



Volume 01 Issue 02 August 2002

Note from Designer...

The theme for this issue of Bite Mark is wu-xia, Chinese sword & sorcery. This inspiration came from both Frank Sronce (http://www.rpg.net/news+reviews/rev_6572.html) and from Ms. Jody Harkavy (<http://roleplaygames.about.com/library/review/aapr071402a.htm>) of their excellent reviews of Jadeclaw RPG. Yet, these articles also pointed out woefully inadequate support materials to run a good Jadeclaw RPG. Since wu-xia is what most people are familiar with Chinese genre rpg, I believe it is a good jumping point to dive into the world of Jadeclaw. And in future issues, I hope to introduce more politics and schemes in Jadeclaw which is what I have in mind for this setting.

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Wolf at the Tiger's Tail

Chapter 1 – Dukes with Few Bu-qians

Written: Ludi Price & Chuan Lin

Another day, and with the sun comes another set of choices. What is it all for? Many men bustle through life; they do what their elders tell them, and most of their choices are made for them. There is comfort in that. We creatures are made to find order and discipline, to find perfection and harmony. Sometimes it is easier to let others find perfection for us, to answer the questions for us, to decide our choices for us.

But sometimes we want freedom as well. Sometimes we don't want to hide behind the decisions and the teachings of others. We want to be ourselves. We want to be free to make our lives our own. We want to wake up each morning not knowing what the day will bring. There are so many possibilities. We could do one thing, and end up dead. Or we could do another, and a whole new window of opportunity opens up for us. It may be life-changing for us. Or more importantly, it could be life-changing for others as well. We just don't know.

That is the problem.

The weather, bright and swelteringly hot, meant little to Jin Tao. It was the kind of afternoon that even nong-ren, farmers, would certainly have napped. The sky was as blue and as clear as a freshly cut sapphire, the sun had bathed the length of the fields in sea of dazzling gold; heatwaves rose up languidly from the

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Bite Mark
Volume I, Issue 2
Fall, 2002

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Wolf at Tiger's Tail: Chapter 1 is a sample chapter we have received for Jadeclaw fiction. Originally, we have an author contacted us in early November who expressed interested in doing a Jadeclaw fiction. In past March, she had submitted a working-in-process of chapter 1. Though her writing was good, there was not enough flavor that easily identify as a Jadeclaw setting. With her permission, I have make some modification and change the chapter 1 title to Dukes with Few Bu-qians.

Next article, An Introduction to Jadeclaw and Wu-xia, deals with the concept of wu-xia: what is it and how does it affect those in Jadeclaw realm.

Wrapping up this issue is a short Jadeclaw adventure, An Evening at the House of Sun Inn. This is a classic wu-xia style adventure where player characters meet at an inn where everyone has his own agenda. And then a group of loal gang comes to crash the party.

Due to amount of pages these articles take out, there will be no Ironclaw articles for this issue. And if no one submits articles for Ironclaw, BiteMark will probably then focus only on Jadeclaw world.

Last but not least, we want to thank Blue Kabuto (<http://www.bluekabuto.com>) for their gracious designs of Bite Mark logo.

Reminder: Any discussion of rules in here are unofficial and unsupported by Sanguine Productions, Ltd.

Chuan Lin
Publisher

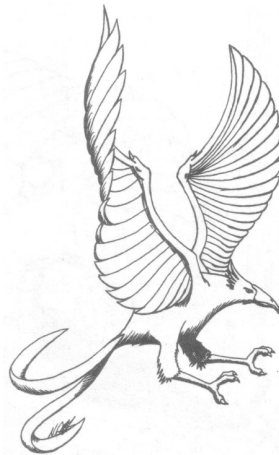
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scorched, parched land. Above, the harsh and dissonant cry of a fan-niao cracked, almost as dry as the earth itself. Aridness beckoned Jin to tiredness, but he refused to give into it. A single bead of sweat coursed down his snout and he caught it in the corner of his mouth. He tried not to lick it, yet he still tasted sharp saltiness on his lips. It almost drew him away. But not quite.

For many years now he had spent his afternoons like this, searching and not quite finding. Reaching, only to be pulled away again, by something material and inconsequential. Even now he wondered what kept him at this fruitless game of hide-and-seek. A lingering sense of duty? An immovable belief he once thought dead, but still clinging on? He did not know. It did not matter. The search had gone on; he had found nothing. And what was it he sought? The truth.

Impatiently, he opened his eyes; endless humdrum of his random thoughts faltered and dissipated into hot air. Suddenly he was angry

at himself for to allow himself fell back into his old philosophical life, and his old introspective way. He licked the sweat away from his



Fan-niao, raptor of Jadeclaw

mouth quickly and stood up. He felt faint and wobbly from the stifling heat and the dehydration. He took his water gourd that hanged from his back, and drank a long draught. Inwardly, he remonstrated himself. He didn't need to search anymore. He already threw away that chance. He was a hypocrite, always had been, and always will be. He knew it.

He looked around and wasn't quite sure what had made him stop in the middle of this track in the first place. He knew why he had stopped, but not what the importance of it was. The reason he had stopped was because he was at the crossroad and not sure which way to go. Should he turn East to State of Wu, West to State of Chu? Or maybe he ought to head back North to State of Shen? This kind of indecision was not what Jin used to. He usually just followed where his feet took him, wandered freely wherever he wished to go. It didn't matter where he went so long as he ended up somewhere he had never been before. In that case, his brains told him it made sense to go East. He had never been there before. But now some sort of hunger had come over him, and it wasn't just a longing for food. It was something much more vague than that, a gnawing at his stomach. No, not there, it was in his heart and mind. It told him to go West, to the little village he knew would welcome him some li down the road, and offer him some rest.

This was a sign of weakness. He should have more discipline than that! Just followed his feet and his senses, and turned East. That was what he really wanted to do. But on the other hand, this feeling was so strong that he could hardly resist it. What could be wrong in taking one night's rest in a nearby village inn anyway, he debated with himself. It wasn't like anyone was going to be mad at him for not taking the eastern road. He could go down there tomorrow. And so, sated with his decision and without much thought, he turned West.

And that was how it all began. A simple diversion, an excursion of a night's time, to go West instead of East. As soon as he had made the decision, he felt better. His heart was lighter, as was his step. He walked for remaining afternoon at a leisure pace, enjoyed the view, and recalled of poetries that would describe the view.

The sun began to set. He was only two li away from his destination, when the sound of kuai xi-yi claws scraped over dusty track from behind him. Wiping at his moist and grimy forehead, he looked back over his shoulder to see who was approaching him.

Two kuai xi-yi galloped up over the horizon, obviously exhausted. White foam gathered at their mouths along with their gleamed scale. But their riders would not allow them to rest, or even to slow. There was a taut fear of death in kuai xi-yi's eyes as they passed Jin, almost a madness, as two riders continued to whip smart but urgently at their mounts. A little surprised, Jin glanced up at them. They were dressed in rough, worn clothing, dusty and dirty from days of travel, filthy almost to the point of blackness, but traces of crimson could not be mistaken underneath the dirt. Over normal tunics they wore leather armour, but these too seemed battered by the journey, and, perhaps, by a few chance scuffles with thieves and bandits

along the way. Obviously they were soldiers on some important errand, and their urgency was proof enough. Yet they wore no chop or pictograph on them that made their duke or state obvious to Jin. They paid him scant attention as they rode past.

Jin followed them with his eyes into the distance. A cloud of dust billowing behind kuai xi-yi claws as they finally disappeared over the horizon. Few men were seen wandering in these parts, and he



Kuai xi-yi, Jadeclaw's Jennet

had expected a quiet journey to the village, undisturbed by any company. Still, soldier appearance did not surprise Jin.

It had been nearly forty years since the eleven states of Zhongguo have been called to Majing, the capital of Zhou State, to solemnly renew their fealty to King Peace of Zhou Dynasty (Zhou Ping Wang). These forty years had been peaceful in the land of Zhongguo. It was a much needed break since the last barbarian invasion that nearly ended the line of Zhou Dynasty. And the lands have recovered from ravage of last barbarian attack.

This was the time of contentment and harmony. Nong-ren could tend their crops without fear for their homesteads being pillaged or ransacked. The laws were able to finally be enforced by constables

(Yan-wei) and marshals of the land (Bu-kuai). Sing-song girls are already telling great tales of brave deeds of yesterday heroes. The awesomeness and wisdom of Zhou kings and ministers have been embodied with the teachings of The Third Sage King. This was an era of the history of Zhongguo to be forever admired.

Still, that did not mean there were good wills among these twelve states. No, there have been plenty of subversions aimed to strength one's state at the expanse of others and to challenge the sovereignty of Zhou Dynasty. Afterall, contentment brought contention among ambitious lords and ministers. Recently, there were stirrings of unrest in the North. Foremost among them was tales of foil assassination of King Zhou by Lu State during New Year Celebration. Regardless of truth, there were talks of retributions. Several States may answer the call by Zhou States.

He did not want to think that these soldiers have anything to do with this sudden suggestion of an uprising. Yet, his cynicism told him otherwise.

The sun was fading fast as Jin reached the village. Nong-ren returned home from their daily toils on the field. They showed curiosity at the sight of this stray dog in their village. Even shi-niao were going home now, being shepherded through streets by children laughing and pointing at the stranger before they quickly ran off when he looked at them. Jin knew their curiosity. Rarely is a lone stranger has found his way into the village. These villagers whispered amongst themselves, and Jin can not help but overheard them talked of other men, on kuai xi-yi, and now a travel-weary vagabond in their midst. So, that was what all the fuss was about. Jin knew that soldiers he had met on the way would be here, probably stopping for supplies and fresh kuai xi-yi.

Putting this realization out

of his mind, and thinking it inconsequential anyway, Jin grasped his staff tighter and trudged on his way, ignoring the stares. He did not mind the looks of strange folk. All dogs were born travelers, and were used to foreign faces and unfamiliar lands. He made straight for the only inn, House of Chen, with his usual unruffled manner. And as he did so, his mouth watered longingly as the delicious scent of food wafted from the building ahead. All of a sudden his stomach demanded to be sated with steamy rice and some cabbages; his body clamoured some hard scrubbing and a nice hot beath before falling to soft bed. Too long he had slept on cold hard earth and munched on staled buns during his endless travels in search of adventure. This village was a welcoming diversion.

