

Oriental Narrative:

How to Understand 'SWORDSMEN (WUXIA)' in Chinese Games



About me——Zhipeng Hu



Me

=



Me (in Game)

In recent years, a new generation of young people
近几年 新一代年轻人

‘Chinese style’ games, with enduring **Wuxia games** as the core

20% are Wuxia Games



50% Wuxia Big Fans



**If you have never heard of Wuxia,
let's watch this video first.**

Keywords:

Ancient China

Strong in combat

Great kungfu

Physical attack

A bit supernatural

Please break the stereotype - Supernatural is not the core of Wuxia



“No Chinese must figure in the story”

——Ten Commandments of
Detective Fiction (1929)

There are similar heroes in Western narratives.



Robin Hood



Assassin's Creed





Zorro



(MAIN)
// ALERT
The Mask
Head to F.E.A.S.T.



SPIDER MAN



Ghost of Tsushima 

Which one is Wuxia?



1



2



Wuxia Elements



The 'Wuxia' elements in the game need to stand out at an early stage to allow players to recognize them.



Can Western developers add Wuxia elements into their games to make it more acceptable by eastern players?

That's why
today we're going to talk about Wuxia
(for player, for Business)



I believe you can do it!

This Talk includes 4 parts

History

Core
Elements

Visual Art

Design Tips

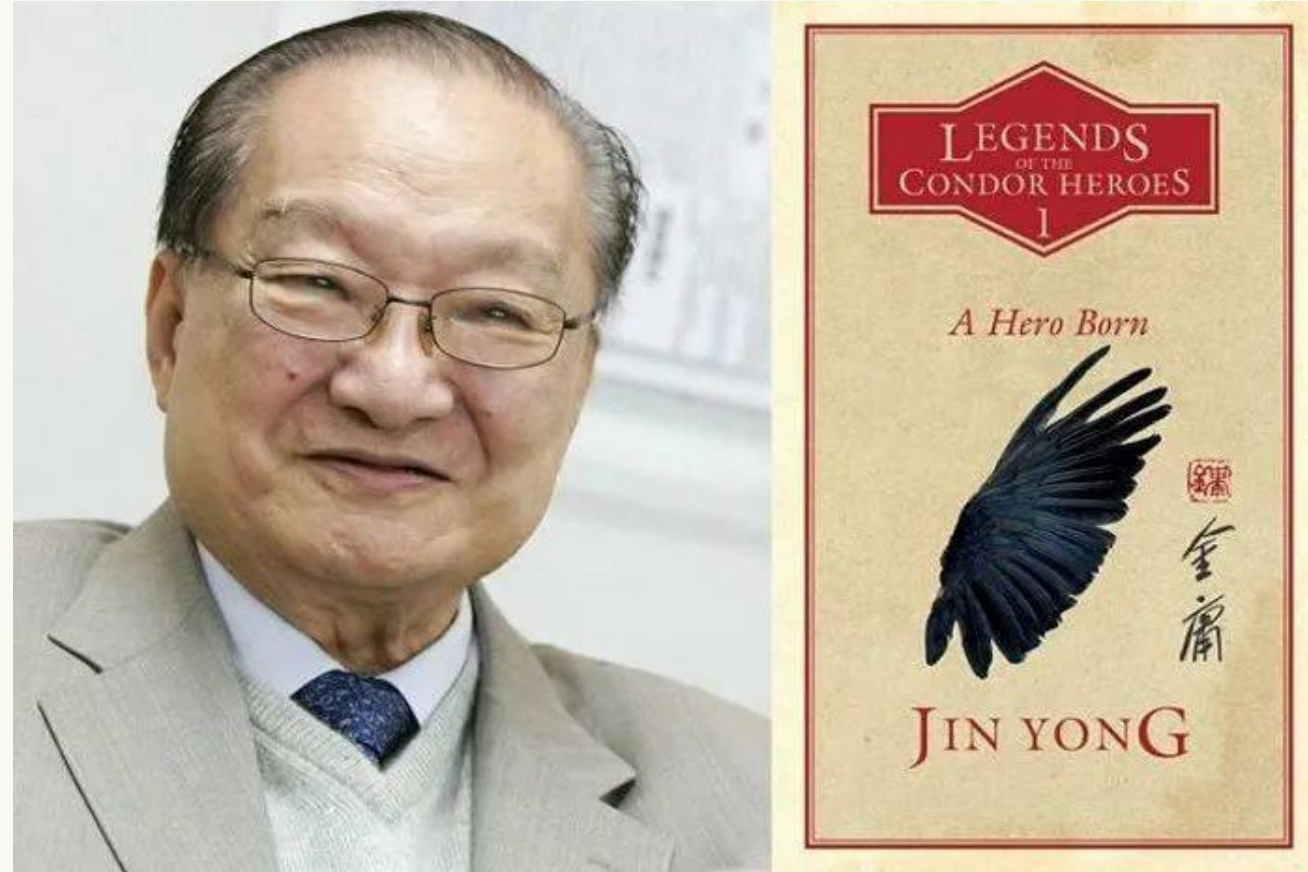
Takeaway: Every western game developer can learn how to add some Wuxia elements into games.



What is WUXIA

History of Wuxia & Wuxia games

What is WUXIA?



Wuxia is a genre of Chinese fiction
telling the adventures of ancient Chinese martial artists

Wuxia tells stories about heroes

Oriental Narrative

武

WU

Swords

侠

XIA

men

Western Narrative

Superman Iron man Spider man

Like western narratives, they're stories about **heroes**.

