GURPS
MARTIAL ARTS

Exotic Combat Systems from All Cultures

By C.J. Carella

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS

Martial Arts

EXOTIC COMBAT SYSTEMS FROM ALL CULTURES
Second Edition

By C. J. Carella

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ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid (**www.sjgames.com/pyramid**). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS.* It also covers all the hobby's top games - *AD&D, Traveller, World of Darkness, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun* and many more - and other SJ Games releases like *In Nomine, INWO, Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures* and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at **www.sjgames.com** for an online catalog, errata and updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and America Online. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion *of GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to: **www.io.com/~ftp/GURPSnet/www.**

The *GURPS Martial Arts* web page is at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/martialarts.**

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set,* Third Edition (Revised). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* - e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set.* A P reference means *GURPS Psionics.* A J reference means *GURPS Japan.* A SU reference means *GURPS Supers.*

The martial arts, in all their many forms, have captured the imaginations of generations. As a spectator sport, a mystic discipline or a way to shape the human body into a finely honed weapon, the skills of hand-to-hand combat and physical and mental conditioning are fascinating.

Fantasy and adventure fiction have been deeply influenced by the martial arts. The unyielding samurai, always ready to lay his life on the line, has become the epitome of the warrior spirit. Dark-clad ninja noiselessly moving in the night have become classic villains - and occasionally heroes. The "code" of the martial arts master, who acts only in self-defense or in defense of the helpless, serves as a worthy guideline for any hero.

This worldbook is dedicated both to the GMs and players who want to roleplay in the martial arts world of the past and the present, and to those who wish to explore the cinematic universe of Brace Lee and Chuck Morris. I hope you will find martial arts history as rich and exciting as its fantasy, and that both can serve you well for roleplaying.

This book may enrich other campaigns as well. A martial arts character can fit in any background (see Chapter 6); after all, they have been around for thousands of years, and have touched every corner of the world. GMs and players who enjoy mixing different backgrounds and settings should remember the TV series *Kung Fu,* where a Chinese monk traveled through America's western frontier.

So put on your gi, tighten your obi, pack your katana and nunchaku, and enter the world of *GURPS Martial Arts!*

ABOUT The AUTHORS

C.J. Carella has finally worked his way up from being an amateur starving writer to becoming a professional starving writer. Born in New York, C.J. has lived in Peru, Venezuela and Connecticut, in that order. His realistic martial arts experience comes from the study of Karate-do Shitoryu. His cinematic martial arts background includes a few million hours of exposure to martial arts fiction in all possible mediums, from books to movies to video games.

He has a B.A. in Medieval History from Yale University. His hobbies/obsessions include science fiction and fantasy, comic books and gaming, all of which he calls "research material."

His love affair with *GURPS* began with the publication of the *Man to Man.* His writing credits include *GURPS Imperial Rome, GURPS War Against the Chtorr* and *GURPS Voodoo* for Steve Jackson Games, as well as *Pantheons of the Megaverse* and *Rifts Mercenaries* for Palladium Books. He is now working full time as a game designer in Detroit, Michigan; his last surviving cat is currently in exile.

Sean Punch is a former particle physicist who now works as *GURPS* line editor and overall system guru for SJ Games. He considers his change in careers to be a step up. He currently works via the Internet, where he is better known as Dr. Kromm. He has been a fanatical gamer since 1979.

Sean and his wife, Bonnie, presently live in Montreal, Quebec with their three cats and one bird.

1 ☯ hISTORY

Think about the term "martial arts." One envisions fighters leaping high in the air to deliver devastating kicks, or smashing bricks to pieces with their bare hands ... a lone, small man defeating a handful of enemies in a few seconds . . . strict lessons in a *dojo* or school, following ancient rituals and teachings . . . and moral and spiritual advancement that matches or surpasses mere physical abilities.
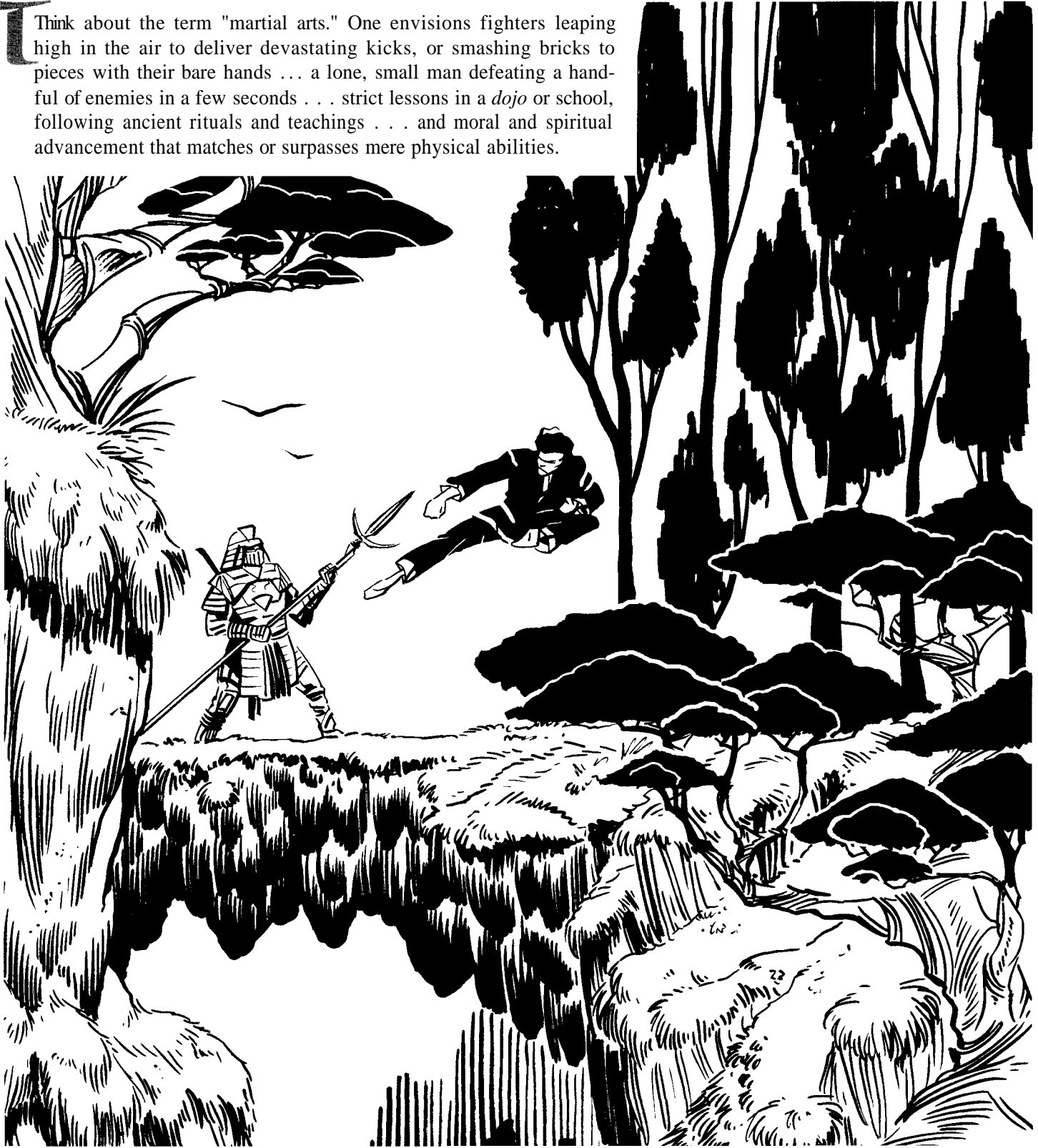
Bodhidharma

This mythical Indian priest is reputed to be both the founder of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China and the creator of Shaolin Chu'an, known today as Shaolin Kung Fu - see p. 101.

Bodhidharma was born around 448 A.D., the youngest son of a Brahmin king; he joined the Buddhist priesthood in India and rose high in its ranks, until he decided to teach his brand of Buddhism to the Chinese people. According to the legend, he walked all the way to China, surviving countless dangers. Upon arriving, he offended the Chinese emperor by dismissing all his great works as "mundane" and therefore worthless (see *Buddhism,* p. 9). After leaving the Chinese capital, he traveled to the Shaolin temple, which at the time concerned itself mainly with translating Indian sacred documents into Chinese. Bodhidharma was at first refused admittance to the temple; he sat down in a meditation trance for nine years, doing nothing but staring at a cliff wall. Eventually, legend says, his intense gaze actually bored a hole in the cliff! After that, the leader of the temple relented and welcomed Bodhidharma, who became the spiritual leader of the monks.

Bodhidharma decided that the monks needed some sort of exercise regimen, as they were so out of shape they fell asleep during meditation. From the set of exercises that Bodhidharma devised, Shaolin Kung Fu was eventually created. It is not certain whether Bodhidharma himself developed the combative aspects of the style. Being a nobleman, he probably had some military training, including wrestling techniques, so it is possible that he helped the monks to devise a system of self-defense (always desirable in remote areas fraught with bandits) as well as exercise.

Another aspect of Bodhidharma's teachings had a powerful impact on the martial arts as a whole. The priest taught his monks about the development of the Chi (see sidebar, p. 84) through breath exercises and meditation techniques. Since Chi is one of the fundamental principles of most Chinese and Japanese martial arts, this is perhaps Bodhidharma's **most** important legacy.

Since the beginning of civilization, different cultures have developed and formalized combat skills. The Romans and the Greeks had systematic techniques for both weapon use and unarmed combat. Medieval warriors were trained in wrestling and swordsmanship. Fencing was a highly stylized art which eventually became a sport.

Nowadays, however, the term "martial arts" is most strongly associated with the Asian styles of combat. Since the end of World War II, and especially as what has come to be known as "kung fu cinema" became popular, people in the West have become fascinated with the skills of the East. Myth and fact have become irrevocably mixed in the popular mind, thanks mainly to the film industry; the truth is less spectacular but considerably more complex.

The Eastern martial arts are primarily forms of self-defense, usually created by people who were unable to use conventional weapons and tactics to defend themselves. Some styles were also used as part of the training of soldiers, particularly elite units. Finally, many arts began as exercise or meditation methods for Asian monastic and philosophical systems.

To better understand the origins of the martial arts (and the various styles), here is a brief look at important eras of martial arts development. For more information about the history of particular schools and styles, see Chapter 4.

China

In many ways, China is the cradle of the martial arts; the most ancient styles trace their origins to there. The earliest mention of martial arts in a historical document dates back to 2674 B.C., when the near-mythical emperor Huang Ti won an important battle using martial artists. This proto-Kung Fu seems to have consisted mainly of weapons training, but it was a regimented system of combat much like later styles.

The Chinese Knights-Errant

In the period from 700 to 200 B.C., Chinese society was wracked by turmoil and internal warfare. Local lords were the supreme rulers of their domains, unconcerned about the country as a whole and constantly warring with their neighbors.

In these troubled times, a new group appeared - wandering warriors who traveled through the small feudal states and fought for noblemen and commoners alike. Their strict chivalric code would have satisfied a Knight of the Round Table; they had to succor the helpless and stand for right above all things. Their lofty ideals were matched by a high degree of martial skill. The Chinese knights-errant, also known as *chun-tzu* or gentlemen, were said to be superb swordsmen and masters of other arts, probably including early forms of empty-hand combat. Their philosophy was shaped by Confucianism, a philosophy that promotes public service, unselfishness and impartiality.

As in medieval Europe, however, the ideals of the Chinese knights were not always followed, and some historians state that they rarely lived up to their legendary reputation. In some instances, they became nothing more than glorified

mercenaries; in others, they themselves became feudal lordlings, contributing to the problem. Still, the ideal knights became models of good behavior and set the standards for many later would-be heroes.

The Shaolin Temple

During the 5th century A.D., a Buddhist temple was founded on the Shao-Shih mountain; it was called the Shaolin Ssu, meaning "Young Forest Temple." It became one of the most famous centers of learning for the budding Buddhist religion (see sidebar, p. 9).

This is the place where Bodhidharma (see sidebar, p. 6) taught. In addition to his spiritual teachings, he is credited with imparting to his monks a series of exercises to increase their stamina so as to better withstand the strict mental and physical austerity that he demanded.

These exercise techniques were not originally designed for combat, but soon a form of boxing became associated with the Shaolin temple. Called Shaolin Ch'uan Fa (Way of the Shaolin Fist), it eventually became the most famous style in the land. It became a matter of prestige to defeat a Shaolin monk or to join the temple. Neither was an easy task.

According to the legends, would-be monks had to pass an arduous series of tests, both physical and mental, to begin learning the secret techniques of the temple. Acceptance only came after the prospective student underwent tests of patience and humility; he would be kept waiting for days, verbally abused and otherwise provoked into losing his temper. If he did, he would be summarily rejected. Thus, those who truly wished to learn were separated from the rest. The last test involved a master of the temple serving tea to the prospective students. If the students accepted the tea, they were dismissed for disrespect; they were supposed to refuse the offer and instead serve the master.

Daily life in the temple was an arduous succession of physical and mental exercises. Students were expected to dedicate themselves solely to the Temple and its teachings, and were not permitted to leave; there are many tales of frustrated students trying to escape the temple.

Graduation from the school was even more challenging. A slightly watered-down rendition of the graduation trial was depicted in the TV pilot of the *Kung Fu* series. After strict questioning about Buddhist doctrine and philosophy, the physical examination began, testing both the monk's style and his restraint in using force; for a detailed description of the test, see the sidebar on p. 100.

The final test was a maze, full of dummies and mechanical devices that were sprung as the student walked down the corridors. If the student failed to parry all attacks, he would fail the test (many monks underwent and failed the trial dozens of times). At the end of the maze waited an even harsher test: a red-hot metal cauldron filled with burning coals and weighing some 500 pounds. The only way to pass that last obstacle was to lift the cauldron and carry it out. During the process, the marks of the dragon and the tiger were branded on the monk's forearms, indicating the end of the test and marking the monk forever as a member of the Shaolin Temple.

After almost a thousand years of splendor, however, the Shaolin Temple faced disaster. During the 17th century, a Chinese border tribe, the Manchus, conquered the rest of the nation and founded the Ch'ing dynasty. A number of monks were sympathizers of the old government and helped the underground groups that were fighting the new regime. Many would-be revolutionaries and members of the former government joined the Shaolin temple, using it as a cover. Eventually, the imperial government sent an army to arrest the Shaolin monks. This attack was successfully repulsed. A bigger army was dispatched and leveled the temple in 1735. According to legend, only five monks escaped

TAOISM

Taoism was founded by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (who lived roughly 580-480 B.C.). It is mainly a Chinese philosophy-religion, but it has influenced many parts of Asia, including Japan. Its influence on the martial arts is very deep.

This ancient philosophy is very hard to understand, mainly because its practitioners refuse to define it. Taoism is an anarchistic philosophy - it asserts that people must remove themselves from society and live in nature, under primitive conditions. This is only a small part of its doctrine, however. Taoists believe that everything in the universe is part of *Too*. Tao can be literally translated as "the Way" or "the Path," but can also mean "nothingness" or "emptiness." It is supposed to pervade everything, including living beings.

Tao is composed of two opposing forces, the Yin and Yang, which make up the famous symbol of the divided circle. Yin represents negative energy, dark and cold; Yang is positive, white. They are opposites, but are linked together, and each carries a small part of the other. Every object and person carries Yin and Yang within. With this concept firmly in their grasp, the Taoists accept bad events with the same attitude with which they accept the good. It is all part of the balance, and things will change as the opposites interact. People must learn to live in harmony with the Tao.

A Taoist PC should try to be above such things as greed, hatred and strong emotions (in game terms, he should either not have that type of Mental Disadvantage, or have several levels of Strong Will to resist them). A Taoist should also be cynical about the worth of worldly affairs; it should be hard to convince him to undertake a quest, for instance, unless he decided that it would help cure some imbalance in nature.

HISTORY

Another principle of Taoism which has deeply influenced the martial arts is the idea of non-action *(wu wei)*. Although many Westerners have interpreted this as laziness and apathy, wu wei does not really promote idleness, but the removal of conscious intent in one's actions. Selfish motives create "active" movements; harmony with nature begets "passive" actions. A passive action is one that occurs spontaneously, without conscious thoughts or desires disturbing it. This passive principle can be better understood through its application to the martial arts.

A normal martial artist practices his art until he believes he has mastered it; he knows the techniques that will bring results. When attacked, he counterattacks strongly and with deliberation. As a result, there is a clash of opposing forces. The martial artist may win, or the opposing force may be stronger and overcome him.

A "passive" martial artist will practice his skill until it becomes part of his nature. He has absorbed the techniques to a degree that they manifest without thought. When attacked, he does not seek to oppose the attacking force; he moves spontaneously, in a harmonious way, and lets the attack "flow" around him. The attacker punches this master, but suddenly the target is elsewhere; instead of being hit, the master grasps the attacking hand and, effortlessly, he spins the enemy head over heels. To an observer, it looks as if the attacker had helped the master to perform the throw. A true master can never be surprised, because he does not need to think about what he is to do; his body will react.

Wu wei can also be translated as "passive achievement." A Taoist must strive never to disturb the harmony of nature. How this is to be done will vary depending on one's personal interpretation; Taoism is a very individualistic philosophy. For some, to retreat from all worldly concerns may be the way. Lao Tzu, the leading mind behind Taoism, did just that. Others might wish to bring harmony into a violent and unbalanced world.

This is a highly simplified version of a complex philosophy, of course. There is considerable debate among philosophers about what Tao, Yin and Yang and a myriad of other concepts *truly* mean. The doctrine of Tao is not as popular as Buddhism in the Orient, mainly because its concepts are too complicated for most people. Among martial artists, however, Taoism is a very influential force.
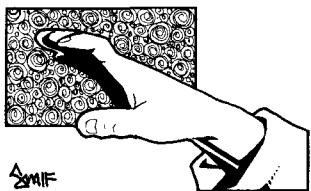
with their lives; they are known as the Venerable Five. With the help of other revolutionaries, some of the survivors helped found a second Shaolin temple, but it was destroyed shortly afterwards. Many monks escaped, however, and the Shaolin temple went underground.

Triads, Tongs and Secret Societies

After the destruction of the Shaolin temple, and as the Manchu dynasty uprooted other Chinese institutions, martial artists scattered through the countryside. Some taught their skills for a living, while others turned to banditry. Schools became centers of dissent where anti-Imperial propaganda was preached. They also became part of the local communities, serving as volunteer police forces, charity centers and, in some cases, as the actual seats of the town or village's governments.
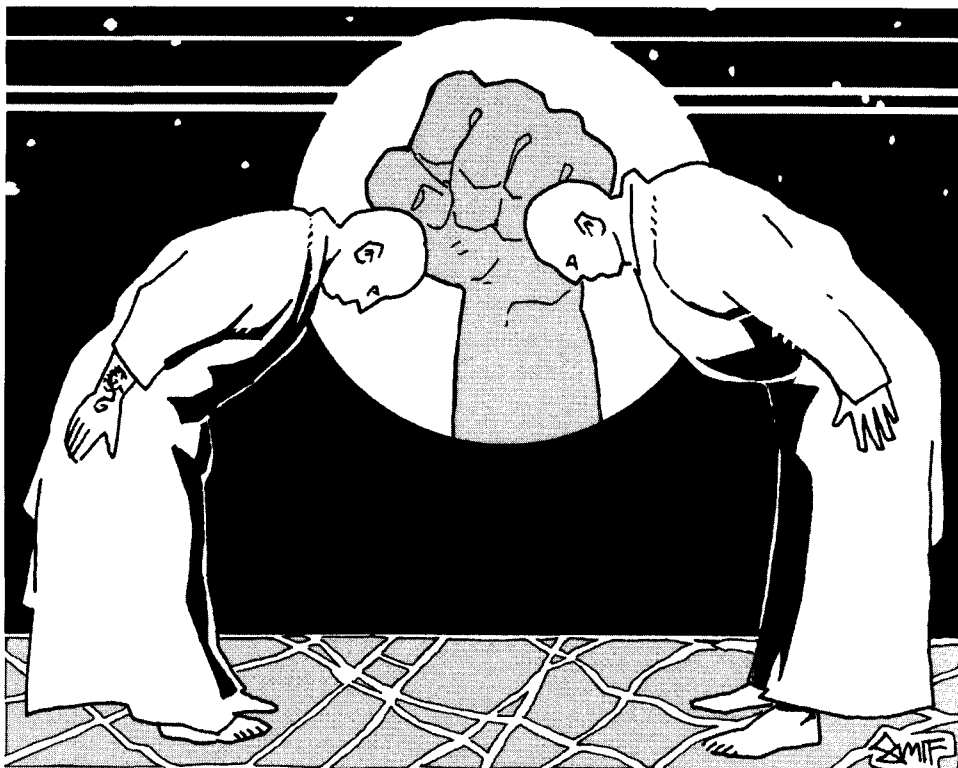
Some Shaolin monks eventually helped found the Triads, which were notorious secret societies. At first, they were among the most beneficial organizations of this sort, helping small villages stand against corrupt officials, providing organization and cohesion for local communities, and working for charitable causes. In some ways, the secret societies revived the mythical kung fu hero as the defender of the poor and defenseless. Many of them concentrated on revolutionary activities. Almost all the revolutions against the Manchu dynasty can be traced to such societies.

Over a century after the destruction of the Shaolin temple, one secret society eventually triggered the end of the Manchu dynasty, albeit unwittingly. The / *Ho Chan,* or "Righteous and Harmonious Fist," has gone down in history as the "Boxers," so called by Europeans both because of their fist symbol and for their martial arts practices, which Westerners considered an Asian analog of boxing. Among the Boxers' ideas was the mistaken belief that their martial arts expertise would make them invulnerable to modern weapons, much like the Amerindian Ghost Dancers. Originally an anti-Manchu organization, the Boxers soon became a hotbed of anti-foreign sentiment. This is understandable, considering the West's

actions against China at that time: several European nations had established trading posts in China by force, even destroying Chinese installations when the Imperial government tried to curtail the opium trade (opium was legal in Europe in the 19th century). The Boxers murdered a number of Europeans and Chinese Christians with the tacit support (or at least inaction) of the Empress and the Chinese authorities, who had little love for the foreigners. Emboldened, the Boxers launched a massive attack and siege of the European delegations in Peking on June 17, 1900. After two months, the trapped Europeans were rescued by Western troops, including an American contingent. The Boxers, despite their avowed skills, were no match for modern firepower. Shortly thereafter, the Imperial government collapsed and the Chinese Republic was born.

In the period of chaos and poverty that followed, most of the Triads and secret societies degenerated into gangs of thugs fighting among themselves for the control of territory. Since these societies had little to offer besides combat skills, fighting became their only way of life. Many turned to crime, such as drug smuggling and prostitution, to support themselves. These criminal groups exist to this day in Taiwan, Hong Kong and many Chinatowns across the world. They are called *tongs* (although the word can also refer to harmless fraternal societies). Many still use kung fu, but it is now supplemented with submachine guns and assault rifles.

JAPAN

Since the end of the 19th century, this tiny island has become first a military and now an economic superpower. In the field of the martial arts, Japan has contributed the three most recognized popular martial arts figures: the samurai, ultimate warrior; the ninja, dark stalker with supernatural powers; and the white-clad *karateka or judoka.*

For a much more thorough overview of Japanese culture and history, see *GURPS Japan.*

The Samurai

This warrior caste, a symbol of Japanese culture, has also become the epitome of the warrior spirit to the rest of the world, displacing the medieval knight in popular imagination. During their thousand-year history, they built a tradition that many martial artists seek to emulate.

The roots of the samurai class date back to 792 A.D., when the younger sons of noble families were trained as professional soldiers and officers. They were taught to fight from horseback with sword and bow. But it was not until the 10th century, when Japan was plunged into constant warfare between rival clans, that the warrior class came into its own. The *shogun* (military governor) became the true power in Japan, followed by the local lords *(daimyo)* and their armed retainers, the samurai. The Confucian class system, placing warriors at the top of society, became firmly established.

The privileges enjoyed by the *bushi* (warrior) class were accompanied by a number of duties, however. Samurai owed absolute fealty to their clan lords and other superiors. This obedience could (and often did) include giving up one's life in the service of the lord. The word *samurai* itself means "one who serves." Philosophical training in Zen and Taoist techniques helped the warriors to distance themselves from base emotions and to be unafraid of dying. This is not to say that the samurai were insane suicide troops; rather, this detachment from concerns about the self helped them to perform in battle with calmness unstirred by fear of pain or death. Fear of death can paralyze and distract, thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. One unconcerned with such things will fully utilize his skill and may avoid harm entirely.

BUDDHISM (ZEN BUDDHISM)

Buddhism began in India as the teachings of the historical figure Gautama, who died in 480 B.C. (the same year Lao Tzu died). During the following centuries, the philosophy he preached became a religion and spread to China, then to Korea, and finally to Japan. Buddhism views the life of each living being as entangled in the five passions: anger, joy, hatred, desire and grief. Its aim is to free the spirit from the three great sins of ignorance, greed and passion. This will allow it to become *enlightened,* and enter into Nirvana, a state of freedom from passion and the illusions of the material world.

An unenlightened spirit is doomed to reincarnate time and time again. Depending on his life, the person can reincarnate as a man or animal, or even go to the Buddhist Hells and other less savory planes of existence. The spirit's *karma* from previous lives will influence his current life. Karmic ties built during previous lives can come back and affect the person; thus, some people feel mysteriously attracted to somebody or feel a deep antipathy towards someone else - they had some tie with them in the past.

A special discipline of Buddhism is Ch'an, or Zen Buddhism. Founded in China by the priest Bodhidharma (see sidebar, p. 6), Zen seeks to achieve enlightenment through meditation techniques (the words Ch'an and Zen literally mean "meditation") and a spontaneous, non-introspective approach to everything from combat to cooking. This last principle is similar to Taoism's "passive achievement," and the two bodies of belief may have influenced each other. Many people in Asia espouse both Zen and Taoism at the same time. ignoring their contradictions.

See *GURPS Japan* for a more complete description of Buddhism.

HISTORY

Miyamoto Musashi

This legendary swordsman lived during the tumultuous times of the 17th century in Japan. His martial arts prowess and ruthlessness are legendary. More recently, he has also become famous for his work on swordsmanship and philosophy, *The Book of Five Rings,* which has a huge following among both martial artists and businessmen.

Musashi (his full name was Shinmen Musashi no Kami Fujiwara no Genshin), was born in the Miyamoto village around 1584. He soon developed an interest in the fighting arts, and at the age of 13, he killed an adult samurai by throwing him to the ground (perhaps with early jujutsu moves?) and then hitting him with a stick. This was but the first of a long string of victories.

Musashi dedicated his life to the mastery of fencing techniques. He lived in the wilds, a wandering ronin, learning and developing his art to maximum efficiency and defeating all challengers. Musashi favored the wooden sword, or *bokken,* over the normal steel blade, although he used normal katanas extensively during his life. He successfully defeated almost all enemies, from swordsmen to exotic weapon-users. Due to his skill and dedication, he became a *Kenshi* (sword saint).

He also proved to be a master of strategy, helping lead the army that destroyed the Christian daimyos of Shimawara in 1638. A few years after this, he became a hermit and wrote *The Book of Five Rings* less than a month before his death in 1645.

Adventure Ideas: Samurai or ronin PCs might encounter Musashi. Picking a fight with him will most likely be a losing proposition (see p. 88 for a character write-up). But if the adventurers behave properly and courageously, he might take a liking to them (a Very Good or better reaction roll) and perhaps even give them a few lessons. Being trained by Musashi could be worth Id character points per month of training (he would not stay in one place much longer than this), all to be put in the Katana skill. Also, the PCs' Reputation would go up by 1 (paid for by unspent or future character points) if they let it be known that they were students of Musashi. This would gain them respect, but might also draw challenges!
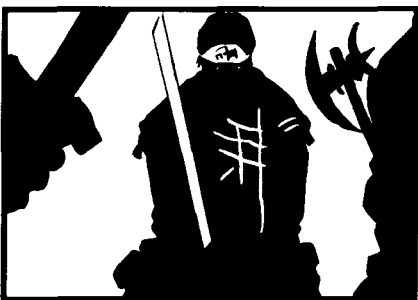
To betray a clan lord was an unforgivable transgression that brought terrible dishonor to the betrayed; the only way to redress such a sin was to commit *seppuku,* or ritual suicide. Seppuku was also required of samurai who failed to adequately perform their duties. Interestingly enough, many powerful noblemen, also of the samurai class, had no such qualms about betraying their superiors, such as the emperor and the shogun.

Samurai were trained in *bujutsu* ("martial arts"). Swordsmanship and archery were the primary skills taught, but other weapon skills, such as the *naginata* (light halberd), spear and knife were also imparted to the aspiring warriors. A few empty-hand techniques, mainly how to grapple opponents, were also taught, but they were completely secondary to weapon training. Since samurai were never unarmed (a samurai would almost always have at least his shortsword at hand), there were very few chances to put those skills to use.

The katana, or Japanese longsword, was both a weapon and badge of office. Worn with the shortsword *(wakizashi},* they formed the *daisho,* or paired swords. Only members of the samurai class were permitted to wear these weapons together. Eventually, the use of the katana was also restricted to the samurai - commoners could only use the wakizashi.

The samurai class was not restricted to men. Women, too, belonged to this class; they were not required to fight in war (although there are many tales of women who did), but were trained in the use of weapons. The *naginata* was their weapon of choice.

At first, the samurai class was fairly flexible in admitting new members. Many commoners rose in status through skill, luck and intelligence. As the shogun's power consolidated and eventually led to the pacification of Japan, the samurai title became hereditary, and the martial skills of the class began to deteriorate. As firearms reduced swordsmanship to a secondary or even superfluous skill, other abilities such as calligraphy, poetry and philosophy grew in importance in their training. *Jutsu* martial skills (designed exclusively for combat effectiveness) declined in popularity. They were supplanted by *Do (* pronounced "dough") skills, which remove themselves from martial concerns and make the study of the martial art a way of life; many of the combat movements became stylized and less effective. Practicality and lethal intent gave way to artistic achievement and spiritual development. Thus *Kenjutsu* (swordsmanship) became *Kendo* (the Way of the Sword, or Sword Art). Also, since the use of the sword in combat declined, the number of experienced warriors who could teach others grew scarce.

Many samurai did not take easily to the gradual undermining of their traditional position. Some became *ronin* (literally "wave man," or person without a place; it referred to a samurai without a master) and made a living performing for the public, teaching sword techniques and other martial skills. Some resorted to banditry. Other samurai vented their resentment by committing acts of violence in the streets. The cities' constables had to adopt new techniques to deal with troublesome (and often drunk) samurai (see *Japanese Martial Arts,* p. 12).

Eventually, the samurai class evolved from a warrior caste into an administrative and governmental group. Their traditional martial spirit was not forgotten completely; even today, many Japanese of samurai lineage own and train with the katana and wakizashi.

The Ninja

In ancient Japan, where everything had a place and society had rigid rules of behavior for all its members, the ninja seem an anomaly, a reflection of a culture with a split personality. The ninja were the dark side of Japan, an unacknowledged facet that was both used and feared.

Serious historians trying to unravel the mysteries of the ninja (and very few do) are faced with an almost insurmountable problem: there are no written records dealing directly with this group, let alone written by them. Since they were a series of secret organizations, the ninja left no information about themselves. Therefore, information about them comes from mainstream Japanese society, a prejudiced view.

Since the ninja usually performed tasks that the samurai warrior class considered beneath its dignity to do, it is possible that the original ninja were members of the *hinin* (or "non-person") class. Among these were entertainers, beggars, exiled criminals and the *eta,* hereditary outcasts who were almost completely cut off from Japanese society. Killing an eta or any hinin was not considered a serious crime. The ninja may have drawn members from the eta class; by their being removed from most of society, their movements would be harder to track.

For their leadership, however, it is likely that the ninja drew from the many warriors and clan leaders who had lost in one of the power struggles that ravaged Japan for most of its history. These new *hinin,* many of them experts in the arts of war, developed many guerrilla and covert operations techniques, probably among the first in history.

A second theory claims that the ninja owe their origin to Chinese cults that found their way to Japan. These Chinese monks had a vast repertoire of martial arts knowledge that they used to inflict terror and gain reputations as master spies and assassins.

The truth is probably a combination of all of the above. Due to the variety of abilities displayed by the ninja, it is likely that their members came from many different walks of life, from warriors to artisans to scientists.

The ninja were among the first to use explosives and black powder weapons; their ability to adapt to changing times was one of the reasons for their success. Exiled noblemen were not likely to have had this flexibility. The eta, on the other hand, owed little loyalty to Japanese conventions - after all, it was their job to do the things that most Japanese could never bring themselves to do. The combination of the two, and the addition of sophisticated martial arts techniques from exiled warrior-monks, could indeed have created fearsome shadow-warriors.

During the warring provinces era (the 16th century), ninja were used extensively in espionage and assassination missions. They were masters of disguise; although not members of any respectable social class, their trained agents could

Bruce Lee

The "Little Dragon," as he was called by his friends, was a powerful catalyst of the interest of the Western world in the martial arts, as well as an influential figure in the martial arts community.

Although he was born in the U.S., Lee grew up in Hong Kong. His father was an opera comedian, and Bruce started participating in films as a child actor. He was a quick-tempered, rebellious youth. This attitude got him into many fights, and he soon decided to learn how to defend himself - one of the most common reasons for learning martial arts. His father introduced him to T'ai Chi, but the gentle art did not satisfy the impatient Lee. Seeking a quicker way, he learned Wing Chun from the best teacher in Hong Kong. He trained with the single-minded determination that characterized him, and he continued training and developing his skills for the rest of his life.

In the United States, he became famous among the martial arts community. He often gave public demonstrations of many of his famous techniques. In 1964, he was spotted by Hollywood talent-seekers, who were impressed by the seeming ease with which he knocked down a full-grown man. This led to Lee's first American dramatic appearance, as Kato in the short-lived series *The Green Hornet.* Although this *Batman* clone series did not last long, it was enough to make Lee famous for his fluid movements and devastating cinematic style.

Lee was never content with his current level of development; he learned styles beyond Wing Chun, among them Filipino Escrima (p. 80) and American boxing. He was even seen reading a book on ballet, seeking a way to incorporate the high leg moves of that art into his fighting style. His quest for perfection eventually led him to reject most traditional martial arts. He believed that their rigidness in the number and types of techniques taught were a drawback in a real combat situation; his key to victory was spontaneity and unpredictability. In some sense, this "break" from traditional martial arts was a move to the Tao/Do way of forgetting the techniques and instead reacting "naturally" to threats (see sidebar, p. 7).

HISTORY

Bruce Lee
(Continued)

As Lee's martial arts skills developed further, his screen career also progressed. He appeared on numerous TV series, and had a small role in the 1969 movie *Marlowe,* but made little headway in Hollywood; racism made movie producers reluctant to cast a Chinese man as the lead of a movie. He decided to try his luck in Hong Kong instead, where he soon became a star with the films *Fists of Fury* and *The Chinese Connection,* both of which became international hits.

Eventually, he achieved his dream of making it in the American film circuit when he was offered a starring role in *Enter the Dragon.* This movie has become the standard against which all martial arts movies are measured.

Tragically, Bruce Lee died suddenly a month before the movie premiered in the United States, just as he was beginning work on a new film, *The Game of Death.* Although wild rumors flew about his death, with many claims that he had been assassinated by rival martial artists (supposedly by poison or by secret pressure-point methods), the medical report showed that Lee died from a cerebral edema caused by an allergy to a headache remedy.

Even though his life and career were so short, Bruce Lee became immortal in the minds and hearts of martial artists and action-movie fans everywhere. He lives on in his movies and in his martial art style.

impersonate the higher classes with ease: priest and merchant, nobleman or commoner. Their dedication and patience were legendary. A ninja assassin would wait in a hidden spot for hours or even days until the target was within range, then strike. They were unparalleled in the arts of deception; a ninja would pretend to commit suicide, but it would turn out that he had slit a bag of blood or a small animal concealed in his clothing. All manner of poisons and gadgets were utilized, calculated to instill fear in their enemies and even their clients.

It is not strange that a body of popular culture grew around the ninja. In the eyes of many Japanese, the ninja were not human at all, but demons or shapeshifters. Rumors of their magical abilities abounded. It was said that they could walk on water or through walls, or wander through a crowd without being noticed. By the 20th century, movies, comic books and TV shows in Japan had firmly entrenched the ninja in the realm of myth. When the ninja became widely known in America, their already inflated image was hyped up in typical Hollywood fashion.

Many ninja weapons and tactics were meant to overcome better armed and armored warriors, mainly through surprise. The ninja were consistently outnumbered and less well-armed. In a face-to-face confrontation, a mounted samurai in full armor would have been more than a match for a single ninja. On the other hand, the same samurai could be caught by a noose, yanked off his horse and stabbed in the face with a poisoned shuriken thrown from yards away; *that* was the ninja's way.

To most Western readers (including most roleplayers) the samurai way, with brave warriors challenging one another in individual duels, is the more romantic and heroic of the two. After all, the ninja were only interested in results, while the samurai and their huge armies could afford to "fight nobly and die well." Samurai could be counted on to obey orders and to fight to the death; ninja could be trusted to get things done. Both had their place.

Japanese Martial Arts

The martial arts as we know them today did not appear in Japan until the end of the 19th century. As the weapon skills of the warrior class became *Do* forms, a tendency toward overspecialization occurred. Schools began teaching a single weapon, or even a single weapon movement (as in the case of Iaido, a martial arts style that concentrates on the drawing and resheathing of the katana). Some of those schools concentrated on the empty-handed styles mentioned above.

There were many reasons for this appearance of empty-hand schools. The Meiji government of the 19th century prohibited commoners from using weapons, and the need for empty-hand techniques (as well as those teaching the use of staffs as weapons) became more popular. Some Chinese teachers arrived in Japan and taught their *ch'uan fa* (boxing) techniques, which were translated in Japanese as *kempo.* Although Jujutsu was an indigenous Japanese martial art, there was some later Chinese influence. The names for these new skills were *jujutsu* (the gentle/supple combat form, which at first also included weapon techniques) and *aikijutsu.* Almost immediately after their appear-

ance, "artistic" forms like Judo and Aikido also appeared. The main goals of those artistic forms were not to make fighters, but to discipline body and mind.
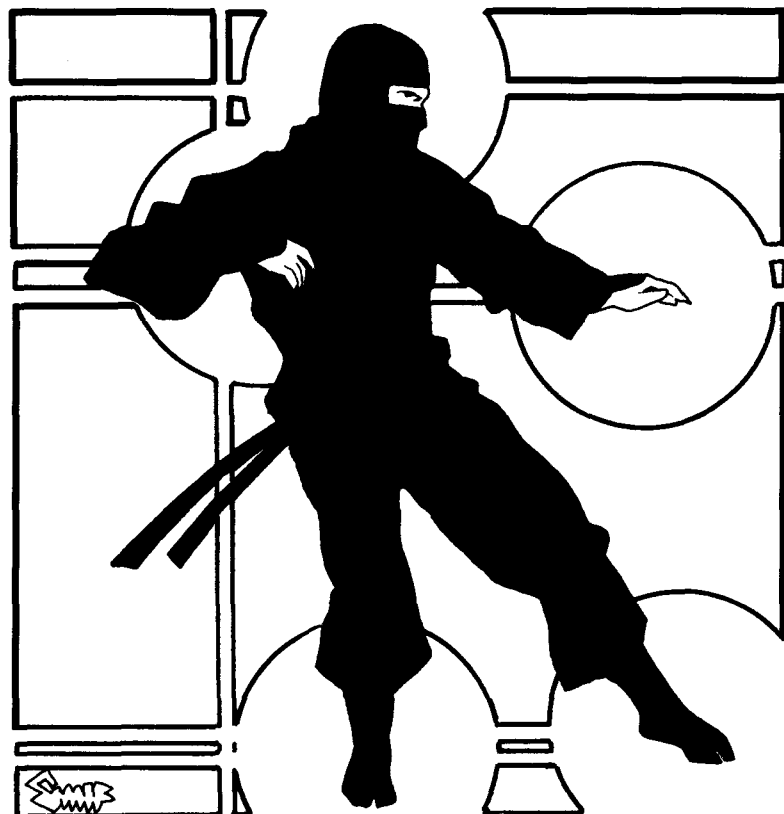
Some early practitioners of the combat forms were bouncers at bars and houses of prostitution, who were required to unobtrusively subdue and remove drunken troublemakers (many of whom were samurai or *ronin).* Others were police officers, who supplemented these arts with such weapons as *the jitte* and the *manriki-gusari* (see Chapter 5) to subdue, again, troublesome samurai. Eventually, Japanese from all walks of life practiced diverse martial arts styles regularly, a tradition that continues to this day.
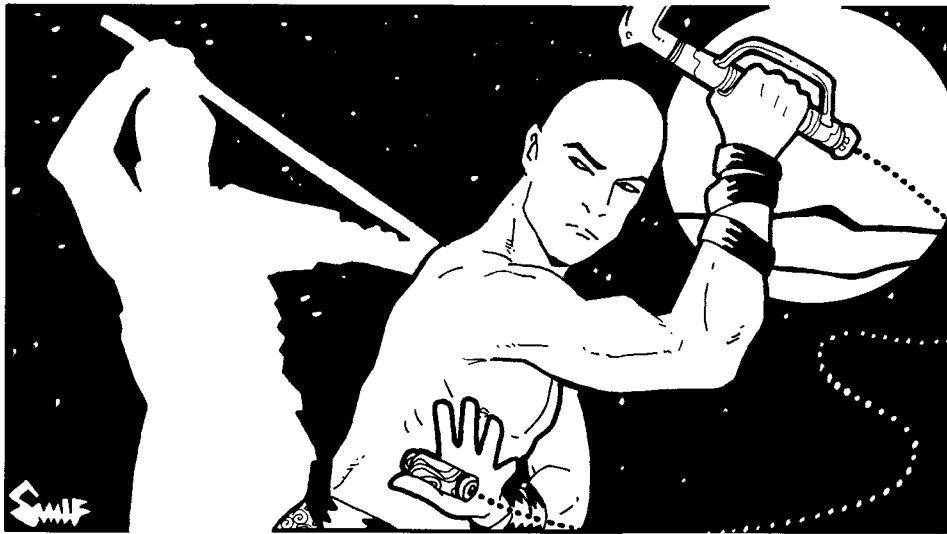
Korea

The origins of martial arts in Korea can be traced to 400 A.D., since mural paintings dating to that time show some sort of unarmed combat system. Legend speaks of ancient techniques that were devised when men fought with flint implements. The skill of rock-throwing, for instance, was developed by legendary masters to the point that an expert could strike vital pressure points with skillful stone throws. Korean historians also claim that many Japanese martial arts are Korean in origin. There is some historical evidence that Korean swordsmiths were influential in the development of the Japanese katana.

Korea has been invaded over and over during its history. It has been conquered by the Chinese, Japanese, Mongols, Europeans and, again, the Japanese during World War II. Early Korea was divided into several warring kingdoms. All of them were influenced to a degree by Chinese culture, both religiously and in the martial arts.

The Hwarang

During the 7th century A.D., Korea was divided into three rival kingdoms - Koguryo, Paeckche and Silla. Silla was the smallest of the three. To defend itself, Silla created an elite body of warriors called the *hwarang.* These warriors were young noblemen who were extensively trained in combat skills and who had to abide by a strict honor code. In many ways, they were similar to the better-known samurai.

Sword and bow skills were taught to the hwarang, as well as horsemanship. They were sworn to be loyal to their lord, to respect their elders, to always be honest with their fellows, to never kill unjustly and to never retreat in combat. These warriors were very successful, as Silla eventually conquered the other two kingdoms and unified Korea.

Martial ARTS AND the Law

At many times in history, weapons and weapon skills have been outlawed by local governments. Today, for instance, most European countries severely restrict the possession and use of firearms. Oriental hand weapons like the nunchaku and shuriken are also illegal in many regions.

Although unarmed fighting skills tend to be less regulated in today's world, they can influence the attitude of the law towards people involved in an act of violence. The tale that martial arts experts must "register" their hands at the local police station as if they were lethal weapons is a myth, but it has some foundations in reality, inasmuch as the use of martial arts skill can be considered "excessive force" or even "lethal force." GMs should keep this in mind, should the PCs become too "fist happy."

Whenever a fight or physical assault takes place and the authorities are involved, a number of judgments will be made about the situation. The police officers on the scene, and later the prosecuting attorneys and judge or jury, will examine the event. Considerations include whether or not the initial attack was provoked, whether one of the parties was acting in self-defense, and whether "reasonable force" was being used. For example, shooting somebody who punched you in a bar fight is not using reasonable force; it is manslaughter or murder. One can only use a lethal weapon when a life is at stake. This last point is very important if one of the participants in the fight is a martial arts expert (or even if he had any martial arts training at all; many judges and juries will know nothing about martial arts ranking systems). The rule of thumb is that, since the martial arts can be considered lethal force, they can be properly used only when the martial artist is in fear for his life or that of others.

Let us examine the following situation: a drunken bar customer insults Andy (who happens to be a black belt in Jujutsu). Andy, who is not drunk, replies wittily, angering the drunk, who proceeds to throw a punch at him. If Andy parries the attack, subdues the drunk with a non-harmful arm lock and then hands him to the bouncers, he is using reasonable force, and probably the police need not be involved.

Continued on next page . . .

If Andy parries the attack and then punches the drunk back, he might be in trouble; although there was provocation and grounds for self-defense, an unsympathetic jury might rule that using violent martial arts skills could be deemed unreasonable force, since Andy was probably not in fear of his life.

Should Andy lose his cool, decide to "teach this jerk a lesson" and use a punch, spin kick and jump kick combination on the drunk, knocking him unconscious and loosening a few teeth (and maybe doing some serious damage as well), he will probably face assault and battery charges. If in the same situation the drunk pulled a knife or a gun, then Andy would be within his rights to use all of his skills to repel the attack, as long as he thought his life was threatened. During the trial or investigation, he should *state* that he was in fear of his life; macho posturing and phrases like "Even with a knife, that guy didn't have a chance against me" will get the martial artist in trouble.

If the PCs are too violent, the GM could give them a warning via a brush with the authorities; maybe a friendly police officer privately explains the facts to them. If they persist, then a criminal trial and a stay in jail (probably followed by a rash of *civil* lawsuits claiming outrageous amounts of money for damages) will change their attitude.

The Sulsa

The *sulsa* ("knights of the night") were a special sub-group of the hwarang warriors. They specialized in covert missions such as espionage, assassination and scouting. Many of their weapons and tactics are very similar to the ones used by the ninja. Unlike their Japanese counterparts, however, the sulsa were official members of the Silla armies, and were fully accepted as such.

A body of legend about the sulsa exists in Korea, as colorful as the stories about other such groups. These warriors were supposed to be able to put enemies to sleep at a distance, become invisible and perform similar feats.

THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

This large group of islands includes the Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra, Indonesia and the Malay peninsula. This huge area has one of the richest cultural mixtures in the world. Over the centuries, the Chinese, Hindus, Japanese, Moslem Arabs, Catholic Spanish and Portuguese, the British and the United States have all influenced the myriad small nations and tribes that dwell there.

The archipelago is made up of hundreds of tiny islands, with thick jungle surrounding high volcanic peaks. Its conditions make it ideal for guerrilla warfare, and for highly mobile and lightly armed and armored troops - in short, the perfect setting for martial arts development.

The basic Indonesian native group is a brown-skinned Asian people commonly known as the Malay; they form the core of the population from Malaysia to the Philippines. Their original culture revolved around an animistic religion. They were fishermen, farmers and fierce warriors; many tribes were feared for their practices of headhunting and ritual cannibalism.

Chinese and Indian explorers and traders influenced some of the islanders' culture and political systems. Kingdoms and principalities were established following Hindu patterns. Buddhism and Hinduism were adopted by many; later, when Arab sailors reached the islands, Islam competed with those two religions and the local animistic beliefs.

The Spanish and Portuguese, followed closely by the Dutch and English, were the next cultural wave. The Philippines were colonized by the Spanish and were the islands most influenced by Western culture, although in the end they kept their language and much of their tradition.

Amidst this racial and cultural maelstrom, violence was frequent. Intertribal warfare was common, growing in intensity as the first nations and principalities emerged and tried to expand at the expense of their neighbors. As a result, combat skills became highly valued. The Islamic, Hindu and Chinese cultures, with their own martial spirit, influenced and intermingled with the native systems of combat. As civilization spread, combat techniques became better organized; famous warriors became respected teachers, and formal styles first appeared. The three most famous forms thus created were *Escrima, Kuntao* and *Pentjak Silat* (see pp. 80, 91 and 96).

Myths and Misconceptions

The attention the martial arts have received in the West has given rise to a number of myths and mistaken notions about them. Understanding the truth behind these legends will aid in roleplaying the martial arts.

Empty-Hand Techniques

Most martial arts schools today concentrate mainly (or even solely) on unarmed combat training. As a result, most people think that the martial arts refer exclusively to this training. Ideas like "true masters do not need any weapon," or that Karate or Judo will allow an unarmed man to beat someone armed with a knife or even a gun, have become commonplace. These beliefs are a misinterpretation of the martial arts.

Originally, the emphasis on martial arts training was on weapons. There are many sound reasons for this. First of all, weapons are (obviously) more effective in terms of damage and reach. Even light armor will provide very effective protection against bare hands or fists. Also, it is far quicker and easier to train an average man to be reasonably competent with a weapon such as a sword or spear. This becomes doubly true when guns are introduced.

The main reason for teaching and learning empty-hand techniques is the fact that weapons may not always be available. Depending on the culture, weapons may not be allowed in certain circumstances, or they may be forbidden or restricted completely. With unarmed combat training, one can still defend oneself. All other things being equal, however, a weapon is more useful.

While it is true that a master of unarmed combat can successfully defend himself from armed attackers, this feat requires enormous amounts of training. The myth that unarmed training removes the danger from weapons is a foolish and dangerous belief. Many martial arts instructors say that the best defense against an armed mugger is a quick escape, or the surrender of one's valuables; fighting an unknown and armed assailant, whose capabilities and willingness to hurt or kill are unknown, is a very dangerous proposition. In a realistic campaign (see p. 19), this should be emphasized. *GURPS,* with its low hit points and high weapon damages, exemplifies this; characters who carelessly get into fights with armed attackers are likely to be short-lived.

Despite these drawbacks, the unarmed aspect of Asian fighting styles has been emphasized. This is mainly due to the social conventions that exist in most of the "civilized" world nowadays. In the 20th century, the main hand weapon is the firearm; in terms of lethality, range and ease of training, it far surpasses ancient hand weapons. On the other hand, its very deadliness has caused it to be severely restricted in the civilian population. If a person is unable or unwilling to use a gun, he has few other practical choices. Swords are too big and socially unacceptable to be used as self-defense weapons. Knives have the stigma of being associated with criminals, and the law does not view their use kindly. Before the martial arts were introduced in the West, cane techniques and boxing were the main methods with which "gentlemen" defended themselves. The

Women in the Martial Arts

Although women in Asia tend to be treated as second-class citizens, the martial arts have been unusually open to females since antiquity. Unarmed combat techniques have always been popular among oppressed peoples, since they provide a means of self-defense that the masters cannot detect or take away. Women in Asia certainly qualify in that respect.

In Japan, samurai women were trained in swordsmanship and the halberd-like *naginata* (see p. 118). They were expected to defend themselves and their households in emergencies. The female attendants of noblewomen were also prepared to die in defense of their mistresses. Japanese mythology has several tales of female warriors as deadly as any of their male counterparts. The ninja, used to breaking social conventions, used female agents extensively both in espionage and assassination missions.

Buddhist nuns in China and Korea learned the same self-defense techniques as male monks. The staff was the most common weapon of the wandering nun. In the Shaolin temple, some nuns became respected teachers. One of them, a survivor of the temple's destruction, helped found the Wing Chun style of Kung Fu (see p. 105).

Many Korean palace guards were female, since the presence of male guards might offend noblewomen. These guards developed a style best suited to combat in enclosed spaces while wearing little or no armor (a later version of their style is described under Kuk Sool Won, p. 90).

Still, the martial arts have remained a predominantly male domain for most of their history. Even today, some styles, like Sumo, remain exclusively male.

But the late 20th century has opened most of the martial arts to women, especially in the West, as the "helpless" image is eradicated.

Styles specializing in the defeat of larger opponents, like Aikido and Judo, now have many female practitioners, even at the highest levels. Women also participate in sporting events, although they compete in separate divisions from men.

Because women have less upper-body strength than men, and a different distribution of weight, some techniques work differently for them. In game terms, these are not important. In a modern campaign, there is no difference between male and female performance in any martial-art skill. In a historical campaign, a woman who has access to training can do as well as any man, but getting that training may be difficult.

martial arts replaced them as an alternative to guns and knives. Since empty-hand methods are perfectly legal (with some exceptions; see the sidebar, p. 13), they are thus emphasized.

The Black Belt

In today's world, the words "black belt" indicate mastery in the martial arts. A black belt is thought to be an invincible fighter, or at least a deadly enemy. Originally, however, the black belt did not represent mastery, but only the *beginning* of true instruction.

The Japanese "belt" system (originally created for Judo in the 19th century) was divided into two parts. *Kyus* (grades), designated by colored belts (see sidebar, p. 77), represent the period in which the basics of the style are taught. Upon reaching the black belt, it is assumed that the student is ready for the advanced teachings of the art; the new grading system is divided into *dans* (steps). A "black belt" is a first dan. Ninth or tenth dan is the maximum level of achievement.

Attaining a black belt is no mean feat, and its wearer will be able to take care of himself (although some schools are more liberal than others when awarding the coveted belts). But a first-dan black belt is not a "master." He can teach others the rudiments of the art, but he still has much to learn, himself. And if his style is an "artistic" form, he may be less able to defend himself than a common brawler.

Superhuman Feats

Ever since the 1960s and the rash of brick-breaking stunts of *karatekas,* the West has been flooded with stories about the incredible powers of the martial arts. Many of these stories had existed for centuries in Asia, but they grew in the telling as they were passed on to Europe and America. Tales abound about the martial artists' ability to smash solid objects, paralyze victims with a touch and even casually tear an enemy's limbs off without apparent effort. Ninja powers, including the abilities to turn invisible and to control minds, have also become the stuff of legend.

It is hard to distinguish truth from reality. Many accounts told by impartial and credible witnesses describe seemingly impossible feats, including the smashing of huge blocks of ice or even concrete (some of which have been explained as very precise applications of force along weak points), the ability to endure devastating blows from sticks and even metal bars, displays of astounding strength and speed, the power to heal wounds and even affect things and people at a distance, without touching them. Some of these happenings must be classed with other "unexplained phenomena" such as telepathy and ESP abilities, the *yogis'* ability to temporarily suspend involuntary bodily functions, and the ability of some Polynesian men to walk over burning coals and emerge unharmed. Scientific research on these subjects has been minimal and usually tainted with prejudice - sometimes in favor, sometimes against.

Even if extraordinary feats are possible, however, learning **them** requires a dedication and patience that most human beings **do not** have. In everyday life, they do not exist. The GM will **choose** what will be "real" in his campaign (see Chapter 3 for **more** information).

2 ☯ characters

A martial artist is no？just any character who has Karate or Judo among his skills. What makes martial arts characters different from other roleplaying archetypes is their dedication to physical and (sometimes) spiritual development. It is usually assumed that a martial artist character began training at an early age (late teens at worst) and that for five or more years he devoted a substantial amount of his life (not just his free time) to practicing and learning his craft. Going to a Karate studio three times a week will not turn someone into a true martial artist.
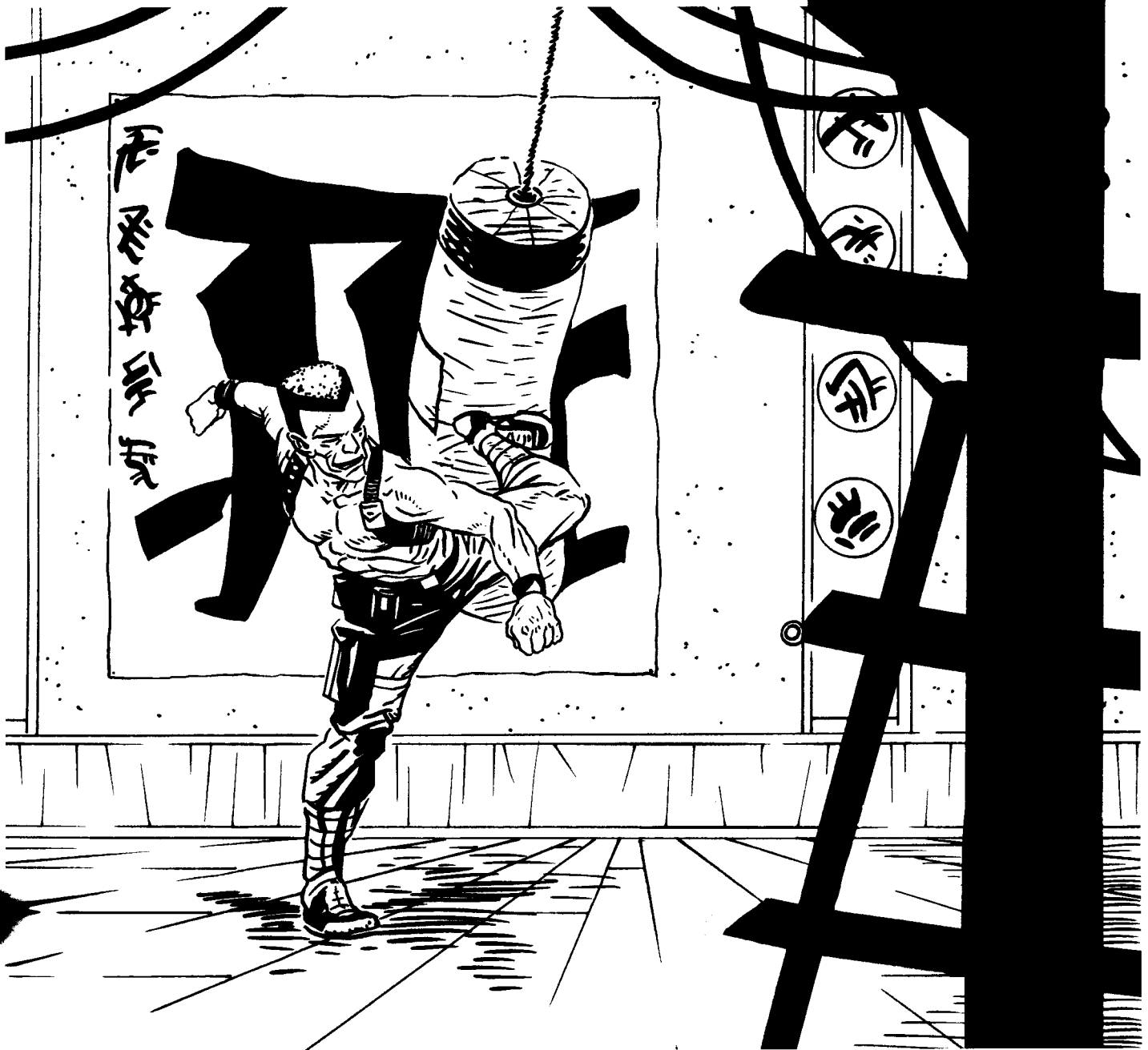
Most of the character creation rules described in the main text presume that the PCs will all be experienced martial artists. A different character type (for a different campaign) is the student PC who has not achieved black belt level; in fact, the PCs could begin play as complete beginners (white belts)!

A point total of 100 or less is appropriate for such students. Skills could be as low as default level, representing a few weeks of training, not enough to have gained character points to invest in them. They should have some decent physical stats, but nothing extraordinary. In short, they should be standard 100-point characters.

The fun of this PC type is that the players get to see them grow during play, painstakingly advancing in rank and ability between adventures. From a mechanistic standpoint, the gradual introduction of new maneuvers and skills will allow players who are not familiar with the martial arts to learn how to use them in play.

However, it will take a lot of campaign sessions before the student learns enough to become a "true" martial artist. Not many campaigns last that long, and not every player can sustain interest that long. GMs must be sure their players are up for such humble beginnings before starting this type of campaign.

Many - if not most - dedicated martial artists either make their living through some aspect of the martial arts, or are independently wealthy or somehow able to spend many hours each day in training. To hold a normal job and still be an accomplished and recognized martial artist requires a determination bordering on the fanatical. A young (under 25 years old) martial arts master is either a phony or a truly extraordinary person.

With this concept in mind, one can see that as long as that dedication exists, almost any character type can also be a martial artist. Players must roleplay that dedication. Good or evil, a martial artist is unlikely to be easily distracted from the pursuit of his goals.

The campaign type will help narrow the choices, but the player should still have an idea as to the type of character he wants to play before he starts buying DX and combat skills.

POINT COST

The point cost for beginning characters in a *GURPS Martial Arts* campaign will vary widely. It is assumed here that most character types will be at "black belt" level or higher (for a beginner, see the sidebar). It must be remembered that in the original martial arts tradition, the black belt was the true beginning stage of study, a point where the basics had been mastered and the essential teachings could now be imparted (see p. 16).

In general, dedicated martial artists will have a *lot* of character points. This book is designed to cover two different campaign types: the *realistic* campaign and the *cinematic* one.

The Realistic Campaign

The realistic campaign assumes that martial artists do not have superhuman abilities; they are just highly trained people, extremely competent at hand-to-hand combat. Even a master will not be able to defeat several trained opponents at the same time, nor can he perform superhuman feats.

In a realistic campaign, PCs can be created with 100 points. However, a 150- or even 200-point roof is more adequate to create a "black belt" character. This reflects the amounts of training martial artists undergo to reach a level of mastery.

Some limitations will prevent this higher point cost from turning a realistic campaign into a kung fu movie. First of all, no more than 100 points (or even 80), should be spent on basic attributes; what sets martial artists above average people is not their physical attributes, but their training. Additionally, the GM may want to set a maximum attribute level (14 or 15 is a good limit), to keep characters as down-to-earth as possible. With these limitations, a 200-point martial artist's stats will not be much higher than those of a 100-point character. His extra points have gone into skills, which is as it should be.

Even with 200 points to spend, PCs will have at least eight or nine skills they must learn, and the reasonable physical stats will make it expensive to reach high levels with those skills. Disadvantages should be kept at the standard 40-point ceiling.

The standard age limit on points spent on skills (see p. B43) should not apply to -martial arts skills. This reflects the intensive training that makes a dedicated martial artist unique. By the same token, however, non-martial arts skills should not benefit from this. The GM should limit the points spent on non-martial arts skills to the character's age - that is, half the standard amount. This means

that, outside unarmed or archaic combat skills and certain philosophical teachings, the martial arts character should not be much more knowledgeable or skilled than the "standard" *GURPS* 100-point character. GMs might even have mixed parties of "normal" adventurers with specialized martial artists; this will work best in modern-day or futuristic settings, where modern weaponry substantially reduces the advantage of martial arts mastery.

There are other ways to keep the game balance in a realistic setting. The characters should not over-concentrate on Karate, Judo and combat skills; the GM must be strict about the creation of combat monsters. There is also no reason why a civilian martial artist should have a high Guns skill, or even the Combat Reflexes advantage. If too many of the players want to play lethal fighters above all, then maybe a cinematic campaign would be more appropriate.

The Cinematic Campaign

A cinematic campaign is more closely related to the *Supers* milieu than the "mainstream" *GURPS* style. The assumption behind this campaign type is that at least some of the legends about the martial arts are true; characters *will* be able to wipe out six opponents at a time, and they will have extraordinary abilities. PCs with 200 to 400 points are appropriate for this campaign! GMs do not have to impose restrictions on attributes, since this campaign will allow a host of flashy (and expensive) skills and advantages.

The ultimate cinematic campaign is the "four-color" campaign, which simulates the most outlandish concepts of both movies and comic books. Metahuman abilities, psionics and magic may coexist, and martial artists can perform impossible feats with ease. This type of campaign requires characters built with 500+ points. The PCs will be the Lees, Morrises, Chans and Stallones that they may want to be. This of course means that the GM will have to work harder to come up with a challenge for his players.

In a cinematic campaign, GMs may follow the *GURPS Supers* pattern (see p. SU5), which gives characters a limit of 100 points in disadvantages.

CHOOSING A Style

In a martial arts campaign, the style (or styles) chosen will help delineate the character. Nationality, personal preferences and philosophical beliefs will narrow the character's choice of styles, and vice versa. If two widely different **or** contradictory styles are chosen, the GM should require the player to come up with a credible history to explain it. This is particularly true if the campaign is set before the 20th century, when most martial arts were still deeply rooted in their place of origin. Chapter 4 lists diverse martial arts from around the world.

The GM may wish to reduce the number of "legal" martial arts for a particular campaign. PCs will only be allowed to learn the styles available, at the GM's discretion.

Some concepts must be made clear in order to understand the different campaign types available in *Martial Arts* (and other *GURPS* settings). The first one is the role of reality in a campaign. In a truly "realistic" campaign, all PCs would be built on 25 points or so, and any hazardous situation would wipe out half an adventuring party immediately.

GURPS is a *realistic* system, inasmuch as brute force can rarely compensate for lapses in common sense, but its characters and situations are heroic.

A realistic *GURPS* campaign can have such "unreal" elements as magic, psionics and supernatural horrors. The characters' abilities, however, will be limited to what an above-average, but still normal, human can do. Realistic fighters will not be able to face multiple opponents, realistic investigators will not solve a crime with one quick look at the scene, and realistic mages will not be able to shatter armies with a spell. This is determined by the points allowed for character creation. At 100 points, characters are heroic, but down-to-earth.

In a cinematic campaign, characters acquire a larger-than-life scope. Now they can be some of the best fighters, or sorcerers or circus performers of the campaign world, or competent in all three professions! In this type of campaign, the unreal elements of most fictional stories are played up - the heroes rarely die, the bad guys are seldom as skilled as the good guys, and so on. Players can recreate the exploits of any fictional character without subjecting him to realistic limitations.

The points allotted for that type of campaign (200 or higher) allow PCs to have physical stats at the upper reaches of human ability, or even some superhuman ones. The "reality" simulated is that of Hollywood adventure. Heroes have great advantages over "normal" people; they will be able to survive foolish actions that would get them killed in real life (or in a realistic campaign).

A "four-color" campaign goes even further, recreating the worlds of comic books or the most fantastic movies and novels. PCs will be superhuman living legends. These characters are created with 500+ points, and can perform incredible feats with ease. Mere mortals cannot match them.

Note that none of these three campaign styles makes characters completely invulnerable. GMs can always devise threats and enemies that will keep the heroes on their toes, and a brute-force approach is always likely to brings disaster to an adventuring party.

CHARACTERS

CHARACTER TYPES

The history and legend of the martial arts includes several specific "archetypes." This section covers some of the types of characters that would fit in a *Martial Arts* campaign. Some suggested skills are given, as well as recommended combat styles for each (see Chapter 4 for more information on styles).

Contender

An athlete, professional or amateur, competing in one of the many martial arts tournaments around the world. With a team, or perhaps only a trainer, the contender goes from place to place, participating in exhibitions, formal sporting events or darker, less publicized competitions where the stakes - and the risks - are higher.

Advantages: A high Wealth level or a rich Patron will help pay for the rigorous training the contender must undergo. Toughness will help the fighter in full-contact competitions. An expert trainer/manager could be an Ally or Patron.

Disadvantages: Rival martial artists make good Enemies; instead of being out to kill you, they want to publicly defeat and humiliate you. Many martial arts competitors are Struggling or Poor; in that case, getting the funds necessary to train and travel may constitute an adventure in itself!

Skills: Other than the obvious, a number of physical skills (such as Running and Swimming) should be required. Tournament Law will help you avoid fouls - or get away with them.

Recommended Styles: Judo, Karate and Tae Kwon Do are the best-known competitive styles. For tougher, full-contact events, Pro Kickboxing and Muay Thai are more appropriate.

Campaign Type: Contenders are fine for a realistic campaign; a whole party can be made up of team members. In a cinematic campaign, winning a tournament may lack melodrama, unless the stakes are upped - maybe the mob or the Yakuza is placing bets, or the contest is to the death.

Cop

Most police officers are overworked, underpaid, and face criminals who are often better-armed than they are. A few cops, however, can do more damage with their hands and feet than with their .38 service revolvers. Sometimes the bad guys provoke them into using their skills. The result is devastating.

Advantages: Legal Enforcement Powers, Patron (Police Department), Allies (fellow officers), among others. Some cops are former soldiers (see below), and might have Combat Reflexes or other appropriate advantages. Some have Rank in their departments.

Disadvantages: All police officers have Duties to their departments, and many have specific criminal Enemies. Other police officers may be Dependents instead of Allies. Honesty and Sense of Duty are also common.

Styles: Police Hand-to-Hand is mandatory. Other than that, any other style is possible; Karate and Judo are the most probable ones.

Skills: Professional Skill: Law Enforcement, Driving, Shortsword (for a police baton) and Guns (except in the U.K.) are required. Stealth, Detect Lies and Streetwise help. Fast-Talk and Acting may save the lives of undercover cops.

Campaign Type: This is primarily a cinematic character type; most real police officers do not have enough time (and character points) to have the skills of a dedicated martial artist as well as the required professional skills.

Crimefighter

This is a selfless philanthropist who helps people with his considerable skills. He may be a private investigator, a civilian vigilante, or a costumed avenger. The result is the same for the evildoers who cross his path.

Advantages: This character and the Monk (below) are the most likely to have the Trained by a Master advantage (see p. 27). Other than that, all combat-oriented advantages (Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold, etc.) will be useful. Intuition and Common Sense may help ferret out criminals. This is one of the few character types who commonly has above-average Wealth. If *GURPS Supers* is being used, you might also want to throw in a super ability or two.

Disadvantages: Enemies and Dependents are common. Sense of Duty, Pacifism (Cannot Kill), and Vows are also typical.

Styles: Jeet Kune Do, Muay Thai and Ninjutsu are all good, hard-hitting styles, appropriate for a tough job like battling evil. Some crimefighters also specialize in more exotic forms, such as Pentjak Silat. Escrima is a very useful style as well.

Skills: Power Blow, Parry Missile Weapons, Pressure Points and Pressure Secrets are common among super-martial artists. Climbing, Stealth, Lockpicking and Research may provide useful information.

Campaign Type: Cinematic, for the most part, but a team of realistic vigilantes (for instance, a band of former youth gang members, now battling criminal gangs) is feasible as well.

Saburo's favorite weapon is the garrote. His ability with it makes him the choice man for missions that require sentry removal. His ability to mimic noblemen's behavior has served him well in infiltrating enemy castles and palaces. Once, escaping after a mission, he bluffed his way past several guards who tried to bar his way; his demeanor was so convincing that the guards did not dare stop him!

Saburo has the habit of leaving a short poem by the side of his victims. The poem is a mockery of the traditional death-verses that samurai write before committing *seppuku*. The implication is that crossing Saburo's clan is a sure way to commit suicide. He only does this when there is no risk to himself or the clan, though.

Attributes
ST10, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 11.
Basic Speed 6, Move 6.

Damage
Basic damage is ld-2 Thrust, ld Swing.
Thus, basic *unarmed* damage is ld-4 with a punch, or ld-2 with a kick. Karate skill of 14 gives a +2 to kicking and punching attacks, so he strikes at ld-2 and kicks at ld.

Advantages
Literacy.

Disadvantages
Extremely Hazardous Duty (Ninja clan, on a 15 or less); Secret (that he and his whole clan are ninja).

Quirks
Likes Poetry, Trademark (Leaves death poems by the side of victims).

Martial Arts Style
Ninjutsu (realistic version).

Skills
Acrobatics-11, Acting-13, Calligraphy-12. Climbing-12, Disguise-13, Fast-Talk-13. Garrote-15, Judo-14, Jumping-14, Karate- 14, Katana-14, Lasso- 13, Poetry-12, Savoir-Faire-13, Shuriken-13, Stealth-14, Swimming-14.

Maneuvers
Aggressive Parry-7 (ld-2), Arm Lock-16, Back Kick-11 (ld), Ear Clap- 10, Elbow Strike- 14 (ld-2), Feint (Karate)- 15, Feint (Katana)-l5, Ground Fighting (Karate)-ll, Hand Parry-9, Hand Strike- 14 (ld-2), Head Butt- 10 (ld-3), Hit Location (Karate)- 12, Jump Kick-11 (ld+2), Knee Strike-15 (ld-1), Riposte (Karate)-ll (ld-2), Spin Kick- 12 (ld), Stamp Kick- 13 (1d+1).

The Skull; 1930s Crimefighter

*The Skull is a pulp-era vigilante. He is ideal for a cinematic **Cliffhangers** campaign, either as an NPC Patron for the PCs or as a character in a high-powered campaign. His stats border on the super-human, and he has a host of combat-oriented advantages. For styles, he chooses the unusual combination of Aikijutsu and Muay Thai (there were versions of both styles in Asia during the 1930s, although they were unknown in the West), which give him several cinematic abilities and hard-hitting moves. The Trained by a Master advantage gives him exotic abilities that will allow him to battle crime.*

Even with 350 points, none of the Skull's martial arts skill levels is over 20, and most are 18 or 19. This is due to the points he spent on the Trained by a Master advantage and several cinematic abilities. A 350-point martial artist without cinematic skills could have much higher skill levels.

Raymond Robeson was a wealthy socialite with only two loves: traveling to **remote** places, and his wife, Linda. Their honeymoon around the world ended tragically when his yacht was hijacked off the coast of Burma by a band of Asian and Western pirates. Both he and his wife were horribly brutalized by the pirates and tossed overboard. As his victims thrashed in the water, the pirate leader gloated that they were in the pay of his stepbrother, Martin. Linda died within a few minutes. Raymond didn't.

Instructor

The character is a teacher (also known as *sensei, sifu* or *guru)* at a martial arts school. If his school is traditional, he is probably a Monk (see below). The instructor works in a modern *dojo,* or school, imparting his knowledge to others. Sometimes special groups, such as police departments, hire him as a trainer or adviser. The Instructor may also be a Contender (see p. 20), and teach part-time to pay his bills.

Advantages: His school can be a Patron, while his advanced students can be taken collectively as an Ally Group. An excellent teacher may have a good Reputation. Voice and Charisma are helpful.

Disadvantages: Young students can be Dependents.

Styles: Any, for obvious reasons.

Skills: Teaching, of course, and probably Leadership as well. Savoir-Faire (Dojo) at a high level (15+) is a plus (see below). Tournament Law will be important in any school that enters formal competition.

Campaign Type: An Instructor will work well in any campaign, although a martial arts teacher should be highly trained, and his point cost must reflect this, even in a realistic campaign.

Monk

This is one of the classic martial artists of fiction. Raised in a religious martial-art school, he is likely to have a vast knowledge of combat skills and Oriental wisdom - and not much else. This character type is usually male except in fantasy worlds (though it must be remembered that the Shaolin temple had nuns trained in the martial arts).

Advantages: Trained by a Master is almost a prerequisite in a cinematic campaign. In many nations, monks receive bonuses on reaction rolls. Clerical Investment is *not* necessary; some "monks" are practicing clerics, but others are simply people who were trained by the school.

Disadvantages: Honesty, Pacifism (Self-Defense Only), Sense of Duty and diverse Vows are common. Some of the more sheltered monks may be Gullible or Primitive. Wealth should be average or lower.

Styles: Any variety of Kung Fu (see p. 90) except Wushu is appropriate; in Japan, fighting monks (Yamabushi) would know early forms of Jujutsu, Aikijutsu and Kyudo.

Skills: Theology, Meditation and Philosophy will reflect the monk's beliefs. Yin/Yang Healing, Calligraphy and Naturalist are also likely.
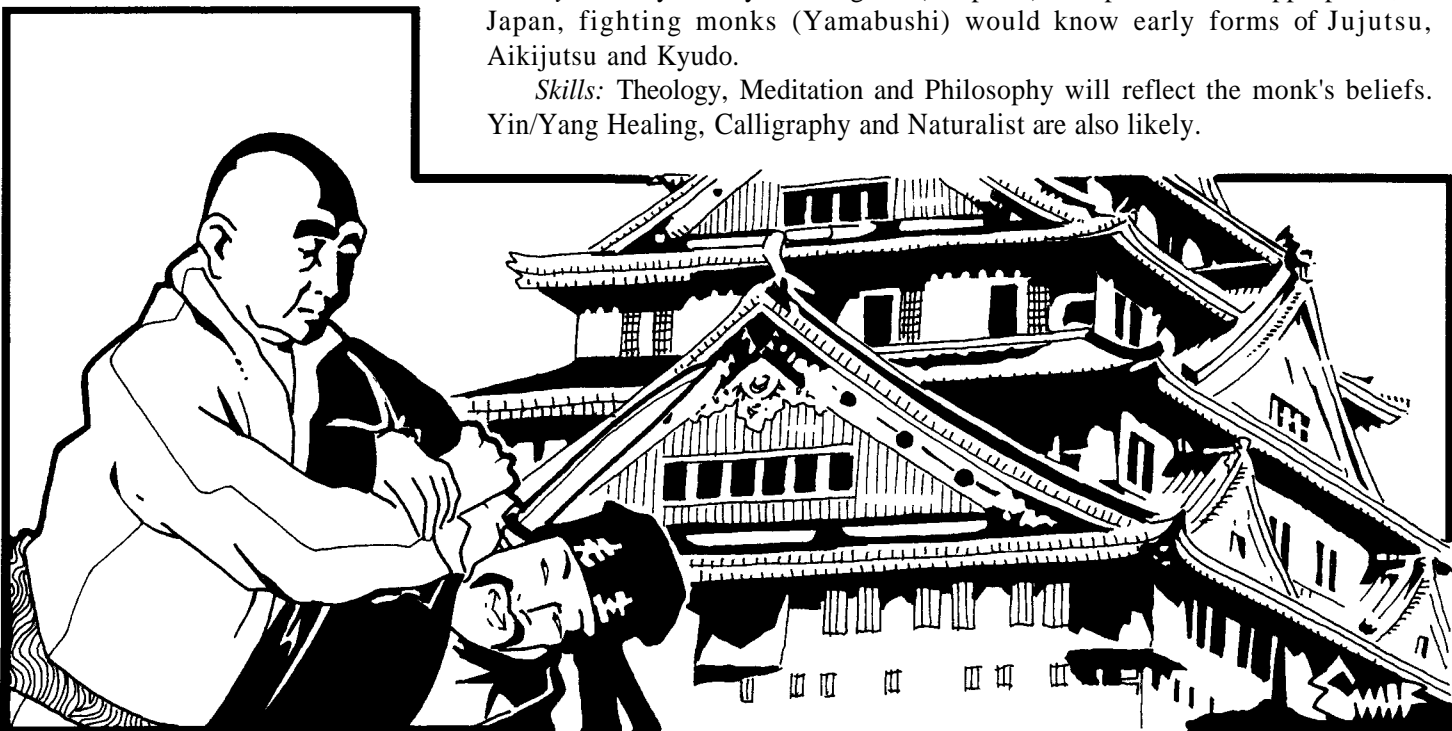
Campaign Type: Mainly cinematic, although a party of sheltered monks suddenly released into the 19th or 20th century with nothing but their skills (kept at realistic levels) might make for an interesting campaign.

Ninja

Master of stealth and deceit, the ninja has become firmly embedded in popular mythology. Popular stories to the contrary, the ninja relied less on their martial arts expertise than on acting, disguise and trickery. Still, some of the claims that the ninja have mysterious abilities may be true . . .

Advantages: Depending on their standing in a campaign, ninja may have the Trained by a Master and Weapon Master advantages. The ninja will have a fearsome Reputation which will occasionally provoke attacks; but which will more often make foes flee. This only applies when they are "in uniform," though!

Disadvantages: Most ninja have a full-time Duty to their clan, worth 15 or even 20 points (see *Extremely Hazardous Duty,* below). Others are *nukenin,* renegade ninja, and probably have formidable Enemies in their former clans. Historical (and modern cinematic) ninjas' identities are dangerous Secrets.

Styles: Ninjutsu and Kobujutsu; some additional styles may also be known by hand-to-hand specialists.

Skills: Fast-Talk. Acting, Disguise and Stealth are indispensable. More exotic ninja may have all the cinematic skills of their style (see pp. 36-40).

Campaign Type: Ninja in the present day are essentially cinematic. A realistic campaign could be set in historical Japan, with all PCs as ninja (see *GURPS Japan* for more information).

Secret Agent

Many secret agents are trained in the martial arts. Also, a few dedicated martial artists work for such agencies. They are particularly handy in places where no weapons can be brought. In any case, the ability to kick one's way out of a tight situation makes a nice addition to the gadgets and the continental charm of the "typical" agent.

Advantages: For dedicated artists, Trained by a Master will offset the edge of high-tech weapons. For the more common agent, above average Appearance, Voice and Charisma help make a good impression. All agents would have either Legal Enforcement Powers or Military Rank, and perhaps Patrons in their agencies, unless they are freelance operatives.

Disadvantages: Duties and Enemies are almost unavoidable for this character type. Overconfidence is common.

Styles: Military Hand-to-Hand is common. Chinese secret agents will probably know Wushu. Hand-to-hand specialists may know any hard-hitting style, such as Muay Thai. Ninjutsu is appropriate for some exotic secret agents (James Bond himself took a Ninjutsu seminar in *You Only Live Twice).*

The SKULL (CONTINUED)

Ten years later, a rugged adventurer stepped from a merchant ship onto the New York docks. He identified himself as Raymond Robeson. His acquaintances barely recognized him: gone was his flippant demeanor. Raymond reclaimed his now-diminished fortune (Martin had enjoyed a spending spree for the past decade) and became a recluse. A few days later, Martin died of a heart attack; a signed confession of his plot against Raymond and a wooden skull-and-crossbones carving were found next to his body. Soon after that, the Skull, merciless enemy of crime, began his exploits.

The Skull wears a grinning death's mask under a wide-brimmed hat. That and his large black trench coat are his "costume." He carries a pistol, but uses it rarely, preferring to depend on his hand-to-hand skills. Criminals live in utter terror of him; stories of his ability to move invisibly and his superhuman strength (actually applications of his Immovable Stance and Push skills) have only grown in the telling. The police would like to talk to him, too.

Attributes
ST 13, DX 17. IQ 14, HT 12.
Basic Speed 7.25, Move 7.

