

# Once Upon a Time in China Jumpchain

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Version 1.0



Welcome to China at the tail end of the 19th century, at a time of unrest and opportunity, where East meets West and change is in the air. Once Upon a Time in China is a kung-fu film about famed physician and martial artist Wong Fei-hung, but also a love letter to kung-fu and the passing of an age.

For the next ten years, this is where you will live: a world where traditional kung-fu meets western modernization. Perhaps you can tip the scales on this conflict, or maybe you are just along for the ride. Either way, take **+1000 CP** and be on your way.

## Location

Like the film, you will begin your stay in the town of Foshan, a bustling port town in southern China, not far from Hong Kong. You will begin when the main plot of the first film begins, in some unspecified year in the late 1800s.

## Backgrounds

All backgrounds may import as drop-ins. By default, all backgrounds will be Chinese natives to the region unless specified otherwise, but you can have some other plausible background if you wish.

**Martial Artist (Free):** End of an era though it may be, this was a time when Kung-Fu legends walked the earth. Now you are among their number. Maybe you are one of the few still trying to make a living as an itinerant martial artist, or maybe you keep the tradition alive while practicing some other profession.

**Bystander (Free):** You're just here to live your life, not get mixed up in any troubles. Whether a shopkeeper, artisan, laborer, or even a government official, you are just a regular person trying to keep your head down.

**Westerner (Free):** The story takes place in a port city that serves as something of a crossroads for new ideas, influences, and people entering the formerly closed-off society. Now you are one such person. Are you a western missionary spreading the word to a new land, or a foreign businessman hoping to find their fortune, or perhaps some other purpose of your own choosing? You don't even have to be foreign by birth. Instead, you could choose to be like "13th Aunt", a Western educated local.

**Gang Member (Free):** Change brings opportunity for those willing to exploit others. Now you are one of these opportunists, a criminal out for your own advantage. Whether you are a bumbling con artist just trying to make a living, or part of a hardened gang of slavers is on your own head.

## Perks

Standard discount rules apply. 100 CP perks are free to their origin; others are half off.

### General

**Chinese Medicine (200):** Though popularized in martial arts films, Wong Fei-hung was famed just as much for his medical prowess in traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. With this perk, you too are now an expert in these medical traditions.

Just as Wong Fei-hung was able to impress Western doctors with his skills, any traditional medicine you practice will always be at least as effective as its home setting's highest standard of medical care. At least when it comes to treatments you perform personally.

## Martial Artist



**A Man Should Better Himself (100):** As seen in the opening montage, even the regular grunts in Wong Fei-hung's militia were capable athletes, able to perform long runs, calisthenics, and martial arts drills without pause. Now you too can perform at their level. Your stamina and strength are boosted in general to near-peak levels. While training you will find them all but endless.

Even better, when you are taking part in group training and exercise, some of these benefits flow to your fellows. The weakest and slowest of your number will find hidden reserves of strength, speed, and endurance which will push them toward reaching the group's average (the average without perk benefits). If you are leading the exercise, it will instead pull everyone up to the 75th percentile.

**Organize the Local Militia (200):** So long as you are of good reputation and have proven your competence, government officials are much more likely to sanction

your private lawkeeping. Whether this takes the form of a local militia, a private security operation, or just your own vigilante efforts, you'll find it much easier to uphold law and order in a way of your own choosing.

This is not absolute. It can be taken away if abused or results in disorder, but it will be easy to restore so long as you make amends or show that the problem has been resolved.

**Sifu (400):** You are a martial arts master, on par with Wong Fei-hung or Master Yim. You begin this jump as a peak expert in some appropriate Chinese martial art of your choice.

Additionally, you will find that you can both learn and teach martial arts much faster than normal, and physical limits will be much harder to hit.

**Iron Vest Kung-Fu (600):** Like Master Yim, you now know the secret to hardening your skin through kung-fu alone, such that no blade can pierce it. At the start, you are as capable as Yim was, able to handle sword and spear without a scratch. But where he was outmatched by bullets, you have the potential to surpass this limitation.

