

Oth

You're a Hero. Will you be a Legend?

Din, the Warring States

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Qin, The Path of Tao

Qin - the role-playing game encourages you to explore a rich and fascinating historical setting. In this Ancient China of the Warring States, doomed to disappear into dictatorship and bureaucracy, there is still the opportunity for you to become a legend...

Political intrigues, battles, quests, magic and mythical creatures await !

As a hero questing for adventure, glory or immortality, you will leap from roof to roof, duel against the expert swordsmen of Chu, plot against the rulers of Qin or Zhao, create pacts with spirits or discover the fruits of the Immortal Isles, decipher oracles carved on jade Bi or tortoise shells, direct your troops to assault fortresses, seek wise taoists to benefit from their learning, drive out phantoms or rely on the power of Chi to accomplish high deeds, worthy of the Divine Masters.

Knight-errant or mercenary, robber or fleeing courtesan, exorcist or alchemist, simple footman or general, destiny calls you all to enter the legend of this forgotten China.

Heart of Jade is born

Su Yi slid to the stone floor in surprise. In the darkness, she could only vaguely glimpse her surroundings. A stuffy, pungent smell of earth assaulted her nostrils. Further away, she could hear water dripping. She suddenly felt cold and noticed the smoke-like wisps of breath dancing by her face. The voices of the kidnappers had faded away, but she still felt like she was not alone...

Put this fang away, little girl, it does not impress me.'

The voice sounded raspy and soft, like that of an old man, and yet it vibrated with supernatural power.

"They are mercenaries working for Fist of Bronze. They destroyed my village and murdered the townspeople. Their Master is after me because of some Sign, whatever that is. I'm tired, hungry and cold. Please don't let them find me, whoever you are."

" The Sign ? Could it be ? At last..."

"What on earth are you talking about ? And who are you ? "

Out of the darkness, a gigantic maw suddenly erupted, stopping only inches from the girl's face. She jumped back, and her dagger fell to the floor with a ringing sound.

Su Yi felt a pang of desperation, but it soon led place to anger.

"Can you grant me revenge? Can you destroy my enemies, make them suffer, lacerate their bodies and tear their souls to shreds? Can you do that, Dragon?"

"Silence, child ! Learn ! Pick up your dagger and get prepared. I will guide your hand. Observe and admire the power of the Tao !"

"Ready ? First lesson: strike with the swiftness of the wind..."

Forty yards below her, she could now clearly distinguish the four troopers that had been pursuing her. Tired of the chase, they had sat down against the rocks, quarrelling over who was responsible for losing trace of their prey. Their iron weapons were resting on the ground, a grave negligence, She felt only a cold determination, the dagger in her hand an extension of her own body.

"Concentrate. You know what needs to be done. Spirit and body must be as one, a single energy focused towards a common goal. Victory. Be as swift as the wind. Are you ready ?"

She took a deep breath and prepared herself for the leap. Su Yi was no more. From now on, Fist of Bronze would learn to fear Heart of Jade. Then she realised she had been reborn.

The History of the Empire

The primordial egg gave birth to Pangu, the first being. Through him were born the Sky, home of the Gods, and the Earth, home of the mortals. Soon, the people gathered under the guidance of the three Majestic Ones, and despite the rebellion of the Warlord Gonggong nearly destroying the world of yore, harmony finally prevailed thanks to the wisdom of the Gods. The people were finally united.

Qin Start-Up Kit

The mythical Yellow Emperor was the first enlightened ruler of an empire that covered all things under the Sky. First of the Five Sovereigns, his reign was followed by that of rulers as wise and benevolent as himself, and the Empire prospered.

Then followed the time of the great mortal dynasties: the Xia came first, then the Yin, and finally the Zhou. In succession, they received the Celestial Mandate from the Emperor of Jade, Ruler of the Gods.

But the power of the Zhou dynasty waned and the ambitious and traitorous Emperor's vassals took their independence and created their own kingdoms in the name of the Dragons they revered. Many believed that the Empire had fallen into the invisible grasp of a malevolent sect dedicated to the power of death and disorder...

There followed a period of constant warring, but also of great intellectual progress, which saw wise thinkers like Lao Zi or Kong Fu Zi spread their teachings throughout a land devastated by the violence that the seven powerful Warring States inflicted on each other.

