



# PULP VILLAINS: PERILS OF THE ORIENT

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# PULP VILLAINS: *PERILS OF THE* ORIENT

by  
C.L. Werner

*Through the fog of pain that pounded against the inside of his skull, Detective John Brandon tried to focus his*

*senses, struggling to make sense of his surroundings.*

*As hard as he tried, he couldn't. He'd been tracking a scurvy Chinaman named Liu Hsien through the dank, dripping tunnels that ran beneath Hoptown. Liu Hsien was*

*the last link in a white slavery ring that had been operating from Hoptown, kidnapping young women and turning them into opium-addicts before selling them to Sal 'the Crow' Corvino's mob to staff their brothels up in Lincoln Heights.*

*Brandon closed his eyes, trying to remember what had happened. His men had raided the dirty little curio*



*shop Hsien used as a front for his slimy operation. The slavers hadn't given up without a fight, but Brandon had made certain his squad went in expecting trouble. Shotguns worked wonders when it came to evening*

*the odds, especially in the warren of grimy basements and tunnels that spread beneath the curio shop. The cops were still mopping up the last of Hsien's thugs when Brandon spotted the ring leader himself dart to one of the basement walls. The Chinaman's*

*nimble fingers quickly worked a hidden catch and the wall slid aside, Hsien swiftly darting into the opening behind it. There was no time for Brandon to call to his men. He lunged at the opening as the wall started to slide back into place, the secret door slamming shut inches behind him. He hesitated for a moment, wondering if he could figure out a way to open the door from his side and jam it open for his men, but the footsteps of the fleeing Hsien echoed back to him from down the tunnel and he decided he didn't have the time.*

*He was on his own.*

*Brandon groaned at his own impulsiveness. With some of the city's finest backing his play, things might have turned out different. Instead, he'd plunged after Hsien by himself, through dank tunnels dripping with slime and stagnant water. He couldn't begin to make sense of the twisting, turning maze, simply chasing after the Chinaman. If he lost sight of Hsien, he knew he might never find his way out.*

*Then, from the dripping shadows, dark shapes had sprung at them. He heard Hsien's frightened squeal as the slaver was crushed to the brick floor by a wiry man dressed in black. Other attackers fell on Brandon, but he beat them back with his pistol, cracking the butt of the gun against shaven skulls. Then one of the flailing fists of his attackers had planted itself in his stomach. The*

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*detective doubled over in pain. Dimly he was aware of a firm hand closing against his shoulder. There was a sensation of pressure, then everything faded to black.*

*Now he found himself in some wild, impossible scene straight out of the Arabian Nights. The filthy tunnels he had been chasing Hsien through were gone. In their place was a monolithic hall, elaborately carved wooden pillars supporting a painted ceiling where dragons and fiery lions prowled. The walls of the hall were hidden behind curtains of silk and teakwood screens, the floor covered in a fabulous tile mosaic. Claw-footed bronze braziers illuminated the scene, their smoke casting a dim haze across the painted ceiling. At the end of the hall, Brandon saw an enormous seat, almost a throne such was its extravagance and enormity. The sides of the chair were cast to resemble writhing Chinese dragons, their fanged mouths forming the feet of the chair, their intertwined legs forming the seat and back. The detective marvelled at the fantastic creatures, for they seemed cast from gold, their talons and teeth picked out in pearl, their gleaming eyes crafted from rubies.*

*Brandon tried to move closer to the opulent throne, but found that his arms were held securely behind him. He turned his head and found a burly Asian standing to either side of him. The men were darker in complexion*

*than the Chinese of Hoptown, with a more compact and weathered look about them. Each man wore Eastern garb, black pants and a black tunic with long, flowing sleeves. A yellow sash circled their waists and Brandon could see a ripple-bladed knife with an ornamented hilt tucked beneath the elaborate sashes. The faces of the men were stoic, as expressionless as stone, but Brandon could see the cruel, sadistic ember that smouldered in their eyes.*

*Just past his own captors, Brandon saw Liu Hsien, the Chinese slaver held securely between another set of the black-garbed guards. Hsien's sallow features had paled into an ivory hue and sweat dripped from his body. Brandon was struck by the look of abject terror that filled the criminal's face, a look such that even twelve years on the beat had not prepared him to see. The detective hastily turned away, feeling Hsien's terror beginning to infect him. He didn't want to know what made the Chinaman afraid, and he tried not to let his imagination consider the question.*

*Movement at the edge of the chamber drew both Brandon's and Hsien's attention. The silk drapery was pulled aside and a lithe figure stepped into the room followed by another pair of black-garbed guards. Brandon felt his pulse quicken as the figure emerged fully into the light, revealing a raven-haired woman, her exotic Chinese*

features framed by long, flowing tresses. A scarlet dress embroidered with writhing serpents clung to her lean figure, accenting every voluptuous curve, her slender legs visible through the slit that ran up the side of the dress. The woman's intense eyes swept across the hall, lingering for a moment on Brandon, before turning toward Hsien. Her eyes narrowed as she saw the slaver and she turned to one of the guards. Brandon could not hear what command she gave the man, but whatever she said had the guard sprinting from the room. She looked back at Hsien, then allowed a final, lingering gaze in Brandon's direction before striding across the hall toward the throne.

Brandon watched the woman walk across the hall, understanding that whatever was going on, whoever she was, she was in charge here. At least she didn't appear to be any friend of Liu Hsien. That might work in his favour, once he found out whatever was going on. The woman walked to the throne and stopped. Instead of seating herself in the golden chair, she adopted a position beside it. The alarm bells started to go off in Brandon's mind. Apparently she wasn't in charge after all. Somehow, he felt that his chances had just taken a dramatic turn for the worse.

From somewhere beyond the shrouded walls, a gong sounded, the booming note echoing through the gloom. Hsien

gave a moan of horror and Brandon knew that whatever it was that the slaver feared, it was not going to remain unknown much longer. Long minutes passed, minutes filled with a brooding silence, only Hsien's moans intruding upon the quiet. Brandon could feel the tension in the air, the horrible expectancy. The only thing he could liken it to was the time he'd been pressed face-first against an alley wall waiting for one of Corvino's gunsels to saw him in half with a chopper. He'd managed to get out of that situation, but he didn't think luck would be so kind a second time.

Behind the silk curtains, Brandon heard a pair of hands clap together twice. One of the swarthy guards hurried to that section of wall, pulling the silk drape back even as he knelt and abased himself. The guards holding Brandon and Hsien also bowed their heads, Hsien following their example. The detective shook aside the hand that pressed against his neck, trying to bow his head. Whatever was coming, he wanted to meet it head on. The gesture of defiance drew the attention of the woman beside the throne, but he could not read the expression in the look she gave him.

A shape emerged from the shadows behind the curtain. As the man came into the light, Brandon saw that he was a Chinaman dressed in a long yellow robe, red dragons crawling across the garment. A black hat topped with a

tassel covered the man's head. The face beneath the hat was thin, almost skull-like, with prominent cheeks and deep-set eyes. The nose was small and set close to the face, the mouth an almost lipless slit across the bottom of his face. Long black moustaches drooped down over his narrow chin. The overall impression was one of malevolence and terrible power.

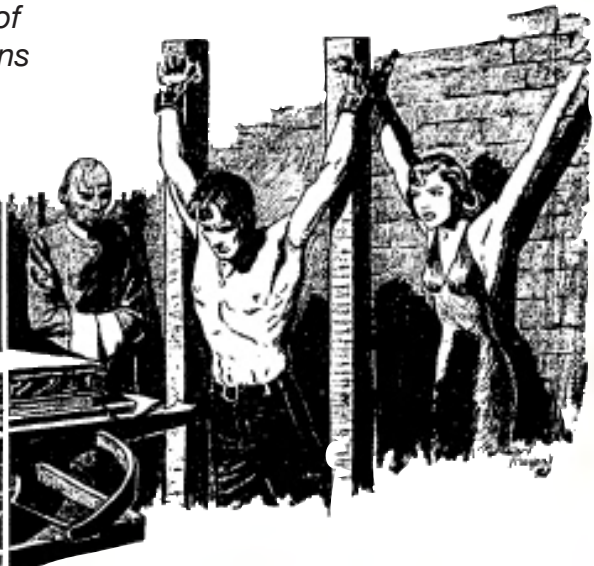
The Chinese ignored Brandon, but did look straight into Hsien's terrified face. A cruel smile split his skull-like face. He turned and stalked across the hall, seating himself in the Dragon Throne. The Celestial extended his hand

and Brandon could see that it was

emaciated, almost claw-like, the nail on the small finger grown to grotesque length after the fashion of the Mandarins of old.

'Brother Hsien,' the Celestial said, his voice like sand scraping against stone. 'I must protest this unseemly breach of protocol. It is most rude to call upon a gentleman unannounced.' Though he kept his voice even, almost without emotion, Brandon could feel the threat in the Chinaman's words. Hsien pulled free of his guards, throwing himself to the floor, sobbing in Cantonese as he grovelled before the throne. The Celestial gestured with his hand and the guards pulled their charge back to his feet.

'Have you no manners, Brother Hsien?' the Chinaman scolded, his voice still devoid of emotion. 'My other guest may not understand the tongue of our homeland. It would be rude for us to exclude him. Please, restrict yourself to English, Brother Hsien.'