As Jin entered the building he was met with the sound of slightly raised voices. It seemed as if some sort of disagreement was going on, by the tone. Feeling a little wary, Jin walked carefully through the main room. Amidst several ancient tables are old loitering farmers who've been scraping their evening meals from their bowls but their ears are all perk up. Jin recognized two riders he had saw on the road, argued heatedly with a man he presumed to be the owner of the establishment. The proprietor, a short and ungainly bear in his early sixties, stared up at the two men, his hands on his hips, his legs set.

"Well, you're going to have to like it or lump it, sirs. Here in this village, this is the best service you are going to get," argued the innkeeper.

"And we're not used to your sort speaking down to us," growled one menacingly. He was as thick set as the innkeeper, only much taller. "We're going to pay well for this room, so you've better treat us with the respect we deserve."

"But I can not just throw out my other customer! "

"Well, you can put him in a smaller

room then," spoke the other, a wiry weasel, "Don't lecture us on fine point of propriety when your sole purpose in life is money. Now get us that room. "

Seeing he was beaten, the innkeeper pursed up his mouth and turned to lead the two men up the ramshackle stairs to their room. With looks of self-satisfaction at one another, swaggerly, they followed him upstairs. Said nothing but noted all of this carefully, Jin sat himself down unobtrusively at a corner



Shi-niao, Jadeclaw domestic fowl, similiar to chicken

table, waited patiently to be served. House of Chen was not full by all means, except for farmers sitting by the entrance, there seemed to be hardly anyone else. No, there was one more. He was a bit disconcerted to see that in the opposite corner to him sat another long figure just like him, wore straw hat so that his features could not be seen. But before Jin had time to move his seat elsewhere, a smiling youngster, obviously the son of the innkeeper, came out to serve him.

"What would you like to eat?" the cub asked him pleasantly, but his face was worn. And Jin detected the expression of one grown old too soon.

"I have a steamed rice, a small dish of cabbage, and a pot of tea."

Obligingly the cub went to the kitchen to fetch his order. When he

returned, Jin took the opportunity to speak to him, hoped to gather some information.

"I see this is the only inn in your village," he began conversationally, "it must be a lot of work for you and your father. "

"Indeed it is," nodded eagerly, the cub was glad to have someone to talk to instead of spoken to. "But we manage to get by. Most farmers tend to eat at homes unless those whose wives are away. We don't get many travelers round here anyway during this kind of season. Today's been a good day though. We have few new customers, and now there's you."

This was good. The cub was willing to speak than he had thought. "It didn't seem to be going very well, the way those two men were shouting at your father," Jin remarked casually.

The boy flushed. "Oh, you heard that? Dukes with few Bu-qians! They wanted to be treated like royalty just because they have some bu-qians in their pockets. But it isn't anything my father can't handle. Those men were soldiers anyway, I saw their wargear as I led their steeds to the stable. And my parents always warned me that you can not reason with them. "

"They're from the capital?" Jin took a stab.

"Well, yes, I think so. I wouldn't know anyway, being a simple village boy," the cub winked as he nodded his head toward those ascending soldiers, "They spoke down to us like typical city folks."

"Dukes with few Bu-qians indeed," Jin agreed dryly, and turned to his steaming rice and salted cabbage. It wasn't the best dish in the world, but it was good wholesome food and delicious after diet of dry foodstuffs he've eaten during his journey. He know his stomach thanks him by the sound of content rumble. Finished his meal, and drained the last of his tea, he stood up, ready for a hot bath. The

serving cub obliged his request. It was not long before Jin was sharing the small room with one other stranger who has been kicked out of his proper room. Trying to make a small talk, but that guy just turned his back to him. Well, it was very comfortably sleeping on a real mattress and under a clean soft cover; he fell asleep fast.

He dreamt of his old life, the life he had left many years before. When he was younger he had spent his days believing in the Truth, and knowing he could find it. A bear had taught him, a bear who had spent his own young days looking for the Truth and who had found it. He had been Jin's mentor, Mozi. He had already been old in years when the young Jin Tao found him and came to study under him in his wooden home in the mountains. Jin had been a devoted student; he listened eagerly from pearls of wisdom Mozi had given him; he treasured every word the old master had said. But something had happened, and suddenly Jin had felt disillusioned. He had become hardened and sad, and would not tell Mozi why; just as he would not tell himself why now. No longer heeded his master words, he had taken to the life of a vagabond, travelled from village to village, from town to town, from city to city. He did not know what he sought after, freedom, companionship, love, or Truth? Now the answer seemed more elusive than ever. And as his dream ended, it floated away on the tides of wakefulness. He seemed to lose them forever.

Feeling groggy, Jin sat up in his bed and shook his head to jar the sleep from him. He had a feeling that his dream has been disturbed, just on the point of some sort of resolution. He would never know what the ending would be. And all his previous dreams have passed as such.

It was at that moment that he heard the steady murmur of voices from the corridor outside his room.

So low were the voices that he could not make out what they were saying, but he realized that it was that constant sound which had woken him up. In times of danger, Jin was always a light sleeper, and he had learnt to trust his senses well. Something obviously suspicious was about. He looked over at the other bed where the other stranger still asleep.

Sliding out of bed with the stealth he was accustomed to, he crept towards the door and, opened it ajar with steady fingers, he pricked his ears up curiously. Luckily, dogs have always been blessed with sharp hearing, and Jin was easily able to make out the conversation going on in the corridor outside. These voices he recognized immediately as belonging to those riders. It seemed that they were having some sort of discussion, and were trying to settle it out in the corridor, quietly so as not to awaken any guests. Jin quickly deduced that they were about to leave the building when the argument had started, otherwise they would not have been wandering round in the corridors at night.

"Listen," said a low rumble of a voice that Jin recognized as belonging to the burlier of the two. "I'm agreed that we can't stay here any longer than we have to. But what do you propose we do? Our kuai xi-yi are exhausted, and if we push them any longer they would most likely be dead before the day turns out. It's too risky."

"We could be waiting in days for kuai xi-yi to recover," spoke another voice, the sly measured tones of a weasel. "Yet, I have a better plan. They say they have no fresh kuai xi-yi in this village, but I have spotted some of them roaming outside. Why not borrow two and leave our mounts here? Our steeds are ten times better than theirs. And they will thank us for giving them such magnificent studs."

The bear laughed a low, deep chuckle.

"Now that's a good idea. I'm sure the villagers would appreciate our gift. But couldn't we wait till morning? If we have fresh kuai xi-yi, then we won't have to leave so early."

"We're late enough as it is," the other hissed sharply. "And the more ground we cover, the better position we are in. Those in State of Chu are waiting for us, and if we don't hurry, the messengers from State of Lu will arrive there before us. And then the whole plan will be ruined!"

"I suppose that makes sense," the bear replied doubtfully. Then Jin heard a thud as the weasel kicked his partner viciously in the shin.

"You doltz of a bear," he seethed, "all brawn and no brains! I should have not listen to that damn soothsayer for picking you as a companion on this journey! Bah, I want my money back next time I see that old fart." And with that he trudged off with his friend in tow. Jin heard them trundled down the stairs and out of hearing range.

Rested up his tensed muscles, Jin relaxed against the door. He had not gained much information from the conversation. All he could gather was that there was some sort of plan being instigated by State of Wu, which seemed to involve State of Lu to the North and State of Chu to the West. Of course, this did not surprise Jin. He had heard rumors that Lu State had paid the Duke of Wu State to keep Chu State in check. This was to keep a powerful and dangerous Chu State from actively involve with Zhou State in retribution against Lu State. Duke Helu of Wu had agreed to aid Lu, since it had benefits from Lu State's foreign aids and technological know-how, especially in metal craft. Indeed, the Land of Open-Mouthed Fishes had proved valuable ally to Helu and State of Wu. It could be nothing more than an innocent errand that sent Wu messengers to Lu; but why send them to Chu? Surely they should be sending troops to the eastern border of Chu, not

these two riders. Unless, of course, a treaty of non-aggression was about to take place between Wu and Chu.

Jin frowned. It did not surprise him if such supposition was actually true. Wu State had much to gain by fuelling the enmity between Chu and Lu. If it instigate a war between the two, then it could profit from either side's loss. Chu State would be ripe for a take-over. The North would not be in position to challenge Duke Helu's hegemony. Jin had no doubt that this was what was going on. He did not particularly like it but what was he, a mangy dog, no, a wandering vagabond, to do about it? It was best to steer clear of the blast when the firecracker finally exploded. He certainly wasn't about to get involved. If Helu become the Duke of South, life would certainly not change much for Jin.

He was just about to go back to bed when strong hand clasp round his mouth from behind. Before he could even make a sound he felt the sharpness of a knife-edge being pressed firmly against his throat. From the steadiness in the grip that held the blade Jin could immediately suspect that this was a trained warrior who was not sound asleep as he had thought.

"I want to ask you some questions," spoke a soft, low, voice by his right ear. "And don't even think of calling out for help. This knife will bleed red before you even begin." The other hand removed to allow him to speak. "Now," the voice continued without expecting a reply, "just how much did you hear those two soldiers?"

Jin didn't like this. Things were moving too quickly for one night. What had he got himself into?

"Nothing really," he croaked lamely.

Pressure on the knife immediately increased. "I don't think you know who you're dealing with," the soft voice caressed against his ear, "But this is not a joke. Either you tell me

or you'll not be long for this world."

"They said they were going to steal some kuai xi-yi," Jin grunted. "But why would you be asking me if you didn't know it yourself? If you don't hurry they'll be gone before you can do anything about it."

The would-be attacker hissed and eased his knife. But before he about to give chase after the two soldiers, Jin had stopped him with a basic maneuver, *A Toast Between Close Friends*, by twisted around expertly and caught his aggressor in the side of the face neatly with his palm. With an exhale of air, ooff, the man fell to ground, a cloaked heap in middle of the floor. The man was about to swivel round onto his back, but Jin had already reached for his staff. He held it dangerously close to the back of his enemy's neck.

"I don't know why you're playing at warrior," he growled as the body on the floor froze, "But it seems that you are worse than a day-old pup. You bring shame to your master! Now tell me why you were after those men!"

"Not unless you tell me why you want to know first!" came the whisper fury.

