



MYSTERIES *Of The* MOUNTAIN

THIS BOOK REQUIRES COYOTE TRAIL

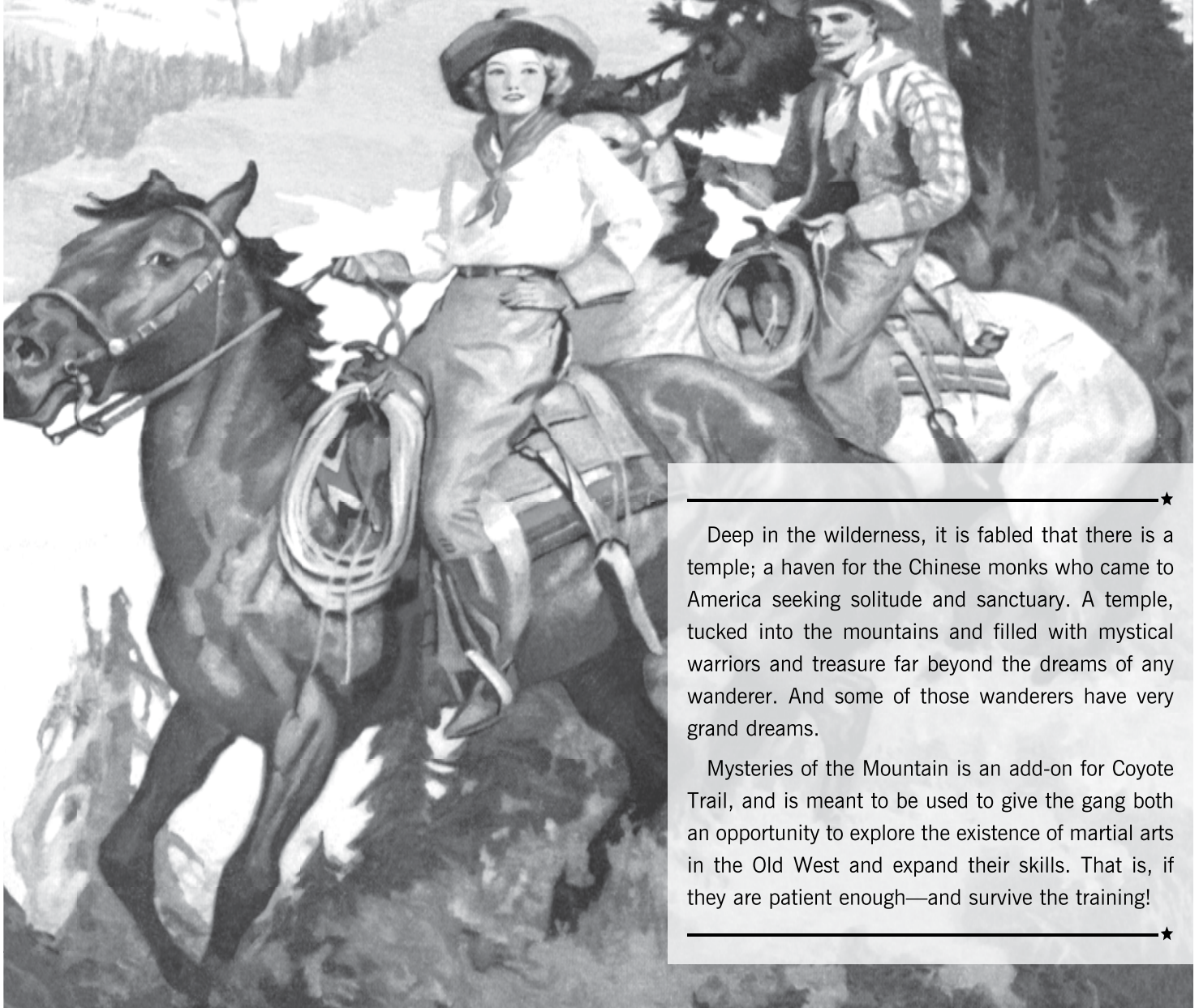
COYOTE TRAIL WILD WEST ADVENTURES

MYSTERIES OF THE MOUNTAIN

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Deep in the wilderness, it is fabled that there is a temple; a haven for the Chinese monks who came to America seeking solitude and sanctuary. A temple, tucked into the mountains and filled with mystical warriors and treasure far beyond the dreams of any wanderer. And some of those wanderers have very grand dreams.

Mysteries of the Mountain is an add-on for Coyote Trail, and is meant to be used to give the gang both an opportunity to explore the existence of martial arts in the Old West and expand their skills. That is, if they are patient enough—and survive the training!

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INTRODUCTION

The mountains can hold many secrets. From hideouts for outlaws and secret stashes for thieves to shortcuts for eager messengers, the mountains have always been there for anyone who can survive the rough terrain and dangerous animals that make it their home. For one small group of immigrants, however, the mountains have become a sanctuary from the rest of the world; a home away from home that cannot be breached easily. And for those who can find their way into this secluded, secret area, the trick is not finding the way out, but finding a way to survive.

In the early 1800s, a group of Chinese monks were sent as ambassadors to the New World to see if there are people who would be open to enlightenment through the pursuit of philosophies different from their own. Unfortunately, these immigrants were shunned by all, including their own people who saw them as a threat to their newfound freedom and feared that they would become a political force.

Fleeing the large cities in California, the monks built a temple somewhere in the mountains, seeking nothing more than a place of quiet and solitude. While they accept new initiates into their order, the majority of the monks remain with the Temple, continuing to seek inner peace and refine their skills as martial artists.

Some monks have ventured out into the world, feeling restrained by the strict demands of their order and wanting to experience the freedom of this new world. Many of them return willingly, sending their sons for training. Others never come back, and pass on tales of their wisdom and skills to those who would listen.