*'Ppplease... noble Wu Sin... hhhave mercy... on mmmiserable Liu Hhhsien...'*

*As Brandon heard the slaver speak the name, he felt ice fill his veins. Wu Sin! The name was infamous throughout Hoptown! There wasn't a hatchetman or tong thug who didn't fear Wu Sin, the man they called the Jade Talon! But the department had never found any evidence that the man actually existed, most of the force, himself included, had long ago decided Wu Sin was nothing more than some imaginary devil conjured up by the denizens of Hoptown to scare their children. He looked again at the imposing, skeletal man seated on the golden throne. If there was a real Jade Talon, the sinister Mandarin certainly fit the bill.*

*The Jade Talon gave Liu Hsien an indulgent smile. 'Mercy, Brother Hsien? After you have violated the laws set down by our society? After you have allowed my operation in Lincoln Heights to suffer such a set back? After you have lead this...'* the Celestial's fiery eyes turned toward Brandon for the first time and the detective cringed as he felt that smouldering gaze burn into his flesh, *'...honourable person to my very doorstep?'* Wu Sin glanced at the woman beside him. She nodded her understanding. Stepping away from the throne, she clapped her hands together. More guards emerged from behind the teakwood screens. They scrambled across the hall, quickly

*rolling back the carpets, exposing a large, circular trap door.*

*The woman walked to the trap door. Kneeling, she pressed a button concealed within the mosaic. The trap door slowly lifted, exposing a black pit. Liu Hsien started screaming as the guards holding him pushed him toward the hole. Brandon struggled against his own captors as they also started to advance.*

*'Hsien! Stop your snivelling!' the woman snarled. 'You dishonour your ancestors with your cowardice!'*

*'Let the cur die in whatever way he sees fit,' Wu Sin reprimanded her. 'One cannot expect a rat to die like a tiger. At least the dacoits may find his screams amusing.'*

*Brandon struggled against the dacoits holding him, but the Burmese held him in an iron grip. He glared at the fearsome Jade Talon, mustering his courage to confront the fiend. 'Don't do this! Don't kill this man!'*

*Wu Sin turned his smouldering eyes toward Brandon again. This time he could feel the malice emanating from the Chinaman's gaze. 'Stop worrying about him, Detective Brandon. Start worrying about yourself.'* The Jade Talon gestured to the dacoits holding Hsien. Immediately the guards pushed the screaming slaver into the pit. Hsien's wails were interrupted by the

sound of snapping bone, then resumed with an agonized intensity. The dacoits holding him pushed Brandon forward, offering him a clear view of the pit.

The pit was twenty feet deep, its stone walls smoothed to an almost glass-like consistency. The bottom was littered with bits of bone and strange clumps of what looked like dirty cotton. Hsien was in the centre of the pit, crumpled in a ball, his legs broken in the fall, screaming like a banshee. Brandon looked up to find the exotic Chinese woman and Wu Sin standing on the far side of the pit, both of them staring down at Hsien. The woman's face was a mixture of disgust and expectancy, the Jade Talon's was pulled into a leer of eager anticipation.

Something moved along the wall of the pit, crawling out from a burrow gouged in the floor. Brandon leaned forward, his curiosity overcoming even the horror of the situation. It was some kind of animal, but he couldn't decide what. A rat? Some kind of dog? Maybe some kind of Chinese jaguar? He could see the thing pushing aside the bones that partially covered its hole, could make out legs pawing at the obstruction, legs that were covered in thick black hair. Hsien's screams became even more frantic as the slaver saw the movement. He crawled desperately toward the smooth walls, dragging his broken limbs behind him.

Brandon cringed away as the thing emerged fully from its burrow. Disbelief caused his mind to recoil from what he had seen, disgust boiled within his stomach. It was impossible, it couldn't have been what he thought it was!

'Detective Brandon, does my pet offend your delicate western sensibilities?' the Jade Talon mocked him. Brandon fought down his revulsion, forcing himself to look back at the spectacle unfolding in the pit. He hadn't imagined it, the hideous thing was still there, slowly, remorselessly scuttling across the floor toward Hsien. As big as a boar, its legs as thick and long as a man's arm, its fangs the size of daggers, its loathsome body covered in coarse black hair, the thing was a gigantic tarantula. Hsien's hands pawed hopelessly at the smooth walls, trying to pull himself up from the spider's lair.

'Few western eyes have seen what you are seeing now, Detective Brandon,' Wu Sin told him. Now that he had forced himself to look, Brandon found himself unable to tear his eyes away from the hideous spectacle. 'These spiders are found only in a few mountain valleys deep in the hinterlands of Mongolia.' A note of pride insinuated itself into the Jade Talon's voice. 'Of course, they don't grow as big as my pet. I used my humble skill with the sciences of chemistry and electro-magnetism to, shall we say, unlock its full potential.'



*Hsien's screams rose to an impossible pitch as the spider finally reached him. The sight of the spider's fangs stabbing down into the man's abdomen finally broke the terrible fascination that had taken hold of Brandon. He looked up from the pit, staring into Wu Sin's cruel eyes.*

*'You're a madman!' the detective spat.*

*The Jade Talon smiled at Brandon's outburst. 'Perhaps, Detective Brandon, but very soon I will be in control of this entire city, from the lowest street beggar to the most decadent socialite. This city, and every thing in it will live or die by the will of Wu Sin.'*

*Brandon tried to pull free from his guards, to seize the smirking Chinaman and throw him into his own spider pit. One of the dacoits that had been holding Liu Hsien smashed a fist into Brandon's head, stunning him and quieting his struggles. The skeletal Celestial nodded as he watched his guards subdue the unruly detective.*

*'Unfortunately, my spider will be eating with Brother Hsien for several weeks,' the Jade Talon apologized. 'I am afraid that we will need to make different accommodations for you, Detective Brandon.'* Wu Sin paused as the woman standing beside him touched his arm. He nodded again.

*'It appears my sister has taken an interest in you, Detective Brandon,' the*

*Jade Talon hissed. Brandon did not like the grim humour he saw on Wu Sin's thin face. 'After a few hours in her tender care, you will come to wish I had another spider.'*

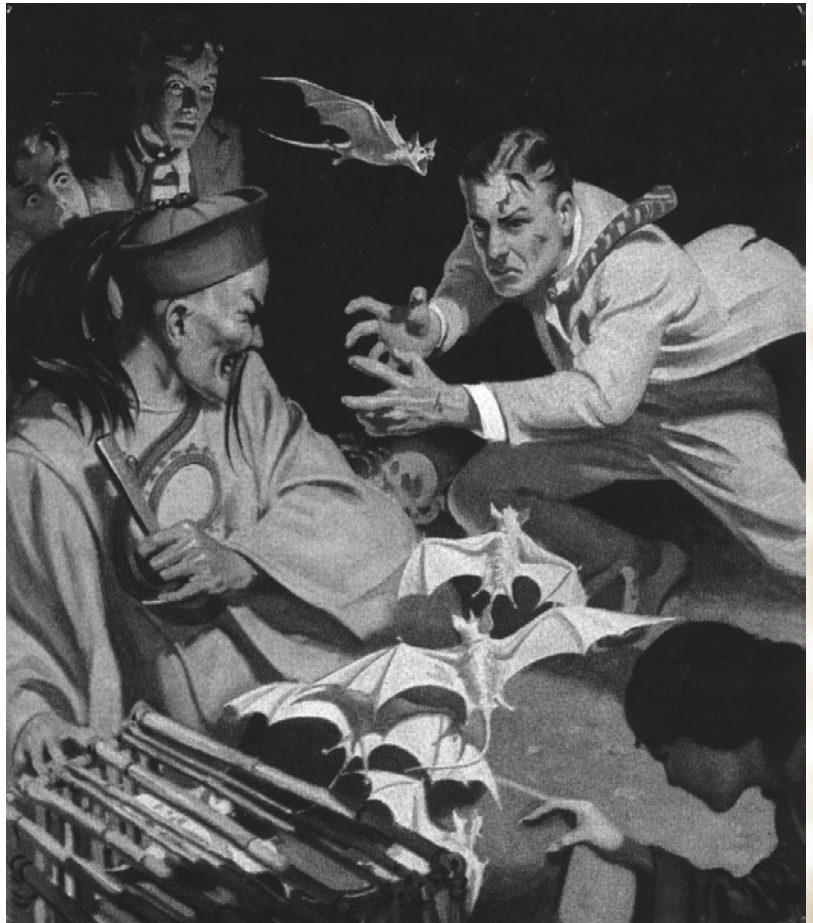


## INTRODUCTION

From the exotic, mysterious East they come to menace western civilization, to challenge all that decent, God-fearing men hold virtuous. With hatchet and knife, pistol and poison, they strike from the shadows. All the cruelty and ruthlessness of ancient races lurks behind their sallow faces and almond eyes.

Like a creeping scourge they slither into the great cities of the world, to plot and plan their insidious schemes. Some seek only to plunder the people of the West, to slake their greed with the dark rewards of crime. Others come to steal not wealth but knowledge, stopping at nothing to take the secrets of the world's great thinkers and intellects and carry that wisdom back with them into the East. The worst, however, have still more nefarious goals in mind: nothing less than the destruction of western civilization, to cast down the old order and rebuild it in the image of the Orient's imperial dynasties.

These are the Perils of the Orient, the sinister villains who swarmed across the pages of pulp magazines from the very beginning in the late 1800's to the very end in the 1950's. They worked their evil in the cinemas of the day and even radio was not free from their twisted machinations. They would carry on into the successors of the pulp magazines –comic books – and would even bring their particular brand of villainy to an upstart medium called television well beyond the hey-day of the pulps that spawned them.



It was called the 'Yellow Peril' and it was a staple of popular fiction by the 1930's. The formula changed depending upon the medium and the capabilities of the creator. At its most base, a Yellow Peril story was one that preyed upon and exploited the fears and ignorance of its audience, playing upon racial stereotypes of the time as a way of enhancing its own impact.

Such stories were often rife with their own ignorance, penned by men who perhaps had never even seen a Chinese, much less been farther east than St Louis. Yet, with only the slightest of research, perhaps limited to consultation of a few magazine articles, an experienced pulpster could bluff his way through an entire novella, depending upon the greater ignorance of his audience to get away with his own. The exotic aura of the almost mythical Orient, combined with the oft-times racist fears of the day, served to create a great demand for Yellow Peril stories, and their popularity ensured that virtually every great pulp hero of the day would find himself running against some inscrutable villain dressed in a mandarin's garb.