For you, this version of the Iron Vest has no upper limit. With training, you will always find a way to make your skin ever more impervious. Armor-piercing rounds, laser blasts, and even unblockable beams of pure annihilation: given time and training, you can find a way to overcome them all.

This only applies to attacks that would pierce, cut, or otherwise damage your skin. Things that bypass this, such as contact poisons, or blunt trauma can still damage your internals.

As a bonus, this will not change the texture, softness, or feel of your skin. Additionally, you will always have at least a vague understanding of how much your current technique can block. This understanding may be improved with practice and study.

## Bystander



**Make a Living (100):** You can always find some gainful way to make a living. At a minimum, this is enough for basic shelter and to avoid starving, but it will scale with your abilities and inclination. Whether an actual steady employment, a business of your own, or even just one-off gigs, so long as there is a place for your talents to earn some money, you can find it.

**I Can Be Your Witness (200):** Speaking up is hard. Even if authorities catch a criminal red-handed in front of a crowd of witnesses, the bystanders might be too afraid. Not for you, though. With this perk, people will never be frightened to speak on your behalf. This won't necessarily ensure their testimony is in your favor, or otherwise change what they would say, only ensure that they act as if they had no fear of repercussions.

Better still, they are right not to be afraid. When someone does speak, report, or act as a witness on your behalf, it will never occur to anyone that they should take action against your witness. Even if they would normally silence such an

outspoken voice, they simply will not think to do so. This doesn't do anything to keep them from projecting their ire at *you*, but at least your witness will be safe.

**Fade Into the Background (400):** As a bystander, you're just not that important. Even if you were, say, a local magistrate, you'd still be sidelined in favor of martial arts squabbles and rival gangs. But hey, in a setting full of lawlessness and colonialism, that's not such a bad thing. With this perk, people are much less likely to plot against you, or account for you at all, so long as you do not directly oppose them. Now you're much less likely to be the subject of random grudges, targets of opportunity, or just having your shop randomly made an example of.

This doesn't protect you from collateral damage, nor from plots that absolutely require your downfall, but given any other alternative, would-be enemies will simply overlook you.

**A Foot in Each World (600):** You are the neutral party, the unaffiliated, able to come and go as you please. So long as you are not outright offensive and make at least a token effort to fit in, you will be accepted pretty much anywhere, without regard to class or race. Whether the swankiest and snobbiest of upper class modern restaurants or the roughest of traditional marketplaces, your presence will be accepted.

So long as you are not outright hostile or aligned against them, groups and organizations will deal with you as a trusted neutral party, even if you are busy doing the same with their enemies. So long as you maintain your neutrality, others will accept and respect this.

## Westerner



**Cultured and Sophisticated (100):** When your customs are strange and new to the locals, they are much more likely to look at them in a favorable light. By default, they will tend to see your practices as more refined and elegant, or at least interestingly exotic. Even someone concerned about outside influences might be inclined to soften when it comes to you.

**Unequal Influence (200):** Bureaucrats and officials will always give you preferential attention and weight. They won't necessarily bow to your will or let you dictate terms, but you'd have to go well out of your way to ever get brushed off or discounted outright.

**Land of Opportunity (400):** You are a master recruiter, able to make any programs, jobs, or opportunities seem incredibly enticing, even if they seem too good to believe.

A land where people trip over gold, and it's mine for the taking as long as I pay two years' wages and accept an ironclad labor contract? Sign me up!

This works both in person and for any recruiting programs that you personally design. The effect tends to be more powerful the more ignorant people are about

the realities of your offer, but it also makes people less likely to do their own investigation and cure that ignorance.

**Passing of an Age (600):** Just as guns and modernization helped spell the end of the kung-fu era, you, too, are an agent of change. Whenever a traditional practice or way of life is challenged by new ideas or technology, you will find yourself able to wield these changes for maximum effect. In your hands, all the upsides of the new ways will be magnified, while the downsides and drawbacks are minimized. In this jump, it was guns that spelled the end of hand-to-hand fighting, but in another setting it could just as easily be personal force-fields ending firearms in favor of a return to melee combat. This is not limited to just combat, either. Ideas, philosophies, art movements, or new technologies will all benefit from this perk, so long as they are challenging the established order.