For Chinese people, Wuxia has 2 meanings

武

WU → Sword

Weapon & Kongfu
(equals to sword)

Outer Power

俠

XIA → Man

Behavior & Spirit
(equals to MAN)

Inner Values

The history of Wuxia is not that long, but it's developing rapidly

History & Legends

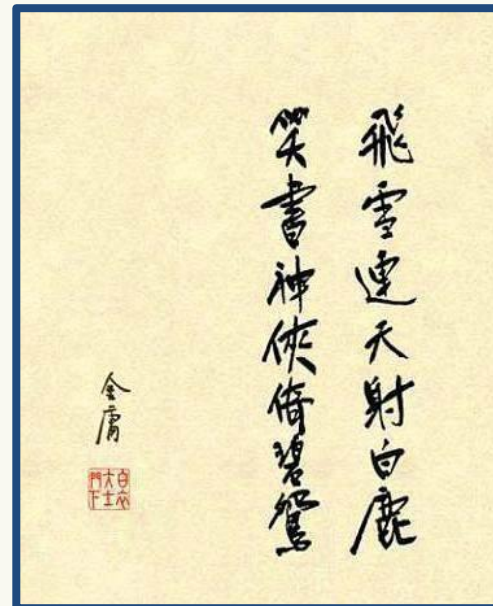
before 1950s



Literature

before 1950s

A literary semi-fictional
Wuxia world



Film & TV

1980s

A visible Wuxia world



Video Games

1990s

A Wuxia world that we can
experience



The source of Wuxia power: kungfu & weapons

Outer source

Kung fu Weapon



The source of Wuxia power : inner Qi

Inner source

Qi (Vital force)



Lack of 'Wu' - Zorro



Lack of Eastern Kungfu & Weapon

The Other Appeal of Wuxia- Inner Spirit and Behavior

侠 XIA

Behavior & Spirit
(equals to MAN)

Inner Values

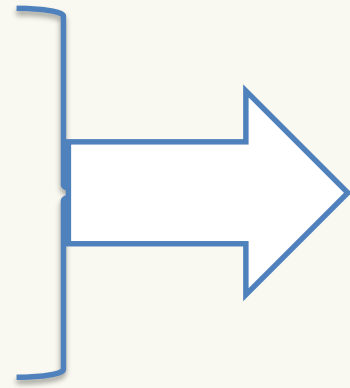
- **Transcendent Words, Actions and Virtues**
- **Defending the value of justice not for the ruling class**

The Other Appeal of Wuxia- Inner Spirit and Behavior

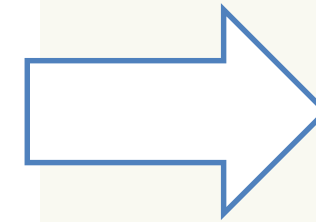
KUNGFU

Qi

POWER



Light Weapons



Swordsman

Lack of 'Xia' – Japanese Bushi



Lack of Wuxia's Inner Spirit

The Development History of Wuxia Games

Based on Wuxia in literature, Chinese game developers started to develop Wuxia games from 1995

Wuxia games allow Oriental users to play heroes

History of Wuxia Games

Wuxia turn-based
RPG

1995-2001



Action fights added
into Wuxia games

2002-2007



Popularity of
Wuxia MMORPG

2008-2020



More kind of Wuxia
games appearing

2021-



Birth of Wuxia games (1995-2001) — Single-player RPG



Development of Wuxia games (2002-2007) — ACT



Rapid spread of Wuxia games (2007-2020) — MMORPG



Dragon Oath
(2007)



Justice Online
(2018)

