

NINJA HERO
Martial Arts Roleplaying Using The *HERO System*

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<http://www.herogames.com>

<1> INTRODUCTION

FIGHT!!!

—Just about every video fighting game ever created

Ninja Hero is the *HERO System* genre book about martial arts campaigning. It takes an in-depth look at the martial arts action genre in all its various incarnations, ranging from Hong Kong cinema to Japanese animated films, *chanbara* movies, and video fighting games. In addition, it examines various genre archetypes, conventions, elements, and stereotypes, and shows how you can incorporate them into any type of martial arts campaign. The book presents information for a wide variety of power levels and subgenres, ranging from the “realistic” fight sequences of most American films to the utterly outlandish action common to Japanese anime.

You can also use *Ninja Hero* as a source of ideas for non-martial arts campaigns — for example, you can adapt much of the material in this book to *Champions* and *Fantasy Hero* campaigns with just a little work. *Ninja Hero* has something of interest for almost every campaign.

<2> HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You can use *Ninja Hero* in two ways: one, to create a stand-alone campaign; or two, as a source of ideas to expand the scope of an existing game focusing on some other genre. Don’t let the martial arts genre focus of the text put you off; it’s easy to introduce a martial arts element into virtually any campaign, regardless of setting or genre.

Gamemasters should start with the first chapter, which examines various martial arts subgenres. It goes on to describe common elements of the genre, and how you can mingle the genre with other campaign styles and settings.

Players should review the subgenres, but focus their attention on the second chapter, which deals with creating characters. It includes a discussion of archetypes, character creation elements, and cinematic martial arts techniques.

The third chapter covers combat. It discusses a number of genre-specific conventions for fight scenes, and provides optional rules for simulating some of the more off-the-wall cinematic martial arts “stunts.”

The fourth chapter covers gamemastering. It reviews all aspects of running martial arts campaigns, from power levels to plots, and everything in between. Players should only read this chapter if they have the GM’s permission.

The fifth chapter is a sourcebook containing several campaign outlines, sample characters, weapons, and adventure seeds. Although it’s primarily meant for GMs, players may want to look over the sample characters before attempting to create their own.

Ninja Hero closes with appendices providing a glossary of martial arts terms and a bibliography/filmography.

<4> THE ULTIMATE MARTIAL ARTIST

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Hero Games also publishes *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, a book providing detailed rules about martial arts in the *HERO System*, including write-ups of over a hundred real world martial arts styles (plus many other fictional styles). Therefore, *Ninja Hero* doesn't include any of that information; it's a genre book about martial arts campaigns and characters, not specifically about martial arts styles themselves. Gamemasters and players interested in *HERO System* martial arts campaigns would do well to acquire a copy of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* to go with this book. References to that book throughout *Ninja Hero* are abbreviate "UMA" (as in, "see UMA, page 114").

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **DISCLAIMER**

Ninja Hero is not intended as a historical guide to China or Japan, even though many martial arts films and stories take place in those time periods. In many cases, these period films play fast-and-loose with historical events and elements, and this book does the same. Just as with most martial arts popular entertainment, historical accuracy takes a back seat to action and adventure. Gamers interested in learning more about those periods of Asian history can find many books and resources about them at their local libraries and bookstores.

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<2> **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

My first exposure to cinematic martial arts was watching "Saturday Morning Kung Fu Theater," which consisted of an endless string of cheaply made Taiwanese "chop-sockey" films. The plots were nonexistent, the fighting mediocre, and the dubbing horrible. Naturally, I ate it right up. When the first edition of *Ninja Hero* came out, I snapped it up just as eagerly. It became an integral part of any campaign or character I developed, and was referred to time and time again. The same went for *The Ultimate Martial Artist* when it was published; the book saw so much use the cover ended up falling off.

At the same time, my awareness of martial arts cinema grew. I discovered the wide realm of Japanese animation, and was introduced to the totally over-the-top world of Hong Kong cinema. Inspired by these sources, I set out to create a new *HERO System* sourcebook, which I titled *Wuxia Hero*. As fate would have it, *Wuxia Hero* would never see print. Instead, I was asked to transform it into the book you are holding now, the new version of *Ninja Hero*.

I hope you find *Ninja Hero* as enjoyable to read as it was to create. I subjected myself to many long, grueling hours of watching the films of Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, Jet Li, Tsui Hark, and others in an effort to fully understand the martial arts action genre, and I hope I've passed on some of what I learned on to you, the reader. So buckle on your *jien*, summon your *ch'i*, and pose dramatically — it's time to... FIGHT!

<chapter> **CHAPTER ONE:**

FISTS, FEET, AND FURIOUS ACTION: THE MARTIAL ARTS GENRE

*Everybody was Kung Fu fighting, those cats were fast as lightning
In fact it was a little bit fright'ning, but they fought with expert timing*
—Carl Douglas, “Kung Fu Fighting”

This chapter of *Ninja Hero* discusses the martial arts genre. The first section examines the different martial arts subgenres, with notes about how to create game campaigns based around them. The second section looks at common elements of the martial arts genre and how you can use them in your campaign. The third section shows you how to combine the martial arts genre with other genres, such as superheroes or fantasy.

For purposes of this book, a “martial arts campaign” is any game emphasizing the presence and use of martial arts styles and techniques. This is not the same as a campaign *featuring* martial arts. Many campaigns have characters who know and use martial arts, but fighting skills aren’t central to the plot or setting. In a martial arts campaign, all aspects of the martial arts, such as the styles known to the characters, the training they endure, special techniques known only by rumor, and rivalries between martial artists of different schools, provide the focus for the game.

<1> MARTIAL ARTS SUBGENRES

The genre of martial arts action can be divided into five broad subgenres, each progressively more fantastic than the last, and with a corresponding boost in levels of power. The subgenres also make excellent campaign types. Before creating a martial arts campaign, the GM should make it clear to his players exactly which subgenre he intends to emulate.

This section describes the five subgenres in ascending order of power and “cinematic” qualities. Each is named after the popular media it’s most associated with, or which best represents it. The subgenres are:

- Realistic (or Real World) Martial Arts
- Cinematic Martial Arts
- Wuxia Martial Arts
- Video Game Martial Arts
- Anime Martial Arts

Of course, these campaign types are not absolutes. Many martial arts campaigns and stories feature a lot of crossover between them, especially the last three on the list.

<2> REALISTIC MARTIAL ARTS

The Realistic Martial Arts subgenre involves stories set in the “real world.” Unlike the more “cinematic” subgenres, it’s fairly straightforward. The martial arts styles known by the characters are usually common ones (such as Karate or Kung Fu), and there are almost no “special techniques” or fantastic powers that allow characters to perform superhuman stunts.

In a Realistic Martial Arts story, the martial arts known by the characters tend to be secondary to the action presented. Examples of a Realistic Martial Arts campaigns include games set in feudal Japan and the characters are all samurai, or a campaign where the characters are all French Musketeers. In both settings, all the characters almost certainly know some sort of martial art (Kenjutsu and Fencing, respectively), but their adventures focus on matters other than their art, and they don’t have any special abilities or semi-mystical fighting techniques. In fact, their art is more of a means to an end, a tool that lets them accomplish certain tasks in the course of an adventure.

In a Realistic Martial Arts campaign, characters are normal humans, built either as Competent Normals (50 Base Points plus up to 50 points of Disadvantages) or as Standard Heroes (75 Base Points plus up to 75 points of Disadvantages). Characters are automatically subject to Normal Characteristic Maxima, but can carry normal weapons and wear normal armor without paying points for them. Extra Damage Classes may not be allowed, and in most cases characters cannot take any of the special martial arts-oriented abilities described in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* or Chapter Two of this book.

<2> CINEMATIC MARTIAL ARTS

The Cinematic Martial Arts subgenre features action-adventure stories with extensive use

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of martial arts styles and combat. It includes the movies of Bruce Lee, Chuck Norris, Jackie Chan, Jean Claude van Damme, Steven Seagal, and an endless parade of cheaply made Taiwanese “chop-socky” films.

What sets Cinematic Martial Arts apart from Realistic Martial Arts is two things. First, martial arts are almost always the focus of this sort of story. That means there’s an emphasis on the styles and techniques used by each character, to differentiate one warrior from another. Second, the fighting abilities and scenes become more fantastic — not as over-the-top as in Wuxia Martial Arts, but much more so than in realistic stories. Characters can’t run up the sides of walls or battle 27 ninja masters to a standstill, but they can fight in more spectacular ways, and take on more foes, than any realistic character.

Characters built for a Cinematic Martial Arts campaign are usually near the peak of “realistic” human performance with regard to their physical abilities. They should range in scale from Powerful Heroes (100 Base Points plus up to 100 points in Disadvantages) to Very Powerful Heroes (125 Base Points plus up to 125 points in Disadvantages). They’re automatically subject to Normal Characteristic Maxima, but can carry normal weapons and wear normal armor without paying points for them.

To emphasize the differences between Realistic and Cinematic, GMs should let players in a Cinematic Martial Arts campaign create their own martial arts styles (or sub-styles), and perhaps even a custom maneuver or two (see page 88 of UMA). Additionally, GMs should also allow characters to purchase special abilities that don’t verge *too* far from the realistic (more Extra Damage Classes than Realistic characters, Damage Reduction versus STUN, Autofire punches, and so forth).

<2> WUXIA MARTIAL ARTS

Wuxia (pronounced “woo-she”) translates approximately as “knight-errant.” The term describes the Hong Kong fantasy film genre specializing in suspending its actors on wires for spectacular action sequences (“wire fu”). Even if you’ve never seen a Hong Kong action film, if you’ve seen either *Big Trouble In Little China* or *The Matrix*, then you should have a basic understanding of the genre.

A Wuxia Martial Arts story takes the fantastic elements of Cinematic Martial Arts one step further. Epitomized by the conventions of Hong Kong cinema, a wuxia story becomes not just a martial arts action-adventure tale, but a martial arts *fantasy*, and as such is jam-packed with bizarre characters, fast and furious fight scenes, strange and unusual settings, and breathtaking over-the-top stunts.

Wuxia characters aren’t merely at the peak of human performance, they often go beyond it to become virtual superhumans. In addition, characters can often manipulate exotic internal energies called *ch’i* (see page ???); this allows them to perform such feats as punching down walls, leaping immense distances, ignoring normally lethal sword blows, and climbing (and clinging to) sheer rock faces and walls. Wuxia characters usually practice their own style of martial arts, and secret techniques unique to each style and/or character are common.

Characters in a Wuxia Martial Arts campaign are incredibly powerful compared to Realistic or Cinematic characters. At a minimum, they’re built as Low-Powered Superheroic characters (150 Base Points plus up to 100 points in Disadvantages), but many are even more

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powerful Standard Superheroic characters (200 Base Points plus up to 150 points in Disadvantages). Characters may take Normal Characteristic Maxima as a Disadvantage if they so desire, but it's not required. Characters have to pay Character Points for any weapons or equipment they carry and any armor they wear.

Gamemasters should let players in Wuxia Martial Arts campaigns create new styles, sub-styles, and maneuvers (though of course the GM should review and approve these creations before letting PCs use them in the game). Each maneuver in a character's style should have its own name. The GM should allow any and all of the special abilities listed in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and Chapter Two of this book.

<2> VIDEO GAME MARTIAL ARTS

The Video Game Martial Arts subgenre focuses on martial arts and martial artists as seen in American and Japanese video games. It closely resembles Wuxia, but with the addition of what amount to full-fledged "superpowers." Typically these powers involve some sort of energy projection (flaming fists, blasts of heat, fireballs, lightning bolts). In addition, the characters themselves are quite often as varied as the powers they possess. It is not unheard of for a martial arts video game to feature aliens, ghosts, robots, and supernatural monsters as part of the cast.

Video Game Martial Arts is a combat-heavy subgenre (even for the martial arts genre). Story development and roleplaying often take a back seat to challenges, duels, and coping with the difficulties posed by the unusual "arenas" where fights take place: the flagstoned courtyards of ancient temples; on the tops of poles projecting out of a pit of lava; a platform bobbing in a strange sea; or a cleared circle of ground in the midst of a snowy, monster-filled forest. The visual element is crucial; a player must be able to "see" the exotic locales and colorful characters in his mind's eye, or the impact of the subgenre diminishes.

The Video Game subgenre offers one advantage for gaming that other types of martial arts campaigns may not: it often features team play. Characters in a Video Game Martial Arts setting are usually part of a "stable" of professional fighters and travel around the world to participate in matches against similarly powered opponents.

Video Game Martial Arts PCs are built on the same power levels as Wuxia Campaign characters; they're usually Standard Superheroic characters (200 Base Points plus up to 150 points in Disadvantages). Characters may take the Normal Characteristic Maxima Disadvantage, but GMs shouldn't recommend this — it makes it hard for the character to stand up to *ch'i*-blast wielding opponents and killer ninja robots! Characters must pay points for any weapons, armor, or other gear they commonly use.

Characters in a Video Game Martial Arts campaign should practice their own unique style of martial arts — they're often as well known by their respective styles as they are by their name. At the very least, the GM should restrict each real world style to a single PC — if Chozaru knows Karate, no other PC can know that style. Additionally, each character should have a unique array of special techniques and powers (perhaps bought as a Power Framework). Each of these techniques should have a name, and characters should announce the name of a power whenever they use it (they receive no Disadvantage points for this; it's a subgenre convention).

<2> ANIME MARTIAL ARTS

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The Anime Martial Arts subgenre reflects martial arts action as seen in Japanese animated films (*a.k.a.* “anime”) and comic books (manga). Although anime is not a subgenre in and of itself (it’s better described as an art style), anime martial artists display enough characteristics in common that they deserve their own category. The Anime Martial Arts subgenre typically combines elements common to both the Wuxia and Video Game settings, but then turns everything up a notch. Anime martial arts characters are often out-and-out superhumans, with powers and abilities far beyond those of even Video Game martial artists. The GM can set an Anime Martial Arts campaign in any time or place he wishes; what makes the subgenre unique is the style of the action and the characters themselves, not the setting or time period.

The power levels of Anime characters range from Low-Powered Superheroic (150 Base Points plus up to 100 points in Disadvantages) to High-Powered Superheroic (300 Base Points plus up to 150 points in Disadvantages), though the higher end of the scale is used more frequently than the lower. Characters can take the Normal Characteristic Maxima as a Disadvantage, but this is uncommon. They must buy any weapons, armor, or other gear they want with their Character Points.

As with Wuxia and Video Game, Anime martial artists invariably have their own special powers and techniques, each with its own name. And just like Video Game characters, loudly announcing the name of an attack as it’s used is a must. The powers allowed to characters in an Anime Martial Arts campaign depend on the exact setting and the desires of the GM, but typically should include such seemingly impossible powers as moving so fast the character leaves afterimages behind, hurling devastating blasts of energy, throwing several hundred punches in the blink of an eye, or transforming one’s skin into iron.

<1> ELEMENTS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS GENRE

Certain conventions, or classic “bits,” are fairly common to the martial arts action genre, no matter what the subgenre. The GM should look these bits over carefully, and decided how to fit each one he likes into his campaign. Many of these elements link together, so using one almost guarantees the appearance of several others.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> OUT OF ASIA

Almost all the “bits” listed here reference Asian martial arts stories. Although the elements have been taken from Asian sources, the GM can adapt them to any setting he chooses. For example, if he runs a swashbuckling game set in the era of the French Musketeers, the GM could have his players search for a lost fencing manual (“Books and Scrolls”), duel with the Cardinal’s Guard (“Feuds”), seek revenge for the death of a comrade (“Murder” and “Revenge”), cross swords with another Musketeer who feels his style is superior to the PCs’ (“Rival Schools and/or Styles”), and introduce a female Musketeer (“Women”).

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> BANDITS

In period settings, China is a huge sprawling empire, while Japan is often wracked by internal power struggles and wars between neighboring *daimyo* (warlords). Thus, areas of both lands are lawless and beset by bandits. In China, bandits are usually found to the north and west, along the fringes of the Gobi Desert. Japanese bandits are normally *ronin* (masterless samurai) and former *ashigaru* (foot soldiers) now homeless after being on the losing side of a battle. Both nations have to deal with pirates, and Chinese pirates are notorious for being exceedingly violent and brutal.

In general, Japanese bandits are simple swordsmen, and usually not very skilled. Chinese bandits, however, often possess unusual fighting techniques and exotic weapons far different than those normally seen in the more civilized areas of China. And unlike Japanese bandits, who are invariably enemies of the hero, in China bandits can be either friend or foe, and often develop into a possible romantic interest for the hero or heroine (more than one Chinese bandit, or bandit leader, is female).

Because the average group of bandits lives by looting and pillaging, this element is a natural adventure catalyst. Some bandits may menace a local town, forcing the PCs to defend themselves and the townsfolk, or the bandits may threaten the PCs directly, demanding tribute in exchange for safe passage (or simply trying to take what they want). Bandits may steal something the PCs need or want, or kidnap someone they’re going to see or are supposed to protect. And, of course, bandits may serve as flunkies to even more powerful villains.

<4> BATTLE AURAS

Primarily a feature of Anime Martial Arts, battle auras appear when a martial artist is

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angry, outraged, or mentally preparing to participate in a serious fight. They usually look like faint flickering flames around the character's body. According to tradition, good or heroic characters have blue auras, while evil characters have red ones. Of course, this isn't a hard and fast rule; in some campaigns, each character has his own uniquely colored aura, regardless of personality.

<4> **BOOKS AND SCROLLS**

An important plot hook in many martial arts adventures is the existence of a book or scroll documenting some new and unusual fighting style, or which contains information on advanced and unbeatable fighting techniques. Often, the actual contents of the book is unimportant; its mere existence sets off a series of thefts and murders leading up to a final showdown with the person responsible for attempting to steal the book in the first place (almost invariably an evil eunuch; see below).

Gamemasters can use these same books and scrolls as a way for PCs to learn new techniques and powers in an ongoing campaign. A grateful patron might give the PCs a book, or they may find a valuable scroll as part of a bandit's horde. Naturally, any skills they learn will almost certainly be put to the test in their next major combat!

<4> **CH'I**

Ch'i (pronounced "kee") translates literally as "breath." It's also spelled *qi* and in Japan is known as *ki* or *wa*, which means "harmonious spirit." It refers to the energy believed to flow through every living thing, as well as the world itself. *Ch'i* can be positive or negative, and too much or too little of one form of *ch'i* can cause illness and even death. But with perfectly balanced *ch'i*, it's said one can live forever.

A warrior can disrupt the flow of *ch'i* through another's body by striking specific pressure points, which can cause loss of power, agonizing pain, or even death. Conversely, acupuncture can release pressure on these same points and restore a healthy flow of *ch'i*. The manipulation of the *ch'i* flowing through the world involves geomancy — *feng shui*, meaning "wind and water."

By using proper forms of meditation, breathing exercises and even diet, a character can harness his *ch'i* and develop superhuman abilities. Once a person has found a way to properly channel his *ch'i*, he can use it to resist pain, leap great distances (or even fly), and perform great feats of strength and agility.

This latter aspect of *ch'i* is central to the wilder forms of the martial arts genre. Almost all of the abilities displayed by characters in Anime, Wuxia, and Video Game martial arts stories derive from their mastery of *ch'i*. In Wuxia, *ch'i* mastery usually manifests through a character's ability to fly, his great strength, and his high resistance to harm. In Anime and Video Game stories, *ch'i* mastery goes a step further, allowing many characters to project blasts of fiery *ch'i* at their enemies.

<4> **EUNUCHS**

The historical Chinese government was virtually run by the eunuch class, so anytime a

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period Chinese story requires an authority figure (like a provincial governor or a local magistrate), he's probably a eunuch. Normally, eunuchs are cruel, oppressive, and incredibly corrupt, virtually robbing the local populace to line their own pockets with wealth. Since the heroic PCs usually seek to overthrow cruel regimes, eunuchs oppose them. Unfortunately for any such heroes, eunuchs are often masters of powerful Kung Fu techniques, making them a match for even a large group of heroes. Most of the time the PCs just have to fight the eunuch's minions (bandits, ninja, soldiers, and even magicians), but if pressed or cornered, an evil eunuch becomes a whirlwind of destruction.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **HISTORICAL EUNUCHS**

In China, eunuchs were created by surgically removing the male's entire genitals. If this was done before puberty, the eunuch never really lost his "baby fat," could not grow a beard, and never developed a deep voice. If the procedure was performed once a man reached puberty, the eunuch generally gained a great deal of weight.

Eunuchs were used as servants in the Imperial court of China for nearly 2,000 years. According to tradition, the Emperor had 3,000 eunuchs at his command, while lesser nobles and favorites of the court typically had only 10-30. Eunuchs were the lowest social class in China, considered on par with insects.

Eunuchs usually came from poor families; they joined the Imperial ranks to escape poverty. As part of the royal court they received a small salary, room, board, and a percentage of anything that passed through the court. In addition, they received numerous bribes, and stole regularly. Because the only way to gain any form of power was through intrigue, most eunuchs plotted behind the Emperor's back, jockeying for positions of power and influence. Martial arts stories often emphasize these latter qualities.

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<4> **FEUDS**

One of the oldest plots in the martial arts genre is the feud between two schools over whose style is better. Although it's an almost clichéd plot, feuds of this sort were all too real; many historical martial artists, from Miyamoto Mushashi to Bruce Lee, fought duels to prove their style was superior. Some feuds are only half-serious — somewhat lighthearted competitions between schools encouraged by masters to keep the students in fighting trim — while others are deadly.

In a roleplaying game, the GM can get a lot of mileage out of such feuds, especially if a PC has developed his own *unique* style. That character can *expect* other fighters to challenge him — they wish to test this new style, to find out firsthand exactly how powerful it is. He must fight or lose "face" (respect) and honor. A more insidious plot would have a PC become the target of a feud due not to his own actions, but due to his association with someone else (such as a relative, or a fellow student) who has committed a crime. In this case, the PC must discover why he's part

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of the feud, who started it, and if any way exists to resolve the problem peacefully.

<4> **GHOSTS AND OTHER SUPERNATURAL MONSTERS**

Although it's completely out of place in Realistic martial arts stories, and even most Cinematic stories, the supernatural is quite common in Anime and Wuxia tales. Characters may find themselves facing anything from beautiful ghosts to horrific hopping vampires. Although these creatures are supernatural, characters can combat many of them with fairly "normal" martial arts skills... but to truly destroy such creatures one must know certain specialized techniques or possess magical powers.

Supernatural threats exist in almost limitless types, shapes, and sizes, (Wuxia heroes have fought fight everything from rubbery demons to house-sized centipedes), but two things seem to remain constant. First, any vampires are hopping vampires — greenish withered corpses dressed in Mandarin robes. They have stiff movements, incredible strength, and tremendous resistance to injury; they travel by hopping instead of walking (hence the name). Second, most ghosts are beautiful females. Dressed in long flowing gowns and robes, they flit about seducing (and sometimes destroying) any man unable to resist their charms.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **SUPERNATURAL PLOT SEEDS**

If you want to introduce the PCs to the supernatural, have them stay at a haunted temple and deal with the various ghosts and other spirits who come out at night. The ghosts can be dangerous, lonely, or serve as a warning, depending the needs of the plot and the power level of the PCs. In fact, a ghost may start a whole adventure, in which the PCs must find a way to put the spectre to rest (either by a proper burial of the ghost's remains, or by avenging the ghost's untimely death). For more stalwart heroes, the GM may want to send them up against a few hopping vampires, especially if the heroes are poking around crypts and graveyards.

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<4> **MAGIC AND SORCERERS**

If high-flying, energy blasting kung fu warriors aren't enough, many Anime and Wuxia stories feature magicians of some sort or another. Taoist sorcerers are common, as are Shinto priests and priestesses, Buddhist mystics, and even ninja (who are usually depicted as masters of strange and bizarre semi-magical techniques).

There are no set rules for such characters, although many seem to be necromancers, summoning ghosts and hopping vampires to attack their enemies. Mental powers (particularly the ability to control minds) are common as well. In the most over-the-top campaigns, magicians can fly, breathe fire, and deflect an enemy's spells right out of the air.

You can convert just about any power found in Chapter Two into a magic spell with a few minor changes. In both Chinese and Japanese settings, magicians often write spells on sheets of paper and hurl them at the enemy. Shinto priests use these talismans (known as *ofuda*) extensively, usually to combat ghosts and other supernatural monsters. Taoist magicians tend to need large altars to perform their sorcery, as well as extensive and complex rituals, such as

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burning paper talismans and spitting forth volatile liquids during the course of an incantation. Other Chinese sorcerers use wooden swords to assist in casting their spells, the sword serving much the same purpose as a Western magician's magic wand.

Magicians can rarely hurl spells with the same ease that martial artists utilize their techniques. Limitations such as *Focus* (writing materials), *Gestures* (the writing and/or hurling), *Extra Time* (long rituals), *Concentration*, and *Limited Range* are appropriate. Of course, this being the martial arts genre, the line between magic spell and *ch'i*-powered technique is a very narrow one, and often the difference is more one of semantics than effect.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MAGIC PLOT SEEDS**

The possible adventures involving magic in a *Ninja Hero* campaign are almost infinite. The PCs might seek out a Shinto priestess to speak with the spirits of the dead (or to have a spirit banished from a home), or they may look to a Buddhist for healing spells and the like. A Taoist sorcerer may cast spells on them (usually while in the employ of an evil eunuch), or the PCs may ask a Taoist for aid in combating some sort of supernatural evil. The campaign's evil eunuch might be a powerful magician himself, capable of summoning terrible monsters to fight his foes for him. And of course, one or more PCs may be magicians, at which point people probably come to them for help.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> **MURDER**

"*You killed my teacher!*" This cry has started innumerable martial arts fights. The death of one's teacher (or other loved one) has prompted numerous heroes to abandon their attempts at a peaceful life and return to their existence as warriors. Along the way, they usually learn a new technique or two — or pick up a new weapon — and use it to exact their revenge.

<4> **NINJA**

The martial arts genre is crawling with ninja (or the local equivalent). They come in all shapes and sizes, and are of both sexes. Masters of disguise, ninja can be anyone at anytime, and their preference for hidden weapons and surprise attacks makes them dangerous foes. When not disguised, they dress in black, skulk through the darkness, and act as assassins and thieves. Usually in the employ of the villain, ninja are silent and deadly killers, and utterly ruthless when it comes to completing their mission. See pages ???-??? for numerous ninja character sheets, and pages ???-??? of UMA for ninja special abilities.

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<box> **NINJA PLOT SEEDS**

Needs something stolen? Send a ninja. Need to have someone killed? Send a ninja. Need to know what your enemy is up to? Send a ninja. Need to get a message through enemy lines? Send

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a ninja. Need cable TV installed? Send a ninja.

Ninja are the GM's friend. They can appear in any campaign, in any setting, and almost any time period. (For example, in Phil Foglio's "Buck Godot" comic books, ninja are a phenomenon common to all sentient species.) Since they rarely act on their own, ninja also allow the GM to involve major campaign villains in the action without actually having the villain show up. [[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> **OLD MASTERS**

In the martial arts genre, the Old Master character serves several purposes. First, he's a walking, talking version of a book or scroll, and can instruct a PC in the new technique or fighting style they need to overcome their current adversary. Second, he serves as the GM's mouthpiece, passing along important plot information as needed. Third, he makes a formidable opponent, as his martial arts skill and experience usually outstrips any one of the PCs. And finally, the death of an Old Master (or, more specifically, the PCs' Old Master) usually suffices to set off a bloody and violent quest for revenge.

Gamemasters should remember two additional points about Old Masters. One, they're not necessarily old. A typical adult or a child martial arts prodigy could fulfill the role of "Old" Master. Two, they don't have to be male — the martial arts genre features many powerful, learned female warriors.

<4> **PERSONAL SACRIFICE**

If the need is great enough, martial arts characters give of themselves to help achieve a greater goal. Usually this means sacrificing one's life, but it can involve giving up something else of great value (such as peace, freedom, or a treasured heirloom). This theme is especially common in Japanese adventures, where one's honor is paramount, and the completion of an ordered task takes precedence over all other matters (including survival).

Sacrifices are excellent tools for the GM, who can have the PCs' allies, friends, and DNPCs sacrifice themselves to save the PCs from capture or death. This sacrifice motivates the PCs, thus further involving them in the plot. However, overuse of this event becomes predictable and boring; it loses a lot of its impact if not handled carefully.

<4> **RELIGION**

Due to the influence of the Shaolin Temple on Chinese martial arts (see below), religion and the martial arts often go hand-in-hand.

<5> **Buddhism**

Historians trace the origins of Buddhism to the historical figure of Gautama, who died in 480 BC. His teachings reached China by 100 BC at the latest, supposedly brought at the request of the Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty. Buddhism spread throughout China fairly rapidly, then

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Korea, and eventually reached Japan around 600 AD.

A devout Buddhist wishes to free himself from the three great sins of ignorance, greed, and passion, and thus escape the delusions of anger, joy, hatred, desire, and grief. Once a person accomplishes this, he becomes enlightened, and enters into Nirvana, where he remains free from the needs of the material world. Those who fail to achieve Nirvana are doomed to a cycle of reincarnation, returning to life as either a man or a beast, or may spend time in the various Chinese and Buddhist hells (and the Chinese got a lotta hells). A person's fate is determined by karma; those who have committed numerous offenses (and built up a great deal of bad karma) are punished for their misdeeds in their next life.

An individual's karmic ties to other people can continue through cycles of reincarnation. This concept often plays a part in Anime and Wuxia martial arts stories, where the souls of long-dead warriors are reborn in a new era, only to once again run afoul of their old enemies, who have also been born into this new time.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **CHINESE GOTTA LOTTA HELLS**

Chinese religion and folklore describe a lot of unpleasant hells (or "earth prisons") where sinners suffer after death. Many of them are devoted to specific sins, much like the levels of Dante's Hell; for example, the Hell Of Hanging Upside Down is to punish those who engaged in ungrateful or animal-like behavior. Some of them include:

The Hell Where Sinners' Tongues Are Torn Out

The Hell Of Cold Ice

The Hell Of Sword-Filled Trees

The Hell With Hills Stuck Full Of Knives

The Hell Of Dancing On Red-Hot Iron

The Hell Of Being Boiled Alive

The Hell Of Sawing Into Pieces

The Hell Of Poisoned Serpents

The Hell Of Cutting And Grinding To Pieces

The Hell Of Blackness And Darkness

The Hell Of Iron Beds

The Hell Of Starving

The Hell Of Gouging The Eyes Out

The Hell Of Sliced Faces

The Hell Of Hanging Upside Down

The Hell Of Drugs Forced Into The Mouth

Mouth-Goring Hell

The Hell Of Cut-Off Hands

Toxic Bee Hell

Heart-Digging Hell

Mouse-Bite And Cut Penis Hell

Car-Pulling Hell

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The Hell Of Thorn-Ball In The Mouth
Barbed Wire Net And Brain-Eating Grasshopper Hell
Extra-Cruel Burned Brick Hell
Fingers Boiling Burned Iron Channel Hell
Splitting Stomach Hell
Drop And Carry Stone Hell
Copper Pan Hell
Cutting Tongue And Boring Cheeks Hell
Car Running Over Body Hell
The Hell Of Hands And Legs Cutting
The Hell Of Boiling And Splashing Oil

There are many other “karmic” hells where one’s sins in life are revisited upon one’s soul. For example, a person who harmed many cats in life might find his soul condemned to a hell where cats tear him to pieces, again and again.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<5> **Bodhidharma**

Although almost certainly a mythical personage, Bodhidharma supposedly founded Chinese Zen Buddhism, and created Shaolin Chu’an, better known as Shaolin Kung Fu. He came to China from India to spread the teachings of his own Buddhist sect. He met with the Emperor of China before continuing on to the Shaolin Temple. Refused admittance, Bodhidharma sat down and meditated by staring at a cliff wall for nine years, eventually (according to legend) boring a hole through the wall by virtue of his intense gaze. Afterwards, he was allowed to enter the temple. Discovering the monks were in poor health and often fell asleep during meditation, Bodhidharma instructed them in certain exercises and breathing techniques, which they were to practice every day. Legend states these exercises formed the basis for creation of Shaolin Kung Fu, while the breathing techniques centered on the concept of harnessing *ch’i* energy, an underlying principle of many Chinese and Japanese martial arts.

<5> **Taoism**

Founded by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (c. 580-480 BC), Taoism has had a great influence on the martial arts. It’s difficult to understand, mainly because it’s difficult to define. To boil it down to a *very* basic synopsis, a Taoist believes the world (or *Tao*) is made up of two forces, the Yin and the Yang. Yin is feminine, lunar, terrestrial, passive, negative, dark, wet, and cold, while Yang is masculine, solar, celestial, active, positive, white, dry, and hot. Yin and Yang should remain in perfect balance (as seen in the well-known Yin-Yang symbol), and thus all events, both good and bad, should be accepted as a matter of fact. A true Taoist lives in perfect harmony with his universe, and doesn’t try to exert his will on the world around him. He lives with the world, not in opposition to it.

Taoism has influenced the martial arts with the idea of *wu wei*, or non-action. *Wu wei* can best be defined as eliminating the need to make a conscious decision with regards to one’s

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actions. A warrior who has perfected *wu wei* with regards to his martial arts is impossible to surprise, because he no longer has to think about reacting. If attacked, he reacts without conscious thought, automatically performing a defensive maneuver and counterattacking.

<4> REVENGE

The need for revenge occurs as a primary motivator in many martial arts plots. Characters may seek revenge in response to a murder of a friend or loved one, the humiliation of themselves or their master, or as part of an attempt to recover some sort of stolen property. Of course, the PCs aren't the only people seeking revenge. Non-player characters may be out for vengeance as well, typically against one of the PCs or someone they have to protect.

Quests for revenge typically resolve in one of several ways. The usual outcome is for the avenging character to kill the person responsible for the insult (although a savage beating may suffice). A somewhat less bloodthirsty resolution involves bringing the target of one's revenge to justice, or to simply take back whatever was stolen in the first place.

<4> RIVAL SCHOOLS AND/OR STYLES

As mentioned under Feuds, it's fairly common for practitioners of different martial arts styles to bicker and fight with one another over whose style is better. In a similar vein, students from comparable styles, but different schools, may also harass and annoy each other. This rivalry ranges from simple insults to deadly serious duels. In Japan, it was common for swordsmen from differing schools to duel as a test of their style and skill, and at times, entire schools got involved in the feud. The same goes for China, where similar rivalries continue to exist into the present day.

For campaigns set in early 1930s China, the GM should consider moving the rival schools concept to an international level. In this setting, the rivalry isn't between various Chinese martial arts schools, but between China and Japan, with the question being the superiority of each country's native art (usually Kung Fu and Karate, respectively).

<4> SHAOLIN

Both the Shaolin Temple itself, and its monks, are common elements in martial arts stories.

The monastery of the Shaolin priests was located on Sha-Shih Mountain, and was called Shaolin Ssu, or "Young Forest Temple." Founded in the fifth century AD, the temple lasted until 1735, when a Manchu army burned it to the ground in an effort to quell rebellion. Legend has it only five monks (known as the Venerable Five) escaped the destruction of the temple. Of these five, one was be Ng Mui, a Buddhist warrior nun and the founder of the Wing Chun style of Kung Fu.

The burning of the temple is an event GMs can incorporate into a period campaign. A Shaolin monk PC may have survived the burning, or perhaps he was away at the time of its destruction and must now lie low to avoid the Manchu soldiers. In either case, the GM has a large hook on which to hang possible plots.

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Monks from Shaolin appear in almost as many martial arts adventures as do ninja. Invariably, they are presented as strong, skilled fighters, and usually possess powerful Kung Fu techniques, putting them far ahead of the average martial artist. They may act as either heroes *or* villains; apparently there was no test of nobility or honor required to gain admittance to Shaolin. Discredited, outcast, and/or selfish monks often wreak havoc and oppress the populace, usually in the service of a eunuch magistrate or governor. Wandering Shaolin monks make for excellent PCs, temporary allies, or sources of information and assistance; if evil, they're naturals as powerful repeat villains.

<4> **SIGNBOARDS**

Chinese and Japanese martial arts schools all have a signboard mounted somewhere in the school. The teachers and students must protect this board at all cost, and cannot allow it to come to harm. In some cases, the master (or his students) go to great lengths to keep the board from so much as touching the ground. Typically, if two schools fight, the winner tears down and smashes the loser's signboard, signifying the loser's utter defeat. Signboards for places of business are often given the same attention; to tear down and abuse one of these signs is a form of great disrespect.

<4> **STUDENTS**

Every Master (old or not) has students. Some are studious, some are rebellious, some are clowns, and all of them can be counted on to get into some sort of trouble. In more serious campaigns, an Old Master may be drawn into conflict by the death of his students, or, as is far more common, the students avenge the Old Master when an enemy kills or humiliates him.

Even skilled martial artists may become students for a time. It's a common theme in martial arts stories for a warrior to spend time with an instructor learning some new or unusual fighting style so he can achieve victory in an upcoming battle. In game terms, this is a great way to explain how PCs spend their Experience Points. Just finding the right master to train with may be an adventure itself!

<4> **THEFT**

The theft of an object, be it a sacred scroll or a powerful weapon, has started many a martial arts story. But thieves can steal things other than material items can be stolen. Many schools worry about the theft of their fighting styles and secret techniques, and in a Wuxia or Anime story, the theft of a person's shadow or soul may be possible. Naturally, when one wants something stolen, one should call in a master thief — which is why there are so many ninja.

<4> **TOURNAMENTS**

The idea of the tournament, in which martial artists from all over come together to participate in a regulated fighting competition, is a fairly common one (not to mention central to the basis of any Video Game story!). Depending on the scope of the setting, a tournament may

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range in size from a single school (or temple) to one involving people from around the world (and beyond — interstellar or extradimensional fighting tournaments are not unheard of).

One of the easiest ways to get a group of PCs together is to have them all meet at a tournament. If the PCs all win (or at least do very well), a patron may ask them to join an elite guard, at which point the GM can send them on all sorts of missions. Tournaments are also major social events; PCs attending one may have to deal with Feuds, Ninja, Revenge, Rivals, fellow Students out to prove themselves... and the more mundane possibilities of cheating, spying, and romance.

<4> UNUSUAL AND UNBEATABLE FIGHTING STYLES

In many martial arts stories, one character (sometimes a hero, sometimes not) possesses a strange combat style, of a type virtually no one has seen before. Typically this style is a powerful one, and contains spectacular techniques allowing its practitioner to defeat even the toughest of opponents. Variations on this theme include making the practitioner the only master of the style, or its last living practitioner. Another idea is to reverse the circumstances. Instead of the hero possessing the unusual style, it is the hero's *enemies* who practice strange martial arts techniques. Naturally, these enemies are all too willing to demonstrate their prowess with these styles when fighting the hero.

Another twist on the unusual fighting style gimmick is the idea of the *unbeatable* style. This is a rare fighting style known to virtually no one (it might even be a lost art, found only in books). Once learned, however, it allows the practitioner to totally dominate his opponents, achieving victory even against supposedly impossible odds. Since giving a hero an unbeatable style doesn't do much for story development, typically only villains know them... and the hero (or heroes) must go on a journey to discover a style or technique of his own that can defeat the style.

<4> WEAPONS

Weapons and weapon-using warriors are extremely common in many martial arts settings. This especially holds true for those campaigns set in Japan, which feature sword-wielding samurai and *ronin* extensively. Campaigns set in China are more mixed in the treatment of weapons, although in most cases, a Chinese hero possesses some sort of weapon proficiency. Naturally, this being the martial arts genre, strange and unusual weapons are common, with some being downright bizarre (and in many cases either illogical in design, or physically impossible to use). Of course, one cannot discount the appearance of magic weapons, which occurs frequently in Wuxia or Anime stories. Usually the heroes must go on a quest to find the weapon, or must recover it after a villain steals it.

Almost as common as true weapons is the use of seemingly ordinary objects as weapons. This includes items such as benches, chairs, tables, curtains, lengths of silk or rope, umbrellas, and most common household furnishings. These items are often just as effective as "real" weapons in the hands of a skilled martial artist (see page 114 of UMA for ways to simulate this ability in game terms).

<4> WOMEN

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The martial arts genre has no gender bias. Although both Chinese and Japanese cultures discriminate against women, this does not stop the genre from featuring all sorts of powerful, skilled, and self-sufficient female martial artists, ninja, and sorcerers. In many cases, these women are feisty, powerful, strong-willed fighters with far more independence than one would normally expect. In addition, most are masters of the martial arts, and know strange and unusual techniques. The existence of female PCs should pose no problem for any *Ninja Hero* campaign.

<1> MARTIAL ARTS, METAGENRES, AND OTHER GENRES

After the GM chooses the subgenre for his campaign, he should consider how the martial arts genre interacts with “meta-genres” (styles or themes of storytelling or game play applicable to any genre) such as horror or tragedy. Does his game feature deadly serious stories, or have more of a comedic slant? Is there any place for romance in the world of the martial arts? Or perhaps the GM wants to mix martial arts with another genre, such as superheroes or Wild West adventure.

By the same token, players should consider the meta-genre aspects of their characters. One PC may be the element of comedy in an otherwise serious campaign, while another’s unrequited love for the evil governor’s beautiful daughter injects a note of romance into the game.

<2> MARTIAL ARTS AND METAGENRES

A martial arts campaign should consist of more than just people hitting each other. Even in the most action-intense game the GM can find room for elements ranging from comedy to tragedy, romance, horror, and everything in between.

<3> Comedy

The martial arts genre readily lends itself to comedy. Even in the most serious story, there’s often one character who’s a clown, who enjoys jokes and pranks, and who makes others laugh. (If the story is serious one, he’s usually the first person beaten up or killed by the villains.) In addition, the nature of the martial arts genre makes it ripe for parody. You could build an entire campaign around the idea that a character can be a martial arts master of literally *anything*. Imagine, for example, a campaign where the PCs must defend themselves from a master of martial arts cooking or martial arts inline skating!

The problem with using comedy in a campaign revolves around the idea of what is funny and what isn’t. If the GM’s sense of humor differs from that of his players, sequences the GM finds funny may be annoying, boring, or outright distasteful to his players. A GM who wants to inject comedy into his campaign should make sure he knows his players and what they like in the humor department.

There’s also the simple possibility of running out of jokes and funny scenes after a few games. A nonstop diet of comedy works great for television sitcoms, but may pale in a gaming campaign. Typically, *Ninja Hero* GMs solve this problem by simply incorporating occasional humor into a normal campaign, instead of making comedy the game’s focus.

One of the biggest comedy pitfalls for the GM to avoid is making the players look like fools. No one likes to be the butt of one joke, much less repeated jokes, and PCs (the stars of the campaign) are even less likely to enjoy this sort of thing. Unless some player willingly takes on the clown’s role, a good option for the GM is to create an NPC specifically designated as comedy relief. This character gets made a fool of, makes humorous mistakes, and constantly gets into hilarious trouble. Of course, the GM also needs to make sure this character is someone the PCs care about, or else they’ll quickly tire of his antics.

<3> **Horror**

Depending on the nature or style of a martial arts game, horror elements may be either wildly inappropriate or an integral part of the campaign. In Cinematic and Realistic settings, horror usually doesn't work well. It's possible to create some eerie, suspenseful stories involving serial killers and the like, but many of the supernatural elements associated with horror gaming aren't appropriate. A modern day action-adventure campaign usually has no room for ghosts, and even if one did appear, the characters would be powerless to affect it. Furthermore, horror derives a lot of its effect from the fear of the unknown and inability to affect the supernatural, but even realistic martial artists often have a great deal of confidence in their skills and abilities.

If the GM does want to introduce horror into a Realistic or Cinematic game, he has to find a way to create the feelings of terror and dread common to horror, without spoiling either the standard tropes of the martial arts genre or the "realistic" tone of the campaign. Instead of using overt monsters and demons, he should consider using purely human horrors (murderers, deranged cultists), or low-key supernatural threats such as some ghosts and vampires. That way the heroes may have trouble dealing with the threat, but can eventually find a way to overcome the horror and triumph.

On the other hand, many Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime martial arts stories include elements of horror, and supernatural encounters with creatures such as ghosts are common. Fortunately, characters in these campaigns typically have enough skills and powers of their own to combat weird opponents. The fear of the unknown still exists (supernatural beings in these settings are usually *very* powerful, and have bizarre abilities), but the PCs' abilities balance it and let them adventure effectively.

<3> **Mystery**

Of all the meta-genres discussed here, mystery is the one seen least in the martial arts genre. In general, martial arts stories are all about action, and the slower pacing of a "whodunit?" is at odds with the typical action-adventure plot. Typically, if the catalyst of the average mystery plot (such as murder or theft) occurs in a martial arts setting, everyone already knows who did it (enemies of the clan or school, for example). The question is not "who did this?" but "what are we going to do about this?"

However, GMs can easily work mystery elements into martial arts campaigns in which the PCs are police officers, private detectives, or special agents. Such characters investigate thefts, murders, and other crimes as part of their jobs, and can utilize their martial skills as they try to uncover the guilty party. The GM simply has to set up the investigation so it involves lots of time out in the street beating up the Big Boss's thugs for information, instead of time in the forensics labs waiting for the results of a DNA test. A campaign such as this doesn't have to take place in the early twenty-first century, either; the characters could be magistrates and guards in a period Chinese or Japanese setting (or any appropriate historical era) just as easily as they could be modern cops.

<3> **Romance**

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Romance is a common element of martial arts stories. The classic example is the hero falling in love with the Kung Fu master's beautiful daughter, and his trials and tribulations to prove himself worthy of her affections. Romance also works as a strong plot hook; the death of a loved one has kicked off many a revenge story.

However, just because a GM *can* include romance in a game doesn't mean he *should*. If the players are deadly serious and only concerned about combat, then odds are any attempt to create a romance subplot will fall flat. Developing a successful romantic subplot requires the cooperation of the player(s). Once that's assured, the GM simply needs to create an NPC who attracts the interest of the player/PC. Since roleplaying games are about wish fulfillment, potential romantic interests are pretty much *always* beautiful/handsome; the attraction comes from the character's conduct or personality, which are more important to the game.

Once he's got the elements of a romantic subplot in place, the GM has many options for possible plots. The simplest (and most clichéd) is the kidnapping of the romantic interest by an adversary. A more sophisticated story focuses on the actions of Rivals for the NPC's affections. (In some cases, an aggressive "suitor" who comes after the *PC* works even better; that's a harder situation for the PC to cope with.) Rival stories become all the more intriguing when the PC can't simply challenge the Rival to a duel — perhaps his beloved (or her/his family) loathes fighting, or the Rival is too powerful or influential for the PC to dare attack. Other options appropriate to the genre include overprotective parents, past lovers, or the spouse of a previously arranged marriage.

Regardless of how the GM introduces a romantic subplot into the game, he must not overdo the romantic interest's involvement. Too many kidnappings, too many conflicts with Rivals, or too many soap operatic moments may make the character's interest in his "beloved" wane. The GM should avoid killing off a romantic interest every time he needs a tragic incident to spur the characters into action. After a while, the Players will avoid any and all occasions for romance, as each one invariably leads to tragedy.

<3> **Satire/Social Commentary**

Due to the nature of the martial arts genre, it's not normally used as a vehicle for satire. Social commentary, on the other hand, crops up frequently in minor ways. Many martial arts films contain a simple social message, even if it's as basic as "do the right thing" or "be kind to lessers and the unfortunate." Other films have gone a step further and taken a look at historical events or current practices with a discerning eye, criticizing and commenting on elements of society many people take for granted.

Although both satire and social commentary make fine elements in public media, GMs might find them less than useful as a campaign element. Trying to convey a "message" via a form of interactive entertainment may not work well, especially if the GM and players don't see eye-to-eye on the validity of the message. Simplistic "morals" like the ones mentioned above come across well in a gaming context; more complex messages often do not.

<3> **Tragedy**

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The world of the martial arts is often a violent one, and calamitous events spark many stories. Murder is the most common event, with rape, theft, and destruction of property close behind. Such events can spur PCs to action, or be part of their backstory to explain why they *don't* act. Gamemasters can also use events such as this to start feuds, which almost always result in further violence.

Tragedy mixes easily with other meta-genres. A romantic interest can be raped or killed, the comedy relief character can run afoul of the enemy, a Rival master murders the PCs' master, and so on. The most important thing to remember about tragedy is not to overuse it. If tragedy after tragedy afflicts the PCs, they may soon become so jaded and frustrated that they lose interest in heroic activities. Gamemasters should also remain sensitive to their players' feelings and try to avoid disturbing them with scenes and events they find uncomfortable.

<2> MARTIAL ARTS AND OTHER GENRES/ERAS

Although *Ninja Hero* is primarily designed to support pure martial campaigns, you can use it to enhance games set in other genres. It expands the options available to martial artist characters, and may even inspire totally new non-martial artist character concepts.

<3> Champions

Martial arts and superheroes go hand-in-hand, and many *Champions* settings already feature martial artists with unusual powers and abilities (as discussed on page 73 of *Champions*). A number of martial arts elements also make fine *Champions* elements, as superhero settings are usually rife with ninja, old masters, secret societies, supernatural beings, and unusual weapons.

Gamemasters and players alike can use *Ninja Hero* as a source of ideas for new powers and techniques for existing martial arts superheroes, or as a basis for building completely new characters. One could even go so far as to create an entire campaign around super-powered martial artists and their adventures, in a style similar to many Video Game campaigns. Other character types could also borrow ideas from *Ninja Hero*. Many of the cinematic powers described in this book are suitable for super-speedsters, bricks, mystics, and weaponmasters. Even mentalist characters may get ideas from *ch'i* powers and meditation-based abilities.

Of course, the prevalence of martial arts in a *Champions* campaign may depend on the subgenre depicted. In *Golden Age Champions* campaigns, martial arts (other than Boxing) are rare, since they weren't well-known in the West at that time; just possessing Martial Arts could qualify as a character's "superpower." Martial arts are also rare in *Galactic Champions*, since characters in those campaigns are too powerful to need them. On the other hand, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Age *Champions* games often feature a wide variety of martial arts supers.

<3> Cyber Hero

With one of the common *Cyber Hero* archetypes being the "street samurai," not to mention the extensive Japanese influence on the world culture, it's not surprising that the martial arts are often an integral part of the Cyberpunk genre. Some common martial arts genre elements exist as well, although they're usually altered to account for the high technology of the setting.

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For example, “cyber-ninja” (ordinary ninja augmented with cyberware) may exist in some settings; and computer security programs may create cyberspace “guards” that look and fight like samurai. See page 84 of UMA for more ideas.

<3> **Dark Champions**

With its emphasis on street-level encounters, and its outbreaks of violence, *Dark Champions* frequently features martial arts and martial artists. As with *Cyber Hero*, the typical *Dark Champions* setting is dark and gritty with a tendency for realistic situations and adventures. The martial arts styles tend to have a degree of realism as well, and are normally just another tool for a *Dark Champions* character to use in his war on crime, with little to no emphasis on the style itself.

This isn't to say that a GM can't use many martial arts genre elements in a *Dark Champions* campaign. Any game including Asian organized crime (such as the yakuza) will certainly include characters with expertise in the martial arts. The GM can add a great deal of color and depth to such groups with a judicious application of certain genre elements. Virtually all of the classic genre bits adapt well to *Dark Champions* settings (except perhaps for those involving the supernatural, and various over-the-top cinematic abilities).

One *Dark Champions* subgenre — espionage — meshes with martial arts particularly well. Realistic and Cinematic martial arts campaigns often have heavy espionage ties, and dashing spies usually receive some hand-to-hand combat training. On a team of PC spies, one may serve as the “martial arts expert,” using both his fighting skills and knowledge of Asian cultures to help the group complete missions.

<3> **Fantasy Hero**

The presence of the martial arts in a fantasy setting greatly depends on the nature of the setting itself. As noted above, wuxia films are already fantasy films, and a Wuxia campaign, if done correctly, contains all the classic elements common to the martial arts genre as well as many fantasy tropes. A more traditional “Western fantasy” setting, with elves, dwarves, orcs, and dragons, is a different matter. Readers may have a hard time visualizing Kung Fu-fighting elves, but the concept certainly has merit. Many European cultures developed armed and unarmed fighting styles, and when you throw magic and fantastic races into the mix, a thriving martial arts culture could develop. (See page 84 of UMA for more ideas.)

For example, Irish legends and myths contain numerous examples of heroes leaping great distances, sprinting nimbly along the ridge poles of houses, running over fields of grass without disturbing the leaves, riding upon hurled spears, snatching spears out of the air, or throwing a spear with enough power to strike several men in a line. Such actions (or “feats” as they are called in the Irish legends) are perfectly at home in fantasy-styled Wuxia or Anime martial arts game.

To take another approach, a GM could easily convert the special martial arts abilities in UMA and Chapter Two of this book into “spells.” Warrior-wizards would not only buy Martial Arts, but they'd learn many body-affecting spells that could render them immune to sword-blows, enable them to hit five people in the blink of an eye, or even let them strike ghosts with

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their bare hands!

A GM looking for a more Realistic or Cinematic feel for a “fantasy martial arts” can simply create a generous selection of armed and unarmed martial arts styles unique to his fantasy setting (such as Poluraathkaa on page 85 of UMA). Then he can develop the standard martial arts elements and tropes, altering them a little here and there to reflect the differences in setting, existence of magic, and so forth. The more you mix elements of the martial arts genre into a fantasy campaign, the less like a traditional fantasy setting it may seem, so make sure the players don’t mind the change in focus and feel.

<3> **Pulp Hero**

The typical Pulp-era campaign has a lot in common with the *Golden Age Champions* genre when it comes to martial arts. Most characters are thoroughly grounded in Western culture; they might know Boxing, or Fencing, or even Savate, but not Jujutsu, Kung Fu, or Karate. Perhaps one character in a PC group is an “American From The Orient” who learned martial arts while traveling in Asia or knocking around Chinatown, but too much more than that and you start to distort the “feel” of the genre. As always, it’s up to the GM to gauge what the players want and respond accordingly; a campaign that mixes the elements of Cinematic or Wuxia martial arts with the strong-jawed heroism of the pulps could be a lot of fun for the right group of gamers.

<3> **Star Hero**

The inclusion of the martial arts in a *Star Hero* setting ranges from the mundane to the fantastic, depending on the nature of the campaign. “Hard science” games, with their emphasis on realism and attention to such matters as the laws of physics, may involve fairly Realistic depictions of martial arts. More Cinematic settings, such as Space Opera campaigns, could feature styles and abilities appropriate to the game, right up to and including fantastic *ch’i* powers (perhaps disguised with more scientific nomenclature). *Star Wars*, after all, is just a martial arts movie set in outer space, with “the Force” standing in for *ch’i*. See *Star Hero*, page ???, for more ideas.

<3> **Western Hero**

Most Hollywood Westerns ignore the presence of large numbers of Chinese railroad workers living and working in all through the western United States in the late 1800s... but this shouldn’t stop a determined GM. You can merge the world of the Old West with the world of martial arts fairly easily. Player characters could encounter Chinese gold miners, laundry workers, or railroad workers, any of whom might know a little Kung Fu. Even such seemingly outlandish ideas as a wandering Shaolin priest aren’t out of the question, although you should keep such encounters to a minimum or else you’ll spoil the feel of most *Western Hero* campaigns.

As for the PCs, typically their access to martial arts is more limited. Some characters may

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know Dirty Infighting or Fisticuffs/Cinematic Brawling, with only a rare few knowing Boxing or Fencing. The French art of Savate was a well-developed style by this point, although the chances of the typical *Western Hero* character knowing the art are extremely slim.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **FAST FISTS AND FAST GUNS: THE OLD WEST MEETS THE FAR EAST**

There have been a number of movies where the world of the martial arts has been mixed with that of the Wild West. A short list includes:

Kung Fu: Warner Brothers Television, 1972. American TV series about a Shaolin priest hiding out in the Old West while on the run from the Imperial Chinese government.

Once Upon A Time In China And America: Film Workshop Ltd., 1997. Hong Kong film featuring Chinese folk hero Wong Fei Hong visiting turn-of-the-century California.

Red Sun: Warner Brothers, 1971. Charles Bronson and Toshiro Mifune as a bandit and a samurai forced to work together to find a stolen sword meant as a gift for the President of the United States.

Shanghai Noon: Touchstone Pictures, 2000. Hollywood production featuring Jackie Chan as an Imperial guardsman searching for a kidnapped Chinese princess in the “Wild West.”

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<Chapter> **CHAPTER TWO:**

TRAINING FOR PERFECTION: MARTIAL ARTS CHARACTER CREATION

Karate is a form of martial arts in which people who have had years and years of training can, using only their hands and feet, make some of the worst movies in the history of the world.

—Dave Barry

This chapter discusses the creation of martial artist characters for *Ninja Hero* campaigns. Obviously such characters must buy Martial Arts, and perhaps martial arts-oriented abilities and powers. But what often sets a good character apart from a mediocre one often has to do with how well-developed and flavorful his abilities are, and what he can do *besides* fight.

<1> CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

There are a number of “archetypes” commonly associated with the martial arts genre. Several of these are covered on pages 107-10 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*; here are some others that might appear in your *Ninja Hero* campaign.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> VIDEO GAME ARCHETYPES

If there is one thing video fighting games are good for, it's character concepts. Almost any video fighting game contains a few character designs any GM can add to his game. A few of the more common archetypes found in such games are as follows:

The Big Bruiser: Usually an American, the Big Bruiser is a walking mountain of muscle (and scars) who wins not by style or finesse, but simply by doing as much damage per hit as possible (to compensate, he's often the slowest person in the game). Many Big Bruisers are professional wrestlers out to prove their style is as “real” as anyone else's.

The Dedicated Warrior: The acknowledged master of his art, this character seeks to perfect his mind, body, and skill through fighting (and little else). The Dedicated Warrior is usually one of the core game characters.

Kung Fu Goddess In A Tight Dress: Ever since Capcom introduced the character of Chun Li, virtually every video fighting game in existence has tried to imitate her. The character is invariably young, beautiful, highly skilled at Kung Fu (or any one of a number of Chinese martial arts), and dressed in costume that is either skintight, revealing, or both.

The Lady Ninja: Similar to the Kung Fu Goddess, the Lady Ninja appears to be the complete antithesis of what a “ninja” should be. Lady Ninjas are young, attractive, and usually wears bright, scanty, and totally impractical costumes designed to show as much skin as possible. Stealth and secrecy don't even begin to enter into the Lady Ninja's consideration. Needless to say, she's a highly effective fighter.

The Megalomaniac Crime Boss: In the game this character is the final “boss” villain and is usually virtually unbeatable (not to mention capable of martial arts techniques no one else can even come close to). He's often responsible for almost every criminal enterprise in the game universe, and his actions tend to account for the origins of most of the “hero” characters. To make matters worse, the heroes also have to take into account the Megalomaniac Crime Boss's various lieutenants and countless minions when seeking to bring him down.

The Obligatory American: American characters in video games are almost always big and blonde. If the character is male, he's tall, muscular, and probably one of the core game characters. If the character is female, she's usually tall, large-breasted, and blonde-haired with blue eyes. Their martial arts skills range from traditional Asian styles to such modern styles as

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Commando Training and Professional Wrestling.

The Super Ninja: You can only identify this character as a ninja because the game tells you that's what he is. His martial skills can include maneuvers from such diverse styles as Capoeira, Karate, and Professional Wrestling. Often, Super Ninjas are capable of performing impossible feats, like vanishing into thin air, even in “realistic” fighting games.

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<3> **The Bounty Hunter**

“As long as there are thieves, I'll be able to make a living.”

—Takenoshita Yabu, *Ronin*

The Bounty Hunter pursues and tracks down criminals, turning them over to local authorities for cash rewards. Usually, the bounty hunter is male, and often grubby, disheveled, and unkempt, presenting an appearance not much better than the criminals he pursues. Naturally, the Bounty Hunter often has a heart of gold hidden under his gruff exterior.

Bounty Hunters are normally swordsmen — few fight barehanded — and some carry a wide variety of weapons, including firearms. His life of combating criminals has made the Bounty Hunter an experienced warrior, with a number of special techniques he uses to capture his quarry.

Bounty Hunters occur in all subgenres, but most often appear in period Cinematic, Realistic, and Wuxia campaigns.

<3> **The Clown**

“Come on! Let's go have some wine down at the market! It's not like Master needs the garden tended *now!*”

—Chung Gungwu, Errant Student

The Clown is a character best personified by the antics of Jackie Chan in many of his films. Although often an effective fighter, the Clown may be lazy, rambunctious, or stubborn, and thus hard to control. Usually the student of a strict master, the Clown's attitude and desire to shirk his non-martial duties gets him into all sorts of trouble, from which he may or may not escape unscathed. He typically practices a fairly normal fighting style, supplementing it with unconventional techniques like eye pokes, head butts, and nose-twists. If he uses weapons, he usually prefers non-weapon weapons such as chairs, benches, ladders, mops, brooms, and other common household objects.

Clownish characters are found in all martial arts subgenres.

<3> **The Evil Eunuch**

“The suffering of the poor are not my concern.”

—Tai-Sheng Zeng, Imperial Magistrate

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A staple of period Wuxia tales, the evil eunuch is a member of the royal court, and usually serves as a local magistrate or governor. The heroes can count on him to be greedy, cruel, and oppressive, and to back up his evil ways with an impressive array of kung fu and sword skills. The Evil Eunuch often has strong *ch'i* powers as well, not to mention a large army of lesser fighters and soldiers at his command.

<3> The Foreign Warrior

“Now you will see what a Nehkojin warrior is truly capable of!”

—*Kayli the Destroyer, Nehkojin mercenary*

The Foreign Warrior is a fighter from another part of the world with a fighting style totally different from anything anyone has seen or experienced. Usually, this style makes the warrior unbeatable for a while, until someone develops a style of his or her own to counter it. This sort of character is usually seen in Cinematic and Wuxia Campaigns.

<3> The [Old] Master

“If you have time to joke and play, you have time to practice.”

—Wong Fei Hong, Master of Hung Boxing

This character is a virtual staple of all forms of the martial arts genre. Normally, the Master is an elderly Asian male who has mastered a certain form of martial arts. In addition, the Master has extensive knowledge of the Martial World, including the history of his style and others, as well as famous martial artists and their accomplishments. A powerful warrior in his youth, the Master now trains others in the martial arts, because despite his great skill, he is usually too old to adventure and combat evil.

Old Masters normally have a school and students, although some may have gone into seclusion and live alone in a remote area. Most are unwilling to take new students, unless the new student can prove himself worthy of instruction.

<3> The Monster Hunter

“There are *obakemono* here... I can smell them.”

—Hari Yuki, Devil Hunter

Found in the Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime martial arts subgenres, these characters make their living hunting down ghosts, spirits, and other monsters that only come out at night. They normally carry some form of weapon — swords, spears, and bows are popular — and are usually practitioners of magical arts, or use specialized *ch'i* techniques allowing them to destroy the supernatural. Otherwise, the characters have no set guidelines, and can range from somber and serious middle-aged monks to young teenaged girls in tight-fitting dresses. The Monster Hunter exists in all martial arts settings, from ancient China to the modern day world, although most seem to be found in Tokyo.

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An alternative to the Monster Hunter is the Supernatural Monster. This character is some sort of creature, usually a ghost, who uses its unique supernatural powers when fighting. This character type occurs rarely in Wuxia, but is fairly typical for Anime and Video Game settings.

<3> **The Ninja**

“I am one with the shadows. The night is my home, and the darkness my loyal friend.”

—Tsukikage

The martial arts genre is rife with ninja (hence the name of this book). They show up everywhere, and are usually the enemy, especially in Wuxia stories, although some Video Game and Anime ninja are considered honorable and presented in a more heroic light.

All ninja are presumed to be highly skilled warriors; even a generic “faceless minion” ninja is more than a match for the average soldier, policeman, or martial artist. Ninja also back up their fighting skills with an incredible assortment of hidden weapons, trick devices, and secretive “ninja magic.” Add in the fact ninja like to strike from ambush and usually attack in large numbers, and one has a very deadly enemy. Much like gangsters in a Pulp crimebusting game, or Nazis in a *Golden Age Champions* setting, ninja make the perfect opponents, mainly because they can be indisputably evil and seem to come in endless quantities.

Ninja seen in period Realistic, Cinematic, and Wuxia settings all wear the ninja night-suit so very familiar to the Western reader, but Video Game and Anime ninja dress slightly differently. Males usually wear some variation of the standard ninja night suit, while female ninja are notorious for wearing scanty and revealing costumes (especially modern-day ninja). If a female Anime ninja does wear the night-suit, it’s be far more form-fitting version than a man’s.

<3> **The Professional Warrior/Mercenary/Killer**

“Peace? Who needs it? I prefer to be where the action is, since that’s where the money is.”

—Rutger Jager, Soldier of Fortune

This character has made a career of fighting and war. He sells his sword (or other weapons) to the highest bidder. He’s constantly on the move, always looking for a new place of conflict (and thus, employment).

A variation of this character type is the Killer, who serves as an assassin or thug, and gladly kills just about anyone for a fee. Characters such as this don’t make good PCs, but are excellent villains, and exist in all martial arts subgenres.

<3> **The Student Warrior**

“I have no idea where my path to perfection will take me, only that I must take it.”

—Toyama Hachiro, Shugysha

The Student Warrior is a martial arts student who has left his place of schooling and gone out into the world to train through fighting. Usually, he wishes to perfect his art through actual combat experience. Seen in many different campaign types, this character is very common in

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games set in period Japan, and historically was known as a *shugysha* (“student warrior”).

<3> **The Traveling Swordsman/Ronin**

“Life is too short to worry about what will happen tomorrow.”
—Jiu Xing, Traveling Swordsman

This character combines elements of the Professional Warrior and the Student Warrior. He’s a skilled fighter who wanders alone, with no set aims. He does not seek out adventure or combat, but it finds him anyway, forcing him to react appropriately.

Traveling Swordsmen are common to both China and Japan. In the former, they tend to be skilled fighters who only wish to find peace, while in the latter, they are normally *ronin* (masterless samurai). They can be found in all martial arts subgenres.

<3> **The Young Punk**

“Hah! You’re slow, old man!”
—Shiba Ringo, Youthful Prodigy

Found in any martial arts subgenres, this character is a hotheaded youth who happens to be highly skilled in the martial arts. Normally in his (he’s almost always male) mid-teens, the Young Punk’s combination of fighting skill, snide or rude mannerisms, and generally carefree behavior quickly attracts the attention of everyone else, both friend and foe. Naturally, this attention usually results in several fights. With time, however, the Young Punk usually matures and outgrows his wilder ways.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **FAMOUS HISTORICAL MARTIAL ARTISTS**

Martial artists of great skill and renown don’t exist just in the movies. Here are a few real-life examples:

Fong Sai Yuk: Born sometime in the early to mid-1800s, Fong Sai Yuk is a well-known folk hero of southern China. A native of the province of Canton, Sai Yuk was trained in the art of Kung Fu by his mother, supposedly a capable martial arts master. Reputed to be very strong, Sai Yuk allegedly killed a challenging master in a match at the age of 14. It is thought that Sai Yuk himself died while still in his early twenties.

Miyamoto Musashi: Musashi (full name: Shinmen Musashi no Kami Fujiwara no Genshin) is Japan’s most famous *kenshi*, or “sword saint.” Born in 1584 near the village of Miyamoto, he dedicated his life to learning the way of the sword. He killed his first man at the age of 13, and by the time he died in 1645, he had won over 60 duels to the death.

A wanderer most of his life, Musashi traveled all over Japan, constantly evolving and developing his own sword style. He was the first to develop the two-sword Nito style, and

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preferred a bokken (which, according to legend, he chopped out of an oar before a duel) to a steel katana.

In 1645, Musashi retired to a cave, where he wrote *The Book Of Five Rings*, his treatise on fighting, philosophy, and the use of the sword. The book has since gone on to achieve a great deal of fame as a manual of conduct among Japanese businessmen, and is almost as well known as Sun Tzu's *The Art Of War*.

San Te: A native of Canton, San Te was a Shaolin monk who lived during the Manchu Dynasty. Popular accounts credited him as the man who made martial arts available to the general public, and as the inventor of the three-section staff.

Born to a Cantonese tea merchant with the family name of Lau, San Te lived in an area heavily oppressed by the Manchu. To defend himself, he trained extensively in the martial arts and was so incredibly strong he could lift 400 *catties* (*i.e.*, 520 pounds), earning the nickname “Iron Arms.” After using his skills to kill a Manchu soldier, he fled to the Shaolin Temple. There he was fully trained in the art of Shaolin Kung Fu.

San Te later returned to Canton, where he lived in the Xichan Temple. He established a school there, and taught the general public Kung Fu. He was killed when the Manchu attacked the Xichan monastery.

Yim Wing Chun: The Wing Chun substyle of Kung Fu is aggressive and powerful, and gained a great deal of popularity when it was revealed as the style Bruce Lee originally studied. According to legend, it was developed by a Buddhist nun named Ng Mui, who created it after watching a snake fight a crane. She then taught this style to a woman named Yim Wing Chun (“beautiful springtime”), so Wing Chun could defend herself from an unwanted suitor. Wing Chun later passed her knowledge on to her husband, who spread the style to several students. [[END SIDEBAR]]

<1> CHARACTER CREATION

A year?! I wanna beat people up right now!

I got the pajamas. Ha... yo... wa... woo!

—Ed Gruberman, *Ti Kwan Leep*

The Frantics

Here are some suggestions for designing and building characters with abilities common to the martial arts genre.

<2> CHARACTERISTICS

Characters in the martial arts genre are usually not bound by the constraints of most mortal men and women. They are often larger-than-life figures, with physical skills far beyond the norm for everyone else. In some settings, the powers and abilities of martial artist characters are on par with Superheroic characters, and many can be considered superheroes in their own right.

<4> STRENGTH

In general, all martial artist characters, regardless of the setting, tend to be strong. Even Realistic and Cinematic martial artists have above average STR scores, usually due to their intensive training and general physical fitness. With Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime martial artists, their high STRs allow them to hurl lengths of timber, uproot trees, shatter stone walls, and leap great distances. However, some exhibitions of what seem to be great strength (such as breaking walls and jumping to the horizon) may depend on a character's mastery of his *ch'i*, not just pure physical prowess. In game terms, this may involve buying Characteristics as Powers, or other Powers such as Energy Blast or Telekinesis.

<4> DEXTERITY

Due to extensive training in the martial arts, most martial artist characters have excellent reaction times. Realistic and Cinematic characters are merely very agile, while Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime fighters can be blindingly fast with amazing hand-eye coordination and highly flexible bodies. Most martial artist characters have at least DEX 15, and more than a few have DEX 20 or higher.

<4> CONSTITUTION

The rigors of intensive training usually result in a character who is fit and hardy, capable of enduring the abuse inflicted in a typical martial arts battle. Naturally, the more cinematic the setting, the tougher the character; some Anime martial artists can withstand punishment that would kill almost anyone else. A CON of 13 or more is typical for all but the oldest and frailest martial artists.

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<4> **BODY**

BODY scores depend greatly on the nature of the campaign and the level of lethality desired by the GM. In general, even Realistic martial artists are fairly hard to kill (BODY 12-15, or more), and even powerful attacks don't seem to inflict serious injuries on many Anime and Wuxia characters (BODY 15-20, or more). Old Masters, on the other hand, are far more fragile and tend to die from any significant wound (BODY 5-8).

<4> **INTELLIGENCE**

Interestingly enough, a good Intelligence score isn't required for martial arts heroes (or villains). There are a number of martial artist characters from many sources that are decidedly slow on the uptake. However, since INT represents the ability to evaluate and react properly in a crisis more than pure brainpower, many martial artists have at least INT 13, if not higher.

