A detailed illustration of a warrior in traditional Chinese attire, heavily stained with blood. The warrior is walking through a courtyard with traditional buildings in the background. The ground is covered in blood splatters, and the buildings also show signs of blood. The overall tone is dark and gritty.

RIGHTEOUS BLOOD RUTHLESS BLADES

WUXIA ROLEPLAYING

**BRENDAN DAVIS
JEREMY BAI**

RIGHTEOUS BLOOD RUTHLESS BLADES

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 OSPREY
GAMES



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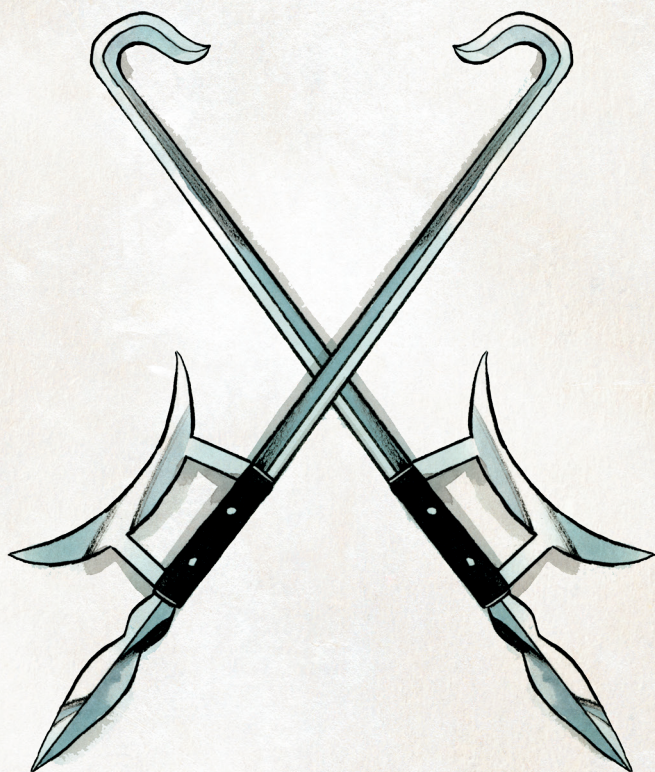
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INTRODUCTION

Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades is a role-playing game (RPG) inspired by darkly themed wuxia books and films, like the novels of Gu Long or movies such as *The Bride with White Hair*. The setting is historical China, but it is a timeless, romantic, and even anachronistic take on the history. The martial world, or Jianghu, is the heart of the *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* setting.

A NOTE ABOUT CHINESE CULTURE AND HISTORY

This is a game book, and shouldn't be mistaken for a source on Chinese culture or history. Further, it takes a deliberately anachronistic approach to the history. Although efforts were made to research key areas to bring that history to life, historical accuracy was not the focus. We encourage people to seek out reliable history books and documentaries, and to read the source material itself. Chinese history and culture are not simple. There is a lot of depth, and it can be easy to be misled by a single source. Later in the book, we include a brief introduction to Chinese culture and history, as well as resources intended to help GMs create a game experience that is both exciting and authentic.



CHAPTER ONE

RULES

This chapter explains the rules of *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*. It begins with key concepts, then it describes important rules, followed by combat rules, and finally encounters. Character creation is handled in Chapter Two.

In order to breathe life into the world of *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*, we include numerous NPCs, special weapons, unique items, etc. That said, we understand that ease of use is important. Therefore, when such entries first appear in a given section, we often provide the page numbers in brackets, like this: Xie Lijuan [239].

SKILLS AND SKILL ROLLS

This is a skill-based game. Typically, when you want to do something important, or something with an uncertain outcome in the setting, you roll the most relevant skill against either a target number (TN) or against an opposed roll. TNs are usually set by the gamemaster (GM) or based on the Defences of your opponent (the default TN is 6). TNs range from 2 to 10. When making a skill roll, roll a number of d10s equal to your skill rank, taking the single highest result. If this number meets or exceeds the TN, you succeed. If you get a 10 result, this is a total success, which produces a more spectacular result. If you roll lower than the TN, you fail in your attempt.

For example, if you have two ranks in External Martial Arts, you roll 2d10 and take the single highest result (so if you rolled a 7 and a 9, you would use the 9 result).

Attacks are also handled by skill rolls. These are described in more detail below in the combat section.

OPPOSED SKILL ROLLS

These are less common than normal skill rolls but happen when two characters pit the same skills against one another: for example, in a race using the Speed skill or in an arm wrestling match using the Muscle skill. Normally the GM will decide whether a given

action results in an opposed skill roll. To perform an opposed skill roll, simply have both characters involved roll their skills like normal and take the single highest result. The person with the highest number wins.

THE JIANGHU

The term Jianghu is a key concept and frequently invoked in this book. We offer a more involved explanation in Chapter Nine, but provide a brief definition here for convenience to the reader. Jianghu is often translated as martial world and is the space inhabited by the martial artists, outlaws, beggars, and others operating outside the reach of the law. It is not a specific place and is similar to an underworld. Though not a physical place, it is often associated with the inns, teahouses, and brothels frequented by those belonging to the Jianghu.

DICE CAPS

Unless an ability, weapon, or ruling by the GM says otherwise, you never roll more than 7d10 at a time for your dice pool. This is the 'soft dice cap' of the system. Even when certain abilities allow you to breach this limit, you will never roll more than 10d10.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

Bonuses and penalties in the game are usually expressed as +1d10 or -1d10, which reflects adding or subtracting dice from relevant dice pools. For example, if someone has 3d10 in Command but suffers a -1d10 penalty, they roll 2d10. If the penalty reduces you to 0d10, then you roll 2d10 and take the single lowest result. Bonuses and penalties can generally range from +1d10 to +7d10 and -1d10 to -7d10. Unless you are using the 'deep penalty' optional rule (see below), characters never roll less than 0d10 (which is rolling 2d10 and taking the single lowest result). However, in most circumstances GMs applying situational bonuses and penalties should not exceed +3d10 or -3d10.

In addition, bonuses and penalties can be applied to Defences, in which case they are a flat number like +1 or -1. Also, in some instances, Defences can be drained. When this happens, the rate of recovery is usually stated in the ability doing the damage (otherwise, assume it takes 1 week to recover).

Deep Penalties (Optional Rule)

As an option, penalties can go beyond 0d10 (rolling 2d10 and taking the lowest result). Each increment beyond this increases the dice pool by 1d10. So the progression is: roll 2d10 and take the single lowest result, roll 3d10 and take the single lowest result, roll 4d10 and take the single lowest result, etc.

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Signature Abilities are the heart of the game. These are broad styles or talents that reflect things like martial arts powers. Sometimes they are a suite of techniques known to the character. You begin the game with one Signature Ability. You gain more as you level. While the entry for a Signature Ability might give specific mechanics, the flavour can be

applied broadly, and is open to interpretation by the GM for further mechanical resolution. See Chapter Three for more details.

GAINING NEW SIGNATURE ABILITIES BEYOND LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS

Normally, you gain new Signature Abilities according to your level. However, starting at the third level, you can gain additional Signature Abilities at any time if you take a Fire Deviation Eccentricity. You can do this up to three times (and must always level-up before you can do it again). This is in addition to any possible Fire Deviations from failing Meditation rolls.

COUNTERS

These are individual moves your character can perform to protect against attacks. Characters begin the game with 1 Counter. You gain an additional Counter at level 5. See Chapter Four for more details.

MAX WOUNDS

Max Wounds indicates how many times you can be injured before dying (see 'Dying' below for more information). Characters start the game with 3 Max Wounds. At level 4, this increases to 4 Max Wounds. At Level 7, this increases to 5 Max Wounds.

RESIST

Characters can ignore levels of damage as they gain rank. Resist is how many Wounds you can absorb before taking damage. It is only effective against foes who are at a lower level than you. At level 4, characters can Resist 1 Wound for each attack. At Level 7, they gain the ability to Resist 2 Wounds for each attack. At level 9, they gain the ability to Resist 3 Wounds.

OVERCOMING RESIST

If you are within three levels of the person with Resist, you can overcome Resist on a total success.

FIRE DEVIATION

Fire Deviation is an internal imbalance of Qi energy that produces unusual effects. When you experience Fire Deviation, you gain a Fire Deviation Eccentricity. See page 113 for more information.

KILLING AURA

Death hangs like a cloud over the heroes and experts of the martial world. As you gain power and kill enemies, you produce an aura that other martial artists can sense. Every character has a Killing Aura expressed as a value of 1–9, and it is the same as your character level.



Everyone also has a Killing Aura Darkness, which can be a much larger number, and is based on the number of people you have killed. This has no direct mechanical effect but can be useful in determining how dangerous someone is, and can impact social interaction. Unless otherwise discussed with the GM, characters start with Killing Aura Darkness 0. So, a level-9 character who has killed 80 people has a Killing Aura of 9, and a Killing Aura Darkness of 80.

Killing Aura can be detected using your highest Martial Arts skill against TN 8. The GM should make the roll and report in general terms about how powerful the person seems (giving a false indication on a failure).

Killing Aura Darkness is detected automatically by characters who have at least one rank in a Martial Arts skill and make an effort to sense it. It is a skill action, and can be performed during the analysis phase of combat if desired. However, the GM should not simply give the player numbers; he or she should use the numbers as a guide for providing a description of what the Killing Aura Darkness looks and feels like (for example, “Chang the Uncanny Gambler has an aura that radiates more brilliantly than your own, and a darkness hangs over him, suggesting he has killed several dozen people,” or “Sun Lan the Yama Queen is surrounded by an endless sea of death”).

At level 6, characters can choose to mask their Killing Aura so people cannot sense it, or make it seem lower than it is.

ADJUDICATING KILLING AURA DARKNESS INCREASE

After an enemy dies, any player character who has inflicted damage on that enemy increases their Killing Aura Darkness by 1 (regardless of who performs the killing blow). The exact details of what constitutes a valid cause to increase Killing Aura Darkness is ultimately determined by the GM.

LEVELS

Characters have levels in *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*. Characters begin at level 1 and can reach level 9. You can gain different improvements as you level, according to the chart below.

IMPROVEMENTS BY LEVEL	
Level	Improvement
1	Start with Signature Ability and Counter
2	You can increase a skill by 1 rank
3	You can increase a Defence by 1 rank; you can take a Fire Deviation to gain more Signature Abilities
4	Gain a new Signature Ability; increase Max Wounds to 4; gain Resist 1
5	Gain 1 new Counter
6	Gain the ability to conceal Killing Aura
7	Gain a new Signature Ability; increase Max Wounds to 5; gain Resist 2
8	You can increase a skill by 1 rank
9	You can increase a Defence by 1 rank; gain Resist 3

Note: Defences are not treated as skills for the purpose of rank increases with level.

GAINING LEVELS

There are three basic systems to select from, depending on the kind of campaign you are running.

1. Level up every session (two-month campaign)
2. Gain experience points (XP) and use the 'Six-Month XP Table' (six-month campaign)
3. Gain XP and use the 'Long-Term XP Table' (long-term campaign)

Whichever method you use, in order to advance in level, you must succeed in a Meditation roll for a number of days equal to the level you are entering. If you fail three times in a row, you experience Fire Deviation (see page 113). If you acquire Fire Deviation by this process, you then advance in level.

The meditation sessions to advance in level must be an undisturbed, prolonged meditation for the entire day for each roll. In campaigns where levels are gained once every session, these meditation sessions can be one hour instead of one day.

Gaining XP

If you are playing a six-month campaign or a long-term campaign, you advance by gaining XP. Each session, you can gain up to 3 XP, providing that you meet the requirements below.

You gain 1 XP for each of the following:

1. Accomplishing a major goal (forming a sect, solving a mystery, stealing an extraordinary object, pulling off a big heist, protecting people from a major threat, etc.)
2. Obtaining revenge
3. Killing or defeating someone stronger than you

SIX-MONTH XP TABLE	
Level	XP
1	0
2	9
3	18
4	27
5	36
6	45
7	54
8	63
9	72

LONG-TERM XP TABLE	
Level	XP
1	0
2	15
3	45
4	78
5	156
6	312
7	468
8	624
9	936

UNLEVELLED CHARACTERS

Most of the general population have no level. Typically, such characters have Max Wounds 1, get 2 points to spend in Martial Arts, 3 in Defences, and 4 in every other skill category (note: the GM can raise key skills as needed to reflect occupation or life experience). However, the GM is always free to tailor Skills, Defences and even Max Wounds to fit a given NPC's concept.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol consumption is widespread in the martial world. Every character has a Drinking Limit equal to one catty per level (using baijiu alcohol as the base). A catty contains roughly five large* servings. When you exceed your Drinking Limit, you must make a Drinking skill roll. If you fail, you pass out. On a success, you suffer -1d10 to all skills. On a total success, you suffer no penalty. For every subsequent catty of alcohol you drink, you must make another check.

Some drinks will be expressed as a number of catties of baijiu (for example, Madame Lian's Significant Wine is worth three catties of baijiu).

*A catty of wine normally contains ten servings for a regular person, but martial heroes are known for their ability to drink large quantities of baijiu, and in film and television depictions, often drink from much larger containers. They can even drink one whole catty at once, for example, if they consume an entire clay pot of baijiu. For characters who rely on being drunk for certain techniques, the GM might wish to skip individual servings and default to entire catties.

DRUNKEN BONUS

When characters are drunk, having exceeded their Drinking Limit, they can gain a Drunken Bonus. The Drunken Bonus negates any penalties from being drunk and provides a +1d10 to any skill roll, when the GM deems it appropriate for very specific situations. Basically, any time that being drunk would seem exceptionally helpful to the situation, the character gets the bonus. For example, a character who flies into a drunken rage and attempts to break open a door could gain +1d10 to the Muscle roll.

WHAT IS BAIJIU?

Baijiu is a distilled clear liquor that is historically popular in China. In Chinese, it literally means 'white alcohol'. It has a high alcohol content, usually between 40% and 60%. It is usually made from sorghum and similar grains (wheat, barley, rice, etc.). In modern China, baijiu is far and away the most popular alcoholic beverage, and this is reflected in the writing of many wuxia novelists. However, the consumption of baijiu did not become common until the Yuan or Ming Dynasties. In earlier times, the alcohol of choice was yellow wine, which is a non-distilled beverage with a lower alcohol count, more akin to grape wine.

GRUDGES

Grudges arise in the martial world between characters over significant disputes. Often this involves the death of a friend or family member, and a resulting desire for revenge, but not always. When players develop grudges with other characters, they should write this down on their character sheet. These grudges can come up on encounter rolls, and when desired by the GM. See page 135 for more details.

Grudges can occur when characters do things to upset non-player characters (NPCs), with the NPC being the aggressor in the grudge. But they can also be a result of players holding enmity for things done to them or people they care about. Typically, grudges can only be settled through violence.

GRUDGE BONUS AND GRUDGE PENALTY

You gain a +1d10 to skill rolls in situations directly relevant to the seeking of revenge. This can be combined with the Drunken Bonus when appropriate. The GM can impose skill penalties on characters who do not pursue a grudge, as well.

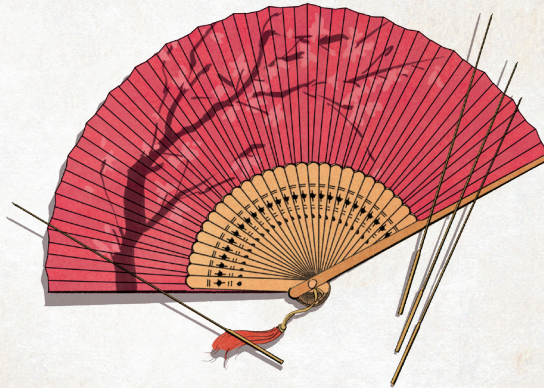
STARTING WITH GRUDGES (OPTIONAL)

As an option, the GM can have all players start the game with a grudge.

LANGUAGES (OPTIONAL)

Every character is assumed to be able to speak a standard version of Chinese that most educated people throughout China can understand. Characters can also choose a dialect based on where they are from. Characters with unusual backgrounds or from countries other than China might begin with a different language altogether. If a character has prolonged contact with a dialect or language, they can learn it within a period of time determined by the GM. For game purposes, our suggestion is a few months for a dialect, and a year or two for a language.

When characters speak across or hear dialects, they need to make a Reasoning roll against the dialect's TN to understand.







CHINESE DIALECTS	
Dialect	Reasoning TN
Cantonese	TN 8
Fujianese	TN 10
Hakka	TN 10
Northeastern Chinese	TN 6
Shandongese	TN 7
Shanghainese	TN 9
Sichuanese	TN 8
Southeastern Chinese	TN 6
Standard Chinese	TN 5

This system is a vast simplification of how languages and dialects operate in reality. The dialect list is not exhaustive, furthermore, the criteria for determining the various TNs is subjective. The difficulty level of various Chinese dialects is a subject of debate even among linguists and native speakers. The GM may introduce other dialects, or tweak the TNs based on the playgroup or personal experience. Also, be aware that throughout most of history, there was no such thing as Standard Chinese, with most people speaking only a local dialect. Wuxia stories tend to disregard this reality and assume that all (or at least most) characters can communicate with each other easily.

ANACHRONISMS OF STYLE

This book is not intended to be an accurate representation of history or culture. While informed by both, its primary purpose is to emulate a certain style of wuxia. We wanted to capture a timeless approach, taking inspiration from Gu Long, Chor Yuen and similar sources. Many of the details in this book are historically accurate, from the setting content to the art, but we gave ourselves the freedom to be creative, and frequently nod to the anachronisms found in classic media, like the 1970s Shaw Brothers martial arts films, or the wuxia television series of the 1980s. For example, some costumes, plot details, or hair styles might not be historically grounded, but fit the glamor or sensibilities of the time period of the source of inspiration.

COMBAT RULES

Combat in *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* occurs in rounds, where characters take turns performing actions. It has three steps:

1. Talking and Analysis Phase
2. Roll Turn Order (roll every round)
3. Move and Perform Skill Action

I. TALKING AND ANALYSIS PHASE

Combat in *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* is quick and brutal. The Talking and Analysis Phase represents an opportunity for clever characters to talk or bluff their way out of a fight, or to gain a potentially life-saving advantage. One of the primary purposes of this phase is to allow for suspense-building and de-escalation. In some situations, such as ambushes, this phase might be skipped.

During this phase, you can assess or find weaknesses, sense Killing Auras, intimidate foes by staring them down or bluffing, or discern information about a person's style. The GM will usually ask for a relevant skill roll for any analysis or intimidation attempt. The GM should adjudicate as needed, but the following three outcomes are the standards:

- **Psych Out:** Roll Command or Persuade. If you beat the Wits of the target, impose a -1d10 penalty against the enemy for the first round of combat. If used against a group of characters, make the psych out roll at -1d10 penalty or more (adjudicated by the GM).
- **Gain a Bonus:** Roll Detect, Empathy, or Reasoning against Wits to assess foes. You gain a +1d10 to the attack for the first round, and on a total success, gain +1 to Wounds on attacks for the first round.
- **Learn About Signature Ability or Counter:** Roll Detect or Empathy against Evade. On a success, you see enough to gain a detail about the person's style, counter, or hidden weapon. On a total success, you discern enough to know the name of the style, counter, or weapon the person uses.

The opponents can talk freely (in other words, role-play) throughout this phase. If the hostile parties reach a resolution before the phase ends, combat can be avoided entirely.

2. TURN ORDER

Once combat begins, every character should roll Speed and take the single highest result. Characters take turns going from highest to lowest. Re-roll to break ties. Always re-roll turn order every round.

3. MOVE AND PERFORM SKILL ACTION

Everyone can move and use a skill in a round. Skills can be used to attack. Usually attacks are made with one of your Martial Arts skills, using a Signature Ability and/or weapon. You can talk during combat at any time.

When moving, you can move up to your full movement. Skill actions include both non-combat and combat skills.

ATTACKING

Attacks are usually made using your Martial Arts skills. You roll your Martial Arts skill against the target's Evade. Roll 1d10 for every rank you have in the Martial Arts skill, and take the single highest result. So, if you have one rank in External Martial Arts, you roll 1d10 when using that skill to attack. If you have two ranks in External Martial Arts, you roll 2d10. Remember to take only the single highest result. If you meet or exceed the Evade score, your attack lands, and you can roll for damage. If you get a 10 on your attack roll, this is a total success, which adds +1d10 to your damage roll.

Although any Martial Arts skill can be used for attacks, the default is assumed to be External Martial Arts. But you can use any Martial Art to make an attack, provided it seems relevant.

While you will often attack using Signature Abilities, you do not need to. You can attack normally using your Martial Arts skill and any weapon of your choosing, or use an unarmed attack.

DAMAGE

Damage is usually determined by your weapon and/or Signature Ability. The most frequent formula for weapon damage is $Xd10 + \text{Muscle rank}$ (X is determined by the weapon). This means you combine the weapon's d10 damage with your muscle. So, a weapon that does 1d10 + Muscle would deal 3d10 damage in the hands of a character with two ranks in Muscle.

When you roll for damage, this is made against Hardiness. Roll the damage pool against Hardiness and take the single highest result (unless otherwise stated). If you meet or exceed Hardiness, you deal 1 Wound. If you get a 10 result, you deal 2 Wounds. Every additional 10 result adds 1 extra Wound.

Open Damage

This is rare, but it indicates that you roll a dice pool of d10 and keep all of the successful results and total successes. If you were to roll 5d10 open damage against Hardiness 7, and got results of 7, 2, 8, 9, and 1, this would deal 3 Wounds (because 7, 8, and 9 all meet or exceed Hardiness 7). Results of 10 function the same as with normal damage delivering 2 Wounds for the first 10 result, and 1 wound for subsequent 10s.

BLOOD SHEDDING HEROES MODE

If you want your campaigns to be especially bloody like a Chang Cheh film, then use this optional method for Open Damage. Count every Success as a Wound and treat every 10 result as two wounds.

Damage Examples

Here are examples of how to use the Wound formula:

1. Muscle + 1d10: A character with two ranks in Muscle would roll 3d10 and take the single highest result.
2. Muscle + 4d10: A character with one rank in Muscle would roll 5d10 and take the single highest result.
3. Muscle + 2d10 Open Damage: A character with one rank in Muscle would roll 3d10 and keep every success and total success, possibly causing multiple Wounds.
4. Muscle – 1d10: A character with three ranks in Muscle would roll 2d10.

Unarmed Damage

Arm Strikes do Muscle – 1d10; Leg Strikes do Muscle + 0d10 and have a –1d10 modifier to their attack roll.

MOVEMENT

Movement in a round is equal to 30 feet plus 10 feet per rank in Speed.

GETTING KNOCKED DOWN

When you get knocked to the ground, it takes one move to get up.

DYING

When you take your Max Wounds in damage, you start dying. Dying takes a number of rounds equal to your Hardiness. When one hit brings you beyond your Max Wounds, roll on the Death and Maiming Table (see below). Dying characters are incapacitated – depending on the GM's determination this could mean unconscious, or alert but unable to take any significant actions.

NON-LETHAL ATTACKS

Characters can always choose to be merciful and not kill a foe when they do enough damage to exceed a target's Max Wounds. They must declare this before rolling damage.

HEALING

You heal 1 Wound per week. Heal 1 extra Wound per week under the care of a physician or skilled healer who makes successful Medicine and Alchemy roll.

RACES AND ROOFTOP CHASES

Chases and races can be resolved by opposed Speed rolls, or Lightness Martial Arts rolls depending on the situation. As a general rule, when someone gets two wins in a row (i.e., rolls higher than their opponent twice in a row), that person gets away or catches the target.

CRIPPLING KUNG FU

When someone is completely helpless and at your mercy, you can disable their kung fu permanently using one or both of the following methods. You can cut their major

tendons to eliminate their ability to use External and Lightness Martial Arts. Or you can destroy their dantian, or elixir field, eliminating their ability to use Internal Martial Arts. They can no longer use these skills after being injured in this way.

WHAT IS AN ELIXIR FIELD?

The elixir field (sometimes called a dantian) is a real-life concept from traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts.

In a wuxia setting, it essentially refers to a reserve of energy or Qi built up through meditation and martial arts practice that can be used to perform incredible feats. In traditional belief, there are multiple elixir fields, but often the concept is simplified in novels and movies to be just a single location.

ACUPOINT ATTACKS

This is a speciality of certain martial artists used to paralyse or harm by attacking or causing blockages to the meridians of the body (see page 117).

RESTRAINING AND GRABBING

You can try to grab people or restrain people. Both you and the target make opposed skill rolls, using the relevant skill (typically Internal or External Martial Arts). Whoever loses is restrained that round, and cannot move more than 5 feet from the restrainer, and their Evade is lowered by 3. The restrain lasts that entire round. Make one opposed roll every round on the restrainer's turn until the restrain is broken.

STUNNED

Some Signature Abilities and weapons can stun. If you are stunned, you can only move half your normal movement and all your skills are rolled at 0d10 (roll 2d10 and take the lowest result).

CHOKING

When relevant, you can opt to choke someone on a successful attack instead of doing damage. As long as you maintain a choke each round, the target loses 1 Hardiness (which returns at a rate of 1 per round when you release them). If they reach zero Hardiness, they pass out for 1d10 minutes. If you persist in choking, you can roll on the Death and Maiming Table.

DEATH AND MAIMING TABLES

Roll on these tables when a character has taken damage beyond his or her Max Wounds. Any time the result of the chart seems at odds with the attack delivered, the GM can opt to roll again, or simply devise an explanation for why the injury was sustained in that case (for example, "The vicious sword slash to your leg causes you to fall into a deep slumber as infection spreads through your body; your teeth blacken and fall out when you awaken").

DEATH AND MAIMING TABLE I: EXTERNAL INJURIES

d10	Result
1	Quick death
2	Blindness (take Blind Eccentricity)
3	Deafness (take Deaf Eccentricity)
4	Slow, painful death
5	Random limb loss (take Missing Limb Eccentricity)
6	Broken limb (treat as missing limb for 1 month)
7	Roll on Table III: Unusual Injuries
8	Crushed throat (take Mute Eccentricity)
9	Horrible scarring (take Scars Eccentricity)
10	Roll again on Table I, then on Table II: Internal Injuries

DEATH AND MAIMING TABLE II: INTERNAL INJURIES

d10	Result
1	Deep fistula connecting to internal organs (permanent loss of 1 Hardiness)
2	Heart injury (you suffer —1d10 to all Internal Martial Arts rolls and your skin appears 10 years older than your years)
3	Kidney injury (you lose 1 Wits)
4	Intestinal injury (you take —1d10 to all Endurance rolls)
5	Lung injury (you suffer —1d10 to all Muscle rolls, including damage rolls that use Muscle)
6	Spleen injury (you suffer excessive blood loss from injuries, taking an additional 1d10 damage the following round after any injury)
7	Blood vessel injury (you live on the cusp of death; any time you attack while Wounded, roll 2d10, taking the single lowest result against your Hardiness. If the number meets or exceeds this result, you spit blood and die.)
8	Bone injuries (your bones are weak now; when you are attacked by blunt weapons, treat your Hardiness as 3 lower than its normal value)
9	Strange death reversal (if you died from a result on Table I, you strangely recover in 1d10 days. However, your blood vessels blacken, and you appear odd, imposing a —1d10 to your Persuade skill. If you did not die as a result of an injury on Table I, then you seem dead for 10 minutes, and awaken with the aforementioned skin condition and penalty.)
10	Bladder injury (you take —1d10 on Drinking skill rolls)

DEATH AND MAIMING TABLE III: UNUSUAL INJURY TABLE	
d10	Result
1	Horrible fistula (1 Wound which never heals)
2	Complete memory loss (you forget everything about yourself and might never regain your memories. The precise details of any potential recovery are up to the GM.)
3	Partial memory loss (you forget all the relevant events leading up to your injury)
4	Deformed face (your injuries are so bad your face is not recognizable anymore. This also imposes a —2d10 penalty to all relevant skill rolls, for example using Persuade to seduce someone.)
5	Tic (you develop an unusual tic such as a twitch or even a stutter. This imposes a —1d10 penalty to relevant skills as determined by the GM.)
6	Tooth loss (you lose all your teeth. This imposes a —1d10 penalty to relevant skills as determined by the GM.)
7	Weeping wound (you develop a recurring infection or abscess that produces drainage regularly. This taxes your body. Roll 2d10 against your Hardiness each day: if the result is equal or higher, then you take a —1d10 penalty to all Martial Arts and Physical skills that day.)
8	Broken nose (your nose is broken and now has an uneven yet ferocious appearance)
9	Finger loss (you lose a finger; this imposes a —1d10 penalty to relevant skills as determined by the GM)
10	Recurring muscle problem (you have a pulled muscle or received a sprain that has a 3 in 10 chance of recurring every combat; if it does, it imposes a —1d10 penalty to your Speed and Combat rolls)

OVERLAND TRAVEL

Characters can travel 20 miles per day by foot. This can be increased by 10 miles, for a total of 30, if you forgo food and momentary rests (losing 1 Hardiness each day). On horseback, you can travel 40 miles per day at a good pace. You can double this amount by pressing the steed, but this will drain 1 Hardiness from the animal every day you do so. Horses can also manage up to 30 miles per hour, but only for a single mile before tiring (and losing 1 point of Hardiness).

Hardiness lost due to travel returns at a rate of 1 point for every day of full rest. Note that you will have to make Survival rolls roughly every seven days to avoid problems and encounters.

Here is a list of basic movement for a few common modes of transportation:

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION	
Method of Travel	Miles per Day
Walking	20 (30 if pressed)
Horse	40 (80 if pressed)
Litter/Palanquin (Jiao)	20 (30 if pressed)
Camel	30 (90 if pressed)
Merchant Ship	135
Small Ship	50



CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTER CREATION

The process for making a character is very simple. Follow these steps using the character sheet from the back of the book or available at www.ospreypublishing.com/gaming_resources_roleplaying. As you make your character, refer to the chapters listed as references.

1. CHOOSE SIGNATURE ABILITY

Every character begins play with a Signature Ability. See Chapter Three for more information.

2. CHOOSE COUNTER

You begin the game with a Counter. See Chapter Four for more information.

3. CHOOSE RESOURCES

You can take any standard weapon, as well as any other relevant equipment or items that the GM deems fit. Furthermore, you can take a special resource from one the following categories:

- **Wealth and Property:** Landed Gentry, Prosperous Business, Manor, Wardrobe, Boat, or Illicit Business (see Chapter Five).
- **Social Resources:** Devoted Ex-Lovers, Loyal Servants, Loyal Bodyguards, Loyal Friend, Official Title, Protector, or Social Network (see Chapter Five).
- **Weapon:** Choose any Rare Weapon (see page 82).

PROBLEMS WITH STARTING ITEMS AND SIGNATURE ABILITIES

If a player picks an item or Signature Ability that is tied to a person or sect in the Jianghu, the player and GM should devise an explanation that makes sense.

4. SELECT SKILLS

Select your skills using the methods outlined in Chapter Eight. Because skills are related to your Signature Abilities and Counters, be sure to keep those in mind as you select your skill ranks.

5. SELECT ECCENTRICITY

Every character has an Eccentricity. These are described in Chapter Seven. Characters who take a Deep Eccentricity gain a Unique Weapon (see page 86).

6. SELECT OCCUPATION

These provide circumstantial bonuses (for instance, +1d10 to a skill roll) when the character is doing something directly related to their occupation. Starting wages are expressed as monthly amounts and can increase with rank or prestige. You start with money equal to two months of your occupation's starting wages. You must meet the prerequisites of an occupation (skills, eccentricities, etc) in order to take it.

Occupations are tools strictly for PCs, NPCs need not abide by them.

Artisan

Prerequisite: 1d10 in Talent or Trade ▪ **Starting wages:** 400 coins

You are talented at working with your hands to produce objects both beautiful and utilitarian. Although this skill has little to do with the martial arts, you can still earn a high reputation in the Jianghu by producing amazing works, as well as significant wealth.

Assassin

Prerequisite: Grim Collector or Obsession Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 600 coins

You are a hired killer. If someone pays you enough, you will murder anyone. As your skill and reputation increase, you can charge higher and higher sums for your services. At the same time, you will become more and more of a target to righteous and orthodox individuals and groups.

Bandit

Prerequisite: Irascible or Greedy Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 100 coins

Perhaps you dream of being rich, and will do almost anything to achieve that goal. Or perhaps you live outside accepted society because poverty has forced this upon you, or because you committed a horrible crime. Either way, you take money from anyone you can. At lower levels, you are likely to be the minion of some notorious bandit chief, but as you become more powerful, you can rise through the ranks, and eventually command a bandit army of your own.

Beggar

Prerequisite: Disgraced or Destitute Eccentricity • **Starting wages:** 50 coins

You live in rags, have no home of your own, and prowl the streets in search of food, or coin to buy it. Perhaps you are a member of an organised group of beggars, or perhaps you are a lone wolf. Maybe you had no choice to become a beggar, or maybe it was intentional. Regardless, you are ostensibly penniless and hopeless. This is a common occupation for people who wish to 'disappear' from the Jianghu.

Buddhist Monk/Nun

Prerequisite: At least 1d10 Religion plus Destitute Eccentricity • **Starting wages:** None

You follow the precepts of Buddhism and are a monk or nun. You shave your head and renounce the ways of the world, assuming a new Dharma name that reflects the change from your past. Most monks and nuns take their vows later in life, will abstain from meat, alcohol, and romance, and will strive to achieve the enlightenment taught by Buddha. Not all monks or nun characters have to be virtuous, it is common in the genre for criminals to disguise themselves as monks or nuns, or to infiltrate monastic orders.

Constable

Prerequisite: Institutions 1d10 and Survival 1d10 • **Starting wages:** 700 coins

You work for the government to investigate crimes and prosecute criminals. At lower levels, you might do little more than patrol the local streets or countryside, but you have the potential to rise through the ranks, eventually becoming a famous figure in the law-enforcement community. Sadly, corruption is a common vice among constables. Most constables serve in groups under a sheriff.

Daoist Priest/Nun

Prerequisite: Religion 1d10 or Medicine and Alchemy 1d10 • **Starting wages:** 50 coins

You follow Daoism and are a priest or nun. You seek to achieve enlightenment of the Dao and ultimately hope to become an Immortal. Some Daoists are like Buddhists in that they are celibate, vegetarian, and live in monasteries. Others have no such restrictions. Although many Daoists are pious, some use their religious lifestyle as a way to disguise their villainous nature.

Dedicated Martial Practitioner

Prerequisite: Martial Art 3d10 plus Obsession Eccentricity or Killer Deep Eccentricity

Starting wages: 75 coins

You care for little more than your pursuit of the martial arts. Perhaps you focus on one specific weapon, or on one aspect such as Internal Martial Arts. Either way, your main goal in life is to improve your fighting skills.

Detective

Prerequisite: 2d10 in two of the following: Survival, Reasoning, Detect, or Jianghu
Starting wages: 900 coins

You investigate crimes for profit. At lower levels, you are likely to be little more than a local sleuth who makes a meagre living. But as you become more powerful, you can gain the attention of the Jianghu at large, and be sought out for your investigatory abilities, for which you can charge a hefty sum. Do note, some historical detectives are actually government officials.

Doctor

Prerequisite: Medicine and Alchemy 3d10 ▪ **Starting wages:** 1,000 coins

Your life mission is to understand the human body and medicine, as well as to heal the sick. You might do it for philosophical purposes, or for profit. You often hold the life of dying individuals in your hands.

Entertainer

Prerequisite: Talent 3d10, or Athletics 3d10, or Beautiful Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 200 coins

You might be a dancer, musician, courtesan, shadow puppeteer, acrobat, or something else. Whatever your speciality, you make a living by performing. At low levels, you will probably make a bit of coin here or there as a local celebrity. But as you become more skilled and well-known, you will be sought out by individuals who are willing to pay hefty sums for your services.

Farmer

Prerequisite: Survival 3d10 ▪ **Starting wages:** 300 coins

You make your living off of the land itself. Perhaps you were born into the profession, or perhaps you chose it. This is a common occupation for people who wish to 'disappear' from the Jianghu.

Fisher

Prerequisite: Survival 3d10 or Boat from Wealth and Property ▪ **Starting wages:** 300 coins

You make your living by catching fish. You can fish in rivers, lakes, harbours, or seas. Because of your close proximity to waterways, you have more frequent contact with travellers, and thus members of the Jianghu.



Government Official

Prerequisite: You must take the Official Title Social Resource, Scholarly Arts 3d10

Starting wages: Rank 1, 400,000 coins; Rank 2, 100,000 coins; Rank 3, 50,000 coins; Rank 4, 25,000 coins; Rank 5, 12,000 coins; Rank 6, 6,000 coins; Rank 7, 3,000 coins; Rank 8, 1,500 coins; Rank 9, 300 coins.

You are part of the Imperial Bureaucracy and start as a rank 9 official. With GM approval, you could start higher, but otherwise you increase in rank with each level. In addition to their wages, officials may also receive bonus or supplemental wages (e.g. 40 bolts of silk), and most are also given 30–300 acres of land. This is likewise subject to GM approval. See page 73 for more on playing an official.

Merchant

Prerequisite: Prosperous Business from Wealth and Property or Peoples and Places 3d10

Starting wages: 1,400 coins

Merchants are often looked down upon, but they can sometimes become extremely rich and powerful. Starting out, you might scrape by to make a living, but as you gain experience, wealth, and power, you can earn sums of money the average person would consider unbelievable.

Playboy/Young Master

Prerequisite: Hedonist Eccentricity and either Landed Gentry from Wealth and Property or Loyal Servants from Social Resources ▪ **Starting wages:** 20,000 coins

Perhaps you inherited your money, perhaps you earned it. Either way, you will never want for cash. Furthermore, your primary pursuits are the pleasures in life. This occupation comes with a wide range of responsibilities tailored to the character's specific background, which the GM must create and enforce.

Scholar

Prerequisite: Scholarly Arts 3d10 ▪ **Starting wages:** 300 coins

Although you don't hold an official position, you have studied extensively for exams and live the leisurely life of a scholar. Most probably you are someone who failed to pass the notoriously difficult exams, or failed to receive a post after passing. You could even be a retired official.

Servant

Prerequisite: Destitute Eccentricity and Order-taker Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 10 coins

Despite your skill as a martial artist, you are only a servant, and have few belongings to call your own. You might adore your master, or despise him, but you must follow his orders.

Shop Owner

Prerequisite: Illicit Business or Prosperous Business from Wealth and Property

Starting wages: 1,100 coins

You might sell silk, you might own an inn, or you might run a brothel. Whatever your specific trade, you have the chance to make significant profit. Although many business-owners are honest and upright people, some are connected to the darker side of society.

Soldier

Prerequisite: Order-taker Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 75 coins

You are a professional fighter who works for the central government, or possibly for local governments or warlords. Your pay is low, and life is usually either extremely boring or extremely bloody. As you distinguish yourself and become more powerful, you have the chance to rise through the ranks and gain command over other soldiers, and even entire armies. However, you always have a superior who you must obey.

Loyalist

Prerequisite: Order-taker Eccentricity or Vow Deep Eccentricity ▪ **Starting wages:** 250 coins

You are a devoted member of some clan, sect, cult, etc. Your main goal in life is to further the interests of that organisation. At low levels, you are probably little more than a glorified servant. But as you become more powerful, you will rise through the ranks, and perhaps gain the opportunity to seize control for yourself.

Thief

Prerequisite: 3d10 in Theft ▪ **Starting wages:** 300 coins

You make a living by taking things that belong to others. At lower levels you are probably little more than a pickpocket or cat burglar. But as you gain experience, your ambitions change, and you focus on incredible heists that bring immense wealth.

7. CREATE BACKSTORY

Now that you have a general idea of what type of character you will be playing, you need to flesh out more details about your character, especially how you connect to the Jianghu. Are you a member of a powerful sect? The child of a famous martial artist? Are you a lone wolf looking for revenge? Do you have any grudges? This step will involve communication with your GM.

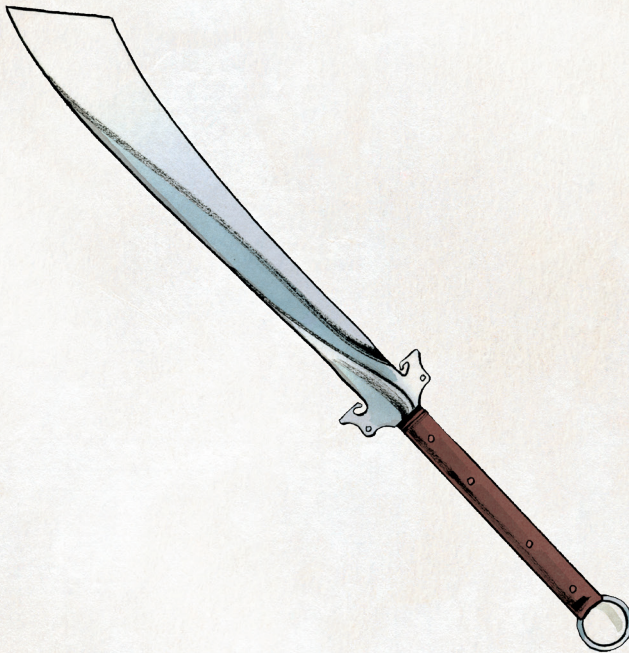
8. FILL OUT ALL OTHER DETAILS

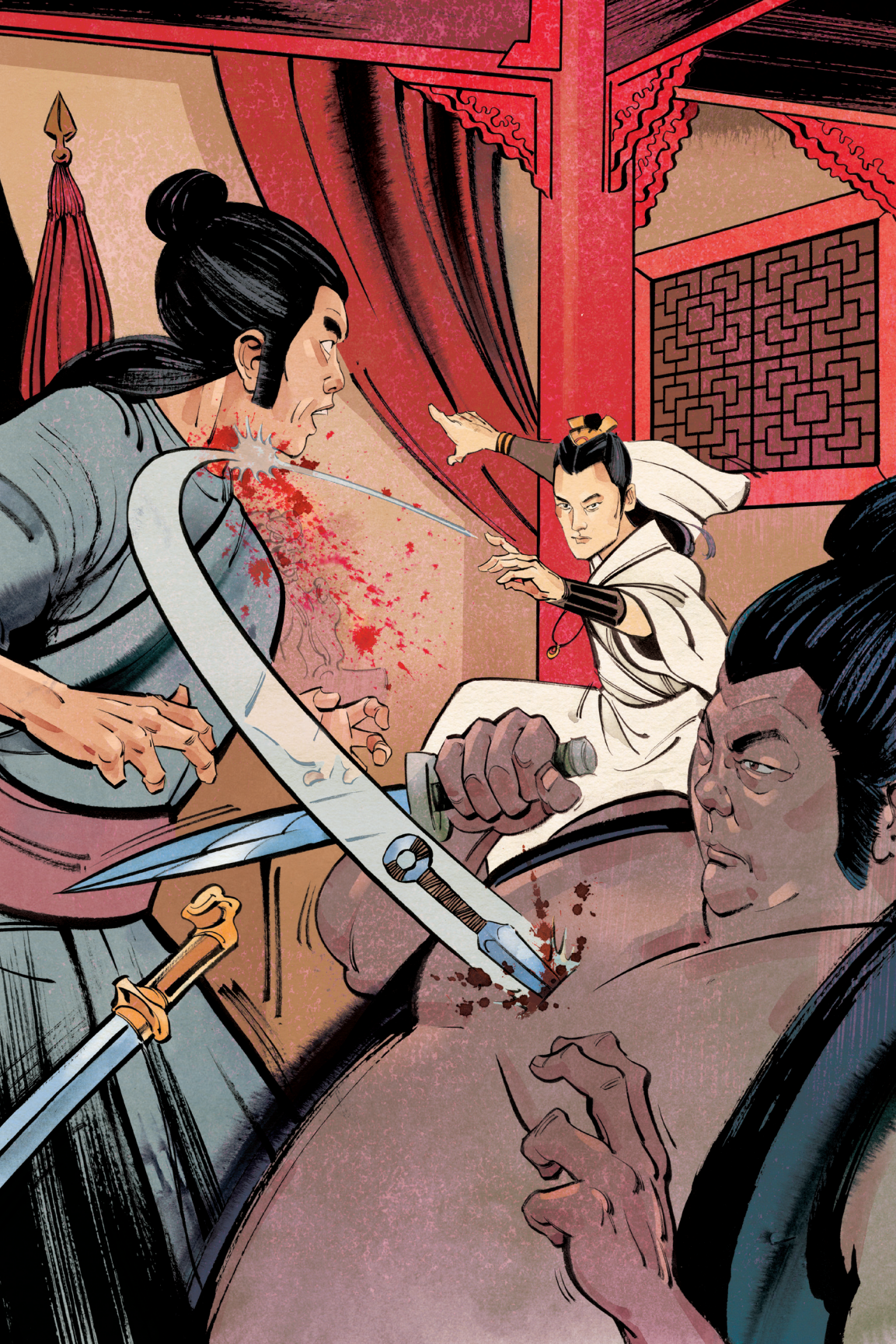
Fill out the remaining details in your character sheet, such as Max Wounds 3, Level 1, Killing Aura 1, Killing Aura Darkness 0, Drinking Limit 1, name and other details.

9. MAKE A BACK-UP CHARACTER

This character is connected to your original character and comes into the game if your original character dies, in which case the back-up character begins with a grudge. The back-up character advances in level with your main character.

You can wait until the second or third session to make your back-up character.





CHAPTER THREE

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Every character starts with a Signature Ability. Signature Abilities include martial arts styles, exceptional talents, etc. They are most commonly a broad method of fighting learned either through manuals or under the tutelage of a master or sect. Individual techniques are more a matter of flavour. Players should feel free to describe the particular technique within the ability they want to execute, or a move they want to innovate within the style during combat, and the GM should freely adjudicate as needed, perhaps giving circumstantial bonuses when they seem warranted.

When gaining new Signature Abilities after character creation, the GM and player should work together to devise a reasonable explanation for how the character learns this new ability (for example, through a manual or a master, or by devising a new martial art).

Some abilities may list a prerequisite Signature Ability you must already have mastered before you choose it. If an ability is required to take another Signature Ability, this is listed in its entry.

CHARACTERISTICS, SIGNATURE ABILITIES, AND CHARACTER CONCEPTS

The best way to make the type of character you want is to browse through the Signature Abilities and find the ones that best fit your concept. We created Characteristics to help guide your selection. Characteristics highlight the basic elements of each Signature Ability. These will usually have no mechanical weight except when stated specifically in the entry. For example, if you are interested in making an internal martial arts master, you should look for the Internal Martial Arts characteristic tag in entry stat blocks. You can also use the guidelines overleaf for selecting appropriate Signature Ability and Counter at character creation:

Brave Archer

Recommended Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Nine Suns [39] or Hawkeyed Assassin [46]

Recommended Counter: Ma's Deflecting Arrow [67]

Daoist Priest

Recommended Signature Abilities: Erudite Cultivation [42], Life-Chasing Sword I [50], or Fly-Whisk Master [45]

Recommended Counter: Clouding Star Defence [64]

Drunken Hero

Recommended Signature Abilities: Alcohol Immortal [35] or Open Mind [54]

Recommended Counter: Breath of Yidi [64]

Musician

Recommended Signature Abilities: Melancholic Song I [53] or Inspired Word [47]

Recommended Counter: Veneer of Vulnerability [69]

Master Swordsman

Recommended Signature Abilities: Weapon Adept [58], Relentless Blade [55], or Studied Blade [57]

Recommended Counter: Sword Parry [69]

Palm Master

Recommended Signature Abilities: Palm of Metal [54] or Empowering Palm [41]

Recommended Counter: Spirit Finger [68]

Trickster

Recommended Signature Abilities: Master Deceiver [51] or Snake Hidden in the Leaves [56]

Recommended Counter: Insightful Reaction [65]

Whip Master

Recommended Signature Abilities: Shadow Whip Style [56] or Ferocious Whipping Style [43]

Recommended Counter: Grip of the Whip [65]

Unarmed Boxer

Recommended Signature Abilities: Enlightening Fist Style [42], Fearless Boxer Style [43],
or Essence-Absorbing Kicks [42]

Recommended Counter: Shadow Fist [68]

SIGNATURE ABILITIES

Acupoint Attack Style

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Unarmed

You are a master of attacking acupoints. You use your knowledge of Internal Martial Arts and Medicine to tap key acupoints and block them. During combat, you can attack any acupoint you wish and cause a blockage if you make a successful Internal Martial Arts roll against the target's Evade, followed by a successful Medicine and Alchemy roll against their Hardiness. See 'Acupoint Blockage' for more information (page 117).

Alcohol Ancestor

Prerequisite: Alcohol Immortal • **Characteristics:** Alcohol, Water, Non-combat, Unarmed

You have mastered the art of drinking to the highest level. This improves your Alcohol Immortal ability. When you make a Drinking skill roll upon exceeding your Drinking Limit, on a failure you suffer no penalty. On a success you gain a +1d10 bonus to all skills for 30 minutes or until you drink again. On a total success you gain a +2d10 bonus to all skills for one hour.

Alcohol Immortal

Required for: Alcohol Ancestor • **Characteristics:** Alcohol, Water, Non-combat, Unarmed

You have mastered the art of drinking to a very high level. When you make a Drinking skill roll upon exceeding your Drinking Limit, on a failure you suffer a -1d10 to all skills. On a success, you suffer no penalty. On a total success you gain a +1d10 bonus to all skills for 30 minutes or until you drink again.

Art of 10,000 Eyes and Ears

Characteristics: Non-combat, Knowledge, Jianghu

You are an expert regarding the Jianghu and everything related to it. You gain a +2d10 on any Jianghu skill roll. As long as you are in a populated location, and can spend at least one day seeking information, you are privy to all the latest Jianghu rumours.

Aura of Majesty

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Non-combat, Unarmed

You have a powerful aura that reflects your standing in the world. You gain +1d10 to +3d10 to all Mental skill rolls against people of lower standing than you. You also gain a +1 to +3 to your Wits against rolls made by people of lower standing than you. The exact bonus should reflect the disparity of social standing as determined by the GM.

Awakening the Golden Lantern I

Required for: Awakening the Golden Lantern II • **Characteristics:** Non-combat, Meditation, Poison, Water

You can make a Meditation roll to stave off poison for a day. This can be used once per day.

Awakening the Golden Lantern II

Prerequisite: Awakening the Golden Lantern I • **Characteristics:** Non-combat, Unarmed, Poison, Water

You can extrude venom or poison from your body. Make a Meditation roll against TN 8. On a success, you remove the poison from your body. This also pushes out any darts or needles embedded in your flesh.

Beauty Niu's Wu Tooth

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

A rare ability utilised by Wu Tooth Beauty Niu that uses potent internal energy and a mouth of rotten teeth to batter people with noxious wind. Roll Internal Martial Arts against all within 60-feet of your breath. On a success, roll 1d10 per character level against Hardiness. On a success, targets become sick and suffer -1d10 penalties to their attack rolls for two rounds. On a total success, they suffer the penalty to attacks and are so overwhelmed with nausea that they cannot move for two rounds.

Bitter Couple Sharing Discontent

Characteristics: Internal, Unarmed, Melee, Water

This improves the Bitter Duo Joint Attack style. It allows the couple to strike up to one target per their combined levels.

Bitter Duo Joint Attack

Required for: Bitter Couple Sharing Discontent • **Characteristics:** Eccentric

This ability can only be learned by lovers who argue and feud bitterly. The underlying theory and the steps demand passion, anger, and an intimate awareness of the other's flaws and weaknesses. When two characters who meet this description both have this ability, they can attack on the same round, at the same time, imposing a -2d10 penalty to any Counter roll, making a single attack roll but two damage rolls.

Blood Deviation Strikes

Characteristics: Internal, Unarmed, Melee, Water

Your blows cause the blood flow of your enemy to reverse, doing damage and throwing their Internal Martial Arts into chaos. To strike at an opponent within 5 feet of you, roll Internal Martial Arts versus Internal Martial Arts. On a success, they take 1 Wound and suffer -2d10 to Internal Martial Arts rolls for the duration of combat. On a total success, they take 1 Wound per your level of Internal Martial Arts.

Blood Shedding Hero Style

Characteristics: Eccentric

You can go on and on, even after the point when you would normally die. After you reach your Max Wounds and death, you can remain standing for a number of rounds equal to your Hardiness. During these rounds, all your attacks do 2 extra Wounds, but you will die when the time has elapsed. This cannot be taken with Yan's Enduring Spirit.

Bombardment of Wood

Required for: Five Elements Destruction

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Wood, Five Elements, Ranged, Unarmed

You specialise in channelling the wood element to injure your foes. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade on up to three enemies within 10 feet, to do 3d10 damage, plus 1 extra Wound against enemies whose signature style is related to earth. On a total success, you knock them backwards 15 feet.

Bone-Shattering Song I

Required for: Bone-Shattering Song II • **Characteristics:** Talent, Musical

You can play chilling melodies that physically harm any who hear them. You can roll Talent against the Wits of your targets to do 3d10 damage. On a total success, the targets take -1 Hardiness, which recovers at a rate of 1 per day.

Bone-Shattering Song II

Prerequisite: Bone-Shattering Song I • **Characteristics:** Talent, Musical

This improves Bone-Shattering Song. Your music can literally shatter the bones of targets. You can deal 4d10 damage. Hardiness is recovered at a rate of 1 per month.

Breath of Fire

Required for: Five Elements Destruction

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Fire, Five Elements, Ranged, Unarmed

When attacking, you channel the fire element to scorch your enemy. Roll Internal Martial Arts with a -1d10 penalty to attack all enemies within 15 feet of you. On a success, roll normal damage, plus 1 extra Wound against enemies whose signature style is related to metal.

Butterfly Sword Expert I

Required for: Butterfly Sword Expert II • **Characteristics:** Armed, Melee, Metal

You use the butterfly swords with grace and skill, easily deflecting blows and slipping in strikes. When using the butterfly swords, you gain a +3 to Evade (rather than +1). If this number causes your Evade to exceed 10, then the attacker takes a -1d10 to their attack. In addition, on a total success on your attack roll, you can make one additional attack against that target with the butterfly sword.

Butterfly Sword Expert II

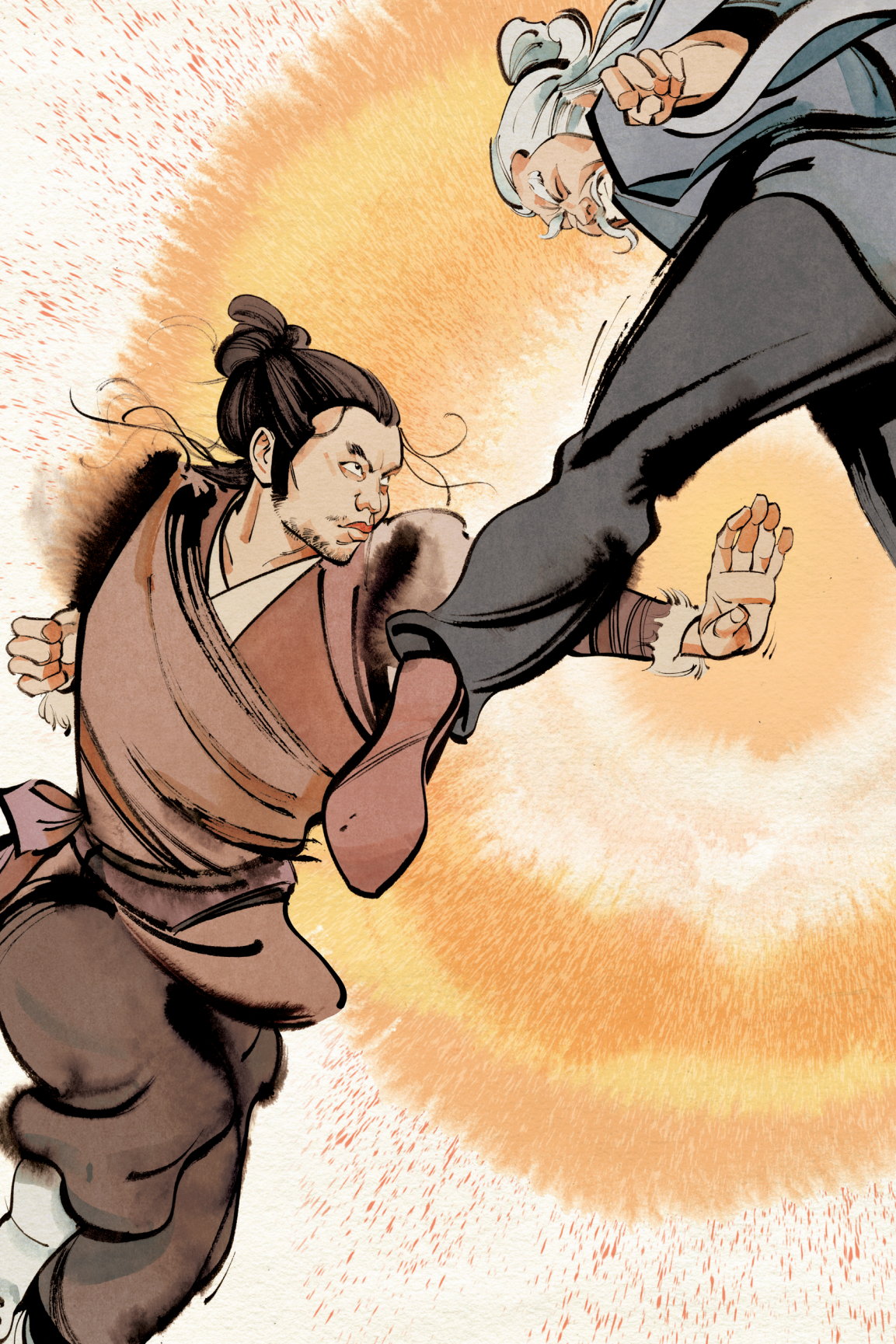
Prerequisite: Butterfly Sword Expert I; you must also be level 5 • **Characteristics:** Armed, Melee, Metal

This improves Butterfly Sword Expert. In addition to the normal effects, attackers must make two successful attack rolls to hit you.

Cackle of the Yin Ghost

Characteristics: Unarmed, Ranged

You can speak, chuckle, or yell in a blood-chilling voice that terrifies your enemy. Roll Command or Persuade against Wits. On a success, your opponent takes a -1d10 penalty on all Physical, Martial Arts, and Defence rolls until the end of your next turn.



Chain Whip Style

Required for: Chain Whipping Immortal • **Characteristics:** Metal, Ranged, Armed

You can fight with the Chain Whip without taking a penalty. You can also wrap your Chain Whip around the flesh of an opponent on a total success, doing 1d10 damage each round automatically until the opponent is freed from the chain.

Chain Whipping God

Prerequisite: Chain Whipping Immortal • **Characteristics:** Metal, Ranged, Armed

This improves your Chain Whipping Immortal. It allows you to hit up to one opponent per level with each attack.

Chain Whipping Immortal

Prerequisite: Chain Whip Style • **Required for:** Chain Whipping God
Characteristics: Metal, Ranged, Armed

This improves your Chain Whip Style. You can still wrap your whip around the flesh of a target on a total success, but now it does 6d10 damage automatically until the opponent is freed from the chain.

Chess Board of Doom

Characteristics: Eccentric, Lightness Martial Arts, Earth

You are highly skilled at creating obstacles. Using your Trade skill and/or Survival you can set up deadly traps or challenges to obstruct movement. You can even do this at dizzying speed if you make a Lightness Martial Arts TN 8 roll.

Cleaver of the Four Suns

Prerequisite: Cleaver of the Solitary Sun • **Required for:** Cleaver of the Nine Suns
Characteristics: Ranged, Fire, Armed

This improves your Cleaver of the Solitary Sun. Ranged attacks gain +2d10 to the attack roll and do 2 extra Wounds on successful damage rolls. This ability cannot be used when you have the high ground.

Cleaver of the Nine Suns

Prerequisite: Cleaver of the Four Suns • **Characteristics:** Ranged, Fire, Armed

This improves your Cleaver of the Four Suns. Ranged attacks gain +3d10 to attack rolls and do 3 extra Wounds on successful damage rolls. This ability cannot be used when you have the high ground.

Cleaver of the Solitary Sun

Required for: Cleaver of the Four Suns • **Characteristics:** Ranged, Fire, Armed

Channelling the ancient powers of true archery, you unleash devastating ranged attacks. Ranged attacks gain +1d10 to the attack roll and do 1 extra Wound on a successful damage roll. This ability cannot be used when you have the high ground.

Concealment from Ghosts and Gods

Characteristics: Eccentric, Non-Combat

You carry out criminal activity with remarkable stealth. Whenever a law enforcement institution or anyone else attempts to investigate you, they suffer a -1d10 penalty per your rank of Theft to their investigation rolls.

Crescent Moon Queen

Prerequisite: Crescent Moon Style • **Characteristics:** Ranged, Armed, External

This enhances your Crescent Moon Style. Your thrown bladed attacks do 1 extra Wound.

