

STEAMSCAPES

ASIA



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Asia

by Eric Simon

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- Chapter 1 -

An Introduction



Work Hard and Honestly

Using this Book

This is a game book. It is the second major setting book in a series that began with *Steamscapes: North America* and will continue with other similar volumes in the future. There are other supplementary books and materials, but the continent books act as the core of the Steamscapes setting world. Steamscapes is a licensed setting for the Savage Worlds system, so you will need the *Savage Worlds Deluxe* or *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition* core rules to play. No additional books are required, although the *North America* book introduced many rules and concepts that are useful for fleshing out a complete sense of the world, and the rules and background in this book are written with that book in mind.

If you are new to steampunk or new to gaming, we would encourage you to read all of this introductory chapter and then move on to Chapter 2 to get a sense of the kind of stories one might experience in this setting. If you are interested in alternate history—particularly if you want to see how this book builds on the background begun in *Steamscapes: North America*—we would suggest you skip to Chapter 5. If you are focused on what new game materials this book offers, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are where you will find new rules for the Apothecary Profession and for martial arts respectively. Finally, if you are planning on running a Steamscapes game, Chapter 6 offers sample characters and scenarios.

The region covered by this book is not the entire continent of Asia. The western portion of the continent will be reserved for future volumes. Our demarcation is an imaginary line drawn north from the mouth of the Indus River. Everything east of that line has been included, although some nations receive greater attention because they have a larger impact on the world. For more detail, refer to the historical background in Chapter 5.

Building an Asian Steampunk

In *Steamscapes: North America*, we discussed the basics of what we mean by “steampunk” with regard to fiction, gaming, and other media. In this book, it becomes important to address some of the core concerns that are often raised about our chosen genre: the Eurocentrism and pro-imperialist sentiment that exist as undercurrents in much of steampunk. The imagery and language of the steampunk community often subtly and sometimes overtly support a European (usually British) view of history and even alternate history. In some cases this means either romanticizing the time period—by ignoring the real struggles of oppressed groups—or romanticizing the people—by presenting European expansion as enlightened and benevolent. This historical blindness can make some potential audience members feel unrepresented or even unwelcome.

The Steamscapes alternate timeline does not shrink from the uglier aspects of real history. We understand that the fundamental natures of people and governments are very difficult to change. But we also take to heart the idea that building a fictional world offers the possibility of highlighting or even raising up those who have historically been marginalized. We have done this in *North America* and in the *Gunslinger's Guide*. It is part of our core philosophy.

In looking at Asian history, this means a focus on the possibility of creating an industrialized Asia without that technological progress being controlled by colonial powers. Some colonial influence is inevitable, especially because it began long before our timeline shift in 1768. However, we can and should find ways to minimize and even reverse some of the effects of that imperialism. What you will see in *Steamscapes: Asia* is a continent that is not entirely

free of European influence but is largely free of European control.

For readers from Europe and North America—and even for some readers from Asian countries themselves—envisioning the results of that change can be difficult. What does “steampunk” look like when it is not driven by Victorian fashion and Victorian sensibilities? Fortunately, there are some resources already available that can help. With this book, *Steamscapes* is not carving a brand new path for the steampunk community, but rather following in the footsteps of some very important pioneers. If you are interested in steampunk from a more global perspective, we would recommend the following sources:

- *Steampunk World*, edited by Sarah Hans (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1939840198>)
- Beyond Victoriana (<http://beyondvictoriana.com/>)
- Steampunk India (<http://www.steampunkindia.com/>)
- James Ng Art (<http://www.jamesngart.com/>)

Continuing a History

One of the keys to building a consistent alternate history is to pick a point of departure from real history from which all of your changes can be extrapolated. With *Steamscapes: Asia*, we wanted to make sure that our point of departure remained the same, and that we could clearly explain all of the changes on this continent in a way that would line up with what is happening in North America.

Another aspect of developing a robust alternate timeline is to look for critical events in real history to avoid, events that would force the timeline back towards our own if they were allowed to happen. In Asia, the timeline was crafted to avoid three key moments: the Raj (specifically the Parliamentary takeover in India following the 1857 rebellions), the Taiping Rebellion (which devastated the Chinese military and enabled England to deal an economic death blow in the Second Opium War), and the Treaty of Kanagawa (which legitimized the economic exploitation of Japan by the United States). Had any of these events been allowed to proceed, the repercussions would have prevented us from reversing the effects of colonialism in any substantive way.

Stopping the Raj follows mostly naturally from our shift and the events in North America. With the Atlantic colonies still part of the Commonwealth until the 1860s, it follows logically that the British middle-class families seeking opportunity out in the world would have gone to America rather than to India. This, combined with more frequent military conflict in Europe, leads directly to a much smaller British population in India and a much less cohesive military force in the hands of the East India Company. As you will see in Chapter 5, this is critical for enabling Indian independence.

Stopping the Taiping Rebellion takes a little bit more tweaking, but does follow directly from a stronger Sikh Empire and a weaker East India Company. Japan’s situation is somewhat more difficult because much of Japan’s trouble in the 19th century was self-imposed. However, we can avoid the Treaty of Kanagawa at least by making Commodore Perry (English now, no longer American) more conciliatory and by making Japan more ready for industrialization.

The changes in other countries largely stem from the effects of one or more of these changes. Burma, for example, benefits greatly from Indian independence and especially from a weaker East India Company. Việt Nam is affected by the changing relations between France and England and how that plays out in their interactions with Asian nations. And events in the Philippines—among other countries—hint at a Europe that is too focused on internal strife to put sufficient effort into maintaining its colonies.

We hope that the historical backgrounds will be interesting and relatively easy to read. We have taken some additional space to set the context of real history prior to the 1768 switch, simply because we know many of our readers will be less familiar with at least some of these histories. Nevertheless, once we pass the switch date in each section, we do not distinguish in the text between real events and alternate timeline events. We leave that to you to discover on your own if you are curious. However, we do guarantee that every person mentioned by name in the historical backgrounds is real, although their lives may have drastically changed in the *Steamscapes* world.

On the Writing of Languages and Names

This book covers people, places, and historical events from a wide variety of regions and nations. Even ignoring the western third of Asia, there are over a dozen major language groups mentioned in the historical background of this book. Each language has its own quirks of spelling and notation when transliterated into English, so rather than try to develop a consistent phonetic system—or to use existing systems that are difficult for the untrained reader to follow—we have decided to simply use each transliteration system separately. For languages where there are multiple systems, we have tried to use the most modern one or the one most likely to be used by speakers of that language if they were given the choice.

In the case of Chinese, for instance, we have opted to favor pinyin over Wade-Giles because pinyin more accurately reflects how Chinese speakers transliterate into English. Wade-Giles was the only official system in use during the 19th century, but it nevertheless reflects an imposed Eurocentric understanding of the Chinese language. Had China entered the industrial world differently, it might have developed the pinyin system sooner and would certainly have preferred it over the British Wade-Giles system.

Names present their own challenge because naming conventions for places and people vary so widely across the many cultures of Asia. In some cultures family names come first, in some they come second, and in some they do not even exist. In Sikh tradition, all men bear the name Singh and all women bear the name Kaur. In Burmese culture a person may have a single monosyllabic name, while in Japanese culture a well-respected samurai or daimyo may go through several entirely different names over the course of his life. Keeping track of all of these different naming conventions would be prohibitively difficult for the casual reader, and taking the time to point out each one as they occur would bog down the overall narrative. Instead, we have simply named each person and place as accurately as possible following the conventions of the appropriate culture, and we leave it to you to research more thoroughly if you wish.

That being said, there are a few important naming choices that we do want to call to your attention. First, with regard to countries, we have

tried to follow as closely as possible the name the people did use or might have used for their own country. “China” and “the Qing Empire” are used interchangeably. “Prathet Thai” (Thai Kingdom) is used rather than the exonym “Siam” or the more 20th century phrasing of “Thailand.” The Sikh Empire retains its imperial designation because “Punjab” is too narrow a description for the territory it holds in our timeline. The other nations of India are all assumed to return to their previous names, with the exception of the “Republic of Sri Lanka,” which we named with the supposition that the melting pot created by colonialism would lead to similar conclusions about naming (combining the Tamil and Sinhalese names for the island) even if independence were achieved 100 years earlier.

Second, it is important to note—for those who are unaware—that emperors in both China and Japan were never referred to by their given names. Instead, they received a dynastic name. When translated into English, it is appropriate to refer to this dynastic name as either part of the emperor’s title (“Emperor Meiji”) or as an adjective (“The Meiji Emperor”). We use both designations, with a slight preference for the adjective form.

Finally, there is some controversy regarding the designation of the three eastern provinces (Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang) as “Manchuria.” Technically, this name was invented by the Japanese as part of an effort to justify invasion of that territory, claiming that China itself considered it a separate region both ethnically and politically. This is complicated by the fact that the term “Manchu” was originally an artificial word created by Nurhaci to distance his heritage from the outcast Jurchen at the founding of the Qing Empire. To be purely technical, there is no such thing as a “Manchu” ethnicity, yet the designation was used throughout the Qing Dynasty to separate the ruling minority from the majority Han. For that reason, it does seem appropriate to allow “Manchuria,” partially because it is connected with Nurhaci’s region of origin and partially because it is slightly insulting to the Qing Empire and their use of “Manchu” to oppress other ethnic groups. This obviously does not absolve the Japanese nor imply that their intentions in the region were benevolent. There are no good nations or bad nations—there are only nations acting in their own self-interest. What you do with that information in your game is entirely up to you.

A Personal Note from the Professor

Those of you who are aware of my previous efforts to compile the various histories of my home continent of North America may be familiar with a particular voice in my writing. I strive as always to maintain the role of objective observer (as befits my background in the sciences) but also to point out regularly those moments in history that I believe the reader is likely to find fascinating or enlightening.

As I organized my travels in preparation for researching the volume you now hold, it quickly became apparent that I could not be as thorough as I would like about each individual region in Asia if I wanted to also cover a large portion of the continent. And so I have recruited a number of fellow explorers and researchers to assist in this project, dividing up the continent according to our personal preferences.

I have the greatest faith in the scholarship and attention of my colleagues, and so in my editing I have done my best to avoid imposing my own sensibilities on their writing. We have all endeavored to be consistent in our use of terms, but if you notice some variation in style then you will know why. It is my belief that this makes the final product not less but more satisfying. I hope that you find that to be true as well.

Fairman Rogers, 1872



- Chapter 2 -

Three Stories of Modern China



The Only Motion is Returning

Tea Smoke

by Kevin Andrew Murphy

(1860)

Qingwa, the apothecary, set aside her pestle and listened with vague interest to Hu Tien. Tien was the youngest son of one of Nanping's wealthiest families and had dabbled in this trade or another—never too much success—most recently styling himself a merchant. “So you see,” Tien explained, “I require these noble gasses in great quantities, so I need many pounds of these mineral salts and this ‘green dragon’s blood.’ But discretion is also required...”

Qingwa frowned, making her face crease with even more wrinkles than she'd already earned. One did not work as an apothecary if one did not trade in discretion as well as prescriptions. One occasionally had to provide medications which could—if administered incorrectly—lead to a miscarriage. Or dispense poisons meant to rid a household of rats. So many rats, in fact, that if they climbed atop one another then put on a mask and robes, they might impersonate the head of household.

Arsenic was the most popular of the mineral salts the less discreet referred to as “powder of inheritance.”

But there was poisoning a grandparent too stubborn or senile to join the revered ancestors, and then there was disposing of an extensive extended

family. “Are you planning to make a bomb?” Qingwa asked bluntly.

“What?” gasped the young merchant, so taken aback that he straightened up from his conspiratorial stoop and knocked his hat on a low-hanging stuffed crocodile. “A bomb?”

“These gasses are very volatile,” Qingwa explained. “If they were to fill a large chamber—say, a banquet hall—and someone were to carry in a lantern, well...”

She produced a slip of magnesium-infused mulberry paper from her sleeve and expertly flicked it betwixt the crocodile's grinning jaws. She had secreted a censer and a cone of sandalwood incense to make smoke curl from the taxidermized nostrils in a draconic fashion. The flash of flame was impressive and demonstrative, causing the tall but callow young merchant to hit his head on the crocodile again, knocking his absurdly fashionable hat into his eyes.

Qingwa grinned and made certain this grin was what greeted him when he righted his headdress.

Tien grinned sheepishly in return. “You are a very wise woman, Mistress Qingwa, and I can see that I cannot rely solely on my good family name. I shall have to take you into my confidence, but I must swear you to the utmost secrecy...”

“That,” said Qingwa with a smile, “is the one prescription I dispense freely for all my customers.”



Qingwa whistled appreciatively. From the outside, the dilapidated warehouse looked like little apart from cheap rent, situated as it was on the outskirts of Nanping with its back half overlooking a cliff and a tiny tea plantation. But on the inside?

What she had at first taken to be a parade dragon meant to be carried by dancers at a new year's festival was in fact an enormous kite. And not just any kite but a kite created by Meifeng. *The Meifeng*, the famed kite mistress who had gained the Imperial Favor.

And just as famously lost it.

There had been wild speculations as to what had become of her since the incident. Some said Meifeng languished in a dungeon beneath the Forbidden

City—obviously untrue, since she was here—while others said she had met the blade of the imperial censor's guillotine. That did not appear to be the case either. The most fanciful declared that she had caught the strings of her own kites and flown to the Land of the West or the Celestial Court itself.

More credible gossip declared that Emperor Xianfeng had banished the kite mistress from Beijing and she was now relegated to obscurity in one of the provinces. For example, Nanping. Which had lovely cliffs and beautiful weather for kites.

Meifeng's name meant *beautiful wind*, and she was indeed well named. Her beauty was so light as to be ethereal, her long hair coming unpinned from its clasps and floating about her like a cloud, and she'd accentuated the whole effect with a gown with flowing sleeves of butterfly silk. But Meifeng also displayed the temper which had famously lost her the Imperial Favor. "Why can't you control your monkeys?" she demanded. "They're staining the silk! Who wants a dragon covered in plum sauce!?"

The dragon, which was huge and jet black limned with tea green and prosperity gold, by no means appeared *covered* in plum sauce, but Qingwa noted a few empurpled splotches which one of Meifeng's beautifully enameled fingernail protectors indicated. A troupe of monkeys cowered before the kite mistress, behind them a young man garbed like a tea farmer. "Mistress Meifeng!" the farmer pleaded, holding the smallest monkey and comforting it from her rage. "I beg of you! My monkeys are very sensitive!"

"I am very sensitive!" the kite mistress countered. "*They* are uncouth apes!"

An ape was not a monkey, but Qingwa knew that pettifogging natural philosophy would be lost on the artist. Meifeng could make kites that flapped like bats or soared like swallows, observing the natural world from that perspective, but like many such geniuses, considered knowledge outside her narrow range of interests beneath contempt.

This failing also, unfortunately, included courtly etiquette.

"Perhaps I may be of service," Qingwa interjected mildly. "I am called Qingwa and am an apothecary by trade. Plum sauce is the offending contaminant? On silk?" Qingwa produced a vial with a conjurer's flourish. "I have a prescription that will take that away."

"Do you think I have not thought of that?" Meifeng looked at her as if she were a child despite Qingwa being at least forty years her senior. "I have filmed the silk with glue and know no reagent to remove the stain without removing the treatment—though the acid in the plum sauce is surely doing that as we speak."

"Which glue did you use?"

"My own formulation," Meifeng stated flatly, "a mixture of various pastes."

"A blend. I see. May I examine your formulary?"

"Not unless you can read minds. Or French." The kite mistress waved her nail guards grandiosely to a space set aside on the warehouse floor. Work tables and drafting boards were liberally littered with scraps of silk and paper, willow withes, pots of glue, balls of twine, and half-constructed mock-ups and prototypes—the tools of the kitemaker's art. Placed prominently on a lectern was a curious volume, obviously occidental, bound in green leather with gilded letters reading *L'histoire des frères Montgolfier*.

Qingwa could read western characters, but only Latin and Greek, and most of that confined to barbaric treatises on alchemy which, rather than deal with the five proper elements of the Wu Xing—Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal—made do with only four, the curious quartet of Fire, Water, Earth, and Air as set forth by the Greek Aristotle.

She could see where having Air elevated to an element would appeal to the kite mistress. Below the title was an inverted cerulean cucurbit emblazoned in gold with a western-style human-faced sun, acanthus leaves entwined into some unplaceable alchemical sigil, an eagle which Qingwa knew to be the symbol of Air in the western cosmology, and three figures from the western zodiac: the Lion, the Virgin, and the Balance Scales.

A Lion at least made some zodiacal sense. As Qingwa understood, they did not have tigers in Europe. But Virgins and Balance Scales?

Below the celestial cucurbit was a basin holding a pair of homunculi, but instead of being properly naked like ginseng children, they were dressed in outlandish western coats with tricornered hats and powdered wigs besides. And both were male. One held a telescope.

Qingwa opened the cover and proceeded to turn the pages, discovering, from the mix of illustrations

and helpful notes in the margins inked in proper Mandarin characters, that the homunculi on the cover were in fact human beings, the title translated as *The History of the Montgolfier Brothers*, and the cerulean cucurbit emblazoned with gilded alchemical sigils was in fact a hot air balloon, like a gigantic *tian deng* sky lantern, festooned with same.

Impatiently, Meifeng reached past her, the claws of her nail frames catching a ribbon bookmark, flipping the volume to a well worn and significantly stained section. Listed on the page, with illustrations, was the formula for the glue used to seal the silk for the making of a balloon powerful enough to bear humans aloft.

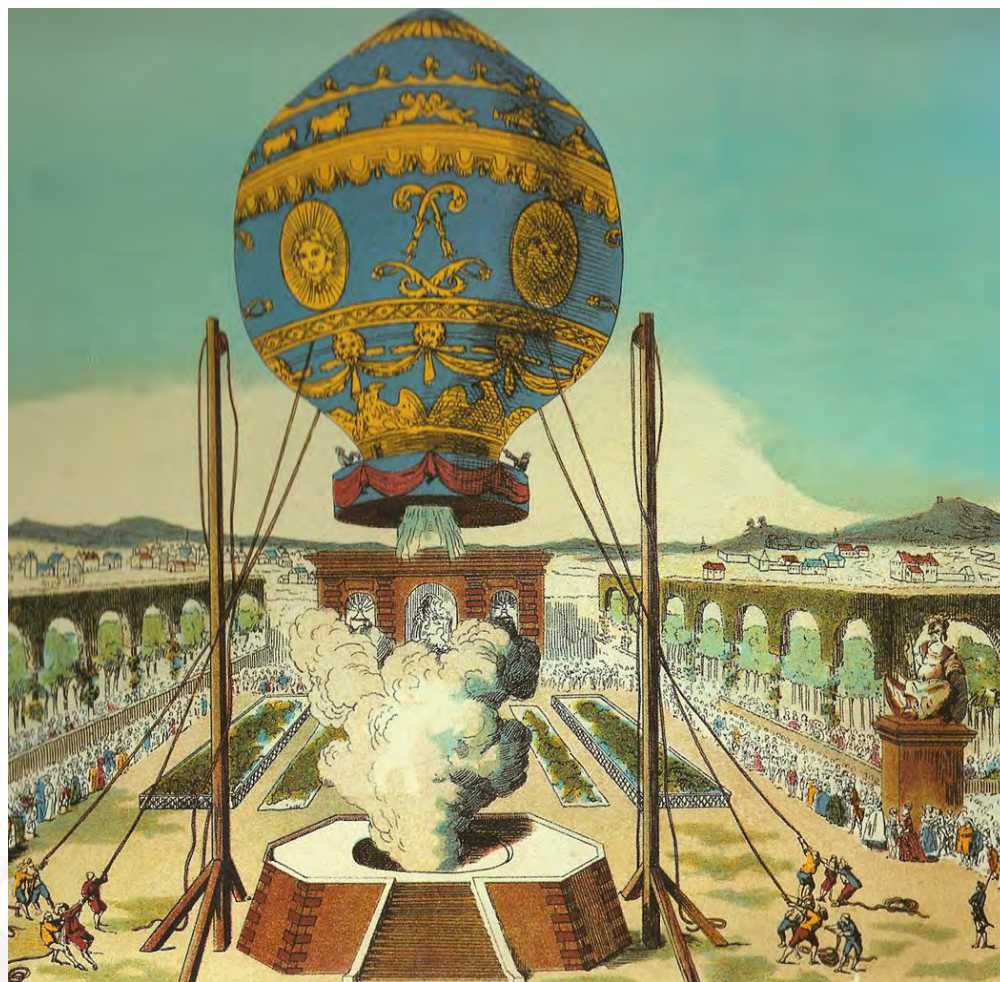
Marginalia in several hands offered wildly divergent translations of the ingredients. From her knowledge of chemistry alone, Qingwa could see that many were incorrect.

“In the end I had to devise my own formula,” Meifeng confessed with exasperation. “I used a gill of turpentine, some of this fish glue, a bit of the lacquer in the red pot, and as much powdered

frankincense as I could get. I don’t know why the original recipe called for frankincense, but it did. And it’s costly. It has to be brought all the way from Arabia! Do you know how far west that is? It may be just one country over for the French, but it’s unbelievably dear here, especially in the quantities needed!”

Qingwa nodded while biting her tongue. Geography was not the area of her expertise, but she was fairly certain that France and Arabia had at least a few countries between them. Possibly a sea. But concentrating on what she did know, Qingwa took note of the stamps and seals on the various pots and crocks. She was familiar with all the apothecaries of Nanping, most of them personally, and all by means of their wares. And while most of the prescriptions were trade secrets, one of the first tricks of the apothecary’s art was that most preparations were relatively simple, differing only in the choice of perfume or tinting agent.

The addition of frankincense complicated matters slightly, but only slightly. Qingwa picked up



a trimming of gummed silk from the floor, soiled it with a drop of plum sauce, then demonstrated how the application of two reagents removed the stain with no damage to the silk or underlying glue.

Rather than thank Qingwa, Meifeng rounded on Hu Tien. "I'm glad you've found someone competent." She made a great show of haughty indifference, ignoring both the monkeys and their trainer who, Qingwa realized belatedly, must also be the owner of the tea plantation, for the rarest and finest tea tips grew on the wild bushes on cliff faces and could only be picked by the agile and nimble fingers of a monkey.

Keeping the monkeys amused in the off season was more of a trick, and their trainers devised all manner of divertissements for them and the populace, usually dressing the monkeys in the livery of a noble family and giving them miniature lutes and fiddles to pluck at in mimicry of a human orchestra or letting them screech and caper in the mock production of an opera, the most dramatic of which tended to be about court politics.

Any resemblance to the antics of actual courtiers was sheerly coincidental. Qingwa noted no less than three monkeys aping Meifeng's attitude and posture, one even wearing a scrap of silk in mimicry of her couture—doubly impressive considering that they were not apes, despite the kite mistress's claims to the contrary.

Hu Tien, though green as a young tea bud, had been trained in the courtly ways, and if he noted the four monkeys mimicking his placating posture, he was polite enough to not remark on it. "Esteemed mistress of sky and silk," he began, folding his hands in a supplicating gesture which the quartet of monkeys copied, "I have done more than find one who could repair the stains to your handiwork. I have enlisted the aid of the venerable apothecary in our venture, for she and only she knows the art of sublimating base matter to release the noble gasses we require..."

"A fourth?" the monkey trainer questioned. "Tien, you said we would be splitting the proceeds three ways, not four!"

Meifeng may have been in the habit of ignoring subjects beneath her interest, but finance and basic mathematics obviously did not fall into this category. "As loathe as I may be to agree with Pengfai and his rude apes, indeed, our agreement was for a three-way

split. Not four." She brought a single nail guard to her cherry blossom lips, musing, "Unless you mean to split your own share with her?"

Tien gave a courtly bow but shook his head to convey his deepest regrets or lack of same. "Alas, even my family's finances have limits. Yet allow me to remind you that we had budgeted to purchase the noble gasses from an apothecary for a goodly sum. But with Qingwa joining us in our enterprise?"

Qingwa had been in business longer than any of them, possibly even put together. And the trade of the apothecary was closely allied with the art of the alchemist which, unfortunately, was rife with charlatans and swindlers. She would need to hear any scheme in detail. "Could the esteemed merchant perhaps explain your use for my noble gasses? I am the soul of discretion."

Tien began to gesture as prelude to a courtly soliloquy only to be cut short by Meifeng. "Well, isn't it obvious?" she said, waving her nail frames to *L'histoire des frères Montgolfier*. "Hot air balloons require significant amounts of fuel plus are innavigable except by wind. Moreover the flame lights them up at night, which may be beautiful for festivals but is completely at odds with smuggling."

Tien, Pengfai, and even some of the monkeys looked at her aghast, and Qingwa began to understand the swiftness with which Meifeng had lost the Imperial Favor. "Smuggling?" she inquired sweetly. "I said I traded in discretion, but I did not agree to take part in anything illegal."

"Not technically illegal," Pengfai explained quietly. "The trouble is that while Nanping produces the finest oolong in all China, and my plantation the finest in Nanping, by the time the tea gets to Beijing, the cost to transport it along the toll roads becomes exorbitant, to say nothing of the tax collectors, bandits, and tea merchants. And by the time the caravans take the tea along the Silk Route to Russia, the price is beyond dear, even though the tea is almost ruined. You know *lapsang souchong*? Well, the tea delivered to Russia is smoked beyond that by the peat fires used to warm the caravans."

"Indeed," Meifeng nodded in agreement, "but, if the tea were transported by air—say, in a dirigible, a navigable balloon borne aloft by noble gasses—well then, we could deliver tea in perfect condition to whomever we wished. Even Tsar Alexander."

"And the monkeys?" Qingwa asked.

“They are our sailors,” Pengfai explained. “Humans are too heavy to climb the kite strings and would want a share of the proceeds, but my monkeys can climb better than any sailor to release the scale sails or turn the dragon’s tail rudder.”

“Our dirigible is the *Oolong*, the black dragon,” Tien declared with pride, “for who better to deliver black dragon tea than an actual black dragon?”

“I designed the *Oolong* as a train kite with a series of round panels, the traditional form for a dragon,” Meifeng explained, “but each panel is in fact a collapsed lantern, and once expanded, further sheeting can be released as sails to connect the lantern globes.” She smiled conspiratorially. “And the pearl the dragon bears will be another balloon with the boat-shaped golden ingot of prosperity serving as our gondola basket.”

“I see...” Qingwa looked about the warehouse, the various partially assembled pieces beginning to make sense. “And you say the French have built these dirigibles?”

“Indeed,” said Tien, “but ghastly things that look like giant silk cucumbers, not a dragon who can swim through the air.”

“Well then,” Qingwa pronounced, “China invented silk. It is high time we show the west how it is used.”

Qingwa was an old woman, but the prospect of this adventure excited her. And when else would she be offered such an opportunity again?



Alchemists long ago, seeking to purify noble gold, had subjected it to the blood of the green dragon and the green lion, these noxious substances eating away any base metals.

While it was useful for both salesmanship and tradition to keep the classical terms, Qingwa knew the blood of both these mythical creatures came from very prosaic sources. Just as the black dragon’s blood was in fact oolong tea, the blood of the green dragon was hydrochloric acid, while sulfuric acid was bled by his cousin, the green lion.

When filings of base metals—say, iron or zinc—were added to these acids, the noble gas hydrogen was released.

Of course it wasn’t necessary to burden her colleagues with such mundanities. What mattered was that the balloons were filled. One by one they inflated, like a string of black pearls or a collection of glass globes woven into fisherman’s nets. The *Oolong* took shape, a black dragon bearing a great pearl—another balloon—with the ingot of prosperity dangling below that as gondola basket, shaped like a paper boat a child might sail on a pond or an effigy of gilded paper hell money one might burn to send funds to the revered ancestors. Motive force came from propellers concealed in the dragon’s roaring mouth and the whirling sun disk on his tail. The ballast came in the form of tea chests.

Then the hangar doors opened, both fore and aft, Hu Tien and Pengfai swinging them aside to the screeching approval of Pengfai’s monkeys. The tea warehouse had been designed to work as a drying shed, with doors at both ends to regulate temperature and allow a breezeway to form between the drying racks, bearing moisture away. But now that design served a higher purpose. Meifeng’s carp-shaped windsocks flapped and fluttered as Tien and Pengfai pulled the doors to their widest aperture, reminding Qingwa of the legend that after a hundred years, a carp transformed into a dragon, like a silkworm emerging from its cocoon.

The *Oolong* strained at its mooring lines, the dragon striving to be born as its little silken cousins flapped and fluttered like a shoal of carp swimming upstream. But rather than resist the current, the great black dragon wished to flow with it, the wind blowing down the street from Nanping and out over the cliff.

“Quickly!” Meifeng commanded from the gilded gondola of the dragon’s pearl. “We need your weight now!”

Pengfai sprinted, leaping aboard the gondola as the mooring lines began to release prematurely with the strength of the wind. His monkeys, all garbed as sailors, howled their approval while swinging on the kite strings, the gondola sinking lower as he leapt aboard.

Meifeng looked to the head of the dragon, the roof of the warehouse, and the overhang of the cliffside door, and Qingwa followed. It did not look like they would clear. “Tien!” Meifeng shrieked with an intensity worthy of an opera harridan. “We need your weight as well!”

Hu Tien, though younger than Pengfai, had lived a more pampered life. He ran for the gondola, his cheeks puffing, his face streaked with sweat as the golden boat of prosperity rose higher. The wind caught his ridiculous hat, blowing it off his head and aloft, the overlarge bows tumbling like the wings of a fruitbat drunk on fermented mangosteens as it blew out the gaping doors and off the cliff.

"Tien!" Meifeng screeched, accompanied by the chorus of monkeys who had chosen to mimic her. But while Tien was tall, he was no giant, and even the famed giant Zhan Shichai, of whom they sold daguerreotypes and stereoscopic postcards, could not have leapt the distance.

But all that was necessary was Tien's weight.

"Catch!" cried Qingwa as she slung one of the basket's sandbags, now tied to a loose mooring line which Qingwa had had the presence of mind to reel in, the dragon lurching a fraction higher as it lost the weight.

"Are you addled, old woman?" Meifeng objected.

"Watch and learn..." Qingwa might be old, but being an apothecary required a light touch and a deft hand. The sandbag landed just beyond Tien, but angled such that the sweep of the line would catch him regardless.

Tien might be young, but he possessed a breadth of experience only possible for a worldly dilettante. At some point in his short but spoiled life, Qingwa could tell, Tien had been allowed to play at being a sailor, for he caught the rope gamely, hauling on it with his full weight.

The *Oolong* dipped, the black dragon just ducking its head for the warehouse door as Hu Tien clung to the line with the pride of his family and his last enterprise which he would not allow to fail even if it meant getting swept off a cliff. Which indeed he was, swinging from the mooring line as he slid down toward the sandbag.

"Pull him up!" Qingwa ordered. Pengfai needed no such dictate, already joining her with his younger stronger hands, but his addition was still not enough to pull the heavier man up. "Meifeng! You vain creature—quit fretting over your absurd nail guards and grab hold! You know better than anyone that every ounce is needed!"

Meifeng, to her credit, grabbed the line and did not even complain as her retinue of monkey mimics followed suit, hauling on the rope behind her.

Inch by inch Hu Tien was borne up until, at last, laughing and crying by turns, he was pulled over the edge of the gondola basket and rolled across the bamboo mats. Pengfai helped him up and embraced him, then Qingwa forewent propriety and did as well.

Meifeng abstained, but smiled wryly. "Pleased to have you aboard."

Tien laughed. "Pleased to be aboard." Tien's loss of his ridiculous hat revealed some of the reason for it: an incipient premature bald spot. He touched the thinning hair self-consciously then laughed, looking to where three of Meifeng's nail guards had been bent askew.

She regarded them ruefully then noticed her retinue of monkeys mimicking her gesture. Meifeng rolled her eyes, turning and looking past the gondola to the valley beyond. "A few nails is an easy price." Her cherry blossom lips formed a smile. "I would have given all of them for this sight."

Qingwa turned and caught her breath. The whole Nanping valley lay before them, the hills rising up on each edge as they drifted over the river below. Tea plantations patched the ground like a grandmother's checked sash, alternating green and brown, while above them floated the pearl and the great black dragon beyond. Monkeys swung from the rigging, pulling the lines as Pengfai had trained them, their swinging antics causing the *Oolong* to twist and weave like a true dragon, slithering across the sky just as the river snaked across the valley below.

Qingwa had to agree. This sight alone was worth almost any price, and a few nails and a foolish hat were a bargain at that.



When their flight path took them over Beijing, Meifeng claimed it was unavoidable, but when the *Oolong* flew over the Forbidden City itself, Qingwa knew it to be deliberate.

"I thought that the Emperor, may Heaven always smile upon him, banned you from Beijing upon pain of death," Qingwa observed as she looked down

upon the imperial palace. Hu Tien possessed an even better vantage point, perched in the gondola's forecabin with his telescope.

Meifeng smiled slightly from her position at the siderail, gazing down with her opera glasses—enameled cloisonné with a motif of phoenixes and clouds—which she bore on a wand in the manner of a lorgnette. "The wise and beloved Xianfeng, may the Heavens bring him their choicest gifts, is a man of his word, only commanded that I never set foot in Beijing again." Meifeng tipped her opera glasses aside and, smiling, pointed them down to indicate her slippers, embroidered with matching phoenix-and-cloud motif. "As you can see, my feet are nowhere near the ground."

Qingwa had to admire her audacity, even while disapproving. Meifeng was a grown woman, and if she chose to flaunt her triumph by flying a dragon dirigible over the Forbidden City itself, that was her own business—except in that Qingwa, Pengfai, and Hu Tien were all involved in this venture as well.

"Commendable as your knowledge of the law may be, I would rather not risk the displeasure of the Imperial Personage," Qingwa remarked sweetly.

"You chose to associate yourself with me, Qingwa," Meifeng countered, "and unlike Tien, you are not young, nor are you so unworldly as the monkey master who, if not for his family's farm, would have found a place in a monastery."

"Point taken," Qingwa allowed. "Would you at least do me the favor of telling me what else you intend, apart from flying a dragon over the emperor's palace, hopefully not more than once?"

"Simply sending him a token of my regard." Meifeng removed a pretty red scarf from her sleeve, monogrammed with her personal chop of a phoenix kite, and tied it to a small brick of tea. "Word should reach him soon enough of our visit to the Tsar, and it would be untoward to not send a hostess gift."

With that, she lobbed it over the side as one might toss a purse of sweetmeats to a beggar child. Meifeng's unwanted retinue of monkey admirers watched and just as quickly followed suit, lobbing something else. Decidedly not sweetmeats.

While Meifeng had shaded her beauty with a straw hat and a liberal application of face powder, Qingwa saw her go ashen beneath that as the monkey droppings fell far more swiftly than the tea brick and its monogrammed parachute.

Qingwa heard Pengfai exclaim, "No! No, you naughty children!" chastising his beloved charges just as Hu Tien exclaimed something far more colorful, refocusing his telescope.

Qingwa snatched Meifeng's opera glasses to look herself. There, in the imperial gardens below, the emperor had been taking tea, accompanied by a favored concubine, a pack of Pekingese dogs, a pair of peacocks, and a few precious muntjac deer. Falling fewmets had soiled the concubine's robes, frightened the peacocks, and sent the deer and dogs into a tizzy. The emperor and concubine gazed up as a distinctive red scarf wafted down with its gift of tea.

Meifeng wrested back her opera glasses to look herself, at last lowering the lorgnette wand. "What do we do?" she breathed in horror.

Qingwa considered. "In the short term? Fly from Beijing with all possible haste. Long term? Hope some palace physician informs them that dragon fewmets are an auspicious gift from the Heavens and medicine for a great many ills."

"Those were not dragon fewmets."

"True," Qingwa replied, "but they don't know that."



While the flight from Beijing proceeded without further incident, word evidently reached the northern provinces of Meifeng's antics. Or at least that was how Qingwa interpreted the occasional rockets lobbed their way. Fortunately they were mostly fireworks without the range necessary to reach a dirigible, especially once they cut a few more sandbags.

But the Great Wall was another matter.

Hu Tien, with his telescope, reported that the Emperor had assembled a battalion of archers and no few cannons atop the Wall, possibly as a military exercise, but most likely not.

Pengfai whistled to his charges in the manner of sailors, exhorting like a schoolmaster, "Children! Quickly! Quickly! Turn the dragon about and make it twist like a snake!"

The monkeys chattered with delight, for they loved this maneuver, one of the more complicated behaviors Pengfai taught them. The *Oolong* reeled about, veering like a troupe of dragon dancers taking an unexpected detour down the street of the wine merchants, twisting like a drunken thing. Which was well, since the aerial bombard from the Great Wall's nearest tower just missed them, flying through a space where one balloon of the *Oolong's* train had just been. The dirigible twitched and snaked south, its throat propeller roaring, the disk on its tail whirling like a shooting star.

Hu Tien was the navigator, but Meifeng was captain. "Where do we fly, Meifeng?"

"West," she pronounced. "Keep out of range of the Wall and fly until nightfall. We can attempt another crossing then. With luck, there'll be clouds."

"Aye aye, Captain," said Hu Tien, now protecting his thinning pate with one of her spare scarves, knotted in the manner of a pirate.

Clouds did not favor them, nor did the moon, for waxing gibbous it shed almost as much radiance as the full, the *Oolong's* black silk coils shining like a cobra in the moonlight.

But a long life had taught Qingwa that sometimes the best fortune was that which you made yourself, and even an apprentice alchemist could make a smoke bomb.

Qingwa lit the fuses on the smudge pots, the type she sold to orange farmers to blanket their groves with protective smoke when frost threatened, and tipped them over the side. Black plumes rose up to blanket the Great Wall. The *Oolong* sailed above, twisting mockingly in the night sky.

But the Wall was long. From the far distance came the sound of a mortar, then a moment later, the cannonball, blazing in the night with the lit fuse of a bombard.

It fell short, landing just north of the Wall, the red light of the explosion glowing like coals through the smoke. But the cannon was mounted atop a chariot led by a team of horses like in the olden days, and it raced down the length of the Wall, torches blazing so brightly that Qingwa could see it even without the aid of Meifeng's opera glasses.

The second blast fell less shy, catching the *Oolong* in the tail, three sections short of the sun disk. The silk yielded, the balloon bursting as the cannonball

ripped through. The netting collapsed, the tea chest ballast plummeting to the Great Wall beneath where it exploded, casting costly oolong tips in all directions.

The monkey sailors shrieked their horror just as did Meifeng. "No!" she cried, another of her operative wails, then ranted a villain's soliloquy: "You wanted me banished, Xianfeng? Fine! But you have not seen my last trick! Pengfai, scatter the pearls!"

Pengfai, seeing the scraps of burning silk caught in the webbing licking towards the other section of the *Oolong*, took up her cry, "Pearls, my children! Pearls!"

The monkeys cocked their heads.

"Pearls!" he exhorted again.

Sure of his meaning, the monkeys leapt to their task. Ropes were pulled and cords were loosed just as the next two balloons in the chain caught fire, the nearest of the ones attached to the tail tip and the last of the ones in the dragon's bobbed tail.

The jet orbs exploded in flames, burning hydrogen licking up the silk like fire racing up the side of an overboiling oil cauldron. Yet at the same time, the dragon's rear legs began to spin, paddling the air like a whirligig as the motive force of a released spring or dropped sandbag pulled the cords that held the sections together.

The last two sections of the *Oolong's* tail caught fire as well, dropping their tea chest ballast to the Great Wall, but all the other balloons flew away, like black pearls rolling apart from a broken strand.

Qingwa held on for the last of her remaining years as the gondola plummeted, jerking to a stop, caught by the last and largest pearl held by the dragon's forelegs, now their sole balloon. The *Oolong's* head moved up like a dragon crown, becoming the motive force in their bobtail dirigible.

Meifeng laughed as they flew on into the barbaric north, the *Oolong Pearl* racing ahead as the kite mistress's beloved wind bore the black pearls away along with their precious cargo of tea and the smoke from Qingwa's smudge pots.

"You planned this," Qingwa told the kite mistress flatly.

"I planned for a possibility," Meifeng admitted, "not a certainty. Were the Heavens truly favoring us, we would be flying a full cargo of tea to Tsar Nicolas. Now? We bring the most choice chests, plus

news of other chests. For the pearls will eventually deflate.”

“Indeed,” Tien agreed, “though it’s a pity you lit those smudge pots, Qingwa. Now the tea will taste of smoke.”

“Heaven must have ordained it,” Pengfai declared devoutly as his monkeys nodded in assent. “Russians enjoy smoked caravan tea, so why shouldn’t they like dragon smoked tea?”

Qingwa considered, looking down at the icy wastes of the Russian steppes, the shadow of the *Oolong Pearl* racing along beneath them. Indeed, why shouldn’t they?

As for Tsar Nicolas, with Tien to intercede and head off any of Meifeng’s indelicacies, they might deal quite profitably with Moscow’s ruler. And given such a proof-of-concept, even the Emperor of China might see fit to pardon Meifeng, for trade was always welcome, and the indelicacies of the kite mistress might be worked around if she were kept away from court.

But that was a job for Hu Tien. Now that Qingwa had seen the kite mistress’s dirigible, she was eager to begin development on the next.

“I understand that the Russians have legends of dragons as well,” Qingwa began conversationally, “but if you do not wish to repeat yourself, Meifeng, they have a number of others: firebirds like our phoenix, enchanted eggs, even a witch who lives in a hut with chicken legs.”

“How droll,” Meifeng remarked, “but landing gear is something I *have* wished to work on...”

“Have you considered pneumatic pistons?” asked Qingwa.

“No,” said the kite mistress, “but it’s still a long flight to Moscow. Tell me more.”

And so Qingwa did.



Curse of the Pirate Queen

by Juliann Troi

(1864)

The floor suddenly pitched and rolled, tossing Bai Sunwei into the companionway wall. Only the handrail saved him from tumbling back down the stairs. Swearing under his breath, he steadied himself and continued the climb. While his father had never tried very hard to hide his disdain, only now did he realize the man actually hated him. How he loathed sailing! Detested being trapped for weeks at a time in a wooden box, careening about at the pleasure of wind and waves.

At last topside, he scanned the cluttered deck. Deserted but for the few on night watch. His gaze travelled upward, to a sky so clear and full of stars. Oh, to be up there aboard a Dragon ship instead.

Making his way to the rail, Sunwei glared out at the churning ink of the South China Sea, deciding he was out of his mind for agreeing to this. The summons had come as a surprise. His father had so seldom spoken to him and certainly didn’t seek him out in an official capacity. That Trade Minister Bai wanted to avail of his second son’s special “talents” was nothing short of astounding. Especially since three years before he’d so scornfully pronounced that same son a mercenary and all but disowned him.

Although the proposal had been cloaked as a “heroic act to save China from the poison of opium,” it sounded more like a suicide mission. The refusal had hovered on his lips, but the reward for success was just too good to pass up. Kiangsu Province was the richest in China and the family holdings there would keep him comfortable for the rest of his life. All he had to do was figure out a way to survive this. A tall order, since the chances of that hovered somewhere between slim and none.

Even though the government was secretly employing pirates to staunch the flow of smuggled opium, they were still pirates and only cooperating because it was in their own interests to do so. They were obviously double dealing. There was no other explanation for the amount of opium that was still getting through. All he had to do was get inside the pirate band that controlled these waters. With that as the goal, here he was, posing as the son of a wealthy merchant with a cargo of sugar, spices from India,

and opium, aboard the most pitiful merchantman that could be hired in Singapore. Bait for the sharks.

This antiquated tub practically dared pirates to come. The stated plan that he would be spared because of the chance for ransom was a nice theory to be sure, but reality often had a way of deviating from the plan. Perhaps that's what his father was counting on, seeing this as a chance to be rid of the black sheep who'd always been a source of embarrassment. Why else would he offer such a lucrative reward unless he never expected to have to make good on what was promised? Sunwei still hadn't worked out how he was going to swing the odds in his favor when the time finally came, but he was certain something would come to him. It always did.

His gaze wandered over the water, trying to pierce the darkness, as if the answer lay somewhere out there. That's when he saw it: a handful of small black shadows growing larger by the second. The pirates they'd been fishing for had arrived. Whirling about, he frantically scanned the deck trying to decide what to do. Just as he was opening his mouth to alert the drowsing sailor nearby, the solution came to him. As nonchalantly as possible, he maneuvered to the watch station.

Sunwei was just stepping back on deck after exchanging clothes with the unconscious sailor, when suddenly there was a flash, followed by a deafening boom and percussion that knocked him from his feet, and the deck in front of him exploded into a ball of crimson fire. It was followed by another and another and in moments the whole deck seemed awash with red flame. He cringed and braced to be consumed by the conflagration, but, to his astonishment, the flames quickly died leaving everything unharmed. By then, chaos had erupted as terrified sailors poured from below, followed by the captain who was shouting orders.

The pirate ships, now ablaze with lights, formed an ever shrinking circle around them, completely hemming them in. Grappling hooks came sailing over the railings on both sides and pirates soon flooded the ship. The crew was quickly overwhelmed and herded at gunpoint to the center of the deck where they were forced to their knees to await their fate. Shortly, the man Sunwei had ambushed and switched clothes with was dragged over and dropped near them. He still hadn't regained consciousness. With any luck, he never would.

A moment later, there was a stir among the pirates as their leader came aboard. He was surprisingly slight in stature, clean shaven, hair bound and covered by a tricorn hat. His slim waist was girded by a scarlet sash under which was a wide belt packed with weapons of all kinds, including several grenades, a pair of gloves with wicked looking barbs and spikes, a pistol with a long barrel and bulbous chamber near the muzzle, several knives of varying lengths and a gold hilted cutlass. It wasn't his array of weaponry that captured Sunwei's attention, however. There was something unique about the way the man moved. His gait was confident, yet there was a certain feline grace to it, like a sleek black panther stealthily stalking its prey.

"Is this all of the crew?" the leader demanded of the captain who'd been hauled to his feet and brought forward at the newcomer's behest.

It was only upon hearing the sultry voice that Sunwei realized the leader was a woman. And only then that he saw the one big hole in his plan. The merchantman's crew knew who he was, or was at least pretending to be. He lowered his head as the captain scanned the lot, hoping against hope that he was just counting numbers and not looking at faces. Agonizing seconds ticked by as he waited to be exposed.

"This is everyone," the captain at last confirmed.

Sunwei had hardly finished the inward sigh of relief when, at a nod from the pirate queen, the captain dropped to the deck, writhing and gurgling, his throat slit. Fear instantly seized them all and Sunwei cursed his luck. His stroke of genius was going to be his death warrant.

"I am Jin Er Hong," the pirate queen announced in a loud voice. "You may join my crew or go the way of your captain. The choice is yours."

One by one, each man was hauled to his feet and visually examined by Jin before being required to give his answer. In two cases, although they'd agreed to switch sides, the sailor's throat was slit anyway, Jin apparently seeing something she didn't like. When Sunwei's turn finally came, he calmly met her probing gaze, and was astonished by how beautiful her eyes were—sable gems in perfect almond settings.

"What is your name?"

The question came as a surprise, for she hadn't asked the others. He knew better than to use his real



name, but was suddenly drawing a blank. All that came to mind were snippets of verse by a Tang Dynasty poet whose works he'd studied in his youth. It was doubtful that any among this crowd could even read, forget having studied the classics, so he went with the impulse.

"I am Li Po," he answered.

He saw her eyes narrow for an instant and dread crawled up his spine, suddenly certain he was about to feel the knife across his windpipe. Then she was moving on to the next man. Once she was done with the crew, she turned her attention to the cargo. Each crate was opened and the opium separated from the other goods.

The merchantman's crew was then employed in transferring the cargo to the pirate ships. The trade goods were dispersed among the different vessels while the opium was taken to the largest, moored a short distance away. Unfortunately, Sunwei had never had to do a day of manual labor in his life and was sweating and straining while his well-honed companions were bearing their burdens with ease. As he paused to mop his brow with his sleeve, he noticed Jin Er Hong watching him, a speculative look in her eyes. Knowing the penalty for falling behind, he redoubled his efforts to fit his new role.

Once the cargo was transferred, the merchantman's crew was dispersed among the waiting pirate vessels, a few to each ship. Sunwei knew he needed to follow the opium and was just wondering how to engineer it without exposing himself when Jin chose him for her ship. He got the uncomfortable feeling that it wasn't just good fortune intervening. As he was leaving the merchantman for the last time, he noticed the man in his clothes was gone.

Once aboard the flagship, he was taken below to a windowless closet of a room. Creatures of the four and eight-legged variety scurried out of the lamp's light to disappear through cracks in the walls. Obviously, he was a prisoner. On the one hand, he was happy to be alive, but got the feeling things had taken a definite turn for the worse. He pulled out a little journal and wrote a few things before secreting it away again and laying down to sleep. Sleep was hard to come by though, as what little remained of the night was filled with the screams of a man being tortured.

Sunwei was startled awake when the door to his little cell was thrown open. Rising gingerly and trying to work stiff, sore muscles, he followed his jailer topside. The first thing to greet him as he stepped on deck was the man he'd switched places with. The unfortunate fellow had been nailed to the mast. Dark trails of caked and dried blood from the parts that had been hacked off made gruesome stripes on the silk of Sunwei's old clothes. Strips of exposed meat where skin had been peeled away from his arms and chest now crawled with flies. A chill shot through him. That could still be his fate.

Trying to stow the grim possibilities, he joined the line for breakfast. After taking a bowl of congee, he chose a spot apart the others. From where he sat he could see the merchantman. It had been completely stripped of anything useful and set adrift.

Turning his gaze from the derelict skeleton, Sunwei began to covertly examine his new shipmates. Astonishingly, there were a number of women and children among them. Apparently, when pirates sailed their families came with them. His wondering gaze settled upon a pretty little girl of five or six flitting carelessly about the deck. All of the hands greeted her with a fatherly respect and teased with her as she made what were apparently her daily rounds. He found it strange that these same men and women who'd nailed a poor innocent man to the mast and tortured him, seemed to be warm and caring parents, aunts and uncles. At length the child came to him.

"What's your name?" she asked, in a sweet voice.

"Li Po," he answered. "And yours?"

"I am Jinhua."

"Golden flower," he said. "Pretty name for a pretty girl."

The child smiled and Sunwei felt himself returning it. There was something so fresh and unsullied about her that completely charmed him. He envied such childlike innocence that didn't worry about life and its cruelties. At her age he'd been just as trusting and gullible, safe in the bosom of his "loving family." Only later had he discovered the shattering truth. As his eyes followed Jinhua when she moved on he noticed Jin Er Hong watching the

exchange with interest. Their eyes locked for an instant and again dread crawled up his spine. She knew. She must. The man had talked. The question now was why she hadn't confronted him?

After breakfast, the pirate fleet weighed anchor, the bulk of which headed northwest, most likely headed back to their village on the coast to store the booty. Jin Er Hong's flagship, however, went northeast.

Once they were underway, Sunwei was put to work scrubbing the blood of the tortured man from the deck. The cloying stench of death clawed at him and twisted his gut with nausea and remorse. Despite his best efforts to resist, his eyes were drawn to the grisly sight. He'd killed before but only in self-defense and not a one who didn't have it coming. As he gazed upon the agony twisted rictus, it occurred to him to wonder about this man's life. Did he have a family he sent pay home to, a family that would now be destitute? Would they ever know why the money stopped coming? Did this pitiful soul's ancestors welcome him into the afterlife or was he, even now, roaming the earth as a ghost? Personally, he'd never put much stock in the appeasing of spirits and ancestors, believing it the stuff of superstitious fools, but when one was face to face with his mortality, such things seemed to matter.

All at once, Sunwei's musings were rudely interrupted by the stinging shock of a bamboo rod across his back.

"Scrub, turtle dung!" the bos'n hollered.

Sunwei was instantly consumed by a flash of rage and the desire to beat the bos'n to death as slowly and painfully as possible. Only seeing Jin Er Hong still watching him closely from her place at the helm stilled his move. Giving himself a mental shake, he went back to work wondering at the inane track of his thoughts. Such sentiment was worthless and would only get him killed. Closing his mind to everything else, he focused on his task.