<4> **EGO**

Due to the self-confidence gained by training in the martial arts, many martial artist characters have higher-than average EGOS. A strong self-will is the hallmark of many heroes of the martial arts genre, and PCs should be no exception. EGO 12 or higher is appropriate.

<4> **PRESENCE**

Along with self-confidence, many martial artists have a strong Presence (PRE 15 or higher). For example, a character skilled in Kung Fu may find people tend to respect him, and young men ask to study under him. He can quell an argument with but a single word, and discipline an unruly student with just a look. Naturally, in the martial arts genre, anything the heroes have, the villains have more of, so the bad guys in the genre almost always have high PRE scores.

<4> **COMELINESS**

You don't have to be handsome to be a martial arts hero, but it helps. Female heroes, on the other hand, are almost always beautiful (especially in Video Game settings). With villains or either gender, Comeliness tends to extremes; either the character is very attractive (COM 16+) or very ugly (COM 6 or lower).

<4> **PHYSICAL DEFENSE AND ENERGY DEFENSE**

These two Characteristics should be fairly high, as martial artist characters can usually take a great deal of punishment. (Of course, PD should exceed ED, given that most martial artists get punched much more often than they get burned or blasted.) But GMs should evaluate characters' PD and ED carefully; the campaign should maintain a fine balance between

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resistance to most injury and invulnerability. For many martial arts settings, slightly lower PD and ED and Limited forms of Damage Reduction (see below) work better than just high defense Characteristics.

<4> **SPEED**

If one thing sets martial artists apart from everyone else, it's their speed. Punching a foe many times in a fraction of a second, striking faster than one can see, hitting a large number of people all at once — these sorts of maneuvers are standard for the more cinematic aspects of the genre. Even though it's usually better to simulate these effects through applications of various Powers and Advantages, instead of outright SPD, it's rare to see a skilled martial artist with a SPD lower than 4, and more than a few have SPD 5 or higher (despite its high cost in Heroic games).

<4> **RECOVERY, ENDURANCE, AND STUN**

Since most of the martial artist's Primary Characteristics should be fairly high, these three figured Characteristics should follow on the same scale. In a Realistic or Cinematic game, STUN is the most important Characteristic, as it allows a character to stay on his feet and keep fighting, while in other subgenres a high END score allows the use of various special techniques and the like.

<2> **SKILLS**

I know Kung Fu...
—Neo, *The Matrix*

<3> **Martial Arts**

The single most important skill in a *Ninja Hero* campaign is — naturally enough — Martial Arts. Many adventures center on a character's learning of a particular form of martial art, or the discovery of a new technique or style. This style doesn't even have to be a real one; characters in Anime and Wuxia settings often know entirely mythical styles. This also holds true in Video Game campaigns, where each character often has his own distinct fighting style (such as Capoeira, Savate, Shotokan Karate, or even Professional Wrestling!).

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **KUNG FU**

In the martial arts genre (and in especially films made in Hong Kong), a character's skill in the martial arts represents both his fighting ability and his mental fortitude and willpower. Thus, one who is a master of the martial arts is often quite skilled in other areas as well. In Hong Kong cinema, this aptitude is often referred to as “powerful *kung fu*.” Since *kung fu* simply means “skill” or “hard work,” the reasoning behind this statement should be obvious. In any event, it's

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quite common to see one's skill in such things as calligraphy, cooking, medicine, or riding credited to one's skill in the martial arts.

The correct term for what most Westerners call *Kung Fu* is actually *wu shu*, which means “military arts,” and is the official term for the assorted forms of Chinese martial arts in The People's Republic of China. Of course, not everyone uses these two terms. Bruce Lee, for example, called his martial arts system “*gong fu*” when he first started instructing fellow Western college students.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> USING MARTIAL ARTS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The type of *Ninja Hero* campaign the GM wants to run determines the martial arts styles available to PCs. Realistic and Cinematic campaigns only feature styles known to exist in the “real world” (*i.e.*, those described on pages 15-63 of UMA). Realistic settings also limit which characters can learn which styles. For example, unless you jump through a lot of unrealistic background hoops, it's impossible for a Wild West cowboy to know about, much less learn, Karate, which doesn't reach America until the mid-twentieth century. In the same vein, while a Pulp-era resident of Hong Kong *could* know Karate, he cannot practice Jeet Kune Do (Bruce Lee hasn't even been born yet, much less invented JKD).

Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns are far more free form. Here, characters are encouraged to develop their own martial arts styles, mixing and matching maneuvers from the lists given in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* until they create a style suitable to their conceptions. If this method seems too unstructured to the GM, he should at least allow characters to buy any and all martial arts styles regardless of national origin. For example, he shouldn't restrict a Chinese swordsman character to some form of Kung Fu; instead, he should let him buy Kenjutsu (or even Fencing), and call it “Kung Fu.” Similarly, a character playing a barehanded martial artist could purchase Kung Fu, Karate, Tae Kwon Do, or even Pentjak-Silat, calling the end result his personal form of Kung Fu (or Karate, or Tae Kwon Do, and so on).

This method of buying martial arts expands the maneuvers available to players during character creation and during combat. Many martial arts styles have exactly one maneuver listed for a punch or kick technique, which works well for most games, but may be too simplified for some *Ninja Hero* campaigns. Character in these sorts of campaigns need access to a wider variety of maneuvers, to better illustrate the differences between their respective martial arts styles.

<4> CUSTOMIZING MARTIAL ARTS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

When setting up a *Ninja Hero* campaign, the GM should pay special attention to the names of the martial arts styles practiced by the PCs and NPCs. Characters should not simply know Kung Fu but a specific style of Kung Fu — such as Eight Drunken Fairies Kung Fu or Wing Chun Kung Fu. The specific style of martial arts used by a character is often very important to the plot of many martial arts adventures. Real-world martial artists have fought numerous duels in an effort to prove whose martial arts style (or substyle) is superior, and a

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martial arts campaign should feature the same sorts of rivalries.

In a Video Game campaign, questions about style become even more important. Often, the villain characters in the campaign all practice a certain “evil” style, noted for its brutality and lethality. In one highly popular fighting game, many of the top fighters practice Shotokan Karate. One character even uses a “dark” form of Shotokan, allowing the character to utilize deadly and destructive techniques. This situation allows the Gamemaster to easily create Hunteds for his PCs, as well as allies and rivals, and should be exploited to its fullest extent.

Along with customizing the name of each character’s particular martial arts style, GMs and players may want to name each specific martial arts maneuver a character knows. Real-world martial maneuvers often have descriptive or poetic names, which may — or may not — have any relation to the maneuver being performed. Some sample names (taken from real world martial arts styles) include: Both Hands Seize the Murderer; Carry Tiger To The Mountain; Dragon Whips His Tail; Searching For The Opponent’s Opening; and Snake Creeps Down. See the fictional martial arts styles on pages 64-74 of UMA for more examples.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MANEUVER NAMES**

As mentioned in the main text, the name of a martial arts technique may not have anything do with the technique itself. One reason for this was to foil spies. A name like “The Mountain’s Hammering Fist” gives you a good idea about what the technique does. On the other hand, “The Lotus Blossom Greets The Sun” could be just about anything. Alternately, a technique such as “Searching For The Opponent’s Opening” may not refer to a specific martial maneuver (like an Offensive Strike), but to a sequence of maneuvers.

Here are some suggested Martial Maneuvers for the example names given in the text:\

Both Hands Seize the Murderer: Martial Grab

Carry Tiger To The Mountain: Defensive Throw

Dragon Whips His Tail: Offensive Strike

Searching For The Opponent’s Opening: Defensive Strike

Snake Creeps Down: Martial Grab (or, a Martial Dodge followed by a Martial Grab)

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> **Other Relevant Skills**

Martial Arts isn’t the only Skill of use to *Ninja Hero* characters — like other Heroic characters, they tend to use Skills a lot. Here are a few notes on special applications of them in martial arts campaigns; you should also consult pages 112-16 of UMA.

<4> **BREAKFALL**

Page 113 of UMA has some general information on martial arts and Breakfall. Here are a few other points worth noting.

A character who’s on the ground Prone for any reason — even just lying down to relax

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— can use Breakfall to get to his feet as a Zero-Phase Action. Breakfall does not just apply to Knockback and Throws.

A character who suffers only Knockdown or 1” of Knockback suffers no penalty to his Breakfall roll to keep his feet, since the penalty is -1 per 2” of Knockback.

A single Breakfall roll lets a character either halve the damage from a Throw *or* retain his footing; he can’t do both with one roll.

<4> BUREAUCRATICS

Most martial arts action heroes have no use for bureaucrats, and with good reason: they prefer to resolve problems the direct way, with their fists. In some campaigns, however, a little knowledge of how to handle bureaucracy can be a great help. For example, in a campaign taking place in period China, Bureaucratics is almost a requirement, especially if the characters have to interact with the Imperial government in any manner. The same is true for games set in feudal Japan. On the other hand, modern day characters, such as police officers in Cinematic campaigns, tend to ignore local laws and associated bureaucratic entanglements with impunity.

Complementary Skills for Bureaucratics include Bribery (the Chinese government was notoriously corrupt at times) and High Society (a must for games set in Japan, where knowing who to talk to and how to talk to them is just as important as knowing what to say).

<4> GAMBLING

Martial artists looking for a greater understanding of strategy and tactics usually learn any one of several tabletop and board games. Skill with any one of these games usually means the character is a man of some intelligence and learning, and often helps him make a good impression on a host. The games (all Board Games) are:

Go-Moku (also known as *Renju*), a game where the objective is to place five colored stones in a row

Hasami Shogi, similar to *Go-Moku*, with the same victory conditions

Mahjongg (or *Ma-Jong*), a tile game roughly 3,000 years old, similar to dominos and with a complex scoring system; popular among gamblers

Siang K’i, or Chinese chess, similar to European chess, but with a game board divided by a river and featuring units such as cannon and chariots

Wei-Ch’i (“way chee”), or *Go*

Of these games, *Wei-Ch’i* is the most important. Better known by its Japanese name, *Go*, it’s an abstract game of territorial conquest which and was a common pastime for samurai. In Japan a master of *Go* (in *HERO* terms, “mastery” means at least Gambling (Wei-Ch’i) 14-) can find plenty of employment as an instructor (even today), and it’s possible to live as a professional *Go* player.

<4> POWER

In some martial arts campaigns, characters can buy a Power Skill, *Martial Arts Tricks*, for

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use as a Required Skill Roll with various special abilities. Video Game and Anime characters may also buy *Power: Ch'i Powers* for use with their specific power sets.

Martial arts action heroes seem capable of almost anything, and often exhibit powers they only use once or twice (usually to resolve a key plot element) and then ignore. Unless the GM wants them to buy all possible powers with Character Points (or perhaps buy a VPP), using the *Power Skill* to simulate this works well.

<4> **PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

The following PSs are common in the martial arts genre.

<5> **Professional Skill: Calligraphy**

In many Asian cultures, a warrior's calligraphic skill mirrors his martial arts mastery. Strong, flowing lines and clearly-written characters are taken as evidence of a person's skill, and the power of his kung fu. A well-written document or letter makes for a positive first impression, and grants the character greater respect among the upper and more cultured classes.

<5> **Professional Skill: *Ch'i*-Centering**

The PS *Ch'i-Centering* allows a character to summon and "center" his *ch'i* through deep breathing exercises and meditative techniques. It lets him calm his mind, and can serve as a Complementary Skill for many other Skills (such as Acrobatics, Contortionist, or KS: Chinese Healing) or abilities with the *Requires A Skill Roll* Limitation.

<5> **Professional Skill: Cooking**

As with calligraphy, cooking skill provides proof of one's kung fu. The ability to make well-balanced, appetizing meals is greatly prized in China, while Japan places emphasis on meals that not only taste good, but look good when arranged on the plate.

<5> **Professional Skill: Lion Dancing**

Adventures occurring in China or in Chinatowns sometimes feature Lion Dances. Often seen in conjunction with various festivals, the dances are best known as a part of the celebration of Chinese New Year. The dancers manipulate a large costume-like object made to resemble a Chinese lion. The lion's head consists of a light wooden frame covered in cloth, while a simpler (but heavily decorated) cloth drape forms the body. The head itself usually has movable eyelids and a mouth that can open and close. Underneath the lion is a crew of two dancers. One man operates the head, while the other forms the rest of the body. Larger lions (requiring larger crews) are possible; they look vaguely like a lion-headed snake, and remind the viewer more of a Chinese dragon than a lion.

Each person operating the lion must have at least an 8- in PS: Lion Dancing; Acrobatics and Contortionist act as Complementary Skills. The dance itself consists of jerky motions meant

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to resemble to movements of a lion or a snake, as well as various leaps, rolls, and jumps.

<5> **Professional Skill: Sensei/Sifu**

Sensei is the Japanese term for teacher; *sifu* means the same thing in China. This skill is a must for anyone who wants to teach others the martial arts and do it well. Those who wish to offer instruction in a specific martial art must have a Knowledge Skill for that art of at least 11-.

<4> **TEAMWORK**

This skill is common among ninja, especially Cinematic ninja, who always seem to attack in well-coordinated groups. Gamemasters may want to consider forbidding PCs to purchase Teamwork at the start of the campaign, but allow them to acquire it after play begins (typically after the disorganized group has suffered defeat at the hands of a superior foe). This is a common genre event, in which the heroes learn to work as a fighting team to defeat a much more powerful opponent.

<2> **PERQUISITES**

All of the Perks are appropriate for *Ninja Hero* campaigns, unless they don't belong in the era and/or setting.

<4> **FOLLOWERS**

Many martial artists have Followers of some sort. Often they are students or apprentices, and their skill varies greatly depending on the tone of the film and the needs of the plot. Characters running Kung Fu schools could take the entire school as a band of Followers, although it fits the genre better to buy a core group of students as Followers, and the rest of the school as a Group DNPC.

Villains can have Followers as well. Many evil eunuchs have entire armies of loyal soldiers at their beck and call. The same holds true for those ninja masters who can call upon the resources of an entire clan.

<4> **FRINGE BENEFITS**

Gamemasters should adapt the Fringe Benefit list to reflect elements from their particular campaign. For example, in a samurai game, all samurai characters should purchase the Fringe Benefit *Knight* (renaming it *Samurai*) or *Member Of The Lower Nobility*. Members of the Chinese court should buy *Member Of The High Nobility*, while a local governor should buy *Low Justice*. In certain eras, only specific people were allowed to carry weapons; you can simulate this with the *Weapon Permit* Fringe Benefit.

See also the Fringe Benefits listed on page 117 of UMA.

<5> **Buddhist Monk (1 Point)**

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Commonly found in martial arts settings, Buddhist monks are usually easy to identify by their shaved heads and saffron-colored robes. Although normally monks are peaceful, in most Wuxia campaigns many (if not all) monks know some sort of self-defense skills. This Fringe Benefit signifies the fact that in areas where people live, the character can always locate someone who'll offer him shelter and a bit of food. Monk characters must also buy the *Right To Marry* Fringe Benefit (UMA page 117).

<2> TALENTS

Since they typically represent “weird abilities” characters possess, most Talents are appropriate for *Ninja Hero* campaigns. Some (such as Speed Reading and Universal Translator) are probably too technical or scientific for the average martial arts game, but others (like Double-Jointed, Resistance, and Lightning Reflexes) occur frequently.

<4> COMBAT LUCK

Combat Luck is a perfect way to represent martial artist characters' ability to avoid taking any major damage from arrows, bladed weapons, and even guns. In martial arts stories (especially ones featuring higher-powered characters), the special effect for the Talent is that the character gets hit by the attack, but the resulting damage affects only his clothing or hair, or causes no more than a thin cut to his skin (complete with a dramatic-looking trickle of blood).

<2> POWERS

This knife cuts this bottle in half...

—Wang Chi, *Big Trouble In Little China*

Characters in *Ninja Hero* campaigns can use Powers to construct all sorts of interesting abilities. The most spectacular powers appear only in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns, but some (such as Missile Deflection) are even appropriate for Realistic and Cinematic characters.

<4> ABSORPTION

Villains in Video Game and Anime campaigns can sometimes absorb incoming attacks and use them to increase their power or health. In general, such Absorption powers work against physical attacks and feed into either the character's STR or END (or Endurance Reserve). The Limitation *Only Up To Starting Values* (-1/2) typically applies to Absorption powers feeding Endurance Reserves. The Endurance Reserve fed by such a power normally has no REC; it only gains END from the Absorption itself.

<5> Rage Meter

The *rage meter* is a power often seen in Video Game campaigns. The more punishment

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the character endures, the quicker a pool of Endurance fills, and the character uses that END to power his special techniques. The character receives no defenses from this type of Absorption. See *Endurance Reserve*, page ???, for more information.

As an option, GMs may want to limit how much Endurance Absorption can actually feed into an Endurance Reserve at one time. This prolongs the amount of time the character must wait until he can use his special techniques, heightening the drama of combat.

Rage Meter: Absorption 6d6 (physical, to Endurance Reserve) (30 Active Points); Only Up To Starting Values (-1/2), Only Works Against Hand-to-Hand Combat Attacks (-1/4).
Total cost: 17 points.

<4> **AID**

Martial arts characters frequently build abilities with Aid; you can apply it in almost limitless ways to simulate various special techniques. Some of the more common forms of Aid include meditative or “*ch'i*-centering” techniques, magic potions, rage meters, the manipulation of pressure points, acupuncture, and ninja finger-lacing techniques. (See UMA, page 119, for some other ideas.) These Aid powers almost always affect physical Characteristics (STR, DEX, and END in particular). A few, especially those seen in Video Game campaigns, fuel Endurance Reserves to provide END for specific powers (such as a character’s “desperation move”).

When building an Aid power, you should apply the Limitation *Self Only* (-1/2) to Aids defined as gathering one’s *ch'i*, getting angry, or meditating. An Aid defined as the manipulation of pressure points may require the Limitation *Others Only* (-1/2), as it seems unlikely someone could reach all the necessary nerve centers on himself.

Possible Advantages for Aid include: *Invisible Power Effects* (usually to Sight Group), simulating the fact that many martial arts Aid powers don’t have any visible effect on the user; and *Trigger*, for Aids that activate when the character meets a certain set of circumstances (such as getting angry or wounded).

Possible Limitations for Aid include: *Activation Roll*, for Aid powers which may or may not work every time the character uses them (such as the manipulation of pressure points); *Concentration*, a must for meditative and *ch'i*-centering powers; *Extra Time*, also a good way to simulate meditative techniques and some potions; *Focus*, for potion bottles, magic seeds, and acupuncture needles; *Gestures* (typically defined as “character must drink” or “character must touch specific pressure points”); *Incantations*, usually a meditative chant; *Requires A Skill Roll*, (such as KS: Chinese Medicine) to simulate the manipulation of pressure points; *Side Effects*, in case the use of the Aid makes the character foolhardy, drunk, or Enraged; and *Visible*, as some Aids, especially those in Video Game and Anime settings, produce perceptible auras and effects.

<5> **Drunken Boxing**

With this Aid, once the character drinks a sufficient quantity of wine or other alcohol, he develops superhuman strength as well as an overall resistance to harm and injury. Characters do not have to buy Life Support: Immunity To Alcohol to use this power, though it’s a good idea.

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Drunken Boxing: Aid STR, CON, PD, STUN 2d6, Can Add Maximum Of 20 Points, Delayed Return Rate (5 points per minute; +1/4), Variable Effect (+1) (54 Active Points); OIF (alcohol of opportunity; -1/2), Gestures (must drink; -1/4), Self Only (-1/2). Total cost: 24 points.

<5> Flow Restoration

By striking specific pressure points and nerve centers on someone else's body, the character restores that person's flow of *ch'i*. The recipient feels revitalized by the new energy. Flow Restoration Aids are common in Wuxia campaigns.

Flow Restoration: Aid END or STUN 6d6, Variable Effect (+1/4) (75 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Gestures (must touch pressure points; -1/4), Only Up To Starting Values (-1/2), Others Only (-1/2), Target Must Have Reachable Pressure Points (-1/2). Total cost: 23 points.

<5> Power-Up

A staple of many Video Game campaigns, this power allows the character to fill up a pool of Endurance which fuels some form of "desperation move" or "ultimate technique."

Power-Up: Aid Endurance Reserve END 3d6 (30 Active Points); Only Up To Starting Values (-1/2), Self Only (-1/2). Total cost: 15 points.

<5> Supreme Warrior Aura

This form of Aid exists mainly in Anime campaigns. By tapping into his inner *ch'i*, the character "powers up," dramatically increasing his STR, DEX, END, and overall fighting ability. As a side effect, the character displays a visible output of excess *ch'i* energy (either as a flaming aura, or a blue or red glow), as well as manifesting an easily detectable *ch'i* "signature" detectable by anyone with Detect *Ch'i* or Mental Awareness.

Supreme Warrior Aura: Aid STR, DEX, CON, PD, ED, SPD, END, STUN, and Ch'i Powers 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +1/2), Variable Effect (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (160 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Visible (-1/4). Total cost: 91 points.

<4> ARMOR

In most cases, *Ninja Hero* characters should only use armor to create actual physical, worn armor (such as described on pages 186-87 of UMA). There are a few exceptions (such as Combat Luck-like abilities), but typically martial artists use Damage Reduction or Damage Resistance to represent their durability.

<4> CLINGING

In martial arts campaigns, characters often buy Clinging to simulate superior climbing skill. Characters of all sorts, but especially ninja, can scale surfaces no one could normally climb, especially without proper equipment. Cinematic and Anime ninja are especially famous for scurrying up otherwise smooth walls without breaking stride, and actor Jackie Chan often climbs walls and other obstacles by virtually bouncing from object to object. See UMA, page 121, for some examples and appropriate Limitations.

The second form of Clinging seen in the martial arts genre is true wall-walking. Characters can use some “special technique” to literally walk up a wall. In extreme cases the character can even stand on the ceiling. This ability is a hallmark of many Wuxia characters.

You can also use Clinging to represent superior balance, allowing for such stunts as fighting while standing on top of a spear stuck in a wall. However, this ability works better as a form of Flight (see page ???).

One truly bizarre form of Clinging is the “cotton belly” technique, which allows a practitioner to trap an opponent’s fist in his stomach. You can build this as a Clinging Damage Shield with the character’s normal STR.

<4> DAMAGE REDUCTION

Characters in the martial arts genre absorb enormous amounts of punishment with little or no ill effect. Kicks, punches, and *ch’i* blasts may stagger the character, but rarely does a single attack put a major character down permanently. Damage Reduction provides an excellent way to represent this ability; it’s almost a required power for Wuxia and Anime characters. If the GM desires, characters may purchase Limited forms of Damage Reduction, such as Damage Reduction that only works against hand-to-hand attacks, *ch’i* energy, or even a specific martial arts style (representing a character who knows how to defend against a certain style very well).

See UMA, page 122, for further information, ideas, and appropriate Limitations.

Tough In A Fight: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25% (15 Active Points); Nonpersistent (-1/4), HTH Combat Attacks Only (-1/4), Stun Only (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points.

<4> DAMAGE RESISTANCE

The ability to resist harm from edged weapons is fairly common in the martial arts genre. Chinese warriors call this ability the Iron Skin, Iron Shirt, or Iron Ox technique. A Video Game character might have it because he’s *literally* made of iron, and Anime characters often possess this power to such extent that they’re effectively bulletproof. Normally characters should only buy Damage Resistance for their PD, but some Video Game and Anime campaigns may also allow characters to buy it for ED.

<5> Iron Shirt Technique

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With this ability, the character can resist the cutting effects of edged weapons — even his skin remains unbroken. But he can still be hurt, and any sufficiently powerful blow still causes him STUN and BODY damage.

Traditionally, the Iron Shirt technique is not 100% effective. Although the character maintains sufficient control of his *ch'i* to make himself virtually invulnerable to edged weapons, he still has a weak spot. This spot is called a “gate,” and is located somewhere in the body. This open gate is defined as a single Hit Location. In cases where the location is a pair (such as the hands) the player must define which of the pair it is (*i.e.*, the right or the left hand). See UMA, page 122, for more information on gates; GMs may, of course, ignore the concept of gates in the interest of simplicity.

In some cases, Iron Shirt doesn't defend against all forms of attack, either. For example, the power presented below does not work versus firearms; GMs running more outlandish martial arts games can remove this Limitation if they wish.

This can be a very effective power for a small number of points. In lower-powered settings the GM may want to limit this ability to only one or two characters.

Iron Shirt Technique: Damage Resistance (8 PD/0 ED) (4 Active Points); Does Not Work Versus Firearms (-1/2), Location 4 [Ears] Left Undefended (-1/4). Total cost: 2 points.

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<box> **DARKNESS**

Darkness can represent several martial arts powers, including ninja smoke bombs, or the ability to create swirling clouds of dust and sand by channeling *ch'i* into the ground or spinning about rapidly during a fight.

Ninja Smoke Bomb: This is a small sphere. When thrown against the ground, it explodes to produce a thick cloud of dense smoke. It allows the ninja to hide for a moment, usually so he can escape.

Darkness to Sight Group 1” radius (10 Active Points); 9 Continuing Charges lasting an Extra Phase each (cleared away by high winds, rain, and the like; -0), IAF (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points

Swirling Dust Cloud: A character in an appropriate location can kick up enough dust and sand to blind his foes, though he can see just fine because he's used to the effect.

Darkness to Sight Group 3” radius, Personal Immunity (+1/4) (37 Active Points); No Range (-1/2), Only Works In Sandy/Dusty Areas (-1/2), Does Not Work In High Winds Or Rain (-1/4). Total cost: 16 points.

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<4> **DENSITY INCREASE**

One of the more unusual powers found in Wuxia and Anime martial arts campaigns is the

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“Thousand Pound Stance” (also called the Thousand Pound Stumble), a *ch'i*-channeling technique that roots a character to the ground so he can better fend off attackers. While using this power, the character cannot move from where he stands, or use his legs to kick, but can move his arms or punch.

Thousand Pound Stance: Density Increase (800 kg mass, +15 STR, +3 PD/ED, -3” KB) (15 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2), User Must Remain Rooted To The Ground (-1). Total cost: 5 points.

<4> **DISPEL**

In martial arts stories, every special technique seems to have a counter-technique that neutralizes it (though the characters may have to go on many adventures to learn the counter-technique they need to defeat a powerful enemy). Counter-techniques are particularly common in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns, where characters routinely render their opponents’ special moves and attacks harmless by using special techniques of their own. You can best model this ability with Dispel, tailored to counter either one specific technique or a whole range of martial arts “special maneuvers.”

<5> **Armor Shredding Strike**

This rather unusual maneuver is a common trick in certain Hong Kong films: a swordsman gets his blade spinning, hits his target, and bits of armor fly everywhere!

Armor Shredding Strike: Dispel PD Armor 4d6, Cumulative (+1/2), Increased Cumulative Points (72 points; +1/2) (24 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), OIF (bladed weapon of opportunity; -1/2), No Range (-1/2). Total cost: 10 points.

<5> **The Power Of Positive *Ch'i***

This power is an example of an all-encompassing Dispel. With it, a character can attempt to Dispel any “*ch'i* power” (basically any power defined as resulting from the control or release of a character’s internal *ch'i* energy). As a No Range power, a character with it can only use it to defend himself, or to remove a *ch'i* power already affecting another character (such as a pressure point Entangle) by touching the victim.

Additional possible limitation for this power include: *Activation Roll*, *Concentration*, *Extra Time*, *Gestures*, *Incantations*, and *Requires A Skill Roll*. The skill required varies depending on the character concept, suggestions include: KS: Chinese Acupuncture, KS: Chinese Medicine, KS: Meditation, and PS: *Ch'i* Centering.

The Power Of Positive Ch'i: Dispel *Ch'i* Powers 16d6, any *Ch'i* power one at a time (+1/4) (60 Active Points); No Range (-1/2). Total cost: 40 points

<4> **DRAIN, SUPPRESS, AND TRANSFER**

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Drain is a common genre effect. Usually defined as a nerve or pressure point strike, Drain can affect a multitude of characteristics, including STR, DEX, and SPD. More lethal forms of Drain (such as the infamous Dim Mak “death touch” described on pages 123-24 of UMA) can affect BODY or PD. Characters can also Drain some Powers, such as Running.

In general, martial arts Drains should have the Limitation of *Only Versus Humans/Target Must Have Reachable “Pressure Points”* (-1/2). This basically limits the power to humans or humanoids having bodies closely resembling those of humans. Another possible Limitation for any pressure point Drain is *Can Be Cured By Chinese Healing* (-1/4), which allows any character with the KS: *Chinese Healing* Skill to reverse (or totally eliminate) the effects of the Drain. Note this may become a Skill Versus Skill Contest if the original Drain required a Skill Roll of its own (see Dispel for suggested skills).

If appropriate for a particular power, characters may also buy Suppress with the same Limitations. In more fantastic settings, Transfer may also be allowed; it doesn’t even require hitting “pressure points” the way Drain and Suppress do.

<4> **DUPLICATION**

As strange as it may seem, one can find Duplication examples in the martial arts genre. Naturally, these examples are normally limited to Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns.

A GM could create a villain who’s a Siamese twin — two people joined at the back, or at the side in such a way that they can use many limbs. One way to represent this sort of ability is as a Limited form of Duplication.

Several martial arts video games feature a character who can produce a second identical duplicate for a short period of time — either a separate individual, or himself moving so quickly he can be in two places at once. (The latter effect requires the *Feedback* Limitation.) You can build this form of Duplication with the *Continuous Charges* Limitation, or by having the Duplication power cost Endurance from a specific Endurance Reserve.

Other forms of Duplication appropriate to “weird” martial arts settings include characters who can create versions of themselves at will, and monstrously large warriors who split into multiple normal-size warriors.

<4> **ENDURANCE RESERVE**

Endurance Reserves are often associated with Video Game campaigns, where they fuel rage meters, special techniques, and other powerful, limited-use abilities. Typically these Reserves have no REC (they’re “refueled” by Absorption or Aid), and start each game at 0 END. Alternately, the Reserve may have REC with the Limitation that it only works during combat (in other words, as the character fights over multiple Turns, he gathers more and more energy for his final, battle-ending blow).

Typically, if a character does not use a “special technique Endurance Reserve,” the END fades away. Characters should apply the Limitation *Reserve Dissipates At 1 END Per Turn When Not In Combat* (-1/2).

<4> **ENERGY BLAST**

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Energy Blasts exist in the martial arts genre in many different forms.

<5> **Catch This!**

Cinematic and Wuxia characters commonly hurl all sorts of objects at each other, including stones, small steel balls, clubs, and clay pots. They can also kick, punch, or bat ordinary household objects (plates, bowls, wine jugs, small buckets, even wooden support posts or bags of rice and flour) at a target, or flip paving stones into the air with their feet and then kick them at a foe. The “missile” hits with great force, although in most cases the object itself isn’t harmed by the impact. All of these are physical Energy Blasts.

When characters use this power, GMs may want to limit the damage from a hurled object to the total DEF and BODY of the object. However, this may make attacks do so little damage they make poor weapons; few items of dishware have a total DEF and BODY of more than three.

If a character attempts to use all or part of a heavy object (a length of support pole or stone pillar, for example) as his “missile,” the GM should compare the character’s Damage Classes in *Catch This!* to the total DEF and BODY of the object the character wants to hurl. If the dice of damage equal or exceed the DEF+BODY, the character can use the object. For example, a character buys *Catch This!* as an EB 11d6. During a fight he decides to send a length of support timber flying through the air at his enemy. Assuming the support pole is, at best, roughly equivalent to a telephone pole (DEF 5, BODY 5), he can use it as his missile, since 11 (his DCs) is equal to or greater to 10.

If the character only uses a piece of an object for *Catch This!*, the GM determines the size of the piece. The character cannot use this aspect of the power to deliberately cause damage to objects and buildings as a sort of “free attack,” but the GM should, if appropriate, take the consequences of the character’s action into account. For example, using one of a building’s support pole as a weapon may cause the building to collapse; if the character uses a stone lion’s head as a missile, the lion’s irate owner may demand compensation.

Possible Advantages for this power include: *Area Of Effect*, defined as hurling a number of objects at once over a wide area, or simply hurling one large one; *Autofire*, defined as kicking several objects in rapid succession; and *Indirect*, for bouncing kicked objects off of walls and into the back of a target. Characters may simply apply *Variable Advantage* for use with this power.

The *Catch This!* power must apply the Limitation *OIF* (appropriate objects of opportunity; -1/2), since a character can only use this power if there is something to kick or throw. Other suggested Limitations include: *No Knockback* (for campaigns that use the Knockback rules), *Range Based On STR*, *Reduced By Range*, and *Requires A Skill Roll* (typically a DEX Roll or Power: Martial Arts Tricks roll).

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<box> **MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: ENERGY BLAST**

Catch This!: Energy Blast 11d6 (55 Active Points); OIF (any appropriate object of opportunity; -1/2), Requires A Martial Arts Tricks Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 27 points.

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Fire Powder Packets: RKA 1d6 (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-3/4), Limited Range (5"; -1/4). Total cost: 5 points.

Fiery Liquor Breath: RKA 1d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +1/2) (22 Active Points); OIF (liquor of opportunity and an appropriate source of flame; -1/2), Limited Range (2"; -1/4). Total cost: 13 points.

Ch'i Fireball: Energy Blast 12d6 (60 Active Points); Gestures (-1/2), Reduced By Range (-1/4). Total cost: 34 points.

Pao-Yeh-Pao-Lo-Mi Fist: Energy Blast 6d6, Autofire (5 shots; +1/2) (45 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4). Total cost: 22 points.

Wave Motion Blast: Energy Blast 20d6 (100 Active Points); Extra Time (Extra Segment; -3/4), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2), Gestures (-1/4), Cannot Be Bounced (-1/4). Total cost: 36 points.

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<5> Wuxia Blasts

Wuxia campaign characters sometimes hurl packets of fire powder, spit fire (usually after drinking a sufficiently flammable substance, such as liquor), breathe out great gusts of wind, or even hurl invisible blasts of *ch'i*. Many of these EBs (or RKAs) have the *No Range* or *Limited Range* Limitation, since they don't work over great distances like typical Energy Blasts.

<5> *Ch'i* Fireball

This power lets a character project a blazing ball of *ch'i* energy. It's an almost universal power for Video Game subgenre characters, and also exists in Anime campaigns. Although the most common form of this attack is a ball of energy, characters can also fire straight power blasts, summon pillars of fire, breathe forth gouts of flame, or even go so far as to immolate themselves.

Common Advantages for this sort of power include Area Of Effect (One Hex *or* Radius), Armor Piercing, Autofire, Continuous, Damage Shield, Double Knockback, Indirect, No Range Penalty, Penetrating, and Variable Advantage.

Suggested Limitations include: *Activation Roll*, for those attacks which don't always go off as planned; *Beam*, for attacks taking the form of narrow laser-like beams; *Concentration*, used in conjunction with *Extra Time* to simulate powerful "ultimate techniques" requiring some time to generate; *Extra Time* which can be used with *Concentration* as stated or by itself to simulate a power requiring a short time to prepare (the more powerful an attack is, the longer it typically takes to generate); *Gestures*, usually a stylized series of hand motions used to "cast" the power; *Incantations*; *No Knockback*; *Reduced by Range*, for simulating flame blasts or attacks that slowly dissipate the further they go; *Requires A Skill Roll*; and *Side Effects*, to simulate

attacks which are just as dangerous to the wielder as to his opponents.

<5> **Pao-Yeh-Pao-Lo-Mi Fist**

This rather unusual attack mixes Taoist sorcery and *ch'i* mastery. The character inscribes a mystical symbol on his palm (usually using his own blood), pronounces the incantation (“pao-yeh-pao-lo-mi”), and unleashes a barrage of energy bolts. Although fairly bizarre, it’s just the sort of power characters can expect in more supernaturally-influenced Wuxia and Anime campaigns.

<5> **Wave Motion Blast**

This type of Energy Blast is common to Video Game and Anime campaigns. It represents the typical “ultimate attack” common to many such characters. Although very powerful, it takes a while to generate, and drains a great deal of the character’s energy.

<4> **ENTANGLE**

From nets to paralyzing pressure-point strikes, Entangles come in all forms in the martial arts genre. Some of the more outlandish Hong Kong films (and a few video games) even feature characters using their extraordinary long hair to entangle a foe.

<5> **Iron Finger Technique**

This is the classic “pressure point” Entangle seen in countless martial arts movies. The attacker makes a series of quick jabs at his target, striking specific nerve bundles and thus rendering the victim unable to move. It’s a perfect power for characters who don’t want to harm their foes and for restraining troublesome individuals. The Advantage *Invisible To Sight Group* (+1/4, since the special effects are invisible, but the source of the attack is not) applies.

Iron Finger: Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2), Invisible To Sight Group (+1/4) (70 Active Points); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4), No Range (-1/2), Susceptible (can be escaped automatically with a successful KS: Chinese Healing roll by another character who touches victim; -1/4), Target Must Have Reachable Pressure Points (-1/2). Total cost: 28 points.

<5> **Deactivation Strike**

This power is similar to the Iron Finger Technique, but has a few visual differences. It’s performed by making a simple punching motion at the target — who collapses, helpless, until he can either overcome the effects of the strike, or someone else “reactivates” him with a quick application of Chinese Healing techniques.

Deactivation Strike: Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2),

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Invisible To Sight Group (+1/4) (70 Active Points); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4), Susceptible (can be escaped automatically with a successful KS: Chinese Healing roll by another character who touches victim; -1/4). Total cost: 47 points.

<5> Entangling Sleeves

The use of sleeves (or hair) to bind and restrain a foe is a common technique in the more fantastic types of martial arts campaigns. In these settings, characters can extend their sleeves great distances, allowing them to grapple with a target, pick up distant objects, and to strike at range.

15 *Flexible Sleeves*: Elemental Control, 30-point powers; all OAF (-1)

6 1) *Entangling Sleeves*: Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF; OAF (-1), Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4), Vulnerable (Fire/Heat; -1), Limited Range (6"; -1/4), Lockout (cannot use any other EC slot as long as a victim remains Entangled; -1/2) 4

6 2) *Gripping Sleeves*: Telekinesis (20 STR); OAF (-1), Affects Whole Object (-1/4), Limited Range (6"; -1/4) 3

12 3) *Extended Sleeves*: Stretching 6", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Always Direct (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (arms; -1/4) 0

Total cost: 39 points.

<4> EXTRA LIMBS

With few exceptions, the typical martial artist has the regular number of arms and legs. However, certain Video Game and Anime characters have additional arms or tails they can use as an Extra Limb, while Wuxia campaign characters sometimes use their hair or long sleeves as a secondary limb.

<4> FLASH

Flashes in Cinematic, Realistic, and Wuxia campaigns tend to be fairly mundane — a hurled handful of sand or a ninja flash bomb — while Video Game and Anime characters prefer more spectacular techniques, such as brilliant blasts of *ch'i* energy. Many martial arts Flashes, including strikes to the eyes, hurled handfuls of dust, and powders blown in a target's face, have the *No Range* Limitation; *Focus* may also be appropriate (either OAF for a weapon, or OIF for objects of opportunity such as dirt, bowls of rice, or cups of water). A favorite technique found in samurai films (and anime) is the using of one's sword blade to reflect sunlight at an attacker, blinding him and setting him up for a finishing blow. More dramatic Flash attacks involve special *ch'i* techniques allowing the character to physically project bursts of light, blinding anyone in the area.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: FLASH**

Fistful Of Sand: Sight Group Flash 4d6, NND (defense is solid coverings protecting the eyes;

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+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (40 Active Points); OIF (any appropriate object of opportunity, such as sand, dirt, or rice; -1/2), No Range (-1/2), Does Not Work Against Desolidified Characters (-1/4). Total cost: 18 points.

Sword Of Light: Sight Group Flash 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (30 Active Points); OIF (any bladed weapon; -1/2), Requires Sufficiently Strong Available Light Source (-1/4). Total cost: 17 points.

Ch'i Lightburst: Sight Group Flash 6d6, Explosion (+1/2) (45 Active Points); Requires A Martial Arts Tricks Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 30 points.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> FLIGHT

Although *Ninja Hero* characters usually cannot literally fly, they use Flight to construct many high-powered martial arts abilities. True flight, without any Limitations or visual aids, only occurs in some Video Game and Anime settings.

<5> Superior Balance

The most basic form of Flight is defined as superior balance. With this, a character can stand on tiny objects or run along the tops of fences without any fear of falling. This differs from Clinging defined as incredible balance — it allows for faster movement and the ability to run along much more fluid surfaces. At its most advanced, characters can use superior balance Flight to race along lengths of rope or to fight on top of the heads of a crowd.

In its simplest form, superior balance Flight allows a character to stand on top of such things as small bamboo poles, the very tops of trees, or twigs floating in a stream and not fall off:

Basic Superior Balance: Flight 1" (2 Active Points); Only To Balance On Small Objects (-1). Total cost: 1 point.

You could add *Requires A Skill Roll*, if desired. Although this power has little practical use, it helps characters make excellent Presence Attacks, and can seriously confusing opponents.

The more mobile version of Superior Balance allows the character to move along thin and narrow objects, such as fences, the ridges of peaked roofs, and powerlines. Characters can also use this version of Flight to run along the top of a field of grass without leaving tracks, or along tree branches and the like. To create this ability, the character buys 6" of Flight (or Flight equal to his Running) and applies some appropriate Limitations:

Advanced Superior Balance: Flight 6" (12 Active Points); Only Along Reasonably Horizontal Surfaces (-1/2), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4). Total cost: 7 points.

Again, *Requires A Skill Roll* may also be appropriate. Other names for this power include Grass Running Stance, Grass Gliding, Mist Running Stance, Wall Running Stance, and Walking on

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Air.

An even more advanced variant allows characters to run across water, up vertical walls and along the heads (or shoulders) of a nearby crowd. This is Flight with the Limitation *Only In Contact With A Surface* (-1/4). In the more extreme Hong Kong wuxia films, characters have been seen fighting while standing on walls or while moving along ceilings!

<5> Superior Leaping

The ability to leap great distances is a virtual requirement for characters in almost any martial arts campaign but a Realistic one. Cinematic characters should buy their jumping ability as Leaping (see below), but Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime characters can jump such immense distances their leaps are nigh-indistinguishable from true flight. To represent this, buy Flight with the Limitations *Only In Straight Lines* (-1/2) and *No Noncombat Movement* (-1/4). This lets a character leap great distances from a standing start, and even remain airborne for long periods of time without needing to land and jump again. Alternately, characters can buy *Leaping To The Horizon*, the same ability but with the Limitation *Must Land At The End Of Each Phase* (-1/2) to represent an inability to “hover.”

Superior Leaping: Flight: 20” (40 Active Points); No Noncombat Movement (-1/4), Only In A Straight Line (-1/2). Total cost: 23 points. (For *Leaping To The Horizon*, cost is 18 points.)

<5> Object Riding

A few characters can fly by riding upon objects such as spinning shields, giant shuriken, whirling umbrellas, and like objects. You can buy this as Flight with the Limitation *Focus*; if the object is large enough, the Advantage *Usable Simultaneously* lets the character take his friends along for the ride.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: FLIGHT

Here are two more unusual forms of Flight for martial arts characters.

Dancing On Air Technique: This type of Flight is mainly seen in Anime campaigns, although characters in high-powered Wuxia campaigns can also use it.

Flight 20”, x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2). Total cost: 67 points.

Self-Propelled Arrow Technique: Probably the wildest form of Flight ever seen in the martial arts genre, the Self-Propelled Arrow Technique lets the character to shoot himself out of his own bow! After jamming one end of the bow in the ground, the character places his feet on the string and one hand on the bow stave (he’s usually got a weapon in his other hand). By releasing the stave, the character shoots himself free and “flies” for a considerable distance. You can build this as Flight with 1 Recoverable Charge (the character has to retrieve his bow to use this power

again).

Flight 20" (40 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1 1/4), Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/4), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4), Only In A Straight Line (-1/2). Total cost: 9 points.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> GLIDING

Martial artist characters sometimes take advantage of their generally loose clothing, as well as cloaks and umbrellas, to glide short distances. Normally, they use this power to descend safely from a great height, such as a cliff or rooftop. More outlandish settings feature actual gliders and immense kites to allow protagonists to take to the air. To build these powers, buy a few inches of Gliding with the *Focus* Limitation.

<4> HAND-TO-HAND ATTACK

Hand-To-Hand Attack is the single most common power seen in the martial arts genre. Used to build weapons and special techniques, Hand-To-Hand Attack is capable of an almost infinite number of power combinations. By applying certain Advantages to HA, characters can build specific martial arts techniques, either individually or as part of a Power Framework full of special attacks. See the accompanying sidebar for some examples.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: HAND-TO-HAND ATTACK

Double-Hand Strike: This technique allows a character to send a foe flying with a single punch.

HA +6d6, Double Knockback (+3/4) (52 Active Points); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2). Total cost: 35 points.

Invisible Strike: This is a blow thrown so fast most people cannot see it. Naturally, this technique renders many forms of Block useless, as the Blocking character cannot block something he can't see. (Don't forget the special rules for applying Invisible Power Effects to HA, on page 272 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*.)

HA +6d6, Invisible To Sight Group (+1/2) (45 Active Points); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2). Total cost: 30 points.

One Hundred Fists Technique: With this ability the character unleashes a virtual storm of blows at his target. The character's hand (or foot) becomes a blur, battering the target senseless with a nonstop barrage of punches (or kicks).

HA +6d6, Autofire (10 shots; +1), Penetrating (+1/2) (75 Active Points); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2). Total cost: 50 points.

Use Art With Stuff: The power allows a character to grab a commonly found object, such as a

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bench, broom, chair, mop, ladder, or sawhorse, and use it as a weapon without hindrance.

HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (30 Active Points); OIF (objects of opportunity; -1/2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2). Total cost: 15 points.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> IMAGES

Images is a power with many uses in martial arts genre campaigns. Some of them include:

<5> Invisible Hands Technique

This technique (found mostly in comedic campaigns) allows a martial artist to throw a series of blows at such speed he overwhelms his target's senses and makes him think he's under attack for longer than he actually is. If the target fails his PER Roll, he wastes a Phase (or more) punching and blocking air, giving his opponent time to escape or do something else. This technique only affects the person fighting the character, everyone else sees the target fighting empty air. It also requires the character to have fought his target for about a Turn before he can use it.

Invisible Hands: Sight Group Images, 1" radius, -4 to PER Rolls, Uncontrolled (+1/2) (33 Active Points); No Range (-1/2), Character Must Fight Target In HTH Combat For At Least One Turn Before Using (-1), Only To Make Target Think HTH Combat Attack Continues (-1). Total cost: 9 points.

<5> Shadow Images

With this power (common in some Anime settings), a character creates multiple copies of himself by moving at high speeds. The maximum number of duplicates is 24. Each duplicate may copy the original character's actions, or act "independently," as the character chooses. Naturally, only the original character can still harm his opponent.

Shadow Images: Sight Group Images, -4 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (16" Radius; +1) (44 Active Points); No Range (-1/2), Must Perform A Half-Move Minimum Each Phase Power Remains In Effect (-1/2). Total cost: 22 points.

<4> INVISIBILITY

Few, if any, characters in the martial arts genre can turn fully invisible; instead, this power is better suited to simulating incredible skill at hiding and personal camouflage. Many characters in Wuxia and Anime campaigns (such as ninja) can "vanish" into the slightest cover and remaining undetectable (Invisibility with the *Chameleon* Limitation).

<4> KILLING ATTACK — HAND-TO-HAND

Killing Attacks abound in the martial arts. Many characters wield swords, and those who don't often carry weapons such as axes, spears, or heavy maces. Other characters use just their

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hands to deliver bone-shattering blows, while in some Video Game and Anime campaigns, characters generate weapons made of *ch'i* energy. In general, the damage weapons and other deadly attacks do in fantastic martial arts settings far outstrips that of their Realistic counterparts.

<5> Weapons

Although they seem ordinary, the weapons wielded by Wuxia and Anime characters inflict tremendous amounts of damage in combat. Examples include slashing a person in two with one casual stroke, chopping trees or thick timbers in half with a single blow, slicing through stone, and so on. In most cases this incredible damage-dealing capacity derives from the character's mastery of his martial art, not magic.

Building such a weapon is a fairly simple matter — just buy two or more dice of HKA with appropriate Limitations. The Limitations *STR Minimum* and *Real Weapon* are *not* appropriate; the damage such weapons do doesn't depend on the might of the character's muscles, but the strength of his *ch'i*. Advantages such as *Armor Piercing* and *Penetrating* are recommended, since they allow characters to damage even high DEF objects like stone walls.

<5> Charging Slash

Another technique, common to Japanese samurai films, is for the martial artist to charge through the enemy, using his sword to cut down everyone in sight. You can simulate this in several ways, the simplest being a Multiple Move By. To best simulate the style of action common to martial arts cinema, either the GM should ignore the Move By rule about the effect of missing one target, or he should require characters to buy Penalty Skill Levels to counteract the penalty for attacking multiple targets.

Second, you can combine Rapid Attack (Hand-to-Hand) and Sweep. The character makes a Half Move to the desired target area and then strikes at all foes in range. However, this limits the number of targets the character can actually attack.

Third, characters can buy a special technique — an HKA with the *Area Of Effect (Line)* Advantage, Linked to a Movement Power (either Flight, Leaping, or Running) bought with inches of movement equal to the Line. When the character activates the ability, he “moves down the line,” attacking everyone as he rushes past. He receives no velocity bonus to damage, however; the movement is a part of the overall power, not a supplement to it. This construction, though potentially expensive, allows the character to attack with an unmodified OCV against DCV 3.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: HKA

Hands Of Death: If a character's Killing Strike isn't enough, he can buy this power instead.

HKA 2 1/2d6 (up to 5d6+1 with STR). Total cost: 40 points.

Bonecrushing Grip: The character can grasp people so hard, or with such devilish cleverness, that he snaps their bones like twigs.

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HKA 2 1/2d6 (up to 5d6+1 with STR) (40 Active Points); Can Only Be Used On Grabbed Characters (-1/2). Total cost: 27 points.

Ch'i Weapon: The character can form a weapon out of pure *ch'i* energy, or surround his fists with blazing *ch'i*.

HKA 2d6 (up to 4d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+1/2) (45 Active Points); Requires A *Ch'i* Powers Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 3 points.

Cinematic Sword: See text.

HKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (90 Active Points);

OAF (-1). Total: 45 points

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> KILLING ATTACK — RANGED

Examples of RKAs exist throughout the martial arts genre. Arrows, knives, shuriken, spears, and even guns are used in martial arts stories. In addition, Video Game and Anime campaigns often feature devastating *ch'i* attacks capable of punching through even the toughest targets. As with HTH weapons, the amount of damage done by ranged weapons in the more cinematic martial arts settings often far exceeds that inflicted by their real world counterparts (with the exception of guns, which usually do *less* damage). There is an account (based on a real event) of a Japanese archer sinking a ship with a single arrow, and characters in the martial arts genre can easily do likewise. Characters can also split trees with arrows, hurl shuriken through walls, and flick steel balls as if they were bullets.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: RKA

Flick Attack: Seen mainly in Wuxia campaigns, this attack requires the character to flick a small object at his opponent at deadly speed. He may use a weapon to do this, or have the ability to do it barehanded.

RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4) (26 Active Points); OIF (available weapon and/or appropriate object of opportunity; -1/2). Total cost: 17 points.

Piercing Missile: The character throws a weapon with such force that it cuts through not only the first target, but several other people standing behind him.

RKA 2d6, Area of Effect (12" Line; +1) (60 Active Points); OIF (weapon of opportunity; -1/2), No Range (-1/2). Total cost: 30 points.

Rain Of Shuriken: With this attack the character (usually a ninja) hurls a continuous rain of shuriken, throwing spikes, steel balls, or other objects at his target. Usually this rain is of greater volume and quantity than is realistically possible... but this is the martial arts genre after all.

RKA 1d6, Autofire (10 shots; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1) (45 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2). Total cost: 18 points.

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Sword Energy!: In some Wuxia and Anime campaigns, a weapon-wielding character doesn't even have to hit his opponent; he just cuts the air and generates a line of destruction between himself and his target. Other names for this power include *Slaying Sword* and *Whirlwind Sword*.

RKA 3d6, Area of Effect (18" Line; +1) (90 Active Points); OIF (weapon of opportunity; -1/2), No Range (-1/2). Total cost: 45 points.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> **KNOCKBACK RESISTANCE**

Since various special martial arts techniques often send characters flying, some warriors develop ways to resist that effect, typically defined as centering one's *ch'i*. This roots the character to the ground, making it difficult to push him back.

Rooted: Knockback Resistance -8" (16 Active Points); Nonpersistent (-1/4), Costs Endurance (-1/2), Requires A *Ch'i* Powers Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points.

<4> **LACK OF WEAKNESS**

This power is very appropriate for characters in a martial arts setting. Gamemasters should allow characters to buy as many points of Lack Of Weakness as they wish. Characters with supposedly unbeatable or highly unusual styles should buy Lack Of Weakness against the *Analyze Style* Skill.

<4> **LEAPING**

Other than HA, Leaping is probably the power most associated with the martial arts genre. Many characters can jump immense distances, usually with little or no visible effort. It's such a common power it almost seems mandatory for all major characters (regardless of setting) to purchase at least a few inches of Leaping. However, in the more wild examples of the genre, jumping ability reaches a point where it's better bought as Flight (see above).

<5> **Ninja Hero Leaping Options**

The GM may wish to consider raising the Normal Characteristic Maxima threshold for Leaping to 10" (or more) to reflect the prevalence of Leaping in martial arts stories.

To properly simulate the incredible leaping ability seen in Wuxia and Anime stories, the GM should eliminate the need for characters to make an Attack Roll to land in the target hex. *Ninja Hero* characters can automatically leap to any hex they can perceive with a Targeting Sense. Characters may have to make a Breakfall roll or DEX Roll to keep their feet if they land on a slippery surface.

Another option for Leaping is to remove the need for a character to make any sort of short run to leap his full distance — instead, characters can make their full Leap from a standing start. However, this type of Leaping is similar to Flight with the Limitation *Straight Line Only*,

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so GMs should decide which version of this ability they prefer.

For more extreme variants of Leaping, GMs could allow a character to leap the same distance vertically as well as horizontally. This sort of leaping ability is mostly associated with Anime characters, and may make Leaping more effective than Flight. Gamemasters should think carefully before allowing this option.

<5> Leaping Examples

Here are two sample powers built with Leaping:

Springing Sword: By landing sword point first after leaping a great distance, a character can then use the springiness common to Chinese swords to propel himself further into the air.

Leaping +6", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (9 Active Points); OAF (-1), Can Only Be Used On The Phase Following A Previous Leap (-1). Total cost: 3 points.

Supreme Equestrian: For a true taste of Wuxia action, a character can buy Leaping with the Advantage *Usable By Other*, allowing him to grant his horse the same sort of Leaping prowess!

Leaping +10" (total cost: 10 points) **plus** Usable By Other for Leaping +10" (+1/4) (2 Active Points); Only Usable By A Horse The Character Is Riding (-1). Total cost: 1 point.

<4> LIFE SUPPORT

Martial arts heroes are a hardy lot, and regularly endure environmental conditions that would destroy anyone of "lesser" stature. Certain forms of Life Support are highly suited for such characters, including: Self-Contained Breathing (defined as holding one's breath), Longevity (up to and including Immortality, a common power among aged masters), and resistance to extremes of heat and cold. For those campaigns allowing the use of *ch'i* powers, Diminished Eating and Sleep are also possible.

<4> MISSILE DEFLECTION

All martial arts characters, regardless of subgenre, can use Missile Deflection. It's very common to see characters in the martial arts genre deflect arrows, hurled spears, and thrown shuriken with their hands or other objects. In some of the wilder Wuxia films, characters can even deflect or snatch bullets out of the air. It's also common for a character to grab a hurled weapon out of the air and throw it back at his attacker.

Any *Ninja Hero* character can buy Missile Deflection up to 10 points (non-gunpowder projectiles). For example, Japanese samurai often learned *yadomejutsu*, the art of arrow-cutting (chopping arrows out of the air and deflecting other missiles). But only Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime characters can buy the 15- and 20-point versions (often with the special effect of using one's own *ch'i*-energy blast to cancel out an enemy's blast). Any martial artist can buy Reflection limited to thrown projectiles; only Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime characters can Reflect other types of attacks, or use Reflection at Range.

<4> **POWER DEFENSE**

Characters in martial arts settings can buy Power Defense if they so wish. Gamemasters may allow players to take the Limitation *Only Protects Against Drain-Based Martial Attacks*. The exact value of this Limitation depends on the frequency with which a character encounters other types of attacks Power Defense protects against. In a typical *Ninja Hero* campaign, the value is -1/2, but it sometimes rises to -1.

<4> **HEALING**

Martial arts action heroes are tough, and often exhibit fairly speedy recuperative powers. They tend to bounce back quickly from almost any major wound, and only require a day or so of rest before they can fight again. Characters with medical training can use their skills to help heal others, and by mixing acupuncture, manipulation of pressure points, and the application of burning herbs, they can assist in the recovery from illness, injuries, and the debilitating effects of martial arts Drains. In some of the more over-the-top Wuxia and Anime campaigns, characters are capable of out-and-out regeneration, and can heal almost any wound instantly.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MARTIAL ARTS POWER EXAMPLES: HEALING**

Ch'i Healing: This ability allows a character to quickly revive an injured character with Chinese healing techniques. It requires knowledge of Chinese medicine and an available assortment of herbs and medicinal compounds.

Simplified Healing 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; 60 Active Points); OAF (medicinal compounds; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Requires A KS: Chinese Healing Roll (-1/4), Does Not Heal Broken Bones Or Similar Severe Injuries (-1/4), Others Only (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points.

It's Only a Flesh Wound!: This ability allows a character to recover from major injuries and wounds within a very short period of time (such as a scene change). It can't regenerate lost limbs, nor affect the damage caused by poison, *dim mak*, or other non-physical attacks, but does restore the character to full health with a minimum of rest.

Healing 8d6 (Regeneration; 8 BODY per Hour), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Persistent (+1/2) (160 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Hour, character cannot take other actions until Hour passes; -2 1/2), Self Only (-1/2), Only Heals Certain Types Of Damage (see text; -1/2). Total cost: 35 points.

Only A Ninja Can Kill A Ninja: In some settings, ninja are so deadly only other ninjas can truly kill them. You can also use this power to represent characters who control their *ch'i* so completely even "death" can't stop them.

Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Turn), Can Heal Limbs, Resurrection (can be stopped by burning the body or drowning), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Persistent (+1/2) (110 Active Points); Does Not Affect Damage Caused By Ninja (-1/2), Extra Time

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(1 Turn; -1 1/4), Self Only (-1/2). Total cost: 34 points.
[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> **RUNNING**

Many martial arts characters can run at phenomenal speeds. The GM may wish to consider raising the Normal Characteristic Maxima threshold for Running to 15" (or more) to reflect this fact. However, due to the ability of many Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime characters to run across water, along thin ropes, and through the branches of trees, players may want to sell back their base 6" of Running and buy some form of limited Flight instead (see above).

<4> **STRETCHING**

Stretching has a multitude of uses in a martial arts setting, ranging from weapon shafts, to elongated sleeves or hair, to the actual lengthening of a Video Game or Anime character's limbs. Standard Limitations include *No Noncombat Stretching* in general; *Always Direct*, *No Velocity Damage*, and *Only To Cause Damage* for weapons like spears; and *Limited Manipulation* for things like whips, sleeves, and extended strands of hair.

<5> **Example Stretching Powers**

Here are three sample powers built with Stretching.

Cloth Lance: A cloth lance is a long length of water-soaked cloth rolled into a tight rope. A character can swing it like a normal staff, but it has the advantage of much greater length and striking power.

HA +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (45 Active Points); OIF (appropriate cloth of opportunity; -1/2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) (22 total points) **plus** Stretching 4", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (30 Active Points); OIF (appropriate cloth of opportunity; -1/2), Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), No Velocity Damage (-1/4), Only To Cause Damage (-1/2) (total cost: 11 points). Total cost: 33 points.

Hair Fu: "Hair fu" allows a character (usually female) to use her long strands of hair as a weapon. Normally, this sort of power is reserved for supernatural creatures, such as demons or ghosts.

The Elemental Control listed below is a low-powered example of a possible hair-related Power Framework. With it, the character can attack someone and tangle him in long tresses of hair, slash at a foe with her hair, launch lethal "hair needles," and grab objects located some distance away.

15 *Hair Fu:* Elemental Control, 30-point powers

36 1) *Long Tresses:* Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Stops Sight Group, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4) 6

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- 15 2) *Hair Whip*: HKA 1d6+1, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) 0
15 3) *Hair Needles*: RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)
0
10 4) *Long Tresses*: Stretching 4", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Always Direct (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (hair; -1/4) 0
Total cost: 91 points.

Pliable Limbs: Through manipulation of his internal *ch'i*, secret yoga techniques, or other unknown training methods, the character can actually lengthen his limbs a short distance. Although physically draining, this technique is highly effective in a fight. Optional Limitations for this power include *Concentration* and *Extra Time*.

Stretching 2" (10 Active Points); Always Direct (-1/4), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1 1/2), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (arms; -1/4). Total cost: 3 Points.

<4> SUMMON

In some of the more unusual martial arts campaigns, characters can Summon creatures to do their bidding. Most such uses of Summon involve snakes, but other animals (such as birds, cats, dogs, and rats) are possible. Evil magicians (see page ???) might be able to summon demons, ghosts, hopping vampires, and zombies.

Summoned creatures typically appear almost instantly and are loyal to the person who called them forth. The animals called are usually normal specimens for their type, and don't possess any special powers. Of course, demons, ghosts, and other monsters have powers and abilities specific to supernatural creatures. See the *HERO System Bestiary* for character sheets detailing many types of animals and fantastic creatures.

<4> TELEKINESIS

Characters in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns exhibit a wide variety of telekinetic effects, including manipulating objects at a distance with long strands of hair or elongated sleeves, or by exerting their *chi*. Hair and clothing-based Telekinesis is usually found in Hong Kong cinema, while *ch'i*-based Telekinesis is common to Japanese anime.

In many ways this power is very similar to Stretching, with the major difference being that characters can use it at much greater ranges. Normally, characters only use this power to grab, hold, and throw a target; they usually buy telekinetic punches as a form of Energy Blast.

<4> TELEPORTATION

Martial artist characters vanish all the time. Ninja disappear in a cloud of smoke, while some *ch'i*-powered Anime heroes can use "instantaneous movement" to cross great distances in an eyeblink. Video Game characters often depart in a flare of energy, only to instantly reappear elsewhere. In most cases, a character's Teleport ability is limited to areas he can get to normally, as few characters can vanish from a locked cell or a sealed room. Naturally, Anime characters

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often ignore this restriction and teleport anywhere — even as far as the other side of the world (or further!). See *The Eighth Path (Supreme Movement)* on page 77 of UMA for an example of a martial arts-style Teleportation power.

<4> **TRANSFORM**

Characters in the martial arts genre normally don't turn objects (such as people) into other objects (such as frogs), but may use Transform to create attacks with certain permanent effects, such as blinding a foe, crippling a limb, or instantly carving writing into wood with a sword-blade.

<2> **POWER ADVANTAGES**

Here are some notes and suggestions about Advantages common to *Ninja Hero* abilities.

<4> **AREA OF EFFECT**

Area Of Effect works well for many martial arts special techniques, because it allows a character to strike a large number of people quickly. For example, One Hex allows a character to strike everyone standing around him, Radius everyone near him he can hit with a whirled spear or similar weapon. In *Ninja Hero* campaigns, GMs should definitely allow the +1/4 “double the radius to 2” option for One Hex; it's perfect for many attack techniques. Cone and Line (typically with the *No Range* Limitation) work well for attacks involving multiple thrown projectiles, Video Game fire breath powers, and the like. Gamemasters may require characters to apply Nonselective or Selective as well, since these special techniques don't really strike the entire “area,” just everyone in it.

<4> **ARMOR PIERCING, PENETRATING**

Armor Piercing simulates a number of special effects, including crushing blows designed to punch through armor, knife-hand or spear-hand attacks that concentrate the force of a blow on a small area, strikes to specific nerve clusters and other vulnerable areas, armor-penetrating arrows, extremely sharp swords, and powerful *ch'i* blasts. Characters can also use it to represent such effects as a rapid series of punches landing so fast they easily overcome any defenses. The *Penetrating* Advantage allows for many of the same effects.

<4> **AUTOFIRE**

The most common *Ninja Hero* special effect for Autofire simulates multiple hand or foot strikes. Characters can also use it with ranged attacks, such as a flurry of shuriken or a barrage of *ch'i* blasts; characters firing anywhere from two to five arrows at once from a bow is a typical genre stunt.

<4> **DOUBLE KNOCKBACK**

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Powerful punches and kicks knock characters all around the battlefield in many forms of martial arts combat. The *Double Knockback* Advantage is an excellent way to simulate this effect, and is often used as part of a specific martial arts technique.

For example, one common Hong Kong cinema stunt is for a character to strike his foe with both hands (or occasionally both feet) and send his target flying. Usually, the character takes damage both from being struck and from impacting something behind him, such as a wall:

Two Palm Strike: HA +6d6, Double Knockback (+3/4) (52 Active Points); Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2). Total cost: 26 points.

<4> INDIRECT

Indirect is useful when attempting to simulate some of the more unusual powers exhibited in the martial arts genre, such as those discussed on page 132 of UMA. Characters can also use flexible weapons made with chain or rope to strike a target on the other side of an obstacle, or from an unusual angle.

Indirect can also simulate a character's ability to guide attacks into a target. In its simplest form, this type of Indirect represents the ability to bounce a thrown object off of multiple surfaces before it hits its target. In Video Game and Anime campaigns, some characters can project ranged attacks (such as *ch'i* blasts) and arc them around a target to strike from above, behind, or below.

<4> NO RANGE MODIFIER

Characters in the martial arts genre can often make nearly impossible archery shots, such as hitting targets almost invisible to the naked eye. Some Video Game and Anime characters mentally guide their *ch'i* blasts, willing them directly to the target. In both cases characters may want to purchase the *No Range Modifier* Advantage for their attacks as a way of simulating their incredible accuracy.

<4> VARIABLE ADVANTAGE

Variable Advantage allows a character to buy a single power (usually Energy Blast or Hand-To-Hand Attack) and simulate many different martial arts techniques and abilities simply by switching Advantages. The GM should strictly monitor the use of Variable Advantage, since it may give characters the ability to duplicate *any* ability they see, which takes the mystique away from an Old Master's "secret technique." Gamemasters may want to consider limiting the number of Advantages a character may select from (usually four), as well as the value of the Advantages to be selected from (usually +1/2).

<2> LIMITATIONS

Here are some notes and suggestions about Limitations common to *Ninja Hero* abilities. Most Limitations not mentioned here, including *Focus* and *Requires A Skill Roll*, are quite

appropriate for martial arts abilities.

<4> **EXTRA TIME**

Many special attacks and techniques take some time to generate. Most have the Limitation *Extra Time (Full Phase)*, meaning the character can attack on his DEX, but may not move, dodge, or otherwise act during the Phase. Other attacks take longer to generate, requiring anywhere from an Extra Phase to a Minute to “power up.”

<4> **GESTURES**

Some special techniques require fairly specific hand and/or arm motions. If an enemy blocks these motions (or the character is bound), the character cannot use the attack. This is especially true in Anime campaigns, where the characters have to perform specific stylized motions to generate specific attacks. If appropriate, you can simulate this with the *Gestures* Limitation.

The GM should consider whether to allow Gestures in his game before starting play. Obviously, Martial Maneuvers and many other attacks require movement of the arms and/or body, and don’t qualify for a *Gestures* Limitation because of it. Only attacks with highly specific movements, ones which don’t involve inflicting damage and can easily be restrained or stopped, should take this Limitation.

<4> **INCANTATIONS**

It’s fairly common for characters to announce the name of their attack as (or right before) they use it, particularly in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns. But this isn’t necessarily enough to qualify as Incantations. Only if preventing the character from speaking stops the power from working is the ability truly Limited. (However, in some games, it may be appropriate to impose a zero-point Psychological Limitation, *Must Announce Name Of Attack Before Using It*, on all characters.)

<4> **LIMITED POWER**

Some special techniques take a Limitation, *Can Be Blocked*. It applies to some Energy Blasts, Ranged Killing Attacks, and Area Of Effect Attacks, and represents attacks a target can stop with the *Block* Combat Maneuver (or any Martial Maneuver with the “Block” helpful element). The Limitation is worth -1/4 if only Block (and not Missile Deflection) affects the attack; it’s worth -1/2 if both Block *and* Missile Deflection allow a character to avoid the attack’s effects.

If a target Blocks a HTH attack with the *Area Of Effect* Advantage, the successful Block does not prevent the attack from affecting other targets within the area.

<4> **LINKED**

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Gamemasters who wish to run a Video Game campaign can simulate the effect of flaming kicks and punches (a staple of such a setting) by Linking an Energy Blast to a character's STR. For example:

Flaming Kick/Punch: EB 6d6 (30 Active Points); Linked (to character's STR; -1/4), No Range (-1/2). Total cost: 17 points.

In this case the value of the Limitation is taken at a reduced level on the assumption the character has less than 30 STR.

<4> REDUCED BY RANGE

This Limitation works well for certain *ch'i*-blast attacks, and even some hurled weapons, since they lose energy as they travel.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> POWER FRAMEWORKS

Power Frameworks are very appropriate to the martial arts genre. Many *Ninja Hero* characters, particularly in the more fantastic subgenres, put all their special techniques or abilities in a Multipower or Elemental Control. There are some examples in UMA, pages 133-34.

The GM should make sure the powers placed in a Framework are related. Just because a character has several powers defined as "martial arts powers" or "secret attack techniques" does not, *per se*, justify placing them in a Framework; the powers should relate to or restrict each other in some way.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<2> DISADVANTAGES

Here are some suggestions on Disadvantages appropriate for *Ninja Hero* characters. See also page 135 of UMA.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> DISADVANTAGE POINTS

Many *Ninja Hero* campaigns are Heroic campaigns. The rules typically limit characters in a Standard Heroic campaign to relatively few points' worth of Disadvantages from any one type of Disadvantage. This may cause some problems, since characters in Heroic campaigns usually don't have access to as many Disadvantages as Superheroic characters do. Disadvantages like Accidental Change, Susceptibility, and Vulnerability don't occur nearly as often in Heroic games. *Ninja Hero* characters may run into trouble trying to come up with 75 points' worth of Disadvantages from the ones they can, realistically, take.

Gamemasters concerned about this problem have several options. First, they can waive the 25

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point limit — either get rid of it altogether, or increase it to, say, 30 or 40 points. Second, they can increase the characters' Base Points, thus diminishing the number of points they have to acquire via Disadvantages.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> AGE/NORMAL CHARACTERISTIC MAXIMA

Due to the larger-than-life nature of characters in the martial arts genre, limitations on their physical Characteristics are not advised. Thus, the Disadvantage *Normal Characteristic Maxima* is not suitable as a campaign ground rule for most campaign settings, though characters can always take it if they wish.

<4> DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Besides *Style* (UMA, page 135), another Distinctive Feature unique to martial artists is *Ch'i Signature*. Campaigns which feature extensive use of *ch'i* powers (Video Game or Anime campaigns) may include characters with *ch'i* so strong that “sensitive” people (those who have *ch'i* powers of their own, or an ability to sense *ch'i*) can detect it even if the character is not using any of his *ch'i* powers.