Crescent Moon Style

Required for: Crescent Moon Queen • **Characteristics:** Ranged, Armed, External

You are adept at throwing bladed weapons at curved trajectories to hit multiple targets. With this style you can hit up to one target every two levels with a thrown weapon.

Deadly Silver Spear

Characteristics: Melee, Metal

Your spear strikes are precise and lethal. When making damage rolls with a spear, treat both 9s and 10s as total successes.

Demon Claw Style

Characteristics: Melee, Unarmed, Metal

You can strike with sharp or rigid claw-like hands that dig deep into the flesh, leaving a painful wound. Whenever you attack with your hands, you can do Muscle +1d10 damage, plus the target loses 1 Hardiness (which takes a month to recover).

Doom Chariot

Characteristics: Wood, Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

You specialise in infusing Qi into wooden objects. This has a number of uses, but the most famous is making chariots blaze with energy to charge airborne at foes and smash into targets. The size and ferocity of the vehicle determines its damage (generally between 2d10 and 8d10). You must make an Internal Martial Arts roll against equal to the potential damage value (TN 8 for 8d10, TN 6 for 6d10, TN 4 for 4d10, and so on) in order to control and attack with the vehicle each round.

Doom Rider

Characteristics: Water, Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

You are skilled at infusing Qi into animals. This has a variety of uses, but one of the more common is infusing your Qi into a beast of burden or steed, increasing its overall power and speed by a factor of four, and allowing you to ride the creature through the air or very quickly over land. Use your Internal Martial Arts against the Hardiness of the target to see whether this works. Use your Ride skill for any relevant manoeuvring.

Double Axe of the Sky

Prerequisite: Double Axe Style ▪ **Required for:** Pangu's Splitting Axe

Characteristics: Metal, Melee, Armed

You strike with the fury of heaven. This improves your Double Axe Style so that all your axe strikes do 1 extra Wound.

Double Axe Style

Required for: Double Axe of the Sky ▪ **Characteristics:** Metal, Melee, Armed

You can fight with two axes without suffering the normal -1d10 Double Axe penalty. This also allows you to make one free follow-up attack on any successful axe attack.

Dragonfly in Floating Leaves

Characteristics: Lightness Martial Arts, Unarmed, Non-combat

You are a master of Lightness Martial Arts and can reach distant locations easily. All of your Lightness Martial Arts skill rolls have double the standard effect.

Dragon Hidden in the Mountains

Prerequisite: Snake Hidden in the Leaves ▪ **Characteristics:** Water, Unarmed, Eccentric, Non-combat

You are a master of disguise. This improves your Snake Hidden in the Leaves. To see through your disguise, an opponent must make two successful Detect rolls.

Empowering Palm

Required for: Empowering Palm of the Heavens

Characteristics: Water, Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed

You specialise in Qi energy attacks. Use your Internal Martial Arts to strike foes in melee or at a range of 20 feet per character level. Such attacks do 1d10 damage per level.

Empowering Palm of Death

Prerequisite: Empowering Palm of the Heavens

Characteristics: Water, Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed

This improves your Empowering Palm of the Heavens. Your palm strikes deliver a lethal poison that also leaves a black imprint on the foe. You must physically touch your opponent to hit them with this ability. Without the antidote, they die in 10 days.

Empowering Palm of the Heavens

Prerequisite: Empowering Palm ▪ **Required for:** Empowering Palm of Death

Characteristics: Water, Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed

This improves Empowering Palm. You can deliver potent blasts of energy at a distance that do 2 extra Wounds.

Enlightening Fist Style

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed

You strike crucial acupoints that dampen a person's defences. Your unarmed attacks now do Muscle + 2d10 damage. In addition, you can make an Internal Martial Arts roll to lower an enemy's Defence of your choice by 1 (recovers at a rate of 1 per hour on success, or 1 per day on total success; if you get two 10s, the effect is permanent).

Erudite Cultivation

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Eccentric

This Internal Martial Arts style boosts your thinking faculties to inhuman levels. Every morning, you must meditate for 30 minutes. Roll Meditation TN 5. On a success, you gain a +1d10 bonus to all Knowledge and Mental rolls until you next sleep. On a failure, you must wait until the following morning to meditate again. You must abstain from alcohol to use this ability.

Essence-Absorbing Seven Kicks

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed, Eccentric

This a suite of seven kicks that absorb energy from your opponents and draw it into yourself. Each kick targets a particular ability, and on a successful attack using Internal Martial Arts, the target loses -1 or -1d10 to that ability, while you gain a +1 or +1d10 to that ability. The transfer only lasts one hour. During that time, you must roll Meditation TN 7 or take 1d10 damage per ability absorbed (for example, if you absorbed three abilities, you suffer 3d10 damage).

The kicks are as follows: Mind-Absorbing Kick (Wits), Body-Absorbing Kick (Muscle), Soul-Devouring Kick (Hardiness), Beauty-Stealing Kick (Persuade), Lightning Kick (Speed), Mood Kick of the Long Journey (Endurance), and General-Devouring Kick (Command).

Exotic Martial Arts

Characteristics: Eccentric

You specialise in a style of martial arts from a foreign country, making it difficult for ordinary members of the Jianghu to deal with you due to a lack of familiarity. Any enemy who has never fought you before suffers a -2d10 penalty on attacks for the first two rounds of combat. This does not apply to anyone who practices the same style of martial arts as you.

Eyes of the Red Pine Immortal

Required for: Soul of the Red Pine Immortal • **Characteristics:** Medicine, Unarmed, Non-combat

Your understanding of medicine rivals that of the Red Pine Immortal, the legendary healer from South China. As a reaction to one of your allies being injured in battle, you can strike their acupoints to negate 1 Wound using the Medicine and Alchemy skill TN 7. You must be within 5 feet of them to do this. Because this disrupts their internal energy, each time you use the ability it reduces the target's Hardiness by 1 (which returns at rate of 1 per day).

Fading Breeze

Prerequisite: Fading Smoke ▪ **Characteristics:** Unarmed, Non-Combat, Eccentric

This improves your Fading Smoke, leaving behind only a fading breeze. You disappear and can move anywhere at your full movement without being seen. This works automatically, and you are untraceable.

Fading Smoke

Required for: Fading Breeze ▪ **Characteristics:** Unarmed, Non-Combat, Eccentric

As long as no one is looking at you directly, you can move at your full movement from any location to another without anyone noticing, leaving behind only a tiny wisp of smoke. Opponents suffer -2d10 to Detect and Survival when trying to find you.

Fearless Boxer Style

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Unarmed, Melee

You have trained every part of your body to be a weapon and be hardened enough to deflect attacks. Your unarmed strikes do Muscle + 1d10 damage and impose a -2 to your opponent's Hardiness. Against melee attacks, you gain +2 Hardiness.

Ferocious Whipping Style

Required for: Ferocious Whip Immortal ▪ **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Eccentric

You are a master of the whip and can use it to wear down your opponent's mind and body. When you attack with the whip, in addition to normal damage, you drain 1 Defence of your choice from the target on a successful damage roll.

Fishing Pole Master

Characteristics: Wood, Melee, Armed, Eccentric

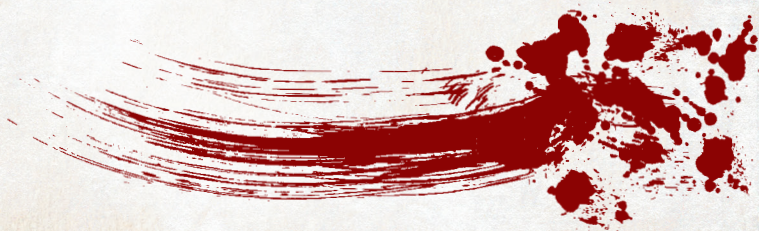
You can use a fishing pole as a lethal weapon. In your hands, using Speed to attack, a fishing pole does Speed + 2d10 damage. On a total success on the attack roll, you cause the foe to bleed, and they suffer -1 Hardiness. You can also spin around and strike up to one target per level provided they are within reach of your pole on any given attack.

Fist of Earth

Required for: Five Elements Destruction

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Earth, Five Elements, Ranged, Unarmed

Channel the earth element to strike with massive force. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade to do normal damage plus 1d10 damage for every point of Resist you have. Inflict 1 extra Wound against enemies whose signature style is related to water.



FIVE ELEMENTS DESTRUCTION

Prerequisite: One Signature Ability or Counter from each of the Five Elements:

Wood: Bombardment of Wood [37] or Wood Replacement [69]

Fire: Breath of Fire [37] or Raging Fire [67]

Earth: Fist of Earth [43] or Blast of Earth [63]

Water: Kicks of Water [49] or Water Torrent [69]

Metal: Palm of Metal [54] or Metal Skin [67]

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Five Elements, Ranged, Unarmed.

If you have mastered five other techniques related to the Five Elements, one for each element, you can combine their power into a devastating attack. You can attack all enemies within 50 feet, gain +3d10 on the attack, do 5 extra Wounds, and knock any survivors 15 feet back, where they lay prone until the beginning of your next turn. Afterwards, your Hardiness drops to half until you gain a full night's rest.

Flashing Moon Sabre Style

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Metal, Melee, Armed

You strike in a blur, hitting up to three foes or delivering two strikes against a single foe. However, you sacrifice power and accuracy for furious speed. Your attacks and damage are made at -1d10.

Flawless Whip Immortal

Prerequisite: Ferocious Whipping Style ▪ **Required for:** Flickering Whip Deity

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Eccentric

This improves your Ferocious Whipping Style, allowing you to hit up to one target per level. Your whip does Speed + 2d10 damage as well.

Flea on the Ceiling

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You can move with incredible agility and nimbleness when upside-down. Roll Athletics TN 6 to traverse the ceiling of any interior location as if it were the floor. Make a new check for every full move you make.

Flickering Whip Deity

Prerequisite: Flawless Whip Immortal

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Eccentric

This improves your Flawless Whip Immortal. Your whip lashes with terrible power, flickering like starlight as it rips your opponent's flesh. Your whip does 3d10 + Speed damage plus 1 extra Wound.

Flying Moth Style

Characteristics: Eccentric

You glide through the air with each attack, striking lightly but in a way that is difficult to defend against; your attacks do normal damage but people Counter against them at -2d10.

Fly-Whisk Master

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Eccentric

When you wield a fly-whisk, it does Speed + 1d10 damage. You also can use your Internal Martial Arts for longer reach. This increases the effective reach by 10 feet per level. In addition, on a total success with your attack rolls, you can stiffen the hairs at a crucial moment to impale foes for open damage.

Giant-Sword Fighter I

Required for: Giant-Sword Fighter II

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You can use the great sabre (and other giant weapons such as giant twin hammers) at a reduced penalty. Instead of -3d10 to Speed and Attack, you take -1d10.

Giant-Sword Fighter II

Prerequisite: Giant-Sword Fighter I • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You can hit up to three targets with giant weapons in smooth, flowing strikes.

Giant-Sword Thrower I

Required for: Giant-Sword Thrower II • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Ranged, Metal

You can throw giant sabres (and other giant weapons such as giant twin hammers) up to 20 feet per rank of Muscle, attacking at range.

Giant-Sword Thrower II

Prerequisite: Giant-Sword Thrower I • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Ranged, Metal

You can throw giant weapons as a ranged attack against up to three targets each round.

God of Gambling

Characteristics: Eccentric, Unarmed, Non-combat

You perform better when the stakes are high and money is on the line. Whenever you perform an action as part of a very big wager, you gain a +2d10 bonus to the skill roll. The only skill this doesn't apply to is the Gambling skill itself.

Golden Crab Style

Characteristics: Melee, Water, Unarmed

You fight with a low, crab-like stance, and keep your hands in a protective position near your face. You have also trained your hands to clench with enormous power. Your hands do Muscle + 3d10 damage, and you gain +1d10 on all your melee Counter attempts.

Golden Thread Expert

Characteristics: Metal, Eccentric

You can use golden threads to easily kill or to set elaborate traps. When you use the golden thread, it does 3d10 damage plus 1 extra Wound. It also requires a Detect TN 9 roll to Counter or see.

Grip of the Yang Divinity

Characteristics: Unarmed, Melee, Internal Martial Arts, Eccentric

You attack by grabbing onto an opponent, then sending destructive Yang energy coursing through their meridians. Roll Athletics versus Athletics to grab onto your enemy. Then roll Internal Martial Arts versus Internal Martial Arts. On a success, inflict 2 Wounds. On a total success, inflict 3 Wounds.

Guan Dao Master

Required for: Guan Dao Tornado Style ▪ **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You are skilled at blazing charges with the Guan Dao. You do not suffer the normal -1d10 penalty for using the Guan Dao. You also do 1 extra Wound any time you are able to charge at full speed at a target (providing you have 20 feet of space leading into the attack).

Guan Dao Tornado Style

Prerequisite: Guan Dao Master ▪ **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You launch deadly spinning attacks with the Guan Dao. You can hit up to two opponents per level, providing they are in your immediate area, and you do 2 extra Wounds on 10 results on your damage rolls instead of 1 extra Wound.

Hawkeyed Assassin

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You can see a great distance and aim ranged weapons with precision. You are able to see eight times further than most people, and gain a +1d10 to all ranged attacks. In addition, conditions that would normally impose Detect penalties do not do so for you, except in cases like blindness.

Hawk Killing Blade

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You are adept at killing airborne opponents, gaining a +2d10 to your attack against them and doing 3 extra Wounds against them on a successful damage roll. They also suffer a -1d10 penalty to Counters against your attacks.

Head-Defeating Style

Characteristics: Eccentric

You always go for the head, aiming to control, batter, and destroy it. Whenever you strike, you can do normal damage plus -1 Wits to the target (which comes back at a rate of 1 per month). In addition, whenever you roll on the Death and Maiming Table, treat any result of 1, 4, 7, and 10 as decapitation or crushing of the head.

Healing Benefaction of the Mercy Goddess

Prerequisite: Healing Hands of the Mercy Goddess

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Poison, Unarmed, Non-combat

This improves your Healing Hands of the Mercy Goddess. Place two fingers onto your own forehead, and two fingers onto an injured ally. Roll Internal Martial Arts TN 8. On a success, your ally regains 1 Wound per level of your Medicine and Alchemy skill. Using this ability reduces your Internal Martial Arts to 0d10 until you get a full night's rest.

Healing Hands of the Mercy Goddess

Required for: Healing Benefaction of the Mercy Goddess

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Poison, Unarmed, Non-combat

Placing both hands on the back of an ally, you can cleanse defilements and heal Wounds. Roll Internal Martial Arts TN 8. On a success, your ally is cured of any poison effects, and regains 1 Wound.

Heart of Sun Bin

Prerequisite: You cannot take this if you have the Mind of Sun Bin ▪ **Characteristics:** Eccentric

Your style is dedicated to the use of tactics and creating opportunities to exploit your opponent's weakness. When you have the high ground, or a similar advantage, you do 2 extra Wounds on damage rolls.

Inner Arts of the Eccentric God

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

Your daily meditation routines focus on that which surpasses the ordinary and mundane. You gain +1d10 on attacks when using bizarre or exotic weapons.

Inspired Word

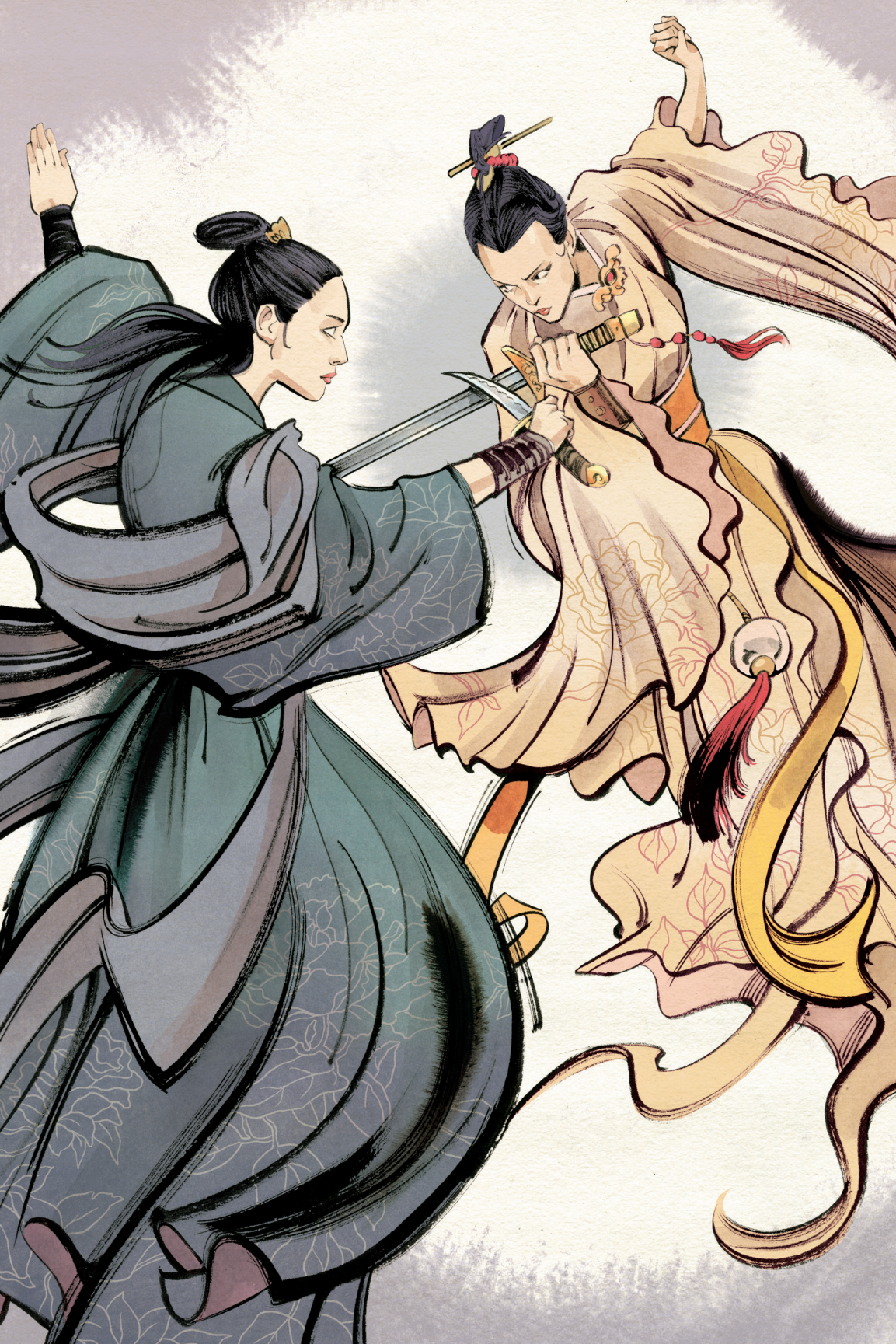
Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You are a great poet who can drive people's passions with a phrase. You can compose poems that plant suggestions and even propel people to violence. Make a Talent roll against the Target's Wits. On a Success the person is filled with the passion you wish them to experience and will feel unfulfilled if they do not act upon it (suffering a -1d10 to all their Skills from lack of interest until they do so).

Inverse Stance

Characteristics: Unarmed, Eccentric

You move and fight on your hands rather than your feet. You may even use this to dance. Because the stance is so unorthodox, it imposes a -1d10 to all melee attacks and gives you a +1d10 bonus on all Counters against melee attacks.



Iron Hand

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Melee, Metal

You have powerful hands capable of crushing foes or healing them. Your mastery of internal strength gives you great precision in the kind of harm or help you bestow. Anytime you attack with your hands, you do Muscle+3d10 Damage. On a total success you can opt to do one of the following: 1 extra Wound, -1 Hardiness, -1d10 Muscle, +1d10 Muscle or Heal 1 Wound (up to once per day, per Target). You can always forgo doing damage if you choose.

Iron Head Striking Style

Characteristics: Earth, Unarmed, Melee

You have trained your head to be hard as a rock and use it to smash opponents. You trade accuracy for power, putting your whole body into attacks. You suffer a -1d10 to all your head strike attacks, but your head does Muscle plus 1 extra Wound and drains 1 Hardiness on a successful damage roll. For purposes of taking damage, any attack to your head should treat your Hardiness as 10. Your head can also be used to smash objects.

Iron Tooth Style

Characteristics: Metal, Eccentric

You are a master of the Iron Teeth and can bite foes effortlessly. Not only can you use Iron Teeth without penalty, you can use your bite to restrain foes freely on a successful attack. Anyone hit by your bite is restrained for 1 round, and can only break free the following round if they make a successful opposed Muscle Roll against you.

Jade Kicks

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Melee, Unarmed

You attack effectively at close range with high and flexible kicks. Your kicks do Muscle plus 2 Extra Wounds when you are at extremely close range, or 3 Extra Wounds if the opponent is trying to grab or hold you in some manner this round, or if you are holding the Target.

Kicks of Water

Required for: Five Elements Destruction

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Water, Five Elements, Melee, Unarmed

Channel the Water element to destabilise the enemy with sweeping kick attacks. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade. On a success, your opponent is knocked to the ground and takes 1d10 damage, plus takes 1 extra Wound if their signature style is related to fire. On your next turn, they must make an opposed Internal Martial Arts roll to stand up.

King of Gambling

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You are a master gambler and gain +2d10 to all Gambling skill rolls.

Life-Chasing Sword I

Required for: Life-Chasing Sword II ▪ **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

You are one with the blade and can cut impossibly wide swaths or perform ferocious piercing leaps that strike multiple opponents. When fighting with a sword you can hit up to 3 Targets per level using Internal Martial Arts against Evade.

Life-Chasing Sword II

Prerequisite: Life-Chasing Sword ▪ **Required for:** Life-Chasing Sword III

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

This improves Life-Chasing Sword. In addition to the previous effects, you can imbue your sword with a powerful internal energy that delivers 1 extra Wound.

Life-Chasing Sword III

Prerequisite: Life-Chasing Sword II ▪ **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

This improves Life-Chasing Sword further. You no longer need a sword, you are the sword. You can perform all the effects of Life-Chasing Sword using virtually any object. Whatever object you use, you do 1d10 damage per character level plus 3 Extra Wounds.

Lijuan's Cruel Assessment

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You are skilled at identifying a person's deep shame, hidden desire, or profound shortcoming. This is something they actively hide from the world. Essentially you can use Empathy to spot things no one else would ever see about a person through minor tells in their behaviour. Roll against Wits to successfully use this ability, as long as you have twenty minutes to observe the Target.

Lijuan's Flower Shaming Beauty

Characteristics: Unarmed, Eccentric

You are stunning to behold and know how to move, speak, or glance in ways that makes foes too self-conscious to strike effectively. You are particularly good at shaming people with your words. You can use relevant Mental skills in and out of combat by rolling against Wits of any Target you communicate with (up to 1 per level). If your skill succeeds, foes suffer -2d10 on their next roll against you, or -1d10 against others. On a total success the effect lasts 10 minutes.

Lijuan's Graceful Dancing Style

Characteristics: Melee, Eccentric

When you fight, you move with the grace and beauty of a dancer, making it much harder for foes to strike you or defend against your attacks. Your attacks do normal damage, but opponents suffer -1d10 to their attack rolls against you and -1d10 to their Counters against your attacks.

Lijuan's Moon-Eclipsing Gaze

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Melee, Eccentric

You tilt your head and gaze softly into your foe's eyes, forcing them to witness your full beauty and pacifying their heart. Roll Command against Wits. On a success the Target is unable to harm you for one hour. You cannot use this during combat though you can use it during the Talking and Analysis Phase.

Maiming Strike Style

Characteristics: Eccentric

You are skilled at maiming people. When you cause a person to roll on the Death and Maiming Table, you can choose any result but death on the first table.

MASTER DECEIVER

Characteristics: Eccentric

Only allowed with GM approval.

You are skilled at deception and poison use and can reveal your schemes at any moment. You may freely announce (in or out of combat) that you have placed a trap or poison in a location or on an object. You must still make a relevant skill roll against the Target's Wits to deceive them into being poisoned or trapped. This ability can only be used within the bounds of reason, and the GM has the final say.

Examples: as an NPC is drinking a cup of alcohol, you tell the GM that you gave the inn's staff poisoned powder to put in the cup. However, you could not tell the GM that you had trapped the cart of a passing government official who you had never seen before.

Mastermind

Characteristics: Eccentric

You are at your best when assessing, planning and letting others do your bidding. Both in and out of combat you can assess any situation with a Reasoning skill roll (TN set by GM). If you succeed, then you see a key weakness, opportunity, etc. to exploit. If you are able to instruct others to exploit this weakness, they gain a +1d10/+1 bonus in their efforts.

Master of Deception

Characteristics: Eccentric, Unarmed

You are skilled at poison and deceptive schemes. Before an event, situation, encounter etc., explain to the GM a detailed scheme. During the encounter, if the scheme is reasonable, you get up to a +3d10 bonus to any skill roll related to the deception. This can apply to long term or short-term schemes.



Master of Mimicry

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You are adept at imitating the mannerisms, appearances, personalities, writings styles and similar characteristics of other people. You can attempt to convince others that you are someone else, even a well-known master, or one of their closest friends or relative. Use the most relevant skill against their Wits to pull off the deception. The effect is nearly perfect.

Melancholic Song I

Required for: Melancholic Song I • **Characteristics:** Musical, Eccentric, Non-combat

You perform music that chills the spirit and controls the mood of listeners. Anytime you sing or play music, roll Talent against Wits. On a success, you can impose a -1d10 penalty against a skill of your choice for as long as you perform the song.

Melancholic Song II

Prerequisite: Melancholic Song I • **Characteristics:** Musical, Eccentric, Non-combat

This improves Melancholic Song. It imposes a -2d10 penalty to a skill of your choice.

Meridian Transposition

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Water

By altering the position of the meridians or organs in your body, you make it difficult for enemies to harm you with internal attacks. Any Internal Martial Arts attacks against you suffer a -3d10 penalty. Furthermore, your acupoints cannot be blocked.

Meteor Hammer Master

Prerequisite: Meteor Hammer Style • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Ranged, Metal, Armed

You bounce the hammer against foe after foe. After each successful attack, you can make another attack at a nearby foe. You can keep using this ability until you fail to strike someone.

Meteor Hammer Style

Required for: Meteor Hammer Master • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Ranged, Metal, Armed

You do not suffer the penalty for wielding a meteor hammer. Also, following a successful attack, you can bounce the hammer, making one attack against a nearby foe.

Mind of Sun Bin

Prerequisite: You cannot take this if you have the Heart of Sun Bin

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

You patiently and carefully apply tactics. When you have the high ground or a similar advantage, you gain +2d10 to your attacks and do 1 extra Wound on successful damage rolls.

Needle and Thread Expert

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

Your use of needles and threads is unrivalled. Whenever you attack with needles and threads, you do 1d10 damage per character level (up to 9d10). In addition, if anyone is tethered to your threads, as a move you can rip out the needles, causing a Wound that does 3d10 damage.

A Needle in Silk Floss

Characteristics: Unarmed, Non-combat, Eccentric

To even the most trained eye, you seem like a gentle person. You are not. You can mask your Killing Aura before reaching level 6.

Needle Master

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

You overwhelm your foes with barrages of needle attacks. When using needles, you can hit up to 1 target per level, or you can focus all your needles on one target, imposing a -1d10 penalty to any Counter attempt.

Nine Fingers of the Void

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Melee, Water, Unarmed, Poison

This is a subtle skill that causes a person to die over the course of nine days. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade. On a success, roll your Medicine against Hardiness. If this succeeds, the target is poisoned and dies in 9 days. The target experiences no symptoms. The cure for the poison is a mixture of honey, salt, and ground cinnabar.

Learning this technique causes Fire Deviation. Take the Fire Deviation Eccentricity when you learn it. If you already have Fire Deviation, take another Fire Deviation Eccentricity in addition to the existing one.

OCCULT ARTS

Characteristics: Eccentric

Only allowed with GM approval.

You practice arts that many scoff at, but that give you access to incredible power. You can make attacks with your Magical Arts skill. Using either magic or sleight of hand, you can launch attacks that are innovative and thrilling, like using incendiary powder to harm your foes. Describe what you want to do with your magic and the GM can incorporate it using a ruling, or by drawing on the guidelines below:

Fire Attacks: Anyone hit by your fire attacks takes 4d10 damage in the first round, and 2d10 in the second.

Array: Attacks that hit multiple targets (up to two per level) do 1d10 damage.

Weaponry: Anything that launches a weapon at someone does the damage of that weapon.

Open Mind

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Water, Alcohol, Unarmed, Non-combat

You rely on alcohol for clarity that normally evades you. When drunk, you add +1d10 to all Mental skills, but -1d10 to all Knowledge skills.

Palm of Metal

Required for: Five Elements Destruction • **Characteristics:** Melee, Metal, Five Elements, Unarmed

Channel the metal element to land devastating palm strikes. You gain +1d10 on your unarmed attack. On a success, you do Muscle + 3d10 damage, and inflict 1 extra Wound against enemies whose signature style is related to wood.

Pangu's Splitting Axe

Prerequisite: Double Axe of the Sky • **Characteristics:** External Martial Arts, Melee, Metal, Armed

This improves your Double Axe Style further. You swing your axes with the power and ferocity of Pangu splitting the cosmos. All of your axe attacks do 3 extra Wounds.

Poison Cultivation

Characteristics: Water, Unarmed, Poison, Eccentric, Non-combat

By ingesting various poisons and toxins for many years, you turn your blood itself into a deadly poison. At any time, you can cut yourself to extract Blood Poison from your veins and use it to coat a weapon, or slip it into food or drink. If you take a Wound in combat, anyone including allies within 10 feet must roll Athletics TN 6 to avoid the resulting spray of blood, or be struck by the poison. This ability also provides innate defences against other types of poison; all poisons suffer a -1d10 penalty when rolling against you.

Pole Stance

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee

When using any long-shafted weapon, you can assume very powerful stances that boost your ability to withstand attacks and deliver counters. You do +1d10 damage on any melee counter, and you gain a +2 to Evade against attacks that use Muscle for damage.

Porcelain-Shattering Finger

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Melee

The weaker your foe, the more powerful your strikes against them. Use Internal Martial Arts for your attacks. You specialise in delivering strikes that exploit physical weakness. Against opponents with zero ranks in Muscle, your attacks do 3 extra Wounds. Against opponents with one rank in Muscle, they do 2 extra Wounds. Against opponents with two ranks in Muscle, they do 1 extra Wound. Against opponents with three ranks, they do normal damage. Only Internal Martial Arts Counters can deflect this style.

Professional Advantage

Characteristics: Eccentric

When you are in the element of your profession, other fighters find it difficult to deal with you. Whenever in that element (as adjudicated by the GM), you gain +2 to all Defences for the first round of combat.

Relentless Blade

Characteristics: Armed, Melee, Metal

You advance relentlessly with each strike of your blade, and your fighting style is built around exceptional footwork. Through careful positioning and by improving it with each successful strike, your attacks increase in lethality as you advance. Every successful attack you make against the same target adds a cumulative +1 extra Wound to the next attack against that target.

Rope Dart Expert I

Required for: Rope Dart Expert II • **Characteristics:** Armed, Melee, Metal

You can use a rope dart without suffering a penalty. With this, you can hit up to two targets with a single attack. In addition, when you get a total success on the attack roll, you can choose to restrain the target or do 1 extra Wound by impaling them.

Rope Dart Expert II

Prerequisite: Rope Dart Expert I • **Characteristics:** Armed, Melee, Metal

This improves your Rope Dart Expert ability. You can now hit two targets per character level, and you do 2 extra Wounds on a total success.

Shadow Whip Style

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee

You are a skilled practitioner of the whip, and you gain a +1d10 when you use it to grab, choke, or strike foes.

Snake Hidden in the Leaves

Required for: Dragon Hidden in the Mountains • **Characteristics:** Water, Unarmed, Eccentric, Non-combat

You are adept at disguising yourself to look like another person. Add a +2d10 bonus to any Disguise roll.

Sorghum Slaughterer

Characteristics: Alcohol, Water, Melee, Ranged

After drinking your fill of baijiu, you unleash deadly attacks. When drunk on baijiu, you gain +1d10 to all Combat and Physical skills, and -1 to all Mental and Knowledge skills.

Soul of the Red Pine Immortal

Prerequisite: Eyes of the Red Pine Immortal • **Characteristics:** Medicine, Fire

Your understanding of medicine surpasses that of the Red Pine Immortal, the legendary healer from South China. This improves your Eyes of the Red Pine Immortal. As a reaction to one of your allies being injured in battle, you can strike their acupoints from a distance with needles to negate 2 Wounds. You must be within 30 feet of them to do this, and doing so drains your ally of 2 Hardiness (which returns at rate of 1 per day). You must successfully strike with the needles and perform a Medicine and Alchemy TN 7 roll.

Staff Leaping Style

Characteristics: Lightness Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Eccentric

You use your staff to vault over foes and climb away from attacks. When using a staff, you can leap an extra 30 feet across multiple people, and you gain +2d10 to your Counters when climbing swiftly up the staff or leaping would enable you to escape the attack.

Stone Body Style

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Earth, Eccentric

Your body is as solid as stone. You impose a -1d10 to all damage rolls against you and your foes suffer -2 to Hardiness whenever you roll damage.

Strangling Hair

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Ranged, Water

You send long tendrils of hair out to confine or strangle opponents. This can be used for a variety of things, and has a range of 10 feet per character level.

To restrain an opponent with your hair, roll Internal Martial Arts versus Evade. On a success, your hair wraps around your opponent, restraining them until the beginning of your next turn and inflicting 1 Wound. On a total success, damage is increased to 2 Wounds. You must have at least waist-length hair to use this ability.

Your hair can be used for similar, non-combat purposes, as adjudicated by the GM.

Studied Blade Style

Characteristics: External Martial Arts, Armed, Melee, Metal

You assess foes carefully and deliver precise killing blows. However, this style is slower and more methodical than others. Using this imposes a -2d10 penalty to Initiative. Your attacks are made at +1d10, and they do 2 extra Wounds.

Swift Silver Spear Style

Characteristics: Lightness Martial Arts, Armed, Melee

You strike quick and light, and are difficult to hit in melee. You can roll Lightness Martial Arts twice for your attacks and take the best pool. You also gain a +2 to your Evade against shorter melee weapons.

Tap of the Bone Physician I

Required for: Tap of the Bone Physician II • **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Combat, Fire

With a gentle touch, you can send Qi into the muscles of your foe for various different effects. Make an Internal Martial Arts roll against Evade. On a success, roll Medicine against Hardiness. If you succeed, you can cause the muscles to react as you desire for 1 round per character level. This can cause 1d10 damage per character level, or instigate other reactions such as paralysis or seizures. Only someone skilled with this style can stop the effect (by rolling Internal Martial Arts against the initial attack roll).

Tap of the Bone Physician II

Prerequisite: Tap of the Bone Physician II • **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Combat, Fire

With the touch of your finger, you cause your enemy's bones to crumble. You can target the bones by touch, making an Internal Martial Arts roll against Evade. On a success, you can make a Medicine and Alchemy roll against Hardiness. If this succeeds, the person feels their bone shatter in the location you touched and loses 1 Hardiness (which takes 1 month to return). On a total success, the person loses 3 Hardiness (which returns at a rate of 1 per month).

Tender Hand of Death

Characteristics: Melee, Non-combat, Fire

You are adept at killing when victims are most vulnerable. You strike while they are distracted by things like a loving embrace or enchanting melody. Outside combat, when the target is distracted, your attacks do +4 extra Wounds. In combat, you suffer a -2d10 penalty to attacks.

Thought-Diminishing Dagger Style

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Ranged, Armed

You are skilled at throwing daggers into key acupoints and can use them to make acupoint attacks. When throwing daggers in this way, make an Internal Martial Arts roll against Evade. In addition, you have a particular ability to strike the Big Hammer Acupoint, gaining a +1d10 bonus when trying to do so.

Uncanny Hands

Characteristics: Non-combat, Eccentric

Your hands move with seemingly unnatural speed, dexterity, and precision. Gain a +1d10 bonus to any rolls for Gambling, Theft, or any other skill the GM deems fit.

Viper Style

Characteristics: Unarmed, Eccentric

You are adept at deception and formulating clever plans. You always succeed on Mental skill rolls against non-ranked characters. Against characters at your level or lower, you always gain a +2d10 bonus to Mental skills. Against characters at a higher level than you, you still get a +1d10 bonus. When making Mental skill rolls against a general TN, you get a +2d10 bonus.

Weapon Adept

Required for: Weapon Saint • **Characteristics:** Armed, Eccentric

You are extremely skilled in the use of one particular weapon. Pick one weapon upon acquiring this skill. You gain a permanent +1d10 bonus when using that type of weapon, and a -1d10 penalty when using any other type of weapon, or fighting unarmed. You also gain a +2 to Evade against this weapon. You become known in the Jianghu as an 'adept' of that type of weapon, such as a Spear Adept, Sword Adept, etc.

Weapon Saint

Prerequisite: Weapon Adept • **Characteristics:** Armed, Eccentric

Your skill in the use of one particular weapon defies imagination. This improves your Weapon Adept ability. Your bonus for your weapon of choice increases to +2d10, and you receive no penalty when fighting with other weapons, or unarmed. It also increases your Evade by 3 against this weapon. You become known in the Jianghu as a 'saint' of that type of weapon, such as a Spear Saint, Sword Saint, etc.

Yang Sun Immolation

Required for: Yin Yang Devastation • **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Ranged, Fire

You shoot rays of sunlight to burn your enemy's eyes. Your enemy must make Athletics roll at TN 8. On a failure, they take 1 Wound and are blinded until they get a full night's rest. On a success, they are blinded for one hour. On a total success, they are not injured. This ability can only be used when the sun is visible in the sky.

Yan's Enduring Fists

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed, Melee

Your open-handed attacks are ferocious and difficult to defend against. Opponents must roll twice to successfully defend against them.

Yan's Enduring Spirit

Characteristics: Eccentric

You continue to fight when others give up or fall. When you exceed your Max Wounds and begin dying, you can continue to fight for a number of rounds equal to Hardiness. When you reach death, you can make an Endurance roll. On a success, you fall into a deep sleep but do not die.

Yan's Internal Mastery

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Medicine, Water, Unarmed, Non-combat

You are skilled at Internal Martial Arts for healing. You can use Internal Martial Arts to heal 1 extra Wound per day on a successful Internal Martial Arts skill roll (TN 6).

Yidi's Iron Stomach

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Alcohol, Water, Non-combat, Unarmed

You have the blessing of Yidi, the god of alcohol, to temporarily increase your alcohol tolerance. Roll Internal Martial Arts TN 6. On a success, gain a number of cattles of tolerance equal to your level for a session of drinking. On a failure, gain a number of cattles of tolerance equal to half your level (round up).

Yin Moon Suffocation

Required for: Yin Yang Devastation • **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

You release a beam of moonlight to wrap around your enemy's throat. Your enemy must make an Athletics roll at TN 8. On a failure, they take 2 Wounds. On a success, they take 1 Wound. On a total success, they take no Wounds. This ability can only be used when the moon is visible in the sky.

YIN YANG APOCALYPSE

Prerequisite: Yin Yang Devastation • **Characteristics:** Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

This improves your Yin Yang Devastation. All enemies in your line of sight must make an Athletics roll. On a failure, they take 3 Wounds. On a success, they take 2 Wounds. Before using this ability, you must first gaze at the moon for ten minutes, then meditate in the full light of the sun for ten minutes in the morning. The powers fade after you sleep.

Yin Yang Devastation

Prerequisites: Yang Sun Immolation and Yin Moon Suffocation • **Required for:** Yin Yang Apocalypse

Characteristics: Internal Martial Arts, Unarmed

If you have mastered one other Yin technique and one other Yang technique, you can combine the Yin power of the moon and the Yang power of the sun to unleash a devastating attack. Your enemy must make an Athletics roll at TN 9. On a failure, they take 3 Wounds. On a success, they take 2 Wounds. Before using this ability, you must first gaze at the moon for ten minutes, then meditate in the full light of the sun for ten minutes in the morning. The powers fade after you sleep.

HIDDEN ABILITIES

These are abilities that players can discover and are of great power. They are rarely shared by their users. No one is guaranteed a hidden ability. They must be acquired from the NPCs in the Jianghu who know them, or through manuals. A player who would like to take a hidden ability should discuss the matter with the GM to see whether it is possible.

Aura of Brutality

You can project an aura that makes you seem like a bloodthirsty killer who has taken many lives, even if you have never killed a single person. When anyone attempts to detect your Killing Aura or Killing Aura Darkness, roll your highest Martial Arts against their Wits. On a success, they 'see' your Killing Aura as being far, far stronger and darker than theirs.

Crazed Raksha Style

Your attacks do normal damage plus 3 extra Wounds, but lower your Evade by 3 for one round. You can also attack multiple opponents, but must divide the 3 extra Wounds among them. This can be found in the Raksha Manual.

Divine Strike of Nine Mountain Gods

Prerequisite: Divine Strike of the Mountain God

Required for: Divine Strike of the Mountain God Army

This improves your Divine Strike of the Mountain God. On a successful melee attack, roll damage with two dice pools, and keep both as separate attacks.

Divine Strike of the Mountain God

Required for: Divine Strike of Nine Mountain Gods

You strike with the power of a mountain god. On a successful melee attack, roll damage with two dice pools, and keep the best set of rolls.

Divine Strike of the Mountain God Army

Prerequisite: Divine Strike of Nine Mountain Gods

This improves your Divine Strike of the Nine Mountain Gods. On a successful melee attack, roll damage with three dice pools, and keep the two best as separate attacks

Head-Ripping Strike

You grab hold of your opponent's head and attempt to rip it from their body. This technique does 6d10 open damage, and if it causes enough Wounds to kill, you remove the head.

Heart-Piercing Finger (Chuanxin Finger)

You stab your finger into the target's chest and strike their heart. Roll Internal Martial Arts at -1d10 against the target. On a success, you do 6d10 damage plus drain 2 Hardiness that never comes back. This is also called Chuanxin Finger.

Lengthening Arms of Ma

You stretch your arms beyond the normal human limit, reaching 5 feet per character level. You can attempt to impale people with your arms, doing Muscle + 2d10 on a normal success, and Muscle + 2d10 plus 3 extra Wounds on a total success. In combat, this also gives you a +1d10 in any grab or restrain attempt, but can be used for a variety of tasks outside combat as well.

Liquid Sword Master

You are a master of flexible weapons and can use liquid swords without any penalty. If anyone tries to Counter against your liquid sword and fails, they take 3 extra Wounds.

Pure Stroke of the Blade

This style requires full concentration and emphasises single, fully committed strikes with a bladed weapon. You must make both a Meditation roll and External Martial Arts roll against the Evade of your foe. If both succeed, you do 1d10 open damage per character level. However, in the next attack against you, provided it is within a round, your Evade and Hardiness are effectively 2. You can attack one target for every three of your character levels.

Slaughtering Blade

You get in close to deliver lethal strikes with bladed weapons. Your attacks do normal damage plus 2 extra Wounds, but lower your Hardiness by 2 against the target you are striking (for 1 round). You can hit up to two targets.





CHAPTER FOUR

COUNTERS

You can use Counters to defend against attacks. When someone attacks you, if you have a Counter that is appropriate to the attack method, you can roll against the attack roll, as an opposed roll. You must declare your intention to Counter before the attacker rolls. On a success, the Counter usually works by evading the attack – but see individual entries, as the Counters vary. Unless a Counter states otherwise, a success means you take no damage from the attack.

COUNTERS

Acupoint Defence

You use Internal Martial Arts to defend against attacks that strike your meridians. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you shift your meridians, and the attack misses.

Bending Reed Defence

When someone targets your head in a melee attack, you lean away like a reed in the wind and then snap back with tremendous power to deliver damage. Roll Lightness Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you do normal damage, but can add any extra Wounds the attacker would have delivered with their attack.

Bitter Duo Defence

You and another person with this Counter can defend against one another's vulnerabilities, providing each other with a flurry of protective strikes against any ranged or melee attack. Roll External Martial Arts –1d10 against any ranged or melee attack against either of you to deflect it. However, the effort is emotionally enervating, and you lose 1 Wits each time (which returns at a rate of 1 per hour).

Blast of Earth

You toss out a handful of sand to temporarily blind your enemies. Roll Athletics against the attack roll. On a success, the opponent misses and is temporarily blinded by sand for one round; they must take a –1d10 penalty on their next attack roll.

Bloat of the Toad

You suck in a huge breath of air, inflating your body like a balloon to gain amazing defensive abilities. Roll Internal Martial Arts against any melee or ranged attack. On a success, you reduce possible Wounds by 1. On a total success, you reduce possible Wounds by 1, and your foe suffers a backlash of 1 Wound.

Breath of Yidi

Emulating the spirit of the Yidi, the god of alcohol, you empty your stomach of one catty of alcohol in a completely unexpected defensive manoeuvre. When drunk, you can expel alcohol from your stomach to change any successful attack on you into a failure, also exhausting foes with the fumes. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll and stop the attack on a success. If the attack was a melee attack, roll 2d10 against the attacker's Hardiness, inflicting 1 Wound on a success. Once you run out of alcohol in your stomach, you can only use this Counter again after drinking enough alcohol to surpass your Drinking Limit.

Closing Defence

You know how to close the distance when someone attacks with a spear or other long weapon and misses. Roll External Martial Arts against Evade. On a success, you slip in and deliver normal damage plus 2 extra Wounds.

Clouding Star Defence

You can create a Qi barrier against ranged Qi attacks. Roll your Internal Martial Arts to defend against ranged Internal Martial Arts attacks.

Crocodile Jaw Defence

You can catch a projectile in your teeth and spit it at a target. Make an Internal Martial Arts roll against any ranged attack that uses a single projectile. On a success, you stop the attack and can spit the projectile at a single target as a free attack for normal damage (use Internal Martial Arts skill for the free attack).

Deadly Wager

You take a great risk to avoid damage, leaving a dangerous opening in your defences for a short period of time. You can force any attack that hits you to turn into a miss. Afterwards, roll Athletics at TN 8. On a total success, the next attack made against you gains a +1d10 bonus. On a success, all subsequent attacks during this combat session gain a +1d10 bonus. On a failure, all attacks during this combat session gain a +1d10 bonus, and you suffer a -2 penalty to your Evade. This Counter cannot be re-used until its negative effects are over.

Defence of Sun Bin

Whenever someone attacks you from a tactically unsound position (for example, from the low ground), you can roll Reasoning against the attack roll to avoid the attack.

Engulfing Wings of the Night Sky

You use your robes to deflect incoming ranged attacks. This is especially useful against darts and needles. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you block the attacks. When used against darts or needles, you can send them back at the attacker.

Golden Armour Defence

You tighten your muscles to protect against bladed and sharp attacks. Roll Muscle against the attack roll; on a success, you stop the attack.

Grip of the Whip

You can use your whip to grip and redirect attacks made against you onto any nearby target within range. Roll External Martial Arts against the attack. On a success, you redirect the attack against a foe of your choice. On a total success, you can physically hurl the attacker as well, doing 1d10 damage in the process.

Hand-Shattering Defence

You block fists and hand strikes with your elbow, knuckles, or a similar protrusion, causing the attacker's bones to shatter. Roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you stop the attack and can then roll 1d10 against Hardiness. If that roll succeeds, the target's hand bones break, effectively giving them the Missing Limb Eccentricity for 1 month.

Hovering Ghost Defence

You use Lightness Martial Arts to stay buoyant in the air, which doesn't enable you to block or dodge, but helps to minimise the impact of any attack. Roll Lightness Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you reduce possible Wounds by 1; on a total success, you take no Wounds.

Immortal Fishing Pole Defence

You can hook an incoming weapon and send it hurling with your fishing pole. Roll Speed against your opponent's attack roll. On a success, the attack fails, and the fishing rod wraps around the opponent's weapon and throws it up to 30 feet away.

Insightful Reaction

You are somewhat of a scholar when it comes to the Jianghu, giving you an advantage when fighting. When an attack is declared against you, roll Jianghu at TN 9. On a success, you recognise the attack ahead of time and detect the attacker's movement patterns, giving you a +2 to all Defences against that technique for the duration of combat. If you have been attacked by the technique before, the TN is lowered to 7.

Iron Armour Defence

You tighten your muscles, making your body impervious to blunt objects and attacks. Roll Muscle against the attack roll. On a success, the attack does not succeed.



Leg-Snapping Defence

When someone kicks you, you slip sideways and move in to break the other leg. Roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you avoid the attack and can roll 1d10 against Hardiness. If that succeeds, you snap the target's leg (effectively giving them the Missing Limb Eccentricity for 1 month).

Lijuan's Crippling Finger

When someone makes an open-handed or grappling attempt, you pinch their little finger between your thumb and index finger, evading the attack and causing a wave of crippling pain through their body. Roll your External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you evade the attack and grip the opponent's little finger. Then roll Medicine and Alchemy against Hardiness. On a success, the target suffers a -1d10 penalty to all skill rolls for 10 minutes from the pain. On a total success, the target suffers a -1d10 penalty and takes 1 Wound if they move within the next 10 minutes (they can attack, but not move).

Lijuan's Deadly Dagger

When someone attempts to attack you in melee and is close to you, if they miss their attack, you can stab a vital area like the neck with your dagger. Roll External Martial Arts against the target's Evade. On a success, you do normal damage plus 1 extra Wound. This only works with inside-bladed weapons like daggers or butterfly swords.

Ma's Deflecting Arrow

You shoot incoming projectiles out of the sky before they can strike. Roll External Martial Arts using a bow against any incoming ranged or thrown attacks (an arrow, dart, needle, etc.). On a success, the attack is deflected. On a total success, the projectile spins back at the attacker using your Counter result as the attack roll (for the normal damage value of the weapon).

Metal Skin

Your skin temporarily becomes hard and metallic in appearance. Roll Internal Martial Arts against TN 7. On a success, your Hardiness is increased by 1 for this attack. On a total success, it increases by 2.

Raging Fire

You circulate your Qi to drastically increase your body temperature. Any common weapon made from metal that makes contact with your body melts and is destroyed, doing no damage. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll to see whether this succeeds.

Reaching Defence

You are skilled at holding opponents with shorter weapons at bay. When someone attacks you with a shorter weapon, roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you interrupt their attack and strike with a sharp, quick stab of your own, doing just the damage of your weapon.

Resting Defence

You often remain seated or inactive, perhaps even eating, in the initial moments of combat. You use this time to study the situation and respond with a clever plan of attack. When someone attacks you with a melee or ranged attack, providing you have been inactive and observing, you can make a Reasoning roll against their attack roll. On a success, you avoid the attack and launch an innovative Counter strike (using the relevant skill to attack). This improvised attack does 3d10 plus a number of extra Wounds equal to the difference between your Wits and the target's.

Shadow Fist

You respond with a quick hand strike or punch when someone attacks you in melee without a weapon. Roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you do normal damage plus 1 extra Wound, and the target loses 1 Hardiness for two rounds.

Shifting Body

You can roll Lightness Martial Arts to avoid melee attacks, and you gain a +2d10 bonus when used to avoid being grabbed, restrained, or held in some manner.

Spinning Block

You can roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll to avoid thrown and projectile weapons, sending them back at the attacker if you get a 10, doing 3d10 damage.

Spirit Finger

You can use your fingers to defend against any melee weapon that has a narrow blade or handle (this cannot be used to defend against larger objects such as giant iron balls). Roll your Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll; if you succeed, you can roll again to take the weapon from your attacker.

Squall from the South Sea

You flick your sleeve to create a powerful tempest around you to protect against ranged attacks. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you block the attack by creating a windstorm with a 10-foot radius around you. Until the end of your next turn, any ranged weapon attack within that area automatically fails. On your next turn, you can move, but cannot attack or use any other Counter.

Steel-Shattering Finger

You stop an incoming melee attack with your finger, potentially generating enough Qi to destroy any weapon as strong as or weaker than steel. Roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you stop the attack. On a total success, you obliterate the weapon.

Sword Cyclone

You spin your sword into a defensive blur. Ranged attacks against you suffer a -1d10 penalty to hit.

Sword Parry

You block a melee weapon attack with your bladed weapon. Roll External Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you block the attack. On a total success, you knock the opponent's weapon from their hands.

Thirst of the Hungry Corpse

You practise dark arts that feed on the life force of others. When an enemy strikes you with a melee attack, roll Internal Martial Arts against the attack roll to reduce the damage to zero and inflict 1 Wound.

Typhoon from the South Sea

Prerequisite: Squall of the South Sea

This improves your Squall from the South Sea. Roll Internal Martial Arts against a ranged attack roll. On a success, you stop the attack and create a windstorm with a 30-foot radius around you. Until the end of your next turn, any ranged weapon attack within that area automatically fails. On your next turn, you can move, but cannot attack or use any other Counter.

Veneer of Vulnerability

You suddenly shift expression when attacked in melee, playing up your meekness and deliberately filling the attacker with sympathy that makes harming you distasteful. Roll Persuade against Wits. On a success, the attacker hesitates and loses the opportunity to strike you this round. On a total success, they hesitate for so long that you get one free normal attack.

Water Torrent

By unexpectedly splashing water onto the ground, you slip behind your opponent. Roll Lightness Martial Arts against the attack roll. On a success, you slide behind your foe, and on the next round, you gain a +1d10 to your attack against them.

Wood Replacement

By confusing your enemy with a replica body part made of wood, you gain an advantage on your next attack. You have a number of false limbs, and use them to intercept attacks. Roll Internal Martial Arts against any attack roll, except Qi-based or fire attacks. On a success, you intercept the attack. This counter requires that you have a replica wooden body part, such as a hand, arm, or head.

Yan's Gambit

You will willingly accept an attack to deliver a devastating blow. Roll your relevant attack skill against the attack. On a success, your Hardiness is halved, and you suffer normal damage. However, the attacker takes double the Wounds that he or she delivers to you.



CHAPTER FIVE

WEALTH AND SOCIAL RESOURCES

These are social and wealth resources that are available to characters if they choose to take them during character creation.

Note that some of these options might conflict with your profession. If so, either simply do not take them, or speak with the GM and find a way to thread them together. For example, a character with the profession 'Beggar' but who has 'Landed Gentry' as a social resource might secretly come from a prosperous family, giving them access to wealth, but for whatever reason, the character chooses to remain a beggar, estranged from their relatives.

These things can emerge on their own naturally in play, but if you select them at character creation, it is as if fate has guaranteed them to you.

WEALTH AND PROPERTY

If you chose Wealth and Property as your resource, you can select one of the following:

Boat

You have a seagoing or river-going vessel no finer than a sailing ship.

Illicit Business

You operate an illegal but profitable business. This reliably provides you with 50,000 coins a month, but comes with tremendous risk should authorities ever discover your activities.

Landed Gentry

You come from a wealthy family and will never want for money. Every month you can reliably draw up to 10,000 coins without affecting your status.

Manor

You have a splendid manor house.

Prosperous Business

You have a very prosperous business, but it must be managed from time to time. Select the nature of the business. You have easy access to 20,000 coins a month.

Wardrobe

You have invested an inordinate amount of energy into amassing a collection of clothing. This gives you ready access to virtually any type of attire you wish.

SOCIAL RESOURCES

If you selected Social Resources as your resource, then you can select one of the following:

Devoted Ex-Lovers

You make a lasting impression on those who fall for you. You have up to ten non-levelled former lovers who are still devoted to you and long for your company. Alternatively, you can have up to three first-level lovers who level as you do. While each lover is independently helpful to you, they often feud when in the presence of one another.

Loyal Bodyguards

You have two Loyal Bodyguards who are your steadfast protectors. Use the Loyal Bodyguard entries in Chapter Eleven for stats (page 246). When you reach level 5, they can upgrade to the Magnificent Bodyguard entry stats. When you reach level 9, they can upgrade to the Divine Bodyguard stats. The GM can also make similar characters of the same level so that Loyal Bodyguards can be unique. If your bodyguard dies, a new one can seek you out within 1 month.

Loyal Friend

You are good friends with a prominent hero whose level is two greater than your own. While this person has matters of their own to tend to, a letter or request for aid rarely goes unanswered, and they are often willing to travel great distances to help with important matters. The GM can either make this character or select an appropriate NPC from Chapter Eleven. Your Loyal Friend never exceeds level 9.

Loyal Servants

You have up to five Personal Servants who are deeply loyal to you. Use the Personal Servants entry in Chapter Eleven for stats (page 247).

Official Title

You are a ranked official in the empire. Officials are ranked 1–9 (with 9 being the lowest and 1 being the highest). Your rank begins at 9 and improves by 1 each time you level. You also get an unlevelled attendant or assistant to help you (use the Assistant Clerk entry in Chapter Eleven for stats (page 245)). See the section ‘Playing an Official’ below.

Protector

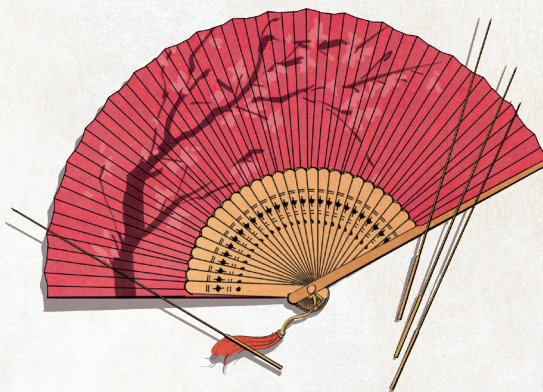
A mysterious person protects your interests. This individual is two levels higher than you, prefers to operate in the shadows, and goes up in level each time you do. Your protector never exceeds level 9.

Social Network

You have an extensive network of informants and agents who report regularly on events in the martial world and elsewhere. Any time you want to see whether your network knows about something, you can check by rolling your network rank against TN 7. Your network has a rank of 1d10 per level (it goes up when you level).

PLAYING AS AN OFFICIAL

Characters can gain official titles in play or by taking the Official Title social resource. This presents many adventure and role-playing opportunities, but also challenges. An official might be required to remain at a post or tend to duties in a far-off place, when the rest of the party is adventuring elsewhere. For this reason, characters who are officials can make an unlevelled attendant or assistant (or other staff) character to help them manage their affairs (use the Assistant Clerk or Low-Rank Scholar-Official entry in Chapter Eleven for stats (see pages 245, 248)). The assistant can leave to go adventuring and report to the official. Or the player can assume the role of the assistant on adventures in order to remain active in the party. The assistant does not gain level or XP, but instead transmits XP to the official character in his or her reports.





CHAPTER SIX

WEAPONS, OBJECTS, AND EQUIPMENT

This chapter provides information on basic weapons and equipment, but also includes the unique weapons of the martial world, like the Dagger of Xie Lijuan and the Ten Needles of the Court of Hell.

CURRENCY

For simplicity's sake, the base currency is the copper coin. Keep in mind that people are often paid with grain and other trade goods. For example, a ranked official might be paid in cash, rice, or bolts of silk. In some time periods, like the Tang and Song Dynasties, characters can use paper currency and bank notes instead of actual coins.

Copper coins: base unit of currency

String of coins: 100 coins

Silver ingot/tael: 100 coins

Gold ingot/tael: 1,000 coins

WEAPONS

WEAPON DAMAGE

Damage is expressed as either a d10 dice pool or a skill + dice pool. If expressed as a dice pool, simply roll that many d10s and take the single highest result. If expressed as skill + dice pool, then add your ranks in the skill and the dice pool for a total number of d10s to roll, taking the single highest result. Note that 0d10 in this case simply indicates that you do not add any d10s to the roll (rather than the usual 2d10, take the lowest). Open damage, which is very rare, indicates that you roll the dice pool and keep all successful results. Here are examples:

1. Muscle + 0d10: A character with two ranks in Muscle would roll 2d10 and take the single highest result.
2. Muscle + 0d10: A character with one rank in Muscle would roll 1d10 and take the single highest result.
3. Speed + 3d10: A character with three ranks in Speed would roll 6d10 and take the single highest result.
4. Speed + Muscle: A character with two ranks in Speed and three Ranks in Muscle would roll 5d10 and take the single highest result.
5. Muscle + 3d10 open damage: A character with one rank in Muscle would roll 4d10 and keep every success and total success, possibly causing multiple Wounds.
6. Muscle - 1d10: A character with two ranks in Muscle would roll 1d10.

UNARMED ATTACK DAMAGE

Arm Strike: Muscle - 1d10

Leg Strike: Muscle + 0d10 and imposes a -1d10 penalty on your attack roll.

RANGE

Use the listed range of each weapon. Thrown melee weapons, unless otherwise stated, have a range of 20 feet. You cannot attack beyond the listed range.

COST

The cost for each weapon is listed in copper coins. The prices listed are for the basic entry-level weapons. It is possible to buy higher quality and more ornate weaponry for more money. Unique Weapons don't have prices because they don't have standard market values; purchasing such items would require negotiation of cost.