Mind you, this does require an actual movement or societal shift. You won't benefit from this perk just by dropping into the setting as an outside context problem. There is also a point where the new ways become so ubiquitous that this perk no longer benefits them. But in the middle, there is a sweet spot where you are a real force of change.

As a bonus, this perk extends to anyone acting directly in concert with you. Soldiers you lead personally, for example, would benefit from this perk just as much as you personally.

### Gang Member



**Crooked Fighting (100):** You may not be a great martial arts master out of legend, but you are good in a scuffle. This perk grants you basic competence in fighting, as well as a knack for ambushes and underhanded moves in combat.

In a fair fight, this perk alone wouldn't let you match a regular in Wong Fei-hung's militia, much less Wong Fei-hung himself, but who said anything about fair...

**Witness? And Live My Days Worrying? (200):** Breaking the law can be a pain. No matter how tough you are, it only takes one witness in the wrong place to bring the arm of the law down on you. At least, that's true if the witness is actually willing to speak. With this perk, people tend to hold their tongue when it comes

to your misdeeds. Whether to the government, a reporter, or even a local vigilante.

By default, they are about as reluctant as they would be to speak up against a hardened criminal who knew where they lived, even if they know nothing about you. If they know you: either personally or by reputation, then this effect scales with the fear you inspire.

However, if someone is willing to directly oppose you anyway, this won't actually deter them from speaking out, either.

**Useful Tool (400):** The great thing about breaking the law is that there is always someone able to use a person willing to stand outside the law. So long as it benefits them, people are much more willing to set aside their beliefs and work with you.

A ruthless, xenophobic merchant who despises your people will have no problems recruiting you as a local agent to do his dirty work. A proud martial arts master who is down on his luck will gladly serve as your enforcer given some praise and coin. This works less on the truly righteous, but those with more flexible morals can find a way to work with you, and even uphold their bargains so long as there is still something in it for them.

**Triad Troubles (600):** No matter how much you are beaten down, it is hard to put you down truly. Both yourself and organizations you create will be more resilient to machinations of the law. While a directed investigation or a single righteous challenger might be able to combat you, the regular workings of the system are much more likely to miss you and yours.

When you choose to do so, it is much easier to go to ground and hide. When powerful enemies stand against you, it is easier to find and recruit powerful allies who are willing to oppose them.

Once per year, if all else seems lost, you may sacrifice all that you have worked for and built this jump in order to ensure your escape. The more you have to lose, the more powerful this effect will be.

## Items

You may apply a discount to one item per price tier. Discounted 100cp items are free. You may apply a higher tier discount to lower tiers if you wish (i.e., discount two 200 items instead of 200/400). Unless otherwise specified, all items repair or are replaced after one week.

**Camera (100):** An 18th century flash equipped camera, comparable to the one used by 13th aunt. Comes with enough supplies to take and develop a dozen pictures, restocking daily.

**Chinese Fan (100):** A beautiful handcrafted fan, similar to the one given to Wong Fei-hung. You can choose whether to have it come with the “unequal treaties” written on it, or just a plain fan. Alternatively, you can replace the treaties with some work of Chinese literature that fits in the space and was created no later than 1850.

**Weapon (100):** An authentic, functional, high quality weapon appropriate to the setting. It can be any traditional Chinese handheld weapon, or any period appropriate firearm. The weapon is of the finest mundane quality. For firearms, it also comes with a supply of powder and ammunition that restock daily.

**Dragon Dance (100):** A full set of all the costumes and props needed for an authentic Chinese Dragon Dance.

**Successful Restaurant (200):** You start the jump owning a modest but successful restaurant in Foshan. Depending on your background and preference it could be

local cuisine, western cuisine, some other regional Chinese food, or really any other appropriate cuisine for the time period and setting.