Damage
Basic damage is 1d Thrust, 2d-1 Swing.
Thus, basic *unarmed* damage is 1d-2 with a punch, or Id with a kick. Karate skill of 18 gives a +3 to kicking and punching attacks, so he strikes at 1d+1 and kicks at 1d+3.

Advantages
Combat Reflexes, Contacts (criminal, 10 points). High Pain Threshold, Reputation (+3 among criminals, due to fear, 7 points). Strong Will +2, Trained by a Master, Wealthy.

Disadvantages
Enemy (several criminal groups, on a 9 or less, -20 points). No Sense of Humor, Overconfidence. Reputation (-3 among police, because he's a lawbreaker, -7 points), Secret (identity, -20 points), Sense of Duty (everyone but criminals, -15 points), Stubborn, Trademark (leaves carving of skull and crossbones, -5 points).

Martial Arts Styles
Aikijutsu and Muay Thai (cinematic).

The Skull
(Continued)

Skills
Acrobatics- 17, Administration- 14, Boxing-18, Driving (Cars)- 17, Escape-15, Fast-Draw (Pistol)- 17, Guns (Pistol)-20, Hypnotism-16, Interrogation- 15, Judo-18, Judo Art- 16, Karate- 18, Katana Art- 17, Language (Japanese)-13, Language (Thai)-13, Shortsword Art-17, Stealth-17, Streetwise-15.

Cinematic Skills
Immovable Stance- 16, Invisibility Art-15, Mental Strength- 16, Pressure Points-18, Pressure Secrets-15, Push-16.

Maneuvers
Arm Lock-20, Axe Kick-18 (1d+5), Back Kick-18 (1d+3), Breakfall-19, Elbow Strike- 18 (1d+1), Finger Lock-18, Ground Fighting (Judo)-16, Hand Parry-13, Hand Strike-18 (1d+1), Hit Location (Karate)- 17, Hook Kick- 18 (1d+4), Jab- 17 (1d), Judo Throw-18, Jump Kick-18 (1d+5), Kicking-18 (1d+3), Knee Strike- 19 (1d+2), Riposte (Karate)-15 (1d+1), Roundhouse Punch-17 (2d+1), Shin Kick- 18 (1d+5), Spin Kick- 18 (1d+3), Spinning Punch-17 (1d+1).

Cinematic Maneuvers
Flying Jump Kick-16 (1d+5, double knockback), Roll with Blow- 16.

Combinations
The Skull uses one particularly vicious combination move: Hand Parry/Arm Lock/Knee Strike. The Arm Lock is a grapple, so the victim defends against the Knee Strike at -4, and the Skull usually goes for the groin.

Skills: As for the Ninja, who in essence is a member of one of the oldest secret agencies in history. A number of high-tech skills like Electronics Operation, Guns, Piloting and Driving will help deal with those inevitable gadgets.

Campaign Type: The Hollywood secret agent is by definition cinematic. A realistic espionage campaign does have a place for unarmed combat specialists, however.

Soldier
Many martial artists have found homes in the army. Some are members of the Special Forces and other elite groups. Others are common privates who may even hide their skills. They can be active in the military, or they may have left, perhaps scarred by their war experiences. Some ex-soldiers become lone vigilantes with their own bloody crusades against crime, terrorists, or anything that offends their sensibilities. For a more detailed look at elite soldier character types, see *GURPS Special Ops.*

Advantages: Some soldiers have high Military Rank, or their units as Patrons; smaller units may be taken as Ally Groups instead.

Disadvantages: Active soldiers have Duties to the armed forces. Some are Fanatic patriots. Others may have one or more Phobias, physical disabilities and other mental disadvantages as a result of battle wounds.

Styles: Military Hand-to-Hand, of course, as well as any other style for a cinematic soldier.

Skills: Other than martial arts combat skills, soldiers are also proficient in modern weapons. All the Guns and Gunner skills are appropriate, as are Piloting, Driving, Strategy and Tactics. Leadership and Savoir-Faire (Military) are mandatory for officers and senior NCOs.

Campaign Type: The Rambo-type soldier is obviously cinematic, but realistic soldier-martial artists are possible, particularly if they serve as Instructors (see above).

Stunt Man
These real-life heroes of the cinema are sometimes accomplished martial artists, particularly if they work on "kung fu" movies. There will be enough action and adventure in the dangerous stunts required by moviemakers, but a devious GM will undoubtedly come up with more complications.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes and Toughness are helpful in keeping the character in one piece while driving a flaming car through a wall. Very successful stunt men have Comfortable or better Wealth.

Disadvantages: Addictions, Compulsive Behaviors and Overconfidence are common. Many stunt men are Struggling or Poor. An Enemy rival stunt man is common, although the Enemy will usually want to upstage or humiliate the character rather than kill him outright. Dependents are also typical.

Styles: Shaolin Kung Fu, Karate and Kickboxing are the most commonly used martial arts on the screen.

Skills: For the well-rounded stunt man, Driving, Climbing, Jumping and Acrobatics are necessary. Many actors began their careers as stunt men, particularly in martial arts flicks; Acting can help them get their faces, as well as their bodies, in the movies. Fast-Talk is useful.

Campaign Type: Realistic stunt men are possible. In a cinematic campaign, the stunt man can have a variety of secondary occupations - bounty hunter comes readily to mind.
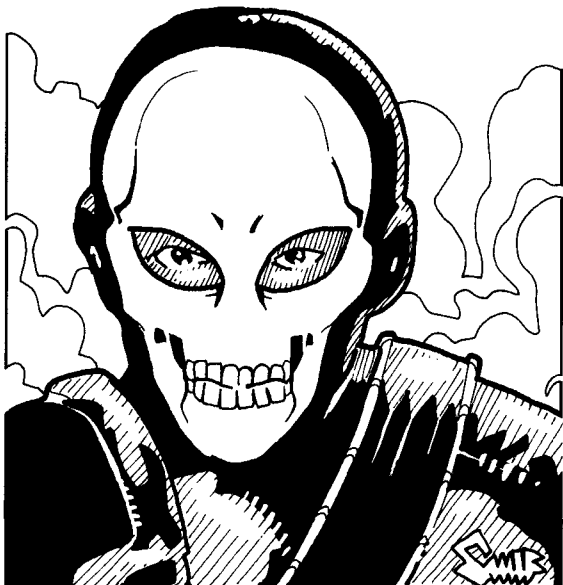
Advantages, Disadvantages and Skills

Martial Arts adventures can take place in almost any background. Most of the advantages, disadvantages and skills described below assume that the campaign world will be the late 20th century (TL7). For different time periods, refer to *GURPS Japan, GURPS Space* and other *GURPS* worldbooks.

Advantages

Allies   see p.B23

For martial artists, the most common Ally is another martial artist. This can vary depending on the character type. A cop or a private detective would be likely to have a partner. A crack pistol shot or a strong brawler makes a good Ally for a lightning-quick Karate expert. In a four-color campaign, a wizard or a metahuman is also appropriate, although expensive.

Contacts   See p.B234

A Contact is an NPC, like an Ally or a Patron. However, the Contact only provides *information*. Contacts may be anything from a wino in the right gutter to the head of state of a country, depending on the character's background. The Contact has access to information, and he is already known to and guaranteed to react favorably to the character. The Contact may want a price, in cash or favors, for the information. The Contact is always played and controlled by the GM and the nature of the price must be set by the GM.

The GM may assume that a Contact is, in general, well-disposed toward the PC. However, the Contact is *not* an Ally or Patron, and is no more likely to give help than any other generally friendly NPC!

A Contact does not have to be created when the PC is first developed. Contacts may be added later. When appropriate, the GM can turn an existing NPC into a Contact for one of more players, possibly in lieu of character points for the adventurer in which the Contact was encountered.

Whatever the case, the Contact can provide information only about his own area of expertise. The technician at the forensics lab probably has no information about Nazi agents in New York, and the First Secretary of the British Embassy probably can't do a ballistic comparison. The GM assigns a skill (Streetwise for a minor criminal, Forensics for a lab tech, etc.) to the Contact. All attempts to get information from him require a secret roll by the GM against the Contact's "effective" skill. Note that the effective skill is not necessarily the NPC's *actual* skill; the actual skill can be set by the GM if the NPC comes into regular play. For instance, the president of the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce might actually have business-related skills of 16-18, but he has an *effective* skill of 21, making him worth 20 points, because he himself has good connections!

Point values for Contacts are based on the type of information and its effective skill, modified by the frequency with which they can provide information and the reliability of the information. Importance of information is relative and the list of possible Contacts is virtually endless; a few are listed below as a guide to help the GM determine value.

Type of Information

Street Contacts. These are minor criminals, derelicts, shoeshine boys, street entertainers, fences and other streetwise NPCs who provide information on illicit activities, local criminal gossip, upcoming crimes and so forth. Base cost is 1 point for "unconnected" Contacts (not part of the local criminal organization; Streetwise-12) and 2 points for "connected" Contacts (Streetwise-15).

Business Contacts. Executives, business owners, secretaries - even the mailroom flunky - can provide information on businesses and business dealings. Base cost depends on how much the contact can be expected to know: 1 point for a mail boy or typist (effective skill 12), 2 points for the president's secretary (effective skill 15), 3 points for an accountant (effective skill 18) or 4 points for the Chairman of the Board (effective skill 21).

Police Contacts. This includes anyone connected with law enforcement and criminal investigation: patrolman, detectives, forensics specialists, coroners, federal agents and so on. Cost depends on access to information or services. Beat cops are 1 point (effective skill 12); detectives, federal agents or records clerks are 2 points (effective skill 15); administrators (lieutenants, captains, Special Agents in Charge, etc.) are 3 points (effective skill 18) and senior officers (sheriffs, chiefs of police, District Superintendents, etc.) are *4* points (effective skill 21).

Frequency of Assistance

Frequency refers to the chance that the Contact can be found when needed. When creating the character, the player must define the way the Contact is normally contacted! Regardless of the chosen frequency, a Contact cannot be reached if the PCs could not reasonably speak to him. No Contact may be used more than once per day, even if several PCs share the same Contact. Multiple questions may be asked each day, at a cumulative -2 for each question after the first.

Available almost all the time (roll of 15 or less): triple cost.

Available quite often (roll of 12 or less): double cost.

Available fairly often (roll of 9 or less): listed cost.

Available rarely (roll of 6 or less): half cost, (round up; minimum cost is always 1).

During the adventure, if a PC wants to talk with his Contact, the GM rolls against the availability number for that Contact. A failed roll means the Contact is busy or cannot be located that day. If the Contact *is* available, then the GM must roll against the Contact's effective skill for each general piece of information the PC requests. A Contact can *never* supply information outside his particular area of knowledge. Use common sense. Likewise, the GM *must not allow* a Contact to give information that short-circuits the adventure or part of it!

If a PC gets a critical failure when trying to reach his Contact, that Contact can't be reached during that entire *adventure.*

Reliability of Information

Contacts are not guaranteed to know anything useful, and are not guaranteed to be truthful. Use the following modifiers (cumulative with frequency modifiers).

Completely reliable: Even on a critical failure, the worst response will be "I don't know." On an ordinary failure he can find information in 1d days. Triple cost.

Usually reliable: On a critical failure the Contact will lie; on any other failure he "doesn't know but check back in 1d days." Roll again at that time; a failure then means he can't find out at all. Double cost.

Somewhat reliable: On a failure the Contact doesn't know and can't find out; on a critical failure he will lie; on a natural 18 he will let the opposition know who is asking questions. Listed cost.

Unreliable: Reduce effective skill by 2. On any failure he will lie; on a critical failure he will notify the enemy. Half cost (round up).

Money Talks

Bribery, whether cash or favors, motivates the Contact and increases his *reliability level.* Once reliability reaches "usually reliable," further levels of increase go to effective skill; bribery cannot make anyone totally reliable!

A cash bribe should be equivalent to one day's income for a +1 bonus, one week's income for +2, one month's for +3 and one year's for +4. Favors should be of equivalent worth. The favor should always be something the character actually performs in the game. The GM must maintain proper roleplaying; a professor might be insulted by a cash bribe, but welcome an introduction to someone who could help him in his researches.

Patrons   see p.B24

Some examples include martial arts schools, an inhumanly skilled teacher, or a secret agency. A Patron may be necessary for a martial artist to learn new tricks.

Reputation   see p. B17

"All martial artists" is a large class of people, giving a modifier of 1/2 to the Reputation value. Reputation is very important in establishing a respectable martial arts school. A +2 Reputation with a frequency of recognition of 7 or less should be the minimum a teacher should have before being able to found a *dojo.*

Unfazeable   see p.B237

Nothing surprises you - at least, nothing that's not obviously a threat. You are exempt from Fright Checks, and almost no reaction modifiers affect you, either way. Intimidation (p. 31) just does not work on you.

This disadvantage is incompatible with all Phobias. A character with this advantage is not emotionless - he just never displays strong feelings. This advantage is especially appropriate for a martial arts master in a Cinematic campaign, perhaps as a side-effect of an extreme level of Meditation or Mental Strength.

This advantage must be roleplayed fully, or the GM can declare that it has been lost.

Unusual Background   see p. B23

A special form of Unusual Background (Trained by a Master) is described below. Depending on the campaign world, GMs may require other Unusual Background requirements from martial artists. "Ninja" specialists, for instance, may have to pay 10 or 15 points for such unusual knowledge. A pre-1950s Westerner with Asian martial arts training should also have to buy a 10-point Unusual Background.

New Advantages (Realistic)

Since *Martial Arts* is designed to work with two different campaign types - realistic and cinematic - advantages and skills will be classified accordingly. Realistic advantages can be used in any campaign type. The GM designing a cinematic campaign can decide which cinematic advantages and skills exist in his game world.

Martial Arts Styles   Variable

Martial arts are not taught one maneuver at a time. There are a number of different "styles," each of which covers different skills and maneuvers, different ways of using them, different training methods and often a specific philosophy.

To simplify character generation (especially for NPCs), each martial arts style can be treated as if it were an *advantage.* The point value of the style will indicate the minimum number of points that must be set aside to purchase that style's skills and maneuvers. This cost reflects the amount of training that one must undergo to become proficient with the style. These points must be paid when the style is chosen during character creation, or when it is learned during the campaign. See Chapter 4 for more information.

Note that a style is not a *true* advantage, and that the style cost simply acts as a "place holder" until the exact distribution of points amongst the style's various abilities is decided upon. A character who has *already* recorded the specific point costs for the skills and maneuvers of a style need not list the "package cost" of the style as well.

Style Familiarity   1-25 points

This indicates a general knowledge about styles *other* than those with which the character is proficient. When facing an unfamiliar style, a character defends at -1; this advantage eliminates this penalty.

The number of styles a character is familiar with determines the point cost. Each style chosen costs 1 character point.

Familiarity with *all* known styles in the game world costs 20 points. This will not identify *secret* styles that are only known to their students, unless the character specifies he has fought them in the past (which might cost up to 5 points more, depending on the role of secret styles in the campaign).

Unless he buys the advantage at the 20-point level or better, the character must specify which styles he is familiar with. When a character encounters an opponent using a familiar style, he will recognize it after the first round of combat. On an IQ roll, he will recognize it *before* combat, by observing the opponent's stance.

To acquire this familiarity during play, a student must not only spend the appropriate character points, but must also have access to appropriate teachers. Films are *not* an acceptable substitute. However, a single day of sparring with a teacher would be enough to add familiarity with a new style.

New Advantages (Cinematic)

These advantages are appropriate only for a cinematic campaign; they make no pretense of realism. The GM should determine beforehand which of the following advantages (if any) are available in his campaign, and inform the players in advance.

Harmony with the Tao   20 points

Flexible and spontaneous, one who understands the Way (see p. 7) does not need training or preparation. He can simply do things, without knowing how. Someone in harmony with the Tao can attempt any one skill roll at his score in the appropriate attribute (usually IQ for Mental skills and DX for Physical skills), once per *game session.* The character does not incur any default penalties. Harmony with the Tao *does* apply to skills which normally have no default, including any Cinematic skill or maneuver. It does not, however, allow one to perform a task without the appropriate tools.

Iron Hand   10/15 points

This advantage represents the toughening of the hands that some martial artists undergo, literally reshaping one of their hands into a lethal weapon. This advantage can be acquired after character creation. There are many paths to the Iron Hand. The roughest one involves breaking the knuckles of one hand repeatedly, with the healed hand becoming stronger than it used to be.

In game terms, the character must cripple his hands no less than a dozen times each - Will rolls should be required to do this! - and make all of his recovery rolls, as per p. B129.

Another way consists of a series of exercises where the hand is shoved into a jar full of pebbles or dry seeds, slowly moving to harsher materials, such as ball bearings or iron filings. Any of these methods will take many months to produce results.

The first level of the advantage costs 10 points and transforms one hand into an Iron Hand; pay 15 points for both hands. Most martial artists will modify only one of their hands in this manner, however.

A character with the Iron Hand will do Thrust damage with that hand (rather than Thrust-2), plus Karate bonuses. The hand will gain a DR of 1 (cumulative with any levels of Toughness). This advantage also gives a +2 bonus to the Breaking Blow skill.

However, any skill that requires delicate finger manipulation (such as Lockpicking, Sleight of Hand, Fast-Draw for small weapons and even Driving or Piloting) will be at -4 DX. Attempts to pull a punch (see p. B122) will require a DX-2 roll or full damage will be delivered anyway. This applies only to the hand modified by this advantage. If both hands are modified in this way, the character will make a very bad thief or juggler. Also, the Iron Hands are easy to spot (make a Vision roll), as they are covered by heavy calluses.

Sharpshooter   45 points

This is the cinematic ability that supernaturally accurate shootists possess, the equivalent of Weapon Master (see below) but for handguns. To a sharpshooter, the gun is a natural extension of his hand, and he can make uncannily precise shots without aiming. Only handguns can be used in this manner. The character never takes a Snap Shot penalty, and he automatically gets the Accuracy bonus of his weapon, *without* a turn of aiming. Furthermore, he can use any handgun, from a flintlock pistol to a hand blaster, at a default value of DX or his highest gun skill-2, whichever is greater. The sharpshooter also has an innate understanding of the workings of any handgun; he can make Armoury rolls for any handgun, even models he has never seen (apply the TL penalties for guns of different Tech Levels, as per p. B185, but the maximum penalty is -6 to skill).

This advantage is utterly cinematic, and is available only during character creation; someone is either born a Sharpshooter or he isn't. No amount of training will give another character this instinctual mastery of the gun.

Trained by a Master   40 points

Anyone can go to the nearest Karate school and learn to be a good martial artist. This training does *not* teach any of the "mystical" abilities listed in the Cinematic Skills section (pp. 36-40). In order to learn these special skills, one must have been trained by a true master, most likely found in a remote, ancient school or temple.
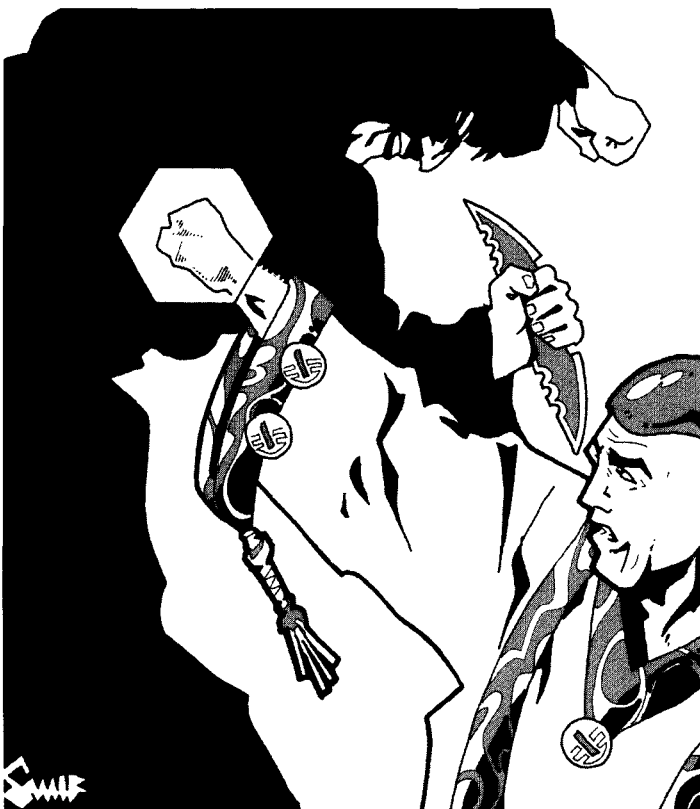
Characters buying this advantage must also learn the Philosophy or Theology skill appropriate to their style (usually Buddhism, Taoism or Shintoism) at IQ level or higher, to represent the spiritual training that usually takes places in such a school.

Several disadvantages could be logically acquired by someone Trained by a Master: an Enemy (a rival school, for instance), a Duty or Sense of Duty to the school or teacher, or even Primitive (someone born and raised in a Shaolin temple in a remote area of Asia might effectively be a TL3 Primitive, a disadvantage worth -20 points in a modern-day campaign).

To acquire this advantage after character creation, the PC must first find a school or teacher. That might be an adventure in itself, with the PC undergoing a dangerous pilgrimage to an appropriately exotic locale. At the end of the training period, the temple or teacher will subject him to a series of hazardous tests, or maybe a quest to yet another remote land. The character must also have Karate or Judo at a skill level of 16 or higher, and enough points to buy the advantage. Once the school is found, the PC will disappear from play for ld+1 game years. Afterwards, he will re-emerge with the Trained by a Master advantage and 20 extra character points to spend on any special skill allowed in the campaign. He will have to pay for those extra points; acquiring one or more of the disadvantages outlined above is the easiest way to do so.

Trained by a Master is the prerequisite to learn all Cinematic skills. If the Chambara attack rules (see p. 65) are being used, this advantage is necessary to make Chambara multiple attacks; those rules apply both to armed and unarmed combat.

Weapon Master   45 or 20 points

A character with this skill has been trained intensively in the use of archaic weapons. He also knows where to strike the human body for the deadliest effect. A Weapon Master gets no bonuses for guns or modern weapons.

When using an archaic weapon, a Weapon Master gets a damage bonus equal to 'A of his skill with that weapon (this does not apply to defaults). He is at least familiar, if not proficient, with virtually every sort of primitive weapon. Even with those weapons with which he is not trained, he has an improved default skill. Physical/Easy Combat/Weapon Skills default to DX-1; Physical/Average ones default to DX-2 and Physical/Hard ones to DX-3. Weapon skills are purchased from their original defaults, not the improved defaults this advantage gives.

A Weapon Master gets multiple attacks as per the Chambara Fighting Rules (see p. 64).

If the master specializes in one weapon skill - Broadsword, Flail, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace, for instance - the advantage costs only 20 points; skill and damage bonuses apply only with that weapon type. If a weapon can be thrown, mastery of that weapon includes the skill used to throw that weapon.

A master with *all* archaic weapons pays 45 points.

A Weapon Master may learn the following cinematic skills: Blind Fighting, Drunken Fighting, Flying Leap, Kiai, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Precognitive Parry, Pressure Points, Throwing Art and Zen Archery. A Master who specializes in one weapon type can only learn skills that apply to that weapon. A Katana Master, for instance, could not learn Throwing Art or Zen Archery, since they relate specifically to different weapon types. Likewise, a Bow Master could not learn Precognitive Parry. Acquiring this advantage after character creation follows the same rules as Trained by a Master, above.

DISADVANTAGES

Codes of Honor   see p. B31

These are some codes of honor appropriate for *Martial Arts* campaigns.

Bushido: One must obey one's liege lord in all things, and must not desert him under any circumstances. A samurai must answer any challenge or insult to his lord. Pain, discomfort and even death must be faced stoically. One must always be polite to one's equals and superiors. A samurai cannot stand disrespect from a social inferior; such disrespect is usually punished with death. -15 points.

Tong Code of Honor: This is the code of criminal gangs and secret societies. A Tong member cannot betray a fellow member, or refuse him aid, or cheat him. He must never talk about his society to strangers, or reveal any names. The penalty for breaking any such rule is death, usually implemented in a highly creative manner. -10 points.

Personal Codes of Honor can include several of the Vows listed below. The total cost of such a Code of Honor cannot exceed -20 points.

Fanaticism   see p. B33

Members of strange cults and mysterious martial arts schools are often Fanatic. A PC who is Trained by a Master may take this disadvantage.

Some cultists have *Extreme Fanaticism.* Point cost remains the same, but the character will have a +3 to Will rolls to resist Interrogation when the answers would betray his cult or organization. On the other hand, the Extremely Fanatic character will not hesitate to die if a prominent member of his cult orders him to. Suicide missions are taken matter-of-factly. This attitude is not appropriate for a PC!

Glory Hound   see p. B240

This is an advanced case of Overconfidence (p. B34); a character may not have *both* Glory Hound and Overconfidence. It is especially appropriate for the Contender character type (see p. 20). You will *always* take time to talk to the press, pose for photographs or sign an autograph. You insist on being in the limelight - you will always take the greatest risks, accept any challenge match, lead the charge, etc.

You get a +1 reaction (at least publicly) from the press, small children, teenagers, etc. and a -1 reaction from other serious martial artists, etc. If the glory-hounding is successful, it can lead to an improved Reputation with fans or with the general public; buy this separately during character creation, or earn it free during the course of the campaign.

Intolerance   see p. B34

Intolerance is as common in Asia as in the Western world. Extreme Intolerance (-10) is common among Japanese and Chinese characters; Intolerance against one or more ethnic/racial groups (-5 points) is also widespread.

No Sense of Humor   see p. B241

You never get any jokes and think everyone is earnestly serious at all times. Likewise, you never joke, and you *are* earnestly serious at all times. Others react to you at -2 in any situation where this disadvantage becomes evident.

Obsession   see p. B241

Your will is fixed upon a single goal. Everything you do is in furtherance of this goal.

To play an Obsessed character, you must be able to rationalize all of his actions as an attempt to reach his goal. A Will roll is required any time the character is requested (or forced) to do something that does not further the goal.

The point cost depends on how short or long term the goal is. Assassinating someone or successfully seducing a particular person would be -5 points, while larger goals like getting to a hard-to-reach place or becoming president would merit higher point values. Some obsessions may cause others to react to the character badly; if so, an Odious Personal Habit or Delusion may also be required (the Obsession cost only covers the obsessive behavior).

If and when the goal is reached, the character must substitute a new goal or buy off the Obsession.

Appropriate obsessions for a martial arts campaign:

Become a master of an art. Cost depends on the starting point cost of the character. A 100-point character would get -10 points for it - he has a long way to go. Higher-point characters will get proportionally less.

Destroy an enemy school.

Learn a secret technique.

On the Edge   see p. 241

Sometimes you don't care whether you live or die. You are not actively suicidal, but you will take unreasonable risks in the face of mortal danger. Whenever you face a life-threatening situation (taking on six well-armed foes empty-handed, facing foes in a speeding vehicle while you are on foot), you must make a successful IQ roll before you can retreat (attempt once per turn; 14 or higher fails automatically).

Each turn that you are in combat, make an IQ roll (again, 14+ fails) to avoid making an All-Out Attack (or the near-insane, suicidal behavior of your choice). Most sensible people avoid you (-2 reaction from anyone who realizes that you're crazy). Primitives and low-lifes will mistake your disregard for your own life for bravery, giving +2 reactions. This disadvantage seems to be unusually common in bad martial arts films .. .

Pacifism   see p.B35

Self-Defense Only is the traditional disadvantage of the martial artist. Some also have the *Cannot Kill* type, and very humane ones will have both.

Cannot Harm Innocents is a type of Pacifism especially appropriate for the Cinematic Crimefighter and Cop character types (see pp. 20-21). This is a "subset" or weaker form of *Cannot Kill;* you cannot take both. A character who takes *Cannot Harm Innocents* may use deadly force *only* on a foe who is attempting to do him serious harm. Capture is not "serious harm" unless the character is already under penalty of death, or has a Code of Honor that would require suicide if captured. A character with *Cannot Harm Innocents* will never intentionally do anything that causes, or even *threatens* to cause, injury to the uninvolved, especially uninvolved "normals." -10 points.

Poverty   see p.B16

In fiction, many martial artists do not own much; wealth is sometimes perceived as an obstacle to the physical and mental discipline necessary to become a master of martial arts. Struggling is the recommended poverty level.

Secret   see p.B238

A Secret is some aspect of your life (or your past) that you must keep hidden. Were it made public, the information could harm your reputation, ruin your career, wreck your friendships and possibly even threaten your life!

The point value of a Secret depends on the consequences if the secret is revealed. The worse the results, the higher the value, as follows:

Serious Embarrassment. If the information gets around, you can forget about ever getting a promotion, getting elected, or marrying well. Alternatively, your Secret could be one that will simply attract unwelcome attention if it is known. -5 points.

Utter Rejection: if your Secret is discovered, your life will be changed. Perhaps you would lose your job and be rejected by friends and loved ones. Perhaps you will merely be harassed by admirers, cultists, long-lost relatives, or the press. -10 points.

Imprisonment or Exile: If the authorities uncover your Secret, you'll have to flee, or be imprisoned for a long time (GM's discretion). -20 points.

Possible Death: Your Secret is so terrible that you might be executed by the authorities, lynched by a mob, or assassinated by the Mafia if it were ever revealed - you would be a hunted man. -30 points.

If a Secret is made public, there will be an immediate negative effect, as described above, ranging from embarrassment to possible death. There is a lasting effect - you suddenly acquire new, permanent disadvantages whose point value equals *twice* that of the Secret itself! The points from these disadvantages go first to buy off

the Secret, and may then (at the GM's option only) be used to buy off other disadvantages or (rarely) to buy new advantages. Any unused points are lost, and the character's point value is reduced.

The new disadvantages acquired must be appropriate to the Secret and should be determined (with the GM's assistance) when the character is created. Most Secrets turn into Enemies, Bad Reputations and Social Stigmas. They might also reduce your Status or Wealth - going from Filthy Rich to merely Very Wealthy is effectively a -10 point disadvantage. Some Secrets could even turn into mental or physical disadvantages, though this would be rare. Similarly, if the GM allows you to buy off old disadvantages with the new points, these too must be appropriate to the Secret. The most common disadvantages that could be bought off are Duties and Dependents.

In general, a Secret appears in a particular game session if the GM rolls a 6 or less on three dice before the adventure begins. However, *as for all other disadvantages of this type,* the GM need not feel constrained by the appearance roll - if he thinks a Secret should come into play, it does!

When a Secret appears, it is not necessarily made public. The character must somehow prevent the Secret from being revealed. This may require him to cave in to blackmail or extortion, to steal the incriminating documents, or even to silence the person who knows the secret. Regardless of the solution, however, it's only temporary - the Secret will appear again and again until it is finally bought off. Secrets may be bought off either automatically through exposure (see above) or with earned character points over the course of play.

Membership in some martial arts schools, depending on the time and place, is in itself a very dangerous Secret.

Social Stigma   *see p. B27*

Depending on the campaign world, Asians or people of Asian descent can be second class citizens (-5 points), or even Minorities (-10 points) in Europe and America. The same could be true for Westerners in Asia, or even worldwide in a futuristic or cyberpunk world where Asians have become the most powerful ethnic group. Furthermore, in some parts of Asia a Westerner may be an Outsider (-15 points).

Vow   *see p. B37*

Some appropriate vows include: vegetarianism or chastity (-5 points each); poverty, "never use firearms" or "won't strike a fallen opponent" (-10 points each), and "use no weapons at all" (-15 points).

New Disadvantages

Extremely Hazardous Duty   -20 points

This is an enhanced version of the Duty disadvantage (p. B39). The character is "on duty" almost all the time, and risks death or serious injury more often than on ordinary duty. There are significant penalties for failure to perform the duty when demanded: dismissal in disgrace, imprisonment and even death.

This type of Duty is appropriate to members of ninja clans, fanatical cults, secret agencies or elite military units.

Trademark   *Varies*

Some characters, especially crimefighters, have a special symbol - a Trademark that they leave at the scene of action, as a way of "signing their work." Not only does this satisfy the character's ego, but it serves as a warning to the criminals that the hero is on the job. Villains are even more likely to have a Trademark, leaving it at the scene of their crimes to establish without a doubt *who did it,* or as a challenge to any heroes in the area.

Characters may have only a single Trademark, even if it is just a Quirk. Multiple actions (e.g., painting the foreheads of your victims white, leaving a small gemstone *and* carving your initials into the ceiling) simply count as a higher level of Trademark, not as multiple ones.

-1 point: Your Trademark takes very little time to leave and cannot be used to trace your identity; it is essentially a Quirk. A typical example is something left at the scene - a playing card, a small stuffed animal and so on - as long as it can't be traced and it takes little time.

-5 points: Your Trademark is still simple, but you *absolutely* must leave it. You cannot leave the scene until you do, even if your enemies are breaking down the door.

-10 points: As above, but leaving your Trademark increases your chances of capture - initial carving, notes, traceable clues, and so on. Leaving this sort of Trademark takes a minimum of 30 seconds. Anyone searching the crime scene and examining your Trademark receives a +2 to their Criminology roll.

-75 points: Your Trademark is so elaborate - dousing the captured thugs with a certain cologne, painting the entire crime scene pink, writing a long poem to the police - that it virtually ensures your eventual capture (with this disadvantage, the GM may give clues *without* a successful Criminology roll).

Remember that a Trademark is an action separate from capturing the crooks or committing a crime. Knocking out villains with a ninja gas bomb is not a Trademark; leaving them handcuffed for the police, with a Yin-Yang button stuck on each crook's shirt, is.
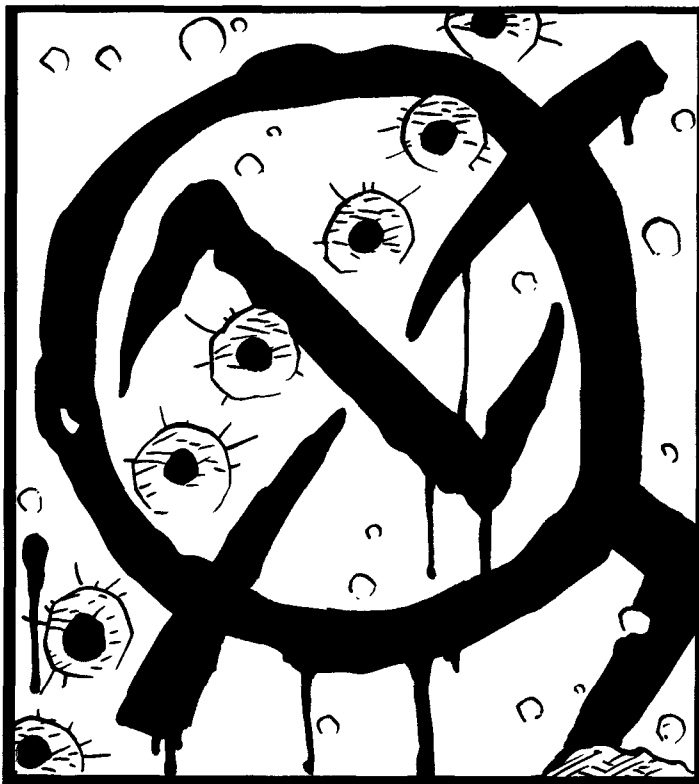
SKILLS

Acrobatics   see p.B48
This skill is important to Cinematic martial artists, allowing them to perform many special maneuvers (see Chapter 3). It is also a prerequisite for the Light Walk skill (see below).

Breath Control   see p.B48
Many advanced martial artists know this skill, and it is the prerequisite for some Cinematic skills, including Body Control (p. 39).

Escape   see p.B65
This skill is important to ninja and other Cinematic martial artists, and is a prerequisite for the Dislocating skill (see p. 37).

Fencing   see p.B50
Some Asian sword techniques, particularly in China, use light thrusting weapons that rely on the quickness of the wrist and fast movements for effectiveness. In terms of precision and scientific and artistic use of the blade, they are the equivalent of Western fencing, and can be treated as the same for game purposes.

To use the fencing maneuvers and styles described in Chapters 3 and 4, fencers must specialize in a specific weapon. In the case of Western fencing, this means rapier, smallsword or saber. Each defaults to the other at -4; it takes several hours of practice to become familiar with each weapon. One way to deal with this is to treat the other two sword types as Average Maneuvers defaulting to the primary skill at -4, and invest points as per the Maneuver Table on p. 42. For 4 points, the -4 penalty would be completely eliminated for one other weapon.

Hypnotism   see p.B56
This skill is commonly a part of the Cinematic martial artist's repertoire, and is a prerequisite for the Hypnotic Hands and Invisibility Art skills (see p. 38).

Intimidation (Mental/Average)   see p. B246
This is a social "influence" skill, used for persuasion. The essence of Intimidation is to convince the subject that you are able and willing, and perhaps eager, to hurt him. In many cases, a good Intimidation roll may prevent a fight.

Intimidation may be substituted for a reaction roll in any situation, though it is at a -3 penalty when used in a request for aid. A successful Intimidation roll gives a Good (though not friendly) reaction. A failed roll gives a Bad reaction. Most people will remember an Intimidation attempt whether successful or not, for a long time; it can permanently affect an NPC's attitude.

When Intimidation is used against a PC (or, at the GM's option, against an NPC), this can also be rolled as a contest of Intimidation vs. Will. See *Influence Rolls,* sidebar, p. B93.

Modifiers: Up to +2 for displays of strength and b l o o d - ness. Appropriate Reputation modifiers will certainly count! +1 for every 6" of height you have over the subject, -1 if you are shorter (-2 if you are more than 6" shorter). +2 for hideous appearance. +2 for every level of Status over the subject. +2 if you have some sort of power over the subject.

Judo and Karate   see p. B51
In *GURPS,* these skills represent all known martial art forms. In *GURPS Martial Arts,* more detail is needed to simulate the large diversity of unarmed combat styles. Judo and Karate will represent two sets of maneuvers which may be part of a style. Karate includes all techniques that involve direct aggression - strikes, kicks and punches. Judo involves "softer" attacks; throws, locks and other ways to turn the attacker's strength against himself. Each style will have elements of one or both techniques to some degree. See Chapter 4 for more detail.

Jumping   see p. B48
This skill is important to Cinematic martial artists, as it is necessary to perform certain maneuvers (see Chapter 3). It is also a prerequisite for the Flying Leap skill (p. 37).

Stealth   see p.B67
This skill is vital for almost any realistic martial artist, since it is about the only way that an unarmed character can get close enough to an armed foe to safely deal with him. It is also a prerequisite for the Invisibility Art (p. 38) and Light Walk (p. 39) skills.

Theology   see p. B62
In many martial arts schools, spiritual training goes hand in hand with physical conditioning. This is normally some form of Buddhism, although some schools may teach Hinduism, Islam, Shinto or Taoism. In any case, many martial arts characters will have a religious and philosophical background. Some of these "religions" are in reality philosophical systems - and most of them are both. PCs may substitute Theology for an equivalent Philosophy skill (p. 34).

Throwing   see p. B49
This skill is a prerequisite for the Throwing Art skill (see p. 40).

CHARACTERS

New Skills (Realistic)

Boxing (Physical/Average)   No default

Although not considered a martial art by the average Westerner, boxing is a scientific unarmed combat technique, and as such has a place in a martial arts campaign, if only to provide Western characters with a more effective skill than Brawling. Boxing falls somewhere between Brawling and Karate in terms of precision and finesse.

Boxing punches add 1/5 of the character's Boxing skill to damage. There is no similar bonus for kicks. In fact, the Boxing skill does not teach one how to kick; use DX-2 or Brawling-2 instead. Parries are % of the skill, at -3 against weapons other than thrusting attacks, and at -2 against kicks (boxing does not train to specifically defend against kicks).

Where Boxing does excel, however, is in teaching fighters how to dodge, by reading the foe's body language before a punch is thrown. Against bare-handed or thrusting attacks, a boxer gets a Dodge bonus equal to 1/8 his skill (rounding down). This Dodge bonus does not count against swinging or ranged attacks.

In a cinematic campaign, Boxers get the same extra attack bonuses as martial artists (see p. 64). They cannot have the Trained by a Master advantage, however, so they cannot make Chambara attacks.

Note: In the same way that the Judo and Karate skills are used in **GURPS Martial Arts** to represent "generic" grappling and striking ability, the Boxing skill is used to represent "generic" ability with footwork and dodging; therefore, the fact that **Boxing** is included as part of a style should not be taken to **imply** that the style is either Western or a sport!

Body Language (Mental/Hard)   Defaults to Psychology-3 or Detect Lies-3

This skill lets you "read" subtle motions and stance shifts in the subject. A martial artist with this skill can predict an incoming attack. It also works in non-combat situations, by letting the user interpret body posture and nuances. If multiple attackers are present, the character must pick *one* foe to watch each turn.

In combat, a Body Language roll can be attempted once every turn (the GM makes those rolls in secret). On a success, the GM will inform the user of his enemy's *general* intentions (i.e., he will Step and Attack, try to Slam or Grapple, etc.). The user will get a +1 to all his Active Defenses and Close Combat rolls for that turn.

If the roll is made by 3 or more, the GM tells the player the specific maneuver the enemy will attempt (a Spin Kick, for instance). This gives the user a +2 to all defense rolls, as above. Additionally, any Feints tried against him will fail automatically. On a critical success, the user defends automatically (he still spends an active defense, though). Failure reveals nothing. On a critical failure, he misread the signals; the GM lies to the PC, who defends at -3.

This skill can also be used to gauge the feelings of a person. Treat the skill as an Empathy (p. B20) or Detect Lies roll (p. B65), rolling against Body Language-3.

Modifiers: all Vision modifiers apply. An enemy with a shield or cloak will be harder to "read"; reduce skill by the PD of either.

Cloak (Physical/Average)   Defaults to DX-5, Buckler-4 or Shield-4

This is the skill of using a cloak, both offensively and defensively. This was actually studied as a skill. Treat a cloak in close combat as if it were a shield (see sidebar, p. B114).

There are two types of cloak used in combat: a large, heavy, full-length cloak such as travelers wear, and the smaller, lightweight, torso-length dress cloak of a 17th-century gentleman. They are described on pp. 125-126.

Combat/Weapon Art or Sport   Variable

These skills are combat skills turned to peaceful uses, aiming at beauty, exercise or tournament competitions, rather than lethal intent. An Art skill emphasizes graceful movements and perfect stances, while the Sport concentrates on speed of movement and inflicting no actual damage in attacks. Art and Sport skills have the same base and default as the equivalent combat skills, with defaults between them at -3 (e.g., Karate Art or Karate Sport at 15 gives an effective Karate skill of 12, and vice versa).

Many martial arts styles are mainly "artistic" in the sense that their style is more aesthetically pleasing than effective in combat (see *Martial Arts Styles,* Chapter 4). Others have become sports, with rules that impair their use in the streets. This explains the many instances of skilled martial artists being beaten by street fighters. This may be an instance where reality would interfere with playing, however; most players would not like to have a -3 penalty in a combat situation, accurate as that might be.

On the other hand, a "street" fighter (one with normal Karate skill, for instance) will perform less well in exhibitions of skill and in no-contact tournaments; hence the -3 penalty to perform either the Art or Sport version. A failure on the Art roll for someone defaulting from the combat skill probably indicates a less than perfect move in an exhibition. A failure on a Sport roll is likely to indicate a foul that may get the user disqualified!

## Fast-Draw (Balisong) (Physical/Easy)   No default

This is the skill needed to quickly ready the Filipino folding knife (see p. 124). If the roll is missed by 2 or more points, the user cuts himself, taking 1 point of damage to the knife hand and amusing all spectators. However, a successful fast-draw of this weapon is a beautiful move; a success by 2 or more points will give a +1 on reaction from any observer.

Garrote (Physical/Easy)   Defaults to DX-5

This is the skill used to strangle a victim with rope or wire. It can only be used on an unaware or helpless victim. The first attack is made from behind (a number of Stealth rolls may be required to reach the intended victim), at -5 for attacking the throat but +4 since the victim is unaware, giving the attacker a net -1 to skill. The victim (if he is not stunned) may attempt to parry at -3. On a success, he manages to put his hand (or any ready one-handed weapon) between his throat and the garrote. The hand takes no damage unless a wire garrote (see below) is being used.

On the turn of the attack, and every turn thereafter, the attacker does thrust damage to the throat (this damage is multiplied by 1.5 if it is crushing, or by two if it is cutting). A rope garrote does crushing damage; a thin wire one does cutting damage; with either, the target also starts to Suffocate (see sidebar, p. B122). The victim can try to break free by winning a Quick Contest (ST-5 or Judo-3 against the attacker's Garrote skill).

If an improvised Garrote is used (almost any piece of rope will do), the skill is at -2. A wire garrote must have wooden or plastic handles on both ends, or the attacker will take thrust/cutting damage to each hand! However, a genuine garrote is an illegal weapon almost everywhere.
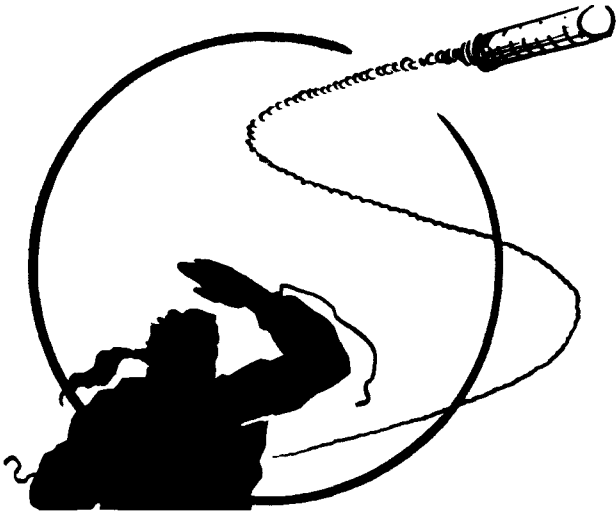
Jitte/Sai (Physical/Average) Defaults to DX-5 or Shortsword-3

This skill is a variation of the Shortsword skill. The jitte, or sai, is hilled like a sword, but the "blade" is tined like a huge fork. It may be blunt, or have a sharp point, but it has no edge. It can be used as a baton or stabbing weapon, or to disarm by twisting the sword from an opponent's hands.

A jitte wielder can initiate the disarm by striking at the opponent's weapon with the declared intention to disarm (see p. B111). If he hits, roll a Quick Contest of weapon skills; the Jitte skill is at +2. If the jitte wielder wins, the foe drops the weapon; if he loses, there is no result. If the jitte wielder loses by 5 or more, *he* loses the jitte.

On any successful parry, by either opponent, the jitte wielder can immediately try to disarm his opponent by twisting his weapon from his hand. Roll a quick contest of weapon skills, as above.

A weapon held in two hands is at +2 to resist the disarm attempt. Note that a jitte can only be used to disarm a foe armed with a rigid weapon; it is ineffective against flexible weapons such as whips.

Katana (Physical/Average)
Defaults to DX-5; see below

This is the skill of using the Japanese longsword, the katana. This weapon can be used either one-handed or two-handed. Style and stance are totally different from Western techniques. Swinging damage is increased by 1 when swinging the sword two-handed.

Parry when used one-handed is 1/2 skill. Used two-handed, and carrying no more than Light Encumbrance, Parry is ⅔ skill. Default is Broadsword-2 for one-handed use, or Two-Handed Sword-2 if used in two hands.

Kusari (Weighted Chain) (Physical/Hard)
Defaults to DX-5 or Flail-2

A kusari is a weighted chain of length equal to about twice the wielder's height. It is difficult to defend against: -2 to block, -4 to parry. The kusari is used two-handed: the wielder uses one hand to hold the chain while his other hand whirls it around over his head until he lets it fly. He can shorten the reach of the chain to fit the situation; maximum reach is 4 yards. A kusari cannot be used if there is no head room (for instance, inside an average-sized room) or in an area full of obstacles (for instance, a bamboo grove). People standing around the wielder count as obstacles.

A successful kusari attack is like a successful hand-to-hand Grapple (see p. B111). An entangled victim cannot move, attack or make any active defenses until he frees himself; this requires a DX-4 roll. A kusari Grapple can also be used to grab the foe's weapon. If a weapon parry against a kusari succeeds, the kusari wielder must immediately roll against his skill. Success means the kusari wrapped around the foe's weapon or weapon arm; a critical failure means the kusari flew from its user's hand! On the next turn, roll a Contest of ST. The loser loses his weapon; the lost weapon falls to the ground. On a tie, the kusari pulls free. The kusari cannot be readied until it has been freed.

Like a ranged weapon, a kusari miss can hit someone else, including the wielder (see p. B117). On a critical miss, a roll of 3, 4, 17 or 18 indicates that the wielder has hit himself in the head.

A kusari is an unbalanced weapon and becomes unready as soon as it is swung. It takes 1 turn to ready for each hex of length, and 2 turns to wrap up and put away for each hex of length.

Main-Gauche (Physical/Average)
Defaults to DX-5

This is the skill of using a knife in the off-hand, offensively and defensively, in conjunction with a weapon in the other hand. It includes the Knife skill, but not Knife Throwing.

The advantages of this skill over the Knife skill are:

1. The parry is 2/3 of the skill.
2. There is no penalty for using the off-hand on *defense.*
3. There is no -1 penalty for parrying with a knife.

Attacking with a knife in the off hand is still at -4 for using the off-hand, unless the user is Ambidextrous or knows the OFF-HAND Weapon Training Hand Weapon Training maneuver.

A main-gauche is primarily used with a rapier, but may be used with other fencing weapons, or other light hand weapons. The main-gauche user may parry one attack per turn, using the knife, at 2/3 skill. A different attack in the same turn may be parried with the other weapon, at its normal parry.

This skill can be used with any sort of knife or dagger, or even with a jitte. Note that a light weapon may break on a parry - see sidebar, p. B111.

CHARACTERS

Maneuvers   Variable

Many martial arts maneuvers can be improved as if they were separate skills. See Chapter 3.

Meditation (Mental/Very Hard)   No default

This is the ability to reach a state of self-induced trance in which the mind is totally relaxed but able to react immediately. A concentration period equal to 18-Skill turns (minimum 1) is required. A successful Meditation roll keeps an injured person from falling unconscious, being shocked or stunned. It also allows the character to concentrate on the task at hand and ignore outside disturbances. A Meditation roll will give the user a +2 on any Mental skill (other than magic, psionics and other metahuman abilities) used in the next turn, and the intense concentration also gives the user +2 to resist direct mental control by psionic or magical means; all other IQ rolls on that turn will be at -2, however.

Parry Missile Weapons (Physical/Hard)
No default

This skill allows a sword, staff, spear or similar weapon to parry thrown or missile weapons. A character with Toughness +2 or higher, or wearing armored wristbands or gloves, may parry with his hands. Characters still cannot parry bullets. Arrows and shuriken are parried at no penalty; darts and crossbow bolts are parried at -5. Thrown hand weapons are easy to parry for someone with this skill: +2 for knives, +4 for larger weapons. The actual Parry is 1/2 of the Parry Missile Weapons skill.

Philosophy (Mental/Hard)   Defaults to IQ-6

This is the study of a body of beliefs similar to Theology (p. B62). Unlike Theology, a character who knows Philosophy does not necessarily believe in those principles, or, if he believes, does not necessarily think they are divinely ordained. Also, the beliefs of Philosophy are not necessarily related to a religious or supernatural concept.

This skill is particularly appropriate in the situation where the character knows martial arts with different (and even antagonistic) spiritual teachings; by adopting both schools' *philosophical* teachings, the character can combine them without conflict (note that in Asia many people combine opposing religions matter-of-factly, despite blatant contradictions between them).

If during an adventure a PC is dubious about the Tightness of a course of action, the GM should let him roll against his Theology or Philosophy (Buddhism, Shinto, Taoism or other specialized religion). On a successful roll, and depending on how good the roll was, the GM can "enlighten" the PC, if possible with a clever phrase or even a parable. The GM should not tell the player what to do, but to indicate to him how a person with the character's background would feel.

Savoir-Faire (Dojo) (Mental/Easy)
Defaults to IQ-4

This skill will tell you the correct way to behave in the *dojo* or school. Some basic rules include removing footwear and bowing on the edge before entering the wooden mat, when to bow to an opponent, traditional greetings, etc. Failure to follow these traditions will at best earn a reaction penalty, and at worst invite violent retribution.

This skill defaults to any appropriate Tournament Law-3.

Sensitivity (Mental/Very Hard)   No default

This skill represents training in being very aware of one's foe - including his exact location, stance and balance - while at close quarters. It is not the same as Blind Fighting, and does not directly allow combat in the dark or under similarly adverse conditions.

Modifiers: Add a permanent +1 for DX 12+, or +2 if DX is 14+. Add 1/3 of any Telepathy Power (the Empathy advantage gives +1).

A successful Sensitivity roll gives +1 to the Blind Fighting, Immovable Stance and Push skills, and to the Close Combat, Corps-a-Corps and Sticking maneuvers. Success by 3 or more gives a +2. These bonuses apply only when fighting a single foe in close combat. This is *cumulative* with any bonuses from the Sticking maneuver.

Opinions vary widely regarding the real-life status of sensitivity training. Masters debate whether or not it is useful to study it as a separate skill, and even whether or not it really works. As such, Sensitivity has not been included in any style, but the GM should feel free to add it to any style that includes some or all of the skills and maneuvers listed above.

Short Staff (Physical/Hard) Defaults to DX-5
or Staff-2

This skill lets you use a one-handed stick (usually no longer than 15 inches in length) with great speed and agility. Parry is -A skill. Parrying with the off-hand is done at no penalty, although attacks are still made at -4 unless the Off-Hand Weapon Training maneuver is learned.

Shuriken (Physical/Hard)   Defaults to DX-6
or Throwing-2

This is the ability to throw razor-sharp shuriken stars and similar non-hafted blades without cutting yourself (see Weapons Table for descriptions).

Style Analysis (Mental/Hard)   Defaults to Body Language-6 or Tactics (Hand to Hand)- 6

This skill allows you to analyze your foe's style by observing his combinations, guards, stances and so on. Style Analysis can only be used on a foe who is engaged in combat (although the character who is using Style Analysis need not be - observation from afar is a perfectly valid technique). If multiple fighters are present, the character must pick only one to watch each turn. There is no benefit in using this skill against a foe whose style you are already familiar with.

To use this skill, a martial artist must be able to see his foe and may take no actions other than All-Out Defense or Concentrate for a minimum of one full turn. At the beginning of his next turn, he may roll against Style Analysis to analyze his foe's style.

Modifiers:

All Vision modifiers.

Foe is observed for only 1 second of combat	-2
Foe is observed for 4-7 seconds of combat	+1
Foe is observed for 8+ seconds of combat	+2
User is wounded while observing	- Wounds
User has less than 5 points of Style Familiarity	-1
User has 10-14 points of Style Familiarity	+2
User has 15-19 points of Style Familiarity	+5
User has 20+ points of Style Familiarity	+10

Success permanently eliminates the -1 unfamiliarity penalty against that *particular* opponent; failure reveals nothing, and a repeated attempt may be made. Critical success also acts as a Body Language roll, giving +2 to all defenses for the next turn only. Critical failure indicates a *gross* error - such as mistaking a Muay Thai practitioner for a Judo stylist - and gives a -3 on the next defense roll made against that attacker, whether that roll is made in a second or in a year.

If combinations are being used, a successful Style Analysis roll (as outlined above) counts as being "familiar with the attacker's style," and gives the usual +1 to see the combination coming.

Any martial arts school may teach Style Analysis. Since this is more a function of school than style, Style Analysis has not been added to any particular style. The GM should decide which schools teach Style Analysis in his campaign, and require students of these schools to learn it as if it were a Secondary skill. Schools that teach modern, composite styles such as Jeet Kune Do are good candidates for this skill.

Sumo Wrestling (Physical/Average)
No default

A Sumo wrestling match consists of Grappling (a Contest of DX, see p. B87) and Slam attacks (a Contest of ST, see p. B112). You can substitute Sumo Wrestling for DX in these contests, and for any other use of DX in unarmed Close Combat. Furthermore, the wrestler can either get a ST bonus equal to 1/5 of his Sumo Wrestling skill or replace his ST with his skill, whichever is better, for the purposes of any Close Combat maneuver such as an attempt to Break Free.

In a regular Sumo contest, the wrestler loses if he is thrown out of the 15' diameter ring, or if he loses his balance and touches the ground with anything besides his feet. If any blood is drawn, *both* fighters lose and the ring is sprinkled with purified rice.

Sumo wrestlers may take Fat as a Disadvantage to increase their weight. The extra weight makes the wrestler harder to throw in the wrestling ring. For each 25 Ibs. by which a wrestler outweighs his opponent, add +1 to his effective Sumo Wrestling Skill and ST in the Contests of Skill.

Tonfa (Physical/Hard)
Defaults to DX-6 or Shortsword-3

The tonfa is a baton with a protruding handle on one of its sides. It is used for striking, much like a billy club. As a defensive weapon, however, it is grasped by the handle and held against the forearm. Parry is 2/3 skill.

Tournament Law (Mental/Easy)
Defaults to IQ-6

This is the study of the history and rules of martial arts competition. A roll on Tournament Law might be required to detect a subtle foul, for instance. This is also the skill to roll against when the GM must test a character's knowledge of the history, personalities, etc., of a given style.

Characters *must* specialize in one specific type of tournament; rules can vary widely between different styles, so there is no default between them, unless the GM determines otherwise. However, a roll against Tournament Law-3 can be used in place of a Savoir-Faire roll when dealing with *any* tournament judge in his official capacity, regardless of style.

Wrestling (Physical/Average)
No default

This is a Western sport that can also be useful in combat. Wrestling teaches how to take down opponents, pin them and apply some holds and locks. While not as effective as Judo, this skill gives its user an edge in Close Combat.

You can use your Wrestling skill to replace DX in Close Combat or in an attempt to grapple, just as for Judo. You also add 1/8 of your skill to your effective ST to attempt a Grapple, a Takedown or a Pin, to use an Arm Lock (see p. 44) or to Break Free (see p. B112).

Yin/Yang Healing (Mental/Hard)
Defaults to IQ-6

This is the skill of using acupuncture, massage or moxa burning at various key body points to readjust the body's medical balance, which is thrown off by injury or illness. GMs may decide whether Yin/Yang Healing counts as the care of a competent Physician for treatment of damage and illness (see pp. B56, B128), or whether it does not work at all. In the first case, depending on the campaign world, he may assign an Unusual Background advantage as a prerequisite.
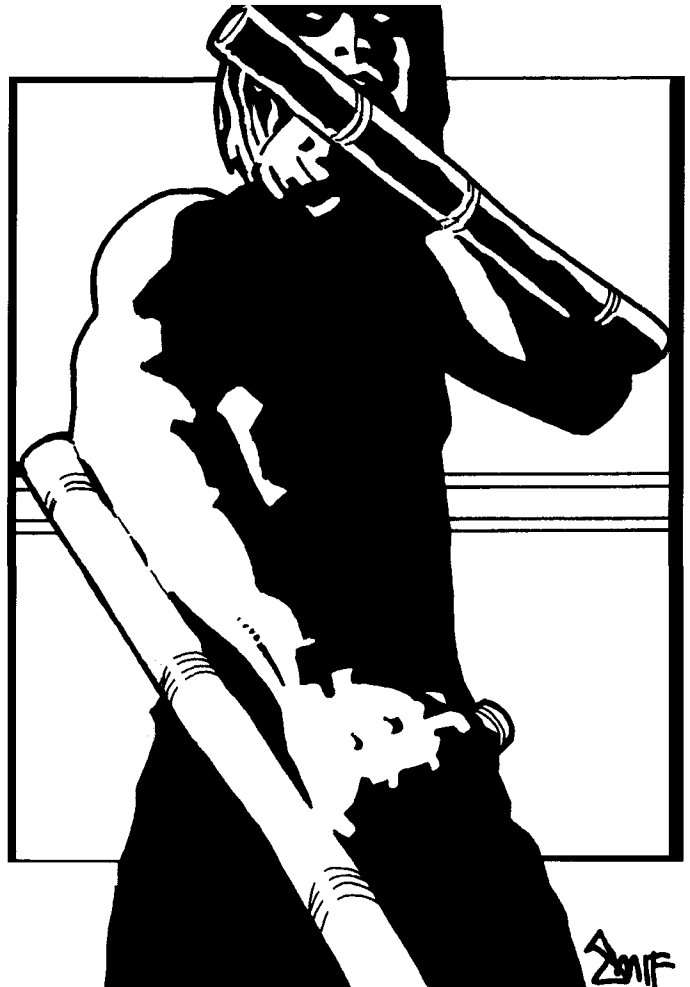
Cinematic skills can only be bought by characters with either the Trained by a Master advantage or (in some cases) the Weapon Master advantage, unless the GM rules otherwise. This restriction applies to default use as well, even where a default to a non-cinematic skill is listed. Eidetic Memory is no help in learning these skills.

Blind Fighting (Mental/Very Hard)
No default

Users of this skill have learned to fight blindfolded or in absolute darkness. As a result, they "sense" their targets without having to see them. There are legends of blind masters who are deadlier than any sighted man.

This skill allows you to use your other senses, mainly hearing, but also smell and even touch, to exactly pinpoint where your attackers are. Each successful roll allows one hand-to-hand attack or active defense without any lighting modifiers, even in total darkness; the user will also have no penalty in fighting against invisible enemies. A blind (either temporarily or permanently) character with this skill can attack and defend without penalty (see p. B27). However, attacks in total darkness, blindness or against invisible enemies are at -2 to target specific parts of the body.

If a character has this skill and Zen Archery (see below), he can actually shoot targets without seeing them, by making rolls on both skills at -6.

Modifiers: Acute Hearing and Alertness. Background noise will affect the roll negatively; -1 for rain, -2 for heavy rain or a storm, -3 for a crowded, noisy area or a place with heavy machinery, -4 for a full football stadium, -5 in the middle of an artillery barrage. If the character cannot hear at all, the roll is at -7, but he can still attempt a roll, as the skill is not completely based on hearing. If the user has any Telepathy or ESP Power (see the **Basic** *Set* or **GURPS** *Psionics),* he can add 1/3 of his total Power to this skill. (For other ways of enhancing cinematic skills with psi, see the sidebar *Enhancing Martial Arts with Psi,* p. 86.)

An attacker can try to use Stealth against a foe with the Blind Fighting skill; in that case, roll a Quick Contest between those skills, with Stealth at -4 on any turn the stealthy fighter tries to attack. Invisibility Art (see below) is completely useless against a character with this skill.

Blinding Touch (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisite: Pressure Points-15+

This is an attack to a specific pressure point that blinds the target temporarily. To use the skill, the attacker first has to successfully hit the target's forehead in a particular spot, making a Karate-8 roll or Hit Location (Karate)-5 roll, whichever is higher. This attack does no damage, but roll a Quick Contest between the attacker's Blinding Touch skill and the defender's HT. If the defender loses, he is blinded for 2d seconds. During that time, all attacks will be at -10, and active defenses will be at -4 if the victim makes a Hearing-2 roll; otherwise he cannot defend at all!

Body Control (Mental/Very Hard)
No default, Prerequisites: Breath Control and Meditation

This skill allows the user to control and affect involuntary biological functions like heart rate, blood flow and digestion. A character with this skill can enter into a deathlike trance; 30-Skill turns of concentration (minimum 1) are required. A doctor must win a Quick Contest (Physician-2 vs. Body Control) to realize that the character is alive, and no one else will have a chance of determining otherwise.

This skill can also be used to flush poisons out of the system. First, a successful Poisons roll (or Naturalist, for a natural venom or poison) must be made to recognize the type of poison. This roll cannot be attempted, of course, until the first symptoms show, unless the victim knows beforehand that he has been poisoned. A roll against the skill will flush the poison, in 1d hours, without further damage. The roll is modified by any HT modifier to resist the poison (see p. B132).

Breaking Blow (Mental/Hard)   No default

This skill allows the user to mystically find the weakest spot in any object. 20-Skill turns of concentration (minimum 1) are required. On a successful roll, he can break the object if he inflicts over 10% of its hit points.

Modifiers: +1 if the object is made of wood or a similar material; -1 if it is made of brick or concrete, -3 if it is stone, and -5 for metal.

In combat, this skill can be used to find the weakest spots of any artificial armor or force field; on a successful roll, only 20% (1/5) of the target's *DR for armor only* is counted against the attack. For each additional attack, another Breaking Blow roll is required.

On a failed roll, the attack is carried out normally. On a critical failure, the user does the damage to his hand or foot; if he was using Power Blow in the attack, it's time to break out the plaster and the bandages!

This skill can be allowed in a realistic campaign. Martial artists can and do break solid objects with seemingly impossible ease. The following restrictions apply, however. First, eliminate the ability to bypass armor; that is cinematic. Second, the skill works at an additional -6 unless it is performed in a carefully controlled environment, i.e., the object must be on a well-braced, well-balanced stand, the user must have time to concentrate (double concentration time) and any other restriction the GM finds convenient. Any ordinary failure in a non-controlled situation is considered a critical failure (see above).

Dislocating (Physical/Hard)   No Default
Prerequisite: Escape-15+

This advanced escape technique is rumored to be taught to some ninja clans and other assassin cults. The user can temporary dislocate limb joints in order to slip through bonds. For instance, by displacing certain hand bones, the character can easily slip out of handcuffs. To use this skill, the character has to concentrate for 20-Will minutes (minimum 1 minute) and make a Dislocating roll, at *half* the penalties to the Escape roll; if successful, he receives a +3 bonus to his Escape skill, or can add 1/5 of his Dislocating skill to the Escape roll, *whichever is higher*. On a failure by 2 or less, nothing happens. On a failure by 3 or more, the character hurt himself, taking 1d damage if he was dislocating the hand or ankle, or 1d+1 if he was trying to dislocate an arm or leg joint, which may cripple the limb. On a critical failure, the character automatically takes enough damage to cripple the limb.

Drunken Fighting (Physical/Hard)
No default, Prerequisites: Karate or Judo at DX+3 or 16, whichever is higher

This skill cannot be higher than the character's skill with Judo or Karate. Many martial arts styles have a "Drunken" sub-style. This complex skill is considered by some to be a fancy technique, unsuited for practical purposes. Others claim that master Drunken Fighters are deadly opponents. The rules below subscribe to the latter school of thought.

In theory, the staggering, unpredictable movements of the Drunken Fighter confuse attackers; the fighter seems to stumble just in time to dodge a blow, or trip and "accidentally" hit an enemy. To simulate this deceptive movement, whenever a Drunken Fighter is in combat, roll a Quick Contest between the Drunken Fighting skill and the opponent's IQ at the beginning of every turn. Roll IQ at +3 if the attacker knows about the Drunken Fighting style; he must be Familiar with the attacker's style, as per the Style Familiarity advantage on p. 26. If the Drunken Fighter wins the contest, his enemy is at -1 to *either* hit or defend during the round (Drunken Fighter's choice) for every point by which he lost the contest. If the Drunken Fighter loses, however, he suffers a similar penalty. On a tie, combat is resolved normally.

Experts (Skill 18+) can fight while intoxicated without penalty.

Flying Fists (Mental/Very Hard)   No default
Prerequisites: Karate-20+, and Power Blow, Breaking Blow, Mental Strength and Meditation at 16+

This is the mythical skill that allows martial artists to strike enemies *from a distance.* No established martial art teaches it; to learn the skill, qualified students must search for a teacher that knows it. Only a handful of masters in any given game world know the secret of the Flying Fists - if it exists at all.

The attacker must be able to see the target and concentrate for 25-Skill turns (minimum 1). At the end of the round, he can make a Flying Fists roll against the target, minus any distance/speed modifiers (see p. B201). If the roll is successful, **the** attacker can then make a Karate punch or kick in the air, also minus all distance/speed modifiers, *and the target will take damage as if he had been hit.* No defense roll is possible, unless the target knows he is being attacked in this manner, in which case he can "project" his Chi to defend against the attack; this is resolved by rolling a Quick Contest, the defender's Mental Strength or Will roll (whichever is higher) against the Flying Fist skill. If the defender wins or ties, he takes no damage.

Flying Leap (Mental/Hard)   No default
Prerequisites: Power Blow and Jumping

This skill allows martial artists to make incredible leaps, covering 10+ yards in a single bound. The character must concentrate for 20-Skill seconds (minimum 1). For the following round, his strength will be *tripled* for jumping purposes (see p. B88). On a failure, jumping rolls will be at -5. A critical failure means the character falls down automatically.

Someone making a Drop Kick, Jump Kick, or Flying Jump Kick can use the ST multiplier given by the Flying Leap skill for damage purposes. All attacks done in this manner are at an additional -2 to hit, due to the increased difficulty in timing.

Hand of Death (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisites: Breaking Blow, Pressure Secrets and Power Blow at level 20+

In martial arts circles, legends abound about a secret technique that can kill a man, no matter how strong, with only a touch. Theories about this power are numerous: some say it is a mystic ability by which the victim's very soul is destroyed, while others hypothesize that the touch sets off vibrations that slowly destroy internal organs. Rumors claim that some of the world's top martial artists have been murdered by dark masters with this ability.

The Hand of Death is the ultimate version of the Pressure Points skill. A master of this skill can somehow cause the gradual deterioration of a victim's nervous system simply by touching him. The touch can be delivered in combat, or even casually; a victim with the Trained by a Master advantage can roll against IQ-3, or his own Pressure Points skill, to know that he has been attacked. No effects are immediately apparent.

One hour after the Hand is applied, and every 3 hours thereafter, a Quick Contest between the character's HT and the attacker's Hand of Death skill (maximum 16) is rolled. A failure results in the loss of 1 HT; a critical failure causes the loss of 3d HT. This goes on until the victim scores a critical success or
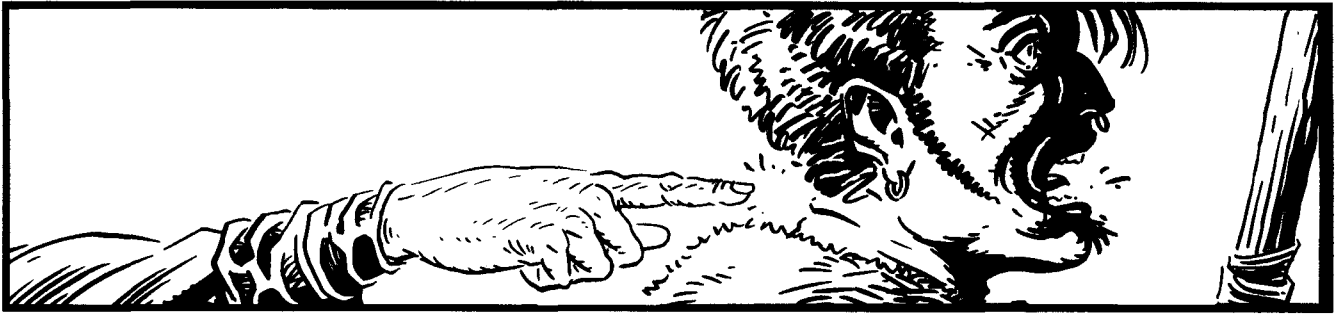
wins three consecutive contests (either of which will shake off the effects of the Hand) or he dies. Western doctors will be baffled; no Medical skill will help or explain this HT loss. Only Yin/Yang Healing will work. Roll a Contest of Skills between the healer and the attacker; one success removes the effects of the Hand for one day, and three successful Contests in a row will cure the patient. Also, the person who inflicted the Hand of Death can remove its effect if he is persuaded to do so. Magical and psionic healing will restore lost HT, but cannot remove the Hand.

This skill can be unbalancing in some campaigns. In a 20th-century world, for instance, PCs could use the Hand to kill with impunity - no jury would believe they had killed somebody by touching him. In pre-modern worlds, of course, rulers and lynch mobs can be more readily convinced to deal with murderous characters. If PCs abuse the Hand in a campaign, the GM should introduce countermeasures - perhaps a medical cure is found for the Hand, or an assassin cult learns of the PCs' skills and decide to eliminate them to preserve the secret. Alternatively, GMs could restrict this skill to NPCs.

Hypnotic Hands (Mental/Hard) No Default
Prerequisite: Hypnotism-15+

The character makes hypnotic motions with his hands, lulling the enemy into a trance-like state. To use the skill, the target must be within (Skill/2) yards, and he must be able to see the attacker. The martial artist then must spend at least 1 turn performing the hand motions; during that time he can not make any attacks, and all Active Defenses are at -2. At the end of this period, the martial artists projects his Chi at the (hopefully) now suggestible victim. A Quick Contest between Hypnotic Hands and Will or Mental Strength is rolled; if the target wins, he is unaffected. The victim is at -1 for every turn above 1 that the attacker spent making the motions - if performed long enough, the technique will wear down the strongest-willed character.

If the victim loses the contest, he is Mentally Stunned (see p. B127) for 1 turn for every point by which he lost the Contest (roll against IQ normally to recover after that). During that period, the character will also be vulnerable to hypnotic suggestions: all Hypnotism rolls made against the victim for that period are resisted at -5 to Will (this -5 penalty also applies to such Hypnotism-based skills as Invisibility Art).

Immovable Stance (Physical/Hard)
No default

This skills allows the user to anchor himself to the ground in such a way that it may take many strong men to move him. It works as a combination of expert balance and the channeling of one's Chi (see sidebar, p. 84) in the proper way.

A character with this skill can resist Slam attacks with it, by either using the Immovable Stance skill in place of ST, or adding 1/5 of his skill to ST, *whichever is greater*. The character can also resist Judo throws (see p. B51), and the Push skill (see below) with this skill.

Invisibility Art (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisites: Hypnotism and Stealth at 16+

This is the fabled skill of the master ninja and other assassin cults. A user of this skill can stand in plain sight without being noticed; it is said that true masters can walk through a crowd unobserved.

To use this skill, the character must take a turn of concentration after announcing this action. If he is standing perfectly still (a Meditation or Breath Control roll will achieve this), he gets a +2 on all his rolls. He must then win a contest of skills (Invisibility Art vs. Vision roll) against each and every person that can see him. Each win for the user means that one subject is unable to see him.

Modifiers: If the viewer is concentrating on something else, or is otherwise distracted, the resistance roll is made at -3. By the same token, anyone specifically looking for intruders will resist at +3. If someone sees him and raises the alarm, by pointing and crying out, anyone who believes the warning will resist at +3 on the next turn.

Once a person notices the user of Invisibility Art, that person will continue to be able to see him until the "invisible" person can get out of sight somehow. (In a darkened area, this can be as easy as stepping into a shadow.)

If the ninja uses a nageteppo (p. 120) before attempting his roll, the resistance roll is also at -3. Thus, the ninja seems to vanish in a cloud of smoke.

The person making the Invisibility Art roll gets a bonus equal to the darkness penalty in the area, if any; this ability works best in the dark. Movement, on the other hand, impairs the use of this skill; if the character is moving slowly (walking speed or less), the roll is at -2, and he must also make a Stealth roll to avoid being heard. If he is running or participating in any strenuous activity, his skill is at -5. This skill cannot be used once the user is in combat; he will have to remove himself from the subject's line of sight before trying again.

A successful roll allows the character to remain invisible for one turn.

Kiai (Physical/Hard) No default

This skill is based on HT, not DX. The martial artist channels his Chi outward, giving a mighty shout that freezes lesser foes. Once every 20-Skill turns, the fighter can attempt the Kiai on a victim; this counts as an attack. Roll a Quick Contest (Kiai skill vs. Will). If the target loses, he is mentally stunned, as per p. B127.

Modifiers: -1 to Kiai skill for every full 2 hexes of distance. The victim resists at +1 if he is Hard of Hearing, at +2 if Deaf!

Normally, this skill only works against one victim at a time; although everyone can hear the shout, the attacker's Chi is focused against a single foe. However, when a skilled martial artist announces his presence with a Kiai, *all* foes may be affected if the Fright Check rules on p. 47 are being used. A Kiai delivered with this skill subtracts 2 from the Will of all enemies when they roll Fright Checks.

At the GM's option, this skill may be learned by *any* martial artist who is Trained by a Master, regardless of style. This skill characterizes the Okinawan styles of karate (see *Goju Ryu, Isshinryu* (p. 84), *Karate* (p. 87) and *Uechi Ryu* (p. 104)), and is already included as part of those styles.

Light Walk (Mental/Hard) No default
Prerequisite: Acrobatics and Stealth at 15+

This skill, called Ch'in Kung, allows a character to walk without leaving visible traces. The training involves walking on the edge of a large jar without tipping it over; the jar is at first filled with water, but at the end of the training the character will be able to walk over an empty jar without moving it. More intensive training follows, and eventually the student will be able to walk over snow or mud leaving no trace. Experts were rumored to be able to walk over thin paper without breaking it.

On a successful Light Walk roll, the user will leave no visible tracks; no Tracking rolls will succeed unless they rely on something more than sight. Thus, a human tracker would be baffled, but bloodhounds would suffer no penalty at all.

A character with Light Walk can also attempt to walk over thin ice or flimsy surfaces. His move during these circumstances is 1/3 normal, modified as the GM sees fit. Thin ice will require a normal Light Walk roll; attempting to walk over rice paper strung over a room, on the other hand, requires a roll at -8!

Furthermore, add 1/5 of the Light Walk skill to Stealth skill when the intention is to move quietly.

Mental Strength (Mental/Hard) No default

The character has learned to focus his Chi to resist mental attacks. This skill replaces IQ in any resistance roll against spells and psionic abilities, as well as Hypnotism, Hypnotic Hands and Invisibility Art.

Modifiers: Strong and Weak Will. This skill does *not* replace most normal Will rolls.

Power Blow (Mental/Hard) No default

The user draws from his inner strength to deliver a devastating punch or kick. 20-Skill turns of concentration (minimum of 1) are required, followed by a Power Blow roll. Then the attack is made, with all normal modifiers. If successful, the character's ST is doubled for damage purposes. With a skill level higher than 20, ST can be *tripled* if the user concentrates for 30-Skill turns.

This skill can be used in non-combat situations. For instance, a character trying to move a heavy object can try to use Power Blow to momentarily double or triple his Strength. This could explain the tale that Shaolin monks were able to lift a 500-pound metal cauldron (filled with hot coals to boot!) as the last part of their initiation test. Prodigious leaps can also be achieved with this skill, although the Flying Leap skill (above) is more effective in this regard.

Example: A martial artist with ST 11 and Power Blow-17 could leap almost 5 feet straight up, or make a standing broad jump of 19 feet!

Using Power Blow for feats of strength costs 1d Fatigue.

Precognitive Parry (Mental/Hard)
No Default
Prerequisites: Danger Sense or ESP Power 3 and Precognition-15+, and one weapon skill at 20+

This is a combination of psionic and Chi skills that allows martial artists to parry attacks they could not possibly defend against, like bullets and beam weapons. This is done by sensing where the incoming attack will arrive, and intercepting it with one's limb or weapon *before* the attack gets there. To use this skill, one must be aware that he is about to be attacked (a gunman aiming at him, for instance). A roll against Precognitive Parry is then made. On a success, the character can make a Parry roll normally.

This doesn't mean the character can swat bullets away with impunity, however. All the martial artist is doing is interposing a weapon (or maybe a limb) between himself and the bullet or beam. The attack will do damage normally against the weapon (use the Breaking Weapons rules on p. B111) unless the character makes his Parry roll by 5 or more, or scores a critical success; any damage past that necessary to break the weapon (or cripple the hand or arm parrying the attack) will affect the defender. The only weapon exempt from this rule is the Force Sword (see p. 127), which either bums up the bullet or deflects the energy beam. In fact, the skill is almost useless without Force Swords, so it is best limited to space-opera campaigns (see the Force Swordsmanship martial art description on p. 114). When used against normal attacks, the skill gives the character a +1 bonus on any Active Defense.

Pressure Points (Mental/Hard) Defaults to Yin/Yang Healing-4 in a Cinematic campaign

This is the application of acupuncture techniques to combat. The attacker seeks to strike pressure points in the body that allow him to paralyze, and even kill, an opponent. In game terms, the character must make a successful attack roll using Karate or the appropriate combat skill (see below); use the Parts of the Body modifiers (p. B203) at an extra -2. At least a point of damage must get through clothing or armor; natural Toughness does *not* protect. Then, roll a Quick Contest of Skills between the attacker's Pressure Points skill and the victim's HT. If the attacker wins, the body part is paralyzed; otherwise, nothing happens other than normal damage.

Arms or legs struck this way are considered crippled for 5d turns. A hit to a torso pressure point will diminish, or even totally arrest, the victim's breathing. He starts suffocating as per p. B122 and must make a HT roll every second to recover. A hit to the head will stun the victim; he must roll versus IQ to recover.

The Pressure Points skill can be used with Judo techniques, in conjunction with the Arm or Wrist Lock Maneuver (see p. 44). The Pressure Points skill is used after a successful lock has been applied; the attacker can choose to do damage in addition to the momentary crippling. This skill can also be used with missile weapons, if learned through a style like Kyudo (see p. 92).

Limitations: This skill is designed to work on the human body. Attacks on animals are at -6 unless a Zoology-2 or a Naturalist-4 roll is made. Nonhuman beings of basically humanoid physiology (Dwarves or Elves, for instance) are affected at -2 (same for an Elf attacking a human). More alien creatures (a human-looking being with three hearts in different parts of the body, for instance) have penalties - perhaps huge ones - or may be impervious to this type of attack (GM's call). All these penalties can be reduced or eliminated if the character can make appropriate Xenology (see *GURPS Space,* p. 37) and Physiology (p. B61) rolls.

CHARACTERS

There is enough documentation about the use of this skill to warrant an open mind. GMs may allow this skill in a realistic campaign; the difficulty of the hit rolls will make practical use of this skill very hard for most characters, so the potentially unbalancing effects can be kept in check. The GM may also change this skill to Mental/Very Hard, making high levels of the skill almost impossible for beginning characters.

Pressure Secrets (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisite: Pressure Points skill at 18+

This powerful skill teaches the user the most vulnerable vital points in the human body. A character with this skill can kill a normal man with a light blow, by crushing and tearing vital organs and nerve clusters with deadly precision. Due to its lethality, Pressure Secrets is very rarely taught. Many masters teach this skill only to one or two carefully chosen pupils after a long apprenticeship; others take the secret to their graves.

On a successful roll, the user's next hand-to-hand attack will do double damage after penetrating armor and Toughness; his hands or feet have in effect become impaling weapons. Attacks on normal "vital organs" (see p. B203) will do triple damage. This also applies to Arm Locks (see p. 44); the damage or DX penalty resulting from a lock is doubled, representing the ability to know exactly where to apply the pressure to tear or sprain joints and ligaments.