MELEE WEAPONS

Axe

Cost: 30

An axe does Muscle + 1d10 damage.

Axes, Double

Cost: 30

You fight with a short axe in each hand. This does Muscle + 2d10 damage but requires Double Axe Style to use effectively. Without the Double Axe Style, you take a -1d10 penalty to all attacks.

Butterfly Swords

Cost: 40

These short swords are used in pairs. They do Muscle + 1d10 damage and provide a +1 bonus to Evade against melee attacks.

Chain Whip

Cost: 20

This is a segmented chain whip. It does Speed + 1d10 damage, but imposes a -1d10 penalty if you don't have the Chain Whip Style. Range of 20 feet.

Chicken Sickle

Cost: 50

These melee weapons are dual wielded and have a chicken-claw-like hook and spear tip head. They do Muscle + 0d10 damage and provide a +1d10 to counters. If you score a total success on a Counter, you can make one additional attack for free against the target.

Cleaver

Cost: 8

Cleavers do Muscle + 1d10.

Dagger

Cost: 12

Daggers do Muscle + 0d10, but can do Muscle + 2d10 when you are immediately pressed up against a foe.

Dagger Axe

Cost: 35

These polearms have a long sharp, dagger-like tip and horizontal blade. On a total success on the attack roll, they add +2d10 to the damage roll rather than +1d10. They do Muscle + 3d10 damage. Dagger Axes can reach 10 feet away.

Deer Horn Knives

Cost: 150

These look like two crossed moon-shaped blades and are meant to be wielded one in each hand. Deer horn knives are ideal for trapping, cutting, and blocking other melee weapons, particularly long ones like spears. They do Speed + 1d10 damage, suffer a -1d10 penalty to attack rolls, but gain a +1d10 bonus to Counters against Melee weapons (+2d10 against long weapons like spears). On a total success on a Counter attempt, you disarm the foe. If you get two 10s on a Counter, you break the target's weapon.

Fan, Folding

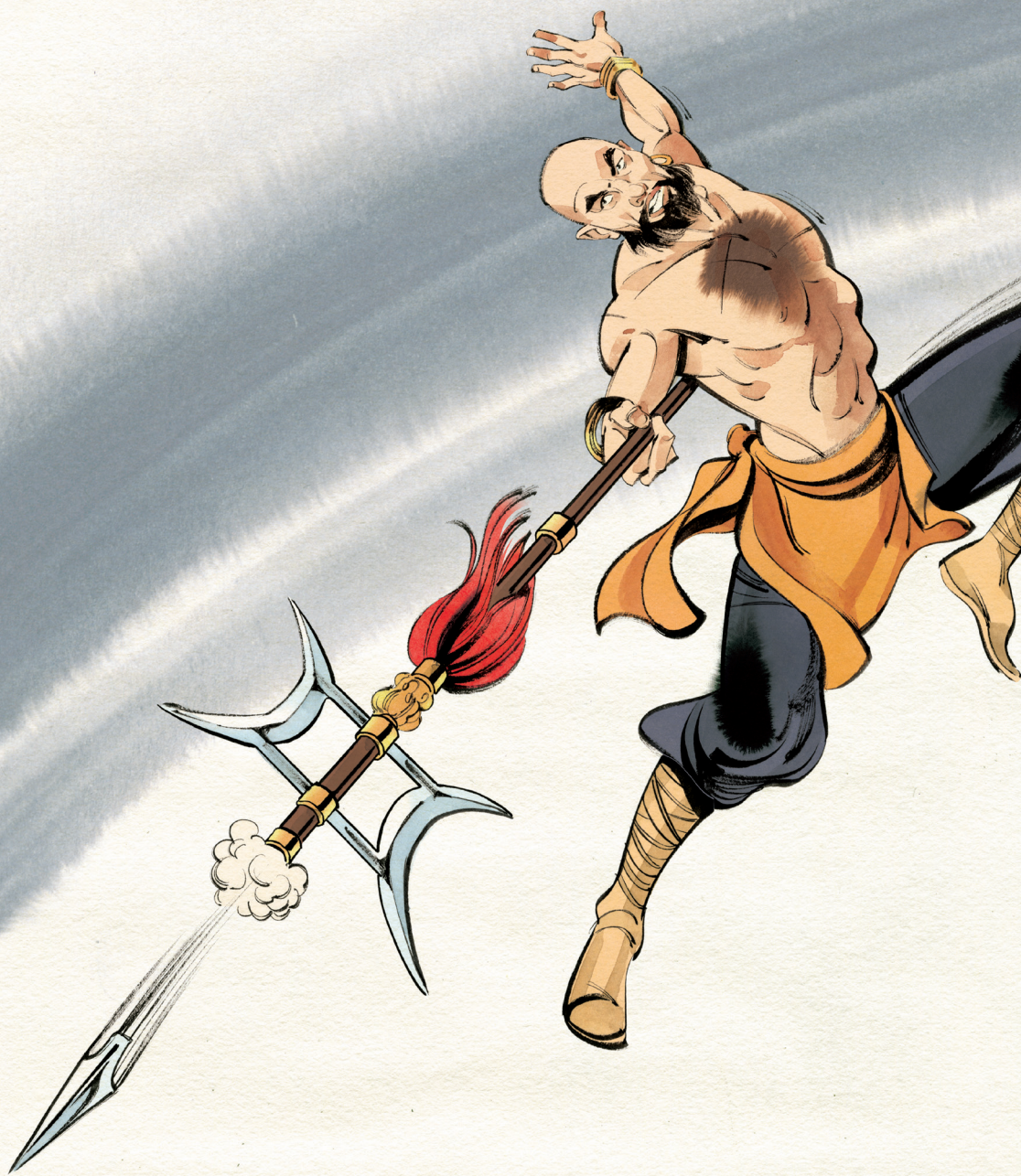
Cost: 10

Folding fans do Speed + 0d10 damage and can be used to fire concealed needles as a free action following an attack roll.

Fan, Non-Folding

Cost: 5

Non-folding fans do Speed + 0d10 damage and add +1 to Evade against melee attacks.



Firelance

Cost: 350

A firelance is a halberd with a small cannon that can fire projectiles on its tip. The spear tip does Muscle + 2d10 damage. When you fire the cannon, it has a range of 20 feet and does 4d10 damage. If you get a 10 on the cannon's damage roll, the target takes another 2d10 the following round from burning.

Fishing Pole

Cost: 3

This long pole, often made from bamboo, usually has a hook and a sharpened point. It does Speed + 0d10 damage. The hook can be used to restrain or grab a foe. It has a range of 15 feet.

Flute

Cost: 6

This musical instrument can also be used as a weapon. It does 1d10 damage and provides a +1d10 to melee Counters.

Fly-Whisk

Cost: 30

This simple device is a handle with horse hair on the tip, and is used to swat flies. In the hands of a master, it is a lethal weapon. It does Speed + 0d10 damage.

Giant Twin Hammers

Cost: 120

These giant spherical hammers impose a -3d10 penalty to wield. If you have the Giant-Sword Fighter ability, then the penalty is -1d10. They do Muscle + 3d10 damage and impose a -1d10 penalty against any attempt to defend.

Golden Thread

Cost: 1,200

This is a fine sharp golden thread of 100 yards that can be used to set traps for foes or as an attack itself. Golden threads do 0d10 damage plus 1 extra Wound, and require a successful Detect roll at TN 8 to Counter.

Great Sabre

Cost: 60

This is a giant sabre that delivers powerful lethal strikes but is hard to control. Characters suffer a -3d10 penalty to attack rolls and Speed when wielding it. Characters who have the Giant-Sword Fighter ability only suffer a -1d10 penalty. It also requires three ranks in Muscle just to wield. The sabre does Muscle + 2d10 damage and does 2 extra Wounds if the attack roll was a total success.

Guan Dao

Cost: 200

This polearm does Muscle + 3d10 damage but imposes a -1d10 penalty to wield. It can also reach people up to 10 feet away.

Hard Whip

Cost: 130

This is a long rod with a handle, hilt, and nodes. It does Muscle + 1d10 damage and grants a +1d10 bonus when used to Counter.

Hook Swords

Cost: 50

These are wielded in each hand and resemble a sword, except the tip ends in a U-shaped hook that can catch weapons. Hook swords do Muscle + 1d10 damage, and provide a +1d10 bonus on melee Counters. If you get a total success on a Counter, you can disarm your opponent.

Horse Chopping Sabre

Cost: 50

This is shaped like an ordinary sabre but with a much longer handle. It does Muscle + 3d10 damage. When used against mounted opponents it does 1 extra Wound to damage.

Meteor Hammer

Cost: 40

This is a devastating iron ball on a long chain or rope. It does Muscle + 4d10 damage (doing up to 7d10 damage), but imposes a -2d10 penalty unless you have Meteor Hammer Style. If you land a total success with a meteor hammer, you can choose to wrap the chain around the target or knock them back 5 feet.

Monk's Spade

Cost: 300

This is a long pole weapon with a spade head and crescent-moon tail. These do Muscle + 3d10 damage. However, because they are unsharpened, the heads do not trigger dying when they cause damage that exceeds Max Wounds (you must strike again to trigger dying). The spade can also be used for digging, while the crescent-moon end bestows a +1d10 to any attack roll made to fend off attacking animals. The monk's spade can reach targets up to 10 feet away.

Sabre

Cost: 40

This single-edged weapon is favoured among the military, civil law enforcement, and similar professions. A sabre does Muscle + 2d10 damage.

Spear

Cost: 25

Spears strike up to 10 feet away and do Muscle + 2d10 damage. They can also be thrown up to 30 feet away.

Staff

Cost: 15

The staff does Muscle + 1d10 damage and can reach foes up to 10 feet away. It gives a +1d10 bonus to attacks.

Stick

Cost: 7

Sticks do Speed + 1d10 damage and give a +1d10 bonus to attacks.

Sword (Jian)

Cost: 100

The double-edged sword is considered to be the most respectable of martial arts weapons. A sword does Muscle + 1d10 damage and grants a +1d10 bonus to attacks.

Trident

Cost: 60

These three-pronged weapons are long and good for disarming foes. They do Muscle + 2d10 damage and have a 10-foot reach. In addition, they can be used to disarm on a successful attack roll if, instead of rolling damage, you succeed on an opposed Muscle roll against the target.

Whip

Cost: 10

This hits at a range of 10 feet and does Speed + 0d10 damage.

RANGED WEAPONS

Blowgun

Cost: 20

These can be used to fire darts or needles, and are very fast to use. They typically do 1d10 damage and give you a +2 on your turn order result (so if you roll Speed for turn order while using a blowgun and get a 7, you would effectively have a 9).

Bow, Composite

Cost: 100

Composite bows do 3d10 damage and have a range of 300 feet.

Bow, Short

Cost: 50

Short bows do 2d10 damage and have a range of 150 feet.

Crossbow

Cost: 200

Crossbows do 2d10 damage. They have a range of 100 feet and grant a +1d10 bonus to the attack roll.

Needle

Cost: 1 each

These are ideal for coating with poison. Needles do 0d10 damage, but poison can make them quite lethal. Poison takes effect as long as the hit is successful. They have a range of 15 feet.

Needles and Threads

Cost: 2 each

A simple needle and thread is a deadly weapon in the hands of a true expert. This does 1d10 damage, and on a total success, the target is tethered to the end of your threads. This has a range of 15 feet.

Rope Dart

Cost: 30

This is a long rope or chain that ends in piercing dart. It imposes a -1d10 penalty unless you have the Rope Dart Expert Signature Ability. It does Speed + 1d10 damage and has a range of 20 feet. On a total success, you can choose to restrain the target or to do 1 extra Wound by impaling them.

RARE WEAPONS

These are weapons that aren't commonly sold in weapon shops. Some, such as the Bow of Ten Thousand Li, are completely unique. Others, such as the Diamond Axe Blade, might exist in multiple versions throughout the Jianghu. Generally speaking, items such as sabres and butterfly swords function as described in their weapon entry, unless otherwise noted.

Bitter Couple's Blades of Jade

These fine sabres are a pair, and are made from a special metal that reacts to the Qi resonance which exists between couples who despise one another. When wielded by such people, these weapons do 1 extra Wound. However, should the couple's bitterness weaken or turn to sentimental love, the blades become heavy, imposing a -1d10 penalty to attack. Therefore, any time they wield the blades, roll 1d10 against their Wits. If the result meets or exceeds their Wits scores, they suffer the penalty. If the result is lower than their Wits, they gain the bonus.

Blood Sparrows

These look like two beautiful sparrows with real feathers. They are shaped from rare cedar, weighted, and fitted with deadly spinning razor blades. They can be thrown at opponents up to 20 feet away, do Speed + 2d10 damage, and drain 2 Hardiness on total successes (which returns at a rate of 1 per day).

Bow of Ten Thousand Li

This simple-looking bow is said to have belonged to Zhou Tong, General Yue Fei's archery instructor. It can fire at tremendous distance, up to 5 kilometres, provided the user can see the target. It also does 4d10 damage. The bow is currently in the possession of Moneybags Hu [218].

Brocaded Granny's Cruel Threads

These look like normal silk threads, but close inspection reveals a sharp and jagged texture. The threads do the standard damage (1d10 damage). But on a total success, in addition to tethering targets, they drain 1 Hardiness due to blood loss.

Butterfly Swords of Wen Shi

These look like ordinary butterfly swords, but when you press a button on the handle, the blades shoot out up to 30 feet to hit the target. These do Muscle + 2d10 damage and provide a +1 bonus to Evade.

Chao's Golden Meteor Hammer

This looks like a double-headed meteor hammer made from pure gold. However, with the push of a secret button, both of the spherical hammers open to release three additional chains that wrap around up to three opponents. This requires exact positioning to successfully pull off. If you get a total success on your attack, the chains can unleash and strike three additional opponents, binding them until they make a Muscle roll at TN 7 to escape.

Like normal meteor hammers, this weapon does Muscle + 4d10 damage (up to 7d10), and imposes a -2d10 penalty to wielders who do not have Meteor Hammer Style.

Chess Board of Death

This stone xiangqi (Chinese chess) board is fitted with thick disc pieces made of jade with razor edges. You can push a cleverly concealed button and fire the pieces at a single target for 6d10 damage at a range of up to 40 feet. Alternatively, you can fire it at an assortment of enemies within a 30-foot radius for 1d10 damage.

Choking Rope

This tightens easily to choke your foes. Make an External Martial Arts roll against Evade. If successful, you loop the rope around your opponent's throat, pull it tight around your leg, and reduce the opponent's Hardiness by 1 for as long as the choke is maintained (once released, the opponent's Hardiness recovers at a rate of 1 per minute). The rope can be used as a regular attack to grab someone, but also can be used as a free

attack whenever you make a successful attack with another melee weapon, unarmed strike, or ability.

Curved Beauty Dagger

These are long slender daggers that do Muscle + 1d10 damage in melee, but 3d10 damage when thrown at a target. They are unique to the Illustrious Qilin Villa [180] and are associated with their Thought-Diminishing Dagger style [58].

Diamond Axe Blade

This can cut through any material as if it were flesh. Against flesh, it does Muscle + 2d10 damage, and the opponent must make a Detect roll (against attack roll) to notice the Wound.

NOTICING THE WOUND

The Diamond Axe Blade is meant to emulate a stylistic element of wuxia in which characters fail to perceive a wound because it was delivered with such precision. Characters struck in this manner still take damage even if they don't notice the wound, but there is flexibility on the part of the GM in determining how far things can go before the person collapses if they are seriously wounded.

Double Crossbow

This fires two arrows at once; roll damage twice and take the best pool.

Fire Cart

A fire cart is a wheeled panel that fits up to 200 gunpowder-charged arrows. The user can point and direct the fire, targeting anyone in a 200-foot radius. This weapon uses Trade against Evade to attack, and does a possible 10d10 open damage. This open damage dice pool can be spread out in any way the user wants against potential targets (for example, he or she could concentrate fire on two targets, but fire at target A more ferociously, doing 6d10 open damage against target A and 4d10 open damage against target B). In addition, on a total success, the target is set aflame and takes 2d10 damage the following round. These weapons are less common in earlier periods of history.

Flawless Blade of Tang

The blade is so fine it lacerates the tendons and muscles, imposing a -1d10 penalty to the target's Speed on a total success (which recovers when the Wound is healed). It does Muscle + 1d10 damage.

Iron Teeth

These long fangs fit into the mouth over the teeth, and protrude over the bottom lip. Without Iron Tooth Style, users suffer a -1d10 penalty to use them. They do Muscle damage, but cause massive bleeding on a total success (victims who are bitten lose 1

Hardiness in the first round, followed by 1 Hardiness in the next round; Hardiness returns at rate of 1 per day).

Jagged Blade of the Raksha

A giant, serrated blade with a menacing Raksha design, this weapon does Muscle + 2d10 damage and maims targets on a 10.

Liquid Swords

These weapons are extremely flexible and can lash out to a surprising distance. They do Speed + 1d10 damage, and can effectively double their length for the purposes of striking opponents. Also, targets must make a TN 6 Detect roll each time they are attacked by a liquid sword, or experience a -2 penalty to Evade. Liquid swords impose a -2d10 penalty on the wielder's attack roll.

Neck-Choking Short Spear

This short spear does Muscle + 1d10 damage. The head pulls off and is connected to a deadly golden thread that runs the length of the spear shaft. This can be used on its own, doing 1d10 damage and draining 1 Hardiness. If you get a total success on your normal attack with the spear, you can use this feature as a free action that round.

Paralysing Moth Darts

These four fuzzy darts do 1d10 damage, but in addition, they have a natural poison that paralyses individual limbs. Each dart works on a specific limb, and if a person is struck by it, roll 2d10 against Hardiness. On a success, that limb is paralysed for four rounds.

Strangling Erhu

Two strings fly out from this musical instrument to choke up to two opponents. Make an External Martial Arts roll against Evade. On a success, you choke the target (or targets) causing them to lose 1 Hardiness, which is recovered at a rate of 1 per round. On a total success, you cause them to lose 1 Hardiness, which is recovered at a rate of 1 per minute. If you send two strings at a single opponent, this adds +1d10 to your attack roll.

Thundering Club

This club releases a loud bang. It does Muscle +1d10 damage. Anyone within 20 feet whose ears are not stuffed when this strikes must succeed on a 2d10 Hardiness check or be deeply stunned for one round (they can move half their normal movement, but cannot attack).

Thundering Dart

This is actually a box filled with 12 darts. Anyone who possesses this would know how to manufacture more as needed, providing that they have the raw materials (including gunpowder). The darts can be thrown at targets up to 25 feet away and do 1d10 damage. On impact, they stick into and remain in the flesh (roll Muscle at TN 9 to remove), then explode in the next round for 3d10 open damage. The explosion only affects the target.

Vicious Monk's Spade

A long pole weapon with a spade head that features a serrated crescent-moon tail. It does Muscle + 3d10 damage. The spade can also be used for digging, while the crescent-moon end bestows a +2d10 to any attack roll made to fend off attacking animals. Can reach targets up to 10 feet away.

UNIQUE WEAPONS

These are one-of-a-kind weapons of great value, the type that many martial artists would kill to acquire.

Asura Trident

This weapon is more than a mere trident, it is a refining furnace that draws in the blood and life energy of your enemies through hollow channels in the prongs. The energy is refined in the shaft, which the wielder can consume to restore themselves. On a successful attack, this weapon does Muscle + 2d10 damage, and drains 1 Hardiness. As a skill action, you can consume the energy in the shaft to regain 1 point of lost Hardiness. Currently, this is in the possession of Xie Lijuan [239].

Churning Horns of the Deer

These finely crafted deer horn knives are cleverly designed to spin if thrown. In addition to the normal functions of deer horn knives, they can be thrown up to 40 feet at targets, doing 3d10 open damage if they hit. They are currently in the possession of the Phoenix Empress of Mingshui [219].

Crippling Rope Dart

This looks like a simple rope dart, but the dart itself can be manipulated by controls on the holding end of the rope. When you get a total success and impale a target, you can make a Medicine and Alchemy roll against the target's Hardiness. On a success, if the target moves that round, they take 1 Wound automatically.

Demon's Liver Gourd

According to legend, this gourd was used in ancient times to hold the liver of a demon, which forever cursed it. Any ordinary liquid placed into the gourd for at least an hour will turn into a putrid, corrosive acid. It can be projected out of the gourd in an attack by making an Internal Martial Arts roll, with a +1d10 bonus to the attack because of the unusual nature of the weapon. Successful attacks do 1 Wound in the first round and a second Wound in the following round.

Embroidered Dragon

This looks like a long, black piece of fabric with a beautiful golden dragon embroidered upon it. The scales of the dragon are razor sharp and raised. It can be used as a weapon with the Internal Martial Arts skill. The scales shave off the flesh on a successful attack, doing 3d10 open damage. Also, the sheet can be used to protect against area attacks

such as explosions if wrapped around the body (bestowing a 2d10 Counter on the wielder). This is currently in the possession of Aching Butterfly Sword [187].

Fan of Dragon's Breath

This folding fan was supposedly constructed from materials harvested from a dead dragon. It can attack up to three opponents, as long as the wielder can see them and they are within 15 feet. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade. On a success, the foes are pushed back 15 feet. On a total success, they are pushed back 15 feet and are knocked prone.

Golden Trident

This trident appears to be made of pure gold and is extremely heavy (requiring 3d10 Muscle to wield). It does Muscle + 3d10 damage, and adds a +1d10 bonus to all attack rolls. The Golden Trident is currently possessed by Liang Hai [206].

Hard Whip of the Falling Star

This hard whip is made from a special steel that is effective at shattering human bone. According to legend, it was forged from a falling star. The whip does Muscle + 1d10 damage. When rolling damage, instead of 10s doing 1 extra Wound, they break a bone. Treat the broken limb as having the Missing Limb Eccentricity for 1 month.

Hidden Fang

Hidden Fang is a green-hued dagger axe. It functions like a normal dagger axe, except it has a long, narrow blade tip hidden in the bottom handle that springs with a touch. Whenever you get a total success on your attack roll, you can choose to release the blade tip and make an additional attack roll for 1d10 damage.

The Immortal's Fishing Pole

This fishing pole appears to be made of bamboo, but is actually crafted from numerous interlocking sections of soft jade. The hook on the pole is cleverly designed to divide into 15 hooks with the touch of a button, imposing a -1d10 penalty to any Counter attempt and providing a +2d10 bonus to any attempt to restrain using the hook. It also bestows a +2d10 bonus to any Survival roll used to fish. This is currently in the possession of He Tian [200].

Parasol of the Iron Web

This parasol can be opened to unleash a web-like iron net that ensnares opponents and crushes them slowly. To use, roll External Martial Arts against the Evade of up to five opponents in relatively close proximity to one another. On a success, the net falls on them like a shroud, then tightens and rips into their bodies. Escape requires a TN 7 Muscle roll (or other relevant skill). Each round, the web causes 3d10 damage to those inside. It does not stop: victims must escape or die.



Peacock Armour

This beautiful suit of lamellar armour is multi-coloured and decorated with mesmerising reflective circles resembling the pattern of a peacock's feathers. The armour provides 1 Resist (which functions on top of any existing Resist the character has) and makes you incredibly difficult to attack. Roll 2d10 against anyone trying to engage you in melee while you wear this armour. On a success, the target is made dizzy by the sight of the armour and suffers a -1d10 penalty to their attacks.

Resounding Pipa

This pipa is made from the bones, sinew, and intestines of Swordmaster Shen. The body is quite strong and has numerous long metal blades along its rim. Shen was killed by Pipa-Playing Witch [221], who turned him into this disorienting musical instrument. Roll Talent against the Wits of all who hear. On a success, you can make the sound appear to come from any direction you choose. On a total success, the targets are unable to correctly discern the direction they are travelling in. The pipa also functions as a weapon, doing 4d10 damage on a successful attack.

Robe of the Sword Goddess

This robe is made from silver and gold threads that move with the wearer, helping to parry blows and fend off attacks. This allows the wearer to make a free 1d10 Counter roll to block any melee attack (in addition to any normal Counters the person has). This is currently in possession of Sword Goddess [210].

Rod of the Divine Porcupine

This complex device appears to be a tall staff with a porcupine engraved into the head. The porcupine is perfectly painted, and the quills are real. The natural sap of the wood keeps them coated in the incredibly deadly Divine Porcupine Venom [100]. The staff does Muscle + 1d10 damage in melee, and with the press of a button, the quills can be sent flying at targets in a 40-foot cone as well. However, replacing the quills is dangerous, requiring a TN 10 Medicine and Alchemy roll to avoid being accidentally poisoned.

Screaming Zither

This instrument creates powerful sustained harmonies that explode the heads of all who are within 20 feet of the performer. Make a Talent roll against Hardiness each round. Every success decreases Hardiness by 1. If the person's Hardiness reaches 0, their head explodes. This is currently in possession of Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiya [233]

The Silver Spear

This beautiful silver spear ends in a serrated blade. It does Muscle + 3d10 damage. On a total success, the spear causes massive bleeding and the loss of 1 Hardiness.

Sky-Sundering Quill

This is a golden blowgun with elaborate designs, crafted in the late Tang period. It has eight special darts, equally ornate and fitted with strange holes. The darts can be fired up to 40 feet and do an astonishing 7d10 damage each. When fired, the darts unleash a

powerful sound that affects everyone within 20 feet of their pathway. Roll 3d10 against the Hardiness of all who hear. On a success, the targets are physically weakened by the sound and suffer -1d10 to their Muscle. On a total success, they also take an additional 2d10 damage.

The Star Sabre

This looks like a larger version of an ordinary sabre that does Muscle + 3d10 damage; however, it has three hidden functions that can be triggered with the press of a button. The first function is a hidden sword. The sabre itself sheaths a slender sword, and it can be drawn out, allowing the user to make 1 extra attack, but this causes the sabre exterior to collapse temporarily. The second function is that a bolt can be fired from the pommel, dealing 3d10 damage. The third function is that the sabre can explode into dozens of sharp fragments, striking everyone in a 10-foot radius for 3d10 damage. The fragments can be assembled again once retrieved.

Starstreak Needles

This set of three silvery needles is said to have been forged from a falling star that landed somewhere in Arabia. Each needle is 4.25 inches long, as flexible as a reed, as light as a feather, and hardly thicker than a hair. Their flexibility makes them extremely easy to keep concealed, and their light weight makes them incredibly fast. They provide +1d10 to Speed rolls determining combat order, and do 1d10 damage in addition to the effects of any poison which coat them.

Sun and Moon Hammers

These giant hammers each feature an oversized iron ball on the end of an iron haft. One hammer is carved with decorations of the sun, and the other is decorated like a moon. You must have Muscle rank 2 to use them. Roll Strength against Evade. On a success, inflict 7d10 damage. Each hammer has an ingeniously hidden button that, when pressed, shoots nine steel spikes out to attack up to nine enemies within 30 feet. Roll Speed against the Evade of each target; on a success, they take 1d10 damage.

Sun Blazing Claws

This pair of weapons function like normal chicken sickles, except the handle is equipped produce a powerful flesh-corroding acid when filled with water. The acid resides in the handle until the wielder releases it through the tip of the chicken claw into any Target that has been struck. On a total success, you can opt to stick the claw deep into the flesh and release the acid. This causes the target to take 3d10 damage the following round, followed by 2d10 damage the round after, then 1d10 damage on the round after that.

Throne of the Sky

This is a sturdy wheelchair crafted from oak and decorated with carvings of clouds and rivers. Numerous tiny knobs located on the surface of the chair align with major acupoints in the human body, and are connected to a network of wires and gears. Anyone who sits in the chair and has at least one rank in Internal Martial Arts can use their upper body to control the chair. Anyone who suffers from a penalty because of a missing leg or legs has the penalty

removed while sitting in the chair, and also gains a +1d10 bonus to Lightness Martial Arts rolls. Anyone else gains a +2d10 bonus to Lightness Martial Arts rolls. In addition, the chair can be loaded with a set of 30 needles. By pushing a button on the arm of the chair, the needles can be released in three separate volleys of 10. Roll Internal Martial Arts against Evade to attack. It takes 10 minutes to reload the needles.

TOP TEN WEAPONS

The top ten weapons are unique and legendary items that almost all members of the Jianghu have heard about, but probably never seen. They are the subject of universal respect and desire, and are so precious as to be beyond value. Mere rumours of the appearance of some of these weapons could spark a sect war, and cause even the most powerful experts to go crazy with desire.

Bamboo Scroll of Shangwen

This beautiful scroll depicts a palace and festival, with every conceivable colour and tone. On close inspection, it is revealed to be comprised of fine slender strips which can be rapidly unravelled and arranged by those with enough intelligence to create perfect concealment in any environment, effectively making a person invisible. To use, make a Reasoning roll against the Wits of those you wish to deceive. On a success, you are invisible to them, providing that you do not move or attack.

Dagger of Xie Lijuan

This small black dagger with a curved tip is the signature weapon of Xie Lijuan [239], who is considered the top fighter in the Jianghu. Counters cannot be used on it. According to rumours, it always kills its target. This is untrue. Although it has killed every target so far, it is possible for it to fail. The dagger does Speed + 3d10 damage, plus 3 extra Wounds.

Death Rain Effigy (Magic)

This statue appears to be the likeness of the Lord of Rain. In his hands he holds two snakes, and two snakes emerge from his ears. Once per moon, the device can be used to kill everyone in a 50-foot radius. To activate, make a Magical Arts roll against the Evade of all targets. On a success, they die in a shower of burning rain.

Flute of the Golden Cicada

This elaborate flute is bright yellow gold and features a delicate cicada motif. When played well by someone with strong Internal Martial Arts, it peels the flesh off foes. Roll Talent + Internal Martial Arts as a single attack roll against the Evade of up to two targets per level of performer. On a success, you do 8d10 open damage as the targets' flesh is peeled by the bitter melody. If the victims remain alive, they permanently lose 1 Hardiness for every Wound sustained.

The Heart-Shaping Crown

The Heart-Shaping Crown features in the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure. See page 267 for more details.



Mother of Lightning

This is a small statue of Dian Mu, goddess of lightning. Dressed in colourful painted robes, her hair expands and attacks a large area with the press of several small buttons. This produces a fiery charge that electrocutes anyone caught in the tangle for 3d10 open damage. To use, roll Trade against the Evade of all targets. You can affect 1 target per Killing Aura Darkness in a 100-foot area.

Spear of the Celestial Physician

This functions like a normal spear, except it is equipped with an elaborate bundle of metal threads inside the shaft. The exterior of the shaft is designed to read the user's pulse. If the wielder dies while fighting with the spear, the threads shoot out and hit vital acupoints to sustain him or her. The device has its own Medicine and Alchemy skill (3d10), which it can roll every minute against TN 6 to keep the person going. On the first failed roll, the user dies permanently.

Star Palace Sabre (Magic)

This heavy sabre has a guard made from polished green stone and a blade crafted from an unknown metal that reflects like a mirror. It can be used to teleport from one place to another by slicing the space before you. To use this ability, make a melee roll at TN 6; on a success, you can move anywhere you want within sight.

Ten Needles of the Courts of Hell

These feared needles are the signature weapon of Sun Lan the Yama Queen [228]. The needles are naturally poisonous and unusually long, with cruel, spiral tips. Each one does 1d10 damage, and this can be added together when multiple needles are thrown at a single target. Anyone struck is exposed. Roll 3d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the target is immobilised for 1 hour, but also suffers extraordinary pain that lowers their Wits by 3 (this returns in a month, as the mental anguish lingers for some time).

Time-Stopping Sword

This functions as a normal sword, but it also allows the wielder to go back in time by six seconds once per day. This is not the product of magic, but a highly advanced device within the hilt. It is so ingenious that no one in the present day, except the original maker, understands the principles behind its creation.

RARE AND PRIZED OBJECTS

These are famous objects of note, scattered throughout China.

Anoma's Lute

This long-necked tanpura was crafted by the banks of the Anoma River, using wood and strings cleansed in its waters. They say the strings never break, and produce a sound of profound tranquillity. Anyone in the presence of music performed upon Anoma's Lute gains a +2d10 to Meditation rolls.

Baoding Steel Balls of the Red Pine Immortal

This set of health balls is said to have originally belonged to the Red Pine Immortal, a legendary healer from South China. One is crafted from white jade, the other from black jade, and they are as smooth as glass. Anyone who possesses the balls and exercises with them for at least 20 minutes daily can gain a +1d10 bonus to a single Medicine and Alchemy skill roll per day.

Bells of Immortality

These bells have a lofty name, but in truth they are just highly prized for their beauty and sound. The total number of bells is not known, but they are crafted from a substance similar to jade. The bells produce an alarmingly loud ring, and their ringing is sympathetic (that is, if you strike one bell, no matter how far apart they are, it will cause the other Bells of Immortality to ring as well). The bells are currently in the possession of Sword Goddess [210] and her disciples.

Bronze Bells of Doom

This is a set of 76 enormous bronze bells, in a thick, L-shaped frame. The bells vary in size and pitch, but produce a powerful, gut-churning sound that can debilitate any who hear them. They were commissioned by the first Song emperor and originally intended to protect the Imperial Palace; however, they vanished before completion, and are rumoured to be in the possession of a powerful sect or organisation in the Jianghu. To use the bells, one must create a melody and make a Talent roll against the Hardiness of any who can hear (including the player). On a success, those affected take 1 Wound any time they move or act so long as the bell is playing. On a total success, they also suffer a -1d10 penalty to all skills for the next two days.

Cloak of Qin Shihuang

Said to be a formal cloak originally owned by the first emperor of China, Qin Shihuang, this garment is tailored from extremely rare materials, including a giraffe pelt, polar bear fur, and leather from an ox that came from the Western lands and stood 10 feet high at the shoulder. It is decorated with the teeth of a sea monster. According to the legends, anyone who wears the cloak for at least one year will have a child who will become an emperor. It is currently in the possession of Thief Goddess Li [231].

Cosmic Feng Shui Compass

This feng shui compass is of unknown origin, and is made from gold, white jade, and rubies. When the 40 concentric rings that make up the compass are spun, a humming sound resonates out that many say resembles the singing of an immortal. Anyone who uses the compass to perform divinations gets a +1d10 bonus to Magical Arts skill rolls for that purpose. The rolls must be made in secret by the GM. If the single highest result is a 4 or less, the information from the divination is opposite to the truth. It is presently at Immortal Sword Manor [262].

Dragon Cane of She Saihua

This legendary object is said to have belonged to She Saihua, and was bestowed upon

her by Emperor Taizong. There are many legends attached to it. Some say it gave her the authority to criticise imperial officials with impunity; others say it effectively gave her command of imperial troops. It has since been lost, and some question whether it existed at all. It is, in fact, a real artefact present somewhere in the Jianghu. Although it has no supernatural powers, its story is widely known, and anyone who has it gains a +2d10 to Command rolls made against anyone serving the emperor.

Hard Pillow of Guan Panpan

This ceramic headrest is shaped like a half moon and has a green glaze with floral designs. It belonged to Guan Panpan, and according to legend, it can enhance the intelligence, beauty, and grace of any who sleep on it regularly. There may or may not be truth to these rumours, but they are widely believed.

Iron Amulets of the Halls of Tranquillity

These iron amulets are the prized possessions of the Halls of Tranquillity [179]. They confer immunity from physical harm, providing the wearer is inside the Halls of Tranquillity.

The Jade Kite

This is a kite in the shape of a hawk made from paper-thin jade, and believed to have been crafted by Lu Ban himself. It is nearly 10 feet in length and can support the weight of one person, allowing them to ascend into the sky up to several hundred feet.

Meteorite Ingot

This is a metallic, oversized ingot, roughly the size of a watermelon. According to rumours, it was crafted from an enormous meteorite that fell to the Earth on the winter solstice during the mythical Xia dynasty. Exquisite, archaic designs cover its surface, and it is considered to be extremely auspicious. Most people consider it too valuable to appraise with money. It is currently in the position of the reigning emperor.

The Obsidian Bat

This is an incense burner with a bat motif on the exterior. It is made from a deep-black obsidian and is highly revered for its healing properties. If it is used to burn incense near a person who is dying, they take twice the normal time to die. In addition, if it is burned near a wounded, non-dying person for a day, they can recover 1 Wound. This item makes an important appearance in Chapter Twelve.

Yidi's Drinking Set

This is a vessel for serving alcohol, with four matching drinking bowls. Crafted from pottery, they are said to have belonged to Yidi, the god of alcohol. After serving as drinking vessels for thousands of years, they have absorbed the essence of alcohol; all one has to do is pour water into the serving vessel, let it sit for ten minutes, and the water will turn into a wine-like beverage with low alcohol content. Any alcohol poured into the vessels becomes more potent, forcing anyone who drinks from them to take a -1d10 penalty on Drinking skill rolls.

MANUALS

These are some sample manuals from the Jianghu. Books such as these are incredibly common, and the GM should make more of them to populate their campaign setting. Manuals are often the source of conflict, as rivals will frequently try to steal them.

Manuals can be a key requirement for players to acquire new Signature Abilities, so GMs should consider that when deciding how readily available they are.

Chuanxin Finger Manual

The Chuanxin Finger Manual contains the dreaded Chuanxin Finger technique, and belongs to the Dragon Clan [177]. The manual itself is tattooed on the back of Lord Dragon's son [213]. It contains the Heart-Piercing Finger Signature Ability.

The Four Swords Manual

This manual was written by Sword Goddess [210] and contains all of her sword techniques. It has been stolen many times, and is now kept inside a poison-coated bi disc in Immortal Sword Manor. It includes the following Signature Abilities: Life-Chasing Sword I, Life-Chasing Sword II, Life-Chasing Sword III, and Maiming Strike.

Manual of the Bone Physician

This manual was written by the Bone Physician [226] and contains two of his Signature Abilities: Tap of the Bone Physician and Tap of the Bone Physician II.

Raksha Manual

This contains the knowledge of Crazy Raksha Style. It was once written on a pagoda in Dali. This was destroyed. But the information was tattooed onto the body of Little Raksha [201]. His flesh now functions as the manual.

Shadow Manual

This book was written by the ferocious master Luo Pei, a maniac with a whip who terrorised the Jianghu decades ago. The book contains the Shadow Fist Counter and the Signature Ability Shadow Whip Style. Although Pei's Shadow Fist technique was orally transmitted and widely known, only those with access to the manual know his Shadow Whip Style. The manual is currently in the possession of Liu Shishi [209], a courtesan residing in Ao Town.

ORDINARY ITEMS

Authority Token

Cost: these cannot be bought

An item that establishes one's identity as a member of an organisation, or gives proof that one is acting on the behalf of some person of authority. Most sects give their members tokens such as these, as do most government agencies. They are commonly made from wood, but could be made from jade, metal, ivory, or other materials. They

usually have one or two characters on the front to establish which organisation or individual they represent, with more explanatory text on the back. Although they are usually rectangular, they can be other shapes, and are sometimes even carved to resemble animals or mythical creatures.

Bamboo Slip

Cost: 1 for 10 slips

This is a blank strip of bamboo or wood, about as long as a chopstick and as wide as two or three. It contains enough room to carve or write a few dozen Chinese characters onto, enough for a short message or record of information. They are often bound together into scroll form (see 'Scroll Book').

Bi Disc

Cost: 5,000

This is a round ceremonial disc with a hole in the centre. It is usually made from jade.

Bronze Mirror

Cost: 20

A circular mirror crafted from bronze. The middle section is polished to such a sheen that one's reflection can be seen in it. The edges and back are decorated fancifully. Small enough to be held in one's hand, they usually do not feature handles.

Incense Timer

Cost: 15

A device used to measure time based on how long it takes a portion of incense to burn. There are many types. Some burn a stick of incense, others burn a coil, and yet others burn different shapes or sizes of incense. Typically, one portion of incense will burn for somewhere between 15 and 30 minutes. The specific appearance, as well as the time involved, varies from design to design.

Ink Stone and Ink Stick

Cost: 20

An ink stone is an object that comes in a variety of shapes, but each has a small well. Ink is produced by rubbing an ink stick on the wetted surface of an ink stone. Ink sticks are made from hardened ink; they are often cylindrical, but sometimes flat and ornate.

Scholar's Travelling Pack

Cost: 10

Often made of wicker or even wood frames woven together, these square-shaped backpacks can carry numerous volumes.

Scholar's Travelling Pack Canopy or Parasol

Cost: 5

These give your Scholar's Travelling Pack protection from the elements.

Scroll Book

Cost: 15

This scroll is made of numerous blank slips of bamboo or wood, bound with twine, and can be used to store a large amount of information. Scroll books are often be used to record martial arts techniques, religious texts, historical events, etc.

Sealing Stamp

Cost: 140

A sealing stamp is used to affix a permanent seal to a document to establish the identity of the person leaving the seal. In some ways, it is like a signature. Typically, the seal itself will be made from stone, but it could also be crafted from metal, wood, bamboo, ivory, or other materials. It will usually contain the name and/or title of the person who owns the seal. Often, the script used for the characters is a specialised one that only someone trained in the scholarly arts can read. Typically, a sealing stamp will come with a small case of red ink, and will be housed in a decorative box of some sort.

OTHER ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT	
Item/Equipment	Cost
Barrel	10
Boat (rowboat)	300
Boat (fishing boat)	5,000
Boat (barge)	20,000
Boat (sailing ship)	1,000,000
Boat (warship)	1,000,000,000
Blanket (cotton)	3
Blanket (silk)	300
Candle	2
Cart	200
Carriage	500
Chain	45
Chest	70
Donkey	500
Feed (daily for animal)	1
Fortress (small)	3,000,000
Fortress (medium)	10,000,000
Fortress (large)	50,000,000
Grappling hook	25
Hammer	10
Horse (common)	3,000
Horse (fine)	5,000
House (shack)	10,000

OTHER ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT (CONTINUED)	
Item/Equipment	Cost
House (simple)	200,000
House (courtyard)	1,000,000
House (mansion)	10,000,000
Jug	3
Ladder (2 metres)	10
Lamp	9
Lock (low quality)	10
Lock (medium quality)	75
Lock (high quality)	200
Oil (cooking)	1
Oil (fuel)	4
Paper (per sheet)	1
Pot	2
Rope (10 metres)	25
Saddlebags	100
Shop (small)	15,000
Shop (medium)	30,000
Shop (large)	60,000
Shovel	8
Tea brick	2,000
Tea cake/nugget	50
Tent	50
Torch	3

LIST OF ALCOHOLS

These are common or well-known alcohols. The cost is listed per catty.

Ordinary Baijiu

Potency: 1 catty • Cost: 20

There are countless varieties of baijiu, each with different flavours and potencies.

Auntie Ying's Phoenix Essence Baijiu

Potency: 1 catty • Cost: 60

Anyone who fails their Drinking skill roll when imbibing this specialised baijiu shivers with cold and suffers a -1d10 penalty to all Physical skills, but gains a +1d10 bonus to all Mental skills from the warm euphoria that follows.

Red Pepper Wine

Potency: 1 catty • Cost: 100

This is a sorghum-based baijiu originating in Sichuan, and normally fermented in mud pits. It has a strong aroma and, despite the fact that it is brewed with red peppers, has a sweet flavour. Its complex flavour profile makes it a favourite among drinkers with more coin in their pocket.

Roc Elixir

Potency: 5 catties • Cost: 200

An extremely potent baijiu that has no aroma but a very earthy aftertaste. It is very expensive, and has a well-hidden secret in that the brewing method is exactly the same as Maggot Bile toxin, with one difference: the mixture must be bottled one week early to become baijiu. If it is bottled during the following week, it is neither baijiu nor poison, and if it is bottled exactly one week later, it becomes the poison. Because both baijiu and toxin are odourless, only expert drinkers and apothecaries can identify the difference with a Drinking or Medicine and Alchemy roll at TN 9.

Second Barrel Baijiu

Potency: 2 catties • Cost: 5

Because of its cheap production cost, this baijiu is especially popular among farmers, soldiers, and low-ranking individuals of the Jianghu. It has a light aroma and a fiery mouthfeel. If you pass out because of failing a Drinking skill roll with this baijiu, you suffer a -1d10 penalty to all skill rolls for six hours after waking up.

Soaring Reed Wine

Potency: 2 catties • Cost: 200

Brewed using sorghum that has been fermented numerous times in brick pits, this baijiu is extremely aromatic and has a complex aftertaste. It is reputed to provide higher mental clarity when imbibed in high quantities, and is thus a favourite among scholars, poets, artists, and the nobility. When you exceed your Drinking Limit with this baijiu, but do not pass out, you gain a +1d10 bonus to knowledge and mental skills. However, if you

exceed your Drinking Limit and pass out, you gain a -2d10 penalty to the same skills for six hours after waking up.

Yellow Wine

Potency: half a catty ▪ Cost: 15

The most common type of alcohol, especially in ancient times. In addition to serving as a beverage, it is commonly used in cooking.

POISONS, PILLS, AND ELIXIRS

There are no price listings for these, as they need to be made by individual characters using raw ingredients they find or purchase at an apothecary.

Standard Poison

This is the default poison in the game. It is fairly common. It can take effect through anything from ingestion to blood contact. Roll 2d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the person dies in 1d10 days. On a total success, the person dies in 1d10 hours.

Black Owl Powder

This poison must be ingested. Once it enters the body, it remains there permanently. Those affected begin to rot from the outside in, losing 1 point of Hardiness each day. When the victim reaches 0 Hardiness, he or she dies. The only way to stave off the effect is to take Black Owl Antidote daily.

Blood Poison

By practising Poison Cultivation, some martial artists turn their blood itself into a deadly poison. If ingested, or if it enters the bloodstream, roll 3d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the victim passes out in one hour for 1d10 minutes. On a total success, the victim passes out immediately for 1d10 minutes. Upon passing out, roll 2d10 and pick the single lowest result. The victim dies in that many days. If the poison merely makes contact with the skin of a victim, the intense pain causes a -1d10 penalty to all skill rolls for one hour.

Bone Poison

Created by the Bone Physician [226], this poison is absorbed through the skin, causing no harm to the flesh, but quickly eating into the bones. Roll 2d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the poison begins melting away bone, reducing Hardiness permanently by 1 every hour unless an antidote is administered. If the victim is reduced to 0 Hardiness, they survive but become a heap of useless flesh.

Divine Porcupine Venom

This venom causes progressive symptoms that are permanent. Roll 4d10 against anyone exposed. On the first day, they go blind. On the second day, they lose their ability to taste. On the third day, they lose their sense of touch. On the fourth day, they lose their hearing and begin to die. Every day after the fourth, they lose 1 Hardiness. When they reach 0, they die. Even if cured, any senses or Hardiness lost do not return. The venom

itself is used to make Divine Porcupine Venom Antidote [103].

Luo Qing's Cultivation Preparation

This pill must be administered to a child at birth. From then on, it works to prepare the baby's elixir field for profound cultivation. However, this potential can only be realised when the child reaches adulthood and undergoes an extraordinary testing of their skills that nearly kills them. After the recovery from such an incident, the recipient of this pill gains +1 Max Wounds, increases Internal Martial Arts by 1, gains two free new Signature Abilities (with no Fire Deviation), and one free new Counter.

Luo Qing's Longevity Elixir

This elixir requires cinnabar, ash, the blood of a giant salamander that has fed daily for ten years on the blood of a great hero, and the bones of a dragon. Anyone who drinks it gains 10 years of longevity, but loses 2 Hardiness as their liver weakens.

Maggot Bile Toxin

This toxin is created by collecting the digestive fluid of maggots and fermenting it for three years in an earthenware pot buried in a snowy climate, whereupon it becomes tasteless and odourless. On being ingested, it removes all ranks in Martial Arts for a number of years equal to how many ranks were removed. Until the toxin is neutralised, all Martial Arts ranks are considered 0d10. Because it is closely connected to roc elixir, expert drinkers and apothecaries can identify the difference with a Drinking or Medicine and Alchemy roll against TN 9.

Meridian Venom

This is a speciality of the Black Cloud Cult. They seal 16 venomous creatures in a Gu Vessel, where they consume one another until one remains. Thusly empowered, the survivor is ground into a powder and mixed with cinnamon twig, peony root, and jujube. Roll 3d10 against the Hardiness of anyone exposed. On a success, the target loses their Resist for 10 minutes and suffers a -1d10 penalty to all Internal Martial Arts skill rolls for one day. On a total success, the Resist is lost for one day, and the skill penalty lasts one month.

Willow Venom

Devised ages ago by Ancient Willow, a physician and poisoner, this poison is incredibly painful and causes death rather quickly. Roll 3d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the person dies in 1d10 hours. In addition, they suffer a -1d10 penalty to all skills as their body is wracked with crippling pain.

Wolf Spider Essence

This is a poison derived from wolf spider venom and a number of other rare ingredients. Anyone exposed to it finds their mind under assault, as they feel the overwhelming aggression of the wolf spider rise inside them. Roll 2d10 against Wits every day. On a success, the victim succumbs and behaves aggressively, even violently, for the rest of the day. On a total success, the victim believes he or she is a wolf spider for the remainder of the day. There is no known cure for Wolf Spider Essence.



ANTIDOTES

Most antidotes come in the form of a bolus pill, often contained in a gourd.

Standard Antidote

This nullifies standard poison.

Black Owl Antidote

This is a powder that mixes with any liquid. When drunk, it postpones the effect of Black Owl Powder for one day.

Blood Poison Antidote

This antidote can only be produced with the blood of the same person who created the Blood Poison. It requires one pint of their blood, as well as some other common medical ingredients. Roll Medicine and Alchemy against TN 8. On a failure, the pint of blood is lost, and the antidote is a failure. Either way, one month must pass before more blood is extracted for another attempt, as it takes time for the toxins in the blood to return to their previous level.

Bone Poison Antidote

This is a vile, thick, black liquid that must be drunk to cure Bone Poison. It eats away at the intestines as it enters the body and stops Bone Poison. Roll 3d10 against Hardiness. On a success, the imbibor takes 1 Wound from the antidote and is cured. On a total success, the person takes 2 Wounds from the antidote and is not cured.

Divine Porcupine Venom Antidote

This is made from Divine Porcupine Venom and a mixture of 1 catty of ground wild boar tusks. This is made into a pill. Taking it can stops the venom from progressing but does not reverse any symptoms already acquired.

Maggot Bile Toxin Antidote

This antidote is created by taking the earthenware pot that the toxin was created in, crushing it into a powder, mixing it with yellow wine, and making in into salve. After applying the salve onto the victim's forehead and dantian region for seven days in a row, the toxin will naturally be flushed from the system, and all Martial Arts ranks will be restored.

Willow Venom Antidote

This round pill must be taken once each day over the full course of 10 days to eliminate the poison. It is rare to find, and only members of Ancient Willow Sect know how to make it. They usually charge 2 silver taels for 10 pills.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Erhu of the Pipa-Playing Witch

Cost: 20,000–100,000

These are erhus made from the flesh of famous swordsmen. They are very high quality, bestowing a +1d10 bonus to any Talent roll to use them.

Erhu (Standard)

Cost: 50

This is a bowed instrument with two strings and a snake-skin sound box.

Flute

Cost: 6

A simple woodwind, often made from bamboo.

Pipa of the Pipa-Playing Witch

Cost: 200,000 or more

Made from the skin and bones of famed swordsmen, these are exquisite instruments that bestow a +2d10 bonus to Talent rolls. They are very rare.

Pipa (Standard)

Cost: 200

This is a stringed instrument with a neck and body resembling a lute. It has 12 to 26 frets and four strings (occasionally five).

Zither

Cost: 150 (Guqin)/250 (Guzheng)

There are stringed instruments laid flat on a fine body of wood. The Guzheng is a common 21-stringed zither, while the Guqin is a more portable, seven-string zither.

SERVICES

Guard

Cost: 25 (loyal) ▪ 100 (magnificent) ▪ 1,000 (divine) per day

Guards come in many forms, and the cost of a guard changes according to their talent and skill.

Inn Room

Cost: 10 (cheap) ▪ 50 (modest) ▪ 100 (expensive) per night

Inns are extremely common, but vary in cost by quality.

Meals

Cost: 3 (food stall) ▪ 20 (inexpensive restaurant) ▪ 60 (good restaurant) ▪ 120 (expensive restaurant) per meal

Restaurants are a staple of wuxia and were common in historical China.

Mourners, Professional

Cost: 40 per funeral

In traditional Chinese culture, it is common to formally mourn the passing of a loved one. In some cases, people hire mourners to assist in the process.

Musicians

Cost: 8 (standard) ▪ 20 (reputable) ▪ 300 (official) per song

Singers and instrumentalists can be hired for a range of costs, depending on their talent levels and rank.

Postal Message (Dak)

Cost: 20 (bronze) ▪ 50 (silver) ▪ 100 (gold) per day

A dak is a postal station that can deliver messages over great distances in a short time (because there is a system of regular daks along the roads). They come in different tallies: bronze for 105 miles a day, silver for 140 miles a day, and gold for 175 miles a day.

Physician

Cost: 90 per day

Physicians are quite common and can perform pulse readings and acupuncture, and prescribe remedies for ailments and symptoms.

Scholar Services

Cost: 10-100

Many scholars can perform services such as writing calligraphy for signs, creating official documents, composing poetry or songs, etc.



CHAPTER SEVEN

ECCENTRICITIES

ECCENTRICITIES

Eccentricities are quirks and flaws, often worn as a badge of pride by those in the Jianghu. Some have minor mechanical effects, while others are more about roleplay and how the world reacts to your character.

PENALTIES FOR BEING MAIMED OR DISABLED

If taken at character creation, Eccentricities related to maiming or disability do not impose penalties, as characters have endured and adapted to any hurdles the Eccentricity can throw. If acquired during play, the GM should apply an appropriate penalty to any relevant skills. Such penalties are removed after one year, or at a suitable time determined by the GM.

WITS CHECKS AND ECCENTRICITIES

Some Eccentricities require a test of will called a Wits check to avoid succumbing to the impulse. Unless otherwise stated, for eccentric impulses, roll 2d10 against Wits to see whether the character can keep the eccentric impulse in check.

Absent-Minded

You have trouble focusing on matters, and often daydream. Whenever you engage in a task that requires concentration, or takes more than a few minutes, roll Endurance against TN 7. On a failure, you fail in the task at hand.

Beautiful

You are one of the top beauties of the martial world. This can be a good thing, but it also attracts unwanted attention.

Blind

You cannot see. If acquired during play, you suffer -2d10 to Detect, and to relevant uses of Physical skills and Martial Arts skills. You also take a -2 penalty to Evade.

Blood Fear

You are terrified by the sight of blood, especially your own.

Deaf

You cannot hear. If acquired during play, you suffer a -3d10 penalty to Detect when hearing is of most importance.

Destitute

You have no money or social connections. You are often poorly regarded by people of high standing. You may not take Wealth and Property or Social Resources on character creation.

Disgraced

You've done something unthinkable, something no one in the Jianghu can accept. Whatever it is, all the martial world knows, and it has a profound impact on your standing. Even bandits and murderers hold you in contempt.

Doppelganger

You bear a very strong resemblance to a famous (or infamous) member of the Jianghu. It could be because you are related to this person (a sibling, child, etc.), or it could be random chance. Either way, you are easily mistaken for them or assumed to be related to them.

Drinker

You drink a lot. You never stop. You always drink.

Dutiful

You are honourable to a fault. Your word is everything, your loyalties are everything, and the rules governing the Jianghu are everything to you.

Eater

You are always hungry and always eating. Without food, you feel restless.

Greedy

Profit and wealth are your primary motivating factors; if you have a chance to earn money, you will take it. Although you are more than willing to bend or break rules to do so, you do not consider earning money via theft or gambling to be true profit.

Grim Collector

You collect things that would horrify a normal person: ears, noses, fingers, etc.

Grim Impulse

You have a strange desire to kill. Your desire to kill is triggered by specific things.

Hedonist

You are obsessed with the pleasures of life. Whenever you are presented with the option to enjoy yourself, the GM should roll 1d10 to 6d10 against your Wits, depending on the nature of the temptation. On a failure, you must partake in the activity.

Hunchback

You have a deformed spine or massive growth that causes your back to bulge and forces you to walk with a stoop. Some people react negatively to your appearance.

Impeccable

You are vain and focused on your appearance. You dress well and are perfectly adorned and/or made-up. You often spend hours preparing yourself to be seen by the world.

Irascible

You are easily angered and prone to bicker or argue over minor or perceived slights.

Missing Limb(s)

You are missing one or more limbs. If acquired after character creation, you take a -1d10 penalty to all relevant skills for every limb lost. Every leg you are missing reduces your movement by half its current amount. The GM should also use judgement in applying additional penalties or restrictions.

Mute

You cannot speak.

Obsession

You are obsessed with a topic, activity, etc. You find it difficult to pass up opportunities to gratify your obsession.

Order-Taker

You do not always have the freedom to make your own decisions. When a superior gives you an order, you must follow it. If you do not, you will suffer whatever consequences the GM deems fit.

Pacifist

Whether because of a religious vow or philosophical ideology, you do not kill, and you avoid violence.

Persistent Laughter

You laugh habitually and often. Mostly, you laugh at times not considered appropriate for laughter.

Persistent Smile

You smile even when you should not be doing so.

Philanthropic

You are concerned little with profit or wealth; if you have a chance to give away money to help people, you will take it.

Scars

The Jianghu has left its mark upon your skin. You have visible scars that will never go away.

Ugly

You are hideous to look upon.

DEEP ECCENTRICITIES

These are quirks that create recurring problems for characters. If you take a Deep Eccentricity, you can start the game with a Unique Weapon (see page 86). Deep Eccentricities need to be discussed with the GM before taking them. You can still take a regular resource if you take a Deep Eccentricity (including a weapon).

Bad Breath

You have terrible-smelling breath. The odour is bad enough to affect most social interactions. Although you can take whatever measures you like to hide the smell, in any situation where it cannot be avoided, the smell imposes a -2d10 penalty to any skill rolls made when trying to create a positive social impression.

Coquettish Man/Woman

You have unusually high charisma and are a notorious flirt incapable of fighting members of the opposite sex.

Corrupt

For enough money, you will do anything, even break laws or violate common social norms. If someone offers you money to do something, you must either agree or allow the GM to roll 1d10 to 6d10 against your Wits to withhold from acting (the number of d10s should reflect the appeal of the offer).

Dim-Witted

You lack intelligence and miss cues easily. You suffer -2 to Wits and -1d10 to Detect and Empathy. You also take a -1d10 penalty to all Knowledge skills.

Delicacy of the Human Flesh

You are a cannibal and do not feel satisfied by normal meals. If you don't eat several pounds of human meat each week, you take a -1 to your Wits, which increases by 1 each week you continue to abstain from human meat. Once you eat human meat, you recover all Wits lost in this manner.

Disloyal Fiend

Your loyalty can be easily purchased. You might make a show of being a faithful disciple or reputable member of a sect alliance, but for a golden tael, you would slit your own master's throat. Whenever someone tempts you to be disloyal, the GM rolls 2d10 against your Wits. If the result is equal to or greater than your Wits score, you must give in to the impulse or take a -2 penalty to Wits for 1d10 days as you agonise over the decision.

Dying

You are ill and will die soon from your ailment. Every month (or any other increment selected by the GM), you must make an Endurance roll at TN 4. If you fail, then you begin dying over the course of 1d10 days. Each day, an attempt can be made to save you with the Medicine and Alchemy skill at TN 10.

Gambler

When the opportunity presents itself, you must gamble. Not gambling, when the opportunity is available, causes you to suffer -1d10 penalties on all your skills due to pre-occupation for a full day. This penalty increases by an additional -1d10 every time you decline a chance to gamble.

Heavy Drinker

You are addicted to alcohol, and must drink a number of catties equal to your level every day. If you do not drink that many catties in a day, you suffer a -1d10 penalty to all skill rolls for every day you have not imbibed enough alcohol.

Inept Martial Artist

You are not naturally talented in the martial arts. You suffer a -1d10 penalty to all your Martial Arts skills.

In Love

You are deeply, ridiculously in love with someone. In that person's presence, you are not yourself. You have trouble concentrating on anything when they are near you, when they are experiencing any kind of difficulty, or when you've recently parted from them. This imposes a -1d10 penalty to all Mental and Knowledge skills.

Killer

You like to kill. You must kill. Whenever your patience is tested, the GM should roll 2d10 against your Wits. If the result is equal or higher than your Wits, you strive to kill the source of your irritation.

Living to Die

You might not desire death, but the path you pursue logically results in your demise. To die gloriously would not be such a bad thing. If you back down from a fight or stop fighting before the enemies are all dead, you suffer a -1d10 penalty to all your Mental skills for a week (and the penalty is cumulative if it occurs again).



Righteous

You cannot tolerate wrongdoing of any kind. If you see anyone breaking the law, or even acting in an immoral fashion, you must either interfere or allow the GM to roll 1d10 to 6d10 against your Wits to withhold from acting (the number of d10s should reflect the egregiousness of the act in question).