The Warring States

Seven large kingdoms occupy the land which was formerly the Empire of Zhou. They all have but one goal : to conquer the other kingdoms in order to recreate the Empire under their rule. Warfare, but also spying, diplomacy and economy are the weapons of this century-long conflict.

Qin is the most powerful of the kingdoms. It used to be semibarbaric, but harsh reforms have contributed to its rise. Its ruthlessly effective administration is a powerful tool allowing its resources to be focused towards the conquest of its rivals.

Zhao is a kingdom strongly influenced by the people of the bordering steppes. Its powerful cavalry and flourishing economy make it a state both respected and feared.

Chu was formerly an enemy of the Empire prior to its dislocation. It is now one of the major powers among the kingdoms, with the largest and most exotic territory.

Qi is the kingdom of scholars and well-read men. Libraries and universities dot its land, and the ruler neglects military power in favour of cultural richness.

Yan, located at the extreme North-East, fights constantly against barbarian raids but must all the same deflect the invasion attempts from rival kingdoms.

Wei used to be a flourishing land, but its power has faded and it now constitutes an easy prey for its rapacious neighbours.

Han is circled by more powerful kingdoms and tries to keep its integrity through diplomatic means, its military strength might being the most limited.

Magic in Qin

It's important to keep in mind that its practitioners don't see Chinese magic as supernatural : it is their greater knowledge of the Laws governing the universe that allows them to perform such feats. It is therefore considered normal and relies on the understanding and use of Chi, the universal source of power. However, the ways of magic are many and varied.

Wizards, Shamans and Taoists

Taoism is a direct inheritance of religious practices of the Priests of the Primordial Dynasties. The primordial religion teaches respect for the Natural Order, following the will of the Gods as interpreted through the reading of symbols, and the observation of religious rites honouring the ancestors. In the Warring States,

most of those who practise magic are Taoists. There are still Shamans and Sorcerers, however, from the village healer to the old wise hermit.

Outer Alchemy

One of the most fabled goals of Taoism is the search for immortality. One way to attain that goal is rumoured to be the creation of a Pill of long Life. The one who swallowed such a pill would supposedly live ten thousand years.

Inner Alchemy

Another means of reaching Immortality is to create a Vital Principle using one's body as an alchemical laboratory.

At its pinnacle, this mystic art allows the manipulation of the elements in their purest form. It becomes possible for the alchemist to perform magical feats like creating fire, surrounding oneself with a sphere of protective water, commanding the branches and roots of trees, moving underground at high speed, etc.

Divination

In ancient times, the main instruments of divination were tortoise shells or flat animal bones. Thrown in a fire, these objects cracked, and the sorcerer interpreted these cracks according to their knowledge.

Discerning signs and symbols and gazing at the Heavens and the stars are also a crucial part of divination as is, of course, the I Ching, the Book of Changes.

Exorcism

The exorcist protects the world of the living against spirits. He practises his art with constant regard to the Balance of the World : life is Yang, death is Yin, and it is not a good thing to let the dead return to haunt the living.



Spirits and creatures

Spirits are very common in Qin, and natives of the Warring States regard them as an integral part of their daily life.

Jiang shi are Chinese vampires, similar to zombies. They sport long fangs and blue nails, they are filthy and move about by hopping.

Emo are demons, often recognised by the single or double horn jutting from the center of their forehead.

Youling, also called Gui are ethereal, vaporous ghosts, and generally take the appearance of beautiful women luring men to rob them of their Yang fluid.

> Taotie are flying heads, their lower jaw missing but their teeth pointy and sharpedged. These demons are rapacious and terribly clever. In all circumstances they are to be avoided, for their devouring hunger leads them to slaughter and dismember any human beings they come across.

> When an excess of Yin fluid stagnates in the vicinity of an inauspicious area (an ancient battle-field, a charnel house, etc.), monsters known as **Wang xiang** may appear. These creatures possess corpses and become fierce red-eyed undead recogniseable by their sharp claws and emaciated bodies. They crave for live flesh and will easily decimate entire villages if there is no one to stop them.