By the end of that interminable, back-breaking day he was exhausted and wanted only to go to his little cell to sleep. Much to his annoyance, he was prevented from doing so by the astonishing fact that every night at the same hour, the pirates had a prayer ceremony. He'd seen the altar, but thought it only decoration, lip service to the god of such pursuits as theirs. He was to discover that they were, in fact, very devout in their worship.

On the altar were now laid offerings of meat, drink and small lit candles. The ceremony began with a loud overture of gongs, cymbals and drums. The bos'n came forward with two swords which he stuck in the very center of the deck. Beside these, he arranged some bowls, a liquid-filled vase and a bundle of twisted pieces of gold joss paper. Then, Jin Er Hong came forward and fell to her knees before the altar.

She began to chant in a clear, beautiful voice that instantly captivated Sunwei. After she'd chanted for some time, she took up the vase and drank. Then, with many gesticulations, she chinked coins and medals together in her hands. The twists of joss paper were lit and Jin rose fluidly to her feet to glide round and round the swords, as if to consecrate them. Sunwei was mesmerized by the grace with which she moved. He could easily picture her dancing, folds of gaily colored silk swaying and whipping about her lithe body in time to the music. Next, she moved to the stern where she waved the burning spills back and forth a few times before solemnly throwing them, one by one, into the sea. The gongs and drums played even louder and Jin prayed more earnestly than ever. When the last spark from the last paper was extinguished, the music ceased, ceremony at its end, and everyone went on about their evening.



Only then was Sunwei taken back to his cell, and he gratefully lay down on the wood floor to sleep. But again sleep eluded him. This night his thoughts were consumed by Jin Er Hong. There was

something so sensual about the way she moved that evoked fantasies of bodies intertwined in a very different kind of worship ceremony. He sighed somewhat wistfully and put the fantasy away, feeling completely destitute. The familiar specter of loneliness was making its nightly visit to torment him. This time, however, there was no woman or drink to chase it away. An intense longing for a home, complete with wife and children, welled up within him. Then and there, he decided that when this was over he would finally settle down.

Stowing this new desire for domestic bliss, he pulled out his little journal to record all that had happened that day, then sought the haven of sleep.



The next morning was the same as the previous one, with the exception of Jinhua. This morning, the child not only sent Sunwei the usual cheerful greeting, she surprised him by wrapping her little arms around his waist and her embrace was like a ray of sunshine on a dreary day. Heart warmed, he hugged her back. Feeling better than he had at any time since beginning this mission, he went to work humming a little tune and labored without ceasing until mid-morning when he was unexpectedly summoned to Jin Er Hong's cabin.

As he dropped into a bow before her, the bad feeling that had been dogging his heels since the summons took up residence in the pit of his stomach. "How may I serve, Captain Jin?"

"Well, Li Po...", she began, "...or should I say, Bai Sunwei?"

So, the long dreaded confrontation had come. No point in pretending any longer.

"What gave me away?" he asked as he straightened.

"First, you chose the name of a Tang Dynasty poet. Second, you're the worst sailor I've ever seen, and finally, this." She held up his little journal.

It was only then that Sunwei realized Jinhua had hugged him that morning with the express purpose of picking his pocket.

"Using your sweet young servant to do your dirty work," he said, shaking his head in disgust. "That's low. May I ask how you knew my real name?"

"Let's just say a little bird told me you were coming."

"So, you have spies in high places," Sunwei deduced. "What happens now? Are you going to nail me to the mast, slice off my ears, and peel me like an orange?"

"Oh, I have something much better in mind for you," the pirate queen purred, her long, slender fingers stroking the hilt of the cutlass in her sash.

A fresh chill chased down Sunwei's spine. Obviously, his hopes of surviving this were about to be dashed.

"When I don't report, the official who sent me will dispatch someone to investigate," he warned, hoping to give her pause.

To his relief, a look of doubt flashed across Jin Er Hong's face. She then moved to sit at a little table near a bank of windows, gesturing for him to take the seat across from her. Cautiously, he moved to take the indicated chair, his senses on full alert. The door at his back made him decidedly uncomfortable. Once seated, he watched her pour tea into two cups, marveling at the grace with which the move was accomplished. To his dismay, he again felt the tingling warmth of desire and desperately fought it, reminding himself that Lady Jin was a ruthless, blood-thirsty pirate leading a large and powerful band of ruthless, blood-thirsty pirates. He met her eyes levelly, ignoring his tea.

"Let's talk about your mission," she said before taking a delicate sip, eyes never leaving his.

"What about it?"

"What is it exactly?"

That her spies had been unable to ferret out the parameters of his mission was a good sign. He might yet have a chance. The thing that puzzled him, though, was why she was serving him tea and asking nicely instead of resorting to torture. Perhaps that would come later.

"First, tell me what you plan to do with me," he demanded.

"Maybe I want to ransom you back."

Sunwei gave a derisive snort. "Good luck with that. There's no one to ransom me to."

"Your father is Trade Minister Bai is he not?"

"Your spy network must have some pretty big holes," Sunwei observed. "Elsewise, you would

know that my father and I aren't exactly close. He gave me this mission because I'm expendable."

Jin Er Hong frowned. "He would cast away the life of a son so carelessly? Why?"

"Let's just say, I've fallen desperately short of his lofty expectations."

"In what way?"

Her eyes implored him to answer and desire rose within him again, this time much stronger and harder to force down. It was as if she was casting a spell over him.

"He wanted me to be an engineer. I was more suited to martial pursuits and put my skills to work for any who could pay. Since my father ascribes to the adage, 'Better to have no son than one who is a soldier,' he disowned me three years ago. Truth is, you and I are no different. The world is a hard, cold place and we're doing what we must to survive."

Lady Jin nodded, her look turning pensive as she sipped her tea.

Into the silence Sunwei ventured, "You aren't exactly what I pictured a pirate lord to be. If I may ask, how did you come to this life? Were you born to it?"

"No," she said, setting her cup down. "I'm originally from a tiny village in Kwangtung Province, firstborn of rice farmers. Unfortunately, taxes were high and yield low so my parents couldn't feed me and my two younger brothers. Since I was worthless and merely a drain on limited resources, I was sold to a flower house in Canton. The owner was very good to me and, seeing potential for greatness, invested much in making me the most sought after sing-song girl in the province." A small smile touched her lips. "She even adopted me as a daughter. All of her considerable property would have come to me and I would have had a very comfortable life."

The smile faded and her countenance hardened. When she spoke again her voice was laced with cold hatred. "Then the pirate Fu Yinti came to buy my contract. When we refused his offer, he raided the house, killed my adopted mother, and kidnapped me. Only after I tried to kill him several times did he offer marriage. With little choice and sensing an opportunity to salvage something of my ruined future, I demanded a fleet of my own as a wedding gift. He agreed and it was done." The hardness faded

and a sad look took its place as she again met Sunwei's eyes. "As you say, life is hard. Particularly for poor, uneducated peasant girls. Our choices are so few. If we don't get chosen by peasant men for a paltry life of barely enough and dying young of disease or starvation, we can become servants or prostitutes."

It was Sunwei's turn to nod.

"Jinhua isn't my servant," Er Hong admitted, quietly. "She's my daughter. She might have been born into it, but I don't want this life for her. I want something much better." Her eyes held his. "And you can give it to her. You can give her an education and a chance to marry well."

Sunwei was moved by Er Hong's story. "So, if I agree to take her..." he began.

"Not just take her," she interrupted sharply. "Adopt her as your daughter."

He rubbed his chin thoughtfully for a moment. "I will consider it on one condition."

"Which is?" the pirate queen asked, eyes glittering dangerously.

"That you come with her. I have no wife and a child needs a mother."

Her eyes narrowed, suspicion filling her voice as she asked, "Why would you do this for me?"

"My mother was a sing-song girl," Sunwei explained, "the favorite of a high court official. Foolishly, she fell in love with him and allowed herself to conceive to trap him. Not wanting any bastards roaming around to cause future trouble, he bought her contract and married her. Although she was devoted to him and I tried to be a good son, Trade Minister Bai did not want us. We were exiled to the family's holdings in Kiangsu Province where my mother proceeded to become a bitter opium addict and I to become everything my father despised. She died from an overdose when I was ten." He met Er Hong's eyes again. "I think she would want me to do this for you and Jinhua. All I ask in return is help accomplishing my mission so I can get the promised reward that will make a better life possible for all of us."

Jin Er Hong pushed to her feet, stalking to the windows, arms folded tightly across her chest, to gaze out at the tranquil sea. Sunwei slowly rose and came to stand beside her.

“What do you propose I do about my husband?” she challenged as she turned to face him. “Fu Yinti isn’t going to just let me go. He will hunt us down and kill us all.”

“How were you planning on getting Jinhua safely away without him knowing? Surely, he would eventually miss his daughter.”

“I was going to tell him she was swept overboard during a storm along with a member of the crew from a captured merchantman who tried to save her. Only if he believes her dead will she be safe.”

“Smart,” Sunwei commended. “Though it would make more sense for her mother to be the one lost trying to save her.”

Er Hong searched his eyes intently for a moment, then nodded. “So, how can I help with your mission?”

“Pirate bands are supposed to be capturing and turning over opium to the government, yet a significant amount is still getting through. I was sent to find out why. They’ve traced the leak to this area, to your band.”

A troubled frown again creased her brow. “We turn the opium over to the government liaison as we’re supposed to,” she insisted. “Instead of destroying it, however, he sells it to crime syndicates and pays us extra to turn a blind eye.”

“So, it’s just another corrupt official lining his pockets,” Sunwei spat angrily.

“I’m afraid it’s not that simple,” Er Hong countered. “He isn’t a corrupt official. He’s a very loyal Imperial servant with a very specific purpose. The money he makes from the opium’s sale goes into a private account.”

“Whose?”

“The Co-Empress Cixi.”

Sunwei was shocked. “You wouldn’t happen to know what she’s doing with the money would you?”

She sighed heavily as if reluctant to answer. “I’ve heard rumors of buying influence and secretly going about strengthening her position. There have been whispers that she intends to take the throne for herself.” She pinned him with an expectant gaze. “What are you going to do?”

“That is the question, isn’t it?” Sunwei turned his eyes to the sea, rubbing his chin again. “This could very well blow China to pieces. It’s got to be played

very carefully.” His mind cast frantically about for a workable solution. The answer, when it came to him a few moments later, was so simple it almost made him laugh. “All we have to do is tell my father the truth. Tell him what you just told me.”

“What about the spies?” Er Hong wanted to know. “It will get back to Fu Yinti.”

“Not if you also tell who the spies are.”

“Lord Fu will still know it was me,” she argued.

“With his spies neutralized he won’t find you or know what you told my father until it’s too late. We’ll hang it around his neck by insisting that he’s part of a plot to overthrow the young Emperor. He will be executed as a traitor and you and Jinhua will be free. If you still want it, I will adopt her as a daughter and try to give you both the life you deserve. Do we have a deal?”

The pirate queen stared long and hard at him, clearly examining all the angles for problems. Sunwei’s eyes were glued to her lips as they finally parted and she said,

“We have a deal.”

He smiled and, to his surprise, she returned it, the marble mask she hid behind falling away. For the first time, Sunwei clearly saw how beautiful Er Hong really was and understood why she was the most sought after sing-song girl in Kwangtung Province. His heart gave a dangerous flutter as desire rose again, stronger than ever. Her lips, so dangerously close, seemed to beckon to him. Clearing his throat uncomfortably, he stepped back a few paces, to a safer distance.

The speculative look returned to her eyes and Sunwei prayed he hadn’t just fallen headlong into a trap that would eventually be his doom. Jin Er Hong was, after all, still a ruthless, blood-thirsty pirate.



Clockwork Glide

by *William F. Wu*

(1871)

Ah Lim looked over the edge of the balloon basket at the South China Sea, far below. The small hot air balloon of stitched leather over his head moved fast on rising northwest winds. Artillery shells flew into the sky from the Portuguese batteries in the colony of Macau, below on the left, and exploded in the air.

To the right, the navy of the Taiping, the Heavenly Kingdom, maneuvered in their attack on Macau from their base in Taiping Island, the former British colony of Hong Kong. The fleet was a motley combination of captured steamships, junks under sail, and even sampans with true believers carrying small arms.

The moment was frightening enough, but if Ah Lim failed to return to the peasant village where he had grown up, his mother, father, and six brothers and sisters would never be free of the hard labor in the rice paddies where they toiled every day.

Junjun stepped up behind Ah Lim. Her shining black hair was pinned up in a western-style bun, with a blue peacock feather. She was a young Toisanese woman with clockwork body parts underneath her full-length, mauve, amber-trimmed British-style traveling dress and bustle. White kid gloves covered her hands.

Behind them, Captain Suey's balloon had greater altitude now. Maneuvered more skillfully, it was slowly gaining on them.

"Junjun!" Captain Suey shouted from his basket. "You are mine!" Still wearing his wingsuit, he spread his arms to stretch out the wide wings. He leaped over the edge of the basket and rode on the wind, diving toward their basket.

"I shall remain free," Junjun declared quietly, as though to herself. She made odd, jerking motions with both arms, whirring and ratcheting. The elaborate folds of her mauve dress and bustle swung out into a huge wingsuit, braced by metal extensions from her arms.

"Are you insane?" Ah Lim yelled, horrified by her intention.

Without answering, Junjun dove over the side of the basket, flying out ahead of Captain Suey.

Ah Lim ran to the side and watched her clockwork glide through the air, dodging artillery shells exploding around her.



Earlier that morning, Ah Lim joined the other passengers at the brass rail of the HMS Alderwood. He peered into the fog still low on the water in the distance, as the sea breeze sent his long, braided queue flying out behind him. The intricately shaped rail curved and swirled with three-foot-high shapes of English swans. The big passenger ship with a figurehead of a giant bronze, spread-winged swan at the prow drove hard through the South China Sea as the three smoke stacks puffed black billows into the sky.

People around Ah Lim, talking with excitement in English, Portuguese, and several dialects of Chinese, pointed ahead through the fog to the vague shape of their destination, the Portuguese colony of Macau.

Ah Lim did not take part in the chatter. Suspicious of the strangers around him, he had avoided making friends during the entire trip. He had traveled to Gold Mountain in steerage, indentured to those who paid his way. With his newfound wealth, he was making his return trip as a rarity, a Chinese gentleman in an American suit traveling with first-class passage.

The other men on deck sported beaver hats with silver filigree, finely cut suits in a variety of colors, and walked with pride and confidence. The beautiful women on their arms wore fashionable gowns and feathered hats. He could not free himself from the feeling that he did not belong.

He also did not dare spend any time with poorer passengers. The secret weight he carried under his clothes was too important, and too many people would kill him for it if they could.

A very large number of vague, dark shapes were moving on the surface of the water through the fog, but Ah Lim could not make out the sizes and shapes of the craft.

Nearby, a pretty Chinese woman with a blue peacock feather in her hair also looked out from the

deck. The only other Chinese traveler present, she discreetly pushed up one sleeve with a white-gloved hand, revealing a complex but dainty structure of black metal gears, levers, plates, and torqued ladders where her wrist should have been. Then she pulled a small oil can out of the many folds in the skirt of her mauve dress and bustle. She oiled the tiny metal hinges and gears in her clockwork wrist, then changed hands to lubricate her other arm before putting the oil can away.

Ah Lim had seen her often during the two-week journey across the Pacific, but they had never spoken. Her dress implied a middle-to-upper class social status, just as his new American suit conveyed. However, he had already noted her stiff, awkward, geometrically precise movements. She possessed clockwork arms, hands, and who knew what else underneath the beautiful gown with its amber trim. Her clockwork parts made clicking, ratcheting, and faint squeaking sounds when she moved. The idea disgusted him.

“One hour!” A uniformed crew member strode along the deck, alternating his call in English and Portuguese. “One hour before we disembark! One hour!”

Almost home, Ah Lim thought to himself. From Macau, he would find passage on a riverboat and hire a cart to go home to his peasant village in the Toisan region of Guangdong Province.

He had only one small suitcase for his journey, but he wore three bulging belts of canvas sewn into separate sections under his black American suit, white shirt with a gold cravat, and a waistcoat of deep red for good luck. All three canvas belts held a fortune in gold dust from his years in California. He had not acquired the dust by panning, but by driving a wagon between the Sacramento Chinatown and the gold fields, selling chickens, salt pork, and beans to miners who were afraid to leave their claims untended, even to find food. The market prices rose quickly when miners had more gold dust than grub.

Some of those miners had lost limbs, replaced by clockwork parts. When he had first started his transport business, three of them had jumped him one night and beaten him with metal fists as loud creaks, ratcheting, and clicks sounded in his ears. Then they had left him and drove away his wagon and supplies.

He recovered from the beating and bought a .45 -caliber Colt Peacemaker revolver. After learning to use it, he restored his business and was never robbed again, but he still heard the clicks, creaks, and ratcheting in his nightmares.

Two of the canvas belts were criss-crossed from his shoulders like bandoliers, while the third, smaller than the other two, circled his abdomen just above his waist. The belts of gold dust were heavy, but he was muscular after working at hard physical labor all his life. A decade after leaving home, after arriving in the California gold fields at the age of sixteen, he could carry the weight back to his family in the village. Instead of doing back-breaking work in the landlord’s rice paddies, his dirt poor family could buy land for themselves.

“Please, may I speak to you?” A woman’s voice behind him asked politely in the See Yup dialect.

At the first sound of her voice, he reached under his jacket for his revolver and spun around. Then, realizing he had overreacted, he released the gun.

“I am Lei Junjun,” said the woman with the clockwork wrists and the hidden little oil can. “You are Yip Gahlim?”

“I am,” he said in reluctant response to his full proper name.

She extended a white-gloved hand to shake.

Ah Lim ignored her hand.

She withdrew her hand but did not move away. “I have been asking about anyone traveling to Toisan. One of the housekeepers told me you speak See Yup. Are you returning home?”

“I am returning home,” Ah Lim said with stiff courtesy. Her nearness made him grimace and want to look away.

“After we arrive in Macau, may I keep company with you? For safety. I pay my own way, of course.”

Ah Lim’s only goal was to take his gold dust home and free his family from the mud of the rice paddies. He wanted no distractions. Without answering, he turned away and slipped through the crowd of passengers. “I’m returning home,” he said to himself, and felt a pang of homesickness for the family he had left so many years before.

He hoped he had made the right move by keeping his gold dust instead of converting its value to coins or paper currency. Trading in the gold dust would have made him vulnerable to being cheated and revealed to strangers how wealthy he had become. After being robbed and beaten, he had lost trust in everyone.

As he began to move away from the woman, warning klaxons honked from many directions around the ship. Startled, most of the passengers looked around the deck and then up into the sky.

A fleet of small hot air balloons and their baskets were dropping out of the clouds toward the ship. Men holding a variety of rifles, muskets, and swords, crowded the baskets. Their hair was cut short, not in long queues. They wore bright red crucifixes around their necks and blue sashes, but nothing else about their clothes matched.

People on the ship screamed in fear. Ship's officers shouted orders and crew members ran from one place to another.

Ah Lim pushed through the crowd to the rail and looked forward again. A disorganized, irregular fleet of steamships, junks under sail, and small fishing boats drove through the fog toward Macau as cannons began to thunder from the Portuguese batteries. In return, the junks and steamships fired artillery shells back, arcing over the water. The Heavenly Kingdom was attacking the European colony and the HMS Alderwood had arrived at the worst moment.

The crew waved for the passengers to go inside, but the crowd was milling in panic.

Ah Lim drew in a deep breath but waited with the crowd. The ship had many possible hiding places, but the attackers might sink the ship. He stayed where he was.

The HMS Alderwood's crew were unprepared to defend the ship. The Heavenly Kingdom's fleet of small balloons hovered overhead as ropes were thrown from the baskets to the deck. Small puffing coal-burners spun big propellers at the back of the baskets.

While passengers screamed and drew away, the Taiping soldiers climbed down the ropes and jumped to the deck. Most leveled their firearms at the crowd, shouting in multiple languages and Chinese dialects, while some of them tethered the balloon baskets to the ship's railing. The crew

members, including officers, were herded together separately.

Landing last, three men swooped from a basket wearing elaborate brown wingsuits with the yellow flag of the Heavenly Kingdom on the front. They drew up, like birds coming a stop in the air, roughly five feet above the deck, then dropped. Their boots thumped as they caught their balance.

"I am Captain Suey!" one wingsuited man shouted in See Yup as he stepped forward, pointing a Chinese sword at the passengers. "Silence!" He was blocky and muscular, with his hair cut bluntly at his shoulders instead of forming a queue. He loosened the tight collar of his wingsuit. "We conquer for the Heavenly Kingdom! We wear the red cross for the crucifixion and the blue sash for the heavenly sky! Look at us and understand!"

His two wingsuited companions stripped off their wingsuits and tossed them at the base of the nearest rope ladder. Both wore pistols and swords in their sashes. They led their other men, moving among the passengers, shoving some aside and pulling others away. Those with the most expensive clothing were singled out.

Ah Lim's pulse pounded as he regretted dressing well for the trip. He slipped his hand inside his coat, holding the Colt. If they killed him, he would not go alone.

One man growled orders to Ah Lim in an unfamiliar dialect. He drew a curved sword from the sash around his waist and grinned, showing gaps in his teeth.

"Stay away!" Ah Lim took a deep breath and reached for his Colt. As he drew it, the stranger swung his sword. At the last moment, Ah Lim flinched, and the sword struck the Colt out of his hand instead of slashing off Ah Lim's hand at the wrist. The Colt clattered on the deck.

The Taiping man laughed and swept up the Colt with his free hand. "Aiee!" He waved the Colt over his head in triumph. Then he stuck the gun in his sash and patted Ah Lim's pockets. He drew out folding money, coins, and travel documents. Then he tugged on the lapel of the coat and spoke in his own dialect again.

Ah Lim drew off his suit jacket and the other man snatched it away.

Crowing with laughter, the Taiping man prodded Ah Lim with his sword, driving him toward the group of best-dressed passengers.

Ah Lim stumbled over to them, angry but relieved that the stranger had not patted him hard enough to feel the three canvas belts. His dress shirt was loose enough to disguise their shapes.

“Lei Junjun! Where are you?” Captain Suey called out, swinging the point of his sword at the biggest crowd of passengers. “I saw the passenger list even before you set sail from San Francisco! Where are you, my betrothed?”

Ah Lim shifted to lose himself in the knot of well-dressed passengers. He glanced up at the baskets of the hot air balloons, now tethered to the railing of the HMS Alderwood. The rope ladders still hung from the baskets nearly to the deck.

“You are here!” Captain Suey slipped his sword into his sash and reached out for Junjun, who was struggling between two of his men as they forced her forward.

“Release me!” Junjun shouted as she was pulled, stumbling with clicks, ratchets, and squeaks, to face Captain Suey. “You are nothing but a bandit chief!”

“And what do you think of your bandit chief now, my Junjun? I am a captain in the navy of the Heavenly Kingdom. Look, I no longer wear the queue that is forced upon Chinese men by our Manchu oppressors. In the Heavenly Kingdom, we shall be free!”

“I am free now,” said Junjun, with her head high as the wind fluttered her blue peacock feather. “When I learned you were a bandit two years ago, my father told your mother back in Toisan that the betrothal would not be honored. Nor will it be!” Her arms and hands worked in stiff, clicking motions as she yanked herself free of the men holding her.

“These other wealthy passengers can buy their freedom with ransom,” said Captain Suey. “You have belonged to me since we were betrothed as babies.”

“The agreement has ended,” Junjun shrieked.

Captain Suey laughed and shoved her back into the crowd of other wealthy passengers.

She bumped against Ah Lim and caught her balance.

Ah Lim backed away from her, as he observed the confusion on deck. Once Captain Suey finished separating the passengers to be held for ransom, they would be imprisoned somewhere. Ah Lim believed his best chance to escape was now.

Captain Suey pointed to one of his lieutenants. “Have the crew take this ship to Taiping Island, not Macau.” He turned to Junjun and pushed her again. “Get into that basket!”

Junjun staggered, falling against Ah Lim.

Ah Lim caught her this time, though he cringed at the feel of her metallic arms under her sleeves.

She pulled free and started climbing a rope ladder up to a balloon basket.

“You, too,” said Captain Suey, prodding Ah Lim with the point of his sword.

Ah Lim moved to the base of the rope ladder, stepping over a discarded wingsuit, and waited as Junjun climbed the rungs.

“Put all the wealthy captives into the balloon baskets!” Captain Suey ordered, striding away. “Don’t lose any of them in the crowd! The rest of the passengers will stay on the ship. Faster! Move!”

Being held for ransom would be a terrible irony for Ah Lim. No one in his family could pay. Once his captors took the time to search him and discovered his gold dust, he expected they would chuck him overboard.

Just before stepping onto the rope ladder, Ah Lim glanced again at the wingsuit lying at his feet. Knowing that his captor’s view of him was momentarily blocked by the crowd, he snatched it up and climbed the ladder, his heart pounding. He had never worn a wingsuit and had no real idea how to use it.

When Ah Lim climbed into the basket, he found Junjun standing at the far corner with her arms folded.

She glared at him until she saw the bundled wingsuit in his arms. Instead of speaking, she walked to his side of the basket and looked down.

Another passenger was reluctantly stepping onto the rope ladder.

“I will not belong to that vile bandit,” said Junjun. She turned to Ah Lim. “You traveled across the ocean from Toisan. You must be a man who will

take risks.” She eyed the wingsuit in his arms pointedly.

“I want nothing to do with you,” said Ah Lim.

Junjun leaned over the edge of the basket. “Step off!” As the other passenger jumped back to the deck in surprise, she pushed up one sleeve of her mauve dress, revealing again her complex braces, gears, and levers instead of an arm of flesh. With one swipe against a sharp metallic edge, she cut the rope that tethered the basket to the ship.

Waves of exhilaration and panic hit Ah Lim as the strong northwest wind caught the balloon and the basket rose into the sky.

She had made a very risky move in a single decisive moment. This was not merely a shy, sophisticated lady despite her expensive gown and the courteous manner she had shown earlier.

Ah Lim looked ahead. The wind was taking them dangerously close to the waters between Taiping Island and Macau. Artillery boomed and shells arced between the city and the advancing navy.

“Do you know how to steer this?” Junjun asked.

“Me? I drove a horse-drawn wagon.”

“Try something,” Junjun pleaded.

Ah Lim hurried to the rear of the basket, where the coal-burner was puffing in a neutral gear. It had a lever to shift gears and another lever as a tiller. He had seen people drive motors like this, but he had never tried it himself.

Shouts and screams rose from the deck of the HMS Alderwood.

“Junjun!” Captain Suey shouted. He barked orders and hurried up the rungs of a rope ladder to another balloon basket. One of his men followed him. He looked up at Junjun. “I will catch you yet!”

Junjun turned to Ah Lim. “What do you think?”

“I don’t know.” Ah Lim dropped the wingsuit and fumbled with the gear shift. He discovered that if he pulled on another lever simultaneously, he could change gears. The big propeller behind the basket began to spin, pushing the basket forward.

Below them, the motor on Captain Suey’s balloon basket was already roaring. The propeller

spun fast. Captain Suey scowled as he looked up at Junjun. “Don’t shoot,” he called to his men. “Hold all fire!”

As soon as Captain Suey’s balloon was untethered, it rose fast, driven by the hot air, the northwest winds, and the propeller. The man who had joined Captain Suey showed he was an old hand at the motor by shifting out of neutral and expertly angling the tiller as the basket rose into the sky.

“They’re coming faster,” said Ah Lim, as he shifted into a higher gear. “They know how to control their basket.”

Artillery shells from Macau screamed closer every moment, exploding in the air around them. Explosive shells and solid iron cannonballs tore through the air from the motley Taiping navy. Ah Lim steered the best he could. He opened a flue in a tube from the motor, sending more hot air into the balloon.

“I will not be taken by that bandit,” Junjun declared. “What about you?”

Ah Lim gazed forward into the distance, even beyond the water where the Taiping navy was now closing on Macau. Past the Portuguese colony, he could see the green of trees and crops. The sight reminded him of home, though his village was still many miles away.

He could do nothing else to speed up the balloon. Shells exploded closer every moment from the Portuguese defending Macau and from the Taiping navy. Peering over the side of the basket, he saw that the Taiping ships were making a pincer move, with the main body threatening the walled city while a splinter group swerved northward, likely planning to land troops outside the city.

Junjun also studied the water and the land in the distance, with the wind fluttering the full skirt of her long dress.

Ah Lim envisioned a shell hitting the balloon, sending the basket dropping into the sea with Junjun, himself, and the gold dust. A terrible helplessness seized him.

Behind them, Captain’s Suey’s balloon rose fast. It came up at a sharper angle, closing the distance.

An artillery shell exploded in the air just below Ah Lim and Junjun, sending shrapnel flying close to them.

“You should put that on.” Junjun nodded toward the wingsuit at his feet.

“I have no idea how to wear this.” Ah Lim picked it up and shook it loose.

Behind them, Captain Suey’s balloon had greater altitude now and drew close.

“Junjun!” Captain Suey shouted from his basket. “You are mine!” Still wearing his wingsuit, he spread his arms to stretch out the wings. He leaped over the edge of the basket and rode on the wind, diving toward them.

Ah Lim wished he had his Colt and looked around the basket desperately for a weapon. He found nothing.

“I shall remain free,” said Junjun. She made odd, jerking motions with both arms, whirring and ratcheting. The elaborate folds of her mauve dress and bustle swung out into a huge wingsuit, braced by metal extensions from her arms.

“Are you insane?” Ah Lim yelled, horrified by her intention.

Without answering, Junjun dove over the side of the basket, gliding out ahead of Captain Suey.

Ah Lim ran to the side and watched her clockwork glide through the air, dodging artillery shells exploding around her.

Captain Suey narrowed his wings like a hawk going into a dive and flew past Ah Lim in the basket, aiming for Junjun.

An artillery shell exploded right behind Ah Lim’s balloon.

Ah Lim looked down and saw Captain Suey strike Junjun and hang on. She was his prisoner again.

With the gold dust weighing hard on his shoulders, Ah Lim cursed and pulled off his dress shirt. He tossed it aside and picked up the discarded wingsuit. Forcing himself not to think about what he was doing, he stepped into the wingsuit and began fastening the buttons up the front. Before he could button it up tight, he had to take off the two gold dust belts on his shoulders. Then he sealed the wingsuit and hung the two belts over his shoulders again.

“Are you insane?” Ah Lim yelled again, this time to himself. He did not dare answer that question. If he hesitated, he would do nothing.

With a deep breath, he jumped out of the basket and spread his arms, entering the open sky as his queue flew out behind him.

An artillery shell exploded behind him.

Below, Junjun kicked and elbowed Captain Suey, and they tumbled awkwardly through the air. Both sets of wings were keeping them in a glide, but neither Junjun nor her captor seemed to have full control.

Ah Lim floated toward them, his arms out and the wind carrying him. The weight of the gold dust pulled him to one side. He struggled to control the wings.

“Stop fighting!” Captain Suey ordered Junjun, his voice nearly carried away on the wind.

“Never!” Junjun screamed.

Ah Lim slammed into Junjun and Captain Suey and hung on. Tangled together, they began tumbling out of control toward the sea.

Captain Suey shoved his face in front of Ah Lim. “Ha! A white devil, are you? You think your clothes make you a white devil? You’re no different from me.” He punched Ah Lim in the side of his head.

Rage surged through Ah Lim. He had not been struck since the clockwork American bandits had left him helpless and broke, and he never had any revenge against them. “Bandit,” he snarled.

“Ah Lim!” Junjun screamed, begging for help.

His head pounding with pain, Ah Lim yanked one of his arms free. He grabbed for one of the belts of gold dust, but snagged both of them. With one looping motion, he threw both belts around Captain Suey’s neck and jerked his arm away from Junjun.

Captain Suey’s eyes grew wide as the weight of both belts pulled his neck back, cutting off his breath. He made a gurgling sound and grabbed for the belts with both hands. In that moment, he released Junjun and twisted downward. His weight ripped both belts out of Ah Lim’s grasp and he fell out of control, with the uneven belts of gold swinging wildly and preventing him from gaining air under his wings.

Junjun spread her great, fabric wings wide again. “Hold on!”

Ah Lim locked his legs around her waist and spread his own wings. They picked up the hard northwest wind in their double sets of wings and shifted into a more shallow angle, though they were low enough for artillery shells to shoot past them in great numbers.

Far below, Captain Suey's body made a tiny white splash in the water. The waves caught his wings and dragged him under.

Suddenly Ah Lim realized he and Junjun had sailed through the arcs of artillery fire to the far side of the naval attack. Ahead of them, he saw the banks of the great Zhu River that flowed from deep inside Guangdong Province. They left Macau, the Taiping navy, and the battle behind.

Ahead, fishing boats plied up and down the river, near quiet banks where peasant women washed clothes and small children played.

Ah Lim and Junjun gradually glided upriver, dropping altitude. Junjun opened her wings and drew upward against the air, almost motionless just a short jump above land. He imitated her movements. Then they fell, tumbling down on the soft mud of the riverbank.

Ah Lim pushed himself up and unfastened his wingsuit.

While he stood and pushed it off, Junjun whirled her arms with multiple ratcheting sounds, folding and swirling her elaborate wingsuit back into the mauve dress with bustle, the fabric stowed away within the full skirt. Then she reached up to straighten the blue peacock feather in her hair.

A fisherman stood nearby, staring at them. He wore a conical hat of wide leaves, no shirt, and loose pants. His feet were bare. He held a net, forgotten in his hands. A small raft of thick bamboo stems lashed together floated in the shallows, with a short mast and a single sail.

"Demons!" The fisherman shouted in the Sam Yup dialect as he stepped back. "Go away!"

Ah Lim spoke some Sam Yup, which he had learned in the Chinatown of Sacramento. He understood that the fisherman had spent his life inland in the world of nature, far from the growing port cities with steamships and coal-burning dynamos. "Not demons. We are going to Toisan." He nodded toward the fishing raft. "We must go upriver first, then find a cart."

The fisherman eyed him with suspicion. "You can fly!"

Ah Lim held up the wingsuit. "I jumped out of a balloon basket. This helped me come down slowly."

"She's a demon!" He pointed, his arm out straight. "I'll take you, not her."

Junjun had pushed up her sleeves and cautiously worked her metallic joints, testing them.

Ah Lim took the little oil can from the folds of her dress and lubricated each joint as she moved it.

When they had finished, she gave him a shy smile and took the oil can back.

"You!" The fisherman pointed again. "You serve this demon?"

Ah Lim pulled out his shirt tail and tore off a piece of the fabric. Without revealing the canvas belt of gold dust around his waist, he reached under the shirt tail and opened a small valve to pour out some dust into the rag. Then he closed the valve and held out the dust, gleaming in the sunlight.

The fisherman stared at the shining treasure.

"I have come from Gold Mountain," said Ah Lim. "Take us upstream to a place where we can hire a cart." He had lost the majority of his gold dust, but this last belt alone would still make his family wealthy.

"Only you," said the fisherman.

Ah Lim took Junjun's hard, metallic hand and drew her ratcheting arm through his. "You will treat her with proper respect and take us both. You don't want to make a demon angry, do you?"

Junjun stifled a little laugh.

Wide-eyed with fear and greed, the fisherman stepped aside for them to step onto his boat.

"And now we shall go back to our villages," said Junjun.

Ah Lim allowed himself a small smile of relief. "If the cart takes us high enough into the mountains, maybe we can jump off and fly home."





- Chapter 3 -

The Apothecary



Right View, Right Conduct, Right Practice

Understanding the Apothecary

Origins and History

For thousands of years, China relied on a combination of herbal remedies, moxibustion, acupuncture, charms, and rituals. These remedies were developed along with a basic understanding of human anatomy (blood circulation was discovered in the 6th century BCE and medical treatment is heavily based on an understanding of the body's 29 pulses). However, anatomical studies through dissection were rarely practiced in China to the extent they were in Europe and the Americas because of Asian beliefs about the condition of the body and the afterlife. It was believed dissections endangered the immortal soul from moving away from its previous life and into reincarnation. So human remains were typically treated with great respect throughout Asia, at least when they were the remains of a loved one, and ceremonies were practiced to discourage the return of angry/hungry ghosts (*keui*) who were denied an appropriate burial.

The study of biology was not as hampered by this lack as one might expect. The Chinese observed circadian rhythms and their effects upon the human within the 2nd century BCE Chinese awareness may well be much older than this, as acupuncture, which is practiced using the rhythms, was invented roughly 2500 years ago. In the 2nd century, the Prince of Huainan supported a team of scientists who conducted state-sponsored experimentation. Using urine analysis, he and his team identified sex

hormones and distilled the urine to produce fertility medication in much the same way modern medicine does it today.

Nutrition-related diseases including beriberi, scurvy, and rickets were described, studied and consistently identified by the 3rd century and doctors prescribed effective recipes (*Systematic Treasury of Medicine* and *The Principles of Correct Diet*) for treatment. Urine analysis and effective dietary treatment for diabetes was developed as early as the 7th century. By the 4th century, physicians as far away as Persia revered Chinese medicine and developed further medical understanding through the 13th century.

Along with medical practitioners, the Chinese developed the world's greatest concentration of state-sponsored chemists, astrophysicists and engineers. Chinese apothecaries were relied upon to produce both herbal remedies and the mugwort for moxibustion and they, along with court physicians, were therefore in the best position to practice chemistry.

To make the Emperor of All Under Heaven immortal, all court physicians sought the highly desirable recipe for the elixir of life. While they never found it, their studies involved exploring the nature and uses of many chemicals including mercury, lead, gold, saltpeter, sulfur, carbon, arsenic, aconite, and distillations of many medicines including jinyinhua, a Chinese honeysuckle used in virological medication and opium.

Engineering and Weapons

Chinese chemists developed weaponized mustard gas (dried balls of mustard and animal excrement) in the 4th century BCE. Before this era, they developed a double billows systems that heated steel-making furnaces. In war time, those billows drove mustard gas into sapper tunnels, killing enemies and preventing demolition of city walls. By the 2nd century CE, the Thunderclap bomb used lime and sulfur to produce tear gas as an effective means of rebellion control, and gunpowder mixes continued to be developed for different purposes including flares, stronger tear gasses, poisonous gasses, explosives and explosive poisonous gasses.

The engineers were not to be outdone by their chemist counterparts. The world's first automaton, the South Pointing Carriage, held a simple jade figure of a man who, no matter what direction the carriage

faced, always pointed south. Created in the 3rd century CE, merchants used it as a guide to return home safely from Silk Road travels. While the differential gears used in the device met a different need at a later time, this was the first and only known use of the technology for hundreds of years. Those same merchants traveled with crossbows as early as the 7th century BCE. By the 3rd century CE, those merchants' crossbows fired eleven bolts in fifteen seconds.

As early as 100 BCE, paper lanterns served in celebrations and as daily illumination, but they also saw warfare. Fighters utilized heat rising from burning towns to give their lanterns extra lift. Paper lanterns designed with a slow burning wick set the paper on fire after the lanterns cleared the town walls, depositing gas payloads.

It did not take long for the inventive Chinese to combine gunpowder and missiles into the first rockets and the first rocket batteries were in use and supplied to the military by 1300 CE. The military also used flame throwers as early as 900 CE. Large brass and copper platforms were placed on either ramparts or ships and filled with "fierce liquid fire" ignitable upon contact with the slow burning sulfur-imbued fuse at the end of the nozzle. These platforms threw continual flame for over a *li*, (one third of a mile), depending on the grade and amount of wind.



Early Fire Arrow

Modern Innovations

When the Qing Dynasty conquered China, they refused contact with their primarily Han subjects,

treating them as servants to be kept at a safe distance. This meant scientific discoveries made by the Han stayed with the Han or were destroyed by the Manchu overlords who refused to be transcended by lesser beings. The xenophobia of the Manchu resulted in dwindling trade, wealth and scientific innovation. Consequently, the Manchus were also treated solely by Manchu physicians, but ironically not always with traditional Manchu medicine.

The Kangxi Emperor and his son published exclusively for the court's use the *Golden Mirror of Medical Learning* (1742). While the court's ruling class and best physicians compiled the book, the knowledge it contained was gleaned entirely from the Han doctors of China, and the knowledge therein was hundreds of years of accumulated data with relatively little in new studies included. Shortly after the publication of this volume, several events occurred that, in their combined effects, wrought tremendous changes in the Middle Kingdom.

First, Chinese physician Wang Qingren suggested anatomy must be understood in order for the physician to best treat his patient. He advocated study of unidentified or criminal corpses, an unpopular stance among the Manchu. He was forced to move farther and farther south, away from the capital. In Canton he met a wandering Buddhist monk named Đoàn Minh Huyền and American missionary and physician Benjamin Hobson. While Đoàn Minh Huyền studied with the two men as their assistant, Wang Qingren helped Hobson write *Quantz Xinlun*, which they published before the first Opium War in 1839. It was widely read by the Han apothecaries and physicians who, despite their dissection misgivings, never ceased secretly studying and widening their knowledge. They received the Western Hemisphere's knowledge of anatomy and promptly applied it to everything they knew. They advanced both the practice of acupuncture through an improved visualization of the human nervous system, but also the study of medicinal application. Toward the end of the first Opium War, the revelation of Chinese honeysuckle as an effective treatment against virological dysentery, among other illnesses raging in China's poorer provinces, changed the healing and survival rate for China and for Việt Nam when Đoàn Minh Huyền returned there in 1842.

Meanwhile, three of China's Han engineers had witnessed Indian locomotives in motion. They did

not need a train to attack the British, but the massive machines were impressive, impregnable and unstoppable by modern weapons. The chief Chinese engineer suggested building a similar device without a need for train tracks. This device was destined to go to the Taiping, who were elated at the gift, and it went far in cementing their relationship with the Qing. The carriage was shipped from Shenzhen to south of Lamma Island in order to evade the British merchant ships. After rounding Lamma's tip, the barge sailed north to Hong Kong Island's Repulse Beach. The carriage and its Taiping strike force disembarked and made their way across Hong Kong Island in order to arrive in time for the planned strike on Victoria.

It took three years and most of the Xianfeng Emperor's finances, but on February 6th when the massive Rolling Soldier carriage under the control of the Taiping forces rolled on its treads into play against Fort Victoria, the havoc it caused was undeniably worth it. Initially, the carriage tried to shoot distilled opiate gasses over the tall stone walls. The carriage's guns did not have the desired range, and three canisters failed to breach the walls. Tragically, the men inside the carriage died under their first barrage. The carriage and their bodies were retrieved and a second attempt made the next night. This time, the carriage was loaded with Thundercrash ammunition packed with high sulfur content. Under the carriage's second attack, the Chinese aimed consistently at one point on the fort's walls, knocking a large hole. The Chinese switched to an explosive gunpowder and crammed it inside a lightweight metal canister designed to shred on contact. After they struck, the first wave of Taiping infantry, the dreaded Jiangshi Legion, entered Victoria.

Two years before, Xianfeng issued a decree offering a pardon and honorable death to many prisoners who agreed to fight in the army. Those pardoned were pulled into general forces. The most vicious (and unpardonable) among them were enrolled in the Legion.

The Emperor gave them the option of dying honorably or dishonorably. Their choice made, Manchu physicians gave them a dangerous concoction of opium and betel nut, a popular Asian stimulant. For those who survived the potion, the opium took away their ability to feel pain, but the betel nut countered the apathy of opium and gave them enough energy to fight "like the undead." To

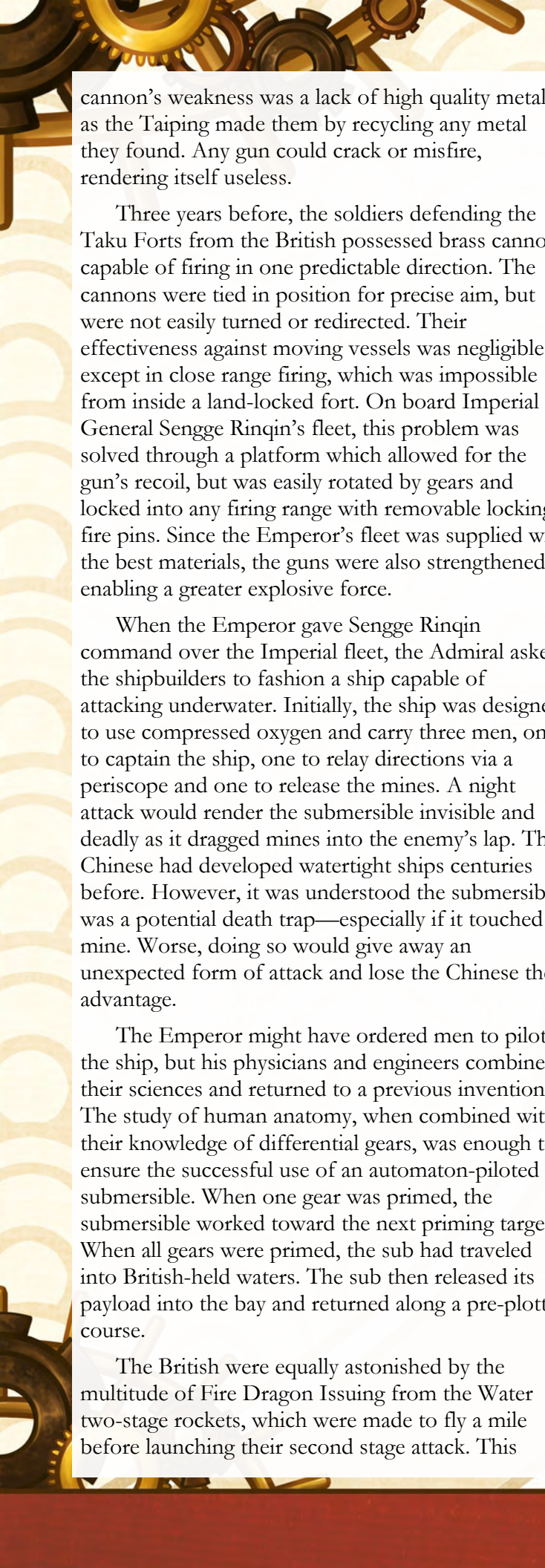
add to this horrific image, the betel nut stained their teeth black and dyed their saliva a deep blood red. Their march caused terror among Chinese and British alike—especially since they showed such a great desire for destruction. This Legion was a death squad. No medicine was wasted on them, only the Jiangshi potion. They were not assigned to the Imperial corps, but given to the Taiping, who accepted them with understandable reluctance. The



The Opium Poppy

Legion died their honorable death taking Victoria.

The Chinese engineers countered the first Opium War's British Armstrong gun, which caused massive, widespread shrapnel damage, by using shoulder launch guns packed with 12-pound balls filled with poison-tipped caltrops, tear gas, or poison gas. This was a centuries old invention, but the Chinese no longer used bamboo launchers. They manufactured lightweight metals capable of withstanding the much higher explosive forces and therefore, shooting farther and faster. These cannons were lighter than, but as powerful as, the Armstrong guns and fired a wider variety of projectiles. The



cannon's weakness was a lack of high quality metals as the Taiping made them by recycling any metal they found. Any gun could crack or misfire, rendering itself useless.

Three years before, the soldiers defending the Taku Forts from the British possessed brass cannons capable of firing in one predictable direction. The cannons were tied in position for precise aim, but were not easily turned or redirected. Their effectiveness against moving vessels was negligible except in close range firing, which was impossible from inside a land-locked fort. On board Imperial General Sengge Rinqin's fleet, this problem was solved through a platform which allowed for the gun's recoil, but was easily rotated by gears and locked into any firing range with removable locking fire pins. Since the Emperor's fleet was supplied with the best materials, the guns were also strengthened, enabling a greater explosive force.

When the Emperor gave Sengge Rinqin command over the Imperial fleet, the Admiral asked the shipbuilders to fashion a ship capable of attacking underwater. Initially, the ship was designed to use compressed oxygen and carry three men, one to captain the ship, one to relay directions via a periscope and one to release the mines. A night attack would render the submersible invisible and deadly as it dragged mines into the enemy's lap. The Chinese had developed watertight ships centuries before. However, it was understood the submersible was a potential death trap—especially if it touched a mine. Worse, doing so would give away an unexpected form of attack and lose the Chinese their advantage.

The Emperor might have ordered men to pilot the ship, but his physicians and engineers combined their sciences and returned to a previous invention. The study of human anatomy, when combined with their knowledge of differential gears, was enough to ensure the successful use of an automaton-piloted submersible. When one gear was primed, the submersible worked toward the next priming target. When all gears were primed, the sub had traveled into British-held waters. The sub then released its payload into the bay and returned along a pre-plotted course.

The British were equally astonished by the multitude of Fire Dragon Issuing from the Water two-stage rockets, which were made to fly a mile before launching their second stage attack. This

included a series of rockets that “exploded” from the mouth of the flying dragon as the first stage rocket fell away. The internal rockets were designed to strike multiple targets with their poison gas, incendiary, or explosive payloads. Launchable from ship deck, these lighter-weight rockets flew for a *li* in unpredictable paths and their shrieking approach caused chaos and indecision.

To add greater confusion, the Chinese generals planned to use the heat rising from the battle to assist their last weapon. During celebrations, lanterns were lit as a type of New Year's resolution. They carried the people's hopes and goals for the New Year. Now they carried much more. Engineers designed mechanized paper kites, eight shaped as Fu creatures and one magnificent imperial dragon. While the Fu creatures delivered distracting smoke and teargas bombs, the dragon was a multi-stage weapon. The first stage released the enfolded dragon kite complete with its gas payload. Once the later rockets fired, the dragon rocket relied on compass technology attached to gears to fly toward Hong Kong where it would release the gasses.

But the device had only been tested once under ideal conditions. When the engineers struck the gong as their signal to send up the kites, the Fu creatures spread confusion as they were designed to do and the dragon rocket roared, soaring into life, but the heat rising from the battle that was meant to assist with lift destroyed the rocket launchers within the kite's mouth. Still, writhing lifelike in the air as it lost altitude, the smoke above the British fleet cleared as the fully realized flaming imperial dragon crashed into the chaos of the mighty British army. Though the imperial dragon did not fire its weapons as intended, the end result was undeniable.

Far from satisfied or complacent after his success, the Xianfeng Emperor vowed China should never again cease scientific exploration. Xianfeng became obsessed with the advantages manned flight could bring his massive nation, but the ignominious crash of the Imperial Dragon did not bode well for kites. He turned to France, and dirigible flight came to China. Having gained so much from his relationship with the French aviators, Xianfeng encouraged travel abroad for the sake of learning and asked Wang Qingren to look into a school for the medical sciences. He requested the same of Li Hongzhang, one of his leading scientific advisers during the war, regarding universities for engineering and mathematics. Sadly, the Emperor died before

this dream of education could be established. For two thousand years, Confucian theory and education had reigned, so this was Xianfeng's greatest change, although it will likely take many decades to fully realize.

After the Dust Settled

While the Emperor and the Taiping both agreed



Đoàn Minh Huyên

on the wisdom of destroying the British stockpiles of opium, the scientists and military did not. They used opiates to great effect during the war and believed destroying the stores would be irresponsible and even unfilial to future Chinese. In later years, their act of disobedience returned to haunt China.

By 1851, Đoàn Minh Huyên had made a name for himself in Việt Nam and his acolytes at last opened a school of medicine. It flourished in the

relative freedom Việt Nam enjoyed and by 1869, Wang Qingren was forced to build his new school on his former assistant's work. A friendly rivalry grew between the institutions and student exchanges between Việt Nam and China became commonplace. Soon all of Asia followed suit. Both medical schools were opened to foreign students by 1870.

Meanwhile, a young official from Beijing named Yang Shenxiu—although trained as a bureaucrat—cultivated a passion for western technology and scientific thought as a result of his interactions with foreign emissaries. In 1869, when he heard a visiting Vietnamese doctor speak about a new school and the nature of the human body, Yang was struck by the precision and laws implied in bodily function. With an eye towards applying the scientific method to medicine, Yang left his position to attend medical school in Việt Nam.