Ch'i Signature: Not Concealable; Always Noticed, Causes Major Reaction; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses: 10 Character Points.

Other Distinctive Features common in the martial arts genre include yakuza tattoos or finger mutilation, the unwavering bearing (and superciliousness) of the samurai, and unusual forms of clothing such as ninja garb.

<4> PHYSICAL LIMITATION

Although most martial arts characters are extremely fit and in full health, it's possible to have a character with some form of physical affliction. Common ones include Blindness (or Missing One Eye) and missing limbs or hands. Many martial arts stories feature characters with such handicaps... and the special techniques or abilities they've developed to compensate for them.

<4> RIVALRY

In the martial arts genre, Rivalries abound. Different schools (of either armed or unarmed combat) are often bitter rivals, and practitioners of one style may find themselves defending their style from others. Even if violence doesn't break out, insults and catcalls usually will. Player characters may find they have many Rivals (even if they didn't pay for any) and may have to deal with challenges, various indignities, and embarrassing situations (any of which may also try their patience and their Psychological Limitations).

<4> SOCIAL LIMITATION

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Characters may take a Social Limitation in a martial arts campaign for several reasons. Hiding one's identity is the most common, although being a member of a minority is another. Others include:

Social Limitation: Eunuch: As the lowest social class in period China, known eunuchs were despised by the rest of the populace. Unless the eunuch was in a position of great power (such as a provincial governor or magistrate), he was treated poorly and with little to no respect.

Eunuch (Frequently, Minor): 10 Character Points.

Social Limitation: Ninja: In period settings, ninja are despised and loathed. A ninja captured by the enemy can expect almost immediate execution, usually in a painful and horrific manner (by being boiled alive, for instance). Thus, ninja adopted various cover identities, and tended to live normally right out in the open, so as not to draw attention to themselves. Characters should only take this Disadvantage in period Cinematic, Realistic, and Wuxia campaigns; ninja in Video Game and Anime settings don't normally encounter this sort of reaction.

Ninja (Occasionally, Severe): 15 Character Points

<2> PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Looking over the vast extent of martial arts powers and abilities may leave you a bit bewildered, wondering where exactly to start. Why, for example, would anyone buy an attack with the Advantage *Indirect* just to hit someone else on the other side of a wall? The answer is the average person wouldn't, since such a power construct is of very limited use. But martial arts characters often have such obscure powers, kept in reserve until the right moment arrives.

The key to building a well-rounded character is to maintain a certain degree of logic behind the character's abilities. Most (if not all) of a character's powers should relate somehow. Even the most outlandish Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime characters are more than a random collection of powers and martial arts techniques.

As an example of character design, look at a few of the characters in the Sourcebook section. Torii Nishi (page ???) is a sixteenth century ninja. As a master of stealth and covert operations, it makes no sense for Nishi to have (or use) most *ch'i* powers (such as an Energy Blast). What Nishi does have are abilities relating to the needs of a ninja, such as Clinging defined as a superior climbing skill, Flight defined as incredible balance, and "vanish into the earth" Tunneling. On the other hand, Midnite Maid (page ???) is pure Video Game martial artist. Naturally, she has all sort of impressive and showy *ch'i* techniques, including fireballs, autofire strikes, incredible leaping ability, and so on.

The evil eunuch, Tai-Sheng Zeng (page ???) seems to be an exception to this idea, until you examine his powers closely. Most are based around the projection of *ch'i* energy, which is why he has a variety of Energy Blasts and Ranged Killing Attacks. Jiu Xing (page ???) is similar, though most of his abilities center on his skill with the sword, and he has a few special techniques to set him apart (such as his Deactivation Strike).

Gamemasters who wish to encourage their players to buy a wide variety of powers have several options. One of these to start with a large number of Base Points (150 to 300 Character

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Points) and run their campaign with 350-400 point characters. This should be enough points to allow for the purchase of specialized limited-use techniques, specially if you keep the Active Points for individual powers low (such as in the 50-75 point range). Another option is to encourage the use of Variable Advantage (or Variable Power Pools), which allows characters to apply odd Advantages to a power to create new techniques.

Gamemasters should also encourage their players to purchase different abilities for their characters. A character who buys only Clinging, Leaping, Damage Classes, and Combat Skill Levels maybe qualify as a martial arts action hero, but he's a rather boring one. The martial arts genre is known for its dynamic and showy martial arts techniques, and any campaign (other than a Realistic one) should emphasize such elements. Players who choose to ignore this part of the genre are effectively denying themselves a lot of what makes martial arts stories fun. This is especially true if the GM runs a *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign (see page ???), where having an assortment of flamboyant martial arts techniques and *ch'i* powers is a virtual requirement.

<1> **PACKAGE DEALS**

These Professional Package Deals represent some of the character types frequently found in *Ninja Hero* campaigns.

<2> **BUDDHIST WARRIOR-MONK**

The warrior-monk is a Buddhist priest who has studied various forms of armed and unarmed combat as a way of improving both his body and his mind. This study also helps him find enlightenment and lets him defend himself in times of trouble.

The Buddhist monk is supposed to live a simple, humble life. He should not cause harm to any living thing. (This is why Japanese monks carry the *shakujo*, or “seven-ring staff,” to warn animals of their passage.) He fights only to defend himself, he eats no meat, and he remains celibate throughout his life. But not all monks obey such a rigid code, and some are more than willing to indulge in food, drink, and women (such monks are common villains in Chinese martial arts cinema). Others are little more than military commanders, leading troops of armed and armored monks into battle. Because of this, the Code Of The Buddhist Monk is an *optional* Disadvantage; only characters who intend to adhere to it, or who could experience problems if their failure to obey it were revealed, should take it. In other words, Shaolin priests tend to have the Code, Japanese *sohei* do not.

A warrior-monk does not have to be male. In China, Buddhist nuns were known to practice the marital arts.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **BUDDHIST WARRIOR-MONK PACKAGE DEAL**

Skills Cost

Martial Arts Maneuvers (10 points’ worth; character’s choice: Kung Fu in historical or modern China; Hwarang-do in historical Korea; Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, or Naginatajutsu in historical Japan, plus Karate in modern Japan) 10

KS: Buddhism 11- 2

KS: Specific Martial Art 11- 2

WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons 4

Fringe Benefit: Right to Marry 1

Fringe Benefit: Buddhist Monk 1

Total cost: 20

Optional Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features: Style -10

Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Buddhist Monk (Common, Strong) -15

[[BOX END]]

<2> **CHINESE KNIGHT-ERRANT (*WUXIA*)**

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The Chinese Knight-Errant, known as a *wuxia*, is a wandering hero-adventurer of pre-twentieth century China. He has no special rank in Chinese society, and like all warriors his social status is below that of scholars. Unlike the samurai of Japan, Chinese Knight-Errants were not part of a nationwide order. Instead, they were individuals who separately adopted similar codes of behavior, wandered their world freely, practiced their Kung Fu, lived a carefree existence when times were good, and set about changing things when times were bad.

The downfall of the Chinese Knight-Errant occurred at the turn of the twentieth century, during the Boxer Rebellion, when they and their fellow martial artists discovered their mastery of Kung Fu was no match for Western guns. However, a modern-day Chinese character could (with GM permission) take the Chinese Knight-Errant Package Deal, especially if he is the type of character who tends to promote individual honor, Kung Fu, and heroism among his fellow countrymen. It's appropriate for female characters to take this Package; Chinese cinema regularly features strong, capable Kung Fu heroines.

The Chinese Knight-Errants' code of honor demands they:

- (1) Right any wrongs they see (especially by helping the weak against the strong).
- (2) Correct any social injustices (*i.e.*, throw down those who oppress the weak and defenseless).
- (3) Keep any oaths of loyalty they take, and meet all obligations they accept.
- (4) Honor good people.
- (5) Spend all wealth on good deeds and good times. (Knights-Errant are boisterous heroes who love festivities but do not save or hoard their wealth; they are usually penniless, spending any treasures they receive to help others or to hold celebrations.)

The GM can easily place the Chinese Knight-Errant in a torturous predicament if he brings #3 into conflict with #4. For example, suppose a Chinese Knight-Errant PC meets a seemingly honorable man who complains of persecution at the hands of a wicked lord. The PC promises to kill the lord. But the lord, when the PC finally confronts him, proves to be an honorable man — the first person the hero met lied to him. The character is now caught between two of his mandates: he must perform the service he promised, and yet he must honor and befriend this good person he has just met. In such a situation, the Knight-Errant has to think fast and work hard to get out of the dilemma. One difficult and grim solution is for the character to injure or maim himself so he's physically incapable of accomplishing his original mission.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **CHINESE KNIGHT-ERRANT PACKAGE DEAL**

Skills Cost

Martial Art: Kung Fu Maneuvers (10 points' worth; player's choice) 10

Combat Skill Levels (8 points' worth; player's choice) 8

KS: Kung Fu 11- 2

Professional Skill 11- (player's choice) 2

9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: 9

Acrobatics, Breakfall, Concealment, Contortionist, Gambling, High Society, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, Streetwise.

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Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Chinese Knight-Errant (Very Common, Total) -25

Total cost: 6

Optional Skills

WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons 6

Optional Disadvantages

Distinctive Features: Style -10

[[BOX END]]

The Professional Skill chosen by a Chinese Knight-Errant is often a menial one, such as cook. This allows him to go from place to place, earning his living in a simple and honest manner, without attracting attention to himself when he needs to lay low.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **TYPES OF CHINESE KNIGHTS**

There are roughly two groups of Chinese Knight-Errants. The first are the *shih*, or nobles. The other are the *wuxia*, or “knight-errants.” The *shih* served specific lords (much like the Japanese samurai), and were of noble birth. The *wuxia*, on the other hand, wandered freely throughout the land. You can use the Chinese Knight-Errant Package Deal for both groups, but it’s more geared toward the *wuxia*.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<2> **CHINESE MASTER**

This character is an aged martial arts master, a teacher of many students — including, perhaps, the PCs. He (this character is generally male) can be a master of one or many martial arts, and doesn’t have to be Chinese — you could also use this Package Deal to create an aged master of Aikido, Jujutsu, or Karate.

Chinese Masters live by a special code: they cannot refuse challenges from other fighters (which is why they often have a *Reputation* Disadvantage — people seek them out to test their prowess). If the Master thinks a fighter is beneath him in skill, the code allows him to send his students to meet the challenger first. That way the Master only fights the best challengers (those who defeat his students) himself.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **Chinese Master Package Deal**

Cost Abilities

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Martial Arts Maneuvers (10 points' worth; choose from Hsing-I, Kung Fu, Pakua, Tai Ch'i Ch'uan if Chinese, Aikido, Jujutsu, or Karate if Japanese) 10

KS: Chinese Healing 12- 3

KS: Specific Martial Art 13- 4

Paramedics 3

PS: Sifu/Sensei 11- 2

WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons 4

Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Chinese Master (Common, Strong) -15

Total cost: 11

Optional Skills

KS: *Ch'i*-Centering Techniques (INT Roll +1) 4

PS: Calligraphy (INT Roll +1) 4

PS: Cooking (INT Roll +1) 4

PS: Lion Dancing (INT Roll +1) 4

Optional Disadvantages

Age (60+) (this Disadvantage is not recommended for Chinese Masters, many of who seem to be in better shape than their pupils) -10

Distinctive Features: Style -10

Reputation: Chinese Master 8- -5

[[BOX END]]

<2> KENSEI

The *Kensei* ("sword-saint," also spelled *kensai* or *kenshi*) is the Japanese master of the sword. A character can take this Package Deal in addition to the Samurai Package Deal, but does not have to. Characters can take this Package in both historical and modern-day campaigns; a modern-day *kensei* could be a kendo or kenjutsu instructor. In addition to this Package Deal, a Kensei should have high DEX and SPD, plenty of Combat Skill Levels, and perhaps some of the special swordfighting abilities described in this book or UMA.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> KENSEI PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Abilities

Martial Art: Kenjutsu Maneuvers (10 points' worth; player's choice) 10

Analyze Style 3

KS: Kenjutsu 11- 2

PS: Sensei 11- 2

WF: Common Melee Weapons 2

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Disadvantages

Distinctive Features: Style -10

Total cost: 9

[[BOX END]]

<2> NINJA

In feudal Japan, ninja were reconnaissance experts, spies, and assassins. The principles of ninjutsu began development as early as the seventh century AD and reached their height during the Tokugawa era (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries AD). The earliest name for the ninja was *shinobi*, or “stealer-in,” *i.e.*, a person who sneaks in. Ninjutsu (including both the martial art and the other skills associated with the ninja) was originally called *shinobi-jutsu*.

Ninja belonged to extended ninja clans, most of which were located in the Iga and Koga mountain areas of Japan. A clan often associated with a specific noble family who employed them on an exclusive or near-exclusive basis; these ties sometimes lasted for many generations.

Ninja fell into one of three ranks within their families. In the lowest rank man were the *genin*, the minion-level ninja who performed the dangerous missions. During the Tokugawa era, known *genin* were the lowest form of life in the Japanese social strata. The mid-ranking ninja were the *chunin*, the sub-leaders and planners who helped run the clan. The highest rank was the *jonin*, the clan or family leader who accepted or refused contracts. There were female ninja, called *kunoichi*, who learned traditional ninja abilities but were especially good at espionage through seduction and infiltration.

After the end of the Tokugawa period, in the late nineteenth century, the ninja families declined; no one needed their skills in a peaceful Japan. According to some modern historians, the last true ninja used their skills in World War II, and no one alive today practices genuine ninjutsu. According to other modern sources, some ninja families retained and handed down their skills until the modern era, and still teach their ninjutsu arts; even some Americans have supposedly learned from them.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **NINJA PACKAGE DEAL**

Skills Cost

Martial Art: Ninjutsu or Karate maneuvers (10 points' worth; character's choice) 10

Acrobatics 3

Breakfall 3

Climbing 3

Concealment 3

KS: Ninjutsu or Karate (character's choice) 8- 1

Language: Ninja Clan Codes and Symbols (fluent conversation; literate) 3

Stealth 3

WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile

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Weapons, Garrote, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari 9

6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: 6

Contortionist, Conversation, Demolitions, Disguise, Fast Draw, High Society, Lockpicking, Paramedics, PS: Cartography (INT Roll), PS: Dancing (INT Roll), PS: Healer (Doctor) (INT Roll), PS: Singing (INT Roll), Riding, Seduction, SS: Meteorology (INT Roll), Security Systems, Sleight Of Hand, Survival (3 points' worth), Tracking, Weaponsmith (3 points' worth)

Total cost: 44

Optional Skills

Bugging 3

Electronics 3

Mechanics 3

WF: Small Arms 2

Optional Disadvantages

Distinctive Features: Style -10

Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable) -5
(for feudal-era ninja, increase the Reaction to "Causes Extreme Reaction (fear and loathing)," and the value to -15)

Hunted: own ninja clan (or organized crime group) 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching) -10
(this Hunted is appropriate for a ninja who's loyal to his clan [or for modern ninja, his organized crime group]; you can change its value by changing the frequency)

Social Limitation: Ninja (Occasionally, Severe) -15

(this Disadvantage is only appropriate for martial arts campaigns set in Japan's feudal period)
[[END BOX]]

<2> THE SAMURAI

The *samurai* were part of the military caste in historical Japan. There were retainers in service to Japanese nobles, trained in the use of the sword, spear, naginata, and bow. They tended to be in excellent physical condition and were expected to lay down their lives for their lord at any time.

Because samurai ranged from simple retainers to military commanders, a samurai character is not required to purchase any martial arts maneuvers as part of the Package Deal. Basic samurai just have Weapon Familiarities and Combat Skill Levels; more skilled samurai generally buy maneuvers from specific martial arts styles, such as Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Naginatajutsu, or Sojutsu. Though it's not required by the Package Deal, most samurai learn a martial arts style.

Women could become samurai, and were bound by the same rules and duties that governed the men. Historically, women did not fight in battles, but there are plenty of warrior women in Japanese cinema and anime. Traditionally, female samurai tend to prefer the naginata to the katana.

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At the end of the nineteenth century, during the Meiji Restoration, the samurai class was disbanded. However, most of the fighting arts of the samurai have survived into the twentieth century, and there are modern Japanese who consider themselves to be samurai in the old tradition.

Both feudal-era and modern day samurai and *ronin* (masterless samurai) may, but do not have to, take any of the optional Disadvantages. A ronin character should only take the Code Of The Bushi if he intends to find a master, or drifts from master to master and behaves as a true samurai when employed by those masters. A modern-day samurai does not have to learn Riding.

In campaigns that limit a character to 25 points of Disadvantages from any one Disadvantage category, the character who takes both Codes only receives 25 points for them instead of 40.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> FEUDAL JAPANESE MILITARY TITLES

The military caste of Japan was known as the *buke*. Men of the *buke* were *bushi*, which means “warrior.” Specific bushi were the *ashigaru* (“fast legs”), who served as spearmen and foot soldiers; the *doshin* and *yoriki*, who were policemen; and the *samurai* (the word comes from the root *saburau*, meaning “to serve”). There were masterless samurai known as *ronin* (“wave man”). These were usually men who had been banished from service, or had been on the losing side of a battle and no longer had a lord to serve. *Ronin* typically turned mercenary, selling their swords to who ever would pay them, or became bandits.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> SAMURAI PACKAGE DEAL

Skills Cost

Fringe Benefit: Kirisutogomen (License to Kill Lower Classes) 10

Combat Skill Levels (8 points’ worth; player’s choice) 8

Riding 3

WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons 4

9 points’ worth of Skills from the following list: 9

Acting, Breakfall, Fast-Draw, High Society, a Knowledge Skill at a 12- roll (Calligraphy, Classical Japanese Literature, Dancing, Divination, Gardening, Go, Hawking, Mon, Healing, Music, Painting, Poetry, Siege Warfare, Tea Ceremony, Woodcut Art), PS: Teacher (INT Roll), Tactics, Weaponsmith

Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation: Code Of Vengeance: Must Avenge All Insults To Self And Lord (Common, Total) -20

Total cost: 14

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Optional Skills

Martial Arts Maneuvers (10 points' worth; choose from Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Naginatajutsu, Sojutsu) 10

KS: Specific Martial Art 11- 2

Optional Disadvantages

Distinctive Features: Samurai Bearing (Concealable With Major Effort, Is Noticed and Recognizable) -10

Distinctive Features: Style -10

Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Bushi (Common, Total) -20

[[BOX END]]

<chapter> **CHAPTER THREE:**
BLOOD AND STEEL: COMBAT

When the opponent expands, I contract, when he contracts, I expand, and when there is an opportunity, I do not hit — it hits all by itself.

—Bruce Lee, *Enter The Dragon*

Obviously, the martial arts genre emphasizes fighting — ranging from one-on-one duels of skill and speed, to battles between entire teams or armies of trained warriors. This chapter contains information, optional rules, and rules variants to help you simulate the fast-paced nature of martial arts genre combat. You should also consult Chapter Three of UMA for additional information and ideas.

<1> **ROLEPLAYING COMBAT**

Martial arts combat has several aspects which you can bring out in the game not only by purchasing special abilities or altering the rules, but in how you roleplay characters. See UMA, page 144, for more suggestions about roleplaying martial arts combat.

<4> **FAST AND FURIOUS MOVEMENT**

Combat in the martial arts action genre involves lots of movement. Depending on the specific campaign, the characters involved may fly, leap, or run about constantly, all the while exchanging kicks, punches, and sword strokes with almost wild abandon. This excess of movement also allows characters to fight not only on the ground, but on rooftops, along the tops (and sides) of walls, amid tree branches or stands of bamboo, and even in mid-air. The combatants may move so quickly their arms, legs, and even entire bodies become a blur as they strike, block, and dodge their way through an encounter.

Thus, if you want to properly simulate the martial arts genre, characters must move around a lot and react quickly to situations. Given the nature of roleplaying games, it's easier to do the former than the latter, but a good roleplayer can do both.

One way to encourage movement during a combat is to remove or alter certain rules dealing with movement. Besides the suggestions for Leaping on page ???, the GM could allow characters to purchase additional inches of movement with the Limitation *Only To Make Half Moves In Combat* (-1). If a character buys enough inches to equal his normal movement, he can then make "Half Moves" equal to his normal Full Move and still attack. However, this ability does not allow a character to make two "Half Moves" equal to double his normal Full Move — it simply helps you to simulate the sort of "run-and-gun" style of fighting common to the martial arts genre.

There are several other ways to get characters moving. First, enforce the rules on weapon lengths. Characters who hope to inflict OCV penalties on their foes need to keep them at the right ranges, and this means backing up as their foes advance (see page 164 of UMA). Second, encourage characters to buy Martial Maneuvers with the Full Move or Half Move Required elements, perhaps by reducing the cost of the former and/or increasing the value of the latter. Third, rule that all uses of Acrobatics or Breakfall to avoid Throw damage, Knockback, or the like require the character to move at least 1" in the direction of the throw/blow. Fourth, provide bonuses to characters who make at least a Half Move in a Phase, such as +1 OCV or -3 to attempts to use Analyze Style against them.

<4> **FLASHY STUNTS**

Martial arts combats are also full of extensive acrobatic stunts and flashy techniques. Naturally, since roleplaying games are not a visual medium, simulating this effect requires the GM and players to roleplay their combats to a greater degree than they otherwise might. Instead of saying "I'm using my Offensive Strike," or even "I'm going to kick him," you should think about using flashier, more flavorful descriptions: "After blocking Jade Tiger's kick with her forearm, Sakura is going to spin down close to the ground and sweep kick Jade Tiger's feet out

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from under her!” This makes a fight easier to visualize, which in turn makes it more dramatic and more fun for everyone. In some cases, a good description may even earn a character a Surprise Move bonus.

Nor should you limit your descriptions to HTH Combat. Characters in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns are notorious for announcing the name of almost *anything* they do, whether it’s their fighting style, their current “stance” (*i.e.*, fighting technique or special power), or a signature move (such as a blast of energy). To maintain the spirit of the genre, you should proclaim the names of your character’s attacks and special maneuvers as you use them. Cries of “Grass Running Stance,” “Sword Energy,” “Hadoken,” and “Roaring Lion Bullet” should be part of the standard dialogue in any *Ninja Hero* combat.

Of course, for those who truly wish to capture the flavor of such fights, don’t forget other classic “taunt lines” such as “Ha! Your Shaolin Fist is no match for my Praying Mantis style!” Gloating is almost required for most Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaign villains, and GMs can have a lot of fun roleplaying such characters.

To further encourage dramatic actions and wild stunts, GMs shouldn’t penalize players for trying something out of the ordinary. For example, if a player wants his character to leap through a window, roll to his feet, and attack a nearby opponent, then the GM should only require an Acrobatics roll to make it through the window and an Attack Roll to hit the target. Gamemasters who wish for an even faster combat and a great degree of in-character gymnastics may simply ask for an Attack Roll. Similar stunts, such as a character tossing a weapon into the air, punching a target, and then catching the falling weapon, or a character using his staff to pole-vault across the battlefield and land with both feet on a target, could be accomplished with either a simple DEX Roll or even a GM declaration of “Okay, Li Ping jams the end of his staff into the ground, leaps over the line of on-coming Manchu soldiers and comes crashing down on the shoulders of Chen Fa. Make an Attack Roll.” An important rule for GMs to remember is “Don’t penalize players for attempting cool and exciting visual stunts.”

<1> COMMON COMBAT EFFECTS, STUNTS, AND TACTICS

Drunken Boxing? Only so-so.

—John, *Drunken Master II*

This section takes a look at some of the stunts, tactics, and other effects common to martial arts genre combats, and how you can simulate them with the *HERO System*. You should also refer to Chapter Three of UMA for more information.

<3> Aerial Fighting

Characters in Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns who can leap great distances, or even fly, may engage in mid-air battles high above the ground. Despite the lack of footing, these characters can deliver blows with the same degree of force as if they were standing on the ground. In such campaigns, do not subtract damage or impose any CV penalties for characters fighting in mid-air.

However, some Combat and Martial Maneuvers are far less effective in aerial combat. Any maneuver that damages the target through impact with the ground (such as a Throw) obviously won't cause any harm, though a character could still physically move a target with such a maneuver (perhaps hurling him *toward* the ground so that he'll hit it eventually). See pages 152-53 of UMA for more information on Throws.

Similar to aerial fighting is fighting on some sort of narrow object, such as a stack of benches, a long length of rope or chain, or on top of a forest of tall posts. For the most part, you can treat this type of fight the same as one occurring in mid-air.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> SPEEDING UP COMBAT

One simple way to speed up combats is declare that when PCs fight low-level opposition (known as minions, mooks, agents, or “stunt monkeys”), their blows always do a standard amount of damage (e.g., average damage [3.5 points per die]). Use the Minion Control Sheet on page 42 of the *HERO System Resource Kit* to easily keep track of the damage each minion takes.

Similarly, characters with Autofire or Area Of Effect attacks should only make one damage roll. All targets hit by the attack take the same amount of damage. You can apply the same principle if a lot of minions hit a single character with the same attack.

See also *Nine Ways To Speed Up Combat* on page 252 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> An Army of One

A classic feature of martial arts films is the scene where one man takes on a virtual army of foes, cutting a path through them like a harvester through a field of wheat. Although exciting

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visually, this sort of scene is hard to play out in a game — any combat dealing with large numbers of minions can take a long time. Here are some ways to simulate this type of battle:

Option One: The GM simply describes the action until the characters reach an important plot point (such as encountering a major villain), at which point combat begins per the normal rules. This is fast and dramatic, but may frustrate players who want to show off their characters' abilities.

Option Two: If a PC's Attack Roll hits a DCV equal to twice or more the DCV of a target minion, the minion is automatically taken out of the fight without the need for a damage roll. For example, if a PC faces a DCV 5 minion and his Attack Roll would hit DCV of 10 or greater, the minion is knocked unconscious (or killed, if appropriate). This works best for minions that have DCVs between 3 and 6.

Alternately, the GM could set the "automatic take-out" threshold at some other number, such as DCV +3, DCV +5, or three times DCV.

Option Three: Rate minions by the number of hits needed to take them out. Really weak minions are knocked out by a single hit; tougher ones require two or three hits. This method saves the trouble of rolling damage, but the drawback is it doesn't account for the damage capabilities of a PC's attacks. Alternately, perhaps a one-hit minion gets removed from the fight by any successful Attack Roll, a two-hit minion by any Attack Roll made by 2 or more, and a three-hit minion by any Attack Roll made by 4 or more.

Option Four: Reducing a minion to 0 Stun removes him from the combat for good; reducing a minion to 0 BODY kills him. Furthermore, minions never get Recoveries (though they can recover from being Stunned).

<3> Coordinating Attacks and Tactics

Taking the idea of the Coordinating Attack rule (see page 249 of the *HERO System Rulebook*) one step further, characters (both players and NPCs) can increase their combat effectiveness by not only coordinating their attacks, but their tactics. By delaying until two characters can attack at once, or switching opponents suddenly, characters may be able to get the GM to grant an OCV bonus for a Surprise Move.

An example of this sort of maneuver would be for one character with a chain weapon to try to entangle an opponent's weapon so the character's partner can attack the virtually weaponless foe. Other examples include one character performing a leg sweep, followed by a second character using a kick on the downed opponent; characters striking both high and low at once, making their attacks much more difficult to block; moving against a foe to get him to strike first, at which point one character Blocks and his companion attacks; characters fighting back to back who suddenly turn around to fight their partner's former foe; blinding a foe with a fistful of sand right before a companion attacks; and so on.

This sort of tactic has been used many times in the martial arts genre as a way for two characters to defeat a more powerful foe. It's also a way for a team of fairly low-powered NPC

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martial artists to harass and defeat a team of powerful player characters.

<3> **Fragile World**

When two (or more) Anime and Wuxia campaign martial artists decide to fight, the landscape usually suffers. The powers exhibited by such characters can be very destructive, and it is quite common to see trees shattered, boulders split, and houses flattened in the course of a fight. There are a number of ways to simulate this effect, including lowering the DEF and BODY of everyday objects or giving everything a 2 x BODY Vulnerability to attacks by the PCs and major NPCs.

<3> **I'm Not Dead Yet...**

Martial artist heroes are an incredibly hardy lot (the villains even more so). In many cases, the heroes survive incredible amounts of physical abuse, and can keep fighting long after they should rightfully be dead. You can simulate this effect by purchasing extra BODY with the Limitation *Only to Stave Off Point of Death* (-2). Extra BODY bought this way has no effect on the character other than to determine if the character is really dead or not.

Example: *Swordmaster Tai-Sheng Zeng, an evil eunuch, has a base BODY of 15 and +10 BODY bought with the "Only to Stave Off Point of Death" Limitation. Normally, he would be dead if his BODY score is reduced to -15, but with the extra Body he must be at -25 BODY to finally die. However, this extra BODY has no effect on his Stun score or the effects of Impairing or Disabling damage.*

Although this power can make it hard to tell if an opponent is really done for, the martial arts genre has kindly given us a sure-fire method to know if a character has received a fatal wound or not. Once a character, either a hero or a villain, starts to spit up blood, then his days are numbered. Gamemasters should remember this common genre cliché when describing how injured a character is.

<3> **Knockback**

Certain attacks in the martial arts genre do devastating amounts of Knockback. In at least one Japanese anime, it is not uncommon to see a character hurled almost to the horizon by a punch or energy blast. To simulate this effect for Wuxia and Anime campaigns, GMs may want to consider replace the 3d6 roll for Knockback when using a Martial Maneuver in favor of the standard 2d6 roll.

If the campaign uses the standard Knockback rules (and rolls), GMs should remember 3d6 is rolled for Knockback only when using a Martial Maneuver, and not for a power bought to represent a martial arts technique.

<3> **Multiple-Power Attacks**

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Multiple-Power attacks (*HERO System 5th Edition*, page 234) are common in the martial arts genre. Here are some additional rules to clarify them and make them more useful in *Ninja Hero* campaigns.

<5> **The Same Power**

For purposes of a Martial Arts-based multiple-Power attacks, STR (the basis for martial combat) does not count as “the same Power,” provided the Maneuvers or attacks based on it are reasonably distinguishable. A Maneuver that causes damage (such as Legsweep) is reasonably distinguishable from one using the Exert basis (such as Martial Disarm) in most instances. Two Maneuvers that simply cause damage (Offensive Strike and Martial Strike, for example) generally are not, but the final decision is up to the GM based on the characters, the situation, and other such factors.

As a rule of thumb, GMs may wish to rule as follows: Martial Maneuver multiple-Power attacks cannot include more than one Maneuver with the *Strike* Basis, and can include only one Maneuver with each of the following Bases: Bind, Disarm, Exert, Flash, Grab Weapon, Grab Opponent, Strike, Throw. Thus, characters can combine two or more Martial Maneuvers in a multiple-Power attack to achieve an interesting combat effect, but not necessarily just to cause a lot of damage.

<5> **Multiple-Power Attacks And Sweep**

Multiple-Power attacks may seem like a better deal to characters than Sweep, since they don’t come with the same penalties and restrictions. If you want to “level the playing field” to encourage PCs to select the right form of attack for *dramatic* purposes instead of just based on tactical considerations, restrict multiple-Power attacks the same way: for each Power or Maneuver added to the multiple-Power attack, there’s a cumulative -2 OCV penalty; multiple-Power attacks take a Full Phase; and using one halves the character’s DCV.

<5> **Defensive Actions**

The standard rule is that characters cannot include a defensive action (such as Block or Missile Deflection) in a multiple-Power attack, or perform a multiple-Power attack consisting solely of defensive actions. However, in some of the wilder *Ninja Hero* campaigns, GMs may want to consider allowing this.

<5> **Increasing Damage**

If a character has Combat Skill Levels which apply to all the Powers or Maneuvers he includes in a multiple-Power attack, he can use them to increase the damage of all the attacks, per the standard rules for adding damage with CSLs.

A character’s Extra DCs bought for his Martial Arts apply to all Martial Maneuvers used in a multiple-Power attack. They do not apply to standard Combat Maneuvers.

<5> **Knockback**

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To determine Knockback for a multiple-Power attack, determine the Knockback for each attack used, and then apply only the best result. For example, if a character used two separate Martial Strikes in a multiple-Power attack, and one did 6” Knockback and the other 3” Knockback, the target takes 6” Knockback.

<4> COMBO MOVES

Characters in Video Game settings often have multiple-hit “combo moves” that allow them to combine two or more forms of attack. Each combo typically has its own name and visual effect. Some characters in other wild martial arts genres have similar abilities, though they’re not as flashy.

To simulate this in *HERO System* terms, a character who wants to have a Combo Move must define (and name) a specific multiple-Power attack. In most subgenres, Combos just include Martial Maneuvers and related special techniques, but in Video Game and Anime campaigns characters can work powers like *Ch’i Blast* into the mix.

At the GM’s option, a character may also be allowed to Link a Movement Power to his Combo. That way he can leap, run, or teleport up to the target as he makes the attack. However, he gets no velocity bonus to damage for the Linked movement.

In most cases, a character with a Combo buys a Combat Skill Levels with it; this is a 3-point CSL. Characters typically announce the names of their Combos when they perform them; in some cases, this may even be a requirement to use the power (*i.e.*, an Incantation).

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> COMBO NAMES

Here are some colorful names for attacks and special techniques; characters can use them for Combos and other abilities:

Aurora Revolution
Buddha Palm
Dancing Sword
Darling Destroyer Girl
Essence Absorbing Stance
Flaming Dragon Dance
Grass Running Stance
Hadoken (Wave Motion Fist)
Kamehameha
No Shadow Kick
Shaolin Fist
Shermie Spiral
Shun Goku Satsu (Instant Hell Murder)
Springing Sword
Sword Energy

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Ultimate Uncontrollable Child
Whirlwind Blow

...and the author's two personal favorites:

Hisshou-Burai-Ken (Certain Victory Trusting In Nobody But Myself Fist)

Super Vegita Big Bang Attack

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> **Retraining And Style Invention**

A common plot in the martial arts genre is one where the hero, a capable martial artist, fights an opponent with a unique or unusual style, or who is simply far better than the hero expected. The hero suffers defeat, often taking a grievous beating in the process. At this point, the hero retreats, heals his wounds, and enters into a phase of extreme training, usually developing a new style or technique with which to defeat his opponent.

Although this is easy to handle from a storytelling point of view, it's more difficult to deal with in game mechanics terms. Story-wise, the hero goes out, finds someone to train him in a new style of technique (or develops the maneuvers on his own), returns and defeats the villain. Nothing could be easier, right?

Within the context of the game, and the game's plot, the GM needs to decide exactly what retraining entails. Is the character learning a new style, or just a new maneuver or technique? Does the player want to restructure his character? In most cases, retraining involves the character gaining new abilities, which cost Character Points. So, where does the character get the points to spend?

In a game with a limited number of play sessions, the GM can hand out a set number of points (or even a set group of maneuvers and techniques) at a specific point in the game. The PCs use the points to buy new maneuvers or powers, defining the process as "re-training."

In a long-term campaign, the GM can use the same method, or he can withhold some Experience Points, building up a "pool" until the time comes for the characters to spend these points on a new set of powers.

Gamemasters may also want to consider fudging things a bit when the heroes meet a new villain with some mythical style that can't be beaten. Simply have anyone fighting the villain do so at -8 OCV and -8 DCV. With penalties like this, just about any character loses quickly. Once the PCs have fallen to the villain's style, they can seek out someone who trains them to fight against this unstoppable style. When they next meet their adversary, they no longer suffer that -8 CV penalty. Here, the retraining is simply part of the story, with no Experience Points spent.

<5> **Developing a New Style**

Sometimes, as part of the retraining process, players may want to have their characters develop an entirely new style. If so, let them, as such plot points form the basis of entire movies. This may involve building an entirely new style using the rules in UMA, or simply selecting appropriate Martial Maneuvers from the standard list.

When a character first uses his new style, he should enjoy a certain degree of success.

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The GM should, for that one game or encounter, be generous with Surprise Move bonuses and other benefits; enemies with Analyze Style shouldn't discover anything about the character's new technique (yet). These advantages fade quickly, as people learn about the character's new fighting abilities — and of course, the GM can turn the tables on the PCs, applying the same rules to villains who retrain....

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **TRAINING SCENES**

Some of the films featuring retraining and the development of a new style as a central plot element include:

The Blade, in which the main character develops a new sword style to compensate for his missing arm;

Fist Of Legend, in which the hero combines Chinese and Japanese martial arts in a loose homage to the ideas of Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do style;

Last Hero In China, in which Chinese folk hero Wong Fei Hong develops a "chicken" style (complete with costume) to defeat a rival's "centipede style" at a local lion dance (it looks as silly as it sounds);

The Prodigal Son, in which the main character is taught Wing Chun to improve his self-esteem; and

Tai Chi Master, in which a Shaolin monk develops the art of Tai Ch'i Ch'uan to overthrow a brutal warlord.

Some films, such as *Bloodsport* and *The Karate Kid*, deal with training in a fairly realistic (or at least logical) manner. Most Wuxia and Anime films, however, have the characters engage in almost impossible training exercises. Examples include swirling the water inside a huge pottery urn until the urn shatters, standing in the middle of blowing cloud of leaves and forming them into a tight ball, or (for the truly outlandish), working out in a room capable of generating a gravitational field of 100 Gs!

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> **Secret Techniques**

Almost as common as the Retraining plot is the "secret technique" gimmick, where the character reveals an unexpected power. In this case, the character doesn't go out and learn a new technique, he simply reveals something he knew all along, but never bothered to use before. Usually, this new knowledge takes the form of a different fighting style or an entirely new ability.

For villains and other NPCs, the GM simply has the character display his new

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technique(s). For PCs, it's not quite so easy. Either the GM has to allow players to spend Experience Points in mid-game to buy new abilities (which may cause game balance problems), or the player has to keep some of his character's abilities secret so he can reveal them at an appropriate moment.

<3> **Signature Moves**

Many martial artist characters have some sort of specific maneuver or "signature move" they perform before combat or during a pause in the fighting. Normally, this move helps the character relax and center his concentration. But it can also signal that the character's very angry, or taking the matter at hand very seriously — in short, it's a visual indicator the character's about to unleash a lot of violence on his opponent. Bruce Lee probably has the most famous signature move, in which he brushes his fingers against a recently received bloody cut or scrape, tastes the blood, and then attacks his foe with newly energized fury.

Characters who want to have a similar signature move should buy Combat Skill Levels (or Hand-To-Hand Attack Dice) with Limitations such as: *Only If Wounded* (the ability only works if the character has suffered BODY damage at some point during the current battle; -1/4); *Only After Taking A Wound* (character must activate the ability in the first available Phase after taking BODY damage from an attack; -1/2); *Gestures* (the touching of the wound and licking of blood, peeling off one's shirt, cracking one's knuckles, or something similar); and *Requires A Martial Arts Tricks Roll* (-1/2).

<3> **Staredowns and Taunts**

In ancient Japan it was said two samurai might meet for a duel, stare at each other for some time, and then one would turn and leave, conceding victory to his opponent without ever drawing his sword. In genre films, when two martial artists meet, there may be a moment where each fighter looks at the other in a similar manner, their attempts at visual intimidation sometimes aided by such gestures as the cracking of their knuckles, a slow stretch, or the deliberate assuming of a fighting stance. Video fighting game designers, who seem to think anything worth doing in a game is worth over-doing, have added various visual and vocal taunts; some of which actually do damage, while others are there simply to aggravate foes and demonstrate a player's skill (*i.e.*, "I can pause and taunt you, and still block your next shot!").

In game terms, you can handle staredowns and taunts — which add a lot of flavor to an encounter — in several ways. Most are simple Presence Attacks, with additional dice gained from such factors as having a *Reputation* Perk (for example "famous swordsman"), a demonstration of a power (a *kiai* shout, smashing an object with a blow, or a quick weapon kata), or a brief soliloquy. The scene in which two samurai meet is probably best handled purely by roleplaying the scene out, as no single die roll can foretell the outcome of any combat.

For greater complexity, the GM may want to consider using the following rules when dealing with taunts and staredowns:

<4> **OPTIONAL STAREDOWN/TAUNT RULES**

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A Staredown occurs either at the beginning of a combat or during a lull in the fighting. Two characters must stand facing each other (or slowly pace around each other), their gazes never wavering from each other's faces. After a period of silent staring (at least one Phase), one of the two people engaged in the Staredown initiates an attack and battle is joined. Staredowns are often an excellent time for a character to use a Signature Move (see above).

Characters in Staredown engage in a Skill Versus Skill Contest using PRE Rolls (bonuses from appropriate *Reputation* Perks apply). If desired, you can modify a character's PRE Roll in the same manner as a Presence Attack: each +1d6 equals +1 to the roll. The winner receives +1 OCV and +1 DCV on his next Phase, regardless of whether he makes an attack or defends himself. (Alternately, the winner may receive +1 OCV and +1 DCV per point by which he beats his opponent's roll, to a maximum of +3 OCV and +3 DCV). If the two characters have their next Phases in the same Segment, the winner also gets to go before his opponent, regardless of relative DEX.

A character engaged in a staredown may break away before it comes to the contest of Presence Rolls. If so, he suffers -2d6 on all Presence Attacks, and -2 on all Interaction Skill rolls involving attempts to impress people, for the rest of the scene against all who witnessed the abortive staredown.

It's a convention of the genre that other people do not attack characters engaged in a staredown. If an outsider attacks a character in a staredown, the target is at -1 DCV for the first attack, but normal DCV thereafter if he breaks away from the staredown and engage the person who attacked him. If he breaks away due to an attack, he does not suffer the penalties outlined above.

A Taunt is any quick verbal insult, often accompanied by a visual gesture. Taunts work just like Staredowns, but with fewer modifiers. If the Taunt takes advantage of a character's Psychological Limitation, it gets a bonus. If it's contrary to a Psychological Limitation, the character has a Psychological Limitation such as *Naive* or *Doesn't Understand Subtleties*, or the character doesn't understand the Taunt for some reason, the taunter suffers a penalty. At the GM's option, the target of a Taunt gets to make a Retort before the dice are rolled, and may obtain his own bonuses (or penalties) from it.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> STAREDOWN EXAMPLE

Johnny Chung is battling the guards of the evil Dr. Tang when he gains a moment's respite. As he picks up a pair of nunchaku, he spies one of the Doctor's guards getting ready to rush him. He decides to try to break the guard's fighting resolve with a Staredown. He holds the nunchaku out in front of him and then quickly engages in a blindingly fast kata with the weapon, whipping it around his body (the GM has him make a DEX Roll to show how good he is, and he makes the roll by 8). At the end of his demonstration, he freezes in a combat stance, adding in a little kiai shout for extra measure. The guard, for his part, readies his own weapon, a short jo, and waits for an opening.

Johnny has a 20 PRE (13-). The GM decides he has a strong reputation (the guards were told to take no chances when dealing with him) (+1), the guard has just seen him take out four fellow

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guards (+2), and he has just exhibited an excellent nunchaku kata (+1). The guard, for his part, has a PRE of 13, and is alone (-1). Johnny has a PRE Roll of 17-, while the guard has a PRE Roll of 11-. Johnny rolls a 9, making his roll by 8, while the guard rolls a 13, missing his roll by 2. Johnny beat his opponent by 10, and on his next Phase, he'll be at +1 OCV and DCV (or, using the alternate rule, +3 OCV and DCV).
[[END SIDEBAR]]

<5> **Strength in Numbers**

If a single person attempts a Staredown or Taunt against a crowd, or two opposing groups attempt to Stare each other Down, the GM may want to consider dropping the flat -1 modifier for being outnumbered. Instead, the larger group gets a +1 bonus if it has twice as many people as the smaller group, with an additional +1 for every doubling thereafter. The maximum bonus obtained by doubling numbers this way is +10.

For Staredowns involving groups, roll the dice once for a group, using the group's leader's PRE.

<3> **The Use Of Weapons**

The martial arts deal with more than just unarmed combat techniques; the use of weapons is central to many martial arts styles. Wandering swordsmen are common characters in both Chinese and Japanese adventures, and Kung Fu masters duel with staves just as often as bare hands. In a Video Game campaign, characters may be armed with virtually anything, ranging from more normal weapons such as swords, spears, or warfans, to anchors, pool cues, or a metal abacus.

Depending on the nature of the campaign, the GM may allow the players to carry weapons. Any weapons should either be selected from a pre-generated list (such as the one on pages 168-72 of UMA) or approved by the GM before play.

<4> **UNUSUAL WEAPONS**

The martial arts genre also features inventive characters turning some highly unusual objects into makeshift weapons. Furniture — especially benches, chairs, ladders and small tables — makes a good impromptu weapon. Many characters use fans and umbrellas, and a popular weapon for female characters is length of cloth (be it a ribbon, a scarf, or a strip of silk). In short, skilled fighters can, and will, use almost any everyday object as a weapon, and in many cases the item is just as effective in combat as an actual weapon!

Most characters pick up and use many of these “weapons” during a fight, discarding them once the fight ends. In other cases, the character carries his unusual weapon at all times; it may even be his preferred weapon of choice. See page 114 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and the “Use Art With Stuff” example on page ??? of this book for more information on how to handle such “non-weapon” weapons. In sufficiently cinematic campaigns, GMs may eliminate penalties for using non-weapon weapons altogether.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MARTIAL ARTS COMBAT CLICHÉS**

There are several “bits” or scenes common to martial arts movies and adventures. Although they don’t have any real effect mechanics-wise, GMs should be aware of them, and consider ways to incorporate them into combats. They include:

Enemy minions who seem to wait in line to be hit.

Enemy minions who attack in small numbers (say, two to four), making it easier for the hero to defeat them.

Major villains (*i.e.*, “bosses”) who wait until *after* the hero has defeated their minions before entering the fray (note this isn’t a given in all fights). A corollary to this is the “Thug Rule” — the heroes must defeat all the minor minions before they take on the major villains; they’re not allowed to charge past the minions to get at the Big Bad Guy.

The heroes thoroughly trounce the main villain in the first part of a battle, only to have him fight more effectively (or demonstrate a new technique) and trounce the heroes in return. Depending on when this occurs (*i.e.*, early in the adventure or at the climax), the heroes may then reveal a secret technique of their own and defeat the villain anyway, or have to go for re-training so they can confront him again and wipe away the humiliation of their defeat.

Although hand-to-hand weapons are an important element of the genre, firearms aren’t. In modern settings, guns either are not used (*i.e.*, no one has any), or anyone with a gun is suddenly disarmed (or runs out of bullets without hitting anything), forcing everyone to fight hand-to-hand. As a corollary, heroes can sometimes get their foes to drop their guns and fight hand-to-hand by challenging them to just such a fight.

If people decide to use their guns anyway, it usually ends up being a waste of ammunition. Minions armed with guns (or bows, for that matter) usually can’t hit anything but scenery.

Even though guns are useless, minions often have a stash of them somewhere. This effect is also common in period settings, where the enemy seems able to produce a whole cache of swords, spears, staves, and other weapons seemingly from nowhere.

The aged and infirm-looking old master never is. He may not be able to travel about the countryside fighting evil anymore, but he can still beat the stuffing out of the average hero.

Dying characters spit up blood, signalling that there’s no way for them to avoid their fate.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<1> SPECIAL CASES AND OPTIONAL RULES

Fumio Funakoshi: *What fist is this?*

Chen Zhen: *Don't ask. It's a good fist if it wins.*

—*Fist of Legend*

This section includes various rules designed to add color and excitement to any *Ninja Hero* campaign. As with any other optional rules, the GM should consider them carefully before allowing them in play, and players should check with the GM to see if he permits them. See also the rules on pages 154-66 of UMA.

<3> Damage In *Ninja Hero* Campaigns

On page 270, the *HERO System 5th Edition* rules state that a character cannot more than double the Damage Classes of a base attack. This rule affects the damage done by Martial Maneuvers in a major way, as the base attack in this case is the character's base STR. For example, a 10 STR character (2 DCs) using an Offensive Strike (+4 DCs) can only do 4d6 of damage.

Ninja Hero campaigns alter this rule to declare that the damage added by the basic Martial Maneuver counts as base damage. That way, a character of any STR gets the full benefit from any Martial Maneuver, which is much more in keeping with the "flavor" of the martial arts genre. However, GMs should still examine very low STR or high STR characters carefully to ensure they're not abusive.

<3> Breaking Weapons

Weapons often break in the martial arts genre; legend even has it the three-section staff was created after a monk had his staff broken in two places, leaving him with three pieces.

Weapons have a total DEF equal to their Active Points divided by 5 (meaning most have DEF equal to their total DCs). Damage which exceeds this DEF removes one "Power" from the weapon — typically its primary form of attack (which is often the only Power it's built with). For example, exceeding the DEF of a spear usually means the shaft has been broken, rendering it almost useless.

A character can specifically target a weapon at -6 OCV for Small weapons (daggers, sais), -4 for Medium weapons (most swords), and -2 for Large weapons (most polearms). (See the weapons table on pages 169-72 of UMA for the sizes of various martial arts weapons.) Just about any type of attack will do; *Ninja Hero* characters are often quite creative when it comes to devising methods for destroying weapons. A few examples include: chopping the wooden shafts of spears, pole weapons, and staves in half with a sword; using a knifehand strike to shatter an ax handle; using a chain whip to twist a sword blade into a knot; cutting a sword in half with a sword stroke of one's own; or using a *ch'i* blast to melt the blade of a weapon.

<4> OPTIONS FOR DAMAGING WEAPONS

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Normally, you should only worry about weapons breaking if a character specifically targets one — weapons don't break if used to attack, block, or the like. However, due to the often highly cinematic nature of the genre, GMs may want to consider a few optional ideas for weapons breakage.

<5> Damage From Attacking

When a character uses a weapon to attack, it could break if it delivers three times its DEF in BODY damage. For example, a 5 DEF sword would break if it ever did 15 BODY in a single attack (presumably the character put all of his STR behind the blow and snapped the weapon by hitting too hard). Naturally, the special effects of the target's defenses help determine if the weapon breaks. Doing 15 BODY to an unarmored man should rarely (if ever) break a weapon, doing 15 BODY to an iron door almost certainly would.

<5> Damage From Blocking

When blocking or parrying an attack, a weapon breaks if it takes more than twice its DEF in a single attack. As with attacks, this breakage depends on special effects. It's highly unlikely a club or staff will break a rope, while a sword could cut right through.

A subset of the breakage while parrying idea involves parrying attacks from extremely strong characters. If the "Casual Strength" of a character's attack (*i.e.*, half the Damage Classes) is more than the DEF of a weapon being used to parry the attack, the weapon breaks and the attack automatically hits the defending character full force.

Example: *Swordmaster Zeng fights with some rebellious Shaolin monks who don't care for his cruel methods of governing. Raising his sword, he brings it down in a vicious cut at the head of one monk. The monk brings up his staff in an attempt to block. Zeng, due to his great strength and skill, has an HKA 4d6 (12 Damage Classes). Half of this (6 DCs) is more than the DEF of the monk's staff (DEF 4), so Zeng cuts clean through the weapon and buries his sword in the monk. Once again, the road to overthrow oppression is paved with the blood of the valiant.*

<4> USING BROKEN WEAPONS

Breaking a weapon doesn't necessarily render it totally useless. A broken sword still has an edge, and chopping a staff in two simply creates two shorter staves. The GM should decide if a character can still use a damaged weapon, and if so, how effective it is. A broken weapon may do less damage than normal (from -1 DC to half damage [or less]), lose its OCV bonus (if any), and/or impose OCV penalties when used. Breaking a weapon could even change it: a staff requires WF: Staffs, but if chopped in two, it becomes more like a club or *hanbo* (WF: Clubs); a spear (WF: Polearms) that loses its head becomes a staff (WF: Staffs).

<3> Missile Deflection Variant

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In the Video Game subgenre, it's not unusual to see a character unleash some sort of energy blast to counter an opponent's similar ranged attack. Normally, the two attacks meet in the center of the screen (or close to it) and cancel each other out. In some video games, a character can try to overpower his opponent's blast with his own attack, not only destroying the incoming attack but sending his own energy blast onward to impact his foe. This sort of contest of power is also fairly common in Anime, where characters often try to overwhelm each other's attacks with special techniques.

Although you can roughly simulate this by buying the power Missile Deflection with the *Range Advantage*, in many cases the effects go beyond the mere canceling out of an incoming attack. Gamemasters desiring greater drama (at the expense of greater complexity) should consider the following rules for "Contests of Power."

<4> CONTEST OF POWER

A Contest Of Power can occur whenever two characters attack each other with some form of ranged attack they can maintain over time (*i.e.*, attacks with Charges or physical weapons may not work). A Contest Of Power can only occur in a one-on-one duel, or at an appropriately dramatic moment; it's too complex and time-consuming for regular combat use.

Use the following steps to determine the outcome of a Contest Of Power:

1. One character ("the Attacker") launches a ranged attack at another ("the Defender"). This attack can be an Energy Blast, a Ranged Killing Attack, or even such powers as Ego Attack or Telekinesis.
2. The Defender, who *must* have an Action available, decides if he wants to counter the attack with one of his own. The Defender can Abort to a Contest of Power only if he has a Phase in this Segment but his DEX has not yet occurred in the initiative order. The Defender cannot use any power with a longer *Extra Time* Limitation than the one the Attacker uses.
3. A Defender can only counter an incoming attack if his attack has a related special effect. The two attacks must have either similar special effects (such as *ch'i* [the default special effect for most martial arts settings], fire, magic, psychokinesis, or even generic "cosmic power"), or opposing special effects (a light-based attack versus a darkness-based one, or a flame bolt versus a blast of water or ice). The attacks used do *not* have to be based on the same power (*i.e.*, a character can counter an Energy Blast with an RKA or Telekinesis, he doesn't have to use another Energy Blast). However, it usually isn't possible for a character to counter an Ego Attack without having mental powers of his own. The special effects of an attack should determine if and how it can be contested.
4. Once both characters have declared their attacks, they make their Attack Rolls (including all modifiers for Combat Skill Levels, Spreading, and the like). The Attacker has to roll to hit the Defender's DCV, while the Defender has to roll to hit the Attacker's current OCV. If they both miss, there are no further effects. If one hits and the other misses, determine damage as normal. If both hit, the Contest of Power has begun. Since they both performed an attack this Phase,

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neither character may take further actions.

5. Once the Contest begins the point of impact for the two attacks is midway between the two participants (*i.e.*, if two characters 18" apart enter into a Contest Of Power, the starting point for the contest is 9" from each character). Alternately, the GM can place the point of impact closer to the character who made his Attack Roll by the least; subtract how much he made his roll by from how much the other character made his roll by, and move the impact point 1" per point closer to the "lesser" character.

Characters involved in a Contest Of Power are at 1/2 DCV due to strain and concentration and cannot move, even if the Contest Of Power takes more than one Phase. If a third character attacks one (or both) of the participants in a Contest Of Power, he may disrupt the Contest. If he does damage to a participant, but does not Stun him, Knock him Out, or do Knockback to him, the Contest continues as normal. If he Stuns him or Knocks him Out, the other participant's attack in the Contest automatically succeeds and hits the Stunned/Knocked Out character. If he does Knockback to a participant, the Contest ends without either character damaging his opponent.

If a character moves through the beams of energy or other effects of the Contest of Power, he takes damage from both effects, and the contest ends.

6. To determine the outcome of a Contest Of Power, each character rolls his dice of damage and counts the BODY in the usual manner for the type of attack used. The character with the higher BODY wins this Phase. The winner subtracts the loser's BODY total from his own, and then moves the point of impact that many inches toward the loser's hex. (Alternately, the GM can have the characters use Knockback done instead of BODY rolled.) Various Advantages and Limitations can affect this die roll; see below.

6a. Effect of Advantages:

Advantages not listed have no special application in a Contest Of Power.

Area Of Effect, Explosion: An Area Of Effect or Explosion attack cannot be opposed in a Contest Of Power, unless the opposing attack also has either the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantage. If a character uses an Area Of Effect/Explosion attack to contest a normal attack, determine the results normally, but add +1 BODY for every 1" of Radius/Cone/Line.

Autofire: An Autofire attack adds +1 BODY to the Contest result for every shot that hits.

Continuous: See Step 8 below.

Double Knockback: Double Knockback increases the number of DCs in an attack (and thus the number of dice rolled for damage) by 75% for purposes of a Contest Of Power.

Indirect: Generally, attacks with this Advantage cannot be opposed, or be used to oppose, in Contests Of Power, but the GM may allow it if the special effects and the situation are appropriate.

6b. Effect of Limitations:

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Limitations not listed have no special application in a Contest Of Power.

Beam, No Knockback: Characters cannot use attacks with these Limitations in a Contest Of Power. If used, they automatically fail.

Reduced By Range: An attack with this Limitation subtracts damage dice based on the distance between the character and the point of impact before rolling for the result of a Contest Of Power.

7. If the point of impact moves into a character's hex, his attack is overwhelmed. His opponent's attack automatically hits him, with damage determined normally. If the impact point remains somewhere between the two characters, they are in a stalemate and the Contest continues on the next Phase.

If at any point the BODY total for one blast is twice or more that of the other, the attack with the higher BODY total instantly overwhelms the other and goes on to hit its intended target automatically.

8. If the initial Contest Of Power ends in a stalemate, then the Contest continues. Characters roll on any Segment in which they both have an Action Phase, at the DEX of the character who moves first in that Segment (including Lightning Reflexes). If only one character has a Phase during a Segment, he automatically moves the Contest point 1" towards his opponent without rolling. An attack with the *Continuous* Advantage moves the Contest point 1" towards an opponent every Segment the opponent does not have a Phase (this 1" is not cumulative with the 1" obtained in Phases only the character has.)

Characters must spend END to keep the Contest Of Power going, but each of them spends this END only on his *opponent's* Phases. Character can Push their attacks if they wish, and can spend STUN as END if needed. A character can end a Contest Of Power voluntarily at anytime, either by accepting the attack, or executing a Dive For Cover on his Phase.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> CONTEST OF POWER EXAMPLES

Kayli the Destroyer (DEX 23, SPD 6) is engaged in combat with the equally unsavory Chiller (DEX 23, SPD 5), when Chiller unleashes an Energy Blast 12d6 based on *ch'i* energy. Kayli, not to be outdone, responds with a 14d6 *ch'i* blast of her own. Each rolls his Attack Roll, and succeeds in hitting his opponent. The Contest Of Power has begun.

Since the two warriors are standing 10" apart, the impact point is 5" away from either character. At this point both characters roll their dice. Chiller rolls only 10 BODY, while Kayli rolls 15 BODY. Kayli wins, and the impact point moves 5" towards Chiller, hitting him.

Now, assume both Kayli and Chiller had 12d6 EBs instead. Starting on Phase 12, Chiller rolls 12 BODY, while Kayli rolls 14. The impact point moves 2" towards Chiller. On Segment 2, Kayli's Phase, the impact point moves 1" closer to Chiller, while on Chiller's Phase in Segment 3, it

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moves 1" towards Kayli. On Kayli's Phase in Segment 4, it moves 1" back towards Chiller, while on Chiller's Phase 5 it moves 1" back towards Kayli. Finally, on Kayli's Phase in Segment 6, it moves 1" towards Chiller, and on Segment 8 Chiller and Kayli roll again, since they both have a Phase. Kayli rolls 12 BODY, while Chiller gets only 9 BODY. The impact point moves 3" towards Chiller, and on Kayli's Segment 10 her blast hits him, at which point he decides he'd rather not be in any more examples.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> Hit Locations

Most, if not all, *Ninja Hero* campaigns use the Hit Location rules (as well as the optional rules for Bleeding, Disabling, and Impairing) — in the martial arts genre, it's important to know not just that a character hits his opponent, but *where* he hits him.

Video Game campaigns are an exception. They rarely use the Hit Location rules; instead, any hit does general damage. Players are allowed to state where and how they're hitting someone ("I kick him hard in the stomach!"), but this is just for color — it has no game effect (unless the character accepts the usual OCV penalty and still makes his Attack Roll).

<4> AVOIDING LIMBS

In campaigns using the Hit Location rules, arms and legs tend to get hit a lot. Although you can explain this by citing the fact that characters usually perform blocks with these limbs, it's still frustrating for players who wish to put down an opponent quickly.

To avoid this problem, characters should attack the Chest location (-3 OCV) directly, which yields roughly average damage. Against minions, this works well, since the average character usually possesses enough CV that the -3 OCV doesn't cause any problems. Against more powerful enemies, this tactic may prove more difficult. Of course, three Targeting Skill Levels eliminates the penalty altogether, meaning the character can always do at least average damage to his foes when he hits.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **THIS GUY IS TOUGH!**

Some martial arts villains are strong and powerful that even blocking their blows can be exhausting. To simulate this, rule that the END required to Block his attacks equals the Damage Classes of the attack divided by two.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> Multiple Attackers Bonus

With very few exceptions, real world martial arts are fairly acrobatic and require room to maneuver. In wilder subgenres, martial arts are even more flamboyant. Thus, GMs should not use the Multiple Attackers Bonus (*HERO System 5th Edition*, page 251) in most *Ninja Hero* campaigns. At most three people can fight a single foe.

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<3> STR Minimum

Due to the nature of combat and weapons use in the martial arts genre, GMs should ignore the STR Minimum rules for *Ninja Hero* campaigns. Just about any martial arts hero can lift and use a weapon, no matter how heavy it is. (Characters can still add their STR to HA- and HKA-based weapons at the usual 5 STR per +1 DC rate.) Characters should buy *really* heavy weapons as Personal Foci, with the special effect being that only the weapon's owner can use it effectively due to years of extensive training.

<3> Sucker Attacks

Sometimes a character wants to trick an enemy into attacking him in such a way that the attack misses and accidentally hits one of the attacker's comrades. Usually a "sucker attack" like this involves sidestepping or dodging so that one character's blow strikes another character (it's particularly appropriate when two enemies try to Move Through the target from opposite angles!).

To make a sucker attack, the character has to have a Held Action available. He waits until the first attacker is just about to attack, then Dodges, Dives For Cover, or otherwise actively avoids the attack so the second attacker takes the hit instead. (The second attacker must be positioned in such a way that the first attacker can hit him; if not, the sucker attack automatically fails.) First, he must make a DEX Roll against the first attacker's DEX Roll to time his Dodge just right — if he fails, the first attacker's attack goes off before he Dodges. Second, the first and second attackers must be properly positioned so the first attacker could hit the second; if not, the sucker attack automatically fails. If the second attacker is "lined up" right, and if the first attacker's attack misses the character, the first attacker must make an Attack Roll using only his base OCV (as calculated from DEX, without Combat Skill Levels, maneuver bonuses, or the like) against the second attacker's DCV. If that roll succeeds, the second attacker takes the damage intended for the character.

<3> Sweep Variants

The Sweep maneuver is an essential element of the martial arts action genre. Striking two or more opponents with a single blow is a typical tactic (commonly associated with, among other things, the "Army Of One" stunt described on page ???). In Cinematic and wilder settings, striking one foe with multiple attacks, allowed as an option for Sweep, is common.

As written, Sweep requires a Full Phase, suffers a cumulative -2 OCV for each additional target beyond the first on all attacks, and leaves the attacker at 1/2 DCV. This works fine for most settings and genres, including Realistic martial arts, but may be too restrictive for Cinematic, Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime martial arts. The suggested options listed below make significant changes to Sweep for *Ninja Hero* games. Gamemasters should evaluate each option carefully, and if they find one they like, choose it (do not combine them).

Option One: Missing one target with Sweep does not mean you miss the following targets.

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(Some GMs may also want to apply this option to Multiple Move Bys.)

Option Two: Sweep requires only a Half Phase Action (in effect, all characters get Rapid Attack for HTH Combat for free). This option makes Sweep more versatile and powerful than Multiple Move By, especially in a lower-powered game where characters might not have large amounts of Flight or Leaping.

Option Three: Treat Sweep like a form of Autofire. Instead of taking a -2 to hit each target, the character rolls against the highest of all the targets' DCVs. If he succeeds, he hits the first target in line (not necessarily the target with the highest DCV); for every full 2 points by which he makes the roll, he hits an additional target, taking them in order. If the targets aren't all neatly lined up (for example, perhaps they're surrounding the character), the first target hit is the one with the lowest DCV, and the hits progress as DCVs rise so that the target with the highest DCV is the last person hit (and thus the person with the greatest chance to be missed). This version of Sweep is called "Wading Through," and works best for campaigns where characters frequently engage in HTH Combat against lots of minions.

Example: *Wong Fei Hong is surrounded by four members of the White Lotus cult. He has OCV 10 and the White Lotus cultists have DCV 6 each, so he needs a 15- to hit any given cultist. As Wong Fei Hong is in a hurry, he declares that he wants to Wade Through the cultists and rolls a 10, hitting three of the cultists (one at 15, one at 13 and the last at 11).*

You can also use this variant of Sweep for multiple Blocks or Missile Deflection rolls — just turn it around to represent a number of successful blocks, as opposed to hits.

<chapter> **CHAPTER FOUR:**

ENTER THE GM: GAMEMASTERING *NINJA HERO*

“If someone asked me what a human being ought to devote the maximum of his time to, I would answer, “Training.” Train more than you sleep.”

—Masutatsu Oyama

This chapter examines the art and science of GMing a *Ninja Hero* campaign. It discusses creating the campaign itself, how to mix in heroes and villains, and what to do with both types of characters to keep the action fresh and interesting.

Although this chapter is meant for GMs, players may wish to read through it as well, since doing so may further familiarize them with the nature and elements of the martial arts genre.

<1> CREATING THE CAMPAIGN

Every type of *HERO System* campaign differs, to greater or lesser degree, from other types in terms of what's required from the GM. This section of Chapter Four covers some considerations specific to *Ninja Hero* campaigns. Gamemasters interested in more ideas, suggestions, and tips for running any sort of *HERO System* game should consult the GMing chapters of the *HERO System 5th Edition*, *Champions*, and *Star Hero*.

<2> POWER LEVELS AND POINT CEILINGS

When you set out to create a *Ninja Hero* campaign, the most important question you must ask is: “How many points will PCs be built on?” The more points the characters have, the more Martial Maneuvers, Combat Skill Levels, Skills, and special abilities they can purchase, and thus the more powerful they'll be. That affects how they relate to the world around them, how easily other characters can oppose or thwart them, and the like. The more points characters have, the less “realistic” the campaign tends to become.

Character point totals also relate to the issue of point ceilings and effectiveness ceilings — restrictions you place on the number of Active Points or Damage Classes powers can have, the SPDs and CVs characters can have, and so forth. The higher these restrictions (if you choose to impose them at all), the less “realistic” your campaign.

How you resolve these issues depends on the style of campaign you want to run. A GM who wants a gritty “street-level” game in which the characters are Hong Kong street toughs needs to set very different standards than one running a campaign featuring PCs who are globe-trotting *ch'i*-powered superwarriors.

Generally, as one rises up the scale from a Realistic campaign to an Anime campaign, the power level of the PCs rises as well, while the power level of rest of the world stays the same:

—A Realistic martial artist might be able to fight maybe two or three (lesser-skilled) opponents at once, but would have to run from a large mob or a squad of soldiers.

—A Cinematic martial artist can easily tackle four or five (sometimes more) foes of lesser skill, and two or three of almost equal skill, and usually thinks nothing of wading into a small mob of untrained fighters. However, even a Cinematic hero cannot dodge bullets and would have to be wary of a squad of armed soldiers.

—A Wuxia martial artist can easily cut his way through a virtual army of foes. Bullets may (or may not) pose a problem, but anything else (such as arrows or thrown spears) he can cut out of the air or simply knock aside.

—A Video Game martial artist is at about same power level as the Wuxia warrior (maybe a little more powerful), but he usually has impressive *ch'i*-blasts and other “superpowers” that allow him to attack at range and perform other incredible feats.

—For an Anime martial artist, even bullets don't present a threat — generally the only

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thing a high-end Anime martial artist fears is another Anime martial artist.

You should also consider whether the PCs are the most powerful characters in their world, and if not, where they stand on the scale of power. Even in an Anime campaign, there's no guarantee that the characters' high point totals and power ceilings make them the most powerful people in the world. Normally, the idea is no matter how powerful *you* are, there is always someone else, tougher than you, out there — and usually that person is a villain (or if not, something prevents him from acting as a hero, so heroic tasks fall to the PCs). For example, villagers may ask a group of seven Realistic martial artists to defend a small village from a marauding gang of about 40 bandits. In a Wuxia game, those same seven heroes may have to deal with 200 bandits and several skilled warriors. In an Anime game, it might only be five heroes versus 700 bandits and a five commanders with powers and abilities equal to those of the PCs!

The descriptions of the five subgenres (pages ???-???) offer suggestions on possible point totals for characters and other matters. The accompanying tables summarize and supplement that information.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **NINJA HERO CHARACTER TYPES GUIDELINES TABLE**

Subgenre	Base Points	Maximum Points from Disadvantages	Maximum Points From Any One Category Of Disadvantage	Total
Realistic*	50-75	50-75	25	100-150
Cinematic*	100-125	100-125	25-40	200-250
Wuxia	150-200	100-150	50	250-350
Video Game	200	150	50	350
Anime	150-300	100-150	50-60	250-450

*: Normal Characteristic Maxima typically applies as a campaign ground rule.

[[END BOX]]

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **NINJA HERO CHARACTER ABILITY GUIDELINES TABLE**

Character Type	Char	SPD	CV	DC	Active Points	Skill Points	Skill Roll	Def/rDef
Realistic	8-20	2-4	2-7	2-8	15-50	10-75	8- to 13-	9/5
Cinematic	10-23	2-5	4-9	4-9	20-60	60-120	8- to 14-	11/6
Wuxia	10-35	3-9	6-12	6-12	40-80	75-150	11-to 16-	18/8
Video Game	10-40	3-10	7-13	6-14	40-80	75-150	11- to 16-	20/10
Anime	10-50	5-10	8-14	10-15	50-90	75-150	11- to 16-	23/12

Notes

Char: The typical range of characters' Primary Characteristics. Some Characteristics tend to be on the higher end of (or even outside) the range (STR for "brick" characters, for example), and some (such as EGO) are

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typically on the low end of the range.

SPD: The typical range of characters' SPDs.

CV: The typical range of characters' base Combat Values.

DC: The typical range of the Damage Classes in characters' attacks.

Active Points: The typical range of Active Points in characters' Powers.

Skill Points: The typical range of Character Points characters spend on Skills or Skill-like abilities.

Skill Roll: The typical range of Skill Rolls in characters' Skills.

Def/rDef: The typical level of the characters' Normal and Resistant Defenses.

[[END BOX]]

<2> CAMPAIGN TONE

The tone of a campaign is just as important as its type and power level. The morality, realism, outlook, and seriousness of the game do as much to create its “look and feel” as the abilities characters possess, and sometimes help you enforce certain genre conventions.

<3> Morality

In a *Ninja Hero* campaign, morality is often a fairly simple campaign element — at least in campaigns influenced and modeled after Chinese martial arts films. The PCs are the heroes and their enemies are evil villains, and the picture of morality is painted in broad strokes. The PCs represent the heroic ideal: they're dedicated to their study of the martial arts, honorable, honest, and kind to the weak, poor, and elderly. The villains are cruel, using their martial skills to oppress others. They steal, cheat, murder, and think nothing of gaining power by persecuting and mistreating those who cannot defend themselves. Naturally, the PC do not submit to the cruel demands of these villains, and after several skirmishes, defeat evil through their purity and harmony of spirit.

This sort of black-and-white worldview doesn't always work as well for a martial arts gaming campaign as it does for film. Players and GMs often prefer situations with greater moral complexity, since stories tend to become boring if the answer to every dilemma is painfully obvious to even the most casual viewer.

