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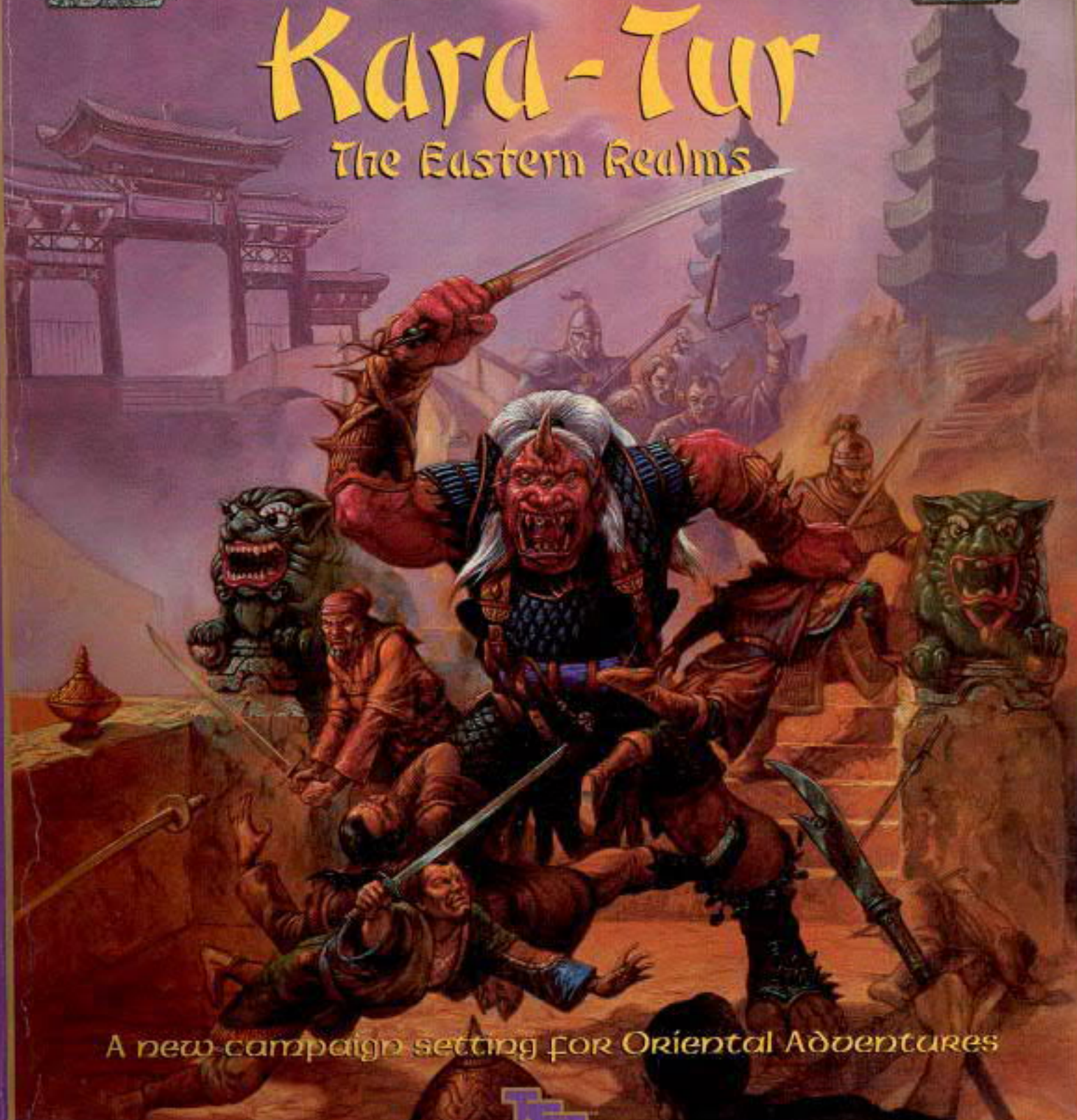


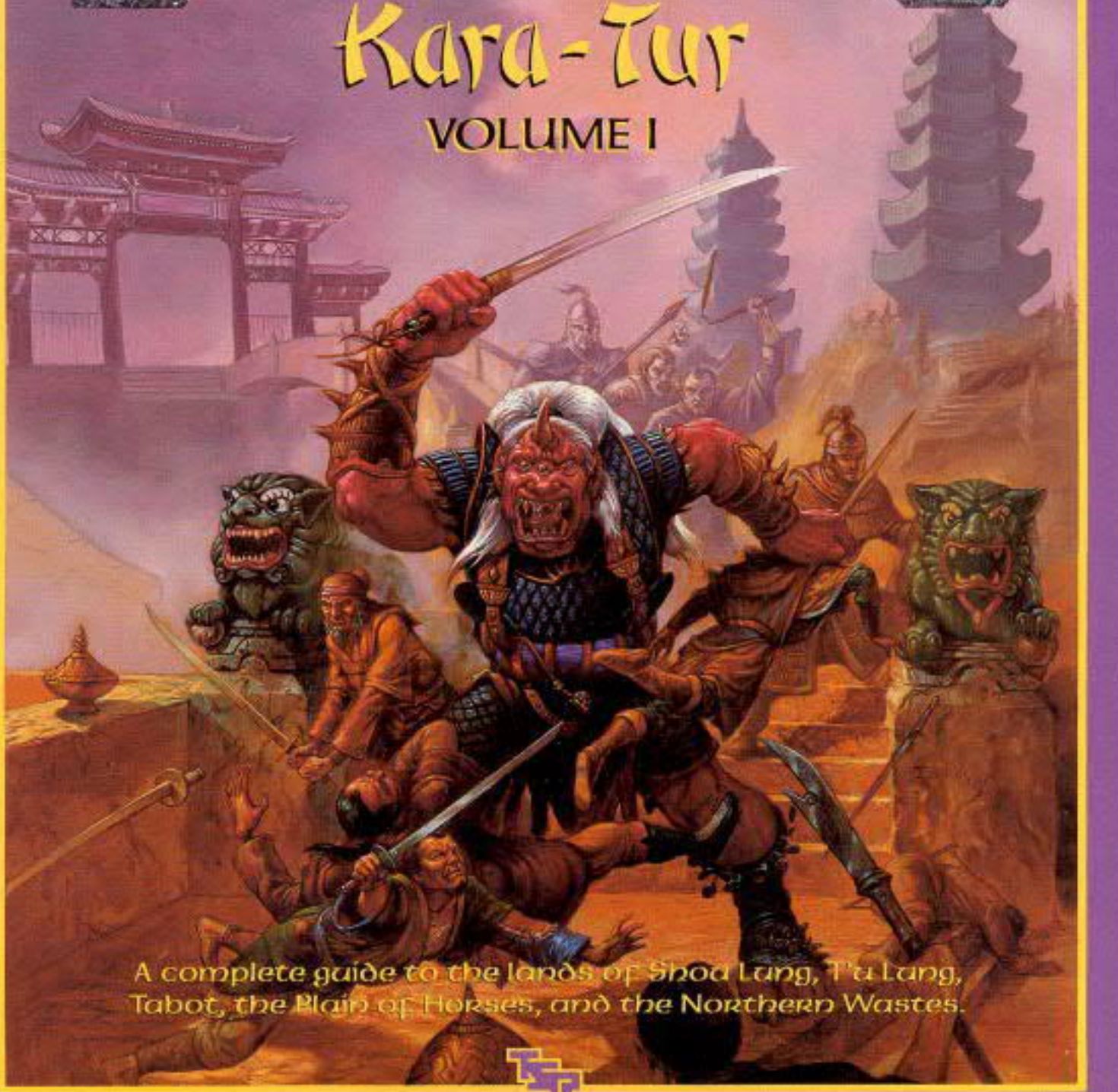
A new campaign setting for Oriental Adventures

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

FORGOTTEN REALMS™

Kara-Tur

VOLUME I



A complete guide to the lands of Shou Lung, T'u Lung, Tabot, the Plain of Horses, and the Northern Wastes.

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A Sourcebook of Kara-Tur

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披氣紼俛伏膚披趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚披趺付腐

Shou Lung

Your guide is the great Dragon Lord Mei Lung Cheng Shan, the great great grandson of the Immortal Historian of the Celestial Empire of Heaven. It is Mei Lung's task to assemble the vast Histories of the Emperor of Heaven, so that the Celestial One will know all that has occurred and best be able to judge the actions of Mankind. Our Great Dragon is over two thousand years old, and has observed the peoples of Shou Lung over the span of Empires. He has also travelled widely to other lands as well, meeting many other Chroniclers of Events and adding their tales to his own. He begins:

"I am Mei Lung Chen-Shan-Tien-Kung-Te, seventh son of Men Lung Chen-Shan-Tien-Kung-Te, the Elder of our Clan, and great-great-grandson of the Immortal of History, Chih Shih Chen-Shan-Tien-Kung-Te. I am most humbly the Grand Historian of his Most Powerful Celestial Majesty. In this Year of the Great Sky Serpent, in the month of Kao, the first day of Shiang, I set pen to paper to record the Myriad Things of this Land of Shou Lung, as requested by my most Honored Friend, the foreign scholar Elminster, and as commanded by my Lord as the duty of the two-hundred-twenty-third Historian of the Celestial Bureaucracy.

As you have requested, and by direction of the Celestial One, I here have written of the lands of Shou Lung; of the Great Empire raised in the Name of the Dragon, and of the diverse peoples and places within its far-flung boundaries. You will find in my words a tale of a land unlike any other—a place of sophistication and superstition; of kings and commoners; of science and sorcery. Be forewarned; for it is written in the Book of Ti Pa Wang Kuo that:

> There is One Shou only. It is like what it has received; proud and full of fire, yet wise and cunning. Above all, Shou, like the Dragon, is Eternal.

The great Empire of Shou Lung is the largest of the many lands that make up Kara-Tur. It is a place of learning, culture and government, with a proud history that chronicles nearly three thousand years, spanning the rise and fall of eight great Dynasties and over seventy Emperors. With its extensive history and stable governance, the Empire exerts a mighty influence over its neighbors. It is said that when the Emperor stamps his foot in the Capital, the earth shakes in Koryo; such is his power. Shou Lung is also a land of many complexities; a land wise in the ways of the world and its sophistications.

Cities

Karatin

The city of Karatin is a large seaport city located at the mouth of the Hungtse. It is built mostly on swamp, with its boundaries hacked brutally out of the surrounding jungle. The efforts of succeeding generations of Emperors have drained most of the swampland, reducing the insect population and the constant threat of disease.

Karatin was the home of the Sea Lords, famous pirates and explorers who founded the expansionist Hai Dynasty in 830. It is one of the first cities to have a unified architectural theme. Buildings are arranged in orderly patterns, facing north. The streets are wide and paved with stone. The Great Palace of the Sea Lords stands in the center of the city. A two story structure similar to the Emperor's Palace in Kuo Te Lung, it is the first of the palaces to have columns along its outer courtyards. Karatin is also known for the Temple of the Jade Empress, a most magnificent structure raised by the Sea Lords around a statue of the Empress Ti Hai Chin, wife of the Hai Dynasty's founder.

The harbor of Karatin is deep and well dredged. Ships constantly come here to trade for silk, rice and the advanced sciences of the Empire. It is a bustling port, where one can find almost any type of goods, and meet people from all over Kara Tur. This is also the port to which most gaijin come when they visit the world of the East.

Kuo Meilan

The great deserted city of Kuo Meilan lies in the center of the vast Chukei Plateau, in a region stripped bare of all life. The city, originally named Ten Mor Shou, was renamed by the Emperor Ten Chin for his evil consort Meilan.

The city is roughly circular, with four great roads leading to the four points of the compass, and encircled by eight great concentric walls. In the center of the city stands the Palace of the Invincible Sun, a three story high structure. From its center, there are passageways which lead to the undercity, and the vast crypt which encloses the Stone Armies of Shih.

Or so it is said. For very few people have ever visited Kuo Meilan—it is a cursed place and haunted by all manner of ghosts, demons and monsters. It is said that any traveler who spends the night in Kuo Meilan will be dead by morning, and that the pile of white bones of visitors is as high as the Dragon Wall. Even worse, it is said that the spirits of the evil dead will take possession of the bodies of those who die there, to walk the earth in men's flesh, spreading horror in their paths.

No maps exist of Kuo Meilan, and all accounts of its design are shrouded in mystery. It is a place of mystery, groaning deep under the curse of Heaven.

Pinchow

Originally a small city in the rice plains adjacent to the Hungtse, Pingchow became a mecca for dissident intellectuals and scholars shortly after the capitol was moved to Kuo Te' Lung in 869. It is a circular city much like Kuo Meilan, ringed with four walls, pierced with gates to the north and south. The center of the city has no great palaces or civic structures, but is instead a densely packed area of tea houses, wine shops, theatres and meeting houses.

Pingchow is also known as the Scholar's City,

祓氣彿俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏彿俛伏膚祓趺付腐

because each year the Imperial Examinations are held here. Year 'round, the city is jammed with prospective scholars studying to pass their exams. There are a great many schools, tutors and examination houses in the city, catering to this specialized clientele.

Places of Interest

Cliffs of Tanghai

A great black basalt cliff overlooking the Hungtse River near Taitun, the cliffs were inscribed by red lightning with the words of the Path of Heaven in 440. The cliffs are considered to be the holiest place in all of Shou Lung, as they are a living symbol of the existence of the Celestial Heaven. The inscriptions, one meter high, are carved along the outer face of the cliff, and cannot be reached by any way short of flying.

Fortress of Kuai

The Fortress of Kuai is located in the center of the old Imperial Capitol of Hsi-Feng. It is a massive construction of stone blocks, each block far too heavy for any hundred men to lift. Legend has it that the Second Emperor Chin of the Ho Dynasty employed a family of giants from the wilds of Koryo to raise the blocks of the fortress. At his death, the Emperor had the giants seal his body within the fortress with a great stone block. It is said that any man who can lift the block will find the treasure of the Second Emperor buried with him, as well as the magic ring he used to control his unwilling giant servants.

Impossible Palace of The Silver Domes

The Impossible Palace of the Silver Domes is a legendary palace which appears at random times all over the Empire. It is most often seen in times of great strife within Shou Lung. Many parties have attempted to enter its eight great domed sections, only to disappear forever.

The Impossible Palace is, as I (Mei Lung) have mentioned earlier, my home. As a rule, I do not take kindly to strangers invading my home for any reason, and have been known to eat most parties of adventurers who do so. I move the palace magically from time to time, to avoid this very thing. Most of the time, it is located at the bottom of a river or in a remote location.

There is one time when the palace is most accessible, and that is when a great danger faces the Empire. While I am prohibited from directly taking a hand in the affairs of men, I am allowed to make available information, weapons or spells to those brave enough to enter my doors. I deal with each transgressor in a different way; some, I ask riddles, others I send great monsters against. Occasionally, as in the case of the hero Wo Mei, I merely talk to them, discussing the classic works and current events, until I have divined the true nature of the one I am dealing with. Each of my tests is different.

But be warned. The superior man knows when he faces certain death. And it is certain death to disturb my privacy without reason!

The Temple of Saigai

The Temple of Saigai is located deep within the mountain forests of Yu'i, near the city of Taichan. The temple is of great stone blocks and is roughly squared. Its surfaces are covered with strange inscriptions in characters unknown to all but wu jen. It's inner walls are covered with carvings of bizarre creatures who resemble something halfway between men and beasts. The temple has been here as long as anyone can recall, and is described in Tabotan records that go back as far as 8,000 years.

Monasteries and Temples Of The Shou Lung Priesthood

The way of the monk is a narrow way, for he must follow the Path. But no matter how narrow the Path, it may take many branchings before reaching its destination. This is the way of it among the Shou-ling.

While the priests of the Way are usually wandering shukenja (known as dang-ki) or wu jen, aloof in their mysteries and strong in power, the backbone of faith is the priesthood of the Shou-ling. These monks and temple warriors wander the lands doing good, or gather together in great temples and monasteries.

Each temple is a place of worship, open to the common people, and also a place where relics of the immortals and sages are displayed. Temples are usually located within a city of some size. Most are dedicated to one of the Nine Immortals, although other sages and deities may also be included jointly in this dedication. The patron immortal is represented by a central statue, which is ringed with small naves where the lesser patrons are depicted. Temples are staffed with about 20 to 40 priests, as well as being guarded by a small number of sohei (up to 30), who protect the temple from desecration and theft.

A monastery incorporates a temple as part of its design, but also has living quarters for a larger number of monks and sohei (as many as two or three thousand at the greatest ones). Monasteries are usually located in remote areas, as these orders desire peace and isolation to better study their particular branch of the Path.

An order of the Shou-ling faith may have many temples or monasteries, scattered in a number of cities. Rarely are there two or more temples of the same sect within the same city—there is too much chance of a schism eventually splitting the two temples apart!

No matter the order, the life of a monk is much the same. Members of the order rise one hour before dawn, going to the central temple to chant and pray to the patron immortal. At dawn, the monks begin the first of their two kung fu training sessions, this one concentrating on stretching and exercises. After this session, they will have breakfast, then move on to morning activities; chants, meditation, scribe work, farming or crafts. The midday meal marks the end of this work, and the start of the afternoon kung fu practices. These are with weapons, movement exercises (kata), and sparring between monks (kumite). After the practice, one of the older monks gives a sermon, reading texts from the monastery's sutra library. Fol-

lowing this is a time of meditation. At dusk there are the evening prayers, with an hour of meditation afterwards, and the last meal of the day This meal is often a place where younger novices can ask questions of the masters and discuss the events of the day. At day's end, the monk returns to his meditation cell to sleep.

Temple Conflicts

The myriad of directions along the Path makes for lively dissension and argument between the priesthoods. Oftentimes, the many orders of the Shou-ling have raised up great temple armies of sohei and monks, to destroy other orders considered to be heretics. Although the Emperor opposes this, temple battles continue even today, as rival orders clash on the streets of the capitol and other places of the Empire.

There are more than two hundred sects, or orders, all professing to be the True Way to follow the Path of Enlightenment; only perhaps two dozen are recognized as "approved" by the Department of Celestial Supervision. Here then, I present a small sample of the most outstanding ones, so that you too will be enlightened.

The Strong Claw Monastery

The Strong Claw monastery is located near Yen Ching, in Ma' Yuan Province. It is one of the oldest monastic orders in the Empire, and it is considered a great honor to be accepted here, despite the monastery's relative isolation from the rest of the world. The patron immortal is Fa Kuan, but Chih Shih is also worshipped here. The life of the monks is a hard one, and applicants are tested both physically and spiritually before they are admitted. The order accepts both male and female novices, although the two sexes live in separate quarters and must pledge a vow of chastity during their tenure with the order.

Located on a high, cold plain, the buildings of the monastery are cave-like, with few windows to prevent heat from escaping. The walls of the enclave are high and thick, to keep out the bitter winds and fell creatures that wander the steppes at night. The land of Ma' Yuan is well known for its huge beasts, monsters and spirits, although not as feared as the dead and cursed plains of Chukei.

During the summer months, the monks of the order raise sorghum and wheat, which they store in underground caves below the monastery buildings. In the bitter winters, they retreat into the monastery's vast and echoing halls, to study the writings of the Path and to say the One Thousand Chants required in the teachings of the order. It is said by the monks that should the cycle of chants be broken, and the full one thousand not said each day, the world will end in fire.

In all seasons, the monks of the order study the techniques of bear style kung fu; the style of great strength and slashing movements favored by the fierce peoples of the Western Marches. The Strong Claw Order is famed for its mastery of this technique, and many have journeyed to the remote monastery to learn its secrets. The sohei of the order are also famed for their skill with the tetsubo, or iron club. Both sohei and monks have served with distinction alongside the Emperor's Army of the Western Marches, battling the fierce horse barbarians. The monks particularly enjoy plucking riders from horseback and wrestling horses to the ground with their great strength.

Travelers will find a solid welcome here, if not a great deal of comfort. Straw mats on stone platforms are the extent of sleeping arrangements. The fare is strictly vegetarian, except on feast days, when chicken or fish are permitted. Visitors to the order are advised to not interfere too much with the monk's duties and to follow the teachings of the Path while they are there!

The current abbot of the monastery is Ta Ping Tsu (Large Feet), the youngest abbot in the history of the order. Ta Ping Tsu was selected at the age of 28 by the previous abbot, as the old Master of the Order lay on his deathbed. The young abbot is extremely strong, both physically and spiritually, though perhaps a little conservative and suspicious of the outside world.

The Order Of Silence

This Temple of the Cobra School is of the unapproved monastic orders—possibly related to the Temple of Quiet Sliding in Chu' Yuan. Two centuries ago, the monk Huo Tseng (Fiery Hate) returned from his travels to find his large, prosperous merchant clan had been wiped out by the armies of Prince Shin Ginsen. Ostensibly, the wealthy Tien Lun family had given aid to the forces of Prince Shin Lu, but it is more likely that the avaricious Prince Ginsen killed them so that he could seize their properties for his war efforts.

Returning to his home poor and clanless, Huo Tseng, a student of the Cobra school of kung fu, gathered together other homeless men and shared his knowledge with them. This was the foundation of the Order of Silence, also known as the Order of the Cobra, which has survived to this day.

The monks of the order vow never to speak until all injustice is eradicated from the lands. In the wars between Shou and T'u Lung, they defended the local people with incredible ferocity, showing mercy to neither side. When the generals of the armies tried to crush the monks, they seemed to slither away into the wilderness. Finding brute force useless, the nobles of the Shou attempted to court the order with rich gifts of land and money. These Huo Tseng used to build a great monastery to Chan Cheng, although he would never, to the last, choose a side in the conflict. This is why the order remains unapproved by the bureaucracy.

Unfortunately, power and hatred have corrupted the charitable ideals of the Silent Order. While the monks still protect the common people from the depredations of the nobles, it has also become a source of of fear throughout the Southern Provinces.

Travelers are welcome at the temple as long as they accept the arrogant ways of the monks and do not disturb the local people. The cobra is considered sacred to this order, and many roam the grounds of the temple freely—it is forbidden to kill one, even in self defense (there is a 60% chance of encountering a cobra during any given day, but only a 5% chance that the cobra will attack if encountered; they are very

used to humans). The monks of the order admire dangerous people, but hold little regard for arms and armor—one reason they have never developed a sohei brotherhood within the temple. The fare is excellent and plentiful, featuring many unusual specialties of the south, except, of course, cobra.

The current abbot is Kui Tzu (Sly Words); a small, slight, quick man; politically agile as well as an outstanding martial artist. He supports the traditions of the temple—the many hours of meditation, kung fu practice, and temple chants and ceremonies. But menial labor is now done only by novices or hired labor. The monks sleep in comfortable rooms and often have personal servants. The vow of silence is less strictly enforced, and seems to be totally absent among the higher ranks of the order.

The Order of The Nimble Hunter

This temple-based order is located in the Imperial Capital of Kuo Te' Lung, in Wang Kuo Province. As students of the cat style of kung fu, monks of this very civilized order train long and hard to develop quickness and agility. But they are also trained in the underlying philosophy of the Path, as well as the literature and arts of Shou Lung. This makes them clever debaters, and gives them a depth of religious understanding uncommon among the Shou-ling priesthood. The order also has a large number of women in its ranks, more than any other Shou-ling sect. It is fitting that Ai Ch'ing is the patron immortal of the sect.

Monks of the order are highly prized as advisors, religious counsellors, and personal bodyguards to the Court. In fact, the Abbotess Yen Yu (Jade Eyes) was once bodyguard to the Emperor's mother.

The monastery has been heavily endowed by wealthy court patrons, and is very beautiful-some might say even opulent, as the order believes that great beauty also serves the Path. Travelers and court patrons are very welcome, particularly for the news they bring. Food and lodging are most pleasant and comfortable.

White Crane Temple

The Order of the White Crane is located in Kirin, Hungtse Province. The order's abbott, Ch'ang Tui (Long Legs), maintains the traditions of the White Crane sect; a conservative tradition based on versatility and worship of Shu Chia, the patron immortal. Members of the order are not only skilled in their devotions and kung fu training, but are also physicians, herbalists, astrologers, craftsmen and historians. Equal time is devoted to the study of the Path of Enlightenment, the White Crane style of kung fu, and manual labor.

Travelers are gladly offered the same simple sleeping mat, vegetarian fare and training regime as the monks of the order. Those staying for any length of time greater than a week are required to work. The White Crane style of kung-fu is noted for its grace and speed. It's sohei are masters of two paired weapons; jitte, sai, butterfly blades and nunchaku.

The Order of The Dragon Monastery

The largest and best known monastery in Shou Lung, this order is the home of the dragon form of kung fu. Each New Year, the monastery hosts a great martial arts competition, open to all orders within the Shou-ling priesthood. The current abbott of the order, Iron Hand, won this competition seven times running, although this occurred many years ago. He is a solid, thoughtful man, with piercing eyes and a calm, friendly demeanor. However, he detests dishonesty and has an active dislike of the nobility, whom he views as self-seeking thieves.

The monastery's close location to the Capitol, and its strong ties to the court have given the order a great deal of prestige. Dating back to the early Kao Dynasty, the actual monastery grounds predate the construction of the city of Kuo Te' Lung, and have grown continuously over the past centuries. The buildings are of yellow brick, with red tile roofs, and ramble over the length of breadth of the order's hilltop properties. The largest building is a four story temple to the patron immortals, Chan Cheng and Fa'Kuan.

The life of a monk here is fairly traditional, if lighter in manual labor and heavier in comforts than more conservative orders would approve of. Besides providing teaching for all classes of students, the monks also maintain farms, copy rare manuscripts, and go among the people to heal the sick and injured. In wartime, the sohei and monks of the Dragon Order are invaluable defenders of the Emperor and serve with distinction in the Army of the Kingdoms. The sohei are famed for their use of the naginata and halberd—many have become members of the Imperial Guard and serve as both religious teachers and protectors within the walls of the Imperial Palace.

Because the Order of the Dragon is in the largest city of Shou Lung, with all manner of hostelries and sanctuaries, it is unlikely that it will be used by travelers. In the court, the sohei and monks present will often (30%) be of this order, and that in any conflict between sects, they will automatically do what they feel is correct to protect the person or will of the Imperial Family. Do not — repeat — do not ask a monk of the Dragon to do something treasonous or seditious. He will kill you and atone for it later.

The monastery and temple settings offer a wide variety of possible adventures. Monks may join forces with imperial soldiers to fight military threats. They can wander aimlessly across Shou Lung, seeking enlightenment and incidentally fighting monsters, evil brigands and corrupt officials.

Government and Politics

Great is the Government of Shou. Great in its scope, grand in its execution, magnificent in its justice and adaptability.

The citizens of Shou Lung owe their ultimate allegiance to the Emperor. He is the Son of Heaven, and the Divine Gate to the Celestial Sphere. The symbol of the Eternal Empire, he is wise, just and merciful to those

who oppose his commands. Under him, the bureaucracy and the court exist only as agents of his will.

The Emperor chooses his own successor from those he deems most suitable; usually the eldest sons of his bloodline, but often a daughter if no son is available. He may choose to resign his high office and return to private life, but this is most rare. For behind each Emperor rests the fate of a dynasty, and in a land where ancestors are worshipped as near gods, even the Son of Heaven must honor the traditions and deeds of those who came before him.

Emperor Kai Tsao Shou Chin
10th level Samurai/Noble
L,G human male (with one-quarter hengeyokai blood)

In his middle 50s, the Emperor Kai Tsao Shou Chin truly lives up to his name of Rebuilder of the Dragon. He is a tall, powerfully built man, with the stature and character of his mountain ancestors. Calm, slow to anger, and thoughtful, he rules with a firm hand over the mighty Empire, its sprawling bureaucracy, and its contentious nobles and priests. Under his directives, the navy and armies have been rebuilt, and there is peace with Wa and Kozakura. His "Gathering of the Pearls" has recovered much of what previous weak Emperors have lost.

Kai Chin faces many obstacles in his reign. Chief among these is the opposition of the mandarinate to his policies of reform. The addition of science and alchemy to the traditional ministries is viewed with alarm, as are his policies of eliminating corrupt officials and replacing them with new blood. He has angered the nobles by refusing to allow new fiefs and properties to be taken from peasant lands. And the official Faith of the Empire faces a great schism which he must somehow heal over in the coming years.

Kai Chins Empress and two concubines have provided him with a total of eight heirs, including three fine sons in direct line of succession. His daughters are both clever and accomplished, sharing the same great beauty as their mothers. At present, his greatest family problem has been the recent kidnapping of his next-to-youngest daughter, and his eldest son's enraged reaction upon learning that Princess Mei Ling was secretly involved in a romantic liaison with the young prince of T'u Lung.

The Mandarinate

The Mandarinate is made up of the upper echelon of scholars and officials, and includes both court scholars and the heads of various official ministries of the bureaucracy. The mandarins are select group, centered around the court in Kuo Te' Lung and the neighboring city of Ping Chow. They are considered to be the embodiment of the "superior man" of Lao Chin-Mao; talented, cultured and well educated. The mandarinate includes:

The Chancellor

The Chancellor is the right hand of the Emperor, and is chosen by him at the Son of Heaven's ascension. It is the Chancellor who must read all of the reports from the Ministers of the Bureaucracy, deciding what is worthy of the Emperors direct attention. The Chancellor controls to a large degree who can and cannot see the Emperor, manages the Imperial Family's calendar of appearances, makes sure that the Emperor's directives are followed and his proclamations posted in all the cities of the Empire, and watches the Bureaucracy diligently for the first signs of treason, corruption or subversion.

As one of the most powerful people in the Empire, the Chancellor faces a great deal of temptation. This is why many Chancellors of past reigns have found themselves beheaded for the slightest hint of corruption, while others have become all but Emperor in name.

The Chamberlain

The Chamberlain of the Imperial Court is responsible for maintaining the Household of the Imperial Court. He handles the Palace finances, schedules the maids, guards and entertainers. He administers to the needs of the Imperial Family and their various concubines, courtiers and guests. Under his auspices, banquets are prepared, state ceremonies arranged, and gifts delivered. The Chamberlain is also responsible for tasting the Imperial Family's food for poison, which is one of the larger drawbacks of the position. However, this is balanced by the access the Chamberlain has to the treasury and gifts of State.

The Emporer's Wu Jen

Kao Shan Ten
L,G Human male

The Emperor's Wu jen is one of his most important advisors, for it is he who employs the necessary sorceries to see the future, spy upon enemies, and turn away magic threats to the Empire. The Emperor's Wu Jen is usually, but not always a follower of the Chung Tao faith, for they are known to be the most powerful wizards in all Shou Lung.

The High Priest

As High Priest of the official Faith, the Royal Abbott is responsible for the spiritual concerns of the Royal Family. It is he who makes sure the proper sacrifices are observed; that the Imperial Family is devout and are proper symbols of the Path, and that the Emperor's proclamations do not contend with the writings of the Path. At least that is the theory. The High Priest confers the deific name upon the Emperor upon his death. In all things, he is the spiritual teacher of the Empire. This in turn gives him great influence over the temples and monasteries. Many a High Priest has taken bribes to sway the Emperor. Even upright men have sometimes proven too zealous in their punishment of false beliefs.

The current High Priest is Kung Pu Mok. Vain, arrogant and stubborn, he longs to establish the power of the Path once and for all. He believes that no earthly ruler can truly understand the Will of Heaven, and that the Empire should become a theocracy.

Kung Pu Mok also harbors a not so secret desire for the Emperor's third daughter, the Princess Pai. Although she has spurned his advances several times,

he hopes that the Black Chung Tao will help him win her love. In exchange, he has allowed the Black Ones to place spies and sorcerors into the Court, disguised as monks of the Shou-ling Faith.

Court Painter, Poet, and Historian

Constantly changing as the fashions at Court change, the Court Painter and Poet serve the will of the Emperor by composing works of poetry or art honoring his reign. The Court Historian is appointed for life, as his task is to chronicle the events of the Court and the Dynasty. The current post for Court Poet is vacant since the death of the previous appointee last year. There is growing sentiment in Court that the position should be offered to the T'u Lungian minstrel Tan Nong, author of the popular *Romance of the Three Lords;* however, the promotion of a renegade (anyone from T'u Lung) is a politically divisive issue.

The Nobility

The noble class is the weakest of all the many factions at Court, a typical lord having far less power than the average minister. Although each lord has his own private army, these are kept small by Imperial decree, and must act in conjunction with the Provincial Governors when the Empire faces a threat.

The nobility, of course, chafes under these restrictions, and therefore is a hotbed of dissent and rebellion. The various noble houses constantly ally and re-ally to determine the best way of taking power from the bureaucracy and the priesthood. Plots are constantly afoot. The Ministry of the Security of the State is ever vigilant to the perfidy of the noble lords.

The Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy controls the day to day operations of a vast empire spanning nearly two thousand miles and over thirty million people. It is the single most powerful force in the Empire, for although the Emperor's will is law, it is the actions of the bureaucracy that enforce that law and make it reality.

The bureaucracy was not always this powerful. From its beginning as a group of court scribes in the Li Dynasty, it gradually grew as lax nobles delegated more of their authority to the clerics. It was during the War of the Nobles (435-440) that the bureaucracy first came into its own. Embracing the Faith of the Nine 'Ravelers as its own, the bureaucracy quickly found ways to play the various noble houses off of each other by controlling access to the Imperial Person. Requests were misplaced, decrees re-written, and records of inheritance lost, as clever clerks and scribes cut arrogant nobles down a notch. By the late 400s, the power of the nobility-had been broken forever in a sea of paperwork.

The final form of the bureaucracy was established during the tenure of Lao Chin-Mao (531-597). Realizing that a nation the size of the Empire required a steady hand upon the wheel of state, the sage codified much of the manners and rules of proper behavior into his massive *Book of Heaven.* Among the principles of the book was the concept of the superior man, or ch'ao teng te jen. The superior man, in Lao Chin's view, understood the ways of Heaven and Tradition. He did not seek to command, but to lead by example. Based on Lao Chin's principles, a new class of bureaucrat arose; a man who was educated, cultured and a gentleman. These early "superior men" called themselves the Mandarinate, and they remain today the model for superior governance within the Empire.

The bureaucracy is organized into eight great ministries; State, War, Magic, Faith, Sea, Agriculture, Public Works and Security of the State. Of the eight, State is the most powerful, covering fifteen separate departments and having indirect command over the Ministry of State Security as well. The various ministries constantly jockey for position in the ever-shifting government, for no one is entirely safe from falling into political disfavor. At a single word, the Emperor may choose to abolish or create a ministry, as Kai Chin did in establishing the Departments of the "Gathering of the Pearls" in 2589. This, combined with his wide-reaching network of spies and censors, helps the Son of Heaven maintain ultimate control over his sprawling empire of bureaucrats.

The Civil Service Examination

The foundation of the bureaucracy is the Civil Service Examination. The examination is a way of assuring that only the most qualified will run the Empire, and that they will be selected in a fair and equitable way, by ability, not rank. The concept of the examinations was first introduced by the Sage Lao Chin-Mao in 581, and immediately was favored by the mandarinate, who saw it as a way to break the power of the nobles even further.

The examinations are held each year in the city of Ping Chow, eight days after the New Year. The examinations take place over a ten day period, with several thousand applicants attending.

Each applicant is enclosed for ten hours in a small chamber, one of some two thousand covering the vast Examination Field at the edge of Ping Chow. The applicants are tested on their knowledge of the classics; the *Book of War,* the *Book of Heaven,* and the *Histories.* At the command of the Emperor Kai Chin, mathematics, physics and science have recently been added to the examinations, although the mandarinate opposes this as a breach of tradition.

Applicants must take the examinations. In the past, Emperors frequently appointed men to posts; this was simply a matter of the right bribe to the right person, but recently, the Emperor has cracked down on this corrupt practice. However, Emperor Kai Chin still considers the petitions of worthy applicants, no matter what their birth, and he has detailed a Department of the Ministry of State to seek out those who have shown exceptional ability.

The applicant must be of at least 3d level to apply to take the examination. To pass, a roll below the character's Intelligence score on 1D20 must be made. Scholars add +2 to Intelligence when making the check. For every point below your Intelligence, your score places you at a higher starting position within the bureaucracy:

Points Below	Position
0-1	Minor Scribe
2	Minor Clerk
3	Department Supervisor
4	In Charge of a Department
5	Magistrate

The player must then roll 1D20 to determine which Department or Ministry he has been placed with.

1 Ministry of Faith
2 Ministry of Magic
3 Ministry of Sea
4 Ministry of War
5 Ministry of State
6 Ministry of Agriculture
7 Ministry of Public Works
8 Dept. of Reclamation
9 Dept. of State Security
10 Dept. of Taxation
11 Dept. of Extinct Beasts
12 Dept. of Lost Treasures
13 Dept. of Old Magery
14 Dept. of Dead Dialects
15 Dept. of Rediscovery
16 Dept. of Science
17 Ministers to the Barbarian Lands
18 Provincial Governors
19 Dept. of the Census
20 Dept. of the Court Scribes

Those who are magistrates are automatically placed in the Ministry of State and must determine which province they have been posted to. They may not be posted to their home province. Roll 1D12 and reroll if the home province comes up.

1 Hungtse
2 Chu' Yuan
3 Yu' I
4 Hai Yuan
5 Arakin
6 Wang Kuo
7 Ti Erte
8 Sheng Ti
9 Wa K'an
10 Ma' Yuan
11 Ch'ing Tung
12 Tien Lun

Kuo Shan and Chukei are never first postings, as they are considered "punishments" for failed officials.

Once a character is part of the bureaucracy, his advancement slows. All but scholars (if used) must earn an additional 10% more experience points to attain a new level. All characters (including scholars) must pass new exams (as explained above) to advance each rank in the bureaucracy. Advances in rank can only occur when the character also advances in level.

The Forbidden City

Located in the heart of the Imperial Capitol, the Forbidden City is truly the Empire's center. Within this great compound are the Palaces of the Emperor and his family, the halls of the government, and the great Hall of Judgement where the Son of Heaven sits upon the Jade Throne and rules the Empire. It is surrounded by huge walls nearly three stories high—even the walls themselves are permeated with passageways and rooms.

The central Court of the Gate of Heaven can hold nearly 100 horses, while the vast Court of the Throne can hold an army of 5,000 men! The Hall of Judgement can hold 1,000 men upon its vast gold and marble floor, and from its seven great balconies, it is said the Emperor can observe the distant mountains of Tabot. Even the Halls of Government are built upon this titanic scale, standing four or more stories each, roofed in red tile and covered with golden carvings depicting the offices of their respective ministries.

Designed by the Court Architect Sum Ma Ling in 868, the Forbidden City combines the finest elements of craftsmanship and feng shui. The doors of the Halls of Government face north and south. There are 30 buildings in the great Concourse of Government, a propitious number. Each building is a balanced square, or a rectangle based upon the Golden Mean. All windows and doors are circular, in the "moon gate" style that promotes the greatest harmony. The entire city is raised above the rest of Kuo Te' Lung on a man-made plateau, and all windows face either the Hungtse or the upper Chan Lu-Fenghsintzu River.

The Forbidden City is surrounded by the Imperial Capitol of Kuo Te' Lung, the Kingdom of the Virtuous Dragon. Kuo Te' Lung is a series of concentric, walled squares, with exactly four wards within each square. The innermost square is the Forbidden City. The next contains all the other Halls of Government. The next square contains the homes of the nobility and other wealthy people. The fourth square contains the marketplaces, while the fifth contains the inns, wine shops, theatres and entertainments. The sixth, seventh and eighth squares contain the living areas of the common people. The eighth wall is the highest of all, topped with a guard-wall, and has four great gates facing in each direction. The gate to the west is never opened at night.

The Forbidden City is exactly that—forbidden. Only those of the Emperor's Government may enter its walls, and even they may not stay past the hour of dusk. As darkness falls, all but the household guards, maids and guests of the Emperor must leave the walls of the city. For an outsider to be caught within is death, and not a pleasant one.

The Forbidden City is guarded with 1,000 guards, each a 6th level bushi armed with pike, sword and full armor. The walls are proof against most sorceries, and cannot be flown over. A magical screen negates the effects of *flight* and *levitation* spells.

Emblems of Authority

The Emblems of Authority are the symbols of the legitimate ruler of the Empire. They have been handed down from Emperor to Emperor since the legendary days of the Nine Travelers, with only one break in succession (during the ill-omened Black Cycle from 976 to 1025).

There are nine emblems, each a gold and jade sym-

bol mounted on a golden chain. Each represents one of the nine Gifts of the Path; a crystal and jade ball with an eternal flame within (Fire); a jade hammer (The Forge); a golden plow (Agriculture); a jade horse; a golden wheel; a golden pen (Writing), a jade pen (History), a golden mask (Poetry & Drama) and a jade and gold lute (Music). The emblems are actually quite small—the largest is about the size of a palm. Each represents one tenth of the Authority of the Emperor; when gathered together, the remaining 10% is incarnated in the physical person of the Son of Heaven himself.