Among Yang's early projects was a clockwork reproduction of the circulatory system, followed by one of the musculature system. Miniscule movements and fine control fascinated him. At last, his work came to the attention of the school administrators. They encouraged him to cease such studies as they brought his soul closer to the mechanics of earth, chaining him to what Buddhists avoided. To prove the value of his pursuits, Yang brought forth his incomplete masterpiece, an emotionless mechanism inherently born within Nirvana. This clockwork man was also devoid of humanity and appalled the school board. They destroyed Yang's work and expelled him. He returned to Beijing in disgrace, but not without hope. Yang Shenxiu retained many of his schematics, and Li Hongzhang's military school for engineering and mathematics welcomed him.

When China declared war against Japan and Korea in response to the incursion in Manchuria, China possessed several hundred clockwork men armed with opiate and mustard gas and a total lack of humanity.



Playing the Apothecary

The role of the apothecary is divided equally between healing and destruction. Some apothecaries will certainly explore some of each in their training, but many choose to focus on one or the other in order to be as effective as possible or simply out of personal preference. As with other professions in the Steamscapes game setting, the first step in becoming an apothecary is taking the Apothecary Professional Edge, which is a prerequisite for all other Edges in the Apothecary Edge Tree. Unlike other professional edge trees, however, the remaining Edges may be learned in any order.

Apothecary Profession

Upon taking this Edge, the apothecary immediately gains one level each in Healing and the new specialty skill, Chemical Engineering (link attribute: Smarts). She also gains full access to all Edges in the Apothecary tree with no other prerequisites. However, several of the Edges require levels in specific Skills before they are actually useful.

For instance, a new apothecary with a d4 in Chemical Engineering may purchase the Rocketry Edge at any time. However, she will not be able to build even a simple fire-arrow style rocket until she increases her Chemical Engineering to at least a d6. Hybrid Edges require advancement in two Skills.

Healing Edges

Anatomy: The apothecary may assist the Vigor roll of an adjacent incapacitated hero. Just before the patient makes her Vigor roll, make a Healing roll with no modifiers. Each success or raise adds +2 to the patient's Vigor roll for death or injury. These modifiers may be applied after the incapacitation roll, but only if the apothecary can get to the patient before the end of the following round.

Anesthesia: The apothecary may allow a patient to ignore wound penalties other than Incapacitated. However, the treatment simultaneously applies Fatigue based on how strong the anesthetic is. Make a Healing roll to determine the duration and Fatigue level: Success = 15 minutes or one combat (apply 1 level of Fatigue). 1 raise = 30 minutes (apply 2 levels of Fatigue). 2 or more raises = subject is unconscious and does not wake until one hour after leaving the care of the apothecary. Both effects

coincide, so the Fatigue will fade at the same time as the ability to ignore wound penalties.

This ability may be used in combat if the apothecary is within melee range of the subject. It takes effect one full round after activation (at the end of the following round). This ability also negates the effect of the patient's wound penalties on all Healing rolls. However, it can only affect Natural Healing rolls if the subject is kept under the effects of Anesthesia for a full 24 hours prior to the roll.

Pharmacology: With a successful Healing roll, the apothecary may temporarily remove the immediate effects of most physical conditions, including Bumps and Bruises, Cold, Disease, Heat, Poison, and Radiation. In many cases, these effects will return if the condition is left untreated, so additional care may be necessary.

Rapid Recovery: A patient under this apothecary's continuous care may make a Natural Healing roll every 2 days instead of every 5 days. Interruptions in care can delay but do not reset the 2 day timer.



Chemical Engineering Edges

Explosives: The apothecary may construct gunpowder-based explosive devices. Note that this skill does not determine the strength of the explosive, since that depends more on the amount of gunpowder than the skill of the apothecary. Higher levels in Chemical Engineering increase the complexity of available detonation modes according to the following list:

- d4 – Fuse detonation
- d6 – Mechanical detonation (switches and timers)
- d8 – Electrical detonation
- d10 – Chemical detonation (enables impact detonation)

Rocketry: The apothecary may construct self-propelled artillery weapons. See the Indirect Fire rule on page 48 for full explanations of each of these rocket types. Higher levels in Chemical Engineering increase the complexity of available devices according to the following list:

- d6 – Stick and tube (fire-arrow style)
- d8 – Metal tube (Congreve style)
- d10 – Multi-stage rockets
- d12 – Directed flight (the apothecary may fire rockets with Shooting rather than using the Indirect Fire rule)

Unit Operation: The apothecary may drastically improve the design work of a gearsmith, gunsmith, or steamhand. Make a Chemical Engineering roll and apply a +2 to the appropriate roll for each success

and raise. This cannot be used for rolls to repair devices unless major modifications are also being made.

Hybrid Edges

Poisons: The apothecary may create poisons that may be fed directly to the subject, applied to weapons, or distributed as gasses using explosives (with the appropriate edge). See the Poison Effects Table in *Savage Worlds* for more information on the effects of these poisons. Higher levels in both Chemical Engineering and Healing increase the complexity of available poisons according to the following list:

- both at d6 – Knockout poisons
- both at d8 – Paralysis poisons
- both at d10 – Lethal poisons

Munitions: An apothecary who is also trained as a gunsmith may create specialized ammunition for use in gunslinger weapons (any weapon with the Custom trait). Higher levels in both Chemical Engineering and Gunsmithing increase the complexity of available ammunition according to the following list:

- both at d8 – Wooden bullets (-2 damage, incapacitated target does not roll a Vigor die for death or injury)
- both at d10 – Manstopper rounds (on a hit, target is automatically Shaken before damage is applied)
- both at d12 – Incendiary ammunition (chance to ignite flammable materials, including the hydrogen/oxygen mix of a leaking airship bag)



- Chapter 4 -

The Arts of War



Constant Perseverance and Application

Martial Arts Overview

Martial arts already exist in *Savage Worlds*. There are Edges and maneuvers that can model many of the things you might want to do as a fighter, and the concept of Trappings allows you to describe the effect in any way that might be appropriate to your character. The rules listed in this chapter are intended to supplement those existing systems to both expand the options available to the player and also to focus on developing individualized styles of combat.

This is done in several ways. First of all, we have introduced a number of new maneuvers on top of the usual list of combat options that are only accessible by learning specific martial art forms. Each maneuver is purchased as a Maneuver Edge that has varying prerequisites depending on the martial art used to train it.

Martial arts themselves are built as Edge Trees. However, these trees incorporate existing *Savage Worlds* Edges that normally have no prerequisites other than rank or skill level. Advancement in a martial art typically alternates between these general Edges and style-specific Maneuver Edges. Maneuver Edges provide the fighter access to the new specialized maneuvers based on the techniques of that particular martial art.

Different styles may share access to similar specialized maneuvers, but apply them differently based on whether they are a weapon form, unarmed form, or foot form. A fighter who has learned how

to use a maneuver with a weapon may not use that maneuver with her feet unless she also progresses far enough in a different style that teaches that maneuver as a foot form. When adding each Maneuver Edge to the fighter's character sheet, it is important that she record both the type of maneuver (weapon, unarmed, foot) and the martial art being studied. For example: "Bando Unarmed Quick-Kill."

A fighter may learn multiple styles and apply his generic *Savage Worlds* Edges to each one. However, he may not skip past the other specific Edge requirements earlier in the tree just because he has a later generic Edge. For instance, the Florentine Edge might appear in both Niten Ichi-Ryu and Gatka, but the fighter must reach that point in a given style before he can move past it. Also, as noted above, each Maneuver Edge is unique to its particular style, such that it is possible to have multiple sources of the same maneuver with no particular mechanical benefit. This simply means that the fighter knows more than one way of achieving that effect.

New Maneuvers

Defensive Footwork: You may move up to half your Pace without running. Until your next turn, gain +1 Parry and +1 to Fighting rolls when defending against combat maneuvers. This counts as your movement and not an action for the purposes of multi-action penalties. It may be combined with the Defend or Full Defense actions. (You may only use Full Defense if you do not actually move.)

Stunning Strike: Make a called shot at -2. Add any armor the defender is wearing to the defender's Parry. If you are successful, the defender must succeed at a Vigor roll or gain one level of Fatigue. Each raise adds -2 to the defender's roll. Any Fatigue levels accrued in this way can be removed by resting for ten minutes after combat.

Quick-Kill: Make a called shot at -2. If you are successful, any damage above target's Toughness skips Shaken and goes directly to Wounds. (Any damage immediately removes Extras from play.)

Clinch: You are skilled at fighting while grappling or grappled. You gain +2 on Grappling rolls and on rolls to escape a grapple, and all of your attacks and defenses are unaffected while in the grapple.

Throw: Make an opposed Fighting roll. If you are successful, the defender is Shaken and prone.

The target takes a wound if already Shaken. Raises have no effect.

Defensive Throw: You may now use Throw to interrupt melee attacks. If you are unsuccessful, the attack continues as normal. Each defensive maneuver you have used since your last turn adds -2 to your Fighting roll.

Staggering Block: When you would be hit with a melee attack, you may immediately attempt an Agility trick on the attacker. If the attacker is Shaken (because of a raise), no damage is rolled. Wild Cards may spend a benny to clear the Shaken condition so that the damage still resolves. Each defensive maneuver you have used since your last turn adds -2 to your Agility roll.

Redirect: When an opponent attempts a combat maneuver against you on their turn, make an opposed Fighting roll. If you are successful, the combat maneuver is instead applied to the attacker. Each defensive maneuver you have used since your last turn adds -2 to your Fighting roll.

A Collection of Fighting Styles

Although the term “martial arts” is generally connected with eastern Asia, the term comes from Latin, meaning the arts of Mars, the god of war. Martial arts could more accurately be described as “fighting style,” “combat forms,” or “combat systems” since many of them are not directly related to war or warriors. In fact, martial arts can be practiced for several reasons, such as sport, self-defense, fitness, or spiritual development.

Many martial arts are practiced throughout Asia. The following are some of the most prominent. Note that each description includes the Edge Tree for that form. The Edges are listed in the most common order of training, with notes regarding the prerequisites of the generic *Savage Worlds* Edges. The Maneuver Edges must be learned after the previous Edges in the sequence, though the other Edges are not restricted in this way. However, some generic Edges gain additional effects when learned as part of a style, and these are indicated below.

Arnis

This Filipino form is unique among Asian forms in its heavy European influence. It is known by many names, including arnis, eskrima, and kali. Most of its

names are derived from Spanish words, such as *arnés* (armor), *eskrima* (fencing), and *estoque* (rapier).

This style gets its European influence from being used in combat against the invading Spanish in guerrilla skirmishes. This influence is reflected not only in names for the style itself and its techniques, but also in the use of dual wielding, prominent in Spanish fencing (*espada y daga*). Since the natives were forbidden to carry swords, arnis uses sticks and knives instead of the longer rapier, therefore shifting its dual wielding focus to paired weapons and evasion. Even when an arnisador only has one weapon, his free hand acts to control, trap, or disarm an opponent’s weapon; it is also used to aid in blocking or to perform joint locks. A fair amount of training is needed to allow hands (and, on a smaller scale, feet) to operate independently of each other.

Devised primarily for the battlefield, arnis emphasizes weapon combat, mostly considering unarmed combat a last resort; most schools only teach unarmed after the student has mastered weapon techniques. Students are trained in several



Note on Defensive Maneuvers

If a fighter has more than one defensive maneuver (Defensive Throw, Staggering Block, or Redirection), the penalties for multiple uses are cumulative. However, a fighter may always choose whether to use a defensive maneuver against each individual attack. Penalties only apply for each maneuver used (whether or not it was used successfully).

Example of play:

A fighter is being attacked by three extras and a wild card. Both groups have higher initiative than the fighter, with the extras having the highest. The first extra attempts an Agility Trick against the fighter, and she chooses to Redirect that Agility Trick. The other two extras simply attack as normal and she does not use any defensive maneuvers, trusting that they will not get through her Parry. The wild card attacks as normal and she attempts a Defensive Throw, but her Fighting roll is now at -2 because of the previous defensive maneuver.

differently-sized sticks and staves, including improvised weaponry. If an arnisador has a choice of weapons, however, he is more likely to choose paired sticks or knives.

Arnis uses geometry as a teaching method, classifying moves by their attacking angle as opposed to weapon or delivery style. The same concepts can be applied to different situations at different ranges. The use of geometric shapes is complemented by studying movement patterns, teaching arnisadores how to use their current position to their advantage and how to move into advantageous positions.

Arnis Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Two-Fisted (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Block (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
4. Weapon Staggering Block (Maneuver Edge)
5. Weapon Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
6. Improved Block (requires Veteran, Block)
7. Ambidextrous (requires Novice, Agility d8+, may now be trained even if normally restricted, and you now gain +1 Parry for each hand without a weapon)

Bagua Zhang

This ancient Chinese internal style is named after the eight trigrams in Ba Gua. The trigrams represent the fundamental principles of reality in Taoist cosmology. The ancient I Ching consists of the 64 possible hexagrams (pairs of trigrams).

Bagua zhang, or the palm of eight trigrams, is a style based on changing according to the situation at hand, defeating an opponent with skill instead of force.

Bagua's central training tenet is circle-walking. Practitioners walk along the edge of a circle, always facing the center, changing stances as they move. This exercise builds on balance, agility and battlefield awareness. In combat, students are always moving in circles, using this movement to generate centripetal force and deliver powerful blows. Defense in bagua is always fluid, deflecting attacks and flowing away from range just to step back in and deliver a decisive counterattack. This defensive ability, said to allow a master to fight multiple armed opponents and survive, is the most iconic of bagua's teachings; however, the style is extremely varied offensively,

teaching most traditional Chinese weapons as well as unarmed strikes (especially with the palm), throws, joint locks, and grapples.

Bagua Zhang Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Unarmed Throw (Maneuver Edge)
4. Counterattack (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
5. Unarmed Defensive Throw (Maneuver Edge)
6. Unarmed Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
7. Improved Extraction (requires Novice, Extraction)
8. Unarmed Redirect (Maneuver Edge)

Bajiquan

This explosive close-combat style was created in Cangxian in the Hebei province, probably around the beginning of the Ming dynasty. It was originally called baziquan (rake fist) but bajiquan (eight extremes fist) quickly caught on, most likely for sounding more refined.

Its attack philosophy is both simple and efficient—to open the opponent's gates (arms) forcibly and then launch attacks at all levels of the body. To allow for a greater variety of striking surfaces, it teaches several elbow, knee, shoulder, and hip strikes. Attacks flow into each other, connecting closely in a sequence.

Bajiquan needs explosive power to work and therefore requires an intensive training regimen to master. Lower-body training is essential, not only for stability but to perform the style's trademark charging step, which allows a student to approach an opponent quickly as well as generating power through momentum. To achieve this initial explosion of power, bajiquan does away with any pretense of flowery motion; its movements are direct, fast, precise, and deceptively simple.

Weapon use in bajiquan favors the spear, although it is mainly an unarmed style, counting 20 unarmed forms against only 8 armed forms. The spear allows students to apply gate-opening tactics from a safe distance; therefore, longer spears are preferred. Spear techniques focus on control and depend on accurate thrusts for decisive strikes. Weapon training is also used to hone a student's

unarmed skill and physical conditioning. Aside from the spear, training in different kinds of swords, staves, and polearms may also be included.



Bajiquan Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Brawler (requires Novice, Strength d8+)
3. Unarmed Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
4. Frenzy (requires Seasoned, Fighting d10+)
5. Bruiser (requires Seasoned, Brawler)
6. Unarmed Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)
7. Improved Frenzy (requires Veteran, Frenzy)
8. Foot Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge, may be used as the Frenzy attack)

Bando

Determining the exact date of origin for bando is difficult, but it is estimated to be around a thousand years old. Like most Burmese culture, this fighting style is heavily influenced by Indian and Chinese forms. It is one among the many Burmese thaing (fighting styles) and well-known outside the country for its ruthless efficiency.

Bando is a reactive style, allowing the opponent to take initiative and then counterattack. One of bando's major tenets is to finish a combat quickly by disarming the opposition. While this is straightforward when dealing with an armed opponent, against an unarmed opponent a practitioner of bando will aim to break limbs or dislocate joints. When dealing with different fighting styles, it is crucial for a bando student to analyze the opponent correctly so as to know which limb should be disabled first. It is a close-quarters style that emphasizes striking over grappling, though it does teach grappling and pinning to a smaller degree.

Practice is similar to most Chinese formal styles, including solo practice (aka) and sparring. Also due to its Chinese influence, bando is divided into animal forms—boar, bull, cobra, deer, eagle, monkey, heron, leopard, python, scorpion, tiger, viper, and finally black panther, a sort of ultimate form which is taught last and combines all the others.

Bando Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Counterattack (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
4. Unarmed Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)
5. Improved Extraction (requires Novice, Extraction)
6. Improved Counterattack (requires Veteran, Counterattack, now allows Quick-Kill to be used as the Counterattack)

Gatka

This ancient style was developed in northern India, dating as far back as 6th century BC; it may be older still. It was practiced slightly differently in different regions, adapting stances and footwork to better fit local terrain. With the Sikh Empire's ascension, it rose to prominence as the style employed by its Akal Sena (precursor to the Dal Khalsa).

Gatka's core is footwork and body positioning, including a peculiar four-step gait (panthra) which is meant to be employed in everyday life until it becomes second nature, allowing a student to change direction quickly and control their center of gravity. Usually practiced along with music, gatka may seem like a dance, with its beautiful coordinated

movements and the rhythm they create. This peculiar rhythm allows students to do battle without anxiety or hesitation. Another core tenet is range; optimal positioning is considered to be just slightly out of an opponent's reach, far enough to avoid his attacks but close enough to launch attacks of your own.

Different from most other Asian forms, *gatka* lacks a rigid technique structure and its attack patterns are more varied from practitioner to practitioner, making it less predictable.

The main weapon in *gatka* is the sword, but it teaches several others. The first weapon a student learns is the training stick made of bamboo, a *marati*. Once the basic techniques are learned with *marati*, they can be applied to other weapons as the student advances in their training, learning one after another (several types of shields, sticks and polearms), culminating with the deadly *urumi*. Unarmed combat is secondary in *gatka* and consists of applying armed forms with hands and feet.

Gatka is as spiritual as it is physical. Its guru masters teach religion and spirituality side by side with physical training. Meditating on spiritual verses of the *gurbani* is as important to a student as sparring.

Gatka Edge Tree

1. Gatka Defensive Footwork (Maneuver Edge)
2. Two-Fisted (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Florentine (requires Novice, Fighting d8+, Agility d8+)
4. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)
5. Counterattack (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
6. Improved Counterattack (requires Veteran, Counterattack)
7. Weapon Redirect (Maneuver Edge)

Jujutsu

Unarmed grappling is depicted in the earliest Japanese historical records, but it only took the form of *jujutsu* (gentle art) in the Sengoku period. It began as a combination of unarmed techniques used on the battlefield against armored and armed opponents. Since striking is not very effective against armored opponents, *jujutsu* focuses on pinning, joint locks, and throws. As a soft art, *jujutsu* aims to redirect the opponent's force. Denying an opponent the use of his weapon is a critical tenet of early *jujutsu*, which

could mean closing in against an opponent with a large weapon, trapping a sword, unhorsing a riding enemy or simply disarming an opponent. Defensively, *jujutsu* also taught how to escape from a grapple, how to retain your weapon when attacked and how to reduce impact from falls.

In the peaceful Edo era, *jujutsu* was expanded to include techniques useful only against unarmored opponents. These are the few striking techniques in *jujutsu*, striking weak points and vital parts such as the throat, groin, or eyes.

Jujutsu includes training with small weapons; this training focuses on defense, especially how to parry, block, and counterattack bigger weapons such as swords and spears with a small backup weapon like a dagger, short sword, or *tessen*. One particular tool that is central to *jujutsu* is the *hojo* cord, used to strangle or restrain an opponent.

There are several different schools of *jujutsu* and training is far from universal. Some schools teach more striking elements, using them as preparation for grappling techniques. Others emphasize weapon training or throwing.

Jujutsu Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Unarmed Throw (Maneuver Edge)
3. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
4. Unarmed Defensive Throw (Maneuver Edge)
5. Block (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
6. Improved Extraction (requires Novice, Extraction)
7. Unarmed Staggering Block (Maneuver Edge)

Kobujutsu

During the Satsuma occupation, Okinawans were not allowed to carry weapons. While this might not be the origin of *kobujutsu*—since similar weapons and styles were found in China, Malaysia, and Indonesia even before the occupation—it certainly helped develop it.

Kobujutsu is not a formal fighting style, but several weapon systems that are frequently taught together. Its core consists of eight weapons, all derived from farming implements and easily disguised as such: *bo* staff, *kama*, *nunchaku*, *sai*, *surujin*, *tonfa*, *tekko*, and *tinbe-rochin*. However, any

weapon or implement that could be improvised as a weapon can be part of a specific school's curriculum. That's the main tenet for kobujutsu—arm yourself as well as you can with whatever resources you have available.

As expected for such a varied fighting style, its range of techniques is immense, varying from weapon to weapon and from school to school. The overall philosophy, however, is quite simple and effective—defend one attack and use that opening to retaliate strongly.

When it comes to training, everything depends on the bo staff. It is the first weapon taught and every other weapon skill is developed by interacting with the staff—every weapon is defined by how it can defeat the bo and when.

Kobujutsu Edge Tree

1. First Strike (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
2. Sweep (requires Novice, Strength d8+, Fighting d8+)
3. Block (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
4. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)
5. Improvisational Fighter (requires Seasoned, Smarts d6+)
6. Improved Block (requires Veteran, Block)
7. Weapon Redirect (Maneuver Edge)

Mardani Khel

Mardani khel (masculine game) was both a sport and a fighting style as far back as the 7th century, but under the influence of warrior king Shivaji it became an efficient tool for guerrilla warfare in the late 1600s.

Usually practiced wearing light armor, mardani khel is efficient either on foot or on horseback. It's a highly mobile style, deceptively so due to the low stances it employs. Defense relies on speed and range, while offense is based on feints and focused attacks. Even on a tactical level, mardani khel employs guerrilla-like tactics.

As a battlefield discipline, mardani khel focuses on weapon combat. Lances are the core of its style, both due to cultural significance and to ease of using it from horseback. Swords are almost as important as lances, used in pairs or with a shield. Aside from the classic pair of sword (pata) and spear (vita), the style

has a vast array of secondary weapons, including bows, axes, bagh nakh, and katara. The pragmatic nature of mardani khel leads students to practice concealing weapons to avoid being caught unarmed.

Mardani Khel Edge Tree

1. Mardani Khel Defensive Footwork (Maneuver Edge)
2. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. First Strike (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
4. Weapon Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
5. Frenzy (requires Seasoned, Fighting d10+)
6. Improved Frenzy (requires Veteran, Frenzy)
7. Weapon Redirect (Maneuver Edge)

Muay Boran

An ancient Thai style, muay boran is one of the most effective striking arts ever created. Its origins are not certain, but it is believed to have been developed as a way to practice fighting skills while avoiding injuries, since armed sparring too often resulted in accidents.

Under King Naresuan, muay boran was taught to the Thai army; the king himself was a prodigious nak muai and was declared a national hero in 1577. His legend is only overshadowed by Pra Chao Sua, the Tiger King, who expanded the practice from the military to the people at large. Traditionally, Thai kings mastered muay boran as part of their education.

The style's core is na-wa arwud, the nine weapons; it combines the use of head, fists, elbows, knees and shins to attack and defend. It is mainly a style of attrition, teaching students not only how to deliver blows, but also how to take them. The use of follow-up attacks with elbow and feet after an initial hit with a punch or knee strike makes muay boran both deadly and fast. Single blows in muay boran can be delivered with any part of the body, using rotation to increase striking power; roundhouse kicks are especially popular as finishing moves. Grappling is restricted to clinching to restrain an opponent and deliver knee and elbow strikes. Defense focuses on blocking; with both hands held up and far forward of the body, the nak muai raise walls between themselves and their opponents.

Muay boran training focuses greatly on physical conditioning and depending on the instructor it can

be as brutal as an actual battle, with students breaking palm trees with their shin to strengthen their bones. Students wrap their hands with knotted rope for greater impact in a practice called kaad chuek. In some muay boran bouts, bone or glass are worked into the rope surface, creating a deadly tool.

Muay Boran Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Brawler (requires Novice, Strength d8+)
3. Foot Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
4. Block (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
5. Bruiser (requires Seasoned, Brawler)
6. Improved Martial Artist (requires Veteran, Martial Artist, Fighting d10+)
7. Clinch (Maneuver Edge)

Ninjutsu

During the Japanese Sengoku period, espionage and trickery flourished. It is no wonder then that it was during this period that ninjutsu was established around the Iga province and the Kōga village, where peasants were trained to become professional spies and assassins. This training is what we call ninjutsu.

More than a fighting system, ninjutsu is a trickery system. The goal is to confuse the opposition using

any means necessary and to avoid actual confrontation if at all possible. To achieve this goal, ninja learn disguises, weapon combat, unarmed combat, and camouflage.

Aside from trickery, the ninja's greatest assets are their tools. Never shy to take any advantage they could, ninja borrow technology from whatever source they can grab. The use of this technology with ingenuity and the ninja's secrecy about their methods gave rise to several myths they were happy to help spread.

Ninja try to avoid combat if at all possible. When they have no other option, they turn to their distinctive fighting style, which is all about feints, evasion, and decisive strikes. There are several techniques to disengage from an opponent as safely as possible, to ensure a proper getaway.

Ninjutsu Edge Tree

1. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
2. Assassin (requires Novice, Agility d8+, Climbing d6+, Fighting d6+, Stealth d8+)
3. One other Professional Edge (various requirements)
4. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge, includes ranged weapons)



Shinobi in Popular Culture

The term “ninja” is a 19th century construction based on the name of the martial art practiced during the Sengoku period by shinobi, who were mercenary spies from the Iga and Kōga clans. During the 19th century, tales and myths about shinobi clans have enthralled a modern populace that still seeks connections to the past. At the same time, the publication of Hokusai's *Manga* in the early 1800s transformed the public's image of the ninja into that of a black-clad master warrior.

In reality, the shinobi clans of the Sengoku accomplished most of their assassinations through poisoning and arson, almost never engaging in direct combat. This approach was a stark contrast to the traditional samurai insistence on dueling, and so the shinobi were considered extremely dishonorable. This was compounded by the fact that many shinobi disguised themselves in the plainclothes of lower-class workers, even to the point of dressing as servants to get into a target household.

Modern ninja are almost certainly still following these more traditional techniques, and are likely pleased with the misdirection played by popular imagery. One thing is certain—if you see a puffed-up fighter dressed in black clothing, you may rest safe in the knowledge that he is absolutely not a ninja.



Niten Ichi-Ryu

This Japanese swordfighting style was developed by legendary samurai Miyamoto Musashi in the early Edo period around 1640 as a result of his experience being victorious in 60 duels. Niten ichi-ryu (two heavens as one) focuses on dual wielding katana and wakizashi together; the style's foundation is the philosophy that holding a sword in two hands is too restrictive, limiting both offense and defense.

Niten is a pragmatic style, avoiding flowery and unnecessary movements. It uses fluid footwork, depending more on the student's battlefield awareness than on strict patterns. Niten is a very aggressive style, either attacking with both swords at once or using one to feint and attacking with the other. This aggressiveness does not mean niten neglects defense; in fact, defending with one weapon and counterattacking with the other is the style's most common and effective maneuver.

Training focuses on kata, always performed with a partner. Usually an advanced student performs an attack so that another student can perform a specific technique. After a few repetitions, they swap roles. Despite being mainly a swordfighting style, niten ichi-ryu also teaches the use of jitte and bo staff.

Niten Ichi-Ryu Edge Tree

1. Florentine (requires Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+)
2. First Strike (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Weapon Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
4. Quick Draw (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
5. Trademark Weapon (requires Novice, Fighting d10+)
6. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)

Pencak Silat

Silat is not a single fighting style, but an umbrella term for several related fighting systems developed in the Malay Archipelago and Indonesia. Its origins are surrounded in myth and even the true meaning of the word "silat" cannot be pinpointed, though the most accepted meaning is a derivation of *sekilat* (fast as lightning). Counting the amount of silat styles is already a challenge, since many regional styles are considered family secrets and are therefore not easily disclosed. While the oral tradition teaches that silat

was developed in Sumatra by a woman watching how a bird and a snake did battle, it was most probably developed by mixing some of the native's combat skills with Chinese and Indian fighting systems.

Silat students keep close to the ground, striking and throwing from crouching stances. Footwork in silat emphasizes quick sideways movement. Weapon training is concurrent with unarmed training, using a variety of weapons depending on the school; however, all schools teach the kris, which is silat's signature weapon. Some schools are softer and circular, while others are harder and linear.

Being so surrounded in myth, silat is also rumored to grant supernatural powers to its masters. By using the kris, it is said they could kill from afar and stab shadows to injure people.

Pencak Silat Edge Tree

1. Silat Defensive Footwork (Maneuver Edge)
2. First Strike (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
4. Foot Throw (Maneuver Edge)
5. Counterattack (requires Seasoned, Fighting d8+)
6. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)

Silambam

The Tamil art of staff wielding, silambam is named after the bamboo staff on which it is focused. According to oral tradition, it is thousands of years old and was created by the Hindu siddha Agastya through divine inspiration. Silambam was a main component of Tamil defense against the British invaders.

The bamboo staff that names the style should be around the same height as the student. Caring for your staff and learning to improvise another in case it is lost is as crucial to silambam as actual combat techniques. Aside from this long staff, other weapons are taught, from shorter staves that can be easily concealed to the Indian push dagger katar. Training also includes kai silambam, or unarmed combat. Both secondary weapons and unarmed strikes in silambam are last resources for situations in which the staff cannot be used to its full potential.

Silambam is an acrobatic and elegant art, relying on spinning to increase the staff's striking power. Advanced silambam training focuses on changing

spins without changing the staff's direction. Footwork is essential, not only for evasion, but to generate power—all of a practitioner's body becomes an engine with the goal of striking harder with the bamboo staff.

Silambam Edge Tree

1. Silambam Defensive Footwork (Maneuver Edge)
2. First Strike (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
3. Extraction (requires Novice, Agility d8+)
4. Weapon Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
5. Sweep (requires Novice)
6. Improved Sweep (requires Veteran, Sweep)
7. Weapon Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)

Taijiquan

This internal Chinese martial art is sometimes shortened as taiji or spelled as tai chi ch'uan. Taijiquan (supreme ultimate fist) was probably developed around the 12th century, due to its ties with neo-Confucianism.

Taiji training focuses on form and repetition, as well as breathing. It teaches a student to deflect force, using an opponent's strength as an advantage. The art's main philosophy is taking appropriate responses according to the opponent's movements and center of gravity. A taiji defense yields against an attack, bending instead of blocking, maneuvering opponents (capturing their center) to positions in which they are off balance and vulnerable. Energy for both attack and defense in taiji normally flows softly from the body's three *dantian* (energy centers), though hard striking techniques are also taught. Because it has been influenced by both Taoism and Confucianism, taiji can be both soft and hard depending on the user's will and necessity; it starts slow and ends fast. Defense is taiji's major tenet and a student will not learn attacking skills (let alone weapon skills) until he masters defense.

There are several schools within taiji, most of them following specific family lineages. Differences lie mostly in training methods, speed, and weapon forms taught. There are several weapons included in common practice, but none are more iconic than the jian. Depending on the school, other swords, some spears and polearms and even whips can become part of a student's training.

Taijiquan Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Unarmed Throw (Maneuver Edge)
3. Dodge (requires Seasoned, Agility d8+)
4. Unarmed Defensive Throw (Maneuver Edge)
5. Improved Martial Artist (requires Veteran, Martial Artist, Fighting d10+)
6. Improved Dodge (requires Veteran, Dodge)
7. Unarmed Redirect (Maneuver Edge)

Te

Due to its proximity with continental Asia, Okinawa received massive cultural influence from China. Trade between these two countries dates as far back as the 6th century CE. This Chinese cultural influence covers many facets of Okinawan life, including its martial arts.

In 1393, a few years after Okinawa became a vassal state to China, a large group of Chinese settlers founded a village on Okinawa. Among them were several martial arts masters. At this time, the Chinese and Okinawan martial arts began to merge into a new art called simply te (hand); different schools would preface "te" with their city of origin, such as naha-te, tomari-te, or shuri-te.

Japan invaded Okinawa in 1609. Among other restrictions, they banned the practice of martial arts. This led the different schools to band together in a single unified force to fight the invaders, honing their skills secretly with clandestine visits to the continent.

Te is primarily a striking art, using hands, feet, elbows, and knees to attack. Grappling and throws are also included in formal training, but both take a back seat to striking. This emphasis in striking allows te users to generate incredible amounts of power in an instant. This characteristic has given the Okinawan rebels a quasi-mystical reputation for knocking out armored samurai with a single blow (*ikken hissatsu*). Te's solid stances and emphasis on single strikes might make it seem like a slow style, but the demanding training regimen hones the student's agility and reflexes, allowing them to react quickly to any combat situation. Te training depends heavily on kata; the skill of te students can be quickly measured by the kata they know and how well they are performed. It is an exclusively unarmed style.

Te Edge Tree

1. Martial Artist (requires Novice, Fighting d6+)
2. Brawler (requires Novice, Strength d8+)
3. Unarmed Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
4. Foot Stunning Strike (Maneuver Edge)
5. Bruiser (requires Seasoned, Brawler)
6. Improved Martial Artist (requires Veteran, Martial Artist, Fighting d10+)
7. Unarmed Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)
8. Foot Quick-Kill (Maneuver Edge)

Melee Weapons

This short list covers some of the most commonly-used weapons in the martial arts listed above. It is not a comprehensive list of all possible weapons. Many other weapons can be modeled using either these weapons or the weapons from the *Savage Worlds* core book. The Short Sword, for instance, can be used to model the stand swords used in Gatka, Mardani Khel, and Pencak Silat, among others. There is no great need to differentiate between these swords mechanically. We have chosen the following weapons because they each add something distinctive to the system.

Bamboo Staff

Weight: 6, Dmg: Str+d4, Cost: 25

+1 to hit when used with a Frenzy or Sweep attack, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 Hands

Baston or Tonfa (each)

Weight: 2, Dmg: Str+d4, Cost: 50

Parry +1 (cumulative if used as a pair by someone with the Two-Fisted or Florentine Edge)

Chakari

Weight: 4, Dmg: none, Cost: 100

Add Agility die to Intimidate rolls when lit, if a 1 is rolled on the Agility die the wielder takes 1d6 fire damage (the roll may still be successful)

The Chakari is not precisely a weapon, but rather a flaming wheel-like device used to terrify enemy elephants.

Katar

Weight: 3, Dmg: Str+d4+2, Cost: 100

AP1

Kris

Weight: 3, Dmg: Str+d6, Cost: 300

Provides +2 Charisma, even when sheathed (among cultures where the knife's importance is likely to be recognized)

Nunchaku

Weight: 5, Dmg: Agi+d6, Cost: 40

Parry +1

Sai (each)

Weight: 3, Dmg: Str+d4, Cost: 75

AP1, Parry +1 (cumulative if used as a pair by someone with the Two-Fisted or Florentine Edge)

Sickle

Weight: 4, Dmg: Str+d6, Cost: 25

+2 to hit on a Disarm maneuver

Urumi/Aara

Weight: 4, Dmg: Str+d8, Cost: 150

+1 to hit when used with a Frenzy or Sweep attack, MinAg: d8

Multi-Bladed Urumi

Weight: 8, Dmg: Str+d10, Cost: 250

+2 to hit when used with a Frenzy or Sweep attack, +2 to Intimidate, MinAg: d10

Wakizashi

Weight: 4, Dmg: Str+d6, Cost: 200

Parry +1 when wielded in the off hand



Martial Arts Edge Trees by Rank

□ = Generic Edge

■ = Maneuver Edge

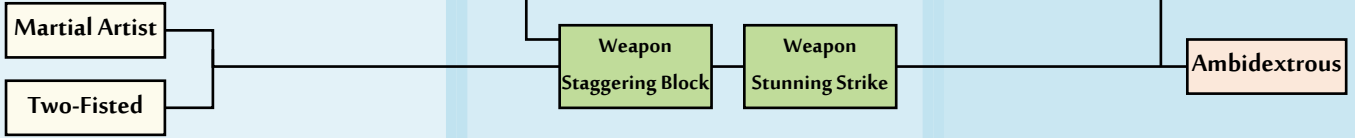
□ = Generic Edge with Bonus

Novice

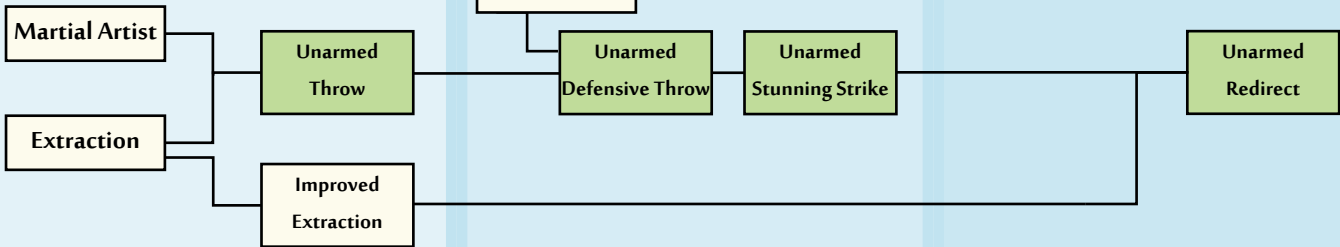
Seasoned

Veteran

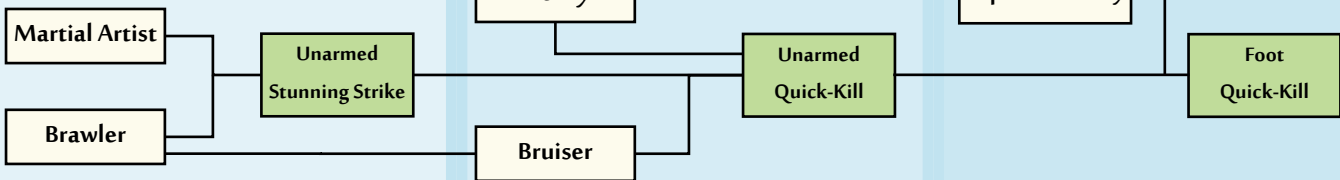
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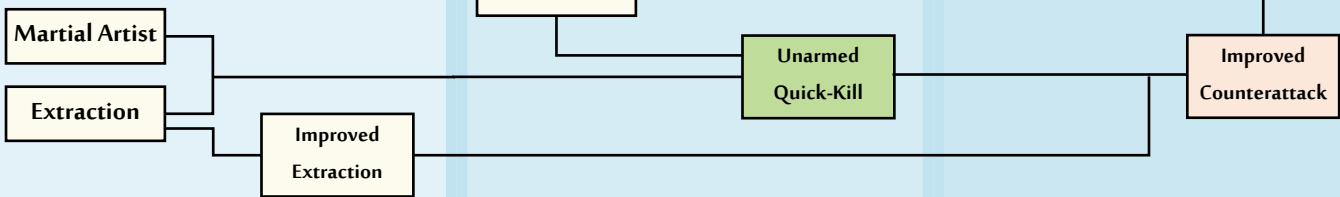
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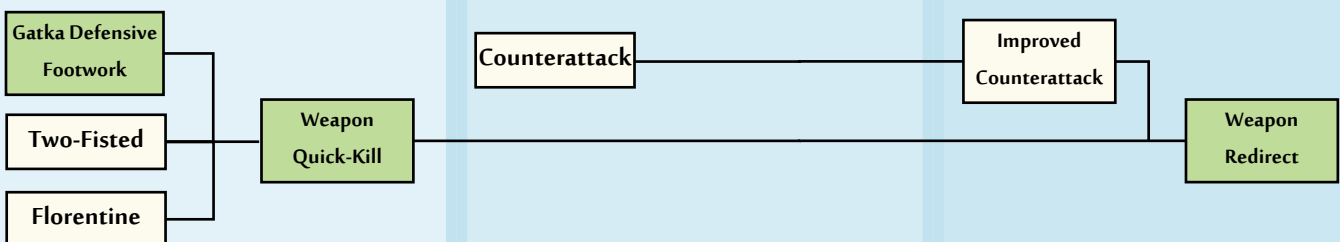
Bajiquan



Bando



Gatka



Martial Arts Edge Trees by Rank

□ = Generic Edge

■ = Maneuver Edge

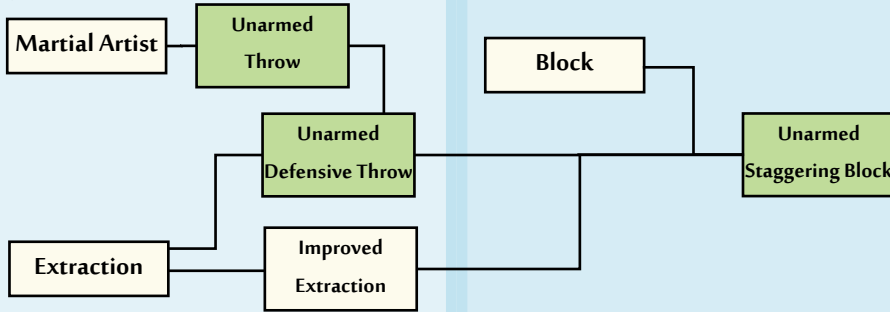
□ = Generic Edge with Bonus

Novice

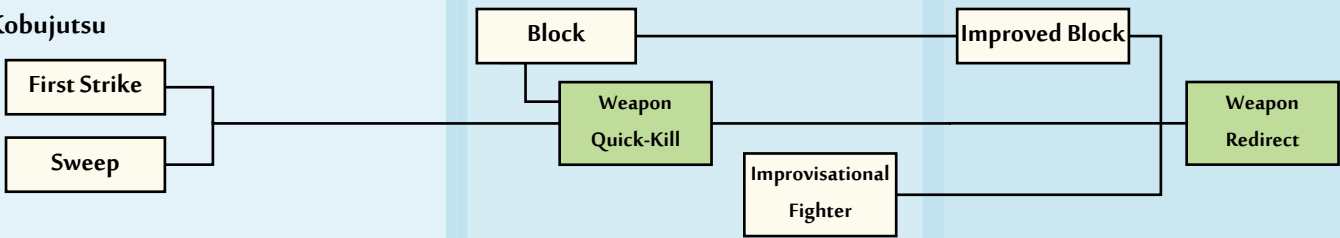
Seasoned

Veteran

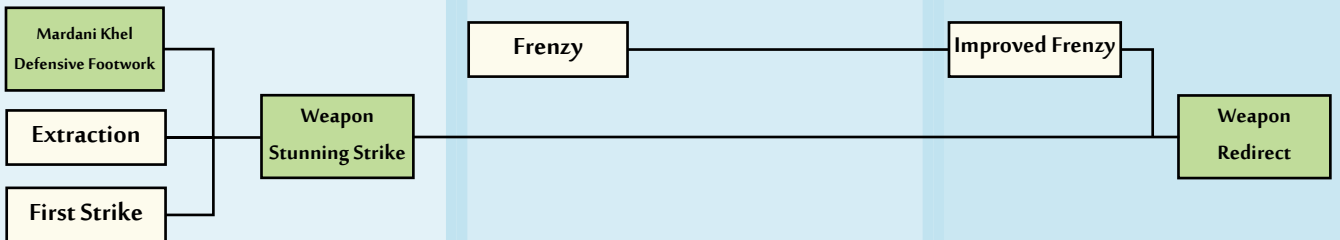
Jujutsu



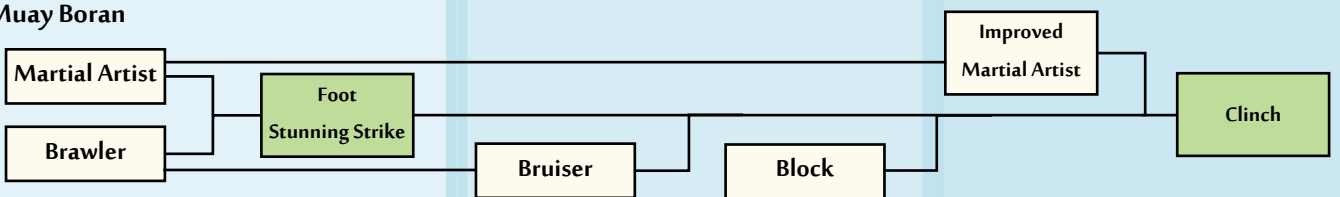
Kobujutsu



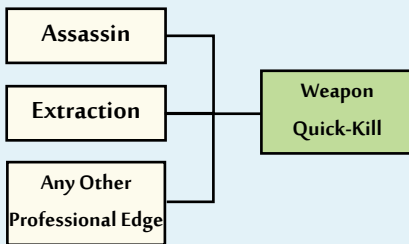
Mardani Khel



Muay Boran



Ninjutsu



Martial Arts Edge Trees by Rank

□ = Generic Edge

■ = Maneuver Edge

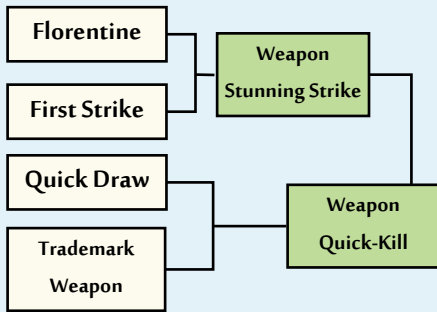
□ = Generic Edge with Bonus

Novice

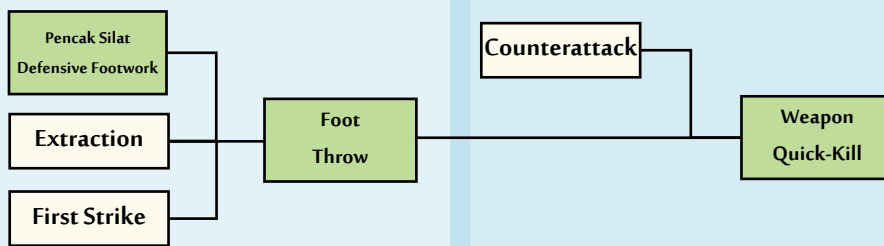
Seasoned

Veteran

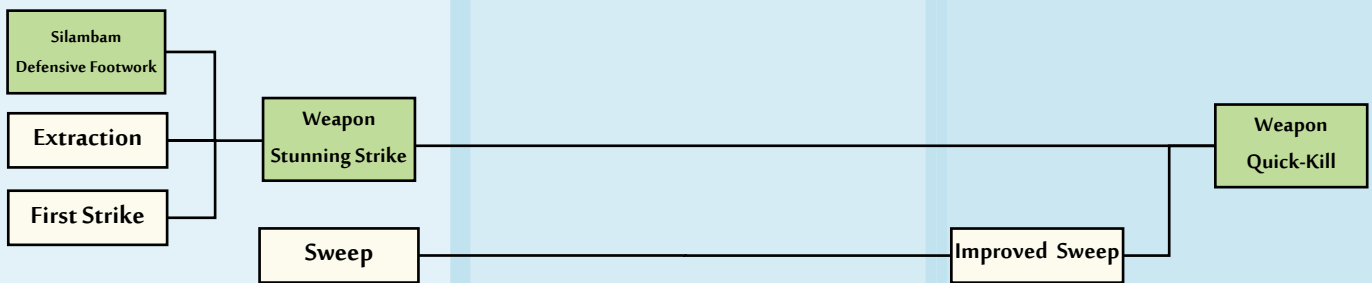
Niten Ichi-Ryu



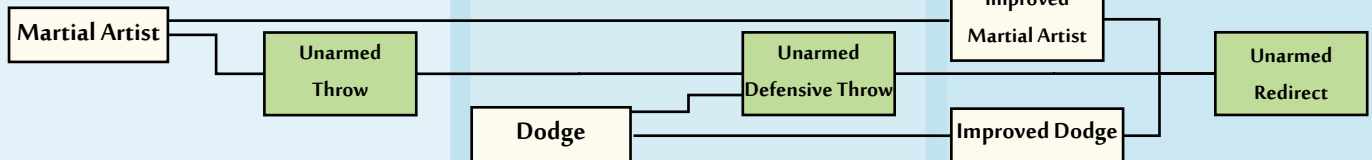
Pencak Silat



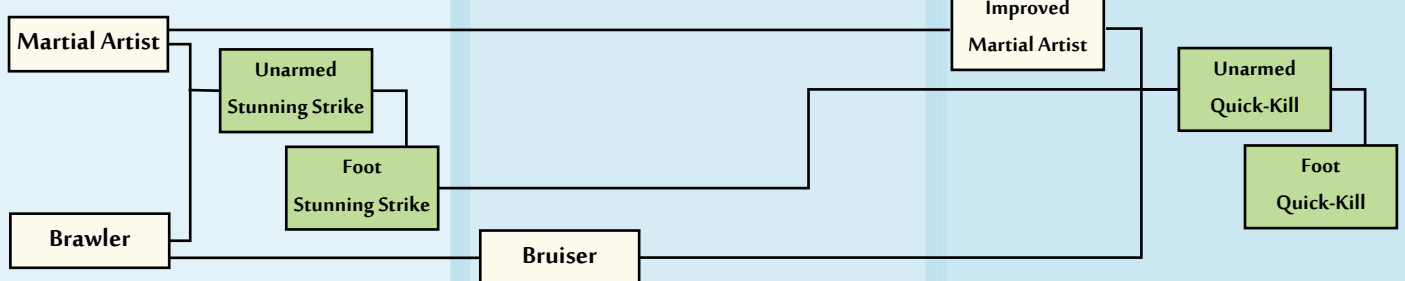
Silambam



Taijiquan



Te



Artillery

New Rule – Indirect Fire

Most rockets of the 19th century are indirect fire weapons. They cannot be aimed in the conventional sense, and so they are typically fired as part of a battery. However, some rockets are more reliable than others, and this is reflected in their new Accuracy attribute. Accuracy is expressed as a dice profile, indicating how far the rocket may stray from its intended target.

When firing an Indirect Fire weapon, designate a point on the ground within the weapon's range. Roll either a scatter die (if playing without a grid) or a d8 (if playing with a grid) to determine the scatter direction. Then roll the Accuracy dice and shift the landing point that many inches or squares away from the designated point. Finally, place the appropriate burst template (size determined by weapon) at the scatter point. Roll damage once for all targets under the template.

When firing a battery of rockets, this process can be abstracted by making a Shooting roll for each target (taking cover and range into account as normal). Success means the target is hit once, and one or more raises means the target is hit by two rockets. This abstracted method may also be used when playing without a map.

Fire Arrow

A simple cardboard-tube style rocket, the fire arrow does little damage by itself. Historically, they were intended to disrupt regiments or interrupt charges but not necessarily to cause significant casualties. In more recent times, they have also been used to great effect against airships. A well-placed volley can very quickly shred and ignite an airship's hydrogen bag. However, the limited range and erratic flight of the fire arrow means that the launcher must be very close to a flying target in order to be effective, which is why the Dragon airships of China use them as broadside weapons.

Range: 15/30/60

Dmg: 2d4

Accuracy: 2d8, Small Burst

Cone Rocket

These metal rockets are based on the Mysore and Congreve style. They are slightly less accurate and slightly less damaging than a well-aimed cannon shot. However, their portability makes them preferable for many situations where it may not be possible to bring multiple cannon.

Range: 24/48/96

Dmg: 2d6+2 (AP2)

Accuracy: 2d6, Medium Burst

Heavy Weapon

Two-Stage Rocket

Two-stage rockets such as the Huolong Chukongqi ("fire dragon out of the air") are much more rare even in China. The few styles developed so far all work similarly: a primary long-range rocket contains approximately two dozen fire arrows, which ignite as the primary rocket approaches its destination. When deployed from a Dragon airship, this weapon allows for an aerial assault on a troop position from a relatively safe distance. However, the time it takes to prepare and load such a rocket in the Dragon's forward launcher limits its effectiveness unless used in conjunction with several other airships. This weapon is primarily used for harassing and intimidating rather than causing significant casualties.