> According to an old legend, any creature bathed in starlight for ten thousand years will attain the wisdom of Man. **Yao** are such animals, and they can adopt human form at will. They are facetious rather than malicious, they like to trick humans for fun, but are rarely cruel. Many tales talk about such creatures falling in love with mortals and marrying them. Animals most likely to become Yao are foxes, monkeys and snakes, and more rarely spiders and crows.

> **Long**, Chinese dragons, are celestial creatures, symbols of power, wisdom and sovereignty.

Kilin are the mounts of Immortals and heroes, chimeras with wings of fire, bodies of horses and stag antlers.

Fenghuang are fabulous birds supposed to symbolize harmony in a couple. Their tails shine with all the colors of the rainbow.

The Character

In Qin, a character is defined by several components which determine what he is, what he can do, what his strengths and weak-nesses are, etc. Here is a description of the various components :

Aspects

Aspects define the innate capacities of the character, his characteristics. They range from 1 (weak) to 5 (legendary).

Wood is a mental aspect representing intelligence, cunning, memory and perception as well as a capacity to reflect and concentrate.

Fire is a social attribute, representing the inner flame of the character, his charisma, intuition and inspiration.

Metal is a martial attribute, it measures the pugnacity of the character, his strength, constitution and warrior spirit.

Water is a physical attribute measuring agility, speed and suppleness of the character.

Earth is a mystical attribute, measuring a sixth sense, the will and the inner force, the bond established between the character and the mystical forces of the universe, the Tao.



Secondary Aspects

These Aspects are all derived from the primary aspects detailed above.

Qin Start-Up Kit

Chi is a measure of the inner force of the character. It allows him to surpass himself and fuel the powers of the Tao.

Passive defense : represents the difficulty to hit a character during an attack.

Vitality measures the vital energy of the character. It is split into five states (*Healthy, Bruised, Lightly wounded, Severely wounded, Fatally wounded*). Each state after Healthy causes a penalty to be added to the threshold of any actions undertaken by a character suffering that level of wounds.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Strengths are favours that destiny bestowed upon the character whereas Weaknesses are his negative features, the areas in which he is fallible.

Talents

Talents are the acquired skills of the character and are rated from 0 to 4 :

0	Inexperienced
1	Apprentice
2	Experienced
3	Expert
4	Master

Talents are divided into five categories : mental (Calligraphy or Medicine), social (Eloquence or Intimidation), martial (the various combat talents), physical (Horsemanship or Climbing) and mystical (Talents related to the Tao).

The Tao

The Tao represent the laws of the universe which govern the workings of the world. Some heroes are able of channelling their Chi in order to influence these laws, to divert them for their own benefit and thus to accomplish the feats that will make living legends of them.

A proper use of the Tao allow feats such as ignoring gravity; moving faster than any mortal, suffusing an object with one's inner force, noticing things that no eye can normally see, etc.

The Tao are organized into 4 levels, each allowing the character to perform increasingly powerful feats, which are useable in various circumstances. These feats should not be restrictive and there should be many ways to use a given feat. The keyword here is creativity.

The rules

The Yin / Yang Dice

The Qin rules are based on the use of the Yin/Yang Dice (YyD), which are no other than two ten-sided dice (d10), one black (Yin) and the other white (Yang).

Throwing YyD consists of throwing these two d10 and subtracting the result of the lowest from the result of the highest. A result of 0 on either of the dice is to be read as zero and not as ten.

If both dice give the same result, it's considered as a critical success, unless both results are 0, in which case it's a critical failure.

Simple Tests

When the result of an action undertaken by a character is uncertain, it must be resolved by a Simple Test.

A simple test consists in adding the scores of the appropriate Aspect and Talent to the results of the **YyD**. The total must then be compared to a Success Threshold (**ST**) determined by the game master depending on the difficulty of the task undertaken. If the total is higher or equal to the **ST**, the action is successful. If not, it's a failure. The difference between the total and the ST is called a Margin of Success, it's a measure of how successful an action is.

In summary : Aspect + Talent + YyD > or = ST.

If the result of the YyD is a critical success, the action is automatically successful no matter what the odds, and the character earns a number of Chi points equal to the result of the dice. If a margin of success is needed, again, the result of the dice is used. A critical failure always results in something disastrous, to be determined by the Game Master.