In legend, the possession of the Authorities gives the Emperor the power to call upon Heaven to accomplish his will. This is treated as a *limited wish* spell, with 90% chance success if all nine emblems are present, and dropping 10% for each one missing. The wearer must be of good/lawful or neutral/neutral alignment; all others will instantly be killed by the wrath of Heaven.

Jade Throne

The Jade Throne is the hereditary seat of the Emperors of Shou Lung. It is a massive chair, standing 20 feet high, and carved from a single 20 ton block of jade. Engraved upon its surfaces are tiny scenes from the reigns of each Emperor—much of the surface still remains uncarved, awaiting future generations. Leg end has it that when the Jade Throne is entirely carved, the Empire will come to an end.

The Provinces Of Shou Lung

Before there was an empire, Shou Lung was many smaller states, waiting to be merged into greatness by the hand of a single Emperor. Under this great government, certain standards were established, so that trade and commerce were regulated, banditry eliminated, and proper knowledge spread to all corners of the land. Here then, are facts concerning all provinces of the Empire.

Governance

Each province is defined by the will of the Emperor as to its boundaries, taxes and responsibilities. In this, the Emperor's will is maintained by the vigilance of the bureaucracy, and its agents, the governors of each province.

Below each governor are the magistrates, in charge of maintaining the order of each city or village. Most towns of more than a thousand people have a magistrate; if the town is smaller, it is under the control of the magistrate of the nearest large town.

The magistrate is the law of the town. He is responsible for high and low justice, settling disputes and maintaining order. He has command of a small group of bailiffs or guards, whose duty is to patrol the town and adjacent roads, keeping the peace and arresting criminals.

Imperial Censors

Of course, even in such an enlightened system there occasionally arise venal and corrupt officials. But, long ago the Emperor demonstrated his profound wisdom by establishing the Imperial Censors. This department (part of the Ministry of State Security) sends its agents out secretly to all the provinces. These men investigate reports of corruption, graft, incompetence and treason. No one, save the Emperor, is above their suspicion. The censors often pose as other officials and never reveal their true posts until they are ready to make an arrest. No one save the highest officials knows who or how many censors working for the government. It is not unknown for the Emperor to secretly appoint censors unknown even to the Department of Imperial Censors!

Chukei

The Land: This area is now a vast wind and drought-swept plain, with sparse grass and almost no water. It is said that the Chukei plateau is haunted by the ghosts from the dead Imperial capital of Kuo Meilan, who scream eternally in the frozen night.

History: This is the original province in which the Empire began, originally known as Chu'ta Te (The Great) Province. For one full Dynasty, the original Shou Lung Empire flourished here. The land was a fertile, open plain, in which millet and barley were grown. But by the end of the Li dynasty, the Nine Immortals, seeing the decadence of the Court, decimated the kingdom with drought and fire, forcing the survivors to flee southward.

The People: The people of Chukei are the tallest of the Shou, slender, with high cheekbones. They are the only Shou who commonly have reddish or brown hair, rather than the usual black—in fact, the term for a redhaired person is chukien. They are somewhat wild in temperament, with a cold anger that reflects their courageous bearing. They are excellent horsemen and swordsmen.

Cities or Places of Note: Fukiow is a large mining city on the plateau, near the dead city of Kuo Meilan. Kangste is the major trade town on the Kuangchiu Road to Koryo. Chaoyang maintains a border garrison covering the junction of the Kuangchiu and Spice Roads. The dead city of Kuo Meilan is on the plain—little visited, it is the deserted capital of the First Kingdom; home of legends, ghosts and myths.

Ma' Yuan (Plain of The Horse)

The Land: This area is comprised of vast, arid salt plain. Most of the salt, iron and other metals of the Empire come from scattered mines in this area. This is the province of the Great Dragon Wall, which blocks the barbarian hordes from sweeping into the Empire. The Kuangchiu Road also passes through this region.

History: Ma' Yuan has always been a place of rugged adventurers and tough miners. Too cold and barren to support a large population, it has never been an important nexus of civilization. The province has formed one of the first lines of defense against the barbarians of the Plain of Horses.

The People: The people of this region, the Mai, are a hardy, stolid and reliable lot; excellent horsemen and fierce fighters with axe and short sword. They are physically the largest of the Shou peoples, stand-

ing almost six foot two as an average. Their clothes are usually rough woolens tipped with furs. The Mai eat far more millet and wheat than is common in other parts of the Empire, mostly in the form of noodles and stuffed buns. They are the only people of the Shou who regularly eat lamb and mutton. It is said of the Mai that they are "Stubborn to anger, as unstoppable as the taifun, and bright before Heaven in their stupid honesty." Whether this proverb is a compliment is somewhat unclear.

Cities or Places of Note: Within the province are the cities of Min Low, a minor trade city on the Spice Road, once terrorized by the Copper Demon of Tros, and Yen Ching, a favorite trade city with the northern barbarians, known for its fine horses and cattle.

Ch'ing Tung

The Land: Ching Tung reaches from the edge of the salt plain, moving south through sloping grasslands into the fertile valley between the Hungtse and Ch'ing Tung Rivers. Following the Hungtse River northwest, the Silver Road runs through Tabot and eventually into the Forgotten Realms, although unknown hazards make this a perilous journey. It is along this basin that most of the village and river traffic moves south into Wang Kuo province, seat of the Imperial Throne.

History: During the Li dynasty, the creation of the Dragon Wall made this region safe from the incursions of the horse barbarians. With its fertile river basin, many stands of trees, and available grazing area, Ch'ing lung became home to many farming clans, particularly the Ch'ing, who had suffered much oppression under the rule of the Hai Dynasty.

The People: The largest ethnic group outside of the people of Wan Kuo, the Ch'ing are characterized by others as being clannish, pushy, and adventurous to a fault; This doesn't bother them at all, as they consider Ch'ing Tung to be the center of the universe. They are more "night owls" than most Shou, fond of staying up late to drink in the wine shops and talk about all manner of current events. They are fond of experimenting with new foods (although they loathe lamb and mutton), often mixing tropical fruits and meats from the southlands into their favorite dishes (one of the favorite Ch'ing dishes is hot and spicy stewed snake with pineapple).

Cities or Places of Note: Shou'Kuan, a major city sits astride the Ningtang Road from Yenching. Taitung is a major river city at the southern end of the First Emperor's Canal. Shangtou, a small backwater farming town has achieved fame for its fine tea and rice. Of special interest are the River Cities. These are located along the heavily journeyed Hungtse River basin, and are well known to all Shou citizens. They include: Mi'Shan, a small northern river city noted for its waterfalls and great Chung Tao shrine to Kwan Ying; To'Ming, a trade city and home of the Emperor's Summer Palace; and Cham Fau (detailed in this volume), a prosperous river town, home of the White Tiger Monastery, and the martial arts school of Master Wang Ho.

Sheng Ti (The Sanctuary Provinces)

The Land: Sheng Ti is mostly rolling hills, with terraces used for extensive rice farming. There are many deep caverns and small, thick forests, teeming with all types of creatures, good and ill. Sheng Ti is well known to be the home of many hengeyokai clans.

History: When the original inhabitants of the First Kingdom were driven south, they entered this area as exhausted refugees. The natives taught the survivors the techniques of rice farming, moving the Empire into an entirely new basis for food production (up to this time, the main food had been millet). Over the centuries, the two groups assimilated, though not without bloodshed. In time, this became the seat of the reborn Empire.

The People: The people of Sheng Ti are small, snubnosed, and extremely fastidious. This delicacy reflects in many aspects of the Sheng culture, producing fine poets, jade sculpture and elaborate ceremonies. The province is also famed for its beautiful women. Fine boned, elegant and decorative, the Sheng courtesan is the subject of much lyric song and poetry.

There are also a large number of spirit folk and hengeyokai living in this verdant, wooded area, and it is rumored that the Sheng owe much of their elegant and diminutive stature to the influence of these peoples. Indeed, the cities of Sheng Ti are among the few in the empire where fox folk and other hengeyokai citizens walk about openly, even in their bipedal forms.

Cities or Places of Note: On the coast is Lo'Shan, a moderate sized seaport city with trade to Wa and Kozakura. Further inland is Hsi-Feng, the site of the second Imperial capital, noted for the Fortress of Kuai, a huge stone castle rumored to have been raised by giants.

Wa K'an (The Land That Views Wa)

The Land: The land rises from the borders of Sheng Ti, finally reaching the sea in a series of towering white bluffs. The coast is broken by many deep inlets and coves, good for fishing and gathering pearls. On clear days, the locals like to claim that they can see the blue-black misty outlines of distant Wa.

History: In the migration from the north, many of the displaced tribes and minor kingdoms found their way to the coast. Here they settled, retaining their old allegiances. Soon the many petty nobles began to war among themselves for land and position. There were several divisions in this time and the conflicts spread. Wa K'an became a buffer state between noble clans of the Empire. Over the years Wa K'an grew as a refuge for people caught between the conflict—with its long (and secret) military ties to Wa, it was able to maintain its neutrality for many centuries.

The People: The people of Wa K'an are known as the Waka, and are in stature much like the Ti (something they bitterly protest whenever possible). They are a mixture of the poetry of the Sheng and the hardheadedness of the Ti; moody and fond of strong drink. The Waka are mostly fishermen who ply the sheltered

coves and inlets of their rocky land, scraping out a modest living.

Cities or Places of Note: Hsiang, a small seaport town is noteworthy for its fine fish. It is also a favorite refuge of Wa nobles fleeing oppression.

Ti Erte (The Second Province)

The Land: Hilly and rolling, with deep valleys and terraced fields. As one approaches the coastline, the country becomes more rocky and strewn with dense belts of fog.

History: By the time of the Second Dynasty, the many nobles of the region had fallen to squabbling among themselves for power and position. Eventually, these conflicts erupted into a series of bloody feuds. Ti Erte was the site of many terrible battles and wars; in fact, it is believed to be haunted by the ghostly spectre of Pin Mo Nom, the dreaded "Headtaker" of legend.

The People: The Ti are a shrewd, insular people, famed among the other peoples of Shou for their monumental cheapness. They are hardheaded, practical, and drive hard bargains. In stature, they are of average height, with deep set eyes and longish hair; fond of wearing heavy embroidered robes and tall, conical hats. The Ti comprise most of the money changers and lenders within the Empire.

Cities or Places of Note: Liaopei, a large city across the river from the old capital of Hsi-Feng is known for its fine food (very hot), and colorful history of warfare with Sheng Ti province. Tsingtao is famed for its beer and wine, which are exported to the other provinces.

Hungtse

The Land: The province of Hungtse borders part of the upper Hungtse river and its tributary the Chan Lu. It is a lush, fertile area near the river, rising eastward to open plains and eventually rolling hills overlooking the sea. A great deal of rice and tea are grown here, as well as much of the silk produced in the Empire.

History: Hungtse was settled early in the Ho Dynasty, as lords from feuding Ti Erte and Sheng Ti provinces fled to the south. Without their armies, the nobility eventually were swallowed up in the farming communities, turning to more peaceful pursuits. In the later Hai Dynasty, merchants from the south imported silkworms to the region, starting an industry which is unmatched for size or profitability anywhere in Kara-Tur. In 631, shortly after the "Sharing of Meals", the Imperial Capital was moved from Hsi-Feng (the Little Phoenix) to Hai Sheng (now re-named Kirin), where it remained until the Ivory Plague decimated it in 859.

The People: The Hungtse are known to be talkative, hot tempered, and easily excited. On the whole, they are a pleasant group, although an old Sheng proverb unkindly says, "If Earth mirrors Heaven in all things, then the Hungtse mirror the Celestial One's chickens; always chattering!" A wide menu of rice, fish, chicken, duck and shrimp has given the Hungtse materials for a truly fabulous cuisine; their cooks are famed far and wide, and are usually found in the best houses of the Empire. It was the Hungtse who invented the tiny fried dumplings known as potstickers, a current Imperial rage.

Cities or Places of Note: Kirin, originally named Hai Sheng, the third Imperial capital, was renamed for the huge kirin who visited the city during the years of the Ivory Plague, saving the populace from certain death. Citizens still believe the city has special protection from the Celestial Emperor. There are also numerous small cities and villages. Typical of these is Linshung; a minor farming town in the great To Chan (fertile) Valley.

Wang Kuo (The Province of The Kingdom)

The Land: This is the current location of the Imperial City, Kuo Te' Lung. It is in the center of a fertile river crescent between the Chan Lu tributary and the Hungtse. The area is well drained and crisscrossed by numerous canals and waterways. Much of the Imperial City is constructed on the ruins of an earlier capital burned down in 2050.

History: Although this region has always been heavily populated, it did not come into its own until 869, after the Ivory Plague decimated the Imperial City of Hai Sheng. Ordered to leave by the kirin, the survivors of the Imperial family fled the area, moving to a small city at a juncture of the upper Hungtse. This they named the new capital. With this exodus came an incredible influx of culture and trade, centering around the new Imperial Capital and the upland city of Ping Chow (a major cultural center famed for its arts, theatres and salons). In 2050, a great fire swept the capital, but it was rebuilt upon the ashes of the old site.

The People: The people of Wang are the largest group of Shou Lung, their densely packed cities making up nearly 40 percent of the overall population. They are known for being unfailingly polite, cultured, intelligent and sophisticated — on the surface. It is the Wang who have set the styles of dress throughout the Empire; published the most important writings and produced the most famous plays. Of medium height and stature, they are fond of wearing the tight cheosong or the high collared mandarin's coat, usually in tasteful, but heavily embroidered silks. "Her skin is as smooth as a Wang's speech," is a common saying within Shou Lung, reflecting their reputation for mannered conversation and elegance.

Cities or Places of Note: Kuo Te' Lung is the capital City of the Empire of Shou Lung. Nearby is Ping Chow, a major trade nexus, and the "cultural center" of the Empire.

Hai Yuan (The Maritime Provinces)

The Land: Moving southwest from the upper Hungtse, the land turns from river basin to dense jungle and swamp, ending in a brackish tidal area at the sea. The many inlets, coves and heavy foliage make this area nearly impossible to farm, but provide excellent cover for pirates, smugglers and other brigands, who still inhabit this area today.

History: These lands were originally known as the Karatin Provinces, and indeed, the capital city of the province is still named Karatin. However, at the the time of the Great Pirate Lords, this region was mostly swamp and jungle. By the command of the first Emperor Chin of the Hai Dynasty, the region around the city of Karatin was drained and diked, making it into a fertile basin. In honor of this achievement, the province was named Hai Yuan (the Maritime Provinces).

The People: The Hai are an adventurous race, but also arrogant, stubborn, and loud in bearing. They are also the most self assured of all the Shou, and seem to flaunt it with their incredible audacity. A Hai will attempt almost any feat, simply because he believes that as a superior man, he will obviously succeed. They are sea traders and occasional pirates, whose houses are built on stilts to protect them from floods, and whose ships are the fleetest of all the Empire. They rarely eat meat, preferring fish, and have learned the dishes of sushi and sashimi (two types of raw fish, one with pickled rice) from the Kozakurans. As a counterpart to the ethereally beautiful women of Sheng Ti, the Hai are said to produce the handsomest men in all the Empire.

And they know it.

Cities or Places of Note: Karatin, the largest city, is claimed by the Hai to be the home of the legendary Sea Lords of Karatin. Also on the coast is Taoshin, a large seaport city with trade to the east. Above the drained ground is Keelung, a high plateau city famed for its tea and extremely fine silks. Shansin, a heavily fortified city, sits on the T'u Lung border as does Meoling. Both are known for plots and intrigues. In the ruins and almost lost is Shou Yang, a deserted jungle city, once terrorized by the Black Leopard Cultists.

Kao Shan (Province of The Mountains)

The Land: Kao Shan is a land of towering peaks, broken by deep valleys filled with rich farm land. Great waterfalls thunder through the passes, dropping nearly a thousand feet in some places. There are many misty passes often snowed over in winter, leading through the mountains to distant Tabot.

History: Traditionally a frontier province, Kao Shan was settled by Tabotans, seeking new farm land to the east, and exiled ministers and nobility from the Imperial capital. It is still considered to be an unpopular posting, even today, and to be sent there is usually a punishment reserved for officials who are highhanded or corrupt.

The People: They are viewed by the rest of Shou as rude, uncultured mountain men; good fighters with the bow, but otherwise unsophisticated. Honest to a fault, the tall, roughhewn Kao thinks nothing of telling a haughty mandarin what he thinks of him, punctuating his opinion with a blow or two. The Kao are the only people of Shou to eat bear and tiger, and claim that they eat dragon when they can get it-a sure boast in my opinion. They are excellent woodcarvers and tellers of folk tales.

Cities or Places of Note: Kai Shan, a now independent city seized by the criminal Tsui Tong in 985, is known widely as a place of vice, corruption and shady dealings.

Yu' I (Province of Friendship)

The Land: High mountain peaks, shrouded in ever present mists, the province of Yu' I is rocky and cold. Snow frequently falls; at the higher passes near Tabot, there is deep snow all year long. Farming is rare, and then only on high terraces and mountainsides. The Yu raise goats—the only province to do so commonly.

History: Important only as a military pass into Tabot and the West, Yu' I was known for many years as a place of strong but friendly people. In later dynasties, overbearing taxes and garrisons of border troops caused this warm welcome to sour, ending in an abortive rebellion in 1771. While the rebellion was crushed, the 16th Emperor Chin showed great enlightenment by withdrawing most of his troops and allowing the people of Yu' I a greater amount of self-determination in the years after.

The People: The Yu are much like the Kao in nature, being descended from the same stock. They wear heavier clothing, and are more touchy about their independence—it is very easy to provoke a Yu to a duel.

Cities or Places of Note: Taichan, a small, heavily defended garrison town, has maintained a fierce independence from the bureaucracy for the last 20 years. The Temple of Saigai, a massive place of worship built by unknown peoples over 8,000 years ago, still dominates the icy High Pass. It has been long deserted. The entire pass is believed the den of some evil horror.

Chu' Yuan (The Bamboo Plains)

The Land: Chu' Yuan is dense and endless jungle of bamboo, thick underbrush, and poisonous creatures. The heat is oppressive, the air muggy and thick. There are standing pools of water everywhere, filled with mosquitos and leeches. The people of Chu' Yuan are hunters and woodsmen, as farming is nearly impossible.

History: The bamboo plains have traditionally been a place of mystery and danger, shunned by most Shou, who only go there to cut the rich timber or trap rare animals. Until the great battles of Shin Lu and Shin Ginsen in 2315, Chu' Yuan was of no military importance to the Empire—now, as a major border with T'u Lung, it supports several garrisons of troops, although these seldom venture far from their secure bases.

The People: The Chu are a suspicious, insular lot, as befits a people who have had generations of warring Shou and T'u trampling their homes underfoot. Small, thin, fond of wearing light clothing and hats, they are the masters of the jungle ambush. They are the only Shou other than the mandarins to commonly wear mustaches. The Chu are said to have amassed great fortunes among their clans; money made in the sale of the rare woods, animals and herbs which can only be found in their jungles; They are also known Empire wide for their food—which features parrot, monkey, snake and other unusual game—all of it served with throat-searing, eye-watering hot sauces.

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

Cities or Places of Note: Yentai, a central city, is located at the edge of the Hungtse Valley, where goods from Tabot are often traded. Taitun, a central river crossing at the lower Hungste, is frequented by merchants buying rare herbs and medicines. Travelers claim the food there is especially fiery. Chu Ting, a craftsman's city in the edge of the Great Forests of Chu' Yuan, is the source of fine mahogany furniture. Ping Tung is the site of the Temple of the Shingten, while Sentai houses the monastery of the White Snake. Li' Ping is a major garrison town on the great Tungpu Road to the Southlands.

Tien Lun (The Plains of Dispute)

The Land: The land is ravaged by years of war; in some areas, nothing grows, not even grass. Great stones of cities lie piled atop each other, and through the center of the land runs the Shattered Road of Kow Tang, its huge paved stones split and torn as by an earthquake. Expect no help here, nor sanctuary; this land is forsaken.

History: Site of most of the major battles of the T'u Lung/Shou Lung conflict. Tien Lun is the site of the Shattered Road and the Battle of the Crimson Wheat (2315). Since this time, it has been the scene of several other great skirmishes, including the Betrayal of the CaHong-Chwi Garrison (2318), the Conflict of the Silver Clouds (2335), and the Battle of the Hammer (2413). Tien Lun is only tenuously part of the Empire and the Emperor must go to great effort just to keep it that way.

The People: The Tien are descended from the Wang, and as such have the same smooth skin, clear eyes and medium stature. But at this juncture, the resemblance ends. Ravaged by years of war, the Tien have become hostile, violent and sadistic; fond of cruel tricks and sharp knives. They can no longer be trusted by any of the Shou peoples, and they repay this distrust with a xenophobic hatred that borders on the maniacal. It is said, "The Tien makes a fell partner, a dangerous companion, and an untrustworthy lover. He is even worse as your enemy."

Cities or Places of Note: Central to it all is Chowthou, a half-ruined and battered city in the middle of the Shou-T'u Lung conflicts. Constantly captured and recaptured through the last 200 years, it has been partially reduced to rubble.

Arakin

The Land: Rough and rugged mountains, descending gradually into rolling foothills as you approach Chu' Yuan and the bamboo jungles.

History: Arakin is considered to be a backwater province of little importance, other than its boundaries with the East. It's major historical note is an appearance of the Impossible Palace in 413, which people are still talking about.

The People: The Arakien are also fierce mountain men, much like their neighbors of Kao Shan.

Cities or Places of Note: The only site of significance is Sei Kung, capital of the province and the site of an appearance by the Impossible Palace.

The Spirit of The Shou

The people of the Empire may be the most practical of all the Lands. They are certainly the most cosmopolitan, being heirs to a culture spanning some 26 centuries. In art, music, classic literature and government, the citizen of Shou Lung walks the Earth in absolute surety that he is part of the greatest civilization ever to grace Heaven. And why should he doubt it?

Was not the Empire already a thousand years old when the first Kozakuran barbarian thought to dress himself in skins? Are not the great books of the Sages the very model upon which all other writings in lesser kingdoms are based? Surely the unlearned savages of Koryo have never devised such an elegant language of written characters, and it is well known that the men of Wa dine upon raw fish rather than the Ten Thousand Delicacies served at any inn of the Empire. Are then, the people of Shou Lung to be blamed for a touch of self-satisfaction? Of course not.

In science, the Shou have created wonders; their books are printed with movable type; they make the sky blaze with rockets and firecrackers, and they fly through the air as do birds. In government, they are without comparison, administering to many diverse peoples fairly and with honor. This enlightened government they have, on occasion, spread to other peoples of Kara-Tur, and while some may have had objection (I am reminded of the vociferous commentary of a young monk I met once while journeying through Tabot), on the whole, few can doubt the splendor and justice of their far-flung Empire.

The Stature of The Shou

There are many races within the Empire, but chief among these are the races of men. The men of Shou Lung stand apart from those of the barbarian lands, in being taller, fairer, and of more pleasing stature to the eye. They are a mixture of the many peoples conquered by the Empire, and in this way have become a vital and muscular hybrid of unyielding vitality. From their northern ancestors, they gain the long dark hair which their women love to pile high upon their heads and afix with decorated pins. This same blood shows in the the long mustaches and beards affected by the mandarins. From the south, they have learned the way of weaving bright silks, to make robes and garments of quality unmatched anywhere else in the lands.

Also within the Empire are those whom we call nonmen. Though, by the will of the Son of Heaven, they are denied a place within the government, they are welcomed within the Empire, where they face less of the prejudices and distrust found in other lands.

The Honor of The Shou

The Shou are a very honorable race of mankind. They have great pride in their ancestors, their Emperor, and their own good names. These, they will defend with all their power, for to lose face is to lose everything.

But it is in the protection of this honor that the Shou

citizen differs from other denizens of Kara-Tur; for example, the haughty samurai of Wa and Kozakura. And this is most important to consider when dealing with the Shou people. Where the samurai must walk about with hand to sword hilt, ready to wipe an insult out in blood, the Shou is more subtle. Not all insults must be settled by blood; in fact, it is sometimes preferable to avoid bloodshed, as this will bring out the magistrate and his guard. Being condemned for murder is an even greater stain upon the family honor.

He prefers to give insult or avenge it in more indirect ways; by ruining a reputation; by bringing a great estate to bondage; by assassination, or by publicly beating his opponent senseless in the street with his superior kung fu. What is most important to the Shou is the honor of the family clan, not himself. Insult a Shou and you have merely angered him. Insult his parents and you have incurred the vengeance of his entire clan. Harm his children or siblings, and no force in the Celestial Heaven will save you from his wrath. Such is the power of family in this land.

It's important to remember the subtle differences of the Shou character. Unlike a Kozakuran, a Shou citizen who blusters, bullies or brags is considered a buffoon, and loses tremendous face. In a culture of such great antiquity and civilization, its more important to be cool and sophisticated—even if you are a peasant. (When playing a Shou character remember to always reach for an insult before reaching for your sword.)

The Clan

The center of the Shou world is the clan. The clan is a tightly woven family, including grandparents, married children, grandchildren, servants and even beasts. At the top of the clan hierarchy is the Clan Head, who is always the eldest male of the family, although occasionally a grandfather will abdicate his leadership in favor of a young son (of 30 or 40) who has shown proper devotion and promise.

The power of the Clan Head is absolute. He may choose who is to marry, and to whom; where the-fortunes of the family are to be spent; and who is to inherit and when. To question his will is to risk being cast out of the clan. To a Shou, this is the ultimate fear, for without a clan, a man has no one to call upon for help, no honor to shield him, and no good name with which to win a living or a bride. Who will take care of him when he is old? Who will speak for him when his good name is slandered? It is well known that those who lose their clan will soon set out upon the road of brigandage and dishonor, for without the clan, what is there to live for?

The Clan Head is responsible to his family as well, He must provide food and shelter for them, and cause no dishonor to the family name. When business with merchants or the government must be done, he must do it. If the government chooses to punish a clan member, the Head, or Tai-tai, must shield the offender from the Emperor's wrath, even taking the punishment himself. He must find proper husbands and wives for his children, find them worthy occupations and even support them if they are unable to find work.

A dutiful member of the clan must show respect in all ways to his Clan Head. He will call him Honored Father, Sir, or Master. When he goes abroad to make his fortune in the capital, he sends money back to the clan. The clan determines what work he will pursue, unless they have no specific directions. Even the choice of wife or husband must be approved by his Clan Head. But for this, the clan member has the security of knowing that, no matter where he goes, he will have people to stand for him, and the family honor and wealth to fall back upon. For all but the most adventurous, this is more than enough.

In addition to those of the living, the clan encompasses the dead as well. Members of the clan who have achieved great things during their lives are remembered and honored. Their deeds are often spoken of in the family histories, and sacrifices to their memories made every festival or feast day. Children are often given the names of a great clan member of the past, in hopes that the child will one day live up the honor of his ancestor.

DM's should use the clan to their advantage whenever possible. A Clan Head can direct a player character to perform certain tasks, or take certain jobs. He may send the character to seek his fortune in strange new cities and lands. Clan emergencies may call the player character from his normal duties; an insult to the clan's honor may force him to take the strongest action.

The Way of Work

All men must work, for this is the Will of Heaven. But to each, his task, his pleasure, and his skill.

In Shou Lung, there are, or course, many jobs and careers, just as in other lands. But I will speak a moment upon these specific Ways of Work, for each has its own unique "Shou-ness," which will serve to illuminate how things differ in the Empire.

Peasants: Unlike the peasant of Kozakura, the peasant of Shou Lung is considered a farmer, not a serf. The land he farms has been owned by his family for generations, handed down from father to eldest son. He may choose to leave the land; to enter politics, the priesthood, or even become a merchant. He sells his crop freely in the markets, planting what and where he wishes, and giving only what the bureaucracy demands as its taxes.

No powerful noble holds power of life and death over the farmer of Shou Lung. Instead, he is judged fairly by the magistrate of his village, appointed from afar by a wise and just bureaucracy He raises many sons and daughters to till the land, and within his family clan, his word is law. Unlike the serf of Wa, he is content, because he is free.

Merchants: Merchants in Shou Lung are not the despised class that they are in Kozakura and Wa. Here, there are no haughty samurai to scoff at those who make their living from selling the work of others. Indeed, the merchant of Shou Lung is more than a mere shopkeeper. He is a physician, healing the aches and pains of the people with accupressure. He is an innkeeper, who gives the weary traveler a place of rest and fine food. He is an herbalist, who, with his

staff of apprentices, grinds powders and mixes potions for internal ills and magics. In short, the merchant is the backbone of Shou society, for he provides services necessary to both the highest and lowest of rank.

In most cases, the merchant class also provides the majority of educated young men for the ever expanding bureaucracy. This is because most farmer's sons cannot spare the long hours of study required in order to pass the Civil Service Examinations; they must instead tend beasts and till fields from sunup to sundown. Within the nobility, few young gentlemen have the desire to study for a position lower than they were born into. It is only in the merchant class that the happy coincidence of upward mobility and leisure time come together. It is rare indeed that a merchant's family does not have one son studying for his exams, supported by his entire clan, for if he is successful, the entire family will prosper with him.

Officials: There are many levels of officials, ranging from province governors with armies of assistants to lowly tax clerks in backwater villages. Any native of the Empire can win himself a post in the bureaucracy by passing the complex and difficult Civil Service Examination with a high enough score. Foreigners and those favored by the Court may also be appointed to official posts, although this is far rarer. Only nonhumans are excepted from holding public office.

As an official, the young scholar will report to one of the many ministries established by the Emperor, working diligently until he is promoted. If he is skilled and competent, he may soon find himself the magistrate in charge of a minor village or garrison—not his own home village (this is forbidden by the Emperor, as it encourages insurrection and corruption among officials), but possibly one very much like it. With greater experience, he may one day become a governor, and rule an entire province in the Emperor's name. His goal to eventually become head of his own ministry, able to make decisions and govern an entire aspect of the Empire as directed by the Son of Heaven.

An official is far from all powerful. Above, below and to either side of him, he will find competitors and limits; his hope is to eventually rise to a high enough position to free himself of most obstacles to his power. Even as the director of a powerful ministry; a member of the mandarinate itself, he may still face punishment and dismissal should his actions or the actions of his underlings anger the Emperor. But the rewards, in money, power and honor, are well worth the risk.

Priests and Monks: There are two main faiths in Shou Lung; The Path of Enlightenment, which espouses a written code of beliefs and actions, handed down from Heaven by the Celestial Emperor, and the Way, a religion of nature and metaphysics which denies that true faith can be taught in books. Priests of the Path (Shou-ling Tao), live together in huge temples and monasteries. Here they study teachings concerning the nature of the Path, as well as martial and healing arts, reading and writing. These monks can be easily recognized by their flowing red robes and shaven heads. While most are removed from the world, choosing to turn away from riches, fame and romantic companionship, this varies from order to order.

Priests of the Way (Chung Hsiang Tao) are solitary souls, who travel the lands seeking knowledge through nature. Chung Tao priests are considered to be more wizards than clerics, for the deeper mysteries of their faith give them sorcerous control over the forces of the material world (these men are actually wu jen). Although in theory, the Way is a truly neutral faith, in reality there are two alignments of Ch'eng Tao priests—those of the Dark Way (using their powers for personal gain) and those of the Light Way (using their powers for the good of others).

Priests and monks are honored and respected by the people of Shou Lung; for their wisdom and knowledge, as well as their command of the martial and mystical arts. It is also common for officials and nobles to retire from public life as they grow old, to take up the robes of a priest. For as it is written; "If one cannot aspire to become an official of Earth, it is just as well to become an official of Heaven."

The Warriors: The warrior of Shou is not the samurai. Yet, do not think that, because he does not walk with the swaggering bravado of the northern barbarians, that he does not draw sword at the slightest imagined insult, that he is not a fighter of consequence. Remember that it took a typhoon and a hidden reef to stop the great fleets of the Emperor Wo Hai Chin, and that even then the lands of Wa were fairly taken.

The warrior of Shou is a civilized man in the most sophisticated land under Heaven. He will not draw sword without just cause, for he knows that under the magistrate's law, all are as one. Unlike the samurai, he can be tried for the death of a farmer, and the knowledge of Imperial justice stays his hand.

But in warfare, he is supreme. With his many weapons—long horse spears, the butterfly sword, the axe and the bow—or with his kung fu and nunchaku, he is fearless and feared. His comrades have held the horse barbarians from our borders, and have kept the barbarians over the Celestial Seas in their place. Whether from the hovel of the peasant or the house of a lord, the warrior of Shou is honored and respected indeed.

Classes in Shou Lung are similar to those commonly used in other parts of Kara-Tur. However, certain classes are named differently, and others are not native to the Empire.

Oriental Adventures	Shou Lung Equivalent
Bushi	Chanshi or Warrior
Monk	Monk
Shukenja	Dang-Ki
Sohei	No-Sheng or Temple Guardian
Wu jen	Wujen
Yakuza	Tong Shu (secret society member)
Samurai	Knight or Noble
Kensai	Master or Chujen
Ninja	Vagabond, although most ninja come from outside the Empire.

Lao Chin-Mao (531-597)

The most influential scholar in all Shou history is the sage Lao Chin-Mao. His four volume work, the *Book of Heaven,* is a guide of behavior and morals for all proper Shou. A wizened, snappish old man, who wore old-fashioned robes and a conical hat, Lao Chin-Mao became Court Advisor to the Eleventh Emperor Chin of the Ho Dynasty. He used his influence to shape the rapidly expanding bureaucracy along his principles, culminating in the creation of the Mandarinate, a upper class of scholars and gentlemen who are the intellectual elite of Shou Lung.

Feng Shui

Feng Shui (Wind & Water) is the ancient Shou art of place divination. A master of feng shui is able to divine the proper place in which to perform certain activities, such as casting spells, creating magical devices, or locating safe places for camps and fortifications.

Every aspect of Shou life holds elements of feng shui. Whenever a wise Shou citizen sets up a household, builds a compound, or even moves the furniture, he first consults with the local feng shui master. The master will advise him on the direction in which to place his front door, align furniture, and avoid building in evil places. By doing these things, bad fortune or evil will be avoided.

Certain things promote good or bad feng shui. For example:

Good Feng shui	**Bad Feng shui**
Round doors	Triangular doors
Round windows	Triangular windows
The color red	The color black
Near water	Doors facing street
Ornate front gates to scare evil	Windows or doors facing west
Windows or doors facing north	

The *feng shui* spell can be used by wu jen and shukenja. Members of the scholar class are also able to use feng shui. Feng shui is an excellent way to give players clues as to the nature of a place. Players should soon realize that a triangular temple with black walls and triangular doors facing west is a place to be approached with great caution!

Feng Shui (Divination)

Level: 3
Components: S
Range: 0
Casting time: 1 turn
Duration: instant.
Saving Throw: Yes
Area of Effect: 50′ radius

This spell is an improved version of *detect harmony.* When cast, all the properties of *detect harmony* are gained. In addition, the caster gains special insight into the appropriate actions to counter or benefit from the influences of the area. This second ability requires the caster to make a saving throw vs. spells. If he succeeds, he gains some valuable intuition. If he fails, he cannot decide on a clear course of action. While correct, insights gained from the spell are generally vague and open to some intrepretation.

For example, a shukenja casts a *feng shui* spell while standing in an old temple. He instantly detects the lingering aura of evil over the place. Pondering hard (and making a successful saving throw), he decides that this evil could perhaps be counter-attacked if the temple were thoroughly cleansed through a purification ceremony. Later, he casts the spell when setting up camp. Unknown to him, there is a kappa living in the district. Again making his saving throw, he realizes this site has bad feng shui and he would do better to set camp further away from the water.

Social Customs

Clothing

While much of the clothing worn in the lands of Shou Lung is similar to clothing elsewhere in Kara-Tur, there are several garments that are so typically "Shou" as to warrant special attention. One of these is the maitung, a tunic favored by scholars and officials. Floor length and buttoned to the neck with a high collar, it is usually crafted from subdued silks and woolens.

The cheosong is a narrow, tight silk woman's dress, common in the high court and more cosmopolitan cities. The skirt is very long, reaching almost to the floor, and has a slit running up either side, often to the hip. The bodice is very tight and buttoned with a high collar. Often, the dress is embroidered with gold or silk thread, depicting mythical beasts and legends which wrap around the body from chest to hem. The cheosong is not commonly found elsewhere in Kara-Tur, as it is considered far too revealing for a proper woman to wear in public. It is especially popular with sing-song girls and other female entertainers.

Older women wear a less revealing version of the cheosong, called the cheo-sam. It is more like a loose embroidered robe of floor length, with enormous sleeves and a high collar.

Unlike the short pants and tunic of the Northern lands, the samfu is a long sleeved, pajama-like outfit. While commonly made of cotton, silk is used in the homes of the wealthy. In colder climes, such as Ma' Yuan Province, it is quilted and worn with high fur boots. The samfu is worn by all classes of people in Shou Lung, and serves as bedclothes, day wear and formal wear, depending on the richness of the fabric and the complexity of decoration. Occasionally, a small embroidered cap is also worn with it.

The waitao is a great heavy coat, with enormous sleeves, favored by soldiers, bailiffs and other military men. It is usually quilted and thus serves as some protection from sword cuts. The sleeves are excellent for carrying hidden weapons. On rare occasions, it may be embroidered. A variation of this is the hai-waitao, or ceremonial robes worn at court by magistrates and nobles. These robes retain the huge sleeves and floor length hems, but are heavily embroidered and trimmed with pearls, gems and rich furs. In most court situations, the hai-waitao is the dress of choice,

allowing freedom of movement, limited protection against an assassins dagger, and allowing the wearer to easily conceal weapons and secret things within its sleeves. It is also worn with a small embroidered cap.

It is common for families to keep huge chests of clothes, passing the most treasured down through the Clan. Shou clothing is known to be extremely durable, even at its most fancy. The many layered kimonos of Wa and Kozakura have not taken well to the Imperial Realms, because they are considered too flimsy for daily wear.

Sing-Song and Flower Girls

The Shou Lung equivalent of the geisha, the sing-song or flower girl is an entertainer and singer. She usually performs in inns or wine shops for the entertainment of travelers. Unlike the geisha, the sing-song girl is not highly trained, nor is she the member of a geisha house. Instead, she is most often an ambitious young girl who wishes to secure a good marriage, and has decided that this is the best way to meet unattached men. Famous sing-song girls have become the concubines of Emperors, or have gone on to raise great Festival houses frequented by powerful court officials.

Trigrams

The Trigrams are one of the aspects of Chung Tao magic that permeates all levels of Shou culture. An ancient means of divination, they were, according to legend, divined by the sage Hsin Fu Chan from patterns in the back of a great sleeping lizard. From this inauspicious beginning, the Trigrams were developed into the sophisticated form used today, in which a handful of broken and unbroken chopsticks are thrown into a circle, and six selected from the top. The resulting series of broken and unbroken lines are then compared to a matching trigram in the *Book of Change* to determine the meaning. There are two parts to the meaning. The first is the name of the Trigram, such as Love, Anger or Fellowship. There is also an explanation of the Trigram as well.

(To throw the Trigrams, roll 1D6 for each of two Trigrams. Add the total of both rolls. Consult the table below to determine outcome. The Trigrams should be used like the shukenja spell *Fate,* but can be used by any character class. The outcomes are deliberately vague, allowing the DM to apply the general statement to his adventure as he sees fit.)

The Book of Change

D	Symbol: Meaning
2	Destruction: Forces are at hand to unmake your fortunes. Use great care.
3	Fellowship: You will meet or find allies in your cause.
4	Simplicity: The best course is that which does the least.
5	Discipline: You must resist the impulse to give up. Strive harder to succeed.
6	Patience: Do not begin unprepared. Wait for the right time.
7	Love: Strong passions call you. Turn to one who shares your feelings.
8	Mountain: Stand fast in your principles. Do not yield at this time.
9	Sea: Always shifting. Be untouchable, make your position flexible, adaptable.
10	Anger: The Fire leaps within you. Use this force to your purpose, but do not let it destroy your judgement. Do not be consumed by hate.
11	Fear: Indecision tears at you. Turn away or stand and face the fear
12	Creation: Great forces may be used to your benefit.

Warriors of The Empty Hand

Better a clean fight and an honorable death, than to run in fear and lose face.

Most Honored Elminster,

It is said that the Shou love to fight, and this is true. But as you will discover when you journey to the Empire, the way in which they fight is unusual to any gajin, or to any samurai from Kozakura or Wa.

The Shou Way of Combat

The Shou are not known for the quality of their sword makers. They have not yet mastered the "thousand fold" techniques of the swordmasters of Wa and Kozakura, which make swords unnaturally strong. Therefore, Shou blades tend to be heavier and not as sharp. This lack of fine blades has tended to damp their enthusiasm for the sword as the chief weapon of combat, although they are known for the creation of several interesting variations on the sword, such as butterfly blades.