There are men who find the Temple on rare occasion, however, and either partake of the teachings of the monks or seek to steal the fabled treasure. Neither goal is an easy feat to accomplish...

"I done heard they got jars of gold!" The grizzled old prospector spat a long stream of tobacco juice towards the spittoon, missing it by a few inches. *"Lots of gold there, just waiting for the taking."*

"And how come you never took it, old man?" One of the young cowboys standing at the bar smiled, tipping his whiskey bottle back as he took a deep swig.

"They're good fighters." The old man tried again, this time hitting the side of the brass pot. *"I saw this one fella take out a whole gang—ten men at once! Dodged bullets and everything!"*

The young cowboy tilted his hat back and walked over to the table, his hands hitched into his belt. *"So why don't you take us there and we'll take care of them?"* He launched his own stream of tobacco juice towards the spittoon, landing squarely in the center.

"Go find it yourself, you young fool." The old man shook his head, tapping near his single good eye. *"I'm not keen to lose this one!"* His gnarled fingers rapped on the tabletop. *"Just go into the mountains and cause enough noise. They'll find you! But don't come crying back to Old Jack!"*





NEW GIMMICKS

A variety of new gimmicks specially created for this book are described below. These gimmicks are marked with an asterisk (*) throughout this book as an indication to refer to this section for more information rather than the Coyote Trail rule-book.

INHERENT GIMMICKS

Blade Knack	the character's sword fighting and knife fighting skill ratings are one (1) greater than normal for contested tasks
Clouded Presence	the character can blend into his surroundings, making him virtually invisible in crowds—his fitness rating is four (4) greater for all stealth tasks when in a crowded area and two (2) greater when alone
Courageous	the character is unusually brave and receives a bonus of -2DIFF on all reasoning-based composure tasks
Drunken Monkey	the character has a tolerance rating of 4 (used to prevent intoxication), allowing him to stay sober even after considerable drinking
Frozen in Time	the character can dodge bullets and catch arrows as if regular contested athletics tasks, but with a penalty of +2DIFF
Heightened Awareness	the character has a greater awareness of his surroundings and is able to react more quickly to events than the average person; similar to the peripheral vision gimmick, the character's awareness rating is two (2) greater for all tasks when the focus of his observations or instincts is outside of his normal field of vision, including directly behind him

Increased Fitness

the character's fitness rating is one (1) greater for all tasks involving strength and agility, but one (1) less for all tasks involving manual dexterity

Inspiring

the character is a born leader—all non-player characters who are given a pep talk by him receive a bonus of -2DIFF on their next task

Inventive

the character uses creative and different ways to approach normal tasks—he can use any ability in conjunction with any skill as long as the player can find an imaginative way to do so (for example, using the reasoning ability with brawling to calculate the proper force and trajectory with which to land a punch)

Iron Grip

the character's fitness rating is two (2) greater for all tasks when trying to keep an opponent pinned (a brawling task) once he has been grappled

Mind Over Body

the character can perform up to a number of prostrated tasks per game equal to his creativity rating

Offensive Improvisation

the character can use his creativity with his athletics skill when using weapons, such as staves and clubs

Quiet in the Night

the character's stealth skill rating is one (1) greater than normal at night

Strong Grip

the character's fitness rating is one (1) greater for all tasks when grappling (a brawling task)



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Surrounded

the character strikes a number of opponents in close combat (brawling, melee, etc) with one attack task equal to the roll of one die; the task receives a penalty of +4DIFF for brawling and knife fighting attacks, +3DIFF for sword fighting attacks, and +2DIFF for athletics tasks involving staves and clubs

Trickster

the character is a smooth talker—his influence rating is two (2) greater for all contested negotiation and seduction tasks

Unfeeling

the character can resist combined penalties due to fatigue and injury, up to the character's creativity rating; for example, a creativity rating of 3 means that the character can ignore a total of +3DIFF worth of penalties from fatigue and injury

DETRIMENTAL GIMMICKS

Anxious

the character is always nervous and unsettled, receiving a penalty of -2 on all reaction rolls

Daunted

the character is easily discouraged, and receives a penalty of +2DIFF on his next task after failing a task

Obedient

the character is easily swayed by others—his influence rating is two (2) less for contested influence-based tasks

Timid

the character is shy and quiet, receiving a penalty of +2DIFF on influence-based tasks involving crowds

VIRTUOUS GIMMICKS

Artistic

the character is called to the aesthetic arts, and enjoys drawing, painting, and other creative ventures; these are a major part of his life, and spends countless hours attempting to perfect his art and admiring works of others

Hardworking

the character believes in a hard day's work, refusing to take the easy way out; this includes not using time-saving machines, paying others to do the work, and skimping on materials

Pacifist

understanding the devastating effects that sometimes come from violence, the character refuses to resort to taking such action unless his life depends on it

CORRUPTIVE GIMMICKS

Aggressive

the character has a short fuse, attacking those who insult or annoy him

Candid

the character deals only in facts and can only speak the truth

Overbearing

the character is loud and boisterous, often overshadowing others in social situations; while this does not affect his social graces, he is the most memorable and typically the first approached when people grow tired of his noise



THE STORIES

Many Chinese immigrants find themselves treated as less-than-human by their American counterparts. Usually reduced to little more than slave labor and shunted into the ghettos of each town, these newcomers often end up working at laundries and, for the less legally-inclined, opium dens in which they grow eager to entice the white man into a drug-induced haze. Some seek a better future and there are those who would join them in a struggle for equality.

DRAGON TRAIL

As the gang travels on horseback between towns, they come across a scene too familiar in the Old West—a lone traveler being attacked by a group of thugs who seek to take what little valuables they can from the elderly man.