Secret Background

You have a dark secret that, if discovered, could create conflict or lead to bloodshed. This needs to be a secret that either is relevant to one of the other player characters or to a major, powerful NPC in the setting (for instance, someone who is one of the top ten fighters or is important to the party for some reason).

Seeking Defeat

Rightly or wrongly, you believe you are the greatest fighter of the martial world, and you long to find a foe who can defeat you. When you are between activities, you grow restless and must seek out a worthy opponent or suffer a -1d10 penalty to all Mental skills and Knowledge skills until you do.

Social Climber

Who someone is, and how they might elevate your status, is very important to you, and those of a lower class are not even worth discussing. You are always willing to do what a higher rank/class person requests; if you resist such a request, you receive a -1d10 penalty to all social skills while in an area under their influence

Unfilial

You bristle at being under the authority of your parents, grandparents, or masters. Whenever a parental figure or your master makes demands of you, the GM should roll 2d10 against your Wits. If the result is equal to or greater than your Wits score, you must lash out verbally or suffer a -2 penalty to Wits for 1d10 days as you fume over the audacity of the request.

Unlucky

Whenever you make a crucial roll, you suffer a -2d10 penalty. The definition of crucial is left up to the GM to interpret.

Vengeance Seeker

You are seeking revenge, but it is against a person who is related to or has strong connections with an ally, fellow player character, or person of great importance. The GM needs to approve the object of revenge.

Vow

You have taken an important and highly restrictive vow. The vow needs to create real challenge and hardship for the character (and the player). If you should ever break this vow, you immediately gain the Unlucky Deep Eccentricity. There are also social ramifications for violating your vow.

FIRE DEVIATION ECCENTRICITIES

Fire Deviation is a mishap that arises when cultivating internal energy or trying to reach a breakthrough in martial arts meditation, that produces an imbalance of Qi. It occurs when you fail 3 Meditation rolls in a row while trying to go up in level (see page 13). When you experience Fire Deviation, your body and mind change in a very significant way. Fire Deviation Eccentricities can be eliminated with a great deal of effort, but the methods are always unique to the circumstances of your Fire Deviation, take a long time, and are determined by the GM.

You can also voluntarily take a Fire Deviation Eccentricity, which allows you to gain additional Signature Abilities (see page 11). If you acquired a Fire Deviation Eccentricity in order to take an additional Signature Ability, then the only way to eliminate the Eccentricity is to lose the Signature Ability gained.

When you suffer Fire Deviation, you experience a mental and physical affliction. Roll on both Fire Deviation Table I: Mental Affliction and Fire Deviation Table II: Physical Affliction to see what the result is. Mental afflictions are usually triggered by something specific: for example, a character with 'violent rage' (result 1 on Fire Deviation Table I) might be triggered when their wishes are thwarted. In these instances, roll 2d10 against the character's Wits. If the number meets or exceeds the character's Wits, they succumb briefly to the rage for several minutes. If the result is 10, they succumb for a full hour.

If you roll the same result on a table, this intensifies the condition. If you roll a result that appears to nullify another result, or one that doesn't make sense, re-roll.

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE I: MENTAL AFFLICTION	
d10	Result
1	Whenever you get frustrated or angry, you fly into a violent rage
2	You experience horrible nightmares (you must make a Meditation roll at TN 6 each week to heal due to lack of sleep; on a failure, you do not heal any Wounds naturally that week)
3	You suffer from heroic delusions exaggerating your own abilities and accomplishments
4	You believe you are someone other than yourself
5	You develop an irrational hatred of an unusually specific thing
6	You develop a strong obsession with an activity such as gambling, buying expensive clothes, or collecting objects
7	You suffer from extreme cowardice and seek any possible way to escape potential danger
8	Your personality becomes more Yin oriented than before; you become more passive and docile, speaking in a softer tone of voice and being more nurturing
9	Your personality becomes more Yang oriented than before; you become more active and dominant, speaking louder and being more aggressive
10	Roll on Fire Deviation Table III: Major Mental Affliction

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE II: PHYSICAL AFFLICTION

d10	Result
1	Your hair turns a random colour (roll on the Random Hair and Eye Colour Table)
2	A strange symbol appears on your forehead
3	You lose all your hair
4	Your throat is damaged, and you must speak in a raspy voice
5	You acquire too much Yang energy, and this is reflected in your appearance; you become taller and more muscular, with angular features (Muscle increase by +1d10)
6	You acquire too much Yin energy, and this is reflected in your appearance; you become shorter and more petite, with softer features (Speed increase by +1d10)
7	All of your teeth fall out
8	Black, veiny lines cover your skin
9	Your eyes change to a solid or glowing colour (roll on the Random Hair and Eye Colour Table)
10	Roll on Fire Deviation Table IV: Major Physical Affliction

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE III: MAJOR MENTAL AFFLICTION

d10	Result
1	You become cruel and find it amusing to kill the innocent
2	You are extremely envious and want to kill all potential rivals
3	You become chivalrous and honour-bound to a fault, never backing down from a fight, and never allowing anyone to take face from you; you always attempt to right any wrong you encounter
4	You are catatonic and must make a Reasoning roll at TN 8 to interact with people or participate in combat
5	You lose your intelligence; your Wits is reduced to 3
6	Only alcohol, opium, or a similar mind-altering substance can dull the pain of your existence; you require a constant state of inebriation to avoid suffering a —2 penalty to your Wits each day
7	You have amnesia and must make a Reasoning roll to remember anything. If you succeed, you remember distorted details. If you get a total success, you remember things clearly.
8	You believe yourself to be an animal or inanimate object in human form; you think you are a spirited creature
9	You start hallucinating. The hallucinations are random, and both their frequency and the specific images seen will be determined by the GM. The GM should be as deceptive as possible, and use this freely for the purposes of creating engaging content, including having hallucinatory interactions with NPCs, or even being sent on adventures that are not real.
10	Roll on Fire Deviation Table VI: Supreme Mental Affliction

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE IV: MAJOR PHYSICAL AFFLICTION	
d10	Result
1	You look like a corpse, and your limbs are rigid, imposing a —2d10 penalty to Speed, but granting a +1d10 bonus to Command when intimidating people
2	A strange, glowing symbol forms into a third eye on your forehead
3	Your teeth become razor sharp, and you must drink five cattles of human blood daily or your Wits lower by 1 each day
4	You burn out your martial arts, reducing all Martial Arts skills to 0d10
5	Your flesh and features resemble a random or relevant animal (or element)
6	You go blind
7	You shrink to half your normal size and develop a hunchback
8	You become ice cold, suffering 1d10 damage whenever you are near fire or other intense heat sources
9	Your body becomes unnaturally hot; anything combustible lights on fire if you touch it
10	Roll on Fire Deviation Table V: Supreme Physical Affliction

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE V: SUPREME PHYSICAL AFFLICTION	
d10	Result
1	Your hands turn into twisted claws that do Muscle + 1d10 damage and impose a —2d10 penalty on relevant social interaction rolls
2	You grow massively in size, gaining 1 extra Wound to all your melee attacks, but taking a —2d10 penalty to Speed. Your movement is reduced to 10 feet plus 10 feet for every rank of Speed.
3	You seem fine, but should you ever have children, they will be hideously ugly; this is permanent and can never be removed
4	Your blood becomes poisonous and can kill you if you do not take regular antidotes. It can also be used to poison people. The GM should randomly select an existing poison. On a Medicine and Alchemy roll against TN 6, you can identify the poison.
5	Your elixir field becomes unstable; whenever you use Internal Martial Arts, you must make a Meditation roll against TN 6 or take 3d10 open damage
6	You begin to age at an accelerated rate of one year every month
7	You effectively become immortal but at a cost: you age backwards, becoming an infant, whereupon you begin ageing again. Your life is an endless cycle of growing old and turning young.
8	Your appearance radically changes to physically resemble the nature of your martial arts. This is not only striking, but also imposes a —2d10 penalty or +2d10 bonus to relevant skills determined by the GM.
9	Whenever you use your martial arts, you transform physically into something grotesque
10	Your bones become brittle; whenever you take a Wound, you also lose 1 point of Hardiness

FIRE DEVIATION TABLE VI: SUPREME MENTAL AFFLICTION

d10	Result
1	You lose control of your mind, becoming a murderous beast for 1d10 minutes whenever you use Internal Martial Arts
2	Your perceptions become unreliable, and you cannot tell friend from foe easily. All of your Detect and Empathy Rolls are at 2d10, taking the single lowest result.
3	You become mentally exhausted, to the extent that whenever you make a Command, Persuade, Detect, Empathy, or Reasoning roll, you lose 1 point of Wits, which returns at a rate of 1 per day
4	You become delusional, and your mind constructs a foe so realistic that you regularly encounter this person and, even though the events are hallucinatory, you take real damage when you fight them. The GM should create a rival NPC who is imaginary but so convincing that battles with him or her are treated as any other encounter in the game (except that the NPC cannot hurt or be hurt by people other than you).
5	Someone you love must die. Be they a friend or ally, companion or lover, you no longer trust this person of great importance to you — to the point where you are convinced you must kill them or be killed yourself.
6	You develop a death obsession, needing to murder and kill an innocent person at least once a month. If you do not, you lose 1 point of Wits. This does not return until you kill, and you keep losing points every month that you refrain from murder.
7	You believe yourself to be a spirited object
8	You believe you are a great historical figure
9	You believe you are a god, immortal, or other supernatural entity
10	You think you have attained an enlightened state of mind, and the focus of your enlightenment is some mundane revelation that others can never understand

RANDOM HAIR AND EYE COLOUR TABLE

d10	Colour
1	Red
2	White
3	Gold
4	Green
5	Yellow
6	Blue
7	Black
8	Multi-coloured streaks
9	Orange
10	Purple

ACUPOINT BLOCKAGE

When your acupoints are blocked, you suffer the effects described below until they are unblocked. Acupoints can usually be blocked using the Medicine and Alchemy skill, providing the target is willing/incapacitated/unaware, or there is at least 10 minutes of time to administer the proper acupuncture technique. In combat, certain styles, such as Acupoint Attack Style, allow you to use your Internal Martial Arts to block key acupoints.

Note, the below effects are for blockages. Any efforts to enhance or stimulate these acupoints could result in positive effects, as determined by the GM. The GM is encouraged to create additional acupoints if appropriate for the players.

Big Hammer Acupoint

This acupoint is found at the back of the neck and helps to regulate Yin and the mind. Anyone with a blocked Big Hammer Acupoint suffers a -4 penalty to Wits and a -1d10 penalty to all Knowledge and Mental skills.

Chest Centre Acupoint

Three quick taps here cause paralysis until the blockage is reversed. This can only be administered by people with higher levels than target, unless the person permits this blockage to occur voluntarily.

Life Gate Acupoint

Found at the base of the spine. Blockage results in an inability to heal.

Tortoise Tail Acupoint

This governs the flow of Yang energy in the body and is related to the kidney. Blockage causes a loss of physical strength and potency. Anyone with a blocked Tortoise Tail Acupoint takes a -2d10 penalty to Muscle and -4 to Hardiness.

Yin Meeting Acupoint

This governs Yin energy and is located in the perineum. You lose all abilities or increases associated with a specific character level (and only that level). Roll 1d10 and remove the ability or increase from the level matching the result. If the result exceeds your level, roll again until a workable result arises. For example, if level 4 were affected, and if you gained the Signature Ability Healing Benefaction of the Mercy Goddess at level 4, you would lose this ability.



CHAPTER EIGHT

SKILLS

SKILL RANKS

Skills are ranked 0–3. A rank indicates the number of d10s you roll when performing that skill. If you have zero ranks, you simply roll 2d10 and take the single lowest result. Otherwise, you roll the number indicated and take the single highest result. This dice pool can be modified (often by abilities or circumstances).

Defences

Unlike all other skills, Defences are static numbers that serve as a TN when people attack you or use abilities against you. This number is base 5 plus the ranks you invest in the Defence. Defences range from 5 to 10.

STARTING SKILLS

When selecting your starting skill ranks, you get a set number of points to spend in each skill group to purchase skills up to a max of three ranks. For Defences, you have 5 points to spend, in Martial Arts skills you have 4 points to spend, and in all remaining skill categories, you have 6 points to spend in each category. Each rank costs 1 point.

Skill Gutting

You can sacrifice all of your skill points in a single category in exchange for 3 additional points to spend in another (this cannot be applied to Martial Arts skills or Defences: you can gut them, but you cannot put points in them from other gutted skills). You cannot gut multiple categories.

DEFENCES

Defences protect you from harm. When people attack you, when your will or mind are under assault, or when you get hit with an attack, a roll is made against the relevant Defence.

You have 5 points to spend in Defences. However each Defence has a base value of 5, so add your ranks to this number to get your final Defence score for that category.

This is the number that must be met or beaten by an attack in order for you to be harmed. For instance, you could put three points into Hardiness, two into Evade and zero into Wits for these totals: Hardiness 8, Evade 7, Wits 5.

Evade

This is how hard you are to hit in combat. When people attack you, they roll against your Evade. If they meet or exceed your Evade score, you are hit.

Hardiness

This is how tough you are. When you are hit with an attack, the damage is rolled against your Hardiness. If the result equals or exceeds your Hardiness score, you take damage (see page 19).

Wits

This shows the resilience of your mind and the strength of your will. It is sometimes used for certain kinds of attacks. It also defends against Command, Empathy, and Persuade. In these cases, the attacks or skill rolls must equal or exceed the Wits score to succeed. Occasionally, characters will be called upon to make a Wits check. This is simply a d10 dice pool (usually between 1d10 and 6d10, but most often 2d10) rolled against Wits when a character's willpower is being tested.

MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS

You have 4 points to spend in Martial Arts skills. These are not accurate reflections of real martial arts, but simplified categories for purposes of play, based on common wuxia tropes.

External Martial Arts

This is your ability to use physical force and explosive movement to engage in combat. It is fighting with bodily might, whether unarmed or using a weapon. Attacks are most commonly made against Evade, and on a success, you roll damage against Hardiness.

Internal Martial Arts

This is your ability to fight with internal energy, which is cultivated through meditation and martial arts practice. It is fighting with your inner force, which can take the form of things like energy blasts, but can also be used for energy-based swordplay or unarmed fighting. Attacks often function like External Martial Arts, rolling against Evade to hit and against Hardiness for damage, but sometimes depend on the specific style being employed.

Lightness Martial Arts

This is the ability to control the weight of your body and your speed, and reflects the ability of martial artists to climb walls, hop over rooftops, and jump with ease. It can also be used to slow down falling. You can leap 20 feet per rank of Lightness Martial Arts.

SPECIALIST SKILLS

These are skills that require special training or apprenticeship. You have 6 points to spend in Specialist Skills.

Medicine and Alchemy

This is used to treat illnesses, use poisons, prepare transformative substances, and assess a person by reading their pulse. You can also use this skill to enhance a person's natural healing (see page 20).

Meditation

This is your ability to attain higher mental states, gain spiritual understanding, and cultivate energy using a variety of techniques, including breathing, visualisation, mnemonics, and focus. It is crucial to martial arts, but also comes with dangers when you reach different stages of development. Whenever you advance in level, you must succeed on a number of Meditation rolls equal to your level. If you fail three times in a row, you suffer a Fire Deviation (see page 113). Note that this skill is very important if you wish to avoid Fire Deviation, especially at higher levels.

Survival

Use this skill to navigate and find things in dangerous environments like the wilderness, mountains and even city streets, and for travel purposes. When the party travels, have the character with the highest rank in Survival make a roll (usually against TN 6) every seven days. On a failure, an encounter occurs. On a success, you spot the potential encounter before it occurs, and can manoeuvre around it if you wish.

Talent

This is your ability to perform artistic and cultural pursuits, such as playing a musical instrument, composing poetry, dancing, painting, etc. Use this whenever you want to impress people with your artistry. For mechanical purposes, it can cover as broad or narrow a range as necessary, as appropriate for the character concept.

Trade

This is your skill to engage in activities like stone masonry, weaving, and carpentry. It can cover as many or as few trades as needed to fit your character.

UNORTHODOX SKILLS

These are skills that some in the martial world regard as less savoury, or at the very least, strange. You have 6 points to spend in Unorthodox Skills.

Disguise

This is your ability to change your appearance or the appearances of others, using make-up, prosthetics, wigs, costumes, etc. Normally this is handled by having the result of your Disguise roll function as the TN of Detect rolls to see through the deception.

Drinking

This is your ability to consume large amounts of alcohol without suffering any ill effects. You use your Drinking skill when you exceed your Drinking Limit. Most members of the Jianghu admire those who can drink heavily, so this is very important in the game.

Gambling

This is your ability to gamble. It can be used to wager on events or games where the outcomes are up to chance or are unclear.

Magical Arts

A rare skill that usually refers to mundane tricks, but can include legitimate magic as well. It also includes things like fortune telling and astrology. Some Signature Abilities use Magical Arts, but more importantly this skill is useful for things like determining auspicious marriage days or assessing a person's fate. In addition, this can be used for illusions based on misdirection. The extent to which magical arts surpasses parlour tricks and enters the realm of actual magic, depends on the level of magic permitted in GM's Jianghu. Most will have minimal levels of magic.

Theft

This is used for a range of thieving activities, including picking pockets and opening locks. It can also be used to inform a character's understanding of situations like heists and break-ins. For example, a player character might make a Theft roll to see whether they can spot weaknesses in the security of a bank.

MENTAL SKILLS

Mental Skills are your ability to sense the world, read people, and interact with others. You have 6 points to spend in Mental Skills.

Command and Persuade do not replace role playing, nor should they undercut it. When a player character is particularly assertive or persuasive, and it is difficult to determine how an NPC might react, you can let the player make a Command or Persuade roll. Affected NPCs still behave within the parameters of their personality. This should not be treated as a form of mind control.

When used against player characters, treat this as information to help inform role playing. A character on the receiving end of a successful Command roll will clearly feel and understand the authoritative presence of the NPC in question, but the player is still free to act on that information however he or she wishes.

Command

Command is your ability to propel people to action by giving orders or bullying. It is always rolled against Wits. On a success, the target may or may not act on what you say, depending on their personality and status, but they will believe the force and consequences of your words. Players and GMs should use their judgement about their character or NPC when deciding how to respond to this skill.

Detect

This is your skill to observe things. It can be used to spot people and objects, and to sense danger or find clues. You normally roll against a TN set by the GM to determine whether you succeed.

Empathy

This is your ability to read social cues and gauge the feelings of others. It isn't a mind reading ability. You roll it against Wits, and on a success you can sense verbal and non-verbal indications of a person's thoughts, intentions, and feelings.

Persuade

This is your ability to convince people of things. You use it to make arguments, to curry favour, and to impress people with your charm. This is always rolled against Wits. On a success, the target will take your position very seriously or even agree, depending on their personality and status. As with Command, players and GMs should use their best judgement about how to respond to this skill when it is used, based on what the character in question would do when presented with a very convincing argument or charming individual.

Reasoning

This is your ability to think fast, and to recollect and solve problems. You roll Reasoning to do things like remember a person's face or recall information that was given to you earlier. In some campaigns it can also be used to solve puzzles and riddles (see the textbox below).

PLAYING DETECTIVE DEE OR BEING DETECTIVE DEE

How a skill like Reasoning is used in a campaign depends on an important play-style consideration. Are you playing the game in a way in which you see and experience the story through the character's eyes, but solve the problems with *your own* mind and skills, or are you playing the game in a way in which *the character's* mind and skills are more important? In short, are you guiding the actions of the genius investigator Detective Dee, or are you the genius investigator? This is particularly relevant considering details specific to a setting or culture. For instance, if a series of four crimes was related to wood, fire, earth, and metal, Detective Dee would definitely realise that the fifth crime would probably be related to water. But you, the player, might not make that connection, unless you are familiar with the culture. The decision of how to apply Reasoning rolls should be a result of discussion between the GM and players.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Physical Skills are a reflection of your strength, athleticism, and motor skills. You have 6 points to spend in Physical Skills.

Athletics

This covers basic, mundane athletic feats. This is distinct from Lightness Martial Arts, which handles super-human levels of physical performance. With Athletics, you can jump small distances, climb, tumble, perform acrobatics, etc. It also covers more performance-related feats not covered by Lightness Martial Arts like catching a ball or body contortion.

Endurance

This is how well you handle physical stress over a period of time. Being deprived of food and water, or being exposed to the elements would require an Endurance roll to avoid suffering negative effects. Doing Horse Stance for one hour would require an Endurance roll. Eating bad food might require an Endurance roll to avoid getting sick.

Muscle

This is how strong you are. Use Muscle to lift heavy objects, push things and, in many cases, to determine your damage for attacks (see page 19).

Ride

This is your ability to ride beasts of burden, such as horses and camels. You only need to use this skill when difficulty or challenges arise in the course of travelling on an animal. You also might need it to perform complex manoeuvres on an animal, or to control an unruly horse. However, everyone in the setting is assumed to have passing familiarity with riding an animal.

Speed

Speed is very important in the game, and it reflects how quickly you move and react. It is used to determine your movement, your turn order in combat, and the outcome of rooftop chases and races (see page 20). Similar to Athletics, it lacks the super-human qualities of Lightness Martial Arts.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge Skills reflect education, experience, and awareness of the world. They do not pertain to actively doing things; rather, they reflect what information you know. You have 6 points to spend in Knowledge Skills.

Knowledge Skills can be as broad or narrow as you need for your character. For example, not every character who takes Institutions will have the same specific understanding of government institutions versus mercantile institutions. But there is nothing wrong with a character having broad knowledge. The important thing is that characters with a narrower focus should be able to use these skills in more specific instances.

Institutions

This is your knowledge of social institutions such as the Imperial Bureaucracy, non-martial societies, guilds, lineages, etc. Use it to determine what you know about their membership, etiquette, rules, and goals.

Jianghu

This is your knowledge of the people, sects, codes, weapons, and martial arts of the Jianghu. You use it to see whether you know what sect someone belongs to, what kind of martial arts they use, or the details of a specific, uncommon weapon. It is assumed that most people have a general understanding of the key concepts of the Jianghu, such as what the top ten weapons are, or who the top ten fighters are, but a skill roll might be called for to know more specific information about them.

Peoples and Places

This is your knowledge of geography and groups of people. Use it to see how much you know about physical locations, cultures, customs, etc.

Religion

This is your knowledge of religions like Daoism and Buddhism, as well as folk religion, folklore, and legend. Use this skill to determine your understanding of sutras, beliefs, the religion's history, lore, etc.

Scholarly Arts

This is understanding of music, strategy, calligraphy, and painting. It also includes your knowledge of things like history and the Confucian classics. It does not include the composition or production of such things. For that, see the Talent skill.



**ALL REMAINING CHAPTERS ARE
INTENDED FOR THE GM ONLY.**



CHAPTER NINE

GAMEMASTERING THE JIANGHU

This chapter consists of advice and tools for GMs. None of what follows is required in play. Use what you find helpful, discard what you don't.

LEARNING THE WUXIA GENRE

Some GMs will come to *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades* with extensive knowledge of the wuxia genre, others might have more limited exposure. At its heart, wuxia is about powerful martial heroes who use things like lightness martial arts, internal cultivation of Qi energy, kung fu, and weapons to protect the weak from the strong, while at the same time abiding by a code of ethics that often differs from societal norms. The setting is usually ancient China.

The term wuxia is a combination of the Chinese characters Wu (武) and Xia (俠). The first character is often translated as 'martial' and the second is frequently translated as 'hero'. The second character is actually a bit more specific than 'hero'; it refers to a person who is trustworthy, brave, and chivalrous, someone who is ready to do battle, and assists those in need. In the wuxia genre, the protagonists are usually 'heroes' like this, and are often depicted as wandering martial artists who fight to defend the common people. Some wuxia stories and movies do feature protagonists who are less heroic, and even when the heroes are righteous, the martial world is usually populated with plenty of eccentric and nefarious characters.

There is a lot more to the genre than can be encapsulated in a single section of a chapter (or even in a whole chapter or book). One way to get a quick overview of the genre's history is to read Stephen Teo's *Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition*. For greater emphasis on wuxia literature, you can read *The Development of Chinese Martial Arts Fiction: A History of Wuxia Literature* by Chen Pingyuan.

That said, the best way to understand wuxia is to read and watch examples of it. We suggest that you find writers and directors who appeal to you and then explore their

work. Three very significant writers are Jin Yong, Liang Yusheng, and Gu Long, but there are many more. Unfortunately, it is difficult to obtain official English translations, although fan translations are common. The works of Gu Long were the biggest inspiration for *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*.

THE JIANGHU

The word 'Jianghu' is a common term in the Chinese language, and has a deep history going back for thousands of years. However, in the wuxia genre, it has its own unique definition.

It is the world of martial arts practitioners, teahouses, bandits, inns, prostitutes, brothels, and the like. It is beyond the reach of the emperor, and literally means 'rivers and lakes', although the etymology is more complex than that. It can be likened to things such as the criminal underworlds of crime fiction. It isn't a physical place, although there are locations that are associated with it. It is a network of individuals, sects, clans, and people whose activities usually revolve around martial arts.

Jianghu means different things in the hands of different writers or directors. For example, the Jianghu portrayed by Jin Yong tends to be deeply historical, whereas Gu Long uses a more anachronistic approach, utilising history as a general backdrop to thrilling, character-driven adventures. One of the joys of a wuxia campaign is creating your own Jianghu, with a unique flavour all its own.

INSPIRATIONAL VIEWING

The first wuxia movies appeared in the 1920s, but this book is focused more on works from mid-1960s onwards, including films like the *Temple of the Red Lotus* trilogy and *Come Drink with Me*. *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades* is particularly inspired by darker wuxia films. This is our recommended viewing list:

The Twin Swords (1965), *The One-Armed Swordsman* (1967), *A Touch of Zen* (1971), *Duel for Gold* (1971), *Finger of Doom* (1972), *The Delightful Forest* (1972), *Intimate Confessions of a Chinese Courtesan* (1973), *Killer Clans* (1976), *Magic Blade* (1976), *Web of Death* (1976), *Master of the Flying Guillotine* (1976), *Sentimental Swordsman* (1977), *Death Duel* (1977), *Broken Oath* (1977), *Crippled Avengers* (1978), *Magnificent Bodyguards* (1978), *Soul of the Sword* (1978), *Swordsman and the Enchantress* (1978), *Last Hurrah for Chivalry* (1979), *Bat without Wings* (1980), *Heroes Shed No Tears* (1980), *Killer Constable* (1980), *What Price Honesty?* (1981), *Bloody Parrot* (1981), *Masked Avengers* (1981), *Human Lanterns* (1982), *Jade Dagger Ninja* (1982), *Opium and the Kung Fu Master* (1984), *New Dragon Gate Inn* (1992), *The Bride With White Hair* (1993), *Deadful Melody* (1994), *The Blade* (1995), *The Duel* (2000), *Legend of the Black Scorpion* (2006), *Reign of Assassins* (2010), *Dragon/Wu Xia* (2011), *The Four Trilogy* (2012-2014), and *Sword Master* (2016).

INSPIRATIONAL READING

If you have the time, we highly recommend digging your teeth into some of the novels which inspire the movies and TV shows that are so popular.

Unfortunately, there are currently only a few official translations of wuxia novels:

The Deer and the Cauldron by Louis Cha (Jin Yong), *The Book and the Sword* by Louis Cha (Jin Yong), *Legends of the Condor Heroes* by Jin Yong, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* by Jin Yong, *Blades from the Willows* by Huanzhulouzhu, and *The Eleventh Son* by Gu Long (note that this is a partial translation which ends on a cliffhanger).

Two of the four great classic novels of Chinese literature, although not true wuxia novels, are sometimes considered the progenitors of the genre, and contain the same heroism, martial arts, and adventures that have come to typify it: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Outlaws of the Marsh* (also known as *Water Margin*).

There are many unofficial translations of wuxia to be found online if you do a bit of searching. Here are a few we recommend: *Smiling Proud Wanderer* by Jin Yong, *Return of the Condor Heroes* by Jin Yong, *Legend of the White-Haired Demoness* by Liang Yusheng, *Sentimental Swordsman*, *Ruthless Sword* by Gu Long, *The Legend of Lu Xiaofeng* by Gu Long, *Heroes Shed No Tears* by Gu Long, *7 Killers* by Gu Long, and *Horizon, Bright Moon, Sabre* by Gu Long.

WUXIA CRASH COURSE

If you're brand new to the wuxia genre and would like some specific recommendations to begin, start by reading the translation of *7 Killers* by Gu Long, a short novel you can find online. You could also try *Horizon, Bright Moon, Sabre* by the same author, also available online.

For movies, try a marathon of *Magic Blade*, *Bride with White Hair*, and *Reign of Assassins*. Those three span several decades of filmmaking and collectively contain almost all of the wuxia elements we include in *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*.

ADJUDICATING THE RULES AND MAKING RULINGS

In this section of the chapter you will find guidelines and advice for managing the rules of *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*.

FIRST RULE: GO BEYOND THE RULES

The purpose of the rules in this book are to keep the game flowing smoothly and to emulate the physics of Jianghu martial arts (see the section 'Genre Physics and Expectations' in this chapter for more information on this, page 143). However, no system is comprehensive, and every system has blind spots. What happens in the game can supersede the letter of the law when it makes sense for it to do so. One key responsibility of the GM is to step in and govern the physics of the world and its cosmology where appropriate. This isn't a licence to fudge, it is a licence to apply logic and imagination to actions the players take, and to events in the game world. That might mean devising an on-the-fly rule for an edge case, or it might mean treating a particular situation as an exception to the standard rules (for example: "Normally this is handled with the Magical Arts skill, but this seems like a special case, so just roll Command to see whether the spirits respond positively"). This game is intended to be run with 'rulings over rules' as the guiding principle. Some abilities and sections of this book specifically require or encourage GM rulings.

RULINGS GUIDELINES

The heart of an RPG is creating a sense that the players are there, and that anything they want to try is at least possible. An RPG shouldn't feel like a computer game that adheres only to the pre-designed rules and parameters. What makes games like this special is the human mind creatively responding to the events as they unfold. The rules are meant to serve that goal, not stifle it. Use rulings to help make the world more believable. Rulings are a key function of the GM, and an essential part of maintaining this believability.

Whenever a player attempts to do something as their character, the GM will need to adjudicate what happens. Typically, this is done via the mechanics outlined in the rules. However, if the rules don't cover what the player wants to do, or the mechanics do not account for the circumstances, then the GM will have to make a ruling. A ruling can be a new mechanic. Or a ruling can be a decision that the action is automatically a success or failure. Often, a ruling is a modification of an existing rule, adapted to the circumstances. In many cases, the GM will think of several ways of making a ruling. In this case, the GM should choose the method that is the most interesting or fun, given the interests of the players.

Rulings are about adapting the facts on the ground, and not allowing the system to relentlessly control every aspect of play. Rulings are not about ignoring the rules, they are about applying the spirit of the rules to unforeseen situations, and giving primacy to play at the table. Use your judgement, logic, and sense of impartiality to fairly render rulings in games. If the player characters have an idea, and it makes sense in the context of what is going on in the game, even if there is no obvious rules solution, hear them out and try to come up with the best method for adjudicating it. If the player characters do something special that you believe would create an exception to a rule, then by all means, allow the exception.

SETTING TARGET NUMBERS

As GM, you will be setting the TN that players must roll against to succeed. As a general rule, if something is easy to perform, and there is no pressure of failure creating a bigger risk (for example, in terms of combat or time pressures), then simply allow success. Only when success is in doubt, or when circumstances raise the stakes, should you ask for a roll. When you do, use the following guidelines: TN 4 for easy tasks, TN 6 for standard tasks, TN 8 for difficult tasks, and TN 10 for very difficult tasks. Treat it as a spectrum. But for a more-specific breakdown, you can use the table below.

ADJUDICATING BONUSES AND PENALTIES

While bonuses and penalties generally can range from $-1d10/+1d10$ to $-7d10/+7d10$ (under the soft cap), it is strongly advised to limit most bonuses and penalties to $-1d10/+1d10$ to $-3d10/+3d10$. Use the table below for most circumstances:

SITUATIONAL MODIFIER TABLE	
Situation	Modifier
Worst	-3d10
Awful	-2d10
Bad	-1d10
Average	No modifier
Good	+1d10
Great	+2d10
Perfect	+3d10

TARGET NUMBER TABLE	
Difficulty	TN
No roll required	1
Very Easy	2-3
Easy	4-5
Standard	6
Difficult	7-8
Very Difficult	9-10

CHARACTER DEATH, BALANCE, AND EYEBALLING COMBAT DIFFICULTY

This game was designed to bring to life the bloodshed and wild kung fu of the wuxia genre. Death hangs in the air, and life can end in the flash of a blade. It is intended to be gritty and lethal, set in a world of martial artists of varying abilities. Characters do die. Very powerful foes, even foes of a higher level than the party, might appear. And there is no sure-fire way to identify exactly how strong or dangerous an opponent is. In our playtest campaigns, for instance, characters were occasionally maimed or killed in the first or second session. The system was designed to be this way, and the abilities in the game were not made to be perfectly equal in all circumstances. Some abilities are better at killing than others, just like how, in the movies, some kung fu styles are more of a threat than others. Although you can do things to mitigate the lethality of the game, everyone at the table should understand the martial world is deadly.

When designing adventures and creating foes for your players, it is still important to identify the potential lethality of any challenge. As the GM, you should have a handle on what you are throwing at the party. The two key things to evaluate with any threat are Max Wounds and potential damage output. If a foe has high Max Wounds, they can last a lot longer in combat, and if their potential damage output exceeds the Max Wounds of any of the player characters, then they can kill quite easily. You will also want to look at the Max Wounds and damage output of your player characters (and eyeball Resist). Usually, damage output is determined by weapons and Signature Abilities, but look for combinations that achieve higher results. Other factors to consider are the number of opponents, types of Counters, and whether characters intend to kill. One very fast but crude gauge involves adding up the Killing Aura of the player characters and comparing this to the total levels of the opponents. If they are about equal, then that will be a challenging, and potentially lethal, fight.

If you want the world to be more balanced, or you want the game to be less lethal, remember this: NPCs and threats only do what you want them to do. Techniques, even if they do enough damage to kill, can be controlled by the user. A powerful NPC only kills if you have them use lethal force. Otherwise, they are free to let the players go, capture them, or maim them. A very powerful character might not desire to kill enemies who proved to be a minor challenge.



The martial world itself often responds to imbalances of power. Lean on both the setting and things like face [153] to create realistic responses to powerful forces in the martial world. If there is imbalance in the world, alliances often form to counteract the imbalance. If an unstoppable martial artist enters the Jianghu, it is a sure bet that sects will unite to contend with the situation. They might not succeed – nothing is guaranteed – but they will greatly even the odds.

One of your most powerful tools is face. Only the most dishonourable characters resort to underhanded means. If an extremely powerful character goes around killing weaker characters, it would violate one of the key rules governing the Jianghu. Face matters in the setting. For example, if a character is confronted by a foe and asks to fight at a later appointed date, to deny that might cause the opponent to lose face. More significantly, multiple parties teaming up on one foe would also potentially lead to a loss of face (relative power levels here might be an important factor; with multiple weak opponents fighting a stronger opponent being more acceptable than the inverse of that).

UNEXPECTED POWER COMBINATIONS

Because of the vast assortment of weapons and abilities, it is possible for players to create incredibly powerful combinations that might catch the GM by surprise. The GM should expect this and take it in stride. There are a couple of ways to handle a seemingly overpowered player.

The first approach is to do nothing in terms of “containing” player power levels, and instead allow the setting to respond naturally. In other words, have NPC sects and heroes who feel intimidated by the player team up to challenge them, or perhaps have them develop a new weapon or Counter to handle their abilities. This is a common theme in movies when a powerful figure threatens to destabilise the martial world. React the way the NPCs and organizations in the setting would to a powerful threat, rather than as a GM trying to contain power. But react logically and with internal consistency. Think about what steps the NPCs actually need to take when dealing with such powerful PCs and what rumors might reach the players as a result. When the martial world evolves in this way, you can embrace the power because it will bring its own drama, consequences and complications. Regardless of how you handle it, this solution may require some preparation, and might take more than one session to play out.

The second approach is a more on-the-spot solution. Simply add a higher-level NPC into the scenario, one with Resist, or give an existing NPC opponent one of the top ten weapons. In doing this, make sure that the sudden development does not come across as being overly contrived. As players reach higher levels, they will become increasingly powerful, which will make it more difficult for GMs to simply pit them against a powerful NPC or weapon to balance the situation. At that point, you will need to revert to the first approach.

However you try to resolve the situation, remind players that *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* is intended to be dark and gritty, with unforgiving combat. When top masters clash, victory is often determined with a single blow, and that becomes increasingly possible at higher levels of play.

COUNTERING COUNTERS

Generally speaking, characters are not allowed to counter Counters, as it slows down combat. However, allowing characters to counter Counters can emulate the back-and-forth fight scenes in wuxia and kung fu movies. If you want to allow it to achieve that feel, feel free to do so. Just be aware that this can change combat pacing.

RESIST

Resist is a tool for scaling the power of high-level martial heroes. However, it exists inside the context of a setting. The GM can allow players to overcome Resist when they employ tactics that nullify an enemy's martial arts, or are particularly inventive and suited to the situation.

ADJUDICATING TALKING AND ANALYSIS PHASE WITH NPCS

The GM should allow NPCs to Psych Out, Gain an Advantage, or Learn About Signature Ability or Counter just as player characters are able to do during this phase. That said, this is ultimately your decision as GM. If you feel that allowing player characters to be psyched out so they suffer a -1d10 penalty would not fit your group, you can opt not to have this door swing both ways.

In some cases, it makes sense to skip this phase, such as in the case of an ambush, or when dealing with an enraged NPC who has no interest in talking.

ADJUDICATING CRIME

Here is a handy way to rule when player characters commit crimes and then attempt to conceal them. Have the player make a 'Crime roll' using a skill that seems relevant to the situation (Survival, Theft, Magical Arts, etc.). Then determine the quality of the local law enforcement institution (such as a sheriff, constable, or patrolling inspector) on a scale of 0-7 (which represents the number of d10s that are rolled against the roll of the player). Make the roll. If the law-enforcement roll succeeds, they eventually find evidence tying the players to the crime. If they fail, they do not.

UNIVERSAL COUNTER (OPTIONAL RULE)

This rule allows all characters to defend against any attack by rolling 1d10 against the attack roll.

FOUR IS UNLUCKY, EIGHT IS LUCKY (OPTIONAL RULE)

In Chinese numerology, four is an unlucky number that is often associated with death, whereas eight is lucky. Whenever these come up in play (as the single highest result on a roll, the numbers of objects or people present, literal numbers in the game setting, etc.) the GM can, as an option and if it feels right, bestow a situational penalty or bonus due to the presence of bad luck or good luck (usually +1d10 to a skill or + to a Defence). Further, the GM could simply have something unfortunate occur. If this affects a die roll, it shouldn't alter the outcome (a success shouldn't become a failure, but it might add something unusual to the result).

RUNNING THE GAME

This section includes advice on encounters, adventures, and campaigns.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS AND GRUDGES

The 'Encounters and Travel' section below offers a simple random encounter method to use when characters travel. However, we encourage GMs to adjust this aspect of the system to fit their own style. Game Masters approach random encounters differently, and you should feel free to experiment with your own encounter tables in a way that works with the style of campaign you hope to run. Encounter tables are just tools and can be customised however you see fit.

ADVICE ON RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

When you roll on a random encounter table and get a result, always start with the question 'Why?' The NPC(s) at the heart of the encounter should want something. This is very important because it helps guide your actions when running the encounters. If you know what your NPCs want, then you can respond accordingly when players make special appeals, try to worm their way out of a conflict, or offer to strike up a bargain. Not all encounters need to end in a fight. In fact, some of the most memorable encounters become springboards to new adventures when the players and the NPC arrive at an agreement or understanding.

For example, if you use the standard encounter table below and the result is a complication, followed by a roll on the Jianghu Table that suggests the complication involves Pipa-Playing Witch, ask yourself why she would be there at that time, and whether there is anything the players have done recently that would warrant a complication (sometimes complications are not warranted, but if they are, it is good to draw on recent history). Perhaps one of the players befriended Brocaded Granny, a seamstress who killed Pipa-Playing Witch's son. So Pipa-Playing Witch comes to demand that the party take her to her rival, or else she will vent her rage on them.

ENCOUNTERS AND TRAVEL

For every seven days of travel, the character with the highest Survival skill should make a roll against TN 6. If the result is a failure, an encounter occurs. See Survival Skill [121] for more details.

Encounter tables are always tailored to the campaign, even to the adventure. The results can be a Grudge Encounter, an Ally or Friend, a Complication, a Twist, or No Encounter. Grudges are enmities in the martial world that the player characters have acquired. When a player develops a grudge, they add that NPC or group to their character sheet. If a Grudge comes up, the GM should select a Grudge entry from one of the player's character sheets to use for the encounter. The GM can also simply opt to create a separate table with all existing Grudges and roll on that when the result of Grudge comes up. Allies or friends are people who the players know and can potentially assist the party or just relay information. Complications can be anything that creates a new challenge or obstacle to the player's current goals. For example, if they have obtained the Obsidian Bat, the Bat King might show up to take it from them. If, the result is a

Twist, then perhaps a merchant might pass by and inform them there are numerous counterfeits of the Obsidian Bat floating around (leading them to question the authenticity of their acquisition). Complications and twists can be dramatic in nature as well. You can also use a Jianghu Table (see below) to flesh out Complications, Allies or Friend, or Twist results. Challengers are simply other people in the Jianghu seeking one or all of the players because they have heard about their reputation and want to duel with them. Encounters in the Jianghu tend to centre on grudges and are related to the player's current activities or current events in the Jianghu, as personalities in this underworld follow rumours and seek one another out.

ENCOUNTER TABLE	
2d10	Result
2–8	Grudge Encounter
9–11	Ally or Friend
12–14	Challenger
15–19	Complication
20	Twist

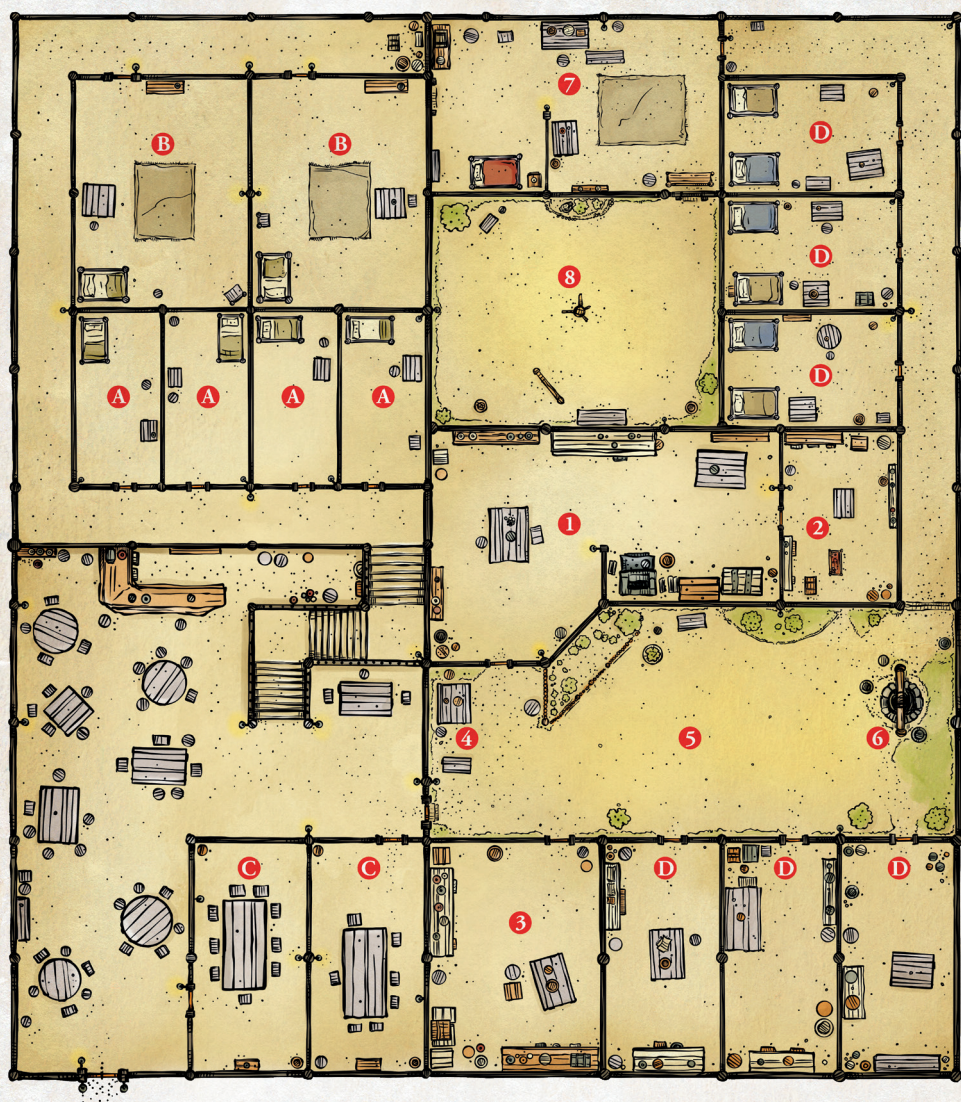
Keep in mind that the GM is always free to throw encounters at the party for any reason. If it makes sense for an NPC to approach and confront the party, or for there to be bandits along the road, it is perfectly acceptable for the GM to present the players with an encounter. As an option, you can call for a special Survival roll to see how surprised the players are by the encounter.

JIANGHU TABLE

This is a d100 table with all the major characters in the Jianghu (if your Jianghu is extensive, you might have multiple levels to this table). You can also make one for each region if you like. For instance, you could have a table for Hebei specifically or Northern China more generally, and make one for each part of the map (so characters tend to be encountered where they reside). Below is a sample table based on the Jianghu we provide. You can adjust the ranges and probabilities of each entry according to how frequently they travel.

For this table, we assigned a 2% chance to encountering low- to mid-level characters and a 1% chance to high-level characters.

JIANGHU TABLE			JIANGHU TABLE (CONTINUED)		
d100	Result	Page	d100	Result	Page
1–2	Aching Butterfly Sword	187	54–55	Master Wu	218
3–4	Auntie Ying	188	56–57	Moneybags Hu	218
5–6	Beauty Face Chang	188	58–59	Pipa-Playing Witch	221
7–8	Beggar Huang	189	60–61	Purity	221
9–10	Chen Chao	190	62–63	Qing Yun	222
11–12	Chen Haolin	191	64–65	Qiu Yan	222
13–14	Chen Nianzhen	193	66–67	Righteous Killer Long	223
15–16	Chief Ban Fei	193	68–69	Sha Nuoge	224
17–18	Constable Wong	194	70–71	Shi Jia	225
19–20	Cui Nuo	195	72–73	Shuai Huixiong	225
21	Eunuch Zhang	196	74–75	Song Mo	226
22–23	Guo the Tiny Mouse	198	76	Song Tuan	226
24–25	Gu Shengtong	198	77	Sun Lan the Yama Queen	228
26–27	Gu Xing	199	78	Surgeon Zhang	230
28	He Tian	200	79–80	Thief Goddess Li	231
29–30	Hong Wenlong	201	81–82	Towering Bodhisattva	232
31–32	Hua Yan	201	83	Tranquil Killer Qing Ying	232
33–34	Iron-Headed Badgers	203	84	Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi	233
35–36	Iron-Toothed Bat King	203	82	Tree Frog Gao	235
37–38	Lady Ren	205	83–84	Wan Lang	236
39	Liang Hai	206	85–86	Wan Shu	236
40–41	Lin Bo	207	87–88	Wu Kang	237
42–43	Li Nin	208	89–90	Wu Tooth Beauty Niu	239
44–45	Liu Shishi	209	91–92	Xie Lijuan	239
46	Liu Xiuling	210	93–94	Xie Song	240
47	Luo Qing	215	95–96	Yang Yu	242
48–49	Ma Zhenlong	215	97–98	Zhao Jing	243
50–51	Master Gao	217	99–100	Zhu Fei	244
52–53	Master Guo	217			



AUNTIE YING'S WINE SHOP

A - Ordinary Rooms

B - Luxury Rooms

C - Private Dining Rooms

D - Family/Staff Rooms

1 - Kitchen

2 - Wine Storage

3 - Food Storage

4 - Food Preparation Table

5 - Main Courtyard

6 - Well

7 - Auntie Ying's Room

8 - Secret Training Courtyard

INN, TEAHOUSE, AND BROTHEL ENCOUNTERS

Inns, brothels, teahouses, restaurants, wine shops, and other such locations feature prominently in wuxia fiction, and are often a source of excitement. You can make these locations more interesting by using encounters. Encounters don't just happen on the road, but often happen in these locations as well.

The chance of an encounter occurring is up to the GM; it can simply happen randomly, or it could be assigned a likelihood. Roll when players stay at an inn, teahouse or brothel. Using a 2 in 10 chance of an event or encounter occurring makes for a consistent and believable game.

Use the table below for such encounters, or make up your own. We recommend updating your tables frequently (removing any results that have already come up and adding in new ones).

INN/TEAHOUSE/BROTHEL ENCOUNTER TABLE I	
d10	Result
1	A random member of the Jianghu follows the players to the location for a sinister purpose
2	A random member of the Jianghu follows the players to the location for altruistic purposes
3	A person in disguise seeks to win their trust in order to steal from them
4	An unruly patron begins mistreating the staff, and grows increasingly violent
5	A group of thieves arrives at the inn disguised as merchants; they have a stolen treasure hidden in their wares
6	A fight breaks out between two random members or factions of the Jianghu. One side might pressure the players to aid them. The players' response will be remembered.
7	Someone is murdered at the location during the evening, and a local constable seeks the players' aid in solving the case
8	A member of the staff covets one of the players' artefacts or possessions, and will go to great lengths to possess it
9	A group of Jianghu villains is seated together, clearly at work on some nefarious scheme
10	Roll on Inn/Teahouse/Brothel Encounter Table II

INN/TEAHOUSE/BROTHEL ENCOUNTER TABLE II	
d10	Result
1	A mysterious traveller comes to the location in disguise. Roll randomly on the Jianghu Table. Decide what they want, and why it would involve the players.
2	A member of the staff was hired to kill one of the player characters (this might be a case of mistaken identity)
3	One of the top ten fighters arrives at the inn, seriously wounded and in need of help. This encounter was ordained by the will of heaven for some important reason, or so this person believes.
4	People begin dying from poison at the location. Who is to blame? How was the poison delivered? And have the players been poisoned?
5	A random member of the Jianghu has just killed another random member, and is quite proud of the achievement. He or she drags the body before the player characters and offers to wager it in a game, in exchange for something they possess.
6	There are rumours of a haunting at the location. Some say a ghostly woman is draining men to their death at night. In truth, the proprietor and his wife are working together to frighten people so they can rob them. She dresses in white, wears white powder with facial paint, and is dangled by a thin rope from the roof, to create the impression she is flying into people's rooms.
7	Three criminals are being transported by powerful officials, and they stop at the location for the night. However, if the player characters investigate, it becomes clear that these criminals are the sons and daughters of a great hero who died ridding the world of corrupt officials.
8	A devious scholar-official has been tasked with engineering deadly devices to use against the emperor's enemies. He has come to the location in order to test his lethal contraptions on patrons. During the players' stay, people begin dying horrifically due to traps set throughout the structure.
9	A fugitive is staying at the location, and soldiers surround the building, then set it ablaze. At the very least, the players must survive the fire, but they might also want to help the fugitive escape, because he claims to know the whereabouts of a sought-after martial arts manual.
10	An important, and greatly hated, official is staying at the location. This official has two Divine Bodyguards and eight Magnificent Bodyguards.

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

This section provides some basic advice on managing your adventures and campaigns. There are endless possible types of adventures, but we have created a simple list that you can use for inspiration.

Assassination

Movies like *Hero*, *The Fate of Lee Khan*, and *The Assassin* feature this kind of plot. Basically, someone important must be killed. It need not be an emperor or king, or even an official. It could merely be someone with a lot of economic or social influence. Whoever it is, getting close to them will probably be difficult. Assassination adventures often involve information gathering, alliance seeking, and political intrigue. They don't

usually require a strong structure, and you can let the players lead with their choices. The challenge is in setting the right level of difficulty. As a rule of thumb, the difficulty can be as high as you want, but if failure is extremely likely, the players should have some sense going in that this is likely to be a doomed venture. For example, anyone trying to assassinate the emperor would know that the risks involved would be tremendous. Still, even failed assassins can be celebrated as martyrs for the right cause, or if their efforts are especially valiant.

Defeating Evil

Powerful evils arise in the Jianghu and must be defeated before they bring chaos (or tyranny) to the martial world. These are often vicious experts with very little regard for human life, who place their own desires and ambitions above all else. This is a very simple 'there is a bad guy who needs to be destroyed' adventure, and it can be as elaborate and complicated as you wish. This adventure type has the advantage of an obvious starting point: identifying or tracking down the villain. *Bat Without Wings* is a good example of this kind of adventure.

Escort Job

These adventures are extremely common in wuxia. Escort companies, a staple of the genre, are organisations or social networks that help to transport and defend goods or people. They usually follow the structure of 'take object X to location B', with complications thrown in along the way, such as assassination and theft attempts. *The Kid with the Golden Arm* and *Deadful Melody* are both good examples.

Foreign Threats

Adventures involving threats to China, or even invasions, can be very exciting. Incursions by Mongolian or Jurchen armies were common throughout the years, and formed the basis of many dramatic periods of Chinese history. Stories from times like these are common in wuxia. Foreign themes can also involve the players venturing beyond China to handle a threat or situation. An example of this is the classic film *The 14 Amazons*, where the women of the Yang family go to seek revenge against the Western Xia for the death General Yang Zongbao.

The Heist

Heists can be as literal as robbing a bank, or they could involve trying to take a legendary treasure or artefact from a powerful sect. Heists obviously involve a lot of planning, including the preparation of a cast of relevant NPCs, potentially with competing interests. When you make a heist adventure, make sure to think about the security procedures in place. Also consider which potential competitors, rivals, or heroes might thwart the players. The 'Rare and Prized Objects' section in Chapter Six lists objects that are perfect for use as the subject of a heist (see page 93). *Duel for Gold* is a classic example of this theme in wuxia, as is *Reign of Assassins*, which is centred on the theft of a mummified relic.

Mystery

Mystery is very common in wuxia, particularly in Gu Long books and Chor Yuen movies. A mystery is one of the more challenging structures for adventures. Take time to think through the heart of the mystery, working out what it centres on, who is involved, what hurdles they might throw in the player's way, and where clues can be found. Drawing up a diagram of groups and people, creating a timeline of events, and mapping out the clues by location can help to give you a visual guide to use as you construct the adventure. When creating clues, remember that it is always better to have too many than not enough. Examples of mystery include *Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame* and *Legend of the Bat*.

Competing for a Powerful Item

A weapon or object of great power throws the martial world into conflict. Everyone wants to wield this item, and if a true villain should obtain it, the results would surely be catastrophic. This is an extremely common trope in wuxia, and the top ten weapons we have created are intended for just this purpose. Often, people will stop at nothing to have the weapon for themselves, and it can lead to a shocking chain of broken alliances and shifting loyalties. *Web of Death* is an excellent example of this type of movie, and *Heaven Sword, Dragon Sabre* is an iconic example in literature.

Sect Wars

Sect wars are an excellent adventure structure, and can allow for a great deal of player freedom. Make sure to have the sects fully fleshed out, and have a good source of conflict. You also need a good understanding the resources available to each side, and the general pacing of the conflict. It can be helpful to simplify by rolling d10 dice pools for each side periodically, based on their rough power level, to see who is winning and who is suffering casualties. Sect wars often involve intrigue, assassination, information gathering, and alliance building. A big part of these kinds of adventures is taking out important members of the rival sect. *Killer Clans* is a good example of a sect war in wuxia.

Search or Rescue

A search for a martial arts manual, a great master, or a lost relic can be a strong foundation for an adventure in wuxia, as well as the typical rescue mission. The set-up is usually as simple as 'go to location X to find object B'. Make sure to take time planning the layout of the area in which the subject of the search is located, and determine what challenges might be faced along the way. *Bride with White Hair 2* is an example of this type of adventure.

Supernatural

Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades assumes a mundane setting with little in the way of the supernatural, although we do have faint glows of the fantastic here or there. It is common in wuxia for a supernatural threat or mystery to emerge, and for the question of its veracity to hang over the entire story. You can freely add in supernatural elements and create an adventure built around the supernatural. If you raise the question of whether

or not the phenomenon is truly supernatural, you should probably answer that question at some point. A *Chinese Ghost Story* is a classic movie which blends the supernatural with wuxia. The film *Bloody Parrot* is an example of a movie that presents a supernatural threat, and the viewer slowly learns whether it is real or man-made.

Tournaments and Duels

When running a tournament or duel, the first step is to determine why the event is being held and how many parties are involved. Sometimes, events such as this will arise naturally in your campaign when characters demand a duel or tournament to settle an outcome. Other times, you might plan them in advance. When you run a tournament, it is important to consider the tournament structure (such as how eliminations are handled). Tournaments are also a great opportunity for intrigue, as people will often try to bend the outcome in their favour by deceptive means, or use the occasion as a distraction for some other plot. *Duel to the Death*, *Death Duel*, *The Duel*, and *Master of the Flying Guillotine* feature duels or tournaments. *Return of Condor Heroes* has several chapters dedicated to a tournament to control Beggar Sect.

CAMPAIGNS ARE SHATTERED PORCELAIN

A campaign is like shattered porcelain. Think of your inaugural adventure as a porcelain vessel that shatters into fragments when the players start interacting with it. Although it might seem counterintuitive, the chaos is good for fuelling adventure. The natural impulse is to put the pieces back together and preserve the adventure or campaign, but the reality is that unexpected developments or changes of direction are often more interesting, and create a more organic play experience. The pieces are what you have to work with for the future of the campaign. You can't predict how the vessel will shatter, all you can do is examine the outcome and make use of the shards. For example, if your party plays the Obsidian Bat for their first adventure and one of them is blinded by Sword Goddess, that is a fragment you can use to generate further adventure (especially if the player character is burning with a desire for vengeance). Or if they kill Xie Lijuan in the Pleasures of the Harbour adventure, that is going to lead somewhere interesting, even if they never bother with the mystery that was planned.

GENRE PHYSICS AND EXPECTATIONS

This is a game that emulates the wuxia genre. As such, the standards of that genre will shape the gameplay. That said, wuxia has many variations.

We've adopted the term 'genre physics' to describe this concept. Genre physics isn't just about the literal laws of physics in the setting, although that does play some part of it. It also refers to expectations: those of both the GM and the players. How do the inhabitants of the world behave? What is plausible or implausible, possible and impossible? How do events lead logically to further plot developments? Without some consensus on such matters, it is easy to run into problems at the game table, especially in a wuxia setting.

Think of it this way: it is very important that both the GM and players understand what 'movie' or 'book' they are playing in. Getting everyone on the same page cuts down on confusion and allows ground rules to be set. For the sake of argument, we will discuss two well-known but out-of-genre movies to illustrate the difference: *Die Hard* and *Silence*

of the *Lambs*. Depending on which of these two movies your game 'takes place in', the action scenes, dramatic moments, and overall mood will vary greatly. In a *Die Hard* game, you could shoot the gas tank of a car to blow it up, but in *Silence of the Lambs* that wouldn't work. In a *Silence of the Lambs* game, your mystery could revolve around horrific and bloody crimes, but in a more light-hearted *Die Hard* game, that would seem out of place.

The GM needs to make sure the players understand what 'movie' they are in, and should adjudicate the game accordingly. This means it should inform rulings, but more significantly, it should inform expectations around outcomes and events. For instance, if the players are in a Chang Cheh film, it would make perfect sense for 12 minions to pop out from the walls when the players enter the villain's room. But if the players are in a King Hu movie, a trap like that would be unlikely, or if it existed, would be heavily foreshadowed.

This isn't just about rules. It's also about how you design your adventures, and how you make in-game decisions. When the players plan what to do, the plausibility depends not just on the genre, but also on the franchise the players are adventuring in.

In the end, genre physics is about understanding which film or book most closely approximates the universe your players are exploring. Or, if the universe is purely of your own invention, clearly setting expectations.

INSPIRATION FROM MYTHOLOGY, LEGEND, HISTORY, AND TRADITION

Whether you are looking for an idea for a new NPC, a basis for a new technique or weapon, a hook for an adventure, or another inspiration, Chinese culture is full of rich resources. Volumes upon volumes of books have been written on such subjects, so we will not attempt to go into any detail. Instead, we will provide a few short lists of topics you can consider using in your campaign.