Range: 100/200/400

Dmg: none

Accuracy: 3d6

Deploys 24 fire arrows upon arrival, each of which scatters as if fired directly forward from that point.

Vehicles

Dragon Airship

The Qing Empire has taken its push towards air superiority in Asia very seriously. Few other countries have even developed a significant air presence, and most of the ships that do exist outside of China have been purchased or commandeered from European powers. These European airships still show evidence of their origins in artillery



The Dragon, the World's First Airship of the Line

spotting or casual travel. The Qing Empire is the first to view the airship as a weapon of war.

Part of the impetus for this innovation certainly comes from China's knowledge of rocketry. A few attempts had been made in the late 1860s to install small guns on European airships, to varying degrees of disaster. The recoil of direct fire artillery is too much for an airship to bear, and the only way to reduce that recoil resulted in a gun that was essentially useless as a weapon. However, self-propelled munitions do not suffer from this problem. Any number of fire arrows can be launched from the side of a Dragon with no noticeable effect on the airship's flight.

With all of the explosives on board, as well as the hydrogen airbag itself, safety is a paramount concern for Chinese aviators. Several crew members are always on watch for stray fires and leaks that might be pointing downward, and there are even patchers

who are able to climb up to the bag and repair it in flight.

China has a large and growing fleet of airships of many varieties, but the Dragons are the flagships. However, the Dragon airship is quite large, and the resources and crew required to maintain and operate one makes it a tremendous investment even for the mighty Qing Empire. So far, there are only ten Dragons currently deployed, but given their early success in the Manchurian conflict it is very likely that the Qixiang Emperor will continue building more.

ACC/TS: 10/60

Toughness: 16 (2)

Crew: 6+20

Climb -2 (may increase up to Climb 0 with release of ballast or gas)

Burmese Airboat

So far, Burma is the only Asian nation other than China to develop its own airship technology rather than simply following European models. The airboat is not as fast as the airships of other countries, but it is designed to handle more drastic elevation changes. The airboat carries a substantial amount of ballast in the form of multiple water tanks, and it has a compartmentalized flight bag that allows for rapid hydrogen release. These features make the Burmese airboat very well suited for traversing mountain ranges, especially those that surround the long, narrow Irrawaddy Valley.

ACC/TS: 15/40

Toughness: 10 (1)

Crew: 2+4

Climb -1 (may increase up to Climb 2 with release of ballast or gas)

War Elephant

For many armies of southern Asia, the elephant is a vehicle of war. Although the term “elephant cavalry” is often used to describe its use in battle, it would be inaccurate to refer to an elephant as a mount in the same way a horse is a mount. Because of its sheer size, an elephant can be a troop carrier, a sniper tower, or even a mobile cannon mount.

Trained war elephants, like trained war horses, do not spook easily. However, considering how difficult they can be to wound with hand weapons, Gatka practitioners of the Sikh Empire often train in devices like the chakari specifically to spook the animals.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+5, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13

Special Abilities:

- **Trample:** Str+d4 – The war elephant may attack each enemy it moves past during its turn. This is treated like a Sweep attack (a single attack at -2 against all enemies), but may be applied to each enemy the war elephant passes during the course of its movement.
- **Large:** Attacks that target the war elephant are at +2 to hit.

- **Vehicle:** In addition to being an animal, the war elephant is considered to be a vehicle with a crew of 1+5 (1 driver and up to 5 optional passengers). Alternately, a small forward-facing cannon or gatling gun may be mounted on the elephant’s back, which then changes the crew size to 1+2. These weapons may not be fired by the driver.

Oni ni Kanabō

Very recently, Japanese gearsmiths have managed to incorporate the rediscovered molybdenum alloys into the design of their war automatons. These automatons are employed almost exclusively in the Emperor’s infantry and have been instrumental in several of the early victories in the Manchurian invasion. So far, none of these automatons have completed their service or otherwise mustered out of the Japanese army, but that time may yet come. In the meantime, there were probably a small number of prototypes created along the way, and these may be out in the world somewhere. However, they are likely to be very rare.

The name “oni ni kanabō” comes from a Japanese expression that signifies the greatest possible strength. The Japanese already referred to automatons as *oni* (demon) and it is said that the only thing stronger than a demon is a demon with a club. So, when gearsmiths were able to create stronger automatons, it seemed only natural to give them a literal *kanabō* (club).

New Racial Template: Oni ni Kanabō

Most automatons in Asia are built following the usual automaton racial template from *Steamskapes: North America*. The template listed below is designed only for the oni ni kanabō. Note that the differences between the normal template and this one make both the positives and the negatives more extreme. The oni ni kanabō are terrifying warriors, but they have a much more difficult time being anything else.

Edges

- **Construct:** Automatons add +2 to recover from being Shaken, don’t suffer from wound modifiers, and are immune to poison and disease. Automatons cannot heal naturally. To heal an automaton requires the Repair skill, which is used like the Healing skill but with no

"Golden Hour." Automatons do not bleed out or otherwise die, though they can suffer injuries from incapacitation. All such injuries are considered permanent until repaired. Typically, these repairs require additional parts, since the original parts were lost to damage. Also, a result of "brain damage" on the injury table will be accompanied by significant loss of memory and personality that cannot be recovered. Mental and social abilities should be reduced or eliminated accordingly, at the GM's discretion.

- **Shell of the Sazae:** Oni ni kanabō are tougher than other automatons. They are considered to have 4 points of armor in all locations. In addition, their armor is highly fire-resistant. Oni ni kanabō are immune to individual fire attacks. However, their internal workings are still made of less durable metals like copper, iron, and brass, and can therefore be damaged through prolonged exposure to high temperatures even though the armor is unaffected.

Hindrances

- **Clockwork Upgrades:** After character creation, automatons may purchase skills as normal, but may only increase attributes and purchase edges with the help of a fully-equipped Gearsmith. The GM should make this an appropriately difficult process with regards to the time, skill, and resources required. Some edges may therefore be easier to acquire than others. (See the Gearsmith Edge Tree for guidelines.) One possible exception to this is that it may be relatively easy for an automaton character to gain a professional edge, since automatons are expected to have a purpose.
- **Horrifying Visage:** Oni ni kanabō have a Charisma of -4 at all times due to their demonic mask and horns, as well as their striking color (typically blue or red). However, they ignore this penalty and instead add a +2 whenever attempting an Intimidate roll.
- **Made for War:** All oni ni kanabō must be created with a minimum Strength and Vigor of d8. If created as a companion automaton, the gearsmith must therefore begin with at least Basic Structural Engineering. In addition, oni ni kanabō suffer a -4 penalty to all Common Knowledge rolls. Unlike other automatons, the

oni ni kanabō cannot overcome this with the Jack of All Trades Edge.

Molybdenum Alloy Spiked Kanabō

Weight: 15, Dmg: Str+d10, Cost: 200

MinStr d8, 2 hands, +1 against Disarm, may not be used with Frenzy.





RUSSIA

**CHINA
(QING EMPIRE)**

SIKH EMPIRE

MARATHA

REPUBLIC OF BENGAL

BURMA

PRATHET THAI

VIETNAM

MYSORE

REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

PHILIPPINES

MALAY STATES

BRUNEI

SARAWAK

DUTCH EAST INDIES

REPUBLIC OF EZO

**KOREA
(JOSEON EMPIRE)**

**JAPAN
(MEIJI EMPIRE)**

- Indian Alliance
- B. - BHUTAN
- S. - SINGAPORE
- C. - British East India Company

ASIA 1872

- Chapter 5 -

The History of Asia



The World is One Great Family

The Indian Alliance

Part I – Origins and Legacies

The history of the Indian subcontinent can be told in its cycles of unification and fragmentation. The cultural unity of the ancient Vedic period was followed by the political dispersion of the sixteen Mahajanapadas or “Great Kingdoms.” After a period of Persian and Greek conquest, Bindusara and Ashoka greatly expanded the Mauryan Empire, the breadth of which would not be rivaled until the much later Gupta Empire. Between those two eras—and between the Gupta and the Mughal Empires—other kingdoms and dynasties vied for control of key territories. Borders changed drastically from age to age, and local customs and regional identity often differed significantly from those of the ruling political entity.

In this way, the history of India is also a history of religion. The Vedic period established the traditions and texts that formed the core of Hinduism, but Jainism and Buddhism also saw their emergence during this time. The Mauryan Empire exhibited a complicated and fluid relationship with all three religions. Hindu priests held high positions in the court of Maurya throughout this period, although Hinduism was not always the chief official religion. Chandragupta, the first emperor, converted to Jainism after his retirement and spread that religion, particularly in eastern India. However, his grandson Ashoka converted to Buddhism during his reign and sent Buddhist missionaries to proselytize

throughout India and far beyond—from Greece to Burma. As he did, he suppressed the practices of Jainism while leaving Hinduism largely untouched.

Following the decline of Maurya, Jainism saw some resurgence under the Mahameghabahana Dynasty, while Buddhism continued to spread on trade routes throughout Asia. Then, all three major religions were allowed and encouraged to flourish under the Gupta Empire. This political unity enabled a period of relatively peaceful coexistence between the three faiths—one of the many reasons the Gupta Empire is widely regarded as the golden age of India. After Gupta’s fall, the subsequent smaller dynasties often favored one religion and suppressed the others. Because of shifting territories, this sometimes meant that the favored religion was actually a minority belief in a given kingdom. This became particularly true with the introduction of a new religion: Islam.

Although the powerful Umayyad Caliphate made attempts to push beyond Persia into India as early as the 8th century, the Battle of Rajasthan halted that initial expansion. Nevertheless, after several hundred years of conflict between the various Middle Kingdoms, the Turks and Afghans were finally able to take significant territory and establish Sultanates in competition with the Hindu dynasties. These Sultanates were often religiously oppressive, and this oppression sparked numerous rebellions and uprisings. The various Hindu kingdoms in eastern and southern India were both politically and philosophically inspired to resist the Sultanate expansion. However, the Sultans were eventually able to draw on both the technological resources of the former Arab Empire and the fierce military might of the Mongols (who had themselves converted to Islam after conquering the Caliphate). This led to a series of conquests that culminated in unification of almost the entire subcontinent under the Mughal Empire, in which Muslim emperors reigned over a majority Hindu population and minority Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs.

As strong as the Mughal Empire seemed at the outset, its timing was ill-fated. The seeds of the empire’s destruction were being sown even as it grew to its largest borders. India on the whole was unprepared to face the most insidious external threat of its history. Already divided by religion, tradition, language, and loyalty, the land was ripe for the kind of divisive economic and political manipulation that European imperialists practiced so well.

Part II – The Fall of the Mughals and the Rise of the Puppets

The Mughal Empire (known as Gurkani at the time) experienced two key peaks in the 17th century. The first was its cultural peak under Shah Jahan. A devout Muslim, Shah Jahan ordered the demolition of major Hindu buildings and institutions throughout the Empire. In the midst of this destruction, however, he also constructed some of the most iconic architecture in India's history and oversaw a golden age of art and science. Nevertheless, because he focused his improvements in Kashmir and other Muslim-dominated territories, this renaissance failed to mitigate—and perhaps even exacerbated—the resentment of the majority Hindu population towards Mughal rule.

The second peak for the Empire occurred under Shah Jahan's son and successor, Aurangzeb. Less interested in religious devotion than his father, Aurangzeb chose a more tolerant and inclusive style of governance. This eased tensions at first, but Aurangzeb soon became the most expansionist of all Mughal emperors. Gurkani reached its political and territorial peak near the end of the 17th century, making it the most extensive Indian empire since Maurya. Unfortunately, even with a more distributed form of government, that much territory proved too much for the Mughal administration to hold peacefully. In the latter half of his long reign, Aurangzeb faced increasing rebellion, most notably the Deccan Wars against the people known as the Maratha.

The Maratha army was surprisingly effective, but more important was its astounding resilience. For seven years it held out against the Mughal onslaught, until the first Maratha leader, Sambhaji, was captured and killed for his refusal to convert to Islam. And yet the Maratha rose again and held off the Mughal Empire for another ten years under a second leader, Rajaram. Despite continued loss of territory, the Maratha extracted heavy casualties from the Mughal Army at every turn. Rajaram died in 1700, leaving a young son as his successor. Tarabai, his widow, declared herself regent and led the Maratha army herself through the remaining seven years of the Deccan Wars. The Mughal Empire no longer had the personnel or materiel to stand against the relentless onslaught of the Maratha. Aurangzeb was finally defeated in 1707 and died soon after. In the decades

that followed Maratha expanded and the Mughal Empire all but disappeared as one by one its various territories revolted and declared their independence.

Though Maratha quickly grew to be the new dominant power in India, the state of the region in the aftermath of the Deccan Wars proved to be a fertile ground for European trade and imperialism. Aurangzeb had been in a position to deal with the Europeans on reasonably equal footing, but the newly-independent Bengal and Hyderabad kingdoms—as well as the numerous smaller states in the region that Europeans inaccurately referred to as “Carnatic”—were less prepared to stand firm in the face of the economic and military might of both the British and French East India Companies. Furthermore, the rulers of these kingdoms soon became easy pawns for France and England. A series of wars known in India as the Carnatic Wars (each of which corresponded to other wars in Europe) were ostensibly fought between the two imperial powers. However, Robert Clive (for England) and Joseph François Dupleix (for France) encouraged, manipulated, and even hired local forces to do much of their fighting for them. This served to not only weaken the armies of those kingdoms but also to make their leaders beholden to the Europeans for economic and military support. When Clive and the British proved victorious, they therefore claimed all of the surrounding territory, making “Carnatic” and Bengal the first major European colonies in India, and in fact the largest such colonies on the Asian mainland.

Part III – Company and Conquest

Following those wars, although England had not yet established direct administration over much of Carnatic territory beyond Madras and the former French holding of Pondicherry, the British East India Company immediately began looking west towards the larger kingdoms of Mysore and Hyderabad. Hyderabad's position was already crippled by the loss of its coastal access in the Northern Circars, but Mysore remained strong under its leader Hyder Ali.

Unfortunately for the Company, Robert Clive had retired by this point. His successors were not nearly as competent, as the most promising officers in English service were beginning to seek service in North America in the newly formed American Colonial Government. Several factors contributed to



Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey, 1757

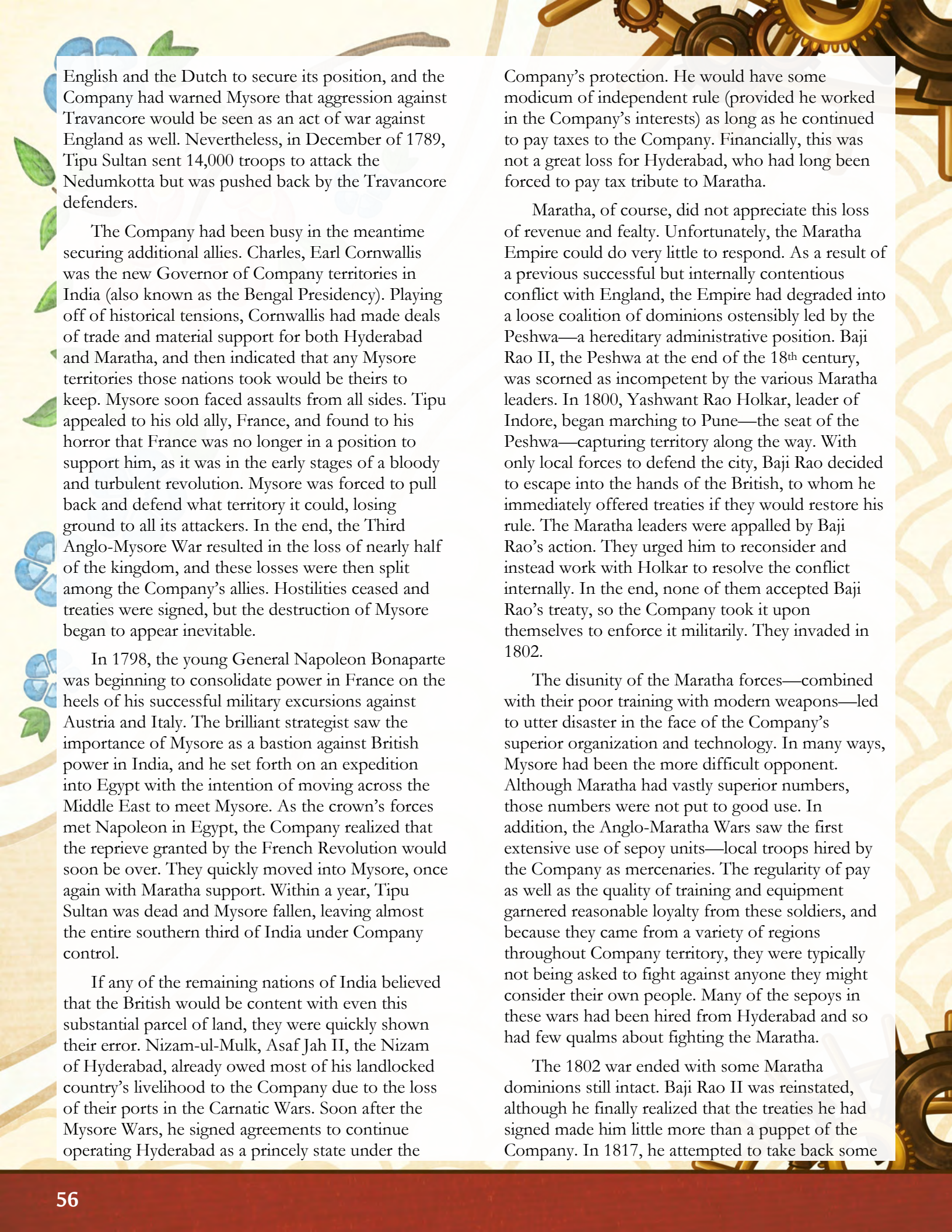
by Francis Hayman

this drain of talent from India, including a more temperate climate, a less hostile (and largely English) local populace, and the revenue loss for the Company after Prime Minister Lord Chatham broke its monopoly in the colonies. Officially, England still supported the Company and its holdings in India as English territory, but after questions about propriety regarding payments to Clive and the loss of tax revenue from America, the Company's standing at home was significantly weakened. In many ways, the Company was desperate for some success.

The first two Anglo-Mysore Wars did not provide that success. Hyder Ali and his son, Tipu Sultan, were both very effective leaders who grew Mysore's economy through a flourishing silk trade and also promoted Mysore's international position with ties to France, a country that was all too happy

to promote a strong counter to England. France hoped that Mysore might offer a way back into the region after its losses in the Carnatic Wars. In addition, both Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan were military technophiles, and they were responsible for some of the first major innovations in rocket technology in centuries. The Mysore rockets used iron tubes for significantly improved accuracy and distance, and these devastated the English cavalry.

However, after ascending to the throne, Tipu Sultan made what would turn out to be a colossal error of timing with the third Anglo-Mysore War. Tipu had grown up hating the English because of his father's wars, and he was particularly frustrated by Company support for Travancore, a kingdom at the southern tip of India that Tipu desired to make part of Mysore. Travancore had worked with both the



English and the Dutch to secure its position, and the Company had warned Mysore that aggression against Travancore would be seen as an act of war against England as well. Nevertheless, in December of 1789, Tipu Sultan sent 14,000 troops to attack the Nedumkotta but was pushed back by the Travancore defenders.

The Company had been busy in the meantime securing additional allies. Charles, Earl Cornwallis was the new Governor of Company territories in India (also known as the Bengal Presidency). Playing off of historical tensions, Cornwallis had made deals of trade and material support for both Hyderabad and Maratha, and then indicated that any Mysore territories those nations took would be theirs to keep. Mysore soon faced assaults from all sides. Tipu appealed to his old ally, France, and found to his horror that France was no longer in a position to support him, as it was in the early stages of a bloody and turbulent revolution. Mysore was forced to pull back and defend what territory it could, losing ground to all its attackers. In the end, the Third Anglo-Mysore War resulted in the loss of nearly half of the kingdom, and these losses were then split among the Company's allies. Hostilities ceased and treaties were signed, but the destruction of Mysore began to appear inevitable.

In 1798, the young General Napoleon Bonaparte was beginning to consolidate power in France on the heels of his successful military excursions against Austria and Italy. The brilliant strategist saw the importance of Mysore as a bastion against British power in India, and he set forth on an expedition into Egypt with the intention of moving across the Middle East to meet Mysore. As the crown's forces met Napoleon in Egypt, the Company realized that the reprieve granted by the French Revolution would soon be over. They quickly moved into Mysore, once again with Maratha support. Within a year, Tipu Sultan was dead and Mysore fallen, leaving almost the entire southern third of India under Company control.

If any of the remaining nations of India believed that the British would be content with even this substantial parcel of land, they were quickly shown their error. Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah II, the Nizam of Hyderabad, already owed most of his landlocked country's livelihood to the Company due to the loss of their ports in the Carnatic Wars. Soon after the Mysore Wars, he signed agreements to continue operating Hyderabad as a princely state under the

Company's protection. He would have some modicum of independent rule (provided he worked in the Company's interests) as long as he continued to pay taxes to the Company. Financially, this was not a great loss for Hyderabad, who had long been forced to pay tax tribute to Maratha.

Maratha, of course, did not appreciate this loss of revenue and fealty. Unfortunately, the Maratha Empire could do very little to respond. As a result of a previous successful but internally contentious conflict with England, the Empire had degraded into a loose coalition of dominions ostensibly led by the Peshwa—a hereditary administrative position. Baji Rao II, the Peshwa at the end of the 18th century, was scorned as incompetent by the various Maratha leaders. In 1800, Yashwant Rao Holkar, leader of Indore, began marching to Pune—the seat of the Peshwa—capturing territory along the way. With only local forces to defend the city, Baji Rao decided to escape into the hands of the British, to whom he immediately offered treaties if they would restore his rule. The Maratha leaders were appalled by Baji Rao's action. They urged him to reconsider and instead work with Holkar to resolve the conflict internally. In the end, none of them accepted Baji Rao's treaty, so the Company took it upon themselves to enforce it militarily. They invaded in 1802.

The disunity of the Maratha forces—combined with their poor training with modern weapons—led to utter disaster in the face of the Company's superior organization and technology. In many ways, Mysore had been the more difficult opponent. Although Maratha had vastly superior numbers, those numbers were not put to good use. In addition, the Anglo-Maratha Wars saw the first extensive use of sepoy units—local troops hired by the Company as mercenaries. The regularity of pay as well as the quality of training and equipment garnered reasonable loyalty from these soldiers, and because they came from a variety of regions throughout Company territory, they were typically not being asked to fight against anyone they might consider their own people. Many of the sepoys in these wars had been hired from Hyderabad and so had few qualms about fighting the Maratha.

The 1802 war ended with some Maratha dominions still intact. Baji Rao II was reinstated, although he finally realized that the treaties he had signed made him little more than a puppet of the Company. In 1817, he attempted to take back some

of Maratha's lost territory, but he was soundly defeated and the Company annexed the remainder of the Maratha Empire. The flag of the British East India Company now flew over almost the entirety of the Indian subcontinent.

However, these victories had been costly, and the Company was beginning to run out of money. Even more devastating, England was beginning to pull its most talented military personnel from India for use in the Napoleonic Wars. The Company desperately needed a way to retain its independent monetary strength, and so it turned to a new source of revenue.

Part IV – From Tea to Opium

With the loss of a colonial monopoly and the price supports that had gone with it, the East India Company's revenue from tea gradually degraded in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In particular, the lack of tax support made it much more difficult to overcome the trade deficit with China. The Company needed to shift to a different cash crop—preferably one that would sell well even in China so as to rebalance that deficit. The solution was obvious, despite being completely illegal in the primary target market.

Opium is one of humanity's oldest medicines and also one of its oldest mind-altering substances. It had been known and used in China for centuries, but relatively rarely due to limited availability. As opium became more widespread in the 17th century, however, the Qing Dynasty saw a growing need to clamp down on its use, finally issuing an imperial prohibition in 1729. Some European smugglers worked around the prohibition throughout the 18th century, and opium smoking increased as the general populace casually disregarded the law.

The Carnatic Wars had placed the world's richest opium fields—the Bengal opium region—directly into the hands of the East India Company. As ports and trade routes were also added to Company territory, it secured its position as an opium monopoly by forcefully expelling all its competitors. This included several companies from the American Colonial Government, all of whom were forced to begin purchasing their supply from Turkey, the world's second largest opium growing region. Eventually this drove up the price of opium in North America and Europe, which allowed the East India Company to make a significant profit even as it

undersold the North American distributors in its most important market of China.

The exceptionally profitable nature of the Chinese opium trade was partially due to differences in the methods of consumption. For the most part, Europeans and North Americans used opium ostensibly for its medicinal qualities—first as laudanum and later as morphine. Many people did become addicted to laudanum-based syrups and elixirs, or they treated them as inexpensive diversions compared to beer or wine, but they still were essentially purchasing their opium mixed in small amounts with sugar and alcohol. Only in China was the smoking of opium commonplace. This meant that the Chinese market, though it was an underground one, required larger quantities of pure opium. In addition, the Bengal poppy fields were significantly closer to China by ship than those of Turkey, so the East India Company maintained a huge advantage in money and time for exploiting this market. Even though its monopoly in India could not keep others from smuggling to China, the Company made a much greater profit than other importers because of its lower overhead and vertically integrated supply chain.

This opium revenue was critical to the Company's overall operations. As the French Revolution ended and the Napoleonic Wars accelerated, the British Crown was offering greater and greater rewards for service in the British Army and the Royal Navy. At the same time, many aspiring merchants and traders were moving operations to North America to take advantage of the rich opportunities there. The decreased availability of soldiers combined with the Company's rapid growth in territory created a massive rise in costs to maintain the standing army needed to enforce Company rule across India. British officers commanded premium wages for even relatively short contracts, and the Company soon found that it could not maintain full units of British troops except in a few ports. Instead, it used opium profits to hire more and more sepoy.

The Company attempted to institute very cautious protocols with its sepoy units in order to discourage rebellion. Soldiers were hired in one region, moved to Madras, Kolkata, or Bombay for training, and then stationed somewhere far away from their point of origin. The sepoy officers of a particular regiment were occasionally transferred to a different unit, but the troops were consistently led by the same British commander. The Company hoped

that this would create a greater trust between the sepoy soldiers and their commander while reducing the likelihood of mutiny led by a local officer. For a time, this seemed to work as hoped, but the Company would soon discover that its resources were stretched too thin to handle another major military action.

Part V – The Sikh Empire

Following the fall of Aurangzeb, the receding line of Mughal influence in India had traveled largely from south to north and east to west, leaving the Punjab region as one of the last remnants of Mughal rule. In the middle of the 18th century, the Afghan Durrani Empire claimed the region for its own, assuming there would be little organized political opposition to such a claim. Although technically true, this assumption eventually proved itself wrong by catalyzing the birth of a new nation.

Punjab was the home of the relatively young Sikh religion, and the Sikh army known as the Dal Khalsa had formed in the early part of the 18th century while the region was still under Mughal control. The Dal Khalsa was instrumental in asserting Sikh independence in the region, and as the Mughal Empire declined, the Sikhs used their military experience and expertise to establish approximately a dozen misls—small sovereign aristocratic states that coordinated a common defense from external threats. This system proved effective against Mughal, Persian, and Durrani incursions throughout the 18th century.

Through these trials and challenges, the military strength of this Sikh confederacy grew. At the end of the 18th century, an ambitious young misldar named Ranjit Singh sought to unify all the Sikh forces under his own banner. He began by conquering Lahore, and then continued across the remaining misls in the following years. By 1801, he had forged a new Sikh Empire with himself crowned as Maharaja. Shuja Shah of the Durrani Empire saw the territorial threat of this unification immediately and attempted to make arrangements with England to secure a mutual defense against the Sikhs. England saw bigger threats around the globe, and did not consider the Punjab region important to its global outlook. This narrow vision and underestimation began a cascade of events that would end up costing the British East India Company all of India.

The Afghans could not effectively threaten Ranjit's empire from the west. Vast mountain ranges—most notably the Spīn Ghar (or Safīd Kūh) mountains—create a very defensible border between the two regions. Without a simultaneous threat from the southeast, the Sikhs had no trouble holding off the Durrani, who were finally forced to relinquish their unenforceable claim on the Punjab.

Not content with merely defending, Maharaja Ranjit Singh continued the pattern of conquest upon which he had forged his empire. He expanded Sikh territory far beyond its original borders under the misl system. He pushed the southern border along the Indus into Bahawalpur and the northeastern border through Jammu and the Kashmir. When the Company completed its conquest of Maratha, it now found a strong and vibrant Sikh Empire as its new neighbor. However, the Company was already reeling with the financial and bureaucratic burdens involved in governing the rest of India. Some Company officials realized that eventually they would have to deal with the Sikhs, but in the meantime they needed to solidify their financial base. Flush with their own successes, the British arrogantly assumed that the Sikh Empire would fall as had all the other Indian empires before it.

For his part, Maharaja Ranjit Singh also understood that confrontation with the English was inevitable. He prepared for the coming conflict by seeking intelligence from those who had recently fought the English to standstills and even victories. He hired consulting mercenary officers from France and Italy who were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. From these Europeans, Singh came to understand that the English strength came largely from its navy when possible, and on land from a mix of cavalry and artillery expertise. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, the Sikhs engaged in numerous organizational reforms and training exercises specifically designed to address English tactics. The Sikh Army (still colloquially known as the Khalsa) already possessed one of the most formidable cavalry forces in the world, and this additional preparation assured its superiority in the coming war.

Sadly, Ranjit Singh would not live to see his plans to fruition. He died in 1839, and for the next several years the crown passed through many hands as weak successor after weak successor tried to claim leadership. Because many of these were the sons and widows of Ranjit Singh, and because many of them were assassinated by their own relatives, faith in the

throne and in Ranjit's lineage began to deteriorate. This period could have spelled the end of the Sikh Empire without any external intervention. Fortunately, the one foreign power most likely to take advantage of this strife was distracted by what would come to be known as the First Opium War, a conflict between China and the East India Company that had begun the same year Ranjit died.

The Khalsa became more and more concerned that the empire would no longer be in a position to defend itself when the British once again turned their eyes westward. The generals quickly decided that they needed a victorious gesture to unite public sentiment. A young officer from the Jammu region—Zorawar Singh Kahluria—became the unlikely prosecutor of this plan. Zorawar was a favored general of the Jammu leader Gulab Singh, one of three Jammu brothers who were busy manipulating the successions in Lahore. Gulab was very happy with Zorawar for his frugality and effective oversight of the forts in Jammu, and Zorawar was allowed to do as he pleased. And so, in 1841, Zorawar Singh Kahluria took 6000 troops and declared war on China.

Although this sounds perfectly ridiculous on its face, the specifics were much more reasonable. Western Tibet was a remote part of the Qing Dynasty that held few cultural and fewer bureaucratic ties to the imperial government. Zorawar's initial assault into Tibet was met with very little resistance. Knowing that overextending his supply lines across the Himalayan plateau would be fatal, Zorawar chose to solidify his hold through a series of forts he constructed across the western edge of the Ladakh Plateau—a traditionally important textile trade route. He left regiments in place to defend the position, although the Qing imperial resident at Lhasa quickly agreed to treaty terms ceding the valley to the Sikhs. Zorawar returned home a hero, having presented the empire its first military victory since Ranjit's death.

Meanwhile in Lahore, Nau Nihal Singh—Ranjit's grandson and the Maharaja supported by Gulab and the Jumma brothers—had been assassinated and replaced by his uncle Sher Singh, who was a puppet of Gulab's rivals. Gulab tried to maneuver Zorawar and the Khalsa to support replacing Ranjit's line with a new Maharaja, specifically himself. However, the Khalsa understood that Gulab's name carried only regional support, and that trying to raise him up would cause the empire to splinter back into the

misms of old. The Khalsa also saw that Sher Singh was a weak and pliable leader that would continue to favor his patrons over the good of the nation.

Thus, in 1843, Zorawar did lead the Khalsa in removing Sher Singh from power, but instead of supporting Gulab's bid they replaced Sher with their own choice for Maharaja: the only remaining uncorrupted son of Ranjit Singh, Duleep. Maharaja Duleep Singh was only five years old at his ascension, so his mother was named as regent. The Khalsa immediately declared their full support for the Maharani Jind Kaur. Zorawar Singh Kahluria supported this solution to the succession problem, and with his support both the general public and the regional leaders acquiesced.



Zorawar Singh Kahluria

The timing of this was quite fortunate, as any further delay would undoubtedly have been extremely costly. The British East India Company had won the First Opium War in 1842, and immediately returned to India with their sights on Punjab. In 1843, as the Sikh succession was at last being resolved, the Company marched on Sindh. The small coastal kingdom was quickly conquered, and the Company began preparing the port of Karachi for use as a staging ground. In 1845, the East India Company declared war on the Sikh Empire.

Part VI – The Tide is Turned

Defense of the Empire was split between two main forces. The first oversaw the defense of the Indus River valley and was commanded by Zorawar Singh Kahluria himself. This was seen as the most likely direction of attack in light of the Company's annexation of Sindh. The second force was responsible for defending the Sutlej River against a potential assault from Delhi and Jaipur. This force was commanded by Lal Singh, a young general who had risen through the ranks more through intrigue, favor, and flattery than by military prowess. The Khalsa distrusted him, but the Maharani Jind Kaur had chosen him as her personal military advisor. In order to preserve the still-fragile state of rule, the generals of the Khalsa consented to work with Lal Singh.

Zorawar had little difficulty fending off attacks to his river forts, although he found that the Company forces were keeping him occupied with constant redeployments. Every time he would drive off one unit, word of another attack would send him hurrying to a different section of the border. In addition, because the attacks always seemed to be made up of advanced cavalry, Zorawar could not be sure when or where the main body of the Company army might be arriving. Finally, after weeks of this, he sent a small group of outriders to track a retreating cavalry regiment to try to find where the infantry and artillery were mustered. Following a thorough search across the border into Sindh, the outriders returned and reported that they had found no infantry or artillery. Zorawar Singh Kahluria quickly realized that the southern front was intended as a distraction, and that he would be needed elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a much harder fight was happening to the east. Despite superior positions, Lal Singh's forces had lost several key entrenchments. Reports of the battles filtered back to the Khalsa indicating that in each case the retreat was called as the British cavalry took the Sikh artillery emplacements. This concerned the generals, because they knew that their own cavalry should have been superior in training and numbers. They had provided Lal Singh with their most elite riders, yet he seemed unable to make good use of them. Following the Battle of Mudki—a narrow loss that should have been an easy victory—the reason was made clear. A loyal cavalryman returned to Lahore from the front and spoke directly

to the Khalsa. He told them that Lal Singh had abandoned his position as soon as the battle was engaged.

The Khalsa was furious, but also in a panic. The British were marching toward Ferozeshah, where the main force was camped. Another betrayal at that site could spell the end of the eastern defenses and perhaps even open up the capital itself. As the generals were deliberating what options they had available, a messenger arrived in Lahore from Zorawar Singh Kahluria indicating that he was marching with half of his troops to reinforce the eastern front and that he expected to arrive there within the week. The Khalsa immediately sent the messenger back asking Zorawar to detach his cavalry and hurry to Ferozeshah, letting the infantry and artillery catch up later.

The Battle of Ferozeshah commenced the very next day, on the 21st of December, 1845. The Company attack was overconfident and aggressive, and the Sikh artillery exacted heavy losses. However, the Sikh infantry quickly found themselves flanked by British cavalry. Both Lal Singh and his lieutenant Tej Singh had withdrawn their cavalry units from the battle, leaving the rest of the army exposed. Fighting continued on into the night, with both sides falling into disarray. As the morning broke, the Company forces began to rally and prepare for another day of fighting, but Lal Singh was nowhere to be found. Tej Singh's forces were similarly drawn off when the commander told his riders that a British resupply retreat was an outflanking maneuver. The Company began its final assault in the mid-morning, clearly expecting to easily finish off the surrounded Sikh troops.

At noon, Zorawar's cavalry finally arrived. They charged out of the southwest and quickly overran the main British artillery batteries. In a frantic and confused maneuver, the British tried to turn the Sikh guns they had captured onto their own position, but Zorawar had already moved in to join the main fighting. Seeing the arrival of these reinforcements, Tej Singh's riders finally joined the fight against their commander's direction. The Company forces—apparently less well supplied and more disorganized than their successes had implied—were quickly routed. Zorawar led both his and Tej Singh's cavalry in a harassing engagement that forced the British to abandon their camp entirely, leaving all of their artillery and supply wagons.

As the defenders of Ferozeshah rebuilt their position and waited for the additional forces to arrive, Zorawar took Lal Singh and Tej Singh into custody. Tej Singh was executed on the evidence of his own troops, while Lal Singh was discovered trying to abandon his unit and ride towards Delhi. In his pack he had a detailed map of the Sikh entrenchment at Sobraon and letters from a British commander named Captain Peter Nicholson specifying which forts the Company forces would be attacking and requesting information on the disposition of defenders at each. With this evidence in hand, Zorawar brought Lal Singh before the Maharani Jind Kaur, who immediately gave the order to have her former personal advisor executed for treason. For his great faith and loyalty, Zorawar Singh Kahluria was appointed the new wazir.

It soon became apparent that Lal Singh's orchestrated betrayal had been the East India Company's key gambit in the war. The British forces that had been pushing towards Lahore retreated across the Sutlej and did not attempt to advance again, largely because the Bengali sepoys that constituted their main infantry contingent had mutinied and fled following the Battle of Ferozeshah. Also, now that Zorawar knew where the enemy army was, he realized that Sindh was essentially unprotected. He sent his southern forces to clear out the few cavalry units stationed there and expand Sikh territory all the way to the ocean. By February of 1845, they had captured Karachi and sent Company ships fleeing from the port. The East India Company hurried to offer a generous treaty to the Sikh Empire that included the concessions of the Punjab and Chandigarh regions as well as the already captured Sindh.

Part VII – The Company Expelled

Following this gross military failure, the British East India Company desperately sought ways to consolidate its hold over the rest of India. Company officials feared what might happen if more sepoys abandoned their units, particularly in the interior cities. The availability of Company ships enabled reasonably short response times along the coasts in the event of a revolt, but slow inland travel left vast swaths of territory at risk. In a panic, the Company sent envoys to England and North America to seek investors for a new, ambitious project: the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR). The Company spent the next two years securing investment, and

then began a search for someone to head the project. They eventually settled on James John Berkley, a student of the railway engineer Robert Stephenson. Berkley was hired in 1849, and by 1850 he had settled in India and begun the work of surveying rights of way.

Meanwhile, the Company decided it was time to appeal for more direct support from England. Realizing the growing difficulties of running India with an entirely mercenary army, the Company appealed to Parliament to declare India an official territory of the British Empire. Unfortunately for the Company, the timing of this appeal could not have been worse. With the economy reeling from the Irish potato blight and numerous European downturns, with unrest in the American Colonial Government over the question of abolition, and with the hints of an heir of Napoleon threatening to overthrow the July Monarchy and signal a new era of French expansionism, Parliament was in no position to take such a drastic step in India. Even worse, Prime Minister John Russell was presiding over a minority government, with his Whigs only able to hold power because of a split among the conservatives. The British Parliament was barely able to make decisions about home affairs, let alone add to its foreign responsibilities.

Over the next several years, a growing array of pressures began to weigh on the Company, its forces, and its finances. The sepoys were the only reliable source of manpower the Company had, so these units also became the source of labor for the new railway project. Soldiers were trained as steamhands, spreading them out across the peninsula and stretching thin the already shrinking units. In an attempt to bolster their ranks, some sepoy officers—particularly those of the Bhakti traditions—began hiring female soldiers and railroad laborers. The English commanders were alarmed at this practice at first, but the sepoy officers assured them there was historical and traditional precedent. Initial objections gradually faded as the women proved to be effective in improving output.

This focus on the railway project demanded increased revenue, so the Company pushed even harder on its opium trade in China. Despite its increasing reliance on this trade, the Company could not afford to commit more troops to holding the developing port of Hong Kong, so in 1856 the Qing Dynasty took advantage of this distraction and attacked. With its resources overburdened with the

railway, the Company was able to put up little resistance. The Xianfeng Emperor finished removing the East India Company from China by 1858. The damage turned out to be much farther reaching than that, however, as the war in China became India's opportunity to rebel as well.

James John Berkley's plan for building a railroad across the peninsula had included two initial trunks, with other legs to be completed later. The first would extend north from Bombay to Delhi, and the second would begin in Kolkata and follow the Ganges River valley northwest to meet the first trunk southeast of Delhi, thus joining Delhi with both coasts. By 1856, this plan was nearing completion. However, as the two lines approached each other, workers and troops from the three "presidencies" or regions of Company-controlled India began to interact with each other. It became apparent that there were differences of pay, treatment, and recruitment practices between the Bombay, Madras, and Bengal Army sepoys. In light of these revelations, some of the steamhands began to discuss the possibility of a general strike, and the soldiers began to whisper about mutiny.

While sepoy discontentment was growing, the nearby district of Jhansi was experiencing a crisis of succession. Several years prior, the East India Company had refused to allow the throne to pass from the deceased Maharaja Gangadhar Rao to his

adopted son, Damodar Rao. Instead they applied a practice known as the Doctrine of Lapse, which was little more than a pretext for annexing entire princely states for direct Company rule. The Maharaja's widow, Rani Lakshmbai, raised continuous objections to this exercise of Lapse, arguing that Damodar Rao was not only a blood relative to Raja Gangadhar Rao—the son of a cousin—but that the Company had given its official approval of the adoption prior to the Maharaja's death. She pleaded for Company officials to allow for the succession and for her to be allowed to act as regent. For several years, Rani Lakshmbai continued these appeals in a regular but peaceful manner.

With all of these issues building in the background, the Company made a critical misstep that drove the sepoys from talk to action. They began issuing a new rifle—the Pattern 1853 Enfield rifled musket—which had a Minie-style cartridge that had to be greased because of its tighter fit. A rumor began spreading among the sepoys that the grease was made of one or both of lard or beef tallow. Since the usual method of loading required biting the end off the paper cartridge, this meant that both Hindus and Muslims could be at risk of ingesting an animal product that would be offensive to them. When these objections were raised to the British officers, Company officials offered to provide the cartridges ungreased so that the soldiers could grease


Begum Hazrat Mahal

One of the notable sparks of the 1857 Rebellion was a woman named Begum Hazrat Mahal. She was a junior wife of Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Awadh. She was an outspoken opponent of Company practices regarding religious observances in her kingdom. She claimed that the Company regularly demolished places of worship to make way for roads and railroads, and she added her voice to the growing outrage about the use of lard and beef tallow for greasing rifle cartridges.

As the uprising began to take shape, Begum Hazrat Mahal gathered supporters and seized control of Lucknow, a city in Uttar Pradesh just northeast of Kanpur. Lucknow's proximity to the railway stop at Kanpur—as well as both the Ganges and Ghaghara Rivers—made it an excellent staging ground for raids on Company convoys and troops trying to quell riots and work stoppages.

When Maratha eventually declared independence, Maharani Lakshmbai recognized the contributions of Hazrat Mahal's forces by reconfirming her son, Birjis Qadra, as Nawab of the princely state of Awadh.





them with non-offensive substances. Rather than mollifying the sepoys, this only served to enrage them by suggesting that the original rumors were true.

And so, on May 10th, 1857, a unit of sepoys at Meerut called a work stoppage. This was a bold move, since the cantonment at Meerut near Delhi was one of the largest encampments of British soldiers in the interior. However, the British did not want to risk a full-scale rebellion, so they ordered the sepoys back to their training drills but did not engage them forcefully. Some of the people in Delhi appealed to Bahadur Shah Zafar—the former Mughal Emperor who still retained some ceremonial power under Company rule—to support the rebelling sepoys, but the aging ruler did nothing out of fear of British retaliation. Civilian riots began to take place in Delhi, but the sepoys maintained a peaceful but tense standoff. On May 12th, the steamhands working near Agra showed their support for the Meerut stoppage by calling a strike as well. That same day, Rani Lakshmibai requested and was granted permission from the Company commander at Jhansi to form a small escort to protect herself. She secured herself into her palace, although she did emerge to conduct a Haldi Kumkum ceremony with the women of Jhansi in part to assure her people that she was not afraid.

Within the week, the sporadic civilian riots that had begun in Delhi were appearing in other cities as well, causing British officers and civilians to hide in their residences or even vacate the area. On May 18th, another wave of petitions for support was sent to Bahadur Shah Zafar, who once again refused to respond. This time, however, the leaders of the protests and petitions decided—either out of wishful thinking or out of a hope to pressure Zafar—that they would speak on his behalf. They declared Bahadur Shah Zafar the Rightful Emperor of All India, and they began posting signs implying that he had claimed that title and asking for all loyal Indians to fight against the Company. At this point, the British officers at Meerut could no longer afford the standoff. They set an ultimatum that if the sepoys did not take up their rifles and help suppress the civilian revolt, then they would be considered mutineers. The sepoys took up arms as the British soldiers prepared to fire, and instead fired back. The mutiny had begun.

At first, few of the local monarchs declared their support for the mutiny. Although his name was used

as a rallying cry, Bahadur Shah Zafar repeatedly sent out proclamations calling for an end to the fighting and for the people to surrender to the British. The civilian leaders claimed that these were false proclamations, that the emperor was being held by British forces, and that he would eventually praise everyone who helped liberate him and his country. Rani Lakshmibai did not go so far as to support the British, but she did ask for additional troops to help keep her city safe. In July of 1857, as it became clear that no help would be coming, she ordered her soldiers to install a foundry in her palace and begin casting cannon of their own to prepare for whatever defense might be necessary.

Although other mutinies quickly spread throughout the Indian peninsula, they displayed very little unity. The sepoy army at Meerut managed to control most of the region immediately surrounding Delhi, but they could not help organize the rebellions in other areas. They supported the steamhands in halting rail travel along the GIPR, they supported the civilian riots in throwing out British-owned businesses, and they worked on securing and stockpiling weapons during the monsoon season. However, with the growing public awareness that Bahadur Shah Zafar was never going to emerge from his palace and lead the army to victory against the British, the Meerut officers began to worry about the revolt faltering from a lack of direction. As a temporary positive action, they decided to use the GIPR itself as a tool of unity, bringing together all the rebellions along the main trunk.

In the winter months of 1857 and 1858, this is just what they did. Leaving a few small garrison units behind, the Meerut Army—as it had begun to style itself—began working its way east along the Ganges line. As it did, it gathered size and momentum from other mutineers and prepared to lay siege to the port of Kolkata, through which the majority of the Company's opium traveled. The officers assumed that Kolkata would be heavily defended, but they knew that victory there would break the Company's will to remain in India. When the Meerut Army arrived outside Kolkata in March of 1858, there was indeed a significant force of infantry and artillery, as well as a number of Company ships that fired on Meerut positions from the bay. The army settled into a protracted siege and began to set up its own guns. After the first few days, however, the Meerut Army realized that it was not seeing the expected cavalry

harassment of its artillery emplacements. In fact, the British cavalry was nowhere to be found.

Because of the rebellion's fragmented nature, their lines of communication were very unreliable and often based on little more than rumor and hearsay. The East India Company had a distinct advantage in this respect, and it used its established communication network to anticipate the Meerut Army's goal and prepare a devastating countergambit. As the Meerut Army moved towards Kolkata along the eastern trunk of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, the cavalry divisions of many of the Company's British regular forces had been sent to Bombay with the goal of moving quickly up the western trunk to retake Delhi and cut off the Meerut Army's supply lines.

However, since their intent was to take Delhi by surprise, the cavalry left the railway at Jabalpur to head north across country. This path took them directly into Jhansi, where they found a surprisingly well-defended fort held by Rani Lakshmibai's growing local militia. The Company had failed to consider this garrison in its plans because it had not technically been in rebellion. Sir Hugh Rose, commander of the British forces, demanded that the Jhansi militia stand down and vacate the fort. After deliberating with her advisers, Rani Lakshmibai issued this statement: "We fight for independence. In the words of Lord Krishna, we will if we are victorious, enjoy the fruits of victory, if defeated and killed on the field of battle, we shall surely earn eternal glory and salvation." Thus, on March 23rd of 1858, Rani Lakshmibai officially joined the rebellion.

The Jhansi defenders held a superior position with larger guns—the British only had a few regiments of smaller horse artillery—but they were vastly outnumbered and lacking in combat experience. Lakshmibai had managed to gather a respectable 14,000 men and women from around her kingdom, but the Company had brought over 35,000 seasoned cavalry troops. The Rani knew she would need help soon or her city would be overrun. Under cover of night, she sent two messengers—Deewan Raghunath Singh and Deewan Jawahar Singh—north to Gwalior and Agra seeking reinforcements. At Gwalior, the messengers encountered Nana Sahib Peshwa, a former Marathan noble who had been forced out of his home city of Kanpur early in the rebellion. Out of loyalty for the Marathan Rani of Jhansi, he directed his general Taty Tope to quickly gather the garrison and begin marching south.

However, he worried that his 6,000 sepoys may not be enough. The two messengers continued on to Agra and Meerut and were able to convince another 5,000 sepoys to leave their garrisons and join the larger defense force at Jhansi.

Deewan Raghunath Singh and Deewan Jawahar Singh knew they needed to find more troops, but they had exhausted the resources of all of the rebelling armies in the area. The only other option was to travel farther afield and hope that the defenders could hold out against the siege long enough for additional reinforcements to arrive. Even with this hope, though, there was only one direction the messengers could travel in order to find any significant number of troops. The two men set out for Lahore. Being Sikh themselves, they were easily welcomed at the court of the Maharaja Duleep Singh. In order to present their petition in a favorable light, the two messengers offered greetings on behalf of "Maharani Lakshmibai of the Maratha Empire," thus marking the first use of this title.

Maharaja Duleep Singh had been only five years old when his own kingdom had fought off the British East India Company, but he had been raised on the tales of that war. He sympathized greatly with the plight of the mutineers, and he agreed to send support immediately. With the consent of the Khalsa, the Maharaja ordered the immediate dispatch of 20,000 elite cavalry to Jhansi, with the promise of additional infantry and artillery to follow.



Maharani Lakshmibai

Lakshmibai's messengers would ride with this force to make all necessary assurances that this was not an invasion force from the Sikh Empire.

The Siege of Jhansi had been brutal, but Lakshmibai's defenders had held out for over two months. The artillery advantage had proven critical, although the fort had suffered considerable damage from the British horse artillery as well. The defenders had to periodically send out their own sowars—light cavalry—to harass the British guns long enough to repair some of the damage. Rani Lakshmibai herself led many of these charges, which helped greatly to keep up the Jhansi morale. Finally, on May 27th, 1858, the Sikh cavalry arrived and routed the Company forces. Lakshmibai sent a large portion of her forces east to reinforce the siege at Kolkata. Meanwhile, a number of nobles from across central India who had been removed from their seats of power heard of the victory and traveled to Jhansi to declare their loyalty to Lakshmibai and to ask for the restoration of their lands. On June 17th, 1858—though there were battles yet to be fought—the gathered nobility officially declared Maratha once again independent and Maharani Lakshmibai its ruler.

Part VII – Restoration and Alliance

Word of this declaration spread quickly, persuading all but the most stalwart loyalist or mercenary sepoys across the region to mutiny and join the new coalition army. This, combined with the support of the Sikh Empire, encouraged similar actions in other parts of the Indian Peninsula. The newly-crowned Nizam of Hyderabad, Afzal ad-Dawlah Asif Jah V, defied the advice of his own prime minister Salar Jung and likewise rejected Company rule, declaring Hyderabad to be independent and claiming its historic borders all the way to the eastern coast. The aged Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar, who had been only five when Tipu Sultan was overthrown by the British, soon followed by declaring the independence of Mysore as well.