Some authors, however, treated their subject with a great deal more care and dignity, though today these stories are almost universally lumped together with their cruder imitators. Certainly the greatest writer associated with Yellow Peril fiction was Sax Rohmer, who penned his first novel about his

famous creation, the insidious Dr Fu Manchu, in 1913 with *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* and concluding only in 1959 with *Emperor Fu Manchu* and Rohmer's death.

Fu Manchu certainly shared in the villainous qualities that were the trademark of his predecessors and countless descendents, but combined with a depth of character that made him every bit as three-dimensional and unique as a Sherlock Holmes or a Captain Nemo. Fu Manchu wasn't the standard cackling megalomaniac that populated most Yellow Peril fiction, but rather was in many ways a flawed hero, but for one thing he'd have been on the side of the angels rather than civilization's mortal adversary.

In Fu Manchu's case, the thing that drove him to villainy was not his own ambition, but those of the European powers. In the time that the first Fu Manchu stories were written, much of the Orient was controlled by European nations. The French had made a colony of Vietnam, for instance, while the British were defacto rulers of Burma and the Dutch held what is now Indonesia. Fu Manchu was driven to his grandiose plans for conquest and empire-building as a reaction to this unrestrained Western imperialism.

Rohmer used him not merely to evoke the fears of his audience, their distrust of the 'inscrutable Oriental' but to also shine a light at what the 'White Peril'

was doing to the cultures and people of the Orient. As Rohmer often pointed out in his books, and as many of his detractors fail to understand, what Fu Manchu was trying to do in Europe and America was no different than what Europeans and Americans were already doing in places like Hong Kong and the Philippines. Far from being a one-dimensional racist heavy, in the hands of Rohmer, the Yellow Peril became a mirror to show the ugly reflection of colonialism and cultural imperialism. Rohmer, who was an Orientologist and had studied quite exhaustively the cultures of the East, always took care to maintain a degree of moral relativism with Fu Manchu. He is not so much the villain because he is evil, but because he is 'on the other team'.

Other Yellow Perils stood somewhere between the stereotypical menaces of Poverty Row serials and the multi-faceted Dr Fu Manchu, with his underlying social and political symbolism. These were exotic villains who, while still certainly Oriental, provided their menace out of good old fashioned bad guy motivation – greed, megalomania and revenge. These characters were handled without the racist overtones of their less cultured counterparts, what made them evil was not their culture or background, but their own individual failings – just like any other villain. A good example of this would be the many Oriental villains that came against The Shadow,

especially when Walter B Gibson was behind the Maxwell Grant pseudonym. While lurking in the back alleys of Chinatown, employing hatchets instead of gats and adorning their hideouts with expensive rugs and jade sculpture, at their core these characters were often little different than the gangsters and mad scientists The Shadow also had to contend with. The great Shiwan Khan, one of The Shadow's arch-rivals, was evil because of who he himself was, not due to some wicked quality inherent in the Mongolian race, as a less sensitive Yellow Peril purveyor would no doubt have suggested. To further illustrate the point, oftentimes The Shadow would find Chinese allies to contend with his Oriental foes, rallying tongs to oppose some nefarious crime lord operating in their midst.

Game Masters will no doubt want to include Oriental villains at some point or another in their campaign, if for no reason than for the same reason they appeared every few months in the pages of The Shadow – to break up the monotony of mobsters and mad scientists. GMs more familiar with the pulp era will want to include them simply because of how large a part the 'Yellow Peril' played in the fiction of the day. And, of course, there is the simple fact that even today the East is still an exotic land of mystery and adventure to those living in the West, and by utilizing characters from the East, a GM can evoke some of that mystery



and wonder. As has hopefully been illustrated, there is nothing inherently racist in presenting Oriental foes in a campaign. Every people and culture will produce its bad apples, and the ancient cultures of the East are no exception. It is when the theme is oversimplified, playing into stereotypes, when it is extended to such a degree that it seems every Chinese in New York is an agent of the Black Dragon Tong, that the GM is straying into the excesses that made much of this sort of fiction reprehensible.

**Perils of the Orient** walks a fine line between the historical excesses of Yellow Peril fiction and the more respectable appreciation for the cultures of China and Japan that a more enlightened and informed society has embraced. In these pages will be presented some of the most common

themes that were evoked in the pulps – from Mongol warriors dreaming of a new empire to sinister Tibetan monks with terrible powers of mysticism and mesmerism, all the usual suspects have been rounded up and presented for your consideration.

The reader may feel, at times, that the fine line between excess and understanding has been crossed, but it should be borne in mind that the characters presented here are not representative of their entire culture, any more than a murderous Thug is indicative of India's vast population or a jack-booted Nazi represents the entire German ethnic group. A game centred around the themes of heroics and adventure will, by definition, focus upon the unusual and the extraordinary – and you will find the **Perils of the Orient** to be both.

## THE MASTERMIND REVISITED

Any discussion of pulp Oriental villains begins with the Mastermind, the criminal fiend who manipulates both the faceless legions of his minions and the stalwart heroes arrayed against him like pieces on some vast chessboard. He is the heart of the beast, the great intellect behind the campaign of robberies, murders and kidnappings that has gripped the city in fear. The Mastermind is representative of villains like Fu Manchu, Yen Sin, Wu Fang and Shiwan Khan. Presented properly, a Mastermind can become the focus of an entire campaign, as the players try to thwart his machinations. But to do so, the GM should carefully consider the Mastermind's motives, methods and assets.

No two Masterminds are alike, and even within the bottommost dregs of the pulps, there were wild (and often ridiculous) variations upon the basic theme. Generally speaking, however, there are two main types of Mastermind. The first is the simple criminal. Certainly his ambitions – and his greed – are far in excess of the common mobster or tong boss, but still, at the end of the day, the Mastermind is focused upon gathering more wealth and extending his criminal empire.

The second sort of Mastermind is an entirely different creature. While certainly not above using the criminal scum of the underworld to achieve

his ends, this sort of Mastermind is an idealist who does not see himself as a criminal. The idealist Mastermind will have a much less mundane objective than his criminal counterpart. He might see himself as a patriot trying to expand the prestige and power of his homeland (under his own brilliant guidance, naturally) or he might be the fanatical agent of some strange Eastern sect, sent to avenge some slight against his temple. Such Masterminds will often be extremely principled men, which again makes them distinct from the usual mobster and madman.

Regardless of motive, regardless even of their cultural and social backgrounds, Oriental Masterminds in pulp stories shared several distinct character traits. Perhaps the most dramatic was a blood chilling nonchalance toward human life and suffering. Masterminds would regularly remonstrate their underlings with hideous mutilations for the slightest infraction, with a swift and brutal death being the price for anything more severe. Torture, something mobsters would use infrequently, is a staple of the Mastermind and where the methods of the average gangster would be limited to brass knuckles and a blow torch, the tortures employed by a Mastermind would be elaborate affairs, as ingenious as they were insidious.

Another quality shared by almost all Oriental Masterminds was an extreme sense of honour. A Mastermind will be very reluctant to give his word, but when he can be forced to give it, he will keep it. Of course, such agreements are kept to the letter rather than to the spirit and a GM should pay particular attention to whatever oath his players might exact from a Mastermind. Insisting that they be released from the Mastermind's Mongolian dungeons, for example, might result in the heroes being deposited in the middle of the Gobi desert without food or water – the Mastermind has kept his word, after all. So long as the letter of any agreement is kept, a Mastermind's honour will be satisfied.



Oriental Masterminds, regardless of their motivations, will always use at least one exotic method of dealing death to their enemies. From a covey of Ninja assassins, to special Cambodian snake venom, to deadly Indonesian tarantulas, an Oriental Mastermind will always have some unique way of killing those who stand in his way. The more resourceful Masterminds will have an entire array

of exotic ways of committing murder, perhaps even several of their own creation if they are given a few levels in the Mad Scientist advanced class. This is, perhaps, the most important habit of the Mastermind to develop since it will often be the first sign to the heroes that their unseen adversary is something more than the usual criminal.

The archetype below is a reasonable approximation of an Oriental Mastermind. He is built using the Mastermind advanced class and the Mad Scientist and Mesmerist advanced classes, all available through Adamant Entertainment's **Thrilling Tales**. It should serve more as an example for GMs, however, rather than a ready-to-use villain to be plopped down into their campaign. Given the scope a well-run Mastermind can offer, GMs should always strive to develop their own unique villain, devoting as much if not more time and consideration in the process as any hero being run by the players.

## ORIENTAL MASTERMIND

**Smart Hero 4/ Mastermind 8/ Mad Scientist 2/ Mesmerist 2; CR 14;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d6+4 plus 8d10+8 plus 2d8+2; hp 94; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30'; Defense +19, touch 19, flat-footed 18 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +8 class); BAB +8; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4/19-20 knife) or +8 ranged (2d6/20 Luger); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Sinister cult or secret society; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +12; AP 15; Rep +8; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 15.

**Occupation:** Academic (Knowledge skills [physical sciences, history, philosophy])

**Skills:** Bluff +9, Concentration +12, Craft (chemical) +16, Craft (electronic) +14, Craft (mechanical) +12, Craft (pharmaceutical) +10, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +5, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +6, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +14, Investigate +4, Knowledge (arcane lore)

+4, Knowledge (behavioural sciences) +6, Knowledge (current events) +4, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +12, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (physical sciences) +10, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Knowledge (technology) +10, Knowledge (philosophy) +8, Knowledge (underworld) +8, Listen +12, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +3, Profession +3, Read/Write Language (Mandarin), Read/Write Language (Cantonese), Read/Write Language (Japanese), Read/Write Language (English), Read/Write Language (Mongolian), Read/Write Language (Latin), Read/Write Language (French), Read/Write Language (German), Repair +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +2, Speak Mandarin, Speak Cantonese, Speak Japanese, Speak English, Speak Latin, Speak Mongolian, Speak French, Speak German, Speak Afghuli, Spot +9.