New era of Wuxia games (2021-) — Keep improving





Wuxia and other oriental cultures

Core differences based on **narratives and deconstruction**

**Native oriental players can easily
recognize that this is not ‘Wuxia’**

Three similar and confusable cultures need to be distinguished

Military narratives

Chinese Mythology

Japanese Bushido

Differences between Wuxia and historical martial narratives

Wuxia



Melee weapon +Kungfu

Stronger person

Anti-gravity jumps

Partly imaginary

Historical Narratives



Melee weapon

Ordinary person

Run or ride a horse

Completely realistic

Differences between Wuxia and Chinese mythology

Wuxia



Chinese Mythology



Melee weapon + kungfu ----- Mythological objects and arts

Stronger person ----- Deities and spirits

Anti-gravity jumps ----- Extraordinary superpower

Partly imaginary ----- Completely imaginary

Differences between Wuxia and Japanese narratives

Wuxia



Melee weapon + Martial arts

Low class

Free and with morality

Partly imaginary

Samurai



• Bushido •

• Ninja •

Katana + Martial Arts

Distinct class

Loyal and Revenge

Partly imaginary

Three core concepts in Wuxia narrative

Sect

Swordmen's School

Jianghu

Swordmen's Society

Country

Swordmen's Motherland

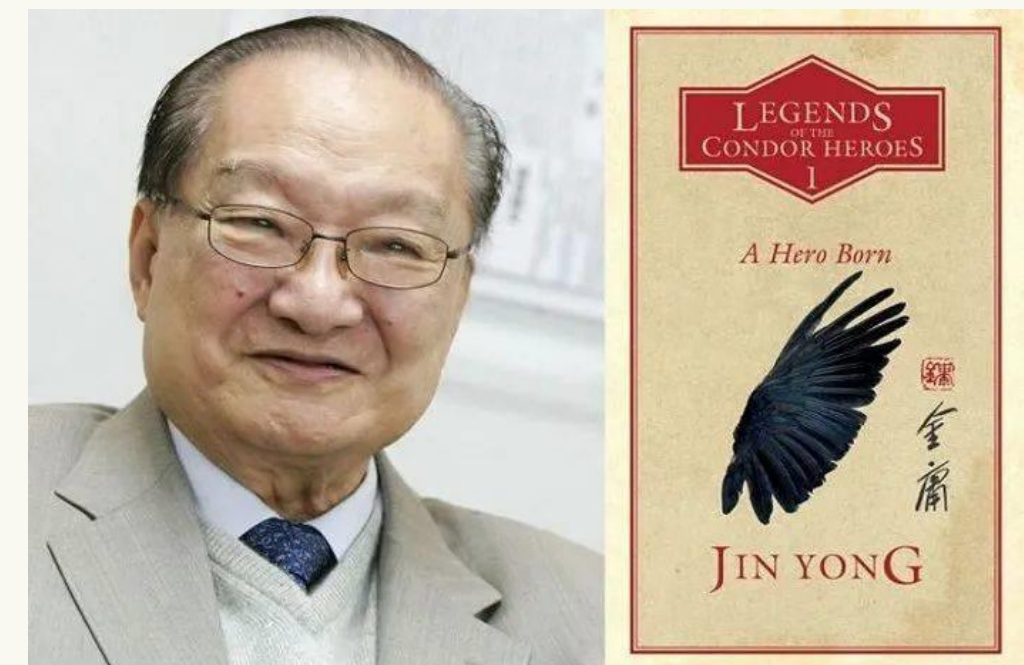
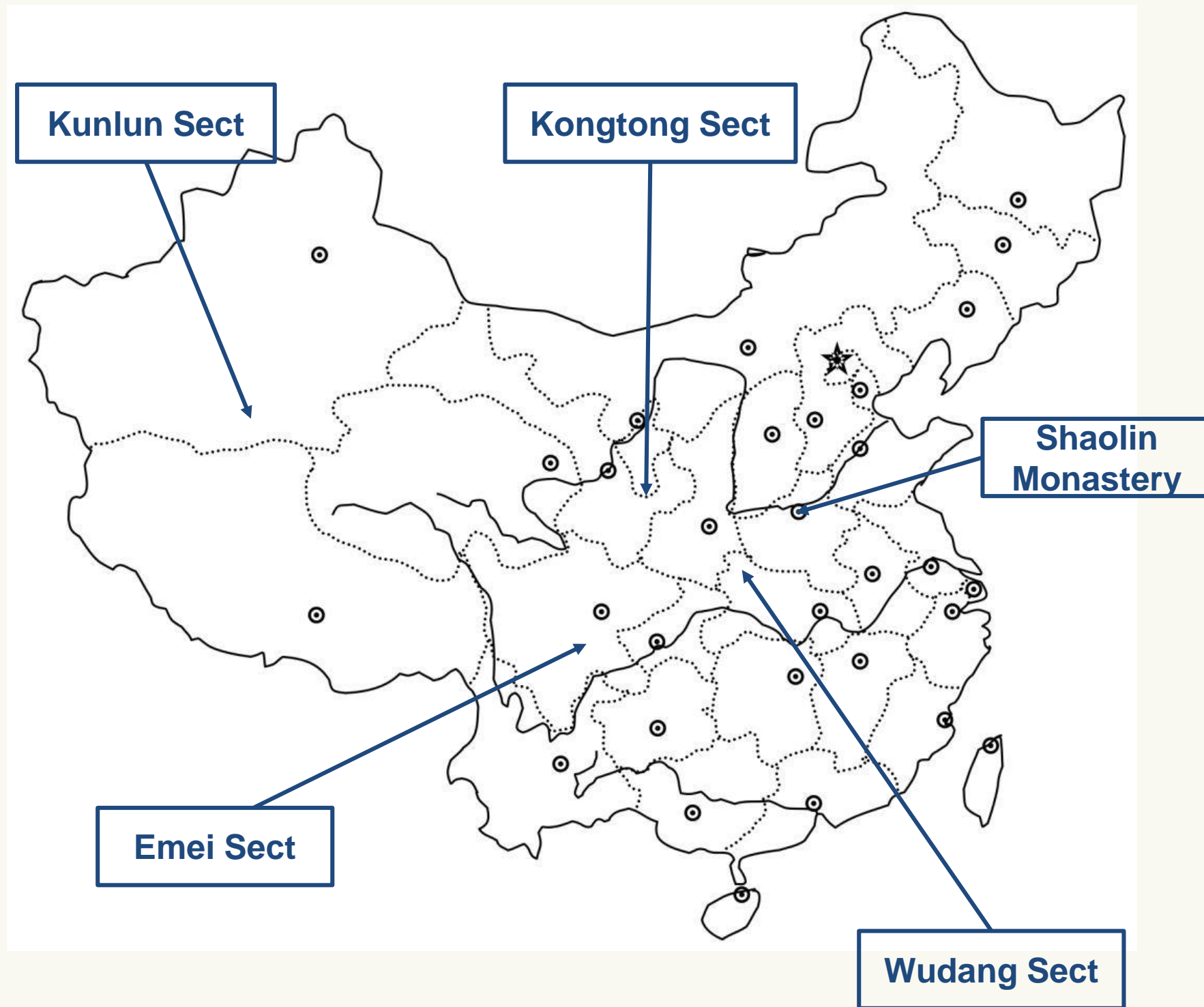
Sect—an organization and a school of swordsmen