Therefore, the Shou are not, for obvious reasons, devotees of the sword duel. This is not to say that they refrain from war—indeed, warfare is seen as a just and honorable way to settle disputes and conquer new territory. Many a man will speak proudly of his service in the Emperor's armies, fighting the horse barbarians and the unwashed Kozakuran scum to the West. Soldiers and warriors are highly respected for their professionalism and bravery.

And this may be the point—professionalism. Rarely, if ever, will one encounter a Shou version of a kensai or ronin, wandering the land with sword in hand. The Shou consider this sort of single-minded devotion to mayhem with the same view as you of the Realms would view a madman rampaging about with an axe. In the Shou viewpoint, the time to draw swords is when a proper war has been declared, the boundaries are known, and all are agreed upon how to divide the loot when the fighting ends. Duels in vengeance for lost honor are considered foolish at best. Why should one cause so much pain and disharmony over saving face, when it would be easier to either have the offender put to death by the local magistrate, or quietly poisoned by a hired sing-song girl? Everyone will assume you arranged his death, and that he was a fool to have opposed you. In this way, you will have saved face.

One should not mistake this calm and rational view-

point to be cowardice. The Shou love to fight. But unlike the combats of Wa or Kozakura, which are usually to the death, the Shou prefer to beat their enemies senseless using the one skill they excel in above all others; the fighting style of unarmed combat, or kung fu.

The Masters of Kung Fu

The Shou are known as the best martial artists in all of Kara-Tur. They are the inventors of the science of unarmed combat, and have devised literally thousands of styles (each style may have its own name, but the overall concept itself is, of course, known as kung fu, or the Way of the Open Hand). Each town has at least two or three teaching halls, or dojos, where students come to master techniques and skills. In addition, every Shou-ling sect has its own martial arts school and each disciple is rigorously trained in these skills. I have taken time to speak of these schools in greater detail in my descriptions of the Monasteries of Shou Lung.

The masters of the open hand art fight often. There are contests between rival schools, in which students champion their particular style of kung fu. There are often conflicts between warring Orders of the Shouling faith, where the weapons of the body are the only weapons used. As most people of Shou Lung know at least a little martial arts, it is a common way to settle disputes and vendettas-two merchant clans may meet and battle each other in the streets, or two local tongs may have kung fu skirmishes to decide the control of a particular city. There are also many commercial contests, where fight promoters or wealthy nobles will put up a rich purse and invite all interested fighters to compete. Occasionally, the local magistrates will get into the act, arranging kung fu exhibitions or grudge matches to settle a dispute between two feuding clans.

The Shou also excel in the construction and use of martial arts weapons—most of the most bizarre weapons you will encounter in traveling the length of Kara-Tur have originated here in Shou Lung. Man catchers, sectional staves and rods, lajatang, nunchaku, sai, sang kauw—these are the weapons of the average Shou warrior, rather than swords and bows. Many of these weapons are nearly unknown outside of the many temples and dojos of the Empire, yet are the subject of almost every Shou tale of combat.

The way of kung fu permeates almost every level of Imperial Society, and Shou peoples are all familiar with at least one martial art (although not always very well). There are even specialized styles for women, children and old people (such as tai chi chuan, a flowing dance movement style). When creating native Shou characters, it is quite fitting to give them at least one level of proficiency in martial arts to reflect this cultural bias.

When Dungeon Mastering combat in a Shou Lung setting, it is useful to think of the difference between a Japanese samurai movie (with its grunts, bellows, challenges and swordplay), and a Chinese kung fu film (with showy displays of kicks, punches, and bizarre weapons). Conflicts between rival temples, martial arts schools and martial arts masters are very common in Shou Lung, and many adventures can revolve around themes common to this genre.

The Iron Hand School

The master of the Iron Hand School is Ling Li Te Hsin (Sharp Mind), a well-known cartographer employed by the Ministry of Public Works in Kuo Te' Shou. The school is run within Ling Li Te Hsin's large family compound, where he lives with his mother, wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law and assorted grandchildren, not to mention three to nine students at any one time.

Only students who have already demonstrated extraordinary (at least 4th level) potential in another kung fu style are considered for Ling Li's dojo. Begin ning students act as servants to the family, learning diligence, discipline and humility. As they progress, they graduate to being treated as Clan members.

The Iron Hand School teaches that to make the body ready for combat, it must be made as hard as iron. Students repeatedly plunge their hands into heated bowls of gravel to toughen their fingers. Hand and arm strikes are practiced against great iron statues. The floor of the dojo itself is of iron plates, to harden the body against falling. (An Iron Hand student is capable of the techniques of Iron Fist, as described in *Oriental Adventures,* page 104.)

The final test of an Iron Hand student is the Iron Combat, in which he must singlehandedly defeat the three Iron Spirits who are the guardians of the School. These iron armored Oni fight with great metal clubs, and have killed many a student who faced them.

Ling Li is very strict about his students avoiding combat unless provoked. In his school, martial arts are taught as a way of personal betterment, and combat is a last resort. However, students of the Iron Hand are not afraid of combat, and often compete in fighting tournaments. The Iron Hand school is considered to be one of the best in the Empire, and the list of applicants is long.

The Five Stars School

The Five Stars School is located in the city of Ping Chow, in Wang Kuo province. The school studies the art of Five Stars kung fu, a style with five types of movement— speed, leaping, missile deflection, and feinting. (These are described on page 103 of *Oriental Adventures.)* The Five Stars techniques are quite favored by young women, as they give the student immense attacking power without requiring great strength.

Masters of the Five Stars school are skilled at hand strike attacks, but not in the usual sense. Instead, they are taught to use great speed and make blurring attacks, landing many blows instead of one. At the highest level of mastery (16th), Seven Stars students are able to actually slow time, doubling their already astounding number of attacks!

The dojo itself is located in the back of a bathhouse in central Ping Chow. It's master, Lin Kwan Shu, is a slender woman with startling blue eyes, obviously the

heritage of gajin ancestry. To enter the school, the applicant must be brought to the master by another student of at least 10th level. Master Kwan then judges the fitness of the applicant and decides if he or she may enter the school.

The final test of a Five Star student is deceptively simple; students are asked to pluck a shiny blue stone from the Master's open palm.

Most fail.

The Northern Fist School

The Northern Fist School concentrates on the ability to kill or stun an opponent using the weaknesses of his own body. Students study the accupressure points of the body and learn to "read" the ki of their opponents. When mastery is accomplished, the student may utilize any of the vital area attacks (as described in *Oriental Adventures,* page 104), including the feared Distance Death technique known only by the masters of the school.

The Northern Fist School is unique in that it will only accept young children as students. The novices are trained not only in the techniques of the school, but in the life philosophy as well. Northern Fist School teachings state that the purpose of the school is to train protectors of the common people. Should the Empire collapse, the Students of the Fist will rise in every town and village, to uphold law and defend the Path of Heaven.

To graduate from the Northern Fist School, the student must pass two tests. The first is the Test of the Great Masters. In this test, the student enters the Hall of the Masters, to find statues of each of the masters of the Northern School arrayed to either side of him. One master comes to life before him—it is never known which one—and the student must defeat him. The fight is to the death (supposedly).

The second test is that of the Inner Soul. In this test, the student is confronted with a simple choice; a moral decision of life. He must make the correct choice as he sees it. His choice will reveal his inner nature to the Master of the School, who will then judge him fit to to become a Master of the Northern Fist School. If the student fails, he may still graduate, but he will not become a Master and learn the Distance Death techniques.

The Southern Star School

The Southern Star School believes that ki is as dangerous as a physical action. Therefore, students of this school practice attacks of speed and precision. Each strike requires that the student concentrate his ki as a single point, just beyond the point of impact. After years of practice, the student becomes capable of delivering devastating attacks without actually touching his opponent at all (achievable at 10th level, this is equivalent to Concentrated Push as listed in *Oriental Adventures,* page 104).

The school is located deep in the woods, in a deserted Chung Tao temple outside the city of Liao Pei. The Master Liu (Willow), is a slight, quiet man with flowing white hair. His modest manner and dress conceal a potent will. Those who seek him for training must first pass the Test of No Wind, in which the applicant must extinguish a single candle, using only his will. Those who fail are sent away again. Mysteriously, they can no longer remember where the school is or that it even exists.

The final test of a Southern Star student is to strike at the surface of the great bronze bell hanging in the center of the Hall of Testing. The bell weighs at least two tons, and is suspended from an iron chain, yet the student must move it without actually touching the surface. If the student is worthy, his ki alone should be able to make the bell swing. A powerful student will be able to make the bell actually ring.

It is noteworthy that on the far side of the temple lies another great bronze bell, split into two halves by the ki of Master Willow.

Secret Societies of Shou Lung

In good times, the bureaucracy is not corrupt, and the Emperor is just and merciful. But there are many times when this is not the case. In these times, the secret societies, or tongs, arise.

Secret societies are everywhere in Shou Lung—not unusual in a land where the government is strictly controlled and secret agents of the Ministry of State Security are everywhere. The tong is the common man's best way of causing change in the highly stratified society of the Empire. There are secret societies on the streets of a Karatin river slum, and secret societies in the chambers of the Imperial Palace. It is even rumored that the Emperor has brought members of the dread Kuo-tan Tong from his home province of Kao Shan to serve as his special agents from time to time.

The secret society member can be many things, depending on the nature of his society. He may be a protector of the weak, fighting valiantly to defeat corrupt officials or right a great wrong. He may be a brigand or a criminal, who spins a web of terror and fear over the night-time city. In all cases, he is a creature of the underworld, who uses a vast lattice of connections, spies, and enforcers to accomplish the society's aims. The secret society member dares not come into the open; his objectives will surely cause his death or imprisonment.

The secret society recruits young men and women of all ranks. The prospective recruit is often approached by close friends or family members. They carefully sound out his interests and political beliefs. Eventually, the recruit is invited to meet directly with members of the tong, where he is sized up for potential. If he' measures up, he is invited to join the tong directly. If he accepts, he undergoes a process of initiation, in which he swears allegiance in blood, learns the secret code words and rituals of the society, and is assigned his first mission on behalf of the society. If he turns the offer down, he is usually killed, for the tong cannot risk being exposed by an outsider.

The secret society may encompass several thousand members, such as the immense Tsui Tong of Kao Shan Province. Or it may be a few a dozen people. Most societies are arranged in groups of three people. Only

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

one of these three knows the name of his superior within the tong. In turn, one other member of his superior's group knows who they take their orders from. In this way, secrecy is maintained.

There are two common types of secret societies; political and criminal.

Political Secret Societies

Political tongs exist to accomplish some type of goal. Often times, this may be a simple as overthrowing a corrupt or evil official. At other times, the goal may be more complex; a secret society might be formed to influence the mandarinate to pass certain laws.

Political tongs differ from criminal tongs in that they are not interested in money. They are less likely to engage in murder or extortion, unless it is a means to accomplishing a specific end. They are usually smaller than criminal societies, and recruit their ranks mostly from the mandarinate, the court, and the bureaucracy. Political tongs most closely resemble revolutionary parties, and only become large when they are about to revolt or overthrow the opposition.

The Society of The Purple Lotus

Formed during the reign of the previous Emperor, the Purple Lotus Society was originally founded as a group of outstanding poets and calligraphers, mostly the sons and daughters of the noble class. The seventh Emperor Chin, being more cultured and aesthetic than strong, favored the arts and the company of graceful, beautiful people. New members of the society are chosen annually, at the New Year, based on submitted samples of calligraphy or poetry. A ritualistic initiation includes the burning of money, artwork and rare items.

Society members once had constant access to the Emperor at any time, but the new Emperor Kai Chin is less impressed with the society, and considers them a dangerous nuisance. Their secret goal is to reestablish the power of the noble class, particularly by undermining the authority of the bureaucracy. Their languid appearance and manner are extremely deceptive, as they are not above assassination, blackmail and kidnapping to accomplish these means. They are particularly fond of poison.

Members are recognized by wearing violet scarves or violet lotus blossoms.

The Society of The Kuo-Tan

In the centuries following the ascendancy of the infamous Tsui Tong, the original founders became disgusted with the tong's criminal behavior. They left the Tsui and established the rival Kuo-tan secret society. One of the most powerful current members of the Kuo-tan is the maternal grandfather of the current Emperor Kai Chin, and the tong has operated out of his family holdings since 2560.

The Kuo-tan is devoted to the secret support of the Empire by any means, whether legal or not. As a secret ally of the Emperor, they have his tacit authority to investigate corruption, evil and vice in court or abroad. When a young noble plots to raise an army against the Empire, it is the Kuo-tan who arrange his disappearance. When a corrupt official steals from the poor, the Kuo-tan secretly empty his treasure houses and redistribute the wealth to its true owners. The Kuo-tan are feared by a great many people, of all ranks of life, but especially by the Tsui Tong, with whom they have waged a bitter war for generations.

The Seventy-Two Society

The name has no connection to the purpose of the society, but was chosen by a powerful feng-shui master as well-omened. The organization is located in Wa K'an and in fact is openly recognized in the city of Hsiang under its guise of a wealthy merchant's club. It's intent is to overthrow Imperial rule in Wa K'an, and make the province independent. This tong is quite strongly backed by the government of Wa, who see the Seventy Two Society as an excellent way to infiltrate spies into the Empire.

The society is recognized by its symbol of three black marks across the back of the left hand.

The Society of The Jade Empress

Appearing harmless enough at first, the Jade Empress Tong is made up of nobles from Hai Yuan, whose donations provide for the upkeep of the magnificent Temple of the Jade Empress. It is said, of course, that her intercession with the Sea Lords allowed her husband to become the first Emperor of the Hai Dynasty.

The society secretly plans to place a Hai pretender on the throne. To accomplish this, of course, will require the murder of the entire Imperial Family-a plan requiring many years of preparation. The Jade Empress Tong has allied with highly placed monastic orders within Hai Yuan, allowing them to field an army of some strength. As for now, their efforts are most concentrated in eliminating the lower levels of opposition within the bureaucracy.

The Many-Hued Peacock Society

One of the oldest of all secret societies is the Many Hued Peacock Society. This group has been in existence for approximately 500 years. The society has its base in the nobles and is dedicated to the overthrow or undermining of the bureaucracy (and thus the Emperor). Not surprisingly, the Emperor considers them criminals and has gone to great efforts to eradicate them.

The society is ruled by the Inner Council, a group of men and women who direct the actions and make long-range plans for the group. They are notorious for the great extent of their operations, taking a long view that may last 100 years or more. This is greatly aided by the fact that all the members of the Inner Council are 100 years or older and at least three date from the founding of the society. It is only through magical devices, spells and mental control that they have retained their youthful appearances of 60 or 70 years old. In addition, this extreme effort to deny death has contributed to their great wisdom and perception. Were it not for their role and desires to bring down the Empire, these men and women would be hailed as great wise men.

Curiously, in its pursuit of its goals, the Many-Hued Peacock Society has been indirectly and directly responsible for saving the Empire from destruction more than once. In its struggles against the Emperor, the society has often foiled the plans of the Gorath, a shadowy and mysterious creature who rules the Royal Vagabonds. Ostensibly serving the Emperor, this creature actually takes its commands from a greater power in the Celestial Bureaucracy — for remember, Shou Lung is a mirror of all things in Heaven. There are intrigues on the Red Earth and there are intrigues in the Heavens. By foiling the Gorath, the society has actually prevented machinations against the structure of the Empire itself.

The Royal Vagabonds

Not properly a secret society, the Royal Vagabonds are a secret clan in the service of the Empire. All members of the clan are ninja (called vagabonds in Shou Lung). Not an official part of the government, the vagabonds still report to the Minister of State Security and the Chief Imperial Censor. Their task is to carry out those missions the Emperor desires — a feared enforcement arm of his secret police network. Few know the identities of fellow members and no one outside the clan can positively identify a vagabond. This uncertainty works to their advantage, since it spreads fear and suspicion among the enemies of the Emperor. The only positive means of identification is a magical sigil borne on the chest of each man. When the appropriate phrase is uttered, this sigil (normally invisible) glows brightly.

The leader of the clan is known only as The Old Man, although she is neither old nor male. From her headquarters somewhere in the Forbidden City, she directs the activities of the clan. She is aided by a creature called the Gorath of uncertain and unknown origin, but of known power and strength. Unknown to everyone, this creature secretly serves the Undersecretary of the Minister of War in the Celestial Bureaucracy, a being who has designs on the post of the Celestial Emperor.

Criminal Tongs

The original criminal secret societies have their roots in the infamous Tsui Tong of the Black Cycle. Unlike the political secret societies, these tongs are devoted to a reign of murder, crime and terror.

Besides their many illegal activities, the criminal tongs are not above hiring themselves out as enforcers, working for corrupt officials and ambitious warlords. Their weapons are muscle, kung fu weapons, poison, arson and murder. Each criminal tong has its own ch'eng po, or enforcer section, heavily armed and willing to face even the magistrate's own guard.

Each tong is commanded by a Dragon Lord. The Dragon Lord directs the activities of five Tiger Generals, each in charge of a ch'eng po of ten or more men. Women are equally represented in tong leadership, and are known as Dragon Ladies and Tigress Generals.

Unlike the yakuza of Kozakura, whom they somewhat resemble, the tongs of Shou Lung do not wear identifying tatoos. Instead, each society has its own symbol—a color, a pin, a hair style or a piece of clothing—which serves to mark a member. The wide number of symbols makes it extremely hard for the authorities to uncover the criminal tongs and their work. The tongs also use complex hand-signals and code words to communicate, making it nearly impossible for an outsider to penetrate their organizations.

Most criminal tongs operate under some type of legitimate front; a charitable organization, an orphanage, or a neighborhood business. Like the yakuza, the tongs often divide the city into wards, one to each of the five Tiger Generals. Within the ward, the Tiger General and his ch'eng po are the law. They look after their own neighborhoods, aiding those in trouble with the magistrate's guard, bribing officials, running gambling and wine houses, and killing any invaders to their territory.

The Tsui Tong

One of the most powerful and infamous secret societies of all time, the Tsui Tong are the literal masters of the city of Kai Shan, and control much of the surrounding province of Kao Shan as well. A powerful criminal organization with over 3,000 members, the Tsui began as a secret society dedicated to overthrowing a corrupt overlord. In this, they were aided by the hero Wo Mei. But in later years, the Tsui became corrupt themselves, engaging in robbery, murder, extortion and terror.

The Tsui have an information network unequalled even by the Ministry's Secret Police. Within their stronghold, the Black Rock Fortress of Kume, located in the central city of Kai Shan, they have amassed great records of events, people and places. Part of this fuels their ever-expanding blackmail and extortion business, but the Tsui are also information brokers, selling secrets to the highest bidder. It was to the Tsui that the one-day Emperor Wo Mei went, to locate the Impossible Palace and recover the Silver Flower Sword of Tan Ming.

The Tsui are also a powerful political force. Often, the bureaucracy has called upon the Tsui for information or to control rebellion in the frontier provinces. In turn, they have demanded and received a number of concessions. No Imperial troops are quartered in the city of Kai Shan; there is no magistrate or guard, and the Tsui run the city pretty much as they like. Within the province, they are free to conduct their gambling operations as they wish, opposed only by the Kuo-tan secret society. Recently, this freedom has been curtailed by the Emperor Kai Chin and his Kuo-tan allies, leading to speculation that the Tsui may soon strike back at the Jade Throne itself.

The Tsui are recognized by the symbol of a black handprint on the face, or a black scarf knotted around the neck. The scarf is also used as a strangler's weapon, a common Tsui method of assassination.

Languages

There is one main tongue in the Empire, and this is

called Kao te Shou, or High Shou. While each province has its own dialects of this language, all are close enough to each other to allow clear conversation.

The writing of the Empire is in the 24 characters of Shou Chiang, the basis for written communications throughout Shou Lung. The characters have been refined and developed for thousands of years, and many nations have adapted loose variations on these. Shou Chiang is written from top to bottom, left to right. The numeric system of Shou Chiang is simple, and easily transferred to the abacus, a common counting tool in the Empire.

The Shou may well be the most literate and educated people under Heaven, for education is highly valued among them. Monks of the Shou-ling and Chung Tao faiths walk the land, teaching the 24 characters and the classics to any who are interested. The bureaucracy has established schools of learning, hoping to foster new scholars to pass the examinations and enter its ranks. Almost every townsman can read, and not a few of the farmers as well. The highest compliment one can bestow upon a Shou of any rank is to call him po hsueh te shen shih, or "a learned gentleman." And most have earned this honor indeed!

The Celestial Empire

It is written that the Earth is the Mirror of Heaven in all things. It is therefore correct that if we Shou have an Emperor, court and officials, it must be this way in the Celestial Empire as well. And so it is. The Empire of Heaven includes both all of the Sky and all of the Land, organized under the government of the all powerful and wise Celestial One. Even the Emperors of the Earth below are merely his subjects, while all the myriad immortals, demigods, spirits, dragons and powers of the Earth serve as his officials.

Each Officer of the Empire of Heaven is responsible to the will of the Celestial One. They receive and carry out his orders, punish the wicked, reward the good, and file reports yearly of their activities. As Heaven is a mirror of Earth, these officials are usually loyal and trustworthy, but it is not unheard of for a corrupt, disobedient or incompetent official to turn up now and again. But with the all-seeing eye of the Celestial One upon them, even these rogues can be stripped of their power and position and sent packing off to the Underworld.

The Celestial Emperor

Ruling from his throne in the Center of All Heaven, the Celestial One charts the path of What Has Been and Will Be. There is only one Celestial Emperor, and he has ruled since the beginning of the Great Cycle. His appearance is that of a tall, aristocratic lord, dressed in shimmering robes of many colors, and wearing the high crown of the Emperors of Shou Lung. His eyes glow white with the Inner fires of Karma, and his visage is stern, yet compassionate. In his right hand, he holds a mighty rod of intricately worked silver, called Kun P'ing Shen p'an, the word for justice. In his left, he holds a golden chalice, filled with the Essence of Life, and known as Lien Min, or Compassion.

The Celestial Emperor is the architect of the Path, and it is his will that both Heaven and Earth mirror each other in achieving perfection. For this reason, he sent the Nine Immortals among men to teach by example. It is also why he caused red lightning to inscribe his will in the granite of the Hungtse, so that men would be reminded throughout time.

At the start of each New Year, the Celestial One calls his Great Court of Heaven before the Jade Throne, to hear the reports of each of his subjects. Whether great or low, each of his Million Officials tells of his deeds and duties of the year before. Misdeeds are also reported, for the all seeing eyes of the Celestial Emperor know even the hidden things. Upon each report, the Center of Heaven passes his judgement, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked as he deems fit. As it is written in the *Book of Heaven:*

> If a land is ruled with justice, righteousness becomes the shield of the ruler. Appeal your case then to Heaven, for this is the font of all justice.

The Nine Immortals

At the beginning of the world, the Celestial Emperor decided to make the Will of Heaven clear to all by sending emissaries to the lands below, each to teach one aspect of the True Path. These emissaries were the first emperors of Shou Lung, and are known by legend as the Nine Immortals. While there are many, many lesser immortals throughout the lands of Shou Lung, these are the ones most often meant when the immortals are called upon. The Nine Immortals stand at the side of the Celestial One's throne, ready at all times to do his bidding. They have been there throughout the Great Cycle, and will still be there when the worlds end and pass into fire.

In the Celestial Bureaucracy, the Immortals are the agents of the Celestial Emperor's will. At his command, they administer and direct all other of the lesser immortals in their appointed tasks. Each of the Nine Immortals is responsible for one aspect of the Path, as reflected in his or her title. According to their responsibilities, they can be called upon to reward the just and punish the wicked. The Nine Immortals represent the nine cardinal virtues of the Path; Scholarship, Respect for Tradition, Honor, Compassion, Love, Fidelity, Karma, Artistry, and Courage. As immortals, they may take any form they wish, but are commonly seen in two aspects— that of men or women as given in each's description, and that of Nine Great Dragons which hold up the world and move all things by their thoughts. As the Celestial One sent these Nine Immortals into the lands of men, this is why the lands they went into are known as Shou Lung, or Receiver of the Dragon.

The Shou people constantly call upon the immortals, not really expecting them to appear but mostly for the good "luck" such calling brings to an endeavour But it is ill fortune indeed to call upon the immortals' aid when evil or mischief is planned, for that is when they will most certainly come to mete out their stern justice!

Here then, are the names and aspects of the Nine Immortal Ones.

Kwan Ying
(pronounced: koo-wann ying)
Compassionate Kwan Ying
Goddess of Compassion, Mercy and Joy

Chan Cheng
(pronounced: chan ching)
Mighty Lord of Heroes
God of war, the martial arts, combat and bravery

Ch'en Hsiang
(pronounced: chee-enn hoo-sang)
Inspiration of Poets, God of poetry, music and literature

Chih Shih
(pronounced: chee shee)
Lord of the Sages, God of History, Lore and Tradition

Nung Chiang
(pronounced: nung chee-ang)
Teacher of the Plow; Master of the Red Earth; God of Agriculture and Fertility

Ai Ch'ing
(pronounced: eye chee-ing)
Mistress of Love and Fidelity, Goddess of Love and Marriage

Fa Kuan
(pronounced: faah koo-wann)
One Who Walks in Righteousness; The Lawgiver; God of Justice

Hsing Yong
(pronounced: hiss-ing yoong)
The Lucky One; Most Fortunate One; God of Fortune and Prosperity

Shu Chia
(pronounced: shoo chi-ah)
Hands of Shu Chia; Hands of the Master; God of Artificers and the Arts

The Lesser Immortals

The servants and assistants of the Nine Immortals, the Lesser Immortals are descended from sages who have been particularly holy in their lives. As a reward, the Celestial One has granted them the boon of immortality and limited godlike powers. The Lesser Immortals each have specific tasks that they perform in Heaven and upon the Red Earth, and are directed in these by the appropriate Greater Immortals.

Jade Ladies

Appearing as translucent women in green robes and elaborate jade headdresses, Jade Ladies are responsible for creating and placing treasures and beautiful things within the earth. Their powers allow them to weave gold, silver and copper into the veins of the rocks, and to fashion rich deposits of jade in secret places, to be uncovered by miners and artisans.

Rice Spirits

Rice spirits are the spirits of the harvest, responsible for making the rice grow strong and tall. They are also in charge of the fertility of men and beasts, and the judging of whether a family should be allowed children. Rice Spirits may be men or women, and appear in a variety of aspects including animals and mythical beasts.

Moon Women

Moon women are responsible for maintaining the proper care of the Heavens-refilling the oils in the great lamps of the Sun, polishing the million crystal orbs that are the stars, and directing the Moon and the constellations in their courses. Because the calendar is derived from the actions of Heaven, Moon Women are also the patron saints of any actions regarding time, such as festivals, portentous moments, and auspicious times of action. They appear as slender young women in gauzy blue robes, who at times are nearly transparent themselves.

Spirit Warriors

These Lesser Immortals are responsible for creating heroic resolve and courage in the fainthearted. They appear as inspirational figures, often leading phantom armies whose manifestation can turn the tide of battles. They are also responsible for carrying off the spirits of slain heroes to be judged by the Lords of Karma, and of guarding the gates of the Underworld from trespassers.

Ladies of Compassion

These Lesser Immortals are responsible for the work of Kwan Ying, appearing throughout Heaven and the Red Earth to ease suffering and pain. They appear as stately young women in white robes and long, loosened hair, carrying a silken white cloth with which to bind wounds.

Lords of Karma

The Lords of Karma are the judges of whether a person's soul has gained enough merit in his current life. Upon their judgement, the dead soul may be elevated to the Heaven of the Ancestors, or even be raised to sit among the Immortals. However, if the Lords judge against them, the soul will be condemned to be a spirit for all eternity, wandering the Red Earth by night, and trapped in the hells of the Underworld by day.

Sages

The sages are people who, in their earthly lives are of such purity and resolve that they are elevated to walk beside the Immortals. However, they are not yet of sufficient greatness to become Lesser Immortals, and as such have no godly powers and are not granted Immortality. A sage need not be dead—many walk the Red Earth today, teaching by their great example and wisdom.

Sages (and Buddas, which is a Tabotan term for the same thing), come in all shapes, sixes, races and walks of life. Most live apart from the world of men, in mountain caves or hidden places in the jungles, to better live in simplicity and peace. This inner harmony

imparts to the sage many benefits—long life, wisdom and knowledge, and mastery of many attributes of the material world. Sages have been known to walk hot coals, quell earthquakes, still typhoons and shatter swords with the touch of a hand. It is not uncommon for a sage to be seen speaking familiarly with the spirits of air and water; to call upon wild beasts to carry him to and fro, and to turn away monsters. Even we great dragons will occasionally come to a sage for counsel and conversation—I myself have a friendship of long duration with the poet-sage Hung Te Ping, for example.

A sage lives his or her life in pursuit of a single goal; to become perfection; to become one with the will or Heaven. In this way, he becomes Heaven itself. And when he has finally died and left the Red Earth, he often times becomes a true Immortal.

Ancestors

When a mortal dies in the Celestial Empire, he is judged by the Lords of Karma as to his relative merit. If his merit is very high, he is elevated to the level of a Lesser Immortal, if less, he may become a sage. If he has merely lived a good and merit-filled life, he is granted eternal existence in the Heaven of the Ancestors. In this land, there is no pain, suffering or infirmity. There is always delicious food to eat and fine clothes to wear.

The ancestors have one responsibility, and that is to advise their descendants. To this end, each ancestor has a secret name, known only to the most trusted of his children, the invoking of which requires his attention.

Spirits

There are two kinds of spirits; those of the dead, which include all baijang, gaki (or hungry ghosts), bisan and the like; and those of nature—kami, harooga and other aspects of the material world. The spirits of the dead are descended from those who lived evil or unfulfilled existences when they were alive. For this, they have been judged by the Lords of Karma to eternally walk the Earth as spirits, forever in torment. By day, they are shut away from the eyes of men in the darkness of the Underworld, where the black caverns echo with their screams of anguish. By night, they haunt the earth, often in evil, forbidden places, or near the place where they died or were buried. This, by the way, is why it is safe to approach a Shou graveyard by day, but extremely dangerous to do so by night.

Twisted by the pain of unfulfilled dreams, visions of vengeance for past wrongs, or hatred and evil, the hungry spirit is a creature of horror, feared by all men. As in all things of the Celestial Empire, they too have their duties, among which is to serve as a terrifying example of the result of evil practices. In order to accomplish this, most hungry spirits have supernatural powers and abilities, many of which are as deadly as they are frightening.

Equally powerful, but not as twisted, are the spirits of nature. These creatures exist as forces of the material world, moving through it to provide life and motion. Some spirits, such as the kami of place, are the guardians of sites and treasures. One legendary example of this is Harooga, the spirit of Akari Island. Others, such as kami of elements, move the winds and waters at the direction of the great dragons of Heaven. There are also spirits of stone and beasts, serpent and fowl, who also guard and protect powerful places in the world. It is these spirits of Wind, Air and Water that the Chung Tao priests of T'u Lung call Nature Cods, although it is known to us of the Celestial Heaven that they are of much less exalted position!

Occasionally, nature spirits and humans fall in love. These unions are often fertile, producing offspring. This is the origin of the spirit folk and hengeyokai; people who combine the elements of the spirit and material worlds. Many of the great romances of Shou literature involve these unions, such as the ancient legend of the river woman.

Faiths of Shou Lung

In the lands of the realms, there are separate religions, each organized around the worship of a particular god. Elminster has spoken of such as Lathander and Azuth and the temples and clericies that surround them. Here in Shou Lung there are fewer gods, as such, and many more forces, spirits and entities. In addition, we are also ruled by a faith which has no god; that of custom. We honor things that have gone before even as much as we worship the gods, and this has done more to shape our faiths than any proclamation or creed.

The man of Shou Lung worships not just one faith, but all faiths, as well as some things closer to superstition than religion. He is a supreme generalist; who recognizes that survival in the spiritual world depends on knowing what god controls what thing, and which spirit to appease when. He will rise in the morning to burn incense to Kwan Ying, the Shou-ling Immortal of Compassion, invoke the name of the great Chung-Tao sages when he is frightened or amazed, and pray to the nature spirits of air and water for a good catch when he is fishing in his boat. He is not entirely cavalier to his gods-he believes fervently in them, and well he should. But he has a tendency to be more familiar with them than seems respectful, calling to them with nicknames even! He is not above bribing his gods either, making them rich offerings of sandalwood incense, gold, silver, or tall red candles, if they will only "do this one thing" for him. Sing-song girls burn incense to Ai Ch'ing for good husbands, then "hedge their bets" with candles to Kwan Ying, so that the husbands will be handsome too.

And so it goes.

The Shou prays to no one god, because he knows that in his infinite wisdom, the Celestial One has given every deity in Heaven a job to do, and you must, of course, talk to the right Immortal for the right task! And woe upon the one who directly calls upon the Celestial Emperor himself. Such impudence will surely be rewarded with lightning and thunder, for if the Master of Heaven wanted to talk to men, he would not

have appointed his Celestial Court to deal with such trivial matters.

Where the Shou is more devoted are in things of the Earth, which is fitting, as Heaven has called upon him to attend to these things. It is important for him to show proper respect for his ancestors, living or dead, because this is written in the edicts of the Path. He calls upon the spirits of field and stream for good harvests and fortune, using all the proper rituals as proscribed by the monks and wu jen. On festival days, he burns paper money, paper clothing and offerings of food at his ancestor's graves so that they might enjoy these in the spirit world.

Thus, the people of Shou do not actually worship any one god, but a pantheon of many. Each god has a certain sphere which is his territory, and a smart man knows which Immortal is which. He may even try to play several Immortals off of each other, appealing to Chih Shih, lord of sages, for the answer to an examination question, and then to Kwan Ying for mercy if Chih Shih does not hear him. The Shou think anyone who belives that all the work of Heaven can be done by one god is an idiot.

Religions

There are two religions in the land of Shou Lung; the Path of Enlightenment, and the Way. In addition, there is a "faith" of custom; a philosophy of the Nine Travelers, which, through the years, has become the guiding principle behind the mandarinate scholars.

The Path

The Path of Enlightenment is the officially recognized "state" religion, primarily due to a well organized temple militia and strong influence at court. The teachings of the Path are said to have been revealed first in the Hungtse River provinces, blasted by red lightning into the sheer granite of the Cliffs of Tanghai. We know this is true, for the inscriptions stand there even today. They admonish us to:

Honor that which has gone before you. For the past is eternal.

Honor and respect your Elders and the Ancestors. Show honor in word, thought, action and deed.

Speak not false words, nor engage in false deeds, for these are not li (the term for rightness under heaven).

Do honor to he who rules you, for the Earth is the Mirror of Heaven, and the Son of Heaven is the mirror of the Celestial One. Be obedient to your lord.

Engage in no base thing, nor commit murder, for to strike another in the name of anger is not li.

Do honor to those you must rule, for under the eye of Heaven, they are your equals. Be fair to those you rule.

Know that all things are One under Heaven, even the lowliest of creatures.

The Path of Enlightenment is conveniently oriented to serve the wishes of the Imperial Family. It encourages fealty and obedience to one's lord, veneration of the past (including past emperors), and those who teach and guard the path. It's very nature deifies the person of the Emperor, elevating him to the very side of the Celestial One in importance, and conferring upon him a secret animal name upon his death.

As the Celestial One's mirror upon the Earth, the Emperor has the right to speak directly to the Immortals as an equal, as well as to call upon the spirits of the Ancestral Emperors, whether in his direct family line or not. He does this in the Heart of the Place Most Secret, a shrine located in the very center of the Forbidden City, and known only to him and his most trusted wu jen. He must also perform all the proper rites, such as plowing the first fields with a silver plow at the start of the New Year (to ensure good harvest), and traveling to the Mountains of the Immortals to make the yearly rituals and sacrifices.

The Guardians of The Path

Those who would guard and teach the path are known as the the Shou-ling Tao, or Receivers of Guidance. This has, through the years, become corrupted into the term Shou-ling, used to describe the priests of this religion. The Shou-ling Tao are the best organized and wealthiest of the faiths, enjoying the favor of the Son of Heaven. Most temples within the lands are Shou-ling temples, recognizable by their high red gates and huge sanctuaries.

There are many sects within the Shou-ling faith, as there are many interpretations of the Path possible. Those which are official sects receive the benefits of the the bureaucracy—granted land, money and the support of the Imperial Family. They maintain many advisors at court, and it is here that many troubles arise, as these advisors fall prey to the temptations and vices of the world and to petty squabbles with the contending priests of the Way.

Often, there are wars between temples and faiths, culminating in bloody battles within the very walls of the Celestial City itself. These battles are often fought with the unsanctioned temples of the faith—fiercely independent temples of the Path with divergent views, who most of the temple elders consider renegades and heretics.

No matter their temple, all Shou-ling monks have these things in common. All have shaven heads and wear the red flowing robes of their order; red in remembrance of the red lightning which carved the teachings in the cliffs. "We are the reflection of the lightning of Heaven", say the writings of the Shou-ling teachers, "and we shall light the Path for those who follow". The monks are well educated, can read and write, and have extensive knowledge of the classics—almost any one of them could easily pass the examinations and enter the mandarinate. Yet, they are sworn to a vow of poverty and to turn away from the things of the world, to better pursue perfection along the Path. Besides, they already wield great influence without the restrictions imposed on bureaucrats.

The Shou-ling monasteries are also famed for creating the art of unarmed fighting, or kung fu. Based upon the precept that it is wrong for a man of faith to spill blood, the monks of Shou lung may not use dag-

gers, swords or cutting weapons. These tools they leave to the skills of a specially chosen class, the no-sheng (sohei), who are consecrated as temple guardians. For themselves, the monks of the Shou-ling choose the weapons of the body only. For it is written:

> To make strong the force of the Body, to become one with Heaven in defense of the weak and the defenseless—this is truly li.

Each monastery or temple has its own specific form of kung fu. Some types are patterned after animals, or elemental forms of nature. Others are derived from the abilities of a certain master, whose skill has forever after influenced that temple's dojo, or teaching hall.

The Way

The followers of the Way are known as Chung Tao, or Guides of the Way. The Way is much more of a philosophy than a religion, because its adherents believe that the true nature of the Way is unknowable. It's shrines are more like hermitages, and its very few temples organized as monasteries or schools, teaching a wide variety of subjects. The Way states that all things in the Celestial Universe affect and are affected by all others. There is no Good, Evil, Law or Chaos—only the forces of the Universe, which may be manipulated as desired. The proper student of the Way thus recognizes this and strives to know the proper way in which to use these forces.

A Chung Tao priest is actually something more of a wizard than a monk or scholar, and both dang-ki (shukenja) and wu jen may be followers of the Way. Powerful positions within the faith are occupied by mages or sorcerers more often than priests, and indeed, many of the great wu jen of history have been Chung Tao priests as well.

The use of power is often the subject of debate, and so it is among the Chung Tao priests. In the earliest days of the Empire, this caused a great rift in the unified faith, with two main temple emerging from the chaos. One group, known as the Black Chung Tao, believe that the superior man has a duty to shape the universe to his ends; directing the unenlightened of the Earth to a higher goal. The second group, known as the White Chung Tao, believe that there are no superior men, only enlightened, ones, and that the proper observance of the Way is in maintaining the natural balance of events. The two sects are distinguished by an identifying mark worn on the chest or sewn on the garments. This symbol, representing the concept of Yin and Yang, is a circle with one half black and one half white. Within the center of each area is a small dot of the opposing color, symbolizing that each half is partially composed of the other. Among Black Chung Tao, the black side is uppermost—among Whites, the white side is uppermost.

In secret, these two forces have been battling for control of the Empire (and thus the material world) for the last 2,000 years. In some dynasties, the Black Chung are deposed from the favor of the court; in others, it is the White. Both use powerful sorceries and servants to win ascendancy. It is not unknown for the Black Chung Tao to employ assassination, illusion and even demons to overthrow dynasties which have thwarted them.

In this, they are opposed by the White Chung Tao, who use their powers to subtly influence events and support the balance. At present, the White Chung Tao are ascendant and enjoy the favor of the Imperial Family, but it is rumored that the Black Chung Tao are already plotting a major challenge.

The Faith of The Nine Travelers

The Nine Travelers is probably the oldest faith in Shou Lung; popular among the lower classes. Yet, for all of this, it is probably the weakest, having almost no temples or organized priesthood. It's power comes from the fact that it is extremely popular among the mandarinate, for its basic tenet is that even the lowliest commoner can become a ruler of men. As the mandarinate became the ruling party of the bureaucracy, this faith was promoted to establish their position of rulership, so that by the mid Kao Dynasty, a great deal of work had been written on the subject. This was opposed somewhat by the nobility, who recognized a political threat when they observed one.

The Nine Travelers faith considers the Nine to be immensely powerful beings of the Celestial Bureaucracy, and in this, they may have approached closer to the truth than any other religion. They consider Heaven to be a vast mirror of the Empire below, with a Celestial Government, Bureaucracy, and Emperor (all of which is true, actually). They err in arguing which of the Nine is the leader, but in all other things, they are quite correct.