**Feats:** Builder (Craft chemical), Defensive Martial Arts, Frightful Presence, Infamy, Iron Will, Leadership, Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Talents (*Smart Hero*):** Linguist, Trick

**Talents (*Mastermind*):** Minions, Ill-gotten Gains, Crime Network, Nefarious Influence, Lair, Devil's Own Luck, Halls of Power

**Talents (*Mad Scientist*):** Weird Science, Scientific Inspiration

**Talents (*Mesmerist*):** Hypnotic Ability, Hypnotic Trance, Trick

**Possessions:** knife, Luger, wealth +12





## EAST MEETS WEST

When gold was discovered in California, one of the largest migrations from the East began. Waves of immigrants from China and Japan began to arrive in the cities of the western coast of the United States. Trying to find a better life, to make their fortune in the gold fields, most of these immigrants found instead back-breaking toil, crushing poverty and racism every bit as extreme as the rigid class systems of their homelands.

Chinese immigrants in particular became a common fixture in the American landscape of the late 1800's, providing a source of cheap labour that was ruthlessly exploited by big business, especially the railroad industry. For their efforts, these immigrants faced racial segregation and intolerance far in excess of even what was inflicted upon the former slaves of the South. Chinese immigrants were subject to 'Exclusion Acts' which prevented them from voting or becoming citizens, extra taxes simply for being Chinese, and ruthless oppression at nearly every level. The 'importation' of Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian women was outlawed in many states, ostensibly to combat prostitution but with the overall intention to prevent the Oriental population from increasing. Throughout it all, the Chinese bore the injustice imposed on them by the American government with all the stoicism

dictated by their Confucian philosophy, trying their best to succeed even in a land that made it clear they were not wanted.

One of the effects of the segregation policies implemented across America and in many European nations was the creation of Chinatowns in many cities. Chinese and other Oriental immigrants were severely restricted by law as to where they could settle and purchase property. Much like the 'Red Light' districts of the day, the intention was to confine these 'undesirable' elements within one part of the city, and the borders of these Chinese districts were often brutally enforced, if not by the official law-keepers then by vigilante mobs. This forced segregation resulted in neighbourhoods that reflected the architecture and culture of China or Japan rather than America. Signs in shop windows would be written Cantonese more often than English and the tones of Oriental languages would echo through the streets.

Due to the severe restrictions placed upon them, Chinatowns quickly found they had no more room to grow. Despite attempts to outlaw immigration from China, the flow of Chinese into America continued almost unabated. Forced to live in specific neighbourhoods, Chinatowns became exceedingly crowded and overpopulated. One way in which the enterprising early residents of these areas attempted to alleviate

the cramped condition was to expand their neighbourhoods in the only way segregation laws allowed. Almost every Chinatown developed a complex and vast network of tunnels beneath them, complete with their own shops and businesses. Some of these tunnels even extended beyond the surface confines of Chinatown, something that was taken advantage of by all manner of smugglers and criminals. This underground activity, combined with the xenophobic prejudices of the general population, gave Chinatowns a particularly unsavoury and sinister reputation. Many became renowned as lawless pits of vice and wickedness, rife with bordellos and opium dens, ruled by murderous tongs.

This attitude towards Chinatowns lasted for decades, it was not until 1943 and WWII that the 'Chinese Exclusion Act' was repealed, and Chinatowns from New York to LA were often the setting for tales of murder and intrigue in the pages of the pulps. Chinatowns (and the more infrequent Japantowns) made valuable bases of operation for Oriental Masterminds, allowing them to blend into the local population and providing them with a ready source of foot soldiers to further their nefarious plans. While historical tongs were secret societies created by Chinese immigrants for mutual security and assistance, the tongs in the pulps were almost always presented as organized criminal fraternities, something like Chinese versions of the Mafia. Their

activities would normally be restricted to the boundaries of Chinatown, but a particularly troublesome hero could sometimes cause a tong to venture beyond their own territory.

Although historically, the tongs in most American Chinatowns were becoming much more mellow in the 1930's, curbing the murder and mayhem that had characterized the tong wars that raged in Californian Chinatowns for sixty years, the tongs that appeared in the pages of the pulps were particularly vicious and bloodthirsty, ready to kill at the drop of a hat. Usually while maintaining the serene smile of a Celestial.

Tong members, as presented in the pulps, tend to be very savage and uncompromising, while at the same time displaying a marked cowardly streak. Once things go bad, the thugs of a tong will quickly disperse, scurrying back to their underground tunnels and disappearing into the Oriental populace of Chinatown. They will more often be equipped with knives, blackjacks and garrotes than they will pistols or other firearms. It is a rare tong indeed that has the resources and modernization in place to outfit its enforcers with Tommy guns and other automatic weapons. One weapon that pulp tongs seemed to have a particular place for was the hatchet, a small hand axe used by tong assassins to brutally eliminate those who had earned the ire of their organization.

An Oriental mastermind operating out of a Chinatown will often take over one or more tongs, then try to eliminate or unite any other gangs operating out of the district. These masterminds need not be the 'threat to civilization' variety, as often as not the sort of mastermind who controls and uses tongs has a much more 'western' mindset and much less grandiose objectives – often content with 'merely' establishing a city-wide criminal empire.

## TONG SOLDIER

**Fast Ordinary 1; CR 1;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d8+2; HP 7; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30'; Defense +15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 class); BAB +0; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20, knife or 1d6/20 sap); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Tong organization; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0, AP 0; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)  
**Skills:** Climb +2, Escape Artist +2, Hide +3, Knowledge (Streetwise) +1, Move Silently +3, Read/Write Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language) +1, Sleight of Hand +2, Speak Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language)  
**Feats:** Simple Weapons Proficiency, Brawl, Archaic Weapons Proficiency  
**Possessions:** knife, sap, wealth +1

## VETERAN TONG SOLDIER

**Fast Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1; CR 1;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d8+2 + 1d10+2; hp 14; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30'; Defense +15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 class); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4/19-20, knife or 1d6/20 sap); FS 5' by 5';

Reach 5'; SQ; AL Tong organization; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)  
**Skills:** Climb +3, Escape Artist +2, Hide +4, Knowledge (Streetwise) +2, Move Silently +4, Read/Write Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language) +1, Sleight of Hand +2, Speak Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language), Spot +2, Survival +2

**Feats:** Simple Weapons Proficiency, Brawl, Archaic Weapons Proficiency  
**Possessions:** knife, sap, wealth +1

## TONG ASSASSIN

**Fast Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1/ Strong Ordinary 3; CR 3;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d8+2 plus 1d10+2 plus 3d8+6; hp 33; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30'; Defense +16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6/20 hatchet or 1d8/20 fu); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL Tong organization; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)  
**Skills:** Climb +6, Concentration +2, Escape Artist +3, Hide +5, Knowledge (Streetwise) +3, Move Silently +5, Read/Write Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language) +1, Sleight of Hand +2, Speak Cantonese (or Mandarin or other appropriate Oriental language), Spot +4, Survival +4, Intimidate +3.

**Feats:** Simple Weapons Proficiency, Brawl, Archaic Weapons Proficiency  
**Possessions:** hatchet or fu, knife, wealth +2

## THE DRAGON LADY

The Femme Fatale Advanced Class is excellent for representing another fixture of pulp stories – the sensuous Asian crime boss commonly described as ‘the Dragon Lady’.

While it is true that most Oriental cultures at the time placed severe restrictions on the role women could play in society, there were some women who were too independent and too resourceful to quietly accept the place society had allowed for them. The Dowager Empress of China is one example of a Chinese woman who wielded extreme power during her reign, manipulating both Chinese and Western elements within her empire to her own benefit, most notoriously during the so-called ‘Boxer Rebellion’ of the 1890’s.

China Mary, a historical character who operated out of Tombstone, Arizona during the town’s heyday in the 1880’s is another example of a powerful, female Chinese. China Mary essentially ran Tombstone’s Hoptown, operating bordellos, opium dens and even some legitimate businesses such as restaurants and laundries. Such was her power in Hoptown, that no Chinese could be hired or paid without the arrangement going through China Mary. She was a very impulsive and headstrong woman, once running off with a blacksmith to Tuscon only to



be brought back to her husband by a bounty hunter.

In fiction, the Dragon Lady had much in common with fiendish masterminds like Dr Fu Manchu or Wu Fang. She could be expected to be merciless, intelligent and resourceful. Even more than her male counterparts, a Dragon Lady would also be quick

to anger and exceedingly vindictive, even to the point of breaking any agreements or promises previously made. Henchmen of a Dragon Lady were even more prone to feeling the lash, and even petty failures might result in mutilation or death on the order of their mistress. One thing guaranteed to earn a Dragon Lady's murderous attentions was anything approaching insubordination. Perhaps because of the male-dominated cultural background, a Dragon Lady would be very quick to eliminate any challenge to her authority.

Dragon Ladies were uniformly attractive, and were quite skilled at using their sensuous, exotic looks to best effect. Many a pulp hero felt himself drawn toward temptation in the arms of a Dragon Lady. A Dragon Lady's affections might be feigned, and often were, in order to gain some useful service from a man who could not be bought – for money that is. However, a Dragon Lady was equally prone toward irrational attractions, usually with a pulp hero working toward the destruction of her organization. The object of a Dragon Lady's genuine affection would be safe from harm, even when sparing the hero was at odds with the best interest of the Dragon Lady's plans. But woe to any other woman in the hero's life, for a Dragon Lady would be exceptionally inventive in removing such rivals.

## DRAGON LADY

**Charismatic Hero 3/ Femme Fatale 5; CR 6** ; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 5d8+5; hp ; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30' ; Defense +16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, + 4 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20 knife) or +3 ranged (2d6/20 derringer); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Tong organization or secret society; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5, AP 10; Rep +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17.