One art genre

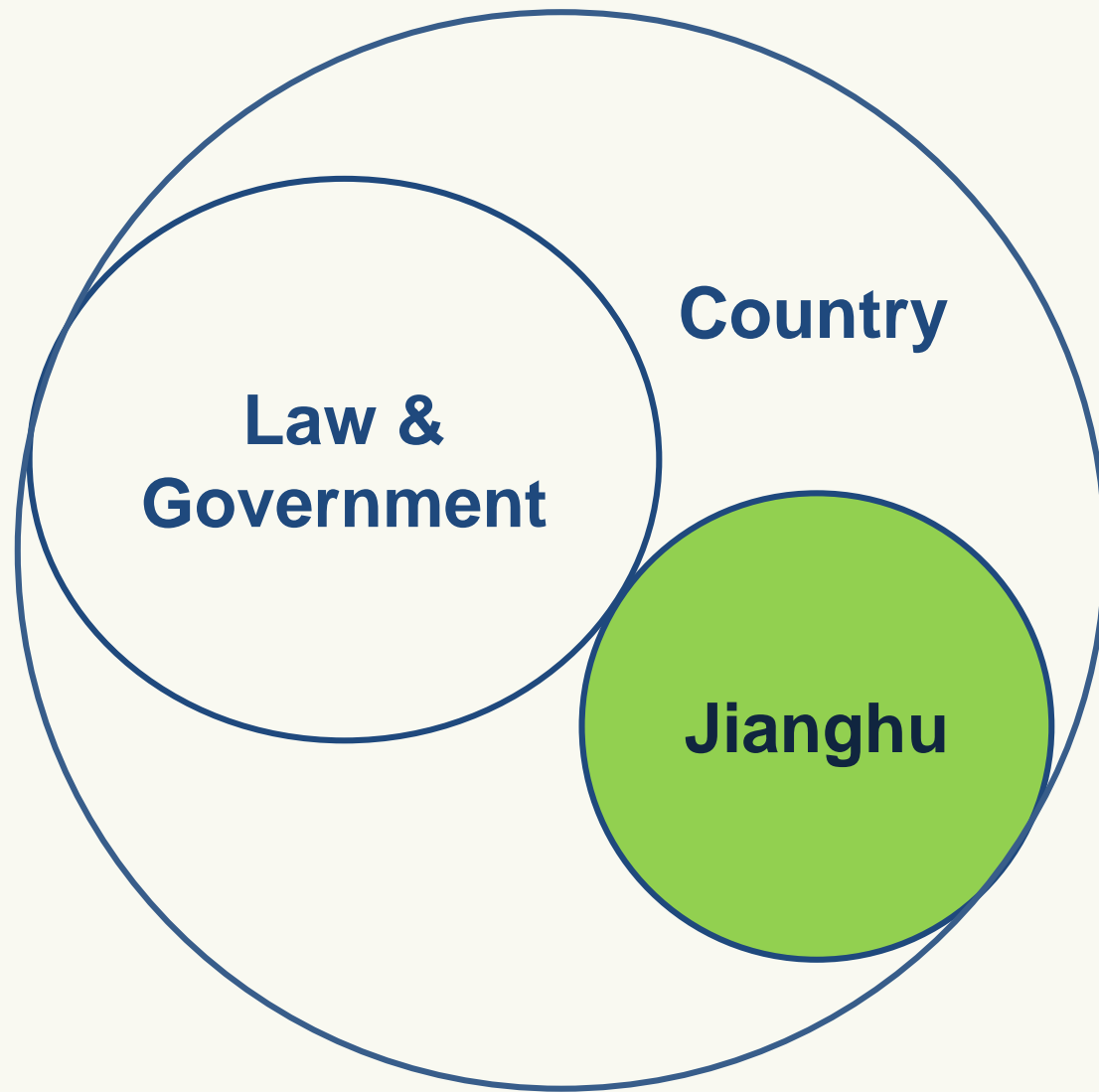
One great master

Share the weal and woe



Louis Cha

Jianghu —— the swordsmen society



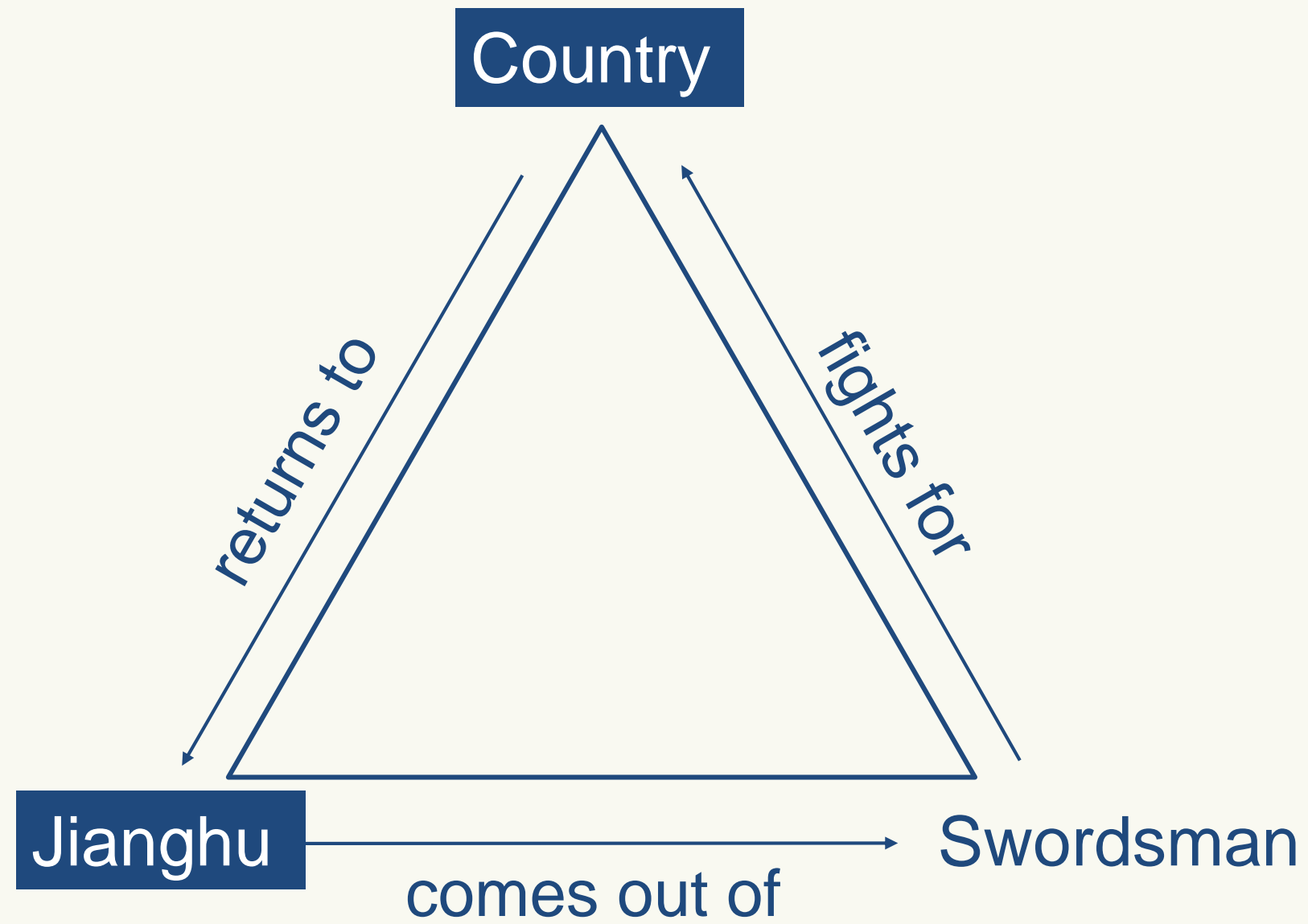
Metaphor: comprehensive social

No fixed locations

Outside the authorities and government

Governed by celebrities or big guilds

Country — Motherland for live and spirit





XIA Spirit



Call for Hero, Games for Hero



Avoid 4 Misunderstandings.



Authentic Wuxia

So, there are 4 misunderstandings to avoid from the very beginning.

4 misunderstandings

- ❌ Excessive superpower
- ❌ Leading army into battles
- ❌ Staying as an official in the government
- ❌ Completely overturned settings for commonly recognized sects (partly new is accepted)