As the characters prepare to race towards the senior and offer assistance, they are shocked to see the stranger suddenly turn the tables on his attackers—he kicks the pistols out of their hands, dodging their knife thrusts and swipes, and gives them a good beating. As the bandits runs away from what they thought was going to be easy pickings, the elderly man collapses.

Assuming the gang offers assistance, they notice that the old man is Chinese and not even armed. In fact, he has nothing of note on his person other than a few coins. If a member of the gang is at least proficient in the medicine skill, he is able to diagnose the old man as having some sort of major stroke or heart attack, and is close to death.

The traveler manages to croak out a few words to the group before slipping into unconsciousness: “temple” and “mountains.” The characters may recollect Old Jack’s words (from the introductory conversation) about the Temple, and decide to take the old man there either for healing or to gather a reward for his safe return. Either way, they have good reason to take the elderly man under their care.

Unfortunately, the bandits who attacked the man regroup not far from the initial site of the attack and decide to return. Embarrassed at their previous defeat at the hands of an old man, they are now out for blood and will not stand for anyone keeping them from taking their revenge—killing the old man is the only thing on their minds, other than eliminating all those who witnessed their shame.

THE BANDITS

With five more members than the characters involved, this group of bandits may seem to outnumber the good guys, but appearances are deceiving. Led by Bony Calhoun, these “men” are nothing more than lost boys seeking to grab what they can as they travel between towns, keeping one step ahead of the law. Their strength is in numbers, and that is their single advantage. The gamemaster can either create these “men” using the standard character creation rules as orphaned outlaws/drifters or as physical extras.

BONY CALHOUN

Bony got his name from the tight skin on his face that gives him an almost skull-like appearance. Many years ago, he was a hardworking homesteader with a family and hopes for a good life until an Indian raid destroyed everything. Angry that the military failed to save his family and at the world in general, he has gathered orphans around him as he moves from town to town, seeking only to get richer on the backs of others. His targets are usually Indians or new immigrants; those who are not likely to report him to the authorities out of fear. Being beaten by a single elderly Chinese man, however, is not going to be tolerated. Bony is armed with a knife and .44 revolver.

3 FITNESS	2 AWARENESS	1 CREATIVITY	1 REASONING	2 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

brawling 2, firearms 3, riding 4,
 knife fighting 2, roping 2, drinking 3,
 gambling 3, tracking 1, streetwise 2,
 general knowledge 2, survival 4,
 western lore 4, intimidation 5,
 street cred 2, composure 4

GIMMICKS

criminal

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REVENGE

Calhoun specifically targets the injured Chinese man, the goal of his initial attack. If he succeeds in killing or further injuring the man, the characters cannot easily discover the location of the temple, and they must either hope for another chance encounter or just search the mountains, likely in vain.

Calhoun tries to escape if the odds turn against him and is likely to succeed, using his men as cover. He will continue to harbor a grudge against the characters, however, and can surface again with another collection of lost boys in future. The gamemaster can use him to annoy and attack the characters when they least expect it in future stories.

If the injured man survives this second attack, he reveals his name to be Tsai Wu, but little else. While suspicious of the gang at the start, he eventually gains enough of his wits to direct them towards where he demands to be left—the side of a rock wall that leads into a mountain. The characters may leave him there or stay with him in an attempt to gain access to the Temple through kindness.

Regardless of their further actions, they have learned about the existence of the Temple. Now the task of gaining entry without losing their lives or possessions weighs heavily on their minds.

THE STRANGER

While minding their own business, the gang comes across a mysterious stranger who seems to be watching their every move. He does not interfere with their actions, but seems to be everywhere the characters go, be it a saloon, general store, or livery.

The stranger appears to be just another of the Chinese workers found in almost every town; ignored and seen as only fit to do menial tasks. There is something different about this stranger, however, that makes the characters anxious—it is almost an air of superiority that is almost impossible to imagine. Still, he does not allow himself to be drawn into any fights or confrontations with anyone, no matter how much danger faces the gang; he does not interfere in any way.

The characters should be unable to trap or catch this enigmatic man, no matter what they do or how hard they try. His ability to elude their grasp is almost supernatural. Just as the characters begin to get accustomed to his almost-constant presence, the man finally allows himself to be approached and interrogated about why he has been following them.

The man explains that his name is Huang Lee, and he reveals that he has been watching the characters in order to judge their inner strength and character. Having found them of good heart and nature (assuming that they are or that the man

is simply a bad judge), the man further discloses that he is a traveling monk from the Chinese Temple. His mission has been to seek white men worthy of visiting the temple and receiving training in the ancient arts.

The characters may be skeptical of the monk's abilities until he demonstrates his skill in disarming and disabling the characters upon request. They may still question, and rightfully so, why these Chinese monks would want to share such knowledge with the rest of the world.

Huang Lee replies to any skepticism, explaining how the Abbot has decided that with the lack of new recruits to the Temple, there is a risk of the ancient skills becoming extinct. Torn between letting these arts die and training the white man in the martial arts, the Abbot has decided to send out emissaries seeking candidates to receive this honor.

These men have been told to seek only those true of heart and mind, and who would use these skills to help others rather than plundering and pillaging. The characters have been found of at least enough ability to be allowed to gain an audience with the Abbot. The true intentions and hearts of the characters will be revealed at that time, and tested in a way that the envoys cannot.

Huang Lee is willing to lead the characters to the Temple via a confusing maze of tunnels and paths. This leaves the gang totally lost and unable to remember the way. Upon arriving, he leaves them, disappearing into the shadows as he has done before;. He eventually reappears at the end of their training—if they succeed.