Although some of these subjects are commonly recognised outside of China, it is a good idea to do research before using them. For example, although the five elements are widely known, they can be difficult to understand and are sometimes translated in other ways, including five agents, five materials, five movements, five phases, five stages, etc. Although they were originally conceptualised as five essential elements required for human life, ancient philosophers eventually used them to categorise everything in existence. Later, the interactions between these five 'elements' became an integral aspect of medicine, cosmology, divination, and more. They are also associated with planets, emotions, senses, animals, and many other things. Taking a bit of time to research any of the subjects below can lead to a host of new insights and inspiration.

Please note that these lists are not intended to be comprehensive.

Key Concepts and Items

Alchemy, cauldrons, colour symbolism, earthly branches, eight treasures, guardian lions, heavenly bureaucracy, heavenly stems, incense, jade, Kunlun, lingzhi mushrooms, lunar calendar, numerology, oracle bones, peaches of immortality, reincarnation and rebirth, ritual bronze, six directions, talismans, ten suns, Three Realms, transmigration, 28 mansions, world flood myth, zodiac.

Animals, Monsters, and Creatures

Dragons, flood dragons, four auspicious beasts (azure dragon, white tiger, black tortoise,

vermillion bird), four fiends, fox spirits, heavenly dog, hopping vampires, immortals, kunpeng, phoenixes, qilins.

Festivals

Double Ninth Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Lantern Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Qixi Festival, Spring Festival, Tomb-Sweeping Day.

Hell and the Underworld

Chinese Hell (has many names), 18 levels of hell, Heibai Wuchang, hell money, the Jade Guide Book, Ksitigarbha, Meng Po, Ox-Head and Horse-Face, ten courts of hell, yama kings.

Literature and Writings

There are many important Chinese writings, too many to list in detail. Here are some that are considered essential works, which educated people in ancient times would have read or at least been familiar with.

Five Classics

Book of Changes (divination)
Classic of Poetry (poetry, songs, etc.)
Book of Rites (rituals)
Book of Documents (prose)
Spring and Autumn Annals (historical record)

Four Books

Great Learning (Daoist text)
Doctrine of the Mean (teachings of Confucian virtue)
Analects (sayings of Confucius)
Mencius (political dialogues)

Four Classical Novels

Dream of the Red Chamber (the rise and fall of a great family)
Water Margin (the tale of a group of outlaws in the Song Dynasty)
Romance of the Three Kingdoms (fictionalised account of the Three Kingdoms period)
Journey to the West (a fictionalised version of the monk Xuanzang's journey to gather Buddhist sutras)

Medical, Physiological, Scientific

Acupuncture, cupping, eight trigrams, feng shui, five elements, gua sha, herbology, hot and cold, meridians, moxibustion, pulse diagnosis, traditional Chinese medicine, Yin and Yang.

Mythological, Legendary, and Historical Figures

Chang'e the moon goddess, Confucius the philosopher, the cowherd and weaver girl, eight immortals, four great bodhisattvas, Four Heavenly Kings, Guan Yu the general,

Guanyin the bodhisattva of compassion, Huang Daxian the Red Pine Immortal, Hou Yi the archer, Jade Emperor, Laozi the founder of Daoism, Lu Dongbin the demon slayer, Nezha the protection deity, Nuwa and Fuxi the mother goddess and emperor-god, Ou Yezi the forger of swords, Pangu the creator of the world, Qin Shi Huang the first emperor of China, Sun Tzu the general, Sun Wukong (Monkey King), Xuanzang the founder of Buddhism, Yellow Emperor, Yue Fei the general, Zhang Fei the general, Zhang Sanfeng the inventor of Taiji, Yidi the god of alcohol, Yu Shi the Lord of Rain, Zheng He the admiral and explorer.

PLAYER GOALS

It can be helpful to ask the players to set goals that they aim to accomplish over the course of the campaign. They should be a major challenge and require more than six sessions to achieve. You can set a clear reward for reaching the goal, like a hefty XP bonus or letting the player gain a level. Goals might include things like finding a lost sibling, getting revenge, obtaining a highly prized artefact, attaining a high-rank position in the Imperial Bureaucracy, or becoming an important sub-chief in a sect. If someone sets a particularly lofty goal (like ruling the martial world), you might give a larger bonus if it is achieved.

Using Player Goals and Secret Backgrounds to Create Dramatic Conflict

You can increase the dramatic conflict in the game by having players select long-term goals related to their background (and keeping them secret when appropriate).

Having goals intersect with other player characters in the group, or major NPCs, can add melodrama and party conflict to the game. One way to do this is to give players the option of taking a Secret Background Deep Eccentricity (see page 112). Talk with the player and weave it into the goal or background of another character.

Something to note about campaigns involving conflict between player characters: they are not for everyone. You probably have an intuitive sense of the level of character conflict your group wants, but it can be useful to check beforehand if you intend to make this a feature of the campaign. It can work brilliantly if people want it, but if your group is more interested in cooperatively facing a challenge, it can be disruptive.

SHIFTING ALLIANCES AND DIFFICULTY

Shifting alliances are a common occurrence in wuxia, and are encouraged in *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*. Often, a change in loyalty can shift the tide of a battle dramatically. Use this concept to your advantage, and let players cultivate allies to help them defeat more powerful foes. Many of the villains in the provided adventures are deliberately at a much higher level than the anticipated party.

The reason for this is threefold. First, to emulate the powerful villains that usually populate wuxia films and books. Second, to encourage play that isn't always resolved with bloodshed; in other words, to get players to fight smart. And third, to get players thinking in terms of things like manipulating alliances to their advantage. A party of level-1 characters against a level-9 enemy would be hopelessly overmatched. But if the players convince a level-6 sub-chief that she's getting a raw deal, maybe she will seize the

moment and join their side in the battle.

Shifting alliances can happen at any time in an adventure, whether on the road or in the middle of a big showdown with the leader of a powerful sect. Regardless of when, you should be guided by NPC motivations and goals. Not all characters will willingly turn on their master or ally.

Keep in mind that this is a door that swings both ways. Although players can exploit shifting alliances to their advantage, so can NPCs. A party can be on the receiving end of this tactic.

DESTINY PATHS (OPTIONAL)

Destiny Paths are a tool to help give characters fated relationships and scenarios over play. They bring fate into the game, treating it as a tangible force connected to concepts like previous lives and the will of heaven. They can also connect to astrology and fortune telling. Here, the players are able to select the Destiny Path they want from the list below, and the GM rolls on their behalf on the relevant table, secretly noting the result. This result functions like gravity in the setting. When the player character enters into situations where their Destiny Path is relevant, the GM can apply bonuses or penalties because the powers of the setting will for this Destiny Path to arise. Characters can resist their Destiny Path, or embrace it. How it actually turns out is anyone's guess. The GM can also freely introduce developments relevant to a character's Destiny Path.

1. Destined for Greatness
2. Secret History
3. Fated Relationship
4. Fated Calamity
5. Innovator
6. Iconoclast
7. Sect Founder/Leader

DESTINED FOR GREATNESS TABLE	
d10	Result
1	You are destined to be emperor
2	You are destined to lead a rebellion
3	You are destined to start a powerful clan
4	You are destined to be the power behind a great leader
5	You are destined to be a martyr
6	You are destined to be a great poet, artist, or painter
7	You are destined to become a great villain or evil
8	You are destined to be a great hero
9	You are destined to be a loser
10	You are destined to lead in a decisive battle



SECRET HISTORY TABLE

d10	Result
1	One of your parents is a great person, but doesn't know you exist or that you are still alive. You grew up with a totally different identity. A person of great standing who you meet and become enemies with is your parent.
2	One of your parents is a great person, but doesn't know you exist or that you are still alive. You grew up with a totally different identity. A person of great standing who you meet and become allies with is your parent.
3	One (or both) of your parents is a great villain
4	You are the bastard child of a member of the imperial family
5	One (or both) of your parents is a famous martial hero
6	Your parents were killed by a great villain
7	You are the reincarnation of a great villain and must work off the negative karma, or else bad things will keep happening to you
8	You are the last in the bloodline of a previous dynasty
9	Your family or clan was slaughtered by the imperial government, and you are the only survivor
10	You were separated from a twin at birth and are fated to encounter them

FATED RELATIONSHIP TABLE

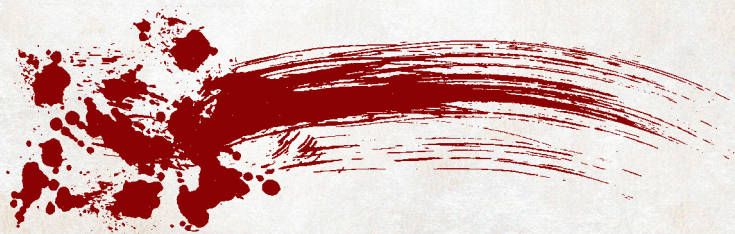
d10	Result
1	You are destined to die by the hand of your lover, or kill them yourself
2	You are fated to reform an enemy from a previous life
3	You are fated to be enemies with someone who was close to you in a previous life
4	A childhood friend will become your enemy
5	You are destined to fall in love, and to be loved by, someone who is dangerously unobtainable (such as a queen)
6	A powerful political figure becomes enamoured with you
7	You are destined to offend someone powerful and be hunted by them
8	You are destined to kill someone who turns out to be very important
9	You are destined to have a great rival
10	You are destined to fall in love with your teacher

FATED CALAMITY TABLE

d10	Result
1	You are meant to die in a terrible massacre
2	You are fated to get a terrible illness
3	You are destined to be hated by most of the martial world
4	You are destined to kill a loved one or close friend unintentionally
5	You are destined to kill a loved one or close friend intentionally
6	You are destined to be devoured by beasts
7	You are destined to take a disciple who will betray you or become a great evil
8	You are destined to be responsible for the purging of your sect, family, or clan
9	You are destined to be the cause of a conflict that costs hundreds of lives in the martial world
10	You are destined to suffer imprisonment for 1d10 years

INNOVATOR TABLE

d10	Result
1	You are destined to create a new style of martial arts
2	You are destined to create a great work of music, art, poetry, literature, etc.
3	You are destined to invent a new weapon
4	You are destined to engineer a new device, structure, or design that can save millions of lives if properly implemented
5	You are destined to implement vital reforms to the imperial government
6	You are destined to invent a magnificent new technology
7	You are destined to become an important tactician or strategist
8	You are destined to create the counter to a powerful and terrifying form of martial arts
9	You are destined to create a new philosophy to explain, interpret, or to guide use of martial arts
10	You are destined to do something no one else in history has ever achieved



ICONOCLAST TABLE	
d10	Result
1	You are destined to fundamentally change a major religion or philosophy
2	You are destined to flagrantly violate a major code of the martial world
3	You are destined to destroy a great relic
4	You are destined to be extremely unorthodox
5	You are destined to reshape the martial world
6	You are destined to wreak havoc on the martial world
7	You are destined to challenge the moral order of the martial world
8	You are destined to destroy a great temple
9	You are destined to anger the martial world by violating its principles
10	You are destined to bring down, destroy, or ruin a major institution or organisation

SECT FOUNDER/LEADER TABLE	
d10	Result
1	You are fated to start a crucial righteous sect
2	You are destined to merge several sects into one
3	You are fated to start a sect that wreaks havoc on the martial world
4	You are destined start a sect that enlightens the population or spreads a major religious message
5	You are destined to destroy a sect
6	You are destined to start a sect from the ashes of another sect
7	You are destined to betray a sect you are anointed to lead
8	You are destined to destroy your sect to increase your own power
9	You are destined to start a cult
10	You are destined to reform a major sect

The GM should feel free to introduce elements related to a player's Destiny Path from time to time. For example, if someone was fated to start a sect that wreaks havoc on the martial world, they might encounter lots of evil martial experts who are favourably disposed towards them. Eventually, they might sense the hand of fate in this. They are free to do what they want; they could fail to become a great sect leader, but this is the destiny they are meant to embrace.

Generally speaking, Destiny Paths are intended for experienced GMs who are comfortable managing complex and long-term elements.



CHAPTER TEN

ANCIENT CHINA AND CREATING THE JIANGHU

Although *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* is set in historical China, it is meant to capture the anachronistic history found in certain types of wuxia, particularly the works of Gu Long. Our Jianghu is more historical romance than straight history. Rather than attempt to create something historically accurate, we used anachronisms and invented concepts to produce what we hope will be the foundation of many adventures and campaigns. Although we did occasionally draw on very real history when appropriate, our main aim was to use it as a canvas for adventure. We want gamers to have fun with history, not be burdened by it.

This chapter provides some basic cultural and historical information, as well as guidelines for creating your own Jianghu. The next chapter provides an example of a Jianghu created using this method.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF CHINESE HISTORY AND CULTURE

It is common for Chinese people to explain to foreigners that 'Chinese culture is vast and deep', and that couldn't be truer. One could spend a lifetime studying it, and not even come close to understanding all of its complexities. Below, we elaborate on some key elements of Chinese culture that are particularly relevant to a wuxia setting.

FACE

Face governs virtually all social interaction. It relates to maintaining reputation, prestige, respect, honour, etc. Face can be earned or lost, given or taken. In all interactions, players should consider how their words and deeds will affect their own face, and how they will affect the face of others.

Some examples that could occur in a game:

The player characters steal a powerful weapon for a crime lord. Upon returning to hand over the weapon and get their reward, they are intercepted by the crime lord's lieutenant, who was also searching for the weapon, and now demands that they give it to him. This would be a conundrum of face. If the player characters give him the weapon, he will take credit for it, and they will lose face. If they refuse to give it to him, he could lose face.

A simpler example is winning or losing a fight. Let's say the players are now working for that crime lord, and he sends them to collect money from a debtor. The debtor turns out to be a skilled fighter and beats them. This would obviously be a big loss of face, not only for the player characters, but also for the crime lord.

A more mundane but very culturally relevant example would be the way the players addressed that crime lord in speech. Maybe his name is Wang Kan, and he runs a gang called the Black Scorpions. He calls himself Grand General, but behind his back people call him the 'Black Shoe' (in Chinese, scorpion and shoe rhyme). When the players first meet him, if they called him Black Shoe, it would be outright insulting; he would be forced to get revenge in some minor way, otherwise he would lose face publicly. If they called him Wang Kan or maybe Mr Wang, they would be refusing to give him face by not using his title. If they called him Grand General or Grand General Wang, they would be giving him face.

In all of the above examples, loss of face could result in altercations, grudges, or even combat.

TEAMING UP AND FACE

For expert martial artists, face often dictates how fights play out. Initiating a fight with weaker opponents is considered an act of cowardice, and is generally looked down on. In terms of game mechanics, this means that duels between characters with similar Killing Auras is the preferred method of combat. Two characters with high Killing Aura would hesitate to team up on characters with lower Killing Aura, as it would be a huge loss of face if the matter became public knowledge. That said, it would be no loss of face for someone with a low Killing Aura to challenge someone with a high Killing Aura (although it might take some convincing for the challenge to be accepted), or for a group of weaker fighters to team up to kill someone stronger than themselves.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND BELIEF

Throughout Chinese history, three major belief systems were key to Chinese culture. All of them are reflected in wuxia settings to some extent or another.

Confucianism

The teachings of the famous philosopher Confucius eventually developed into a codified set of beliefs called Confucianism. Less a religion and more a system of philosophy and behaviour, it emphasises the importance of family and social structure. There is a heavy theological element, including belief in heaven and various gods, as well as complex rituals used to establish relationships with them. The importance of Confucianism

waxed and waned throughout history, and experienced many transformations. It is widely considered to be the backbone and foundation of Chinese culture, and it was a key factor in the development of society. From its beginning, Confucianism was linked with martial arts; Confucius himself came from the knightly class, and would have been familiar with the use of the bow, sword, and chariot.

The Five Human Virtues are a key part of Confucianism: Ren (benevolence, humanity, and compassion), Yi (honesty and righteousness), Zhi (knowledge), Xin (integrity), and Li (correct behaviour, propriety, and ritual).

Daoism

A home-grown Chinese philosophy and religion, Daoism revolves around living in harmony with the Dao. That 'Dao' is a complex topic, but in short, it describes the complexities of nature, reality, and existence. Whereas Confucianism is about strict social order, Daoism embraces the spontaneity of the universe. Concepts such as Yin and Yang, as well as the five elements, are key to Daoism's explanation of the cyclical nature of the world. There is an entire pantheon of gods in Daoist belief, as well as 'immortals', who are spiritually transcendent beings. Various martial arts are connected to Daoism, particularly those which emphasise internal aspects. One of the most famous temples associated with Daoist martial arts is Wudang, which played a role both historically and in fiction.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a complex religious system that is difficult to reduce to key elements, but essentially focuses on escaping the cycle of rebirth through following the teachings of the Buddha. It was introduced into China by missionaries from India, well after Confucianism and Daoism were established. As a 'foreign' religion, it was occasionally at odds with the traditional beliefs. That said, it spread rapidly, and became a key aspect of Chinese culture, with adherents among common people and emperors alike. Some of the main elements of the belief system include the four noble truths, the eightfold path, reincarnation, karma, escape from the cycle of rebirth, and the veneration of bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Of course, there are many sects and a variety of different teachings. Because Buddhist temples often needed to defend themselves, it was not unheard of for them to hire martial artists as a defence force, or even to train their own martial artists. These practices led to the Shaolin Monastery gaining the reputation of being a historical centre of martial arts, although the details are a matter of some debate among scholars.

Other Religions and Beliefs

Various folk religions played a part in Chinese culture throughout history, and almost all major religions of the world entered China at one point or another. Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and other religions could be found in one form or another, and in some cases, elements of those religions became permanent aspects of the culture. Although criticisms of religion were not unheard of, atheism was not common until modern times.

DRINKING CULTURE

In ancient times, the most common beverages were yellow wine and rice wine. The former is a non-distilled, grain-based alcohol common to the north, whereas the latter is primarily southern. Later in history, the drink of choice became baijiu, a distilled beverage usually made from sorghum, with a very high alcohol content. Beer and grape wine are, for the most part, modern introductions. Distilled liquids such as whiskey, vodka, or rum are also modern, and are usually categorised under the blanket term 'foreign alcohol'.

Most commonly, drinking and eating go hand-in-hand, whether in ancient times or modern; 'bar culture' is foreign to China. Because of the prevalence of inns or taverns in traditional RPGs, this could pose a challenge for GMs and players alike. In contrast to their Western counterparts, Chinese inns and taverns were not places to mingle with strangers, listen to music, dance, etc. Think of them more like modern-day restaurants. Of course, this is not a hard and fast rule. Some classic 'tavern' scenes in wuxia movies can be found in *Come Drink With Me*, *Dragon Inn*, *New Dragon Gate Inn*, and *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (the fight scene in the third act).

Another factor to consider regarding drinking is the practice of 'drinking together' and toasting. Unlike Western culture, in which one usually sips one's drink at will, in China, drinkers usually drink together, often as part of a toast. Sometimes that involves everyone at the table, sometimes everyone in the room, or sometimes just two individuals who are specifically toasting each other. Refusing to drink when being toasted would be extremely insulting. The toasts can be long and complex, or little more than 'let's drink together'. Usually, the person initiating the toast or drink will determine how much to imbibe, and the other drinkers will watch closely to drink the same amount. It could be a tiny sip, or it could be the entire cup, in which case the drinker will often say "Bottoms up" to indicate so.

Usually, the degree to which the cup is raised is important; someone in a superior social position will be allowed to hold the cup higher, with less important people making sure to hold their cup at a lower level. Drinkers with equal social status will hold their cups at the same level. Of course, all of this can lead to tense situations if there is disagreement over the standing of the individuals involved. These general rules hold true whether the cups are held at a distance or clinked together. Placing one's cup below the level of another drinker's cup is an expression of humility, which can lead to exaggerated and sometimes humorous scenes when two drinkers attempt to 'out-humble' each other. If someone is toasted individually, the polite thing is to return the favour sometime later.

For the most part, it is expected that drinkers consume alcohol specifically, although other liquids such as water or juice could be substituted, perhaps for religious or health reasons. According to accepted social norms, it would be inappropriate for men to pressure women, young ones, or the elderly into drinking.

Even more so than in Western culture, drinking alone is rare, and is often associated with sadness, mourning, and drunkenness. That said, drunkenness is less stigmatised in Chinese culture.

Furthermore, in wuxia, drinking is usually glamorised and/or exaggerated. Heroic

martial artists are often depicted as heavy drinkers with a high tolerance for alcohol, people who can consume huge quantities of alcohol without showing any sign of drunkenness. By contrast, someone unable to 'hold their liquor' might be viewed as lacking in valour or prowess, and could be the subject of disdain or ridicule. At the same time, drinking is a way to express or initiate friendship, show respect for superiors, offer apologies, etc.

The purpose of the alcohol tolerance mechanic in *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* is to bring this signature aspect of Chinese and wuxia culture into the game, and we encourage GMs to make full use of it. At a roadside wine shop, have a wandering hero toast the players by way of introduction, and perhaps even challenge them to a drinking contest (whether formally or by action). When the players meet a powerful sect leader, perhaps the sect leader will throw a banquet in which the sect minions line up to toast the players; players with high alcohol tolerance might make a big impression, whereas those with low tolerance might end up passing out and losing face.

NAMES, TITLES, AND NICKNAMES

The proper use of surnames, given names, titles, and nicknames is extremely important in Chinese culture, and by extension, wuxia. Here is a brief overview of some things to consider. As with our other sections on Chinese culture, we cannot touch on every aspect of this subject, and will be forced to leave out many nuanced points that are too complex for a basic summary.

Chinese culture emphasises the importance of family, and this is reflected in the structure of names. To be clear, 'surname' refers to the family name, or what we would call the 'last name' in English. The given name is the 'first name'. Chinese switches the order; the surname comes first and the given name comes last. Thus, we would know immediately that someone named Li Mubai comes from the Li family/clan. Li is his surname, and Mubai is his given name. Li Mubai's siblings might be Li Mutan, Li Mufa, Li Muhei, etc. Another important tradition in Chinese culture is for the children to share the first character of their given name (usually this applies to male children, although the generation name could be applied to daughters as well). Often, the specific character is picked generations in advance by means of divination or other methods.

Usually, the surname is passed down patrilineally, although not always. There is a formal process for a man to marry into the family of a woman, in which case his children would bear the name of the mother. Regardless, women do not change their surname upon marriage, and thus the surnames of married couples rarely match (it is generally considered inauspicious to marry someone with the same surname as yourself). There is a special form of address that can be used for a married woman in which her husband's surname is used. For instance, let's say Li Mubai is married to Yu Xiulian. Normally, people would address her as "Mrs Yu", but alternatively they could call her "Madame Li", depending on the circumstances.

It is not common to use someone's given name alone, whether to address them or to talk about them in the third person, unless you have a very close relationship with them. So in the case of Li Mubai, it would be improper to call him simply Mubai. Family members or very close friends might call him Mubai, or possibly some sort of nickname.

For instance, it's common to take one of the characters from the given name and add the character 'er' to it to form a nickname that conveys a sense of closeness. So Li Mubai's friends and family might call him Bai'er. The 'er' doesn't have a particular meaning in this case, it just sounds personal, intimate, and somewhat cute.

Truth be told, it is more common to use titles as forms of address, and also as the way to talk about someone in the third person. From a young age, children are taught to address other, older children as either "Big Brother" or "Big Sister", and children younger than themselves as "Little Brother" and "Little Sister". They are taught to address adults as "Uncle" and "Aunt", and elderly folks as "Grandfather" and "Grandmother". These titles have nothing to do with family; they will be used even on complete strangers. There is also a complex system of titles which children learn to describe virtually every family member, with unique titles for 'paternal aunt's son' (cousin) and 'maternal grandfather's brother', etc. The specific titles can vary from region to region, so trying to emulate this in a game would be pointless. In cases where using the title alone might not be specific enough, adding the surname or the entire surname/given name combo would be appropriate. So when Li Mubai was playing with his friends as a child, they might call him "Big Brother Li" or "Big Brother Li Mubai".

Although we don't recommend trying to imitate the complex way Chinese people address each other, consider emphasising the importance of using titles when addressing both players and NPCs. Using the proper title when speaking to members of the Jianghu would be crucial, and a mistake could be taken as an insult. For more about this aspect, see 'Face' in this chapter (page 153).

Nicknames are extremely common in Chinese culture, even more so than in Western culture. Most children are assigned an official nickname as a baby, and through life, friends and family members will often come up with nicknames for each other.

In wuxia, it's common for martial artists to use martial nicknames, or Buddhist or Daoist names in the case of religious adherents. For the martial nicknames, it could be a self-appointed name designed to intimidate or sound impressive, or it could be a nickname earned by action, martial arts technique, background, etc. Buddhist or Daoist names are usually selected upon renouncing one's former life and walking the religious path. The extent to which you use such nicknames is up to your individual playgroup.

In terms of titles, it's important to note that members of sects in wuxia will usually address each other in a way that makes their rank very clear. Movie subtitles usually do not convey the complexities, although novel translations are sometimes more accurate. What you might read in the subtitles as "Martial Brother" or "Third Brother" could actually be "Third Senior Martial Brother". Again, adhering to the complexities of address is not realistic for an RPG, but you could consider establishing something that maintains the spirit of a rank-based address system.



THE IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY AND GOVERNMENT

The specifics of ancient Chinese government structure vary over its history. Starting in 221 BCE, when the Warring States period ended and China was unified by the Qin, it was ruled by emperors until 1911 CE – a period of over 2,000 years.

In order to serve in the Imperial Bureaucracy one needed to pass the imperial exams, a process that became particularly formalized and emphasized in the Song period. These merit-based exams were notoriously difficult, and some people spent decades trying to pass them. The precise nature of the exams varied, but they were held regularly.

Government officials followed an elaborate system of ranks, of which there were typically nine, divided into lower and upper levels (this is often expressed as a number followed by the letter A or B, but for simplicity, this book generally avoids these). Ranked officials served as executives and as officers, whereas unranked officials formed the bulk of the government service. *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* refers to such individuals as scholar-officials.

The precise structure of officialdom changed over time, but evolved into something very complex and effective. For the purposes of gameplay, the following overview of government can serve for much of the imperial period or for a more timeless campaign. Do keep in mind that every dynasty is distinct, and it is a good idea to research the period you intend to use as a backdrop for your campaign if you intend to be specific.

At the head of the government was the emperor. Emperors ruled from imperial cities with sections walled off both for defence purposes and to enforce the ranking system.

The emperor would often have an advisory council, and the government was divided into departments headed by directors.

Law enforcement was often handled by civil and military institutions. There were patrolling inspectors with soldiers under them, who were the military enforcement mechanism, and sheriffs with constables under them, serving as the civil law enforcement wing. In addition, there were sometimes local watches, called *baojia*, which were groups of civilian households who answered to a designated head and helped to keep the peace. The numbers of soldiers and constables serving under inspectors and sheriffs would vary by population size.

If you want to know more about government and law enforcement during a specific period, we suggest reading a reliable history book on the particular dynasty (see 'Researching Historical China' in this chapter [\[164\]](#)).

TIMELESS SETTINGS

Some wuxia stories take place in specific parts of China, or in specific periods of time. But in many, the historical setting and specific location are not particularly important, and mostly provide a backdrop for the action and drama. If you wish to emulate that style, and focus more on plot and character in your campaign, don't worry too much about historical China, or the realities of its geography.

That said, we have prepared a very brief overview that can be used to provide a general canvas on which to paint your adventure.

TIME PERIOD

Chinese history and culture is a massive subject that is difficult to break down into bite-sized pieces. To simplify matters, we have distilled the history of China into four important periods that are ideal for campaigns and adventures using *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades*. In our attempt to keep things simple, we focused on four main periods, and don't go into detail regarding some key dynasties like Tang, Song, and Yuan. If you are interested in making your campaign historically accurate, we recommend checking out the 'Researching Historical China' section below.

ANCIENT

This time period is epitomised by the Han Dynasty, but would include other dynasties such as the Jin and Qin, as well as the Three Kingdoms and Warring States periods. For simplification, this also includes the Tang and Song. This is the true 'ancient' China, in which life was very different from modern times. Until the Tang and Song, it was not common to sit in chairs, but rather on the ground at short tables. Written Chinese characters existed in a very different form than they do now in the earliest part of this period, and the common languages used were a far cry from modern Mandarin. Some of the world's most important technologies were invented during this time period, such as paper, gunpowder (Tang and Song), and compasses. Rudimentary firearms were even common in military settings by the Song Dynasty. Although fashion varied from dynasty to dynasty, men generally wore long robes and bound their hair up, while women wore beautiful gowns and had complex hairstyles. Warfare and violence were common, and the martial arts flourished.

Movie references: *Hero*; *House of Flying Daggers*; *Curse of the Golden Flower*; *Detective Dee* series.

AGE OF THE MING

This refers to the Ming Dynasty, in which contact with foreign nations was more common, and culture and society flourished. China had just suffered hundreds of years of foreign invasion and occupation at the hands of the Jurchen and Mongols, but now, the government was back in the hands of ethnic Chinese emperors. Although this time period had unique style and fashion, clothing generally looked like it had throughout the previous centuries. This was when the fabled Great Wall was developed into the form we know today. By this point, the martial arts had reached a very developed state, complete with their own mythos and legends.

Movie references: *Come Drink With Me*; *Swordsman II*; *Reign of Assassins*; *A Touch of Zen*.

AGE OF THE QING

This refers to the Qing Dynasty period. Yet again, the government was out of the hands of the ethnic Chinese, and was run by Manchurians, who originated in Northeast China. One of the most obvious changes to fashion was that, in a show of submission, Chinese men were forced to shave the front of their head and wear the rest of their hair in a long 'queue' that would hang down their back. Only Buddhist monks and Daoist

priests were exempt from this law. During the early years, secret societies loyal to the previous Ming Dynasty abounded. Eventually, the government weakened, and foreign incursions increased. Famous incidents such as the Boxer Rebellion and the Opium War occurred. It ended with the complete collapse of the dynasty, ending over 2,000 years of imperial rule.

Movie references: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *True Legend*; *Once Upon a Time in China*.

MODERN CHINA

After the Qing Dynasty ended, China experienced a turbulent and violent history. For a brief period, it was ruled by a republic plagued with political instability and the influence of local warlords. The influence of outside culture, especially from the West, became increasingly evident, especially in fashion and technology. For the most part, *Righteous Blood*, *Ruthless Blades* is intended to cover periods before the 20th century, although campaigns set in the early 1900s are a possibility. That said, we have not included any industrial elements in the game, so if matters of technology are touched on, the GM will need to improvise those aspects.

Movie references: *The Savage Five*; *Fist of Legend*; *Bodyguards and Assassins*; *Dragon (Wu Xia)*.

LOCATIONS

China is a huge country, similar in size to the United States, Canada, or Brazil. A place that immense and complex cannot be described thoroughly in a few pages or paragraphs. To simplify matters, we have broken the country down into five general regions. Of course, each of these regions is filled with countless smaller locations of interest, including sprawling cities, ancient temples, and geographical wonders. Some of these areas were not always part of China, and some of the listed landmarks are more recent than others. If you are interested in maintaining historical accuracy, take the time to research the location of your adventure or campaign.

CENTRAL PLAINS – ‘THE CRADLE OF CIVILISATION’

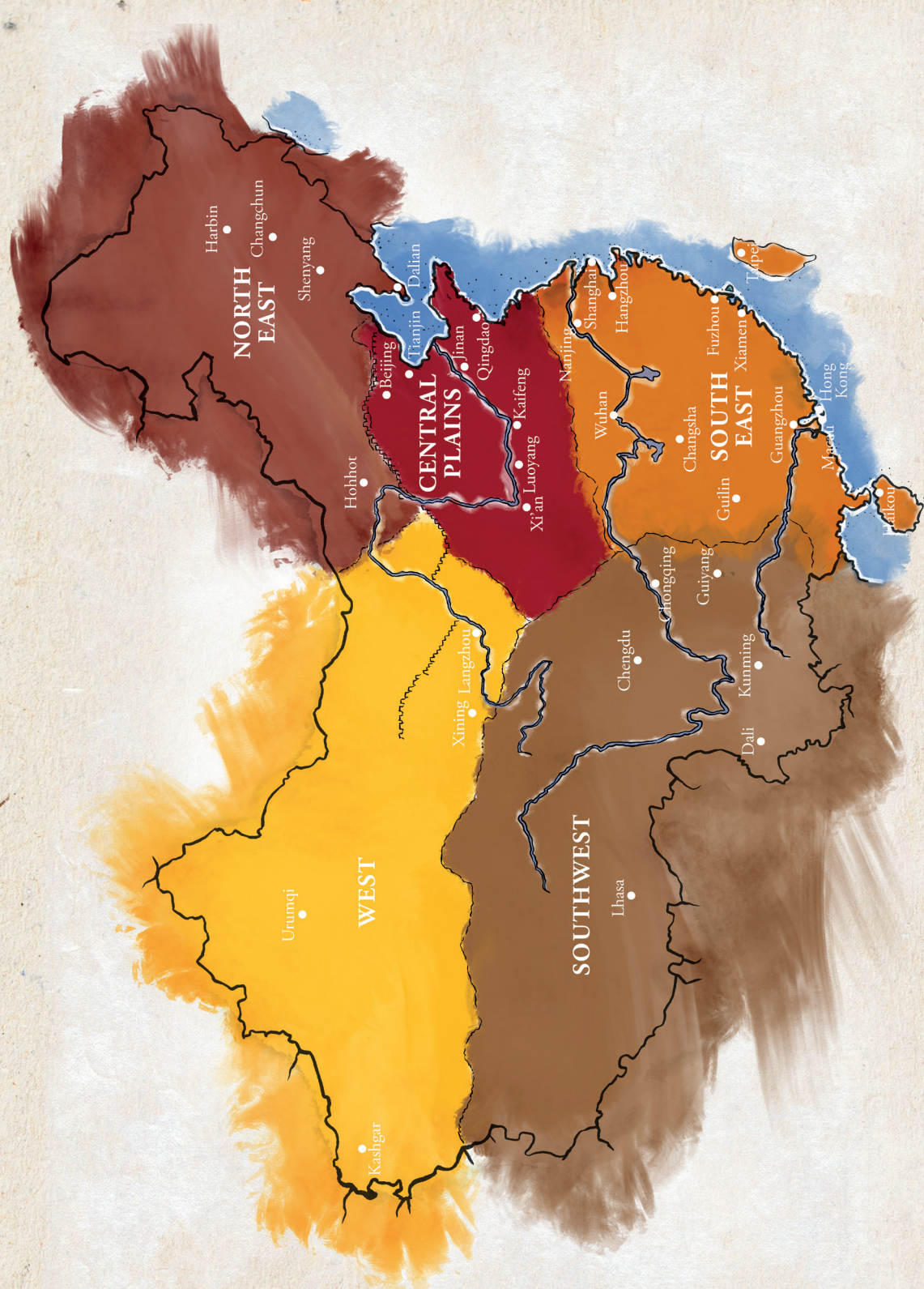
This is where historical evidence has been unearthed of some of the most ancient civilisations in the world. It was the location of many dynastic capitals throughout history, and, for all intents and purposes, is ‘China proper’. It essentially covers everything north of the Yangtze River and south of the Great Wall, and is home to many famous organisations traditionally connected to martial arts, such as Shaolin and Wudang.

Food: Salty and simple. Many dishes with pork and lamb, with wheat being the staple food. A variety of noodles, buns, dumplings, and flatbreads are common. Peanuts and vinegar are main condiments.

Famous cities: Beijing, Jinan, Kaifeng, Luoyang, Qingdao, Tianjin, Xi’an.

Key ethnic groups: Han Chinese.

Landmarks: Forbidden City, Grand Canal, Great Wall, Longmen Grottoes, Mount Tai, Wild Goose Pagoda, Yellow River.





NORTHEAST – ‘THE COLD BARBARIAN LANDS’

For much of Chinese history, the far north and the northeast were the home of barbarian tribes that would frequently invade the Central Plains. Martial arts veered towards horsemanship, archery, and wrestling.

Food: Sweet and salty. Many dishes with lamb and fish, as well as noodles and buns. Known for stewed dishes and large portions, as well as dumplings.

Famous cities: Changchun, Dalian, Harbin, Hohhot, Shenyang.

Key ethnic groups: Mongolian, Manchu, Korean.

Landmarks: Changbai Mountains, Great Wall, Jingpo Lake, Karakorum, Red Beach of Panjin.

WEST – ‘THE DESERT FRONTIER’

If one term could be used to summarise the western desert region of China, it would be ‘The Silk Road’, which linked China to Western nations as distant as Rome. Throughout history, it was the most ‘foreign’ part of China proper, and was considered the outskirts of the empire.

Food: Hearty dishes featuring lamb, kebabs, and roasted fish. Rice is the staple food. Cumin, red pepper, and black pepper are common spices.

Famous cities: Kashgar, Lanzhou, Turpan, Urumqi, Xining.

Key ethnic groups: Uyghur, Turkic, Mongolian.

Landmarks: Gaochang, Gobi Desert, Labrang Monastery, Karakul Lake, Mogao Caves, Taklamakan Desert.

SOUTHWEST – ‘THE EXOTIC MOUNTAINS’

This is one of the most diverse parts of China. Dialects and languages abound here, as well as ethnic minorities and strange clothing. Traditionally, Tibet is considered Western, but we have placed it here for game purposes.

Food: Three major cuisines can be found in this region: Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibetan. Sichuan cuisine features bold and spicy flavours, heavy use of garlic, chilli peppers, and numbing peppers. Rice is the common staple food. Yunnan cuisine is extremely complex, but is typically spicy. Tibetan cuisine features dishes of goat, yak, and mutton. Cheese is more common than in other parts of China, as is butter and yoghurt. Vegetables are not very common because of the difficulty of growing them at high altitudes.

Famous cities: Dali, Chengdu, Chongqing, Guiyang, Kunming, Lhasa.

Key ethnic groups: Tibetan, Miao, Bai, Yi, and many, many others.

Landmarks: Jiuzhaigou, Leshan Giant Buddha, Kunlun Mountains, Mount Emei, Mount Everest, Mount Qingcheng, Potala Palace, Shunan Bamboo Forest, Three Gorges, Yamdrok Lake, Yangtze River, Yuanyang Rice Terraces.

SOUTHEAST – 'THE STEAMY JUNGLE'

Emperors tended to rule from the Central Plains, so the southeast was distant and difficult to control. Rebels and dissidents would often gather here, far from the prying eyes of the court. It is home to many unique dialects and ethnic groups, as well as a host of unique delicacies and cuisines. Much of the seafaring culture of China was focused here, where contact with the rest of Southeast Asia, as well as the world beyond, was easier. This location is rich in martial arts lore, being home to famous martial experts from history such as Huang Feihong and Ip Man.

Food: Seafood is very common here, as is dim sum. Sweet dishes are much more numerous than in other parts of China. Rice is the staple, including rice noodles.

Famous cities: Changsha, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Guilin, Haikou, Hong Kong, Hangzhou, Macau, Nanjing, Taipei, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Wuhan.

Key ethnic groups: Han Chinese and Miao.

Landmarks: Grand Canal, Li River, Liurong Temple, Reed Flute Cave, West Lake, Zhangjiajie Forest.

RESEARCHING HISTORICAL CHINA

This book is focused on providing a flavourful setting inspired by movies and books that use history more loosely. However, you might want to explore the history of China in more detail.

That history is a very big topic, so we suggest you begin with a survey book to get an overall impression. It is generally advisable to use reliable sources such as books written by professional historians and published by university presses. After getting a sense of the general history, you will probably want to focus on a specific dynasty. For individual dynasties, we highly recommend the *History of Imperial China* series by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Another helpful resource is *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* by Charles O. Hucker, which provides a very good overview of the systems of government in each dynasty, as well as an extensive catalogue of official title descriptions. Also useful as a reference book is *Chinese History: A New Manual* by Endymion Wilkinson, which covers a wide range of topics and time periods.

Once you have the broad strokes of the overall history and the more narrow periods you are interested in, you can start looking more closely at details useful to gaming. For example, you might read a book on trade like *Commerce and Society in Sung China* by Shiba Yoshinobu (with a translation by Mark Elvin), or you could read a book like *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*, which explores the decline of the great clans. If you want to learn about the imperial exam system, *China's Examination Hell* by Ichisada Miyazaki (with translation by Conrad Schirokauer) is a good place to start.

You should also consider checking primary sources, as these can not only be good sources of information, but also provide potential handouts during play. *The Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian is a good place to begin.

One very interesting book is *Bing: From Farmer's Son to Magistrate in Han China*. Written by Mark Loewe, it is a story that follows the life of a fictional magistrate living in the Han Dynasty. It is a unique way to get a window into the ground-level existence of people at the time.

MAKING YOUR OWN JIANGHU

You can use the Jianghu in this book, but you might want to make your own. These are some simple guidelines for making your own Jianghu.

START WITH A MAP

The easiest way to make your own Jianghu is to start with a map. This can be a historical map of China or a more general one with the modern place names: it all depends on how timeless you want the Jianghu to feel. The precise level of historical accuracy is up to you. If you do want historical accuracy, we recommend finding a selection of accurate and detailed maps first, then choosing one and creating the Jianghu around it (doing things the other way around will require more searching for maps that fit your vision). Considering how large China is, feel free to focus on a smaller region such as one of the five areas we discuss above, or even a specific province or city.

POPULATE THE MAP

Once you have your map, take a coloured pen, marker, or pencil and start adding sects, roadside inns, roads, cults, towns, and other details that come to mind. You don't need to have everything fleshed out at first; sometimes just a name, like Guardians of Hellgate, will give you the kernel you need for greater elaboration later. Some locations will be inside cities. To indicate this, simply write the name near the city with a line connected to it. Feel free to invent cities and towns as well. There is nothing wrong with adding a fictional community to meet a concept, such as we did with the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure [267]. The point of this is to just get a sense of the scope of your martial world. You can always go back and revise after you've spent more time on the specific elements.

The material rendered in colour serves as your Jianghu. Using a single colour ink helps to differentiate it from the rest of the map. This is the martial underworld that exists alongside and separate from the regular world.

CREATE A UNIFYING BACKSTORY OR COMMON SOURCE OF CONFLICT

It can be very helpful to establish some kind of major backstory to the campaign you plan to run. This can be as relevant or irrelevant to the actual adventures your players will go on as you like. It might just serve as a backdrop or to help inform the motives of NPCs, or it could be the central conflict. At the very least, it will help you to understand the present conflicts in the Jianghu. For example, you could write something like:

"Twenty years ago, the martial world was ravaged by Zhang Shen and his deadly Golden Centipede Shackle. With such a powerful artefact, Zhang Shen was unstoppable until the Eight Clan Alliance united against him. And yet, he was so deadly that the alliance was forced to resort to deception to win, murdering him at a summit where violence had strictly been forbidden. To ensure his evil never returned, they sealed his device in Wudang, and had his young children raised in four of the most righteous sects, without knowledge of their father. When the campaign begins, there are rumours of someone using his name to commit terrible murders, perhaps seeking revenge, and Wudang fears someone will try to steal the Golden Centipede Shackle."

BUILD YOUR SECTS AND CHARACTERS

Once you have your backstory and your map, you can start making your sects and NPCs. It is a good idea to make a map of the alliances, grudges, and enmities, just so you don't lose track as you design them. Start broadly with the sects, working out who their leaders are, who their important members are, what their overall purposes or philosophies are, and how many disciples they have.

Once you have your sects, begin fleshing out the individual members, starting with the most important ones. You should give them stats, as you never know when they will come up in play. Then stat out the lower-ranked members, disciples, and people peripherally related to the sects.

The Jianghu in this book takes a more character focused approach to organizing conflict. There are still sects, but the focus is on big personalities more than groups. If you decide to build your Jianghu conflict around NPCs in this way, you may want to take more time planning and mapping out your alliances and grudges.

FLESH OUT OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND LOCATIONS

Once you have your basic sects and NPCs made, you should start on other organisations and locations. For example, you might have a major restaurant run by an eccentric figure in the Jianghu. Or you might have an important society or merchant group that is significant to martial heroes but not a key sect. And of course, unaffiliated, wandering martial artists are also a staple of the genre, so feel free to add them in as well. As with sects, stat the characters.

STATTING NPCs

When making stats for your NPCs, use the characteristic tags in the Signature Abilities to help you find ones that suit their personality and martial style. You can also invent new abilities around the character if you are comfortable with this. This is what will really give your Jianghu its own flavour and legend.

Try to make characters that are distinct and easy to remember. The starker, the better. You will likely have many NPCs in a wuxia campaign, and the best ones tend to stand out and be memorable. But even the minor figures need to have something that makes them easy to remember down the road. It is an expectation in the wuxia genre to have interesting characters who stand out through both their personality and martial arts (ideally with these two things blending seamlessly).

PAINT WITH HISTORY

Use history as a simple backdrop for your Jianghu if you want. Try to have fun. Some wuxia movies take history very seriously, but even those that do often enjoy themselves in the process. The point is to play with history and adapt it to your campaign (not the other way around).

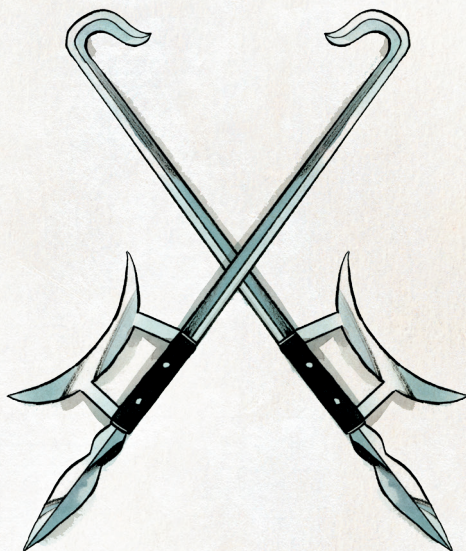
A great example of using history in a fun way is the film *Marco Polo* by Chang Cheh. Not only is it a wonderfully fun and well-choreographed martial arts film, it also turns the historical figure of Marco Polo into an antagonistic official working against the

heroes. It ends up being a very sympathetic portrayal, but it is the kind of use of a historical figure that takes a little letting go. Feel free to use real historical elements as launching pads, but ultimately, your purpose is to make memorable, interesting, and gameable content for your campaign, rather than give your players a lesson in history.

Other examples of films and books that use real historical figures and events but bring them into the Jianghu are *The Bride with White Hair* and the *Condor Heroes* series. *The Bride with White Hair* uses the fall of the Ming Dynasty to the Qing and the pivotal historic figure Wu Sangui to help make the conflicts and happenings of the Jianghu even more dramatic.

LET HISTORY BE YOUR GUIDE

When using history, you will not always have access to good resources. For example, you might want a map of a particular city, but if you cannot find one, you will either need to come up with the details yourself or abandon it for another location. The same is true of other historical details. If you want a measure of accuracy in your campaign, one easy way to achieve it is to start with the historical resources you have (that is, the books and maps you have on your shelf, and the material you can find doing preliminary research), then build your campaign and adventures around that.





CHAPTER ELEVEN

JIANGHU, NPCs, AND OTHER THREATS

This chapter provides a Jianghu with its sects and characters. Adventures provided in later chapters are set within this Jianghu.

OUR JIANGHU

In the days of scholarly emperors, when the great clans were all but extinguished, the Jianghu flourished. It is populated by eccentric martial experts, some driven by ambition, some by greed, others by vengeance, and some seeking to do good. Over the years, ten weapons have come to be considered the most powerful, and are highly coveted by all. None desire or deserve them more than the top ten fighters of the Jianghu. Today, the great beauty Xie Lijuan [239], also known as Heartless Dagger, is considered supreme among them, but she has many rivals, and some yet to rise. Blood will surely be spilled in the struggles to gather the great weapons, but is this just a distraction from other threats? Is there a hidden master yet to be revealed?

ANACHRONISTIC HISTORY

This Jianghu follows an anachronistic history model. Although it draws on real-world history for ideas and inspiration, we insert deliberate anachronisms and changes to the historical details to suit the needs of the campaign. For example, historical figures might be older or younger as needed to make them relevant, their role in the history might be exaggerated or completely changed for dramatic effect, and certain technology or institutions might reflect later or earlier developments.

That said, this is set in a particular time and place, although we cloud that with floral language. If you read through the NPC section, you can find indications of the time and setting.

TOP TEN FIGHTERS

There is no official method to determine the ranking, skill, or ability of the top ten fighters. The exact order of the list is often the subject of debate, although the general consensus is that Xie Lijuan occupies the top spot. The name they are most commonly known by appears first.

1. Xie Lijuan, Heartless Dagger [239]
2. Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi [233]
3. Song Tuan, Bone Physician [226]
4. Sun Lan the Yama Queen [228]
5. Hong Wenlong, Ill-Fated Blade [201]
6. Liang Hai, Seven-Headed Sea Monster [207]
7. Luo Qing, Grand Mistress Pill Furnace [215]
8. Surgeon Zhang [233]
9. He Tian [200]
10. Liu Xiuling, Sword Goddess [210]

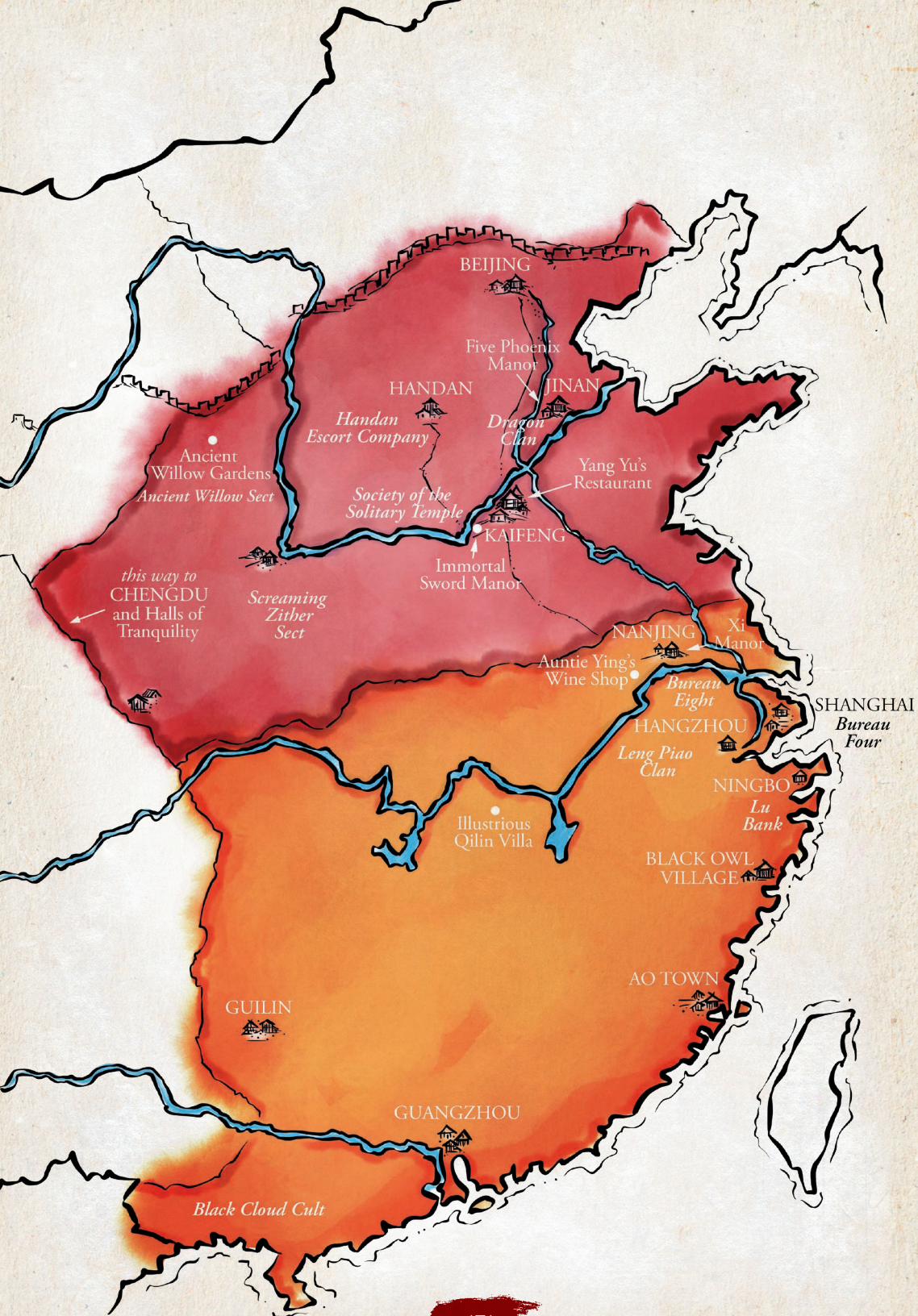
TOP TEN WEAPONS

Even more so than the top ten fighters, the order in which the top ten weapons should be listed is a matter of dispute. Some even suggest that certain items on the list should be replaced with other Unique Weapons. And some of the items, such as the Dagger of Xie Lijuan and the Ten Needles of the Courts of Hell, are so tied to those who possess them that people question whether their place on the list is because of the might of the weapon, or the might of their owners. The entries for the top ten weapons can be found in Chapter Six (page 91).

1. Dagger of Xie Lijuan [91]
2. Flute of the Golden Cicada [91]
3. Death Rain Effigy [91]
4. Time-Stopping Sword [93]
5. The Heart-Shaping Crown [91]
6. Mother of Lightning [93]
7. Spear of the Celestial Physician [93]
8. Ten Needles of the Courts of Hell [93]
9. Star Palace Sabre [93]
10. Bamboo Scroll of Shangwen [91]

PLACES AND ORGANISATIONS

These are important sects, organisations, societies, clans, and other groups of the Jianghu. Their headquarters or areas of influence appear on the Jianghu map. Each entry aims at brevity to keep looking-up to a minimum. Key information, such as disciple stats, is included in each entry, but named characters are listed alphabetically in the 'Non-Player Characters' section of this chapter. We encourage the GM to flesh out any organisation that might play a key role in the campaign (and to create new ones as needed).



ANCIENT WILLOW SECT

Key Members: Physicians of the Ancient Willow Sect ▪ **Grudges:** Song Tuan [226]

Allies: None

This sect is an organisation supposedly dedicated to healing, and founded by a mysterious physician nicknamed Ancient Willow. It is headquartered at The Ancient Willow Gardens, where the sect members cultivate weeping willows to use for their medicinal properties. They are also notorious poisoners. They avoid the conflicts of the Jianghu, allying with no one, so their services can be available to all. However, anyone who interferes with their affairs risks provoking a relentless grudge. They believe that grudges, like sickness, must be exterminated at the root. The organisation currently has no leader; there are simply a number of physicians who live almost like monks and heal or harm for a fee. They decided to recruit and make Song Tuan, also known as Bone Physician, their leader, but he has refused. Now they want to either force him to accept the mantle of leader, or find a way to steal his techniques and kill him.

Physicians of Ancient Willow Sect (20)

The members of this sect are formidable and dress in black robes. Half of the physicians use acupoint martial arts, while the other half use needle attacks.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial

Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Medicine

and Alchemy: 3d10, Survival: 2d10,

Meditation: 1d10, Magical Arts: 2d10, Theft: 2d10,

Drinking: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Endurance: 1d10, Scholarly Arts:

3d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: Varies

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Song Tuan [230]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Needles [82]

Signature Abilities: Acupoint Attack Style [35] or

Needle Master [54] (50%), Healing Hands of the

Mercy Goddess [47]

Counters: Hovering Ghost Defence [65]

AO TOWN

Ao Town features in the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure. See page 267 for more details about that adventure and Ao Town.

AUNTIE YING'S WINE SHOP

Key Members: Auntie Ying [188], Su Yi [230], Hanging Ghost Monk [199]

Grudges: Liu Xiuling [210] ▪ **Allies:** Society of the Solitary Temple [183]

This wine shop and inn in Nanjing is operated by Auntie Ying. Auntie Ying is famous for two things: her four ugly sons and four ugly daughters, and her ability to fulfil any request made of her. Her price is steep, but martial experts come from all over China to ask her for favours. Sometimes she demands money (usually beginning at 4 golden taels), but more often she asks for a service (which is one of the ways she manages to fulfil so many requests). For very difficult demands, she insists on arranging a marriage with one of her eight ugly children.

The wine shop itself serves all manner of baijiu and has an elaborate selection of noodle dishes (Golden Dragon Pork Noodle, Heroic Salty Duck Noodle Soup, Green

Dragon Monk Noodle, etc.). Her most well-known alcohol is Auntie Ying's Phoenix Essence Baijiu [99], which is said to produce a terrible chill followed by warm and pleasant thoughts.

One of Auntie Ying's sons is a palace eunuch named Su Yi, who is also the head of the Society of the Solitary Temple. This is just one of many connections that enable her to easily obtain alcohol permits and gain access to people and information so she can provide favours in the Jianghu. Hanging Ghost Monk is also one of her sons.

They have a grudge with Sword Goddess because she refused to marry Auntie Ying's son Su Yi. See page 138 for a layout of the Wine Shop.

BLACK CLOUD CULT

Key Members: Hua Yan [201] • **Grudges:** None • **Allies:** None

A relatively new addition to the top organisations in the Jianghu, the Black Cloud Cult has consolidated power throughout the Yunnan and Guangxi regions of southeastern China. Because of their frequent use of poison, their ruthlessness and cruelty, and their refusal to comply with the ordinary conventions of the Jianghu, they are viewed as a demonic and unorthodox organisation. No one knows the identity of the leader of the cult, only that he or she is a very powerful martial artist called the Black Cloud. Even less clear is the cult's goal. They have been expanding rapidly and exterminating any opponents who stand in their way. According to rumour, the cult wishes to gain ultimate domination of the Jianghu and, possibly, China as a whole.

The cult is most famous for its Meridian Venom [101].

The purpose of this group is to add a sense of mystery to the game, and give GMs a significant threat that they can drop into a campaign at any time. Their true goals and plans are also left up to the GM to tailor to the campaign. The cult is also the perfect subject for a player's Secret Background. The GM can make any NPCs in the book secret members of this cult. The senior members' stat blocks are empty because they are chosen by the GM. He or she should select a number of NPCs from the 'Non-Player Characters' section of this book to be the senior members.

Black Cloud Disciples (5,000)

When not in disguise, Black Cloud Disciples dress in black garments with white trim and embroidery. Although they lack effective martial arts talents, they are all skilled poisoners, and they use their Meridian Venom to weaken the enemies of the senior members of the cult (so they can be more easily defeated). They usually fight with tridents, preferring to outnumber and outmanoeuvre their opponents.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 6, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Endurance: 1d10,

Detect: 0d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10,

Trade: 1d10, Survival: 1d10, Theft: 3d10,

Magical Arts: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: None

Minions: None

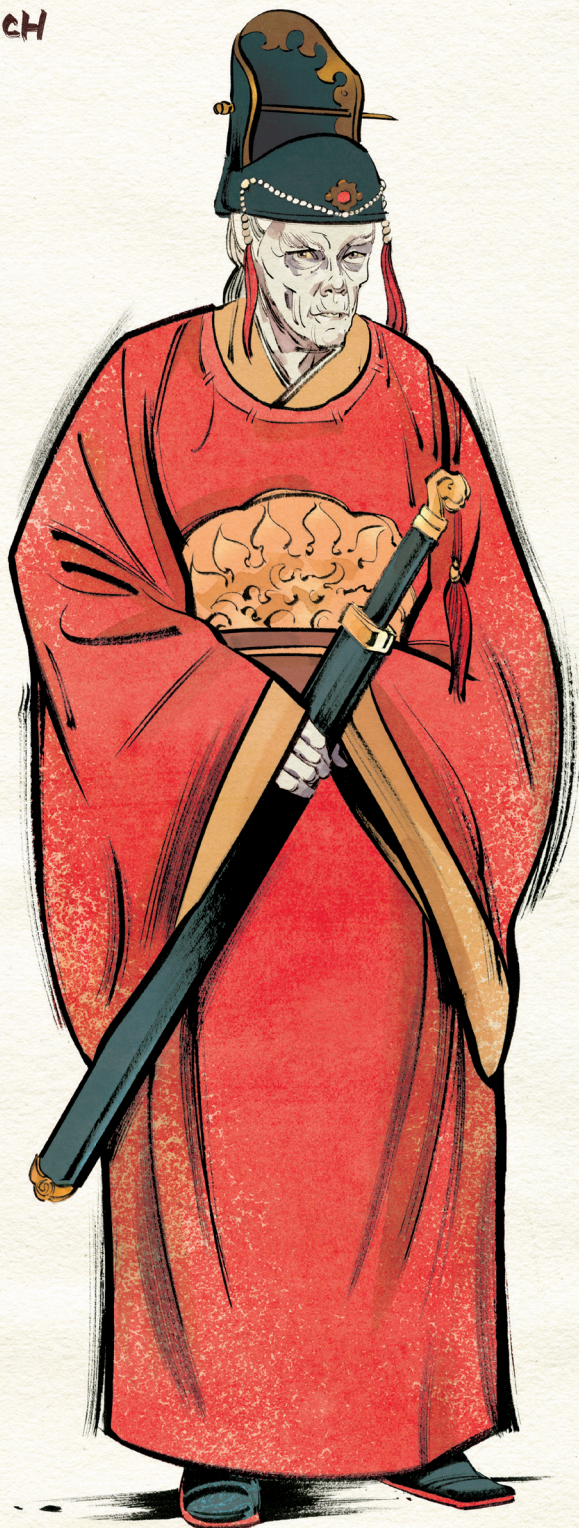
Equipment: Trident [81], Meridian Venom [101]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

EUNUCH ZHANG,
THE DEAD EUNUCH

殭屍太監張公公



Black Cloud Senior Members

These are the leaders of the Black Cloud Cult. They conceal their membership from the rest of the martial world and, when not in disguise, dress in white robes with yellow masks.