With these announcements, the rebellion took a different turn in the latter half of 1858. The coalition army gathered additional forces from the new mutineers and from the slower-moving reinforcements from Lahore and then began to sweep southward. This army moved not with the intention of conquering territory but rather liberating

local governments and institutions from Company control. Hyderabad proved an easy first step as many of the British troops had already been removed to the coasts for defense of the major ports. Both Lahore and Jhansi sent word formally recognizing the sovereignty of Hyderabad and promising normal diplomatic relations with the Nizam. The fighting escalated as the army moved toward Mysore, since this involved taking territory around Bombay on the way south. The coalition army sent word ahead to the Maharaja that it would first have to end the Company occupation of this major western port before any help would be available. This turned out to cause little difficulty, as Mysore was able to muster enough of a local defense force to hold off the few British troops that had not already abandoned the area. No organized Company attacks were made in any of the southernmost regions.

By the end of 1858, the sieges at Bombay and Kolkata had both ended with the successful removal of the defenders, and portions of the coalition army and the Meerut army sent units to meet up and assault the final British holdings around Madras. When the armies arrived in March of 1859, they found the East India Company estates abandoned and the city completely undefended. Without its opium revenue the Company had realized that it could not field enough troops to defend against the combined forces of the entire Indian peninsula. Knowing that they at least retained naval superiority, they withdrew to British Ceylon (the island of Lanka).

The next few years saw tremendous political cooperation between the liberated Indian kingdoms. At first, there was a great sense of euphoria and camaraderie among people at all levels of society. The lifting of the yoke of the Company became a shared origin, and neither the rulers nor their subjects were eager to violate their mutual respect and gratitude by resuming rivalries of centuries past. Mysore, Hyderabad, and Maratha quickly signed treaties agreeing on generous and beneficial territories for all. Though some districts had historical ties to more than one kingdom, compromises were quickly reached and borders settled with few issues.

The disposition of Bengal was slightly more challenging. That region had been under British control the longest, and prior to that it had been a semi-independent Mughal dominion. Kolkata was one of the busiest and wealthiest ports in India, but



Bengal had little recent experience as a fully independent nation. What it did have, however, was a growing cosmopolitan and educated middle class and even the beginnings of a cultural and philosophical renaissance. So in the end, the new country found a solution somewhat unique to the region—democracy. Intellectual leaders led by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay helped develop a new constitution that created a unicameral parliamentary system and officially declared the country's name to be the Republic of Bengal. On May 7th, 1861, the first free elections were held in an Indian nation.

With the political development of India proceeding rapidly, many of the nations now sought economic development as well. Each country had its own major port, but Maratha and Bengal possessed an additional advantage in the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Although the original British and American investors had taken a complete loss on the project, the track was laid and local steamhands were available to maintain it. The two countries agreed to share management of the GIPR, but Hyderabad, Mysore, and the Sikh Empire began to express interest in participating as well. In 1862, an economic summit was held in Delhi, and plans were made to extend major lines to Madras, Mangalore, Lahore, and Karachi, as well as other smaller lines in the future. In addition, Maratha, Bengal, and the Sikh Empire began importing airship technology from France and the Ottoman Empire in order to enable more effective trade with mountainous regions such as Nepal and Bhutan. This development led to one final confrontation with the British East India Company.

In 1865, as the countries of North America were becoming independent, the countries of India saw an opportunity to trade more directly with this new market. Prior to that time, American companies had come to Indian ports, but now Indian companies were considering the possibility of doing their own shipping to increase profits. However, one of the primary regional exports was tea, and this put them directly in competition with the East India Company, which now operated primarily in British Ceylon and Singapore. And of course, many Company officers still rankled at their expulsion from India, so relations between the Indian nations and their former occupier were quite negative. Unfortunately, the most efficient sea route to North America required traveling the Malacca Strait and sailing right

past Singapore. Out of a sense of retaliation, the British East India Company imposed heavy taxes and tolls on any Indian companies using the Malay port or even traveling near it. The companies complained to their governments and demanded action against the East India Company.

In February of 1866, the member states of the GIPR met for a summit to discuss possible solutions to the Singapore problem. At this summit, they agreed that economic cooperation should be supported with greater political and even military cooperation. To that end, they formed the Indian Alliance, a loose federation of Indian countries that agreed to support and defend each other from external threats. The IA's first official act was to declare the British East India Company to be openly hostile to the interests of Alliance nations and therefore a valid military target. Within weeks, a strike force was organized, and the Indian Alliance attacked British Ceylon by both sea and air. This marked the first ever significant deployment of troops into combat by airship. The Company naval and ground artillery was unprepared to defend against this aerial assault, so the Alliance troops were able to land and seize defensible positions with minimal casualties. The airships also dropped mines on docked frigates from above, making it difficult for the Company to bring in supplies, let alone go about the normal business of shipping tea and coffee. Within a month, the East India Company surrendered the island of Lanka and promised unhindered passage through the Malacca Strait.

The population of Lanka was extremely diverse from centuries of trade, colonization by multiple European powers, and even forced immigration by the East India Company for the purposes of plantation labor. Because of this, the island decided to follow Bengal's lead and create a parliamentary democracy. However, the new Republic of Sri Lanka took an even greater step towards egalitarianism and instituted universal suffrage. This made the Republic of Sri Lanka the first country in Asia to do so, at almost exactly the same time the Rocky Mountain Republic finished ratifying its constitution, making 1866 a watershed year in equal rights.

In the years that followed, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan all joined the Indian Alliance. As of 1872, work is nearly completed on all the major lines of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and airships help extend that trade network further inland. On the whole, India has not yet taken to automaton

technology, though a small number of scientists—particularly in Bengal—are exploring it as a curiosity. Because of this, India has not yet made any significant moves towards electrification either, except to construct telegraph lines along the GIPR. The Indian Alliance holds steady, although as external threats are reduced and the Revolution of 1857 fades into the past, some national rivalries are beginning to reemerge. Nevertheless, the Indian region remains an economic powerhouse that will likely continue to dominate international trade for years to come.

China

“When a country is well governed, poverty and a mean condition are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of.”

Analects 8.17

Part I – Origins and Legacies

Although it is accurate in some respects to say that China has existed for approximately four thousand years, the geography, politics, and culture of the region have changed drastically at key points during that history. There has by no means been a single consistent thread of experience throughout China’s growth as a nation. However, China has progressed through clear and measurable stages in such a way that it has remained recognizable as a coherent entity. Even when opposing dynasties or kingdoms have vied for dominance, there has always been a China at the center—figuratively if not geographically.

Some part of the reason for this lies in China’s adoption of Confucianism as its philosophical core early in the Imperial period. The pragmatic organizational focus of Confucianism helped maintain consistency of thought and governance across the empire in ways unheard of anywhere in the world at the time. Even as Buddhism and Taoism grew more popular among the populace, the bureaucracy remained true to its Confucian roots. The effectiveness of this tradition goes a long way to explaining why Kublai Khan chose to adopt Chinese bureaucratic methods for rule during the Mongol-established Yuan Dynasty.

The relatively modern dynasties of the last thousand years are also notable as being marked by significant ethnic division and conflict. In the consolidation that followed the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (10th century A.D.), the largest geographical divisions were claimed by the Song Dynasty in the south and the Jin Dynasty in the north. The Song Dynasty was ethnically Han—the most common ethnicity in the region. The Jin Dynasty was formed through the unification of the Jurchen tribes of Manchuria and surrounding regions. Jin defeated the smaller Liao Dynasty and then turned its attention southward, capturing key cities and weakening but not defeating the vast Song.



Member States of the Indian Alliance

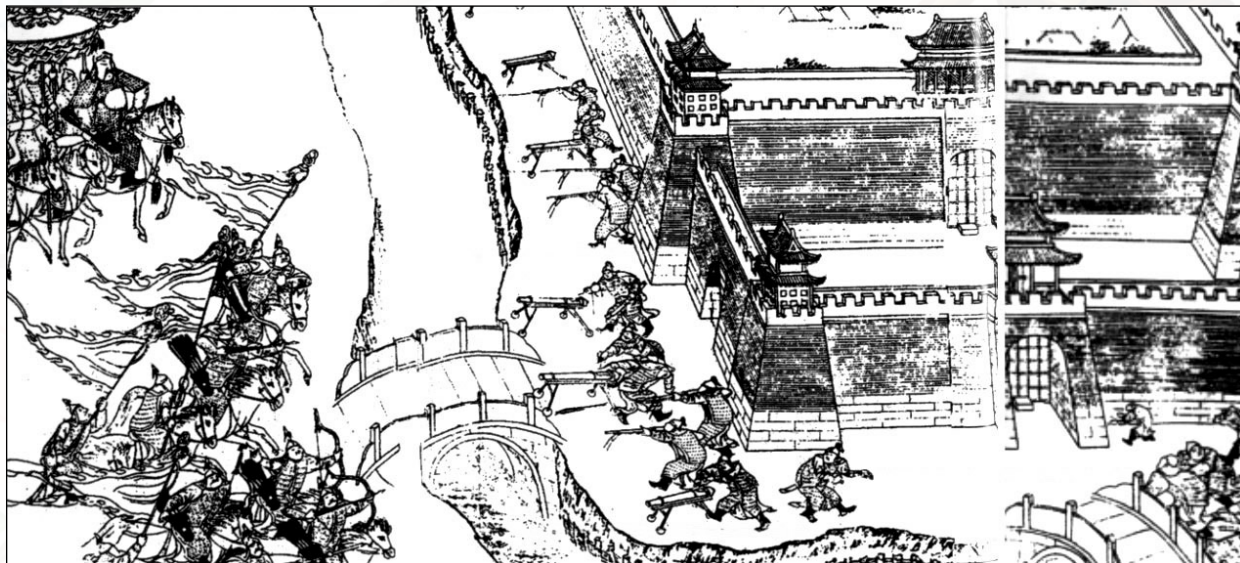
The following is the full list of the members of the Indian Alliance, their leaders, and their forms of government, listed in chronological order of membership:

Founding Members (1866)

- The Sikh Empire – Maharaja Duleep Singh (monarchy with military advisory council)
- Maratha – Maharani Lakshmibai (imperial monarchy with princely states)
- Hyderabad – Rasheed-ud-din Khan Shams-ul-Umra III, acting as regent for the underage Nizam Afzal ad-Dawlah Asif Jah VI (monarchy)
- Mysore – Maharaja Sri Chamarajendra Wadiyar X (monarchy)
- Republic of Bengal – Prime Minister Jatindramohan Tagore (parliamentary democracy)

Joined Later

- Republic of Sri Lanka (1867) – President Veerahennedige Helena (constitutional republic)
- Nepal (1869) – Muktiyar Ranodip Singh on behalf of Surendra Bikram Shah (monarchy with hereditary civil representation)
- Bhutan (1870) – Druk Desi Jigme Namgyal of Trongsa (civil administration of independent military districts)



Nurhaci at the Battle of Liaoyang, 1621

Following a peace agreement, the Jurchen people—a minority even in their own territory—intermarried and coexisted with the majority Han population. Thus, when Genghis Khan swept in and conquered both dynasties, the Jurchen in traditionally Chinese territory were grouped with the Han for political identification purposes. However, the Jurchen in traditionally Mongol territory were classified as Mongol.

All non-Mongols (who were generally classified as Han regardless of origin) experienced severe persecution and oppression under the Yuan Dynasty. This led to numerous revolts and finally the rise of the Ming Dynasty. The Ming was an ethnic Han dynasty, but saw little resistance from the now scattered Jurchen minorities. The Ming emperors would rule with relatively little unrest for over 250 years, although they in turn treated those of Jurchen ethnicity as servants and lesser vassals. It was not until the 17th century that a descendant of the Jurchen people—a warlord named Nurhaci—consolidated the northern tribes and identified them as culturally distinct from both the Mongols and the Koreans. Nurhaci declared himself Khan of the Later Jin Empire before leading his people in a revolt that would end in the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty and the establishment of Nurhaci as First Emperor of the Qing Dynasty. Meanwhile, Nurhaci renamed his people “Manchu,” largely because of the negative connotations of the Jurchen name.

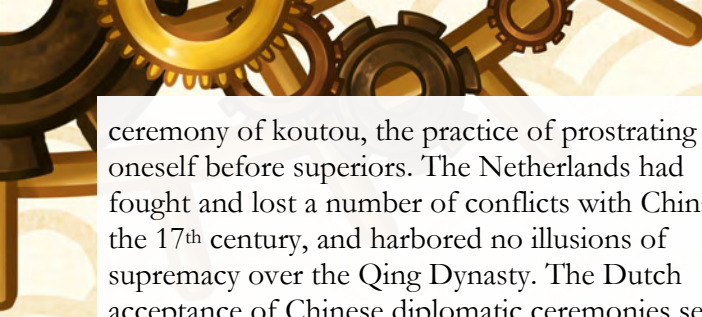
The Manchu ruling elite of the Qing Dynasty did not treat the majority Han Chinese well. Some leaders made concessions to inclusion, but the regent

Prince Dorgon, one of Nurhaci’s sons, imposed a queue order requiring that all Han men wear their hair in a queue to show their loyalty, on pain of death. The rebellions and massacres that followed this order seeded deep resentment among the Han against the Manchu regime. This resentment and the Qing habit of severe punishment for insubordination would lay the groundwork for greater trouble in the decades to come.

Part II – European Trade and the White Lotus

At the end of the 18th century, the British East India Company made several attempts to equalize trade with China. Unlike India, where the Company was largely left to its own devices, the British government supported the trade diplomacy with China. This was due to the greater economic danger that China posed as a result of its exclusive use of silver as currency. Chinese goods—particularly silk, tea, and ceramics—were very expensive, but the Qing Dynasty wanted only silver in trade and not the durable goods that England would have been more able to provide. But England’s access to silver was limited, and imbalance was inevitable.

Meanwhile, the Qianlong Emperor met a representative of the Dutch East India Company in what would turn out to be the last friendly diplomatic relations the Qing Dynasty would have with a European power. In 1795, a Dutch embassy led by Isaac Titsingh was granted a formal audience with the Emperor and treated very well by the administration. The primary reason for this positive reception was Titsingh’s willingness to engage in the



ceremony of koutou, the practice of prostrating oneself before superiors. The Netherlands had fought and lost a number of conflicts with China in the 17th century, and harbored no illusions of supremacy over the Qing Dynasty. The Dutch acceptance of Chinese diplomatic ceremonies set them in contrast with the British embassy, who had for several years prior tried unsuccessfully to seek an audience despite their unwillingness to go through the koutou.

For his part, the British ambassador George Macartney was able to conduct some negotiations even without a direct meeting, but ultimately the Qianlong Emperor and the administrators of the Qing Dynasty did not see a reason to grant any European power the land and trade requests England was making. After all, the Qianlong Emperor had overseen one of the greatest dynastic expansions in China's history, and China's economy was the largest in the world. What need did China have of England? Faced with this logic, Macartney decided to engage in diplomacy by different means—he sought to destabilize the authority of the Qing Dynasty and seek some opportunity in its weakness.

In 1794, a number of smaller uprisings began to coalesce into a larger popular movement against the Emperor's authority. Seeking relief from rising taxes and corrupt local officials, the people of several

central and southern provinces found support from the White Lotus Society, a secret religious sect that had participated in several uprisings throughout the 18th century. With the support and leadership of the White Lotus, the local rebellions became a larger movement just as the Qianlong Emperor was deciding to abdicate the throne to his son, the Jiaqing Emperor. While the retired Emperor still lived, he exercised much of the de facto power of the administration, and it was he that sent forces to try to stop the White Lotus Rebellion. However, the White Lotus forces used surprisingly effective guerrilla tactics, often disappearing into the general populace after striking. As a result, very little headway had been made by the time the Qianlong Emperor died in 1799.

It turned out that the Jiaqing Emperor had other priorities besides stopping a peasant revolt. Immediately after his father's death, he arrested one of his father's close advisors, a minister named Heshen. Heshen had grown increasingly corrupt in the preceding years, although the Qianlong Emperor had chosen to overlook the minister's embezzlement out of respect for their long personal history. The Jiaqing Emperor had no such ties, and executed the man as soon as he could. This served to further separate the Qing Dynasty from England, however, because Heshen had been the primary point of contact for the Macartney delegation. The new



Wang Cong'er

One of the most successful popular revolts in Chinese history was led by a former circus acrobat—a young woman named Wang Cong'er with no formal military training.

In 1796, the leaders of the White Lotus Society were captured and killed before they could even begin to implement their plans for rebellion. Among them was Wang Cong'er's husband, Qi Lin. Qi's followers, many of whom had been personally recruited by Wang, quickly pledged fealty. Less than a month later, she led Qi's army of 40,000 rebels on several devastating raids before rendezvousing with the remaining White Lotus generals. The rest of the Society, inspired by the 19-year-old's determination, popularity, and above all success, elected her Supreme Sect Leader of the eight armies of the White Lotus.

For the next ten years, Wang Cong'er led constant guerrilla raids across Sichuan, Hubei, and Shanxi provinces, evading capture and frustrating all attempts by government forces to contain the uprising. Wang was less enthusiastic than some of her advisors about the arms deals with England, but she conceded the benefits of consistent material support.

When the rebellion was finally dispersed in 1806, Wang Cong'er disappeared. No one knows for sure what happened to her, and this has made her the source of numerous myths and legends ever since.

Emperor cut off all communication with England partially because of his isolationist attitude and partially out of spite towards anything connected to Heshen.

Seeing little other recourse, Ambassador Macartney abandoned his attempts to explore normal relations with the Qing Dynasty and instead sent overtures to the leaders of the White Lotus Society. He offered weapons and other material support to the rebellion in exchange for information and assistance in establishing a smuggling network into southern China. There had been some illegal opium traffic prior to this, but the collaboration between Macartney and the White Lotus drastically increased that trade. With the support of English arms, the White Lotus Rebellion continued until 1806, when the Jiaqing Emperor finally mustered enough troops to put it down. However, the damage was done—the remaining years of the Jiaqing Emperor saw opium smuggling reach unprecedented levels, further draining the Chinese economy and setting the stage for the greatest setback the Qing Dynasty would face.

Part III – The First Opium War

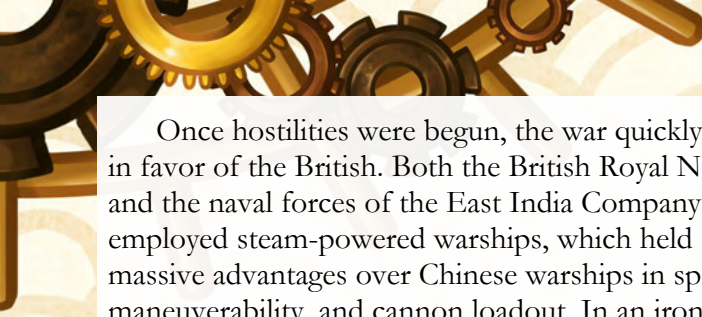
The Jiaqing Emperor's reign was relatively short. However, his administration marked an even greater push towards isolationism than many of his predecessors. With the illegal opium trade threatening China's revenue, the Emperor turned the blame on cultural symbols of western encroachment rather than practical ones. He extended laws against sorcery to include Christianity, sentencing European missionaries to death and selling into slavery all Chinese Christians who would not recant. This harsh treatment—in addition to further tax increases to offset opium-related losses—incited even more peasant uprisings that were then put down violently. The Jiaqing Emperor died in 1820 at the age of 59, leaving China in its weakest condition in nearly 200 years.

When the Daoguang Emperor took power, he inherited a trade imbalance that had finally reversed—more silver was now leaving China to pay for opium than was entering it. Opium was becoming significantly cheaper as a result of price wars between some American companies trading in Turkish opium and the British East India Company with its higher quality Bengali opium but a more streamlined distribution chain. However, the

plummeting prices only made opium use more popular. Import levels rose from the already significant 4,000 chests per year to a staggering 30,000 chests per year.

The Daoguang Emperor sent his commissioner Lin Zexu to manage the Empire's response to the opium problem. Lin attempted a forceful prohibition of both trade and use through a variety of direct measures, including destruction of both opium and opium pipes, arrests of both dealers and users, and even—when nothing else seemed to be working—pleading with foreign merchants and offering them valuable tea if they would turn over their opium to him instead of selling it. Lin's efforts continued to escalate until June of 1839, when he seized 20,000 chests of opium from British merchants by blockading the mouth of the Zhu Jiang (Pearl) River and holding their ships hostage in the port of Guangzhou until they turned over the opium. Lin then tried to force the British Superintendent of Trade in China, Charles Elliot, to sign an agreement prohibiting British ships from trafficking opium. Elliot refused, and for a short time all British trade was halted as he required all British companies to likewise refuse to sign the “no opium” bond.

Charles Elliot's refusal was politically problematic. Technically, his office did not represent the companies that were actually smuggling the opium. The chief importer was the East India Company, which was incorporated in England but operated its opium trade entirely outside of British territory. The remaining importers operated under the laws of the American Colonial Government, which was a British Commonwealth state that nevertheless managed its own trade regulations. Instead the companies that were directly affected were those that operated between Guangzhou and England, and many of these companies were trying to conduct trade that was otherwise legal and acceptable to China. The *Thomas Coutts*, a Quaker-owned ship that refused to trade in opium, proclaimed its right to sign the “no opium” bond and trade with Guangzhou in spite of Elliot's demands. Elliot responded by setting up his own blockade of the Zhu Jiang River. Another ship—the *Royal Saxon*—attempted to break this blockade and was fired upon. The Qing navy rushed to protect the *Royal Saxon*, and conflict quickly escalated. Thus, the first shots of the war were actually fired by the British upon their own citizens.



Once hostilities were begun, the war quickly fell in favor of the British. Both the British Royal Navy and the naval forces of the East India Company employed steam-powered warships, which held massive advantages over Chinese warships in speed, maneuverability, and cannon loadout. In an ironic twist of history, some of the East India Company ships even used “Congreve” rockets, which had been adapted from the Mysore rockets developed by Tipu Sultan. China had fallen behind in the very technology it had given the world.

Although England’s forces remained mostly at sea and never took any territory, their naval dominance shut down China’s critical coastal trade. This halted all of the tariff revenue and much of the communication that normally flowed from the busy port of Guangzhou north to the capital in Beijing. The Empire was crippled. In 1842, the Daoguang Emperor sent his representatives to sign a humiliating and unequal treaty at Nanjing. In addition to the opening of multiple trade ports, the Qing Empire was forced to cede the island of Hong Kong off the coast of Guangdong Province, thus providing British ships with a port that could not be blockaded as easily as Guangzhou. The Daoguang Emperor tried to pin the blame for everything that had happened on his commissioner, Lin Zexu, but even this scapegoating could not stop the rapid decline of public opinion regarding the fitness not only of the Emperor but of the Qing Dynasty itself. The Emperor died in 1850, leaving a trouble-ridden China to his 19-year-old son, now the Xianfeng Emperor.

Part IV – A Crisis of Identity and Leadership

The Xianfeng Emperor had grown up watching an Empire in total decline. Given his youth and position, it would have been easy for a son of the Emperor to isolate himself from the concerns of the nation, but one event provided the young prince with an advisor who would offer a critical perspective for his coming rule. In 1841, China was assaulted from another direction in addition to the ongoing naval conflict with England. On the distant mountainous frontier of Tibet, the Empire was attacked by the young Sikh Empire. The tactics and technology of the Sikh forces surprised the Tibetan defenders, who relied heavily on terrain to protect themselves from attack. The Imperial resident in Lhasa—the amban Meng Bao—understood that no help would be coming and quickly signed a generous



Excerpts from the Letter to Queen Victoria

We find that your country is distant from us about sixty or seventy thousand li, that your foreign ships come hither striving the one with the other for our trade, and for the simple reason of their strong desire to reap a profit. Now, out of the wealth of our Inner Land, if we take a part to bestow upon foreigners from afar, it follows, that the immense wealth which the said foreigners amass, ought properly speaking to be portion of our own native Chinese people. By what principle of reason then, should these foreigners send in return a poisonous drug, which involves in destruction those very natives of China?

...

We have heard that in your own country opium is prohibited with the utmost strictness and severity—this is a strong proof that you know full well how hurtful it is to mankind. Since then you do not permit it to injure your own country, you ought not to have the injurious drug transferred to another country, and above all others, how much less to the Inner Land! Of the products which China exports to your foreign countries, there is not one which is not beneficial to mankind in some shape or other. Has China (we should like to ask) ever yet sent forth a noxious article from its soil?

...

On the other hand, the things that come from your foreign countries are only calculated to make presents of, or serve for mere amusement. It is quite the same to us if we have them, or if we have them not. If then these are of no material consequence to us of the Inner Land, what difficulty would there be in prohibiting and shutting our market against them? It is only that our heavenly dynasty most freely permits you to take off her tea, silk, and other commodities, and convey them for consumption everywhere, without the slightest stint or grudge, for no other reason, but that where a profit exists, we wish that it be diffused abroad for the benefit of all the earth!

Lin Zexu, 1839

treaty with the Sikh Empire to forestall further aggression.

Following the Opium War, Meng Bao was recalled to Beijing to report on the conflict with the Sikhs. The Daoguang Emperor focused most of his wrath on Lin Zexu—the minor loss of territory in Tibet was not a significant cause for concern when compared to the concessions made at Nanjing—and Meng Bao therefore escaped closer scrutiny. However, the boy who would later become the Xianfeng Emperor was fascinated with stories of far-off Tibet, so he requested for Meng to remain at court and tell him of his experiences. As the prince learned about Tibet, he also learned about the Sikh Empire and the rise of British rule in India. In the years that followed, Meng Bao rose to a position of permanent advisor to the prince, and thus assured his elevation when the Xianfeng Emperor came to power.

Immediately following this transition, the new Emperor was faced with his first threat of rebellion. In the decades since the White Lotus Rebellion, uprisings had become almost commonplace. However, not since the White Lotus had a peasant movement centered around such a charismatic leader as this. In 1850, officials became aware of a large gathering in Guangxi Province. This group, which called themselves the “Heavenly Kingdom,” was led by a man named Hong Xiuquan who claimed to be the brother of Jesus Christ. As the group continued to grow—estimates varied between 10,000 and 30,000—the Xianfeng Emperor was faced with the decision of how to deal with what could easily become a sizeable and fanatical revolt. Given past Qing practices, it seemed inevitable that the Emperor would crack down on this quasi-Christian sect on religious grounds.

However, Meng Bao recognized that there were other factors at work. He told the Emperor that it was unlikely that so many followers had joined with Hong Xiuquan just because of his religious teachings. He believed that the people were more attracted to Hong’s populist anti-Manchu rhetoric than his unusual brand of Christianity. Since Meng himself was Han, he offered to negotiate with the Heavenly Kingdom. So in 1851, Meng Bao met with Hong Xiuquan and the other leaders of the Heavenly Kingdom. Hong and several of his inner circle were Hakka—a minority subset of the Han—so there was still some ethnic distrust. Nevertheless, Meng managed to convince most of the leaders—though

less so Hong Xiuquan—that many people believed the Heavenly Kingdom to be operating under the influence of British agents. Since the Heavenly Kingdom directly blamed the Qing Dynasty for the Treaty of Nanjing, this was a disturbing accusation. Meng Bao then suggested that the best way to prove that they were not operating on behalf of England was to push the foreigners out of China. He even offered the sect dominion over the island of Hong Kong if it could ever be recovered.



Hong Xiuquan

This was the final piece that brought Hong Xiuquan fully on board. In his sermons, he soon began likening himself to Moses—offering to lead his people out of slavery into the promised land, which he called “Taiping” (Perfect Peace). Meng Bao returned to the capital with his task complete, but the Emperor was not pleased with his offer of Hong Kong, worrying that it would encourage other rebellions. But Meng Bao was prepared for this concern. He replied, “As Kong Fuzi said—if a thing be really hard, it may be ground without being made thin, and if a thing be really white, it may be steeped in a dark fluid without being made black.” The other gathered advisors saw the wisdom in these words, and agreed that the Emperor could treat with one rebellious group without having to make concessions to all of them. The Heavenly Kingdom was granted a unique policy status only because it could be used as a weapon against English occupation.

Hong Xiuquan spent two years gathering more and more followers. Chinese Christians from Guangxi, Hunan, and Guangdong—including many from areas around the Portuguese colony of

Macau—joined the Heavenly Kingdom’s encampment. By 1853, its numbers had swelled to almost 200,000, although only about half of those were able-bodied fighters. In late 1853, Hong Xiuquan had his followers pack up their belongings and begin the *Chu Aiji Ji* (Exodus). For months they migrated eastward, settling finally outside of Shenzhen just north of Hong Kong. The arrival of such a large camp on the coast alarmed the British merchants. Sir John Bowring, the administrator of Hong Kong, sent a letter to the court of the Emperor demanding to know why China had placed so many troops just outside of British territory. And here the brilliance of Meng Bao’s scheme became apparent—the Emperor was able to legitimately express his own concern at the camp, even referring to the Heavenly Kingdom as “these European-influenced Christian rebels.”

For the next year, Bowring became increasingly agitated at the inaction of the Xianfeng administration. He insisted repeatedly that the Chinese should be responsible for removing the Heavenly Kingdom from Shenzhen. China continued to delay by claiming concern that attempting to do anything about the camp would result in a rebellion larger than any in China’s history. Then, in 1855, Meng Bao presented his diplomatic master stroke. Under pretense of finally taking action against the Heavenly Kingdom, he negotiated with Sir John Bowring to allow the easing of restrictions that the Treaty of Nanjing had placed on Chinese naval movements. Bowring agreed, and the bulk of the Qing Navy moved into the waters around Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

Part V – The Year of the Dragon

The Qing Imperial Navy initially arranged itself in what appeared to be a blockade around Shenzhen. Meng Bao told Sir John Bowring that they intended to starve the Heavenly Kingdom into submission. In reality, the blockade ships began secretly providing additional weapons to Hong Xiuquan’s people. The months dragged on, and although Meng Bao assured the British that the blockade was working, Bowring began to suspect that it was not as effective as Meng claimed. In January of 1856, Bowring hired Chinese spies to infiltrate the rebel camp in order to ascertain the truth. The spies quickly discovered the secret arms shipments and attempted to return to Hong Kong on a pirate ship called the *Arrow* that flew the British flag. However, the *Arrow* was discovered and

stopped attempting to pass out of the blockade. The spies were captured and interrogated, and Meng Bao realized that there was very little time left.

Although the *Arrow*’s British registry had lapsed, making its British flag technically illegal, Sir John Bowring immediately demanded the release of the ship and its crew. The Qing Imperial Navy complied, but Bowring knew that something was wrong when his spies were not among the released prisoners. He sent messages to Meng Bao accusing the Xianfeng administration of complicity in the rebellion and demanding that its navy immediately leave the area so that the British Navy could take over the blockade. Instead, Meng Bao sent word to Hong Xiuquan to prepare for an attack.

On the evening of February 6th—chosen for its auspiciousness as the beginning of the year of the dragon—the Army of the Heavenly Kingdom marched south, while the Imperial Navy blockade moved to surround Hong Kong. Well after midnight, Hong Xiuquan’s army had arrived at Kowloon and begun securing its position in the Walled City. They quickly set up the several large cannon that the blockade had hidden there and began shelling the city of Victoria across the bay. Meanwhile, the Imperial Navy used rockets to set fire to both warships and merchant vessels docked in the area. The new moon provided an initial cover of darkness for these attacks, which caused great panic among the British crews. Most of the ships were abandoned and left to burn out without firing a single shot in response.

The artillery and rocket assaults on Victoria continued for several days, stopping all trade into the colonial port. On February 10th, ships began ferrying Hong Xiuquan’s troops across to the island, where they began a protracted assault on the few British gun emplacements still operating. By February 12th, Heavenly Kingdom forces had captured the entire British settlement, including Sir John Bowring himself. Although Hong Xiuquan wanted to kill Bowring, Meng Bao insisted that he and all surviving British residents be turned over to the Imperial Navy and sent to Beijing. However, Meng did agree to let Hong burn all of the shipping warehouses that contained opium—the drug that both the Heavenly Kingdom and the Qing Dynasty agreed was the immoral root cause of China’s economic plight. Hong Xiuquan likened this final act of destruction to the fall of the walls of Jericho, and he invited the rest of his followers to join the army on the island he

now called Taiping. The significance he assigned to it caused many observers to begin referring to the conflict as the Second Opium War (and retroactively referring to the 1839 war as the First Opium War).

The British captives were brought to Beijing, where the Xianfeng Emperor promised to release them on the condition that England sign a new treaty with China. Bowring realized that even the full might of the British Navy would have difficulty removing the Heavenly Kingdom from Taiping now that it was clear that Hong Xiuquan had the Emperor's support. He was also alarmed at both the cleverness and the aggression the Qing Dynasty had displayed in working with the Heavenly Kingdom to assault the British colony. On May 4th, 1856, Sir John Bowring signed the Treaty of Beijing, conceding all British holdings (including those belonging to the East India Company), promising that all legal British merchants would abide by the "no opium" agreement, and—most importantly—acknowledging China's right to attack and seize without recompense any vessel found to be violating that agreement.

All of China began to praise and celebrate the Xianfeng Emperor for the first time since he had taken power, and this festive spirit only increased when Concubine Yi, a consort of the Emperor, gave birth to a son. With a reasserted dominance over European interests in Asia and an heir born a dragon, China's future prosperity seemed assured.

Part VI – The Xianfeng Restoration

It did not take long for China to have further difficulties with European powers. This time, though, the trouble came from a European power that stretched into Asia. Russia wanted to strengthen its power in the Pacific, and the Amur River had long seemed the best option. Although this portion of Manchuria was controlled by China, Russia had been quietly building up naval bases on the coast nearby for years. Russia had assumed that the region was too remote to cause concern for Beijing, and for a long time this assumption proved accurate. However, in 1858, the Imperial Navy was able to take a coastal survey of its territories and it discovered the Russian settlements. The Xianfeng Emperor threatened war with Russia if it did not sign a treaty permanently agreeing to the Manchurian border as it currently stood. Knowing that war with China in its eastern territories would be costly and difficult, Russia capitulated and signed the Treaty of Aigun.

In the wake of this treaty, Russia became more conciliatory towards the Qing Dynasty. Tsar Alexander II shared his ambitious plan for an intercontinental telegraph line connecting Asia and North America through Russian territories and crossing the Bering Strait. The Xianfeng Emperor saw how advantageous such technology could be

Taiping

The island of Taiping occupies a strange and unique place in the Chinese authority structure. The acceptance of a settlement that is not only partially self-governed but largely Christian is severely out of character for the bureaucracy in general and for the Qing Dynasty in particular.

In the years that followed the Second Opium War, the leaders of the Heavenly Kingdom have understood how tenuous the good graces of the Emperor can be. Understanding that they cannot forever ride the coattails of their predecessor's great victory over England, they have set about using their position to make themselves as useful as possible. Since the bureaucracy largely interprets "usefulness" in terms of tax revenue, these leaders have worked hard to develop Taiping into a highly profitable center of trade.

In many ways, the work that was begun by the English with the town of Victoria continues under the Heavenly Kingdom. For many countries other than England, business continues either as usual or even better than before. Merchants are aware that the Taiping port authority is extremely vigilant against the smuggling of opium or similar contraband, but otherwise the island remains a very convenient port for selling goods to China.

Over time, Taiping's moral center has softened slightly in light of this cosmopolitanism, but the Heavenly Kingdom still runs the local government and comprises a majority of the population.

even within China, so he agreed to work with Russia. At the same time, he ordered a telegraph network to be created that would connect the capitals of every province. China's network was unique in that it was built without any accompanying railroad network, because the Qing Dynasty eschewed rail transport (although part of the network did follow the Grand Canal).

China continued to strengthen its navy, but it was becoming apparent that some other transportation improvements would be needed to support the country's inland growth. Also, its conflicts with England had demonstrated the vulnerability of communication and trade along the coast. China needed an alternative solution. Railroads would require too much initial investment for a country as large as China. Some exploration was made into steam carts, but they were too slow and unreliable. Speed and flexibility were essential.

In the spring of 1860, French inventor Henri Giffard paid a visit to the court of the Xianfeng Emperor. France had made efforts to improve diplomatic relations with China following the Second Opium War, and Emperor Louis Napoleon had sent Giffard as a cultural ambassador. Giffard brought with him a small two-man dirigible, which the Emperor insisted on riding. After this flight, the Emperor proclaimed that air travel was China's future, and he immediately made a trade agreement with France to begin importing technology and training so that China could develop its own airship network.

With all of these technological advances, and with real progress finally being made at reducing opium consumption, the Chinese economy was finally making a significant rebound. The early 1860s became a golden age, both figuratively and literally. With the completion of the TransPacific Telegraph in 1863, Beijing could now communicate directly with San Francisco, and this encouraged even more migration to the Gum Shan (Gold Mountain) of California. Chinese

miners and merchants in California sent much of their wealth home, contributing to China's overall economic growth.

The Xianfeng Emperor died unexpectedly in 1864, mourned and revered by his people. His son was given the era name Qixiang (Auspicious) to reflect both the greatness of his birth year and the people's hopes for China's future.

Part VII – The Dowager Empresses


The Qixiang Emperor was of course not yet old enough to reign independently. A set of regents would need to oversee the Empire for ten years until he reached his majority. The Xianfeng Emperor had named a board of eight regents to be led by Meng Bao, who was now nearly sixty. These regents represented the most established noble lines and the most skilled bureaucrats in the Imperial Court. However, they were not prepared for the political upheaval that was to come.

Following the Xianfeng Emperor's death, his primary consort, Empress Zhen, was given the title of Dowager Empress. By tradition, no other

concubines would receive any titles, even Concubine Yi, the mother of the Emperor. Concubine Yi held ambitions of greater power, but she carried no official influence without a title. Nevertheless, she was very popular at court and had many private supporters. She enlisted several such scribes to scour the records, and they were able to find the precedent she needed. The Kangxi Emperor, who was well remembered as a great and popular ruler, had indeed had two Dowager Empresses—Ciren and Cihe—one of whom had been the official Empress Consort and the other the mother of the Emperor. Yi presented this information to her longtime friend, Empress Zhen, and together the two went to the board of regents. Given the popularity of Concubine Yi, the board accepted the precedent without hesitation and named her Empress Dowager Cixi. At the



Concubine Yi



same time, Empress Zhen's official title was changed to Empress Dowager Ci'an. The two Dowager Empresses became inseparable at court. Together they entertained numerous ministers and visiting diplomats in a capacity that was not quite official but nevertheless demonstrated power.

With an established title and her first powerful ally, Empress Dowager Cixi began the next phase of her plan. Although most of the Emperor's regents were respected supporters of the Xianfeng Emperor's administration, a few were old-guard nobles who had been part of the Daoguang Emperor's advisory council. They were grudgingly accepted by most courtiers out of deference to their station, but the failures of the Daoguang Emperor's administration still hung over their heads. Cixi targeted three such nobles in her quest for even greater power: Zaiyuan (Prince Yi), Duanhua (Prince Zheng), and Sushun, Duanhua's younger brother. In particular, Cixi knew that Sushun had come into conflict numerous times with Meng Bao over ideological differences, and that Sushun was bitter over having been proven wrong numerous times. Cixi knew that she could provoke Sushun into rash action.

In late 1864, Meng Bao was traveling in the South, leaving the other regents in charge. The two Dowager Empresses summoned the remaining regents in front of the Emperor to discuss a proposal they had to an ongoing problem. Although the board of regents was able to manage China's bureaucracy quite well, some laws and actions required Imperial decree. In order to be official, these documents were required to be in the Emperor's own hand, written in a special red ink that only the Emperor himself could touch. However, the eight-year-old Qixiang Emperor was not far along in his schooling and was still unsure in his handwriting. Everyone knew this, but out of reverence it was left unspoken. Cixi and Ci'an offered an alternative way of making the decrees official without publicly embarrassing the young Emperor—they proposed using the seals that had been given each of them by the late Xianfeng Emperor, with one seal marking the beginning and one the end of each decree. These seals were simply favors given by the Emperor to his consorts and had never had any official significance, but the Dowager Empresses suggested that the board of regents could declare them to be official and a replacement for the red ink.

At first, the discussion was calm but undecided. Then Cixi held up a telegram from Meng Bao that seemed to indicate that he approved her plan even without consulting the other regents. (In reality, Cixi had asked him about something minor and unrelated which would not have required the full board's approval.) Sushun became enraged at this and began shouting that Meng Bao had overstepped his authority. He then turned wholly against Cixi's plan and insisted that the Emperor would have to keep writing decrees, "regardless of his poor handwriting." Duanhua and Zaiyuan supported Sushun's statement, and the rest of the board indicated that perhaps they should wait for Meng Bao to discuss what had become a contentious issue. Cixi politely deferred to the assembled regents and withdrew her request.

However, Empress Dowager Cixi then immediately went to Yixin (Prince Gong), who was not himself a regent but was the younger half-brother of the Xianfeng Emperor. He was also fairly popular because he had been in charge of negotiating the Treaty of Aigun with Russia. Cixi asked Yixin to draft a letter to the board of regents indicating that they had caused a major offense to the Emperor by speaking embarrassingly about his handwriting, and by not allowing him a method of making official decrees while saving face. Yixin was an ally and supporter of Cixi, so he readily agreed. Upon receiving the letter, the regents went into a panic. They understood that there had indeed been a public offense, and that the penalty for this major offense would be death. The seven members of the board who were present gathered a hasty meeting and voted 4 to 3 to approve the use of the seals. Within hours, Yixin presented a new decree—this one bearing the newly-official seals—that called for the arrest and execution of the dissenters Sushun, Duanhua, and Zaiyuan.

Meng Bao's agents sent word informing him of all the details of what had happened, and he returned to Beijing at best speed. He arrived just two days after Sushun's execution and called a meeting of the remaining regents, as well as Cixi and her co-conspirators Ci'an and Yixin. Always the shrewd diplomat, Meng Bao understood perfectly well just how much power the Dowager Empresses now held as the keepers of the seals. He also realized that Cixi's coup was a tremendously popular one because of her many supporters at court and the great affection the Chinese people held for her. He

proposed that Cixi, Ci'an, and Yixin be raised to the board of regents to fill the three vacancies, and that Cixi take his place at its head. He then offered to take personal responsibility for the education of the Qixiang Emperor. This effectively placed the Dowager Empress right where she wanted to be, so she easily agreed.



The Qixiang Emperor at Study

In the years that followed, Empress Dowager Cixi quickly established herself as the power behind her son's throne. However, Meng Bao used his position as Grand Tutor to help the Qixiang Emperor learn critical diplomatic skills and develop his own network of supporters. Although Meng died in 1869, he had done all he could to assure that Qixiang would eventually be a strong Emperor in his own right.

Part VIII – World Power and a New War

With the majority of the Emperor's court favoring modernization, the latter half of the 1860s brought further advances to China. The Imperial Army worked on expanding the use of airships, and even began exploring ways of using rocketry to arm them. The first Dragon airship took flight in 1870. The telegraph sparked China's economic growth both at home and abroad, and with the influx of wealth from the Rocky Mountain Republic, the merchant middle class grew in size and influence. Even the Guozhijian (capital school) system began to add modern sciences to its traditional curriculum of art and philosophy.

European nations began to recognize China's dominance in the region. Russia, France, Spain, and the Netherlands all established permanent embassies in Beijing (staffed by diplomats who were perfectly willing to practice koutou) and offered favorable trade agreements. England and Prussia (later Germany) were not as favorably disposed towards China as a result of the terms of the Treaty of Beijing, and these nations were particularly unwelcome in Beijing after they began to work with China's enemies—notably Japan. With the exception of the Rocky Mountain Republic, the countries of North America did not pay much attention to the politics of Asia. However, some shipping and transport companies from Texas and the American Consolidated Union have opened offices in Guangzhou. Wells Fargo has had particular success in acting as a conduit for Chinese trade in North America.

With greater international involvement comes greater potential for conflict. Indeed, China's ties to both Wells Fargo and the Rocky Mountain Republic have acted as proximate causes to its newest war. The laws of the Rocky Mountain Republic include a very generous set of land sovereignty rights. Taking advantage of this, a number of wealthy Chinese merchants managed to acquire a gold mine and the surrounding land—including a trading outpost called Weaverville—and then declare this land to be under the law and rule of the Qixiang Emperor, effectively making the town and mine part of the Qing Empire. Wells Fargo and the Chinese merchants then conspired to use this town as a jumping-off point for smuggling gold and technology out of the RMR without paying tariffs. Officially, China did not recognize Weaverville as its territory. However, in

1871, a Japanese agent attacked the gold mine with a small army of automatons.

The Battle of Weaverville did not directly trigger a war with Japan, but it significantly raised tensions between the two countries. China began paying attention to the fact that Japan was now also a significant technological power, and that the internal conflicts that had crippled Japan's government for several decades seemed to be mostly resolved. However, the last straw came in early 1872, when Japan reached out to Korea and signed a non-aggression pact. China had long considered Korea a vassal state, even to the point of collecting tributary taxes. A treaty between Korea and Japan could only be intended as a threat to China, and perhaps a prelude to full declaration of independence by the Joseon Dynasty. And so, in February of 1872, China sent Dragon airships into Korea to demand that King Gojong retract its treaty with Japan. Gojong refused, and Japan in turn called China's actions an act of war against its own sovereignty and promised swift retaliation. On March 11th, 1872, Japan invaded Manchuria. England and Korea soon joined the conflict on the side of Japan, while Russia joined China in order to defend its own interests with regard to the TransPacific Telegraph. China has made some counterattacks in both Korea and Japan, but Manchuria seems to have become the primary front.

While this war poses the greatest threat to China in recent years, there is little danger with regard to China's overall dominance. Possessed of tremendous economic and military might, China promises to remain a world power for the foreseeable future. The Qixiang Emperor is two years away from taking direct control of the throne, but his regents—especially Meng Bao and the Dowager Empress Cixi—have raised him well. As of 1872, China's future does indeed appear to be auspicious.



Flag of the Qing Empire

Japan

Part I – The Land of the Gods

The defining moment of Japan's recent history is the Meiji Restoration, a brief and divisive war that broke the power of the shogun and elevated young Emperor Meiji from his position as a mere figurehead into the true head of state, ending centuries of rule by the samurai class. In order to understand this power struggle, it is necessary to understand one of the most controversial beliefs of the Japanese people: that the emperor is divine.

The *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*—the ancient texts that record the legendary prehistory of Japan—relate that the first emperor of Japan was a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu. Imbued with what westerners would call “the divine right of kings” and other East Asians would recognize as “the mandate of heaven,” the first emperor pacified both nature kami and hostile clans to bring the Japanese archipelago under his rule.

This tradition of divine right served to preserve the imperial family's prestige even as their practical political authority eroded. The warrior-emperors who conquered Japan became scholars as the centuries wore on, creating a centralized bureaucracy in imitation of the Chinese court and ironically undermining their own position by adopting and promoting Buddhism. By the time of the Heian Period (794 CE to 1185 CE), an artistically and philosophically rich culture had grown up around the imperial household's capital of Heian-Kyo (modern Kyoto), but at the cost of that culture becoming insular and detached from the practicalities of ruling Japan. True political power had been usurped by an avaricious family of regents and the samurai that served them.

Part II – An Age of War

In the end, the samurai rebelled. No warrior clan would dare to repudiate the divine rights of the emperor, but the warlords were able to justify their actions by claiming they were serving the best interests of the emperor. In the name of serving the empire, the daimyo battled viciously for the title of shogun (a title that means “barbarian-defeating general” but could just as easily be translated as Cromwell's title of “Lord Protector”). Near-constant

war reigned from 1185 to 1603 as shogunates rose and fell.

Not all of these wars were internal. In 1274 and again in 1281, Kublai Khan sent his Mongol army and Chinese and Korean conscripts to invade Japan. Both times, the invading forces were defeated by both the Japanese defenders and by devastating typhoons attributed to divine intervention. The Japanese were victorious, but the two invasions were costly and reinforced the vicious circle of conflict amongst the daimyo.

It wasn't until the 16th century that three successive daimyo were able to build on each other's successes and break the cycle of war. The first—Oda Nobunaga—was ruthless and practical, purchasing firearms from Portuguese traders and missionaries. This introduction of European technology and thought paved the way for the first Japanese experiments with clockworks as well as the conversion of many Japanese to Christianity. Nobunaga used Christianity as a weapon as well. His fellow daimyo were not his only opponents; there were also powerful Buddhist monasteries who fielded their own armies. The religion introduced by the Portuguese and promulgated by the Spanish siphoned some of the wealth away from these monasteries, making them easier targets for Oda's army.



Tokugawa Ieyasu

Ironically, Nobunaga died in a Buddhist temple when he was betrayed by a powerful retainer. The betrayer was brought to justice by another retainer, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who completed Nobunaga's ambition and unified Japan under his rule.

Toyotomi used his position to attempt an invasion of Ming China by way of Korea. While the samurai army was successful in occupying Korea and starting a spearhead into Manchuria, Korean guerilla fighters and the Ming army eventually repelled the invaders. Toyotomi died before the invasion was routed, but his fledgling dynasty was terribly weakened by the loss.

Tokugawa Ieyasu—in turn an enemy and then ally of Oda and Toyotomi—rebelled against Hideyoshi's young son and seized control of the nation. Having outlasted his rivals, Tokugawa was finally able to create a stable line of succession that would rule as shogun for over two hundred years.

Part III – The Tokugawa “Peace”

Tokugawa Ieyasu seized control of the Toyotomi lands and retainers with the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 CE. In the aftermath of the battle, he divided the *han* or provinces of Japan amongst his allies and enemies, rewarding some by making them *fudai* (“vassal”) daimyo and punishing others by making them *tozama* (“outsider”) daimyo. While the *fudai daimyo* largely held smaller fiefs than the *tozama*, they were welcomed into the state bureaucracy and awarded official posts. The *tozama* lords, on the other hand, were given control of large but remote fiefdoms (frequently on the southern island of Kyushu), making it difficult for them to influence politics. Some *tozama daimyo* clans were uprooted from domains they had held for generations.

Exiling one's enemies to rich, remote provinces might seem like a recipe for revolution, but Ieyasu and his successors used the *tozama daimyo*'s wealth and remoteness to the shogunate's advantage. The land-rich outsider lords were called upon to contribute to public works, obliging them to devote their wealth and labor to the benefit of other *han* (such as the samurai of Satsuma *han* in southern Kyushu being sent to dam a river in central Honshu). Their money was also drained by the law of *sankin-kōtai* whereby daimyo were required to spend alternate years dwelling at the shogunal capital of Edo and their provincial estates. Since the wives and children of the daimyo were required to live full-time

in Edo, this meant maintaining the full economic burdens of two households.

The toll, of course, was ultimately paid by the peasants who grew the rice on which the samurai economy depended. The tax burden on the common folk inspired nearly three thousand peasant rebellions after the violence of the Sengoku Era ended, including the last true battle fought in Japan before the Meiji Restoration. The Tokugawa regime saw Christianity as an instigator of discontent and created a self-fulfilling prophecy by brutally suppressing the faith. Harsh taxation and religious persecution led to the Christian peasants of Shimabara besieging their lords' castles. The rebellion was crushed and the shogun had its leaders executed by crucifixion.

The shogunate placed the blame on Christianity instead of taxation and henceforth enforced a ban on the religion throughout Japan. Fearing similar corruption of Japanese thought by foreign influences, the Tokugawa regime closed Japan's borders. The Portuguese and Spanish—whose Catholicism was seen as the worst influence on Christian rebels—were banished from the country, while the less-threatening Protestant Dutch were allowed to trade only at the port city of Nagasaki. Direct trade with the Chinese was also restricted to Nagasaki, while specific samurai clans with existing relations with the Ryukyu Kingdom, Korea, and the Ainu of Ezochi were allowed to continue their commerce.

In the eyes of foreigners, it appeared that Japan had secluded itself from the world.

