

BLOWING UP HONG KONG



written by
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CREDITS

"BLOWING UP HONG KONG"

AN **ATLAS GAMES** PRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION



My first memory of Hong Kong is actually a memory of watching *The Man With The Golden Gun* on television. I don't know why, but something about those

brief glimpses of the city streets, Victoria Harbor, and the Peninsula Hotel struck a chord deep within me. Perhaps it was the way that, in my youth, my father repeatedly regaled me with tales of high adventure in "HK" (all stemming from a week-long furlough during the Vietnam War). Maybe it was because our expensive-looking family room stereo setup (which he shipped back to my mother before he returned to south Vietnam) came from the city's hidden high-tech bargain alleys and no matter where we lived we always had the most exotic system on the block. Regardless of the reason, all I knew was I had to go there someday. I wouldn't be satisfied until I had.

In 1994, I finally got my chance. I had just arrived in Taiwan after graduating from university and needed to make a "visa run" (that's where you leave one country because your travel papers are on the cusp of expiring, go to another country, and then return to the country you just left to get new papers at passport control). Hong Kong was my turnaround port of choice, and as soon as I made the heart-stopping descent into Kai Tak International Airport I fell in love with the city.

There are few cities in the world that truly live up to the illusion portrayed in movies and on television. They're either disappointingly small, appallingly rundown, or shockingly mundane. Hong Kong is one of those places that lives up to its fictionalized grandeur. It's everything you've ever seen on film and then some. The neon lights, the petrol fumes, the jam-packed sidewalks, the towering ultra-modern skyscrapers resplendent in their bright lights—all of it fulfilled and then exceeded every single one of my expectations. That's saying a lot when you think about it.

When the inimitable Will Hindmarch asked me to write a travel book about Hong Kong for *Feng Shui*, I couldn't believe it. "Are you kidding?!" I asked. "I would love to!" I was so excited, in fact, that the very next day I scheduled a "research trip" to Hong Kong. So, in March of 2004, I flew back to Hong Kong to start work on this book.

Hong Kong has changed in the ten years I've been coming here. Strangely, however, it hasn't changed a whole heck of a lot. Although I was lucky to have experienced it before and after the handover back to China, I can't really point to a lot of differences in the before and after. There are a lot more Mandarin Chinese-speaking tourists than before, and there's more of a pollution problem on the streets and sidewalks. The cops don't seem as trim or fit as they did when the British ruled. But other than that, the city has remained essentially unchanged. That's one of the magical things about Hong Kong. The skyline may shift every six months as new buildings replace slightly older ones, and some of your favorite stores or pubs may go the way of the dodo, but at heart everything is still the way it's always been. Hong Kong's character doesn't lie in its scenery or superstructure. It lies within its unique people and culture.

I suspect Hong Kong 150 years ago was much as it is today: a trade culture, a fast-moving business culture, a loud culture of social interactions carried out at the top of one's lungs. It's also where the best characteristics of British, Indian, Nepalese, Filipino, and countless other immigrant worldviews have blended over the decades with the affable Cantonese ways of Southern China. It is continually evolving.

Although I've altered real locations and places in the city to mimic the cinematic spirit of *Feng Shui*, I have endeavored to remain true to Hong Kong's character and soul. There's a lot of ground to cover when you write a fictionalized travel book about one of the most densely packed cities on Earth. Hopefully, I covered enough to give you a good feel for the city and its people. Don't constrain yourself to what's written here, though. Like the real-life city, the Hong Kong of your game should be a dynamic, vibrant, and highly malleable place. Change the locations to suite your needs, as we have. Move buildings, transmogrify entire neighborhoods and districts, and blow the hell out of everything in sight. The city can take it. It thrives best on change. Do with it as you will.

You just might find it pays you back in spades.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Chris Jones is pretty sure he invented "Hawaiian pizza" while attending the University of Missouri at Columbia. He thinks it should therefore be called "Missourizza." When he's not sweltering in the heat of St. Louis, he can be found traipsing around Southeast Asia, causing a ruckus and getting thrown out of seedy gangster bars.

USING THIS BOOK

by Will Hindmarch

Blowing Up Hong Kong is your guide to the capital city of *Feng Shui*. Chris Jones has done your location scouting, he's gathered up some character actors, some extras, and found you some leads on the local action, but *you're* the stars and the directors of your action movie roleplaying experience. This book's primary purpose is to give you a sense of understanding—a sense of ownership—over the fictional Hong Kong of the Secret War, whether you're a player or the GM. It's your city now. Shoot your epic.

When *Blowing Up Hong Kong* was first mentioned in the *Feng Shui* rule book back in 1996, not much was known about the Secret War. In the years since, a lot has been uncovered. So, we decided not to load this book up on the "truth" about the Secret War. You won't find a section in this book explaining exactly who represents the Ascended in each district of Hong Kong, or what the Guiding Hand's long-term plans are for the island of Lantau. That stuff should be decided when it's the subject of an adventure in your *Feng Shui* series—it should be about how the PCs are mixed up in it and what *they* can do to stop it.

I'll put it another way: the villainous mastermind behind the activities of every faction is the nemesis the GM has specially designed for his series. This book gives you some common ground, but the deeper you dig, the more the series—and its secrets—should be specific to the game you're running. Besides, I could tell you Gun Hai Pak is the single most powerful Shaolin monk in Kowloon, but one change to the timeline and I'd be wrong.

That's not to say you won't find any secrets of the time war in here. You will, if you look. But since the war's a big secret, the truth isn't out on display for you. You'll find peeks at what's going on beneath the everyday world where those secrets poke through, throughout the city and throughout this book. Look, grasshopper, and you shall find.

In other words, *Blowing Up Hong Kong* is concerned with breadth, not depth. Hong Kong and the New Territories are a big subject to cover, so we've sought out the sorts of archetypal locations you'll need for your typical action scenes—escapes, stand-offs, raids, confrontations, negotiations, gun shopping. This book is about Hong Kong as a place. In the end, you'll decide what goes on there.

Who Reads This Book?

You do, whoever you are. One of the best ways for players to get a grasp on the environment (and in *Feng Shui*, players need an especially good sense of what's around them) is for them to get free reign of these pages. Yes, there's some information inside that, maybe, the GM won't want them to know. Don't sweat it: the Secret War is constantly in motion, and what's true one second isn't true the next (and wasn't true a hundred years before).

Players, you shouldn't assume that what's written in here is the straight dope. What's true is whatever happens on screen, at the table.

GMs, don't let us boss you around. Do what you want with what's in here, and make up the rest.

COVERING OUR ASSES

This book describes a fantasy version of modern-day Hong Kong. It is not of this world. This is a work of fiction.

Geography has been adjusted, history has been altered, and certain people, places, and things in this book do not appear or act as they do in reality. We've taken a lot creative license. So, if you read something you know for a fact isn't true, don't sweat it. This isn't the Hong Kong you read about or visited. It's the movie version: realistic, but not really. It's brighter, louder, and more explosive than the actual thing.

In the movies, it's better when stuff explodes. In real life, it's not. Before you go looking for some coded manifesto in here, read this: don't bother. We do not advocate real violence, whether it's in Hong Kong or anywhere else. There's a reason why the maniacs who plant bombs in the football stadium are the bad guys in the movies, remember. Same goes for punching your little brother, so knock it off.

Reading the Statistics in This Book

You're probably pretty used to reading a *Feng Shui* "stat block" by now. Still, it's worth clarifying what you see in the statistics in this book.

Schticks: For space reasons, a character's schticks are recorded using just the name of the schtick and the number of schticks invested in it (e.g. "Fast Draw (x3)"), rather than including any of the various effects. When possible, we've lumped all kinds of schticks together (Gun schticks, Creature schticks, etc.), except where it'd be confusing.

Weapons: In this book, the weapons used by a GMC are listed in the order they are most likely to be used by that character. If a character doesn't have something common listed (like "punch"), he gives up the fight after his listed weapons are exhausted.

Damage: As in the *Feng Shui* rule book, when you see a Damage rating marked with an asterisk (e.g. "13*"), that means the weapon takes out unnamed characters on an Outcome of 4 or less. A two-asterisk weapon takes out mooks on an Outcome of 3 or less.

MATTERS OF TIME

This book is set in the year 2005. So far as this book is concerned, it is now 2005 in the Contemporary juncture. For simplicity's sake, we have not moved the dates forward in the other junctures. (You're used to looking for "1850" and "2056," anyway.) Feel free to do so.

Blowing Up Hong Kong looks at the SAR (see page 8) from the vantage point of the Contemporary juncture. You'll find some speculation (and some facts) about the future and past, but they are presented as they look from here and now.

This isn't the last you've heard from us on the subject.

Throughout this book, "HK" = "Hong Kong"

FACTS AT A GLANCE

TIME ZONE: Hong Kong Standard Time. (GMT +8 Hours)

AREA CODE: 852. (Though, in *Feng Shui*, the prefix on all phone numbers is 555.)

EMERGENCY NUMBER: 999. (Instead of 911.)

ELEVATION: 59 ft. (18 m)

CLIMATE: Semi-tropical. Seasonal temperatures range between 26° (79° F) and 33° Celsius (91° F) in the summer months and 14° (57° F) and 20° Celsius (68° F) in the wintertime. Late summer and early autumn (especially September) are typhoon season—expect one or two typhoons per month. Humidity ranges from about 70% to about 85% year-round. August is the wettest month, though any month from May to September may see up to 16 inches of rainfall. Rain (or drizzle) in Hong Kong frequently lasts days.

POPULATION: About 7 million. Every year, the population grows by almost 2%, not counting the arrival of 50,000 or so legal immigrants from the Mainland. Most of this population lives in the New Territories, with about a third in Kowloon and less than a quarter on Hong Kong Island itself. Less than 2% of the population lives out amid the islands.

DIVERSITY: The vast majority of Hong Kong's population is made up of ethnic Chinese, just more than half of whom are Hong Kong natives. The most populace groups of foreigners are made up of Filipinos, Indonesians, and Americans, respectively. Canadians are a close fourth, with about two-thirds as many British and Australians.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: Chinese and English. Since the handover, the government hasn't actually decreed Mandarin to be the official dialect, as it is in the Mainland, so most official business is still conducted in Cantonese.

CURRENCY: The Hong Kong Dollar (HK\$) is locked at HK\$8.00 to US\$1.00 (less, actually, but for game purposes and simplicity it's been rounded up). If you neglect to change your money at the airport or a bank (business hours: 9AM–4:30PM weekdays and 'til 12:30PM Saturdays), you can convert your money on the street at a licensed money-changer's booth for a charge of 10%–20%.

TIPPING: Not customary, though many places include a fixed service charge (about 10% in restaurants). Expect brusque or downright surly service in areas frequented by large groups of tourists and backpackers, where tipping is the exception and not the rule.

HAGGLING: Except for department stores and chain stores, haggling is acceptable and even expected.

IDENTIFICATION: Visitors are required to have passports and entry papers on them at all times. Hong Kong residents are required to carry government-issued identification cards. A government ID card is typically issued when a resident is in junior high or high school. They are valid for life. If a card must be replaced, the owner typically uses the same photo he used for the original. (It's not unusual for a 50-year-old man to carry an identification card bearing a photo of him as a teenager.) If you're a foreign traveler staying in Hong Kong for more than three months, you're required to get a Hong Kong ID.

VOLTAGE: 220V, 50 Hz AC. Outlets vary widely.

TELEVISION: Hong Kong's broadcast system is paid for by the government, but broadcast outlets maintain independent editorial control. Both Cantonese and English channels are available.

NEWSPAPERS: The *Oriental Daily News* and the *Apple Daily* are the leading Cantonese newspapers. The *South China Morning Post* (aka "Pro-China Morning Post") is a popular English newspaper among the local Chinese. The *Hong Kong iMail* is an active local-reporting tabloid. *USA Today* and the *Asian Wall Street Journal* both print Hong Kong editions.

SMELLS, SIGHTS, AND SOUNDS

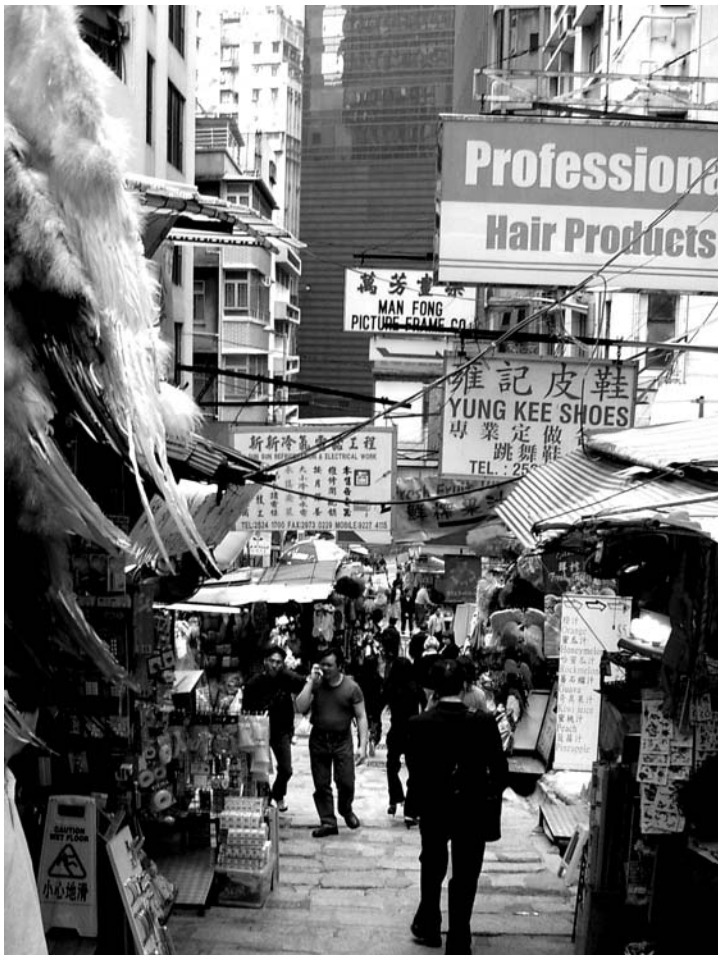
The first thing you'll notice is the smell. Everywhere you go, there's an ever-present odor of diesel fumes mixed with salt water. Buses and delivery trucks constantly belch out gray petrol fumes, and the never-ending marine traffic of muscular tugs and barges, sleek cruise ships, and sporty yachts contribute more than their fair share of exhaust. Near the water you can't help but get a whiff of decaying seaweed, dead fish, and other unidentifiable bits of rotting organic life. Near the night markets, all you can smell is coppery blood and meat cured to the edge of rancidity. Other markets specialize in dried foodstuffs such as mushrooms, bamboo, herbs, spices, seaweed, and fish, all of which creates its own pungent, medicinal aroma. In the fashionable areas, air conditioners set to maximum cold drive the scents of make-up and perfume out into the streets. As you move closer to the New Territories (and, after that, closer to Mainland China) a different smell assaults you: raw sewage. Human waste is the fertilizer of choice for rice paddies and gardens, so rural sewers are set up to carry it straight to the farmers, or at least to cisterns for weekly honey wagons to collect. Often the sewers are just beneath the surface, exposed every 15 or 20 feet by iron grates. Just when you think you've smelled the worst, someone in a nearby building flushes a toilet and the ripeness increases tenfold.

Hong Kong is a city of light. Neon signs hang like cybernetic cobwebs from and between buildings. They crowd out into the air over the streets, so they never seem to fall dark. Office buildings on the coast have computer-programmed light shows for the edification and amazement of tourists, while buildings in other parts of the city never turn their lights down; it's cheaper in the long run to just buy a monthly allotment of electricity in bulk. Late at night, when many shops close down, others open up. Large video screens in dense districts display advertisements 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Red and yellow are the two most common colors—they're believed to be lucky.

The people are also quite colorful, both in heritage and fashion. Hong Kong is a nexus of immigration, a city filled with Asians, Americans, Africans, Europeans, Indians, and Middle-Easterners, to name but a few. It's ideally located in terms of the global fashion and *haute couture* scene, with trend-setting Japan and the American West Coast to one side and ultra-fashionable Europe on the other. Designer clothing from both sides arrives in Hong Kong as soon as it's manufactured, ensuring residents are always at the forefront of popular trends.

Then there's the Chinese predilection for banner-hanging. Large red banners inscribed with black characters are strung across streets and intersections. Sometimes they're political, other times they're religious, and occasionally they're community-oriented. Similar banners are hung over doors, from windows, on bare alley walls, and from lampposts. Smaller, diamond-shaped banners inscribed with fortune-summoning words and phrases are pasted on doors.

Hong Kong is a loud city, and Chinese culture loves noise. In addition to the standard compliment of automobiles accelerating, braking, and honking, you've got ship horns blasting out warnings and emergency vehicles blaring out classically European siren peals. Street touts and night market vendors shout loudly over one another, sometimes using portable PAs slung under their arms to advertise wares to passers-by. Customers likewise shout back, to be heard over the din and to haggle like they mean it. Elderly Chinese men and women shout conversations at one another in obvious displays of affection. (To unfamiliar ears, it sounds like they hate each other, but they don't.) When a temple procession rolls by, drummers a-rhythmically bang on instruments while the neighborhood brass horn and flute section tries to remember everything it's been rehearsing for 50 years. Firecrackers explode in long, loud chains. Shops play music and advertisements through tinny speakers mounted outside. Walking down a sidewalk is an exercise in aural schizophrenia; every three seconds you're assailed with a new promotion or the latest song from the cutie girl Cantopop singer *du jour*, or white noise from an un-tuned radio.





OPIUM WAR LEFTOVERS

During the first Opium War (1840–42), approximately 2,000 chests of opium in the midst of transport to the port village of Xiamen by the British East India Company went missing. The ships carrying them—the HMS King George and the HMS Henry V—were not sunk by imperial corvettes or captured by pirates. The chests just disappeared somewhere during transit. They might have been offloaded onto another ship, tossed overboard, or sold in another port and reported missing. Whatever the truth, the opium seemed to be gone for good.

But it's not. The chests and their addictive contents are safely hidden in Hong Kong. The problem is few people know where, exactly. The opium is still in fine shape, because it was derived from White Tiger Opium, a special sub-species that's been extinct for fifty years and never, ever goes bad. Suffice it to say, the stuff is worth a king's ransom.

Some say White Tiger Opium is what demons from the Nine Hells used to like. Others claim it

THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

Before the handover to China, Hong Kong was a colony of Britain. It functioned independently of the British government for most political, economic, and social programs and was, for all intents and purposes, an independent city-state. The only time HK joined the British political ticket was when it was explicitly forbidden from accomplishing something on its own (such as in various special interest-related UN meetings and programs). After the handover, Hong Kong officially became a part of China, with the title "Special Administrative Region," or SAR. It remains, however, an autonomous city-state, technically speaking. Rarely do the SAR powers-that-be sign on to anything political as a part of the Mainland Chinese government contingent.

supplants the soul and turns users into vehicles for errant spirits. Even if that's not true, it's more valuable and more dangerous than regular opium.

Whoever finds even one of those lost chests is sure to attract a lot of buyers, a lot of thieves, and a lot of trouble.

GEOGRAPHY

Hong Kong, as a region, consists of a large peninsula (Kowloon) surrounded by a floating skirt of 235 islands, including Hong Kong island itself, for a total of about 2000 square kilometers of territory. Approximately 6% of the land is arable, and just over 12% is forested. The land on Kowloon and the largest islands is hillier the closer it is to the sea (with a few "mountains" scattered about here and there, namely Victoria Peak and Castle Peak). The Hong Kong region lies right on the mouth of the Pearl River estuary, giving it convenient inland access to Guandong and Guangzhou.

Many massive land reclamation projects are underway in Hong

Kong, and plenty have already been completed. A few islands close to the Kowloon peninsula have been absorbed into the peninsula through such projects. Meanwhile, landscapers and engineers are constantly battling with the area's steep slopes to maintain inhabited lots and protect properties throughout the SAR from erosion damage and over-development.

Although the region is officially segregated into 18 districts, you can generally split it into four larger areas:

- Hong Kong Island (80 sq km)
- Kowloon (47 sq km)
- New Territories (796 sq km)
- The Islands (175 sq km)





**THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION:
HONG KONG**

A Brief History

To a lot of people—historians included—Hong Kong’s history begins with the arrival of the British. The fact of the matter, supported by a considerable amount of archaeological evidence, is people have been living in the Kowloon Peninsula/Hong Kong Island region (known as Xinan Province until the Qing Dynasty) and the hundreds of smaller islands cluttered around it for at least 6,000 years. In prehistoric times, the water level was about 100 meters lower than it is today; it was quite some time before shard-hunters realized they were going to have to get their feet wet if they wanted to find prehistoric evidence of habitation. In or around the islands, namely Lantau and Lamma, they found stone inscriptions, bronze fishing equipment, knives, spearheads, arrowheads, and other signs of a human Neolithic presence.

Later, as the Chinese civilization evolved, so too did that of primitive Xinan. During the Shang dynasty, rogue shamans (the predecessors to the Taoist priests and sages of later dynasties) moved into the region, drawn by what they perceived as its overwhelmingly beneficial feng shui. They were obsessed with the weather and how to manipulate it. During the Qin and Han dynasties, more refugees arrived along with a sporadic “official” imperial military presence (usually a squad or garrison of soldiers from the capital, sent south as punishment for something or other). This pattern of southward migration and settlement continued for centuries. In the Warring States period, three armies fled from the land of Wei and ended up first in Guangdong, then in Hong Kong.

The Tanka and Hakklo arrived during the Tang and Song dynasties. Both quickly claimed various harbors and natural

The name *Tanka* started off as a derogatory term used by the Han in reference to the “egg people” living on boats in Hong Kong’s coastal waters.

typhoon shelters for their fishing boats and floating villages. Following on their heels were the ancestors of the modern-day Cantonese peoples: the Five Great Clans (the Tang, Man, Liu, Han, and Paug families) who hailed from the central northern regions of China. They were a contentious lot. They departed from the glorious Chinese empire when their leaders couldn’t get the concessions they wanted out of the emperor.

During the Yuan dynasty, they were more or less ignored. Left alone, the clans took to ruling their new territories with an iron fist. They were no better than the bandits and pirates whose presence they suffered in exchange for a share of loot. Unfortunately, the Clans could not be ignored for long.

The Qing dynasty monarch sent platoon after platoon to Xinan to subdue them. The Clan leaders were savvy, however; rather than put up a fight, they prostrated themselves before the newly appointed magistrates and swore oaths of fealty. What the Clans really wanted, though, was a return of the good old days, when Ming rulers left them alone so long as they paid an annual tithe. As soon as the Qing magistrates turned their backs on them, the Clan leaders sponsored secret societies dedicated to the eventual overthrow and replacement of the Manchu-worshipping dogs they mocked with obedience. These secret orders—called Three Harmonies Societies—were the foundation for the gangster Triads that would rise to prominence immediately after the British arrived.

The Clans dug in, building thick walls and barricades around their villages and farms to keep foreigners and invaders out. They encouraged highway robbery, maritime piracy, and miscellaneous banditry. Another group of people moved into the lands and waters of Xinan in the time of the Qing: the Hakka, or “guest people.” They took over the farms left behind by Manchu immigrants, who were by now fleeing the notoriously violent region in droves. Using the wealth they brought with them from the north, the Clans turned the Hakka into tenant farmers.

When the imperial presence in the region was finally eroded, the people of Xinan Province and Hong Kong were truly left to their own devices.

Enter the British

The British showed up during the 19th century when the Qing dynasty was already quite weak (for a whole host of reasons not related to the ongoing Triad conflicts in Hong Kong). They came with fat boats loaded with English and European crafts, foods, wines, spices, and other commodities. They were eager to buy up chinoiserie and force trade concessions out of the Qing government that would ultimately benefit the Crown. The Chinese, however, weren’t buying. China was self-contained and self-satisfied. For all intents and purposes, it was closed to outside trade.

For the British, the demand back home for exotic Chinese teas, spices, porcelains, teaks, and silver were too great to ignore. Then they discovered something they could use to get the attention of the Chinese: opium from Turkey and India. It swept through the coastal provinces like a plague. Demand for it grew out of control. The British were removing more silver and gold bullion than the Qing government could handle. Opium had been illegal under imperial law as far back as 1800, but that deterred neither the addicts nor the suppliers. At the peak of the opium trade, more than 30,000 chests of opium were coming into China a year. The Qing army and navy were

weak from decades of corruption, and the imperial government simply didn't command the authority or the resources to effectively combat the British merchants on their terms.

The Opium War: A Fire in Hong Kong

Finally, in 1839, a magistrate in Guangdong seized all the opium in port and burned it. Tensions flared. A month later, two British men murdered a Chinese merchant and

were evacuated by the British. The Chinese wanted them to face local justice. With violence seemingly imminent, the British navy seized Hong Kong island in preparation for battle. It was the beginning of the first of two Opium Wars.

After years of naval defeats at the hands of the British, the Qing government finally conceded to Britain's demands for open trade in 1842. As part of the so-called "Treaty of Nanjing," the British acquired the island of Hong Kong in perpetuity. However, because the treaty had never been officially ratified by the British governor, it was never considered official. As such, a second treaty was signed a year later. The terms and conditions varied only slightly from the original, and it was ratified on both sides. This was the first of the "unequal treaties" forced upon the Qing government. A series of five "treaty ports" were created where the British and, later, their allies could openly trade with Chinese merchants and hongts (trade groups). The treaty ports were like colonies; foreign merchants and governors had more authority over the cities than local magistrates and law officers due to their extraterritoriality and exemption from Chinese law.

A SIMPLIFIED TIMELINE OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT

Xia Dynasty	ca. 21st – 16th century BC
Shang Dynasty	ca. 16th – 11th century BC
Zhou Dynasty	
Western Zhou	11th century BC–711 BC
Eastern Zhou	770 BC–476 BC
Warring States Period	476 BC–221 BC
Qin Dynasty	221 BC – 206 BC
Han Dynasty (Western)	206 BC – 24 AD
Han Dynasty (Eastern)	25 AD – 220 AD
Three Kingdoms Period	220 AD – 280 AD
Jin Dynasty (Western)	265 AD – 316 AD
Jin Dynasty (Eastern)	317 AD – 420 AD
Northern & Southern Dynasties	
Northern	386 AD – 581 AD
Southern	420 AD – 589 AD
Sui Dynasty	581 AD – 618 AD
Tang Dynasty	618 AD – 907 AD
Five Dynasties & Ten States	
Later Liang Dynasty	907 AD – 923 AD
Later Tang Dynasty	923 AD – 936 AD
Later Jin Dynasty	936 AD – 946 AD
Later Han Dynasty	947 AD – 951 AD
Later Zhou Dynasty	951 AD – 960 AD
Ten States/Kingdoms Period	902 AD – 979 AD
Song Dynasty	
Northern	960 AD – 1127 AD
Southern	1127 AD – 1279 AD
Liao Dynasty	916 AD – 1125 AD
Jin Dynasty	1115 AD – 1234 AD
Yuan Dynasty	1271 AD – 1368 AD
Ming Dynasty	1368 AD – 1644 AD
Qing (Manchu) Dynasty	1644 AD – 1911 AD
Republic of China	1911 AD – 1949 AD
People's Republic of China	1949 AD – 2044 AD
(QinSoft) Dynasty	2042 AD – 2051 AD
People's Empire of China	2044 AD – 2051 AD
BuroChina™	2051 AD – 2056 AD

(All dates are approximate and subject to temporal alteration.)

The Opium War 2: Hong Kong Smoke

After the first Opium War, an economic crisis hit southern China hard due to a massive trade deficit created in the wake of the first treaty. In an attempt to bolster the economy—and as a result of the crashing value of Chinese coin, as well as Spanish and Mexican silver, which was used to pay for goods bought from the Chinese—the imperial government issued its first paper money in 1853. It was, unfortunately, too little, too late. On the social front, the Opium War devastated the collective Chinese psyche and overall morale. Before the war, they considered themselves superior to Western barbarians. Afterwards, they accepted that Western tactics and science had given the British and their allies an advantage over the Middle Kingdom. Intellectuals became obsessed with emulating Western scholars, diplomats, and merchants. This began a new love/hate relationship between China and the West.

In 1856, tensions rose again. By now the French and the Americans had pried their own unfair concessions out of the imperial government. A Chinese ship flying a British flag was boarded under suspicion of smuggling opium (patently illegal for Chinese nationals), but because the ship flew the Union Jack, the British viewed this as a direct attack on their sovereignty. War erupted up and down the Chinese coast. The French, Germans, Russians and Americans joined in, and the results were devastating. In 1858, the Treaty of Tientsin was signed, granting the allied foreign forces eleven more treaty ports, in addition to even more extraterritoriality rights and a reimbursement of expenses accrued during the war (more than 2 million taels of silver). The Chinese government, however, refused to allow the establishment of foreign legations in the capital and the war persisted for two more years.

Finally, in 1860 the Convention of Beijing was signed, which finally made the opium trade legal, granted the British

an additional monetary award of 8 million taels of silver, and afforded the British a host of other concessions, including the right to export Chinese laborers overseas.

The First of Ninety-Nine

During the 1890s, the bubonic plague erupted in Hong Kong. It killed nearly 6,000 people over the next ten years, hitting especially hard in the crowded areas around Victoria Peak. In 1898, realizing the colony was growing too rapidly and concerned with its defense against various Triad and rebel groups plaguing the region, the British government leased additional land from the Chinese. This area became known as the New Territories. The Qing government, in one of its last acts of wisdom, ceded the area to them for a limited time: 99 years. This came back to haunt the British government in later years, but ultimately became a blessing in disguise.

WWI and WWII

In the years leading up to the first two World Wars, Hong Kong became a major trade depot for the Europeans. A variety of wealthy noble houses—most of which emerged from the Opium Wars significantly wealthier than when they entered—dominated local economics. Their influence was widespread across southern China and their participation in local politics was considerable. The shipping industry in the region grew exponentially as a result. Hong Kong prospered as it never had before.

When World War II arrived, everything changed. The Japanese attacked in 1941 and took control of the colony. For the next 3 years, Hong Kong served as a principal Japanese battle hub and internment camp. They built an airfield in Kowloon, which would later become Kai Tak international airport.

Attack of the Communists

Not long after WWII ended, a civil war broke out on the Mainland. The Communists took advantage of the Nationalists' weakness and took control of the government from them. Many Nationalists fled to Taiwan, others to Hong Kong. American and British soldiers stationed in Hong Kong aided the Nationalists up to the last minute, but the Communist armies were too numerous to defeat. The Western soldiers retreated, bringing with them hundreds of thousands of refugees. Hong Kong's population swelled. The sudden influx of a dirt-cheap labor force gave the territory an economic boost, however, in the form of countless sweat shops and textile factories.

Throughout the sixties and seventies, Triads recruited from the new arrivals. Under the auspices of support for the communist "motherland," they worked over time to undermine the British authority in the region. In truth, the Triads never cared one whit for politics; they were simply leveraging the favorable pro-Mainland sentiment to their own advantage. The British spared no expense, though, in quashing the nascent communist movement, then it set its sights on gangs and corruption, inciting a secret war that would never end.

HK Hand-Me-Down

During the 1980s, the British government realized the colony had become a yoke around its neck. The 99-year lease would be

up in the late 90s, and China had already said the return of the New Territories was both inevitable and non-negotiable. For years, the British had been quietly dropping their colonies and granting independence, so when the Chinese also offered to take back the islands the British owned outright, they agreed. This set off nearly fifteen years of negotiations to ensure the people of Hong Kong reaped the benefits of the future handover. The noble houses, fearing for their financial lives, fled in droves. So, too, did those common people who could afford to emigrate. Other nations in the British Commonwealth, namely Canada and Australia, made it easy for the intelligentsia, the literati, and the wealthy to immigrate.

This resulted in a near melt-down of the Hong Kong economy in the years leading up to the July 1, 1997 handover of the territory to Mainland China. The "brain drain" also crippled Hong Kong socially and academically. Everyone feared for the worst. They were certain that when the Mainland assumed control, Hong Kong would become, at best, like Shenzhen—a barren, corrupt economic security zone—or, at worst, like modern Beijing and Shanghai—flooded with unskilled labor and plagued with astronomical unemployment and crime.

Cure for a Handover

The funny thing is that, right after the handover, very little actually changed. Although the city had a new law, called the Basic Law (which ostensibly guaranteed Hong Konger freedoms and rights for 50 years), and all streets and buildings with British colonial nomenclature were changed to be less Western and more Chinese (but only in Chinese—the English was generally left alone, strangely), and businesses had new policies for working across the border in Mainland China, nothing really changed the day after the ceremonies. At least, not right away. Getting a job was still hard. The economy wasn't exactly soaring (thanks to the recent Asian economic implosion), and goods were still expensive.

Since then, the people of Hong Kong have realized something: they don't like the Chinese controlling their lives. The Mainland influence is subtle, but it's there. The government is run by 60 representatives, 30 of which are "elected," but only by a limited number of approved, registered voters. The other 30 are appointed by major businesses. Of course, the Mainland government has final say. Seemingly harmless additions to the Basic Law are added on an annual basis—things that could potentially curtail freedom of speech and assembly. As a result, every year, on the anniversary of the handover, the citizens of Hong Kong stage massive city-wide protests boasting as many as half a million participants. The Mainland government naturally responds with stone-faced criticisms, claiming the protestors are unpatriotic and "undemocratic."

One thing the Hong Kongers don't seem to have realized yet is this: the harder you push the Mainland government, the harder it resists. Though the Mainland has only a single garrison of soldiers stationed in the territory, it can bring in thousands more men and equipment within hours should it become necessary. The question now is: how hard can Hong Kong push before the Mainland loses all patience and responds like it did in Tiananmen Square in 1989?

THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG

With the time war in full swing on either side of the second millennium barrier (2001 AD), the future of Hong Kong is mutable and uncertain. The latter two junctures—the contemporary era and the era surrounding 2056 AD—give Secret Warriors a look at two well-lit spots on the black highway of history, but the terrain between is largely unknown. While future historians have plenty of information on the nature of ordinary life in Hong Kong throughout the first half of the 21st century (it was much like life elsewhere), very little reliable information will come out of the Chinese governments regarding internal operations. This is normal, but the tantalizing secrets surrounding the advanced technologies coming out of China between 2039 and 2051 will raise new questions about what's going on behind the scenes at the PRC.

To look at the future of Hong Kong, we must speculate from both the contemporary and the future junctures. The history of 21st-century China will take place largely out of public sight, in government-funded laboratories and factories, in corporate board rooms and R&D departments, in military bases and taoist temples. Until the Buro unites the planet beneath its world government in 2051, the People's Republic of China maintains a course first plotted in the 1950s: a course to the stars.

Although precise dates are difficult to determine, shortly after the Chinese reclamation of Hong Kong, the PRC steps up technological research and development in the SAR, using established tech firms and international contacts to build a variety of new technological institutions loyal to the PRC and dedicated to the "Further Modernizations" plans of China. It's part of the country's long-term plan to outrun the other global superpowers and establish China as a technological leader. This would simultaneously raise morale and national pride among Chinese citizens—even in such estranged populations as Hong Kong and Taiwan—while demonstrating China's commitment to its Communist system through the realization of forward-thinking projects. The first few years will be harsh on the body politic, as the citizens of Hong Kong learn during the economic troubles of the early 2000s, but in the end China proves that a Communist nation can be successful.

China's plan is to gain a technological lead without raising the ire or suspicion of other major nations (in the 1990s, Chinese officials repeatedly state their intentions to never participate in an arms race), and then turn its attention back to a traditional cultural identity. Once both stages of the plan are complete, the nation will have a simpler job for future centuries: maintain prosperity for the People's Republic by maintaining the balance between futuristic development and traditional values. The first half the plan works fine, but the Buro interrupts the PRC's course in the 2050s, and imposes its exaggerated

"WHILE SHARING THE JOY AND EXCITEMENT OF ALL CHINESE ACROSS THE WORLD, THE HONG KONG PEOPLE TODAY CAN HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SAYING THAT 'HONG KONG BENEFITS FROM EVERY PROGRESS THE MOTHERLAND HAS MADE.'"
—Editorial in Hong Kong pro-Beijing newspaper *Wen Wei Po** (From CNW.com)

model of hyperconsumerism onto the Chinese people.

Coincidentally, early arcanowave research will be just one part of China's endeavor to realize new technologies in the 21st century. In 2013, decision-makers inside the Chinese government choose to vigorously pursue a renewed space program, and arcanowave research will be just one of several projects left unfunded the following year. The Cross-Disciplinary Convergence Association (CDCA), created thereafter to continue arcanowave research, eventually becomes the Buro and conquers the world through the power of feng shui.

China, meanwhile, continues to send *taikonauts* (Chinese astronauts) into orbit. Permanent orbital facilities give way to organized tourism and a rush of cash into outer space.

This is when things become unclear. Future records suggest a former taikonaut and subsequent founder of a Hong Kong technological company called QinSoft becomes an influential player in Chinese politics around 2042 AD. He institutes a union of Taoist spiritualism and technological innovation through computer-assisted worship and online temples that sweeps like a fad through Hong Kong and the PRC. This figure (his specific identity has changed several times as a result of temporal tampering) eventually becomes a technological and spiritual leader among Chinese bureaucrats, until he's replaced by his son in 2050. This period, which exists "behind" formal periods of Chinese history, is known unofficially as the QinSoft Dynasty. Hong Kong is its cultural capital.

The QinSoft Dynasty will be responsible for the foundation of China's successful military/civilian lunar base in 2044, which transforms the People's Republic of China into the People's Communist Empire of China. They will complete the first stage in China's plan for the future. They will not, however, be Innerwalkers or Secret Warriors, so far as anyone can tell. They will manage some union of technology and feng shui that makes China the technological superpower of the 21st Century, but seemingly without knowingly controlling feng shui sites. Clearly there is more to be known about the QinSoft Dynasty and what its descendants are up to in 2056. The answers will surely be found in the home city of the QinSoft Dynasty, the tech center of the former PEC, the corporate fortress of the Buro: Hong Kong.





THE DISTRICTS

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is composed of 18 districts, all of which are further subdivided into smaller neighborhoods. City affairs, finances and budgets, voting (when it's allowed), and taxation are all handled through district offices. The Legislative Council appoints district chairpersons every three years. If a chairperson is moderately successful or popular in her district, she retains the post for a very long time, or at least until she decides to make a bid for greater power in the city government.

HONG KONG ISLAND

Central and Western

Location: Hong Kong Island.

Neighborhoods: Kennedy Town, Sai Ying Pun, Sheung Wan, Central, Tai Ping Shan (Victoria Peak), and Admiralty.

This is probably the most famous district in the entire city; it's the heart of all government and finance for the SAR. Tall, incredibly expensive buildings line the north shore, illuminating Victoria Harbor at night with amazing displays of light, between elevated walkways winding along serpentine routes. Down on the crowded streets and sidewalks, you see double-decker buses, red taxicabs, Rolls Royces, Jaguars, limousines, and top-of-the-line Mercedes-Benzes, Masaratis, and Peugeots mixed in with ordinary vehicles and police motorcycles on patrol. Pedestrians tend to be well-dressed businesspeople and diplomats, sweaty camera-wielding tourists, or Filipino amahs. During the morning and evening rush hours, street traffic is immobile. During the lunchtime rush, getting anywhere on the sidewalks requires infinite patience. The district's shopping centers, nightclubs, and restaurants are not for the faint of heart or the poor. Designer everything is the norm here. Don't be surprised if you stumble across movie stars and entourages engaged in the fine art of shopping, or if you see the American ambassador taking a smoke-and-coffee break in Chater Garden. Film crews often come to the district to work, though their permits are usually issued for early morning, late night, and weekend filming only, so as not to interfere with real business.

This district was the site of the official British colonial presence in 1857, called Victoria City at the time (after the Queen, of course). The original shoreline was much narrower. Almost all of the district's modern buildings are standing on reclaimed land that didn't exist prior to the 20th century.

Quick Links: Star Ferry to Tsim Sha Tsui. MTR to Kowloon and Wan Chai. Airport Express to Chep Lap Kok. Street access to Kowloon Peninsula (underwater tunnel), Lantau Island (across the bridge), or Aberdeen (through the under-mountain tunnel). Jet foil to Macau. Peak tram to the Mid-Levels and the Peak Observatory.

Eastern

Location: Hong Kong Island.

Neighborhoods: Victoria Park, North Point, Quarry Bay, Shau Kei Wan, Chai Wan, and Siu Sai Wan.

This is one of the more heavily populated districts on the island; it's home to over half a million people. It's urban, but not flashy or overly high-tech. Victoria Park, built in the 1950s, is a nice place to visit and get fresh air. One of the

SAR's three cross-harbor traffic tunnels can also be found here, traversing the gap between the island and the peninsula. Alongside it is an MTR tunnel. In the 1800s the British maintained a fort in Shau Kei Wan to protect the harbor's eastern approach; today it's the Museum of Coastal Defense. Also during the 19th century, Aldrich Bay was an important typhoon shelter for Tanka fisherfolk. It has since been reclaimed and is now home to a series of high-rise apartment buildings. Siu Sai Wan, meanwhile, proudly boasts the second-largest sports arena in the region. In Quarry Bay you will also find the famous "noon-day" gun.

Quick Links: MTR to Kowloon Peninsula (Lam Tin).

Southern

Location: Hong Kong Island.

Neighborhoods: Big Wave Bay, Stanley, Shek O, Tai Tam, Chung Hom Kok, Repulse Bay, Deepwater Bay, Aberdeen, Sham Wan, Ap Lei Chau, and Pok Fu Lam.

Southern isn't nearly as crowded as the districts on the north side of the island. Geographically, it's the largest district. Much of the terrain is rugged and mountainous, though that doesn't keep people from living here. Some of its more famous features include: the other side of Victoria Peak, with a view of the ocean and the setting sun that is just spectacular; Ocean Park and the Middle Kingdom—theme parks located just around the bend from Aberdeen; the Aberdeen Chinese Cemetery (also known colloquially as "the nightclub"); the Aberdeen typhoon shelter in the harbor; and Stanley Market—a discount clothing market that traces its ancestry all the way back to the Qing dynasty when trade ships from the Mainland offloaded their goods here. Stanley Prison, the city's largest maximum-security prison, is out here, too.

Because the district is less crowded than others, it's ideal for people who want to "get away" for the weekend. Swimmers and wind-surfers come to enjoy the white sand beaches and business people with bad taste in pants come to play golf on the many local courses—especially the one in Deepwater Bay. All this recreational land attracts low-cost decorators-slash-geomancers on municipal or private contracts, paid to properly sculpt the feng shui of various local spots. As a result, the area is dotted with very minor feng shui sites, each too small to attract the attention of important Innerwalkers.

Quick Links: Sampan (junk) to wherever. Street access to Central (through the under-mountain tunnel), or by means of the long way around (or over) the Peak.

Wan Chai

Location: Hong Kong Island.

Neighborhoods: Causeway Bay.

At one time, this district set the standard for "red light" districts the world over. Despite being somewhat tamed, it still boats more than its fair share of topless bars, seedy watering holes, and gangster hangouts. During the Korean and Vietnam wars, soldiers on furlough made Wan Chai their home away from home. Whenever an American navy vessel passes through the city, soldiers come to this district (though

HONG KONG ISLAND

nowadays most go to Tsim Sha Tsui over in Kowloon because it's way seedier). This is a small district, packed to the gills with mom-and-pop shops, day markets, and cramped alleyways. You'll find cheap clothing in bulk as well as inexpensive tailoring and seamstress services. The north end of the district is remarkably different, like another portion of the ubiquitous financial district to the west. The ultimate symbol of this upscale spillover is the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and Central Plaza, which bridges the districts. Finally, there is the Pacific Place shopping center, a sprawling and expensive mercantile paradise. Like Central, Wan Chai has its own ferry pier.

In the 1960s, this district gained no small amount of notoriety with the release of *The World of Suzie Wong*. The movie starred William Holden as an ex-patriot artist who falls in love with a golden-hearted prostitute at the height of the Cold War. Richard Mason wrote the original novel on which the film was based. HK still resembles the book to this day, though few of the buildings from that time still exist.

Quick Links: *Star Ferry to Tsim Sha Tsui or Hung Hom. MTR to Central and Eastern.*

Kowloon City

Location: *Kowloon Peninsula.*

Neighborhoods: *Ho Man Tin, Hung Hom, Kai Tak, Kowloon Tong, Tok Wa Wan, and Whampoa Garden.*

With a population of almost 400,000 people living in a 1,000-hectare district, you'd think this is another one of Hong Kong's extremely crowded areas, but it doesn't feel all that packed once you're on its streets. At the southernmost end is Hung Hom, with its ferry pier to Central and Wan Chai and its KCR station (currently in the midst of being rebuilt, giving the entire neighborhood a definite "bombed-out" look). The Kai Tak neighborhood was once the home of the Hong Kong International Airport. Its twin runway strip extended for hundreds of meters out into the waters of Victoria Harbor and made for a truly memorable landing (see the *Feng Shui* rule book). Today the land is empty and derelict. The government is trying to encourage various private housing projects to reclaim it, but so far they've had no luck. In the past, buildings in this neighborhood had a height limit, so as not to interfere with air traffic. All that will change when, if ever, Kai Tak is built up again.

Another of the district's famous features is the Walled City Park, where the infamous Kowloon Walled City used to stand. The Chungking Mansions in TST are the proverbial viper's nest, but the Walled City was a hundred times worse in its day. In its place is a park and memorial. Few downtown districts are as full of wildlife as this one (with the unusual exception of Central, perhaps, and its Peak). There are more parks in Kowloon City than you can shake a branch at: Hoi Sham with its distinctive rock formations, Sung Wong Toi Garden for its wonderful flowers, and Hutchison Park with its traditional gateways, to name just a few.

Quick Links: *KCR to Kowloon Tong and Guangdong. Star Ferry to Wan Chai and Central. MTR to Yau Tsim Mong and*

Kwun Tong. Coastal ferry to Shenzhen, Guangdong, and Shanghai.

Kwun Tong

Location: *Kowloon Peninsula.*

Neighborhoods: *Ho Man Tin, Hung Hom, Kai Tak, Kowloon Tong, Tok Wa Wan, and Whampoa Garden.*

If Mong Kok in Yau Tsim Mong is the most densely packed neighborhood in the city, Kwun Tong is the most crowded district. Its population is well in excess of 600,000 people, giving it approximately 55,000 people per square kilometer. It was one of the first places settled by Qing Dynasty immigrants and has been growing steadily for the last 200 years. It has the majority of the city's manufacturing facilities, such as textile factories and microchip manufacturers. Though the lure Shenzhen is strong, with its special tax breaks and cheap labor, the Kwun Tong district council is constantly doing what it can to keep businesses from fleeing. There are four industrial parks for high-tech businesses and factories, distributed from Lion Rock in the north all the way over to the border with Kowloon City and the old Kai Tak airport to the west.

At the moment, Kwun Tong boasts the largest shopping center in Hong Kong: the Festival Walk in Kowloon Tong. The Kowloon Tong MTR station is built in the mall's basement, giving commuters immediate access to it and its eight levels of consumer bliss.

Quick Links: *KCR light rail to the New Territories and Shenzhen. MTR to Kowloon City. MTR to Quarry Bay on Hong Kong Island. Coastal ferry to Shenzhen, Guangdong, and Shanghai. Street access to Hong Kong Island via the cross-harbor tunnel and bridges.*

Wong Tai Sin

Location: *Kowloon Peninsula.*

Neighborhoods: *Wang Tau Hom, Lok Fu, Chuk Yuen, Wong Tai Sin, Tsz Wan Shan, Fung Wong, Choi Hung, and Choi Wan.*

This district is named for its most prominent feature: Wong Tai Sin temple. It's bound on all sides by land and small mountain peaks, such as Lion Rock in the north and Fei Ngor Shan in the south, and various roads to and from other districts on the remaining sides. It is, in fact, the one district in the entire SAR without a coastline. This accounts for its relatively low population of Tanka fisherfolk and its quite large population of Hakka people (who are uneasy on the water). The district was used for refugee camps in the 19th century when hundreds of thousands of Mainland Chinese fled first the Second World War and then the Communist revolution. As such, it's traditionally one of the poorer districts, with the vast majority of residents living in public-funded housing estates. In addition to the Wong Tai Sin temple, the district is renowned for its Buddhist nunnery at Chi Lin and the Nga Tsin Wai fortified village built in the 1700s.

Quick Links: *MTR to Yau Tsim Mong and Kwun Tong. KCR to Hung Hom or Guangdong.*

Sham Shui Po

Location: Kowloon Peninsula.

Neighborhoods: Cheung Sha Wan, Lai Chi Kok, and Mei Foo.

This district is on the opposite side of the peninsula from Kwun Tung and is its counterpart in services rendered. Where Kwun Tung is industrial, Sham Shui Po is consumer-oriented. Sham Shui Po is the poorest district in Hong Kong. It's also the regional haven for knock-off goods, pirated software, cheap hardware, and all manner of marginally legal goods. The district is a political hothouse and the home for many pro-democracy movements. Not so surprisingly, the combination of poverty and politicians makes it a criminal haven. Prostitutes openly work the street corners and Triad activities and social events are often held in public places, such as temples, all-night restaurants, and Karaoke parlors.