Here is the scale of the Success Thresholds depending on the difficulty of the action :



Opposed Tests

When two characters accomplish an opposed action, they both carry out a simple test against ST determined by the Game Master, then their margins of success are compared. The one with the higher margin wins. A Critical Success always wins over a simple success, no matter what the margin is.

The Combat System

When combat occurs, the game master must be especially attentive to how time passes inside the game, segmenting it into turns and exchanges.

A **Turn** is the time it takes for a character to carry out a number of actions equal to 1 + his level in the martial Talent being used. For example, a character who is Experienced (2) in his martial Talent will be able to perform 3 actions during a turn.

An **Exhange** is the amount of time between the action of the protagonist with the highest initiative and the action of the protagonist with the lowest initiative.

Here is how combat is handled :

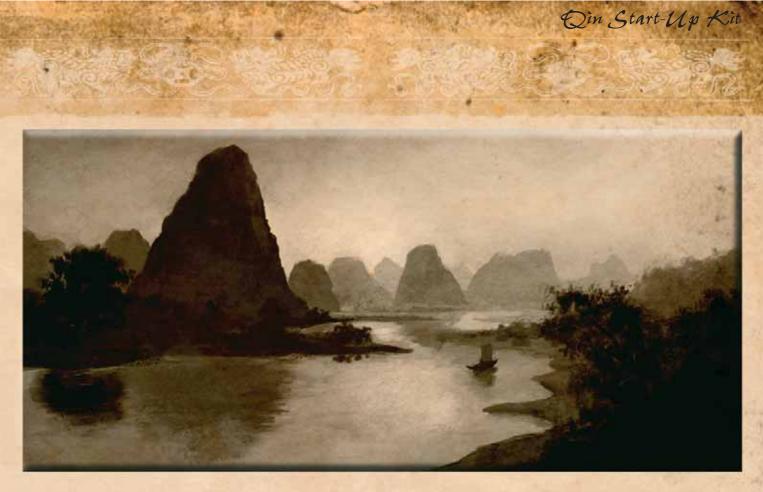
Initiative

Each protagonist **rolls for initiative by adding his Water score to the results of a YyD roll**. If two protagonists end up with the same result, the one with the highest Water aspect has initiative over the other.

If the two protagonists' Water Aspects are equal, then their actions will be simultaneous.



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Protagonists then act in order of decreasing initiative, one after the other, each performing one action at a time until the end of that exchange. Those protagonists who are able to perform additional actions then start a second exchange, then a third and so on until all protagonists have performed all their actions for the turn, in which case the turn ends and a new turn starts.

Attack

A protagonist who wishes to attack an opponent must roll a Metal + Martial Talent +YyD against an ST equal to the opponent's passive defense score. If the roll is successful, the attack has succeeded.

Defense

A protagonist whose Passive Defense is overcome by an attack can choose to further defend himself. In order to do that he must roll a Water + Appropriate Talent + YyD against an ST equal to the total score of the attack. If successful, the defender is considered to have fended off the attack. In order to attempt such a defense, however, the protagonist must use one of the actions he has available for the current turn.

Movement

A protagonist who wishes to move significantly during a turn must spend **an action in order to cover a number of yards equal to his Water level**.

Damage

If an attack succeeds and is not defended, the damage it inflicts is **equal to the Metal Aspect of the attacker + the weapon's Damage Score** to which the **Margin of Success of the Attack roll** can be added if and only if the Yang dice scored higher than the Yin dice or the roll is critical. This total is reduced by the defender's armour rating if applicable. The protagonist who suffers the damage ticks the corresponding number of boxes of Vitality and applies the corresponding penalty, if any, to all subsequent rolls.

Once every protagonist has acted for this exchange, a new exchange begins. Protagonists act in the same order of inititative. Once every protagonist has used up his available actions, a new turn begins, starting with a new initiative roll.

Combat Maneuvers

A basic Martial Talent covers the use of simple strikes with the associated weapon. A seasoned martial artist, however, knows how to rely on more spectacular techniques that may also result in different effects. These are called Combat Maneuvers. Each level of a given Martial Talent allows the use of these maneuvers if the combatant has learned them.

Using such a maneuver usually increases the ST by +1, and only one maneuver may be used per action.

Relying on Tao

Tao can be useful in combat as well as in other circumstances. Most Tao don't require the expenditure of an action, but improve an action already undertaken.

