

ULTIMATE THREE KINGDOMS GUIDE



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LEGACY OF THE DRAGON

Zhang Lei had never been a very good soldier. Hell, he'd never really been a very good anything. In pretty much every instance in his youth, there had always been several other boys, and in some cases girls, who outshined him. It wasn't that he was terrible at most things, just a little below average. Unfortunately, that made him unnoticeable to pretty much everyone. The girls wanted the stronger and more attractive boys; the boys wanted teammates who could jump, run, and play at a higher level than he could; he was usually picked last in class, and forgotten by most of the world. Even at home he was the fourth of six boys, utterly forgettable.

On his fourteenth birthday, Lei waited for someone, anyone, to acknowledge his celebratory day. But people were too busy and he was too invisible for anyone to notice. That night he left after dinner with the intent of running away from home. He never would, of course, he just wasn't brave enough, and like everything else, he lacked courage. Lei did make it to the edge of the forest, the trees cloaked in shadow beckoning him in. He made it to the tree line before turning around. He'd head home and resume his below average life, marry a below average girl and have below average children while raising below average crops. Then suddenly, he stopped in his tracks. Something deep, dark and terrible rose in the pit of his stomach. His anger had always been predictably average, but something was different now. With a sudden clarity Lei saw his future and it sickened him. In a rage he turned on the nearest tree and slammed his fist into it. No curses or bellows escaped his lips, just red hot rage channeled into his fists, exploding bark off the hapless tree. He beat on that tree over and over again, his knuckles turning raw under the strain. Blood slicked his hands and still he crashed them into the wood. With one last vicious blow, Lei murdered the tree, realizing at the last moment there was a sharp snap and his tall adversary crashed toward him. Frozen with fear and unable to move, Lei waited for the beast to crush him; a fitting end for his utterly average mortal life.

"Move kid!" The high pitched yell came from a cloaked traveler who leapt out of the tree. Lei watched the figure streak in and tackle him, rolling out of the way as the tree crushed the ground, stirring up a cloud of dust. Lei caught his breath and looked up into the most beautiful face he'd ever seen: perfectly angular and soft, with full red lips and round blue orbs, the face of the angels. Just then he experienced a welling of previously unknown feelings and was enchanted as the woman's chest pushed down on his. The moment ended far too soon and the woman stood, dusting herself off. "Are you crazy?" she asked. She tilted back her traveling hat and the moonlight reflected perfectly off her light tea-colored skin. It reminded Lei of an agate he'd found in his youth, sparkling in the sun. "Are you mute too?" the woman asked.

"Mute?" he asked her. "Umm, no." He managed to stammer. The woman recognized the pain and confusion in his face and softened her demeanor; it only made her look more beautiful.

"Come along, let me look at those." She moved over to a nearby rock and motioned to his hands. Lei shuffled over, never taking his eyes off of hers. He tripped lightly over a loose root, but paid it no attention. The woman took out a wineskin of water and washed away the blood on his knuckles before wrapping them in strong leaves from a side pack she carried. "There, that should be better. I'm Ci Maho."

“Lei.” He stammered. “Zhang Lei.”

“You from around here?” Maho asked concerned. Lei nodded, still dumbstruck. “What did the tree do to you, and how did you do that?”

Only then did Lei realize he’d felled a rather large tree with his bare hands. He shook his head and looked from the tree to his hands and back again. “I don’t know. I was just so mad.”

“So much anger.” Maho said more to herself, then to Lei. “It can be dangerous.” Lei looked down, ashamed at his rage. Maho raised his chin with her hand and smiled. “There is nothing to be ashamed of. Have you no training?”

“Training?” he asked.

She nodded. “I guess not. The anger inside of you, it is neither good nor bad. It exists alongside serenity in balance with the universe.” She raised her palms and then clasped them together. “When one is out of balance, a person is out of balance. Do you often get angered?”

“Never.” He told her. “I just... I just know what my future holds; a life of mediocrity and boredom. I- I didn’t like knowing that.”

Maho thought on the boy for several seconds and then nodded. “This won’t do.” She stood and took his hand in hers. Lei let out an involuntary smile at the touch. “Come, show me your home. We have business to discuss with your family.”

For nearly four-hundred years the Han Dynasty ruled over a unified China in relative peace and security. During this time China’s economy flourished and technology moved forward in leaps and bounds. All this came to an end during what would become to be known as the **Three Kingdoms Period**. This one-hundred year period saw dozens of petty warlords fight for control over the vast nation. It was a time of heroes and villains, deceit and honor, warfare and diplomacy. Popularized by the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, this period has spawned dozens of movies, video games and stories. It is the perfect setting for high adventure in the ancient Chinese tradition.

HISTORY

The Han Dynasty was formed in 206 BCE during a period of relative peace and tranquility. However, over time, more and more power was siphoned off by court eunuchs at the expense of the emperor until corruption was so profound it resulted in a massive rebellion by a group of men who took on the name The Yellow Turbans. The Yellow Turbans reportedly had hundreds of thousands of followers throughout China and over thirty-six regional bases. The Han Imperial Army was dispatched to deal with the Yellow Turban army with the support of local regional governors who had nearly full control over their domains. During this time, the young emperor was convinced to allow full military control to the local governors in the domains as well. This ultimately led to dull decentralization of the Chinese government as local governors began to act more independently. Eventually, the far western province of Yi severed all ties with the imperial government. It wasn't long before other imperial governors did likewise.

This event coincided with the death of the emperor, further weakening the imperial regime. With the emperor's death, the court eunuchs began plotting to put onto the throne a member of the imperial family whom they could better control. This precipitated a member of the imperial family, He Jin, to order general Dong Zhuo to return to the capital with his elite northern military forces. However, the eunuchs learned of He Jin's plot and had him assassinated. Once Dong Zhuo arrived, he slaughtered all those that opposed him and effectively became de facto warlord. Once word reached the outlying provinces of this transgression, a coalition of governors and their armies moved against Dong Zhuo. With defeat imminent, the warlord burned the imperial capital to the ground and forced millions of civilians to migrate to his new capital to the west. A year later Dong Zhuo was killed in a coup by his most prominent general, Lu Bu.

At this time all of China was fractured into minor states, all ruled by provincial governors more interested in increasing their military and economic power than imperial reconciliation. For the next fifteen years the regional warlords were slowly absorbed and defeated until finally only three remained; Cao Cao of Wei in the North, Liu Bei of Shu, who wished to restore the Han Dynasty in the southwest, and Sun Quan of Wu in the south central and east. These three kingdoms vied over the course of the next sixty years until the Wei and Wu states were finally defeated in 280 CE.

TIMELINE

- 184 CE Corruption and epidemic lead to a massive rebellion of some 100,000 commoners under Zhang Jiao and his brothers Zhang Bao and Zhang Liang.
- 189 The current emperor of the Han Dynasty dies. The corrupt court eunuchs yield their power to place a young, controllable member of the imperial family on the throne. General-in-Chief He Jin, also a member of the royal family, hears of the treachery and returns to the capital to take charge. While there, the eunuchs have He Jin assassinated. Dong Zhuo, in charge of the coalition against the Yellow Turbans, brings his troops to the capital to aid against the

- eunuchs. Once there, he discovers He Jin's assassination and takes control of the court with his army, putting to the sword the corrupt eunuchs.
- 190 During the next year, Dong Zhuo begins to consolidate his power until he disposes and assassinates the current emperor. He is the de facto power in the court and begins to murder or exile any who speaks against him.
- 191 A coalition is formed of regional warlords against Dong Zhuo. Dong Zhuo, alarmed at the coalition force, evacuates the capital, burns it to the ground and retreats west to establish his new capital at Chang'an. However, with central control of the country destroyed, regional warlords begin to plot for their own gain. The coalition fails and warlords begin to eliminate rivals and concentrate their power.
- 192 Lǚ Bu, Dong Zhuo's greatest general in force of arms, kills Dong Zhuo and takes over command of his forces.
- 193-200 During these years, more and more warlords consolidate their control. In 198 Lǚ Bu's forces are defeated by Liu Bei and Cao Cao.
- 207 Cao Cao defeats his rivals and unifies northern China. He establishes his capital at Luoyang.
- 208 **Battle of Red Cliffs:** The three most powerful warlords, Liu Bei, Sun Quan, and Cao Cao, face off on the Yangtze River. Liu Bei and Sun Quan join forces to repel Cao Cao.
- 209-215 Cao Cao completes his conquest of the far northwest provinces and establishes the Kingdom of Wei. Liu Bei has defeated the last major warlord in the southwest and establishes the Kingdom of Shu. Sun Quan has formed the Kingdom of Wu in southeast and south-central China.
- 220 Cao Cao dies and is replaced by his son Cao Pi. On his father's death, Cao Pi forces the last emperor of the Han Dynasty, in his captivity, to abdicate, thus officially ending the Han Dynasty.
- 223 Liu Bei dies and is succeeded by his son Liu Shan.
- 226 Cao Pi dies and is succeeded by his son Cao Rui
- 239 Cao Rui dies and is succeeded by his adopted son, Cao Fang
- 249 Sima Yi, senior strategic advisor of Wei, seizes power and installs Cao Mao as emperor.
- 252 Sun Quan dies and is succeeded by his youngest son Sun Liang.
- 260 Cao Mao is killed and Cao Huan becomes emperor.
- 263 Wei completes the conquest of Shu. Shu, weakened after years of struggle against southern rebels as well as Wei, submits to Wei authority. A great deal of Shu nobles and supporters flee west into Persia.
- 265 Cao Huan is defeated in a coup by Sima Yan.
- 280 Wei, now called the Jin, completes the conquest of Wu and unites China under the Jin Dynasty under Sima Yan.

EQUIPMENT

During the majority of the three kingdoms period, most troops were unarmored and had little training. Instead, warlords relied on their chief asset: manpower. Armies of this period typically numbered over 50,000 troops, although most of these were simple peasant levies. On the other end of the spectrum were the professional soldiers, officers and warlords who relied on some of the best armor and weapons in the world up to that time. What follows is a list of weapons and armor used during the timeframe with a description of their use and popularity.

HAND WEAPONS

Bows

Although the crossbow was by far the preferred ranged warfare weapon during this period, the bow was utilized by states with less advanced construction ability. While bows were easier to manufacture, they were much harder to master than the crossbow. The Chinese bow during this time was predominately a composite bow made of wood and long-siyah bows. Bow use was more of an art practiced by the social elite.

Chu-ko-nu

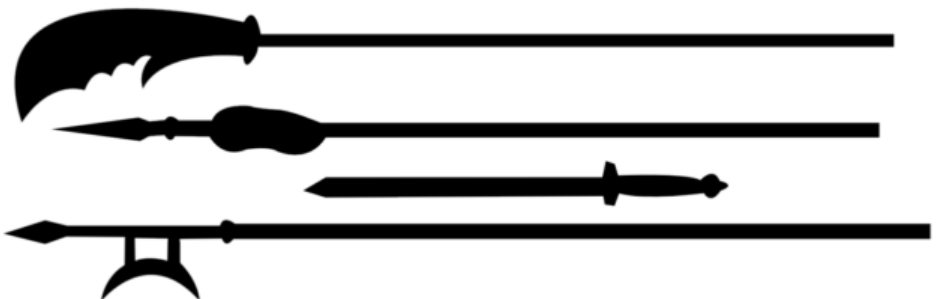
The famous Chinese repeating crossbow was able to fire several bolts at once in rapid succession. In this manner, up to ten bolts could be fired before the user had to reload the magazine. Like the typical crossbow, the Chu-ko-nu had an effective range of 60 meters, but had a much shorter maximum range of around 150 meters.

Crossbows

Crossbows played a large role in warfare during the Three Kingdoms Period. The simple crossbow was a stunted bow mounted on the end of a wooden stock. The bow string was pulled back to provide tension and fastened to a trigger mechanism. The effective range was around 60 meters, but a maximum range of upwards of 300 meters was possible. Because of their ease of use, conscripts could be trained in a manner of hours and proficient in just a few days. When properly employed, however, they could only reliably be fired at two bolts per minute.

Dao

The dao, or sabre, was a single-edged, curved blade primarily utilized as a slashing weapon. As with the jian, the creation of these weapons was not standardized and numerous types exist, although they were often created with roughly the same blade lengths as the jian. The hilt guard was disc shaped. It was known formally as “The General of All Weapons.”



Dagger-axe

The dagger-axe was a polearm with a unique blade. It consisted of an iron, spear-like blade on the end of an 8 – 18 foot shaft. Additionally, a perpendicular, dagger-like blade is set against the spear point. In combat it could be used as a piercing weapon or slashed across the enemy with the dagger blade. The dagger axe was easy to train with and provided its wielder with a long reach than the typical, Western pike vein.

Guan Dao

The guan dao was an iron polearm similar to the Western glaive. It consisted of a large, sharply curved, heavy blade atop a five to seven foot pole. Its chief strengths lied in its long range and heavy construction allowing for powerful strikes. The tip of the blade was usually hooked to assist in disarming the enemy. The weapon was often extraordinarily heavy with versions weighing upwards of 150 pounds, though they would typically be half this weight.

Gun

The gun was a simple staff weapon designed to be five to six feet in length. Known formally as “The Grandfather of All Weapons,” the gun tapered slightly toward the top and served as a cheap weapon in ancient China. It was typically made of wood cut directly from any one of the many trees in the Chinese countryside.

Jian

The Chinese word for sword, jian, refers to a straight, double-edged blade. They were predominately one-handed weapons with an overall length of 39-40 cm and a blade length of about 75 cm. The nonstandard methods of their creation led to numerous variations and types. A hilt guard protects the hand in combat and the handle was finished with a pommel for balance. Because the double-edged blade required

additional training to perfect, the Jian was traditionally known as “The Gentlemen of Weapons.”