The district is famous for Lei Chung Uk, a Han-dynasty tomb and perhaps the oldest intact ancient building in the region. The Ap Liu street market is another landmark, offering all manner of cheap hardware and pirated goods. The eastern border shares a shopping center with Kwun Tung, the Festival Walk. Although technically a part of Kwun Tung, Sham Shui Po residents like to pretend it's in their district. The district's other famous mall is the Golden Shopping Center, a software and multimedia boot-legger's paradise.

Quick Links: MTR to Yau Tsim Mong. Airport Express to Chep Lap Kok. Coastal ferry to Shenzhen, Guangdong, and Shanghai. KCR light rail to the New Territories.

Yau Tsim Mong

Location: Kowloon Peninsula.

Neighborhoods: Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok, Jordan, Prince Edward, and Ho Tin.

This is the major district on the western side of Kowloon Peninsula. Approximately 280,000 people live within these seven square kilometers, not including tourists, transients, and the homeless. This is the home of the Golden Mile, or, as it is more formally known, Nathan Road. It has five-star hotels, hostels, guest houses, restaurants, duty-free shops, "discount" shops, pubs, movie theaters, and just about everything else a major metropolitan hub requires. Further north in Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok you have the night markets and members-only clubs. Major tourist attractions include the jade market, the bird market, the Temple Street night market, and the knock-off clothing bazaars of Mong Kok. If you need to get away from the hustle and bustle of a district that never sleeps, head for Kowloon Park.

The street corners are home to touts and prostitutes. From the time the sun rises until very late at night, it's difficult to navigate the sidewalk of Tsim Sha Tsui (also called simply "TST") without running into them. They get in your face, block your path, and politely yet persistently pressure you into buying whatever they're selling.

Up in Mong Kok, it's more of the same: Mong Kok is literally the densest urban area on the planet. As soon as you hit the side streets, where the night markets are, you'll believe it. The police frequently have to close off the streets

because the crush of people is so tight cars cannot pass. The neighborhood's shopping arcades, with their low, corrugated ceilings and hot neon signs, are even worse once you step in off the street. Window shoppers move at a snail's pace, not because they're enjoying the walk but because they have no choice. God help you if you're six levels up into one of these firetraps and are overcome with a sudden bout of claustrophobia.

The further north you go, the less extreme the density becomes. Prince Edward is positively urbane compared to Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei, with nice shops and classy restaurants.

Yau Tsim Mong is home to people of all nationalities: Indians, Pakistanis, and Afghans from the sub-continent; Somalis, Moroccans, and Egyptians from North Africa; Americans; Brits; Australians; Nepalese; Indonesians; Filipinos; you name the nationality, and you'll quickly find a restaurant or specialty store owned by someone from that country. These ex-pats typically come from former colonies of the United Kingdom, and they make up the bulk of the displaced people living here.

The Chungking Mansions—as nasty and run-down a tenement building as ever existed—is one of the more famous landmarks in TST and a haven for backpackers and people who can't afford to live elsewhere in the district (see page 79). It's been featured in numerous movies, such as Wong-Kar Wei's *Chungking Express*.

Quick Links: MTR to Tsuen Wan (New Territories). MTR to Tung Chung (Lantau Island). Airport Express to Chep Lap Kok. MTR to North Point via Lam Tin (Kowloon Peninsula). KCR to Guangdong. Cruise ship to wherever. Star Ferry to Central and Wan Chai. Sampan (junk) to wherever. Coastal ferry to Shanghai, Shenzhen, or Guangdong. Street access to Hong Kong Island via the cross-harbor tunnel.

Islands

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Too many to list. Includes Se Chau (Snake Island), Cheung Chau, Kat O Chau (Crooked Island), Kiu Tsui Chau (Sharp Island), Lamma, Lantau, Leung Sheun Wan (High Island), Pak Sha Chau (White Sand Island), Tap Mun Chau (Grass Island), Wong Wan Chau (Double Island), Yeung Chau (Goat Island), Long Chau (Dragon Island), and Guai Wan (Monster Island).

The Islands district is the least-densely populated of the lot. Almost 20% of the Hong Kong territory is comprised of more than 200 islands, but the island district's population is barely 90,000—that's less than 500 people per square kilometer. Of course, many of those people don't actually live on land: they're boat people and fisherfolk.

The district is famous for a giant outdoor bronze statue of the Buddha—the largest in the world—near Po Lin Monastery. It's also renowned among archaeologists for its excellent artifacts from China's ancient past, which have been turning up in less-inhabited areas of the district for decades now.

Aside from Hong Kong Island, the only island accessible by automobile is Lantau. It has bridges allowing for

metro, train, and car traffic (as well as illegal pedestrian traffic). Lantau Island is home to Chep Lap Kok airport and numerous shipping terminals. It's also where Po Lin is located. Most of the islands in the district do not allow motorized vehicle traffic. Many of them are national parks.

Quick Links: Take your pick: by boat you can get anywhere. The only island with train and street access is Lantau (from Kwai Tsing). Air access to everywhere via Lantau Island and Chep Lap Kok Airport.

Kwai Tsing

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Kwai Hing, Kwai Shing East Estate, Upper Tai Wo Hau, Lower Tai Wo Hau, Kwai Chung Estate, Shek Yam, On Yam, Tai Pak Tin, Shek Lei, Shek Lei Extension, Kwai Fong, Wah Fung, Cho Yiu, Lai Yiu, Hing Fong, Lai King, Kwai Shing West Estate, Nga On, Wai Hoi, Tsing Yi Estate, Greenfield, Cheung Ching, Cheung Hong, Shing Hong, Tsing Yi South, Cheung Hang, Fat Tai, and Cheung On.

Where Lantau Island in the Islands district possesses one end of the famous Tsing-Ma suspension bridge and airport express railway lines, Kwai Tsing owns the originating end. This district is famous for its numerous shipping and cargo terminals. Public housing estates are the norm here; combined with the port areas, they give the district a dull, gray, boring atmosphere. After Oakland and East Bay in America, Kwai Tsing is one of the busiest container ports in the world. The district's population is about 500,000 people.

Quick Links: Airport express to Lantau or to Kowloon Peninsula and Hong Kong Island. Coastal ferry to Guangdong, Shenzhen, and Shanghai. Sampan (junk) to wherever. Highway access to the Kowloon Peninsula and Mainland China.

North

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Fanling, Sha Tau Kok, Ta Ku Ling, and Sheung Shui.

This district shares a border with Mainland China; namely, the industrial city of Shenzhen. Most of the 300,000 people living here reside in just two towns: Fanling and Sheung Shui. Everyone lives out in the farmlands or in the district's 110 tiny rural villages. Hundreds of years ago, the Liu clan (one of the Five Great Clans) settled in the region. The clan leader built Sheung Shui as a walled village surrounded by a moat. At the heart of the modern Sheung Shui city, the walled village still stands and is still inhabited by Liu descendants.

There are three checkpoints in the North District for entering China: Lo Wu, Man Kam To, and She Tau Kok. Once through the checkpoints, you are officially and literally in no-man's land until you enter the Shenzhen checkpoints.

Quick Links: Highway access to Mainland China. Coastal ferry to Guangdong, Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong Island, and Lantau Island.

Sai Kung

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Too many to list. Includes Sai Kung Town, Hang Hau, Ho Chung, Lei Yue Men, Tseung Kwan O (Junk Bay), Kau Sai Chau, Tiu Chung Chau, Choi Hung, Yim Tim Tsai (Little Salt Field), Hoi Ha Wan, and Pak Tam Chung.

This district is a beautiful, spacious place with low population density and numerous parklands, nature reserves, and uninhabited landscapes. The Sai Kung Peninsula is Hong Kong's easternmost area and one of its largest protected parklands. It contains numerous golf courses, beaches, hiking trails, diving haunts, sailing clubs, and kayaking and snorkeling outposts. If you ever need to get away from the lights and metropolitan hustle-bustle, this district is your best bet. Sai Kung town is said to have the freshest and tastiest seafood in all the territories. It is also home to the Hong Kong University of Technology and Science.

Other district highlights include: Sheung Yiu Hakka Folk Village, Sai Kung Martyr's Monument (dedicated to Hong Kong's World War II freedom fighters), Tin Hau Temple (near Joss Bay), and the Leung Shang Wan Han Dynasty military storage facility (now a fishing village and "designated seafood culture area").

Quick Links: MTR to Kowloon Peninsula and Hong Kong Island. Sampan (junk) to wherever, especially the Islands District and Hong Kong Island.

Sha Tin

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Too many to list. Includes Ma On Shan, Tai Wai Industrial Park, Fo Tan Industrial Park, Siu Lek Yuen Industrial Park, and the Shek Mun Industrial Park.

This is one of the wealthier areas in the New Territories. The majority of the 600,000 people here live in and around Sha Tin city, or one of the four major industrial parks built to compete with Shenzhen for high-tech and manufacturing business. The district's 48 villages support a small fraction of the total population, comprised generally of farmers. Tai Wai village, built in 1574, is walled in. Sha Tin city is built on reclaimed land and was one of the first "new towns" built after the British acquired the New Territories; it's known for its racetrack.

Other landmarks include: the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (the largest museum in the region), Penfold Garden (at the center of the Sha Tin Racecourse) and, bizarrely, "Snoopy's World:" a theme-park featuring the Peanuts® characters created by Charles Schultz.

In 2003, Sha Tin's Prince of Wales Hospital was the epicenter for the Asian epidemic of SARS (Severe Adult Respiratory Syndrome).

Because of its numerous industrial factories, plants, and research centers, Sha Tin has the worst reputation of any district in Hong Kong for environmental pollution. The situation is improving, but today it still has some of the filthiest waterways around.

Quick Links: Highway access to Kowloon Peninsula (via the Lion Road Tunnel, Tate's Cairn Tunnel or Tai Po Road). KCR to

Mainland China (Guangdong). Ma On Shan railway to Sai Kung district. KCR light rail to anywhere in the district.

Tai Po

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Tai Po town, Lam Tsuen, Tsat Yuek and Sai Kung North.

With a total population somewhere in the neighborhood of 320,000, fully two-thirds of the people in this remote district live in Tai Po town. There's not much out here, aside from the rather feeble industrial park that allowed the town to "boom" briefly in the 1970s and early 80s. Lam Tsuen is the part of the district where you'll find all the old-style villages. They're quite popular with birdwatchers and ornithologists because they have an incredible variety of avian species. The Wun Yiu walled village, founded by members of one of the Great Clans, was established in 1650 and became famous for its high-quality ceramics. The village of Tsat Yuek has its own Man Mo Temple, similar to the one erected in downtown Hong Kong in Central. It was built in the 1890s at the behest of the village leader, who had just been appointed a regional police chief and wanted to show his gratitude to the gods. It didn't hurt either that the temple was also used as a drop-off point for "red envelopes" paid to the local bandit king to keep him and his ruffians out of the villagers' collective, if sweaty, hair.

Quick Links: KCR light rail to Sha Tin and Guangdong. Coastal ferry to Guangdong, Shenzhen, Kowloon Peninsula, and Shanghai. Highway access to just about everywhere.

Tsuen Wan

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Tsuen Wan town, Sham Tseng, Ma Wan, and Tai Mo Shan.

This New Territories district is one of the few served directly by the city's metropolitan rapid transit (MTR) system. It boasts the very first "new town" built after the acquisition of the New Territories from Mainland China. Although much of the container shipping industry has moved to nearby Kwai Tsing in recent years, Tsuen Wan remains a focal point for regional transportation. Thanks to the MTR and KCR

light rail, residents are able to easily commute into downtown areas. As such, they're less "blue collar" than their brethren in other New Territories districts.

Industrial buildings left over from the city's early years of development and growth are gradually being replaced by more and more office towers and shopping arcades. Tsuen Wan district has an unusually high number of temples and churches.

Quick Links: Coastal ferry to Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong Island, Guangdong, Shenzhen, and Shanghai. MTR to Kowloon Peninsula, Lantau Island, and Hong Kong Island. Air access to everywhere via Lantau Island and Chep Lap Kok Airport.

Tuen Mun

Location: The New Territories.

Neighborhoods: Tuen Mun town and Castle Peak.

Although this district has a half a million residents, it doesn't really feel crowded. It's on the western side of the SAR, and contains a high number of nature reserves, parks, and beaches. On weekends, New Territories residents go to Golden Beach, Butterfly Beach, and Mud Dragon Cove to relax and take in the sun. Although the district has an extensive coastline, it doesn't have much sea traffic and its container shipping industry is virtually non-existent. It does however have quite good river traffic support, with a thoroughly modern River Trade Terminal in the Tuen Mun Township.

Quick Links: KCR light rail to Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories, and Shenzhen. Coastal ferry to Shenzhen, Guangdong, Kowloon Peninsula, and Shanghai.



Yuen Long

Location: *The New Territories.*

Neighborhoods: *Yuen Long town, Tin Shui Wai, Ping Shan Heung, Ha Tsuen Heung, Kam Tin Heung, Pat Heung, San Tin Heung, and Shap Pat Heung.*

This district is centered on Yuen Long town, a former market town established during the Sung dynasty by the Tang and Man clans. It was situated on a major trade road that ultimately led to the rest of Mainland China. Today the district has a population of about 500,000 residents, most of whom work across the border in Shenzhen at factory jobs.

One of the district's most prominent features is the Mai Po Marshes wetland. Marine biologists have set up research facilities in Mai Po to monitor local wildlife, but their jobs are becoming increasingly more difficult as hyper-industrial Shenzhen keeps dumping toxic pollutants into the local waterways. A separate facility in the south end of the district monitors the local white dol-

Each of the SAR's districts is packed with history and sites to see. Yuen Long, for instance, features Hong Kong's oldest historic pagoda, built in 1486 by Tang Ying-tung of the venerable Tang Clan. At the time of this writing, you can find all manner of great resources for Hong Kong online. The factoid above, for example, and lots more like it can be found at the Hong Kong tourism website: www.discoverhongkong.com

phin populations as well. The feng shui here is therefore in a precarious state of flux, with good chi coming in from the sea and bad chi coming in from the Shenzhen factories.

Quick Links: *KCR light rail to Shenzhen, New Territories and Kowloon Peninsula.*

27 KICK-ASS PLACES TO STAGE A BRAWL*

1. The bamboo construction scaffolding enveloping new buildings as they are built.
2. Atop or inside a Peak Tram car while it ascends/descends the Peak.
3. Tiger Balm Park, amidst colorful statuary of gods and demons. (Western)
4. In the stairwells of hollow buildings, such as the Chungking Mansions. (TST)
5. Atop or inside a Star Ferry as it crosses Victoria Harbor.
6. St. John's Cathedral. Include a flock of white pigeons flying in slow motion through the front doors for that "St. John Woo effect." (Central)
7. High-speed car chase around the Peak on Lugard Road on the north side or Harlech Road on the south side. (Central)
8. The 800-meter-long Mid-Levels escalator and stairs. (Central)
9. Stanley Market amidst throngs of penny-pinching shoppers looking for cheap factory overrun clothing. (South)
10. High-speed golf cart chase across the 18-hole greensward in Deep Water Bay, leading into and through the exclusive Hong Kong Country Club.
11. Nathan Road (TST). Thousands of shops catering to tourists; thousands of neon-signs overhanging the road; and thousands of opportunities to cause lots and lots of damage.
12. The Jade Market. You break it, you take it. (Yau Ma Tei)
13. The Ladies' Market. At night, food vendors with pushcarts selling everything from stewed octopus balls to grilled duck tongues pack into the market. (Mong Kok)
14. Temple of 10,000 Buddhas. One big gold Buddha surrounded by 12,800 smaller ones in the walls. (New Territories)
15. The DKNY Café. Because it exists, it must be destroyed. It sits smugly across the street from the Hard Rock Café on Canton Road. (TST)
16. On the decks of a giant cruise ship docked at the Ocean Terminal. (TST)
17. Aboard a smuggler's junk in the Mai Po Marshes. (New Territories)
18. Inside the Cross Harbor Tunnel between Causeway Bay and Kowloon.
19. Atop the Central Plaza Tower.
20. Queen's Road East, a winding specialty street offering countless varieties of rattan and rosewood furniture. (Wan Chai)
21. The Happy Valley Racecourse on race day. (Happy Valley)
22. The Tsim Sha Tsui MTR Station. The criss-crossing escalators moving itinerant commuters up and down through the station are quite long. (TST)
23. The gently rocking sampan boats of Aberdeen Harbor. (Aberdeen)
24. The elevated walkways that run the entire length of Central above Connaught Road.
25. On a moving roller coaster in Ocean Park. (Aberdeen)
26. Inside a fume-laden soy sauce factory. (New Territories)
27. The Shaw Brothers Movie Studios. What's more *Feng Shui* than a Hong Kong-style fight scene staged amidst a fictional one as it's being filmed? (New Territories)

**because 25 just weren't enough*

PECULIAR CHINESE CUSTOMS

Every culture has its collection of notable, unusual, and downright strange practices. Chinese culture is no exception. Chinese cuisine is a central facet of daily life in Hong Kong—and a point of pride for Chinese culture as a whole—so it should be no surprise to learn a great number of odd customs revolve around food here. Still more surround children and social interaction in general.

Here's an assortment of peculiar Chinese customs you're liable to experience in Hong Kong.

Teatime Kowtowing

It's a southern Chinese tradition to gently knock your fore- and middle-finger knuckles on the table when someone pours or refills a cup of tea for you. This is a symbolic form of kowtowing. It's origins lie in history: it's said that once, long ago, the Emperor came to Canton to visit his subjects. He was not one for excessive formality, nor did he want the people to recognize him—he wanted to form an opinion of them based on ordinary behavior, not prostrate displays of teary-eyed fear and joy. So, he and his entourage went abroad *in cognito*. While sitting in a tea-house, the Emperor casually reached across the table to pour tea for one his men. The man, under orders not to reveal the Emperor, felt compelled to demonstrate gratitude and fealty to his liege. Instead of kowtowing properly, he knocked his knuckles on the table. For years the custom spread among the imperial guard and their families, eventually entering popular custom and practice. The story of its origins wasn't revealed until years later.

Fish Turning

At the dinner table, never use your chopsticks to turn over a fish on a plate or a steamer. Doing so brings bad luck to any fisherman dining with you: it means his ship will capsize the next time he ventures out on the water. If you need to get meat from the underside of your fish, punch through with your chopsticks or, failing that, gently lift one end and pick the meat out from underneath.

Toothpicks

After a meal, everyone likes to have a good dig at the old choppers to clear out sticky bits of food. In a culture where spitting shrimp heads and bones on the table and wiping your hands on the table cloth is appropriate dinner etiquette, the gentility with which the Chinese clean their teeth can only mean one thing: they got the custom from the Japanese. When cleaning your teeth with a toothpick, always hide the action behind your free hand. Seriously.

IN THE GAME

But how do you use these customs in a fight? You got me. They're not for fighting. Instead, you use these customs as ammunition during role-playing scenes—those scenes between the gun dances when you define why your character fights—to describe your PC, set up vendettas ("Gan bei, you son of a bitch."), and establish a rapport between your fellow PCs or the folks you have to save (or fight) later.

Don't forget, though, that you've got skills like Intimidate, Seduction, and Deceit. You get bonuses on your stunts for vivid descriptions, right? You should get bonuses to your role-playing skills for scary, funny, smooth, and clever descriptions, too. Intimidate a Triad boss by shockingly breeching Chinese custom. Seduce a femme fatale or competing heroine by sensitively demonstrating your understanding of ancient practices. Play dumb by getting it all wrong. Use dinners, funerals, and other dialogue scenes to charge up your fights with real emotion. It's just more dramatic to sword fight in the tea room where you fell in love or blow the hell out of the restaurant where you ate a tense last meal with your traitorous brother.

Nothing grosses out a Chinese person more than watching another clean his teeth. Feel free to re-consume liberated food. (Every once in a while you'll come across some loutish troll openly digging in his teeth and spitting slivers of mushy food out on the sidewalk. Cross to the other side of the street lest you get hit.)

Chopsticks

Don't stick your chopsticks straight down into a bowl of rice—it looks like incense embedded in a temple *jin ting* and is associated with death. When eating, it's acceptable to use chopsticks to shovel food into your mouth once you've successfully hooked the rice bowl on your lower lip.

Although the rules of courtesy (such as they are) dictate you should never dip into communal dishes using the end with which you eat, don't worry about it. Unless you're entertaining the company boss, no one cares. But if you do want to be polite, flip your chopsticks around and use the back end to serve yourself.

Boozing It Up

In pubs, toasting your buddies is a polite and sure-fire way to get them drunk fast, because no one in their right mind can turn down a toast. Hold your glass with one hand, lightly touching the bottom with the other, and raise it. Bow your head slightly to be extra polite. A toast is usually accompanied by the words *gan bei*, meaning "dry glass." That's your cue to shotgun the sucker.

Take turns refilling everyone's glasses at the table. When part of a group, one person almost always pays for the drinks; usually the oldest person in a group, the person from your company with the highest salary and position, or the person with the highest social standing. It's considered good form to fight over the bill as long as you let the *da ge* or "older brother" (or *da jie*, "older sister") ultimately pay.

Finally, when you're really sloshed, it's totally acceptable to say and do embarrassing things. No one will hold it against you the next day. You may become so drunk you can no longer walk. That's fine, too. In that case, your friends will take great delight in proving to you how much they care about you by dragging you out of the pub and dumping you into the first cab that comes by. They'll pay the cabbie and keep your wallet until they see you again. This happens all the time.

Making Acquaintances

If there's one thing Chinese people are surprisingly blunt about, it's money. When you first make the acquaintance of a Chinese person, it is entirely proper for him to ask you three things: What's your job? How much do you make? What's your blood type? The first two are self-explanatory, of course. The final one stems from a common superstition that a person's blood type determines his personality and fortune. Lots of folk traditions of the sort have cropped up over the years; by 2045, DNA tags replace blood type in this particular superstition.

Name Cards

Chinese name cards aren't so different from Western business cards, though Chinese cards—especially in Hong Kong—have the same information printed on both sides: one in English, the other in Chinese. Rather, it's the practice of name card exchanging that's a little unusual. When you greet another person with your card, hand it over using both hands and give tiny little bow. Your acquaintance will do the same in turn. Once you receive a name card, make a brief show of examining it respectfully. Never put in your pocket. Instead, if you're at the meeting table, lay it on the table in front of you. If you receive multiple name cards at once, put them all down and arrange them in the same order as your new acquaintances are seated. (This helps to remember who's who.) Finally, carry your name cards in a name card holder; silver is the preferred metal. And no, most card holders aren't thick enough to stop bullets (unless it's a gift from an important GMC or the name card inside has special significance to the story). For that you'll need a hip flask and good Fortune.

Children, Part I

Chinese culture puts its children before anyone else. Children are given free reign to run around department stores, quick shops, teahouses, and restaurants entirely unsupervised. They get away with behavior that Westerners would deem offensive or embarrassing. Kids are, more or less, ignored.

China, despite the Triads and traffic problems and over-crowded cities, does not have an epidemic of child kidnapping. You'll frequently see unattended children running up and down mall corridors, their parents a good 20 or 30 meters behind them. When a kid needs to pee, he'll do it right there off the edge of the curb and no one will think it strange. In short, Chinese parents are extremely permissive with children. They are forgiving of just about everything. If you're a foreigner in China for the first time, this becomes apparent the first time a kid calls you a "foreign devil" right to your face and no one else even bats an eye.

Children, Part II

In the West, parents love to grow over their children. They're proud of them and want the whole world to know it. In China, being proud and being a braggart never go in hand in hand. Parents and siblings have seemingly derogatory nicknames for one another—it's a sign of genuine affection. Chinese parents downplay their children's abilities and importance. A parent never talks about how good his or her child is. In fact, the parent is more likely to compare her to the neighbor's children, saying how ashamed she is that her daughter was born so ugly or stupid and "oh, why couldn't she have been born like that Liu girl, she's a genius, you know, and so gorgeous." Or, a father might introduce his son as "my stupid number three boy—I'd sell him if I could but it's just my rotten luck that's no longer legal." Parents are not malicious when they talk like this, they're just being humble, Chinese-style. (That's not to say this doesn't have negative repercussions; plenty of kids grow up with serious psychological or social issues because this sort of parental affection gets taken too far when they're young.)

Funerals

The more ostentatious a funeral, the more the relatives and friends loved the deceased. After a person dies, a tent is erected outside his house and his ashes or casket are placed inside. A large photograph is placed on top of the accompanying altar. Pyramids of beer and whiskey are erected outside the entrance. Priests and professional wailing mourners come by every night for seven days to lead the family in prayer.

It's believed that, when a soul enters the afterlife, it spends seven days wandering around confused. The prayers are meant to guide him to a particular lake in Hell. Once he sees his reflection in the lake, he realizes he's dead. Then he's given a couple of days to go home and make peace with his relatives.

After the priest says the soul is finally at peace and has moved on to the 18 Stories of Hell, the funeral picks up and moves in a slow procession through the neighborhood to the cemetery or temple where the body is to be interred or cremated. Especially wealthy families may hire extra mourners, traditional musicians, and karaoke floats with beautiful women singing pop music and torch songs.

FACE

KNOW IT, SAVE IT, LOSE IT

In Mandarin, the word for “face” is *lian* (pronounced “leeyen”), but the word that best describes how face works is *guan xi* (pronounced “gwahn shee”)—literally, “relationship.” You’ll hear the word often in everyday life: If someone bumps into you and says “I’m sorry,” the typical response is *mei guan xi*—literally meaning “no relationship,” but colloquially meaning “don’t worry about it.” Say you go to lunch with an underling and, while you’re paying for the both of you (as is appropriate in Chinese culture), he tries to hand you his share of the bill: you respond with “*mei guan xi, mei guan xi.*”

In Chinese culture, the higher a person’s status, the stronger her worldly influence (in theory). If you know a person, you automatically have some degree of *guan xi* with her, depending on numerous subtle, unquantifiable factors. Mostly, it has to do with what you can offer her (favours, money, special deals, etc.) and what she can offer you in return. That is what Chinese face is all about. Confucius describes this chain of social relationships in *The Analects*, wherein he explains that fealty to the Emperor supervenes upon familial fealty, which in turn supervenes upon social fealty. Face is the reason everything is negotiable in Chinese culture.

Think of *guan xi* as the nebulous foundation of give-and-take between you and others. A colleague might come to you and say “I need two weeks off to take care of some private business, but I need your help; I don’t have enough *guan xi* with the boss, so he won’t listen to me.” Your colleague hopes you’ll use your *guan xi* with the boss to get him off his time off. This will, of course, significantly alter your *guan xi* with your colleague—he’ll owe you big time.

Losing Face

Losing face—known in Mandarin as *diu lian* (pronounced *dyoh leeyen*)—is what happens when you do something to compromise your relationship with

another person. For example, if you spill wine on a Triad boss’ suit, you lose face with him. Lose face and you end up owing somebody for the embarrassment you’ve created. If you lose enough face with someone, that person cuts you off for good, socially speaking. (In the case of gangsters, maybe other kinds of cutting go on, too.) Moreover, that person’s face network also cuts you off. piss off the wrong person in Hong Kong and you’ll find nobody gives you the time of day. If you do something embarrassing among friends, though, it’s okay to comment “*hao diu lian ah!*” (“I/you really lost face!”)

Saving Face

When you prevent yourself (or someone else) from losing face, you’re “saving face.” This is the easiest, most sure-fire way of putting a stranger in your social debt. Losing face is a big deal in Chinese culture, so there are many ways for a person to recoup social standing (even if marginally), thanks, in part, to the malleable nature of social relationships in China. Groveling is probably the most direct method. The word for it, *kou tou* (pronounced “koh toh”), comes from the type of bow you’re expected to perform when greeting someone of incredibly high rank, such as a regional magistrate or the Emperor. (It’s the origin of the word *kowtow* in English.)

Kowtowing in public does two things: it strips you of any face you had and it resets your “face-o-meter” in the eyes of all witnesses because of your symbolic sacrifice, as it were. A politician who has committed egregious mistakes kowtows on television—his career might be in ruin, but he can effectively start over again. In places like Taiwan, politicians go to prison for the most shameful behavior but, after a healthy round of public groveling, get re-elected as soon as they’re released. (This doesn’t happen too often in modern China, though, due to anti-corruption laws and liberal use of the death penalty.)

FACE IN THE GAME

If all you want is an easy way to quantify face in game terms, do this: Every time you screw up in the eyes of others—say, by angering, embarrassing, or inconveniencing someone of a higher social status, by getting yourself demoted, or by costing someone else money—make a black mark on the back of your character sheet. Every time you do benefit somebody else—say, by granting favors to people lower on the social ladder, by making generous loans, performing charitable acts, saving face or money for someone else, or by protecting someone else from embarrassment—make a red mark on the back of your character sheet. If you have more red marks than black, your *guan xi* is good. The greater the disparity, the better your *guan xi* is with the world at large and, ultimately, the more favors you can expect from others. If you have more black marks, then your *guan xi* sucks; people think of you as a doofus, a deadbeat, and an unreliable friend.

For a little more granularity, you can use our patented* Face-O-Meter, at right. The principle is the same as above, but you'll know where your face is going and where it's coming from. You can use this list without game mechanics, just to keep track of favors owed and people unimpressed, if you want. This is especially good if your *Feng Shui* series is focused on a single, recurring location (like Hong Kong), and these characters are likely to come up again.

When you gain or lose face, make a mark in the next available box up or down from the center and write down one key NPC who saw it, who you helped out/embarrassed, or who owes you (or vice versa)—this is contact information you'll use later. Write down the skill that character's most likely to use to make contacts checks, too. (For example: "Sgt. Walter Yau (Police)") It's perfectly fine to have someone written down more than once—you've just got a lot of face with such people. When you call in that favor or make ammends, erase that person from your list. It might take multiple, small gestures to gain or lose face with someone, if the GM says so.

The higher your "face gained," the better your general reputation; the lower your "face lost," the worse your rep. Everyone might not know it, but folks who share contacts with those on your list sure will. Make an ass out of yourself in front a homicide detective, and all the other detectives (and anyone else with Police-based contacts) has a chance to know about it later (with a successful contacts check).

Optionally, you can use this information to make contacts checks, if the GM allows it. Even if you don't have any skill bonuses in a particular skill, you can make a contacts check using that skill if someone on your "face gained" list has it as her listed skill. Each positive reference you have with that same skill grants a cumulative +1 bonus to your contacts check. Each negative reference with the same contact skill imposes a cumulative -1 penalty on contacts checks. The GM sets the Difficulty for these checks as usual.

Whenever your name would be written down on someone else's face-o-meter under "Face Lost," you have the option of waving it off. When you gain face, you have the option of not marking it down, and sparing the other guy the favor later on. Say "*mei guan xi.*"

FACE GAINED

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

FACE-O-METER

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

FACE LOST

GETTING AROUND

Before you can have some place to go, you've got to know how to get there. Hong Kong's a city on the move, so you've got lots of options, including public and private planes, cars, trains, and boats. That means you've got endless options for chases, stunts, escapes, pursuits, crashes, and explosions. Let's get on with it.

Chep Lap Kok Airport

LAUNTAU ISLAND—Chep Lap Kok, known officially as the Hong Kong International Airport, is one of the most expensive airports in the world. In fact, it was a crucial element in Britain's handover negotiations with China; it sweetened the deal. Standing on a 1200-hectare piece of land built up over a period of six years from the seabed beside Lantau Island, the airport sees 50 take-offs and landings every hour and operates 24 hours a day.

More than 45 million people move through the airport's sprawling passenger terminal each year. The check-in hall is gargantuan in its breadth and height. As you step into the building from the curb, you'll notice broad gangways sloping down toward the hall and 288 airline counters. There are other floors stacked below the gangways and check-in hall where you'll see passengers scurrying to their gates and between the various restaurants and convenience stores.

Wide-open spaces, high ceilings, white washed walls and bright lights give the departures terminal a distinctly roomy ambiance even in the midst of the peak travel time. People-movers run the length of most corridors, carrying weary travelers past duty-free shops, coffee bars, snack shops, book vendors, restaurants, VIP lounges, boarding gates and waiting areas, internet access points, sleeping cubicles, showers, and other ordinary airport installations.

In addition to the airport's regular passenger traffic, it functions as a major cargo hub for Southeast Asia. The airport has a complete maintenance facility—it's one of few in the region that can fully convert a Boeing 747 passenger plane into a cargo freighter and back again. The terminal handles between 3 and 9 million tons of cargo each year.

Arriving in Hong Kong

Planes land on one of two runways bordered on their eastern side by the ocean. Although not nearly as precarious as landing at the old Kai Tak Airport, if you happen to be sitting on the right hand side of the plane and look out during landing, all you'll see is water; this can be unsettling, but is great for a sequence with jet-skis and passenger jets. The arrivals terminal is a separate structure from the departures terminal, so you've got to take an inter-terminal subway train to get to the main airport terminal. There you can move through passport control (a hall as big as the lobby of Grand Central Station), pick up your luggage from the carousels, and hire transportation to the city.

Government-sponsored "A-line" buses will take you to downtown Hong Kong for a nominal fee. The route is scenic, heading first down the Lantau coast past cargo ship terminals and warehouses, across the impressively long bridge to Kowloon, and ending up in Tsim Sha Tsui. If you can afford the steep fare, you can also take one of HK's red taxis into the city (they'll charge you for gas back to the airport and for the bridge toll), or a private limousine. Hotel buses leave every 15 minutes.

Kai Tak Airport

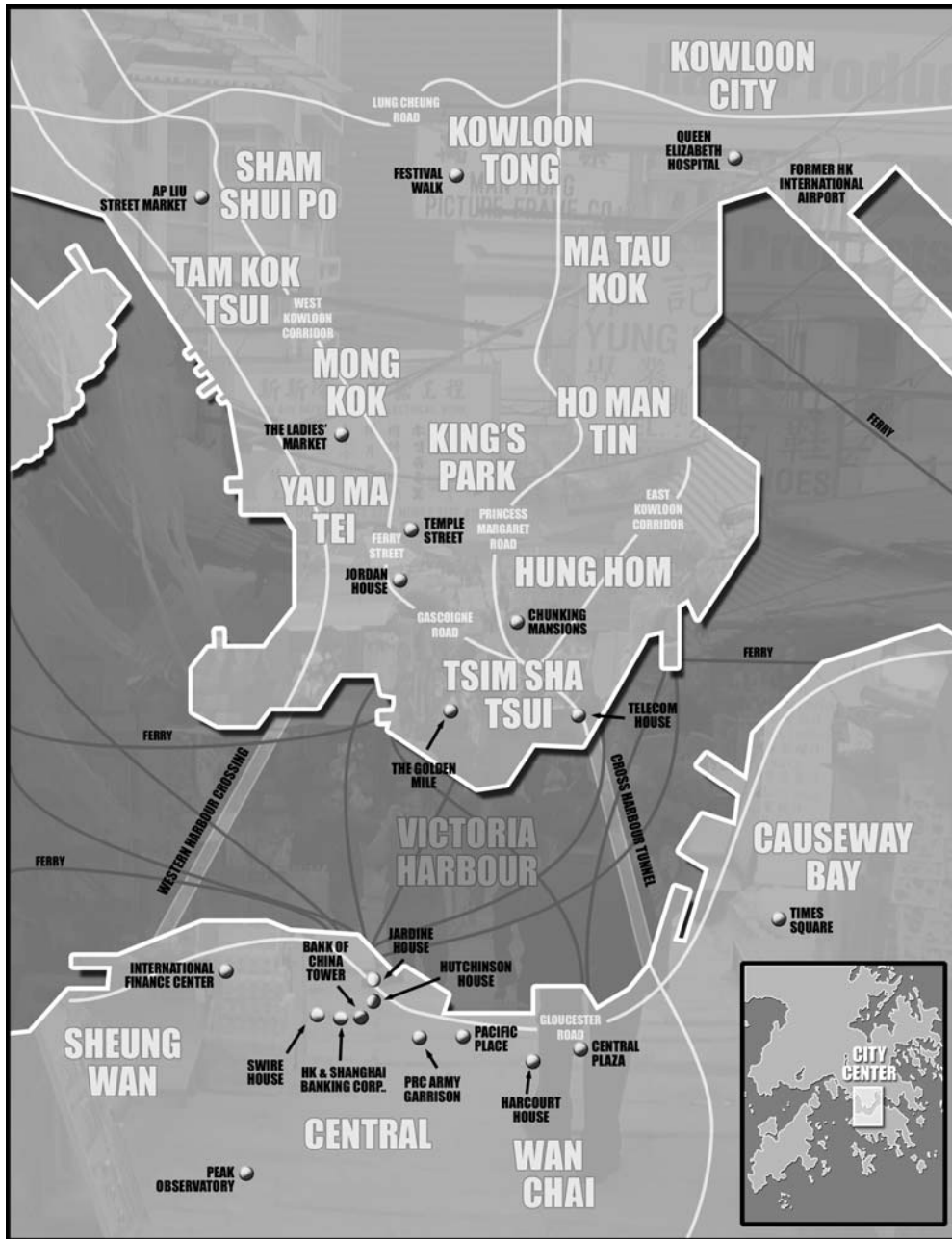
HUNG HOM—The Japanese built this, Hong Kong's original international airport, in Kowloon during World War II. Before Kai Tak, the land was used by the British RAF, private flying clubs, and pilot training schools. The name for the airport came from Hoi Kai and Au Tak, a pair of eccentric billionaire best friends who had originally intended to build a massive walled estate on the land. When their geomancers discovered something bad below the ground, the two withdrew from the project and gifted the land to the British government. At the time, they hoped the Brits would suffer the bad luck festering beneath the landscape, but it turns out the feng shui "experts" were skilled con men. They came out ahead when the British suddenly acquired this piece of prime real estate.

The airport's twin runways extended out over the waters of Victoria Harbor, making each hour's 31 take-offs and landings a harrowing experience for pilots and passengers alike. Pilots used a checkerboard pattern on a hill next door as a rough altimeter when making the final descent, and travelers arriving at Kai Tak came in so close to the surrounding skyscrapers they could see in through apartment windows. Because Kai Tak was built in the heart of a residential neighborhood, the government restricted airplane traffic to the hours from 6 AM to 12 AM.

Kai Tak was critical to Hong Kong's economy, and therefore received continual maintenance and upgrades in the decades after it was built. Nevertheless, time caught up with it. Hong Kong needed a bigger airport, and Kai Tak had no room to grow. Enter, Chep Lap Kok airport.

Kai Tak shut down in 1998.

The land formerly occupied by Kai Tak is now a barren wasteland. The government hopes some enterprising company (or companies) will develop the land and revitalize the neighborhood, but various political and economic obstacles



one in Tsim Sha Tsui sees more traffic than the others simply because it's the main access point for new arrivals to the city, tourists, and the city's ubiquitous backpackers. Boats depart from TST and Hung Hom bound for terminals in Central and Wan Chai. Boats leaving Central and Wan Chai either return to TST or head for nearby Hung Hom. Special ferries leaving from alternate docks in any of the terminals may take passengers on water tours, or serve as water taxis for the outlying islands. None of the ferries service Macau. (For that you need to head to the jet foil pier over in Sheung Wan.)

It takes about 10 minutes to get across the Harbor, depending on the weather, the waves, and how much boat traffic is plowing through it. Barges frequently cut across the ferries' paths. At least once a day a towering cruise ship passes through on its way east. A ferry has two decks, upper and lower. Upper deck fare is slightly more expensive and affords a better view of the approaching coast. Most businesspeople and commuters end up on the lower deck, because it's mercifully free of gawking, picture-taking tourists. Seat backs on the ferries are reversible, because the teardrop-shaped boats don't turn around after

keep stonewalling the process. The Ascended have considered turning the area into a new nest of corporate arcologies, but the place really does have awful feng shui these days—any attempt to repair it would cost millions and attract the attention of every Secret Warrior in Hong Kong.

Star Ferry Terminal

TST, CENTRAL, WAN CHAI, HUNG HOM—The green-and-white Star Ferry boats cross Victoria Harbor at 10-minute intervals. They've been doing so since the late 1880s, when they primarily carried coal to the residents of Hong Kong Island. There are four commuter terminals, two on the peninsula and two on the island. The

docking; they just reverse engines and go the other way. Each boat has a crew of six: two pilots and four deckhands to handle ropes and gangways, all dressed in faux-naval, navy-blue uniforms.

Ferry terminals have bus stops outside with waiting double-deckers for tourists. City buses arrive every ten minutes to pick up commuters and transfers. Underneath the bus port awnings are magazine and newspaper vendors. Stores are also built into the terminals, lining the bus port and the corridors leading to each of the docks. They sell clothes and souvenirs for tourists, snack food, fast food, drinks, and other miscellaneous bric-a-brac. Maxim's, a popular fast food chain in Hong Kong, often has a presence in the terminals.

The docks are long finger-like extensions of the buildings, roofed over and pierced by numerous narrow windows like medieval arrow-slits—good for cover even today. Gates leading down to the gangway from the waiting area open as soon as the boats have docked and released their passengers; a sailor runs up to open it, and everyone descends to cross the bobbing gangway. Each dock has room for two, one on each side, though only one is in use at a time (unless you're perfectly timing a daring escape by dashing from an arriving ferry onto a departing ferry).



Despite pollution controls, the boats constantly belch out foul clouds of diesel smoke. Sitting on the decks, which are open to the air, the most dominant scents are smoke and seawater. At one time, Victoria Harbor was filled with tremendous amounts of raw sewage and garbage, which lent it a truly disgusting air. Thankfully, it is no longer quite that “fragrant.”

When it rains, or the waves are high, the ferry crews roll canvas coverings down over the open sides to keep the people inside dry.

The Kowloon-Canton Railway

Built in 1910, the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) was the original steam locomotive line connecting Mainland China with Hong Kong. In modern Hong Kong it's become, with the addition of extensive light rail expansion lines, a vital conduit for commuters from the New Territories to get into Kowloon and Hong Kong for school or work. While the southernmost terminal is in the Hung Hom neighborhood of Kowloon, the main access point for the line is in Kowloon Tong further to the north. Both terminals move approximately 800,000 passengers on 42 trains each workday. The original Kowloon terminus was located in the southern point of Tsim Sha Tsui. Its only remnant is the Clock Tower, which overlooks Victoria Harbor and faces Central on the island. The Hong Kong Cultural Center and Space Museum occupies the station's land today.

For the most part, KCR stations in Kowloon and the New Territories are similar to MTR stations, except above ground. Once you get into China proper, they resemble traditional railroad stations. There are three lines into

Unnamed KCR Security Guard

Sample Dialogue: “No chewing gum or beetle nut on the trains, pal.”

Attributes: Bod 6, Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 5

Skills: Drive 7, Martial Arts 8

Weapons: Telescoping aluminum club (8)

Unnamed KCR Train Conductor

Sample Dialogue: “Please keep your body parts inside the train at all times.”

Attributes: Bod 4, Chi 0, Mnd 6, Ref 5

Skills: Drive 9, Info: Hong Kong 10

Weapons: Punch (5)

China: the Beijing Line, the Shanghai Line, and the Guangdong Line. The Beijing and Shanghai lines operate on alternate days, so you'll need 26 hours on average to reach either city.

The KCR's electric cars are modern and comfortable. Each can carry up to 330 passengers. Individual cars are designed to minimize extraneous external noise and movement. Bench-like seats face inward. Steel runner bars along the ceiling support plenty of straphangers, and vertical grab-poles are placed in the center of the train car aisles in 15-foot intervals. Every car is outfitted with closed-circuit television cameras for monitoring passenger safety (and, in 2056, consumer behavior). LCD screens hanging from train car ceilings in high-impact plastic mounts provide route information to passengers.

A few years ago, the Hong Kong government decided to expand the Hung Hom terminus. Now it's temporarily out of service while an army of construction workers, cranes, and backhoes reconfigures the property. At the moment, it looks like a bombed-out crater full of concrete and rebar boulders, muddy pits, and towering construction equipment imported from Japan and Korea.

Members of the Red Scorpion Triad use KCR cars to smuggle drugs between Hong Kong and the Mainland. They seal their shipments in scent-proof black plastic envelopes the size of briefcases, then stuff them under the cars, above the axels. Dogs can't detect them, and the border police never notice the bags with their mirrors (or they're paid not to notice them). Occasionally the gang smuggles weapons this way. In 2003, they smuggled out the dismembered bodies of a Bamboo Union hit team that tried to assassinate the Red Scorpion leader. The body parts were subsequently delivered *en masse* to the Guangdong chief of police, who is also a cell leader for the Bamboo Union.

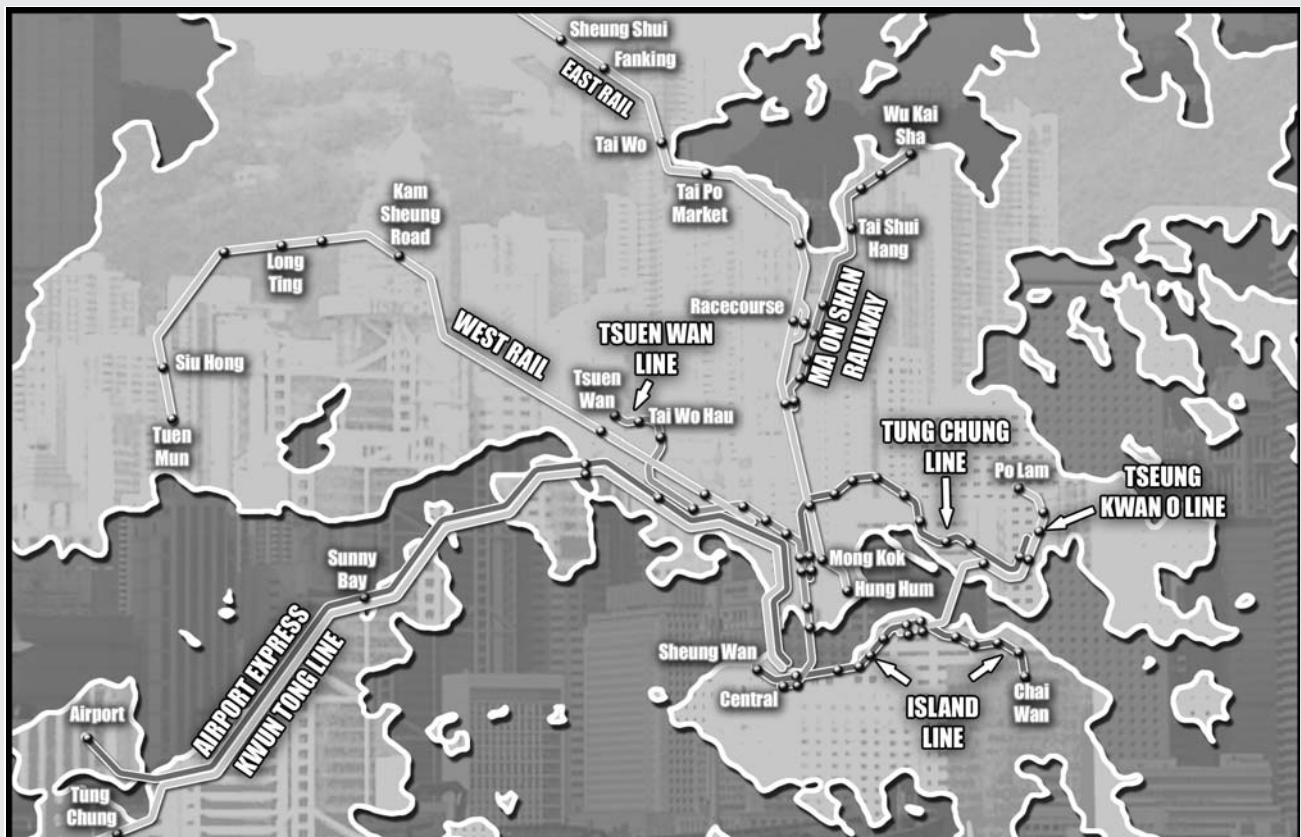
THE MTR

The metro—Hong Kong’s mass-transit rail, or “MTR”—was decades in the making and cost tens of millions of dollars, but has proven to be a bargain. It runs from the edge of the New Territories all the way down to and around Hong Kong Island’s north coast. MTR entrances are convenient, numerous, and easily accessible. The stations themselves are huge underground spaces—often multi-storied, if they handle more than one line or an important junction. They are rife with escalators, elevators, and stairs. In some parts of the city you have to navigate through long, brightly illuminated subterranean tunnels for five or ten minutes before you even get to the station (such as at Causeway Bay on the main island or Kowloon Tong on the peninsula). You can purchase tickets from (or take cover behind) touch-screen kiosks equipped with convenient digitized maps in English and Chinese, or service booths staffed by railway officials. There is an electronic fare card available—magnificently called the Octopus Card—which you can use on city buses and ferries, too.

Metro cars are spacious and wide, with benches running parallel along the walls. Digital advertising boards are mounted over the benches, while digital station and route maps are mounted over each car’s sliding doors. During rush hour, many lines become absolutely packed with people. Metro security guards and police officers perform regular patrols of the cars and platform areas. Every station platform has a bulletproof glass-enclosed security booth housing a guard monitoring the level’s security cameras. Additional security is provided in the form of glass walls and doors mounted on platform edges to prevent accidental falls onto the tracks. However, the walls stop just before the platforms do; the remainder of the platform opens directly on the track tunnel.