Using a Tao requires the expenditure of a number of Chi points equal to the level of the effect used. It is possible to combine the use of several Taos on a same action. The Chi expenditure is then cumulative.

It's possible to use a Tao in combination with a Combat Maneuver.

Ching Lu-zuo and Mai Lin-chi

Here are two pre-generated characters provided to help you with the rules of Qin.

Ching Lu-zno

Lu-zuo is a powerful warrior known throughout the Warring States. A former mercenary, his martial talents are now for sale to the highest bidder, and when he cannot find an honest job he occasionally adopts the trade of the highway robber. Luzuo, however, is growing somewhat tired of this life and hopes to find himself a woman and settle down to a peaceful life alongside a loving wife. The reputation of Mai Lin-chi drove him to challenge the fierce adventuress...

Chi

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Vitality

21 (10 / 5 / 3 / 2 / 1)

Talents

Chuishù 2, Horsemanship 2, Intimidation 2, Legends 1, Heraldry 1, Survival (steppes) 1

Strengths

Paw of the Bear: Lu-zuo handles blunt weapons with virtuosity. Once per session, he may decide to add the result of the YyD to the damage of an attack carried out with such a weapon.

Weaknesses

Impetuosity of the Horse : Lu-zuo is hot-headed and immediately reacts to the slightest insult or provocation.

Combat Maneuvers

Lu-zuo's Chuishù Talent enables him to wield the powerful War Mace, his favorite weapon. Being Experienced (2) in this Talent, Lu-zuo knows the following maneuvers :

Knock-Out: Lu-zuo works out the damage of his attack normally, and his target must make a test of his Metal Aspect using this result as ST. If the test fails, the target collapses to the ground and loses consciousness for (6 - Earth) minutes.

Tao

Here are the Tao mastered by Lu-zuo and their effects :

Tao of the Destructive Breath

This Tao encompasses an understanding of the nature of the elements and the force they exert on a given structure. It allows Lu-zuo to release his Chi in a perfect blow that strikes with perfect accuracy at the weakest point of a structure.

Level 1

Lu-zuo automatically shatters a structure of wood of the approximate size of a chair, by striking the specific point that will destroy the balance of the object.

This Tao can also grant him a damage bonus of up to his level in this Tao by spending a number of Chi points equal to the bonus granted.

Level 2

Lu-zuo automatically shatters a wooden construction the size and structure of a scaffolding (it may also be a support beam, a sturdy door, etc.), by striking the exact point which destroys its integrity.

Level 3

Lu-zuo may shatter a stone structure the size of a tombstone.

Tao of the Resistant Body

With this Tao, Lu-zuo may increase his natural resistance.

Level 1

Lu-zuo may channel his Chi in order to increase his ability to sustain heat (up to $+140^{\circ}$ F) or cold (down to -22° F). Under such conditions, he does not suffer any penalty, nor does he suffer any damage for a number of hours equal to his level in this Tao.

Additionally, he gains two permanent boxes of Vitality at the Healthy state.