Qiang

“The King of Weapons” was a straight piece of wood topped with a small, metal blade. Usually from seven to thirteen feet in length, these spears were easy and quick to produce and just as easy to acquire a basic skill in use.

Swords

Chinese sword making was roughly 1,200 years more advanced than its Western counterpart. That is, the Chinese were crafting strong, reliable steel swords 1,000 years before Europe. Sword making was not an institution in China, but instead an art form with the blades created by skilled decentralized craftsmen.

Tassel

A tassel was often attached to the hilt of Chinese melee weapons, most commonly the jian or dao. The tassels had several purposes in combat. First, the tassel could be attached to the wrist to make it difficult for the wielder to become disarmed in combat. Second, they were often employed as a distraction method or to impair an enemy’s vision.

Zhanmadao

The “Horse Chopping Sabre” was a variant of the dao, which greatly increased its overall length. The weapon measured an impressive 150 cm in length with a full 120 cm of that being a long, single blade. The blade curved slightly near the end and employed the same type of guard as the traditional dao. The zhanmadao was used as an anti-cavalry weapon and needed to be wielded with two hands to be effective.

VEHICLES

Balista

Essentially a large crossbow, ballistas used tension technology to launch massive iron bolts at groups of enemies. The ballista was constructed of two wooden arms with ropes attached to each. These could be twisted back to create tension which could then be used to fling the bolts semi-accurately at about 300 meters with a maximum range of around double that. The winch was usually manned by two men and weighed around 2,000 pounds, requiring animal labor to maneuver. As

such, they were more commonly found in sieges rather than field battles.

Chariots

Although chariots were largely falling out of style by the time of the Three Kingdoms period, they were still occasionally present on the battlefield, usually by commanders or strategic advisors. They allowed for increased mobility across the battlefield while leaving the passenger to observe the battle without need to control the mount and ride. Additionally, chariots could be used as mobile platforms for archers. However, by the beginning of this period, the typical war chariots of ancient China were in decline in favor of mounted troops.



ARMOR

The typical levy army was largely unarmored. The cost of outfitting such large armies, mostly unskilled in the art of war, made raising new troops much easier than manufacturing protection for the existing troops. When the occasional infantryman was armored, it was with simple hide armor or boiled leather. Of course the lack of high quality armor did not extend to the professional soldiers and officers. Instead, these men relied on heavier armor typically made of metal plates. A few of the designs are detailed below.

Barding

Barding, or horse armor, was a rarity during the time period. Elite commanders were able to field a few small sets. This was simple padded armor made of cloth, light leather or treated animal skins covering the horse's chest and neck. However, some important leaders were able to field coats of plates for their mounts, despite the cost.

Corselet

Similar to a set of lamellar, the corselet was a simple breastplate made of iron or steel. It differed from the lamellar as each side was generally one solid piece rather than scaled together pieces.

Hide Armor

Hide armor was made of cured hides and cut into protective pieces for the chest and back. It was cheap to create given the necessary skills to bring down large game.

Lamellar Cuirass

A chest piece made of roughly rectangular plates strung together into horizontal rows was suspended with cords over the shoulders. A coat was used to protect the chest and back, but had no protection for the arms or neck.

Leather Armor

Leather armor was created of laquered pieces of leather strung together to form basic protection. It was easier to create than iron or plate armor, but had the disadvantage of being both inflexible and heavy.

Liang-tang

Liang-tang was a double-faced armor that consisted of iron or steel plates in the front and rear connected with braces around the shoulders. The shoulder was also protected by a small set of attached plates.

Paper Armor

Paper armor was a cheap way to offer minimal protection during battle. It consisted of rows of paper one to three inches thick set in a lamellar fashion. This armor was light weight and had the advantage of becoming tougher in precipitation. For this reason, it was more popular in the wetter, southern regions.

Shields

Shields of the day were small, round affairs created of wood with a metal reinforcement attached to the center and outer edges. In some instances bucklers could be attached directly to the wrist as to not impede the use of two hands in combat, such as when wielding a crossbow.

Melee Weapons Table

Name	Damage	Wt	Price	Notes
Dagger-axe	Str +d8	15	400	2 hands, reach 1
Dao	Str+d6	5	200	
Guan Dao	Str+d10+2	75	2000	2 hands, reach 1, Parry -1
Gun	Str+d4	8	20	2 hands
Jian	Str+d8	8	400	Parry +1
Qiang	Str+d6	10	100	2 hands, reach 1
Zhanmadao	Str+d10	12	500	2 hands

Ranged Weapons Table

Name	Range	Dmg	ROF	Cost	Wt	Shots	Min Str.	Notes
Chu-ko-nu	10/20/40	2d6	1-3	800	12	10	d6	AP 2, Special*
Bows	12/24/48	2d6	1	250	3	-	d6	
Crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	1	200	10	-	d6	AP 2, 1 action to reload
Heavy	30/60/100	2d6	1	200	15	-	d8	AP 4, 2 actions to reload

**The Chu-ko-nu can be fired in rapid succession up to three times per round. Every additional shot beyond the first instills a (-1) cumulative penalty on the attack. A chu-ko-nu magazine has ten shots in it before it must be reloaded. Reloading with an already-loaded magazine takes 1 action. Otherwise loading an empty magazine takes 4 actions.*

Armor Table

Name	Armor	Wt	Cost	Notes
Paper Lamellar Cuirass	+1	5	10	Covers torso, Special*
Hide Lamellar Cuirass	+1	20	40	Covers torso
Leather Lamellar Cuirass	+1	15	50	Covers torso
Steel Corselet	+3	15	200	Covers torso, arms
Liang-tang Plate	+5	25	500	Covers torso, arms, legs
Shield	-	10	50	+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged shots

**Paper armor receives a +1 Armor bonus when soaked. However, this process doubles the weight and the armor has a 50% chance of being ruined at the end of combat.*

Barding Table (For Horses)

Name	Armor	Wt	Cost	Notes
Cloth	+1	10	200	Covers torso, legs
Leather / Hide	+2	20	500	Covers torso, legs
Plate	+3	30	1300	Covers torso, legs

ARMY TACTICS

Exact military formations and tactics for the time period are rare. Written records from Chinese historians were usually from scholars and not military minds. Thus, while we have dates and locations of existing battles, exact formations and troop composition are relatively unknown. We do have some basic information as well as written stratagems based on battles of the Three Kingdoms time frame. However, with so few sources, many of this is open to interpretation. The historical authenticity of these formations, including their use and manner, is open to debate. What follows are the basic force formations for the time period as well as a few known formations from records.

- **Wu:** Five man squad in a line
- **Dui:** 10 Wu, 50 men, 10 across in 5 ranks
- **Bo:** Two Dui, 100 men in a square, 10 men across with 10 ranks.
- **Qu:** Two Bo, 200 men in a rectangle, 5 men deep and 40 rows across.

Square

A square is comprised of several rows of Qu with the commander in the center of the back row. The stronger or more experienced Qu were placed on the flanks. This allowed the center Qu to feign retreat, allowing for the Qu on the flanks to envelope the attacking enemy when they pushed too far.

Circle

Circle is a defensive formation when Qu were reformed into rings. Ranged units and commanders would be in the center of the circle.

Awl

An awl is a wedge formation with the point toward the enemy. This is an offensive formation that allows an army to better penetrate defensive ranks. The most experienced or strongest soldiers are placed at the front and center of the wedge.

Flight

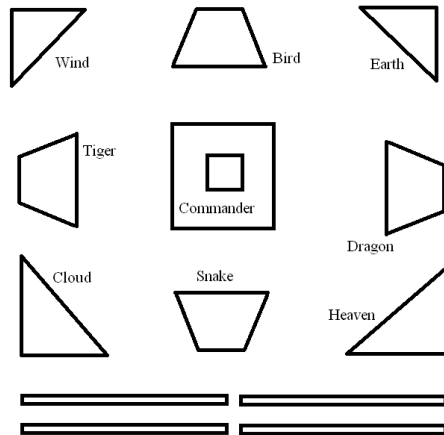
Similar to birds flying together, flight is an offensive formation consisting of two wings with the commander in the center. The wings can be used to envelope enemies.

Basket

Basket is an inverted flight formation softened into a "U" shape. This defensive formation is used to lure enemies into its center before attempting to envelope them.

Hook

Hook is a long line of men with their edges turned inwards for greater flank protection. It is excellent for use by ranged units.



Cavalry Screening Force

Eight-Fold Maze

The eight-fold maze, also called the eight trigrams, is an ancient formation that uses redundant pillars to support one another. It consists of nine divisions of soldiers in triangle and trapezoid shapes surrounding the commander and his staff. Each division had a specific name and purpose. The inner and central divisions could engage the enemy while supporting one another while the outer and rear divisions could envelope and attack vulnerable flanks. It often used a small force of cavalry to screen its maneuvers.

Dispersed

Dispersed is not a full formation style, simply any formation where the distance between soldiers is increased. Also known as a “loose” formation, dispersed makes one’s forces appear larger and increases survivability against ranged attacks.

Close

The opposite of dispersed, soldiers close ranks and decrease the spacing between them. This allows for greater resiliency in melee combat and allows ranks to better support one another.

Regardless of what formation is in use, Chinese militaries employed a combined arms approach. Troops armed with polearms, spears or swords defended and were supported by crossbowmen or other ranged units. Cavalry were used less than in Western armies, but still utilized as shock troops, to exploit flanks and to chase routing forces. During the Three Kingdoms period however, there were so many different generals training dozens of different forces that each force took on the traits of their individual commander. As such, there were no standardized formations of military tactics. However, the very basic structure was a large number of spear and halberd men supporting crossbowmen and archers and backed up by better armed swordsmen. Cavalry were used on the flanks and to pursue enemies in flight.

Cavalry troops were a small, but important portion of Chinese armies. Their roles ranged from screening the army and scouting for the main force, pursuing routed forces, raiding enemy weak spots and supply lines and as a mobile shock force. However, they were most often employed to counter the enemy cavalry. When not countering the enemy horses or after completing this task, the cavalry troops provided a hammering force to crush into the ranks of mostly peasant soldiers, striking fear into their enemies and rallying their own forces. The majority of cavalry were recruited from either very northern China or the nomadic people in the steppes beyond. For this reason, northern commanders were able to field a greater number of mounted troops than their southern kin.

The numbers of troops involved dwarfed Western standards. Commanders could field armies of 50,000-100,000 men. These were largely conscripted commoners, but the sheer number of men on the field of battle must have made logistics an absolute nightmare.

Naval warfare was nearly as important as ground battles. Unlike Western Europe, naval warfare in China was performed on the wide waterways of the Wei, Yellow, Huai and Yangzi Rivers. Strategic control of these waterways was responsible for highly defensible positions. Cao Cao’s inability to break the combined Wu and Shu forces during the naval battle of Red Cliffs was a disaster for Wei. Chinese naval forces however, were merely extensions of land battles. The ships were really just floating fortresses used to house

masses of archers and the occasional boarding party. Three Kingdoms naval tactics called for a massive use of missiles against the enemy naval parties until the opposing ships were either too damaged to remain afloat or too undermanned to resist boarding, often using barrages of fire as a favorite tactic. It cannot be understated how large these vessels became during the Three Kingdom period. The ships had tall castles on the fore and aft of the ships with which to rain down arrows and employed trebuchets to launch larger missiles. Texts indicate that a vessel able to carry one hundred horses on it was only considered of meager size.

Private, professional soldiers, known as buqu, became popular during the later Han Dynasty and Three Kingdoms period. These men worked directly for individual warlords as personal guards and elite strike forces. Buqu was unique in that it was a hereditary relationship. If a buqu soldier died, a family member was expected to inherit his rank and position. Payment was often in the form of farmland which the soldier's family was expected to work. Buqu served for life and were expected to marry into each other's families to maintain the status and effectiveness of the buqu force.

Martial Arts

As one of the birth lands of martial arts, Chinese martial arts are traditionally referred to as wushu or kung fu. Indeed no fighting system in China would be complete without the addition of a martial arts system. However, the vast territorial and cultural differences within China spawned a vast difference in martial arts techniques. In a general manner, these forms can be split into "hard" and "soft" techniques, each with a yin or yang component. Hard techniques emphasized vicious, powerful, straight forward assaults while soft techniques rely more on fluid motion and balanced movements. For a *Savage World* setting, it is appropriate to add a martial arts suite to the existing Edges. These are discussed later in **Character Options**.

36 Stratagems

The 36 Stratagems are a written account of various military tactics employed by the commanders of ancient China. While not specific to the Three Kingdoms period, they would have largely been in use during this turbulent time. These stratagems come to us from the *Biography of Wáng Jìngzé*. The stratagem names and a brief description of their use are summarized below.

1. **Deceive the heavens to cross the ocean:** Mask your true goals by promoting the agenda of a fake goal until the true goal is achieved. Essentially, if one acts on the façade over and over again, then when you act on the real goal, most will consider the true goal to be the fake.
2. **Besiege Wèi to rescue Zhào:** Never directly attack an enemy superior in strength. Instead, strike at his weak point, as every foe has one.
3. **Kill with a borrowed knife:** Use another weapon, especially one not affiliated with you, to strike at your enemy.
4. **Wait at leisure while the enemy labors:** Attempt to fight an enemy while he is tired and you are rested. Choosing the site of your battle will ensure that you and you alone know the place of your conflict.