"Ho, you're a spunky one," Jin spoke grimly, "your master needs to teach you some manners!" He grinned darkly and baited his fallen foe. "For your information, I'm not after those soldiers at all. I just happened to pass through here when all this commotion started. And now I'm starting to get just a little bit curious about all this. So, who sent you? Duke Lu?"

There was a short, sharp gasp of anger from the man on the floor. And before Jin knew it, his opponent had performed *Chopped the Tree at Its Root* by lashed out at Jin's legs with a foot. Jin toppled before he realized that he had let his guard down. Then the cloaked figure followed through with a graceful *Rebound of Unyielding Willow* by somersaulted on to his

feet. He ran out of the room and silently down the stairs. Picking himself up, Jin doggedly followed as fast as he could.

As he reached the foot of the stairs he could make out the tail end of the assassin's cloak fluttering through the open front door of the inn. Skimmed past tables in the partial darkness, Jin gave chase, and crashed out the front door into the open air. At first he could see nothing, but then he heard the faint sound of kuai xi-yi whinnying round the back of the inn. He then saw the cloaked figure rushed around the side of the building and out of sight. Chased after him, Jin turned at the last corner of the building, panted heavily. An adjoining field had been broken into. He saw two soldiers on kuai xi-yi back, raced toward the open gate. The caped assailant looked on, obviously did not know how to stop these two riders as they galloped past at full speed. They rode away, and heeded not the black cloaked figure or Jin Tao. Soon, they were lost to the early dawn. And the remaining two could do nothing but stood and watched.

Jin looked on, eyes narrowed. Again, two riders were headed toward the West, the direction of Chu State. There was no way to stop them now. They would be far ahead into the day before the cloaked one next to him can give chase. Now, the problems should chase themselves away from him.

He had no sooner let the memory of his opponent enter his mind, when Jin felt that stealthy presence already upon him.

"Now you will pay!" soft voice whispered, but now it was harsh and tainted with silent fury. "You, who have stood in the way of my master, have destroyed all our plans! You have doomed us all. Die for your idiocy!"

A thin, silvery streak of metal flashed out in the waning moonlight. But Jin, made use of all his reflexes and performed *Thrice*

Refusals of Friend's Kindness by dodged knife blade easily. Again and again in mounting frustration, the other tried to stab him with the dagger. Unfortunately, Jin simply won't stand still. Neither strain of effort nor fear showed on his face. Instead, he smirked. Despite his misgivings about his master's beliefs, Mozi had taught him the martial arts, Mozi's **Principle of Friendships**, well. Besides, Jin's assailant has demonstrated what little fighting skill he has, an adroit fighter, indeed. Jin nearly laughed. But, that would just infuriate the poor pup into doing something foolish. This pup was far too young, too rash, and too heady. Whoever had chosen him for this mission don't deserve to be an Alpha.

Eventually Jin has seen all he needed. He decided it was time to stop toyed with the pup and showed who is the Prime. With the

maneuver, *Accept not Your Friend's Gift*, he raised an arm quickly and knocked the knife from the hand of his opponent just as it was about to gouge his heart. The silvery blade went spiral up into the air for several seconds, then impaled itself into the grass not far away with a quiet swoosh. Not missing a beat, Jin continued with *Offering Seat to Overtaxed Friend*, with an easy thrusting of his right palm movement and left hooked foot. He sent the assailant reeled to the ground. All too easy. This pup now should know his position in the hierarchy of life.

Except that he wasn't a pup.

Jin gaped as his opponent's hood dropped down and revealed the face of an attractive young female fox. She was winded from his last attack and gasped for breath as she sat up, stared up at him darkly through the crimson tangle of her fur.

"A vixen?" he could not help himself from saying. "Why are you involved in all this?"

"I should be asking you the same question," she scowled up at him; her voice whispered. "You have some explaining to do."

He has some explaining to do?

Glossary

Fan-niao: Jadeclaw fowl, similar to hawk or raptor

Kuai xi-yi: Jadeclaw riding steed

Li: Jadeclaw's unit to measure distance 1 li = 2.3 km or 1.43 miles.

Nong ren: Jadeclaw term for farmers

Shi-niao: Jadeclaw domesticated fowl, similar to chicken

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An Introduction to Wuxia and Jadeclaw

By Chuan Lin

This is my humble attempt at introducing Wu-xia genre in the world of Jadeclaw. The original source for this article can be found at <http://www.heroic-cinema.com/eric/> called, A Definition of Wuxia and Xia by Eric Yin.

Introduction

In Zhongguo, wu-xia is made of two characters. The first character, wu, is a pictograph of stopping invaders' lances. And its meaning has to do all things military and valiant. The second character, xia, is a pictograph of four different variation of person characters. The picture symbolizes a person who assisted a great person (who

in turn, helped other people). Its meaning is chivalry or errant knight in Calabraise terms.



Left: Wu Xia calligraphy during late Quan Dynasty.

Right: Wu Xia calligraphy during current period.

However, xia are differed from knights of Calabraise in several aspects. Like knights, xia are skilled in combat but they are not professional soldiers. In this regard, they were similar to judicial champion in a sense that xia are duelists. Still, it is not easy to pigeonhole them as judicial champion because in general, they do not fight just for anyone, or for money, or for a cause. They often owned their loyalty to a person of great renown or to their friends. Also, unlike knights of Calabraises where noble birth is a requirement, wu-xia came from different backgrounds. Some are members of merchant houses whose fortunes rival that of nobility, some dressed in most sorry state but refused all sort of charity from strangers. They sought after adventures, though money is less of

a concern than their reputation. They fought but in accordance to their senses of righteousness. For lack of better description in Calabraise, it would simply best called them, vagrant warriors.

Society has many views on wu-xia. At one extreme, the Head Minister of Record, Masi Qian, saw them as a force of good. They are above head and shoulder over those who use random violence for personal gains. At other extreme, Master of Legalist Philosophy, Han Fei-tze, deplored them as descendants of one of Five Venoms, the Centipede or Wu-gong. And Xun Yue, an advocate of Literati Philosophy, thought wu-xia as having warped the values promoted by the Third Sage King.

Wu-xia viewed themselves as outsiders who fights for what is right for those who can not fight for themselves. They are men of their words; once a promise has given, even the spell, *Break the Golden Chain*, would not able to retract that oath. Their currency is in their reputation; death does come before dishonor. Lastly, they are masters of martial arts and are skilled in no less than 18 methods of fighting.

But in actuality, wu-xia are more dogmatic than selfless. They fight for a cause where they have promised to uphold; sometime, the righteousness of these causes is questionable.

No matter how they acted and behaved, wu-xia are all bonded by principles of loyalty, reciprocity, and duty.

Value System

Eight personality traits associated with wu-xia. Altruism, individualism, justice, loyalty, courage, truthfulness, disregard for wealth and desire for glory derived from Third Sage King's Five Virtues: Ren (benevolence), Li (propriety), Xian (good faith), Yi (righteousness), and Zhi (knowledge).

However, not many are able to attend such lofty perfection. They are just as likely to subject to human

foibles as other. Their tragedies are popular requests among sing-song girls and story-tellers.

*For ten years I have been
polishing this sword;*

*Its frosty edge has never
been put to the test.*

*Now I am holding it and
showing it to you, sir:*

*Is there anyone suffering
from injustices?*

Chia Tao

Not all wu-xia are altruistic, in fact, many great leaders were quite acquisitive. But their redeemed value is the fact that they are willing to share the wealth among their comrades.

Most often, wu-xia's sense of justice was subjective; some can be said to be nothing more than vengeance in thin disguise. Yet, it had to do with the reciprocity.

Loyalty is not blind, according to wu-xia definition. It is the result from the mutuality. Once earned, a wu-xia is *willing to suffer two blades stuck to his ribs for his friend.*¹

And in the name of Loyalty, courage shines. A wu-xia may cherish his life for his own sake. But for his friends, he is willing to lay down his life without a thought.

Truthfulness is the only currency that universal wu-xia have to give to each other. Once, an oath has been broken, that person's value is worse than that of barbarians and no better than an animal. This is best expressed with a popular saying, "*A promise is worth 10,000 jade jewels.*"

The most visible trait of wu-xia

is individualism. It allowed wu-xia to break away from normal social protocols. Individualism allowed wu-xia to place personal loyalty above loyalty to the family. They eschewed the conventional etiquette and favored taking matter into their own hands. Wu-xia have little respect for the law of the state or the conventions of behavior in a society where they lived. They only recognized those traits that they have been upheld.

Origin of Wu-Xia

Mythical Origin

Han Fei Tzu had attributed dubious origins of wu-xia to Wu-gong, Five Venoms's Centipede. Wu-gong was a monkey Master of Arms from Hou State during Second Sage King reign. He was very combative and developed many techniques. Among which, the **Flying Monkey Forty-Four Stabs** was his signature style. It was said that his tail was so strong that it could lift and swing a full stone mace with relatively easy and accuracy.

As the martial representative from Hou State, Wu-gong often matched bouts with other Master of Arms from the eleven states. However, the contest often turned deadly as Wu-gong was not satisfied merely defeated his opponent, he enjoyed killing them as well.

Despite his constant victory, he was not popular among his peers. Those around him already smell the scent of bloodshed emitted from him. Still, Wu-gong was not repented of his action. He craved for more adventures and combats. To break from the conformity of Hou House, Wu-gong became rogue warrior. He traveled throughout the country tried to learn as much as he could on art of fighting and killed those who challenged him but failed.

It came to time when even Wu-gong began to fear for his mortality. His eyesight was not as perceptive as

it used to be; he became easily exhausted; his tail has troubled lifting even half stone mace; and worse of all, the fights were taken longer to finish and many times, Wu-gong had been on verge of defeat.

He needed to find a way to become an immortal. So he went to the Tai Ping School of Ever Peace to demand an audience. The school was deserted when he got there. Many teachers took their students and hidden from him. He wandered there for four days and four nights; cursed the school and every immortal while smashing things.

Eventually, a wizen old man came out of hiding and told him to get lost if he let Wu-gong know the location of immortal elixir. The Rogue Warrior agreed. The wizen old man gave him a bamboo slip with direction and timing of how to acquire the immortal elixir. Then he disappeared before Wu-gong very eyes that the latter had no doubt he had met an immortal.