Thus, a *Ninja Hero* campaign's level of morality often depends on the type of campaign you're running, not the type of film you're trying to emulate. Realistic campaigns, being “realistic,” usually don't have clearly defined moral choices, but instead present things in shades of grey. In these campaigns, as in the real world, there are few easy moral decisions, although some may be simpler than others. To further complicate matters, these campaigns often feature PCs who are all subject to the orders of others: samurai in the service of a single lord, members of a special police unit, or the like. That means the characters' personal feelings may (and often will) be overridden by commands from superiors, leading to internal conflict and difficult choices for the PCs.

Cinematic campaigns usually have the same sort of moral flavor as Realistic settings, but with a more, well, “cinematic” tinge: good and evil are a bit easier to tell apart, and the PCs' choices are a little easier to make. But few decisions are painted in pure black and white, and there may be times when the PCs encounter difficult moral challenges (such as having to fight

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someone who, in other circumstances, might have been an ally).

As Wuxia and Video Game campaigns feature are more “over the top” style of action and adventure, their moral tone also tends to be somewhat exaggerated. In these games, moral choices are much simpler, and although the hero might not look very heroic (or act very heroically), there’s usually no doubt about the intent and motivations of the villains.

Anime campaigns, although frequently even more outlandish than Wuxia and Video Game campaigns, do not continue this trend. An Anime Campaign can range from strict black and white to shades of grey, with the exact direction of the moral compass depending on a host of other elements, such as the time period depicted, the story being told, the focus of the story, and so on.

<3> **Realism**

The “realism” level of a particular campaign is easily determined based on its type. A Realistic campaign is, not surprisingly, far more “realistic” than a Cinematic campaign, which is more real (or less fantastic) than a Wuxia campaign, and so on.

As a general rule, the martial arts genre thrives on characters who perform stunts normally considered improbable, or even impossible. In campaigns where characters can leap to the horizon, punch through walls, and fire off blasts of *ch'i* energy, there’s no point in penalizing them for attempting outlandish or dangerous stunts — in fact, hindering or disallowing such stunts undermines the purpose and intent of the more fantastic campaign types. But you need to make sure the PCs don’t go too far; even the martial arts genre has its limits. Just because a character can run along a length of rope strung between two poles without falling doesn’t mean he can run up a stream of bullets fired from a gun. Only in the most fantastic of Anime campaigns could a character succeed with such a stunt. You need to establish early on exactly what characters can and cannot do within the confines of your campaign, so the players understand the limits.

<3> **Outlook And Seriousness**

For the most part, the martial arts genre is an optimistic one. The characters, through use of their martial skill (often backed by purity of intent and a healthy dose of honor) can overcome their foes and make a difference in the world around them — even if that difference is only keeping the local neighborhood safe from bullies and thieves. Only the dark and grim samurai dramas of Japan reverse this trend; in them, characters unable to change their fate or the world around them, no matter how hard they try, are often the norm. But in these stories, even the death of a character doesn’t necessarily mean he’s “lost” or failed. If a loyal samurai dies while fulfilling his lord’s wishes, he’s carried out his duty properly, his death notwithstanding.

Most people like to watch martial arts movies so they can see the hero (Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Michelle Yeoh...) kick the stuffing out of his enemies. Odds are, the players in a martial arts campaign want to experience the same thing. However, this doesn’t mean you should make all the villains pushovers! Even if the PCs can overthrow the evil eunuch and restore freedom to the province, this doesn’t mean they should do it in a single session — an optimistic outlook isn’t the same thing as an easy road to success. Make the characters work for their

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victories, have them sweat and bleed, mix setbacks with advances, and in the end, when they've defeated the evil magistrate and have cause to celebrate, let them enjoy the fruits of their success for a little while before the next enemy comes along.

By the same token, you should give some thought to the level of humor you want in your campaign. As noted on page ???, the martial arts genre is prone to self-parody; even the most serious wuxia films often feature small lighthearted moments. You should be ready and willing to allow occasional moments of comic relief to crop up in even the most serious campaigns and game sessions. Few players (or GMs) enjoy games that are uniformly deadly serious or constantly comedic; most prefer a blending of the two elements.

<2> CAMPAIGN VIEWPOINT

Ninja Hero campaigns typically feature one of three viewpoints: Chinese, Japanese, or American. You need to decide which viewpoint your campaign has, and inform the players in advance, since viewpoint may influence characters' backgrounds, personalities, and conduct.

<4> CHINESE

A Chinese Viewpoint adventure is usually a very patriotic affair, in which the heroes prove the worth and valor of China and its people by opposing and defeating an oppressor (either in the form of a corrupt government official or a foreign invader). The hero (or heroine) is usually a master of one of the Chinese martial arts. If he's not, the story revolves around him learning some new technique or style with which to defeat the villain. He either learns the technique from a teacher or (more commonly) develops the new ability himself through study, practice, and long hours of hard work (thus proving he has "powerful kung fu").

The nature of the villain depends on the time period. Adventures set in the past (*i.e.*, before 1600 AD) usually feature Chinese or Mongolian villains. The former are typically corrupt government officials; the latter are either invaders, or have newly established themselves as the rulers of China (the Yuan dynasty). Another common villain is the Manchus, northern barbarians from Manchuria noted for their oppression of their Chinese subjects.

Adventures set in the mid to late eighteenth century usually feature European villains. At this point in time, several European powers (and the United States) were economically "invading" China, often using opium to enrich themselves at the expense of the Chinese people.

More modern adventures (*i.e.*, pre-World War II) usually feature the Japanese as villains. Japan conquered and controlled much of China in the 1930s, and any adventure set during this time period almost certainly uses the Japanese (and a few traitorous Chinese lackeys) as the heroes' enemies.

There are two common themes in Chinese Viewpoint adventures. The first is "overwhelming strife." Because everyone (the government, merchants, numerous martial arts societies...) wants more power (be it political, economic, or martial), there's great upheaval, with constant wars and fighting, leading to the ruination of China and its people. Thrust into the middle of this is the hero, who often doesn't want to fight, but must anyway, if only to put down those who would oppress everything he holds dear.

The second theme is "Chinese unity." The protagonist of a Chinese Viewpoint adventure

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is often the “people’s hero” — one who fights on behalf of the people, in the process inspiring them to stand up to oppression. He encourages the people to remain strong, to fight corruption, and to oppose foreigners who try to force their desires and laws on the people of China. In these stories, the hero is much more willing to fight, since force is usually the only thing the enemy respects or understands.

If you want to run a Chinese Viewpoint campaign or adventure, you should have at least a passing familiarity with Chinese history, if only to figure out who would make a proper enemy for the PCs. Chinese cinema itself tends to play fast-and-loose with history whenever it suits the plot, and anachronistic elements abound in some of the more fantastic films, so they can in your campaign, too... up to a point. You also need to ensure the players understand and care about their characters’ place in society. A proper Chinese hero is a patriot, fighting for his country and its people, but not a jingoist; he roots out and opposes internal corruption as well as foreign invasion.

In many respects, the morality in a Chinese Viewpoint story is broadly black-and-white. The true Chinese are heroes, and the Japanese and other foreigners are villains. You can use this format occasionally, but it becomes repetitious for players after only a few adventures. For gaming purposes, it’s often better to vary elements, presenting the characters with Europeans (and even Japanese) sympathetic to their cause, as well as Chinese secret societies bent on overthrowing the current government (not to mention killing any and all foreigners they find). Films like *Fist Of Legend* and *Once Upon A Time In China* present such elements perfectly, and may be worth watching for inspiration.

<4> JAPANESE

In Japanese Viewpoint stories, the heroes are usually samurai or ronin placed in a can’t-win situation. They may face a crisis of ethics with no clear solution (for example, their code of obedience to their lord may demand one action, while their code of vengeance demands the opposite). Sometimes, an impossible task confronts them (such as surviving the attacks of an unbeatable foe or an entire army).

In Japanese Viewpoint stories, virtually all heroes are Japanese. The martial arts are not as central a theme in Japanese Viewpoint adventures as in Chinese Viewpoint stories, since almost all characters have some fighting skill, and their martial arts abilities (usually Kenjutsu swordsmanship, although some characters may practice such styles as Naginatajutsu, Sojutsu, or even Jujutsu) are simply a means to an end.

When Japanese Viewpoint heroes confront their enemies, combat is almost always lethal — indeed, it’s usually incredibly violent and bloody. Since most characters are swordsmen rather than unarmed combatants, and few people wear armor, death is common among PCs and NPCs alike.

The majority of villains in Japanese Viewpoint stories are usually not posturing, evil men. They’re just people placed in a bad situation... one which requires them to oppose the heroes. “Right” and “wrong” remain unclear — the heroes have one goal, the villains have another, and if events are to move forward, one side has to die. Those villains who *are* evil are usually ruthless, amoral gangsters or corrupt officials who stop at nothing to ensure their own safety, security, success, or prosperity.

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When running a Japanese Viewpoint story, you can enforce these elements by making sure conflicting desires, emotions, and obligations beset the characters. By contrasting the requirements of their oaths of loyalty to their lord with their personal codes of honor, you can set up the sort of dilemmas all too common to Japanese Viewpoint stories. The characters then have to bide their time before they can act, or come up with a creative way to accomplish their goals. Characters who violate their codes should be punished appropriately, and in many cases *seppuku* (ritual suicide) is the only way to atone for such a misdeed.

For the most part, Japanese Viewpoint adventures are set in either the *Sengoku* (Warring States) period (roughly 1540-1600 AD) or during the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600-1868 AD). If you want to run a Japanese Viewpoint campaign, you should become familiar with the history of feudal Japan, as the time period tells you who's currently attempting to unify Japan, and thus where the struggle is taking place.

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<box> **THE 47 RONIN**

Nothing better illustrates the elements of a Japanese Viewpoint story than the tale of the 47 ronin. When Lord Asano visited the Shogun's palace, he struck another man for insulting him. However, to draw a sword in the Shogun's palace was a capital offense, and Asano was forced to commit *seppuku* to pay for his crime. His retainers swore to avenge his death (by killing the man who originally insulted him), and then went their separate ways. After a year of planning, waiting, and appearing to have lost all honor (by becoming beggars and drunkards), Lord Asano's 47 ronin attacked their target's home, killing him. The 47 ronin then committed *seppuku* as payment for their crime (murder), having satisfied their obligation to avenge their lord's death and preserved their personal honor in the process.

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<4> **AMERICAN**

In American Viewpoint adventures, the heroes are not usually adventurers; they're gainfully-employed people who know a lot about the martial arts. Of course, their type of employment easily leads to dramatic situations; they're often policemen, federal agents, military personnel, criminals with hearts of gold, or martial arts instructors.

As with Japanese Viewpoint adventures, the martial arts used by the heroes are a means to an end. The plots of American Viewpoint adventures translate to other genres without difficulty, with guns and cars taking the place of the martial arts. But the martial arts receive more exposure than in Japanese Viewpoint adventures, for two reasons. First, each hero tends to have his own style of combat, so the story includes a scene or situation where each one gets to show off his skills. Second, many of the minions do not know martial arts, and the very fact the major villains and the heroes do sets them apart from "ordinary humanity," so the story emphasizes such abilities. This is often even more pronounced than in Chinese Viewpoint adventures, where most people seem to know some sort of fighting arts; in American films, the heroes are extra-special because they've mastered these unusual abilities.

In American Viewpoint adventures, the heroes encounter a situation they must resolve,

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and their martial arts abilities allow them to resolve it. The master/student relationship seldom plays a part (films such as *The Karate Kid* are exceptions); generally, the heroes are a society of equals, as befits Western democratic traditions. The villains are usually crimelords, using their martial arts and minions to maintain their crime empires or to hatch some enormous plot. Usually they are so lacking in honor that the heroes can be very flawed human beings and still contrast favorably with the villains.

Combat in American Viewpoint adventures varies. In the first part of the story, it's usually not very deadly; in the end, it's always lethal. A few American Viewpoint movies feature lethal violence all the way through, though.

American Viewpoint stories typically take place in the modern world; period dramas are rare. Frequently the setting is a big city in the United States, but it may be a more exotic foreign city, such as Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, or Manila.

American Viewpoint adventures have a great deal in common with the *Dark Champions* genre, such as their strong emphasis on vigilantism and concepts like "justice, not law." Frequently, the hero of an American Viewpoint adventure must oppose both the villain and the authorities (represented by the police and/or government) to accomplish his goals. He "bucks the system," so to speak, because the system isn't working or hampers his ability to fight crime. By taking the law into his own hands, the hero of an American Viewpoint adventure eliminates crime and criminals using his martial skills, and in the end the authorities "look the other way" when the hero exposes the criminal's deeds.

Running an American Viewpoint adventure is usually a fairly simple. It doesn't require any historical research or effort to hook the PCs in; just create a foe whose actions are so heinous the heroes *have* to act... and then turn them loose. If the PCs react by ignoring their superiors, ignoring the law, and pretty much doing what they want, then they are behaving perfectly "in character" for an American Viewpoint adventure (as seen in *Above The Law* and many other Steven Seagal movies, among others).

<2> CAMPAIGN THEME

In addition to deciding on a Viewpoint, you should also consider the overall theme of your campaign (if any — not all games have a unifying theme). Themes aren't required for *Ninja Hero* games, but can help motivate players or set the tone for the campaign.

In martial arts stories, themes range from the simple ("hard work and discipline lead to success") to the more complex or involved ("those with a pure heart are unstoppable"). Other themes are more setting-specific; as mentioned under the Chinese Viewpoint section, strife and unrest in the martial world is a common theme in such stories. Characters whose backgrounds and actions help to advance or explore the theme may receive extra Experience Points, positive modifiers on die rolls, or other bonuses; those who don't may suffer penalties (or simply miss out on any benefits).

You should decide which (if any) themes will arise in your campaign, since that helps you set the tone of the game. For example, if revenge is a central theme, odds are the campaign is dark and gritty.

Here are a few examples of themes common to the martial arts genre as whole:

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<5> Age

Old masters, sages, and retired warriors know more about the world and how it works than the young give them credit for. The aged are a repository of knowledge, and in a martial arts setting, this usually translates to new and unusual martial arts styles and techniques. The same also goes for ancient books and manuscripts, which may detail powerful martial techniques lost for ages. The “generation gap” that arises when younger heroes don’t understand the value of age, or overlook the wisdom of the elderly, often causes plot complications.

<5> Power

Power is an important consideration for martial arts characters. No matter how powerful a character is, there’s always someone out there who is more powerful still — and sometimes those with power (corrupt Shaolin monks, evil eunuch governors) abuse it. How characters acquire power, use power, and react to those with greater or lesser power than themselves is a basic theme underlying many martial arts stories.

<5> Revenge

Revenge drives many martial arts heroes to act. Typically, someone dear to the heroes is killed, and honor requires that they take vengeance on the killer. What transforms this from a simple motivation to a theme is an exploration of what revenge is and means... and what it does to those who seek it. How does the quest for vengeance affect the character? Does he really gain any satisfaction from obtaining it? Does repaying “an eye for an eye” accomplish anything?

<5> Sacrifice

Often closely related to Revenge, the theme of sacrifice examines what a character is willing to give up to accomplish his goals. Is anything important enough to justify the loss of a character’s honor? His soul? His family? His life? By examining the boundaries of what the heroes will and will not sacrifice, the campaign often engages in detailed character exploration, leading to lots of intense roleplaying.

<2> CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORK

The five basic subgenres (campaign types) described in Chapter One tell you about various types of *Ninja Hero* campaigns, but don’t specifically describe a particular framework for on which to base the adventures of a group of PCs. “Framework” in this respect refers to what brings the characters together and keeps them together; broadly speaking, it defines the PCs and guides them during their adventures. Not all campaigns have specific frameworks — some just throw the PCs together and send them on their way without worrying about dramatic logic or consequences — but many do, since having a framework often makes things easier on the GM. Players need to know what framework (if any) you’ve chosen for the campaign before they start designing PCs, and you need to know it so you can plan the right types of adventures and

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subplots for them.

Here are some common frameworks for martial arts campaigns:

The Heroes Are Bounty Hunters: The PCs are a team of bounty hunters traveling about the land capturing criminals and turning them over to the authorities in exchange for reward money. Along the way, they often encounter situations which compel them to get involved, regardless of the financial compensation. This campaign is best suited for fantasy or historical campaigns.

The Heroes Are Freelance Do-Gooders: The heroes are wanderers, men and women who travel from place to place trying to make things better. Inevitably, trouble finds them wherever they go. This framework is appropriate for any type of campaign; while it's most associated with fantasy/historical campaigns, TV shows like *The A-Team* show that it works in the modern day as well.

The Heroes Are Professional Fighters: The campaign centers around a tour of professional competitions. Wherever the heroes go, they have a tournament to participate in — and, inevitably, some other situation arises that requires them to use their martial arts abilities for real. Often, old friends and buddies need their help against the local mob or other troublemakers. Naturally, this framework is tailor-made for Video Game campaigns, but it's also suitable for other subgenres.

The Heroes Are Skilled Warriors: The PCs are members of an elite military force, a clan of ninja, or ronin in a feudal Japanese campaign. Whatever they are, at the beginning of each adventure someone hires them to pull off some impossible task, assassination, or rescue. This makes it easy for you to motivate and control them; they do what their employer hires them to do, how he tells them to do it.

<2> CAMPAIGN SETTING

You can set a *Ninja Hero* campaign in virtually any time period, from the far past to the distant future, and virtually any location (even fantasy worlds or alien planets replete with monsters and strange creatures). All that's required is a way for you to emphasize martial arts fighting styles, techniques, and action.

Consider the overall scope of the campaign: will you limit it to one small area (say, a city), or will it range over the entire countryside... or even from planet to planet? Scope often depends on subgenre. A Video Game campaign, for example, almost requires a broad scope so characters can travel from one exotic locale to another to participate in fights, while a Realistic campaign typically involves a more restricted venue (such as Paris for a French Musketeers game). The smaller the scope of the campaign, the easier it is for you, since you can re-use a lot of material over and over (such as locations and NPCs) — but it's also harder, since you can't just create *any* sort of situation and often have to spend a lot of time developing aspects of the setting. On the other hand, a campaign covering a large area gives you a great deal of leeway with regard to plots and possible encounters with NPCs, but deprives you of the intimate knowledge of a smaller setting.

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If you choose a historical setting, such as Han Dynasty China, you should spend some time familiarizing yourself with the era, its events, its people, and its customs. You don't have to become an expert, but you should know enough to answer players' questions — and hopefully inspire them to study the setting themselves to improve their roleplaying.

Chapter Five describes several sample campaign settings, ranging from the fantastic (*Big Trouble In Ancient China*) to the mundane (*Swords Of The Sun King*). However, these five settings really only scratch the surface of possible campaign ideas. You could, for example, have a campaign set in feudal Japan in which the PCs are all samurai, or one set in the modern day involving a team of elite special forces agents.

<1> RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

Once you've decided on the basics and created your campaign and its setting, you have to actually run the game. This involves some additional considerations and work on your part, but the more effort you put into your game, the better your games tend to be, and the more everyone enjoys them.

<2> CAMPAIGN PLOTS

Once you settle on broader issues such as campaign type, framework, and theme, you should give some consideration to plots — in other words, to the individual stories you want to tell and what happens in them. You may also want to consider subplots (secondary plots occurring in the background of main plots) and “story arc” plots that unfold over multiple adventures.

Creating stories for *Ninja Hero* campaigns is a fairly simple matter, since the martial arts genre isn't exactly noted for its overly-imaginative plots. Usually the concern is not so much with the plot itself, but how it's dressed up. *Enter The Dragon* has only the most threadbare of plots, but no one cares because Bruce Lee utterly dominates the film. The same goes for many other martial arts films, in which basic and formulaic plots are carried by well-choreographed fight scenes, bizarre heroes and villains, and jaw-dropping stunts.

Here are some standard martial arts adventure plots, and how they typically develop:

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<box> INSPIRATIONAL FILMS

It's a fairly simple matter to match the sample plots with various well-known martial arts films. A short list is as follows:

Building To Confrontation: *Drunken Master II* (Golden Harvest Ltd. 1994), *Fist Of Legend* (Eastern Production Ltd., 1994), *Return Of The Dragon* (Golden Harvest Ltd., 1973)

The Competition: *Bloodsport* (Cannon International, 1988)

Infiltrate And Rescue/Destroy: *Enter The Dragon* (Warner Brothers, 1973)

Loss, Retraining, And Confrontation: *The Blade* (Golden Harvest Ltd., 1995), *Tai Chi Master* (Eastern Production Ltd., 1993)

Protect The Defenseless: *Iron Monkey* (Golden Harvest Ltd., 1993), *The Seven Samurai* (Toho Company Ltd., 1954)

The Search For Perfection: *Dragonball Z* (Toei Company Ltd., TV series from 1989-1996)

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<4> BUILDING TO CONFRONTATION

How the Heroes Get Involved: The heroes are all attacked or insulted until they cannot take it any longer and the only possible response is vengeance. With some groups, this might take only one insult; with others, it may require a series of affronts and lesser confrontations that put more and more pressure on the normally-peaceful heroes until they cannot hold back.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: The heroes are just living their lives when someone decides to harass or harm them: annoy their families, ruin their places of business, methodically kill everyone in their families, humiliate or murder their master, and so on. Several combats result from this sequence in events, each one nastier and more serious than the one before.

The Middle Part Of The Adventure: The heroes realize they can't get out of this situation without bloodshed and decide to take the war to their enemy. More deadly combat between the two groups results.

The Climax Of The Adventure: The heroes make their way to their enemy and confront him (or them) for a climactic battle.

Potential Complications: This plot works well in a movie, where the scriptwriter controls the main characters. In a game, you don't control the main characters (the PCs), so you can't control their reactions. It's entirely likely the PCs won't tolerate a continued campaign of assault and harassment — one attack by the villains and the PCs will set out to take them down. You may have to provide some sort of in-game reason why the PCs have to put up with the villains' actions in the early parts of the adventure. For example, if they leave their shops to go punish the evil magistrate (the villain whose soldiers have been bothering them), bandits will take advantage of their absence to loot the town. The PCs (or some NPCs) have to remove the bandit threat before they can cope with the magistrate.

<4> THE COMPETITION

How the Heroes Get Involved: Someone invites or challenges the heroes to participate in a competition (typically a tournament of some sort). It should be a fairly normal competition, but the actions of crooks, double-dealers, and other ne'er-do-wells complicate matters.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: The early rounds of the competition pit the heroes against some minor opponents, whom they defeat so they rise in the standings. This part of the adventure serves two purposes. First, it lets the PCs get to know the important NPCs at the competition — both the friendly/honorable ones who'll become allies, and the angry/dishonorable ones who'll become the PCs' bitter enemies. Second, it gives the PCs the chance to discover that there's something untoward going on, a complication that they'll eventually have to deal with. Usually this involves the actions of gangsters, who may be trying to rig the tournament, or who back a favorite fighter and don't want the PCs to defeat him. Alternately, it may involve a favored competitor who's cheating to ensure his own success.

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The Middle Part Of The Adventure: As the PCs (or most of them) continue to succeed in the tournament, their enemies try to remove them from the picture. They start out with low-level threats, attempts at bribery or seduction, and other “soft” methods, but after the PCs refuse to be intimidated or distracted, the opposition progresses to “hard” methods such as attacks by minions of various quality or bribing a tournament fighter to try to cripple them in the ring.

The Climax Of The Adventure: The villains persist in their efforts to keep the PCs from finishing or winning the competition. Often this entails kidnapping one or more PCs, or even better their DNPCs or love interests, to lure the heroes away; severe forms of cheating (like drugging the PCs) are another possibility. Somehow the PCs have to resolve the situation, make it to the competition on time, and fight for the championship.

Potential Complications: Unfortunate dice rolls, poor tactics, or even drawing tough opponents in early rounds may eliminate the PCs (or most of them) from the competition so early the villains don’t need to do anything to stop them. You either have to orchestrate events to keep at least one PC in the tournament, or ally them with an NPC who has a decent chance of winning so they can save him from the villains.

<4> INFILTRATE AND RESCUE/DESTROY

How the Heroes Get Involved: The government, or in some cases a private patron, asks or hires the PCs to infiltrate a protected place (a castle, a top-secret installation, a terrorist camp) and accomplish some goal. Typically the PCs have to rescue kidnappees, defeat (kill) the main villain, or disable the organization maintaining the place.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: First, the patron has to bring the PCs together and convince them to undertake the mission. Then, the PCs have to prepare for the mission, using information provided by the patron, plus data gathered by their own investigation (if appropriate). Planning the raid may take a lot of time (both in-game and out of game) as the PCs obtain equipment (including false identities, if they need to disguise themselves to sneak in), practice their roles, and hone their martial arts abilities for the inevitable confrontation.

The Middle Part Of The Adventure: The heroes launch their raid. At first it goes well; they overcome some minor obstacle or defeat a lesser opponent, and reach their early objectives. Then, inevitably, something goes wrong. The enemy may discover them too soon, or there’s an obstacle they knew nothing about and aren’t prepared for, or the person they’re trying to rescue doesn’t want to be rescued for some reason. Most fiendishly of all, they may find out their target is the Good Guy — the patron who recruited them is evil or corrupt.

The Climax Of The Adventure: Using their natural resourcefulness and martial arts skills, the heroes adapt and overcome, finding a way around the new obstacles so they can battle their way to victory! After a successful mission, they celebrate.

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Potential Complications: The party may refuse to help the patron. Perhaps they hold out for more money, or simply aren't interested in the adventure he offers. This forces you to get creative, perhaps making the patron the villain so he can use evil means (*e.g.*, kidnapping DNPCs) to force them to do his bidding.

<4> LOSS, RETRAINING, AND CONFRONTATION

How the Heroes Get Involved: This adventure begins like any other, but proceeds differently.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: Unlike most stories, where the PCs don't confront the main villain until the climax, here they somehow get to confront him early... only to have him soundly defeat them. Rather than killing them, he leaves them defeated, humiliated, and injured.

The Middle Part Of The Adventure: The heroes learn, through research or the help of a friendly NPC, how the villain defeated them so handily — he has a special technique or secret style (or, more rarely, a special weapon). They also learn of someone who can teach them this style, or a technique that counteracts it. They have to find this person (often an arduous adventure in itself!) and convince him to accept them as his students. After a long period of intensive, and often somewhat confusing, training, the PCs are ready to confront the villain on more equal footing. At this point they may have to fend off attacks from the villain (via minions), who's learned what they're up to; the PCs' teacher may even be killed, giving them further motive for revenge.

The Climax Of The Adventure: Now that they've re-trained, the PC confront the master villain again (though they usually have to fight their way through his minions first). This time, the battle is a fair fight, with both PCs and villain using their utmost skill to triumph.

Potential Complications: It's hard to predict what PCs will do or how the dice will fall, so it's possible they may defeat the main villain (or come close to it) in the early confrontation. You should design the villain to make this as unlikely as possible, and if necessary include a foolproof way for him to escape (such as a Teleportation Ring).

Even worse, the PCs might lose the final, climactic, battle. This is even less likely, since strength of numbers is an important factor, but if it occurs you can, if appropriate, simply repeat the process. Enough retraining and they're bound to defeat him.

<4> PROTECT THE DEFENSELESS

How the Heroes Get Involved: The heroes find a small business, neighborhood, village, or province that's being menaced by evil, such as supernatural horrors, criminal gangs, a cruel eunuch governor, bandits, or a villainous martial arts school. They may come across this place in their travels, or live there when the troubles begin — or maybe, as in *The Seven Samurai*, the inhabitants actively seek them out due to their reputations.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: The heroes arrange a first encounter with the bad guys,

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typically by waiting for them to come back for another round of marauding and crime. Then they use their martial arts skills to administer a sound thrashing, earning the accolades of the populace.

The Middle Part Of The Adventure: Having lost one or more groups of minions because of the PCs' efforts, the main villain gets proactive. He sends out groups of higher-powered minions (including some whose job is just to observe and analyze the PCs), investigates the characters, and perhaps even tries to warn the PCs away (by, for example, kidnapping or killing a DNPC). Some of the defenseless people may claim the PCs are stirring up the villain unnecessarily, and cause trouble for them as a way of trying to get them to leave.

The Climax Of The Adventure: Realizing that defensive tactics alone won't get the job done, the PCs take the fight directly to the main villain. This may require some investigation or scouting (to find his lair) and/or infiltration (to get inside his lair), but it always climaxes in a major battle. Usually the PCs have to defeat some powerful minions before they can attack the main villain.

Potential Complications: The PCs may not want to "waste their time" protecting some tiny village. If this happens, you need to give them a reason to change their minds, such as a DNPC who tries to help out and gets hurt, or a love interest who lives there. Another potential problem is that some PCs could get badly hurt or injured before the final confrontation, when they need to be in top condition. Be sure they have time to rest and recuperate, or access to healing, in case this happens.

<4> THE SEARCH FOR PERFECTION

How the Heroes Get Involved: One or more PCs takes it upon himself to perfect his fighting techniques, learn something, or address his character flaws (Psychological Limitations). This involves a quest both physical and personal.

The Early Part Of The Adventure: Some event — defeat at the hands of a superior fighter, the loss of a love interest who can't cope with his personality, or the like — confronts a character with his own deficiencies. A wise NPC recommends that he leave his home; travel is, after all, broadening. The PC and his friends set out on a journey of discovery.

The Middle Part Of The Adventure: During their travels, the characters have several mini-adventures, often ones tailored to broaden their horizons or confront the main character with the problems he's trying to correct. As they earn Experience Points, the PCs improve themselves (often by buying down Disadvantages) and start to overcome their personal difficulties... but they also accumulate a rogues' gallery of enemies and adversaries.

The Climax Of The Adventure: Eventually, the PCs improve enough to take on the problem that originally led to their quest (or an enemy they met early on, if the motivation was a more personal problem). Now events maneuver them into a battle with this enemy, who's probably

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hired some of the other enemies they've made along the way to help defeat them. (On the other hand, an honorable enemy may choose to side with the PCs.) In a final confrontation, the PCs defeat the villains and return home better people.

Potential Complications: This plot (almost a campaign framework) creates personal campaigns with episodic stories, which not all players may enjoy. Make sure all the players know what you have in mind, and approve, before you start the game.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **OTHER MARTIAL ARTS PLOTS**

Besides the ones described in the main text, here are a few other typical martial arts adventure plots:

Caught In The Middle: The PCs find themselves thrust into a situation they may not fully understand. Around them, two or more factions battle over territory, wealth, or power, not caring who gets hurt in the process. The PCs must survive the situation, figure out what's going on, and put a stop to it. Usually, they accomplish this through stealth, guile, and a violent final confrontation that puts all their martial arts skills to the test.

Escort: The PCs must get a person (or persons) to safety. Usually, their charge is of high rank and pursued by numerous powerful enemies. To make matters worse, the escape route runs through enemy-controlled (or otherwise dangerous) territory. The PCs need both their wits and their martial prowess to succeed.

The Race: The PCs are in a race to get somewhere or something before anyone else. If somewhere, the place is usually a sanctuary where the PCs will be safe or a location where the PCs can deliver needed information. If the goal is an object, it's usually an enchanted item or a valuable source of information. The other people involved in the race range from rival schools, to members of the government, to greedy criminals. The PCs need to keep their wits about them and their weapons ready if they are to survive.

Troublemakers: A group has moved into the local area and is causing trouble. This group can be a criminal gang, a rival martial arts school, a corrupt official's personal guard, or a troop of foreign nationals. They may harass or even assault decent townsfolk, extort money and goods, or just engage in fights for the sheer fun of it. Eventually, they assault or harm the PCs (or one of their friends), and it's time to fight back.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<3> **Instant Plot Generator**

If you're pressed for time, use the accompanying instant plot generator to create *Ninja Hero* scenarios. Pick one from Column A, one from Column B, and one from Column C — or roll randomly, using two dice. Of course, you'll have to do a little work to flesh out the details of

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who (A) does what (B) to what (C), but building on the basic framework shouldn't take too long.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **NINJA HERO INSTANT PLOT GENERATOR**

First Die	Second Die	Column A	Column B	Column C
1	1-3	A corrupt official	Assault	A bridge or pass
1	4-6	A ghost	Attack	A bowl of ashes
2	1-3	A group of revolutionaries	Defend	A broken sword
2	4-6	A kung fu master	Destroy	A hidden fortress
3	1-2	A lone swordsman	Duel	A magic flower
3	3-4	A one-armed swordsman	Escort	A magic sword
3	5-6	An army	Find	A princess
4	1-2	An army general	Hide	A sacred scroll
4	3-4	An evil eunuch	Infiltrate	A village
4	5-6	Eight ninja	Protect	An island
5	1-3	Four assassins	Recover	Two children
5	4-6	Seven samurai	Steal	An important official
6	1-3	Three brothers	Replace	A wise scholar
6	4-6	Two Shaolin monks	Curse	A pious monk

[[BOX END]]

<2> DEALING WITH DISCONNECTS

One of the most important things to remember when GMing a *Ninja Hero* campaign is this: what works in the movies may not work during play. The reason for this is simple — the writer of a manga or movie controls all the characters' actions, while you only control your NPCs, not the main characters (the PCs). In addition, an author can incapacitate a character for as long as he needs without any difficulty, whereas you'll have to deal with bored players if you sideline some of the PCs while the others remain free to act.

Here are some suggestions about how to deal with “disconnects” common to the martial arts genre.

<4> LETTING THE STUNNED FOE RECOVER

In many genres, it's common for characters in combat to press any advantage they obtain — including Stunning a foe. Once a character is Stunned, that often signals the end of the fight, since he can't react while his opponent keeps pounding on him until he's Knocked Out or dead.

Many martial arts stories, particularly those centered around tournaments or similar competitions (such as the movie *Bloodsport*), don't work this way. For some reason — perhaps to satisfy honor, perhaps because it looks good on-screen — a character who Stuns another fighter backs off and gives his opponent the chance to recover from being Stunned. Even dishonorable or villainous fighters do this, often as a way of expressing contempt or scorn for

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their opponents. A character usually only allows a foe to Recover once or twice (mercy has its limits, even among honorable warriors), and never grants such leniency toward the end of a fight, but he still does it.

If you want to simulate this sort of scene in your games, you have to convince the players to go along with it. Most gamers aren't the type to stand around and let a Stunned opponent shake off the effects and keep fighting. You should decide why a fighter would let his opponent recover from being Stunned this way. Is it a case of honor over expediency? Is it local custom? Do characters like to prolong fights? Decide on a reasonable explanation and let the players know what it is so they can accept it in the context of the game.

A similar situation occurs in games featuring a lot of weapons combat. In this case the pause usually doesn't come after one character is Stunned, but when one character loses his weapon. The pause lets the disarmed fighter recover his blade so the fight can resume on equal footing. The explanation in this case is almost always honor — it's not honorable to kill an unarmed man, nor does it show off the character's skill with weapons.

Incorporating this aspect of martial arts combat into your games means a character who Stuns his foe simply has to refrain from attacking his opponent until the opponent recovers from being Stunned. If players aren't willing to do this voluntarily, the GM can require it as a rule, or penalize merciless fighters by awarding them fewer Experience Points, imposing a *Reputation* Disadvantage, or the like.

In at least one subgenre — Video Games — this “bit” doesn't apply. In those settings, stunning (or “dizzying”) an opponent isn't only a desired effect, it's practically encouraged! Characters in these games shouldn't think twice about striking a Stunned foe (especially if they can use a spectacular Combo to do it!).

<4> PAUSING FOR LAST WORDS

Invariably, when two characters engage in a fight to the death the loser manages to utter a few final words before dying (sometimes he makes quite a speech!). This doesn't always translate well into a roleplaying game setting, where characters are either conscious or dead, without a “last words” middle ground before they expire.

Fortunately, it's not too hard to arrange matters to allow for this in a *Ninja Hero* game, if you want it. First of all, it's possible for a *HERO System* character to be at negative BODY (dying) but positive STUN, which makes it easy for him to talk a while before perishing. In other situations, the GM simply has to fudge things a bit, allowing a character just enough time for a soliloquy (an action which takes no time) before death takes him.

Typically a soliloquy only provides a little dramatic effect. In appropriate situations, the GM may allow a dying character to impart a final clue, or perhaps even make his soliloquy a Presence Attack to rally his comrades.

<4> SAMURAI DUELS

Similar to “last words” moments are scenes in samurai movies where two katana-wielding warriors rush at each other, strike, keep moving, and then stop, both standing stock-still until one of them — the one who got hit — falls over.

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Reproducing this in a game, where players know what they rolled on the dice and instantly have a good idea whether they hit a target, requires a little effort. Have the player make an Attack Roll as normal, but in such a way that only you can see the result. For example, maybe he has to roll the dice so they land behind your GM's Screen. This allows you to determine who hits, and to describe it in the most dramatic terms. For example, instead of saying "Oh, you got him. He stands for a minute and then falls over with a thud," try this: "Shin and Jiro pass with a flash of blades. Both come to a stop and stand still for a few moments in picture-perfect Kenjutsu stances. Then, Shin turns around as Jiro slowly slumps to the ground."

Traditionally, in this sort of confrontation, one character dies (or suffers grievous injury), while the other — the superior warrior — suffers not a scratch. In situations where a PC duels an unimportant NPC, you can simply assume that if the PC hits, he automatically kills his opponent without being hit in return. For major NPCs, though, it's probably best to let both characters make their Attack Rolls, and damage rolls if necessary, to preserve game balance.

<4> SPLITTING UP THE PARTY

A common literary effect involves splitting up a group of characters into two or more smaller groups. Although this works well in a film or book, in a roleplaying session this can be a *very* bad idea. Splitting up a part of PCs causes numerous problems: some players sit around board while their characters are off-camera; players know *exactly* what the other group is doing, ruining the dramatic tension normally inherent in the situation; you have to keep track of two groups.

The easiest way to avoid this problem is simply never to split the party. If you have to do it, do it sparingly, and try to move between groups at short intervals so no one gets bored. Alternately, if the off-camera players are willing, have them take the part of NPCs so they remain involved with the story.

<4> A VILLAIN FOR EVERY HERO

In many martial arts stories, a group of characters gets whittled down one by one as they approach their objective. At certain points the group meets a villain who's the specific nemesis of one of the characters. That character stays behind to fight his nemesis, while the rest of the party moves on. Usually, only the main hero (or the hero and his sidekick) makes it to the final objective (and meets *his* nemesis, the main villain).

Although this is a perfectly valid (and exciting) literary stunt, it suffers from all the problems that splitting up the party does, plus more (like resolving what happens if a lesser PC defeats his nemesis and then tries to catch up with his comrades). Only if the players want to play along with something like this should you attempt it — and even then, you may want to wait and run all the fights simultaneously to save time and minimize boredom.

<2> KEEPING YOUR CAMPAIGN FRESH

One of the biggest problems you'll face over the course of your *Ninja* campaign is how to keep it from becoming dull and boring. Although the campaign may initially seem new and

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exciting, after a while the plots become repetitious and predictable. A new villain moves into town, shows off his unstoppable new martial arts style, and proceeds to beat up anyone who doesn't agree with him. The PCs, after losing a fight or two to the villain and his minions, get together to train, develop a counter to the villain's style, and proceed to show him the error of his ways. Sound familiar? It should; it's the basis for an uncountable number of cheaply made Taiwanese "chop-socky" films. Interestingly enough, the answer to this dilemma can be found in another field of popular martial arts media: video fighting games.

The makers of video fighting games face the same situation as the *Ninja Hero* GM — they have to keep the players entertained. And unlike movie makers, their fanbase is far more demanding. If a new game doesn't hold anyone's interest, no one will play it, and if no one plays it, the game loses money. Gamemasters face the same problem; if their game doesn't hold anyone's interest, no one wants to play in it, and no one has any fun (the GM most of all).

The video fighting game solution is to constantly update the story line and the style of gameplay. For *Ninja Hero* GMs, this means not being afraid to change the scope of the game as the campaign progresses.

Look at it this way: with each new release in a video fighting game series, the game adds new characters and removes some of the older ones. Sometimes missing characters simply retire (whether due to lasting injuries or because they resolved their reason for fighting); others are killed in combat or just vanish for unexplained reasons. New characters often have some connection to older characters; they may be blood relatives, former students, old foes, Hunters, or long-lost friends. As the story evolves, so does game play. Individual characters may gain new powers, while new game programming may make previously unique/impossible attacks and techniques available to all characters.

You can (and should) apply these same ideas to their own game. If the players become bored or lose interest in the campaign, find out why. Are they tired of dealing with a certain character? Then retire that NPC and bring in a replacement — one who's sufficiently different to intrigue them. Have fights become routine? Perhaps it's time to allow some new powers into the game, or to otherwise change the look and feel of combat. Don't be afraid to let the game evolve, either with regard to the story or in terms of power level. Such changes are typical of the martial arts genre.

But don't make such changes willy-nilly. If you're going to alter the scope or nature of your campaign, make the players aware of what you intend to do, and use them (if possible) as a catalyst for the changes. If you decide to eliminate an unwanted NPC, don't just have him disappear — let the PCs remove him in some way (or at least assist with the effort). Alternately, maybe the new NPC you want to introduce gets rid of the old NPC as a way of "upping the ante" and showing the PCs how dangerous he is. Maybe he reveals that the old NPC was a mere underling of his who's now been "re-assigned"... to the graveyard.

When it comes to changing the power level of the game, create a plausible in-game way to do it. If there's a really powerful new villain in town, maybe this time when the PCs go for retraining you give them each 50 Experience Points to spend on new abilities. Whatever the case, you should make the changes part of the story line instead of simply letting them "happen."

<2> GEMMASTERING *NINJA HERO* DISADVANTAGES

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The PCs' Disadvantages are built-in plot hooks for you to use — ways to cause endless amounts of trouble for the players and their characters, draw new characters into the game, keep a party of characters together. Here are some suggestions and ideas about ways to use Disadvantages to help you run your *Ninja Hero* campaign; you should also refer to the Disadvantages section of UMA.

<4> **DEPENDENT NON-PLAYER CHARACTER**

In a martial arts game, you should make a DNPC more than just the “victim of the week.” There are plenty of more creative ways you can use them. For example, even when they're not being assaulted by villains, DNPCs can draw characters into scenarios. A DNPC may run afoul of someone the PC wants to avoid, with the PC challenged to a duel as a result. Perhaps the DNPC is the player's student, and somehow insults the villain (or perhaps the student beat one of the villain's students and the villain wants to exact revenge). Characters out to “get” a PC might engineer harmless incidents to provoke a hero into rash action, or to warn the hero off. Or the DNPC might decide to defend the PC's honor and engage in rash actions of his own (this seems to be especially true of DNPCs defined as students or sidekicks).

<5> **Floating DNPCs**

You may want to allow characters to take *floating DNPCs* — that is, a “generic” DNPC who changes from scenario to scenario. In one game, it's the local magistrate's headstrong young daughter who wants to “have adventures”; in another, it's a weak old man who insists on helping the PCs defend his village from bandits. As long as the DNPC justifies all of the Character Points the PC receives for the Disadvantage (or more), you can use him. This solves the problem of bringing DNPCs into a game where characters travel a lot, or of having DNPCs in a revenge melodrama game where villains cut them down like flies.

<5> **DNPCs By Group**

You might also want to consider allowing a *PC group DNPC* — an NPC the entire group of PCs swears to protect. In other words, all the PCs buy the same character as their DNPC (though you may wish to allot -5 points for the Disadvantage, since the DNPC has a lot more protectors than a standard DNPC). The DNPC could be almost anyone — the child of a local lord, the heir to the throne, the last surviving member of the royal family on the run, or even a simple merchant trying to get home — as long as all the PCs have a vested interest in ensuring his safety. This is a great way to bring a group of otherwise disparate PCs together for an extended adventure until they form ties of their own.

<4> **ENRAGED**

Enraged, by its very nature, gives the GM plenty of ways to trouble a PC — particularly in a campaign set in Asian cultural areas, where diplomacy, poise, and “face” are often valued. Odds are, sooner or later events will provoke a PC into hitting (or even killing) someone he

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shouldn't, and that creates stories in and of itself as the PC and his friends try to avoid government officials, cover up the misdeed, justify the PC's actions, or escape from new Hunteds acquired because of the incident.

<4> **HUNTED**

Much like a DNPC, a Hunted provides an excellent way to bring a group of PCs together and keep them together. A common Hunted can, in fact, *force* a group of characters to stay together, if only because there's strength in numbers. The exact nature of the Hunted depends on the campaign, of course. In a game set in ancient China, the Hunted might be an evil eunuch oppressing a province and ruthlessly executing all known martial artists in the area. In a feudal Japan game, the Hunted might be the forces of a rival warlord, pursuing the survivors of a recent battle he won. In a Pulp-era game, the Hunted could be the Japanese, looking to eliminate any troublesome Kung Fu masters in Manchuria.

Regardless of who the Hunted is, try to use him creatively. Not every encounter between him and his quarry needs to be a dramatic battle. Instead, Hunted can strike at the PCs in more subtle ways. They can aid their enemies, tell bounty hunters where to find them, harass their loved ones, smear the character's reputation, and so forth. Imagine how angry the PCs will be when they discover that their old adversary, Tai Jing, helped the local evil eunuch track them down! In short, let the Hunted influence the game, even if he's not always "on stage."

<5> **Floating Hunteds**

You can apply the same "floating" principle discussed above for DNPCs to Hunteds. This way, no matter where the characters go, it seems like they're making enemies. This works best in campaigns where the PCs travel a lot. A floating Hunted is worth -5 points, since typically the Hunteds have Limited Geographic Influence (or other impediments which keep them from following the PCs around the countryside).

<4> **PHYSICAL LIMITATION**

Most Physical Limitations affect a character's combat performance and don't require any additional attention from the GM to impact the game. However, you do need to consider how to handle the situation when a PC "picks up" a Physical Limitation during play due to injuries suffered in battle. If you're using the Impairing and Disabling rules, you need to make sure your players understand that, and understand how strictly you intend to enforce it. Although players may not care for the idea of their characters being permanently maimed, that does happen frequently in the genre. Moreover, it's often the catalyst for a character to develop a unique new martial arts style or weapon.

<4> **PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION**

Psychological Limitations, particularly codes of honor and oaths of loyalty, are common in the martial arts genre. They're a great way to embroil a character in adventures, or inflict

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moral dilemmas upon him (especially when there's an inherent conflict between two of his Psychological Limitations, or two aspects of a code of honor). It's important for players to handle martial arts Psychological Limitations (like *Code Of The Bushi* or *Code Of The Chinese Knight-Errant*) properly; ignoring or mishandling them runs contrary to the martial arts genre (and roleplaying in general). See page 136 of UMA for a list of Psychological Limitations appropriate for *Ninja Hero* characters.

<4> REPUTATION

Much like Enraged, Reputation makes an excellent GMing tool. You can use one to embroil a character in unwanted fights (when his Reputation is one that attracts challengers eager to take down the “top gun”) or earn the character unwanted attention (for Reputations such as “Brutal In Combat,” or which bring the character unwanted students). As with Hunted, you don't have to restrict Reputation just to combat situations. Characters may find their Reputations precede them, so innkeepers refuse them rooms, merchants don't sell to them, townsfolk flee their approach, and the local law either asks them to leave town, or simply arrests them and tosses them in prison.

<4> SOCIAL LIMITATION

You can use some Social Limitations to bring a group of PCs together. *Minority* works well for this, especially if the game involves a group of Chinese nationals fighting to assert their independence from an outside force (see *Last Heroes In China* in Chapter Five). You can also make a Social Limitation central to the overall plot of a campaign. For example, if the PCs are bandits (in the Robin Hood mold), then maintaining their cover identities and keeping their activities secret is an important element of the campaign.

<2> THE NINJA HERO ENVIRONMENT

The ability to break boards is almost a given for a martial artist. Many styles specifically teach such breaking exercises, and judge the ability to break boards and the like when considering students for promotion to the next rank. It's not unheard of for real world martial artists to be able to break boards, bricks, and cinderblocks, and with the proper training a stylist can shatter impressive stacks of clay tiles or bricks, or blocks of ice. Naturally, Cinematic and Wuxia stylists are capable of even greater demonstrations of power, and routinely punch down walls, smash trees, and reduce large rocks to fragments. Anime warriors go even further — when two high-powered Anime martial artists fight, they often leave the countryside in ruins, with flattened buildings and smoking craters marking the combat.

You should populate any fight scene with interesting objects for the characters to fight around, on, under, and even with. Missed attacks (especially *ch'i* blasts and the like) should destroy whatever scenery they hit, and you may also want to consider the same effect those for hand-to-hand attacks which miss their intended targets.

The accompanying text box lists the DEF and BODY values for a variety of objects commonly found at martial arts battle sites. You can use this list to create new objects and can

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alter the items on this list, if needed, to represent specific custom-made objects.

[[BOX TEXT]]

<box> **COMMON MARTIAL ARTS SCENERY**

Material Or Object DEF BODY

Furniture

Bar Stool	4	5	
Bench, Small	3	2	
Bench, Large	3	4	
Chair	3	3	
Display Case	2	4	
Priceless Porcelain Vase, Small (12"-24" tall)		2	2
Priceless Porcelain Vase, Medium (24"-48" tall)		2	3-4
Priceless Porcelain Vase, Large (48"+ tall)	2		5-6
Railing (for Stairs and so on)	4	2	
Stairs, Wooden	5	12	
Table	4	5	
Window, Cinematic	0	1	
Window, Realistic	1-2	1	
Wooden Support Post	4	5	

Miscellaneous Outdoor Items

Boulder, Small	5	7	
Boulder, Large	5	13	
Rake	2	1	
Stone Garden Lantern	5	3	
Street Lamp	5	6	
Telephone Booth	3	6	

Trees

Bamboo Tree, Small	3	5	
Bamboo Tree, Medium		4	8
Bamboo Tree, Large	5	11	
Tree, Small	4	5	
Tree, Medium	5	8	
Tree, Large	5	11	

Walls

Brick, single	5	1	
Cinderblock, single	4	1	
Japanese Paper Wall	2	2	
Wooden Wall	4	3	
Brick Wall	5	3	

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Stone Wall	6	5	
Wooden 2x4, single	3		1

Weapons

Polearm	4	5-7	
Pool Cue	3	3	
Staff	4	4	
Sword	4	4-6	

Miscellaneous

Cart, Vendor	3	8-12	
Chain, Length of (4'-6')		5	1-3
Ice, block of	4	6-12	
Rope, Length of (5'-8')			special 1-2
Sack of Grain	2	5	
Statue of Buddha, Small, Wooden	3		3
Statue of Buddha, Medium, Clay	3		3-4
Statue of Buddha, Large, Stone			6 8-10
Statue of Buddha, Giant, Bronze	8		18-20
Trash Can, Metal	4	4	
Wooden Crate, Small	4	4	
Wooden Crate, Large	4	7	

The ability to cut a length of rope depends on the special effect of the attack used. Virtually all normal attacks (such as punches, kicks, clubs, and staff weapons) cannot damage a length of a rope, especially if there is any slack available. Edged attacks (such as knives and daggers) can saw through the rope, while extremely sharp edged weapons (axes, katana, some pole weapons) might cut through in a single swing. *Ch'i* powers can burn through rope easily. When dealing with edged weapons, figure a standard thickness of rope (such as normally used for climbing) has 1-2 DEF. Thin ropes only have 1 DEF, while thick ropes (such as the hawsers used on ships) 3+ DEF. The BODY given is for a standard thickness of rope, thin ropes have but 1 BODY, while thick hawsers have 3-5 BODY.

[[BOX END]]

<1> MARTIAL ARTS VILLAINS

The villain or villains opposing the PCs are one of the most important elements of a *Ninja Hero* campaign. This section discusses the art of creating interesting martial arts villains, and how to use them in the campaign.

<3> What Makes A Good Enemy?

The question of “what makes a good villain?” confronts animators, filmmakers, writers, video game programmers, and GMs alike. The right villain can either make or break a martial arts adventure, and while interesting villains can draw players into a campaign and get them involved, dull or boring villains can virtually kill a game session.

To create a “good” villain, you need to find ways to ensure the players (not to mention their characters) remember him long after a game session ends. That means he’s got to be *distinctive*, and there are three ways to do that. You can use one or more of them; the best villains often combine all three.

The first is to make the villain *visually distinctive* (a common tactic in video games and other visual media). Perhaps the villain is a foreigner and uses an unknown and distinctive fighting style, has a unique or rare weapon, or simply looks, dresses, acts, and/or talks in a strange and unusual manner.

The second method is to make your villain *psychologically distinctive* — in other words, making him stand out because of his personality. Ask yourself why he opposes the heroes. Is he a mercenary, a man who fights for the sheer enjoyment of fighting, or a greedy or ruthless person seeking to remove obstacles to his plans of oppression? Alternately, he may be an honorable man, thrust into the role of “villain” by unfortunate circumstance or misunderstanding (martial arts stories, with their frequent emphasis on honor, are the perfect showcases for such “bad” guys).

Third, you can make him *dramatically distinctive* — memorable because of his central role in the campaign, a particular character’s background, or both. Villains linked to the PCs in some way have a firmer footing in the campaign, and a stronger presence in the minds of the players. You should look for ways to connect established and newly introduced villains to one or more PCs (if possible), since these connections can provide excellent plot hooks.

One thing all GMs should remember about villains: less is more. Resist the urge to throw your most favorite, powerful villains at the heroes at the outset of a campaign. Let the PCs work their way up through the ranks, fighting minions and more minions, before they get the chance to challenge your best bad guys. This way, you’ll have time to establish the major villain as a powerful presence, and can build up his reputation before the PCs actually meet him.

A perfect example of a villain central to both a campaign and a specific character is Lord Hikiji in Stan Sakai’s comic series *Usagi Yojimbo*. Lord Hikiji is a human in a world dominated by anthropomorphic animals, which makes him visually distinctive and unusual. He killed Usagi’s father, indirectly killed Lord Mifune (Usagi’s master), and gave Usagi his distinctive facial scar. Finally, Lord Hikiji desires to conquer all of Japan, and Usagi has run afoul of his plots and agents many times. Thus, although Usagi rarely sees Lord Hikiji himself, he’s crucial to both the world of *Usagi Yojimbo*, and to Usagi’s origin story.

<4> **BALANCING VILLAINS**

As the GM, you have (in effect) an unlimited number of Character Points to work with when building villains, so you're under less of an obligation to build balanced characters in the sense of limiting yourself to the campaign guidelines, or justifying all of the villains points with Disadvantages. But you still have to consider the issue of villain balance *versus the PCs*. For those purposes, you can organize villains into three distinct groups — Lessers, Equals, and Greater — based on their Character Points and power levels relative to the PCs.

Lessers — low-end, low-powered villains, such as gang members, soldiers, minions, and common thugs — don't require many Character Points; they're usually too weak to present much of a threat to any one PC, much less a whole group (that's why minions always attack in large numbers).

Greater — high-powered villains, such as evil Old Masters, video game-style “boss” characters, and would-be world conquerors — require so many Character points you shouldn't even bother trying to balance them; they should threaten the entire PC group. A villain intended to face the entire PC group in combat must be much more powerful than any one PC. The PCs have to work hard to defeat such a foe, often spending points to buy Teamwork and other special abilities specifically to overcome him.

You have to give the most thought to Equals — the mid-ranged villains, the ones who balance against the PCs both in numbers and in Character Point totals. These villains fight the PCs on equal footing; typically the heroes must defeat them before they can tackle the main villain. However, even though mid-ranged villains are similar to the heroes in numbers, Active Point totals, and the like, they don't have to be perfectly balanced game play-wise. Villains often specialize in a specific martial art or weapon much more so than PCs can (giving them higher CVs, more maneuvers, more special abilities, and sometimes more DCs). You can also design a mid-range villain to exploit a PC's weaknesses (just don't overdo it, or do it frequently; it's unfair and discourages well-rounded PCs). Naturally, once the villain loses his special weapon, or the PCs neutralize his technique, his advantage vanishes and he's much easier to defeat.

<3> **Villain Motivations**

Building your villain is only half the battle. You also need to run him as part of the campaign; if you run the villain well, the players will remember him even if their characters defeat him easily.

When you create a villain, perhaps the most important aspects of him is his motivation. What makes him do what he does? Few (if any) people actively think of themselves as “evil”; they have specific reasons for their conduct, often ones that (in their eyes) completely justify their actions. Some of the motivations common to *Ninja Hero* villains include:

<5> **Bloodlust**

This sort of villain likes to hurt people and has little to no compunctions about killing his foes. He's rarely a main villain, but is often a feared and powerful high-level minion. He lives for

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battle, and likes to start, engage in, and win fights. He's a particularly dangerous opponent, one who's quick to exploit any weakness, usually ignores any attempts to surrender, and often uses attacks and techniques designed to inflict maximum injuries. He's also highly likely to attack innocents. He often has Enraged, Reputation, or Psychological Limitations such as *Bad Tempered*, *Casual Killer*, *Cruel And Brutal*, *Likes To Hurt Foes*, or *Vicious Fighter*.

<5> **Glory**

This villain only wishes to enhance his own reputation (or that of his country). Everything (or almost everything) he does is designed to call attention to his deeds and to prove his greatness. Often self-centered, and only willing get involved in a situation if he can use it to enhance his own stature and reputation, he may even manipulate events to make himself look better. Taking the adage "All is fair in love and war" to heart, he engages in bribery, fraud, kidnapping, and even murder to ensure that his reputation and notoriety remain untarnished. He often has a great deal of wealth and personal power, as well as such Psychological Limitations as *Arrogant*, *Self-Centered*, or *Only Concerned With Personal Image*.

<5> **Greed**

A classic motivation, greed drives villains to accumulate as much wealth as possible. (In the martial arts genre, some characters are greedy for knowledge instead.) Common bandits, avaricious officials, and powerful crimelords all tend to have this motivation, often mixed with a desire for power as well (see below). Psychological Limitations such as *Greedy*, often coupled with *Ruthless* or *Self-Centered*, are common; greedy characters often don't care who they have to hurt to get what they want.

<5> **Personal Superiority**

A martial arts character with this motivation is often the least villainous of villains. He fights not for glory, money, or revenge, but to prove his own superiority and self-worth. However, little else matters to the character, and trying to get him to do anything *but* fight is often impossible. He'll go out of his way to challenge characters with reputations as skilled fighters, sometimes even arranging events to put them in situations where they *have* to fight him... and he'll go on fighting even if a building is collapsing around him.

Once a personal superiority villain starts fighting, he usually fights honorably, without tricks or cheating; it wouldn't prove his superiority if he won by underhanded means. On the other hand, if he feels an opponent doesn't live up to his reputation as a skilled fighter, or isn't fighting as hard as he can, he might just decide to teach his opponent a "lesson" involving grievous (even deadly) injuries.

Personal superiority villains normally aren't main villains, but often serve one as a major minion. They usually have Psychological Limitations such as *Arrogant*, *Honorable*, or *Overconfidence*, plus a Reputation as a ruthless fighter.

<5> **Power**

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The powerhungry villain is similar in many respects to the greedy villain, but instead of money he craves power — be it political, military, martial, mystical, or all of the above. In many settings, this sort of villain is the most dangerous of all, utterly ruthless and obsessed with acquiring power. He'll do whatever he must to get what he wants, and usually has plentiful resources (money, land, troops, weapons) to help him. He's often the campaign's main villain, built on an epic scale, and has Psychological Limitations such as *Powerhungry*, *Craves Power And Influence*, *Disdain For The Weak*, or *Megalomania*.

<5> **Revenge**

This character has just one thing on his mind: revenge. Someone, somewhere, at some time insulted, harmed, or otherwise dishonored him, and now he wants his revenge. He'll stop at nothing to see it done, and is often frighteningly persistent. He becomes a villain, rather than just an annoying NPC, when he lets his desire for revenge overcome his desire to see any sort of justice done. A samurai who swears to avenge his master's death by slaying his master's killer is a hero, but if he burns down an inn to do it (thus killing numerous innocents), he's a villain.

One interesting twist is to create a vengeance-seeking villain who doesn't have a valid case for seeking revenge. Perhaps he's after the wrong person, or maybe he just imagined the insult. But he's still determined to obtain his revenge, and won't listen to reason when the PCs try to dissuade him.

The revenge-seeking villains are usually minor characters, though one who's after a PC may appear frequently and cause a great deal of trouble. Common Psychological Limitations for such villains include *Hunting X* (where "X" is their target), *Vengeful*, *Seeks Vengeance*, *Singleminded*, and *The Ends Justify The Means*.

<5> **Thrillseeking**

The thrillseeker lives to match wits with authority, the law, and others in positions of power. Usually a solo operative, he might be an assassin, a mercenary, or a thief, but his main desire is to get into, and then safely get out of, dangerous situations. An even more dangerous form of thrillseeking villain is the one who acts as a villain for "kicks" and has little regard for the welfare of others. To make matters worse, thrillseekers of either type tend to be unconventional in their methods and unpredictable in their actions. In a campaign, the former type of villain might just be a pest, but the latter may present a lethal threat, especially to innocent bystanders. Thrillseeking villains often have such Psychological Limitations as *Adrenaline Junkie*, *Overconfidence*, *Reckless*, and, of course, *Thrillseeker*.

<3> **Villain Archetypes**

Just like every other genre, martial arts stories often feature certain readily-identifiable villain stereotypes. These include:

<5> **The Big Boss**

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“Big Boss” is a longstanding martial arts genre term for “master villain.” Most of the major villains the PCs encounter who aren’t Evil Masters will be Big Bosses.

Big Bosses, as the name implies, are often crimelords, although discredited Shaolin monks, evil eunuchs, military commanders, and warlords can all fit into this archetype. In any case, a Big Boss has a lot of power, not just physically, but politically and in the form of minions. He’s normally the enemy of at least one (if not all) of the PCs, although he might once have been a PC’s teacher and master.

The PCs typically encounter a Big Boss either when he moves into a “territory” they’re already in (their home village, for example), or when they visit someplace they’ve never been before where the Big Boss already holds sway. Adventures featuring Big Bosses usually require the PCs to stave off attacks from the Boss’s minions while they find ways to cripple his organization and then take him on personally.

Big Bosses are built as a Greater villain. Typically they’re excellent fighters, a match for at least any one or two PCs, though a few fall into the Sydney Greenstreet “too fat to fight” category.

<5> **The Brother/Rival**

Once a member of the PC’s school or family (or both), this character grew jealous of the PC’s skill in the martial arts, or what he perceived as preferential treatment for the PC. Eventually, he dishonored himself in the eyes of his school and/or family (usually by unfairly attacking the PC, or trying to beat him by cheating), and was cast out. Now he’s the PC’s greatest enemy, and seeks to revenge himself for the humiliation and disgrace the PC “caused.” In many stories, a Big Boss, Evil Master, or other main villain recruits the Brother/Rival and uses him as a weapon against the PC.

You should design a Brother/Rival as an Equal — the PC’s dark twin, with similar fighting abilities but different motivations and goals. However, he may have a few more points of CV or DCs, since he focuses so singlemindedly on his fighting, or perhaps some extra dice of damage that activate only if his *Enraged: When Fighting PC* Disadvantage takes effect.

<5> **The Brute**

Every Big Boss, and many Evil Masters, has at least one large, well-muscled minion to do his dirty work. Often slow of wit, the Brute works as an enforcer or collector of protection money — jobs depending more on intimidation and strength than smarts. His martial arts skills run toward Sumo Wrestling, Wrestling, or other styles that don’t rely so much on swiftness and agility.

Typically, the PCs’ first encounter the Brute early in the scenario, often in a situation where he can demonstrate his frightening strength by casually defeating a few normals. Later in the scenario, they meet him again, using their speed and skill to overcome his brawn.

You should build the Brute as an Equal — almost. He should have fewer points of SPD than the PCs, but higher STR, and perhaps a very high OCV with one or two signature maneuvers (typically Punch or Grab). His CON and REC should also be high; he’s hard to put

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down and keep down.

A variant on the Brute is the Muscleman, who unlike the Brute is (a) smart, and (b) fights well — *very* well. He's got all the Brute's strength and resilience, plus the speed, agility, and quick wits of ordinary martial artists. He's not *quite* as good a warrior as the PCs — he may lack a point or two of CV, or a DC or two, on them — but his ability to shrug off damage should frighten the PCs, at least at first. He may also serve his boss as a Lieutenant (see below). Build him as an Equal.

<5> **The Clan Advisor**

In martial arts stories featuring the PCs' clan, school, corporation, or like organization or group, one of the chief advisors to the group's leaders (and/or the PCs) is often a traitor who's colluding with the main villain. Typically he hopes to gain leadership of the group for himself, or to marry the leader's beautiful daughter, or to take revenge for some long-imagined slight. (In a few cases, he's an *unwilling* traitor whom the main villain is blackmailing or coercing.) He works insidiously, giving cleverly-disguised bad advice and otherwise trying to undermine the group's position and power. At the same time, he keeps the main villain updated on what the group and the PCs are doing. When the PCs figure out what's going on, poetic justice usually steps in — either the main villain kills the traitor, or he dies in an accident as he tries to escape from the PCs.

Most Clan Advisors are built as Lessers; they're not intended to fight even a single PC one-on-one, though they do have some martial arts skills. They usually have lots of Interaction Skills and KSs.

<5> **The Evil Master**

A highly skilled and powerful master of the martial arts, the Evil Master resembles the Big Boss, but he's usually the head of a school, ninja clan, or the like. He's usually more concerned with proving the supremacy of his style, school, or personal prowess than with acquiring wealth or power, though some Evil Masters intend to create a legion of unstoppable martial arts assassins, conquer the PCs' nation, or something equally nefarious. In some cases he's the Brother/Rival of the PCs' own master.

The Evil Master is a Greater villain. Typically he can take on all of the PCs at once and beat them easily early in the game. Once they retrain, learning secret techniques and counters for the Evil Master's own style, the PCs can defeat him.

<5> **The Evil Master's Daughter**

Evil Masters often have daughters, whom they train to be skilled martial artists. Sometimes the Daughter is devoted to her father and his goals; she helps him to work toward them and scorns the PCs (though she may befriend them as a trick, later betraying them at an opportune moment). In other stories, the Daughter is wracked by indecision — she loves her father and defends him to the death, but loathes his evil nature and does not want him to triumph. The latter form of Daughter often becomes an ally of the PCs (at least temporarily), and may be a

good love interest for a male PC.

You should build the Evil Master's Daughter as an Equal.

<5> **The Go-Between**

A messenger who carries orders from a Big Boss (or Evil Master) to his minions, the Go-Between also delivers ultimatums to people the Big Boss wants to bow to his will (such as the PCs). Go-Betweens range from simpering toadies, to insidiously clever diplomats, to powerful and clever fighters.

Normally the PCs don't fight the Go-Between; he has a sort of "diplomatic immunity," at least until the climactic fight scene. Even then, it's likely the Go-Between will sneak away from the battle, to return in a later adventure as the new Big Boss. You should build him as a Lesser or an Equal, depending on whether you intend to have him fight the PCs. He usually has a high PRE and lots of Interaction Skills.

<5> **The Lieutenant/Senior Student**

Big Bosses, Evil Masters, and other major villains of all kinds usually have one or more lieutenants or senior students — well-trained, powerful assistants who help run the Big Boss's organization. As important members of the organization, Lieutenants should be designed as Equals; in most stories, the PCs must encounter and defeat a main villain's Lieutenants before proceeding to the final battle with the main villain himself (in some cases, the PCs may mistake the Lieutenant for his boss, until they defeat him). Each one should have his own personality and background, including a preferred fighting style, weapon, and/or special abilities.

<5> **The Survivor Seeking Revenge**

Over the course of a campaign, or even a single long adventure, PCs tend to meet, defeat, and often kill their enemies. It's a staple of the martial arts genre that the dead enemies have siblings, widow(er)s, children, friends, and allies who seek revenge. In some cases, this is a simple matter of one evil person trying to avenge another. It becomes more complex when the Survivor is an honorable, kind, or good-hearted person bound by ties of blood and honor to avenge his evil relative. In the latter case, avoiding the terrible tragedy of having to defeat (and probably kill) so noble a person because of a pointless blood feud may take a lot of effort and sacrifice on the PCs' part.

You should build this character as an Equal.

<1> **MARTIAL ARTS NPCs**

Well-developed NPCs are as important to a *Ninja Hero* campaign as well-developed villains, for while the villains give the PCs someone to fight, the NPCs serve many roles that are nearly as important: provider of information; love interest; scenario motivation; and more.

<3> **What Makes A Good NPC?**

The best martial arts NPCs are more than just “window dressing.” A good NPC isn’t just a cardboard cutout; he should have motivations and a personality all his own. That doesn’t mean you need to prepare a character sheet for everyone the PCs might meet, though; for most NPCs only a single sentence (or a single word) description should suffice. The most important, memorable details (“old man, walks with a limp, Canton accent, cantankerous”, “headstrong teenager, full of enthusiasm, sloppy dresser”) are what you need to know. Go beyond visual appearance if necessary; accents, smells, and the like can all help bring an NPC to life. More important NPCs, or those whom you expect to interact heavily with the PCs, should have a more detailed background, possibly including a full character sheet, or at least a character brief.

<3> **NPC Motivations**

Non-player characters are more than just foils for the PCs to order around and use as they see fit. They’ve got their own motivations, agendas, and plans (even if they’re simple ones like “earn a living” or “survive this attack”). Some enthusiastically help the PCs; others shun them, inform the authorities about them, or even attack them. When creating NPCs for your *Ninja Hero* campaign, you should decide what motivates each one. That way you know how he’ll react to the PCs and other in-game situations. A few common NPC motivations are:

<5> **Curiosity**

The character is curious about the unknown. This might be scientific curiosity (“Why is the sky blue?”), investigative curiosity (“Where is Boss Lee hiding his ill-gotten money?”), or mere idle curiosity (“What does this button do?”). The character may follow the PCs to see what they’re up to (eventually becoming either a help or a hindrance), or he may serve the PCs as a source of information (or gossip). Curiosity-afflicted NPCs also make great scenario-starters; they get in trouble easily, often find things they shouldn’t, and otherwise get the action going.

<5> **Greed**

This character wants material wealth. Unlike the villain who is motivated by greed, the greedy NPC usually isn’t so blatant or ruthless about it. For example, a greedy merchant overcharges his customers and underpays his employees, while a greedy mercenary takes any job as long as the money is decent (even if that means betraying his current employer). Greedy characters also tend to be miserly, and often try and pay as little as possible for anything they might need (including the services of the PCs). In some cases, PCs can enlist the help of greedy

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NPCs by paying them, or by pointing out a threat to their money.

<5> **Love**

Love, in one of its myriad forms, motivates many NPCs. A character may act out of love for an individual or for a group (such as a clan or a country), to win the love of an individual, or to prove his love for an individual. Depending on the form of love that motivates the NPC, his actions may be benign, bothersome, or downright dangerous.

Love often works best as an NPC motivation when it's love for one of the PCs — in other words, when the NPC is a “love interest” for a PC (either currently, or potentially). A love interest may provide significant help to the object of his affection, or become a potential hostage for the villains. In a story tinged by tragedy, the love interest may sacrifice himself to save or help the PC.

You should use love interests sparingly — too many of them, and they become routine, or the PC may start to abuse their affections by ordering them around. Killing love interests should be even more infrequent; it quickly becomes anti-climactic and loses its impact if it happens more than once or twice in a campaign.

<5> **Revenge**

The NPC seeks vengeance for some act that's disgraced his honor, clan, family, or school. He wants to find the person(s) responsible, and usually won't stop until he sees justice done. In some stories, this sort of NPC works at cross-purposes to the PCs (perhaps he wants to kill someone they like); in others, he tries to obtain the PCs' help with his quest. In some cases, the NPC may even want revenge against a PC, but since he's not a villain, that usually means he's suffering from a case of mistaken identity.