5. **Loot a burning house:** Attack an enemy when they are beset with other difficulties. Rebellion, attacks elsewhere and disease are all excellent distractions for when to strike.
6. **Make a sound in the east, then strike in the west:** Feign assault in one place to get your opponent to concentrate his forces there while you strike at another location.
7. **Create something from nothing:** Use illusion, deceit and trickery to make your opponent believe there is something there when in fact there is nothing of value. Alternatively, do the opposite and mask where an asset is.
8. **Openly repair the gallery roads, but sneak through the passage of Chencang:** Show your enemy you are attempting one endeavor while actually going on the offensive in secret.
9. **Watch the fires burning across the river:** Wait until all elements in contention have exhausted themselves before entering the fray yourself.
10. **Hide a knife behind a smile:** Use diplomacy and false good intentions against an enemy to lure him into your trust. Then, strike at him when he least expects it.
11. **Sacrifice the plum tree to preserve the peach tree:** Sacrifice your short term objectives to secure long term goals. This can be applied to troops, territories or any number of strategic objectives.
12. **Take the opportunity to pilfer a goat:** During the course of a campaign, be flexible to take advantage of any other profitable opportunities that present themselves.
13. **Stomp the grass to scare the snake:** Make a distraction or provocation to get your opponent to give away vital pieces of information, such as location or strategy.
14. **Borrow a corpse to resurrect the soul:** Appropriate for your own goals a strategy, technique or other element that has been abandoned or forgotten.
15. **Entice the tiger to leave its mountain lair:** If an opponent receives his strength from his defensive position, only engage him away from the source of his strength.
16. **In order to capture, one must let loose:** Having a desperate enemy is not advantageous. Allow him a false avenue to escape. This will allow you to defeat your enemy's morale easier.
17. **Tossing out a brick to get a jade gem:** Create an incentive for your enemy to react or reveal himself. In this way you can offer something less valuable than the information you gleam.
18. **Defeat the enemy by capturing their chief:** An enemy is often overcome simply by removing its commander. Strike at the head of the snake and the body will wither and die.
19. **Remove the firewood from under the pot:** Strike at and remove the source of an issue for best results.
20. **Disturb the water and catch a fish:** Confusion on the battlefield can be used to your advantage. An enemy is rarely at his best when faced with confusion and distraction.

21. **Slough off the cicada's golden shell:** When in retreat, mask yourself with distraction and disguise.
22. **Shut the door to catch the thief:** If you wish to capture your enemy, take your time and plan accordingly. Remove all possible escape routes before striking.
23. **Befriend a distant state while attacking a neighbor:** The best allies are those that are distant to you, but bordering your enemy. They have little incentive to attack you but all the reason in the world to aid you against your common enemy.
24. **Obtain safe passage to conquer the State of Guo:** Use an ally's resources and provisions to attack a common foe.
25. **Replace the beams with rotten timbers:** Attempt to sow disruption within your opponent's ranks or typical activities to weaken the force arrayed against you.
26. **Point at the mulberry tree while cursing the locust tree:** Use innuendo or vagueness when accusing a powerful or protected enemy. Make all know the source of your ire, but leave the specific name to the wind.
27. **Feign madness but keep your balance:** Mask your intentions as those of a fool to keep your true intentions secret and make your enemy underestimate you.
28. **Remove the ladder when the enemy has ascended to the roof:** Attempt to lure your enemy into a dangerous or precarious location, then remove any avenue he may have to return to more familiar surroundings.
29. **Deck the tree with false blossoms:** Use deception and disguise to make something seem opposite of what it is; value to valueless, weak to threatening, pivotal to useless.
30. **Make the host and the guest exchange roles:** Take command of another's forces or resources in the guise of a subordinate.
31. **The beauty trap (honey trap):** Send beautiful women or other coveted distractions into the enemy's camp to sow distrust amongst the ranks and distract the command staff.
32. **The empty fort strategy:** If you are facing a superior enemy, remain calm and act in control. Your enemy will fear an ambush and may hesitate.
33. **Let the enemy's own spy sow discord in the enemy camp:** Do your best to cause a rift between your enemy and elements he considers friendly. Then strike when he is preoccupied.
34. **Inflict injury on oneself to win the enemy's trust:** There are two possible uses for this stratagem. First, feign injury to lull your enemy into a false confidence. Second, claim an injury to your enemy against a common enemy to get him to sympathize or plot with you.
35. **Chain stratagems:** When possible, consider using several strategies in tandem to add confusion to your true plans.
36. **If all else fails, retreat:** When all else fails, retreat, regroup and reassess. Escape is not defeat, but rather the prolonging of a campaign.

THE THREE KINGDOMS

WEI

The Kingdom of Wei was established by the warlord Cao Cao's son after his death. It was the largest and strongest of the Chinese states during the Three Kingdoms period. Its official foundation date was 220, though the roots of the state go back further to Cao Cao's pacification of the north. The Kingdom's name is derived from Cao Cao's personal holdings, called Wei, during the Han Dynasty.

During the Three Kingdoms period, Wei waged successful, albeit stalemated, conflicts with both Wu and Shu, who were often allied against the large state, as well as successful incursions into what is present day Korea. Wei widely implemented and practiced a policy known as Tuntian. These were agricultural colonies with the direct purpose to support Wei military campaigns. Garrisoned units, especially in calmer locations unused to attack, were expected to farm the land. Many of these tenants turned to Buqu after years of practice. Additionally, Wei's close proximity to the nomadic people in the north allowed them to field a greater cavalry force than the states of Shu and Wu. These nomadic people were given lands to settle in exchange for military service.

Wei eventually succumbed to coup by the powerful Sima family. In 265 the last Cao ruler was disposed and the Sima family founded the Jin Dynasty. This dynasty would eventually defeat the last remaining state of Wu and unite China under their rule.



Wei Rulers

Pre-foundation	Cao Cao: Feudal warlord under the Han Dynasty
220-226	Cao Pi: Second son of Cao Cao.
226-239	Cao Rui: Son of Cao Pi.
239-254	Cao Fang: Adopted son of Cao Rui.
254-260	Cao Mao: Grandson of Cao Pi, son of Cao Lin.
260-265	Cao Huan: Son of Cao Yu, youngest son of Cao Pi.
265	Sima Yan: Son of Sima Yan, grandson of Sima Yi, founder of the Jin Dynasty.

Generals and Commanders

Cao Cao

Born into the court of the Han Dynasty, Cao Cao was well trained in the arts of ancient China: warfare, poetry and diplomacy. During the Yellow Turban Rebellion he held a command in the Imperial Army and it was he who secured a formidable rebel army's surrender in 192 in Yan. After this, he was a key figure in bringing about the end of Dong Zhuo after the warlord seized power. Later, Cao Cao defeated the substantial armies of Yuan Shao to unite the north under his rule. Although he did not formally declare himself an independent state, the state of Wei was created under his reign.

Cao Cao was brilliant, but often cruel. He organized farmer-soldier communities to ensure his army was well fed and well-staffed. He died in 220 of disease.



Cao Pi

Cao Pi was the second son and successor to the warlord Cao Cao. Although not a particularly bright general or administrator, he was a cunning opponent in the royal court. It was Cao Pi who forced the last Han emperor to abdicate to him, ending the Han Dynasty and creating the state of Wei. During his reign he increased centralization of the government and focused on administration issues and strengthening Wei's power base. He made few gains against the states of Wu and Shu during his lifetime. He died in 226 and was succeeded by his son Cao Rui.



Cao Ren

A top General, Cao Ren was Cao Cao's cousin and was renowned for his daring and skill, leading Cao Cao's vanguard into numerous engagements. He was instrumental in several important battles which would come to pacify the north under Cao Cao's control. After Cao Cao's death, he served Cao Pi as the general in charge of several provinces. He died in 223.

Cheng Yu

A trusted advisor to Cao Cao, Cheng Yu was one of the men directly responsible for Cao Cao's success in the north. His guidance and

strategic mind was of great use to Cao Cao and assumed the role of chief advisor in battles for Cao Cao and Cao Pi. He died in retirement in 220 at the age of 78.

Guo Jia

Guo Jia was a minor administrator in the Han Government and renowned for his intelligence and strategic mind. He served Cao Cao as a chief strategist and was responsible for many of Cao Cao's plans in the early years. It was often said he could predict the outcome of an event far further and more accurately than anyone of his time. At his death in 207, Cao Cao grieved openly and spoke of ways Guo Jia would have changed his course had he lived.



Sima Yan

The grandson of Sima Yi, Sima Yan fulfilled his grandfather's ambition and usurped control of the Kingdom of Wei from the Cao clan. It was Sima Yan who finally bested the state of Wu and unified China under the Jin Dynasty. However, in doing so he decentralized the government and empowered the regional commanders. Legend tells of his great indulgences such as feasting and over 10,000 concubines. He died in 290 at the age of 55.



Sima Yi

Sima Yi was the great strategist and advisor to the state of Wei and instrumental in its defense against attacks from Shu. He served Cao Cao and his sons in the creation of Wei and matched wits against the Shu mastermind, Zhuge Liang, on numerous occasions. He died in 251 at the age of 71.



Xiahou Dun

Brother of Xiahou Yuan, Xiahou Dun served under Cao Cao during the war with Dong Zhuo. He was also known as "One-eyed" as he lost his left eye during the Battle of Xiapi. Xiahou Dun led the vanguard during Wei battles and was known for his hot temper and fiery personality. He died a few months after Cao Cao, following his friend to the grave.



Xiahou Yuan

A childhood friend and distant relative to Cao Cao, Xiahou Yuan served as a general in Cao Cao's forces during the attack on Dong Zhuo. A fierce warrior and administrator, he headed the logistical operations of Cao Cao's forces. He died in 219 defending his camp during the Battle of Mount Dingjun against Lei Bei's forces.





Xu Huang

Originally a minor official, Xu Huang took up arms as a member of a sect of the Yellow Turban Rebels until that rebel force fell in with Dong Zhuo. He assisted in returning the emperor to the royal court in Luoyang before turning his loyalties to Cao Cao. Xu Huang then went on to make a name for himself as a general in the Battles of Guandu, Jiangling, Tong Pass, Fancheng and a dozen others. He was considered even tempered and disciplined. He died in 227 after serving both Cao Pi and Cao Rui following Cao Cao's death. The great author of the time, Chen Shou counted Xu Huang as one of Cao Cao's Five Elite Generals.



Xu Shu

Xu Shu was a strategist and general for the state of Wei known for his cunning intellect. He studied together with Zhuge Liang and the two indulged in debates for sport. The man died of illness as an Imperial Secretary.

Xu You

A strategist and friend of Cao Cao, Xu You was instrumental in the Battle of Guandu. He was executed by Cao Cao in 204 after mocking the then defeated Yuan Shao.

Yu Jin

Yu Jin was a military commander who fought against the Yellow Turban Rebellion before falling in with Cao Cao. He distinguished himself on the battlefield and was well known for his level-headed leadership qualities. He served in the vanguard when the army progressed and the rearguard during retreat. He fell to the Shu general Guan Yu and was held in captivity until being returned to his former lord's son, Cao Pi, in his elderly years. He died in 221 and is considered one of Cao Cao's Five Elite Generals.

Yue Jin

A military general under Cao Cao, Yue Jin was renowned for his bravery and skill despite his short size. He distinguished himself in the Battle of Guandu and served the warlord through multiple campaigns. He died in 218 and is considered one of Cao Cao's Five Elite Generals.



Zhang He

Zhang He was a military commander who began his career under Yuan Shao, but defected to Cao Cao after the Battle of Guandu. He was a powerful warrior and known for his ability to complete campaigns, even on limited resources. He served Cao Cao and his successors in multiple battles, defending against incursions by Shu in the later years. He was killed on the field of battle in 231 and is considered one of Cao Cao's Five Elite Generals.

Zhang Liao

A minor government official turned General, Zhang Liao first served Dong Zhuo then Lu Bu after the former was killed. He fought with Lu Bu until the man was defeated and executed by Cao Cao. Liao then transferred his loyalties to Cao Cao and became a trusted general. The man was known for his intelligence and martial brilliance and fought in numerous battles for Cao Cao. He eventually fell to illness in 222 after the Battle of Dongkou. He was considered one of Cao Cao's Five Elite Generals.



WU

Wu existed in the south-central and southeastern portions of China and was one of the three major kingdoms established during the Three Kingdoms period. Its name was derived from the Wu province in which it originated and was created and shepherded by the Sun family. The Sun family was one of the first to begin expanding its base of power in the south by defeating rival warlords during the Yellow Turban rebellion. As such, it was well situated to defend its holdings as well as continue to expand south.

Wu formed a tentative alliance with Shu to stave off the numerically superior Wei forces. Wu was known for its superior navy and its troops were well trained in marine warfare. Thus, Wei was unable to gain any territory south of the Yangtze River. After Sun Quan's death, his sons were unable to hold the kingdom together as they vied with one another for power, weakening the regime.

After the fall of Shu to Wei, Wu was living on borrowed time. Eventually, Wei invaded from multiple fronts and soundly defeated the Sun family. Because Wu so quickly established dominion over its lands, it was able to fund various projects to develop the area in the south both economically and culturally. However, even these advances could not withstand the Jin Dynasty's manpower and economic superiority.

Wu Rulers

Pre-foundation	Sun Jian: Warlord and general, fought against Dong Zhuo.
229-252	Sun Quan: Second son to Sun Jian, formed the Kingdom of Wu.
252-258	Sun Liang: Youngest son of Sun Quan.
258-264	Sun Xiu: Son of Sun Quan.
264-280	Sun Hao: Son of Sun He, son of Sun Quan.

Generals and Commanders

Chen Wu

General and officer in charge of the Wu house guard, Chen Wu was a lighthearted man said to have always fought with honor and valor. His death came in an attempt to rescue his lord at the Battle of Xiaoyao Ford in 215.



Ding Feng

An apt soldier, Ding Feng rose through the ranks to become a general in the Wu army under Sun Liang. He was instrumental in promoting Sun Hao to leadership in Wu over his father's wishes. During his latter years, he was blamed for several military losses and exiled by the same man he once helped place on the throne.