BLACK OWL VILLAGE

Key Members: Song Tuan [226] • **Grudges:** None • **Allies:** None

This remote coastal village in Fujian is home to Song Tuan, or Bone Physician. It is famous for its inventive seafood dishes. The people here seem devoted to Bone Physician, and if asked, say that they respect him for being one of the few villagers to attain true merit and success. A strange atmosphere exists in the village; there is always drama and excitement of some sort, and if one looks closely, all the villagers seem nervous. The truth is that Black Owl Village is a construct engineered by Bone Physician, intended to replicate in precise detail his childhood home (whose residents were killed by bandits). The people who live in the village were all abducted by Bone Physician and forced to assume a role he created for them. Each role is based on the identity of someone from his childhood.

Bone Physician has created a special poison called Black Owl Powder, which he forces all the residents to take. He puts the antidote in the well water, so they are forced to remain in the village. If they don't drink the well water every day, their skin begins to rot off until they die.

Bone Physician is still 'recruiting' people to fill roles in his village. He frequently ventures out to find someone who resembles a person he suddenly recalls from childhood.

BUREAU FOUR (THE LOCUST TREE SOCIETY)

Key Members: Eunuch Zhang [196]

Grudges: Bureau Eight [176], Zhao Jing [243], Thief Goddess Li [234] • **Allies:** The Emperor

Based in Shanghai, this bureau goes by numerous names, but the official term is Bureau Four. The internal language they use to describe themselves is the Jade Rabbit Bureau, but people more often call them The Locust Tree Society, due to their frequent habit of framing the innocent for their activities. It is a secret organisation within the Ministry of Justice. It is also the first secret bureau in terms of hierarchy, meaning its authority and jurisdiction supersedes the others. Eunuch Zhang oversees this bureau personally, but only he, the emperor, and a select few know this. The society was originally created to protect the emperor and seek methods to ensure his longevity. Since then, its purpose has been perverted towards personal and political gain for its senior members, which they often accomplish by appealing to the emperor's fears and desires. They have a reputation for magic and sorcery, but these are often really just clever tricks and machines.

Bureau Four Agents

The bureau has numerous officials and staff, but this stat block is for the skilled agents who perform special missions for the bureau. They are normally organised into squads of five. These agents are masters of disguise and tactics. They are trained to observe their enemies and find weaknesses before striking.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External Martial

Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10, Magical

Arts: 2d10, Theft: 1d10, Disguise: 3d10,

Reasoning: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Ride: 2d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10,

Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Eight [176],

Zhao Jing [243], Thief Goddess Li [231]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Snake Hidden in the Leaves [56],

Studied Blade Style [57]

Counters: Sword Parry [69]

BUREAU EIGHT

Key Members: Director Zhao Kai [195], Shi Jia [225], Vice Director Ge Cizhong [235]

Grudges: Bureau Four [175], Zhao Jing [243] • **Allies:** None

An organ of the Ministry of Justice based in Hangzhou, this bureau ostensibly investigates crime throughout the empire, but in reality is focused on investigating, manipulating, and even controlling the Jianghu. The organisation is very secretive. It employs constables to carry out investigations, who are often organised into teams of four, but are sometimes sent alone on missions. The higher ranks are shrouded in mystery to the general population. Members of each team answer to a chief constable, who in turn answers to the vice director (who reports to the director). Constables only know the identity of their chief. The organisation is very well funded, and recruits some of the most powerful martial artists from the Jianghu to work for them. Currently, it is investigating Song Tuan, otherwise known as Bone Physician [226], partly because of rumours of his crimes, but mostly to determine whether he is an ally or threat to the emperor.

The director of Bureau Eight is Director Zhao Kai, also known as Prince Kai, one of the emperor's sons. The bureau is the fruit of the labours of Vice Director Ge Cizhong. He encouraged the court to establish the bureau to help keep the prince's interest in the Jianghu free of scandal or danger.

Bureau Eight Chief Constables

Bureau Eight chief constables dress in blue robes and carry sabres. They command units of four constables and are very highly trained in martial arts. Each chief constable is unique, but use this stat block for generic versions. Feel free to name and create your own chief constables in the organisation.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 9, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial

Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Command: 2d10,

Reasoning: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Scholarly

Arts: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10,

Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Four [175],

Zhao Jing [243]

Allies: None

Minions: Constables

Equipment: Crossbows [82], Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary

Sun [39], Cleaver of the Four Suns [39],

Flashing Moon Sabre [44]

Counters: Ma's Deflecting Arrow [67],

Shifting Body [68]

Bureau Eight Constables

Constables operate in groups of four and can vary enormously, as they are recruited from the Jianghu. Use these stats for generic members of the organisation, but feel free to individualise constables in your campaign.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 9, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Command: 2d10,

Reasoning: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Scholarly

Arts: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10,

Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Four [175],

Zhao Jing [243]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Crossbows [82], Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary

Sun [39], Cleaver of the Four Suns [39]

Counters: Ma's Deflecting Arrow [67]

DRAGON CLAN

Key Members: Long Dawang [211], Lord Dragon's Nine Sons [213], Gu Xing [199]

Grudges: None ▪ **Allies:** Five Phoenix Manor [178]

Based in Jinan, Shandong, the Dragon Clan has a reputation for being incredibly rich, and also extremely powerful in terms of martial arts. The leader of the clan is Long Dawang, colloquially called Lord Dragon, and he has nine sons, known as Lord Dragon's Nine Sons, whom he trusts to carry out clan business operations throughout much of North China. Lord Dragon's wife died after giving birth to their ninth son. Most people believe this was due to the birth, but in truth he murdered her. The Dragon Clan has a sterling reputation in the Jianghu, and is lauded for the way it cares for orphans and widows. However, they only help the needy to increase their prestige and control. Their true nature is ruthless and cruel. In reality, they seek political power, and hope to one day have a member of their clan made emperor. Towards this end they will do anything, including working with hostile foreign powers in order to unseat the current ruler.

Their martial arts are highly respected, particularly their Chuanxin Finger (otherwise known as Heart-Piercing Finger).

The Chuanxin Finger Manual [96] is tattooed on the back of Lord Dragon's ninth son, Long Ren [213]. Lord Dragon keeps Long Ren by his side at all times.

The clan resides in a large courtyard house called Dragon Manor. They are allied with Five Phoenix Manor due to proximity and their seemingly shared emphasis on virtue.

FIVE PHOENIX MANOR

Key Members: Phoenix Empress of Mingshui [219] • **Grudges:** Moneybags Hu [218]

Allies: Dragon Clan [177], Long Dawang [211], Handan Escort Company [179]

This is so-named because its members regularly meet at Five Phoenix Manor near Jinan. It is made up of the most reputable and virtuous Township Mistresses in the region. In this time period, Township Mistresses, or Xiangjun, are the wives or daughters of officials who have obtained merit titles. They are led by Phoenix Empress of Mingshui, the wife of the Shandong Prefect. They are a righteous martial sect that promotes the Five Human Virtues.

Once every ten years, they host a competition at Five Phoenix Manor and award the title of Supreme Pillar of the Wulin to the winner. This competition involves fighting, but also includes many other tests and challenges to evaluate character. The aim is to reward the most intelligent, the most virtuous, the bravest, and the most talented martial artist. Currently there is no person holding this title, as all competitors at the previous event died under somewhat mysterious circumstances.

They have a long-standing rivalry with Moneybags Hu after thwarting a number of his schemes, and are allied with the Dragon Clan because of their supposed virtue.

The Reputable Township Mistresses of Five Phoenix Manor (38)

These are all reputable wives of officials in Shandong. They use deer horn knives as weapons.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Talent: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10, Command: 3d10,

Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10, Peoples

and Places: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Dutiful

Social Resources: Loyal Servants

Grudges/Rivalries: Moneybags Hu [218]

Allies: Long Dawang [211], Dragon Clan [177]

Minions: Personal Servants [247]

Equipment: Deer Horn Knives [77]

Signature Abilities: Crescent Moon Style [40]

Counters: Yan's Gambit [69]

THE HANDAN ESCORT COMPANY

Key Members: Chief Ban Fei [193], Wan Lang [236], Yang Tao [242]

Grudges: Xie Lijuan [239] • **Allies:** Five Phoenix Manor [178]

This was once a prestigious escort company with a solid reputation for transporting valuable objects and people. But they've fallen on hard times. They were slaughtered by someone claiming to be Xie Lijuan, who had hired them to transport the Obsidian Bat [95] to Sword Goddess, also called Liu Xiuling [210]. In truth the person claiming to be Xie Lijuan was really Sword Goddess. She also cut off the legs of their chief, Ban Fei. Now they are only a handful of men struggling to finish the remaining contracts they are obligated to fulfil. Their leader is Chief Ban Fei, and the second in command is Wan Lang. Currently, Chief Ban Fei is insisting that they go on with transporting the Obsidian Bat to Sword Goddess.

For more information on Handan Escort Company, see Chapter Twelve.

Handan Escort Guards (7)

The morale of the Handan Escort guards is low. They witnessed the slaughter of their fellow escorts, and now Chief Ban Fei is insisting that they complete their remaining contracts.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Lijuan [239]

Allies: Five Phoenix Manor [178]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

HALLS OF TRANQUILLITY

Key Members: Golden Bowl Chief [197], Surgeon Zhang [230]

Grudges: Screaming Zither Sect [182], Zhu Fei [244] • **Allies:** None

Located in the incredibly remote Jiuzhaigou Valley in Southwestern China, the Halls of Tranquillity are a natural cave structure whose entrance is a mighty waterfall. The precise location of the Halls is not generally known, but even the lowliest Jianghu denizen knows that they are a place of ultimate peace and safety. The Halls are guarded by the Order of the Golden Bowl, a group devoted to pacifism. Anyone who wishes to leave the Jianghu and live a life of tranquillity can travel there, wash their hands in a golden bowl to signify their retirement, and be offered permanent sanctuary. All consecrated members of the Order of the Golden Bowl wear an iron amulet [95] that makes them invincible as long as they remain within the Halls. The reason for this is that the iron amulets are forged from chunks extracted from a massive lodestone that rests in the depths of the Halls of Tranquillity. Because of the invincibility provided by the iron amulets, not even the most powerful martial artist could ever make a move against the Order of the Golden Bowl. And thus, the Halls of Tranquillity have become the ultimate destination for not only those who wish to retire from the Jianghu, but also those who are so fearful of death that they are willing to live a life of asceticism rather than face whatever enemies

pursue them. Even criminals and evil martial artists can find sanctuary there, as long as they confess their crimes and swear an oath to live peacefully. There is a simple way to negate the powers of the iron amulets, but the method is a secret passed down only to the successive generations of Golden Bowl chiefs. It is highly frowned upon for members of the Order to return to the outside world and meddle in the Jianghu. Any who do so and get caught risk being expelled from the Order.

ILLUSTRIOUS QILIN VILLA (CULT OF THE PARROT GOD)

Key Members: Parrot God Yu, Wu Tooth Beauty Niu [239], Xie Song [240], Masters Gao [218],

Guo [218] and Wu [219] • **Grudges:** Xie Song [240], Tree Frog Gao [235]

Allies: Beggar Huang [189]

This strange cult believes that their founder, a famed swordsman of the Han Dynasty named Yu, became a god and reincarnates frequently. They refer to him as God Yu, and must find his current incarnation and care for him. More often than not, he reincarnates as an animal. They believe his present incarnation to be a parrot they found in an old antique shop in Jinan. No matter how outrageous, they take all their orders from the parrot's words, and treat him to the luxuries they believe God Yu is accustomed to. Their current leader is Wu Tooth Beauty Niu.

Their headquarters is Illustrious Qilin Villa on Poyang Lake (the legendary home of Yu when he lived). Because of this, they refer to their organisation as the Illustrious Qilin Villa, whereas most outsiders call them the Cult of the Parrot God. It is a courtyard villa where the Parrot God houses his treasures and cult members are trained in martial arts. Their chief is Wu Tooth Beauty Niu, who has three sub-chiefs: Master Gao, Master Guo, and Master Wu. Beggar Huang manages a network of beggars who serve as informants for the organisation (but in reality work for their nemesis Tree Frog Gao).

Because they now have an animal that can speak, the organisation is revitalised and recruiting many new members. When they recruit, one of their preferred methods is to do so in eight groups of four. Master Gao weeds out potential traitors, and new initiates are commanded to execute suspected traitors collectively by beating them with heavy sticks.

The cult is seeking to find and kill one of its former members, Xie Song, who accused Master Gao of being a fraud. They regard him as a traitor and imperial spy.

Parrot God Yu

Parrot God Yu has colourful feathers with a healthy sheen and a strong powerful beak. His voice is melodious and deep, but can take on the sound of virtually anyone he hears. He appreciates tributes of wealth and treasure. He adores glimmering objects. Currently, Parrot God Yu is worried because he has foreseen the collapse of the empire, and believes that in order to avert disaster, one of the princes (the heir apparent) needs to be assassinated. He often tries to recruit people by telling them he has foreseen their death in Kaifeng, and that it can be averted with the death of the heir apparent.

Defences: Hardiness: 3, Evade: 9, Wits: 7

Skills: Detect: 3d10, Persuade: 2d10, Command:

3d10, Muscle: 0d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Talent:

2d10, Institutions: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10

Max Wounds: 1

Servants of the Parrot God (54)

Most of the servants of the Parrot God wear red and black robes, and carry curved daggers. They are loyal believers in the Parrot God's divinity, and each has had a special audience with him where a bond was forged that is nearly impossible to break (they each believe they have a special role to play in this world). Although there are some women in the organisation, most are men (and most of these are exceptionally good-looking men).

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

Endurance: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10,

Survival: 3d10, Religion: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Song [240]

Allies: Beggar Huang [189]

Minions: None

Equipment: Curved Beauty Dagger [84]

Signature Abilities: Thought-Diminishing Dagger
Style [58]

Counters: Closing Defence [64]

IMMORTAL SWORD MANOR

See the 'Immortal Sword Manor' entry in Chapter Twelve [262].

THE LENG PIAO CLAN

Key Members: Leng Ban [205], Piao Qingzhao [220]

Grudges: Red Eagle Sect [182], Lu Bank [182] • **Allies:** Society of the Solitary Temple [183]

The Leng Piao Clan is a prestigious family that controls large sections of land in Hangzhou. It was once two separate great clans, which merged 40 years ago. They are led by a bitter patriarch and matriarch named Leng Ban and Piao Qingzhao. The couple resent each other, but there is still a kernel of affection between them. With time, their bitterness grew, causing rivalry within the clan itself. There are effectively two branches: the Leng and the Piao. However, they and the members of their clan are united by love of money. Recently, the duo decided to enrich their clan through underhanded means. They try to outdo each other in the planning of crimes, and have their underlings rob banks or merchant vessels. They are active along the Grand Canal, and control many restaurants on its waterways that serve as hideouts and information hubs.

The Leng Piao Clan's strength is in its numbers. The clan recently destroyed the Red Eagle Sect and is intent on eliminating the surviving members.

Leng Piao Clan Members (2,450)

Leng Piao disciples all wear golden robes and are evenly divided into two groups: Leng and Piao.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 0d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Red Eagle Sect [182],
Lu Bank [182]

Allies: Society of the Solitary Temple [183]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

LU BANK

Key Members: Lu Ren [214], Beauty Face Chang [188], Li Nin [208]

Grudges: Moneybags Hu [218], Leng Piao Clan [181] ▪ **Allies:** Screaming Zither Sect [182]

This bank, based in Ningbo, is known for lending large sums of money to anyone who needs it. It takes the limbs of those who fail to pay. The boss, Lu Ren, is a collector of the body parts of great heroes. When anyone of note borrows from the bank, he takes a personal interest, and sends his henchmen to prevent the person from repaying the loan so that he can place one of their limbs on his wall.

Lu Ren pays his henchmen very well, and this has enabled him to attract a number of well-known heroes into his service. Beauty Face Chang is one of his most feared underlings, and Lu Ren favours him. Li Nin (Unravelling Sword) is another well-known member of Lu Bank.

Lu Bank is friendly with the Screaming Zither Sect, but seeks revenge on Moneybags Hu due to a business deal that went bad.

Lu Bank Henchmen

This is a typical henchman of Lu Bank. For named henchmen, use their entries in the 'Non-Player Characters' section of this chapter.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 6, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 1d10,

Athletics: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Survival: 3d10,

Theft: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Persuade: 1d10,

Reasoning: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and

Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: Varies

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Money Bags Hu [218],
Leng Piao Clan [181]

Allies: Screaming Zither Sect [182]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Weapon Adept [58],
Weapon Saint [58]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

RED EAGLE SECT

Key Members: Chen Chao [190], Chen Haolin [191], Chen Nianzhen [193]

Grudges: Leng Piao Clan [181] ▪ **Allies:** None

This once-powerful organisation caused terror throughout the area of Hangzhou. It was defeated by the Leng Piao Clan, and its key surviving members, the Chen Family, roam the Jianghu.

SCREAMING ZITHER SECT

Key Members: Zhu Fei [244]

Grudges: Tranquil Scholar Hua Shi [233], Golden Bowl Chief [197] ▪ **Allies:** Lu Bank [182]

This sect is known for their signature Screaming Zither [89], and use it to bully and extort other members of the Jianghu. The sect frequently takes over businesses like roadside inns. Many such establishments submit willingly, because those who refuse are forced to listen to the Screaming Zither until their heads explode. The members of the sect are exceptionally loyal to their chief, Zhu Fei, and her heartbreak over Golden Bowl

Chief has become their hatred of him. They sometimes offer their services to Lu Bank, and are on good terms with its leader.

All of their disciples possess special hats with fabric ear coverings that stave off the effects of the zither for those who wear them. Only members of the sect know of these hats.

Zhu Fei originally used the sect to vent her anger at the martial world (due to her husband, Golden Bowl Chief, retiring and abandoning her). However, the zither was stolen by Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi, and the sect is now dedicated to retrieving it.

Screaming Zither Disciples (18)

The Screaming Zither disciples all dress like court musicians and wear special hats with thick fabric coverings, which protect their ears so they are unaffected by the Screaming Zither.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Ride: 1d10,

Detect: 1d10, Meditation: 1d10, Talent: 3d10,

Trade: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10,

Magical Arts: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10,

Command: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10,

Reasoning: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 2

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Grudges/Rivalries: Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi [233], Golden Bowl Chief [197]

Allies: Lu Bank [182]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sabre [80], Ear Cloths (block Screaming Zither)

Signature Abilities: Flashing Moon Sabre Style [44]

Counters: Golden Armour Defence [65]

THE SOCIETY OF THE SOLITARY TEMPLE

Key Members: Su Yi [230]

Grudges: Surgeon Zhang [230], Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Auntie Ying [188], Hanging Ghost Monk [199], Leng Piao Clan [181]

Founded by Master Sun at the beginning of the reigning dynasty, the Society of the Solitary Temple is an association of like-minded gentlemen based in Kaifeng. They are dedicated to obtaining and discussing the paintings of the renowned historical artist Li Cheng. To obtain his great works, they resort to thieving and murderous means, using their good standing and reputations to shield them from blame. Their present leader is a rank-5 palace servitor eunuch named Su Yi. Su Yi is actually the son of Auntie Ying of Auntie Ying's Wine Shop (but this is not widely known).

Currently, the sect is dedicated to kidnapping Surgeon Zhang so they can force him to continue the training of Su Yi.

Solitary Temple Members (23)

Although each member can vary considerably (the GM should feel free to modify this stat block for exceptional members of the sect), all are scholar-officials or gentry with considerable knowledge of the art of painting.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5 or 6 against Melee, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10, Theft: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Ride: 3d10, Institutions: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 10

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Surgeon Zhang [230],

Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Auntie Ying [188], Hanging Ghost

Monk [199], Leng Piao Clan [181]

Minions: None

Equipment: Butterfly Swords [76]

Signature Abilities: Butterfly Sword Expert I [37]

Counters: Steel-Shattering Finger [68]

XIE MANOR

Key Members: Xie Lijuan [239], Shuai Huixiong [225], Qing Yun [222]

Grudges: Cui Nuo [195], Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Song Tuan [226], Liu Xiuling [210]

Located north of Shanghai along the Grand Canal, Xie Manor is the house of the famed and feared killer, Xie Lijuan. Reputed to be the top fighter in the martial world, Xie Lijuan is also one of the most famous beauties of the martial world. She lives for cruelty and death, and her sect glories in helping her achieve this. They are also extremely arrogant, and love to taunt those beneath them. Xie Manor is frequently embroiled in the turmoil of the Jianghu (and often the source of it). As the top fighter and possessor of a top weapon in the Jianghu, the Dagger of Xie Lijuan [91], she and her organisation are constantly forced to defend against challengers, infiltrators, thieves, assassins, and the like. To date, no enemy has ever been able to prevail against her, regardless of the methods used. Currently, Xie Lijuan wants to take the Heart-Shaping Crown from Sun Lan the Yama Queen (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure).



Xie Manor Disciples (64)

Most disciples of the sect are female and appear to function as Xie Lijuan's servants. However, they are all very skilled in martial arts. She only selects disciples who have some kind of charisma or charm; it does not have to be physical beauty.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 1d10, Talent: 3d10, Survival: 2d10, Meditation: 1d10, Theft: 3d10, Disguise: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 22

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Cui Nuo [195], Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Song Tuan [226], Liu Xiuling [211]

Minions: None

Equipment: Dagger [77]

Signature Abilities: Lijuan's Flower Shaming Beauty [50], Lijuan's Moon-Eclipsing Gaze [51]

Counters: Lijuan's Deadly Dagger [67]

YANG YU'S RESTAURANT

Key Members: Yang Yu [242] • **Grudges:** Purity [221]

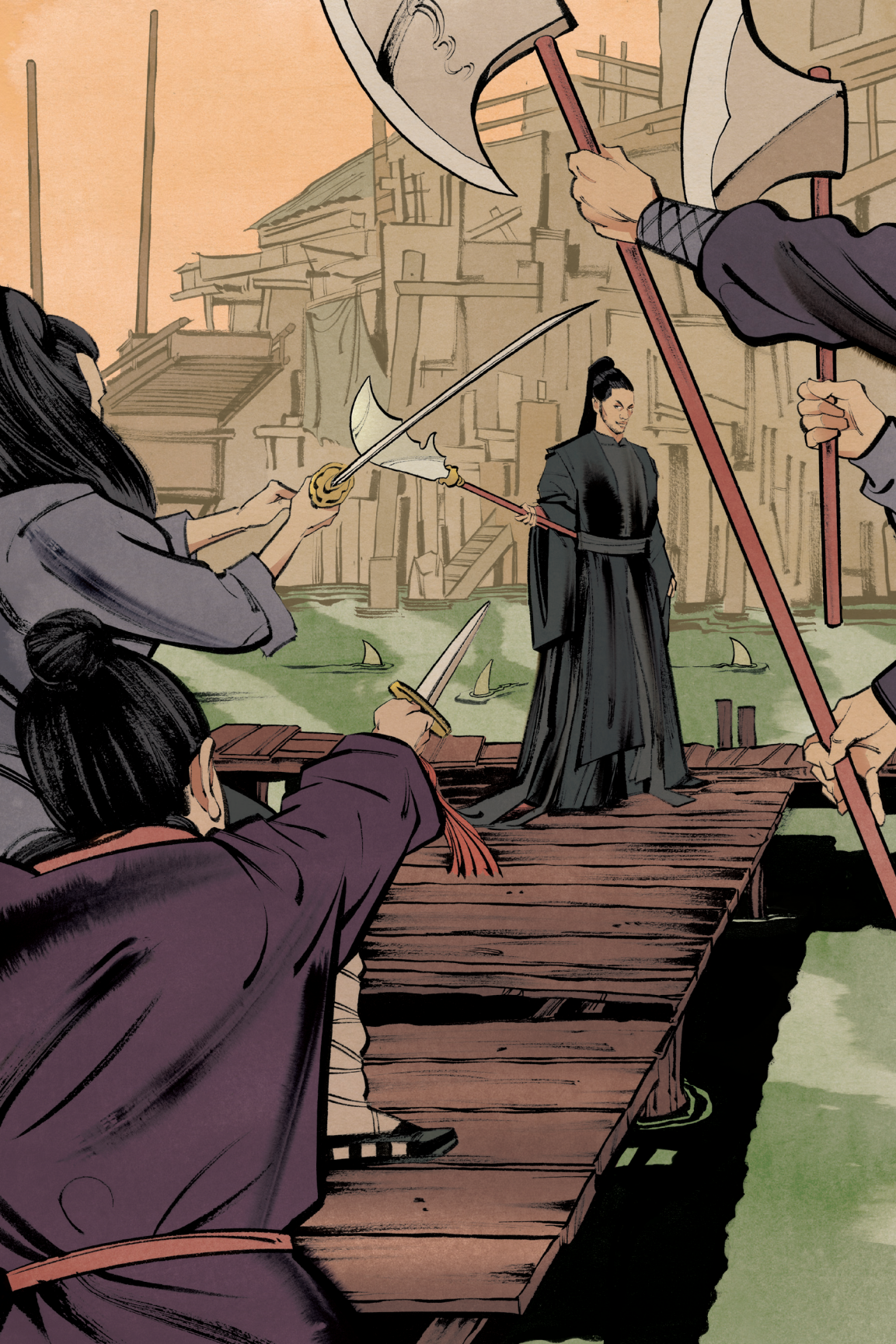
Allies: Chen Haolin [191]

This is one of the best restaurants in China, located in the capital city of Kaifeng. It is quite large, with a two-level outdoor dining area, affixed to a tower-like structure, with a wide interior dining area on the first floor. The tower interior is lined with wooden railed stairs that lead to small, partitioned alcoves for private seating.

The restaurant is owned by Yang Yu (Succubus Yang), who takes any criticism of her dishes personally. If anyone speaks poorly of the food, she attempts to have them killed. She immediately hires members of the martial world to do the killing for her (roll randomly). It is also possible that Yang Yu will approach the player characters and ask them to kill someone for bad-mouthing her restaurant.

Although guests can request any dish, these are their most well-regarded dishes: Flaming Ox Tail, Golden Immortals of the Deep Sea, Plum Cake Soup, Dapeng Egg, and Yang Yu Braised Duck.

There are rarer and more exotic dishes available, but these are only provided to those willing to sleep with the proprietor.



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

WHY SO MANY NPCs?

There are a lot of NPCs in this book, the reason being that wuxia stories tend to be character-driven, and thus, we feel it is important to have a large cast of interconnected characters. It is also helpful for generating adventure material. *Righteous Blood, Ruthless Blades* places greater emphasis on characters and character networks than sects (though there are sects in the setting too). Characters tend to be linked with several other characters through their backgrounds, through grudges, rivalries and alliances. If you look at the Grudges/Rivalries and Allies entries on the stat block, as well as the Recent Developments entries, this will give you inspiration for potential adventures centred on character networks in the game. For ease of use, we include the organizations that characters belong to or lead in their Allies entry. In some instances, characters may appear in both an NPC's Grudges and Allies entry without explanation. This just indicates a complicated or long-standing relationship.

ACHING BUTTERFLY SWORD

Also known as Heart-Breaking Butterfly, Aching Butterfly Sword is a quick-witted and joyous swordswoman who sinks into sad rumination when drunk (which is often). She falls in love very easily, but loses interest just as quickly. Her heart is tender, and she hates shattering lovers' spirits when she leaves, so she often fakes her death, then writes a farewell letter expressing eternal love that can never be realised (inventing a suitably dramatic reason). After this, she assumes a new identity. She is something of a legend, and many heartbroken lovers who receive farewells are said to be victims of the Aching Butterfly Sword.

Recent Developments

Aching Butterfly Sword's only true friend is Chen Haolin. She used to drink with him, but never developed a romance. After he acquired the Embroidered Dragon, she feared his skills were too low, and this would make him a target for others in the martial world, so she stole it in order to keep him from harm. Now he is angry, and she is on the run.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7 or 10 w/ Butterfly Swords, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Disguise: 1d10, Gambling: 1d10, Drinking: 2d10, Theft: 2d10, Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 34

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Drinker

Grudges/Rivalries: Chen Haolin [191]

Allies: Chen Haolin

Minions: None

Equipment: Butterfly Swords [76], Embroidered Dragon [86]

Signature Abilities: Butterfly Sword Expert [37], Butterfly Sword Expert II [37]

Counters: Sword Cyclone [68], Insightful Reaction [65]

AUNTIE YING

Auntie Ying is the proprietor of Auntie Ying's Wine Shop, and the inventor of Auntie Ying's Phoenix Essence Baijiu [99]. She is cunning and charming, although very forceful. She is good at assessing people, and not afraid to harm those who mistake her willingness to please for a merciful nature. She has many influential contacts in the Jianghu, and uses these to provide favours in exchange for payment or services. She also has four ugly daughters and four ugly sons, most of whom she wishes to have married. She has tried many times to secure marriage arrangements with handsome or beautiful heroes in exchange for her services. Sword Goddess refused to marry one of her sons, Su Yi, so Auntie Ying despises her now. Su Yi later went on to become a palace eunuch whose position she exploits. Another one of her sons, Hanging Ghost Monk left to become a monk.

Although Auntie Ying's martial arts are exceptional, she conceals her extraordinary abilities from the martial world. No one has ever seen her perform her techniques and lived. She has killed many. To the world, she is a mediocre practitioner of kung fu. In truth, her abilities rival Xie Lijuan [239]. She suffered Fire Deviation while mastering a technique, making her obsessed with getting information about people. It is also the reason she has ugly children.

Recent Developments

Auntie Ying recently heard about the wit and good looks of Xie Lijuan's maidservant, Qing Yun [222]. She wants to arrange a marriage between Qing and one of her sons. But first, she must make a favourable impression on Xie Lijuan, so she is currently seeking a way to do so.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Trade: 2d10,

Survival: 1d10, Drinking: 3d10, Theft: 2d10,

Gambling: 1d10, Persuade: 2d10,

Empathy: 3d10, Endurance: 2d10,

Jianghu: 3d10, Institutions: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 9

Killing Aura Darkness: 450

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 3

Eccentricities: Fire Deviation (Supreme Physical:
Ugly Children; Mental: Obsession)

Social Resources: Social Network

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Su Yi [230], Hanging Ghost Monk [199],
Auntie Ying's Wine Shop [172]

Minions: Children

Equipment: Rope Dart [82]

Signature Abilities: Rope Dart Expert I [56], Rope
Dart Expert II [56], Stone Body Style [57],
Fearless Boxer Style [43]

Counters: Shadow Fist [68], Spinning Block [68]

BEAUTY FACE CHANG

Beauty Face Chang is the ugliest person in the martial world and a henchman of Lu Bank. One of his eyes is larger than the other, his nose resembles a durian, and his skin is broken up by clusters of angry red pimples. He frequently resorts to cosmetics to conceal his ugliness, but with little success. This brings him much suffering, so he drinks and fights. He hopes to find a skilled physician who can make his face 'as beautiful as jade' (he dreams of changing his nickname to 'Jade Face Chang'). He has been selling his sword services to save up money to use when he finds such a person. He is also a

talented singer, although he rarely performs for people. Despite his crude appearance and inelegant tongue, he is well educated and comes from a wealthy background.

One of the only people Beauty Face Chang trusts is Lu Ren, the head of Lu Bank. He respects Lu Ren's intelligence and feels that that he is the only person who does not judge him for his looks.

Recent Developments

Beauty Face Chang suffered Fire Deviation from overtraining. This pushed his skills to a higher level, but damaged his mind. Now he is filled with violent envy against any handsome or skilled martial hero. In addition, his physique is unnaturally muscular and large. He recently killed a martial hero named Li Lushan at a teahouse when the man called him 'an ugly lump of iron'. Since then, Li Lushan's friend, Wan Shu (Lady Iron Hand), has sworn revenge.

Defences: Hardiness 10, Evade 6, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial

Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed:

0d10, Muscle: 4d10, Detect: 3d10, Meditation:

1d10, Survival: 3d10, Talent: 3d10, Command:

2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Endurance: 2d10, Ride:

1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Religion: 2d10, Scholarly

Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6

Killing Aura Darkness: 124

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Ugly, Fire Deviation (Mental: envious
of rivals; Physical: too much Yang energy)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Wan Shu [236]

Allies: Lu Bank [182], Lu Ren [214], Li Nin [208]

Minions: None

Equipment: Great Sabre [79]

Signature Abilities: Blood Shedding Hero Style
[36], Giant-Sword Fighter I [45], Giant-Sword
Fighter II [45]

Counters: Crocodile Jaw Defence [64], Reaching
Defence [67]

BEGGAR HUANG

Very few people know the true origin of Beggar Huang. He was once a high-ranking eunuch in the reigning dynasty. However, his championing of the common people earned him the ire of other government officials, who conspired to have him framed and executed. He managed to escape execution, whereupon he disguised himself and became a beggar. Although he still fights for the common people, his poor lot in life has given him a nasty temper. As such, he doesn't hesitate to use his whip to strangle anyone he perceives as being an enemy. He was trained by Tree Frog Gao and occasionally performs tasks for her.

Recent Developments

Beggar Huang recently joined the Illustrious Qilin Villa, and is working to build a network of beggars to further their cause. In truth, this network is loyal to Tree Frog Gao (who sent them to spy on Beggar Huang). Beggar Huang's loyalties are split between the cult and his master, Tree Frog Gao. And he is increasingly ill-at-ease with the organisation's methods. If he must choose, he will remain loyal to Tree Frog Gao.

Beggar Huang obtained the Shadow Manual [96] from a tomb, but gave it to Liu Shishi when she offered to feed him.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,
Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,
Meditation: 3d10, Talent: 2d10, Medicine and
Alchemy: 1d10, Endurance: 2d10,
Disguise: 2d10, Magical Arts: 1d10, Theft: 3d10,
Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10,
Reasoning: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10,
Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 27

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Irascible

Social Resources: Social Network

Grudges/Rivalries: The Imperial Bureaucracy

Allies: Tree Frog Gao [235], Illustrious Qilin Villa
[180], Liu Shishi [209]

Minions: Beggars [245]

Equipment: Whip [81]

Signature Abilities: Ferocious Whipping
Style [43], Shadow Whip Style [56]

Counters: Shadow Fist [68]

BONE PHYSICIAN See Song Tuan [226]

BROCADED GRANNY See Qiu Yan [222]

CHEN CHAO

Chen Chao is the former leader of Red Eagle Sect [182], an organisation that once terrorised the Jianghu. He was defeated by the Leng Piao Clan, which extinguished his sect. He escaped with his son and daughter (Chen Haolin and Chen Nianzhen). Chen Chao now wants revenge. He believes in being ruthless and cunning, and longs to have the martial world under his grip. His son, Chen Haolin, hates him and considers him a great evil in this world. His daughter, Chen Nianzhen, is more loyal. Chen Chao wants power, money, and adoration.

Recent Developments

Since the destruction of his sect headquarters in Hangzhou, Chen Chao has been roaming with his daughter, pretending to be an ailing old man named Jing. They stay at inns while Chen Chao finds an organisation to infiltrate and, ultimately, take over.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 10

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,
Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,
Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Talent: 1d10,
Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10,
Theft: 2d10, Command: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,
Athletics: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10,
Jianghu: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 415

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Obsession (power)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Leng Piao Clan [181],
Chen Haolin [191]

Allies: Chen Nianzhen [193]

Minions: None

Equipment: Dagger Axe [77]

Signature Abilities: Maiming Strike Style [51],
Heart of Sun Bin [47]

Counters: Defence of Sun Bin [64],
Insightful Reaction [65]

CHEN HAOLIN (CHEN THE HEAD-TAKER)

To his face, people call Chen Haolin ‘The Head-Taker’ for obvious reasons. However, behind his back, they call him Chen the Mountain of Flesh. When not assassinating targets, he gorges himself on the finest of foods, and is thus one of the fattest members of the martial world. Chen Haolin is known for his Diamond Axe Blade, and for his calm demeanour leading up to a fight. He often patiently eats delicacies until the appropriate moment to strike presents itself. Although not well-spoken or well-read, he is extraordinarily clever and has a very good memory. He adores Qiu Yan (Brocaded Granny) and treats her as his own mother.

Chen Haolin is the brother of Chen Nianzhen and the son of Chen Chao, and was thus a member of Red Eagle Sect [182] before its destruction. He despises his father, but still cares for his sister. He regards his father as evil, and feels that the destruction of the Red Eagle Sect was deserved.

Recent Developments

Chen Haolin was once friends with Aching Butterfly Sword (they were drinking companions). He had obtained the Embroidered Dragon [86] as a gift from Brocaded Granny, but Aching Butterfly Sword stole it from him when they were drinking at an inn. Now he wants it back.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 5, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Drinking: 3d10, Gambling: 2d10, Theft: 1d10, Command: 1d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Endurance: 2d10, Ride: 1d10, Institutions: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Religion: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 98

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Eater

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Aching Butterfly Sword [187], Chen Chao [190]

Allies: Aching Butterfly Sword [187], BQiu Yan [222], Chen Nianzhen [193], Yang Yu [242]

Minions: None

Equipment: Diamond Axe Blade [84]

Signature Abilities: Head-Defeating Style [46], Mind of Sun Bin [53]

Counters: Resting Defence [68]



CHEN NIANZHEN, RUTHLESS IMMORTAL

冷血女仙
陳念珍



CHEN NIANZHEN (RUTHLESS IMMORTAL)

Confident and exceptionally tall, Chen Nianzhen acquired her name because she has been lethally wounded many times but always survived. She has deep scars on her body and face, loves gambling and drinking, but hates lies. If she catches anyone lying to her, she rips out their tongue. Chen Nianzhen believes in being ruthless and in being loyal to her family. Sometimes this is a source of conflict.

Chen Nianzhen is the daughter of Chen Chao and the sister of Chen Haolin. Her brother and father no longer get along, and this causes her tremendous heartache. She remains faithful to both. They used to lead Red Eagle Sect [182], a ruthless organisation that was extinguished by the Leng Piao Clan.

Recent Developments

Chen Nianzhen was tasked by her father with finding an organisation he can easily take over in order to re-establish his power in the Jianghu. She cut out the eye of Hong Wenlong and anticipates a duel with him in the future to settle the grudge.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial

Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Meditation: 3d10, Survival: 3d10,

Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 3d10, Gambling: 2d10,

Command: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Athletics: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10,

Institutions: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples

and Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 198

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Scarred

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Leng Piao Clan [181],

Hong Wenlong/Ill-Fated Blade [201]

Allies: Chen Chao [190], Chen Haolin [191]

Minions: None

Equipment: Dagger Axe [77]

Signature Abilities: Maiming Strike Style [51],

Heart of Sun Bin [47]

Counters: Defence of Sun Bin [64]

CHIEF BAN FEI

Chief Ban Fei is head of the Handan Escort Company. He is a serious and honest man who recently lost his legs at the hands of someone dressed as Xie Lijuan. During that same incident, many of his men were killed. This same person had hired them to transport the Obsidian Bat to Sword Goddess. Although he burns with a desire for revenge, his current priority is to complete the escort contracts he has entered into. He has few men, so he intends to hire heroes to help him complete these tasks. He will reward and treat such people well if they succeed. His most pressing mission is the transportation of the Obsidian Bat from Handan to Kaifeng.

Recent Developments

Chief Ban suspects that the person who attacked him and his men was Sword Goddess (Liu Xiuling), but he has kept this thought to himself. He has replaced the Obsidian Bat with a dangerous device that he hopes will kill or seriously weaken Sword Goddess.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 3d10, Survival: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Meditation: 1d10, Command: 2d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 4

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Missing Limbs (legs)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Five Phoenix Manor [178], Handan Escort Company [179]

Minions: Handan Escorts

Equipment: Sabre [80], Bat King Medallion [261]

Signature Abilities: Flashing Moon Sabre Style [44], Awakening the Golden Lantern I [35]

Counters: Closing Defence [64]

CONSTABLE WANG (THE DRUNKEN CONSTABLE)

Constable Wang is an expert with a bow and arrow. He has a good heart, but is almost always drunk. Despite his love of liquor, he can shoot an arrow through the middle of a coin at 300 paces. Although this seems impressive, he actually uses simple sleight of hand (Magical Arts) to achieve this effect. He is known for always helping those in need and upholding justice. Despite the fact that he presents himself as an exceptional martial artist, his fighting talents are fairly minor and he is afraid of his own blood.

Recent Developments

Constable Wang is no longer a constable. Someone framed him for robbing a bank, and he is now on the run. He doesn't know who was behind the deception, but is determined to find them and make them pay.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 3d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Disguise: 3d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Ride: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 12

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Blood Fear

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Framer

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Composite Bow [81]

Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary Sun [39]

Counters: Veneer of Vulnerability [69]

CRIMSON STARGAZER See Zhu Fei [244]

CUI NUO (JADE-LEGGED YOGI)

Cui Nuo is a dancer and master of yogic martial arts, which she learned after travelling in India. She fights primarily with kicks, using her exceptional flexibility to strike at unusually close range, but also uses a rope. She can use her yoga to slip out of people's grasps with ease. Although she feigns simplicity and humility, she is extremely clever and has unrivalled ambition.

Recent Developments

Cui Nuo married a handsome but conceited swordsman named Gu Xing, who left her after three months because he fell in love with Xie Lijuan (who is only vaguely aware of his reputation for vanity). Now Cui Nuo wants to kill Xie Lijuan, but knows she is too weak, so she goes after her minions instead, while simultaneously looking for allies to even the odds. She is good friends with Liang Hai, the Seven-Headed Sea Monster and hopes to conspire with him against Xie Lijuan.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 0d10,

Survival: 3d10, Talent: 2d10, Trade: 1d10,

Drinking: 1d10, Gambling: 1d10, Magical Arts:

2d10, Theft: 2d10, Command: 2d10, Empathy:

2d10, Persuade: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and

Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 17

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: In Love

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Lijuan [239],

Gu Xing [199]

Allies: Liang Hai [206]

Minions: None

Equipment: Choking Rope [83]

Signature Abilities: Jade Kicks [49]

Counters: Shifting Body [68]

THE DEAD EUNUCH See Eunuch Zhang [196]

DIRECTOR ZHAO KAI (PRINCE KAI)

The son of the emperor, and the head of Bureau Eight, Director Zhao Kai is only in his twenties and has the demeanour of an artist or poet. However, he is very intelligent, and passed the imperial exams at an unprecedentedly young age. He actually passed in the top rank, but this was kept secret. He frequently spends his days painting, as it helps him to think. From his early youth, he was fascinated by the Jianghu, and learned stories about it from his tutor (and current vice director of Bureau Eight) Ge Cizhong.

Recent Developments

Director Zhao Kai has grown restless lately, believing that disaster looms somewhere in the Jianghu and that it might affect his family. He is determined to root out conspiracies against his father and manipulate the Jianghu into protecting him.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 6, Wits 8
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External
Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,
Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,
Ride: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10, Talent: 3d10,
Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10,
Institutions: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2
Killing Aura Darkness: 0
Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Impeccable
Social Resources: Official Title
Grudges/Rivalries: Eunuch Zhang [196]
Allies: Vice Director Ge Cizhong [235],
Bureau Eight [176]
Minions: Bureau Eight Constables [176],
Shi Jia [225]
Equipment: Composite Bow [81]
Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary
Sun [39]
Counters: Ma's Deflecting Arrow [67]

THE DRUNKEN CONSTABLE See Constable Wang [194]

ENDLESS WELL MA ZHENLONG See Ma Zhenlong [215]

EUNUCH ZHANG (THE DEAD EUNUCH)

Eunuch Zhang experienced Fire Deviation as a young man, giving him a pale, pasty complexion that people say makes him look like a corpse. To make matters worse, he is incredibly intelligent, and looks down on anyone who he views as being less intelligent than himself. His Essence-Absorbing Seven Kicks increase his life force with every life they take, and he does not hesitate to use them.

Eunuch Zhang is an influential palace eunuch who has learned to make himself indispensable to people in power. He is also the secret head of Bureau Four. The emperor relies on his sound advice, and others rely on his vast access to assortments of pleasure and entertainment. He keeps track of incriminating information on as many people as possible in order to control them. He has a large network of informants and spies outside of Bureau Four as well.

He studied martial arts under the hermit Han Guo. Liu Xiuling (Sword Goddess) was also Han Guo's disciple. Suffering from a painful illness, Han Guo asked for a mercy killing, which Eunuch Zhang provided. Sword Goddess has despised him since then. He longs for her to forgive him and is plagued with guilt.

Recent Developments

Many years ago, Eunuch Zhang contributed to the rise of Empress Zheng to her current position in the palace. She and he are mutual admirers of one another, and he works hard to protect her interests. It can be said that all of his efforts are dedicated to ensuring her survival.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 10

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 1d10*, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Talent: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Command: 1d10*, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Ride: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 98

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Fire Deviation (Supreme Physical: looks like a corpse; modifiers to skills marked with * above)

Social Resources: Social Network

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210], Director Zhao Kai [195], Vice Director Ge Cizhong [235], Bureau Eight [176], Thief Goddess Li [231]

Allies: Empress Zheng, The Emperor, Bureau Four [175]

Minions: He Tian [200], Hua Yan [201], Guo the Tiny Mouse [198], Spy Network

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Essence-Absorbing Seven Kicks [42], Life-Chasing Sword I [50], Life-Chasing Sword II [50]

Counters: Steel-Shattering Finger [68], Thirst of the Hungry Corpse [69]

GOLDEN BOWL CHIEF

The Golden Bowl Chief is the leader of the Halls of Tranquillity. He was once a great villain of the martial world known as King Star Sabre, who ruthlessly slaughtered people with his infamous blade, and cared only for power. He trained Zhu Fei as his disciple and took her as his wife, against the orthodoxy of the Jianghu. Just as he was reaching the heights of power and was preparing to murder all of his enemies at a banquet he had orchestrated, he heard a distant monk reciting a lost sutra, and his heart became empty of any desire for earthly rewards. He left the banquet that evening, abandoned Zhu Fei, and retired to the Halls of Tranquillity, where he eventually became chief. He left his sword behind, and Zhu Fei took it up on his behalf. He no longer uses his martial arts and will no longer kill.

Recent Developments

Golden Bowl Chief is worried that a great evil is soon to emerge in the Jianghu. He is equally worried that the Halls' iron amulets will become the prize of this evil, which will use them to spread havoc in the martial world. He is now determined to destroy the source of the iron amulets' power.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Ride: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Gambling: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Institutions: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 1,589

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Pacifist

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Zhu Fei [244], Screaming Zither Sect [182]

Allies: Zhu Fei [244], Halls of Tranquillity [179]

Minions: Halls of Tranquillity Members

Equipment: Iron Amulet of the Halls of Tranquillity [95]

Signature Abilities: Slaughtering Blade [61], Hawk Killing Blade [46], Pure Stroke of the Blade [61]

Counters: Clouding Star Defence [64], Golden Armour Defence [65]

GRAND MISTRESS PILL FURNACE See Luo Qing [215]

GUO THE TINY MOUSE

Guo the Tiny Mouse is a very tall and burly man. His alternative nickname is the Forge God, because he produces the highest-quality weapons of the age. He also delights in learning all of the latest news about the martial world, and passing that news on to his next customer. He is a minion of Eunuch Zhang, and is mainly tasked with keeping an eye on Sword Goddess to protect her. As for the origin of his nickname, only a few people know the truth.

Recent Developments

Guo the Tiny Mouse learned about the massacre of Handan Escort Company, and something about the story doesn't sound right to him. He wants to investigate and find out what role Sword Goddess [210] played in the massacre.

Defences: Hardiness 9, Evade 5, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 0d10,

Endurance: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Survival: 3d10,

Gambling: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10,

Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10,

Reasoning: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10,

Institutions: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 78

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Obsession (Gossip)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Eunuch Zhang [196]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Essence-Absorbing Seven

Kicks [42], Life-Chasing Sword I [50]

Counters: Golden Armour Defence [65]

GU SHENGTONG (SHIN CHO-HEE)

Gu Shengtong is the Sheriff of Ao Town and King Feng's and left hand. She is also deeply in love with him, and has been his lover ever since his wife, Wan Shu (Lady Iron Hand), left. Now that Lady Iron Hand has departed, she does what she can to ensure she never returns. Her real name is not Gu Shengtong, it is Shin Cho-hee, and she is from Goryeo (Korea). If any were willing to help her permanently remove Lady Iron Hand from the King Feng's heart, she would reward them and lend men or other resources. She fights with a Woldo, a moon blade similar to a Guan Dao, and has unusual aptitude for martial arts. She is a reckless and dangerous opponent.

Recent Developments

Gu Shengtong is taking an interest in the events occurring around the Heart-Shaping Crown (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure). She is hoping to find people to recruit to help her deal with Lady Iron Hand.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 6, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 1d10, Survival: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 2d10, Theft: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6
Killing Aura Darkness: 210

Max Wounds: 4
Resist: 1
Eccentricities: Dutiful
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Wan Shu [236]
Allies: King Feng the Iron Sail [204]
Minions: Constables [247]
Equipment: Woldo (use Guan Dao [80] stats)
Signature Abilities: Exotic Martial Arts [42], Guan Dao Master [46]
Counters: Spinning Block [68], Spirit Finger [68]

GU XING

A handsome and proud swordsman, Gu Xing is the former husband of Cui Nuo. He is vain and well dressed, but also a braggart whose abilities fall far short of his claims. Although he presents himself as a righteous hero, deep down he is motivated by his own selfish desires, and would break any law, moral precept, or institutional rule to obtain what he desires. He fights using the very unusual Golden Crab Style.

He is a member of Dragon Clan but only invokes this association in times of crisis.

Recent Developments

Soon after his marriage to Cui Nuo, he saw Xie Lijuan [239] and met her gaze at a pavilion. He fell in love and left Cui Nuo to find his heart's desire. But Xie Lijuan is difficult to find, and aloof when found. He believes he must achieve something great to make a lasting impression.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Drinking: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Religion: 1d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2
Killing Aura Darkness: 26

Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0
Eccentricities: Beautiful
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Cui Nuo [195]
Allies: Dragon Clan [177], Lord Dragon's Nine Sons [213]
Minions: None
Equipment: None
Signature Abilities: Golden Crab Style [45]
Counters: Shadow Fist [68]

HANDSOME BEARDED HERO See Shuai Huixiong [225]

HANGING GHOST MONK

Hanging Ghost Monk dresses in tattered saffron robes and looks gaunt with ugly features. His eyes are sunken, and he is easily mistaken for a ghost. He has been depriving himself of food for killing a man in self-defence. He only eats a small portion each morning. He is a friend of Righteous Killer Long [223], knows a bit about the mystery in Ao Town (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure) and has vowed to kill any who investigate the matter. He is compassionate and does not wish to

kill, so will utter 'Amitabha' (a Buddhist mantra) before each strike or kill. He fights with a rope dart.

Hanging Ghost Monk is one of Auntie Ying's four sons. He rejected her ways long ago, although he remains dutiful.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Meditation: 3d10,

Survival: 2d10, Empathy: 3d10, Persuade: 1d10,

Command: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Religion:

3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 2

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Pacifist

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Auntie Ying's Wine Shop [172], Auntie Ying [188], Su Yi [230], Righteous Killer Long [223]

Equipment: Rope Dart [82]

Signature Abilities: Rope Dart Expert I [56], Rope Dart Expert II [56]

Counters: Spirit Finger [68]

HEARTLESS DAGGER See Xie Lijuan [239]

HE TIAN

He Tian is feared by the few who in the martial world who know of him. He is lean, with graceful features, and speaks in a raspy voice. A fisherman who prefers to live in seclusion, he is the devoted minion of Eunuch Zhang, whom he admires greatly. Although content to spend his time fishing and surviving in the woods alone, he occasionally hunts men. Eunuch Zhang often calls upon him to kill troublesome individuals. He possesses the Immortal's Fishing Pole and is skilled at laying traps and taking people by surprise (particularly through the use of disguises).

Recent Developments

While training, He Tian suffered Fire Deviation. This is what made his voice raspy (before this, his voice was clear and melodious). He believes he made a major breakthrough, which he did, to an extent, and also came to believe he was turning into either a god or a Buddha. He hasn't settled on the exact nature of his transformation yet. Currently he is obsessed with discovering what he has become.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 0d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Trade: 2d10,

Survival: 3d10, Disguise: 3d10, Theft: 3d10,

Empathy: 3d10, Reasoning: 3d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Institutions: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 320

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Fire Deviation (Physical: Raspy Voice; and Mental: God Delusion)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Eunuch Zhang [196]

Minions: None

Equipment: The Immortal's Fishing Pole [87]

Signature Abilities: Fishing Pole Master [43], Chess Board of Doom [39], Dragonfly in Floating Leaves [41], Snake Hidden in the Leaves [56], Dragon Hidden in the Mountains [41]

Counters: Immortal Fishing Pole Defence [65], Shifting Body [68]

HONG WENLONG (ILL-FATED BLADE)

Hong Wenlong, otherwise known as the Ill-Fated Blade or Ill-Fated Hong, is a masterful swordsman. His Pure Stroke of the Blade style is unrivalled, but he has suffered many injuries and tragedies that, when taken together, lead people to believe he is cursed by heaven. He rejects this, and believes he is favoured by heaven but just being tested. Thus, he strives to be heroic and jovial. His manner is odd and overly enthusiastic, and he always seems to be on the cusp of shedding tears. A rage is building that he might one day release.

Among the tragedies he has endured are the following: his left eye was taken by Chen Nianzhen; his wife (Li Mei) and daughter (Hong Fu) were killed by an unknown murderer; his right hand was eaten by a crocodile; and he is slowly going deaf due to natural causes.

Recent Developments

Hong Wenlong recently heard a rumour that the person who murdered his wife and daughter was connected to Illustrious Qilin Villa. He is planning to make his way there to investigate the matter, and is looking for little-known members of the Jianghu that he can send in as spies.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 8, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Athletics: 1d10, Meditation: 3d10, Survival:

2d10, Trade: 1d10, Drinking: 3d10, Gambling:

3d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10,

Jianghu: 3d10, Religion: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 145

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Deaf, Missing Limb, Partially Blind, and Unlucky (Deep Eccentricity)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Chen Nianzhen [193], wife and daughter's murderer

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Pure Stroke of the Blade [61], Studied Blade Style [57], Life-Chasing Sword I [50]

Counters: Sword Parry [69], Sword Cyclone [68]

HOU YI'S SICKLY GRANDSON See Lin Bo [207]

HUA YAN (LITTLE RAKSHA)

Little Raksha is short but wide, with a deranged demeanour. He often cackles maniacally, and he fights with an enormous serrated sabre. In combat, he relies on intuition and luck, exposing himself in order to find good opportunities to harm his foes. Little Raksha cares only for the pleasures of the world; he lives for nothing else, but hopes to die for something more. He is a minion of Eunuch Zhang, though secretly in league with the Black Cloud Cult. He learned his Crazy Raksha Style from a manual etched into a ruined pagoda in Dali. Fearful others would learn it, he tattooed the manual onto his body and destroyed the pagoda (few know about this, but the monk, Purity, is chasing after him over the matter).

HUA YAN, LITTLE RAKSHA

小羅刹華炎



Recent Developments

Little Raksha has made contact with the Black Cloud Cult and anticipates its rise in the martial world. He believes his position with Eunuch Zhang makes him valuable to the organisation, and is awaiting their orders.

Defences: Hardiness 9, Evade 7, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 3d10,

Meditation: 1d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10,

Trade: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10,

Theft: 2d10, Persuade: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10,

Institutions: 1d10, Jianghu: 1d10,

Peoples and Places: 2d10, Religion: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 90

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Persistent Laughter

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Purity [221]

Allies: Eunuch Zhang [196], Black Cloud Cult [173]

Minions: None

Equipment: Jagged Blade of the Raksha [85]

Signature Abilities: Crazy Raksha Style [60],
Giant-Sword Fighter I [45]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

IRON-HEADED BADGERS

These are three identical brothers. Each is equally dim-witted, but always happy and eager to enjoy wine. Their anger is easy to provoke, and they are famous for their Iron Head Striking Style. They are loyal to Iron-Toothed Bat King, who provides them with wine and entertainment regularly.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 7, Wits 3

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 2d10, Endurance: 2d10,

Athletics: 1d10, Detect: 2d10 (from 3d10),

Command: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10,

Meditation: 2d10, Drinking: 3d10,

Gambling: 1d10, Theft: 2d10, Jianghu: 1d10,

Peoples and Places: 2d10, Religion: 2d10,

Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 2

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Dim-witted

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Iron-Toothed Bat King [203]

Minions: None

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: Iron Head Striking Style [49]

Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65]

IRON-TOOTHED BAT KING

Iron-Toothed Bat King is an intelligent, ferocious and ugly collector of rare artefacts, famous for his iron teeth and his fear of beautiful women (he becomes obsequious in their presence). He has a flair for drama and loves to swoop in to introduce himself before attacking merchant caravans or escort wagons. He dresses in long leather robes reminiscent of a bat, and travels with his three Iron-Headed Badgers (whose loyalty he earns by providing them with wine and amusement). He often employs convoluted arguments and nonsensical logic to confuse his enemies. Although he talks like a malicious killer, he actually disdains killing, and often crafts excuses not to do so.

Recent Developments

He has learned that Handan Escort Company [179] is transporting the Obsidian Bat [95] to Kaifeng. This infuriates him, as he believes the object rightfully belongs to him, so he intends to take it if he can.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 8
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External
 Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,
 Speed: 3d10, Athletics: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10,
 Detect: 0d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Persuade: 1d10,
 Command: 1d10, Empathy: 2d10,
 Survival: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Theft: 3d10,
 Magical Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10,
 Peoples and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3
Killing Aura Darkness: 9

Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0
Eccentricities: Ugly
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: None
Allies: Qiu Yan [222]
Minions: The Iron-Headed Badgers [203]
Equipment: Iron Teeth [84]
Signature Abilities: Iron Tooth Style [49]
Counter: Engulfing Wings of the Night Sky [65]

JADE-LEGGED YOGI See Cui Nuo [195]

KING FENG THE IRON SAIL (KING IRON SAIL)

King Feng the Iron Sail, the ruler of Ao Town, is proud of his accomplishments, and is a loud, even flamboyant leader. He is good at building enthusiasm, and has an aptitude for forging strong political ties with government officials. However, he finds the daily management of his city dull, and is easily irritated with petitioners, whom he often punishes harshly. King Feng was once a military official, but he turned to piracy and led a pirate fleet that frightened the empire. He used that fear to secure a deal and establish Ao Town on the coast (he agreed to stop his own activities and protect the region against other pirates, in exchange for the freedom to operate a number of non-violent criminal enterprises in the area).

King Iron Sail's wife, Wan Shu (Lady Iron Hand), left him many years ago because he took Gu Shengtong as a lover. He regularly threatens to assemble the fleet and leave, hoping it will cause Lady Iron Hand to return. In her absence, he continues to keep company with Gu Shengtong, one of his most trusted officials.

Recent Developments

King Feng is eager to re-unite with his wife, Lady Iron Hand, and is looking for capable people to help locate her. He would reward such folk with riches and good positions in his city. He has also recently taken an interest in Buddhism, and is beginning to question his previous beliefs. He remains cruel, but his heart is open to change.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 8
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External
 Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,
 Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 1d10,
 Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Trade: 2d10,
 Gambling: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Command: 3d10,
 Persuade: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10,
 Endurance: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10,
 Jianghu: 2d10, Religion: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7
Killing Aura Darkness: 143
Max Wounds: 5
Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Coquettish Man
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Wan Shu [236]
Allies: Empire
Minions: Gu Shengtong [198], Constables [247]
Equipment: Double Axe [76]
Signature Abilities: Double Axe Style [41], Double
 Axe of the Sky [41], Pangu's Splitting Axe [55]
Counters: Crocodile Jaw Defence [64],
 Bending Reed Defence [63]

LADY IRON HAND See Wan Shu [236]

LADY REN

Lady Ren operates the Tea Smoke Teahouse, a respectable front for prostitution in Ao Town. She is something of an information hub, with numerous imperial contacts. She can use these contacts to offer people protection (usually for money). When she first opened the teahouse many years ago, a woman stumbled to the ground in front of her and died with a baby in her arms. The woman had been stabbed. Lady Ren never found out who she was, but took the child and raised it as her own. This child became Righteous Killer Long, whom she still regards as a son. Lady Ren prefers to deal with people without resorting to physical violence, but carries a weapon in the form of a flute, which she will use with deadly force if she must. When she does kill, she prefers to lull her enemies into a false sense of security and then strike when she is certain she can land a fatal blow.