One way in which the mandarinate has reinforced its claims upon the bureaucracy is by legitimizing the *Book of Heaven*. This four-volume work is heavily based upon the concepts of the Path, but refers to these within the context of the Nine Travelers' reigns. The mandarinate has made knowledge of the *Book of Heaven* an important part of the civil service examination.

Often, miraculous events (such as the appearances of the Chu Jen Yin, or Giants in Gray) are attributed to actions of the Nine. Because the mandarinate has a vested interest in the promotion of this faith, they immediately call out a Board of Inquiry for each event, compiling vast scrolls of information and "not proven" and "possible" verdicts. It is somewhat ironic that this "faith of clerks" may well be the most accurate depiction of the Celestial Empire man has ever devised, yet suffers from disbelief simply because it is so mundane in aspect.

Money and Commerce

Taxation

Taxation within the Empire is based upon the counting of heads, and this is accomplished each year through the census, as directed by the Most Pussiant Department of Population and Census. Their tallies are then used to determine the taxation for the particular province. The taxes of the province are then levied from the province as a whole, and it is the duty of the governor to submit these to the bureaucracy at

the start of the New Year. He in turn must direct the local magistrates to collect taxes from their individual villages. The village as a whole must submit a specified amount; it is up to the magistrate to determine how much each individual household will pay, although he must abide by the formulae set by the Emperor and the bureaucrats.

The taxation structure of Shou Lung is unusual in that it takes into account the needs of the Empire as a whole. Some provinces will be required to send a levy of wheat or rice; others a measure of ore, gold or wood. These taxes are then stored in great warehouses in the Imperial City, with the Emperor usually taking a small amount of this. During times of famine or want, the Emperor can thus direct his ministries to distribute these levies among the people, a most enlightened system indeed.

Transportation

Each of the fourteen provinces is well travelled, and spanned by roads of stone. To the north, runs the Kuangchiu Road towards Koryo; to the east of this, the Great Spice Road passes through the land of the horse barbarians. The Thousand Shrine Bridge crosses the Chukei River, and the road soon becomes the Kaifeng Highway. As wide as two wagons end to end, this stone highway leads to the Imperial City, paralleling the Emperor's Grand Canal on its union between the Chukei and Ch'ing Tung rivers, and later the Second Emperor's Canal between the Chi'ing Tung and the Chan Lu tributary. As the Kaifeng Highway passes through the Imperial City, it becomes-the Lunghai Highway. This path is known as the Shattered Road, as it was destroyed during the Succession of T'u Lung in 2315. At the junction of the capital and the Shattered Road, the Tungpu Road runs southward into the jungle. The Silver Roads runs west along the upper Hungste and eventually enters Tabot.

The great rivers and canals are well dredged and traveled by all manner of craft. Sampans, riverboats, barges and rafts ply the waters freely. The roads are well maintained by convict labor, and the local bailiffs of each village are responsible for keeping them clear of brigands. There are no toll paths or waystations, and the roads are well marked and lined with many small villages.

Jade

The Shou excel in one craft above all others, and this is the carving of jade, a semi-precious stone found deep within the earth. Jade is normally a translucent green color, but also appears in red, white, bluish green and black There are two types of jade; mei-yu jade, or high jade of the finest quality, and yu jade of lesser quality. Both types are placed magically within the earth by the touch of Jade Ladies, elemental spirits who control the creation of all rare metals and gems.

While jade is found in other lands of Kara-Tur it is only in Shou Lung that the finest may be procured. This rare gem is then crafted and shaped into many forms—dragons, lions, birds, bamboo—and into many uses—pendants, earrings, statues, inkstamps and chess pieces, to name a few. Jade is highly valued as a trade item, particularly in the kingdoms of Wa and Kozakura. Those who carve jade are much respected, and are beloved of the Immortal Shu Chia, the Craftsman.

Science

While Shou Lung is a place of magic and sorcery, it is also a place of science and invention as well. Since earliest times, Shou physicians have known how to brew potions and powders for curing illnesses. Shou mathematicians have developed complex theories for the way in which the stars of Heaven are moved, and the mathematics to prove their beliefs.

Since the Li dynasty, the craftsmen of Shou Lung have discovered, lost and rediscovered the printing press at least five times. Each time, the new invention was used to print copies of classic Shou works, then fell into disuse after the demand slacked. However, under the farsighted influence of the Emperor Kai Chin, the printing press has once again been revived. New works, such as Tan Nong's immensely popular *Romance* of T'u Lung, are being printed and distributed, with the intention of creating a literature of popular culture. With moveable type and paper, it is possible that the printing press will not be lost again.

Likewise, Shou Lung has had paper, fireworks and artillery for several hundred years. Signal flares announce the start of battles. Rockets, cannon and mortars are commonly used by the armies of the Empire although they often bring more harm to friend than foe. Fireworks of many dazzling colors are exported all over Kara-Tur for celebrations.

The compass and sextant are also important inventions, used to chart the course of Shou ships throughout the Celestial Seas. The Shou have also developed the water clock, the treadmill-driven paddle boats, paper money, water pumps, the drill and the chair.

One of the most amazing new inventions of the Gathering of the Pearls is the hua hsiang chi, or glider. The story behind this is interesting. It appears that while visiting his relatives in Kao Shan, the Emperor saw a young man suspended high above the. mountains in a great silk kite. His interest caught, the Son of Heaven instructed his guard to bring the bold flier to him. "But this is a dangerous precedent," the mandarins protested. "Suppose someone uses a kite like this to drop great weights down upon our armies! This thing should be destroyed!" But the Emperor replied, "If it can be done, then someone else will recreate this kite, no matter what we do to its inventor! If great weights will be dropped, I am determined that we shall be the ones to do it!" The inventor was brought to the palace, where he was immediately proclaimed the chief of the Ministry of Glorious Flight. Since this time, he has built many great kites, some of which can fly without strings; much to Emperor Kai Chin's pleasure.

History

Elminster has asked me to relate to you the histories of my land. As a scholar, you obviously understand

that there are many ways of telling a story, and you will soon recognize discrepancies between the other histories I have enclosed and what I have written. It is an unfortunate tradition in my land that the Court Historians, at the start of each new reign, re-scribe the Official Histories to best show the new Emperor in his most flattering light. One of the most prevalent of these altered Histories is that of Wei Tsao Te, the Court Historian of the Kao Dynasty, whose two hundred volume work, the *Shichi Hsi,* is a masterpiece of fantasy and fiction, abounding with grey clad giants, flaming words in the sky, and demon emperors. Due to his long and prolific life, Wei Tsao's histories are now regarded as the standard by which other histories are measured. But as I have lived at least 900 more years than he has, I suspect my tellings of these tales will bear truer fruit.

Here then, are a sampling of the legends and histories of Shou Lung.

In the time when the worlds were newly formed, and burned like fire and smelled of hot steel, the Celestial One directed his many minions, the kami of place and stream, to walk the red earth and quell it's violence. All the while, he breathed his cool, misty breath over the land in the divine wind known as the kamikaze, to make the land a fit place to grow rice upon.

Soon, from the dust of the Red Earth, humans rose, but they were a quarrelsome and contentious lot, more beasts than men. The Celestial Emperor, ruler of the bureaucracy, believed this wrong, and desired that men should live in the Image of Heaven. And he set about to make the Will of Heaven clear to all by sending his emissaries to the lands below, each to teach one aspect of the True Path. These emissaries were the First Emperors of Shou Lung, and are known by legend as the Nine Immortals.

The immortals represent the nine cardinal virtues of the Path. As immortals, they may take any form they wish, but are commonly seen in two aspects— that of humans, of great beauty and power, and of nine great dragons which hold up the world and move all things by their thoughts. As the Celestial One sent these Nine Immortals into the lands of men, this is why the lands they went into are known as Shou Lung, or Receiver of the Dragon.

The Bravery Of Tan Chin

After seven prosperous years, rumors began to reach the Great Court of a new cult to the south, who worshiped the spirit of a great black leopard named Hei Te Pao. This cult spread terror throughout the peaceful rice lands of the Fenghsintsu, extorting rice and treasure from the Emperor's own officials, murdering all who opposed them in fiendish and terrible ways, and kidnapping innocents for use as sacrifices to it's bloody spirit-god. And in fury, the young emperor vowed to destroy this cult. Seven parties of heroes left seven times from the Imperial City to defeat the cults of Hei Te Pao, and not one returned.

It was from this that Tan Chin understood that the high Priest of the Black Leopard cult was a wu jen of mighty power, and that even his most skilled sorcerers and warriors could not strike him in his lair So Tan Chin undertook to find a way to himself bring the minions of Hei Te Pao to justice.

In the great libraries of the Imperial City, where all that is known is recorded, Tan Chin discovered an old legend which told of a great demon panther held in thrall by the ensorcelment of an ivory chain. He spoke of this to his blood brother, the poet wu jen Kar Wuan, and in secret, the two heroes rode to the south and the lair of the dark cult.

Now, when the two reached the deserted temple, they found evil Nan Kung Chi, priest of the Black Leopards, awaiting them. For with his mighty sorcery, nothing could hide from his eyes, even in the jungle. In his rage, Nan Kung Chi summoned his great black spirit cat to slay them. But Tan Chin recognized the ivory chain that held it within the sorcerer's power, and with a sweep of the spear Shan Tien, shattered the links. Unbound, the evil spirit turned upon it's tormentor and carried him shrieking off into the night. His remaining followers fled out to sea, led by the Second High Priest of the order, and were never seen again. So the Black Leopard Cult was defeated.

The Making of The Great Wall

Now, although Chien Fu had defeated the horse barbarians many years before, they were a stubborn people; wild like their desert homes and high tundras. And they swept down each year upon the helpless provinces of Chukei and Ma' Yuan, ravaging and killing as they wished. The border garrisons were often outnumbered, and to serve in the northern armies was as if to be given a death sentence.

"My empire is being bled dry," spoke Tan Chin to his best friend, the poet Kar Wuan one night. "If only there were a way to hold back the horsemen without this grevous price!" Now Kar Wuan also hated this bloodshed, and together, the two cleverly devised a way which to end it for all time.

In those days, there dwelt under the sea a great dragon, whose name was Pao Hu Jen, the Guardian. His length exceeded that of a thousand li, and his task was to guard the Jade Mirror of Shih. From his studies, Kar Wuan knew of this, and he also knew that the Jade Mirror had the power to turn life into stone and stone to life. He advised the young Emperor to join him, and together, they took sail one night, far out into the Celestial Sea to where Pao Hu was said to sleep.

With Kar Wuan's spells to aid them, they swam to the bottom of the ocean. Soon, they came upon the huge dragon, sleeping with his many coils wrapped around the stone pillars which hold up the land of Shou Lung from the sea. Between his paws, there rested the Jade Mirror. With craft and spells, they stole the mirror from Pao Hu.

Now, when the great dragon awoke and found the mirror gone, he rose to the surface of the sea in a fury. His breath scored the clouds with steam, and his bellow of anger rocked the heavens! But to his surprise, he found only the Emperor Tan Chin waiting for him, sitting fishing in his small boat. For Kar Wuan had already fled to Shou Lung with his sorcerous arts.

"Man Emperor!" roared the Dragon. "Have you seen

the thief who took my Mirror?" Tan Chin smiled. "Indeed I have," he replied. "He has gone westward, to the land of the horse barbarians, to sell your mirror to their great Khan. If you hurry, you will surely stop him!" And so the dragon rushed along the clouds to the west, his tremendous body stretching out for miles behind him.

When he reached the west, he found Kar Wuan standing on a high mountaintop, facing the north and the east. And as the dragon swept around in a great curve, to snatch off Kar Wuan's head with his claws, the clever wu jen raised the Magic Mirror to face him. Lightning crashed, and the dragon Pao Hu turned to stone! His huge body crashed to earth as if so many mighty bricks, stretching the length of many miles, and forming a huge wall over hill and plain! His one hundred spines became guardhouses, his great claws mighty fortresses, and his fanged mouth the tremendous gate which forbids entry to those who would enter Shou in anger. The horse barbarians could not go over his great stone body, and in rage, turned west to seek easier prey.

All this is, of course, true; I myself observed this. And this is why the great span that runs from the high Plateau to the great river of Chukei is known as the Great Dragon's Wall.

The Tale of Shin Ginsen and Shin Lu

Attend me now, for this is the tragedy! For the weak willed Sun Ma Chin could never seem to choose a wife from his many concubines. And, as the way of karma wrote events, two of his mistresses became pregnant by him. Both give birth within hours of each other, and both gave Sun Ma Chin sons. One was Shin Lu and the other Shin Ginsen.

Now Shin Lu and Shin Ginsen were both fair to look at, and both reached manhood as tall, powerful princes. And it would be a mistake to take the words of Wei Tsao, who describes Shin Ginsen as the more "malleable." Rather, it was that the advice of his courtiers ran along the same paths as his own. For while Shin Lu's mother was of the Wang, and thus gave to him the balanced measure and cool head of her people, Shin Ginsen's blood was that of the Hai Sea Lords, who are hot tempered and arrogant to a fault. It enraged him that his half brother might share his throne, and he began to plot in secret against him.

This is the way of it; Shin Lu at this time loved the lady Tien Shih, of noble birth and a member of the House of Ch'ing Tung. They would take long walks through the Imperial Gardens together, admiring the moon, the stars, and each other. Now Shin Ginsen knew of this, and he arranged a way to encompass his brother's death. Among his friends, Ginsen counted an ambassador to Wa, and this courtier had spoken to him of the feared assassins of the samurai peoples, the ninja. Indeed, two ninja were now counted among the ambassadors' personal retinue. For a small price; say, a provincial governorship, the ambassador was willing...

So it was that as Shin Lu walked with his love in the Imperial Gardens, the hired killers leapt from cover. Before the young Prince could draw sword, they were upon him. But for love of Shin Lu, his Lady Tien threw herself upon the ninja's weapon, saving the Prince. The famous Floating Blade of Shin Lu drank assassin's blood that night, but it was far too late.

Now when Ginsen came to the garden to "discover" his brother's body, he found instead a living Prince, covered with the blood of his dead love. At once, both knew the truth of it, and their hands flew to swords. There in the great open lawns of the Palace they fought, blades flashing silver and crimson in the moonlight, until the Floating Blade slashed Ginsen's face open from eye to jaw. In rage, Prince Ginsen drove his sword once through Prince Lu's chest, and fled into the night. His followers retreated with him, setting the City afire and leaving all within to die.

But Shin Lu did not die, and with the sorcerous arts of his White Chung wu jen, he was soon recovered in body, though not in soul. For a dark passion consumed him, and he hungered to have the Floating Blade drink his brother's blood. And so three years later, they faced each other, across a vast field and with two opposing hosts, at the place called the Plains of Dispute. Here, two mighty armies clashed in mortal combat, until the rivers ran with blood and forever after the grass grew red.

This was the Battle of the Crimson Wheat (2315) and by it's bloody end, the power of Shin Ginsen was broken. In rout, his forces fled to the South. To prevent Shin Lu's pursuit, the wu jen Kow Tang smote the Southern Road with his staff, and the road shattered from end to end. This is how the Shattered Road was created.

In sorrow, Shin Lu returned to the Capitol. He was crowned there as Emperor of the Kuo (or Nation) Dynasty. His first command was to offer Ginsen's rebellious supporters the Choice of Blades—to die at the Emperor's pleasure, or flee to the Southlands and join their deposed Prince. The Floating Blade never drank Ginsen's blood. And Shin Lu died alone after 70 years of rule, the name of his lost love Tien on his lips.

As for Prince Ginsen, he was crowned Emperor of the Lui (Green) Dynasty. The land he fled into was named T'u Lung, or Dragon of the Earth, and a new kingdom proclaimed. But cruelty and avarice ruled Ginsen's new empire, and soon destroyed him as well. Betwixt this, and two centuries of war between the Empires, the land of T'u Lung has become like it's founder—twisted, evil, and lost before Heaven.

The Gathering of Pearls

Now Dog followed Hare, and Owl followed Dog. These are the secret names of the Sixth, and Seventh Emperors Chin. But it is said that eight is the lucky number of prosperity, and so it is shown to be true. For by the eighth of the line, the blood of the hengeyokai had thinned, such that it is not even suspected today. And, as fortune has it, the son of Hsiao Chin was not raised at the Great Court. Instead, his mother fell to disagreement with the foolish Seventh Emperor, and fled with her infant son to her father's fief in far Kao Shan.

Here then, was the young Prince raised, among the honest and simple people of the mountains. He grew

tall and strong, a delight to his mother and the pride of his family. In the year of 2561, he ascended the Jade Throne, taking the name of Kai Tsao Shou, or He Who Rebuilds the Dragon.

In this time, his honest nature has reshaped all of Shou Lung. With his first official proclamation, he established the Gathering of the Pearls, creating many new ministries devoted to recovering what had been lost by the weak and foolish dynasties before him. He has commissoned great public works and revived the navy. The people have rice and the temples receive their prayers.

The Eighth Emperor Kai Chin is a man of strength, and admires heroes. So it is that he has called upon the brave of Shou Lung to serve the Empire in novel ways. Daring adventurers take his commission to explore the deserted cities and rid them of evil things. Old territories to the north and west are gathered again under his banner, as new general lead his armies. Even within the bureaucracy, there is a call for change, as the corrupt and the evil are cast down from office, and the wise and honorable raised in their places. For he is the Rebuilder, and in his strength and wisdom are the Empire's salvation.

Of The Empire Today

Truly then, this is an Enlightened Age. But in all things, there is Yin and Yang. While much has been accomplished in the name of Emperor Kai Chin, there is much, much more which needs doing. And there are still rumors and tales astir, any one of which is a tale in itself. Let me tell you of just a few of these.

In the Empire of T'u Lung, the Emperor grows restive. His wu jen counsel a great war with Shou Lung, while Kai Chin is still weak upon his throne. Spies infiltrate the Capital of Shou Lung and sorcery is in the streets.

The White ChEng Tao are in ascendancy. But the Black Ones are preparing to turn the wheel again. They have placed their agents within the Shou-ling priesthood, to stir up trouble and create religious foment.

The Shou-ling temples chafe under the rule of Emperor Kai Chin. He has commanded the corrupt among them to give up their rich palaces and monasteries. In addition, the Faith has been shattered by many new orders and rival sects, promoted by the unwise rule of its Head Priest.

The mandarinate contends with the Emperor's will on several accounts. He has, first of all, begun to emphasize the pursuits of science over those of tradition. The mandarinate believes that this will undermine their authority. He has also removed many powerful and corrupt officials from office, and they now plot against him.

There are rumors of a rebirth of the ancient Black Leopard Cult. This cult is located in T'u Lung, and centers around a great black leopard who speaks as a man. The spirit claims to be the new form of the evil Nan Kung Chi, once high priest of the cult.

The Court of Shou Lung is currently being visited by the poet Tan Hikao Nong, a wandering minstrel from the southlands. With his imposing height, heroic manner, and handsome face, he is often hailed as a "young Ch'en Hsiang come to Earth" (or so the court ladies say!) While the personage of Tan Nong is perhaps dangerous only to the hearts of women, his most recent song cycle is far more disturbing. For he sings of a "fictional" romance between a Prince of T'u Lung and a Princess of Shou, both incognito, who meet and fall in love when the Prince rescues the Lady from kidnappers. While most of the Court merely sighs in romantic bliss, the Imperial Family knows that several months ago, the Emperor's youngest daughter was kidnapped by enemies of the Jade Throne, and was rescued by a handsome young merchant captain...

The Giants in Grey (Chu Jen Yin)

The Giants in Grey are legendary creatures who appear just before the advent of a great tragedy. While they have not been seen in several generations, the Chu Jen Yin have warned of the Ivory Plague, the great Earthquake of 703, the crop blight of 980 and the birth of the brothers Shin Lu and Shin Ginsen. They are at least four meters high, dressed in the flowing leather robes of a sohei, and are grey in both costume and features.

The Headtaker (Pin Mo Nom)

The Headtaker is the name given to the legendary General Pin Mo Nom, who fought in the Wars of the Nobles (435-440). Pin Mo was infamous for his cruelty and barbarism. He often put entire cities to the sword, placing the heads of his victims on long red poles outside the city walls. For his evil deeds, Pin Mo was condemned by the Lords of Karma to wander eternally, seeking his own missing head (which was chopped off in 439).

Receivers of The Dragon: Selected NPCs of The Empire of Shou Lung

In my wanderings through the Empire, I have met many people, human and not. Each has a story to tell, and while these stories are small, I do not ignore them. For the wise man knows that the seeds of history begin this way, in small actions, the heroisms of simple people, and the way in which they resist the sweeping tides of the Universe. Attend me then! For these are only a few of the people of Shou.

In this section, you will meet just a few of the many people who inhabit the Empire of Shou Lung; the true Receivers of the Dragon. These NPCs are designed to appear almost anywhere within the Empire, and are general enough to reappear in new forms throughout any number of adventures. They are described in terms of *Oriental Adventures* character classes, although in Shou Lung they would be described by other names.

Huang Ch'ung

11th level Sohei
Dragon Monastery, Kao Te' Lung
Human male

Huang Ch'ung was born in the year of a great locust

plague. The famine was so great that his clan was split up and he was consecrated to the monastery. He did not ask to be a sohei, but in his opinion, it is not a bad life. He takes great pride in his skill with two-handed sword and glaive, and is known throughout the province. But Huang Ch'ung is bored most of the time, as there have been no great temple wars in some time, and being in the Capitol, his monastery is never attacked. He would welcome any chance for adventure at this point.

Hsiung Chi Kang

5th level Samurai
Young Noble & Secret Police Operative
N,L, Human male

Too handsome, very cocky, this young man appears quite likeable, but a little self impressed. He likes to flirt, strut, drink and gossip. Unbeknownst to others, he is also a lieutenant in the Imperial Secret Police, and will gladly drink and gossip with others while pumping them for information. Not that he wouldn't mind a little dalliance with an attractive member of an adventuring party!

Mei Li Mao

13th level Yakuza
N,N, Human female

This gracefully aging Dragon Lady owns the Imperial Phoenix restaurant in the capital city of Kuo Te' Lung. Many secret societies meet there, from the subversive poetry societies to criminal tongs. It is the place to see and be seen, frequented by nobles and students alike. It is also a refuge for deal-brokering, and any violence within is speedily (and lethally) dealt with. Mei Li is also a fence for very selective stolen goods, as well as a source of much gossip and Court intrigue.

Wan Tu Ma

18th level Barbarian
N,N, Human male

Originally from the steppes of Ma' Yuan, Wan is a weapon smith of some skill, an expert horseman, and dedicated bodyguard to his sometime romantic interest Mei Li Mao. Often to be found in the Imperial Phoenix restaurant in Kuo Te' Lung, he is surprisingly well spoken and will consider freelance work from time to time.

Sen Lin Hsao

3d level Shukenja
G,L, Korobokuru female

Sen Lin lives by herself in a small forest hut. She possesses a mantle of feathers and fur woven from all the animals of the forest, each of whom has contributed a small bit of hair or down. This is the Mantle of Forest Spirits, which allows her to ask guidance and omens from any creature of the forests. Sen is often consulted by the korobokuru about all matters from weddings to business ventures. She is also consulted by the spirit folk she meets in the forest.

Lien Hua Liang

1st level Samurai
G,L, Human female

Lien Hua is the only daughter of Lord Chen of the prestigious Lien Clan of Linshung. Her father's uncle was Minister of Public Works under the previous Emperor, and was loved for his kindness. HIs foresightedness provided for the building of many roads and granaries during his administration. Lien Hua is 15 and possessed of all the maidenly virtues, being beautiful, virtuous, respectful to her parents, obedient, devout and talented. Unfortunately, her father has assigned impossible tasks to all her suitors so that they may never win her away from him.

Hua Li Te

Abbot of the Pure Thought Monastery
20th level Monk
N,L, Human male

Still robust and vital in his 70's, an extraordinary six feet tall with thinning grey hair, this monk is head of the largest monastery in Arakin. Abbot Hua can still remember the days of religious wars, and his determination to avoid further conflict causes him to be very strict with monks and sohei who become involved in inter-order fights. Hua Li once instructed an inattentive pupil by hammering the teachings of the Path into the monastery walls with hand strikes! He can still beat anyone in the order, if not with raw power, then with cunning and skill.

Kuang Ming Ling

2d level Shukenja
G,C, Human female

Kuang is a wealthy merchant's daughter from Linshung, a man who hopes that his romantic, headstrong daughter's desire to become a shukenja will pass. However, she is firm in her goals and has undertaken a pilgrimage to a distant monastery. Her father has quietly sent along two korobokuru retainers to protect her during her quest for wisdom.

Hsiao Nan Tzu Wen

9th level Bushi
N,N, Korobokuru male

A retainer of the merchant Kao Ling, the generally affable bushi has been ordered to follow his master's wayward daughter Kuang Ming, protecting her. Hsaio is always quick to encourage any impulse she might have to visit inns, wine shops, and other purveyors of food and drink. He is especially proficient with the sectional staff and enjoys tackling "over-stuffed humans with clumsy swords."

Ling Yu Pao

7th level Bushi
N,N, Korobokuru male

Working for Kao Ling is the first well-paying bushi position that the "Weasel" has found. It is most important that he do well to keep his job. Whenever his little shukenja charge will allow it, he tries gently to steer her back to the safety of her father's home. Most of the time, this is the last thing she wishes to hear, so he is not well tolerated. A long suffering sort, he is profi-

cient in short sword and bow.

Yen Tsu Wang

Daughter of the Master of the Wang
Ho School of Kung Fu
8th level Kensai
G,L, Human female

Beautiful and well-trained by her Master father, Yen Tzu's sterling wit and spirited nature captured the young magistrate of Cham Fau's heart, despite her lack of political advantages. Yen's father, being an honorable man, is a strong supporter of the new magistrate, and the two get along well. Many of the Elders of the town give the young official more credence because he is well spoken of by Master Wang. Opinionated and clear thinking, she often her husband's best advisor and confidant.

Chen Ching Ch'ien

10th level Kensai
N,N, River spirit female

Chen Ching Ch'ien is a student at the Wang Ho school in Cham Fau. She is noted for an extremely calm and serene mind. Chen is capable of incredible feats of ki because of this focusing ability. Chen Ching Ch'ien is tied to the Hungste River itself, swimming in and meditating by it every morning. People believe that Ju Huo Wang, son of the Old Master, loves her for her great and serene beauty. However, she is put off by his fiery temper and angry ways.

Ju Huo Wang

12th level Kensai
G,L, Human male

The brother of An Ching Hua, he will inherit the Wang Ho school when his father steps down. Tall and wiry, he has a strong, spirited nature, as well as a formidable temper. His father counsels him that to master his temper is to master himself, but Ju Huo is unable to do this. He is particularly enraged by his sister An's decision to join star pupil Chien Jang in his self-imposed exile.

An Ching Wang

Wang Ho School
4th level Kensai
C,L, Human female

After her father was injured by his most promising pupil, An Ching followed her lover on his penitent wanderings. Originally torn by her decision, she was visited by a White Lady of Kwan Ying, who advised her to "follow her heart and things would work out." An Ching's older sister was recently married to the new magistrate of Cham Fau. In a family well known for lovely daughters, An Ching Wang is not only petite and charming, but a deadly fighter as well.

Chien Jang Liang

8th level Kensai
G,L, Human male

A year ago, this terribly gifted young martial artist was rewarded by the Master of the Wang Ho School with a secret technique—the Hands of Chan Cheng. Unfortunately, while practicing with his Master, he nearly killed him by mistake. Stricken with remorse, he has sworn to wander forever as an outcast, sleeping in the wilds and doing the most menial tasks in repentance. With very great persuasion, he will fight for a good cause, but refuses to teach anyone what he has learned. Devoted to his studies, he was not aware that the Master's daughter An Ching had fallen in love with him. She now follows Chien on his wanderings, seeking a way for him to redeem himself and satisfy his guilt.

Shou Chih Long

3d level Yakuza
N,N, Korobokuru male

Shou Chih is a cutpurse who is generally seen in the marketplace. He will not steal from other korobokuru, as he considers this dishonorable. Shou makes a good living as a thief for the 108 Society Tong, supplementing his income by occasionally acting as an informant for the Ministry of Security. He is also a part-time tour guide to the area, as the mood strikes him.

Yu Fu Fang

4th level Barbarian
N,N, Human male

Yu Fu lives in a small village along the Hungtse River. He fishes with trained cormorants, with silver rings around their throats. He also builds boats, but rarely for anyone other than his friends. His catch is the marvel of the local markets; fish of all types and sizes, including rare delicacies like deepwater eel. Little do they know that the little fisherman has a magic flute with which he can call fish to his boat!

Mei Kuei Chu

7th level Samurai
G,L, Bamboo spirit female

Mei Kuei is seeking desperately to save the honor of her clan. Three generations ago, her uncle killed a man who burned off a sacred bamboo grove, killing her aunt. For this action, her entire family was condemned by the local magistrate and forced to flee. Mei Kuei is seeking to prove that her aunt was murdered and that the charges against her uncle are unjustified.

Hu Tieh

16th level Monk
G,L, Spirit folk male

Hu Tieh is most misleading in appearance. A youngish-looking, bald-headed man in faded red robes, his shoulders are narrow and his hands soft. His voice is quiet, and he is too shy to look women in the eye. Yet Hu is a student of the Dragonfly style of kung fu—the ephemeral school which gives it's masters the powers of levitation and incredible speed. His spirit folk ancestry make this ki-oriented form second nature to his otherworldly appearance. Hu is currently seeking a master of his school to teach him the final rituals of the Dragonfly technique.

K'ai Hua Liu

9th level Bushi
G,L, Human female

For many generations now, the Liu Clan has had a running feud with the powerful Feng Su shipping clan

拔氣拂俛伏膚拔趺付腐郛弗伏拂俛伏膚拔趺付腐

of Cham Fau. K'ai protects the ships of the family fleet and spies on her rivals. Believing that the Feng Su are in league with the pirates of the Hungste, she is determined to gather proof, no matter what the cost.

YuYa Mao

9th level Bushi
G,C, Hengeyokai (cat) female

In human or in cat form, this woman is elegant and quick moving. Her temperament is curious and yet strangely aloof. The traveling guardian of many small villages, even the villagers she protects do not know her well, as she likes to end trouble quickly and move on. When YuYa spends any lengthy time among people, she prefers to appear as a stray Siamese cat, pulling devilish pranks and stealing fish. In human form, YuYa carries both long and short swords.

Hu

14th level bushi
G,N, Hengeyokai (tiger) male

An occasional companion of YuYa Mao, he is less often seen in human form, preferring to remain a huge tiger when he is seen at all. For Hu, night is his kingdom, when he can prowl the damp paths of the jungle silently. In human form, he is almost 6-foot-3 and heavily built—a man who moves silently and with great assurance. He speaks seldom, and always has a slight aura of menace about him. He is not all that fond of people, but will occasionally go out of his way to protect the weak if their cause interests him. In human form, he is skilled in two-handed sword and longbow (daikyu).

Nan Wu

19th level Wu Jen
N,N, Human male

After surviving many years of dangerous work and internal power struggles as wu jen to the powerful Tsui Tong, Nan Wu has retired to the comfortable life. He is content with his library of books, artifacts and notes. On rare occasions, his secret society employers drag him kicking and struggling out of his retirement for "one last task."

Items Of Interest

Floating Blade

The famous Floating Blade of Shin Lu is one of a matched pair of swords, forged on the day of the two half-brothers, (Shin Lu and Shin Ginsen) birth. The second sword is known as the Shimmering Blade of Shin Ginsen. Both weapons are *longswords +3* in the butterfly-tipped Shou style, and have the following powers: *vorpal blade, luck blade, illusion* and *charm* 3x per day. However, in the presence of the matching blade, the swords become mere +3 blades, unable to tap into their greater powers. The two blades are currently on display in the respective capitols of Shou and T'u Lung. The Floating Blade's alignment is G/L, the Shimmering Blade's is E/L.

The Book of Heaven

This massive four volume work, written by the sage Lao Chin-Mao, is a collection of rituals, customs, and edicts on how to live. It is the single most influential work in the voluminous literature of Shou Lung. *The Book of Heaven* postulates the concept of li, or the correct way of doing things. Chin Mao believed that in all things, the proper man should attempt to achieve lin, following a pattern of complex rituals which defined this state. Things which do not achieve lin are things which should not be done. Acts which encompass honor, truthfulness, nobility and sacrifice in the name of the ancestors are considered to have great li. A passage from the Book illustrates this well:

> The wise man knows that Heaven smiles upon that which is li. As Heaven is the source of all right, if you are with li, you will have the favor of heaven.

The principle of li is best illustrated by the following tale: The great general Po Wan once refused to attack his enemies while they struggled to prepare for battle. Instead, he allowed the opposing army to form itself into readiness before starting his own attack. He was, of course, soundly defeated. When his aides berated him for his foolishness, he replied, "The strong does not unfairly crush the weak, nor attack his enemy when he is unprepared." General Po Wan's enemy was so impressed by this show of li, that he summarily released the old general and had him escorted back to his home city.

The Histories

The Histories (or Shichi Hsi) are one of the classics which must be read by any scholar hoping to pass his examinations. They are a compendium of events and legends compiled by Wei Tsao Te, the Court Historian of the Kao Dynasty.

(Within the Histories, you will find an adequate enough record of Shou Lung. But you should be aware that the Histories suffer from constant rewriting as successive dynasties sought to hide or change facts to put themselves in a more favorable light. Much of the Histories is either vague, untrue, or sheer fantasy, such as the accounts of my home, the Impossible Palace. — Mei Lung)

(The Official accounts of the Histories are based on the historical timeline published in OA#3, *Ochimo, the Spirit Warrior.* DMs should be aware that the Histories are flawed, and that there are numerous events and background stories not commonly known to most Shou.)

The Ivory Chain of Pao

Known as the Demon Binder, the chain is a three meter length of finely linked ivory, each link a carved image of a man holding hands with the next man in line. The chain has the ability to bind any spirit to its service until one of the links is broken. When the spirit is freed, the chain magically reforges itself into a single length again.

The Demon Binder has been lost since the time of the Hai Dynasty, when it was carried by the Sixth Emperor in his conquest of Wa. It is assumed to have gone to the bottom of the sea, but rumor has it that

the gajin pilot Rourke brought it back to Shou Lung with the authorities.

Shan Tien (Lightning)

Shan Tien (Lightning) is the name of the famous spear of the hero Chung Hsin Te, who later passed it to the hands of the hero-emperor Tan Chin. (Lightning is considered to be a +4 artifact-level weapon, with the following powers; *teleportation* 3x per day, *break any weapon* 3x per day, *heal* 1x per day. The spear's alignment is G/L.) When Tan Chin became ensorcelled by the charms of Meilan, he was unable to use the spear. During the destruction of the First Kingdom, it was stolen from the Library of Kuo Meilan and has been missing ever since.

Stone Knights of Shih

Under the great dead city of Kuo Meilan, there lies a marvelous cavern. Within this vast space stand 10,000 men and horses, armored in the livery and weapons of the great Li Dynasty, frozen in stone. Legend has it that upon the destruction of Kuo Meilan, 10,000 of the Emperor Tan Chin's finest knights came to him, begging a way to serve him in the Empire's hour of need. Using the Mirror of Shih, which turns life to stone and stone to life, he turned them to statues, telling them; "Remember! When the Empire has greatest need of you, you will be ready to serve it well. For in this way, you will be eternally vigilant, eternally ready!"

(If revived each of the fabled Knights of Shih is a 10th level samurai, armored in full banded mail and carrying longsword and pike. Each knight is riding a fully barded warhorse. The knights can be brought to life only with the magic Jade Mirror of Shih, which has been missing since the fall of the Li Dynasty.)

Shen Shou (1572-1832)

Founder of the "sky to ground" pen school, the work of this famous painter is the model for most other styles in the Empire. There are 20 well-known pieces of his work, most in the Imperial Palace Galleries; however, there are at least seven missing works which collectors have sought for many years. The most famous of these is Lady Mei Ling Contemplates the Stream, worth an estimated 10,000 ch'ien.

The River Town of Cham Fau

Cham Fau is a typical river valley town of about 10,000 people, located along the Hungtse basin along the rice plain. The terrain itself is a river valley toward the north, passing between high cliffs, eventually widening into broad floodplains with islands and bluffs to either side.

Cham Fau is an excellent place in which to begin a Shou Lung campaign, as it is the model for literally hundreds of small towns within the Empire, filled with a variety of people, legends and stories. Each section of the overview presents a variety of rumors, plot complications, characters and subplots for designing adventures around. DMs can easily experiment with adding their own players to this "soap opera" of life in a typical Shou Lung township.

When we think of Cham Fau, we think of two towns. One is the Upper Town, a ring of high hills above the flood plain, where the wealthy and powerful dwell in their stately mansions and temples. Here, the streets are paved with stone and well-patrolled by the local magistrate's guards. Great arched gates face the street, usually covered with bronze representations of "lucky" signs, dragons and monsters, designed to scare away misfortune and evil spirits. On the highest hill is the Monastery of the Path, with it's imposing red lintel gates and golden shrines. Below is the local magistrate's house, with high white walls and rich wood trimmings.

Below, on the floodplain, amidst a chaos of bridges, canals, roadways and moored river sampans, dwell the common people; merchants, mendicants, peasants and thieves. The roads here are of hard packed earth and infrequently patrolled. During the spring floods and monsoons, they turn into morasses of mud. Between Huang Bay and the mainland, a great canal runs north to south, jammed with houseboats, sampans, rowboats and barges. Above this choked waterway, arch high wooden bridges painted bright red (the most lucky color) and covered in gold filigree and carved symbols.

To either side of the canal, the dirt streets are packed with a hodgepodge of houses, each with it's own high stone or brick wall, and tiled or thatched roof. Unlike the homes of lands such as Kozakura and Wa, with their light wood and paper walls, most Shou homes are made of sundried brick and stone—in fact, the biggest difference between a rich man's house and a peasant's hut is only the quality of these materials. The house consists of an outer stone wall, about 7 feet high, capped with a slanted tile roof, with the main living quarters built along one wall. In respect for the aspects of feng shui (or location magic), this main house (or then wu), usually is on the southernmost side of the wall. Other living areas of less importance are along the side walls. Because it is considered unlucky to face the west (where the Shou underworld is supposed to be), the front of the house will almost never face this direction. The four or more sides of the house face inward on open courtyards. The inner courtyard often contains an ornamental garden, or waterfalls and scenic ponds with koi carp. This is the courtyard for contemplative gatherings. The outer courtyard is often bricked, and has room for horses, pigs and chickens to run freely.

The rooms are usually raised about 2 feet above the central courtyards, often with space for storage under the house. In summer, the family pigs and goats find shelter here. In winter, the raised floors provide protection from flooding. The floor surfaces in an official's house are covered in fine woods from the southern jungles, while those in most homes are of packed dirt or brick, eliminating the crawlspace under the house.

The house of a Clan is normally referred to as a compound, for it is more fortress than building. It has many rooms for servants, children, adults and guests. The walls are high and thick—in times of trouble or insurrection, the Clan walls up the two entrances to

the compound and survives on its storehouses of food and water. The servants and family are mobilized to defend the walls, while children tend the chickens and other livestock which has been driven indoors for protection.

While the Kozakurans sleep on rolled mats on the floor, the people of Shou delight in building massive wood and iron bedsteads, oftentimes the sleeping quarters for an entire family (the younger sons sleep on the father's side of the bed, the younger daughters with their mother). These huge, ornate constructions are passed down through the family from clan head to clan head; in fact, a popular Shou comedy tells of a young couple scheming to do away with their in-laws so that they can take possession of the only comfortable bed in the house. The rest of the furniture is also of heavy hardwood, ornately carved with dragons, mythical beasts, and scenes from the legends and the histories known to every learned man. This type of furniture is common to almost all Shou households, even the poorest— only the number of pieces and the ornateness change from home to home.

Mok Tien, The Fisherman

Mok Tien is a typical resident of Cham Fau, the patriarch and head of the Mok clan. The Clan, like most in Shou Lung, consists of Mok and his wife, their grown up sons and their wives (who often live at home for some time before they are established enough to set up their own homes nearby), unmarried daughters, assorted grandchildren and grandparents, and various dogs, goats, pigs and other livestock.

There are almost a dozen members of the Mok clan currently living under one roof—an average-sized Shou family. As head of the Clan, Mok Tien's power is absolute, although, as in most families, his wife Leilan can be most vociferous in expressing her opinions. But this happens only in private. When addressing a senior member of the Clan, it is customary to bow and preface his or her name with "most honored," "Master" or "Mistress." Yet, between all this formality are little familiar touches—a husband and wife addressing each other fondly as "Old Lady" and "Old Man" in the privacy of their rooms, or venerable grandparents nicknaming their grandchildren by adding the diminutive "chan" to their given names.