Gan Ning

A bandit in his youth, Gan Ning settled in with the Wu forces and served Sun Quan in multiple battles. During his service he was renowned for many acts of valor including facing down the famous Wei general Guan Yu and raiding Cao Cao's army camp. The exact death of his date is not known, but is estimated around 221.



Huang Gai

A general under the Sun family, Huang Gai is credited for lighting Cao Cao's fleet ablaze during the Battle of Red Cliffs. He was well respected by enemies and allies alike. The date of his death is unknown.

Ling Tong

Ling Tong followed his father Ling Cao into Wu service and was renowned for his generosity, valor and wit. He led Sun Quan's vanguard in multiple battles and defended admirably against overwhelming assaults from Cao Cao. He died of illness in 237 at the age of 48.

Lu Meng

A commander of Wu forces, Lu Meng came from a minor family, but proved himself worthy on the battlefield. He was an accomplished naval general and was important during the Battle of Red Cliffs, Lujiang and Wancheng. He died from illness at the age of 41 in 220.



Lu Su

Lu Su was an administrator and eventually became the battlefield commander for the kingdom. He was instrumental in drawing up Sun Quan's plan for a three state system and brokering the various alliances with Liu Bei. He died with honors in 217 at the age of 45.



Lu Xun

A general and administrator under Sun Quan, Lu Xun was from a famous family and known for his work against the southern tribes. He believed in a more peaceful manner of administration and attempted to win over the population through good deeds. He married into the Sun family via Sun Ce's daughter. He died at the age of 63 in 245.

Sun Ce

The eldest child of Sun Jian, Sun Ce was originally a Han Dynasty general who worked to put down the tyrant Dong Zhuo. He was active in pacifying the south and began to form the foundations of the country of Wu. He was ambushed and killed by an arrow in 200 at the age of 25. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Sun Quan.



Sun Jian

Sun Jian was the father of Sun Qian who would later come to found the nation of Wu. He was an official in the Han Dynasty and later formed an army to combat the Yellow Turban Rebellion. He was renowned for his bravery and resourcefulness. Later on he fought in the coalition against Dong Zhuo. He died in combat in 191 and was succeeded by his sons.

Sun Quan

Sun Quan was the second son of Sun Ce and established the kingdom of Wu. He excelled at building on his family's legacy and attracting superior men to his cause. Additionally, he built upon his force's greatest weakness, river warfare, and urged his commanders to drill their seamen relentlessly. Throughout his life he managed the delicate balance of power between Shu, Wei and Wu and fought off incursions from Wei on numerous occasions, most famously at the Battle of Red Cliffs. He died in 252 at the age of 70, succeeded by his son Sun Liang.



Taishi Ci

Taishi Ci was a brilliant warrior who served under several smaller, regional lords before finding service in Wu. He fought to suppress the Yellow Turbans and worked as an administrator and commander. He was said to hold honor in the highest regard and faithfully served Sun Ce and Sun Quan until his death in 206 at the age of 41.

Zhou Tai

A supposed former pirate and apt naval commander, Zhou Tai came to serve Wu and was renowned for his bravery. He saved Sun Quan's life during a small skirmish and participated at several important battles. He died as a high ranking general around 225.

Zhou Yu

The victorious naval general at the Battle of Red Cliffs, Zhou Yu served under Sun Ce and then Sun Quan. After Sun Ce's death, Zhou Yu was placed in direct control of the military affairs of Wu and contributed to the success of numerous key battles against Cao Cao. He laid out several diplomatic affairs before his death in 210 at the age of 35.



SHU

Shu was the third and smallest state to vie for contention during the Three Kingdoms period. It was headquartered around the historical Shu province and was thusly named. The Shu kingdom was created by Liu Bei who was said to have a direct lineage from the Liu emperors of the Han Dynasty. In literature, Liu Bei's struggles are in order to reestablish the defunct Han Dynasty. Liu Bei was greatly supported at the outset by his sworn blood brothers, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, names that have passed into legend. Liu Bei also suffered the most hardship, moving his base from northeastern China, into exile and then finally into the southwest where Shu was established.

Shu was able to survive due to its strong alliance with Wu, tactical genius, Zhuge Liang, and its stalwart generals. However, the death of Liu Bei's blood brother, Guan Yu, at the hands of Sun Quan broke the alliance and Liu Bei launched an ill-advised attack against Wu in retaliation. The attack failed and further weakened the state. After Liu Bei's death, his son, Liu Shan succeeded him, although most civil affairs were undertaken by Shu's military genius, Zhuge Liang. Shu launched several invasions against Wei that proved unsuccessful. Eventually weakened, Shu fell to a Wei invasion.

Shu was beset during its time by rebel tribesmen in the south and took great aims to pacify the people. Additionally, it greatly increased the logistical ability of southwest China including roadways, dams and other public works.

Shu Rulers

- 221-223 **Liu Bei:** A minor governor during the Han Dynasty with distant links to the Imperial Family. He fought against the Yellow Turbans and eventually formed the Kingdom of Shu in an attempt to re-establish the Han Dynasty.
- 223-263 **Liu Shan:** Eldest son to Liu Bei, he was wise enough to leave most military and civil affairs to Zhuge Liang. He was captured after Wei's successful invasion and lived the remainder of his life in comfort in the Jin capital.

Generals and Commanders

Guan Yu



By far the most famous general to serve in this period, Guan Yu originally joined Liu Bei in fighting the Yellow Turban Rebellion. The general was with Liu Bei at the beginning and the two formed a famous blood oath with Zhang Fei, swearing brotherhood to each other. Guan Yu briefly served Cao Cao in putting down Dong Zhuo before returning to Liu Bei.

During his career, Guan Yu was renowned for his strength of arms and honorable reputation. He was said to wield a one-hundred pound guan dao named 'Green Dragon Crescent Blade,' originating the weapon that would be named after him. Guan Yu served Liu Bei and Shu faithfully until his capture and execution by Wu in 219. He was later deified as a God of War and known as Emperor Guan. He was considered one of Liu Bei's Five Tiger Generals.

Huang Zhong

A military general under the warlord Liu Biao, Huang Zhong was an older general renowned for his youthful vigor and fighting prowess. He joined Liu Bei once the man formed the kingdom of Shu and fought valiantly in several key battles against Cao Cao. He died in 220 and was considered one of Liu Bei's Five Tiger Generals.



Liao Hua

An officer in Guan Yu's army, Liao Hua served the kingdom of Shu faithfully for several years. He was known for his persistence and determination and fought in many campaigns. He died at the age of 70 in 264.

Liu Bei

Liu Bei was the first emperor of the established state of Shu. He was said to be descended from the Han Emperors of old and is depicted in literature as a virtuous ruler who fought to restore the Han Dynasty. In his early years he fought against the Yellow Turbans and Dong Zhuo. Eventually Bei was forced to retreat to the southeast where he established the kingdom of Shu.

Bei relied heavily on his powerful generals and renowned advisors to help sculpt his policy and decision making. In 222 he led an invasion against Wu to avenge his blood brother Guan Yu, who was executed by his former allies in Wu. However, the invasion of revenge was ill-prepared and ended in disaster. He died the next year at the age of 62, and was succeeded by his son Liu Shan. Today he is worshiped as the patron of shoemakers.



Liu Shan

Liu Bei's son and successor to the Kingdom of Shu, Liu Shan was only 16 when he took the throne. He was considered a competent ruler who understood the merit of wise people and delegated his tasks wisely to the smarter and stronger men around him. After Shu was conquered by Wei, he was brought to the Wei capital in Luoyang where he spent the rest of his life in relative comfort as a duke. He died in 271 at the age of 64.

Ma Chao

The son of the warlord Ma Teng, Ma Chao served his father until Cao Cao overran his family's lands while consolidating his power. He then joined Liu Bei and led as a cavalry general under the Shu banner. He was known as one of Shu's Five Tiger Generals and died in 222 at the age of 47.





Pang Tong

An administrator in the Han Dynasty, Pang Tong was known for his intellect and ability to assess a person's character and merits. He later served Lei Bei as a military advisor alongside Zhuge Liang. It was Pang Tong who advised Liu Bei to conquer the southeast to better compete with the vast resources of his rival Cao Cao in the north. He died at the age of 36 in 214 of an arrow wound.

Wei Yan

A member of Liu Bei's personal guard, Wei Yan eventually rose through the Shu ranks to become a general. He fought for Shu and distinguished himself during the Northern Expeditions. He died in battle in 234.



Zhang Fei

Zhang Fei was the third blood brother to Guan Yu and Liu Bei and was a fierce warrior, said to be without equal. He had a fiery personality and temper which often got him into trouble on the battlefield. Together with his blood brothers, Zhang Fei battled against the Yellow Turbans and Dong Zhuo before helping to establish the Kingdom of Shu. He led as a general in multiple campaigns and was highly recognized by his ability to lead men. He died in 221 of assassination and was considered one of Liu Bei's Five Tiger Generals.



Zhao Yun

A warrior and later general under Liu Bei, Zhao Yun first served under Liu Bei during the Yellow Turban Rebellion. The general then followed Liu Bei as he defended against Cao Cao's incursions. He was instrumental in numerous battles for Shu and Liu Bei trusted the man with his life. He died in 229 of unknown causes. Like Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, Ma Chao and Huang Zhong, he was considered one of Shu's Five Tiger Generals.



Zhuge Liang

One of the most brilliant strategist and statesmen of his time, Zhuge Liang served Liu Bei as his primary advisor and head of state. He was behind almost every military aspect of Shu from 208 to his death in 234. Under Liu Shan he was the boy's regent and continued his role as chief military advisor. His campaigns against Cao Cao are the stuff of legend, although ultimately unsuccessful. He died in 234 of illness at the age of 54. He is credited with creating a unique, repeating crossbow as well as a number of other inventions.

RANK AND ARMY STRUCTURE

Types of Units

It would seem that the majority of the armies during the Three Kingdoms period were constructed of spear or pike soldiers and crossbowmen, supplemented with elite sword and shield infantry (shields being either smaller, round rattan shields or larger tetrahedral shields, like towers, for front line work) and a good mixture of heavy and light cavalry for shock, flanks and harassment.

The following units were present and in wide use during the Three Kingdoms period. Although the manner of their equipment might vary from region to region, they are a valid representation of the average soldier for the era.

Archer

Archers equipped with short bows were common when crossbows were not readily available. Like their crossbow yielding kin, they were usually unarmored, though they could be issued robes of like color to distinguish forces on the battle field. A simple dagger would be their only sidearm. Archers were occasionally mounted to provide a mobile, ranged force, but this was rare unless employing one of the steppe tribes from the north.

Crossbowman

Crossbowmen were largely unarmored, although it wasn't unheard of for missile troops to be armed in light armor by armies rich enough to equip them. The crossbowmen would carry their crossbow, of which there were dozens of different models ranging from small hand crossbows to massive contraptions that could only be

loaded by sitting on the ground and bracing the contraption with the feet. Their quiver would hold enough bolts for immediate engagements with additional being available in the rear supply train.

Lancer / Cavalry Regular

The regular cavalryman, a minority on the battlefield, was equipped with a jian or spear and wore iron or steel cuirass or liang-tang armor.

Spearman

Spearman would wield either spears or halberds, especially the dagger-axe, and be armored in either a leather lamellar cuirass or unarmored.

Swordsman

The typical swordsman was used to support polearm wielders and equipped with dao, shield and leather lamella cuirass, hide armor or paper armor.

Rank Structure

Each of the kingdoms of Wei, Shu and Wu used similar rank structures as those established during the Han Dynasty. It consisted of grades of commanders, or generals, who utilized an officer corps over the rank and file. In addition, honorary titles were common and given to men who were expected to fulfill specific roles or while on campaign. Additionally, some military men were given civilian titles when placed in the role of provincial governor. It was not uncommon for a high ranking official to carry several titles covering both a military and civilian range. Also, the titles were largely historical and did not always correlate to a specific role. For instance, it was quite likely during the Three Kingdoms period that the Chief Chariots General employed no chariots in his force.

Generals / Commanders Ranks

Generals and commanders were awarded ranks in the same manner that titles were bestowed upon nobility in the Western world. These ranks were often a mixture of ceremonial and official with little clarity on duties or responsibilities. The Grading system was used to provide a hierarchy of ranks when necessary, with the lower grades deferring to the higher. Some titles occupied the same objectives, with higher grades only being used if there was a suitable General of that rank. For example, the Chief Kingdom Defense General, Grade 2, was in charge of overall kingdom defense. This is the same role as given to the Kingdom Defense General, Grade 3. It was not necessary to have both a Grade 2 and Grade 3 general in this role, but rather the increased rank would be used if the General was worthy of that honor.

Grade 1

- **Chief General:** Supreme General of an army or force.

Grade 2

- **Chief Cavalry General:** In charge of mounted forces.
- **Chief Chariots General:** Historical title for general in charge of mounted forces.
- **Chief Protectorate General:** In charge of defense at a remote location.
- **Chief Garrison General:** In charge of a specific garrison
- **Chief Kingdom Defense General:** In charge of overall national defense.

Grade 3

- **Guarding General:** In charge of defense of a specific objective.
- **Vanguard General:** In charge of army's lead vanguard.
- **Rear Guard General:** In charge of army's rear guard.
- **Left General:** In charge of the left flank.
- **Right General:** In charge of the right flank.
- **Garrison General:** In charge of a garrison. (Lesser title than above.)
- **Garrison Protector General:** In charge of an external garrison.

- **Kingdom Defense General:** In charge of overall kingdom defense.
- **City Defense General:** In charge of defenses for a specific city or location.