Limitations: The same as for the Pressure Points skill (above).

This is definitely not a realistic skill; GMs may restrict or forbid this skill if they consider it too unbalancing for their campaign. Alternatively, they can limit it to NPCs, thus creating terrifying enemies for the heroes.

Push (Physical/Hard)
No default

This difficult skill allows a character to "gently" push away an adversary, or to cause him to lose his balance. A small man with a high level in this skill could knock down or push away a weightlifter. The T'ai Chi style (see p. 104) is reputed to teach this form of attack to advanced students.

To use this skill, the character must score a hit in combat; the target can attempt any active defense, but PD from armor does not protect. This "blow" does no damage, but can be used in either of two ways. The first option is to cause the opponent to fall; the victim must roll against DX, at -1 for every point the Push roll was made by, or fall down. Alternatively, the attack can be treated as a Slam attack (see p. B112 and B106), with the Push skill replacing ST and DX.

Throwing Art (Physical/Hard)
No default
Prerequisite: Throwing at 16+

This skill transcends mere throwing and turns almost any object into a deadly weapon. Forks, kitchen knives, and other long sharp objects can be thrown as daggers; any blunt object can do thrust+1 damage; baseball bats do swing+1 crushing, pencils do thrust-3 impaling; playing cards do thrust-3 cutting damage!

Furthermore, when using a *balanced* throwing weapon, the character is even more lethal; add 1/5 of his Throwing Art skill to the damage he does with those weapons. This is not cumulative with bonuses from the Weapon Master advantage.

Zen Archery (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisite: Bow at level 20+

The archer must concentrate for 20-Skill turns (minimum 1). Successful use of this skill allows use of a bow with only 1/3 (round down) the normal penalties for target speed, range and size.

FOUR-COLOR MARTIAL ARTS

This section represents the "reality" of martial arts *comic books,* particularly Japanese and Chinese comic books, in which martial artists are portrayed as truly superhuman beings, far above even cinematic standards. Even so, some martial artists claim that true masters have some or all of these abilities.

The usual explanation for these powers is the development of one's *chi* or *ki.* The Chi is (to overly simplify a very complex concept) a combination of one's life-force and soul; it flows inside all human beings. The goal of many martial arts is to learn to channel one's Chi in a number of ways. Martial arts legends and fiction claim that some master practitioners are able to heal wounds, resist powerful blows, and even kill with their Chi.

In game terms, Chi can be represented either by super-abilities or by magic.

Super Martial ARTISTS

Using *GURPS Supers,* it is easy to create a campaign in which metahuman martial artists have speed, strength and dexteri-

ty impossible to normal humans. The flow of *chi,* expressed differently in different characters, can grant not just combat abilities, but also healing powers, levitation and even extrasensory perception.

The Nimba Cult, described in *Super Scum,* is a logical Enemy for any super-powered martial artist.

An interesting challenge in a super-powerful game is to build (for instance) a 500-point martial artist with *no* super-abilities, just to see how he stacks up against his metahuman competition. He may not be as strong or fast, but his training will be marvelous indeed . . .

Martial ARTS Magic

GMs may decide that some or all of the superhuman abilities of martial arts legend are just good old-fashioned sorcery (this would be most useful if the GM owns *GURPS Magic.)* In that case, he may devise a list of spells that are allowable for his campaign. Most of those spells should be subtle in nature (i.e.. the College of Mind Control), with a few aggressive spells (such as Deathtouch) thrown in.

The martial arts have a huge repertoire of techniques and methods for attack and defense. Most of them can easily be played out with the standard *GURPS* combat system. Still, players - especially those who are familiar with the many Eastern techniques of combat - may want more detail. The rules in this chapter will provide it. These maneuvers also give special flavor to the different martial arts "styles" described in Chapter 4, as each school favors some maneuvers over others. Martial artists will be able to roleplay this in combat, attacking and defending with maneuvers determined by the styles they choose.
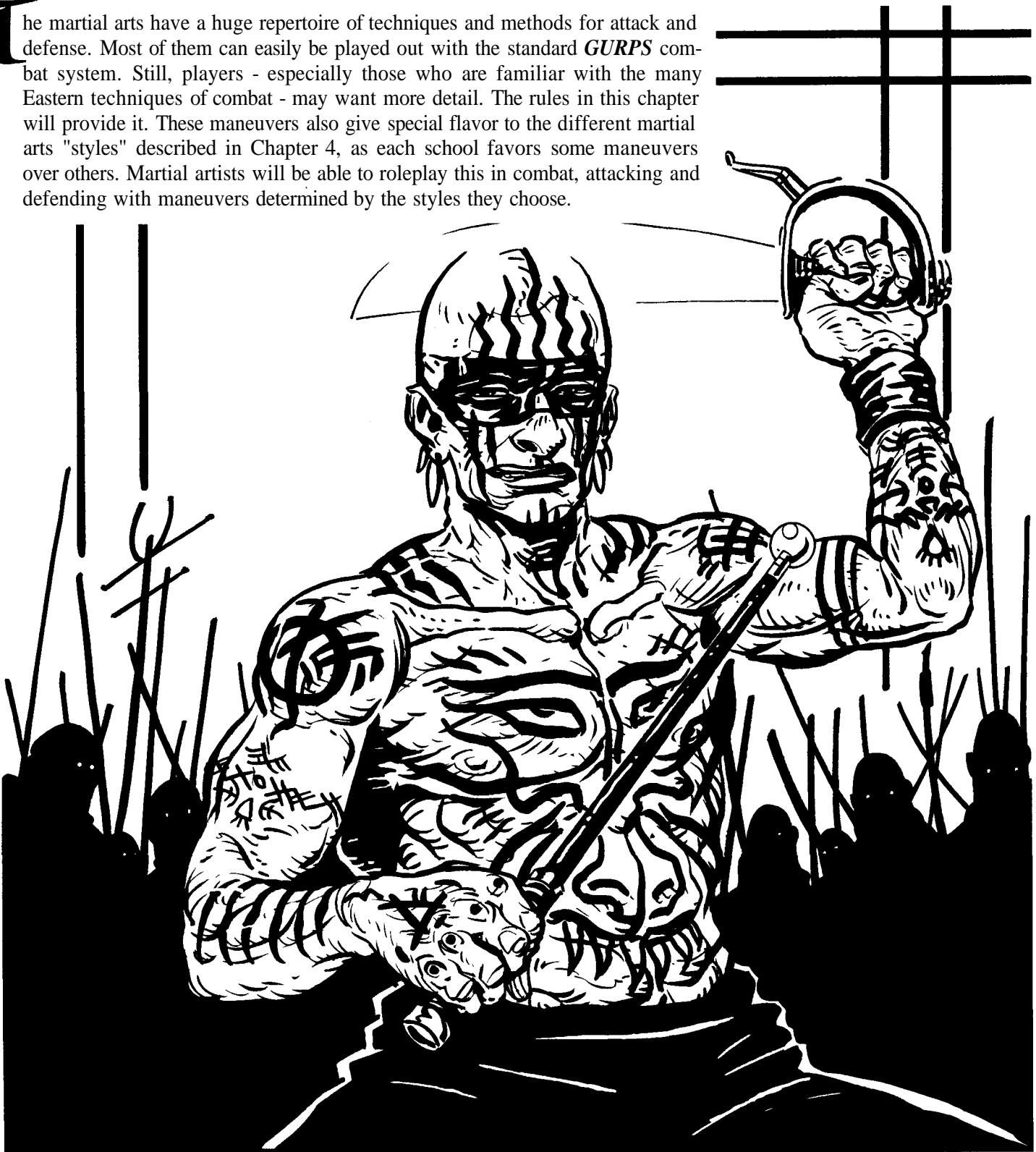
CREATING NEW MANEUVERS

The list of maneuvers presented here covers the basics - yet it only scratches the surface of martial arts tradition. Players and GMs of martial arts campaigns will want to add their favorite techniques to the list.

To translate a maneuver into *GURPS* terms, decide the following:

Name of the maneuver.

Difficulty. Most maneuvers are Hard.

Is it Cinematic or Realistic? It should be fairly easy to determine whether a given maneuver belongs in Chambara movies or whether it's taught in a local dojo!

Defaults. Base the default on a similar but simpler maneuver, or on an appropriate weapon skill, if one exists. Otherwise, hard-contact maneuvers can default to Karate or Brawling, while soft maneuvers can default to Judo or Wrestling, at appropriate penalties. Maneuvers with no obvious martial-arts default can be based on ST, DX, Acrobatics skill, or perhaps some other skill.

Limitation. Can the maneuver be learned at a level higher than the level of the ability from which it defaults? This makes sense for some maneuvers, and doesn't for others. See the listed maneuvers for examples.

Description. Describe the operation of the maneuver in game terms. Any maneuver with the potential for spectacular success should either be very hard to learn, or carry the risk of spectacular failure. This is not only for game balance ... it's the way martial arts combat really works. If there were a master technique that won all fights, every master would teach it.

On the other hand, some maneuvers *are* especially good against certain opposing maneuvers, and weak against others. This can be described in as much detail as your particular campaign enjoys.

What styles teach this maneuver? If the maneuver is appropriate to any of the existing styles in Chapter 4, add it to the list for those styles. Otherwise, the maneuver must belong to a new style which is part of the campaign; to *no* style (in which case it cannot be learned above default); or to a secret style (in which case no one can learn it at all unless they find a master in that style).

For guidelines on creation of a whole new *style,* see the sidebar on p. 71.

Despite the variety presented here, this remains a bare-bones description; there are dozens of variations of each maneuver! Each GM may customize these rules (see sidebar) to fit the level of detail of his campaign. Sortie may find extra detail unnecessary, particularly in a campaign where combat is not a primary feature. On the other hand, with some of the maneuvers described below, fights could be over a lot sooner! See the sidebar for suggestions on creating new maneuvers.

The Martial Arts Record *Sheet*

In *GURPS Martial Arts,* a fighter's combat maneuvers are like a magician's spells or a super's abilities. Since the character (and the player) must keep track of at least a half-dozen maneuvers, the best thing to do is to write them down. A fighter with only a few maneuvers can use the Skills column of the Character Sheet. Alternatively, a separate Martial Arts Record Sheet (see p. 157) can be added to the character sheet; it has space to describe each maneuver, as well as space for notes on cinematic skills and other useful information for martial artists.

MANEUVERS

A martial arts *maneuver* is a specific type of attack or defense. Maneuvers are treated like skills; each one defaults to one or more prerequisite skills, or to DX. Kicking, for instance, is a Hard maneuver defaulting to Karate-2. Some maneuvers can also default to other maneuvers (all special kicks, for instance, have two different defaults: one from Karate and another from the basic Kicking maneuver); this is a special exception to the *Double Defaults* restriction on p. B45. When figuring a maneuver from default level, always use the best default.

When a maneuver defaults to "any combat skill" (e.g., Feint), this means that a version of the maneuver is available for any hand weapon skill, or for any bare-handed combat skill. For maneuvers like this, a separate version is required for each combat skill (see *Specialization,* below).

Many fighters, especially in low-point-level campaigns, will have put no points into any maneuvers except those required by their style. They can still use any of the maneuvers below at the listed defaults!

LEARNING Maneuvers

If a style teaches a particular maneuver (styles are described in Chapter 4), a fighter *who knows that style* can study and improve it. Otherwise, the character can only have it at default level. Thus, a fighter can attempt any move, but his best maneuvers will be those taught by a style which he knows.

Maneuvers are learned according to the table below:

	Average	Hard
Default	0 points	0 points
Default+1	1/2 point	1 point
Default+2	1 point	2 points
Default+3	2 points	4 points
Default+4	4 points	6 points

Further increases cost 2 points per level.

When DX or a default skill goes up, each maneuver which defaults from it will increase as well. Some maneuvers, like Arm Lock and Feint, can be improved *beyond* the level of the controlling skill. Others, like Ground Fighting, cannot be improved beyond the level of the prerequisite; a fighter isn't likely to be a *better* swordsman while lying on the ground than he is while standing. This will be noted in the individual entries.

Specialization: Some maneuvers (e.g., Feint, Hit Location) also require specialization to a particular skill. In the case of some styles, these maneuvers could default from *several* different skills. If this is the case, the user must decide which specific skill(s) these maneuvers will actually be learned for.

Example: Saburo (see p. 20) has both the Karate and Katana skills at level 14. His style (Ninjutsu) gives him 2 points in the Feint maneuver for Karate or any weapon skill. This does *not* mean that his Feint with Karate and all of his weapon skills becomes 16! Instead, he must choose either to put 2 points into one Feint maneuver or 1 point into each of two Feints. He decides to spend 1 point to buy Feint (Karate)-15 and 1 point to buy Feint (Katana) 15. If he later increases his Karate skill to 15, his Feint (Karate) will go up to 16.

Depending on the difficulty of the maneuver, it will cost as much to increase it by 5 or 6 levels as it will to raise the *whole underlying skill* by one level! This makes it possible to create "one-trick" fighters - but it will usually be more cost-effective to divide points relatively evenly between skills and favored maneuvers.

Aggressive Parry (Hard)

Defaults to Karate Parry-4
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed 2/3 Karate skill level

This maneuver is taught by only a few styles, as it is not sportsmanlike by any means! Instead of trying to deflect a punch or a kick, the martial artist *attacks* the incoming hand or foot! He rolls a Parry at -4; a successful roll indicates that he has hit the attacker's limb. Roll damage normally. On a missed roll, the parry fails and the attack hits normally; on a critical failure, the *defender's* hand is hit, and takes +2 damage!

This maneuver can be used against hand-to-hand attacks only (in a cinematic campaign, GMs can allow characters to attack weapons in this manner, following the rules on p. B111). Only the PD of rigid or metal armor on the parrying arm or hand adds to the Aggressive Parry roll. Using this maneuver, either in a competition or in a dojo, is a sure way to be disqualified and expelled, and to acquire a bad Reputation. On the streets, on the other hand, expediency counts more than manners.

At the GM's option, *any* combat skill that can normally be used to parry might have a version of this maneuver, if the style that it is part of calls for it. Weapons could then be used to shatter other weapons, and even Brawling could have a version, as part of a particularly vicious style. No matter what skill it is based on, Aggressive Parry can never exceed the regular Parry for that skill.

DIRTY Tricks in a Campaign

Some of the maneuvers described in this section are considered "fighting dirty" - Eye Gouging and Face Attacks being the most glaring examples, as are the Head Butt and Ear Clap. These maneuvers are unsportsmanlike, brutal, and unseemly. They can win a fight quickly, however. This may lead to some PCs relying on them a lot. Using dirty tricks continually to win fights may derail the tone of a *Martial Arts* campaign, which is usually designed around flashy maneuvers and heroic fights. If the big tough brawler that you painstakingly design is going to get his eyes poked out and his groin smashed on the first round, the tone of the campaign is going to change.

There are ways to limit dirty tricks in a campaign. First, most typical martial arts PCs will not come from a background that teaches those tricks. Most traditional schools do not condone such behavior. This means that most characters trying dirty tricks would be doing them from a default, and may be better off trying a more conventional method.

Secondly, PCs who gain a reputation as dirty fighters will receive a different treatment from both friends and enemies. People they defeat by using such brutal tactics are a lot more likely to hold a grudge than those bested through "honorable" means. A failed attempt to dishonestly cripple an enemy will probably lead to a nastier fight than it would have been otherwise, with worse consequences for the brawler if he loses. The GM has several options open to him if he wishes to limit the use of these tricks, such having the PCs' peers frown on them, increasing the default penalties for non-streetwise characters, etc.

This is, of course, assuming the GM wishes to limit dirty tricks in a campaign. The more gritty and realistic a campaign is, the less likely dirty tricks will get in the way. A low-point cyberpunk campaign where all the PCs are street-bred thugs should have plenty of room for dirty tricks - and their enemies will be using them too!

COMBAT
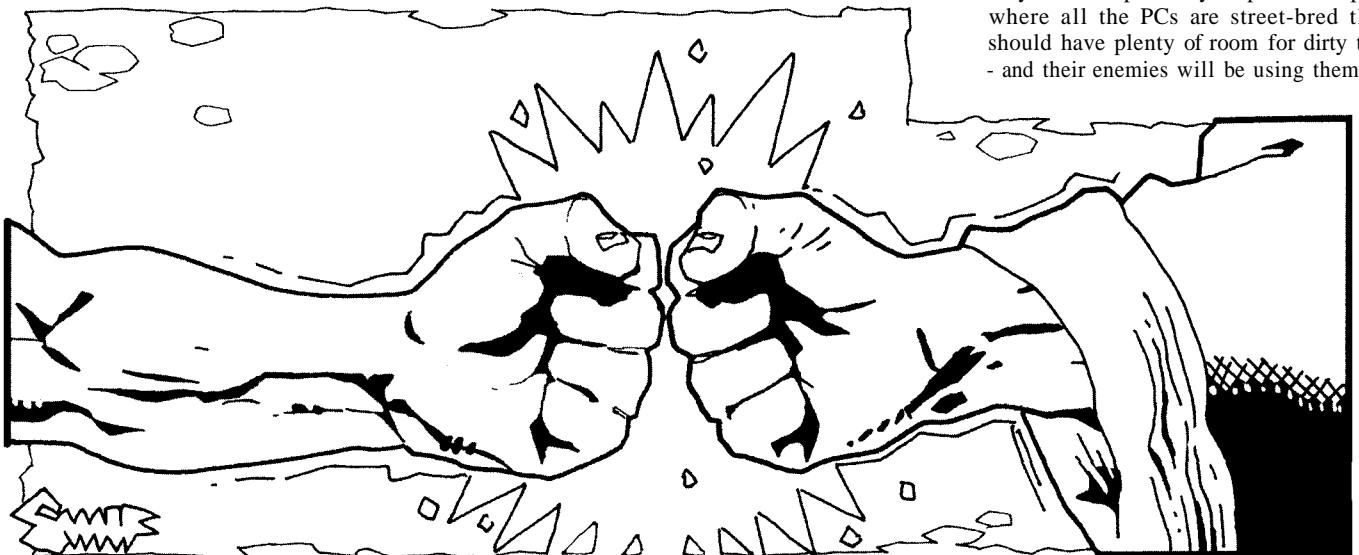
CONCENTRATION and CMARTIAL ARTS; an OPTIONAL Rule

Although many martial arts techniques eventually become instinctive, like swimming or riding a bike, a minimum concentration is necessary to perform them correctly. In the martial arts, losing your cool may mean losing the fight!

Martial artists with the Bad Temper disadvantage will fight at -2 DX if they fail a Will roll to keep their emotions in check. Other mental disadvantages can lead to similar problems. A Lecherous combatant will be in trouble if a beautiful woman starts cheering him during a tournament - or if he faces a sexy foe. An Intolerant character may feel too contemptuous of his enemy - after all, a miserable (fill in the blank) can be no threat to me, a true-blooded (fill in the blank)! Will rolls will keep these disadvantages at bay, but an unmodified roll of 14 or more is always a miss (see p. B93).

Quirks will create a similar problem, but Will Rolls to resist are at +1 and the DX penalty if the roll is failed is -1 to DX.

Aggressive Parrying Kick (Hard)   Defaults to Parrying Kick-4
Prerequisite: Brawling or Karate
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill/2

An aggressive version of the Parrying Kick (see p. 53). This works exactly as an Aggressive Parry (above), except that it can only be used against low-line attacks (usually kicks to areas 11-16; see p. B211), and a successful parry does kicking damage instead of punching damage. Stopping a kick this way is sometimes referred to as "jamming a kick."

Arm or Wrist Lock (Average)   Defaults to Judo or Wrestling*
Prerequisite: Judo or Wrestling*

A character with the Judo or Wrestling skill can twist an opponent's limbs, paralyzing or crippling him. First, you must either successfully parry an attack in hand-to-hand combat (this *can* be a weapon attack, if the foe is no more than 1 yard away) or make a Grapple (using DX, Judo or Wrestling). If you succeed, you grab one of the victim's arms. *On the same turn,* roll a Quick Contest: your Arm Lock skill vs. his DX, Wrestling or Judo skill (whichever is best). If you win, you have trapped his arm in a lock. The attacker may indicate the particular nature of the lock (i.e., behind the foe's back, his arm extended from his side, etc.). Your foe may try to break free; use Arm Lock+4 or ST against his ST or Judo in another Quick Contest. If you win, you have immobilized the arm; the victim can try to break free in subsequent rounds, but at a cumulative -1 penalty.

On the next turn, you may choose to inflict pain or damage on the trapped limb. A third Quick Contest (Arm Lock or ST vs. HT) is required. The victim is at +3 if he has the High Pain Threshold advantage and your intention was only to cause pain. If you win, you inflict one point of damage or *pain* (causing DX and IQ penalties without actual damage) for every point by which you make the roll. If you do crippling damage, you break the arm or hand you were holding; no further damage can be inflicted, but all further attempts to cause pain are at +3! The arm lock counts as torture on an Interrogation roll (see p. B66). The victim must also make a Will roll minus the damage inflicted, or drop any weapon he was holding in that hand. Of course, if the hand or arm is crippled, any weapon held by it is automatically dropped.

Furthermore, other attacks may be inflicted on the victim. Close Combat attacks can be used against someone held by the lock; the victim defends at -4, in addition to any other penalties caused by the damage or pain caused by the lock itself.

*Some styles use a stick, tonfa or other weapon as a lever to inflict an Arm Lock. Use the rules above, except that the default and prerequisite skills become the appropriate weapon skill (usually Short Staff, Shortsword or Tonfa).

Axe Kick (Hard)   Defaults to Karate-4 or Kicking-2
Prerequisite: Karate or Kicking
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This attack consists of lifting the leg over the target and then bringing it down in a chopping motion. The attack does more damage than a normal kick, but is difficult to execute. An Axe Kick can only be used on targets that are less than one yard in height (a kneeling man, for instance), unless it is executed like a Jump Kick, in which case the roll is at an additional -1 but the attack does +1 damage. Damage is thrust+2 (+3 if jumping), plus Karate bonuses. If jumping, treat a miss like a missed Jump Kick (p. 52).

Back Kick (Hard)

Defaults to Karate-4 or Kicking-2
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This maneuver lets a fighter attack back hexes without changing facing. The roll is at Karate-4, in addition to any other modifiers. The user must be aware of the attacker behind him. The kicker's active defenses against all attacks are at -2 for that round.

Breakfall (Average)

Defaults to Judo or Acrobatics
Prerequisite: Judo

This is a basic Judo maneuver, involving slapping the mat or ground to absorb the shock of landing. When the user is thrown for damage (see Judo Throw, p. 51), a successful Breakfall will avoid damage. In any fall, a roll against Breakfall will reduce the effective distance of the fall by one yard. This is *not* cumulative with the results of a successful Acrobatics roll (p. B48).

Cat Stance (Average)

Defaults to Karate-3
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate+2

The *Neko-Ashi-Dachi,* or Cat Stance, was developed in Okinawa, and is used mostly by Okinawan styles and some Chinese forms (although it could be easily incorporated into fantasy and science-fiction styles). Almost all balance is shifted to the back leg as the slightly raised front leg comes perpendicular to the left foot. The result is a leg that is prepared to strike almost instantaneously. It takes 1 second to enter Cat Stance, or no time at all if a roll is made.

On a successful Cat Stance roll, anyone entering the fighter's front hex may be kicked, without that kick counting as an action - essentially a "free" attack, although this can only be done once per turn. This allows the fighter to attack and then be ready to counterattack or defend. This kick is treated like an ordinary Karate kick. Roll at Cat Stance-2, or Karate-5 if the default has not been improved at all. A failed roll will unbalance the kicker; -2 to DX and active defenses that turn.

Going into a Cat Stance is also useful in breaking Grapples from the rear (as long as the Cat Stance is performed *after* being grappled). If the fighter is grappled from the rear, he may attack with an Elbow Strike *and attempt to Break Free on the same turn.*

A person performing a Cat Stance may either change facing (any direction) or move 1 hex forward on his turn.

Choke Hold (Hard)

Defaults to Judo-2 or Wrestling-3
Prerequisite: Judo or Wrestling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This special Grapple consists of locking one forearm around the target's neck, applying pressure to the windpipe and effectively shutting off the victim's oxygen supply. A Choke Hold is very difficult to break: the more the target struggles, the tighter the choke becomes. This maneuver can also result in permanent damage to the target's throat. It was used by police to control dangerous criminals until its potential lethality prompted the authorities to ban it.

To effect a Choke Hold, the attacker must have Grappled the victim with both hands *from behind.* After a successful grapple, a Choke Hold roll is necessary to place the victim in the hold (the target can make any Active Defense against this; PD does not protect). Once the hold is in place, the victim starts to suffocate (see p. B122). Breaking Free is very difficult; the victim is at -5 to all rolls to do so (attacks like Elbow Strikes can be used without any additional penalties, however). Also, the Choke Hold can inflict damage as per Strangling see p. B112), if the user so desires; it may happen accidentally, if the victim is

MANEUVERS AND COMBAT/WEAPON ART OR SPORT Skills

There are a few purely artistic or athletic styles (such as Kendo, p. 88) whose Primary skills include *only* Combat/Weapon Art or Sport skills and not "true" combat skills. In such a case, the listed Maneuvers of that style *can* default from the Art or Sport form of the skill, but such maneuvers are themselves Art or Sport forms, and are used at -3 in real combat.

For each artistic style, there is also a related combat-oriented style (Kenjutsu, in the case of Kendo); characters who plan to enter combat should consider learning that style instead.
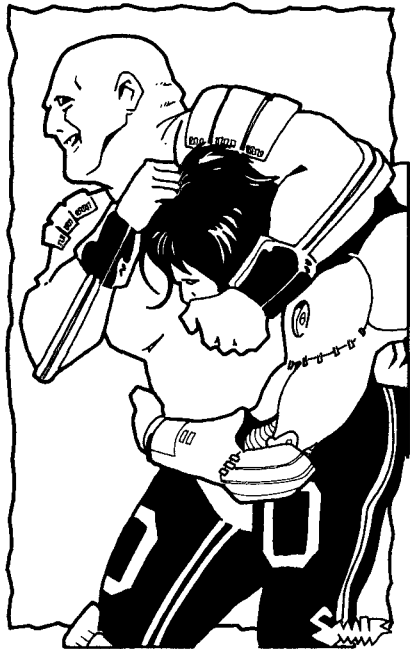
struggling wildly. Against an uncontrolled victim, make a Choke Hold roll at an additional -2 to avoid inflicting damage; if the attacker intends to hurt a thrashing victim, add +3 to the ST of the attacker for damage purposes.

Close Combat (Average)   Defaults to any close combat
weapon skill-2 or other weapon skill-6
Prerequisite: Any weapon skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level, or skill-3 for long weapons

In close combat, weapon attacks made with legal close combat weapons are normally at -2, while longer weapons may not be used to attack at all. This maneuver can be learned to eliminate the -2 for using a close combat weapon at reach C, or to allow longer weapons to attack in close combat.

For a legal close combat weapon (Blackjack, Knife, etc.), this maneuver can be improved to allow the weapon to be used at no penalty in close combat, although the Close Combat maneuver cannot exceed the prerequisite skill level.

For a longer weapon, this maneuver allows an attack to be made at a reach 1 hex short of its normal range, but at -6. This involves holding the weapon as far away from the target as possible and requires at least 1 hex of clearance behind and to one side of the attacker. Characters can reduce the penalty with certain weapons by learning to shift grips on their weapon, practicing attacks that maximize the available maneuvering space, etc. By improving this maneuver, the penalty for using a longer weapon can be reduced to as little as -3.

This maneuver must be learned for each weapon skill the character wishes to improve. Improving this maneuver is useful if it is used in conjunction with the Corps-a-Corps maneuver (see below).

Corps-a-Corps (Hard)   Defaults to Fencing or Jitte/Sai
Prerequisite: Fencing or Jitte/Sai
Cannot be improved beyond prerequisite skill+2

A fencer uses this maneuver to keep an enemy in Close Combat by locking blades. To do this, the attacker must begin his turn in a front hex of his opponent. He then steps into the opponent's hex and attempts to bind the opponent's blade. He must *win* a Quick Contest (Corps-a-Corps versus the enemy's weapon skill) to lock blades that turn, taking one action, successful or not.

Modifiers: Corps-a-Corps is at -3 vs. a Stop Hit (see p. 55).

If the attacker does not win the Quick Contest, treat it as a case of two characters in the same hex. Either a Stop Hit or a Riposte (see p. 54) will give the opponent a chance to hit the attacker before this happens. If the attacker wins, the blades are locked, and the opponent is free to perform any normal action (at an additional -2) that doesn't involve his sword. However, if the opponent wishes to leave the hex, *with his weapon,* he must win or tie a subsequent contest between his weapon skill+2 and the attacker's Corps-a-Corps. Each attempt counts as an action. He may try each turn (stepping out of the hex the turn he succeeds), or perform some other legal action. Simply dropping the weapon will allow him to step back out of the hex that turn, but the opponent may flip the weapon to any adjacent hex with a weapon skill roll.

The fencer who initiated Corps-a-Corps does not need to do anything to keep the two blades locked together. He may release the bound blade at any time. He may perform any other close combat action *at an additional -2* (improving the Close Combat maneuver does not eliminate this penalty), such as stabbing with a dagger in the off-hand, attempting to grab with an empty off-hand, etc. In a locked-blades situation, apply a -2 to all actions (except an attempt to break free of the bind) by either opponent, above and beyond any close combat modifiers.
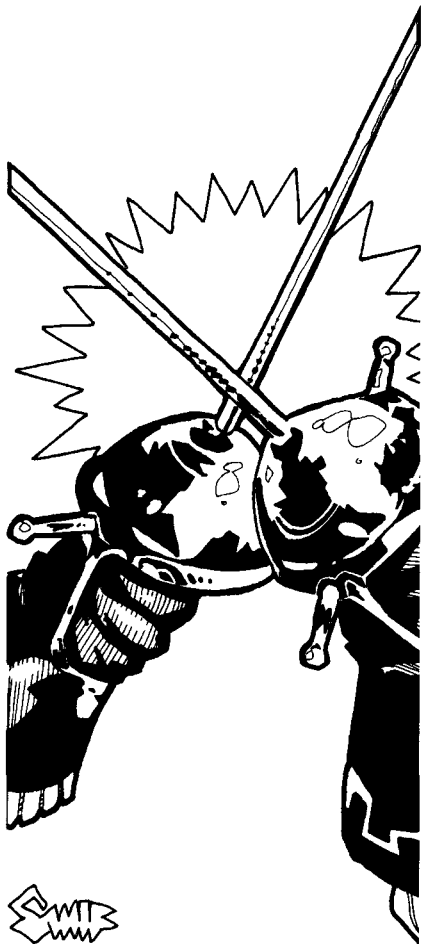
Any fencing weapon can bind any other fencing weapon. Jitte/Sai weapons can bind fencing weapons, light swords (2 lbs. or less) and knives. Knives, shortswords, broadswords, katanas, etc., cannot bind other blades.

Disarming (Hard)   *Defaults to DX, Judo or weapon skill*
Prerequisites: None

This maneuver allows an unarmed man to take an attacker's weapon. The defender must have successfully parried the weapon attack, or must grab the foe's weapon arm, as per p. B111, substituting Disarming for DX. On the next turn, a Quick Contest between Disarming and DX is necessary to remove the weapon. A failure means the attacker keeps the weapon; a critical failure means a hit on the hand! For weapons that have disarming capabilities, replace Disarming with the appropriate weapon skill.

For another way to disarm an opponent, see Arm and Wrist Lock, above.

Drop Kick (Hard)   *Defaults to Karate-4 or Wrestling-3*
Prerequisite: Karate or Wrestling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This kick uses both feet in an attack designed to knock a foe down. The kicker must move at least one yard before attempting it. A roll against Drop Kick is required. The target can Dodge or Block, but cannot Parry. The kick does thrust+2 damage, and has a reach of 2 hexes. Additionally, this kick is treated as a Slam (p. B112) at +2 ST for the attacker. The attacker automatically falls down after the kick, whether he connected or not. (In a cinematic campaign, an Acrobatics-5 roll can be attempted to let the kicker bounce off the foe and regain his feet.)

Ear Clap (Average)   *Defaults to Karate-6 or Brawling-6*
Prerequisite: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

An attacker can pop an enemy's eardrums, stunning and deafening him. Two skill rolls must be made at the same time; each counts as an attack. If the multiple attack rules are not in use, the attacker must make an All-Out Attack to perform this maneuver.

After hitting, roll a Quick Contest: Ear Clap vs. HT. If the target loses, he is physically stunned (see p. B127); he is also at DX-2 and deaf for 2d seconds. On a critical miss on the HT roll, or a critical success on the Ear Clap, the victim is deafened for the rest of the combat, and must roll to recover as if from a crippling injury (see p. B129). A permanent injury can result in the Hard of Hearing or even Deaf disadvantage.

A One-handed ear clap would require only one attack. If the victim loses the Quick Contest, he is deafened in *one* ear for 2d seconds (treat as hard of hearing) at -1 DX. He is still stunned if he loses the Quick Contest. The result of a critical miss on HT or critical success on Ear Clap is potentially permanent Hard of Hearing, not deafness.

Elbow Strike (Average)   *Defaults to Karate-2*
Prerequisites: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This maneuver is particularly useful if somebody is attacking or grappling you from behind. To attack enemies behind you in Close Combat, roll against Elbow Strike, with no modifiers for not facing the enemy (attacks to a specific part of the body, such as the vitals or head, are at an extra -1, for a total of -3, in addition to the standard penalties on p. B203). Frontal attacks are resolved as for a normal punch. The attack does the same damage as a Karate punch.

Eye-Gouging (Hard)   *Defaults to Brawling-9 or Karate-9*
Prerequisite: Brawling or Karate
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This is the basic eye-poke attack. Damage is thrust-4 plus Brawling or Karate bonuses. Any damage past 3 points is ignored; an eye gouge is very unlikely to

FRIGHT Checks AND Martial ARTISTS

Getting scared can be disastrous to a martial artist. If he is overcome by his fear, he may suddenly forget all the techniques he has learned until he regains his composure.

A martial artist who fails a Fright Check (see p. B93) will suffer a temporary loss of his skills. Hand-to-hand attacks will be made at DX level, and weapon attacks at default level! This is in addition to all other Fright Check effects. This effect will last for 1d rounds; at the end of it, he will make the same Fright Check with a +1 bonus. If he still misses, the same effect will take place. Each subsequent roll will get an additional +1. If the fighter enters combat during that period, he will get a +5 bonus for the next Fright Check. Combat Reflexes give a +4 bonus to resist this effect only (not cumulative with the +2 to resist the Fright Check itself, as per p. B93).

This effect is useful to GMs combining *Horror* and *Martial Arts* in a campaign, but it can help the PCs as well. Whenever a swarm of cannon-fodder NPCs is confronted by a true master of the martial arts, they should all make a Fright Check.

Modifiers: the attacker's Reputation (negative and positive levels all count against the roll); -3 if he has just wiped out a roomful of similarly-outfitted NPCs; -1 for every additional PC of high status facing the group. Failed rolls will work as above, giving the heroes the edge.

PCs who are not highly skilled may try to deceive the NPCs, convincing them that they are deadly masters. Fast-Talk and Acting rolls must be made; every point by which each roll was made will subtract from the NPCs' Will rolls! GMs may require the player to roleplay the attempt at deceit.

The CONTEST of WILLS

This is a typical martial arts staple, particularly in samurai legends and films. Two warriors face each other, and stare intensely into each other's eyes; suddenly, one breaks eye contact, and walks away beaten, or makes a desperate charge, knowing that he will lose. The characters' willpower, poise and skill all influence this battle of the *chis*.

To engage in a Contest of Wills, *both* fighters must be able to take the Step and Concentrate maneuver (see p. B106). Either character can initiate it by locking eyes with the opponent during the Concentrate maneuver. If the foe accepts the challenge, move on to the next section. If he wishes to reject it, he must make a Will roll to avoid being drawn in anyway; if successful, he can take any other action (including attacking the challenger) normally.

To resolve this contest, the two opponents enter a normal contest of skills - in this case, Will versus Will - with the following modifiers. The better fighter gets +1 for every 3 points by which his best skill exceeds the foe's best skill. Add each character's Reputation to his effective Will. A *negative* Reputation may help or hurt, at the GM's option. For instance, a character with a -2 Reputation as a ruthless killer may actually get a +2 to his roll. A successful Acting roll will give a +1 to the roll, unless the opposing character has Body Language, Detect Lies or Empathy. Characters may replace their IQ with their Hypnotism or Mental Strength skill, if it is higher. Other reaction modifiers can be included, at the GM's discretion.

Roll the contest until one opponent fails his roll, as specified in p. B87. The loser must them make a reaction roll, at +1 for every point by which he lost the contest; refer to the Potential Combat table for the result. Even if the loser attacks, he will have a DX penalty of -1 for every point by which he lost the contest of wills.

The Contest of Wills is usually reserved for heroic PCs and NPCs. When a PC is confronted with cannon-fodder characters, resolve their reaction with the Fright Check rules (see sidebar, p. 38).

go past the eyes into the brain. However, even if no damage is done, eye-gouging is extremely painful. Roll 1d for every point of damage rolled (maximum 2), or 1d-1 if no damage is rolled; that's the DX and IQ penalty for the next turn. Furthermore, the character must make a HT-3 roll (HT if he has High Pain Threshold) or be stunned; roll against HT or IQ (whichever is higher) to recover.

Face Attacks (Hard)
Defaults to Brawling-5
Prerequisite: Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This nasty attack consists of grabbing a facial feature (ears and lips are favorites) and *pulling* it until something gives! Damage is thrust-3 plus Brawling bonuses (maximum damage is 1d, no matter how strong the character is). Like eye-gouging, this will induce a lot of pain: the victim will be at -2 DX and IQ or *twice* the damage rolled, whichever is higher (halve the penalties if the victim has High Pain Threshold).

Feint (Hard)
Defaults to any combat skill
Prerequisite: Any combat skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill+4

This maneuver is identical to the Feint described on p. B105. It can be raised up to four levels past the prerequisite skill level.

Example: Tsung has Karate-16. Using Karate as a default, he has a Feint skill of 16. He can raise his Feint (Karate) to 17 with 1 point. 2 points will increase this to 18, and each additional 2 points will increase his feint one more level, to a maximum of 20.

Finger Lock (Hard)
Defaults to Arm Lock-3
*Prerequisite: Arm Lock*

This Arm Lock variant allows the martial artist to grab fingers and twist them painfully, often snapping them. Use the rules for Arm Locks (p. 44) but all rolls are at -3 (except damage rolls). If enough damage to cripple the hand is done, the finger or fingers grabbed have been broken and any extra damage is lost. This maneuver allows for a quick disabling attack; on the other hand, if the victim makes a Will roll to ignore the pain (no roll is necessary if he has High Pain Threshold); he can throw punches at -3 skill with the crippled hand (a failure inflicts an extra 1d of damage to the *arm),* or use Elbow Strikes at no penalty.

Fleche (Average)
Defaults to Fencing-3
Prerequisite: Fencing; cannot exceed Fencing skill level

This attack consists of a swift advance to close the distance with the enemy, ending with a thrusting attack with a fencing weapon. An attack in fleche allows the attacker to move one *extra* hex with his Step and Attack maneuver. Attacks
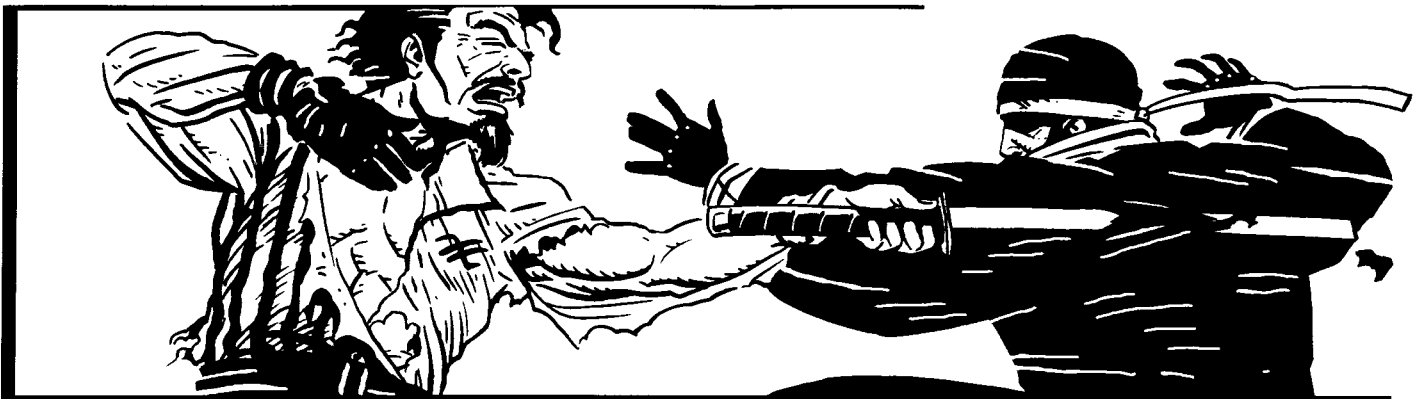
during this advance are at -3. The effective skill of the attacker to resist Feints, Ripostes and Stop Hits is also at -3: the swift advance opens the character up for counterattacks.

Floor Lunge (Hard)

Defaults to Fencing-4
Prerequisite: Fencing
Cannot exceed Fencing skill level

The Fencing equivalent of a Jump Kick, this maneuver consists of a lunge so long and low that the fencer loses his balance and places his free hand on the floor to support himself. Treat this as a crouch; he will have to spend a turn getting up, during which he will not be able to add the bonus of a Retreat to his defenses. The floor lunge adds 1 hex of reach to the fencer's attack, and +2 damage; furthermore, it subtracts 2 from the defender's Parry or Block because it comes in so low. All active defenses by the attacker are also at -2 on the turn of the lunge. If the multiple attack rules are being used, the floor lunge takes the place of 2 normal attacks. This maneuver is illegal in modern fencing tournaments.

Ground Fighting (Hard)

Defaults to any combat skill-4
Prerequisite: Any combat/weapon skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

Fighting while lying down has a penalty of -4 to all hand-to-hand attacks and -3 to all active defenses. Some styles teach techniques to fight from the ground; these techniques are represented by extra required points in this maneuver. Fighters can use Ground Fighting (Combat Skill) at no penalty to attack, and a roll against Ground Fighting allows an active defense at only -1.

Hand Parry (Special)   Roll vs. 2/3 Karate, Brawling or Boxing

All styles with Karate, Brawling or Boxing have hand parries. A bare-handed parry is made exactly as described in the *Basic Set.* It can be improved *only* by buying Enhanced Parry (see p. 58). Many combinations - in some styles, almost all important combinations - begin with a hand parry to deflect a blow, followed by a counterattack. Note that there are restrictions on what can be parried bare-handed with each combat skill; see the individual skill descriptions for details.

Any style with Karate, Brawling or Boxing as a primary skill has the Hand Parry maneuver at no extra cost.

Hand Strike (Special)   Roll vs. Karate, Brawling or Boxing
Cannot be improved

All styles with Karate, Brawling or Boxing have hand strikes, from the basic closed fist to exotica like stiff-finger thrusts, knife blows and the ubiquitous "karate chop." Any unarmed bout - even in a style that emphasizes kicks - will have more hand strikes than any other type of blow, just because these attacks are quick and relatively safe for the attacker.

All these hand strikes do Thrust-2 damage plus skill bonuses, and use the basic Karate, Boxing or Brawling skill; skill in this maneuver cannot be improved. A Karate or Boxing practitioner adds 1/5 of his skill to the damage he does; a Brawling practitioner without Karate or Boxing skill adds 1/10 of his skill. Use only the best bonus. For more damage, use the Pressure Points or Pressure Secrets skills.

Any style with Karate, Brawling or Boxing as a primary skill has the Hand Strike maneuver at no extra cost.

VITAL ORGANS

The following are optional rules for players who want more detail in combat. Certain parts of the body are more susceptible to damage than others. Below are the effects of successful attacks on them, in addition to normal damage effects.

Groin

The groin is included in area 11 on the Parts of the Body Table on p. B203. It has a -3 penalty to hit, and can only be targeted with a thrusting attack. A miss by 1 hits the body or the leg (roll a die). On human males, this is excruciatingly painful; on a hit, the target must make a HT roll, at -1 for every point of damage, or be physically stunned. If an unmodified HT roll is missed, the victim falls unconscious (see p. B127). High Pain Threshold gives a +5 to the roll. Low Pain Threshold *doubles* the penalties.

Jaw

The jaw is at -6 to hit; if the attack misses by 1, the face is hit. The victim must roll against HT-2 or HT minus damage taken (whichever is *less)* or be physically stunned.

Kidneys

The kidneys can only be targeted on an attack to the victim's back. They are at -4 to hit; a miss by 1 indicates a hit to the body. Crushing attacks do 1.5x damage; other types do damage like an ordinary hit to the vitals (see p. B203).

Nose

The nose is targeted at -6; a miss by 1 hits the face. Hollywood movies and pulp novels to the contrary, it is almost impossible to kill a person by driving nose splinters into the brain. A blow to the nose is extremely painful, however. On a hit, the victim must make a roll against HT-1 (HT+4 if he has High Pain Threshold, -1 per point of damage if he has Low Pain Threshold) or be physically stunned.

Throat

Attacks on the neck can be lethal. The throat is at -5 to hit; a miss by 1 hits the body. Crushing attacks do 1.5x damage; cutting and impaling attacks both do 2x damage. The victim is stunned if he takes total hits over 1/3 HT to the neck. If he takes over HT from a *crushing* attack, the throat may be crushed. Roll vs. HT; if the victim fails the HT roll, his throat has been crushed. He must make an additional HT roll each turn, losing 1 hit if he fails, until he dies or receives the appropriate first aid. If the neck takes over HT damage from a *cutting* attack, a successful HT roll is necessary to avoid decapitation!

PARTIAL Injuries

A realistic fact of combat is that an injury that will not cripple a body part will still decrease the effectiveness of a fighter. Usually, adrenalin will compensate for pain and injury over the first furious seconds of a fight, so most normal *GURPS* combats need not bother with the pain in an arm or a leg. Long tournaments with fights lasting several minutes, or a long string of separate fights, however, will last long enough to make bruises and minor sprains tell on the characters. To simulate this, GMs may wish to use the optional rules below.

A fighter can ignore the effects of all non-crippling injuries for (2xHT) seconds. At the end of that time, he will start suffering some impairment. The severity of this will be determined by the amount and location of the damage. Characters with High Pain Threshold *halve* all penalties, rounding down (so, a -1 penalty is fully ignored); a Meditation roll will also halve all penalties.

Arms: A character who takes damage to an arm will lose some effectiveness in its use. If he has taken less than 1/5 HT damage, the limb is hurt but still fully functional; the character suffers pain when he uses the arm, but that is all. He is at -1 DX for any action that involves that arm; this includes using two-handed weapons. If he has taken more than 1/5 HT but less than 1/3 HT damage, the arm is severely damaged, and motor abilities are lost; he is at -3 DX, and using the arm for strenuous activities may require a Will roll (GM's decision). If the damage is more than 1/3 HT, and up to 1/2 HT (which automatically cripples the arm), the character is at -5 DX for actions involving the arm.

Head Butt (Average)
Defaults to Karate-6* or Brawling-6
Prerequisites: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This common brawling technique has been adopted by some pragmatic martial arts styles. It can only be used in close combat. The head butt is an attack against the opponent's head, using one's own head as a weapon. Roll against the Head Butt maneuver; roll at +1 if you have Grappled the enemy with both hands. The victim cannot Parry; Dodges are at -1 due to the close quarters; a Block at -3 may also be attempted. The attack does Thrust-1 damage to the Brain (see p. B203); a steel helmet or something similar gives +1 damage. A miss has no effect; a critical miss results in the attacker taking Thrust-1 to his own brain! If the victim has a DR of 4 or higher (including the 2 points from his natural DR), the attacker must roll vs. HT or take ld-3 damage to the brain.

This is not an orthodox martial arts maneuver. Most styles will not teach it; if Head Butt is not listed in a character's style, that fighter must use the Brawling default instead of his Karate skill.

Head Lock (Hard)
Defaults to Judo-4 or Wrestling-4
Prerequisite: Judo or Wrestling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This attack consists of putting the target's head in a lock, similar in some ways to a Choke Hold, but holding it in such a way that the target can be thrown while using the neck as the axis of the throw - which will almost certainly break the target's neck. After Grappling the foe, the attacker must roll against Head Lock to grab the neck (the target can make any Active Defense against this; PD does not protect). On a success, the target's head has been put in a lock. The following round, the attacker can try to either Choke the victim (treat this as a normal Strangling roll), or he can throw him; the throw is resolved as a Quick Contest between the attacker's Judo or Wrestling skill and the defender's ST, DX, Judo or Wrestling, *whichever is highest.* If the attacker wins, the target takes swing damage (plus a bonus equal to % Wrestling or Judo skill) to the neck, which is multiplied by 1.5. If the defender wins or ties, no damage is taken and the victim can try to Break Free.

See the Neck Snap maneuver (p. 53) for the lasting effects of neck damage.

Hit Location (Hard) Defaults to any combat skill-3
Prerequisite: Any combat/weapon skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This maneuver lets the attacker reduce the penalties for hit location. Hit Location must be bought separately for each combat skill. One does not roll against the Hit Location maneuver to use it; instead, each level of Hit Location gives the attacker a bonus that can be used to offset hit location penalties. This bonus is +1 if Hit Location is known at Skill-2, +2 if it is known at Skill-1 and +3 if it is known at Skill. No further improvement is possible. This bonus can never result in the attack being made at a higher level than the prerequisite skill; it can *only* be used to offset hit location penalties.

Example: Geoff has Karate-15 and Hit Location-15. This gives a bonus of +3. He can attack the brain (-7 to hit) at only -4 and the vitals (-3 to hit) at no penalty; he may also attack the arms or legs (-2 to hit) at no penalty, but not at +1.

Hit Location has *no effect* on maneuvers that are already targeted on specific parts of the body (e.g., Eye Gouging, Face Attacks, Head Butt, etc.). To improve your chance of hitting with such a maneuver, improve the maneuver.

Hook Kick (Hard)
Defaults to Karate-3 or Kicking-1
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

The attacker pivots on one foot, spinning his body and delivering a powerful kick. It does thrust+1 damage, plus Karate bonuses; it is also at -1 to Parry. If the attack misses or is successfully parried, the attacker must make another Hook Kick roll or lose his balance (-2 to all defense rolls).

Jab (Average)
Defaults to Boxing-3 or Karate-3
Prerequisite: Boxing
Cannot exceed Boxing skill level

This is a quick snapping blow which can either allow multiple light attacks or be used as a feint for a more powerful attack. A Jab allows one extra attack that round, but both attacks must be jabs. Jab damage is Thrust-3 plus Boxing bonuses. Also, a single Jab can be used instead of a Feint maneuver; the Jab is counted as an attack, and if it hits can do damage normally, but the same to-hit roll is used as a Feint roll (see p. B105); the next attack will get the bonuses of the Feint (if any).

Example: Leon "the Drill" Martinez has Boxing-14 and Jab-13. He attacks an adversary with Boxing-12 with a Jab. He rolls a 9, making his Jab roll by 4; the other boxer rolls his Parry successfully. However, the boxer also has to roll against his Boxing skill; he rolls a 12, losing the Contest by 4 points. On the next round, Leon throws a punch; his enemy will be at -4 to defend.

Judo Parry (Special)
Roll vs. 2/3 Judo
Cannot be improved

The Judo skill includes training in subtle footwork and evading blows. This maneuver allows the character to guide a foe's attack away from or past himself, effectively allowing him to dodge the attack. This still counts as a Parry, not a Dodge, and the character is still limited to his usual number of parries per turn. Contact is not required but it is common, and a Judo Parry *can* be used to initiate an Arm Lock, Judo Throw, or any other maneuver that can be initiated with a Parry. There is no *aggresive* version of this skill, however.

Unlike a true Dodge, Judo Parry may not recieve Acrobatics or Boxing bonuses, nor may it be used against ranged weapons.

Any style with Judo as a primary skill has the this maneuver at no extra cost.

Judo Throw (Special)
Roll vs. Judo skill
Cannot be improved

This maneuver is described on p. B51. A martial artist may also inflict damage with the throw. A thrown foe, if the attacker wishes, will take 1d-2 damage. A successful Judo throw at -6 to skill will result in the victim falling on his head, taking that damage to the brain. A successful Breakfall roll will avoid this damage.

PARTIAL Injuries (Continued))

If any of the Multiple Action rules are being used, at least 1/3 of all the character's attacks will be at the penalties described above, because they will be using the damaged arm.

Legs: If less than 1/5 HT damage is taken to one leg, the fighter will be at -1 to kick with *either* leg (either he is using the injured leg to kick, or he is supporting his body with it!). Any action requiring the character to travel at his full Move will require a Will roll to overcome the pain. Damage between 1/5 HT and 1/3 HT will reduce Move by 1. Kicking with the injured leg will be done at -3 DX; using the good leg to kick is done at -1 DX, but the character must make a HT roll or he will aggravate his leg injury, taking 1 point of damage. Injuries between 1/3 HT and 1/2 HT reduce Move by 3, the fighter is at -5 to kick with the injured leg, and he cannot stand on the injured leg.

Body: Body injuries can hurt combat performance. Reduce Move and DX by 1 if someone takes more than 1/2 HT damage to the body, and by 2 if he takes more than 2/3 HT damage.

Example Of MARTIAL ARTS COMBAT

In a dark alley, the leaders of two rival gangs confront each other. Hiro Ngyen has ST 12, DX 12, IQ 10 and HT 12. He is proficient in Tae Kwon Do. Important skills and maneuvers are Karate-15, Back Kick-14, Elbow Strike-13, Hook Kick-15, Jump Kick-13, Kicking-15, and Spin Kick-14, Dodge 7 and Parry 11. His opponent, Pedro Garcia, has ST 11, DX 13, IQ 11 and HT 10. His style is Jujutsu and his skills and maneuvers are Judo-14, Karate-14, Arm Lock-14, Dodge 6 and Parry 10. Both fighters have Combat Reflexes (already figured into their defenses), but neither is familiar with the other's style, so all defenses are at -1. Neither of them is wearing armor.

Turn #1: Hiro goes first (his Move is higher) and attacks with a Spin Kick (which means he must roll twice; see p. 55). His first roll (the feint) is an 8 - he made it by 6. Garcia rolls an 11 on his Karate; he made it only by 3, so he is at -3 to Parry this round. Hire's second roll is successful. Garcia needs to roll a 6 or less to parry. Not surprisingly, he misses and takes 3 points of damage; probably some cracked ribs.

COMBAT

Gritting his teeth, Garcia tries a Judo Grapple (Judo+3, but at -3 because of the injury, which brings it down to Judo). His roll is an 11, making it by 3. Hire's own roll was also an 11 - he only makes it by 1, and his left arm is caught. Garcia tries to twist Hiro's arm (Arm Lock vs. DX). Garcia rolls a 6, making his roll by 5 (he is still at -3 for shock); Hiro's resistance roll is a 10, so his arm is twisted. Garcia moves behind Hiro.

Turn #2: Garcia gets initiative, since he is holding Hiro's arm. He tries to break the arm. He makes his Arm Lock roll by 2; Hiro makes his HT roll by 2 - a tie, so no damage is taken. Hiro goes for an Elbow Strike, and rolls successfully. Garcia tries to Parry with his free hand, but rolls an 11; he takes 6 points of damage, which brings him down to 1 hit point and also stuns him. Garcia releases Hiro.

Turn #3: Garcia fails his HT roll; he is still stunned. Hiro goes for the kill with a Jump Kick. He makes his roll. Garcia is already at -5 to Parry, and the Jump Kick gives an additional -2. He tries a Parry and Retreat (total modified roll of 6). His roll is a 7, not good enough, and he takes 9 more points of damage. Garcia's HT is at -8; he has severe internal injuries. He rolls an 8 to remain conscious, but rolls a 14 to stay on his feet. Garcia falls down.

Turn #4: Garcia makes his roll to stay conscious. Hiro tells him "You'd better stay down, man," but does not interfere when Garcia (who has the Stubborn disadvantage) gets up anyway.

Turn #5: Hiro tries his Spin Kick again and rolls an 11 (made it by 3). Garcia rolls a 10 against a needed 14, so he is at +1 to Parry. His Parry roll is successful (an 8; he made it by 2). He tries a Leg Grapple (a quick contest between Garcia's Judo skill of 14 against Hiro's DX of 12). Garcia grabs the leg.

Turn #6: Emboldened, Garcia does an All-Out Attack. First, he tries a Takedown, with a +3 bonus since he is holding Hiro's leg. Garcia wins the Quick Contest and his opponent hits the ground. Hiro tries a kick from the ground (at -4, for a total roll of 11) and misses. Garcia kicks Hiro's groin (needs to roll a 9 or less) and hits. Hiro's own Parry is unsuccessful (his defenses are at -3 for being on the ground) and he takes 3 points of damage. He must make a HT-3 roll to avoid being stunned, and misses. Now Garcia has the advantage; unlike Hiro, he does not let his opponent get up (in all fairness, he is hurt pretty badly, so he feels no compulsion to be sporting).

This skill cannot be improved beyond Judo skill, since it is the main application of the skill. As such, it is not included in the maneuvers listed for any particular style. Any style that includes Judo skill will include the Judo Throw.

Jump Kick (Hard)   Defaults to Karate-4 or Kicking-2
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

A classic maneuver in fiction, although most martial arts teachers discourage its use in real life situations. This kick increases the attack's reach to 2 hexes; damage is thrust+2 (plus Karate bonuses), and the attack is at -2 to parry. If you miss, roll vs. DX-4 or Acrobatics-2 to avoid falling.

Kicking (Hard)   Defaults to Karate-2 or Brawling-2
Prerequisite: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

Some styles put a great emphasis on kick attacks. A style that lists Kicking among its maneuvers can learn it as a separate skill. Other types of kick can default to either Kicking or Karate; use whichever default is higher. The skill level with the kicking maneuver does not affect damage; use the unmodified Karate skill for this. If a kick misses, roll vs. Kicking skill or DX to avoid falling. Damage from a regular kick is thrust/crushing, plus 1/5 (round down) of Karate skill or 1/10 (round down) of Brawling skill.

Knee Strike (Average)   Defaults to Karate-1 or Brawling-1
Prerequisite: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill+2

This attack does thrust-1 damage, plus Karate or Brawling bonuses. If the target has been grappled successfully, he defends at -2. If the target has been grappled from the front, the natural target of a Knee Strike is the groin (e.g., the vitals), and there is no hit location penalty to attack the groin! Knee Strike has reach C.

Leg Grapple (Special)   Roll vs. Brawling, Judo or Karate
Cannot be improved

This is a common maneuver employed against kicking attacks; practitioners of almost all martial arts will be familiar with it. This option is available to a fighter who is kicked in an upper body part (areas 3-11; see p. B211). If an unarmed Parry against the kick is made by 2 or more, the defender may choose to grab the attacker's leg. Roll as for a Grapple (see p. B111); in this case, it is a contest between the defender's skill and the attacker's DX or Kicking skill. If the defender wins the contest, the kicking leg has been captured. The victim's attacks and defenses are at -4 as long as the foot is grappled. If the grappler then wants to attempt a Takedown (see p. Bl112), he gets a +3 on the attempt.

This maneuver, even if known, is usually frowned upon in some formal events. In the streets, it is one of the reasons street fighters so often win against martial artists. Also, this realistic rule may spoil the fun of high-kicking cinematic characters.

Lunge (Average)   Defaults to Fencing-2 or Katana-2
Prerequisite: Fencing or Katana
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This is a full-extension thrust, with the fencer stepping as widely as possible to reach as far and as fast as he can. Lunges have more reach and do more damage, but the defensive capabilities of the attacker are reduced. Attacks do +1 damage, and the reach of the weapon is increased by 1, but all Active Defenses are at -2 that

turn. This bonus applies to thrusting attacks only. Characters with the Katana skill can use the lunge, but only when holding the katana two-handed.

Neck Snap (Hard)
Defaults to ST-4
Prerequisite: None
Cannot exceed ST+3

This brute-force attack consists of grabbing and suddenly twisting the victim's head, hoping to snap the neck. A very strong person can kill instantly with this maneuver.

First, the character must Grapple the victim by the head with both hands. On the following round, the attacker rolls a Quick Contest, his Neck Snap maneuver versus the victim's ST or HT (whichever is greater), plus Toughness, if any. If the attacker wins the contest, he does swing/crushing damage, which is multiplied by 1.5 against the neck. On a tie, or if the victim wins, no damage is inflicted. Neck damage, even if not lethal, can be crippling; if the victim survives, he must roll against crippling, as per p. B129; a lasting injury will keep the character in a neck brace for the allotted period, and all crushing damage done to his neck during that time will be *doubled* (representing the chance that the injury will aggravate itself).

Off-Hand Weapon Training (Hard)
Defaults to any Combat/Weapon skill-4
Prerequisite: Any Combat/Weapon skill
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

Anyone who has learned to use a weapon with the master hand can learn to use the same weapon with the off hand. This maneuver allows one to eliminate the -4 off-hand penalty, but only for that particular weapon. This maneuver is very useful when using paired weapons (see also the cinematic Dual-Weapon Attack maneuver). Off-hand training can also be applied to other skills, and to train the off-hand skill up if the master hand is lost or crippled.

Parrying Kick (Special)
Defaults to Karate/2 or Brawling/2
Prerequisite: Brawling or Karate
Cannot be improved

This rarely-taught maneuver uses the defender's leg to parry a low attack. The difficulty in using the leg as a parrying tool makes the parry equal to half the character's Karate or Brawling skill instead of 2/3.

Rabbit Punch (Average)
Defaults to Brawling-3
Prerequisite: Brawling
Cannot exceed Brawling skill level

This is a swinging blow that uses both hands like a mace. The blow does swing damage plus Brawling bonuses. With his hands locked together, however, the character cannot parry very well; parry is only 1/2 Brawling skill. Locking one's hands together is risky: on a critical failure, *both* hands take thrust damage in addition to any other effects of the critical failure.

Retain Weapon (Hard)
Defaults to weapon skill or DX
Prerequisite: Any weapon skill (see below)

This represents training in how to hold on to your weapon when someone is trying to take it away from you, and is commonly taught to soldiers and police. The default is to weapon skill for hand weapons, or to DX for ranged weapons such as bows or guns (in which case it must be learned separately for each type of weapon - pistol, rifle, etc.). The Retain Weapon maneuver replaces weapon skill or DX when resisting an attempt to disarm, and can be used in place of ST when someone is trying to grab your weapon (as per p. B111).

COMBAT

OPTIONAL Rule;
Combinations

In real martial arts training, students learn more than simple kicks, punches and throws. As they progress in training, they learn to combine different moves in quick sequences. For instance, a punch and a follow-up kick can be practiced until punching and kicking become almost one motion. The traditional *kata* is an exercise which practices these linked maneuvers, or combinations.

Combinations allow a martial artist to flow smoothly from one motion to the next. The main drawback of using combinations is that an opponent familiar with the particular fighting style may be able to predict those moves.

For gaming purposes, a fighter can link up to three *Step And . . .* maneuvers or Active Defenses into a combination. This costs 4 character points to link two maneuvers, or 6 for three maneuvers. He can use the whole combination instead of an attack or defense. A combination that begins with an attack can be used instead of an attack, while one that starts with an active defense will be counted as a defending parry.

Only one combination can be used each turn, even if the cinematic multiple attack rules are being used. No cinematic skill can be used in a combination.

Example: Terry the karate master has two combinations: Spin Kick-Punch, and Parry-Punch-Kick. On his combat turn, he can make one normal attack, and use the Parry-Punch-Kick combination as his Active Defense. Alternatively, he can attack with the Spin Kick-Punch set, and defend normally.

The player must announce his intention to use a combination at the beginning of the round. The GM secretly rolls a Quick Contest between the first skill used in the combination (for instance, if the first maneuver is a Karate parry, use the unmodified Karate skill) and the opponent's highest combat skill. If the combination user wins, he proceeds with the combination. The target can only defend until all the combination moves are finished. If the user loses, he can only use the first maneuver, and his opponent defends at +3.

Defenders who are familiar with the attacker's style, or have the Body Language skill, get a +1 bonus in the contest against attackers using combinations. Defenders with both get a +2 bonus.

This rule can be unbalancing, as it allows characters to perform multiple attacks on each turn. If it distorts your combats, increase the bonus allowed to the defender if he wins the Quick Contest.

Riposte (Hard)
Defaults to weapon skill-4
Prerequisite: Fencing or other combat skill (see below)
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This maneuver is taught in fencing schools as well as martial arts *dojos*. It consists of a quick counter-attack after successfully parrying an enemy attack. It can only be employed with thrusting weapons and hand attacks.

The character can choose to use this maneuver if he has been successfully attacked by a thrusting or hand attack. He must Parry the attack; if successful, he can instantly attack (or Feint) at -4. The enemy is at -1 to defend (he is still recovering from the attack), and at an additional -1 for every point by which the Parry was successful (do not count Passive Defense bonuses). The riposte replaces the character's next attack; it is not an extra attack.

Example: if the character has Parry-10 and PD 2, rolling an 11 means he parried successfully, but the enemy does not have any penalty to parry the riposte beyond the automatic -1; if the parry roll had been 7, on the other hand, the enemy's total defense penalty would be -4!

Roundhouse Punch (Average)
Defaults to Brawling-3 or Boxing-3
Prerequisite: Brawling or Boxing
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This heavy punch is a wide swing with the whole body behind it. It is often used in an All-Out Attack (see p. B105). Damage is swing-1, plus Brawling or Boxing bonuses. This attack is both slow and easy to defend against, however; by using it, the attacker automatically surrenders initiative (he is "readying" his punching hand) and the target gets a +2 on active defenses against the roundhouse. Experienced fighters usually reserve the attack for use against a stunned foe; it makes a good *coup de grace*.

Shin Kick (Hard)
Defaults to Karate-3 or Kicking-1
Prerequisite: Karate and appropriate style
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This attack uses the shin, instead of the foot, as an striking weapon. Practitioners smash their shins on hard objects until they do not feel pain. As a result, their kicks do more damage than normal. This attack is mainly used by the Muay Thai practitioners (see p. 92), but other styles, such as Tae Kwon Do and some Kung Fu variants, may also have it. The attack does thrust+2 plus Karate bonuses. When striking an object or person with DR 3+, the attacker must roll against HT or take thrust damage to the leg.

Shuto (Hard)
Defaults to Karate-3
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This attack is a hand strike designed to go under the defender's guard. Damage is as per the normal hand strike, but the attack is -2 to Parry (there is no modifier to Dodge, though).

Slip (Hard)
Defaults to Dodge-3
Prerequisite: Boxing
Cannot exceed unencumbered Dodge

This is an attempt to duck past an opponent's attack and come up inside his guard, ready to attack. A Slip can be used instead of a normal Dodge against any punch or weapon attack aimed above the defender's waist (areas 3-11; see p. B211) by an attacker in a front hex. If the Slip is successful, the attack is dodged and the defender can step forward one hex, into close combat with the attacker.

The Boxing/8 Dodge bonus adds to the Slip maneuver, even against swung weapons. A Slip benefits from PD, like any Dodge, but cannot be combined with an Acrobatic Dodge (p. B48) or a Retreat. On a critical failure, the defender walks *into* the attack and takes +1 damage!

Spin Kick (Hard)

Defaults to Karate-3 or Kicking-1
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This is similar to the Hook Kick (p. 51) but it has a different goal. It consists of a quick pivot of the body resulting in a back kick or a side kick against an enemy in front of the attacker. The intended result of the sudden shift in the attacker's center of gravity is to surprise the enemy, but an experienced martial artist is not likely to be fooled by it.

The Spin Kick allows a simultaneous Feint and attack. The attacker must roll twice. First, roll a Quick Contest of Spin Kick vs. the opponent's Karate, Brawling or DX for the Feint, then roll a second time to deliver the attack. If the Feint is successful, use the Feinting rules on p. B96 to determine the enemy's defense penalties. However, if the defender wins the contest, he gets a *bonus* equal to the amount by which he won the contest; the kick was badly delivered and the attacker "telegraphed" the kick, making it easier to defend. The Spin Kick does normal kicking damage.

Spinning Punch (Hard)

Defaults to Karate-2
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This is the hand-attack equivalent to the Spin Kick (described above). It uses the same game mechanics, but damage is equal to normal punching damage.

Stop Hit (Hard)

Defaults to Fencing-4
Prerequisite: Fencing
Cannot exceed Fencing skill level

This is a risky maneuver in real combat, although it is frequently used in sports fencing, where only the thrust that hits first counts for scoring purposes. The Stop Hit is an attack launched at the same time an enemy attacks! The combatant using the Stop Hit is effectively surrendering his Active Defense. On the other hand, the original attacker cannot defend either, unless he abandons his attack and tries to use an Active Defense; if he does that, he is still at -1 to defend against the Stop Hit.

If both fighters press on with their attacks, roll a Quick Contest between the attacker's weapon or Fencing skill and the defender's Stop Hit; the one with the highest Move gets a +1 on the contest. The winner rolls to hit first; if he hits and does damage, assess any shock and stunning penalties on the wounded character and *halve* them before applying them to his own attack. Even if the

wound is enough to stun the enemy, he can still roll for his attack, at -4 or minus the damage taken, whichever is higher. On a tie, rolls to hit and damage are taken simultaneously, with effects taking place in the following turn.

This maneuver can result in both fighters being killed or incapacitated, so is rarely used in lethal combat. A character using a Stop Hit is very vulnerable to Ripostes and Feints; a common fencing tactic consists in inviting a Stop Hit with a Feint, and then attacking the off-balance character. If someone uses a Stop Hit in response to a Feint, he is at -3 skill to resist the feint.

Stamp Kick (Average)
Defaults to Brawling-3, Karate-3 or Kicking-1
Prerequisite: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This attack consists of a swift, downward stamp with the heel, using the attacker's entire body weight to give additional force to the kick. The attack does more damage than a normal kick, but can only be used to attack the foot of a standing opponent or to attack an opponent who is lying on the ground. It is commonly used as a finishing move on a downed foe. Use of this attack in a tournament is frowned upon. Damage is thrust+1, plus Brawling or Karate bonuses. On a miss, the attacker must roll vs. HT or take this damage to the foot he was striking with.

Sweeping Kick (Hard)
Defaults to Karate-3 or Kicking-1
Prerequisite: Karate
Cannot exceed Karate skill level

This is an attempt to kick the adversary's legs out from under him. If the attack is not successfully parried or dodged, roll a contest between Sweeping Kick skill and the victim's DX. Modifiers: +1 to the stronger of the two. If the victim loses, he is knocked down, unless he can make an Acrobatics-5 roll to somersault in the air and land safely.

Trip (Special)
Roll vs. Judo skill
Cannot be improved

This attack allows a martial artist to trip or throw a charging foe. The foe must have either moved two or more hexes into the martial artist's hex or any of his front hexes, or stepped into one of those hexes after running at full Move the previous turn. The martial artist must either be taking a Wait or else be the target of the foe's Slam attack. This maneuver is declared as soon as the foe enters a legal hex.

Before any action on the target's part is resolved, roll a Quick Contest between the attacker's Judo skill and the defender's DX. If the defender has run more than half his Move this turn, or his full Move last turn and a Step this turn, then the attacker is at +2. As well, the stronger fighter gets +1. If the attacker wins, the defender is thrown as per the Judo Throw maneuver (see p. 51), which ends the defender's turn. On a tie, the defender spends one extra movement point to keep moving. If the defender wins, he overruns the attacker and knocks him over!

Any style that includes Judo will include the Trip.

Competition
Types
(C o n t i n u e d)

Protected Full Contact
In this type of competition, punches or kicks do connect with the target, but some sort of protection is worn. This protection ranges from Boxing's padded gloves and mouth guard to Tae Kwon Do body armor. Actual damage will be small (although there are always dangerous exceptions), but endurance will play a bigger role than in the type of contest mentioned above.

Combat proceeds normally; punches or kicks that land will gain points to the contestants. The GM can rule that if actual damage is inflicted or many punches landed on one of the contestants, the character receives a -1 on the HT roll to resist fatigue loss (see p. 63). Alternatively, the Stun Damage rules can be used for the ring; the punches do full Stun Damage (ignore the protective garments) as well as normal damage (reduced by the gloves or body armor). If a character loses all his Stun points, he is knocked out.

Full Contact Without Protection
This is the most dangerous type of tournament, and the oldest. Bare-knuckle fights were common in Europe since the 18th century, and in Asia most contests were also conducted without protection until very recently (and there are still a number of - sometimes illegal - full-contact events around the world).

Treat this as normal *GURPS* combat; the contestants may or may not pull their punches, depending on the type of fight this is, but mostly they will not.

Yawara (Average)

Defaults to Karate-3 or Brawling-5
Prerequisite: Karate or Brawling
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

A yawara is a short, weighted stick. The martial artist grips the stick in his fist and uses the weighted ends to do additional damage to his opponent. Yawara is not considered a weapon skill, but a Karate maneuver. A martial artist using a yawara does +3 damage with all hand attacks.

Yawara doesn't affect the martial artist's parry - just his chance to hit and his damage.

Cinematic Maneuvers

Some unrealistic martial arts maneuvers are commonly seen in movies and comic books. They are more appropriate for cinematic campaigns, so they are separated from the rest. The GM may wish to include some of them in a realistic campaign, as he wishes. These maneuvers *do not* require the Trained by a Master advantage as a prerequisite.

Acrobatic Kick (Hard)

Defaults to Acrobatics-4
Prerequisites: Acrobatics and Kicking

This maneuver consists of an acrobatic tumble or somersault preceding a kick attack. The idea behind the unexpected movement is to confuse the opponent. The fighter must make an Acrobatics roll to perform the tumble; this counts as an attack. Then, roll a Quick Contest between Acrobatic Kick and the target's Karate or appropriate weapon skill; if the attacker wins, he can kick normally, and the defender is at -1 to defend for every point by which he lost the contest. If the target wins the contest, he is at +2 to defend.

Binding (Hard)

Defaults to Judo
Prerequisite: Judo

In legend, this maneuver was used by Japanese guards and police to arrest criminals, and by ninja in abductions. In theory, the attacker binds the subject, limb by limb, while parrying the victim's attacks. The attacker must have a rope ready in his hands (in modern times, handcuffs can be substituted).

The Binding maneuver can only be attempted in Close Combat. After a successful Parry or Grapple, the attacker must win a Quick Contest (Binding vs. DX) to bind the targeted limb. The process is repeated for each arm and leg. If the target's legs are both bound, he must roll vs. DX-6 every turn or fall down, and DX and ST are at -6 to resist Takedowns and Slam attacks. After both arms and legs are bound in this manner, the victim must make an Escape or DX-6 roll to free himself, as per p. B65; he is helpless in the mean time.

This maneuver *can* be improved beyond the basic Judo level.

Dual-Weapon Attack (Hard)

Defaults to combat skill-4
Prerequisite: Any one-handed combat skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

The attacker may strike with two weapons *at once,* at the same foe or two adjacent ones. Each weapon is at -4, in addition to any off-hand and hit location penalties. Such attacks are difficult to defend against if aimed at a single foe. The defender's attention is divided: -1 to defend against each attack of a Dual-Weapon Attack aimed at a sole opponent. This applies to any number of attacks made with paired weapons.

In the Chambara and multiple attack rules (see pp. 65-66), an attacker with wo weapons can add one extra attack to his total, at -4. The other attacks receive no modifiers. He can distribute his attacks between the two weapons as he desires.

ST11, DX 11, IQ9, HT 10, Move 5.

Skills: Judo-13, Karate-13.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock-13, Dodge-5, Kick-11 (1d+1), Parry-8, Punch-13 (1d-1).

Cinematic Rules: This campaign uses all the multiple attack rules (giving the Skull three attacks and parries every turn), and the Stun rules, modified with the Different Damage Type optional rule (crushing attacks other than bullets do Stun damage; bullets, cutting and impaling weapons do normal hit point damage). The Skull has a beginning stun of 60, and each of his foes has Stun 50; he also has a Move of 7, so his first attack has an initiative number of 7, his second an initiative of 6, and the last one is down to 5. The GM rules that the agents get to attack before the Skull's last attack. Neither the thugs nor the Skull is familiar with each other's style (all defenses at-1).

The enemy agents attack the Skull from 5 different points (see diagram).
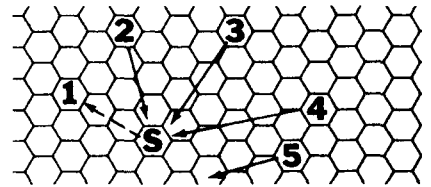
Turn #1: The nearest thug is 3 yards away, so the Skull moves one hex and uses a Jump Kick. The kick counts as two of the Skull's attacks. His roll is successful. Thug #1 tries to Dodge, and misses. The kick does 10 points of damage. The agent is knocked back one yard, and must make a DX roll to stay on his feet. Since his DX is at -10 for the damage taken (see *Shock,* p. B126) he fails and hits the ground.

The other thugs move. Only #2 is close enough to attack immediately. He makes a Wild Swing, punches, and misses. The Skull uses a Spin Kick on him. He makes his first roll by 6. The agent misses his roll, giving the agent -6 to his defense roll (-7 counting unfamiliarity). The Skull kicks for the brain (his player would have had to announce this before attempting either roll), at -7 for targeting the brain, but +2 for having Hit Location at skill-1, for a net -5. He rolls a 10. The target misses his Parry and takes 9 points of damage, modified to 7 (-2 head DR). The damage is quadrupled to 28 points; #2 is down to 12 Stun, but in any case, the damage is enough to knock him out.

Thugs 3 and 4 are now next to the Skull. 5 is behind him, trying to cut off his retreat.

Turn #2: The Skull uses his Push skill on #3, who fails his defense roll. The Skull uses his skill as a Slam, and makes his roll by 7. The agent only makes his ST roll by 1, so he is knocked back 3 hexes, and falls down. The Skull makes his second attack, a punch, at #4, but is parried. #4 then punches the Skull from the side; the crimefighter is at a -3 penalty (attack from the side and unfamiliarity) to Parry, and misses. The punch does 4 points of damage (his stun is down to 56). The Skull counters with his last attack for the turn, a hammer blow (Hand Strike) to the brain. His roll is successful, and the agent misses his Parry - he takes a total of 20 points of Stun damage and is knocked out.

Thug #5, from several yards away, tries a flying tackle (see p. B113) on the Skull. The Skull does not try to Dodge, so the attacker succeeds on a DX roll. A Quick Contest ensues between the Skull's Immovable Stance skill (16) and the thug's modified ST (15). The Skull rolls a 9, and #5 rolls a 12. The thug actually bounces back 2 hexes and falls down, downed by the crimefighter's *passive* maneuver. #1 crawls toward the Skull, hoping to trip him.

Turn #3: The Skull tries to Grapple #1, and succeeds (with a modified skill of 21, it is almost impossible to fail). The crimefighter tries to twist the agent's arm, using his Arm Lock (level 20) against the thug's DX of 11. He does it and applies pain for his next attack (Arm Lock against victim's HT). The Skull wins by 8, so the thug is writhing on the floor at -8 DX and IQ. The other two conscious thugs scramble to their feet and run. The Skull lets them go; he only needs one conscious prisoner. The battle has taken just three seconds.

Enhanced Defenses

The Enhanced Block, Enhanced Dodge and Enhanced Parry "maneuvers" below represent the idea that some styles have secret techniques that carry defensive techniques past their normal limits. Like Cinematic skills, they are only available to one who has been Trained by a Master in a style that offers the particular ability. Enhanced Parry is also available to those with the Weapon Master advantage.

Enhanced Block   6 points

For game purposes, this is actually an advantage, not a skill. It comes from training, and *can* be acquired after a character is created. It gives +1 to a Block with those martial-arts styles that use a buckler, cloak or shield. It must be specialized to a particular Block defense. No more than a +1 is possible.

Enhanced Dodge   15 points

This advantage gives a +1 to any Dodge maneuver. It represents superhuman training in evasion; this may be thought of as use of the chi force, careful observation allowing attacks to be predicted before they are launched, or anything else that fits the cinematic mystique of the particular style. It comes from training, and can be acquired after character creation. No more than a +1 is possible (for truly excessive Dodge scores, use the Increased Speed advantage, p. SU41).

The point cost is high because a fighter may Dodge any number of attacks in one turn; an Enhanced Dodge is a powerful defensive ability!

Enhanced Parry   6 or 10 points

This advantage may be gained separately for bare hands (6 points), for any one weapon (6 points), or for all weapons (10 points). It comes from training, and can be acquired after a character is created. Each advantage gives +1 to a parry with the appropriate weapon or with the bare hand. No more than a +1 is possible. Note that, for instance, a style that gives an Enhanced Parry with the bare hand would give no bonus with the sword, and vice versa.

Fighting While Seated (Hard)   Defaults to combat skill-2
Prerequisite: Any combat skill; must specialize
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

Some highly-trained martial artists show their contempt for lesser opponents by remaining seated when attacked. Attacks made while sitting are at -2, as are all active defenses. This can be attempted with any style. On an Acrobatics-2 roll the fighter can leap from the chair and make a normal *Step and. . .* action - if the roll fails, the fighter stood up but did nothing else.

Flying Jump Kick (Hard)
Defaults to Karate-6 or Kicking-4
Prerequisite: Karate or Kicking
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This is a common cinematic maneuver, in which a fighter flies through the air and lands devastating kicks.

A Jumping or DX-4 roll is first required. If successful, roll against the Flying Jump Kick skill. On a miss, roll against Acrobatics-4 or DX-8 to avoid falling, taking ld-3 crushing damage for every two yards you traveled. All active defenses are at -4 during this maneuver, and this is also the only attack you can make during the round, even if using the Multiple Attacks rules.

The advantage of this difficult kick is that you can hit anything you can reach with a standing or running broad jump (see p. B88); a character *can* run his full Move, jump and launch a flying Jump Kick! The kick does thrust+2 damage; double the damage for knockback purposes. This attack is parried at -3.