Followed the instruction on the bamboo strip, Wu-gong traveled to the deepest valley in Wei Shi Mountain. On fourth night of eight month, he dug and found himself an ancient jar with cloth seal. He broke the seal and reached in for something. Instead, he felt a bite on his digit and pulled out. He saw a lean white centipede held fast on his digit with its bite and multitude of limbs. In his rage, Wu-gong peeled the white centipede. He bitten and swallowed it. Wu-gong felt a sharp pain in his chest and fainted.

By the time he woke up, he felt refresh and energized. He was young again! But when he turned to see if his tail could lift a full stone mace, he was shock to see his elonged body and many limbs. He had become the centipede.

With shame and angered, he stayed in the mountain range and learned to shift-shaped back to his original form. He took his rage and frustration out on lone traveler or small caravan that traveled through

Wei Shi Mountain. Decades later, he still could not changed back into original form. It was then, he realized that his centipede form was the original form. So another decades have passed before he learned to shape change into other forms. Naturally, monkey was his favorite form.

*He did not even worry
about his parents,*

*Let alone his children
and his wife.*

*His name entered the
register of heroes;*

*His heart had no room
for personal feelings.*

*He risked his life at a
time of national disaster,*

*And regarded death
merely as returning home.*

Tsao Chih

About that time, his raids against travelers in Wei Shi Mountain have finally attracted the attentions of many Zhongguo adventures and heroines. Many have died tried to defeat him before he was mortally wounded and fled westward.

There was rumor that he was the teacher of the Three Horns, one of Four Evils that scourged Zhongguo during reign of Third Sage King. Yet, his pupil and his dream were crushed on the eastern foothill of Wei Shi Mountain. But Wu-gong lived on and continued to cause havocs within Zhongguo.

That is the mythical explanation of how

wu-xia came about. They are disciples of Wu-gong who secretly spread chaos through armed conflicts.

Traditional Origin

Traditionally, the origin of wu-xia began with the fall of Quan Dynasty and the rise of Zhou Dynasty. With the change of new dynasty, the loyalty to Noble Houses and States were discarded or replaced by the loyalty to ideology and functions. Most shi or warrior castes were able to accept the fact and swear to new allegiances with stoicism. Others rather than swear loyalty to new house or to new ideology, they begged to release from service and took upon life of wandering. They wandered across countryside to look for answers. Some found it through Daoism; some found it through banditry; and some found it through Fourth King Sage's writings.

It was the latter group who began to develop their own peculiar codes of honor and behavior. Gradually, this became undercurrent of normal society with its own terms:

Baidao — the White Path (the yang of wulin), xia who dedicated themselves for the goods of general public. They tended to follow the rules and regulations set by society at large.

Gongfu/Gong-fu/Kungfu/Kung-fu — difference dialects of saying Martial Arts. These are used interchangeability in Jadeclaw world.

Heidao — the Black Path (the yin of wulin), xia who dedicated themselves for the goods of small group or himself at the expanse of general public. They tended to disregard rules and regulations set by society at large.

Jianghu — river lake, another world to describe the subculture of society where xia operated their own set of value system.

Shih — the warrior caste, they are individuals from family of minor nobility or of hereditary warrior. As time moves on, this term extends to include individuals from non-

noble families and intelligentsia.

Xia — the generic term for adventurers who are members of wulin.

Yingxiong — xia of baidao (or hero) who have achieved recognition from general public and wulin.

Wulin — the forest of martial art, the subculture of society where xia operated with their own set of value system. Wulin is further divided into baidao and heidao. In wulin, each xia has an alias or a nickname that best described his fighting style, his quirk, or his origin. A person may be a well known in wulin yet relatively insignificant in society. And he can just as likely be famous in both wulin and society. Fewer are those who choose huida or path of neutrality.

Wuxia — another generic term for adventures who are members of wulin. Wuxia is for those who are more concentrate with fighting skills than magic or literature.

Sect and Secret Societies

In general, the concept of Daoism (and Dharism would not be introduced until supplement 5) monastery teaching martial arts has yet to become popular. Most often, martial arts are taught within family, clan, or select group of students. Majority of sects and secret societies are maintained by noble houses. Only they have enough wealth and connection to maintain large groups of warriors.

In a distant second are the merchant houses. These sects are interested in maintained good relation with both the White and the Black Paths of Wulin or to help overwatch the business at hand.

The smallest among them are families that taught martial arts only within the same blood line.

Xia may seem to be a part of the counterculture. But only those without a liege nor belong to any organization may display such

counterculture, nonconformity, and disregards against authority behaviors. Yet, when they swore an oath to become part of an organization or a sect, they are doing their utmost to follow rules and regulations set by his superiors. Often, these rules and regulations are often strict and carry stiff penalty for disobedience.

Value System

Similar to the Xia Value System mentioned by Eric Yin, xia of Jadeclaw upheld the following:

*Literati scholars confuse
the law by words,*

*Wu-xia violate the
prohibitions by deeds*

*Han Fei Tzu
Master of Legalism*

Filial Piety (Xiao) — obedience to parents (including teachers), respect for superiors (including elder students), honoring ancestors

Harmony in relationships (He) — not confronting, not standing out or overly asserting oneself. Harmony comes from being contented, accepting with one's position and having few desires so that one is not in conflict with others.

Reciprocity (Shu) — repaying of gifts, greetings, favors (good and evil). It is better to give away favors as other people will be in-debt to you than to receive it as you will be in-debt to them.

Wisdom (Zhi) — valuing knowledge, education, intelligence through self-cultivation as well as resisting corruption, keeping oneself of pure mind and body and being teachable, willing to learn from anyone. Hence most xia are able to

cite poetry, quotes, and literature.

Right-mindedness (Yi) — an attitudinal concept of doing what is right, not out of duty, but with an appropriate motive and intention. Often comes in conflict with other virtues such as Filial Piety, Reciprocity and Sincerity.

Sincerity (Xin) — not being manipulative but honest and genuine, especially making good on one's word, being trustworthy, following through. Sincerity is the currency that xia held more dear than life itself.

Humaneness (Ren) — the conduct of humaneness through self-discipline and observing the propriety of relationships. Xia, who is practicing humaneness, is prudent, careful, circumspect (includes planning well, thinking about what one is doing, being slow to talk and opine; includes being thrifty, frugal, patient, and adaptable).

Each xia, sect and secret society below will rank from 1 (lowest priority) to 7 (highest priority) to above values. In general, they strive to live high expectation of all these values. But when any of these two values come in conflict with one another, the ranking will then be used to determine which value take proceeding over another.

Here is samples of Sects and Martial Art Schools.

House Cui
(Harbinger from the mountain, Rat, located in State of Cheng)

A minor noble house from State of Cheng, House Cui traced its lineage all the way back to the time of Great Flood. In its ancestral temple, there are no less than 53 ancestral tablets. The House Cui is infamously known from its spotted past.

崔家

There was an ancestor whose noble folly had earned him a place as Sixty-Six Sacrilegious Curses (though no one dared to utter it in front of House Cui for reason below). But the House Cui gained wealth and position by him.

The legendary master, Cui Furong, had created Cui Guei (Ghostly Harbinger) martial art had walked the yellow earth more than 60 years ago. His villainy had been so great that it takes a group of xia from House Yù, from Beggar's Gang, and from White Crane School to bring him down. His death had made Ghostly Harbinger Martial Art notorious.

But House Cui can boast that one has become a hermit known as Wise Man of Dong Shen Mountains, his former dwelling had been converted into a small shrine that attracted steady worshippers from local.

Then there was Cui Weiliu, a famous musician who personally crafted his own qin (10 strings zithers) called Wenli Qin that it has been prominently displayed at the Palace of Duke Zhèng.

House Cui located at Ru Nan, the southernmost city and the capital of Cheng State. For past generation or two, they have tried unsuccessfully in becoming the Sixth Merchant House due to the unity of Five Merchant Houses.

House Gui are very interested with involvement of foreign barbarians. They want to use foreign barbarians as the mean for them to achieve their goal. Mao Shu, an assassin sect, has a team of thirteen warriors whose have Cui Gui Duan Ge (described below). As a team, they have successfully brought down very skilled warrior or sorcerer who would have no problem defeating half as that many assassins.

House Cui's Value System

- Filial Piety (5)
- Harmony in relationships (6)
- Reciprocity (7)

- Wisdom (1)
- Right-mindedness (2)
- Sincerity (4)
- Humaneness (3)

Ghostly Harbinger (Cui Gui Duan Ge)

This is a close quarter martial art. Practitioner relies on his speed and size to get close to his enemies so that their weapons will be ineffective whereas his would be.

The weapon of choice for Ghostly Harbinger style is a pair of short halberds. As Cui Gui warrior moving in range, he uses short halberd to parry or to redirect the attack to elsewhere with its hook. And when he gets within close quarter, the blade side of short halberd adds additional damage to his punch. This weapon is often used in pair. This is also one of few team-oriented martial art as one practitioner would lock down the opponent's weapon while his compatriot attack against weaponless foe or to buy time for others to perform long action.

Cost: Esoteric Gift – Sect, Ghostly Harbinger (Cui Gui Duan Ge) 1 pt.

Kind of Fighting Wheels

Short Halberd (Special – Improved Disarm, Upset) has a crescent moon blade as guard for hand. It is about 3 cun 8 fen (2.85 ft or 87 cm) in length and its crescent moon blade guard is about 1 cun (9.17 in or 23.3 cm). It is made out of solid metal. The handle is wrapped in cloth or leather. The hook is sharpened to allow slashing.

Short Halberd primary function is to entangle opponent's weapon to render it useless. It can also used to hook on cloth or flesh to hinder opponent movement. The crescent moon blade guard can

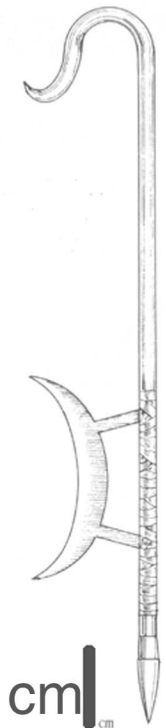
be use to cause additional damage via punching.

It is a versatile weapon that became deadly when used in pair. However, this is a weapon that required expert handling for it could cause as much damage to its owner who is inexperienced with it.

