

CONVERSION NOTES

Fans of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* may want to use *Dragon Fist* in conjunction with their home campaigns. Although the *Dragon Fist* game is in many ways its own system, it is solidly based on **AD&D**, and crossovers can be handled with little difficulty. The two systems share some fundamental features: Characters from both games have Armor Class, hit points, spells, saving throws, etc. Most of the rules are fully compatible. The places that require some conversion are discussed below.

The Stunt System

The most important difference between the two games is the stunt system. In traditional **AD&D**, characters get benefits for having high ability scores, and these bonuses are constantly in effect. In *Dragon Fist*, a character gets the bonus only by performing the right stunt.

There may come a time when you want characters from Tianguo to fight opponents from other **AD&D** worlds, such as the **Forgotten Realms** campaign setting. Since the numbers are all compatible, the best thing to do is to let each character follow the rules of his or her home world. While this does mean that *Dragon Fist* characters can get larger bonuses due to the stunt system, characters from other **AD&D** worlds will tend to have a better AC, more magic items, and the continuous increased chance to hit of the THAC0 system.

Initiative

Dragon Fist uses an individual initiative system that's very different than that of **AD&D**. Because the two are so incompatible, it is recommended that you use the standard **AD&D** group initiative system when mixing characters from different worlds. Roll 1d10 for each side and let whoever has the highest roll take their actions first. You'll probably find this speeds up your game.

Armor Class

Dragon Fist Armor Class is based on an inverted version of the normal **AD&D** 2nd Edition rules to make the combat system more compatible with the feat system. Converting ACs is easy, though. To convert either way, simply subtract the AC from 20. For instance, an AC of 5 in **AD&D** becomes an AC of 15 in *Dragon Fist*. Similarly, an AC of -3 becomes 23. An AC of 14 in *Dragon Fist* becomes an AC of 6 in the **AD&D** game, while an AC of 24 becomes -4.

Level Limits

The *Dragon Fist* game supports play only up to 10th level. This was done partly because of space constraints, and partly because the system isn't as effective at very high levels. Still, there may be players who want to continue on above this limit and find new challenges worthy of such martial arts masters. For the time being, these players can use the **AD&D** *Player's Handbook*, which has appropriate experience point and saving throw tables for higher-level characters. DMs should be careful about which high-level spells they allow, though; not everything is appropriate for the world of Tianguo.

Early in 2000, look for the *Dragon Fist* Grand Master rules on the Wizards of the Coast® website. These rules will allow higher-level characters and reveal the martial arts secrets of Tianguo.

Appendix 2: Ten Recommended Films

Space prohibits an extensive filmography, but it would delinquent not to mention at least the key films of the wuxia genre. Here is a short list of ten Hong Kong films that are highly recommended. Some of these may be available at your local video store; others you may need to seek out in specialty shops. Before embarking on a *Dragon Fist* campaign, try getting your group together to watch at least one of these movies. This should help to get everyone into the proper frame of mind.

The Bride With White Hair (1993)

Director: Ronnie Yu

A visually stunning film, *The Bride with White Hair* is the story of Lian, a wild woman raised by wolves. Lian, played by Brigitte Lin, is an assassin for a cult led by a mutant Siamese twin (half male and half female). She falls in love with Zhuo, a swordsman from the World of Martial Arts, and must break her ties with the cult no matter what the cost. *The Bride with White Hair* looks great, tells a compelling story, and features some amazing action sequences. It's also been released commercially in the U.S., so it should be fairly easy to find.

Burning Paradise (1994)

Director: Ringo Lam

If you've ever wondered how to mix **AD&D** with kung fu, you must see this film. Nearly the entire movie takes place in the dreaded Red Lotus Temple, an evil place filled with deathtraps and ruled over by the insane Kung. Folk hero Fong Sai Yuk tries to escape from the temple and free his Shaolin monk brethren, and this results in some furious action. Kung, the cult leader, is a great model for Emperor Jianmin.

A Chinese Ghost Story (1987)

Director: Ching Siu-Tung

This is the quintessential Hong Kong movie about ghosts. Joey Wang will tear your heart out as the beautiful ghost denied reincarnation by the Tree Devil. She falls in love with a mortal named Ning (played by Tony Leung), who recruits a Taoist wizard to help him set his love free. The movie climaxes with everyone going to Hell to fight the Tree Devil on his home turf. Great stuff!

