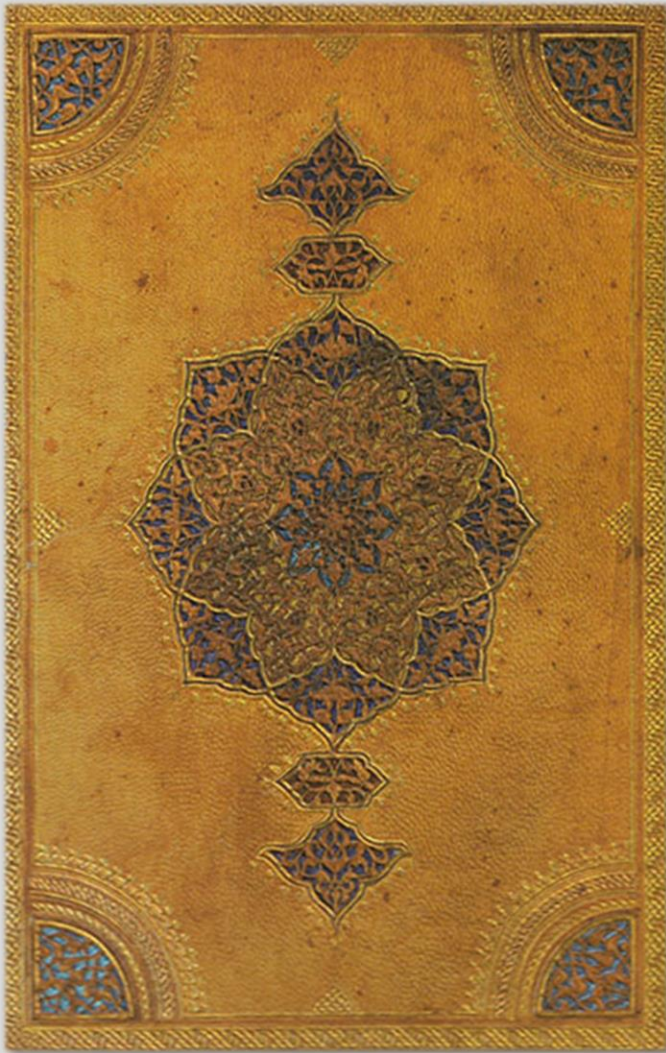


# FISHING THE RIVER OF STARS



Language: German  
SAN Loss: 1d8  
Cthulhu Mythos: +2%/+6%  
Mythos Rating: 24  
Study: 28 Days  
Spells: None

A strange and curious text reputedly among those in the blasphemous library of Auguste Chapdelaine. Recovered during the Second Opium War and brought back to London in 1858, the origins of this anonymous work were lost with Chapdelaine's life. The text is marred by its crude translation from the original Chinese to French, and then German in this edition. Margin notes indicate this translation was done by a Professor Gottfried Mulder.

Chapdelaine, along with other Chinese Catholics from his circle of followers, was arrested and executed in Yaoshan, helping to precipitate France's involvement in the war. Reputedly Chapdelaine was condemned for his missionary work, but darker rumors suggest that it was dark rites emerging from his study of forbidden Chinese texts which ultimately brought down the wrath of the local mandarin.

Fishing the River of Stars is reputedly a first-hand account of the rise of the Northern Song Dynasty during the 10th and 11th centuries in China. Much of its bulk is taken up with routine and unsurprising bureaucratic "revelations", but the choice passages which have given the book its particular notoriety are those revolving around the legendary engineer Zhang Sixun, who served Emperor Taizu of Song.

Zhang Sixun is said to have been served by a council of "thrice-mouthed advisors", each of whom was said to "speak with three tongues" and to "balance the words of one hand against the other". The strangely cryptic and

disturbingly inhuman descriptions of these advisors are echoed eerily in a description of the inner (or secret) gardens of Emperor Taizu, where the author reputedly saw flocks of blue-green hummingbirds, their "feathers flecked with gold and with lipped mouths gaping upon their hovering backs".

There are also suggestions that the ingenious armillary sphere of Zhang Sixun's astronomical clock tower, which employed liquid mercury in its escapement mechanism, was only the "precursor" or "broken model" of the true clock tower which was "hidden by the Emperor". This "true tower" was reputedly powered by "reddened mercury".

In its final black chapters, Fishing the River of Stars reputedly supports the legends that claim Emperor Taizong killed his brother Taizu to inherit the throne. Here, however, it is intimated that the "Golden Shelf Promise" (the sealed document which validated Taizong's claim to the throne) was filled with such horrid blasphemies that its "golden inks were placed in flame until they melted into screaming lead" and the scroll was replaced with a more palatable forgery.

As for the bizarre claims that the "honey of the hummingbirds" nevertheless corrupted the blood of Taizong's sons, it can only be said that the text descends into almost incoherent poetry and the true meaning of whatever metaphor is being sought is perhaps lost.