Ghostly Harbinger

(Gui Hao Duan Ge)

See Table 1



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Footnotes

¹ a popular wu-xia saying

Table 1 - Ghostly Harbinger (Cui Gui Duan Ge)

Maneuver Name	General Description / Game Term
Ghostly Rat's Shadow (Ying-gui hao)	By swinging a pair of short halberd in rapid fashion, the practitioner seemed to create a wall of force that parries against all in-coming melee attacks. Instead of one brute force to knock aside melee attack, this involves numerous little pushes in order to misdirect opposing weapon at the last minute. Basic Advantage, cost 1 pt. Requirement: Second Parry Game Term: Reroll all 1's.
Rat with Iron Jaw (Tie-ya hao)	By capitalizing a pair of short halberds, the practitioner attempts to lock opponent weapons through a successful parry. Expert Advantage, cost 1 pt. Requirement: Ghostly Rat's Shadow Game Term: After a successful parry, the practitioner can choose to entangle opponent's appendage or weapon for one round.
Rat with Borrowed Strength (Tou-li hao)	After learning how to parry and to entangle, this technique teaches how to borrow opponent's strength. Now, instead of actively parrying against physical attack, the practitioner learns to use the opposing force to gain additional movement. Expert Advantage, cost 1 pt. Requirement: Rat with Iron Jaw Game Term: Prior to parry, the practitioner has to announce that he is using this maneuver. After the parry dice are thrown, practitioner moves a pace for every successful parry dice. This considers a free action.
Three Arm Rat (San-bi hao)	To learn this style, the practitioner was bound up during training and a short halberd is lying on the ground. A group of apprentice charged at the practitioner with wooden sticks. This repeated every day. The practitioner has to learn how to pick up the short halberd with his tail and to wield it successfully. Else, he will be beaten silly. This training exercise is looked forward by many junior apprentices who have suffered humiliation and beatings by their more senior members. Heroic Advantage, cost 1 pt. Requirement: Rat with Borrowed Strength, Prehensile Tail/Prehensile Feet Game Term: With this maneuver, the practitioner able to coordinate his prehensile tail to strike in co-operation with his other melee attacks. This allows practitioner to use two different maneuvers at the same time or gains an additional attack. For those without Prehensile Tail, they gains Prehensile Feet gift. That is, they have trained to use their foot to grab and use weapon.
Fury of Cornered Rat (Jiao-luo hao)	This maneuver brings out a sense of despair and desperation from the practitioner. He learns to channel these emotion to his advantage. Bristle with a sense of doom, the practitioner give all away all he has until either his opponents are dead or he is unconscious by exhaustion. Heroic Advantage, cost 1 pt. Requirement: Three Arm Rat, Heroic Short Halberd weapon skill, Heroic Resolve skill Game Term: For one round, this practitioner can perform as many actions beyond what he normally allows. In order to do so, he has to roll his <i>Resolve skill</i> against <i>Difficult Test</i> (2d10) for first extra action, <i>For Experts Only</i> (2d12) for second extra action, <i>For Heroes Only</i> (3d12) for third extra action, and <i>For Legends Only</i> (4d12) for fourth and additional action afterward. Once he fails the roll, the practitioner is sent Reeling.

A Night in House of Sun Inn

Jadeclaw Adventure by Chuan Lin

Summary

Players arrive to a busy town and stay at an inn. Instead of a night of rest, excitement awaits. This is an expandable one-shot adventure. The Host can make this as complicated as possible by role-play many NPCs within. Nearly most of them have their own secret agenda that may or may not coincide with Players. Also included are tidbits of rumors (adventure seeds) that are from the upcoming supplement, *Loot the Burning House*. Or the Host can simply just go straight to kung-fu fighting choreography.

From our original Sanguine gang, players opted the kung-fu fighting choreography. However, after finding out about Fox Entertainers, party splintered between upheld the law (to turn them to local constable or Yan Wei) or to maintain one's words (a promise made). That was one of few memorial games we have. It will be interesting to see how other groups fare.

Player information are in this font style and color. Host information are in this font style and color.

Hook

Players arrive to Town of Elegance (Ya-zhi Zhen) in State of Sung (the one in the map is a typo). House of Sun Inn (use the Teahouse map on Jadeclaw RPG, page 316) welcomes their weary bodies and gleaming coins. A family of Oxen runs House of Sun Inn. Old Bull, Jaizhen, sits at the counter by the door and welcomes the guests. He calls for Number Two Bull to take these esteemed guests to a table. Other two bulls serving foods and busing tables are Number Five Bull and Obdurate Calf. Within the Inn are other guests:

Father-daughter fox traveling entertainers

They perform live entertainment. Elder fox plays a musical instrument, pipa. Younger vixen sings a folk-song, *Intoxicated Under the Shadow of Flowers* (see insert on the right).

Host Info: Father, Li Ke-shou, and daughter, Li Yuan-zhi, are from State of Wei who have been traveled throughout Zhongguo. Father has wanted to travel and see the world. He also looks for a good family for his daughter to be married into. Daughter has an aspiring dream of become a sword-dancer and wishes that her future partner would also be a sword-dancer. They have arrived at this town for ten days now and would probably move on to toward Wei State via Zhou State by tomorrow.

Their gossips: There have been recent burglaries against the local gang, Dark Water. It's better to keep on moving than to be these people's punching bag.

Their secret: Father and daughter are really the burglars known as Night Clouds. Father took her daughter out to perfect her skills. Though they robbed the tong, loots are disbursed among poorer folks of this town. They themselves do not keep any of the loot other than the money they earned as traveling entertainers.

Intoxicated Under the Shadow of Flowers:

*Light mists and heavy clouds,
melancholy the long dreary day,*

*In the golden censer
the burning incense is dying away.*

*It is again time
for the lovely Double Ninth festival;*

*The coolness of midnight
penetrates my screen of sheer silk
and chills my pillow of jade.*

*After drinking wine after twilight
under the chrysanthemum hedge,*

*My sleeves are perfumed
by the faint fragrance of the plants.*

*Oh, I cannot say it is not enchanting,
Only, when the west wind stirs the
curtain,*

*I see that I am more gracile
than the yellow flowers.*

(By LiQingChow tr. Lucy Chow H)

In battle: They will actively avoid combat by pretending to be non-combatants. They will use their dodge skills to get out of the way at last minute.

A He-Crane scholar & Cat Boy

White Scholar is reading his book, sipping his tea, and occasionally raising his head to enjoy sing-song girl's performance. His young cat boy servant is napping by the table.

Host Info: White scholar, Lu Yong-zhang, and his servant, Brush Boy, are from State of Lu. They have been to State Zhou to partake mandarin examination and now are on their way home.

Their gossips: State of Zhou seems to be mobilize troops against State of Lu. Apparently, there was an assassination attempt against King of Zhou but it was foiled. But Zhou Minister of Law has accused Lu State as the rogue state.

Their secret: Crane Scholar is a spy from State of Lu and is on his way back to report this news and troop strength to Wu Chi, General of Western Border in State of Lu. Lu Yong-zhang tries to gather any news players may have known about their home State's reaction to the news.

In battle: They also prefer not to involve in combat unless players are nearly defeated by npc thugs. Then they would jump in to help.



Pipa, a Zhong-guoesse musical instrument.

Lonely She-snake

She is sampling her tea by herself, she seems disinterested in all around commotion.

Host Info: Doubt Fire is a daoshih. She has recently come down from Dong Shen Mountains and is on her way to the Hang East Lake. She may be aloof to players behavior simply because she is uncomfortable to have a lively communication with another person. She has been in meditation in solitude for three years.

Her gossips: None. She does not have anything to share though she is interested in listening what players have to offer.

Her secret: She knows about Fox entertainers group's identify.

In battle: She retreated to the corner of inn and watches the battle with keen interest. Every five round, she will secretly cast spell to assist the weaker side.

Wandering Eye Monkey and 3 Rabbit Brothers

A he-monkey is watching everyone with great interest. He drinks wine and enjoys his meal with gusto. He shares his table with 3 rabbits.

Curious Monkey

Monkey Host Info: The Monkey calls himself Jianjie, a bounty hunter from State of Wei. He is here hunting after infamous rogue, Night Clouds. He has heard of recent burglary against local gang, Dark Water or Light Water or whatever (he set his sight on bigger fish than small shrimps) which are very similar to Night Clouds style. He arrived the town today. He met up these 3 rabbits who are down on their lucks and try to catch up with local gossips.

His Gossips: A murder in the capital of Wei has dimmed the New Year celebration. Count Shu, patriarch of Shu Clan is celebrated his 80th birthday. Many prominent nobility, ministers, and renown masters were invited. Even Kung-sun Lung, master of Minja, has been invited. Yet, on the very day of the party, while his guests were mingled downstairs, Count Shu was killed in his private chamber. Among his honored guests is Cold Blood, one of Four Royal Marshals of Zhongguo.

His Secret: Count Shu was adventurous and a skilled gongfu warrior at his younger days. He had been actively participated with Shu Jia Escort Service and traveled to other States. Count Shu had made some numerous enemies like Lord Conqueror and his gang of bandits. Though Lord Conqueror had been captured and killed, his two ablest assistants: Wind and Cloud have escaped.

Jianjie does not know why Cold Blood had attended this birthday bash.

In battle: Jianjie would spent a round or two trying to observe everyone involve in melee. He tries to recognize anyone with Bad Reputation/Secret: Out-law. Otherwise, he would attempt to help the poor entertainers.

Rabbits Brothers

Host Info: They called themselves, Anda the Elder Brother, Andao the Middle Brother, and Anding the Younger Brother. Anda the Elder is a jack-rabbit and his behavior is polite; Andao the Middle is a mountain hare who seems a bit haughty despite their downtrodden states; and Anding the Younger is a grassland hare who has quick temper. They are blooded brothers who swore oath to each other. They are out of work scouts from State of Qin who heard of rumors of war between State of Zhou and State of Lu. They want to explore both sides before deciding which faction do they want to join.

Their Gossips: On their way here, they have passed Yong Chong City, the capital of Shen State. They have picked up an interesting gossip. Yong Chong City was buzz with excitement with rumors of a band of adventurers called themselves, Spring Screams, have found the legendary Dragon Pool. They have a gourd fill with water from that legendary lake. They are interested to sell it to the highest bidder. The winner bidder will doubly bless by brew the water with longevity ginseng at the fifteenth day after the New Year when the spirits ascend to heaven. But they have been into hiding.