The metro trains use two underwater tunnels to cross Victoria Harbor. The main tunnel runs straight across the center of the Harbor from TST to Central and between two submerged automobile tunnels. The other metro tunnel runs between Shau Kei Wan on the island and Lam Tin on the peninsula. Access doors in the TST-to-Central tunnel open on maintenance corridors. Every 15th door connects, via a short concrete passageway, to the traffic tunnels on the eastern side of the metro tunnel.

Finally, the subway connects at various stations to the Kowloon-Canton Railway, giving the city’s residents easy access to the New Territories. The most important of these junctions on the line is the Kowloon-Tong station. Millions of commuters ride the train in and out of the city every day. Without this KCR/MTR connection, the city’s economy would collapse.



The Sixth Tunnel

One of the most popular urban legends in Hong Kong is the one about the “missing tunnel.” As everyone knows, three subterranean automobile tunnels and two metro tunnels allow for traffic between the Kowloon peninsula and Hong Kong Island. They were built in the 1960s and ’70s. The idea that a sixth, secret tunnel was built became popular in the ’70s right before Mao’s death, amid irrational fears that his insane protégé, Deng Xiao-Ping, would invade the British colony despite the standing treaty between the two nations. Conspiracy theorists thought the alleged sixth tunnel was used as a secure storage depot for weapons, armor, and munitions and a central command post for the British. Others believed Mainland Chinese covertly built the tunnel on Deng’s orders, to give their troops and tanks invisible access to the island. It would have been fairly easy to hide a large-scale construction project at the time, given Victoria Harbor was choked with floating construction platforms and barges. All the Chinese troops would have needed to do is divert construction workers (most of whom were Vietnamese refugees) and sneak in their own equipment on disguised barges and junks.

That’s all hokum. The so-called “sixth tunnel” was actually the first one built—in 1853.

A group calling itself the “Archdiocese of the Amethyst Pimate” (sic) began tunneling to Hong Kong Island in the early 1840s using experimental machinery imported from an American company called “Bonengel’s Modern Arms & Inventions.” The British wouldn’t take possession of the island until the following decade. Before that, the island served as a safe haven for ships during typhoon season and, more often than not, a base of operations for pirates. Quite surprisingly, the Archdiocese finished the tunnel in what can only be considered record time for that day and age. When the British took over, they remained unaware of it, stretching beneath their new real estate from Hung Hom to Admiralty, for nearly 50 years.

Then in 1902 a Rhodesian explorer named Wallis Gramercy stumbled across it and the nefarious activities of the Archdiocese, which had been using the tunnel as a munitions depot for decades. Over 50,000 tons of black powder was found stored in wooden crates and barrels down there. The British army sealed the tunnel, the members of the Archdiocese were arrested, and the tunnel soon became the stuff of legend. When the British government decided to build the three transit tunnels, they secretly reopened “the Amethyst Tunnel” and built the cross-harbor tunnel along side it. Government records—which are, by the by, exceptionally hard to get your hands on—show the sixth tunnel was sealed again at the end of the construction project. Presumably government workers used it to ferry equipment back and forth across the Harbor.

Today, the tunnel is still very much in use, even though the Chinese government remains unaware of its existence. If they did know about it, they’d probably start World War III. British and American intelligence agencies have been using the tunnel for the last 25 years as a base of operations in Asia. The tunnel contains military equipment sufficient to wage guerilla warfare all over Southeast Asia. The American Corps of Engineers sealed the tunnel’s two termini fifteen years ago, blocking them with concrete and steel out to a distance of 100 meters into the Harbor. There are only three ways to enter the sixth tun-

nel, now: through narrow passages connected to the MTR tunnel running along the east of it; through select “emergency” exits opening into the four-lane highway running to the west of it; or through a pair of large metallic sockets embedded in the Harbor silt (each one large enough to accommodate two eighteen-wheelers or a medium-sized submersible). During the last five years, Hong Kong police divers have twice discovered the sockets and assumed them to be plates left over from the construction of the other tunnels. Still, the Chief Executive of the SAR doesn’t like the idea that determined SCUBA-diving terrorists could pry the sockets open and somehow flood or damage the Cross Harbor tunnel, to which he assumes they connect. Further municipal investigations are inevitable. That’s why the CIA is ready to eliminate the original police divers who discovered the hatches, if the need arises.

Inside the Tunnel

The tunnel complex consists of the following: Central Command, a long room filled with equipment and officers; the Mess; the Officers’ Quarters; the Barracks, which house three Delta teams, three SAS teams, a miscellaneous number of CIA and MI6 spies, Elite Taiwanese Frogmen, and Japanese KaijuBot technicians; the Armory, where personnel weapons and armor are stored; the Motor Pool, where heavy vehicles such as tanks, APCs, and the like are maintained; the Marina, for mini-submersibles and amphibious hovercraft (below the first socket); and the Airlock, used for the comings and goings of the various divers (below the second socket).

Two men jointly preside over base activities: Major Jack Stryker of the US Marines and Lt. Commander Gary Saunders of the British Royal Navy.

Stryker is a charismatic, no-nonsense combat veteran known for disobeying orders; he’s been busted more times than anyone else in military history. Exasperated, his commanding officers were faced with a hard decision: discharge him, lock him up in Leavenworth, or ship him off to a place where his roguish demeanor could inflict the least damage on their own careers and the most damage on their enemies. His mission orders are stamped “UNODIR” (military jargon for “unless otherwise directed”). That means he pretty much does what he wants as long it fulfills his mission objectives.

His British counterpart, Lt. Commander Gary Saunders, is the exact opposite. Where Stryker is a loud, larger-than-life caricature of soldiery, Saunders is a proper English gentleman from a long and distinguished line of military heroes. He was once on the fast track toward an impressive posting under the Prince of Wales’ command, until some Idiot in Charge paired him with Stryker on a joint US/British mission in the Middle East. Yes, sir, they succeeded, sir, beyond everyone’s wildest dreams, sir. Sure was a shame, though, about the Patriot missile warhead that went off beneath that Saudi prince’s palace. It wasn’t Saunders’ fault, though; the Yank disobeyed a direct order when he set it off. Still, if it hadn’t been for Stryker’s decisive thinking they wouldn’t have been able to contain the hyper-accelerated oblongata virus. Unfortunately, the Idiots in Charge busted him permanently to Lt. Commander because of the mess the two of them made. Adding insult to injury, they shipped him out here to the “jewel of Asia,” where nothing interesting ever happens—at least not in a secret-on-condition-of-death, sealed, underground hole. He would have already buggered off and retired to a cotton plantation in Indonesia if doing so wouldn’t further besmirch his family’s good name.

Major Jack Stryker

Sample Dialogue: "Cover me while I storm the building."

Attributes: Bod 8 (Tgh 9), Chi 0 (For 3), Mnd 4 (Wil 8), Ref 6 (Dex 8)

Skills: Drive 15, Guns 17, Info: Anti-Terrorism 10, Martial Arts 15, Sabotage 12

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing (x3), Carnival of Carnage, Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs, Lightning Reload (x2)

Weapons: M16 (13*/5/30), Desert Eagle .50 Magnum (12/3/9+1), punch (9), kick (10)

Lt. Commander Gary Saunders

Sample Dialogue: "Ah, here comes the tea. Would you care for a mango biscuit, Corporal? Bloody good stuff. Australian, you know."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Tgh 7), Chi 0, Mnd 8 (Cha 10, Wil 9), Ref 7 (Dex 8)

Skills: Drive 17, Fix-It 15, Guns 14, Info: Global Politics 13, Martial Arts 13, Sabotage 14

Schticks: Eagle Eye (x2), Fast Draw (x2), Lightning Reload, Signature Weapon (Father's Colt 1911A)

Weapons: Father's Colt 1911A (13/2/7+1), grenade (20), punch (6), kick (7)

Delta/SAS Soldier

Sample Dialogue: "Mama Cass and Baby Bear have punted! We got a hot ham and cheese sandwich, people! Go! Go! Go!"

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Per 8, Wil 8), Ref 7 (Dex 8)

Skills: Driving 12, Guns 13, Intrusion 12, Martial Arts 12, Sabotage 13

Schticks: Eagle Eye (x2), Lightning Reload (x2)

Weapons: H&K MP5 (10/5/30), punch (8), kick (9)

Elite Taiwanese Frogman

Sample Dialogue: "SAAAAA!" ("DIEEEEE!")

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Per 8, Wil 7), Ref 8 (Agi 9)

Skills: Driving 10, Guns 13, Martial Arts 11, Sabotage 15

Unique Schtick: Frogmen are unhindered by water, and move at one and a half times their Speed when submerged. They gain a constant +1 bonus to dodge AVs when in the water.

Weapons: Speargun (12/5/3+1), knife (10), punch (8), C4 (30)

KaijuBot Technician

Sample Dialogue: "Kare no namae wa Gajira desu. Honto da yo!"

Attributes: Bod 4, Chi 0, Mnd 8 (Int 10), Ref 7

Skills: Driving 13, Fix-It 16, Guns 8, Intrusion 13, Martial Arts 7, Sabotage 15

Weapons: H&K MP5K (10/3/30), punch (5)

Cars & Motorcycles

In the wealthy city of Hong Kong, the car is the most visible hallmark of an individual's status and wealth. The territory fairly teems with expensive limousines, fancy sedans, suped-up sports cars, and Japanese crotch-rockets. Here's a telling fact for you: Hong Kongers purchase more Rolls Royce automobiles *per capita* than any other country in the world. Jaguars, Lexuses, and Mercedes-Benzes are also very popular amongst those who can afford them, while any mid-range cars that can be custom fitted with mag-wheels, neon hubcaps, strobing license plates, and glass-pack mufflers are the staple vehicles of young urban rebels. (By 2056, these "neon racers" become full-fledged revolutionaries.)

On the other hand, sports cars are so common amongst car enthusiasts that few car clubs admit owners with Porsches, Ferraris, and Lamborghinis anymore. Street racing, one of the most fiercely opposed illegal pastimes in the territories, goes on throughout Hong Kong when the nighttime streets are deserted.

Car dealerships can be found in any area outside of downtown. Most are located near highways in less crowded but still moderately affluent neighborhoods, or in the New Territories where large comfortable showrooms are the norm. The best of the few exceptions to this norm is the lone Rolls-Royce dealership in the heart of the Central financial district—its showroom contains a single display vehicle squeezed into a storefront window just large enough to display it. The latest, most expensive model is always the showpiece of choice. (As of this writing, that is a platinum-colored Phantom.)

Generally speaking, cars cost two to three times as much as they do in countries like the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany; the government imposes shockingly steep taxes on cars in an effort to limit their proliferation. Parking is a huge problem in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island. It costs an arm and leg just to get your name on the waiting list for a residential or long-term parking space. When a space finally does become available, it costs you another arm and the other leg to pay the monthly rent on it.

If you're thinking of attuning to a feng shui site, make sure you can afford to freaking park there.

The Silver Lining

DIAMOND HILL—Just down the street from the Chi Lin nunnery in Diamond Hill is an elegant two-story Jaguar and Rolls Royce dealership. Proprietor Arthur C. K. Moore is an infectiously jovial Chinese man whose assumed British surname comes from his school years in England, as does his borderline-raunchy south-of-the-Thames English accent. He is, rather paradoxically, the epitome of class and gentility, conducting business affairs with an aristocratic and lordly demeanor. Although the dealership's prices are higher than anyone else's in Hong Kong for the models sold there, it is one of the few respectable places specializing in heavily armored vehicles. Every car rolled out of Moore's showroom comes with hardened electronics,



Arthur C.K. Moore

Sample Dialogue: "At that price I'll be cutting me own throat! But I like you, mate. I do. Consider it a done deal."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Cha 9), Ref 8 (Dex 9)

Skills: Deceit 16, Driving 18, Fix-It 14, Guns 10, Martial Arts 10, Seduction 16

Unique Schtick: *Cut Me Own Throat:* Moore uses his Seduction skill to manipulate others into feeling a powerful attraction for an object Moore specifies. Those seduced by Moore buy things they cannot afford, and end up owing him. His Seduction contacts are salespeople, mechanics, and fixers of all sorts.

Weapons: Glock 18 (10/1/17+1)

In addition to selling all manner of vehicle armor and modifications, cars from the Silver Lining are equipped with performance-enhancing stabilizers and top-grade parts, which grant a +1 bonus to your Driving AV for every 6 skill bonuses you have in Driving. (If you're using the automobile rules from *Golden Comeback*, every car out of the Silver Lining comes with +2 Wreck and +1 Pep, too; Moore's cars are immune to blowback damage from ramming.)



GPS satellite hook-ups, global wireless communications, bulletproof windows, armor plating, steel-tread tires resistant to caltrops and spike strips, and embedded re-circulating blow-off valves to keep the engine cool during high-speed car chases. If you've got the proper licenses, he'll further outfit your car with defensive



weaponry and anti-personnel measures for navigating through crowds and riots. The mechanics he employs have exclusive contracts with him. They are so good at what they do that celebrities and politicians come from all over Asia—not just Hong Kong—to employ Moore's services.

Cost: Rich only.

Warehouse 31, Tong Lam Road

LAUNTAU ISLAND—This seemingly abandoned godown sits quietly amongst a long row of shipping warehouses on Tong Lam Road not far from the shipping yard's cargo loaders. Its windows are painted with light-absorbing black dye, and all of its doors are sealed with concrete and rebar. The only way inside is through an underground tunnel, the entrance to which is about a mile and a half away, masquerading as a private parking garage. The parking garage contains an elevator carousel, ostensibly for storing cars, which lowers vehicles into the tunnel 50 meters below. To access the carousel, you need a unique credit card with an embedded IC chip issued by the warehouse's owner, Tony Seung. His employees carry cards containing biometric information, which is checked every time they sign in. Temporary cards, issued to guests, are good for 6-24 hours, depending on how much business the guest intends to give Seung.

Placed in the parking garage's support structure at key points are huge bricks of Sementex. When blown, they collapse the garage into the tunnel below, sealing it and giving employees in the warehouse a chance to blow the sealed doors and escape.

The warehouse is an elaborate chop shop filled with 25 bays for working on cars, motorcycles, speedboats, and anything else with an engine. Wireless security cameras (broadcasting on an 802.11g WEP secured network) are hidden inside black plastic bubbles hidden on the ceiling. They give the security room upstairs a view of all areas of the shop.

The security room, Seung's offices, and an employee lounge/game room hang near the ceiling from a re-engineered cargo loader. To get up there you must use the hoist: a narrow cage barely spacious enough for five people. Pneumatic pulleys raise and lower it, controlled both by a hand box inside the cage and from the security room. The entire upstairs complex can be slid around the warehouse's headspace on reinforced tracks in the ceiling, giving Seung a commanding view of the shop floor. In case of trouble, Seung disconnects the pneumatic

Tony Seung

Sample Dialogue: "It's time to put him in his place. Bring his wife and children to me."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Tgh 7), Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Wil 9), Ref 6

Skills: Deceit 17, Fix-It 13, Gambling 15, Guns 17, Intimidation 18, Martial Arts 17

Shticks: Both Guns Blazing, Fast Draw (x3), Lightning Reload (x2), Signature Weapon (gold machete) [can use Fast Draw]

Weapons: Gold machete (14), twin Colt King Cobras (11/3/6), punch (6), kick (7)

hoist and escapes to his helicopter on the roof. The helicopter is hidden from air traffic beneath tarpaulins and air conditioning equipment.

So what does Seung do? He customizes vehicles for smugglers, giving them one hell of an edge over law enforcement. Seung's boats and cars, in particular, are the bane of customs officials' existence; few have ever been caught or successfully stopped. Those captured have self-destructed when boarded, killing both officers and smugglers alike. Not only does Seung's group do speed and body work, they also outfit relatively mundane-appearing vehicles with secret compartments, high-tech security systems, jamming devices, counter-surveillance equipment, and anything else he can get his hands on to thwart the law. Whereas the cars you might purchase from the Silver Lining are tanks in sheep's clothing, the cars rolling out of Seung's chop shop are ninja stealth vehicles.

Tony Seung is a smooth operator. Barely 30 years old, he spent most of his life in Australia as a member of a Triad car-theft ring. A few years ago, he and the gang's leader had a difference of opinion. Seung and a few friends hacked him to pieces. Since then, Seung's been running his operation out of Hong Kong, where he's rapidly become a multi-millionaire. Working with smugglers pays a hell of a lot more than stealing cars from yuppies.

Seung keeps his head shaved. He favors dark glasses and clothing, such as suit coats and pants with a tight black t-shirt underneath and thick jackboots on his feet. His favorite weapon is a gold-plated machete given to him by his old boss a few years back.

Yachts & Boats

With more than 200 islands in the Hong Kong territory, it's no wonder a significant portion of the population either lives aboard boats, or owns one or two for recreational purposes. Boats are a ubiquitous part of the HK scene. Fishermen clog the bays and ports with run-down fishing junks. Wealthy businessmen and politicians cruise the waterways on million-dollar yachts. Gorgeous bikini-clad sun worshippers lie atop parked speedboats, or lounge in the back as their rich boyfriends ferry them to the hottest beachside nightclubs. Water taxis, usually converted second-hand mini-yachts, ferry people around the islands,

The smuggling vehicles that come out of Tony Seung's shop have Deceit ratings of their own, which they use to outwit customs agents and coast guards. The average Deceit rating is 15. Seung's vehicles are also unusually fast, granting a +3 bonus to Driving checks (that's a +3 Pep, if you've got *Golden Comeback*) for all drivers. His vehicles aren't especially well armored, though (-2 Wreck, if you've got *Golden Comeback*, or are using the rules on page 33). Seung's built-in self-destruct mechanisms (which he secretly installs in all vehicles, whether they ask for it or not), deal 27 damage when they go off.

or back and forth between Hong Kong Island and the Mainland.

Buying a boat can be more affordable than buying a car in HK. Practically every noteworthy marina has a boat broker. But if you don't want to buy one, you can hire one, either through a professional charter outfit or from any schlub with an outboard motor and a price.

Sailboat races hosted by the local sailing clubs are a common sight in the spring and summer. Dragon boat races are held every June during the Dragon Boat Festival, drawing celebrants from the world over. In Aberdeen Harbor and Cheung Chau Island, you can hire a junk or sampan to tour the harbors, or to use in lieu of a hotel room. More-expensive sampans possess a bizarre hybrid of Old World quality and charm mixed with traditional Chinese boat life that is well worth the steep price.

Johnny Parrot's Big Boatyard

ABERDEEN—About ten years ago, American ATF officers ran Johnny Parrot out of the Caribbean after pegging him as a gunrunner. That, he'll tell anything with ears, was a dirty, filthy lie. Parrot came to Hong Kong while *en route* to Koh Samui in Thailand and was waylaid by the stunning beauty and sultry charm of local news-casting sensation Patricia Lim during an interview he did about the semi-annual Hong Kong-Manila yacht race. He forsook his U.S. citizenship, and they've been married and living in the territory ever since. While his wife earns millions of dollars each year working for Pearl TV, he maintains the largest boat brokerage on the island.

HONG KONG COASTAL DEFENSE

The Hong Kong police force keeps a very close eye on the comings and goings of boats in the SAR. Smuggling has always been a problem. Even before the British showed up, Chinese pirates used the islands in the territory as typhoon shelters, illicit ports, and impromptu repair yards. Don't be surprised if the police suddenly request permission to board your boat and check for illegal antiquities, drugs, or even slaves. This is the price of safety; few sailors face life-threatening trouble in Hong Kong's waters because the police are always there to lend assistance—especially during typhoon season.

Johnny Parrot

Sample Dialogue: "Drinks for everyone!"

Attributes: Bod 6 (Con 8), Chi 0 (Fu 3), Mnd 5 (Wil 4), Ref 7

Skills: Driving 16, Guns 10, Martial Arts 15, Seduction 11

Schticks: Drunken Stance, Drunken Fist

Weapons: Punch (7), kick (8)

Parrot's boats range from elite "escape dinghies" for corporate executives (and the occasional super spy) to cool *Miami Vice*-like speedboats to multi-million-dollar yachts the size of small cruise ships. The brokerage's marina not only has boats and yachts for sale but also has membership facilities, two restaurants, and a bar called the Parrot Cage. Every Thursday, Parrot takes the stage with his band, the Sand Pipers, to play an hour of rollicking Reggae and Carib-Rock. Though he's not at all good (he sucks, actually), customers tolerate his rock fantasies because it's his bar. Plus, the drinks are on the house when he's on stage.

Cost: Rich.

Ma Mui Nautical Discounts

CHEUNG CHAU—At the exact opposite end of the spectrum from Jimmy Parrot's dealership is Ma Mui Nautical Discounts. The proprietor, Shelley Wei, has been selling boats in some form or another for the last 60 years. The Tanka fisher folk come to her because they trust her implicitly; her prices are the fairest in the territory. She sells used and refurbished junks, sailboats, dinghies, and the occasional run-down yacht. Because she's an ethnic Hakka, it's unusual that Shelly has spent most of her life on the water; her kin live on traditional farms in the New Territories. She doesn't understand why she feels so at home on the sea.

If she knew more about the Secret War, she'd realize she's the product of lateral reincarnation. In the timeline ruled by the Four Monarchs, she was a tough and battle-scarred admiral serving under the Fire Pagoda banner. When the timeline shifted, she ended up here living a fairly uneventful life as a fisherwoman and boat dealer. Somewhere in her, the capacity for leadership exists. Some time after 2006, it will be stirred up in her again, and she'll begin inspiring her apprentices to organize the fisher folk of HK. By 2056, her apprentices will be the commanders of an anti-Buro revolutionary force in Taiwan.

She doesn't know it, but she's a minor sorcerer, too.

Shelley employs six talented apprentices. They, like her, share a deep abiding love for all things nautical. Their collective craftsmanship is some of the best in Southern China. Though their ships may not look like much, the quality of their work is high. Shelley's construction and repair techniques allow them to infuse a boat with potent threads of raw chi energy. This results in heightened performance and security in rough waters or storms, and practically guarantees excellent harvests every time the boats go to sea. Whenever ten or more boats from the Ma Mui yard come within 100 meters of one another, they form a spontaneous feng shui site to which their inhabitants are automatically and unconsciously attuned.

Shelley Wei

Sample Dialogue: "She might be an ugly duckling, but she'll outlast anything on the water."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Tgh 8, Con 9), Chi 0 (For 1, Mag 5), Mnd 5 (Wil 8), Ref 5 (Spd 6)

Skills: Driving 17, Info: Seamanship 20, Leadership 18, Martial Arts 13, Sorcery 13

Sorcery Schticks: Fertility, Influence

Weapons: Fishhook (8)

During the 19th and 20th centuries, mystically linked boats such as these formed floating villages, the largest and most famous of which was Gangpei. Floating off the coast of Formosa (now known as Taiwan), Gangpei's semi-permanent fleet was so large it was regarded as a floating city. While the sampans of Aberdeen Harbor are the last remnant of Gangpei, their chi has long been lost. Shelley Wei refuses to have anything to do with the Aberdeen ships or their masters. Her apprentices think this has something to do with her great-grandfather, who may have been betrayed by Gangpei's leaders.

Cost: Working Stiff.

SOME BOATS

Wooden Junk: This boat is everywhere in Hong Kong. Its squat, box-like shape is sturdy and reliable. The basic design hasn't changed for hundreds of years. It can weather mild typhoons well enough, but when it can't it's easy as pie to rebuild. A junk is spacious enough inside to be comfortable for a family of 4 to 7 people. Traditional junks have tall beautiful sails. Modern junks are motorized. (Poor and up.)

Prima Live-Aboard: This 55-foot boat with a deck and a half is fairly ubiquitous in the Hong Kong territory. It's moderately affordable, with businessmen and wealthy ex-patriots constituting its largest customer base. Its sleek lines give it more speed in the water than the average trawler live-aboard. The boat can accommodate 30 people comfortably, or it can house a family of 4 to 8 people indefinitely. (Rich)

Patrol Ship: Police gunships regularly patrol the waterways of Hong Kong. They're 45 feet long, gunmetal gray, bristling with radar and radio arrays, and crewed by 12 cops, 2 pilots, a navigator, and a radio operator. The engines are better than standard, for a tactical edge on perpetrators in speedboats. Each is armed with two 50-cal machine guns (Damage 15*), fore and aft, together servicing a full 360-degree firing arc. Heavy armor plating (APV X) allows it to resist small arms fire. (Rich)

Fireboat: These red and white boats have six water cannons mounted on swivel turrets. Machinery at the center of the boat draws water from the sea, pumping 15,000 liters per minute, while secondary tanks store chemical fire retardants and foam. A crane at the front, used to rescue people from high decks, has another water cannon mounted on it. A water cannon can push around most people (Difficulty 15 to oppose with Strength or Martial Arts), and even take out unnamed characters with a successful Guns attack with an Outcome of 4 or better. (Rich)

OPTIONAL RULES: VEHICLE MODS

You can have any of these HK mechanics make miscellaneous improvements on your favorite ride. Add a nuke-proof hardened electrical system or transform your car into a sporty submarine like the Lotus in *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Improvements and their associated benefits are listed below.

Mods require Fix-It checks and time. You're busy, though, which is why you hire others to do the work for you. A minor mod takes three days (Difficulty 8). A major mod takes a week (Difficulty 10). Serious

mods take two weeks (Difficulty 12). Every day you shave off the time adds 1 to the Difficulty.

To get serious mods done, you need to have Driving, Fix-It, or Info contacts (Difficulty 12) to do the work or get the parts for you.

A vehicle can have only so many mods.

- 3 minor mods OR
- 2 major mods OR
- 1 minor and 1 major mod OR
- 1 serious mod

MINOR MODS (WORKING STIFF)

Armor Plating I
Cover Plating
Crash Rig I
Nitrous Oxide I
Refined Handling
Re-Inflating Tires I

EFFECT

+1 Wreck/−1 Pep or +2 Wreck/−2 Pep.
Passengers have 90% cover (+6 Difficulty).
Passengers get +5 Toughness in a crash.
+2 Pep for 3 shots.
+1 Pep.
The first time tires are hit, ignore it.

MAJOR MODS (RICH)

Armor Plating II
Bombproof
Bulletproof
Crash Rig II
Fireproof
Hardened Electronics
Nitrous Oxide II
Re-Inflating Tires II

EFFECT

+3 Wreck/−3 Pep or +4 Wreck/−4 Pep.
Damage Immunity: Explosions.
Damage Immunity: Bullets.
Passengers get +8 Toughness in a crash.
Damage Immunity: Fire.
Damage Immunity: Electricity.
+4 Pep for 6 shots.
The first two times tires are hit, ignore it.

SERIOUS MODS (RICH + CONTACTS)

Airborne
Armor Plating III
Crash Rig III
Nitrus Oxide, Maximum
Reflective Paneling
Submersible

EFFECT

Flies with the speed and maneuverability of a helicopter.
+X Wreck/−.5X Pep (e.g. +2 Wreck/−1 Pep).
Passengers get +11 Toughness in a crash.
+5 Pep for one sequence.
Damage Immunity: Arcanowaves.
Becomes an airtight submarine for water travel.

So, what's this Wreck and Pep stuff? If you don't have *Golden Comeback*, you're missing out on the vehicle rules. Here's the gist of them, so you can use the mods above in your game: **PEP** modifies all the Driving checks you make in a vehicle. Some vehicles have positive values, others have negative values. The GM decides whether a vehicle has good Pep (up to +3 Pep) or bad (as low as −3 Pep). **WRECK** measures a vehicle's durability. The simple version: Every 10 points of damage done to a vehicle reduces its Wreck rating by one, instead of hurting the passengers (who have 75% cover inside). When the Wreck's gone, the vehicle's done. An ordinary car has about Wreck 7, while a garbage truck has Wreck 15. For more vehicles, get *Golden Comeback*.

NATURE, PARKS, & ANIMALS

Hong Kong is not exactly known for its teeming vistas of flora and fauna, yet it has, despite its size and population, one of the most stable and beautiful biospheres in Southeast Asia. The waters around the former colony's hundreds of islands are rich with sea life, the most famous of which is probably the Chinese white dolphin. The region's tall hills and (if you will) mountains have clearly delineated biospheres; the higher you climb, the more distinctive the flora and fauna you find. The tropical environment fosters tremendous diversity among the various insect and plant species—there are more than a hundred species of dragonfly and more than a thousand species of butterfly in the territory.

Environmental conservation has not always been on the government agenda. However, things began changing for the better in the early-to-mid 80s when the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Agency was instituted. Its top priority is to protect the fertile waters around Hong Kong's islands from over-fishing and pollution. The city has always taken pride in its free market economy and small number of public regulations, so it continues to perform a delicate balancing act that keeps fisher folk satisfied and the environment clean and stable. On land, the region maintains an impressive amount of viable farmland despite the bright city lights, the non-stop market-driven culture, and excessive pollution. The New Territories is a prime example of this: though they're only about 8% arable land, the area's rice paddies, dairy farms, and vegetable farms are responsible for over 20% of the entire Hong Kong territory's food intake.

Almost 30% of the SAR is reserved as parkland, either in use currently or reserved for future use. There are approximately 20 scenic parks featuring sign-posted jogging trails, barbeque and picnic sites, shaded pavilions, walking paths, and educational nature trails. The EPA's efforts reach the city's densest parts, from Central on Hong Kong Island to Tsim Sha Tsui in Kowloon. Even within wall-to-wall pedestrian crowds, flowing rivers of vehicular traffic, and unending clouds of pollution from belching cargo barges and tugs, you can find isolated patches of vibrant wilderness. Chater Park, Kowloon Park, and Victoria Peak are a few examples of places to visit for fresher air and greenery.

Up the coast, past the cargo terminals and the rice fields, you'll find the Mai Po Marshes, an impressive (if mosquito-plagued) nature reserve dedicated to preserving Hong Kong's natural wetlands. The more than 350 species of bird living in the Marshes (out of a total 500 species in the SAR) are an attraction for the city's itinerant birdwatchers, including geomancers and minor sorcerers. The Marshes are also home to 24 traditional *gei-wei* ponds, dug slightly inland along the coast and used for feeding and breeding local sea shrimp populations.

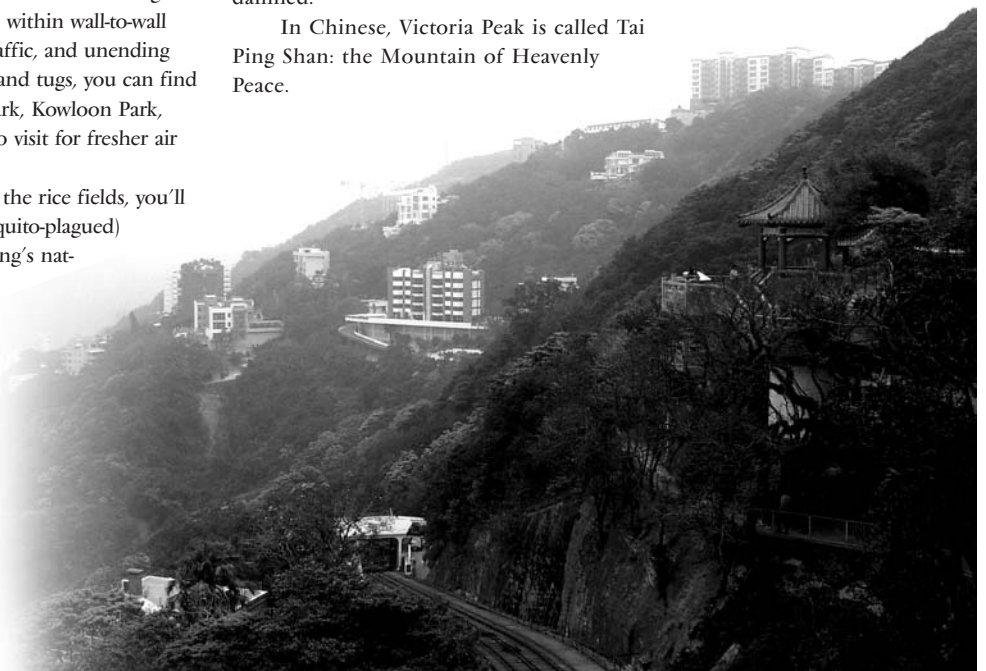
Victoria Peak

CENTRAL—What can one say about Victoria Peak that hasn't already been written a thousand times? Like the Eiffel Tower is the pre-eminent Parisian landmark and the Statue of Liberty the *de facto* symbol of New York, this small mountain rising out the South China Sea stands for everything that is Hong Kong. It's 1,800 feet above sea level at its highest point and covered by a thick coat of plants, trees, and, of course, buildings. The slope is steep; in recent years, the government has gone to a lot of trouble to protect it from overdevelopment and erosion. Heavy, positioned boulders jut from the earth in strategic locations, like so many stone teeth, while concrete shields cover the ground around trees and shrubbery.

The British quickly learned the Peak was the best place to escape malaria-carrying mosquitoes and the oppressive humidity of the lowlands. The first governor made it a crime for unauthorized non-British residents to live (or even travel!) on the mountain. The government later rescinded the law, but by then it didn't matter: so-called undesirables couldn't afford to live on the Peak and no sensible rickshawer wanted to pull gawkers up its winding roads. Hong Kong's rich and famous have lived on the Peak ever since in mansions of awesome opulence.

The sight from the top of the peak, most notably the Peak Observatory, is not to be missed. The city drapes around Victoria Peak like a flashy Christmas tree skirt. Whoever it was that wrote "Hong Kong is the glittering jewel of China" had to have been leaning over the edge of the Observatory's viewing deck. That's just what Hong Kong looks like from on high, stereotypes be damned.

In Chinese, Victoria Peak is called Tai Ping Shan: the Mountain of Heavenly Peace.



THE MID-LEVELS ESCALATOR

CENTRAL—This, the longest outdoor escalator in the world, rises up from the base of Victoria Peak in Central up through a neighborhood clinging to the mountainside called the Mid-Levels. Before 10 AM, the escalator runs down hill; from then until 6 PM it runs uphill. The escalator has conveniently placed gaps to allow people to get on and off at various points along the way. Beside the escalator is a comprehensive set of concrete stairs, though you need fortitude and willpower to make the entire climb without mechanical assistance. On the lower half of the hill supporting the escalator are curio shops, small family-owned restaurants, and pubs. The higher you go, the more residential the area becomes. At the escalator's uppermost terminus you can find wealthy homes, quiet parks, and many private driveways.

The escalator doesn't move very fast, but it's in constant motion and, so, is a great place for a fight scene. It's covered to shelter commuters from inclement weather, so try running along the roof. You can also attempt to run up or down the rubber handrails, with a Difficulty 10 stunt.

The place's unique feng shui (its chi saws back and forth across the fabric of reality) facilitates passage to the Netherworld. This happens less than once a month, when a full murder of crows lands on the escalator roof after midnight. Taking the escalator downhill with the birds perched sends you straight down into the bowels of the Earth and eventually deposits you in an obscure corner of the Netherworld.

A crow-headed fiend waits at the bottom to collect a toll from anyone riding the escalator. The toll is usually some "vestigial" body part, such as a pinky finger or a toe. The fiend wields a huge watermelon knife when performing his on-the-spot surgery. He stands a good 12 feet tall, has a pair of skeletal wings protruding from his broad shoulder blades, and is marked with ritually inflicted lacerations across his massive chest and back. From the waist down he's got gray elephantine legs and black-painted elephantine toenails.

The Toll-Crow, Bird-Headed Fiend

Sample Dialogue: "Dis here's me toll boof, mate. An' I reckon you owes me a toll."

Attributes: Bod 7 (Tgh 10), Chi 3, Mnd 5 (Per 8), Ref 6

Skills: Creature Powers 14, Martial Arts 15

Schticks & Creature Powers: Regeneration (x5), Signature Weapon (watermelon knife)

Weapons: Watermelon knife (12), claws (9), beak (10),

Chater Garden

CENTRAL—You'll find this park on Chater Road in downtown Central, between the Rolls Royce dealership (with just one lonely but really, really expensive car in the "showroom"), the Old Supreme Court building, a big parking garage, and the Bank of China Tower. The park's centerpiece is a pleasantly designed fountain garden. At lunch, it's packed with business people from the surrounding buildings. On Sundays, it fills with Filipina amahs catching up with dear friends and engaging in informal church activities. A broad swath of flat concrete demarcating the park's southern boundary becomes the staging ground for rallies, concerts, and other events. This is your iconic downtown green patch.

Kowloon Park

TST—Sitting on a small hill overlooking the tangle of hotels, mansions, and duty-free stores of Tsim Sha Tsui is Kowloon Park. It's less a nature reserve and more a place for locals to get away from the rapacious glitter and neon that characterizes their neighborhood. There are fountains and artificial pools, as well as enough twiny banyan trees and grass to purify at least some of Kowloon's diesel-laden air, but the real draws to the park are its public swimming pool and indoor game hall. If you're looking to play a match of Chinese checkers, *wei qi* (Chinese-style *go*), or Western chess, you shouldn't have trouble finding a game here—elderly men and women spend hours warming the park's concrete benches and competing with strangers.

Victoria Park

CAUSEWAY BAY—Of all the parks on the main island, this one is the best. It's large, well maintained and, surrounded by a wall of jagged tenement buildings, one of few places truly impervious to assault by the city's soundscape. The park's been here for some time, judging by the age and enormity of its trees. At the northeastern end is a public swimming pool, though it pales in comparison to the one in the Kowloon Park, on the other side of the Harbor. Sensibly placed concession stands offer icy respite from the summer and autumn heat and humidity.

The park is home to numerous annual events, such as the Chinese New Year flower market, the Tiananmen memorial vigil, outdoor performances of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, and outdoor charity balls.

North of the park is a private yacht club and marina. To the west are Times Square and the Japanese department store Sogo. With the exception of the park department's maintenance trucks and bicycles, vehicular traffic is not permitted on park grounds; this is one of the few places left in Hong Kong where you're likely to encounter mounted police officers (and chases involving them).

The park's statue of Queen Victoria used to stand in Statue Square, over in Central. After the Mainland took control, they had it discretely relocated here.

Hong Kong Park

CENTRAL—Hong Kong Park is a weird fusion of nature reserve and modern art. Its north side backs right up against the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank building, where the press of leaves against the skyscraper is kept in check by a bloody big concrete wall. An elevated walkway passes over the bus-choked Queensway and connects the garden to the skyrise. What makes the park the so

unusual is its explicit emphasis on the union of Man and Nature. A plethora of artfully built modern structures stand on the park's slopes (it occupies a big chunk of the Victoria Peak mountain side), shaded by the dense canopy of trees. It's therefore a popular place to have wedding pictures taken.

The Falstaff House, the oldest surviving 19th century building in Hong Kong, features a tea museum inside. The aviary is a bird-watcher's paradise and hall of heartache for the Ascended, who know it as a prison for the their meeker brethren. The botanical garden has one large exhibit, among many, exploring the wonder of bamboo. The *tai qi* garden and made-made waterfall are monuments to good living and modern well-being. (That is, they are minor feng shui sites.) The arts center and its accompanying museum is an inspiration for struggling artists—a haven of tranquility—until a school bus pulls up and, with a hydraulic hiss, spills forth screaming, sticky-fingered proof that Brownian Motion is a force to be reckoned with.

Nearby is the Peak Tram Station, which takes passengers up to the Peak Observatory, and St. John's Cathedral, one of the oldest Catholic churches in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Zoological & Botanical Gardens

CENTRAL—Found in 1871 and sitting on 5 hectares of prime mountainside real estate, the zoo, like everything else in the city, is a strangely appealing mish-mash of new and old. Half of the park is dedicated to a playground, jaguar enclosures, various plant gardens (bamboo, camellia, and magnolia) and the ubiquitous aviary. The other half is newer and has the mammal and reptile enclosures. Low-level operatives don't get it, but the Lodge sometimes holds secret meetings here.

Mai Po Marshes

NEW TERRITORIES—The World Wildlife Fund oversees management of this wetland nature reserve on the northwest edge of the New Territories, near Shenzhen. Broad mudflat plains, clattering reeds, and mangroves characterize what is really nothing more than an enormous swamp. The ever-present stench testifies to that: it gives the air a primal, mulchy, fetid quality.

Every winter, approximately 60,000 birds migrating south out of China make a stopover in the Marshes. When they take flight they blot out the sun. It's joked that Mai Po would never have become a national park if it hadn't been for the birds, which endlessly fascinate Hong Kong residents.

To get into the Marshes you must first apply for a permit with the park management.

Kowloon Walled City Park

KOWLOON CITY—In 1898, during negotiations between the British and the Chinese, it was decided that a garrison town built in Kowloon in 1847 would remain in Chinese possession until all the nitty-gritty details regarding the transfer were worked out to the satisfaction of both parties. It was home to a low-ranking magistrate and a small garrison of soldiers. Months later, after the treaty had been signed, the garrison left but the support personnel refused to depart.

The Chinese claimed the residents had every right to be there because not all treaty details had been worked out satisfactorily. (In truth, they were trying to stick it to the British; they hoped to someday take advantage of an official Chinese presence in the foreign colony.) The British didn't want to forcibly remove the squatters and incite a diplomatic brouhaha or another war. So they left the garrison alone.

Thus was born the Kowloon Walled City. Years passed, the garrison remained, and people more or less forgot about them. It remained, an independent mini-colony, until World War II, when the Japanese tore down its towering granite walls to make Kai Tak Airport. The residents and their descendants fled. It seemed like the Walled City was history, but it wasn't. After the war, refugees from China took over the land. Technically speaking, its status quo was still intact. The British were powerless to do anything—the Chinese government insisted that movement against this new wave of squatters would be tantamount to an act of aggression against the Communist government.

The residents rebuilt the walls, this time with modern yet ramshackle buildings. Gangsters moved in, taking advantage of the social black hole the Walled City was becoming. Utilities were stolen from the surrounding neighborhoods—city engineers friendly to the Walled City's residents secretly sunk wells into the earth or patched in networks of pipes, wiring, pumps, and generators from the outside. In the ensuing decades, the Walled City grew upward, reaching a height of 14 stories. The gangs ruled absolutely inside. People lived in fear and poverty. Fire was the second most common killer, after murder. Hundreds of cramped pigeon coops were built on the roofs for cheap entertainment. Sweatshops deep in the interior produced cheap knock-offs. Sex and drugs dominated the local economy. Opium dens, whorehouses, and gambling parlors thrived. It soon became known as Hak Nam (City of Darkness). The Kowloon Walled City was the first true arcology (see page 78), but not a successful one.

In 1984, the Hong Kong government finally had enough. As part of its new handover negotiations with Mainland China, it finally settled the ambiguous political status of the Walled City and assumed control. The residents were relocated to government housing in the New Territories and the buildings were razed. But no one in Hong Kong could forget the plight of the Walled City's inhabitants during the past 80 years. Instead of building a new skyscraper or apartment block on the land, the government commissioned a memorial space: the Kowloon Walled City Park.

The park features a Chinese zodiac garden, a mount-view pavilion, and a hilltop pavilion. Each pavilion is made from grey granite and wooden beams painted a deep royal red. The walls are inscribed with geomantic symbols. Various ponds and pathways tour the old Walled City, with historical spots marked by plaques. Archaeologists unearthed portions of the original garrison town, now on display in the park.

In 2055, the digital golem of the notorious cyber-outlaw St. Louis Blue erects a holographic monument over the

Bird Man, Guiding Hand Sentry

Sample Dialogue: "There you are, you jet-powered sneak..."

Attributes: Bod 7 (Tgh 8), Chi 0 (Fu 8), Mnd 8 (Per 10), Ref 9

Skills: Deceit 14, Martial Arts 17

Fu Shticks: The Path of the Clever Eye (all), Signature Weapon (brass telescope)

Weapons: Punch (8), kick (9), brass telescope (11)

park. The 20-story cube flows with dynamic multicolored light streams that, when touched by living flesh, generate life-like, semi-transparent images of the Kowloon Walled City of the past. The Buro wants to destroy the monument, but a vast public outcry stays their hand. As far as anyone can tell, the hologram is harmless enough. (A few engineers on black market BBSs suggest the cube is a vast quantum repository of recovered data once deleted by the Buro.)

Lantau Peak

LANTAU ISLAND—This is the second largest mountain in Hong Kong. It overlooks Chep Lap Kok airport and is but a hop, skip, and jump away from a Buddhist monastery.

Like most nature reserves in the region, you cannot legally drive motorized vehicles up the peak (unless you're a park ranger), so you're going to have to hoof it.

The Guiding Hand has an agent living permanently on the peak, called "Bird Man." He comes across as a crazy rural hobo: his clothes are tattered patchworks, and despite the proximity of so much fresh- and saltwater he smells pretty rank. The only thing he owns is a brass telescope, which he carries around everywhere he goes and uses to observe the "migratory comings and goings of the Steel Bastard Bird." He's watching airplanes. The park authority repeatedly ran him off or arrested him in response to numerous complaints from tourists and hikers, but in time accepted he was mostly harmless. Now they let him dwell in the park. What they don't know is the Bird Man's mendicant insanity is an act. He observes planes, not for terrorist purposes but because he—and his immediate superior—is convinced there's a Netherworld portal up in the sky being used by the Architects of the Flesh. Airplanes and helicopters suddenly appear over the airport every three or four weeks, and so far only the Guiding Hand seems to have noticed. What could those Bastard Birds be up to?

TEA FIELDS

NEW TERRITORIES—Tea is the national drink of pretty much every East Asian country. (Take your pick.) This part of the world is a tea *aficionado's* paradise. Chinese tea is widely regarded as the best, with the king of teas, some say, coming from the slopes of Taiwan's Ali mountain. The SAR has its share of tea fields and manufacturers, too. Tian Ren is the largest distributor of consumer teas, bottled teas, and tea leaves for the thousands of teashops in the territory. Their corporate fields are spread all over the New Territories and Southern China. Privately owned fields are just as numerous. Out here, tea is big business.

Tea fields range in size from 1 hectare (the kind owned by a single household) to 20 or 30 hectares (for one type of leaf owned by a company). Tea grows in knee-high clusters and gives off a mildly fragrant scent—the cumulative effect can be pretty heady. During the summer months, when the tea is in full bloom, tea field owners erect a tent or build wood pavilions in the middle of the field and serve huge seven- or eight-course dinners for visitors and tour groups. The massive dishes on the menu involve lots of tea-based ingredients. Strangely, though, the drinks of choice at these affairs aren't tea but rather sour plum wine, rice wine, and beer.

GOLDEN BUDDHA TEA

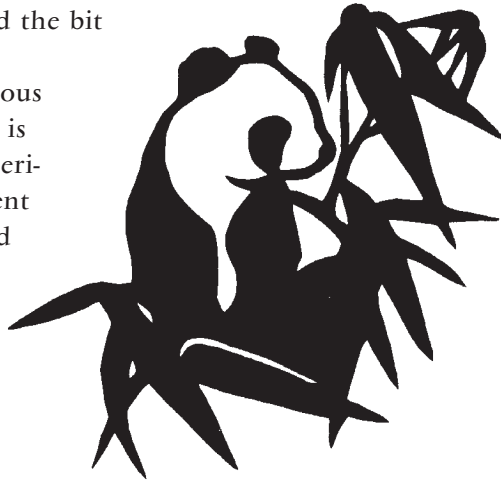
Spend some time in the company of serious tea-drinkers and you'll eventually hear the legendary tales about a fabled type of tea leaf called "Golden Buddha." Drinking the Golden Buddha is believed to imbue a person with extraordinary powers. Here are a few of the supernatural effects said to be granted by this remarkable tea (and ways to use them in the game). Who knows which of these, if any, are true?

- The tea opens the drinker's third eye and bestows upon her the wisdom of the ages (increasing all Mind attributes by one-third until the next sunrise).
- Shaolin monks of yore claimed they gained the capacity for extraordinary kung fu powers because they drank the tea every day (and earned one experience point for every seven consecutive days of tea-drinking).
- Portugese sailors in Macau, confusing Portugese and Chinese myths, said the tea turned their guts "into iron," making them impervious to poisons and illness (by giving them a +10 boost to their Constitution secondary attribute).
- An Ascended scientist named Dr. Mardell believes the tea enables shapeshifting, whether the drinker's a transformed animal or not. (Drinking the tea grants anyone a +4 bonus to a Chi test (Difficulty 8) to transform into an animal for 88 minutes.)

OCEAN PARK

ABERDEEN—This is a mish-mash of theme parks crammed into the south side of Aberdeen. It features, among other things, the standard theme park fare of roller coasters, hill cars, and pendulum boats. It also has animatronic exhibits showcasing a singing seal and bongo-playing pandas, a wave park for swimming, a gigantic artificial atoll and fish aquarium, and a walk-through shark aquarium. An elevated cable car transports patrons between the lower half of the park and the bit on the mountainside.

One of the more famous attractions at Ocean Park is the Middle Kingdom, a period re-creation of an ancient Chinese village. Costumed actors stay in character while interacting with visitors and demonstrating the trades and customs of ancient China. They put on mar-



tial arts displays, Cantonese opera performances, and craft exhibitions.