HUANG LEE

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Chosen among his brethren to seek potential applicants for the Temple, Huang Lee is adept at becoming virtually invisible in public. His mission is to search for those good in heart and spirit to be interviewed by the Abbot, and he does not divulge the location of the Temple under any circumstances. If tortured or beaten, he would rather perish than give out any information.

4	4	3	2	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

archery 3, athletics 8, brawlwng 7, finesse 7, knife fighting 7, riding 2, stealth 8, tracking 4, design 3, literacy 7, music 3, carpentry 1, general knowledge 1, medicine 5, legends 5, survival 6, composure 6

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GIMMICKS

mind over body, clouded presence

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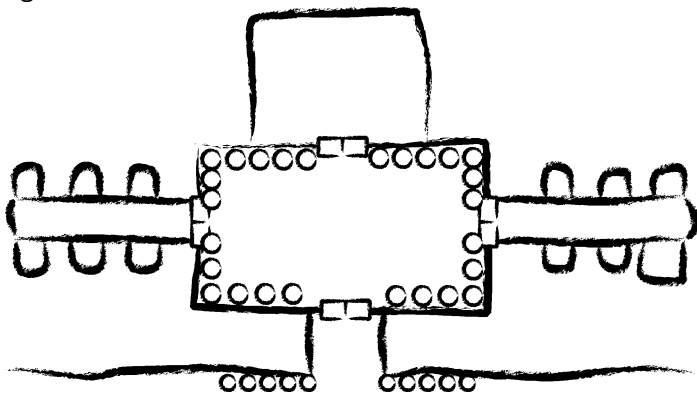
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THE TEMPLE

The Temple is literally carved into the side of a mountain along a box canyon, hidden in the shadows for most of the day. While a group can approach straight down the narrow passage to the front, there are paths around, over, and through the mountain that can also be discovered by an expert tracker (a challenging or impossible task). Even so, they all lead to the front courtyard where a solitary monk is on guard day and night.



THE OUTER COURTYARD

The outer courtyard is a rather bland opening to the Temple. It is empty save for a pair of huge stone doors at the far end. A series of pillars run around the outside, thin enough to allow horses to be tied if the bridles reach, but strong enough to resist being pulled down even by the strongest team of horses.

The monk himself is an elderly man, armed with nothing but his tongue. He interrogates visitors thoroughly to discover the reasons for the visit, showing no emotion. If he finds their discussion to his liking, he gestures them forward to the stone doors.

The doors are not only made of stone, but of stone delicately balanced and organized far beyond that of ordinary craftsmen. The intricately carved pictures on the door detail the initial arrival of the monks to America, as well as their withdrawal from society after being shunned by countrymen and native alike. They cannot be forced open by mere muscle, but must be delicately pushed by laying hands on certain pictures.

If the gang has won the approval of the monk guarding the entrance, he describes which pictures need to be pressed for entry. If the gang has created tension or unwisely attacked the monk, they receive no help from him. The monk offers no information even under duress; he does not resist and is even willing to die before revealing the secret of the doors to those with evil intentions towards his brothers.

The doors can also be opened with sheer luck (an investigation task with a roll of double ones) or intense study of the pictures and the images (a challenging finesse, crafts, or legends task). If violence is used against the doors, they slip off their precariously balanced joints and seal the temple seemingly forever (the monks restore the doors well after the gang leaves the area). When the proper stones are pressed, the stone doors swing open silently, admitting the characters to the inner courtyard.

TYPICAL MONK



The average monk has either immigrated across the ocean or was born in North America to parents who sent him to the Temple for protection or training. Either way, he has shunned the technological wonders of the day and has chosen to follow the old ways. Dedicated to the defense of the Temple and his fellow monks, he fights when necessary and aids those whom his leader deems worthy of assistance.

4	4	2	2	2
FITNESS	AWARENESS	CREATIVITY	REASONING	INFLUENCE

SKILLS

archery 2, athletics 6, brawling 6, finesse 5, knife fighting 6, riding 2, stealth 6, tracking 4, design 3, literacy 3, music 3, carpentry 3, general knowledge 2, medicine 3, legends 5, survival 5, composure 5

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GIMMICKS

up to two trained gimmicks (see *The Training*)



THE INNER COURTYARD

The stone doors open to reveal a huge inner courtyard, easily the size of a small frontier town. The floor is made up of small stones, intricately laid out in a series of squares that fit together so tightly that they cannot be moved. Not even a piece of paper can be hidden between them.

Around the edges of the courtyard, open to the sky, are a series of pillars. Upon inspection, a variety of animals are carved into twelve of the twenty-four pillars. A character making a challenging legends task recognizes them as the animals of the Chinese Zodiac.

Three halls lead off of the yard, one in each direction. Two of these lead to the "wings" of the Temple, and the one directly in front of the characters leads to the main Temple itself. No doors are seen, however, unless one makes another inspection of the stone walls behind the pillars and makes the right decisions once again.



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A single monk is found here. He questions the gang, intent on determining their reasons for entering. Once again, if the characters are belligerent or insulting, the monk refuses to offer any help or information.

If the monk guarding the outside courtyard has been injured or killed and the characters gain entrance despite this, the monk regards them as hostiles and immediately attacks them. Characters may attempt to talk their way out of the situation, but need a very good reason for harming one of the monks (this should be acted out rather than relying on a dice roll).

If the characters proceed to attack the monk or disfigure any of the pillars, a loud bell rings, signifying a major conflict about to start. A number of warrior-monks equal to the roll of two dice suddenly appear from nowhere around the characters, waiting for the next move.

Any aggressive actions trigger a fight that the characters are sure to lose. Upon the last member of the gang losing consciousness, the entire group awakens outside of the box canyon, stripped of their belongings. A single lotus blossom is found lying on the body of the leader of the gang.