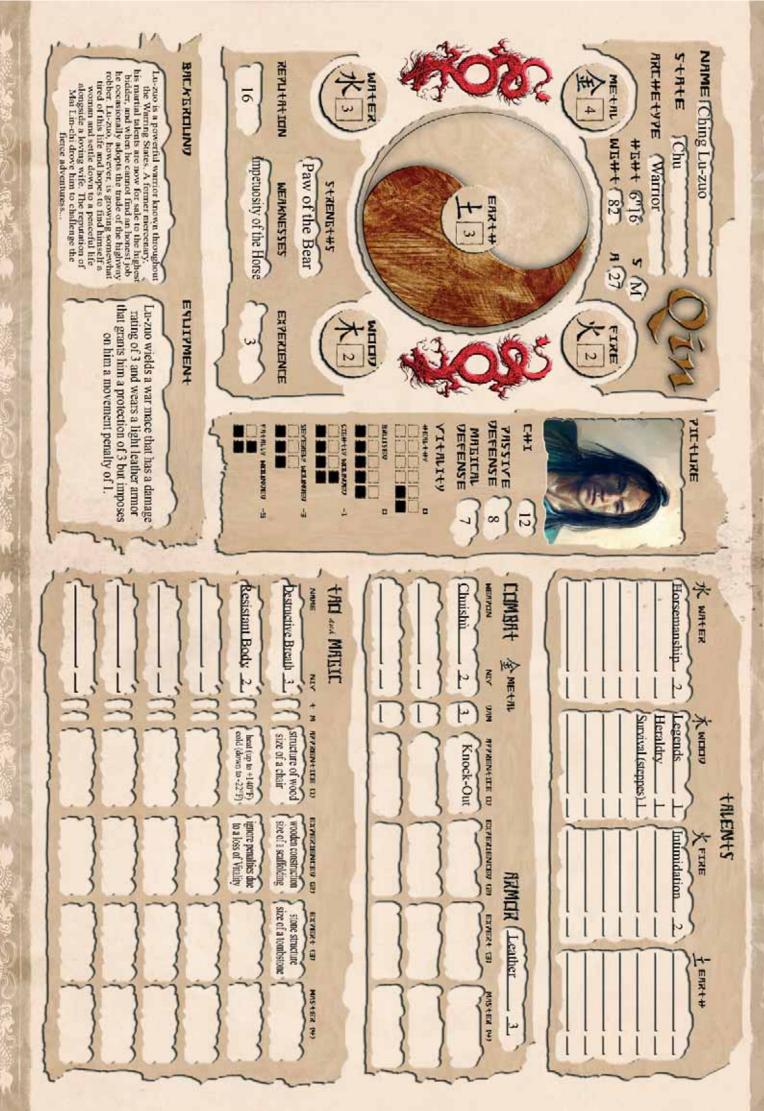
Level 2

From this level onwards, Lu-zuo can spend Chi to ignore penalties due to a loss of Vitality for a number of turns equal to his level in this Tao.

He gains two more permanent boxes of Vitality at the Healthy state.

Equipment

Lu-zuo wields a war mace that has a damage rating of 3 and wears a light leather armor that grants him a protection of 3 but imposes on him a movement penalty of 1.



Mai Lin-chi

Mai Lin-chi is the spoiled daughter of a Jiang Hu Clan Chief. She's been a practitioner of martial arts since her youngest age, and once vowed she would only ever marry a man able of defeating her in a duel. Many applicants have already felt the tip of her blade on their necks.

Chi 18

Vitality 19 (7 / 5 / 4 / 2 / 1)

Talents

Jiànshù 2, Acrobatics 2, Dance 2, Discretion 1, Meditation 1, Climbing 1

Strengths Agility of the Monkey : Lin-chi loves climbing and does not fear heights. Once per session, she can re-roll a Climbing Test. Whether the second result is better than the first or not, it must be applied.

Weaknesses

Curious as a rat : Lin-chi can't stop snooping everywhere. She feels compelled to investigate any occurence, regardless of the potential danger.

Combat Maneuvers

Lin-chi's Jiànshù Talent enables her to handle the Chinese sword. Being Experienced (2) in this Talent, she has mastered the following maneuvers :

Accurate blow : The strike aims precisely at a fault in the opponent's armor. The opponent's protection is reduced by 2 and may be reduced to 0.

Great Parry : Lin-chi rolls a Metal + Jiànshù Test against an ST 7. If she succeeds, she can add her Margin of Success to her score in passive defense until the rest of the combat or until she decides to lower her guard. As long as her guard is high, all attacks she performs will suffer a penalty equal to the bonus granted to her passive defense.

Weapon Block : Lin-chi twists her opponent's weapon in order to block it with her own or against an element of the surroundings. Her opponent has the choice to either drop his weapon (which costs an action) or try to release it by winning an opposed Water Aspect test (which also costs an action). Lin-chi can maintain her block (no action required) or try to break the opponent's weapon (by making a successful Metal Test against an ST of 7 for a wooden weapon or 10 for a metal one. This requires one action). If she fails this test, her opponent's weapon is automatically released from her block.

Tao Here are the Tao Lin-chi has mastered and their effects :

Tao of the Six Directions

This Tao corresponds to the mastery of movement wich can be either horizontal, upwards (jumping) or downwards (diving).

Level 1

Racing or jumping : Lin-chi may add her Water Aspect in yards to any horizontal movement she undertakes (even if the action is already a movement).

Level 2

Racing or jumping : Lin-chi's horizontal movement rate now rises to (Water x 2) yards per action.