Their Secrets: A large labor mobilization has been taking place near the capital of Qin State. They are to create a large lake, Nanhu (Southern Lake) south of the capital, Hanzhong. The Duke Qin desires to have a summer palace junk on the lakeside to escape the heat. Lists of names are being drawn as conscripts for this project.

In Combat: Anding the Younger would be one of first who jumps in to defend the sing-song girl. If he is in trouble during the fight, Andao the Middle would jump in to help his younger brother. And if both are in trouble, then Anda the Elder would jump in to help his brothers. If one of the brother has been slain, the remaining two would fight to death or swore eternal vengeance against their brother's slayer.

Boar with Dough

Rich Boar is appeared to be the leader of his group (4 bodyguards, a herald, 4 servants, a driver, and a concubine with 5 maids). He enjoys his food and feasts his eyes on vixen entertainer with great interest.

Host Info: Rich Dilettante, Lu Qinli, is member of a minor nobility clan, Lou, from State of Cheng. His family is located at Ke-fu Zhen, the westernmost town. Though minor in status, his family is quite rich and allowed their number three son, Lou Qinli, to travel in style. He obviously is in no hurry and tends to enjoy live as much as he can.

His Gossips: People at Ru-nan, State Cheng's Capital, are troubled by the event occurred in the New Year event. Five Stars Pearls, the large ocean going junk smashed against the harbor as it came to port. There was no clear indication of sudden tidal wave (haichao) that lift the junk high above its crest before crushing it with full fury. Out of 160 people on board, 10 passengers and 15 crewmembers were rescued. Unfortunately; the captain, Stone Guardian, and goods from the South were lost. Another inauspicious sight is troops of various factions have been cited for deployment around the royal palace. Rumors of coup are being whispered about. These were not auspicious signs and herald a year of trouble.

His Secret: Lou Qinlin desired young sing-song girl, Li Yuan-zhi. He would do what he can to gain her affection. Naturally, he sees both the attacker and the defender as competitors to his amour for the sing-song girl.

In Combat: Lou Qinlin would not involve in combat. He simply order his bodyguards to both defend him and

young song girl.

Locals

Various Monkey, Rats, and Chicken fill out remaining tables. The Innkeeper is an Ox, he has three other young bulls (all family related) to help out with serving foods and busing tables.

Host Information: These are locals who come here for food and entertainment. Basically, they are here to relax after a day's work. They are mostly merchants and artisans with few farmers or labors.

Gossips: Here are some of local gossips, which may provide additional adventure seeds or flavor to the adventure, that both locals and the innkeeper know of. Some rumors are meant to be confusing as they should be. It is up to players to decide what to believe in.

- There are whispers that Chia-ming, a local physician, has his house burned down is because he was late on payment to the local gang, Dark Water, which is led by one called Meng Shih-fan. And what's more, there were someone who dared to cause trouble with the Dark Water gang. A recent series of burglary have plagued the gang hideout. Now, these gang began to ask for more extortion money.
- Whatever happened to Xu Haifeng's pregnant wife? Xu Haifeng is a Baron (Nan-jue) whose estate is nearby. He is well respected by locals and considered by many an exemplar of a superior man. His wife, Li Wen Coco, was a proper lady who was in her fourth month pregnancy. There was no report of impropriety or any domestic disturbance by their servants. Then one day out of blue, they announced that they have to attend to Baroness Yi's baby birthday at Sung State Capital, Dai Xian. A week later, Baron Xu returned along. There was no mentioned of whereabouts of his wife. It is as if Li Wen Coco has disappeared.
- In a nearby Kao-zhen, there is a plague of Dengue Fever. Eighty people rumored to have suffered horrible headache, pain in eyes, swelling and achiness in all part of the body, high fever, red rash all over body, lack of appetite, and diarrhea. Could this be the return of demon Han-dou?
- State of Sung is joining Zhou State to teach Lu State the follies of her foiled assassination attempt. Border is closed between Lu State and Sung State.
- State of Sung is joining Lu State to defend against Zhou State. There was no basis for Zhou State's accusation. Border is closed between Sung State and Zhou State.
- There was talked of having a joint experiment developed between State of Lu and State of Sung of establishing a post here called Ma-ting. This building would act as a stop to replenish supplies and steeds and also as a place where information from official government being passed on. But because of up-coming conflict, what will happen to the join venture?

Secrets: Some of these rumors and gossips above will be in slightly more in details in the first supplement, Loot the Burning House. They would be classified as social, political and exalted. Social rumors are for those who have skill in streetwise and attempt to gather information about a city. Political rumors are obvious for character with gubernatorial career or connection. Exalted rumors are for character who have nobility gift or served one of NPC noble. These are our attempts to create a sense of wheel-within-wheel atmosphere. Hopefully, these rumors and gossips are flexible enough for Host to modify according to his players actions.

Combat: Patrons will flee the combat. The innkeeper and his sons are in dilemma: if they helped, the Dark Water gang would cause them trouble once the party leaves; if they don't help, then there would be lot more collateral damages. They are paralyzed with fear.

Line

Give players sometime to mingle the crowd or to let them do some role-playing. But eventually, a gang of

motley crews of rooster, chicken, and dogs will show up to crash the party. Erh Hao, a right hand man of Dark Water Gang, leads them. They have been instructed to bring sing-song vixen, Li Yuan-zhi, back as Number Four Wife for the gang leader, Meng Shih-fan.

Erh Hao, “So, old man, have your daughter make presentable for our boss. We are here to escort your daughter and you to the wedding ceremony, hea, hea.”

Li Ke-shou, “Oh no, gracious master, this humbled sing song daughter of mine is too pitiful to bring any joy or usefulness to your great boss. This lowly Li Ke-shou respectfully asked your boss to give this glorious position to a more worthy girl.”

Pause to give players to do one action; other NPCs are just looking on to see continue development.

Erh Hao, if not disrupt, will continue, “No, old man, your daughter has been selected. Both of you and your daughter will not live in hunger or in poverty. Considered that you are being lucky. Now, let’s go, you don’t want to keep your future son-in-law waiting too long.”

Li Ke-shou, “Oh please, please have mercy on us, she is too ignorant to be of any useful to be her husband. Please grant me mercy.”

Pause to give players to do one action; other NPCs begin to get nervous at whole thing.

Erh Hao, “Enough talks, let’s go”. With that, he waved his hand and his men began to move toward fox entertainers.

If challenge by other characters, **Erh Hao** simply states, “She has been selected by our boss, that is enough reason.”

The initial combat should not be too difficult for players to overcome. There should be 1 thugs against a non-fighter character, 2 thugs against a fighter, and Erh Hao would face the most skilled looking fighter. Defeated thugs announced that they will be back with their buddies.

Sing-song girl, Li Yuan-zhi, and her father, Li Ke-shou, thanked players profusely. They would explain that they are wandering entertainers who have arrived this town for a week ago. Every night, they have entertained folks at this inn with tales from another State or sang popular folk songs. Two nights ago, the leader of triad had saw Li Yuan-zhi’s performance. Next night, his minion came and asked her to be their boss’s number 4 wife. Li Ke-shou refused and almost a scaffold had occurred. They knew they have to leave but hope that with tonight’s performance, they should have enough fund to travel to next town.

Players are given time to make any preparation or to convince other NPC to help their cause. Without player’s inference, each NPC below will act differently after the encounter.

Fox Entertainers (father, Li Ke-shou, daughter, Li Yuan-zhi)– They know that they are the source of this incident. Not wish to burden themselves on others, especially the ox innkeeper who lives within Dark Water Gang reach. They would announce that they would leave this place immediately to not be a burden to everyone around them. And secretly, they would plan one big heist against Dark Water Gang before they leave to repay for the troubles these gangsters have inconvenient everyone. They hope to take the advantage of the fact that while Dark Water Gang comes um force to look for them, their hideout would be undermanned for them to visit.

He-Crane scholar (Lu Yong-zhang and his servant, Brush Boy) – If he has been involved in initial combat above, his chivalrous nature gotten better of him. He would offer his service to assist either player characters or fox entertainers. Otherwise, they are content to sit back and watch the whole thing develop. They would explain that they were on their way home to State of Lu. They have been traveled around nearby states as a way for Lu Yong-zhang to relieve the stress of examination.

If white-crane scholar has not been involved in the initial conflict, his curiosity would make him stay in hidden and watch.

She-snake (Doubt Fire)- She is troubled by such event. This does not feel nature event of things nor does it seem balance. She may come to a conclusion that this is but a test to see if her commitment to the balance of Tao is steadfast enough even when the weak and righteous are suffered. She has considered this a lesson for the day. She intends to head back her dwelling and mediate today’s event.

He monkey (Jianjie) – Jianjie is interested in catching the big fish, be it player character, boss leader (Meng Shih-fan) or the Nigh Cloud rogues. In fight, he would conserve his strength to make sure he is only dealing with one thug at a time. When opportunity presents itself, he would swoop to take away his prey and himself away from this battle.

Three oathed rabbits (Anda the Elder Brother, Andao the Middle Brother, and Anding the Younger Brother) – If they have not involved in the initial combat, they are less likely to be involved. It would require an appeal to their chivalry or justice to overcome their reluctance. Otherwise, they would leave tonight to avoid further confrontation. If they have been involved in the initial combat, then they are willing to see the thing through.

Rich Boar (Lu Qinli) – He will evaluate his chance of impression the singsong girl against the possibility of losing his men. If he has no chance (i.e. player characters suffered minimal damages, his men were injured, or sing-song girl showed no obvious interest in him) then he would decline to join them. However, he would not leave this place, as it is unthinkable for him to flee from the gang. Lu Qinli would feign disinterested and retire to his suit. He would not come out regardless what happens to others. His bodyguards are instructed to protect his suit.

If Lu Qinli perceives a possible for glory or to win singsong girl's heart then he would agree to help player characters. He is very good at becoming the figurehead leader in an attempt to get recognition and not the harms. He would pretend to listen to player characters' advice and then permitted them to carry out.

Ox Innkeeper (Jaizhen) – Being more practical and cautious man, he would decide to stay out of this conflict all together. To him, player characters are temporary; Dark Water Gang is more permanent. He doesn't think player characters have any chance to defeat Dark Water Gang in next conflict. It will take a serious persuasion roll to convince him otherwise.