If the characters treat the monk with respect, they may gain valuable information, such as events regarding the Chinese Tongs and local gangs. If the characters are disrespectful but back down after the warrior monks appear, the monk is still willing to help them, but with less enthusiasm.

An audience can be requested with the Abbot, but only after the characters spend the night in the inner courtyard without fire or shelter. If the gang disagrees with these terms, they are gently ushered back to the stone gates and forced to leave.

THE AUDIENCE

After a night in the courtyard, the characters are offered an audience with the Abbot under certain conditions—they must discard all weapons and clothing, dressing in monk's robes, so that nothing can be hidden. Again, any dispute results in the characters being escorted from the temple premises.

There are three branches running off of the main courtyard—the one directly in front of the stone doors leads to the Temple itself, while those to the left and right lead to smaller chambers and storage rooms, along with the Abbot's cell. This cell is just larger than that of the other monks, and is sparsely furnished with only a table and a pair of chairs setting it apart from the other chambers. The Abbot, a man named Chen Lin, welcomes the gang as he sits on his bed, waiting for the characters to choose who sits at the table and who stands.

The Abbot is polite and obviously familiar with the gang's life stories before they even utter a word. If their intentions are less than honorable and plan to loot and/or burn the temple, the Abbot announces the futility of their efforts and invites them to leave peacefully. This can be avoided and the monk deceived if

each of the characters can make a successful influence-based gambling task. They must still meet the other requirements to maintain their charade, however.

If the characters are able to convince the monk of their worthiness and their search for knowledge, they are allowed to stay and undergo remedial training. The characters are individually led to chambers and told to meditate for an hour before joining the others in the main courtyard for training. What the characters do is during this time is up to them, as long as they do not cause trouble in the Temple.

ABBOT CHEN LIN

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Chosen by secret ballot to lead his fellow monks, the Abbot is sworn to keep the fighting skills of the Temple secret, but to pass them onto those who are deemed worthy. He knows that time is not on their side when it comes to preserving the ancient knowledge and skills, but they cannot allow the talents developed over centuries of studying and meditation to be used for evil.

5 FITNESS	5 AWARENESS	4 CREATIVITY	3 REASONING	3 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

archery 5, athletics 7, brawling 7, finesse 7, knife fighting 7, riding 2, stealth 7, sword fighting 6, tracking 5, design 3, literacy 4, music 4, carpentry 4, general knowledge 4, medicine 5, legends 7, survival 5, intimidation 5, negotiation 5, composure 6

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GIMMICKS

inspiring, artistic

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THE TRAINING

The monks' initial training is intense and lasts an entire month. The characters are given a sparse amount of food and water, and are expected to take a vow of silence for a week as they train with the monks. During this month, the characters are given free rein of the Temple, except for the inner sanctum leading off of the inner courtyard. All attempts to enter fail and repeated attempts result in expulsion from the Temple.

Note: The martial arts displayed by the Chinese monks are not meant to be of any specific style or school, only a general introduction to the Oriental world. If the characters wish to gain training in a particular style or school, the gamemaster can assess the probability of such schools existing and if they would allow not only an outsider but also a non-Chinese to even know of their existence, much less train them.



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Initial Training

At the end of the initial training, a character gains an increase in his brawling skill (roll one die, add the character's creativity rating to the result, and consult the table below; the rating may not be raised above 8), and can choose one of the gimmicks listed below (the player can choose one). Some gimmicks are only temporary, and are lost after the designated time period.

BRAWLING INCREASE

1 to 3	none
4 to 6	+1 brawling
7 to 9	+2 brawling
10 to 11	+3 brawling

- **Heightened Awareness***
- **Increased Fitness*** (in effect only for the next six months)
- **Strong Grip*** (in effect only for the next six months)
- **Unfeeling*** (in effect only for the next six months)

At the end of the final day of the initial training, the characters are taken to the actual temple room in order to receive a blessing from the Abbot. The temple itself is literally filled with thousands of small statues scattered about in small niches and on shelves. All of the statues are of the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. Strangely enough, there is no gold, silver, or gems imbedded in any of them. In fact, the room is somewhat similar to any general store the characters might have entered during their past. For those unfamiliar with the Chinese Zodiac, the Abbot recites the tale...

The Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac assigns animals to each year, unlike the common Western Zodiac that runs from month to month. Each year belongs to the auspice of a certain animal. People born in that year are considered to be endowed with certain abilities, good and bad, of that animal.

The legend behind these creatures describes how the Jade Emperor decided to hold a great holiday on his birthday and a contest for the animals in his domain. He challenged the animals to race across a fast-flowing river, with the winner being the first to walk ashore.

Alliances were quickly built between the different creatures. The cat and rat convinced the ox to carry them, since neither were good swimmers and would likely drown. The pair promised the ox that in exchange for his help, they would allow him to set foot first on the land and win the race, allowing the cat and rat to at least keep their dignity. The ox, being good-natured and more than a little gullible, agreed to the deal.

Halfway across the river, the cat and the rat began to fight on the back of the ox. The cat was finally pushed into the river by the rat, thus the exclusion of the cat from the Zodiac and the ongoing hatred between cats and rats to this day. As the ox approached the shore, the rat broke their agreement and jumped onto solid ground, securing the first place in the Zodiac. The good-natured ox plodded ashore, taking second place without any ill will towards the rat.

Third place in the Zodiac went to the tiger who struggled across the river, finally dragging himself ashore to the delight of the Emperor.

The rabbit, knowing that he was not a strong swimmer, sought stepping stones and logs, finally getting himself aboard a floating log that drifted quickly towards shore. This secured him the fourth spot of the Zodiac.