Even though the Guiding Hand maintains a chapter house in Shek O, some members spend a lot of time in the Middle Kingdom to help alleviate homesickness. Some low-level members even have part-time jobs as street performers in the village. When the group needs to convene in the Contemporary juncture, they sometimes hold meetings inside the replica temple late at night after everything closes.

Ocean Park's newly built panda enclosure is home to An An and Jia Jia, a pair of dislocated pandas who, if you talk to the Ascended, couldn't possibly have less in common with one another. (Is it any surprise they refuse to copulate?) Rumors abound that Jia Jia is an Ascended big-wig, forcibly reverted in the Netherworld by some Innerwalking cop.

RICE PADDIES

NEW TERRITORIES—A rice paddy is a swampy swath of flooded land where rice is grown. They stink to high heaven; the main fertilizer is manure (human and other). Rice grows up through water to about shin-height. Frogs, snakes, and egrets live in paddies, but birds are the bane of the farmer's existence—they eat freshly plugged rice seeds. If unchecked they can ruin a harvest.

If you fight in a rice paddy, your Speed is cut in half as long as you touch the ground. Mud envelops your feet with an irresistible vacuum-like pull, moistly sucking away shoes, socks, and leg hair (ouch). Oxen are another nasty complication: they like wading in the paddies to cool off. A cranky ox is liable to make his indignation known by sticking his horns in your backside or kicking you in the head. (Better to put a goon in his path instead.)

Out in the countryside, it's not uncommon to see farmers driving around on three-wheeled truck/motorcycle hybrids collecting barrels of fertilizer from their neighbors' septic tanks. The trikes make an obnoxious *tuk tuk tuk tuk* sound audible from a mile away, but make for interesting escape vehicles. Farmers also collect vegetable waste from orange barrels put in every neighborhood just for them. They feed it to their oxen and pigs. Either barrel becomes a vile projectile in a rice paddy battle.

A few years ago, police and PRC soldiers closed down the town of Lok Ma Chau. They say a mutant toad, the size of a car, raised by the Han family broke free from its rice paddy and went on a rampage. Rumor has it the toad was being fed experimental animal (or human) chow from Buro labs in the future.

Rural Wildlife

The following is a sample of the diverse animal, insect, and plant life indigenous to Hong Kong. A well-placed critter can complicate an otherwise ordinary fight scene or bit of stealth, and animals are always good for comic relief. Not everything that happens in *Feng Shui* is necessarily the result of evil sorcerers or dope-peddling Triad thugs. (By the way: everything below is edible by Hong Kong standards.)

Mammals: cat, dog, horse, cow, ox, goat, grey shrew, musk shrew, Japanese pipistrelle, Chinese pipistrelle, noctule bat, yellow house bat, bent-winged bat, mouse-eared bat, big-footed bat, long-fingered bat, Horsfield's bat, Eastern Daubenton's bat, horseshoe bat, round-leaf bat, wrinkle-lipped bat, fruit bat, club-footed bat, black-bearded tomb bat, chestnut spiny rat, Sladen's rat, ship rat, roof rat, bandicoot rat, buff-bellied rat, brown rat, Ryukyu mouse, house mouse, squirrel, Chinese porcupine, Chinese pangolin, masked palm civet, Indian civet, leopard civet, ferret badger, Chinese otter, Asian mongoose, crab-eating mongoose, yellow-throated martin, Rhesus macaque, wild boar, Chinese muntjac, Chinese pink (or white) dolphin, finless porpoise, bottlenose dolphin, false killer whale, Fraser's dolphin, long-beaked dolphin, pantropical spotted dolphin, striped dolphin, spinner dolphin, rough-toothed dolphin, Risso's dolphin, Minke whale, Bryde's whale, fin whale, pygmy sperm whale.

(Civet cats were the source of China's SARS epidemic.)

Reptiles: big-headed terrapin, three-banded box terrapin, red-eared slider, green turtle, Pacific Ridley turtle, leatherback turtle, Chinese soft-shelled turtle, four-clawed gecko, Chinese gecko, Tokay gecko, Godzilla, Bowring's gecko, tree

What the Heck Do Animals Do In My Action Game?

Glad you asked. Despite being the basis for all manner of kung fu styles, HK wildlife doesn't supply much of a threat for your average *Feng Shui* PC. What wildlife can do, though, is spice up a fight with epic imagery and visceral details. Animal calls might betray a sneaking enemy—if the PCs pick up on audio cues the GM hides in his narrative (“Why have the frogs gone quiet?”) Clouds of biting insects could burn up like tiny embers at the fringes of a sorcerer's fireball—a simple detail to make the magic seem real. A snake can be used as a weapon, whether snapped like a whip, pulled like a garrote, or thrown at an exposed face to deliver some deadly toxin. A flock of birds could swish through a rooftop battle, distracting sorcerers, ruining a gunman's aim, or just beautifully synchronizing with a martial artist's crane stance attack. John Woo uses

gecko, changeable lizard, common water monitor, Bogadek's burrowing lizard, grass lizard, forest skink, five-striped blue-tailed skink, long-tailed skink, slender forest skink, brown forest skink, white-headed blind skink, Burmese python, burrowing snake, mountain keelback, buff-stripped keelback, large-spotted cat snake, northern reed snake, greater green snake, painted bronze back, red mountain racer, copperhead racer, mangrove water snake, Chinese water snake, wolf snake, mountain wolf snake, banded wolf snake, golden Kukri snake, Taiwanese Kukri snake, banded stream snake, striped stream snake, Chinese slug snake, white-spotted slug snake, mock viper, Indo-Chinese rat snake, common rat snake, grooved neck keelback, Chinese mountain snake, diamondback water snake, banded krait, many-banded krait, coral snake, banded sea snake, slender sea snake, ornate sea snake, Chinese cobra, king cobra, bamboo snake, mountain pit viper.

Everything Else: mangrove crab, dragonfly, butterfly, mosquito, fly, horsefly, spider, cricket, earthworm, maggot, sea slug, sea urchin, chicken, pigeon, quail, oriental stork, Dalmatian pelican, Chinese egret, black-headed ibis, black-faced spoonbill, mandarin duck, Baikai teal, black vulture, grey-headed lapwing, far-eastern curlew, Asian dowitcher, spotted greenshank, spoon-billed sandpiper, spotted eagle, imperial eagle, Saunders' gull, relict gull, exploding gull, Japanese paradise flycatcher, silky starling, chestnut-cheeked starling, Pacific loon, red-footed booby, (are we allowed to say “booby” here?), Christmas Island frigate bird, grey heron, purple heron, Swinhoe's egret, cattle egret, Chinese pond heron, night heron, yellow bittern, black stork, whistling duck, greylag goose, mallard, pintail, shoveler, goldeneye, osprey, kite, harrier, goshawk, sparrowhawk, moorhen, cascade frog, Asian toad, spotted narrow-mouthed frog, painted frog, leaf-litter toad, short-legged toad, Butler's pygmy toad, ornate pygmy toad, rough-skinned floating frog, Hong Kong newt, Romer's tree frog, brown tree frog, spiny frog, big-headed frog, paddy frog, Chinese bullfrog, giant spiny frog, mudskipper,

Supernatural: wang liang (black-faced ogre), jiang shi (hopping vampire), rogue abomination, lost battlechimp, semi-reverted Ascended, snake men.

Urban Wildlife

Not many of the wild animals above actually reside inside the city. It's hard to: the locals would probably eat such creatures before they had a chance to reproduce. Aside from birds and baseball-sized spiders, the animal you're most likely to run into is a semi-tame monkey. Oh, and these:

Mammals: cat, dog, goat, roof rat, ship rat, brown rat, yellow house bat, house mouse, Rhesus macaque, squirrel.

Reptiles: four-clawed gecko, Chinese gecko, Tokay gecko, long-tailed skink, large-spotted cat snake, Indo-Chinese rat snake, common rat snake.

Everything Else: dragonfly, butterfly, mosquito, fly, horsefly, spider, cricket, earthworm, maggot, chicken, pigeon, quail, mallard, Saunders' gull, relict gull.

Supernatural: jiang shi (hopping vampire), concrete zombie, rogue abomination, nuclear shade, ci mei (demonic seductress), serpent men.

white doves all the time. Why not find your own signature, symbolic animal to use as decoration in your fight scenes?

SOME SUPERNATURAL CREATURES OF HONG KONG

Wang Liang (Black-Faced Ogre)

A *wang liang* (pronounced *wahng lyahng*) is a Chinese ogre. The most common sort in the Hong Kong region is the Black-Faced Ogre. It's 12 feet tall with a pinched black face, oversized fox ears, an enormous fanged mouth not unlike a panther's, and red-hot eyes shot through with white veins. A long, long time ago, wang liang were nothing more than simple fisher folk whose claim to fame was a deep affinity for river and lake dragons. There aren't many wang liang left in the world. Their existence seems inexorably tied to the fate of dragons, and you can probably

count the number of those left on one hand. If you really need to find a wang liang, try looking in the mountains near running water—they're never far from freshwater fish.

Wang liang are enthusiastic gossips. If you draw one into a conversation, be prepared to talk all night. They don't read (something in their eyes makes it physically impossible for them to see printed letters), but if you tell one a story he's never heard before he'll be in your debt. Female wang liang have never been seen by human eyes. That's because they're really dragons.* Wang liang are, therefore, polyandrous.

Unnamed Wang Liang (Black-Faced Ogre)

Sample Dialogue: "You eat my fish? Let's see."

Attributes: Bod 10, Chi 2, Mnd 4, Ref 7

Skills: Creature Powers 12, Driving 8 (for boats), Info: Fishing 17, Martial Arts 11

Creature Powers: Rancid Breath (x2)

Weapons: Fist (12), kick (13), head-butt (14)

Johnny Chung, Concrete Zombie

Sample Dialogue: "Aaavurgh."

Attributes: Bod 10 (Tgh 15), Chi 0, Mnd 3 (Per 8), Ref 5

Skills: Creature Powers 15, Martial Arts 10

Unique Schtick: *Guts of Rebar:* A concrete zombie uses its Creature Powers skill to cause collateral damage, bring down buildings, and to throw or crush cars in a fight. It also eats concrete and steel as a three-shot action, regaining Wound Points equal to the Outcome of a Creature Powers test (Difficulty 12).

Weapons: Fist (12), kick (13), bite (13)

Concrete Zombie

A peculiar kind of undeath results from the funeral traditions of gangsters: the "concrete zombie" kind. A living person buried alive in wet concrete (or even secretly interred after being murdered) might come back as a concrete zombie. Normally the concrete hardens and, in the best of all mafia worlds, that's that. Some people, however, are born with a heavy-duty line of karmic credit** that extends backwards through past lives to a time when they also drowned someone, and this curse of undeath is the payback.

As concrete fills a victim's orifices and lungs and plasters his eyes shut, his body slowly transforms: concrete and flesh melt together, blending steel rebar, rocks, flecks of dirt, and dead animals. Sharp, jagged chunks of scrap metal or stones form his teeth. His soul sinks to his navel, where it hardens into a blood-colored, fist-sized diamond. The zombie sees through this soul-stone. It allows him to see a living being's chi—the essence that fuels him from that point forward. The transformation process takes about a week. Once complete, the zombie rips himself free of his prison and hunts. People with impressive chi attract a concrete

Unnamed Concrete Zombie

As above, except:

Skills: Creature Powers 12, Martial Arts 10

Unique Schtick: *Guts of Rebar:* To reflect the toughness of an unnamed concrete zombie, use its Creature Powers skill as its Dodge AV. To take one out without beating its AV by 5, deal it enough damage to double its Creature Powers AV (that's 24 damage: a big explosion).

zombie like flies to honey or German tourists to tropical waters.

A concrete zombie is voracious. You can't converse with one—it just wants to gnaw through your belly and eat your chi. Its movements are punctuated by the scraping sound of concrete slabs rubbing together. Fresh concrete dust wafts off its body, like undead dandruff. When it talks, mosquitoes fly out its mouth from a stagnant pool of water deep inside its gut. The best way to kill one is with blasting caps and demolition cord. Bullets won't slow it down and it easily regenerates damage by absorbing fresh concrete and steel. Edged weapons have no effect. Blunt weapons make it laugh.

* Contrary to popular belief, wang liang claim all Chinese dragons are female. No kidding. You can peek under their skirts if you don't believe it, but the relevant sexual organs are largely metaphysical, so good luck with that.

**You know the expression "just enough rope to hang yourself?" That's karmic credit.

Nuclear Shade

Once, there was a timeline in which the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima didn't end WWII. Japanese spies stole the plans for nuclear weapons from the Los Alamos labs and retaliated, bombing Anchorage, Alaska first, then Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, and a tiny town called Harrisville.† The Americans returned fire, destroying Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. The ashes of nuclear fire spread far and wide on the wind, carrying deadly radiation. Both sides pounded away at one another until nothing was left of either country. The world died.

A group of Indian Innerwalkers, however, escaped into the Netherworld, went back to 1850, and threw their support behind the Guiding Hand, whom they'd previously opposed. Bolstered, the Hand took control of six massive feng shui sites around Asia and subsequently changed history to ensure the Japanese wouldn't prematurely acquire nuclear technology. (It wasn't the nuclear-free end they wanted, but it was something.) A critical shift swerved history and the Second World War ended after the second American bomb fell on Japan.

Nuclear physicists are smart people, but they don't know this: some part of each soul burned in the flames of nuclear oblivion remains on earth. At the core of the initial reaction, in the femtosecond when the atom splits in half, a microcosmic pinhole opens in the fabric between this world and the Netherworld. Any soul caught in the nuclear blast becomes exempt from changes in time. Thus is born a nuclear shade. Most are blasted into some remote and hellish corner of the Netherworld, existing in a blurry, feral half-life where they hunt together in roving packs seeking flesh to boil off the bones of the living and feed upon. Some are still hanging around; mostly in Japan, China, and the American West.

A nuclear shade is a radioactive charge with a bit of coherent light giving it form. It appears as a slightly illuminated, semi-transparent cloud of human-shaped vapor or fire. Its body dissipates to nothing where the hands and feet should be, and its eyes are filled with arcing lines of golden light, like sunspots. The darkest part of a shade's body is the gaping hole where its mouth should be, black as night. Normally, the creature is intangible and almost invisible; you won't find one until you're within five feet of it, unless you've got a Geiger counter. Radiation pulses outward from its form, infecting all it touches. When the creature latches its icy mouth on a victim, the radiation level in the area spikes. The victim's flesh suppurates with tumors and boils, his teeth crack open and fall from his head, his hair falls out in bloody clumps, and eventually his entire body is nothing more than a pile of nuclear ash.

Killing a nuclear shade requires a sturdy Hazmat suit and lots of lead to absorb the radiation shed by it. Lead is bad for nuke shades. So are bullets.

A group of Japanese research scientists calling itself Project Darkstar wants to capture as many nuclear shades

Nuclear Shade

Sample Dialogue: "It... burns..."

Attributes: Bod 8, Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 7

Skills: Creature Powers 10, Martial Arts 9

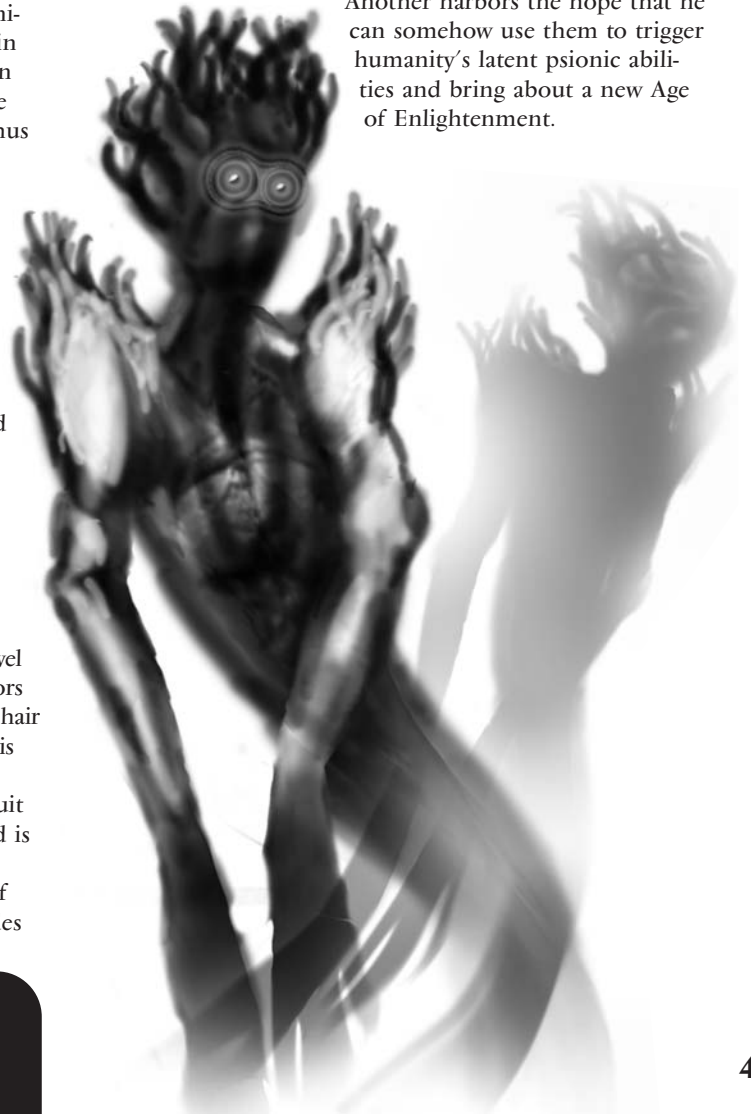
Creature Powers: Damage Immunity (unarmed attacks, except for fu powers; Blast magic, except for Chi; all fire and electricity), Insubstantial.

Unique Schtick: *Rad Burn:* This ability works just like Blast (Disintegration), but is made with a Creature Powers test. Whenever a nuclear shade deals damage (with its Rad Burn or its touch), the damage it deals is reduced by the victim's Constitution instead of its Toughness.

Weapons: Touch (11)

as possible. They believe they can harness the implied power inside the creatures' bodies to create portable power plants. One scientist, secretly in league with the terrorist group M78, thinks a shade can be made into a bomb.

Another harbors the hope that he can somehow use them to trigger humanity's latent psionic abilities and bring about a new Age of Enlightenment.



† The pilot had bad directions.

RELIGION & MAGIC

The two basic flavors of Hong Kong religious belief are *noisy* and *noisier*. Both Taoism and Buddhism, the two most popular religions in the city, place heavy stock in the deafening power of gongs, drums, bells, and chants. They are especially fond of exploding raw gunpowder grenades they call “fire-crackers.” The religions of China, and therefore Hong Kong, are also old, with an eye on those who have come before.

Old and loud: that’s Hong Kong religion.

Religion is certainly not understated in the daily life of the average person here. There are at least two Taoist holidays a month in which offerings of food, drink, candy, and incense are made on the street in front of one’s residence or place of work. Quieter prayers are made each morning at small family altars kept somewhere in each house and shop. On the big holidays, full-fledged parades featuring costumed warriors, lion dancers, dragon dancers, and drummers shut down two or three city blocks at a time.

In this day and age, Hong Kong hipsters may only pay lip service to the old-school beliefs of their parents and grandparents, but you simply cannot escape the fact that, to most Chinese, the spirit world is quite real. Spirits move about everywhere in Hong Kong, dwell in everything, and respond to all sorts of stimuli. Interaction with spirits, whether through temple offerings or the harmonious use of feng shui, is a part of ordinary life. If you ignore it, you run the risk of one day suffering spiritual ire.

Maybe this public recognition of local spirits, coupled with the adaptive modernism of a cosmopolitan port city, is what gives Hong Kong its exceptional receptiveness to magic and other strangeness. Hong Kong has attained some accidental (or incidental) balance of the past and the future that puts it on the axis of the world’s chi flow throughout history.

Regional Modifiers

So, the *Feng Shui* rule book says Hong Kong and the New Territories aren’t subject to the usual Sorcery AV modifier for the Contemporary juncture. It says Hong Kong’s Sorcery AV modifier is 0. Overall, that’s true, but here’s something for you to play with.

The clash of ultramodern and traditional elements in Hong Kong makes the SAR a level playing field as a whole. In individual locations, where past and future collide, where magic and science intersect, you’ll find strange exceptions. Some temples, especially those with long-time spiritual tenants, afford a bonus to Sorcery checks, while certain tech centers like arcades impose a penalty on your Sorcery AV. Exactly which locations are subject to exceptional modifiers is left for the GM to decide based on the needs of the action and the story. Remember, though, that these special locations are exceptional—there aren’t too many of them around.

Some locations only modify tests for specific Sorcery actions. If you’re close enough to a temple bell, you might gain a +1 bonus on Summoning spells that banish spirits. If you’re sitting near a meditation pond, you might get a bonus to Divination spells. It isn’t all about the trappings of the time period, though. It’s also about what makes intuitive sense and is interesting to you and the GM. You might get a one-time bonus to a Divination test in the digital camera section of an electronics store, just because the GM likes the idea. Hong Kong is full of all kinds of fluctuating strangeness, which GMs can use an excuse for just about anything.

FAVORABLE SPIRITS

If the presence of powerful, favorable spirits can change the Sorcery AV modifier of a place, why can’t they modify other actions? GMs can use spirits to grant bonuses or penalties to any action performed under the purview of a local spirit. One spirit might favor the practice of Medicine while another frowns on Gambling, for example. Most modifiers make sense for the location they affect—such as a brothel-inhabiting spirit favoring Seduction—but not all do. Spirits are fickle.

To enjoy the benefits of spiritual favor (or to buy off spiritual disfavor), a character may have to pray at an altar, leave an offering at a shrine, burn incense, or meditate.

FALUN DAFU (AKA FALUN GONG)

Falun Gong, not technically a religion of its own, is a philosophical and spiritual practice involving meditative and physical exercises, called Chi-gong (“life-energy”), designed to promote healthy living and spirituality. It is meant to supplement religious observances by helping practitioners become more focused and harmonious. Founded in 1992 by Li Hongzhi (author of Falun Dafa’s central texts: *Zhuan Falun* and *Falun Gong*, and sometimes called Master Li), Falun Gong quickly caught on in China and abroad, attracting millions of followers in just a few years (today there are as many as 100 million practitioners of Falun Gong).

Falun Gong (“Practice of the Wheel”) practices center on the understanding of the Falun—the dharmic wheel that turns within every human body on the axel of the navel. It is the human instrument of chi, a spiritual organ essential to transcendent living. The symbolic representation of this is a spinning manji or swastika, circled by smaller yin-yangs and wheels.

In 1999, China cracked down on Falun Gong, which the PRC is said to have labeled an “evil cult.” Thousands of Falun Gong members were arrested and imprisoned. Hundreds were allegedly tortured or killed (the PRC says “rehabilitated”).

Every faction in the Secret War suspects Falun Gong of being some surface element in the fight for feng shui. Are they a recruitment process for the Ascended? Is the spiritual cog imagery some precursor of the Buro’s arcanowave future? Is this the start of some new faction in the war? Is it used by the Dragons to identify would-be Secret Warriors? Is it meant to prepare people for Netherworld travel?

Clear answers have been difficult to discern. Falun Gong is open to anyone—joining Falun Gong is like joining a Tai Chi class. Their autonomy makes no sense if they’re planning on forming a firm coalition of history-conquerors. Besides that, Falun Gong forbids killing and covetous behavior (like the pursuit of feng shui sites), which means they’re not likely to win the Secret War even if they join.

It’s possible that Falun Gong has nothing at all to do with time travel and the Secret War. At least, not by design. But Falun Gong teaches ordinary people to sense the flow of chi in their own bodies and in the world at large. It’s only a matter of time before some faction attempts to absorb (or infiltrate) the movement and take control.

What if Falun Gong, though, is secretly a means of teaching ordinary folks (not Innerwalkers) to attune to feng shui sites all over the world? What if widespread attunement frees chi from the factions’ tug-of-war and restores the flow of destiny to every common man and woman on the planet? What if it shifts history to favor nature itself?

NUMEROLOGY: MAGIC MATH

Numerology is very popular in Hong Kong. Numbers are associated with words they audibly resemble. The number 4 (*sie*, in Cantonese) sounds like the word for “die,” so it’s especially unlucky. You’ll find many Hong Kong buildings lacking a fourth or fourteenth floor as a result. The number 7, on the other hand, sounds like *chut* (meaning “certainty”), so it’s favorable. Putting numbers together, though, can change their meaning: 74 suggests “certain death.” It’s all very complex and subject to personal interpretation.

The numeral 8 is exceedingly lucky in Chinese numerology, because of its connections to the traditionally eight-sided tri-grams and, perhaps, for its connections to Buddhism. The Cantonese word for eight, *fa*, is also the word for “prosperous.” Getting a numeral 8 in your license plate, phone number, or address is a big deal in Hong Kong; folks pay big bucks to get eighth-floor offices, and real estate with an auspicious address is much more expensive than neighboring properties. Auspicious license plates are auctioned off by the government to raise money for charitable organizations.

Geomancers need to be aware of a site’s numerological factors. A family living at a bad address may suffer from bad luck, but that bad luck may be overcome with proper feng shui. On the other hand, Secret Warriors looking for feng shui sites should be sure to check the 800 block of every major street in every new city they visit.

In case it ever comes up, odd numbers are considered yang numbers, while even numbers are considered yin.

OPTIONAL NUMEROLOGICAL EFFECTS

If you’re the GM, think about using numerological effects in play to direct the players’ attention towards the role numerology plays in a particular adventure. Here are a few ways you can emphasize bad numerology in the game. Use only one at a time, if any, and only when the PCs are in an area with really, really lousy numerological factors (e.g., fighting on the fourteenth floor of 74 E. 4th Street).

- Treat all 4s that come up on the positive die as a 0, unless it’s a Fortune die.
- Don’t let anyone use Fortune dice.
- All actions taken on the 14th and 4th shots of the sequence get an additional negative die.



TAOISM

Taoism is a syncretic religion derived originally from the contemplative navel-gazing of philosopher Lao Tzu (and, later, Chuang Tzu) that bizarrely transformed over the centuries to incorporate elements from every religion it met on the way—Taoism never met a religion it didn't like. That's because Taoism is all about the adaptation of the self to external events. It's as much a way of life (*tao* means “the Path” or “the Way”) as it is a philosophy of religion. Practitioners say you can't truly understand Taoism by reading about it; you have to experience the path for yourself.

Lao Tzu is credited with the creation of the *Tao Te Ching* (“The Way and Its Power”), the seminal text of Taoism. In the fifth century, China adopted Taoism as its customary religion. It has since become a varied mixture of common folk traditions and advanced philosophical concepts. Taoists aspire towards equilibrium and pursue a life in harmony with natural order; this ethic is known as Wu-wei (“no action”). It connotes a sense of flow and adaptivity.

Daily worship and meditation is essential to travel on the Path: Taoism emphasizes action over speech, it encourages practice above theory. Taoism recognizes many “gods” and honorable deified spirits. The Path is about transcending this reality for another, and the Way leads through life.

Today, the Taoist pantheon consists of thousands of gods, most of whom were living ancestors at one time. Each is evidence of the adaptivity and welcoming spirit of those who walk the Way, and may be considered aspects of the Tao itself. Of course, all these gods

Change is the only constant. The Tao can never be achieved, for there is no destination. The Tao is the journey, and you are the destination. Lao Tzu wrote, in the first words of the *Tao Te Ching*, “the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao. The experience that can be described is not the actual experience.”

also afford you plenty of flex room when inventing your own for use in the Secret War.

Taoism is all about the experience. You cannot really know about something until you've done it yourself, say the Taoists. The Taoist doctrine called the Identity of Opposites summarizes this concept nicely (see below). This is the central concept of philosophical Taoism, which can be tapped into as a lifestyle as much as a religion.

Religious Taoism encompasses philosophical Taoism, while also exploring avenues of sorcery and meditation, with the ultimate goal of achieving immortality (and walking the Path forever). The Taoist sorcerers of 69 AD are religious Taoists, while most modern Taoists, even when they consider themselves religious Taoists, are functionally philosophical Taoists—they do not actively seek out the magical secrets of immortality.

In theory, there may be hundreds of immortals walking the modern earth. It's difficult to know; most are masters of the Tao, and so do not flaunt their mystical achievement. Of these ever-living masters, the Eight Immortals (see *Thorns of the Lotus*) are the de facto, iconic exemplars.

Taoism, like Buddhism, is an autonomous faith. To become a Taoist, you need only to walk the Path. If you follow the Way, you are a follower of the Way. If you live the Tao, you are a Taoist. No churchly organization or central temple oversees the religion's widespread efforts or determines Taoist policy.

The yin-yang symbol is an iconic Taoist image you already know. To better understand Taoism, get yourself a copy of the *I-Ching* (The Book of Changes) and the *Tao Te Ching*. Both are available at The People's Bookstores, throughout Hong Kong.



Chuang-Tzu's Taoist principle known as the Identity of Opposites is a valuable example of the Wu-wei perspective. The Identity of Opposites says there are no true opposites. Such relationships are illusory. Everything is relative. If you do not see the Way, change your position and look again.

PRIEST OR SORCERER?

In Taoism, the difference between a priest and a sorcerer is slight, but important. Most temple caretakers and religious leaders are priests; they are deeply devoted to the numerous gods of the Way. (There are at least 10,000 major and minor deities, with new ones cropping up every decade or two.) While sorcerers are trained in the use of Taoist magic and often pay their respects to select deities, they do not have the devotion or discipline of their clerical counterparts. Where priests rely on providence, fate, and godly blessing in order to create spells, sorcerers manipulate spiritual energies through brute force and the sheer strength (some say stubbornness) of their personalities.

A priest is called a *dao shi* ("Way master"). One who specializes in the practice of feng shui is called a *feng shui shi* ("wind/water master"). Sorcerers more often than not refer to themselves as *mo fa shi* ("black arts masters") or *da fa shi* ("exorcists")—rogue priests who specialize in vanquishing foul supernatural creatures, demons, and ghosts.

You can hire a feng shui shi for a nominal hourly fee at most temples. Be sure to arrange for one in advance since he will in all likelihood not be on the premises and must be called in by the temple secretary. Take heed, though: few of these rent-a-priests are actually skilled enough to alter the feng shui of any location larger than a house, a shop, or a tenement flat. The truly gifted ones—those able to manipulate the feng shui of entire buildings, city blocks, or a genuine feng shui—site are very difficult to hire if you do not possess the right contacts (whether via Info or Sorcery), the right amount of money (some work only with the rich, others only with the poor), or both.

In practice, whether your character is a priest or a sorcerer, he's probably using Sorcery schticks. Priests are more likely to learn Sorcery powers like Divination and Fertility, while proper sorcerers favor the classics: Blast and Summoning. In fact, if you're playing a magic-slinging character from the West, coming to the East to seek sorcerous enlightenment is a great melodramatic hook. Plus, Taoist temples are a fine place to learn new Sorcery powers. On the other hand, you could be an old pro looking to pass your knowledge on to some new student.

RENT-A-PRIEST PRICES

It's a fair bet that you'll have to pay a lot of money to secure the mystical services of a genuine, honest-to-goodness priest or sorcerer.

Service	Price
General Consultation	HK\$238/hr
Divination: Revelation	HK\$568
Divination: Prediction	HK\$1,618
Divination: Warning	HK\$3,854
Fertility: De-Attunement	HK\$504
Fertility: Germination	HK\$2,113
Fertility: Growth	HK\$428
Fertility: Observe Chi	HK\$333
Fertility: Restore Chi	HK\$2,548
Heal: Cure Diseases	HK\$1 x Difficulty
Heal: Heal Wounds	HK\$2 x Difficulty
Heal: Immortality	HK\$1,000 x Difficulty
Heal: Material Restoration	HK\$5 x Difficulty
Heal: Poison Antidotes	HK\$2 x Difficulty
Influence: Emotion Potions	HK\$660
Influence: Enchantment	HK\$200 x Difficulty
Influence: Illusions	HK\$400 x Difficulty
Influence: Inspiration	HK\$728
Summoning: Banishment	HK\$444
Summoning: Corruption	HK\$8,008
Summoning: Domination	HK\$2,746
Summoning: Exorcism	HK\$300 x Difficulty
Summoning: Invocation	HK\$1,000 x Difficulty
Summoning: Purification	HK\$8,008
Weather: Cold	HK\$500
Weather: Heat and Humidity	HK\$500
Weather: Fog	HK\$500
Weather: Lightning	HK\$778
Weather: Rain	HK\$1,000
Weather: Snow	HK\$1,000
Weather: Thunder	HK\$250
Weather: Wind	HK\$778

Note: Hiring a geomancer may also require a hefty donation to his or her home temple. You may incur additional charges (or discounts) for select holy, auspicious, or portentous days. Remember, everything is negotiable in Hong Kong, even the services of the clergy. HK dollar values are included here for purposes of dialogue and GM flexibility. "Rich" isn't the same in every *Feng Shui* series, so we leave it to you decide whether or not working stiffs can afford this sort of thing.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is an import from India, where it first caught on more than 2,500 years ago, that came to China by way of Tibet. Buddhists don't believe in an overseeing god or pantheon of celestial deities. Instead, Buddhists revere the Buddha, who began life as Siddhartha Gutama, an Indian prince. The short version is this: the prince became dissatisfied with his life of material luxury and left his wife and family to seek out personal peace and enlightenment. He explored another way of life, living in the wild, sleeping outdoors, and eating food given to him by generous passersby. For a time, he experimented with the limits of his mortal body by strictly limiting his diet and fasting outright. He allowed himself to be taunted and tormented by cruel strangers, and he grew impossibly thin. None of it brought him the enlightenment he sought.

Eating again, but still wandering, the prince came to find himself sitting under a Bodhi-tree. It

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. Right Understanding

You must understand the teachings of the Buddha.

2. Right Thought

Avoid sensual desires and thoughts of ill-will or cruelty. Focus on compassion and charity.

3. Right Speech

Lies, obscenities, and profanities must be avoided. Neither are you allowed to gossip.

4. Right Action

You must not hurt, kill, steal, or take sexual advantage of others.

5. Right Livelihood

You must not work any job (prostitute, butcher, drug dealer) that requires you to break any of the five precepts.

6. Right Effort

Always aspire to achieve and maintain wholesome states. Always avoid performing evil deeds. Always strive to overcome evil where you find it.

7. Right Mindfulness

Be aware of your body, your feelings, your self, and the thoughts of the Buddha.

8. Right Concentration

Master your powers of concentration. Meditate, focus, and know.

TOP TEN BUDDHIST PRECEPTS

1. I will not harm living beings.
2. I will not take things not freely given.
3. I will not engage in sexual misconduct.
4. I will not engage in false speech.
5. I will not partake of intoxicating drinks and drugs.
6. I will not take untimely meals.
7. I will abstain from dancing, singing, music, and mime.
8. I will not make use of garlands, perfumes, or personal adornments.
9. I will not make use of seats of power.
10. I will not accept gold or silver.

was six years since he'd left his family and his palace. There he sat and contemplated the nature of reality, passing through one layer of consciousness to another in the deepest meditation. In time, he received visions of his past lives, visualized the karmic cycle of rebirths, and realized the true origin of suffering was desire, the *tanha* (meaning "thirst").

The Buddha's Four Noble Truths outline the nature of suffering and summarize his central teachings. The Noble Truth of Suffering defines eight categories of suffering: Birth, Decay, Death, Despair, Sorrow, Lamentation, Grief, and Pain. All wanting is a form of suffering—the unslaked thirst is the root of all anguish. Buddhism calls for the cessation of personal suffering through the obliteration of personal cravings, whether they call for sensual pursuits or material things. By overcoming and transcending the endless wanting of the physical form, a Buddhist believes she can escape the karmic cycle and reach a more advanced state of enlightened existence. By transcending mortal cravings, one transcends mortal suffering.

By understanding this cosmic truth, Siddhartha became the Buddha (meaning "awakened one"). Subsequent buddhas and bodhisattvas—men and women who have achieved a transcendent existence—are also recognized and honored, though not to the extent of the Buddha himself.

Buddhism's lack of a central deity or pantheon, in the traditional sense, causes it to be sometimes called an "atheistic religion." Historically, though, Buddhism has made mention of traditional Indian

THE TROUBLE WITH BUDDHISTS

It's that first precept. It's just about impossible to be a great action hero without harming living creatures. It's therefore hard to play a truly Buddhist PC in *Feng Shui*.

Of course, lots of heroic bad-asses subscribe to religions that discourage or forbid violence on paper. The trick is to either feel bad afterwards (see numerous action movie confessional scenes), or to nobly accept the comeuppance that comes from heresy for the sake of the greater good (thereby playing the heroic/tragic martyr). The key to making it work is the dialogue; you've got to have a capacity to dramatically, even tearfully, explain why you've chosen vengeance over faith, why you regret shooting this mook even while you're shooting him, or how you've become a defender of the Ten Precepts by defying them with steel. You'll have to do it a lot, without boring the heck out of everyone else at the table.

Just being an ex-Buddhist is probably enough. Maybe your character used to be a Buddhist monk, until her monastery was burned to the ground and she decided to get revenge. Maybe it all goes back even further than that, and your character used to be a cold-hearted assassin, but is *now* a Buddhist monk. Sure, it won't last, but you'll get to play up the great scene(s) when your character transitions back into the gun-battling ways of her former life—whether it's for all the right reasons or not. Your character doesn't have to be a very good Buddhist to derive melodramatic hooks and characterizations from Buddhism. It's just one more good reason to fight.

gods in its legends and writings. Even if you decide Buddhism is an atheistic religion, do not mistake it for one without a deeply complex spiritual dogma or moral code.

For common Buddhists, the Five Precepts (1–5, at left) are the center of the religion's moral code. On holy days, lay Buddhists may be expected to observe up to eight or ten of the precepts. For Buddhist monks, all of the Ten Precepts must be dutifully respected. Beyond that, another 220 or so monastic rules guide a monk's life.

Everyone dies. In the meantime, Buddhists practice a philosophy of life first outlined by the Buddha himself, called the Eightfold Path. As a lifestyle, the Eightfold Path helps practitioners become wise, moral, and focused individuals. As a spiritual course, it guides Buddhists towards enlightenment and bodhisattva-hood.

SEVEN UNENLIGHTENED BASTARDS

Among fledgling Buddhists and common worshippers, the legendary Seven Unenlightened are a folk tale, a myth told to describe the dangers of deviation from the Eightfold Path. In underground martial arts circles and criminal syndicates, they're known as outcasts and traitors, as avatars of misplaced trust. Among Hong Kong's Secret Warriors, they're known as restless thieves, treacherous assassins, and faithless bastards. Everything everyone says about them is right. These miserable scumbags are the antithesis of good Buddhists, and they're out there working for yet another foolish crime lord and planning their next betrayal. If you meet them, do the rest of the world a favor, and kill them.

They say they're brothers, but that's bull. The Seven Unenlightened were all monks at a Buddhist monastery in Cambodia until they came to Hong Kong on a charity mission and were somehow—through some craving—corrupted. Innerwalkers say they stumbled into some Netherworld hell. Underground HK sorcerers say they were tricked by some powerful demon into giving up their souls. Buddhists say they were tainted by desire, and succumbed to raw human urges; the Seven Unenlightened are what we all can become if we do not observe the wisdom of the Buddha. The Seven Unenlightened aren't talking, so all anyone can do is guess.

Once there were eight of them, but when they gave up on their charitable mission and set out to amass their immoral fortunes, the Seven killed the eighth, who refused to go along with them. Each of the remaining seven personifies one part of the Eightfold Path gone wrong:

Lim Po is the Master of Wrong Thought. He's a cruel hedonist, an expert at torture, and a scholar of human depravity. He's a competent martial artist and amateur sorcerer.

Chun Lao is the Voice of Wrong Speech, the Liar of Hong Kong. He is a thief, a gambler, and a sly hand with a garrote.

Kao Xi is the Master of Brutality, an exceptional martial artist and unparalleled gunman. He's never needed more than one bullet to kill any enemy, according to legend. He is a bloodthirsty lush, always brawling, fighting, whoring, and abusing.

Hom Che is Head of the Flesh Market. The worst of Hong Kong's most awful professions get their goods from him: poached animals, prostitutes, drugs, guns, whatever. They say he's been a hundred gunfights and never been hit.

Harold Hark is the Viceroy of Sin. He is the coordinator for his Seven "brothers," their agent and publicist. He handles deals and takes meetings. Supposedly, he's a black magician, too.

Chon Hu is the Evil Mind. He's the strategist and scholar of the lot. He never fights, and no one gets close enough to try.

Ming Zu is the Master of Black Focus. All that's known of him is his capacity for turning good people into sinners against their own will. His very presence drives innocents to crime.



HONG KONG'S OTHER RELIGIONS

While it is indeed true that **Confucianism** is widely considered the third part of the Chinese religious triptych, it is not nearly as ubiquitous as either Buddhism or Taoism—any given city might have two or three temples dedicated solely to him. Confucius receives one grand holiday a year, wherein students and scholars pray to him for blessings with their academic endeavors. On his birthday, petitioners have been known to pluck the hairs from a sacrificial pig. Doing so invests the plucker with Confucian wisdom and knowledge. Generally speaking, though, the population at large doesn't so much worship him as honor him.

Islam has a large number of followers in Hong Kong. The 70,000 Muslims living and working in the city are comprised of Mainland Chinese, plus Middle Eastern and South-East Asian immigrants. The oldest mosque is *Jamiathe Masjid*, or the Shelley Street Mosque, in Central, built in 1890. Others include one in Stanley Prison built to serve the needs of incarcerated Muslims and another on Nathan Road in Kowloon, which is spacious

enough to accommodate up to 2,000 worshippers (or an elegant gun ballet).

One of the lesser-known religions in the region is **Sikhism**. During the height of modern British colonial expansion, the crown employed quite a number of Sikhs from the Punjab region of India. They have long had a reputation for discipline and honor, and their professional soldiers continue to be some of the best in the world. The British military gave thousands of them a home in Hong Kong. Understandably, they left an indelible impression on the local culture. The Happy Valley *gurdwara* is probably the most important of the three serving the 8,000 members of the local Sikh population.

Finally, there is **Christianity**. With more than 150,000 Catholic migrant workers from the Philippines alone (most of whom are amahs—nurses or wet maids), plus another 100,000 Catholics and 250,000 Protestants from other countries, this imported belief system makes up a whopping 7% of Hong Kong's total population. Christian churches can be found easily in just about every district, though. The largest of them is St. John's Cathedral in Central on the main island.



TEMPLE ETIQUETTE

You know the old saying, “When in Rome, *yadda yadda yadda*?” Well, Hong Kong isn’t Rome. Accustomed as they are to the touristy comings and goings of outsiders, Hong Kongers don’t really expect anyone to conform to their culture. Temple-keepers may even expect you to act like a confused philistine and not know how to behave at first, so just ask for help if you need it.

Still, there are a few rules of etiquette you should observe inside a Chinese temple if you’re a non-believer. Offending a worshipper is pretty bad, but offending a temple’s gods is much worse—possibly resulting in a loss of Fortune (or your life) if you’re especially egregious. Here are a few dos and don’ts for well-mannered temple visitors:

- Only a sorcerer, priest, or sanctified layperson may touch a deity’s effigy. If anyone else does, it must be replaced at great time, expense, and effort. The offending party may even be asked to replace it himself; if he refuses, he risks exposure to horrendous luck and danger for the rest of his life. Priests believe the best effigies are acquired through considerable physical and spiritual exertion. Ideally, they should come from the Inner Kingdom.
- If you stand directly in front of an effigy, put your hands together and bow briefly to show proper respect. You are, after all, in a god’s house.
- People with surnames directly related to the 12 ancient lineages of the Chinese zodiac are forbidden from entering temples. For Western tourists this is generally not a problem, but for locals it can be a headache. Fortunately, few temples enforce this rather obscure restriction anymore. Every once in a while, though, a particularly enlightened temple monk recognizes a petitioner’s aura for what it is and feels compelled to take action.
- Similarly, people born in a year in opposition to the current year (what would Chuang-Tzu say?) may not be allowed to enter certain temples under any conditions. For example, a person born in the Year of the Dog wouldn’t be allowed into the temple during the Year of the Dragon, because the dragon is the dog’s natural antithesis.
- Prayers are accompanied by offerings of fruit and other foods on holidays. Meat is an acceptable offering for Taoists (well-endowed roosters work bloody wonders, apparently) but this is definitely not the case for Buddhists.
- Menstruating women are forbidden from entering Taoist temples. Buddhist temples do not have such a prohibition.

Ghost money is a form of spiritual currency: a yellow paper bill decorated with auspicious writings and symbols. It’s traded to spirits in exchange for services rendered (good favor, usually). To spend it, burn it. That deposits it into your spiritual account. Wealthy folks burn the stuff by the bale, presumably to reach a higher class of heavenly being.

- Making a comestible sacrifice shows respect and piety. If you want to make a significant request of the gods, then burn a pile of ghost money (sometimes called “Hell Bank notes”) instead. Ghost money should also be burned on the 1st and 15th days of the lunar month, as well as on important Taoist holidays. Buddhists do not believe in this form of spiritual bribery.
- The laity may consume food offerings after a sacrifice; once the gods have accepted an item’s spiritual essence, it is of no more use for them.

Faux Pas of the Gods

Insult a temple deity, and you’ve got all manner of problems. Breech the etiquette above, and you can expect spiritual repercussion until you make amends. Repercussions can come in many forms, but the most common is bad luck. In the game, that can mean extra negative dice on actions related to the purview of an angry spirit, a constant –1 AV on everything, or just the need to make a lot of Fortune checks with high Difficulties. When you finally set things right—by apologizing, making a sufficient offering, or completing some job for the spirit as mandated by his priestly agents—things go back to normal.

Of course, this being *Feng Shui*, it’s likely that spiritually offensive actions will take place during a fight in the temple. In that case, local spirits may just manifest and join the scrap themselves to knock all the offending heads around a bit. It takes a special kind of pissed-off spirit to do that, though.

TEMPLES

Hong Kong has no less than 600 temples. Every neighborhood seems to possess one or more blindingly garish Taoist temples. Dragons, phoenixes, and other supernatural beasts cling to their gently sloping roofs—supernatural gargoyles designed to ward off malicious spirits. Iron pots plated in brass, bronze, or gold shed lazy smoke from the miniature forests of incense sticks jammed into them. Rosewood or teak altars bear the fanciful (sometimes terrifying) likenesses of the gods, goddesses, and demons to which they are dedicated. They range in size from the intimate (built in the gap between two buildings, large enough for a small table and one effigy) to the grand (Wong Tai Sin, with property as large as a small skyscraper). By far the most prevalent deity in the city is Tin Hau, the goddess of the sea. Buddhist temples are less garish than their Taoist counterparts as well as less numerous. A typical Buddhist temple serves more worshippers than the typical Taoist temple. Taoist temples are generally dedicated to neighborhood deities, whereas Buddhist temples are dedicated just to the Buddhas.

Man Mo

SHEUNG WAN—Built on Hollywood Road in 1848, this temple houses both the god of literature and civil service, Man Cheung, and the god of martial arts and war, Kwan Yu. Before the British established their own rule of law on the island, Hong Kong residents brought legal troubles to this temple. In fact, it was common during the Qing Dynasty to bring disputes to regional temples, which substituted for the bureaucratic courts of the day, especially in out-of-the-way villages. Despite Man Mo's location near the city's financial heart, it still receives a large number of traditionalist worshippers. Seeing as Kwan Yu is considered the patron saint of law enforcement *and* crime, don't be surprised if you suddenly find yourself flanked by a small platoon of tattooed thugs or police (at the same time!) solemnly lifting smoldering incense sticks to their brows in prayer while you're busy navel-gazing or arranging top secret business deals in one of the quieter vestibules.

Large, spiral coils of fragrant incense hang from the ceiling in the central hall. Incense sticks smolder in iron pots on the floor before the raised dais supporting temple effigies. The side hall is not as wide as the main one, nor does it share its precipitously suspended Damoclean coils. It does contain the likenesses of minor gods and demons allied with Man Cheung and Kwan Yu, with altars of polished rosewood. Hidden between the two halls in a thin corridor reserved for the temple caretakers is a small man-hole cover, unlockable only through skilled use of the Divination magic (Difficulty 15). The tunnel below leads down to a damp basement. A group of six exiled Tibetan monks sits in a circle there, chanting continuously at all hours of the day around a Mandela formed of colorful sand. Cohorts relieve them every 48 hours. The Mandela is actually a portal that leads to the kitchens of a Tibetan sanctuary in the Netherworld. As long as the chanting persists, the portal stays open.

Fortune-tellers sometimes set up tables inside the temple courtyard. After praying to either god, you may shake a

Green Egg, Former Maverick Cop

Sample Dialogue: "You don't scare me, sonny."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Per 9), Ref 8

Skills: Driving 13, Guns 17, Info: Gangland 16, Martial Arts 11, Police 16

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing, Fast Draw, Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs, Lightning Reload

Weapons: Browning High Power (10/2/13 +1), Colt Detective Special (9/1/6)

fortune stick out of a bamboo canister. One of the diviers will interpret it, for a small fee. If you do this, make a Fortune check with an Open Roll. If you beat Difficulty 8, you gain an additional 2 Fortune dice for the session. If you get a negative Outcome, the GM will give you an extra negative die on some check before the session is over.