Grade 4

- **Troop Defense General:** In charge of an army's defensive objectives.
- **Martial Defense General:** In charge of an army's infantry regiments.
- **Central Defense General:** In charge of central army defense.
- **Central Fort General:** In charge of central garrison defense.
- **Left Defense General:** In charge of an army's left flank defense.
- **Right Defense General:** In charge of an army's right flank defense.
- **Front Troop General:** In charge of an army's front rank infantry.
- **Left Troop General:** In charge of an army's left flank infantry.
- **Right Troop General:** In charge of an army's right flank infantry.
- **Rear Troop General:** In charge of an army's reinforcements.
- **Brave Cavalry General:** In charge of an army's cavalry regiments.
- **Strong Bow General:** In charge of an army's missile troops.

Grade 5

- **Rising Eagle General:** Honorary title.
- **Fiery Tiger General:** Honorary title.
- **Proclaim Might General:** Honorary title.
- **Mighty Tiger General:** Honorary title.
- **Front Flag General:** Honorary title.
- **Side General:** Another term for an Assistant General.
- **Assistant General:** General's Aid

Expeditionary Titles

- **General Who Conquers the East:** In charge of offense in the east.
- **General Who Conquers the South:** In charge of offense in the south.
- **General Who Conquers the West:** In charge of offense in the west.
- **General Who Conquers the North:** In charge of offense in the north.

Missionary Titles

- **General Who Guards the East:** In charge of kingdom defenses in the east.
- **General Who Guards the South:** In charge of kingdom defenses in the south.
- **General Who Guards the West:** In charge of kingdom defenses in the west.
- **General Who Guards the North:** In charge of kingdom defenses in the north.

Honorary Titles

- **Zheng Lu General:** Honorary title.
- **Shu Expedition General:** Honorary title.
- **Light Chariot General:** Honorary title.
- **Dragon Prance General:** Honorary title.
- **Tiger Tooth General:** Honorary title.
- **Leader Army General:** Honorary title.
- **Northern Defense General:** Honorary title.
- **Vanquish Di General:** Honorary title.

Civilian Ranks

- **Emperor / Empress:** Supreme Being in the empire.
- **Chancellor:** High ranking advisor that acted in the emperor's stead.
- **Prime Minister:** Administrator of a large group of lands.
- **Chief Controller:** Another term for a Prefect.
- **Grand Chief Controller:** Another term for a Grand Administrator.
- **Grand Administrator:** Administrator of several smaller territories.
- **Administrator:** Another term for Prefect.
- **Prefect:** Administrator of a few or one territories.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Pre- and post-Han Dynasty was a land divided between tradition and innovation. Family history and clan prestige take precedence, but this period is riddled with men who rose from lowly ranks due to acts of valor or cunning insight. While Liu Bei and Cao Cao can trace their lineage to prestigious posts or dynastic claims, men such as Zhao Yun and Taishi Ci gained fame from their art on the battlefield and heroism. In the same manner, ultimate respect is paid to the Han emperor, despite him being in reality a political puppet, discarded at the emergence of the three kingdoms.

During this time, Wei introduced an administrative practice known as Wei's Nine Rank System. This was a program designed to discover men of substance and put them into ranks where their considerable skills could be used to great effect. The intent was to try to bring the laymen into prominence; however, Wei was still tied to its traditional roots and in practice only the rich were selected. In this same vein titles and military positions were handed down from father to son much like western royalty.

It is important to remember that China was a large diverse country with regional templates overriding any type of unified culture. Each subregion was popular for its particular combination of people, goods and cultures. A well-known saying in China is, "the wind varies within ten li; customs vary within a hundred li." (A 'li' was a measurement of about 500 meters.) Thus, some of the following information would be different from region to region, but this serves as a good primer on overall Chinese values and superstitions.

Numbers

Numbers in Chinese society play an important role even today. Some numbers are inherently considered good luck and others cursed. Lucky numbers include the numbers two, three, five, six, seven, eight, nine and forty-nine. Unlucky numbers include four, five and six. The careful observer will notice that the numbers five and six are considered both lucky and unlucky. This is due to the many different definitions some words have. While the number five can be associated with the emperor (lucky), it is also associated with being a negative. By itself it would be considered unlucky, but when used to modify another unlucky number, such as six (to fall), it would mean not fall, which would be considered a good omen and thus a good number in this connotation.

- **Lucky Numbers:** 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 49
- **Unlucky Numbers:** 4, 5, 6

Colors

Like numbers, certain colors are considered especially favorable or bring about certain meaning in everyday life. Below is a small list of the most widely used colors and the meaning behind them.

- **Black:** The color associated with water as a neutral color. It was called Heaven's color and not associated with mourning or death as it is in the west.
- **Red:** The color of fire represents good fortune and joy.

- **Green:** The color associated with the element of wood came to represent spring and nature. It was also associated with renewal.
- **White:** The traditional color of mourning and death. It serves as roughly the same purpose as black does in the west. Its corresponding element is metal and also represents purity and brightness.
- **Yellow:** Associated with the element of earth, it is seen as the imperial color and also represents good luck and worldly freedoms.

Animals

Chinese culture was apt at spotting and developing animal characteristics in everyday culture. Over time, animal symbolism took on a powerful role in Chinese culture. Some of these animal symbols are listed below.

- **Tiger:** Dignity, courage, strength and fierceness.
- **Phoenix:** Luck, opportunity, virtue and good fortune.
- **Rooster:** Reliability, advancement and achievements. Also used to ward off evil spirits.
- **Horse:** Loyalty, endurance and recognition of achievements.
- **Rabbit:** Hope.
- **Monkey:** Protector of evil spirits.
- **Magpie:** Joy, marriage and family.
- **Crane:** Longevity and passage to the next life.
- **Cat:** Able to disperse and protect against evil spirits.
- **Lion:** Energy, strength, valor and godly acts.
- **Goldfish:** Wealth and gold.
- **Butterfly:** Love and romance, beauty and long life.
- **Crab:** Status and prosperity.
- **Dragon:** Self-confidence, courage, abundance and good luck.

Religion and Values

Chinese religion has greatly influenced both civilian and military values. The religions of Buddhism, Taoism and especially Confucianism are widely shared in nearly all regions of China. Scholars touted the Taoist values and often ranked a ruler based on how well he administered to these values. The promise of reincarnation and rebirth guided a ruler's decisions and influenced men's morale on the battlefield.

Confucianism

Derived from the teachings of Confucius from around 500 BCE, Confucianism revolves around the core belief of humanism which teaches to be primarily concerned with the world and one's family over the afterlife. Assisting one's community through altruistic deeds is seen as honorable and just, the true meaning of life. It often holds no or little regard for the world's deities.

Taoism

Also referred to as Daoism, Taoism rests on three particular tenants: humility, compassion and moderation. Great respect is paid for ancestors and other enlightened people. It promotes simplicity over the complex and the concept known as wu-wei. Wu-wei is known as action without action. In this manner Taoism extorts that the natural world works its own way without human intervention and by acting against it we disrupt nature's harmony.

Buddhism

Buddhism derives from the teachings of Siddhartha in India around 500 BCE. It encompasses several complex concepts such as Karma, Samsara, truths and nobility through actions. In essence, Buddhism attempts to relieve and remove suffering from the world through direct action. However, Buddhism is a deeply complex topic full of dozens of tenants and virtues.

Women's Roles

Women's roles in the military were nearly non-existent. In culture they could be a driving force given enough power and influence. History is riddled with mothers of royal children, concubines to powerful men, promoting their child's ascension through careful plotting and planning. That being said, the traditional role of the woman in society was very limited. A treatise on women's roles entitled "Lessons for Women" outlines seven virtues for women; humility, role as a wife, respect, womanly qualifications, devotion, obedience and harmony. Although outdated by today's standards, these roles remained a powerful force in ancient China.

MAJOR BATTLES

Timeline

184	Yellow Turban Rebellion	204	Battle of Ye
190	Battle of Xingyang	205	Battle of Nanpi
191	Battle of Yangcheng	208	Battle of Changban
191	Battle of Jieqiao	208	Battle of Jiangling
191	Battle of Xiangyang	208	Battle of Chibi (Battle of Red Cliffs)
193	Battle of Fengqiu	211	Battle of Tong Pass
194	Battle of Yan Province	213	Siege of Jicheng
197	Battle of Wancheng	213	Battle of Ruxukou
198	Battle of Xiapi	214	Battle of Xiaoyao Ford
198	Battle of Yijing	215	Battle of Baxi
200	Battle of Boma	217	Battle of Ruxukou
200	Battle of Dushi Ford	219	Battle of Mount Dingjun
200	Battle of Guandu	219	Battle of Fancheng
202	Battle of Bowang	219	Battle of Han River
203	Battle of Xiakou	221	Battle of Xiaoting
		222	Battle of Ruxu
		228	Battle of Jieting
		229	Siege of Chencang
		234	Battle of Wuzhang Plains
		244	Battle of Xingshi

Descriptions

DATE BATTLE NAME

- First Force composition, Leader (Kingdom), and commanders
- Second Force composition, Leader (Kingdom), and commanders
- Description of battle and aftermath

184 YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION

- Han Dynasty armies commanded by He Jin, Huangfu Song, Zhu Jun and Lu Zhi.
- Yellow Turban Rebels under Zhang Jue, Zhang Liang, Zhang Bao, Zhang Mancheng and Bo Cai.
- Tens of thousands of rebels rise up due to famine and disease under the leadership of the Zhang family, led by Zhang Jue. An Imperial Army gathers supplied from mostly regional governors such as Cao Cao, Sun Jian and Liu Bei led by General He Jin. The rebels were eventually defeated after several engagements in early 185. However, this weakened the Han regime and fragmented the local regional governors into individual warlords.

190 BATTLE OF XINGYANG

- Han Dynasty warlord coalition commanded by Cao Cao with around 4,000 troops.
- Dong Zhuo's regional army commanded by Xu Rong of near equal strength.
- Cao Cao was defeated by the much better trained army of Dong Zhuo as the latter retreated to the west. Cao Cao lost several thousand men and was forced to retreat. Dong Zhuo did not press an attack and continued his retreat west.

191 BATTLE OF YANGCHENG

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded by Zhou Yu.
- Yuan Shu's forces under the command of Sun Jian.
- Dispute between two northern warlords from the same clan after the coalition against Dong Zhuo began to disintegrate. This marked the first inter-warlords skirmish and a new era of regional warlords attacking one another for personal gain.

191 BATTLE OF JIEQIAO

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded personally. Roughly 40,000 infantry and missile troops.
- Gongsun Zan's army commanded personally. Roughly 30,000 infantry and 10,000 missile troops.
- Yuan Shao's troops used superior tactics against Gongzun Zan's advancing force and routed the attack. Gongsun Zan's army lost a few thousand men before routing and regrouping in a friendly province. Yuan Shao begins to assert his northern dominance.

191 BATTLE OF XIANGYANG

- Liu Biao's army commanded by Huang Zu.
- Sun Jian's army commanded personally.
- Sun Jian's forces fought against Liu Biao as the two were allied with belligerents Yuan Shu and Yuan Shao. Sun Jian routed Huang Zu's forces, but was killed by an

arrow in combat. With the loss of their leader, Sun Jian's forces retreated home. The loss of Sun Jian would forever shape the Kingdom of Wu.

191 BATTLE OF FENGQIU

- Yuan Shu's army of roughly 12,000 infantry.
- Cao Cao's army of roughly 30,000 infantry and missile troops.
- Deprived of his storage base, Yuan Shu attacked Cao Cao's much larger army in hopes of breaking through. Cao Cao's forces won decisively and many of Yuan Shu's forces were slaughtered. Cao Cao begins to remove Yuan Shu's base of power and advances north.

194 BATTLE OF YAN PROVINCE

- Lu Bu's uprising attracts several young generals who raise or defect roughly 6,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army of roughly 10,000 infantry troops.
- Several rebellious officers under Cao Cao joined Lu Bu as the warlord conquered his bases in Yan. Cao Cao responded by regrouping and attacking the rebels. After a protracted battle and subsequent siege, Lu Bu's forces were forced to retreat due to lack of supplies. However, Cao Cao was unable to pursue due to the length of the siege and legend of Lu Bu's might.

197 BATTLE OF WANCHENG

- Zhang Xiu's forces commanded personally.
- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Dian Wei.
- Zhang Xiu launched a surprise attack on Cao Cao's forces and quickly overwhelmed them. Cao Cao fled in the fight, but his son Cao Ang and General Dian Wei gave their lives so he may escape. Wei is deprived of a famous general and its base of operations shaken.

198 BATTLE OF XIAPI

- Liu Bei and Cao Cao join forces and command their armies personally.
- Lu Bu's forces commanded personally.
- Lu Bu's forces are defeated and pushed back to their base city at Xiapi. After a month-long siege, Lu Bu surrendered and was executed. Many of his officers switched sides to Cao Cao after his death. Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei's legend grew thanks to their exploits.

198 BATTLE OF YIJING

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded personally numbering over 60,000 troops.
- Gongsun Zan's army commanded personally numbering nearly 100,000 troops.
- Yuan Shao's forces successfully laid siege to Gongsun Zan's heavily defended home fortress after defeating several smaller ambush attempts. Gongsun Zan is killed when the city falls in complete victory for Yuan Shao. Gongsun Zan's lands and forces are absorbed by Yuan Shao.

200 BATTLE OF BOMA

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded by Yan Liang numbering around 10,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army commanded by Liu Yan and Guan Yu numbering around 5,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's forces marginally defeated Yuan Shao's forces, but are forced to retreat after the battle. Yuan Shao lost their famous general Yan Liang to Guan Yu in the assault. Guan Yu's legend continued to grow.