Part IV – Inventing Traditional Japan

There is a sadly common impression in the minds of many foreigners that Japanese culture was somehow trapped in time during this period of seclusion, that decades and centuries passed without any change in Japan's quaint culture. This is a mistake; the "traditional" Japan that Commodore Perry and other early 19th century visitors beheld was almost purely the invention of the Tokugawa Era, no older than the culture of the American Consolidated Union and the other English-speaking nations of North America. Edo culture—named after the capital city where so much of this culture was invented—embraced constant change and innovation.

One of the immediate changes the Tokugawa peace wrought on Japan was the purpose of the samurai's life. With war ended, there was nothing for warriors to do. Samurai had been rewarded with loot from conquered *han*, but now there were no more conquests to be made. The Tokugawa regime resolved this by transforming the government into a wide-ranging bureaucracy modeled after China and the teachings of Confucius. The samurai changed from warriors into scholars.

This increased emphasis on education and sophistication led to a growth in aesthetic pursuits. Tea ceremony and flower arranging flourished, the practice of swordsmanship became instead the cult of the sword, and the desire for material wealth—for status symbols of their prosperity and dominance—began to overwhelm the ascetic influence of *bushido*. This was complicated by the fact that samurai lived on fixed stipends determined by the potential rice harvest of their *han*, and they were forbidden to engage in commerce or crafting because of the dignity of their position. Despite being the ruling class of the nation, a great number of samurai could not afford the lifestyle they desired.

The answer was an alliance of necessity with the merchant class. Merchants were actually considered one of the lowest castes in Japan, but they nevertheless became intimately intertwined with the finances of the samurai. Not only could merchants bring beautiful silks and pottery from all over Japan and beyond, but they could also lend samurai the money to afford these luxuries.

Edo, capital of the samurai, became a merchant town. Increasingly powerful mercantile families gathered in the capital to service their samurai clients. Not bound by the rigid formality demanded of the samurai, the nouveau riche merchants of Edo were able to indulge in lewder, wilder entertainment. Pleasure districts and theaters sprang up to fulfill their desires, creating the culture of legal prostitution, geisha, and kabuki recognized throughout the world, the culture known as the *ukiyo* or "floating world."

The still-thriving *ukiyo* gave rise to many of the hallmarks of Japanese culture that westerners mistake for ancient, ingrained traditions instead of vibrant, living arts. Important critics and artists such as James McNeill Whistler and Baudelaire have championed the beautiful woodblock prints called *ukiyo-e* that celebrate this rowdy merchant culture.

The vogue for Japanese art in the west means that portraits of prostitutes, music-hall dancers, and bisexual actors hang on the sitting-room walls of proper middle-class families throughout Europe and North America. These blissfully unaware folk would undoubtedly be even more astounded to learn that some of the actors depicted are automatons called *karakuri*.

Part V – Dolls and Demons

Butai karakuri—Japanese automaton theater—began in the bustling merchant town of Osaka in 1662, when a clock maker named Takeda Omi combined clockworks and water power to create the first automated theater. It was an instant hit, utterly eclipsing a brief fad for puppet theater (*bunraku*) and becoming the premier venue for drama. Advances in clockwork technology during the late 18th century enabled *karakuri* to become sophisticated enough to have their own unique “personalities.” Today, *butai karakuri* is the most popular form of theater in Japan and *karakuri* actors are as popular in *ukiyo-e* prints as human celebrities.

The automaton actors of *butai karakuri* are only the most visible of the unique automatons of Japan. Beginning with clockwork dolls and progressing into the powerful *oni* and delicate *karakuri* that exist today, an entire culture of man mixing with machine grew up during the Edo period. The Portuguese and Spanish traders who introduced firearms to Japan during the Sengoku Era also introduced modern clockworks. Artisans were brought in to study the mechanical clocks and other gearworks mechanisms gifted to the daimyo by the foreigners and soon Japanese-built clockworks were constructed. Limitations in native metalworking, however, meant most of these intricate constructs were built of wood, in turn limiting the practical size and usage of clockworks.

The most common *karakuri* throughout most of the Edo period were *zashiki karakuri*—small household *karakuri* used for entertainment—the most famous of which is the *chabakobei ningyo*, a doll-sized *karakuri* that carries a cup of tea across the room and back. Larger *dashi karakuri*—more expensive than most households could afford—decorated the floats for religious festivals, acting out tales of gods and bodhisattvas. The most elaborate were the *butai karakuri*, and the intricacy and subtlety of their construction might have remained the



From “*Karakuri Zui*” by Hosokawa Hanzō Yurinao (1796)

exclusive purview of the theaters if it had not been for an eccentric scientist named Hiraga Gennai (b. 1728 – d. 1842).

“Eccentric” is something of an understatement; many would call Hiraga Gennai “mad.” Temperamental and opinionated, it was a miracle he was not executed in 1779 when he had to be physically restrained from assaulting one of his apprentices during an argument. The quarrel in question occurred over opening new mines in a mountain village; Hiraga was adamant in arguing that the shogunate needed to increase Japan’s metalworking capabilities if it was to keep up with the west. The scientific journals and encyclopedias that trickled into Japan through the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki showed all too well how quickly both science and military tactics were advancing in Europe. Thankfully for Japan, Hiraga’s petition to open new mines was granted.

Hiraga Gennai’s work not only increased the availability of copper, iron, nickel, and other industrial metals in Japan (an important enough innovation in a nation that preferred working with wood), but he also invented several devices that enabled Japanese artisans to develop truly autonomous automatons. His *erekiteru* was an electrostatic generator that allowed Japan to develop its own spark wand and electrical motor technology independent of Michael Faraday’s innovations. He developed thermometers to regulate Japan’s nascent

steam technology, invented an asbestos cloth that gave metalworkers and *karakuri* alike greater protection from heat, and extrapolated from European techniques resilient new styles of porcelain that decreased the weight of automatons while increasing their strength. Even though it took decades for others to bring the potential of Hiraga's inventions to fruition, without the work of that singular genius Japan may never have developed the ubiquitous life-sized *karakuri* that astonish westerners.

The most revolutionary development to come out of Hiraga Gennai's work was the iron *oni*. Earlier *karakuri* had to be crafted from wood due to the relative unavailability of metal—with even the gears delicately carved from carefully-seasoned wood—so they were both fragile and expensive. Master craftsmen would labor for a year or more to build even the doll-sized *chabakobei ningyo*. While Japan never industrialized the same way Europe and North America did, Hiraga's mines and new metallurgical techniques meant that heavy-duty gears could be molded in a matter of days. Powerful, load-bearing automata debuted in Japan in 1834.

The first iron *oni*—named “Shuten Doji” after a famous, sake-loving demon—was essentially an oversized *chabakobei ningyo*. He was similar in many ways to Fitch & Fulton's dock-loading automaton Babe, but lacked the later automaton's versatility. Shaped like a muscular humanoid with broad, pronged feet to increase stability, Shuten Doji would walk 100 yards in a straight line once sufficient weight was placed in the basket on his back and then return to his starting point once the weight was removed. Shuten Doji's inventor, Tanaka Hisashige (b. 1799), demonstrated the *oni*'s capabilities by having it carry a large barrel of sake up and down a narrow pier.

Shuten Doji's inventor sold his plans to other craftsmen and soon there were “*oni* masters” throughout Japan. Farming villages pooled funds to buy *oni* to carry crops from the fields, merchants bought “yoked” *oni* they could guide with steering rods to carry their wares, and even daimyo bought oversized, piloted *oni* to carry them in ornate palanquins on the machine's backs. People personalized their *oni*, giving them names and having them painted with beautiful, tattoo-like designs. Especially among the working class, these animate yet unthinking constructs became anthropomorphized into members of society.

A basic tenet of Shinto is *musubi*, the animating force of the universe; in essence, not just people but also animals, plants, and stones and mountains are seen to have a soul. When all the world partakes of the divine, then even what mankind makes with its hands can be partially divine. The samurai's cult of the sword elevated a tool for killing into the embodiment of honor during the Edo era; it was only natural that *oni*—fashioned in human shape, capable of independent movement—would be seen to have *musubi* of their own. The same was true of *karakuri*, and it became even more true once the *oni* and *karakuri* became capable of thinking and speaking for themselves.

Shuten Doji's inventor, Tanaka Hisashige, did not rest on his laurels after inventing the iron *oni*. Gifted with a tireless and innovative mind, Tanaka was already a famous *karakuri* master when he created Shuten Doji. His work was in demand by daimyo, the Kyoto nobility, and the shogun himself. In 1851, Tanaka built a highly complex clock called the “Ten-Thousand Year Self-Ringing Bell” or “Myriad Year Clock;” it is capable of accurately tracking western standardized time, the far more complex Japanese clock system (where hours have different lengths at different times of the year), lunar phases, the Chinese solar calendar, and the western calendar. With this experiment in autonomous accuracy completed, he turned to translations of the work of Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace.



Tanaka Hisashige



Steel Like a Gem

The Japanese sword pair known as the *daishō* (consisting of the katana and wakizashi) is familiar throughout the world as the symbol—the soul—of the samurai, inextricably linked to the samurai code of honor. The remarkable steel that katana are forged from, however, had a greater impact on the course of Japanese history than just forming the swords of warriors. The accidental alloying of molybdenum with *tamabagane*—the so-called “gem-like steel”—allowed Japan to develop impressive long-range cannon and arm the iron *oni* with the fearsome *kanabō*—steel clubs that shatter the armor of warships—and in turn end the rule of the samurai.

The samurai—like the Mongol invaders they fought off in the 13th century—began as mounted archers, firing arrows at each other from their asymmetrical *daijū* as they raced up and down each other’s battle lines. The sword (known during this era as a *tachi*) was used in close fighting, but it lacked the mystique European knights gave to their weapons. Indeed, it was the twanging of a traditional bow that was thought to ward off evil spirits, not the bite of cold steel.

As military strategy evolved—especially in the wake of widespread use of firearms—swordsmanship became more highly prized. Close combat became a more necessary tactic to neutralize enemy arquebusiers, but even then the katana was a practical weapon to be used or discarded as needed. While good, strong blades made by master craftsmen were coveted, they were largely not embellished or treated as works of art.

One of the few exceptions to the utilitarian treatment of swords prior to the Tokugawa shogunate was reverence for the works of Gorō Nyūdō Masamune, a swordsmith of the 14th century. Masamune produced swords of striking beauty and durability, gleaming *tachi* shimmering with striking patterns that endured when lesser swords would break. This was because he mixed his asthma medicine in with the *tamabagane*.

Tamabagane is made from iron sand, a particular kind of ore that is found both as actual sand on river banks and beaches and as rock strata in mountains. The various impurities in the iron sand allowed for the effective introduction of carbon into *tamabagane* to create steel capable of holding the razor-sharp edge demanded of Japanese swords. This steel is brittle, however, and katana are prone to breakage—leading to sword fighting techniques that deemphasize parries in favor of evasion—and giving advantage to the warrior with the more durable weapon.

Legend holds that Masamune once spilled his medication—a powdered mineral—onto a sword he was forging and afterwards discovered that the weapon was stronger than any he had heretofore made. This medication was powdered molybdenum, a dense, lead-like mineral with an incredibly high melting temperature. The swords Masamune created with this technique are still deadly and strong, coveted by collectors amongst the great samurai families; the Tokugawa clan had a large collection of them that has fallen into the hands of the Ezo Republic and the Shinsengumi. Unfortunately, the secrets of his technique perished during the Sengoku era even as the sword became a samurai’s preeminent weapon.

Hiraga Gennai turned his attention to the mystery of Masamune blades during his lifetime, extrapolating from the work of Swedish chemists Carl Wilhelm Scheele and Peter Jacob Hjelm to isolate the element. His contentious work in opening new mines was partially fueled by a desire to discover molybdenum deposits. Swordsmith Suishinshi Masahide (1750-1825) used Hiraga’s discoveries to begin a renaissance in Japanese swordmaking that is carried on today by the official Imperial swordsmith Gassan Sadakazu (b. 1836), a highly regarded master artisan.

Another artisan influenced by Masamune’s accidental discovery and Hiraga’s work is Tanaka Hisashige. After his work creating the iron *oni* and the first true intelligent Japanese automata, Tanaka was recruited by the *tozama daimyo* of Saga *han* to create coastal artillery to protect the domain from the British. Tanaka realized he could use the Saga reverberatory furnaces to create molybdenum steel capable of withstanding the heat generated by high-powered, long-range shells and revolutionized Saga’s defenses. He also experimented with his iron *oni*, creating more powerful models inspired by the war automata introduced in the North American Civil War. He also finally gave the *oni* their *kanabō*.

Steel Like a Gem (Continued)

In legend, the demonic *oni* for whom the automatons are named wield iron-shod clubs capable of crushing a horse and rider in one blow. Tanaka discovered he could forge molybdenum steel versions of these weapons—absurdly heavy pieces of solid metal—that only the reengineered war *oni* could heft. These *kanabō* could shatter practically anything, hitting with the power of a cannonball. There was already an ancient saying in Japan—*oni-ni-kanabō* (“like giving a club to an *oni*”)—that essentially means “make something strong even stronger” or “adding fuel to the fire.” The large-scale use of molybdenum steel in Japan that began with Masamune’s blades eventually fueled the Meiji Restoration.

When Consul General Townsend Harris arrived in Japan in 1856, he was loaned the services of a geisha to educate him and his embassy in Japanese ways. Embarrassed but intrigued by the offer, Harris reluctantly accepted. A few days later, a large crate was brought to the temple the legation had made their home. Inside the crate was a technological marvel: a sapient automaton named Chocho-san, the greatest of Tanaka Hisashige’s creations. Harris could hardly believe that this isolated feudal nation had created something on par with the most recent scientific innovations of the west. He would have been even more surprised to know that soon heirloom family *oni* would be upgraded to sentience, that (somewhat less sophisticated) clockwork geisha like Chocho-san would grace the pages of *ukiyo-e*, and that *butai karakuri* would walk the streets with retinues of hangers-on.

Part VI – The Open Lock

Townsend Harris’s surprise at Japan’s technological achievements is logical in the face of Japan’s supposed isolation from the world, but the borders supposedly closed by the shogunate’s *sakoku* (“locked country”) policy remained astonishingly open throughout the Tokugawa era. While travel to and from Japan by both natives and foreigners was tightly regulated, the Chinese and Dutch trading enclaves at Nagasaki allowed for the latest scientific advances to be quickly disseminated in Japan. In fact, foreign influences were so prevalent during Japan’s isolation that it can be argued rebellion against these influences led directly to the restoration of the emperor.

The Protestant Dutch were never as evangelical as their Catholic competitors. After the rebellion at

Shimabara, the Dutch East India Company was granted a small compound on the artificial island of Dejima outside of Nagasaki. Chinese traders were allowed a similar compound nearby. Both settlements were walled in and allowed very limited access with Japanese citizens. Nevertheless, distinct schools of *rangaku* (“Dutch learning” or “western learning”) and *shushigaku* (Neo-Confucianism or “Chinese learning”) developed out of interaction with the foreigners.

Rangaku kept Japan up to date with the scientific innovations of the Age of Reason. The head of the Dejima outpost was required to travel to Edo every year and report to the shogun, so the court was kept informed of world events as well as gifted with European innovations. Dutch surgeons were allowed out of the compound to treat Nagasaki samurai, and western medicine spread through Japan. In 1720, the reigning shogun set translators to work on Dutch scientific manuals and treatises. These eventually introduced to Japan such innovations as air pumps (refined in Japan to produce perpetual oil lamps and some *karakuri* mechanisms), electricity (including the experiments of Benjamin Franklin), glass lenses (eyeglasses, microscopes, and telescopes), lighter-than-air travel (largely disregarded as a novelty), and steam engines (used to power the early iron *oni*). The possibilities of western science even led to the formation of a *rangaku* faction in the shogun’s counselors.

The *rangaku* faction argued that reopening the borders and embracing western science would make Japan stronger. Japan would not lose its identity to Europe, as Japanese adaptation of western ways would reinvent this technology into a uniquely Japanese form—just as Japan had adapted all the culture it imported from China. In the early decades

of the 19th century, reformers like Takashima Shūhan and Sakuma Shōzan imported western cannons and mortars through the Dutch, attempting to strengthen coastal defenses by emulating the Europeans. They were opposed by the Neo-Confucian faction of the Tokugawa court, a powerful voice that represented the essentially Chinese ethic that underwrote the shogunate.

Neo-Confucianism was in many ways the true underlying “religion” of the Tokugawa era. Emphasizing duty and loyalty as the cornerstones of ethics, *shushigaku* gave the shogunate a template upon which to build a bureaucratic civil government to replace the feudal warfare of the Sengoku Era. It provided an honorable alternative to the warrior lifestyle for the samurai class, allowing them to become instead scholars and administrators. Hierarchy and fealty became the organizing principles of society; honoring one’s superiors even at one’s personal expense became the ethos of the samurai.

The chain of fealty and honor created by *shushigaku* resulted in some unexpected consequences. The Shimazu clan of Satsuma *han* conquered the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609, making a foreign king the vassal of a vassal of the shogun. The Matsumae clan ruled the northern isle of Ezochi as a private fief, but their loyalty to the shogun meant they could not treat with Russian embassies. The Sō clan of Tsushima Island were forced to routinely alter official documents as they kept up a gray market trade with Korea, making sure everything that reached the shogun showed greater deference than what the Koreans actually wrote. Preserving honor became more important than life itself, as the Forty-Seven Ronin demonstrated.

As evidenced by the careers of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu, samurai frequently switched sides during the conflicts of the Sengoku Era, choosing personal gain at the expense of sworn oaths. In the peace of the Tokugawa Shogunate, samurai were free from the daily concerns of survival on the battlefield and began to romanticize the samurai ethos. *Bushido*, with its Neo-Confucian ideal of loyalty, became the code of the samurai. Nowhere was this demonstrated more fully than in the actions of forty-seven retainers of Asano Naganori, a young daimyo who was goaded by the avaricious courtier Kira Yoshinaka into attacking Kira in the shogun’s presence. Asano was sentenced to seppuku for the affront and Kira was awarded some of his holdings.

Asano’s loyal retainers—now masterless ronin after the fall of their lord—plotted for a year before assassinating Kira; they knew full well that their own lives were forfeit, but gladly sacrificed themselves for their lord’s honor.

As the Edo Era progressed, more and more samurai revered the Forty-Seven Ronin’s self-sacrifice as a demonstration of the true samurai spirit. The Neo-Confucian underpinnings of the loyalty demanded by bushido gnawed at the Neo-Confucian underpinnings of the fealty demanded by the shogunate. The *tozama daimyo* chafed at their continued exclusion from the councils of the shogun, knowing this was in contravention of the meritocracy argued by Chinese Confucianism. The lowly state of the emperor of Japan grated against the fidelity demanded by *shushigaku*. A new way of thinking was called for.

More and more samurai turned away from foreign learning—both Dutch and Chinese—to call for *kokugaku* (“national learning” or “Japanese learning”). The proponents of *kokugaku* argued that Japan should truly close its borders, that the Japanese should lock their hearts and minds shut against foreign thought. *Kokugaku* looked back to the early reverence for the divine emperor and Japan’s native Shinto religion, arguing for a “purified” Japan—an ideology that refined the unique, native elements of Japanese thought and forged them into a sword to cut a new path for Japan.

And then Commodore Perry arrived and turned a philosophical debate into a national crisis.

Part VII – The Black Ships

Perry didn’t cause the crisis on his own, of course. The Russians had been sniffing around Ezochi for decades and earlier conflicts like the First Opium War and the *Morrison* Incident exacerbated anti-foreign propaganda in Japan. Regardless, it is inarguable that Perry’s infamous Black Ships were the proximate cause of the Tokugawa regime’s destruction, as anti-foreign and pro-imperial forces seized their opportunity.

However, in light of Russia’s alliance with China in the ongoing conflict between China and Japan, it should be noted that Russia sought greater influence in Japan long before the British made their beachhead at Yokohama. During the reign of Catherine the Great, a Hungarian exile escaped Siberia to warn the Japanese that Russia was

planning to invade; while his story was probably false, it did lead the shogunate to regard Russia with great suspicion. Genuinely peaceful attempts by Russia to negotiate trade in Ezochi and Nagasaki devolved into violence on both sides, leading to an ongoing dispute over which nation holds the Kuril Islands. British expansionism during the First Opium War led to alarm in Moscow, resulting in a few more failed attempts to win Japanese favor.

The First Opium War greatly alarmed the government in Edo as well. Despite the occasional invasions in both directions, Japan always regarded China as the dominant power in the world. The British success during the First Opium War shocked the Japanese, and the *rangaku* faction briefly found itself ascendant as the shogunate and imperial court alike called for the adoption of modern western armaments to protect Japan's shores.

In one of history's great ironies, paranoid Japanese forces used those modern cannon to fire on a British vessel carrying Japanese sailors. The *Morrison*, an English merchant vessel, sailed from Macau in 1837 to repatriate a shipwrecked Japanese crew to their native soil. While the British vessel escaped unharmed, the incident ignited international furor over Japan's *sakoku* policy. In turn, the *rangaku* faction tried to argue for an end to *sakoku*, but all

they were able to secure was permission for foreign vessels to take on fuel and water.

Numerous attempts were made over the next decade—by Britain especially—to peacefully open Japan's borders. Domestic opposition to the First Opium War embarrassed the British into pursuing more diplomatic overtures to Japan, but Britain's patience eventually ended after a decade and a half of Japanese stalling. Knowing that another show of force in Asia from the Royal Navy or the East India Company would draw ire in London, the Japanese mission was placed in American hands. In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry of the American Colonial Navy sailed into Edo Bay with four dark-hulled warships.

The "Black Ships" ignored Japanese warnings to stop, training powerful cannon armed with exploding shells—something the Japanese had yet to develop—on the relatively weaker Japanese defenses. After threatening to bombard Edo if his overtures were not received, Perry presented the Japanese with a letter from Governor Millard Fillmore of the American Colonial Government offering peace and amity between Japan and the British Empire. He then left for China to give the Japanese time to consider Britain's demands for trade relations and safe harbor for British sailors. Perry returned in 1854 with twice as many warships, but was pleased to find



Perry Greeted on His Return to Japan

that the shogunate had agreed to his terms; unfortunately, the letter from Governor Fillmore was to the emperor—not the shogun—and the Tokugawa regime had not secured the emperor’s signature.

Part VIII – Intrigue in the Bakumatsu

The word *Bakumatsu* (“end of the curtain”) is used in Japan to refer to the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate. It was a time of intrigue and rising violence, as the insult of the shogunate concluding humiliating negotiations with a foreign power against the emperor’s commands prompted pro-imperial factions to rebel. Weakened shoguns struggled to hold on to power, but the times had changed; Britain and other foreign nations were able to seize greater concessions from the weakened nation. Gangs of samurai fought like wild dogs in the streets of Kyoto while foreign opportunists armed the *tozama* lords. In the end, war was inevitable.

The shogunate was besieged on all sides. On the one hand was the obvious threat of the Anglo-American navy, threatening to bomb Edo into rubble if the shogun did not accept their offer of friendship. On the other hand was Emperor Kōmei (1831 – 1867), popular for his belligerent order “*Sonnō jōi*” (“Revere the Emperor; expel the barbarians”). Supporting the emperor became a way for the daimyo to strike back at the government that had persecuted them for two centuries. *Tozama daimyo*—many from domains that were firsthand witnesses to European military superiority, and many of which had thus chosen to import western armaments—nevertheless rallied around Kōmei. The shogunate was forced to consult with the imperial court and the outsider lords over the foreign incursions, alienating the *fudai* and adding to its woes. The shogun petitioned Kōmei for permission to proceed with negotiations, but did not receive it. Forced to weigh the certainty of British violence against the possibility of imperial censure, the shogun signed Perry’s treaty on the emperor’s behalf.

Unfortunately, this was just the beginning. Perry had secured the right to open a British consulate in the city of Shimoda; in 1856, Sir Townsend Harris of New York, fresh from his successful conclusion of the Bowring Treaty with Prathet Thai, arrived to become the first British Consul in Japan. While more sympathetic to Asian culture than many of his contemporaries might have

been (and charmed by the gift of the shogun’s precious *karakuri* Chocho-san), Sir Townsend was nevertheless eager to protect the health and safety of British citizens in Japan, and he interpreted this as a need to also extend British trading interests. He secured extraterritoriality for Britons, ensuring they would not be held liable to Japanese laws, and absurdly low tariffs on British goods. It was a classic example of the kind of “Unequal Treaty” Britain had imposed on China after the First Opium War.

The Treaty of Amity and Commerce opened the door for France, Russia, and other nations to bully their way into Japan. Foreign settlements sprang up in the treaty ports, and violence exploded as sword-carrying samurai and pistol-packing westerners cut each other down over offenses of honor. Perhaps even more offensive to the Japanese spirit, though, was the belligerence of Chinese visitors in the wake of the Second Opium War; full of pride from sending the English packing, they sneered at the Japanese as “the sick men of Asia.” Anti-foreign resentment grew and the *kokugaku* faction grew stronger.

Some foreigners, though, sided with the Japanese to their own advantage, inadvertently setting the stage for Japan’s civil war. Thomas Blake Glover (b. 1838), a Scottish expatriate, flouted British and Japanese law to sell arms and warships to the dissident daimyo of Satsuma and Chōshū, two large southern *tozama ban*. These illegal arms deals prompted the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance to begin plotting with the imperial court against the shogun, effectively taking over the imperial capital. Disaffected ronin from the *tozama ban* flocked to Kyoto to join the imperialists’ grand schemes and shogunal loyalists flocked there to oppose them. The geisha houses and inns of the imperial city were spattered with blood as they became hotbeds of assassination and reprisal. Vendetta soon exploded into war.

Part IX – The Boshin War

The Tokugawa regime invited military missions from throughout Europe to help raise up and train a new Japanese army in the western style. Many nations were eager to sell their wares and services to Japan—after signing a compact that they would not directly assist either side in the inevitable civil war—but the Second French Empire (already enjoying a vogue for *ukiyo-e* and Japanese style) particularly leapt

at the opportunity. Napoleon III dispatched seventeen experts in European infantry and cavalry tactics to aid the shogun. These men evidently fell in love with Japan; many of them resigned their commissions in France to join the shogun's forces when war was declared. Even now, they serve as counselors to the Republic of Ezo.

Britain, meanwhile, subtly worked to bolster the imperialists—an irony not lost on those who remembered Perry's Black Ships and the beginnings of the Bakumatsu Era. Despite the *kokugaku* rhetoric and cries of *sonnō jōi*, there were many progressives amongst the imperialists who looked to Britain's constitutional monarchy as a model of government. These men were eager to accept Britain's aid. Weapons (like Gatling guns and howitzers) and warships were purchased (including the *Kōtetsu*, an ironclad originally built for the Confederacy). Five young samurai from Chōshū even absconded to Britain to study western ways. This cultural exchange helped mollify imperialist views of Europe and secured foreign aid for their rebellion.

The bloodshed of rebellion still might have been avoided. Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837 – 1870), the fifteenth and last Tokugawa shogun, succeeded to the office in 1866. A far more adroit politician than his last two predecessors, Yoshinobu agreed to return sovereignty to the emperor and administrate Japan at the head of a bicameral legislature. Meanwhile, Emperor Kōmei died under mysterious circumstances—silencing the worst of the anti-foreign elements—and his young son Mutsuhito (b. 1852) was declared the Meiji Emperor on February 3, 1867. The Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, however, realized that it could never seize political power as long as the Tokugawa clan still existed, so they declared war.

Provocateurs in Kyoto led by Satsuma samurai Saigō Takamori incited renewed anti-shogunate violence, causing the shogun-less government to send in troops. Saigō then led Satsuma-Chōshū to victory in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi in January of 1868. The French military mission had not had time to truly modernize the shogun's army, and the superior imperialist armaments took the day. Saigō pressed on, crushing shogunal resistance and capturing Edo by early July. Yoshinobu surrendered, but his retainers fought on.

Tokugawa loyalists organized a counter-insurgency in northern Honshu, even proclaiming

one of Emperor Meiji's cousins as their emperor instead. Imperialist forces marched north, joined by improved iron *oni* Tanaka Hisashige reverse-engineered from English Civil War automatons acquired by Thomas Blake Glover. This led to the most storied action of the Boshin War when the Byakkotai (“White Tiger Force”), a squad of teenaged shogun loyalists, fought to the last man against a force of iron *oni* in defense of Aizu Castle. The technological superiority of the imperialist faction quickly wore down the resistance in Honshu, and the war was all but ended by November.

The only place it did not end was the remote northern isle of Ezochi. Admiral Enomoto Takeaki used the shogun's navy to loot the treasury of Osaka Castle and flee beyond the imperialists' reach. While intended as a safe harbor for samurai tradition, Enomoto and his companions were persuaded by the French officers that accompanied them to declare Ezochi the free Republic of Ezo. Recognition was swiftly granted by France, China, Russia, and the Rocky Mountain Republic, hampering imperial efforts to reclaim the island. The attempted imperial invasion was a disaster; the *Kōtetsu* was captured and attempts to land a marine force of iron *oni* resulted in the loss of scores of automatons. Imperial forces retreated and the island—rich in natural lumber and potential farmland—was abandoned to the last of the samurai.

Part X – The End of the Samurai

A small cabal of samurai rose to prominence during the Boshin War. Saigō Takamori—hero of the Battle of Toba-Fushimi—and politicians such as Ōkubo Toshimichi and Ōkuma Shigenobu formed a Council of State that assimilated and streamlined the Tokugawa bureaucracy. Joined by a small number of daimyo and imperial court nobles, these men organized new ministries and formalized the imperial army. In the wake of the imperial defeat at Hakodate, anti-samurai decrees and legislation were passed by this oligarchy that ruled in the emperor's name.

The samurai class itself ceased to be; the Council of State instead created a new caste system of *kazoku* (nobles, including court nobles and former daimyo), *shizoku* (the former samurai), and commoners. The *kazoku*—in another example of the Meiji government's mingling of western influences and anti-foreign sentiment—were granted new titles

Manslayers and Wolves

The clash of steel in the Bakumatsu era forged new legends in Japan, folk heroes as renowned as the gunslingers of North America. Swordsmen lived and died tragic lives in the streets of Kyoto as they opposed or upheld the shogunate. While few of these men were true leaders during the Meiji Restoration or the Ezoichi Independence, their stories have had a greater impact on the popular imagination than those of shoguns or emperors.

The most popular anti-shogunate figures are actually *hitokiri* (“manslayers” or “assassins”), notable mainly for their patriotic (in this case meaning “pro-Imperial” and “anti-foreigner”) murders of Tokugawa officials and pro-western sympathizers. Kawakami Gensai (b. 1834), for instance, is a former retainer of Choshu and Kumamoto who struck down—in broad daylight and with only one blow—and killed the rangaku scholar Sakuma Shōzan. Despite the fact that his claim to fame is killing an unarmed inventor, his story is still filled with the strange, mad poetry that invites the hero worship of ex-Confederates like Jesse James.

As a young man, Kawakami Gensai is said to have derided practice with wooden swords as child's play, instead studying tea ceremony and flower arrangement. He held a private tea ceremony for some of the assassins of the unpopular Tokugawa chief minister Ii Naosuke. Kawakami married a woman admired for her skill with the naginata, and lost his mentor to the swords of the shogun's Shinsengumi in the infamous Ikedaya incident. His story was primed for embellishment even before his daring daylight assassination; in the wake of Sakuma's death, dozens of slayings were credited to the quiet, studious Kawakami. Even today, most assume that his position in the Manchurian expeditionary force is merely a cover for secret missions deep into Chinese and Russian territory.

Kawakami Gensai's foes in the Shinsengumi live on in the popular imagination as well, even though they are now exiles in the Ezo Republic. The Shinsengumi (“new squad”) was founded to protect shogunate loyalists working in and visiting Kyoto. Most were low-ranked samurai recruited from the sword schools of Edo, but some were commoners and a few are rumored to have been women. Once in Kyoto, they acted more as a paramilitary hit squad, attacking pro-Imperial agitators like the pro-democratic reformer Sakamoto Ryōma. Their most famous victory was a raid on the Ikedaya Inn during which they reportedly disrupted a plot to burn Kyoto, killing eight pro-Imperial ronin and arresting twenty-three more. Ironically, the Ikedaya incident probably increased violence in Kyoto, prompting escalating retaliation on both sides (such as Kawakami's career as a manslayer).

When the Boshin War began in earnest, the Shinsengumi joined the shogun's army. They fought valiantly in several engagements but were eventually forced to retreat to Ezoichi with the rest of the shogunate forces. Even in exile, though, their legend lives on. During the Battle of Hakodate Bay, the decisive victory that won the Republic of Ezo its independence, the surviving Shinsengumi boarded and captured the imperial ironclad *Kōtetsu*. They were lucky—a Gatling gun used to repel boarders jammed—but the risk they ran only added to their legend. The Shinsengumi's captain, Hijikata Toshizo, now serves as Assistant Army Minister to the Republic, employing his feared compatriots as assassins and saboteurs in the cold war between the two Japans.



Kawakami Gensai

such as baron and marquis and incomes based on the tax revenues of their new holdings. The *shizoku* lost everything that made them unique; they were stripped of their right to wear swords and their guaranteed incomes from the feudal *han*, and even their prominence in the bureaucracy vanished as merchants with much better experience at balancing budgets were wooed by the Council of State. The only thing left to sop their pride was the practically worthless distinction of the name *shizoku*.

Joining the army and police force allowed former samurai to retain the right to call themselves warriors—even if the swords they were issued were more often western-style sabers instead of katana—so the ranks of the military and law enforcement were soon swollen with *shizoku*. This alarmed some members of the Council of State, but pleased Field Marshall Saigō Takamori, who already envisioned spreading Japanese power to the Asian mainland (even advocating for the invasion of Korea before common cause was found with the Joseon Dynasty). The wounded pride of the former samurai found a balm in embracing their warrior heritage. The rising sun flag, emblematic of the emperor's descent from the sun goddess Ameterasu, flies proudly over Japan's eager legions.



Saigō Takamori in Dress Uniform

Part XI – Sacred Chaos

Indeed, the divine ancestry of the imperial line is emphasized more today than it has been for centuries. Foreign visitors before the Meiji Restoration often remarked upon the quaint way that the elevated philosophy of Buddhism and the animist folkways of Shinto were intertwined in Japan, utterly missing the hostility between the faiths that simmered beneath the surface. The turmoil surrounding the fall of the Bakumatsu and the beginning of the Meiji Era aggravated these long-gestating tensions in Japanese religious life. Over a thousand years since first proselytizing Buddhism to their subjects, the imperial court embarked on an ongoing campaign of suppressing the foreign religion and advocating for Shinto.

In the short time since the Imperialists won power, the holdings of thousands of Buddhist temples have been confiscated by the government. Temples have been closed and priceless scriptures, statues, and works of art destroyed. Many priests have been forced to convert to Shinto or become laymen. Hundreds have fled to the Republic of Ezo where they now toil along its frosty frontier, while thousands more have taken to the roads of Imperial Japan as beggars and outcasts.

The biggest, most powerful Buddhist temples remain secure, but a clear message has been sent to the populace and to foreigners that Shinto is the one true religion of Imperial Japan. The influx of wealth seized from the temples and monasteries—based in no small part on donations the shogunate forced the Japanese to pay in order to prove they were not Christians—has filled imperial coffers drained by the costs of the Boshin War and the theft of Osaka Castle's treasury by Enomoto Takeaki. The symbolic victory of asserting Japan's uniqueness and the exalted status of the imperial line has been even more important.

It is doubtful the aggression against Buddhism can continue. While there was much celebrating of the repeal of the shogunate-mandated alms to local Buddhist temples, Buddhism originally spread among the masses because it provided spiritual support lacking in the native religion. Shinto, after all, considers death a taboo and is not equipped to provide the basic need of funerary rites and services. Shinto also offers no hope of salvation, which at least the populist Pure Land sects of Buddhism provide.

The spiritual malaise resulting from this conflict between centuries of tradition and imperialist nationalism led to the ongoing “*Ee ja nai ka*” movement. Roughly translatable as “Who the hell cares?” *ee ja nai ka* is something like a spontaneous version of the Carnival celebrations of Catholic Europe and South America. Villages—and sometimes entire towns—abandon their obligations to dance and sing themselves into exhaustion. Crops are left unharvested and handiworks left unfinished as despairing communities give themselves over to nihilistic hedonism. Since sacred amulets sometimes “miraculously” fall from the sky during these wild parties, Imperial officials suspect Buddhist agitators are behind the movement. Thankfully, there has been little violence so far.

Christianity is finally legal again, and new religions also appear to fill the void in peoples’ souls. Most of the new religions emphasize traditional Japanese values such as charity, conformity, and industry, but their use of techniques like spirit possession—and the fact that most of them were

founded by women—alarms imperial officials. The top three are Kurozumikyo, Oomoto, and Tenrikyo. Kurozumikyo claims its leader was visited by Ameterasu herself, Oomoto venerates the usually-evil kami Konjin, and Tenrikyo blends Shinto ceremony with a monotheistic belief in a newly-invented benevolent creator deity called Tenri-O-no-Mikoto. Popular support for these apparently harmless new faiths grows, but the government watches them carefully, wary for any sign of dissent. It remains ambivalent to Christianity, too; if Japan didn’t need the support of the west in its struggle against China, it is doubtful Christianity would be begrudgingly tolerated again.

Part XII – A New Age of War

The war against China is an opportunity for Japan to declare its independence and power, to prove itself to the west. While English arms and Korean cooperation are necessary for the war’s success, it is Japan’s success in integrating western



Japanese Forces Assaulting Manchuria

technology and Japanese spirit that is being tested. The former samurai can finally test their code of bushido in the war two centuries of Tokugawa rule denied them, and the emperor of a small island nation can prove to the world that he has as much right to the title as the emperor of the mightiest nation in Asia.

The Council of State is led by partisans from Satsuma and Chōshū, *han* that had armed themselves with modern cannon and firearms well before the Boshin War began, and their familiarity with such weapons dramatically decreased the training the military of Imperial Japan required. Saigō Takamori agitated for an expansionist war practically before the Restoration had begun, so his rapid response in invading Manchuria is unsurprising. Young Emperor Meiji's own pride grows daily as he involves himself more in his government's workings and Field Marshall Saigō is easily one of his favorites. England's support is a natural extension of the way they helped arm the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, but the alliance with Korea surprises everyone who isn't aware of the secret history of Japanese-Korean relations.

As noted before, the closed borders of Tokugawa Japan were surprisingly open. The Sō clan of Tsushima Island and the Joseon Dynasty originally signed the Treaty of Gyeongju in 1443, giving the Sō a monopoly on trade with Japan in return for assistance in ending Japanese piracy against Korea. The treaty was disrupted by Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea, but after his death the Sō worked hard to reestablish friendly relations with Korea. This trade continued throughout the Tokugawa Era, making the Sō quite wealthy despite their limited holdings. In 1869, an envoy from the Sō was authorized by the new Meiji government to normalize relations with Korea. Negotiations took several years (the semantics of precedent between the Japanese emperor and the Korean king were a sticking point) but eventually the non-aggression pact was signed in 1872. Whether Japan suspected this subversion of China's feudal rights would provoke war is known only to the Council of State.

Japan now occupies much of Manchuria, backed by strong supply lines through Korea and the ironclad steamship navy of the Japan-England alliance. The manslayers of the Bakumatsu find new employment in infiltrating China while the iron *oni* crush opposition with their *kanabō*. The technological genius of Tanaka Hisashige and his

peers is drafted into finding ways to counteract China's air superiority; experiments with revolutionary mobile armaments are rumored in Japan's mountainous hinterlands. Railroads, telegraphs, and other modern conveniences proliferate throughout the archipelago itself, as the Japanese people rally behind the promise of the new empire. The Empire of Japan stands strong and proud among the nations of the world as the sun rises on a new age.



Imperial Flag of Japan

The Other Japans

The Republic of Ezo

The island of Ezochi (after the historic name for the non-Japanese natives today called the Ainu) lies over twelve miles north of Honshu, separated from the main islands of the Japanese archipelago by the cold, strong currents of the Tsugaru Strait. While Japanese colonies have existed on the island since the 14th century, it was only in the last two decades that the governments of Japan made any direct claim to Ezochi; prior to then it was no more considered a part of Japan than the Ryukyu Islands.

Fear of Russian expansion led the Tokugawa shogunate to officially seize control of Ezo in 1855. This symbolic act of expanding Japan's borders gives the Tokugawa loyalists who founded the Republic of Ezo a deep sense of investment in this half-wild island. The Empire of Japan does not recognize the Republic of Ezo—instead claiming Ezochi as a territory of Japan under the prefectural name “Hokkaido”—but support from France and recognition by China and Russia keep the fledgling nation independent.

In many ways, the Republic of Ezo resembles the Rocky Mountain Republic. Outside of the capital of Hakodate, modern industry quickly gives way to a hardscrabble life of small frontier communities at odds with the tribal natives they have displaced. These communities live on a literal sword's edge of violence as displaced samurai resort to brigandry to survive or install themselves as "bosses" of these tiny towns.

The main port and capital at Hakodate is an astonishing example of Japan's rapid modernization. Beneath the star-shaped fortress of Goryōkaku stands a rapidly-expanding city practically indistinguishable from a European or North American settlement. Enomoto Takeaki—prompted or perhaps puppeteered by French military advisor Jules Brunet—serves as president of a republic where all men of samurai descent are granted a vote; it's hardly as egalitarian as western elected governments, but it is a significant departure for Japan. While the shogunate's gold reserves still fuel most of the fledgling nation's growth, logging and fishing are quickly becoming important industries, while clearing the land for farming is producing excellent wheat crops.

This rapid agricultural expansion threatens the tenuous hold of the island's native Ainu. Ethnically and culturally distinct from their Japanese neighbors, the Ainu are a semi-nomadic tribal people who worship nature spirits (particularly the bear). In a sad parallel to the early plight of Native Americans, the Ainu have suffered greatly from warfare with and illnesses spread by the Japanese colonists who have trickled into Ezochi since the Sengoku Period. The long-time Japanese residents have now been joined by entire villages from Iga and Ōmi provinces who absconded to Ezochi after the shogunate's defeat. The new residents frequently provoke conflict with the native Ainu due to their ignorance of Ainu ways, but just as frequently fight with the established Japanese over resources.

While the Republic's government certainly intends to address the lawlessness of its frontier, its current focus must be on the ongoing cold war with Imperial Japan if it is to survive at all. This lack of oversight means inland Ezochi is now home to a subculture of samurai "swordslingers"—swordsmen as eager to prove themselves in combat as the gunslingers of North America—who act as enforcers on both sides of the law. The Tokugawa loyalists who created the Republic have been joined by

renegades from clans throughout Japan, so a wide variety of kenjutsu schools are practiced by the swordslingers. In addition, undesirables fleeing Meiji persecution are trickling into the Republic. Some—like the Buddhist monks ousted by the imperialist pro-Shinto stance—are harmless, but criminal elements are sneaking into Ezochi as well. Rumor holds that several farming villages deep in the interior are controlled by yakuza gangs.



Flag of the Republic of Ezo

The Ryukyu Kingdom

A chain of islands stretches between Japan and the Chinese colony of Taiwan; the Japanese refer to them as the Nansai-shotō ("Southwest islands") but they are better known to English speakers as the "Ryukyu Islands" after the kingdom that has governed there since the 14th century. Based on Okinawa—the largest island in the chain—the Ryukyu Kingdom has long existed in the unenviable position of being a tributary of China while also secretly being a vassal to the daimyo of Satsuma. This bizarre situation is finally coming to an end; unfortunately for the Ryukyu king, the end is nigh because Imperial Japan is seizing direct control of the islands.

Satsuma *han* invaded the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609, shortly before the establishment of the *sakoku* policy. The Ryukyu king was already a tributary of China, engaging in a mutually-beneficial cultural exchange wherein the Chinese provided ships so that the Okinawans could conduct international trade on reclusive China's behalf. The Satsuma daimyo wanted this trade to continue, so the subjugated Okinawans were forbidden from communicating

their conquest to the Chinese. While the Ryukyu Kingdom was disarmed (prompting the Okinawans to invent new forms of unarmed combat), it otherwise behaved very much as a self-governing entity.

The utility of the Nansei-shotō in the war against China, though, is patently obvious. The new Meiji government has seized direct control of the island from Satsuma, abolishing the native kingdom and

installing a prefectural governor. Japanese settlers have been sent to the Ryukyus for the first time in history and now occupy the northern stretch of the archipelago; the Okinawan language has been forbidden and Japanese schools have been established. The last Ryukyu king has been granted the title of Marquis Shō Tai and now dwells in Tokyo. This does little to console the islanders now that they are second-class citizens in their own homeland.



Shuri Castle, Okinawa



Korea

Part I – Cultural Overview

Despite almost constant oppression from a myriad of invaders, Korea has done remarkably well in standing up to its war-like and aggressive neighbors, both militarily and culturally. China, Japan, and even the Mongols have all at one time or another inhabited the peninsula and called it their own. Despite this, Korea has managed to not only maintain a cohesive society that is distinctly its own, but also to protect a thriving culture that shares very little with the surrounding aggressors of past or present. Even the Korean language has managed to escape certain outside cultural influences and is very much its own voice, with the remotest provincial dialect being able to be understood by most Koreans. One of the most significant cultural events was the declaration of the Korean alphabet Hangeul by King Sejong the Great in 1446. Such is the duality of Korea that King Sejong is also known for his use of the world's first multiple rocket launcher that could launch 200 rocket arrows at a time and became the backbone of the Korean fighting force. He went on to develop first-rate distance weapons that served the Korean navy well in times of war and ensured it remained the most successful such force of its time.

However, that's not to say that Korea has remained completely unchanged by the ebb and flow of invasion and passive influence. Buddhism from India is widely practiced in Korea, as is the Chinese version of Neo-Confucianism, which is a sect of Confucianism that emphasizes morality and applied ethics. This latter has always been the religion of the elite higher classes—the ruling classes—while the practice of Buddhism has been the religion of the poor. Cultural advancement has always been of paramount importance to Korea. For example, in latter day Goryeo, the *Jikji* (short for *Buljo Jikjisimcheyojeol*) was printed on the world's first movable-type printing press. The *Jikji* was a Korean Buddhist document, the full title of which means the *Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests' Zen Teachings*. At the end of the Han invasion in the 13th century, Koreans strove to create a civil service within the government as well as a codification of their criminal laws into a unified justice system. And yet, despite all these societal initiatives, a hereditary form of slavery has been practiced in Korea even into the 19th century. This has caused tension with England, Korea's new

trading partner and ally against China and Russia, because of England's relatively recent but now vehement anti-slavery stance.

Part II – Origins, Unification, and Invasions

In 2333 BCE, what was known colloquially as the Old Joseon Kingdom, or Gojoseon, was founded, spanning the entire Korean peninsula as well as parts of southern Jurchen. Korea's first Kingdom was united by Dangun Wanggeom, also known as Tangun. Tangun was believed to be the "Grandson of Heaven" and Dangun became an honorific title bestowed on all rulers of this period. However, China posits that it was one of its own that founded the Joseon/Gojoseon Kingdom—namely Gija, who was uncle to the last King of the Shang Dynasty. This has been rejected outright by leading Korean scholars who have failed to find any solid archaeological evidence to support such assertions. They believe that Gija Joseon merely cohabited the region located in Liaoning at the same time as the Gojoseon Kingdom and did not rule it as is claimed by the annals of the Han Dynasty.

War came to the peninsula in 109 BCE when Chinese Emperor Wu launched a Han military invasion against the Gojoseon Kingdom. After the war, the Han Dynasty sought to capitalize on this period of instability and hastily founded four prefectures close to the Korean border in the northeast region of what would later be called Manchuria. Three of these prefectures fell to the Kingdom of Samhan due to constant insurrection under the rule of the Chinese, while the last was taken by the Kingdom of Goguryeo. However, from this period of bitter in-fighting and rivalry, rose the Proto-Three Kingdoms, with Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla coming to the fore.

The Three Kingdoms (in what was also known as the Several States Period) eventually dominated all of the Korean peninsula as well as huge swaths of Manchuria. The Kingdoms competed amongst one another militarily as well as financially. Widespread production of iron meant that agricultural tools were more advanced and readily available, as well as ensuring that their weapons were sharper and stronger, thus increasing the wealth and power of the Kingdoms.

After a long period of constant warring between the Three Kingdoms, Silla eventually won out, defeating Goguryeo and Baekje and unifying the

peninsula in 668 CE into the Koryo Dynasty. (The modern spelling, “Korea,” first appeared in the late 17th century in the diaries of the Dutch East India Company’s Hendrick Hamel.) During this time Buddhist culture thrived, as did local poetry, craftsmanship, and art. Under a unified Silla the relationship between Korea and its old rival, China, remained relatively peaceful. However, due to insurrection and strife, Silla fell to Goryeo in 935. The peninsula was then united under King Taejo of Goryeo in 936.

The Mongol invasion of Korea began in 1231 and lasted for approximately 30 years. The Mongols forced the royal family to capitulate and relinquish all its territory. For the next 90 years, Goryeo was forced to live under the yoke of the Mongol Empire. Dissolution and internal strife brought about an end to the Mongol Empire/Yuan Dynasty in the 1340s. King Gongmin, the local ruler at the time, strove to reunite what he could and sought to create a cohesive Goryean government, but his problems were many. Constant raids from the Red Turban Troops (a hold-over from the internal Yuan Dynasty), as well as withering attacks from Japanese pirates called the *wokou* forced Korea to increase its military spending on boats, training, and personnel. The *wokou* continued to be an ongoing problem for Korea, not only on the high-seas, but on its fresh-water river ways and tributaries. This forced the Koreans to adapt portions of their navy specifically to combat this scourge.

Distrust between China, Japan, and Korea simmered for centuries. China in particular thought of Korea as inferior to its own cultural legacy; it considered Korea nothing more than a vassal state, demanding reparations and taxes in tribute. This placed even more strain on an already flagging economy. Still, Korea managed to thrive after such depredation and its economy even managed to stabilize during times of peace.

Korea practiced a hierarchical system of government with the King at the top, bureaucratic and civil service officials beneath the sovereign, then the artisans and merchants below that. The bulk of the populace fell into that lowest category, with laborers, farmers, and slaves together making up at one time as much as 30% of the population. Heavy taxation, bribery, and corruption sapped the stability of the nation, as the upper echelon’s tight grip on the nation’s wealth placed huge and continual strain on the poor.

The first Japanese invasion of 1592 – 1596 at the hands of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the second of 1597 – 1598 put an even more devastating fiscal burden on the Korean economy, forcing it to the brink of complete collapse. China, ever willing to influence its neighbor, began to slowly reel Korea into its control so that it had a buffer against both Japan and Nurhaci’s Later Jin Dynasty. Nurhaci put a stop to that plan by invading the Korean peninsula first in 1627 and again in 1636. After these two invasions, Korea was forced to recognize the authority of what soon became the Qing Empire.

Part III – The French and Russian Incidents, Isolationism, and All-Out War

The 19th century was a period of great upheaval for Korea, politically, economically, and—unfortunately once again—militarily. This time, however, the greatest threat came from further afield than the Koreans could have ever expected.

The arrival of Christianity in Asia was met with great skepticism and wariness on behalf of the Korean elite. Prior to that point, Confucianism had been the dominant religion in the region, and that was how the rulers planned on keeping it. Catholicism slowly began to thrive in China (and infiltrate the court) and even Japan, but not so in Korea. Korean officials banned Christianity outright out of fear of western influence. They saw first-hand what the religion was doing to China and believed it had the potential to destroy the culture they had fought so hard to maintain over the centuries.



Andrew Kim Taegon, Korean Catholic Priest

Clandestinely, French Catholic missionaries had for many years infiltrated mainland Korea and preached to the local populace. By the time this was discovered by officials in Hamgyong Province, nearly ten thousand Koreans had converted to Catholicism. Normally the government would have simply rounded up the perpetrators and deport them. However, a change in the leadership of the country led to several of the missionaries being beheaded as an act of defiance against what Korea saw as the west meddling in the very dynamic of Korean society.