Hand-Clap Parry (Hard)
Defaults to Parry (Judo or Karate)-5
Prerequisite: Karate or Judo
Cannot exceed normal Judo or Karate Parry

This cinematic maneuver was used by the most skilled (or foolhardy) samurai of old to defend against sword-strokes bare handed and then disarm the enemy. The maneuver consists of trapping the attacking blade between your hands! The precise timing this requires makes this all but impossible. On a missed Parry, the attacker can choose whether to hit a hand or his original target. On a success, the defender can try to disarm the swordsman with his next attack by winning a contest between his Karate or Judo skill and the enemy's weapon skill-3. Alternatively, he can launch a kick attack; the swordsman cannot Parry unless he lets go of his sword and uses his bare hands. Dodging is possible, but at -2 for as long as he holds the sword.

Initial Carving (Average)
Default varies
Prerequisite: Fencing; must specialize in each letter
Cannot exceed Fencing skill level

Swashbucklers who wish to carve an initial while fighting can attempt to do so. Determine where the initial is to be carved and the number of strokes necessary to carve the initial - a Z takes three, for example. The first cut of the initial is at no penalty beyond the normal penalty to hit that particular body part. Thus, an initial on the chest is at -0 for the first stroke, a letter on the forehead is at -5, and so on. If the first stroke does at least 1 point of cutting damage, anything but metal or a similarly hard material will be marked. *An impaling weapon may make a 0-HT scratch for initial-carving purposes.* This will cause a scar if made on skin (meaning that it may be used to deliver particularly vile poisons), and will rip cloth but not armor.

The remaining strokes of the initial are more difficult to place accurately. They are at -4 (in addition to any body part modifiers) for an initial roughly 4 inches by 4 inches. This modifier is necessary to ensure that the strokes are aligned well with the first stroke. If a subsequent stroke attempt is failed by 4 or less, the slash is made, but is not properly connected to the previous lines - there is either a gap or an overlap - roll a die. This can be very bad form - it might even change the initial to another letter! It is possible to attempt to connect lines that are too far apart (try again, same modifier), or simply start over in another spot. The victim might object to the erasing process, however, which involves at least half a dozen criss-cross lines. Initial-carving should only be attempted in a combat situation by the very skilled, or those named Inigo, Ignatz or Irene.

The maneuver must be improved for each letter.

FASTER COMBAT

In a cinematic or "four-color" campaign, some characters will have such a high Dodge that it is almost impossible to hit them, no matter what the attacker's skill level. This has the advantage of simulating cinematic combat very well - heroes rarely get hit by gunfire, fragments or flying shuriken. Unfortunately, this can also slow combat down to a crawl, as **only** critical successes or failures will **make a** difference in the fight.

There are several mechanisms that can be used to speed up combat. All of these are optional rules.

Critical Success

Normally, a 3 or 4 is always a critical success, a 5 when modified skill is 15, and a 6 if modified skill is 16+. To make critical success more likely, a 7 is a critical success for a modified skill of 20, an 8 for 25, a 9 at 30 and a 10 at skill level 35. The progression stops here, giving the fighter a 50% chance of achieving a critical success each time he attacks!

Quick Contests

For fighters with a Dodge of 13+, it is recommended that combat be resolved with a Quick Contest of Skills between the attacker's weapon or skill level versus Dodge. This will keep combat from bogging down into an interminable series of dodged attacks.

Parry and Block should be used normally, as these can be used only a few times per turn.

optional
COMBAT Rules

Described below are some options GMs can introduce into their *Martial Arts* campaigns. Some may help speed play along, and others may increase the power of martial artists. Some GMs and players may find them potentially unbalancing, at least in some settings.

Only the Best Shall Win

When two highly-skilled martial artists mix it up, fights can last almost endlessly because attacks on both sides are easily defended against. One way to deal with this problem is to increase the chance for critical hits (see above). Another system is presented here. *Note:* this optional rule will give high-skilled characters an enormous advantage over inferior foes.

When an attack is rolled, keep track of how much the modified skill roll succeeded by; for every *two* points the attack succeeded by (rounded down), the defender is at -1 to *any* Active Defense against that attack (not just Dodge, as in the case of the Quick Contest optional rule presented above).

Example: Master Lung has Karate-24, and he is fighting the Skull (Karate-18, Kicking-18). Master Lung chops at the Skull's neck (Karate-5 roll), and rolls a 12, making his modified skill roll by 7. The Skull's normal Parry is 13, but he is at -3 (7 divided by 2, rounded down) for a total of 10. He rolls an 8 and defends. The Skull's counterattack is a kick to the body; he rolls a 9, beating his Kicking maneuver by 9. Master Lung's super-high Parry of 16 is at -4; he rolls a 13 and is hit!

This rule will tend to make characters aim at easy targets in combat with skilled opponents, since they will want to inflict the maximum penalty possible on their enemies' defenses. A huge difference in skill will usually spell doom for the lesser character (it usually does anyway, but with this method it happens more quickly).

Example: Don Lorenzo Estrada wishes to leave the initials L.E. on the skin of several (unwilling) acquaintances, so he practices long and hard. He spends 2 character points on the L and 4 on the E (which takes 4 strokes, so he wants to get it right the first time). His Fencing skill is 14; he will make the first stroke of each letter on a 14 or less. The next part of the L is at default+3, giving a net -1 to his skill - he needs a 13. The E is at default+4: he has no penalty to carve it at all.

Piledriver (Hard)   *Defaults to Wrestling-4*
Prerequisite: Wrestling

This is a devastating elbow strike delivered by the attacker's whole body, which is slamming down on the foe. This attack can be used against a foe while he is kneeling, sitting or lying down; the piledriver is an ideal follow-up to a Takedown. The attack does swing damage plus 1/5 of the attacker's Wrestling skill. This also counts as a Slam. The victim can only Dodge; if the attacker misses and hits the ground, he takes 2d-2 damage unless he makes an Acrobatics or Breakfall roll. The Piledriver is more commonly called an elbow drop. It is distinct from another manuever known as a piledriver in which the attacking wrestler smashes his opponent's head into the ground after grappling him and turning him upside-down.

Roll with Blow (Hard)   *Defaults to Acrobatics-2 or DX-6*
Prerequisite: Acrobatics or Judo

With this maneuver, the defender presents little resistance to the force of a punch or other crushing attacks, taking less damage. If the defender misses his defense roll against a *crushing* attack, he may attempt a Roll with Blow roll to reduce damage. On a successful roll, he takes half damage (rounded up) from the attack, and is knocked 1 hex for every 2 points of the damage he took, before it was halved. The defender must roll against DX, minus 1 for every hex he was knocked back, or lose his footing and fall down.

On a critical success, the defender takes only one hit of damage. On a failure, he takes normal damage but is still knocked back as above. On a critical failure, he takes normal damage, falls down, and is physically stunned!

Springing Attack (Average)   *Defaults to Acrobatics-3*
Prerequisites: Acrobatics and Karate

The martial artist using this maneuver must first adopt a low, crouched position; this requires a Karate roll. The intention behind this crouch is to store energy and spring forward in an explosive, powerful attack. On the turn following the crouch, the martial artist can roll against his Springing Attack; on a success, his next attack will do +2 damage. An ordinary failure means the martial artist loses his balance and is at -2 DX and Active Defenses; a critical failure will cause the attacker to fall down!

Sticking (Hard)   *Defaults to Judo-2*
Prerequisite: Judo at 14+

If this maneuver does not appear in a style, the default is Judo-4, and it cannot be improved.

In this maneuver, a fighter touches the opponent and leaves his hand in contact with him, "stuck" to his skin. By doing this, he can "feel" his opponent's intentions, and counter them more easily.

To perform the Sticking maneuver, the attacker must make a Judo+2 roll; this indicates he is in contact with his enemy. Every round, he must win a Quick Contest (Sticking vs. DX) to remain in contact. As long as he is "stuck" to the opponent, he can attack and parry at +2. The attacker cannot dodge without losing contact, however.

Whirlwind Attack (Hard) Defaults to Katana-5 or Staff-5
Prerequisite: Katana or Staff
Cannot exceed prerequisite skill level

This highly cinematic maneuver is a fabled samurai attack which allows a beleaguered fighter to attack each and every foe besetting him with lightning speed! If this maneuver is used, it counts as *all* of the attacker's actions for that turn, regardless of how many actions that character might normally have.

A Whirlwind Attack is an All-Out Attack, but rather than choosing one of the usual All-Out Attack options, the attacker spins in his hex, attacking each and every foe in any adjacent hex. He must choose his first foe and then engage the remaining foes in either clockwise or counterclockwise order (attacker's option). Each attack is resolved before proceeding to the next attack, rolling against the Whirlwind Attack maneuver rather than weapon skill. A Whirlwind Attack must be a swung attack and cannot be combined with *any* other maneuver. Hit location is determined randomly for each foe, and the foes may defend normally.

At the end of the attack, the attacker may choose to be facing in *any* direction. If there are any foes left standing, it may be wise not to put one's back to them. As a result of the Ail-Out Attack, the attacker is now defenseless as well.

If *any* attack critically misses during a Whirlwind Attack, then that attack and *all remaining attacks* are considered to be critical failures. Roll on the critical miss table for each attack and assess the penalties cumulatively!

TOURNAMENT COMBAT

Not all martial arts combat is resolved in darkened alleyways and villains' hideouts. In reality, most martial arts action is seen in (for the most part) bloodless tournaments. Tournament fighting, both professional and amateur, is a place for PCs to test their mettle and even make a living (see p. 20).

Tournament combat is not like "normal" fights to the death. Unlike the streets, there are rules to be followed. Although in both cases winning is important, competition fighting goes about it in a different way.
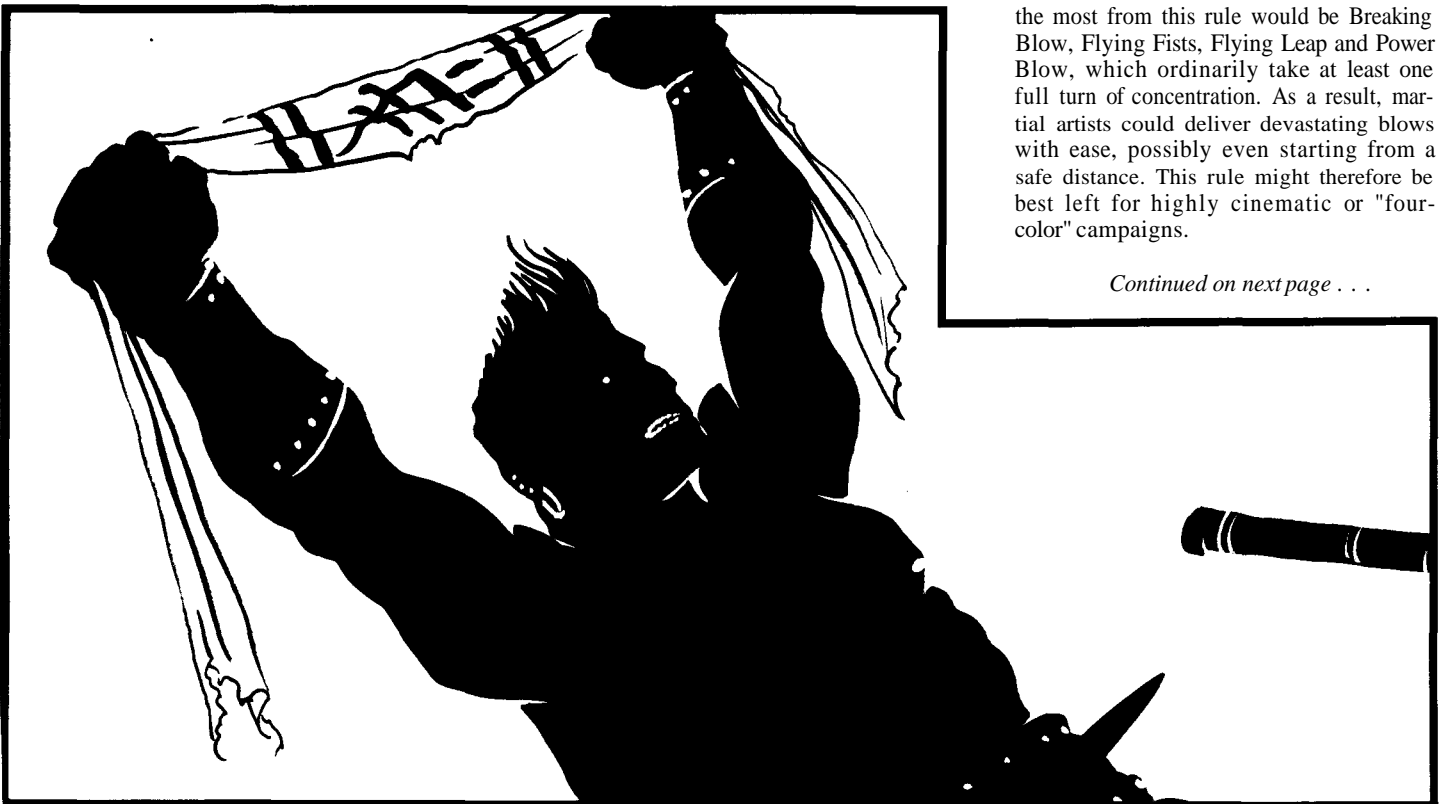
OPTIONAL COMBAT RULES (CONTINUED)

Reduced Concentration for Cinematic Skills

This option allows characters to use cinematic skills more quickly. If the GM uses this rule, Trained by a Master practitioners will have an enormous edge over normal martial artists, so he must consider it carefully.

This rule replaces "turns of concentration" with "attacks." For instance, Power Blow takes 20-Skill turns to ready; now it would take 20-Skill *attacks* to ready. Both the attack and an Active Defense are lost for every attack used in concentrating on the cinematic maneuver. Since Trained by a Master characters have several attacks every turn, this dramatically reduces the time to ready several cinematic abilities. If the character has more attacks than it takes to ready the skill, he can attack on that turn. Regardless of how many attacks he has on that turn, he can only make 1 attack (and has 1 Active Defense) that turn. Further-more, his initiative goes down by 1 for every attack he spent concentrating.

Example: The Purple Mantis is Trained by a Master, and has Karate-24 and Power Blow-17. His Karate skill gives him 5 attacks per second; it takes him 3 attacks to ready his Power Blow skill. That means that he can perform 1 Power Blow every turn; he could only do 1 attack per turn in this way, however. His Move is 8, but it would be treated as 5 for initiative purposes for that turn.

The cinematic skills that would benefit the most from this rule would be Breaking Blow, Flying Fists, Flying Leap and Power Blow, which ordinarily take at least one full turn of concentration. As a result, martial artists could deliver devastating blows with ease, possibly even starting from a safe distance. This rule might therefore be best left for highly cinematic or "four-color" campaigns.

COMBAT

OPTIONAL COMBAT RULES (Continued)

Concentrated Defense

In real combat, a fighter can protect one part of his body at the expense of others. For example, when fencing with a foil, a leg and arm are forward to protect the torso, which is the only valid target. When the whole body is fair game, as with the epee, the fencer must move the leg back to prevent it from being hit, making the torso an easier target. The following rule simulates the concentration of defense.

Before an attack is initiated, defender may decide to more heavily defend a certain portion of his body. The defender should write down the area of the body where he wishes to concentrate his defense. He gains a +1 bonus to the defense of this one area for every -1 penalty he takes for *all other* areas, up to a maximum bonus of +5 or a minimum effective defense of 4 after the penalty. For simplicity, the parts of the body can be divided into four areas:

1) Head (includes the brain, eyes, jaw, nose and throat)
2) Torso (includes the vitals and groin)
3) Arms (includes both hands and arms)
4) Legs (includes both feet and legs)

A defense of the *vitals only* may be attempted for a +2 bonus for each -1 penalty to all other body parts, up to a maximum +6 - e.g., if a defender takes a full +6 bonus to guard the vitals, the defense of the rest of his body would be at -3.

A skilled opponent will notice a concentrated defense. For an attacker to realize that his opponent is favoring a certain body location, he rolls vs. 2/3 his highest weapon skill, *plus* the amount of bonus the defender is attempting to gain. Roll once before each attack. Success means the attacker can predict where the concentrated defense will be, and a critical failure means that he misinterprets the defense.

Example: Jean-Luc wants to keep his sword arm safe, so he concentrates his defense to give himself a +2 bonus to defend against attacks to his right arm or hand. He now has a -2 to defend against attacks to any other body part. His attacker, Frederick, rolls to see if Jean-Luc is favoring a certain body part. His Fencing skill is 15, so he rolls against a 10 plus the +2 bonus Jean-Luc is attempting, or a 12. He rolls a 14, indicating failure, and attacks Jean-Luc's sword arm. The defender rolls vs. a 12 to parry (his normal parry is 10, plus the concentrated defense bonus) and rolls an 11 . He parries.

Roleplaying Tournaments

Competition or tournament combat is different from standard fights. Depending on the emphasis of the campaign, it can be minimized or ignored altogether. With the rules below, however, the GM can make it as exciting as a "real" hit-point-draining battle.

Combat Length

Depending on the rules of engagement, tournament fights last between 30 seconds or so to several rounds of two or three minutes each. Obviously, to roleplay every round in even the shortest fight is next to impossible, considering that the *GURPS* combat turn is one second long. Two different ways to roleplay competition fights are described below, depending on the situation and the amount of detail the GM desires.

The Detailed Method: For a fully roleplayed, movie-like description of the fight, the battle will focus on some "highlights" of action separated by a number of turns where nothing much happens (this reflects the reality of most sports fights). In other words, the opponents will trade punches for a couple of seconds, circle each other for several more, and so on. At the beginning of the round, the GM rolls four dice, or fewer if he wants more detail. This is the number of seconds that elapse before any telling blows are exchanged; during this time it is assumed that the opponents circled and threw jabs at each other. Then a two- or three-turn fight is played out; whenever one of the antagonists manages to break free from the fight (a successful Dodge and retreat, for instance) or at the GM's discretion, the fighters disengage and the same number of dice are rolled for the next exchange of blows.

Example: "Dutch" McNamara is squaring off against Jose "Shatterhands" Rodriguez. Each round lasts 2 minutes (120 seconds). At the start of the fight, the GM rolls 4 dice, and gets a 16; he tells his players that they circled and sparred for 16 seconds before closing. Three seconds of fighting are roleplayed (Dutch lands one solid punch and defends successfully against Jose's attacks). The fight is now 19 seconds long. The GM rolls again, and gets a 10, so they will get to fight again on the 29th second of the round. On the average, Dutch and Jose will play out about 24 seconds of the 120 seconds in the round.

The GM alone keeps track of the time, unless one of the characters has Absolute Timing, in which case he knows how much time is left. When the round is over, the foes return to their corners (or their equivalent); thus, a fighter can be literally saved by the bell. This method produces a long, detailed fight, and is most useful in situations where the stakes are high (the climactic fight for the world championship, for instance).

The Quick Method: This alternative system can be used for GMs who want less detail or for less important fights. Resolve each "round" (ranging from 30 seconds to several minutes) as a Quick Contest of Skill (see p. B87); the contestants get one roll for every 30 seconds of the engagement (round up). If nobody wins, the round ends as a draw; otherwise, the winner gets one "point" (not related to any competition point system, but a tool for the GM to resolve the fight). The fight ends when one contestant accumulates 5 points more than his opponent. On a Critical Success on the contest, the winner gets 1d+1 points immediately.
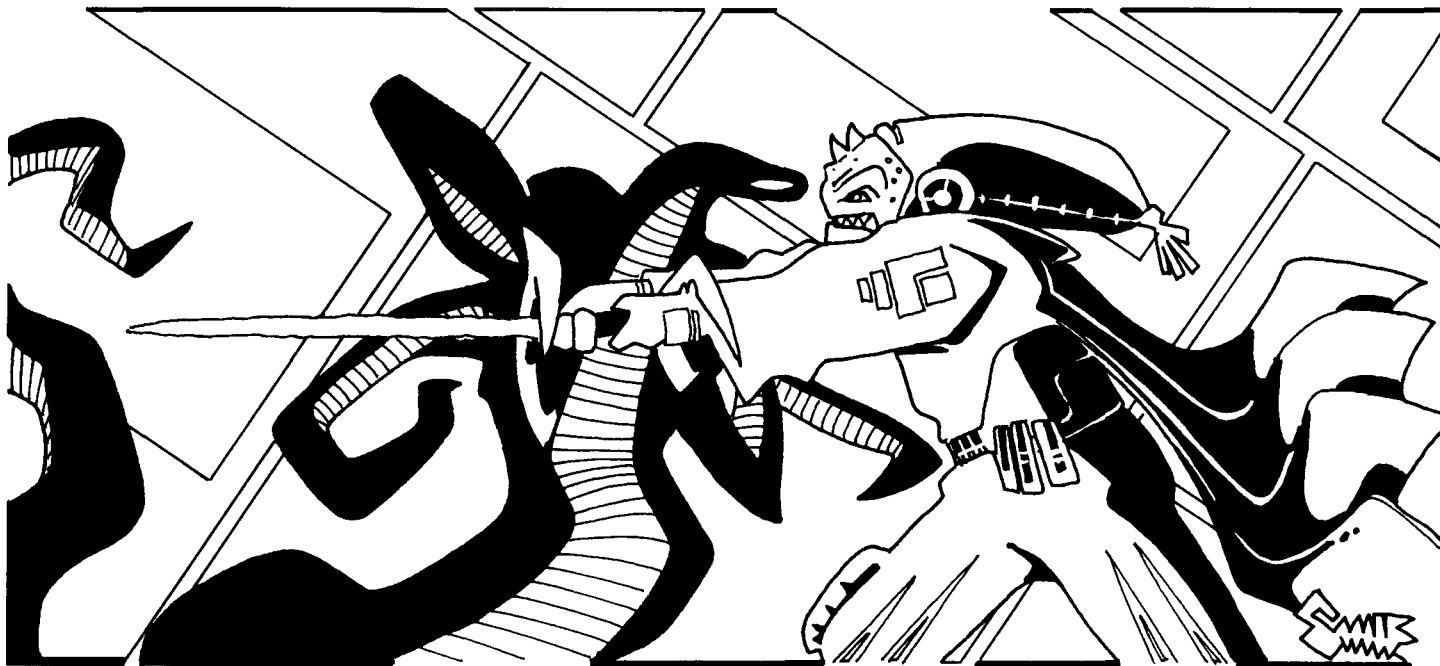
Example: In the fight above, the GM uses the Quick method. Each round lasts 2 minutes, so each round is four Quick Contests of Skill between Dutch and Jose (Karate Sport skills of 17 and 15, respectively). In the first round, Dutch wins three of the four rolls, so he wins that round and gets one point.

The second method will solve the battle more quickly, but will give the players a more passive role, leaving it up to the GM to convincingly describe the fight.

Fatigue

This will be an important consideration in all types of tournament fights. While real combat usually lasts only a few seconds, a sports fight (boxing, for instance) can go on for as long as half an hour, an hour or even longer! Fatigue loss (described on p. B134) can cause a fighter to lose as surely as his opponent's skill.

If a match (or a number of matches on the same day) lasts more than three minutes, Fatigue will start building up. Each fighter will automatically lose 1 point of Fatigue after 10 seconds. After 3 minutes, each contestant will roll against their HT; if they succeed there is no effect. On a failed roll, they lose another Fatigue point; on a Critical Failure, they lose *two points.*

Modifiers: -1 for every previous two-minute bout of fighting.

These rolls assume that there is a rest period of at least 30 seconds between rounds; otherwise, fighters must roll *every* minute, at -1 for every minute they have already fought. If the rounds of a particular competition are shorter than three minutes (most are), make the rolls whenever the total fighting time reaches three minutes.

Optional Rules: To better represent the effect of fatigue on a contestant, use these rules. When a fighter's fatigue is reduced by 2/3 he will suffer the effects of the Low Pain Threshold disadvantage (see p. B29). If he has the High Pain Threshold advantage, he temporarily *loses* it instead, while if he already had the Low Pain Threshold disadvantage he suffers *twice* the standard penalties! This represents the weakening effect of a long fight, making a tiring fighter more susceptible to a knockout. When his ST goes down to 3, his Move is halved, as per p. B29; he also gets a -1 penalty to all his Active Defenses, or loses his Combat Reflexes bonus.

Nonhuman *foes*

GMs may wish to introduce the martial arts in a super campaign, or introduce non-human races from *GURPS Aliens* or *GURPS Fantasy Folk.* Here are some optional rules for combat with nonhuman (or metahuman) enemies.

Vital Points

When fighting humanoid aliens, vital points are targeted at -1 or more, depending on how different the alien's internal structure is. This modifier also affects the Pressure Points and Pressure Secrets skills. Completely alien creatures cannot be **hit in** vital points unless the character is familiar with their anatomy.

Multiple Arms

For every arm above two, multilimbed characters get a +2 to all attempts to Grapple or Pin, or break free from a Grapple or Pin. A six-armed alien with Judo-15 would have an effective skill of 23 to Grapple (a total of 26 with the +3 bonus) and Pin! When attempting an Arm Lock, each additional arm adds +1 to the Judo roll, both to immobilize and to inflict damage.

Superhuman Strength

A fighter with Judo can throw an opponent after a Parry, no matter *how* strong it is (see p. B51), since the martial artist is using the attacker's own strength. However, if a Judo practitioner engages an extremely strong foe using close combat maneuvers that normally require a Quick Contest of ST or DX (see pp. B111-112), he will have more difficulties.

Moreso than strength, *weight* is the determining factor here. A nonhuman creature or superhuman that is no heavier than humans can be affected as easily as a normal. If the creature's weight is within human ranges, use its DX instead. Give the creature a +1 bonus in the Quick Contest for every 10 points of strength above the human average (+1 for ST 20, +2 for 30, etc.) if the creature's weight is greater than 300 Ibs. but less than 500 Ibs. Increase this bonus to +2 if weight is greater than 500 Ibs. If the creature weighs more than 800 Ibs., use its full strength.

For close combat maneuvers that do not normally require a Quick Contest, such as a Judo Throw initiated with a Grapple as opposed to a Parry, read the bonus above as a *penalty* instead, and apply this penalty to the attacker's Judo skill.

Judges and Fouls

Most competitions will have a number of impartial observers watching the fight, both to decide who the winner is and to spot and penalize fouls. They vary in quantity, from a single referee to six or more. Every time a point is scored, a foul is committed, or anything happens that the judges must rule about, the GM must make a Vision roll for *each* judge.

Modifiers (optional): +3 to -3 depending on their position with respect to the contestants at the moment (the GM can determine it randomly, or depending on the judges' arrangement; in some competitions, a judge sits on each corner, so it stands to reason that whenever something happens, some of them will have a better view than the rest); a random modifier (roll ld-3 and apply the bonus or penalty), to determine whether the judge was paying attention at that particular moment; others, including the judges' personal biases (they should not be great; the judge is supposed to be impartial, after all).

On a successful Vision roll, the judge will vote accurately; on a failure he will not see the point or foul; on a critical failure, he will interpret the event in the worst manner possible (ranging from giving the point or foul to the wrong contestant to declaring the fight won in favor of the wrong person). Of course, if someone bought the judge, his votes will be predetermined.

If the Quick Method is being used, the judges roll only once per round.

Cinematic Rules

The rules below belong exclusively to a cinematic martial arts campaign; don't try them at the dojo, or in a realistic game. GMs running a down-to-earth campaign should disallow most or all of them. Alternatively, a GM can choose the ones he prefers, customizing his campaign to achieve a balance between heroics and realism. Be sure to tell your players beforehand which rules apply to your campaign!

Chambara Fighting

Chambara is the Japanese name for a (not highly authentic) movie or TV show featuring heroic, highly skilled martial artists, usually ronin and ninja. This word is also sometimes applied to martial arts movies in general, particularly those where the main characters have superhuman abilities.

Chambara fighting style is fast and furious, with characters jumping through the air over enemy blows. This is the ideal Cinematic style for a Martial Arts campaign. Only fighters with combat skills at 15 or better and the Trained by a Master advantage may use these Chambara "bonuses."

A Chambara fighter using bare hands or a ready, balanced weapon may make one additional attack and Parry per turn for each three points of weapon or Karate skill over 12. This will give a fighter two attacks at skill level 15, three at level 18, and so on. The Chambara fighter can skip one attack in order to change facing - that is, each facing change (to any facing) "costs" one attack.

A Chambara fighter's Wild Swing (see p. B105) is at -5 hit penalty, but is not limited to a maximum attack roll of 9.

Chambara Defenses

A Chambara fighter with the Combat Reflexes advantage can sense a surprise attack from behind. Even if the fighter does not change facing, the attack still counts as coming from the side, not the rear, just as in a "runaround" attack (see p. B108) - it is only -2 to the defender's active defense.

The typical Chambara defense is to dodge by jumping. A DX (or Jumping or Acrobatics) roll is required. If the roll is successful, the fighter has *double* his

normal Dodge defense against that attack. If the roll fails, he gets only the normal Dodge defense. On a critical failure, he *falls.* Each attempt to dodge by jumping means the fighter may make one less attack on his next turn.

A Chambara fighter may also Evade in close combat, passing through a foe's hex, by Jumping. This tactic also requires a successful DX (or Jumping or Acrobatics) roll *and* costs 4 Move points (virtually ruling it out for average people with heavy encumbrance). If the roll fails, the attempt to evade failed. If the roll succeeds, the jumper is at +5 on the Contest of DX to evade (p. B113).

GMs should require the Trained by a Master advantage as a prerequisite for these rules. Chambara combat is best suited to adventures with enormous numbers of NPC spear-carriers whose only function is to be carved up by the hero.

multiple ATTACKS

Martial arts fiction is full of warriors who can fight two, three, or more opponents at the same time, moving with unnatural speed (helped in the movies by obliging stunt men who wait in place to be hit by the protagonist). Even real-life martial artists have demonstrated incredible reaction time that would probably allow them to attack more than once in a second. To simulate this "fact" of martial arts fantasy, three sets of optional rules can be used.

Cinematic Combat: As described on p. B183, this rule allows extra Parries per round. This, however, does not truly duplicate the frenzied action of kung fu flicks.

Skill Bonuses: For every 8 points of skill, the character gets one attack or Parry. In other words, a fighter gets one extra attack and Parry at level 16, two at level 24, and so on. This allows only expert and better characters to have this huge advantage in combat. This rule can also be applied to weapon skills as well as Karate and Judo.

Chambara Rules: As described above, these rules allow a fighter to make one extra attack and Parry for every three points of skill over level 12, but they are limited to those with the Trained by a Master (or Weapon Master) advantage.

All of the Above: All three of the above rules, used together, can allow for an interesting mix of character types, adding variety to the martial artist character. In this case, the Cinematic Fighting rules of p. B183 would apply to characters with Brawling and other Western fighting skills, as well as martial artists with low skill levels. Highly trained "normal" martial artists would use the second rule, and Trained by a Master fighters would use the Chambara fighting style.

multiple ATTACK Rules

Skill bonuses and the Chambara rules will easily lead to fighters who can attack and Parry two, three or even more times in a round. Although this represents cinematic "reality," players may unbalance games by abusing those rules, and combat may become the center of the game. Also, a number of questions will arise about the application of those rules under special circumstances. Here are some guidelines for multiple attacks; the GM should use some or all of them to control game balance.

Ail-Out Attacks

If a character with multiple attacks makes an Ail-Out Attack, he loses all his active defenses, but can still Dodge once (he cannot use the Chambara jumping dodge on p. 64, however). By using the All-Out Attack, he can add one extra strike for every *two* attacks he normally has, rounding *down.* Alternatively, he can choose *any one* of the
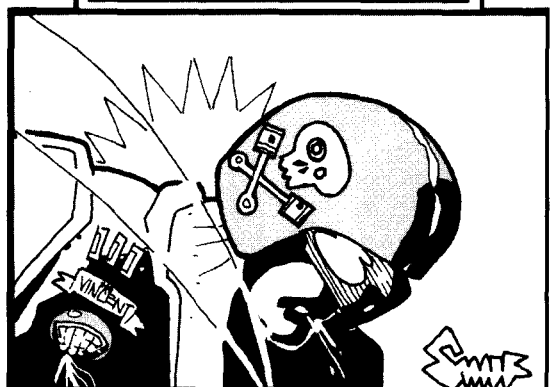
"Initiative" is a term used to express the concept of "who goes next." In most cases, initiative in martial arts combat should be determined by the Move value, as per the sidebar on p. B95.

To determine the turn sequence of attackers with multiple attacks, use the following rule. The first attack uses the character's Move value; the second uses Move -1, the third Move-2, and so on.

Example: The Skull has 3 attacks and Move 7; he faces a thug with one attack and Move 6. The Skull attacks first; his second attack has the same Move as his opponent's (in that case, let the character with the highest Basic Speed go first); his third attack will come after his enemy's turn.

If one fighter has an opponent pinned, or in an arm or leg hold, the immobilized fighter takes his turn normally if he is slower than his foe. If he is faster than his foe, he does *not* go first; he goes immediately after the foe who has immobilized him.

CONTROLLING Multiple ATTACKS

bonuses applicable to an All-Out Attack (+4 to hit, +2 damage, etc.; see p. B105) and apply it to *all* of his normal attacks, still at the cost of all his active defenses. This makes All-Out Attacks rather inefficient and undesirable, as well it should be. Even in the movies, very few martial artists are berserkers who will use such maneuvers (unless their emotions overpower their skills - see sidebars, p. 44 and 47).

Feinting

A character can Feint and attack on the same round, by sacrificing one attack for the Feint. He still keeps his Parry. The Feint will help the next attack, as per p. B96, but not any subsequent blows.

Missile Weapons

Martial arts legends tell of master archers who could draw and shoot several times each second. Characters with multiple attacks may reduce the ready time of a missile weapon by one second for each attack spent, effectively trading those extra attacks for Ready maneuvers.

For instance, a bow takes two seconds to ready (p. B96). An archer with three attacks can ready and shoot an arrow in one turn; one with four attacks can ready and shoot an arrow, then draw another arrow just in time for the next turn. As well, when using these cinematic rules, Fast-Draw (Arrow) rolls will allow the archer to fire once for *every* attack he has! The Fast-Draw roll must be made for every arrow shot, at a cumulative -1 for every arrow fired after the first one. None of these shots will be aimed; if the archer's modified skill is less than the bow's Snap Shot number, each shot will be at an additional -4 (see p. B115). GMs may impose some special requirements for multiple attacks with ranged weapons, such as the Zen Archery skill, the Trained by a Master or Weapon Master advantages, or all of the above.

Opponents with Multiple Attacks

The Multiple Attack options were designed mainly to allow PCs to chop through large numbers of cannon-fodder flunkies. When opponents with multiple attacks face each other, a player may make nine or ten attack and defense rolls in a single turn. The GM should use the rules for Initiative (see sidebar, p. 65) to determine the turn sequence. The fighter with the highest Move attacks first, regardless of the number of attacks. Note that a pinned fighter cannot move before the opponent who is pinning him.

Parrying and All-Out Defense

For every attack he has, a combatant can Parry once. The number of Blocks and Dodges he has remain the same. If he chooses the All-Out Defense maneuver, the number of parries he has doubles, and he can defend twice against the same attack. However, a fighter cannot use the All-Out Defense with one of his attacks and still attack normally with the others. By using this maneuver, he loses *all* his attacks for that turn.

Readying

Weapons that become unready after attacking or parrying (such as axes, nunchakus, etc.) can be readied on the same turn by spending one attack and one parry. For instance, a fighter with three attacks could attack with an axe once, ready it, and strike

with it a second time on the same turn. If he used the unbalanced weapon to parry as well, it would cost him another attack and parry to ready it. In that case, he could attack and parry only once, but his weapon would be ready for the next turn.

Thrown Weapons

If a fighter has several attacks, any or all of them may involve thrown knives, shuriken, etc., with the following conditions. The attacker must have all the weapons to be thrown in his hand; if not, he must have them in an easy to reach pocket/sheath, making a Fast-Draw-3 roll for each weapon drawn after the first one in a turn. As with missile weapons, the GM may limit this maneuver by requiring the Throwing Art skill, the Weapon Master advantage, or both.

Damage and RECOVERY

Martial Arts movies resemble super comic books in that people are shown trading punches, kicks and blunt weapons damage with seeming impunity; other than a few nosebleeds and split lips, even cannon-fodder NPCs get up time and time again after punches that should by rights have killed or seriously injured them.

In real life, the martial arts can be deadly; even in training and competitions, severe injuries or even death can occur. The *GURPS* injury system represents this accurately. A ST 10 man with a high Karate skill (15+) can kill another with a few well-placed blows. In a realistic campaign, this will teach characters not to run headlong into fights - as it should. In a cinematic campaign, however, this would not be appropriate; combat is an essential part of this type of campaign, and the characters cannot be expected to avoid it. PCs and NPCs live to fight another day, except, perhaps, at the climactic battle. Here are some optional rules to limit damage in a cinematic battle.

Optional Rule: Flesh Wounds

This cinematic rule, from p. B183, will prevent premature deaths in Martial Arts battle without changing the combat system. Anyone who is not actually in combat may spend one unused character point, immediately healing all damage except crippling injuries, all fatigue and (if that optional rule is being used) all stun damage.

Optional Rule: Stun Damage

This rule, first introduced in *Supers* (p. S86) has a place in a cinematic martial arts campaign. With this rule, all characters have "stun points" equal to five times their hit points; this is a new stat, and the player must keep track of it separately. When a character's Stun reaches 0, he is knocked unconscious. Consciousness is recovered normally (see p. B129). A conscious character regains lost Stun at 1 point per minute of rest.

Unless an attacker specifically declares an attack as "shoot to kill" before it is made, all damage taken is stun only. The GM may also treat damage from falling (or falling objects) as stun damage.

This will result in people being knocked out just as frequently as in normal *GURPS* combat, but it will *extremely* hard for them to be killed. The advantage of this rule is that PCs and NPCs will have a much lower mortality rate. The big disadvantage of this rule is its total unreality. Being run through by a katana *doesn't* just stun someone!

COMBAT

More OPTIONAL RULES FOR STUN POINTS

Adding the Stun stat will raise a number of questions about crippling attacks, vital points, knocking a person unconscious, and so on. The GM can use some of the optional rules described below to solve those problems, or, based on them, create his own rules to deal with special situations regarding injuries. These rules can also be helpful for a *Supers* campaign using the Stun rules.

Vital Points A blow to the Brain (Area 3-4) does quadruple Stun damage; the victim is stunned if he takes Stun damage over HT/2, knocked out if over HT. If normal hit point damage is also taken, it takes precedence over this and its effects are as per B203. Blows to the vitals do not inflict extra Stun damage (but see below).

In any event, when struck in the head or vitals by a crushing blow, the victim must roll to avoid being knocked out, again following the rules of the *Basic Set.*

Optional Rule: Damage Reduction

Another *Supers* optional rule modifies the Stun Damage rule. The GM sets a particular rate - 1/4, 1/3, 1/2 or whatever he chooses. When someone takes damage, only the amount determined by this modifier is applied to HT, with the full value being applied to Stun. This method allows the GM to fine-tune the amount of "unreality" in combat, but requires more bookkeeping, as the players must keep track of how much damage is real and how much is Stun.

Example: Chuck Stalnowski, karate expert, has a HT of 12 (and therefore Stun 60) in a campaign with 1/3 Damage Reduction. He is hit by a burst of three 9mm bullets, which do 10, 4 and 13 points of damage. The total 27 points are subtracted from Stun, bringing it down to 33. 1/3 of 27 is 9 points, so his HT is reduced to 3, slowing him down and probably stunning him as well. Of course, without this rule he would be rolling against HT to stay alive!

Optional Rule: Different Damage Types

This is another optional rule that suits cinematic "reality" in the martial arts. Most crushing attacks (except bullets) do Stun damage, but cutting and impaling weapons, as well as firearms, do full HT damage (or, alternatively, have a Damage Reduction ratio, as described above). This allows for more "relative" realism: it is easier to believe that a victim can be knocked out but be relatively unscathed after being kicked in the head a few times, as opposed to being stabbed in the vitals for the same result. This rule simulates the "reality" of the milestone kung fu movie *The Chinese Connection.* At first, the bad guys attack Brace Lee's school with sticks and bare hands. The result is a number of braised but relatively unhurt fighters. At the end of the movie, on the other hand, the attackers return with swords and knives, and kill a large number of people.

If this rale is used, bloodthirsty PCs may end up carrying knives and swords more often than nunchakus and jo sticks, since bladed weapons will have a definite "edge" in lethality! Of course, such serial-killer PCs would face equally well-armed foes … not to mention law-enforcement agencies equipped with firearms.

UNARMED CRITICAL MISS TABLES

Unarmed combat has its own unique hazards. When an unarmed fighter critically fails at an attack, parry or other maneuver, use these tables instead of the usual Critical Miss Table on p. B202.

Unarmed CRITICAL Miss TABLE — STRIKING and PARRYING

3 - You trip and knock yourself out! If kicking, you slip and fall on your head; otherwise, you fall face-first into your foe's fist, knee or forehead. Roll vs. HT every 30 minutes to recover.

4 - You connect using the wrong part of your body! You immediately take enough damage to cripple the body part that you were striking with (HT/3 for a hand or foot, HT/2 for an arm or leg). DR has no effect on this damage. On a Head Butt, see #3 above.

5 - You hit a solid object (wall or floor) instead of your opponent. Take normal punch or kick damage to the body part you were striking with; DR protects normally.

6 - As #5 above, but for half damage only.

7 - You stumble forward. Advance one hex past your opponent and end the turn facing away from him. Your foe is now behind you !

8 - You fall down. It will take you two turns to get up (one if a successful Acrobatics roll is made immediately).

9, 10, 11 - You lose your balance. You can do nothing else until your next turn. All your active defenses are at -2 until your next turn.

12 - You trip. Make a DX roll to avoid falling down. This roll is at -4 if kicking, or at *twice* the usual DX penalty for any maneuver that requires a DX roll to avoid mishap even on a normal failure (e.g., Flying Jump Kick).

13 - You let your guard down. All your active defenses are at -2 for the next turn, and any successful Feint made against you during this turn counts *double!* This *will* be obvious to your foe.

14 - You stumble forward. See #7 above.

15 - You pull a muscle. Take ld-3 damage to your arm (if punching or attacking with the arm), leg (if kicking) or neck (on a Head Butt). You are off balance and at -1 to all attacks and defenses for the next turn. You are at -3 to any action involving that arm or leg (or to *any* action, if you injure your neck) until this damage heals. This penalty is reduced to -1 if you have the High Pain Threshold advantage.

16 - You strained your shoulder! If parrying or punching, that arm is "crippled" for the rest of the encounter. You cannot use that arm to attack or defend for 30 minutes. All subsequent punches and parries with the other arm will be at -1. If kicking, you fall down hard instead, taking ld-1 damage. DR protects normally.

17 - You connect using the wrong part of your body. See #4 above.

18 - You trip and knock yourself out. See #3 above.
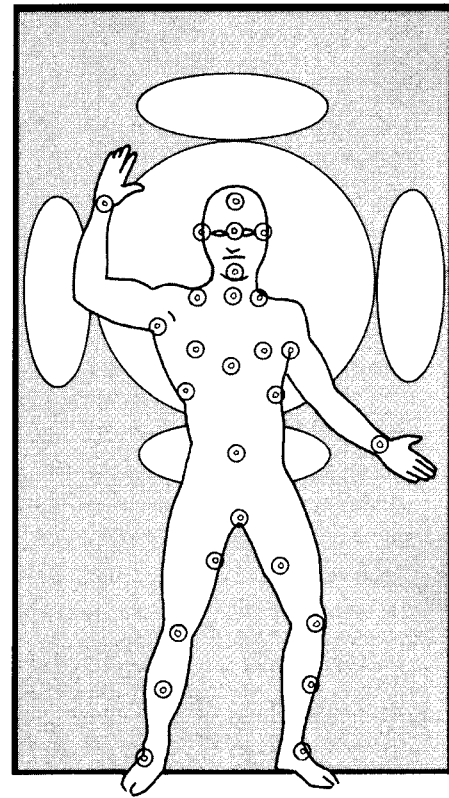
Unarmed CRITICAL Miss Table – grappling, Locks AND THROWS

3 - You knock yourself out! You smash your forehead against your opponent's, or catch a knee in the solar plexus. Roll vs. HT every 30 minutes to recover.

4 - You throw your back out (ld-3 damage) and are at -6 DX and -4 IQ from the pain until someone resets your back with a First Aid-2 roll. These penalties are halved if you have the High Pain Threshold advantage.

5 - You fall down *hard,* taking ld-1 damage. DR protects normally.

6 - As #5 above, but for ld-3 damage only.

7 - You stumble forward. Advance one hex past your opponent and end the turn facing away from him. Your foe is now behind you! Alternatively, if you were attempting an Arm or Finger Lock or a Judo Throw and if your opponent's style includes that maneuver, he has the option of immediately inflicting that maneuver upon *you* if he can make an unmodified Judo or Wrestling roll!

8 - You fall down. It will take you two turns to get up (one if a successful Acrobatics roll is made immediately).

9, 10, 11 - You lose your balance. You can do nothing else until your next turn. All your active defenses are at -2 until your next turn.

12 - You trip. Make a DX roll to avoid falling down.

13 - You let your guard down. All your active defenses are at -2 for the next turn. You are also at -2 to DX in any Quick Contest made in Close Combat, and any successful Feint against you counts *double!* This *will* be obvious to your foe.

14 - You stumble forward. See #7 above.

15 - You pull a muscle. Take ld-3 damage to your back (Torso). You are off balance and at -1 to all attack and defense maneuvers for the next turn. You are at -3 to any action until this damage heals. This penalty is reduced to -1 if you have the High Pain Threshold advantage.

16 - You fall down *hard.* See #5 above.

17 - You throw your back out. See #4 above.

18 - You knock yourself out. See #3 above.

More OPTIONAL RULES for STUM POINTS (Continued)

New Vital Points
   The GM may assign new vital areas that increase the number of Stun points a victim loses. A hit to the Head (Area 5) or to the Groin (Area 11) can do double Stun Damage (but no extra hit point damage). This is in addition to any other effects (see sidebar, p. 49).

Crippling Damage
   A limb is considered crippled if it takes Stun points equal to the character's HT; rolls to recover (p. B129) are made at +5. If HT point damage is also inflicted, and is enough to cripple the limb, then proceed normally.

Poison Damage
   Poisons and Venoms do stun damage, at first. However, if the victim does not receive medical aid within HT hours, minutes or even seconds (depending on the severity of the poison - GM's call), a second HT roll to resist the poison must be made, with all its modifiers; on a failure the victim takes normal hit point damage. For poisons with a specific effect other than HT loss (like Curare, p. 121), assign those effects instead.

COMBAT

4 ☯ STYLES

The term "martial arts" covers a huge variety of disciplines. There are many different objectives, philosophies and weapon forms. Each school, or collection of Teachings and techniques, is called a "style."

Styles with a similar background may vary widely in stances, maneuvers and overall character. There are "hard" styles that work aggressively, "soft" ones that concentrate on defense, and combinations of the two. Traditional techniques compete with pragmatic, modern ones for supremacy. Some styles are designed for exercise and tournament events; others work best in the streets. And, beyond all this, each style has a specific "flavor" that individualizes it and its users.

In a *Martial Arts* campaign, choosing one or more styles for a PC provides another roleplaying angle. In combat, his actions will be shaped by his training. In the *dojo* or school, and in everyday life, his behavior will be influenced by the spiritual teachings (or lack thereof!) of his style. It will also provide guidelines for choosing skills and special maneuvers for the fighter.

This chapter describes many different styles, some historical, some futuristic and some fantastic, but these descriptions need not be set in stone. The 20th century has seen a great deal of blending between martial arts techniques, as experts seek to combine the best elements of different styles - and who knows what the future will bring? At the same time, there are so many variations within the same styles (there are probably hundreds of Karate schools, for instance), that a martial arts connoisseur could probably find fault with a general statement about *any* style.

Each GM should feel free to modify the style descriptions to suit his campaign and his perspective of the skills in question. And some GMs will dispense with most or all of the rules in this chapter; some players may not want to deal with the extra bookkeeping involved. On the other hand, the extra dimension added to the martial artist character should be worth it.

Each style will be described briefly, with its history and background and a general overview of its specific tactics and philosophy. The style's characteristic skills and maneuvers will be listed and described.

skills

Each style will teach more than one skill; most will include several, not all of which will be combat skills. A martial artist will be proficient in many different fields, transcending the limits of the Judo and Karate skills (see p. 31 for the applications of Judo and Karate). Common examples of the physical skills include Combat/Weapon skills, Jumping, and Acrobatics. Many martial arts also teach a religion or philosophy. Furthermore, many styles claim to have secret skills of great power; these are most likely to appear in a cinematic campaign.

The rules below influence character creation and points earned through study (see p. B82); those points are learned through the school, and will follow the guidelines given below. Points earned through adventure may be spent as the player pleases, within the guidelines imposed by the character's chosen style.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND OPTIONAL Skills

Each style will emphasize some skills over others, and some may be taught only to advanced students. To translate this into game terms, they will be divided into Primary, Secondary and Optional skills.

Primary Skills

Primary skills reflect the main focus of the individual style; they are usually taught first, and students dedicate more time and energy to master them. All Primary skills must be at a similar level; no difference greater than two levels is allowed (except for those who study more than one style - see p. 75).

When a character selects a style, he *must* spend at least one point on each Primary skill; this is figured into the style cost.

For example, the Primary skills for the Aikido style are Judo and Judo Art. These are the main skills used by this graceful, "soft" form.

Secondary Skills

Secondary skills are also part of the style's repertoire, but are either taught only at higher levels, or are not given as much attention throughout. Until all Primary skills reach 15 (Black Belt level), Secondary skills cannot be emphasized.

There are hundreds of martial arts styles, and thousands of variations within styles. No book can cover them all. Furthermore, there is constant disagreement among martial arts practitioners as to what the strong points of each style are. It is easy to describe new styles within the *GURPS Martial Arts* framework. In fact, creative GMs and players can invent their own brand-new styles.

The mechanics of creating a new style are fairly easy. The GM should first have a clear idea of what type of form he is creating. Is it an aggressive style (concentrating on kicks and punches), a defensive one (using locks and throws primarily) or a combination of the two? Is there a particular emphasis on some maneuver (kicks, for instance)? What weapons (if any) and non-combat skills (such as a philosophical background) does the style have? If the GM is not personally familiar with the style, he can look up books and magazine articles on it; photographs of sample maneuvers can be particularly enlightening in deciding what bonuses or penalties the style will have.

After that, the GM can draw up a list of Primary, Secondary and Optional skills; in a cinematic campaign, some Cinematic skills should also be added. Maneuvers, with some bonuses and maybe some penalties, are chosen, setting a point cost for the style. When GMs are designing a style, they should try to keep the total point cost below 25 points (35 points for the cinematic version); a more reasonable limit is 15 to 20 points. Remember - this is the point cost for a competent *student* of the style, not a master!

Finally, the GM can decide what place the style has in the campaign. Is it publicly known, or is it a "secret style," taught by only a few hidden masters? The style may even be illegal in its home territory.

A player with a skilled martial-artist character may even want to have his creator invent and popularize a new style *during the campaign*. For guidelines, see the next sidebar.

Developing New STYLES DURING PLAY

Martial arts history is full of advanced students of classic forms who branched off and creating their own. Bruce Lee's development of Jeet Kune Do is one of the most recent such situations (see sidebars, pp. 11-12). PCs may wish to replicate this situation, creating their own art. It isn't easy, though. The would-be creator should be an expert in at least one style before developing his own! Even then, the style may not be accepted by the martial arts community; they may shoot it down as plagiarism or opportunism. The martial artist must be very sure of himself to try to become the founder of a style.

The PC must develop the mechanics of the style, as described in *Creating New Styles* on p. 71. The GM should work with the player, and in any case will have final say on whether the proposed style is "legal" or not. Some restrictions: the style should not have any maneuvers the creator cannot perform at Black Belt level or better (i.e., a modified success roll of 15 or higher). The same applies to skills; the style developer must know all skills he plans to include in his style (including Secondary or Optional skills) at level 15 or higher.

If two or more PCs join forces to create a style, the GM can allow them to pool their resources (i.e., styles known), with one limitation: all PCs involved must be able to perform all the maneuvers included in the new style at the required levels (see above).

A new martial art cannot be created overnight; at least a game year must be spent in its development, and GMs may require more time. Adventures will detract from this; add one more month to the required time for every *week* the creator is off adventuring. Development includes brainstorming with co-creators, practicing the new moves, developing new *katas,* teaching, and demonstrating the new moves to members of the martial arts community.

After all this work, the GM must gauge the new style's reception . This will depend on the campaign world. In 19th-century Japan, new styles were appearing throughout the land, and people were receptive to new forms, particularly if the teacher proposing them was highly respected. Ancient China, on the other hand, was a very traditionalist land; a new style would be seen as a transgression against the sacred teachings of the old masters.

All Secondary skills must remain at least one level lower than the lowest Primary Skill (i.e., if the lowest Primary skill level is 13, no Secondary skill can go above 12). Before raising Secondary skills, the student will have to improve Primary skills accordingly.

If a martial artist's default level in a Secondary (or Optional) skill is higher than these guidelines would allow, then of course he is not penalized for this.

Once all of the trainee's Primary skills have reached 15 or higher, however, he can learn Secondary and Optional skills at any level, even matching (or surpassing) the Primary ones. This reflects the fact that a student with a high level of expertise will be given more leeway to explore, and also because some facets of the style are only taught to advanced students.

There is no minimum level for Secondary skills until a student's Primary skills have all reached level 15 (Black Belt level). Once all Primary skills have reached 15, a student may not raise Primary skills further until at least one point has been put into each Secondary skill. No further improvement in Secondary skills is ever required, though the well-rounded student would of course seek it. For example, the Secondary skills for Aikido are Katana Art and Shortsword Art. These techniques are not central to the circular throws of Aikido, but are taught to advanced students.

Optional Skills

Optional skills may or may not be taught in any particular school (GM's choice), or the PC may choose not to learn them; either way, they are not emphasized in that style, at least until the student has learned all the basics. Until all Primary skills reach level 15, each Optional skill must be at least *2 levels* lower than the lowest Primary skill (in the example above, no Optional skill could be learned above level 11). Optional skills *may* be higher than Secondary ones.

All this applies to skills taught by that style only. A fighter who has learned some skills elsewhere might know them at any level; the guidelines here represent the normal learning process a student of a style would follow.

For example, the Optional skills for Aikido are the Japanese language, Staff, and Theology (Shinto). None of these is ever necessary to the skilled *practice* of Aikido, but all can contribute to a full understanding, and advanced students would be encouraged to study them.

Rule Variations

The rules for Primary and Secondary skills simulate the way those skills are taught in an actual school. In a situation where a student could learn a skill *outside* his school, the GM can allow it to be learned at any skill level . . . though, of course, the PC's master may disapprove of his spending time on extraneous forms or maneuvers. This is entirely up to the GM.

Cinematic Skills

Many styles carry a body of legend . . . tales of the feats which true masters can perform. These are the "Cinematic skills." Not every style includes Cinematic skills. There are no tales of the miraculous feats of ninja policemen, for instance, so Police Hand-to-hand has no Cinematic skills. In general, the Cinematic skills given for a style will represent a heroic exaggeration of the style's true techniques.

For example, the Cinematic skills associated with Aikido are Immovable Stance, Invisibility Art, Mental Strength, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets and Push - all "gentle" techniques.

In a cinematic campaign, the cinematic style cost (see p. 74) includes one point to be spend on each Cinematic skill it teaches. The student must have all Primary skills at level 16 or higher before learning any Cinematic skills; this type of teaching is only begun at black belt level. The student who does not yet have Primary skills at this level will not be able to use Cinematic skills. He will acquire the understanding to use these esoteric skills when his mastery of the "mundane" skills reaches the appropriate level (as his master will no doubt assure him!). Under these rules, the GM *could* require a character to pay one point per Cinematic skill (i.e., charge the full cinematic style cost) regardless of his Primary skill levels. However, it is probably wise simply not to charge these points initially and only require characters to spend points for Cinematic skills as the skills are actually learned.

Normally, the Trained by a Master advantage (or, in certain cases, the Weapon Master advantage) is required to learn *any* Cinematic skills, regardless of skill level.

Maneuvers

Most styles have a specific set of defensive and offensive *Maneuvers,* sometimes to the exclusion of all others. A character trained in any style will be most proficient in its Maneuvers. The character must spend at least a half-point on every regular Maneuver in the style, and he can improve the Maneuvers as described on p. 42.

Some styles require students to learn certain Maneuvers at higher levels, even at the beginning, and no fighter can reach Black Belt status until he puts at least 2 points into each of his style's Maneuvers, unless that would raise the Maneuver above its maximum allowable level. Other than that, each student may emphasize whatever Maneuvers he and his master feel are most important.

If a Maneuver is not part of his style, the character cannot learn it beyond the default level (GMs can allow exceptions to this at their discretion). Having PCs stick to their style's Maneuvers is helpful in two ways. First of all, it gives a role-playing dimension to combat, with each fighter having his own "repertoire" of moves. Secondly, it makes it easier for players to remember the Maneuvers available to them; knowing four or five Maneuvers is easier than trying to memorize all of them, especially for players with no hands-on martial arts experience who may have problems visualizing the action. Lastly, it reflects martial arts reality: many martial artists tend to specialize in particular moves.
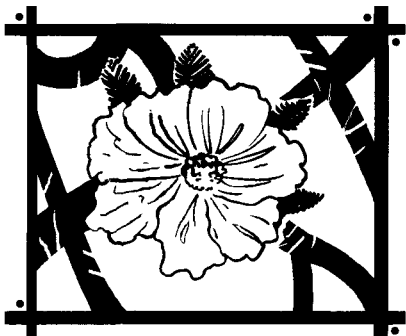
Modifiers: -1 to -10, depending on the community's openness to new ideas; the PC's Reputation (if more than one PC developed the style, use the highest one); +1 for every renowned martial artist (average skill of 18+, Reputation +2 or higher) who publicly supports the style; +1 to +5 for successful public demonstrations; -1 to -7 if a demonstration ends in a disaster; +1 to +3 for successful promotion attempts (double the negative modifiers if the attempt is a flop); a base modifier between +5 and -5, based on GM's opinion about the quality of the new style, as well as the PCs' roleplaying of key situations.

A Good or better reaction means the martial art is accepted and liked; many students will be interested, and the PC can open schools dedicated exclusively to that style. The new style can become an element in the campaign. The creator of the style can justify an enhanced Reputation; whether the GM wants to make him a gift of the required character points should depend on the skill with which the style's development was roleplayed.

A Neutral or Poor reaction indicates a "cold shoulder." Some people mock or denounce the innovation; most simply do not notice it. The creators may spend another year in development, trying for more endorsements and successful demonstrations, and roll again at a -1 penalty.

A Bad reaction means most respectable martial artists blast the style publicly, and want nothing to do with it; the creator is perceived as an opportunistic and unworthy attention-seeker. Reduce the PC's Reputation by 1. There is no point in trying again; the wise PC will let the matter drop - or take his style underground, developing his skills away from hostile eyes!

A Disastrous reaction means not only that the style is not accepted, and will be lambasted by everyone, but the PC's reputation will be tarnished; reduce his Reputation by *three* points. In some cultures and environments (i.e., an ancient temple), the creator may be exiled or persecuted.

Cinematic Maneuvers

The Cinematic Maneuvers of a style are simply the least realistic Maneuvers commonly attributed to that style. They are usually more appropriate for cinematic campaigns than for realistic ones; thus, they are separated from the regular Maneuvers, and their cost is included only in the cinematic style cost. Whether or not these Maneuvers can be learned by a character is chiefly a function of the campaign mode (realistic or cinematic); the GM may wish to include some of them in a realistic campaign as he wishes, increasing the style cost appropriately.

These maneuvers *do not* require the Trained by a Master advantage as a prerequisite, with the exception of the various Enhanced Defenses (Block, Dodge or Parry), which do.

Style COST

Each style has a point cost, which represents the minimum number of points that must be set aside to learn the style's skills and maneuvers well enough to get the benefits of familiarity with the style. This is based on the number of *Primary skills* and *Maneuvers* in the style. Each Primary skill and each Maneuver increases the style cost by 1 point. For most styles, there is a minimum cost of 5 points (representing 1,000 hours of study). This is not to say that you can't learn something about the martial arts in less time; after all, a half-point (100 hours) will buy skill in Judo or Karate. However, that represents some training in wrestling holds or effective striking - not the full scope of a true martial art. There are exceptions, like Self-Defense Hand-to-Hand, which are deliberately simple to learn and have no "art" or philosophical element. These have very low point costs.

Note that most styles have two point costs. The second represents the style's increased point value in a *cinematic* campaign (see below). If the GM decides that certain Cinematic skills are simply unavailable, or that all characters can learn certain Cinematic Maneuvers, then the style costs should be adjusted appropriately.

Spending Initial Points

The points spent for the "cost" of a style go directly toward purchasing the Primary skills or improving the Maneuvers. At least 1 point must be spent on each Primary skill; at least a half-point must be spent on each Average Maneuver, and at least 1 point on each Hard Maneuver. Any remaining points may be divided between the Primary skills and Maneuvers of the style in any way the character wishes.

Example: Aikido has two Primary skills and four Maneuvers. This makes its point cost is 6. When a character takes Aikido as a style, he must spend a minimum of 1 point on each of the Primary skills (Judo Art and Judo). He must put a half-point into each of the Average Maneuvers (Arm Lock and Breakfall), and a full point into each of the Hard Maneuvers (Finger Lock and Ground Fighting). This adds up to 5. The remaining point may be divided between Maneuvers and Primary skills in any way. The player may always choose to spend more, but the minimum is 6 - thus, the style's "point cost" is 6.

Some styles will require extra study in certain skills or Maneuvers; this will be specified for the individual style, and the extra cost is included in the style cost. For instance. An Ch'i has the notation [2 points] after the Feint Maneuver. When adding this style, the fighter must put *at least 2 points* into Feint, because the style emphasizes feint moves.

Cinematic Style Cost

Most styles have a second, Cinematic, point cost listed. In a cinematic campaign, the character must pay an additional point for every Cinematic skill and Maneuver in the style. This extra cost does not include the Trained by a Master advantage, which must be purchased separately if the character wishes to learn any Cinematic skills at all.

These extra points are spent on the Cinematic skills and Maneuvers in the same way: at least 1 point for each skill, at least a half-point for each Average Cinematic Maneuver and at least 1 point for each Hard Cinematic Maneuver, with any remaining points being divided between these Cinematic skills and Maneuvers as the player wishes. Note that the student may not *use* the Cinematic skills until he has learned all the style's Primary skills at level 16 or better. The GM may require that he still pay for them, but at the minimum 1 point each. In such a case, the skill is listed on the character sheet *without* a skill level to reflect the fact that the character is still learning the skill and cannot use it.

A few styles also have the cinematic abilities Enhanced Block, Dodge or Parry. The cost of these abilities adds directly to the style cost. These points give the student a +1 to the appropriate active defense, representing the style's strong emphasis on defensive moves. While these are listed as Cinematic Maneuvers, they cannot be learned without the Trained by a Master advantage, even in a cinematic campaign where other Cinematic Maneuvers are allowed to all characters.

Students of a style do *not* have to learn all its cinematic abilities. If they elect not to buy some of the skills and maneuvers, or if the GM decides that certain abilities are simply unavailable, then reduce the total cost of the style by 1 for each "dropped" ability. Assume that the master didn't know these secrets, or declined to teach them for some reason. The student cannot learn them at all unless he finds another master (a quest) or learns another style that teaches them.

If the GM rules that *all* characters can learn certain Cinematic Maneuvers, then the cost of these maneuvers should be added to the realistic style cost. The cinematic style cost will not be changed, since it still includes *all* of the style's skills and maneuvers.

COMBINING STYLES

Many famous martial artists of the past and present have studied more than one style in their lifetimes. PCs who are dedicated martial artists may try to do the same. The student must normally pay the full point cost of each style, subject to the special rules below.

Styles Bought During Character Creation

When a new character is *created* with more than one style, he must know all of the Primary skills of *each* style. Thus, a character with many styles will have high levels in a wide variety of skills. The same skills are not taken repeatedly; characters will have only *one* Karate skill level, for instance. The changes introduced by different styles are reflected by the new Maneuvers available. The PC must pay the full cost of all the styles with which he is proficient. However, if two styles have common Primary skills or Maneuvers, the character does *not* put multiple points into those abilities; see below for what to do with these "left over" points.

Secret Development

Alternatively, the founder of the style may not want to practice it publicly; this may be dictated by his philosophy (Zen Buddhism and Taoism do not look kindly on self-promotion), or by circumstances (in Japanese-occupied Okinawa, teachers of combat styles had to practice in secret or face a death-by-torture execution). In that case, he can approach potential students privately. Use reaction rolls, modified as above; they should be roleplayed before the rolls are made and modified accordingly. A Bad or Disastrous reaction will mean the potential student will want to reveal the secret, and must be dealt with accordingly.

cinematic ABILITIES AND PREREQUISITES

In some cases, the prerequisite(s) for a style's cinematic abilities are *not* listed as Primary skills of the style, but as Secondary or Optional skills instead. In order to learn or improve a cinematic ability, however, the student must know all of its prerequisites at skill level 12+, even if they are Secondary or Optional skills. Since Primary skills must be at least one level higher than Secondary skills and two levels higher than Optional skills until black belt level (15+) is reached, this means that a student who has taken a 12+ in a Secondary or Optional skill to meet a prerequisite will need to know his style's Primary skills at level 13, 14 or higher right from the start. This effect is intentional! A master will only teach such difficult and jealously-guarded tricks to the most promising of students - which is one of the reasons why these abilities are considered *cinematic*.

Martial ARTS Uniforms

The most common martial art uniform is the *gi:* a kimono-like costume consisting of a jacket and pants, designed to allow maximum flexibility. Judo uniforms have some padding on the jacket, since the practitioners spend a large amount of their time landing or being thrown into a mat (this padding is too light to be considered armor). Karate uniforms are lighter. In general, these uniforms are white. After the ninja craze of the 1980s, some schools have changed to black uniforms.

The gi is worn in most martial arts schools. Lately, some dojos have changed to plain exercise gear. While traditionalists frown upon this, keep in mind that the gi was originally nothing but a simplified form of Japanese everyday wear, so there is no inherent mysticism in the clothing.

Many schools, especially Western ones, **will** decorate the jacket with embroidered **patches** representing the school. Some competitions also give patches to winners, or even to all participants. A traditional master will not allow these Westernized distractions.

Most martial arts styles now use this type of uniform, even when a different costume was worn traditionally. When a modern style uses different dress, this will be discussed in the sidebar beside that style's description.

AIKIDO Uniforms

The modern Aikido uniform is similar to the Judo uniform (see above). The more traditional one (still used in many schools) uses the judo jacket worn over a black *hakama* ("split skirt").

Example: Pentjak Silat, Tae Kwon Do and Muay Thai all have Karate as a Primary skill. A character buying all three styles will put only *one* point into his Karate skill, not three; as a result, two points are "left over" from the style costs.

The points "left over" from style costs as the result of the duplication of abilities can, at the GM's option, be considered "lost." This can be taken to represent the extra training needed to master each style's different stances and moves. This option is probably best for a realistic campaign.

Alternatively, the GM can allow "left over" points to be spent on the Primary skills and Maneuvers of *any* of the character's styles, using the justification that the cross-pollination of styles can lead to an improved understanding of the common techniques. This method probably works best in a cinematic campaign.

In either case, it is strongly recommended that the GM require at least one point per style beyond the first be "lost," simply to balance the multiple points of Style Familiarity (see p. 26) that the character will effectively get for free upon learning each new style.

Learning New Styles During Play

A character may also learn a new style during the course of play. He must first find a teacher. Depending on the campaign and the style he wants to learn, this may be as simple as opening the Yellow Pages, or it may require a quest! As a rule, one *must* have a teacher to study the martial arts. See sidebar, p. 153.

Once the teacher is found, the student begins to spend character points to add the required abilities - Primary skills first, then Maneuvers. The required character points may come from "saved" points or from points earned in adventuring (if the adventure exercises the appropriate skills). The most realistic way to get these points is, of course, by assigning hours of study: 200 hours per point.

The student gains *familiarity* with the style (see p. 26) after he spends his first point studying it. He may gain it after a single sparring session with the master or an advanced student, but many masters won't *allow* sparring until many hours have been spent in simple exercise and katas!

The student does not "know" the style until he has spent *new* points equal to the style's cost, according to the rules given above. For instance, Judo and Aikido both have Judo and Judo Art as Primary skills. But no matter how good you are at Judo, you cannot be considered to "know" Aikido until you have spent 6 points in Aikido training *after* finding an Aikido teacher.

Optional Rule: Extra Detail

Those who want a very detailed and realistic simulation of multi-style proficiency may require the skills of each style to be learned separately. In the example above, the PC would have three different Karate skills: Karate (Silat), Karate (Tae Kwon Do) and Karate (Muay Thai). He would get one point for each skill, and could know them at different levels. However, each skill would have to be raised separately; there would be no default between them. The Maneuvers for a style only work with the skills that are part of that style. In combat, the PC must announce, each turn, which style he is going to use.

Historical and Modern Styles

Aikido/Aiki-JUTSU   6 POINTS/13 POINTS

Aikido is primarily an artistic or "do" style (p. 10). It has become very popular in recent years, both as a self-defense method and a sport. Its value in self-defense is rather overrated, due to its being an art rather than a combat technique. Its predecessor, Aiki-jutsu, on the other hand, was a highly effective combat system. Aiki-jutsu is an ancient Japanese martial art, attributed to the legendary Yoshitsune. Aikido was founded by Morihei Uyeshiba, during the 1920s and '30s in Japan. It is said that Uyeshiba was capable of superhuman feats, whose secrets may (in a cinematic campaign) have been handed down to some selected students.

Aikido's main technique is the throw. Theoretically, a circular motion must be described by the throw. In Aikido, the attacker is supposed to flow with the motion, actually assisting the throw and using the Breakfall maneuver (p. 45) to land on the ground. This type of training would cause problems in a real fight. Aiki-jutsu uses the same theory, but in a more pragmatic way. The opponent is expected to resist being thrown, and a number of moves are used to "persuade" him.

Primary Skills: Judo Art, Judo.

Secondary Skills: Katana Art, Shortsword Art.

Optional Skills: Language (Japanese), Staff, Theology (Shinto).

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Breakfall, Finger Lock, Ground Fighting (Judo).

Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance, Invisibility Art, Mental Strength, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

An Ch'i   9 POINTS/12 POINTS

This unusual Chinese style concentrates on hidden weapons and gadgets, and is taught in secret. Its reliance on exotic tools makes it a distant cousin of Ninjutsu, and An Ch'i exiles in Japan might have been among the original ninja.

This style concentrates on the use of thrown weapons. It is said that masters of this style can turn any common household object into a deadly weapon (see the Throwing Art skill, p. 40). This form also specializes in concealing techniques for small throwing weapons, such as spring-loaded arrows, shuriken disguised as common items like coins, harmless-looking darts, and countless others (players and GMs are encouraged to use their imagination here). In combat, an An Ch'i specialist will try to take his opponents by surprise. He will seem helpless. Suddenly, weapons will appear in his hands, and he will start raining them on his enemies, aiming for vital points. An Ch'i masters are also well-known for filling their hiding places with exotic booby-traps.

In a cinematic campaign, this style is ideal for Weapon Masters. In fact, some of the extraordinary claims made about this style make it more appropriate for cinematic roleplaying. Masters of the skill can learn Pressure Points and Power Blow, which can be used with thrown weapons only.

As a style, An Ch'i is rather incomplete and was probably not meant to be studied alone, but in combination with other styles, particularly external Kung Fu forms. This style was common among the Chinese equivalent of the ninja - the Lin Kuei, or "forest demons."

(Note: GMs may restrict this style to cinematic campaigns only.)

Primary Skills: Fast-Draw (Knife and Shuriken), Holdout, Throwing, Traps.

Secondary Skills: Armoury/TL3-4 (Thrown Weapons), Blowpipe.

Optional Skills: Karate, Judo, other weapon skills.

Maneuvers: Hit Location (Throwing) [2 points], Feint (Throwing) [2 points].

Cinematic Skills: Power Blow, Pressure Points, Throwing Art.

Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

Grading systems

Many styles have a structured grading or rank system, going from beginner or novice to master of the art. The most common system is that of "belt" ranks, used in Judo, Karate, Aikido and many other Japanese forms. One of the most common "belt systems" is shown below, with approximate corresponding skill levels. This skill level should be the average level of *all* Primary skills (see p. 71) of the form being learned.

White, or Red Belt: beginner; this is the lowest rank. Skill level ranges from default (DX-6) to 10.

Yellow Belt: A beginner after some training. Skill level 11. At least two character points should have been spent on each Primary skill.

Orange Belt: Skill level 12.

*Green Belt:* A more or less competent student. Skill level 13.

Blue Belt: At this level, the student may help to assist the class in some small ways. Skill level 14.

Brown Belt: A competent martial artist, who will help teach the simpler techniques. Skill level (average) 14.5.

Black Belt: All the basic techniques have been mastered. Skill level 15.

Note that, contrary to popular belief, training does not end with the black belt. In fact, most Asian martial artists feel that this is the stage at which, with the basic *physical* moves mastered, the true study of the art can begin. The Western tendency to view the black belt as a goal in itself is considered absurd.

For more advanced levels, see the sidebar on p. 78.
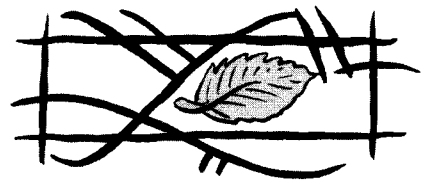
Okinawan Ranks

Most Okinawan styles (see Isshinryu and Goju Ryu) use a belt system similar to the one above. These ranks (called *kyu*) have names as well as colors, with ten ranks before reaching the black belt. The names and belt-colors, as well as average skills, are described below. The skill level is the average of all Primary skill levels:

Jukyu (White Belt): 10 or less.

Kyukyu (Yellow): 10.5.

Hachikyu (Orange): 11.

Shichikyu (Green): 11.5.

Rokkyu(Blue): 12.

Gokyu (Purple, First Level): 12.5.

Yonkyu (Purple, Second Level): 13.

Sankyu (Brown, First Level): 13.5.

Nikyu (Brown, Second Level): 14.

Ikkyu (Brown, Third Level): 14.5.

LIFE AFTER THE BLACK BELT

The black belt is but the first of a series of levels of mastery. In Karate, those grades are known as Dan (degree). A "regular" black belt is a First Dan. Each subsequent Dan represents an improvement of two skill levels, or three at the higher Dans, as detailed below.

First Dan: (Black Belt): Skill Level 15.
Second Dan: Skill Level 16-17.
Third Dan: Skill Level 18-19.
Fourth Dan: Skill Level 20-21.
Fifth Dan: Skill Level 22-23.
Sixth Dan: Skill Level 24-26.

And so on, 3 levels per Dan. There are very few masters of Fifth Dan level or higher. Tenth Dan martial artist (minimum skill level 36!) are extremely rare. Martial artists that claim such a level will be considered fakes unless they have a good Reputation or can provide solid documentation to back their claim; this documentation (the equivalent of a diploma) must come from a well-known school or master. Winning duels will not prove a claim, especially in the present; your skill as a brawler is not the issue. 10th Dans under 40 years old will be met with great skepticism.

BANDO Animalforms

The Bando style described above is the Boar form of Bando. Each animal form has a different emphasis, with different Maneuvers and skills. They are briefly described below. All the other skills of Bando remain unchanged.

Bull Form: Strong stances and powerful takedowns are used in this form.
Skills: Wrestling.
Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance, Push.

Cobra Form: This form emphasizes attacks on the vital points.
Maneuvers: Finger Lock, Hit Location (Karate).
Cinematic Skills: Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Eagle Form: Concentrates on double-handed parries and swift strikes.
Maneuvers: Riposte [2 points].

Panther Form: Like their namesakes, Panther practitioners circle around the victim, then pounce.
Skills: Acrobatics, Jumping.
Cinematic Skills: Flying Leap.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Springing Attack.

Python Form: Gripping and strangling maneuvers are the main focus.
Maneuvers: Choke Hold, Neck Snap.
Cinematic Skills: Pressure Points.

Scorpion Form: Aping the stinger of the scorpion, practitioners seize and strike nerve clusters in painful ways.
Maneuvers: Hit Location (Karate).
Cinematic Skills: Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

BANDO (Burmese Martial ART)
15 POINTS/19 POINTS

Developed in the former British colony of Burma, Bando has long been valued by military men for its combat effectiveness. Among its better known practitioners are Britain's famed Gurkha soldiers. Because of its emphasis on practicality, it is sometimes referred to as "the jeep of the martial arts."

Bando was introduced in America in 1959 by Dr. Maung Gyi, whose father was instrumental in modernizing the system in his native Burma.

Developed by military men for training and conditioning, modern bando combines self-defense (thaing), unarmed combative sport (bando) and armed combative training (banshay). While thaing and bando weren't fused into one system until the 1930s, the roots of the system reach back to ancient Burma where *bama lethway,* or Burmese boxing, was once the national sport of nobility.

The primary targets for the Bando fighter are the legs, followed by the torso and finally the head. Training in the art is not picked up overnight; the mental and physical aspects of the art are ingrained over a period of several years. Advanced students then can train in one of the advanced "animal forms" that the style offers (see sidebar). The basic combat philosophy behind Bando calls for speed, deception and a continuous attacks: the enemy is to be defeated quickly and decisively. The targeting of limbs means that the attack needs not be lethal, as long as the enemy is rendered incapable of further aggression. That quest for a fierce and decisive victory has gained Bando practitioners a reputation as formidable opponents.

Bando may not be the flashiest of the martial arts, but it is certainly one of the most explosive. This is particularly true of the boar system of Bando (for other animal varieties, see sidebar). This little known animal style emphasizes hard locks, explosive power and close-in techniques designed to steamroll an opponent. In keeping with the animal itself, the bando boarman prefers to fight in close combat. The elemental philosophy of the system is quite simple: no enemy should be able to survive a close-in encounter with a trained practitioner.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Judo, Karate, Philosophy (Buddhism), Savoir-Faire (Dojo).
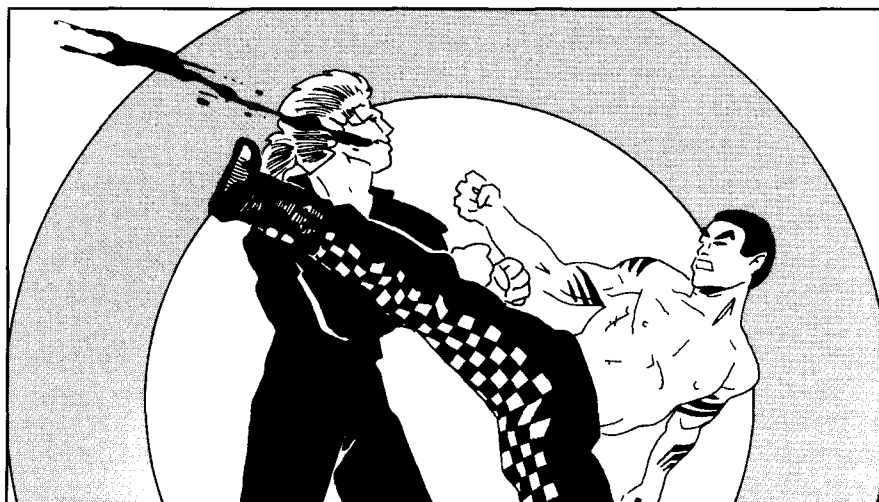
Secondary Skills: Knife, Short Staff, Whip.

Optional Skills: Body Language, Karate Sport, Language (Malay), Tournament Law.

Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry, Arm Lock, Elbow Strike, Head Butt, Head Lock, Jab, Knee Strike, Riposte (Karate), Shin Kick, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Mental Strength, Power Blow.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

Capoeira   8 POINTS/12 POINTS

This form is both a combat style and a performing art. Its origins lie in Africa, not Asia, and it was developed primarily in Brazil among the slave population. It has become popular in the United States, where it has begun to mix with other forms such as Karate and Tae Kwon Do. To many Capoeira practitioners, this is all right, as this style has been in constant flux. Capoeira is more than a combat form. Music and dancing are also taught, at least in the traditional modes. Outside Brazil, however, the emphasis is on the combat side of this art.

Capoeira is characterized by fast acrobatic maneuvers, including cartwheels and somersaults. Striking techniques are combined with locks, throws and leg sweeps. The acrobatics serve as feints; one never knows what to expect from a Capoeira *mestre* (master or teacher).

In a cinematic campaign, GMs may rule that some secret techniques have been passed on since the time of the slaves. The fact that *candomble* (a mixture of Christianity and African religions with magical undertones) is practiced in Brazil may bring an occult component to the style. If **GURPS Magic** is being used in the campaign, a martial artist-magician character would be possible.

Primary Skills: Karate, Acrobatics.

Secondary Skills: Dancing (Brazilian), Judo, Jumping, Musical Instrument (Strings or Percussion). Outside Brazil, Dancing and Musical Instrument are optional skills.

Optional Skills: Knife, Language (Portuguese), Shortsword, Staff.

Maneuvers: Feint (Karate) [2 points], Ground Fighting (Karate) [2 points], Spin Kick, Sweeping Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Power Blow. Additionally, characters with Magical Aptitude may learn some spells at the GM's discretion. It is suggested that the spells should be mainly drawn from the College of Body Control (p. M23).

Cinematic Maneuvers: Acrobatic Kick, Roll with Blow, Springing Attack.

Special: If the fighter's Acrobatics skill is higher than his Karate skill, he can substitute it for the Feint Maneuver (this is a special effect, and costs no points).

CHIN NA   11 POINTS/16 POINTS

This style emphasizes the study of pressure point and disabling arm lock techniques. Its origins are mixed in with the earliest Kung Fu history; it was taught in the Shaolin temple (see p. 7), among other places.

Chin Na specializes in painful and disabling locks and strikes. Students learn about the human body as thoroughly as a medical student, but with a different goal. Nerve clusters, bone joints and internal cavities are studied as targets to cause pain, numbness or death. Although the emphasis of this style is on disabling techniques, many of the skills it teaches can easily kill.