The oldest of the fortune-tellers stakes a claim on Ladder Street, which runs alongside the temple perpendicular to Hollywood Road. He parks his scrawny carcass on a bamboo stool in front of a wobbly cardboard table and answers to the name "Green Egg." Though he claims to be 112 years old, he doesn't appear a day over 110. A scarred hole takes the place of his left eye. In its place is a moldy green "iron egg," claiming it grants him mystical "second sight." It doesn't; he's as mundane as mundane gets. But he's not completely worthless. In his youth, Green Egg was a high-ranking officer in the Hong Kong police force. Too bad for him his innumerable Triad connections ultimately resulted in his expulsion from the force and a 10-year incarceration in Stanley Prison. Since his release 41 years ago, he's been working the area around Man Mo. His divinations are total crap, but his connections to the gangs, who believe his insights, are good as ever. If you need an introduction to the 14k or the Bamboo Union, you could do a lot worse than the Egg.

Tin Hau

YAU MA TEI—This garish religious complex comprised of five individual temple buildings is located in the heart of the Kowloon peninsula. All told, it houses at least fifteen distinct deities. The primary dedication is to Tin Hau, goddess of fisher folk and the sea. Her effigy sits in the main hall, accompanied by 60 smaller variants, one for each year of the Taoist cyclical calendar. Other deities in the adjoining temples are: Shing Wong, the deity of urban development; the Ten Judges of the Underworld, whose bestial heads planted atop human bodies are a constant source of nightmares for children and adults alike; Fook Tak, one of innumerable gods representing the earth; Kuan Yin, the Buddhist saint of mercy, thoughtfully incorporated into the Taoist pantheon “just in case;” and Shea Tan, the local community’s guardian warrior spirit. Fishermen, (especially the Tanka) come to Tin Hau to pray for good weather and ripe waters. Petitioners devoutly place short stacks of unburnt ghost money under the Tin Hau “mini-me” according to the year in which they were born.

The Underworld Judges are believed to be transformed animals. As such, members of the Ascended are allowed to enter only this section of the temple complex, provided they can overcome their deep-seated fears of magic. The Judges’ main hall is a haven for animals that have reverted permanently back to their animal forms. Locals tolerate them so long as they keep to themselves (although on certain holidays the animals make themselves scarce lest they inadvertently become sacrificial offerings). A taupe- and white-striped tabby cat lives beneath the main altar, a stray dog named “Harbor Breath” lolls lazily in the temple doorway, a rather daft iguana convinced it’s a giant radioactive dragon balefully watches everything from atop a musty curio cabinet in the back, and a hairless chimpanzee nicknamed “Uncle Oubliette” parades around in squeaky rubber galoshes and frayed telephone cables when he’s not selling maps of the city’s sewer system from a toilet stall in the men’s bathroom for HK\$10 apiece.

Uncle Oubliette is really a refugee from the future, his journey to Hong Kong from the Netherworld having taken a long, circuitous route during which he lost all memories of his former life. The two or three Jammers who still remember him think he could have been a part of Operation Killdeer

Uncle Oubliette, Transformed Monkey

Sample Dialogue: “Wowzers! Get a load of the charlies on that bird! Uh, I mean...*ook, ook, ook!*”

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 7 (For 4), Mnd 5 (Cha 9), Ref 8

Skills: Guns 11, Info: History 10, Info: Cartography 13, Martial Arts 14

Schticks: Bounce (x2), Caper, Throw

and somehow lost his marbles when the timelines shifted. He learned early on in his exile at the temple not to act too abnormally, lest he raise suspicion. Given his amnesia, it’s hardly surprising he considers himself a semi-reverted transformed animal; except he has an obsession with arcanowave devices, unlike a good, magic-fearing tranimal.

If you pray to Tin Hau, make a Willpower check (Difficulty 10). On a successful roll, you gain a +4 AV bonus to all Sorcery (Weather) checks for the next week. This blessing may only be received once per month. In the case of a catastrophic failure, all Sorcery (Weather) checks suffer a -4 penalty for the following month. Sorcerers on the Tin Hau grounds always gain a +1 bonus to Sorcery checks for Weather spells.

Wong Tai Sin

KOWLOON CITY—During his mortal life, Wong Tai Sin discovered the sacred Elixir of Eternal Life. Traditionally, he assumes the role of the Chinese



Hippocrates, overseeing (in conjunction with the Yellow Emperor) all things related to health and healing. In time, though, his Hong Kong temple took on a new—and, for most residents, vastly more important—role: luck.

A concrete arch at the top of a short flight of stairs in an exterior courtyard makes up the temple's primary entrance. As you pass under the arch, you enter a smaller courtyard facing the three sacred chambers of the main hall. Its red and gold walls stand out in stark contrast to the greenery of the surrounding garden. A long windowless building housing nearly 150 fortune-tellers in thin cubicles runs alongside it. Other, smaller buildings in and around the complex include a library containing the collected teachings of Wong Tai Sin, a memorial hall for storing the death-tablets of deceased Taoists, a Confucian temple, and a hall dedicated three times over to the Buddhist goddess of mercy, the Taoist god of war, and an immortal saint. At the back of the temple is a quiet park called the Nine Dragons Garden. Its numerous pagodas, stone formations, and waterfalls lend it an air of serenity.

Hordes of people come to the temple's expansive courtyard every day to petition the gods for fame, fortune, and luck. Noise from the constant rattling of *chim*—wooden boxes shaken while selecting a piece of wood inscribed with a propitious number for one of the many fortune-tellers to interpret—puts a damper on conversation and overrides all background sounds. A thick haze of charcoal-flavored incense smoke chokes the air—a by-product of so many heartfelt prayers sent to Heaven during business hours.

The land on which the temple is built is a natural aggregate of ley lines called "dragon veins" (*long mai*). As a result, the feng shui of the site is excellent. Praying to Wong Tai Sin gives you an automatic success on one check of your choice during the next 24 hours, provided that check will net you money. You may only receive this blessing once per month. Additional prayers don't have any other effect, though such piety will undoubtedly be noticed and appreciated once you're dead.

The Guiding Hand secretly controls Wong Tai Sin temple. On any given day, a least fifteen disguised Hand combatants are on site (two of which are the temple secretaries). Hand members sometimes dress in old-fashioned, anachronistic garb. Strangely, this does not garner any second glances, as that tends to be the norm for many priests and traditionalists.

A washed-up gambler named Kenwood "Kenny" Tong can sometimes be found sleeping in one of the many pagodas in the temple garden, habitually reeking of stale booze, boiled vegetables, and urine. Famous in the late '80s and early '90s for winning the International Gambling Championship in Macau for 9 years straight, the man's luck turned for the worse when Roger Fu devastated him at the 1994 European Baccarat Championship in Monaco. Tong has been down and out ever since. The former "god of gamblers" is quite shameless, loudly and obnoxiously begging for money to spend on lottery tickets, so he can win cash to spend on food and drinks. Kenny's incredible run of good luck was the result of his accidental attunement to the feng shui of Wong Tai Sin, during a marathon meditation session in 1985. When the Guiding Hand took over the temple, he was forcibly de-attuned and has been suffering from bad luck ever since.

Kenwood "Kenny" Tong, Gambler

Sample Dialogue: "Big money, big money, no whammies!"

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 3 (For 7), Mnd 7 (Cha 9), Ref 7

Skills: Gambling 15, Guns 15, Martial Arts 13, Seduction 16

Schticks: Fast Draw

Unique Schtick: Gambler (see *Feng Shui*)

Weapons: Colt 1911A (10/2/7 +1), punch (6)

Temple Secretary, Historical Henchman

Sample Dialogue: "You'll have to make an appointment."

Attributes: Bod 6, Chi 1 (Fu 3), Mnd 4, Ref 6

Skills: Intimidation 9, Martial Arts 9

Schticks: Claw of the Tiger, Tiger Stance

Weapons: Punch (7), kick (8)

Temple Roustabout, Modern Mook

Sample Dialogue: "That looks like it hurt. Want me to do it again?"

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 4, Ref 5

Skills: Guns 8, Intimidation 8, Martial Arts 6

Weapons: Revolver (9/2/6), punch (6), kick (7)

Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb

SHAM SHUI PO—In Hong Kong and other parts of China where land is at a premium, government housing is some of the most sought after. It tends to be affordable, prestigious, and spacious. When the Hong Kong government decided to create new housing projects in the 1950s, the Lei Cheng Uk estate was one of the first to be designated. However, in 1955, as engineers cleared away a portion of the hill on Tonkin Street, they made an amazing discovery: the remains of a Later Han Dynasty burial tomb—the only one of its kind ever found in Hong Kong. The public housing estate was built on another plot, and a government-funded museum dedicated to preserving the tomb was established on the Tonkin Street hill.

Blacksnake, Furious Ogre

Sample Dialogue: "Gwrrr! Come here!"

Attributes: Bod 12, Chi 0 (Mag 3), Mnd 3 (Per 6, Wil 7), Ref 6

Skills: Creature Powers 12, Intimidation 16, Martial Arts 18

Schticks: Death Resistance (x3), Rancid Breath (Damage 13)

Unique Schtick: *Skull Yolks:* Every skull Blacksnake breaks open releases chi which he can slurp up to make a Heal check using his Creature Powers skill, instead of Sorcery.

Weapons: Guang dao polearm (16), kick (14), punch (13)

Although the cross-shaped brick mound of the tomb is off-limits to visitors, you can view portions of its interior through Plexiglas windows. The central chamber, shaped like a tall beehive, rises dramatically above the side and rear chambers. A few scholars believe the tomb's chambers possess unique acoustic properties, but because the government sealed it off no one has had the opportunity to test this theory. Eighty of the tomb's original artifacts are on exhibit inside the five rooms of the one-story museum next door, along with seasonal exhibits on loan from other museums.

The official story of the tomb is that it was built for an officer who died serving in a Han military garrison sometime around 60 or 70 AD, but the truth is it was constructed to be a prison for a mountain ogre (*wang liang*) named Blacksnake. The ogre went on a rampage in 68 or 69 AD, and for almost a full year the population of Guangdong province lived in fear of him. He never intended to become a mass murderer, but after locals beheaded his glorious dragon lover, Snowriver, he felt compelled to exact revenge upon all humans.

Blacksnake struck in the dead of night, sometimes as many as three or four times, and always without plan or pattern. His victims ranged far and wide, coming from all strata of society. The one thing they all had in common, in the end, was that their heads had been split open and their brains removed (and presumably consumed). A Fukienese sorcerer eventually put an end to the ogre's berserking, but not before he had claimed more than 500 lives. The sorcerer buried the ogre deep below the earth, in direct violation of the magistrate's order to utterly destroy him—but exactly as the Eaters of the Lotus commanded. He bound Blacksnake with blessed chains and chi energy channeled through a the cross-shaped structure he built over the ogre's pit. The tomb was designed to amplify the chi flowing through it and prevent Blacksnake from ever escaping. Over the centuries, the feng shui around the tomb has become irreparably tainted because of the ogre's presence. If someone ever attunes to the place's meager feng shui, Blacksnake will be released.

Kai Fong Lam, Would-Be Goddess

Sample Dialogue: "You know, I'm, like, a goddess and stuff. Really."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 9 (For 0), Mnd 6, Ref 7

Skills: Info: Anatomy 11, Info: History 10, Info: Mythology 10, Info: Eastern Philosophy 13, Leadership 8, Martial Arts 18

Schticks: Friend of Darkness, Dark's Soft Whisper, Blade of Darkness, Gathering of the Darkness, Strike From the Darkness

Unique Schtick: Plucking Eyes: With a Martial Arts Outcome of 7 or better, Kai Fong Lam plucks out an eyeball, reducing her victim's Perception by half. If she does it twice, her victim is blind.

Weapons: Dagger (8)

Devoted Attendants

Sample Dialogue: "As mistress commands."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 4, Ref 5

Skills: Guns 6, Intimidation 8, Martial Arts 8

Weapons: Dagger (8)

Kai Fong Lam

NEW TERRITORIES—At the outermost edge of the SAR, along the border shared with Shenzhen, is a small temple dedicated to a goddess known to just a handful people: Kai Fong Lam, the Harvester of Eyes. The temple is not easy to find; it stands in a hidden courtyard, a paltry 20 meters wide, between two old tenements. It is accessible by a winding narrow corridor running through the dark shadows cast by 12 stories of caged balconies and laundry, littered with metallic debris from the nearby bicycle factory. The temple itself is nothing more than a red brick shed capped by a sloping roof of fading gold tiles. A tiny *jin ting* (ghost money oven) and altar are inside the shed, with no effigy to worship. Corrugated plastic sheets bolted to the building's inner walls shield the temple from prying highs in the flats above.

Unlike other temples, the goddess who resides here is not a spiritual being, but an 18-year-old woman believed by her clan to be the reincarnation of Kai Fong Lam, like every daughter on her mother's side before her. The girl, Sally Yan, thinks she has seen and done everything. She remembers each lifetime as if it happened yesterday.

For whatever reason, she has a thing for eyeballs. (Not a sexual thing, but one of those perverse serial-killer things.) She believes eyes are the windows to the soul. She and her two attendants (cousins on her father's side of the family) drive from town to town one night a week to pluck the eyeballs from teenage boys and girls. Back at the temple, they place the eyes on a scorching hot brazier and recite the glories of Kai Fong Lam's past incarnations as their grisly trophies sizzle into bloody goo. When her true form is finally realized—when she has enough eyes—she will become an immortal god.

No one in her clan (including her two attendants, who literally worship the ground upon which she walks) is one hundred percent sure she's the real deal. They hope she is, though, and know of only one way to find out...



HONG KONG'S FENG SHUI

There's an apartment block in Repulse Bay with a hole through the middle of it. It sits in a nice spot, between the water and some picturesque hills, but its feng shui was awful. Back when it was part of a local hotel—before the hole went through it—business was lousy. The operation was in danger of going under. Geomancers were called in. It was soon discovered the building was blocking the flow of energy down from the hills to the water; the mountain dragons could not drink. So a hole, lined with windows and balconies, was made in the building, through which the dragons could move back and forth from the water. Everything seems fine at the apartment block now.

For years, the Hong Kong Bank owned the space in front of its building, so it could keep the area clear of competing structures and maintain the harmonious arrangement of feng shui for its headquarters: gardens and water in front, mountain behind. Land reclamation projects, however, created more and more real estate between the HK Bank building and the water, and the Bank had to keep buying it up to maintain its feng shui (and the power of those attuned to the building). Then a wise newcomer to HK, a Lodge member sent to modernize Ascended operations in the area in 1997,

devised a way to maintain the site and the HK Bank's good standing with the city. They donated all the land between the building and the sea to the city, under the condition that the land would forever stay a public park space—that it would forever preserve the feng shui of the site.

Even to ordinary citizens not involved in the Secret War, feng shui is serious business in Hong Kong. It compels the giants of business to shell out huge sums of money, it mandates the position of office furniture and interior decorations, and it influences all sectors of life—love, health, prosperity.

It's also great cover for the chi-fanatical factions of the time war. Whereas business moguls in the Order of the Wheel may seem out of touch or obtuse if they obsess over the opinions of some highly-paid interior decorator, Jade Wheel Society members seem downright prudent in doing so. Feng shui sites can be modified in Hong Kong using official channels—construction contractors, paid geomancers, aerial photography—and honest accounting. In Chicago, the Ascended worry about making headlines (and tipping off their enemies) when they modify major real estate. In Hong Kong, the augmentation of major feng shui sites is lost in the hubub of the city's constant alterations.

Finding and monitoring important feng shui sites in Hong Kong therefore requires careful observation and investigation. Most of the city's feng shui sites are already taken—but not all of them. The same background noise that protects the moves of the big players completely obscures the smaller operator. The proper use and care of many small

feng shui sites can create power to rival that of a major site, with patience, skill, and luck. More importantly, certain feng shui sites—those with centuries of powerful chi influence, those with natural peculiarities, and those with other supernatural interactions—grant strange or specialized effects to the attuned.

Feng Shui Site Effects

It's not practical to list Hong Kong's feng shui sites. Besides, the ones really important to your *Feng Shui* series get made up by the GM. Here, then, are a few ideas for general sites and special benefits for attunement to them. Use them as a basis for your own ideas, and watch out for more of these in future books. Unless otherwise noted, these benefits are in addition to the three extra experience points granted for attunement. (Hint: By taking one of these and pairing it with any other shop, building, park, or restaurant in the book, you've got a feng shui site.)

Animal Influence

A site that resembles an animal (the shrimp site in the *Feng Shui* rulebook, for example), or a site that is favored by a particular animal (e.g., cranes at a marshland) may allow transformed animals to purchase transformed animal schticks for one less experience point. Alternately, fu schticks with that animal's name in them (e.g. Tiger Stance) may be purchased for one less experience point instead.

Arcane Site

Certain sites imbued with magical energies (former Netherworld portals, major Taoist shrines, etc.) allow attuned characters to adjust the juncture modifier for Sorcery checks within the site by one or two points.

High-Rise Site

The tops of a few tall buildings can be considered different sites from the rest of the building. Such high places grant vision and an

In the middle of the twentieth century, Communist China officially proclaimed feng shui to be a superstition and banned its practice as a profession. The country's masters of geomancy were driven out, mostly to Hong Kong. While much of Asia—and people throughout the world—continue to embrace the powers of feng shui, Hong Kong has become the geomantic capital of the PRC. An estimated 90% of HK inhabitants believe in it, and the world's premiere practitioners live and work here. What Paris is to fashion, Hong Kong is to the quasi-scientific study of chi flow and thirsty dragons.

improved perspective to attuned characters. This increased visibility manifests as a +2 bonus to the Perception attribute of attuned characters.

Holy Site

Temples and other holy sites may house favorable spirits may consult with attuned characters, effectively giving them use of the Divination schtick's Prediction effect with an AV of 10 while they're at the site.

Medicinal Site

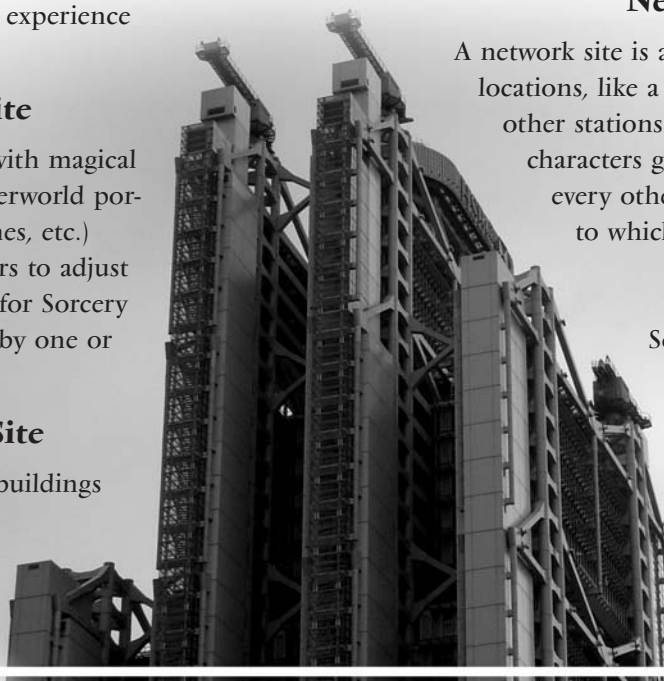
A site with physical medicinal elements in place, such as a hospital or a patch of tonic herbs, might grant attuned characters the Death Resistance Creature schtick.

Network Site

A network site is any one in a larger circuit of locations, like a subway station, even if the other stations aren't feng shui sites. Attuned characters gain +1 experience point for every other feng shui site on the circuit to which they're attuned.

Shoreline Site

Some sites located where the shore meets the sea—and there are many such sites throughout the Hong Kong Islands—allow all those attuned to them to use the Weather schtick with an AV of 12, when standing on the site.



HAUNTED HONG KONG

Every city has its share of famous (and infamous) hauntings. Hong Kong is no exception. Almost every neighborhood claims to have a malicious ghost, but the average haunting is nothing of the sort. In an effort to curb the constant harassment police dispatchers received from people crying wolf over imaginary ghosts or demonic possession, the Hong Kong Police Department set up a special unit of Taoist priests to handle spiritual matters on their behalf. The unit, called Section 44, has been quite successful. In its first year alone, it debunked 95% of its calls. The remaining 5% seem to have been genuine. Those hauntings were either left alone (for reasons the unit kept to itself), or quickly exorcised. Nonetheless, new hauntings crop up practically every day. Saddled with a budget that allows for only 14 paid investigators over a jurisdiction encompassing the entire SAR, Section 44 is expected to solve modern disturbances, unsolved mysteries, and hundred-year-old crimes.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital

KOWLOON CITY—Bruce Lee, the founder of the martial arts style Jeet Kun Do, died here on July 20, 1974. Many people say his shade haunts its corridors. Official autopsy reports read “death by misadventure,” but the forensic specialist who examined Lee believed he died from an allergic reaction to meprobamate, a standard ingredient of the Equagesic aspirin pill Lee had swallowed earlier that day. Some people claim he died of a curse put on him by rival action film star Charlie Long, while others (and a Hollywood biopic) attribute his death to a wicked demon thought to have been plaguing his family for decades. A section in the police report, which was never made public, notes that the nurse on duty at the time of Lee’s death discovered a mysterious *I-Ching* hexagram written in white chalk beneath his bed, although how this could have killed him is unknown. Whatever the truth is, the room in the Kowloon hospital where he died has become an unofficial shrine for die-hard fans and students of the martial arts.

The security at Queen Elizabeth is extremely tight. If you do attempt to complete your pilgrimage there, you’ll need to be ultra-sneaky to avoid trespassing charges. If that’s a problem, you can always wuss out and visit the Bruce Lee Bar and Museum in Central instead.

Over the years, occult-minded Bruce Lee fans have put together this theory: the ghost of Bruce Lee may only transcend from this world to the afterlife when the contract he signed in the earliest days of his career is destroyed or when he fulfills the terms delineated in it, whichever comes first. A mysterious individual named “Mr. Seven” drafted the document in what appears to be blood. It stipulates Bruce must complete one film for a company called Thunder Pagoda Movie City as a means of negating his karmic debt to them from a past life. At the moment, the contract is framed on the wall of the exclusive Billionaire’s Club atop the International Finance Center tower in

Central. North Korean banking representative Park Suk-Hwang owns it. If you’re thinking about stealing it, know that a crack team of North Korean Special Forces Commandos protects him and his property. They also ensure he acts in accordance to his government’s wishes while in Hong Kong. Know also that Kim Mai Yun, “The Thief of Hong Kong,” died trying to get it.

The Ghost of Bruce Lee

Sample Dialogue: “Relax your mind. Free your spirit. Fight without fighting.”

Skills: Creature Powers 20, Info: Jeet Kun Do 25, Martial Arts 20

Unique Schtick: *Always the Dragon:* Bruce Lee’s ghost isn’t an apparition or phantasm. It’s a positive essence which inhabits those who reach the site of his death and meditate on his teachings. With a successful Info: Jeet Kun Do check (Difficulty 15) made at his hospital shrine, you gain the skills above and the spiritual guidance of Bruce Lee for one fight. Plus your fists deal 10 damage as long as that fight lasts. Oh, you get the Absorption Creature Schtick for that fight, too. Be like water, my friend.

The Jumbo Seafood Restaurant

ABERDEEN—Beneath this famous floating restaurant in Aberdeen Harbor lie the remains of the *Golden Comeback*, a pirate junk of no small repute during the 1840s, before British cannons destroyed her. A pod of white dolphins (a species unique to China and the South China Sea, colloquially called “sea pandas”) makes the space around the sunken boat their home. Oceanic silt covers much of its

ruined frame. If you believe the stories, fourteen slender skeletons are chained to the boat's gunwales, beneath the sea sludge. These dead women were imperial concubines kidnapped from their palaces in Beijing and bound to the ship to deter a British attack. It didn't work. The waters below the Jumbo Seafood Restaurant are swelling with the ladies' damp screams of horror.

According to a fragment of an obscure religious document discovered in the Forbidden City by historians in 1974, the concubines each possessed one of Gautama Buddha's finger bones and, as everyone knows, whosoever holds a piece of the Buddha cannot die. Three years ago, a yacht carrying antiques stolen from the Mainland went down in a thunderstorm less than a mile away from the sunken junk. One such antique was the Boneflower Chalice, an ornately embossed drinking cup made from the Gautama Buddha's skullcap.

The mystical resonance shed by the chalice has been agitating the finger bones dangling from the necks of the dead concubines. With each passing month, the bones grow magically "hotter." The concubine ghosts were mad to begin with, but lately their collective insanity has grown to epic proportions because of the resonance. If they get free of their chains, they'll terrorize HK. In the meantime, the waters of Aberdeen Harbor are becoming crowded with monsters as the wrath of the concubines taints the sea. Cursed sea life resembling aquatic demons and ghosts of myth are increasingly finding their way into fishing nets. Government officials don't yet know what is wrong with the harbor, but it scares the piss out of them.

If the Buddha's bones are returned to the Nokon Laika monastery in northern India where they belong, a lama can re-consecrate them. The concubines will then rest in piece and the harbor will return to normal.

Undead Imperial Concubines

Sample Dialogue: "Kiss me...Give me your warmth..."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Mov 7), Chi 0 (Mag 7), Mnd 6, Ref 7

Skills: Intimidation 13, Martial Arts 14, Seduction 18

Unique Schtick: *Unending Inevitable Comeback:* Until they're separated from the fingerbones of the Buddha, these ladies get all the Inevitable Comebacks they want.

Weapons: Fingernails (10)

Devil Fish

Attributes: Bod 4 (Mov 6), Chi 0, Mnd 1, Ref 4 (Spd 7)

Skills: Martial Arts 8

Schticks: Damage Immunity: Unarmed (except Fu), Poison (fangs)

Weapons: Fangs (12, poison)

Tsang Tai Uk

NEW TERRITORIES—Quarry-Master Tsang built the eponymous "Mr. Tsang's Big House" some time in the 1840s. This New Territories walled village is one of few historical remnants of Imperial China left in Hong Kong. Thick granite walls surround twin rows of old-style houses. Stubby gray towers rise from the village's four corners. Narrow passageways and miniature courtyards link the houses together, making it possible to traverse the village without ever stepping out into the open. If asked, any one of the village's 300 residents tell you the story about the ghost of a woman named Sing Loi who haunts nearby Lion Rock. In 1918 she committed suicide by leaping to her death from the cliff, a victim of her own shame. Apparently, a charming

con man tricked her into opening the village's north-

ern gate late one night, thus allowing his cohorts to sneak in and steal a priceless jade disc that had been the Sing clan's pride and joy for decades.

Visiting geomancers believe the village should, in theory, possess remarkable feng shui. Were that true, the residents would have become extremely wealthy by now, but this is not the case. The reason is this: after Quarry-Master Tsang built the village, he hired a priest to correct

5 UNSOLVED MYSTERIES IN HONG KONG*

1. **The Roman Crucifixion Murders.** Sammy Lin is a prominent member of the Hong Kong government's executive branch. He's also well known for penning some of the most popular kung-fu novels (the *Dr. Sou & Little Nephew* series) ever written in China. For the past 10 years, police have considered him the prime suspect in a series of grisly serial killings that continue to this day. Nobody, certainly not the police, has been able to prove his involvement, despite a slew of circumstantial evidence linking him to the cases. At least once a year, one of the major magazines or popular news programs runs a piece on Lin and his alleged involvement in the murders. From the nickname alone you can guess how they're carried out. How do Catholicism, HK government, and a successful series of kung-fu novels interact to create a serial killer? Is Lin even the killer at all... or does he know who is?
2. **The ABM Scandal.** In 1999, the ABM Financial Trust Corporation lost over 22 billion dollars (HK), resulting in layoffs that put thousands of people out of work and rocked the Hang Seng Index so hard the local economy is still recovering. At first it looked like another case of embezzlement, but as investigators looked deeper it became apparent the money was paid out to three anonymous individuals in accordance with the terms of an agreement drafted between their equally anonymous grandparents and ABM Corp's founding fathers in the 1850s. The company's longtime accounting firm paid the money out as instructed by the original legally binding agreement. It was also authorized, sight unseen, by the ABM Chief Finance Officer. What was in that contract, anyway, that a successful executive would write billion-dollar checks without question?
3. **The Werewolf of King's Park.** Every full moon in King's Park (Yau Ma Tei), a "werewolf" comes out to terrorize anyone unfortunate enough to be caught there. The creature—if that's what it truly is—doesn't kill its victims. Instead, it eats feet. Victims and witnesses say the werewolf looks real—not at all like a crazy man in a costume—and that he fits the Western concept of the creature exactly. Police have tried repeatedly to catch the werewolf, but it's too canny and too fast for them, always managing to disappear into the side alleys surrounding the park. At least two witnesses have said the werewolf talks, in its fashion, muttering something about identifying the "the Spearbearer" as he chews on their ankles.
4. **Heavenly Needles.** Folks assumed the gods blessed acupuncturist Hoi Ha-San—at least before his rather unlucky death last year. Those who had sessions with him enjoyed amazing luck in the three days following treatment: Some won the state-sponsored lottery, others became overnight millionaires at the racetracks. When word got out about his skills, Hoi's appointment book filled up. Then, last year, his daughter discovered him pinned, dead, to the ceiling of their shop with 10,001 needles. After the police investigation, the needles disappeared from the evidence warehouse. Rumors in the acupuncturist circles say anyone who possesses just one of the needles acquires incredible luck—absorbed during Hoi Ha-San's death. If that's true, then owning all of them could turn a person into a god. When the needles start turning up in other murders throughout the SAR, the police seek out sorcerers to help solve the crime. Is it the work of demons, or is there some sinister underground battle going on between the city's magical acupuncturists?
5. **The God of Extortion.** A mysterious criminal mastermind known only as the God of Extortion plays a cat-and-mouse game with Hong Kong police and politicians. He has a seemingly supernatural ability to gather incriminating and embarrassing evidence against anyone, anywhere, which he's used to make himself millions through blackmail. Twice in the last 5 years he has granted Pearl TV exclusive interviews, with his face and voice disguised, of course. Speculation runs rampant; who is the God of Extortion? Most people think he's a government insider. Others think he's a spirit of reckoning. Where does he get his information... and who's next?

**Good For Journalists, Magic Cops, and Meddling Scrappy Kids*

the land's awkward feng shui by burying four large jade discs at key points around the village perimeter. They channeled beneficial chi from the four cardinal points of the compass. The priest also placed a fifth disc, which represented the Earth, at the exact center of the village, upon a granite pedestal, to act as the focal point for the chi flow. When Sing Loi's con-man lover stole the fifth disc—the only disc anyone in the village knew about by that time—he disrupted the land's balance. Without the central disc, the other four reflect chi out and around the village, generating a perfect mystical void. Sorcery, Fu, Creature, and

Arcanowave powers do not work inside the village as a result.

Shortly before Sing Loi killed herself, she received a letter from her treacherous lover, expressing his regret. "It was not by desire to steal from you," he wrote. "I am too afraid to disobey the Hand." He vowed to return to disc to the village as soon as he could steal it back from the Hand. He never succeeded. To this day, the disc lies embedded in the marble-tiled foyer of the Hand's primary chapter house in Shek O. Sing Loi still awaits the disc's return. Only then can her deep shame be relieved.

Cheung Po Tsai Cave

CHEUNG CHAU ISLAND—At the south end of Cheung Chau Island—a hop, skip, and two jumps to the south of Lantau Island—you’ll find a famous pirate king’s final resting place. At the height of pirate activity in this region, Cheung Po Tsai was probably the worst of the lot. His cruelty and cunning went unmatched for decades in the 15th century until Kamakura Hatoichi, a Japanese assassin in the Emperor’s employ, cornered him in a cave at the island’s southern tip. They fought for 3 straight days. Then, with flashing blades, the assassin viciously gutted Cheung. But the pirate wouldn’t die, at least not right away. He clutched Hatoichi in his hands and drowned him with blood pouring from the fatal wound. Cheung collapsed atop him, dead at last.

The island’s fisherman know better, though. They know the ghosts of both men stalk one another in death, battling each night to mutual defeat on the floor of the cave...until the next night.

For years, treasure hunters have come to the cave to dig for Cheung Po Tsai’s buried treasure, but none have found it. Instead of burying his considerable wealth anywhere on the island, where it could be found and stolen, Cheung hid it in the Netherworld. A crack in the cave ceiling leads out of this world to a perfectly cubic cave marked with archaic Chinese inscriptions from the Han Dynasty. They reference a “Harvester of Eyes,” a foul demonic goddess from a world “beyond the Triple-Tiered Heaven and the Eighteen-Storeyed Hell.” When she returns to the Middle Kingdom, she shall take up her unholy arms and armor from the walls of the treasure chamber and lay waste China.

Good luck warning folks. Neither Cheung nor Hatoichi let anyone who’s seen the treasure get out alive. Pull it off, though, and your wealth level goes straight to Rich.

Cheung Po Tsai, Ghost Pirate

Sample Dialogue: “Killing me won’t make me give it up!”

Attributes: Bod 7 (Str 9), Chi 0 (For 3), Mnd 5, Ref 8

Skills: Creature Powers 12, Deceit 15, Martial Arts 18

Schticks: Insubstantial, Damage Immunity: Bullets (except magic), Death Resistance (x2), Signature Weapon (broadsword)

Weapons: Chinese broadsword (15)

Kamakura Hatoichi, Ghost Assassin

Sample Dialogue: “You will die now, enemy-san.”

Attributes: Bod 7 (Tgh 9), Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Wil 8), Ref 8

Skills: Creature Powers 12, Intimidation 15, Martial Arts 18

Schticks: Insubstantial, Damage Immunity: Bullets (except magic), Death Resistance (x2), Signature Weapon (katana)

Weapons: Katana (13)

SECTION 44

In Chinese, the number 44 is pretty damn unlucky. It sounds like the words for “double dead.” Ask any one of the 14 members assigned to the unit, and they’ll tell you that’s how they feel most of the time. For many of them, the assignment is one step above being fired altogether. Police officers sent to Section 44 have been known to quit their jobs rather than work for a unit that, in their estimation, does nothing more than baby-sit paranoid nut-cases and delusional wackos. Others, namely those who have the gift of second sight (called *yin-yang yen* in Chinese, or “Yin-Yang Eyes”), are initially happy to get a job that takes advantage of their particular and peculiar gift, but all too quickly the feeling fades as reality sinks in. The average ghost, typical demon, or run-of-the-mill psychotic sorcerer are enough to drive even the hardest soul plunging over sanity’s precipice straight into the gaping maw of madness. Section 44, therefore, has the highest turnover rate of any police section—not just in Hong Kong, but the world. (Shanghai comes in a close second, tied with Bangkok).

Section 44 is divided into three specialized sub-units, described on the next page. It’s based out of a Hong Kong Police Department branch office in Ma Tau Wai, on the Kowloon Peninsula. Its headquarters is really nothing more than a seriously dilapidated two-story office building. The basement features a standard compliment of offices, interview (interrogation) rooms, and lead-walled holding cells. A secret door in a disused bathroom near the cells leads down to a hidden basement level, which contains a securely locked portal to the Netherworld. The first floor contains a pair of workout rooms, equipment storage, an armory, a common room, a small kitchen, two toilets, and a surprisingly high-tech meeting room. A couple of mundane police officers assigned to Section 44 from other divisions, a dispatcher, and a secretary can always be found on duty on the first floor. The second floor is where you can find the unit’s “barracks,” a TV room, and game room.

YIN-YANG EYES

The expression “yin-yang eyes” traditionally describes those who can see ghosts and spirits. In modern practice, however, it’s used to describe anyone who has seen a supernatural creature or the workings of magic first-hand, and implies a certain level of experience with, and acceptance of, the existence of the supernatural. You’d say, “He just got his *yin-yang yen*, and’s still a little weirded out.”

Sub-Unit 444: Death Dealers

This is the most feared unit in Section 44, not because its members are such ultra-cool bad-asses (they are), and not because they get the latest in high-technomystical weaponry (they do), but because they regularly go spelunking where sane people dread to tread—down into the deepest, darkest corners of the Netherworld on missions to blast out the roots of evil. That they usually live to tell about it makes them that much more fearsome. They're like the SWAT team from Hell. They know about the portals to different junctures (though they have no jurisdiction in other times), and they're peripherally aware of the Secret War. Thing is, they don't care. Any magically inclined individual or supernatural creature that breaks Hong Kong law is going to answer to the Death Dealers, regardless of his secret politics.

Another of the sub-unit's goals is to shut down HK portals to the Netherworld. They haven't found any reliable way to do this, yet, but they're currently investigating a group of anarchists who might be able to get it done; some splinter faction called "the Dragons."

444: Death Dealer

Sample Dialogue: "Let's resurrect him so I can kill him again."

Attributes: Bod 7 (Tgh 8), Chi 0 (Mag 3), Mnd 5 (Per 6, Wil 8), Ref 6

Skills: Driving 9, Guns 13, Info: Occult 11, Intimidation 11, Martial Arts 10, Medicine 8, Police 11

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing, Fast Draw, Lightning Reload

Weapons: SPAS-12 (13/5/7), Sig-Sauer P-220 (10/2/9+1), punch (8), kick (9)

Sub-Unit 446: Ghost Hunters

The largest of the three sub-units, 446's sole province is crimes dealing with ghosts. They don't always perform exorcisms—the proper course in each case depends on each ghost's particular psychic hang-up. Most ghosts are sent on down the karmic wheel simply by helping them resolve the spiritual issues keeping them anchored to the mortal world.

Of course, there are exceptions. Last year, the unit spent three weeks trying to banish the Crimson Madrigal, an aural manifestation composed of four separate souls intimately bound through shared music. It took eight SWAT guys as back-up and a blown-up electronics store to send the Madrigal packing. Assuming it worked, the unit fears it may manifest again.

Members of the other sub-units and police officers from other departments tease 446 with Dan Aykroyd quotes. To their credit, the Ghost Hunters do what they can to convince others of the seriousness of their charter. Grace Fong, a popular TV reporter, gives them tons of exposure, calling them the city's "X-Heroes." She writes up their adventures in

GROUP SCHTICKS

PC groups and group schticks were introduced and explored in *Friends of the Dragon*. If you don't have that book, don't worry about any of the material in that box to the right—you don't need group schticks to use Section 44 in your game. Just in case you want to give group schticks a shot, here's the rundown on how they work.

Group schticks are possessed by the group as a whole, rather than any one particular character. So long as a PC is a member of Section 44, he enjoys all the benefits of the group schtick on the right. Should he quit (or get fired), he no longer gets to use the group schtick.

Because you might not have (or be using) *Friends of the Dragon* in your *Feng Shui* series, Section 44 has a group schtick that operates a bit differently from an ordinary schtick—each character can improve it himself, without needing to know how to buy group schticks. If a character leaves Section 44, she can still use the group schtick, but she can't improve it any more.

the Friday edition of *Apple Daily* under the pseudonym "Yin Jong." The reason for her loyalty stems from her childhood; after her sister died, Grace and her family were haunted for years. It wasn't until 446 performed the exorcism (and lost three officers) that the Fong family knew peace.

446: Ghost Hunter

Sample Dialogue: "It can still kill *us*, remember. So calm down and listen."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Mov 6), Chi 0 (Mag 4), Mnd 8 (Wil 9), Ref 7 (Spd 8)

Skills: Driving 9, Guns 11, Info: Occult 13, Leadership 11, Martial Arts 9, Medicine 9, Police 11

Schticks: Fast Draw, Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs (x2)

Weapons: Sig-Sauer P-220 (10/2/9+1), punch (6), kick (7)

Sub-Unit 449: Demon Slayers

There are but three members to this unit, which prides itself on efficacy and speed. Demon slaying isn't really all it's cracked up to be—the typical demon is a lot scarier than it is threatening. Lots of demons don't come to our world just to wreak raw, unadulterated havoc like so many people believe. After all, there's no faster way to bring down the wrath of every two-bit sorcerer, priest, and magic cop in all of Southeast Asia than by engaging in crassly overt activities. Instead, smart demons lean toward subtlety and finesse—the slow corruption of all that is good is an endeavor worth their time. The pay off in the long run is substantially higher than, say, eating some poor schlep's family right in front him for the sheer terror factor of it all. Many demons, for example,

HKPD: SECTION 44

Name: Hong Kong Police Department's Section 44, Sub-Sections 444-449

The Pitch: Prevent, debunk, solve, and combat supernatural crime in the SAR.

Juncture: Section 44 operates in the Contemporary juncture, beginning in 1994.

Backstory: Any. There are as many reasons to join (or be sent to) Section 44 as there are ghosts in HK. Many Section 44 cops aren't here by choice, anyway.

Schticks: Section 44 squads get Authority, Back-Up, Headquarters, and Library. Most city cops don't understand why Section 44 is funded at all, but HK cops protect each other, no matter what. Section 44 has all the responsibilities of a Vice or Homicide unit, with half the support.

Special: To be in Section 44, you've got to be employed by the HKPD. You'll need at least one skill bonus in Police. Knowing something about the occult helps, but you'll learn on the job.

Unique Schtick

Yin-Yang Yen: As a member of Section 44, you've already had (or are about to have) an encounter with the supernatural. For you, the Info: Occult skill becomes something you can use to resist Sorcery and Creature schticks, in place of your Magic attribute. Once your Info: Occult AV reaches ten, your very presence imposes a penalty on all Sorcery attempts you specify (usually by shouting, "Freeze!" or "Stop right there!"). The penalty is equal to -1 for every five skill bonuses you have. You'll also find yourself using Info: Occult the way most cops use the Police skill—to identify perps and their paraphernalia.

449: Demon Slayer

Sample Dialogue: "Oh, nice, Xander. You trying to get us killed?"

Attributes: Bod 6 (Str 7, Tgh 8), Chi 1 (Mag 3), Mnd 6 (Wil 8), Ref 6

Skills: Driving 9, Guns 12, Info: Occult 11, Intimidation 8, Martial Arts 12, Medicine 7, Police 11

Schticks: Hands Without Shadow, Lightning Reload (x2)

Weapons: Crossbow (10/5/2+1), sword (10), punch (8), kick (9), .38 special (9/1/6).

have infiltrated the stock exchange and financial sector, where they can use their undue influence to corrupt people on a significantly larger scale. Demonic bodyguards also seem to be common in the entertainment industry.

It's the job of the 449 to dig up HK's demons and make them fight it out. As it happens, though, demons are low on the list of supernatural perps, so the 449 gets a lot of down time.

Sunday night at 11 PM is TV Night. The 449 gathers on the third floor to watch reruns of syndicated action shows on Channel 2. Off-duty firefighters from the station down the street usually join them with a case or four of Carlsberg beer, making for a raucous time. (Everyone knows the only people who throw better parties than cops are firefighters.)

THE ASCENDED AND SECTION 44

With so many police departments in so many cities being controlled by Pledged commissioners and police chiefs, it's a wonder no one in Section 44 knows anything about the Jade Wheel Society or the Pledged. It's true though, and here's why: it's better for the Ascended that way. The investigators of Section 44, and other departments like it around the world, have proven to be unreliable allies; they're just too eager to pull back curtains and stick their noses into every curiosity.

This isn't to say the Ascended ignore Section 44. The department is budgeted to receive an experimental anti-sorcery device next year, a sort of portable generator that emits a field of magic-muffling energy—like a mobile juncture modifier. Section 44 officers aren't sure how it'll work, but they're happy to try it out. If it works, then production may secretly begin on larger versions. But Section 44 doesn't work for the Ascended. No, sir.

Meanwhile, Section 44 officers are curious why wealthy industrialists keep giving them tips on where to find fugitive sorcerers and bloodthirsty monsters. But none of these aristocrats are ever linked to magical practices themselves, so Section 44 has only suspicions to go on.

COPS & GANGSTERS

Despite the popular perception of a wildly corrupt city police force, Hong Kong cops are, generally speaking, pretty straight-laced and honest. This was especially true when the British controlled Hong Kong, but since Mainland China took charge things have begun slipping noticeably. Nevertheless, the corruption that does exist is nothing compared to other countries in Asia (namely Taiwan and Mainland China itself). Of course, there are exceptions; bad seeds always slip through.

The Hong Kong Police Department headquarters is on Hollywood Road, in Central, on Hong Kong Island. Every neighborhood has a police presence, and every district has its own police station. In populous or touristy areas, cops patrolling the street in pairs, on foot, are a common sight. Higher-ranking officers patrol in roving squad cars. Most stations have a small SWAT contingent for the area's special weapons needs, but all Hong Kong cops carry side arms (unlike their British counterparts). Patrol cars have AR-18 semi-automatic rifles securely locked in their boots (i.e., trunks—HK used to be British, remember).

In districts along the water, the police have docks and police boats for patrolling Hong Kong's waterways twenty-four hours a day. They even have a coastal defense museum located in Shau Kei Wan to keep the history of more than six hundred years of sea-going in the South China Seas. In the 1800s, the British military built a fortified redoubt on the hill overlooking Victoria Harbor to protect its eastern approach. The cannons inside the walls helped to keep the residents of the island safe from pirate ships and served as lookouts for inclement weather coming in from the Mainland. The fort even saw action during World War II. Today, a tensile tent covers the redoubt, making it appear to be a much larger structure than it really is. Modern coastal defense ships operate out of

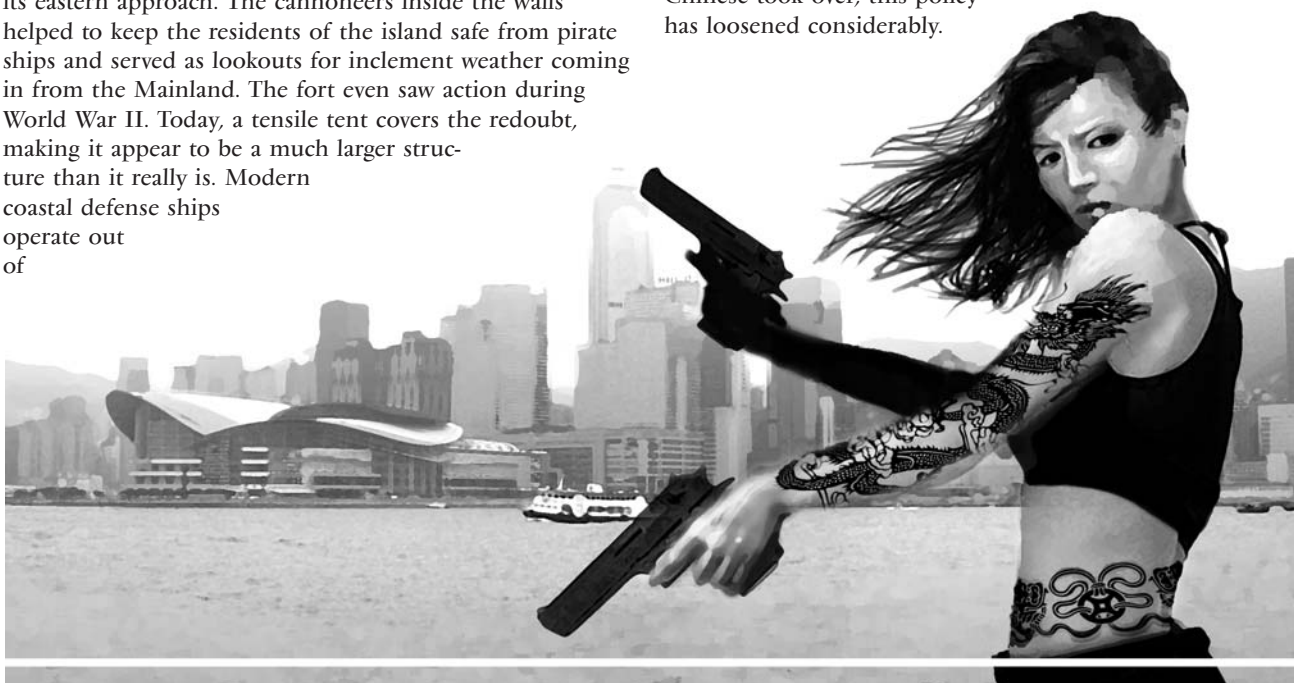
AR-18 Rifle

13*/5/30

This Armalite rifle descends from the AR-15, which hoped to replace the M16 as the standard US military service rifle in the 1960s. Instead, it's become a popular commercial and municipal service weapon, in addition to seeing some use with the IRA (who won it the nickname "widowmaker"). Take the luggage-grip off the top of the M16, and you've got an idea what this one looks like. Available in basic black, drab green, and oatmeal. Get the optional folding stock for a Concealment rating of 4.

all the major bays, and every seaside district has a coastal defense marina, however small it may be. The larger marinas on Lantau Island, Hong Kong Island, and Sai Kung have larger police gunboats, the really big fire-fighting tugs built for rescuing cargo barges and cruise ships, and specially outfitted Customs boats to combat smuggling.