When word reached the French authorities of what had happened, they decided that swift retaliation was the only appropriate option. France dispatched several warships to the area and planned on sailing up the Han River to the capital, Seoul. These ships were ordered to sack the city in the name of France and teach the young Korean king a lesson. But the French had made a grave mistake. Not only had they underestimated the tumultuous Han River, but they had failed to believe that such a “primitive” culture could have superior firepower and ships. The two sides skirmished on the outskirts of the capital, but the Koreans easily defeated this exploratory force and sent its remnants limping back home.

Precisely two months later, the belligerent Russians dispatched their own warships to demand trading rights and a permanent residency in Korea. This time the Koreans acted first, and a huge naval battle took place off the Ganghwa islands. The Russians had planned to use these isles as a base for their ships to better run a blockade along the eastern coast of Korea. Of the seventeen vessels dispatched by the Russians, only four returned to their home port. But not before the Russians had slaughtered everyone on the islands, as well as burning ancient temples and libraries to the ground. Korea might have sent off its latest invader, but it had paid a heavy cultural price.

This led to a temporary policy of complete isolationism that earned Korea the title of “The Hermit Kingdom.” However, this policy proved fiscally unwise for Korea and it was soon forced to open up trade negotiations with both Japan and England who were becoming more active in the region. Out of all the western powers, the Koreans respected the English more than most because of their shared hate for the Catholic French. In 1872, Japan convinced Korea to sign a non-aggression

pact. This angered the Qing Empire because it was seen as a sign of provocation. In February of that year began what the Koreans called the “Chinese Disruption.” Dragon Airships were seen over the capital and all major ports and harbors.

China flexed its muscles and made its supremacy in airpower known. Threats and demands soon followed the show of force. Korea was ordered to rescind its agreement with Japan or suffer the obvious consequences. Korea’s new trading partners, Japan and England, saw this as an act of war. Korea itself was unwilling to bend once more to the will of China, especially now that China was friendly with the Russians, who would never be forgiven for what they had done on the Ganghwa isles. Thus, when Japan invaded Manchuria on the 11th of March, 1872, Korea and England joined forces to assist. Russia aligned itself with China, and war once again broke out in the region.

England’s navy is engaged on patrols of the Chinese coastlines as well as running blockades against Russian supply ships sent to Chinese harbors. The elite Korean navy plays a valuable role in the war, patrolling the China Sea with its heavily armed panokseons as well as delivering soldiers and supplies up-river via shallow-draft turtle boats to Manchuria, the primary front for this conflict. Once more Korea is at war, but this time, things may just go in her favor.



Royal Flag of the Joseon Dynasty

The Philippines

Part I – Origins and Legacies

The Philippines are an archipelago of over 7,000 islands in the western Pacific Ocean. The nation can be divided into three island clusters: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Luzon, the largest cluster, is the economic and political heart of the nation. Visayas, the central island group, is bordered on the west by the Sulu Sea, and is at constant risk of attack by Sulu pirates. Mindanao, the southernmost cluster, is a rocky, mountainous region, defined by its incredibly diverse peoples—a mix of native Filipinos, Sulus, Chinese, Japanese, and Spaniards, with a significant Muslim, Buddhist, and Catholic religious presence.

Little is known of Filipino history before the 9th century, but prehistoric people have lived on the islands for tens of thousands of years. With nearly 2,000 populated islands in the archipelago and nearly as many tribal groups, the Philippines are home to a widely varied system of beliefs and traditions. In Manila, on the island of Luzon, most Filipinos have a culturally-ingrained desire for social approval. The traditional *hija* (sense of shame) and *amor propio* (self-esteem) encourage assimilation to foster a sense of belonging. This cultural norm was put to the test when Spanish conquistadors invaded the Philippines in the 16th century.

In the late 13th century, the Philippine island of Luzon became a tributary of the vast Majapahit Empire, the last and greatest empire of the Austronesian islands. The rise and fall of the Majapahit are shrouded in mystery, but it is known that the empire was born after an ancient Javanese ruler briefly allied with Kublai Khan to destroy his enemies. Few records of the once-great empire remain, save for some apocryphal poetry and a few terra cotta figures of their most famous leader, Gajah Mada. The Majapahit Empire crumbled around the year 1500, but the Philippines would soon be conquered by another empire, one of the most powerful in the western world.

Part II – Spanish Conquest

Ferdinand Magellan, the famous Portuguese explorer, arrived in the Philippines in 1521. He formed loose alliances with local leaders, hoping to earn their trust and convert them to Catholicism in the process. He died there that same year, while

aiding a local raja in his war against *datu* (prince) Lapu-Lapu, a legendary Filipino hero. Throughout the 16th century, dozens of expeditions were made from Spain to the Philippines, in the hopes of adding the island nation to *Nueva España* (New Spain), a growing empire of Spanish colonies, which at its height contained much of South America, Central America, and the Gulf Coast of North America.

The Philippines' first Spanish rulers relocated indigenous groups into homogenized settlements, not unlike the Jacksonian policy of herding Native Americans into reservations. The Philippines were ostensibly ruled by the Viceroy of New Spain, but a governor-general from Spain was appointed to govern the nation from Manila.

The Philippines were an unprofitable colony, producing mainly gold and silver that was shipped to other nearby colonies in Asia and Central America. None of the trade revenue generated in the colonial Philippines ever made it back to Spain, where it was hoped that the Philippines colony would shake Portugal's dominance of the global spice trade.

The colonial era saw the rise of four social castes in the Spanish-controlled Philippines: *los peninsulares* (European-born Spaniards), *los criollos* (colonially-born Spaniards), *los mestizos* (a person of both Filipino and foreign descent), and *los indios* (native Filipinos). The *casta* system essentially granted citizens more social power and respectability based on the lightness of their skin and the supposed purity of their ancestry.

As of the early 1870s, the Philippines had endured three and a half dehumanizing centuries of Spanish rule. Many *peninsulares* and *criollos* rode in luxurious steamships while *mestizos* and *indios* still tilled their fields with centuries-old tools. The people were on the brink of revolution, and while they recognized the need to modernize their nation, many community leaders feared that accepting new steam technology would cause the Philippines to lose sight of their past. A popular Filipino proverb states *he who does not remember where he came from will never reach his destination*, encouraging progress but warning against losing sight of why one sought that progress to begin with. To the people of Manila, war was inevitable, but to the people of rural Visayas, the freedom they lost under Spanish hegemony was nothing compared to the destruction war would bring.

Part III – ¡Revolución!

In April of 1871, a Spanish monarchist soldier named Rafael Gerónimo Cayetano Izquierdo y Gutiérrez was appointed Governor-General of Manila and the Philippines, to the dismay of many Filipinos. Izquierdo was disgusted by the liberal policies of his locally-beloved predecessor, Carlos María de la Torre y Nava Cerrada, and famously vowed to rule the Philippines “with an iron fist.” Though Izquierdo brought long-needed industrialization to the archipelago, few *mestizos* or *indios* reaped the benefits of the new telegraph lines or top-of-the-line steamships. Izquierdo earned the ire of the *mestizos* and *indios* by repealing most of Torre’s reforms, implementing draconian labor laws, and drastically raising taxes on all native-born Filipinos.

On 20 January, 1872, a battalion of two hundred Filipino soldiers stationed at Fort San Felipe rose up against Izquierdo’s government by staging a rebellion in the maritime city of Cavite. The rebels incorrectly believed that the soldiers garrisoned in Manila would rally to their cause and overthrow the colonial government. None of the fearful Manilan soldiers came to aid the revolution.

Frightened and desperate, the Cavite rebels hunted for some way to fortify their position. Among other munitions, the San Felipe arsenal held the bodies of fifty decommissioned automata that had been seized from pirates, smugglers, and slavers in the Sulu Sea. Despite the protestations of some Catholics among the rebels, the automated soldiers were reactivated and armed with rifles and kris blades.

Fewer than half the automata were in operable condition, and many were positioned on the battlements as “scarecrows” to intimidate the Spanish forces who arrived the next day to quell the insurrection. The battle dragged on for nearly two weeks, and the rebels’ spirits were bolstered only by the news that other anti-colonial riots had flared up in the nearby cities of Tampus, Bakoor, and even in Manila, the colonial capital.

In early February, mobs of violent protesters began to encircle the Manilan capitol, and Spanish officials hurriedly devised a plan to end the siege of Fort San Felipe and return their forces to Manila’s defense. Governor-General Rafael de Izquierdo and his political allies apprehended three Filipino priests

on 2 February, 1872, and announced that they would be executed for heresy and sedition. The secular priests—Mariano Gomez (a Chinese-Hispanic *tornatrás*), José Burgos (a *mestizo*), and Jacinto Zamora (a *criollo*), were falsely accused of inciting the Cavite rebellion and committing crimes against God by arming the heathen automata. Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora were executed in front of Fort San Felipe the next day.

The fortress’s beleaguered defenders surrendered after the public execution, but the riots did not end. The martyrs of Cavite became a banner beneath which all Filipinos rallied against the Spanish Empire. Riots grew into skirmishes and skirmishes into open rebellion. The Filipino revolutionaries called themselves the Gomburza, for **Gomez**, **Burgos**, and **Zamora**, and quickly took back the city of Cavite and ousted the imperial government from dozens of other towns in the Luzon islands.



Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora

Within a matter of weeks, the rebellion had spread across Luzon and to the northern tip of Visayas. Gomburza forces had cornered the Izquierdo government in Manila and laid siege to the capitol, severing telegraph lines and tearing up train tracks as they went. The rebels’ victories had been hard-won at first, but the farther they spread from Manila, the easier their battles became. Spanish troops were few and far between, and the reason soon became clear: the empire had abandoned the Philippines.

The colony had never been as profitable as Queen Isabella II and her advisors had hoped, and the war could not have struck them at a worse time. The Spanish Empire had committed to industrializing their holdings in South America and strengthening their military presence in the Iberian Peninsula, fearing an attack from Napoleon's forces to the north. The war in the Philippines was too expensive to support, especially with the constant threat of European war.

Izquierdo waited out the siege for three weeks before he discovered Spain had abandoned him. The news shattered his resolve, and he fled under cover of night with a handful of his closest retainers, thanking God that the rebel army had not yet unified into a coordinated force. He fled cross-country for a week before he and his two remaining aides reached Spanish-controlled territory in the south. Over the next six months, the remaining pockets of Spanish resistance on the Luzon islands surrendered to Filipino forces.

Part IV – Freedom and Self-Determination

Filipino independence is not recognized by the fading Spanish Empire, nor by the other major European powers. None of the great empires wish to acknowledge how easily the Spanish were defeated by its supposedly primitive Filipino subjects. The colonial government of Malay—one of the few British territories left in Southeast Asia—has suppressed all news of Filipino independence and closed their ports to Filipino ships, as the British Empire fears that word of the rebels' victory might lead to native uprisings in their other territories. For the same reasons, however, the Indian Alliance and other post-colonial nations in the region have loudly announced the Free Philippines' right to self-determination.

The fledgling Gomburza party—the only recognized party of the Free Philippines—is currently led by Mariano Álvarez, a *mestizo* born in Cavite, the city where the rebellion began. The need for revolution became clear to Álvarez after he was imprisoned and brutally tortured in 1871 for insulting a Spanish officer, and again in 1872 after being falsely implicated in the Cavite riots. He escaped from prison in Manila during the riots and tried to unify the disorganized rebels encircling the capitol.

Álvarez is most concerned with protecting his new government from internal threats. He is considered a great leader by those who served under him in Manila and his campaign across Luzon, but not everyone desires his rule. Before the Spanish came, Filipino culture was highly diverse, spread across thousands of islands, with thousands of tribal leaders. Some want to return to those days, and to Álvarez's dismay, will defend their right to self-determination to the death.

For the past few months, the Free Philippines have been unbothered by external attackers, allowing the revolutionary army to quell dissenting tribal leaders and to watch the northern shores of Visayas for Spanish activity. The Sulu pirates see the Philippine Revolution as a noble cause, and rarely conduct raids on Gomburza territory. However, ominous reports of a fleet of steamships flying the red cross of *Nueva España* off the southern coast of Luzon have sent a wave of panic across the islands. Filipino scout ships have scoured the waters between Luzon and Visayas, but the infamous *flota fantasmal* (Ghostly Fleet) remains untraceable.

Some insist that the phantoms are simply the work of pirates who have salvaged old imperial steamships, but the truth is much more sinister. Izquierdo and other vengeful ex-governors still seek retribution for their humiliation at Manila. The colonial government-in-exile has relocated to the Davao Region of Southern Mindanao, the southernmost island in the Philippine archipelago. The deposed governor-general could have escaped to Spain on one of the remaining galleons in the Davao Gulf, but his wounded pride and festering greed has shackled him to the Philippines. He has chosen to hunker down in the San Pedro Cathedral in Davao City, converting the historic church into a military base, and has sworn to retake Manila for the empire and restore his right to rule.



Unofficial Flag of the Free Philippines

Việt Nam

*"I'd like to ride storms, kill sharks in the open sea,
drive out the aggressors, reconquer the country, undo
the ties of serfdom, and never bend my back to be the
concubine of whatever man."*

Lady Triệu, 248

Part I – Early History

In 40 CE, the sisters Trưng Trắc and Trưng Nhị, with an army comprised mostly of women, led the first successful rebellion against the Chinese government that had been occupying the area of Nam Việt for nearly 250 years. Through this rebellion, the independent nation of Việt Nam was founded. Having liberated their country, they held power as queens for three years until the Han army returned in 43 CE. Though the country's independence was short-lived, the seeds of rebellion were sown, and numerous revolts occurred in the centuries that followed. By the year 1009, the 837 years of Chinese rule were interrupted by four more Vietnamese dynasties over the course of the millennium, as well as a number of less successful rebellions, one of the most famous of which was led by Lady Triệu in 248. According to the legends, Lady Triệu was said to be over nine feet tall, with breasts over three feet long that she kept tied behind her back as she rode into battle atop a giant war elephant. Her story continues to be an inspiration to the Vietnamese people throughout history. The first truly successful rebellion came in 938 in the battle of Bạch Đằng in 938, when Ngô Quyền finally won Việt Nam's independence, beginning a dynasty that lasted about 30 years.

The first Vietnamese dynasty to last more than two centuries came in the form of the Lý Dynasty in 1009. This period was also rife with attempted invasions by China, but these were successfully kept at bay. The dynasty ended when Trần Thủ Độ arranged for his nephew Trần Cảnh to marry the Empress Regnant Lý Chiêu Hoàng in 1225. The Trần Dynasty continued to keep the borders strong, now against attempted invasions from the Mongol Empire.

In 1400 Hồ Quý Ly manipulated the overthrow of the Trần Dynasty through political maneuvering and the execution of hundreds of people, including a 3-year-old emperor. Unfortunately for the Hồ

Dynasty, Hồ Quý Ly found himself faced with increasing hostilities from China, who seized the country in 1407. China held the territory for another 20 years until Lê Lợi drove them out in 1427 and established the Lê Dynasty. He ruled from 1428 until 1789, with the exception of the six-year period when the throne was usurped by the Mạc Dynasty from 1527-1533. After that the nation was divided with the Lê family controlling the south and the Mạc family controlling the north until the Lê drove them out in 1593.



Lady Triệu

Although the Lê Dynasty was back in name, they were mostly operating as figureheads under the Nguyễn warlords in the south and the Trịnh warlords in the north. This was the political environment of Việt Nam when European missionaries and merchants began arriving in the early 17th century. One of the most famous of the early missionaries was Alexandre de Rhodes, a French Jesuit who arrived in 1619. He is most famous for having created the first Portuguese-Latin-Vietnamese dictionary, but he was also a very ardent missionary, claiming to have converted over 6,000 Vietnamese to the Catholic religion. In 1630 he was expelled from the country, but he returned numerous times. His enthusiasm eventually earned him a death sentence that was reduced to exile, after which he returned to Rome and obtained funding to found the Paris Foreign Missions Society in 1659.

Though he himself never returned to Việt Nam, French missionaries continued to meddle in Việt Nam despite the efforts of the warlords to drive them out.

Part II – Fall of the Warlords

At the same time French missionaries were meddling in Vietnamese affairs, tensions were mounting between the warlords that left the peasantry destitute and suffering under high taxes to support the continued warfare. Small peasant revolts began to spring up throughout the country. These were largely unsuccessful, but in 1771 a pair of brothers from the Tây Sơn district of Bình Định Province (the brothers coincidentally bore the name Nguyễn but had no relation to the ruling family), led a rebellion against the Nguyễn lords, uniting the people with the slogan “seize the property of the rich and distribute it to the poor.” In 1777, the last of the Nguyễn lords, Nguyễn Ánh, sought and was denied sanctuary by the French missionary Pigneau de Behaine, leading to Nguyễn Ánh’s ultimate defeat and the 1778 crowning of the oldest of the Tây Sơn brothers, Nguyễn Nhạc, taking the royal name of Thái Đức.

Thái Đức’s younger brother, Nguyễn Huệ, met with Pigneau de Behaine, seeking an alliance with the French missionaries as the Tây Sơn brothers consolidated power in the south in preparation for marching on the Trịnh lords in the north. Behaine declared his neutrality in the conflict. Even without the aid of the French, the Tây Sơn brothers were able to defeat the Trịnh lords in the north thanks to the Flaming Tiger Cannon, a hand-held cannon which could release a stream of fire at very long range. The Tây Sơn army forced the figurehead Lê emperor, Lê Hiến Tông, to retreat into China in 1788. Chinese emperor Qianlong agreed to restore the Lê family to power and took the Vietnamese capital of Thăng Long. Huệ retaliated with a surprise attack during the 1789 Lunar New Year celebrations in the famous Battle of Đống Đa. Having retaken the capital, Huệ declared himself Emperor Quang Trung, and solidified his right to the throne by marrying Lê Ngọc Hân, daughter of Lê Hiến Tông.

With the country united, the warlords vanquished, and the Lê family permanently ousted, Quang Trung took an apparent respite from warfare as he began securing an economic base. He issued heavy taxes on the rich, as promised in the slogan of

the Tây Sơn rebellion, but the poor saw less of that money than they had expected as he secretly began melting copper coins for the manufacture of military equipment in order to build a military force to invade China. However, in 1802 Quang Trung died of a stroke, leaving his son, Nguyễn Quan Toàn, to be crowned emperor Cảnh Thịnh.

Part III – Cambodian Conflict

As he took the throne, one of Cảnh Thịnh’s biggest concerns was Thai activity in Cambodia. Fearing that a successful conquest of Cambodia would be followed up by an invasion of Việt Nam, Cảnh Thịnh took most of the army his father had prepared and sailed it south to begin his own war in Cambodia. Being attacked on both sides, Cambodia sought aid from France, who proffered limited military support, enough to maintain Cambodian autonomy as the conflict between the Thai Kingdom and Việt Nam drew out for ten years. The situation seemed to be in a stalemate until Napoleon withdrew his aid in 1812. Cảnh Thịnh took advantage of the withdrawal of French troops to launch a coordinated attack that succeeded in driving out the Thai army.

With the French and Thai threats out of the way, Việt Nam was faced with what to do with Cambodia. The king of Cambodia, Ang Chan II, swore his allegiance to Việt Nam, offering his next daughter up to be the wife of Cảnh Thịnh’s first-born son when they would both be of age. This union was consummated when Ang Mey married Nguyễn Bình in 1834, at which point Cambodia was formally incorporated as part of Việt Nam. Both Cảnh Thịnh and Ang Chan II died the following year, leaving the throne to Nguyễn Bình, who took the royal name of Càn Bằng.

Queen Ang Mey and Emperor Càn Bằng differed in their approach to leadership, and Ang Mey sought numerous times to counteract the emperor’s policies behind his back. A major point of contention was the treatment of French missionaries. Ang Mey felt that they should be given free reign of the country while Càn Bằng wanted to place restrictions on their actions. When in 1843 Càn Bằng decided to begin arresting French missionaries, the queen secretly helped them to escape. Before he died in 1845, he never learned that it was her deceit that freed the missionaries. Upon his death, he left the throne to their 10-year-old son, Nguyễn Đạt.

The coronation of a child emperor left Queen Ang Mey with the seat of power in the country. She relaxed the restrictions on foreigners and began reversing other policies enacted by her now-deceased husband. Initially the mandarins were resistant to her policies, but when they saw how her open trade policies and generosity to the poor helped bring the country to a level of unprecedented economic prosperity, they carried out her orders with greater respect.



Ang Mey of Cambodia

Part IV – The Strange Fragrance from the Precious Mountain

In 1849 Ang Mey fell ill with cholera. During her illness, Nguyễn Đạt found himself truly leading the nation for the first time. He refused to take a royal name, feeling that to do so distanced an emperor from the people. In his first few months he granted a great number of audiences to common people. One of these audiences was to a Buddhist named Đoàn Minh Huyền who had come straight from the Thất Sơn Mountains where he had been living. Đoàn Minh Huyền claimed to be able to help the queen, and he successfully cured her of the disease. Nguyễn Đạt offered Huyền funding to pursue medical research in the mountains, but Đoàn Minh Huyền refused. Word spread throughout the countryside

and tales were told of his ability to heal the queen, and soon he was healing others as well. Đoàn Minh Huyền became known among the people as the “living Buddha” and “Buddha Master of Royal Peace.” His followers took the funding offered by the government and opened up a medical school in 1851. Buddhists and healers came from far and wide to study under Huyền’s philosophy. Apothecaries trained in this school all wore amulets in which the words “Bửu Sơn Kỳ Hương” (Strange Fragrance from the Precious Mountain) were engraved in Chinese characters. A rising cholera epidemic in Việt Nam was soon all but eliminated by the Bửu Sơn Kỳ Hương apothecaries.

Though Ang Mey had recovered, Nguyễn Đạt continued to rule. After Huyền’s death in 1856, Ang Mey’s health began to deteriorate once more, and she died in 1858. France, seeking an ally in Asia, took this as an opportunity to send Bishop Dominique Lefèbvre to Việt Nam in a dirigible to attend the funeral. Lefèbvre offered the airship as a gift to emperor Nguyễn Đạt in honor of the work Ang Mey had done protecting the French missionaries. The pilot remained as well to train the Vietnamese royal family in aviation.

By 1872, Việt Nam has become a leading medical center in Asia. Bửu Sơn Kỳ Hương medical school continues to get students from various parts of Asia coming to train as apothecaries. Aviator training is still restricted to those of royal blood and aviation is mostly a recreational activity, but consideration is being made to training the merchant class for the opening up of dirigible trade routes.



*Imperial Pennon
of the Nguyễn Dynasty*

Prathet Thai

Part I – Early History

The Thai Kingdom, colloquially known as Meung Thai or more formally as Prathet Thai, was from its early inception a nation at the crossroads of many cultures. Prior to the tenth century CE, the peninsula of Indochina was inhabited by various indigenous tribes and kingdoms. The two major river systems of the Chao Phraya and the Mekong were key factors in the economic and cultural development of the Thai region, nurturing the growth of major trading settlements and ports.

The region is linked to China's Yunnan province via the Mekong River, and drew influence from both Chinese culture as well as the powerful ancient kingdoms of India—notably the extensive Maurya Empire (322-185 BCE), which spread the teachings of Buddhism to the Indochina peninsula. The Tai people migrated from China and settled into the peninsula as early as the Tang Dynasty. At the time, the Dvaravati inhabited the region of the Chao Phraya river valley. Dvaravati rule consisted of a network of city-states or principalities rather than a centralized kingdom, in what is known as a mandala system of government.

Trade flourished along the network of rivers, with artifacts and coins from as far as Rome reaching Dvaravati prior to the tenth century CE. The Tang court of China also records tributes from the Dvaravati. In the 13th century, Sukhothai emerged as a kingdom independent of the Khmer empire. The Thai Lanna kingdom, centered at Chiang Mai, was also established at that time. The practice of medicine was well-established in Sukhothai, with over a hundred organized hospitals throughout the kingdom. Medical practices focused on external techniques such as acupressure, bone-setting, massage, and cupping, and integrated a strong internal component combining elements of shamanism and Buddhist meditation for spiritual health.

It was the Ayutthaya kingdom, located to the south around the Gulf of Thailand, that consolidated power in the Thai region, eventually conquering Sukhothai and turning the Lanna kingdom into a vassal state.

Part II – Ayutthaya Kingdom, A Golden Age

The first ruler of the Ayutthaya kingdom, King Ramathibodi I (1351-1369), established Buddhism as the official state religion, differentiating Ayutthaya from the neighboring Hindu kingdom of Angkor. The Ayutthaya period (1351-1767) was a golden age of cultural exchange and innovation in the Thai kingdoms. Ayutthaya continued the Sukhothai tradition of medicine and trade, strengthening the Buddhist practices of mental cultivation and development for healing. A network of Buddhist temples and monasteries began to develop, forming a pathway for transmission of knowledge. Among them, Wat Buddhaisawan located in the Ayutthaya capital, collected knowledge of weaponry and fighting skills, and began to train disciples in the krabi krabong form of sword and pole-fighting as well as an advanced form of elephantry battle.



Provincial Seal of Suphan Buri Depicting Elephant Warfare

A spirit of tolerance and openness to foreign ideas flourished in the kingdom. As a result, Ayutthaya became a crossroads of technological development. Foreign traders from China, Annam (Việt Nam), Japan, and Persia were allowed to set up villages outside of the capital. These trading enclaves allowed many different cultures to thrive in the kingdom. This openness was later extended to Portuguese and Dutch traders as well during the reign of King Narai. Narai was known for welcoming foreigners to his court. Dutch and

English traders were allowed to establish factories, and Narai sent a diplomatic mission in 1686 dispatched to Louis XIV in Versailles. The king also sent diplomats to the Hague and brought in French engineers to fortify the palace.

The increased French influence in court eventually led to backlash against foreigners. Following Narai's death, foreign advisors in the Thai court were marked as traitors. Western traders were expelled or even massacred. Though the Dutch East India Company continued to do business in Ayutthaya, the period from 1688 to 1700 remained a hostile and volatile environment for western traders. Despite this, ties were never completely severed with the West.

Part III – Burmese-Thai Wars: Sacking of Ayutthaya and Rise of the Thonburi Kingdom

The last fifty years of the kingdom were plagued by power struggles among the princes of Ayutthaya, and relations with the kingdom of Burma reached a head. In 1765, a Burmese army of 40,000 marched into Ayutthaya from the north and the west. As the Burmese forces marched through Ayutthaya, they raided the villages and demanded the families hand over their unmarried daughters. Leaders from several surrounding *meungs*, or city-states, mounted a resistance of four hundred men centered at the village of Bang Rajan.

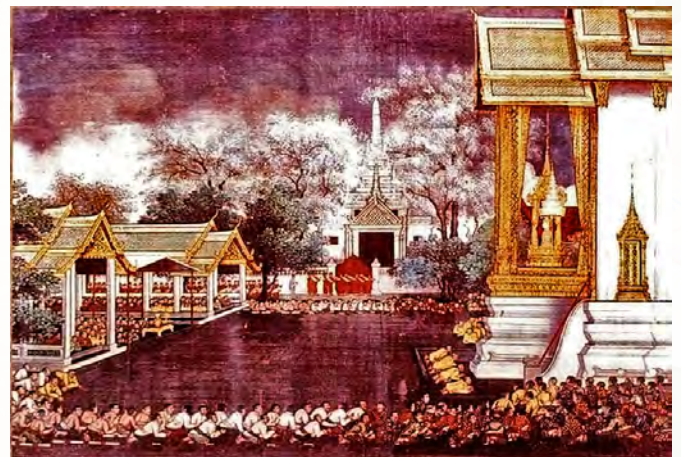
The Thai resistance was bolstered by Ajarn Thammachot, a Buddhist monk who happened to be stationed at the village monastery. Thammachot's role in the subsequent fight is shrouded in mystery. Though he is often cited as being something of a sorcerer, equipped with powerful spells and charms that protected the fighters and imbued them with super-human abilities, another theory suggests Thammochot had studied not only the fighting techniques and weaponry of the Buddhaisawan temple, but was knowledgeable about the technological advancements passed on in secret among the monks.

Unfortunately, the truth of the Bang Rachan resistance may never be known. After five months of fighting, during which Bang Rachan desperately requested assistance from the capital in the form of cannons and artillery, reinforcements failed to materialize. Ayutthaya did, however, send an engineer who joined the fight to help the villagers cast their own weapons, but the guns came out

cracked and unusable. A few murky accounts passed down from the few survivors claimed that the gunpowder and metal weaponry somehow conflicted with the Buddhaisawan power source, and the two forces counteracted one another, unintentionally causing the final break-down of Bang Rachan's defenses.

Eventually the village rebellion succumbed to the invasion as the meung leaders fell one by one. The Burmese army proceeded to march on the capital. In 1767, the capital city of Ayutthaya was sacked by the invading Burmese army after a fourteen month siege. The libraries and archives were burned to ash, bringing the kingdom to ruin. Burma's occupation of Ayutthaya did not last long, only the space of a year, as it was simultaneously embroiled in a war with Qing Dynasty China.

In the aftermath of the Burmese invasion, the provinces of Ayutthaya declared independence and the kingdom was splintered into rogue states ruled by regional warlords. Burma continued to threaten the city-states. Resistance to Burmese rule and the reunification of the Thai states was led by a noble of Chinese descent known as Taksin. Taksin had studied at Wat Buddhasaiwan, and was a skilled martial artist and strategist. He used his training to raise a rebel army and recover the lands that were lost to the Burmese.



Coronation of King Taksin

Taksin established his court at Thonburi, and his armies expanded Thai rule into the Kingdom of Lanna as well as northern Laos and Cambodia. During Taksin's reign (1768-1779), the Thai court became heavily influenced by Chinese culture as many of his officials were of Chinese descent.

Despite his strong Buddhist roots, Taksin eventually fell out of favor with the Buddhist monkhood as well as the Chinese traders and missionaries when he became both delusional and dictatorial. According to legend, Taksin was deposed by his own court, and wrapped in a silk bag before being beaten to death by clubs. This method of execution saved his body the indignity of being cut.

Part IV – Rattanakosin Kingdom and the Age of Enlightenment

In 1782, General Chakri replaced Taksin as ruler and founded the Rattanakosin Kingdom with Bangkok as its capital. He became known as Rama I. King Rama reinstated the traditions of the Ayutthaya court, including the tradition of appointing an *Uparat* or vice-king, usually the king's brother. Rama also imposed order on the Buddhist monkhood, curbing their powers, though Buddhism would remain a significant force within the Thai court. During this period, the Thai kingdom grew in strength, annexing

lands from the neighboring kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia and growing into a dominant power in the region.

By the end of Rama I's rule in 1809, Meung Thai ruled over a larger land area in Southeast Asia than ever before. Following King Rama's death, the Thai kingdom enjoyed a period of relative peace and an age of growth in culture, technology and science. During this time, western influences once again could be felt in the Thai kingdom, with the British sending several agents of the East India Company to negotiate trade agreements. Though the Thai court sensed the threat of western encroachment, they were able to rely on diplomacy to negotiate several favorable trade agreements, allowing foreign traders into Bangkok where, similar to the kingdom of Ayutthaya, foreign settlements began to thrive, influencing Thai culture and education.

The Age of Enlightenment rose to a peak during the reign of King Mongkut, known as Rama IV. Mongkut, like all Thai princes, entered the Buddhist



King Mongkut's Solar Eclipse Viewing Party

monastery early in life prior to taking the throne. In the long-standing Thai tradition of allowing foreign trade, western scholars and teachers were allowed into the kingdom and Mongkut received training in western sciences as well as Buddhist philosophy. Mongkut became known as the father of science in the Thai Kingdom, combining western studies of astronomy and physics with eastern studies of mindfulness and meditation. Mongkut also established a Ministry of Science, including a branch that sought to recover the lost knowledge of Wat Buddhasawan by scouring the ruins of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, searching through the razed libraries and archives.

Unlike his predecessors, Mongkut refused to send tributaries to the Chinese Qing court, attempting to distance the Thai court from Chinese influence. Mongkut feared the corrupting influence of opium and wanted to establish his own relations with the western nations. China and the Thai kingdom continue to regard one another from a respectful distance, though the Thai court observed the development of Chinese airship technology with wariness, realizing that China could possibly challenge Thai's dominance on land in Southeast Asia, where the combination of armored elephantry and artillery, as well as naval control of the rivers, had allowed them to maintain a stronghold.

When the British pushed for more favorable terms, King Mongkut signed the Bowring Treaty, which allowed free trade for foreigners in Bangkok. This positioned Meung Thai as one of the most open kingdoms in Asia to western commerce. Mongkut's constant balance of eastern and western influences could be seen in his accomplishment of predicting the correct location and time of the solar eclipse in Wakor in 1868. He utilized Thai methods of measuring time with the western methods of measuring longitude and latitude, and invited high-ranking European as well as Thai officials to witness the total eclipse in the small village of Wakor. Though a triumph, the trip would ultimately prove tragic. Mongkut contracted malaria and eventually died six weeks later.

Part V – The Reign of Rama V

Prince Chulalongkorn, or Rama V, took the throne at the age of 15 in 1868 after his father's death from malaria. Due to the king's young age, rule was actually in the hands of his regent while

Chulalongkorn spent the next four years traveling studying both western and Thai science and politics. King Mongkut had established tenuous relations with the British and the French as well as a balance of power with the neighboring kingdoms of Việt Nam and Laos, all of which would fall into the hands of young Chulalongkorn. Mongkut had also challenged long-standing Thai traditions, altering the Buddhist astrological calendar and changing the court dress to be more western in style. Factions within the Thai court continue to clash over eastern versus western tradition.

In 1872, the young king at nineteen is on the cusp of coming of age and taking the throne officially. As a sovereign, he is more open towards relations with the West than his surrounding neighbors, but faces a kingdom at a precipice of change and poised at the crossroads of many forces.



King Chulalongkorn, Rama V

Burma

Part I – Origins and Legacies

The Irrawaddy River flows through the heart of Burma, and the valley has offered a home for settlers for thousands of years. Once, Pyu city-states populated the central valley, while Mon city-states rested in the southern Irrawaddy delta. The valley proved too tempting a target, and attracted the attention of a tribe from the snowy, mountainous Nanzhao kingdom to the east. They descended into the valley and conquered the Pyu, founding the Pagan Empire. The tribe was known as the Mranma. Eventually, the Pyu would identify as Mranma, as well.

By the 11th century, the empire included the southern Mon as well, and its people converted to Theravada Buddhism. Soon, temples spread out from the capital. They dotted the landscape—some small stupas, half-pyramids topped with a bell-shaped cupola, some even echoing the style of India. The Bagan temple district thus would rival the Khmer Angkor Wat, but with a distinct Burmese style.

A Mongol invasion in the 13th century turned the once bustling capital of Bagan into a small village in a deforested valley. But three centuries later, when the Ava Empire rose to prominence, it grew at the heart of the old Pagan Empire. By the end of the 18th century elephants and musketeers had secured Burmese rule everywhere from the Himalayas in the north to the delta in the south, from the Shan hills in the east to the border of Bengal in the west.

A strong regime in Bangkok prevented eastward expansion, so the empire set its sights on Arakan, a kingdom abutting Bengal. Arakan was soon wholly annexed, with 20,000 Arakanese captives sent to the capital. Next came Manipur. The empire even sent a legion through the snowy mountain pass and annexed Assam in the Brahmaputra valley. Plans were in place for Bhutan and Jantia. But these provinces, clearly Indian, now brought Burma to the threshold of Bengal...and British India.

Part II – Beware the Banyan Tree

Even as the Ava Empire expanded, the court spied upon the British. Intelligence reported that the British flag flew all along the Coromandal Coast. Another report likened the British to the Banyan



British Assault on Rangoon

tree: it leans on others as it grows, until it starves them of their light. The Banyan tree was ready to grow, and Burma would provide the perfect nourishment.

The conquest of Assam had sent refugees into neighboring Cachar. The British East India Company, fearing greater expansion, immediately declared Cachar and Jaintia protectorates. In Arakan, refugees from a minor rebellion likewise poured into British Bengal. The Company used these two border disputes as an excuse to declare war.

Despite initial military success, the Burmese had not counted on the Company navy, which far from bothering with the contested border, went straight for Burma's trade center—the port town of Rangoon. The British, now fully reinforced by sea, could climb their way up the Irrawaddy River toward the empire's heart. The British employed the *Diana*, a steamboat used for the first time in war, to face the native Burmese warboats. Burma, outmatched, sued for peace in 1826, ceding Arakan, Assam, and Manipur to the British. In addition, the British would remain in Rangoon until Burma paid one million pounds. Even so, the war lasted two years and cost the Company five million pounds, not to mention 15,000 lives, the most expensive British campaign in India yet.

Part III – Work of Kings

Burma eventually regained Rangoon, and the Company refocused on its new acquisitions in Burma. Bagyidaw, the king of Burma, however, did not fare as well. He devoted himself to technical research and experiments and was reportedly keen on discovering a way to make himself disappear at will. The court took advantage of his perceived incapacity. In the ensuing intrigue, Bagyidaw's brother, Tharrawaddy, emerged as leader, acting as regent in place of his unstable king. Tharrawaddy reorganized the army and paraded down the river to show his power. Unfortunately, he too succumbed to the peculiar illness that had plagued his brother. Intrigue followed again, and this time, one of Tharrawaddy's sons, Pagan, took the throne.

King Pagan began a series of building projects, both temples and buildings that gained him merit in the Buddhist faith. But his efforts would prove short-lived. Foreshadowing what would happen in the Hong Kong harbor several years later, Burma fined two British ships in Rangoon harbor in 1851.

The Company, hoping to recoup much-needed expenses from the first war, demanded one million pounds for this perceived violation. The Company didn't bother waiting for an answer and seized Rangoon.

British forces soon defeated Burmese armies attempting to recapture Rangoon, and continued up the river to take over the Pegu region. Drumming up investors for the Greater Indian Peninsula Railway, however, was putting financial pressure on the campaign. The Company might have sued for peace, if a helping hand hadn't come from within the Court of Ava itself. King Pagan's half-brother and President of the Council of State, Mindon, believed Burma would not survive a war with the British. Mindon had an ally in his full brother, Kanaung, who himself had faced the Company's superior arms.

The two led a faction urging peace, but when several of their retainers were arrested, they fled the capital and gathered an army. The Burmese military now had to fight against two foes, the British and the rebels under Mindon. Mindon's troops closed in on the capital, defeating the army along the Irrawaddy. Sentiment in the capital swung toward his side, and Mindon entered the city unopposed. As the newly crowned king, he ended the war and came to terms with the East India Company. Unfortunately, Burma's entire delta region would remain in British hands.

Part IV – Reform Rising

Mindon found himself king without an empire. Ava had once stretched from the Irrawaddy delta to the Brahmaputra valley. After this second war, only the Bagan region and the neighboring Shan hills remained. Rice and trade goods from the delta now had to be acquired with cash on the international market. Mindon consolidated royal power. He built a new capital, a symbol of the new Burma, far from the river and British cannons. He named it Mandalay.

Mindon began to modernize the bureaucracy by giving workers a salary, replacing the *appanage* system of income based on land. He sent nobles and scholars abroad to learn about scientific advancements. He also brought in factories that automated clothing manufacture, creating a much-needed revenue source. His brother Kanaung focused on the military. He added steamboats to the fleet. He transformed the army from a rotating

scription service to a professional organization. Burma also manufactured its own arms, except for cannons, which Britain prevented from entering the country through Rangoon. These arms were tested early in Mindon's reign when the Thai encroached on Burmese borders.

Alongside modernization, a conservative tradition offered a surprising benefit. With Rangoon in British hands, many monks left the region to rejoin their spiritual leader in Mandalay. Mindon saw these monks as a means to connect a country divided in two. He encouraged them to return to Lower Burma, where they fostered Burman loyalty to the king, even under British rule. They could also keep tabs on the British without being seduced by British wealth.



Mindon

But the biggest boon to Mindon's reign came from his chief queen, Nanmadaw Mibaya. She had a particular interest in astrology as well as modern science. Visitors were pleased to give her telescopes, barometers, and nautical maps. With these, she helped develop the Burmese airboat, modeled after the old Burmese river warboats. With her calculations, the airboats could more easily navigate

over the mountains to the Chinese province of Yunnan, improving the export of teak. As a result, Burma experienced a trade surplus, despite being deprived of both rice and port by the British.

In 1857, the door to Yunnan slammed shut, not because of winds or roads, but the Panthay Rebellion. Out of fear of angering China, legal trade with the Yunnan rebels fell off. Burma found itself without reliable income, while Britain continued to pressure Burma to lower trade tariffs. Still coasting on years of trade surplus, Burma may not have survived if an opportunity hadn't presented itself from an unusual direction: India.

Part V – Empire Reborn?

In 1857, a mutiny in India mushroomed into a full-fledged rebellion. Mindon seized the moment. Taking a page from Britain's book, he offered one million pounds sterling in return for Pegu and Rangoon. The British immediately turned down this offer. Fearful of losing both China and India, Britain saw Burma as a desperately needed "backdoor" to China. But the Indian rebellion had revitalized the dream of a united Burma. Mindon called upon the monks of Lower Burma to encourage religious discipline and asceticism among the loyal Burmese. Normally bustling trade declined as workers focused on their faith rather than their work for the British.

The East India Company was struggling. The Indian Rebellion compromised its access to Bengal's opium fields. Income from the once lucrative Rangoon dwindled. The one million pounds suddenly sounded a lot more attractive, so the Company offered to return the Pegu region – except Rangoon. Mindon boldly countered, insisting they needed Rangoon's trade more than Pegu's rice, a blatant lie. The two sides compromised. In exchange for the pounds sterling, Burma would regain the Pegu region, and Rangoon would become an open, international city, protected by both British and Burmese forces. Furthermore, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company gained unfettered access to the Irrawaddy River, giving the British their backdoor to China.

As the Indian rebellion reached its triumphant conclusion, Burma once again ruled over the Irrawaddy valley. Bengal and the former Ava empire territory of Assam had sided with the free Indian rebellion. Despite returning Pegu, the East India Company still controlled former western Burmese territories Arakan and Manipur, as well as

Tenassarim, a coastal region next to the Thai Kingdom. With its Burmese holdings split in two, the Company found itself in a precarious position between angered Bengali and Indian states on one side and Prathet Thai on the other.

Part VI – Never Side with the Banyan Tree

The return of Lower Burma earned Mindon the adoration of his people. Unfortunately, a backlash was coming. Lower Burmans had grown used to selling their rice on the international market and resented now state-mandated prices. Furthermore, now that the East India Company realized its losses in India, it came to regret sacrificing Pegu and Rangoon. They feared Burma would attempt to reclaim the rest of Burma. China and many Indian kingdoms also distrusted Burma, who had aided their enemy when it could have caused the most damage.

In 1866, the East India Company secretly colluded with two sons of Mindon. In a stunning coup, the two princes and their allies crashed a meeting conducted by Kanaung, the Crown Prince, and killed him and several high-ranking officers. Mindon narrowly avoided being killed himself. It cost 200 boats, two steamers, and 10,000 soldiers to put down this revolt. Next, a son of the assassinated Kanaung gathered another army and marched on Mandalay. The British Residence refused to lend Mindon a steamship to escape, convinced he would be overthrown. Mindon was tempted to abdicate, but Nanmadaw Mibaya consulted her astrological charts and predicted victory. She ensured it by reinforcing 16 elephants, 18 cannon, and 600 cavalry with airboats that dropped flaming oil on rebel troops.

Having defended his throne, Mindon continues to reform and modernize Burma. Turning away from princes, he now depends more on his educated officials. Unfortunately, he refuses to designate an heir, not from among his 70 children, nor the 144 children and grandchildren of the assassinated Crown Prince.

Furthermore, as of 1872, China has largely put down the Panthay Rebellion, suddenly opening the backdoor to China. But who will walk through it? Will it be a reunited Burma, a desperate East India Company, or any of the new powers in Asia, who now have free entry through the open port city of Rangoon?

Singapore

Everything passes through Singapore.

That was the hope, when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles founded a free port at the tip of the Malay peninsula. He convinced the British East India Company that the island of Singapore would give the Company unrivaled access to regional trade between India, China, and the wider world. To get the island, Raffles had to smuggle the exiled sultan of Johor back into Singapore, which at the time was a settlement of only 1,000 inhabitants. It was an inauspicious (if appropriate) beginning for the future trade city, but in February 1819, all Raffles cared about was that he had a beginning.

The port of Singapore grew rapidly, though not in the way Raffles had expected. The city's first governor, William Farquhar, allowed the city to develop on its own more than under his guidance. Immigrants flooded into the port from all over the region, particularly from China, India, and the Malay Peninsula. Singapore grew haphazardly, and the governor generated revenue for the city by allowing legal gambling and opium trade.

Raffles wasn't keen on the Singapore that had sprung up by 1823, and dismissed Farquhar. He tried to make Singapore a more orderly—and segregated—city. But the port could not be tamed. It continued to grow faster than the East India Company could administer it. People from all over the region continued to look to Singapore as a new beginning, including many escaping the Opium War, the troubles in India, and the wars of succession on the peninsula. Fifty years after Raffles created the port of Singapore, its population had grown a thousand-fold, as had its problems.

These problems were a realization of Raffles' vision, in a way. He wanted a free port to eclipse all other regional and colonial ports. In that, he succeeded. But more than goods passed through Singapore. Illicit deals and secret alliances are sealed over imported tea. Revolts in foreign lands germinate in the association halls and wharfs of Raffles' free port. Law enforcement is stretched thin, and officers find it easier (and more profitable) to look the other way.

But the multitudes of factions within Singapore are always watching, always tracking. Clockwork doves and pigeons are not uncommon, and the per

capita population of automatons is higher in Singapore than any other city. Most automatons are connected to at least one *kongsi*, syndicate or secret society, and their decision engines are far savvier than what can be found in America. Over at the Temenggong's residence in Telok Blangah, the cultural leader's most consistent guest is an automaton who appears to pre-date their official deployment in the English Civil War. Everything passes through Singapore, especially things that aren't supposed to.

This is why the East India Company held onto Singapore so tightly, even as it lost so much else. With the application of steam technology to ocean travel, the Straits of Malacca (and therefore Singapore) saw trade explode. Everything passed through Singapore, and it's why the Company thought it still had leverage in the region.



Early Growth in Singapore

The Battle of Ceylon changed all that. It exposed the Company as an organization that did not have the infrastructure nor diplomatic skill to keep up with a changing region. Singapore was seen as prime piece of real estate under the control of a colonial power who did not have the ability to run it. Sensing the other predators looking to pounce on the lucrative port, the British Crown acted quickly. In 1867, it nationalized the East India Company and took over its operations on the Malay Peninsula.

Sir Harry Ord was appointed governor of Singapore (and the other Straits Settlements, Penang and Malacca), a position he still holds today. He has his work cut out for him: the advent of air travel could have threatened Singapore's position in trade routes, had Governor Ord not convinced Queen Victoria to build a port for airships on the island. The opening of the Suez Canal has been both a favorable and disruptive event for the Singapore.

The infusion of capital, manpower, and attention from the Crown has exposed some of the criminal element.

But even with the new penal code that Governor Ord put into effect, the city's underworld has a 50-year head start on the Crown. Singapore remains a web of secret connections that understaffed police and civil servants struggle to keep up with.

Malay States

When the British Crown took over the East India Company's assets in the Malay Peninsula, it was primarily for the mercantile and strategic opportunities of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca. The assets also included the rest of the peninsula, and there was little agreement amongst British leaders on how to move forward with these Malay states. Many saw the value of a Malaysian colony, particularly one with abundant tin and the kind of climate that would be conducive to commercial crops like rubber trees. But others were weary of setting up another colony so soon after the English Civil War in America. These voices also pointed to the unrest and tension in the peninsula as the precursors to another provincial war on distant soil.

It was a personal friend of Queen Victoria who came forward with the plan for the Malay states. Abu Bakar was the Temenggong of the Malaysian state of Johor, and had visited England a year prior, displaying a diplomatic skill that charmed everyone he met—including the Queen. Abu Bakar's plan appealed to both sides of the argument: Grant the Malay states independence and autonomy, but provide them with British advisors from the Straits Settlements. The result would be an important ally in the region who also was rich in resources.

With significant pressure from the Crown, Parliament voted in favor of Malaysian autonomy. Abu Bakar returned home to Johor, taking the title of Maharaja to the cheers of his home state. He created the Durbar, the ruling council comprised of the five leaders of the Malay states. To nobody's surprise, Abu Bakar's voice holds the most sway in this council of leaders. He is well-traveled, charismatic, and close friends with Tan Hiok Nee, the leader of the Chinese population within Johor. To those outside the peninsula, the state of Johor is a cosmopolitan model of diversity, progress, and diplomacy.

The other Malay states, however, bristle at Abu Bakar's rising star in the international community. Johor often distances itself from other Malay states, and now its Maharaja was an unspoken "first among equals." It was Johor, after all, who ceded Singapore to the British, and Singapore is the source of many of the revolts that permeate the other Malay states.

The state of Selangor would be a foil to Johor's power if it wasn't suffering internal power struggles. Selangor boasts bountiful tin mines, a popular free port in the Straits of Malacca, and the quickly-growing boomtown of Kuala Lumpur. But where Johor's cultural and mercantile leaders are friendly, Selangor's are ready to launch armies at each other. Abdul Samad leads Selangor, but Yap Ah Loy is the power in Kuala Lumpur. Unfortunately, these two are actively undercutting each other's position, and it may only be time before violence erupts.

The state of Negeri Sembilan has a highly decentralized government, and sectarian disagreements often result in skirmishes. A popular (and alarming) rumor is that Johor might annex parts of Negeri Sembilan in order to help restore order. The northern state of Perak bristles against its British advisors and Johor's hegemony. Pahang, the largest of the Malay states, is still reeling from a civil war that ceased less than a decade ago.

The tension within and between the Malay states threatens their newfound autonomy, but a few things keep everything together. One is Abu Bakar, who is charming, well-traveled, and connected to so many international levers of power. The other is the specter of Prathet Thai, which looms large to the north. Visitors to the Malay states have a lot to gain, but must be careful not to end up on the wrong side of the disputes simmering underneath the gleaming surface.

Sarawak

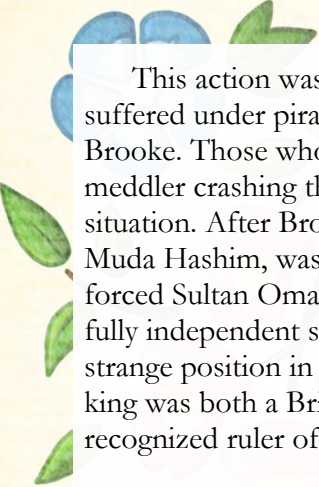
To some, Sarawak, the kingdom of the White Rajahs on the northern coast of Borneo, is a nation of progress and ideas, founded by an adventurer who defeated pirates and built a regional power while fighting corruption. To others, it is a land of oppressive rule, led by a foreign family who steal territory from native Dayak and Malay people while inflicting violence upon them in the name of "order."

For centuries, Sarawak was part of Brunei and ruled by a sultan far to the east of Kuching. Borneo is home to a diverse variety of Dayak people (the native population of the island), as well as immigrants from Malay and China (and occasionally Europe). These cultural differences were compounded for decades by economic disparity, opportunistic piracy, and a Bruneian leadership more interested with political in-fighting.