<5> **Sense Of Adventure**

The NPC has gone out to seek his fortune in the world and travels about looking for new experiences and situations. Often young and somewhat naive, this sort of character may travel with PCs (especially if they seem to live an “exciting” life). He may or may not recognize a dangerous situation when it develops, and may or may not possess fighting skills.

<5> **Sense Of Duty/Responsibility**

The NPC has a job to do and intends to do it well. Typically a member of a larger organization (a school or the Police Department, for example), or sworn to the service of a local lord, this NPC is usually hard to bribe and/or corrupt, but can be a staunch ally of the PCs in times of trouble if their interests align.

Alternately, an NPC may have a “Sense Of Responsibility” to a particular organization or community. Even if he sometimes seems a little shady or scruffy, his heart's in the right place, and the PCs can usually count on him when the chips are down.

<4> **NPC ARCHETYPES**

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Non-villainous NPCs have archetypes just like villains do. In fact, many of them are the same — friendly or neutral versions of the villain archetypes

<5> **The Clan Advisor**

This character is just like the traitorous Clan Advisor, except he supports the clan and its goals with sound advice. Of course, the PCs have no way of knowing this, since both character types act in the same manner. The PCs have to learn from the advisor's deeds, not his looks, whether he's loyal or not.

<5> **The Loved One**

This character is a PC's fiancé(e), lover, sibling, or spouse. Sometimes an unskilled "normal," sometimes an accomplished fighter in his own right, the loved one doesn't usually accompany the PC on adventures, but may if you need him to. Depending on the story and setting, the loved one may become a victim of the villain, spurring the PC to seek vengeance.

<5> **The Master**

In most campaigns the PCs' Master (be it their martial arts master, liege lord, or commanding officer) is an NPC. Normally a much better fighter than his students (or at least more knowledgeable), the Master lacks the PCs' youth, strength, stamina, and vigor. Virtually unbeatable in a sparring match, the Master's not tough or strong enough to fight the Evil Master and his students in open combat — that's why he trains the PCs for the task. Alternately, he may have some crucial Vulnerability the villain knows about.

<5> **The Master's Beautiful Daughter**

The Master often has a daughter who is also an accomplished martial artist. Genre conventions make her very beautiful, and quite capable of defending herself in combat. You can use her to provide a little extra "muscle" if the PCs need it, or as a potential love interest for one of the PCs (at which point the PC often gains a Rival in the form of a fellow suitor).

<5> **The Shopkeeper And Family**

In many martial arts stories, shopkeepers, their families, and other ordinary people (fishermen, restaurateurs, farmers, businessmen) abound. They're the NPCs who initially suffer the predations of the villain, and whom the PCs must protect from further harm. Over the course of the campaign, the PCs may develop a wide network of friends among the common folk, an important resource many villains overlook or scorn.

<5> **The Survivor Seeking Revenge**

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When a villain kills someone, the victim often has relatives who seek revenge. Many are inadequate to the task, and so it falls to the PCs to rescue and perhaps train them. A few are skilled enough to work side-by-side with the PCs to bring the villain down... though their rash desire for vengeance often causes them to overextend themselves and get killed by the villain.

<chapter> **CHAPTER FIVE:**

DEADLY ENEMIES AND FLASHING BLADES: A *NINJA HERO* SOURCEBOOK

“I’ve come to speak to you about a tournament of the martial arts.”

—Mr. Braithwaite, *Enter The Dragon*

This chapter provides a wealth of resources for the *Ninja Hero* GM. First, there are several floorplans for common martial arts locales. Second, there are five campaign descriptions, one for each of the subgenres described in Chapter One. Third, there are nearly two dozen NPCs and villains (including five generic ninja), fully written up for your use. The chapter concludes with several magical weapons and other artifacts, and some short adventure seeds, suitable for almost any martial arts campaign.

<1> FLOORPLANS

Gamemasters who need scenic locations for martial arts combats may want to try these.

<3> Dojo, Ancient Chinese Kwoon

The accompanying map represents a generic martial arts school from roughly the Manchu era. The map only shows the main courtyard, since that's where fights most likely occur. There may also be other buildings nearby, fields for growing crops to support the school, and so forth.

A. Front Courtyard: This is a small courtyard set between the street and the school proper. A wall separates the courtyard from the street; the students can close the double doors in the wall at night or in times of trouble. Over the doors is the school's signboard, giving the name of the school. Opposite the street doors is a second set of double doors which open onto the school's training yard. The walls bordering this courtyard all have sharply peaked tile roofs running along the top (except for the streetside wall).

B. Training Yard: This is the school's training yard. The floor is of flagstones, though there are rectangles of bare dirt in each corner for potted plants. Next to the plants are long wooden weapon racks supporting a variety of Chinese polearms. Each rack has four to six polearms.

C. Veranda: Around the edge of the training yard is a covered veranda with a railing of worked wooden posts. Thicker wooden posts support the tile roof. Doors opposite the stairs lead into the living quarters, storerooms, and kitchen while windows, made from thin wooden poles and paper, let in light and air.

D. Porch: This is the "porch," a covered area open to the air that serves as a gathering place for students and instructors.

E. Shrine: This room is separated from the porch by a wooden wall with glass windows and folding doors. The school's shrine sits on the far wall. It honors past masters and also contains important school artifacts.

<3> Dojo, Modern American

The accompanying map represents a modern-day karate dojo, but you can easily use it for any generic martial arts school.

A. Genkan: The *genkan*, or foyer. This is where students should leave their shoes. In a proper karate dojo, the rest of the floor is elevated above the *genkan*, and is made of wood.

B. Makiwara: The *makiwara*, a wooden post wrapped in rope and/or twine. Students punch the *makiwara* to build strength and toughness.

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C. Punching Bag: This is a standard “heavy bag,” filled with sand and suspended by a chain from the ceiling.

D. Training Dummy: This is another heavy bag, but shaped more like a person and suspended with bungee cords.

E. *Dojo Kun*: The *Dojo Kun*, or five rules of the dojo. Depending on the school, these rules may be heavily emphasized or totally ignored.

F. *Hata*: The *hata*, or school flag. These are common in Japan and have the name of the school and the school’s parent organization on them.

G. Towel Rack: Some schools may have weapon racks, with katana, bo, and what not, or a tub of jo, hanbo, tonfa, boken, and rubber guns and knives.

H. Toilet.

I. Bathroom with sink.

J. Wall-Mounted Mirror: Good for showing a student what he’s doing wrong (or right).

K. White Board: For announcements and other general information.

L. Storage Closet: This is where the dojo keeps its towels, uniforms, pads, and cleaning gear.

M. *Nafuda*: *Nafuda* are wooden boards two inches wide and six inches tall. Each one has the name and rank of a student on it. They show the ranking of students in the school, as well as whether the named student is physically in the school at present. *Nafuda* are common in traditional karate schools, but are rare in more modern, Western schools.

<3> Tournament Fighting Ring

The accompanying map represents a typical tournament area for staging one-on-one fights. The options below allow you to adapt the floorplan to virtually any setting or era.

A. Fighting Ring: This is area where fights actually occur. The “ring” is fifteen feet (about 2.25”) on a side and made from hard-packed dirt edged with brick. Other versions may use flagstones, a raised wooden floor, clay, grass, metal plates, or stretched canvas. There is a six-foot (1”) area around the ring where fighters sit and prepare for their matches.

B. Judges’ Seats: A raised wooden platform with seats for three (or five) judges. You could replace the judges with high-ranking masters of the art who determine if a fighter is worthy to advance to the next rank or level (this works well if the ring is part of a school or Shaolin monastery), dignitaries, or even the person sponsoring the fighting tournament.

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C. Seats: In this ring the floor is depressed and the seats are set in the sloping walls (the dotted line indicates where the slope starts and ends). The stairs and seats are made from cut flagstone and brick set into the earth. A modern version of the arena would be on flat ground and surrounded by arena-style seating.

D. Shrine: This can be any semi-religious shrine or display area. The tournaments organizers can place carved signboards, flags, suits of armor, large barrels of *sake*, porcelain vases, statues, weapons, and other objects here. In front of the shrine is a rack to hold nameplates, flags, markers, *mon*, or insignia to indicate who is currently involved in a match.

Further options: Not all rings have a judges' stand or a shrine. If you remove either (or both) of these items, you should replace them with more seating. A modern "pit fighting" arena wouldn't have either, and would have seats on all four sides. In addition, modern boxing and wrestling rings are raised up above the floor so the audience can look up at them instead of down (however, a sumo ring is on the floor and the seats are elevated, as described above). For an "ultimate fighting" style ring, a heavy chain-link fence walls in (and may even roof) the fighting arena. An illegal or dark future version of this ring would have barbed wire, spikes, and similar nasty bits worked into the chainlinks.

<1> CAMPAIGNS AND SETTINGS

This section describes five different sample campaigns, each corresponding to one of the martial arts subgenres. Each of the descriptions just scratches the surface of possible game ideas for an on-going *Ninja Hero* campaign; the GM should develop and expand on the ideas to suit himself and flesh out the setting for his PCs.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> MYTHIC CHINA ACCORDING TO THE MOVIES

Since mythic China provides the setting for most Chinese martial arts films, you may want to run a campaign in such a setting. However, the China of centuries past as depicted in the movies isn't necessarily the same as what you'll read about in history books. Here's what it's like, according to Hong Kong cinema:

Ancient China is a violent place. The Emperor may rule, but he can only really control the lands nearest the capitol (and then only if he's willing to do more than lounge around his palace). Various eunuch governors and magistrates, mostly corrupt and self-centered, control the outer territories. Bandits are everywhere, preying on honest merchants and villagers, while vicious pirates control the seas. To top it off, the various martial arts schools are often at each others' throats, fighting in an effort to prove themselves superior.

Oppression and cruel rulers quickly spawn rebels who seek to overthrow the current regime and press the Emperor for justice. Naturally, corrupt local officials dislike this; they recruit evil martial arts masters to hunt down rebels (and anyone else who interferes with the officials' rules). And, as if all this infighting weren't enough, the Japanese are out there! They might use their ninja as spies and assassins, or supply guns to one faction or another.

All this fighting and strife has led to the abandonment of temples and towns, many of which are now haunted. The threats may be mundane (such as bandits), or possibly terrifying supernatural creatures — such as hopping corpses or beautiful, seductive ghosts. Regardless of the exact nature of the “haunt,” it doesn't care for visitors, and tries to kill them. Fortunately, local Taoist sorcerers or Buddhist monks often help drive off the evil.

In areas where the fighting has raged uncontrolled, the entire region may be a wasteland, populated only by ragged units of soldiers, bandits, and solitary bounty hunters. The latter are often powerful and skilled swordsmen, but so greedy and amoral they're scarcely better than the men they track down.

In the middle of this are innocent townspeople and farmers trying to get by. Most have given up on any chance for a decent life, although a few would fight back if they could. Some government officials are honest and just, but corrupt superiors and a lack of local cooperation hinder their efforts.

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Anyone trying to make a better life for himself may have allies, however. Shaolin monks, rightly feared as powerful and skilled martial artists, are usually more than willing to dispense a little justice. Unfortunately, heroes also have to contend with Shaolin monks who have gone bad — who possess the same skills, but use them for personal gain.

Thanks to the wide variety of settings in ancient China, you can run just about any campaign there, from straight martial arts action, to supernatural horror. Characters can be rebels fighting corrupt governmental oppressors, slayers of ghost and vampires, loyal patriots defending China against evil foreign invaders, adventurers questing for ancient secrets and treasures, martial arts students avenging the death of their master, and much more.

This same description also largely applies to the mythic feudal Japan common to many martial arts *anime* (such as *Ninja Scroll*).

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<2> REALISTIC MARTIAL ARTS: SWORDS OF THE SUN KING

Flashing rapiers, beautiful maidens, dashing military actions. The nobility of the King’s Musketeers and the perfidiousness of the Cardinal and his Guards. Secret conspiracies and midnight assignations. All these, and more, are part of the action in seventeenth-century France.

The year is 1630. France is the undisputed greatest nation on the face of the Earth (well, to the French anyway). Elements of French culture influence almost all of Europe, from fencing, to food, to music, to clothing. The internal strife of the previous decades is over, and Paris is the unofficial capital of Europe.

The most prestigious job in all of France (and, perhaps, all of Europe) is to belong to the King’s Musketeers. These men (and if the GM is lenient, women), recruited from the best swordsmen in France (and Europe), serve as the King’s elite guard, tasked with protecting his person at all times.

Swords Of The Sun King is a Realistic martial arts campaign, but you should still allow for a certain sense of style and feats of derring-do among the PCs (this is where the word “swashbuckling” comes from, after all). Inspirational films include: *The Three Musketeers* (specifically the 1974 version with Michael York), *The Four Musketeers* (ditto), and *The Princess Bride*.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **SUN KING?**

Technically, it was Louis XIV (who reigned from 1643-1715) who was the Sun King, but *Swords Of The Sun King* sounds better than “Swords of King Louis the Thirteenth” (and “The Three [or Four] Musketeers” was already taken).

Although films (and the campaign) depict him as a villain, it’s debatable whether Cardinal Richelieu was the evil man he’s often made out to be. According to some scholars, he was a friend of the King and the most powerful man in France, and the rivalry between him and Louis

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XIII was a friendly one mainly expressed through the actions of their personal guards. Richelieu's primary aim (in a gaming campaign) is to make France the most powerful nation in Europe, and most everything he does relates to that goal. Naturally, you can ignore this if you wish, instead turning Richelieu into the villainous mastermind of the movies.
[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> IMPORTANCE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Player characters in a *Swords Of The Sun King* campaign are in an interesting position; although they themselves aren't important as individuals (for the most part), they directly serve one of the most powerful men in Europe (King Louis XIII), and are an extension of his will (and his ego). The characters can easily find themselves involved in events of literally national (and international) importance. Their actions can bring them to the direct attention of both Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu (who serves France — not the King, not himself, and *not* the PCs, but France).

<4> CAMPAIGN TONE

Morality: Good versus Evil is black and white. For the most part the Musketeers are good, the Cardinal's Guard are rivals, and almost anyone else who is against France is the enemy. Actually, this is a bit over-simplified, but it sums up the nature of the setting and time (for gaming purposes) rather well. Of course, GMs can make the campaign far more complicated morality-wise, but that sort of defeats the spirit of a swashbuckling campaign.

Realism: Realistic. Although a character in this setting may swing from chandeliers or jump into his horse's saddle from a second story window, he can't leap *up* to that second story window from the ground or otherwise do the impossible. Technically, this setting should be Very Realistic, but once again that defeats the idea of a swashbuckling campaign (it would also mean the PCs are susceptible to any number of diseases and illnesses, and any wound is an open invitation to infection, neither of which add much to a gaming campaign). However, a Realistic setting means the PCs can lose limbs to wounds, armor is heavy (and won't stop bullets), and weapons can (and will) break.

The one departure from the real world a GM may want to consider is the idea of allowing female Musketeers (and/or Cardinal's Guard). Although it has almost no historical basis, it does allow female players to participate in the campaign without restricting them to cross-gender characters or a ladies-in-waiting. (Actually, there *was* a woman who shattered the gender barriers of the era: Julie la Maupin, a professional duelist and a star of the Paris Opera. In addition, Queen Christina of Sweden (1644-1654) dressed like a man while hunting, fencing, and riding, and tended to ignore social conventions regarding proper dress for a lady of the time.)

Outlook: Almost everything works out. Since this is a swashbuckling campaign, things should work out in the PCs' favor in the long run. However, they may still be hassled, imprisoned, beaten, injured, or otherwise harmed along the way.

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Seriousness: More serious than lighthearted. A swashbuckling setting should be an adventurous romp, not a comedy. Comedic elements occur frequently, but they're a natural extension of game play, not forcibly inserted into the campaign. Much of the comedy comes from the interaction of the PCs among themselves, not from deliberate outside jokes.

Continuity: Some long stories and some episodic ones — some long-reaching plots and story arcs, intermingled with shorter adventures. Continuity does have its place (especially in terms of subplots), and people who were injured (for example) in the last adventure should remain injured for the next few sessions.

<4> **SETTING**

Here are some basic details about the setting.

<5> **Physical World**

The campaign takes place during the “swashbuckling era,” from roughly 1590 to around 1720. As this is meant to be a real world campaign, the political world should be relatively historically accurate, as should the technology used.

<5> **Scope**

Paris, France in the year 1630 (or thereabouts). Most of the action should take place in the city of Paris or the nearby countryside. However, it is possible for the characters to adventure to the outer reaches of France and even into other countries, especially if they are on a mission for the King. If the King himself goes to war, a unit of Musketeers follows, while the rest remain behind (guess which group the PCs will be in...).

<5> **Technology Level**

This is the era of pike and musket, when modern weapons and tactics replace many of the military methods of the Middle Ages (plate armor, knights on horseback, shield walls, massed archers, and so on). Gunpowder is in wide use, both for shoulder arms and large field cannon. Ships still move by sail, a horse is the fastest way to travel by land, and passage to the New World takes weeks (if you even get there!). The printing press has brought books to the masses, and there are even glasses to help you read. Medical knowledge is still a bit lacking and can be downright crude; disease, illness, and infection are common killers.

<5> **Occurrence Of *Ch'i* Powers**

No *Ch'i* powers exist. This is a real world campaign, and one not set in the Orient to boot, so *ch'i* powers should not be allowed. However, the GM *might* allow some of the specific Fencing Special Abilities, such as Fighting Florentine or the False Disengage (both are real world fencing techniques, after all).

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<5> Character Building Guidelines

Starting Points For PCs: 75

Maximum Disadvantage Points For PCs: 75

Maximum Points From Any One Disadvantage Category: 25

Characters automatically have the *Normal Characteristic Maxima* Disadvantage

Character can carry normal technology (weapons, and so on) at no point cost

Power Levels

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
OCV/DCV	5-8	10
Speed	3-4	4
DEF	4-5	8 (Here DEF represents the type of armor the characters may be allowed to wear.)
Skill Rolls	11- to 13-	14-

<4> CAMPAIGN RULES

A *Swords Of The Sun King* campaign uses the Hit Location Table and the Knockdown rules. Characters are not allowed to Push.

<2> CINEMATIC: SATURDAY MORNING KUNG FU THEATER

This isn't so much a specific campaign setting, but a suggested style of campaign. It's meant to simulate the action and imagery seen in countless cheaply-made Taiwanese "chop-socky" films — the sort most people think of as "typical martial arts flicks." It also simulates numerous Hollywood action films in which martial arts play a strong role. The characters, trained martial artists, become embroiled in various plots because of their martial skills. Naturally, to survive, they must use their martial prowess to fight their way free.

The *Saturday Morning Kung Fu Theater* campaign tends to push the envelope of what's humanly possible, without verging into Wuxia action or true superpowers. Most of the special powers and moves the characters exhibit are extensions of real world abilities — they can strike faster and hit harder than a Realistic martial artist. But for the most part, the real world still works the same, and characters are rarely (if ever) immune to blades and bullets.

Although the majority of films that fall under the header of *Saturday Morning Kung Fu Theater* are poor examples of the genre, you can draw inspiration from better, more watchable films, such as: *Above The Law*, *Bloodsport*, *The Chinese Connection*, *Drunken Master*, *Enter The Dragon*, *Fists Of Fury*, *The Five Deadly Venoms*, *The Hidden Fortress*, *Marked For Death*, *Romeo Must Die*, *Seven Samurai*, *Snake In The Eagle's Shadow*, and *Yojimbo*.

<4> IMPORTANCE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The PCs are but a few of the innumerable martial artists in the world. Normally, they

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aren't even the best around, just highly skilled and competent. Over the course of the campaign, they may develop into some of the world's greatest fighters, but they still can't stop bullets.

<4> CAMPAIGN TONE

Morality: Good versus Bad is mostly clear-cut. Heroes act properly heroic, and villains are evil; it's as simple as that. Only rarely does a villain become heroic, but sometimes a presumed friend turns traitor at the worst moment.

Realism: Neutral. Although characters in a series such as this can't fly or throw blasts of *ch'i* energy, they still seem capable of slightly impossible stunts, such as surviving enormous amounts of physical abuse.

Outlook: Success balanced by failures. Although the heroes can expect to survive to meet the main villain, it's not a given that they survive the final encounter (though if they don't, it's a genre convention the villain won't either).

Seriousness: More serious than lighthearted. Until Jackie Chan made his breakthrough films of *Drunken Master* and *Snake In The Eagle's Shadow*, kung fu comedies were virtually unknown.

Continuity: Episodic. The GM makes no effort to tie the adventures together. In general, sequels of a popular martial arts film have little or nothing to do with the original film — except maybe a few similar characters. The characters tie up all loose ends by the end of each adventure.

<4> SETTING

Here are some basic details about the setting.

<5> Physical World

You can set a *Saturday Morning Kung Fu Theater* anytime and anywhere: historical China; feudal Japan; modern day America. However the campaign should have some basis in historical reality; martial arts fantasies are normally Wuxia campaigns.

<5> Scope

The campaign is normally limited to one village, town, or city. Rarely do the characters engage in any sort of travel, unless getting to from one place to another is the whole point of the adventure.

<5> Technology Level

Varies. Period films have technology common to the era — usually swords, spears, bows,

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and the like. Modern films feature modern technology, although normally firearms are fairly rare (except in American films).

<5> Occurrence Of *Ch'i* Powers

Ch'i powers are very rare. Usually only a select few characters (such as Old Masters) possess them.

<5> Character Building Guidelines

Starting Points For PCs: 100-125

Maximum Disadvantage Points For PCs: 100-125

Maximum Points From Any One Disadvantage Category: 25-40

Characters automatically have the *Normal Characteristic Maxima* Disadvantage

Character can carry normal technology (weapons, and so on) at no point cost

	Power Levels	
	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
OCV/DCV	7-9 12	
Speed	3-4 5	
DEF	6-8 10	
Skill Rolls	11- to 13-	15-

	<i>Ch'i</i> Power Level	
	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
Normal Attack	30-40	50
Killing Attack	10-20	30
Defenses	10-20	30
Other	20-30	40

<4> CAMPAIGN RULES

A *Saturday Morning Kung Fu Theater* campaign does not use the Hit Location Table. It uses the Knockdown rules. Characters are not allowed to Push.

<2> WUXIA: THE LAST HEROES IN CHINA

Set anywhere from 1840 to 1937, in a China beset by trouble both internal and out, this campaign features great strife, rebellion, and outright war as numerous foreign powers partition and exploit the Middle Kingdom. Opium has become the scourge of the Chinese people, and both Great Britain and France have bombarded Chinese coastal cities in a successful effort to get their way. China is on a slow spiral to ruin.

You have nearly one hundred years of history to pick from when setting up this campaign, and those one hundred years include some highly volatile historical events, including:

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the first Opium War (1840-1842), the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), the Boxer (or Harmonious Fists) Rebellion (1900), the Revolution of 1911, and the rebellions and Communist uprising of 1925-1936. World War II begins (in China) in July 1937, effectively ending the campaign as described.

In a *Last Heroes In China* campaign, the PCs are Chinese patriots (or people sympathetic to the Chinese cause) fighting against foreign oppression, greedy bandits, revolutionaries who wish to topple the Imperial government, and corrupt magistrates. Later period campaigns can have the characters fighting on behalf of the Revolution, or against the first waves of the Japanese invasion during the early 1930s.

Films set in this era include: *Drunken Master II*, *Fist Of Legend*, *Fong Sai Yuk 1 & 2*, *Iron Monkey*, *Last Hero In China*, and *Once Upon A Time In China 1-6*. The *Once Upon A Time In China* films basically define this setting for all intents and purposes.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **THE EMPRESS DOWAGER**

Tzu Hsi, the Empress Dowager, ruled China as either regent or in name from 1864 to her death in 1908. A Manchu, she despised the West and Westerners, and was known for her cruelty; she often executed political opponents in horrific ways. Player characters in a *Last Heroes In China* aren't required to be loyal to her, but are usually loyal to China herself, and fight to preserve Chinese dignity and the right for China to settle its own affairs.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> IMPORTANCE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Although the PCs are powerful and may be well known and respected in their chosen fields, they cannot fight the armed forces of entire nations. The best they can do is to win small victories, and hope that by showing their courage and valor they can encourage others to stand strong and resist the slow domination of China.

<4> CAMPAIGN TONE

Morality: Good versus Bad is mostly clear-cut. Typically, anyone Chinese is good, while the foreign powers (such as France, Great Britain, and Japan) are bad. Of course, more than a few Chinese side with the enemy out of self-interest or greed, and occasionally a foreigner is sympathetic.

Realism: Romantic. Characters in this setting consistently perform the fairly impossible (this is, after all, the Wuxia subgenre).

Outlook: Almost everything works out. Since the films this campaign derives from are meant to inspire pride in the Chinese people, they usually don't end with the heroes failing. However, a hero may die after completing his mission, or suffer the loss of a close friend or loved one.

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Seriousness: More serious than lighthearted. Due to the nature of the time period shown in these films, they tend to have a mostly serious tone. But, like many Hong Kong films, even the darkest and most violent of movies can have moments of pure hilarity (and conversely, comedies can have short scenes of intense graphic violence).

Continuity: Some long stories and some episodic ones. Usually multiple films with the same title adhere to a certain degree of continuity from one movie to the next; your campaign should do likewise.

<4> **SETTING**

Here are some basic details about the setting.

<5> **Physical World**

This campaign takes place anytime from 1840 to 1936, in historical China. You can (and should) take advantage of real-world events, such as the bloody Taiping Rebellion, to create challenging adventures.

<5> **Scope**

The Pacific coast of China, usually in the cities of Canton or Shanghai.

<5> **Technology Level**

The technology in the campaign depends on the exact era. In general, characters can have traditional Chinese weapons (such as swords) at any time, and also encounter Western innovations (such as firearms and steam engines). For the most part, the Chinese don't use much foreign technology, except for such items as glasses, sunglasses, umbrellas, and clocks.

<5> **Occurrence Of *Ch'i* Powers**

This being a *wuxia*-inspired campaign, *ch'i* powers are common. Many people (including the PCs) have them, and those who have them often know several techniques.

<5> **Character Building Guidelines**

Starting Points For PCs: 150 to 200

Maximum Disadvantage Points For PCs: 100-150

Maximum Points From Any One Disadvantage Category: 50

Characters *do not* automatically have the *Normal Characteristic Maxima* Disadvantage

Character *cannot* carry normal technology (weapons, and so on) at no point cost

Power Levels

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	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
OCV/DCV	10-12	14
Speed	4-5	7
DEF	8-10	14
Skill Rolls	12- to 14-	16-

Ch'i Power Level

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
Normal Attack	40-50	60
Killing Attack	20-30	45
Defenses	20-30	40
Other	40-60	75

<4> CAMPAIGN RULES

A *Last Heroes In China* campaign uses the Hit Location Table and the Knockback rules. Characters are allowed to Push.

<4> HOUSE RULES

You should allow the presence of Western martial artists, even though such characters are virtually non-existent historically. Western martial artists often star as villains (or assistants to the villain) in many films set in this time period.

<2> VIDEO GAME: KING OF THE STREETFIGHTING WARRIORS

Every year (or every several years), a powerful, mysterious organization holds a martial arts tournament on a grand scale. Fighters from all over the world attend, each with his own mission and reasons for being there. Most merely wish to win the coveted top prize, but some want to prove themselves in battle, seek vengeance for a slain loved one, or want to fight a specific foe — and a few just want to have fun. Regardless, the competition is fierce, as each of the warriors in attendance ranks among the best in the martial world... even without his *ch'i* superpowers.

A *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign presumes the existence of a worldwide fighting competition that attracts numerous top fighters, each competing for a specific reason. The tournament may take place in one location, but it's more likely the fighters travel from one picturesque location to another as the tournament progresses. Player characters can be loners, but are typically allies who belong to the same faction or "stable" of fighters. As they travel and fight, they meet other fighters, most of whom wish to defeat them and advance in the rankings (a few may become close friends, though still competitors for the top prize). To make matters more confusing, the PCs also have to deal with dishonorable fighters, evil crimelords, ruthless assassins, and other hazards. Good thing they're so skilled in the martial arts.

This is the universe found in such video games as *Advanced Variable Geo*, *Battle Arena Toshinden*, *Darkstalkers*, *Dead Or Alive*, *King Of Fighters*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Soul Caliber*, *Street*

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Fighter II, and *Tekken*. You can also see it in such anime as *Advanced Variable Geo*, *Fatal Fury*, and *Street Fighter II*.

<4> IMPORTANCE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

This campaign presumes the PCs are some of the best fighters in the world. On the other hand, there are lots of fighters out there, many of whom have powers and abilities similar to the PCs'.

<4> CAMPAIGN TONE

Morality: Good versus Evil is black and white. It's usually pretty easy to tell who's a hero and who's a villain, at least after a few rounds of the tournament. It's virtually required that you create an evil faction of fighters to oppose the good faction (the PCs).

Realism: Romantic. Characters in *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* command all sorts of impressive *ch'i* powers, and are capable of superhuman feats.

Outlook: Success balanced by failures. A PC can't win every battle, especially at the outset, but as he gains in experience, he may eventually become nigh-unstoppable.

Seriousness: More serious than lighthearted. The tournaments presented in these games are a serious business, and few of the participants are clownish by nature. Naturally, a few exceptions exist.

Continuity: Some multi-part stories and some episodic ones. Most video fighting games keep certain plot elements consistent with each new version of the game, as discussed on page ???, so your campaign should do the same.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> EXAMPLE VIDEO GAME POWERS

Here are a few examples of the sorts of powers characters in a *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign possess.

Blizzard Breath: The character can breathe forth a cone of deadly cold and frost to freeze his enemies' hearts.

EB 7d6, Area Of Effect (8" Cone; +1) (70 Active Points); No Range (-1/2), No Knockback (-1/4). Total cost: 40 points.

Fireball Blast: The character can project (or throw) a small but lethal fireball from his hands. RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2) (60 Active Points); Limited Range (10"; -1/4). Total cost: 48 points.

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Lightning Aura: A shimmering, crackling field of thunderbolts surrounds the character, making it deadly to touch him.

HKA 1d6+1, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+1/2) (60 Active Points); No STR Bonus (-1/2). Total cost: 40 points.

Serpentine Tongue: The character's tongue has been replaced with an extendable, razor-tipped steel cable.

Extra Limb (1) (total cost: 5 points) **plus** Stretching 6" (30 Active Points); Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (Extra Limb tongue; -1/4), Range Modifier Applies (-1/4) (total cost: 15 points) **plus** HKA 1d6+1, Armor Piercing (+1/2) (30 Active Points); No STR Bonus (-1/2) (total cost: 20 points). Total cost: 40 points.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

<4> SETTING

Here are some basic details about the setting.

<5> Physical World

Normally, a *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign takes place in the here-and-now (though a few feature science fiction-type settings). Technology is usually just about the same, or slightly more advanced. The geopolitical world is the same as well, with a few minor differences (such as a minor fictional country or two). The major change comes in the area of paranormal powers. Many (if not all) the competitors have impressive *ch'i* powers, such as fireball projection, energy blasts, limited flight, and teleportation. Some characters may even have psychic or magic powers. The only real limits are the player's imaginations, as it seems that just about anything goes in such a setting.

<5> Scope

The entire world. The PCs travel around the world to participate in the next tournament. Rounds of the tournament take place in fantastic locales — platforms in the middle of the sea, snow-covered mountaintops, the courtyards of ancient temples, exotic jungle islands, torchlit caverns. You should spend a lot of game preparation time mapping out intriguing arenas for the PCs' fights.

You also need to create the worldwide ruling body governing the tournament. Although mysterious, and perhaps with its own agenda or powers, generally it should resemble real-world boxing and wrestling federations, with the same duties and judging powers.

<5> Technology

To the extent technology enters into the game at all, it's modern-day tech, or perhaps even a little more advanced than that.

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<5> Occurrence Of *Ch'i* Powers

Ch'i abilities are everywhere; virtually every competitor in the tournament has them, and they're flashy and powerful.

<5> Character Building Guidelines

Starting Points For PCs: 200

Maximum Disadvantage Points For PCs: 150

Maximum Points From Any One Disadvantage Category: 50

Characters *do not* automatically have the *Normal Characteristic Maxima* Disadvantage

Character *cannot* carry normal technology (weapons, and so on) at no point cost

Power Levels

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
OCV/DCV	10-13	16
Speed	4-6	7
DEF	10-12	15
Skill Rolls	12- to 14-	16-

Ch'i Power Level

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
Normal Attack	40-60	75
Killing Attack	20-30	45-60
Defenses	20-30	40-50
Other	40-60	75

[[END BOX]]

<4> CAMPAIGN RULES

A *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign uses the Hit Location Table and the Knockback rules. Characters are allowed to Push.

<4> HOUSE RULES

You should allow technological, magic, and psychic powers in the campaign. Also, unlike almost every other setting, each character should have a specific and easily identifiable costume, as well as a martial arts style different from many of the other characters.

<2> ANIME: BIG TROUBLE IN ANCIENT CHINA

Seductive ghosts, evil sorcerers, plotting eunuchs, brave swordsmen — this is the world of mythical China, where magic and monsters exist, and the power of a hero's Kung Fu is truly extraordinary. Set in the years before major contact with European traders, this campaign takes

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place anywhere from the time of the Three Kingdoms (184-580 AD) up to the end of the seventeenth century. This is the China seen in such films as *Ashes Of Time*; *The Blade*; *The Bride With White Hair*; *A Chinese Ghost Story*; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *Dragon Inn*; *Kung Fu Cult Master*; *Swordsman 1-3*; *Tai Chi Master*; and *Zu: Warriors Of The Magic Mountain*.

<4> IMPORTANCE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

In a world such as this, the PCs are important and powerful heroes, able to have a major impact on the world around them. They may not topple the Imperial Government, but they can certainly remove a corrupt magistrate or governor, turn back an invasion of bandits, single-handedly fight off a small army, or defeat a terrible monster in a fight to the death.

<4> CAMPAIGN TONE

Morality: Good versus Bad is mostly clear-cut. In general, a *Big Trouble In Ancient China* campaign has clearly defined heroes and villains. But occasionally, especially in adventures dealing with court intrigues, determining who to trust, and who's on which side, becomes nearly impossible. At that point, the heroes must trust in their own abilities and fight for the causes they believe in.

Realism: Very Romantic. Characters in this setting can routinely do the highly impossible.

Outlook: Success balanced by failures. The PCs often achieve their goals (such as defeating a horde of bandits), but losses occur. Not everyone survives the final battle, but those who fall go down fighting.

Seriousness: More serious than lighthearted. In truth, this is a difficult concept to rate with regard to many Anime stories. Even the most serious films often has a few moments of light, even absurd, comedy mixed in — after all, a few comic scenes balance out the seriousness of the situation. But even the most comedic of heroes drops his humorous mannerisms when evil makes its presence known.

Continuity: Some long stories and some episodic ones. How the campaign's adventures fit together really depends on the GM's wishes. In general, films belonging to a series (such as the *Swordsman* movies) have a reasonable degree of continuity. However, the death of a major character in one film doesn't mean he can't appear in the next one.

<4> SETTING

Here are some basic details about the setting.

<5> Physical World

Set in China's past, *Big Trouble In Ancient China* features the landscape, people, and

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culture you'd expect for that era — with the addition of magic and supernatural monsters (such as ghosts and demons from the Nine Hells). The GM and players may need to do a little research to get the right “feel” for the setting.

<5> Scope

Anywhere in China, although most films of this period tend to focus on Northern China. Japan may be mentioned and characters from there may appear.

<5> Technology Level

Fairly typical pre-Western contact China. Battles are fought by men in armor wielding swords, spears, and bows. Guns and cannons are virtually nonexistent.

<5> Occurrence Of *Ch'i* Powers

Ch'i powers are common. Many people (including the PCs) have them, and those who have them often know several techniques.

<5> Character Building Guidelines

Starting Points For PCs: 200

Maximum Disadvantage Points For PCs: 150

Maximum Points From Any One Disadvantage Category: 50

Characters *do not* automatically have the *Normal Characteristic Maxima* Disadvantage

Character *cannot* carry normal technology (weapons, and so on) at no point cost

Power Levels

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
OCV/DCV	10-12	14
Speed	4-5	7
DEF	8-10	14
Skill Rolls	12- to 14-	16-

Ch'i Power Level

	Starting Range	Starting Maximum
Normal Attack	40-50	60
Killing Attack	20-30	45
Defenses	20-30	40
Other	40-60	75

<4> CAMPAIGN RULES

A *Big Trouble In Ancient China* campaign uses the Hit Location Table and the Knockback rules. Characters are allowed to Push.

<4> **HOUSE RULES**

Big Trouble In Ancient China campaigns feature magic and the supernatural. You should allow PCs to have magical or semi-magical powers, as well as ways to affect supernatural creatures and creations.

<1> VILLAINS AND NPCs

The following sample characters showcase a wide range of *Ninja Hero* character styles and power levels. The first part of section includes several ninja writeups; the last part provides sample characters for each subgenre. Roughly speaking, characters are listed in order of point total, with the most inexpensive and basic designs first, followed by more elaborate and expensive characters.

Several of the character sheets in this section include Disadvantages with a value of zero. This indicates a Disadvantage the GM should remember — but that belongs to a type for which the character has already received the maximum points according to the campaign guidelines.

<2> SAMPLE NINJA BY SUBGENRE

Since the name of this book is *Ninja Hero*, here are some sample character sheets for ninja in each of the five martial arts subgenres.

JACK MURRAY

Realistic Ninja

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH damage [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 2 1/2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	3	Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)	
4	ED	1	Total: 4 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	16	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
25	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 53	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: *Kajukenbo Karate*

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block +2	+2		Block, Abort
4	Disarm-1	+1		25 STR Disarm
4	Dodge —	+5		Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort

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3	Joint Lock	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 25 STR to hold on
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	4d6 Strike; Target Falls
4	Punch/Snap Kick	+0+	2	5d6 Strike
5	Side/Spin Kick	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
3	Slam	+0	+1	3d6+v/5; Target Falls
2	Use Art With Karate Weapons, Staff			

Perks

1	Fringe Benefit: Accredited Instructor
1	Fringe Benefit: Black Belt

Skills

6	+2 with Kajukenbo Karate
5	+1 with Agility Skills
3	Acrobatics 12-
3	Breakfall 12-
3	Climbing 12-
3	Concealment 12-
1	Fast Draw 8-
4	KS: Kajukenbo Karate 13-
3	KS: Martial World 12-
2	KS: Ninja Facts 11-
3	Oratory 12-
3	PS: Instructor 12-
1	SS: Kajukenbo Karate 8-
3	Stealth 12-
6	WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Bow, Off-Hand

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 83

Total Cost: 136

75+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable)
10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Always Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
15	Psychological Limitation: Conceited And Self-Centered (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Moderate)
0	Psychological Limitation: Overly Concerned With His Image (Common, Moderate)
5	Reputation: fake and/or liar (limited group: martial world) 11-
5	Rivalry: Professional (other martial arts instructors he sees as being in competition with his school; Rival[s] Aware of Rivalry)
11	Experience Points

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Total Disadvantage Points: 136

Background/History: When the ninja craze started in the mid-1980s, Jack Murray was there. An accomplished practitioner of kajukenbo karate (which he learned while stationed in Hawaii with the Army), Jack saw the ninja phenomenon as a sure ticket to fame and fortune — well, the fortune part anyway. Buying the supplies he needed from a variety of martial arts distributors up and down the West Coast, Jack turned his Bay Area kajukenbo karate school into the San Francisco Ninjutsu Academy.

After redecorating his school with the appropriate props (shuriken, a ninja-to, a night-suit...) Jack reopened for business — and business was good. He soon found his classes filled with impressionable young men and women who all wanted to be ninja — or the next best thing anyway. Jack was more than happy to teach them the techniques of kajukenbo while dressing everything in a constant patter on the subject ninja techniques, methods, and fighting styles. His ignorant students swallowed his teachings hook, line, and sinker.

Now a comfortably wealthy man, Jack sees no reason to quit teaching his brand of “ninjutsu.” He figures what his students don’t know can’t hurt them, since its not like any *real* ninja are going to complain, right?

Personality/Motivation: Jack Murray is a victim of his own success. Initially he figured the whole ninja thing would make a great marketing gimmick, and when he learned he was right, he quickly became loath to do anything that might harm his lucrative cash cow. His success has also gone to his head, to the point where he’s starting to believe his own words as the truth — he treats bald-faced lies as fact and becomes defensive if pressed on the issue. He’s earned a reputation as a bit of a crank in martial arts circles. Many instructors from other schools won’t speak with him and avoid him at competitions and meetings (which Jack has started to avoid himself). For his own part, Jack chalks these actions up to jealousy over his success.

Almost everything Jack does, whether in class or at a demonstration, is tailored to enhance his “ninja mystique.” When teaching or at public demonstrations, he always wears a black *igabakama*, although he removes the hood when teaching. To his students, this makes Jack look impressive; to those in the know, it makes him look like a fool.

Quote: “Learn the mystic arts of the ninja the Jack Murray way!”

Powers/Tactics: For all his faults, Jack *is* a master of kajukenbo, highly adept at hand-to-hand combat. He trains constantly, both alone and with his fellow instructors and most experienced students. However, his concern with his image has made him adopt highly flashy combat techniques. Instead of such tried and true fighting combinations as Block-Legsweep, or Block-Disarm-Slam, Jack prefers to Dodge attacks and then go straight into Snap or Spin Kicks. Against his students his attacks are effective, but if Jack ever has to fight anyone on his own level, he may be in for a rude surprise.

Campaign Use: Although a bit exaggerated, Jack represents the ninja experts who seemed to be all-to-common in the late 1980s and early ’90s (and even today). You can use him in any modern-day setting, ranging from *Champions* campaigns to Realistic martial arts games. Though

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he's not a villain by any stretch of the imagination, he's no hero either, and mainly serves as an example to the PCs of what *not* to do and how *not* to treat their martial skill and training.

If Jack's not tough enough for your PCs (assuming you want them to confront each other directly), give him more Combat Skill Levels. If he's too much of a challenge, take away some of his Martial Maneuvers and lower some of his Characteristics a bit.

Jack would probably never Hunt anyone. He'll protect himself and his turf, but if he needs to harass someone, he'll do it by generating negative publicity for them or filing lawsuits until they leave him alone.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **JACK MURRAY PLOT SEEDS**

A group of *real* ninja take offense at Jack's business practices and abuse of their ancient traditions and decide to "teach him a lesson"... a fatal sort of lesson. Knowing he can't take a group of true ninja on, Murray turns to the PCs for help.

A reporter finds out the truth about Murray and plans to expose him. Unwilling to see his business ruined, Murray murders the poor man. For some reason (their jobs as cops, their friendship with the reporter...) the PCs get involved in the murder investigation.

Unbeknownst to Murray, a bunch of "ninja stuff" he bought at an estate auction a couple years ago actually contains some valuable ninja artifacts. Where are they from, who might want them, and what would they do to get them?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Jack Murray is a couple inches under six feet in height, with a well-toned build, blue eyes, and close-cropped sandy blond hair. At his school he wears a black *igabakama*, complete with *tabi* boots and *shinobi-zukin* (hood and mask), although he removes the latter before teaching. When not at his school, Jack wears moderately expensive casual clothing designed to give him freedom of movement if the need should arise.

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TORII RINZO/ASANO NISHI

Cinematic Ninja

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2 1/2d6 HTH damage [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
13	CON	6	12-	
9	BODY	-2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 14-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	2	Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)	
4	ED	1	Total: 4 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	10	Phases: 4, 6, 9, 12	
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
23	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 62	

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
Swimming: 3"/6"
Flight: 8"
Tunneling: 1"/1"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Asano-ryu Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	Block +2	+2 Block, Abort
4	Dodge —	+5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick -2	+1 6 1/2d6 Strike
4	Punch +0	+2 4 1/2d6 Strike
3	Takedown	+1 +1 2 1/2d6 Strike; Target Falls
2	Use Art with Spear, Sword	
4	<i>Calm Exterior:</i> +8 PRE; Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1) 0	
7	<i>Superior Climbing Skill:</i> Clinging (normal STR); Cannot Resist KB Or Throws (-1/4), No Ceiling Movement Or Angles Of Less Than 80° (-1/4) 1	
12	<i>Superior Balance:</i> Flight 8", Invisible To Sight Group (+1/2); Only Along Reasonably Horizontal Surfaces (-3/4), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4) 2	
4	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +2" (8" total) 2	
1	<i>Strong Swimmer:</i> Swimming +1" (3" total) 1	
5	<i>Dontonjutsu:</i> Tunneling 1" through 1 DEF material, Fill In; Maximum Of Distance 1" (-1), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1) 3	
6	<i>Sharp Senses:</i> +2 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups 0	

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Skills

6	+2 with Taijutsu
3	+1 with Acting, Concealment, and Disguise
10	+2 with Interaction Skills
3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Acting 11-
2	AK: Arika Province 11-
3	<i>Ukemi</i> : Breakfall 13-
3	Bribery 11-
3	<i>Intenjutsu</i> : Concealment 12-
3	<i>Henshojutsu</i> : Disguise 12-
2	Forgery (Documents) 12-
2	Gambling (Dice Games) 12-
2	KS: Mon 11-
2	KS: Ninjutsu 11-
3	Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)
1	Language: Japanese (literacy with native language)
3	Lockpicking 13-
3	Persuasion 11-
2	PS: <i>Ashigaru</i> 11-
1	PS: Calligraphy 8-
1	PS: Musician (<i>shakuhachi</i> [bamboo flute]) 8-
3	Seduction 11-
5	<i>Shinobi-iri</i> : Stealth 14-
4	Survival (Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
3	Tracking 12-
6	WF: Common Martial Arts Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 143

Total Cost: 205

100+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
15	Hunted: The Arai Clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI Watching)
20	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To The Arai Clan (Common, Total)
5	Psychological Limitation: The End Justifies The Means (Common, Strong)
0	Psychological Limitation: Is Always Armed (Common, Moderate)
0	Psychological Limitation: Quiet And Unobtrusive, Tries To Avoid Being Noticed (Common, Moderate)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
40	Experience Points

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Total Disadvantage Points: 205

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Weapons

Name	OCV	Damage	STNx	Notes
Kamayari	-1	1 1/2d6	0	L, 2H, +1 Range, Thr, +2 OCV w/Bind, Block, Disarm, Takeaway
Katana	++1	1 1/2d6	0	M, Thr, 1 1/2H
Tanto	+0	1/2d6	0	S, Thr

Armor

Name of Armor	DEF	Location
Jingasa	6	5
Full Kote	4	6-9 (Location 6 Activates on a 11-)
Tatami Do	5	10-13
Tatami Gaidate	4	14-15 (Versus Frontal Attacks Only)

All armor is Half Value Versus Guns.

Background/History: To the world around him, Torii Rinzo is a simple *ashigaru* (foot soldier) and scout in the army of Lord Arai, master of Arika Province. In truth, Rinzo is a *shinobi*, or ninja. Most of the time he acts as your average *ashigaru* would, going on patrols, manning checkpoints, and training with weapons. At other times Lord Arai sends him to deliver messages or to scout the province borders. Usually, these missions are a ruse, meant to hide Rinzo's real task: spying on the neighboring lords and their holdings.

But his role as a *shinobi* isn't Rinzo's only secret. Unknown to virtually everyone, Lord Arai included, Rinzo is really Asano Nishi, a woman. She was the only *shinobi* readily available when Lord Arai requested the services of a ninja, and thanks to her skill with disguises and acting has served Arai ever since without ever revealing her true identity.

Personality/Motivation: Due to the nature of her rather unusual status, Nishi stays quiet and unobtrusive. She tries her best to remain unnoticed, playing the part of a simple and unremarkable foot soldier. She lets her hair hang down into her eyes to disguise her face, and spends as much time as possible wearing her *do* (breastplate) to lessen any chance of discovery.

Nishi is unswervingly loyal to the Arai family, and will do anything (subterfuge, assassination, theft, arson, kidnapping...) to ensure it achieves its aims and goals. She's a strong believer in the preemptive attack, the hidden trap, the strike from behind. To Nishi, honor is pointless; the end always justifies the means.

Nishi has several other identities she can assume if needed. They include Gonzo the woodcutter, who usually dresses in rough clothing and has a shawl draped over his head and shoulders; Kiyo, a somewhat simple-minded young woman who wears bright kimonos and is always cheerful; and Hiroshi-no-suke, a male samurai who dresses in a long *kimono* and *haori* and is never without his katana.

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You may want to contrast Asano Nishi with Toji Shin on page ???, since they live in the same time period and serve the same lord.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> NISHI'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Nishi's *Distinctive Features*: *Style* Disadvantage sometimes poses problems for her, because it threatens to expose her identity. But she's no fool; she mainly uses her art when she thinks no one will notice (like in the middle of a massed battle), or if she's alone with her target (in which case no one will be left alive to tell about it). She also sticks to her weapons if at all possible, since most of her Taijutsu weapon skills aren't that different from Kenjutsu or Yarijutsu. Since Taijutsu is a fairly rare art, most people don't recognize it anyway; if anyone ever asks, Nishi claims she received her training in her native village (one conveniently located in the mountains far away).

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Quote: "As you wish, my Lord."

Powers/Tactics: As a *shinobi* Nishi has learned a number of interesting skills. Trained in the art of *taijutsu* (a.k.a. *ninjutsu*), she's adopted her techniques for use with the katana (long sword) and *yari* (spear). A capable climber, she can scale virtually anything, including trees, steep cliffs, castle walls, and seemingly sheer rock faces. She has an almost unearthly sense of balance, and can easily run along the peak of a castle roof, a narrow section of timber, tree branches, or even a length of rope. Finally Nishi is a master of the *dontonjutsu* technique and can vanish from sight in just a few seconds by burying herself in loose sand, soft earth, or a muddy river bank (her favorite places to perform this maneuver).

On duty Nishi wears a simple folding body armor or *do*. She supplements this with a *jingasa* (flat helmet), *kote* (sleeve armor) and *haidate* (thigh armor). Her main weapon is a *kamiyari* — a lance with a cruciform blade, backed up by a katana. At times, she has carried such items as smoke and flash bombs, but since these weapons are hard to come by, this happens only very rarely.

Campaign Use: Nishi is a historical version of the typical Cinematic Ninja — agile, sneaky, and a master of surprise attacks. Her powers are fairly common to the genre, although film ninja usually have many more gadgets (and usually use the *ninja-to* or ninja sword).

Although designed as a Cinematic Ninja, Nishi is also pretty "realistic"; she doesn't carry the *ninja-to*, wear a night-suit, or use a bewildering assortment of weaponry. She's a scout, like most period ninja really were. If you want to make her more powerful, give her 150 Base Points, increase her Speed to 5 (or even 6), bump up her Dexterity, Constitution, and PD/ED, add some new maneuvers and Damages Classes to her martial arts, and/or give her more weapons and some Combat Skill Levels (making her roughly a 275-300 point character, if you use all these options). To weaken her, remove some of her Martial Maneuvers, special techniques, and Skills.

Nishi only Hunts characters if ordered to do so by Lord Arai. If so ordered, she'll do anything she can to carry out her mission and slay her target.

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[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **ASANO NISHI PLOT SEEDS**

Lord Arai sends Nishi on a mission to infiltrate an enemy encampment... one a third party has hired the PCs to infiltrate as well. When they all bump into each other, will they fight or work together? Who, exactly, is this “third party” the PCs are working for; do his interests dovetail with Lord Arai’s?

A mission goes horribly wrong, and Nishi has to flee, badly wounded and disguised as a *geisha*. She collapses, near death from loss of blood, right outside the PCs’ camp (house, castle, tavern...). If they save her, she owes them a blood debt — how can she repay it, and what will Lord Arai think of the whole matter?

Lord Arai assigns “Torii Rinzo” to act as a personal retainer to the PCs, who happen to be working for him — but in reality to keep an eye on them and make sure they complete an important mission. But what happens when she begins to feel a romantic attraction for a male PC?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Nishi is a young woman in her mid-twenties. She’s short (barely over five feet tall), with a small but well-muscled frame that reveals the athletic life she leads. To aid her disguises, Nishi wears her hair very long and bound in a shaggy topknot. When not wearing armor, she binds her breasts with a broad strip of cloth and dresses in a knee-length *kimono* and loose trousers. If dressed in more feminine garb, Nishi is surprisingly attractive, with a delicately proportioned figure.

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FEI YUN

Wuxia Ninja

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH damage [2]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	6	Total: 10 PD (0 rPD)	
8	ED	4	Total: 8 ED (0 rED)	
5	SPD	17	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
17	REC	18		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	2	Total Characteristics Cost: 144	

Movement: Flight: 12"/24"

Leaping: 8"/16"

Running: 6"/12"

Swimming: 2"/4"

Teleportation: 12"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: An Ch'i and Kung Fu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block +2	+2		Block, Abort
4	Disarm-1	+1		Disarm, 40 STR
4	Dodge —	+5		Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Escape +0	+0		45 STR Escape
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	7d6 Strike; Target Falls
4	Nerve/Tien Hsueh Strike	-1	+1	3d6 NND (1)
4	Strike +0	+2		8d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
3	Use Art With Blades, Polearms, Staff			

Martial Arts: An Chi

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Rng	Notes
4	Basic Shot	+0	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
3	Defensive Shot		+1	+2	+0 Weapon Strike
5	Moving Shot	-1	+0	+0	Weapon Strike; Full Move
4	Quick Shot	+1	+0	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
7	<i>An Ch'i Smoke Bomb:</i> Darkness to Sight Group 1" Radius; 9 Charges lasting an Extra				

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Phase each (cleared away by high winds, rain, and the like; -0), IAF (-1/2) [9]

13 *Giau Tzu Jen*: HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4),
Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1) 0

8 *Master Of Thrown Weapons*: HKA 1/2d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Ranged (+1/2); OIF (any
sharp/pointed object of opportunity; -1/2), No Knockback (-1/4) 1

7 *Shou Gen*: RKA 1d6-1, Autofire (5 shots; +1/2); 5 Charges (-3/4), IIF (-1/4) [5]

25 *Master Of Thrown Weapons*: Missile Deflection & Reflection (thrown objects; back at
the attacker) 0

36 *Master Of Movement*: Multipower, 36-point reserve

2m 1) *Gecko Stance*: Clinging (normal STR); Cannot Resist Knockback Or Throws (-1/4)
0

5m 2) *Mist Running Stance*: Flight 12", Invisible To Sight Group (+1/2); Only Along
Reasonably Horizontal Surfaces (-1/2) 3

1m 3) *Cricket Stance*: Leaping +4" (8" forward, 4" upward) 1

1u 4) *One With The Air Stance*: Teleportation 6"; Requires A Stealth Roll (-1/2), Only To
"Vanish" When No One Is Looking (-1/2), Can Only Teleport To Places The Character Could
Normally Go (-1/2), No Noncombat Multiple (-1/4) 1

1m 5) *Mole Stance*: Tunneling 1" through 1 DEF material, Fill In; Maximum Of Distance
1" (-1) 1

Perks

4 Contact: Tai-Sheng Zeng (extremely useful powers and resources) 8-

Talents

3 Lightsleep

Skills

12 +4 with An Ch'i

12 Ranged Skill Levels: +4 With All Attacks

3 Acrobatics 14-

3 Breakfall 14-

3 Contortionist 14-

3 Fast Draw (Thrown Weapons) 14-

3 Interrogation 13-

3 KS: An Ch'i 12-

1 Language: Mandarin (literacy for native language)

3 Mimicry 12-

2 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 11-

3 Stealth 14-

2 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 12-

3 Tracking 12-

6 WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Common
Missile Weapons

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Total Powers & Skills Cost: 229

Total Cost: 373

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 10 DNPC: Mi Yun (sister) 11- (Slightly Less Powerful)
- 10 Hunted: Enemies Of Tai-Sheng Zeng 8- (As Pow)
- 15 Hunted: Tai-Sheng Zeng 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy For Wealth And Power (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Tai-Sheng Zeng (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Reputation: dangerous *lin kuei* (Limited Group) 11- (Extreme)
- 78 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 373

Background/History: To maintain his despotic hold over the territories given to him, Governor Tai-Sheng Zeng needed men skilled in the arts of espionage and assassination. No fool, he went to straight to the source for such warriors: the *lin kuei*, the mysterious “forest demons” who were unmatched at such tasks. By promising them gold and protection from outside interference, the evil eunuch recruited many of them into his ranks.

Fei Yun is one these men. Trained in the arts of the *lin kuei* since he was very young, he is a skilled fighter, but is even more skilled at infiltrating protected places. He serves Tai-Sheng Zeng as a scout, spy, and assassin, and his many successes have made him one of the eunuch’s top operatives.

Personality/Motivation: Fei Yun is a man driven by a mixture of fear, greed, and loyalty. He is afraid of Tai-Sheng Zeng (and rightly so; the eunuch is not to be trifled with), but willingly accepts the governor’s gold. He’s become quite loyal to Tai-Sheng Zeng, for he realizes that without the magistrate he wouldn’t have half of what he does now. He serves Tai-Sheng Zeng to the best of his ability, to ensure a steady stream of gold and gifts, but he also tries to keep his desire for more wealth in check, so as to not overstep his bounds or attract so much attention the eunuch comes to regard him as a threat.

Fei Yun cares for little else besides gold. He considers most other people obstacles to his success, and quickly kills anyone who stands in his way. The only person he loves is his sister, Mi Yun. She is a *lin kuei* herself (though not skilled as he), and his only family. Occasionally he assists her (or she him) on a mission. They hide their wealth in secret cave in the forest, where they can examine it at their leisure.

Quote: None. Fei Yun doesn’t speak those he is about to assassinate.

Powers/Tactics: As a *lin kuei*, Fei Yun is a master of the thrown weapon, and can turn any

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reasonably-sized sharp or pointed object into a lethal projectile. His preferred method of assassination is by a thrown weapon, and he often uses something in the victim's home to do the deed. If he cannot find a suitable object, he has *shou gen* (sleeve arrows), which he conceals in his right sleeve. He packs the arrows into a spring-loaded tube, so he can launch all five in a single attack if necessary. If he must fight hand-to-hand, Fei Yun draws his *giau tzu jen*, a serrated-edged sword, and cuts his way free, fleeing at the first opportunity.

Fei Yun's lin kuei training makes him a master of movement. He can climb virtually anything, run across water or through the branches of trees, leap great distances, or tunnel into the earth and vanish. He uses these techniques to ambush targets, coming in from an unexpected angle to attack by surprise before using his movement abilities to leave by a different direction. If pressed hard or surrounded, Fei Yun resorts to his ultimate technique — he momentarily blinds his enemies with a smoke bomb and then “vanishes” into thin air.

Campaign Use: Fei Yun is typical of many Wuxia-styled ninja. You can use him in virtually any game with ninja in it, since he's as at home in the modern day (with some Skill modifications) as in the ancient past. He's actually a little underpowered when compared to many Wuxia characters, and represents the bottom end of the power scale. To make him more powerful, increase his STR to 25, DEX to 26, and SPD to 6. Add two more Damage Classes to his An Ch'i and Kung Fu, and increase the amount of damage done by his *giau tzu jen*, Master Of Thrown Weapons power, and *shou gen*. If he's already too tough for your PCs, reduce his Characteristics (particularly SPD) and remove a Martial Maneuver or two.

Fei Yun only Hunts characters if Tai-Sheng Zeng orders him to, and in that case pursues his quarry with lethal intensity. If a PC seriously humiliated him, he might start a private vendetta against the hero... but only during his “free time” and if it would not expose Tai-Sheng Zeng to any difficulties.

Fei Yun's sister, Mi Yun, has virtually the same powers he does, but she's not as strong or as fast, doesn't have his Damage Classes, carries a simple *jien* and no other weapons, and cannot Reflect thrown weapon attacks. She only has half of his Combat Skill Levels.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> FEI YUN PLOT SEEDS

Tai-Sheng Zeng sends Fei Yun to kill the PCs. Knowing he can't take on a group of skilled martial artists on even terms, Fei Yun lures them into an old, abandoned mansion he's rigged with numerous traps.

Mi Yun somehow meets and falls in love with a male PC. How will Fei Yun react to this? Does the PC reciprocate her feelings?

Fei Yun finds an ancient scroll describing some long-lost *lin kuei* fighting secrets. After learning to use them, he's so powerful he deposes Tai-Sheng Zeng and takes his place as governor. Compared to Fei Yun, the eunuch is a benevolent ruler. How will the PCs save the people from Fei Yun's oppression... and what will Tai-Sheng Zeng do to regain his position?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

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Appearance: Fei Yun is tall and well-muscled, with a lean build. He has medium-length black hair and brown eyes, and tends to dress in a plain tunic and trousers when not on a mission. When functioning as a *lin kwei*, he wears a black nightsuit similar to the type worn by Japanese ninja, complete with face mask. Since *fei yun* means “flying cloud,” he sometimes wears a gray nightsuit instead, with a white sash for a belt.

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STEEL NINJA

Video Game Ninja

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH damage [2]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	0	Total: 15 PD (10 rPD)	
5	ED	0	Total: 15 ED (10 rED)	
5	SPD	17	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	0		
50	END	0		
40	STUN	-1	Total Characteristics Cost: 130	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 20"/40"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Robato	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	Arm Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
4	Break Free	+0 +0 50 STR versus Grabs
3	Joint Lock	-1 -1 Grab One Limb, 40 STR to hold on
4	Knee Strike/Low Kick	+2 +0 9d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0 +2 9d6 Strike
5	Sidekick	-2 +1 11d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0 +1 7d6 +v/5; Target Falls
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)	
23	<i>Shuriken Gun:</i> RKA 1d6, Autofire (3 shots; +1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1); Restrainable (-1/2) 0	
24	<i>Armored Body:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); Activation Roll 15- (-1/4) 0	
15	<i>Armored Body:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25% 0	
45	<i>Robotic Body:</i> Life Support: Total 0	
18	<i>Hydraulic Jacks:</i> Leaping +15" (20" forward, 10" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); No Noncombat Movement (-1/4) 0	
-2	<i>Robotic Body:</i> Swimming -2" 0	
9	<i>Battle Computer:</i> Aid DEX 2d6, Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible; +1); Requires An Analyze Style Roll (-1/2), Self Only (-1/2), Only For Increasing OCV And DCV (-1/4), Only	

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Versus Single Foe (-1), Must Fight Target For 1 Turn (5 Phases) Before Making Roll (-1 1/4)
0

10 *Magnetic Pads:* Clinging (normal STR) 0

9 *Extendable Arms:* Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Always Direct (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (Arms; -1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4) 0

Talents

9 *Robotic Body:* Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)

17 *Computer Brain:* Absolute Range Sense, Absolute Time Sense, Bump of Direction, Eidetic Memory, Lighting Calculator

Skills

3 Acrobatics 14-

7 Analyze Style 15-

3 Breakfall 14-

3 Concealment 13-

3 Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 231

Total Cost: 361

200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Always Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)

15 Distinctive Features: Armored Robot (Concealable, Major Reaction)

10 Hunted: Creator 11- (Mo Pow, Watching) 11-

20 Hunted: various participants in the World King of the Ring tournament 14- (As Pow)

15 Physical Limitation: Machine Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

15 Psychological Limitation: Seeks Out Chances To Engage In Martial Conflicts (Common, Strong)

10 Reputation: merciless battle machine (limited group: martial world, extreme) 11-

66 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 361

Background/History: In the past few years, the World King of the Ring tournament has seen a new and most unusual participant: an android known as the Steel Ninja, a robotic warrior whose sole purpose seems to be to seek out and combat any and all other King of the Ring fighters. To make matters worse, more than one Steel Ninja seems to exist, for reliable reports say the Steel Ninja has been destroyed and dismantled — but then he reappears soon after in another location. (Other evidence seems to indicate two different people fought the Steel Ninja on the same day — even though they were a thousand miles apart!)

Most King of the Ring fighters have taken the Steel Ninja at face value, as just another combatant, but a handful have begun to seek out the Steel Ninja specifically. Some of these

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warriors simply want to test their skill against a powerful opponent, while a select few have decided to learn who or what the Steel Ninja is — and who built it, and why.

Personality/Motivation: As a machine, the Steel Ninja doesn't have much of a personality. Programmed to seek out and fight powerful opponents, meaning virtually anyone involved in of the King of the Ring tournament, it shadows a selected target until the right opportunity presents itself, then sheds its disguise (a long overcoat and a low hat) and issues a challenge. How the Steel Ninja finds its targets remains unknown; popular speculation claims the Steel Ninja is dropped in an area where a particular fighter is known to live and left to its own devices. After a fight, whoever drops it off picks it up. In those instances when it's been destroyed or damaged, any recovered "parts" have mysteriously disappeared soon thereafter.

Quote: "Now we must fight."

Powers/Tactics: For all its complexity, the Steel Ninja isn't the most imaginative fighter. Typically it starts by firing a volley from its Shuriken Gun, and then closes to HTH range, where it uses simple and direct attacks. It defends mostly with its Arm Block, then counters with Punches and Low Kicks. When it Stuns an opponent, it grasps him in a Joint Lock and administers a volley of Knee Strikes until its captive collapses.

However, it augments these simplistic tactics with its powerful combat systems. It can extend its arms to hit targets more than ten feet away (a clever surprise tactic against opponents with long-hafted weapons), and its Hydraulic Jacks allow it to make prodigious leaps. Thanks to its onboard battle computer, it even becomes faster the longer it fights someone — it stores fighting data and analyzes it in mid-combat to improve its performance.

Campaign Use: The Steel Ninja is a character type common to many Video Game settings. In many cases, the person building the robot warrior has a virtual army of them stashed away somewhere, and each time the heroes beat one battle machine, another one soon makes its appearance. This write-up doesn't specify an exact origin so the GM can tailor the Steel Ninja to suit his own campaign — for example, in a *Champions* game, perhaps the fighting robot is a servant of the fiendish Mechanon.

For some variety, you could have more than just a "steel" ninja. In addition to the base Steel Ninja (which is blue), there might be a Gold Ninja (yellow), an Iron Ninja (grey), a Silver Ninja (silver, naturally), and so on. Each would have powers specific to its model. For example, the Gold Ninja has an electrical attack instead of the Shuriken Gun, the Iron Ninja has more STR and Armor, and the Silver Ninja is faster.

For a more powerful version of the Steel Ninja, increase its Aid to 4d6, its Armor to 15 PD/ED, its Damage Reduction to 50%, and its Stretching to 4". You could also swap out or add weapons. A weaker version should have a 20 STR, a 20 DEX, a 20 CON, no Damage Reduction, and only 10" of Leaping. Of course, GMs could use all three versions in the same game, just to keep the PCs on their toes...

The Steel Ninja doesn't Hunt anyone, since its quest to confront King of the Ring contestants occupies all its time.

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[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **STEEL NINJA PLOT SEEDS**

Something goes wrong with the Steel Ninja's programming — he concludes that the PCs are the only other warriors left in the World King of the Ring tournament (or, if they're not participants in the tourney, that they are). His frequent attacks start to cause the PCs problems, not to mention the risk of injury; they've got to find a way to correct the problem or stop him permanently.

When the organizers of the World King of the Ring question the Steel Ninja's involvement — citing the fact that he seems able to fight opponents in different locations at the same time — an entire legion of Steel Ninjas attacks their mountaintop monastery headquarters. The PCs have to team up with the other tournament competitors to defeat the Steel Ninja legion once and for all and lift the siege.

The Steel Ninja reveals that he's not really a robot, but a human in a powered armor suit. Is this true, or is a sinister plot brewing?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: The Steel Ninja is a human-sized android covered in rigid armor plates. The plates are a steel blue color and cover the limbs, torso, chest, and head. The gaps between the plates reveal a heavy black armored fabric.

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TSUKIKAGE

Anime Ninja

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	STR	13	14-	Lift: 600 kg; 4 1/2d6 HTH Damage [1]
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
20	CON	20	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
22	COM	6	13-	
12	PD	7	Total: 18 PD (6 rPD)	
10	ED	6	Total: 16 ED (6 rED)	
6	SPD	20	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	2		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 180	

Movement: Running: 10"/20"
 Leaping: 9"/18"
 Teleportation: 10"/20"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers & Skills

Martial Arts: Jigen-Ryu Kenjutsu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block*+2	+2		Block, Abort
4	Evade*—	+5		Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Lightning Stroke	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Slashing Stroke*	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike

*Also Ninjutsu Block, Dodge, and Kick

Martial Arts: Kage-Ryu Ninjutsu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1	+1	2d6 NND(1)
4	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND(2)
4	Punch +0	+2		6 1/2d6 Strike
4	Reversal	-1	-2	38 STR to Escape; Grab Two Limbs
3	Takedown	+1	+1	4 1/2d6 Strike, Target Falls
1	Use Art with Blades			
4	<i>Child Of Darkness:</i>	Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4) on 23 STR; Only At Night (-1/2)		
20	<i>Katana:</i>	HKA 1 1/2d6 (3d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1) plus +1 OCV; OAF (-1)		
				0

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- 8 *Bo Shuriken*: RKA 1d6, Autofire (3 shots; +1/4), 9 Recoverable Charges (+1/4); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-1/4), Costs Endurance (-1/2) [9]/3
- 7 *Friend Of The Darkness*: Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 25%; Stun Only (-1/2) 0
- 11 *Veil Of Darkness*: Mental Defense (15 points total) 0
- 8 *Shadow Step*: Running +4" (10" total) 1
- 15 *Shadow Step*: Invisible To Hearing Group (+1/4) and Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) for up to 10" Running 0
- 5 *Strong Leaper*: +5" (9" forward, 5" upward) 2
- 33 *Move Through Shadows*: Teleportation 20", Invisible to Hearing Group (+1/4); Requires Darkness Or Shadows (-1/2) 5
- 8 *Shadow Walk*: Clinging (normal STR); Cannot Resist Knockback Or Throws (-1/4) 1
- 6 *Daughter Of The Darkness*: Healing 1d6 (Regeneration; 1 BODY per Variable Time Increment), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Persistent (+1/2); Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (1 Turn or more, see sidebar; -1 1/4), Self Only (-1/2), Only At Night (-1/2) 0
- 30 *One With The Darkness*: Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); Requires Darkness Or Shadows (-1/2) 0
- 5 *See In The Dark*: Nightvision 0

Talents

- 12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
- 16 Combat Sense 14-
- 3 Lightsleep

Skills

- 10 +2 with Hand-To-Hand Combat
- 5 +1 with Interaction Skills
- 3 +1 with Acrobatics, Breakfall, and Stealth
-
- 3 Acrobatics 15-
- 3 AK: Edo 13-
- 3 *Ukemi*: Breakfall 15-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 *Henshojutsu*: Disguise 13-
- 3 *Iaijutsu*: Fast Draw 15-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 1 Language: Japanese (literacy for native language)
- 3 Persuasion 12-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 5 Shadowing 14-
- 3 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 13-
- 3 *Shinobi-iri*: Stealth 15-

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- 7 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garrote
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Edo Gossip 13-
- 2 2) KS: The Edo Underworld 13-
- 2 3) KS: Fashion 13-
- 2 4) KS: Kenjutsu 13-
- 2 5) KS: Ninjutsu 13-
- 3 Jack-Of-All-Trades
- 2 1) PS: *Buyo* (Court Dance) 15-
- 2 2) PS: *Cha-no-ryu* (Tea Ceremony) 13-
- 2 3) PS: *Geisha* 13-
- 2 4) PS: *Kunoichi* 13-
- 2 5) PS: Musician (*koto* [zither]) 15-
- 2 6) PS: *Utai* (Singing) 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 330

Total Character Cost: 510

200+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Features: Extreme Beauty (Easily Concealable; Causes Major Reaction [lust])
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Cannot Stand Bright Light Or The Sun (see text) (Frequently, Greatly)
- 10 Physical Limitation: One Eye (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To The Shogun (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Despises Samurai And The *Kuge* (nobility) (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Loathes Bright Light Or Daylight (Common, Moderate)
- 0 Psychological Limitation: Meek And Demure (as O-Shizu) *or* Arrogant And Flamboyant (as Tsukikage) (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Minority (*Geisha*; member of *bonge* caste) (Very Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
- 180 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 510

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **DAUGHTER OF THE DARKNESS**

The Time Increment for Tsukikage's Regeneration depends on the phases of the moon. The phases are as follows (each lasts 3-4 days):

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Moon Phase	Regeneration Increment
New	1 BODY every Turn
Crescent Waxing	1 BODY every Minute
Half Waxing	1 BODY every 5 Minutes
Gibbous Waxing	1 BODY every 20 Minutes
Full	1 BODY every Hour
Gibbous Waning	1 BODY every 20 Minutes
Half Waning	1 BODY every 5 Minutes
Crescent Waning	1 BODY every Minute
New	1 BODY every Turn

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Background/History: With his victory at the Battle of Sekigahara, Ieyasu Tokugawa was able to declare himself Shogun, effectively becoming the ruler of all Japan.