The background is a traditional Chinese ink wash painting. It depicts a vast, misty landscape with rolling mountains and dense, swirling clouds or mist. The brushwork is expressive, with varying shades of grey and black ink on a white background, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The composition is centered, with the text overlaid on the middle section.

Typical Visual Elements of 'Wuxia'

Art & Style

Visual Arts: Typical Visual Elements of Wuxia

1



· Characters ·

3



· Actions ·

6



· Scenes ·

Protagonist



Characters in Justice Online

- Character Setting: Perfectionism
- Good-looking, talented and righteous
- Leadership

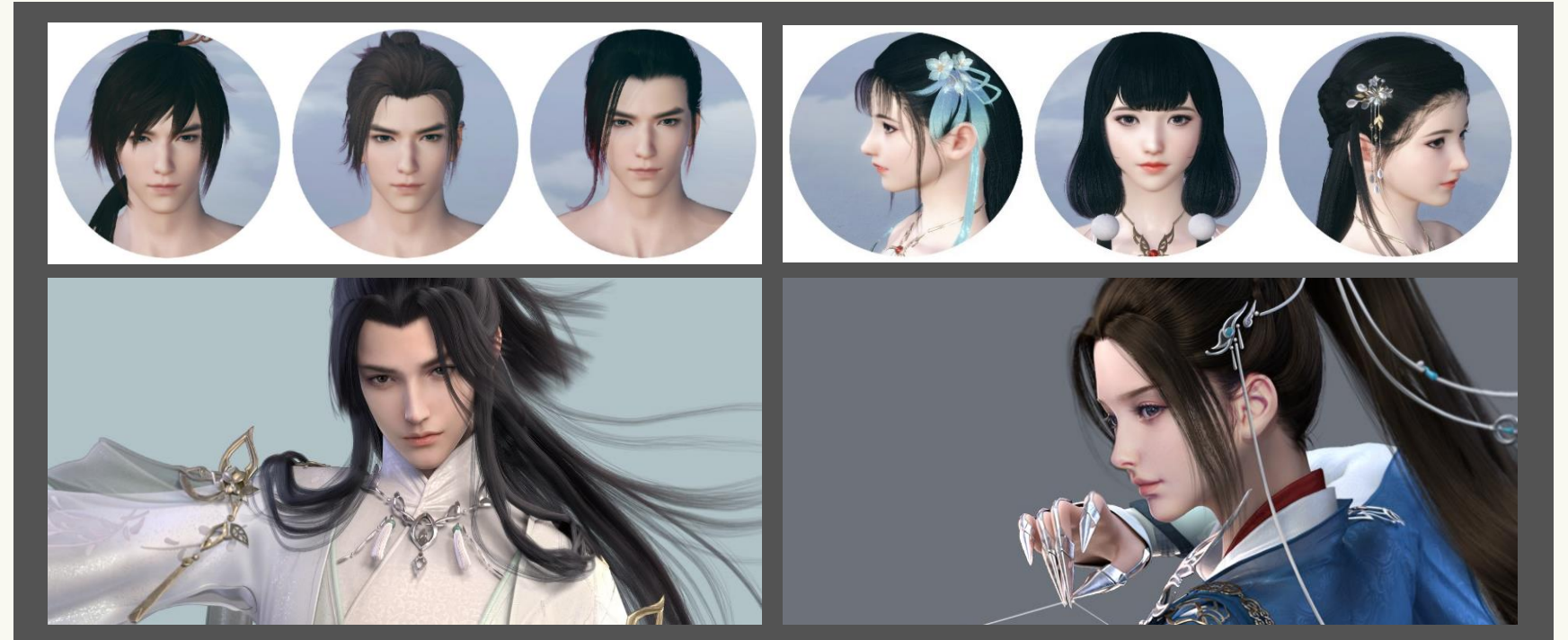
Visual Arts: Wuxia Characters——look so beautiful