A prosperous fisherman by trade, Mok Tien spends long hours casting his nets to catch eel, carp and other shallow water fish common in the Hungtse. Like most Shou, he rises before dawn, pulling on his working clothes of cotton trousers, loose over-jacket, and wide straw hat. He pauses before the family altar to say a brief prayer to the various household gods and burn a stick of joss for good fortune. He then joins his family for a breakfast of tea, rice, pickles and steamed pork buns, or bow. After breakfast, Mok and his four adult sons walk down through the maze of houses of the lower town to their fishing boat, the *Bright Flower of Heavenly Sunrise.*

The Bright Flower of Heavenly Sunrise

The *Bright flower* is atypical of most of the boats on the river, most of which are small, flatbottomed scows propelled by a single oar, mounted on the stern and vigorously pumped back and forth by the pilot. In his youth, Mok Tien fought in the northern campaigns and earned himself rank and some measure of wealth. This, he invested wisely in the *Bright Flower,* a 38-foot sampan with a covered central cabin, a mast and an open hold. In addition to fishing, Mok uses the *Bright Flower* to carry goods up and down the river on occasional trading trips, as well as renting the sampan out to prospective adventurers and officials who need to go downriver in a hurry.

Like many river dwellers, Mok Tien can be hired to convey adventurers from place to place. His fee is 1 tael per passenger per day, and double this if the charter will take the *Bright Flower* into dangerous territory (such as the Upper Hungtse or places where pirates have recently been spotted).

The *Bright Flower* is large enough to carry 10 passengers, or five passengers and horses. It is crewed by Mok Tien and his four sons, all of whom may be treated as if 3d level bushi. Characters should be careful not to anger Mok Tien with demands for charters, as he is quite likely to turn out the entire town against them!

Recently, Mok Tien has been harrassed by members of the powerful Feng Su Clan, who wish him to join their trade cartel. He has refused, but the offer has made him uneasy. Rumor has it that the Feng Su have allies among the river pirates. It would be easy enough for the *Bright Flower* to disappear one night on the river, to resurface further downstream with a new coat of paint. Mok Tien nervously tells his sons to watch the river for the first signs of trouble.

On The River

Most of the commerce of Cham Fau revolves around farming rice and fishing. By midday, most of the fishermen have brought in their purse nets, having set their larger nets in the current, to be picked up in the evening. The fishermen stick to the shore and avoid deep water—there are too many tales of river monsters to justify the risk. There is a long-standing legend of a huge river serpent that lives in the deepest part of the river, and several missing boats are attributed to his attacks. In addition, the dread Shih Jen Pirates have been attacking boats up and down the river. So far, the magistrate's guard has been unable to bring these brigands to justice.

In The Rice Fields

The rice farmers also have their own interests. Currently, most of the paddies in the town are controlled by two Clans—the Shen Clan, who own two large fields, and the Shuii Clan, who also own two large fields. The ambitious Shen have tried for many years to add the rich fields of their neighbors to their own properties, with little success. But rumor has it that a recent alliance with the Yellow Hand Tong threaten to change all this, by making the Shen an even more formidable force. The unallied farmers in the valley carefully watch over their shoulders, as the two great Clans maneuver for position. A battle seems inevitable.

The Inn of The Lucky Dragon

The Lucky Dragon Inn is the center of activity in Cham Fau. Before dawn, the fishermen stop in for breakfast, while travelers awake and prepare to move on. There is some discussion of events during the night, as members of the guard pass by. As the day passes, the fishermen pass through with their morning catch. Lin Po, the owner of the Lucky Dragon, buys the best of the catch for the afternoon meals, while his wife Lan-ying oversees the lunch crowd.

Lin Po has been fortunate in that he has three strong sons to help in the restaurant. However, he also has seven daughters—not quite as fortunate, in that he will be hard pressed to provide dowries for each of them! Lin Po's sons are currently studying at the Wang Ho school of kung fu, and one of them is about to take the examination for the Civil Service. Little does Lin Po know that his eldest daughter is also preparing for the examination, and has been studying kung fu with one of the young monks at the local monastery. The monk, Chen Tsao, is considering renouncing his vows and running away with the beautiful Mei-yuan, but as of yet, his love remains undeclared.

The Inn of the Lucky Dragon is the largest establishment in town, and provides meals as well as lodging. It is a three building compound—The largest section is the inn, with a stable to one side and the family quarters between. For 1 tael a night, one can purchase a private room and a three course dinner. For 10 yuan, a space in a 10 person communal room can be had, with rice, tea and pickles.

The Lucky Dragon is a safe place to spend the night; even in the communal sleeping rooms, there is little danger of theft. The surrounding area is well patrolled by the guard, and the Po family is always on the lookout for cutpurses and thieves among the clientele.

The Wang Ho School

Across the expanse of Huang Bay, the Master of the Wang Ho School anxiously awaits one of his students. Recently, there have been attacks on members of his school by unknown martial artists.

The fame of the Wang Ho school is well known throughout the Hungtse River valley, and there are many rival schools who oppose the Wangs. The annual Tournament at the Fortress of General Tsuo is a week away, and Master Wang suspects that his rivals plan to destroy the school before it can enter the competition.

Unknown to Master Wang, his most promising student, Kung Chin Lo, has been approached by the powerful Tsui Tong. When he refused their offers, the secret society kidnapped his sister to force him to cooperate. The Tsui have a great deal of money riding on the outcome of the upcoming tourney. Their man waits at the Inn of the Lucky Dragon for Kung Chin's answer. What he doesn't know is that the Kung has mobilized other members of the Wang School, and they are preparing to attack the Tsui kidnappers tonight.

The White Tiger Monastery

In the Great Temple, the monks practice with sai and tonfa, their ragged shouts echoing in the still air of late afternoon. Since dawn, they have been practicing thus, honing their skills. Tonight the Abbot Cho Fong has promised that the White Tiger Monks will strike at the Kwan Ying Temple. It is a fitting time, at the end of the Festival of Lanterns, to eradicate the rebellious monks from Cham Fau, and to forever establish the White Tiger Order in the Town. After all, are they not approved by the Department of Celestial Supervision itself? Have not the Immortals themselves appeared to their leader, telling him the place and time to strike?

From his vantage point in the vast graveyard of Upper Cham Fau, the wu jen Zo Chung smiles. Already, his illusions have convinced the gullible Shou-ling Abbot to wage war upon the priests of Kwan Ying. The resulting insurrection will force the magistrate to call out the guard and expel the White Tiger Order. Then Zo Chung can bring in his own candidates for the monastery; candidates he can control. Already, his webs of sorcery are accomplishing his evil designs.

The Fortress of General Tsuo

Behind the great stone walls of his fortress, General Tsuo smiles. Soon, the Shen Mei nobles will arrive, ostensibly to attend the great tournament held each year. The Shen Mei will secretly be bringing the Jade Mirror of Shih with them. Soon, the general will command a new army to challenge the Emperor-an army of stone, invincible and eternal: The Stone Army of Kuo Meilan.

In the meantime, he watches his champion, Chien Ying Lien, practice his katas in the great courtyard of the fortress. Chien Ying is a master of the Leopard school. Already he has defeated over 100 men. The general smiles. This time, he and his Grey Phoenix dojo will take the prize away from the upstart Master Wang.

The Magistrate's House

Li Sung Ming is the new magistrate in the area. Recently appointed, he is a clever young man of a noble family. The Cham Fau position is a very good posting for one so young, and he suspects that he has been placed here for reasons not immediately apparent. This bothers him considerably.

Li Sung's mentor in the bureaucracy is Tok Feng Lo, a powerful mandarin and Second Assistant to the Minister of State. Li Sung knows that a powerful mentor is not always an advantage—the student often inherits the enemies of his teacher. He suspects that Tok has used his influence to get Li Sung safely out of the way of a power struggle at Court. But assassins and sorcerers have a long reach.

But other things bother Li Sung more. Last night, he was visited by the writer T'an Chen, a secret agent of the Ministry of the Security of the Empire. T'an warned Li to watch for signs of secret meetings between members of the Shen Mei Clan, formidable noble enemies of the Emperor, and General Tsuo. And in the city, a conflict between the headstrong Abbot of the White Tiger Monastery and the Temple of Kwan Ying the Compassionate is about to explode into violence. In the last week, the guard has had to break up at least three fights between rival groups of monks.

Li Sung's new wife enters his writing room. She is the eldest daughter of the Master of Wang Ho school, and a skilled martial artist in her own right. She brings word to her husband that his wu jen has arrived for the Feast of Lanterns banquet. At last, thinks the harried Magistrate. Something is going right.

The Guard of Cham Fau

The Captain of the Magistrate's Guard shifts uneasily in his saddle. From his position at the edge of the upper city, he can observe all of lower Cham Fau below. He has been captain of the guard for over ten years, serving through three successive magistrates. His finely honed instincts tell him there will be trouble tonight. Not the usual Festival troubles of drunken fishermen and hotheaded young scholars getting into fights. He feels a storm brewing in every quarter of the town tonight, and he doesn't like it. He calls to his second in command. "Issue weapons tonight," he says quietly. "I want men in every section of town. Tell them to be ready for anything." The lieutenant nods and rides away. The captain still does not feel happy about this. He has only 20 men. And it will be a bad night.

The Map of Cham Fau

The Map of Cham Fau Upon this scroll, I have written the principal places of Cham Fau, their locations and their importance. These are:

1) Ting Shen Island. The Fortress home of General Kung Pao Tsuo, a famous general and confidant of the last emperor. Heavily guarded, the fortress is home to an immense art collection. Each year, General Tsuo holds a martial arts competition on the grounds of the fortress, inviting martial artists from all over Shou Lung.

2) Farm of Mo Shi Tam. Ostensibly, this is the home of the Tam clan, known for breeding fine steeds for the Emperor's One Thousand Horses. Only horses of a certain bloodline are used—all are black, with characteristic arched necks and a white star on the forehead. In addition, the Tam farm is the home of the Amada Tong, a powerful, criminal secret society

3) Min Fang Island. The estate of Lord Kai Mai Lin, a high lord of the mandarinate and father to the current Second Concubine, Pai Lin. The estate teems with many wild and rare animals brought there by Lord Lin, an avid hunter and conservationist. Min Fangs' isolated position makes it an excellent place for Court nobility to meet and plot in safety.

4) Bright Flower of Heavenly Sunrise. This is the main dock where the Flower is moored, the Mok family being prestigious enough to have it's own dock space. The two small outbuildings to the West are drying sheds for the Mok family's fish.

5) The Seven Sons Tavern. Named by the proprietess, Lin Mei, who has seven strapping sons, it is a wine shop, serving rice wine, plum brandy, and potstickers. The Seven Sons Tavern is a local meeting place for the young men of Cham Fau, particularly the students of the Wang Ho school and it's rival, the General's Grey Phoenix dojo on Ting Shen Island.

6) Mok Clan family compound.

7) The Lucky Dragon Inn. This is a large inn, catering to the river trade. It is open at at all hours, and is well known up and down the Hungtse for it's fine meals.

8) The Central Marketplace. This area is an open, brick-tiled space where local farmers and merchants set up stalls to sell wares. Around it are all the permanent shops of "downtown" Cham Fau.

9) T'ung Shen's Strong Steeds of Noble Birth Stable. Here horses may be purchased by travelers at a nominal price of 3 c'hien. It is rumored that T'ung Shen's stable sometimes features horses stolen from the farm of Mo Shi Tam, horse breeder of the Emperor's One Thousand Horses. But this has never been proven.

10) Master San Mei's House of Apothecary. Here, one may purchase potions, elixirs, rare herbs and other medicinal things. In addition, Master San stocks many supplies for spells and sorceries.

11) Lo Fan's Magnificent House of Weapons. An excellent place in which to purchase weapons of all types, including swords, daggers, polearms, armor and kung fu weapons.

12) Shou Mai Ting Restaurant. Specializing in Northern Cuisine from Chukei, including noodle based dishes. Cheaper than the Lucky Dragon Inn.

13) House of Fo Wok, the Tailor. Fo Wok is a skilled weaver and tailor' specializing in silk and embroidered work.

14) House of Chih Liao, the Physician. Trained in the arts and skills of the Court Physicians, Chih Liao is also a skilled shukenja (5th level).

16) Temple of Kwan Ying, Mistress of Compassion. A small temple administered to by monks of the unapproved Grey Cat sect. Occasional conflicts arise between these monks and the members of the Dragon sect of the nearby White Tiger monastery.

16) Mi Fa Teug's Ever Bountiful Emporium of Dried Goods and Traveler's Accessories. Here, the traveler can purchase food, traveling gear, and other needed supplies.

17) The Garrison House of the Cham Fau Guard. combining a magistrate's office, the jails, an armory and sleeping quarters for 20 guardsmen.

18) Wa Ko Inn. An inexpensive inn favored by less legitimate travelers visiting Cham Fau. The inn is also a meeting place for the Black Tiger secret society.

19) Compound of the Shen Clan. The Shens are major buyers and shippers of rice in the area, owning both fields adjacent to the warehouse. They are wealthy patrons of the Yellow Hand long.

20) Warehouse of the Shen Clan, used for Yellow Hand Tong meetings.

21) Warehouse of the Shen Clan, and secret dojo for practicing in the Yellow Hand kung fu style.

22) Feng Su Warehouses. Here are stored various grain and trade goods for the Feng Su Clans' cargo operations. Occasionally, the Feng Su have been known to take contraband or illegal cargoes, and it is here that these illicit things are stored. The Feng Su are suspected of having a secret alliance with the Shi Jen Pirates.

23) The Feng Su Compound. The Feng Su Clan owns a small fleet of five cargo ships similar to the *Bright Flower of Heavenly Sunrise.* However, they are primarily grain transporters, carrying the rice of the community eastwards to the markets of Wang Kuo and Hai Yuan. Their ships are docked at the Glorious Moon Flower Rising fish dock, which is the only berth large enough to accommodate all of them.

24) The Forest of Shen Hua. A deep and forbidding area, the forest is the home of the fabled Men of the Woods. The men (actually a mixture of men, women, spirit folk, hengeyokai and korobokuru), are an almost legendary band who defended the villages of the Hungste Valley against the evil and corrupt mandarins of the previous Emperor. The Men of the Woods have been pardoned by Emperor Kai Tsao Chin, but still remain in hiding.

25) The Compound of the Shuii Clan. The Shuii farm the two paddies adjacent to their property. Recently, they have been under pressure from the wealthy Shen Clan, who wish to add this land to their holdings. There have been several fights between sons of the two clans.

26) The Wang Ho School of Martial Arts. Home to the Empire-famed Wang Clan, masters of the Lightning Fist technique. For many years now, students of the Wang Ho School have won the annual tournament at the Fortress of General Tsuo.

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

27) The White Tiger Monastery. This temple is maintained by an approved order of Shou-ling monks, who maintain a retreat and a temple to Nung Chang, the god of farming. There are occasional battles between the monks and the unapproved "rebel" monks of the Temple of Kwan Ying. These monks study the Tiger style of kung fu.

28) The Compound of The Magistrate, Li Sung Ming. There are three sections to the house; the Main House, the Hall of Celebration, and the House of The Ever Welcome Guest.

29) Fu Te (wealthy) region of Cham Fau. This neighborhood is home to the majority of wealthy and titled people of Cham Fau.

30) The Compound of the Tai Jen Clan. The Tai Jen are, for some mysterious reason, favored by a great Kirin, who visits the farm regularly. The Tai Jen have a beautiful daughter of marriageable age—perhaps the reason is not so mysterious after all.

31) The House of Zo Chung Kao, wu jen advisor to the Magistrate. Unbeknownst to the magistrate, Zo Chung is a Black Chung Tao. He hopes to increase the importance of Cham Fau, creating a haven for the nobility and a possible power base for rebellion. Zo Chung lives near the graveyard, and often summons spirits there.

32) House of T'an Chen. Ostensibly a scholar and writer of court fiction, whose works are much in demand at Court, T'an Chen is actually an agent of the Ministry of Security of the Imperial State, whose task is to maintain a watch on possible subversives such as General Tsuo, Lord Kai Mai Lin and the various secret societies known to operate in the region.

33) House of To Sheng Li. To Sheng is a professional bodyguard of high reputation, despite the fact that he is korobokuru. He will often hire out as a personal guard to travelers along the river.

34) Tz' Wei Grove. This grove is in the midst of the Weng Tam Clan rice paddy. It is a midnight rendezvous for lovers from the Fu Te section of town. At the center of the grove is a small shrine to Kwan Ying, maintained by the hermit Lan To Te.

35) The House of Hermit Lan To Te. Lan To appears to be a crazy old hermit who lives out on the furthest edge of the town. In reality, he is the White Chung shukenja Tao Lan, spiritual guardian of Cham Fau.

36) The House of Tang Hai Tao. The Tang Clan are reputed to be simple fishermen of rough ways. In reality, their compound is the base of the dread Shih Jen Pirates, who prey on shipping throughout the Middle Hungtse.

37) Compound of the Yen Chow Clan. The Yen Chow are a loose clan of farming families who are producers and weavers of silk.

38)Glorious Moon Flower Rising Fish Dock. This is the equivalent of the town docks, built under the direction of the magistrate to comply with orders of The Most Farsighted Department of Public Constructions and Civil Works. This is where all public shipping is berthed.

39) Mu Pei Cemetery. The official cemetery of Upper Cham Fau, it is known for mysterious hauntings and a demon woman-creature called the Lover of Shin Mei.

40) Twelve Serpent Deep. The deepest part of the river, this area is rumored to be the home of a vast monster, possibly a river dragon, which has, on several occasions, swallowed up ships without a trace.

T'u Lung

"T'u Lung, the wild and mysterious rebels of the south, seeped in arcane magics and full of the savage nonsense that leads men into their wars. T'u Lung has been at war since it broke away from Shou, almost 300 years! If not with our powerful legions, then with the warring states farther south, jungle barbarians or itself. I have traveled through this land and seen the abandoned cities cursed and destroyed by wars and evil magic. Yet, the people endure, and new cities are built on the ashes of the old.

I have known many from T'u Lung, but Tan Hikao Nong the Balladeer is my favorite. He is an excellent storyteller, and full of all types of useful information. I originally saw him perform in Karatin, and realized he was using magic to influence the audience, but he had talent and his voice was strong. Then I saw him at the reception for the marriage of Sung Tsi, and he sang The Three Lords' Romance. Some of the audience was moved to tears, it was so compelling. I became interested in Tan Hikao Nong that evening. Later, when I heard school-children chanting a bit of his songs, or overheard a young women who hummed passages from "The Romance," I realized he had a rare gift, and so I sought him out.

Traveling with Ambassador Hing Ti Chin as advisor and observer, I first met Nong in Shang Stzi in the heart of T'u Lung. He later visited me in my apartments in the Imperial City, and I have watched his performances many times. Over the years, our mutual love of histories and knowledge has made us fast friends. This touring minstrel has returned to Shou Lung many times, and his epic ballads and lighthearted melodies are part of the current popular culture of both our lands. We spent a week together in Wafang, and what follows is excerpts of our correspondence, Nong's thoughts, stories and teachings about T'u Lung. There's a few things I've discovered about Tan Hikao Nong that he will not discuss himself-the fact that he has lived 145 years, yet still looks the human age of a robust 45 is one, and his childhood is another. Since I was very interested, I used my powers over time to observe his early life.

Of course, Nong will never mention his past, as these memories are painful. He does explain his life with Fargh Choi, so I'll leave that to him. Much of what he relates is truth and that is why I chose him to tell you of the rebel south. Here are the words of the famous Balladeer of T'u Lung, Tan Hiko Nong:

The Land

"Come, ye multitudes, listen to all my words. It is not I, the Little Child, who dare to undertake a rebellious enterprise; Heaven has given the charge to destroy the enemy for his many crimes against ye, the people. The Wonders of Kara-Tur reside in the heart of T'u, the richest culture and true divine Dynasty. The peoples of the world are pale in comparison, art is decadent and ill-inspired and magic is weak and impermanent. T'u is the Might of the South, the bastion of truth and freedom, the chosen arm of the celestial bureaucracy on Kara-Tur. We must never forget this fact. Hold our banners high! This is T'u Lung!"
–Wai Chu Doang, the fifth Emperor of the Lui Dynasty speaking to his troops before the ill-fated Battle of Tan.

"The South holds many of the wonders of Shou, and while maligned and discredited, it lies like a sleeping dragon, awaiting the signal to rise like the sun."
–Wei Tsao Te, Court Historian of Kao Dynasty, in "Shichi Hsi," the 200 volume "False Histories" of Shou

I have traveled the length of my homeland and visited its most famous and obscure villages, cities and monuments, so I will tell you of the varied places and the colorful people that make up my T'u Lung.

Cities

Balanzia

From its birth in 1672 to its destruction in 2403, Balanzia was the biggest port city in all of the southlands. Its reputation was built on its easy access to Zastrasai Bay and the Straits of Va'shung, its great sea wall and its magnificent towers. For many years this city was the heart of the south, where the Emperor of Shou sent his fleets and merchants to search for the most exotic gifts and wares. Sailors from all of Kara-Tur called this port their home, and it was common to see all nationalities here, from wild southern jungle men to Cold Koryoans and the legions of Wa (Kozakura was not known to exist at this time). Raw jade and magic woods, pottery and ceramics, brass and iron and hardened steels, all were brought to Balanzia to trade, for the best prices were to be negotiated here.

The people of Balanzia grew arrogant and powerful, ignoring the challenges of other cities, states or emperors. And for many years their pride was justified, as no power could breech their great sea wall or conquer their militia and navies. These foolish people began to compare their city to the Palaces of the Celestial Heavens, and huge civic projects were begun to enrich the wide streets and squares with fancy murals and statues, and multi-colored banners and tapestries were hung from the houses. Balanzia became the most beautiful city in Kara-Tur.

In 2368 a wandering wiseman named Loarru the Just came to Balanzia, and in the center of the town he had a vision of the mighty city's fall. The walls would be breached by many battles, and when they fell for the sixth time, the pride of this city would turn to madness. The Celestial Heavens would punish the people for their arrogance, and their beauty would be turned to insanity. For years this wiseman wandered the streets of this town preaching his message of death and destruction, but his cries went unheeded.

T'u Lung was at war with Shou again, and numerous battles raged on the Plains of Blood. In the year 2397, the north wall of Balanzia was breached for the very first time, though it was repaired and the city staved off invasion. The next year it happened again,

but once again the city's defenses held firm against the enemy In the year 2400 the Gate of Shuza was collapsed and two months later the great sea wall was overcome by a pirate gang. After the thieves had been routed, many of the people remembered the prophecy of Loarru the Just, and some began to leave the port city. Again, the north wall fell to the warriors of Shou in 2402, and after a huge and bloody battle, the city barely turned away the waves of invaders! The proud inhabitants of Balanzia began to fear the words of Loarru, and refugees sailed away to the safer lands of Ausa and Wai.

In 2403 the great wu jen Moia Chun used a mighty elemental to bring the north wall tumbling down, and the fearful warriors of Balanzia broke rank and fled for the sea. The people went insane with fear and thousands were killed or trampled as they tore down the great sea wall to escape the encroaching armies of Shou Lung. Men ran mad in the streets and monstrous fires swept through Balanzia. In less than a month, the city was deserted, haunted by ghosts and evil spirits, and it is avoided to this day!

I was given these maps of old and current Balanzia by a shukenja named Doraxo Bwen. The places he has marked in his key to the old city he swears still stand today, although his reports may not be reliable.

Key to Old Balanzia, circa 2310

1. The shipyards of the master wright Pokan
2. The docks of Balanzia
3. The castle of E'tuing clan, lords of Balanzia
4. The mansion of Wai Udo Chung, cousin to the Emperor of T'u Lung
5. The compound of the Ty clan
6. The towers of Angu Riz the wu jen and seer
7. The great mansion of the merchant Rhot Chu Asivna
8. The house of the moneychanger, Keno
9. The shop of Tugudo the Lance-maker
10. The military school of Wan Tonki
11. The Cotnui park and zoo
12. The Temple of the East
13. The warehouses and. homes of Xu
14. The house of Zittra the Witch
15. The observatory of Minkra the Sage
16. The Yellow Magpie Inn
17. The great sea tower of Horsa the Warrior
18. The market
19. The Fendo clan house
20. The library of Ont the Wise
21. The yards of Yekolda the blacksmith
22. The White Dog Inn
23. The Bonaku Boarding House
24. The Wachuni clan house
25. Nendra the Wu Jen's home and tower
26. The Cantun clan house
27. Captain Onakoo Wee's home
28. The merchant Zia'ui Denti's house
29. The Gate of Hang'to
30. The Gate of Shuza
31. The Gate of Benchu
32. The Great Sea Wall
33. The Left Sea Tower of Balanzia, housing the magic bowl of Tru Jakee
34. The E'nnuka Suindu Inn
35. The yards of Gheta Xax, the merchant of Tabot
36. The yards and storehouse of the Bahn clan
37. The mansion of Pudda the Strong

The Village of Anechu

This is one of my favorite spots. Anechu is run by a righteous man named Ho Kui Dung, an honest and trustworthy member of the great Ho clan. His village is prosperous, and the people are happy. There is an inn there called the Hearth Warmth which serves the finest food in all T'u Lung. The local temple has a golden statue of Ju Shou, the West, and I often make offerings at this altar, since Ju Shou has helped me in the past.

Ha'chou

On the northwest edge of the Hills of Quai lies the grand city Ha'chou, home of the master Nift of the Silver Eye. This great sage is the keeper of the *Books of the Nanking,* a chronicle of magic study by famous wu jens of Ha'chou. There are 11 volumes by 19 esteemed contributors. Nift has one false eye made of silver and he is a tall, thin old man. He allows only one man entrance to his libraries for consultation, and it is not uncommon for a line of interested scholars and seekers to stand outside his door awaiting their chance at the volumes.

Ha'chou has 25 towers, each painted a different color and flying the city's banner, a blood red field with silhouettes of three birds of prey: the owl, the hawk, and the blue-crested kestrel. Its streets are wide and well kept, which is because of the Gahn clan's rule, a strict and powerful government with hundreds of guards, officers, and informants throughout the city.

The Village and Temple of Lai Sao

On the banks of the wide Fenghsintzu River, about midway between the cities of Zun Hi and Shosun, lies the little village of Lai Sao and its famous temple. The village is ruled by the Hinto clan, who have controlled this area for four generations and have connections with yakuza. It is a loose government, and vagrants come and go with ease through its main gates.

The temple is north of the village on the Broken Road. This is the spot where General Damar of Shou was blinded by the shukenja Joki Lam, thus ending his invasion and attempt to seize the capital city, Wai. The two fought for hours in personal combat, with the general finally killing the holyman before the altar, but permanently blinded by the wiseman's curse. The blind general was forced to retreat and was unable to take the capital. A monument to the holyman was erected in the courtyard of the temple, and many men aspire to the bravery of Joki Lam. The Emperor himself attended Joki's funeral and proclaimed him a hero of the realm. Some believe his ghost will council brave and honest supplicants to the Temple of Lai Sao, and so pilgrimages to this temple are common.

Ausa

This mighty port is famous for its 15 wharfs, each named for a different god. The Ho clan is still the most powerful force in Ausa, but the merchant marine, under the leadership of the "Four Sea-lions," controls a large section of the city and its people. The four men who control the port and its trade are seldom seen and have walled off their mansions within the greater walls of Ausa. There is a natural spring in the market square in the center of the city, and it provides water for the entire population. The shrines of Sokeng and So'wanu are beautiful gold-leafed and domed pagodas and are open to the public, but filled with watchful sohei. Criminals of all sorts are ferried to the prison-town called Zawqun's Landing where they are forced into heavy labor mining the limestone slabs that form a primary building supply for Ausa's expansions and make a good export as well!

Off the east coast of Ausa is the Xifung Reef, a curse to navigators and the grave of many ships and seasoned sailors. There are rumors of a witch named Helgara Twi who haunts this reef and lures sailors to their dooms, and stories of a ghostly ferry-man who saves drowning men, only to dine upon them! Every year we hear stories of brave adventurers who return rich from reef salvage, but that is not the rule—most disappear and are never heard of again.

Wai, formerly "Chia Wan Ch'uan"

The city of Eleven Gates and Nine Great Walls is a series of fortresses and suburbs stretching from the Old City, founded in 469, all the way to the Dakarazu Palace Compound in the north. It encloses two very large parks, the Nwekasu Walk and the Do Chi Botanical Gardens, with its attendant school of philosopher-naturalists. The city has overbuilt itself, arching new highways over the roofs of squalid slums and erecting new buildings above, clearly stratifying the actual buildings as well as the classes. Certain grade status allows one access to "higher" parts and more influential sections of the capital city.

The streets are crowded and the lower levels are in perpetual squalor, but in contrast, the clan mansions and Dakarazu Palace are the most splendid buildings in all T'u! Their towers and minarets rise gracefully into the skies, and their domes sparkle with gold leaf and silver. Green copper dragons adorn every rooftop and elaborate trolleys and elevators link the city's parts. Ivory balconies wrap the sides of the palace, and jeweled chimes tinkle in the breeze. The current Emperor enjoys caged birds, so a thousand gilded cages with birds of all descriptions hang from balconies and windows, chattering and singing. The Palace is so large it can house 1,500 guests for one event, and often less important guests are kept in the village of Donu s'ai, miles to the south where they won't be annoying.

Even as beautiful and cultured as Wai appears, it is all a mask for the plotting and scheming that is rampant in our capital. It is unwise to enter this city without powerful allies, or a most important reason, for often bystanders are drawn into bad situations not of their liking. I have lost two friends to the political intrigue of Wai, and a third rots in the Emperor's dungeons for crimes he did not commit. Heed my words and steer clear of Wai.

Places Of Interest

E'do Formal Gardens

The sublime E'do formal gardens are north of Chempka on the road to Chunming, and have been the scene of many historic visions and events, like the prophecies of Jaki Wan before the bell of Sandor, or the murder of Wai Finto Hu, the cousin of our emperor, in the Maze of Torlak Zo. Wai's treaty of peace with Ausa was signed here, and the "Hostage's Revolt" was centered in the main pagoda of E'do. Here is a map of these famous gardens, given to me by the monk Sintan who tends E'do. Often the first gate is crowded with supplicants and seekers of knowledge, but few venture into the hanging gardens or stop to contemplate the wandering trees or the elms of the mighty wu jen. The final shrine stands in a grove that never needs tending, and seldom do men chance the madness that comes with the arcane visions it bestows, so the grove stands always empty and still. The gardens are the ultimate tranquility in all of T'u.

Key To E'do Formal Gardens

1. The Ganji Gate, or Gate of Dawn's Rays
2. Eleven bonzai junipers, gifts from the Kozakuran court
3. The Bell Tower of Sandor
4. The Gate of Lenn
5. The maze of Torlak Zo
6. The great brass pyramid of Yo'un
7. The Magical Gate of Fa
8. The statue of Minchu the Horrible
9. The Golden Globe of Forgetfulness
10. The E'do pagoda
11. Concave wading pool with obsidian tiles, drain in center forming Yin
12. Convex wading pool with white opal tiles, fountain in center forming Yang
13. The War Shrine of Pendax, under the hanging gardens
14. The three elms of the wu jen Choi'ax
15. The Mas'zing Gate and the Field of Wandering Trees
16. The Shrine of the Holy Balance
17. The Temple of Absolute Knowledge

The Flooded City, Ca'hong Chwi

When Shou originally built the Broken Road, it ended at the gates of a mighty city called Ca'hong Chwi. This massive fortress and walled town sat on the edge of the wild Henai River, and it was filled with loyal men of Shou, who never allowed the men of the south to have status in Ca'hong Chwi. It became a hated symbol of the northern Emperor's power and domination. It was this way for hundreds of years and the people of the south sought revenge against the haughty "shih" who held Ca'hong Chwi.

When the south revolted, the people of Ca'hong

Chwi remained loyal to Shou and the Hodo'ung Cha garrison sent troops and began a siege of the city. The forces were equally matched and the siege lasted for months. It began to look as if the walls of Ca'hong Chwi would never fall, then the hero Wantu Fang had a marvelous idea. He asked the garrison to aid him in a civic project north of the sieged city. The proud Shou sympathizers in Ca'hong Chwi celebrated as the attacking armies marched away, but soon their victory cries faded to weeping!

Wantu Fang had commissioned the garrison forces and all the local people to build the S'tuni Dam, and soon the water was rising and flooding the magnificent city of Ca'hong Chwi! It took four months to complete, but soon the entire city was flooded, and the area was irrigated into one of the most prosperous districts in all T'u Lung. The people of Ca'hong Chwi were caught and executed, and all that remains of the city are five towers that still rise out of the center of Sin Bukai Lake. There are only rumors now, of the ghost of the lake that wanders from tower to tower in the moonlight, and of fantastic treasures left behind in the flooded city.

The Three Sisters: Nipo, Jeukung and Awana

The three large islands north of the Joi Chang Peninsula are called Nipo, Jeukung and Awana, and they are territories disputed with Shou Lung. Of the three, Jeukung is the most coveted, a wooded isle with a famous trading port. It is ruled by Bhu'en Raw the Sealord, captain of a fleet of 26 vessels, and highly connected with the local yakuza. Some believe he is a member of the long Ch'an, a secret society of ninja, but this is only gossip.

Nipo is the smallest island and is the home of hermits and flocks of seabirds. At one time this small windswept rock was used as a coventry for criminals and wu jens convicted of evil against mankind. Awana is the most eastern isle, and it is known for its magic plant, the awana herb, a spice that only grows in this wild land. To collect the awana spice is a dangerous task, since the island is filled with unholy cannibals and terrible monsters, but the plant is worth its weight in jewels, for it cures many illnesses and can be used to extend life.

T'hai Salt Flats

An ancient salt lake once filled this land, but deep underground upheavals resulted in the water draining away, leaving a desolate and parched tract of salty soil where no green plants take root. Strange boulders and sand dunes shape the land here, and it is an evil place. The only man who is known to live there is the evil wu jen Utwa So, the master of the "salt-zombies," undead monsters he has created from the helpless peasants and adventurers who wander into his domains. Utwa So has sent his monsters against the villages of Hojuro and Tran, and his name is feared in those places. The T'hai is a place to be avoided.

The Yengso Rocks

Standing pillars, carved by the wind and time into fantastic and almost impossible shapes, are the natural monument we call the Rocks of Yengso. There are exactly 124 of these natural pillars, crowded together and standing about 70 feet high. This is a holy place, frequented by shukenja and monks in need of contemplation. It is said that the fifth emperor of the Lui Dynasty, Wai Chu Doang, used to come to these stones and contemplate his problems in their shadows. Some people believe they whisper truths to those who can sit long enough to gain understanding, and that these towering rocks were once a mighty army that dared to challenge the Celestial Heavens and were turned to stone by the gods, wrath.

The Ruins Of T'u Lung

Many of our cities have been overrun by armies, torn down by barbarians or sacked by brothers caught in a civil war, and their ruins fill our lands. It is very common to come across the burned out remains of a homestead or a dilapidated fortress abandoned in the wilds. This is a part of T'u Lung, the reminder of its discordant past. The people of T'u Lung have migrated from place to place, sometimes returning to the scene of a battle to rebuild, other times avoiding the torn field of conflict.

Most of the larger abandoned places have a powerful curse or dweomer cast upon them, so rich cities like Balanzia and Old Kaji-man lie undisturbed for generations. The smaller places, such as Quenche, I'kuni Wanta, Kahgang Su, Miska and Tan, have retained their name through history, and maybe a ghost or two. Most of the deserted villages and houses are nameless, and they are the occasional waystation for bandits, vagrants and the lost. It is a dangerous habit to frequent these eerie places, especially at night, and I recommend staying with popular inns and roads well traveled!

The Okan'ing School

The Okan'ing School of the village Ventrax teaches the art of the illusion, and only takes students with aptitude. The masters have been responsible for mighty magic illusions in time of war. Once they made the entire village of Ventrax disappear for a fortnight.

The Fenghsintzu Riven

The Fenghsintzu River is called by many names; "the Great Snake," "Water Father," "The Liquid Spirit," and "Heart-road" are just a few. It is the original method of travel in the south and many barges still slide past its banks. It is infested with crocodiles and water buffalo, and in the far south there are water serpents that can sink a 40-foot barge. Boats, rafts and canoes are available in any river town along its winding course.

I'wa Geyser

The I'wa Geyser ejects boiling sulfur water every three hours and it is the scene of three shrines and an ancient outdoor altar of some prehistoric Kio Ton Mu (witchdoctor). Pilgrims wander to this spot for the yearly Cleansing Festival, to bathe in the collected waters of the geyser. They believe it extends their life,

祓氟紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

although no evidence exists that this is true.

Government and Politics

"The image is of Decrease, the lake beneath the mountain. The water is evaporating, thus dropping its level and benefiting the mount. The rock symbolizes stubborn silence and the lake is careless joy. In this way, the superior man learns to govern his temper and stubborn angers, also restrains the wild moods that possess the mind, impulsive instincts."

– Hsao Chronicles, Hu Ling Do.

T'u lung is divided into six provinces, each administered by a hereditary governor. The provinces are divided into districts and official positions are assigned on the basis of family and graft. There are 28 districts total, and about 45 powerful noble families in T'u Lung. The Lui Dynasty has never been able to break the power of the nobles. Currently, they control the examination system and have arranged for various offices to become hereditary. These powerful clans have exempted themselves from Imperial edicts, and ignore the tax levies. The Emperor can enforce his will only with a majority of consenting noble families behind him.

Each provincial governor sets up his district bureaucracy in his own fashion, yet certain elements are the same in all. The district officer is a sheriff and chief accountant, and he rules two divisions, the military office and the public welfare office. The military includes the samurai and bushi police force, as well as any standing armies assigned to the district, and in some districts, the spies and assassins, too. The Public Welfare Office is usually overstaffed, divided into a plethora of ministries, from Housing to Hearth Inspection, from Spirit-catchers to Laundry, and most of these ministers and their staffs do no actual work! Of course, they're usually related to the provincial. governor or some noble family to gain the position initially! Delays are notoriously long, apathy is prevalent and the system is very frustrating to honest peasants.

Local districts, small villages and towns, are controlled by officers who are randomly selected from the population each year and must provide their services for free. Districts are referred to as townships. Often, the less prestigious positions cause financial burdens to the chosen families and one mistake could result in the death of the 'volunteer,' so these positions are not coveted and some avoided.

This is how it is supposed to be done: each family is separated into a grade according to wealth, first the richest in the sector and tenth the poorest. Township leaders (li-cheng) are chosen only from the first grade and they report directly to the provincial governor, and household chiefs (hu-chang) come from the second grade and report to the township officer. These positions are in charge of tax collection, and they are expected to make up uncollected tax from their own pockets! Elders (Ch'i-chang) come from all grades and are allowed advisory status only. Stalwart men (chuang-ting) come from the third through fifth grades and supply the local militia of sheriffs and bowmen. The supply masters (ya-ch'ien) and scribes (hsing shu-shou) are chosen from the sixth and seventh-grades and are often hanged for lost inventory or incorrect totals! The eighth and ninth grades are called upon to provide messengers who may have to run hundreds of miles to deliver an imperial edict! The lowest grade is comprised of the homeless, the beggars, the vagrants and the wandering priests, all considered unfit for office and despised by higher officials.

Of course, the actual selection for these posts is in no way random! It is very difficult for common men and 'shih' to move into government positions, unless they excel in a battle or show extreme bravery and skill as not to go unrewarded by a superior man. The people have no recourse with the crooked officials and courts, so they are easily oppressed.

Corruption of official posts is one of our biggest problems in T'u Lung, and many are involved in the courtly intrigues and secrets. Many of the nobles lead secret cults who swear to overthrow the Wai Empire. Another problem we have is inept people impressed into official positions, leaving us with bully-sheriffs and stalwart men with no morals, education or convictions! Contrast that with the well-trained officers of Shou!

The public works built by Shou Lung have run into disrepair, and neither the Emperor nor the nobles can take time away from their fighting to improve the lot of the T'u. "King Wai's Canals" run haphazardly, and are choked with reeds and mud, and the S'tuni Dam is leaky. Many roads and trails are choked with weeds and thickets, allowing ample hiding places for wild beasts and still wilder men. Bandits, murderers and monsters infest all but the biggest of highways.

It seems the biggest pastime in the cities is political plotting. Assassination is often the best way to improve position and wealth. Because of this, many criminal families and evil black brotherhoods of death are found in T'u Lung; some even control entire villages and wards of large cities. I have performed for these clans, and their code of honor is as strong as the samurai's. These yakuza have become rivals of the nobility and sometimes support the Emperor in his power struggles for favors and secret pacts.

The Provinces Of T'u Lung

"The superior man separates and defines his existence into manageable parts, assigning life and fate his correct and true position. Thus we are confronted with the Image of Limit, the brim-full lake under the sky."

– Hsao Chronicles, Hu Ling Do.

Currently, T'u Lung is divided into six provinces and 28 districts or "townships." Each province has been controlled by a clan for generations, but the district leaders have changed at the whims of these nobles. Size and shapes of the districts also change frequently as one commander is rewarded and another is punished by the Emperor or provincial governor. The following list outlines the provinces and political situations as they are in 2607.