Throughout the region's extensive history, the Hong Kong police have tended to overlook certain activities, such as illegal street vending and the fencing of stolen goods. In contrast, nothing brings the HKPD crashing through the front door faster than illegal drugs or firearms. They also have a famous love/hate relationship with the Triads of Hong Kong. During British tenure, the HKPD maintained a zero-tolerance policy regarding the Triads. Since the Chinese took over, this policy has loosened considerably.



5 PLACES TO GO IN HONG KONG IF YOU'RE A TRIAD GANGSTER*

1. A KTV (also known as a karaoke parlor). This rented room comes with a big-screen TV (or wall-sized video screen), a karaoke machine loaded with 5,000 Cantopop and English songs, and disco lights. Bring your friends, get drunk, and sing badly. If you're really loaded, hire some escorts to join you. KTVs smell like a pub that hasn't been cleaned in a month. They also sport piss-poor soundproofing, which means you get to enjoy other peoples' bad singing, too. Joy.

2. An All-Night Seafood Joint. Along the coasts in less crowded parts of Hong Kong are family-style open-air seafood joints. Order 12 or 13 fish courses and five or six cases of beer, and you're all set for a long night of good cheer with your mates. The all-night places cater to the typical all-night crowds, including the Chinese mafia, who seem to keep nocturnal hours. It's okay to spit bones and carcasses on the floor (which makes a gross, slick surface that'll keep less-skilled martial artists busy while you whup their asses).

3. A Love Motel. An import from fetish-obsessed Japan, the love motel boasts private theme rooms guaranteed to satisfy whatever sexual peccadilloes you or your associates might entertain. Rooms range from Tahitian-style beach houses to private penthouses overlooking the Eiffel Tower to sadomasochistic torture chambers in Hell. Prices are arranged according to the complexity of any given fantasy and the size of the room. As technology improves, so does the quality of the totally immersive sexual fantasy. (Hong Kong becomes the leading city for love motels in 2051, much to its own dismay.)

4. A Late Night Piano Bar. Not really a bar so much as a restaurant featuring a pianist. Each table is magnificently large, surrounded by circular sofa that accommodates 10 people easily. Courses of faux Western cuisine are served over a four- or five-hour stretch. The drinks are bottomless and the serving staff is extremely attentive. Of course, all this comes at a hefty price. Because gangsters are the most frequent customers, there's no enforceable dress code. While most of them come wearing their finest, occasionally a group of rayon-clad thugs or jersey-wearing hipster hitmen show up.

5. A Taoist Temple. During the day, priests use a temple's back room for study, meditation, or napping. At night, gangsters might use it for gambling. If you're looking for a game of cards, mahjong, or dice and you can't get into any of the classier illegal joints, you'll probably be right at home in a temple. Guards watch the main entrance, always alert for police. To get into a game or three, you have to already know someone inside or be known by the guards. Get caught cheating and you're either dead or the star of a card room/temple shoot-out (complete with white doves, no doubt).

*Or, 5 PLACES TO AMBUSH TRIAD GANGSTERS

The Triads have always been a part of Chinese life. When a Triad controls a neighborhood, the shopkeepers more often than not pay a monthly "red envelope" fee to the neighborhood leader, who then quietly passes it on to the Triads. (You know those cute little red envelopes with the gold calligraphy on them you find in Chinatown dime stores? Yeah, those.) This is a standard protection fee. Aside from that monthly fee, the Triads leave most ordinary shopkeepers and residents alone. Many shopkeepers gain face with the Triads by not charging them for food or goods, or by performing marginal activities, like holding packages or returning videos, on their behalf.

The Triads sponsor or run illegal gambling dens, whorehouses, chop shops, and fences. The more dangerous Triad gangs smuggle drugs, firearms, and, in some cases, slaves. When opportunities arise or need mandates, Triads engage in blackmail, burglary, and murder.

The three foremost Triad gangs in Hong Kong are The Bamboo Union, The Four Seas Gang, and The 14k (said "fourteen kay"). The Triads originated in the anti-dynastic movements of the Qing Dynasty as secret societies seeking to restore the romanticized glory of the Ming Dynasty through the violent removal of the Qing emperor. The two original movements were the Heaven and Earth Society and the Three Harmonies Society (from which the word *triad* is derived). Because Qing peacekeepers and magistrates rightly viewed these societies as a threat to their livelihoods, the Triads had to exist in secret. Their members met in local temples, exchanged secret hand signs and passwords to identify one another, and adopted pseudo-religious trappings to throw off investigators and bounty hunters. As time passed, the Triads grew convoluted and superstitious, especially as more and more Taoist beliefs were incorporated into their rituals.

Taoism was important to the Triads from early on because they believed in the Mandate of Heaven, the Taoist tenet that claimed the Emperor only ruled through the grace of the gods in Heaven. If the Emperor no longer had the Mandate, then it befell his subjects to strip him of power through armed rebellion. The Triads, therefore, initially felt they were working on behalf of the gods.

The leaders of the Triads were only human, though, and corruption quickly dragged the societies down to the bottom rung of the social hierarchy. They attracted the poor, the thuggish, and the criminally minded, as they do today. The continued religious trappings at the heart of the Triads' existence may be what makes them so bold—the highest-ranking leaders believe the laws of the gods have given them the divine right to work outside the laws of mortal men because, as far as anyone can tell, the Mandate of Heaven has been revoked for years.

As the Triads attract criminally minded young men and women, they also drive law-loving folk into the service of the police. Thus, many Hong Kong cops have personal experience—and relationships—with the Triads. As a result, the police and the Triads know many of the same people and share a kind of adversarial rapport.

Constable (HKPD)

Sample Dialogue: "What do you got there? All right, move along."

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Wil 7), Ref 7

Skills: Driving 8, Guns 8, Martial Arts 7, Police 8

Weapons: Norinco M1911 (10/3/7+1), billy club (10), punch (8), kick (9), AR-18 (13*/5/30).

Blue Lantern (14k)

Sample Dialogue: "What are you looking at?"

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Cha 7), Ref 7

Skills: Driving 7, Guns 8, Intimidation 8, Martial Arts 8

Weapons: Norinco Tokarev (10/2/8+1), knife (10), punch (8), kick (9), Mini UZI (10/3/25).

Police Organization

The Hong Kong police department is organized into five main departments: Operations, Crime & Security, Personnel & Training, Management Services, and Finance & Planning. The Organized Crime and Triad Bureau under the Crime & Security Department focuses specifically on gangster activities and receives support from all the other districts. A sixth department—Section 44—exists off the books.

The six regional formations of the HKPD are:

- **Hong Kong Island**
- **Kowloon East**
- **Kowloon West**
- **New Territories North**
- **New Territories South**
- **Marine**

Police ranks are delineated as:

- **Chief Superintendent**
- **Senior Superintendent**
- **Superintendent**
- **Chief Inspector**
- **Senior Inspector**
- **Inspector**
- **Probationary Inspector**
- **Station Sergeant**
- **Sergeant**
- **Senior Constable**
- **Constable**

Cops:

- Better training
- Better armor
- Sick leave
- Pensions
- Fancy funerals

Triad Organization

The Triads utilize various organizational structures to fit the needs of different neighborhoods and areas of operation (which is very Taoist of them). Individual Triad gangs always fall beneath the great regional organization. Local, unaffiliated tongs (gangs) may or may not work in a regular or official capacity with the Triads proper. Triad territories vary widely; one gang may control a very small region while another deals solely in narcotics operations within a larger area controlled by still another Triad outfit.

A typical Triad gang has the following ranks and titles:

- **San Chu (Rank 489)**—The leader. Also known as the "dragon's head."
- **Fu San Chu (Rank 438)**—The ranking deputy leader.
- **Sin Fung (Rank 438)**—The vanguard. A deputy leader.
- **Heung Chu (Rank 438)**—The incense or ceremonies master. A deputy leader.
- **Cho Hai (Rank 432)**—A ranking soldier, aka "straw sandal."
- **Hung Kwan (Rank 426)**—A ranking soldier, aka "red pole."
- **Pak Tsz Sin (Rank 415)**—A ranking soldier, aka "white fan."
- **49 (Rank, uh, 49)**—An ordinary member of Triad society.
- **Blue Lantern (Rank 49)**—An ordinary member of Triad society.

Triads:

- Better pay
- Better cars
- Better guns
- Prison time
- Hideous screaming deaths



HIRING GUARDS AND GOONS

For a city of its size, Hong Kong has a very large number of licensed security companies: 860 at last count. There are three types of security ratings issued by the government.

Type I is general security work that anyone without a criminal record can do with minimal training and maximum supervision. Type I security guards are not allowed to carry weapons of any sort. These types of security guards typically make timed, scheduled rounds on a property and clock in at multiple checkpoints. If a problem situation develops, their only prerogative is to call it in, whether that means alerting the police, the company they work for, or both.

Type II is specialized security. Not only must a guard have no criminal record, he must have appropriate security training. Weapons such as brass knuckles, truncheons, and saps are allowed. Small-caliber handguns are allowed only through special dispensation and licensing, which are the exception, not the rule. Type II security guards may detain suspects only on the premises they are assigned to protect. Any use of lethal force results in an automatic suspension of the guard's license and an investigation of the company that employs him.

Type III is elite security. Guards and other employees are almost always ex-law enforcement or military personnel who have no criminal records. They receive cross-training with municipal law enforcement, may carry weapons, and may make arrests regardless of location or circumstance. Type III security guards serve as bank escorts, bodyguards, and high-tech or government installation patrolmen. Use of lethal force results in a temporary leave of duty pending formal investigations and, usually, assignment to a new post.

Illegal Protection

Unlicensed security operatives are, of course, also for hire. To get them, you almost always have to go through the Triads, and when you don't, the Triads are displeased. Whether the people you hire are "goons" depends more on your own outlook or the jobs you give them and less on the goons' own worldview. Unlicensed security costs about five times what a licensed security guard costs. If you hire illegal bodyguards and are caught, you'll probably do more time than the goon—unless he was directly implicated in a crime, in which case you two serve equal time. Hong Kong courts subscribe to the "chain of command" school of thought, which is why so many low-ranking gangsters from the fringe gangs serve minimal sentences: the "I was under orders" excuse is a valid defense. Don't be surprised if your hired help turns on you at the first opportunity, Triad oaths be damned. *Guan xi* plays a role, too; if you have a lot of clout, your men won't turn you in, if only because they're afraid your other allies will whack them. Suffice it to say, there's no honor among Hong Kong thieves, so you should conduct your illegal affairs accordingly.

There are no formal ranking systems for goons in general, though the Triad makes use of one for the sake of order. These terms don't come with licenses; they're a kind of jargon used to respect (or disrespect) professionals.

A **dragon's tail** is the lowest-ranking position, for true thugs. They have all the wit and subtlety of a bulldog. These are the so-called foot soldiers, young recruits, and consistent failures of the tong. The title's a derogatory honor: the tail is where the dragon defecates.

The next rank is **dragon's fist**, for the soldiers who've graduated up to the point of moderate respectability. They're the smart ones who know when to keep their mouths shut, when to kill a mark (and when not to), and how to handle finances such that their skimming off the top (expected in the Triads, by the way) doesn't go too far.

Finally, the last rank is **dragon's horn**. These are the best of the gangster best, with enough time on the job to put them on par with professional soldiers. In fact, many were once professional soldiers, cops, and mercenaries. Horns possess a lethal combination of ruthlessness and brains. The privilege of rank is in the assignment: a dragon's horn works directly for the gang's kingpin, the **dragon's head**.

SECURITY COMPANIES

OSTERREICH PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY, LLC (Mong Kok, Kowloon):

Type I. Security Guards: 100.

Omega Systems (Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon): Type II. Specialist Security Personnel: 30.

A-SQUAD SECURITY, LTD. (Kwai Chung, New Territories): Type III. Bodyguards: 10; Elite Security Personnel: 15.

DAI LEE HONG (Wan Chai, Hong Kong Island): Type I, II. Security Guards: 230; Specialist Security Personnel: 100.

PAN ASIA SECURITY, LTD. (Sham Shui Po, Kowloon): Type I, II. Security Guards: 45; Specialists Security Personnel: 12.

SATELLITE COMPANY (Hung Hom, Kowloon): Type I, II, III. Security Guards: 76; Specialist Security Personnel: 110; Elite Security Personnel: 33; Bodyguards: 11

HING TAK SYSTEMS (Sheung Wan, Hong Kong Island): Type I, II, III. Security Guards: 136; Specialist Security Personnel: 40; Elite Security Personnel: 40; Bodyguards: 21

Type I security and dragon's tails have AVs of 7–9 in skills like Driving, Detective, Martial Arts, Medicine, and maybe Guns.

Type II security and dragon's fists have AVs of 9–13 in skills like Driving, Detective (or Police), Guns, Intimidation, and Martial Arts. These GMCs may have schticks, but probably don't.

Type III security and dragon's horns have AVs of 13+ in skills like Driving, Detective (or Police), Guns, Intimidation, and Martial Arts. These GMCs have at least one schtick, and may have several. Dragon's horn's are likely to be named characters, too, though security guards seldom are.

PRISONS

Hong Kong's penal system is a model of efficiency and success, at least superficially. It emphasizes rehabilitation, not out of altruism but rather because of space issues. The territory is simply not large enough to sustain a resident, ever-increasing population of convicted criminals.

That said, Chinese culture, with its neo-Confucian social hierarchies and *guan xi* networks, really does look out for its own. Crimes are always relative, always judged based on the circumstances in which they were committed—including murder. As a result, sentences tend to be both negotiable and malleable. This is not to say the Hong Kong judicial system is corrupt, but in the Chinese worldview, concepts of "good" and "evil" are generally not absolute ones—except in literature, but that's a whole other thing.

For example, if a criminal can afford to buy off his victim's family, either legally or illegally, they may ask the court for a lighter sentence in the spirit of forgiveness. If they do ask, the criminal is very likely receive it.

Crimes resulting in a victim's death are worth less money to his relatives, because the victim's livelihood is no longer affected, beyond simply not having one anymore. Crimes that leave a victim severely wounded or physically disabled are worth more to his family, because the victim has lost the potential to bring money into the family pot as he did before, and may well be costing the family more.

If a criminal does go to prison, chances are he'll get out in a timely manner. Sentences aren't very long in Hong Kong.

The British legal system, however, has had a profound effect on the local culture; working with the courts is not nearly as easy or flexible as in other parts of China, where the judicial system's sentencing procedures tend to be like shopping at the neighborhood market. The British trained magistrates early on to curb it. Nevertheless, the Brits never could fully undermine the thousand-year influence of the native culture. Nor did they really want to, in the end. Hong Kong has always been a colony, and colonial law is never the same as in the homeland.

The SAR has 24 correctional facilities and psychiatric institutions. In addition, there are halfway houses and "reception centers" for illegal immigrants, namely the Vietnamese, who are still sneaking over the border into the city (one must wonder why, given how successful their own economy has become in the years since the war with the U.S.) Community-maintained, city-sponsored drug rehabilitation programs and post-incarceration readjustment centers work to keep ex-convicts from becoming repeat offenders.

Stanley Prison

STANLEY—This is the largest maximum-security prison in Hong Kong. It's located on the Stanley peninsula—that dangling tail that comes off the south end of Hong Kong Island. It was built in 1937 and can accommodate 1,500 male prisoners. The building's white-washed walls give it a sterile appearance. Prisoners with known Triad affiliations are segregated from their cohorts. At the first sign of gangster-like activity inside, all inmates involved are put in soli-

tary confinement for 30 days per offense (where "offense" equals "talking like a Triad member"). Unless you're tough as nails going in, don't expect to come out in one piece, much less alive. Stanley Prison is reserved primarily for prisoners serving long—or life—sentences.

Some stories floating around the Netherworld suggest the prison has a secret government-sponsored research facility that will be the precursor to Dr. Anita Dao's arcanowave technology breakthrough. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen. So far, all attempts to look into the rumor have met with failure. Investigation back from the future hasn't yielded answers, but has suggested that unidentified test subjects were reaching the CDCA through government channels.

Shek Pik Prison

LANTAU ISLAND—Built in 1984 near the Shek Pik reservoir, this fence- and barbed-wire-encircled facility is used for maximum security prisoners serving short or medium-length sentences. Some are lifers. Most are not. The inmate population is 450.

The Ascended own this one. If a prisoner is an Innerwalker, the Lodge does everything in its power to get him sentenced to Shek Pik. Once inside, guards loyal to the group either get the prisoner in enough trouble to end up shived, or they use interrogation and brain washing techniques late at night to turn him into a double agent working, unknowingly, for the Ascended.

This is also where the Ascended keep sorcerous prisoners from other junctures. Not many of them are kept for long, but sometimes the Lodge demands answers. When it does, the guards receive a simple text message: *Ask him everything.*

Most of Shek Pik is underground, but that's hardly common knowledge. A whole network of labs and secret cells are maintained four, five, and six stories below the surface. The guards down there aren't quite human, and neither are the prisoners they watch.

Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre

NEW TERRITORIES—Yet another maximum-security prison (because why would your *Feng Shui* characters bother with anything less?). The Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre sits atop a tree-covered hill in the New Territories, overlooking the town for which it was named. It was established in 1972 to handle prisoners who require psychiatric care and observation. This is the only facility where the criminally violent and insane are incarcerated. Patients under court observation (namely those who plead insanity) are sent here for evaluation.

For years, the residents of the Siu Lam township downhill from the prison have been reporting strange incidences occurring up there, such as unusual lights hovering over the facility, disturbing mechanized sounds coming from deep inside the hill, and the occasional wild man running amok in or around the prison. Section 44 of the HKPD goes up there once a month to put the stories to rest. As of yet, it has been unable to prove or disprove them.

HOSPITALS

Hospitals and emergency rooms in Hong Kong are overseen by the National Health System (NHS). Government policy requires that no citizen be without adequate health coverage, so a small portion of every person's taxable income goes to maintain the health system. Residents are issued NHS "smart-cards" with embedded IC chips that contain all their vital information. Visits to doctors and hospitals are inexpensive for general care, but prices climb steeply for specialized care and procedures. Still, the regional health care system is cheaper than many Western countries by a factor of ten (or more).

The Hospital Authority maintains medical facilities and organizes hospitals into regional clusters. Patients get preferential treatment if they attend a hospital in their district. In the event they end up in a hospital outside their home district, and assuming their medical troubles are not immediately life threatening, they get second-priority treatment.

Hong Kong's health care system, although pretty much a financial black hole, is world-class, medically speaking. Given its semi-tropical locale, it's not surprising the city still suffers from epidemics of diseases such as cholera, plague (yes, plague), and yellow fever. Lesser epidemics include chicken pox, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis. In recent years a new virulent disease has shown up: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or (wait for it) SARS. It originated with civet cats*—which are a delicacy in southern China—and is spread through bodily fluids, such as spittle and sweat, during the symptomatic phase, when the victim suffers from fever and breathing difficulties.

Getting wounds from battle treated at the hospitals is easy, but doctors and nurses are required by law to notify the authorities of all crime-related (or seemingly crime-related) injuries. Gunshot wounds are taken especially seriously. If you show up at the hospital sporting one, you may as well bring your own handcuffs, because the cops won't let you go until you give them the information they require to arrest the perpetrator. If you were nothing more than an innocent bystander, you've got nothing to worry about. (Deceit, man! That's what the skill's there for!)

Don't be surprised, though, if the police bring a forensic specialist along with them to swab for gunshot residue on your fingers. Just in case, you know.

*Yeah. Civet cats. We think. The PRC ordered the slaughter of a great many wild civet cats to stop the spread of SARS. On the one hand, it seems to have worked. On the other hand, world scientists hollared about lost specimens and data—the rest of the world hadn't yet agreed that civet cats were definitely the cause of the epidemic. Maybe some transformed civet cats in the Lodge made some enemies in the PRC?

HEALTH CARE DISTRICTS AND HOSPITALS

Hong Kong East: Cheshire Home, Chunk Hom Kok; Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital; Ruttonjee Hospital; St. John Hospital; Tang Shiu Kin; Tung Wah; and Wong Chuk Hang.

Hong Kong West: Grantham Hospital; MacLehose Medical Rehabilitation Centre; Nam Long Hospital; Queen Mary Hospital; The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital at Sandy Bay; Tsan Yuk Hospital; and Tung Wah.

Kowloon Central: HK Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service; Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital; Hong Kong Eye Hospital; Kowloon Hospital; Queen Elizabeth Hospital; and Rehabaid Centre.

Kowloon East: Haven of Hope Hospital; Tseung Kwan O Hospital; and the United Christian Hospital.

Kowloon West: Caritas Medical Centre; Kwai Chung Hospital; Kwong Wah; Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital; Princess Margaret Hospital; Wong Tai Sin Hospital; and Yan Chai Hospital.

New Territories East: Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital; Bradbury Hospice; Cheshire Home, Sha Tin; North District Hospital; Prince of Wales Hospital; Sha Tin Hospital; and Tai Po Hospital.

New Territories West: Castle Peak Hospital; Pok Oi Hospital; and Tuen Mun Hospital.

HEALTH CARE IN ACTION

Going to the hospital can seem like an awful break in the action, but it doesn't have to be that way. Hospitals play vital roles in action movies, and they can play those roles in your *Feng Shui* series, too. Hospitals are where characters like ex-wives and estranged boyfriends return to chat about melodramatic hooks and reveal their true feelings. Hospitals are where assassins show up with roses and swords. Hospitals—and this is important—are where vital clues are given to stymied players through montages of nightmarish, convoluted images experienced by a wounded and unconscious PC. Don't think of hospitals as where derailed characters crash and the adventure falls apart. Think of hospitals as where characters go to regroup, make a dramatic show of getting out of bed, and resolve to *end this once and for all*.

Stuck? Confused? Get one of the PCs dramatically wounded in a spectacular stunt and go to the hospital for some inspiration.

Oh, and you can get medical assistance at a hospital. Average on-call doctors in a Hong Kong ER have a Medicine AV of 9 or 10. They also ask questions and probe into your personal life like the doctors on *ER*, coaxing out dramatic soliloquies and maybe giving you a subtle clue you'll understand later, when it's relevant.

SPENDING MONEY

Few cities in the world offer as much shopping variety as Hong Kong. One minute you're standing in Pacific Place looking at clothes that cost the better part of a month's salary (for your average corporate type), and the next you're down the street in Sheung Wan buying curios on Cat Street for pocket change. Between these two extremes falls the entire spectrum of consumer goods, including knock-offs, bootlegs, and forgeries. You can literally buy anything you want in Hong Kong—if you know where to look and have enough money.

There are two kinds of places to shop in Hong Kong, generally speaking: modern shopping palaces and old-fashioned street markets.

Street markets transform the avenues they inhabit. Vendors set up portable carts or easily dismantled stalls wherever they find an open space, so markets can be mystifying and difficult to navigate. Night markets open around 5 PM and run until 7 or 8 in the morning. They offer late-night treats (nothing compliments a long night of busting thugs like fried onion bread and a fresh warm mug of soy milk), illegal software, pirated music and movies, and knock-off clothes at less-than-wholesale prices. They sell legal goods too, but typically of extremely poor quality. Day markets open around 6 or 7 in the morning and run until 5 or 6 at night. They offer groceries, toiletries, and other common household goods. Housekeepers come to the day markets every morning to buy fresh produce. Granted, they could go to chain stores like Wellcome or Park'n Shop for such amenities, but the traditionalist mindset keeps the average Hong Konger returning to the markets because you just can't haggle with the employees at a chain store without getting thrown out on your ear.

Modern malls are a relatively recent import from the West, built on dedicated lots with plenty of parking. The malls in Hong Kong were once considered some of the largest in Southeast Asia, but lately that honor has slipped away to places like Taipei and Singapore. Embedded arcades, on the other hand, are set up deep inside office towers or apartment blocks and often span two or three interconnected buildings. The arcades have been around much longer than malls, and arose out of the necessity to utilize severely limited land space on Hong Kong Island. In some ways, arcades are a decidedly Asian answer to the modern demand for quantity and convenience. They seem to be the earliest prototypes for futuristic residential arcologies.

The Festival Walk

KOWLOON TONG—One of Hong Kong's biggest and newest modern shopping malls is the Festival Walk, located in scenic Kowloon Tong and owned by Swire House. It stands 8 stories high and stretches out for a kilometer. None of the floors are exactly the same size; instead, they're arranged like a vertical jigsaw puzzle, each placed askew above the previous floor. At the basement level are a Park'n Shop and the tunnel to the Kowloon Tong MTR station (perfect for a drawn-out escape sequence through the mall, to the subway). The tunnel is quite long, like an underground stretch of road (just begging for motorcycles).

Shops in the mall range from the inexpensive (the Page One bookstore, Fortress Electronics, the Pacific Coffee Company) to the pricy (Tommy Hilfiger, Nakamichi Audio, the Armani Exchange). On the 5th level is a full-sized ice-skating rink, undoubtedly the largest in the territory. The 6th level sports a movie theater and the 7th level offers an Asian-style food court (Chinese, Indonesian, and Japanese fast food—if you want Western food, go to the lonely KFC down the hall). Escalators are arranged in a bizarre fashion, almost at random. This can't be good for the place's feng shui.

At any given hour of the day, there are at least 30 security personnel on the premises. A few years ago a group of 14k soldiers ambushed the head of the Bamboo Union and his family in Nicky Patricca's Ristorante Italiano on the 4th level, sparking a gang war that lasted five weeks. Each time the Bamboo Union came to the mall to pray over the spot where their leader died,

14k soldiers were there waiting for them. Eventually, management had to shut down the entire mall and—in an unusual maneuver—the Hong Kong Police escorted grieving Bamboo Union members to the restaurant so they could perform rituals of grief. Since then, things have quieted down considerably. Rumor has it that Patricca, a towering Italian-American immigrant from Chicago, is a very close friend of the Bamboo Union. It is also rumored he drives around in a heavily armored car with five or six Sicilian bodyguards, and that he sleeps in a different flat every night to avoid 14K assassins. In truth, his bodyguards are all Ukrainian, and it's not the Bamboo Union he calls friends, but the 14K. Nicky's assistant, the gorgeous Eurasian supermodel Silk Deveroux, is a traitor twice over. Although she ostensibly works for the Bamboo Union as a mole assigned to infiltrate Patricca's small organization, she's covertly working as an informant for the HKPD.

Nicky Patricca

Sample Dialogue: "Try this gorgonzola. Tell me it isn't perfection."

Attributes: Bod 4 (Tgh 6), Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Cha 8), Ref 5

Skills: Deceit 18, Guns 16, Info: Italian Cooking 13, Info: Organized Crime 18, Intimidation 17, Leadership 15, Martial Arts 10

Schticks: Carnival of Carnage (x2), Fast Draw, Lightning Reload (x2)

Weapons: AMT Automag V (12/3/5+1), baseball bat (7), kick (6), punch (5)

Silk Deveroux

Sample Dialogue: "Hello-ooo. Hi. Up here. Keep talking to my chest and I'm gonna stab out your eyes, *capisce?*"
Attributes: Bod 6 (Mov 7), Chi 0 (Fu 4), Mnd 6 (Wil 8, Cha 9), Ref 7 (Spd 9)
Skills: Deceit 17, Detective 10, Guns 14, Info: Organized Crime 15, Intrusion 16, Martial Arts 16, Seduction 18
Schticks: Fast Draw, Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs (x2), Lightning Reload, Natural Order, Walk of a Thousand Steps, Willow Step
Weapons: Knife (8), kick (8), Walther PPK (9/1/6+1), punch (7)

Reginald Fong IV, Ascended Executive

Sample Dialogue: "The Board of Directors has given us the go-ahead to quietly purchase 47% of News Corp's shares. Murdoch doesn't stand a chance."
Attributes: Bod 4 (Con 7), Chi 0, Mnd 8 (Per 5), Ref 5
Skills: Deceit 16, Guns 12, Info: Business 18, Info: Ascended Operations 17, Leadership 14, Martial Arts 8
Weapons: Walther P-5 Compact (10/1/8+1)

Victoria Excelsior Security

Sample Dialogue: "Please come with us, sir. Mr. Fong would like to have a private word with you in the east conference room. No, sir, I'm afraid this isn't a request."
Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 6
Skills: Guns 10, Martial Arts 9
Weapons: Tec-9 (10/3/32+1), mini-club (9), punch (8), kick (9)

Pacific Place

ADMIRALTY—If the Festival Walk is one of the largest malls in Hong Kong, Pacific Place is the most glamorous. You can find it on the north side of HK island in Admiralty, next to Central. It is accessible directly from the Admiralty MTR station, the street, and from numerous elevated walkways winding throughout the entire district. Steep stairs skirting around the side of Pacific Place lead up to offices and extremely pricey residential units.



No less than three elegant hotels brace the mall: the Island Shangri-La, the JW Marriot, and the Victoria Excelsior.

Pacific Place has a four-screen movie theater, two food courts, and two major department stores (Lane Crawford and Seibu). Its four levels are each comprised of a long single corridor so wide you could drag race in them with room to spare. The mall's flagship stores

sell only the classiest and priciest products. The cheapest thing you can buy is a fast-food burger in one of the two food courts. Artsy-fartsy restaurants occupy the other food court, which is where you can find the entrance to the Admiralty MTR station. Stores include: Poupine Fashion Diva, Lam Hwa Video & Sound, Collars & Cuffs, Godiva Chocolatier, Hugo Boss, Prada, Gucci, Tiffany's, Hermès, Fancl Cosmetics, and Marks & Spencer, to name a few.

The Victoria Excelsior, managed by one Reginald Fong IV and connected to Pacific Place's east wing, is a five-star hotel reserved for the wealthiest and most important people on the island. Government officials and celebrities reserve suites on one of fifteen floors, which are booked solid for the next five years to patrons who remain safely anonymous.

Beneath these prestigious suites are ten top-secret basement sublevels containing a central command center, safe houses, equipment storage, laboratories, armories, training facilities, and ultra-secure compounds for impris-

oning captured enemies and quarantining supernatural creatures, all controlled by the Ascended. The hotel extends down into the earth, past criss-crossing MTR tunnels, water and sewage pipes, and fiber-optic cable trunks, until it pierces into the Netherworld where it connects directly to the Hub, the central nexus of Ascended power throughout all junctures of the secret war.

The Victoria Excelsior has a dirty secret not even its Ascended overlords know about: the hotel will be a headquarters for Buro operations in 2056. It will also be the heart of the world's first true arcology. A Buro infiltrator is currently in the process of reprogramming the hotel's central computer, ALICE. The computer is tapped into the Jade Wheel's global operations net. Once the reprogramming is complete, a clever little subversion virus will slowly propagate through the Ascended's network and, when the time is right, crash the Lodge's finances in Asia. Oh, and as an unintentional side effect it will completely destroy the Internet as we know it.

Reginald Fong IV is the third-highest ranking member of the Pledged in Southeast Asia. He works directly for Major Huang Yu-Kuan, the new Hong Kong Operations Chief stationed out of Fort Stanley. When former HKOC Connie Bo died, Fong assumed many of her responsibilities, but not her post. Many in the Jade Wheel suspect he was the one who pulled the trigger (seven times) when the order came down from on-high, but nothing could be further from the truth. Fong was in love with Connie, but he was strangely ignorant of her secret bid for power.

Ap Liu Street Market

SHAM SHUI PO—North of the crowded Kowloon Peninsula in the Sham Shui Po district is a night market that spans four square city blocks. It specializes in electronic goods



Unnamed Bangkok Butcher

Sample Dialogue: "Let me find you a prettier girl. A cheaper girl. Okay?"

Attributes: Bod 6 (Str 8), Chi 0, Mnd 4, Ref 6

Skills: Deceit 8, Guns 7, Intimidation 10, Martial Arts 8

Weapons: Big knife (11), kick (10), punch (9)

and hardware. Especially hardware. Walking through the market is like walking through an exploded hardware store—piles of electric drills, screwdrivers, wrenches, light fixtures, and cabling lay along the sides of the streets. There are no price tags in sight. If you want to buy something, you have to haggle for it.

Hidden behind the market's rows of tents and stands are the actual shops and sidewalks. They offer stereo equipment, DVD players, cell phones, concert speakers, club lighting, karaoke machines, and anything else with copper wiring and an electric heartbeat. One section of the market devotes itself to pornography, and one vendor in particular has every issue ever printed of *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Hustler*, and *Blimey*. *She's Shagging Her Mate!* magazines. His buddy next door sells Japanese porno discs showcasing bizarre and graphic scenes the Japanese censors—being the party poopers they are—have digitally blotted out.

The market's north street sells fresh food cooked on the spot as you order it. A long row of butcher shops, with its freshly slaughtered animals hanging from hooks out on the sidewalk and icy buckets of live fish and crabs, resembles a surreal abattoir. Red lights hanging over the meat mask any spoilage.

Police officers regularly patrol the market to discourage black market vendors from setting up shop. They don't do this out of a sense of legal propriety or because Western governments pressure Hong Kong to enforce international copyright laws; they patrol because the Shenzhen Citizen's Council bribes them. A police presence encourages people who want bootleg movies and music to make the hour-and-a-half journey north to Shenzhen City, where the black market not only thrives but appears to be state-sponsored.

A gang of Thai immigrants calling themselves the Bangkok Butchers controls the protection racket in and around Sham Shui Po. If you cause too much trouble, they'll come after you with razor-sharp meat cleavers, machetes, and watermelon knives. The Butchers have an uneasy alliance with the 14k, who want nothing to do with the Ap Liu street market as long as selling bootleg media there is *verboten*.

The Ladies' Market

MONG KOK—Wedged firmly between shopping arcades too numerous to count, there is a fantastic open-air night market featuring women's clothing (thus its name). Don't be fooled, though, because there's plenty for men to buy. The market occupies a warren of side streets, alleys, cubbyholes, and abandoned first-floor shopping arcades. Racks of designer clothing

Ng Pui

Sample Dialogue: "Hee hee hee hee hee hee hee, hee hee hee hee hee hee..."

Attributes: Bod 4, Chi 0 (Mag 4), Mnd 4 (Wil 7), Ref 5 (Spd 6)

Skills: Deceit 12, Info: Cooking 15, Martial Arts 13, Sorcery 9

Sorcery Schticks: Divination, Fertility

Unique Schtick: *Choice Cut:* Ng Pui's meat cleaver deals 12 damage, just because he's creepy. He also enjoys all the benefits of *Fast Draw* (x2) and *Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs* (x3) with it. Finally, he always gets an additional +2 bonus to Initiative when it's in hand.

Weapons: Meat Cleaver (12)

hang three-high over the heads of shoppers. You can purchase affordable jewelry, shoes, belts, and other accessories from almost every stall. Much of the market's textile wares come from Europe, in which case they're the real deal, limited in size and quantity, and rather pricey. Others get their textiles from Korea, which produces amazingly authentic-looking and affordable designer knock-offs. Sweatshops in Guanzhou or Shenzhen produce the rest.

Shopping arcades embedded in the ramshackle buildings around the market collect much of its spill-off. They are narrow, dark, and crowded affairs packed to the gills with young hipsters shopping for a new look. If you're a claustrophobe, confine yourself to the market. Even then, the sheer number of people crushed into it can be daunting. It is literally wall-to-wall with people—a pickpocket's dream come true. Cops patrol the street in pairs, not so much to enforce copyright law or shut down illegal clothing vendors, but to keep an eye out for Triad members, who pretty much own Mong Kok. Not far from the Ladies' Market are the seedy neon-lit streets dominated by the Triad brothels and hourly hotels.

Street performers and touts contribute to the market's lively atmosphere. So do the dozens of food vendors with their pushcarts, out and selling as soon as the sun goes down.

Ng Pui, owner of the Laughing Dragon cart, is famous for his steamed dumplings. The secret ingredient in his popular pork buns is human flesh. (Yes, that's right. People meat. Soy lent Green.) Once a week, he sneaks out in the dead of night to murder one of the innumerable hapless street bums living in the abandoned doorways and alleys of Mong Kok. He believes he's a *bodhisattva* (a living Buddha). Those whose flesh he cooks and serves are blessed by his inherent nature, and anyone who consumes one of his specialty "Eight Golden Delights" pork buns is promised a place by his side in Heaven when the world ends. Of course, none of this remotely true. Ng Pui is simply an insane sorcerer.

Temple Street

YAU MA TEI—Situated north of Tin Hau Temple, the Temple Street night market is famous for the sheer mind-numbing quantity of useless gimcracks and doodads it offers. While

Unnamed Crescent Wave Vigilante

Sample Dialogue: "Your fu is good, stranger. But mine is better. Observe."

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0 (Fu 6), Mnd 5, Ref 6

Skills: Intimidation 12, Martial Arts 12

Schticks: Path of the Hands of Light (all)

Weapons: Punch (8), kick (9)

you *can* pick up a few bootleg DVDs and CDs or the odd article of clothing here, you're more likely to find video games, candy bins, imported Japanese actions figures, dried foodstuffs, pungent traditional medicines, and firecrackers. Colorful strands of Christmas lights criss-cross the street, while twin rows of bright paper lanterns run up and down its length. This is the tourist's night market, friendly and accessible, but not nearly as large or impressive as others in the SAR.

The Crescent Wave, a group of martial artists devoted to the sea goddess Tin Hau, protects the street vendors from Triad interference. Though they're a thorn in the Triad's side, they're left alone these days. The last time the Bamboo Union tried to strong arm the Wave, the Union's soldiers wound up in body bags. The police were never able to prove members of the Wave killed them, though, because not a mark was found on any of the bodies. The inspector in charge of the investigation believes they used *dim mak*, the art of lethal acupressure, to do the deed.

Crescent Wave martial artists stroll through the market every night, chatting happily with vendors and customers and generally making their presence known. Their uniforms consist of Chuck Norris-style stretchy-leg martial-arts blue jeans, pointy-toed cowboy boots, and tight white t-shirts emblazoned with a pair of Chinese dragons intertwined around a yin-yang pearl. Written in traditional Chinese characters on the back of their shirts are the words "April 17th, 1858," whatever that means.

Lascar Row

SHEUNG WAN—Lascar Row is colloquially known as "Cat Street." In the old days, thieves, sailors, prostitutes, and other lowlifes (nicknamed "rats") made the street their home. Thieves sold off their loot to the street's shopkeepers, known as "cats." It was said that if you ever had anything stolen from you in Hong Kong you could find it again on Cat Street. Today, the street specializes in fake and authentic antiques, pawned possessions, and miscellaneous bric-a-brac. It's not far from Man Mo Temple (a popular shrine dedicated to the gods of war and civil service) and Ladder Street (a steeply angled pedestrian walkway bridging Hollywood Road and Queen's Road Central).

Hong Kong is the only place outside of Mainland China where you can legally purchase Chinese antiques, and Lascar Row is the best place for that. Still, there remains a thriving black market for genuine antiques and historical artifacts. If you ask the right questions in select

shops, the owners may be able to put you in touch with black market art dealers.

If you're looking for the ideal place to wreak as much havoc as humanly possible, Cat Street is the place you want to go. Fights in and around antique porcelain vases, fragile rosewood curio cabinets, and delicate jade scepters are always interesting, especially if you truly appreciate the value of such items and your opponents do not. Recall Jackie Chan's vase-saving stint in *Rush Hour* (or in many of his other movies)? You can do that on Cat Street, but on a much larger scale.

Both the Guiding Hand and the Eaters of the Lotus maintain small shops here, though each is unaware of the other's presence. Much of the Guiding Hand's modern financing comes from selling items they bury in their home juncture and dig up in the Contemporary juncture for sale as pristine antiques. Their shop, called *The Mandate of Heaven*, is located near Lascar Row's intersection with Sai Street. It's an old, tiny building built from recycled red bricks, gray driftwood, and lots of shipping-container tin, but its security is top-notch, and so are its wares. The proprietor is an 18-year-old boy named Steven Chan, whose knowledge of Qing Dynasty antiquities is unparalleled. He's so good, in fact, that the University of Hong Kong's history department awarded him an honorary M.A. (Chan, of course, is a native of the 1850 juncture. He hails from Shanghai, but his Cantonese, Mandarin, and English are all flawless.)

The shop owned by the Eaters of the Lotus is called *Dragon Pearl Curios and Antiques*. They, like the Guiding Hand, import items from the past. The owner is an elderly socialite named Wang Wu-Wu. She was brought forward to the 1850 juncture as a young girl, stolen from the emperor's harem of concubines, and then educated in Western ways in Beijing. In 1910, she was enlisted by the Eaters of the Lotus to live in the future and take ownership of an antique shop, since she was accustomed to time travel of relocation. Now Wu-Wu is a

Wang Wu-Wu

Sample Dialogue: "Oh my goodness, gracious. Did you see the gown Lady Reeveshire wore to the Penelope Waters Ball? It was absolutely *ghastly!*"

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Cha 8, Per 9), Ref 5

Skills: Deceit 17, Info: Antiques 14, Info: Gossip 17, Martial Arts 12

Weapons: Fan (7), kick (7), punch (6)

Steven Chan

Sample Dialogue: "The Empress Dowager Ci Xi, a nice lady, owned this jade-pommeled backstabber. I'll let you have it for two millions dollars."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 8 (Int 9), Ref 6

Skills: Deceit 15, Info: Antiques 15, Info: History 16, Martial Arts 11

Weapons: Antique sword (9), kick (7), punch (6)

vital contact in the modern juncture. She's intelligent, classy, and worldly. She's also a queen of gossip. Despite her advanced years, she's able to manage both the meager shop and a busy social life. If there's a party on the Peak or a dinner at an ambassador's house, you can be sure she's there. Wu-Wu owns houses in Macau, in Sheung Wan on Hong Kong Island, and in Shanghai. She immensely enjoys her modern lifestyle, but hates growing old. Lotus explorers returning from the future juncture have repeatedly promised they'll steal Burotech rejuvenation technology to restore her youth, but so far no one's come through for her. Wang Wu-Wu increasingly feels she can no longer afford to wait.

The Golden Mile

TSIM SHA TSUI—Two major thoroughfares run north and south at the farthest end of Kowloon Peninsula. The bigger of the two is Nathan Road, also known as the "Golden Mile." Enough kaleidoscopically colored neon hangs from the buildings lining the street to illuminate Yankee Stadium. Towering five-star hotels, the epitome of modern urban comfort, stand side by side with low-rent residential blocks, the unenviable barnacles of modern urban sprawl. The sidewalks are a morass of humanity, ranging from wide-eyed camera-happy tourists clicking away at everything in sight to sub-continental touts selling fake Rolexes or offering to tailor a suit for you. The Golden Mile is rife with everything that makes Hong Kong a consumer paradise on Earth: camera shops, duty free shops, computer dealers, designer clothes, designer knock-offs, CDs, DVDs, karaoke VCDs, cell phones, and so on. Late at night, the street walkers emerge from the hidden back alley pubs to ply their trade out in the open, offering men and women "oriental massages." Restaurants and pubs represent every significant international cuisine.

The only thing you cannot get on the Golden Mile is a good deal. Everything costs more than any other market in the territory, regardless of how hard you negotiate. Popular shopping spots on the Mile include: Yue Hwa Chinese Products Emporium (with real martial arts weapons), the Chungking Mansions shopping arcade, Young Kee Surveillance World (fulfilling all your Chuck Berry-inspired toiletry espionage needs), and Mad Dog's Saloon (featuring a couple of lads from Cork who play the best Irish music in all of Southeast Asia).

Guns are illegal in Hong Kong. That doesn't deter Quintana Lang. She sells all manner of firearms from her magazine shop inside the Chungking Mansions street-level shopping arcade. The guns aren't actually kept there, though. Rather, customers browse for what they want using *Gunz* magazine, then place a subscription card containing their offer and the delivery place, day, and time inside a suggestions box. Quintana's boys bring the guns, but only after confirming the buyer is both legit and not in anyway affiliated with the police. (A hacker friend of Quintana's, St. Louis Blue, also checks up on clients for her with his "L337 haXX0ring skillz"). The police haven't yet caught on to her illegal

Quintana Lang

Sample Dialogue: "Now take the G36C Compact Carbine from Heckler & Koch, here: it fires a 5.56mm hollow-point round that'll blow the doors off a barn at 150 yards."

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0 (For 1), Mnd 5 (Int 7, Per 9), Ref 8

Skills: Deceit 15, Fix-It 12, Guns 17, Info: Organized Crime 18

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing (x2), Carnival of Carnage, Eagle Eye (x2), Fast Draw (x2), Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs, Lightning Reload (x3), Signature Weapon (Desert Eagle .50)

Weapons: Desert Eagle .50 (15/3/9+1), S&W 3566 (11/3/15+1)

St. Louis Blue

Sample Dialogue: "That's version 5, dork-face. You need version 6 to transfer files between clients."

Attributes: Bod 3, Chi 0 (For 2), Mnd 8 (Cha 5, Int 9), Ref 6 (Dex 8)

Skills: Fix-It 16, Guns 12, Intrusion 17

Unique Schtick: *Data Trail:* St. Louis Blue uses your own fame and contacts against you. To look you up, he makes a contacts check using your highest AV, provided it's for one of the following skills: Detective, Fix-It, Guns, Police, or Info: Organized Crime. If he beats a Difficulty of 10, he digs up your contacts online and finds out whether or not you worked with the cops.

Weapons: Tec-9 (10/3/32+1)

and dangerous activities. She's exceptionally picky about potential clients. Her reputation among the tongs and Triads is practically flawless.

The Nightclub

ABERDEEN—One of Aberdeen's most famous features is the traditional Chinese graveyard that faces it from the southern side of a large nearby hill. It's called "The Nightclub" by the locals, who superstitiously regard the graveyard not so much as a place for resting in peace, but rather as a creepy hangout for the shades of dead relatives. Bodies are interred in the graveyard for six or seven years, after which they're dug up, washed, and cremated—space is a real problem, here. Elaborate headstones mark the graves, each adorned with a photograph of the deceased.

The hill is very steep. Rugged, narrow footpaths wind through the graveyard, joining up with wider, more navigable staircases on the east and west sides. Every year, those with relatives buried in the graveyard come to celebrate Grave Sweeping Day, when they dutifully clean the area around their relatives' headstones. Offerings are made, prayers recited, and picnics held on the gravesites (so that food can be shared with the departed in the afterlife).

Unnamed Filipino Slave

Sample Dialogue: "You gotta get me outta here!"

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 5

Skills: Martial Arts 7

Weapons: Punch (8), kick (9)

Unnamed Cartel Goon

Sample Dialogue: "You're not authorized to be in here!"

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 4 (Wil 3), Ref 7

Skills: Guns 9, Intimidation 11, Martial Arts 9

Weapons: H&K MP 5 K (10/3/30), kick (9), punch (8)

Fong Sai Yee, Drug Kingpin

Sample Dialogue: "People all over the world use my products."

Attributes: Bod 6, Chi 0, Mnd 7 (Wil 9), Ref 6

Skills: Guns 15, Info: Business 16, Intimidation 15, Leadership 13, Martial Arts 11, Sabotage 14

Weapons: Grenade (17), mini UZI (10/3/25), kick (8)

Deep inside the hill is an underground complex of tunnels, laboratories, and storerooms, all of which the Wo Kung drug cartel maintains. It's an elaborate, secret drug market, frequented by international clients and buyers for global kingpins. It's also the site of subterranean raves teeming with dealers and drug addicts.

The entrance to the complex is at the base of the hill, beside the tomb of a rare long-time resident: Chep Lei Ngo. Pressing the characters of his name and birth-death dates in a specific pattern opens a narrow passageway. Fifty meters into the hill, the passage ends at a locked, armored door with a keypad. You must input a six-digit code into the keypad to gain entry into the complex, unless it's a rave night.

Inside, the facility is a twisty, confusing maze of cramped tunnels and steep stairs connecting to thirteen low-tech drug-production labs, seven storerooms, ten hydroponics farms, five dormitories, two barracks, one security room, and an office. Filipino slaves kidnapped from area construction sites toil in the labs in 20-hour shifts. When slaves die, as they inevitably do in the labs, their bodies are chopped up and fed to the sharks in the harbor. A small army of heavily armed men keeps a close watch on the slave labor force. Three more work in the security room, monitoring cameras placed in every conceivable nook and cranny in the facility.

Party guests and potential customers are entertained in a decorated warehouse space. Ravers and negligent clients frequently join the ranks of the slave laborers, however, after accepting invitations to private Wo Kung parties.

The leader of the operation is a Chinese gentleman from Macau named Fong Sai Yee. He runs a tight ship and is notorious for his absolute lack of compassion. In the event that cops or a rival gang discovers the facility, Fong sets a self-destruct timer to give himself just enough time to exit through an escape tunnel only he knows about. It lets out in the men's room of a gas station atop the hill. When the timer goes off, explosive charges in the ceilings and floors bury everyone in the lab with the rest of the dead in the Nightclub.

The Wo Kung cartel is the fourth-largest supplier of opium, heroin, and cocaine in Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle. Its labs produce approximately two tons of drugs each week. Every Sunday at 2 AM, five waterproofed 250-pound bales are dumped into the fat storm run-off pipes running through the graveyard hill (and subsequently the facility) from the streets above it down to Aberdeen Harbor below. As soon as the bales hit the harbor, they sink like stones. Cartel divers later retrieve them, whenever circumstances allow, by using digital tracking beacons planted inside the bales. Cartel soldiers frequently patrol the graveyard in the dead of night. If they come across late-night interlopers, they do what they can to make the graveyard seem haunted. When that doesn't work, trespassers get blown away.