The main emphasis of Chin Na is on locks and holds, although some punching and kicking techniques are also taught. Precise, economical attacks are the norm, usually at close range. To grapple with a Chin Na master is to invite disaster. Chin Na uses many ideas from Taoism and Zen Buddhism, including the belief that the best way to win a fight is by not fighting at all. But it is also very pragmatic and, to some, ruthless. On the other hand, Chin Na teachers state that using locks to subdue a foe is merciful, since it would be easier to kill him.

This style works best in a cinematic campaign, unless the GM allows the Pressure Points skill to be used in a realistic setting. Many of the locks that are used in Chin Na are based on Chi flow theories, which opens the ground to a number of cinematic skills. Although many Chin Na techniques are taught in most Chinese martial arts forms and other grappling arts, there are few schools that teach this art exclusively, specially in the West.
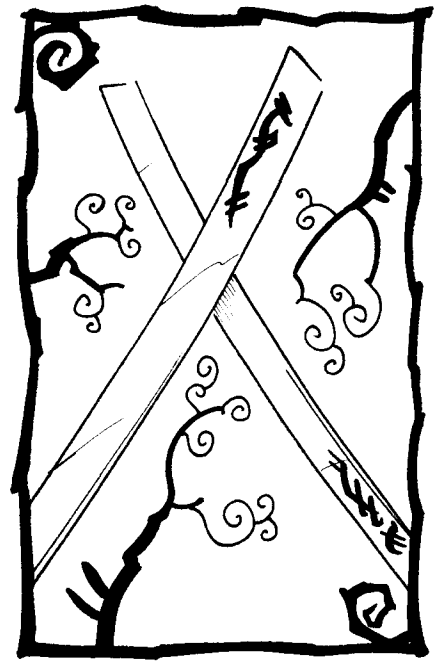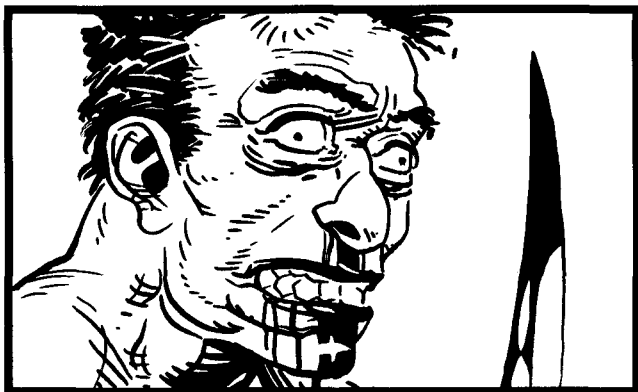
Style vs. Style

Despite constant, heated arguments between the enthusiasts of different martial arts, it is hard to tell whether any one style is better than any other. The general consensus (which this book tries to reflect) is that any martial art can produce a deadly fighter, if the dedication and physical potential are there.

Some styles, of course, are designed specifically to create effective fighters, just as others work best in a restricted environment, such as sports tournaments. All other things being equal, for instance, a Jeet Kune Do practitioner will defeat a *Judoka* 90% of the time. On the other hand, if the same Jeet Kune Do stylist comes up against a streetwise Pentjak Silat or Muay Thai fighter, the outcome would be in doubt.

In general, the deadliest martial artist, both in real life and game terms, is the one who masters many different styles. A multi-skilled stylist will be more unpredictable and better able to deal with all sorts of situations. The problem of learning more than one martial art is the time required to do this (represented by the point cost of each style).

In a cinematic campaign, the equation can be altered radically; while the Muay Thai man is a very tough physical fighter, a T'ai Chi cinematic expert can "gently" throw him against the nearest wall, or paralyze him with a few deft touches. A style with a good repertoire of cinematic skills will have an advantage over "mundane" ones.

Overall, players should know that there is no "unbeatable" style. All styles have their weaknesses; all forms have useful moves.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate.

Secondary Skills: Philosophy (Taoism or Zen Buddhism), Meditation.

Optional Skills: Breath Control, Language (Chinese), Yin-Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock [2 points], Choke Hold, Finger Lock, Head Lock, Hit Location (Karate) [2 points], Neck Snap, Spinning Punch.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Hand of Death, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

ESCRIMA   13 POINTS/17 POINTS

The Philippine Islands have been invaded dozens of times in their long history. Like many other oppressed peoples, the island's inhabitants developed their own combat system. Although there are some distinctions between weapon training and empty-hand styles, the term Escrima will be used here to describe all Filipino martial arts.

This style's main weapons are the stick and the balisong knife (see p. 124). The Escrima student is trained to deflect enemy weapons with economical movements, and to counterattack swiftly, in ways somewhat similar to Western fencing. However, although the term Escrima is a bastardization of the Spanish word *esgrima* ("fencing"), it is wrong to assume (as many do) that this style derives from Spanish fencing techniques. Traditional Escrima emphasizes the striking of the opponent's hands and arms over attacks against the body. The style assumes that the opponent is armed; the goal is first to disarm, then to attack. This attitude, not fashionable in sporting events, is very useful in real-life confrontations.

Empty hand movements mirror the stick style. A number of locks are also taught, with the stick being used as an extra lever to aid an immobilizing lock or disarm. At higher levels, other skills, such as Knife Throwing or even Whip, may be introduced.

Primary Skills: Fast-Draw (Balisong), Karate, Main-Gauche, Short Staff.

Secondary Skills: Judo.

Optional Skills: Knife Throwing, Language (Tagalog), Staff, Whip.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point] (defaults from Short Staff instead of Judo; can only be used when wielding a stick), Elbow Strike, Hit Location [2 points] (Karate or Main-Gauche), Knee Strike, Off-Hand Weapon Training [Main-Gauche *and* Short Staff, 2 points each]

Cinematic Skills: Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

FRENCH FENCING   10 POINTS/17 POINTS

This fencing style was developed in France during the late 17th century. A change in fashion prompted its creation. The French court had introduced the smallsword as the sidearm of choice; the long rapier was seen as too cumbersome and inelegant. This light weapon soon proved to be ideal for complicated and fast maneuvers, and a practiced wielder could use it to attack and defend without the problems of the rapier. The resulting fighting techniques that were developed were the direct precursors of modern fencing. Fencing schools *(salles)* were opened throughout France, and then throughout the world.

The smallsword is not a very powerful weapon; a person can be stabbed multiple times with it without being disabled, unless a vital organ is pierced. On the other hand, its lightness made it ideal for complex maneuvers, swift attacks and carefully-aimed hits. Fencing became a complex art.

RUNNING AMOK

This phrase was used in the 19th century to describe the strange behavior that sometimes affected Indonesian natives. In a sudden fit of rage, a man would grab the nearest weapon at hand (usually a *kris* knife, described on p. 123), and rush into the streets, attacking everyone in his way. As many as 20 people might die in such an incident before the berserker was finally slain - a man *amok* would always fight to the death. In a large city, this might happen as often as twice a day.

The causes for such insane fits of rage are not clear. Usually, a man who suffered some great personal loss or found himself in a desperate position was likeliest to run amok. Some scholars believe that this was the equivalent of ritual suicide, a form of *seppuku* in which the suicidal person tries to take as many people as he can with him.

This type of behavior was also common among certain Muslim tribes from the Philippines. These tribesmen, the Moros, fiercely fought American troops when the U.S. was occupying the Philippines at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, their insane ferocity was one of the causes for the introduction of the .45 pistol in the Army; the .38 revolvers that the troops were using were not powerful enough to stop the charging Moros.

In game terms, a character "running amok" will suffer the symptoms of the Berserk disadvantage (see p. B31). He will attack everyone he sees, and will not attempt any Will rolls to snap out of his state. If he has some martial arts knowledge (probably Escrima, Kuntao or Pentjak Silat), he will use it with no penalties.

PCs living or visiting the Indonesian archipelago may be confronted by a man "running amok." If they are respected martial artists, they may be called to help the authorities to stop (usually by killing) the madman. A Malay or Filipino PC might even suffer from such a fit! If faced with hopeless odds, for instance, he might decide to run amok even if he did not have the Berserk disadvantage. Of course, this option is usually suicidal, and thus is best left to NPCs.

Shortly afterwards, the first set of rules that turned fencing into a sport rather than a combat skill were also devised. Foil fencing restricted the number of targets that could be struck as well as the permissible maneuvers. This greatly reduced the usefulness of fencing in real life. Eventually, however, a separate style of fencing, epee fencing, was designed to prepare duelists for real combat.

In either form, French style fencers are taught several maneuvers designed to overcome the target's defenses. Feint and counter feint, strikes and counterattacks are all tried in an attempt to find weaknesses in an adversary. In a cinematic campaign, dedicated swordsmen can enjoy the benefits of the Weapon Master advantage and can perform several cinematic maneuvers.

Primary Skills: Fencing (Smallsword), Fencing Art.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Savoir-Faire *(Salle),* Tactics.

Optional Skills: Black Powder Weapons, Body Language, Cloak, Main-Gauche, Riding (Horse), Wrestling.

Maneuvers: Close Combat (Fencing or Main-Gauche), Corps-a-Corps, Feint (Fencing), Fleche, Lunge, Off-Hand Weapon Training (Fencing), Riposte (Fencing), Stop Hit.

Cinematic Skills: None.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Initial Carving, Enhanced Parry (Fencing).

GOJU RYU   10 POINTS/17 POINTS

Goju Ryu was named and systematized by Chojun Miyagi, the successor to its founder Higaonna Kanryu. It was later brought to the United States during the mid-20th century. Many other modern Karate styles have traces of Goju Ryu in them.

The spiritual foundation of Goju Ryu is deeply rooted in Taoism (see p. 7). This inner calmness is apparent in many of the style's katas. Taosim, however, is not as apparent in modern dojos as it was in years past. Traditional Goju Ryu tends to be more "internal" (see p. 83) than most other forms of Karate.

Goju Ryu's main principle is to never meet the enemy with the same strength that he is using. In Chinese, Goju means hard-soft. If the enemy attacks full force, never use an equally strong block. The style, however, teaches powerful techniques designed to down a foe in one blow, and counterattacks that can break the attacker's limbs (the Aggressive Parry maneuver). Strength and timing are the key to Goju Ryu. In addition, dramatic breathing techniques are emphasized, and considered as important to master as any attack or defense.

In addition to empty-hand techniques, this style teaches a variety of Okinawan weapon skills, with emphasis on the staff and the sai. This makes Goju Ryu a well-balanced art, combining several aspects from spiritual martial arts and combative, external styles.

Primary Skills: Breath Control, Karate, Karate Art, Meditation, Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Flail, Jitte/Sai, Staff, Tournament Law.

Optional Skills: Katana, Theology (Taoism), Tonfa, Yin-Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry, Back Kick, Cat Stance, Elbow Strike, Knee Strike.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Immovable Stance, Kiai, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

Amok
Adventure

Japanese residents of a Western city are running amok for no apparent reason! Over a dozen people have been killed already. The PCs investigate the event and discover that the victims are the descendants of certain Japanese officers who participated in the occupation of the Indonesian islands during World War II. Further research reveals another link. A powerful *guru* had issued a very public curse against the leaders of the invasion. He was immediately imprisoned, and died there under mysterious circumstances. All the officers involved in the incident committed suicide shortly afterward.

What is causing these attacks? Maybe some event (or person) has reawakened the curse, and the PCs must find a way to put it to rest once more. Or a descendant of the *guru* is using more direct methods (drugs, subliminal messages, psionic powers or a modified form of the Hand of Death) to cause victims to go into a murderous frenzy. If the PCs get too close to solving the mystery, they (or their Dependents) could become the next target of those methods.

STYLES

Rashid ibn Hasan al-Alamut

Attributes
ST 11, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 10.
Basic Speed 6, Move 6.
Dodge 6, Parry 7.
Damage: *Thrust* ld-1, *Swing* ld+1.
Point Total: 100 points.

Advantages
Night Vision, Strong Will +1.

Disadvantages
Extremely Hazardous Duty; Fanaticism; Secret (Cult membership).

Quirks
Considers his beautiful knife to be a gift from Allah; Dislikes battlefield weapons; Dresses like a beggar; Quiet.

Martial Arts Style
Hashishin Style (realistic).

Skills
Brawling-14; Broadsword-13; Climbing-14; Disguise-15; Fast-Draw (Knife)-15; Holdout-16; Knife-16; Knife Throwing-14; Language (Pahlavi)-13; Poisons-12; Riding (Horse)-13; Shadowing-15; Stealth-16; Streetwise-14; Survival (Urban)-14; Theology (Islamic)-12; Wrestling-15.

Maneuvers
Hand Strike-14 (ld-2); Feint (Knife)-18.

Rashid is a Fedavi, trained at the original Hashishin stronghold of Alamut. He is quiet and reserved, humble and dedicated to the Hashishin cause. Like most Hashishin, he prefers the knife above all other weapons. His most prized possession is a fine, jewelled knife that he took from a wealthy victim, and which he views as a gift from Allah. Rashid is skilled at disguise, and approaches his victims in the guise of a humble beggar, then draws his knife and strikes quickly. He is at home in the city, and speaks good enough Pahlavi to pass for a Persian.

Rashid is a 100-point character suitable for use as a PC or NPC in a *GURPS Arabian Nights* campaign. If he were trained in Geb'al Din instead of Alamut, he would be equally at home in Yrth's Al-Haz in a *GURPS Fantasy* campaign.

Hapkido   11 POINTS/14 POINTS

This Korean style is a combination of different national styles, and includes both striking methods and locks and throws. This is a very complete martial art that has been adopted by a number of law-enforcement agencies. It was the style used by three female killers against James Bond in *You Only Live Twice*.

Hapkido uses a combination of high kicks like those of Tae Kwon Do (see p. 103), as well as close combat moves. The combined form is somewhat less effective than a dedicated one (such as Aikijutsu or Tae Kwon Do), but it has greater versatility.

In a cinematic campaign, this style has few special skills due to its relative newness.

Primary Skills: Karate, Judo.
Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Jumping.
Optional Skills: Language (Korean).
Maneuvers: Back Kick, Hook Kick, Jump Kick, Kicking [2 points], Riposte (Karate), Shuto, Spin Kick, Sweeping Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Flying Leap, Power Blow, Pressure Points.
Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

Hashishin Style   7 POINTS
(NO cinematic abilities)

This style comprises the skills of the dreaded Hashishins - the secretive Islamic cult that plagued the Middle East during the Middle Ages. The word assassin comes from their nickname *hashishin,* (hashish-eaters) which originates from the rumored custom the cultists had of using drugs before their killings. The order was founded in the early 11th-century in Persia, and was an offshoot of the Shiite Muslims. The sect was divided into several groups, including the *Dais* ("Initiated"), *Refiks* ("Students") and *Fedavis* ("Devoted Ones"). The *Fedavis* were the actual assassins. The leader of the Hashishin was known as the Old Man of the Mountain. The Hashishin were supposedly destroyed centuries ago, but the cult might have survived in secret to this day (for more information on the possibility of modern Hashishin, see *GURPS Illuminati).*

The Order of Assassins' preferred weapon was the knife, although strangulation and poisoning were also employed. A common tactic involved following the target at night until he reached a relatively deserted street. The Hashishin would move in, grab the victim and stab him to death. They were also known for sending their assassins to kill their targets in crowded public places. The Hashishin fully expected to be cut down in the ensuing chaos, believing that their place in Heaven was assured. The cold-bloodedness of such acts struck terror into the hearts of both the common populace and political and religious leaders.

In a cinematic campaign, the Hashishin might have access to magic spells. Perhaps some of their drugs were actually alchemical potions !

Primary Skills: Holdout, Knife, Shadowing, Stealth, Wrestling.
Secondary Skills: Broadsword, Brawling, Disguise, Knife Throwing, Poisons, Theology (Islamic).

Optional Skills: Riding (Horse), Shield, Spear.

Maneuvers: Feint (Knife) [2 points].

Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None, but may have access to magic.

Ңsing-Yi Chuan   12 POINTS/26 POINTS

This internal Chinese style has its origins in the Hunan province. The secrecy among the users of Hsing-Yi (the art was outlawed many times) has placed the style in obscurity for many centuries. After the Chinese Revolution, the style was taught to several students, and it has recently been exported to the United States.

Hsing-Yi espouses several principles common to internal styles like T'ai-Chi (p. 104) and Pakua (p. 94). Unlike both of those styles, however, Hsing-Yi is a militant, aggressive martial art with the goal of incapacitating opponents as quickly as possible. It develops Chi, but channels it in destructive ways; practitioners of other internal styles might take a dim view of Hsing-Yi's goals, which led to several rivalries and blood feuds between the competing styles.

The art uses several different animal movements for grappling, striking and throwing. The style combines solid stances with sudden changes of direction and devastating one-attack kills. Body conditioning is achieved by having students strike each other repeatedly, and by hardening fists, elbows, knees and feet through practice blows (the cinematic advantage Iron Hand from p. 27 would be common among masters of this style). Beginning students were taught several external techniques, which made them efficient fighters very quickly. As they advanced, they were taught Chi-enhancing techniques along the lines of T'ai Chi.

Hsing-Yi is very useful both in a realistic and a cinematic setting. The style is hard-hitting and devastating, and it also has several cinematic skills and maneuvers. The style teaches mostly empty-hand techniques, but some weapons, including the nunchaku and the spear, are also taught.

Primary Skills: Karate, Judo, Jumping.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Breath Control, Meditation, Savoir-Faire (Dojo), one weapon skill from the following: Broadsword, Flail, Shortsword, Spear, Staff.

Optional Skills: Other weapon skills, Philosophy (Taoist).

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Axe Kick, Back Kick, Cat Stance, Jump Kick, Hook Kick, Kicking, Spin Kick, Spinning Punch.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Immovable Stance, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (Bare Hands), Springing Attack.

External vs. Internal, Ңard vs. Soft

Martial arts students make a distinction between "external" or "hard" styles and "internal" or "soft" ones, as well as forms that combine elements from the two types. External styles are mainly concerned with the physical world, while internal ones have a more spiritual outlook. This division is the basis for the two "martial arts" skills in the *GURPS Basic Set,* with Karate representing the hard techniques and Judo representing the soft ones.

External styles concentrate on physical achievement, strong attacks and good reflexes. Kicks and punches are emphasized, though other techniques may be included as well. They are popular in the West, because they produce tangible results and are mastered more easily. Hard styles concentrate on winning by using overwhelming force against opponents; they are based on the Karate skill. External styles include Muay Thai, most varieties of Karate and Tae Kwon Do, Hapkido, Wing Chun Kung Fu and Escrima.

At the other extreme are the internal styles, whose goal is not primarily combat, but spiritual development. They concentrate on throws and other responsive techniques, which means that the practitioner must be attacked before he can act. Instead of resisting an aggressor, students are taught to yield to force and then redirect it against the enemy. Internal styles are usually based on the philosophical principles of Taoism and Buddhism (see pp. 7 and 9, respectively) and use the Judo skill. The best-known purely internal styles are T'ai Chi Chuan, Aikido and Pakua.

Suppose that a martial artist is attacked by a stick-wielding foe. If the martial artist comes from an external school, he will probably try to gain the initiative, maybe by feinting and then attacking before the man can even strike with the stick. Alternatively, the martial artist will parry the stick attack and then counterattack strongly with a combination of kicks and punches, or maybe an arm lock. On the other hand, an internal stylist will let the attacker attempt to strike him; the martial artist will then sidestep, guiding the stick with his hand and then, using the stick-wielder's own strength, throw him on the ground.

A purely internal style will have few or no aggressive moves.

Many styles, especially those that originated from traditional or ancient forms, combine both external and internal aspects. Many external styles also impart philosophical teachings, which further blurs the distinction. Kempo, Pentjak Silat, Kuntao and Kuk Sool Won, for instance, have elements from both categories.

STYLES

cm

Chi (Ki in Japanese) means literally "breath." According to Asian philosophers and martial artists, chi is the life force that exists within all human beings. It is described as a flow of energy through one's body, a flow which must be balanced in order to live a healthy life. If perfect balance in one's chi is achieved, some Taoists believe, immortality can be achieved.

Imbalances in a person's chi flow can produce disease or even death; acupuncture techniques try to restore the harmonious flow to eliminate those imbalances. The counterpart of those techniques are the pressure point attacks that seek to create an imbalance to hurt an enemy.

It is believed that this life force can be controlled or even increased through breathing exercises and meditation. A life without stress is also important for the development of one's chi; Taoists believe that the daily lives of most people, with their worries over material things, cause chi to decay, resulting in an unnaturally short life. Martial artists who develop their chi can supposedly use it to influence the physical world by channeling that energy into attacks and defenses. It is said that by controlling his chi flow, a master can resist pain and hardships, deliver devastating attacks, and perform superhuman feats.

The cinematic and "four-color" martial arts rules work on the assumption that these beliefs are true, and that a martial artist's chi allows him to do things that no amount of physical training would achieve. See pp. 36 and 40.

Isshinryu   14 POINTS/21 POINTS

Isshinryu was created by Tatsuo Shimabuku in 1954, and brought to the United States in the 1960s. Isshinryu was derived from many different Okinawan karate styles, including Goju Ryu (see p. 81) and Shorin Ryu.

As a new technique, Isshinryu is not as spiritually developed as some karate arts. Still, many traditional teachings have been passed down and are imparted in Isshinryu. Shimabuku taught eight Codes of Karate, which students of Isshinryu strictly follow:

1. A person's heart is the same as Heaven and Earth.
2. The blood circulating is similar to the motion of the moon and the sun.
3. A manner of drinking and spitting is either hard or soft.
4. A person's unbalance is the same as a weight.
5. The body should be able to change directions at any time.
6. Strike when the opportunity presents itself.
7. The eye must see all sides.
8. The ear must listen in all directions.

Isshinryu is unlike many other karate styles. Both hard and soft techniques are taught equally. Isshinryu has removed all fancy techniques from its repertoire. Kicks and punches are extremely efficient, with no wasted motion whatsoever. Unlike most martial arts styles, Isshinryu uses vertical punches, not the typical "twist punches."

In a cinematic campaign, the newness of the style might disqualify it from having any special techniques. It is possible that Isshinryu practitioners have been passing down secret skills that were developed by older styles. True to the teaching of its founder, this style teaches how to see from all sides (Blind Fighting).

Primary Skills: Boxing, Karate, Karate Art, Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Jitte/Sai, Flail, Staff, Tonfa, Tournament Law.

Optional Skills: Body Language, Breath Control, Katana, Philosophy (Taoism), Yin-Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Back Kick, Cat Stance, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Jab, Jump Kick, Knee Strike, Shuto, Spin Kick, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Immovable Stance, Kiai, Power Blow, Pressure Points.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Flying Jump Kick, Roll with Blow.

ITALIANRAPIERFENCING
9 POINTS/24 POINTS

This is one of the oldest fencing styles adopted in the West, and was fully developed in the 16th century. The Italian rapier, or "slashing rapier" (see p. 125), was a long, well-balanced weapon designed primarily for thrusting. The rapier tended to be too long for adequate parrying, however (when using a rapier, Parry is 2/3 Fencing skill, but only one parry is allowed per turn), so it was supplemented by a dagger or a cloak, which was used for parrying purposes; some of the older versions also taught parrying with the off-hand, protected by a gauntlet. Dodging was also a commonly-used move to avoid the enemy's thrusts (use the Dodge and Retreat rules on p. B109).

The original fencing techniques also used a lot of wrestling moves, with the fencers often moving into close quarters. The secondary combat mode of the Italian fencer consisted of fighting with the dagger alone, using wrestling moves to grapple the target and then stabbing him repeatedly with the dagger.

In a cinematic campaign, Weapon Master characters can be allowed. They would be able to perform incredible feats, like making multiple attacks in a second, making amazing dodges, etc.

Primary Skills: Cloak, Fencing (Rapier), Main-Gauche.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Wrestling.

Optional Skills: Black Powder Weapons, Broadsword, Riding (Horse), Savoir-Faire (16th-century Italian), TWO-HANDED Sword.

Maneuvers: Feint (Rapier), Feint (Main-Gauche), Fleche, Hit Location (Rapier), Lunge, Off-Hand Weapon Training (Main-Gauche).

Cinematic Skills: None.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge.

Jeetkunedo   20 POINTS/27 POINTS

This is one of the newest styles in this chapter. It is best known for its rejection of the aesthetic considerations of traditional styles and its creator, the legendary Bruce Lee (see sidebar, pp. 11-12). Lee felt that the traditional styles were too restrictive; by following set patterns, they were easily countered. His teachings emphasized flexibility and unpredictability. Spontaneity was the only rule.

Jeet Kune Do is designed solely for combat. It combines streamlined elements from Wing Chun, other varieties of Kung Fu, and several non-Chinese styles such as Escrima and Boxing. Over the years, teachers have adopted other techniques from other styles, keeping alive the goal of flexibility. This amalgam makes JKD a very powerful style.

Furthermore, there are many legends about Bruce Lee's abilities; if they are true, he might have passed powerful secrets to a few worthy students. In a cinematic campaign, GMs can allow several special abilities.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Judo, Karate.

Secondary Skills: Body Language.

Optional Skills: Flail, Short Staff, Staff, any martial arts weapon skill.

Maneuvers: Back Kick, Ear Clap, Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate) [2 points], Hit Location (Karate) [2 points], Hook Kick, Jab, Jump Kick, Knee Strike, Riposte (Karate), Slip, Spin Kick [2 points], Spinning Punch, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Sticking.

Juoo   7 POINTS (MO cinematic abilities)

The first Oriental martial art to become popular in the West, Judo became widespread after World War II, when American soldiers in Japan came into contact with the skill and eventually brought it to the States. The original Judo was an artistic form of Jujutsu (see below), concentrating mainly on throws and locks. Most modifications of the style were made in order to *avoid* injuring practitioners, which reduced the style's combat value. For instance, most Judo schools offer little or no training in ways to counter punches and kicks. In the West, it soon became an spectator sport, with rigid rules that further diminished its real-life effectiveness.

It makes sense, from the Japanese point of view, that Judo was the first martial art that was introduced to the West. Just as individual masters begin by teaching the most basic techniques to their students, the Japanese started out by imparting the less powerful, more artistic combat forms.

This style introduced many martial arts concepts and misconceptions to the West, including the colored belts grading system and the idea that a martial artist could easily defeat a larger and stronger opponent. Regrettably, sports or artistic judo is not as useful in real fights as was originally believed. On the other hand, if combined with a "jutsu" style, it will provide some useful moves, particularly the ability to fight more effectively from the ground.

Primary Skills: Judo Art, Judo, Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Tournament Law (Judo).

Martial ARTS and PSIONICS; OPTIONAL Rules

Cinematic martial artists and psis both channel internal energies that most people are not aware of. Many believe that the so-called chi powers are nothing more than psionic abilities triggered by physical condition and meditation techniques. GMs wishing to combine cinematic martial arts with psionic powers should decide whether chi and psi abilities are one and the same, or different types of energy.

The following theory could work well in a cinematic campaign: chi (see p. 84) is the root of both cinematic abilities and all psionic powers. Psis are adepts whose powerful chi has been channeled into actions affecting the external world. Cinematic martial artists use their chi to affect their own bodies. Both are two sides of the same coin. The two sets of abilities can interact and be combined, or can resist each other.

Using this theory as a base, outlined below are some possible ways in which psi powers and cinematic abilities can interact with each other. These rules will allow martial artists to stand off psionicists, and will make psionic martial artist characters very powerful. This will work in some campaigns, but may unbalance others. GMs will have to decide whether these rules fit with the tone of their campaign.

Chi Opposing Psi

Mental Strength (see p. 39) can resist any telepathic ability, including Telereceive, Mental Blow, Mental Stab, etc. - but only if the martial artist is aware that he is being targeted by a psi. A psi attempting any of these skills must first win a Quick Contest of skill between his telepathic skill and the subject's Mental Strength (plus Strong or Weak Will modifiers) before proceeding with the regular skill rolls. Mental Strength can also resist Psychic Vampirism powers (see p. PI6).

Body Control (see p. 36) can resist Direct Telekinetic Attacks (pp. B172 and P35); the martial artist is trying to undo the damage the psi is causing! Immovable Stance can resist being moved telekinetically, but at-3.

Enhancing Martial Arts with Psi

A fighter who is Trained by a Master with psionic abilities can use psi to enhance some of his combat abilities. A psychokinetic psi can add half of his *PK* Power to his effective ST when using the Immovable Stance (p. 38) or Push (p. 40) skill. A character can also increase his punching strength by using telekinesis to reinforce his chi; when using Breaking Blow, Power Blow and Flying Leap, the character can add 1/2 his 1/2 Power (rounded down) to his final modified ST; the character must roll both against the Telekinesis skill and Power Blow to achieve this.

Example: Psi-Fists has ST 1 1, PK Power 15, Power Blow-15 and Telekinesis-14. When striking with a Power Blow, his effective ST is 22; by making a successful Telekinesis roll, this ST is raised to 29!

Telepaths can add 1/3 of their Telepathy Power to the following Cinematic skills: Blind Fighting, Hypnotic Hands and Invisibility Art. Espers can add 1/3 of their ESP Power to the Blind Fighting skill as well.

Enhancing Psi Abilities with Chi

The martial artist channels his internal chi to strengthen the power of his psionic abilities. Power Blow can temporarily raise the Power of a psionic attack. For every *two* points a Power Blow roll is made by, the martial artist can raise his effective psionic Power by 1 when using any of the following psionic skills: Mental Blow, Mental Stab (p. P21), Mind Sword (p. P23) or Telekinesis (for throwing or a Direct Telekinetic Attack). Using Power Blow in this way costs 2 fatigue per use. If a Kiai (p. 38) is simultaneously directed at the target of a Mental Blow, Mental Stab or *Shout* made using Telesend, the effective *skill* of the psionic attack is increased by 1 for every point the Kiai roll is made by.

Other Interactions

The list above is only the tip of the iceberg. Combining cinematic martial arts and psi abilities can greatly increase the power of both. GMs must decide which of these combinations, if any, exist in the campaign.

Optional Skills: Meditation.
Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Breakfall, Ground Fighting (Judo) [2 points].
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

JUJUTSU   7 points/12 POINTS

Jujutsu is one of the oldest martial arts styles of Japan. It formed part of traditional military training, along with swordsmanship and archery. Unlike many martial arts styles, it has no central body of techniques; hundreds of Jujutsu schools developed during the nineteenth century, each with its own form. Depending on the original school, some Jujutsu varieties will be the equivalent of Karate or Aikijutsu, with weapons training thrown in. The more traditional ones, however, usually have a combination of grapples, locks and striking maneuvers. The main objective is the disabling of the enemy, by whatever means necessary. Atemi, the study of vital organs, is taught in many Jujutsu schools (treat as the Pressure Points skill).

Modern Jujutsu is even more varied than the original forms. Some versions have kickboxing elements, while others have become "art" forms, roughly equivalent to Judo (see above). The skill template below represents a more or less traditional form, with some modern elements thrown in.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate.
Secondary Skills: Savoir-Faire (Dojo), Judo or Karate Art.
Optional Skills: any number of weapons from Kobujutsu, Katana, Boxing.
Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point], Back Kick, Disarming [2 points], Spin Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Binding, Roll with Blow.

KALARIPAYIT   7 POINTS/14 POINTS

This style is practiced in the Southern Indian state of Kerala, and is representative of the martial arts of India. It is closely tied to Hinduism, the religion of India. Kalaripayit combines a well-rounded hand-to-hand combat program with varied weapon training. Advanced students also learn a version of the Chinese Chin Na style (see p. 79), with its emphasis on vital points. It is interesting that this art may have been taken from China to India centuries after the Hindu wise man Bodhidharma reputedly brought the seeds for the martial arts to China.

Weapons used by this style include the sword, knife and staff, as well as a powerful mace called *gada* (p. 123). A number of exotic weapons can also be used by this style; some of them are described in Chapter 5. Traditionally, Kalaripayit exponents fight with their body covered in oil, which gives them a +1 to resist grapples, locks and other similar close combat attacks. (There is no point value for this; anyone can buy and apply oil, but few people wear it on the street.)

In a cinematic campaign, GMs must remember that India is one of the earliest regions to espouse the principles of transcendental meditation, where yogis and fakirs routinely perform amazing feats of body control. Kalaripayit is rarely taught to foreigners, and has almost no teachers outside the Hindu mainland. A non-Hindu character with this style may be required to have an Unusual Background worth 5 points.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Theology (Hinduism).

Secondary Skills: Breath Control, Meditation, and any three of the following: Broadsword, Knife, Shield, Shortsword, Spear, Staff, Two-Handed Axe/Mace.

Optional Skills: Acrobatics, Jumping, any of the weapon skills listed above, Language (Hindi).

Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point], Elbow Strike, Knee Strike, Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Body Control, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

KARATE   11 POINTS/16 POINTS

Karate is one of the best-known martial arts styles in the world. Its name means "empty hand." Its origin lies in Okinawa (for more about the Okinawan martial arts, see *Kobujutsu,* below) but most modern forms of Karate derive from techniques developed in mainland Japan during the nineteenth century. Starting in the 1960s, Karate followed Judo to popularity in the West, until there were hundreds of Karate schools in the U.S. and Europe.

As Karate became assimilated into the West, different branches appeared. It was taught as a sport, using a point system forbidding full contact against the opponent, and with an emphasis in tournament training. Other schools emphasized the self-defense aspect of Karate and concentrated on its combat aspect; yet others attempted to cater to both camps at the same time. As many Karate forms were "do" styles to begin with, the self-defense value of the style may have been overestimated in some cases. Later on, some practitioners tried to return to full contact styles (see Pro Kickboxing, below). Beside these modern distinctions, there are dozens of sub-styles within Karate, all with some differences.

Within this variety, some basic elements are common to most Karate types. The main moves of the style are kicking and punching techniques. Traditional Karate strove for power and strength: the main goal was to kill or disable the opponent with one blow. The *kiai* or deep shout that accompanies most blows serves to channel one's energy into the attack. Moves are learned through constant repetition, sparring, and the practice of *kata,* carefully choreographed strings of attacks and defenses in which the martial artists pretends to fight multiple enemies. Some locks and throws may be taught, but this is rare; more often, ways to *resist* locks and throws are taught instead.

In cinematic campaigns, Karate is a well-respected style with an ample body of legendary moves. The *kiai* can become truly devastating. Pressure Point techniques have been taught in the earlier forms of Karate, and Karate introduced the Breaking Blow skill to the West, giving rise to several martial arts myths.

The skill template described below is from a well-balanced Karate variant. GMs may vary this list to suit their needs. Specific schools are also presented separately under Goju Ryu, Isshinryu and Uechi Ryu.

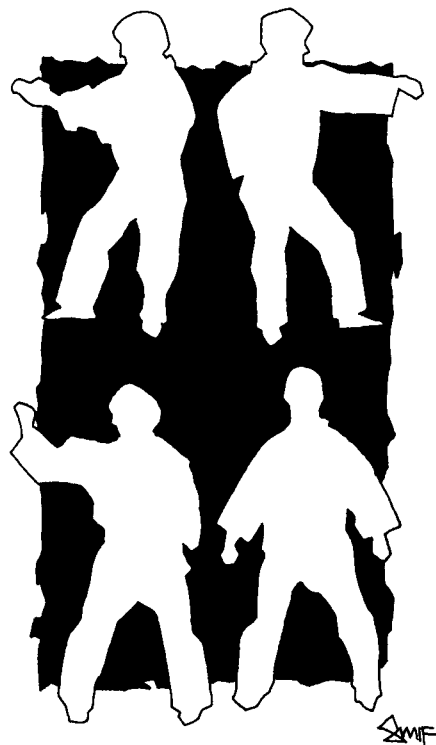*Primary Skills:* Karate Art, Karate, Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Judo, Tournament Law (Karate).

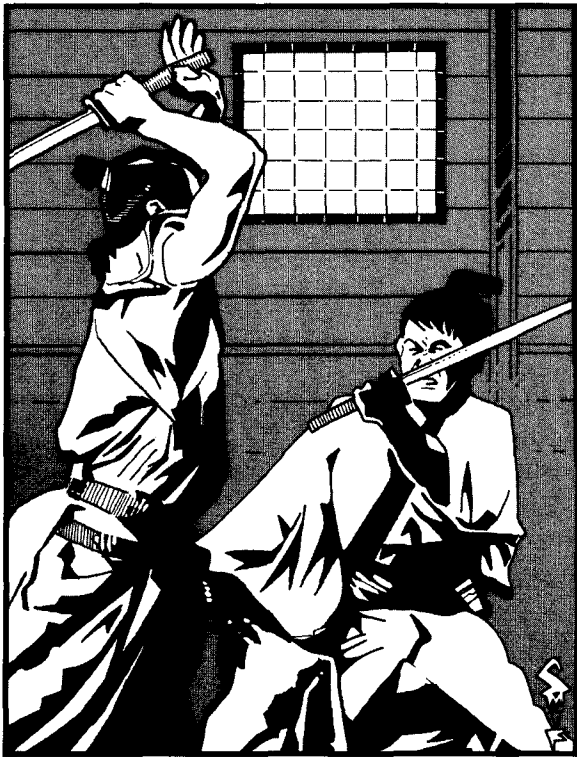*Optional Skills:* Theology (Shinto); any Kobujutsu weapons.

Maneuvers: Back Kick, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Jump Kick, Kicking, Knee Strike, Spin Kick, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Kiai, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points.

Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

MIYAMOTO Musashi

Age 50; 5'8", 136 Ibs. Black hair and eyes; with a lithe, powerful body.

Attributes
ST 14, DX 16, IQ 14, HT 12.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 8, Parry 22 (two-handed) or 17 (one-handed).
Damage: *Thrust 1*d, *Swing* 2d.
Point Total: 575 points.

Advantages
Combat Reflexes; Literacy; Status 2; Strong Will +4; Weapon Master (Katana).

Disadvantages
Bloodlust; Code of Honor (Bushido); Obsession (Perfecting his arts); Stubbornness.

Quirks
Always accepts a challenge; Believes the stick is deadlier than the sword; Contemplative; Loner.

Martial Arts Styles
Jujutsu (realistic), Kenjutsu (cinematic).

Skills
Armoury-14; Body Language-16; Breath Control-16; Fast-Draw (Katana)-18; Judo-18; Judo Art-16; Karate-16; Katana-30; Katana Art-28; Leadership-14; Meditation-16; Parry Missile Weapons-18; Philosophy-16; Riding (Horse)-16; Savoir-Faire-16; Short Staff-18; Shortsword-20; Strategy-20; Survival (Woods)-14; Tactics-16; Teaching-14; Writing-16.

Kempo (SHORINJI SCHOOL)
6 POINTS/26 POINTS

Kempo is the Japanese word for *ch'uanfa,* Chinese for "boxing" - what is nowadays known as Kung Fu. During the 19th century, as the demand for unarmed combat techniques increased in Japan (see p. 12), many Chinese teachers went there. Their arts, as well as some indigenous styles, became known under that name.

The founder of Shorinji Kempo (one of the most influential forms of this style), Doshin So, learned a number of Chinese arts during the 1930s. "Shorinji Kempo" can be translated as "Shaolin Kung Fu," though the two styles are not identical by any means. Originally conceived as a religious organization (and still recognized as one in Japan), Shorinji Kempo now has a lay subdivision. The Shorinji school is described below. There are many other forms of Kempo (some of which closely resemble Karate, above), mainly because, like the name Kung Fu, Kempo is a very wide term, applied to a large number of styles.

Shorinji Kempo teaches care for others as well as fighting techniques. Pacifism (Cannot Kill or Self-Defense Only) is very common among serious followers of this art. Pressure point techniques are mainly used to subdue rather than to cause harm. This is a complete form, with strikes and kicks supplemented with holds and throws. The staff is the primary weapon taught by this style.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Philosophy (Zen Buddhism).
Secondary Skills: Meditation, Staff.
Optional Skills: Breath Control, Yin/Yang Healing.
Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point], Kicking, Spin Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Body Control, Breaking Blow, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge.

kendo (Japanese SWORD ART) and Kenjutsu (Japanese SWORDSMANSHIP)

The katana holds a privileged place in Japanese culture. A work of beauty and terrible power, the sword was said to hold its warrior's soul. The making of the blade was a mystical ritual that combined astounding metallurgical skill with the sense of aesthetics that exists in almost all walks of life in Japan. It is not strange that the use of the sword also combines the martial way with the artistic sense.

Kendo is the current name of the art of the sword. It is to real-life swordsmanship what fencing is to swashbuckling swordplay. Many Kendo maneuvers will get you killed in real combat. As the participants wear armor and use relatively light *shinai,* or bamboo swords, there is very little chance of injury, which sometimes makes students careless.

Kenjutsu is the original combat form of Kendo. For practice, the *bokken,* a solid wood sword, is used more often than the *shinai.* In fact, legendary practitioners claimed that the *bokken* was as effective as the katana, if not more, and used it exclusively; this weapon is quite able to inflict lethal wounds. In Kenjutsu, another martial art is also incorporated: *laijutsu* (today called laido), the art of drawing and attacking at the same time. There are schools that teach laido exclusively as a separate martial art. For game purposes, treat laido as Fast-Draw (Katana) plus Katana skill.

In these styles, the Contest of Wills between the two participants is as important as the physical struggle (see p. 48). In legendary Japan, sword masters

decided the outcome of the duel without unsheathing their swords. The opponent must also be studied during the fight, so as to learn the degree of his ability and to predict his next movement.

Kendo schools are relatively common around the world; there are schools in most major cities of the West. Kenjutsu, on the other hand, is more rarely taught. One must travel to Japan or seek individual teachers elsewhere to learn the combative form.

Kendo   7 points/15 points

Primary Skills: Katana Art.

Secondary Skills: Body Language, Meditation, Theology (Shinto, Zen Buddhism or Confucianism).

Optional Skills: Breath Control, Parry Missile Weapons.

Maneuvers: Feint (Katana) [2 points], Hit Location (Katana) [2 points], Lunge, Riposte (Katana).

Cinematic Skills: Mental Strength, Power Blow (Katana only).

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (Katana).

Kenjutsu   9 points/18 points

Primary Skills: As for Kendo, plus Katana and Fast-Draw (Katana).

Cinematic Maneuvers: Whirlwind Attack.

Other Skills and Maneuvers: Exactly as for Kendo.

KOBUJUTSU (OKINAWAN Weapons)
5 POINTS/13 POINTS

Okinawa is an island off the coast of Japan, conquered by the Japanese during the 16th century. The islanders were forbidden to use swords and other weapons. Over the years, they developed both empty-hand techniques (the direct ancestors of modern Karate) and the use of common farm implements as weapons. The threshing flail became the nunchaku, hayforks became *sai,* the sickle became *kama.* The end result of this process was a range of exotic weapons that fascinate martial artists. Kobujutsu deals with the use of those weapons. This compendium of skills is known as Ryukyu Kobujutsu, or Kobujutsu for short.

Kobujutsu deals mainly with armed techniques. Students begin with the bo staff, followed by such weapons as the tonfa, sai, kama, and the ubiquitous nunchaku, which became so popular during the martial arts craze of the seventies. In fact, many "ninja" weapons are actually Okinawan in origin. Modern Ninjutsu (see p. 93) has absorbed many of these weapons into its repertoire, although there is little evidence that the historical ninja used them (the main exception being the kama, in its kusarigama configuration).

Kobujutsu is one of the few Asian martial arts that teaches use of the shield. The tortoise shield, called *timbe,* is the equivalent of a small shield (see p. B76). It is used in conjunction with a short stabbing spear called *rochin* (see *Weapon Tables,* p. 132). Brass knuckles *(tekko),* are also used in combat, although their use is limited to black belt practitioners.

This style is not widespread in the West; however, a number of martial arts schools for other styles (particularly Jujutsu) also give weapons training more or less equivalent to this. The GM may allow a student to train in this style if he is learning another Japanese martial art.

Cinematic Skills

Mental Strength-20; Power Blow (Katana)-20.

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-20; Back Kick-13 (1d+3); Disarming (Judo)-20; Feint (Katana)-34; Hand Strike-16 (1d+1); Hit Location (Katana)-30; Lunge (Katana)-30; Off-Hand Weapon Training (Shortsword)-20; Riposte (Katana)-30; Spin Kick-14 (1d+3).

Cinematic Maneuvers

Enhanced Parry (Katana); Whirlwind Attack-30.

Miyamoto Musashi was a true *kenshi* who lived in 17th-century Japan; a more detailed description of his life and times can be found on p. 10.

The description below assumes that all of the legends about his prowess are true, and that he was a swordsman without equal. As depicted here, he is both a master of cinematic Kenjutsu and a Weapon Master with the katana. He also knows Jujutsu, to represent his apparent skill at unarmed combat, and is skilled with the shortsword (including Off-Hand Weapon Training) to reflect his two-sword technique. Note that his Primary skills are *not* all within two levels of one another, since he perfected his style almost entirely on his own and not at a dojo!

Musashi is a 575-point character, suitable for use as a NPC in a cinematic *Martial Arts* campaign that uses the *GURPS Japan* setting.

STYLES

Primary Skills: Staff and any two from Axe/Mace, Flail, Jitte/Sai, Shield, Spear, Tonfa.

Secondary Skills: Any three of the above weapon skills not picked as Primary skills. Brawling (for use of the tekko) must be taken, unless the character is also proficient in Karate or Boxing.

Optional Skills: Any weapon skill, Karate and Judo. Usually, Kobujutsu is learned in conjunction with another Japanese style, such as Jujutsu or Karate.

Maneuvers: Off-Hand Weapon Training (Axe/Mace, Flail, Jitte/Sai or Tonfa). (This is an excellent style for a Weapon Master.)

Cinematic Skills: Power Blow (specialized with any of the above weapons).

Cinematic Maneuvers: Dual-Weapon Attack (Flail, Jitte/Sai or Tonfa) [2 points], Enhanced Parry (with one weapon).

Kuk SOOL WON   12 POINTS/19 POINTS

This is one of the most popular Korean forms. Kuk Sool Won was created at the end of World War II and combined several traditional styles of Korea. It includes empty-hand fighting, weapons, arm locks and pressure point techniques. Its ancient teachings include those learned by Buddhist monks, such as staff and stone throwing; the teachings of the Hwarang knights (see p. 13); and the skills of palace guards (male and female) which included the use of very short swords and throwing even hairpins for deadly effect.

The Korean sword *(gum)* is as revered as the katana is in Japan. Kuk Sool Won practitioners learn more about the sword than its use. At high levels, they are taught sword-making techniques and are required to forge their own blade. It is believed that in making his own sword, the practitioner will link his soul to the blade's, and will make both invincible. Techniques are somewhat similar to Japanese styles, so the Katana skill is used here for Korean swordsmanship.

In a cinematic campaign, Kuk Sool Won has several special abilities. That and its weapon skills make this style a good, well-rounded form.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Katana, Staff.

Secondary Skills: Any three of the following: Main-Gauche, Short Staff, Shortsword, Throwing.

Optional Skills: Other weapon skills, Philosophy (Buddhism), Yin/Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Hit Location (Karate, Katana or Staff) [2 points], Jump Kick, Kicking, Off-Hand Weapon Training (Katana), Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Throwing Art.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Binding, Roll with Blow.

KUNG*fu*   VARIABLE; see Below

The name *kung fu* is a typical case of the cultural gaps between East and West. *Kung fu* literally means "hard work" or "great accomplishment," and was traditionally a term applied to excellence in any craft or art - from calligraphy and drawing to the martial arts. In China, people who had achieved mastery over some skill (either physical or mental) was said to be "possessed" of *kung fu*. Many martial art masters were described in this way, particularly in early Chinese novels. Eventually, the words *kung fu* were used to describe great martial artists, and mistakes in translation and interpretation led to the use of the word to label the martial arts themselves.

Even setting this conceptual problem aside, *kung fu,* despite popular belief, is not *one* martial arts style. The name is currently applied to most Chinese forms. The number of styles under the general heading of *kung fu* is so staggering that to dump all of them under one category would be a great injustice. It could be said

that there are more *"kung fu"* varieties in China than other martial arts styles in the rest of the world. Also, although *kung fu* has been used in the past to include all Chinese martial arts, it is used here to represent Chinese "external" forms (see p. 83). "Internal" styles such as Hsing-Yi, Pakua and T'ai Chi (see individual entries) are considered a separate form, historically distinct from what most people would call *kung fu.* The reader must remember that this division is not clear-cut; many *kung fu* styles have "internal" elements, and the grappling techniques of Chin Na (p. 79) are very similar to some T'ai Chi maneuvers.

To show the variety among Chinese styles, this book will include eight *kung fu* forms, each with its own entry: *An Ch'i,* p. 77. *Chin Na,* p. 79. *Pao Chuan,* p. 95. *Praying Mantis Kung Fu,* p. 97. *Shaolin Kung Fu,* p. 101. *White Crane Kung Fu,* p. 105. *Wing Chun Kung Fu,* p. 105. *Wushu Kung Fu,* p. 106.

KUNTAO   13 POINTS/22 POINTS

This Indonesian martial art is the chief competitor of Pentjak Silat (see p. 96) in the Malaysian archipelago. Unlike Silat, whose origins are diffused among the many ethnic groups that have inhabited or invaded the archipelago over the centuries, Kuntao traces its origins to the large Chinese communities of the islands. The word Kuntao is a rendition of the Chinese term Chu'an Fa (Way of the Fist, or "boxing"). Traditionally, the teaching of this art was a closely guarded secret, restricted to selected members of the Chinese community. Exhibitions were likely to be phony demonstrations of the style, meant to cloud the true techniques. This was due to the strong rivalry from martial artists of both the Pentjak Silat persuasion and other Kuntao schools, a rivalry that even in recent times could turn bloody. It made little sense to display one's skills to possible enemies. More recently, masters of the art have become more open about teaching foreigners.

Dozens of variations of this style are scattered around Indonesia, Malaysia and Borneo. As a whole they parallel the variety found in China itself, although over the centuries the Indonesian forms have evolved into different styles.

Kuntao uses both striking and grappling techniques, making it a well-balanced martial art. Numerous weapons, most of them of Chinese origin, are taught, including everything from swords to three-sectioned staffs. Punching attacks can be suddenly transformed into throws or locks. Practicality and economy of movement is emphasized, as this style has had to be used in real-life combats up to the present day. In a cinematic campaign, who knows what secret techniques were brought to Indonesia by Chinese colonists and exiles? A number of special skills can be found in this style, enough to match those of its rival, Pentjak Silat.

It is still very hard to find a willing Kuntao teacher. Many of the old masters believe that modern concerns are too distracting for the pursuit of the arts, and claim that there are no more worthy students. Combined with the secretiveness that traditionally wraps this style, it can be a genuine quest to find a school of this art. Very recently, a few Indonesian schools have been opened in America; they usually combine Kuntao and Pentjak Silat in their style. Masters from the "old country" would undoubtedly find this disturbing.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, any three of the following weapons: Broadsword, Fencing, Flail, Knife, Staff, Throwing, Two-Handed Sword, Whip.

Secondary Skills: Language (Chinese), any other two of the above weapons.

Optional Skills: Breath Control, Language (Malaysian or Indonesian), Philosophy (Buddhism or Taoism).

Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point], Back Kick, Finger Lock, Head Lock, Jump Kick, Kicking, Riposte (Karate), Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Blinding Touch, Body Control, Breaking Blow, Hand of Death, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Flying Jump Kick, Roll with Blow.

(SGT Sergei Mikoyan

Age 45; 6', 170 lbs. Close-cropped blond hair, blue-grey eyes, light skin; a hulking ethnic Russian, clean-shaven, with an intimidating presence and a penetrating stare.

Attributes
ST 12, DX 13, IQ 12, HT 13.
Basic Speed 6.50, Move 6.
Dodge 7, Parry 11.
Damage: *Thrust* ld-1, *Swing* ld+2.
Point Total: 300 points.

Advantages
Combat Reflexes; Reputation (+2): One of the best meres on the market (only to other meres, x 1/3); Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages
Bloodlust; Code of Honor ("Stays bought"); Overconfidence; Sense of Duty (To his men); Stubbornness.

Quirks
Bitter about having his position cut; Dislikes politicians; Slightly intolerant of non-Russians.

Martial Arts Styles
Military Hand-to-Hand; Professional Boxing (realistic).

Skills
Acting-12; Administration-12; Armoury/TL7 (Guns)- 13; Boating-11; Body Language-10; Boxing-15; Brawling-15; Camouflage-14; Climbing-15; Demolition/TL7-13; Detect Lies-12; **Driving/TL7 (Tracked)- 13**; Driving/TL7 (Wheeled)- 13; Electronics Operation/TL7 (Communications)-12; Engineer/TL7 (Combat)-13; Escape-11; Explosive Ordnance Disposal/TL7-11; First Aid/TL7-11; Forward Observer/TL7-ll; Garrote-14; Guns/TL7 (GL)-14; Guns/TL7 (LAW)- 15; Guns/TL7 (Light Auto)-16; Guns/TL7 (Pistol)-15; Intelligence Analysis-12; Interrogation- 12; Judo-15, Jumping-14; Knife-15; Language (Arabic)-12; Language (English)- 12; **Leadership** 14; Mechanic/TL7-10; NEC Warfare/TL7-15; Orienteering- 14; Parachuting-14; Photography-10; Powerboat-11; Savoir-Faire (Military)- 13; Scrounging- 12; Scuba-12; Shortsword-14; Skiing-14; Spear-14; Stealth-15; Survival (Arctic)- 15; Survival (Desert)-13; Survival (Jungle)-12; Survival (Mountain)-15; Swimming-14; Tactics-14; Throwing-14; Teaching-13; Tournament Law (Boxing)-15; Traps/TL7-14.

STYLES

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-17; Disarming (Judo)-17; Feint (Boxing)-17, Hand Strike-15 (1d); Jab-14 (ld-1); Retain Weapon (Rifle)-15; Riposte (Boxing)-12 (1d); Roundhouse Punch (Boxing)-15 (ld+4); Slip-6.

Sergei Mikoyan is a former member of a *Spetsnaz* (Soviet special operations) unit that saw action in Afghanistan in the 1980s. After the Soviet withdrawal, he was promoted to sergeant for his efforts and became a hand-to-hand combat instructor, teaching *Spetsnaz* troopers basic hand-to-hand combat and doing a fair bit of boxing on the side. With the collapse of the Union in the early 1990s, Sergei's position was rendered obsolete by cutbacks in military spending. He is now an international mercenary, taking employment as he can find it in the brush-fire wars of the world, and teaching unarmed combat in between times.

Sergei is a realistic 300-point character suitable for use as a PC or NPC in a *GURPS Special Ops* campaign, or as a NPC adversary in other modern settings, such as a *GURPS Espionage* campaign. Sergei was built using the *Spetsnaz* occupational template in *GURPS Special Ops.*

Kyudo   5 POINTS/10 POINTS

Kyudo ("the Way of the Bow"), is more than mere archery; it is a philosophical art. This Japanese martial art concentrates on training mind and spirit as well as body. Although this is (or should be) true for most traditional styles, few concentrate on the proper mindset with the intensity of classical Kyudo.

Zen training forms the core of this art. A sense of oneness with the bow and the target is cultivated in the student. Hitting the target is not the primary goal, although a high proficiency in archery is expected before the deeper philosophical training is imparted. The drawing of the arrow, tensing the bow and shooting is done in a ritualistic, almost mystical way. Breathing exercises and calligraphy, as well as meditation techniques, are all part of the training process.

In a cinematic campaign, this is an ideal style for Weapon Masters and mystically-oriented martial artists. As the development of Chi is a basic part of Kyudo, this form has a host of cinematic skills. These are all used with the bow and arrow. The Pressure Points skill, for instance, will allow the bowman to hit vital points with an arrow; he can choose to do full damage as well as the special effects, or do minimal damage (a minimum of one point).

Primary Skills: Bow [2 points], Fast-Draw (Arrow), Meditation, Philosophy (Zen Buddhism).

Secondary Skills: Breath Control.

Optional Skills: Calligraphy (Japanese).

Maneuvers: None.

Cinematic Skills: Body Control, Mental Strength, Power Blow (Bow only), Pressure Points (Bow only), Zen Archery.

Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

MILITARY HAND-TO-HAND   7 POINTS (NO CINEMATIC ABILITIES)

This is a no-nonsense, simple style meant to be learned quickly. Still, it is usually restricted to elite military units (such as Special Forces teams), paramilitary security organizations, and some secret agencies. Both striking techniques and some locks and throws are taught. At higher levels, sentry-removal tactics are introduced. Some weapon training is also given. Disarming moves and ways to defend against weapon attacks are also taught. Firearms training is not included in this version of the style, as this is part of normal military training and falls outside the scope of this book. For a detailed treatment of military training, see *GURPS Special Ops.*

Primary Skills: Brawling, Judo, Knife.

Secondary Skills: Climbing, Shortsword (for baton or machete), Spear (for rifle and bayonet), Stealth.

Optional Skills: Garrote, Jumping, Karate, Staff, Tonfa.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Disarming [2 points], Retain Weapon (Rifle).

Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

MUAY THAI (Thai Kickboxing)   18 POINTS/20 POINTS

This form has become the subject of the latest martial arts "fad," replacing Ninjutsu in terms of popularity. Muay Thai is closely related to Professional Kickboxing (see p. 98), and sometimes no distinction is made between the two. There are many important differences, however: Muay Thai is a much older, more sophisticated and more brutal style. In Thailand, tens of thousands of contestants compete savagely against each other. Most Thai boxers are poor all their lives, and their careers are very short-lived, ending mainly due to injuries

received in contests or even in training. It is relatively easy to be injured or crippled in Thai Kickboxing, due to the very direct approach of the sport. As a result, this style churns out some of today's toughest martial artists.

Muay Thai uses kicks, punches, knee and elbow jabs, and even some grappling techniques. The boxer's shins are toughened through continuous drill against bags and hard objects, and are used for devastating kicks, aiming usually at legs and arms in order to cripple the opponent. These "dirty fighting" moves make Muay Thai a powerful self-defense form.

There is little philosophical background in Thai Kickboxing. Most fighters are in it for the money and status, and winning is the one and only goal.

In a cinematic campaign, this would bring about a lack of "internal" abilities. This style has no cinematic skills, and only two cinematic Maneuvers. GMs may rule that the Trained by a Master advantage is not allowed to Muay Thai practitioners. The high point cost of this style will tend to deter characters from having other styles; this reflects the intensive training Thai kickboxers undergo.

Recommended Advantages: Thai Kickboxers should have at least one level of Toughness. High Pain Threshold and Combat Reflexes are very common.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Karate.

Secondary Skills: Judo.

Optional Skills: None.

Maneuvers: Axe Kick, Back Kick, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Jab, Jump Kick, Kicking [2 points], Knee Strike [1 point], Hit Location (Karate) [2 points], Riposte (Karate), Roundhouse Punch, Shin Kick, Spin Kick, Spinning Punch.

Cinematic Skills: None.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Flying Jump Kick, Roll with Blow.

NINJUTSU   23 POINTS/39 POINTS

Note: The GM may require an Unusual Background advantage for PCs choosing this style. The fabled ninja arts have been clouded in mystery from their origin; as the ninja lived on the fringes of Japanese society, no clear records of their style were kept. Today, only techniques handed down from individual teachers survive, taught in select schools around the world. The Hollywood ninja craze has further clouded the issue, as disreputable teachers took the ninja mantle to attract students. The description below is a combination of the historical ninja abilities and the legends, ancient and modern, that surround them.

Ninjutsu is, above all, an espionage style. Its goal is stealth and inconspicuousness rather than combat ability. Among its Primary and Secondary skills we find Stealth, Fast-Talk, Disguise and Acting besides normal combat skills. In combat, it relies on its arsenal of exotic weapons and a ruthless, pragmatic hand-to-hand style called *taijutsu* (meaning "body-combat art"), which has elements of Jujutsu and Karate. The goal of the ninja is to finish a fight quickly, before it can be detected by guards or passers-by. Unless the opponent is targeted for assassination or his silence is desirable, the ninja will opt for a quick disable rather than a kill, so the victim can spread the rumors about the dark stalkers' invincibility.

Some of the skills are marked with an (h); these are historical ninja skills which may not be appropriate for modern ninja characters, although some cinematic ninja clans may have them (or their TL7 equivalents).

Primary Skills: Karate, Judo and Stealth. The ninja must also have two weapon skills from the following: Axe/Mace, Black Powder Weapons (h), Blowpipe, Bow, Garrote, Katana, Knife, Kusari, Lasso, Shortsword, Shuriken, Staff, Throwing or any of the Okinawan weapon skills (see the Kobujutsu style, p. 89) as well as two other skills from the following: Acrobatics, Climbing, Jumping and Swimming.

The Ninja COSTUME

Almost every movie fan has seen a version of the infamous ninja uniform. Black, it consists of loose-fitting pants and jacket, complete with a hood and mask that cover most of the face, except the eyes, and allows the ninja to melt into the shadows.

However, Stephen K. Hayes, himself a practitioner of modern Ninjutsu, suggests in his book, *The Ancient Art of Ninja Warfare,* that the traditional ninja costume may have never been used in real life!

Ninja were first depicted as black-clad stalkers in the eighteenth century Kabuki theater. In Japanese theater, prop handlers were usually dressed in black as they moved across the dark backstage. This allowed them to rearrange the scene without being conspicuous; the audience acted as if the prop handlers were truly invisible. Giving ninja characters in the stage the same dark costume served to emphasize their invisibility. It is very likely that this was the true "origin" of the ninja costume.

The ninja preferred not to be noticed. While dark garb would be useful in dark forests and to penetrate castles and such, it would be foolish to wear it inside a house, as anybody who saw the ninja would immediately realize that he did not belong there. Whenever it was possible, the ninja dressed in clothing appropriate to the location. Inside a palace, they would dress as samurai or servants, thus lulling the victim's suspicions until they were within range. In a village, they would be inconspicuous as normal peasants of fishermen. Another favorite tactic was to pose as beggars or insane people, who were of such low status that most people (including guards) did their best not to notice them!

The best way to be invisible was to seem to belong somewhere. The dark costume, if used at all, was reserved for the very rare occasions when a massive night assault was required.

PONTIUS PERTINAX

Age 26; 5'8", 150 lbs. Curly black hair, brown eyes, tanned complexion; an attractive, athletic young man, with several prominent (but romantic-looking) scars.

Attributes
ST13, DX 14, IQ 10, HT 13.
Basic Speed 6.75, Move 8.
Dodge7, Parry 11.
Damage: *Thrust 1*d, *Swing* 2d-1.
Point Total: 200 points.

Advantages
Attractive Appearance; Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold; Luck; Reputation (+2): Heroic gladiator (only in Rome, x 1/2); Rapid Healing; Toughness-DR 1.

Disadvantages
Bloodlust; Glory Hound; Greed; Social Stigma (Slave).

Quirks
Knows he's good and doesn't hide the fact; Loves to play the crowd; Secretly has no idea what he will do with his freedom.

Martial Arts Style
Pancratium (realistic).

Skills
Bard-10; Boxing-16; Brawling-14; Broadsword- 14; Intimidation- 12; Karate-16; Knife-14; Performance- 12; Running-12; Shield-14; Shortsword-14; Spear-14; Wrestling-16.

Maneuvers
Arm Lock- 18; Feint (Karate)- 18; Hand Strike- 16 (ld+1); Hit Location (Karate)-16; Jab-16 (1d); Riposte (Karate)-14 (ld+1); Roundhouse Punch- 15 (2d+1); Spinning Punch- 16 (ld+1); Stamp Kick-16 (ld+4).

Secondary Skills: Another two weapon skills; one of these must be a ranged weapon skill unless one was already chosen as a Primary skill. All of the non-combat skills listed above that have not been picked as Primary become Secondary skills automatically. Another three skills must be picked from this group: Acting (h), Breath Control, Disguise (h), Escape (h), Fast-Talk (h), Forgery (h), Meditation, Tactics and Yin-Yang Healing.

Optional Skills: Any of the skills mentioned above, and any combat skills, Bard, Hypnotism, Sex Appeal (h) for female ninja.

Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry [2 points], Arm Lock, Back Kick, Ear Clap, Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate or weapon skill) [2 points, or 1 in each], Ground Fighting (Judo or Karate), Head Butt, Hit Location (Karate or weapon skill), Jump Kick, Knee Strike, Riposte (Karate or weapon skill), Spin Kick, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Blinding Touch, Breaking Blow, Dislocation, Hand of Death, Hypnotic Hands, Invisibility Art, Light Walk, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets and Throwing Art.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Binding [2 points], Roll with Blow.

Pakua   5 POINTS/30 POINTS

This style is almost unknown in the West, but is closely related to T'ai Chi and other "internal" styles. The influence of Taoism (see p. 7) in Pakua is more direct than in most other forms. The very stance and movements of Pakua are directly derived from the teachings of that philosophy.

Like T'ai Chi practitioners, circular movements are the basis of Pakua. Unlike T'ai Chi, however, the Pakua practitioner moves in a circle, always walking and describing complex hand movements. This art is almost completely non-aggressive; a master can evade almost any attack with ease. When attacking, Pakua masters use their *chi,* and are reputed to deliver formidable blows (see below).

This form concentrates on the development of chi. As such, it truly comes into its own in a cinematic campaign. Power Blow is the best known skill, as the Pakua master delivers a relatively unskilled but devastating punch or kick by channeling his chi. There also many other legends about the esoteric powers of old Pakua masters.

Primary Skills: Judo, Meditation, Philosophy (Taoism).
Secondary Skills: Brawling.
Optional Skills: Karate, Broadsword.
Maneuvers: Arm Lock [2 points].
Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Push.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge, Enhanced Parry (bare-handed).

PANCRATIUM/MU TAU   13 points/17 POINTS

This style was practiced in classical Greece and Rome, which makes it one of the oldest styles still being taught. Pancratium combined wrestling, boxing and all-around fighting techniques in a brutal sport. Punches, kicks, throws and locks were all allowed; the objective was to force one of the contestants to submit. Even in Greece, where blood sports were not favored, crippling or lethal injuries were common. In Rome, Pancratium was used in gladiatorial contests, and the fighters were often armed with spiked gloves.

Pancratium practitioners also were said to be capable of superhuman feats like brick smashing and the ability to stand in one place (even on a slippery shield) while being pushed and jostled by several people. Cinematic abilities can be bought with this style.

More recently, the art of Pancratium was revived in the Mu Tau style. Mu Tau combines Greek fighting and other styles. The principle behind Mu Tau is that there are no rules. Sparring is full contact, with body armor used so that practitioners can strike with full force. As a result, only very tough martial artists become proficient with this style.

Pancratium is an easy style to introduce in a historical campaign, and not just one set in Ancient Rome or Greece. In Medieval times, travelers from the Byzantine Empire (the remains of the Roman empire that lasted until the 15th century) could know the style. It may have been the predecessor of French Savate (see p. 99), so it might even exist in a *Swashbucklers* campaign.

Recommended Advantages: Toughness.
Primary Skills: Boxing, Karate, Wrestling.
Secondary Skills: none.
Optional Skills: Language (Greek or Latin), Philosophy (Stoic, etc.).
Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Feint (Boxing or Karate) [2 points], Hit Location (Boxing or Karate) [2 points], Jab, Riposte (Karate), Roundhouse Punch, Spinning Punch, Stamp Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Power Blow, Immovable Stance.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

PAO CHUAN (Leopard fist KUNGFUꙍ)
15 points/33 POINTS

Pao chuan, or "leopard fist," was one of the several animal techniques taught at the Shaolin Temple (see p. 7); each of these techniques developed various skills. The leopard style teaches the *kung fu* student how to be proficient at low quarters from the solar plexus down. Ground encounters teach him various leg takedowns, sweeps, rolling strategies, clinch tactics and ground-level kicks. Practitioners attack with clenched foreknuckle strikes delivered at high speeds, sometimes using powerful uppercuts and punches. Low stances combined with evasive movements are the basic principles observed by a confronting opponent. Crawling techniques are also taught in an upright posture, although they account for only 25% of all moves. In the upright posture, the leopard stylist makes use of an imaginary triangle pattern for his footwork movement. The practitioner uses the triangle as a base instrument for offensive or defensive maneuvers.

The opposition, when making an advance, will enter into the top or 90-degree mark of the leopard stylist's triangle, thus falling prey to the numerous awaiting routines.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Karate, Karate Art, Meditation.
Secondary Skills: Judo, Body Language, Jumping, Language (Chinese), Philosophy (Taoism), any two of the following weapon skills: Broadsword, Shortsword, Spear, Staff.
Optional Skills: Acrobatics, Climbing, any weapon skills not chosen as secondary skills.
Maneuvers: Cat Stance, Feint (Karate), Ground Fighting (Karate) [2 points], Hit Location (Karate), Jab, Jump Kick, Kicking, Riposte (Karate), Spin Kick, Sweeping Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Light Walk.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge, Roll with Blow.

SILAT GRADING SYSTEM

Traditionally, Silat gurus did not grade their students. Skill levels were recognized through the practitioner's reputation, or learned the hard way during a fight. Since violence between different schools or ethnic groups was not uncommon, it was unwise to show one's degree's of proficiency, and even more unwise to believe any claims of skills made by a potential enemy. In the present, some Westernized teachers have adopted the Judo belt system (see sidebar, p. 77).

PENTJAK SILAT UNIFORM

Pentjak Silat is meant to be used in real life; as such, it is usually learned in common street clothes. Of course, the common streetwear of Malaysia and Indonesia is exotic and strange to Westerners, and can be seen as a "costume". Malaysian clothes tend to be loose fitting and light, which makes them ideal for training and real combat.

These "uniforms" will also vary from one school to another, depending on the place of origin of the teachers and founders. Traditional Silat costumes tend to be black, and it consists of the following elements: a loose shirt, either open like a judo jacket or pullover-type; pants not unlike those used in Karate; the *samping,* or waist-cloth, which usually has a colorful pattern; a turban-like head cloth, called *tengkokok.* Most modern practitioners have discarded the headgear and waist-cloth, or have adopted the typical Judo uniform.

PENTJAK SILAT — 24 points/33 POINTS

This is the martial art of the Malaysian Archipelago. Almost unknown to the general public in the United States, Silat is a very dynamic combat style whose exoticism is equalled by its lethality. Pentjak Silat owes its effectiveness to the fact that it has been used, until very recent times, in actual combat.

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of different branches of Silat, from "soft" types similar to T'ai Chi to "hard" styles not unlike kickboxing, and numerous variations in between. A mixed bag of these extremes is described here. There is also a considerable body of legend around the supernatural abilities of true masters, enough to make Silat one of the most powerful styles available in a cinematic campaign.

Silat's weapon of choice is the *kris, a* knife with a characteristic serpentine blade. Other weapons include the *parang,* a heavy chopping shortsword; the *tjabang,* almost exactly like the Japanese *jitte* (see p. 118), short sticks, staffs, weighted chains, and whips. Weaponless combat also plays an important part in this style, with strikes, locks and throws all being used. Also characteristic of Silat is the constant movement of hands and body that accompanies any maneuver, used to distract one's opponent.

Silat teachers, or *gurus,* are very selective about who they accept as students. Training is very intensive, designed to develop flexibility and speed more than strength. This is also one of the few styles that accounts for difficult footing in combat, again proof of its pragmatism. More exotic techniques available to the Silat practitioner include Meditation and Hypnotism, as well as a full array of cinematic skills. An expert in this style is also supposed to be able to "read" his opponent's body language, becoming able to predict attacks.

All in all, this is one of the most effective styles in modern times. Its drawbacks include the necessity for intensive training and high physical fitness, but this is true of any good martial art.

Recommended Advantages: the Weapon Master advantage is very appropriate for a Silat master in a cinematic campaign.

Primary Skills: Body Language, Judo, Karate, Main-Gauche and one skill from the following: Jitte/Sai, Kusari, Shortsword, Short Staff, Staff, Whip.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Hypnotism, Jumping, one more weapon skill from the above list.

Optional Skills: Other weapon skills, as above.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Close Combat (Main-Gauche), Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate or Main-Gauche) [2 points], Finger Lock, Ground Fighting (any type) [2 points], Head Lock, Jump Kick, Neck Snap, Riposte (Karate or Main-Gauche), Spin Kick, Sweeping Kick.

Special: Silat practitioners can reduce by 2 any unfavorable terrain modifiers (i.e., slippery mud, or partially in water). This is worth 4 points. Also, Silat practitioners can add other Ground Fighting specializations, over and above the 2-point one they must start with, at any time.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Hypnotic Hands, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Acrobatic Kick, Roll with Blow, Springing Attack.

Police HAND-TO-HAND   5 POINTS
(NO CINEMATIC ABILITIES)

This is a common style taught to police officers around America and the world. It is meant to be learned very quickly, and has very little in the way of special or stylish maneuvers. Arm Locks are the main technique taught. The skills listed in this style omit many of the skills a police officer would receive during training. A number of those are listed in the *Cop* character type description (p. 20). Different police departments will give different training to their officers; GMs should modify the list below as they see fit.

Primary Skills: Judo, Shortsword (for baton), Tonfa (some departments).

Secondary Skills: Brawling, Wrestling.

Optional Skills: Karate, Shield (Riot Shield), Shortsword (some departments).

Maneuvers: Arm Lock [1 point], Choke Hold (this is no longer part of the training in the U.S., but it was commonly taught in the past and many officers will know it nonetheless), Retain Weapon (Pistol).

Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

PRAYING MANTIS KUNG FU
10 POINTS/23 POINTS

There are many versions of this animal style. The praying mantis has been long admired in the martial arts world for its speed and fierce attacks. The Shaolin Temple developed several mantis techniques, many of which have become styles in their own right. The version described below is known as the "northern" version of Praying Mantis Kung Fu. It has a very distinct stance, with the elbows kept close to the body and the forearms extended, hands open in imitation of the mantis' claws. It combines soft movements for the defense and hard, explosive counterattacks. Like the mantis, a practitioner waits until the attacker starts to move, then flows around him and devours him with swift attacks.

Praying Mantis Kung Fu emphasizes balanced stances that allow for swift changes in position to let enemy attacks fly by unimpeded. From the same stance, the martial artist then springs forward on the attacker, hitting vital points with devastating force. Sticking techniques are also taught by this style; combined with its forceful attacks make this a very effective form. In a cinematic campaign, the stance of the Praying Mantis can be used to daze enemies.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Savoir Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Jumping, Philosophy (Taoism), Stealth.

Optional Skills: Weapon skills per the Shaolin style (see p. 101), Hypnotism.

Maneuvers: Elbow Strike, Hit Location (Karate), Jump Kick, Kicking, Knee Strike, Riposte (Karate), Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Hypnotic Hands, Light Walk, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (bare-handed), Sticking.

Reina Queen

Age 37; 6'2", 175 Ibs. Medium-length black hair, brown eyes, tanned complexion; a statuesque Latin woman; has a dove tattooed on her right ankle.

Attributes:
ST 18, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 14/18.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 7, Parry 12.
Damage: *Thrust* 1d+2, *Swing* 3d.
Point Total: 350 points.

Advantages
Charisma +2; High Pain Threshold; Strong Will +3; Toughness-DR 2; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages
Enemy (The Mob, 6 or less); Major Vow (To fight crime); Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents); Reputation (-2): "Bad guy" (only as Reina, x 1/2; only to wrestling fans, x 1/2); Reputation (-2): Vigilante (7 or less; only to police, x 1/2); Secret Identity; Sense of Duty (Personal friends).

Quirks
Doesn't really believe in k*i.* Jovial and outgoing, Lectures crooks as she pounds on them, Uses potentially lethal moves as a last resort.

Martial Arts Style
Professional Wrestling ("cinematic").

Skills
Acrobatics-15; Acting-14; Area Knowledge (City)-12; Brawling-18; Disguise-14; Driving/TL7 (Car)-14; Fast-Talk-12; First Aid/TL7-12; Interrogation-12; Intimidation (default from ST)-13; Jumping-14; Language (Spanish)-12; Performance-14; Shadowing-12; Stealth-14; Streetwise-12; Throwing-14; Tournament Law (Pro Wrestling)-14; Wrestling-18; Wrestling Sport-16.

Continued on next page . . .

PROFESSIONAL BOXING   8 points/14 POINTS

Pugilism, or boxing, has been widely practiced in the West since the 19th century. This "manly art" was a source of entertainment (matches were popular spectacles) and was also taught as a form of self-defense. Boxing uses punching techniques and quick footwork. It also has strict rules limiting the permissible targets to the head, arms and body above the waist. This limits its effectiveness in a brawl. Still, a trained boxer is a fearsome opponent.

Boxing was widely known in America by the mid-19th century. Characters in a *GURPS Old West* campaign can learn it. This style can also be useful in a *Cliffhangers* campaign.

If there is a "legend" connected with professional boxing, it has to do with the boxer's incredible ability to absorb damage and keep fighting. In a cinematic campaign, the GM may allow boxers to buy Extra Hit Points at 5 character points apiece. These don't affect HT - just ability to absorb damage. If the optional Stun Damage rule (p. 68) is being used, boxers can be allowed to purchase Extra Stun Points for 2 character points each.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Tournament Law (Boxing).
Secondary Skills: Body Language.
Skills: Running, Swimming.
Maneuvers: Feint (Boxing) [2 points], Jab, Riposte (Boxing), Roundhouse Punch, Slip.
Cinematic Skills: None.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (bare hands).

PROFESSIONAL KICKBOXING   8 POINTS
(NO CINEMATIC ABILITIES)

As karate became a sport in the West, competition rules were designed to prevent accidental injuries both in tournaments and in the dojo. A "point" system was extrapolated from "artistic" karate, where contestants stopped their attacks an inch or so before connecting and judges determined whether the blow would have been effective if it have landed.

Eventually a number of martial artists became disenchanted with this. The tournaments were too unrealistic, they felt, emphasizing speed over power, form over effectiveness. During the 1970s, a new sport emerged, first called Full-Contact Karate and then Kickboxing.

Pro Kickboxing combines elements from traditional martial arts and Western boxing. Boxing gloves, as well as,head and foot protectors (see p. 129) are used to prevent injuries; still, Kickboxing has about the same injury rate as Professional Boxing. Many martial arts schools teach Kickboxing along with their main style.

This form involves arduous training, adding bodybuilding and other Western techniques to the classic Asian calisthenics. Strength and power are as important as speed and reflexes. The style itself tends to emphasize punches over kicks; the rules specify a minimum of kicks to be launched every round, mainly because fighters tend to concentrate on punches. Overall, this is a good style for self-defense, as its full contact practices toughen students for real conflict. It is also a way for a martial artist to make a living, as there is a wide kickboxing circuit in the States and Europe.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Karate.
Secondary Skills: Tournament Law (Kickboxing)
Optional Skills: As determined by the main martial art of the school where kickboxing is taught. None otherwise.
Maneuvers: Back Kick [2 points], Jab, Jump Kick, Spin Kick [2 points].
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

Professional Wrestling   12 Points
(No Cinematic Abilities)

Professional wrestling has become a source of entertainment in the West. Loosely based on sports wrestling, an ancient sport that can trace its roots to the Greco-Roman world, Pro Wrestling is the stuff of comic books brought to "reality." The wrestling ring has become a stage for drama and comedy, full of colorful characters with outlandish names and costumes and semi-fictional feuds. Despite some denials from organizers and the wrestlers, most people believe that Pro Wrestling contests are carefully choreographed.

GMs must decide whether those fights are staged or real, and whether the wrestlers are simply performers or are similar to their ring personas. In a cinematic campaign, the latter option is more appropriate. Even in a realistic campaign, a professional wrestler must be a highly accomplished athlete as well as a performer. Pro Wrestling includes a variety of takedowns, pins and holds. The style also has some punches and kicks. In the ring, almost anything goes; cheating and dirty tricks are used often (especially by the "bad guys"). Many wrestlers have the Fat, Overweight or Gigantism disadvantages.

In a cinematic campaign, wrestler characters should put most of their considerable character points in ST and HT, adding Toughness and other combat advantages. This will help compensate for the lack of cinematic skills, although the fact remains that a wrestler will be no match for a someone Trained by a Master. Another option would be to allow wrestlers to use the Extra Hit Points and even the Enhanced ST rules from *Supers,* turning them into slightly metahuman beings (much as they are portrayed in fiction).

Primary Skills: Brawling, Wrestling, Wrestling Sport.
Secondary Skills: Acting, Performance, Tournament Law (Pro Wrestling).
Optional Skills: Acrobatics.
Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Choke Hold, Drop Kick [2 points], Ear Clap, Head Butt, Neck Snap, Piledriver (if the GM permits), Stamp Kick.
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

Savate   10 Points (No Cinematic Abilities*)

This French style is almost as old as boxing, with origins rooted in the end of the 18th century. Ironically, this makes Savate almost a century older than many modern Asian martial arts. This form's origins lie in the French waterfronts, where street fighters refined their skills in tavern brawls and other non-conventional arenas. Savate eventually reached the upper classes, and schools, or *salles,* soon opened around Paris and the rest of France. Today, it continues to be mainly a French style, but has some following in Europe and America.

Savate has some boxing elements, but they are combined with a number of kicking techniques that rivals many Asian styles in variety and effectiveness. Dodging is an important part of the style, as well as overall speed and reflexes. This is a full-contact sport, where injuries are not uncommon, so proficient Savate boxers are tough enemies, both in and out of the ring.

In the early days of the sport, cane fighting was also taught. The cane, the symbol of a gentleman in the 19th century, was also a self-defense weapon, and the skills taught by Savate made it an even more effective one. Upper-class sorts who trained in this style were also likely to be proficient in Fencing. Thus, it is perfectly possible to have a high-kicking, multiple-weapon-wielding character who has not had a whit of Oriental arts training.

Savate does not have a religious or mystical origin, so it has no history of supernatural abilities. In a cinematic campaign, the Trained by a Master ability is not available to Savate-trained characters. Other than that limitation, Savate can hold its own against any other martial art in the world.

Reina Queen (Continued)

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-20; Choke Hold- 17; Drop Kick-18 (1d+4); Ear Clap-14; Hand Strike-18 (1d+1); Head Butt-16 (1d+1); Neck Snap- 18 (3d); Piledriver- 18 (3d+3); Stamp Kick-18 (1d+4).

"Reina Queen" is the ring name of Maria Velasco, a female wrestler in the Women's Wrestling Federation. In the ring, she is portrayed as a "bad guy," and has cheated her way to the title on two occasions. In reality, though, Maria has a heart of gold; her personality in the ring is all an act. In fact, outside the ring she assumes a *third* (unnamed) identity and fights crime with a team of other martial artists (most of whom are Trained by a Master), where her strength and toughness compliment the others' speed and high kicks.