The Emperor noticed the dragon arriving safe and secure, having flown across the river without problem. Frowning, he asked the dragon why he had not come in first since he could fly and did not have to worry about the water. The dragon responded that he had been in the air and spotted a rabbit stranded on a floating log in the river, so he paused to provide a mighty puff of air, pushing the log to shore ahead of the dragon. This impressed the Jade Emperor greatly.

As the horse emerged from the river and was about to place his hoof on the ground to secure his place in the Zodiac, a snake suddenly appeared from between his hooves, startling the creature and forcing him back into the river. The snake took the sixth place and the horse the seventh due to his surprise.

The next three spots were achieved through a group effort. The sheep, monkey, and rooster agreed to work together to cross the river. The rooster flew up and down the length of the riverbank until he spotted an old raft lying on the shoreline. The sheep and monkey worked hard to free it from the tangled weeds and repair it—the sheep bit through the long weeds, while the monkey used his hands to weave patches for the holes. Finally, the three crossed the river as a team. The Emperor announced the sheep as the eighth sign, monkey as the ninth, and rooster as the tenth animal in the Zodiac.

Next to arrive on the opposite shore was the dog. The Emperor asked the dog why it took so long to cross, since he was known to be a powerful swimmer. The dog responded that he had stopped to take a bath, since he was worried about the dirt on his coat muddying the river water and disturbing the tranquility of the river.

The last and twelfth creature to arrive was the pig, struggling ashore just as the Emperor was about to declare the event ended. Shocked that it had taken him so long to arrive, the Emperor asked the pig for an explanation. The pig complained that he had stopped for a snack, since he could not be expected



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to travel so far on an empty stomach. Then he had taken a nap, since he grew tired from the meal. Upon waking, the pig realized that he was the only one left and raced to the river.

Roaring with laughter, the Jade Emperor declared the Zodiac signs to be these animals and everyone celebrated the end of the holiday.

Note: While the Chinese Zodiac signs are usually assigned to a person based on the year in which he was born, paperwork is easily lost or misplaced in the West. Many characters might not even know their actual birth dates or even how old they are. Choosing a sign in the Temple is not meant to give an actual year of birth or assign certain personality attributes, but only to give options for future stories.

The Choice

The Abbot asks each character to choose a statue that most reflects himself and bring it to him later in private. After the choices are made, the monk closes the doors again, and the characters are not able to re-enter.

As each character meets with the Abbot, he is quizzed as to his true intentions for coming to the temple. If the original goal was to steal from the monks and the character denies it, the Abbot pulls out a sack from under his thatched straw bed, giving it to the character. The sack is heavy, and the character is warned not to open it until he departs with the rest of his gang. The monk ushers the character to the outer courtyard and tells him to never attempt a return. When the doors close and sack is opened, the character finds that it is filled with sand and a single gold coin. If the character attempts to re-enter the Temple, the monks beat him senseless and deposit the body in the desert. There can be no discussion of the statue.

If the character admits an original intent to steal but has since reformed his intentions, the monk asks for the statue and gives the character not only a sack, but also directions to a hidden room inside the Temple. Upon inspection, the sack holds the statue, as well as gold coins to the value of fifty dollars.

If the reason the character went to the temple was to gain enlightenment and training to help others, and he is of good character, the Abbot is pleased with him, providing another sack plus directions to the hidden room. The Abbot tells him that they can return in a year for further training if desired, but not before then.

The characters directed to go to the hidden room find themselves in a tattoo parlor with a single monk. He silently gestures for them to produce their animal statues and then tattoos each character with a small, yet easily visible like tattoo on the small webbing between the thumb and first finger of the right hand. The monk then directs the successful candidates back to the Abbot.

The Abbot then discloses that each of the characters is now part of a special brotherhood. When one of their brethren needs help, they must provide aid, no questions asked. Likewise, if a the character needs help, others must assist him. Those with the same animal tattoos are linked even more closely in the spiritual sense. If the character ever refuses to help one of his brothers or sisters, he is banned from any future training and shunned by those with the same animal tattoo.

Successful candidates are escorted to the front door by the Abbot, who expresses his support for them, urging a return in a year's time for another month of training and a chance to improve their skills. He also warns the characters that he may call upon them in the future for assistance and to be aware of any brethren who approach them for help at any time.

General Training

If the characters spend an additional month of dedicated training after one full year, they gain an increase in the brawling and/or athletics skills (roll one die, add the character's creativity rating to the result, and consult the table below; a skill rating may not be raised above 8).

ATHLETICS AND BRAWLING INCREASES			★
1 to 2	none		
3 to 4	+1 athletics		
5	+1 athletics	+1 brawling	
6 to 7	+2 athletics	+1 brawling	
8 to 9	+2 athletics	+2 brawling	
10 to 11	+3 athletics	+2 brawling	★

The character also gains one of the following gimmicks. Some gimmicks are only temporary, and are lost after the designated time period. In addition, if the character gained a temporary gimmick from his initial training, it now becomes a permanent gimmick.

- **Drunken Monkey***
- **Quiet in the Night*** (in effect only for the next year)
- **Offensive Improvisation*** (in effect only for the next year)
- **Surrounded*** (in effect only for the next year)

As the character completes his general training, he is also taught the ways of nature and gains a new gimmick based on his chosen animal of the Zodiac. These are more like side-effects of his training, rather than them being specifically instilled.