WEIRD STORES

That which is considered off-the-wall in Western cultures might be perfectly acceptable in Hong Kong. The stores presented in this section, however, bridge cultural conflict: they are weird by anyone's standards. Weird shops such as these aren't found in popular shopping centers and arcades. Rather, they're in out-of-the-way places: down a winding alley, behind a minor temple dedicated to the Kitchen God, or in the heart of a flower market.

Kwun Hing Lung

WAN CHAI—Throughout Hong Kong you'll find shops dedicated to all things feng shui, selling such items as incense (in many sizes and flavors), mirrors (blessed and not), godly icons (especially ones decorated with gold leaf), and propitiously inscribed banners. These are not sorcerer shops but rather religious paraphernalia shops. A genuine sorcerer's shop, besides being illegal, is a truly disturbing place, prone to causing nightmares in casual visitors. Kwun Hing Lung is one such establishment.

Located on Tai Wo Street in Wan Chai, the shop hides behind a chaotic façade of ladders and bamboo construction lattices. The severely weathered sign over the shop's dusty opaque windows reads "Wing Foo's Quality Rice." The shop's owner and resident sorcerer, Choi Fa-Yuen, obviously doesn't sell rice. He has simply been too lazy to clean up the storefront. In fact, he'd just as soon let people be misled; his is not an occupation that the Hong Kong Police Department, and especially Section 44, looks on with compassion.

Inside, the shop is considerably deeper than it is wide. Behind an old-fashioned marble-topped counter, long rows of shelves line the north wall, crowded with bottles, containers, jars, and boxes of traditional Chinese herbal remedies. Stacked along the south wall are numerous sealed and unsealed crates sent from places all around the world at various dates over the last 150 years (according to the fading postal marks and routing directions stamped on them). These contain all manner of dried animal body parts, artifacts, and potsherds. There are even a few preserved human and supernatural creature bodies. Higher up on the wall, closer to the ceiling, are a dozen or so stuffed animal carcasses. These are not true animals but the remains of reverted Ascended.

The shop does not have electrical wiring. Candles, lanterns, and sometimes magic provide lighting.

A door at the back of the shop leads to Choi's work area, where he conducts serious business with customers who want more than love potions and fortune bracelets. Choi practices a particularly vile form of shamanistic necromancy in which all his mystic power comes from the ebbing life force of sacrificial victims, usually animals (though transformed animals are best). Every few days, a new animal victim is staked to the floor at the center of the work area. It's usually cut open from stem to stern and slowly eviscerated. Gore spatters the walls, floor, and ceiling. The stench is not entirely unlike that of a charnel house. Tallow candles and flaming pots are embedded in the victim's quivering body

Choi Fa-Yuen

Sample Dialogue: "Yes, it is sad. Don't look at it, look at me. If you want my services, it is necessary, however."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Con 8), Chi 2 (Mag 8), Mnd 8 (Per 10), Ref 5 (Spd 7)

Skills: Info: Occult 18, Martial Arts 10, Medicine 17, Sorcery 17

Schticks: Blast (Disease, Disintegration, Lightning, Transmutation), Divination, Fertility, Heal, Influence, Summoning

Weapons: Blast: Disintegration (10), Blast: Lightning (10), staff (8)

cavity, used by Choi for the brewing of enchanted potions, elixirs, and philters. While Choi is able to keep his victims alive through prodigious use of drugs and herbs, they only last about four days.

Although Choi's sorcery is clearly diabolical, he doesn't see it that way. Nor does he consider himself a madman. He carefully selects his victims through ritualistic divination. The most auspicious are members of the Ascended who are going to die imminently for one reason or another (such as natural causes, a traffic accident, or murder). By taking them for his rituals before they can meet their fated deaths, he is able to aid their souls in moving on. He also performs a kind of Taoist "last rites" upon them that ensures they feel nothing for the duration of their sacrifice.

Mummified heads are nailed to the work area's walls. They are sometimes used for consultations with the dead. Tables strewn with the tools of Choi's trade surround the sacrificial space. Embedded in the west wall is a large *jin ting*, which he uses for burning ghost money and expired victims. (To keep the smoke and burnt flesh smell at a minimum, Choi has developed a special herbal concoction to absorb the odor and smoke.) He keeps his victims' bones stacked in a corner. They are key ingredients in many of his concoctions. Finally, nailed to the ceiling is an immature dragon's hide, its scales shining resplendently in the flickering candlelight. If you stare at it long enough, you almost feel as if it can transform your consciousness.

Choi has been living in Hong Kong since 1894. Well into his hundreds, he doesn't seem to be much older than 60 or 65. It would seem he is no stranger to the fabled Elixir of Immortality sought after by many an emperor and Taoist sage. If pressed on the matter, though, he will not give a straight answer. It is unknown whether Section 44 of the Hong Kong Police Department knows about him and his murderous ways. If they do, they must have their reasons for letting him operate.

Future, Inc. Tattoo House

TSIM SHA TSUI—In the back streets of Tsim Sha Tsui, on the second floor of a run-down tenement building, you can find the Future, Inc. Tattoo House. It's not really a "house." It consists of some plastic stools, air compressors, needles, and jars of inks arranged in an abandoned hallway. Tat-lovers from all over the world flock here, not because of its charming squalor but because of the quality of its artists. The lead artist and owner,

Faye Liang

Sample Dialogue: "Yeah, I could draw that for you. I could do better, though. Let me show you."

Attributes: Bod 5 (Tgh 6), Chi 0 (For 2), Mnd 6 (Cha 7, Per 8), Ref 6 (Dex 8)

Skills: Fix-It 17, Info: Tattoos 15, Martial Arts 12, Medicine 9, Sabotage 12

Weapons: Kick (7), punch (6)

world-renowned Faye Liang, once worked as the lead experimental hardware developer at Macroware. Her specialty was the holographic storage of digital data. Unsatisfied with the wage-slave lifestyle, she walked out one day and never looked back. A week later she was learning the art of tattooing from her friend and occasional lover, Jimmy Kim. Combined with her knowledge of holographic imaging, she soon became a master. Within her ever-widening circle of underground fans, her stunning three-dimensional designs are becoming legendary.

Although Liang owns the patents on her special needles and injection machines, Macroware is in the process of her suing her for the theft of their intellectual property. They say her holographic tattooing process relies on the use of custom-bred nanomachines designed by Liang during her tenure with the company. She denies it. While the lawsuit waits on the judicial docket, Liang continues tattooing her customers with her unique ink.

There are some rumors that Liang's holographic tattoos mutate over time, taking on characteristics their owners never desired. Some have become larger, while others are said to have withered away and "died." A reporter for *Hardwired* magazine

April Chan

Sample Dialogue: "Ohhhh, you know what you'd look good in?"

Attributes: Bod 4, Chi 0 (For 1), Mnd 6 (Int 7, Per 8), Ref 5

Skills: Deceit 15, Info: Television 16, Seduction 13

Weapons: Punch (5)

once speculated in a feature article that each tattoo is a part of a larger organic quantum-computing program and that, when enough people had received her tats, the program will spontaneously develop into independent software. Because of the tattoos' collective quantum nature, they would not have to be in physical proximity to one another to function, according to the *Hardwired* article. Liang herself can't believe all the baseless speculation. She'll be the first to admit that all she cares about is creating quality, long-lasting works of art.

CosPlay Paradise

SHAU KEI WAN—If you're into Japanese manga, comic books, and a bizarre form of roleplaying called "costume play" (or "cosplay"), then this unusual shop might be right up your alley. Owned and operated by April Chan, the shop occupies three floors of an otherwise insignificant shopping arcade. It's a costume shop. Racks dense with faux fur, plastic armor, and mock weaponry fill the first two levels. The third level is reserved for members of the CosPlay Paradise VIP Club. On any given day of the week, you'll find crowds of young men and women in the shop trying on the clothes and costumes of their favorite characters from just about every medium imaginable: comics, video games, cartoons, movies, television shows, music videos, bubblegum cards, you name it.

April Chan used to be the lead writer on *Unicorn Darkly*, a show about a robotic, six-legged unicorn on a never-ending quest to retrieve the magic bubble-ray projector that trapped her mother in The Midnight Island Void. (It was popular in the '80s.) April's obsession with actually transforming into the title character ultimately led to her getting fired. Afterwards, she sank every last dime of her savings into CosPlay Paradise. The VIP Club on the third floor is her *demesne*. It's a place where she and her most trusted friends act out their deepest, and in some cases darkest, fantasies.

If you ever need a good disguise, the make-up facilities here are the best in Hong Kong, despite the store's predilection toward freakishness. Many movie make-up artists come to CosPlay Paradise to learn or improve their craft. April maintains a wide selection of mundane costumes on hand for her less deviant customers, and some of them have been through the Netherworld and worn centuries in the past—though April doesn't know that.



The Year of the White Rat

DISCOVERY BAY—In a culture with a 90% literacy rate, it should come as no surprise to find just as many bookstores as convenience stores and tea shops. They're everywhere, selling books, magazines, and comic books of every stripe, color, genre, size, and quality imaginable. They even stock translations of foreign bestsellers, and in some parts of Hong Kong, entire sections of English- and Japanese-language books as well. In the mornings and during lunch, you're likely to find the stores packed with businessmen loitering over the magazine racks, reading up on the newest computer hardware or console games. In the late afternoons and around dinnertime, the stores are thick with students sitting on the floors reading through their favorite comic books.

The Year of the White Rat is a bookstore unlike any other in the territory. For one thing, it's an invitation-only establishment—a private library, if you like. For another, the books on the store's shelves are categorically not for sale. At least, they're not for sale to anyone who doesn't understand what they are, and for those who do, the price for any given volume is not calculated monetarily.

The books themselves are unusual for one reason: they record events in alternate timelines. As any initiate to the time war knows, history is malleable. It changes with every incursion into the past by future warriors, and vice versa. In fact, the storeowner, Ms. Cecelia Wong, says there simply is no such thing as linear time, as proven by the existence of her very peculiar books. To borrow a line from the late, inestimable Douglas Adams, "time is an illusion." According to Ms. Wong's theory, time is only a relative measure of distance in a three-dimensional space. As soon as you bypass the speed of light, time no longer exists. Faster-than-light travel is impossible in all junctures, but faster-than-light computing is not. Her books are just elaborate quantum computers, able to exist simultaneously in all the so-called "timelines" because the only thing separating the Now that you know from the Now of 1891 (or an alternate Now where you were never born thanks to meddling by the Jammers) is relative spatial distance, and to a quantum computer that distance simply does not exist. That means when you go back in time you are really traveling back through already-traversed space at superluminal speeds. According to the mathematics presented by various theories of relativity, you should be able to arrive at a given point in space before you ever left it. Ms. Wong has all the convoluted details, if you really need to know them.

Her quantum computer-books possess details of events in every available alternate timeline and about past events in the current timeline. She doesn't like looking too far into the possible futures of the modern juncture in which she resides because, in her words, "the universe will probably unravel all at once if I look too hard." Moreover, all futures are nothing more than possibilities when looked

Ms. Cecelia Wong

Sample Dialogue: "Welcome. Please think twice before you touch anything. Son? Listen, now: *anything.*"

Attributes: Bod 4 (Con 5), Chi 0 (For 3), Mnd 9 (Per 10), Ref 4 (Dex 6)

Skills: Detective 12, Info: Libraries 18, Info: Histories 17, Info: Quantum Mechanics 11, Martial Arts 11

Weapons: Cane (7)

at from the past. Not so strangely, her books operate on the same principles governing the existence and functionality of the Netherworld, although she doesn't know for certain—nor is she really interested in finding out this late in her already-long life.

Of course, her entire philosophy could be bunk. It is just a theory, after all.

The bookstore is located in an out-of-the-way alley in Discovery Bay on Lantau Island. It's a traditional building augmented with reinforced walls, thick safety glass windows, and a very secure door. To enter, you must press the buzzer. If Ms. Wong recognizes you, or after stating your business into the speaker box she agrees to see you, she'll buzz you in. The shop has four perfectly square floors, solid oak bookshelves, and thousands of books. Narrow, steep stairs give access to the upper floors.

The books appear quite mundane. Most are leather-bound with pages resembling freshly pressed vellum parchment. In truth, the pages are made from an advanced quantum substance she claims comes from the year 2412.

Books are organized by year and timeline. Ms. Wong has a very elaborate system for keeping track of expired or alternate timelines—one, it seems, only she will ever understand. Reading a "quantum history book" can be a disconcerting experience. If you manage to hunt down a tome containing previous histories of your own existence, be prepared to be upset. What's worse? Finding out that, in the time of the Four Monarchs, you lived a better life than the one you're living now, or discovering you're a noted officer in an evil empire in a former timeline?

Ms. Wong is 88 years old. She was the first woman to attend the University of Hong Kong, and later took her master's degrees (seven of them), and her doctorate degrees (three of them) from Stanford and Oxford. She's fond of hard butterscotch candies, speaks English with a slight British accent, and likes to dress in a traditional "coolie" shirt, slacks, and slippers (most elderly Chinese women in the New Territories dress like this, so it's not anachronistic or anything). The cane she uses to help her walk is made from a beautifully carved and polished piece of flotsam—she says it was a gift Dr. Sun Yat-Sen.

8 NETHERWORLD PORTALS IN HONG KONG

Being at the center of the time war has its advantages. The biggest is easy access to the Netherworld. If Hong Kong has the most feng shui sites of any place on Earth, it has approximately twice as many Netherworld portals. A small number of intertemporal scholars postulate that feng shui sites jut up through the fabric of the space-time continuum, like a mountain rising out of the South China Sea; the stronger the site, the weaker the space-time barrier. At these weak spots, the Middle Kingdom and the Netherworld overlap, allowing Innerwalkers to move between the two realms, like base jumpers plunging into the eroding sea of history. The following is a short selection of prominent portals, well known to the active Secret Warriors in the city.

1. **Kee Yao Cave (Castle Peak, New Territories)** Not far from one of the shorter Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) lines, up a 500-meter-high peak, and inside a tiny cave once renowned for its prehistoric contents, you'll find an ancient portal. The cave narrows considerably at the back, forcing would-be explorers to crawl on their bellies for 1000 meters. The transition to the Netherworld is seamless; the cave opens into an innerspace cave controlled by wang liang gangsters once in the employ of the Triads. They're too big to fit through the portal, but sometimes receive messengers from their mafioso masters through it.
2. **Tai Koo Shing Bank (Ngau Tau Kok, Kowloon)** When this portal was discovered in 1979, an enterprising member of the Ascended bought the land and built the Tai Koo Shing bank over it. The portal is now buried inside the bank's central vault. Opening the vault door reveals a pristine white corridor sloping downward for the next mile and half. Ultimately, this refined passage opens into the Hall of Screams, in the Fire Pagoda. Bank guards have orders to shoot to kill if anyone approaches the vault.
3. **Melvin's Newspaper Emporium (Kennedy Town, Aberdeen)** Melvin Chang is pretty much what you'd expect from a newspaper vendor: a bookish, spot-squeezing bloke with two left everything. His shop sells daily and weekly newspapers, which are displayed at the front on circular racks, but he also sells valuable antique newspapers bound in plastic bags. The dimly lit shop has four extremely small rooms, each packed with old almanacs and stacked with yellowing newspapers. If you dig around long enough in the northwest room, you'll find a crack in the wall that leads to the newspaper stacks of the Netherworld Library.
4. **Constantine's Donairs (St. Stephan's Beach, Stanley)** Constantine Demos, the proprietor and sole employee of this ramshackle beachside hut, shucks authentic "Halifax-style" donairs. (That's something you won't find anywhere else in China, so if you buy one prepare to act appropriately surprised when he tells you about it.) Approximately one hundred meters away from the hut, straight out into the bay, is a small, slowly twisting whirlpool that lets out at the rocky bottom of a foul green Netherworld river. The watery portal is locked, however. To open it, you need to carry one of Constantine's special "tsitziki donairs" and into the whirlpool with you.
5. **Penfold Park (Sha Tin, New Territories)** At the center of the Hong Kong Jockey Club racecourse in Sha Tin is Penfold Park. Except for Saturdays when the horse races are held, the park is open to the public. The beautifully maintained lawn has a few trees. One in particular is quite extraordinary because embedded in its trunk is a secret doorway that opens on a narrow staircase. The staircase winds upward into the tree, and lets out in the upstairs room of a Netherworld pub called the *Seventh Serpent of the Apocalypse*.
6. **Star Ferry Terminal (Connaught Road, Central)** Off the subterranean passageway connecting the Star Ferry Terminal on Central's shore to busy Connaught Road is a rusted maintenance door with a shiny new padlock. Put in the combination (24-36-11) and follow the cold concrete tunnel behind it to the Caves of Dissonance in the Netherworld, home to a bizarre group of mutated and alienated HK waterworks employees. They're constructing an unfathomably complicated sculpture out of pipes (water, PVC, electrical, and fiber-optic) taken from all over the city. The "dissonance" permeating the cave is the sound of water rushing through the artwork's hollow guts.
7. **Ambassador Flats Fire Door (Mongkok)** On the top floor of the Ambassador Flats apartment building in Mongkok, at the end of the hall, is a door that once led out to a fire escape. Now it just opens out of the side of the building, fourteen stories above the Mongkok streets. If you know the secret knock (once loud, pause, thrice loud) and someone on the Nether side recognizes it, you can pass through to the Netherworld, though. The door, when opened from the nether side, leads to a junction of tunnels coming out of 1850 and 2056. Here's what most Innerwalkers don't know, though: if you open the door from the outside of the apartment (while dangling from the building, for example), it also leads to the Netherworld—and you don't have to be expected, then, to be let in.
8. **Excellent Parking (Kowloon)** The four-story, underground Excellent Parking garage must have been built by some magnificent, but vanished, Netherworld shaper. In that garage is a dumpster, and inside that dumpster is a short chute through the Netherworld. The chute leads to a different juncture depending on which level of the garage the dumpster is on. The further underground you go, the further back in time you go. The dumpster is normally kept on the bottom floor (69 AD), and doesn't work at all if removed from the garage.



BIG BUILDINGS

Hong Kong is a difficult place to keep up with, architecturally speaking. Ever since its founding, habitable land has been at a premium. The main island has narrow coasts skirting around steep hills, and the hundreds of outlying islands are so small as to be negligible. Of course, none of this was a problem when fisher folk and pirates were the only people living here. Their populations were always small enough that the amount of available land was sufficient. Later, when the British took over stewardship of the islands and colonized them, land suddenly became an issue. Projects were created to build up the thin, ribbon-like coasts. Wealthy government officials and merchants took over the hills (the most famous being Victoria Peak), which rose higher than the troublesome mosquitoes and flies and inevitable plagues that followed them. Fisher folk were forced into smaller harbors that offered less protection from inclement weather. The larger harbors were taken over for military and trade ships.

When the British signed the lease for the New Territories, they alleviated some of the problem by moving a large part of the population (especially the boat people) out of the crowded island areas. However, because the administrative and financial heart was on the main island, the problem of congestion along the island's coastline was never truly solved. Buildings in Hong Kong are constructed as fast as they're torn down, and vice versa, as the land on which they stand is constantly repurposed—a process that persists to this day. As a result, Hong Kong's architecture has always tended to be dynamic and fleeting. Old leftover colonial houses can be found next door to the latest I. M. Pei "art-chitectural" wonders. Here today, gone tomorrow.



That is the theme of the Hong Kong vista: one day the office block where you work is just sitting there, minding its own business, and the following day it's being torn down to make way for an interstate bypass or a new housing estate or a shopping center. Next year, the new building will disappear too, only to be replaced by something else, like a theme park or a rocket ship, or something.

Buildings in the most crowded parts of Hong Kong are, out of necessity, extremely diversified. They usually contain residential blocks, shopping arcades, restaurant arcades, banks, moneychangers, micro-factories, and even schools. If they are not inside the same building (like the Chungking Mansions) then they are in the same conglom-

WHAT IS THIS "ARCOLOGY" THING?

Paolo Soleri first coined the term *arcology* in his book *Arcology: The City in the Image of Man*. It's (if you'll pardon my French) a *portmanteau* word of "architecture" and "ecology." Soleri envisioned a system enabling people to live in harmony with the environment by molding our architecture to work in tandem with the world rather than against it. Sound familiar? Hong Kong is the global leader in geomancy, and practical arcologies.

Science fiction writers picked up the term and incorporated it into their vocabulary, where it assumed the meaning of a self-sustaining, self-contained urban environment: a city inside a building (or, if you prefer, a building the size of a city). An excellent look at arcology life and society in one possible future is presented in Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's fantastic novel *An Oath of Fealty*.

erate of interconnected buildings (like the Pacific Place/Queensway Harbor/United Center complex). Hong Kong seems to be consciously evolving into a city of arcologies. Elevated walkways stretch through the densest districts. Impressive, flood-proof ant hives of underground subways permeate the land. Buildings are interlinked to their neighbors in mind-boggling chains of connecting corridors. Thank God for GPS, because you'll need it.

Of course, not all districts are so cramped. The further you move away from the main island and the downtown Kowloon district of Tsim Sha Tsui (and the closer you get to the New Territories), the less extreme the buildings become. Towering housing estates are built in groups of three to five, originally erected as a response to the waves of refugees and illegal immigrants flooding into Hong Kong during the war years. They rise monotonously around schools, cargo terminals, bus stations, markets, and the occasional shopping arcade. While the estates are identical in their blandness, every once in a while an estate manager with a sense of humor paints his buildings varying shades of pastel. The city's inescapable smog eventually turns them a uniform gray. As you move deeper into the New Territories, farms crop up and, with them, actual houses, carports, and the occasional walled-in village or two.

EXCUSE MY DUST

The Chinese have a peculiar way of putting buildings together that stems from 2,000 years of history and tradition. Whenever a new building goes up, or when modifications are made to an existing building, bamboo scaffolding is erected around the building. In a matter of days, a 12-story building can be hidden behind a green cage. To keep dust and dirt from drifting down to the crowded streets below, mesh-like curtains are hung from the scaffolding, further disguising the construction work from prying eyes. Chinese construction workers don't rely on elevators to ascend and descend, but climb nimbly up and down the bamboo by hand. They seldom wear boots or other protective footwear, as strange as that may seem to Westerners. They either go barefoot, or wear flip-flops.

Because the urban landscape of Hong Kong is densely packed with buildings, there's not much room for construction cranes and other heavy equipment on the street. So, construction crews use special cranes, which they mount to the top of the building, that hang over the streets below. As the building grows, the crane moves up with it. Earthquakes have been known to knock a construction crane or two loose, sending them spiraling to the sidewalks. This happened in Taipei during the construction of the 101 Building (the tallest in the world, for now). A 100-foot-long crane tumbled almost 100 stories, killing six people on the ground and the driver in the crane's control booth.

Staging a battle on construction scaffolding gives you plenty of opportunities to come up with some wicked stunts. For instance, bamboo is extremely flexible, even aged and dry; you can detach one end of a bamboo spar from the overall scaffolding and use it to vault yourself onto another building or a menacing helicopter. Bullets shatter bamboo, despite its flexibility. Shooting through bamboo sends shards spraying in all directions. If an opponent is close enough, he'll take extra damage (+1 or +2) from sharp splinters. Scaffold nets can break an unfortunate fall, though being vertical, they won't actually catch you so much as slow you down and give you a chance to grab onto the scaffolding or slide inside the building. Finally, if you cut the ropes binding the spars just so, you can collapse large sections of scaffolding against neighboring buildings, creating impromptu ramps for daring escapes or makeshift cages to contain supernatural beasts.

The Chungking Mansions

TSIM SHA TSUI—No examination of Hong Kong would be complete without a look at the Chungking Mansions: seventeen-odd stories of convoluted apartment blocks, guesthouses, Indian mess halls, sweatshops, convenience stores, money exchangers, a first-level shopping arcade, and a branch of Canton University. A person can live his whole life inside one of the mansions without ever having to

Unnamed Somali Smuggler

Sample Dialogue: "What be your poison, Babylon?"

Attributes: Bod 6 (Tgh 8), Chi 0 (For 1), Mnd 5 (Cha 6, Per 7), Ref 5 (Spd 8)

Skills: Deceit 13, Fix-It 11, Guns 8, Intimidation 12, Intrusion 10, Martial Arts 10

Schticks: Signature Weapon (Two big African knives)

Weapons: Two big African knives (12), punch (7), kick (8)

leave, as every amenity is available somewhere within. A perpetual odor of curry spices, aniseed, and paprika fills the air, clinging to every surface and thankfully masking worse odors. Rats run through the litter-strewn corridors, confident in their entitlement to this urban ship that will never sink, despite the best efforts of the city government, the police, and the Triad gangsters who call it home. Shallow puddles of fetid water, born of pinging pipes and creaking rain gutters, birth swarms of mosquitoes. Those who can no longer afford a room sleep in the halls, homeless inside the biggest, nastiest residential structure in the world. All told, the building is a cesspit.

At the center of the Chungking Mansions is a hollow courtyard that extends up from the ground level all the way up to the roof. This creates inward-facing balconies and walkways, which make for some truly bodacious rappelling and pedestrian chase scenes. Five elevators and twice as many stairwells service the five distinct, mutually isolated "blocks" inside the building. The elevators are cramped affairs with stainless steel walls; as soon as the doors open, dozens of residents and backpackers press inward like sardines into a roller-tin.

Backpackers? Yes, backpackers. The Chungking is infamous among backpackers and other low-budget world travelers as the most affordable place to stay in downtown Hong Kong. It's also the most dangerous. Thievery is rampant. In a city where muggings are almost unheard of, this lone building has a higher crime rate than all the other districts in southern Kowloon combined. The Chungking is home to Triads, Turkish mafia, and Somali smugglers. Each one controls one or two blocks. It's not surprising the local constabulary frequently stage raids on the building. People have gone into the building and never come out again. To be fair, though, if you don't carry yourself like a professional victim, flaunt your wealth, and swagger around like you're the cock of the walk, you should be okay inside. The vast majority of the people you meet are not gangsters. They're just simple folk trying to get by in a complicated world.

Before the first century AD, the land occupied today by the Chungking Mansions was a potent feng shui site. But in a long, drawn-out battle between the Architects of the Flesh and the Eaters of the Lotus, the site was burned. No one has ever been able to repair or restore it. Magic utilized in the building suffers a -2 AV penalty as a result. In the modern juncture, the Architects of the Flesh are fervently trying to subvert portions of the building's D Block

to create trouble for the Ascended. Meanwhile, the Ascended have established a small base of operations in A Block. If you follow the western staircase from B Block down to the basement levels you'll eventually come out in the Netherworld; unfortunately, that particular stairwell seems to be completely impassable from the 3rd floor on down, as it's filled with tons of detritus, discarded furniture, a burnt out VW, and the odd corpse or two.

In 2043, it should be noted, the Chungking Mansions will be torn down and replaced with the terrestrial socket of an *Overlord*-class sky hook. In 2054, a terrorist nuke destroys the upper two-thirds of the space elevator, and squatters turn the remaining third into the tallest inhabited structure on Earth. It quickly becomes a deadly no-man's-land with no law enforcement or Buro presence whatsoever.

Other mansions in Kowloon (TST, Hung Hom, Yau Ma Tei, and Mong Kok) include but are not limited to: The Mirador Mansions, the Pak Lung Residential Park, the New Mumbai Mansions, and the Ang Kien Li Mansions. They each have the same general demeanor as the Chungking Mansions, though they are all decidedly safer.

Bank of China Tower

CENTRAL—Eight years in the making, this commercial office tower in the financial district resembles a collection of stacked, triangular glass-and-steel blocks, or an unfurled Rubik's Snake™. Its base is a perfect cube; each section above it narrows the building's width by removing a large triangular chunk from its frame, as though it were a puzzle of the gods'. Not only is its ultra-modern design beautiful to behold, its unique structure enables it to easily withstand the high-speed winds and typhoons that plague the island in the late summer and early autumn months. At 370 meters in height, the building's 72 floors contain the Bank of China's corporate headquarters, two African consulates, miscellaneous stock brokerages, accounting firms, and other assorted financial institutions. The panoramic viewing gallery on the 47th floor is open to the public; it's a good, safely anonymous place to meet with sensitive contacts, or to exchange hostages.

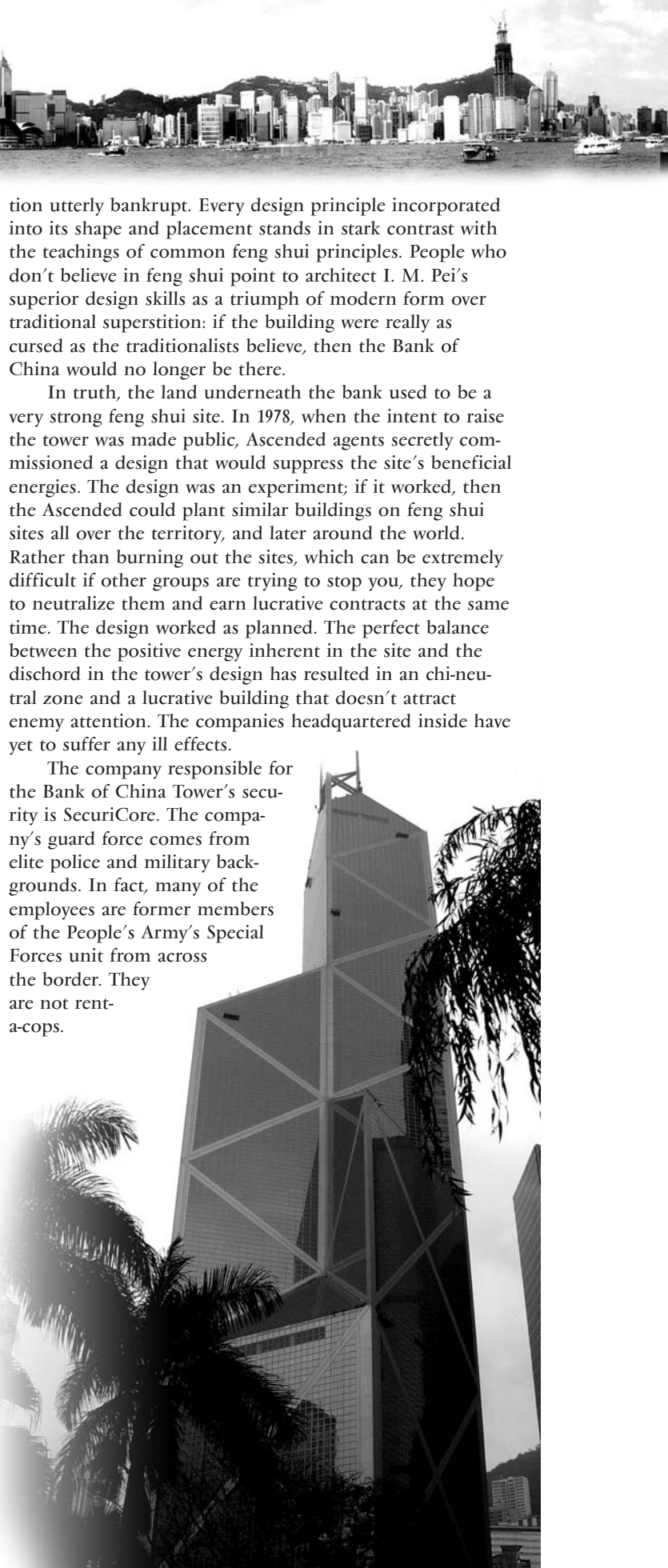
If you don't have the patience for subtlety, you can stage one hell of a battle here. For the sheer *chutzpah* factor, try landing a motorcycle driven off the roof of its next-door neighbor, the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, on the gallery floor. Heck, try landing one on any other floor, but be sure to take out the reinforced windows first, or you're in for a rude impact, a long fall, and a lousy landing. Last year, an all-girl Yakuza hit squad escaped from the tower by launching portable glide-planes from the 65th floor—the Bank of China's private executive viewing gallery—after blowing out the bulletproof windows with Semtex darts.

Despite its snappy design—and this is important—the tower's acute angles, crossed beams, and offensive triangles create such appalling feng shui that many Hong Kong residents marvel at the fact it hasn't collapsed from an earthquake or driven its parent corpora-

tion utterly bankrupt. Every design principle incorporated into its shape and placement stands in stark contrast with the teachings of common feng shui principles. People who don't believe in feng shui point to architect I. M. Pei's superior design skills as a triumph of modern form over traditional superstition: if the building were really as cursed as the traditionalists believe, then the Bank of China would no longer be there.

In truth, the land underneath the bank used to be a very strong feng shui site. In 1978, when the intent to raise the tower was made public, Ascended agents secretly commissioned a design that would suppress the site's beneficial energies. The design was an experiment; if it worked, then the Ascended could plant similar buildings on feng shui sites all over the territory, and later around the world. Rather than burning out the sites, which can be extremely difficult if other groups are trying to stop you, they hope to neutralize them and earn lucrative contracts at the same time. The design worked as planned. The perfect balance between the positive energy inherent in the site and the discord in the tower's design has resulted in an chi-neutral zone and a lucrative building that doesn't attract enemy attention. The companies headquartered inside have yet to suffer any ill effects.

The company responsible for the Bank of China Tower's security is SecuriCore. The company's guard force comes from elite police and military backgrounds. In fact, many of the employees are former members of the People's Army's Special Forces unit from across the border. They are not rent-a-cops.



SecuriCore Guard (Type II Security)

Sample Dialogue: "Bravo Leader to Bravo 12: We've got a bogey in sector 21 dash 7. Check it out and report back to me, aysap. Copy?"

Attributes: Bod 7 (Tgh 10), Chi 0, Mnd 5 (Per 8), Ref 6 (Agl 7, 6 in armor)

Skills: Detective 12, Guns 12, Intimidation 13, Martial Arts 12

Schticks: Eagle Eye, Fast Draw, Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs (x2)

Weapons: H&K MP5 (10/3/30) or Benelli 90 (13/5/7), Norinco M1911 (10/3/7+1), taser club (9), punch (8), kick (9)

Armor: Police Shell (Tgh +3, Agl -1, accounted for)

They're ex-professional soldiers. Groups who try to infiltrate the building or cause havoc inside are in for a very rude surprise when the guards catch up to them. The company has a special license from the SAR administration to not only carry weaponry, but to carry heavy weaponry, wear body armor, and use deadly force in order to safeguard their client companies.

Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

CENTRAL—Perhaps the most expensive building in the history of architecture (priced at an estimated US\$1 billion), the gunmetal-gray Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation tower is an architectural marvel. Contrary to typical architectural design, the HSBC building has no central group of columns or elevator banks running up and down through the center like a skeletal spine. Rather, a bizarre external mechanical framework appears to support hanging floors, heating and ventilation systems, stairwells, and elevators. A 12-meter-high hollow space beneath the center of the building serves as a shaded public concourse. Escalators, with machinery and gears visible through glass panels, rise up from the street to the first floor of an 11-story-high atrium at the heart of the building's 47 floors, above the concourse. Computer-controlled mirrors strategically placed in the outer walls reflect light into the atrium all day long, following the sun's position. The floors sway with the movement of the earth and wind, allowing for compensation during particularly strong earthquakes and typhoons. Tall bronze lions placed outside the north entrance bring good luck.

The HSBC is one of the banks chartered to print the territory's currency. While printing facilities are secretly located elsewhere, the bank keeps a significant portion of their reserve on site. This is very unusual. The government requires monetary reserves to be stored in the Monetary Authority's armored vaults but, for reasons outsiders have been able to discern, HSBC is exempt from the rule. The HSBC bank vaults are on the building's upper floors. They utilize the latest security, and SecuriCore soldiers on permanent assignment watch over them every minute of every day.

Some financial moguls suspect the government allows the bank to keep its reserve on site so it can launder money from government-sponsored Triads. No connection between the bank leaders and the Chinese mafia has ever been proven, though. Others think the HSBC is used to launder "lost" Nazi gold bullion transferred to Hong Kong as payment to the Japanese during the Second World War. The PRC government, conspiracy theorists proclaim, has been sitting on the gold all these decades, unable to move it and unwilling to melt it down. Since the handover, things have changed enough in the world at large that they can now attempt to cycle the gold through the bank, which has financial connections beyond even the Mainland government's reach. Of course, all of this is rumor. No proof supporting this improbable theory has ever come to light.

Yet swastika-stamped gold bricks occasionally show up on the black market in Hong Kong, possibly sold off by an HSBC executive.

Central Plaza

WAN CHAI—With 78 floors, the Central Plaza building was once the tallest in Hong Kong. Its location on Gloucester and Harbor Roads, beside the island-side access to the Cross-Harbor Tunnel and behind the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition center, makes it a prominent landmark for business commuters. It is also the second-tallest freestanding concrete structure in the world. (Most buildings in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are built from concrete and rebar, which are able to withstand the fluid forces generated by the frequent earthquakes in the region.) From a distance, the tower looks almost like a syringe, with its indented corners and needle-like antenna. The podium block below the antenna is plated with neon lights that cryptically display the time only in the six hours leading up to midnight. The gold plating on the building's sides resembles that of a circuit board. During the holidays, artfully designed lighting arrays adorn the building's north side (such as a Chinese dragon during the Lunar New Year). As with many other buildings on the north side of the island, winding elevated walkways emerge from the building to guide pedestrians to other places in the district, most notably the convention center across the way.

The top five floors are owned by one of the wealthiest men in Hong Kong, if not the world. He is Gareth Shou, son of soy sauce tycoon Shou Zu-Hua. Gareth and his father have not spoken in ten years. Superficially, the story seems typical of the angst exhibited by young scions in the public spotlight: his grouchy old man hoped he would take over the company, but the strong-willed youth wanted something uniquely his own. His father disowned him, kicking him out on the street with nothing but the clothes on his back. After a decade of building his own life and career, Gareth now sits on the boards of no fewer than twenty high tech firms. Revenues from their products and patents have made him one of the richest men alive. And yet, it's not what Gareth ever desired. The money, the corporations, and the fame were all a means to an end: to

Gareth Shou

Sample Dialogue: "Reginald Fong is going to move on News Corp's stock first thing in the morning. I want you to outbid him no matter what the cost."

Attributes: Bod 6, Chi 0, Mnd 7, Ref 6 (Agl 8)

Skills: Deceit 12, Fix-It 13, Guns 13, Info: Business 15, Intimidation 12, Martial Arts 13, Sabotage 14

Weapons: Punch (7), kick (8)

The Steel Dragon

Sample Dialogue: "Persist not against my peerless power armor, pest! 'Tis hopeless!"

Attributes: Bod 11 (Tgh 16), Chi 0, Mnd 7, Ref 6 (Agl 8)

Skills: Fix-It 13, Guns 15, Intimidation 17, Martial Arts 15, Sabotage 14

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing (x2), Carnival of Carnage, Fast Draw (x2), Lightning Reload (x2), Signature Weapon (Steel Dragon Hammer)

Unique Schtick: *Grace Under Fire:* The Steel Dragon is calm even in a bloodbath and graceful even in his industrial-strength armor. He suffers no Agility penalties for wearing his Steel Dragon armor. Further, his Mind attributes are never affected by Impairment, so long as he's wearing the armor.

Weapons: 2 big machine guns (13*/6/50), Steel Dragon Hammer (17), punch (12), kick (13)

Armor: *Steel Dragon Power Armor:* The Steel Dragon's armor boosts his Body attributes (+5) in addition to supplying armor (Tgh +5, Agl -4). Technically, Gareth has all the schticks and skills listed for the Steel Dragon, but he only uses them when in the guise of his avenging antihero. Something catastrophic would have to happen for Gareth to let his two lives overlap—or clash.

finance his crusade for personal justice. His father is in truth a black-hearted villain: a foul sorcerer of no small repute amongst those in power. When Gareth isn't working or attending ceremonies or hosting charity auctions, he covertly works to put an end to his father's far-reaching criminal empire. Wearing high-tech battle-armor he designed himself, relying on battle-prowess learned through hundreds of hours in experimental simulators, and calling himself "The Steel Dragon," he works overtime taking out the men who blindly serve his father, one by one, day after day, year after year. There is much more to the story, of course, involving all the usual melodramatic hooks—murder of loved ones, betrayal, torture, and the killing of innocents—but it suffices to say that Gareth has reasons aplenty for wanting his father dead.

While the penthouse levels of Central Plaza contain Gareth Shou's private mansion, training facilities, and

Shou Zu-Hua, Executive Sorcerer

Sample Dialogue: "I see great profit in our future."

Attributes: Bod 4, Chi 0 (For 1, Mag 8), Mnd 7 (Int 9, Per 8), Ref 6 (Spd 7)

Skills: Deceit 17, Info: Business 18, Intimidation 15, Medicine 13, Sabotage 14, Sorcery 17

Schticks: Blast (Acid, Fire, Lightning), Divination, Fertility, Influence, Movement, Summoning

Weapons: Blast (10), Punch (7), kick (8)

crime-fighting command center, the twenty-five floors below are devoted to the corporation that generates the largest percentage of his income: ShouTech Machine Research, LLC. This is the main business arm of a company with offices in every major country, and factories in China, Siberia, and parts of Africa. Its products include heavy lifting equipment, cargo loaders, hovercraft, and other industrial machinery. The secret to the company's tremendous success lies in its enhanced synthetic neuromuscular fibers, which allow its machines to move, lift, and carry ten times the weight of similar products from other companies. These fibers are also the secret ingredient in Gareth's power armor.

International Finance Center

CENTRAL—The International Finance Center is a relatively new arrival on the Hong Kong skyline, and is currently the island's tallest building. The Monetary Authority's headquarters is inside, as is the Hong Kong Island terminus of the Airport Express train to Chep Lap Kok Airport. The building rises up 88 floors above Victoria Harbor, gently fluting inward at the very top like the benign claws on some demon's steeped hands. It dwarfs the buildings around it. At night, bright white spotlights help to illuminate it from the park at its base, while the long claws on its crown glow fiercely.

Built above the HVAC and elevator equipment on the roof is the Billionaire's Club. As its name suggests, only the richest of the rich are invited to join. A five-star restaurant and bar, private banquet rooms, guest rooms, and a business center serve these elite men and women from the top of the business world, as does an army of waiters, chefs, concierges, and security guards. In addition to the Monetary Authority, other distinguished financial corporations, government offices, and embassies pay rent here. Three European, two Middle Eastern, and three Asian nations keep a significant portion of their national gold reserves in the building's innermost vaults, allegedly the most secure in the world.

This is the building for your *Die Hard* adventure. It's larger than life, ultra-secure, and positively awe-inspiring in design. Any scene wherein the heroes angel-rappel down the north face or base-jump from the roof is sure to be exciting and tense. The "oh, crap!" factor increases when you realize

the building flares out towards the bottom, ripe for sudden, accidental impacts during a long drop. Inside, the floors are spacious with high ceilings. Many multi-level atriums are distributed throughout. A dozen high-speed elevators service floors in blocks of 20. Three service elevators and fifteen stairwells climb the length of the entire tower. High-tech computer rooms in the basement control lighting, heating, air ventilation, elevators, and the thousands of security cameras placed discreetly on every floor. While a small army of security men protects the building and its assets, four squads of disguised, yet heavily armed, PRC Special Forces soldiers take turns protecting the vaults.

What not many people know—what the building’s original designers hope to keep secret—is that the building’s power supply comes from vat-grown, genetically engineered and mutated flesh. This allows the building to operate independent of the city’s power grid. Milky white flesh flows in a semi-liquified state through specially designed superconducting containment hoses embedded in the building’s steel frame, while excess energy is shed through the claw-like baffles on the roof. Not only do the baffles emit tremendous amounts of light as a result, they also emit unfiltered radiation similar to arcanowaves. The designers didn’t know the first thing about magic, the time war, or arcanowave energy; they stumbled on their power source by accident while working on nuclear reactor designs for the Soviet Union. The energy flowing through

Unnamed Zombified Employee

Sample Dialogue: “Meat...”

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 1 (Per 5), Ref 5

Skills: Martial Arts 7

Schticks: Damage Immunity: Electricity and Fire (even magical), Inevitable Comeback

Unique Schtick: *Chew Through Anything:* A zombified employee bites through chains, eats through doors, and chews through barriers in search of flesh. For each degree of cover an object provides, the zombie needs to spend 1 shot chewing to break through it. A fence granting 50% cover, for example, takes 2 shots to eat through.

Weapons: Bite (7), scratch (6)

the building causes random mutations in one out of every twenty thousand people, turning them into horrible creatures that must feed on raw flesh (either the “flesh” inside the conduits, or the flesh of their co-workers) to survive. So few mutations have occurred thus far that the building’s managers haven’t yet suspected their unique power source might be the cause. If there were a leak, however, the whole world would know.

(You’re standing in Kowloon, looking across Victoria Harbor.)

YOUR
GUIDE
TO THE
HONG
KONG
SKYLINE

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. SUN HUNG KAI CENTER | 9. BANK OF CHINA TOWER |
| 2. CENTRAL PLAZA | 10. CHEUNG KONG CENTER |
| 3. HONG KONG CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTER | 11. HONG KONG CITY HALL |
| 4. HARCOURT HOUSE | 12. JARDINE HOUSE |
| 5. MASS MUTUAL TOWER | 13. ONE & TWO EXCHANGE SQUARE |
| 6. THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS | 14. TWO INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CENTER |
| 7. QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES | 15. ONE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CENTER |
| 8. CHINESE PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY FORCES BUILDING | 16. THE CENTER |

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16



Peak Observatory

CENTRAL—Sitting atop of Victoria Peak like a post-modern crown is the Peak Observatory, a towering anvil-shaped building sheathed in stainless steel plates and glass. On clear days, the observation deck gives sightseers an amazing view of Sheung Wan, Central, Wan Chai, and Tsim Sha Tsui across the harbor. On hazy days, when fog rolls in and shrouds everything like the island in *King Kong*, the city becomes somber and ghostly. At night, the view is spectacular (great for romantic closing shots before the credits roll); the city looks like an ocean of stars lying at your feet. To get to the Peak Observatory, take the Peak Tram from Central. The tramcars ascend and descend using counterweights and a simple electric control system, originally built in the 1800s. They pass slowly through the Mid-Levels neighborhoods and then through woodland conservation projects before docking at the underside of the Observatory. You can also reach the Peak Observatory via car by taking either Harlech or Lugard Roads up the 50-degree slope to the top. If you find yourself in the peak's woodlands, you're likely to encounter wild dogs, monkeys, snakes, feral runaway children and the occasional renegade supernatural creature.

The Observatory consists of two small shopping levels promoting Hong Kong tourism, with the tram station in the lowest level. The flat-roofed tower overshadowing the observation deck is not open to the public, nor are the switchback stairs leading up to the uppermost levels. The second level opens on a broad driveway. Across the drive is a second, rather expensive, shopping arcade. Two hundred yards away, around the curve of the peak's northern face, is a small Taoist pagoda where one may relax in solitude while enjoying the view below (or performing a training montage).

During World War II, the Japanese occupation force in Hong Kong was charged by Emperor Hirohito to protect the experimental KaijuBot in the area, so that neither the Allies nor the Chinese Nationalists got wind of it. The robot is a ten-story-tall mechanized spider armed with giant flamethrowers, arc-lighting generators, sonic wave casters, and more. Unfortunately for them, the Japanese army never had the opportunity to test it in real combat. By the time the mechanical monstrosity arrived in Hong Kong—straddling three barges—the Allies had dropped the first of two atomic bombs. The Japanese commandant in Hong Kong ordered his subordinates to store the KaijuBot inside the Peak, in a special hanger built just for it. Once the troops sealed the doors, he had them all executed. Then he marched the executioners down the hill and had them executed as well. When word

Giant Spider KaijuBot

Sample Dialogue: "DESTROY ALL MONSTERS. DEST...*bzzt*..."

Attributes: Bod 14 (Mov 7), Chi 0, Mnd 3 (Per 8), Ref 10

Skills: Creature Powers 18, Guns 18, Martial Arts 12

Schticks: Blast (Fire), Damage Immunity: Bullets (except magic),

Damage Immunity: Fire (except magic), Damage Immunity:

Suffocation and Drowning, Lightning Reload (x3)

Weapons: Blast: Fire (15), chin-mounted machine guns

(13*/7/100), stomp (17)

Kaiju is the Japanese giant-monster genre that encompasses your Godzillas and your Rodans. Where this KaijuBot came from is unclear, but it seems to have been built by the Japanese, either in the future or the Netherworld.

reached him of the second atomic bomb, he committed suicide; all knowledge of the robot's resting place supposedly died with him.

The hanger doors are approximately one hundred meters below the Peak Observatory's observation deck, covered in 50 years worth of underbrush, trees, vines, and woodland detritus. The Japanese Consulate currently owns the land. They intend to build a gala mansion there for the resident ambassador. Whether they know about the KaijuBot or not is uncertain, but it's one hell of a coincidence if they don't.

The roof of the flat-topped Observatory tower is an excellent place to hold a tension-filled standoff. Plus, you can launch hang-gliders from it and safely glide under the Coastal Police radar (which, in case you feel the urge to take it out, is mounted atop the PRC Army Garrison, formerly called the Prince of Wales building, in Central). The north side of the Peak Observatory also gives you unfettered views of the southern sides of every major financial building in Central and Sheung Wan.