200 BATTLE OF DUSHI FORD

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded personally numbering roughly 5,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army commanded by Yu Jin and Yue Jin numbering around 5,000 troops.
- As Cao Cao retreated after his success at the Battle of Boma, Yuan Shao attacked his rear. However, the Wei generals were not only able to hold their positions, but also sallied out and raided Yuan Shao's camp, effectively allowing Cao Cao's forces to retreat in an orderly manner.

200 BATTLE OF GUANDU

- Yuan Shao's forces commanded personally and under Guo Tu numbering around 100,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Cao Hong numbering around 40,000 troops.
- The famous battle at Guandu was carried out after a prolonged siege of over ten months. Yuan Shao's forces were unable to overcome Cao Cao's defenses. With both sides running low on supplies Cao Cao led a sortie to destroy Yuan Shao's remaining supplies. Additionally, Cao Cao's men were able to destroy the relief force carrying additional supplies while his generals held off a direct assault on his base. With the loss of the supplies, Yuan Shao's forces were demoralized and fled, losing many tens-of thousands of men in the rout. Yuan Shao escaped with his personal bodyguard, but his forces were nearly broken.

200 BATTLE OF BOWANG

- Liu Bei's forces commanded personally.
- Cao Cao's army commanded by Xiahou Dun.
- Liu Bei's forces, working for Liu Biao, were sent to defend against an invasion from Cao Cao. Liu Bei's forces feigned retreat and handily defeated Xiahou Dun's army as he rushed to pursue. Cao Cao was dealt a severe blow setting back his southerly attacks dramatically.

203 BATTLE OF XIAKOU

- Sun Quan's army commanded by Ling Cao numbering around 5,000 marines.
- Liu Biao's army commanded by Huang Zu numbering around 31,000 marines.
- A naval battle involving Sun Quan's assault into Liu Biao's territory. The numerically superior force was able to rout Sun Quan's navy and force them back into their own territory.

204 BATTLE OF YE

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Cao Hong with roughly 15,000 troops.
- Yuan Shang's army commanded personally and under Shen Pei numbering around 20,000 troops.
- Cao Cao invaded north into the territory of Yuan Shang, one of Yuan Shao's two sons who are embroiled in a succession war after the death of their father. Cao Cao besieged Yuan Shang's home and outmaneuvered the relief force sent to lift the siege, crushing them. Yuan Shang was forced to abandon his home and flee north. Cao Cao became in charge of nearly all of northern China.

205 BATTLE OF NANPI

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Cao Chun.
- Yuan Tan's army commanded personally.
- Cao Cao invaded and pushed Yuan Tan's forces out of their home base. He pursued them north and eventually the two sides fought a fierce battle. Cao Cao won, but only after heavy losses on both sides. Yuan Tan was essentially removed from power and Cao Cao effectively became ruler of the north.

208 BATTLE OF CHANGBAN

- Liu Bei's army commanded personally and under Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, Zhao Yun and Zhuge Liang.
- Cao Cao's army commanded personally with 5,000 elite cavalry and retainers.
- Liu Bei was relocating the population of the city of Xiahou as Cao Cao advanced. Liu Bei's generals Guan Yu and Zhang Fei were able to hold off the assaulting forces long enough for much of the population to escape.

208 BATTLE OF JIANGLING

- Liu Bei's and Sun Quan's army commanded under Zhou Yu and Ling Tong numbering around 40,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army commanded under Cao Ren numbering around 100,000 troops.
- In numerous engagements, the allied forces of Sun Quan and Liu Bei inflicted heavy losses forcing Cao Cao to retreat. Liu Bei established his kingdom of Shu and the Three Kingdoms period officially takes shape.

208 BATTLE OF CHIBI (RED CLIFFS)

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally numbering around 200,000 infantry and marines.
- Liu Bei and Sun Quan's forces commanded under Zhou Yu, Cheng Pu and Liu Bei numbering around 60,000 marines and infantry.
- Perhaps the most famous battle of the Three Kingdoms period, Cao Cao launched a massive invasion into the south. As he prepared to cross the Yangtze River, the allies manage to burn the majority of Cao Cao's fleet through trickery. In the rout, Cao Cao's forces lost even greater numbers from disease and disorganization. The defeat seriously set back the Kingdom of Wei and allowed a three-way stalemate between Wei, Wu and Shu.

211 BATTLE OF TONG PASS

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Cao Hong, Jia Xu and Xu Huang numbering around 70,000 troops.
- A coalition of Guanxi forces commanded by Ma Chao, Cheng Yi, Zhang Heng and Han Sui with around 100,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's invasion of the northwest was met with stern resistance by a coalition of warlords led by Ma Teng. Cao Cao was able to score several critical victories before fracturing the coalition. This led to an ultimate victory for Cao Cao.

213 SIEGE OF JICHENG

- Ma Chao's army commanded personally and under Zhang Lu with roughly 10,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army commanded personally.
- Ma Chao led the remainder of his forces to retake the city of Jicheng after Cao Cao's initial success. Ma Chao was successful in retaking the city after a long siege. However, the length of the siege allowed Cao Cao to reorganize his troops.

213 BATTLE OF RUXUKOU

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Sun Guan numbering over 350,000 troops.
- Sun Quan's army commanded personally and under Lu Meng, Zhou Tai, Gan Ning and Ling Tong numbering a little over 100,000 troops.
- Cao Cao launched a general advance into Wu territory with only minor victories which were all eventually turned back. Cao Cao was forced to retreat and regroup back to his home province, unable to contend with the superior Wu navy and their personnel.

214 BATTLE OF XIAOYAO FORD

- Cao Cao's army commanded by Zhang Liao, Yue Jin and Xiahou Dun numbering around 300,000 troops.
- Sun Quan's army commanded personally and under Gan Ning and Ling Tong numbering around 100,000 troops.
- Sun Quan's invasion into Cao Cao's territory was repelled after several arduous engagements. Losses were light on both sides as most leaders were weary of an encroaching plague.

215 BATTLE OF BAXI

- Cao Cao's army commanded under Zhang He.
- Liu Bei's army commanded by Zhang Fei.
- Zhang Fei led a small force against Cao Cao's forces led by Zhang He. Zhang Fei was able to outmaneuver the opposing army and annihilate it.

217 BATTLE OF RUXUKOU

- Cao Cao's army commanded personally and under Lu Meng, Zhang Liao and Xiahou Yuan numbering around 350,000 troops.
- Sun Quan's army commanded personally and under Ling Tong, Xu Sheng and Gan Ning numbering around 75,000 troops.

- As Cao Cao began to prepare for another invasion into Sun Quan's territory, Sun Quan sent his general Gan Ning into Cao Cao's camps at night to cause severe havoc. This led Cao Cao to pull back his troops and postpone his attack.

219 BATTLE OF MOUNT DINGJUN

- Liu Bei's army under Huang Zhong
- Cao Cao's army under Xiahou Yuan.
- Liu Bei invaded Cao Cao's territory, but was resisted at Hanzhong for over a year. Liu Bei eventually forced his way through and Cao Cao's star general, Xiahou Yuan, was killed in action.

219 BATTLE OF FANCHENG

- Liu Bei's army under Guan Yu with roughly 100,000 troops.
- Cao Cao's army under Cao Ren, Xu Huang, Pang De and Yu Jin numbering roughly 100,000 men.
- Guan Yu assaulted into Cao Cao's territories and scored several key victories. However, as he returned home, his base of operations was compromised, leading many of his troops to desert for fear of their families. With his escape route compromised, he was eventually captured and executed.

219 BATTLE OF HAN RIVER

- Liu Bei's army under Zhao Yan and Huang Zhong.
- Cao Cao's army commanded personally.
- Cao Cao's retaliation assault after the death of Xiahou Yuan. However, Liu Bei's generals held fast and forced Cao Cao's men into the Han River, inflicting heavy losses.

221 BATTLE OF XIAOTING

- Sun Quan's army commanded under Lu Xun numbering roughly 50,000 troops.
- Liu Bei's army commanded personally numbering roughly 100,000 troops.
- To avenge the death of his general and blood brother Guan Yu, Liu Bei invaded Wu and scored several significant victories. However, his supply lines were compromised, which led to demoralization and desertion. Shu lost heavily in the retreat.

222 BATTLE OF RUXU

- Cao Wei's army under Cao Ren.
- Sun Quan's army under Zhu Huan.
- Cao Wei sent Cao Ren to invade Sun Quan's territories, but the invasion was repulsed on several fronts. The famous Wei general Cao Ren was lost in the failed assaults.

228 BATTLE OF JIETING

- Shu forces commanded by Zhuge Liang, Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi numbering around 50,000 men.
- Wei forces commanded by Zhang He and Cao Zhen numbering around 30,000 troops.
- The invading Shu army was encircled due to negligence by its sub-commander Ma Su. The defensive fort was set ablaze and most of the Shu army was lost.

229 BATTLE OF CHENCANG

- Shu forces commanded by Zhuge Liang numbering around 100,000 men.
- Wei forces commanded by Hao Zhano numbering around 2,000 troops.
- Zhuge Liang and his expansive army invaded Wei and initially besieged Chencang. However, the Shu forces were repelled from the walls due to superior tactics and forced to retreat.

234 BATTLE OF WUZHANG PLAINS

- Shu forces commanded by Zhuge Liang numbering around 100,000 men.
- Wei forces commanded by Sima Yi numbering around 200,000 troops.
- Zhuge Liang led a large force against Wei and was met by a sizeable army under Sima Yi in a defensive position. Neither side was prepared to engage the other, thus a stalemate occurred. However, when the famed strategist of Shu died of illness, his army retreated back home.

244 BATTLE OF XINGSHI

- Shu forces commanded by Fei Yi and Wang Ping numbering around 50,000 men.
- Wei forces commanded by Cao Shuang, Guo Huai and Xiahou Xuan numbering around 50,000 troops.
- Cao Shuang sent an invasion force into the heartland of Shu's territory. However, the invasion was unable to take Hanzhong and was forced to retreat in the face of Shu reinforcements.

263 INVASION OF SHU

- Shu forces commanded by Liu Shan and Jiang Wei numbering roughly 150,000 troops.
- Wei forces commanded by Sima Zhao, Zhuge Xu and Deng Ai numbering around 170,000 men.
- In 263, Wei launched a final invasion of Shu. Wei had superiority in manpower, wealth and tactics and was eventually able to take the Shu capital. Wu took advantage of the situation and took several key territories in the east. Shu was absorbed.

280 INVASION OF WU

- Wu forces commanded by Sun Hao and Zhang Ti numbering around 220,000 troops.
- Jin Dynasty forces commanded by Hu Fen, Jia Chong and Wang Jun with around 200,000 men.
- Jin forces attacked Wu on multiple fronts from the north and west. Unable to sustain defensive positions on all sides, Wu lost its strategic river defenses one by one until the capital fell in early 281.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

ARCHTYPES

While *Savage Worlds* is a system with lots of flexibility, it lacks standard archetypes. However, some players may wish to skip parts of character creation and jump right into a game. To facilitate this, here is a list of archetypes of warriors for quick play or creative reference.

CROSSBOWMAN / BOWMAN

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Riding d4, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Throwing d6.

Hindrances: Loyal (Minor), Quirk (Minor), +1 Major Hindrance

Edges: Steady Hands, +2 Edges

CAVALRYMAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d4, +2 skill points

Hindrances: All Thumbs (Minor), Big Mouth (Minor), +1 Major Hindrance

Edges: Beast Bond, Quick Draw, Sweep

NAVAL SOLDIER

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Swimming d8, Throwing d4

Hindrances: Ugly (Minor), Wanted (Minor), Yellow (Major)

Edges: Acrobat, Luck, Steady Hands

OFFICER'S RETAINER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6+2, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d6+2, +2 skill points

Hindrances: Overconfident (Major), +2 Minor Hindrances

Edges: Command, Strong Willed, +1 Edge

WU SOLDIER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d8, Boating d6, Swimming d6, Piloting d6, +6 skill points

Hindrances: Bad Luck (Major), Loyal (Minor), Poverty (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Ambidextrous, Quick

WEI SOLDIER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6, +2 skill points

Hindrances: Mean (Minor), Overconfident (Major), +1 Minor Hindrance

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, +1 Edge

SHU SOLDIER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6,
Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:**
5

Skills: Fighting d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise
d6, Survival d6, Tracking d8, +4 skill points

Hindrances: Cautious (Minor), Heroic
(Major), +1 Minor Hindrance

Edges: Woodsman, Luck, Great Luck

NEW HINDRANCES

HONOR STAINED (MAJOR)

The character has a history of personal and family dishonor. His clan is known far and wide as dishonorable scum who act more like mercenaries than decent people. He suffers a (-2) penalty to Charisma and people are very unlikely to trust him once they know his name.

POOR TRACKING (MAJOR)

The character has extremely poor hand-eye coordination. Despite his best efforts, he just cannot hit the broadside of a barn from any distance. He suffers (-2) penalty to all Shooting and Throwing rolls.



NEW EDGES

Background Edges

HAN BLOODLINE

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Your character can trace his direct lineage to the Han Empire and this knowledge is readily available to the common folk. This bestows a +2 bonus to Charisma, but also comes with many social advantages and disadvantages of being from a noble bloodline. People will expect the character to help those in need, act in a regal manner and honor the ancestors. Of course, those who openly oppose the Han will plot against him in a similar manner.

Combat Edges

CAVALRY EXPERT

Requirements: Seasoned, Riding d8+

Your character is an expert on horseback. This grants him several unique advantages when mounted. First, he is able to coax a little more out of his mounts and thus increase their pace by +2. Second, once per round, the character may negate a successful attack on his mount with a successful Riding check. This check is a free action and is performed immediately after a successful attack on the mount, but before damage is determined. If the Riding check fails, damage is applied normally. Finally, the character does not suffer the (-2) penalty when using ranged weapons while mounted. While this Edge typically applies to horses as mounts, it extends to camels, donkeys, chariots, wagons or any other creature or vehicle the GM determines is reasonable.