Left on its own, it will have a competent local staff running the business well enough to grant you a modest profit. If you want to step in and run things yourself, that is always an option.

In future jumps, you may similarly insert the restaurant with some local cuisine, or any cuisine that this item has served previously. (You'll still have to find local sources for ingredients, though).

**Respectable Training Hall (200):** You own a simple but well-appointed training hall for martial arts training and practice. In addition to training space and equipment, it will also have living space for yourself and a few disciples.

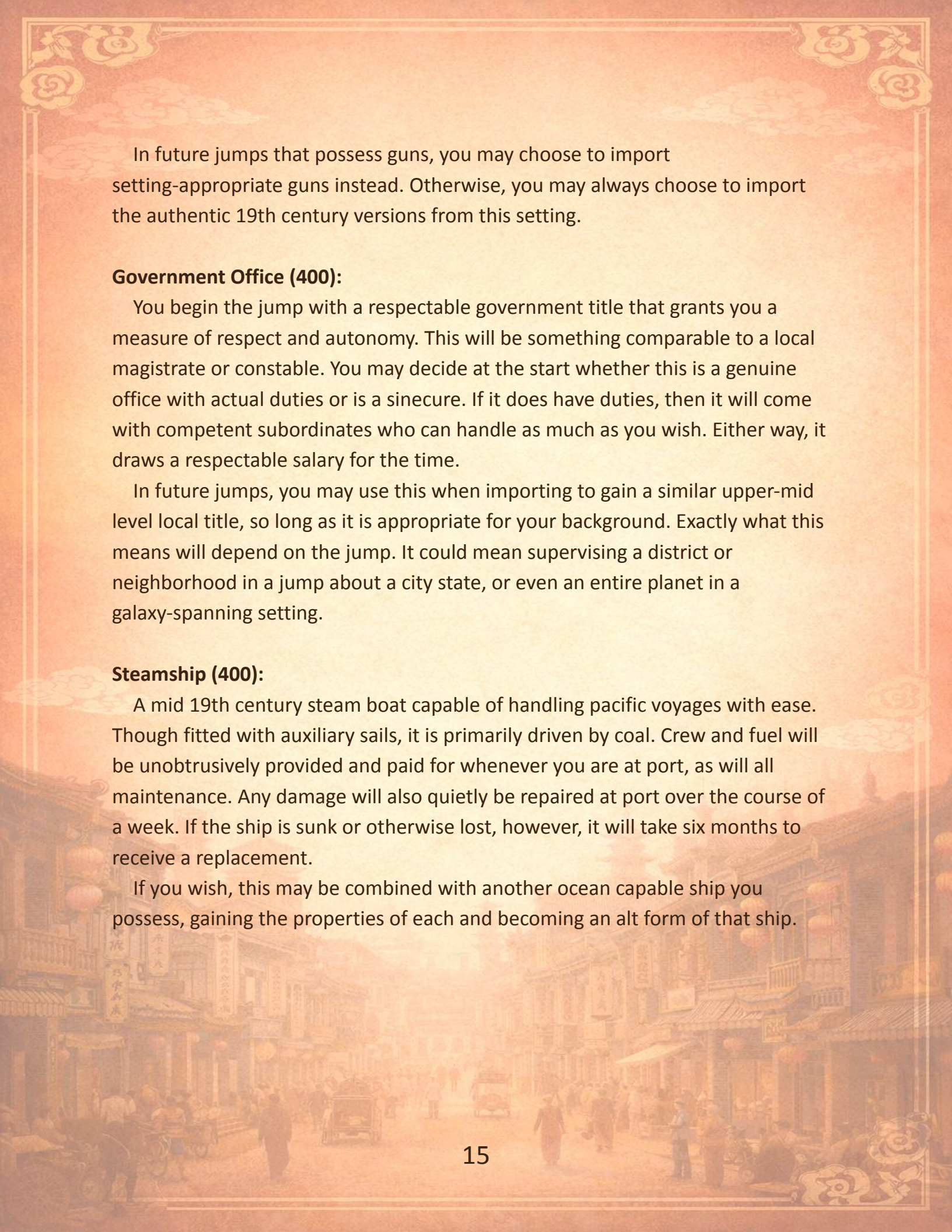
So long as you personally operate it and keep it in good standing, people will find you more respectable for your connection with this martial arts school.