Reina is a 350-point character suitable for use as a PC or NPC in a cinematic *Martial Arts* campaign set in the modern era. Since Professional Wrestling has no cinematic abilities, she has been given Enhanced Strength and Extra Hit Points to compensate.
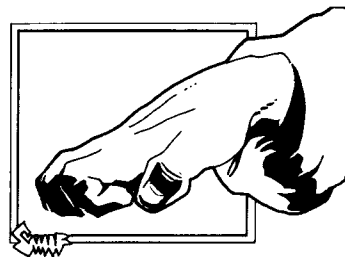
SAVATE Grades

Savate has its own rank system, this one based on glove colors rather than belts. This gradation is similar for gaming purposes to the belt system described in the sidebar on p. 77; it goes as follows:

Blue Gloves: Default to Skill 10.
Green Gloves: Skill 11.
Red Gloves: Skill 12.
White Gloves: Skill 13.
Yellow Gloves: Skill 14+. After this level, one must participate in competitions to advance in rank. It would be possible to be very skilled in Savate yet have "only" the Yellow Gloves, if one did not compete.
Bronze Gloves: 15+.
Silver Gloves (Levels One to Three): 16+.

SAVATE COSTUME

The Savate traditional dress is similar to that worn by boxers in the 19th century. It consists of a sleeveless jumpsuit, usually in a dark color. Hard-toed shoes are used (add +1 to damage in combat).

Styles

The Shaolin Initiation

The test that a Shaolin monk had to undergo in order to become full-fledged member of the Temple is legendary, and is the model for many fictional martial-arts institutions. Many monks never underwent those tests; the superiors had to decide whether the candidates had the potential to be tested in the first place. It was not uncommon for candidates to fail several times before passing the test, or to be seriously injured or killed in the attempt. Since the monk had to be ready to face danger, there was little concern given to their safety during the test.

First, the candidate was tested on his knowledge of the intellectual arts. In game terms, rolls against History (Chinese)-3, Calligraphy, and Philosophy (Buddhism)-4 were required. (GMs with a penchant for riddles can replace the Philosophy roll with some questions designed to test the character's - and the player's - knowledge of the beliefs of the temple. (The *Kung Fu* TV show has many examples of this.) On a failure on any of those rolls, the candidate was disqualified until the next such test. On a critical failure, his status was reduced and he was sent to re-learn his lessons with the beginner monks.

A series of physical tests followed. The candidate was pitted against several opponents at once, had to faced armed enemies bare-handed and even hold his own against some of the masters of the Temple. The GM can solve this test as a series of skill rolls, or as Contests or Quick Contests against the other monks. He can also use the tournament rules on p. 61. Or the whole test could be roleplayed.

If the candidate held his own against living opponents, a further test awaited. He had to enter a maze full of life-sized dummies that launched spring-activated attacks. The maze was in near-complete darkness (-7 to all Vision rolls). The candidate had to make Traps-4 (-11 with lighting penalties) to avoid the traps. Otherwise, he was attacked by 1d dummies from any hex side. The dummies have the equivalent of ST 12 and attack with a skill of 11. The attacks are either simulated punches and kicks doing thrust damage, or weapons doing the appropriate damage. Unless the monk was seriously injured, he was allowed to go on - towards the next trap. The GM can set as many dummy attacks as he wants; the length of the tests varied from candidate to candidate, since they were designed to push their individual abilities to the limit. This is a test of character as well as skill!
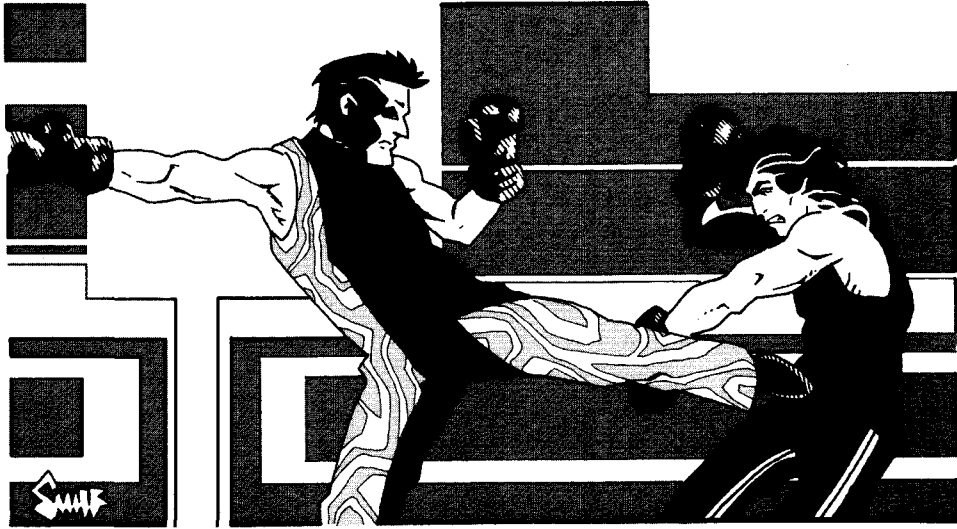
Primary Skills: Karate, Boxing.
Secondary Skills: Broadsword (Cane).
Optional Skills: Fencing, Language (French).
Maneuvers: Back Kick, Drop Kick, Hit Location (Karate) [2 points], Jump Kick, Kicking [2 points], Spin Kick.
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None, but see the note below.

*Note: Older accounts sometimes relate stories of highly acrobatic attacks that are made at a full run or while turning handstands. These rumors may be true in a cinematic campaign, in which case the GM may wish to add the Acrobatics skill and the Acrobatic Kick and Flying Jump Kick maneuvers to create a "cinematic" style (13 points).

Self-Defense Hand-to-Hand   1 POINT

This is a typical direct, combat-oriented hand-to-hand system, which can be derived from any of a number of styles. Its origins lie in the 20th century, when large segments of the civilian population feel threatened by crime and want to learn how to resist acts of violence. Karate, Judo and many forms of Kung Fu have self-defense sub-categories. This form has a very limited repertoire of maneuvers, and aims for simplicity and ease of learning, much like the Police and Military systems (see above). In fact, many police officers and military personnel will be proficient in this style instead of their "official" versions.

This system will sometimes have a "parent" martial art. Striking techniques or throws may be combined, or one may be taken to the detriment, or exclusion, of the other. Other skills may be added, depending on the "parent" style, if any. This form will have no Cinematic skills or Maneuvers.

GURPS characters with martial arts skills who were created without the *GURPS Martial Arts* rules can be considered to belong to this category (this "blanket" rule will cover PCs whose players do not want to use these new rules). Training in this system will not make one into a flashy martial artist, but its simplicity (and low point cost) allows more diversification into other skills.

Primary Skills: Judo or Karate, possibly both.
Secondary Skills: None, or as per the "parent" system.
Optional Skills: As per Secondary skills, above.
Maneuvers: Standard Karate and Judo moves (Hand Parry, Hand Strike, Judo Throw, etc.) as described in the *Basic Set.* Other maneuvers can be added at the GM's discretion. Average maneuvers like Arm Lock, Elbow Strike or Knee Strike are the most likely candidates.
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

Shaolin KUNG FU   16 POINTS/32 POINTS

The famous Shaolin temple (see p. 7) was a great center of martial arts learning. In it, many different "styles" were taught, from "hard" striking techniques to the more sophisticated ones like Chin Na (see p. 79). It is hard, therefore, to try to describe a particular style inherent to the school, especially since many later styles claim to have originated there.

The style described below is a well-rounded and complete form that draws from the many doctrines and arts taught at the temple. It is also meant to describe the skills that an archetypical Shaolin monk would have, according to the legends. Skills that are more appropriate to the historical Shaolin (as opposed to their modern counterparts) are marked with an (h). If these skills are eliminated, the point cost for the style becomes 14, or 30 in a cinematic campaign.

Practitioners of this style tend to be in constant movement, keeping the enemy guessing where the next attack will come from. Kicks are very important, but are also combined with a number of grappling techniques and punches. The staff and the spear are the most influential weapons, although sword techniques and the use of other edged polearms (such as the Chinese staff-sword and the edged staff) are also taught.

The Shaolin practitioner of historical times must be many things besides a soldier. Stealth and other subtle skills were included in the teachings of the school. In addition, the monks were scholars, well-versed in philosophy and theology. They were taught to fight only when absolutely necessary, and to use the minimum amount of violence required to resolve the situation.

Today, many styles claim to be the direct descendants of the traditional Shaolin school. One can find training of this sort almost anywhere in the world, although it is more likely that the true heirs of Shaolin exist only in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In a cinematic campaign, Shaolin practitioners (who have probably been the subject of more movies than any other martial art) are rivaled only by the ninja in terms of exotic abilities. From Power Blow to Drunken Fighting, this style covers all types of special abilities. If one believes all the legends about the powers of the Shaolin monks, it is hard to understand how the Manchu dynasty was able to destroy the temple (see p. 7), even after many failures and a long military campaign.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Meditation (h), Philosophy (Buddhism) (h).

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Breath Control, Calligraphy (h), History (Chinese) (h), Literature (Chinese) (h), Jumping, Spear, Staff, Stealth, Theology (Buddhism), Throwing.

Optional Skills: Bow, Broadsword, Hypnotism, Two-Handed Sword, Yin/Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Axe Kick, Back Kick, Feint (Karate) *[2* points], Hook Kick, Jump Kick [2 points], Kicking, Spin Kick [2 points], Spinning Punch.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Blinding Touch, Breaking Blow, Drunken Fighting, Hand of Death, Invisibility Art, Light Walk, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Throwing Art, Zen Archery.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Flying Jump Kick, Hand-Clap Parry, Roll with Blow, Springing Attack.

THE Shaolin INITIATION (Continued)

At the end of the tunnel waited the final obstacle; a huge metal vessel, weighing 500 pounds and filled with hot coals (in a realistic campaign, the vessel can be made lighter, but should weigh at least 250 pounds). The only way to get past it was to lift the vessel and carry it outside. A ST roll must be made to lift it; use the rules for lifting things on p. B89. Since the vessel is red-hot, the candidate's arms will be burned, taking ld-3 points each. A Will-5 roll is necessary to hold on to the vessel (Will-2 if the character has the High Pain Threshold advantage). Two unmodified ST rolls are necessary to carry the vessel outside. Several senior monks were waiting at the end of the tunnel, ready to welcome the new member and to tend to his wounds.

On each side of the vessel was a brand, the tiger and the dragon respectively. By lifting the red-hot cauldron, the monk marked himself forever with the signs of the Shaolin temple. This practice served to deter impostors; few would-be monks were willing to burn themselves with metal brands.

Shaolin Uniform

The monks of the Shaolin temple traditionally wore a white shirt over black loose pants. The head was kept shaved.

styles

TOMMY KWONG

Age 33; 5'9", 140 lbs. Long black hair and eyes, medium Asian complexion; an attractive, grim-faced young man with a wiry build.

Attributes
ST 11, DX 16, IQ 11, HT 12.
Basic Speed 7, Move 9.
Dodge 7, Parry 12.
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1, *Swing* 1d+1.
Point Total: 250 points.

Advantages
Attractive; High Pain Threshold; Strong Will +3.

Disadvantages
Enemy (Street gangs, 9 or less); Obsession (Avenging his brother and father); Social Status -1 (Criminal).

Quirks
Always wears white; Grim and silent; Thinks the police are incompetent; Trains compulsively; Tries hard not to be as bad as the people he is hunting.

Martial Arts Styles
Professional Kickboxing; Streetfighting.

Skills
Area Knowledge (LA)-12; Boxing-17; Brawling-17; Broadsword (Bat)-16; Climbing-15; Fast-Talk-10; First Aid/TL7-12; Holdout-10; Intimidation-12; Jumping-16; Karate-18; Language (Chinese)-9; Language (Korean)-9; Motorcycle-16; Running-16; Scrounging-11; Shadowing-12; Shortsword (Billy Club)-15; Stealth-18; Streetwise-16; Survival (Urban)-12; Swimming-16; Teaching-11; Tournament Law (Professional Kickboxing)-12.
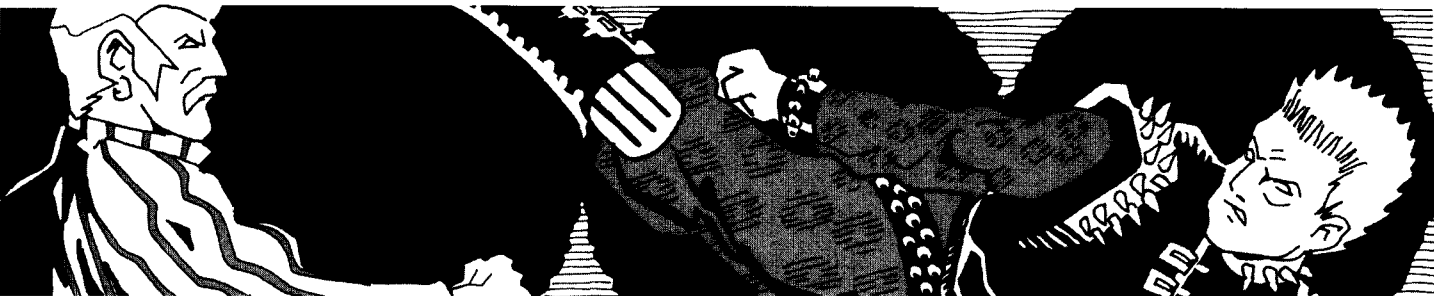
Maneuvers
Back Kick-18 (1d+2); Eye-Gouging-12 (1d-2); Face Attacks-14 (1d-3); Feint (Brawling)-19; Hand Strike-18 (1d); Head Butt-14 (1d-2); Hit Location (Brawling)-17; Jab-17 (1d-1); Jump Kick-18 (1d+4); Kicking-18(1d+2); Knee Strike-18 (1d+1); Neck Snap-11 (1d+1); Rabbit Punch-16 (1d+2); Roundhouse Punch-16 (1d+3); Spin Kick-18 (1d+2); Stamp Kick-18 (1d+3).

STREETFIGHTING   16 POINTS
(NO cinematic abilities)

This is not a style you can learn in a *dojo*. Its lessons are hard, and many students are crippled or killed by learning them. Streetfighting is undisciplined, unorthodox and brutal. It consists mostly of a repertoire of dirty tricks leavened with ruthlessness. The objective is to finish the fight as soon as possible. Most street toughs only know the barest rudiments of Streetfighting (Brawling skill). Only the most bloodthirsty master it. The introduction of martial arts to the general public has added elements of Asian fighting arts to the combat skills of the streets, but here they have been stripped down to their barest essentials, and used in the most direct manner possible.

The techniques described below represent the skills of the toughest street-bred fighters. They combine a host of nasty maneuvers and some weapon skills. A Streetfighter will use whatever he has available to win the fight, be it his fists, sticks, knives or guns. Many will not be done if their opponent is on the ground - that is when the stomping starts. The goal is not only to defeat the opponent, but to either hurt him so badly he will never be able to come after you, or to hurt him so badly he is *afraid* to come after you.

Besides fighting skills, the other lesson in the street involves making a quick getaway. Sometimes to stay and fight will mean arrest, a beating or death. The ability to lose oneself in back streets, jump over obstacles and climb chain-link fences can keep a Streetfighter alive where fighting skills will not. Knowing one's way around the streets is also very helpful.

Primary Skills: Brawling, Running, Stealth, Streetwise and one of the following skills: Broadsword (for baseball bat or two-by-four), Knife, Shortsword (for billy club or stick).

Secondary Skills: Climbing, Holdout, Jumping, Karate, Survival (Urban), another weapon skill.

Optional Skills: Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Guns, Scrounging.

Maneuvers: Eye-Gouging, Face Attacks, Feint (Brawling), Head Butt, Hit Location (Brawling), Kicking, Knee Strike, Neck Snap, Rabbit Punch, Roundhouse Punch, Stamp Kick.

Cinematic Maneuvers and Skills: None.

SUMO   5 POINTS/5 POINTS

This highly ritualized ceremonial sport is seen by many Westerners as a contest of pure force between two obese and clumsy oafs. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Sumo is an intricate martial art with a long history and a powerful repertoire of movements.

The origins of Sumo are legendary, and date back to a mythical early emperor of Japan, who witnessed a battle between two giants. Eventually, Sumo became deeply influenced by Japan's national religion/philosophy, Shintoism. A religious ritual still precedes the matches.

STYLES

The goal of a *sumotori* (Sumo wrestler) in combat is to either throw the adversary out of the ring or make him touch the ground with any limb other than his feet. To do this, a number of techniques are taught, from grapples and pushes to slaps. A sumotori is trained to use his strength and weight to maximum advantage. Outside the ring, their size and toughness makes them very resilient, and once they get a grip on the enemy, the fight is as good as over.

Sumotori are trained since childhood in special "stables" of fighters. Constant exercise and a fat-rich diet are combined to give them their enormous size. After a relatively short career, many Sumo wrestlers retire, rich; many retired sumotori open restaurants.

Outside Japan, the best place to learn Sumo is actually part of the United States - Hawaii. In fact, a number of Hawaiians have managed to wrest championship prizes from the Japanese contenders.

In a cinematic campaign, some Sumo wrestlers may have learned to focus their *chi* to greatly increase their strength for short periods of time, enabling them to suddenly turn the tables on an opponent (the Power Blow skill). Although blood should never be drawn in a Sumo match, sumotori *outside* the ring have no compunction about punching enemies, so they are formidable foes.

Primary Skills: Sumo Wrestling, Tournament Law (Sumo).
Secondary Skills: Theology (Shinto).
Optional Skills: Brawling, Karate, Meditation, Wrestling.
Maneuvers: None. But see the *Sumo Wrestling* skill, p. 35, for combat bonuses.
Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Power Blow.
Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

Tae KWONDO   14 POINTS/21 POINTS

This Korean martial art is very similar to Japanese Karate in that striking techniques form most of its repertoire. What distinguishes Tae Kwon Do is its emphasis on high kicks, and it has an impressive body of breaking techniques. This style has become popular worldwide, and was featured during the 1988 Olympics.

Historically, Korean scholars place the origin of this style, or some unarmed combat equivalent, as far back as 400 A.D., since mural paintings describing such activities were found in archaeological sites dating from that time. Some Koreans point to this and claim that their style precedes the legendary origins of Kung Fu by some 200 years (see p. 13), although there is evidence that the Chinese were practicing some form of hand-to-hand combat hundreds or even thousands of years before the traditional dates. Nevertheless, it is clear that Korea has a long history of martial arts learning.

Tae Kwon Do has "do" and "jutsu" forms, with their accompanying differences. Most schools in the West will emphasize the sports side. However, most Tae Kwon Do contests are full-contact events, so GMs may judge the style taught **in** those schools to be "jutsu" training (see p. 12). A Tae Kwon Do expert will use many high kicks, but only where it is feasible to do so. Other techniques include punches and elbow attacks, leg sweeps and other standard maneuvers. This style **has** schools in over 60 countries around the world - many "karate" schools are actually teaching TKD forms - so finding a teacher is not difficult.

Primary Skills: Jumping, Karate, Karate Sport, Savoir-Faire (Dojo).
Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Tournament Law (Tae Kwon Do)
Optional Skills: Judo. Some schools also offer weapon training.
Maneuvers: Axe Kick, Back Kick, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Jump Kick [2 points], Kicking [2 points], Spin Kick, Sweeping Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Power Blow.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Acrobatic Kick, Flying Jump Kick [2 points], Roll with Blow.

Sumo DRESS

Sumotoris are very scantily dressed in the ring, wearing only a small loincloth (*mawashi*) made of silk or cotton. Outside the ring, however, very complex (and expensive) kimono-like dresses are worn for ceremonial occasions. Sumo wrestlers are also immediately recognized because of their hair topknot (also known as *chon-mage*). This topknot is reminiscent of the days when the samurai wore them as a badge of their class and marks the *sumo-tori* as members of the warrior caste.

Styles

T'AI Chi CHUAN   5 (OR 8) points/28 POINTS

This martial art has grown popular in the West, but it is appreciated more for its artistic and therapeutic values than for its combat effectiveness. T'ai Chi is a graceful, relaxed art, with a series of carefully balanced movements that resemble ballet dancing in many ways. But there is also a martial side to this art.

This is one of the "internal" martial arts forms, concerned with the balancing of the user's chi (see sidebar, p. 84). In a cinematic campaign, of course, this means that a T'ai Chi expert will be a master of several esoteric abilities. Even in a realistic campaign, this style, with its emphasis on balance, has something to offer combat-oriented martial artists. It has a repertoire of striking techniques as well, but as a whole they are secondary to pushes and throws. T'ai Chi also offers some sword training, but mainly as a Weapon Art.

In combat, the main advantage of T'ai Chi is its concentration, at high training levels, on the art of unbalancing an opponent through cleverly applied pushes. Even in a realistic campaign, the GM may allow its students to have the Push skill (see p. 40) to reflect this. Similarly, the teachings of T'ai Chi present "sticking hands" as a vital counterpart to "pushing hands", so the GM may also wish to allow the Sticking maneuver in a realistic campaign.

Primary Skills: Judo, Judo Art, Meditation, Philosophy (Zen or Taoism). If Push is allowed in a realistic campaign, then it too is a Primary skill.

Secondary Skills: Broadsword Art, Karate.

Optional Skills: Breath Control, Shortsword Art, Spear Art, Staff Art, Tin-Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock. If Sticking is allowed in a realistic campaign, then Sticking [2 points] is also a standard Maneuver for T'ai Chi.

Cinematic Skills: Body Control, Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge, Sticking [2 points].

Uechi Ryu   11 POINTS/21 POINTS

This Karate variant was originally taught by Kanbun Uechi (1877-1948), an Okinawan who studied in Fukien around the turn of the century. Uechi became one of the few Okinawans to actually teach in China. Though he escaped by being drafted into the Japanese army by leaving Okinawa, Uechi returned, but refused to teach for years. Eventually, Uechi taught some Okinawans in Japan during the 1920's but resettled in Okinawa some years later. Uechi called his style the *pangainoon* system. It uses very few kata, and all kata reflect the same lineage as the kata of Naha-Te. It employs a lighter breathing technique than in Goju Ryu. The style was renamed by Uechi's son, Kanei, in 1948 after his father's death. The principles of the tiger, dragon and crane, as taught by Kanbun Uechi, are central. In a cinematic campaign, this style develops chi in a number of ways, allowing the practitioner to use several devastating skills.

Primary Skills: Breath Control, Karate, Karate Art, Meditation, Savoir Faire (Dojo).

Secondary Skills: Jitte/Sai, Staff, Tonfa.

Optional Skills: Karate Sport, Philosophy (Buddhism), Tournament Law, any Kobujutsu weapon skill (see p. 89).

Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry, Back Kick, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Knee Strike, Shin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Immovable Stance, Kiai, Power Blow.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (Karate).

TAEKWONDO
RANKS

Tae Kwon Do uses a belt system very similar to the Judo system (see sidebar, p. 77) to show ranks up to Black Belt. The colors have different meanings, however.

White Belt: Beginner. Default to Skill 10.

Yellow Belt: Skill 11.
Blue Belt: Skill 12.
Red Belt: Skill 13.
Red/Black Belt: Skill 14.
Black Belt: Skill 15.

After the Black Belt comes a system of *dans* that follows the Japanese pattern (see sidebar, p. 78).

White CRANE KUNG FU 7 points/13 POINTS

This ancient style of Kung Fu, called Pak Hok, bases its movements on those of the crane. The legend goes that a Taoist priest was impressed by the skill of a crane protecting its nest from a thieving ape. The monk combined the wing and beak moves of the crane with other martial arts.

The White Crane style includes wide swinging attacks and defenses, jumps and highly stylized stances. Defensive tactics are used at first, followed by a fully committed attack. This means that the White Crane expert will rarely attack first. This style also has a large repertoire of weapons, from the *jiann* (straight Chinese sword) to the chain-whip.

Primary Skills: Karate, Philosophy (Taoism).

Secondary Skills: Judo, Jumping, Language (Chinese), Meditation, any two of the following weapon skills: Broadsword, Knife, Shortsword, Spear, Staff, Whip.

Optional Skills: Any of the other weapon skills.

Maneuvers: Back Kick, Jump Kick, Riposte (Karate), Spin Kick [2 points].

Cinematic Skills: None.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (with bare hands or any one weapon).

Special: To reflect the defensive bias of White Crane, a White Crane fighter is at -1 Speed for the purposes of determining *Initiative* (see p. 65) for each of his attacks. On the other hand, the bizarre stances of the style give any foe without Style Familiarity a -2 to use the Body Language skill when facing a White Crane user. As well, a White Crane fighter is at +1 to resist the first Feint made against him each turn - a benefit of carefully observing the foe and waiting for him to act. These special effects roughly balance one-another, and are worth no points.

WlNG CHUN KUNQ FU 14 POINTS/32 POINTS

This was one of the martial arts that Brace Lee studied before developing his own style (see *Jeet Kune Do,* p. 85), a fact that has contributed to its popularity. Wing Chun is one of the oldest styles of China; its legendary origin can be traced to the destruction of the Shaolin temple (see *Shaolin Kung Fu,* p. 101). One of the Venerable Five was a nun, Ng Mui, who hid in another temple and passed her knowledge to a girl there. This girl, whose name was Yim Wing Chun, along with her husband, combined these teachings with other skills such as knife fighting, and passed them on.

Wing Chun is primarily a style for close fighting. Quick parries and ripostes, and "sticking" techniques, are taught. Fast, short-ranged punches and kicks are the rule. Locks and throws are also taught, again with an emphasis on close combat. Besides empty-handed combat, Wing Chun has two primary weapons: the butterfly sword, usually used in pairs, and a heavy, long staff, used in a swinging fashion - more like a greatsword than a standard staff. This helps close the gap created by the short-ranged tactics of the hand-to-hand portion of the style.

Since this is an ancient style, one that was created by members of the Venerable Five, it has a wide repertoire of cinematic abilities. Many of the skills found in more "internal" styles like T'ai Chi or Aikido are present in Wing Chun.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Shortsword.

Secondary Skills: Knife, Philosophy (Zen Buddhism), Two-Handed Sword (for use with a staff).

Optional Skills: Meditation, Staff.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Close Combat (Knife or Shortsword), Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate or weapon) [2 points, or 1 point in each], Knee Strike, Off-Hand Weapon Training (Shortsword), Riposte (Karate), Spin Kick, Stamp Kick.

MASTER Yl

Age 75; 5'4", 110 lbs. Long white hair, wispy hair, beard and moustache; black eyes, Asian complexion; a serene and kindly-looking old man.

Attributes

ST9, DX 15, IQ 15, HT 13.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 7, Parry 14.
Damage: *Thrust* ld-2, *Swing* ld-1.
Point Total: 500 points.

Advantages

Ally Group (Twenty 100-point martial artists, 9 or less); Contact (Shanghai's senior officials, 9 or less, usually reliable); Harmony with the Tao; Longevity; Strong Will +3; Trained By A Master.

Disadvantages

Enemy (Shanghai underworld, 6 or less); Major Vow (Never refuse aid to those who deserve it); Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents); Sense of Duty (To his students).

Quirks

Dislikes political fanatics; Meditates every day; Polite, Prefers the countryside to the city; Wears only traditional dress.

Martial Arts Styles

Chin Na; White Crane Kung Fu (cinematic).

Skills

Area Knowledge (China)-15; Area Knowledge (Shanghai)-16; Breath Control-15; Calligraphy-15; Gardening-15; Judo-20; Jumping-16; Karate-20; Knife-15; Language: Mandarin-16; Leadership-16; Meditation-15; Nei Tan-15; Philosophy (Taoism)-18; Savoir-Faire-15; Shortsword-16; Staff-16; Streetwise-17; Survival (Plains)-14; Survival (Jungle)-14; Teaching-16; Whip-15; Writing-15; Yin/Yang Healing-15.

Cinematic Skills

Breaking Blow-20; Hand of Death-15; Power Blow-20; Pressure Points-20; Pressure Secrets-20.

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-24; Back Kick-18 (ld+2); Choke Hold-20; Finger Lock-22; Hand Strike-20 (ld); Head Lock-18 (ld+1); Hit Location (Karate)-20; Jump Kick-20 (ld+4); Kicking-18 (ld+2); Neck Snap-12 (ld-1); Riposte (Karate)-20 (ld); Spin Kick-20 (ld+2); Spinning Punch-20 (ld).

Cinematic Maneuvers

Enhanced Parry (Hands).

STYLES

Yi Huan-ch'eng was born in Peking in 1850, amidst the turmoil of the Taiping Uprising. When he was 3, his parents sent him away to his uncle's home in the countryside. Huan was sent to stay with his uncle for a reason: Uncle Wu was a martial arts master, with many devoted students, and quite capable of protecting young Huan.

Huan never returned to Peking, and spent the first 30 years of his life learning the secrets of kung fu under the watchful eye of his uncle. When Uncle Wu died, Huan became a wanderer, protecting the weak and teaching martial arts skills to those who needed them. In 1900, he settled in Shanghai, where he has lived since. He now has a sizeable but secret following of "righters of wrongs" who are fanatically loyal to him.

Master Yi is a 500-point character suitable for use as a powerful NPC - perhaps even as the teacher of one or more of the PCs - in a cinematic *GURPS China* or *Cliffhangers* campaign set in the China of the 1920s.

Sha-Shan

Age 50; 5'9", 145 lbs. Shaven head, black eyes, dark Asian complexion; a sinister man with an unnerving stare, clad in studded leather, with multiple body piercings.

Attributes

ST 13, DX 16, IQ 14, HT 12.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 7, Parry 14.
Damage: *Thrust 1*d, *Swing* 2d-1.
Point Total: 500 points.

Advantages

Ally Group (Gang of 30 or 40 75-point martial artists, 9 or less); High Pain Threshold; Iron Hand (Right hand); Trained By A Master.

Disadvantages

Greed; Lecherousness; Megalomania; Pyromania; Sadism; Unattractive.

Quirks

Dispenses with philosophy as "largely unnecessary;" Easily flattered; Fascinated with gunpowder.

Martial Arts Style

Wudong (cinematic).

Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Dual-Weapon Attack (Shortsword) [2 points], Enhanced Parry (all weapons), Sticking.

WUDONG   13 POINTS/30 POINTS

Wudong is a Taoist style that was created and taught in the Wudong mountains in Central China. The style concentrates on low-to-the-ground, seemingly unbalanced postures, and quick springing attacks from the low positions. This style has had relatively little public exposure; most Wudong teachers were hermits who would accept no more than a handful of students. This secrecy makes Wudong an ideal style for cinematic campaigns, as the ancient Taoist lore of Wudong includes techniques to develop and channel chi in all its different forms.

Most Wudong stances feature a crouching posture, which is used to launch explosive attacks. Training is done slowly, in positions that seem deceptively heavy and not well-balanced. Most of the initial training resembles "external" Kung Fu (see p. 91), with emphasis on striking power and physical conditioning. Grappling techniques are also used, using pressure points to inflict disabling locks and holds. Kicks, elbow blows, and open-handed strikes are the main attacks of the style, with the addition of "soft" defensive maneuvers, which allow enemy attacks to flow by unimpeded.

In a cinematic campaign, Wudong offers several skills and maneuvers. The deceptive balance of Wudong stances are equivalent to Drunken Fighting (see p. 37), although the movements are not the same; Wudong-trained characters use the skill for the same game effect, although the moves will not be recognizable as traditional drunk-fighting techniques. Chi mastery gives the Wudong practitioner a wide choice of other abilities, including (in some cases) the dreaded Hand of Death.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Breath Control, Judo, Karate, Karate Art.

Secondary Skills: Jumping, Philosophy (Taoism).

Optional Skills: Meditation, Yin-Yang Healing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Elbow Strike, Hook Kick, Jump Kick, Kicking, Knee Strike, Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Body Control, Breaking Blow, Drunken Fighting, Hand of Death, Immovable Stance, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Acrobatic Kick, Enhanced Parry (bare-handed), Springing Attack.

Wushu Kung fu   10 POINTS/20 POINTS

Wushu is the state-controlled martial art of Communist China. The name was originally another word for kung fu, but it was adopted by the Maoist government as a symbol of change. Seeing the traditional martial arts as reactionary, the Chinese government restructured the arts into a sports-like body of techniques, where hand-to-hand combat is combined with exercise methods and flashy acrobatic maneuvers. Most of the "internal" components of the martial arts were eliminated and considered "superstitions."

Later on, however, a number of the chi-oriented techniques of old began to reappear in some areas of Wushu. This body of knowledge is called Qigong, the art of channeling one's chi. Breaking techniques are the most common of those doctrines; they require intensive training, so they are reserved for a highly endowed and dedicated few.

Many Wushu movements have no combat value. Indeed, many of the designers of this modern form contend that the martial arts are useless for 20th-

century combat, and emphasize the exercise side of the art. The acrobatic movements of this style can be effective in the hands of an expert, however. Jump kicks, leaping attacks and other stylish maneuvers are common. Some of the moves in this style resemble the "animal" techniques (see White Crane Kung Fu, p. 105). This style also has a wide repertoire of weapons, including swords, knives, steel whips, three-part staffs, and others.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Jumping, Karate Art, Karate.

Secondary Skills: Judo Art, Judo (in some schools), Philosophy (Communist Doctrine), and any two of the following skills: Axe/Mace, Broadsword, Flail, Knife, Shortsword, Spear, Staff, Whip.

Optional Skills: Breath Control, Meditation, Yin/Yang Healing, any other weapon skills.

Maneuvers: Back Kick, Hook Kick, Jump Kick [2 points], Off-Hand Weapon Training (any one-handed weapon), Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Hand of Death, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Dual Weapon Attack (any one-handed weapon) [2 points], Flying Jump Kick.

Fictional Styles

All of the styles described above are either historical or modern versions of real or semi-legendary martial arts. GMs do not need to limit themselves to earthly styles, however. Fantasy creatures, alien races and the humans of the future will, no doubt, have their own unique, scientific methods of combat.

GMs can use historical and real-world styles as guidelines. A cabal of assassins, for instance, could have a style patterned after Ninjutsu. The Space Patrol in a futuristic campaign could have the equivalent of Military or Police Hand-to-hand, perhaps with Free Fall thrown in. In a low-tech setting, a style with several weapons, like Kobujutsu, is most useful. Some styles could be designed to work while wearing heavy armor or even a battlesuit. Others could mix combat skills with spells. The capabilities of an alien or fantasy race must also be taken into account; a multilimbed race is likely to specialize in Judo-like techniques, while a slow but strong species might prefer to use devastating punches.

The following are examples of fictional styles, intended to serve as models for the GM who wishes to introduce martial arts into a fantasy or science fiction campaign. Engaijutsu and Kronin Karate are specifically geared to races that can be found in *GURPS Aliens,* although they could be easily refitted for similar species. Aerie Fighting, Smasha and Sylvan War-Lore are designed specifically for the *GURPS Fantasy* milieu. Dragon Man Kung Fu is a more "generic" fantasy style. Finally, Cyberninjutsu, Force-Swordsmanship and Spacer Kung Fu are futuristic human styles that could fit into any sufficiently advanced *GURPS Space* or *GURPS Cyberpunk* campaign.

Sha-Shan (Continued)

Skills

Acrobatics-18; Area Knowledge (China)-14; Breath Control-16; Camouflage-14; Demolitions/TL5-16; Disguise-14; Fast-Talk-14, Gambling-14; Guns/TL5 (Pistol)-18; Interrogation-17; Intimidation-17; Judo-18; Jumping-16; Karate-20; Karate Art-18; Language: Mandarin-14; Leadership-17; Meditation-14; Philosophy (Taoism)-12; Poisons-14; Sex-Appeal-12; Stealth-16; Streetwise-17; Tactics-14; Teaching-13; Traps/TL5-14; Yin/Yang Healing-14.

Cinematic Skills

Body Control-14; Breaking Blow-20; Drunken Fighting-18; Hand of Death-14; Immovable Stance-16; Mental Strength-14; Power Blow-20; Pressure Points-18; Pressure Secrets-20.

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-21; Back Kick-20 (ld+4); Elbow Strike-20 (ld+2); Hand Strike-20 (ld+4); Hook Kick-20 (ld+5); Jump Kick-20 (ld+6); Kicking-20 (ld+4); Knee Strike-22 (ld+3); Spin Kick-20 (ld+4).

Cinematic Maneuvers

Acrobatic Kick-16; Enhanced Parry (Hands); Springing Attack-18.

Although the details of his past are shrouded in mystery, it is apparent that the man called Sha-Shan learned the ancient and carefully-guarded secrets of Wudong somewhere along the line, possibly from Taoist monks in the mountains of central China. In any event, he has turned his talents to evil, and has adopted the name Sha-Shan ("Mountain Killer") for his life of crime. Sha-Shan is a brutal and sadistic individual, but values gold enough that he would likely train a group of students in return for their money and service.

Sha-Shan is a power-hungry "evil master," an interesting alternative to the traditional robed, white-haired sage. He is a 500-point character who is best used as a powerful NPC or as a formidable Enemy. He would be an ideal choice for the master of an evil school that opposes that of Master Yi (see above) in a cinematic *GURPS China* or *Cliffhangers* campaign.

styles

ARLah

Engai; age 300; 4'2", 80 lbs. High-peaked, flame-red crest, luminescent white eyes, jet-black skin; a relatively bulky and powerful Engai female, who generally wears a gaze that is best described as one of relaxed calm that's about fifty percent sneer!

Attributes

ST 11, DX 14, IQ 15, HT 14.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 7, Parry 12.
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1, *Swing* 1d+1.
Point Total: 650 points.

Advantages

Charisma +2; Empathy; Immunity to Disease; Metabolism Control (x3), Night Vision; Perfect Balance; Polarized Eyes; Status 2; Strong Will +2; Trained by a Master; Unaging; Very Beautiful; Voice; Walk on Liquid.

Disadvantages

Curious, Intolerance (Mortals), Obsession (Studying the Martial Arts), Overconfidence, Stubbornness.

Quirks

Annoyingly industrious, Incorporates all manner of pleasures into her training, Likes her solitude, Spends hours studying history, Tries to be the solemn master and fails miserably.

Skills

Acrobatics-17; Archaeology-18; Beam Weapons-16; Biochemistry-15; Breath Control-16; Carousing-15; Chemistry-15; Dancing-15; Electronics Operation (Teaching Equipment)-16; History-18; Hypnotism-16; Judo-18; Jumping-16; Karate-18; Meditation-16; Philosophy (Engai)-14; Research-18; Sensitivity-17; Staff-15; Stealth-16; Style Analysis-13; Yin/Yang Healing-14.

Cinematic Skills

Blinding Touch-16; Body Control-16; Breaking Blow-16; Flying Leap-16; Hypnotic Hands-16; Immovable Stance-16, Light Walk-16; Mental Strength-16; Power Blow-16; Pressure Points-18; Pressure Secrets-18; Push-16.

Maneuvers

Arm Lock-20; Back Kick-17 (1d+2); Choke Hold-17; Elbow Strike-18 (1d); Feint (Karate)-22; Finger Lock-18; Hand Strike-18 (1d); Head Lock-17 (1d+3); Jump Kick-18 (1d+4); Kicking-18 (1d+2); Knee Strike-19 (1d+1); Spin Kick-18 (1d+2).

Cinematic Maneuvers

Acrobatic Kick-15; Flying Jump Kick-18 (1d+4); Roll with Blow-17.

ALIEN STYLES
ENGAIJUTSU   15 points/30 POINTS

The Engai are an ancient race of advanced but decadent beings described in *GURPS Aliens,* p. 108. These beautiful elfin creatures achieved immortality through biochemical advances and the channeling of their inner energies through meditation and breathing techniques, developed through a very powerful martial arts style. In effect, the Engai have achieved the Taoist ideal - the perfect balancing of *chi* that ensures eternal life (see p. 84). The Engai also developed and then voluntarily discarded powerful psionic abilities. Currently, most Engai content themselves with pursuing pleasurable activities, enjoying their eternal lives to the fullest. They are generally lazy and apathetic toward worldly concerns (in some ways, representing an extreme form of the *wu-wei* component of Taoist philosophy, as described on p. 7). All Engai still practice the meditation techniques and a simple form of their martial art; these techniques allow Engai to control their metabolism to an incredible degree, and even to walk over liquid!

Even the most "ascetic" Engaijutsu master will show a surprising love for enjoying the finer things in life; part of Engaijutsu training consists of drinking and celebrating (leading to the development of the Carousing skill).

The origins of the Engai's martial art are lost in the distant past. It is rumored, however, that a handful of ancient Engai teachers still exist, and worthy humanoids may learn these secret techniques. Although all Engai have some knowledge of the style, only a few of them actually bother learning the full techniques of this art. The few extraordinarily dedicated aliens who do master it may be unusual enough to deal with non-Engai who wish to learn these chi-channeling abilities. Human characters who become Engaijutsu masters may actually achieve immortality themselves. In a highly cinematic campaign, a character with the Trained by a Master (Engaijutsu) advantage and a high level of mastery in the style may purchase the Unaging advantage, which costs 15 points. Those with at least skill 21 in Light Walk can purchase the Walk on Liquid advantage, costing 15 points.

Engaijutsu is ideal for cinematic campaigns in space settings. Engai practitioners are the deadliest hand-to-hand combatants in the universe; non-Engai students will gain access to an impressive array of abilities. Keep in mind, however, that fewer than one in a thousand Engai is dedicated enough to master their ancient style, which means there are less than a hundred Engai martial artists in the whole universe! Finding a teacher and convincing him to pass on his knowledge will be an epic achievement in and of itself.

*Primary Skills:* Breath Control, Judo, Karate, Meditation.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Carousing, Hypnotism, Jumping, Yin-Yang Healing.

Optional Skills: Any athletic skill, Philosophy (Engai) (very similar to some forms of Taoism), Staff, Stealth.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Choke Hold, Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate), Finger Lock, Head Lock, Jump Kick, Kicking, Knee Strike, Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Blinding Touch, Body Control, Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Hypnotic Hands, Immovable Stance, Light Walk, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Acrobatic Kick, Flying Jump Kick, Roll with Blow.
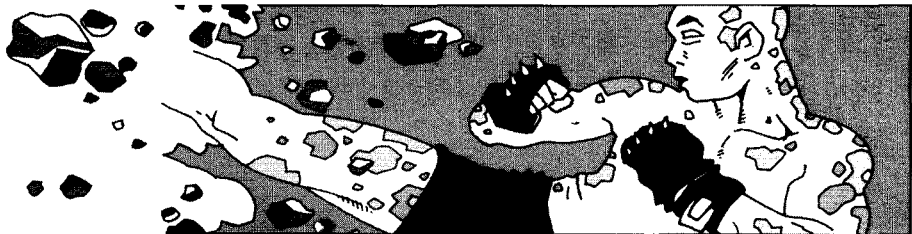
KRONIN KARATE   14 POINTS/17 POINTS

The Kronin are a warrior race (described in *GURPS Aliens,* p.68). Many of their fighters practice a style called Tierneju Yi Kronin ("combat discipline of the Kronin"); Terrans refer to it as "Kronin Karate" or "Kronin Kung-Fu," depending on who you ask. The Kronin are powerful telepaths, and their style involves elements of *mental* combat. Thus, it could be appropriate for any humanoid telepathic race, such as the Takisians from *GURPS Wild Cards.*

Kronin Karate is usually taught only to members of the upper classes (upper ranks or elite fighting units). A simplified version of this style is made available to everyone as part of the military training all Kronin undergo. This style emphasizes direct attacks, both physically (with Karate maneuvers) and psionically (favoring Mental Blow). The broadsword is a traditional weapon, but practitioners of Kronin Karate train constantly with it; with a vibro- or monomolecular blade, they can use this archaic weapon to great effect. Kronin also carry Force Shields (see p. B76) whenever possible, which gives them an edge both in close combat and against ranged weapons. ·

In a cinematic campaign, a few special abilities are available. Combined with their psionic skills, they allow Kronin Karate to hold its own against all comers. In a "four-color" campaign, it is recommended that, instead of chi abilities, the Kronin concentrate on psionic powers.

Primary Skills: Broadsword, Force Shield, Judo, Karate, Mental Blow, Mind Shield, Telereceive, Telesend.

Secondary Skills: Free Fall, Stealth, Throwing.

Optional Skills: Other telepathic skills, Acrobatics, Jumping, Knife, Staff.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Back Kick, Feint (Broadsword or Karate) [2 points, or 1 point in each], Hook Kick, Spin Kick.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Power Blow, Pressure Points.

Cinematic Maneuvers: None.

FANTASY STYLES
AERIE FIGHTING (WINGED folk MARTIAL ART)
10 POINTS/25 POINTS

The Winged Folk (p. FF136) are a race of flying humans that live in remote areas. Most Winged Folk avoid hand-to-hand combat, since their wings become a liability at close quarters and their bone structure is fragile. There are, however, some techniques that allow Winged Folk to successfully defend themselves while in close combat. Some warrior societies (including the Brides of Arrai, an all-female fighting order) have developed a hard-hitting style that concentrates on ranged attacks and devastating kicks. An Aerie Fighting combatant knows how to throw any weapon with deadly effect, and is also an accomplished archer.

Flying acrobatics are developed by this style; practitioners of Aerie Fighting learn Flight, a Physical/Average skill (defaults to DX for a flying race) that helps the character make tighter turns in the air. Turning radius calculations are described on p. B139; most flyers can pull a number of Gs equal to HT/2. By making a HT roll and a Flight-4 roll, the character can increase the number of Gs by 1; for each additional G beyond the first, subtract 2 from each roll. On a failed HT roll, he blacks out for 2d turns. On a failed skill roll, he loses control. Hand-to-hand combat while on the air will require Flight rolls to stay aloft. Failures will indicate the character falls for a turn, after which he may attempt Flight rolls to regain control.

In a Cinematic campaign, some Aerie Fighting secret teachings are available, including master bowmanship techniques which allow them to make incredible shots at enormous ranges.

Arlah is a young Engai, barely 300 years old. During her studies as a youth, her curiosity was piqued by a series of neural induction sessions on the ancient history of her people and their martial arts traditions. With a single-minded dedication quite uncharacteristic of an Engai, Arlah decided to dedicate her life to seeking out this knowledge and to reviving the ancient practices. Few other Engai really cared one way or the other, so she pursued her studies in near solitude for 245 years, bringing her race's formidable technology to bear on the problem, and then employing sleep teaching, neural induction and learning suits to teach the ancient techniques to herself.

When Arlah believed that she had finally mastered the martial arts, she was visited by a much older Engai, Wahni, who seemed to know everything that Arlah had done over the last two centuries. Wahni was (suprisingly) quite impressed with Arlah's dedication, and offered to help her complete her training by actually *teaching* her in person! Arlah accepted the offer, and today is the only pupil of Engaijutsu's only teacher.

Arlah is a 650-point character, really only suitable for use as a powerful NPC in a cinematic *GURPS Space* campaign. However, she *could* be introduced into a *Supers* campaign as a unique character, although the GM may wish to charge additional points for Engai teachnology.

Arlah is built using the Engai racial template in *GURPS Aliens,* updated to agree with the latest edition of the race creation rules in *Fantasy Folk,* Second Edition. Note that she has bought off her racial Laziness disadvantage.

SWOOPING KICK (HARD)

Defaults to Kicking-4
Prerequisite: Flight-15+

This Maneuver is unique to Aerie Fighting. The attacker dives from a minimum altitude of 6 yards (requiring a Flight-2 roll), and delivers the kick as he sweeps past the enemy. This attack does swing+1 damage plus Karate bonuses, and is at -1 to Parry in addition to normal height penalties (see p. B123).

SISTER
Magrethe
DEMONSLAYER

Age 41; 5'9", 145 lbs. Braided golden hair, green eyes, rosy complexion; has a very visible tattoo of an elaborate red dragon around her throat.

Attributes
ST 13, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 13.
Basic Speed 7, Move 7.
Dodge 8, Parry 13 (two-handed) or 10 (one-handed).
Damage: *Thrust 1*d, *Swing* 2d-1.
Point Total: 450 points.

Advantages
Combat Reflexes; Literacy; Luck; Patron (The Dragon Temple, 9 or less); Red Dragon Tattoo; Reputation (+2): Heroic demon slayer; Status 2 (Knight); Strong Will +3; Trained By A Master.

Disadvantages
Code of Honor (Dragon Temple Code); Enemy (Demonic forces, 9 or less); Extremely Hazardous Duty; Honesty.

Quirks
Dislikes being called a Dragon-Woman; Refuses rewards and favors; Says a prayer when she draws her sword.

Martial Arts Style
Dragon-Man Kung Fu (cinematic).

Skills
Acrobatics-15; Area Knowledge (Countryside)- 15; Armoury/TL3-12; Bard-14; Breath Control- 12; Fast-Draw (Katana)-16; Judo- 16; Jumping- 16; Karate- 17; Katana-18; Leadership- 15; Magic Breath-17; Meditation- 13; Occultism-15; Philosophy (Dragon Temple)- 16; Staff-15; Stealth-15; Survival (Marsh)-12; Survival (Mountain)- 12; Survival (Woods)- 12; Tactics-14; *Yin/Yang* Healing- 14.

Primary Skills: Bolas, Bow, Flight [2 points], Karate, Throwing.
Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Fast-Draw (Arrow), Fast-Draw (Knife).
Optional Skills: Net, Spear, Theology (Winged Folk).
Maneuvers: Jump Kick, Kicking, Knee Strike, Swooping Kick (see sidebar).
Cinematic Skills: Power Blow, Throwing Art, Zen Archery.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Dodge (with the limitation Only When Flying, for a total cost of 12 points).

DRAGON-MAN KUNG *fu*
11 POINTS/20 POINTS

"In the fastness of the Gryll'Eriad Mountains, well-protected from the elements and the evil men do, lies the Dragon Temple. Behind the jade-facade doors of the Temple lies the secret of the Flame Breath. How it is that men and women with no mystical ability can exhale fire at will is not known. It is indeed fortunate that the Dragon Temple monks only venture outside to serve on the holiest quests and that the few wandering Dragon-Men are knights of the noblest rank, warriors who never stray from the path of righteousness that their teachers set for them. But what if the secrets of the Dragon Temple were turned over to evil and greedy men? I shudder at the very thought."
— the Writings of Mi-Long the Traveler

This style of combat is unique to fantasy backgrounds. High-ranking practitioners of Dragon-Man Kung Fu gain the ability to breathe flame! Very few people outside the acolytes of the Dragon Temple know how this power is acquired, but many a warrior and mage has traveled to the remote monastery and pleaded, demanded or otherwise tried to cajole or steal the secret out of the reclusive monks. All have failed; most paid with their prides or their lives for the offense. A few have joined the Temple and learned the secret, and are now part of the forces protecting it.

Most Dragon-Men are inducted into the Temple when they are children or teenagers. Only the most extraordinary applicants will be admitted to the Temple after age 20; a martial artist Trained by a Master of another school *might* pass muster. Initiates must go through several gruelling physical and mental ordeals, and master all the basic skills of the style, before the Gift of Flame is bestowed (in game terms, the character must have the Trained by a Master advantage, must pay the full cost of the cinematic version of the style, and must have the prerequisites for Trained by a Master, including a minimum Primary skill level of 16).

The Dragon Temple is a strict (almost fanatical) upholder of Good; its monks are living weapons to be used against evil sorcerers, demons and the undead. The emperors of the land cheerfully accept the monks' aid in times of trouble, but are fearful and suspicious of the Dragon-Men; occasionally a government army has been raised against the Temple - and been destroyed.

There is a legend that claims that deep within the bowels of the Temple lies its founder, an ancient dragon who has endured for millennia. This dragon, it is rumored, is the one that taught the secret of flame breath to the monks. The Gift of Flame is not a *chi* power, but a magically-granted power. It is bestowed through a special version of Knack Tattoos (see p. MI62); the tattoos that are given to the acolytes of the Temple give them the power to breathe fire. The power works as per the Breathe Fire spell on p. M34; the breath does 1d+1 to 4d+4 flame damage per use, and its range is equal to 1 hex per die of damage. Three types of tattoo are available:

Styles

The first one, given to Green Dragon Acolytes, allows the wearer to breathe flame; this takes 1 second of concentration and costs 1 Fatigue per ld+1 of damage. The second type, given to Red Dragon Acolytes, allows the monk to Breathe Fire *immediately,* without concentration. The last one, reserved only for the top masters, the Golden Dragon Acolytes, casts the spell without concentration and the first ld+1 of damage *is free* - enabling the monk to emit a ld+1 jet of flame from his mouth continuously! These tattoos must be purchased with character points, using the Knack rules on p. M86: the Green Dragon tattoo costs 20 points, the Red Dragon tattoo costs 30 points, and the Golden Dragon tattoo costs 40 points. This is in addition to the other prerequisites.

Primary Skills: Judo, Karate, Magic Breath (P/E, used to aim flame jet; see p. M94), Philosophy (Dragon Temple) and one weapon skill from the following: Katana, Shortsword, Spear, Staff.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Breath Control, Jumping, Meditation, Stealth, Yin/Yang Healing, one more weapon skill.

Optional Skills: any other weapon skills,

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Axe Kick, Back Kick, Jump Kick, Spin Kick, Spinning Punch.

Cinematic Skills: Blinding Touch, Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Flying Jump Kick, Roll with Blow.

Smasha (ORC COMBAT Style)
13 POINTS/18 POINTS

*"Smasha, eh ? " The old guardsman leaned backwards on his chair, his eyes twinkling, his smile distant. "I'm sure yer awready heard the tales - y'know, the one where them Orc gods gave this one tribe some secret tricks an' all that nice stuff. . . But lemme tell ya something 1 **know.***

"'Bout six, seven years ago, it was. . . we had this reg'lar right at this here tavern. He was an Ugglie - pardon me, Your Sageness; you 'd be callin ' 'im a Half-Ore, but we simple folk got our own names. Krelkin, he was called. Quiet sort of fellow, got along well with everyone but Trash. And that was bad enough; Trash was an Ogre, a tame 'un, left out of the arena on account of killin' so many people. Trash gave ol' Krelkin a trashin' I never seen a man

Cinematic Skills
Blinding Touch-12; Breaking Blow-15; Flying Leap-19; Mental Strength-16; Power Blow-19; Pressure Points-18; Pressure Secrets-12.

Maneuvers
Arm Lock-18; Axe Kick-15 (ld+5);, Back Kick-15 (ld+3); Hand Strike-17 (ld+1); Jump Kick-17 (ld+5); Spin Kick-17 (ld+3); Spinning Punch-17 (ld+1).

Cinematic Maneuvers
Flying Jump Kick-17 (ld+5); Roll with Blow-15.

Sister Magrethe is a wandering Dragon-Man knight, a Red Dragon Acolyte of the Dragon Temple. Virtuous and beloved by the common folk, she fights evil wherever she finds it, and has freed many villages from the oppression of would-be sorcerer-lords. Bards sing tales of her most famous deed: the defeat of the dread Demon Lord Vyktyr in personal combat, preventing him from flinging open the gates of Hell. Vyktyr now sits in Hell, directing a campaign of personal vengeance against Magrethe as he awaits the regeneration of his corporeal form. This has led to a full-fledged war between the Demon's human pawns and the Dragon Temple!

Magrethe is a 450-point character, suitable for use as a *very* powerful NPC in a highly-cinematic fantasy campaign with **Martial Arts** elements. She would be an ideal Patron for young Dragon-Man acolytes.

STYLES
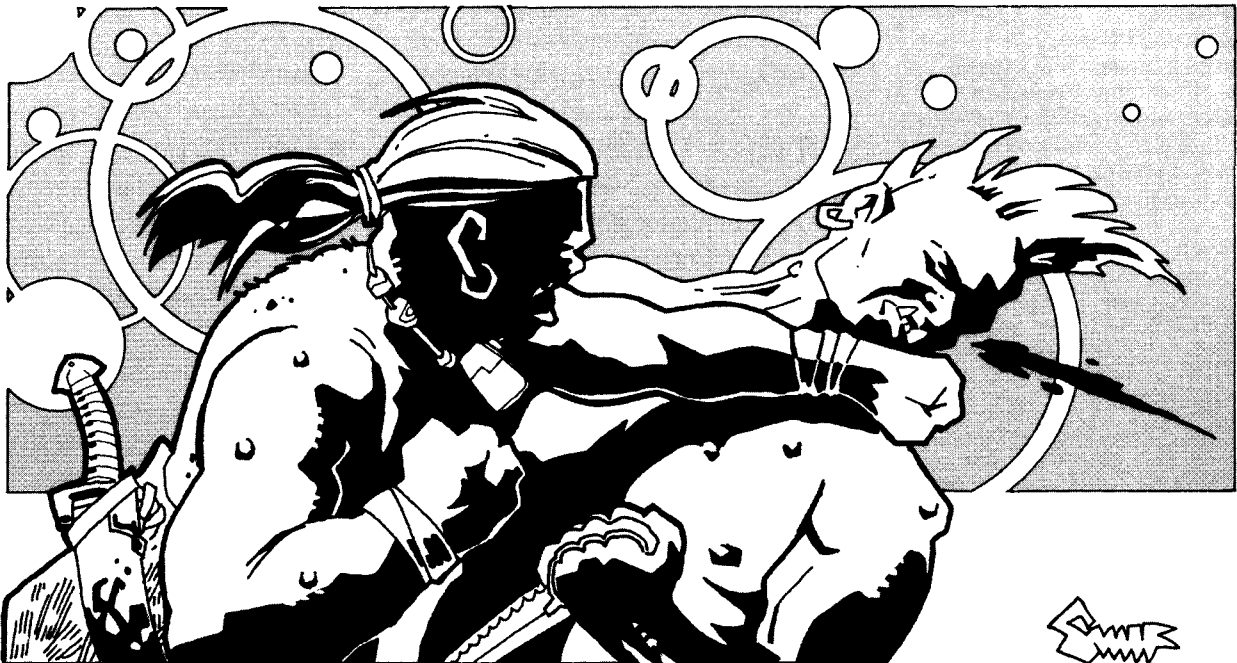
Staff VAULT (Hard)

No *default (see below)*
Prerequisites: Drop Kick, Staff.

This maneuver is unique to Sylvan War Lore. A fighter with a staff can use it for a pole-vaulting kick. Treat it as a Flying Jump Kick (p. B43), with an extra 2 hexes of reach due to the pole-vault, and an extra +1 damage. On a successful roll, the attacker lands next to his victim after the kick.

The Staff Vault is learned as though it defaulted to Drop Kick-4, but no one without training can execute this maneuver. If the kicker falls, he must roll vs. DX-2 to keep hold of his staff.

TAURELEN LAURERIL

Elf; age 55; 5' 10", 135 lbs. Long silver hair, violet eyes, pale complexion.

Attributes
ST 10, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 11.
Basic Speed 6.25, Move 6.
Dodge 7, Parry 11.
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2, *Swing* 1d.
Point Total: 225 points.

Advantages
Attractive Appearance; Combat Reflexes; Literacy, Magery 1; Musical Ability +2; Trained By A Master; Unaging.

Disadvantages
Code of Honor (Elves'); Impulsiveness; Overconfidence; Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents); Sense of Duty (Nature); Stubbornness; Technophobia (Mild).

Quirks
Bored to tears with "book-learning"; Finds humans amusing; Intolerant of Orks: Light-hearted and carefree; Sees battle as a kind of game.

Martial Arts Style
Sylvan War Lore (cinematic).

come out alive from - 'course, Krelkin weren't human, so in two or three weeks he can walk again. An' he left for th' Mountains out North, and the one word he says, when someone or other asks him what he's lookin' for, is "Smasha."

"Well, I'd almost plain forgotten ol' Krelkin when he came back, two years later. Trash was head bouncer at the tavern now, and he remembers Krelkin fine. So Trash smiles and I figure Krelkin won't be walking outta this one. I mighta said somethin', but it's no business of the Guard what happens betwixt an Ogre and an Ugglie. Trash reaches for Krelkin with a hand the size of a Delbury ham.

"Only Krelkin, he ain't there no more. He ducks under Trash's arm, grabs his face, an' next thing I see, Trash is screamin' like a wounded pig, an' one of his eyes is runnin' down his face. Krelkin kicks him where it hurts, **twice,** and Trash bends over like he's payin' his respects. But then I notice Trash is gropin' fer his dagger.

"Krelkin notices, too. He stands there for a moment, and Trash jus' cleared his dagger out when the Ugglie hits 'im with both hands together. I hear a **crack,** an' I figger that's the ogre's neck breakin'. I was right, 'cause Trash went down and never got up.

"Krelkin? He just smiled a little, then bought drinks for ev'ryone. Nobody paid 'im no mind after that; some wise mouths made some jokes about takin' out the Trash. Krelkin's now the Fire Mage General's chief bodyguard. An' there's none that calls 'im Ugglie any more."

The origins of Smasha are a mystery. All its practitioners show a degree of refined brutality that is disturbing at best. Some of them can even perform superhuman feats. Fortunately, very few Orcs have the dedication to progress that far in the study of Smasha; most practitioners are mundane fighters. Only cream-of-the-crop Orcs master the intricacies of this style, but among some tribes it is common to find some brawler-wrestlers with more skill than the average Orc.

Primary Skills: Boxing, Brawling, Wrestling.
Secondary Skills: Jumping, Knife, Stealth, any weapon skills.
Optional Skills: Acrobatics, Holdout.
Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry (Brawling), Arm Lock, Eye Gouging, Face Attacks, Head Butt, Jab, Kicking, Rabbit Punch, Roundhouse Punch, Stamp Kick.
Cinematic Skills: Kiai, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow. ·

SYLVAN WAR LORE   9 points/15 POINTS

This combat art was developed by Wood Elves to face the depredations of Orcs and other intruders. Fauns and Leprechauns have been known to learn Sylvan War Lore as well; there are legends about Giants who were masters of this style, but nobody wants to hear them, let alone believe them. Very few humans even know that this style exists. A human character would have to have a high Unusual Background advantage (15+ points) to be able to learn it.

The primary weapon of Sylvan War Lore is the staff. It is said that a master of this style can defeat half a dozen foes in full armor with only a whirling quarterstaff. The Short Staff skill is favored by Leprechauns in wielding their shillelaghs. In a cinematic campaign, both the Trained by a Master and Weapon Master advantages are available.

This style is also very concerned with stealth and subtlety. A trained loremaster can become practically invisible in a forested area, waiting for the right moment to attack. Since many practitioners of this style also know magic, they are

fearsome opponents. A mage with the Trained by a Master advantage could use Camouflage, Invisibility Art and the Invisibility *spell* and thus defeat all forms of detection.

Primary Skills: Brawling, Staff, Stealth, Survival (Forest), Wrestling.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Breath Control, Camouflage, Climbing, Jumping, Meditation, Tracking.

Optional Skills: Bow, Hypnotism, First Aid, Knife, Knife Throwing.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Disarming, Drop Kick, and special Staff Vault Maneuver (see sidebar).

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Body Control, Invisibility Art, Light Walk, Mental Strength.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Roll with Blow.

ƒUTURISTIC STYLES
CYBERNINJUTSU
15 POINTS (no cinematic abilities)

This is a combat technique designed for assassins with cybernetic augmentations in TL8+ worlds, especially those with a cyberpunk flavor. Cyberninjutsu is taught secretly, sometimes by ancient ninja clans who have adapted to modern times, and by the rare megacorp that specializes in the use of bionically-augmented agents. Its moves are designed to make the most out of bionic implants like Claws, Ripsnakes (see p. 127) and other hidden weapons. Like their predecessors, cyber-ninja are masters of covert operations and deceptive moves. They specialize in subtle, inconspicuous killings; the best cyber-ninja can commit a murder in the middle of a crowded room and leave the scene before anyone (maybe even the victim!) realizes what has happened.

The typical cyber-ninja will have the following bionics: Claws, Ripsnake or Stinger, and a Poison Reservoir (see p. 127). They may also have a Weapon Implant or Mount (see p. CY33), or a Hidden Compartment (p. CY32). His skills mirror those of the ancient ninja. The cyber-ninja's ideal is to achieve total surprise; for that purpose he (or she) will often attempt to gain the target's trust by befriending or seducing him.

There is no cinematic point cost for Cyberninjutsu. This assumes that ninjas with cinematic abilities eschew cybernetics in favor of traditional techniques; use normal Ninjutsu as described in p. 93. Interesting rivalries might develop between the original shadow assassins and these ultra-tech newcomers.

Primary Skills: Acting, Holdout, Judo, Karate, Poisons, Stealth.

Secondary Skills: Climbing, Fast-Draw (Claws), Fast-Talk, Jumping, Sex Appeal, Shadowing and two weapon skills, ancient or modern, including Guns.

Optional Skills: Any weapon skills, Armoury (Cybernetic Weapons), Demolitions.

Skills
Acrobatics-15; Bard-14; Bow-14; Brawling-16; Breath Control-12; Camouflage-14; Carousing-12; Climbing-14; Dancing-14; First Aid/TL3-13; Hypnotism-12; Jumping-15; Knife-14; Knife Throwing-14; Meditation-12; Musical Instrument (Drum)-14; Savoir-Faire-15; Singing-14; Staff-16; Stealth-16; Survival (Forest)-16; Tracking-14; Wrestling-16.

Cinematic Skills
Blind Fighting-12; Body Control-12; Light Walk-14; Mental Strength-14.

Maneuvers
Arm Lock-18; Disarming-16; Drop Kick-16 (1d); Staff Vault-14 (ld+2).

Cinematic Maneuvers
Roll with Blow-15.

Spells
Clumsiness-12; Dexterity-12; Haste-12; Heal Plant-12; Hide Path-15; Hush-12; Identify Plant-12; Itch-12; Lend HT-12; Lend ST-12; Mage-Stealth-15; Might-12; Minor Healing-12; Seek Plant-12; Silence-12; Spasm-12; Sound-12; Vigor-12

Taurelen is a Wood Elf scout and warrior-mage. Despite (or because of) the fact that her mother is a powerful seeress and her father is a great wizard, she rejected advanced magical training and sought the training of a Sylvan War Lore master instead. Taurelen is an impulsive Elf who often takes risks that she shouldn't. She uses her training to harass Orcs at the edge of her community's forest, and has a penchant for mixing it up where other Elves would prefer to use magic or the bow.

Taurelen is 225-point character suitable for use as an above-average PC or NPC in a *GURPS Fantasy* campaign that includes cinematic martial arts elements as well as magic. Taurelen was built using the Elf racial template in *GURPS Fantasy Folk*.

Kaa
Martial Art

Reticulate   ***17points/25 points***

The Reticulate style emphasizes classic Judo movements that utilize the Kaa tail as a weapon. The Art relies on greater flexibility and encourages inflicting pain on the opponent. It also emphasizes subduing the opponent as quickly and quietly as possible.

The Art originated from the Kaa WarMaster Sahrk (Status 8) nearly 30 years ago. He is waging a campaign to remake the Kaa into a race of conquerors. He despises cowardice and will attempt to recruit any Kaa he sees acting bravely. He started a selective breeding program with the goal of breeding Kaa without Cowardice and with greater Strength and Intelligence. So far there are several hundred Kaa that have been improved this way and several hundred others who have overcome their Cowardice Disadvantage. A Reticulate-trained Kaa costs an extra 27 points above the racial base (75 in a cinematic campaign), including the loss of the Cowardice Disadvantage. This cost can be reduced by replacing Cowardice with Duty or Sense of Duty towards Sahrk and the new Kaa race.

Sahrk is using his new Kaa sparingly but with deadly effectiveness. Each Kaa under Sahrk must go through at least ten years of training to learn Reticulate. They are then turned into teachers for new Kaa students, starting a cycle of ever-improving Kaa Martial Artists. Sahrk has a hidden planet devoted to his new Kaa and uses several asteroid bases to raid frontier planets for slaves, supplies and as a proving ground for his troops.

Primary Skills: Hypnotism, Judo, Karate and Wrestling.
Secondary Skills: Physiology (Human) and Physiology (Kaa).
Optional Skills: Anthropology, Interrogation, Psychology and Xenobiology (Human).
Maneuvers: Aggressive Tail Parry, Arm Lock [2 points], Breakfall, Feint (Judo), Ground Fighting (Judo), Hit Location (Karate) [2 points], Hook Kick (Tail), Kicking (Tail), Neck Snare, Spin Kick (Tail), Sweeping Kick (Tail).
Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow, Immovable Stance, Invisibility Art, Power Blow, Pressure Points, and Pressure Secrets.
Cinematic Maneuvers: Binding and Sticking.

Maneuvers: Aggressive Parry, Arm Lock, Eye Gouging, Elbow Strike, Feint (Karate), Finger Lock, Head Butt, Knee Strike, Neck Snap.
Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

FORCE-SWORDSMANSHIP 7 POINTS/21 POINTS

This style revolves around the use of the Force Sword (see p. 127). Practitioners devote their lives to the mastery of the weapon, becoming ultra-tech versions of the Japanese "sword saints" of old. Conventional wisdom holds that most force-swordsmen are foolish fanatics obsessed with a weapon system of limited usefulness, but there are rumors that the true masters of the style are capable of superhuman feats. The style is taught in some planetary cultures where duelling is fashionable; young members of galactic noble houses often walk around with richly-decorated force swords hanging from their belts. These weapons often become badges of aristocracy, and their use is forbidden to commoners. Force-swordsmanship is also a well-regarded spectator sport, using either training blades (see p. 128) or actual swords in to-the-death gladiatorial events.

The average swordsman uses a one- or two-handed grip on his weapon and a fencing style similar to Japanese Kenjutsu. Special care is taken to keep the energy blade away from the body when attacking, since even a glancing blow can hurt the user of the sword. Jumping and tumbling techniques are taught to allow the swordsman to outmaneuver enemies. Optionally, some grappling moves are added but rarely used, since the risks of using bare hands against force swords are enough to make anybody quiver.

Beneath this well-known sport and combat technique lies a shadowy subculture of swordsmen who claim that extraordinary individuals can forge a supernatural link with their blades. This link, they claim, allows true masters to do more damage with their weapon, and to use them in amazing ways. There are centuries-old myths (some which seem to predate the actual invention of force-swords!) that tell of force-swordsmen parrying beam weapons with their shining blades. In a cinematic or "four-color" campaign, characters with the Weapon Master and Danger Sense advantages have managed to link their chi with their swords. To do so, they have to build the sword themselves (requiring

an Armoury (Force Swords) roll at -5). As a result of this link, they not only get the damage bonuses for the Weapon Master advantage (see p. 28), but can use Power Blow with the sword, which *doubles* the sword's damage (i.e., if the sword did 8d+3 damage, it will do 16d+6 if a Power Blow roll is made!). Additionally, they can perform other feats like the Precognitive Parry described on p. 39.

Primary Skill: Acrobatics, Katana (Force Sword), Katana Art (Force Sword).

Secondary Skills: Jumping, Savoir-Faire (Dojo), Wrestling.

Optional Skills: Karate.

Maneuvers: Feint (Force Sword) [2 points], Hit Location (Force Sword), Off-Hand Weapon Training (Force Sword).

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting, Flying Leap, Kiai, Mental Strength, Power Blow, Parry Missile Weapons (Beams), Precognitive Parry.

Cinematic Maneuvers: Enhanced Parry (Force Sword), Whirlwind Attack.

SPACER KUNG FU   15 POINTS
(NO CINEMATIC ABILITIES)

This style might be developed by TL8-9 space station personnel, asteroid miners, and other spacer professions. Spacer Kung Fu assumes that low or zero-gravity is the norm of most space installations. In a *Cyberpunk* campaign, where Earth is just beginning to set up bases in the Moon and Mars, this style would fit in very well.

Spacer Kung Fu turns a human in zero-gee or vacuum into a deadly opponent, even when encumbered with a vacc-suit. Judo and Knife, besides Free Fall, are the main skills of this style. With Judo, a trained fighter can throw an opponent in zero-gee, or leave him hanging helplessly in mid-air. On the surface of a ship or station, a foe without thrusters can be thrown on a one-way tour of the galaxy. Locks and grapples are also emphasized; the foe's own momentum is used to break his bones. With the Knife skill, vital pipes and hoses can be hit, eliminating the adversary's air supply and even exposing him to vacuum. In fragile installations where bullets or beam weapons will spell doom for everyone, the knife is the weapon of preference.

A spacer usually favors a vibroblade or even a monowire blade, possibly worn in a power holster (see p. UT21). He may use a power glove (p. UT62) to get a grip on his foe.

This style does not have cinematic abilities. However, any of the styles described in the main text can be customized by adding Free Fall, Vacc Suit and the Maneuvers described below, creating "Spacer Jujutsu" or "Spacer Wushu," for instance. Those styles can use their cinematic abilities: but remember that in space, nobody can hear your *kiai.*

Primary Skills: Free Fall, Judo, Jumping, Karate, Knife, Vacc Suit.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Climbing.

Optional Skills: Fast-Draw (Knife), Fast-Draw (Power Holster), Knife Throwing, Stealth.

Maneuvers: Arm Lock, Close Combat (Knife), Hit Location (Karate or Knife) [2 points, or 1 in each], Jump Kick.

Special: Normally, vacc suits give a -1 to all DX-based skills and DX rolls. This training includes combat-familiarization which eliminates the penalty to all combat-oriented rolls and the Free Fall skill; the cost is 4 character points.

Cinematic Skills and Maneuvers: None.

Aggressive Tail Parry (P/H)
Defaults to *(Karate/2)-4*
Prerequisites: Karate, a tail and Extra Flexibility
Cannot exceed Karate/2

This maneuver works in a manner identical to Aggressive Parry, except that it does normal kicking damage.

Neck Snare (P/H)
Defaults to Judo-4
Prerequisites: Judo, a tail and Extra Flexibility

This maneuver allows the attacker to grab a foe by the neck and apply a choke hold in one swift motion. Roll a Quick Contest between the attacker's Neck Snare maneuver and the defender's DX, Judo or Wrestling. If the attacker wins, his tail is wrapped around his victim's neck. Treat this as a Choke Hold.

Styles
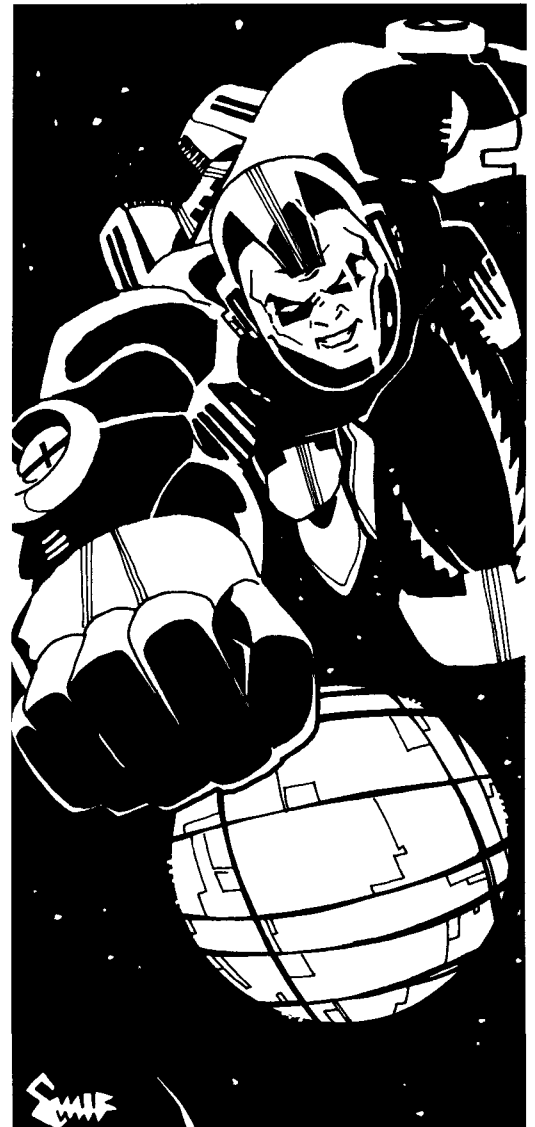
5. WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

Although many martial arts emphasize empty-hand techniques, most of them include some weapon training, a heritage from more violent times. Popular culture has become fixated on a number of those weapons from time to time - witness the nunchaku fad of the seventies and the current fascination for "ninja" weapons. This fascination has led to weapons training in some styles that were not meant to use weapons in the first place!
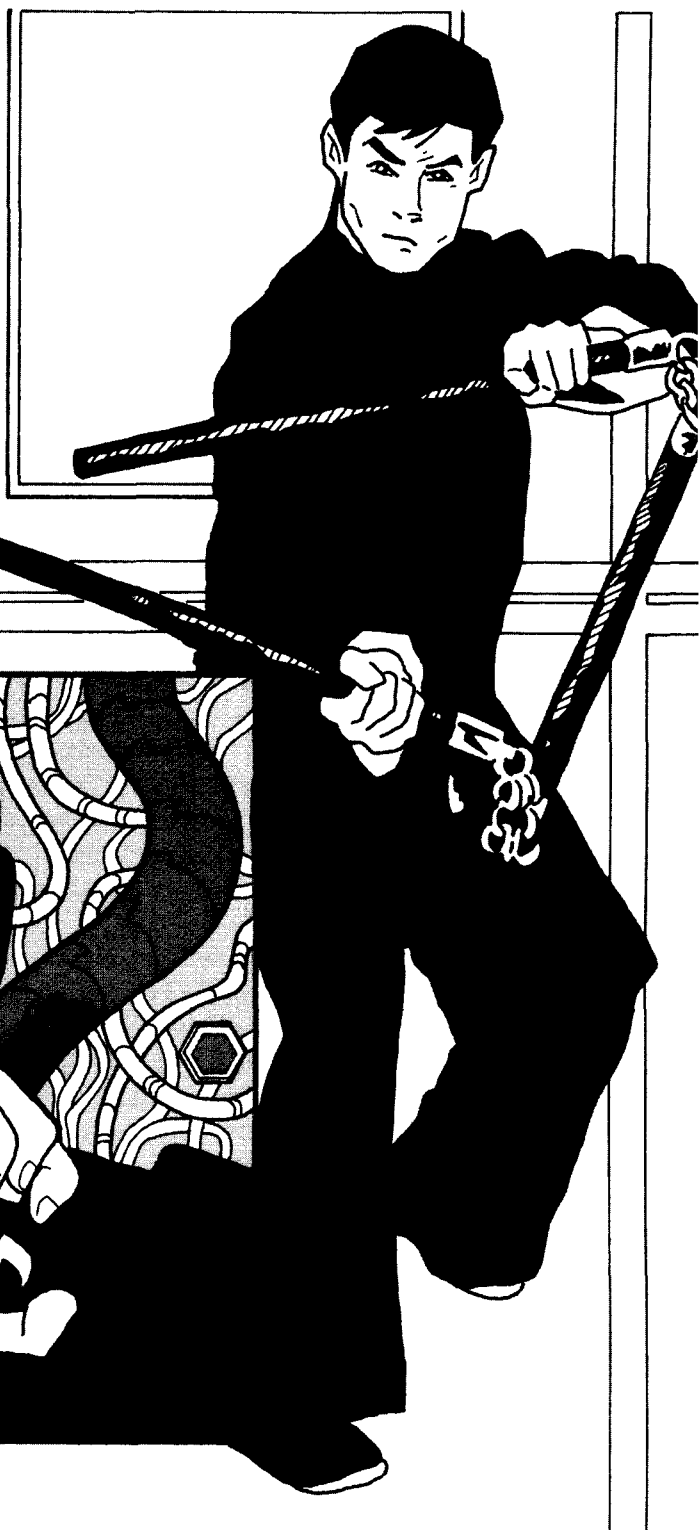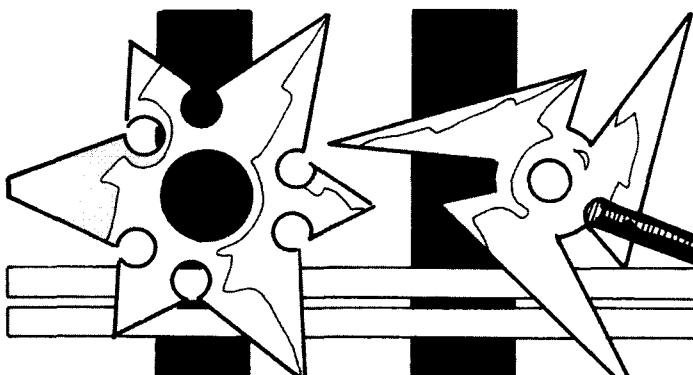
The selection of weapons below will focus on the more popular weapons of the 20th century. Some of these were rather obscure during the period of their origin - much less popular than more mundane, less memorable ones. Still, most of them can be quite lethal. Many of these weapons are only slightly different from the ones found in the *Basic Set*. This chapter will give brief descriptions and some notes as to their background and what martial arts styles are most likely to use them.

Weapon Costs

Since this book can be used for campaigns in many historical periods, it is impossible to give an accurate single cost for weapons. The *Weapon Table* (pp. 130-135) gives modern-day costs for the weapons it describes. These assume weapons of Good quality. (In a TL7 campaign, however, sword-steel becomes less expensive, so the costs given here will buy knives and swords of Fine quality, doing +1 damage, and *Good* weapons are 40% of this cost.) Note that lower prices can be found in many martial-arts catalogs; often, these are Cheap quality weapons, if not toys.

Historical costs will vary. A campaign set a hundred years ago might divide most costs by 10. For other periods, the GM can determine a reasonable formula.

For a campaign set in medieval Japan, prices would be about the same as modern ones, but use "pieces of silver" instead of "dollars." The given prices will buy a Good weapon; Fine knives and swords will cost 4 times as much, and Very Fine ones at least 20 times as much. See *GURPS Japan*.

Prices for historical ninja gadgets (p. 119) are expressed in silver pieces. In a modern campaign, the GM may decide how easy or hard it is for would-be ninjas to find or build their devices - this should be based largely on the cleverness of the *players*.

Chinese Weapons

Chinese martial arts weapons range from the utilitarian to the ridiculous. Some are so bizarre that observers find it hard to believe that they could be wielded effectively in combat. Multibladed swords and knives, edged staffs and other strange instruments abound in Chinese lore. GMs dealing with these weapons must keep in mind that, throughout history, simple designs have endured because they work better. It would be reasonable to assess a DX penalty to any really peculiar-looking weapon. For more exotic weapons, see *GURPS China*.

SWORDS

Jiann - This is a straight sword tapering to a point. It is used primarily for thrusting. The jiann is popularly known as the "T'ai Chi Sword" due to its use in that style. It can be used with either the Broadsword or the Fencing skills. The Fencing skill can only be used if the fighter's encumbrance is Light or less.