Recent Developments

Lady Ren knows that Righteous Killer Long has been involved in recent killings related to Sun Lan the Yama Queen [228]. She is very worried for his safety.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 7, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Trade: 2d10,

Talent: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10,

Magical Arts: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10,

Empathy: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10,

Athletics: 1d10, Endurance: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 12

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Impeccable

Social Resources: Social Network

Allies: Righteous Killer Long [223]

Minions: None

Equipment: Flute [79]

Signature Abilities: Tender Hand of Death [58]

Counters: Closing Defence [64]

LENG BAN

Leng Ban is one of the heads of the Leng Piao Clan. He commands the Leng division. His wife, Piao Qingzhao, leads the Piao division. He is a handsome but devious man, and very prone to flirtatious behaviour. He once deeply loved his wife, but numerous infidelities on his part, and public remarks on her part, have turned his love into a deeply bitter feeling. Her tongue and mind are faster than his, and Leng Ban finds her speed of mind frustrating. He considers her his intellectual equal, but it takes him longer to formulate ideas. He and his wife are often called the Bitter Duo, and together they wield the Bitter Couple's Blades of Jade. He and Piao Qingzhao almost always travel together because their individual kung fu styles complement one another.

Despite his amorous behaviour, he otherwise lives a very plain lifestyle, forgoing as many other vices as he can in order to concentrate on sect management.

Recent Developments

Leng Ban, his wife, and their clan recently wiped out Red Eagle Sect. However, he was moved by Chen Nianzhen's scarred beauty, and let her escape. Her father, Chen Chao, and brother, Chen Haolin, both escaped as well. Now the Leng Piao Clan dominates Hangzhou. Leng Ban believes the Leng Piao Clan should fortify their position, and grow stronger before making any more dramatic moves.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10,

Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Detect: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Command: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10,

Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10,

Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6

Killing Aura Darkness: 456

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Coquettish Man

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Red Eagle Sect [182],

Chen Haolin [191], Chen Nianzhen [193],

Chen Chao [190], Piao Qingzhao [220],

Lu Bank [182], Lu Ren [214]

Allies: Society of the Solitary Temple [183],

Su Yi, [230], Leng Piao Clan [181],

Piao Qingzhao [220]

Minions: Leng Piao Disciples

Equipment: Bitter Couple's Blades of Jade [82]

Signature Abilities: Bitter Duo Joint Attack [36],

Bitter Couple Sharing Discontent [36]

Counters: Bitter Duo Defence [63],

Sword Cyclone [68]

LIANG HAI (SEVEN-HEADED SEA MONSTER)

Liang Hai previously made a living as a sea fisherman off the coast of northeast China. He once went missing in a violent storm, only to return five years later with a golden trident and a fantastic story. He claims to have travelled to the bottom of the sea and learned a powerful kung fu from a sea monster. Many experts have attempted to duel him, and all of them were killed except for one, who claimed that Liang transformed into a seven-headed sea monster during the fight. Liang Hai currently lives on an island off the coast of northeast China, where he refuses to see anyone. He is a terrifying opponent who becomes monstrous (in body and personality) when he uses his martial arts. He is good friends with Cui Nuo (Jade-Legged Yogi) and despises Xie Lijuan because he is envious of her.

Recent Developments

Liang Hai wants two things: to be free from the Fire Deviation that afflicts him and to be the number one fighter in the martial world. He knows that his affliction enhances his fighting prowess greatly, so he wants a cure that will not take away what he has gained.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 8, Wits 5
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Detect: 0d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 599

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Fire Deviation (Supreme Physical: seven hideous faces anytime he uses martial arts; Supreme Mental: becomes murderous whenever he uses Internal Martial Arts)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Lijuan [239]

Allies: Cui Nuo/Jade-Legged Yogi [195]

Minions: None

Equipment: Golden Trident [87], Fishing Pole [79]

Signature Abilities: Head-Defeating Style [46], Nine Fingers of the Void [54], Deadly Silver Spear (use with Trident) [40], Fishing Pole Master [43]

Counters: Reaching Defence [67], Clouding Star Defence [64]

LIN BO (HOU YI'S SICKLY GRANDSON)

Lin Bo is an archer with a sharp sense of humour who desires riches and fame, and believes he can rise through the ranks of the imperial army or the constabulary due to his skill with the bow. He claims to be a better shot than the Drunken Constable, although the two of them have never met, much less competed. One day he hopes to meet and defeat that legendary constable. He once joked that the reason he is so good with a bow and arrow is that he is Hou Yi's grandson. The name stuck, but with some modification: he is called 'Hou Yi's Sickly Grandson'. Lin Bo can't refuse sweets or meat dishes, and yet has a bizarre metabolism that ensures that he never gains weight no matter how much he eats. He is actually extremely skinny to the point of looking unhealthy. His eyes are dark and sunken, and his hair quite thin. He deeply desires the Bow of Ten Thousand Li [83].

Recent Developments

Lin Bo recently discovered that the cause of his sickly appearance is a pill given to him at birth by a mysterious woman (he does not know it, but this woman is Luo Qing [215], who is really his mother). He is now seeking to find her so he can be cured. In truth, she gave him Luo Qing's Cultivation Preparation [101]. Because of this, if he is nearly killed and recovers, his martial arts will vastly improve, giving him Cleaver of the Four Suns and Cleaver of the Nine Suns.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 8
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 3d10, Survival: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Meditation: 1d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Theft: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 90

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Greedy

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Drunken Constable [194]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Composite Bow [81]

Signature Abilities: Hawkeyed Assassin [46], Cleaver of the Solitary Suns [39]

Counters: Defence of Sun Bin [64], Resting Defence [68]

LI NIN (UNRAVELLED SWORD)

He was once known as Unrivalled Scholar, an admired, charming swordsman. Now he is Unravelling Sword. His reputation fell, stray hair by stray hair, until, haggard, he roamed the Jianghu like a madman. The classics fell from his mind, and the coin vanished from his robe. He talks to himself, unable to speak with others. Only wine, money, or blood awaken his spirit.

Unbeknown to most, the reason for his fall from grace was a failed romance with Qing Yun, the maidservant of Xie Lijuan. This fact is only known to Li Nin, Qing Yun, and Xie Lijuan, and is not the subject of rumour.

Recent Developments

Li Nin now works as an enforcer for Lu Bank, doing whatever dirty work they need him to do.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial

Arts: 3d10, Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10,

Gambling: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10,

Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 13

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Drinker

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Qing Yun [222],

Xie Lijuan [239]

Allies: Lu Bank [182], Lu Ren [214]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Strangling Hair [57],

Sorghum Slaughterer [56]

Counters: Breath of Yidi [64], Spirit Finger [59]

LI QIANG

Li Qiang was once a common soldier. After returning from a tour of duty, he found his family had been massacred. His search for revenge turned into an epic adventure of blood and martial arts. In the end, he mastered one of the most powerful martial arts to exact his revenge, slaughtering the culprits, their families, and anyone connected to them. But he paid a heavy price along the way. Although he became one of the most powerful martial artists in existence, he lost his sanity. After achieving vengeance, he disappeared into parts unknown. Decades passed, and his name became a thing of the past.

He is now an elderly man who stands with an upright and military-like posture. He has no hair, and a large scar on the right side of his scalp. In addition, he has a large amount of spiralling, long-healed scars on his hands and forearms. His skin has a crimson hue, and his body is covered with black veins. In the centre of his forehead there is the purple, glowing image of a sword that can open to reveal a third eye. In the place of teeth, he has a sharp pair of removable iron fangs that were the weapon of a fallen enemy. He has a crazed, imperious look that makes him seem like a mad god.

Li Qiang is the hidden master of the setting. He is much more powerful than normal characters and potentially very deadly if used.

Recent Developments

After many years in seclusion, Li Qiang has returned to the Jianghu for unknown reasons.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 9, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Muscle: 3d10, Speed: 3d10, Detect: 3d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 2d0, Survival: 3d10,

Talent: 1d10, Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 3d10,

Gambling: 2d10, Command: 3d10,

Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 3d10,

Religion: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 10

Killing Aura Darkness: 2,720

Max Wounds: 6

Resist: 4

Eccentricities: Living to Die, Scars, Hallucinations,
Hairless, Heroic Delusions, Black Veins,

No Teeth, Horrible Nightmares, Raspy Voice,
Obsessed with Collecting Teeth, Reddish Skin,
Believe Self to be a God

Social Resources: Unknown

Grudges/Rivalries: Unknown

Allies: Unknown

Minions: Unknown

Equipment: Iron Teeth [85]

Signature Abilities: Fist of Earth [43], Palm of
Metal [54], Breath of Fire [37], Kicks of Water
[49], Bombardment of Wood [37], Five
Elements Destruction [44]

Counters: Insightful Reaction [65], Thirst of the
Hungry Corpse [69]

LITTLE RAKSHA See Hua Yan [201]

LIU SHISHI

A famed courtesan from Fujian, Liu Shishi is noted for her skills in poetry and singing, but is particularly famous for her dancing (which she no longer performs for anyone). She prefers to remain seated because her feet were cut off by her sister, Sword Goddess, when her profession was first discovered by the family. She conceals her injury from most people, taking great pains to travel by sedan chair and hire handlers who carry her, so she never has to stand. She has two driving passions: hatred for her sister and love for Righteous Killer Long.

Recent Developments

Liu Shishi has been devising a dancing style using only her hands (this is her Inverse Stance). She recently mastered it and realised it could be used as a martial art as well. Following a rumour that Beggar Huang was in town and possessed the Shadow Manual, she plied him with free banquets and gained his pity by telling him about how her sister cut off her legs. He gave her the Shadow Manual, and she quickly mastered its contents.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

Talent: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 1d10,

Magical Arts: 2d10, Theft: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10,

Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10,

Endurance: 1d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 3

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Missing Limbs

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210]

Allies: Beggar Huang [189], Righteous Killer Long [223]

Minions: None

Equipment: Shadow Manual [96], Whip [81]

Signature Abilities: Inverse Stance [47], Shadow Whip Style [56]

Counters: Shadow Fist [68]

LIU XIULING (SWORD GODDESS)

Liu Xiuling has had many martial names throughout her career, but eventually people took to calling her the Sword Goddess. She is reputed to be the best sword fighter in the martial world, and it is believed that she has never lost a duel. She claims to adhere to the righteous principles of the Jianghu, but her nature is mercurial, and she breaks codes as often as she follows them. Her righteous demeanour often slips to reveal a more selfish centre. She is the sister of Liu Shishi, a courtesan whose feet she cut off upon learning the truth about her occupation. Sword Goddess is also a friendly rival to Xie Lijuan. She lives near Kaifeng at Immortal Sword Manor.

Sword Goddess studied under the master Han Guo, an eccentric hermit who is now deceased. She and Eunuch Zhang were fellow students, but since their master's death, they have become enemies. Han Guo became painfully ill and requested they perform a mercy killing. Sword Goddess refused, Eunuch Zhang agreed. Since that time, she has blamed him for their master's death and despises him (but cannot bring herself to kill him yet).

When Sword Goddess refused to marry Auntie Ying's son Su Yi, it created a longstanding grudge. One of the main reasons she refused was that, at the time, Su Yi was the student of her long-time friend Surgeon Zhang.

Recent Developments

Sword Goddess has grown irritated with her rival, Xie Lijuan, so she disguised herself as Xie, hired the Handan Escort Company to transport the Obsidian Bat to her Immortal Sword Manor, then killed most of the men, and cut off the chief's legs. She did this to get Xie Lijuan's attention (see Chapter Twelve for details).

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10,

Detect: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Talent: 1d10, Gambling: 3d10, Disguise: 2d10,

Drinking: 1d10, Empathy: 1d10,

Command: 1d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10,

Scholarly Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 199

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Gambler (Deep Eccentricity), Fire

Deviation (Mental: Yang-Oriented Personality,

Physical: Glowing Dot on Forehead)

Social Resources: Social Network (7d10)

Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Shishi [209], Handan

Escort Company [179], Eunuch Zhang [196],

Auntie Ying [188], Xie Lijuan [239]

Allies: Xie Lijuan [239], Immortal Sword Manor

[262], Surgeon Zhang [230]

Minions: Immortal Sword Manor Disciples

Equipment: Robe of the Sword Goddess [89],

Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Maiming Strike Style [51],

Life-Chasing Sword I [50], Life-Chasing Sword

II [50], Life-Chasing Sword III [50]

Counters: Spinning Block [68], Defence of

Sun Bin [64]

LONG DAWANG (LORD DRAGON)

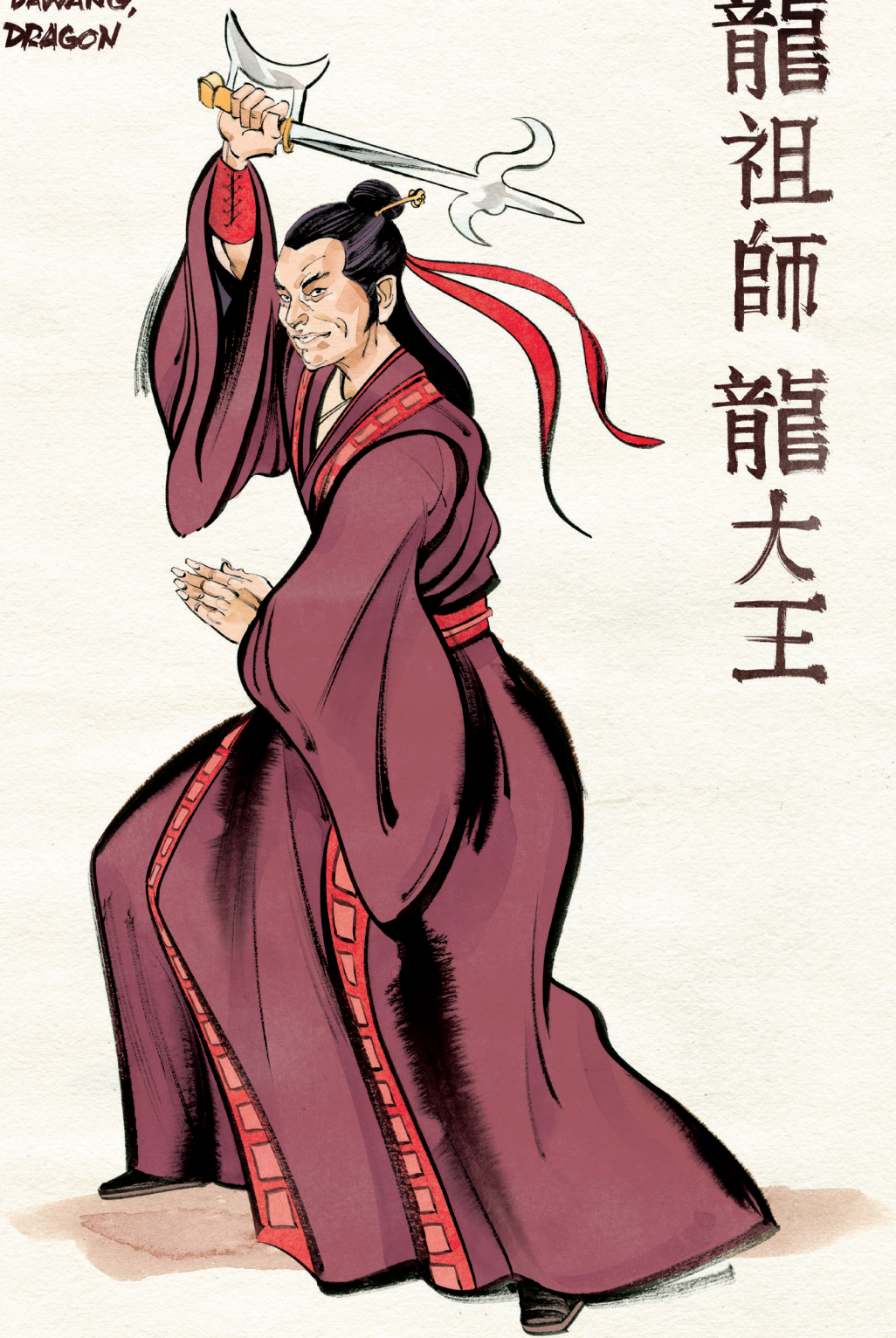
Lord Dragon is handsome and smiles more than a normal person should. Tall, he walks with confidence, and some say his features resemble those of a crocodile. His teeth are razor-sharp, which he conceals with false teeth. He has the bearing of a ruler, and the heart of a tyrant. He built a reputation for himself as a virtuous man, but in reality is incapable of remorse, and uses people, even his own children, as tools to advance his goals. He killed his own wife after she gave him his final son, because she knew all his secrets, and he only ever wanted her so she could bear children. Now he has his sights set on dethroning the emperor. He lacks the political connections to stage an inside coup, so plans to seek allies outside the empire to help him achieve his goal. He has made a point of avoiding entering alliances and making enemies, all with the goal of being viewed as a trustworthy arbiter in the Jianghu.

Recent Developments

Lord Dragon is actively seeking to work with the foreign powers to the north and west. But he needs intermediaries, and is recruiting such people. Lord Dragon recently experienced Fire Deviation when mastering the Head-Ripping Strike. It has made him obsessed with unusually shaped rocks, and made his teeth sharp like blades. He must also drink five cattles of human blood a day.

LONG DAWANG,
LORD DRAGON

龍祖師
龍大王



Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 7, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Detect: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Magical Arts: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 200

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Persistent Smile, Fire Deviation (Mental: Rock Obsession; Major Physical: Razor Teeth and Blood Drinking)

Social Resources: Social Network (Widows and Orphans)

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Five Phoenix Manor [178], Phoenix Empress of Mingshui [219]

Minions: Sons of the Dragon [214], Gu Xing [199]

Equipment: Chuanxin Finger Manual [96], Chicken Sickle [77]

Signature Abilities: Heart-Piercing Finger [61], Head-Defeating Style [46], Lengthening Arms of Ma [61], Head-Ripping Strike [61]

Counters: Crocodile Jaw Defence [64], Blast of Earth [63]

LORD DRAGON'S NINE SONS (SONS OF THE DRAGON)

These are the nine sons of Lord Dragon. They dress in fine robes, have the good looks of their mother, and most do not know the truth about her death (see Lord Dragon entry). To the world, they present themselves as gentlemen and dutiful sons. In reality, they are conniving and compete violently against one another for their father's favour. They use chicken sickles and are quite capable of decapitation. Their given names and birth rank are: Ren (ninth), Yang (eight), Ming (seventh), Gang (sixth), Yan (fifth), Fang (fourth), Chao (third), Li (second), and Jie (first). They are all surnamed Long.

Long Ren has the Chuanxin Finger Manual [96] tattooed on his back.

Recent Developments

Lord Dragon has sent all of his sons but the ninth and fourth to venture out and help him to secure an alliance with foreign powers. Recently, Long Yang learned the truth about their mother's death, and is holding the information to use to his advantage. It is unclear how the other brothers will react when they learn this. Some will side with their father, others will turn against him.

Feel free to create slight variations on the stat block to create differences between the nine brothers.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10, Detect: 0d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Meditation: 1d10, Trade: 1d10, Theft: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 30

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Beautiful

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Five Phoenix Manor [178]

Minions: None

Equipment: Chicken Sickle [77]

Signature Abilities: Head-Defeating Style [46]

Counters: Blast of Earth [63]

LU REN

Lu Ren is the chief of Lu Bank and a very charming man. He has a way with people, always giving his full attention and consideration to whoever he is talking with. He makes their struggles feel like his own, and understands how to connect with people by taking an interest in their concerns. An eccentric collector of rare objects, he is obsessed with amassing the body parts of great heroes. He gladly lends such men and women money, with the understanding that should they fail to repay him, he will take a limb. If a particularly famous person borrows money, he sometimes sends his henchmen to prevent them from repaying the loan so that he can place one of their limbs on his wall. Although he is wealthy beyond measure, he doesn't really care for money or worldly goods, nor is he superficial. He never judges a person by their looks, their wealth, or how they present themselves to the world. He likes people with talent, or who have an interesting spark of personality.

Lu Ren likes to hire skilled members of the martial world as enforcers for his organisation. His standards are very high. His favoured underling is Beauty Face Chang, whom he regards almost as a son. He often hires Screaming Zither Sect to perform tasks for him, and he admires their organization. He has a longstanding grudge with Moneybags Hu over a business deal gone sour.

Recent Developments

His favoured henchman, Beauty Face Chang, recently suffered Fire Deviation and has run amuck in the martial world. Lu Ren is desperately seeking a cure for Beauty Face's condition. He is also interested in retrieving the Screaming Zither from Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi, so it can be returned to Zhu Fei and Screaming Zither Sect.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 5, Wits 10

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 3d10, Endurance: 2d10,

Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 3d10, Talent: 3d10,

Trade: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and

Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 304

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Grim Collector

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Moneybags Hu [218],

Leng Piao Clan [181]

Allies: Screaming Zither Sect [182], Zhu Fei [244]

Minions: Beauty Face Chang [188], Li Nin [208],

Lu Bank Henchmen [182]

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: Fist of Earth [43],

Enlightening Fist Style [42], Tender Hand of Death [58]

Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65],

Hand-Shattering Defence [65]

LUO QING (GRAND MISTRESS PILL FURNACE)

Luo Qing is rumoured to be the only alchemist in the history of China to have successfully concocted pills to increase longevity. This is true. However, she detests people who grovel and beg for her services, and will frequently beat anyone who does so. She is also highly protective of her pills and formulas, and lives the life of a hermit to prevent people from getting them. Another reason she secludes herself is that she and her former husband, Ma Zhenlong, lost a wager to Moneybags Hu. They bet their infant child in a contest of martial skill for the Bow of Ten Thousand Li. Ma Zhenlong lost the contest when he failed to reach the top of a tree as fast as Moneybags Hu. Luo Qing honoured the bet, but vowed to take something of equal worth from Moneybags Hu one day. She fed their son her Cultivation Preparation Pill before handing him to Moneybags Hu. She also cast Ma Zhenlong from her life and became a hermit. She long believed her son to have passed away soon after Moneybags Hu took him, and has no idea he is alive and goes by the name Lin Bo [207].

Recent Developments

Luo Qing has recently heard that Moneybags Hu sold her son when he was an infant to a drunkard. She now wishes to leave her hermitage and kill both Moneybags Hu and Ma Zhenlong.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Survival, 2d10, Meditation: 2d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Command: 1d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Athletics: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 450

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Dutiful

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Moneybags Hu [218], Ma Zhenlong [215]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Luo Qing's Cultivation Preparation [101], Luo Qing's Longevity Elixir [101], Great Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Giant-Sword Fighter I [45], Giant-Sword Fighter II [45], Giant-Sword Thrower I [45]

Counters: Golden Armour Defence [65], Iron Armour Defence [65]

MA ZHENLONG (ENDLESS WELL MA ZHENLONG)

Ma Zhenlong spends most of his time in a drunken daze near the meat district of the local provincial capital. He often sleeps resting up against his hunting bow. No one knows why he is such a drunkard, but all it takes is news of 'quarry' to reach his ears, and he will perk up and hunt his prey down no matter where it is. When he meets divided or quarrelling families, it pains him, and he goes to great lengths to help. The reason for his drunken state is due to his history. He is the former husband of Luo Qing and the father of Lin Bo [207], although he doesn't know Lin Bo's current name, or if he still lives. He lost Lin Bo, and Luo Qing's love, when he failed in a contest of martial skill against Moneybags Hu; he was beaten in an attempt to race up a tree to win the Bow of Ten Thousand Li. Moneybags Hu then took his infant son and sold him at an inn. Ma Zhenlong still cares for Luo Qing, and does not wish to harm her if she comes after him (instead he will try to run away).

海量馬振龍

ENDLESS WELL
MA ZHENLONG



Recent Developments

Ma Zhenlong recently learned that his son might still be alive, and intends to find him. He hopes to re-unite with Luo Qing when he does so.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10, Theft: 1d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 3d10, Empathy: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Religion: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 97

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Drinker

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Luo Qing [215],

Moneybags Hu [218]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Composite Bow [81]

Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary Sun

[39], Cleaver of the Four Suns [39],

Cleaver of the Nine Suns [39]

Counters: Ma's Deflecting Arrow [67],

Hand-Shattering Defence [65]

MASTER GAO

Master Gao is a physician, and one of the three main sub-chiefs of Illustrious Qilin Villa. Known for his Truth Telling Pulse Reading Technique, he is a fraud who convinced the Parrot God he can discern lies by reading pulses. Any new recruits brought to the cult must have their pulse read by Master Gao to see whether they are a spy (in actual fact he just decides based on whether he likes the person or not).

Recent Developments

Master Gao is eager to take over the sect for himself. He believes Wu Tooth Beauty Niu might know he is a fraud, and this is making him desperate to find allies outside the cult who can help him to attain his goals.

Defences: Hardiness 3, Evade 4, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 0d10, Detect: 0d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 0d10, Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Killing Aura Darkness: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: None

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Song [240]

Allies: Illustrious Qilin Villa [180], Wu Tooth Beauty

Niu [239], Master Wu [218]

Minions: Servants of the Parrot God [181]

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

MASTER GUO

Master Guo is one of the sub-chiefs of Illustrious Qilin Villa. He manages the book keeping, accounting, scheduling, and daily affairs of the organisation. He knows all the ins-and-outs of the cult. He is ingratiating, having wormed his way into the graces of Wu Tooth Beauty Niu, and acts in a servile way towards Master Wu (despite sharing the same rank).

Recent Developments

Master Guo strongly dislikes Master Gao and is secretly working to have him eliminated from the organisation.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 7, Wits 6
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Talent: 2d10, Persuade: 3d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Religion: 3d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3
Killing Aura Darkness: 1
Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Order-Taker
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Song [240], Master Gao [217]
Allies: Illustrious Qilin Villa [180], Wu Tooth Beauty Niu [239], Master Wu [218]
Minions: Servants of the Parrot God [181]
Equipment: Curved Beauty Dagger [82]
Signature Abilities: Thought-Diminishing Dagger Style [58]
Counters: Closing Defence [64]

MASTER WU

Master Wu is one of the sub-chiefs of Illustrious Qilin Villa. He is a gruff but charming man, who is mainly in charge of recruiting new talent to the organisation. He is based in Kaifeng and has 15 Servants of the Parrot God under his command. Master Wu makes a point of recruiting as many handsome, educated men as he can to the organisation, believing this helps them to infiltrate the Imperial Bureaucracy. He also believes this endears him more to Wu Tooth Beauty Niu.

Recent Developments

Master Wu has recently been posted in Kaifeng and is working to cultivate agents in the palace.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 8, Wits 6
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Religion: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4
Killing Aura Darkness: 99
Max Wounds: 4
Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Order-Taker
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Song [240]
Allies: Illustrious Qilin Villa [180], Wu Tooth Beauty Niu [239], Master Guo [217]
Minions: Servants of the Parrot God [181]
Equipment: Curved Beauty Dagger [82]
Signature Abilities: Thought-Diminishing Dagger Style [58], Slaughtering Blade [61]
Counters: Closing Defence [64]

MASTER XIE See Xie Song [240]

MONEYBAGS HU

Moneybags Hu is a rich paper merchant who is only interested in profit, and in crushing his competition. He especially delights in challenging and tormenting his rivals in the martial world (particularly those with superior skills to his own). Nothing bothers him more than seeing others achieve greater mastery of martial arts. Because of his violent

ways, government connections, and cunning, he has a virtual monopoly on all paper production in the south of China. He is also addicted to gambling. Thanks to his vast resources, however, he always manages to come out on the lucky end of the dice. He acquired the Bow of Ten Thousand Li many years ago, and uses it to taunt his enemies in the martial world. He despised the heroic couple Luo Qing and Ma Zhenlong, and lured them into a contest with the bow, gaining their infant son in the process (who he sold to a drunk at an inn for a profit of 88 coins).

Moneybags Hu despises Five Phoenix Manor, which has interfered with many of his money-making efforts in the past. He wants to wipe its denizens from the martial world. Thanks to a bad business deal, he also has to deal with a grudge with Lu Ren.

Recent Developments

He recently hired Qiu Yan (Brocaded Granny) to kill Yan, the son of Pipa-Playing Witch. Now he wishes to expand his paper empire into the north.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 10

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Talent: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10,

Survival: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Gambling: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10, Theft: 2d10,

Persuade: 2d10, Command: 2d10,

Empathy: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Ride: 1d10,

Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10,

Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 568

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Greedy

Social Resources: Social Network

Grudges/Rivalries: Luo Qing [215], Ma Zhenlong [215], Pipa-Playing Witch [221], Five Phoenix Manor [178], Lu Ren [214]

Allies: Qiu Yan [222]

Minions: 18 Magnificent Bodyguards [246], 4 Divine Bodyguards [246]

Equipment: Bow of Ten Thousand Li [83]

Signature Abilities: Cleaver of the Solitary Sun [39], Acupoint Attack Style [35]

Counters: Crocodile Jaw Defence [64], Acupoint Defence [63]

PHILANTHROPIST WU See Wu Kang [237]

PHOENIX EMPRESS OF MINGSHUI

Also called the Lady of Five Virtues, the Phoenix Empress of Mingshui is short and somewhat petite. Her real name is Chen Ye, and she is the wife of the prefect of Shandong Province. She is in her late 60s, and makes no attempt to look more youthful than her present age. She dresses well, but not ostentatiously, relying on the talents of her family to produce quality attire. Her reputation for virtue, and her household's example to the empire, prompted the emperor to award her residence with a door plaque acknowledging her officially as the Phoenix Empress of Mingshui, Lady of Five Virtues.

Recent Developments

As the competition for the Supreme Pillar of the Wulin title approaches, Phoenix Empress wants to do something truly impressive. She is seeking skilled engineers to help design a tournament ground with complicated mazes and harrowing challenges.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,
Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,
Talent: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10, Command: 3d10,
Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10,
Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10, Peoples
and Places: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 3

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Dutiful

Social Resources: Loyal Servants

Grudges/Rivalries: Moneybags Hu [218]

Allies: Long Dawang [211], Dragon Clan [177]

Minions: Township Mistresses of Five Phoenix
Manor [178]

Equipment: Churning Horns of the Deer [86]

Signature Abilities: Crescent Moon Style [40],
Crescent Moon Queen [40], Dragonfly in
Floating Leaves [41]

Counters: Yan's Gambit [69], Bending Reed
Defence [63]

PIAO QINGZHAO

Piao Qingzhao is the leader of Leng Piao Clan along with her husband, Leng Ban. She commands the Piao division of the sect. She is pretty and graceful, with a fast mind and sharp tongue. She is blunt in the presence of incompetence, and her negative assessments of people tend to stick until they have redeemed themselves in her eyes. She once loved Leng Ban, but his rampant infidelities and slow wit infuriated her until all that was left was bitterness. Still, his and her complementary martial arts require that they fight as one, so she has to remain with him to maximise their effectiveness. Unlike her husband, Piao Qingzhao enjoys gambling and drinking. Together, they wield the Bitter Couple's Blades of Jade.

Recent Developments

Piao Qingzhao's clan recently defeated Red Eagle Sect under her leadership. Leng Ban was so struck by the scars and beauty of the Red Eagle Sect chief's daughter, Chen Nianzhen, that he let her go, and enabled the escape of Nianzhen's father, Chen Chao, and her brother, Chen Haolin. Piao Qingzhao is furious over that. Now she wants to ally with other sects and strike at Lu Bank to secure their power.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 6, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,
Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10,
Talent: 2d10 Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10,
Detect: 1d10, Reasoning: 3d10,
Command: 2d10, Magical Arts: 2d10,
Drinking: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6

Killing Aura Darkness: 345

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Gambler

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Red Eagle Sect [182],

Chen Haolin [191], Chen Nianzhen [193],
Chen Chao [190], Lu Bank [182], Lu Ren [214],
Leng Ban [205]

Allies: Society of the Solitary Temple [183],

Su Yi [230], Leng Ban [205]

Minions: Leng Piao Disciples [181]

Equipment: Bitter Couple's Blades of Jade [82]

Signature Abilities: Bitter Duo Joint Attack [36],
Bitter Couple Sharing Discontent [36]

Counters: Bitter Duo Defence [63],
Sword Cyclone [68]

PIPA-PLAYING WITCH

Pipa-Playing Witch is an old woman with a twisted body, who makes the most exquisite pipas and erhu, crafting the strings from strands of human intestine instead of the more common silk. It brings her great delight to make such strings from the remains of famous swordsmen (she pays for the bodies, as she isn't powerful enough to kill them herself). She is loyal to Sun Lan the Yama Queen, whose poetry she admires. She often rides a small mule named Broken Hoof. She is always willing to pay a high price for the body of a famous swordsman. She is a widow, and her son, Yan, died recently.

Recent Developments

Pipa-Playing Witch's son, Yan, was murdered in cold blood by Qiu Yan (Brocade Granny). She doesn't know the reasons, but is seeking revenge.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Talent: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Magical Arts: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Ride: 3d10, Religion: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 39

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Grim Collector

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Qiu Yan [222]

Allies: Sun Lan the Yama Queen [228]

Minions: None

Equipment: Resounding Pipa [89], Erhu of the Pipa-Playing Witch [104], Pipa of the Pipa-Playing Witch [104], Mule (Broken Hoof)

Signature Abilities: Bone-Shattering Song I [37]

Counters: Blast of Earth [63]

PRINCE KAI See Director Zhao Kai [195]

PURITY (SLEEPING BODHISATTVA)

Purity is the Dharma name taken by the man once known as Xu Tie. Before becoming a monk, he was a sadistic serial killer who targeted beautiful women. Later, he blinded himself, which is why people call him the Sleeping Bodhisattva. Few people know the truth of his past life.

Recent Developments

When Xu Tie saw the beauty mark on Yang Yu's face, he made her his next target. However, just before he was about to kill her, she unmasked herself, revealing her terrible face scar. Horrified, he fled, later blinding himself in the hopes of forgetting her scarred features. Purity has also heard that Hua Yan (Little Raksha) acquired valuable information by destroying a pagoda, and now regards him as an enemy.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 7, Wits 5
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Survival: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Disguise: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Detect: 3d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 3d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1
Killing Aura Darkness: 76
Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Blind, Grim Impulse (he is compelled to kill any woman he sees that has a mole or beauty mark)
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Yang Yu [242], Hua Yan [201]
Allies: None
Minions: None
Equipment: Vicious Monk's Spade [86]
Signature Abilities: A Needle in Silk Floss [54]
Counters: Deadly Wager [64]

QING YUN

Qing Yun is the maidservant of Xie Lijuan. She is arrogant and has a sharp tongue, preferring to humiliate potential foes rather than kill them, if possible. She once fell in love with Li Nin, but later abandoned him for reasons known only to herself. Only she, Li Nin, and her master Xie Lijuan know about the failed romance. She is loyal to Xie Lijuan, but also resents her fame, and hopes to surpass her one day.

Recent Developments

Qing Yun has recently heard about the Illustrious Qilin Villa [180] and is intensely curious. She believes if she can hire someone to help her steal the Parrot God, this will serve as an excellent gift for her master, Xie Lijuan. She believes her master will marry someone in the near future, and hopes to secure it as a wedding gift. In addition to this, Qing Yun recently stole the Asura Trident from Wu Kang so that Xie Lijuan could use it to hire people in Ao Town.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 8
Skills: External Martial Arts: 3d10, Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Survival: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10, Theft: 1d10, Gambling: 2d10, Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 2d10, Command: 3d10, Persuade: 1d10, Empathy: 2d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3
Killing Aura Darkness: 22
Max Wounds: 4
Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Irascible
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Li Nin [208]
Allies: Xie Manor [184], Xie Lijuan [239], Shuai Huixiong [225], Song Tuan [226]
Minions: None
Equipment: Dagger [77]
Signature Abilities: Lijuan's Flower Shaming Beauty [50], Lijuan's Moon-Eclipsing Gaze [51]
Counters: Lijuan's Deadly Dagger [67], Lijuan's Crippling Finger [67]

QIU YAN (BROCADED GRANNY)

Brocaded Granny wanders China selling her elaborately patterned robes and gowns. Her talent is legendary, but peddling brocaded garments is a cover for her real occupation: an assassin. Although far from being the most skilled killer, she uses her kindly smile, knowledge of magic, and nurturing demeanour to get close and kill targets (sometimes using a minor disguise or sleight of hand). She has a clever tongue, and isn't afraid to insult her foes. She also enjoys drinking, and consumes a steady quantity of baijiu

during the day. Brocaded Granny is tender and kind to any who treat her respectfully, and food is an easy way to win her loyalty. She is good friends with Chen Haolin, who always treats her respectfully.

Recent Developments

On a recent venture to Kaifeng, Brocaded Granny saw Iron-Toothed Bat King and fell instantly in love. She is too embarrassed to approach him or reveal her feelings to anyone, but has privately vowed to help him succeed and protect him if she can. Brocaded Granny recently killed Yan, the son of Pipa-Playing Witch, for a mere 75 coins (paid by Moneybags Hu).

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Endurance: 3d10,

Detect: 2d10, Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 1d10,

Trade: 3d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10,

Drinking: 3d10, Disguise: 1d10,

Magical Arts: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Religion: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 20

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Drinker

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Pipa-Playing Witch [221]

Allies: Chen Haolin [191]

Minions: None

Equipment: Needles and Threads [82],

Standard Poison [100], Brocaded Granny's

Cruel Threads [83]

Signature Abilities: Needle and Thread

Expert [53]

Counters: Veneer of Vulnerability [63]

QUEEN OF BEGGARS See Tree Frog Gao [235]

RAMBLING IMMORTAL See Sha Nuoge [224]

RIGHTEOUS KILLER LONG

Righteous Killer Long spends most of his time in brothels and gambling halls, pursuing pleasure. But when he hears of an injustice against an innocent or helpless person, he is filled with rage and sets out to find and kill the responsible party. He is particularly sensitive when the people harmed are involved in his favourite pastimes. He is currently in love with the famed courtesan Liu Shishi, and grows mad with jealousy if anyone else earns her attention. He was once friends with Boss Yan of Schooner Casino in Ao Town, but had a falling out when he caught Yan's casino cheating regularly. He was raised by Lady Ren of the Tea Smoke Teahouse. He had a sworn brother named Long Hongyao who died of a mysterious illness. Since his brother's death, Righteous Killer Long has remained close to Long Hongyao's wife, Zhao Jing.

Recent Developments

Righteous Killer Long is in Ao Town and has possession of the Heart-Shaping Crown (he stole the crown from Sun Lan). There he is spending his days with Liu Shishi as he tries to protect the crown (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure).

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Survival: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Talent: 1d10,

Drinking: 3d10, Gambling: 3d10,

Command: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Endurance: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Scholarly Arts: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 4

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Obsession (Brothels and Gambling)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Sun Lan the Yama

Queen [228], Boss Yen

Allies: Liu Shishi [209], Zhao Jing [243], Lady Ren [205], Hanging Ghost Monk [199]

Minions: Actors

Equipment: Guan Dao [80]

Signature Abilities: Guan Dao Master [46],

Guan Dao Tornado Style [46]

Counters: Reaching Defence [67],

Spinning Block [68]

RUTHLESS IMMORTAL See Chen Nianzhen [193]

SAINTLY SURGEON See Surgeon Zhang [230]

SEVEN-HEADED SEA MONSTER See Liang Hai [206]

SHADOW DEMON See Song Mo [226]

SHA NUOGE (RAMBLING IMMORTAL)

Rambling Immortal is a gregarious and eccentric martial hero who roams the Jianghu in an endless pursuit of amusement. If something or someone isn't fun, she immediately loses interest. When she speaks, her words flow relentlessly, and she jumps from topic to topic. Although she seems harmless, her fists are cruel. She prefers to lure enemies into a position where she can counter and break a limb.

Recent Developments

Rambling Immortal was recently playing chess with a man in Kaifeng, when Qiu Yan (Brocaded Granny) poisoned and killed him, then fled. Since then, she has been looking for Brocaded Granny so she can break her arms and legs.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 8, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,

Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Drinking: 2d10, Gambling: 3d10, Theft: 1d10,

Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Peoples and Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6

Killing Aura Darkness: 127

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Obsession (fun)

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Qiu Yan [222]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: Head-Defeating Style [46],

Enlightening Fist Style [42]

Counters: Hand-Shattering Defence [65],

Leg-Snapping Defence [67]

SHI JIA

Shi Jia is a young constable who works for Bureau Eight. He is not very skilled in martial arts. However, his reputation for being a rising genius detective has prompted Bureau Eight to assign two bodyguards to protect him. He is somewhat cocky and arrogant, but also a coward because of his deficiency in martial arts. Unlike most constables in Bureau Eight, he usually operates alone, often forcing his bodyguards to lurk in the shadows until threats emerge.

Recent Developments

He has been investigating a series of murders in Ao Town and believes they are connected to Sun Lan the Yama Queen [231]. He is looking for people to help him.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 0d10, Detect: 3d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Inept Martial Artist

Social Resources: Loyal Bodyguards [246]

Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Four [175],

Zhao Jing [243]

Allies: Bureau Eight [176]

Minions: 2 Loyal Bodyguards [246]

Equipment: Bureau Eight authority token

Signature Abilities: Art of 10,000 Eyes and Ears [35]

Counters: Insightful Reaction [65]

SHUAI HUIXIONG (HANDSOME BEARDED HERO)

Handsome Bearded Hero is passionate and adores music, literature, and fighting. He is frequently in love, and his heart is often broken. When in love, he experiences profound insights. He is at the beck and call of Xie Lijuan because he owes her a thousand golden taels.

Recent Developments

Handsome Bearded Hero met Wan Shu (Lady Iron Hand) while investigating the matters in Ao Town for Xie Lijuan (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure). He disguised himself as a lone swordsman named Ma Tang, then fell in love with her through a shared interest in music. After, he concocted a plan to impress Lady Iron Hand by using his good looks as bait to lure Beauty Face Chang to her so she can get revenge (Beauty Face Chang is infuriated by handsome men).

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Meditation: 1d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 3d10, Disguise: 3d10, Drinking: 2d10, Gambling: 1d10, Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 2d10, Endurance: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10, Religion: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2

Killing Aura Darkness: 12

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Beautiful

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Beauty Face Chang [188]

Allies: Xie Lijuan [239], Wan Shu [236],

Qing Yun [222]

Minions: None

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Snake Hidden in the Leaves [56]

Counters: Golden Amour Defense [65]

SLEEPING BODHISATTVA See Purity [221]

SONG MO (SHADOW DEMON)

Song Mo calls himself the 'Shadow Demon', and tries to convince people that he is a depraved serial killer who murders martial artists and uses their blood to make maroon-coloured pots. He will often tell potential victims that he uses the Nine Fingers of the Void to kill people in a way that makes it seem like they died of natural causes. He claims that for this reason, no one is aware of his existence, nor of the hundreds of people he has killed. The truth is that he is little more than a con-artist who intimidates his victims into giving him their wealth to 'spare their lives'. Although the Nine Fingers of the Void is a real technique, he actually doesn't know how to use it.

Recent Developments

Song Mo's activities have come to the attention of Bureau Eight. They do not know who he is, only that a person matching his description has been swindling people throughout China. He is unaware that they have begun to investigate him.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

Survival: 3d10, Trade: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Theft: 3d10, Disguise: 2d10, Gambling: 1d10,

Persuade: 3d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning

1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Peoples and Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2

Killing Aura Darkness: 2

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Greedy

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: None

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Aura of Brutality [60]

Counters: Deadly Wager [64]

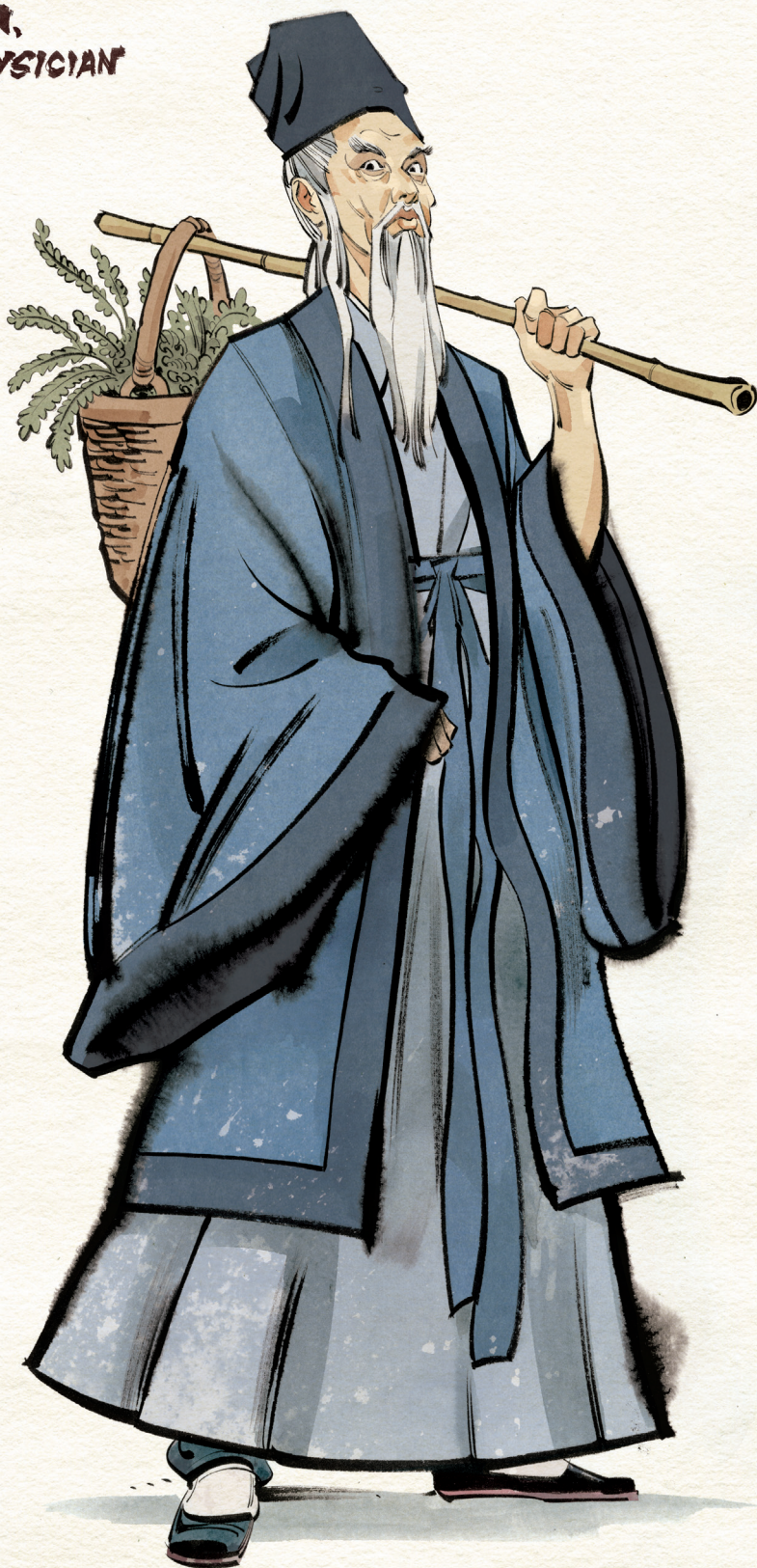
SONG TUAN (BONE PHYSICIAN)

Bone Physician is a retired official who resides in Fujian in Black Owl Village. He is tall and strange, rarely changing his expression unless the subject of death arises. He is fascinated by death, and is enthusiastic and curious whenever he finds it. In his past life as an official, his favourite duty was examining bodies during inquests so he could learn more about the structure of the human form. Now he is impatient and likes to examine bodies as they slip into death, often with his help. Although deeply depraved in this respect, he still aids those who live up to his high standards of merit (he will aid those who are truly capable). He is also the inventor of Bone Poison. He is currently being investigated by Bureau Eight. He discovered this through the investigations of Zhao Jing, who he hired after a failed assassination attempt. He is also being pursued by Ancient Willow Sect, who want his techniques and leadership (he believes they are beneath him).

Bone Physician's obsession with death began as a child when his village was attacked by bandits and all the people were slowly killed. This triggered a fascination that never left, but also a longing for the home of his childhood. When he retired, he recreated his past in the form of Black Owl Village, by kidnapping people and forcing them to live there like the folk he remembered as a child. He is still seeking to abduct new victims to fill roles in his village.

SONG TUAN,
BONE PHYSICIAN

白
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Recent Developments

Bone Physician has taken an interest in the health of Xie Lijuan, periodically visiting her to try new remedies. He is genuinely perplexed by her case, and sincere in his efforts to cure her. He is actively recruiting assistants to help him track down rare herbs and old medicine manuals towards that end.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 10

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 3d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Survival: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Reasoning: 3d10,

Endurance: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, People and

Places: 1d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 548

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Grim Impulse

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Eight [176], Ancient Willow Sect [172]

Allies: Xie Manor [184], Xie Lijuan [239], Qing Yun [222], Zhao Jing [243], Black Owl Village [175]

Minions: Black Owl Villagers

Equipment: Bone Poison [100], Black Owl Powder [100], Black Owl Antidote [103], Bone Poison Antidote [103], Manual of the Bone Physician [96]

Signature Abilities: Tap of the Bone Physician I [57], Tap of the Bone Physician II [57], Acupoint Attack Style [35]

Counters: Defence of Sun Bin [64], Acupoint Defence [63]

SUCCUBUS YANG See Yang Yu [242]

SUN LAN THE YAMA QUEEN

Sun Lan the Yama Queen is one of the most feared and alluring denizens of the martial world. She uses her Ten Needles of the Courts of Hell to immobilise victims (sometimes martial artists, but other times ordinary citizens) and torture them to death. She claims that their screams purify her mind and heart, and help her to write the most beautiful poetry in all history. Her poetry is widely regarded as the work of genius, although few people know the truth of its origin. She has green eyes, smells of incense and fresh blood, and prefers black and violet garments.

Recent Developments

Sun Lan travelled to Ao Town and lost possession of the Heart-Shaping Crown to Righteous Killer Long. She is planning a great massacre with the help of the Poets of the Mirrored Sky, the goal being to draw out Righteous Killer Long and get revenge (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure).

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 5, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 0d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Talent: 3d10,

Magical Arts: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10,

Theft: 2d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10,

Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10,

Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10,

Religion: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 484

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Grim Impulse

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Righteous Killer Long [223]

Allies: None

Minions: Pipa-Playing Witch [221], Poets of the Mirrored Sky Society

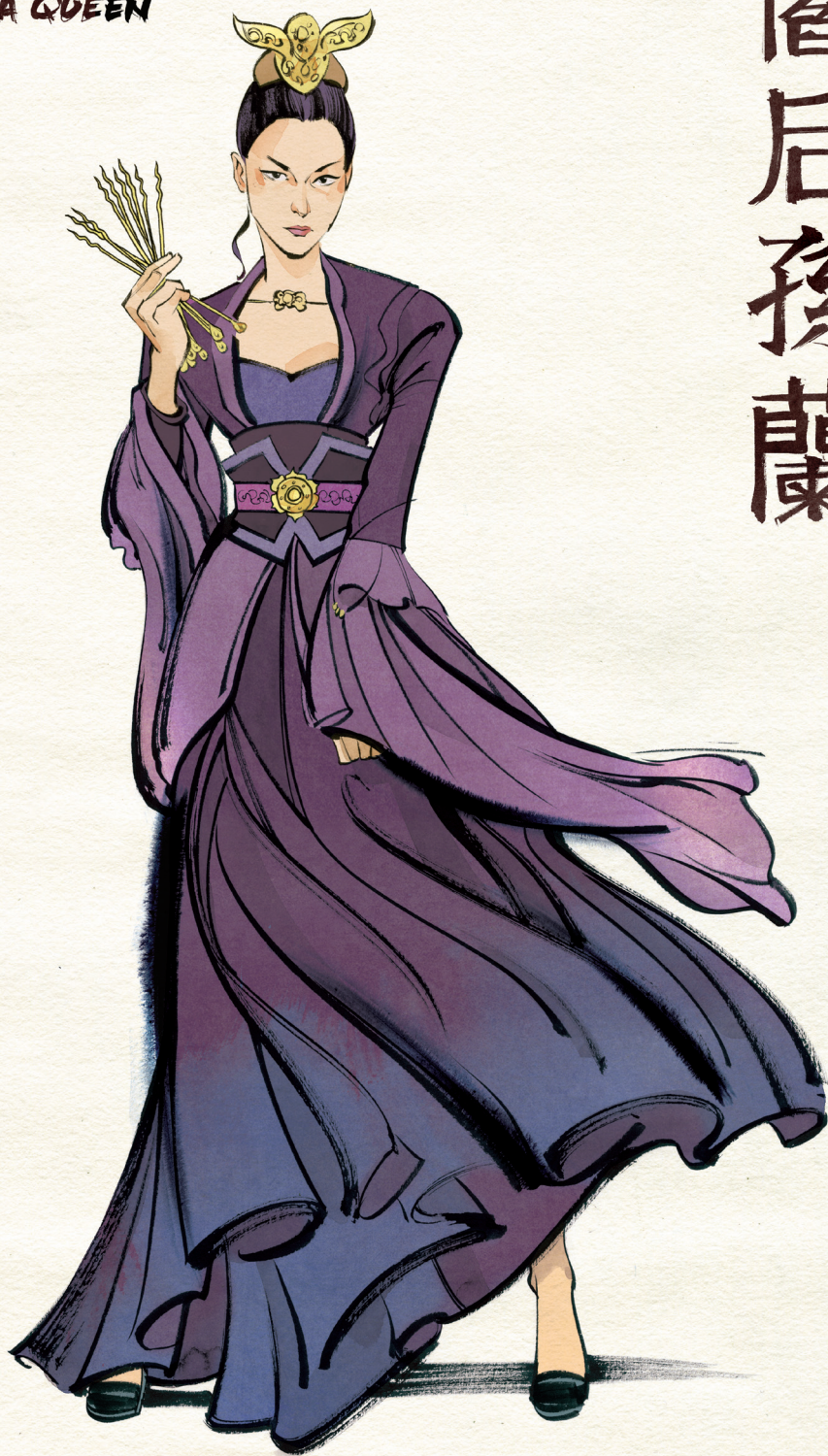
Equipment: Ten Needles of the Courts of Hell [93], Golden Thread [79]

Signature Abilities: Needle Master [54], Inspired Word [47], Golden Thread Expert [46]

Counters: Raging Fire [67], Bloat of the Toad [64]

SUN LAN
THE YAMA QUEEN

閻后孫蘭



SURGEON ZHANG (THE SAINTLY SURGEON)

Surgeon Zhang is known for his nearly magical ability to cure any wound. However, after becoming disillusioned with the Jianghu, he joined the Order of the Golden Bowl in the Halls of Tranquillity. Despite having retired, he still uses his abilities to help the sick and injured, with a stipulation: that they either join the Order of the Golden Bowl, or perform an incredibly virtuous act of heroism. He has many allies, those being the individuals he has rescued from death with his skills. Su Yi of the Society of the Solitary Temple is one of his former students.

Recent Developments

Surgeon Zhang was once friends with the Bone Physician, but eventually became disgusted with his depravities. He managed to end the friendship with no grudges on either side. Later, Surgeon Zhang's apprentice betrayed him in the hope of becoming Bone Physician's apprentice. During a heated argument, a fight broke out, and Surgeon Zhang killed his apprentice, which led to his decision to retire from the Jianghu.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 10, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10,

Empathy: 3d10, Reasoning 1d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples

and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10,

Religion 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 8

Killing Aura Darkness: 1

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Pacifist

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Society of the Solitary Temple [183], Su Yi [230]

Allies: Beggar Huang [189], Qiu Yan [222], Hong Wenlong [201], Liu Xiuling [210], Qing Yun [222], Wu Kang [237], Zhu Fei [244], Halls of Tranquillity [179]

Minions: None

Equipment: Fly-Whisk [79]

Signature Abilities: Eyes of the Red Pine Immortal [42], Healing Hands of the Mercy Goddess [47], Healing Benefaction of the Mercy Goddess [47]

Counters: Clouding Star Defence [64], Steel-Shattering Finger [68]

SU YI

Su Yi is a rank-5 palace eunuch who adores art, especially the art of the famed painter Li Cheng. He is the head of the Society of the Solitary Temple and the son of Auntie Ying. He is also the brother of Hanging Ghost Monk. Su Yi is especially ugly, with warts and sunken features. However, he is kind to his friends, and loyal to family. He studied martial arts under Surgeon Zhang before his retirement. Before he became a eunuch, his mother, Auntie Ying, tried to broker a marriage deal between him and Sword Goddess, but it failed (leading to a grudge).

Recent Developments

Su Yi has reached an impasse in his martial arts training. He wants to find a way to force Surgeon Zhang to teach him his remaining skills. He will use whatever means he can to achieve this.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7, Wits 9
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Talent: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Empathy: 3d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10, Religion: 1d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5
Killing Aura Darkness: 0
Max Wounds: 4
Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Ugly
Social Resources: Social Network
Grudges/Rivalries: Liu Xiuling [210], Surgeon Zhang [230]
Allies: Society of the Solitary Temple [183], Auntie Ying [188], Hanging Ghost Monk [199]
Equipment: Fly-Whisk [79]
Signature Abilities: Healing Hands of the Mercy Goddess [47], Healing Benefaction of the Mercy Goddess [47]
Counters: Steel-Shattering Finger [68]

SWORD GODDESS See Liu Xiuling [210]

THIEF GODDESS LI

Thief Goddess Li is said to have been born with hands that can pick any lock. Unfortunately, she often loses her ill-gotten gains playing dice. Even worse, she will not hesitate to decapitate anyone who she thinks has cheated her, which is usually anyone who beats her at dice. For the most part, she avoids stealing from powerful martial artists, and focuses her efforts on merchants, government officials, and the like. If she is hired for a large sum of money, she will consider stealing from Jianghu experts, but will always attempt to frame someone else for the deed. Her permanent residence is Ao Town, where she runs Li's Antiques (and uses it to fence her stolen goods).

Recent Developments

In an elaborate heist, she stole the Cloak of Qin Shihuang from the Imperial Palace in the capital city. As a result, she is currently under investigation by Bureau Four.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Disguise: 1d10, Drinking: 1d0, Gambling: 1d10, Theft: 3d10, Detect: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Athletics: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10, Religion: 1d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6
Killing Aura Darkness: 20

Max Wounds: 4
Resist: 1
Eccentricities: Gambler
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Four [175]
Allies: None
Equipment: Staff [81], Cloak of Qin Shihuang [94]
Signature Abilities: Uncanny Hands [58], Concealment from Ghosts and Gods [40]
Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65], Shifting Body [68]

TOWERING BODHISATTVA

Towering Bodhisattva appears to be an extremely tall and menacing monk who wanders with a begging bowl and asks for donations. Any who refuse, he kills. He is actually two people, an orphaned brother and sister named Yang Leng and Yang Xiaoping. The former stands on the latter's shoulders to create the illusion of being a tall monk. Their martial arts are also not so great, but because there are two of them, and it seems like only one person attacking, this creates the impression that Towering Bodhisattva is a deadly fighter.

Recent Developments

Due to a chance turn of events, Wu Kang (Philanthropist Wu) recently discovered the secret of the Towering Bodhisattva. This enraged him, and a fight broke out, only to be interrupted by Tranquil Killer Qing Ying and Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi. Since then, Tranquil Killer and Tranquil Scholar have been the Towering Bodhisattva's good friends.

Separation

If separated, they cannot use their Signature Abilities and Counters.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Meditation: 1d10,

Survival: 3d10, Disguise: 3d10, Gambling: 1d10,

Theft: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Persuade: 3d10,

Reasoning: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10,

Speed: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and

Places: 1d10, Religion: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 6

Killing Aura Darkness: 5

Max Wounds: 4/4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Destitute

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Wu Kang [237]

Allies: Tranquil Killer Qing Ying [232], Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi [233]

Equipment: Monk's Spade [80]

Signature Abilities: Pole Stance [55],

Professional Advantage [55]

Counters: Bitter Duo Defence [63], Shifting Body [68]

TRANQUIL KILLER QING YING

Tranquil Killer Qing Ying wears fine blue and white and is the picture of calm. His anger is rare, but when unleashed, he is immeasurably violent. Witnesses say it is either horrifying or an honour to behold. He is a prolific painter, focusing mostly on mountain landscapes and fish. He is sworn brothers with Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi, as they both enjoy peaceful music and calm.