**Occupation:** Entrepreneur (Bluff, Gamble)  
**Skills:** Balance +5, Bluff +8, Concentration +5, Disguise +9, Gamble +5, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (behavioural sciences) +2, Knowledge (business) +4, Knowledge (current events) +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Move Silently +7, Perform (act) +5, Perform (dance) +6, Perform (sing) +4, Read/Write Mandarin, Read/Write Cantonese, Read/Write English, Read/ Write French, Read/Write German, Read/Write Italian, Read/Write Japanese, Sense Motive +8 ,Speak Mandarin, Speak Cantonese, Speak English, Speak French, Speak Japanese, Tumble +7

**Feats:** Deceptive, Exotic Features, Iron Will, Leadership, Simple Weapons Proficiency,

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Charm, Favor

**Talents (Femme Fatale):** Lollapalooza, Minions, Discern Lie, Tough Cookie (Combat Martial Arts), Easy Mark, Sob Story, Tough Cookie (Defensive Martial Arts)

**Possessions:** knife, derringer, wealth +8

## THE MYSTERIOUS ORIENT

The lands of the Orient were places of mystery and adventure in the pages of the pulps. Here were vast, uncharted regions where lost civilizations and hidden cities might yet be found. The ancient civilizations of the East had developed into exotic and inscrutable cultures that no Westerner could ever hope to truly understand. Fortunes could be made in these strange lands, but danger was never far behind.

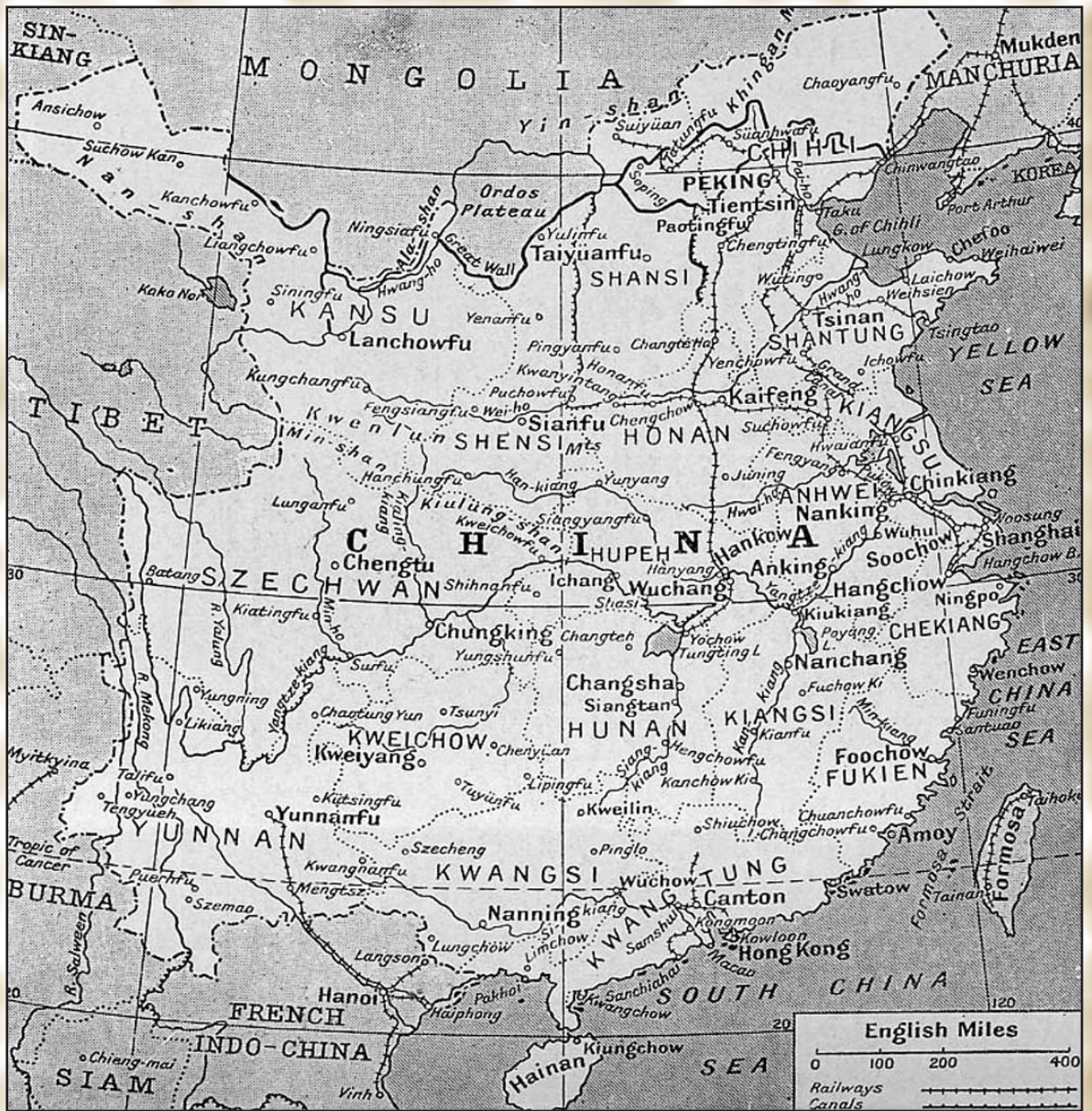
Historically, the 1930's was a time of great change and turmoil in the Orient. Western powers governed large portions of Asia. The British Empire encompassed Burma and Malaya, as well as the Chinese port city of Hong Kong. Vietnam was ruled as French Indo-China by France. The Dutch Republic had possessions in Java and the other islands which constituted its colony of the Dutch East Indies. Following the Spanish-American War, the United States adopted the Philippines as a territory.

China herself was a land of anarchy and strife. Following the destruction of the Imperial dynasty, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists maintained official control over China, but beyond the great cities, real dominion over the land rested in the hands of military warlords. The problem of maintaining control over the remote regions of China would only grow worse as Mao Tse-Tung's communists

grew in number and power in the north of the country, incited into rebellion by Soviet support. Manchuria, one of China's most ancient provinces was invaded by Japan in 1932, initiating a conflict in Asia that would only really end with the close of WWII. Renaming the region 'Manchuko' and placing Emperor Pyui as their puppet governor of the conquered realm, the Japanese would use Manchuria as a spring board for their ambitions elsewhere.

Mongolia, the land that had given birth to the mighty Mongol Empire, an empire that had stretched from China to the Nile, was undergoing its violent entry into the modern world. The echoes of Genghis Khan which carried on in the god-kings who had ruled Mongolia for centuries were being swept away by the new Soviet-backed communist government. Even with the Soviet army marching freely through the wastes of Mongolia, the land was still a breeding ground for bandits and robber princes of every description. In far flung corners, the followers of god-kings such as Seng Chen Gegen and Bodgo Gegen could still be found, adhering to the old ways in defiance of their communist rulers.

Forbidden Tibet, a mysterious mountain world of ice and snow, ruled by its priest-lords was even more an enigma than any of the other lands of the East. Here was the domain of the lamas and their strange eastern mysticism. Here was the lost world



where no Westerner was permitted to walk. Tales of the Abominable Snowman had already reached Europeans, and the strange world of Tibet seemed the logical hiding place of such a sinister creature. It would not be until the German Ahnenerbe SS mounted an expedition to this mountain

kingdom that Western eyes would behold its ancient splendours.

Of all the nations of the Orient, it is Japan that exists as a stable and independent society. The Japanese Empire has rapidly modernized, boasting an impressive navy and a

well-equipped and highly trained army. By the 1930's, in addition to the Pacific possessions lost by Germany in WWI, Japan's Empire includes Korea and Manchuria, lands that will provide the raw resources for the even greater expansions envisioned by the militarist faction within the Japanese Diet.

In the pages of the pulps, Oriental villains operating in the West would often bring minions and henchmen with them from their homelands, supplementing the crude abilities of westernized Orientals with the more specialized skills of their ancient traditions. Pulp writers were often quite free with the nature of the followers an Oriental mastermind might gather to himself. A Chinese mastermind, for instance, might include Mongolian warriors and Burmese Dacoits among his retinue, while a Japanese spy master might make use of savage jungle natives or even Indian stranglers. The only hard and fast rule was that these characterful killers be exotic and evocative of the public perception of the 'mysterious Orient'.

## ENEMIES FROM THE EAST

What follows are profiles and descriptions of some of the more common Oriental villains that featured in the pages of the pulps. They can be used as a sampling of the sort of exotic 'specialists' a criminal mastermind might employ. It is a good idea to develop at least one type of 'specialist' when designing a mastermind as this will create a 'signature' henchman type, allowing players to quickly recognize the hand of their Oriental nemesis without ever setting eyes on the villain himself. More powerful and resourceful masterminds might include several types of 'specialists', Dr Fu Manchu for example was often portrayed as drawing his agents from across the globe and might include any number of different nationalities among his men, however there should always be a prevalent type of minion, one that is employed more often than any other. Again, drawing examples from literature of the time, Dr Fu Manchu commonly employed Dacoits while Shiwan Khan would use Mongol warriors.





## DACOITS

Real Dacoits are armed robbers, a class of bandits in India who are characterized by the ferocity of their attacks (no doubt hoping to scare their victims into submission and eliminate the need to use the weapons they carry). In the pages of the pulps, however, Dacoits were quite different. Due no doubt to the influence of Sax Rohmer, Dacoits were more often from Burma rather than India. While still fierce and armed, Dacoits also became masters of stealth and acrobatics, able to sneak into homes and infiltrate government buildings without making a sound. Pulp Dacoits will often be equipped with grapples or climbing claws to facilitate entry into upper floor windows and may go barefoot to increase their agility while climbing. The weapons favoured by a pulp Dacoit will almost always be knives, especially throwing knives, though they will sometimes employ strangler's cords as well. A pulp Dacoit is characterized by unswerving loyalty as well, thinking nothing of sacrificing his life if there is a chance of furthering his master's plans.