ELEPHANT TRUNK

Requirements: Seasoned, Two-fisted, Strength d10+

Your character possesses great strength, especially in her arms. This allows her to wield two-handed weapons in one hand, although taking a (-2) penalty to attacks for doing so.

IMPROVED ELEPHANT TRUNK

Requirement: Veteran, Elephant Trunk

The character no longer suffers the (-2) penalty for using a two-handed weapon in one hand.

HERO'S BELLOW

Requirements: Seasoned, Intimidation d10+

The character can intimidate and bewilder normal men with sheer force of will. As an action, he may flourish a weapon or act in another intimidating way to cause all Extras within 10' to make a Spirit check. Failure means they cannot advance on the character or attack them in melee. Those who fail are still free to defend themselves or attack others, as long as the attack does not bring the Extra closer to the character. A failed check can be rechecked each round until successful.

LEGENDARY BELLOW

Requirements: Veteran, Hero's Bellow, Intimidation d12+

As Hero's Bellow, but the character may make a free second below if two or more Extras fail in a single combat round.

POLEARM SWEEP

Requirements: Heroic, Improved Sweep, Strength d10+, Fighting d10+

Polearm Sweep allows the character to make a single Fighting attack and apply it against all enemies within reach when equipped with a polearm weapon. This attack allows the character to avoid hitting all allies within reach.

Leadership Edges

AMBUSH ARTIST

Requirements: Seasoned, Command, Stealth d10+

When leading troops, any allies within the character's Command Radius use her Stealth score and do not have to roll their own, allowing her well-planned ambush or sneak attack to avoid being fouled up by one of her troops.

CAVALRY LEADER

Requirements: Veteran, Cavalry Expert, Followers, Riding d10+

The character's ability to lead men on horseback is unsurpassed. He may extend the benefit of his Cavalry Expert Edge to all Extras under his command and within his Command Radius. Each Extra is now considered to have the Cavalry Expert Edge, regardless of prerequisites.

INFANTRY LEADER

Requirements: Seasoned, Fleet-footed

The infantry leader excels at leading troops of infantry and ranged units. He may extend the benefits of his Fleet-footed Edge to any Extras under his command and within his Command Radius.

LEGENDARY HERO

Requirements: Heroic, Wild Card, Charismatic, Followers

Legendary heroes are known far and wide. Their deeds are retold by traveling bards and merchants, and they subsequently acquire followers much more easily. Upon choosing this Edge, a large retainer of ten followers joins the hero's band. The followers are fiercely loyal and

serve their master faithfully. From this point on, if any followers are lost from combat or accident, they are automatically replaced at a rate of one every 1d10 days.

Professional Edges

CAMPAIGN SCHOLAR

Requirements: Veteran, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (any two) d8+, Notice d8+

A campaign scholar learns from her actions and the actions of those around her. At the end of any game session when the GM awards Experience Points, a campaign scholar is awarded one additional Experience Point.

MASTER SCHOLAR

Requirements: Heroic, Campaign Scholar, Smarts d10+, Knowledge (any three) d10+, Notice d10+

The master scholar is not only able to learn at an accelerated rate, but can also imbue this knowledge upon her traveling partners while together. The Master Scholar may extend her Campaign Scholar benefits to a single companion Wild Card after a campaign session.

SEA CAPTAIN

Requirements: Seasoned, Ace, Boating d10+

The character is at home on the open water, commanding on the seas and rivers. When piloting or commanding a boat he adds +1 to the Acceleration and +2 to the Top Speed of any vehicle under his command. Additionally, he is able to successfully operate a sea vehicle with only half the required crew, to a minimum of 1+1.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

Guan Bao

Bao is the youngest of five sons born to a small farming family within the Guan clan. All his other brothers were recruited into the regional army to assist in putting down the Yellow Turban Rebellion. At 16, he was well old enough to serve, but was expected to remain behind to assist with the family's farm. An apt hunter and skilled with the bow, Bao considered it a great insult to be left behind.

His luck changed when a young lord, Cao Xi, came to the farm to seek shelter after losing his troops to an ambush. That night, the rebels tracked Cao Xi to the farm. Bao came to Cao Xi's defense and with five well placed shots, scattered the rebels and saved Cao Xi's life. After that night, Cao Xi demanded Bao accompany him as part of his bodyguard and compensated the family. Now Guan Bao rides at Cao Xi's side, his faithful friend.

Personality: Guan Bao is timid with a mild personality when not in combat. In battle however, he is cool and precise, launching arrow after arrow where they are needed most. His urban upbringing taught him to respect the poor and disadvantaged and he routinely goes out of his way to help the poor folk he encounters.

Mannerisms: Bao's hands are always at work, usually straightening a feather for his arrows or using one to pick his teeth.

Distinguishing Features: Bao is never without a feather on him; so much so that the act is nearly compulsive. When not manipulating one with his fingers, one usually adorns his hair or is shoved behind his ear. He wears no armor and carries only a small pack, his bow and quiver.

Environment: Guan Bao is usually in the company of the noble Cao Xi. He is loyal to the man while Xi does good deeds. However, Xi's noble nature often puts the two at odds when Bao insists on helping the poor or turning down rewards.

Adventure Seeds: Bao likes Cao Xi, but the man is often a nuisance with his noble blood. The two could be put at odds in the right circumstances which would end their alliance. Additionally, Guan Bao is often on his own hunting or foraging for food while his master rests.



GUAN BAO (NOVICE)

Bao is a young farmer turned archer of sixteen years. He helps the poor and disenfranchised and yearns to make a name for himself during this time of crisis.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4+2, Riding d6, Shooting d10+1, Survival d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d4

Armor: None

Weapons: Bow

Items: Quiver, arrows, pack, bedroll, 2 weeks of rations

Edges: Alertness, First Strike, Luck, Trademark Weapon (bow)

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Major), Illiterate (Minor), Poverty (Minor)

Tian Chi

Tian Chi is a scholar and historian who believes the best way to avoid the conflicts of the past is to learn about and record the failings of the present. Chi's youth and training are lost to time, even he can't remember them. He remembers studying under a stern but fair scholar, but at his advanced age can't recall many details. All he has now is his books and his mind, the latter is failing fast.

Personality: Chi doesn't concern himself with good or bad, life or death. Instead, he attaches himself to whom he perceives as great men and women and tags along, recording their deeds. He will, of course, defend himself and realizes that the death of these great men would be a severe blow to the harmony of the universe, thus he also defends them as well. However, if the great man he is with falls, he is just as likely to request to join the next one. At his age, Chi doesn't really care about dying. He'd rather not, but has led a good life and is ready to go whenever the universe calls him.

Mannerisms: When not recording his thoughts in his tomes or making notes, which is usually always, Chi can be found sleeping or dozing off. He protects his books at all times and would rather die than see them destroyed.

Distinguishing Features: Tian Chi is in his elderly years with a completely gray beard and hair. His vision is poor, but he has retained his excellent hearing. He carries a walking stick for support and to assist in combat. His gray robes are often covered in more dust than the road and his enormous pack is stuffed with books and journals.

Environment: Tian Chi is usually on campaign, traveling with what he considers great men and recording their thoughts, deeds, and reactions. He maintains a small house that he uses only as a book depository.

Adventure Seeds: Chi is likely to see a PC as a great person destined for great things. He is likely to tag along and can make an interesting companion. He may also be in the company of another great man, who falls in combat. In which case, he is happy to join the next.



TIAN CHI (VETERAN)

Chi is a scholar and adventurer in his advanced age who believes the important deeds of the present must be recorded for posterity.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4; **Charisma:** 2

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d12, Knowledge (Biology) d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Knowledge (Nobility) d10, Notice d10, Repair d10, Streetwise d10

Armor: None

Weapons: Gun

Items: 2 pack, bedroll, lots of books, Gun

Edges: Campaign Scholar, Master Scholar, Charismatic, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Investigator

Hindrances: Elderly (Major), Loyal (Minor), Big Mouth (Minor)

Wu Du

Wu Du is a quiet man in his mid-twenties who practices the martial arts. He devotes much of his time in attempting to make his mind and body one. In his youth his brother taught him the basics of wushu and he's spent the better part of his life attempting to perfect them. He is always on the lookout for teachers and enjoys adventuring for the express purpose of honing his skills. Wu Du believes one day his true calling will be revealed and he is determined to be prepared to meet it. In an effort to cleanse his mind and bring him closer to perfection, he has put his past behind him and no longer associates with his past family.

Personality: Wu Du is distant and seems cold. However, his heart is pure and he puts the needs of the poor and downtrodden in front of his own. His distant nature is simply due to his constant introspection.

Mannerisms: Silent with eyes that seem to pass through people, even in conversation, Wu Du often gives people a chill just by talking with him. He rarely shows emotion, attempting to suppress it and remain in control at all times.

Distinguishing Features: Wu Du is completely bald and has piercing blue eyes. He wears a loose fitting green robe and carries no weapons. His ears are pierced with small bars of silver.

Environment: Wu Du is constantly traveling, looking for teachers of wushu and honing his skills. He can be found on any road or city, but rarely stays in one place long.

Adventure Seeds: Wu Du is always off on his quest to perfect his skills. He is just as likely to respond to calls for help as he is to move on to the next town. However, he is often swayed by the needs of the poor.



WU DU (SEASONED)

Wu Du is a man with a mysterious past who lends his life to perfect his martial arts skills. He is nearly emotionless on the outside, but is constantly suppressing his emotions internally.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d8, Survival d4, Tracking d4, Swimming d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Bow

Items: Quiver, arrows, pack, bedroll, 2 weeks of rations

Edges: Acrobat, Block, Dodge, Fleet-Footed, Frenzy, Martial Artist, Improved Martial Artist

Hindrances: Vow (Major), Poverty (Minor), Doubting Thomas (Minor)

QUICK-USE NPC ARCHYPES

SPEARMAN [NOVICE]

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

Edges: Alertness, First Strike

Gear: Minor wealth, Dagger-axe, Paper Lamellar Cuirass, backpack

SWORDSMAN [SEASONED]

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Swimming d6

Edges: Trademark Weapon (Dao), Luck, Sweep, Frenzy

Gear: Dao, Leather Lamellar Cuirass, backpack, Minor wealth, Shield

CROSSBOWMAN [NOVICE]

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6

Edges: Alertness, Trademark Weapon (Jian)

Gear: Jian, Leather Lamellar Cuirass, backpack, Minor wealth

LANCER / CAVALRY REGULAR [VETERAN]

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d10, Taunt d4, Tracking d4

Edges: Sweep, Improved Sweep, Steady Hands, Trademark Weapon (Jian)

Gear: Jian, backpack, wealth, Shield, Steel Corselet

MARINE [NOVICE]

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d8, Throwing d6, Swimming d8, Boating d8, Notice d4, Repair d6

Edges: Ace, Alertness

Gear: Minor wealth, Dao, bow, backpack, swimming bladder

OFFICER [HEROIC]

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Edges: Fleet-footed, Infantry Leader, Polearm Sweep, Sweep, Improved Sweep, Trademark Weapon (Guan Dao), Improved Trademark Weapon (Guan Dao)

Gear: Guan Dao, Liang-tang plate, Jian, backpack, Major wealth

SAVAGE TALE

Provided here is an adventure intended to give the GM ideas for additional adventures during the time of the Three Kingdoms in China. Full details are not provided to allow the GM to tailor the adventures for any level or play, or insert them into an existing campaign. They encompass the feel of adventures in ancient China and are intended to be run over the course of one evening of play.

GATECRASHERS

The Preview

The adventure takes place in one of the many, massive walled gates that occupy the mountain passes in central and western China. Once inside, the PCs are recognized as heroes of minor renown by the local governor. The governor has a problem in that there are two armies from rival factions heading their way. Both have sent messengers that they want control of the gate, but the governor is unsure what to do. He'd like the PCs to help him decide which side to support.

The PC's question the governor and can either make their decision or question the envoys from either side, after which the PC's are free to make their recommendation to the governor. Once that is done, the other side sends assassins to kill the PCs to make a statement about supporting the wrong side. The PCs fight off the assassins and the next day the first rival army arrives. The governor sends the PCs out to inform the envoy that they will not be surrendering the wall. Annoyed, the envoy challenges one of the PCs to a duel. Depending on if the PC wins, loses or declines, the enemy army gets a situational modifier (such as a boost to their morale).

The next day the army the governor is supporting arrives. He sends the PCs as spies to the other army with a message that the garrison will sally out to aid them once battle is joined. On the way, the PCs are ambushed and must fight off rival scouts. If successful, the army the PCs are supporting is successful, but only with the help of the garrisoned army. The PCs are compensated well for their service.

The Players

Liu Cazen

Liu Cazen is a middle-aged balding man who was placed in charge of the gate only late this year. Since his initial placement, he has had no official orders and no imperial decree. He has been stumbling along as best he can, but did not expect to have to govern every little issue from the rather expansive town, which has sprung up between the walls. He is desperate for guidance and takes whatever is offered. He constantly swats and hates making decisions.

Huan Lam

Lam is a 40-something diplomat and scholar with straight, long, greasy hair. He is always smiling, but there is something off-putting about his smile, as if he's pulling something

over on you. He has only one mission: to ensure his side is allowed access to the Gate. He is not above bribing the PCs and offers them great riches for their support. His word is rarely good, however, something the PCs discover by asking around. He hates Zheng Guo with a passion and even asks the PCs to take care of him, if they aren't above such things.