If it were only that simple.

Although his victory allowed Tokugawa to assume the title of Shogun, he still had to contend with numerous rivals and rebellious *daimyo* who were less than willing to submit to his rule. Even after he quelled several uprisings and forcibly brought the *daimyo* in line, there was still the chance of future plots against his rule. But Tokugawa was no fool; he knew the best way to prevent rebellions was to defuse them before they even started. Therefore, he planted spies throughout Japan, whose purpose was to remain alert for possible plans against him... and if necessary, to eliminate the plotters.

Tsukikage is just one of those spies. A *kunoichi* of unparalleled skill, she also possesses a strange form of ninja magic that allows her to become one with the darkness and shadows. She uses her talents in the city of Edo, where she normally goes about in the guise of a highly-skilled (and much sought after) *geisha*. As she entertains officials of the court, local samurai, and visiting daimyo, she listens to their words and carefully observes their actions, passing on any interesting bits of information. Occasionally, she receives a message in return, at which point she drops her *geisha* disguise and ventures forth as one of the Shogun's ninja.

Personality/Motivation: Tsukikage is a woman of extremes. On one hand she is a cultured, demure, polite, and subservient *geisha* who goes by the name of O-Shizu, while on the other she is the flamboyantly dressed Tsukikage, the mistress of the night, who goes where she wishes when she wishes, and answers to no one — except the Shogun. Tsukikage plays both her roles to the hilt, and if it weren't for her missing eye, no one would ever connect the elegant O-Shizu with the brash and almost arrogant Tsukikage.

Her role as the Shogun's ninja allows Tsukikage to step outside the rigid Japanese caste system (which Tokugawa enforces stringently, to further prevent rebellion) and look at it with a critical eye. What she sees disgusts her, but she realizes there's nothing she can do to change it. As a *geisha*, O-Shizu is a *bonge*, or commoner, almost at the bottom of the social ladder. Although her beauty, grace, and skill make her a much sought-after *geisha*, and she can count many powerful samurai and court officials as her patrons, any one of them could cut her down in the street with impunity and suffer nothing in the way of legal ramifications. As a *kunoichi*, she

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doesn't even register on the social scale, and can expect a gruesome and painful death if anyone discovers her true nature.

When acting as O-Shizu, Tsukikage is bright, cheerful, and smiling. She dances, sings, serves *sake*, laughs when appropriate, and does her best to put her clients at ease. She also listens intently to what they say (and more importantly, what they *don't* say), watches how they act, and observes who's in favor and who is not. She tolerates any untoward advances her clients make, and doesn't struggle if pawed or groped (fortunately, her skill and reputation as a *geisha* means she almost never encounters clientele so base as to engage in such untoward conduct).

As Tsukikage, she repays any abuses she suffers (or sees her fellow *geisha* and *bonge* suffer) in kind. She revels in her unique station and enjoys the contrast of being both O-Shizu the *geisha*, who lives in fear of the whims of the samurai, and Tsukikage the *kunoichi*, whose presence strikes fear into even the most stouthearted warriors. She's come to despise the samurai and the nobility, seeing many of them as weaklings and cowards who are only strong and brave due to their status. But she remains utterly loyal to Tokugawa, even though his actions reinforce the social structure she has come to hate. Perhaps her loyalty derives from practicality, for although her master enforces rigid separation of the classes, as one of his ninja she ignores those rules and acts with impunity.

Quote: "Relax, councillor. If I had wished to kill you, neither you or your guards would have ever seen me, and the only sign of my passing would have been the discovery of your corpse come the morning. Now sit and make yourself comfortable, for the time has come for you to explain yourself to the Shogun."

Powers/Tactics: True to her name (*tsukikage* means moonbeams, moonlight, or moonshadows), Tsukikage is at home in the darkness and normally works only at night. Her powers allow her to climb virtually any surface with ease, move in utter silence, and even vanish into a shadow and reappear from another shadow. She can also become totally invisible, if she stands in a shadowed or dark area.

Tsukikage uses her powers to spy on those who might present a threat to the Tokugawa Shogunate. She prefers to remain hidden, watching and waiting, biding her time until she feels the moment is right to strike. Her Shadow Step, Move Through Shadows, and One With The Darkness powers allow her to follow her target with virtually no chance of being detected.

When the time comes to eliminate her quarry, Tsukikage likes it if her target knows why he (or she) is about to die. She appears — usually by stepping out of a shadowed recess — and informs him of his crimes. She usually chooses to kill a target in his personal living quarters, since that tells anyone else planning to act against the Shogun that there's nowhere they can hide from Ieyasu's wrath.

If an assassination target fights back, he quickly discovers how powerful Tsukikage is. Strong and fast, skilled in both Kenjutsu and Ninjutsu, she's quite adept with the blade, and also carries nine bo shuriken tucked inside her clothing. Since she has only one eye, Tsukikage throws her shuriken in groups of three, to better her chance of hitting with one.

When fighting, Tsukikage goes for the quick kill, aiming her sword blows for vital areas such as the stomach or neck. She tends to block or dodge incoming blows, then counterstrikes with fast Lightning Strokes, hoping to cripple her foe so she can finish him with a Slashing

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Stroke. She isn't above playing to her own strengths (and her enemy's weaknesses), so she extinguishes candles and lanterns while fighting — she can see quite easily in the dark.

If wounded, Tsukikage calls upon a powerful form of ninja magic to heal her injuries... but her healing only works at night, and cannot bring her back from the dead or regenerate lost body parts (such as her eye). The speed of her healing depends on the phases of the moon (see sidebar).

Tsukikage cannot tolerate bright light (such as from large bonfires) or direct sunlight. She suffers a -4 penalty on all Characteristic, PER, Skill, and Attack Rolls in such circumstances. Normally, she sleeps during the day, only coming out once the sun sets. Since her role as a *geisha* requires mostly nighttime activity, no one questions her sleeping habits.

Campaign Use: From her powers to her personality to her mode of dress, Tsukikage is a pure Anime ninja, designed for use in high-powered anime-inspired martial arts fantasy games. Of course, you can use her in other appropriate settings, such as some *Champions* games (where she'd make a great supervillainess). In a modern-day campaign, you could highlight the vigilante-esque “defend/avenge the common man” aspect of her personality, making her a little more honorable and sympathetic.

If you want Tsukikage to be more powerful, increase her defenses (which at present are low because she rarely stands and fights), or give her more shadow powers (perhaps the ability to generate fields of Darkness). To weaken her, reduce her Characteristics and get rid of her Move Through Shadows and One With The Darkness powers.

Tsukikage only Hunts people Ieyasu Tokugawa tells her to. Otherwise she remains in her *geisha* guise.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> TSUKIKAGE PLOT SEEDS

Tsukikage's *ch'i* powers suddenly disappear! As she investigates, she finds clues indicating the PCs somehow “stole” them from her. What will she do to get them back? How can the PCs convince her she's wrong?

The PCs come to know the beautiful *geisha* O-Shizu. What will they do when she reveals to them she's a ninja working for a noble cause and needs their help? Is her cause really all that noble?

A male PC and Tsukikage become attracted to each other, but trouble arises when the PCs are hired by a *daimyo* who wants to rebel against Ieyasu Tokugawa. Can the PC and the lady ninja resolve their feelings without compromising their oaths of loyalty?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Tsukikage is tall for a woman, standing 5'8", with a slender but perfectly proportioned build. She has exceedingly pale skin, a single dark eye (the other is missing, the socket concealed by an eyepatch), a delicately featured face, and jet-black hair that falls nearly to the floor when worn loose. As a *geisha*, she wears an ornately patterned *kimono* (usually in

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multiple layers) with an elaborately tied *obi*. Her hair is bound up and kept in place with gold hairpins, while her face is painted with the traditional white makeup. Her eyepatch only enhances her beauty and makes her seem even more alluring and exotic.

As Tsukikage, her costume is far more ostentatious. She wears a white high-collared bodystocking that leaves her arms and legs bare and is open from the base of her throat to just past her navel in the front. Over this goes a black knee-length *haori* (jacket) edged with gold trim. A narrow silver *obi* (belt) keeps the *haori* secure. Black cloth *kote* (sleeves) extend from the backs of her hands to mid-bicep cover her arms, and she wears black thigh-high *tabi* boots. Her face is bare, with the exception of her eyepatch, and her hair pulled back into a ponytail secured tightly at the crown of her head (although a few locks fall artistically across her face). She carries her katana thrust under the *obi*, while her bo shuriken are secured within the *haori*.

<2> GENERIC NINJA

The following six character sheets provide write-ups for “generic” ninja for use in any campaign. You can customize them as desired to increase or decrease their level of power, or to change their focus. You can also use them to represent other martial arts minions and “thugs” simply by changing the Martial Arts package (or just the maneuvers’ names) and some of the Skills. For example, the Heroic-Level Ninja *Genin* makes a good martial arts “agent” for *Champions* games, and if you trim down his Characteristics a bit, he’s a good minion for main villains in Heroic *Ninja Hero* campaigns.

HEROIC-LEVEL NINJA *GENIN*

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH Damage [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
16	CON	12	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2 1/2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	3	Total: 12 PD (6 rPD)	
6	ED	3	Total: 12 ED (6 rED)	
3	SPD	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12	
5	REC	0		
32	END	0		
30	STUN	4	Total Characteristics Cost: 61	

Movement: Running: 7”/14”
 Leaping: 6”/12”
 Swimming: 3”/6”

Cost Powers & Skills

Martial Arts: Ninjutsu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1	+1	2d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2	+0	1d6+1 HKA (2 DC)
4	Punch	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3d6 +v/5; Target Falls
1	Use Art with one weapon type (GM’s choice)			
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1” (7” total) 1			

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- 3 *Strong Leaper*: Leaping +3" (6" forward, 3" upward) 1
1 *Strong Swimmer*: Swimming +1" (3" total) 1

Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: Membership: *Ninja Genin*

Skills

- 8 +1 with All Combat
2 +1 OCV with Ninja-to
- 3 Climbing 13-
3 *Intenjutsu*: Concealment 12-
2 KS: *Ninjutsu* 11-
2 One KS at 11-, GM's choice
3 Language: *Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols* (fluent conversation; literate)
2 PS: *Ninja* 11-
2 One other PS at 11- (GM's choice)
3 *Shinobi-iri*: Stealth 13-
6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
12 Choose four from the following list: Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Fast Draw (*Iaijutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism, Weaponsmith (3 points worth)
(Modern-day ninja should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 84

Total Character Cost: 145

75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: *Ninja Night-Suit* (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
10 Distinctive Features: *Style* (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
25 Psychological Limitation: *Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer* (Very Common, Total)
15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)

Total Disadvantage Points: 145

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

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Cost Power END

- 15 *Ninja-to And Saya*: Multipower, 30-point reserve, all OAF (-1)
1u 1) *Blade*: HKA 1 1/2d6 (plus STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (15; -3/4), Real Weapon (-1/4) 0
1u 2) *Hilt/Saya As Club*: HA +2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), STR Minimum (15; -3/4), Real Weapon (-1/4) 0
1u 3) *Saya And Sageo As A Climbing Platform*: +1 to Climbing Roll; OAF (-1) 0
1u 4) *Blinding Powder In Saya*: As Metsubishi, Blown, above
1u 5) *Sageo As Strangling Garrotte*: refer to “Garrotte,” above, for details on that weapon 1
1u 6) *Saya As Breathing Tube (Takezutsu)*: Life Support (Breathe Underwater); OAF (-1), Only Works Close To The Surface (-1) 0
12 *Concealed Ninja Armor*: Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-1/2)

Notes: This ninja is intended as a foe for characters in Heroic campaigns; as such, he gets his *ninja-to* and armor for free. If you want to scale him down so that he’s a good minion-level enemy for Heroic PCs, as opposed to an Equal, remove his Combat Skill Levels, reduce his DEX and CON to 14, reduce his extra Leaping to +1”, and change his extra Skill picks from four to two.

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NINJA *GENIN*

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH Damage [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	7	Total: 16 PD (6 rPD)	
8	ED	4	Total: 14 ED (6 rED)	
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
8	REC	2		
40	END	2		
35	STUN	5	Total Characteristics Cost: 99	

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
 Leaping: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1 +1 2d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
4	Dodge	— +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1 7d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2 +0 1d6+1 HKA (2 DC)
4	Punch	+0 +2 5d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0 +1 3d6 +v/5; Target Falls
2	Use Art with two weapon types (GM's choice)	
21	<i>Ninja-to</i> : see page ???	
12	<i>Concealed Ninja Armor</i> : Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-1/2) 0	
20	<i>Deflecting And Dodging</i> : Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks) 0	
2	<i>Strong Runner</i> : Running +1" (7" total) 1	
3	<i>Strong Leaper</i> : Leaping +3" (6" forward, 3" upward) 1	
1	<i>Strong Swimmer</i> : Swimming +1" (3" total) 1	

Perks

1 Fringe Benefit: Membership: *Ninja Genin*

Talents

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

- 3 Lightsleep
- Skills**
- 8 +1 with All Combat
- 2 +1 OCV with Ninja-to

- 3 Acrobatics 13-
- 3 *Ukemi*: Breakfall 13-
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 *Intenjutsu*: Concealment 12-
- 2 KS: Ninjutsu 11-
- 2 One KS at 11-, GM's choice
- 3 Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)
- 3 PS: Ninja 12-
- 3 *Shinobi-iri*: Stealth 13-
- 6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
- 15 Choose five from the following list: Acrobatics, Breakfall (*Ukemi*), Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Conversation, Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Fast Draw (*Iaijutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Seduction, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism, Weaponsmith (3 points' worth)
(Modern-day ninja should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 149

Total Character Cost: 248

125+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Hunted: enemy ninja clan, law enforcement agency, or similar enemy 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other ninja clans)
- 28 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 248

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

Notes: This ninja is competent minion-type foe for Superheroic characters, or an Equal-level opponent for many Wuxia, Video Game, or Anime PCs. He's basically the same as the Heroic-Level Ninja *Genin*, but has higher Characteristics and pays Character Points for his weapons and equipment. For an even more powerful *genin*, you can apply any or all of the following options:

Cost Optional *Genin* Abilities

37 *Ninja Weapons And Gadgets:* Variable Power Pool, 30 base + 15 control cost; Can Only Be Changed At Base (-1/2), Limited Class Of Powers (ninja gear; -1/2)

20 Special abilities and techniques, and/or additional Skills (GM's choice)

16 +2 with All Combat

6 +2 with Ninjutsu

4 +2 with Ninja-to

4 +2 with Other Weapon Of Choice

6 Three SSs at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: Anatomy; Cartography; Chemistry; Medicine; Meteorology [*Ten-Mon*])

2 TF: Ninja Water-Walking Devices, Small Rowed Boats

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

KUNOICHI

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2 1/2d6 HTH Damage [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
17	CON	14	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	5	Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)	
8	ED	5	Total: 8 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
6	REC	0		
38	END	2		
30	STUN	2	Total Characteristics Cost: 90	

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
 Leaping: 5"/10"
 Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1 +1 2d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
4	Dodge	— +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1 6 1/2d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2 +0 1d6+1 HKA (2 DC)
4	Punch	+0 +2 4 1/2d6 Strike
3	Takedown	+1 +1 2 1/2d6 Strike, Target Falls
2	Use Art with two weapon types (GM's choice)	
37	<i>Ninja Weapons And Gadgets:</i> Variable Power Pool, 30 base + 15 control cost; Can Only Be Changed At Base (-1/2), Limited Class Of Powers (ninja gear; -1/2) var	
21	<i>Ninja-to:</i> see page ???	
20	<i>Deflecting And Dodging:</i> Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks) 0	
3	<i>Strong Leaper:</i> Leaping +3" (5" forward, 3" upward) 1	
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total) 1	
1	<i>Strong Swimmer:</i> Swimming +1" (3" total) 1	
15	Special Skills or additional Skills (GM's choice) var	

Perks

1 Fringe Benefit: Membership: Kunoichi

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

Talents

3 Lightsleep

Skills

8 +1 with All Combat

2 +1 OCV with Ninja-to

3 Acrobatics 13-

3 *Ukemi*: Breakfall 13-

3 Climbing 13-

3 *Intenjutsu*: Concealment 12-

3 Conversation 12-

3 High Society 12-

3 KS: Ninjutsu 12-

4 Two KSs at 11-, GM's choice

3 Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)

3 Persuasion 12-

3 PS: Kunoichi 12-

3 PS: One entertainment skill at 12-

6 Three PSs at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: entertainment skills such as Dancing and Singing; Geography [*Chi-Mon*]; skills relating to making weapons; Signaling [*Noroshijutsu*]; Knot-Tying [*Hojojutsu/Terinawajutsu*]; skills appropriate for the ninja's favored disguises or Deep Covers)

3 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 12-

5 Seduction 13-

5 *Shinobi-iri*: Stealth 14-

9 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garrote, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari

6 Choose two from the following list: Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Fast Draw (*Iaijutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism, Weaponsmith (3 points worth) (Note: Modern-day *kunoichi* should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 214

Total Character Cost: 304

125+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

- 15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Hunted: enemy ninja clan, law enforcement agency, or similar enemy 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other ninja clans)
- 64 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 304

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Notes: The *kunoichi* is a female ninja. Although she is as fierce and clever a fighter as her clan brothers, her training also encompasses ways to use her feminine wiles to gather information or complete missions. On most of her assignments she leaves her *ninja-to* behind and uses her Gadget Pool to buy weapons disguised as hairpins and other objects a woman carries.

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

NINJA CHUNIN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH Damage [1]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
13	PD	10	Total: 19 PD (6 rPD)	
10	ED	6	Total: 16 ED (6 rED)	
5	SPD	19	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
8	REC	2		
40	END	0		
38	STUN	7	Total Characteristics Cost: 135	

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
 Leaping: 9"/18"
 Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1 +1 3d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
5	Breaking Throw	-2 -2 Grab One Limb; 2d6 HKA, Disable; Target Falls
4	Choke Hold	-2 +0 Grab One Limb, 3d6 NND(2)
4	Dodge	— +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1 9d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2 +0 2d6 HKA (2 DC)
4	Punch	+0 +2 7d6 Strike
4	Reversal	-1 -2 40 STR to Escape; Grab Two Limbs
3	Sacrifice Throw	+2 +1 5d6 Strike; You Fall; Target Falls
5	Takeaway	+0 +0 Grab Weapon, 35 STR to take weapon away
3	Takedown	+1 +1 5d6 Strike, Target Falls
3	Throw	+0 +1 5d6 +v/5; Target Falls
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)	
4	Use Art with four weapon types (GM's choice)	
75	<i>Ninja Weapons And Gadgets:</i> Variable Power Pool, 60 base + 30 control cost; Can Only Be Changed At Base (-1/2), Limited Class Of Powers (ninja gear; -1/2) var	
21	<i>Ninja-to:</i> see page ???	
12	<i>Concealed Ninja Armor:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-1/2) 0	

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

- 20 *Deflecting And Dodging:* Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks) 0
- 3 *Strong Leaper:* Leaping +6" (9" forward, 5" upward) 1
- 2 *Strong Runner:* Running +3" (9" total) 1
- 1 *Strong Swimmer:* Swimming +2" (4" total) 1
- 60 Ninja special techniques, mystic abilities, and/or additional Skills (GM's choice) var

Perks

- 4 Two Deep Covers (GM's choice)
- 3 Fringe Benefit: Membership: Ninja *Chunin*

Talents

- 3 Lightsleep

Skills

- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 6 +2 with Ninjutsu
- 4 +2 with Ninja-to
- 4 +2 with Other Weapon Of Choice

- 3 Acrobatics 13-
- 3 *Ukemi:* Breakfall 13-
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 *Intenjutsu:* Concealment 12-
- 3 *Iaijutsu:* Fast Draw 13-
- 5 KS: Ninjutsu 14-
- 10 Five KSs at 11-, GM's choice
- 3 Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)
- 5 PS: Ninja 14-
- 10 Five PSs at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: entertainment skills such as Dancing and Singing; Geography (*Chi-Mon*); skills relating to making weapons; Signaling (*Noroshijutsu*); Knot-Tying (*Hojojutsu/Terinawajutsu*); skills that are appropriate for the ninja's favored disguises or Deep Covers)
- 3 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 12-
- 10 Five Sciences at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: Anatomy; Cartography; Chemistry; Medicine; Meteorology [Ten-Mon])
- 5 *Shinobi-iri:* Stealth 14-
- 2 TF: Ninja Water-Walking Devices, Small Rowed Boats
- 9 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garrote, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari
- 18 Choose six from the following list: Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Conversation, Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Seduction, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism, Weaponsmith (3 points worth)

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

(Modern-day ninja should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 393

Total Character Cost: 528

150+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Hunted: enemy ninja clan, law enforcement agency, or similar enemy 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other ninja clans)
- 263 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 528

Notes: The ninja *chunin* is a mid-level member of a ninja clan. As a “sub-leader,” he organizes missions (sometimes leading the *genin* on particularly difficult ones) and advises the clan’s *jonin*. In the game, one or two chunin should present a serious threat to most starting or low-level PC groups; with a few Skill changes, a chunin could serve as the main villain for a scenario.

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

NINJA JONIN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH Damage [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
22	CON	24	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
10	COM	0	11-	
15	PD	11	Total: 21 PD (6 rPD)	
12	ED	8	Total: 18 ED (6 rED)	
6	SPD	26	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	4		
44	END	0		
45	STUN	9	Total Characteristics Cost: 183	

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
 Leaping: 12"/24"
 Swimming: 5"/10"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1 +1 4d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
5	Breaking Throw	-2 -2 Grab One Limb; HKA 2 1/2d6, Disable; Target Falls
4	Choke Hold	-2 +0 Grab One Limb, 4d6 NND(2)
4	Dodge	— +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1 12d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2 +0 2 1/2d6 HKA (2 DC)
4	Punch	+0 +2 10d6 Strike
4	Reversal	-1 -2 55 STR to Escape; Grab Two Limbs
3	Sacrifice Throw	+2 +1 8d6 Strike; You Fall; Target Falls
5	Takeaway	+0 +0 Grab Weapon, 45 STR to take weapon away
3	Takedown	+1 +1 8d6 Strike, Target Falls
3	Throw	+0 +1 8d6 +v/5; Target Falls
16	+4 Damage Classes (already added in)	
5	Use Art with five weapon types (GM's choice)	
112	<i>Ninja Weapons And Gadgets:</i> Variable Power Pool, 90 base + 45 control cost; Can Only Be Changed At Base (-1/2), Limited Class Of Powers (ninja gear; -1/2) var	
21	<i>Ninja-to:</i> see page ???	

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

- 12 *Concealed Ninja Armor:* Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-1/2) 0
- 20 *Deflecting And Dodging:* Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks) 0
- 8 *Strong Leaper:* Leaping +8" (12" forward, 6" upward) 1
- 6 *Strong Runner:* Running +3" (9" total) 1
- 3 *Strong Swimmer:* Swimming +3" (5" total) 1
- 90 Ninja special techniques, mystic abilities, and/or additional Skills (GM's choice) var

Perks

- 4 Deep Covers: two, of the GM's choice
- 6 Fringe Benefit: Membership: Ninja *Jonin*

Talents

- 3 Lightsleep

Skills

- 24 +3 with All Combat
- 9 +3 with Ninjutsu
- 6 +3 OCV with Ninja-to
- 6 +3 OCV with Other Weapon Of Choice

- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 3 *Ukemi:* Breakfall 14-
- 3 Climbing 14-
- 3 *Intenjutsu:* Concealment 13-
- 3 *Iaijutsu:* Fast Draw 15-
- 5 KS: Ninjutsu 14-
- 10 Five KSs at 11-, GM's choice
- 3 Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)
- 5 PS: Ninja 15-
- 10 Five PSs at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: entertainment skills such as Dancing and Singing; Geography (*Chi-Mon*); skills relating to making weapons; Signaling (*Noroshijutsu*); Knot-Tying (*Hojojutsu/Terinawajutsu*); skills that are appropriate for the ninja's favored disguises or Deep Covers)
- 3 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 13-
- 10 Five Sciences at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: Anatomy; Cartography; Chemistry; Medicine; Meteorology [*Ten-Mon*])
- 7 *Shinobi-iri:* Stealth 16-
- 2 TF: Ninja Water-Walking Devices, Small Rowed Boats
- 9 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garrote, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari
- 24 Choose eight from the following list: Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Conversation, Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Seduction, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism,

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Weaponsmith (3 points worth)

(Modern-day ninja should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 506

Total Character Cost: 689

150+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)

15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

20 Hunted: enemy ninja clan, law enforcement agency, or similar enemy 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)

25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer (Very Common, Total)

15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)

5 Rivalry: Professional (with other ninja clans)

444 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 689

Notes: A ninja *jonin* leads a ninja clan. He negotiates contracts with employers, chooses outstanding *genin* to become *chunin*, and determines the overall conduct of the clan. He is an unquestioned leader, not only because of the respect his men have for him, but due to his high level of power and skill.

This write-up represents a *jonin* who's still reasonably young and fit — who could go on missions if necessary, fight the PCs, or serve as the main villain for a *Ninja Hero* campaign. For an aged *jonin*, reduce his Physical Characteristics some (perhaps making up for the loss with Extra DCs and Combat Skill Levels).

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

DISGUSTINGLY POWERFUL NINJA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH Damage [2]
28	DEX	54	15-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
26	CON	32	14-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
10	COM	0	11-	
20	PD	15	Total: 26 PD (6 rPD)	
15	ED	10	Total: 21 ED (6 rED)	
8	SPD	42	Phases: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12	
13	REC	6		
60	END	4		
50	STUN	4	Total Characteristics Cost: 255	

Movement: Running: 11"/22"
 Leaping: 15"/30"
 Swimming: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Ninjutsu	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	<i>Atemi</i> Punch	-1 +1 5d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
5	Breaking Throw	-2 -2 Grab One Limb; HKA 3d6+1, Disable; Target Falls
4	Choke Hold	-2 +0 Grab One Limb, 5d6 NND(2)
4	Dodge	— +5 Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2 +1 15d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2 +0 3d6+1 HKA
4	Punch	+0 +2 13d6 Strike
4	Reversal	-1 -2 70 STR to Escape; Grab Two Limbs
3	Sacrifice Throw	+2 +1 11d6 Strike; You Fall; Target Falls
5	Takeaway	+0 +0 Grab Weapon, 65 STR to take weapon away
3	Takedown	+1 +1 11d6 Strike, Target Falls
3	Throw	+0 +1 11d6 +v/5; Target Falls
24	+6 Damage Classes (already added in)	
5	Use Art with five weapon types (GM's choice)	
150	<i>Ninja Weapons And Gadgets:</i> Variable Power Pool, 120 base + 60 control cost; Can	
Only	Be Changed At Base (-1/2), Limited Class Of Powers (ninja gear; -1/2) var	
21	<i>Ninja-to:</i> see page ???	
12	<i>Concealed Ninja Armor:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-1/2) 0	

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

- 20 *Deflecting And Dodging:* Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks) 0
- 10 *Strong Leaper:* Leaping +10" (15" forward, 8" upward) 1
- 6 *Strong Runner:* Running +5" (11" total) 1
- 3 *Strong Swimmer:* Swimming +5" (7" total) 1
- 120 Ninja special techniques, mystic abilities, and/or additional Skills (GM's choice) var

Perks

- 4 Deep Covers: two, of the GM's choice
- 5 Fringe Benefit: Membership: High-Ranking Ninja

Talents

- 3 Lightsleep

Skills

- 40 +5 with All Combat
- 15 +5 with Ninjutsu
- 8 +4 OCV with Ninja-to
- 8 +4 OCV with Other Weapon Of Choice

- 3 Acrobatics 15-
- 3 *Ukemi:* Breakfall 15-
- 3 Climbing 15-
- 3 *Intenjutsu:* Concealment 14-
- 3 *Iaijutsu:* Fast Draw 15-
- 5 KS: Ninjutsu 16-
- 10 Five KSs at 11-, GM's choice
- 3 Language: Ninja Clan Codes & Symbols (fluent conversation; literate)
- 5 PS: Ninja 16-
- 10 Five PSs at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: entertainment skills such as Dancing and Singing; Geography (*Chi-Mon*); skills relating to making weapons; Signaling (*Noroshijutsu*); Knot-Tying (*Hojojutsu/Terinawajutsu*); skills that are appropriate for the ninja's favored disguises or Deep Covers)
- 3 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 14-
- 10 Five Sciences at 11-, GM's choice (suggestions: Anatomy; Cartography; Chemistry; Medicine; Meteorology [*Ten-Mon*])
- 7 *Shinobi-iri:* Stealth 17-
- 2 TF: Ninja Water-Walking Devices, Small Rowed Boats
- 9 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garrote, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari
- 30 Choose ten from the following list: Contortionist (*Tonjutsu*), Conversation, Cryptography, Demolitions (*Kajutsu*), Disguise (*Henshojutsu*), Lockpicking, Mimicry, Navigation, Paramedic, Riding (*Bajutsu*), Security Systems, Seduction, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics (*Bo-ryaku*), Tracking, TF (3 points' worth), Ventriloquism, Weaponsmith (3 points worth)

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

(Modern-day ninja should add to this list: Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Forgery, Mechanics, Systems Operation, WF: Small Arms plus one 1-point WF [*Kajutsu*].)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 615

Total Character Cost: 870

200+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Ninja Night-Suit (Easily Concealed; Noticed and Recognizable)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Hunted: own ninja clan 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Hunted: enemy ninja clan, law enforcement agency, or similar enemy 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Ninja Clan/Employer (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: lethal Japanese assassin, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other ninja clans)
- 555 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 870

Notes: The Disgustingly Powerful Ninja is a villain intended to make even powerful Video Game warriors, Anime martial artists, and superheroes blanch. One or two of these exquisitely-trained, mystically powerful warriors give any team of PCs a fit, if the GM uses them properly (which is to say, intelligently and creatively).

<2> REALISTIC CHARACTERS

Here are two sample characters for Realistic martial arts campaigns.

ALICE ONO

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1 1/2d6 HTH damage [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
9	CON	-2	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
14	COM	2	12-	
4	PD	2	Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)	
2	ED	0	Total: 2 ED (0 rED)	
3	SPD	6	Phases: 4, 8, 12	
4	REC	0		
18	END	0		
17	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 16	

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Judo	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
5	Block +1	+3 Block, Abort
4	Escape +0	+0 23 STR versus Grabs
3	Joint Lock	+0 -1 Grab One Limb, 18 STR to hold on
4	Joint Lock/Throw	+1 +0 Grab One limb; 1d6 NND(7); Target Falls
3	Slam +0	+1 1 1/2d6 +v/5; Target Falls
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total) 1	

Skills

3	+1 with Judo
3	Breakfall 12-
1	KS: Judo 8-
4	Language: Japanese (idiomatic; English is native)
1	PS: Field Hockey 8-
1	PS: Soccer 8-

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Total Powers & Skills Cost: 34

Total Cost: 50

25+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)

15 Psychological Limitation: Youthful Confidence And Determination (Common, Strong)

0 Social Limitation: Youth (aged 15) (Frequently, Minor [character is simply not allowed to go some places or perform certain actions])

Total Disadvantage Points: 50

Background/History: Alice Ono has been practicing judo almost since she learned to walk. Her father, a part-time instructor at a local judo school, has been her *sensei*, training her in the more defensive aspects of the art, such as escape techniques and throws. For her own part, Alice has taken to the training like a duck to water, and is an accomplished practitioner of judo — a fact she's more than willing to demonstrate on anyone who thinks her small size and slight frame mean she can be harassed with impunity.

Personality/Motivation: Her judo skills have given Alice a strong degree of confidence and a “can do” attitude. She feels she can accomplish anything, provided she puts her mind to it. This belief has made her a star pupil and a skilled athlete (she excels in field hockey, soccer, and track). As for her future plans, she's uncertain, but is strongly considering following in the footsteps of her grandfather, who was in the 442nd Infantry in World War II, and her father, who served in Vietnam. She's even thought about applying to become an astronaut.

Quote: “This is called a joint lock. Not bad for “just a girl,” huh?”

Powers/Tactics: Although not one to start fights, Alice is more than ready to finish them. If attacked, she tries to Block, and continues Blocking until her attacker becomes frustrated and either leaves her alone or does something foolish (like a Haymaker). At that point she performs a Slam to throw her opponent to the ground and applies a Joint Lock to keep him there. If her victim gets out of her Joint Lock, she'll repeat the process. She won't try to hurt her opponents, but she'll let them hurt themselves.

Campaign Use: Alice Ono is meant to represent a more-or-less normal real-world martial artist. You can drop her into almost any modern-era setting with ease. With a little work you could put her in a Pulp-era or science fiction setting; with a few adjustments to her Skills, background, and name, she works fine for period martial arts games. Player characters could have Alice as a DNPC, or she could be the daughter of a DNPC or Contact.

To make Alice tougher, give her a few more Martial Maneuvers and increase her Physical Characteristics by a few points. To weaken her, remove one or two Martial Maneuvers. Alice doesn't Hunt heroes. She's just trying to get through high school.

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[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **ALICE ONO PLOT SEEDS**

One of the PCs takes a job at Alice's school. He notices Alice sneaking around a lot. What's she up to?

Alice gets in trouble for fighting in school, making everyone (including her father) think she's becoming a rebellious, out-of-control teenager. How can she prove she was just defending some younger students from bullies?

Alice enters a martial arts tournament, only to have a dishonorable competitor frame her for cheating. The PCs, judges for the competition, have to find out what's going on.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Alice Ono, age 15, stands a few inches over five feet in height; she has brown eyes and straight black hair that falls past her shoulders. She has a slender, athletic build, and tends to dress in simple skirt and blouse outfits.

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

ALBERTO MONTARI

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	STR	2	11-	Lift: 137 kg; 2d6 HTH Damage [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 2 1/2d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	2	Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)	
4	ED	2	Total: 4 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	10	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
22	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 60	

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END	
	Martial Arts: Cappelvera School Fencing		
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV Notes
4	<i>Ceduto</i> +0	+0	27 STR to escape Bind
3	Cut +2	+1	Weapon Strike
4	<i>Double A Double</i>	+2	+2 Weapon +2 DC Strike, Must Follow Predefined Maneuver
4	Parry +2	+2	Block Abort
4	<i>Prise de Fer</i>	+1	+0 22 STR Bind
4	Riposte	+2	+2 Weapon +2 DC Strike, Must Follow Block
5	Thrust +1	+3	Weapon Strike
4	Void —	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total)		1

Perks

2	Fringe Benefit: Member of the Lower Nobility
1	Money: Well Off

Skills

9	+3 With Cappelvera Fencing
2	AK: Genoa 11-
3	Bribery 12-

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- 2 Gambling (Card Games) 12-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 2 KS: Cappelletti Fencing 11-
- 2 KS: Card And Dice Games 11-
- 2 KS: The Genoa Underworld 11-
- 1 Language: Italian (literacy with native language)
- 3 Seduction 12-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 13-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 10 Two Weapon Fighting (HTH)
- 4 WF: Small Arms, Blades, Off-Hand,

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 86

Total Cost: 146

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Enraged: if insulted or made to look foolish (Uncommon), go 11-, recover 11-
- 10 Hunted: various noble families of Genoa 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Bored Noble Looking For Excitement (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Cruel Streak (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Reputation: cruel and hot-tempered, 11-
- 1 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 146

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Weapons

Name	OCV	Damage	STNx	Notes
Main-Gauche				+6 DEF on Hand
Using Blade	0		1d6-1	0 +2 OCV with Block
Using Hilt	0		(2d6)	—
Rapier	+1		1d6	0

Background/History: The Montari may not be one of the largest families in 1530s Genoa, but they have become one of the wealthiest through hard work and capitalizing on trade opportunities. Unfortunately, not all of the Montari are so dedicated and disciplined.

Alberto Montari is one of many men in the Montari family, but unlike most of his brothers and cousins, he has no interest in trade or business — although he does have a great love of money. Instead, Alberto has learned how to fence skillfully, how to gamble well, and

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how to seduce young women. He's the black sheep of the family, but enjoys himself too much to care. Besides, in Alberto's opinion, he has plenty of brothers who are more than willing to carry on the family business, so there's no harm done, right?

Personality/Motivation: Boredom has made Alberto dangerous. He leads the life of the idle rich, and with little to occupy his time (he steadfastly refuses to learn about his father's business), he's turned to various forms of vice. He likes to eat, drink, and gamble, and frequents the gambling dens and rough taverns found on Genoa's back streets, where he indulges his tastes for cards, dice, women, wine, and violence. He's got a sizable chip on his shoulder, and doesn't care to be made the fool; nor does he take insults lightly. In either situation, he quickly demands redress and/or satisfaction. Normally, satisfaction comes in the form of a duel, at which point Alberto's tendency for cruelty comes into play. He often toys with his opponents while fencing, making it look like they have a chance, before he moves in for the kill.

Quote: "Do you mean to insult me with your words, sir? Be warned, I have a ready blade and will take an apology at the point of my sword if need be."

Powers/Tactics: Alberto is quickly developing into a master of the Cappelletti school of Italian fencing. Quick, agile, and strong, he has a good eye for his opponent's sword. He typically fights defensively at the start of a duel, spending a few Phases using the Parry and Void maneuvers to judge his opponent's skill. When ready to counterattack, he performs yet another Block (hoping to lure his opponent into a false sense of security), and then follows up with a Riposte. If fighting with two weapons, Alberto employs the same tactics, but tries to use his offhand weapon (usually a main-gauche) to Bind his foe's weapon and then launch into the *Double a Double* maneuver with his main weapon. If using only one weapon, Alberto favors a Parry, Riposte, and Double a Double pattern, trying for maximum effectiveness in the shortest amount of time. He's begun to practice the *Pasata Soto* maneuver, hoping to add to his repertoire. It is only a matter of time before he decides to try this technique out in yet another street duel.

Campaign Use: Alberto Montari is an example of the sort of characters one might expect to find in a *Swords Of The Sun King* campaign, but he could easily appear in a *Fantasy Hero* setting, especially one set in a large city-state or one dealing with courtly intrigue. He'd make an excellent Rival for a similar PC (or a PC's "hotheaded younger brother" DNPC if you get rid of his tendencies toward cruelty).

To make Alberto more powerful, give him more Combat Skill Levels with Fencing and increase his physical Characteristics. If he's already too tough for your PCs, remove some of his Martial Maneuvers and reduce his DEX to 18.

Alberto's not much for Hunting heroes; that's too much like work. However, if repeatedly insulted or humiliated by a PC, he'll make it his business to find the PC and take revenge.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **ALBERTO MONTARI PLOT SEEDS**

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Montari and another bravo compete to see who can seduce the most women in a given period of time. Unfortunately for them, one of the women on the list is a PC (or a PC's sister, DNPC, wife...); what happens when the PC finds out about this?

When his father cuts off his money, Montari has to take drastic steps to ensure he remains well-supplied with funds. He takes a job to kill someone... one of the PCs, in fact. What will he do to pull the job off?

Montari hears one of the PCs has a new, unbeatable fencing technique. He begins to pester the PC to teach it to him, tries to find ways to ingratiate himself with the PC, and so on. How far will he go? Does the PC really know a secret fencing maneuver?
[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Alberto is a young man 5'10" tall, with a whipcord-lean frame. He has black hair that falls in long ringlets to just past his shoulders, and dark eyes; he keeps clean shaven except for a thick mustache.

Alberto does his best to dress in the finest clothing he can afford. This normally consists of a velvet doublet and hose, plus low leather boots and a stylish floppy cloth cap. A thin leather belt supports a purse, a knife (normally used for eating, not fighting), and Alberto's rapier. If expecting trouble (or looking for it), Alberto also carries a long dagger or main-gauche to use in his left hand.

<2> CINEMATIC CHARACTERS

Here are two sample characters for Cinematic martial arts campaigns.

DOCTOR PAIN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	20	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH damage [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3 1/2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	3	Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)	
6	ED	2	Total: 6 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	15	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
9	REC	0		
40	END	0		
36	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 98	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: Professional Wrestling				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	Backbreaker	-2	+0	HKA 1/2d6 (2 DC); Target Falls
4	Bear Hug	+0	+0	9d6 Crush; Must Follow Grab
4	Duck	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
3	Footsweep	+2	-1	6d6 Strike; Target Falls
3	Grapple	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 35 STR to hold on
4	Grappling Defense	+0	+0	40 STR versus Grabs
3	Pile Driver	+0	+2	7d6 Strike; Target Falls; Must Follow Grab
4	No Sell	+2	+2	Block, Abort
3	Smash/Headbutt	+1	+0	7d6 Strike
3	Suplex	+2	+1	5d6 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls
3	Throw	+0	+1	5d6 +v/5; Target Falls
1	Use Art With Ringside Objects			
13	<i>The Pain Injection:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), No Knockback (-1/4), Only Versus Prone Opponent (-1/2)			
1u	1) <i>A World Of Hurt:</i> +HA 4d6, Penetrating (+1/2); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), No Knockback (-1/4), Only Versus Prone Opponent (-1/2) 3			

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- 1u 2) *The Finisher!*: +HA 2d6, NND (defense is rigid resistant PD on Hit Location 12 or not needing to breathe; +1), Does BODY (+1); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), No Knockback (-1/4), Must Be Aimed At Location 12 Or Has No Effect (-1/2), Only Versus Prone Opponent (-1/2) 3
- 11 *Can Take A Punch*: Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 50%; STUN Only (-1/2), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-1/4) 0

Skills

- 20 +4 Hand-To-Hand
- 3 +1 with Acrobatics, Breakfall, and Climbing
- 3 Acrobatics 12-
- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Breakfall 12-
- 3 Climbing 12-
- 2 KS: Bodybuilding 11-
- 2 KS: Professional Wrestling World 11-
- 2 KS: Sports Entertainment 11-
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 PS: Professional Wrestler/Entertainer 13-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 1 TF: Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 120

Total Cost: 218

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Bad Tempered, Likes To Start/Get Into Fights (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: No Tolerance For The Weak And Whiners (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Likes To Live Up To His Bad Boy Image (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Reputation: heel (*i.e.*, a wrestling villain) (limited group: professional wrestling fans), 14-
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other professional wrestlers for the attentions of the crowd and general fame)
- 10 Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Minor)
- 48 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 218

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Background/History: A born athlete, in high school Dwight McCarthy wrestled and played football. He did pretty much the same in college, majoring in beer, cheerleaders, and skipping class. His size, strength, and skill made the university look the other way when it came to his academic record — after all, the football program brought in far more money than any science fair.

Every Sunday Dwight strapped on his pads and helmet and went out to crush a quarterback or two. But even the fun of smashing the guy with the ball got old after a while. Oh, sure, there was big money in football, but not for linemen. Quarterbacks, running backs, wide receivers, the guys who moved the ball and scored touchdowns, they made the big bucks and won the big contracts. Dwight wanted something more, something exciting, something on the edge, something like... pro wrestling.

Initially, Dwight laughed at the idea of being a professional wrestler. There was no way he was going to dress up in spandex and play at wrestling with guys named the Steel Sheik, Commander Crusher, and Fuji, the Japanese Man-Mountain. It was worse than embarrassing, it was stupid. Then the representative from the IWC (International Wrestling Confederation) took Dwight to a match and showed him a sample contract. Gone were the spandex and silly masks Dwight remembered from watching wrestling as a kid (although the names remained). They'd been replaced by black leather and denim, and the ring girls were a lot more buff and better endowed than in years past. And the money!

Dwight signed up almost on the spot, and spent some time developing a persona and look — Doctor Pain. His size and strength quickly made him a top wrestler — even in a field dominated by big men — as one of the “sport’s” heels (villains), a role he relished. Recently, however, Dwight has felt limited by the possibilities of the IWC, and has started to participate in illegal underground fighting competitions. The IWC knows nothing of this, and Dwight prefers to keep it that way.

Personality/Motivation: A lifetime of being big and strong has left Dwight with an arrogant, bullying personality. His time in the IWC has done nothing to change this — in fact, it's only encouraged his “bad boy” image. He isn't afraid to push others around with his great strength and size, and treats men smaller and weaker than he with disdain (women he just treats like sex objects).

Lately Dwight has begun to feel his life lacks something. Although he enjoys his time in the IWC ring, he'd like to do something more on the edge, something more outrageous than play-acting at wrestling, hitting people with folding chairs, and tossing opponents through announcers' tables. He's found this outlet in the underground fighting circuit, where he can use his physical skills to their fullest, without the limits imposed by the IWC. So far, this satisfies Dwight, but the time may come when even that is not enough to satisfy his craving for violence.

Quote: “Pain is my business!”

Powers/Tactics: As a pro wrestler, Dwight isn't much for subtlety. His main aim is to close on his opponent and then get him into a Grab, at which point he manhandles his unlucky victim into

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submission. In the ring, when acting as Doctor Pain, he sticks to various throws, such as the Piledriver (where he bodily throws his opponent to the ground), the Suplex (in which both Dwight and his opponent hit the ground, with the opponent on the bottom), and a simple Throw. He subjects Stunned opponents to a Bearhug, and then throws them to the ground. If necessary (or called for in the script), he can use common ringside objects — folding chairs, brooms, beer bottles, and the like — to hit his opponent. He can use his No Sell to deflect an opponent's attack (to “sell,” in wrestling parlance, meaning to make a move look good and/or effective), but he prefers offense to defense.

On the underground circuit, Dwight fights more aggressively, with Footsweeps to send foes sprawling, forearm Smashes to stagger opponents, and his Headbutt as a close-in surprise move. He also uses such dangerous moves as his Backbreaker (in which he slams an opponent into the ground over his knee), and his Bearhug at full strength (in the IWC ring Dwight tends to use minimal force, letting the maneuver itself do most of the work).

No matter where he fights, Dwight likes to finish opponents with his famed “Pain Injection,” a falling elbow drop delivered to the abdomen of a prone opponent. In the IWC ring Dwight uses his “World Of Hurt” slot, in which he pulls the blow before impact, resulting in a painful, but survivable, attack. In the underground ring, he uses the more dangerous “Finisher!” which he specifically aims at the stomach area; it can do a great deal of physical damage. Dwight hasn't killed anyone with “The Finisher!”... yet.

Campaign Use: Doctor Pain is a Cinematic pro wrestler, with appropriate levels of strength and toughness. He works well as the model for many big-bruiser characters seen in films (such as Bolo in *Enter The Dragon*), and his professional wrestling background makes him a common staple of many video fighting games (his background and origin simulate such characters). You could easily incorporate him into other modern-day settings (for example, as an enforcer in a *Dark Champions* campaign), or make him a gladiator-type character in a *Fantasy Hero* game.

If you need to “power down” Doctor Pain, drop his CON to 18 and his SPD to 3, eliminate his Multipower and his Damage Reduction, and give him only two HTH Combat Levels. This makes him suitable for most Heroic-level settings. To increase Doctor Pain's power level, just boost his physical Characteristic as needed and give him some Extra Damage Classes.

Dwight's temper and aggressiveness may cause him to Hunt a hero who humiliates him, but probably not more than on an 8-. His agents and managers have enough influence to keep him from throwing away his career on some petty vendetta against a “loser” hero.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> DOCTOR PAIN PLOT SEEDS

After a reporter offers Dwight a *huge* sum of money to reveal the existence of the underground fighting circuit, the organizers of the circuit put out a contract on his life. The newspaper hires the PCs to protect Dwight... who doesn't do anything to make their job easy, since he regards being “babysat” as “sissified.”

One of Doctor Pain's “arch-enemies” on the pro wrestling is murdered. The deceased and Dwight were known to hate one another in real life, so he's a suspect. His managers hire the PCs

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to clear his name. Dwight doesn't help matters by making no secret of the fact he's glad the murder happened.

Dwight decides that if he can beat up a well-known PC in public, his notoriety as a “bad boy” and super-tough fighter will be assured. Who will he pick to help him cement his reputation?
[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Dwight is a huge man, standing a full 6'8” and weighing a good 300 pounds of solid muscle. In keeping with his image as one of wrestling's prime bad boys, he shaves his head bald, but has a neatly trimmed black goatee. As Doctor Pain, he wears a black leather vest with no shirt, black pants, and knee-high black boots. Black elbow pads and fingerless fighting gloves complete his costume. Out of the ring, Dwight prefers casual wear with an emphasis on the leather look.

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TOJI SHIN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3 1/2d6 HTH damage [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
16	CON	12	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	3	Total: 7 PD (0 rPD)	
6	ED	3	Total: 6 ED (0 rED)	
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
7	REC	0		
32	END	0		
30	STUN	1	Total Characteristics Cost: 85	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END			
	Martial Arts: Kenjutsu, Naginatajutsu, Yarijutsu				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
4	Bind +1	+0	Bind, 28 STR		
4	Block +2	+2	Block, Abort		
4	Disarm-1	+1	Disarm, 28 STR		
4	Evade —	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort		
4	Lightning Stroke		+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Slashing Stroke		-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
4	Thrust +0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike		
2	Use Art With Shaft, Polearms				
	Martial Arts: Kyujutsu				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Rng	Notes
4	Basic Shot	+0	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Distance Shot	+0	-2	+6	Weapon Strike; +1 Segment
5	Far Shot	+1	-1	+4	Weapon Strike
4	Quick Shot	+1	+0	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
	Perks				
10	Fringe Benefit: Kirisutogomen				
3	Fringe Benefit: Samurai				
	Skills				

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16	+2 with All Combat
10	+2 Hand-To-Hand
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Bureaucratics 13-
5	<i>Iaijutsu</i> : Fast Draw 14-
3	High Society 13-
2	Gambling (Board Games) 12-
2	KS: History of the Toji Clan 11-
2	KS: History of the Arai Clan 11-
2	KS: Kenjutsu 11-
2	KS: Kyujutsu 11-
2	KS: Mon 11-
2	KS: Naginatajutsu/Yarijutsu 11-
2	KS: The Samurai World 11-
1	Language: Japanese (literacy with native language)
3	PS: Calligraphy 13-
3	PS: Poetry 12-
3	PS: Samurai 12-
3	Riding 13-
3	Tactics 12-
3	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Bow

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 137

Total Cost: 222

125+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Samurai Bearing (Concealable With Effort; Noticed and Recognizable)
10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Bushi (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Of Vengeance: Must Avenge All Insults to Self and Lord (Common, Total)
0	Psychological Limitation: Honorable, Will Do Nothing That Would Dishonor Him In The Eyes Of His Ancestors (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
17	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 222

<4> EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Weapons

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Name	OCV	RMod	DMG	STNx	Shots	Notes
Yumi, Four-Man		0		+1	2d6+1 0	24 RC, 2H, Concentration 1/2 DCV

Name	OCV	Damage	STNx	Notes
Katana ++1	1	1/2d6	0	M, Thr, 1 1/2H
Naginata				L, 2H, +1 Range, MP
Using Blade	0	1 1/2d6	0	
Using Shaft	0	(4d6)	—	
Tanto +0	1/2d6	0	S, Thr	
Wakizashi	0	1d6	0	M, Thr
Yari				L, 2H, +1 Range, Thr, MP
Using Blade	-1	1 1/2d6	0	
Using Shaft	0	(4d6)	—	

Armor

Name of Armor	DEF	Location
Kabuto (Helmet)	6	4-5
Kote (Sleeves)	6	6-7 (Location 6 Activates on a 11-)
Sode (Shoulders)	6	8-9
Mogami Do (Breastplate)	6	10-13
Haidate (Apron)	6	10-15 (Versus Frontal Attacks Only)
Suneate (Greaves)	6	16-17

All armor is Half Value Versus Guns

Background/History: For nine generations the Toji clan has served the Arai family. During this time the clan has won great praise and respect for both its loyalty and its prowess in battle. In return, the lord of Ariki Province has awarded it high station and honor.

Toji Shin is the most recent of many Toji samurai to serve the Arai. He has quickly gained fame as a samurai's samurai, and is known for his courtly manners, impeccable honor, skill with arms, and unwavering loyalty to Lord Arai. He is the sort of samurai legends are made of, and as Japan slowly slides into the Sengoku (Warring States) era, he has the chance to either make an immortal name for himself, or vanish in the murky depths of history.

Personality/Motivation: Two great forces shape Shin as a person. The first is his oath of loyalty to Lord Arai under the tenets of the Bushido code. Shin follows this code absolutely, knowing that as long as he obeys the orders of his lord, he can do no wrong. He sees himself as nothing more than a tool of Lord Arai's — and just as one blames the man, and not his katana, for a murder, no action Shin undertakes, no matter how heinous, diminishes his honor as long as he follows Lord Arai's orders.

The second force is Shin's desire to do nothing to dishonor the names of his ancestors. Acutely aware of the fame his family has gained in service to the Arai, he has no wish to stain that reputation. In situations where he has no experience (or which puzzle him), Shin takes a moment to ask himself "What did (or would) my ancestors do?". Then he acts on what he considers the proper answer.

It may seem to some that Shin's two motivations are at odds with one another, but this is

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not the case. For example, if Shin were ordered to kill everyone in a village, he'd do so without question, knowing his ancestors also didn't question their lord's orders, and thus honored both their lords and their adherence to the Bushido code. In the same vein, Shin doesn't exercise his right of *kirisutogomen* willy-nilly, cutting down anyone who offends him. His ancestors showed restraint and humility, and thereby increased their renown, who is he to do differently?

You may wish to compare and contrast Toji's personality and perspective on honor with that of Torii Nishi (page ???), who serves the same lord.

Quote: "I am no more than a tool for Lord Arai to direct as he needs and pleases. As long as I remember this, my honor will be unblemished and my renown assured."

Powers/Tactics: As a samurai of a wealthy clan, serving an equally wealthy lord, Shin has had access to both instructors and equipment of high quality. He has been trained in all the various martial arts a proper samurai should know, including the use of the sword (*kenjutsu*), the glaive (*naginatajutsu*), the lance (*varijutsu*), and the bow (*kyujutsu*). In addition, he can ride (and fight from horseback if needed), plays *go* to sharpen his mind and tactical skills, practices poetry to refine his manners, and writes his poems to perfect his calligraphy (and thus demonstrate his good breeding). He knows how to behave properly in court, and how to deal with court officials. Finally, he is well-versed in the history of both his clan and the Arai, as well as the history and philosophy of the various martial arts he knows.

In combat Shin's tactics depend on the situation and Lord Arai's commands. In open warfare he prefers to use his bow for as long as possible, switching between his various Kyujutsu maneuvers depending on the nature and location of his target. On horseback, Shin normally carries his yari, but he favors his naginata when he fights on foot. Regardless of whatever other arms he carries, Shin has his *dai-sho* (paired swords) with him at all times, and draws his katana if he loses or breaks his main weapon. He likes to take the fight to his enemy, using Blocks and Dodges only if hard pressed; he prefers to go on the offensive with Lightning Strokes and Thrusts. Since he's intended for use in Cinematic campaigns, he can use his Kenjutsu maneuvers with polearms (like the yari and the naginata), though more realistic campaigns wouldn't allow this.

Campaign Use: Toji Shin represents the sort of characters seen in many samurai films (known as *jidai-geki*, or "period plays" in Japan), such as *The Hidden Fortress*, *Ran*, *The Seven Samurai*, and *Yojimbo*. Thus, he's brave, skilled, and quite capable in battle. However, he may be a bit expensive for the average Heroic campaign, although you could use him as an NPC and relegate him to a mostly off-camera role. On the other hand, he fits perfectly in a Cinematic setting.

If you want to decrease Shin's power, drop his DEX to 15, his CON to 15, his SPD to 3, remove his Kyujutsu, remove his two HTH Combat Levels, drop his Fast Draw to 13-, and make all his KSs an 8-. For a more powerful character (one suited for Wuxia or Anime campaigns), increase his DEX, SPD, and Combat Skill Levels, and add a few Skills (like Defense Maneuver) as needed. Just making Shin pay for all his weapons and armor quickly pushes his point total to nearly 300 points.

Shin only Hunts people if Lord Arai orders him to. In that case, he pursues tenaciously, using any honorable tactic or option available to him to close with and capture his quarry.

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[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **TOJI SHIN PLOT SEEDS**

Shin's warrior skills begin to deteriorate; he's not getting nearly enough sleep. He claims he's having recurring nightmares in which all the ghosts of the men he's slain haunt him. Lord Arai hires (or assigns) the PCs to investigate the matter and stop the "evil sorcery" that he's convinced is behind this.

Lord Arai sends the PCs on an important courier mission, sending Shin with them to make sure things get done right. How will they relate to the often-inflexible Shin? What if it turns out the mission isn't particularly honorable?

Shin reveals his true colors — he's a ninja, working for Lord Arai's greatest enemy! After assassinating Lord Arai, he flees with the Arai family's most valuable heirlooms. The PCs must track him down, kill him, and recover the items.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Toji Shin is almost 30 years of age, and stands 5'8" tall, with the build one would expect from a man who practices the martial arts as a way of life. He keeps clean shaven, and wears his hair in the standard "tea-whisk" style or topknot. For clothing, Shin wears the typical dress of a samurai of his era. This consists of a kimono (robe), hakama (trousers), and a dobuku (a wide-sleeved coat). He secures the kimono with a simple obi (belt). Shin keeps his wakizashi tucked under his obi, and carries this weapon with him at all times. All of Shin's clothing is very simple in cut and fashion. Although monetarily well-off, Shin avoids excessive displays of wealth, as he feels it sends the wrong message about his character.

Shin's armor is a full suit of mogami (lamellar) harness, consisting of breastplate, shoulders, sleeves, a hanging apron for thigh protection, and greaves to protect the lower legs. Made from close-set plates laced together, mail, and leather, the armor is a very mundane russet color, with dark braid.

<2> WUXIA CHARACTERS

Here are three sample characters for Wuxia martial arts campaigns.

JIU XING

Val	Char	Cost	Rolls	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH Damage [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	26	14-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4	13-	
10	PD	5	Total: 10 PD (0 rPD)	
10	ED	5	Total: 10 ED (0 rED)	
6	SPD	26	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	0		
46	END	0		
40	STUN	1	Total Characteristics Cost: 159	

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
 Leaping: 10"/20"
 Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost Powers END

- 30 *Taiji Mountain Sword Techniques:* Multipower, 45-point reserve; all OIF (sword of opportunity; -1/2)
- 2u 1) *Side-Slashing Sword:* HKA 2d6 (3d6+1 with STR), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4); OIF (-1/2) 4
- 3u 2) *Slaying Sword:* HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+1/2); OIF (-1/2) 4
- 3u 3) *Splitting Sword:* HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Penetrating (+1/2); OIF (-1/2) 4
- 3u 4) *Whirling Sword:* HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Autofire (5 shots; +1/2); OIF (-1/2) 4
- 3u 5) *Whirlwind Sword:* HKA 1d6+1 (2d6 with STR), Area of Effect Nonselective (2" Radius; +3/4), Personal Immunity (+1/4); OIF (-1/2) 4
- 2u 6) *Riveting Sword:* HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Ranged (+1/2); OIF (-1/2), Lockout (must throw sword, cannot use this or any other Multipower slot until sword is recovered or another one is obtained; -1/2) 4
- 1u 7) *Springing Sword:* Leaping +12" (22" forward, 11" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Can Only Be Used On The Phase Following A Previous Leap (-1); OIF (-1/2) 0
- 31 *Deactivation Strike:* Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2),

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Invisible To Sight Group (+1/4); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4), Restrained (-1/2), Can Be Escaped Automatically With A Successful KS: Chinese Healing Roll (-1/2) 7

24 *Wen Jen*: HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1) **plus** +1 OCV; OAF (-1) 0

18 *Arrow-Cutting Strike*: Missile Deflection (arrows and projectiles), Ranged (adjacent hexes, +1/2); OIF (sword of opportunity; -1/2) **plus** +4 OCV 0

35 *Kun Gen*: RKA 2d6, No Range Modifier (+1/2), 24 Recoverable Charges (+3/4); OAF (-1) **plus** +1 OCV; OAF (-1) [24rc]

Martial Arts: Taiji Mountain Sword Style

Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

5	Dancing Sword	+2	-2	Weapon +4 DC Strike; Half-Move Required
5	Dividing Sword	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
5	Floating Sword	—	+4	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort; FMove
5	Flying Sword	+1	+0	Weapon + v/5; FMove
4	Penetrating Sword	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
4	Swaying Sword	-1	+1	Disarm, 35 STR
4	Trapping Sword	+1	+0	Bind, 35 STR
5	Wavering Sword	+1	+3	Block, Abort
1	Use Art Barehanded, with Blades			
4	<i>Strong Runner</i> : Running +2" (8" total)			2
5	<i>Strong Leaper</i> : Leaping +5" (10" forward, 5" upward)			2
1	<i>Strong Swimmer</i> : Swimming +1" (3" total)			1
10	<i>The Power Of Positive Ch'i</i> : Luck 2d6			

Perks

3 Reputation: Hero of the People (in the local province) +3/+3d6

Talents

3 *Sharp Senses*: Lightsleep

Skills

10	+2 Hand-To-Hand
6	+2 with Taiji Mountain Sword Techniques Multipower
7	<i>Quick With A Sword</i> : +2 With DCV; OIF (sword of opportunity; -1/2)
3	Acrobatics 14-
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Climbing 14-
3	Contortionist 14-
5	<i>Skilled In War</i> : Defense Maneuver II
3	Disguise 12-
2	Gambling (Dice Games) 12-
3	<i>Quick With A Sword</i> : Fast Draw 14-
2	KS: Chinese Acupuncture/Healing 11-

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3	KS: The Martial World 12-
5	KS: Taiji Mountain Sword Style 14-
1	Language: Mandarin (literacy with native language)
3	Paramedic 12-
2	PS: Cook 11-
3	PS: Musician (lute) 14-
3	Riding 14-
7	Shadowing 14-
3	Sleight of Hand 14-
3	Stealth 14-
3	Streetwise 14-
2	Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
3	Tracking 12-
6	WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 316

Total Character Cost: 475

200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
15	DNPC: Assorted Local Villagers 8- (Normal)
10	Hunted: Enemies of the Taiji Mountain Sword School 8- (As Pow)
20	Hunted: Imperial Police Officers 11- (As Pow, NCI)
5	Money: Poor
15	Psychological Limitation: Adventurous And Fun Loving (Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Chinese Knight (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Dislike Of Injustice And Oppression (Common, Strong)
0	Psychological Limitation: Vow Of Vengeance On Tai-Sheng Zeng (Common, Strong)
10	Reputation: notorious bandit, 11-
5	Unluck: 1d6
150	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 475

Background/History: A former student of the famous Taiji Mountain Sword School, Jiu Xing was driven into hiding when the evil Tai-Sheng Zeng outlawed and then destroyed the school. Vowing revenge on the cruel eunuch for the deaths of his teachers and fellow students, Jiu Xing fled into the mountains to bide his time until he felt strong enough to destroy Tai-Sheng Zeng and his oppressive regime. Until that moment arrives, Jiu Xing lives the life of a “noble bandit,” stealing from Imperial functionaries and redistributing the funds to the poor and needy in several surrounding villages. His actions have made him a hated enemy of the nobles and the wealthy,

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but a hero to the local farmers, who keep him fed, clothed, and appraised of local developments he might find interesting (such as the movements of police and soldiers).

Personality/Motivation: Although he's personally witnessed great tragedy, Jiu Xing has vowed to not dwell on the matter. Instead, he's dedicated his life to the here-and-now, living only in the present, with no regrets for the past and little thought for the future. This does not mean Jiu Xing doesn't plan or have any long-term goals, but it reflects his beliefs on the transitory nature of life. Thus, he tends to take off on wild adventures at the drop of a hat, such as chasing bandits in the mountains, rescuing kidnapped princesses (well, he would if he could find any), and harassing Tai-Sheng Zeng's forces wherever he finds them.

In addition to the more frivolous aspects of his character, Jiu Xing has also taken to heart the principles behind the code of the *wuxia*, or Chinese knights. Although he doesn't follow it as strictly as a true *wuxia*, he's dedicated to the idea of righting wrongs, stopping social injustice, honoring good people, and spending any money he has on good deeds and good times. He's more discriminating when it comes to oaths and obligations, however. Realizing the danger of being trapped by false words and promises, Jiu Xing doesn't make such promises lightly, and thinks long and hard about any oath before he makes it.

Quote: "Those who hunger for power and wealth have brought much strife to the world. My mission is to end some of that strife."

Powers/Tactics: Formerly one of the top students of the Taiji Mountain Sword School, Jiu Xing is now a master in his own right. His sword techniques are second to virtually no one; armed with even a simple *wen jen*, Jiu Xing can knock arrows out of the air, strike a flurry of blows in just a few seconds, hurl his sword with great skill, slash a host of foes, and cut through even the thickest armor. In addition to his sword skills, Jiu Xing also has a very potent and useful non-lethal combat technique: his Deactivation Strike, which immobilizes virtually anyone. Jiu Xing uses this technique against messengers and couriers, since they're usually not of an evil bent themselves. Bandits and soldiers, however, get a taste of his skill in swordsmanship.

In battle, Jiu Xing first attacks with his *kun gen*, since he can accurately launch arrows from great distances and still hit his target. When he runs low on arrows — or, more likely, has closed to hand-to-hand range with his foe — he abandons his bow and draws his sword. He prefers to leap into the middle of a crowd of foes and unleash his Whirlwind Sword technique, cutting down anyone within reach. In these situations, his foes are usually relatively unskilled soldiers, so he places most (if not all) of his Combat Skill Levels into DCV.

Against a single opponent, Jiu Xing fights more cautiously, parrying and dodging for at least a few Phases so he can evaluate his foe's skills. Once he's got a feel for his opponent, he changes tactics, attacking all-out if he thinks his foe is less skilled than he. Against enemies of equal or greater skill, he tries to fight in such a way as to confuse his opponent, switching rapidly among his selection of sword stances and techniques and trying to not settle on any one style. He never stands still in combat, but uses his Floating Sword, Flying Sword, and Springing Sword techniques to move about the battlefield. If seriously outmatched, Jiu Xing flees, typically by using his Springing Sword technique to quickly escape the battlefield.

Jiu Xing's Riveting Sword technique is a last-ditch maneuver. Since it requires him to

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hurl his sword away, he only use it if he has another sword handy, he feels unthreatened by his opponent, needs to bring down an escaping foe, or needs a distraction so he can make his escape.

Campaign Use: Reminiscent of characters seen in the films *Butterfly And Sword*, *Swordsman I*, and *Swordsman II* (among others), Jiu Xing is a natural for inclusion in a Big Trouble In Ancient China campaign. With a few changes, he works well in just about any sort of Wuxia game; with a few more changes, he could become a martial arts superhero in a *Champions* game, or an immortal elven warrior in *Fantasy Hero*.

If Jiu Xing is too powerful for your game, consider replacing most of his Taiji Mountain Sword Techniques with a Variable Advantage for his *wen jen*, remove some of his Martial Maneuvers, and get rid of his Deactivation Strike. If he's not tough enough, give him more Combat Skill Levels.

Jiu Xing would never Hunt a hero, unless he was somehow tricked into thinking that hero worked for Tai-Sheng Zeng. He's already got enough to do harassing and robbing the evil eunuch's men.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> JIU XING PLOT SEEDS

Tai-Sheng Zeng plants false clues that make it look like the PCs work for him. Now Jiu Xing is Hunting them, distracting both him and them while Zeng can work his evil unhindered. The bandit and the heroes must find out what's really going on and team up to stop the evil eunuch.

While recovering from a bad wound, Jiu Xing has a fevered dream of a powerful magical weapon hidden in some caves in the mountains to the north. He asks the PCs to help him recover the blade; surely, with such a weapon, he cannot fail to stop Tai-Sheng Zeng!

Jiu Xing turns evil, becoming a true bandit. He loots, pillages, and murders his way across the province, evading all attempts to stop him. Then he shows up in the PCs' village one day and seems surprised when everyone flees from him. What's going on?

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Jiu Xing is fairly young, with long, shaggy black hair, and brown eyes. He stands 5'8" tall, with a lean but muscular build, and always seems to need a shave. He dresses in worn clothing — a tunic and sash, loose trousers, and leather boots — in a style reminiscent of Mongolian fashions of northern China. A long, thin, *wen jen* (sword) hangs from his sash, while on his back he carries a quiver of arrows and a *kun gen* (bow).