Joi Chang Peninsula

The Joi Chang Peninsula Province, including the Blood Plains and all lands north of the Mokan River, is ruled by the Tan clan and is heavily aligned with Ausa. The current Tan patriarch is Tan Wui Locca, who claims to be a direct descendant of Tan Wui Han. The Symbol of the Tan is a kingfisher and this bird is sewn on their flags and banners. The feathers of these birds are coveted, but the family would never harm their chosen symbol for fear of celestial retribution. The Tan have two fleets of 30 warships, and 48 merchant vessels, and work together with Ausa to monopolize water trade. The current Tan family leaders claim direct descendancy from Tan Chin.

The province is split into five districts:

Montow District, including jurisdiction over the "Three Sisters," the islands north of the peninsula, is controlled by the Tan family from Te Pachan Castle.

Lenache District, ruled by Tan Wui Locca's friend and advisor, Dotu Ghi Ichi.

Sian Li District, ruled by Garrison Commander Ip Feu Choy, a renowned strategist and important warrior.

The Blood Plains, ruled by the ruthless Lord Bichika Toon, general of the Scarlet Riders of Yensa Shrine.

North Mokan District, administered by the Quan family for three generations, now ruled by Quan To Srong of the river city Bachai.

The Forests of Joi Chang are filled with magical beasts and T'u deserters living in hermitage. Countless battles, great and small, have been waged on the Blood Plains, and ghosts and ghouls wander this cursed land.

Ausa

The Ausa Province controls all land east of the Akensai River and south to Chedoru, and it is ruled by the Ho clan from the port city Ausa. Ho Bai Lee rules the province and his district, and he has seen that his cousin controls another district to consolidate Ho power. The Ho have a navy based in Keeling of 75 warships, and a merchant marine of 30 ships. The Ho family owns the Go S'tenai Quarries and their marble has been a limitless source of wealth for four generations. The sky-blue Ho Banner has two white daggers and three red stars. The Ausa ships are feared throughout Kara-Tur's mighty oceans.

Ausa Province is divided into the following districts.

Ausa District, under the control of Ho Bai Lee, the main exporter of dried fish for T'u Lung.

Shin District, administered by Shin So Tang from his castle west of Chunming. Shin is a direct descendant of Shin Ginsen, and plots continually for the downfall of the usurping Wai family. His factions are very powerful and support the warrior Ho clan in most ventures. You can know them by a tattoo of a green dragon on their left arms.

Chempka District, ruled by Ho Duantu Qwi, cousin of the Governor Ho of Ausa Province. He is an honorable man, but many on his staff are corrupt.

Keeling District, ruled by Do Enang, the sealord of Keeling, world renowned for the Market of the Moons and the Isgathes Towers.

Chedoru District, ruled for three generations by the Wai family through marriage and treaties. Wai Ga So'in, third cousin to the Emperor, controls the southernmost district of Ausa, and lives in a hidden fortress, protected against assassination and wars. This is a powerful wing of the Wai clan, and they have an army of paid soldiers masquerading as farmers in Chedoru and Li.

True patriots of Ausa do not recognize the Emperor, and refer to him as the "King of Wail." They are obstinate people and publicly call for the overthrow of the government. The Nugha tribes of the hills of E'sang Yi still follow a mysterious kio ton mu (witchdoctor). The Nikaro Monument draws thousands of supplicants to its yearly Festival of Akensai from all over T'u Lung.

East Wai

East Wai Province, the historical Wai Province, includes all lands east of the Fenghsintzu River and west of the Akensai River. This collection of six districts is under the control of the Maki family, led by Maki Wantu Ohn and his four sons. The provincial capital is in Zun Hi, and it is an ancient castle occupied by the Wai clan for thousands of years. The Maki clan supports the Emperor and owes their hereditary position to his graces. These districts produce a lot of the rice that supports the empire.

The six districts of East Wai Province are:

The H'sin-to District administered by Hong Kwan To. The district capital is the only ocean port in Wai territory, a very corrupt city. The royal navy of 52 warships is docked at H'sin-to.

The Pendir Chao District overlooking the fields of Penchow east to the Canung Marsh and south to the Wong Flats. District officer is General Ku D'nag Sao, who gained his position through bravery in battle in defense of his district. He is an honorable man and has attempted to purge graft from his bureaucracy.

The Shosun District ruled by Wai Kung Chui, the widow of Wai Kung Hu, third cousin of the Emperor. This woman is carrying the position in a custodial fashion until her young son can assume the office, but she is a ruthless dictator and wields the power of her office with conviction.

The Zun Hi District, ruled by the provincial governor, includes the land surrounding the cities of Fo Liche Gai, S'seh Yando, and Ha'chou, north of the hills of Quai. It is one of the richest districts in all of T'u Lung.

South Quai is administered from the Hodo'ung Cha garrison and has been governed by the Ro'aku clan for five generations. The current district officer is Ro'aku Swi A'un Song, a veteran of the southern barbarian skirmishes of 2603.

The Habi District borders the Bashan Do Province south of S'seh Yando, and is ruled by Lord Akishi Wa Ry of ancient Quenche. This lord favors the Emperor and harbors training grounds for the loyal armies of T'u Lung.

West Wai

West Wai Province, formerly Chia Wan Ch'uan Province, is ruled by the Emperor and has three districts, all held by members of the Wai family, either direct or by marriage. This is the worst province for corrupt officials and ineffective government. The royal bureaucracy is in knots and many of the lower administrators are thugs and dullards, adding to the confusion. Forgers are rampant and the imperial seal means little-money is the language of West Wai Province.

The districts of West Wai are:

The provincial capital Wai, circled by the "King's Waters," the canals and the winding Fenghsintzu River. The Emperor rules by edicts from Dakarazu Palace north of the capital city.

To'an District, ruled by the Emperor's brother, Wai Gada Mo, encompassing the land from Tsing on the Mokan River south to the great Fenghsintzu, including the forbidden realm of the ancient dried salt lake, the T'hai Salt Flats.

The Noka'o Ruha District that borders the disputed lands, Lup Iantu (Pien Lun by Shou reckoning). This district is controlled by a criminal family which has married into the Wai clan—while Wai Gu Sunlee is officially in command of the district, the real power lies with Hum Chuk, "father" of the Qan Do Chang clan, a powerful yakuza organization, whose son has married the emperor's third daughter and holds her hostage in his fortress.

Bashan Do

Bashan Do Province, carved from Wai by Fengnao during the Three Kingdoms period of T'u Lung history, is ruled by the descendants of the general who pried the lands away from Wai, Wen Lo Qent. The current governor is Wen Lo Ap, and his capital city in in the Te Lu District, just north of the Fenghsintzu. Wen Lo Ap is very loyal to the Yang clan of Fengnao, and ignores the edicts of the Emperor. Wen keeps a standing army of 2,000 along the border with Shou Lung, and another 1,000 troops along the border with East Wai Province.

The three districts of Bashan Do are:

Dayo F'so District, west of the Fenghsintzu, the deep woodlands south of the Pasintzu River. This wild country is governed by Lord Atax Cho and his Dayo Badgers, an elite army of foresters and sohei.

Te Lu District east of the Fenghsintzu River is watched over by the provincial governor and the entire Wen clan. Political corruption is seldom seen in this district.

Noka Jui District is ruled by Putar Yi Onru, a nephew of the provincial governor, Wen Lo Ap. He is the leader of at least three organizations bent on destroying the Lui Dynasty.

Fengnao Province

Fengnao Province, the vast lands north of the "Tail of the Fenghsintzu," has been controlled by the Yang clan since the days of the Three Kingdoms. The patriarch Yang Pu Tobi rules from Kichai in the far south, and his lands are divided into six districts. The nobles tolerate what they call "Wai and the imperial nonsense," but they ignore edicts, raise their own taxes and keep their own armed forces. The territory is less populated, filled with dense forests and miles of rolling hills. Strange wu jens and shukenja wander this province, and many nonhumans flourish in the wild land.

The Fengnao Province is divided into these districts:

The Winto Forest District, bisected by the great Conqueror's Highway and the Southern Passage of Shou, is ruled by the Lord Uki Awn Cho. His seat of power is a fortress connected to the Ha Tuin Garrison.

The Durkon District is governed by Yang Wui Up, the cousin of the provincial governor.

The Banang District, enfiefed to the General Kodo Smara who defeated the southern barbarians in the battle of To'cun Cho.

The Kichai District is ruled by the provincial governor, Yang Pu Tobi, an active warrior and inspiring leader. Kichai votes consistently against the wishes of the Emperor.

The Hachomi District centers around that city, and is ruled by Gung Toa Tso, whose family has controlled this district for five generations. The Gung clan is of questionable ancestry, but they rule with excessive might and keep fear in the heart of their district.

The So'iru District, west of Banang and the Southern Passage, and south of mountainous Durkon District, is administered by the commander of the Tyu Ton garrison, a hereditary position held by Han Yo Went.

Men of Yang are a silent lot, and many still mistrust the Wai clan. While they do not publicly call for the overthrow of the Emperor, they privately endorse this goal and work toward it.

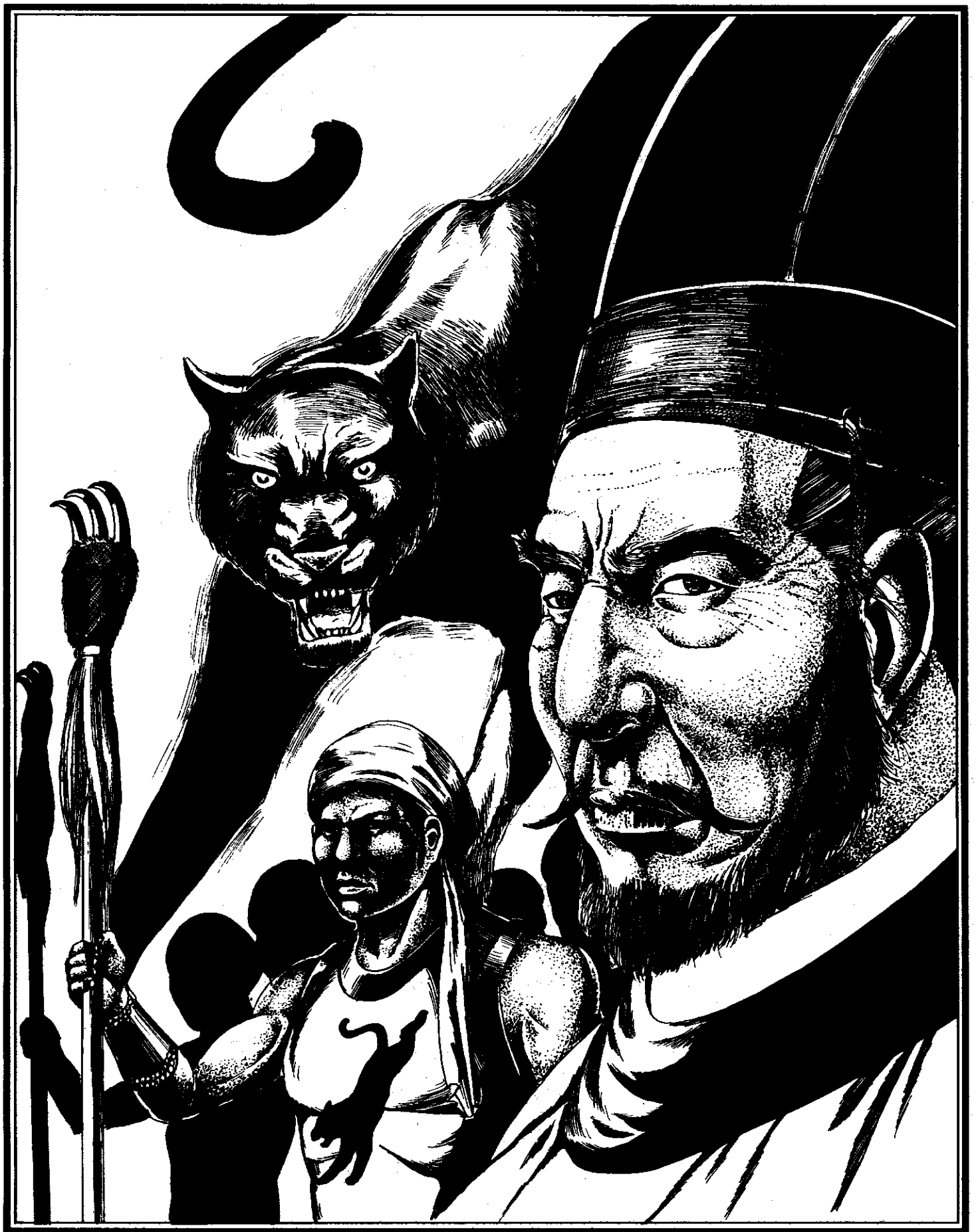
Fengnao Province has many religious cults, most thousands of years old, that lurk in the deep forests or far upriver from civilization. Care must be taken not to fall into these cannibals, clutches!

Fengnao established political relations with the High Lord of Oceans of Tabot and has connections to the south, in the warring states.

Political Careers

If your players wish to enter the government of T'u and advance their status, then they will find themselves embroiled in a political nightmare, with everyone out to stab them in the back, and a very stagnant bureaucracy incapable of real action without an emergency, such as a war. The paperwork will be staggering, and the only road to advancement is the death of an immediate superior, an often impossible situation. District level positions are of little political consequence, but provincial ministerial positions can be influential, and so most are hereditary.

To gain one of these stations is to probably incur the wrath of an injured clan. This could lead to a secret vendetta against the player characters, assassination attempts and campaigns to defame the characters' reputations. Nothing is sacred in the politics of T'u Lung. In this way, T'u Lung is the opposite of Shou Lung.



The Symbols of Government

The symbols of government in T'u Lung are carved peach-wood seals. These are used to seal scrolls and denote rank and office. Usually they are carried in a velvet-lined case, of expensive woods or scarce metal, but sometimes a brazen officer will attach the seals to a chain and wear them about his neck like jewels.

Bureaucracy at Work

Dealing with government offices goes like this: first you go to the house-hold chiefs with you problem, and it is recorded by the local scribes. If you are lucky, the township officer will hear your complaint and refer it to a provincial minister so you will have to travel to the provincial capital for an appointment with one of the minister's assistants, who will have his scribes register your problem in the provincial records. Usually, the minister's office decides it is a decision for local jurisdiction, and refers the matter back to the township officer.

If one still pursues the issue, a gathering of the elders will be consulted and their suggestions recorded by the scribes, sometimes forwarded back to the minister's office for comment or decision, sometimes handled by the township officer directly. It usually takes two to five years to receive government action on a specific matter, whether it be re-building a damaged canal wall or getting a warrant for the arrest of a murderer! Yes, it is extremely frustrating.

Magic Training in T'u Lung

"The Image of a fresh-water spring filled with tangled reeds, set on the side of a mountain, the Sign of Youth, of inexperience. To seek training improves the nature of all men. There will be advantage in being firm and correct. Thus, superior men turn to the Way."

– Hsao Chronicles, Hu Ling Do

Often I hear the people of Shou describing the magics and arts of T'u as degenerate and ill-conceived. Nothing could be further from the truth! I have had the opportunity to study under two great masters, Fargh Choi and To Nanchi, and I have charmed millions with my arts. Let me tell you of my magic training and you can judge if it is enlightened or barbarian.

My first master was Fargh Choi of the east, now dead some 60 years. He was ancient even when I studied under him, a white haired old codger who believed in a pupils silence and absolute obedience. Before he began formal magic training, I was physically and mentally prepared through rigorous work and memorization of important rites and names of invocation.

I became intimately acquainted with the gods of the four directions through repetition: the East is Kou Mang, who has the body of a bird but a human face and rides two lung (dragons); the west is Ju Shou who is known by the snake he wears on his left ear, who also rides two lung; the south is Chu Jung who has the body of a beast, the face of a human, and rides two flaming snakes with ladies' faces; and north is Yu Chiang who has the face of a human, but has wings of a black hawk and feathers for hair, two small green snakes around his ears and two green snakes coiled around his legs. These four gods control the wind, and they are essential to the mastering of the element air Rites of magic were based on the simple invocations of these gods. Fargh Choi taught me that the simple was often the most elegant and full of power. He also taught me of feng shui, the magical art of placing things to increase their karma and powers.

Fargh spent a long time making sure I studied the silk scrolls and the records inked on bamboo slats that he had collected over the years, full of philosophies and concepts and magic treatises. I learned of the deity of Chung Mountain which is called Hu Yinto. When it opens its great eyes it is day, and when it closes those great lids, it is night. When it blows breath winter comes, and when it sucks in the air, the summer follows. It does not eat or drink, but when it comes to breathe, there is wind. Its body is thousands of feet long, placed east of the peak, and it has a human face and a snake body, completely scarlet red. It creates all the millions of creatures that ride and guide its wind, and it is these agents that man can control!

It was also necessary that I memorize the five elements and their correlates, and I have summarized them in this chart, so that you can see the connections a learned man takes for granted.

5 Elements	5 Seasons	5 Direction	5 Animal	5 Creatures	5 Grains
wood	Spring	east	sheep	scaly	wheat
fire	summer	south	fowl	feathered	beans
soil	false	center	ox	naked	millet
metal	autumn	west	dog	hairy	hemp
lwater	winter	north	pig	shell	rice

5 Organs	5 Numbers	5 Colors	5 Tastes	6 Smells
spleen	8	azure	sour	goatish
lungs	7	red	bitter	burning
heart	5	yellow	sweet	fragrant
liver	9	white	acrid	rank
kidneys	6	black	salt	rotten

Fargh Choi taught that the cosmos is a single fabric and to pull on one thread would produce a result somewhere else, even in the celestial Heavens above! A superior man can restore the harmony of the celestial fabric, but the inept add flux and dangerous tears that introduce demons and evil spirits into our realms. I learned care and control of my talents, then my master taught me how to call a mist, then a fog, then a breeze, then a gust of wind.

My apprenticeship under Fargh Choi lasted four years, and he taught me how to charm people and the element air and its correlates. Most important, he taught me tong, a passive martial art, a nonviolent form of judo that has always saved me in hand-to-hand combat. He also made me my own master, cooling many of my youthful lusts with sound knowledge and sage advice. When I left him I was well prepared for the streets of T'u Lung, a follower of the way and a true wu jen.

About 40 years later, after many loves and adventures, I grew serious with my life and sought out a new teacher, one who I could respect and follow. I heard that a man in Hachoni had been playing the flute steadily for 10 days and people believed he was cursed and would soon die. I hurried to the place to see if I could be of service. But when I arrived, the man stopped playing and told me he had been waiting for me! This is how I met To Nanchi.

To Nanchi was my greatest teacher and I followed his wandering path for 12 years to master his skills. He taught me to have an intuitional understanding of the lunar and solar nodes and their effects on people and the fabric of the cosmos. I slowly learned to channel the tides of these celestial bodies into my music and magic, adding great powers I had never considered or even knew were there to command!

To become active in the community, I learned the essential shamanistic ritual for the Great Exorcism Festival, held yearly to drive away the demons, pestilence, droughts and lingering problems of the previous year I know how to consecrate the robes that are placed on the city's walls, and I have worn the bearskin with four golden eyes during the ceremonial (and transcendental) battle at the height of the festival.

To Nanchi's greatest gift was to teach me the art of crafting a magic flute. First I learned to select a virgin stand of bamboo, never felled by man. Each stalk must be sounded with a knock until the one most in tune with my inner being "rings" to me. Then it must be felled with a single blow. The bamboo staff is polished and oiled. With the appropriate offerings, I perform a ceremony where the sound holes are burned into the wood with a gaze! Of course, when the ceremony is finished I possess an enchanted flute, but then one must learn to play it! It took years to master this instrument, and I still have much to learn.

In all, To Nanchi taught me 17 new and powerful spells, which I keep listed in my journal. He is a very powerful wu jen who wants the countryside aiding the weak and seeking knowledge, and, while he is ancient, he is still wandering to this day.

Wu Jen

Wu jen are also called "Fang-hsiang Shih," or the master of recipes. The necromancers are powerful and are best left to their own paths. Many wander the the hills and forests of T'u, and the simple folk are wary of their evil eyes and magic spells. Sometimes they are consulted as diviners of dreams, or asked for sage advice, although often they are of little service to any except themselves.

Social Customs

Secret Societies of T'u Lung

"The Image of a Thunderstorm at Night, the Symbol of Chaos. The superior man is diligent and sincere, bringing order to the discord. Call to the Phoenix for rebirth from the ashes."

– Hsao Chronicles, Hu Ling Do

Most men of T'u Lung are involved with some secret society, black market, yakuza clan, or clandestine sect, for to live without 'contacts' is to be poor, oppressed and outcast in T'u Lung. Many of the current cults and secret societies are groups that gained amnesty from the First Emperor, Chin, when he allowed them to join his combined armies, although most returned to their clandestine ways after Shou was repelled. Some of these groups have a small, exclusive membership, while others have thousands of members. Sometimes a secret organization will approach one for membership, often a group of like-minded individuals who believe you are with them in mind and spirit. I have been approached no less than 16 times in my long life! While there are probably hundreds of secret groups in T'u Lung, I only know a little bit about a few. Here are five of the most infamous secret societies that I have learned about in my time:

The Black Leopard Cult of Durkon: regardless of whether you believe in the Black Leopard myths of Tabot and Fengnao, the cult still exists in the area around Durkon and on Akari Island. Its number has grown steadily since the amnesty granted by the First Emperor, for its warrior legions have gained a reputation for courage and valor. They meet at night and each member knows a secret signal that affords him passage into their hidden temples. The average folks of the townships appreciate the cult's presence because it keeps the government's agents honest, but the secret meetings sometimes end with a ritual sacrifice of cattle, or worse, and the good men of the lowest grades bear the evil fruits of the cult's expansion.

When I was last in Durkon (I sang for the Tonu clan Wedding Celebration six months ago), I saw the black paw mark of the cult's curse on two houses, and both were burnt to the ground that same evening. Local gossip said one was the house of a mercenary who had slaughtered a leopard and proudly displayed its skin, while the other was the house of a local scribe who had written about the cult in the logs of the district. Rumors say they drink the blood of their victims, but I think that is nonsense. I do believe they are a dangerous group and best avoided.

The "Red Eye-brows" Faction: originally started by Yang Juinto Fa to avenge his father's disgrace and memorialize his mother's name, the "Red Eyebrows" were formed by a group of knights errant who banded together against the taxes and tyranny of the Green Dynasty under the fists of Wai Chu Doang. The membership was very exclusive, and those in this secret army were known only to each other. They championed the weak and oppressed peasants, and usually sneaked away before any reward could be offered. Their mark was a hand with three fingers held high, and many peasants began to use this sign to affiliate with their protectors.

It is not certain whether this group is still in existence, but their good deeds have become proverbial, such as "his heart was as if he had red eyebrows," or "she turned down the gift so they would think her eyebrows red." These warriors are very popular folk heroes.

The Yellow Lizards of Keeling: This is a pirate conspiracy based in Keeling harbor. Men who join must get a purple crane tattooed on their right arm and it usually means they have no regards for the laws of T'u Lung. This society of seafaring murderers and cutthroats is the terror of the shipping lanes. No one knows where the pirate base is located, nor do we know who leads this outlaw band. Honest men fear the black sails of these killers, and their banner, a yellow sea-lizard on a green field, usually means trouble. There is a standing reward for any information leading to these scoundrels or their lair, but few are brave (or stupid) enough to attempt to collect it! I have heard rumors that members of the Ho clan are involved with this secret band of pirates, but I have never seen proof.

The Gilded Monkey's Foot: I have heard that in Banang, an honest and upright man will be approached to join the Order of the Gilded Monkey's Paw, a secret society of good men working to better the community. It was relayed to me that hundreds of trustworthy men have joined the ranks of this group, and they perform civic works in secret and expect no reward. They always leave a gilded monkey's paw behind to show that they had passed, and to increase the name of their order. The signs, symbols and signals of this band are a secret, but certain members have been known to be found at every gate and inn in Banang, and they are sometimes referred to as the monkey's eyes. That is where we get the saying, "under the monkey's eyes; when we mean we're being watched by someone we trust.

The Cult of the Eight Jade Tokens: This quasi-religious order has members throughout Wai, centered in a village called U'ling Su. This group is the black market in east and west Wai provinces, and members are believed to be rich and dangerous. Various yakuza groups answer to the commands of this secret society, and it is rumored that a part of this organization is a training school for ninjas! I had an experience in which a group of bandits ran away from our caravan because one of my companions was a recognized member. That was sobering, I assure you. The remainder of the journey was most nerve-wracking, as I knew one of my fellows was a member of a secret outlaw band, but I couldn't tell which, and I was afraid of a knife in the darkness!

The Festival To Welcome The Ethers

During the Festival to Welcome the Ethers (of the seasons), held each year on the fifth day of the month Yu, we cook and serve a rabbit stew, and remove all the bones except the rabbit's kneecap. The men who find the kneecaps in their bowls are lucky for the next year and often get married or find treasure, or some other form of good luck befalls their family. This custom is carried out in all parts of the land.

Water Clocks

Water clocks are kept in most villages and they are set by the rising of the sun, so local time varies from place to place, and season to season. The water clock in the capital city runs from an aqueduct and is never reset with the seasons or dawn, so it is called the true time. True time is important only if one has an important meeting with the Emperor who always observes "true time."

Languages

The language is the same as Shou, with local variations and accents that sometimes render it difficult to understand. Dress is slightly different, as the hotter climes in T'u Lung require lighter garments, linen tunics and cotton robes, rather than wools and furs of Shou Lung's styles. Silk is still one of the most important status symbols, and richly dyed, stained and patterned silk is artfully woven into most upper-class clothing. Tattoos are considered lower class and marks for servants, and while many secret societies and cults require them as tokens of initiation, most gentlemen keep them hidden.

Festivals

Clay Bulls are used as sacrifices in festivals and religious ceremonies throughout T'u Lung. These massive pottery works are filled with rice and fruits, incense and other offerings, then burned or cast from the walls, whatever is the local custom. Sometimes they are painted and decorated with jewels for a special occasion. Once in a great while a clay dragon will be made by some master potter, and filled with precious objects for presentation to the gods. These special festivals usually include tightrope walkers who perform daring feats and "dragon parades" in which men dress as a long paper dragon and dance in the streets to wild music and fireworks.

Money and Commerce

Our currency is exactly like Shou, same denominations and value, but the rate of exchange with Shou is notoriously bad, as Shou coin is almost useless in T'u Lung. Only along the border can a man find a reasonably fair exchange.

Everybody who makes money in T'u Lung pays taxes—one-third goes to the township officers. "Tax evasion leads to confiscation of all assets and deporta-

tion, unless the Emperor wants one's head. There are prominent offices in each city where a player can declare the money he's made and contribute to the welfare of his state. Of course, anyone can hide funds and not report, and many are living outside the system, evading the tax collector's net year after year.

Conflicts

Visitors must beware conscription, for T'u Lung is constantly fighting somebody and new fronts are just around the corner. I have become quite elusive in my years, but I've been caught twice and forced to serve in the infantry, marching wearily, to watch my comrades trampled by enemy cavalry and chariots. You would think that the T'u generals would come up with defenses that protect more lives, but they haven't yet.

Over the years it's a wonder Shou has not regained control, for the blunders and repetitive errors the T'u armies have committed have never hindered their advance, only their own inefficiency has stopped them.

The Garrisons

There are 15 garrisons, all originally built by the forces of Shou when they conquered the land in the years between 420 and 475. They have played an important part in the defense of T'u, from the Shou raiders as well as the jungle barbarians. Each garrison houses 400 cavalry who patrol as sheriffs when not actively fighting in battles.

Many towns have sprung up in the protective shadows of these fortresses in the wilderness. The names of the 15 garrisons are:

1. S'ian Li
2. We'peng
3. Hodo'ung Cha
4. Jinko
5. Mireng Do
6. Nashki
7. Bophuni
8. Wafang
9. Ha Tuin
10. Sung Ho
11. Chun
12. Lan Ichi
13. Asundra
14. Qui Yaro
15. Xang Ti

Conscription is another matter. Often a group of characters will find themselves drugged by the inn's food, only to wake up in a secret army under the whip of a savage leader! Battles are a way of life in T'u Lung and men are always needed—to defend against Shou, put down a revolt, avenge a political killing, or settle a clan war. There are many ways recruits are caught, with wine, women and song, by trick or by force, but all of them quickly put the characters into life or death struggles. Some players may find the mercenary life enjoyable and it is a popular vocation in T'u Lung.

On an average, once every year some group will attempt conscription on any given character, and this is understood by the population, who have all served at some time, and either have been maimed or have become good at escaping the draft.

Gencha Village

The shrine in the market of Gencha village has a powerful P'oh spirit living in it, and offerings have been made continually to it for 435 years. In return, the spirit has not allowed the village to become entangled in a battle or war.

Non-Player Characters

To Na'u Brotherhood

The Ferrymen at Fo Liche Gai have formed a union of honest men, called the To Na'u Brotherhood, an army serving justice. These kindhearted men will help anyone in distress, and have been known to harbor hounded criminals from the law. They number 20, but some believe that many more have joined their ranks in secret.

Wai Gada Sinzu, the grandson of Wai Gada Hysu, and Eighth Emperor of the Lui Dynasty of T'u Lung, bearer of the Imperial seals, known by the honorific name of Emperor Wy;
capital city, West and East Wai Provinces;
wu jen 2d level;
LE, human, male.

The Emperor is a middle-aged man of 47 years with a barrel chest and muscular physique. He is never without his imperial guard, known as the Silent Tigers, who dress in black uniforms with brass buttons. His court is in the entrance halls of Dakarazu Palace in the capital city, and he only views the people on court days, once a week when he reviews and judges civil disturbances and captured criminals.

The Emperor has a reputation of being bloodthirsty and cruel. He carries an ivory wand which is said to hold a magic that will render any man helpless, and also protects him against evil spirits.

Always at his side, the Emperor's most trusted advisor is a mercenary named Ye'ahn Joshu, who leads the Silent Tigers. This man is about 35 years old, and is rumored to be a master of the "perfect accident," a deadly ninja!

The Emperor has five concubines, but only four children, his two older daughters and his twin sons, Anku and Soreti. He likes caged birds, but has collected them in excess, with a bird in almost every room of the palace. When he tires of a certain bird, he releases it so his companion Ye'ahn can practice his archery skills. It is rumored that he collects the skulls of his enemies and has built a mock throne from them, in which he sits new victims before he has them beheaded!

Empress Dowager Wai Locunni Eio, whose title is "Queen Mother of the Gentle Winds;"
confined to Dakarazu Palace;
LN, human, woman.

The Emperor's mother is a sophisticated woman of 72 years with iron gray hair and a straight back. Her demeanor is strict and prim, and she hovers about the

court, insisting on correct procedures and proper ceremony. She is ruthless with those who cross her, and it is rumored that she carries a dagger dipped in the poison of the yankara root, which causes instant fiery pains. She is the only woman who can make demands of the Emperor and see them carried out.

As a young woman, Locunni Eio was a great beauty, and her portraits adorn tapestries and paintings in various rooms of the palace. Her long life is attributed to the prophecy and blessing of Ku He Long who said she would live until her son had measured 60 summers' time. If she does fulfill this prophecy, she has many years left to subtly influence the court.

Kodo Smara, general of Fengnao Province, hereditary li-cheng (township officer) of the Banang District;
samurai 16th level;
NG, human, male.

The General of Banang secured his position by repelling the invasion of a tribe of southern barbarians in the battle of To'cun Cho. The new officer displaced the Bantu clan which had held the position for two generations, and now has a blood feud with the Kodo clan. Luckily Kodo Smara came from an old T'u Lung family, and they were prepared for the generals new office, with a secret army to defend the district officer's house and family.

General Kodo is a tall man of 50 years, with a thick beard and a magical scimitar and copper shield. His armor is also copper, and his headdress is horrific, a dragon-demon's cowl. He often wears his armor and practices wargames or rides with his cavalry on patrol. An old soldier at heart, he keeps his old battle cronies as advisors and has let the financial health of his district suffer through neglect. It is said that he values courageous men and will entertain adventurers for their exciting tales.

Rah Kigi Lo, the Emperor's secret concubine;
closeted in Y'cho Kang;
yakuza 14th level;
NE, human, female.

The dragon-lady of Y'cho Kang is currently kept by the Emperor himself in apartments adjoining the royal summer house. This evil widow collected the riches of four men before she managed to reach the Emperor's court. Her holdings are, large, and her family accounts for about half of the crime in Y'cho Kang. The business of extortion and smuggling is run by Rah Kigi Lo through her two sons, Rah Kointo and Hayu Wan. These two thugs have been introduced into high T'u Lung society by her grasping plans, but they are more at home in street battles with the rival yakuza family, the Iyo Chan clan.

Rah Kigi Lo is a proud woman of excellent figure and hypnotic eyes. They say she casts a spell with her deep green eyes, and she killed her first husband with her own hands. She owns and runs a fleet of river barges and three warehouses in the village of Wai T'lu just downriver from Y'cho Kang. Rah's most hated enemy is Wai Kung Chui, the widow who is the township officer for Shosun, a day upriver from Y'cho Kang.

Wai Ghuto Sa, the Emperor's cousin;
Chempka,
samurai 9th level;
LG, human, male.

Referred to as the "White Hart of Chempka," the Emperor's cousin is an honorable man who owns an estate just outside the city on the road to Anechu. He is considered by most to be the most trustworthy man in the entire Wai clan. When he was 18, He led the Wai clan armies into the Canung Marsh to capture the outlaw Robo T'io and his band of cutthroats. The treasure they recovered was wisely invested by the "white hart" and has grown into a large fortune.

At age 42, Wai Ghuto Sa is often sought after as intermediary in conflicts with the Wai clan or the Emperor. Sa lost two fingers of his left hand in personal combat with the bandits, so he always wears silk gloves to disguise this fact. He has three sons and a wife and he dotes on his family. The peasants regard him kindly for his civic works and the respect he returns them.

Lord Ghira Tso of Lenachi, the "last of the brothers;"
samurai, 6th level;
LN, human, male.

There were six brothers in the Ghira clan before their father was cursed by the shukenja Won of Sunob Bay. The elder Ghira was to see all his sons die before his own funeral. One by one the bothers died, each in a terrible accident or by a wasting sickness with no cure. The deaths came in order, so the youngest son decided he had the longest time to live and quested for the old shukenja. Ghira Tso found Won and repaid the wrong his father had done, and he was released from the curse, but only after his five older brothers had died in their father's arms!

Lord Ghira Tso is one of the nine hu-chang (household chiefs) in Lenachi, and he is an advisor to Dotu Ghi Ichi, the district official. His father is Ghira Ma, one of the city's ch'i-chang (elders). His wife is a member of the Shin clan, distant relative to Shin Ginsen, the first emperor of T'u Lung. He has the honorific title of "lord" because his clan is one of the original 34 noble families of T'u. Tso is a short man with a belly from overeating, but his wit is sharp. He commands a private army of 100 bowmenguards. Politically, he is loyal to the Tan clan and the provincial government, but he has no respect for the Emperor or the Wai family. As a respectable citizen, he does not hire mercenaries or conscript men for his legion, but pays good wages and provides excellent training. His father receives revenues from four rice farms and the family owns a successful logging operation under the supervision of a barbarian named Vindrana.

Ruri Woh, "Chi uan'Ko Quai" (white bird of Quai Hills);
shukenja 16th level;
LG, human, male.

This seemingly frail and bent old man can be found wandering the hills of Quai from the village of U'ling Su all the way south to the border and west to the Fenghsintzu River. He is a powerful master, and has

spent years aiding the distressed and good at heart, especially the peasants and the few hill tribes in deep Quai. He often approaches a group of strangers in the form of a scrawny white bird that flutters about and perches on warriors' helms to eavesdrop. In this form he is virtually impossible to hit with a hand-held weapon, except for a net. He is known for defeating two hill giants and destroying the Jiki-ketsu-gaki of I'kuni Wanta.

Do Enang, Sealord of Keeling;
bushi 10th level;
LN, human, male.

The township leader has changed every generation in Keeling, and the current high district officer is a retired sea captain of the Do clan. His family owns and runs a fleet of 20 merchant ships and 35 fishing boats. His face-has a scar that runs from his left eye to his jawbone, a wide band with jagged edge, a rip from a sea monster. The thing's sun-dried head hangs in his trophy room along with other savage totems of his explorations of Xifung Reef. His family has a fortress on La Island, and it is rumored that they have warships docked there in secret.

Ukito Wan, general of Ausa;
samurai 12th level;
LN, human, male.

A confidant of Ho Bai Lee, the provincial governor, Ukito Wan gained his reputation in leading the Ausan forces in the battle of Do Orabi five years past. He is a young man of incredible martial skills, with an enthusiasm for battle and a great strategic mind. It is said that he is a shrewd judge of character and has surrounded himself with the best advisors. While his father's holdings were in the sixth grade, Ukito Wan has increased his personal wealth to measure first grade status, and he has wisely refused a position in the government, for his meager clan would be destroyed in a blood feud with a displaced clan—although it is rumored that he does have a secret army of his old command, dedicated followers sworn to his support. Ukito values the kensai, and he hosts skill contests and rewards the winners with large sums and free services.

Osu Qyu Lo'ahn, merchant of H'sin-to;
bushi 3d level;
NG, human, male.

Osu Qyu Lo'ahn was the third son of a township scribe in E'pong Li. At age 14 he left his father's house and traveled downriver to H'sin-to. After working various trading ships he was impressed into a crew of a merchant vessel bound for Keeling. Tied in the hold, he was the only survivor of a sea demon that ate all the others in the crew! Once he freed himself, the thing had left, and he found a crew of fishermen who helped him sail the ship into port as salvage. This gave him his first merchant ship.

A daring man, Osu traveled to Awana Island three times to collect the treasured herbs, and the proceeds from those trips allowed him to buy a house and four more ships. He is considered an expert on collecting trips to Awana Isle. He loves to barter and frequents the markets of H'sin-to, flanked by three hefty guards. He is a collector of rare artifacts and sometimes invites adventurers for dinner if they possess something he wants, or if he thinks he can talk them into fetching some special relic for him.

Utwa So, Master of the "salt-zombies;"
T'hai Salt Flats;
wu jen 18th level;
CE, human, male.

In a hidden fortress deep in the desolate salt flats, Utwa So lives with his wife, a hengeyokai badger-woman named Yujirra. He has killed the heroes Mancha Wi and Wai Tan Hu and displays their heads on his keep's walls. His army of undead "salt-zombies" wander the deserted dunes and jagged landscape, always searching for more lost souls to add to their numbers. Utwa So has a bajang (lesser spirit) that serves him as a familiar, usually taking the form of a wildcat. He occasionally leads his armies into Hojuro and Dan for new victims. His curses and magic are feared throughout West Wai Province.

Ghutan Dox Ayani, sorceress of Tsing;
wu jen 7th level;
CG, human, female.