NOBLE HOUSES

The Noble Houses, called *hongs* (meaning “trading companies”) in Cantonese, have been in Hong Kong since the days the British first founded the colony as a storm shelter and a trade outpost. The first of the prominent Houses to establish footholds on the island were Jardine-Matheson, Swire Group, Sonkeerring, Hutchison-Whampoa, Richter, and Granviere. Although they all have their corporate origins earlier in European history, they each also played crucial roles in the development of Asian trade and, more importantly, in turning Hong Kong into the financial center it is today. In the first fifty years of the colony’s existence, the Houses engaged in such legally and morally questionable activities as opium trade, piracy, and antiquities smuggling. This was, of course, in addition to the everyday, ordinary activities of railroad construction, importation and exportation of legal trade goods, and cargo and passenger transportation.

The wealthiest individuals in Asia oversee the Noble Houses. Their corporate culture is firmly rooted in an “old money, old boys” club philosophy, sometimes to their detriment. They typically employ tens—if not hundreds—of thousands of people, control hundreds of smaller companies, and own property all over the world. Up until the late 1980s, when they began moving their corporate headquarters to other countries in anticipation of the post-handover chaos, high-ranking House leaders lived like royalty in and around Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangdong. Though the decline and fall of Hong Kong civilization has yet to occur, despite the handover, few of the original Noble Houses have returned in force.

Hutchison House never left. To this day it’s the most diversified and influential *hong* in local politics. Jardine-Matheson, though now headquartered in Bermuda, continues to play an active political role. Richter House went off the market in 1979 and is no longer a publicly traded company. As a result, the limits of their holdings remain private and largely unknown; they have humungous coffers, though. In 1995, when Granviere House was on the verge of bankruptcy, Richter House bailed them out with a timely series of loans. As far as anyone knows, they have yet to be paid back.

The Noble Houses maintain a visible presence on Hong Kong island, namely in Central, Admiralty, and Sheung Wan (basically, in the territory’s financial locus), but their influence is felt everywhere. Jardine House in Central stands beside the Star Ferry terminal. It is colloquially known in Cantonese as the “house of a thousand arseholes” for its round windows, which the designer had originally hoped would evoke the feeling of a ship’s many portholes. (Jardine’s reputation has always been rather notorious for its participation in the two Opium Wars; that’s the real source of its unflattering nickname.) Hutchison House, Swire House, and Granviere House also maintain large, expensive regional headquarters in Central. Swire owns the Festival Walk in Kowloon Tong. A subdivision of Richter House, Richstar Communications, owns the second-largest cable and broadband service provider in the territory. Granviere House owns hotels on the Golden Mile, and Jardine owns the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Richter House

QUARRY BAY—Josef Richter was a young Prussian *émigré* in England when he co-founded the Richter, Grayson, and Barnes Shipping Company in 1831 with funds he had conned out of various aristocratic families on the Continent. (One such family was related to the czars of Russia, and would later take control of the company in the 1960s.) When trade with China increased in the 1840s and ‘50s, Richter took a third of the company’s fleet to Asia to create a permanent base of operations. When the British acquired Hong Kong, he founded Richter House on the island. At the ripe old age of 51, Josef Richter became the youngest of the House *taipans* (leaders). Because of his Prussian origins and age, the British colonials did what they could to keep him out of their private clubs and government offices. Yet, he persevered. When Sonkeerring House fell into Jardine’s debt, Josef Richter gave them a loan with extremely generous terms (not that it helped in the end). Later, he bailed out Caltonhill House, a minor trading company that didn’t survive the century, when they ran into serious trouble with Qing Dynasty magistrates ruling over Guangdong province—trouble that Swire House quietly paid the British government to ignore. As stability gradually settled over the troubled region, Richter House’s reputation for generosity and fair play worked to its advantage. Richter spent many weeks in the governor’s company on trips to Macau, Xiamen, and Hainan. His influence over Hong Kong politics grew enormously. The other Houses became jealous; in time, his company received the best contracts from both the British and the Chinese. One of the Houses, to this day nobody knows which, hired a gun-slinging American assassin to take out Richter and his three lieutenants. He succeeded. Without anyone to lead it, Richter House was on the verge of spiraling out of control. The other Houses worked double-time to insert themselves into Richter’s place, while it fell behind.

Richter House survived, barely; over the subsequent decades it built itself back up. When the 20th century rolled around, it moved into the burgeoning automobile and steam-ship industry. Motorized engines for other vehicles soon followed. By 1950, the House owned a monopoly on motor-driven machinery in Southern China. (Except, of course, for railroad engines. Jardine-Matheson had an unshakeable grip on that technology, having built the first Chinese railroad in 1871.) In 1961, as the Cold War began heating up in earnest between the United States and the Soviet Union, economic instability plagued Hong Kong. All the Noble Houses suffered. Richter House, still associated with the

Brett Brown, Gunslinging Assassin

Sample Dialogue: “You pay me \$100 for every bullet I need to take your man down. Won’t cost you much.”

Attributes: Bod 5 (Tgh 6), Chi 0 (For 3), Mnd 5 (Per 8), Ref 8 (Spd 9)

Skills: Driving 10, Guns 16, Martial Arts 10, Medicine 9

Schticks: Both Guns Blazing (x2), Eagle Eye, Fast Draw (x4), Lightning Reload

Weapons: Five Colt Army Revolvers (8/5/1), punch (6)

parent company of Richter, Grayson, and Barnes back in England, suffered the most, however. Its monetary reserves were drying up. The home office's debts became unmanageable due to a string of incredibly bad business decisions made by the ruling head of the company, Richard Grayson. The company was a sinking ship that threatened to bring all its outside holdings down with it. Richter House withdrew from its association with RG&B, buying itself out for an amount of money that left it almost bankrupt.

That was when the Russians moved in.

Descendents of the Czarist family originally cheated by Josef Richter, the Zovoyas, bought Richter House for a song. They fired the company's existing employees and replaced them with Russians and Uzbeks. In 1979, in response to growing tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the ruling *taipan*, Misha Zovoya, took the House's financial holdings off the public markets.

Nobody has any idea how Richter House makes its money now. Their headquarters, moved to Moscow in 1994, are completely impenetrable. The original Richter House in Hong Kong was replaced with a rather short skyscraper in Quarry Bay in 1987. It continues to manage the company's Asian affairs, whatever those may be, and is just as impregnable as the buildings owned in Moscow.

Richter House is 18 floors of jet-dried concrete and steel. Tinted windows that appear black in the day glow with a muted red light at night. Company employees must endure rigorous security procedures. The corporate intranet is not connected to any external networks. Instead, the House maintains communications with the parent company via an encrypted laser-based satellite feed. Savagely trained Doberman pinchers have the run of the halls at night when employees leave, and former Soviet soldiers and counter-intelligence agents work as security guards. Absolutely no one who doesn't belong inside Richter House is allowed in. Ever.

A private investigator looking into the disappearance of a client's husband discovered something strange about the company a few months ago: corpses ostensibly bought for educational purposes by the University of Canton are actually being paid for by a mysterious "Department 237" in Richter House. The bodies arrive in groups of 12 every other Tuesday at 2 AM inside black "laundry service" vans, and are discreetly delivered through the building's back entrance on Lantern Street.

Granviere House

SAM SHING—This Noble House possesses none of the prominence exhibited by the others. Although it was one of the first, it never aspired to be anything more than a mid-sized trading company... because it's always been a front for the Dragons, the latest casualty in the Secret War. Before Operation Killdeer devastated the group, two of its members, Sylvia March and Gordon Peterson, went to Paris during the 1850s and bought the company out. They moved its headquarters to Hong Kong Island in anticipation of the coming battle for feng shui sites in the region. The other factions have never learned that surviving Dragons own Granviere, though they've come close. For years, the company quietly purchased small but unremarkable properties all over Hong Kong—properties charged with nominal amounts of chi and possessed of good feng shui. While the other groups focused their efforts on bigger, flashier sites, the shattered Dragons managed to secure a decent toehold in the war by leveraging overlooked sites. Unfortunately, things were not so good for the House economically. By the time of the handover, anxiety over imminent PRC rule was so strong that the House's *taipan*, Margaret Ping, felt she had no choice but to move the company to a lower-profile location. Unlike the other Noble Houses, who had moved to other hemispheres, she moved Granviere to the New Territories. As CEO, her first priority was the acquisition of feng shui sites, not financial or corporate growth.

Few Dragons knew about Granviere House, because it would jeopardize the group. If Ping learned anything from Operation Killdeer, it was that you couldn't trust anyone, even your own friends. Rather, the House funds Dragon ops through a series of subordinate companies obliquely owned by Granviere. Only one person in each of the other companies is Dragon-aware; the rest are mundane employees. The envoy interfaces with local Dragons, giving them missions, equipment, and money. Inside agents don't know about Granviere House; they receive assignments in code through secure, anonymous email servers. It is extremely difficult to trace anything back to Ping.

The building is a plain concrete structure, twenty stories tall. House operations occupy the top seven floors; the others are rented out to unaffiliated companies. Granviere controls the majority of cargo terminals on the western side of the New Territories (through various dummy companies), as well as some smaller shipping firms and boatyards dispersed throughout the region. Granviere also owns the Mos Burger fast food joints in Sam Shing, one of which is a weak feng shui site.

Unnamed Russian Security Guard

Sample Dialogue: "No."

Attributes: Bod 9, Chi 0, Mnd 4, Ref 5

Skills: Guns 9, Intimidation 12, Martial Arts 9

Schticks: *Hands Like Hams:* These big, scary Russians deal +1 damage with their giant, ham-like fists.

Weapons: Makarov (10/2/8+1), punch (11), kick (11)

Margaret Ping

Sample Dialogue: "You've got the 5-to-11 shift. I'd like you on drive-thru tonight, okay?"

Attributes: Bod 5, Chi 0, Mnd 9, Ref 7

Skills: Fix-It 9, Guns 13, Info: Business 13, Leadership 16, Martial Arts 12

Weapons: Beretta Jet Fire (8/1/8+1), kick (7)

Hok Yu Stadium

TSUEN WAN—In the decade before the British left Hong Kong, they spent billions of dollars building up its infrastructure as part of the original handover accord signed in the early 1980s. One project resulted in the new airport at Chep Lap Kok. Another project resulted in Hong Wang Stadium. It, on the other hand, was an epic failure. Designed by controversial architect and performance artist Philip J. Lei, the stadium rapidly became the ex-colony's most embarrassing landmark. To say it's ugly is a disservice to ugly buildings everywhere. It's an uneven, ungainly knot of concrete concourses, tunnels, offices, and private rooms surrounding the only normal part of the building: the football field. In interviews given during the stadium's construction, Lei claimed it was a practical piece of modern art. Its unique shapes were meant to evoke Hong Kongers' fear of a future under Mainland Chinese rule, he said. Critics say it wasn't so much *designed* as it was vomited out of the earth by the shade of H.P. Lovecraft. Football fans and teams avoided the stadium in droves. Stadium managers hosted a single match before a crowd of twenty people (relatives) before they admitted defeat and shut down for good. Now it is a cyst on the New Territories landscape, which no one has had the wherewithal to tear down. Worse, the Tsuen Wan MTR station is located directly underneath it, with seven exits spilling commuters out into the stadium's nightmare-inducing shadow.

The stadium, at its tallest point, is fifteen stories tall. Crimson concourse ramps wind around it like steel arteries. Offices, locker rooms, vendors, storage rooms, equipment sheds, and HVAC rooms variously bulge out of it or depress into it, following the architect's bizarre sense of the organic. The stadium roof is a steel framework with hundreds of tons of lead-supported stained glass depicting the Taiping Rebellion and its leader Hong Xiu-Quan (who claimed to be Christ reincarnate, by the way). During the day, sunlight streaming through the glass casts the image of a Swiss stopwatch. As the sun moves through the sky, the watch slowly transforms into a phoenix. When night falls, the glass glows hot with neon gases trapped between the panes. Hybrid stone gargoyles of Chinese and European pedigree cling to columns and supports. Statues of stylized Taoist gods, demons, and sages wearing futuristic clothing and wielding impossible weapons stand guard.

In theory, the stadium is abandoned. In truth, a man named Min Kwan owns the title. He's an occasional Netherworld resident and a die-hard football fan. When the stadium went belly up, he bought it for a tad more than nothing. Then he organized a Netherworld-based football (meaning "soccer") league. Every Tuesday night, beginning at midnight, the league plays two games in Hok Yu Stadium. The teams are odd collec-

THE BIGGEST TITHE EVER

In 1899 on the eve of the new century, the paranoid founder of the Sonkeerring House shipping company, an Afrikaner named Koos Van der Merwe, feared the apocalypse was imminent. Having been in Asia for some time, he knew quite a bit about Chinese religious beliefs, and he knew that if he did indeed die when the world ended he could ensure a good afterlife for himself through selective bribery. So, he took two million dollars worth of gold krugerrands from the House coffers and handed them over to a notorious Taoist fakir (notorious, that is, to the Chinese, not the foreign population) and asked him to sacrifice the gold to the deities who sat in judgment of souls. The priest happily took the gold and promised the Afrikaner a palace with 900 vestal virgins in the afterlife. Pleased, Van der Merwe went home, dressed in his finest clothes, lay down in bed, and waited for the end. But the world didn't end that night. The clock chimed midnight, and life went on. For one minute.

Before Van der Merwe could register his surprise, an earthquake struck the islands and his house collapsed on top of him, crushing him beneath three tons of pointy debris. When his son and heir found out about the spiritual bribe, he went after the Taoist fakir with a small army of goons to get the krugerrands back. That Taoist fellow, though, had the good sense to bugger off to Indonesia. Sonkeerring House subsequently went belly up because it was incapable of paying its debts to Jardine-Matheson, which promptly took over ownership of the Van der Merwe fleet.

Van der Merwe's descendants never did find out where the money ended up, although not for lack of trying. Now Van der Merwe's great-great grandkids—a couple of ne'er-do-well accountants living in Antwerp, are looking to hire some treasure-hunters to track down the krugerrands, if they still exist. (Failing that, they want the fakir's descendents, or whoever profited from the bribe, to pay back the money, plus interest.) The gold's trail begins in Hong Kong.

tions of temporally displaced nobodies, cursed creatures, fugitives from the future, and other Innerwalkers. IKTV broadcasts the games live throughout the Netherworld. Because of the league's popularity, the stadium has become a sort of unofficial neutral ground in the Secret War. Differences of opinion still happen, as with any football match anywhere else in the world, but these have little to do with the current conflicts plaguing the various groups.

PRC Army Garrison

CENTRAL—This square, incredibly bland-looking, vanilla-colored building is one of the few in Central not devoted to making money. It's where the Mainland's sole military presence in the SAR lives and trains. Before the handover, it was called the Prince of Wales Building and housed the British military contingent. During the handover ceremonies, Prince Charles and Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin met there to finalize the deal. It's a 20-story-tall structure capped off with a bristle of radar dishes and communication antennas. The upper 15 stories are isolated from the lower five by a narrow bottleneck. In the event of an emergency, stairwells and elevator shafts in the bottleneck are sealed to prevent intruders from entering the top three-quarters of the building.

Annex buildings surround the garrison; two full Mainland Chinese army platoons live and study within them. The SAR's Chief Executive has no authority over the PRC garrison; its officials report to General Ma Ying-Jun, the PRC's commanding officer in the SAR, who in turn reports directly to Beijing. However, the general is a savvy man. He knows the PRC's military presence in Hong Kong makes the population uncomfortable. As such, the soldiers rarely go beyond the compound in uniform. On furlough days, he encourages them to take their pleasures across the border, to Shenzhen or Guangdong.

The central building was riddled with surveillance devices when the British retreated. There were so many, in fact, that for the first year after the handover, the army refused to use the building. General Ma still isn't sure his men have found everything. He's trying

General Ma Ying-Jun

Sample Dialogue: "I cannot tolerate such a risk to the Mainland, sir."

Attributes: Bod 7, Chi 0, Mnd 7, Ref 5

Skills: Guns 15, Intimidation 14, Leadership 17, Sabotage 14

Schticks: Eagle Eye (x2), Lightning Reload (x3), Signature Weapon (Nickel-plated Norinco M1911)

Weapons: Nickel-plated Norinco M1911 (13/3/7+1), punch (8), kick (9)

to get the Chief Executive to let them move into another building, but so far he's met nothing but resistance. (Which only makes him more suspicious.) So, General Ma has chosen to take matters into his own hands. He's had his men secretly wire the building with plastic explosives. He'll give the Chief Executive another 6 months to reconsider his request for new facilities. After that, he and his men will "just happen to be in China on training exercises" when "a terrorist group" just happens to blow the building to smithereens. Fifteen minutes before the explosives go off, the police will receive a credible tip, warning them of the blast and motivating them to clear out the building. The general hopes to avoid any casualties, but he sees the possibility of ongoing surveillance of PRC troops as a grave threat to all of China. He's willing to sacrifice some bricks and mortar for that. Even a few lives, if need be.



Unnamed PRC Garrison Soldier

Sample Dialogue: "Yes, sir."

Attributes: Bod 6, Chi 0, Mnd 5, Ref 5

Skills: Guns 8, Martial Arts 8

Weapons: AR-18 (13*/5/30), Noricono M1911 (10/3/7+1), punch (7), kick (8)

He doesn't realize it yet, but a traitorous garrison sergeant sold two of the three activation codes for the building's explosives to a small group of Chinese extremists who call themselves the Fifth Remnant. This sergeant—a North Korean mole looking to return home—plans to fake his death when the Fifth Remnant blows the building.

General Ma is the only person who knows the third activation code.

THE FIFTH REMNANT

The Fifth Remnant is a faction of pseudo-religious terrorists operating in Southeast Asia and on the American west coast. They claim to be Taoists, but are, in fact, fanatical servants of the Four Monarchs trapped in a hostile timeline. The thirteen-or-so leaders of Fifth Remnant cells were each taken to the Netherworld as infants, so they witnessed the critical shift that ruined their worlds. They don't, however, know about the Secret War, and cannot make sense of what's happened to their world. Once, the Four Monarchs intended to use such "sleeping revolutionaries" as a ready army, should they ever lose their hold on the Contemporary juncture (as they did). Since then, the Monarchs have forgotten about the Fifth Remnant.

The Fifth Remnant only knows that their world is wrong. They're not sure how to change it back, but they think a big enough explosion might bring the Monarchs back. It's only a matter of time until they get the attention of *someone* who knows what's going on, at least.

Up until the 1970s, a secret tunnel connected the Prince of Wales building to the Sixth Tunnel in Victoria Harbor. When the colony's return to the Mainland was imminent, the British collapsed the tunnel (but not before they had moved in fresh intelligence gathering equipment, weapons, and upgraded the tunnel's other facilities). A few years ago, the massive earthquake that rocked Taiwan, killing 1200 people, affected the tectonic plates below Hong Kong. As a result, parts of the tunnel have opened up again, if only slightly. In time, Chinese soldiers will undoubtedly discover one of these openings and pry inside. When that happens, British and American covert operatives using the tunnel as their Asian base of operations will be discovered. International tensions will certainly rise in the wake of the scandal.

5 THINGS TO DO IN HONG KONG IF YOU'RE AN ANARCHIST*

1. **Tap into the fiber optic lines** running through pipes in Victoria Harbor. They are the sole means for transferring computer network and broadband data between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. You'll need some good SCUBA gear and a lot of stamina. Beware of giant mutant fish; every year one swallows a police diver or two. If you succeed, you can hack into just about any government or financial institution or hijack any and all computerized data moving through the pipes. Sorting it all out is something else entirely.

2. **Build your own pirate radio aerial** atop the Peak Observatory. Broadcasting an arcanowave signal on frequency 19000-6789 DV is (theoretically) guaranteed to light up every feng shui site from Hong Kong to Guangzhou. If you broadcast long enough you might even affect their chi resonance. The problem is you need an experimental military-grade hypertransponder in order to properly transmit. One can be found in Sub-Basement Four of the PRC Army Garrison in Central (formerly the Prince of Wales building).

3. **Put together a low-tech EMP device** (like "the pinch" in the *Ocean's Eleven* remake) with ordinary equipment bought at Fortress Electronics. If you don't have the plans to build one, steal them from a scruffy hacker named St. Louis Blue who works out of Star House in Tsim Sha Tsui. Getting to him won't be easy: seven Mongolian bruisers serve as his bodyguards. Detonate the EMP from the top of the Bank of China tower and the entire city becomes electronically sterile for at least a week. This devastates both the local and world economies as the Hang Sang stock market crashes and burns.

4. **Seventy-five barrels of Agent Orange** left over from the Vietnam war are stored away in a warehouse near the cargo terminals on Lantau Island. Swap them with the pesticide the government uses to cut down on the city's mosquito population. The pesticide trucks spray the city on a quarterly basis, driving from street to street, painting everything in sight. If you're really evil, combine the Agent Orange with a rarefied form of liquid plastique; it ignites at temperatures higher than 45 degrees Celsius. You're guaranteed at least one day during the summer will cross that threshold.

5. **Rewire the neon signs** or the complicated arrangement of building lights along Hong Kong Island's north coast so its famous Manhattan-esque nighttime skyline displays anarchist propaganda or says something offensive. If you can manage it, link the lights to a strobe generator that outputs 360 beats or more per minute. Anyone viewing the psychotic light display has a 50% chance of suffering a spontaneous seizure. Amplify the effect by spiking the public drinking water in Tsim Sha Tsui with Ecstasy half an hour before the show begins.

**Or, FIVE THINGS TO HEROICALLY HALT IF YOU'RE A HERO*

USUSUAL PEOPLE

Hong Kong is a real mix of people and cultures. Though the majority of the population consists of native Cantonese speakers, British influences remain quite tangible. Add Indian, Nepali, African, Filipino, and European immigrants to the limited space and you end up with a hybrid culture unlike any other. The people described in this section represent a wide array of characters ready to make an on-screen appearance as the GM sees fit. They might be contacts, enemies, old friends, or anything else the story calls for. Each is just a sketch to get you inspired. It's what's on screen that matters, anyway.

The Good Shepard

A 50-year-old ex-sheep-herd now living on the streets of Lai King, Loh Tak-Wing (also known as "the Good Shepard") spends his days attempting to herd other homeless people as if they were sheep. At night, he keeps watch over the flock where they sleep beneath a highway overpass. At the moment, he has 20 sheep in his flock.

Ding Fei

If you're ever in Shek O, you're likely to run into this woman. She's 87 years old, dried up, used up, and withered up like a prune. Still, none of that prevents her from dressing like a *Seeking Susan*-era Madonna. Ding Fei claims to have once been a famous singer and nightclub entertainer. Now she's an infamous nobody. She wanders around the village warbling old songs. An entourage of yapping street dogs follows her everywhere.

The General

There aren't many of them left, but occasionally you'll encounter some of the old Nationalists who were driven out of China by the Maoists. The General is one of them. He lives in his own world, wandering the streets of Yau Ma Tei, giving silent speeches to an invisible audience or conducting imaginary military orchestras. His mind is still firmly entrenched in the 1940s. He talks so quietly because he has no tongue.

Chopstick Man

Chopstick Man is a homeless fellow afflicted with a severe case of obsessive-compulsive disorder. He spends most of his time peeling the wood from disposable chopsticks until they disintegrate into splinters and toothpicks. You can always tell where he's spent the night in Mong Kok because of the sheer volume of woody detritus left behind.

Yee-Loh Garland

At Wong Tai Sin temple, in the fortuneteller gallery, there sits a towering drag queen named Yee-Loh Garland. She was once Mainland China's number one Olympic volleyball player. As soon as she came out of the closet, the government threw her in the slammer for "deviant behavior." After her release, two years ago, she made a bee-line for Hong Kong, where the government is more tolerant. She enjoys her work, although she'll be the first to admit she doesn't know the first thing about telling fortunes and that she makes it up as she goes along. Still, she's got genuine empathy, and her customers believe she's touched by the gods, even if she doesn't.

Charlie Hoi

The Frugal Inn Golden Mile is, with one exception, a rather unremarkable hotel with an equally unremarkable shopping arcade. The exception's name is Charlie Hoi, the Singing Concierge. Plagued with a paralyzing stutter as a child, he learned to communicate with those around him through the momentum of song. Charlie's voice is quite majestic, with talent worthy of a professional singer. What's more, he's an excellent concierge, able to procure just about anything with a moment's notice.

Ng Sek-Hon

Some people take their karaoke seriously. Ng Sek-Hon puts them to shame with his karaoke obsession. He's been a cab driver for 20 years. As soon as technology caught up with his passion, he outfitted his car with the ultimate mobile karaoke system. The headrests and dashboard in his car have built-in LCD video screens, his boot contains a 100-disc changer for playing all the most popular karaoke VCDs, the back seats of the car hide powerful throbbing speakers, and he's even wired up an in-car microphone system (including extra reverb for people who suck). His fares are twice that of normal cabs, but people pay it to experience the ride.

Fok Man-Kwan

This lifelong professional activist marches around Central every day carrying a placard demanding that Hong Kong be returned to colonial status. However, he doesn't want the British back. He wants the Overlords of Alpha Centauri to assume control over the SAR. Fok also seems to know a lot about the Architects of the Flesh, for some bizarre reason. He believes the current British Prime Minister is an experimental Lifedecoy™ robot, and that the real PM is back on Alpha Centauri attending university.

Vijay Ramalasar

Vijay Ramalasar was one of Bollywood's rising stars in the early 90s. He was incredibly handsome and could not only carry a tune, but could also dance without looking like he had two left feet (unlike that clown Deepak Wellington). Vijay's success was a thorn in Deepak's side. So, Deepak hired a couple of goons to destroy the young man's career. Late one night, they ambushed him outside a nightclub and burned his face. It did the job. Vijay left India, came to Hong Kong, and now runs a coffee stand in Repulse Bay. His face is a morass of criss-crossed scar tissue.

Agadu Sowati

It's pretty hard to be a stand-up comedian in Africa when you specialize in dry observational humor you learned from the TV. Agadu Sowati spent a decade learning that lesson. A few months ago, he finally saved enough money to go to America, where he thought he could try his luck getting onto the *Tonight Show*. Unfortunately, he got as far as Hong Kong before circumstances mired him here. He's trying to move on, but owes a group of Somali smugglers a ton of money. He works weeknights at the Yelts Inn in Lan Kwai Fong.

Fuad the English Teacher

Fuad comes from a family of Turkish ex-pats who moved to Azerbaijan when he was a child. His father was recently given an unpopular government position, so Fuad was sent to live for a time Hong Kong, away from the political games. Fuad barely speaks English, but apparently that qualifies him to teach it at a cram school in Causeway Bay. Right now there are thirty-three impressionable young high school girls running around Hong Kong speaking broken English with thick Turko-Bajani accents.

Jun-Yu Goldblatt

This self-proclaimed Queen of Manners is Jun-Yu Goldblatt, the Chinese equivalent of Emily Post. She's married to Canadian industrial millionaire Harold Goldblatt. With a monthly disposable income greater than the GNP of many small African nations, Jun-Yu has rapidly become bored with shopping and other creative ways of spending. So, she has adopted a cause: the cause of good manners and class distinction. Every week you can see her on TV or holding tea-time court at the Peninsula Hotel as she "educates" Hong Kongers (who view her as a rich crackpot and nothing more).

Tsang Wai-Hun

This incredibly wealthy man owns a small plot of land in Central beside the towering Amaratin Skyscraper, which he also owns. Despite pressure from businessmen and politicians to sell the 500-square-foot plot, he insists on farming rice and sweet potatoes on it while dressed in traditional peasant garb. His family has been in Central since 1653, and became rich during the last century through real estate they owned on Hong Kong Island. Tsang is the last of his line. He sold off everything except for the “farm” and the building beside it.

Sik Wa & Sik Wang

Wa and Wang are eighty-year-old Siamese twins who sell grilled seafood from a pushcart in Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei. These brothers have been feuding for twenty years over a lady Sik Wa claims Sik Wang stole from him. They have not spoken to one another in all that time. Sik Wa has an aural eidetic memory—he’s able to remember any sound he has ever heard. Sik Wang has a visual eidetic memory, allowing him to recall anything he’s ever seen. They’re joined together at the spine.

Shui Lung

A growth disorder afflicts this fishwife, who works in the day market on Cochrane Street in Central, beside the Mid-Levels Escalator. She is officially the tallest woman in Hong Kong, at 8 feet 11 inches in height. Lung is 28 years old and hopelessly single. Men are intimidated by her. She’s a comic book fanatic who spends her meager earnings every Saturday on imported Japanese manga. Sometimes she supplements her income by working as a bouncer at various pubs in Mid-Levels.

Mao Nu-Wang

Prostitutes, like Mao Nu-Wang, are a fact of life in Hong Kong. Were it not for her knack for Elvis impersonation, Nu-Wang would be unremarkable. She discovered the King as a youngster and fell immediately in love with him. All her life she’s been obsessed with his music. To afford the more expensive Elvis paraphernalia available in online auctions, she started turning tricks. Business was no good at all, until she donned a low-cut version of the King’s white rhinestone eagle jumpsuit, big ‘70s-style sunglasses, and mighty heels. Then business boomed.

In Chinese, Elvis Presley’s name is transliterated as *Mao Wang* (“Cat King”). *Mao Nu-Wang* means “Cat Queen.”

Michael “Bear” O’Reilly

Michael O’Reilly is a trustafarian backpacker who believes he’s mastered every single martial art known to man. (He hasn’t.) All his so-called kung fu knowledge comes from watching Weekend Warrior Kung Fu Theater as a kid in Wisconsin. His Chinese friends nicknamed him “Bear” for his tremendous mane of hair, thick bushy beard, and weirdly hairy body. He’s a living stereotype: a granola-eating, Birkenstock-wearing, dope-smoking hippie. Because his father is a wealthy entertainment lawyer, Bear doesn’t have to work for a living. He simply exists, man. Can you dig it?

Bear answers direct questions with cryptic and pithy Confucian-esque phrases.

Mufasa Hajar

Mufasa’s been living in the Chungking Mansions for the last 20 years as an emigrant from Yemen come to seek his fortune in HK. All he found was a heroin addiction. If you need to a local guide inside the Mansions, he’s your man. Long-time residents even rely on him at times. Mufasa calls everyone “boss,” including his two daughters and estranged wife.

Gavin Wimple

This leprechaun of a man hails from Newcastle, England. He came to Hong Kong in the mid-’90s to take a job as a junior journalist for the *Southeast Asian Gazette*. He’s loud, bawdy, lewd, boisterous, and intensely aggressive—he embodies everything Asian people hate about Westerners. He’s been deported 23 times for brawling. His favorite tactic is to head-butt his opponent in the face while screaming thickly accented obscenities at the top of his lungs. You’ll find him clinging precariously to a barstool in the Foreign Correspondents Club in Central, drinking pint after pint of thick Malaysian-brewed Guinness.

The Professor

Nobody knows the Professor’s real name. He’s been a fixture at Chater Park for half a century, sitting on the same bench every day until 3 PM, at which time he presumably returns home. He knows everything about anything, or at least acts like he does. When he speaks, his Mandarin boasts a thick Beijing accent. His court entourage consists of other old men and women, who often play games of *wu zi qi* or chess while listening to him lecture about whatever. At times, it seems obvious that he was a Maoist in his youth; other times, he talks like a Nationalist. In truth, he’s neither. He was once a Japanese soldier stationed in Northern China and defected to China after the war.

San Ming Shou

Literally, “the Three Hands of Fate.” These three decrepit old ladies spend their days in the Kowloon Walled City Park feeding the ducks, gossiping with friends and passers-by, and teaching select students a variant of the martial art *Ba Gua Zhang*. They picked up their nickname from their habit of evaluating potential students for “fateful energies.” If a prospect has bad fate, they dismiss her. If she has good fate, they take her under their wings. The women only accept other women as students. *Ba Gua Zhang* is an exceptional form of kung fu traditionally studied by imperial bodyguards; the San Ming Shou trace their ancestry back to the Chinese empress who ruled during the Tang Dynasty—and was protected by female bodyguards. The women say they’re married to a trio of handsome mallards in one of the park’s many ponds.

Nam Kau-Yi

Every morning at the crack of dawn you can find this chubby lady dancing on the eastern side of Victoria Park in Causeway Bay. She brings an old wind-up phonograph, with which she plays classical ballroom music. Some mornings other people join in, partnering up with strangers and dancing with a grace they never knew they had. Nam has an infectious zest for life. Anyone who participates her morning dance ritual always leaves happy.

Walter Liu

Walter owns and operates a newsstand on the covered sidewalk outside the Star Ferry Terminal in TST. He’s a normal guy in his 40s who enjoys talking with his regular customers about current events, horse racing, and whatnot. What’s strange about him is that, once per day, one *Apple Daily* in his stack is actually the newspaper that’ll be printed the following day. It is 100% accurate and authentic. He doesn’t know which newspaper it will be, nor can he predict how and when it appears. It just does. Usually the customer who buys it doesn’t realize it.

Cheng Koo-Hee

Cheng sells gum, tissues, and pencils from a cardboard box on the streets of Quarry Bay. She’s paralyzed from the waist down, but gets around with a motorized wheelchair. She used to work as a programmer for Macroware, until she found herself suddenly down-sized. Ever since, she’s been hawking gum and other knick-knacks to business commuters and passers-by. Although the work is rather demeaning for someone with her skill set, she has got to be the luckiest person in Hong Kong because she always comes home with a couple of thousand dollars in her box. She inherited it from an old Taoist monk who said he no longer needed it.

James Monk

Monk immigrated to Hong Kong from England 15 years ago for reasons nobody has ever learned. He’s a reclusive, insular, grouchy, and lazy hypochondriac. How he manages day-to-day existence is a mystery to his friends. Monk is a minor celebrity in Hong Kong for abandoning his British citizenship in the months preceding the handover and becoming a full-fledged Chinese citizen. He even spent two years in the PRC army, advancing to the rank of corporal before being discharged. He feels his soul is Chinese and that being born in the West was a curse placed upon him by the spirit of Sun Wu-Kong, the Monkey King. Now he works for an art gallery in Lan Kwai Fong as the artist in-residence. He specializes in charcoal.

Laurence Poupine

In the 1960s, Laurence was working as a fashion model in Paris when she met and fell in love with industrial millionaire Benoit Poupine. They moved to Hong Kong in the '70s. Her husband died of a stroke in 1983. Laurence still has a sizeable fortune, managed by a small army of accountants in Central. She spends her days drifting from one social event to another, whether it's a charity event here or afternoon tea with the embassy wives there. Laurence seems to have an amazing capacity to be just about anywhere that matters at any given moment. That's because there are three of her. In 1979, she was the victim of a mysterious accident while visiting her late husband at an off-shore research center. She and her other two "selves" have been sharing her life ever since.

Shing "The Man" Wan

The Man is an old-fashioned 1970s-style pimp. Think "Huggy Bear," and you've got it. Except he does it in Cantonese. He and his six beautiful '70s-obsessed ladies work out of Lei Yue Mun, across Victoria Harbor from the eastern side of Hong Kong Island and not far from the Hung Hom ferry terminals. The Man has numerous contacts among the Yakuza and Japanese businessmen. His ladies service members of both groups when they come down to Southeast Asia on "sex holiday tours." Every other Thursday you can find him at Suzee Wu's Butee-shop getting a perm.

Tsz Ma

Tsz Ma ("Sesame," in English) is an extremely charismatic young man with movie-star looks who works as a sales manager for the Bank of America corporation in Central. Every day at noon he goes to the Pacific Coffee Company on Chater Road for a bite to eat, a cup of coffee or two, and perhaps a rousing sexual escapade with one of the many businesswoman who come to the coffee house specifically to meet him. He's a gigolo, you see, and a damn good one at that.

Song Lian

Up until a few years ago, Song Lian was one of Hong Kong's few private detectives. He's a permanent fixture on the Culture Center quay in Tsim Sha Tsui these days. Once he was both dapper and intelligent. Then someone put a bullet through his head for seeing something he shouldn't have and his life went into a tailspin. The fact that he survived is a testament to his strength of will. Unfortunately, the bullet effectively lobotomized him, reducing his intelligence to child-like levels. A Filipina nursemaid hired by his sister watches out for him—a pretty easy task considering he spends his days on the quay listening to Big Band music from an oversized radio and filling in crosswords with what looks like gibberish.

Rosario Madangbayan

Rosario is the Hong Kong sales rep for Pinatubo Beer, the best-selling beer in the Philippines and the third-best-selling beer in all of Southeast Asia. She's a perpetually happy woman with an exuberant laugh and a competitive streak a mile wide. As the only sales rep for her company in Hong Kong, she knows every single pub owner and bartender in the greater metropolitan area. Her house is high up in the Mid-Levels, where she cohabitates with her girlfriend Lisa Kwok, the moderately famous Singaporean supermodel.

Chompoo Suriyavetha

Chompoo is a gorgeous Thai beauty working behind the bar in a sports pub called Manchester United, not far from Wong Tai Sin temple. She is what is known around Southeast Asia as a *kathoey*, or "ladyboy." For all intents and purposes, she is a woman. Those who know her little secret do not know if she has completed the migration from one gender to the other, though, so how much of a woman she is remains to be seen. Chompoo lives with her three brothers. They work on a highway construction crew, but sell equipment and explosives stolen from their employers on the side. If you need to purchase blasting caps or bulldozers, talk to Chompoo and she'll hook you up with them—for a fee. All that surgery costs money, you know.

Julie Li-Mei Kip

Born and raised in Coventry, England, Julie Kip immigrated to Hong Kong after graduating from Oxford with a degree in Medieval Literature. She works for her grandparents in their incense shop, handling customers and taking orders while her two handsome cousins make the incense in back. The real reason she's in Hong Kong is to find the Holy Grail. She considers herself a modern-day Templar, and her grail quest has brought her to Asia. Julie has few illusions, though; she knows her quest is (mostly) academic. Still, put a broadsword in her hands and she'll surprise you.

Marcus d'Auberon

Marcus is a radio shock jock from France. When he was banned from French radio early in his career, he moved to New York and ruled the airwaves for the better part of a decade. When he was banned in America, he ended up in Asia, first at Armed Forces Radio in Japan, then in Taiwan, and finally in Hong Kong, where he carries on with his irreverent, raunchy, and scatological show. By normal standards, he's an embarrassment, but Hong Kong youth just can't get enough of him. His syndicated show is now only broadcast on satellite and Internet radio stations. He goes to every media event he can in the cause of shameless self-promotion.

Gao Shan

If you're ever walking through the Carpenter Road Park and come across a hunch-backed old man singing karaoke through a portable amp and mini-DVD player, congratulations! You've just met Gao Shan. He's retired, and spends every afternoon serenading passers-by with old Chinese songs and his appalling voice. The sign beside his set-up claims he accepts donations on behalf of the Hong Kong Humane Society. Gao has the uncanny knack of being able to spot an Ascended from a mile away. In fact, he can see anyone's true form.

Jok Sau-Fu

In the basement of an almost-abandoned shopping arcade in Fortress Hill, Sau-Fu sells boiled dumplings. They're not especially good dumplings. The pork ones have a spotty aftertaste and the vegetarian ones use an incredibly bitter vegetable called *jiu cai* instead of cabbage. The only people who come to his shop are old people whose taste buds are dead, or his friends. They know the truth about his dumplings—and they're willing to put up with the taste to enjoy their effects.

Lau Xiao-Yee

Xiao-Yee is a cute young college student with an obsession: she loves talking to foreigners. She goes out of her way to engage them in conversation. It's not because her English needs work—she speaks fluent British English. It's because she really wants to be a foreigner. Her favorite conversational topics include television shows, music, and foreign cultures. At the end of any given conversation, she invariably asks her new friend for his autograph. If she is asked for any contact information, she looks terrified and runs away.

Harvey Ying

There are exactly five Santas in Hong Kong. Four are American ex-pats whose day jobs keep them busy during the non-Holiday season. The fifth is native Hong Konger Harvey Ying. Sure, there are other Chinese Santas, but none live as Santa full time. Harvey is a method actor. His house is decorated year-round like a shopping mall Christmas diorama. He has a half-dozen dogs he calls reindeer, and his best friend is a little person from down the hall, named Kao Li. Harvey calls him Bernard the Elf.

Mikhail Babyet

Mikhail is a professional triathlete who lives in Hong Kong because his long-time coach, Sinead Dun, is a professor of dietary nutrition at the University of Southern China in Kowloon. Babyet can be seen running in the streets followed by one or two motorcycle cops (it's illegal for pedestrians to walk or run on vehicular roadways). As an official Hong Kong resident, he is allowed to compete under the city's banner at international race events. Unbeknownst to everyone, Babyet has multiple personality disorder, which has split his mind into 444 distinct personalities. The controlling personality is Mikhail, the athlete. The other 443 are "demonic" personalities who believe they're trapped in Hell.

23 URBAN LEGENDS FOR INNERWALKERS AND OTHER WEIRDOS*

1. A major battle on the last day of 1996 between multiple factions in the Secret War resulted in the handover happening years earlier than originally planned.
2. The government's Chief Executive has secretly initiated a plan to assassinate meddlesome political activists. So far, three of the fourteen on the hit list have died under mysterious circumstances.
3. Cantopop star Lisa Wong died of a drug overdose during the intermission at her last concert and was replaced by a body double (from the future?!) who has been playing her part ever since.
4. Mainland China has plans to alter the feng shui of the whole SAR to bring the place in line with modern Chinese policies. These changes will alter HK's chi resonance in every juncture and diminish the power of area sorcerers.
5. Photographer to the stars Jay Gang has retired due to mental distress—every picture he takes supposedly reveals ghosts hanging around his subjects.
6. The pneumonia virus responsible for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome was bioengineered by the CIA and released in China in an attempt to bring its economy down, making it easier for American troops to invade and take over HK.
7. A heretofore-unknown group of time warriors from India is gathering in the Netherworld. If they take enough feng shui sites, the world will become a big Hindu musical.
8. Hidden within one of the big warehouses in Kowloon is a complete, functioning Chinese village. Everyone there believes it's the year 70 AD, or something.
9. 5% of all tourists from Japan are actually elite spies sent to steal HK's high-tech secrets. It's too bad the Taiwanese got here first.
10. Primatologist Katherine Bowers discovered an unusual ape-like creature in Sumatra a year ago and claims it's the missing link. She allegedly brought it back to the University of Hong Kong for study, but it escaped into the city.
11. A faction in the government's Legislative Yuan wants to reinstate mandatory foot binding for women. It's part of a plot to skew (and harness) the chi of Chinese females.
12. The government spiked the city's water with a mild variant of LSD to make the memories of the citizenry more malleable. That's why so many people see "magic"—they're hallucinating, man! (Like, tripping the light fantastic, y'know?)
13. A sentient supercomputer calling itself "Big Bob McGowan" knows everything that will happen over the next 371 years. Everything. It's buried under the Courthouse in Central and the only people who have access to it are a couple of pasty sibling bank night-shift guards named Stevie Ray Chan and Eddie Van Chan.
14. Over the last thirty years, fifteen people have tried to commit suicide by jumping from the roof of the Entertainment Building on Queen's Road in Central. None of them succeeded—or were even hurt. Four simply disappeared.
15. The biotech company Archangel is on the cusp of realizing a perfect drug therapy to artificially elevate certain animal species to near-human intelligence. Various world governments plan to use the so-called "Brin Serum" to create animal brain trusts using dolphins, chimpanzees, dogs, and jumbo-sized parrots—but where's the money coming from?
16. Bonengel Engineering has secured permission to build advanced facilities for a southern Chinese space program in the New Territories to compete with the ESA's domination of the satellite-launching market.
17. Privately owned Geiger counters have been illegal since 1997 because China is hiding five nuclear missiles in the hubub and tech noise of HK. They're aimed at Taiwan, Japan, Australia, and, strangely, the Indian ocean.
18. Every computer sold in Hong Kong has a digital "backdoor" hardwired into its chipset to give law enforcement secret access to it.
19. Forty-seven outspoken businesspeople, students, and activists have died under mysterious circumstances since the handover 1997. It's the work of space aliens or the PRC (or both).
20. Three paranormally gifted youngsters able to swap bodies with people at will are running amok in the city. They randomly swap bodies with pedestrians and cause all sorts of illegal (and sometimes deadly) havoc while "wearing" them. All those street urchins? There are just three minds working all of them.
21. One of the gorillas in the HK zoo is "undercover." Supposedly, he's retired from some military program and resting in his ape equivalent of an old-folks home.
22. When they built the new airport on Lantau, they also built a secret terminal to house advanced military aircraft constructed by the PRC from designs found during a raid on some hacker enclave in Kowloon. At least two of those photosensitive stealth fighters are in place already.
23. If you can find it, there's an underground club near Mongkok that plays music from the future. They say you can even watch DVDs of future sports events there. According to the club owners, though, the place isn't actually "on Earth."

**Call it "Intelligence From the Secret Front," if you want.*

APPENDIX:

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

These schticks may come in handy when you're blowing up Hong Kong. The fu powers of the Path of the Broken Island cost the same as other fu powers. The other schticks cost experience points equal to $(8 + x)$; x = the total number of schticks you'll have once you've acquired this new one. Wrecking Ball has an exception: it costs a Big Bruiser just ten experience points to learn, regardless of how many other schticks she has.

Crash Proof

For every schtick you have in Crashproof, your Toughness is considered 2 points higher whenever you take damage from car crashes, collapsing buildings, and the like. The GM is the judge of what qualifies in any given situation. Rule of thumb: If the Damage isn't coming directly from somebody's weapon (fist, gun, spell, etc.), this schtick may apply. This schtick always applies for falls and leaps through plate glass.

You may not have more than three schticks in Crash Proof.

Ride the Blast

When stuff explodes, you go flying—wherever you want. Whenever you take Damage from an explosion, you can ride the blast a distance equal to twice your Move in meters. This trip doesn't cost you shots or affect your next action, and you land where you want (smoking and coughing). For each additional schtick you take in Ride the Blast, add your Move rating again to the distance you can travel.

Sabotage Shot

Normally you make Sabotage checks with pliers or your fingers, but with this schtick you can use a gun to make Sabotage checks at range with a -2 AV penalty (by hitting cables, blasting engine parts, or shooting the timer on a bomb). In other words, as long as you're shooting at objects (like exploding barrels) and not people, you can use Sabotage in place of Guns. Each additional schtick in Sabotage Shot reduces the penalty (first to -1 AV, then to zero). You can't have more than three schticks in Sabotage Shot.

Shaped Blast

Each schtick you take in Shaped Blast allows you to specify one person to be exempt from the Damage caused by explosives, grenades, and dynamite you use. Typically this one person is you, but with more schticks you could bring the whole family.

Wrecking Ball

(This is a new unique schtick for the Big Bruiser character type. GMs must grant permission for other characters to buy it.)

Objects are no match for you. You use your Toughness secondary attribute in place of Strength when lifting or breaking objects. You can choose to use your straight Toughness AV (rather than rolling) when smashing through walls and doors, if you want. Plus, weapons that physically strike you (except Signature Weapons) automatically break (though they deal Damage first).

The Path of the Broken Island

Fist of Disharmony

Chi: 1*/ Shots: 2

Strike a surface or object, like a wall or a pipe. Another object connected to that surface, like a window or a valve, breaks, pops, shatters, or comes unlatched, provided it is within twice your Move rating, in meters (note that you do not need to be able to reach the object you target). Nothing between you and the object you target is affected. You can make a Martial Arts check to attack with the targeted object (if you've knocked loose a support beam, for example). *To knock loose especially large objects, the GM may require you to spend additional Chi—generally about 1 Chi for every 10 points of damage the object could do (a support beam doing 18 Damage requires 2 Chi to knock loose).

Prerequisite: None. Path: Typhoon Season Strike

Typhoon Season Strike

Chi: X/ Shots: 3

Make a strike at an opponent by punching through intervening objects, like cover and armor. Spend Chi equal to the Toughness bonus of the armor or the Difficulty modifier granted by intervening cover (e.g., 75% cover requires 4 Chi), assuming the object is solid, like concrete or metal. If the object is thin, like plywood, pay half its bonus in Chi. Your opponent still gains the benefit of her armor or cover on this attack, but (assuming you spend the Chi), not afterwards—your strike shatters armor and crumbles cover.

Prerequisite: Fist of Disharmony. Path: Angry Mountain.

Angry Mountain

Chi: 5 + X/ Shots: 3

Strike the ground to create a violent tremor within twice your Strength score in meters. Your Martial Arts AV becomes the Difficulty for everyone (*everyone*) within that space to beat with a Martial Arts check of their own. Those who fail are sent sprawling and suffer Damage as if you'd hit them with your fist. The amount by which they fail becomes the Outcome of your attack; unnamed characters caught in the effect therefore go down if they fail by 5 or more. For every additional Chi you spend, increase the size of the area affected (in meters) or the Difficulty of the Martial Arts check by one.

Prerequisite: Typhoon Season Strike. Path: Vengeance of the Turtle (see Feng Shui)

The Path of the Broken Island is only taught by Buddhist monks living on a volcanic island miles east of the SAR. The monks who live there send one of their members to Kowloon each month for supplies.

THE PATH OF THE BROKEN ISLAND

Fist of Disharmony

Typhoon Season Strike

Angry Mountain

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