Dau - A heavy-bladed scimitar, the dau can be used for chopping or thrusting.

Hook Sword - This blunt weapon has a hooked "point," used to snare weapons using the Jitte/Sai skill (see p. 33). To strike with it, use the Broadsword skill. If the Jitte/Sai skill is not known, attempts to disarm are resolved normally (see p. B111), but this weapon gets a +1 bonus to the attempt (reducing the penalty to -1). Its handguard is usually edged, allowing the user to slash enemies with it; use Brawling or Karate for this attack. Use the normal damage for a punch, but make it cutting instead of crushing.

Butterfly Swords - These heavy, saber-like chopping weapons are commonly used in pairs. Their weight lets them do slightly more cutting damage than a normal shortsword, but they are useless for thrusting. They are a favorite tool of Wing Chun adepts (see p. 105).

knives

Slashing Wheels - These Chinese weapons are metal circles with several cutting protrusions on its outer edge. One section of the circle has a leather- or cloth-covered hand-grip. These weapons are often used in pairs, and users will learn the Off-Hand Weapon Training Skill. They can be used with the Knife or Main-Gauche skill, but an unfamiliar user is at -4 until he spends a day practicing with them.

Some common slashing wheels include the 5-Fires Wind-Fire Wheel, which has five pointed extensions, the Gold-Coin Wheel, which resembles ancient Chinese coins, and the 9-Fires Wind-Fire Wheel, that has three three-pronged points. Used defensively, slashing wheels provide PD 1 for parrying purposes only.
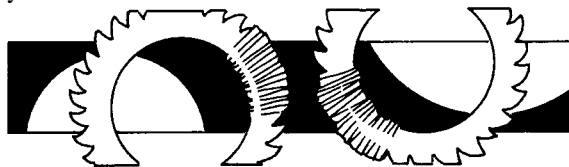
There are also combination knife-wheel weapons, which have two knife points and a half-wheel with three slashing points as a hand-guard. Combinations do the same damage as a dagger with the point, and cutting wheel damage with the guard.

STAFFS AND POLEARMS

Dah-Dau (Horse-Cutter) - This edged staff or halberd is very similar to the Japanese naginata (see below). Size and weight vary widely.

Yueh-Ya-Chaan (Monk's Spade) - This strange-looking weapon has a crescent-shaped blade on one end and a spade-like one on the other, probably a modified agricultural implement. It uses Polearm skill. Its name indicates it was probably used by the Shaolin monks (see p. 7). Balance is different from halberd, naginata or other Polearms, so those using the Monk's Spade for the first time will be at -2 for unfamiliarity, as per p. B43.

Southern-Tiger-Fork - This trident-like spear has three wide-set stabbing points. If the Spear and Jitte/Sai skills are both known at skill 13+, it can be used to disarm (see p. 33).

Each point can damage separately. On an ordinary hit against the body, only one point hits; if the roll is made by 1, two points hit, and if it is made by 2+, all three points hit. Roll the damage listed on the table for *each* point; DR protects separately against each attack. (Against a limb, only one point would hit. Against the head, one point is effective on an ordinary attack, two on a success by 2 or more.) Because this spear is very tip-heavy, the user is always at a -2 skill penalty.

Spear (Chiang) - These came in varying lengths and sizes; the lighter ones can be used with the Staff skill.

Flails

Three-Part Staff - This Nunchaku variation (see below) is an extremely hard weapon to learn; any attack with it is at -3 to skill until 24 hours have been spent in practice, and even after that, attacks are at -1 to regular Flail skill. Many Kung Fu styles use this weapon. It can attack once using the reach listed on the table, or it can be treated as two separate nunchakus, able to attack twice in the same turn (see *Dual-Weapon Attack,* p. 57). In the latter case, reach is 1 or C.

Whips

Chain-Whip - A whip made up of metal links. It cannot entangle like a normal whip, but has no maximum damage restriction either. Parry is still 1/3 skill. A chain-whip may be 1 to 4 yards long, and takes 1 turn to ready per yard of length.

Japanese Weapons

Most of the best-known martial arts weapons are Japanese or Okinawan in origin. This book separates typical Japanese weapons from ninja weapons, as the latter were almost never used by members of mainstream Japanese society. Publicly using any ninja weapon in historical Japan gave the user a -3 penalty to all reaction rolls. Also, due to the strict social divisions in feudal Japan, some weapons were restricted to particular classes; some of those distinctions are discussed in the weapons descriptions. For more information, see **GURPS Japan.**

Swords

Katana - A long, slightly curved sword with a two-handed grip, it can be used one- or two-handed; when used two-handed, the weapon does +1 swinging damage and Parry is -A skill. A scabbarded katana was used against unworthy enemies to subdue without killing. The katana was eventually restricted to the samurai class, although the earlier periods of feudal Japan had no such restrictions (see p. 9). Katanas are usually of Fine quality or better.

Wakizashi - A short sword; used in conjunction with the katana by the samurai class, and as a main weapon by most other social classes.

Bokken - This hardwood katana replica was used for practice. It is only slightly less dangerous than a real katana, however. Its hardness and weight make it a formidable blunt instrument; the famous swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (see sidebar, p. 10) used only wooden swords after he became a master, claiming that the bokken was actually deadlier than the normal katana. When used two-handed, the bokken adds + 1 damage to the swing.

Shinai — As safety rose in importance during sword drill, many schools abandoned the dangerous bokken in favor of a more lightweight, less damaging weapon. The *shinai,* built with bamboo strips bound together with cloth, proved to be ideal. Close in dimension and balance to the katana, it delivers (relatively) little actual damage. In a pinch, it can still strike effectively.

Nodachi - A long, slightly curved greatsword with a long grip and a blunt tip, usually worn over the shoulder in a back sheath.

knives

Hishi - A small dagger, often carried by women.

Kozuka - A small knife carried in the same scabbard as the katana; samurai use it to carry the severed head of an enemy.

Sai - A small, forked disarming baton, similar to the Jitte, below. It sometimes has a stabbing point.

Tanto - A large curved knife with a chisel-like point. It has recently become popular around the world.

Axes

Kama - A long-handled sickle. When the sickle-blade is attached to a chain, it creates the kusari-gama, below.

Masakari - A woodcutter's axe.

Nata - A hatchet.

STAFFS and CLUBS

Bo - A man-tall bamboo staff.

Jitte - A forked disarming baton (see Jitte/Sai skill, p. 33).

Jo - A shorter staff that can be used one- or two-handed. It can also be used with the Katana skill; treat it as a bokken, doing -1 damage.

Tetsubo - An iron bar, used as a staff.

Ton/a - A club with a handle set at right angles. See p. 35.
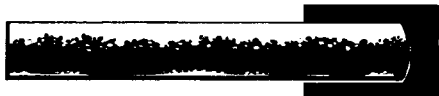
Polearms and SPEARS

Naginata - A long-shafted weapon with a heavy blade. Often used by women, the naginata uses the Polearm or Two-Handed Sword skill. It can stab, cut or inflict blunt damage.

Rochin - A short spear, used one-handed for stabbing.

Yari - A spear, used mainly for thrusting, not throwing.

Yarinage - A javelin.

flails

Nunchaku - This wooden flail was originally used for threshing rice. It consists of two short sticks joined together by a length of rope or (more recently) a short chain.

Kusari - This weighted chain is described in detail in the Kusari skill entry (p. 33). If used as a flail (with the Flail skill), it does its listed damage but does not have the special Kusari skill abilities.

Kusari-gama - A chain with a sickle blade attached to one end.

Manriki-gusari - Meaning "10,000 power," this is a combination of the basic nunchaku and kusari designs. A length of chain (shorter than that of the kusari but much longer than the
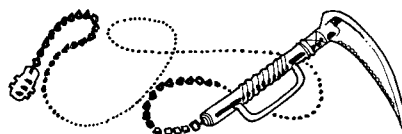
nunchaku's) joins two metal weights. It has more striking power than the nunchaku and can also be used to entangle weapons.

RANGED WEAPONS

Dai-kyu - A composite longbow, made of wood sandwiched between two pieces of fire-hardened bamboo. The staff is held together with glue and thread. It is asymmetrical, with two-thirds of its length rising above the archer's left shoulder. This allows it to be used on horseback, unlike the European longbow which can only be used on foot. Use the Composite Bow stats in the Basic *Set.*

OTHER WEAPONS

Tekko - Brass knuckles.
Timbe - A small shield, usually made out of a tortoise shell.

NINJA EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS

The ninja's arsenal depended as much on tactics as on weapons, but it is the lethal gadgets that appeal to many martial arts fans. Ninjutsu weapons were designed for effectiveness and ease of concealment; there was very little in the way of fancy decorations or capricious shapes.

SWORDS

Ninja-to - This weapon is similar to the katana (above) but it has a shorter, straight blade. Some ninja-tos were built to be concealed inside staffs by removing the hilt-guard. The sword sheath usually has a built-in blowpipe.

Polearms

Chain-Staff- A staff with a Kusari (see p. 33) attached to one end. This weapon needs both the Staff and Kusari skills to use effectively; roll against the lower of the two skills.

Oh-gama - A huge version of the Kusari-gama; this two-handed scythe has a maximum-length kusari chain, a long slashing sickle blade and a thrusting point.
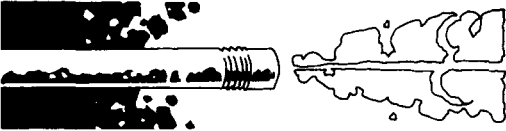
Blowpipe

Fukiya - This blowpipe was used at close range to blow powder or bamboo slivers with various effects. It is a hollow tube two or three feet long which can be easily concealed. It can also be used to create a jet of fire. Onobi powder (see below) is ignited at the end of the fukiya, creating a yard-long tongue of flame. It will ignite flammable items (such as a man soaked in oil by a water-blowgun - see below). It also temporarily blinds night-time viewers (all Vision rolls are at -3 for 10 seconds for anyone within 10 yards). It can be Dodged or Blocked, but not Parried.

The fukiya can also fire a bamboo sliver dipped in any type of poison (see p. 121). It can be Dodged or Blocked, but not Parried; it is too small. Use the stats on p. 133, but reduce the maximum range to ST/2 when using powders.

Water Blowgun - this special type of fukiya has a push-handle that, when shoved through the pipe section, propels a jet of water. This is a one-shot weapon and uses the Blowpipe skill. Maximum range is 4, regardless of the user's ST.

Poisons and eye-irritants can be used with this weapon by targeting the Head (-5 to hit); the target gets a HT-3 roll to avoid swallowing the liquid or getting his eyes wet. Alternatively, oil or other flammables can be squirted with the blowgun.

After being soaked with oil, the victim's clothing will ignite if brought into contact with a flame on a roll or 4 or higher on one die (the roll is at +1 for every additional turn in contact with the flame). If the soaked person is attacked by a flaming blowgun (see above), the roll is at +2! A character in flames takes damage as per p. B130.
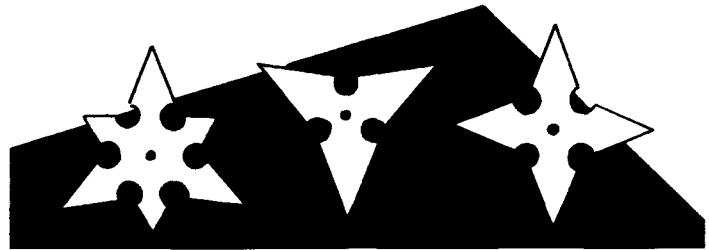
RANGED WEAPONS

Half-bow (han-kyu) - The han-kyu is a small bow that can be concealed in the sleeve of a kimono (+1 to Holdout). It has less range and power than the samurai longbow, but uses the same kinds of arrowheads. A ninja's quiver (made of cloth) holds 12 arrows and can also be hidden in his kimono sleeve. Use the stats for the short bow in the *Basic Set.*

Shuriken - These small star-shaped blades come in different sizes, doing varying damage. The smallest ones are +5 to Holdout, but do very little damage; they are usually coated with poison (see below). Shuriken do cutting damage.

Shuriken can also be held in the hand and used in melee combat, doing +2 damage to Karate or Brawling attacks.

SPECIAL WEAPONS

Garrote - This favorite assassins' weapon may have been part of the ninja's arsenal; cinematic ninja will definitely be acquainted with them. Its effects are described under the Garrote skill (p. 33). Wire garrotes are not available until TL 6+. A combination rope garrote or wire garrote/nunchaku can be made (such a weapon is shown in the movie *Marathon Man);* it does -1 damage when used as a nunchaku. Treat the wire garrote version as a cheap weapon for breaking purposes.

Neko-de (Bladed Hand) - This edged glove is +4 to Holdout when folded (+1 when worn). Karate bonuses apply when using this weapon.

Special Equipment

Besides "normal" weapons such as swords and knives, the ninja had a varied arsenal of exotic weapons and equipment. Not being bound by the rigid rules of war of the samurai class, ninja were among the first to use the new weapons introduced by Westerners. Ninja did not feel constrained to use only "honorable" weapons. They used poisons extensively; black powder weapons soon entered their arsenal.

These weapons and tools help explain the belief that ninja had supernatural powers. A man would be murdered while he slept in a locked and guarded room; did the ninja materialize there through magic - or did he simply use special hand-and-foot clawed gloves to climb up the wooden wall of the house? A cornered ninja makes a gesture and disappears in a cloud of smoke; was it the use of chi powers, or the skillful use of a small grenade and some quick footwork? In a cinematic campaign, it could be either.

explosives

Even before the Europeans' first contact with Japan, gunpowder was known in Asia, and the ninja had a wide array of grenades and mines.

The ninja grenade was called *nageteppo*. It consisted of a blown eggshell filled with powder and other ingredients. Most nageteppo were not high-explosive killing weapons; instead, they were used for distraction and shock value. They are not easy to transport; they are usually carried in a padded bag inside a kimono sleeve. Each nageteppo has a 1 in 6 chance of breaking if the carrier falls and fails a DX roll.

There were two types of nageteppo, one used at daytime, and the other at night. Day nageteppo, or *endama*, create a cloud of smoke covering a seven-hex area. This causes partial darkness (all vision rolls at -3) and hides the ninja from anyone directly on the opposite side - that is, anyone whose direct line of vision to the ninja is through one of the seven hexes. This cloud will last 10 seconds in still air; wind may dissipate it sooner.

Night nageteppo *(hidama)* create a flash of bright light, temporarily blinding viewers within 10 yards (all vision rolls at -3 in addition to normal darkness penalties; characters with Night Vision lose that advantage for 2d turns).

Either type of grenade can be enhanced with lacquer poison (see below); if so, anyone who breathes the smoke outdoors will sneeze and itch for 1d minutes, losing 1d DX. Indoors, the effect will be more serious; see *Lacquer,* below.

It is possible that more lethal grenades were also used by the ninja. A typical black powder grenade does 1d+2 concussion damage and 2d cutting from fragmentation. Land mines (uzume-bi) do 3d concussion and 2d fragmentation damage. Both the fragmentation grenade and the land mine can be combined with the day or night nageteppo effects.

Present-day special forces use stun grenades for much the same purpose as the ninja used nageteppos. Modern ninja may use them as well. These grenades (known as "stun munitions") cause an intense flash and a loud noise. Anyone within 10 yards of the grenade must make a HT-5 roll to avoid being physically stunned, and must make a HT-5 roll every subsequent turn to recover. On a critical failure, he remains stunned for 5 seconds before he can roll again. Eye and hearing protection change the rolls to unmodified HT, but give -3 to all Vision and Hearing rolls. A side effect of this type of grenade is smoke (-2 to all vision rolls and to aimed fire within five yards of the point of impact for 10 seconds), and the possibility that a fire can be started. For more information on stun munitions, see *GURPS Special Ops.*

Explosive Powders

All these formulas are ninja secrets. To make any of the powders described below, a Naturalist roll must be made to find the materials in nature. This takes an hour; a successful roll locates enough material to make one dose, plus one more dose for every point by which the roll was made. A Chemistry roll, and 2d hours, are required to create the powder; up to 10 doses may be made at once.

Endama powder: Creates dense smoke when ignited. One dose makes one day nageteppo.

Hidama powder: Creates a bright flash when ignited. One dose makes one night nageteppo.

Onobi powder: This also flashes into fire when ignited, but not as quickly as hidama powder - it makes a good flame jet, and can ignite flammable objects.

Enhanced Weapons

True to their reputation for unpredictability, Ninjutsu practitioners sometimes added "special features" to their already bizarre weapons. The Kusari-gama combination weapon was a favorite for this type of modification. Among other things, the weighted chain sometimes had a nageteppo grenade (see above) attached to its end. The ninja device might be tipped with:

Explosives. Explodes on a hit, parry or block, doing the normal effect as listed on the Explosives section; an explosive going off on contact will do double damage to the target but the weapon wielder will probably be within range of the concussion or fragmentation damage.

Poisons or blinding liquids or powders. Lemon juice and pepper powder are two very effective blinding agents: on a hit on the head, make a HT-4 roll or be blinded for 20-HT seconds. On a successful roll, the target is at -2 DX for the same length of time.

Oil. A flaming wad of oil-soaked cloth was sometimes attached to weapons for spectacular nighttime effects. Historical Japanese faced with the sudden light show produced by the spinning flame must make Fright Checks.

Snakes! Even poisonous snakes were tied to the end of the chain. On a successful hit, the snake makes one attack, rolling against a 10 to hit! An Animal Handling roll is required to

attach the snake; a roll at -4 is required to remove it, if the objective is to remove it alive. On a failure, the snake escapes and another roll, at -2, is required to catch it. On a critical failure of either roll, the handler is bitten (3d damage).

Explosive Arrows

Arrows could also contain explosives and pyrotechnics; they do no extra damage, but are very distracting. A nighttime volley of such arrows (10 or more arrows shot at the same time) will create such a din of noise and light that all Hearing or Vision rolls for the next minute are at -4, cumulative with poor lighting bonuses. Characters with the Night Vision advantage lose their immunity to darkness for 20-HT seconds (minimum of 1), as the flashes of light will dazzle them badly. Single arrows have the same effect as night nageteppo (see above).
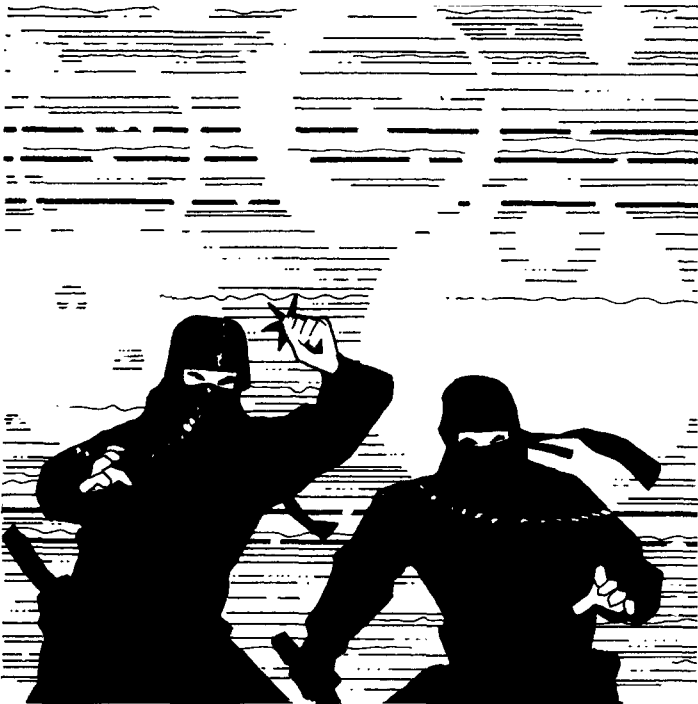
POISONS

The ninja did not limit themselves to standard weapons; in feudal Japan, they were known as master users of poisons. Listed below are both traditional poisons and modern substances that ninja are likely to use in a present-day campaign. Other historical ninja poisons are described in *GURPS Japan*.

Masuizai powder: This is made from a type of weed, and must be manufactured by the user. Taken internally, it causes the victim to sleep for 1 d hours per dose, up to 4 doses. On a HT roll, subtract 15 minutes for each point by which the roll is made.

This drug can also be combined with incense; burned in an open room, it merely makes people drowsy (roll vs. HT to resist; -1 to IQ and DX if the HT roll is failed), but in a closed room it has the effect of one dose taken internally, as described above.

If blown from a blowpipe, the powder can be Dodged or Blocked, at -3, but not Parried. Its effect are for a dose taken internally, as described above.

Fugu Poison: This comes from the bladder of the globefish, a Japanese delicacy which, improperly prepared, can be lethal. To cook the globefish, one must hold a special license in Japan. As a digestive poison, it cannot be resisted; it causes skin tingling for 2d minutes, then paralysis and 1d damage per minute for 1d minutes. A fresh globefish would cost one silver piece.

Poisoning arrows with it makes it a blood poison doing 1d damage; a successful HT-4 roll per wound reduces the effect to skin tingling.

Viper Venom: this poison is extracted from a live viper and used on arrows and missile weapons. It is a blood poison, doing 1d damage per wound. A successful HT roll will reduce damage to 1d-3. Each viper will yield up to 4 doses; each dose requires a successful Animal Handling roll, and a failure indicates no more venom will be available from that snake. A critical failure means snakebite doing 3d damage.

Curare: This is a South American poison used by some Amazon jungle tribes. Obviously, historical ninja had no access to it, but modern (particularly cinematic) ninja may make use of it or an equivalent. This deadly blood agent blocks the nervous system, eventually paralyzing the heart and respiratory muscles. It is obtained from the sap of an Amazon vine called *Strychnos toxin.*

The victim gets one HT-6 roll to resist the effect. Failure means the victim is completely paralyzed and falls unconscious. A successful First Aid-2 roll made every 30 minutes will keep the victim alive and allow a HT roll (also every 30 minutes) to recover. A critical failure on any of these rolls indicates death in 1d minutes. If the initial HT-6 roll is made, the victim is at -5 DX for the next 15-HT minutes (minimum of 2).

Lacquer: This is tapped from the lacquer tree in the spring. Honest folk use it to preserve wood. Ninja use it as a contact poison, causing blistering like poison ivy: -1 DX for each contact, lasting 1d days. It cannot be used on weapon-edges; more prolonged contact is needed. A ninja might use it on a foe's own sword, on the *hilt.*

Mixed with incense, it makes a respiratory poison. Anyone breathing the poisoned incense must roll vs. HT+4 or take 1d damage. The same is true is a lacquer-enhanced grenade explodes indoors, where the smoke cannot be avoided. Even if the HT roll succeeds, the victim will lose 1d of DX for 1d minutes, due to itching and sneezing.

Lacquer can be bought anywhere, at $1 per dose.

Delivery Methods

Ninjutsu taught many ingenious methods of making sure the poison reached the target. Poisoned weapons were common, especially ranged ones like arrows and shuriken. Digestive poisons would commonly be put in food and drinks. In the case of closely protected personages, this was difficult. Some ways included bribing or blackmailing the kitchen help (difficult in feudal Japan, where loyalty was a powerful trait among all social classes); planting an agent, often an "ignorable" woman, close enough to the target to be able to handle his food (a couple of Sleight of Hand rolls did the rest); or, more rarely, staging a secret raid to poison the food in the stores. This last option required the utmost secrecy, as suspicion of tampering would give the game away. Being discovered by anyone meant failure even if no alarm was given at the moment, unless the witness' death or disappearance could be arranged without causing suspicion.

There were many other more exotic methods to poison people. One was described in the James Bond movie *You Only Live Twice.* The ninja crawls his way to an open skylight and dangles a long piece of string over the sleeping victim; then, a single drop of poison is allowed to run down the string until it drops in the unaware target's mouth. The ninja probably took a few pages out of the Borgias' book; rings could become poison dispensers, or one with a sharp point hidden underneath could inject the poison with a "harmless" slap on the back.

Other Gadgets

The number of strange devices the ninja are reputed to have used in the past are incredibly varied. Listed below are some examples to set off the imaginations of both GMs and players.

BAMBOO snorkel

This easy-to-improvise tool allows breathing under water to a depth of no more than 6 feet. Weight: 4 oz. Moving requires a DX-4 roll every 5 yards; the character's Move is reduced to 1. On a failure, he trips on the bottom and must make a Swimming roll to keep the snorkel out of the water. A critical failure means the snorkel becomes submerged and the user inhales a mouthful of water; he loses 1 point of Fatigue, as per the Swimming rules of p. B91, and must come out of the water, coughing and spitting - a bad situation to be in if a guard outpost is nearby. Cost is 1 silver - or make your own.
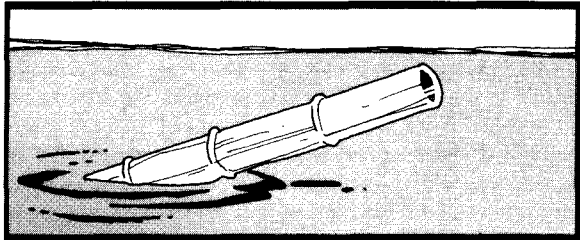
Disguised Weapons

Small weapons can be disguised to look like harmless items. Knives and shuriken can be hidden inside walking staffs and canes, or made to look like hair ornaments and belt buckles. Blowguns were commonly disguised as umbrellas, staffs and flutes. At TL 6+, spring-loaded switchblades can be concealed inside lighters, hairbrushes and other small items. Cigarettes can be converted to small blowguns (SS 16, Ace 1, Max HT/4), perfect to blow poison powder or a small dart into somebody's face.

As a general rule, double or triple the cost of any weapon that has been modified to look like something else. Weight will be the same or less, depending on the size of the disguised version. Some disguised weapons do -1 or -2 damage due to their reduced size. For ranged weapons, also reduce Ace by 1 or 2 points, and increase the SS number by a like amount.

Climbing Spikes

Fitted to hands and feet, these give a +4 to all Climbing rolls. A skilled ninja can use these to climb wooden walls even if the sides are completely sheer. Putting on the spikes takes one minute per foot or hand. At least one hand or foot must be spiked for successful climbing.

Moving on a wall takes a roll against Climbing skill every three seconds; hanging on the wall takes a roll against Climbing skill every 10 seconds. On a failure the ninja falls off. On a critical failure he either falls off very noisily or breaks his spikes, whichever is more embarrassing and dangerous at the time.
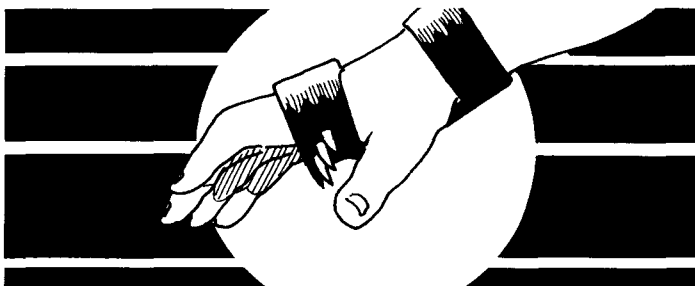
An authentic set of spikes weighs 1 lb. and costs 300 silver pieces. A modern set would weigh 12 ounces and cost at least $500. Discovery of such spikes, in any period, would put the owner under immediate suspicion.
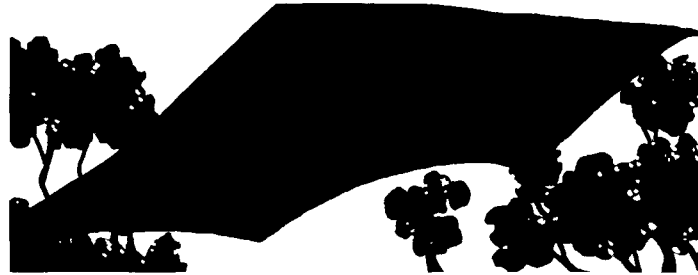
CLIDERS

Ninja gliders gave rise to the rumors that the invisible assassins could fly magically. These gliders (according to legend) were used to get agents behind enemy lines, to penetrate heavily guarded fortifications, and to get out of those fortifications, if the walls were high enough.

Hang gliding is a very complicated balancing of air currents, the lift of the glider and the effects of gravity on the combined mass of pilot and craft. In still air the glider sinks steadily; with good air currents, a skillful pilot can remain level or even climb.

The Piloting (Hang-Gliding) skill is needed to launch the glider and to keep it in the air. The GM can assign penalties to skill for unfavorable conditions.

Modifiers: Unfavorable weather, -3 to -6 (up to -10 for actual storms); Night, -1 to -4; Precision landing, -1 for each 10 yards of target-area diameter less than 100.

Ninja were reputed to be able to actually scratch-build gliders with improvised materials. Some lightweight and stiff material (bamboo or aluminum, for instance) must be available for the frame, as well as some strong and light fabric. To do this, an Engineering roll must be made, at penalties ranging from -2 to -10 depending on such factors as materials, the Engineer' specialization and time available to the ninja. The GM must make the Engineering rolls in secret. On a failure, the builder ruins the materials he was working with. On a critical failure, the glider falls apart at a very bad moment (GM's choice, although killing the pilot outright is not recommended; on the other hand, making him crash-land on top of a troop barrack is interesting).

An improvised glider will bring a -3 to -6 modifier (depending on how well-built the glider is) to all Piloting (Hang-Glider) rolls. For more information on Hang-Gliding, see the *GURPS Space* adventure, *Unnight,* p. 36.

grapnel AND Rope

Ninja grapnels are padded to make minimum noise when they land. Within 5 yards of the landing grapnel, Hearing rolls at -3 must be made to notice the noise, and an IQ-3 roll must then succeed to correctly interpret the noise. Throwing a grapnel to hook an object requires a simple DX-4 roll (DX-2 for someone who has practiced for a few hours), or the Throwing skill. Maximum range is about 10% less than the length of the attached rope, or STx10, whichever is less.

A typical grapnel weighs 2 lbs. and can support 300 lbs.; it would cost 20 silver. Modern grapnels can be lighter and stronger.

Inflatable Shoes

These can be made with a variety of materials, from animal guts to high-tech plastics. With a successful DX roll every 10 seconds, the wearer can walk on the surface of calm water. The GM can assess penalties of up to -10 for rough water conditions, or simply rule that the water is too rough for any attempt to work. On a failure, the walker falls over. On a critical failure, his shoes deflate (a sadistic GM can rule instead that the shoes are keeping the ninja underwater - Swimming-8 rolls must be made to break to the surface).

Inflating each shoe takes 60-HT seconds of uninterrupted effort. If inflation is interrupted, it must be started over. A pair of shoes can support the weight of the walker plus 100 Ibs. The walker floats so low in the water that he appears to be walking on the surface.
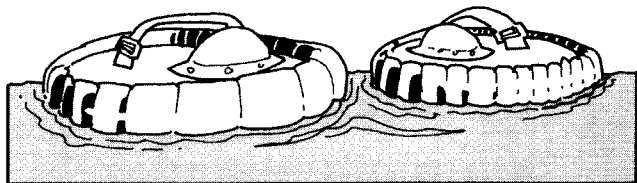
Indian Weapons

India has been influenced by several different cultures, from the Greeks to the Mongols to the British, all the while retaining its own unique character. Indian weapons are exotic and varied. Some Indian weapons are as outlandish as the Chinese. In a realistic campaign, they should probably be of little value.

SWORDS

Katar - This exotic knife is gripped like a corkscrew. The handle is perpendicular to the blade. The knife has an odd triangular shape. Katars vary in length from shortsword-sized to as small as daggers. There is a -2 penalty for unfamiliarity; 20 hours of practice will reduce it to -1, and 45 will eliminate it.

Urumi - This sword has a long flexible blade, and is used to flail enemies (use the Whip skill).

STAMPS AND CLUBS

Gada - A heavy wooden mace with a round head. It uses the Two-Handed Axe/Mace skill.

Muchan - A two-foot-long straight stick, wielded as a staff. It parries well, but does not strike as hard as a full-length staff.

Otta - A curved stick that resembles an elephant's tusk. It uses the Broadsword skill.
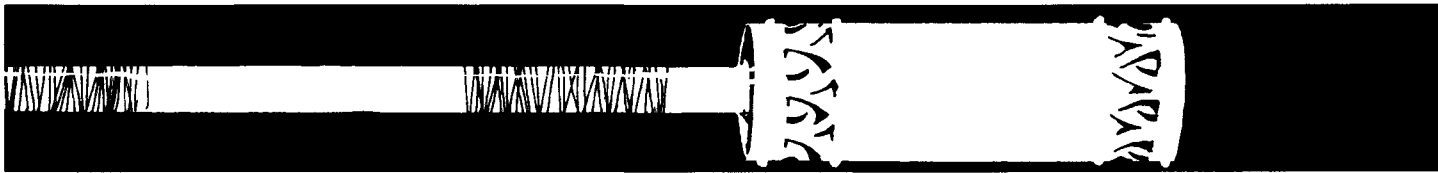
Indonesian Weapons

knives

Kris - This is as much a national weapon (or, considering the numbers of nations in the area, international) in the Indonesian Archipelago as the katana is in Japan. There are many types of kris blades and handles, but they all share a wavy blade, almost like a twisting snake. The kris comes in all sizes; the blade described in the weapons table is a "large" kris. For smaller blades, use the appropriate stats in the *Basic Set*.

Blade quality varies; many kris blades are rather brittle and blunt. The traditional knife is made with an amalgamation of metals, hammered one over the other, much like the katana. The result, in theory, is a sturdy, lethal weapon. Most kris knives are of Good quality; Fine and Very Fine weapons are also available.

There is also a great body of Kris mythology. Many examples are listed by one of the leading works in the subject, *D. Draeger's Weapons and Fighting Arts of the Indonesian Archipelago*. Among them were the ability to kill a man by either pointing the knife at him or attacking his shadow or footprints, the power to scare off dangerous animals, the ability to warn its owner of danger and fight by itself, and even the magical property of moving a flame from place to place! In a cinematic campaign, GMs may want to simulate some of these abilities, using the appropriate enchanted-weapon spells from *GURPS Magic.*

Pisau - This small blade is common to most Pentjak **Silat** styles. It is meant to be carried in concealment.

Badik - A knife with a peculiar pistol-like handle.
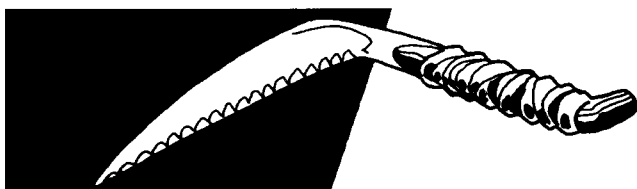
SWORDS

Parang - This heavy chopping weapon is the equivalent of a machete.

Pedang - A short sword with thrusting point.

Arit - A sickle-shaped weapon.

STAFFS AND CLUBS

Tjabang - This weapon is identical to the Okinawan jitte and sai, and actually seems to predate them by a few centuries!

Tongkat - A term applied to any long stick. It can be used with either the Shortsword skill or the Short Staff skill.

Toya - A staff, usually made of bamboo.

Polearms

Latajang - This weapon is used mainly by Kuntao practitioners (see p. 92). It consists of a staff with two crescent blades on its ends. It is so similar to the Chinese Monk's Spade (see p. 117) that it is likely it originally came from China. As with the Monk's Spade, normal polearm users are at -2 to skill for unfamiliarity.

RANGED WEAPONS

Paku - A short sharpened stick, this weapon is thrown like a knife; it is usually carried concealed in the sleeve. They are either sharpened at both ends or only one, and are difficult to use, requiring the Knife Throwing or Shuriken skill. Treat as a knife of the appropriate size, but doing -1 damage.

Piau - A strange bladed weapon, it is thrown exactly like the Japanese shuriken, for the same effect.

KOREAN WEAPONS

The Koreans have fought off invasions from the Mongols, the Chinese and the Japanese throughout their history. In doing so, they developed their own set of weapons and tactics. Korean swordsmen were in their time as feared as the samurai. The Koreans were unconventional in their use of female palace guards. These women warriors used shorter weapons than their male counterparts, but were no less effective.

SWORDS

Gum - This long sword can be straight and double-edged or slightly curved and single-edged like the Japanese katana. Traditionally, the quality of Korean swords was very high; like the katana, they are generally of Fine quality.

Dan Sang Gum - Short, wide-bladed swords favored by palace guards. They could used singly or in pairs.
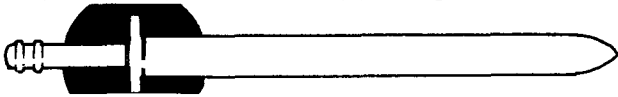
STAFFS and CLUBS

Bong - A quarterstaff.

Dan Bong - Short sticks, generally used in pairs. They use the Short Staff skill.
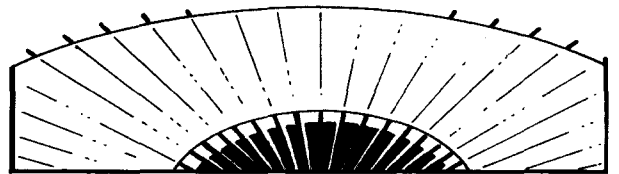
SPECIAL WEAPONS

Combat Fan - These fans were specially made of hardwood and added metal blades to provide both a cutting and blunt weapon. Closed, the fan could be used with the Karate skill to do extra damage (count as brass knuckles). Open, it was used as a slashing weapon (roll vs. DX-2), although it did not do much damage. It was not uncommon for the fan blades to be poisoned.

PHILIPPINE WEAPONS

The Philippine Islands are covered by hot jungles. The dense vegetation and wet climate make the use of armor unwise. Clothing is also light and sparse. Philippine weapons are likewise light and small, emphasizing speed and ease of concealment over size.

Knives

Balisong Knife - Also called "butterfly knife" (which sometimes causes confusion with the Chinese butterfly *swords),* this distinctive weapon has gained popularity in the West (and has consequently been banned in a number of places). It is characterized by a split handle which folds over the blade, serving as a sheath and halving the size of the weapon when not in use. Due to this, the balisong is at +1 to Holdout for a knife of the appropriate size.

The weapon is opened by flipping one of the handles end-over-end while holding the other. The Fast-Draw Balisong skill (see p. 32) covers this opening skill. Characters without this skill must take one turn to ready the knife *after* removing it from a pocket or other place of concealment.
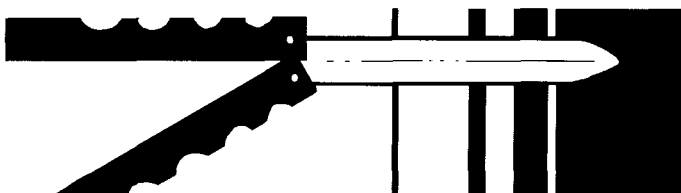
The traditional Balisong has a bone or wooden handle, but modern versions have a sleek-looking metal one, complete with a good swivel system (giving a +1 to Fast-Draw). This weapon is often used in pairs.

Punal - A normal knife of any length.

SWORDS

Bolo - This heavy short sword is very similar to the South American machete and the Indonesian *parang* (above); it is used both as an agricultural implement and a weapon.

STAFFS AND CLUBS

Escrima Stick - This weapon is a simple length of wood, used one-handed. It is the skill with which it is wielded that makes it deadly (see the Short Staff skill, p. 34).

European Fencing Weapons

European-style fencers have employed a surprising variety of weapons over the years. As these weapons were worn daily, quite often in urban areas or on horseback, most of them were fairly light - and many of them were quite concealable (like the main gauche), or improvised from everyday items (like the cloak). Below are some of the more common weapons used by fencers. For more information, refer to *GURPS Swashbucklers.*

Swords

Fencing Saber - An edged sword, but not heavy enough for chopping. Maximum cutting damage is 1d. It has a 1 in 3 chance of breaking if it hits DR 2 or more.

Smallsword - A short, light and relatively flexible sword intended only for stabbing. Often carried when a something more serious than a dress piece but less unwieldy than a rapier is needed.

Dress Smallsword - A shorter, lighter version of the smallsword, designed specifically to be worn around town and on formal occasions as a dress piece.

Swordcane - A smallsword can also be concealed in a heavy cane. This costs $450 and weighs 4 lbs. When drawn, the fencer has a smallsword (above) in one hand and a light club (use the Broadsword skill) in the other. For $350, a sleeker version is available, which weighs 2.5 Ibs. When drawn, the fencer is armed with a dress smallsword (above) and a baton (use the Short Staffer Shortsword skill).

Rapier - A light, stiff, long (2-hex reach) sword. The rapier parries with ⅔ Fencing skill, rounded down, but can make only 1 parry per turn. Most rapier fencers carry a main gauche (see below) for additional parrying, or a buckler for blocking.

Slashing Rapier ~ Like the rapier, above, but with a cutting edge. This weapon was popular with Italian fencers (see p. 84). Thrusting damage is still thrust+1 impaling, but it can also do swing/cutting damage. It takes 1 turn to ready after a cut, because the long blade overbalances the hilt.

Basket Hilts

A basket hilt is a metal guard on the hilt of a sword, wrapping around the swordsman's hand. It is intended to protect the hand from blows, and can itself be used as a weapon. They can be used on any weapon, including two-handed weapons (note that very few Asian weapons used basket hilts). A basket hilt weighs one pound, has PD 3 and DR 5 and adds 25% of the cost of a Good weapon. This PD applies only to the sword hand and only when the weapon is in hand. The basket hilt gives a PD 1 to the entire body when used against melee weapons (counting as a very small shield), but does not count against missile weapons and does not protect against attacks from behind. This PD also applies only when the weapon is in hand, not when it is sheathed. DR only applies to the covered hand. A basket hilt costs the same, no matter what the quality of the weapon.

A normal basket hilt is not large enough to allow one to wear a gauntlet on the sword hand. One could be custom built so that a hand wearing a gauntlet would fit; this would double the cost of the hilt. A hand inside a gauntlet that is inside the basket has the DR of both but only the PD of the basket.

A basket hilt changes the balance and grip characteristics of a sword. There is a -2 penalty for unfamiliarity unless the user has spent one day familiarizing himself with the feel of the hilt.

Using the basket hilt in close combat is at -2, and uses DX, Brawling, Karate or Boxing (this penalty can be eliminated with the Close Combat maneuver on p. 46). The basket acts as brass knuckles, giving +2 to punching damage.

knives

Main Gauche - Any knife or dagger can be used with the Main Gauche skill, but a true main gauche has a broad, rigid, tri-angular blade and an elaborate hand guard that almost completely conceals the fencer's hand, giving that hand PD 3 and DR 5.

Cloaks

Heavy Cloak - The *heavy cloak* is used as a shield; treat the defensive maneuver as a Block, figured at 1/2 Cloak skill (see p. 32). The cloak provides PD 2. The cloak has DR 1, and it takes 5 points of cutting damage to render a heavy cloak useless. An impaling attack of 2 points of damage is necessary to penetrate a heavy cloak - damage over that amount gets through to the cloak wielder. Crushing damage has no effect on it. Note that the cloak is damaged (and impaling attacks get through) *only* if the defense roll was made by only the number of points of its PD.

The cloak can also be used offensively. The offensive maneuver with a heavy cloak is enveloping the opponent. The cloak is treated as a thrown weapon at Cloak skill (SS 12, Acc 1, Max 2, half-damage doesn't apply). The maximum aiming bonus is +1. A thrown heavy cloak may be Dodged or Blocked. It may be only Parried by a weapon of 2 Ibs. or more. A heavy cloak weighs 5 Ibs.

At a 1-yard range, the user may hold onto the heavy cloak while throwing it. If the throw misses or the defender is success-ful, one turn is needed to ready it again for offensive or defensive use. If the throw is successful, the attacker may attempt to pull his opponent off-balance. Roll a Quick Contest of ST; the attacker is

opponent is blinded until he takes an action to remove the cloak.

Entangling the opponent's weapon allows the cloak wielder to retain his hold on the cloak. Roll a Quick Contest of the attacker's Cloak skill (minus any modifiers to hit - see *Striking at Weapons,* pp. B110-111) and the defender's Weapon Skill (or DX if carrying a ranged weapon). It counts as an attack. If a melee weapon is entangled, the defender must win or tie a Contest of Weapon Skills before he can use his weapon again. Each attempt counts as an action. If the cloak user wishes to attack with another weapon the next turn, he is at -2 if he retains his hold on an entangling cloak.

A Contest of DX versus Cloak Skill is needed to free a missile weapon from a cloak.

Entangling the arm is a Quick Contest of the attacker's Cloak skill, at -2 for hit location, and the defender's DX (or Judo or Wrestling). If the defender is holding a weapon in either hand, he has the opportunity to Parry the cloak before the Quick Contest. The defender must win a Contest of ST to free the entangled arm. A weapon in a tangled arm may be used at -6 but any aim is spoiled.

Snapping the cloak in an opponent's face is done at Cloak-5. If the attack is successful, the attacker *may* be blinded for a turn. Any defense may be used against this attack. Critical success on the Cloak skill does 1 point of damage to one eye (roll randomly for which one), blinds the opponent for one second and mentally stuns him. Otherwise, making the attack roll by *5* or more will blind the opponent for one second (with no damage to the eyes). If the attacker makes the attack roll by less than 5 and the defender fails the defense roll, the defender's DX is reduced by 1 for the next turn only.

at +2, and add Wrestling bonuses (+1 ST for every 8 points of Wrestling skill) for both characters. If the defender loses the contest, he is at -2 DX the next turn. If he loses by five or more, he is pulled off his feet to his knees. On a critical failure, the defender falls down. It takes a successful DX roll and one turn to remove the cloak. In the meantime, the cloak blinds the defender and prevents any attack or active defenses.

Light Cloak - The *light cloak* uses the same Cloak skill described on p. 32, but is more versatile. It has PD 1, for Blocking purposes, but it can be used more creatively as an attack weapon. A light cloak weighs 2 Ibs. It has DR 1 and it takes 3 points of cutting damage to render a light cloak useless. Any impaling damage over 1 point gets through to the attacker.

Throwing the light cloak is similar to throwing the heavy cloak (same range modifiers), but it cannot be held onto, can be Parried by any ready weapon, and requires no DX roll to remove. The

Modern Weapons

Modern materials and machining have brought about some refinements on traditional martial arts weapons. At TL7+, *any* of the bladed weapons above can be made of superior materials that will hold a better edge; bladed weapons are Fine quality by default, with Good weapons costing only 40% the listed price and Very Fine weapons available for 4 times the listed cost.

STAFFS AND CLUBS

Tokushu Keibo - This is a modern martial arts weapon, a collapsible stainless steel baton that easily fits in a pocket when closed (+1 to Holdout). It can be used with the Shortsword or Short Staff skill. The weapon also has jitte-like hand guards, and it can be used as a jitte (see p. 33), but at -3 skill - the guards are very small. Weight 1 lb.; $20 for a manual model (takes 1 turn to ready or a Fast-Draw (Tokushu Keibo) roll to ready it on the same turn), $50 for a spring-action one (no rolls to ready it in the same turn).

Flails

Collapsible Nunchaku - These 20th-century models are concealed in a belt-case (+1 to Holdout) and are opened with a fling of the wrist (1 turn to ready unless a Fast-Draw (Collapsible Nunchaku) roll is made). Damage and other stats are the same.

Ultra-Tech Weapons

Futuristic martial artists do not need to limit themselves to archaic weapons. These are some science fiction weapons with notes on how they can be used by martial artists. For more information on these weapons, refer to *GURPS Ultra-Tech.*

CLUBS

Neurolashes - These TL10 weapons require the Shortsword or Short Staff skills. On a successful hit, the target must roll against HT-3 + Will modifiers. High Pain Threshold gives a +3 bonus, Low Pain Threshold doubles all penalties. If successful, the victim can still function, will be at -2 to ST, DX, IQ and all skills based on those attributes, but due to the pain for 15-Will turns (minimum one turn). If he was hit on a limb, that limb is useless for the same length of time. If he fails the HT roll, he is in such agony he can do *nothing* for this time. A critical failure causes unconsciousness for 20-HT minutes (at least one minute). Each additional hit lowers the resisting HT rolls by 1

(e.g. the second hit is resisted at HT-4). With each successive hit, start the recovery time all over again. Penalties to attributes are *not* cumulative. Any armor with DR over 2 protects totally from the neurolash attack.

There are two types of neurolashes. Type I can hit 50 times before losing power. Type II does 1d damage besides the effects described above, but can hit only 5 times. Without power, the neurolash is just a baton and does crushing damage.

SWORDS and Knives

Note that at TL8+, any blade can be made *Superfine* for 20 times the listed cost; a Superfine blade does +3 damage.

Vibroblades - These TL8 weapons vibrate several thousands of times per second. This adds 1d to damage, and any armor protects with only 1/5 its DR. As the blade vibrates so rapidly, its movement is invisible and it is impossible to tell a vibroweapon from a regular weapon of the same type. A

Hearing roll made from 1 hex away will detect a faint hum that marks the vibroweapon for anyone familiar with it. Anyone parrying (or whose weapon is parried by) a vibroblade will realize the blade's nature on an IQ roll. Any cutting weapon can be made in a vibro version.

Turning on the vibro effect takes a turn, but a successful Fast-Draw roll activates the blade as it is drawn. When not activated, a vibroblade performs like a normal one.
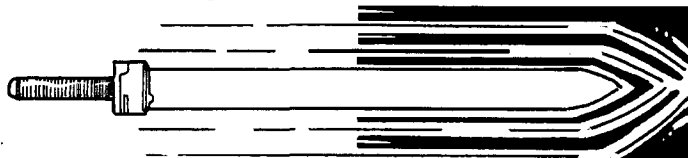
Monomolecular Blade - Available at TL9, this is a sword or knife with a strand of monomolecular wire stretched along its edge. This enables the weapon to cut through almost anything as the wire slashes into the target at the molecular level. Monowire blades do +1d additional cutting damage, and any armor protects with only 1/10 its DR. Any sword or knife (except a rapier or a smallsword) can be made in a monowire version. Monowire weapons cannot also be vibroblades.

Sonic Blade - A sonic blade (TL10) consists of a powered hilt which, when activated, projects a two-foot blade of coherent sound, powerful enough to liquefy tissue or tear the flesh off bones. It can be activated as it is being readied, on a successful Fast-Draw roll; otherwise it requires a turn. Any hit from a sonic blade does 5d crushing damage; if damage from the weapon is more than double that necessary to cripple a limb that is hit, that limb is completely torn off. Any hit to the head requires a HT roll or the target's eardrums will be shattered, rendering him deaf until they are replaced. Any armor hit by a sonic blade loses 1 DR at the location hit. Natural armor (fur, scales, etc.) loses as many points of DR in that spot as damage it blocks. Armor protects with only 1/5 its DR against a sonic blade.

A sonic blade differs from other melee weapons in that its "blade" is not solid - it cannot physically parry another weapon (except for a force sword, see below), nor can it be parried, but it can *damage* a weapon. If a sonic blade hits a weapon (or is hit by one), it does normal damage to that weapon rather than parrying the blow. If the opposed weapon is an activated vibroblade, damage is *doubled* - the sonic blade sets up catastrophic vibrations in the vibroblade, likely shattering it! A sonic blade *can* physically Parry a force sword and vice versa without damage, but it cannot Parry (or damage) another sonic blade.
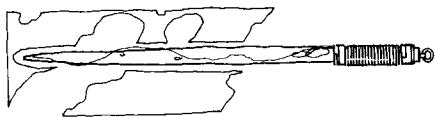
Force Sword - This TL11 weapon is described on p. B50 and p. UT91. It can be used with either the Force Sword skill or with a variation of the Katana skill. Katana (Force Sword) defaults to and from the normal Katana skill at -3. When used two-handed and with Light Encumbrance or less, Parry is % skill. Armor protects at 1/5 DR versus a force sword.

Whips

Monomolecular Whip - This is a *weighted* length of wire attached to a short handle. It is used exactly like a whip (see p. B52). However, a control allows the wire to be extended from one to seven yards, or retracted into its handle, altering its reach and the time required to re-ready after each swing. It takes one turn to extend or retract the monowire.

A monowire whip is difficult to use, requiring a separate Physical/Hard skill, defaulting to Whip-2. It is also *dangerous;* any "drop weapon" critical miss by the user indicates he has hit himself or a friend.

Damage is swing-2 as per a normal whip, but damage type is cutting, with +1d added. Armor has only 1/10 its normal DR versus a monowire whip. If a monowire whip is used as a lasso or to snare a weapon, it will act as a wire garrote, cutting into the target and doing its normal damage *every turn* it is pulled until the victim escapes - or is cut in half.

Ranged Weapons

Sonic Shuriken - Available at TL10, this weapon appears to be a one-inch disk of plastic. When activated and thrown (one action, using Throwing, Shuriken or Knife Throwing skill), it sprouts six three-inch "blades" of coherent sound. Damage is 1d+3 cutting. Due to its small power source, the sonic blades only last for a second, but this is enough time for it to hit the target. This weapon can also be modified to deliver a dose of venom if it penetrates the target's armor. The power source of this weapon is very easy to conceal, making it a favored assassin's weapon (+5 to Holdout, even at TL10).

Cybernetic Weapons

Cybernetic Claws - These TL8 cybernetic implants are fully described in **GURPS** *Cyberpunk*. They are razor claws on the user's hands. They can be completely retracted or extended at will. The claws are also useful for climbing, adding +1 to Climbing skill.

The less expensive version is fairly short and does an extra +2 points of damage in any form of "unarmed" combat. $4,000 (and optionally, 15 character points).

The more expensive claws are 6" to 8" long, and emerge from the knuckles or wrist rather than the fingertips. They change the wearer's damage to thrust/impaling or swing/cutting damage. Karate bonuses, if any, add to final damage. $8,000 (and optionally, 40 character points).

Poison Reservoir - This TL8 cybernetic implant is a reservoir of poisons (or other chemicals - hallucinogens are a perennial favorite) compatible with claws or blades. A poison reservoir in a clawless hand comes with little "scratchers" under the fingernails, which do no extra damage but allow the poison to be applied more readily. The poison reservoir can be used to coat the ammunition of weapons located in the arm.

A poison reservoir holds 50 doses of poison and can be refilled. It can be split into two parts, allowing the cyborg to switch between two liquids; a poison and its antidote are common choices, in case of a mistake. A packet of 50 doses of synthetic cobra venom (see p. B139) costs $5,000; the "standard pack" has 45 doses of venom and 5 doses of antidote. A poison reservoir costs $1,000 (and optionally, 10 character points).

Ripsnake - This is a bionic assassin's weapon available at TL8+. It consists of a cyberlinked, polymer, worm-like bionic limb that can be concealed anywhere in the body. It is usually kept behind a natural body opening (the mouth is the most common area). The cyborg can activate the ripsnake at will; it

extends out of his body (it has a 1-hex reach) and can bite or sting, doing 1d+1 cutting damage; it can have a poison reservoir (above) containing up to 5 doses. It is most dangerous if it can somehow enter the body of a victim (this is often done by *kissing* the victim on the mouth). If the ripsnake enters the body, it will start to do 1d+1 impaling damage, and neither DR nor Toughness will protect! Poisons injected in this way are at -3 HT to resist. Cost is $5,000 (and optionally, 40 character points).

Special WEAPONS

Monowire Garrote- this TL 9 weapon is identical to the wire garrote described on p. 119, but it does +1d damage and armor's DR is divided by ten.
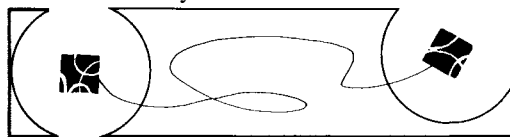
Training Equipment

Training is an important part of martial arts. Much of the equipment listed below will be found in *dojos* and training centers of the appropriate tech level.

RUBBER WEAPONS

At TL7, any blunt weapon or short cutting weapon can be made of soft rubber with a hard core. The weapons are very similar in balance to the real thing, but they do very little damage. Divide any swinging damage rolled by 3 before applying to DR and hit points; thrusting damage is divided by 2, but the weapon will break if it delivers more than 4 points of damage. $5-$30. Weight is the same as the real weapon.

ELECTRONIC foils

Electrical fencing equipment was introduced during the 1960s, and is now used to judge fencing competitions. Sensors are built into the fencing weapon, and wires are run from its hilt through the user's sleeve and then run to the judging apparatus. In a competition, there is a small chance of tripping on the wires (on a Critical Failure, the GM may rule that the character has gotten entangled in the wires, which is not serious but embarrassing). The judging machine determines whether a hit has reached a legal area and can also time "simultaneous" hits to 1/25 of a second; if the second hit arrives more than 1/25 of a second after the first hit, only the first attack counts for scoring purposes. $2,000, 70 lbs.
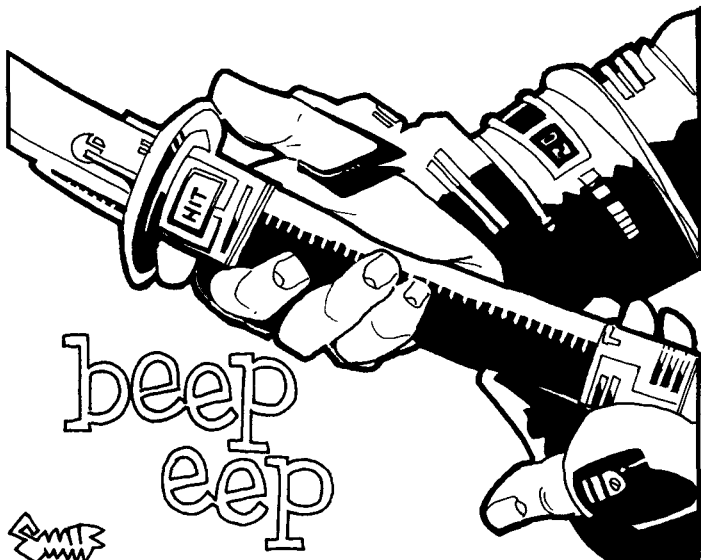
Digital WEAPONS

At TL8+, these dummy weapons have built-in computer chips that measure swing and thrust strength, angle of attack, etc. The weapons have internal springs and collapsible shafts; they are flexible enough to allow full-force attacks (divide all damage rolled by 4 before applying it to DR and hit points). The weapon

chip can either record the effectiveness of a hit in its memory, or transmit it to a judging computer within 100 yards. The chip is programmed with the enemy's armor capabilities, and so can judge whether an attack penetrated the armor and with how much remaining force. With this equipment, characters fighting training or sporting bouts can roll attacks and damage as if they were in a real fight; keep track of actual damage on a separate sheet. When the weapon chip determines it has crippled or killed an opponent, it emits a loud beep, leaving no doubts that the combat is over. $500 per weapon chipped, $1,000 for judging computer; weight is the same as the real weapon.

DIGITAL SPARRING ARMOR

This TL8 invention uses the same technology as the digital weapons (see above) to build a safe suit of sparring armor that can accurately simulate combat conditions. The suit provides DR 16 versus crushing attacks and DR 2 versus cutting and impaling attacks. The suit is flexible but slightly bulky; wearers are at -1 skill until they spend 10 hours training with it. Built through the suit is a network of fiber-optic sensors that detect hit location, strength of the hit, likely damage taken from the attack, etc. A computer chip judges this information and can transmit it to a judging computer within 100 yards.

The advanced set of armor has a built-in exoskeleton that will stiffen any body part that has taken too much damage to function, as judged by the computer chips built into the suit. A limb that takes enough "damage" to be crippled will go rigid, and the fighter will not be able to use it. When a combatant takes a disabling or killing blow, the whole suit will stiffen up, causing the wearer to topple helplessly. A verbal command can reset the suit, eliminating the paralysis. If for some reason the wearer wants to fight on after the suit has been disabled (say, for example, that a group of assassins walks into a sparring match, and the PCs cannot reset their suits), he has to overcome the suit's ST of 15 (roll a Quick Contest of ST per *attempted action),* and even then he will be at -6 DX (reduce this penalty by 1 for every point by which the character beats the suit's ST).

A standard suit of armor, which only emits beeps and chirrups to announce damage, costs $3,000, and weighs 18 lbs. An Advanced Sparring Suit, with self-disabling capabilities, costs $8,000, and weighs 25 lbs. Halve cost at TL9, and halve it again at TL11.

VIRTUAL REALITY SPARRING ARMOR

This is an Advanced Sparring Suit, described above, with a Virtual Reality helmet, electronic sensors and a built-in laser. The helmet projects a fictional scene into the wearer's visor; the scene is a computerized projection that moves and interacts with the character's actions, which are "read" by the suit's sensors. This can allow for solo sparring; a virtual reality program creates a

simulated opponent. Every time the projection hits the wearer, the suit gives him a painful electronic jolt with the laser, causing almost as much pain as a real injury (in game terms, apply *half* the "assumed" damage for Shock penalties). As per the advanced suit, crippling or killing blows will paralyze the suit.

VR Sparring Programs are very popular, especially the ones that use famous characters. Martial artists can now battle Bruce Lee in the Hall of Mirrors from *Enter the Dragon,* or square off with Muhammed Ali for the world's heavyweight championship!

A full VR Sparring set costs $12,000. Weight: 30 lbs. The VR helmet has DR 10 and can take 7 hit points before being disabled and 15 before being destroyed. Martial art parlors will rent a self-adjusting suit by the hour, at $50 an hour or more. This suit will not fit as well as a custom-made one, giving a -1 to DX. Furthermore, characters with Gigantism or Fat disadvantages will need *special* custom-made suits, which cost an additional $2,000.

WING CHUN WOODEN DUMMY

This Wing Chun (see p. 105) training tool consists of a man-sized wooden trunk with several arm-length sticks protruding from its sides. The wooden dummy is good for training students to launch attacks while keeping ready to parry or dodge counter-attacks. On a critical failure, however, the martial artist takes ld+1 crushing damage!

ARMOR

Most martial arts are based on speed of movement and the ability to move without restriction. Due to this fact, armor is generally eschewed in favor of speed. It is hard to perform some of the more complex maneuvers of the martial arts while encumbered. Furthermore, Asian warriors in general did not rely on heavy armor. The hot weather and high humidity of most of Southeast Asia makes metal armor highly uncomfortable and impractical, as it tends to rust rapidly. Partly to combat this, lacquered armor was used, each chain link or metal scale carefully coated in lacquer to protect the metal. Leather and cloth armor were most common; chainmail and scale were also used, but to a lesser degree; plate was all but unknown.

The advent of firearms in the East brought the same results as in the West, almost at the same time. The best samurai armor could not stop a musket bullet; soon suits of armor became part of ceremonial dress, historical curios, or ornamental pieces.

In the 20th century, however, *sports* armor became common. Some Japanese "do" forms, such as Kendo, already used padded armor. As Karate became a sport, safety concerns increased. No-contact rules provided the first solution; modern impact-resistant armor provided the other.

ANCIENT Chinese ARMOR

The Chinese had their versions of Leather, Heavy Leather, Scale and Chainmail armor, as described in the **Basic** *Set.*

ANCIENT Japanese ARMOR

The image of the samurai, in his exotic and colorful armor, has captured the imagination of the West. Each suit of armor was a beautiful work of art as well as a highly efficient protection system, again reflecting the Japanese tendency to make every walk of life into a form of aesthetic expression.

The basic corselet (called *do*) was made of laminated strips of leather, bamboo and leather, or metal. Some suits were also made of mail links, each individually lacquered. It tended to be lighter, for its strength, than equivalent European armor.

An all-leather do protects with PD 2, DR 2. 60 silvers, 9 lbs. A full set of leather armor, including face mask, sleeves and leggings, might cost 140 silvers and weigh 20 lbs.

Bamboo-reinforced leather gives PD 2, DR 3. 100 silvers, 11 lbs. A full set of this armor might cost 220 silvers and weigh 25 lbs.

A steel corselet, worn by the richest samurai, is PD 3, DR 4. 100 silver pieces, 15 lbs. A full set of steel armor might weigh 35 lbs. and cost 375 silvers.

KENDO ARMOR

As traditional Japanese armor became obsolete and martial swordsmanship (kenjutsu) gave way to artistic and philosophical fencing (kendo), new requirements had to be fulfilled. One of them was to avoid injuring the students; while in earlier times getting cut or bruised in practice was a common occurrence and accepted, the less militaristic society of the 19th century (much like today's world) found such dangers unacceptable. A famous fencing teacher, Nakanishi Chuta, both perfected the practice sword *(shinai,* listed above) and devised this trunk and face protector (also called *do).*

The Kendo suit has PD 2, DR 3 against blunt attacks, and PD 1, DR 2 against cutting and impaling attacks. Cost is $700, weight is 10 lbs.

NINJA ARMOR

Ninja armor consisted of metal rods or scales sewn into normal clothing. It gives PD 1 and DR 3; it looks normal but can weigh 20 lbs. Cost is 100 silvers.

BOXING gloves

This Western invention both protects the hands and reduces the damage done with punches. These gloves provide PD 1, DR 2 (hands only), and *halve* damage done by a punch (if the Stun damage rules are being used, GMs may rule that the gloves do full Stun damage). When parrying, the PD of the gloves adds to the defender's roll. Cost is $60 for a pair.

Modern**Body**ARMOR

This is constructed of foam and fiberglass. The best-known type is used by Tae Kwon Do practitioners. It provides PD 1, DR 3 against crushing attacks and PD 1, DR 2 against cutting and impaling attacks. Cost is $100 for a full suit, weight is 10 lbs.

Weapon Tables

Chinese Weapons

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
BROADSWORD (DX-5 or Shortsword-2)							
Jiann (long sword)	imp	thr +1	1,2	$700	3	8	Used primarily for thrusting.
	cut	sw	1				
Dau (scimitar)	cut	sw+2	1	$700	5	11	
	imp	thr	1				
Hook Sword	cr	sw+1	1	$200	3	10	Can disarm - see p. 117.
	cut	thr	1,C				Bladed hand guard.
FENCING (DX-5) *Seep. B99 for fencing parry rules.*							
Jiann (long sword)	imp	thr+1	1.2	$700	3	8	Parry is 2/3 Fencing skill.
	cut	sw	1				
FLAIL (DX-6) *Any attempt to parry a flail is at -4. Fencing weapons cannot parry flails.* *							
Three-Part Staff	cr	sw+4	1-3	$60	5	11	1 turn to re-ready. -2 to block.
							All attacks are at DX-1. See p. 117.
	cr	sw+2	C,1				Used as two separate attacks.
KNIFE (DX-4)							
Slashing Wheel	cut	thr+1	C	S60	1	none	Usually used in pairs. Gives PD 1.
Knife-Wheel	cut	thr+1	C	$75	1.5	none	Usually used in pairs. Gives PD 1.
	imp	thr-1	C				
POLEARM (DX-5) *All polearms require two hands.*							
Monk's Spade	cut	sw+1	1.2*	**$100** 6		10	Blade; 1 turn to ready after swing.
	cr	sw+1	1,2*				Shaft: 1 turn to ready after swing.
	cut	thr+2	1.2*				Spade: 1 turn to ready after thrust.
Light Horse-Cutter	cut	sw+4	1,2*	**$120** 8		12	2 turns to ready after swing.
	imp	thr+2	1,2*				1 turn to ready after thrust.
Heavy Horse-Cutter	cut	sw+5	2,3*	**$150** 12		13	2 turns to ready after swing.
	imp	thr+3	1-3*				1 turn to ready after thrust.
SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)							
Butterfly Sword	cut	sw+1	1	$400	3	10	Used in pairs.
SPEAR (DX-5 or Staff-2)							
Chiang (spear)	imp	thr+2	1	$40	4	9	Used 1-handed - throwable.
	imp	thr+3	1,2*				Used 2-handed.
Southern-Tiger Fork	imp	thr+1	1	$80	5	10	Used 1-handed (up to 3 attacks).
							All attacks are at -2 DX. See p. 117.
	imp	thr+2	1,2*				Used 2-handed (up to 3 attacks).
							All attacks are at -2 DX. See p. 117.
STAFF (DX-5 or Spear-2) *Requires two hands.*							
Staff	cr	sw+2	1,2	$10	4	6	Parry is 2/3 Staff skill.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				
Chiang (spear)	cr	sw+2	1,2	$40	4	6	Used as staff, to strike.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				Used as staff, to jab with blunt end.
Light Horse-Cutter	cr	sw+2	1,2	$120	8	12	Staff technique, with shaft.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				Staff technique, with blunt end.
WHIP (No default) *							
Chain Whip	cr	sw+1	1-4	$50/yd	3/yd	12	See p. B52; cannot entangle.

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.　　* Becomes *unready* if used to parry.

JAPANESE WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5)							
Nata (hatchet)	cut	sw	1	$40	2	7	1 turn to ready after swing.
Kama (sickle)	cut	sw+2	1,2	$70	3	11	1 turn to ready after swing.
Masakari (axe)	cut	sw+2	1	$50	4	12	1 turn to ready after swing.

FLAIL (DX-6) *Any attempt to parry a flail is at -4. Fencing weapons cannot parry flails.* *

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Nunchaku	cr	sw+2	1,2	$20	2	10	1 turn to re-ready.-2 to block.

JITTE/SAI (DX-5 or Shortsword-2)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Jitte	cr	thr	C,1	$20	1	7	Blunt point; used to disarm.
	cr	sw	C				
Sai	imp	thr	C,1	$30	l	8	Sharp point; can also disarm.
	cr	sw	C				Swing strike is like jitte.

KATANA (DX-5 or Broadsword-2) *Can be used one-handed or two-handed (+1 swinging damage). See p. 118.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Katana (Fine Quality)	cut	sw+2/+3	1,2	$650	5	11	Quadruple cost at
	imp	thr+2	1				TL6- outside Japan.
Katana, scabbarded	cr	sw+l/+2	1,2				Used to subdue.
Bokken	cr	sw+l/+2	1,2	$40	5	11	Wooden training sword.
	cr	thr+1	1				
Shinai	cr	sw-l/sw	1,2	$40	3	9	Bamboo training sword.
	cr	thr-1	1				

KNIFE (DX-4)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Hishi	imp	thr-1	C	$20	¼	none	Max. damage 1d.
Kozuka	cut	sw-3	C,1	$30	½	none	Max. damage 1d+1.
	imp	thr-1	C				Max. damage 1d+1.
Tanto	cut	sw-2	C,1	$40	1	none	Max. damage 1d+2.
	imp	thr	C				Max. damage 1d+2.
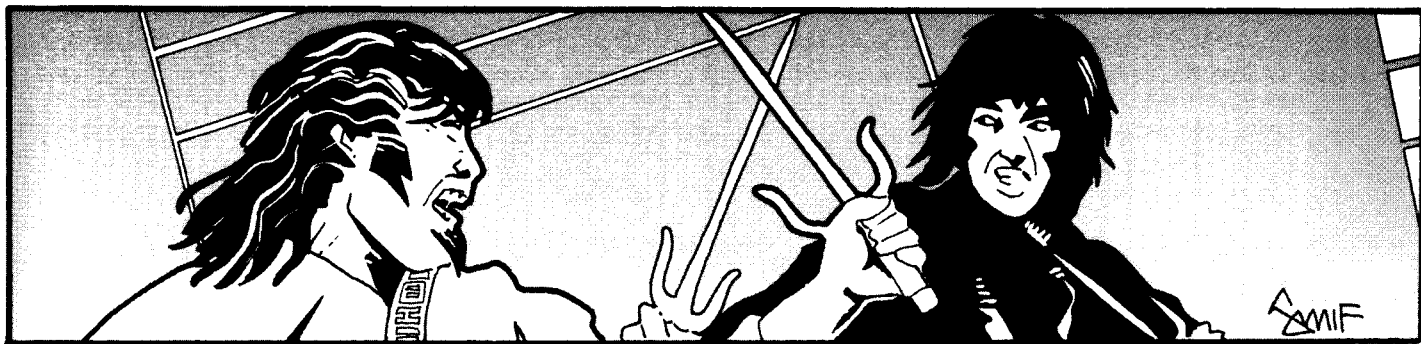
KUSARI (DX-5 or Flail-2) *All kusari weapons are blocked at -2 and parried at -4.* *

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Kusari	cr	sw+2	1-4	$70	5	11	1 turn to ready per yard of attack.
	grapple	see p. 33	1-4				
Kusari-gama	cut	sw+2	1,2	$80	3	11	1 turn to ready after swing.
Manriki-gusari	cr	sw+4	1,2	$60	3	11	1 turn to ready after each use.
	grapple	see p. 33	1,2				

POLEARM (DX-5) *All polearms require 2 hands.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Naginata	cut	sw+3	1,2	$100	6	9	1 turn to ready after swing.
	imp	thr+3	2				

SHORT STAFF (DX-5 or Staff-2)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Mm ST	Special Notes
Jo	cr	sw+1	1	$10	2	none	
	cr	thr+1	1				

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.   * Becomes *unready* if used to parry.

WEAPON TABLES

| Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)							
Wakizashi	cut	sw	1	$400	2	7	Samurai's side sword,
	imp	thr	1				along with katana.
SPEAR (DX-5 or Staff-2)							
Rochin (short spear)	imp	thr+1	1	$30	2	7	One-handed stabbing spear.
Yarinage (javelin)	imp	thr+1	1	$30	2	none	Soldier's throwing weapon.
Yari (spear)	imp	thr+2	1	$40	4	9	Used 1-handed - throwable.
	imp	thr+3	1,2*				Used 2-handed.

STAFF (DX-5 or Spear-2) *Requires two hands.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Bo	cr	sw+2	1,2	$10	4	6	Requires 2 hands.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				
Naginata	cr	sw+2	1,2	$100	6	9	Staff technique, with shaft.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				Staff technique, with blunt end.
Tetsubo	cr	sw+4	1,2	$100	10	13	Staff technique.
	cr	thr+2	1,2				(Parry is ⅔ skill.)

TONFA (DX-6 or Shortsword-3)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Tonfa	cr	**sw+1**	1	$40	2	7	Parry is 2/3 Tonfa skill.
	cr	thr+1	C,1				

TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5) *Requires two hands.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Nodachi	cut	sw+4	1,2	$800	7	12	Worn in a back sheath.
	cr	thr+2	2				Blunt tip.
Naginata	cut	sw+3	1,2	$100	6	9	Sword technique: 1 turn to ready after swing.
	imp	thr+3	2				Sword technique; no time to ready.
Tetsubo	cr	sw+4	1,2	$100	10	13	Sword technique; 1 turn to ready after swing.
	cr	thr+2	2				Sword technique; no time to ready.

JAPANESE RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
BOW (DX-6) *Requires two hands to use; 2 turns to ready, 3 if choosing between different kinds of arrow in quiver.*										
Dai-kyu (longbow)							$900	4	10	
Armor-piercing arrow	imp	thr+1	14	3	STx20	STx25	$2	2 oz.		Max damage 1d; -2 to armor DR.
Bowel-raker arrow	cut	thr+3	14	2	STx15	STx20	$2	2 oz.		Max. damage 1d+4; 1d-3 damage to remove.
Willow-leaf arrow	cut	thr+3	14	3	STx20	STx25	$2	2 oz.		Max. damage 1d+4.

NINJA WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
BLOWPIPE (DX-6)							
Fukiya	Seep. 119	Seep. 119	C,1	$30	1	none	See p. 119. Can also be used as a ranged weapon; see below

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.   * Becomes *unready* if used to parry.
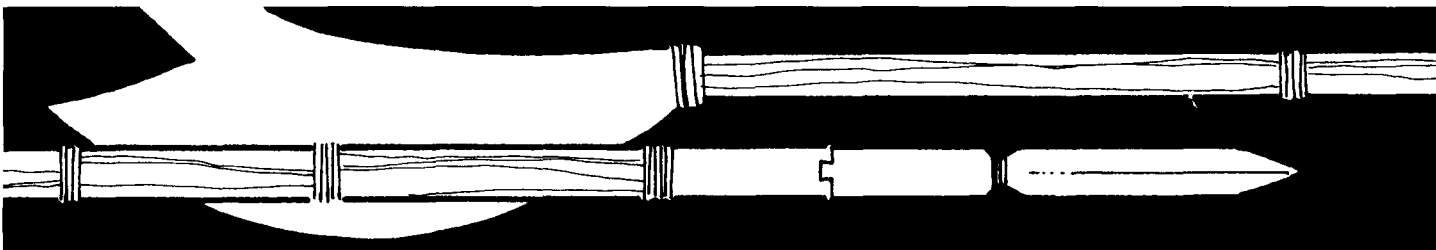
Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
DX, BRAWLING or KARATE							
Neko-de (bladed hand)	cut	sw-2	C	$100	1	none	Receives Brawling or Karate
	imp	thr	C				bonuses.

GARROTE (DX-5) *Requires two hands.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Rope	cr	thr	C*	$1	2oz.	none	Damage only if wrapped around neck,
Wire	cut	thr	C*	$5	1 oz.	none	See pp. 33, 119.

KUSARI (DX-5 or Flail-2) *AH kusari weapons are blocked at -2 and parried at -4.* *

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Oh-gama	cut	sw+4	1-4	$130	8	12	1 turn to ready after sw.

SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Ninja-to	cut	sw	1	$400	2	7	
	imp	thr	1				

Ninja Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
BLOWPIPE (DX-6)										
Blowpipe	Special (see p. 119)		10	1	-	STx4	$30	1	none	See p. 119.

BOW (DX-6) *Requires two hands to use; 2 turns to ready, 3 if choosing between different kinds of arrow in quiver.*

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
Han-kyu (shortbow)							$600	2.5	7	
Armor-piercing arrow	imp	thr-2	12	1	STx10	STx15	$2	2oz.		Max damage 1d-1; -2 to armor DR.
Bowel-raker arrow	cut	thr	12	0	STx5	STx10	$2	2oz.		Max. damage 1d+3; 1d-3 damage to remove.
Willow-leaf arrow	cut	thr	12	1	STx10	STx15	$2	2oz.		Max. damage 1d+3.

DX-3 or THROWING SKILL

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
Nageteppo (grenade)	varies	varies	12	0	-	STx3.5	$50	1	none	See p. 120.
Stun Munition (grenade)	varies	varies	12	0	-	STx3.5	$40	1	none	See p. 120.

KNIFE THROWING (DX-4)

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
Hishi (dagger)	imp	thr-1	12	0	ST-5	ST	$20	¼	none	Max. dam. 1d.
Kozuka (small knife)	imp	thr-1	11	0	ST-5	ST	$30	½	none	Max. dam. 1d+1.

SHURIKEN (DX-6 or Throwing-2)

Weapon	Type	Amount	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Cost	Wt.	ST	Special Notes
Shuriken (starblade)	cut	thr-1	8	1	ST-5	ST	$3	⅒	none	Usually in set of 9 Max. dam. 1d+2.

INDIAN WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
BROADSWORD (DX-5)							
Otta	cr	sw+1	1	$60	3	10	S-shaped club.
	cr	thr+1	1				

KNIFE (DX-4)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Katar (small)	imp	thr+1	C	$40	1	none	Perpendicular grip.
	cut	sw-3	C,l				A knife-sized katar.

SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
Katar (large)	imp	thr+1	1	$400	2	7	Perpendicular grip.
	cut	sw-1	1				A sword-sized katar.

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.   ★ Becomes *unready* if used to parry.

WEAPON TABLES

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
STAFF (DX-5 or Spear-2) *Requires two hands.*							
Muchan	cr	sw	1	$10	1	7	Baton-sized, but used two-handed.
	cr	thr	1				Parry is still 2/3 skill.
TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5) *Requires two hands.*							
Gada	cr	sw+3	1,2	$60	9	13	1 turn to ready after swing.
	cr	thr+2	1				1 turn to ready after thrust.
WHIP (No default) *							
Urumi	cr	sw-1	1-3	$400	4	8	Max. damage 1d+2: see p. B52.

INDONESIAN WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
KNIFE (DX-4) or MAIN-GAU(CHE (no default)							
Kris	cut	sw-2	C,l	$40	1	none	This is a *large* kris.
	imp	thr	C				Max. damage 1d+2.
Pisau	cut	sw-3	C.I	$30	1/2	none	Max. damage 1d+1.
	imp	**thr**-1	C				
POLEARM (DX-5) *Requires two hands.*							
Latajang	cut	sw+2	1,2*	$100	7	10	1 turn to ready after swing.
	cut	thr+1	1.2*				1 turn to ready after thrust.
SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)							
Parang	cut	sw+1	1	$400	3	10	
Pedang	cut	sw	1	$400	2	7	
	imp	thr	1				

KOREAN WEAPONS

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	Special Notes
KARATE or DX-2							
Combat Fan	cut	thr-2	C	$40	1	none	Max. damage 1d-1. Uses DX-2.
	cr	thr	C,1				Receives Karate bonuses; uses Karate.
KATANA (DX-5 or Broadsword-2) *Can be used one-handed or two-handed (+1 damage). See p. 118.*							
Gum	cut	sw+2/+3	1,2	$650	5	11	Usually of Fine quality.
	imp	thr+2	1				-1 from listed damage if not.
SHORT STAFF (DX-5 or Staff-2)							
Dan Bong	cr	sw	1	$10	1	7	
	cr	thr	1				
SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2)							
Dan Sang Gum	cut	sw+1	1	$400	3	10	Often used in pairs.

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.   * Becomes *unready* if used to parry.

Philippine weapons

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	MinST	Special Notes
KNIFE (DX-4) or MAIN-GAUCHE (no default)							
Punal	cut	sw-2	C,l	$40	1	none	Max. damage 1d+2.
	imp	thr	C				
Balisong Knife	cut	sw-3	C,l	$30	½	none	+1 to Holdout skill.
	imp	thr-1	1				Max. damage 1d+1.
SHORTSWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-2) or SHORT STAFF (DX-5 or Staff-2)							
Escrima Stick	cr	sw	1	$20	1	none	
	cr	thr	1				
WHIP (No default)							
Bullwhip	cr	sw-2	1-7	$20/yd	2/yd	10	Max. damage 1d-1. See p. B52.

European Fencing Weapons

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	MinST	Special Notes
CLOAK (DX-5, Buckler-4 or Shield-4)							
Heavy Cloak	Seep. 125.	Seep. 125.	1+	$50	5	none	Used to Block. Can be thrown.
Light Cloak	Seep. 126.	Seep. 126.	1+	$20	2	none	Used to Block. Can be thrown.
FENCING (DX-5) *See p. B99 for fencing parry rules.*							
Fencing Saber	imp	thr+1	1	$400	2	none	Max. thrust damage 1d+2.
	cut	sw-1	1				Max. swing damage 1d. May break.
Smallsword	imp	thr+1	1	$400	1.5	none	Max. damage 1d+1.
Dress Smallsword	imp	thr	1	$300	1	none	Max. damage 1d.
Rapier	imp	thr+1	1,2	$500	2	7	Max. damage 1d+1.
Slashing Rapier	imp	thr+1	1,2	$1,000	2	7	Max. thrust damage 1d+1.
	cut	sw	1,2				1 turn to ready after a swing.
MAIN-GAUCHE (DX-5) *Parry is 2/3 skill.*							
Main-Gauche	imp	thr	C	$50	1.25	none	Max. thrust damage 1d+2.
	cut	sw-3	C,l				Max. swing damage 1d+1.