Defying gravity : In addition, Lin-chi may choose to move up a vertical surface for a distance of up to (Water) yards per action.

Level 3

Racing or jumping : Lin-chi may now add (Water x 3) yards to a horizontal movement as part of an action.

Defying gravity : Lin-chi can from now run up a vertical surface for a distance of up to (Water x 2) yards per action.

Jumping : similarly, during her actions, Lin-chi may now leap up or dive down by up to (Water) yards provided she lands or rebounds on a solid surface at the end of this movement.

Tao of the Light Step

Her understanding of the forces of equilibrium allow Lin-chi to defy the fundamental principles of balance. Thus, she can "stand" against non-horizontal surfaces or extremely small or uncomfortable ones.

Level 1

With this degree of control, Lin-chi can cancel any penalties due to fighting on unstable ground, be it rocking like the deck of a boat in high wind or slippery like a surface covered with oil or ice. She may also benefit from a bonus of up to her level in this Tao for any test aiming at avoiding a fall. To do so, she must spend a number of Chi points equal to the bonus she wishes to apply.

Tao of Sudden Lightning

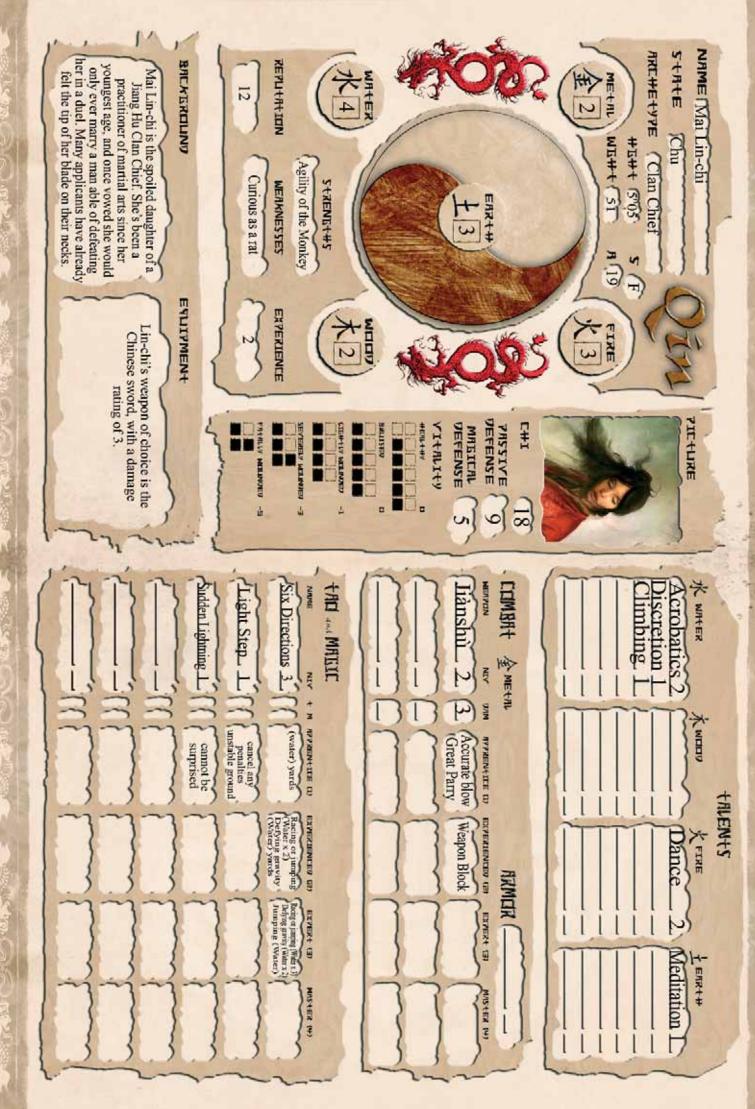
This Tao allow Lin-chi to anticipate her opponents attacks and therefore better control the exhanges.

Level 1

Lin-chi cannot be surprised by an ambush or surprise attack. Once activated, this Tao allows her to cancel all penalties for surprise for a number of hours equal to her Wood Aspect.

Equipment

Lin-chi's weapon of choice is the Chinese sword, with a damage rating of 3.



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