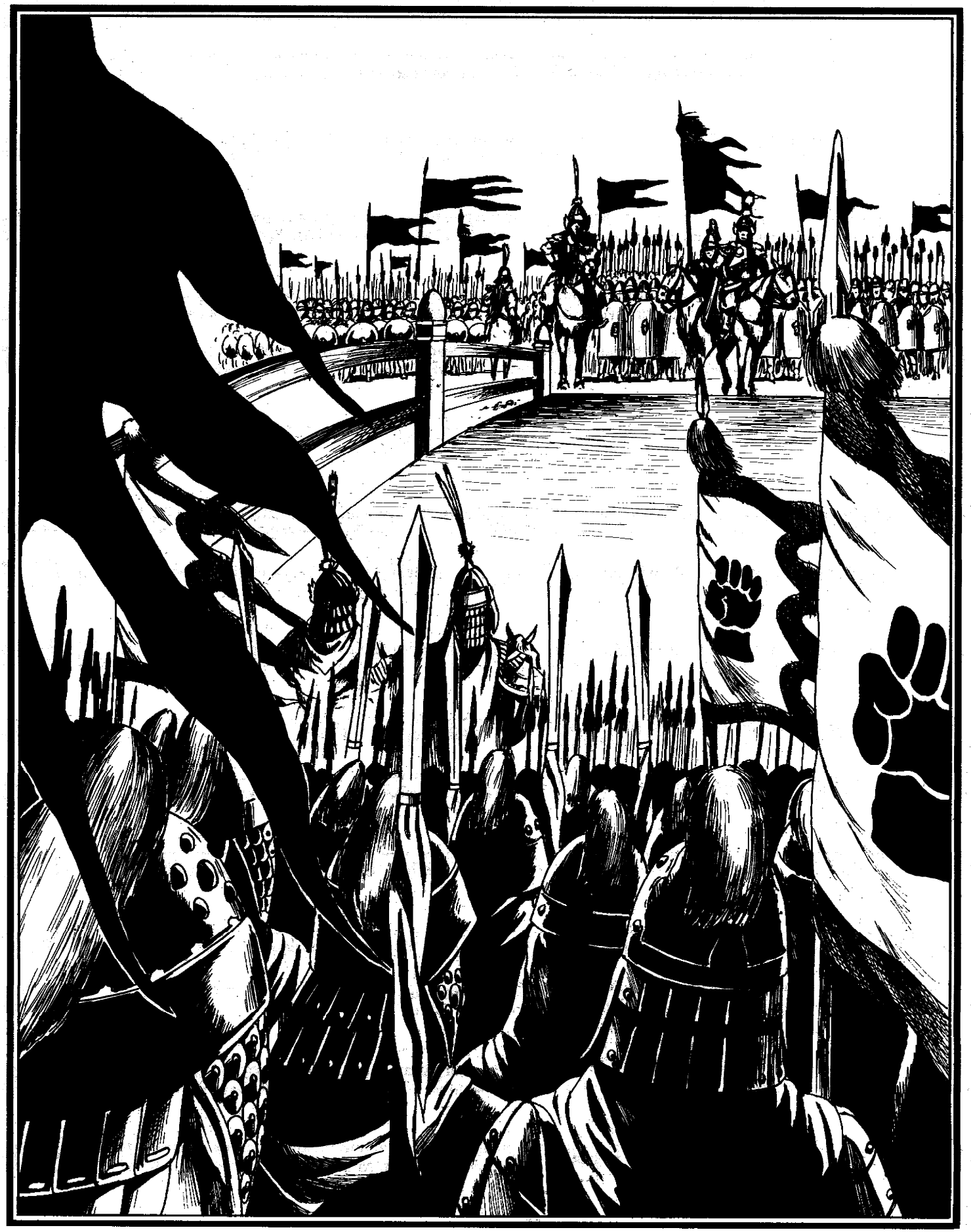
The "witch of Tsing" is a beautiful woman who lives in a bamboo hut by the Mokan River. Her powers encompass the elements of fire and earth, and she has the magical mirror "Flame-eye" that allows her to spy through any open flame! She once healed the mighty warrior Ho Maki Unta and required him to bring her the shell of a kappa as repayment. This shell she made into a magical raft which floats in whatever direction she commands, even upriver! She has been known to foil crooks and river pirates, and for that reason she is tolerated by the officials of Tsing. The peasants and river coolies fear her and avoid her paths and hut.

Heto Yiodo, "Chai Wanderer" or "Ridgewalker;"
Rintai Plains and Chai Ridge;
shukenja 14th level;
CG, human, male.

The ridgewalker is a holy man with long, unkept hair and beard, who sleeps during days and travels at night. It is said that he is a friend of wild beasts, and a tiger provides him with game and protection. Certainly birds like him, for flocks always follow him and deliver his messages and warnings. He has healed strangers and left their camps before they could thank him. It is rumored he lives in a small cave, and the spirits of the celestial bureaucracy visit him there because of his pious and true nature.

Nu'sazto Ichi;
Wai, the capital city;
barbarian 6th level;
CE, human, male.

The barbarian in the Emperor's court is the treacherous Nu'sazto, a murdering son of a captured general of the Warring States. The Emperor is amused by the barbarian's crude behavior and stumblings with the pomp of his court, and he keeps Nu'sazto around to annoy his mother. Nu'sazto is always planning to kill the Emperor, but he seems to always turn imperial



evidence when his conspirators face the block. He has uncovered many assassination plots and has curried favor with the Emperor and other members of the Wai clan.

The barbarian dresses in his native clothes with conceit. The women of the court have flocked to him and he has had to fight two challengers for offending their masculine honor. In both of these duels he has killed mercilessly, and has the reputation for hating T'u Lung and its people. Some believe that he is seeking the perfect opportunity to murder the Emperor, but others believe he is living better than he ever could back in the south, and he will continue his charades to amuse the court. Nu'sazto has a quick temper, and often goes to elaborate means to gain revenge.

Chu Raiza Pwee, widow proprietor of the Elk's Brow Waystation in the Forests of Xahn;
Bashan Do Province;
NG, human, female.

The matron of the Elk's Brow is well-known for her strength and kindness. She housed her local village in her walled waystation when Shou troops attacked, and she commanded the defenses that held for 14 days. The armies of the north moved on and have never bothered the waystation or the village of Hahn-ri since! Chu Raiza Pwee was given the honorary title, "gatherer of thorns," by the provincial governor. Soldiers have come to her for advice and to stay in the safe and restful confines of the Elk's Brow.

Chu's husband was killed by a deepwood boar and he left her with three daughters and the station, a wide compound with nine buildings and stalls. She hired 14 women as her staff, and has trained each as a warrior. The Elks Brow can hold 45 single guests, many more in times of trouble, and under the walls is a series of tunnels and dungeons build to aid in defense and to store supplies for the winter.

Ghira Bui So, second cousin to the Lord of Lenachi;
Do Orabi;
samurai 9th level;
LN, human, male.

Ghira Bui So is the leader of the secret army known publicly as the Nuchi Gai, the "honest wolves." He commands a walled fortress which he maintains as a "school for natural history." The honest wolves fight for the continuation of the current realm, and they enforce the laws to the letter, even if it means the death of well-meaning peasants! They are zealots in their duty, and have many times volunteered to fight against the invasion of Shou troops. The order is a clandestine group, and, unless serving in a war, the banners and symbols of the honest wolves are kept hidden and secret.

Ghira Bui So is a middle-aged man with a bald head and yellow eyes like a cat. He listens well, and is believed to carry ninja weapons without disgust, though he is not aligned with a black brotherhood. On his right hand is a heavy gold ring that has magic powers, and he also wears an earring in the barbarian fashion.

Gyoro, the seer of Chedoru;
0 level sage;
LN, human, male.

Along the southern border in the exotic town of Chedoru, one can find the seer Gyoro sitting in the town center as a beggar, telling stories to the children. In the evenings he sits before the shrine of the crossroads god and watches the sun set, and has visions of the future in the colorful sky. It is his curse to sit by this shrine and foresee events through rain or cold. Many people come and question him about his visions, and he faithfully tells the truths he has learned, whether they are relevant to the person or not. He is allowed to sleep in apartments adjoining the Heng household, as his visions have aided their fortunes. It is believed that when he gets too old to continue the nightly visions, he will find another worthy shukenja and pass the curse on to a new "Seer of Chedoru."

Yondak, the Giant of Durkon;
forest and mountains of north Durkon District;
15 hit dice;
CN, giant, male.

Yondak has caught and eaten a few peasants, but he is famous for three great accomplishments. The first was his complete destruction of the bandit gang of Ko Ali. He placed their heads on poles before the gates of Durkon to the cheers of the crowds on the city's walls. His second feat was with the hero Yuga Sin, when he lifted the mountainside so the hero could trap the tengu Ancheen in its lair.

Yondak's third triumph was in a battle with three Me-zu Oni who had been commissioned by the Celestial Emperor. These monstrous horse-faced spirits were sworn to the destruction of Va'shee, a village on the Fenghsintzu south of Durkon, but they had decided to "take the long way" and the things landed in the forests north of Durkon. As these evil creatures began their wanton destruction, Yondak crossed their paths and challenged them. It was a magnificent battle, with polymorphed moths casting spells on the giant, and incredible feats of strength, like uprooting full oaks to deflect fireballs. The conflict lasted one full night and Yondak again placed heads on his poles before the gates of Durkon.

The giant is huge and bald, and he wears a huge leather girdle and 18 brass bands around each arm. He is missing most of his teeth, but his mind is quick, and his traps are deadly. It is rumored that he will join a quest if the cause strikes his fancy.

Tenrax, kio ton mu (witchdoctor) of the Nugha tribes;
hills of E'sang Yi;
wu jen 12th level;
CN, human, male.

The seldom-seen leader of the horsemen of E'sang Yi is a wizard-priest of ancient knowledge and dangerous lore. As one of the few remaining kio ton mu, Tenrax performs ancient rites for the Nugha tribes, the nomadic peoples of the hill country south of Chunming in Ausa province. For thousands of years they have held to their traditions and shunned the ways of civilized man, living in crude tent cities with

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

their horses and flocks of goats. Tenrax has spoken for the tribesmen in the courts of Wai, but his presence is considered a novelty, not to be taken seriously. He is a tall and commanding man, with dark eyes and shaggy eyebrows, and he wears the ceremonial robes of his priesthood, made of leathers, furs, and copper rings.

Benchi, the ferrykeep of Bex Yr across the wide Fenghsintzu at Shosun;
kensai 7th level;
CG, human, male.

When Benchi was a boy, he was orphaned and sold to an old kensai named No Koni Wa, uncle of the famous To Jano. Benchi was taught the art of the sword by the great master To Jano himself, starting his training at the age of four At 25, the year To Jano died, Benchi began his travels and gained local renown for his swordsmanship. Tiring of the mercenary life, Benchi bought a barge and turned it into a ferry. The poling has made his arms stronger and his sword has saved his passengers' lives, overpowering river pirates and thieves many times. His reputation as an honest man and a kensai is known everywhere, as the balladeer has written songs about his exploits, though some are rampant exaggeration.

Echu Nan the mercenary;
the Blood Plains;
bushi 8th level;
LN, human, male.

There's always work for a mercenary on the Blood Plains—whether it be Shou or T'u or just a bandit mob raiding some poor village, it's there in the no man's land between the Mariner province of Shou and the Joi Chang Peninsula. This is where one finds Echu Nan the "money warrior" who hires his fighting swords. He carries two short scimitars into battle, and has survived 12 clan wars, three vendettas and 16 battles with Shou troops. His left leg has a deep scar on the calf and back flank, but it does not hamper his abilities. He shaves his head except for a long pony-tail which he ties in a knot at the back of his neck. His courage is well known among professional fighters and many of his colleagues dread discovering that they have been hired to meet Echu Nan on the field of battle, He has also killed a gentleman who attempted to cheat him of his wages, after a successful but bloody victory.

Sang Yi the potter of Dentarr;
bushi 5th level;
LG, human, male.

As a young boy Sang Yi learned his father's trade as a potter, but he left home at age 16 and wandered looking for his fortune. He met up with Jenshi the tanner's son and Heomo Ling the swordsman, and the three became known as the three chu'ong li (the frogs that whistle in the evening). The three were very courageous in the Stand of Punton Bridge, fighting for the Wai clan, and they were well rewarded for their bravery. Sang Yi spent 10 years in the Wai army, then took a wife and retired a rich man. He moved back to Dentarr and resumed his father's vocation.

Over the years, Sang Yi's pottery gained a reputation for style and grace, and various wu jens and shukenjas were made welcome in his compound, and asked to repay with a little magic. Sang Yi bowls never chip, they change color with different contents, and keep contents hot or cold. Many of the pitchers are magical as well. His greatest creations have been with a wu jen named Techi Ugo, and these have been offered to the Emperor as gifts.

Sang Yi is broad shouldered and no longer carries a sword, but he can fight with his clay tools very aptly! His jaw is wide and he always seems to be smiling, with lines and dimples in his cheeks. He smells of pinewood and smoke, and he smokes from a long carved pipe with a crystal stem.

Hong Too, the hem of Hijan;
yakuza 12th level (ninja 12th level);
CN, human, male.

When the village caught fire, Hong Too carried many women and children to safety. He carried water and inspired others to help contain the blaze. Even after it seemed hopeless, the hero of Hijan continued to fetch buckets of water and dowse the flames. Hong Too was one of the first to start rebuilding and personally sheltered eight families while their homes were raised from the ashes.

Some believe that he is the leader of a yakuza band operating out of Hijan and that his rebuilding efforts are only attempts to regain a new hold on the village. Now, many people owe him their lives for his kindness and they will support him in any way possible, which lend legitimacy to his way of crime. All of Hijan follows his lead, and Hong Too exerts his powers over as many as possible.

Hong Too is of medium build, about 50 years old with graying temples and a long braided mustache. He commonly wears a brightly colored cap and has a katana at his belt.

Tan Mikao Tso, the Bear of T'kon Chi Springs;
the Blood Plains;
bushi 10th level;
CE, human, male.

A distant relative to the ruling clan, Tan Mikao Tso keeps an apartment in Lo'ang, a village on the mouth of the Fenghsintzu River. He is a huge man and he loves to wrestle, often pinning opponents under his great bulk to win the match. Because his hair is so thick and stands up like a bristle brush, people call him the Bear. The Bear is best known for hiring on with caravans as protection, and he is a guide for the Bachai to Do Orabi run, through the T'kon Chi Springs. Tan is often sought during the Great Exorcism Festival to portray the part of the bear-god in morality plays.

Cheng Ta Ubo, mine boss of the imperial mines;
south of Fo Liche Gai;
bushi 17th level;
LE, human, male.

His hands black from the dust and grime of the deep wells, Cheng is the cruel slavedriver forcing convicts and prisoners of war to scrape and dig for gold, cop-

per and iron from the shallow hills of north Quai. He has an evil smile permanently cut into his face by an enemy's blade, and an ugly scar runs the length of his right arm, ending in a lost thumb. This has not stopped him from gathering four concubines who are blinded by his wealth and power. His guards are an elite force hand-chosen by the Emperor to protect the mines and their fruit. Cheng Ta Ubo enjoys the Emperor's favor, which encourages his sadistic and evil nature. Many of the miners are dying from starvation and exhaustion, too weak to attempt a revolt.

Nuska Ohm Wy;
Henai River;
hengeyokai (monkey), CN, male.

This monkey can change into a man at will, and he is known for mischief along the river from the dammed lake to the outskirts of Zun Hi. Nuska Ohm Wy is a sly animal and he uses his trouble and commotions to cover his petty thievery, but most times he just enjoys making fools of humans. This monkey-man will try to join caravans or travelers on the Broken Road and dupe them into believing he is just a fellow adventurer in need of some labor or companionship. Sometimes he will steal everyone's clothes while they sleep, or poke slow leaks in boats or rafts. He is devious, but not evil, never intending death, just maximum embarrassment. The local peasants have a saying, that "You've met Nuska" when a situation is very awkward.

Items of Interest

The Runes of Norzahk

Appearance: This book is bound with the hide of a ki-rin, a silvery-blue fur of silky texture. This beautiful hide is stretched over two thin slices of bamboo which are sewn together at the spine. It is only one hand width wide, while it is three tall, and it is one finger thick. The pages are laminated silk, with different colored enamels highlighting the most important runes. The first page in the tome holds a cursed rune that turns the reader to stone.

History: The legends and myths of the mighty wu jen Norzahk abound in the eastern lands of Banang district. Coming from a poor family with very little honor, Norzahk showed aptitude for wizardry and called his own familiar by the age of 12. He studied under four different masters, outpacing each before he moved on to the next. By middle age, Norzahk had captured a river dragon and rode a foo dog as a mount. He built a secret fortress with a series of catacombs beneath it and sponsored a school for his followers.

Norzahk's accomplishments include destroying the coven of Jurindo and dispelling many malignant spirits. It is believed he moved the course of the Fenghsintzu River and that he could fly faster than any bird. As he grew older, he became a hermit, studying the arcane magics of necromancy in order to prolong his life. But the evil magics perverted his neutral nature, and the mighty wu jen grew hateful and corrupt. Soon he was murdering innocents to extend his own life, and his powers were a blight on the land. Many heroes and warriors lost their lives attempting to rid the world of Norzahk. The evil wu jen finally disappeared and ceased to haunt the southern villages at night, looking for unwary victims.

Norzahk's students told a story of the wu jen's *Book of Runes,* a powerful book of magic that listed all the necromancer's spells. The wu jen carried it with him when he taught in his school, but he had taken it into his hidden fortress when he became a hermit. It was filled with enlightened runes of magical powers that held the knowledge of all Norzahk's spells. Many of these students had searched in vain for the ancient wu jen's fortress when it was believed that he had died, but it is said that the tome still lies undisturbed with its dead master.

The runes contain an assortment of typical spells known throughout the land, ranging from 1st to 8th level, but also include two unique spells, *Year Stealing* and *Thornbush Arrows* and the detailed recipe for *Flame Eggs.*

Year Stealing (necromantic) reversible
Level: 8
Range: Special
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6 segments
Saving Throw: Half loss

Explanation/description: By means of this spell an evil wu jen can steal years from a victim's life and add them to his own life. This draining of life force demands special preparations. It is an arcane art lost for hundreds of years. This spell is the truth behind the old wives' tales that wu jen's could steal a man's life.

Before attempting to steal years, a wu jen must gather blood from his intended victim, which he mixes with his own and water, then places the liquid in a special glass screen made for this purpose. The glass screen must be at least waist high, formed of two panels with a thin channel between, and a hole bored through the center. An unlit black candle is placed on the victim's side of the glass pane and a white candle is lit on the wu jen's side (this is reversed to reverse the spell). A unicorn's horn is stuck through the glass pane in the hole left for this reason, and this acts as a conduit for the magic. When the wu jen casts the spell, the glass screen glows with the light of the candle and this light builds in intensity until a flash of white light envelopes all components, including the people. When the light recedes the white candle has blackened and is blown out while the unlit candle is now streaked with gray and burns with a blue flame. The wu jen becomes 2d6 years younger, while the victim adds the same amount of years to his age. The unicorn's horn turns to useless dust.

Thornbush Arrows (Alteration)
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: 5 thorns/level

Components: V, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/description: Thorns are the most important component of this spell. Whole thorns must be sliced from a rose bush and kept with petals from the same plant's blossoms. When the spell is cast, the wu jen must hold the thorns on his open palm and wave a feather of a phoenix over them, then direct them toward a target. The thorns will fly up and strike with a +4 to hit the target. The little barbs cause 1-2 points of damage (use a coin), but they can be dipped in various poisons before being launched. They all must be used in one shot, but can be spread out over an area to strike multiple targets. These magical thorns only hit targets a wu jen can see, and cannot follow a fleeing or evading individual.

The phoenix feather is useless after the spell and blackens with spent energy. Wu jens who have learned this spell are constantly on the lookout for nice rose bushes or flowering thorn trees.

Flame Eggs

The Runes explain the recipe for Flame Eggs as follows:

Made from duck eggs or rubbery lizard eggs, Flame Eggs are fragile wards usually set on a treasure or as a trap. The slightest tremble sets them off, causing 2d6 points of damage to all subjects in a 10-foot radius. A steady hand and calm movements are needed to create these powerful objects.

First the wu jen making the eggs must have mastered the element of Fire enough to possess the ability of *Fire Breath* (5th level spell). Fresh eggs are required, and the yolks are blown out by pricking a hole in both ends of the egg and using a straw to blow through the hole. Then the bottom hole is sealed with the chip removed from the egg.

Over a small fire, the wu jen must bring oil from the karmak tree to a full boil, then fill the eggs with this hot oil. A scale from a flame adder is used to seal the eggs. The wu jen places the hot egg in his mouth and recites all the words to the spell *Fire Breath* except for the very last, then removes the egg from his mouth. When the egg cools, it is ready to be placed.

After the egg has come to the spot it will guard, the wu jen leans down close to the object and whispers the final word to the spell. The egg will tremble, for the spell has been set off inside but the shell is just strong enough to hold back the flames. The lightest touch will explode it.

Karmak trees are found in the Winto Forest in scattered groves. They are considered useless for their wood is thick with an oily sap and warps when cured. The sap must be purified and distilled into a fine oil for this spell. The better the oil, the more effective the eggs, according to the recipe.

The Juia Lo'tanu

Appearance: This tome is bound with the time-blackened skin of a giant eel, smooth and glossy. On its cover is a painting of a red and white spotted carp, the symbol of hard work and success. Inside are 20 paintings done on translucent silk that has been stiffened with clear lacquer. The paintings can be viewed from either side. They are of tranquil subjects with hidden deeper meanings. Examples of the subjects are: two kittens watching swimming carp in a pool with water lilies; the sun setting behind a picturesque mountain; three girls farming in the rice-paddy. The book has no magical wards or traps, as it was designed to be accessible.

History: This very beautiful work of art was painted by Da'u Ching Tso with the magical paints given to him by the pigfaced spirit from the Heavens. It was inspired by the teachings of the wu jen Korsanna the Orator, who infused his magic into Da'u's expressions of art. The thoughts, feelings and knowledge of the student and master are gained through study of this tome.

Korsarma took this treasured book throughout the land, using it as a teaching tool. This was in the years 1240-1280, and many great speakers are known from this period, most of whom followed Korsanna for a while. Then Korsanna died mysteriously in the village of Sou Tu, now ruins in southern Noka Jui District. The Juia Lo'tanu passed through a few hands who admired it only as art, then came to rest in the hands of the Wai clan about the year 1425. This tome was held and studied by the Wai family, and many believe that this magic enabled the Wai men to gain their power and stature in the communities of southern Shou. By the year 2000, the Wai clan was one of the most powerful noble families of southern Shou Lung, well known for their imaginative and engaging public speaking.

Just before the Moon Feast Festival in the year 2065, the Wai clan fortress and compound was raided by a band of marauding jungle barbarians, who succeeded in breaking through the main gate with a *fireball* from their leader's magic staff. This group of fools stole many of the family heirlooms, but also took the *Juia Lo'tanu.* This ancestral home was located east of the modern city of Ha'chou, and the escaping brigands rode east to the Henai River, crossing at Tarepi. Here they were caught mid-stream by the Shou posse and many of them were killed by arrows. Only the wizard leader and five men eluded the law. Historians speculate that these barbarians were the same group that raided We'noa and Chin a year later, and were ultimately captured at Cufa Twi Caverns. The *Juia Lo'tanu* and the rest of the Wai heirlooms were lost. Gossip and legend places the treasure in a citadel, deep inside the caverns, but this is only hearsay.

If a character has an Intelligence of 15 or higher, he will gain from intense analysis of this tome. Alignment is unimportant to the magical lessons. After 1d4 months of scrutiny, the tome gives insight into the art of magical oratory, a fantastic gift, and the skill is passed on to the reader. It gives the character a magical ability to influence any group he addresses toward his position or conclusions, often swaying a crowds support. The player must speak for a half-hour or more. The effectiveness of this ability is situational, and entirely dependent on the DM's interpretation. It is not a mass hypnotism or suggestion, because it can

be learned by any character class and it is not as powerful as a true wu jen spell. A magical speech will add 10 percent to the morale of followers or troops in the speaker's command. It also increases the courtly abilities of Poetry and Noh by lowering their base chance of success by two.

For example, if the magical orator is addressing a group of friends, or any neutral crowd, they may be easily convinced that the speaker's purpose or meanings are correct and true, and action may be expected. However, a speech before an angry Emperor or a lynch-mob may only save the character's life, with a quick trip to the local prison or a public flogging the punishment-the situation will dictate the outcome. A low-classed bushi warrior can only expect a magical speech to get gentlemen to listen and maybe reflect on his words. A good benchmark is that 15 percent of any neutral group will be swayed to action or belief by magical oratory.

The Edu'sascar

Appearance: These magical placards are painted with the hallowed symbols of the monks of old S'tung Monastery Each is a cream-colored card two hands tall by one and a half wide, with a powerful magical symbol painted in black on the surface, and etched with gold. The ink of the giant river squid was used to pen the signs, and it was purified and blessed by the monks. The cards were formed of flax and silk fibers, mixed with bamboo pulp, a local tuber called tocara root, and dried flowers of the dogwood tree. This mixture was rolled out flat and cut with a holy blade from the S'tung Temple. The five cards are kept wrapped in silks and stored in a dragon leather satchel made to hold them. The dragon leather is from the throat of a river dragon and it resembles alligator skin. It is a very soft and pliable leather, but it is highly resistant to scratches or cuts.

History: The five Edu'sascar were made by the founder of the S'tung Monastery in 894. This shukenja-turned-monk's real name is lost, but his posthumous title is "Sky Father," for he was an avid astronomer and left many charts of the star's paths and records of shooting stars and comets. He had his followers create the placards, then this ancient abbot carried these empty cards and his ink on a purging journey into the wilderness. When he returned four months later, he had drawn the magical symbols. The golden highlights were added by later generations of adoring and pious monks.

The Edu'sascar have always been held by the monks of S'tung, and the few times they were stolen, a terrible curse hounded the thieves and they returned the plaques. The curse causes everything alive that is touched by the cursed person to soon die by a stroke of bad luck. Plants are stepped on, trees are struck by lightning, horses stumble and break their backs, people are drowned or killed in accidents. The weights of the deaths and anticipation of a dismal future or guilty consciences drove the criminals back to the monastery to return the holy relics.

The Edu'sascar are brought out to the walls of the monastery for the yearly ceremony honoring the gods of the seasons, held on the winter equinox. At this time they are held out and their combined powers sweep the sky with colorful rays of light, like an aurora borealis. All the cards are invoked by concentrating on the ink image. The placards can be used individually and their symbols and powers are as follows:

Ki, the symbol of the Power Within. With this card a monk or shukenja can increase the ki powers of a congregation one level for one round. The number of people effected increases by three per level of the character using the card. It does not work in the hands of lay men or women.

Mo, the sign of the Calm Sea, the symbol of Inner Calm. This card can be used by any character of any class or level to calm storms. It is reversible by inverting the card, which calls a wind and thunderstorms. This placard's side-effects cause the wielder's skin to pale to an ashen white which returns to normal only after a long and restful sleep.

Di, the sign of Flowers of Spring, the symbol of Nature's Strength. This allows a shukenja, monk or wu jen to speak with plants and cast the spell *Quick-growth* with no prior training in this sort of magic. Lay men have no ability with this card.

Fo, the sign of Cloudy Sky, the symbol of Hidden Power. This card works only for monks of neutral good alignment. All others receive an electrical shock which causes 1d4 points of damage. By focusing on *this* card the monk can cast *Immunity to Weapons* and *Invisibility to Enemies.* A monk can also hold this card over his head and pronounce the word symbolized on the card, and it will be as if the word were a *Holy Word,* as in the spell.

La, the sign of Bridges over the Depths, the symbol of the Strength in Brotherhood. This card can only be wielded by a shukenja of 10th or higher level. It allows the manipulator to Mass Heal, a particularly handy battlefield skill! The spell heals a total of 100 hit points per casting, and this can be spread among as many individuals as desired by the caster in increments of 5. In other words, 10 characters would get 10 points, or 20 would receive 5, or 1 might receive 20 points while another got 80, at the caster's whim. This powerful card is the most coveted of the Edu'sascar, as it has been used to support and rally T'u Lung troops when joined by the monks of Stung. It's side-effect is that it ages its wielder by 1d6 years each use, so it is used sparingly.

The Scrolls of Ha Rahni

Appearance: The scrolls are long silk rolls wound on ornate teak spools. The spools fit tightly into matching carved boxes, inset with gems and brass chasings. There are four scrolls per box and two boxes, and each scroll is a treatise, diary, notebook and spellbook of the famous wu jen of Old Banang, Ha Rahni. These scrolls list the following spells: *Accuracy, Bind, Fire Shuriken, Whip, Disguise, Haste, Fire Rain, Hold Person, Scry, Melt Metal, Wall of Fire, Conjure Elemental, Telekinesis, Enchant an Item, Surelife,* and *Internal Fire.* Most of the scrolls are illuminated with colored threads and small illustrations, and they

are written non-consecutively, as the wu jen wrote one day in one, then the next day in another.

History: Ha Rahni began the scrolls after his touring days, when he took the profits of his adventures and settled down in Banang, around the year 2180. He was a powerful and inquisitive man, setting up many laboratories and recording numerous arcane facts in his scrolls. These records remained in his hands until 2212, the year of Ha Rahni's death, when the scrolls were passed on to his students. Many of the illuminations to the texts are attributed to these followers of the great wu jen. Ha Rahni's house and grounds became a school in the methods of his magic, led by an enthusiastic young wu jen, Xogah Koo, who never reached Ha Rahni's level of skill in magic, but far outpaced his teacher as a businessman. The Ha Rahni School is a martial arts and magic training school in modern Banang, a tribute to the skills of Xogah Koo.

In the year 2297, the main house in the school compound caught fire and the scrolls were rescued only seconds before disaster. The evil wu jen Hordolaz stole the scrolls and flew to his tower in the city of Ca'hong Chwi, before it was flooded. Hordolaz hid the scrolls in his apartments overlooking the city, and used the knowledge they gave him for evil purposes. In 2315, when the city was flooded and destroyed, the evil Hordolaz was killed by T'u warriors, but the scrolls were not recovered. It is rumored that they still exist hidden in the submerged tower of the wu jen.

The Warfu Stones

Appearance: The magical gems were placed on Kara-Tur by the Lords of Karma, at the direction of the Celestial Emperor. They have many colors, but always sparkle with an inner fire or seem to encase movement. These jewels cannot be crushed or melted, and, when in use, float over the head of the wielder, or circle the head like a miniature moon. Warfu stones have been found and used by heroes and villains throughout history, and the stories that surround their use often mention incredible feats attributed to the stones. Here are the types of Warfu Stones known in T'u Lung:

Color	Power
Green	raises level by one
Blue	bestows flight
Red	protects from fire
Yellow	raises strength by one point
Violet	raises charisma by one point
Opal	doubles ki power
White	raises comeliness by one point
Black	allows one additional martial art special maneuver
Crystal	increase weapon proficiency by +2

Mokan River Pearls

The Mokan River pearls come from the lance mussels of the Mokan River, a common bivalve with a pearly inner shell with long, razor-sharp edges. These mussels are harvested by river coolies by the thousands for their meat and occasionally a single pearl is found. These large animals make large pearls, sometimes as big as an eye, and they are coveted for false eyes due to their smoothness. Often these pearls are swirled with a bright scarlet or turquoise color, and these are even more prized. A single pearl will bring 10-50 Ch'ien and a necklace of these pearls can be worth thousands of Ch'ien. They are believed to be prized by the Moon Women, the lesser gods of the Celestial Bureaucracy.

The Death Rock of The Darahd Stin

The Cult of the Darahd Stin are an evil congregation that worship the giant river salamander. Their kio ton mu carries a horrible relic called the *Death Rock* which is an inky-black stone about the size of a fist. This stone is rumored to enable the possessor to cast the following spells: *Shadow Door, Passwall, Creeping Darkness, Pain, Mass Suggestion, Withering Palm,* and *Power Word-Kill.* It also gives the wielder the ability to cast an *Ancient Curse* and *Cause Critical Wounds* like the shukenja spells. Anyone who finds the *Death Rock* in their house or placed in their path is cursed by the cult and can expect death soon.

It is believed that the *Death Rock* is really the black heart of the nameless god who watches over assassins and murderers, often pictured in the shape of the giant black river salamander. It was given to the cult by the god himself when he began to encourage their worship. This cult is filled with unsavory types, thugs and thieves with no honor. The members are believed to be spread throughout T'u Lung. No one knows where the Temple of the Darahd S'tin is located, but it is rumored to be somewhere northwest of Kichai.

The Monkey Fist of Ha'chao

Dark and ratty, this relic appears to be a tightly clenched monkey fist severed at the wrist. It is dried and a silver cuff attaches it to a long silver chain. Its hairs are black and wiry, and it seems to be holding something, but the fingers cannot be forced open. It has no odor, but if a *Detect Magic* is cast on it, the object shines bright white light.

History: Long before mankind was visited by the Nine, Fa Kuan, the god of justice, was directing the Lords of Karma in the ways of the Eternal Change, when one of these spirits was distracted by a passing Jade Lady. As a punishment for wandering attention, Fa Kuan turned the spirit creature into a monkey to illustrate change, and the embarrassed spirit hid his face among his peers.

After a few years of sulking, the spirit returned to Fa Kuan and, once again, began his studies. A century passed and the monkey-spirit became restless —when would his master return him to his true form? After a few more years, he approached Fa Kuan and begged mercy. The god told the spirit creature that it must approach the Celestial Emperor.

The Emperor knew the monkey-spirit would come to him as he knew the outcome of their meeting. When the silly creature appeared to beg forgiveness in all humility, the Celestial Emperor placed a grape in

his mouth and then took it out and held it up for the monkey-spirit to see. The grape sparkled with saliva.

"This will return you to your former shape," the god began, "but, once you eat it, you will lose your immortality and soon fade from our existence. It is yours to decide." And the Celestial Emperor handed the grape to the spirit creature.

The monkey looked at the pale green grape, and rolled it in his hand. "And what happens if I crush this fruit?" the spirit asked and squeezed the grape until it popped! A great fire of incredible light engulfed the foolish monkey, and it stumbled about the court for a moment. The little ape quickly leaped to Chan Ching, the god of heroes, and grabbed his long dagger. Grasping the blade with his left hand, the spirit chopped off his hand with a swift stroke. The monkey's paw fell out of heaven, still flaming with the white fire, and the spirit was restored to his true form, less his lost hand.

The paw fell into the Fenghsintzu River where its flames were cooled and it washed on the banks where the city of Kichai now stands. The first to find the magic paw started its cult of worshipers, who were dispersed by the Shou invasion about 415. The Monkey's Fist then passed into the hands of the great wu jen, Ha'chao.

Ha'chao learned its many powers and wielded them in many parts of the Empire, spreading his fame and gathering wealth. The wu jen retired to his secret fortress in Canung Marsh and that was the last the magical paw was seen for 1,200 years. In 1689, Wang Di Uno, the hero of Rochung, located the lost fortress and recovered the Monkey Fist. His son used the magic in the battle of Kao 2, 1723, when southern jungle barbarians were routed along the border near Hodo'ung Cha garrison. For five generations, this relic increased the power and honor of the Wang clan, but it was finally stolen by a daring thief, and has been lost since 1974. Nothing more is known about the relic, but legends and myths abound, and many adventurers have searched for it in vain.

The Fist is useless to all except a wu jen of 8th level or higher. To these it bestows the following spells and abilities:

- allows the wielder to shapechange into a monkey at will;
- increases the wielder's ability to climb walls by 50 percent;
- the following spells can be cast at will: *Accuracy, Hypnotism, Read Magic, Shield, Wizard Mark, Invisibility, Hypnotic Pattern,* and *Haste;*
- *Animal Growth* once/day, *Permanent Illusion* once/week, *Elemental Servant* once/month, *Permanency* once/year, *Planar Call* and *Summon Spirit* only once (there is a 45% chance that the Lord of Karma without a hand is summoned).

Adventure Ideas

I have decided to cover one garrison and its trade town in depth as an example of T'u Lung villages, and the best example I believe is Wafang, on the Southern Passage where the Fenghsintzu crosses from the Cha'yuan province of Shou Lung into the Fengnao province of T'u. This spot sees a lot of traffic and the inns of Wafang are famous for their hospitality and excellent food. Besides its fine reputation, it is the garrison I know best, since I have visited this town innumerable times.

Key To Wafang Garrison and Trade-Town

1. The Gate of Yanching, across the Southern Passage Highway
2. The Wafang Fortress and Garrison, east compound
3. The Wafang Garrison, west compound
4. Bok Chu's Inn
5. Nudo Juss's House, the money-changer
6. Rankow the Wu Jen's house and towers
7. The merchant Yo Ven Cha's warehouse
8. The Market Square
9. Sonuk Du's Mansion and observatory
10. The Master Potter
11. The blacksmith Wogentu's yard
12. The butcher Man'to's stockyard
13. The Fanu clan house
14. The mansion and rice paddies of the Hoji clan
15. The Gai clan mansion
16. The Qu Tung School of martial art
17. Banda Inu the seer's house
18. The mercenary Gwee's house and stables
19. The Fox's Clearing, where the rain shrine stands
20. The merchant Wiscu Chon's Yards
21. The Uisa To School compound
22. Fandro the merchant's mansion
23. The Yang Keep
24. Xircon the arms-seller
25. The stables of Han So
26. Fan'intu's Inn
27. The Donang clan home
28. Unido the interpreter's house
29. Wise Mara's house
30. Tarungo the barbarian's shop

Government Careers

It is a fact of life that unless a character is a superhero, if he doesn't belong to the correct clan, his chances of advancement in the government are very slim. Yet, often fast advances are maneuvered by smart clansmen who put their position and powers to the best use. So, while it is virtually impossible for a peasant to rise above his birth status, a wise gentleman can work his way into the highest levels of T'u Lung society.

While this may deter some adventurers from T'u Lung, it more than makes up for its rigid society with ample opportunities for escapades! T'u Lung is filled with abandoned mines, half-burnt cities, monster-filled ruins and haunted houses. It is the antithesis of Shou where the countryside is well-groomed and safe: the government's harsh rule and corruption encourages yakuza clans and highwaymen! T'u Lung is still untamed, and its face has been scoured by the continual wars that have raged across the lands. It is possible for players to go from adventure to adventure and never deal with the governmental structure,

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

other than tax collection and conscription attempts.

The T'u Lung Calendar of Events
The Year 2607

Tsou

A vendetta is begun by a faction within the Yang clan against the Hohm clan of Hachoni. Both sides are enlisting men in secret armies. The Yang's dispute the Hohm's claim to forestry land north of the city, and blame the Hohms for a recent death of one of their spies.

The ghost of an ancient ancestor of the Ho clan is seen in Ausa. He was executed by the Shou troops who put down their revolt hundreds of years ago, yet he had no part in the rebellion. He was an honorable man and mourns his lost name. This spirit is haunting the streets of the city and has not been exorcised by the local priests and monks.

A forest near the city of Banang is turned into stone. Many people visit the sight and experts say it is a visitation by the celestial forces, but there is no validation to this claim.

The Emperor discovers a spy in his court and tortures him to discover his master. People say he was of the Tan clan and they are gathering an army now to forestall the Emperor's punishments. However, others believe the spy died before revealing his master— in any event, the unfortunate man's head hangs from a pole on the southern gates of the capital city.

Ju

The village of Bu Han in the So'iru district in Fengnao province is visited by a celestial minion, a spirit creature with pig's feet, a man's head and torso and long white wings. This thing warns of an impending doom that will soon destroy the village and all inhabitants!

Poisoned chunming pepper wine is served to the Emperor, and he gets very ill, but lives through the ordeal. He blames the Shin family of Ausa, and demands the leaders of this clan be executed and their heads be brought to him. The Shin clan is warned and escapes the punishment by hiding somewhere in the hills of E'sang Yi. Some believe the Nugha are in league with the Shin clan but no one can find them. An Imperial edict offers 15,000 Ch'ien to be split equally among the people who find and bring the Shins to justice.

The shukenja Anwan of Ujoh is killed by an evil spirit. This thing has eaten several villagers and a sheriff sent from Hachoni.

Yu

The earth quakes and the S'tuni Dam is damaged, draining the Sin Bukai Lake. Monsters crawl out of the uncovered city in the center of the pool and begin to cause problems for the local villages. The rice paddies also drain and the crops are ruined. A hero named Ju Ghoni drinks a potion that gives him phantom wings and he flies to the celestial heavens to steal the supreme emperor's "swelling mold" to fix the dam. He is caught and turned to stone by the angry celestial bureaucracy, then placed in the market of Hifuwa village as a warning to men not to tamper with the celestial beings.

A large force of bakemono attack We'peng garrison and breach the wall in a surprise move. They are repelled, but casualties are high. Volunteers are being collected to serve at the fortress.

A battle is fought between a small group of soldiers loyal to the Emperor and a secret army with a green and red banner. A reward is offered for information about this faction.

Kao

The Kohuno clan of Keeling celebrates its oldest daughter's coming of age with a feast, and many prospective suitors are invited. Do Enang the Sealord is sending his second and third sons, since he favors the Kohuno family and has made a number of their clan household chiefs.

General Ku D'nag Sao, the district officer of Pendir Chao, is found dead in his apartments. The general had no sons. His son-in-law attempts to take his place, but is killed by a rival clan in street battles. The Emperor sends 500 troops to the district capital to quell the riots.

The group of Nugha riders take control of the Ye T'sau Well and allow no watering there. Posses from Chunming and Ausa muster a force of 100 and ride to retake the well, but when they arrive, the tribesmen have disappeared into the hills of E'sang Yi.

The Emperor has an argument with his brother, Wai Gada Mo, which results in a court division. About one third of the courtiers leave the capital for the To'an district in support of Wai Gada Mo. There is talk of civil war.

Kao II

The Emperor issues an Imperial edict calling for conscription for an offensive with Shou. The troops are being assembled in Noka'o Ruha so they can invade and retake the Lup Iantu territories (Pien Lun).

Wai Gada Mo is summoned to the Emperor's court, and after delays, he appears and is arrested by his brother and thrown into the dungeons of the Dakarazu Palace. Wai Gada Mo's friends withdraw all support of the army in protest, but no uprising occurs. The Emperor moves Wai Gu Sunlee and his family to oversee To'an district and places the care of Noka'o Ruha district in the hands of his trusted Minister of Royal Ceremony, Yung Aah Soo.

Twelve men wearing masks and carrying an orange banner with a skull in black attack the village of Chun Ki, just a day downriver from Banang. No one knows who they are, but they do succeed in killing the village's household chief and stealing a heaven stone, a carved jade ring, from a local shrine. One man notices they rode Nugha horses.