## Dacoit

**Fast Hero 4; CR 3;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 18; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30' ; Defense +17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +5 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3/19-20 katar or 1d4/19-20 keris); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Secret society or cult; SV Fort +2, Ref +2 , Will +0, AP 8; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

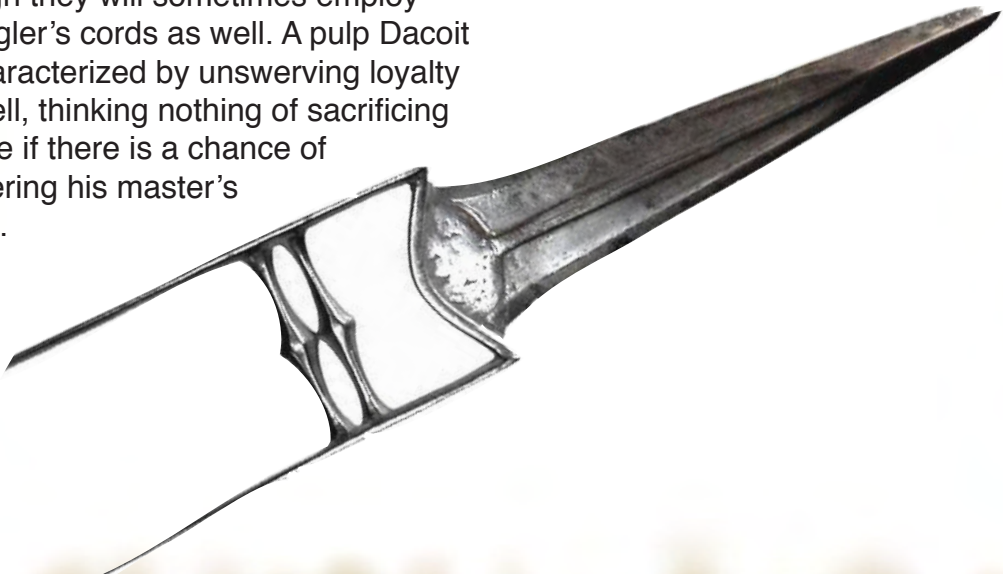
**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)

**Skills:** Balance +4, Climb +5, Escape Artist +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (streetwise), Move Silently +8, Read/Write Cantonese, Read/Write Burmese, Sleight of Hand +2, Speak Cantonese, Speak Burmese, Tumble +4

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Combat Martial Arts, Stealthy

**Talents:** Evasion, Opportunist

**Possessions:** katar, keris, wealth +1



## MONGOLIAN WARRIORS

In the era of the pulps, the last vestiges of the ancient Mongolian culture would sometimes be brought into the cities of the Western world. The prospect of a new Genghis Khan ascending from the fragmented lands of the Orient to forge a new Mongol Empire was a theme repeated often in pulp stories, serials and films. Among the most potent weapons such a would-be god-king might command were Mongolian warriors.

The Mongolian warrior of the pulps was a powerful, strong soldier, steeped in the military traditions of the ancient past. Sword and spear, bow and arrow, these were the weapons the Mongolian warrior would use to serve his master and destroy those who would oppose his rise to power. Often dressed in lacquered armour, armed with his medieval weapons, a Mongolian warrior created a very vivid and memorable minion for any mastermind he served. Although skilled at shadowing a target, a Mongolian warrior showed little patience for tactics in general, almost always taking the most direct route to eliminate an enemy. Even more fiercely loyal than a Dacoit, a Mongolian warrior would rather die than fail his divine master.

## Mongolian Warrior

**Strong Hero 3; CR 3;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 21; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 20' ; Defense +18, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+0 size, +1 Dex., +5 armor, +2 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d10/19-20 tulwar or 1d4/19-20 knife); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Secret society or cult; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1, AP 6; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 6.

**Occupation:** Military (Climb, Move Silently)  
**Skills:** Climb +4, Handle Animal, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Move Silently +3, Profession, Read/Write Mongolian, Speak Mongolian  
**Feats:** Simple Weapon Proficiency, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Brawl  
**Talents:** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Possessions:** Lamellar armor (treat as chainmail), tulwar, knife



## NINJA

Although almost unknown in the era of the pulps, Ninja have become a fixture of many modern 'neo-pulp' story dealing with Oriental themes. Ninja are assassin-spies from Japan, experts at stealth and murder. The origins of the ninja stretch back into the misty past of feudal Japan when peasant farmers found it necessary to protect themselves from roving bands of bandits and samurai.

Unable to compete on an equal footing with well-armed bandits and well-trained samurai, the peasants employed guerrilla tactics to defend their villages and farms. Over the centuries, such skills were honed to an amazing degree and incorporated unique martial arts techniques. Because ninja were peasants, and therefore not bound by the strict code of honour the samurai lived by, Japanese lords often used them for espionage, infiltration and assassination, all duties that were beneath the dignity of a samurai. A ninja in a pulp setting will be used for similar duties by the mastermind he or she serves.

Ninja, while extremely professional, will not display the suicidal kind of loyalty shown by Dacoits or Mongolian warriors. If things go bad, a ninja's first thoughts will be of escape, though he might return at a more opportune time to avenge the dishonour of being routed by his enemies. The main

thing to bear in mind is that a ninja will always strike when circumstances are most in his favour.

Ninja in fiction will typically wear all black suits with a head covering that leaves only the eyes exposed. They employ a wide variety of tools and weapons in carrying out their assignments, from smoke bombs, grappling claws, throwing stars and the shinobigatana sword to caltrops and firecrackers. Anything that might help confuse, disorient and impair an enemy can be expected to find its way into a ninja's bag of tricks. Under no circumstances will a ninja even consider fighting fair.

## Ninja

**Fast Hero 4/ Martial Artist 3/ Infiltrator 4; CR11;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d8+8 plus 3d8+6 plus 4d8+8; hp 66; Mas 15; Init +3; Spd 30'; Defense +23, touch 23, flat-footed 23 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +10 class); BAB +8; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20 shinobigatana or 1d6+2/20 nunchaku or 1d4+2/19-20 sai) +8 ranged (1d4/19-20 sai or 1d4/19-20 shuriken); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Ninja clan; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +3, AP 12; Rep +3; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Occupation:** Cloistered (Concentration, Sense Motive)

**Skills:** Balance +9, Climb +6, Concentration +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +8, Hide +12, Jump +6, Knowledge (Streetwise), Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Read/Write Japanese, Search +5, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Speak Japanese, Spot +6, Tumble +9

**Feats:** Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency,

Blind-Fight, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy

**Talents (*Fast Hero*):** Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

**Talents (*Martial Artist*):** Living Weapon 1d6, Flying Kick

**Talents (*Infiltrator*):** Sweep, Improvised Implements, Improved Evasion

**Possessions:** shinobigatana, nunchaku, shuriken (20), sais (2)

## MARTIAL ARTIST

In the days of the pulps, the exotic unarmed combat techniques developed in the Orient were still things of wonder and mystery, with all sorts of wild and imaginative attributes assigned to them by a largely ignorant western world. At this time, almost superhuman abilities such as dodging bullets and killing a man with a sinister 'death touch' were held as common elements of these strange and sinister fighting styles practised in the East. Of the numerous schools of the martial arts, only Japanese karate and judo were widely known in the East. Indeed, many pulpsters would refer to Chinese martial artists as 'judo masters' as a way of conveying and explaining the extraordinary abilities they employed. It would not be until well after WWII and the exposure of western soldiers to Oriental cultures that a greater understanding of these remarkable arts would become more common, leading directly into the Kung-Fu phenomenon of the 1960's and '70's.

Any Oriental Mastermind worth his salt will probably have at least one Martial Artist in his entourage, perhaps as a valued lieutenant or a deceptively unimposing bodyguard. A Martial Artist can also fulfil the role assassin or spy, using his unique skills to confound the conventions of western authorities. The below profile depicts an experienced and talented Martial Artist who could serve as a ranking member of a mastermind's organization.

### Martial Artist

**Tough Hero 4/ Martial Artist 3; CR 7;**

Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d10+8 plus 3d8+6; hp 52; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30'; Defense +18, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +5 class); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/20 nangun or 1d8+2/19-20 do); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Martial arts dojo; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2, AP 9; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Athlete (Balance, Jump, Tumble)

**Skills:** Balance +5, Climb +6, Concentration +6, Escape Artist +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Cantonese (or other Oriental Language), Speak Cantonese (or other Oriental Language), Spot +1, Survival +1, Tumble +6.

**Feats:** Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Alertness, Knockout Punch, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Combat Reflexes

**Talents (*Tough Hero*):** Remain Conscious, Second Wind

**Talents (*Martial Artist*):** Living Weapon 1d6, Flying Kick

**Possessions:** nangun, do, wealth +1

## JUNGLE TRIBESMEN

While many of the civilizations in the Orient boast centuries of culture and history, philosophical and scientific development, there also exist, even today, isolated societies that continue to subsist at almost stone age levels. These isolated tribes linger in some of the most remote and unforgiving lands it is possible to imagine: the festering swamps of New Guinea, the fever-ridden jungles of Vietnam, the sweltering hill-country of Burma's remote interior. These are lands that test a man every day, demanding his every effort be devoted to the simple task of staying alive. There is no time for poetry and invention in the jungle, only the brutal struggle between man and unforgiving nature. The people who dwell in these places are rugged and hard, survivors who have become as primeval as the land they inhabit.

Tales of headhunters and wild men never failed to captivate western audiences, and when such savages were depicted in the misty lands of the Orient, the captivation was made all the more enthralling. One of the

earliest of these 'primitives' to appear in popular fiction was the character of Tonga in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*, one of the earliest of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Tonga was depicted as hailing from the Andaman Islands, a sharp-toothed pygmy killer who employed a blowgun in his murders. The example of Tonga carried on for decades, filling the pages of the pulps with innumerable imitators. Everyone from the Shadow to Doc Savage would have their wits and courage tested by these savage throwbacks to a more primordial age. Perhaps the best known of the pulp-



age savages are the Tcho-Tcho people created by horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. Presented as diminutive, barely-human cannibals, the Tcho-Tcho exemplified the bestial ferocity of an earlier epoch, an atavistic reminder of mankind's repulsive past.