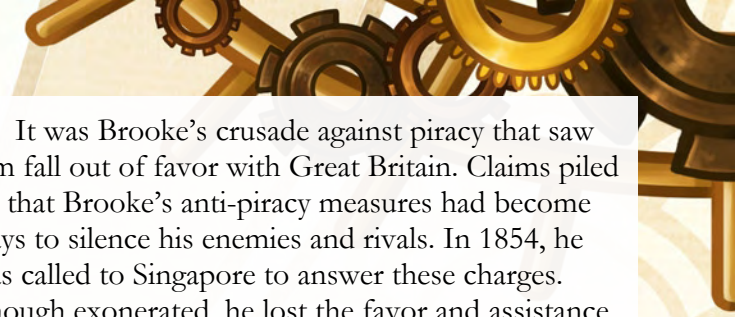
Omar Ali Saifuddin II ascended to the throne in 1828 amidst a growing tide of revolts. The new sultan's reputation as little more than a puppet of the Bruneian political elites only fanned the flames of rebellion. By 1839, Sarawak was in chaos. The sultan's *bendahara*, Pengiran Muda Hashim, was sent to Sarawak to try and stem the rebellions. It was here that Hashim met a British adventurer named James Brooke. Within three years, Brooke had suppressed the rebellion and convinced the Hashim and the Sultan to confer onto Brooke the title of governor (or Rajah) of Sarawak. With his new title, Rajah Brooke used his position and his British citizenship to fight the scourge of piracy in the region.



James Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak
Portrait by Sir Francis Grant



This action was seen two ways: those who once suffered under piracy became loyal subjects of Rajah Brooke. Those who profited off piracy saw him as a meddler crashing through a delicate political situation. After Brooke's friend and ally, Pengiran Muda Hashim, was assassinated in 1846, the Rajah forced Sultan Omar Ali to recognize Sarawak as a fully independent state. Rajah Brooke occupied a strange position in the world: the man who would be king was both a British citizen yet also the recognized ruler of a foreign kingdom.



It was Brooke's crusade against piracy that saw him fall out of favor with Great Britain. Claims piled up that Brooke's anti-piracy measures had become ways to silence his enemies and rivals. In 1854, he was called to Singapore to answer these charges. Though exonerated, he lost the favor and assistance of his British allies. His actions also earned him a local enemy, a Dayak warrior known as Rentap. While Rentap didn't have the power to displace Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak could never get Rentap to capitulate.



A Brief Interlude about Pirates

The waters between the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines have a long history of piracy. As the 19th century passed into its latter half, the powers in the region—colonial and native—thought the issue of piracy to be near-extinct. Naval steam technology and the dedicated attention of skilled maritime leaders had seemingly eradicated this scourge.

It was a surprise, then, when employees of Lloyds of London started poring through recent Singapore records to better serve the Crown's new entrepôt. As they started to recognize certain patterns, a realization sprang up: piratical attacks have been slowly *increasing* in the last decade. Despite claims of its death, piracy hadn't gone away. Its practitioners simply worked more subtly, inflicting financial rather than physical wounds.

The truth is that idealists underestimated the usefulness of pirates in the region. Unaffiliated third-party privateers could inflict fiscal injury or hamper supply lines without revealing the money behind the "random" action of the pirates. Soon it was more than insurance adjusters who discovered that piracy's death was greatly exaggerated. Pirates were getting access to better ships with cutting-edge technology and hiring gearsmiths and spark wranglers.

The capital required for this level of sophistication could only come from wealthy governments, corporations, or individuals. But which ones? The more one looked into it, the more it seemed that everybody was complicit. This was demonstrated by a new form of piracy, the 1871 attack on the Dutch cargo airship *Prins van Oranje*.

The Dutch airship had passed within sight of the Riau Islands, when the crew spotted another cargo airship at a higher altitude. The *Prins* took no additional actions – the mystery airship was on the wrong course for a boarding action. A shout of awe went up as the crew spotted a flock of winged shapes emanated from the mystery airship. Awe turned to fear when they realized the shapes were armed men and women gliding on personal winged devices.

The crew would later have difficulty describing these devices. Some European aviators recalled the "governable parachute" of Sir George Cayley. Crew local to the region described them as giant *wau bulan* kites. What was not in doubt was the efficiency of these winged pirates. Before the crew processed what was happening, the pirates had stolen valuables, account ledgers, and the ship's log. They then leapt off the *Prins*, gliding down to the mystery airship, which was now at a lower altitude and descending.

The Dutch government pointed the finger at England, calling it an attempt to destabilize the Dutch position in the region. England wondered aloud if these were allies of the late Rentap, striking against Sarawak and the Netherlands. Rumor in Singapore was that it was in response to the recent penal codes enacted by the city's governor. The only certainty was that airships would need new anti-piracy protocols.

In 1868, James Brooke passed away. His nephew, Charles Johnson Brooke, inherited the role of Rajah of Sarawak. The new Rajah continues to build upon his family's reputation as stalwart enemies of piracy, even though Sarawak doesn't have a pirate problem.

While many in Sarawak are loyal to the new Rajah, Charles Brooke finds himself in a tenuous position. Rentap died in 1871, and his memory has sparked a new generation of Dayak rebels. Other groups, such as those led by Syarif Masahor, raid from neighboring states. There is even a rumor that shortly before he became Rajah, Charles had a dalliance with a Malay woman that bore him a son. If true, this would be of interest to anyone who might want to introduce a rival to the Sarawak throne.

Brunei

The sultanate of Brunei stands at a crossroads. It was already on the decline at the start of the 19th century, thanks to self-destructive political games of succession. The arrival of James Brooke saved Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II, but it came at the cost of Brunei's borders.

Omar Ali passed away in 1852, and royal infighting had removed a lot of potential successors. The sultan's son-in-law, Abdul Momin, took over as Brunei's leader. The pattern of trading away land to Rajah Brooke for little return continued under Momin until 1865. That's when Momin's brother and heir apparent, Hashim Jalilul Alam Aqamaddin, announced that he would serve as regent for the elderly and failing Momin.



Muara Coal Mine, Brunei

Hashim, also known as Pengiran Anak Hashim, has endeavored to stop Brunei from slipping even further to extinction. Through Momin, he issued the "Amanat," the declaration that no more Bruneian land would be ceded or leased. Hashim has spent the last few years trying to carve a place in the world for Brunei, and he believes that his country's future will hinge on their role in energy production.

Hashim has hired a large contingent of steamhands to upgrade the island of Labuan, a failed stopover port that the British tired of running. The island's coal deposits made a start, but Hashim has turned it into a waystation for ships of sea and air, where they can not only refuel and repair, but also find crew.

The sultan's regent has also put an open call to scientists, engineers, and spark wranglers who can help in his quest to make Brunei a regional supplier of energy. One such visitor was a young French scientist, Jacques-Arsène d'Arsonval, who shared some fascinating theories with Hashim about generating electricity via temperature differentials in the sea.

Pengiran Anak Hashim has stabilized Brunei's decline, and is the heir apparent to take over when Momin passes away. If he can keep Brunei on the leading edge of energy research, Hashim believes he can move his country past the chaos of the present day.



- Chapter 6 -

Running the Game



As One Acts, So Does One Become

The following sections are designed to assist both players and gamemasters in their explorations into the Steamskapes world. First, there is some advice on setting and campaign design to help GMs who are either starting a game in Asia or transitioning an existing game onto the continent. After that, there are a number of sample characters made using rules from both this book and *Steamskapes: North America*. In order to show some of the variety available within the Steamskapes setting, the sample characters in this book have been constructed at the beginning of the Seasoned rank (with 20 xp).

Finally, there are a number of sample scenarios intended to give gamemasters a starting point for designing campaigns. These scenarios should provide a sense of how characters might interact more directly with the setting. They are not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive in their portrayal of the Steamskapes world. Gamemasters are therefore strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the history and background in Chapter 5 before running more than a brief introductory game such as those presented in the sample scenarios.

Thinking about Setting

In *Steamskapes: North America*, we introduced the idea of differentiating between “high” and “low” steampunk. That distinction remains relevant in *Steamskapes: Asia*, as there are vast differences between the various regions and what levels of

technology are accepted or even present. Some of this disparity has to do with availability, and some of it has to do with priority. The countries of India, for example, are unique in prioritizing rail expansion. In terms of characters, this means that most steamhands across Asia are more used to working either with smaller machinery, such as the engines on an airship, or much larger machinery, such as that found on naval steamships. Even steam carts are not as common in Asia as they are, for instance, in the Rocky Mountain Republic. Only in India are you likely to find substantial numbers of steamhands who work on large land vehicles.

Similarly, Việt Nam—with its strong French influence—is one of the few countries to explore sabotage as a military tactic. Amateur saboteurs might show up anywhere, since there are always folks who dislike technology. However, Vietnamese saboteurs are the only professionally trained individuals to be found in the area, though many of them do travel abroad. The Republic of Ezo in particular has hired some of these saboteurs to help them defend themselves against the automatons of the Meiji Empire.

On the other hand, air travel is fairly common in many Asian countries. Most countries import airships and sometimes even aviators from Europe and North America. China and Burma are unique in their focus on developing airship technology locally. In play, it is fairly possible that players may see and even fly a Burmese airboat, but a Chinese dragon should be a much rarer occurrence. Seeing one during a game should be a sign that the stakes have risen significantly, and unless you are specifically running a Chinese military campaign, it should be nearly impossible for the players to actually ride one.

Automatons and the accompanying gearsmiths and spark wranglers are most often found in areas with strong British influence, particularly Japan and Singapore. Some Chinese and Marathan gearsmiths do develop their own independent projects, but those countries have not embraced the technology with the rapidity or thoroughness that Japan has. However, as with the Chinese dragon airship, the oni ni kanabō racial template is intended almost exclusively for military use, and should be used with similar rarity.

Many of the elements introduced in this book should be fairly common. The martial arts rules in Chapter 4 are designed with the idea that more than

one player may want to try them out, and they should be relatively easy to add to NPCs as well. It is perfectly reasonable to see them used frequently. Apothecaries of all kinds are prevalent throughout the continent, though their training and style may vary by location. If you are playing an Apothecary, consider adding Trappings to your abilities to distinguish your particular methods of healing.

Wherever you go in the Steamsapes world, keep in mind that these are generalizations. There are always exceptions, and player characters are often going to be the ones to find or represent those exceptions. It is always more interesting to find reasons to say yes instead of excuses to say no.

When considering where in the world to set your game, you may also want to think about your own knowledge and comfort level. Do you as the players and gamemaster have a particular affinity for India? Go ahead and start your campaign there. It may be tempting to tell the story of a globetrotting airship crew so that you can get a little taste of many places, but that tends to put a much larger burden on the gamemaster. Take your time in each location so that you all have a chance to get to know it. That way everyone will have a more satisfying experience. And always plan your next destination at the end of the session so that the gamemaster has time to prepare!

Thinking about Character

With *Steamsapes: North America*, we tried to offer some diversity in the world and in our sample characters so that players could see a wide variety of people represented. However, given that our primary reading audience is also North American, players were very likely to be able to see themselves somewhere in that group. With *Steamsapes: Asia*, we hope that some players will be able to see themselves represented, but we know that many will not.

There are no white sample characters in this book. One of the most important goals of the Steamsapes setting is that of offering a less colonial approach to steampunk. We want to make steampunk appealing and inviting to a broader audience, and that means thinking about it in different ways. It means that we want players to be encouraged to adventure as non-white, non-English-speaking characters, but we also understand that this experience may be new to some players.

Here are some tips for playing a character from a different country or culture:

- Don't make a big deal about it. Once you've described your character, just do what you think your character does without constantly referencing identity. People are basically people wherever you go, so just play your character normally. As you become comfortable with the character, then maybe you can do some research to add a few layers.
- Think in terms of goals, not identity. Focus on what your character wants and how to get it, rather than trying to just play who they are.
- Avoid stereotypes. Pop culture makes a habit of using shorthand indicators of character elements like gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, and cultural identity. These are almost always inaccurate and frequently offensive. This definitely includes accents and dialects—unless you are an actor specifically trained in that dialect, you are going to get it wrong. Just speak in your normal voice.
- Consider using the X-Card. This is a simple social mechanic created by John Stavropoulos to help players feel safer including potentially uncomfortable subject matter in their games, because it makes it easier to remove anything that goes too far without having to explain or defend your reasons. You can read about it here: (<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>)

Finally, if someone is very opposed to this prospect, go ahead and let them play a character that is more familiar. There are indeed some people from Europe and North America in the various countries of Asia, so it is possible you might have one or two among the player characters. However, it is important to remember that they are the outsiders and should be treated as very unusual (and perhaps with suspicion) depending on where they are. That English gearsmith in Madras is going to have to explain herself fairly often.

In addition, we would strongly discourage your group from playing an all-European or all-North American party traveling in Asia, as that is very much counter to the purposes of this book. It might be all right as a chapter in an ongoing campaign where the party is traveling all over the world, but if you are starting a new game in Asia, try to focus on the stories of the people who are actually from there.

Using the Scenarios

The last part of this chapter includes three sample game scenarios to be run as standalone games or as part of a larger campaign. Depending on how much embellishment the players and gamemaster add, we expect them to take approximately two hours to play (not including character creation or selection). Here are a few tips for using them:

- **Text in red** is intended to be read aloud. You can use what we have written or your own descriptions and dialogue as you like. [Brackets] indicate optional text that may be added or changed based on the situation.
- At certain points, a scenario may present several likely choices that a party might make. These may not be all-inclusive. If players come up with other options, use the included choices as a guideline for potential outcomes.
- NPCs have been given a basic list of skills and equipment that should be just enough for most situations. If something unusual comes up, feel free to assume that a given NPC has an appropriate skill or item.
- Characters with this symbol are considered Wild Cards. Please see *Savage Worlds Deluxe* for details. 強
- Extras are sometimes listed with a numeric formula such as **P+2**. This means that the number of that particular type of extra should be

two more than the number of players (or **P**). However, such numbers are always guidelines. Feel free to adjust them up or down based on the experience levels of both your players and their characters.

- Always read the whole scenario before running the game. It is important for the gamemaster to have an idea of where the plot is going, because otherwise the players will take it somewhere entirely different.
- If the players take the plot somewhere entirely different, don't worry! If you still want to tell the story in the scenario, you might try to use the written scenes as markers to find your way back. In this way, you may end up with more scenes, but you'll still include the ones we intended.
- Feel free to use the scenarios as suggestions, guides, or frameworks for building your own adventures and campaigns. Cut and paste all you like!
- Have fun!

Note that the third scenario, "The Invasion of Manchuria," is a mass battle scenario. This is ideal for inclusion in a more military campaign, but may not be as enjoyable for a group focused on exploration and character development. Also, we have left the operational details for that scenario minimal so that the players can have significant influence over the battle plans.



The Apothecary

Attributes

Agility – d4
Smarts – d10
Spirit – d6
Strength – d4
Vigor – d6

Charisma

0

Pace

6

Parry

4

Toughness

5

Skills

Chemical Engineering – d6
Fighting – d4
Healing – d10
Investigation – d8
Notice – d8
Persuasion – d6
Survival – d6

Edges

Anatomy
Anesthesia
Apothecary Profession
Explosives
Linguist
Poisons
Rapid Recovery

Hindrances

Heroic
Loyal
Pacifist (minor)



The Aviator

Attributes

Agility – d8
Smarts – d6
Spirit – d8
Strength – d6
Vigor – d4

Charisma

0

Pace

6

Parry

6

Toughness

4

Skills

Aeronautical Navigation – d6
Climbing – d6
Fighting – d8
Notice – d6
Piloting – d10
Repair – d6

Edges

Ace
Aviator Profession
Elan
Extraction
Martial Artist
Unarmed Throw
(Bagua Zhang)

Hindrances

Arrogant
Delusional (Minor)
Poverty



The Gunslinger

Attributes

Agility – d10
Smarts – d8
Spirit – d6
Strength – d4
Vigor – d4

Charisma

0

Pace

6

Parry

5

Toughness

4

Skills

Fighting – d6
Gunsmithing – d8
Healing – d4
Investigation – d6
Intimidation – d6
Knowledge (Battle) – d6
Notice – d6
Shooting – d10
Streetwise – d8

Edges

Command
Command Presence
Gunslinger Profession
Steady Hands
Tactician
Two-Fisted

Hindrances

Elderly
Quirk
Stubborn



The Oni

Attributes

Agility – d8
Smarts – d4
Spirit – d4
Strength – d8
Vigor – d8

Charisma

-4

Pace

8

Parry

8

Toughness

10(4)

Skills

Fighting – d12
Intimidation – d6
Notice – d4
Repair – d4
Throwing – d6
Tracking – d4

Edges

Complex Joints (+1 Agility rolls
and Agility-linked Skill rolls)
Construct
Dodge
Fleet-Footed
Shell of the Sazae

Hindrances

Clockwork Upgrades
Horrifying Visage
Made for War



The Saboteur

Attributes

Agility – d8
Smarts – d8
Spirit – d4
Strength – d6
Vigor – d6

Charisma

2

Pace

6

Parry

6

Toughness

5

Skills

Chemical Engineering – d8
Climbing – d6
Fighting – d8
Healing – d4
Lockpicking – d4
Notice – d6
Repair – d4
Sabotage – d8
Stealth – d8

Edges

Apothecary Profession
Attractive
Explosives
Improvisational Fighter
Luck
Saboteur Profession

Hindrances

Curious
Greedy
Phobia (Minor)



The Soldier

Attributes

Agility – d8
Smarts – d6
Spirit – d6
Strength – d8
Vigor – d6

Charisma

Pace

Parry

Toughness

0

6

7

5

Skills

Climbing – d4
Fighting – d10
Healing – d4
Notice – d4
Riding – d6
Survival - d6
Swimming - d4
Taunt - d6

Edges

Counterattack
Florentine
Gatka Defensive Footwork
Two-Fisted
Weapon Quick-Kill (Gatka)

Hindrances

Code of Honor
Loyal
Vow (Minor)



The Steamhand

Attributes

Agility – d8

Smarts – d8

Spirit – d4

Strength – d8

Vigor – d4

Charisma

-1

Pace

6

Parry

6

Toughness

4

Skills

Climbing – d4

Driving – d8

Fighting – d8

Notice – d4

Repair – d8

Steamsmithing – d6

Survival – d4

Throwing – d6

Edges

Extraction

First Strike

Silambam Defensive Footwork

Steamhand Profession

Sweep

Weapon Stunning Strike (Silambam)

Hindrances

Big Mouth

Habit

Overconfident



The Way to Mandalay

Prologue

Your journey leaves you at the docks of the free port city Rangoon. The spires of Buddhist temples rise in the distance, but looming auxiliary sails on steamers grab your more immediate attention. The local Burmese lift crates of sesame from Upper Burma onto seaships, destined for India, Singapore, and beyond. One large crate swings precariously from its crane over the docks. If anyone else is worried, they don't let on. Women, their cheeks graced with a dusting of yellow thanaka, carry their goods, meeting your gaze as they pass. The parade of longyi tied at the waist gives way to pants as a gaggle of British or foreign sailors, soiled by days at sea, stumble toward the ship. But they veer off drunkenly toward a saloon.

An argument breaks out between two men, seemingly oblivious to the crate that dangles over their heads. Several Burmese seamen on the ship stop their work to watch. The first man, a local, is yelling a string of Burmese, while the second, a man in an unfamiliar British uniform, waves his hands at him. "English! English!"

The Burmese man switches to English. "Our shipment! Not yours!"

The rope holding the crate above the men seems frayed. "On the terms of the treaty, we have the right to search for..."

"Rangoon is a free port!"

The argument seems unlikely to end before the crate falls upon them.

Scene 1 – Drop Shipment

The party needs to decide quickly what to do, but they have several choices for how to deal with the falling crate:

Option A: A Civil Intervention

Using Persuasion, the party can urge the men to calm down, or move out of the way. They can then lower the crate down, before anyone gets hurt. If they are not able to do so, the crate comes crashing down on whatever is underneath.

Option B: A Logical Solution

Using Repair, Knowledge: Engineering, or related skills, the party can attempt to fix the crane or push it in another direction without disturbing the argument.

Option C: Strong Arm Tactics

Using Agility, the party can tackle the two men just before the crate comes crashing down on them.

If the crate is placed there carefully, it cracks open slightly. It crunches entirely open if it falls. The Burmese man, Thant, continues to argue with the British Company man, Mr. Evans. If the heroes participate, they may catch the following information depending on how they listen or steer the conversation:

Conversation points

- The crate is destined for Mandalay, the capital of Burma, on an Irrawaddy Flotilla Company steamboat. This company is a British East India Company subsidiary.
- According to the treaty between Burma and the British East India Company, cannons are still not allowed into Burma.
- Rangoon is a free port city, and neither the British East India Company nor Burma can decide what can or can't enter the city.
- A look inside the crashed crate yields what looks like a metal sheet—not obviously related to a cannon.

While the conversation continues, the heroes may notice that the Burmese sailors, far from sitting back and watching, are now surreptitiously unloading smaller boxes from the ship. The Burmese man makes sure the English Company man is focused on the fallen crate, and not on those boxes.

In the end, the two men compromise and leave the crate with the metal sheet in Rangoon for examination. If the players seem to side with the British, Mr. Evans takes the party aside and hires them to escort the ship up to Mandalay and keep an eye on the Burmese. If the players seem to side with the Burmese man, Thant takes the party aside, and encourages them to take a job with the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company to make sure the British don't pry into the shipment.

Scene 2 – The Irrawaddy River

The boxes, except for the crate that caused such consternation, are transferred to a British river steamboat. Once all are aboard, a mix of European, Indian, and Burmese sailors gather round. A man in a captain's uniform beckons you forward, and begins to speak to the assembled crew with a Scottish brogue.

"Most of you know me. I am Captain McDermott of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. I will have no fighting or gambling on board. We will bring this shipment and our passengers to Mandalay without incident." He turns to you. "You will make sure of it. The river is well traveled, but there are dangers..."

One of the sailors says something in a language you're not familiar with, earning laughter from the rest of the crew. McDermott spares a smile.

"He said 'crocodiles,' but we won't need to fear God's creatures on the river. Dacoits will be our greatest concern." He barks a few orders to get the journey under way. As the crew disperses, he has a private thought to share with you.

"Your task is to protect this ship, but that doesn't mean you should turn a blind eye to the passengers or crew. I don't trust anyone on board."

The steamboat leaves Rangoon and soon finds itself on the Irrawaddy River. The heroes may observe the crew, but finds nothing untoward about their behavior. One passenger staying in a state cabin appears to be a woman with a long robe and headcovering. The party sees her rarely, but when they do, she is lurking near the shipment storage area.

After several hours on the river, worried expressions spread among the crew. If the adventurers investigate, they come across several crewmen looking into the water. A dead Englishman is floating down the river, crucified on a wooden cross which keeps him afloat. If the players ask a native crewman, he explains it is the bandits, who care for no one. The captain, however, calls them dacoits, an Indian term. He fears that this crucifixion is a message from their leader, Boh. He warns you to keep watch. Just then, the party notices the woman, watching the body float by without flinching. The captain urges her to return to her cabin.

Option A: The State Cabin

Using Investigation or related skills, the party can attempt to find out more about the mysterious woman in the state cabin. Information on the manifest suggests that the passenger is a Muslim woman from Arakan. Burma once conquered this western province, but surrendered it to British India after the first Anglo-Burmese war.

If they use Stealth and Notice to watch her, however, they may discover that "she" doesn't walk like a woman. If they use Intimidation or Persuasion, this person reveals himself to be a man named Mokkha. He is Arakanese, a crown servant from Mandalay. He has masqueraded as a woman, knowing the British will not consider him a threat. His mission is to make sure that the British do not find out what is in the shipment.

Even so, he worries about Boh, the leader of the bandits ravaging the countryside. Although he focuses his attacks on the British, Boh shows no allegiance to King Mindon. He recruits from among the local Burmese, creating guerilla fighters that can disappear into the countryside. The villagers are too afraid to sell them out to Britain or Burma. It's possible Boh has learned about the shipment and wants it for himself.

Option B: Search the Shipment

Using Lockpicking and Stealth, the adventurers can find their way into the storage area, pick the locks on the boxes, and discover what lies within. They immediately find pieces of a battle-scarred automaton. Anyone familiar with North American symbols or technology recognizes that this was a Civil War automaton. Using any science-related skill, the party learns that this automaton is non-functioning, as its power source is broken.

If the party chooses to unmask Mokkha or reveal the contents of the shipment to the Scottish captain in secret, he thanks them. He suggests they watch Mokkha and decide what to do with him once they reach Mandalay. If Mokkha is publically unmasked, the captain confines him to quarters.

Scene 3 – Low Tide

The sun is just now poking over the horizon, when the travelers spot hundreds of spires growing larger in the distance along the shore. If they wonder if this is Mandalay, it is not. This is Bagan, filled with thousands of temples, built over the centuries. The

era of building has long since ended, and the majority of the temples have fallen into disrepair. A small village has grown up between the spires and the tamarind trees.

The ship stutters and stops, then jerks forward. The captain informs everyone that they will stop in Bagan to check the ship. He's worried that the river is too low to continue the journey to Mandalay. If so, they will have to return to Rangoon. In the meantime, he asks you to escort Mokka around the village to keep an eye on him. If Mokka has been confined to quarters, he petitions to disembark, which the captain grants only if the party agrees to escort him.

As Mokka and the group arrive, several children and adults in the village are playing a game called cogmento. They set up a fruit players don't recognize, and try to knock it over with a ball made with strips of bamboo. Each time the fruit is knocked over in the first go, there is much celebration, and if any of the adventurers manage it, they are welcomed heartily. After seeing the party's interest in this game, Mokka reveals himself if he hasn't already.

Mokka is desperate to prevent the shipment's return to Rangoon, where he fears the British will search it. Burma doesn't want to start a war; they want to prevent it. He wants only to protect the Burmese people, like the ones playing the game, and if the British find the automaton, they may cancel the peace treaty and the region could be plunged into

war. He asks the party to get the shipment off the ship, and help him get it to Mandalay. The conversation is cut short by gunfire and yelling from the direction of the ship.

Bandits are attacking the ship from the shore, hidden among the trees. Their aim focuses on vital locations on the boat, such as the engine. The captain and crew are attempting to fire back, but are having trouble seeing through the foliage. When the group arrives, the captain yells that the dacoits want the ship, and they'll let their passengers live. Mokka turns to the party and says the attack provides the perfect opportunity to unload the ship in secret. If they wait until the bandits are defeated, they may have to fight the captain for the goods.

DACOITS (P+2)

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Shooting d8

Equipment: Shotgun (12/24/48, dmg 1-3d6)

Option A: A Curious Proposal

Using Persuasion or related skills, the party can convince the captain to save the ship by returning to Rangoon. He gives permission to unload the



Steamboat on the Irrawaddy River

equipment, though he suspects the shipment will be stolen.

Option B: Lock and Unload

Using Stealth and related abilities, the adventurers carry the boxes containing the automaton onto the shore unimpeded during the attack.

If the ship sails back toward Rangoon, the party now senses that they are being stalked by an unknown number of Bandits, many of whom are still unseen on the opposite shore. If the adventurers simply take the automaton boxes, the captain manages to scare off the bandits temporarily, and then realizes the party has stolen the shipment. The party now needs to get away from the captain and his crew before they find out what's inside.

Option C: Fight On

The party elects to attack the bandits. After several of them have been killed or incapacitated, the remainder flee. The captain believes that they are hoping to lead the party away. He is torn between returning the ship to Rangoon and safety, and getting the shipment to its destination. The party may elect to then move on to Option A, or fight the captain for the shipment.

If the party captures a dacoit and manages to get him to talk, he reveals that the Boh has a plan for the shipment, but was not told what it was. He smiles, revealing a golden tooth. Mokkha indicates that the bandits must be getting money from somewhere. He doubts that raiding the British or the Burman countryside earned them golden teeth.

Scene 4 – Secret in the Pagoda

Mokkha fears that Boh or the British will steal the automaton, and it shouldn't fall into either of their hands. He knows a faster way to get the shipment to Mandalay. He urges a child to lead them to Dhammayangyi. A player who uses Tracking can aid in obscuring the party's trail so they won't be followed. Stealth may also help. Otherwise, the Bandits catch up to the group, but they do not engage. The bandits simply keep track of them. If so, Mokkha says that they won't have much time before the Bandits surround them in force.

Moving through an endless field of temples and shrines, the adventurers draw closer to the largest one of all. When they stand before it, its red brick

climbing up to the sky like a step pyramid, the child announces: "Dhammayangyi!" Mokkha gestures for them to enter through a corridor, but soon he is met by a brick wall. Some consternation follows. The interior of the temple has been bricked off. Players using Notice, however, may notice something unusual in one section of the brick, or Mokkha himself finds it. A particularly well-lit area of brick, bright than the others, draws his attention. He steps up to the wall and pushes it aside—showing that it was, in fact, an image projected on canvas—and walks inside.

Within, the brick image was clearly projected by a camera obscura effect. Going deeper beyond the first camera obscura room, the party discovers a chemical engineering lab.

Conversation points

- The late King Bagyidaw created this lab. He adapted the camera obscura, brought to him by travelling scholars, in order to achieve his dream to disappear at will.
- King Bagyidaw and his successor, the late King Tharrawaddy, performed scientific experiments here decades ago.
- Chemicals used here were imported from everywhere, including mercury from China.
- The kings and anyone who worked here slowly degenerated mentally. Very few people work here now as a result.
- The lab may contain enough to help repair the automaton.
- If they stay inside until night, they can send up a signal fire that will draw an airboat from Mandalay.

Any party member who successfully uses Knowledge: Engineering or Electromagnetism discovers a mercuric oxide battery, the first of its kind, among the detritus in the half-abandoned lab. It can be placed inside the automaton to power it.

Scene 5 – Fight or Flight

If the party did not successfully lose track of the dacoits on their way to the temple, the child runs into the lab and announces that an airboat has arrived while they are still working on the automaton. If they did lose the dacoits, Mokkha lights the signal fire once night falls, and the child

announces the arrival of the airboat a short time thereafter.

Outside, the airboat hovers above the temple. Based on the Burmese warboat, it is long and thin, originally built for river travel. Instead of oars, flaps help guide the ship through the air. Mokkha waves toward the ship, until a volley of flames rains down from it. Mokkha dives out of the way, shocked.

A voice from above yells down to the party in Burmese, sounding confident and amused. One quick glance reveals the speaker wears khaki pants and a hard hat—British Indian attire, though he is clearly Burmese. Mokkha translates for the party: “He offers our lives if we surrender the automaton. This is the Boh.”

強 CIVIL WAR AUTOMATON

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Shooting d6

Equipment: Mini-Cannon (20/40/80, dmg 2d10, heavy weapon)

強 BOH

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Climbing d6, Engineering d8, Fighting d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d10

Equipment: Sharps Carbine (15/30/60, dmg 2d10, AP2)

AIRBOAT DACOITS (*P*Extras)

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

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

Equipment: Flaming Oil (thrown, 2d6, small burst template)

The bandits piloting the airboat rain flaming oil on the party. The group may try to bring down the airboat by shooting at it, or by using the automaton. Because the airboat is hovering so close to the top of the temple, they can also try to board it through a successful use of Climbing. If the party boards, the bandits protect Boh, who fights to the death if possible. His dying words: “There is another.”

Aftermath

If the airboat survives, the party may fly it, along with Mokkha and the automaton, all the way to Mandalay. Otherwise, the signal fire eventually draws an official royal airboat, which carries them all to Mandalay Palace.

The party gains an audience with Nanmadaw Mibaya, the Chief Queen, who is delighted with the automaton the party and her servant Mokkha brought. She had consulted her astrological charts and knew that it would successfully arrive on this auspicious day. She believes the automaton will help ensure a sovereign Burma. She is only slightly less thrilled to discover the mercury cell powering it came from Bagan. She explains that what happened in Bagan is why the Burmese Kings no longer directly engage in scientific research. She will have to devise a safer way to power the automaton.

She takes the news of Boh’s fate thoughtfully, then surprisingly dismisses it by echoing his last words: “There is another.” She explains that Boh is actually a title for the leader of the bandits. Kill one, and there is always another. She is more worried about how the bandits seemed to know of their darkest secrets, and how they seem to be so well-funded. It may well be they are working for a third party...the English? China? Perhaps India itself?

She rewards the party well—in return for their silence. She offers travel to wherever they would like to journey next, including, if they so desire, China by airboat...



Across the Deccan

Prologue

You are railroad inspectors for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. You represent the interests of all the countries of the Indian Alliance, an alliance whose strength has been tested by accusation and blame between Maratha and Hyderabad regarding delays of the construction of the Railway's final major trunk connecting Bombay to Madras. The work has been plagued by strange accidents and other setbacks, and you need to help discover the causes and get work going again. The fate of India's unity may rest in your hands.

You have arrived at a work site outside of Solapur, a small town near the Maratha/Hyderabad border. As you approach the camp, you hear an alarmed voice cry out the word "TIGER!" Screams of terrified workers rise up as you rush to intervene...

Scene 1 – Tiger Attack Near Solapur

TIGERS (P-3, minimum 1)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Pace: 8, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8

Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Tigers may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Tigers ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Pounce:** Tigers often pounces on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. They can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Their Parry is reduced by -2 until their next action when performing the maneuver however.
- **Size +1**

Once the tigers are subdued or driven away, the heroes can approach the foreman of the work camp and find out more information. He indicates that prior to this incident, his crew was largely untouched. However he has heard about a number of other problems that various groups have had, including the following:

- Attacks by bandits, although these have been few enough that he feels they have sufficient security. Also the attacks have mostly been farther south, closer to the Mysore border.
- Material deliveries going missing or ending up in the wrong place.
- Tracks sinking in areas where ground water was closer to the surface than originally surveyed.

The foreman has no personal knowledge of these incidents. The tiger attack was his camp's first experience with any sort of trouble. He can direct the party to another work camp to the south, or the heroes can choose to investigate the tiger attack first. If they investigate, there are two avenues they may pursue:

Option A: Asking Around Town

The railroad workers often visit the small town of Solapur and other surrounding villages for their regular supplies. The villagers may have seen something that could provide some clue to the attack.

The most likely sources of information are the market and the town's religious leaders. Finding information in the market requires a Streetwise roll. Getting information from the religious leaders first requires being granted an audience (Persuasion) and then asking the right questions to prompt good answers (Investigation).

The heroes may visit either the Dargah (shrine) of Hazrat Shah Zahur if they are Muslim or the lake temple of Shri Siddheshwar if they are Hindu or Sikh. However, some Hindus may be uncomfortable at the temple depending on their individual beliefs, because Shri Siddheshwar was a Lingayat guru who frequently promoted intermarriage between castes. A Hindu with a rigid view of castes has a -1 on the Persuasion roll to be granted an audience, as does a woman at the Dargah.

However they approach it, the following clues may be discovered:

- The railroad workers are always welcomed when they come to town. They have been respectful and generous with their business.
- The townspeople do not always recognize the workers by sight, so they would not know if other visitors had come to town.

- The largest purchase anyone can remember within the last couple of weeks was for a load of cut bamboo poles. (A retroactive Notice roll can allow the heroes to remember whether the railroad workers had been using bamboo. They were not.)
- Someone had been asking if there were a gearsmith in town, and the villagers had no idea what that was.

Option B: Tracking the Tigers

With moderate Notice and Tracking rolls (at -2), the party may retrace the steps of the tigers. By doing so, they eventually discover a set of bamboo cages hidden near the work site. There seem to be some sort of mechanisms attached to the top of the cages that were designed to release them. Any science-related Knowledge check confirms that these are timers. If there is a gearsmith in the party, a Mechanical Programming check can determine that these timers are very simple, and could easily have been made by a novice gearsmith. Either this roll or an Investigation roll examining the claw marks on the bamboo poles suggests that the tigers were probably kept in these cages for at least a couple days before being released. They were almost certainly very hungry.

As the heroes wrap up their investigation around Solapur, the foreman suggests that they visit the next work camp. He doesn't know where they are right now, only that they recently completed work on the bridge over the Krishna River near Wadi. As the adventurers are leaving, he calls out, "You might want to double-check that bridge, too. Just to make sure."

Scene 2 – Sabotage Near Wadi

As soon as the party arrives at the bridge, it is clear that something is happening. Several armed men stand guard over each end of the bridge. They do not look like railroad workers. A very difficult Notice roll (-4) also reveals movement down by the base of the bridge on each side. If the party is using a spyglass or Stealth to get a closer look, they may be able to spot the powder kegs being moved into place under the bridge supports.

In the ensuing combat, the bandits do everything they can to protect the people setting the explosives.

They favor delay over defeat, so they are likely to try to use Tricks as well as simple attacks. Once combat has begun, if four rounds pass without those saboteurs being interrupted, they light the fuses. However, they are simple wick fuses that will take two more rounds before detonating the charges. Once the fuses are lit, all of the remaining bandits attempt to escape to their boat (see Scene 3). They also attempt to escape if their mission has clearly failed.

BANDITS (P+2)

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Equipment: Short Sword (Str+d6), Short Bow (12/24/48, dmg 2d6)

SABOTEURS (one on each side of the river)

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 4

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Sabotage d8

Equipment: Short Sword (Str+d6)

Edges: Fleet-Footed, Extraction

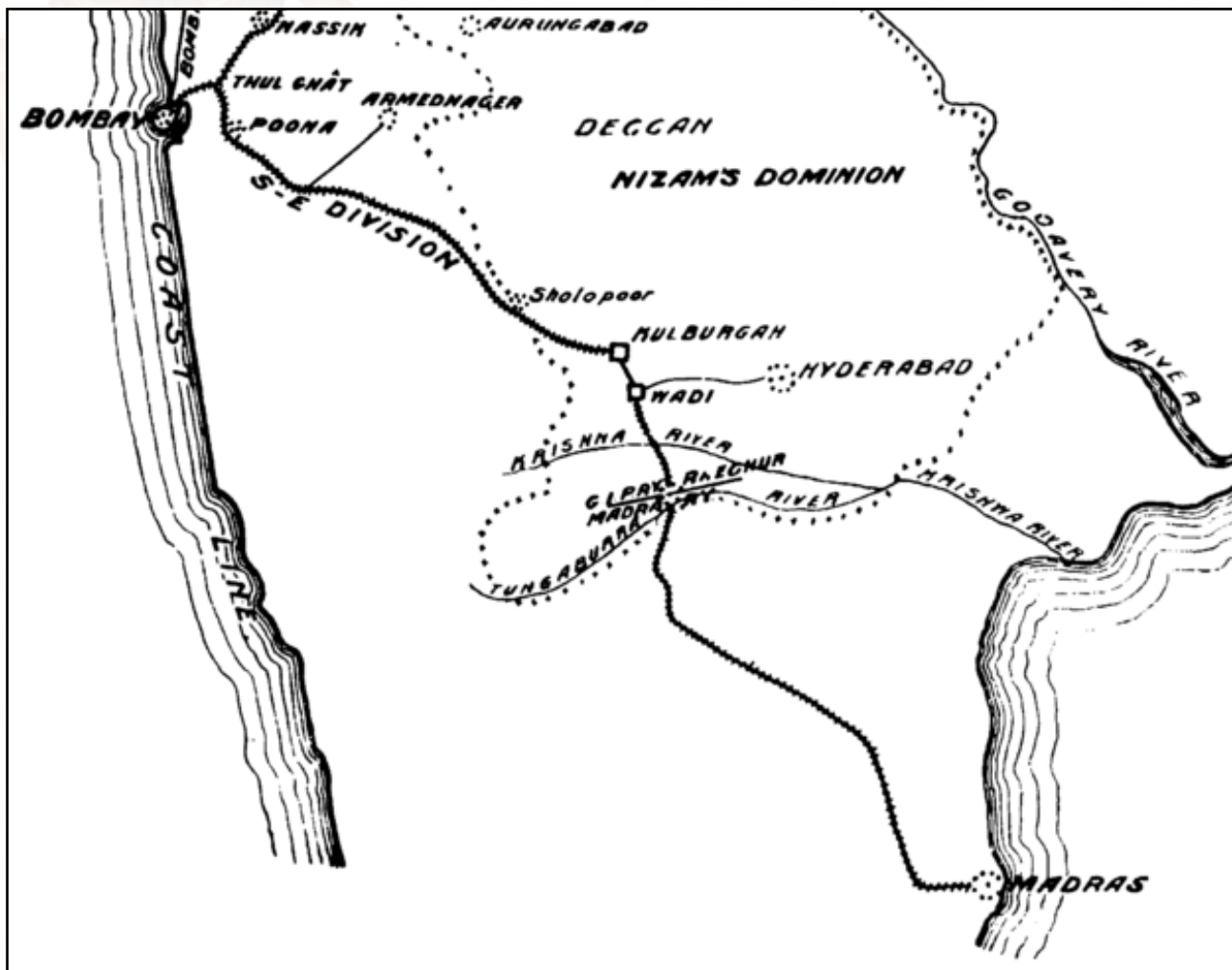
If the heroes defeat all of the bandits, they may keep some of them alive for interrogation. With successful Persuasion or Intimidation rolls, the heroes convince the captives to reveal the location of their hideout, allowing the party to skip to Scene 4. Otherwise, the bandits simply say that they come from Tintani, a small village on the Krishna River west of here.

If some of the bandits escape, the heroes may attempt to chase them. The bandits head upriver in a small steam-powered boat, which means that the adventurers must follow them either along the banks (on horseback or steam cart) or above (in an airship).

Scene 3 – Up the Krishna River

This is a 10-round abstract chase that covers several hours of pursuit.

The banks of the Krishna are very uneven, including cliffs and small islands in many places. This makes it almost impossible to stay in range of the boat the whole time, so their opportunities for



Great Indian Peninsula Railway, Southeast Division (original plans)

interaction with the boat are limited. Terrain is always considered difficult for the party if pursuing on land (-2 to all rolls).

On the other hand, if the party is pursuing by air, they have a +2 speed bonus. (Do not add the +2 Climb bonus, because they are not chasing another aircraft.) If there are enough bandits remaining, those that are not piloting the boat attempt to shoot holes in the airbag to slow down the heroes.

If the heroes try to shoot at the boat itself, they have little effect unless they target the boiler for the steam engine. This is a Called Shot (-2), and the boiler has Toughness 8(2). If the boiler is Shaken, the Bandits may attempt an unskilled Knowledge: Engineering roll to clear it, or they may simply abandon ship and swim to shore. If it is wounded, it explodes and does 2d8 damage to anyone still on the boat.

There are three possible results from this chase:

Option A: The Bandits Escape

One way or another, the bandits manage to lose the pursuers. The last the heroes saw of them, they were getting off their boat at the docks near Tintani and had disappeared into the crowds of pilgrims that seem to be gathering in that area. Time to investigate more personally...

Option B: The Bandits are Killed

The best the heroes could manage is to kill the fleeing bandits. They won't be blowing up any more bridges, but the trail has now gone cold. This must be closer to their home turf, though, so maybe the heroes can ask around the nearby town...

Option C: The Bandits are Captured

The cleverness of the heroes has not only stopped the bandits but left them alive. They may now interrogate them as described in Scene 2.

Scene 4 – The Temple at Tintani

When the heroes arrive at this town, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter Tintani at what appears to be the height of a festival. The streets feel more crowded than you would expect for a small, remote village, and everywhere there seem to be temporary stalls set up selling fruits, incense, colorful trinkets, and icons to travelers. Spirits are high, and you are greeted happily by everyone you meet.

Most of the small pictures and statues being sold on these stands depict a local guru named Shri Mouneshwar, also known by his Muslim name Moinuddin. The main temple in Tintani is devoted to Mouneshwar/Moinuddin, who founded a syncretic combination of monotheistic Hinduism and Sufi Islam, fusing local traditions into both. It turns out that Moinuddin was especially popular among the local goldsmiths because of his rejection of caste. (Goldsmithing and other artisanal professions are considered lower in some traditional Hindu systems.)

Tintani is very much a town of goldsmiths. That becomes clear as you make your way through the crowds. There are many established shops displaying their gold wares, and if you do manage to get to the Shri Mouneshwara Temple, you find that it is ornately decorated with gold trim everywhere. The prevalence of goldsmiths is due to the town's access to both the Krishna River and the Kolar district—the largest gold mining region in southern India.

The most useful sources of information in this area are the goldsmiths, who can be found at either their shops or at the temple itself. The heroes may take many different approaches to this investigation, so let it flow from roleplay rather than a specific skill roll. The most pertinent pieces of information are as follows:

- With all of the pilgrims visiting the temple, it would be difficult to identify anyone matching a specific description. It would also be difficult to differentiate among the many travelers from out of town.
- There is one gearsmith in town. The easy availability of a wide variety of metals brought her here from Kolkata. When asked, she will indicate that she did indeed make timed release mechanisms for a gentlemen. However, when he asked her if she could make timed detonators,

she refused to work with him anymore. Her description does not match any of the bandits the heroes fought at the bridge.

- The local black market has recently seen an influx of blanks—gold slices cut from a bar but not stamped with any insignia. Making blanks is relatively easy if you have gold bars and a small forge, but the practice is unusual around here. Even the criminals in this area typically do not have any reason to hide the origin of their gold, because gold is relatively common.
- Goldsmiths generally refuse to work with blanks, as they are almost certainly obtained illegally. If someone is making blanks, they are probably doing it themselves.
- No one is aware of any bandit gangs operating in the area, but there are definitely abandoned mines that might be used as hideouts.
- Any goldsmith can provide a map of local mines and show which ones are no longer used. One of them is indeed built into a cliff that is accessible from the river.

Scene 5 – The Bandit Camp

The heroes must approach the entrance to this small abandoned mine from the water. This can be done either by boat or by climbing down from the cliffs above. Either way, it will be difficult to flee. If the group from the bridge escaped during Scene 3, the party finds their boat beached outside of this mine entrance. Otherwise, the riverbank is empty.

The mine shaft curves around and angles upward away from the water. As the party moves farther into the cave, they hear faint echoes of conversation and see flickers of light from a flame on the walls. With a contested Stealth roll (against the leader's Notice), they can try to listen to the conversation. The discussion is low but tense and seems to be primarily concerned with issues of payment. These are clearly the bandits responsible for a variety of attacks.

BANDITS (P, plus any that escaped in Scene 3)

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Equipment: Short Sword (Str+d6)



BANDIT LEADER

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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Gunsmithing d8, Notice d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d10

Edges: Extraction, Gunslinger, Quickdraw, Trademark Weapon (Starr Revolver)

Equipment: Starr Revolver (12/24/48, dmg 2d6+1, RoF 2, Custom)

BANDIT ENFORCER (optional for raising difficulty)



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

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 8, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Notice d6,

Edges: Mardani Khel Defensive Footwork, Extraction, First Strike, Weapon Stunning Strike, Frenzy

Equipment: Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, Two Hands)

Aftermath

You discover evidence that the various attacks and incidents were indeed planned by this group of bandits. There are powder kegs, work schedules, fake land surveys, and gold bars that have been sliced for blanks. The bars that you can see are stamped, but they are stamped in English with the name of a mining company in the Rocky Mountain Republic.

It seems that the bandits were actually being supplied by North American investors who had hoped to stage a hostile takeover of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway after exhausting its funding and turning the Indian Alliance members against each other. This information will no doubt be of interest to the leaders of all the member states. Today you have saved both the railroad and the Alliance!



Religion in Roleplaying

The previous adventure includes several opportunities to incorporate religious themes into your roleplaying session. In each case they are optional; the plot does not require the players to engage with the religious content in order to move forward. However, it is available for those who do want it.

When deciding whether to bring religion into your game, always consider your play group. If you think anyone might be uncomfortable with it within the context of the game, or if your players tend to focus on action over conversation, then you might want to gloss over the religious discussions.

However, if all of your players are willing, adding religion can greatly enrich both the characters and the setting. The countries of Asia (particularly India) are incredibly diverse in their religions. People of different faiths and traditions interact frequently, sometimes with tension but often quite peacefully. For your players, religion can be another element that informs roleplay. It can provide deeper reasons for Hindrances like Pacifist, Vow, or Code of Honor. It can provide hooks and connections for the heroes wherever they travel. And yes, it can even provide conflict as long as everyone is comfortable playing with that.

Before you bring religion into your game, make sure to have a discussion with your group. Go over the advice on page 117 in “Thinking About Character,” especially the points about the X Card and stereotypes. Do not even think about discussing religion unless you and your players are sure that you can be respectful to all faiths being represented, and that includes both those in the game world and those held by the players at the table. Always be sensitive to how the fiction of your game might interact with a player’s real-world feelings.

Once you do decide to include religion, remember that it doesn’t need to be there all the time. As in real life, we might be aware of someone’s beliefs, but they don’t have to constantly remind us with everything they say or do. Like any character element, religious faith and practices should guide your actions, not dictate them. In that way, religion can help you play rich, complex characters.

The Invasion of Manchuria

Prologue

March 11, 1872

Japanese forces land on the coast of Manchuria at the mouth of the Suchan River. [Historical note: The Suchan River is the former name of the Partizanskaya River near modern-day Nakhodka. Since that territory remains Chinese in the Steamscapes timeline, the name has not changed.] Bolstered by English air and naval forces, the landing site is quickly secured. However, several Chinese dragon airships are stationed in the area as part of an intimidation campaign against Korea. The dragons quickly mobilize and devastate the English zeppelin scouts, then turn to harass the Japanese ground forces.

But that is all they can do. China does not have many troops in the area and the dragons are not equipped to hold off an entire army by themselves. The airbases send urgent telegraphs for reinforcements. Beijing responds immediately, but it will be at least two days before a significant force can be sent by sea. Meanwhile, a wire is also sent to Moscow. Tsar Nicholas orders the entire regiment out of the border town of Khabarovsk to reinforce the Chinese airbases. The troops are ferried with Chinese airships and Russian steam carts and should arrive by the following evening.

But in that day, how much more territory will the Japanese manage to secure? And how soon will Korea enter the fray?

Setup

This scenario is intended to use the rules for mass battles in the *Savage Worlds* core rules. Players may set themselves up on either side of the battle, based on character background and roleplaying choices. There are also a few slight tweaks to those rules that reflect the changing battle situation and a larger scope.

In this mass battle scenario, each turn represents one day. As the battle progresses, reinforcements may arrive, adding tokens to one side or the other. So for instance, the Japanese side starts with a huge advantage, but over the first several turns the Russian and Chinese forces gradually come into play. Player characters may participate per the usual rules,

but keep in mind that their actions may be broader than simply Fighting or Shooting. Nearly any skill may be helpful, depending on how they can explain it. You might even run the player actions as regular focused roleplaying sessions in between each mass battle round.

For the Knowledge (Battle) rolls each turn, use the following leader's skill levels for each side. Both are considered Wild Cards. However, China does not have access to General Zuo until reinforcements arrive at the end of turn 3 and should use either the player's Knowledge or an Extra's d6 to represent the local commander.

- Japan: Field Marshall Saigō Takamori, Knowledge (Battle) d12
- China: General Zuo Zongtang, Knowledge (Battle) d10

Tokens and situational modifiers are as follows:

- Japan has the advantage and begins with 10 tokens. 4 tokens represent regular army regiments, 2 mobile artillery, 1 oni ni kanabō unit, 1 light cavalry regiment, 1 naval support, and 1 scouting airship.
- China begins with 4 tokens. 2 represent dragon airships, 2 local Yong Ying forces.
- China has massive air superiority even from the beginning, providing a +3 throughout the battle. Japan's artillery and naval support provide a +1.
- China has a slight terrain advantage to start, giving Japan a -1.
- After turn 1, add 2 tokens to China to represent Russian reinforcements.
- After turn 3, add 6 tokens to China to represent General Zuo's ground and navy reinforcements.
- If the battle lasts through turn 7, add 2 tokens to Japan to represent Korean reinforcements.

Aftermath

Japan's sudden aggression has surprised everyone. But China remains strong, and will certainly respond to this assault with a strike of their own. But where will the dragon direct its wrath? At Korea, the accomplice? Or at the Japanese archipelago itself? Whatever the Emperor decides, there is no doubt that this is only the first front in a much larger war to come.

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On the indexing of names:

As noted in the introduction, this book covers a broad range of cultures with many different positional titles and naming conventions. We do not expect the reader to know all of these, but this disparity can make locating individual historical figures very difficult. Because of this, we have prioritized indexing by the name order as it appears in the text, even for cultures (such as European) where a formal family name may come last. Cross-referencing has been supplied as often as possible, especially when a shortened version of the name may be used in the text. For example, Henri Giffard appears under H, G, and also F (for “French inventor”).

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