The Shaping of Western Heroes

Realism

Restore the appearance of soldiers with wounds, scars and other elements



The Shaping of Chinese Swordsmen

Idealism

Youth, Plainness, Elegance
Swords and neat clothes

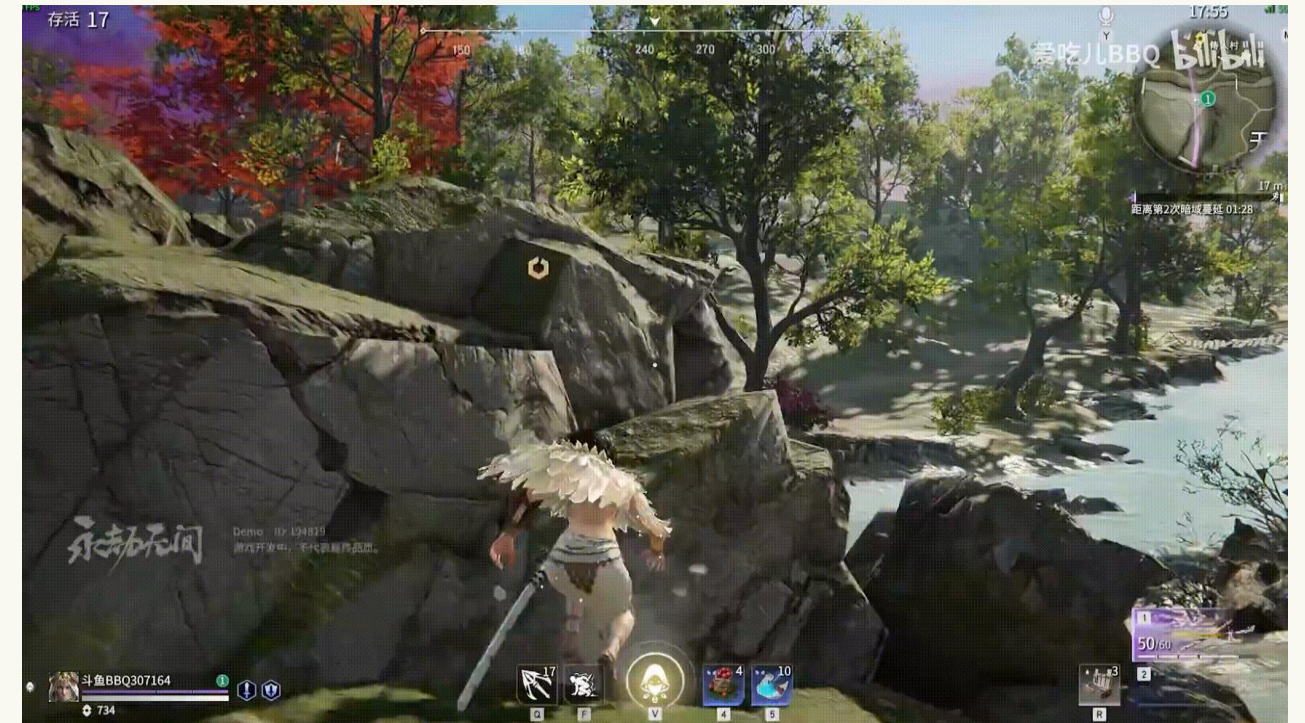
Visual Arts: Recognizable Visual Elements of Wuxia——Why?



Taking ancient Chinese painting art as an example, the most important aesthetic factor is line, not reality.

**Fast
Light
Elegant**

Visual Arts: Three Wuxia Action Features——Fast



- Action Speed
- Advanced Skills
- Attack & Dodge

Visual Arts: Three Wuxia Action Features——Light (Anti-gravity)

- **Anti-Gravity Jump**



Swift and Light Moving Actions in the game NARAKA: BLADEPOINT

Visual Arts: Three Wuxia Action Features——Light (Anti-gravity)

- **Anti-Gravity Jump**



Various Styles of Anti-gravity jump in the game Justice Online

Visual Arts: Three Wuxia Action Features——Elegant



Elegant from Justice Online

Visual Arts: Recognizable Visual Elements of Wuxia——Scenes

Six Types of Scene

- Bamboo Forest
- Water Surface
- Mountain Top

Nature

- Roof
- Arena
- Ancient Inn

Buildings

1

Bamboo Forest

《Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon》

Bamboo Forest

- Metaphor of 'Tenacity'
- Oriental artistry
- Easy to hide inside
- Signals of danger



2

Water Surface



Water Surface

- Use Anti-Gravity Jump
- Oriental artistry
- Arduous to practice
- Indicates high Kung Fu level



Water Surface Scene in Justice Online

3

the Mountain Top



Film- The third master's sword

Mountain Top

- Tension in combat
- Fight for glory
- Glorious title for WINNER



*Exclusive Badge and Title for
WINNER in NARAKA:BLADEPOINT*

4 Roof

《Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon》

Roof

- Anti-gravity Jump
- Observe from a high perspective
- Wait for the timing to attack