COYOTE TRAIL

WILD WEST ADVENTURES

MYSTERIES OF THE MOUNTAIN

GENERAL ZODIAC TRAINING ★

Rat	aggressive*
Ox	anxious*
Tiger	superstitious
Rabbit	obedient*
Dragon	overbearing*
Snake	lecherous
Horse	thrill-seeker
Sheep	candid*
Monkey	daunted*
Rooster	greedy
Dog	timid*
Pig	cowardly

ADVANCED ZODIAC TRAINING ★

Rat	gentlemanly
Ox	inspiring*
Tiger	alluring
Rabbit	pacifist*
Dragon	deductive
Snake	trickster*
Horse	hardworking*
Sheep	artistic*
Monkey	inventive*
Rooster	courageous*
Dog	loyal
Pig	tolerant

Advanced Training

Further, advanced training requiring a full year provides even more benefits. The character's fitness, awareness, **or** creativity rating is increased by one (1), and he gains an increase in the knife fighting, sword fighting, and/or archery skills (roll one die, add the character's fitness rating to the result, and consult the table below; a skill rating may not be raised above 8).

KNIFE AND SWORD FIGHTING INCREASES ★

1 to 2	none	
3 to 4	+1 sword fighting	
5 to 7	+2 sword fighting	+1 archery
8 to 9	+2 sword fighting	+1 knife fighting or archery
10 to 11	+3 sword fighting	+2 knife fighting or archery

Additionally, the character gains one of the following gimmicks **or** may choose another gimmick from initial or general training (temporary ones are permanent). If the character gained a temporary gimmick from his general training, it now becomes a permanent gimmick.

- **Blade Knack***
- **Constitution**
- **Frozen in Time***
- **Hardened**
- **Iron Grip***
- **Mind Over Body***

As the character completes his advanced training, his education of the ways of nature continues. He gains a new gimmick based on his chosen animal of the Zodiac. These are a direct result of his philosophical training. The character must also make a make an awareness-based composure task. If successful, he no longer possesses the gimmick gained for his Zodiac animal during his general training.

MOUNTAIN SIEGE

The characters, in their cells, are awakened in the middle of the night by the monks. They are then directed to the Abbot's cell. He is obviously disturbed and motions them to sit on the ground and be silent.

"There is a problem that requires immediate attention," he begins, but pauses. Finally, he shakes his head, as if having an internal conversation with himself.

"There are men in the outer courtyard—evil men. They have brought dynamite and other explosives in order to break into the Temple by force, and take what little we have. I need you to defeat these men and protect the entrance."

When asked the reason for the monks not defending the door themselves, the Abbot replies that there are other pockets of intruders in the mountains surrounding the Temple, and the majority of monks have been dispatched in small groups to make sure that no one brings the mountain itself down on the Temple.

Failure is not an option here. If the characters fail, the stone doors are destroyed and they are either trapped outside the Temple, unable to complete their training or worse—being trapped inside the Temple with the other monks. It would take about six months to repair the doors and the characters would have to remain in the Temple, since they have yet to earn enough of the Abbot's trust to be allowed to leave via the secret exits through which the other fighting groups have used.

Depending on how much time has passed with the characters' training, they may be able to use some of their newfound talents, but it is more likely that they are forced to deal with the attackers with their existing skills. The Abbot returns the gang's weapons to better help them in this situation.



THE INVADERS

Wild Bob Cat is in charge of the five men leading the frontal attack on the Temple. He has no intentions of playing fairly and has already killed the guarding monk without remorse. He also has no problem killing the characters and does not offer any mercy, seeing them as either supporters of the Temple or competition for the riches inside. The gamemaster can either create his men using the standard character creation rules as outlaws or cowboys, or as physical extras. The invaders can be armed with an assortment of weapons, from revolvers to shotguns.

Other bands of invaders circling the top of the Temple on the mountains are of no real danger to the characters and are successfully stopped from setting off demolition charges by the warrior-monks.

WILD BOB CAT



Nothing more than a bully, this tall, thick-necked man sees the Temple raid as a way to not only get rich, but to increase his position among the smaller gangs in the area. Not much of a gunfighter, he counts more on his gift to intimidate and harass his victims to get what he wants. Still, he is not above using violence to get the job done, and does so with a smile on his face. Wild Bob Cat is armed with a pair of .44 revolvers and a shotgun.

3 FITNESS	2 AWARENESS	2 CREATIVITY	1 REASONING	3 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

brawling 4, firearms 3, riding 4,
knife fighting 4, roping 4, drinking 3,
gambling 3, tracking 3, streetwise 2,
general knowledge 4, survival 4,
western lore 4, intimidation 5,
street cred 3, composure 3

INT : FAT : INJ

□ : □ : □	-
□ : □ : □	+1DIFF
□ : □ : □	+2DIFF
□ : □ : □	+3DIFF
□ : □ : □	—

GIMMICKS

criminal, lecherous, sadist



If the characters are successful in subduing Wild Bob Cat's men without killing, the Abbot is very pleased and allows them to keep whatever they find on the bodies of the unconscious men. If any are killed, he directs the characters to bring the dead bodies into the inner courtyard so that the monks can pray for their souls, and then dispose of the bodies, with no removal of personal items being tolerated.

Any unconscious invaders, including Bob Cat, are transported by the monks to an unknown location in the wilderness outside of the mountain. They are allowed to join their unfortunate comrades who were defeated by the groups of warrior-monks.

HIGHEST BIDDER

Not long after the characters have finished their training and return to what passes for civilization, they encounter a small, Chinese boy in a saloon. The child passes a hand-written note to one of the characters and runs out the door.

Upon reading the note, the characters find that it is a summons to meet one of the monks at the edge of town just after sunset. The message is addressed primarily to those carrying the Dragon tattoo, but is obviously aimed at the group who trained together as a whole.

If the characters go to meet the monk, they find a young Chinese man sitting under a lone tree. Deep in meditation, he still rises to welcomes them as they approach. Some of the characters may recognize him as one of the other trainees from the Temple who was there at the same time as themselves.