Zheng Guo

Guo is a young man just over the age of twenty. He has a wide eye wonder about him that comes with youth. He is utterly devoted to his side as he believes it is the best side to bring peace to the land. He doesn't know Huan Lam very much, but is wary of him as he serves the rival side and has the experience of age. He tries to convince the PCs that his side needs to win to safeguard lives. He cannot offer any money, but knows his lord will reward their service.

Assassins

The assassins sent by the rival side, determined by whom the PCs support, strike from the shadows and gang up on the weakest PC, attempting to incapacitate him before moving on to the next. They work on ganging up with each other if possible. Use the statistics for the Wei soldiers for quick use. If captured, they tell the PCs who hired them in exchange for their lives.

Scouts

The scouts who attempt to intercept the PCs are irregulars from the opposing army. Use the statistics for the Shu soldiers for quick use. They flee if they lose more than half of their numbers in combat.

The Plot

The PCs have come to one of the massive gates that block the mountain passes. Control of the gate means control of the surrounding region as the mountains are largely impassable. Hu Lao Gate is a good example of this type of fortification. Effectively, it consists of a small town walled in by the mountains on both side and two massive stone walls on the other.

The PCs can be there for whatever reason the GM chooses. Perhaps there is a rare apothecary residing there or a wise man the PCs seek an audience with. Regardless, once they enter town and begin moving about, they are recognized as heroes who previously performed a worthy task (something from the PC's past adventures or background). A small group of guards takes note and approaches the PCs, requesting they follow them to see the governor, Liu Cazen, who has a request of them.

Cazen informs the PCs that he needs help. Since taking the post of governor last year, he has received no imperial decrees. He has tried to do the best he can, but isn't good at making decisions. He has heard the PCs are honorable and has a request of them. There are two rival armies approaching the Gate. Both have sent envoys demanding the gate be opened for them. He isn't sure which side to support and would like the PCs to talk to each of the envoys to feel out who he should support. In exchange, he offers a small reward and waves the imperial tax on anything they buy in the town – effectively giving them a ten percent discount on items purchased. He gives them directions to the inn where the two envoys are staying.

The PCs are free to meet with both envoys and determine whom they think the governor should support. (See the individual descriptions of both Huan Lam and Zheng Guo above.) Once the PCs make their determination, they return to the governor, but he is unable to see them until morning, due to important matters of state. However, they have been given free stay at the inn in town and can stay the night. That night, a group of assassins attempts to break into the PCs room and silence them. If the PCs take any prisoners, they readily admit they were hired by whatever envoy the PCs have decided against supporting. The next morning the PCs give the governor their report. He agrees with them and has a second request: whatever army the PCs chose not to support has



arrived and is outside the Gate. He wants the PCs to go out and inform the army's representative that the Gate will not be surrendered.

The representative meets them in the open about three hundred feet from the wall. Annoyed at the PC's insolence, the warrior challenges the strongest looking PC to a duel. If the PC agrees, the warrior fights fairly until one of them is knocked unconscious (Incapacitated). If the PC refuses or loses, it deals a severe blow to the morale of the Gate defenders. If he wins, the opposing army witnesses their champion falling and thus loses morale. Either way, the PCs are then allowed to re-enter the Gate after the duel.

The next day, the supported army arrives. The governor requests the PCs to sneak around the opposing army and deliver the message to the supported army that the Gate garrison will support them and attack once battle is joined. The governor promises more renown and reward for their service. Outside, the PCs are able to take some of the mountain passes with a little difficulty (imposing a (-1) penalty to Riding rolls if necessary) to get to the army they are supporting. However, they run into an opposing patrol who attempts to stop them.

The PCs continue on and deliver their message to the supporting army. The army commander is happy for their help and the next day the army attacks. The GM is free to have the PCs join in the battle, in which they should fight a small contingent of soldiers of equal level to be challenging or become part of a Mass Battle. After the battle, the PC's army wins, thanks to the Gate garrison's support. If the PCs won the duel earlier, losses are light, however, if they declined or lost the duel, losses on both sides are severe (due to a lack of morale). Either way, the PCs have been integral to the victory and are rewarded well.

The Prize

The PCs are rewarded in several ways: first, as mentioned earlier, they can buy items in the Gate city at a 10% discount. Second, they are known as heroes to the citizens of the side they supported and receive a +1 bonus to their Charisma when dealing with them. Finally, the general is impressed and offers a small amount of the booty taken from the battlefield. The GM is free to hand out whatever wealth is appropriate for his campaign.

Legends

The Three Kingdoms period is a time of epic characters, both heroic and sadistic. It was a time when legends were born that still exist today. The Chinese epic "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" brings us many of these legends. What follows are a few of the many legendary characters' exploits. Use them to formulate how you want your hero to behave and form what legends will be told about him.

Xiahou Dun's Eye

One of Cao Cao's star generals, Xiahou Dun the one-eyed, served Wei for over thirty years and participated in nearly every major engagement with Cao Cao and his son Cao Pi. Legend has it that during the Battle of Xiapi, Dun took an arrow to the eye. Unphased, he removed the arrow and ate his own eyeball. The scene shocked everyone on the field of battle and Xiahou Dun was able to kill the general who fired the arrow.

Battle of Changban

The Battle of Changban was famous for its legendary deeds. As Cao Cao advanced, Liu Bei took the time and effort to relocate the citizens with him. The texts state that so respected was Liu Bei, that the people would rather follow him into certain death than work for another warlord. During this same fight, Zhao Yun rushed headlong back into the enemy ranks to rescue Liu Bei's infant son. He then strapped the lad to his chest and fought his way out against hordes of enemies. Finally, Cao Cao's troops were stopped cold when they came across Zhang Fei standing alone on a bridge. Fei supposedly bellowed so loud and brandished his sword with such menace that none dared approach and one enemy general fell dead from dread. Once the two generals arrived home, Liu Bei tossed his infant son to the ground and proclaimed that his own child was not worth the cost of two of his best generals.

Gan Ning's Night Raid

As Cao Cao invaded Wu with over 400,000 men, Gan Ning embarked with just one-hundred cavalry and raided Cao Cao's army with such ferocity that Cao Cao was forced to sound a general retreat until morning. Gan Ning returned with each of his one-hundred riders alive.

Zhuge Liang's Brilliance

Shu's chief strategist was rumored to be the wisest man in the world. He was given credit for several inventions of the time including; a repeating crossbow, the wheelbarrow, a type of bread used for troops on the march, along with several scholarly works. He was also given credit for his "borrowing 100,000 arrows" ruse in which the joint Wei / Wu navy sailed vessels manned by straw soldiers along the Wei battle lines prompting massive arrow fire. The arrows were then collected for use within their own army.

Guan Yu's Conditions

Guan Yu was said to have complete loyalty to his blood brothers Liu Bei and Zhang Fei. During the early years of fighting, Guan Yu was surrounded on a hill by Cao Cao's forces. When asked for his surrender, Yu famously announced three conditions to his surrender. One, Liu Bei's spouses must not be harmed and must be well taken care of. Two, in name, Guan Yu surrenders to the emperor and not Cao Cao. Three, Guan Yu is allowed to leave and reunite with Liu Bei if one day he ever finds out the latter's whereabouts. Cao Cao agreed to the terms and Guan Yu served for a few months under his command until he learned of Liu Bei's location.

Guan Yu's Return

Once he learned of Liu Bei's location, he made to leave Cao Cao's service but unwilling to part with the fierce general, Cao Cao would not grant him an audience. Frustrated, Yu composed a letter and left on his own terms. Escorting Liu Bei's wife, Yu made his way toward Liu Bei. However, at each pass he was stopped by one of Cao Cao's generals and their men. Infuriated, Guan Yu killed each in turn, uncovering assassination plots and ambushes one by one. By the time he reached Liu Bei, he had slain six of Cao Cao's generals who attempted to impede his journey.

Three Brothers

The three sworn brothers Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei came together almost haphazardly. After spending the day together and discussing how they wished to heal the

land from tyrants and rebels, the three swore brotherhood to one another under a peach tree. The so called Oath of the Peach Garden is loosely translated as such; "We three; Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, though of different families, swear brotherhood, and promise mutual help to one end. We will rescue each other in difficulty. We will aid each other in danger. We swear to serve the state and save the people. We ask not the same day of birth, but we seek to die together. May Heaven, the all-ruling, and Earth, the all-producing, read our hearts. If we turn aside from righteousness or forget kindness, may Heaven and Human smite us!"

Three Brothers Fight Lu Bu

Lu Bu was the most feared warrior in the land. After he rebelled against Dong Zhou and set up his own fiefdom, Liu Bei and Cao Cao's forces attempted to remove him from power. However, Lu Bu struck down man after man until none dared to near him. Seeing cowardice in the ranks, Zhang Fei galloped out and engaged Lu Bu. The two fought for many bouts until Guan Yu rode out to his aid with Liu Bei not far behind. The three brothers fought over a hundred bouts with the warlord until he tired and made his escape. It was the first time Lu Bu had been beaten in hand-to-hand combat and showcases both Lu Bu's strength and the brother's loyalty to one another.

Epilogue

Zhang Lei watched the woman he'd met all those many years ago sleep soundly in the bed next to him. He thought of all their adventures together, how after several years their friendship grew into much more, how she had taught him how to channel his inner energy to become a formidable warrior, but most of all, he thought of the night they met.

Ci Maho knocked on his parent's door with him standing obediently next to her. His mother opened the door and looked from her to Lei. "Yes, can I help you? Lei?"

Maho bowed and put her arm around Lei's shoulders in support. "Good evening, madam. I am Ci Maho. I found your son in the woods."

Lei's mother looked stern and put her hands on her hips. "Lei, what has gotten into you? Get inside. Thank you for your-"

"You misunderstand me, madam. Your son, he is special. I wish to take him as my apprentice and train him in my art."

"Train him? A woman? Are you serious?" Maho responded with only a slight smile and a nod of her head. "Fi, come here!" the woman yelled over her shoulder. A man appeared in the doorway with a large frame. Behind him Lei's brothers came to investigate the late disturbance as well. "This woman wants to take Lei to 'train' him." Lei's father let out a bellow of laughter, joined also by his brothers.

"Listen to her, mother!" Lei yelled.

The laughter subsided and Lei's father grew angry. "You show respect to your mother, Lei." Lei lost all his courage and lowered his gaze. "Lei get in the house. Be gone woman."

Maho held tight to Lei's shoulder with her hand. "Let us make a wager." She took out a small, silk, yellow scarf from her pocket and raised it above her head. "This is the quarry." She then reached into a second pocket and took out a large pouch which jingled with coin. "This is the stake. If any of your family can take the ribbon from me before yielding, I will go my way and give you this bag of gold as payment. However, if you yield while I still have the ribbon, then I will take the boy with me to train."

“What nonsense is this?” Lei’s mother asked.

“Not nonsense. A wager. Lei, do you agree to these terms?” Lei raised his eyes and nodded his agreement.

“You wish to go with her?” His mother asked.

“I do, mother.” He told her.

His mother looked to his father and the two whispered in hushed tones. A few seconds later he bellowed, “It is agreed. If any of my family can take the ribbon from you before we yield, you will leave the purse and be on your way. However, if we cannot, Lei will follow you, as he wishes.”

Maho smiled and turned, walking to the middle of the yard. She smiled and dangled the ribbon before her. “Whenever you are ready.” Lei’s father strolled out boldly and walked over to remove the ribbon from Maho’s hand. As he approached she deftly tucked the ribbon to one side and weaved her hands in intricate arcs, never allowing Fi to take hold of the ribbon. Annoyed, the man placed a hand on her shoulder to hold her still. Maho bent slightly and Fi toppled over her shoulder to the ground. Maho skipped a few steps out of his reach and kicked a cloud of dirt in his face for good measure. “Must be faster than that.” She chided.

“Boys, get her!” Fi yelled.

Lei’s brothers came at her in a massive rush. Each was older than Lei, each bigger and stronger from a youth of farmwork. The first barreled into her and she rolled with the momentum to the ground, springing up and propelling him off into the brush with her legs. The force of the push sent her to her feet and she met the next boy with a playful slap across his face before sweeping his legs out from under him. Fi was there then, grabbing at her arm and the ribbon. She shoved him backwards with a kick and turned her attention to the next few brothers. The next she grabbed in a vicious headlock under one arm and the one after she pushed to the ground with a free leg and held him there. The oldest had gotten to his feet and rejoined the fray then, grabbing her arms behind her back. She looked to Liu with a tiny smile on her lip as the youngest son, no more than ten rushed toward her free hand holding the ribbon.

“No!” Lei yelled and ran out, tackling his young sibling before he could get there. Maho’s smile became a large grin and she fell to the ground, taking with her the boy in the headlock and removing her arms from her rear assailant. On the ground she wrapped her legs around the standing boy and dragged him down, rolling on top of him as she did. She slapped him across the face as well and then stood and walked over to Lei.

Fi had straightened himself and he and his boys were preparing to rush the girl when Lei’s mother yelled over the commotion, “Stop!” The men stopped and looked at her. “You truly wish to go with her?” She asked Lei again. Lei nodded and took hold of Maho’s hand. His mother walked over and kissed him on the head. “Then go.” She then took the ribbon slowly from Maho’s hand and placed it around her son’s arm. “Take care of him.”

“I will.” Maho said. They turned and walked off. Maho tossed the coin purse to Fi as she passed. Lei felt the largest smile he had ever known take over his face as they left. It was wide enough to cross the oceans with some to spare; certainly not average.

Ci Maho's eyes fluttered open and she looked up into the steely blue orbs of the man Zhang Lei had become. More than she had ever anticipated, more than she had ever hoped. "Have you been watching me all night?" she asked with a grin.

"The bandits should be here soon, we should get ready." He told her.

"We have time." She said softly. She took his hand and pulled him down to the bed, enjoying his company one more time before they set off on yet another adventure.

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