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WONG FEI HONG

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH Damage [2]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
25	CON	30	14-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
16	COM	3	12-	
10	PD	5		Total: 10 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	3		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
6	SPD	24		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	0		
50	END	0		
40	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 184

Movement: Flight: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 12"/24"
 Running: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

55 *Kung Fu Techniques:* Multipower, 55-point reserve
 2u 1) *Catch This!:* Energy Blast 8d6; OIF (objects of opportunity; -1/2), Range Based On STR (-1/4) 4
 3u 2) *Cross Fist:* HA +11d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), Reduced Penetration (-1/4), Separate Attack Rolls Required (-1/4) 5
 3u 3) *No Shadow Kick:* HA +4d6, Autofire (10 shots; +1), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/2); All Shots Versus Same Target (-1/4), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 5
 3u 4) *Sweep Kick:* HA +4d6, Area Of Effect Nonselective (2" Radius; +3/4), Personal Immunity (+1/4); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 4
 2u 5) *Twin Palm Strike:* HA +4d6, Double Knockback (+3/4); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2) 6
 22 *Umbrella:* Multipower, 45-point reserve, all OAF (-1)
 1u 1) *Closed Umbrella:* HA +3d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), OAF (-1) 0
 2u 2) *Open Umbrella:* Missile Deflection (arrows/projectiles), Ranged (adjacent hexes, +1/2); OAF (-1) **plus** +6 OCV; OAF (-1) 0
 1u 3) *Open Umbrella:* +3 DCV; OAF (-1) 0
 24 *Drunken Boxing:* Aid STR, CON, PD, STUN 2d6, Can Add Maximum of 20 Points, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute, +1/4), Variable Effect (+1); Gestures (must drink; -1/4), OIF (alcohol of opportunity; -1/2) Self Only (-1/2) 0

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Martial Arts: Drunken Boxing and Hung Boxing

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
4	Arm Sweep Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
4	Backfist/Snap Kick	+2	+0	8d6 Strike	
5	Crescent Kick Block	+1	+3	Block, Abort	
4	Disarm-1	+1	40 STR Disarm		
4	Dodge —	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort		
5	Flying Dodge —	+4	Dodge All Attacks, Abort, Full Move		
5	Flying Kick	+2	-1	10d6 Strike	
3	Joint Lock	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 40 STR to Hold On	
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	7d6; Target Falls	
4	Punch/Side Kick	+0	+2	8d6 Strike	
4	Sand Palm	+0	+0	45 STR Shove	
5	Spin Kick	-2	+1	10d6 Strike	
3	Throw +0	+1	6d6 + v/5; Target Falls		
4	+1 Damage Class (already added in)				
4	Use Art with Blades, Chain Weapons, Staff, Umbrella				
11	<i>Master Of Kung Fu:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 50%; Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-1/4), STUN Only (-1/2) 0				
10	<i>Arrow Catching:</i> Missile Deflection (arrows/projectiles) 0				
8	<i>Incredible Balance:</i> Flight 6"; Only If In Contact With A Level Surface (-1/2) 1				
5	<i>Strong Leaper:</i> Leaping +5" (10" forward, 5" upward) 1				
2	<i>Wall Spring:</i> Leaping +2" (12" forward, 6" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Requires A Half Move (-1/2) 0				
4	<i>Nimble Feet:</i> Extra Limbs (2), Inherent (+1/4); No Fine Manipulation (-1/2) 0				

Perks

25	Followers: 4 75-Base Point students
8	Reputation: Wong Fei Hong, master of kung fu and medicine (in the Canton area) +4/+4d6

Talents

22	<i>Master Of Kung Fu:</i> Danger Sense (sense, out of combat) 13-
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Skills

10	<i>Signature Move:</i> +5 OCV with No Shadow Kick
20	+4 Hand-To-Hand
20	+2 Overall
7	Acrobatics 16-
3	Acting 15-
2	AK: Canton 11-
2	AK: Fu-Shan 11-
5	Analyze Style 14-

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5	Breakfall 15-
3	Bureaucratics 15-
3	Climbing 14-
3	Contortionist 14-
10	Defense Maneuver IV
3	High Society 15-
3	Oratory 15-
5	Paramedic 14-
5	Shadowing 14-
3	Sleight Of Hand 14-
3	Stealth 14-
5	WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Handguns, Off Hand, Thrown Sword
3	Jack Of All Trades
2	1) PS: Calligraphy 14-
2	2) PS: Drumming 14-
5	3) PS: Doctor 16-
2	4) PS: Lion Dancing 14-
2	5) PS: Sifu 15-
3	Scholar
3	1) KS: Chinese Healing 14-
2	2) KS: Chinese Philosophy 13-
2	3) KS: Herbs And Herbal Remedies 13-
2	4) KS: Hung Boxing 13-
2	5) KS: The Martial World 13-
3	6) KS: Medicine 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 427

Total Cost: 611

300+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
20	DNPC: Aunt Yee/Siu-Qun (fiancée) 14- (Normal)
10	DNPC: Students (Buckteeth So, Clubfoot, Leung Fu, and Porky Lang, who are always getting into trouble) 11- (Less Powerful)
15	Psychological Limitation: A Stern Taskmaster, Not One For Frivolity (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Calm And Philosophical, A Proper Chinese Gentleman (Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Chinese Patriot, Wishes What Is Best For China And Its People (Very Common, Strong)
5	Psychological Limitation: Traditionalist, Has Limited Use For The West And Its Ways (Uncommon, Moderate)
0	Psychological Limitation: Loves Aunt Yee/Siu-Qun (Common, Strong)
216	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 611

Background/History: Wong Fei Hong is China's greatest and best-known martial arts master. Born in the province of Canton in 1847, his father was Wong Kay Ying, a master of Hung Kuen ("flower fist"), and one of the Ten Tigers of Canton, a group of warriors dedicated to the ideals of chivalry and justice. For reasons known only to himself, Wong Kay Ying refused to instruct his son in the art of Kung Fu, forcing the young Fei Hong to seek training from his father's master, one Luk Ah Choy. In due time, the young Fei Hong became a master of Hung Kuen (also known as Hung Boxing or Hung Gar), as well as such techniques as drunken boxing, the No Shadow Kick, and lion dancing.

As he grew older, Fei Hong learned the arts of medicine, eventually becoming a respected doctor. He continued his training in the martial arts as well, and eventually opened a school where he could teach his students and treat patients. The most famous of these students was Lam Sai Wing, also known as "The Magnificent Butcher." After Fei Hong's death in 1924, Lam Sai Wing moved to Hong Kong, where he taught Hung Kuen to a new generation of students. In time, these students would work in the Hong Kong film industry, eventually coming full circle and portraying the lives of Wong Fei Hong and Lam Sai Wing on the screen.

The Wong Fei Hong depicted here (not a historical representation, but a more idealized version of the man, as seen in many movies) is in his early thirties. He lives during a period when various foreign powers (such as England, France, and the United States) are pressuring China for expanded trade rights and a greater influence in Chinese affairs. It's a violent and lawless time, when foreigners and natives alike oppress and exploit the poor Chinese to make themselves wealthy. Wong Fei Hong fights against these evils, assisted by his many faithful companions: the beautiful Aunt Yee (also known as Aunt 13 or Siu-Qun), who spent several years abroad attending school in England, and eventually becomes his wife; Buckteeth So, a bespectacled young man recently returned from America; Clubfoot, a hunchbacked warrior whose loyalty matches his great strength; Leung Fu, his best student; and Porky Lang, a former butcher.

Personality/Motivation: First and foremost, Wong Fei Hong is a proper Chinese gentleman. He shows respect for his elders, doesn't allow himself to become overly emotional, and firmly adheres to certain forms of Confucian philosophy. Although he has a sense of humor, he has little time for pointless jokes, and feels any time spent playing around could be better spent in training or learning. He does not tolerate foolishness on the part of his students, and quickly disciplines anyone who gets out of line. But he's also protective of his students, and comes to the aid of any who find themselves in trouble not of their own doing.

The most powerful aspect of Wong Fei Hong's character is his patriotism. A strong proponent of justice, he refuses to tolerate oppression and disorder. He does what he can to preserve order in a chaotic time. He's more than willing to fight for the honor of China, as well as to preserve her national identity and heritage. He counts as enemies of China not only those Western powers who greedily consume the country's wealth, but also any Chinese who wish to disrupt and destroy the government, or who prey on other Chinese. Although he does not care for the way the Western powers try to run roughshod over China and her customs, he's not

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xenophobic; he's willing to cooperate with the West, even if he finds little useful in what it has to offer.

Quote: “We have to strengthen ourselves, so as to have a better future!”

Powers/Tactics: Wong Fei Hong has powerful kung fu, and can perform many astounding feats of skill. With his incredible sense of balance, he can fight while standing atop such surfaces as piles of shipping crates, narrow support timbers, the heads and shoulders of a crowd, and even decorative vases. He can easily jump to (or from) the top of a tall building, and when he couples this with his ability to spring from nearby objects, he can literally bounce around a battlefield, making it hard for a foe to reach him.

Although he doesn't seek out fights, Fei Hong readily defends himself if necessary. In a one-on-one fight, he starts out by blocking, so he can examine his foe's fighting style and technique before going on the offensive. Once he switches to attacks, Fei Hong is relentless, attempting to put down his foe quickly and efficiently, without grandstanding or pointless exhibitions of his skill. If a foe can withstand his other techniques, Fei Hong uses his No Shadow Kick, a rapid-fire kick of great power.

When fighting multiple foes, Fei Hong puts his Combat Skill Levels in DCV and utilizes his Sweep Kick to put down as many foes in as short a period of time as he can. If tightly pressed, he leaps to a more defensible position before renewing his assault.

In any combat, Fei Hong usually prefers to disable, rather than kill, his enemy. He often starts with a Disarm before attacking with a Throw or Legsweep. He frequently uses his Shove or Twin Palm technique to push one opponent back into a crowd, causing confusion as his enemies tumble over each other.

Although Wong Fei Hong knows the Drunken Boxing technique, he no longer practices it. He promised his father a long time ago that he would not drink (a prime component of Drunken Boxing), since doing so could easily cause Fei Hong to injure someone unknowingly. If hard-pressed, Fei Hong might resort to this technique, although the danger would have to be great indeed.

Campaign Use: Wong Fei Hong is the Chinese equivalent of Robin Hood, Superman, and Captain America all rolled into one. Naturally, he works best in a Last Heroes In China campaign, but you can easily adapt him for a Big Trouble In Ancient China game, or even for other time periods.

Wong Fei Hong makes a good master or mentor for PCs — someone who trains and inspires them. He'll teach them what they need to know, and may even come to their aid if they get into serious trouble, but he won't bail them out most of the time. He wants his students to be self-reliant, not to use him as a “crutch” when things get tough.

You shouldn't adjust Wong Fei Hong's power level. His character sheet is intended as a reasonably accurate representation of the “romantic” view of him, so you should keep it as-is.

Wong Fei Hong doesn't Hunt people; it's not in his nature. His efforts to support China may bring him into repeated conflict with particular villains, but he's not a vigilante.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **WONG FEI HONG PLOT SEEDS**

Acting due to pressure from the French, Chinese authorities arrest Fei Hong's students, claiming they were part of some plot to destroy the French Embassy. Fei Hong has to find a way to free them and clear their names before they're executed; he'll need the PCs' help.

A wicked magistrate holds Aunt Yee hostage, claiming he'll kill her if Fei Hong doesn't obey his commands. Fei Hong can't try to free her without tipping off the magistrate, who has him watched like a hawk 24 hours a day. He secretly gets word to the PCs, asking them to rescue her while he lures Fei Hong's agents away from his compound.

Wong Fei Hong and Aunt Yee finally decide to get married. His enemies, naturally, decide to interrupt the ceremony and kill him. The PCs, his friends, have to stop this plot without letting word of it leak out to Fei Hong.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Wong Fei Hong, a Chinese man in his late twenties, is of average height, with a trim, but strong, build. His hair, worn in the standard Manchu style of a long pigtail, is black, while his eyes are a dark brown. He dresses in the standard fashion of a Chinese gentlemen: a long tunic, sash, trousers, white socks, and slippers.

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TAI-SHENG ZENG

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3200 kg; 7d6 Hand-To-Hand damage [3]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
25	BODY	30	14-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
10	COM	0	11-	
12	PD	5	Total: 12 PD (0 rPD)	
11	ED	5	Total: 11 ED (0 rED)	
6	SPD	26	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
13	REC	0		
60	END	0		
50	STUN	2	Total Characteristics Cost: 227	

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
 Leaping: 14"/28"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

120	Martial Arts Stances And Techniques: Multipower, 120-point reserve			
12u	1) <i>Empty Fist Stance:</i>	Energy Blast 12d6, Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible; +1)		
	12			
6u	2) <i>Tribute To The Heavens Stance:</i>	Energy Blast 9d6, Indirect (always comes from the sky; +1/4), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible; +1); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Gestures (must pull down energy from the sky with both hands; -1/4)10		
4u	3) <i>Flick Attack:</i>	RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Invisible To Hearing Group (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4); OIF (available weapon and any appropriate object of opportunity; -1/2)	3	
6u	4) <i>Sword Energy:</i>	RKA 4d6, Area of Effect (24" Line; +1); OIF (weapon of opportunity; -1/2), No Range (-1/2)	12	
5u	5) <i>Essence Absorbing Stance:</i>	Transfer 4d6 (target's BODY, END, or STUN to character's BODY, END, or STUN), Can Transfer Maximum Of 80 Points, Variable Effect (+1/4); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Must Follow Grab (-1/2)	11	
1u	6) <i>Armor-Shredding Strike:</i>	Dispel Armor 12d6; OIF (sword of opportunity; -1/2), Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), No Range (-1/2)	6	
24	<i>Wen Jen:</i>	HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1)	plus	
+1	OCV; OAF (-1)	0		
	Martial Arts: The Sword of the Insurmountable Storm			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	Dance Of The Swift Wind	+1	+0	Weapon +v/5; Full Move

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5	Fist Of The Whirlwind	+2	-2	Weapon +4 DC Strike, Half-Move Required
4	Leaves In The Wind	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
4	Push Against The Wind	+1	+0	Bind, 45 STR
4	Reed In The Wind	+2	+2	Block; Abort
5	Swaying Of The Wind	+0	+4	Dodge All Attacks, Abort; Full Move
5	Thunderous Strike	-2	+1	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Wind's Gentle Caress	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
4	Wind Takes Away	-1	+1	Disarm; 45 STR to Disarm
2	Use Art Barehanded, with Blades			
24	<i>Master Of His Ch'i</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-1/4)			
24	<i>Grass Running Stance</i> : Flight 12", Invisible To Sight Group (+1/2), Only Along Reasonably Horizontal Surfaces (-1/2)	2		
4	<i>Strong Runner</i> : Running +2" (Total 8")	2		
7	<i>Cricket Stance</i> : Leaping +7" (14" forward, 7" upward)	2		
23	<i>Master Of His Ch'i</i> : Detect <i>Ch'i</i> 13-, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Discriminatory, Sense, Telescopic (+8 versus Range Modifier)	0		

Perks

40	Followers: 250 0 Base Point soldiers
5	Fringe Benefit: Imperial Magistrate

Talents

22	<i>Master of His Ch'i</i> : Danger Sense (sense, out of combat) 13-
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Skills

32	+4 With All Combat
12	+4 versus Range Modifier with All Attacks
3	Acrobatics 14-
3	Analyze Style 13-
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Bribery 15-
3	Bureaucratics 15-
3	Conversation 15-
3	Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons)14-
3	High Society 15-
3	Interrogation 15-
3	KS: Law 13-
3	KS: Literature 13-
2	KS: Martial World 11-
1	Language: Mandarin (literacy with native language)
3	Oratory 15-
3	Persuasion 15-

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- 3 PS: Calligraphy 14-
- 3 PS: Imperial Governor 15-
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 6 WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 474

Total Cost: 701

300+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 10 Hunted: Jiu Xing 8- (As Pow)
- 10 Hunted: The Imperial Court 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Corrupt And Greedy (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Disdain For Such Weak Emotions As Compassion And Love (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Despises Women, Considers Them An Obstacle In The Pursuit Of True Power (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vow Of Duty To The Emperor (Very Common, Moderate)
- 15 Reputation: corrupt and cruel Imperial Governor (Extreme) 11-
- 10 Social Limitation: Eunuch (Frequent, Minor)
- 281 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 701

Background/History: Born to poor parents, Tai-Sheng Zeng was sold to the Imperial Court at a very young age. He was made into a eunuch soon after, and grew up in the servant's quarters of the Emperor's palace. As time passed, Tai-Sheng Zeng realized the court of the Emperor was full of corruption, and the path to true power and mastery of one's fate lay in understanding the arts of bribery, corruption, and graft. Having learned this lesson well, Tai-Sheng Zeng quickly rose within the hierarchy of the eunuchs. He ruthlessly exploited underlings while doing his best to undermine those of higher rank than himself.

Tai-Sheng Zeng's bid for power was quite successful, and he was rewarded with an appointment to an Imperial magistracy. He applied the lessons learned in the Imperial Court to his practice of law, and became exceedingly wealthy thanks to a constant stream of bribes and gifts. He also consolidated his power, removing troublesome (and honest) scholars and law officers from their positions and surrounding himself with loyal sycophants who were more than willing to curry official favor by following his commands.

Eventually, his record as a dedicated and loyal magistrate earned him an appointment to the governorship of certain territories in northern China. He was commanded to pacify the region by eliminating the troublemakers, bandits, and barbarians plaguing it. However, his first official

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act was to outlaw and eliminate the Taiji Mountain Sword School, a school of swordsmen who refused to pay him the proper bribes and incentives. His second act was to increase taxes, skimming the extra off for himself. His third was to destroy the bandit gangs, taking their stolen wealth for his own, and then using his own troops to take their place. This brought him more wealth, but also gave him a reason to write to the Imperial capital requesting more funds, troops, and arms.

The only flaw in Tai-Sheng Zeng's plan is a young man named Jiu Xing (page ???). A survivor of the Taiji Mountain massacre, Jiu Xing has dedicated himself to eliminating Tai-Sheng Zeng and overthrowing his corrupt rule. Tai-Sheng Zeng's troops have yet to catch the elusive bandit. If they don't do so soon, Tai-Sheng Zeng will probably see to Jiu Xing's demise personally.

Personality/Motivation: Tai-Sheng Zeng doesn't like anyone but himself. His life in the Imperial Court showed him that concepts such as friendship, love, and compassion were signs of weakness; he has nothing for disdain for such ideas, and despises those who espouse them. He prefers to deal from a position of strength, crushing those who dare to get out of line and disturb the order he has imposed on the provinces under his rule. He couples this attitude with his vow of service to the Emperor to create the perfect excuse for his oppressive taxes, brutal police tactics, and general abuse of the judicial process.

Quote: "Compassion and love are emotions for the weak. True strength is found in ruthlessness and a willingness to do that which others fear!"

Powers/Tactics: Tai-Sheng Zeng is not only a proud and cruel Imperial governor, but also a terrifyingly skilled swordsman, trained in a variety of unusual and unique martial arts techniques. His mastery of his *ch'i* is phenomenal, allowing him to project powerful blasts of invisible force. He also absorbs *ch'i* from living things; his Essence Absorbing Stance can easily kill an unfortunate victim (he sometimes uses it on prisoners.). He can use a sword to fling small objects with the force of an arrow, project a surge of sword energy through the blade, or shred an opponent's armor in a few quick strokes.

In battle, Tai-Sheng Zeng prefers to face his opponents with sword in hand. He tends to go for the quick kill, favoring his Dance Of The Swift Wind, Fist Of The Whirlwind, or Leaves In The Wind sword stances above all others. He's not above gloating over the fate of his opponents, and if he feels he's far more skilled than his opponent, he often disarms his foe, then slowly cuts him to pieces using the Wind's Gentle Caress stance.

Tai-Sheng Zeng prefers to keep his *ch'i* powers hidden. He only uses them if he feels outnumbered or at an extreme disadvantage. When he unleashes them, he targets his most powerful foes first, usually using his Empty Fist Stance to batter them senseless. He often employs his Tribute To The Heavens Stance to wreck buildings, literally bringing the house down on his opponents. If wounded, or at a severe disadvantage, Tai-Sheng Zeng flees, using his Cricket Stance to leap away or his Grass Running Stance to escape across a body of water or through the branches of a forest.

Campaign Use: Tai-Sheng Zeng is a character reminiscent of evil eunuchs seen in a multitude

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of films, such as *Dragon Inn*, *Swordsman I*, and *Tai Chi Master*. He makes an excellent master villain for a Big Trouble In Ancient China campaign, or a long-term foe for a group of heroic Chinese knights. It wouldn't take much work to adapt him to a modern-day campaign (as a corrupt Communist Chinese official) or a *Fantasy Hero* game (as a strange wizard, perhaps).

If Tai-Sheng Zeng is too powerful for your PCs, reduce his STR to 25, CON to 25, and SPD to 5, and remove two of his Multipower slots about three or four Martial Maneuvers. If he's not tough enough, boost his DEX to 30 and SPD to 7, and add Multipower slots or other special abilities if necessary.

Tai-Sheng Zeng Hunts any hero who inconveniences him, provided he doesn't have bigger fish to fry at the time. However, he rarely gets involved with the Hunt personally, preferring to delegate the responsibility to his underlings and soldiers. Only those heroes who avoid his forces merit his own wrath.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> TAI-SHENG ZENG PLOT SEEDS

Tai-Sheng Zeng decides to rid himself of that meddling Jiu Xing once and for all. He hires the PCs to track the bandit down and kill him, if necessary manufacturing "evidence" that Jiu is an evil murderer and robber.

After a long and desperate struggle, the PCs and their allies kill Tai-Sheng Zeng! The evil eunuch is no more, and the province is freed from his grasp... at least until he returns from the dead as a *ch'i*-powered vampiric creature with a thirst for human souls!

A kindly old scholar hires the PCs to recover some ancient scrolls. After they succeed and deliver the goods, they discover the scholar is actually Tai-Sheng Zeng's puppet — and he now knows the secret techniques written on the scrolls! They've got to find a way to get the scrolls back so Tai-Sheng Zeng can't use his new powers anymore.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Tai-Sheng Zeng is in his mid-fifties, although one wouldn't know it from his physical capabilities. As a eunuch, he has an unusually round, clean-shaven face, and speaks with a high-pitched voice. He keeps his thick, greyish-white hair cropped close to his skull; his dark, piercing eyes often scowl at those who displease him. Befitting an official of the Imperial court, Tai-Sheng Zeng dresses in formal robes of richly adorned silk and brocade. However, he is no fool, and does not wear clothing that overly hinders him (since assassins can strike at any time). At his side he wears a *wen jen* set with gems in a silk-wrapped sheath.

<2> VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS

Here are two sample characters for Video Game martial arts campaigns.

MEOW YEN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	STR	13	14-	Lift 600 kg; 4 1/2d6 HTH damage [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	26	14-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 14-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
12	PD	7	Total: 12 PD (0 rPD)	
10	ED	5	Total: 10 ED (0 rED)	
5	SPD	16	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	0		
46	END	0		
40	STUN	3	Total Characteristics Cost: 150	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 9"/18"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
	Martial Arts: Narr'thurrr ("Feline Kickboxing")	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	Arm Sweep Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
5	Crescent Kick Block	+1 +3 Block, Abort
3	Footsweep	+2 -1 7 1/2d6 Strike; Target Falls
4	Elbow/Knee Strike; Front/Low Kick	+0 +2 8 1/2d6 Strike
5	Jab	+1 +3 6 1/2d6 Strike
5	Roundhouse/Side Kick	-2 +1 10 1/2d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)	
33	<i>Narr'thurrr Techniques:</i> Multipower, 50-point reserve; all Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2)	
3u	1) <i>Double Kick:</i> HA +10d6; Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Reduced Penetration (-1/4)	5
2u	2) <i>Power Kick:</i> HA +5d6, Double Knockback (+3/4); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2)	8
2u	3) <i>Rapid Kick:</i> HA +5d6, Autofire (5 shots; +1/2), Penetrating (+1/2); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), All Shots Versus Same Target (-1/4)	5
8	<i>Feline Claws:</i> HKA 1/2d6, 0 END (+1/2); Reduced Penetration (-1/4), Restrained (-	

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1/2)	0	
6	<i>Inner Focus:</i>	Mental Defense (10 points total) 0
4	<i>Feline Legs:</i>	Running +2" (8" total) 1
4	<i>Felines Legs:</i>	Leaping +4" (9" forward, 5" upward) 1
6	<i>Feline Senses:</i>	+2 PER With All Sense Groups 0
Perks		
2	Reputation:	World Champion (in the Martial World) +2/+2d6
Talents		
3	Lightsleep	
Skills		
20	+4 Hand-To-Hand	
4	+2 OCV with Elbow/Knee Strike; Front/Low Kick	
3	Acrobatics	14-
3	AK: Illithorn Plains	12-
7	Analyze	14-
3	Breakfall	14-
3	CK: City-State of Devinor	12-
3	Climbing	14-
2	KS: Fighting Styles Of The Known World	11-
5	KS: Narr'thurrr	14-
3	KS: The Martial World	12-
4	Language: Common Tongue (idiomatic; Feline is native)	
3	PS: Narr'thurrr Champion	12-
3	SS: Narr'thurrr	12-
3	Streetwise	13-
2	Survival (Tropical Plains)	12-
3	Tracking	12-
2	WF: Common Melee Weapons	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 183

Total Cost: 333

200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Feline (Concealable)
10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
10	Hunted: assorted challengers to his title 8- (As Pow)
5	Hunted: other martial artists of note 11- (As Pow, Watching)
20	Psychological Limitation: Dedicated Warrior (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Honorable (Common, Strong)

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- 10 Psychological Limitation: Stoic And Taciturn (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Dislikes Large Crowds And Enclosed Areas (Uncommon, Moderate)
- 15 Reputation: World Champion, 14-
- 10 Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Minor)
- 38 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 333

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **FELINE FEATURES**

Meow Yen has taken the Distinctive Feature *Feline* (the name of his race) because he lives in a mostly human city. If he returned to his village in the Illithorn Plains, he'd lose the Disadvantage. On the other hand, John Wa the Monkey King (page ???) doesn't have Distinctive Features because he lives in an anthromorphic universe where a humanoid monkey (and other such animals) is fairly commonplace. Similarly, Kayli the Destroyer (page ???) doesn't have Distinctive Features because she's from a science fiction setting where there are lots of weird-looking aliens running around.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Background/History: Meow Yen was born in a small village on the Illithorn Plains, where like many male Feline he learned to hunt and track game. He was also taught the basics of Narr'thurrr, a form of kickboxing traditionally taught to all Feline. He was an apt pupil, and quickly rose to become the top fighter of his village. Soon after, his renown spread across the Illithorn Plains, and he began to compete in matches against fighters from other villages. Although he wasn't unbeatable, he always displayed great skill and tenacity, so that the elders looked on even his losses as proof of his strength and skill. Eventually, word of his exploits reached the ears of the Fighting Masters of Devinor, and Meow Yen was called to the great City-State to fight in the next tournament.

After winning his first tournament in Devinor, Meow Yen became the Master of Devinor's Champion, whose sole purpose was to travel from tourney to tourney and win fame and renown for himself and, more importantly, Devinor. This exhilarating experience allowed him to travel to new places and fight against new opponents and new styles. After several years of competing, he won the most prestigious tournament, the Grandmaster of the Fist championship, and was declared the World Champion.

Meow Yen has now returned to Devinor to train and further perfect his skills. He plans to defend his title in the next Grandmaster of the Fist tourney, and hopes that when the time comes for him to retire from the ring he will do so undefeated.

Personality/Motivation: Meow Yen lives for one thing — the fight. Although he doesn't seek out or start fights, there is nothing he likes better than stepping into the ring to battle a worthy foe. He dedicates most of his waking hours to training, hoping to hone his skills to the point

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where he won't even have to think about reacting to an attack... he simply will.

As part of his training, Meow Yen avoids many luxuries, including strong drink, disreputable women, and frivolous pastimes. He has become something of an ascetic, living a sparse existence to harden his body and strengthen his mind.

In the ring and out, Meow Yen holds himself to a code of honorable conduct — he doesn't just want to win, he wants to demonstrate the strength of his style, his race, and himself. He never fights dishonorably or takes unfair advantage of his foes, and at times has refused to fight warriors obviously weaker than he. But when facing warriors who seem capable of standing against him, he fights without restraint or quarter (though he usually gives a beaten fighter the chance to surrender, only ending the fight in a knockout if he must).

Recently, Meow Yen has begun to study some of the styles practiced by other races. Although he doesn't expect to incorporate any of these styles into his own, he believes knowing about them helps him defend against them. He has also received some requests to teach Narr'thurrrn, but has turned them down — not only because teaching would distract him from his training schedule, but because he has yet to find a worthy student.

Quote: “I have mastered my art, my mind, my body, and myself. I have perfected my style; my offense is unstoppable, my defense unbreakable. As long as I remember this, I will never know defeat.”

Powers/Tactics: Meow Yen lives up to the creed of “the best defense is a good offense.” He uses a strong series of attacks to keep opponents from responding in kind — as he has often said, “My style is impetuous.” Of course, a series of rapid attacks isn't enough to fluster every opponent, and when someone stands up to his first assault, he switches to a combination of Arm Sweeps and Crescent Kick Blocks to protect himself, responding with a rapid Elbow or Knee Strike when he can get inside his opponent's defenses.

When fighting, Meow Yen tends to stick with normal Narr'thurrrn maneuvers, waiting until he has determined his opponent's level of fighting ability before unleashing any of his more specialized techniques. He often uses the Double Kick on Stunned opponents as a finishing move, while the Power Kick is a defensive measure, meant to give him some breathing room (if he needs it). He uses his Rapid Kick against foes who can withstand the effects of his other attacks.

Thanks to his triumph in the Grandmaster tournament, Meow Yen has become well-known for his fighting prowess. Sometimes this helps him impress people; at other times it attracts arrogant challengers who think they can defeat him.

Campaign Use: Meow Yen is typical of the student warrior types often seen in video fighting games. He thinks only of perfecting his art (and thus, himself); the PCs must either train hard to defeat him, or become his friend to receive training from him.

As presented, Meow Yen has a neutral outlook — he's not a bully and a braggart, but has no interest in performing altruistic deeds. If you want a more dynamic NPC, make him a villain (he becomes arrogant and cruel, a victim of his own success) or a hero (he opens up a bit and starts teaching and helping others).

To make Meow Yen more powerful, give him more Narr'thurrrn maneuvers and special

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techniques — as his old ones become well-known, he develops new ones to give him an edge in the ring. If he's too tough, reduce his Characteristics a little, and perhaps get rid of one or more special techniques.

Meow Yen doesn't Hunt heroes; he's too busy training and fighting. He'll work out his dislike of others in the ring, if necessary.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MEOW YIN PLOT SEEDS**

When Meow Yin suddenly disappears, the Master of Devinor hires the PCs to find him. Who kidnapped him, and why?... or was it really a kidnapping at all?

Due to a strange magical fluctuation, Meow Yin gets sent to modern-day Earth. How will he react to this bizarre new world... and how will it react to him? Can the PCs find a way to send him home?

While journeying to a tournament in a distant city, Meow Yin and the PCs are stranded in an odd valley by a freak blizzard. They must work together to find out what's going on and fight their way to freedom.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Meow Yen stands 5'10" and weighs 160 pounds, with a lean, well-muscled build. Like all Feline, his body is covered with a fine coat of fur, which in his case is a tawny color, while his dark brown hair is cropped off cleanly at the shoulders and restrained with a white headband. Since he spends most of his time training, he normally dresses in a loose pair of shorts and a thick cloth belt. Leather bracers support his wrists and ankles, while he wraps his hands and feet in strips of white cloth.

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MIDNITE MAID

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 Hand-To-Hand Damage [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	26	14-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3 1/2d6
18	COM	4	13-	
12	PD	8	Total: 12 PD (0 rPD)	
10	ED	5	Total: 10 ED (0 rED)	
6	SPD	26	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
10	REC	2		
46	END	0		
35	STUN	2	Total Characteristics Cost: 155	

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
Leaping: 8"/16"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

60 **Ch'i Energy:** Multipower, 75-point reserve; all Incantations (-1/4)
3u 1) *Light Of The Rising Sun Fist:* Energy Blast 12d6; Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4), Reduced By Range (-1/4) 6
2u 2) *New Moon Rises Kick:* HA +6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +1/4); Incantations (-1/4), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 9
3u 3) *Crescent Moon Kick:* Flight 14"; Incantations (-1/4), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4), Level Flight Only (-1/2), Straight Line Flight Only (-1/2) **plus** HA +5d6, Autofire (5 shots; +1/2); Incantations (-1/4), Linked (-1/4), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 13
2u 4) *Shooting Star Fist:* Leaping +10" (14" forwards, 7" upward); Incantations (-1/4), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4) **plus** HA +6d6; Linked (-1/4), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 5
3u 5) *Moon Devours The Sun:* HA +6d6, Autofire (10 shots; +1), Penetrating (+1/2); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Incantations (-1/2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 30

Martial Arts: Shotokan Karate

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Backroll Throw	+2	+1	6d6 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls
4	Block +2	+2		Block; Abort
4	Dodge +0	+5		Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
3	Footsweep	+2	-1	7d6 Strike; Target Falls
4	Punch +0	+2		8d6 Strike
5	Side Kick	+1	-2	10d6 Strike
4	Snap Kick	+2	+0	8d6 Strike

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- 5 Spin Kick -2 +1 10d6 Strike
- 8 +2 Damage Classes (already added in)
- 1 *Full Contact Karate Gloves And Forearm Guards*: Armor (2 PD/2 ED); 0 DEF Versus Guns (-1/2), Activation Roll 8- or Locations 6-7 (-2), OIF (-1/2) 0
- 2 *Full Contact Karate Gloves And Forearm Guards*: +4 PD/+4 ED; Activation Roll 8- or Locations 6-7 (-2), OIF (-1/2)0
- 5 *Ch'i Harmony*: Energy Damage Reduction, Normal, 25%; Only Works Against *Ch'i* Attacks (-1) 0
- 5 *Ch'i Harmony*: Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 25%; HTH Attacks Only (-1/4), Must Be Aware Of Attack (-1/4), STUN Only (-1/2)0
- 4 *Strong Leaper*: Leaping +4" (8" forward, 4" upward) 1
- 4 *Strong Runner*: Running +2" (8" total) 2

Perks

- 2 Contact: Sensei 11-
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Black Belt

Talents

- 17 *Genshin*: Danger Sense (in combat, sense) 13-

Skills

- 10 +2 Hand-To-Hand
- 2 *Desperation Move*: +4 OCV with Moon Devours The Sun; Costs Endurance (-1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (x6 END; -2 1/2) 6
- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 2 AK: Los Angeles 11-
- 3 Analyze Style 13-
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 3 Climbing 14-
- 2 KS: Acupuncture/Japanese Healing Techniques 11-
- 2 KS: Martial World 11-
- 3 KS: Shotokan Karate 13-
- 2 Language: Japanese (fluent conversation; English is native)
- 3 Paramedic 13-
- 1 PS: Doctor 8-
- 3 PS: Waitress 13-
- 2 SS: Shotokan Karate 11-
- 2 SS: Sports Medicine 11-
- 3 Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 203

Total Cost: 358

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200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Strong Source Of *Ch'i* Energy (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 DNPC: Sensei 14- (Less Pow)
- 15 Enraged if innocents harmed or threatened 11- / 11-
- 15 Hunted: Mortimer Hibiki (The Master Ninja) 11- (As Pow)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Committed To Constant Self-Improvement; Likes To Test Her Skills, Abilities And Powers (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Strong Desire To Help Those In Need (Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Martial arts prodigy (limited group: the Martial World), 11-
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jessica Golden) (Frequently, Major)
- 23 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 358

Background/History: Jessica Golden knelt on the floor of the dojo and stared at the Shinto shrine on the far wall. Sensei had told her to meditate, and she had always found it easy to lose herself in contemplation of the shrine's many objects.

"Jessica?" Sensei asked in a quiet voice, "What troubles you so?"

"My life," she responded tiredly. "It seems like such a waste."

"And why is that?"

Still staring at the shrine, Jessica gestured at herself. "Look at me, Sensei! If I'm not here, I'm being a waitress, and if I'm not working, I'm in school. Why? For what purpose? I don't seem to be getting anywhere... all I do is go in circles, one day like the next."

"Tell me, student; what is more important? One's destination, or the journey one takes to get there?"

Oops. Figures he would go Zen on her at a time like this. Well... she wouldn't take the easy way out and give him some flippant half-assed answer like some students. She'd give this some thought and say something. Something... well, if not profound, then at least intelligent.

She knew what she wanted to do once she graduated college. She wanted to go into physical therapy, helping injured people regain the use of their limbs. She'd been told it was difficult work, and that not all patients would succeed... but at least she had to try.

Sounded like a Yoda-ism. Hmmph... do or do not, there is no try....

Wait a minute....

Jessica paused for a moment, thinking the line over. Isn't that the point? That it's better to try and fail then to never try at all? Is that the answer? That the destination is of no importance, it's how one makes the journey?

"The journey, Sensei."

"Why?"

"Because... because..." Jessica struggled to put her thoughts into words. "Because the

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destination is predetermined. You know where you're going, but... you don't know how. The journey is an unknown... and how you face the unknown... determines who you are?"

"Excellent. If this is true, then why does your journey upset you?"

"I... I don't know Sensei. I mean... I am doing the best I can... but..."

"But what?"

"But it seems the more I learn, the more I don't know. That I am going nowhere."

"Jessica." Sensei's voice was soothing. "You are the most apt pupil I have ever had. Indeed, you have, in some ways, surpassed your teacher."

"I have?" Jessica asked in disbelief. She didn't think that was possible. Sensei could do anything.

"Yes," Sensei nodded. "Your skill is greater than anyone I have ever seen at your age, and your potential has no limits. But there is a price. As a wise philosopher once said, 'with great power comes great responsibility'."

Jessica gaped. Nothing Sensei had ever said to her before had even hinted at such a revelation.

"Wow. Uhm... Sensei? I like the sound of that. Who said it? Confucius? Musashi? Sun Tzu?"

"No." Sensei turned and gave her a wry grin. "Stan Lee."

"Sensei!?"

Serious once again, Sensei faced his student. "You have great power, Jessica. *Ch'i* flows through you like water, and is yours for the taking. You can do things few of my students can ever hope to learn. I have taught you all I know, but what you do with your gifts is up to you."

"I want to help people, Sensei, that is why I am studying to be a doctor. But how can my ability to hurl a fireball of *ch'i* help anyone?"

"A good question, student." Sensei stood and gestured at the world outside the dojo's windows.

"One does not learn the martial arts to fight... one learns the martial arts improve one's body, to better one's health, one's self-confidence, one's sense of self. Yet there are those who gladly use their martial skills for personal gain. They use their power to take from those weaker than they, instead of protecting them."

"So you want me to use my skill in karate to defend people?"

"If you wish." Sensei turned around, his expression blank. "What ever you choose, choose wisely. If you wish to help others, then do so. The world seems to have far too few people who are willing to do just that."

In the two years since that conversation Jessica has taken her desire to help people to an extreme end. She realized Sensei was right. The world seemed full of people gifted by luck or design with powers and abilities far beyond those of normal men who were more than willing to put on a costume, adopt a code name, and go out and use their fantastic powers for selfish ends. Most people were helpless in the face of these "supercriminals," unless they had powers of their own — such as the ability to hurl a fireball of *ch'i*.

Deciding to fight fire with fire (in a manner of speaking), Jessica assumed a costumed identity of her own. Lacking funds to go out and buy a pre-made costume (and not really having much in the way of sewing skill), she took an inexpensive black bodystocking, one of her old waitress uniforms and some odds and ends Sensei had lying around and created the identity of

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“Midnite Maid.” Jessica places the blame for the name squarely on Sensei’s shoulders. He offered it up after seeing her dressed in it for the first time.

Although her two years of crimefighting have not been an overall smashing success (she tries not to think about the time a misplaced *ch'i* fireball burned an abandoned fast food restaurant to the ground), Jessica feels she’s made a difference. People no longer laugh (outwardly anyway) at her choice of name and costume, and she even has a minor fan club at her college. And as if to prove she’s hit the “big time” as a superhero, Jessica has attracted the ire of one Mortimer Hibiki, better known to the world at large as “The Master Ninja.” Jessica isn’t exactly sure what Mortimer wants, but does know it usually involves the theft of money or precious cultural artifacts. The two have clashed numerous times, and Jessica is certain they will again.

Personality/Motivation: Having overcome her own personal identity crisis, Midnite Maid has developed into a woman who enjoys all life has to offer. Her sessions with Sensei have instilled a deep respect for, and dedication to, constant self-improvement, both mentally and physically. She has a strong drive to better herself in all areas, and that means testing her skills and abilities constantly... which sometimes leads her into situations even her powers may not be enough to handle.

Midnite Maid also has a healthy respect for the world around her. Sensei has helped her understand that the *ch'i* energy she so taps into comes from the natural order of life. Thus, she holds all life to be precious, and doesn’t like or condone the idea of killing, especially for no reason. She does not kill, and objects to the use of lethal attacks by any heroes she works with. If necessary, she’ll even help an injured criminal escape, or take him to a hospital, rather than seeing him die on the battlefield.

Quote: “I suggest you surrender now before I treat you to a taste of my Shooting Star Fist!”

Powers/Tactics: Midnite Maid is an acknowledged master of Shotokan karate, and can back up her impressive hand-to-hand skills with an incredible array of *ch'i* powers. Due to the nature of her powers, Midnite Maid usually restricts herself to basic karate techniques, only tapping into her *ch'i* powers if her opponent demonstrates *ch'i* abilities of his own (or other, similar, super powers).

To use any of her *ch'i* powers, Midnite Maid must chant certain mnemonic phrases to properly focus her concentration. She can fire spheres of *ch'i* energy, make a blindingly fast series of kicks that give off flares of *ch'i* energy, spin through the air toward a target and kick him several times, leap great distances to deliver a devastating punch at the end, or attack with a rapid-fire series of punches.

Campaign Use: Midnite Maid is a Video Game character adapted for use in a superhero campaign. Her powers and skills are common to many video fighting game warriors, but they’ve been given a more four-color superhero twist. If you prefer, you can tone down the superheroic elements and just use her as a typical Video Game PC.

If you want to make Midnite Maid more powerful, give her more Combat Skill Levels and some additional Multipower slots, and/or increase her SPD to 7. If she’s already too tough

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for your game, remove two or three of her *ch'i* powers and reduce her Characteristics (including SPD to 5).

Midnite Maid would only Hunt a hero if that hero were a killer — such as a *Dark Champions*-style vigilante. She might hunt a villain or dishonorable fighter who has escaped from her repeatedly.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **MIDNITE MAID PLOT SEEDS**

An unscrupulous producer creates a “Midnite Maid” animated television show without Jessica’s permission. She can’t exactly pursue the matter through normal legal channels, so she seeks the PCs’ help to find other, equally effective, ways to stop the show.

Someone dressed as Midnite Maid, and with remarkably similar powers, begins committing crimes all around the city. Jessica needs the PCs’ help to find out what’s going on and clear her name.

Midnite Maid disappears — no one’s seen her for weeks. Concerned about their friend (or at least sometime ally), the PCs investigate the situation.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Jessica Golden, 24, stands 5’8” with an athletic and supple build. She has dark skin, green eyes, and straight black hair that falls to her upper back.

As Midnight Maid, she wears a black bodystocking, with one of her old waitress uniforms over it. The uniform consists of a white blouse with short, puffy sleeves, a knee-length skirt she’s dyed black to match the bodysuit, and a white waitress apron, complete with frills. On her feet she has tabi boots, red karate sparring pads cover her hands and forearms, and a ninja face mask conceals her identity while allowing her hair to hang free.

Several times Jessica has found herself fighting crime during the day, usually dressed in her pink and white waitress uniform. At these times she goes by the name “Pretty Soldier Waitress X,” a spur-of-the-moment decision she’s really starting to regret.

<2> ANIME CHARACTERS

Here are two sample characters for Anime martial arts campaigns.

JOHN WA, THE MONKEY KING

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH damage [2]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
23	CON	26	14-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
19	EGO	18	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	6	Total: 14 PD (4 rPD)	
10	ED	5	Total: 14 ED (4 rED)	
6	SPD	24	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
9	REC	0		
50	END	2		
40	STUN	5	Total Characteristics Cost: 160	

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 20"/40"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: Mad Monkey Kung Fu (Feng Hou Wu Shu)				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Caper	—	+4	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort; Full Move
3	Grapple	-1	-1	+10 STR Grab
4	Kick/Punch	+0	+2	Strike
4	Leaping Spin Kick		+2	+0 Strike
4	Monkey Business		+0	+0 Crush, Must Follow Grab
5	Side Kick	-2	+1	Strike
4	Squirm Free	+0	+0	+15 STR versus Grab
3	Trip	+2	-1	Strike; Target Falls
2	Use Art With Blades, Staff			
14	<i>Expanding Kuen:</i> HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) plus +1 OCV; OAF (-1) 0			
16	<i>Spinning Kuen:</i> HA +4d6, Damage Shield (+1/2), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2), Requires A Successful Attack Roll (-1/2), Power Stops Working Instantly If Character Is Stunned Or Knocked Out (-1/4), Not When			

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Grabbed (-1/4)3

37 *Expanding Kuen*: Stretching 15", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretch (-1/4), Only To Cause Damage (-1/2)0

15 *Darn Do*: HKA 1d6+1 (2 1/2d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1) 0

5 *Brigandine Armor*: Armor (4 PD/4 ED); Activation Roll 11- or Locations 6-7 and 10-13 (-1), OIF (-1/2) 0

16 *Leap To The Horizon*: Leaping +16" (20" forward/10" upward) 2

10 *Master Of Movement*: Leaping +20"; Only To Make Half Moves In Combat (-1) 2

7 *At Home In The Trees*: Clinging (normal STR); Cannot Resist Knockback Or Throws (-1/4), No Ceiling Movement Or Angles Of Less Than 80° (-1/4) 1

6 *Feet Usable As Hands*: Extra Limbs (2), Inherent (+1/4) 0

5 *Tail*: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+1/4); Limited Manipulation (-1/4)0

35 *King Of The Monkeys*: Summon 8 200-point Monkey Warriors, Devoted (+3/4); One Charge Which Recovers in 1 Week (-1 1/2), Gestures (must pluck hairs from head and throw them to the ground; -1/4)

Perks

2 Reputation: Savior of the Oppressed (in the local province) +2/+2d6

Talents

3 Environmental Movement (Impeccable Balance)

Skills

12 +4 with Mad Monkey Kung Fu

3 Acrobatics 14-

2 AK: Tien 11-

2 AK: Tien Mountains 11-

3 Breakfall 14-

3 Contortionist 14-

4 KS: Kung Fu 13-

1 KS: Tien Healing 8-

2 KS: Tien History 11-

2 KS: Tien Mountains Flora And Fauna 11-

2 KS: Tien Philosophy 11-

2 PS: Woodcutter 11-

5 Shadowing 12-

3 Sleight of Hand

3 Stealth 14-

2 Survival (Mountains) 11-

1 Tactics 8-

4 WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapon, Common Melee Weapons

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Total Powers & Skills Cost: 265

Total Cost: 425

200+ Disadvantages

- 15 DNPC: current victim of Dai-She brutality (Normal) 11-
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable; Always Noticed And Recognizable; Detectable By Large Group)
- 25 Hunted: The Dai-She 14- (As Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Dedicated To His Cause (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Protective Of Friends And Allies (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Reckless, Often Prone To Acting Without Thinking (Common, Strong)
- 0 Psychological Limitation: Perpetually Cheerful (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Reputation: rabble rouser and rebel, 11-
- 10 Social Limitation: Wanted Outlaw (Frequently, Major)
- 105 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 425

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **THE ORIGINAL MONKEY KING**

Originally, the Monkey King is from Chinese mythology. His name is Songoku, and he is the main character of the famous Chinese novel *The Journey To The West*, written by Wu Chengen in the sixteenth century. The book is a wild flight of fantasy in which Songoku wreaks havoc on the Celestial Bureaucracy of China until he's given a chance to redeem himself: he must accompany the monk Xuanzang to India to bring back a copy of the Buddhist scripture.

The mythological character of Songoku has many of the same abilities as John Wa, but at an even greater power level. According to legend, Songoku had a staff that could become any length needed, from the size of a small needle (kept behind Songoku's ear) to pillar reaching from Earth to Heaven; he could leap 80,000 miles in a single bound; and he could produce 100,000 duplicates of himself by pulling a few hairs free.

The story was a popular one, and Songoku eventually became a virtual deity himself. Modern retellings include a translation of the original tale (*Monkey*, by Arthur Waley), a Hong Kong live-action film (*A Chinese Odyssey I and II*), a Japanese animated television series (*Monkey*), and a Japanese manga series (*Dragonball*, by Akira Toriyama).

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Background/History: Nearly a thousand years ago, the Kingdom of Tien was invaded by the Dai-She barbarians — desert dwellers who came from the north, driving all before them as they looted and pillaged. They found the land of Tien to be one of plenty, and although it was well-guarded, the warriors of Tien were no match for the seemingly limitless numbers of Dai-She. Soon the Dai-She conquered all of Tien.

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Just when things seemed hopeless, the monk Pao Luis foretold that a savior would one day drive the Dai-She back into the desert, so the people should not give up hope. Encouraged by the monk's words, many of the Tienese fled into the mountains to hide and wait.

One day, while out cutting wood, a man named Lin Wa found a child amid the splintered wreckage of a lightning-struck tree. He named the child "John," meaning "favored of the gods," and brought him up as his own.

It soon became apparent John was far more than he seemed. He was naturally quite strong, as well as agile, and could climb nearly anything. When he was old enough, his father sent him further into the mountains, to learn Kung Fu from the descendants of Pao Luis's sect. John quickly mastered Kung Fu, modifying it into a form suited to his own needs. Finally, the head priest told John of his destiny.

John, it seemed, was the savior Pao Luis had spoken of a full thousand years before. Pao Luis had written the savior would come from the mountains, birthed by wood and fire, and would be an army unto himself. Although John agreed the circumstances of his birth were unusual, he certainly wasn't an army unto himself, at which point the priest asked him to pull a few hairs from his head and throw them to the ground. John soon found himself surrounded by eight monkey warriors, each armed and armored for battle. Unable to deny his power, John agreed to go forth and oppose the Dai-She, confident he would succeed... for didn't he have the words of a prophet on his side?

Personality/Motivation: For the most part, John is a cheerful man. Although the oppression of his people by the Dai-She saddens him, he refuses to dwell on it, seeing that as victory of sorts for the Dai-She. Instead, he tries to concentrate on the positive, and keeps a smile on his face at all times. However, when confronting great evil, or in battle, John becomes just as serious as any warrior, or even more so, for he knows full well what will happen should he lose or die.

The biggest flaw in John's character is his total belief in his destiny. His success in many early battles has reinforced his belief that only he can drive out the Dai-She. Thus, he tends to take unnecessary risks and to enact plans he hasn't fully thought out, counting on his "destiny" as the savior of the people of Tien to see him through.

Quote: "It is my destiny to free the Kingdom of Tien from the Dai-She. The people are counting on me to do so. Failure is not an option."

Powers/Tactics: John Wa is a naturally talented and very skilled martial artist. His mountain upbringing has made him strong and agile, while his time spent in the temple has given him great skill with both weaponed and hand-to-hand combat. In addition, he has developed and mastered his own unique martial arts style, which he named "Mad Monkey Kung Fu" in a moment of whimsy.

Since he's basically fighting a war, John has adopted the dress of a warrior. He wears leather and steel brigandine armor on his torso and forearms, and carries both a broadsword and a special staff. Given to him by the master of the temple, the staff can become almost any length John wills, and is an invaluable weapon and tool in his campaign against the Dai-She.

When fighting, John tries to keep moving, and never remains in any one spot (or with any one opponent) for long. He bounds about the battlefield at great speed, attacking first one foe and

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then leaping off to attack another without pause. He often tries to trick his opponents into making sucker attacks (page ???), or at least to get them to exhaust their supplies of arrows and spears. He varies his attacks frequently to keep his opponents off-balance, rarely using the same one two Phases in a row.

If hard pressed or surrounded, John spins his staff around his body rapidly, usually striking anyone within range who tries to hit him. If outnumbered or wounded, he Summons eight monkey warriors with arms and armor (and skills) much like his own. However, he dislikes using this ability, because he can only do it once a week, fears he may use up his supply of warriors, and feels guilty when a warrior dies. When the battle ends, John sends the warriors on their way, telling them to fight against the Dai-She and to come when he calls them again.

Campaign Use: John Wa is a broad mixture of Hong Kong cinema and Japanese animation. He fits into both Anime games and high-powered fantasy campaigns featuring characters capable of fantastic stunts. In fact, the GM could make John Wa the focus of an entire campaign, with John being a powerful NPC controlled by the GM, and the PCs some of his followers (though of course John and his exploits mustn't overshadow the PCs).

If you need to make John Wa more powerful, increase his Characteristics slightly and give him more special abilities. For example, perhaps his staff has other powers, such as helping him channel *ch'i* to Teleport or become Desolidified. If he's already too powerful for your game, reduce his Characteristics a little, remove some of his Martial Maneuvers, and get rid of one or two of his powers.

John Wa will only Hunt heroes if they work for or with the Dai-She. Otherwise he'll remain focused on his quest to free Tien.

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> JOHN WA PLOT SEEDS

All of John Wa's hair — *all* of it — falls out, depriving him of the ability to summon monkey warriors. Who has cursed him with baldness? Lacking monkey warrior backup, he'll need the PCs' help to investigate and resolve the situation.

The Dai-She hire the PCs to find and capture (or kill) John Wa, making it seem as if he's an evil rebel against their lawful rule. How can the PCs find out the truth, and what help will they give the Monkey King when they do?

John Wa receives, and responds, to a mysterious summons to meet someone at Yan Shen Mountain. It turns out he is but one of many animal-men in the world, all called together by a man calling himself the Master of Beasts, who wants to use them as an army to conquer China. The Monkey King sends word to the PCs to come help him defeat the Master's plan.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: As his name suggests, John Wa is a humanoid monkey, albeit much taller than any normal monkey. He stands 5'8" tall, with a lean and supple build, and has broad hands and feet. His hair, which covers most of his body except for his face, hands and feet, is black, as is

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his tail. John wears a loose tunic and trousers, with a skirt made from tiger skin. Over this goes his brigandine armor, as well as a sash to hold his darn do secure. He holds his extendable staff in one hand, and wears a silver circlet on his brow to mark his rank.

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KAYLI THE DESTROYER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1600 kg; 6d6 HTH Damage [3]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
25	CON	30	14-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
23	PRE	13	14-	PRE Attack: 4 1/2d6
14	COM	2	12-	
18	PD	12	Total: 28 PD (10 rPD)	
15	ED	10	Total: 25 ED (10 rED)	
6	SPD	24	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
12	REC	2		
60	END	5		
50	STUN	4	Total Characteristics Cost: 199	

Movement: Flight: 30"/480"

Leaping: 18"/36"

Running: 9"/18"

Swimming: 3"/6"

Teleportation: 18"/36"

Cost Powers END

67 *Nehkojin Battle Aura:* Aid STR, DEX, CON, PD, ED, SPD, END, STUN, and Energy Of The Dragon Powers 4d6, Can Add Maximum Of 30 Points, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 Per 5 Minutes; +1/2), Variable Effect (+2); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Self Only (-1/2), Visible (brilliant burst of yellowish flame surrounds Kayli; -1/4) 0

75 *Energy Of The Dragon:* Multipower, 75-point reserve

12m 1) *Arrows Of The Dragon:* Energy Blast 10d6, Autofire (5 shots; +1/2); Gestures (Kayli must make a series of rapid punching motions to generate and project attack; -1/4) 7

15m 2) *Breath Of The Dragon:* Energy Blast 15d6 7

9m 3) *Bite Of The Dragon:* HKA 2d6 (4d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) 0

9m 4) *Inferno Of The Dragon:* RKA 3d6+1, Armor Piercing (+1/2); Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Gestures (Kayli must summon and then project energy with both hands; -1/4) 7

15m 5) *Wings Of The Dragon:* Flight 30", x16 Noncombat 7

12 *Ultimate Breath Of The Dragon:* Energy Blast +8d6 to Breath Of The Dragon; Extra Time (Extra Phase; -3/4), Increased Endurance (x4 END; -1 1/2) 16

7 *Strength Of The Nehkojin:* Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4) on 30 STR 1

10 *Claws:* HKA 1/2d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Inherent (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Reduced Penetration (-1/4), Restrained (-1/2) 0

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Martial Arts: Nehkojin Combat Training (The Way of the Warrior)

	Maneuver		OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2		Block, Abort
4	Disarm-1		+1		Disarm; 50 STR
4	Dodge	—	+5		Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0		50 STR versus Grabs
5	Kick	-2	+1		12d6 Strike
4	Knee/Elbow Strike		+2	+0	10d6 Strike
3	Legsweep	+2	-1		9d6 Strike; Target Falls
4	Punch	+0	+2		10d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)				
3	Use Art with Blades, Claws, Clubs				
13	<i>Nehkojin Battle Harness</i> : Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-1/2), Activation Roll 12- or Locations 6-7, 9-14, 16-18 (-3/4) 0				
27	<i>Nehkojin Toughness</i> : Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Normal, 50%; STUN Only (-1/2) 0				
35	<i>Ch'i Blocking</i> : Missile Deflection (all ranged attacks), Ranged (+1); Costs END (-1/2) plus +4 OCV 4				
6	<i>Strong Runner</i> : Running +3" (9" total) 2				
12	<i>Strong Leaper</i> : Leaping +12" (18" forward, 9" upward) 2				
1	<i>Strong Swimmer</i> : Swimming +1" (3" total) 1				
24	<i>Instantaneous Movement</i> : Teleport 18"; Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-1/4), No Noncombat Movement (-1/4) 4				
19	<i>Ch'i Sense</i> : Detect <i>Ch'i</i> 14-, Discriminatory, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Sense 0				
5	<i>Tail</i> : Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+1/4); Limited Manipulation (-1/4) 0				

Skills

32	+4 with All Combat
3	+1 with Survival, Tactics and Tracking
8	+4 versus Range Modifier with Multipower Attacks
3	Acrobatics 14-
3	AK: Local Space 12-
7	Analyze: Fighting Style 14-
3	Breakfall 14-
5	Defense Maneuver II
3	Demolitions 12-
6	Gambling (Card Games; Dice Games) 13-
2	KS: Alien Races 11-
3	KS: Local Space 12-
3	KS: Various Fighting Styles and Techniques 12-
4	Language: Galactic Common (idiomatic; Nehkojin is native)
1	Mechanics 8-

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- 1 Navigation 8-
- 2 PS: Mercenary/Pirate 11-
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 8 Survival (Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Urban) 12-
- 1 Systems Operation 8-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Grav Vehicles/Hovercraft, Personal-Use Spacecraft
- 6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 536

Total Cost: 735

300+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: assorted galactic law enforcement organizations 11- (As Pow, NCI)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Non-Human Biology, Requires Specialized Medical Attention (Infrequent, Greatly Impairing)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Greedy; Likes Wealth And Luxuries, Usually To Excess (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hot Tempered And Irritable; Easy To Goad And Bait (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Likes To Fight, Prefers Violent Solutions To Problems (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Reckless, tends to act with out thinking (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Kayli the Destroyer, violent and destructive mercenary, pirate, and Nehkojin warrior, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other mercenary and warrior types)
- 345 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 735

Background/History: The universe is a big place, and there are many different species living in it. Some races are fairly benevolent, some militant, and some no one really understands... but few are as feared as the Nehkojin. A true warrior race, dedicated to perfecting their skill at combat, the Nehkojin seem to care about nothing but battle — and they're very good at fighting. Fortunately for the rest of the universe, the Nehkojin care about *combat*, not *conquest*; they prefer to operate alone, often as mercenaries in the armies of other species.

One of the most notorious of the Nehkojin is a female named Kayli the Destroyer. A powerful and skilled warrior, she's known throughout the Galaxy as a pirate and mercenary who'll do almost anything... if the pay is right. No one knows exactly where she came from or who trained her, but she's quickly made a name for herself, even among the combative Nehkojin.

Kayli wanders the Galaxy, moving from one conflict to another, apparently caring only

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for the chance to engage in combat. Over the years she has accumulated an impressive record of battlefield accomplishments, including fighting her way through whole companies of trained soldiers. She's also shown a marked lack of morals, and at least once laid waste an entire city on behalf of a group of rebels. The authorities suspect her involvement in several other terrorist operations, and have copious of evidence of her notorious activities as a pirate. But so far, all efforts to capture her have failed.

Personality/Motivation: Kayli is a warrior through and through. She intends to become the most powerful example of Nehkojin prowess the Universe has ever seen. To her, conflict is a way of life, and anything else is almost unthinkable; the desire for peace is a weakness. For Kayli (and all other Nehkojin for that matter), the battlefield is a proving ground to separate the mighty from the weak. Those who are strong and tough enough survive; everyone else falls by the wayside.

Kayli is bad-tempered, greedy, violent, and headstrong — and these are her good points. Even worse, these traits allow others to manipulate her easily. Since she believes the Nehkojin are the greatest warriors ever known, she's more than willing to live up to her species's reputation. Thus, those who wish to hire her services can usually do so by hinting at the chance for glorious combat against incredible odds.

Working with Kayli can be more trouble than its worth, however. She prefers to be left to her own devices in combat, and doesn't care for extensive scrutiny of her activities. Most of her employers have learned to just give her a basic outline of her objectives and then let her go about her business. She is, in effect, a living fire-and-forget missile.

Kayli's foul disposition often manifests as a tendency to favor destructive solutions to problems, and as a reckless disregard for personal safety. Thus, she has virtually no friends... but then again, the Nehkojin don't put much stock in the idea of friendship anyway.

Aside from combat, Kayli's primary motivation in life is the acquisition of wealth, which she spends in a virtual orgy of excess. She lives very much for the moment.

Quote: "You wish to challenge me? I am Kayli the Destroyer, a Nehkojin warrior. I have shattered starships, slaughtered armies, ravaged cities, and plundered entire worlds. I will see you lying broken and defeated before me."

Powers/Tactics: As with all members of the Nehkojin race, Kayli has great physical strength coupled with superhuman levels of agility, endurance, and durability. She can further increase her physical prowess by tapping into her Battle Aura, a Nehkojin ability to channel the universe's flow of *ch'i* directly through the body. The result is a brilliant burst of yellowish flame around the Nehkojin using it, which marks a massive upsurge in physical capabilities.

In addition, Kayli can freely manipulate *ch'i* energy to produce a variety of energy attacks, including a single powerful beam (her Breath Of The Dragon), a burst of energy bolts (the Arrows Of The Dragon), or even a concentrated energy blade (the Bite Of The Dragon). In addition, Kayli can use her *ch'i*-channeling powers to fly, or to move with short bursts of incredible speed.

Before a battle, or as soon as one starts, Kayli activates her Battle Aura (and if possible, keeps it going until it's at maximum effect). Once actually in combat, Kayli attempts to eliminate

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her opponent(s) as fast as possible. She starts out with the Breath Of The Dragon, and then flies into hand-to-hand range, where she uses her Battle Aura-enhanced strength and martial arts skill to end the fight as quickly as she can. Normally, Kayli employs her Arrows Of The Dragon when attacking a group of targets, or if she wishes to spread random destruction. She saves the Bite Of The Dragon for vehicles, robots, inanimate objects, and opponents who shrug off everything else she tries.

Kayli doesn't waste time with fancy maneuvers; she wants to get the maximum effect out of every effort. This often translates into a great deal of overkill as she hurls her *ch'i* blasts at full power, regardless of the situation. Fortunately for her opponents, her Ultimate Breath Of The Dragon attack takes too much time and energy for her to use as freely as she'd like. As a rule, she uses it only when a target cannot take advantage of the time needed to generate it, or as an attack of last resort.

In open warfare, Kayli likes to sow as much destruction as possible, mainly by firing her attacks at explosive, flammable, or fragile targets. But even such cases of wanton destruction, Kayli wants maximum return on her "investment" — her favorite targets are fueling stations, chemical storage tanks, bridges and overpasses, and large mass-transit vehicles, all of which lead to even greater destruction.

Campaign Use: As written, Kayli is a rather generic Anime villainess (in fact, she'd be *underpowered* in some anime settings!), suitable for use not only in Anime martial arts games but as a villain in *Champions* campaigns, or perhaps a strange, high-powered sorceress in *Fantasy Hero*. She has no redeeming features; PCs who try to appeal to her "sense of honor" or to evoke some sympathy from her will quickly learn the error of their ways.

If Kayli's not powerful enough for you, lengthen the fade rate of her Nehkojin Battle Aura, add one to three points of SPD, and reduce the END cost of her powers so she can use them more often. You might even reduce (or eliminate) the Extra Time requirement for some of her abilities. If she's so powerful she'll run roughshod over your PCs, eliminate several of her powers (including the Ultimate Breath) and increase the END costs of the others so she has to use them more carefully.

Kayli makes an excellent Hunter for a group of PCs — she's tough, tenacious, and vengeful. She's most likely to find herself on the PCs' trail when someone hires her to kill or capture them, but if they elude her or make her look foolish, they'll earn her undying hatred. She's not a subtle Hunter, but then again, does she really need to be when she can tear starships apart with her bare hands?

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **KAYLI THE DESTROYER PLOT SEEDS**

Angered at the way Kayli flouts the law, but unable to stop her by conventional means, the authorities hire the PCs to bring her in... dead or alive.

The PCs enjoy a string of successes committing commando raids against their employer's enemy's forces. The enemy hires Kayli to intercept their next mission and put a stop to it — a *permanent* stop.

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Several destructive, mysterious pirate raids have occurred in the Garaldis Sector, without a single survivor being left to tell who did it. The authorities suspect Kayli's involvement, and hire the PCs to stop the piracy. When she finds out she's being unjustly blamed, Kayli teams up with the PCs to find the perpetrators — but on her own terms.

[[END SIDEBAR]]

Appearance: Kayli is 5'10" tall, and weighs around 160 pounds, with an athletic, muscular build; scars cover much of her body. She can be fairly attractive if she wishes, but is usually in too foul a mood to bother. Like all Nehkojin, her skin has a warm gray coloration, while her thick mane of shoulder-length hair and long, tapering, cat-like ears are deep black. The mane runs down her neck and along her spine until it joins a long, thin, black-furred tail. Her yellowish-green eyes glow red right after she activates her Battle Aura. Long, sharp black claws tip her fingers.

In combat, Kayli wears a black, one-piece bodysuit that covers her from neck to wrist to ankle. Over that she sometimes wears a sectional Nehkojin battle harness in white, with armor plates over her torso, thighs, lower legs, and forearms. White boots and white fingerless gloves complete her costume. Out of combat, she tends to wear semi-military looking garb, usually of a utilitarian nature. She has little use for casual wear.

<2> MONSTERS

Here are two supernatural creatures often encountered in *wuxia* films: the Chinese vampire and Chinese ghost.

CH'ING-SHIH

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH damage [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3 1/2d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
8	PD	3		Total: 8 PD (3 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 5 ED (1 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	0		
40	END	2		
40	STUN	6		Total Characteristics Cost: 105 (+5 with NCM)

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Leaping: 5"/10"

Cost Powers END

7	<i>Fangs:</i>	HKA 1 point (1/2d6 with STR), Penetrating (+1/2)	1
33	<i>Drink Blood:</i>	RKA 1d6, NND (defense is not having blood or protective skin or equipment too thick to bite through; +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); No Range (-1/2), Fangs Must Do BODY First (-1/2)	0
30	<i>Claws:</i>	HKA 2d6 (3 1/2d6 with STR)	3
48	<i>Icy Breath:</i>	Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is any sort of "holy" or "divine" Defense Power; +1), Does BODY (+1); Limited Range (3"; -1/4)	6
60	<i>Undead Body:</i>	Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
2	<i>Undead Body:</i>	Damage Resistance (3 PD/1 ED)	0
21	<i>Hard To Slay:</i>	Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Day), Resurrection (others can stop resurrection as described in the text), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Persistent (+1/2); Self Only (-1/2), Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (3 BODY/Day; -2 2/4), Resurrection Only (-1/2)	0
47	<i>Undead Vitality:</i>	Life Support: Total (except Diminished Eating; including Longevity: Immortality)	0
2	<i>Swift:</i>	Running +1" (7" total)	1
5	<i>Ch'ing-Shih Eyes:</i>	Nightvision	0

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Skills

- 10 +2 Hand-To-Hand
- 20 Skills and Talents (abilities and interests in life)
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 5 Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 296

Total Cost: 401

75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Dependence: must sleep each night in a coffin containing earth from its gravesite (or any cemetery, if inapplicable) or suffer Weakness (Uncommon, Difficult to obtain)
- 40 Enraged: Berserk in combat (Very Common), go 11-, recover 8-
- 10 Physical Limitation: Can Be Trapped In Its Coffin (see text) (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
- 0 Physical Limitation: Human Size
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Cannot Enter A Dwelling Without Invitation (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Aversion To Strong Odors (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Will Only Cross Running Water Via Bridges (Uncommon, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Considers Humanity Cattle (Common, Moderate)
- 25 Susceptibility: to holy objects and places, takes 2d6 per Phase is in contact with them (Common)
- 35 Susceptibility: to direct sunlight, takes 2d6 per Segment (Very Common)
- 20 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Fire attacks (Common)
- 20 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Fire attacks (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1 1/2 x STUN from Electricity attacks (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1 1/2 x BODY from Electricity attacks (Common)
- 86 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 401

<4> OPTIONS

Cost Optional *Ch'ing-Shih* Powers

- 20 *Flying*: Flight 10"
- 27 *Mist Form*: Desolidification (affected by wind, heat, or cold); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-1/2)
- 20 *Invisible Form*: Invisibility to Sight Group

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Ecology: The Chinese vampire is known as *ch'ing-shih* (also spelled *qing-shi*, *kuangshi*, or *kiangshi*, meaning “corpse-spectre”); another name for it is *hsi-hsue-kuei* (“suck-blood demon”). It is a corpse animated by its *p'o*, or inferior soul, because the body was not given proper funeral rites, somehow remained undecayed, or had an animal jump over it. A corpse must be kept away from sunlight and moonlight, which might infuse it with *yang* (positive energy), thus providing power to the *p'o*. In some cases, evil men or sorcerers deliberately separate their superior and inferior souls and hide the former, deliberately turning themselves into *ch'ing-shih*.

A *ch'ing-shih* survives by drinking the blood of the living (and sometimes by eating human flesh as well). Typically it needs at least one adult human's worth of blood per week, though this decreases as it ages (and thus gains more power). If necessary, it can substitute animal blood.

While some Chinese vampires move normally, others cannot walk properly due to the pain and stiffness of being dead (and perhaps due to the way their burial shrouds wrap around their legs). These are known as *hopping vampires*, for they can only move by hopping. Hopping vampires use this same character sheet, without any of the optional powers, but have DEX 14, SPD 3, and Running 5” (-26 points).

Personality/Motivation: *Ch'ing-shih* are completely evil, existing only to feed off live humans. Some retain sexual desires and commit foul assaults upon the living before killing them. Some, particularly those who return from the dead due to improper burial, attack their own families.

Powers/Tactics: Like Western vampires, the *ch'ing-shih* has many powers. In addition to its great strength, fangs, and claws, it also has a terrible icy breath which can slay the living. Some *ch'ing-shih* can fly, change into a cloud of mist, or become invisible. To kill a normal *ch'ing-shih*, one must dig it up and burn it (they are Vulnerable to Fire); to kill one who has hidden its superior soul, the soul must be found and freed.

However, the *ch'ing-shih* also shares many of the Western vampire's disabilities, and has a few of its own. It must sleep in a coffin, cannot stand the light of day, and cannot cross thresholds without invitation. It is prone to going Berserk in battle. In addition to its weakness to fire, it can be destroyed by lightning. Garlic, incense, or other strong odors provide protection against it, and if someone who sprinkles rice, iron, and red peas on the ground above its coffin traps it inside.

Campaign Use: Some stories speak of *ch'ing-shih* who are blind, relying on their sense of smell to hunt victims (primarily by following the scent of the victim's breath). Give these vampires the Physical Limitation *Blindness* (-25 points), and +3 Smell PER and Tracking for Normal Smell (+11 points). A victim who holds his breath can prevent the creature from smelling him (-6 to Smell PER Rolls).

According to Chinese folklore, some vampires (and ghosts) can only move in straight lines — this is why Chinese footbridges often bend and turn, and Chinese houses and stores have screens in front of the door. You can represent this with the Physical Limitation *Can Only Move In Straight Lines* (Frequently, Greatly Impairing; -15 points).

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Appearance: The typical *ch'ing-shih* is covered with whitish or greenish colored hair, and has long, claw-like nails, fangs, and red eyes. The “hopping vampire” form of the creature often resembles a greenish, withered corpse dressed in Mandarin robes.