Ultratech Weapons

Weapon	Type	Amount	Reach	Cost	Weight	MinST	Special Notes
FORCE SWORD or KATANA (FORCE SWORD) (DX-5 or Katana-3)							
Force Sword	imp	4d(5)	1	$3,000	2	none	
	cut	8d(5)	1				
Sonic Blade	cr	5d(5)	C.1	$2.500	2.5	none	
MONOMOLECULAR WHIP (Whip-2)							
Monowire Whip	cut	sw-2+ld(10)	1-7	$900	0.5	none	

* Must be *readied* for one turn to change from long to short grip or vice versa.   *   Becomes *unready* if used to parry

Weapon Tables
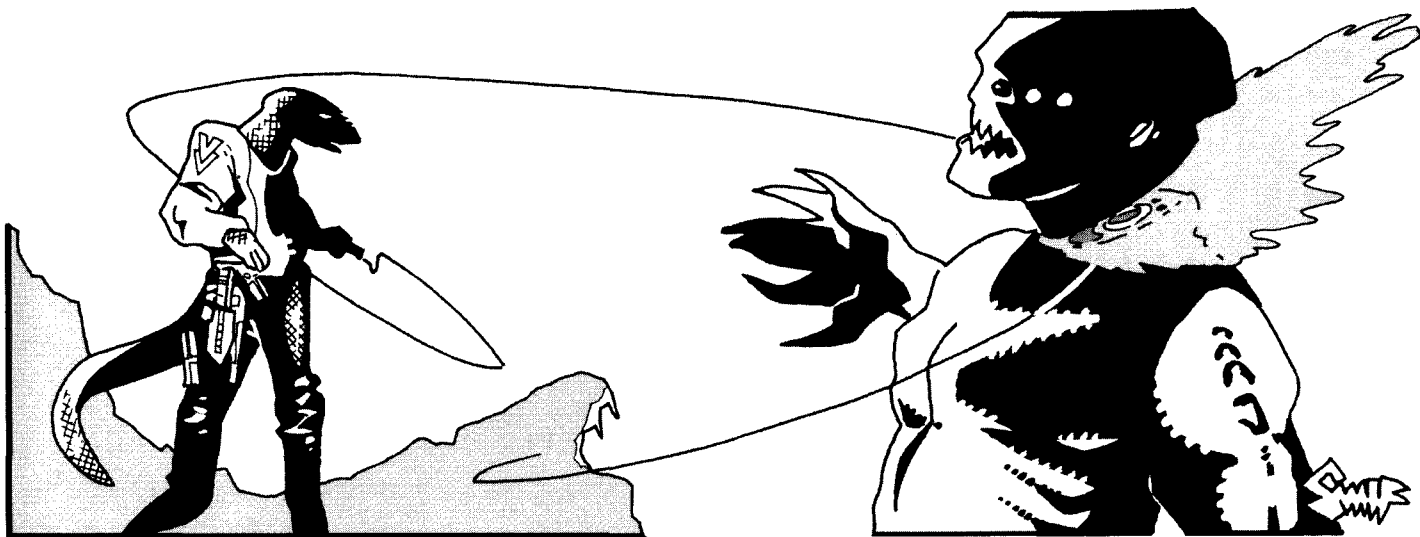
6 ☯ CAMPAIGNS

M a r t i a l arts tales are full of classic fiction elements: the attainment of a long-sought goal, the rise of heroic characters, the quest for justice or revenge, exotic peoples and places, and more. GMs can use any or all of those elements in shaping their campaigns.

A martial arts campaign should be more than a series of adventures for expert *karatekas,* just as an adventure should be more than an extended slugfest. The GM must work carefully on the campaign setting as well as the adventure plots. This chapter will provide some guidelines and suggestions.

The *Martial Arts Campaign Plan* on p. 158 is a valuable tool for the GM beginning a campaign. When it is complete, a copy should be given to each player.
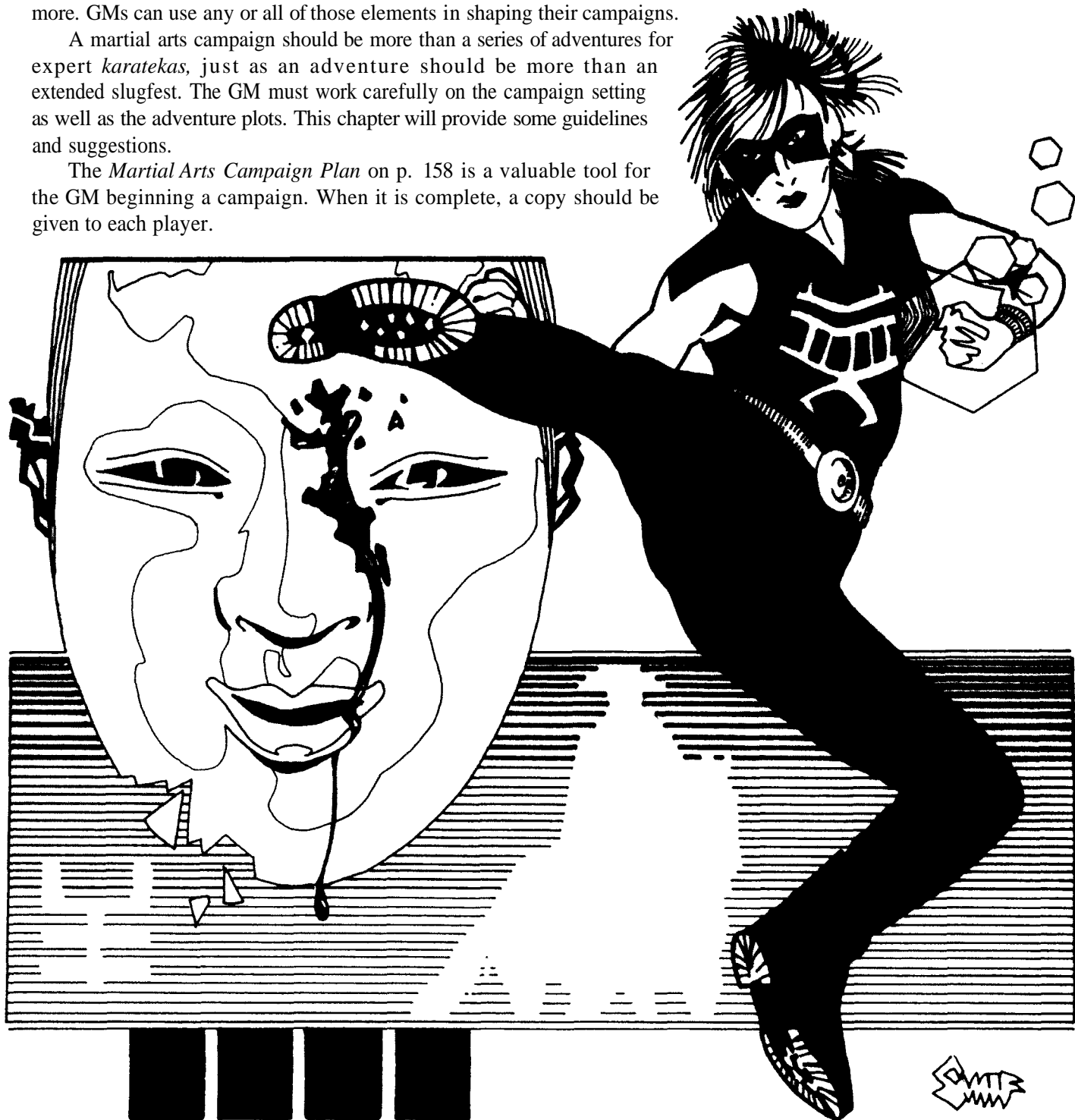
CINEMATIC VS. REALISTIC CAMPAIGNS

This should be the GM's first consideration before he starts fleshing out the campaign. The two campaign types are very different. In particular, a cinematic *Martial Arts* milieu, with its traditional emphasis on physical action, can be harder to "balance" successfully.

Here are some ways to implement both types of campaign, with their advantages and disadvantages. The GM should weigh these with what he knows about his players and what he thinks they would enjoy best.

The Realistic Campaign

This campaign assumes that, while expert martial artists can be highly effective fighters and adventurers, they are not superhuman. They cannot smash down walls or take on a roomful of thugs without working up a sweat. Indeed, they don't present much of a challenge to a man armed with a gun . . . and, being sensible people, they know this.

This campaign has two "levels." The first one is the standard campaign with 100-point characters. A 100-point martial artist who is a monk or professional student can be quite formidable. In a modern campaign, a 100-point character with a life *outside* the dojo would probably be a talented beginner . . . perhaps fairly proficient in one style, but perhaps not yet even holding a "black belt." Such characters would have to learn on the job, slowly perfecting their art as they adventure. The main drawback of this level is that players will not be able to replicate many of the heroic actions they may wish to simulate. On the other hand, the gradual advancement of characters will allow GMs to introduce the new rules slowly, making it easier to learn them. Also, the "from the ground up" approach brings more satisfaction to many players and GMs.

The second level assumes the PCs are already experts at their craft, highly advanced students or instructors of at least one style. This type of campaign requires 150 points or more for beginning characters, with some limitations (see Chapter 3). This will allow the players to have well-rounded and highly effective fighters - even "combat monsters" - from the start. Without cinematic skills to back them up, however, they will still be vulnerable to superior odds and weaponry.

Advantages: In a realistic campaign, the characters will not be above the law, and cannot replace strategy and thinking with brute force. At the second level, "heroic" roleplaying becomes more feasible, but characters must still use their wits. The GM will be able to borrow plot ideas from many sources, and

THE SECRET ABILITIES CAMPAIGN

A special hybrid between the cinematic and the realistic campaign takes a leaf out of the Secret Magic campaigns described in *GURPS Horror* and *GURPS Conan,* limiting the use of most types of magic to NPCs. In the Secret Abilities campaign, cinematic abilities do exist, but are in the hand of a few masters, who will not divulge those secrets easily.

PCs may know a few cinematic skills as per the *Hybrid Campaigns* option (see main text), but the rest cannot be acquired except by somehow convincing a teacher that the PCs are worthy of the dangerous knowledge implicit in those skills. A whole campaign could revolve around the quest for this knowledge; maybe the PCs are being chased by some evil masters whose abilities far outstrip their own, and are desperately seeking a teacher that will allow them to fight their enemies on an equal footing.

In a Secret Abilities campaign, cinematic skills should appear infrequently.

Example: at the end of an adventure, the PCs surround the withered old man who heads the deadly Tong gangs they have just defeated after a long fight. To their surprise (and sudden HT loss!), the old man starts making four attacks per turn and punching six-foot-tall characters across the room. After crippling or knocking out half of the party, the old man smiles enigmatically, steps around the corner and vanishes! Of course, if this type of situation occurs too often, the GM may have to perform some fancy footwork to escape the *players!*

Eventually, as PCs gain experience and undergo the right ordeals, a teacher might be found, and the jump to a totally cinematic campaign could be made. This is also a good way to introduce new life to a realistic campaign, should the players wish for more excitement.

will never have to wrack his imagination to create a "tough enough" foe; an ordinary street gang will be a formidable challenge.

Disadvantages: PCs will not be able to perform the feats that players see in the movies, or even some of the ones that are attributed to true masters of the art (see Chapter 1). This may be frustrating for some players. Likewise, the player who cut his teeth on chambara movies will be very upset the first time he loses a character to a .38 slug.
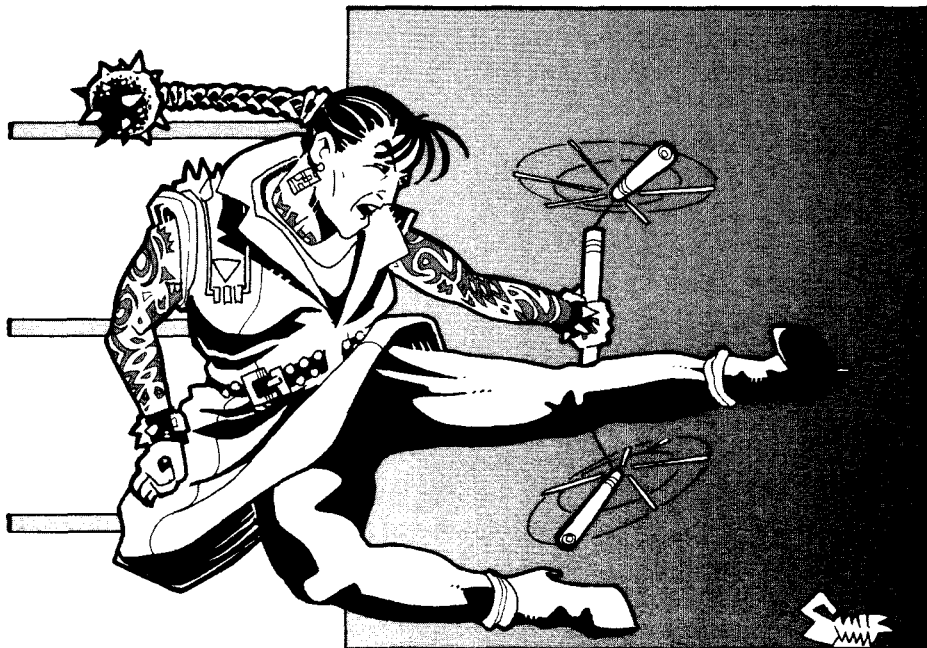
The Cinematic Campaign

At the other end of the spectrum, we have the campaign that assumes that most of the martial arts legends are true, and that masters are able to transcend normal human limit. Characters will be built with 200 to 400 points; at this level, their attributes and skill levels can be truly superhuman. Characters from movies, television and comic books can be recreated for this campaign. PCs can become a law unto themselves, only matched by large numbers of enemies or other highly trained martial artists.

An even higher-powered campaign is possible: the "four-color" game, with 500+ points per character, and maybe some powers from the *GURPS Supers* book. The campaign should then follow a comic-book pattern, with enemies and situations modified accordingly.

Advantages: This type of campaign can be a lot of fun, with high adventure being the order of the day. The scope and stakes of the game will be larger than life; characters will have great responsibilities with their power. With large point totals, each character's abilities can be individualized greatly. Comic books and chambara movies can be re-created. All in all, a great break from everyday life.

Disadvantages: It will be fairly easy for players to come up with "combat monster" characters, almost invulnerable in a fight but good for little else. The GM must work hard to keep the game balanced (if he feels this is important), and it will be difficult to come up with new challenges (unless the players *enjoy* cardboard foes). The campaign may degenerate into the equivalent of *A-Team* formula episodes . . . see the crime, stomp the henchmen, find the leader, stomp the leader. The End.

On the other hand, this can happen to *any* campaign, not just a cinematic one. It's up to the GM and the players. And if that's what everybody wants . . .

Different worlds

These martial arts rules can be used in conjunction with a number of different *GURPS* worldbooks. Ways to use this book in conjunction with *Supers* have been already described (see Chapter 3), but *Martial Arts* can enrich almost any other background. Below are some ideas to introduce martial arts mayhem into other backgrounds, with some sample adventures in each.

Japan

Medieval Japan is an excellent, and exciting, choice for a roleplaying campaign. However, most of the Japanese styles presented here were not created until the 19th and 20th centuries. Jujutsu, Sumo, Kenjutsu and Kobujutsu (and Ninjutsu, of course) are the only styles appropriate for a Japan-based campaign in the age of the samurai.

Keep in mind that, because of the class distinctions of medieval Japan, a "permanent" party should be made up of similar character types. Samurai and ninja would not go adventuring together!

For more background, see *GURPS Japan.* This sourcebook provides information for both realistic and fantasy campaigns. In a fantasy campaign, where magic is real, cinematic martial arts skills would be *most* appropriate!

Shaolin Showdown

A band of Shaolin monks seeks refuge in Japan after the destruction of their temple (see p. 7). Perhaps they are welcomed at a Buddhist temple, or perhaps they are hunted down by the local authorities. If the PCs are the monks, they must learn to survive in a hostile new world. They could found a school and pass along their knowledge. Or a local lord might adopt them as guards, eliciting the enmity of local samurai and other noblemen, who might try to remove the newcomers (perhaps by calling in some ninja).

Alternatively, the PCs could be Japanese samurai and *yamabushi* (warrior monks) confronting these strange foreigners and their exotic skills and customs. In most Japanese and Chinese fiction, these encounters tend to end in violence, but this need not be the case. Perhaps a mixed party of Chinese and Japanese PCs could be formed - though this would be historically unlikely.

Hybrid Campaigns

As an alternative to the two options above, the GM may pick and choose the elements he feels will make for the best balance between fun and reality. Some of the less fantastic cinematic skills (such as Breaking Blow and Pressure Points) may be made available, perhaps with one of the Multiple Attacks (p. 65) and Damage Reduction rules (p. 67). Thus, the GM can tailor the rules to fit his own opinion of the martial arts, and the needs of the particular campaign.

Advantages: This solution may offer the best of both worlds. In particular, GMs may easily scale up the campaign as the PCs progress in power and skill (See *The Secret Abilities Campaign,* sidebar, p. 137). It can also provide an exciting level of uncertainty. The PCs, and the players, know that *some* of the fantastic stories are true . . . Does that mean that they're *all* true? And if master martial artists are real, what about yeti? UFOs? The Illuminati?

Disadvantages: The GM will have to make up more rulings; each cinematic rule, skill or maneuver must be individually considered for inclusion. If the GM isn't firm, each ruling is a potential argument. Players may be disappointed if their pet legend isn't true.

Campaign Setting

Before choosing a background, the GM should ask himself a number of questions about the elements that should be present in the campaign. Certain factors, particularly the technology level of the setting, will greatly influence a martial arts campaign. Fill in the *Martial Arts Campaign Plan,* p. 158, which covers these same questions in a brief format.

Tech Level

What is the technology level (TL) of the campaign? At TL3 or less (pre-gunpowder), martial artists can be very powerful characters, especially if cinematic abilities are allowed. The existence of heavy armor may reduce their advantages, but not completely offset them. This may make them heroes, or public enemies . . . remember the destruction of the Shaolin temple, and the inferior social status of the ninja!

At TL4-5, gunpowder is a danger, but not enough to reduce the effectiveness of the martial arts; in fact, by eliminating armor from the picture, gunpowder actually enhances the potential of the arts, especially if they're used in stealth rather than on the battlefield. This is a fertile field for "ninja-tech."

After TL6, however, automatic weapons are more powerful than any hand-to-hand or melee combat style. The martial artist must pick his times and places carefully, and walk softly the rest of the time. His skills - even most of the cinematic ones - can be defended against, as long as someone thinks to do so.

Fantastic Powers

Does magic exist in the campaign world? Martial arts and magic can mix well; many disciplines have a tradition of mystical powers that allows them to fit in a fantasy world. If magic exist, a pre-modern or legendary setting would work best for the campaign, unless the GM wants to tackle the task of combining magic and technology. Magic and the martial arts

Fantasy: The Land of Yrth

Yrth, the world described in *GURPS Fantasy,* has its own "Oriental" setting, the mysterious land of Sahud. Martial artists could come into their own there, especially in a cinematic campaign. A wandering martial artist could make an interesting PC in any campaign; roleplaying an Asian mindset and its interaction with medieval Christians and Moslems, as well as demi-humans, would be a highly rewarding challenge. On the active side, pitting skill and chi against magic and Western weapons and armor will probably pique the interest of many players.

Ninja-like clans existed in medieval Islam (the word *assassin* comes from one such Moslem cult - see *Hashishin Style,* p. 82). Ingenious GMs can create appropriate martial arts styles for such organizations (start with a combination of Brawling, Wrestling and weapon skills); they could be lethal enemies for the PCs. On the other hand, Japanese ninja could also have been brought to Yrth by a later outbreak of the Banestorm.

Styles

The world of Yrth is mainly a medieval European and Middle Eastern society. The Pancratium style might exist both in Megalos (for gladiatorial events) and among some Arab cultures, since the Arabs absorbed many Greek and Roman arts and sciences. Recent arrivals to Yrth can, of course, be skilled in any style, which may save their lives as they face a primitive and violent new world. In Japan-like Sahud there would be equivalents of Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kobujutsu and Kuk Sool Won; GMs can use those styles with as much or as little change as they please.

Nonhuman races with martial arts training would be an interesting rarity (see *Fantasy Styles,* p. 109). A Reptile Man trained in Jujutsu would be a fearsome enemy. Maybe some Elven tribes have their own exotic styles, either derived from Asian wanderers or created by themselves. The sight of a Sahudese Halfling going into a Karate stance may provoke laughter, but not for long.

Adventuring in Yrth

Ronins from Another World

A group of exiled samurai (the PCs) are hired to put an end to an evil wizard plaguing the Japanese countryside. The brave warriors unsheathe their katanas, walk into the wizard's lair . . . and vanish in a flash of lightning. When their eyes clear, the ronin find themselves on the land of Yrth. There they can become mercenaries, or join a knightly order. Or maybe, hearing about Sahud, they try to reach it, believing it to be their beloved Nippon - and get the shock of their lives on arriving.

combined will probably be able to match technology in many ways; a cinematic Karate master with a Reverse Missiles spell could take on a rifle platoon and win.

Do psionic powers or super-abilities exist in this world? At what levels do they exist? The so-called "chi abilities" of martial arts legend are very similar to psionic abilities; many people claim that the chi is the source of these psionic powers. A super-world can be enriched with the addition of the martial arts rules of this book, and the cinematic skills and advantages will give "super-normal" characters a better chance against their high-powered counterparts.

Time and Place

After those questions have been settled, a physical setting can be selected. The martial arts have a 2,000-year history, and will probably exist as long as civilization endures . . . and perhaps longer. This gives the GM a wide range of choices, from historical roleplaying to brave new worlds. And remember . . . choosing a historical setting does *not* rule out magic or psi! The campaign can be set in a feudal Japan in which the spirits and sky-dragons are very real … or a cliffhangers 1920 in which psi powers and cinematic chi are the weapons of the battling secret masters.

Three settings are described below, with some of the elements particular to each, and their advantages and disadvantages.

China

It would be impossible to do justice, in less than a full book, to China's millennium-long history. Instead, a brief rundown of some interesting periods of Chinese history is provided below. For a much more complete treatment of the subject, see *GURPS China.*

Peace, Justice, and the Chinese Way (circa 500 B.C.-l 000 A.D.)

The characters are Chinese knights-errant, highly skilled in early forms of Kung Fu and inspired by the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism (see sidebars, pp. 7 & 9), traveling throughout the land perfecting their art and righting wrongs. They may meet the legendary creators of many martial arts forms, or even create their own! Enemies include evil local warlords, bandit gangs, or (in a cinematic, mystical or "four-color" campaign) supernatural beings. (Remember that all the characters should firmly believe in the supernatural, whether it really exists or not.)

Advantages: This is one of the legendary Golden Ages of the martial arts. All types of adventures can be found in this setting. Since this period is wrapped in legend, fantasy elements can be introduced without problems. And China is *vast.* Any number of settings can co-exist, and there's always room to run away from foes who can't be defeated.

Disadvantages: The only real drawback of this campaign is that the GM must either do a great deal of research in order to bring to life a historically-correct vision of ancient China, or he will have to acquire an entirely separate supplement *(GURPS China)* expressly for the purpose. On the other hand, the GM may give free rein to his imagination and use a highly-romanticized version of the period, with only the barest historical facts to sustain it. And, of course, he can add fantasy elements, such as magic, demons, etc. As long as none of the players is a nit-picking Chinese scholar, this option would be as much fun as the first one.

A Troubled Land (1900s-1930s China)

China during the decade preceding World War II was a land in chaos, beset by many enemies, both from within and without. The European powers and the United States had trampled the country with literal "gunboat diplomacy", the Imperial government eventually collapsed, and most of the political power fell into the hands of local warlords. During the mid-1930s, Japan invaded the country, already in the throes of a Communist revolution.

This period has been the setting for many martial arts movies (the most famous of which is Bruce Lee's *The Chinese Connection.* The Japanese are usually portrayed as the bad guys, imperialistic invaders itching to test their Karate skills against the Chinese Kung Fu forms. This rapidly-changing world is rich in adventure possibilities.

GURPS Cliffhangers provides some background on China in the 1930s. With that book, it might be possible to link a martial artist character with two-fisted Western adventurers (perhaps including a French Savate expert), which would make for an interesting mix.

The Business of Vengeance

Northern barbarians (most of them wolf-shapechangers) raid Sahudese coastal village, turning it into a burning waste. One of the victims happens to be an important nobleman's favorite wife. Thirsty for revenge, the nobleman hires some of the land's deadliest warriors and sorcerers (the PCs) and sends them after the Dark Wolf Clan. The catch: sea routes are too dangerous. The avengers must make the long overland journey through foreign territory to reach the Dark Wolves' territory, somewhere in the North. Along the way, the travelers have to deal with the strange and barbarous customs of the nations they will visit, culminating with an epic showdown with a were-tribe.

Special Ops

Many special forces soldiers are also dedicated martial artists, and their involvement with a school may lead to adventures outside the realm of military missions. Asian terrorists may use martial arts against the troopers, or infiltrators may have to forgo their weapons in the interest of stealth, which would force them to rely on their unarmed combat skills.

In a cinematic campaign, martial artists will make greater foes for soldiers in a 20th-century milieu. Combined parties of multi-skilled troops and devastating martial artists make for an explosive combination. Imagine a Stallone-Norris team-up, and run it that way.

Ninja Ops

The ninja are among the oldest special ops organizations. A *Special Ops* campaign can be based around the activities of a ninja clan. *GURPS Japan* would be an asset, as well as some good research on Japanese history. The ninja can take part in some historical moments of Japanese history - possibly even changing it! Sabotage, scouting, guerrilla warfare, rescue and assassination missions, all can be played against the background of the Land of the Rising Sun.

CLIFFHANGERS

The explosive 1930s fit well with the frenzied style of the martial arts adventure. Remember that many of the best-known heroes of the pulps learned secret abilities in the Orient (such as the ability to "cloud men's minds" to become invisible, extraordinary fighting abilities and other exotica).

Asian characters often appeared as sidekicks of the heroes. A party of straight-punching Western characters can be reinforced with one or two martial artists with a host of cinematic skills. Martial arts characters also make deadly foes.

The Cliffhanger style of adventuring is also very suitable to martial arts adventures in any setting. Have the bad guys (about 30 or so) corner the heroes in a small shack - then close your folder and say "That's all for tonight, folks! See you next time."

Advantages: This is a period of fast, violent change, ideal for adventures, particularly for GMs and players who enjoy intrigue. Historical background information is more available . . . but large portions of China were still full of mystery. And since worldwide travel is available, the campaign can *leave* China any time adventure beckons elsewhere ... or face foes from any corner of the globe, intent on exploitation.

Disadvantages: The setting may be *too* fast-changing and violent. Chinese PCs will have to face a divided, warring and impoverished land, and the ability to kick down a door may seem too feeble to make much of a difference. Western PCs may sympathize - or they may be exploiters, though of course many of the worst exploiters will see themselves as noble explorers or even missionaries.

JAPAN

The martial arts of the 20th century have been most influenced by Japanese culture. The uniforms, customs and popular figures surrounding the arts are predominantly Japanese. Japan is a great setting for a campaign in any period - ancient, medieval or modern.

The Age of the Samurai (Japan, 1200-1600)

This is the period of the Japanese Shogunate, the time of the samurai and the ninja. This is an exciting, fast-moving time and territory, fit for any type of martial arts campaign. *GURPS Japan* is an invaluable source for GMs setting a campaign in this time frame.

During this period, Japan was wracked by civil wars. Enemy clans such as the Minamoto, the Taira and Tokugawa fought for the position of *shogun* or overlord of the land. The Emperor was little more than a puppet of the current shogun. Large-scale warfare, court intrigue and heroic exploits were common throughout this era.

A very interesting trouble-spot in this time period is Okinawa, the conquered island where Karate and most famous martial arts weapons originated (for more information, see Chapter 4). PCs can play local revolutionary groups, secretly teaching martial arts and conspiring to overthrow the Japanese.

Advantages: During the earlier parts of this period warriors could rise to the nobility if they were good enough, and the ninja were at the height of their power - both good elements for a martial arts campaign.

Disadvantages: Roleplaying Japanese behavior during this period may be hard for beginning players. GMs who insist on realism will have to do a lot of research to flesh out this setting. There will be few chances for Oriental characters to interact with Western ones, or even with Japanese of social classes other than their own . . . the "mixed adventuring party" is totally foreign to the medieval Japanese mentality.

The Birth of the Martial Arts (19th to early 20th century)

The 19th century marks the beginning of the martial arts as we know them today. Most of the Japanese styles described in Chapter 4 were in development during this period. The GM should try to emphasize the older components of those styles, such as philosophical and spiritual training, as they were much more important then.

The end of the 19th century also saw Japan enter the world stage and move away from its isolationist policies. By the turn of the century, Japan would win wars against China and Russia and be on its way to becoming a world power. International intrigue can enter a martial arts campaign set in this period. Adventurers could interact with their British and American counterparts from the Victorian era (for more information on Victorian England, see *GURPS Horror).* Worldwide travel is possible, for study, trade or espionage.

Advantages: The PCs will be learning styles as they are being created. The struggle between the last samurai and the (relatively) Westernized central government can provide a campaign theme.

Disadvantages: This was a rather peaceful period within Japan. PCs may have to travel to see action.

Other SETTINGS

Besides China and Japan, there are dozens of other possible choices of locale for a *Martial Arts* adventure. Here are some suggestions.

There's No Time Like the Present

The campaign world is 20th-century Earth. As for specific locale, there is a wide variety of choices. The good old U.S. of A. may be the easiest one. Other continents provide more exoticism, though.

Advantages: The advantages of running a present-day campaign in the West are many, especially for beleaguered GMs. All the vital information for a campaign (maps, price lists, famous NPCs) is readily available. PCs should have few roleplaying problems, as the cultural background will be familiar (unless they are playing the parts of foreign characters). Modern transportation makes a

HORROR

Fear may strike into any heart, even that of the warrior. Asian fiction is chockfull of supernatural beings battling martial artists, from vampires to Shinto and Buddhist demons. If your players are getting too cocky for their own good, maybe a run-in with the unexplained is called for. If a PC's opponent suddenly grows fur and fangs and then proves to be immune to kicks and punches (most martial artists do not carry silver weapons, after all), his player may drop the Maneuvers List and reach for the Fright Check table.

Another way to use *Martial Arts* with *Horror* is to apply the opposite viewpoint. If the PCs are normal 100-point investigators; a 400-point "psycho-killer" Tae Kwon Do master with a host of cinematic skills is as powerful as any monster short of the Lord Beneath the Ice.

Shinobi Nightmare

One by one, prominent martial artists are murdered under strange circumstances. A fourth-degree black belt is found dead in a securely locked room. Another has his larynx crushed in broad daylight, in the middle of a large crowd, and nobody sees the murderer. As a mixed team of martial artist and investigator PCs probe for a link between the murders, they discover that the dead masters and a few others joined forces to destroy an evil ninja teacher. Investigations at the site of the murders reveal ancient Japanese characters that were the ninja's trademark. But he is supposed to be dead. . . .

Were the masters wrong in assuming they had killed the ninja? Did he have a pupil or relative who is carrying his mission of revenge? Or did the assassin, with his dying breath, call upon dark forces that allowed him to mete out vengeance beyond the grave?

To make things a bit more interesting, one of the masters summons his surviving colleagues and the investigators to his secluded dojo on a remote mountain side. After everyone has arrived, a freak storm leaves them stranded there. And somewhere outside - or in their midst - the killer lurks. . .

Swashbucklers

Since *GURPS Swashbucklers* is meant to be cinematic, its high-adventure style fits right in with the martial arts. And while Musketeers roamed Europe and pirates plagued the Caribbean, Samurai battled in Japan and the Shaolin temple was seeing its last days. Spain kept a steady line of trade with the Far East by way of Mexico. It would not be impossible to believe that, for instance, an exiled Chinese monk could have escaped on a Spanish ship and made his way to Mexico and the Caribbean. And if one could, what about two, or three or four?

Readers of the novel *Shogun* know that enterprising travelers and privateers can make their way to some very strange places. Dutch or Spanish traders had frequent contacts with the Chinese, Malaysian and Japanese, giving raise to plenty of occasions for fencers to face samurai, ninja and assorted martial artists.

For piracy with a purely Asian twist, a *GURPS Swashbucklers* campaign set in the Yellow Sea is possible. The Japanese were feared pirates throughout the 17th century, and diverse Malay and Filipino tribes were the terror of the seas until crushed by the British Navy late in the 19th century.

The Pirates of Pentjak

A group of Dutch and English sailors/pirates are shipwrecked somewhere in Indonesia. There they befriend the natives. The Europeans teach the Malaysians how to build a small but seaworthy vessel; the Malaysians teach some Europeans the complex art of Pentjak Silat (see p. 96). Eventually, a handful of adventurers venture out with their schooner, some pistols and the mysterious fighting arts of Indonesia.

globe-trotting campaign quite feasible, allowing the GM to freshen up the campaign with new locales as often as he wishes. Adventure settings and understandable foes are as close as the daily paper.

Disadvantages: The greatest disadvantage of the modern campaign setting is the existence of firearms. This creates two problems. First of all, it reduces the effectiveness of martial artists: a character may be a wizard at twirling his nunchaku or katana, but a foe with a revolver can do him in easily, as graphically portrayed in *Raiders of the Lost Ark.* The second problem is an offshoot of the first; if one is going to face danger, it makes more sense to carry a gun than a naginata. PCs cannot be blamed if, after overcoming armed guards, they decide to pick up the guards' Uzis. This very reasonable course of action will, of course, turn the martial arts adventure into a Rambo-rama shoot-em-up. The only way for the GM to prevent this might be to present very outlandish situations that will clash badly with a realistic campaign.

Post-Apocalypse

The campaign is set on a world ravaged by a nuclear war or other devastating disaster. Civilization as we know it is falling apart, or has collapsed completely. Modern weapons soon disappear or become extremely scarce or expensive. National governments have been replaced by local warlords or complete anarchy - peaceful in some places, bloody in others. Brute force - or the ability to protect citizens from the brute force of others - is the main source of political power.

In this background, the martial arts acquire a level of importance unequalled since ancient times. When wars are fought with sticks and stones, a Kung Fu master can become king or savior to those around him. Martial arts schools can become wandering mercenary groups, selling their skills to the highest bidder, or carving out their own kingdoms.

Advantages: Modern weaponry ceases to be a determining factor, and characters will be forced to rely on their physical skills rather than their ability to use M-16s. The GM can recreate many Kung Fu or Western movie cliches with a fresh stage, the ruins of the modern world: the village becomes the remains of a skyscraper, and the marauding bandits can become savage mutants. Surviving bits of technology become threatening magic . . . the PCs can never be *sure* that all the guns are gone.

Disadvantages: The post-holocaust genre has its own range of cliches, such as marauding mutants, road warriors and wild pseudo-punk tribesmen. GMs will have to work hard to avoid miring the campaign in them - unless, of course, they choose to revel in them on purpose!

Near Future - Cyberpunk

In this setting, the nuclear holocaust never happened - but it might as well have. Corporations rule the world, and their agents, street samurai, fixers and netrunners, are a law unto themselves (for more information about this background, see *GURPS Cyberpunk* and *GURPS Cyberworld).* Martial artists fit easily into this world. Cyberpunk's seminal novel *Neuromancer* depicted a Trained by a Master bodyguard/assassin (Hideo) complete with Zen Archery and Blind Fighting.

In this high-tech universe, assassins and corporate soldiers are expected to be proficient both in armed and unarmed skills. Martial artists can have their skills augmented by expensive built-in gadgets (see p. 127). But un-augmented hand-to-hand specialists have the advantage of being independent from expensive (and detectable) weapons and other hardware.

Advantages: This setting allows a very wide variety of characters - not just martial artists - thus expanding the options for players and GM alike.

Disadvantages: The same as in a 20th-century setting. In an ultra-tech background, the number of lethal weapons will only increase in number. However, the GM can counter this by setting up situations in which weapons are detectable and prohibited - but the trained hand cannot be detected until it is used.

A Galaxy Far, Far Away

A science fiction campaign can be set in any possible future, as described in *GURPS Space.* There are several interesting possibilities for the martial arts. Blood sports may be common in some intergalactic cultures; the PCs could be gladiators of the future, either slaves or professional "entertainers." Among other things, they may deal with alien fighters (with exotic abilities and martial arts styles), null-grav battle, and exotic weapons like neural whips and vibroblades.

Another possibility is the "space opera" campaign, where force swords and ray guns are the only change from traditional martial arts themes; see *GURPS Lensman* for an example of a space opera setting that includes some martial arts elements. New styles could take advantage of high-TL gadgets, incorporating them into maneuvers and skills. Ninja would use chameleon suits and other

OLD WEST

Ever since the *Kung Fu* series aired on television, the combination of martial arts action and heroic Western gunfights has fascinated writers and moviemakers. GMs running either a **Martial Arts** or an **Old West** campaign can spice up either with an occasional crossover. Thousands of Chinese migrants toiled on the railroads and settled in Western cities; Kung Fu experts, sinister Tong enforcers and wandering monks may all be among them. As Japan began opening relations with the West, emissaries, some of them of the samurai class, traveled through the world, including the United States. This idea is developed in the film *Red Sun,* which teams up Toshiro Mifune and Charles Bronson as stern samurai and ruthless gunslinger.

Though this is less frequently treated in fiction, frontier-era Americans can also travel to Asia. American trading ships soon became common in several ports in the Far East. If a few gunslingers needed to get out of town quickly, signing aboard a trader may be the only option for them. After that, the clash between Colt Peacemaker and swirling nunchaku is not far off.

Arrows of Vengeance

The wealthy banker of a small town is shot dead - with a broad-headed arrow no Westerner can recognize. The PCs are hired by the banker's son, freshly returned from the Navy, to hunt down the murderer. Suspects include ranchers the banker was squeezing out of their lands, Indian marauders and greedy relatives.

The culprit, however, is a well-educated Japanese woman of samurai descent. Her target was the banker's *son,* who killed her father while on leave in Japan. She missed on the first attack, and is now plotting her next step. She is an expert in Kenjutsu and Kyudo, and is now living off the land.

Alternatively, the PCs could be relatives of the woman, looking for her either to stop her or (more likely) help her. Or perhaps a mixed party of Japanese and American PCs gets caught in a web of intrigue, deceit and murder as the banker's son and the vengeful samurai turn the town into a battlefield.

Tme Travel

Many martial artists would love to relocate in time. Traveling to the past to meet and learn from the greatest masters of history and legend is a favorite fantasy. More aggressive fighters might want to go back to cross swords (or staffs, or fists) with those masters.

For other time travelers, a highly skilled empty-hand combatant may be a desirable companion, especially if anonymity is preferred and high-tech equipment cannot be displayed openly in primitive times.

The Empty Hand of Time

Professor Marcus settled back on the chair. "Yes, I have managed to construct a space-time displacer. Why do I need you? Well, it so happens that my assistant, Gregor, made an unauthorized jaunt back, and I am sending you after him. The reason I need a group of karate masters is that there is a small drawback in the displacer. . . . Inorganics cannot be sent back in time. I am unable to send anything but your naked bodies; no equipment, no weapons.

"But then again, you are never un-armed, are you?"

ultra-tech tools. GMs planning this type of campaign should watch Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress,* followed by the movie this Japanese samurai classic inspired - *Star Wars.*

Advantages: In a cinematic campaign, ultra-tech devices will keep martial artists' special abilities from becoming unbalancing. Alien races and strange new worlds will inject novelty to old plotlines.

Disadvantages: In the face of hand weapons that can level city blocks, the ability to floor a foe with one blow becomes less awesome. As for the cyberpunk background, the GM can create situations that neutralize such weapons - but these must be carefully worked out or they may seem contrived.

Campaign Themes

After the setting has been decided, the GM should think about the tone of the campaign. What roles should most of the PCs play? What will be the focal point (if any) of the campaign?

Some campaigns have no central theme at all. The GM creates a setting, and the players create their characters, who are then turned loose in the game world, going from adventure to adventure. This system works better in some settings than others, but it tends to give an amorphous feeling to the campaign. For GMs who feel that a campaign is much like a collaborative novel (or series of novels), with some sort of central plot, some possibilities are offered below.

Before choosing the theme, the GM should know what types of characters will be participating in the campaign. If necessary, he can restrict the character types to those that would fit in the chosen theme.

The Quest

The PCs are trekking around the world (or country, or region) in search of something. This is a classic fantasy theme that fits very well in a martial arts campaign. A typical quest is the search for secret styles or maneuvers known only by ancient schools in hidden areas of the world. Teachers, magical weapons and the cure for strange diseases (or the Hand of Death) are other possible subjects for a quest. People, instead of objects, can also be quest goals; a prisoner may need rescuing, or someone must be killed to fulfill a vow of revenge. Or perhaps a message must be delivered, a geas fulfilled, an ancient talisman obtained or destroyed. . .

The PCs should all be *able* to do a lot of wandering; the goal of the quest will not be nearby. In pre-modern times, going from one valley to the next could be a quest. In the present, quests will probably involve travel across continents, sometimes through hostile areas. In the future, a quest could span the galaxy.

A good Enemy for the PCs could be someone who is after the same goal and is not above sabotaging the competition. Another type of adversary would be an opponent who is charged with preventing the PCs from reaching their goal ... he might be a fiend, or he might be highly principled. ("I am so sorry, but now that you have found our valley, we cannot permit you to leave . . . ever.") Either one will be a good source of adventures.

Advantages: The PCs have a concrete goal ahead of them, which makes it easier for the GM to direct the campaign and predict their actions. There will be plenty of adventure "hooks," the most direct one being clues toward the object of the quest. The classic false ending (the PCs have their goal in sight, or even think they have achieved it, but then find that they have been deceived), can be used once or twice to spice things up.

Disadvantages: What do the PCs do after they finish the quest? The easiest answer is to give them a related quest (for instance, after they find the princess, they have to get her back to safety), but eventually all loose ends will be tied up and the campaign will run dry. This does not *have* to be a problem; some people prefer that a campaign have a natural end!

Sources: Quests are the subject of many films: some good examples include *The Hidden Fortress* by Kurosawa and *Star Wars.* Although not related to the martial arts, the must-read for any GM planning a Quest campaign is J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings.*

To Serve and Protect

The characters are all policemen or some type of law officers. In ancient China and Japan, many martial artists worked as official peacekeepers (for more information, see **GURPS China** and **GURPS Japan).**

Present-day policemen are trained in some martial arts (see Police Hand-to-Hand, p. 97), but are unlikely to be dedicated martial artists, except in a cinematic campaign.

Most adventures will revolve around criminal investigations, riot control, and even firefighting (in old China and Japan, magistrates doubled as firemen). An interesting twist would be to use 20th-century cop-show plots in, for instance, 16th-century Japan. Vice lords would become gambling gangsters, bar fights would become sword battles between drunken samurai, and car chases would be replaced by mounted pursuit, or simple running. Ninja are appropriate antagonists, but can also be allies or even the heroes; many lords had ninja clans who were as loyal as his samurai, and did the jobs the samurai couldn't do.

Sources: Chuck Norris' *Code of Silence* is a typical martial artists/cop movie.

The Schoolboys

The PCs are members of a *dojo* or *kwoon,* either as students or instructors. The campaign revolves around the school and its progress. The setting should probably be either in the early 20th century or before, when schools were often the center of political intrigue, and when inter-school rivalry was often resolved with duels to the death or even all-out fights in the streets. Earlier still, the school could be a temple, and the PCs monks dedicated to its service.

A good deal of the campaign will be spent in learning and advancing. Roleplaying the highlights of some teaching sessions could be a lot of fun, particularly if there are rivalries within the school, with some factions trying to make the others look bad. Challenges to the PCs may involve the whole school. A typical situation involves a rival school trying to outshine or destroy

SURVIVORS

Post-holocaust adventure has often crossed paths with the martial arts in movies and books. It makes sense that if society (and the means to build modern weapons) collapses, those who have primitive combat skills will become powerful forces in the new order (see p. 144 for a more thorough description of this background).

Shelter, Shelter

The PCs find an old man who can guide them to an special shelter built just before the nukes hit the fan - a shelter full of non-perishable food, weapons, fuel and other equipment. And only the old man knows the code key to unlock the impregnable entrance.

The problem: standing between the PCs and the loot is a tribe of mutated savages, led by an insane martial arts master who has taught them as much as their irradiated minds could absorb. Another problem; the PCs are out of ammo for their few precious guns. Hopefully, they did not neglect their Karate classes.

Adventure Seeds

The adventure seeds described below include both straight **Martial Arts** adventures and crossovers.

Deadly Secret

The PCs meet a well-traveled mercenary and martial artist who claims he met an old man who kills foes at a distance, with a gesture. This ancient master lives on the outskirts of a remote village, in a country wracked by civil war; the mere's unit was obliterated and he left the country in a hurry, but he wants to meet the old man again. He asks the PCs for help to return. He thinks that they might convince the old man to pass on his secret techniques.

Traveling to the troubled area and finding the old man should be an adventure in itself. On arrival, however, the PCs discover that the old man is being hunted by a secret assassin cult. Apparently he was a former member, and the cult wishes to silence him. The assassins have connections with the forces controlling the area. If the PCs wish to help the old man, they must outwit an army as well as the team of killers combing the countryside. How well the heroes account for themselves will be the key to whether the old man will consider them worthy pupils.

Rogue Dragon

An evil necromancer has captured a Golden Dragon Man (p. 110) of legendary skill (at least twice the point total of the average PC). He controls the hero with a Geas spell. So far, the Dragon Man has helped torch a village, nearly killing several locals.

The PCs can be other Dragon Men sent to take care of their own, local officials or warriors trying to stop the necromancer, or mages confronting their rival. They have to stop not only the renegade monk, but the necromancer's minions. To make matters worse, unless the PCs can prove that the Dragon Man is an unwilling accomplice, the local government will use the incident as an excuse to persecute all members of the Dragon Temple!

the characters' *dojo.* Public tournaments, private duels or all-out "wars" may result. The government might suddenly outlaw the martial art practices of the school (if they weren't outlawed all along), forcing it underground; PCs will have to fight discovery, rooting out informers, planning and looking for meeting places, maybe even plotting to overthrow the evil government.

In the present, there will be less danger, but still plenty of action. Tournaments will not be as dangerous; in full-contact events, however, grudges can be carried out savagely. And alley fights against the silk-jacketed tools of the false Master Chang can be deadly. The school will be more likely to be the base of operations of the PCs rather than the source of adventures. In any setting, it will be useful as a place to keep the PCs together, and to introduce new PCs.

Advantages: The school theme gives incentives for the PCs to work as a team, with common goals.

Disadvantages: In the 20th century, martial arts schools as a whole (at least, the reputable ones) are quiet, orderly places. As such, they will not serve well as the central focus of an action-filled campaign.

Sources: Bruce Lee's movie, *The Chinese Connection,* is a perfect example of the school-centered campaign.

War Is Hell

The PCs are caught in the middle of a war. They can be soldiers fighting for either side (for the mercenary side to this campaign, see *Soldiers of Fortune,* below), civilians, or travelers trapped in the conflict.

In a pre-firearms historical setting (see above), martial artists will become a coveted resource, both as soldier-trainers and elite combat troops. Very wise and famous fighters may become officers in the army; the mass-combat system found in *GURPS Conan, Horseclans, Japan* or *Vikings* will be helpful in conducting strategic operations. Cinematic martial artists will have the chance to pit their skills against armored opponents, a greater challenge than your average local toughs or bandit gangs.

In this premodern setting, generals may try to hire skilled fighters, or, in a more repressive society, forcibly recruit them. PCs not wishing to join either army will have to escape both of them, traveling through a devastated countryside.

Alternatively, the PCs are innocent bystanders; maybe they are foreigners with no intention of becoming involved, or belong to a national minority with no loyalty to the ruling class that is running the war. In either case, to leave the area would be sensible . . . but difficult. Food will probably be scarce as armies requisition what they need or simply loot conquered areas. As troops are concentrated in some areas and deserters flee into the countryside, banditry will become very common, especially in the soldier-free areas the PCs may be trying to reach.

Since travel will be either horse- or foot-based, the refugees will face a long and dangerous journey.

In modern times, martial artists will face even more dangers. 17th-century Japan, for instance (see p. 9), when firearms were introduced, marked the beginning of the end for the samurai class; the master swordsmen charged heedlessly against solid musket fire and were mowed down by the hundreds. Samurai PCs may join the innovative minority among the Japanese nobility and start using and promoting firearms. Or they can look for weapons and tactics to reduce firearms' effectiveness. Composite bows, for instance, could shoot faster and more accurately than early black powder weapons; samurai horsemen could have shot thick enemy formations at a distance, beyond musket range. Of course, that would require samurai to learn hit-and-run tactics, which was against their character.

At TL5+, rapid-fire weaponry significantly reduces the value of martial artists in warfare, making it unlikely that they will be recruited for these skills alone. Still, espionage and other undercover assignments always need people who can make do without weapons. Martial artists can team up with *Special Ops* military experts.

Advantages: If the PCs are members of an army, they will have to obey their superiors' orders, thus allowing the GM to "guide" them to the next adventure. Almost all types of adventures can be fit to this campaign, from hack-and-slash to complex intrigue and mystery.

Disadvantages: The military campaign may prove to be too restrictive for some players. (If this happens, the GM can simply let them go AWOL and turn it into a "renegades" campaign.)

A Learning Experience

This type of campaign is closely related to the *Schoolboys* theme (see above). The difference is that the emphasis is on the characters' development as martial artists. The "campaign" will concentrate on their lives as they train in the martial arts and progress from being unskilled beginners to achieving true mastery.

Although this may sound less interesting than roleplaying skulking ninja or intrepid questers, the *roleplaying* possibilities are great. If the student PCs come from varied backgrounds (a fisherman's son, a young nobleman and a foreigner, for instance, or, in modern times, a college student, a street-smart kid and a starving artist), their interaction would be interesting. Also, there could be petty
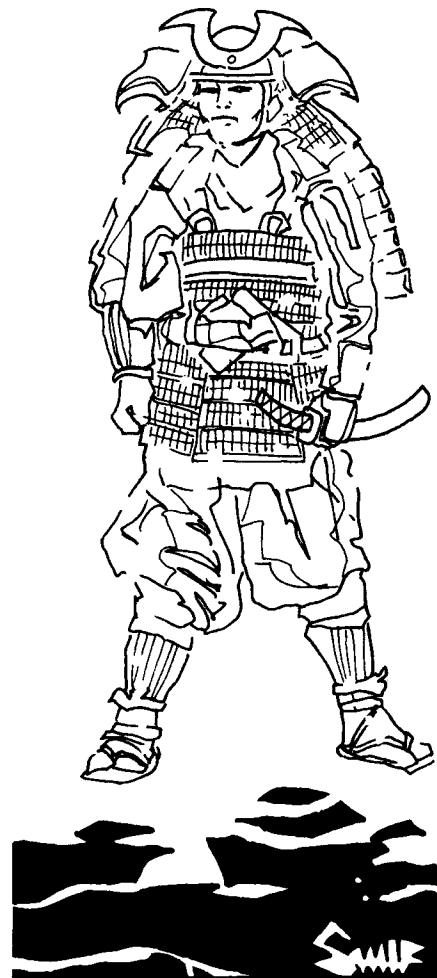
ADVENTURE SEEDS (CONTINUED)

Sword of Musashi

In a modern-day setting, a string of "Katana Murders" has plagued the campaign city. Most of the victims, who are both American and Japanese, are businessmen involved with a multinational chemical corporation. If the PCs become entangled, they will eventually confront the murderer - a ghostly samurai in armor, wielding a katana with unearthly skill, who identifies himself as Miyamoto Musashi (see p. 88)!

The specter is not interested in killing the PCs - at least at first. Further investigation reveals that the accidental poisoning of a reservoir, and the death or maiming of dozens of people in a small Japanese inlet, involved the corporation. The company's Yakuza ties are sending enforcers to protect the surviving executives - and to deal with anyone who knows too much.

Who controls the ghost of Musashi? The heroes will have to find out before they confront the spirit again.

CAMPAIGNS

Martial Arts in Other GURPS Backgrounds

The *GURPS* system has covered many other fictional backgrounds. Here are some suggestions for more existing *GURPS* books where GMs can introduce the martial arts rules.

Conan the Barbarian

The world of Conan is full of strange races and peoples, all of whom love battle and respect a warrior. Pancratium or its equivalent fits in with most civilized kingdoms. And sorcerer-ruled Hyboria has a clan of assassins who use special batons to attack pressure points (see *GURPS Conan,* p. 57).

Conan himself is skilled with many weapons, especially the sword and the bow, but not in any particular "style." He is simply very good. He will react well to anyone who seems to match his mettle, and might invite a skilled fighter to accompany him on an adventure.

Lensman

E. E. "Doc" Smith's *Lensman* universe (as described in its *GURPS* worldbook) is an ideal setting for a martial arts campaign. Every member of the Galactic Patrol and the Space Marines has martial arts training, as do the warriors of several alien races. Boarding actions by marines armed with space-axes are as common as beam weapon fire-fights, and the defensive force screens built into armor are vulnerable to slow-moving attacks, such as punches and kicks! This setting is also starkly cinematic, and characters who are Trained by a Master would fit right in, while *chi* powers would be a seamless complement to a Lensman's potent psionics.

rivalries between students (some of which might be resolved after hours, outside the *dojo),* tests of both skill and character, and a myriad of subplots involving the characters' personal lives.

Advantages: There will be less traveling and consequently less paperwork for the GM. This campaign might never leave its city, town or village. PCs will have to do some serious roleplaying and thinking, instead of pure hack-and-slash. This is a great campaign for players who like to let their *characters* interact.

Disadvantages: It will be a real challenge - both for the GM and the players - to keep this campaign stimulating. GMs will have to either know from experience or do some intensive research about teaching methods and anecdotes to use during the game. Action-oriented players may find the whole thing boring.

Sources: The Karate Kid movie is a capsule form of this campaign.

Soldiers of Fortune

The PCs are mercenaries, using their skills to make a living. In a pre-modern campaign, martial artists will have plenty of opportunities to peddle their skills. Even today, hand-to-hand specialists are valued as bodyguards or bounty hunters, particularly in areas where guns are strictly controlled by the government.

The characters will have to build up a good Reputation in order to attract customers. Alternatively, the campaign can start with the PCs-for-hire working for a semi-permanent employer, who could be a Patron, Ally, or fellow player-character. A famous pro boxer could have a small retinue of highly trained security men, for instance. Or, if their skills are illegal, the PCs can be highly paid "guerrilla teachers," in constant danger.

Advantages: By controlling the "market" for mercenaries, the GM can easily hook the players into adventures. Any mix of action and intrigue can be offered.

Disadvantages: Selling one's talents runs counter to the philosophical ideals behind many martial arts styles, although many historical martial artists did act as mercenaries or bodyguards.

Sources: Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai.*

Vigilante Justice

This is a staple of fiction: the characters are private crime fighters, using their fantastic skills to battle justice on the edge of the law. Their goal is to deal with the crimes that the police can't or won't touch. In many cases, they will be in as much danger from the authorities as from the outlaws.

Vigilantes must hide their identity, to avoid both criminal retribution and police persecution. The costumed vigilante belongs more to the realm of comic books than movies, but there are examples there, too.

A variation of the theme is the martial arts troubleshooter, who goes around helping those in need. He (or they) usually acts on his own, not quite stepping outside the law, but not asking for its help, either. The origins of this type of character go back to ancient China, when martial artists wandered around the countryside like the Asian equivalent of knights-errant (see *The Chinese Way,* above). Some Japanese *ronin* also served good causes, at least in popular fiction. Thus, this type of campaign is good for almost any background.

Advantages: The GM has a wide body of fiction and movies from which to draw inspiration. The campaign will be one of high adventure, very satisfying to swashbuckling players. It can travel widely, or stay in one city, as the GM and players prefer.

Disadvantages: Adventures may degenerate into endless strings of fights unless the GM introduces some mystery and investigation elements, which may not appeal to action-oriented players.

Sources: The masked vigilante theme is a cornerstone of comic books; the classic example of a martial-artist superhero is DC Comics' Batman. (Actually, Batman, with his dark costume and his belt full of gadgets, is a high-tech ninja!) The wandering adventurer theme is found in numerous movies. In *Return of the Dragon,* Bruce Lee plays a typical troubleshooter. The *Kung Fu* series also follows this theme, as does the Kurosawa movie *Sanjuro.*

CAMPAIGNS

Creating NPCs for Martial Arts Campaigns

Cannon-fodder

Non-player characters for *Martial Arts* campaigns are a bit harder to create than normal NPCs; there are skills and maneuvers to keep up with. To keep the paperwork at a minimum while maintaining balance, "cannon-fodder" NPCs should be proficient in only one style. The GM may give them only the primary skills of the style, and skip all others. This will keep things simple; most NPCs are unlikely to be very advanced students, anyway.

"Personality" NPCs

Major NPCs, on the other hand, should be treated as normal characters in all respects, including a detailed martial arts repertoire. These are the characters who will become the allies, rivals or chief foes of the party. Make them up with a full-scale character sheet, and think about their personalities. To make them more interesting (especially in a cinematic campaign) they can be given appropriate quirks, such as:

Reliance on one particular maneuver, which is known at an incredibly high level.

Reliance on an unusual weapon. The NPC could be expert with this weapon, or (for a silly campaign) hopelessly clumsy.

Great loyalty to his particular style, school or philosophy.

Particular dislike for the users of a certain style. This may be expressed as a desire to best them in combat - or a refusal to have anything to do with them.

A fondness for aphorisms or inscrutable sayings. "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" A book on Zen is great research material for this. (GMs: If a player character does too much of this, tell him he has developed an Odious Personal Habit.)

Wanted!

The PCs are being pursued by a very powerful foe, be it the authorities, a ninja clan or the Mob. The heroes cannot stay in one place for long, and they can *never* let down their guard. This campaign type is sometimes combined with the *Quest* (above), where the heroes are searching for something or someone while being hunted by a third party. Perhaps the object of their quest is the one (teacher, weapon, secret, battleground) that will give them a chance of final escape or a fair fight.

This type of campaign works well in most settings, although in futuristic backgrounds the characters may have problems escaping high-tech pursuit devices. The enemy should be powerful enough that the characters know that to stand and fight would be suicidal. The *Wanted!* campaign works best with small groups, even with only one PC!

Advantages: As the PCs travel around, they may get involved in a number of other situations, even as they try to elude their pursuers. Ambitious GMs may use dozens of adventure types, from straight martial arts mayhem to crime/mystery to horror, while keeping the menacing enemy in the background, ready to strike. Players who like variety will enjoy the continuous changes of setting and pace. For those who like that kind of thing, the PCs can be criminals, on the run from the authorities.

Disadvantages: It can be very difficult to run a *Wanted!* campaign with a large group; intra-party bickering can become fierce. GMs will have a lot of work in keeping things fresh, not to mention working out each new setting as the PCs travel about. The players will never forget that the GM is pulling the strings.

Sources: The *Kung Fu* TV series, or the *Kamui* comic book.

Warriors of the Night

This is the ninja campaign - all the PCs are part of a secret ninja clan, or they are on the opposite side, hunting the dark assassins down. Depending on the GM's opinion of the ninja, they can be mercenary assassins for hire, faithful servants of their Japanese lord, freedom fighters who occasionally hire their services to the rich and powerful, or a sinister cult with its own hidden agenda. There were many different ninja clans in historical Japan, and some of them were at odds, because of loyalty to warring employers or long-standing blood feuds. In a cinematic campaign, the GM can create two ninja clans, one "good" or "neutral" and the other "evil," and have the PCs choose sides - or even better, get caught in the middle.

In historical Japan, ninja PCs must keep their affiliation a secret, the alternative being imprisonment or death for "bad" ninja, loss of effectiveness for "good" ones. They will be up against trained soldiers who for the most part will be as fanatical and willing to die as they. Employers will be wealthy merchants, noblemen, even the *shogun* himself. Assignments will vary from reconnaissance missions to information gathering to kidnapping, assassination, sabotage, and commando raids. In many cases, the employer will have no loyalty to his ninja tools, and will seek to betray them when the job is done.

In modern times, ninja cults may still exist. Some may work for the benefit of mankind, but most likely they will work for money. They will probably use modern weapons and tools, even to the exclusion of traditional ones. This will be necessary if they are to be successful, since the "enemy" will probably have automatic weapons, high-tech electronic surveillance equipment, and other resources. In a cinematic campaign, however, the ninja will be masters of many strange abilities, and will be able to deal with modern technology even if they stick to ancient methods.

Another possibility for this type of campaign would be to make the PCs renegade ninja, also called *nukenin.* This becomes a variation of the *Wanted!* campaign. Renegade ninja in historical Japan face huge risks; they are hunted by the most powerful underworld organization of the times, and will be shunned, or even killed, by the rest of the population, should their identity be discovered.

In modern times, this type of PC will have an easier time when dealing with society at large. On the other hand, nobody will believe they are being hunted down by ninja - until it is too late. A ninja clan, or even a lone assassin, is terrifying enough to be used in a **Horror** campaign (see sidebar, pp. 142-3).

In a realistic campaign, GMs should take note that Ninjutsu is currently taught in many schools in the United States, and is becoming a respected martial arts style, with a focus on self-defense and survival. Some schools are simply attempting to cash in on the ninja craze, but many are honest places where Japan-trained instructors teach the taijutsu style of combat (see p. 93), as well as the basics of ninja philosophy. GMs and players trying to create real-life ninja should research those schools.

The Quest for the Master

When a PC wants to learn a new style, an ancient and honorable sub-plot can enter the campaign. This is the Quest for the Master - the one teacher who can impart the wisdom and training that the would-be student must have.

This makes much more sense in a historical campaign (when teachers were rare and some schools were outlawed) or in a cinematic campaign (where there is no Yellow Pages listing for "Hand of Death, Teachers.")

Even in a modern-day, realistic campaign, a quest is possible. In this case, *finding* the Master might be easy . . . but convincing him that you are worthy to learn his art might be much harder. The Master may set tasks, and the tasks may not seem to make much sense . . . they may even seem evil or illegal. (And perhaps they are! No one ever said that all Masters were good people. How the would-be student reacts to this is a role-playing challenge.)

Another variation: the PCs' *current* Master announces that he can teach them no more at their current level of understanding. He sends them on a mission of some sort, with the promise of more training when they return. Or perhaps they have learned everything that *he* can teach them, and he sends them to seek out *his* Master . . .

The traditional Master appears incredibly old. He dresses and acts in a wholly traditional fashion - except when he chooses to be eccentric. He appears to be frail, but shows great prowess when the student least expects it. He always knows what the student needs, and this is usually just the opposite of what the student wants. He may have the audacity to end the student's training by vanishing or dying.

That's the stereotype! The Master is never what the student expects . . . but the Master described above is exactly what the *player* may expect, if he reads martial-arts fiction. So change the script.

The GM can surprise the players by letting the Master be young. Or female. Or hopelessly alcoholic. Or stupid (too many kicks in the head?). Or *evil.* Or greedy. ("Sure, I'll teach you the Seven Secret Kicks. That'll be $30,000, in gold. For each of you.") The Master is never what the student expects . . .

Silly Rules

GMs running a slapstick campaign (see main text) can use some of the rules below (some of which first appeared in *Special Ops*) to simulate some of the themes found in late night Kung Fu flicks.

Bulletproof Nudity

Player characters can increase PD by undressing. Wearing a ragged T-shirt is PD 3; stripping to the waist is PD 5; total nudity is PD 7. These are +1 for female PCs.

Advantages: Ninja PCs will all have similar goals, making it easier to cooperate. Since the term "ninja" has been applied to so many different groups, the GM can use it to label a martial arts super-team, a mere organization, or anything in between. The ninja make an interesting (and lethal) enemy.

Disadvantages: Characters may end up being too similar, and the GM may end up facing "the Legion of Super-Clones" syndrome. (To fight this, emphasize personality and roleplaying.) Ninja are usually perceived as evil, so some players may not want to portray them.

Sources: Chuck Morris' *The Octagon,* and a myriad of others.

Gun Control Law

The enemy will rarely use guns. When they possess them at all, they will threaten the PCs with them and will never defend against attacks meant to knock firearms away. Most of the time, the bad guys will only use melee weapons.

Martial Artists Anonymous

Every NPC the characters encounter - from the local greengrocer to the shoeshine boy - will have Karate and Judo at 16+, and will be itching to use them, both for and against the PCs. Any attack will be heralded by loud kiais. Every few minutes the party will hear shouting and loud thumps, as of falling bodies; if they investigate, they will find a routine domestic disturbance being settled by kicks and chops.

Imperial Stormtrooper Marksmanship Academy

If the Gun Control Law (above) is broken, the bad guys never hit with the first shot or burst of automatic fire. This always lands close enough to the PC that he is aware he is under fire, but never does damage.

Larger Than Life

The optional Stun rules apply to the PCs (and select NPCs) but not to most normal mortals (including cannon fodder attackers). In effect, this gives the heroes 60 or more "hit points" against their enemies' ten or so - sounds like old roleplaying times, doesn't it?

Kung Fu for Laughs

Another focus for a martial arts campaign is the "silly" or humorous style. Martial arts movies are often rich in unintentional humor, due to poor translation jobs and even poorer scripts. The stereotypical Kung Fu movie plot consists of a string of fights barely connected by the flimsiest of plots. Common lines include such jewels as: "So you wanna fight, ah?" and "You don't look so tough to me!" Some of these films even include *intentional* humor.

The silly campaign can use any settings or theme, but the situations and characters should be exaggerated cliches. Wherever the PCs go, they will face people who will want to fight them, and for some reason all these foes will be accomplished martial artists. The bad guys will have no clear motivations, other than trying to prove their superiority by beating the heroes up.

The optional Stun rules (pp. 67-68) should be used. Most of the time, nobody should be seriously hurt. Both PCs and NPCs should have a mixture of high skill and inopportune clumsiness. Before any maneuver is attempted, the GM could roll 2d-12 to determine a DX penalty for that round. Results should be high on slapstick and low on damage; if someone was attempting a Flying Jump Kick, have him go through a plate glass window and emerge intact, except for his ego. A missed Power Blow could leave the "hero" with his fist helplessly stuck in a wall. GMs should award character points to PCs (or players) who can move their lips out of synch with their words to mimic bad dubbing.

This type of campaign is not for everyone, and is unlikely to last beyond a few game sessions. The GM should consider his player's tolerance for cheap Kung Fu flicks. If they cannot sit through more than one bad martial arts movie at a time, this idea would work best as a one-shot adventure - perhaps a change of pace for another campaign.

GLOSSARY

Each word is followed by its pronunciation (in brackets), and its place of origin (in parenthesis). C stands for China, J for Japan, and M for Malaysia or Indonesia; other countries are named in full.

bokken [boh-KEHN] (J): A wooden practice katana, heavy enough to be a weapon in its own right.

bushi [BOO-shee] (J): A member of the warrior class of Japan (not only noblemen, but commoner soldiers as well). Thus, *bushido* meant "the warrior's way," or the code of behavior appropriate to a warrior.

chambara [cham-BAH-rah] (J): A drama focusing on heroic, highly skilled combat.

chi [CHEE] (C): Literally, "breath"; inner energy found in all beings. Called ki [key] in Japanese.

chu'an fa [CHOO-an-fah] (C): Boxing or unarmed combat techniques.

daisho [DIE-shoh] (J): Paired swords, the two swords worn together that were the badge of the samurai.

dan [DAHN] (J): Literally, "step." Grade system for martial artists who have achieved black belt level (First Dan); each Dan represents one higher level, Tenth Dan being the usual maximum. Originally used in Judo, the Dan grade system is now used for most Asian martial arts.

do [DOH] (J): "Way" or "path;" applied to the achievement or mastery of any skill; also to highly artistic martial arts.

dojo [DOH-joh] (J): Martial arts school (see also *kwoon* and *salle,* below).

gi [GEEH] (J): Loose jacket and pants, usually white, used in the practice of the martial arts.

gum [GOOM] (K): Korean longsword, roughly equivalent to the Japanese katana.

guru [GOO-roo] (M): A wise man; a teacher of martial arts.

hakama [HAH-kah-mah] (J): A divided skirt laced over the kimono for a trousers-like appearance. Worn as part of the standard costume for aikido and some other martial arts.

JKD: Common U.S. abbreviation for Jeet Kune Do.

-jutsu [JOOT-soo] (J): A combat-oriented technique or style.

-ka [-kah] (J): A practitioner of a martial art. A judoka, for instance, is a student of judo. It is improper to append -ka to any term except a Japanese one. Note also that a sumo wrestler is a *sumotori,* not a "sumoka."

kata [KAH-tah] (J): A series of practice movements learned by the student like a dance to learn advanced skills.

ki [KEY] (J): Life force or spirit. See *chi.*

kiai [KEY-ay] (J): Martial arts shout that is delivered when striking, useful in channeling energy.

kwoon [KWOON] (C): Martial arts school.

Mestre [MEHS-treh] (Brazilian Portuguese): Master, teacher of martial arts.

ninja [NEEN-jah] (J): Historically, a member of one of several secretive spy/assassin/saboteur clans of feudal Japan. More loosely, anyone who practices ninjutsu (see p. 93).

obi **[OH-bee]** (J): A sash or belt tied around the kimono at the waist. Used in the martial arts to show the level of advancement of a student.

ronin [ROH-neen] (J): Literally, "wave-man." A clanless samurai who had either been disowned by the clan lord or whose clan had been wiped out or abolished.

salle [SAL] **(French):** Fencing or Savate school.

Sensei [SEN-say] (J)]: Martial arts teacher.

shinai [shee-NIE (J): A bamboo practice sword.

Sifu [SEE-foo] (C): Martial arts teacher.

sumo [SOO-moh] (J): Traditional Japanese wrestling, still a very popular sport.

sumotori [SOO-moh-toh-ree] (J): A practitioner of sumo (see above).

7KD: Common U.S. abbreviation for Tae Kwon Do.

tao [DOW] (C): The Way or Path (see p. 7); learning the Tao of a particular skill or trade implies achieving total mastery in it.

tatami [tah-TAH-mee] (J): Straw or wooden mat used in Japanese houses. Most traditional dojos are covered by a wooden tatami. Students are not allowed to wear shoes on it; they must also bow at the edge before entering it.

tenglokok [TENG-loh-kock] (M): Turban-like headcloth traditionally worn by Malaysian martial artists.

tong [TONG] (C): A Chinese society, guild or gang. Not necessarily either secret or criminal - but often both.
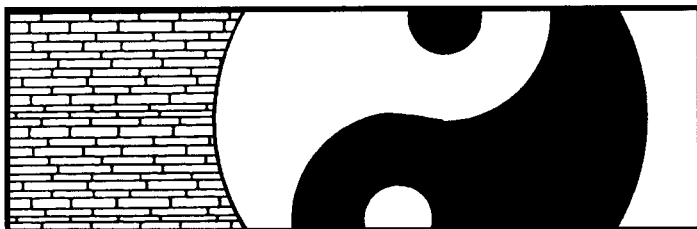
yin/yang (Asian): Philosophical concept relating to paired and opposing, yet interrelated forces; its symbol is used by several martial art styles. A yin/yang symbol appears above. Also, medical treatment by acupuncture, massage and moxa burning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Non-Fiction Books

The following books provide useful information on martial arts history, styles and background.

Ancient Art of Ninja Warfare, by Stephen K. Hayes.

The Complete Martial Arts, by Paul Crompton.

Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts, by Donn F. Draeger and Robert W. Smith.

Rung Fu: History, Philosophy and Technique, by David Chow and Richard Spangler.

Weapons and Fighting Arts of the Indonesian Archipelago, by Donn F. Draeger.

Fiction Books

This selection can give GMs and players some ideas for characters and adventures.

Blackcollar, by Timothy Zahn. Elite troops, futuristic Special Operations forces with bionic implants and ninja training, battle conquering aliens in the future.

The *James Bond* novels, by Ian Fleming, *You Only Live Twice* in particular.

Marathon Man, by William Goldman, and its sequel, *Brothers.* One of the main characters of this thriller is a hand-to-hand expert.

Modesty Blaise, by Peter O'Donnell, and its sequels, *A Taste For Death, Sabre-Tooth, The Impossible Virgin, I Lucifer,* among others. The characters, situations and action of these novels are perfect models for adventure roleplaying.

Ninja, by Eric Van Lustbader, and its sequel *The Miko.* These works are chock-full of cinematic abilities and ninja gadgets.

Comic Books

Comic books are full of martial arts themes. Below is a sampling. Several American companies are translating and marketing Japanese and Chinese comics. They are fantastic campaign sourcebooks.

Badger, First Comics. Full of martial arts action mixed with biting humor. *Badger's* creator, Mike Baron, is a martial arts practitioner and emphasizes detail in the comics he writes. (Since Badger's patron is a genuine wizard, this is a fantasy crossover.)

Daredevil, Marvel Comics.

Green Arrow, DC Comics.

Kamui, First Comics.

Lone Wolf and Cub, First Comics.

Ninja High School, Antarctic Press.

Power Man and Iron Fist, Marvel Comics. Out of print now, but worth the price of getting back issues.

The X-Men, Marvel Comics.

Movies

There are far too many martial arts movies to list here. The number of *good* martial arts movies, on the other hand, is much smaller. This is still far from an exhaustive list.

Bloodsport

The Chinese Connection: This Bruce Lee movie pits him against an evil Japanese school during the early 20th century.

Code of Silence

Dragon: A biographical account of the life of Bruce Lee. Shows some of the difficulties faced by martial arts masters who wish to develop and teach new styles.

Enter the Dragon: The classic martial arts film by Bruce Lee. A must see.

Fists of Fury

The Hidden Fortress

The Karate Kid

The Kentucky Fried Movie: GMs wishing to run a silly campaign need look no further for inspiration. One segment of this movie is a beautiful spoof of *Enter the Dragon.*

Kickboxer

Man with the Golden Gun

Mortal Kombat: An extreme case of a four-color martial arts movie, inspired by the popular video game of the same name!

The Octagon: A terrorist ninja camp is depicted in this Chuck Norris movie.

Rapid Fire: Stars Bruce Lee's son, Brandon.

Return of the Dragon

Sanjuro

Silent Rage: An interesting mixture of martial arts action and horror. Chuck Norris pits his skills against a man who cannot be killed.

The Seven Samurai: A classic Kurosawa samurai movie that was later used as the basis for a western, *The Magnificent Seven.*

Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, Return of the Jedi: It's got sword-twirling warriors, a quest for self-advancement, ancient teachers and mystical abilities - don't let the spaceships and rayguns fool you, these are martial arts movies!

Street Fighter: Another four-color martial arts movie with a video game theme.

You Only Live Twice: James Bond (Sean Connery) becomes a ninja.

Television Shows

The Green Hornet. Not a martial arts show as such, this short-lived TV series gave Bruce Lee his first American acting role: Kato, the Green Hornet's high-kicking chauffeur.

Kung Fu. This cult classic depicts the adventures of a Shaolin monk in the American Old West. Excellent source of cinematic adventure and "kung fu philosophy."

Magazines

These publications are great sources for new martial art styles, history, philosophy, weapons and moves.

Black Belt

Inside Karate

Inside Kung-Fu

Karate Illustrated

Ninja

MARTIAL ARTS RECORD) Sheet   Styles Mastered _____

Player's Name _____
Character's Name _____

Maneuver	Skill	Damage/Effect	Other Information

Active Defenses

Skill	Modified Parry Roll

Combinations

_____

Cinematic Skills   Effect   Notes

Record Sheet

MARTIAL ARTS CAMPAIGN Plan

GM: _____

Date: _____

Campaign name: _____. Campaign's starting year: _____

Rate game time passes: _____

Cinematic rules in use, if any: _____
_____

Optional Stun rules in use, if any:. _____
_____

Campaign setting: time and place _____ (Suggestion: give players a map of the area.)

Campaign's Tech Level: _____Differences from this TL as described in *GURPS Basic Set:*
_____

Player Character information:

Starting point value allowed for PC_____Base wealth for PCs: _____

Language(s) the PCs will need: _____

Especially useful/useless character types: _____

Especially appropriate/inappropriate professions: _____

Advantages and skills that will be especially useful in this campaign: _____
_____

Advantages and skills that will be worthless in this campaign: _____

Disadvantages that will be discouraged in this campaign, either because they are fatal or because they won't really be disadvantages: _____

Appropriate Patrons (and base value): _____

Appropriate Enemies (and base value): _____

Special disciplines available in this campaign:

Psionics? (How powerful? How common?) _____ _____

Magic? (How powerful? How common?)_____ _____

Rules variants: New skills, advantages, disadvantages (summarize) _____
_____

Rules variants: Changes in combat rules (summarize). _____
_____

Martial Artist information:

Are there legal restrictions on the martial arts? _____

PC styles allowed: _____
_____

Styles known to exist, but not available to PCs: _____
_____

Are there styles and maneuvers not listed in the book? (Add descriptions on separate sheet.) _____

Magic (if it exists):

General mana level:_____Are there areas of other mana levels? How large and how common are they?
_____

Are any optional magic rules in use? _____

How common are magic and mages? Are there wizards who are *not* martial-arts masters? _____

Are magic-users well distributed? If not, where are they most likely to be found? _____

How common are magical items?_____

Does quick-and-dirty enchantment exist in this world? _____

Are there active deities or Higher Powers?_____

Is there any special clerical magic?_____ _____

What spells from the Spell List are known in this campaign? _____

Are there any "common knowledge" spells to be added to the list?_____

The GM should also provide the players with details on: new styles and maneuvers, and their availability; "house rules" for character creation; important organizations; and history, if it is not a straight historical campaign.

MASTERS OF DEATH

Flying fists and devastating kicks . . . hands as deadly as swords. This is *GURPS Martial Arts*. From silent and deadly ninja to vigilante crimefighters who take justice into their own trained hands, *Martial Arts* has it all!

This book presents detailed rules for expert hand-to-hand combat. You don't just do "a kick" or "a punch." You can specify a spinning back kick, followed by a leg sweep and an arm lock! No problem . . . except for your foe!

Abilities are divided into *realistic* — for those who want to accurately portray martial arts as they really are — and *cinematic,* to simulate the on-screen action of heroes like Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris, or even the Saturday afternoon Kung-Fu Theater!

Also included are sections on the history of the martial arts, and on special martial-arts weapons.
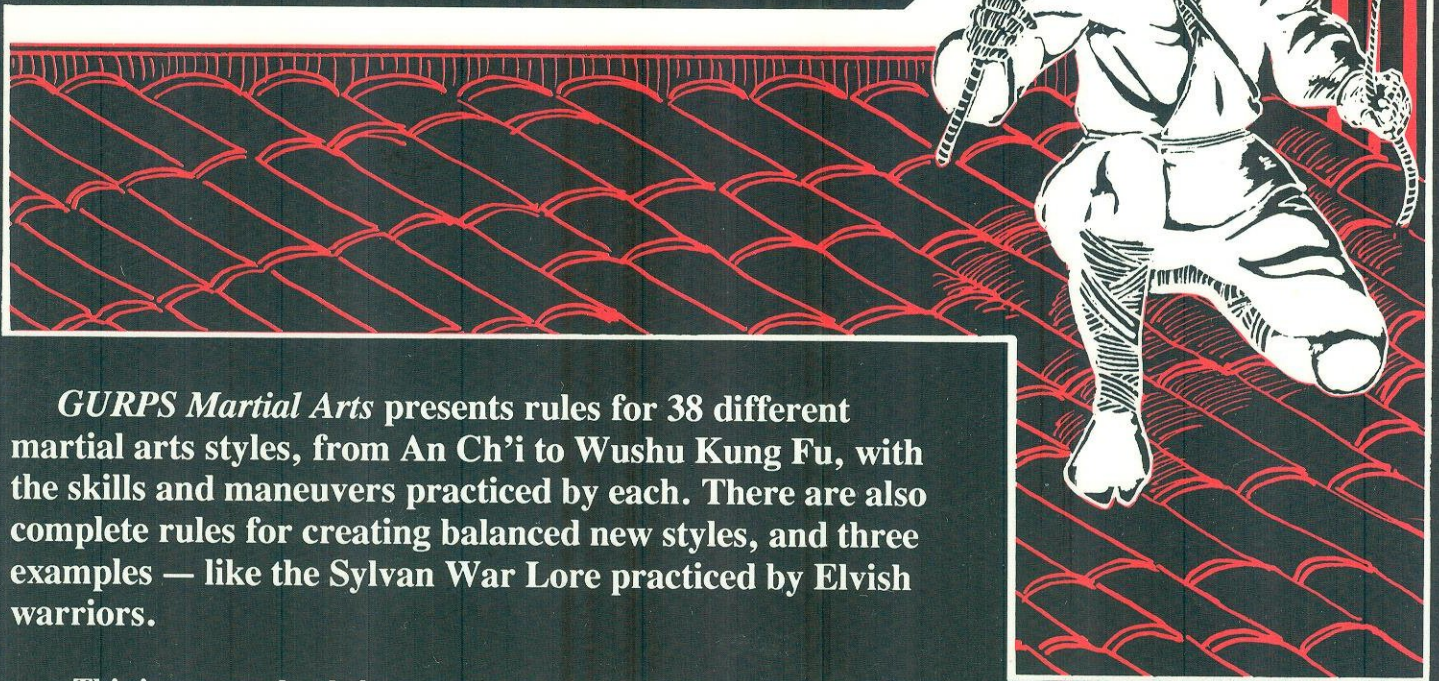
GURPS Martial Arts presents rules for 38 different martial arts styles, from An Ch'i to Wushu Kung Fu, with the skills and maneuvers practiced by each. There are also complete rules for creating balanced new styles, and three examples — like the Sylvan War Lore practiced by Elvish warriors.

This is a sourcebook for use with the *GURPS Basic Set*. No other books are needed.

Written by C.J. Carella
Edited by Steve Jackson and Loyd Blankenship
Illustrated by Rick Harris and Carl Anderson

STEVE JACKSON GAMES