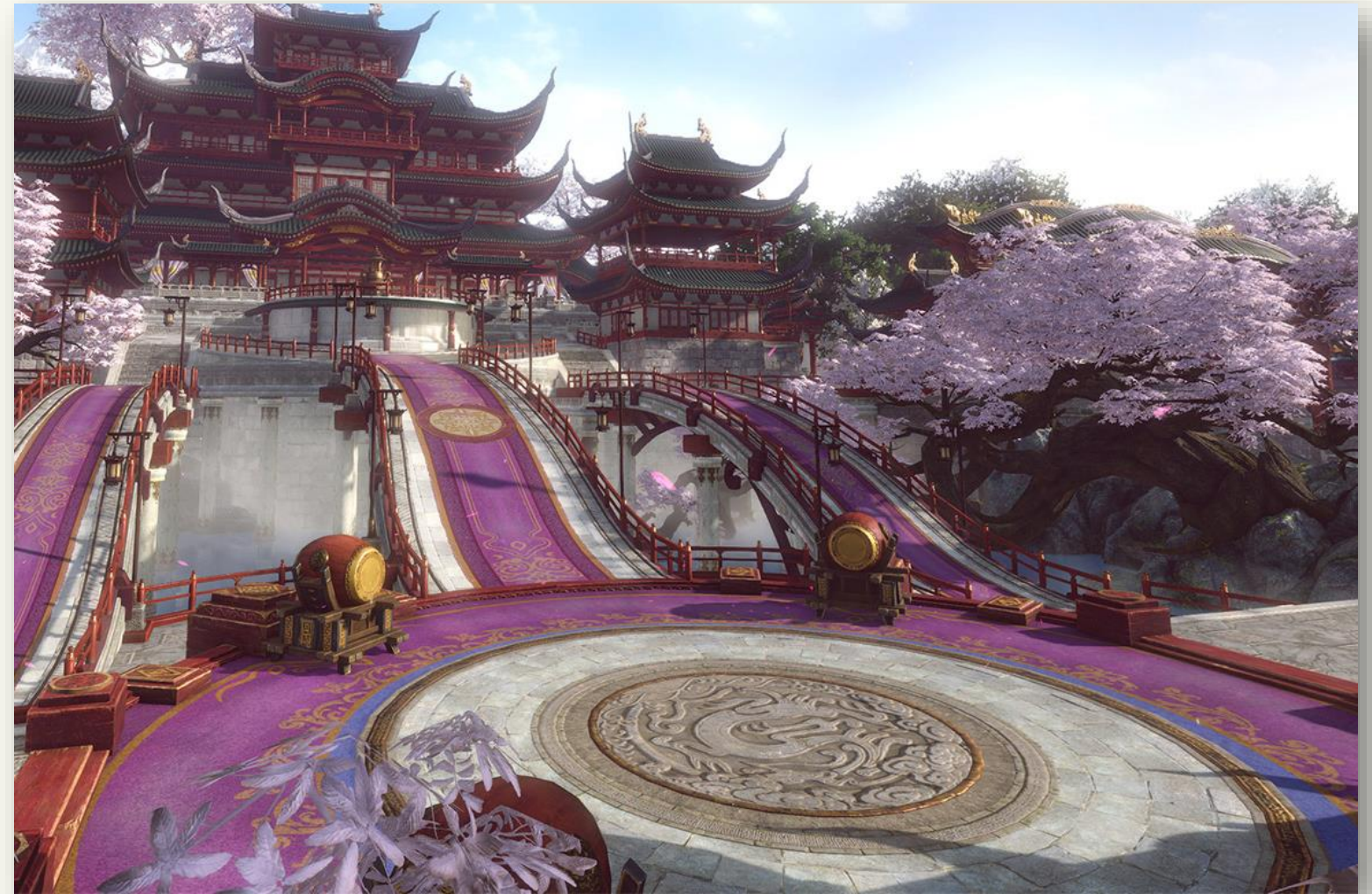
5

Public Arena

Film Clips—Public Challenge

Arena

- Encourage public challenges
- Keep leveling up
- Pursue self-improvement
- Positive competition



6

Ancient Inn

《*Dragon Inn*》
Clips of Inn Scene and Fight

Ancient Inn

- Stories and conflicts happen most
- Exchange Jianghu information
- Make acquaintances
- Indoor space: visuals keep changing
- Express storyline and emotions