**Nondescript Warehouse (200):** A simple warehouse or storage hall in the bad part of town. Includes enough space for a modest amount of goods (legal or otherwise) as well as some rooms for yourself and some underlings to stay.

You pay no taxes or other fees on this property, and it is naturally resistant (but not immune) to any suspicion or scrutiny. Illicit goods under your control will also share this resistance while being transported to or from this building.

**Rifles and Canons(400):**

You have enough rifles to outfit a modest company, about 150 total, as well as enough powder and ammunition for a week's worth of rigorous training or operation, restocking weekly. This also comes with five portable field canons, also with supplies for a week.



In future jumps that possess guns, you may choose to import setting-appropriate guns instead. Otherwise, you may always choose to import the authentic 19th century versions from this setting.

**Government Office (400):**

You begin the jump with a respectable government title that grants you a measure of respect and autonomy. This will be something comparable to a local magistrate or constable. You may decide at the start whether this is a genuine office with actual duties or is a sinecure. If it does have duties, then it will come with competent subordinates who can handle as much as you wish. Either way, it draws a respectable salary for the time.

In future jumps, you may use this when importing to gain a similar upper-mid level local title, so long as it is appropriate for your background. Exactly what this means will depend on the jump. It could mean supervising a district or neighborhood in a jump about a city state, or even an entire planet in a galaxy-spanning setting.

**Steamship (400):**

A mid 19th century steam boat capable of handling pacific voyages with ease. Though fitted with auxiliary sails, it is primarily driven by coal. Crew and fuel will be unobtrusively provided and paid for whenever you are at port, as will all maintenance. Any damage will also quietly be repaired at port over the course of a week. If the ship is sunk or otherwise lost, however, it will take six months to receive a replacement.

If you wish, this may be combined with another ocean capable ship you possess, gaining the properties of each and becoming an alt form of that ship.

## Companions

**Import Companions** (50/200/400): Import an existing companion for 50 CP per companion, or a flat 200 for up to 8 companions. They will get 500 CP to spend on Perks and Items. Double your cost to instead give them each 800 CP.

**Jumper's Militia** (100): Import up to a hundred companions. They take the same origin as you and get discounts/freebies plus 300 CP to spend. They may not gain any additional points through drawbacks.

**Canon Companions** (free/100/200): Anyone can join as a companion should you both agree to it. For 100 CP, you are guaranteed to meet them under favorable terms, but the actual recruitment pitch is still up to you. Additionally, canon characters you have paid for receive the same death protection as your existing companions, provided they have already agreed to join the chain. For 200, you can select up to eight canon characters instead of just one.

# Drawbacks

(+1000 CP Maximum)

**Once Upon a Time in China and America (+0):** No, not *Once Upon a Time in America*, that's an entirely separate film. This is about the final entry in the film series, set in the United States. If you take this perk, you will instead find yourself in the United States at the dawn of the 20th century, at the same time that Wong Fei-hung and his entourage travel to America. Expect more western (the genre) themes, as well as an exploration of the troubles faced by Asian immigrants in the new world.

**S-s-s-stutter (+100 CP):** You have a noticeable stutter, and have trouble getting your words across.

**Antagonistic Officials (+100 CP):** Government officials tend to distrust you. While they won't go out of their way to make trouble, if you find yourself involved in a disturbance expect that they'll quickly jump to blaming you, and your word will always count for little in their eyes. This can be counteracted somewhat if you can arrange for someone they do trust to testify in your defense.

**Aunt X (+100 CP):** Like 13th Aunt and Wong Fei-hung, you will find yourself caught in a hopeless romance. Expect it to be fully requited, but for various reasons neither of you will admit or act on your romantic feelings for the duration of the jump. If your companions or some other third party tries to force the issue or act as matchmaker, circumstances will always prevent them from being successful. Nothing is stopping you from inviting them to the chain and striking up a relationship afterwards, but the invitation itself must be strictly platonic.