A Mastermind who makes use of Jungle Tribesmen often presents himself as a god, or at least an instrument of a god's will. Superstition and fear are the only things that can bind such primitives to the command of an outsider. Their uses are limited, clearly their ability to understand or interact with the modern world is limited at best. However, for brutal, merciless killers, it is hard to imagine anything more horrible than the snarling visage of a dwarfish cannibal as he scurries silently up the side of a fire-escape. Normally, a Mastermind will tend to have only a single Tribesman in his entourage, but more ambitious ones could conceivably have spirited an entire clan from their jungle homes. A wise Mastermind employs these fiends with caution, however. Any sign of weakness on his part could get the Tribesmen wondering about his claims of divinity...

## Jungle Tribesman

**Tough Hero 2; CR 2;** Small-sized humanoid; HD 2d10+4; hp 16; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30' ; Defense +15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 class); BAB +1; Grap -3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/20 spear); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Jungle Tribe; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -1, AP 6; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Primitive (Climb, Jump, Survival)

**Skills:** Climb +4, Concentration +2, Jump +2, Move Silently +3, Speak Tribal Dialect, Spot +1, Survival +1

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Track, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Endurance, Stealthy, Elusive Target

**Talents:** Remain Conscious

**Possessions:** spear



## BLACK MONK

The mystics of Tibet and Nepal were source many pulp writers plundered when in need of a 'scientific' explanation for magical effects in a story. Yoga, Buddhism, and even Confucian philosophy were laced with exotic, almost arcane, trappings in the pages of the pulps. The extraordinary feats described in travellers' tales brought back by those who had visited the Orient were expanded upon until the Buddhist monasteries high in the Himalayas became synonymous with astral projection, levitation, telepathy and even stranger accomplishments of mental awareness and spiritual discipline.

Naturally, the pulps made ready use of public perceptions of the arcane arts of the East. The Shadow's amazing abilities to 'cloud men's minds' was attributed to studying under Tibetan monks. More often, however, the mystic arts developed in the hermitages of Mongolia and Nepal were depicted in a more sinister light. The Shadow's nemesis, Shiwan Khan, for example, was a master of these exotic techniques of hypnosis and telepathy.

In the fiction of Robert E Howard, renowned creator of Conan of Cimmeria, an entire black order of evil Buddhist monks was based in the remote wastes of Mongolia, a twisted society of depraved minds that had unlocked secrets mankind was

never meant to know, capable even of torturing the physical body into new and horrible shapes, transforming one trespasser into their domain into a living werewolf.

In the occult works of the time, two mystical kingdoms were held to be hidden within the vastness of the Himalayas: Shambhalah and Agharti. While Shambhalah was presented as a utopian ideal of morality and good, Agharti was a sinister and wicked place where sorcerers delved into the lost wisdom of vanquished civilizations in their quest to dominate the entire world. These adepts of Agharti would sometimes venture in the outer world, spying on the lands they plotted against.

Black Monks represent these nefarious mystics from the forbidden East. Masters of mental disciplines and powers far beyond anything known in the West, a Black Monk presents a truly formidable challenge. While appropriate to be used as a master criminal in his own right, a Black Monk might find himself as an ally or agent of another villain. To really give heroes a workout, perhaps several Black Monks have journeyed from their hidden monasteries to plague the civilized world. The important thing for the GM to bear in mind is the motivation behind a Black Monk's excursion into the western world. Black Monks have forsaken the needs and desires of common men, and they have little to

share in the base motives of lesser criminals. Fulfilling prophecy, seeking to reclaim lost relics, or revenge against the defilers of ancient tombs are just some of the purposes that can drive a Black Monk.

## Black Monk

**Dedicated Hero 1/ Mesmerist 7/ Martial**

**Artist 1; CR 9;** Medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d6+1 plus 7d6+7 plus 1d8+1; hp 42; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30'; Defense +16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8/20 nangun); FS 5' by 5'; Reach 5'; SQ; AL: Monastic order; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +9, AP 11; Rep +4; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 12.

**Occupation:** Cloistered  
(Concentration, Sense Motive)

**Skills:** Bluff +5, Concentration +11, Handle Animal +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +11, Jump +3, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +12, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +4, Knowledge (philosophy) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +3, Read/Write Tibetan, Read/Write Mongolian, Read/Write Cantonese, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +4, Speak Tibetan, Speak Mongolian, Speak Cantonese, Speak English, Speak Yeti, Spot +7, Survival +2

**Feats:** Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Focused, Frightful Presence, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trance

**Talents (*Dedicated Hero*):** Empathy

**Talents (*Mesmerist*):** Hypnotic Ability, Hypnotic Trance, Trick, Command Word, Winning Smile, Lengthy Trance, Compulsion

**Talents (*Martial Artist*):** Living Weapon 1d6

**Possessions:** nangun, prayer beads, wealth +2





## ORIENTAL ARMORY

The following table presents some of the archaic weapons commonly employed by Oriental villains in the blood-soaked pages of the pulps.

### Archaic Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Do	1d8	19-20	Slashing	Med	4lb	17
Fu	1d8	20	Slashing	Med	5lb	15
Gou	1d6	20	Slashing	Med	4lb	17
Katana	2d6	19-20	Slashing	Large	8lb	19
Katar	1d3	19-20	Piercing	Tiny	1lb	16
Keris	1d4	19-20	Piercing	Small	1lb	17
Naginata	1d10	20	Slashing	Large	15lb	15
Nangun	1d8	20	Bludgeoning	Large	10lb	12
Nunchaku	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	Small	2lb	15
Qiang	1d8	19-20	Piercing	Large	4lb	13
Shinobigatana	1d6	19-20	Slashing	Med	3lb	17
Tulwar	1d10	19-20	Slashing	Med	5lb	13

### Ranged Archaic Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Sai	1d4	19-20	Piercing	10'	Small	1lb	13
Shuriken	1d4	20	Piercing	20'	Tiny	1lb	13

## WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

**Do** – The Do is a straight sword used in China, roughly the same size and shape as the western broadsword.

**Fu** – The Fu is a Chinese combat axe. It is used one-handed and a skilled practitioner will typically employ one in either hand. The Fu is the preferred weapon of Tong assassins, though most are forced to employ the hatchets that are more common in western cities.

**Gou** – The Gou is another Chinese sword. Unlike the Do, it is not a straight sword, but has a hooked blade that is designed to slash enemies.

**Katana** – The Katana is the famed sword of the samurai of Japan. With the increasing militarization of Japan, the Katana is once again being seen as a status symbol and Japanese officers will carry hastily made, mass produced Katanas with them into the coming world war. The Katana is a slashing weapon honed to an incredible fine edge, more akin to a giant razor than a sword.

**Katar** – The Katar is a punch dagger used by thieves and assassins in India, Burma and Indonesia. These weapons are small and designed for concealment, delivering a deadly surprise when hidden within a clenched fist. The Katar is one of several

weapons associated with Dacoits in the pulps.

**Keris** – The wavy-bladed Keris is a large knife used by the people of the Philippines, Java and Thailand. It is a stabbing rather than slashing weapon and hideously lethal in the hands of a skilled fighter.

**Naginata** – The Naginata is a Japanese spear with a curved steel blade. It is a slashing rather than stabbing weapon and historically was used by infantry to defend against mounted samurai in a fashion similar to the European pike.



**Nangun** – The Nangun is a Chinese combat staff made from wax wood. The weapon can deliver brutal, bone-shattering strikes that can quickly subdue an adversary.

**Nunchaku** – Developed by Okinawan and Japanese peasant farmers as a way of getting around laws that prohibited the possession of edged weapons, the Nunchaku consists of a pair of sticks attached at one end by a length of chain or rope. In the hands of a skilled practitioner, Nunchaku can be used to deliver a rapid and disorienting flurry of strikes and even overcome the reach of adversaries with swords and spears.

**Qiang** – In China, the spear is held as the 'king of weapons'. The Qiang consists of a leaf-shaped steel blade fitted to a seven foot long wooden shaft. A tassel of horse-hair is attached just beneath the blade, both to disorient an enemy and to soak up blood once the weapon is stabbed into the body of an opponent.

**Sai** – Typically Sais will be used as a pair, one held in either hand. The weapon is a blunt dagger that originates in Okinawa. It is a largely defensive weapon, used to disarm enemies by means of catching an attacker's blade with one of the blunt projections that frame the central blade of the Sai. They are sometimes depicted as being used in more

offensive styles and can be thrown in a manner similar to a javelin.

**Shinobigatana** – Shorter than the Katana used by samurai, the Shinobigatana is a razor-edged sword employed by Ninja, typically constructed with baser materials and less craftsmanship than the elaborate artistry involved in fabrication of a Katana.

**Shuriken** – Coming in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and materials, Shuriken are small blades that can be thrown at enemies or used in hand-to-hand combat. Traditionally they were fabricated from household materials such as needles and coins. Typical shapes include nail-like spikes, bladed stars and razor-edged discs.

**Tulwar** – Although a weapon originating in India and which spread west into Afghanistan and Persia rather than east into Burma and Thailand, the curved Tulwar nevertheless was frequently found in use by ceremonial guards in the lair of many a fiendish Oriental Mastermind. Although the curved blade is designed for slashing an enemy, the sharp point of the weapon can also be used for stabbing.

## HORRORS OF THE ORIENT

The villains of the East did not come alone when they turned their cruel eyes on the West. The fiendish nightmares of an entire continent and thousands of years of civilization and culture came with them. No Oriental villain worth his salt did not have some hideous and revolting creature lurking within his lair, ready to deliver a horrible death to those unfortunates who earned the villain's ire. Poisonous vermin of every description slithered and crawled through the pages of a Yellow Peril story, from venomous lizards to enormous centipedes and spiders. An Oriental villain was often quite inventive when employing such inhuman assassins, designing cages that would slowly lower a victim into a pit of snakes or a pungent perfume that would draw a giant scorpion across half a city in search of its odorous target.