Lee Wong, as the monk introduces himself, informs them that their help is requested by the Abbot. A rogue monk has decided to leave the Temple and reveal his secrets to the highest bidder—a great danger to the area. If he trains and assists those not dedicated to law and order, it could unbalance the district and possibly spread the seeds of conquest throughout the world. He tells the gang to imagine what would happen if countless outlaws with special training and a lack of conscience are set loose upon the innocent and defenseless. The characters are being called upon to hunt down and capture the rogue monk, killing him only if it is absolutely necessary to protect the Temple's secrets.

LEE WONG



The only son of the Abbot, Lee Wong knows that he must work twice as hard to show himself worthy, even though he hides behind a false name to avoid any signs of favoritism. Eager and headstrong, this young man is open to the New World and looking to blend the old with the new. A member of the Dragon Brotherhood, he is also beholden to help any of his tattooed brethren when called upon, and vice versa.

4 FITNESS	3 AWARENESS	2 CREATIVITY	2 REASONING	1 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

archery 3, athletics 5, brawling 5,
finesse 5, knife fighting 4, riding 2,
stealth 6, tracking 4, design 3,
literacy 4, music 3, carpentry 1,
general knowledge 1, medicine 2,
legends 5, survival 5, composure 4

INT : FAT : INJ

□ : □ : □	-
□ : □ : □	+1DIFF
□ : □ : □	+2DIFF
□ : □ : □	+3DIFF
□ : □ : □	—

GIMMICKS

courageous, timid, drunken monkey



COYOTE TRAIL

WILD WEST ADVENTURES

MYSTERIES OF THE MOUNTAIN

The rogue monk's name is Zhang Huang, and he is reportedly heading for the same town in which the characters are presently. Lee Wong was able to get ahead of him just in time, thanks to his knowledge of the area. Zhang Huang is expected to arrive tomorrow morning, and has already begun offering his skills and training to the unlawful elements in the area.

Lee Wong also offers his assistance to the characters, representing not only the interests of the Temple, but those of the Dragon Brotherhood, of which he is one. Any characters possessing the Dragon Tattoo are especially obliged to help the young monk assimilate into the Western lifestyle.

Zhang Huang attempts to arrange meetings with the local Tongs and outlaw gangs, offering his skills to the highest bidder. The Tongs relish the idea of obtaining such a warrior, while the criminals intend to either assimilate him into their gangs or use him as a human weapon. Either way, he cannot be allowed to succeed.

ZHANG HUANG ★

The young monk was brought to the Temple by his Chinese parents who could not afford to keep him; the youngest of many children. Bitter at this abandonment, he has gone through the training with the ultimate goal of returning to the outside world to take revenge on his parents and the communities that refused him a better life.

4 FITNESS	4 AWARENESS	2 CREATIVITY	1 REASONING	1 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

archery 2, athletics 4, brawling 4, finesse 5, knife fighting 3, riding 2, stealth 6, tracking 4, design 3, literacy 3, legends 4, survival 5, general knowledge 2, composure 4

INT	FAT	INJ	
□	□	□	-
□	□	□	+1DIFF
□	□	□	+2DIFF
□	□	□	+3DIFF
□	□	□	—

GIMMICKS

blade knack, frozen in time, mind over body, aggressive

The characters must find and neutralize this danger in any way they can. They cannot fall afoul of the law, however, since they are unable to disclose their reasons for wanting to take custody of Zhang Huang or explain about the Temple, since they have been sworn to secrecy. Having Lee Wong in their group also raises questions due to the racism still prevalent in society at that time. If they are taken into custody, Zhang Huang completes his goal, selling his skills to the highest bidder with dire consequences for the future. The gamemaster can choose the outcome of the bidding war.

The Xiang and Lung Tongs have sent a single representative to meet and discuss terms with Zhang Huang. They pose yet another danger as they are not willing to let the gang stand in their way of obtaining the Temple's secrets. When all becomes apparent, there are a variety of dangers that the characters must face before and during subduing Zhang Huang and returning him to the Temple.

TYPICAL XIANG ENFORCER/LUNG ENFORCER ★

Sent as representatives of their respective Tongs, these men are vicious killers with no conscience. They try to avoid bloodshed outside of the Chinese community, but have no problem torturing and murdering their own kind in order to complete a mission.

4 FITNESS	4 AWARENESS	1 CREATIVITY	1 REASONING	2 INFLUENCE
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SKILLS

athletics 6, brawling 6, riding 2, knife fighting 6, general knowledge 2, survival 5

INT	FAT	INJ	
□	□	□	-
□	□	□	+1DIFF
□	□	□	+2DIFF
□	□	□	+3DIFF
□	□	□	—

GIMMICKS

criminal, sadist

If the characters kill Zhang Huang, they must return his body to the Temple and apologize to the Abbot. He is disappointed, but does understand, and rewards each character with gold nuggets worth twenty-five dollars for their services. If they return Zhang Huang unharmed to the Temple, the Abbot is extremely pleased, rewarding each of the characters with a hundred dollars worth of gold nuggets. Zhang Huang is taken inside and never seen again—the monks deal with him in their own way.

Lee Wong accompanies the characters through the entire mission, and must be kept alive at all costs. Unknown to the characters, Lee Wong is the Abbot's son, but this may be discovered through proper deduction and common sense without penalty. If he is killed through random violence, the Abbot is not only very displeased, but also shows clear sadness. He may even revoke the characters' access to the Temple depending on the circumstances. If his son dies bravely and heroically, he is still upset but does not penalize the characters. If Lee Wong survives, he may join the gang in future adventures, having tasted some of the outside world and finding it to his liking.