When the party is readied, it is time to move to the Sinkers.

Sinkers

If Dark Water Gang had been physically beaten off, they would be back with more thugs. Knowing this, the innkeeper would beg all involved parties (players, Li Ke-shou, and even Lu Yong-zhang if he had actively participated) to leave his establishment for fear of damaging his property. If players cannot come up with a way to soothe innkeeper's fear, Lu Yong-zhang would put down a jewel jade (zhu-yu) as insurance against any mishap. If inquired, he explains, "why fight in misery when we can rest in comfort."

Based on surviving gang information, Meng Shih-fan decided he may or may not carry out the threats. If the party still seems pretty strong, then Meng Shih-fan wants to lay low until the entire situation passes away. The vixen is not important enough for him to lose any more men. This just compounds his misfortunes he has with recent burglary. He figures it would be a good time to remain hidden and to lick his wounds. Otherwise, he would carry through the threat.

When the party is readied, it is time to move to the Final Battle.

In the final battle, Meng Shih-fan would bring enough thugs that would 2 thugs to non-warrior type characters and 3 thugs to warrior type characters. Meng Shih-fan would look on. If the battle seems turned against him, he would flee under the darkness. If the battle seems to be winning, he would join in the fight.

If there is an encounter with Dark Water gang and Meng Shih-fan escaped alive, players have earned themselves a **Flaw: Enemy – Meng Shih and Dark Water gang**.

Next Day

Majority of NPC who are uninvolved or relatively unscathed in last night's combat will bid their farewell and went their separate ways. However, since Town of Elegance (Ya-zhi Zhen) sits on North-South route, lots of them seemingly traveled together for at least a short while.

Fox Entertainers (father, Li Ke-shou, daughter, Li Yuan-zhi) – If significantly wounded, they would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. Otherwise, they will continue to travel South then westward into State of Zhou. From there, they will turn northward to State of Wei, their homeland. Along the way, they

would stop at towns and cities to ply their trades and to practice their skills further.

He-Crane scholar (Lu Yong-zhang and his servant, Brush Boy) - If significantly wounded, they would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. Otherwise, both the scholar and his servant will travel northward to State of Lu. At the first town, they will contact liaison of General Wu Chi to report their finding which further confirm what the General has suspected all along. Soon, a martial law would declare that severe limit the traffic between in and out of Lu State on the west side. There will be more troops training and mobilization. Meanwhile, Crane Scholar and Brush Boy will continue to traveled eastward to the capital to bring both the result of their finding and Wu Chi's written request to strengthened the western front.

She-snake (Doubt Fire)- If significantly wounded, she would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. Otherwise, she will depart alone and travel southward toward to Hang East Lake. There, she will enter Falling Water Temple to report her insight to Chief Daoshi there.

He monkey (Jianjie) - If significantly wounded, he would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. And if fox entertainers are able to hide their tracks (by not participated the fight), Bounty Hunter will conclude that they are not the people he has been looked for. He would decide to hang out with the party who he thinks are offer more possibility to apprehend law-breakers. Otherwise, he would follow at discreet distance behind fox entertainers.

Three Oathed rabbits (Anda the Elder Brother, Andao the Middle Brother, and Anding the Younger Brother) - If significantly wounded, they would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. Otherwise, they travel northward to the State of Lu. There, they are most likely to be employed by General Wu Chi's army.

Rich Boar (Lu Qinli) - If significantly wounded, he would spend another day or two of bed rest before continue on. Whether or not his wooing attempt is successful or not, he is traveling westward to State of Zhou. His family has a business establishing (trading salt commodity) at the capital, Ma-jing, and he is to oversea it. Then he will report back to the family.

House of Sun Inn (Ox Family) - If players have successfully defeated Dark Water gang, House of Sun will become local opinion leader. Next time, players travel pass Town of Elegance (Ya-zhi Zhen), House of Sun Inn will be larger and more plush then before. They will be treated as honorable guests and receives best food and services at courtesy charges. Old Ox Innkeeper, in fact, will host a banquet with party members as the guests of honor.

If players failed to defeat Dark Water Gang, House of Sun will be vandalized after party are long gone. Dark Water Gang will taking out their frustration at local merchants. Next time, players travel pass Town of Elegance (Ya-zhi Zhen), House of Sun Inn will be smaller and more shamble then before. They will be kicked out of House of Sun and refuse to serve them. In fact, party will paid exorbitant price for any goods and services during their stay at this town.

Dark Water Gang (Meng Shih-fan) - If players have defeated Dark Water Gang, there will be no other gang to replace them. The fame of House of Sun Inn and their connection with players will be enough to deter anyone else trying to fill in Dark Water Gang's hole. That is not to say no petty crimes will not occur, only that no organized crime will take place for 3 to 5 years.

If Dark Water Gang has survived, they are looking forward for a rematch with players. Instead of brutal frontal assault, they start to pick off player one by one, a la, Clanton gang in Wyatt Erp or Tombstone movies. Or they will frame a player for a crime. They will harass the players until they leave town.

Troubleshoot

Q: What's local law & order's reaction to Dark Water Gang?

A: There are three different approaches to this issue. It all depends on how players want to expand this adventure. For our original Sanguine group, it was an one-shot adventure that ended up with players argued among themselves. So the question of law & order never come up. But here are three possible cliché examples:

1. The cheesiest, laws & order is in Dark Water Gang's payroll. There are many snitches within structure of Ssu-Kuo's department that Dark Water Gang is aware of every activity occurred. So usually, Yan Wei

patrol arrived late when perpetrators have already escaped. It has become so much corruption that Ssu-Kuo came to view this as a cushion job before moving on to bigger and better.

2. Similar to above except that Ssu-Kuo want to eliminate Dark Water Gang. No merchant dare to in public accused Dark Water Gang of wrong doing. Without people pressing charges, there is nothing Ssu-Kuo could do.
3. There is an unspoken understanding between Ssu-Kuo and Dark Water Gang. As long as the later does not behave too brazenly and still paid its dues in taxes, Ssu-Kuo is willing to look the other way. However, if the crime is too flagrant or audacity, Ssu-Kuo will force to clam down Dark Water Gang once and for all.

Supporting Casts

Fox Entertainers:

Li Ke-shou, the father

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10

Race - fox (d8); **Career** - entertainer (d10), vagrant warrior (d10)

<i>Fox</i>	<i>Entertainer</i>	<i>Vagrant Warrior</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8			D8	Climbing
D8			D8	Sixth Sense
D8			D8	Stealth
D8			D8	Tracking
	D10		D10	Music Instrument
	D10		D10	Acting
	D10		D10	Fast Talk
	D10		D10	Psychology
	D10		D10	Streetwise
		D10	D10	Axe
		D10	D10	Fencing
		D10	D10	Flail
		D10	D10	Mace
		D10	D10	Polearm
		D10	D10	Spear
		D10	D10	Staff (favorite)
		D10	D10	Sword
			D10	Dodge
			D10	Resolved

Gifts: Claw, Keen Ears, Teeth, Luck, Knock Down (with Staff)

Flaws: Pacifist (fight only in self defense), Honorable, Obsequious, Soft-Hearted

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 1/2

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d10; Parry Staff d12 & d12 & d12

Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d10 & d6

Resolve: D10 & d10
Weapons: ½ stone Staff (to hit: d10 & d10 & d10; to damage: d10 & d10)
Special Abilities: Trait - Prosperity (page 62) d10
Equipment: Pipa musical instrument, ½ stone staff, Light Leather, 200 bu-qians (tonight's work as entertainer)

Fox Entertainer: Li Yuan-zhi, the daughter

Primary Traits: Body d8; Speed d8; Mind d8; Will d8

Race - fox (d8); Career - entertainer (d8), vagrant warrior (d8)

<i>Fox</i>	<i>Entertainer</i>	<i>Vagrant Warrior</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8			D6	Climbing
D8			D6	Sixth Sense
D8			D6	Stealth
D8			D6	Tracking
	D8		D8	Music Instrument
	D8		D8	Acting
	D8		D8	Fast Talk
	D8		D8	Psychology
	D8		D8	Streetwise
		D8	D8	Axe
		D8	D8	Fencing
		D8	D8	Flail
		D8	D8	Mace
		D8	D8	Polearm
		D8	D8	Spear
		D8	D8	Staff
		D8	D8	Sword (sword)
			D8	Dodge
			D8	Resolved

Flaws: Pacifist (fight only in self defense), Honorable, Obsequious, Soft-Hearted
Initiative: D8 & d8
Move: Dash 8 paces, Stride 2
Defenses: Dodge d8 & d8; ½ Stone Sword d8 & d8 & d8
Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d8 & d6
Resolve: D8 & d8
Weapons: 1/4 stone Sword (to hit: d8 & d8 & d8; to damage: d10 & d8)
Special Abilities: Surprise (page 62) d8
Equipment: Scarf Loose robe, Light leather hidden beneath, ¼ stone Sword hidden within her many scarf robe, 24 bu-qians (tonight's work as sing-song girl)

Crane Scholar, Lu yang-zhang

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10

Race: crane (d8); **Career:** scholar (d10), spy (d10)

<i>Crane</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Spy</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8			D8	Contortionist
D8			D8	Fishing
D8			D8	Flight
D8			D8	Swimming
	D10		D10	Calligraphy
	D10		D10	Etiquette
	D10		D10	History
	D10		D10	Literacy
	D10		D10	Lore: Law
		D10	D10	Cryptography
		D10	D10	Disguise
		D10	D10	Fast-Talk
		D10	D10	Streetwise
			D10	Fencing (scholarly sword)
			D10	Dodge
			D10	Resolved

Gifts: Beak, Claws, Flight, Prehensile Feet

Flaws: Frail, Honorable, Curious, Duty

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 ½

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d10; ½ Stone Sword d12 & d12

Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d8 & d6

Resolve: D10 & d10

Weapons: 1/4 stone Sword (to hit: d10 & d10; to damage: d10 & d10)

Special Abilities: Sensuality d8

Equipment: Scholarly outfit, light leather beneath scholar outfit, writing instruments, book, 2 jewel jade (zhu-yu), 8 golden blade (jin-dao), and 20 bu-qian.