Six Types of Scene

- Bamboo Forest
- Water Surface
- Mountain Top

Nature

- Roof
- Arena
- Ancient Inn

Buildings



Design Tips for Wuxia Games

Emotion & Resonation

Design Tips: Resonate & Emotions from Netease Practice

Meteor Butterfly Sword

Justice Online

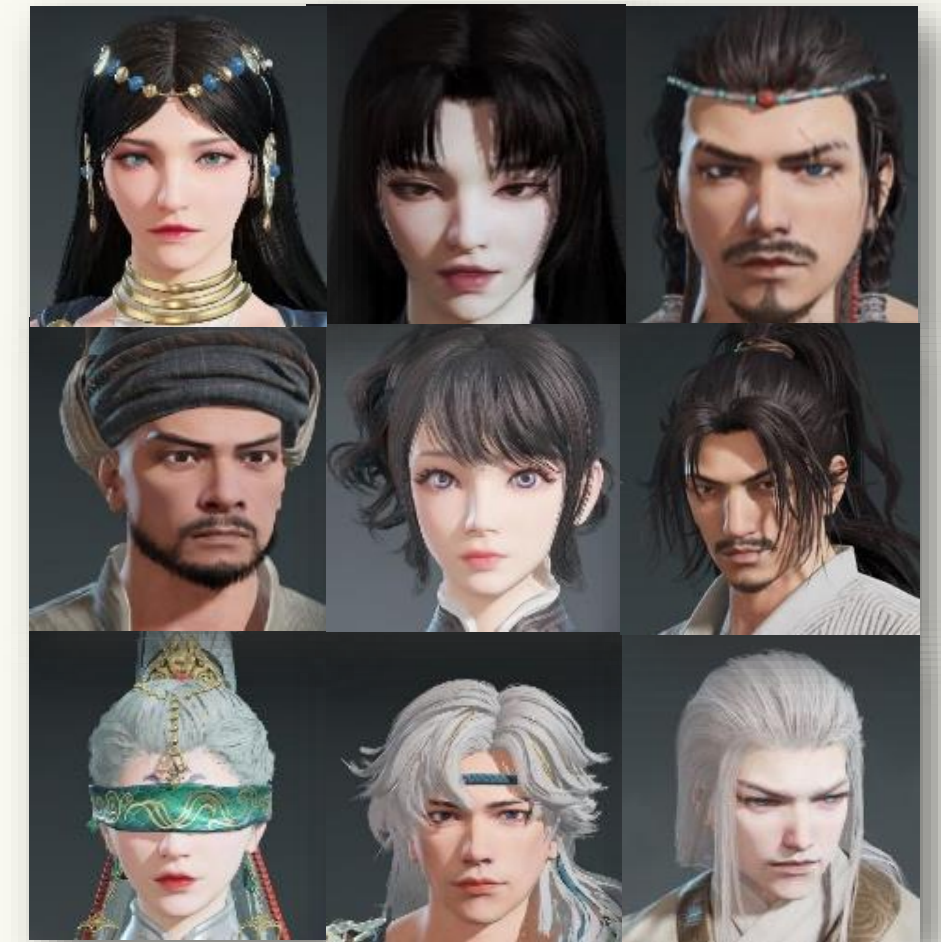
NARAKA: BLADEPOINT



Tips 1 The Exterior of WUXIA: customizable appearance and diverse weapons

Character Customization (Facial)

- Create your own Wuxia hero
- Show artistry and resonance
- Express diversity and respect

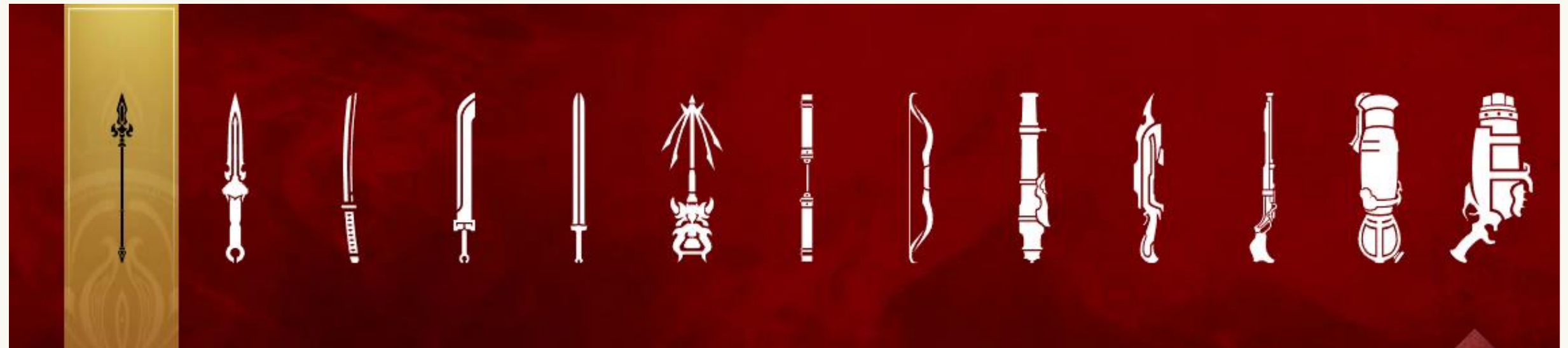


*Facial customization system
in NARAKA: BLADEPOINT*

Tip 1 The Exterior of WUXIA: customizable appearance and diverse weapons

Weapon System

- Abundant weapons
- Realistic feeling
- Combine with historical celebrities



Weapon system in NARAKA: BLADEPOINT

Tip 2 Brave from Wuxia: Gold Escort—Wandering in the Jianghu

Gold Escort Gameplay

- Gameplay based on Wuxia
- Restore the unique affair
- Experience authenticity



Gold Escort system in Justice Online

Tip 3 Sect System of Wuxia: More together

Sect System

- Socialization: players' social needs
- Sense of belonging and glory
- Resonate: individual & group



Guild system in Justice Online

Tip 4 Brotherhood of WUXIA: Let like-minded players make a public oath

‘Blood Brothers’

- Socialization properties
- Deepen fraternity & Emotional bond
- Available to all genders
- Resonate: individual & individual



Tip 5 Getting married: fighting with the your love

Marriage System

- Diversity
- Research on psychological needs
- 75% active players get married
- Experience marriage without realistic pressure



Marriage system in Justice Online

Tip 6 Restoring scenes: idea from Chinese paintings

Scenes & Immersion

- Connected with masterpieces
- Stimulate senses: visuals and sounds
- Sense of immersion



Bianjing in Justice Online



TAKEAWAY

Takeaway

- Beware of the differences between Wuxia and other oriental narratives
- Wuxia features and key elements:
3 core concepts & 4 misunderstandings
- Visual arts connecting Wuxia and games:
1 character, 3 action features, 6 scenes
- Design tips to bring emotions & resonance :
customization and authentic gameplay



WU



XIA