**What's the use of being a kung fu expert? Can't make a living (+200 CP):** And now neither can you. For the duration of this jump, you can expect to be flat broke. Any out of jump sources of money are unavailable, and if you took **Make a Living** expect it to provide only the bare minimum.

If you try to rely on companions or others not affected by this perk, expect there to always be some reason for their help to be short term at best.

**Sifu, a challenger! (+200 CP):** At least once each month, expect to be challenged to a duel by a challenger or roughly your standing. These aren't necessarily deadly contests (though they can be), but at a minimum you should expect a noticeable loss of reputation if you lose. Whatever their reasons for challenging you, do not expect them to take no for an answer.

Of course, this is an honorable duel, so all of your out of jump powers, items, and perks are inactive for the duration, nor can anyone else interfere until the match has reached its conclusion.

**We can't fight guns with kung fu (+300 CP):** Any perks or powers you have that would let you overpower, defend against, or otherwise trivialize firearms are gone for the duration of this jump. That includes more esoteric defenses such as regeneration, intangibility, super speed, etc. It also applies to anything provided by companions or anyone else. For example, expect a set of futuristic power armor provided by a companion to offer about as much protection to you as a cotton shirt, even if it should be capable of shrugging off rockets all day long.

In short, getting shot with a 19th century gun is a genuine threat to you, and nothing can change that.

**Back to Your Roots (+300 CP):** A martial artist is only as good as their foundation, and this drawback will help you return to the fundamentals by barring all out of jump perks, items, warehouse, and other powers.

**Journey to the West (+300 CP):** Change is coming a little fast these days, isn't it? Every gang and especially foreigners already seem to have some of these Colt revolvers and Spencer repeating rifles already, and it will be only a matter of months after your arrival until they also get cannons, an industrial revolution and gatling guns, too. Kung-Fu and other traditional arts will not have the honor of a dignified death at this rate. (Even/especially if you are immune to gunfire, expect your allies, or even random martial artists to dramatically underestimate the danger of firearms and suffer the consequences.)

**Not wives, whores! (+400 CP):** You begin the jump chained up in the hold of a ship bound for another continent. Once they arrive, you will be put to work doing something that you would find unpleasant. All powers, perks, items, etc are unavailable for the duration of your captivity. Should your captors successfully ship you to your intended destination, your powers will remain sealed until you set foot safely back in China.

Your companions are able to rescue you, but they begin the jump unaware of your peril, with all memory of this drawback stripped away. Any perk or power that should warn them of your danger will be ineffective until you are once again safe.

Failing to escape is NOT a chain ender, but expect a painful, unpleasant, and dangerous time if you do not.

**Boxed into a Corner (+400CP, incompatible with Once Upon a Time in China and America or Not wives, whores):** Although the films were always unclear about the timeline, they happen somewhere around the time of the boxer rebellion, a time when uprisings of Chinese martial artists (called "Boxers" by the western forces of the time) rose against perceived foreign influence, which spiraled into open war between China and the (mostly) Western Eight-Nation Alliance.

Shortly after the start of this jump, the conflict will break out and spill into open war. Although in real life most of the action took place in the north well away from Foshan, expect this region to be hit much harder by this jump's version.

When the fighting breaks out, you will be forced to choose a side. Either support the Eight-Nation Alliance and find yourself an enemy of the Chinese, or side with China and see the guns of the West (and Japan) turned against you. Trying to remain neutral will simply see yourself become an enemy of both.

If you take **Journey to the West**, you will be locked into the Chinese side of the conflict, and the advantage in guns will be even more stacked on the Western side than it was in the real conflict.

# Afterwards

The standard post-jump options apply.

## Stay Here

Remain in this world permanently and see how things unfold after.

## Return Home

Put an end to your travels and return to where you started before your jumping began.

## Continue Onward

The journey is not over for you yet.