Dragon Gate Inn (1992)

Director: Raymond Lee

Also known as *Dragon Inn*, this film features a top-notch cast and terrific action. Tony Leung and Brigitte Lin star as loyal swordbearers attempting to bring two children to safety. They are pursued by Donnie Yen, an evil eunuch who wants to execute the children. Both parties are trapped by a raging storm in the Dragon Gate Inn, which is run by a swindler played by Maggie Cheung. A tense cat-and-mouse game ensues, and whole thing climaxes in an amazing fight scene in the desert. The nod to *Sweeney Todd* ("Hey, what's in these meat buns?") only adds to the fun.

Encounters of the Spooky Kind (1980)

Director: Sammo Hung

One of the first films to effectively fuse horror and martial arts, *Encounters of the Spooky Kind* is a classic. Sammo Hung directs and stars. In the film he plays a bumpkin named Chang whose joke seance succeeds in summoning a number of supernatural creatures. His unfaithful wife and her lover recruit an evil wizard to help them knock off poor Chang, who finds a wizard of his own to help protect him. The final sequence is an intense magical duel between the two wizards, which really should be seen by anyone playing a *Dragon Fist* spellcaster.

Mr. Vampire (1985)

Director: Ricky Lau

If you can see only one movie about Asian vampires, this should be the one. *Mr. Vampire* is a vastly entertaining film about "the One Eyebrow Priest," a vampire hunter played by Lam

Ching Ying. He and his two assistants unearth an improperly buried body to prevent it from turning into a hopping vampire. Naturally, the vampire escapes, and chaos ensues. Pauline Wong also makes an appearance as a seductive ghost. In the end the One Eyebrow Priest and his Taoist tricks save the day. This film was so popular it spawned seven sequels and a host of imitators.

New Legend of Shaolin (1994)

Director: Wong Jing

Jet Li stars as Hung Shi Kwan, another Chinese folk hero from martial arts lore. Hung and his son get mixed up with a bunch of young Shaolin kids, who hold the keys to lost Ming treasure. Tze Miu is great as Hung's grim son, and father and son fight together in some amazing sequences. Although director Wong Jing couldn't resist some slapstick humor and other silliness, *New Legend of Shaolin* is still well worth seeing.

Swordsman II (1992)

Director: Ching Siu Tung

Don't fret if you haven't seen Part I. *Swordsman II* really stands alone and is far superior to the original. Of all the movies in this section, this is one that really captures the essence of wuxia. Brigitte Lin stars as Asia the Invincible, a man so power-hungry he castrates himself to gain the supernatural might of the Ultimate Scroll and turns into a woman by the end of the film! Opposing Asia is Rosamund Kwan, and caught in the middle is the always impressive Jet Li. The stunts are deliciously improbable and Brigitte Lin is just too cool as Asia. In fact, Lin's character was so popular that she returned to star as Asia again in a sequel called *East is Red*. See them both if you can.

Tai Chi Master (1993)

Director: Yuen Wo Ping

Jet Li and Chin Siu-Ho star as two best friends who are learning martial arts at a temple. Constantly at odds, the two friends are kicked out of the temple. Jet Li joins a righteous rebel group, but Chin Siu-Ho falls in with the evil eunuchs. After a nasty feat that leaves him insane, Jet Li returns to sanity and invents Tai Chi at the same time! He returns with new moves and has it out with his former friend. Michelle Yeoh, who later achieved notoriety in the West as a Bond girl, also stars.

Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain (1983)

Director: Tsui Hark

A benchmark film from director and producer Tsui Hark. While you may laugh at the sheer '80s feel of the costuming and effects, this film creates a true fantasy world. Yuen Biao stars as a disillusioned soldier who flees mortal conflicts. Hiding out on the Magic Mountain, however, he turns into a reluctant hero when the Blood Monster threatens the world with his army of demons. Biao and friends must find two magic swords before the Blood Monster can break through and destroy the world. This is a great blend of fantasy and martial arts that still stands up sixteen years later.