Recent Developments

As a result of experiencing Fire Deviation during a recent session of meditation, his hair turned bright blue, and he began to experience hallucinations.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 6, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Gambling: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Muscle: 3d10, Speed: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10, Religion: 1d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7
Killing Aura Darkness: 37
Max Wounds: 5
Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Killer
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: None
Allies: Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi [233], Towering Bodhisattva [232]
Minions: None
Equipment: Sword [81]
Signature Abilities: Blood Shedding Hero Style [36], Maiming Strike Style [51], Weapon Adept (Sword) [58]
Counters: Metal Skin [67], Sword Cyclone [68]

TRANQUIL SCHOLAR HUA SHIYI

Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi is soft-spoken and well-mannered. He prizes quiet and peaceful enjoyment above all else, and is particularly fond of poetry and music. He detests interruptions and distractions. When anyone disrupts the peace or speaks loudly during a performance, he gently reminds them that ‘the virtuous are tranquil’. If they persist, he removes the offending part of the person’s body (for instance, their tongue if they were talking, or their hands if they were clapping), and then calmly resumes his tranquility. He is sworn brothers with Tranquil Killer Qing Ying.

Recent Developments

As a result of experiencing Fire Deviation, his eyes turned golden, and he came to believe that he is the reincarnation of Han Xiangzi, one of the Eight Immortals of Chinese mythology. In that guise, he attacked the Screaming Zither Sect, killed several of their disciples, and took their Screaming Zither.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 9, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Meditation: 3d10, Talent: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Institutions: 1d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10, Religion: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 3d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 9
Killing Aura Darkness: 12
Max Wounds: 5
Resist: 3

Eccentricities: Fire Deviation (Physical: Solid gold eyes; Mental: thinks he is the reincarnation of Han Xiangzi)
Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Screaming Zither Sect [182]
Allies: Tranquil Killer Qing Ying [232], Towering Bodhisattva [232]
Minions: None
Equipment: Screaming Zither [89], Flute [79]
Signature Abilities: Melancholic Song I [53], Melancholic Song II [53], Bone-Shattering Song I [37], Bone-Shattering Song II [37]
Counters: Insightful Reaction [65], Resting Defence [68]

TRANQUIL SCHOLAR
HUA SHIYI

安靜秀才華師伊



TREE FROG GAO (QUEEN OF BEGGARS)

Tree Frog Gao, known to some as Queen of Beggars, maintains her job as a lowly street sweeper, but the truth is that in the course of her work, she uses her incredible Lightness Martial Arts and her whip to snatch up any valuables she sees. As a result, she is actually quite rich. She maintains no allegiances, but occasionally takes riches from the wrong person, and is forced to flee to another city. She gives what wealth she doesn't want to local beggars, a large group of whom have taken to calling her their Queen. Tree Frog Gao regards Beggar Huang as her only true disciple. She currently hates the Illustrious Qilin Villa, and wants them to be destroyed.

Recent Developments

Tree Frog Gao's disciple, Beggar Huang, recently joined the Illustrious Qilin Villa. This angered her, but she is patient and will wait to see what he decides to do in the end. She sent her group of loyal beggars to spy on him. This is the network of beggars he believes he has built.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 9, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 3d10, External

Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Athletics: 2d10,

Detect: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10,

Trade: 1d10, Theft: 3d10, Disguise: 1d10,

Drinking: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10,

Reasoning: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10,

Peoples and Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 188

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Greedy

Social Resources: Social Network (Beggars)

Wealth Resources: Illicit Business

Grudges/Rivalries: Illustrious Qilin Villa/Cult of the Parrot God [180], Wu Tooth Beauty Niu [239]

Allies: None

Minions: Beggar Huang [189], Beggars [245]

Equipment: Whip [81]

Signature Abilities: Ferocious Whipping Style [43], Flawless Whip Immortal [44], Flickering Whip Deity [45]

Counters: Grip of the Whip [65], Shifting Body [68]

UNRAVELLED SWORD See Li Nin [208]

VICE DIRECTOR GE CIZHONG

Vice Director Ge Cizhong is an imperial tutor responsible for educating many of the emperor's children. He helped create Bureau Eight and is loyal to Director Zhao Kai (Prince Kai). He views Zhao like a son or nephew, and spends a great deal of effort protecting him from intrigue and harm. He has no martial abilities, but is intelligent and cunning. He also wields tremendous influence in the palace.

Recent Developments

Vice Director Ge Cizhong recently began experiencing troubling symptoms. His lungs explode in pain when he exerts himself, his pulse feels erratic, and he experiences bouts of extreme dizziness. Ge Cizhong believes he is dying, and is desperate to find someone capable of replacing him as the prince's protector.

Defences: Hardiness 3, Evade 4, Wits 10
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External
 Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,
 Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 0d10, Detect: 3d10,
 Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Trade: 2d10,
 Talent: 3d10, Persuade: 3d10, Reasoning: 3d10,
 Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 1d10,
 Institutions: 3d10, Religion: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0
Killing Aura Darkness: 0
Max Wounds: 1
Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Dying
Social Resources: Social Network
Grudges/Rivalries: Bureau Four [175],
 Eunuch Zhang [196]
Allies: Bureau Eight [176], Director Zhao Kai [195]
Minions: Bureau Eight Constables [176],
 Shi Jia [225]
Equipment: None
Signature Abilities: None
Counters: None

WAN LANG

Wan Lang is a subchief of the Handan Escort Company, serving under Chief Ban Fei. He seems loyal and is always careful to tend to his chief's needs. He has a wife named Yang Tao, whom he loves dearly. They have four children: two girls named Wan Hou and Wan Na, and two boys named Wan Bu and Wan Yong.

Recent Developments

Wan Lang is secretly working with Iron-Toothed Bat King to help him take the Obsidian Bat [95]. He needs the money now that the organisation is falling apart, and regards the chief's insistence on honouring the remaining contracts as foolish. He was given a medallion by Iron-Toothed Bat King to present to the Iron-Headed Badgers.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 7
Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External
 Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10,
 Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 3d10,
 Survival: 2d10
Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2
Killing Aura Darkness: 4
Max Wounds: 3
Resist: 0
Eccentricities: Blood Fear

Social Resources: None
Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Lijuan [239]
Allies: Yang Tao [242], Iron-Toothed Bat King [203]
Minions: None
Equipment: Sabre [80], Bat King Medallion [261]
Signature Abilities: Flashing Moon Sabre
 Style [44]
Counters: Closing Defence [64]

WAN SHU (LADY IRON HAND)

Lady Iron Hand is the estranged wife of King Iron Sail. She is strong, with round features and remarkable eyes. She left her husband because he took Gu Shengtong as a lover. Now she wanders the Jianghu to pacify her heart. She is famous for her powerful hands, which she uses to help or harm as her mood sees fit. She returns kindness with generosity, and responds to cruelty with violence. She adores music and despises thieves, particularly pirates. She still loves King Iron Sail, but will not return unless he permanently severs ties with Gu Shengtong.

Recent Developments

Lady Iron Hand befriended a charming but harmless martial hero named Li Lushan. He insulted Beauty Face Chang, who cut off Li Lushan's head while Lady Iron Hand was having tea with him. She has vowed not to wash off the blood until Beauty Face Chang is killed by her Iron Hand technique. Lady Iron Hand also recently became acquainted with a man who calls himself Ma Tang, who she believes could be a potential disciple (he is really Handsome Bearded Hero in disguise).

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 5, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 3d10, Endurance: 2d10, Detect: 1d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Gambling: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Scholarly Arts: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 154

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Irascible

Social Resources: Social Network

Grudges/Rivalries: Beauty Face Chang [188], Gu Shengtong [198], King Iron Sail [204]

Allies: Shuai Huixiong [225], King Iron Sail [204]

Minions: None

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: Iron Hand [49], Porcelain-Shattering Finger [55], Stone Body Style [57]

Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65], Resting Defence [68]

WU KANG (PHILANTHROPIST WU)

Wu Kang is a notorious bandit who routinely slaughters rich merchants and government soldiers alike. However, he donates to popular charities and temples, and is thus often referred to as one of the top philanthropists in the martial world. His Asura Trident is rumoured to be possessed by an evil spirit that devours the souls of anyone it stabs. He is a former lover of Xie Lijuan. After Xie Lijuan abandoned him, he married a woman named Wan Ying. They have a son named Wu Ming.

Recent Developments

Wu Kang's Asura Trident was recently stolen by one of Xie Lijuan's minions, Qing Yun [222]. Wu Kang is out looking for it and furious.

Defences: Hardiness 9, Evade 7, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 3d10, Theft: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Reasoning 1d10, Athletics: 1d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 2

Killing Aura Darkness: 20

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Philanthropic

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Xie Lijuan [239], Towering Bodhisattva [232]

Allies: None

Minions: None

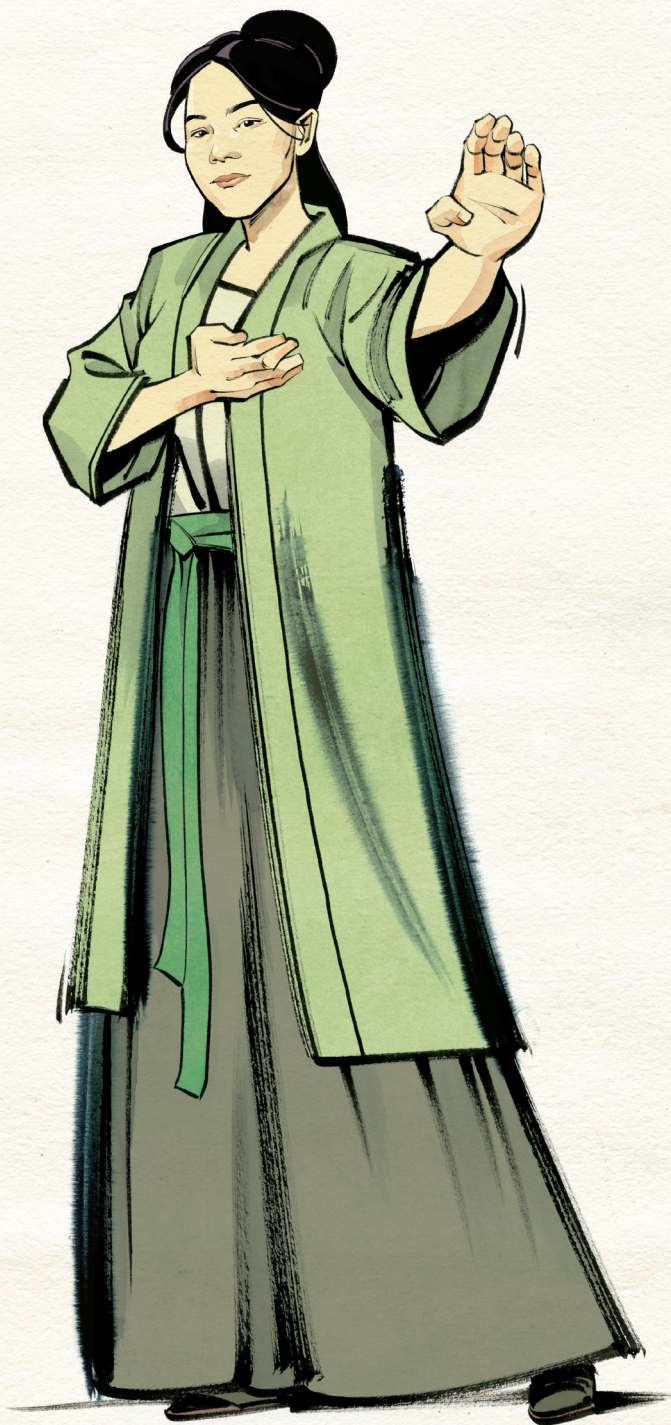
Equipment: Spear [81]

Signature Abilities: Swift Silver Spear Style [57]

Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65]

WAN SHU, LADY IRON HAND

鐵手夫人
晚舒



WU TOOTH BEAUTY NIU

Also known as Foul Princess and Jade-Lipped Viper, she is one of the Jianghu's most beautiful heroes and the chief of Illustrious Qilin Villa. However, her breath is odious, its stench so powerful it is known as Beauty Niu's Wu Tooth. She is a master of internal energy techniques, and her attacks are like the unstoppable surge of a foul-smelling tide. Beauty Niu often carries Parrot God Yu on her shoulder, and acts as his personal attendant. She originally joined the cult because she had a personal grudge against the empire (her father was executed by a magistrate for murders he did not commit).

Recent Developments

Wu Tooth Beauty Niu is eager to spread the cult's interests into Chang'an. She is seeking promising recruits to help her achieve this.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 9, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Trade: 1d10, Survival: 2d10, Magical Arts: 2d10, Disguise: 1d10, Theft: 3d10, Gambling: 1d10, Religion: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 27

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Bad Breath

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: The Empire, Xie Song [240]

Allies: None

Minions: Master Gao [217], Master Guo [217], Master Wu [218], Servants of the Parrot God [180], Beggar Huang [189]

Equipment: Curved Beauty Dagger [84]

Signature Abilities: Beauty Niu's Wu Tooth [36], Thought-Diminishing Dagger Style [58]

Counters: Acupoint Defence [63], Closing Defence [64]

XIE LIJUAN (HEARTLESS DAGGER)

Xie Lijuan is one of the top beauties and the number-one killer in the martial world. This has attracted many jealous rivals, who often challenge her to death duels. Numerous would-be lovers also seek her affection. Her love is cruel, sometimes kind, but never caring. She has no time for romance or beauty. She sees only death on the horizon. She is dying, and her heart belongs to killing.

Xie Lijuan resides in Xie Manor and possesses the feared Dagger of Xie Lijuan. She is rivals with Sword Goddess. She travels with a retinue of servants and physicians who attend to her, and she frequently receives treatment from Bone Physician to treat the mysterious and deadly malady from which she suffers.

Her fighting style emphasises playing mind games with her foes, using her words, charisma, and beauty to unsettle them or thwart their attacks, so she can make her own.

Recent Developments

Xie Lijuan unintentionally attracted the affection of Gu Xing when she glanced at him in a pavilion. He left his wife, Cui Nuo, who now seeks revenge. Xie Lijuan cares nothing for the marriage, and is very irritated by Gu Xing's interest in her. Killing him would be no challenge, so she plans to hire someone else to do it. In addition, Xie Lijuan recently had Qing Yun steal the Asura Trident from Wu Kang so she could use it to hire people in Ao Town (page 267 for more on the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure).

Xie Lijuan knows that her minion, Qing Yun, broke the heart and mind of Li Nin (Unravelling Sword).

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 10, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 3d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,
Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10,
Endurance: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10,
Talent: 3d10, Survival: 1d10, Meditation: 2d10,
Empathy: 3d10, Command: 3d10, Persuade:
2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Scholarly
Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 9

Killing Aura Darkness: 399

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 3

Eccentricities: Dying, Fire Deviation (Mental):
Obsessed with Killing, Physical: Hideous

Children)

Social Resources: Devoted Ex-Lovers

Grudges/Rivalries: Cui Nuo [195], Liu Xiuling
[210], Li Nin [208]

Allies: Song Tuan [226], Liu Xiuling [210]

Minions: Qing Yun [222], Shuai Huixiong [225]

Equipment: Dagger of Xie Lijuan [91]

Signature Abilities: Lijuan's Cruel Assessment
[50], Lijuan's Graceful Dancing Style [50],
Lijuan's Moon Eclipsing Gaze [50], Lijuan's
Flower Shaming Beauty [50]

Counters: Lijuan's Crippling Finger [67], Lijuan's
Deadly Dagger [67]

XIE SONG (MASTER XIE)

Xie Song spends almost all of his time thinking of a way to reconcile Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and other folk religions. He is so focused on this endeavour that he does little else other than think and read books. His knowledge of ancient religion, philosophy, and myth surpasses anyone alive. Despite his scholarly nature, he has a short temper; if anyone attempts to disturb his ruminations, he is quick to resort to violence.

Recent Developments

He was recently recruited by the Illustrious Qilin Villa, mostly due to his impressive intellect. However, when he accused one of their higher-ranking members, Master Gao, of being a fraud, and then subsequently humiliated him in a public debate, he was marked for death.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 8, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External

Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10,
Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Medicine and
Alchemy: 1d10, Talent: 1d10, Meditation: 3d10,
Magical Arts: 1d10, Gambling: 3d10,
Drinking: 1d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Detect: 3d10,
Scholarly Arts: 3d10, Jianghu: 1d10, People and
Places: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10, Religion: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: 9

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Obsession (Philosophy)

Social Resources: None

Wealth and Property: Manor

Grudges/Rivalries: Illustrious Qilin Villa/Cult of
the Parrot God [180], Master Gao [217]

Allies: None

Minions: None

Equipment: Curved Beauty Dagger [84]

Signature Abilities: Thought-Diminishing Dagger
Style [58]

Counters: Engulfing Wings of the Night Sky [65]

XIE LIJUAN,
HEARTLESS DAGGER

無情刀謝麗娟



YANG TAO

Yang Tao is the wife of Wan Lang, a sub-chief of Handan Escort Company. She is stubborn and traditional. She and Wan Lang are still deeply in love, and have four children together. Although she has no knowledge of martial arts, should her husband ever be killed, she will seek out a master and train to get revenge.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External

Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10,

Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 0d10, Detect: 1d10,

Survival: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Magical Arts: 1d10,

Jianghu: 1d10, Religion: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: None

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: None

Allies: Wan Lang [236], Handan Escort Company
[179]

Minions: None

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

YANG YU (SUCCUBUS YANG)

Yang Yu operates the best restaurant in China, located in the capital city. The most well-known secret of the restaurant is that to get the best and most exotic dishes, patrons need to spend the night with Yang Yu, be they male or female. The only exception to this rule is Chen Haolin, whom she believes to be the only true food connoisseur in the Jianghu. If anyone speaks ill of her food, she will hire a team of killers to cut them down within 24 hours. She has many horrible scars that she hides beneath her clothing, most notably a burn mark on her face that she conceals with a mask.

Recent Developments

Roughly one year ago, Yang Yu did something she had never done before in her entire life: she fell in love. Unfortunately, the target of her love was a man named Xu Tie, a vicious serial killer who wanted to make her his next victim. When she learned the truth, her world was shattered, and she vowed to kill him if she could. Unfortunately, he disappeared into the night, making it impossible for her to get her revenge. She is unaware that he became a monk and took the Dharma name Purity.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 6, Wits 9

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External

Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10,

Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

Talent: 1d10, Trade: 1d10, Survival: 3d10,

Meditation: 1d10, Gambling: 3d10,

Drinking: 3d10, Command: 2d10,

Persuade: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10,

Endurance: 2d10, Jianghu: 3d10, Peoples
and Places: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 14

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Eccentricities: Scars

Social Resources: None

Wealth and Property: Prosperous Business

Grudges/Rivalries: Purity [221]

Allies: Chen Haolin [191]

Minions: None

Equipment: Dagger [77]

Signature Abilities: Professional Advantage [55]

Counters: Shifting Body [68]

ZHAO JING

The beautiful Zhao Jing is an unaffiliated investigator who has solved more mysteries in the martial world than anyone else. However, she charges a hefty sum for her services, and the price seems to go up with each case that she solves. For ostensibly professional reasons, both Bureau Four and Bureau Eight have tried to put an end to her on numerous occasions, but her Empowering Palm makes her very difficult to deal with. She was once married to a man named Long Hongyao, the sworn brother of Righteous Killer Long. Unfortunately, Long Hongyao died of disease after they were married for only a year.

Recent Developments

When Bone Physician was nearly killed in an assassination attempt, he hired Zhao Jing to investigate. She discovered that Bureau Eight was behind the incident.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 2d10, Detect: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Survival: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Theft: 2d10, Gambling: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Endurance: 1d10, Jianghu: 3d10, People and Places: 1d10, Institutions: 1d10, Religion: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: 548

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Eccentricities: Impeccable

Social Resources: None

Wealth and Property: Wardrobe

Grudges/Rivalries: Sun Lan the Yama Queen [228], Bureau Four [175], Bureau Eight [176]

Allies: Song Tuan [226], Righteous Killer Long [223]

Minions: None

Equipment: Crossbow [82]

Signature Abilities: Empowering Palm [41], Empowering Palm of the Heavens [41], Empowering Palm of Death [41]

Counters: Insightful Reaction [65], Steel-Shattering Finger [68]

ZHU FEI (THE CRIMSON STARGAZER)

Zhu Fei knows more about the night sky than most people, and is said to be able to use the stars to predict the future. She is even more skilled with the sabre, and wears red clothes to mask the blood of her enemies. Unfortunately, she has her head stuck in the clouds so often that she has the reputation of not keeping her commitments. She is the wife of the Golden Bowl Chief of the Halls of Tranquillity, so although she has not yet retired from the Jianghu, she is often seen in that vicinity. She feels abandoned by him, and her nature has tilted towards cruelty since he left.

Recent Developments

Zhu Fei obtained the Screaming Zither and formed her own sect. She and her disciples used it to extort people. Her ultimate goal was to create enough chaos that Golden Bowl Chief would be forced to return to the martial world to confront her. However, her Screaming Zither was stolen by Tranquil Scholar Hua Shiyi, and she is obsessed with getting it back (although she knows she and her disciples are too weak to confront him by themselves).

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 8, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial

Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 3d10,

Muscle: 2d10, Ride: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

Meditation: 1d10, Talent: 3d10, Trade: 2d10,

Athletics: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10, Magical Arts: 3d10,

Drinking: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Empathy: 2d10,

Reasoning: 1d10, Institutions: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10,

Scholarly Arts: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 5

Killing Aura Darkness: 15

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Eccentricities: Absent-minded, Killer

Social Resources: None

Grudges/Rivalries: Yang Yu [242], Tranquil Scholar

Hua Shiyi [233], Golden Bowl Chief [197]

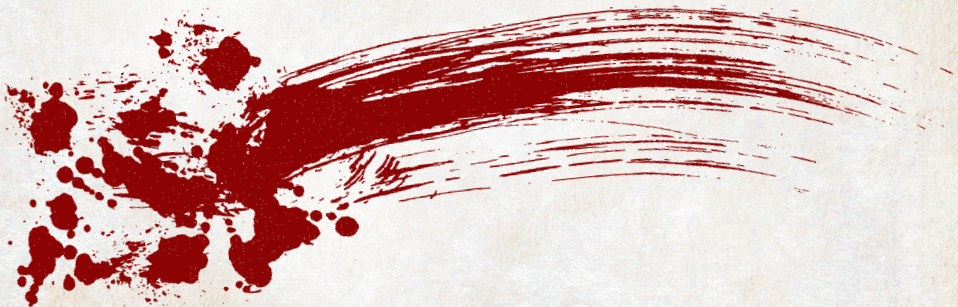
Allies: Screaming Zither Sect [182], Golden Bowl Chief [197]

Minions: None

Equipment: Star Sabre [90], Ear Cloths (block screaming Zither)

Signature Abilities: Slaughtering Blade [61], Flashing Moon Sabre Style [44]

Counters: Clouding Star Defence [64], Golden Armour Defence [65]



OTHER THREATS

These are entries for various types of threats the characters can face.

ASSISTANT CLERK

This is a non-ranked position in the Imperial Bureaucracy.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 3d10, Muscle: 0d10, Detect: 1d10, Survival: 2d10, Talent: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 2d10, Disguise: 2d10, Theft: 2d10, Drinking: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Reasoning: 3d10, Ride: 3d10, Institutions: 3d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Scholarly Arts: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

BANDITS

Bandits are common, particularly when harvests are poor (farmers sometimes resort to banditry in hard times). They often operate in groups, and sometimes their numbers get so large they can form armies.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 1d10, Survival: 3d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sticks [81], Short Bow [82]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

BEGGARS

Beggars are common in cities, and can be found in the countryside as well. Sometimes they organize into groups or sects. Most beggars acknowledge Tree Frog Gao as their leader.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Theft: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

BODYGUARDS, LOYAL

These are guards or escort men whose services are sold for protection purposes.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 0d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

BODYGUARDS, MAGNIFICENT

These are exceptional escorts or guards.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 7, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10,

Detect: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Trade: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Gambling: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 1d10, Ride: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Relentless Blade [55]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

BODYGUARDS, DIVINE

The greatest escort companies can claim to have guards such as this in their ranks.

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 7, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 2d10, External Martial Arts: 2d10, Internal Martial Arts: 1d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 2d10,

Detect: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Trade: 3d10, Meditation: 1d10, Gambling: 3d10, Drinking: 3d10, Command: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Athletics: 1d10, Ride: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Equipment: Sabre [80]

Signature Abilities: Relentless Blade [55], Hawk Killing Blade [46]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

BULLIES

Bullies are people who use martial arts to harm or exploit the weak.

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 6, Wits 5

Skills: External Martial Arts 2d10, Internal Martial Arts 1d10, Lightness Martial Arts 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 5

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: Fearless Boxer Style [43]

Counters: Shadow Fist [68]

CONSTABLES

Constables are civil enforcement officials of the law who patrol in groups under a sheriff.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10,
Detect: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: Crossbows [82], Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

GUARDS

These are standard guards you might find at a business or hired to protect a personal residence.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10,
Detect: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sticks [81]

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

PERSONAL SERVANTS

These are personal attendants or servants, often attached to a household.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 5, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10,
Detect: 2d10, Survival: 3d10, Trade: 3d10, Talent: 1d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 1d10, Empathy: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10,
Endurance: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL, LOWER RANK (RANKS 9-7)

These are the very lowest ranking officials, those who might have only recently passed the imperial exams. They are rarely skilled in martial arts, although exceptions exist. Ranks vary by period, a rank-9 official in the Qing Dynasty might be an editorial assistant in the Editorial Office; a rank-7 official in the Song Dynasty might be a secretarial receptionist in the Office for Audience Ceremonies; and a rank 9 official might also be a frontier commandant from the Tang to the Song.

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 0d10, External Martial Arts: 0d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle: 0d10,

Talent: 1d10, Command: 1d10, Persuade: 1d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Detect: 1d10,

People and Places: 2d10, Institutions: 2d10, Religion: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 0

Max Wounds: 1

Resist: 0

Equipment: None

Signature Abilities: None

Counters: None

SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL, MIDDLE RANK (RANKS 6-4)

These are mid-level officials who are often modestly skilled in martial arts. A rank-5 official might be the vice-director of forestry and crafts during the Ming Dynasty. In the Song Dynasty, a rank-5 official might be a eunuch commissioner who heads the Palace Visitors Bureau.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7, Wits 7

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10,

Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10, Talent: 1d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10,

Reasoning: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, People and Places: 3d10, Institutions: 3d10, Religion: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 3

Killing Aura Darkness: Varies

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Weapon Adept [58]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL, UPPER RANK (1-3)

Although not all rank-2 officials have martial abilities, the rise through the Imperial Bureaucracy is based on merit, so many will. Therefore, the stat block provided is an example of a high-ranking official with martial arts abilities. A rank-3 official might be a prefect during the Tang Dynasty. A rank-1 official might be Censor-in-Chief.

Defences: Hardiness 6, Evade 7, Wits 8

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle: 2d10, Medicine and Alchemy: 3d10, Meditation: 2d10, Talent: 1d10, Command: 2d10, Persuade: 2d10, Empathy: 1d10, Reasoning: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Athletics: 2d10, Jianghu: 2d10, People and Places: 3d10, Institutions: 3d10, Religion: 2d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 7

Killing Aura Darkness: Varies

Max Wounds: 5

Resist: 2

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Acupoint Attack Style [35], Enlightening Fist Style [42], Empowering Palm [41]

Counters: Iron Armour Defence [65], Golden Armour Defence [65]

SHERIFF

A sheriff is tasked with upholding the law, and has a number of constables under him or her (the number of which is determined by the population size of the area).

Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 5, Wits 6

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 0d10, Speed: 1d10, Muscle: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Equipment: Crossbows [82], Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Weapon Adept [58]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

These are basic stats for typical animals players might encounter. Feel free to modify them to create other types of animal not included in this list.

Crocodiles

Defences: Hardiness: 7, Evade: 7, Wits: 2

Skills: Bite: 2d10, Detect: 2d10, Muscle: 4d10, Speed: 2d10

Max Wounds: 3

Bite: A crocodile bite does 3d10 open damage. On a total success on their attack, they can opt to trap the target in their jaws (doing 2d10 open damage each round automatically until the target escapes). Or they can opt to lock the target in a death roll, keeping them underwater, and causing loss of 1 Hardiness each round until the opponent escapes (typically resolved by an opposed Muscle roll).

Sharks

Defences: Hardiness: 7, Evade: 7, Wits: 2

Skills: Bite: 3d10, Detect: 2d10, Muscle: 4d10, Speed: 4d10

Max Wounds: 3

Bite: The bite of a shark does 6d10 damage.

Tigers

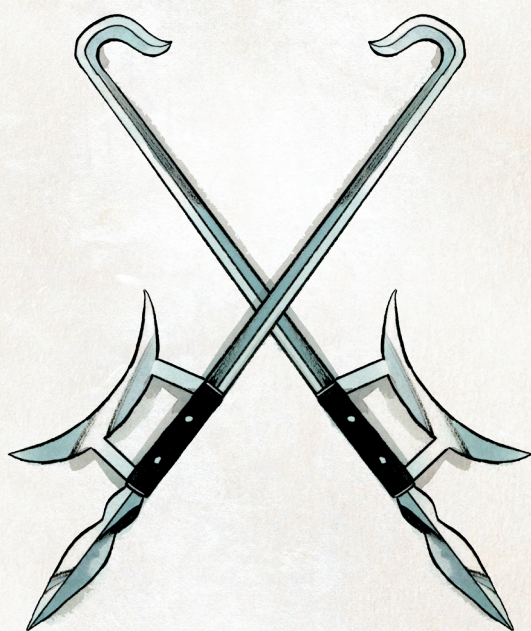
Defences: Hardiness 5, Evade 3, Wits 2

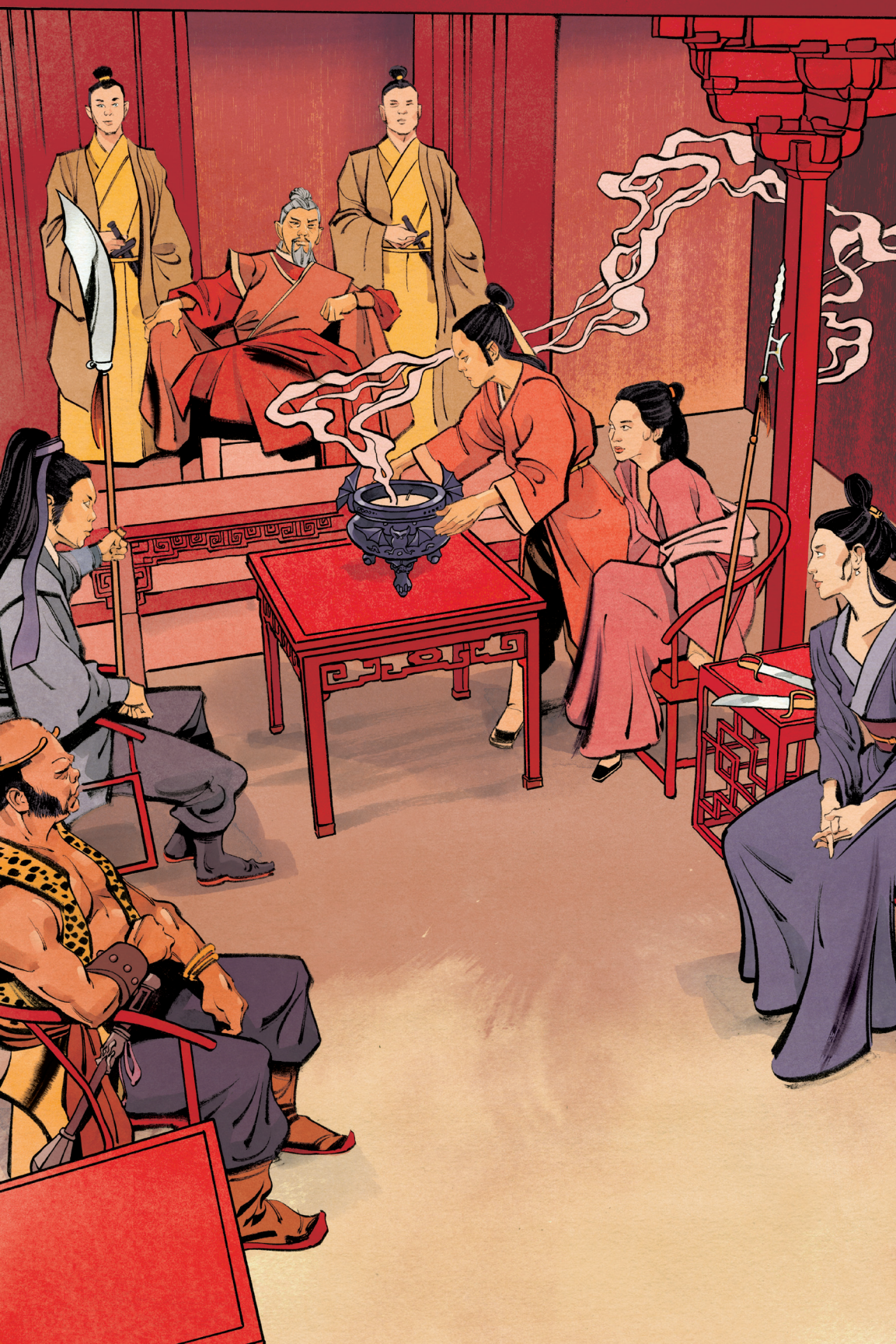
Key Skills: Bite: 2d10, Claw: 2d10, Muscle: 3d10, Speed: 3d10, Detect: 3d10

Max Wounds: 3

Claws: These do 3d10 damage. If they hit with their claw, then they can get a free bite attack.

Bite: A tiger's bite does 3d10 damage





CHAPTER TWELVE

THE OBSIDIAN BAT

This is an introductory adventure with a simple, straightforward structure so that new GMs can run it easily, but with enough characters and moving parts that more experienced GMs can take a freer hand and run it as a living adventure.

Although intended for a party of level-1 characters, we intentionally pit them against a level-7 foe: Sword Goddess, also known as Liu Xiuling [210]. At low levels, a total party kill is unlikely, as it would be a huge loss of face for Sword Goddess to fight and kill people so much weaker than her. That said, a total-party maiming remains possible.

This adventure can also be linked to the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure (see page 267).

SYNOPSIS

The players are hired by Chief Ban Fei [193] of the Handan Escort Company [179] to transport the Obsidian Bat [95] from his outpost in Handan to Sword Goddess at her Immortal Sword Manor [262]. However, there is far more to the situation than a simple escort job. In truth, the Obsidian Bat has been replaced by a weaponised replica to harm Sword Goddess. And there are bandits hoping to steal the object from the party on their way. Depending on how events play out, the party could find themselves in a confrontation with Sword Goddess, or they might impress her and be offered her boat if they escort a shipment of wheat to a vendor in Hangzhou.

BACKGROUND

A woman who claimed to be the famous Xie Lijuan [239] recently came to the Handan Escort Company and hired them to take the Obsidian Bat to the famous Sword Goddess of Immortal Sword Manor, located outside Kaifeng. Although this woman looked exactly like Xie Lijuan, the truth is that she was actually Sword Goddess herself.

After paying for the contract, she unexpectedly attacked and killed dozens of escorts, leaving only a few alive. Then she cut off Chief Ban Fei's legs. Although the survivors burned for revenge, Chief Ban Fei puzzlingly decided to honour the Obsidian Bat contract. The reason for this is that, based on the attacker's footwork during the

slaughter, Chief Ban Fei was convinced that she was not Xie Lijuan, but rather Sword Goddess.

After replacing the Obsidian Bat with a replica that is rigged to explode and release poisonous gas, he put out a call for new recruits, who he intends to use as pawns to unknowingly deliver the lethal device. He expects this to result in a fight, and although he doesn't expect his newly hired pawns to come out on top, he hopes that Sword Goddess will either be killed by the poisonous gas, or at least wounded badly enough that he and his men can ambush her later and finish her off.

To complicate matters, Iron-Toothed Bat King [203] and his Iron-Headed Badgers are intent on stealing the Obsidian Bat. Furthermore, one of Chief Ban Fei's men, named Wan Lang [236], is secretly working with Iron-Toothed Bat King.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Some names are difficult to pronounce in English. If you are not familiar with Chinese pronunciation, use the following simplifications.

Liu Xiuling

Extreme simplification – Loo Shoo-Leeng

More proper version – Liu sounds like 'yo' with an 'L' grafted to the beginning: Lyo. Xiu is also like 'yo' with a 'Sh' sound: Shyo. Ling rhymes with ring: Lyo Shyo-Ling

Xie Lijuan

Extreme simplification – Shay Lee-John

More proper version – Xie has a short 'E' sound like 'meh', starts with a 'Sh', and connects those two sounds with a 'Y':

Shyeh. Li rhymes with me or Lee. Juan is very much like the Spanish name Juan, except with a hard 'J': Shyeh

Lee-Juan.

HOOK

Chief Ban Fei has put out a recruitment call in the city of Handan, looking for unknowns seeking to establish a reputation. This adventure assumes the players respond to the call and go to Chief Ban Fei at Handan Escort Hall. Word of the attack on the Handan Escort Company has not yet begun to spread.

If you need a more compelling hook for a reluctant party, consider piquing their interest with the Xie Lijuan attack. There are many people who would pay handsomely to get information about her whereabouts. Players with personal connections to her might take the job to further her interests, or Xie Lijuan's maidservant Qing Yun [222] could hire the party to investigate on her behalf (Xie Lijuan would be curious to find out who is impersonating her). Consider using character backgrounds and connections to draw them into the adventure. Whatever situation leads the players into the initial meeting with Chief Han Bei, it is the perfect subject for a "Session Zero" for the group.

SESSION ZERO?

Session zero is a chance for GM and players to sit down before the first full session of play to discuss matters such as style of play, house rules, the campaign in general, and the player characters. Some groups like to create characters together during session zero, others prefer to arrive with characters build already. Session zero can be a good opportunity to get used to a new game system, perhaps even running a combat session and a few roleplay tests of the newly created characters.

CONTENDING WITH SWORD GODDESS

It is possible the players could end up in a confrontation against Sword Goddess. She will not try to kill them, as they are new to the martial world and have no reputation. Instead she will either maim them or try to forcibly recruit them. Alternatively, the GM can turn this adventure into a larger campaign, allowing the players to level up before a final showdown with Sword Goddess.

Although a fight with Sword Goddess would be a big risk for a first level party, if the players should pursue this course, there are ways for them to even the odds. They could seek out more powerful allies such as Unravelled Sword. If they are clever, or if they have someone with the Beautiful Eccentricity, they might gain Iron-Toothed Bat King's support. Furthermore, there are other resources to be taken advantage of on the road to Immortal Sword Manor. And of course, if they deploy the fake Obsidian Bat correctly, Sword Goddess will be severely weakened.

The scenario need not conclude with a fight between the party and Sword Goddess. Clever players might resort to negotiation, running away, or subservience.

The Fake Obsidian Bat

This looks almost exactly like the real Obsidian Bat, which is an incense burner decorated with bat motifs. The replica, however, is hollow and packed with explosives and poison. When it is used to burn incense, it explodes after a short time. Roll 5d10 against the Evade of everyone in a 15-foot area. Those hit take 3d10 open damage from the explosion, and are exposed to Meridian Venom (roll 3d10 against Hardiness or lose Resist and suffer -1d10 to Internal Martial Arts). Anyone familiar with the real Obsidian Bat can discern the forgery on a Detect roll against TN 8. Anyone without such familiarity can discern the forgery on a Jianghu roll at TN 10.

MEETING WITH CHIEF BAN FEI AT HANDAN ESCORT HALL

Handan Escort Hall is a courtyard dwelling, located in Handan, with one guard at the gate entrance. The guard will escort the party in and take them to the main reception room. Players who specifically examine the surroundings see signs of a recent attack (sword cuts in furniture, cracked tables, blood stains, etc.), and they also note that the hall seems unusually empty. Characters who don't examine their surroundings should be asked to make a Detect TN 6 roll to see signs of the attack.

Chief Ban Fei greets them seated in a rolling chair. His legs were cut off in "Xie

Lijuan's" attack, and this is clear to anyone looking closely at him. He gets right to business, asking if they will take the job escorting the Obsidian Bat to Immortal Sword Manor. He makes an initial offer of 5 silver taels per person for the entire job. He also offers to send his sub-chief Wan Lang with them for the journey.

Only seven of his guards, and Wan Lang, survived the attack.

Negotiating the Escort Rate

Chief Ban Fei can be persuaded to increase his offer to 10 taels per person for the job, but if pressed, he will eventually give them 5 taels per person, per day, payable upon completion of the mission.

Asking About the Attack

If asked, Chief Ban Fei will give a general description of the attack. However, he is not very forthcoming beyond this, and will not reveal his suspicions about Sword Goddess. Some of his men might report unusual details about the attack, including the following:

The attacker dressed and acted like Xie Lijuan. That said, Xie Lijuan has the reputation of being stunningly beautiful, and this woman didn't seem unusually attractive.

Xie Lijuan is famous for her dagger. The attacker did use a dagger, but wielded it like a sword.

Confronting Chief Ban Fei About the Fake Obsidian Bat

If the party discovers the device is a fake, do not railroad them into a confrontation with Sword Goddess. Instead, allow them to do whatever they wish. If they go back to Chief Ban Fei and demand an explanation, he will dramatically admit to forgery, and explain the truth of what happened, including his suspicion that Sword Goddess was behind the attack. He will play to their sense of honour in an attempt to get them to follow through with the delivery, and also offer to pay them double the amount initially agreed upon.

HANDAN

Handan is a town famed for its Cizhou porcelain, and is believed to be the birthplace of the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang of the State of Qin. It was the capital of State of Zhao prior to the Qin conquest. Handan Escort Company is located here, and there are a number of inns and restaurants as well.

THE ROAD TO KAIFENG

The trip should take five days, and there are places to rest for every day of normal travel. There are some planned encounters along the way, but the GM should feel free to use them in whatever order makes sense for the party. The GM can also call for a Survival roll for the trip to see whether any random encounters arise.

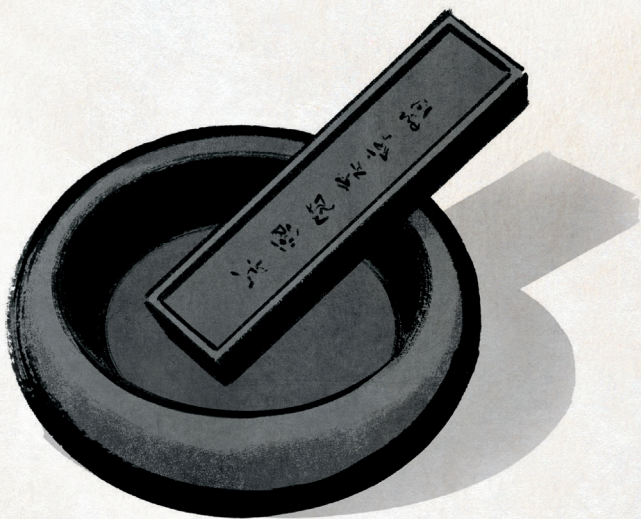
As the players travel, they might hear rumours (see below). There are many inns and brothels to stay at along the way. If you want something interesting or unusual to occur at any of these venues, see 'Inn, Teahouse, and Brothel Encounters' in Chapter Nine [139].

RUMOURS ALONG THE WAY

As the players travel and ask around, they can acquire information from different sources. Feel free to choose from the following list when they investigate where it seems appropriate to do so, or to roll. For example, if players ask an informed person what they know about Sword Goddess, result 1 would be a reasonable reaction. If you get the same result twice, roll again.

The GM should feel free to expand upon rumours as desired.

RUMOUR TABLE	
d10	Rumour
1	Sword Goddess is very powerful
2	Sword Goddess is unrivalled in this region, only Li Nin [208] even comes close to being her match
3	There was a recent attack on the Handan Escort Company
4	Sword Goddess was seen travelling north to Handan before the massacre at Handan Escort
5	Sword Goddess cut off her own sister's feet
6	Li Nin spends all his time at the Wang's Roadside Wine Shop [260]
7	Sword Goddess was seen travelling south to Kaifeng recently
8	Iron-Toothed Bat King and his Badgers reside at an old ruined temple
9	Xie Lijuan is rumoured to be near Ao Town, which is very far from Handan
10	Sword Goddess and Xie Lijuan are friendly rivals



ENCOUNTERS IN THE JIANGHU (OPTIONAL)

These are optional encounters the GM can select when appropriate or roll. These are intended to give the players a sense that they are part of the broad and complex Jianghu, but also to introduce characters who could become important if grudges arise.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE JIANGHU TABLE	
d10	Result
1–3	Qiu Yan [222] approaches the party and tries to sell her wares, then whispers in their ear that she is a skilled assassin if they have need of her services. She is extremely pleasant and delightful, but not afraid to tell a tragic lie to convince them to employ her.
4–6	Guo the Tiny Mouse [198] approaches the party, preferably at a wine shop or inn, and pries about their business. He is investigating the massacre in Handan, and wants to protect innocent people. He follows the party with the aim of helping them should they run afoul of Sword Goddess, Xie Lijuan, or some other powerful figure in the Jianghu. He is reluctant to directly involve himself, but will craft an item to help them face a particular foe.
7–8	Tree Frog Gao [235] is sweeping in one of the towns the players pass through and uses the opportunity to pick their pockets. She'll take the Obsidian Bat if it isn't well guarded. The pickpocketing can be resolved with an opposed roll between her Theft skill and the target's Detect skill. If the players catch her, it could result in a chase. She might toy with the party, rather than seek to harm them in a conversation, and might be persuaded to work with them if they can appeal to her sensibilities.
9–10	Pipa-Playing Witch [221] follows the party and approaches them at an opportune moment. She offers to sell them erhus made from the flesh of famed swordsmen. If the players tell her about their mission, she is delighted, and offers them 20 golden taels in exchange for Sword Goddess' skin.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE ROAD TO IMMORTAL SWORD MANOR

These are the encounters that occur as the players head towards Kaifeng.

Letter Key

Note that the letter key for encounters is to make things easier for the novice GM. You can run these in order, but if you have more experience, feel free to run them more loosely, drawing on the personalities of the characters involved to determine when and where they are likely to take place. For example, Iron-Toothed Bat King can stage his ambush in any way he likes, based on whatever intelligence his men are able to gather. It could be a roadside encounter, as indicated on the map, but he could just as easily opt to attack the players while they are staying at an inn.

THE ROAD TO KAIFENG



A. WAN LANG TRIES TO STEAL THE OBSIDIAN BAT AND TAKE IT TO BAT KING'S HIDEOUT

Wan Lang will try to take the Obsidian Bat while the player characters are sleeping, and bring it to Iron-Toothed Bat King in the Ruined Temple Hideout (see below). Wan Lang will bide his time, waiting for the right moment, even if that means spending money to keep the player characters distracted. His main interest is getting the Obsidian Bat, so he will flee as soon as he has it. If he escapes, the players can still attempt to track him to the Ruined Temple Hideout.

Wan Lang

See 'Wan Lang' entry on page 236.

B. WANG'S ROADSIDE WINE SHOP

This small open-air wine shop is run by Wang Yan. He serves second barrel baijiu [99] at market price and offers poorly cooked noodle dishes and braised meat for 2 copper coins per meal. The food is seasoned to taste, and delicious, but very unclean. Anyone who eats it needs to make an Endurance roll at TN 7 that night or suffer -1d10 to their Mental and Physical skills for 1d10 days because of food poisoning. Also note that any players who drink too much could suffer the ill effects of second barrel baijiu.

Wang Yan is friendly and willing to share information if asked. He knows that Sword Goddess passed through the area before and after the incident in Handan.

Bully Encounter

A group of four local bullies has been drinking baijiu all day, and they are growing restless. When the players arrive, the bullies stare them down and try to pick a fight. When the players' food and drinks arrive, one of them approaches and demands that the players pay them for their meals. If they pay, the bullies will probably leave the players alone. If they refuse, the bullies smash the players' bowls and cups and instigate a brawl.

Bullies (4)

See Bullies' entry on page 247.

C. QING YUN CONFRONTS PARTY TO DEMAND EXPLANATION

Qing Yun approaches the party on the road. She is investigating the massacre because rumours have started to spread that Xie Lijuan was the culprit (Qing Yun knows that Xie Lijuan could not possibly have carried out the attack because she is far away in Ao Town). She questions the players about the event, and depending on how the conversation plays out, might try to persuade them of Xie Lijuan's innocence, and even recruit them to help clear her name. Her aim isn't to fight the players, but to gain information and get to the bottom of things. For her purposes, the players are potential allies at this point, and she will only initiate a fight if someone insults Xie Lijuan.

D. THE AMBUSH

Iron-Toothed Bat King and his men ambush the party to steal the Obsidian Bat. Bat King sends his Iron Headed Badgers in advance to announce his demands, and to state

that he is the rightful owner of the Obsidian Bat. If fighting breaks out, the Bat King joins the fray. He intends to take the Obsidian Bat and rush back to his hideout in the Ruined Temple (see below). If asked, he states that the bat belongs to him because his name and the object's name are similar. He is not the rightful owner, but believes it is his destiny to possess it.

FEAR OF BEAUTIES

Iron-Toothed Bat King is afraid of beautiful women. This is the kind of detail GMs should feel free to elaborate on in an interaction with the party. For example, if any female player characters have the Beautiful Eccentricity, it would be reasonable for Iron-Toothed Bat King to shift from demanding the Obsidian Bat to obsequiously offering his services to her. He might treat the rest of the party coldly, but obey her out of fear.

Bat King Medallion

This is the medallion of Iron-Toothed Bat King. When presented to the Iron-Headed Badgers, it signifies the carrier has the Bat King's support. If the players take it from him, they could easily use it to trick his minions.

Iron-Toothed Bat King

See page 203.

Iron-Headed Badgers

See page 203.

E. RUINED TEMPLE HIDEOUT

This is the Bat King's Hideout. It is an old Daoist temple that is rumoured by locals to be haunted. In truth, the only spirit here is Bat King. He and his men reside in the broken down structure. This location is where he retreats and where Wan Lang brings the Obsidian Bat if he manages to take it. The buildings are all worn to the ground, and Iron-Toothed Bat King and his men have turned it into a makeshift camp using tents and lean-tos.

To pick up Iron-Toothed Bat King's trail and follow him to the temple, roll Survival against TN 6.

F. IMMORTAL SWORD MANOR

When the players arrive here, disciples greet them and escort them to area B on the Immortal Sword Manor map, where Sword Goddess waits to receive the Obsidian Bat. How this encounter plays out is largely a matter of what the players do and say. Sword Goddess will respond favourably if they directly offer her the bat. If they suggest an alliance or offer to tell her about Chief Ban Fei's plans, she will be impressed and reward them with a boat.

If they fail to bring the bat because of having lost it, she will scold them and have her disciples chase them away. If they detonate the fake Obsidian Bat in her presence

(intentionally or unintentionally), she will maim them and have them dumped at the side of the road some distance away from the manor. If Sword Goddess or her disciples detonate the Obsidian Bat in the party's presence, a fight will break out immediately. If she detonates it after they depart or while they are in another area of the manor, she will likely blame them and demand an explanation.

Gift of a Boat

If the players impress her, she gives them a grain boat. She has a shipment of wheat destined for Hangzhou, and will give the players the boat if they take it south for the sale. If they refuse the boat, she asks what they would like. If their request is reasonable, she will provide it. The journey south is an easy way to transition to 'the 'Pleasures of the Harbour' adventure (see page 267).

IMMORTAL SWORD MANOR

Key Members: Liu Xiuling [210]

Grudges: Xie Lijuan [239], Liu Shishi [209], Handan Escort Company [179],

Eunuch Zhang [196], Auntie Ying [188]

Allies: Xie Lijuan [239]

Immortal Sword Manor is located just outside Kaifeng. It was once a Buddhist temple that had been abandoned, and has now been converted into a residence and training ground for Sword Goddess and her disciples. Sword Goddess is one of the more famous martial heroes in the Jianghu. Her nature is mercurial, and she has recently caused a disturbance in the martial world by masquerading as Xie Lijuan and killing members of Handan Escort Company.

The sect is arrogant and presents itself as chivalrous. Like Sword Goddess herself, the members of Immortal Sword Manor are under the delusion they abide by the codes of the Jianghu, yet often break them (usually under a pretext of following them). Their belief in their own virtue is their greatest strength but also their greatest weakness. They cannot accept that their organisation or Sword Goddess are anything but the righteous heroes they claim to be. When this is challenged, they lash out.

The Four Swords Manual [96] is here in area 4.

Immortal Sword Disciples (115)

These guardians dress in blue and gold robes and are devoted followers of Sword Goddess. They are arrogant and claim to be righteous, but will stoop to underhanded means if they can find a plausible excuse for doing so. Immortal Sword Disciples can be summoned by the Bells of Immortality (see page 265 and the Immortal Sword Manor map key for more details).

Defences: Hardiness 7, Evade 8, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 2d10, Speed: 0d10, Muscle:

2d10, Endurance: 2d10, Athletics: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Command: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10,

Meditation: 2d10, Drinking: 3d10, Gambling: 1d10, Theft: 2d10, Jianghu: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 2d10,

Religion: 2d10, Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 1

Killing Aura Darkness: 1

Max Wounds: 3

Resist: 0

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Life-Chasing Sword I [50]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

Twin Divinities (2)

These are Sword Goddess' top disciples and personal guards. They are sisters and have trained under Sword Goddess since they were children (they were brought to the temple by an unknown dying swordsman who perished from a long-forgotten grudge).

Defences: Hardiness 8, Evade 8, Wits 5

Skills: Lightness Martial Arts: 1d10, External Martial Arts: 1d10, Internal Martial Arts: 3d10, Speed: 2d10, Muscle:

3d10, Endurance: 3d10, Athletics: 1d10, Detect: 2d10, Command: 3d10, Trade: 2d10, Survival: 2d10,

Meditation: 2d10, Jianghu: 1d10, Peoples and Places: 1d10, Religion: 3d10, Institutions: 1d10

Level/Killing Aura/Drinking Limit: 4

Killing Aura Darkness: 120

Max Wounds: 4

Resist: 1

Equipment: Sword [81]

Signature Abilities: Life-Chasing Sword I [50], Life-Chasing Sword II [50]

Counters: Spinning Block [68]

MAP KEY OF IMMORTAL SWORD MANOR

There are always at least five patrols of two Immortal Sword Disciples at any given time. Sword Goddess usually keeps at least half of her disciples at the manor, while the others are spread out at key outposts and on missions. They can be summoned quickly with the Bells of Immortality.

1. Main Gate

This gate has three doors, but only the central door is functional. Inside, there are four bodhisattva statues, two on either side, covered with dust, as well as a few random objects like tables, chairs, etc. Five disciples are stationed outside the gate during daylight. At night time, the gate is barred from the inside, with two disciples inside on guard duty throughout the night.

2. Primary Hall

The centre of the structure features a complex sculpture of Buddhist imagery, covered with dust.

3. Central Pagoda

This two-storey pagoda has been converted for use by the disciples. The bottom level can be used for sparring during rainy weather, or resting during the summer heat. The second storey is often occupied by higher-level disciples who oversee training in the courtyard.

4. Main Residence

The top floor is the residence of Sword Goddess, and the bottom floor is occupied by the Twin Divinities, who act as both guards and personal servants. The bottom floor



features residences at either end of the structure, with the central area acting as an audience chamber. Inside Sword Goddess' personal chambers, against the wall, is a circular bi disc that appears to be jade but is actually a weaker material. Inside the bi disc is the Four Swords Manual [96]. However, the bi disc is coated in contact poison (treat as standard poison except that it only requires skin contact).

5. Main Temple Building

Being somewhat superstitious, Sword Goddess has left this building almost completely intact. It features a large statue of the bodhisattva Guanyin, which is currently covered with dust. There are also other objects such as prayer mats, a dilapidated altar, etc. For the most part, she and her disciples stay out of this building.

6. Back Storage

This is a relatively secure room, the door of which is locked with a chain and padlock that requires a Theft roll at TN 8 to unlock. Inside the room are the following items: ten jugs of soaring reed wine, a box containing 50 golden ingots, and the Cosmic Feng Shui Compass [94].

7. Bell and Drum Towers

These tall towers provide a view of the entire complex and hold two giant jade-like bells. They are part of a network of bells called the Bells of Immortality. Ringing these bells rings all the other Bells of Immortality scattered through the empire and summons the remaining Immortal Sword Disciples. When struck, 1d10 disciples return to the temple each day. During the day, both towers are manned by two disciples. At night, only the western tower is occupied.

A. Entryway Courtyard

This courtyard features a few statues, plants, and trees. During the daytime it is mostly unoccupied, except when disciples awaken and move to the main courtyard for training, or tend to the garden.

B. Main Courtyard

During the daytime, this courtyard is usually occupied by roughly 30 disciples who spar, train in martial arts forms, and occasionally take short rests. At night, it is mostly empty save for the occasional disciple going for a night stroll. There are some trees and shrubbery, as well as two large incense cauldrons located on either side of the Central Pagoda (Building 3).

C. Rear Courtyard

This wide courtyard is usually empty.

D. Dining Pagoda

A pagoda has been erected here that Sword Goddess often uses for the purposes of dining or relaxation. It is large enough to fit a table for ten people. It overlooks a small pond that contains fish, turtles, lily pads, etc.

E. Garden

This garden contains fruit trees, vegetables, etc. that are tended regularly.

F. Small-Room Buildings

These buildings contain two rooms, each of which contains four cots and other utilitarian housing objects. They are generally set aside for lower-ranking disciples.

G. Large-Room Buildings

The two large rooms in these buildings each contain a bed and slightly more luxurious housing objects than the small-room buildings. These are set aside for guests, or higher-ranking disciples.

H. Façade Buildings

These are façade buildings that area actually empty chambers with no entrances or exits.

GRUDGES

This adventure comes with the strong possibility of the party developing grudges. While they can develop naturally in play at any time, these are the grudges that are likely to occur in this adventure.

Chief Ban Fei

If the players thwart his attempt at revenge against Sword Goddess, he will seek revenge. A grudge could also result if they confront him about the false Obsidian Bat and reject his request for assistance.

Sword Goddess

Sword Goddess could develop a grudge against the party if they attack her or if she feels they are responsible for detonating the false Obsidian Bat in her presence, but she is equally likely to try to recruit them as minions. They are so beneath her, she could go either way.

Iron-Toothed Bat King


Iron-Toothed Bat King will only develop a grudge against the party if they truly humiliate or insult him.

Brocaded Granny

If the players kill Iron-Toothed Bat King, Brocaded Granny will seek to avenge his death.

Yang Tao

If Wan Lang is killed, his wife, Yang Tao, who doesn't yet know martial arts, will seek training and come for the killers when she feels her skills have reached a high enough level.



BONUS CHAPTER

PLEASURES OF THE HARBOUR

Pleasures of the Harbour is a mystery adventure in the style of the film *Magic Blade* and the book *Horizon Bright Moon Sabre*, and is meant for a party of any level. In a boat city named Ao Town on the southern coast of China, the players find themselves swept into a web of intrigue and danger.

The Pleasures of the Harbour adventure works well as a follow-up to the Obsidian Bat adventure, or can be run entirely standalone. The full scenario can be downloaded at www.ospreypublishing.com/gaming_resources_roleplaying.

SYNOPSIS

In this adventure, the players go to Ao Town, a floating city of boats, platforms, and other structures founded by pirates. It exists just outside the normal legal purview of the empire. There, they are asked by Xie Lijuan to recover her 'uncle' in the city, only to discover that her 'uncle' is a living weapon: the Heart-Shaping Crown. He was controlled by Sun Lan the Yama Queen, and taken by Righteous Killer Long, who is trying to do good and liberate him. Righteous Killer Long hires a group of actors to fend off any meddlers, and Sun Lan plots a glorious massacre to draw out Righteous Killer Long. As the players follow clues, Sun Lan leaves a trail of dead bodies so she can find inspiration for her massacre (attracting sharks to the area in the process), while Righteous Killer Long sends his actors after the party to frighten them away. The players are free to investigate and ally with whoever they see fit. They could track down Righteous Killer Long and recover the weapon, or perhaps they might join forces with him to take on the Yama Queen. It is even conceivable that the party will work with either Righteous Killer Long or Sun Lan to kill Xie Lijuan.

The players might also get swept up in the drama between King Feng the Iron Sail, Wan Shu, and Gu Shengtong.

CHARACTER SHEET

Name

Level

Killing Aura

Drinking Limit

Killing Aura Darkness

XP

Max Wounds

Current Wounds

Resist

Defences

Evade	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hardiness	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wits	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Martial Arts

External Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internal Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lightness Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Specialist Skills

Medicine & Alchemy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meditation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Survival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Unorthodox Skills

Disguise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gambling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Magical Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Theft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Mental Skills

Command	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Persuade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reasoning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Physical Skills

Athletics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Endurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muscle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Knowledge Skills

Institutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jianghu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People and Places	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scholarly Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Signature Abilities

Eccentricities

Counters

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