Sometimes the inhuman agents of an Oriental villain were even more bizarre. Trained crocodiles, intelligent apes, gigantic lizards, nothing was too strange or wild for the pages of the pulps to present to readers. Indeed, the stranger the better was often the rule of the day.

Below are a few unusual creatures from the Orient that will fit in quite well even in a campaign that is running with a restrained element of the fantastic.

## ALLGHOI KHORKHOI

The infamous 'Mongolian Death Worm' is a feared inhabitant of the Gobi Desert. Despite its name, the creature is not actually a worm at all, but a highly venomous primitive viper. Small, nearly blind, and quite sluggish, the Allghoi Khorkhoi relies upon its uncanny camouflaged scales and deadly venom to subdue prey and protect itself from predators. In the Gobi, they prey upon insects and small lizards, lurking just beneath the sand until the snake detects the vibrations of the creature's approach. It then launches itself from the sand, stabbing its poisonous fangs into the prey. Because the snake hunts by vibrations in the sand rather than sight or smell, it will often attack animals much too large for it to devour, including human beings. It is this propensity to attack anything that comes close to it that has made the Allghoi Khorkhoi such a menace to the inhabitants of the Gobi. Fortunately, the serpents are extremely rare and seldom encountered.

Some of the mystics and god-kings of Mongolia have captured these snakes in the past and used them as deadly guardians within treasure vaults and tombs. The floor of the chamber in which the snakes are placed is covered with a thin layer of sand. Since the snakes move by burrowing through the sand, and since their scales blend in perfectly, the lethal vipers are all but invisible to someone who does not know what to look for. Less scrupulous

individuals sometimes use the Allghoi Khorkhoi as a method for terror, the superstitious dread with which the Mongolians regard this snake cannot be understated. A fierce warrior who would happily wade into machine gun fire can be reduced to a whimpering child simply with the threat of the Allghoi Khorkhoi.

The Allghoi Khorkhoi is a good representative of the type of poisonous creatures an Oriental villain might keep as pets, guardians, or executioners.

### Allghoi Khorkhoi

**CR 3;** Small Animal; HD 1d6+1; hp 4; Mass 2; Init +3; Spd 10', burrow 10'; Defense 13, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+2 size); BAB +3; Grap -4; Atk +5 melee (1d3-1 plus poison, bite); FS 5' by 5; Reach 5'; SQ poison (DC18), tremorsense; AL none; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 4, Cha 2.

**Skills:** Hide +6 (doubled in sand)

**Feats:** Weapon finesse (bite).

*Poison (Ex):* Bite – Fortitude save for ½ effect; save DC 18; Paralysis/2d10 hp damage

*Tremorsense (Ex):* The Allghoi Khorkhoi can sense anything that comes within 60' of it provided the creature or object is in contact with the ground and is moving. Almost blind, these snakes can only see unmoving objects that are within 5' of them.

### BURU

The Buru is a large semi-aquatic lizard that hails from the remote valleys of the Himalayas. It is blue-black in colour, fading to an off-white along the belly. The scales are small and fine except along the back, which is covered in a layer of tougher, plate-like scales. The lizards grow to over 15' in length, sporting long, whip-like tails and enormous clawed feet. While its body resembles that of monitor lizards such as the Komodo dragon, the Buru's head is narrower and sharper, its powerful jaws filled with flat molars rather than sharp fangs. A herbivore, the Buru dwells in swamps and marshland, spending much of its time in the water except when sunning itself in the early morning. Much of the Buru's habitat has been destroyed by the native populations of the valleys, reclaimed from the swamps for use as rice fields. As a result, the lizards have become extinct in many of their former territories.

The Buru is a throwback to the time of the great reptiles and just the sort of unusual creature a hero might find haunting the lair of an Oriental villain. While normally inoffensive to humans, the lizards can be 'trained' after a fashion to act as guards for a villain who is patient and resourceful enough to accommodate them. The intelligence of a Buru is quite limited, the reptiles are pure instinct. They can be tricked into a heightened state of alertness by the simple expedient of aggravating

their keen sense of smell. By feeding the Burus a diet of specific pungent variety, a villain can cause the lizards to associate the smell with food. Treating a corridor or chamber so that it exudes this food smell will aggravate any hungry Burus placed in it, causing them to become increasingly aggressive and agitated. Especially brutal villains might also douse a captive in the scent of a Buru's normal diet, then loose the lizards to hunt down the unfortunate. By the time the slow-witted Burus realise that what they have tracked down isn't a tasty melon but a stringy G-man, it will be much too late to do the victim much good.

## Buru

**CR 7;** Large animal; HD 7d8+9; hp 41; Mas 17; Init +2; Spd 30', swim 50'; Defense 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; BAB +2; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+4 bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+4, tail slap, 1d6+4 bite); FS 10' by 10'; Reach 10'; SQ Scent; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will -1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 8, Cha 2.  
**Skills:** Climb +4, Hide +7 (+11 in swamps, marshes), Move Silently +6

## ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

The mysterious creature that reputedly haunts the Himalayas first came to the attention of Western civilization in 1925 with reports from a British mountaineering expedition. Some of the Sherpa guides pointed out a strange object climbing down the lower slopes. Although it was hard to make out details, the shape was undeniably bipedal and the movement distinctly unnatural and inhuman. The story was soon carried in newspapers across the world, the Tibetan word *yeti* mistranslated by the British press as 'Abominable Snowman'. The fascinating enigma would grip the imagination of the world and ignite a controversy that continues to fuel both derision and speculation.

The Yeti is a huge, ape-like biped, standing between 8 and 12 feet in height and weighing perhaps as much as 1,000 pounds. It walks upright, like a man, and leaves behind enormous footprints in the ice and snow. Although popular culture has since depicted the Yeti as possessing white fur, actual sightings and tradition depicts the creature as brown, black, or more rarely a dirty grey. The creature's immense strength and endurance are renowned, it is capable of carrying off livestock and, in tradition, Tibetan women. While the Tibetan traditions blur the line between the Yeti's existence as a real animal or a demon of the mountains, scientific speculation has sometimes pointed toward

*Gigantopithecus* a giant ape that inhabited China in prehistoric times.

The Abominable Snowman was a fixture of popular media during the pulp period. The Yeti menaced explorers in the pages of pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* and even *Doc Savage* as well as adventurers in radio programs

such as 'Escape'. The creature was depicted as savage and ferocious, echoing the 'killer ape' popularized on the silver screen, but also presented as something more than merely an animal. The Yeti is a creature with intelligence and the ability to reason, not a simple brute governed by instinct and natural cunning. It is this intelligence that some



Eastern mystics can exploit to gain control over a Yeti, bringing the horror down from the high mountains and into the shadows of civilization.

The below profile better depicts a 'traditional' Yeti than the version presented in standard d20, removing the more 'elemental' aspects of the creature and making it a 'normal', if highly

unusual, animal. The Tibetans actually speak of three man-beasts that inhabit the Himalayas, the diminutive *meh-teh*, the *yeh-teh*, and the truly monstrous and gigantic *dzu-teh*. A GM who wants to explore all three possibilities could employ the below profile to depict a *yeh-teh* and use the 'advanced yeti' from the d20 Modern SRD to depict the even bigger *dzu-teh*. It would also be appropriate for a GM who really wants to blur the lines between science and mysticism to give Yetis the power of speech, possessing a language all their own and which some ascetics may have learned from ancient Tibetan texts. The image of a Black Monk conversing with a Yeti in a language of snarls and whistles is certain to make heroes even more uneasy.

### **Yeti:**

**CR 5;** Large monstrous humanoid; HD 10d10 +30; hp 80; Mas 16; Init +1; Spd 40'; Defense 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; BAB +6; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6 claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws); FS 10' by 10'; Reach 10'; SQ cold resistance, darkvision 60'; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Climb +10, Hide +10, Move Silently +10, Survival +7

**Feats:** Track

*Cold Resistance:* Inured to the frigid temperatures at the roof of the world, a yeti is highly resistant to the damaging effects of cold. A yeti will always take half damage from a cold-based attack, taking one-quarter damage from cold-based attacks that have their damage reduced with a successful saving throw.



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are adventure seed ideas using Perils of the Orient:

- An Oriental Mastermind has decided to expand his operations, allying himself with another force of evil: The Nazis. He has struck an arrangement: He will provide the Nazis with industrial secrets (stolen by his operatives), and in return, the Nazis will allow him to smuggle opium from New York to Los Angeles via their zeppelin, *Die Walkuriye*, which is making a promotional world-wide tour. The Nazis believe that helping “the Devil of Chinatown” spread his drugs throughout the United States will further weaken “a decadent and corrupt society,” leaving it ripe for Nazi takeover.

- A cabal of Black Monks, from the hidden city of Agharti, have come to the Player Characters home city, in order to recover priceless Tibetan mystical artifacts which have been brought back from the Himalayas by an unwitting explorer, under the mistaken impression that the artifacts are merely curios and works of art.

The Black Monks try first to locate the items by kidnapping the explorer from a reception at the Geographic Society Club, but the items have already been sent to the museum. The Player Characters will have to uncover the plot, defend the explorer, and prevent the Monks from getting their hands on the artifacts.



- A number of prominent citizens are discovered murdered in hideous and bizarre fashion. Investigation by the Player-Characters will reveal that all of the victims are shareholders in a railroad company. Further investigation will reveal that the victims were the sons and daughters of the original founders of the company, and that the company was responsible for the deaths of a great many Chinese workers during the construction of its rail lines in the West.

An Oriental Mastermind, who views himself as the heir to Mandate of Heaven, is taking revenge for the ill treatment of his race at the hands of the westerners, as the first part of his plan to consolidate support among the Chinese community worldwide... and then to form a World Empire, with himself on the throne.