Cat Boy Servant, Brush Boy

Primary Traits: Body d6; Speed d6; Mind d6; Will d6

Race: cat (d6); **Career:** servant (d8)

<i>Cat</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D6		D4	Acrobatics
D6		D4	Climbing
D6		D4	Stealth
	D8	D6	Etiquette

D8	D6	Fast Talk
D8	D6	Heraldry
D8	D6	Psychology
	D6	Axe
	D6	Dodge

Gifts: Claws, Night Vision, Teeth
Flaws: Duty, Pacifist: Cannot take life, Taciturn
Initiative: D6 & d6
Move: Dash 6 paces, Stride 1 ½
Defenses: Dodge d6 & d6; Hatchet d6 & d6
Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d6 & d6
Weapons: Hatchet (to hit: d6 & d6; to damage: d8 & d6)
Special Abilities: Surprise (page 62) d4
Equipment: Servant outfit, light leather, hatchet hidden, ¼ stone sword hidden

Snake Dao-shih, Doubt Fire

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10
Race: Snake (d8); **Career:** Dao-shih (d10)

<i>Snake</i>	<i>Dao Shih</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D8	Camouflage
D8		D8	Contortionist
D8		D8	Tracking
D8		D8	Wrestling
	D10	D10	Literacy
	D10	D10	Lore: Magic
	D10	D10	Meditation
			Create Water (page 217, mastery)
			Dao Shih's Fragile Aura of Water (page 220, mastery)
			Detect Water (page 223, mastery)
			Water Controls Wood (page 249, mastery))
			Water Dispel Fire (page 250, mastery)
			Dao Shih's Proper Aura of Water (page 221, mastery)
			Difficulty at the Beginning (page 223, mastery)
			Flooding Deluge (page 229, mastery)
			Inspect Water (page 232, mastery)
			Misfortune of Water (page 235, mastery, she making spiting motion)
			Fulfillment (page 229, cost 3)
			Water Counters Fire (page 249, cost 2)
			Abysmal (page 210, cost 4)
			Ladle of Mud (page 233, cost 2, she making spiting motion)

Calling Down the Rain (page 212, cost 5)

D8 Dodge

D8 Resolved

Gifts: Extra Hit Points, Ophidian, Prehensile Tail, Teeth

Flaws: Morose, Pacifist (cannot take life), Slothful, Taciturn

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 ½

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d8

Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d10 & d6

Resolve: D10 & d8

Weapons:

Special Abilities: Magic Points: 20; Surprise (page 62) d8

Equipment: Taoist priest robe, light leather, 10 bu-qians

Monkey Bounty Hunter, Jianjie

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10

Race: Monkey (d8); **Career:** Bounty Hunter (d10)

<i>Monkey</i>	<i>Bounty Hunter</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D8	Acrobatics
D8		D8	Climbing
D8		D8	Contortionist
D8		D8	Wrestling
	D10	D10	Spear
	D10	D10	Shadowing
	D10	D10	Streetwise
	D10	D10	Tracking
		D10	Dodge
		D10	Resolved

Gifts: Prehensile Feet, Prehensile Tail

Flaws: Curious, Honorable

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: 1/2

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d10; ½ Stone Spear d10 & d10 & d10

Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d10 & d6

Resolve: D10 & d10

Weapons: ½ stone Spear (to hit: d10 & d10 & d10; to damage: d10 & d8 & d4)

Special Abilities: Prosperity (page 62) d8

Equipment: ½ stone spear nearby, light leather, 10 bu-qian, promissory note

Rabbit Scouts:

Anda the Elder, Andao the Middle, Anding the Younger

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10

Race: rabbit(d8); **Career:** Scout(d10)

<i>Rabbits</i>	<i>Scout</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D8	Digging
D8		D8	Herbalism
D8		D8	Jumping
D8		D8	Stealth
	D10	D10	Cartography
	D10	D10	Hiking
	D10	D10	Navigation
	D10	D10	Observation
		D10	Spear
		D10	Dodge
		D10	Resolved

Gifts: Claw, Keen Ears

Flaws: Honorable, Obsequious / Honorable, Duty/Honorable, Heroic

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 1/2

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d10; ½ Stone Spear d10 & d10

Armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d10 & d6

Resolve: D10 & d10

Weapons: ½ stone Spear (to hit: d10 & d10; to damage: d10 & d8 & d4)

Special Abilities: Surprise (page 62) d8, Sensuality (page 62) d8, Prosperity (page 62) d8

Equipment: ½ stone spear, light leather, 10 bu-qian

Boar Dilettante, Lu Qin-li

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10

Race: Boar (d8); **Career:** Dilettante (d10)

<i>Boar</i>	<i>Dilettante</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D8	Digging
D8		D10	Resolve
D8		D8	Tracking
	D10	D10	Etiquette
	D10	D10	Fencing
	D10	D10	Literacy
	D10	D10	Herald
	D10	D10	Streetwise

Gifts: Tusks, Nobility
Flaws: Garrulous, Gregarious
Initiative: D10 & d8
Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 1/2
Defenses: Dodge d10 & d10; ¼ Stone Scholarly Sword d12 & d12 & d12
Armor: None, To Soak: d10
Resolve: D8 & d10 & d10
Weapons: ¼ Stone Scholarly Sword (to hit: d10 & d10 & d10; to damage: d10 & d10)
Special Abilities: Inspection (page 62) d8
Equipment: 8 golden blade (jin dao), 10 bu-qians, a servant nearby with his sword.

4 bodyguards, a concubine

Use Minion stats @ Jadeclaw RPG page 310

a herald, 4 servants and 1 driver, 5 maids

Use Mook stats @ Jadeclaw RPG page 310

Ox Innkeeper:

Jaizhen

Primary Traits: Body d8; Speed d8; Mind d8; Will d8
Race: ox (d8); **Career:** innkeeper (d8)

<i>Ox</i>	<i>Innkeeper</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D6	Herbalism
D8		D6	Hiking
D8		D6	Resolve
	D8	D8	Accounting
	D8	D8	Haggling
	D8	D8	Streetwise
	D8	D8	Trade: Innkeeper
	D8	D8	Local Knowledge

Gifts: Horns, Hooves, Robustness +2, Strength +3
Flaws: Poor Sight ,
Initiative: D8 & d8
Move: Dash 8 paces, Stride 2
Defenses: Dodge d8
Armor: Cotton Armor (d4); To Soak: d12 & d4
Resolve: D8 & d8 & d6

Weapons: Punch (to hit: d8, to damage d12 & d4)
Special Abilities: Courage (page 62) d6
Equipment: Cotton Armor, abacus

Number Two Bull, Number Five Bull, Obdurate Calf

Primary Traits: Body d6; Speed d6; Mind d6; Will d6
Race: ox (d6); **Career:** servant (d8)

<i>Ox</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D6		D6	Herbalism
D6		D6	Hiking
D6		D6	Resolve
	D8	D6	Etiquette
	D8	D6	Fast Talk
	D8	D6	Heraldry
	D8	D6	Psychology

Gifts: Horns, Hooves, Robustness +2, Strength +3
Flaws: Poor Sight ,
Initiative: D6 & d6
Move: Dash 6 paces, Stride 1 1/2
Defenses: Dodge d6
Armor: Cotton Armor (d4); To Soak: d10 & d4
Resolve: D6 & d6 & d6
Weapons: Punch (to hit: d6, to damage d12)
Special Abilities: Prosperity (page 62) d6
Equipment: Pan, pot, dishes

Dark Water Gang

Meng Shih-fan, Crime Boss, male

Primary Traits: Body d10; Speed d10; Mind d8; Will d10
Race: Snake (d8); **Career:** Vagabond (d12, d4), Fence (d10)

<i>Snake</i>	<i>Fence</i>	<i>Vagabond</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8			D8	Camouflage
D8			D8	Contortionist
D8			D8	Tracking
D8			D8	Wrestling
	D10		D10	Ciphering
	D10		D10	Forgery
	D10		D10	Haggling

D10		D10	Streetwise
	D12 & d4	D10	Axe
	D12 & d4	D10	Fencing
	D12 & d4	D10	Flail (favorite: ½ stone iron chain-link club)
	D12 & d4	D10	Mace
	D12 & d4	D10	Polearm
	D12 & d4	D10	Spear
	D12 & d4	D10	Staff
	D12 & d4	D10	Sword
		D8	Dodge
		D8	Resolved

Gifts: Extra Hit Points, Ophidian, Prehensile Tail, Teeth, Flail Mastery (Iron Serpent)

Flaws: No Hand, Bad Reputation, Foe, Garrulous

Initiative: D10 & d8

Move: Dash 10 paces, Stride 2 ½

Defenses: Dodge d10 & d8; ½ stone Iron Chain-link Club Parry d12 & d10 & d10 & d4

Armor: Heavy Leather (d8); To Soak: d8 & d10

Resolve: D10 & d8

Weapons: ½ stone Iron Chain-link Club (to hit: d12 & d10 & d10 & d4; to damage: d10 & d10 & d4; flail mastery)

Special Abilities: Surprise (page 62) d8

Equipment: Heavy Leather, ½ stone iron chain-link club, 28 bu-qians, key to his secret cache of wealth.

Erh Hao, Number Two Man

Primary Traits: Body d8; Speed d8; Mind d8; Will d8

Race: Ox (d8); **Career:** Robber (d8)

<i>Ox</i>	<i>Robber</i>	<i>Skills Level</i>	<i>Skills</i>
D8		D6	Herbalism
D8		D6	Hiking
D8		D12, d4	Resolve
	D8	D8	Sword Skill
	D8	D8	Intimidation
	D8	D8	Streetwise
	D8	D8	Stealth
		D8	Brawling

Gifts: Horn, Hooves, Robustness +2, Strength +3, School of Black Tortoise

Flaws: Poor Sight, Bad Reputation: Fail student of School of Black Tortoise

Initiative: D8 & d8
Move: Dash 8 paces, Stride 2
Defenses: ½ Stone Sword d8 & d8 & d8; Brawling d8 & d8
A armor: Light Leather (d6); To Soak: d12 & d6
Resolve: D12 & D8 & D8 & D4
Weapons: ½ stone Sword (to hit: d8 & d8 & d8; to damage: d12 & d12 & d4 & d4)
Special Abilities: Sensuality (page 62) d8
Equipment: ½ Stone Sword, Light Leather, 8 bu-qians