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CHINESE GHOST

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1 1/2d6 HTH Damage [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
9	BODY	-2	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
20	COM	5	13-	
4	PD	2		Total PD: 4 (4 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total ED: 4 (4 rED)
3	SPD	0		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
30	END	0		
22	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 59

Movement: Running: 0"
Flight: 12"/24"

Cost Powers END

22	<i>Hair:</i>	Elemental Control, 44-point powers	
29	1) <i>Long Tresses:</i>	Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Stops Sight Group, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4), Entangle Can Only Target Extremities (-1/2), No Range (-1/2)	6
23	2) <i>Hair Whip:</i>	HKA 2d6 (3d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)	0
11	3) <i>Long Tresses:</i>	Stretching 6", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); No Fine Manipulation (-1/2), Always Direct (-1/4), Limited Body Parts (hair; -1/4)	0
13	<i>Long Tresses:</i>	+22 STR; No Figured Characteristics (-1/2), Only With Hair (-1/4)	2
40	<i>Supernatural Resistance To Harm:</i>	Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%; Does Not Protect Against "Spirit-Cutting" Weapons and Techniques, Or Magic Powers (-1/2)	0
3	<i>Supernatural Resistance To Harm:</i>	Damage Resistance (4 PD/4 ED); Not Versus "Spirit-Cutting" Weapons and Techniques, Or Magic Powers (-1/2)	0
50	<i>Ghost Body:</i>	Life Support (Total; including Longevity [Immortality])	0
36	<i>Walking On Air:</i>	Flight 12", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)	0
-12	<i>Walking On Air:</i>	Running -6"	0
7	<i>Long Tresses:</i>	Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+1/4)	0
5	<i>Ghostly Clothing:</i>	Cosmetic Transform 2d6 (standard effect: 2 BODY) (clothing into any other clothing); Limited Target (clothing; -1/2), Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2)	1
5	<i>Night Eyes:</i>	Nightvision	0

Skills

6	+2 with Hair Elemental Control
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- 20 Various Skills possessed in life
- 3 Seduction 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 261

Total Cost: 320

75+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Features: Body Is Cool To The Touch (Concealable With Difficulty; Causes Major Reaction [fear])
- 15 Distinctive Features: Unearthly Beauty (Concealable With Difficulty; Causes Major Reaction [desire])
- 10 Hunted: assorted ghost hunters and magicians 8- (As Pow)
- 0 Physical Limitation: Human Sized
- 15 Physical Limitation: Repelled By Good Luck Charms And Holy Texts (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, cannot leap (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Susceptibility: to direct sunlight, takes 1d6 per Phase (Uncommon)
- 170 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 320

<4> OPTIONS

Cost Optional Chinese Ghost Powers

- 39 *Flexible Sleeves*: See page ???
- 12 *Razor Sharp Fingernails*: HKA 1d6 (1d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-1/4)
- 1

Ecology: Chinese ghosts are the spirits of dead women, though they're not immaterial like Western ghosts. They inhabit the area where their bodies were buried; if cremated, they're tied to the specific jar containing their ashes. They tend to live in abandoned temples, castles, and manor houses, where they seduce passing travelers, either for their own amusement or at the request of a powerful spirit of the Underworld.

Personality/Motivation: Most Chinese ghosts wish to pass on to the next life and renew their journey in the cosmic cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Others wish to avoid the underworld for as long as possible and do anything they can to remain free, up to and including killing any mortal who dares disturb them. However, in either case, a proper burial of the ghost's body and/or jar of ashes puts the ghost's soul at peace and sends it on to its next life.

Powers/Tactics: Chinese ghosts are physically weak beings and can be bested by a powerful or determined warrior. For this reason they tend to avoid open combat and attack their targets using stealth and guile. Their preferred method is to use their skill in Seduction to put a man off-guard

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and at ease and then strike when he's most vulnerable.

Chinese ghosts hide during the day, for sunlight causes them great harm. They emerge from their hiding places at night to prey upon their victims.

Campaign Use: Gamemasters can use a Chinese ghost in any number of ways. The PCs may encounter such a ghost and endeavor to recover her jar of ashes so she can return to the cosmic wheel and undergo reincarnation. Or, they can encounter a ghost working (or enslaved by) a more powerful being of the Underworld (usually a demon of some sort), and be forced to fight both the ghost and her master (or, free the ghost from her master). The ghost may fall in love with one of the PCs and attempt to seduce him away from his companions, or a PC may fall in love with the ghost, not realizing she's dead.

Gamemasters can give Chinese ghosts a wide variety of additional powers. Besides the two listed here, virtually any of the more "mystical" martial arts powers in Chapter Two are appropriate for Chinese ghosts.

In high-powered Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime campaigns, a player could even have a Chinese ghost as a PC! However, the ghost's aversion to sunlight may make play difficult.

Appearance: Chinese ghosts are typically slim and slender young women of astonishing beauty. Their hair tends to be long and flowing, and their clothing of high quality. Regardless of their appearance, all such ghosts feel cool, even cold to the touch, and cannot stand the light of day or holy objects.

<1> MAGIC ARTIFACTS AND WEAPONS

Magic weapons appear in many different types of martial arts adventures. Here are a few examples for *Ninja Hero* GMs to use in their campaigns if the wish.

<4> KYOKUJITSU NAGINATA

This weapon consists of a 5' wooden shaft topped by a 2' blade. It looks like a naginata of high quality, and anyone examining it realizes it's of great age.

When a character uses the Kyokujitsu Naginata in battle against the supernatural, it becomes wreathed with yellow flames. With it, a character can slay ghosts; it glows whenever they are near. If the user spins it over his head, it either shines brightly enough to blind onlookers, or turns night into day.

The last owner of the Kyokujitsu Naginata lost it centuries ago; its whereabouts remain unknown. Rumors place it in the far north of Japan, guarded by a fierce dragon, who will only surrender the weapon to a noble and valiant warrior.

Cost Power END

- 17 *Kyokujitsu Naginata*: Multipower, 70-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
3m 1) *Spirit Cutting Blade*: HKA 2d6 (plus STR), Affects Desolidified (supernatural special effects only; +1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2) 0
1u 2) *Light Of Blinding*: Sight Group Flash 8d6, Explosion (+1/2), Personal Immunity (+1/4); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Gestures (-1/4), No Range (-1/2) 7
1u 3) *Shaft*: HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 0
1u 4) *Spirit Sensing*: Detect Supernatural Beings (INT Roll), Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Ranged, Sense; OAF (-1), Independent (-2) 0
1u 5) *Light Of Heaven*: Sight Group Images, Increased Size (125" Radius; +1 3/4); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Gestures (-1/4), No Range (-1/2), Only To Create Light (-1) 3
1m 6) *Shaft*: Stretching: 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), Only To Cause Damage (-1/2), No Velocity Damage (-1/4) 0

Total cost: 25 points.

<4> LU JYAN SHENG MING

Lu Jyan Sheng Ming is a *jien* forged of an unknown and unearthly metal. It has a blade 34 inches long and an inch wide. Strange characters (or runes) in pale blue-green adorn the blade; they give off a faint blue-green glow in dim conditions. It rings faintly if struck with a fingernail. Incredibly sharp, Lu Jyan Sheng Ming can cut through most anything with ease — in fact, it's so sharp that weapons which try to block it often get cut in half! Although virtually unbreakable, the weapon remains flexible enough to bend almost double and still return to its original form.

Currently, the sword has no owner; legends say it's in a secure location somewhere in

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northern China.

Cost *Lu Jyan Sheng Ming* **END**

10 *Lu Jyan Sheng Ming*: HKA 1d6+1 (plus STR), Penetrating (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2) 0

32 *Too Sharp To Block*: Dispel Weapons 12d6, any Attack Power one at a time (+1/4), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (can damage things it strikes in combat; +3/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Persistent (+1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Works Against Weapons Which Try To Block The Blade (-1/2) 0

Total cost: 42 points.

<4> **SILVER FAN**

This enchanted item resembles a simple folding fan, made from a thin sheet of bright and shiny metal. If a character opens it fully, he can use it to defend himself against magic spells. In some cases, the wielder can even reflect the spells back at he who cast them!

Silver Fan: Missile Deflection & Reflection (all Ranged attacks), +6 OCV (70 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Works Against Magical Attacks (-1). Total Cost: 14 points.

<4> **THE STORM LORD'S VAJRA**

This weapon belongs to the Lord of Darkness and Storms. Normally a fairly belligerent and cocky deity — one who enjoys displays of strength and skill — the Lord of Storms occasionally allows a hero to find his Vajra and use it to further some cause. Fortunately for men, the Lord of Storms has no liking for the forces of evil (despite being the deity of darkness), and usually supports those who oppose it. Recently, some sorcerers have claimed the Vajra was lost on Earth since the god's mother, the foremost deity of heaven, took it away from him. But if so, it's probably just a matter of time before it finds its way back to the Lord of Storms.

The Vajra (a type of object used in many religions in and around China) normally appears as a short metal rod with three curved tines (or claws) extending from each end. The rod itself fits easily into a person's grasp, with the tines forming a loose ball at either end. If the user so wills, the Vajra forms itself into one of three objects — a broad-bladed sword, a spiked and ridged metal staff, or a wide fan — each with a specific power.

Cost **Power** **END**

11 *Storm Lord's Vajra*: Multipower, 45 point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

1u 1) *Sword*: HKA 2d6 (plus STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) 0

1u 2) *Iron Staff*: HA +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 0

1u 3) *War Fan*: Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +3 OCV 0

Total cost: 14 points.

<4> SWORD OF THE THUNDER KING

The “Sword” Of The Thunder King is actually a *chai-dao*, a polearm 5’5” long (of which 2’6” consist of a broad, slightly curved blade). The haft, formed of a dense, dark wood, ends in a large ring. When any character uses it in combat, it causes minor rumbling noises (akin to distant thunder) and the blade sparks with small bolts of lightning when it impacts metal (including armor). A skilled user can also evoke its magical powers. It can project bolts of lightning, summon storms, and allow its wielder to ride the winds. It also produces deafening crashes of thunder to disorient the foe.

No one knows where the Sword Of The Thunder King currently is. Various rumors place it in the far north of China, Japan, Taiwan, and places even more mysterious (such as America).

Cost Power END

15 *Sword Of The Thunder King*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

1u 1) *Blade*: HKA 2d6 (plus STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2) 0

1u 2) *Shaft*: HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-1/2) 0

3m 3) *Lightning*: Energy Blast 12d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Outside (-1/2), 9 Charges (-1/4) [9]

2m 4) *Wind Riding*: Flight 20”, Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Outside (-1/2) 2

2m 5) *Summoning Of Storms*: Change Environment 125” radius, -1 To Sight Group PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-1/2), Only Outside (-1/2) 4

1u 6) *Shaft*: Stretching: 1”, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), Only To Cause Damage (-1/2), No Velocity Damage (-1/4) 0

20 *A Thunderous Crash*: Hearing Group Flash 8d6, Explosion (+1/2), Personal Immunity (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-1/2) 0

Total cost: 45 points

<4> TENSHI

Another enchanted sword, Tenshi is a ghost-cutting blade, used to dispel and destroy malevolent spirits and other supernatural entities. Its name reflects the nature of the blade; it translates as “Heaven and Earth.” (It can also be spelled *Tenchi* and have various other meanings, a not uncommon state of affairs in Chinese.) A fairly normal-looking sword, with a long, straight blade 30 inches long plus a 12” hilt, it’s kept in a sheath resembling a short cane or walking stick.

When unsheathed, the sword signals that ghosts are near by sending faint blue flames flickering along its length. The same flames appear if the sword strikes (*i.e.*, cuts) a ghost or other supernatural creature. The sword can also destroy low-powered spells.

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Cost Power END

12 *Enchanted Cane Sword Tenshi*: Multipower, 49-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

1u 1) *Ghost Cutting Blade*: HKA 1 1/2d6 (plus STR), Affects Desolidified (supernatural special effects only +1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
0

1u 2) *Magic Cutting Blade*: Dispel Magic 13d6, any Magic power one at a time (+1/4); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-1/2)5

1u 3) *Ghost Sensing*: Detect Supernatural Beings 13-, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Ranged, Sense; OAF (-1), Independent (-2) 0

<1> ADVENTURE SEEDS

“Sometimes the greatest heroes are also the greatest idiots.”

—Sir Te, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

The following adventure seeds are not complete scenarios in their own right; they simply summarize several classic martial arts plots. You should edit, adjust, and alter each adventure seed to make it fit your campaign.

<4> THE ONLY GOOD SWORD IN THE BAD PART OF TOWN

Our hero (or heroes) enters a seemingly deserted town. Shops are closed, trash litters the streets, and the only person open for business is the coffin maker, who apparently has more orders than he can fill. Taking refuge in a nearby inn, the hero learns that a gang war grips the town, with two rival gangster families fighting it out to determine who controls the area.

Soon, several local thugs come around to see what the hero is up to. If character is a swordsman, they issue a challenge to see how tough he really is. If he wins, one of the gangs offers him a job. Events spiral out from there as the gangs compete for his services and he takes advantage of the situation to help himself, and the town.

Preparation: You need to prepare two large gangs. Most of the gang members are fairly generic fighters, easily defeated by the PCs. A few, however, should be designed as Equal villains. At least one should have some sort of special (and powerful) techniques that make all the others fear him. You should hold this villain in reserve and introduce him later on in the scenario.

Although this scenario has plenty of action, it should (if run right) also feature plenty of double-dealing, backstabbing, and treachery, as the two families fight over who gets to hire the PCs. The heroes, meanwhile, need to keep their wits about them if they’re to successfully play each gang off against the other, eventually destroying both — thus ridding the town of their evil ways once and for all.

Plan the scenario so the gangs can take on all the PCs. In the movies, this plot usually features a solo hero; in a game, you need to account for the actions of a group of heroes.

<4> RIVAL SCHOOLS

Similar to the The Only Good Sword In The Bad Part of Town, Rival Schools features two martial arts schools at each others’ throats in their attempts to prove the superiority of their respective styles. (In more modern games, national or ethnic pride may also factor into the conflict.) The PCs, who can be members of one of the schools if you so desire, are caught in the middle. They have to deal with open fighting in the streets as well as back-alley ambushes. In most cases, the fights end with a savage beating (but no deaths), but anyone can see things will soon get worse.

Preparation: You should create a “generic” member of each school, as well as a few top

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students and instructors. As students are wounded (and killed), mark them off your master list of NPCs, until only a few survivors remain. To run this scenario in true martial arts action style, the school the PCs belong to should lose most of the fights, forcing them to flee their town, hide out, train in a new and devastating style, and then return to wreak bloody vengeance.

You can expand this scenario to cover far more than one city. In some martial arts films, the fighting results from an effort by one school to destroy all other schools in the entire country (and thus reign supreme in the world of martial arts). Alternately, you can start with the destruction having already taken place — the PCs are the only survivors of the losing schools who gather together to avenge the deaths of their friends and family (and the honor of their respective schools).

<4> SEVEN AGAINST SEVEN HUNDRED

Bandits overrun a virtually defenseless small village, killing farmers, carrying off women, stealing crops and livestock. They promise to come again in the fall, after the rest of the villagers bring in the harvest, and take all they can. After scraping together a little money and some rice, the farmers begin a desperate search to find someone, anyone, with the courage and the determination to help them defend their village.

Preparation: You need a map of the village and its surroundings. The area should include not only rice fields, but a few natural features, like streams, around which the PCs can form defenses.

The farmers are normals built on no more than about 25 points, with little or no weapons or martial arts training. Their weapons include bamboo spears, axes, hunting bows, hoes, and rakes. The bandits range from novices and weaklings scarcely more powerful than the farmers, to a few leaders able to challenge a PC in a one-on-one fight.

To further complicate matters, consider introducing a few twists. For example, instead of making the bandits a lawless rabble, have them work for a local warlord — Tai-Sheng Zeng (page ???), for example. Unknown to the farmers, the village itself may sit on an important site or may conceal a hidden treasure. Instead of defending homes and crops, perhaps the PCs have to defend a rebel leader from capture by the cruel and oppressive government. Perhaps the village is a monastery, a Western church, a hospital, or any other structure a small bandit army might want to get into.

<4> STOP THIEF!

The unthinkable has happened! Someone has stolen the school's precious training scrolls! If the secrets in those scrolls get out, all will be ruined!

Who's the thief? He could be a member of a rival school, a traitor within the school, an agent of a foreign powers (usually a ninja), a rebel working against the government, or a simple burglar looking to sell his find to the highest bidder. He may not even understand the true value of the scrolls and the secret martial arts techniques they describe.

The longer the scrolls remain lost, the more frantic the search to find them becomes. The masters send out parties to scour the countryside (one of the parties being the PCs, of course),

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with instructions to leave no stone unturned. Unfortunately, the theft has caused dissension in the ranks of the school, and infighting may end up destroying the school itself. To make matters worse, the school's enemies learn of the theft and move against the school in the hopes of destroying it and scattering the students. And, of course, what happens when someone reads the scrolls and starts to train using the techniques described within?

Preparation: First, you need to decide what “secret technique” the scrolls contain and write it up in game terms. It should be powerful and unique, or else the scrolls really aren't that valuable.

Second, you need to decide who stole the scrolls, and why. Once you settle on a villain, you need to prepare a character sheet for him, since the odds of a fight between him and the PCs are good.

Third, you need to create some factions within the school to quarrel over the event, the search, and the outcome. You should also create some rival schools who want to find the scrolls themselves, and/or take advantage of the PCs' school's temporary weakness.

Mix these elements liberally with some red herrings, an occasional legitimate clue, and a timeline representing who discovers what when (to keep the game moving), and you're set. If you want to vary the adventure a little, put the scrolls in a government library, a monastery, a merchant's cargo, or somewhere other than a school, and vary the PCs' role accordingly. But don't forget: the longer the PCs take to find the scrolls, the more powerful the scrolls' current owner will be when they finally arrive to retrieve them!

<1> **APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY**

Miyagi: Karate come from China, sixteenth century, called *te*, “hand.” Hundred year later, Miyagi ancestor bring to Okinawa, call *kara-te*, “empty hand.”

Daniel Larusso: I thought it came from Buddhist temples and stuff like that.

Miyagi: You too much TV.

—*The Karate Kid*

The following is a collection of terms common to martial arts and the martial arts genre. In the listing below (J) indicates a Japanese word, (C) Chinese, and (K) Korean.

Anime (J): The Japanese name for their extensive animation industry and all animation in general. Usually pronounced “annie-may.”

Cantonese (C): The common dialect of southern China and the city of Hong Kong. Currently, Hong Kong action films are shot in Cantonese (before 1970, they were usually shot in Mandarin).

Category One/Two/Three (C): Hong Kong’s system for rating films. A Category One film is open to all viewers, while a Category Two is for those 16 and over. Category Three films feature nudity, explicit sex, and/or violence, and are for adults only.

Cattie (C): An old form of measure in China. One cattie equals .605 kilograms or 1.3 pounds. The historical figure San Te was said to be able to lift 400 catties.

Chanbara (J): Also spelled *chambara*, these are Japanese historical samurai dramas. Known for their violence and bloodshed, they often have the same loose historical basis as Hong Kong’s wuxia films. The word *chanbara* comes from “chan-chan bara-bara,” the vocal sound effect for swords clashing.

Ch’i (C): Also spelt *chi* or *qi*, it means spirit, breath, or energy. In some martial arts philosophies or genres, it represents personal energy which a character can harness to create spectacular powers or effects. In Japan it is called *ki*, while in India it is called *prana*.

Ching Dynasty (C): The rulers of China from 1645 to 1911. Also known as the Manchus, the Ching replaced the Ming Dynasty, and are often the villains in many martial arts movies.

Darn Do (C): Also called a *Dan Do*, this is the Chinese broadsword. It has a broad, slightly curved blade and a length of red silk tied to the pommel.

Do (J, K): “The way of.” When used with regard to a martial arts style, it refers to the philosophical side of the art. Kendo, for example is “the way of the sword.” See *jutsu*.

Dojang (K): Training hall, school.

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Dojo (J): Training hall, school.

Face: When used in Chinese films, it means “respect.” “You will give me face!” is a common phrase in Hong Kong action cinema.

Feng Shui (C): “Wind and water.” The art of geomancy, or influencing the flow of *ch’i* through a structure by configuring elements both within and without a building.

Gung Fu (C): Chinese pronunciation of “kung fu.” Bruce Lee used “gong fu” in his writings on the martial arts, but it was quickly replaced in the West by kung fu as the TV series of that name became popular.

Hopping Corpse: The bodies of the dead brought back to a semblance of life. Seen in many Hong Kong films dealing with the supernatural, these undead hop instead of walk, and are usually stiff in their movements. Strong and immune to harm, they usually appear in great numbers. Hopping corpses are loosely derived from the *chiang-shih*, or Chinese vampire.

Hwarang-do (K): Korean martial art originally practiced by young nobles, or *hwarang*.

Jeet Kune Do (C): “The way of the intercepting fist.” Martial arts style developed by Bruce Lee that emphasizes using only the most practical elements of any fighting style.

Jidai-geki (J): Japanese word meaning “period plays.” It refers to such period samurai films as *The Seven Samurai* and *Yojimbo*. It’s the source for the name “Jedi” in the *Star Wars* films.

Jien (C): A long, straight, thin-bladed Chinese sword. Flexible and springy, it’s the typical weapon carried by traveling swordsman characters in Chinese cinema.

Jutsu (J): “The art of.” When used with regards to a martial arts style, it refers to the combat side of the art. Kenjutsu, for example is “the art of the sword.”

Karate (J): Common name for a wide variety of Japanese martial arts styles. To most Westerners, all martial arts are usually “karate” or “kung fu.” Literally translates to “empty hand” (“kara” empty, “te” hand). Originally it meant “China hand.”

Kata (J): A series of forms, exercises, or formalized training movements.

Katana (J): Japanese longsword. Usually called a “samurai sword” in the West.

Ki (J): Spirit; breath; energy. Also known as *wa*. In China it is called *ch’i*, in India *prana* (q.v.).

Kiai (J): The Japanese war shout.

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Ken (J): Fist, technique, sword.

Kwoon (C): Training hall, school.

Kung Fu (C): Generic name for Chinese martial arts. Translated literally it means “hard work,” or “skill acquired after long practice.” Thus, any craft (not just martial arts), demonstrated with great skill, can be said to show “strong kung fu.”

Lion Dancing: Chinese folk-art in which participants dress up in fanciful costumes resembling some sort of mythical beast (the ancient Chinese had no idea what a real lion looked like). Lion dancing is a traditional skill of martial arts masters, and is commonly seen in many martial arts films.

Mah Jong (C): Popular Chinese gambling game. It is superficially similar to dominoes, uses tiles, and has a complex scoring system.

Manchu (C): Another name for the Ching Dynasty (*q.v.*).

Mandarin (C): The main language of China and Taiwan.

Ming: The ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644. They were displaced by the Ching, which led to rebellions in Southern China.

Manga (J): Literally means “irresponsible pictures.” The word refers to Japanese comic books.

Minion: Any low-importance NPC opponent. Also known as “agents,” “mooks,” and “popcorn.”

Ninja (J): The shadow warriors of Japan who worked as spies and assassins. Ninja are incredibly popular in the martial arts genre and appear with great regularity in all forms of martial arts media. Commonly depicted in black uniforms and carrying a medium-length, straight-bladed sword, the ninja are often portrayed as having almost mystical abilities.

Nunchaku (J): A karate weapon consisting of two lengths of wood connected by a length of rope or chain. Known as a *seurng gee kwan* in Cantonese, the weapon is often called a “numchuck” or “nunchuck” in the West. Bruce Lee made the weapon popular by using it in all of his films, including some well-known scenes in *Enter The Dragon*.

Old School: Term used to describe pre-Bruce Lee martial artists and martial arts films. Bruce Lee represents the turning point from the old style of movie making to the more modern, dynamic films of Jackie Chan and Jet Li.

Peking Opera: A traditional Chinese performance art combining acrobatics, dance, martial arts and singing. Many well-known Hong Kong martial arts movie stars were trained in the Peking

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Opera before graduating to films.

Popcorn: See “Minion.”

Prana: The Indian word for *ch'i* (*q.v.*).

Sabom (K): Teacher.

Sensei (J): Teacher.

Sifu (C): Teacher.

Shaolin (C): Also called *Sil Lum*, this Buddhist sect is thought to be responsible for the origins of all Chinese fighting arts. The Indian monk Bodhidharma supposedly visited a Shaolin temple, and his exercises and breathing techniques formed the basis for what would eventually become kung fu. Naturally, Chinese martial arts films are rife with references to, and descriptions of, Shaolin temples, monks, and fighting styles.

Shinobi (J): Literally “stealers-in.” An early name for ninja (*q.v.*).

Stunt Monkeys: The acrobatic combat extras seen in any Hong Kong action film.

36th Chamber of Shaolin: According to legend, the Shaolin temple was divided into 35 chambers, each of which taught a specific aspect of kung fu. The monk San Te was said to have established a separate, 36th, Chamber for teaching the public.

Tae Kwon Do (K): “The way of kicking and punching.” Korean martial art developed from karate and *hwarang-do*.

Wa (J): Harmonious spirit. See *ch'i*.

Wing Chun (C): Aggressive Chinese martial art made popular by Bruce Lee. Originally developed for a woman, Yim Wing Chun, who gave her name to the style.

Wire-Fu: Western term for any Hong Kong film featuring characters flying and fighting while suspended from wires. See *Wuxia*.

Wu Shu (C): Literally translates to “military arts.” This Mandarin word refers to all of China’s martial arts, although now it is usually used to indicated the fighting and performance arts taught in mainland China.

Wuxia (C): A Chinese word meaning roughly “knight-errant.” It also refers to a genre of Hong Kong cinema featuring characters flying about and fighting while supported by a wire harness. This had lead to the word being translated to mean “flying men.”

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<1> **APPENDIX B: NAMES**

<3> **Burmese Names**

Burmese names generally do not include last names; people have given names only, plus other names assigned as titles (for example, Ma (“little sister”) or Daw (“aunt”) for women, and Maung (“little brother”) and U (“uncle”) for men).

Burmese children’s names traditionally depend on what day of the week they are born on -- each day has a letter assigned to it, and the child’s name will begin with that letter (for example, all Friday names begin with “th”).

Burmese male and female names may be the same; there is no clear differentiation as there is in Western cultures. Thus, one could play a male character named Myint, or a female one named Thant.

<4> **MALE GIVEN NAMES**

Aung Ye Kyaw, Aye, Aye Ko, Aye Thaung, Ba Hla, Ba Nyien, Ba Than, Ba Thaw, Ba Thein, Ba Thwin, Ba Tlome, Ba Tu, Ba Yin, Bo Gyaw, Bo Mya, Byi Gawbyan, Byu Gale, Chit Hlaing, Chit Swe, Chit Than, Gyi, Hiit Lat, Hla, Htoo, Jap Tu, Kala Byan, Kha, Khin, Khin Nyunt, Kyaw Ba, Lin, Lone, Mai, Min, Mya Thinn, Myint, Myo, Myo Nyunt, Ne Win, Ngwe Khain, Nu, Nyan Lin, Nyunt, On, Oo, Pe Thein, Phone Myint, Po Sin, Po Thit, Pye Thein, Sai Aung Tun, San Yu, Saw, Sein Lwin, Shwe, Soe, Tan, Than, Thant, Thaung, Thaw Shwe, Thet She, Thakin, Thin, Thint, Tin, Tin Aung, Tin Oo, Toe, Tun, Tun Kyi, Tun Tin, Tun Yi, Tun Yin Law, Van Kulh, Win, Yo. Zaw Win

<4> **FEMALE GIVEN NAMES**

Aung, Aye, Khin, Kyaw, Kyi, Meit, Mima, Mya, Myint, Ne Htun, Nu, Thaw, Thin, Tin, Warwar, Yon

<3> **Chinese Names**

With Chinese names, the family name goes first and the given name second. “Jim Smith” in the U.S. would be “Smith Jim” in China.

Personal names usually have great import to the Chinese. Often a name which deprecates the child is chosen, to make the child seem undesirable to evil spirits and other malevolent creatures. As someone goes through life, new names may be added to commemorate important events or occurrences (such as getting married, a new job, starting or graduating school, and so forth).

Americanized Given Names: Often, Americanized Chinese will have a traditional Chinese given name but also adopt a Western given name for use among westerners. A woman who is Shih Tse to the Chinese might be Sandra Shih to the Americans.

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<4> FAMILY NAMES

Áo, Ba, Bào, Cài, Cáo, Chan, Chang, Chao, Che, Chen, Cheng, Chiang, Chin, Ching, Cho, Chou, Chow, Chu, Chung, Cong, Cu♣, Deng, Fan, Fán, Fang, Féng, F□ng, Fok, Fong, Fù, Fung, Gài, G~n, Gao, Gào, G~o, G□, G□ng, Gòng, Gōng, G∩ng, G↓, Guàn, Gu~n, Guì, Gu♣, Guó, Gu∩, H|, Han, Hán, Háng, H|o, Hè, Ho, Hoi, Hou, Hóu, Hsaio, Hsu, Hu, Hú, Hù, Hua, Huà, Hu~, Huán, Huàn, Huang, Huáng, Huángf↓, Hui, Huì, Hung, I, Jí, Jì, Jǐ, J♣, J|, Jianbua, Jiang, Ji|ng, Ji~ng, J♣n, Jǐng, J♣ng, J©, King, Kōng, Ku|i, Kuàng, Ku~ng, Kuí, Kun, Kung, Kwan, Lai, Lài, Lan, Lán, Lang, Lang, Lao, Láo, L|o, Lei, Léi, L□ng, Leung, Li (Lee), Lí, Lì, Lǐ, Lián, Liang, Liáng, Liào, Lim, Lin, Lín, Líng, Liu, Liú, Lo, Lóng, Lóu, Lu, Lú, Lù, L↓, Lǔ, Luán, Luó, Luò, Ma, Mài, Mak, M|n, Mao, Máo, Méi, Méi, Mén, Mén, Mèng, Mèng, Miáo, Miào, Miào, Mǐn, Míng, Mò, Mòqí, Mù, Mùróng, N~, Ní, Nián, Niè, Niè, Ning, Ning, Niú, Niú, Ni↓, Øu, Øuyáng, Pak, Pán, P~n, Páng, Pei, Péi, Péng, Qí, Qǐ, Q♣, Qian, Qiáo, Qín, Qìng, Qiu, Qiú, Quán, R|n, Rén, Rong, Ru|n, Rui, Sà, Sau-Ki, Shàn, Shàng, Sh~ng, Shànggu~n, Shào, Shé, Sh□n, Shǐ, Sh♣, Shih, Shih, Shiu, Shòu, Sh©, Shuǐ, S♣, Siju, S♣k∩ng, S♣ma, S♣tú, Song, S∩ng, Su, Sù, Suí, Sun, S©n, Sung, Suǒ, Tah, Tái, Tan, Tán, Tang, Táng, T~ng, Teng, Téng, Tì, Tián, Ti□, Tieh, Tong, Tóng, Tsai, Tse, Wa, Wan, Wàn, Wang, Wáng, Wei, Wéi, Wèi, W□i, Wén, W□n, W□ng, Wong, Wu, W↓, W©, Xí, X♣, Xià, Xi|n, Xiàng, Xi~nyú, Xi~o, Xie, Xiè, X♣mén, Xíng, Xiu, Xu, Xú, X↓, Xún, Yán, Yàn, Y~n, Yang, Yáo, Yè, Yee, Yeh, Yì, Y♣, Yim, Yin, Yìn, Ying, Yíng, Yip, Yóu, Yu, Yú, Yù, Y↓, Yuan, Yuán, Yùchí, Yuè, Yuen, Yun, Yún, Yùn, Z~ng, Zeng, Z□ng, Zh~, Zhái, Zhàn, Zh~n, Zhang, Zh~ng, Zh|ngs©n, Zhao, Zh□n, Zheng, Zhèng, Zh♣, Zhòng, Zh∩ng, Zhoun, Zh∩u, Zhu, Zh©, Zhu~ng, Zh©gé, Zhu∩, Z∩ng, Z∩u

<4> MALE GIVEN NAMES

An, Angúo, Baio, Bang, Chao-hui, Cheh, Chen, Cheung, Chi, Chia-cheng, Chia-liang, Chih, Cho, Chung, Daquan, Dé-li, Deng, Déshì, Déwei, Dìngbang, Dou, Enlai, Fai, Fei, Feng, Fu, Fung-lung, Gan, Gangsheng, Gong, Gongquan, Gungwu, Guofeng, Guoquiang, Guotin, Guoxi, Haifeng, Hing, Hing-keung, Ho, Hong, Hop, Hou, Hsaio-hsien, Hu, Huailiang, Huang-fu, Huei-Ho, Hulin, Hung, Jaw-long, Jianguang, Jian-Guo, Jianyang, Jin, Jingquan, Jingrong, Jingsheng, Jinxi, Jizhong, Jun, Juntao, Keung, Kien, Kong, Kuang, Kuan-tai, Kung, Kungzheng, Kwan, Lanqing, Li, Lì, Liang, Liàng, Liangde, Lieh, Liko, Long-Xiang, Loo, Lok, Lung, Man, Manchu, Ming, Míng-hóá, Míng-tun, Nan, Ning, On, Park, Peng, Qichen, Qiuping, Qiu-Yue, Qung-Fa, Quon, Rongji, Runming, Shangkun, Shàoqiáng, Shen, Sheng, Shilín, Shing, Shiping, Shiyu, Shizhen, Shoi-ming, Shude, Shu-sai-chong, Siguang, Song, Songhe, Sueh-yén, Sying, Sze, Tai-Sheng, Tan, Tao, Te, Tsun-chùng, Tung, Wang, Wei, Weiqian, Weiqiang, Wing, Woo, Wu, Xiaopeng, Xiaoping, Xiaotao, Xiaoxuan, Xiaoyauin, Xinling, Xiu-Fang, Xun, Yang, Yifu, Yin, Yiquan, Yiren, Yixiao, Yong, Youming, Yu, Yuejei, Yun, Yun-Fat, Yuwei, Zemin, Zhang, Zhao, Zhìhuán, Zhiqiang, Zhiqing, Zhixin, Zhìyuan, Zhongli, Zhu, Zi, Zuang

<4> FEMALE GIVEN NAMES

Ah Cy, Ah Kum, Ah Lam, An, Bik, Bo, Chao-xing, Chen, Chin, Chow, Chu-hua, Chun, Chyou,

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Da-chun, Dai-tai, Da-xia, Ding, Eu-fùnh, Eu-meh, Fang, Far, Fung, Guan-yin, Guixian, Haixia, Howin, Hseuh, Hu, Hua, Hui, Hùifang, Hwei-ru, Jiahui, Jiani, Jianping, Jihong, Jing-wei, Juefeng, Juijuan, Jun, Kuai-hua, Kue-ching, Kwong, Lan, Lee, Lian, Lien, Lien-hua, Lì-húa, Lihwa, Lijuan, Lin, Ling, Lingjuan, Lingling, Linwei, Liping, Lìxué, Mao, Méh-è, Méh-fùnh, Mei, Mei-Chun, Meiyang, Meizhu, Min, Ming-hua, Mingxing, Mu-lan, Mu-tan, Nuwa, Peihsi, Peijun, Peipei, Ping, Qiànrú, Qing, Qiurui, Qun, Rongfang, Rúfen, Sheu-fùnh, Syà, Sying, Szu, Tao, Tè, Tse, Tu, Ushi, Weihong, Xiaobo, Xiaojun, Xiaolan, Xiaoquin, Xiaotian, Xilan, Xingjiang, Xiulan, Xiu-mei, Xiumin, Xuedi, Yan, Yáng, Yanhong, Yanjun, Yet-kwai, Yín, Ying, Yong, Yow, Yuefang, Yuèhai, Yuèqín, Yuet, Yu-jun, Yuk, Yuke, Yumei, Yüying, Yüzhen, Yuzhu, Zhen

<3> Japanese Names

Japanese names are presented with family name first, given name last. However, because of Western influences in modern Japan, many Japanese now write their names in the Western fashion (given name first, family name last).

<4> FAMILY NAMES

Abukawa, Aburakoji, Adachi, Aihara, Akada, Akashi, Akimoto, Akusawa, Akutagawa, Anekoji, Ankokuji, Ano, Aoki, Aonuma, Arai, Arakida, Arima, Asahina, Asaka, Asako, Asakura, Asaoka, Asayama, Ashiya, Atarashi, Awataguchi, Ayakoji, Baba, Ban, Bannen, Bessho, Bojo, Chiba, Chibanosuke, Chikusa, Cho, Choichi, Chosogabo, Daidoji, Daigo, Dan, Dei, Demura, Doi, Ebara, Edo, Egami, Endo, Emi, Emori, Endo, Fuji, Fujibayashi, Fujimoto, Fujimura, Fujikawa, Fujisawa, Fukami, Fukatsu, Fukawa, Fukazawa, Fukuchi, Fukunaka, Funakoshi, Furue, Furukawa, Furusaka, Fuse, Fuseya, Fushiki, Futamatsu, Futami, Futoshi, Gama, Gamo, Gojo, Gomi, Goto, Gushiken, Hachisuga, Hagiwara, Hama, Hamada, Hamuro, Hanagata, Hanazono, Handa, Hane, Hara, Harada, Hase, Hasegawa, Hashimoto, Hatakeyama, Hattori, Hayashi, Hayashida, Hayata, Hayuka, Henmi, Hida, Higshirokujo, Higuchi, Hikata, Hino, Hinonishi, Hioki, Hirai, Hirano, Hirata, Hirayama, Hiro, Hirose, Hisamatsu, Hisatomo, Hitomi, Hitotsuyanagi, Hoho, Hoki, Hongo, Honme, Hori, Horiuchi, Hoshino, Hosoi, Hosokawa, Hotta, Iba, Ichihashi, Ichino, Ichiyangi, Ide, Ido, Igarashi, Iida, Iimuro, Iizuka, Ijichi, Ikeda, Ikoma, Imagawa, Ina, Ino, Inohara, Inokuma, Inoue, Iriye, Isawa, Ise, Ishida, Ishigaya, Ishimaki, Isobe, Itagaki, Itazaki, Ito, Iwahara, Iwakura, Iwano, Iwata, Iyohara, Izeki, Jikoji, Jimyoin, Jinbo, Kabeyama, Kadono, Kainsho, Kagabu, Kagawa, Kaji, Kajino, Kajitani, Kajiyama, Kakei, Kamachi, Kamadai, Kamimura, Kaminaga, Kamonomiya, Kanbayashi, Kaneko, Kanemaru, Kanesaka, Kano, Karasumaru, Kasai, Kasamatsu, Kashida, Katano, Kato, Katsu, Katsuragawa, Kawaguchi, Kawai, Kawanabe, Kaya, Kazanin, Kazuo, Kenmotsu, Ki, Kihara, Kikuchi, Kimotsuki, Kimura, Kimuro, Kira, Kishiro, Kitabatake, Kiyooka, Kobayagawa, Kobayashi, Kochi, Koda, Kohone, Koizumi, Kojima, Komakine, Komparu, Kon, Kondo, Konishi, Kono, Koo, Kosuge, Kozukuri, Kubota, Kuge, Kuna, Kuni, Kuramitsu, Kuramoto, Kurifuda, Kuroyanagi, Kusakabe, Kushimoto, Kutsuki, Kuwayama, Kyogoko, Machida, Maeda, Maehata, Magaribuchi, Maki, Mamiya, Manabe, Maru, Masaki, Masamori, Matsubayashi, Matsudaira, Matsukara, Matsumara, Matsumoto, Matsumura, Matsuoka, Matsushige, Matsuyama, Matsuzaki,

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Menokoji, Mibu, Miki, Mimuroto, Minase, Mishina, Mitsuhashi, Mitsukuri, Mitsuya, Miura, Miuranosuke, Miyajima, Miyakawa, Miyamoto, Miyazawa, Mizunoya, Mochizuki, Monna, Monobe, Mori, Morioka, Morisue, Morita, Motoyoshi, Mukai, Muramatsu, Mushiakoji, Muto, Mutsu, Nabeshima, Nabo, Nagai, Nagaokita, Naito, Nakada, Nakamikado, Nakamura, Nakane, Nakanichi, Nakao, Nakatoni, Nakayama, Nambu, Namekata, Narau, Narimatsu, Naruhito, Narushima, Nasu, Nataga, Natsume, Negishi, Nie, Nii, Niinomi, Niki, Ninomiya, Nishi, Nishidoin, Nishikigori, Nishimura, Nishirokujo, Nitta, Niyakuoji, Noda, Noisski, Nomura, Nonoyama, Noro, Nose, Oba, Ochi, Oda, Odaka, Ogazawara, Oguri, Ogushi, Ohara, Oi, Oinuma, Okamura, Okano, Oki, Okudaira, Omikado, Ono, Onuki, Ooka, Orui, Osaki, Oseki, Oshikoji, Otagaki, Otaku, Otani, Ouchi, Owada, Ozaki, Reizei, Rokkaku, Rokugo, Rokujo, Ryojoji, Ryojoji, Saai, Saigusa, Saito, Sakai, Sakakiwara, Sakamoto, Sakiyurai, Samukawa, Sanai, Sanjonishi, Sasakawa, Sasaki, Sasase, Satomura, Sawai, Sekiguchi, Sekine, Senbon, Senke, Serizawa, Shiba, Shibanokuji, Shibata, Shibazani, Shibuki, Shibuya, Shijo, Shimabayashi, Shimakage, Shimazu, Shimoeda, Shimura, Shin, Shinjo, Shinoyama, Shinozaki, Shiokawa, Shiomi, Shirai, Shirasu, Shiskikura, Sho, Shokei, So, Sofue, Sohda, Somo, Sono, Sonoda, Soshi, Sotomura, Soyeshima, Sue, Suganuma, Sugimoto, Sugiyama, Suhara, Suwa, Tachinaba, Tada, Taguchi, Tajiha, Takachihara, Takabe, Takahashi, Takaki, Takano, Takara, Takatsukasa, Takayama, Takayanagi, Takeba, Takeda, Takemoto, Takemura, Takenoya, Takikawa, Tamamatsu, Tanabe, Tanaka, Tanba, Tani, Tanida, Tanji, Tarao, Tashiro, Tazawa, Tenno, Terasaka, To, Togashi, Togi, Tokudaiji, Tomizawa, Torii, Toshima, Tokooya, Tozawa, Tsubai, Tsuchihashi, Tsugane, Tsuji, Tsukahara, Tsukawaki, Tsumori, Tsurimi, Tsutsumi, Uchikawa, Uehara, Uemura, Uesugi, Ukita, Unno, Uramatsu, Urya, Usami, Ushigome, Utsonomiya, Wada, Wakafuji, Wakizaka, Watada, Watanabe, Tabe, Yagyu, Yamadera, Yamaguchi, Yamakawa, Yamakazi, Yamamoto, Yamana, Yamanouchi, Yamashita, Yamawaki, Yanada, Yano, Yasuki, Yoda, Yogo, Yokose, Yokoyama, Yoneno, Yoneta, Yoshida, Yoshikawa, Yoshimatsu, Yoshisato, Yuasa, Yuhi, Yui, Yura, Yusa, Zakoji

<4> MALE GIVEN NAMES

Agatamori, Akae, Akahito, Akemi, Akihiko, Akiie, Akinobu, Akinori, Akio, Akira, Akiuji, Akiyoshi, Arimoro, Atsutada, Azumamaro, Baisetsu, Bakin, Bancho, Bantaro, Botan, Chikashira, Chikatsada, Chikauji, Chikayoshi, Choei, Chokei, Chonei, Daini, Dokwan, Dosan, Doshun, Eiichi, Eiji, Eizo, Ekei, Ekiken, Emishi, Emon, Fuhito, Fujifusa, Fujitsuna, Fusaaki, Fusaie, Fusasaki, Fuyuyoshi, Gekkei, Gennai, Gidayu, Goemon, Gohei, Gongoro, Gonsai, Gorodayu, Hakusekei, Hamanari, Hamaomi, Hangwan, Haruhiko, Haruhiro, Haruhisa, Haruki, Harusue, Harutomo, Haseo, Hayanari, Heihachiro, Hideaki, Hidekani, Hidemasa, Hidetsugu, Hideyoshi, Hikaru, Hiroie, Hiromasa, Hiroshi, Hiroteru, Hirotuna, Hiroyo, Hisahide, Hisashi, Hisato, Hisemasa, Hisoi, Hisoka, Hitoshi, Hoitsu, Hokiichi, Hoshu, Ieharu, Iemoto, Ienobu, Ietsugu, Ieyasu, Iezane, Ikku, Imakebito, Iname, Isamu, Isao, Isas, Ishi, Issai, Iwao, Jikkyu, Jingoro, Jiro, Jo, Joji, Jun, Junan, Junkei, Junzo, Jusai, Kabun, Kageki, Kagekiyo, Kagemoto, Kagetoki, Kahei, Kanamura, Kanamichi, Katsumi, Kane, Kanesue, Kaneyasu, Kauren, Katsumi, Katsushige, Kazuhiro, Kazuo, Keiki, Keisai, Keisuke, Ken, Kenichi, Kenji, Kenko, Kenshin, Kiichi, Kimmochi, Kin, Kinsue, Kinto, Kintsune, Kiyogimi, Kiyomoro, Kiyoshi, Kiyotsura, Koetsu, Koji, Kokan, Konyo, Korekado, Korenao, Korin, Koshiro, Kumpei, Kurajimaro,

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Kuromaro, Kawaran, Kyoji, Kyoso, Makato, Makoto, Masahiro, Masaichi, Masami, Masao, Masato, Masue, Masutomo, Matabei, Matate, Me, Michichika, Michio, Mifune, Mitsuo, Mitsuyako, Mochikune, Mochimoto, Mondo, Monzaemon, Morihiro, Morito, Moroe, Motoki, Motomari, Motomuchi, Munekiyo, Munesuke, Muneto, Muramune, Nagachika, Nagate, Naoko, Naozumi, Natsui, Nobuhiro, Nobunaga, Nobuyuki, Norikatsu, Norimoto, Noritoshi, Noriuji, Noriyori, Norizane, Ogame, Ogi, Oguramaro, Oiwa, Okyo, Otomoro, On-shi, Otondo, Oyori, Oyumi, Raiden, Razau, Renshi, Rikyu, Ringo, Rinzo, Rokuemon, Ryoi, Ryokoi, Ryoshun, Saburo, Sadafuji, Sadaie, Sadakata, Sadamasa, Sadataka, Sadauji, Sadayoshi, Sakehisa, Samba, Samuru, Sanehima, Saneyuki, San-yo, Sanzo, Saru, Sawao, Seiki, Seikwa, Seimei, Seiri, Shigehide, Shigekatsu, Shigekori, Shigenari, Shigeru, Shigetani, Shigeyoshi, Shikei, Shikibu, Shipei, Shin, Shingen, Shinji, Shinobu, Shinsaku, Shiro, Shirozaemon, Sho, Shoan, Shonagon, Shuji, Shumkichi, Shun, Shunsui, Sodan, Soi, Sorai, Sorin, Soun, Suefusa, Sukechika, Sukena, Sukune, Sumio, Surimoto, Surugamaro, Tadaaki, Tadafusa, Tadahiro, Tadao, Tadashi, Tadataka, Tadatomo, Tadatsuno, Tadauji, Tadayoshi, Taiga, Takaai, Takaie, Takakage, Takamori, Takanoba, Takao, Takashi, Takatomo, Takatora, Takaugi, Takehide, Takeichi, Takeo, Takeshi, Takuji, Tameaki, Tameie, Tamekago, Tameyori, Tamikichi, Tampaku, Tamuramoro, Tanenara, Taro, Tarozayemon, Tashiro, Tatsutsaka, Tensui, Teriuihi, Teruzumi, Toemon, Tofu, Togai, Togama, Togan, Toju, Tokihiro, Tokimune, Tokisada, Tokiyuki, Tokubei, Tokusuke, Tomi, Tomoie, Tomomitsu, Tomomune, Tomonori, Toshi, Toshifusa, Toshihiro, Toshiie, Toshikatsu, Toshinao, Toshio, Toshisue, Toyoharu, Toyokazu, Toyokuni, Tsuburu, Tsuginawa, Tsunashige, Tsunayoshi, Tsunetake, Tsunetsugu, Tsurunaga, Tsuruyuki, Tsutomu, Uchinaro, Ujiaki, Ujichika, Ujiharuru, Ujikiyo, Ujimitsu, Ujiasu, Ujiyori, Ukon, Umakai, Umbin, Umon, Uona, Wakimura, Yakamochi, Yasahiro, Yasuchika, Yasuhira, Yasuhiro, Yasumoto, Yasumura, Yasuo, Yasushi, Yasushige, Yasutoki, Yasuyo, Yayu, Yemon, Yorto, Yoriashi, Yorifusa, Yorikane, Yorinari, Yorinobu, Yorisada, Yoritada, Yoriyasu, Yoriyuka, Yoroze, Yosai, Yoshi, Yoshiaki, Yoshiakira, Yoshifura, Yoshiharu, Yoshihide, Yoshihisa, Yoshikage, Yoshikane, Yoshikaru, Yoshikatsu, Yoshima, Yohimitsu, Yoshimoto, Yoshimune, Yoshinaga, Yoshinao, Yoshinobu, Yoshinori, Yoshio, Yoshioki, Yoshiro, Yoshishoge, Yoshisuge, Yoshitaka, Yoshito-hi, Yoshitoshi, Yoshitoyo, Yoshitsugu, Yoshitsune, Yoshituge, Yoshiyaru, Yoshiyori, Yoshiyuki, Yoshizane, Yoshizumi, Yujo, Yukihiro, Yukiie, Yukimasa, Yukimori, Yukimura, Yukinaga, Yukio, Yukitsune, Yukiyasu, Yukiyori, Zenan, Zeshin, Zuiken

<4> FEMALE GIVEN NAMES

Ai, Aiko, Akako, Akasuki, Akemi, Aki, Akiko, Akina, Anzu, Aoi, Asa, Au, Ayako, Ayame, Ayano, Azami, Chika, Chikako, Chitose, Chiyo, Chizu, Cho, Chuemoko, Dai, Den, Echiko, Emiko, Etsu, Etsuko, Fujiko, Fuyu, Gen, Gin, Ginko, Haketoko, Hama, Hanako, Haru, Harue, Haruko, Hatsu, Haya, Hide, Hideko, Hideyo, Hiro, Hiroko, Hiromi, Hisa, Hisano, Hoshi, Iku, Ima, Imoko, Ine, Iruko, Ito, Iwa, Izuko, Jin, Junko, Juri, Kachiko, Kaede, Kagami, Kaiyo, Kama, Kamako, Kame, Kameko, Kana, Kane, Kaoru, Kata, Katsu, Katsuko, Katsumi, Kawa, Kaya, Kayoko, Kazashi, Kazu, Kazuko, Kei, Keiko, Kenko, Kichi, Kikue, Kikuko, Kikuno, Kimi, Kimie, Kin, Kinu, Kinuko, Kinuye, Kishi, Kiwa, Kiyo, Kiyoko, Kiyomi, Kiyoshi, Ko, Kohana, Koko, Koma, Kome, Konomi, Koto, Kozakura, Kozue, Kukiko, Kuma, Kumi, Kumiko, Kuni, Kunie, Kuniko, Kura, Kuri, Kusuriko, Kyoko, Leiko, Machi, Mai, Makiko, Manako, Mari,

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Mariko, Masa, Masae, Masago, Masako, Masu, Masuko, Matsu, Matsuko, Mayumi, Michi, Michiko, Midori, Mië, Mieko, Mika, Mikazuki, Miki, Mikie, Mina, Mine, Mineko, Misao, Mitsu, Miwa, Miwako, Miyo, Miyoko, Miyuki, Mochiko, Mon, Morie, Moto, Mura, Murasaki, Nagisa, Namako, Nami, Namiko, Nani, Naoki, Nara, Nari, Nariako, Nariko, Natsu, Nishi, Nori, Norie, Noriko, Nui, Nyoko, Orino, Otsu, Rai, Raku, Ran, Rei, Reiko, Ren, Riku, Roku, Ruri, Ruriko, Ryo, Ryu, Sachi, Sachiko, Sada, Sadako, Sadchiko, Saeko, Sai, Sakaë, Saki, Sakura, Sata, Sato, Sawa, Saya, Sei, Seiko, Seki, Sen, Setsu, Setsuko, Shigé, Shiho, Shihobu, Shika, Shikako, Shina, Shino, Shirushi, Shizu, Shizue, Shizuka, Shizuko, Shizuyo, Shoko, Soko, Sugi, Suki, Sumi, Sumie, Sute, Suzu, Suzue, Suzuki, Tadamako, Taka, Takako, Takara, Take, Takeko, Taki, Tama, Tamaki, Tamako, Tame, Tami, Tamiko, Tanaka, Tane, Tani, Taniko, Taru, Tatsu, Tazu, Teruoko, Tetsu, Toki, Tokiwa, Toko, Tokuko, Tokutako, Tomi, Tomiju, Tomo, Tomotoko, Tora, Tori, Toshi, Toshiko, Toyoko, Tsughi, Tsuko, Tsuna, Tsuru, Ujikiko, Umako, Umeko, Umeno, Urano, Uta, Utako, Utano, Yachi, Yaeko, Yasu, Yasuko, Yayoi, Yei, Yo, Yoi, Yoko, Yone, Yori, Yoritoko, Yoshe, Yoshi, Yoshike, Yoshiko, Yoshioko, Yuki, Yukiako, Yukie, Yukiko, Yukiyo, Yuko, Yumi, Yuri, Yuriko, Zana

<3> Korean Names

Korean names also go in the order of family name first, given name last.

Traditionally, Korean first names have two syllables. The first syllable is shared by all siblings of the same gender, and the second syllable is individualized. The first syllable is predestined for generations and is based on a cycle which is determined by the family name. However, as Korea becomes modernized and more Koreans move away from their native villages or lands, this system is breaking down and is often no longer used.

<4> FAMILY NAMES

Ahn, An, Baik, Bae, Bang, Byon, Chang, Cho, Choi, Chol, Chung, Gu, Gwang, Ha, Han, Ho, Huang, Hwang, Jang, Jeon, Jeong, Jeung, Jo, Jong, Jung, Kang, Kim, Kwang, Kwon, Lee, Li, Ma, Moon, Oh, Paek, Pai, Park, Ri, Ryom, San, Seo, Shin, Si, Sin, Son, Song, Sung, Yang, Yi, Yoon, You, Youn, Yu, Yun

<4> MALE GIVEN NAMES

Bon-hwa, Bong-chol, Byeoung-keun, Chang-hee, Chang-sun, Chin-hae, Chin-hwa, Chul-moo, Chulsoon, Chung-ho, Dae-du, Dong-gul, Dong-sun, Dong-yul, Duck-hwan, Duck-young, Eui-kon, Eui-tae, Eunkyhung, Gab-do, Gyong-si, Hae-jin, Hae-sup, Hak-kun, Han-gyong, Ho-bong, Ho-jun, Ho-pyong, Hyang-soon, Hyong-kim, Hyong-zoo, Hyun-ki, Hyun-shik, In-su, In-sung, In-Tak, Jae-hwa, Jae-yup, Jeaki, Jong-kyu, Joon-ho, Joon-sup, Jung-keun, Jung-mo, Jung-oh, Juyung, Kang-dae, Ki-woon, Kwang-sun, Kyou-chull, Mal-chin, Man-shik, Man-young, Mun-hee, Myung-dae, Myung-suck, Nam-hong, Pan-yong, Sang-mun, Sang-ook, Se-hong, Seung-lip, Shin-cho, Soo-ann, Soon-chun, Suck-chin, Sun-tae, Sung-joo, Weon-kee, Won-shik, Won-sop, Yo-sub, Yong-chul, Yong-ik, Yong-jo, Yong-kyun, Yong-sun, Young-hai, Young-jae, Young-joon, Young-sam, Young-soo, Young-su, Youngchul

Ninja Hero Playtest Copy

<4> FEMALE GIVEN NAMES

Ae-cha, Aei-young, Bong-cha, Byung-soon, Chan-sook, Chin-sun, Choon-hee, Choon-yei, Chun-ja, Chun-ok, Chung-ae, Chung-cha, Eun-kyung, Eun-sook, Hae, Hae-won, He-ran, He-suk, Hea-jung, Hee-young, Heesok, Ho-sook, Hwa-soo, Hwa-soon, Hwa-young, Hyang-soon, Hyosonn, Hyoui-soon, Hyun-ae, Hyun-ok, Hyung-sook, Jae-hwa, Jin-ho, Jong, Jung-a, Jung-hye, Kum-ja, Kyung-hee, Kyung-hu, Kyung-hwa, Kyung-ja, Kyung-soon, Mi-cha, Mi-hi, Mi-ja, Mikum, Mi-na, Mi-ok, Mi-sook, Mun-hee, Myong-suk, Myung-hee, Myung-ok, Myung-sun, Ok-hwa, Ok-jim, Ok-rim, Ok-sun, Soo-kyung, Soon-bok, Soon-ei, Soon-ok, Soon-yi, Su-dae, Sun-hi, Syung-soon, Yang-gae, Yeun-ja, Young-hee, Young-il, Young-ja, Young-nae, Young-soon, Zung-bok

<3> Thai Names

Thai names are usually written family name first, given name second.

<4> FAMILY NAMES

Adireksan, Adulyadej, Angsun, Aran, Aroon, Asnee, Atid, Attakorn, Ayutthaya, Banthadtan, Bhotiwihok, Boonyanet, Chinpee, Chokloikaew, Chomanan, Chongkittavron, Chookhae, Choonhavan, Choosri, Chuchart, Decha, Hoonsilapa, Intaratanon, Isaraphanich, Jayanandana, Jingsornthong, Kaeothong, Kajornprasart, Kajornprusart, Kamheangpatiyooth, Kanchanalak, Kasem, Kavitanon, Kiet, Kijwattananuson, Kingchakaew, Kittakachorn, Kovit, Laoapasuwong, Leekpai, Lek, Mahidol, Malinee, Mamanee, Methathip, Mitpanich, Moolasartsathorn, Nimmanahaeminda, Niran, Nirapathpongporn, Patano, Pechboonha, Phinpathya, Phromphan, Phuengsujarit, Phutrakul, Pimchaichon, Pitsuwan, Poonswad, Potipimpanon, Prajadhipok, Prakarnchai, Pramroj, Pravat, Pricha, Pulsathornkul, Prapavat, Puanmuangpak, Rattakul, Rojanasatian, Rogjanasakul, Runrot, Saengthong, Sakornpitak, Sarasart, Savetsila, Sawprapassorn, Sawsiriphan, Sirichanya, Siripongs, Snidvongs, Sompong, Soonsiri, Soothornsima, Srichai, Suchit, Sudlabha, Sukmark, Sum, Suphakat, Thanajaro, Therdchai, Thiamprasert, Thienthong, Thomwang, Thonesavanh, Thongsamak, Tinsulanonda, Titisaksoporn, Ukol, Urairat, Vajiralongkorn, Vanikabutra, Virawan, Virote, Warathongchai, Warrasan, Wongwacharakarn, Yongchaiyudh

<4> MALE GIVEN NAMES

Amnuay, Ananda, Apichart, Arthit, Banyat, Bhichai, Bhumibol, Boonchu, Boonma, Boontung, Brosong, Buangam, Budin, Bunbongkarn, Chakrabandhu, Chalong, Chaovalit, Chaowas, Charnchai, Chatichai, Chavalit, Cheewaket, Chennoi, Chetta Chinawoot, Chiradet, Chuan, Chuchai, Dentharonee, Jaturun, Jessupha, Jirasak, Jutharat, Kavi, Khunpol, Khunsoek, Kitikorn, Kongbej, Kriangsak, Kukrit, Molthisok, Niphon, Nirund, Niyom, Nongkhai, Pan, Phaithoon, Phisan, Phongsak, Praman, Prem, Sampan, Samyan, Sanan, Savit, Sawai, Seni, Siddhi, Singnum, Snoh, Sombat, Somchith, Somdej, Somsak, Somwang, Somwong, Staporn, Suchin, Surasak,

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Surin, Suthep, Tarrin, Teera, Thanom, Thirdpong, Thitipan, Uthai, Vajiralongkorn, Varunvirya, Vichit, Vitaya, Vithoon, Vuthisit, Wasan, Winai, Wittaya, Yongyuth

<4> FEMALE GIVEN NAMES

Ausanat, Busaya, Chulabhorn, Daw, Duangnet, Durudee, Jongchit, Kanok, Kanya, Lawan, Mali, Maniwan, Mayuree, Nataya, Nissa, Padungsri, Phailin, Praitun, Punngarm, Ratana, Sirindhorn, Solada, Sopa, Suchin, Suleeport, Sumalee, Sunee, Sunisa, Tasanee, Tida, Ubol, Wasana

<3> Vietnamese Names

Traditionally, Vietnamese names are written like other Asian names (family name first, given name second). However, in the modern day, Vietnamese names are often written in the Western style (given name first, family name second), particularly by Vietnamese living in the United States.

<4> FAMILY, NAMES

Bui, Chin, Chinh, Cong, Dang, Diem, Do, Don, Dong, Du, Duc, Duong, Hong, Hung, Huong, Huyhn, Huynh, Lai, Lam, Le, Linh, Luong, Ly, Manh, Minh, Ngo, Ngoc, Ngoc, Nguyen, Pham, Thai, Thieu, Tran, Trang, Tranh, Trinh, Truong, Tun, Vu

<4> MALE, GIVEN, NAMES

An, Antoan, Bang, Bao, Bay, Binh, Buu, Cadao, Cambao, Cham, Chan, Chi, Chim, Cuong, Dan, Dat, Dieu, Din, Dinh, Dong, Duc, Duong, Duy, Gan, Gia, Gian, Hai, Hieu, Hoa, Hoang, Hoc, Hung, Huyen, Hy, Kha, Kim, Lam, Lap, Long, Lua, Minh, Mui, Nam, Ngai, Nghi, Nghia, Ngo, Ngoc, Ngu, Nguieu, Nguyen, Nhu, Nien, Pham, Phat, Phong, Phu, Phuoc, Pin, Quang, Qui, Quy, Son, Tai, Tam, Tan, Teo, Thai, Thang, Thanh, Thian, Thien, Tho, Thu, Thuc, Tin, Tinh, Tong, Triet, Truong, Tu'ong, Tu, Tuan, Tung, Tuyen, Van, Vinh, Vo, Yu

<4> FEMALE, GIVEN, NAMES

Ai, Am, An, Anh, Be, Bian, Bich, Bua, Cai, Cam, Cara, Choy, Dao, Diem, Duong, Ha, Hang, Hanh, Hoa, Hong, Hue, Huong, Hyunh, Kieu, Kim, Lan, Lang, Le, Mai, Mieu, My, Ngoc, Nguyet, Nu, Ping, Tam, Tao, Thanh, Thao, The, Thu, Thuy, Ti, Trang, Trinh, Truc, Trung, Tuyet, Ut, Viet, Xuan

<1> **APPENDIX C: FILMOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Let Mortal Kombat begin!

—Shang Tzung, *Mortal Kombat*

<2> **HONG KONG ACTION CINEMA**

A Man Called Hero

Ashes of Time

The Blade

The Bride With White Hair 1 & 2

Butterfly and Sword

A Chinese Ghost Story 1-3

A Chinese Odyssey I: Pandora's Box

A Chinese Odyssey II: Cinderella

Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon

Eastern Condors

Enter the Fat Dragon

Executioners

Dragon Inn

Dragons Forever

Drunken Master 2

Duel to the Death

Fist of Legend

The Five Deadly Venoms

Flying Dagger

Fong Sai Yuk 1 & 2

The Heroic Trio

Iron Monkey

A Kid From Tibet

Kung Fu Cult Master

Last Hero in China

Once Upon a Time in China 1-6

Police Story

Project : A 1 & 2

The Stormriders

Supercop

Swordsman 1-3

Tai Chi Master

Twin Dragons

Wing Chun

Wheels On Meals

Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **WHAT TO WATCH?**

If you've never seen a Hong Kong action film before, your best bet is to find *A Chinese Ghost Story*. Although the subtitles are suspect, and it might be a bit slow-paced for some, the last half of the film is filled with all sorts of great effects and action scenes, which more than make up for its sedate beginning. In addition, *A Chinese Ghost Story* is positively crammed with all sorts of common Wuxia subgenre elements. If you don't like this film, odds are you won't care for *The Blade*, *Dragon Inn* or *Swordsman* either.

For a full introduction to Hong Kong cinema, and wuxia action specifically, the author recommends the following five films: *A Chinese Ghost Story*, *The Bride With the White Hair*, *Iron Monkey*, *Swordsman 2*, and *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*. These five films contain a broad mix of wuxia elements and feature a wide variety of over-the-top action sequences.

If you can't find any of these movies at your local video store, then try the classic American film *Big Trouble In Little China*. It has all you can ask for in a wuxia film, and more, including some great character ideas, excellent special effects, well-done action scenes, and extremely funny character interaction and one-liners.

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<2> **JAPANESE ANIME**

Cowboy Bebop
Dagger of Kamui
Dragonball Z
Fatal Fury
Fist of the North Star
Jubei-chan The Ninja Girl
Monkey
Ninja Scroll
Outlaw Star
Ranma 1/2
Raven Tengu Kabuto
Street Fighter II
Variable Geo

<2> **JAPANESE CINEMA**

Hari-Kiri
The Hidden Fortress
Legend of Eight Samurai
Long Wolf and Cub (series)
Samurai 1-3

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Seven Samurai
Samurai Rebellion
Sanjuro
The Sword of Doom
Yojimbo
Zatoichi (series)
Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo

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<box> FILMS LISTED BY ACTOR/DIRECTOR

Here's a brief filmography for some of the biggest names in martial arts cinema.

Brigitte Lin Ching-hsia: *Ashes of Time*, *The Bride With White Hair 1 and 2*, *Dragon Inn*, *Swordsman 2 and 3* (a.k.a. *East is Red*), *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*.

Bruce Lee: *The Big Boss* (a.k.a. *Fists of Fury*), *Enter the Dragon*, *Fist of Fury* (a.k.a. *The Chinese Connection*), *Return of the Dragon*

Jackie Chan: *Armor of God*, *Armor of God 2: Operation Condor*, *City Hunter*, *Dragons Forever*, *Drunken Master 2*, *Police Story*, *Project: A 1 and 2*, *Rumble in the Bronx*, *Supercop*, *Twin Dragons*, *Wheels on Meals*.

Jet Li: *Fist of Legend*, *Fong Sai Yuk 1 and 2*, *Kiss of the Dragon*, *Kung Fu Cult Master*, *Last Hero in China*, *Once Upon a Time in China 1-3 and 6*, *The One*, *Romeo Must Die*, *Swordsman II*, *Tai Chi Master*

Michelle Yeoh: *Butterfly and Sword*, *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*, *Executioners*, *The Heroic Trio*, *Tai Chi Master*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Wing Chun*

Samo Hung Kam-bo: *Dragons Forever*, *Eastern Condors*, *Enter the Dragon*, *Enter the Fat Dragon*, *Pedicab Driver*, *Project: A*, *Shanghai Express*, *Spooky Encounters*, *Wheels on Meals*, *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*

Toshiro Mifune: *The Hidden Fortress*, *Samurai 1-3*, *Seven Samurai*, *Samurai Rebellion*, *Sanjuro*, *The Sword of Doom*, *Yojimbo*, *Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo*

Tsui Hark: *The Blade*, *Burning Paradise*, *A Chinese Ghost Story 1-3*, *Dragon Inn*, *Green Snake*, *Once Upon a Time in China 1-6*, *Swordsman 2*, *Wicked City*, *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*.

Yuen Woo-ping: *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon*, *Drunken Master*, *Eastern Condors*, *Fist of Legend*, *Iron Monkey*, *Last Hero in China*, *The Matrix*, *Once Upon a Time in China*, *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow*, *Wing Chun*

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<2> **JAPANESE MANGA**

Blade of the Immortal
Dark Angel
Dragonball
Fist of the North Star
Ranma 1/2
Striker (a.k.a. *Spriggen*)

<2> **AMERICAN ACTION CINEMA**

Above the Law
The Big Brawl
Big Trouble In Little China
Bloodsport
Charlie's Angels
Enter The Dragon
Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai
Kiss of the Dragon
The Last Dragon
Marked for Death
The Matrix
Mortal Kombat
Mortal Kombat II: Annihilation
The One
Romeo Must Die
Street Fighter
X-Men

[[SIDEBAR]]

<box> **VIDEO FIGHTING GAMES**

There are many video fighting games out there, with all sorts of characters, gameplay, and storylines. Some of the best in terms of interesting and creative character designs are: *Advanced Variable Geo*, *Battle Arena Toshinden*, *Darkstalkers (Vampire Saviour)*, *Dead Or Alive 2*, *Fatal Fury*, *Guilty Gear X*, *King Of Fighters* (and its numerous sequels), *Mortal Kombat* (and its numerous sequels), *Samurai Showdown*, *Soul Calibur*, *Street Fighter II* (and its numerous sequels), and *Tekken*.

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<2> **AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS**

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Bulletproof Monk
Gen 13 Bootleg: Grunge The Movie
Sin City
Usagi Yojimbo

<2> AMERICAN TELEVISION

Jackie Chan Adventures
Kung Fu
Kung Fu: The Legend Continues
Martial Law
Xena: Warrior Princess

<2> BOOKS

Chow, David and Richard Spangler. *Kung Fu: History, Philosophy and Technique*
Dannen, Fredric and Barry Long. *Hong Kong Babylon*
Logan, Bey. *Hong Kong Action Cinema*
Hammond, Stefan and Mike Wilkins. *Sex and Zen & A Bullet in the Head*

<2> ROLEPLAYING GAMES

Phythyon, John R. *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*
Breakey, Lise and Bruce Thomas. *Furry Pirates*
Bridges, Bill, Phil Brucato, Brian Campbell, Sean Lang, Mike Tinney, and Stephan Wieck. *Street Fighter The Storytelling Game*
Bryant, Anthony J. and Mark T. Arsenault. *Sengoku*
Carella, C.J. *GURPS Martial Arts*
Gold, Lee and Hunter Thompson. *GURPS Japan*
Kane, Thomas M. *GURPS China*
Laws, Robin. *Feng Shui*
Lindroos, Nicole, Jeff Mackintosh, Chris Pramas, and Lucien Soulban. *Hong Kong Action Theater! Second Edition*
O'Sullivan, Steffan. *GURPS Swashbucklers*
Pramas, Chris. *Dragon Fist*
Pulver, David L. and Mark C. MacKinnon. *Big Eyes Small Mouth*
Stolze, Greg. *Usagi Yojimbo Roleplaying Game*
Walton, Ken and Jo Walton. *GURPS Celtic Myth*
Wick, John. *Legend of the Five Rings*
Wujcik, Eric. *Mystic China*

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Back Cover Text:

MY KUNG FU CAN BEAT YOUR KUNG FU!

The latest in the Hero Games line of genre books, *Ninja Hero* discusses and describes the martial arts genre for gaming, and shows how to create characters, campaigns, wondrous weapons, and other elements of martial arts films using the *HERO System* rules. It includes:

- a complete review of the martial arts genre and its five subgenres — Realistic, Cinematic, Wuxia, Video Game, and Anime — with guidelines and suggestions for simulating each part of the genre using the *HERO System* rules
- an extensive section on creating martial arts characters using the *HERO System*, including Package Deals for major character archetypes such as the Samurai or Chinese Knight-Errant
- suggested rules additions and variations for simulating martial combat in the various subgenres
- a comprehensive chapter on gamemastering martial arts games
- a detailed sourcebook including maps, five sample campaigns, nearly two dozen characters for the various subgenres, sample magic weapons, and plot seeds
- and more!

Whatever type of martial arts action you prefer, *Ninja Hero* helps you simulate it in your games!

[[SMALLER TEXT]]

Ninja Hero extensively references *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, and does not reprint text contained in that book. Readers may find it helpful to have both volumes.

[[END SMALLER TEXT]]

Price: \$26.99

Stock Number: DOJHERO400