Chu

The ambassador from Wa visits the T'u Lung court, and the Emperor gives him many gifts and signs a

treaty opening T'u Ports to Wa warships and merchant marines. Wa is searching for a partner in invading Shou, but the Emperor declines the opportunity, the recent losses still fresh in his mind.

Tan Wui Locca is visited by an apparition which warns him of a Shou attempt to take the Three Sisters, the islands that are part of the Montow district. He prepares a secret army on JeuKung and anchors a fleet of warships east of Awana.

A Lu Nat, an evil lesser spirit, is seen in the ruins of Quenche. The mercenary Vang Hu is overcome by the monster and carried into the ruins. It is said that the warrior was holding a *ring of strength,* but it is in the hands of the spirit now.

Hsiang

A caravan on the Conqueror's Highway is overrun by bakemono from the Winto Forest. Only two survivors make it to Shang Stzi with their tale. The district officer drafts 20 new men to patrol the roadways and hunt down these dangerous monsters.

The great sage Zahn Jo dies in his home in Sanki. Many travel to his funeral to honor his name. The sage is given the posthumous title of Wa'duinta, which means "fountainhead." The two most important tomes in *his* collection, *The Hisiorical notes of Chi* and *The Studies of Metaphysics of Time and Illusion* by the master illusionist I'chu Gho, are discovered stolen after the ceremonies.

The Emperor increases taxes to support the war efforts along the border with Shou. Many complain of the excessive amounts and the heavy burdens placed upon them. The Fengnao and Bashan Do provinces decide to ignore the edict.

Chuang

A comet is seen in the southern skies, arcing out over the oceans to the east. Many wisemen call this a good omen.

River pirates set fire to the village of Handu, a day upriver from Banang. The entire village is burned to the ground. The provincial governor, Kodo Smara, vows revenge and sends his private army out searching for these pirates, who are led by a man known only as the Silver Watersnake.

There is a revolt in the Wai mines and over half of the slaves are killed before the uprising is put down. Rumors are that it is dangerous to travel in this region of East Wai, as the Emperor is indiscriminately gathering new slaves for his mines, catching anyone who is not of the upper classes and putting him to work.

The Tan clan announces the birth of a new son at Te Pachan Castle. A naming ceremony is scheduled and many important guests are expected to attend.

Hsuan

A river monster resembling a giant hippopotamus builds a lair under the Punton Bridge. It kills four mighty warriors of S'seh Yando who were sent to defeat the thing, and it now controls the bridge and demands a toll from all who wish to pass.

The Prince Wai Gada Anku leaves court again. Rumors are that he is attempting to get into Shou Lung to visit his love, the Princess of Shou. He has been absent for three weeks, and there is no word of his fate.

A poetry contest is scheduled for the end of the month in Ausa. Prizes are to be provided by the Ho clan, and the first prize will be a fortress on the Sunob Bay. Poets are well respected and admired in this province.

Yang

A ship arrives in H'sin-to carrying a load of wax-cased pills from far and exotic Kozakura. This new medicine is coveted throughout the land and it commands a very high price.

The Shrine of the God of Thunder in the village of Gencha is turned to dust by a passing shukenja who claims that it was inhabited by an evil spirit. This unknown benefactor captures the spirit in a glass bottle and floats it down the Fenghsintzu River. The shrine is being rebuilt to honor the god.

A group of fearsome Tigbanua buso move into the area of Kichai and begin raiding local villages. A reward is offered by the township officer for their destruction.

A giant carp sinks two fishing boats on the Henai River near Tarepi. The villagers are afraid of this monster and are looking for a brave group of adventurers willing to capture or kill the beast.

A criminal band calling itself the "Blue Tigers" becomes troublesome on the Conqueror's Highway in the Bashan Do province. The Wen clan sends its private army out to bring this group of bandits to justice, but they are unable to locate the group so far.

Ku

A major earthquake causes the walls of Ha'chou to tumble down, killing and injuring many peasants and citizens. Rebuilding is going very slowly for lack of supplies.

Two yakuza clans in west Wai begin a war for control of the criminal activities in the province. The battles are secret, but the dead left in the streets are not, and many of the local officials encourage the fighting, which just strengthens their positions.

A dragon is seen by the Emperor and his court flying over the Dakarazu Palace. The sooth-sayers proclaim that this is a good omen, and the Emperor gives amnesty to all in his prisons to celebrate the occasion, including his brother, who returns to his district without position.

The village of Fon'awu in the Banang district is swallowed by an earthquake and completely destroyed. It is rumored that an incredible treasure was lost in this terrible calamity, carried by the adventuring party who called themselves the "Honest Dawn-cocks." These men had raided the lost temple of Anduax and stole cursed gems from the caverns beneath the altars.

In Durkon district, reports are that a hunting pack of yeti have been attacking smaller villages and homesteads, carrying off peasants as food. The yeti number more than 50, and the district officials are hastily gathering an army to stop the monsters' raids.

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

A famous lama or monk of Tabot comes to the Wai court as ambassador of the High Lord of Oceans. Tabot wishes to enter into a trade agreement with T'u Lung, as well as join armies to quell Shou aggression in both lands. The Emperor welcomes the lama and is rumored to be very interested in Tabot's offers.

Tu

Merlox, the wu jen of Pe Nok, completes five magical tapestries that cause whoever gazes at them to see a vision of the past which they portray. These magical items are given to the Tan clan as tribute for their protection, and the beautiful weavings are hung in the great hall of Te Pachan Castle.

Some infidel enters the Imperial tombs and disturbs the rest of the dead Emperors. The Wai clan offers a reward for the capture of the criminals and the return of the stolen treasures.

The village of Lo'ha is chastised for hiding escaped mine slaves, and its three household chiefs are hanged in the town center as a warning. Production at the Wai mines is down, and Rumors are that the Emperor is displeased.

Ancient undead warriors are accidentally raised from their graves by a group of rice farmers extending an irrigation canal near the village of Gawat. Coming out of an extensive unmarked sepulcher' the monsters attack and kill six of the diggers. The things keep the workers from their fields.

Tabot

"I have had little traffic with Tabot over the many years," Meilung wrote to Elminster, "and other than that magic tome I had given to the warrior monks at Ko'Chung for safe keeping, it seemed that I had lost contact with the people of the land. Yes, it's true I can tell you the history of the land, the coming of the High Lama, the battles with Shou Lung, but I didn't know the people and their culture, and I believed that I was missing the essence of the land, so I sought an opportunity to visit Tabot and observe.

"Surprisingly, within a year, an ambassadorial delegation from Tabot opened communications and a treaty of peace was proposed! We were honored by the invitation to an important Tabotan ceremony in the Temple of Heaven's Heart on the top of Mount E'kwong, close to the Shou Lung border. The religious ceremony was in my jurisdiction and, rather than send one of my men, I decided to accept the duty myself. It was to be a pilgrimage up the mountainside, and the number of worshipers was curtailed to a select few of the thousands of the Tabotan faithful that wished to attend. I soon discovered what a tedious journey I had undertaken, and if it hadn't been for a young monk, the entire trip would have been a dreary bore.

"When we reached the base of Mount E'kwong, grim and foreboding as most of this stark country, our escorts told us we would have to continue the 60-mile journey on foot, as is the custom of the supplicants. It would have been impossible to ride, as the narrow roadway was choked with people of all description: monks and old men, girls and babes and warriors. My companions and I watched a regiment of warrior. priests wearing brass skullcaps topped with the "eye" of a peacock feather march past us, and nine important women dressed in strange headgear resembling rainbows wrapped around their heads, a group of servants outfitted in gray-black woolen garments swarming in their wake. All of Tabot was passing here, and I decided to stop my entourage and watch the procession.

"Alas but all of Tabot gets very dull! After two days I was beginning to believe there was no one in the crowds of importance, so we might as well begin the climb, and I began to ready my men, when a young Tabotan monk stepped up to me, dressed in an orange loincloth and holding an ornate green and gold umbrella, and proclaimed, 'You look important enough!'

" 'Important enough?' I asked, but the young man ignored my question and introduced himself.

" 'I am Pang, nu cho of the great and powerful monastery Pokarr, chosen by the enlightened abbot Mo Kin to represent my brothers in the great festival in the Temple of the Heaven's Heart, above. You appear to be a guest from Shou Lung, and I beg your worthy company on the journey that lies before us. I, who have not spoken for the last eight years, am released from my vows of silence as a scribe of the monastery, by virtue of my choice for this favored march of holy supplication to the Celestial Heart. Will you travel with a humble servant of Pokarr and his men to the shrine?' Behind him stood five temple guards, dressed in dark green pants and blouses, and armed with scimitars hung on their belts.

"Pulling my hood forward to keep out the rain and hide my eyes, I agreed to accompany Pang, who proceeded to give a wide and varied description of his homelands. The following notes are in his words, culled from our discussions during that pilgrimage up Mount E'kwong's jagged slopes. Listen with the wisdom of age, Elminster, for youth colors the truth with certainty, and Pang's biases masquerade gaps in his knowledge. Here are the words of Pang of Tabot."

Tabot is a holy land, first and always, but while the dzong-pon rule in the districts, the High One sits with the Celestial Emperor and watches over his chosen land. We are a stable and committed nation, ruled sensibly by the hands of the gods. . . . It is a place for prayer and ceremony and scholarly learning, a restful place.

Geography

The land is poor but workable, and the mountains play host to thousands of goats and sheep. Tabot mainly imports rice, grains, and steel, while we export copper, furs, and ice. You from Shou Lung like the glacier ice. Phutan is surrounded by a thick bamboo forest, but the remainder of our lowland is rough hills and grassy fields, and few trees save those we tend. It is a wild land, with freezing winds off the glaciers, avalanches and mud-slides, dust-storms and the insurmountable peaks of the Wu Pi Te Shar Mountains. Many of our people are nomads, moving with their herds. The local wild yaks have been domesticated over the years. There are white snow apes and downy snow birds throughout the mountains, and the white tiger hunts in our realm. Most horrible of our fauna is the yeti, the huge snow men that have plagued the monasteries since their inception.

Climate

Tabot is harsh in climate. Its crop season is six to eight weeks, even in the river valleys. Prevailing winds and high altitudes keep the glaciers alive in the Po Yul Dzayul Range, and Nad Ho Ting Lake only thaws for a few months per year The landscape is very stark for the majority of the year—gray hills, hunched with boulders, gravel slides, and lichen-covered stones. Fields of tough grasses and thick brush stretch along the rivers, and bandits hide in the shadows. This is a desperate land, and it is a wild place. In winter, the snow grows deep and the glaciers gain back the ground they lost the previous summer. The roads outlined on various maps of Tabot are no more than trails through the cold, rocky land.

Cities

The cities of Tabot are still recovering from thousands of years of misrule by the nobility, and there are still wild places. Not many of them have mastered the two story dwelling, so most "towns" are made of tents and yurts and sod-brick long-houses. The twin cities of Motra and Joya are nothing more than confused laymen, allowing the out-laws of T'u Lung and Shou Lung free passage. Their streets are rife with bandits, thieves, and murdering scoundrels. People say they worship the frog and snake there, and that the night assassins are real in those frontier towns. The monasteries have preserved the culture and riches of Tabot. I can tell you all about the important monasteries.

U'chan Gompa

U'Chan Gompa, where the Lord of Oceans presides, is our most famous monastery and the capital city of Tabot. The common people persist in calling the city by its former name, Koko Nur. The magnificent stairs to its gate are just a prelude to the palace of the High One. The complex houses 1,200 men, 230 women, 700 children, 400 horses, and 200 goats. It has 45 towers, each topped with an onion dome of gold-leaf, and 12 minarets standing twice as tall, where a lama can meditate for days undisturbed. You've probably seen paintings of it, long and white against the black mountains of the Po Yul Dzayul Range, Mount Shun all craggy and mysterious in the distance. The monks have honeycombed the ancient fortress with secret passages and hidden rooms, and it's said that in their libraries are the war treatise of Chu and the crucial tome, Puvarna, the great holy teachings of the first High One in his own handwriting. Of course, no one in all of Tabot will raise his arm against the Staff of the Oceans, and the High One is usually near his treasures, so they are well protected.

The councils all meet in U'Chan, and the city is crowded with guests and supplicants throughout the year The last census puts 22,000 people in U'Chan, with about 4,000 transients, all crowded in a sprawling city without a single building over three stories talk Yes, that's the biggest city in Tabot, rivaling some in your own land.

There are four temples in the city, with towering pillars and statues of marble. Tin dragons hang from the rafters and adorn all the roof peaks, for the dragon is the symbol of U'Chan. Traffic is heavy on the road to Ji, and caravans leave daily on this relatively safe and well-traveled route. And I know you've heard of the temple on Mount Shun, where the Holy Mysteries of our faith occurred, where demons have been conquered and the lances of Tabja Rung were forged. U'Chan is a place a man is lucky to see.

Ko'Chung Gompa

In the north lies Ko'Chung Gompa. This gompa has always been a fortress, known for its high, thick walls and the huge siege tower that houses the only entrance into the compound. The monks are studied and professional, although they tend to be a bit savage, as they are challenged regularly, and battle hardens the soul. But Ko'Chung has a fresh water spring on its grounds, and flowering vines creep amid the battlements, so in the time of growing, Ko'Chung Gompa has a stark beauty that has brought many lamas to understanding the Way of Enlightenment. I hope to visit that holy place.

At Ko'Chung is the magnificent E'soa Hochi, the Herald, a magical history of the world that writes itself as you watch! It is said that the man who reads can use the book to seek particular histories, like a lost love or an old foe, but not many see the tome with their eyes, save by special permission of the Lord of Oceans. The Herald is coveted by many powerful men, and this has made the abbots of Ko'Chung Gompa strong-willed and cautious. Ko'Chung has been our northern bulwark against the plains raiders and the heathens of Shou Lung who continually attempt to invade tranquil Tabot. The militia there numbers 800 trained warriors and the kicugun, an elite cavalry numbering 250.

M'Tsin Gompa

In the northwest, just northeast of Lake Nad Ho Ting, is M'tsin Gompa, a small retreat famed for its natural wells and koi (sacred multicolored carp) pools. The lamas contemplate and tend the beautiful fish, and the compound covers a terraced mountainside with many shrines and devotion poles raised among the pools. Only 340 lamas are on the roster of M'tsin, but their quiet and harmony has brought to them great magic. As they have shown in battle, the lamas of M'tsin control the elements and the weather with ease. They mine gold north of Nad Ho Ting Tso, and some think that they are the richest of the gompas, but if they are, they are the stingiest as well.

Pokarr and Lii Gompas

Pokarr and Lii Gompa are called the Right and Left Hands of U'Chan, and both monasteries house 1,000 or more lamas and novices. Pokarr is my home. Pokarr's dread cavalry has repelled invaders many times, and our three wide, stone gates can swing open or closed in an instant. The original fortress was dug deep into the mountainside, and miles of tunnels lie abandoned today. It is known that during 2267 Zife Yur the warrior disappeared in the catacombs deep under the old keep centered in today's monastery and never came out. Of course, no one's allowed in there now.

Pokarr has the wisest of all abbots, Mo Kin, my benefactor. We have four libraries that include masterworks by Ischan and Doka'zar, the religious treatises of Wang Tcu Lor, and the natural histories and journals of Soo Enlahm. The lamas are educated in calligraphy and swordsmanship and may indulge in one other art, so as to praise the gods. Many of us work the clays from the lands south of the city Rokstang, and our pottery has become known throughout the realm. Our best potters can infuse magic into their vessels.

Pokarr Gompa has three separate treasure rooms for keeping our relics safe. I have seen the holy remnants, the bones of stone, and the four golden Eggs of

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

Ghastar, but I've only seen one egg's power, when Mo Kin used the egg with ruby snakes to stop the flood of Rokstang six years ago. There is a magical tapestry that will mesmerize those who watch it and five holy volumes from the hand of the first Lord Of Oceans. These are just a few of the treasures of Pokarr Gompa, the Left Hand.

Lii has all those bells and two big festivals.

Frekang Gompa

Frekang Gompa has the Gates of Ocean, created by the High Lord to protect the brotherhood after the Kume Sa Yeti of 2339, the yeti pack hunt that killed or carried off 280 of the 400 lamas. The gate has spoken to the pious and advised them, it has set fire to unbelievers, and I have seen paintings of it depicted as an ivory and jeweled entrance with the waters of a great sea under its arches. All unbelievers who attempt to pass through the gate fall into the sea and drown. The symbol of the Frekang is the horse, and they often wear scarves and colored prayer shawls.

Hoshki and Buchan Do Gompas

Near Hoshki Gompa, real water spurts out of the base of the Marnu Cliffs, and the Nam River starts its rush down to Nam Tso below. Hoshki Gompa itself views the misty trails of the Wohani River as it drains into Nam Tso from the northern reaches of Phutan. There are rumors of Nam Tso, like men who are truly fish, and that locals fish with a trained bird wearing a brass collar to keep it from swallowing the fish. Hoshki is always at war with the Phutanese, as is Buchan Do Gompa on the southwestern edge of Tabot. Phutan is a lawless haven for notorious criminals of Shou Lung, T'u Lung, and Tabot, and lamas and holy men are murdered on sight by decree of their heathen king.

Do'dzin Gompa

Of the remaining Gompa, Do'dzin is important, and Pokarr sends delegations to four festivals there each year. It is the place where the High Lord was taught, and that is commemorated through the yearly presentation of the Whi-yeu Nohg, a play of the life story of the High One. There are 600 lamas and a city of 1,400 laymen that takes its name and protection from the monastery. The trees in the center of the compound bear figs which the lamas brew into a very strong drink called mujahroom, and this is drunk on the eve of Penance Day, when the revelers are released from all vows. Of course, the next day they pay for their night of indiscretion. Do'dzin's symbol is a hawk, and they have a solid gold hawk with outstretched wings above their holiest shrine. It is said that a ghost haunts Do'dzin, a fearful shade that is the harbringer of evil fortunes for the lamas.

They possess a map to the Valley of Wings, a mythical hidden valley far in the Peerless Mountains. And I've heard that a bath in a certain pool that collects beneath the altars can bring more years to your life, as the abbots of Do'dzin grow to 130 to 176 years old!

Architecture

Most peasants live in tents, but some have houses made of tamped dirt walls, a few beams of wood and thatched roofs, which are flat because of the low amount of rainfall. The nobility live in two or three story houses made of tamped dirt walls, rough-hewn beams, and tiled roofs. The roof is raised from the building and under it is storage, a wide, open attic, housing supplies and a few birds. The first floor is usually reserved for the animals, a sure sign of wealth, and the family lives on the second and sometimes third levels.

Social Customs

Each year is begun with a special ceremony of burning a tortoise shell to divine the future. A question is posed, the shell is placed in cherry red coals, and the priests of U'chan read the answer in the markings that appear. The shell is inscribed with the information and hung on the walls of the temple to aid the people and lamas to plan for this new year. Many questions are put to the gods in this manner and many answers are gained. Influential people have had their questions asked of the oracle as well.

Clothing is fashioned from yak and sheep wool, and from pounded leather, often dyed a bright red or forest green. Many men have hand-stitched caps that they wear for festival days, and heavy fur caps with earflaps for the cold. Others wear plain white caps of linen that cover the tops of their ears. Women are usually wrapped tight in black or gray woolen dresses, and cover these in multi-colored scarves and elaborate head pieces for ceremonies. While the noblemen dress in somber silk gowns and style their hair in jeweled knots, their women wear elaborate dresses decorated with bells and chimes. All children and the ever-present lamas have shaved heads.

Tabotan men love to gamble and enjoy games of physical skill, like wrestling, yak roping, and breaking horses to Tabotan bare-back riding. They drink a stong drink made from tubers called co'wii, the "cow's kick." They are barbaric nomads, even when gathered in cities for convenience and trade.

Average Tabotans, educated by the monks and raised on legends of the first Lord of Oceans, are fiercely loyal to their religious convictions and support the government because it is strong and betters their lot.

Languages

Tabotan common is easily learned: "la" means mountain pass, "tso" means lake, "chu" is a river, and the word "gompa" means monastery. The language and the people have remained a simple lot.

They speak a common Tabotan language with thick local accents and know very little of the trade tongue. An interpreter is needed for more than superficial conversation. There is an 80 percent chance to find an interpreter in any of the larger cities, and a 60 percent chance in smaller villages; these men commonly charge 10 to 30 yuan per day for their services; prices

are always higher in the smaller towns where service is at a premium.

Their paltry common tongue has held together these barbarian people, and they share common superstitions such as these: A man's soul passes into the closest rocks upon death; spirits of great power dwell in the mountains, and they must be acknowledged and appeased; a storm with rain brings bad luck, but a storm that passes by with no rain brings good luck; the Wind Spirits rule the Peerless Mountains; and the myth of Hignog the badger, used to frighten children with stories of the horrible animal masquerading as a man and stealing bad children to eat.

Religion

The true flowering of our culture is in the 15 gompas. The religious holidays and festivals rival Shou Lung's in size and spectacular artistry commended to the gods. Our parades seem to continue every day of the year, with pomp and glory, bringing joy to the dull lives of the peasants.

Tabot is known for its wisemen of the mountains, but many are charlatans, and only five are considered to be true oracles by the brotherhoods. Those five are: Smirnk of the Willows of Hokla Mountain; the Forgotten One, whose name is lost, living on Pojah Mountain; Morka Fooztang from Noko-Ji (the "blow high over Ji") Peak; Tzu Wan, the Entrusted, who sits above the Marnu Cliffs where the source of Nam Tso Lake issues; and old Ti Horr of Mount Wiz'tcu Tan. These five have foretold events and raised dead heroes in answer to just pleas. They are the hermits of Tabot, and there is a legend that when a true hermit dies, all the bells at Lii Monastery ring themselves nine times to aid his soul's passing into the Celestial Heavens. These wisemen have mighty visions and reveal the future of mankind, and some guard precious relics of arcane origin.

Conflicts

Now, I want to stress that Pokarr strictly follows the true and holy laws of the High Lord, not like those south of the Haraki Ridge, the jungle retreats of Nafeen and Zotung, who are rumored to be harboring the outlaw "Baron" Phen Do of Khampo. Those types are very vocal in their disagreements in the yig-tsang (monk council), often creating a disturbance and grumbling with the tithings decreed by the high lord. We disdain these renegades and the High One has told us to beware a separatist movement. The fools don't realize that He could destroy them at any time—only the wisest holds back his hand as the Lord of Oceans has. Jo'nai, Mafensea, Lo'S'sem, they're all alike, hot and muggy and lots of insects! And I've heard that their ceremonies are primitive and gaudy.

(Pang does not provide details about Lii, Pokarr's chief rival, or discuss the southern monasteries and their radical stance in the yig-tsang which is paralyzing the monastic council. His biases also leave a gap in his knowledge of the laymen of Tabot and the landscape—Meilung.)

History

Tabot means "the Roof of the World." The true history of Tabot begins in the holy year of 585 by Shou Lung's reckoning, when the first of many wrongly accused temple militias fled their persecution into the wild and mountainous southwest. Many of these monks and temple guards were searching for a holy land, pure and enduring, and the great mountain ranges provided a sublime answer to their quests for a remote hermitage. Fifteen different groups founded outposts in the mountains between 585 and 640, avoiding contact with the barbarian kings that had held to this land in the past, hiding from the wrath of Shou Lung. These were called the Years of Frost, for the lamas, as we called ourselves, had many struggles, fighting horrible monsters and fierce ice storms, starving in the high homesteads, our numbers dwindling each year.

In the year 646, spurred by an invasion by Ho Dynasty Shou Lung troops, the remnants of these brave warrior priests joined forces with the heathens and tribal chiefs of the lowland cities and successfully repelled the Shou Lung marauders in the Battle of Tsagang. A mighty sohei named Ramara led the monks and Baron Ohn of Han Chao managed his horde. They founded a new city on the site of their victory, and the two heroes conferred for 10 days. The nobles of old Tabot made a treaty with the sohei leagues. We know it as the Peace Land Treaty, as that is what was exchanged. The monks legitimized their mountain keeps and the tribes of the lowlands counted the monks as a part of their national guard. A new nation, Tabot, was founded and blessed by all those gathered, and it became a holy word and a holy place.

There's an old legend about how the original 19 royal families were founded, and it's typical of the level of the original inhabitants. Thousands of years ago, the moon came to earth and appeared as a beautiful woman, wandering the night. All the white tigers of the land were summoned to her and mesmerized by her beauty, and she pressed her hand to each of their foreheads. Each of the cats stood up and became a man, strong and intelligent. There were nineteen tigers, and each founded a clan. One is now Phutan and the others used to control the great lowland cities, before the High Lord of Oceans began his rule on earth. The moon, of course, went back to the sky, and these new men went on to feats of heroism.

The first reported miracle in our holy land was at Mesku Peak, where seven lamas of the Zotung Keep found a man frozen solid and covered with ice in the year 710. When the lamas melted the ice, the man washed away and a living male leopard cub was found. The lamas raised the cub to an adult, and it grew to the size of a horse. One day it spoke, asking to be set free, and the astonished lamas opened their gates. The leopard went back to Mesku Peak where he had been found, but sometimes the newly appointed abbot of the new monastery of Zotung could call on the leopard for aid with decisions. Many devout lamas have been visited by a huge leopard in their dreams, advising them on

the correct path to enlightenment.

In 837 and 859 Shou Lung invaded our territory, and in 894 all of northern Tabot, from Ko'Chung to the Lokar Pass, fell to the Shou Lung army. It appeared our forces were doomed, so the artisans of Ji cast five crystalline warriors, and a group of powerful dang-ki (shukenja) and wu jens animated the warriors and brought them to life, endowing them with magical powers. On the third day of the fifth month, the warriors of stone met the forces of Shou Lung as they exited from Lokar Pass, and a great battle was waged in which the tattered armies of Tabot, aided by the magical warriors, defeated the army of Shou Lung and recovered all the lost lands that Shou had annexed. The crystalline warriors disappeared into the mountains and have never been seen again. We call that day Crystal Day, a holy day in the monasteries.

It was in the year 2311 that the High Lord of Oceans was born under the conjunction of the heavenly signals, and the land flowered again.

His name was H'Dang Li, and he was found crying in the wastelands just north of the Haraki Ridge by a shepherd who placed the child in the care of the lamas of Do'dzin. The monasteries had all recognized the purity of this young boy, who was born enlightened, completely one with the celestial heavens. He possessed magical powers and a high intellect, and soon he had won over the hearts of the people with his holiness. The peasants loved the holy boy and showered him with gifts. Under his banner, the monasteries were reformed and reasserted their control on Tabot between 2317 and 2318, creating the wise Council Kashag that rules today. The boy faced the armies of the nobility alone and defeated them with powerful magic-the men found they couldn't fight a six-year-old child. The people found their conscience, and arms were set aside. He was a knowing leader, prepared for things yet to come. The High One created the Magical Gates of Frekang and the Staff of the Oceans and many other wonders during his glorious 82-year reign. Then he chose a successor and wandered off into the mountains south of Mount Wiz'tcu Tan.

The most important change the High Lord of Ocean brought to Tabot was its new government. As sole, benevolent leader, he held council only with the lon chen (chief ministers), heard petitions from the council kashag (one monk, three lay peasants) and held audience with the chi-kyap khempo (lord chamberlain). The Tabotan nobility had been stripped of everything except their titles and small estates in their former kingdoms, and they could only speak with the High Lama through the chi-kyap khempo. The monasteries were permitted to disband their armies, and all contested lands or items were fairly judged by the Lord of Oceans. The council kashag partitioned the country into districts very similar to the old baronies and created a five-armed bureaucracy that provided for defense, a public forum, police, taxes, trade, and international relations (here I have drawn a diagram of the government of Tabot). The decisions of the High One are final, the Lord of Ocean's word is law. Notice how the monasteries each have direct influence on the Lord of Oceans. As a powerful visitor, it would behoove you to make friends with one of the influentials of Tabot, and I could introduce you to Mo Kin, my fine and wise abbot.

Non-Player Characters

Mo Kin, Abbot of Pokarr:
12th level monk;
LG, human male.

A devout follower of the High Lama, Mo Kin is a member of the Lon Chen, the chief ministers who advise the spiritual and political leader of all Tabot. As abbot of Pokarr Gompa, he is responsible for the patrol of the eastern border north of Mount E'kwong, and so is commander of a powerful militia. He is a quiet and thoughtful man, considered a fair and good administrator by the lamas, and is well-known for his slow decisions, extreme patience, and sound advice. At 78 years of age, Mo Kin is surprisingly agile and travels to other northern monasteries to enjoy their festival celebrations four or five times a year

Baron Phen Do of Khampo: "the Outlaw;"
9th level barbarian;
LE, human, male.

Bent on the overthrow of the Lord of Oceans and reinstatement of the noble class as rulers of Tabot, Baron Phen Do has bribed the Chi-Kyap Khempo and influences the Nafeen and Zotung Gompas through gifts and spies. He has started a revolt, causing three divisions of the army to be stationed in Khampo by the nervous officials of the mag-Chi le-Khung, the military office. Hidden in the mountains east of Nafeen Gompa is his secret army known as the "Raccoon-dogs." There they maintain a base and ninja-type school.

A strong man, the baron has long black braids that hang down his back. He wears a glove to cover the scars that mar his left hand and arm. He carries a magical battle-ax dipped in poison. The dzong-pon, or sheriffs, carry pictures of him, and there are always rumors of his newest notorious escapade.

Ning D'Ahn, Abbot of U'Chan and the seventh High Lama, Lord of Oceans:
17th level monk;
LN, human, male.

The sixth high lama chose Ning D'Ahn as his successor when Ning was only eight years old, and in the tradition of the High One, the previous Lord of Oceans wandered off into the mountains, leaving the boy to his new position. His reign has been difficult, including the attempted revolt of Baron Phen Do and the southern monasteries actions that have undermined the government south of the Haraki Ridge. The yigtsang, monk council, is divided on most issues, and their delegates to the chief ministers, the tse-khor, are corrupt and untrustworthy. Through various means, the Lord of Oceans has replaced all the Lon Chen with monks he trusts from north Tabot, which has further alienated the south. There have been two attempts on his life, each by a ninja masquerading as a lama, and so the high lama is very paranoid.

A tall, thin man with a shaved head, Ning D'Ahn always carries the Staff of the Oceans, which gives him various wondrous powers, attributed to His Holi-

ness by his followers. The high Lama is currently 64 years old. His robes are stitched with gold and silver and jewels. His personal guards, the "No-Haree," are fanatical and suicidal in their protection, and dress in white robes and furs, and carry white enameled shields. Twice a year the Lord of Oceans presides over two outdoor festivals, the Wona Chu'ing in the dead of winter and the Dui'yu, the celebration of the harvests. These are the only times he is seen by the general public.

Pag Hou Ling, dzong-pon of Chophon:
7th level barbarian;
LN, human, male.

Pag's mother was a refugee of T'u Lung, and he bears a resemblance to the people of that land, having thinner cheekbones and being taller than the average Tabotan. Pag wears a copper mask into battle and a copper do-maru type of armor, with his long hair tied in a knot at the back of his neck for luck. He is deaf in his right ear from a magical spell, and he never drinks alchoholic beverages or allows women in the same room, strictly adhering to the lamas' dictates.

Working for the council kashag since he was 15 years old, Pag Hou Ling served The dzong-pon of Tsetu as an assistant deputy for 10 years, and then spent six years as a traveling secretary in the southern districts. Two years ago he was rewarded for bravery in a battle with Shou Lung bandits, and the council reassigned the stewardship of Chophon to him. A fanatic follower of the Lord of Oceans, believing the most incredible of the legends about the first high lama, and a frequent visitor and benefactor of Do'dzin Gompa, Pag Hou Ling has a firm grasp on his district and embodies the religious fervor that inspires Tabotans.

As dzong-pon of Chophon, Pag is well respected as a shrewd leader and an excellent police chief. His men are well disciplined and ready, constantly keeping vigil against invasion as well as domestic problems. Chophon has the reputation of a safe place, well patrolled with no tolerance for thieves or crime.

Lady Holang Of Pim Tung:
7th level barbarian/ninja;
CN, human, female.

Lady Holang was stolen from a rich family in T'u Lung and sold in Motra before she was old enough to marry. Because of her beauty, she was bought by the Baron Mukow Jian of Pim Tung to be a house slave, but he liked her so much that he made her his third wife. Lady Holang soon discovered the secret life her husband led. Against the warnings of the other women, Lady Holang spied on the baron until she was discovered. Her education in T'u Lung and outspoken opinions saved her from death, because her defense was solid advice the baron had not heard from any of his other advisors. The baron began to consult her in private, and he began to prosper from her ideas. The lady joined his secret army (the Vian-chi) disguised as a man and learned to fight like a ninja. By the time she was 34 years old, she was the Baron's favored wife, and her son was designated heir to the estates.

Lady Holang rules Pim Tung with an iron fist, the dzong-pon is her puppet, and she has spies in all levels at Jo'nai Gompa. She is taller than most women and still attractive, with long black hair and doe eyes. Her men frequent Joya and Motra, and she often will exchange free passage to Phutan by river for money. She wants the Lord of Oceans overthrown so that her husband can be emperor of Tabot, as in T'u Lung and Shou Lung. To this end, she sends spies to U'Chan and confers with Baron Phen Do of Khampo. Her men curtly interrogate all who pass through their territory. These men can be identified by the sign of Pim lung—a burning arrow—and the warriors are further distinguished by a red cord they use to tie their scabbards to their belts.

Nako Nang, merchant of Talung:
5th level wu jen;
CG, human, male.

Nako Nang lives for caravans, and he has traveled all of Tabot and most of T'u Lung trading furs and ice for timber and steel (and an occasional new spell). He is a true adventurer, full of tales of his exploits and legends of the land of Tabot. He is a relatively dependable guide, and he has respect for the Lord of Oceans and his men. Nako owns a small house in Talung. A well paid and happy servant watches the place when he's gone.

Moo Kalai:
4th level barbarian;
NG, hengeyokai carp man.

Moo Kalai lives in Nam Tso with his brothers and sisters' swimming in the depths of the deep lake and hibernating through the winters. Moo Kalai is very short, has big eyes, very pale skin, and shaves his head smooth in the style of the lamas. No human has ever seen him eat or sleep. A careful creature, Moo occasionally visits the markets of Bidnop So to trade his people's lake rice and opals from the lake bed for a variety of items the carp people can't make themselves. The carp people have saved a few fishermen's lives and rescued a little girl, so the people of Bidnop So respect and protect the "lake folk" (as they are called).

Items Of Interest

E'soa Ho-chi

E'soa Ho-chi, "the Herald," was given to the lamas of Ko'Chung by Mei Lung as a chronicle to verify history in case the dragon had an unforeseen accident. The tome is very large and thick and it is always open, with writing on the right side and unfinished script appearing magically on the left. A lama must stand vigil and turn the page to keep the magic flowing, but any one can do the job. This book records history as the events unfold. The person who turns the page can direct the book's recounting of current events to the people and places about which the reader wishes to learn, or he could read the book's reports on the important events of Kara-Tur as decided by the book. Occasionally, mentions of the western barbarians appear on the pages. The herald weighs more than one man can lift and is adorned in gold and blue and green jades.

Clearly, this is a very powerful instrument of the Celestial Heavens. The guards are fanatical about its safety, willing to die protecting it. Should it be stolen, all of Tabot (along with interested parties of T'u Lung and Shou Lung) would seek the tome. Some would seek to return it to the Gompa. Others would only want it for their own use. Once word of the theft was out, there would be virtually no peace for the thieves.

Crystal Warriors

Deep in a hidden mountain sepulcher lie the five crystalline warriors awaiting the call to defend Tabot against monstrous odds. They are:

- the Glass Warrior, who turns water to ice and carries a bow and never-empty quiver (+3 bow);
- the Porcelain Warrior, who makes water boil and wields a copper lance and shield that shine like the sun (each +2, save vs. blindness);
- the Ruby Warrior, who turns water to steam, sets fire to wood and cloth, and wields a great stone club (+4, whispers to owner, grants true sight and scry to possessor);
- the Jade Warrior, who can change water into plants, herd trees, and carries a bamboo scimitar into battle (cuts as a +5 sword of sharpness, casts wood rot), and;
- the Diamond or Rainbow Warrior, who controls the weather and the elements of earth and water (can cast any wu jen earth or water spell), and carries the famous "Scythe of Pain" (+5 and immoblizes target for 1-3 turns with wracking pain).

All the warriors can be raised by a lama of strong faith (or by those tampering with their rest). They will come to the aid of Tabot if an invasion is destroying the country, and have ignored honest pleas of lesser magnitude.

Crystalline Warriors: AC -4, 15 HD, 95 hp, MV 9, D by weapon +8, SA +3 to hit, fly, invisibility, jump (all at will); individual powers are usable at will and have a range of 300 feet; SD immune to poison, petrifaction, charm, hold, sleep, and death spells.

The Staff Of Oceans

This is an ornate staff laminated from many types of wood and carved into intricate designs of dragons, hawks, and faces. It was created by the first Lord of Oceans, who used it to flood a frozen battlefield and defeat the nobility's forces. It has the following powers (all using one charge): spell immunity (one turn duration), create water, air walk, and cure serious wounds. For three charges, the staff can raise dead or cast an ancient curse. It can discharge up to 10 lightning bolts/day (6d6 each, no charge required). It is the ruling instrument of Tabot, so it is always carried by the High Lord of Oceans when he is in public.

The Golden Eggs of Ghastar

The Golden Eggs of Ghastar originally numbered nine, but only four are now known to be in the possession of the lamas of Pokarr Gompa. They were created by the ancient craftsmen of old Tabot before the lamas came, and each was endowed with a different magical power. Ghastar was the last known man to have all nine. The four at Pokarr Gompa are:

- the gold egg with ruby snakes which can stop floods and avalanches;
- the obsidian egg with silver crocodiles which can cause earthquakes (as per the spell);
- the gold egg with jade elephants supporting it which can control men's minds (as per a mass charm spell);
- and the silver egg with emerald inlays like lace which can cause a volcanic eruption.

The missing five are just as powerful, but knowledge as to their whereabouts or powers is lost. The eggs can be used by a shukenja or monk of 10th level or higher with a lawful alignment.

Suggested Adventures

This section lists the gossip and rumors that have filtered through the districts of Tabot over the past year. These news items can be used as recent history and reasons for adventures or they can be introduced' one at a time, into an ongoing campaign. There is no order to their arrangement, and they are only offered as springboards for the DM to adapt to his style of play.

Rumors of Tabot

A diplomatic mission from T'u Lung is passing through on its way to U'Chan, and they carry many chests of treasure to woo the High Lama's favor. The group includes a princess of the Wai clan and 50 mounted guards.

The lamas of Buchan Do Gompa report that the Phutanese are gathering an army along the border. The mag-chi leKhung (military office) is moving troops into the area, and conscription has been ordered for the cities of Thok, Darka, Khampo, and Bidnop So. Mercenaries are being accepted into the forces, and a number of temple guards from the monasteries are volunteering.

Yeti have come down from Wu Pi Te Shar and attacked Nafeen, causing heavy damage and the deaths of 23 men. A hunting expedition is being organized by the Thok district dzong-pan, and he has printed handbills which are distributed as far as the Bidnop So Bridge. Twenty-five volunteers from Eo'tzi Gompa have arrived at Nafeen Gompa already. Some scared people are saying it's another Kume Sa yeti, the evil pack-hunt.

While digging a deep irrigation canal in Rokstang, workers have uncovered a huge cavern system and a ruined city, all made of brass. The place appeared to be the site of a terrible disaster, and ever since it was uncovered, a drought has hit the land and the river is drying up, perhaps frozen high in the mountains. The Dzong-pon is searching for brave warriors to accompany him into the city and quiet the curse that has now spread to Rokstang.

A fire has swept through fij, and more than half of the city has been destroyed. The lamas of the closest gompa have sent emergency workers to rebuild before the month of Maki begins and the cold claims

all the homeless.

The image of the first Lord of Oceans was scorched into the altar at Mount Shun by lightning. This is according to a number of the lamas who attended the ceremonies at the end of the yearly pilgrimage. They claim this is a sign of special favor and demand privileges in accordance with this. Rival monks are suspicious of the whole thing.

A man-eating tiger is terrorizing the small villages south of Talung. A bounty has been placed on the animal's head, but it has craftily outwitted all attempts to kill it so far. Some believe that it is a supernatural thing, perhaps a spirit or god, punishing the people for some wrongdoing.

One of the tortoise-shell divinations of the U'Chan lamas was that a very rich gold mine would be discovered east of Mount Pojah, near the Shou Lung border. Another shell was interpreted to foretell the fall of burning rocks from the sky on Khampo during Qwa-'chein Goh celebrations, but they have not been officially warned of the impending disaster, as punishment for their recent rebellion.

The Armies of T'u Lung's General Hiso Sing have invaded Shou Lung north of Joya. There is speculation that any retreat will automatically be an invasion of Tabot, and the Mag-Chi LeKhung has begun moving troops to the southern border. The office is considering conscription.

A hot-spring has been found in the mountains northeast of Mesku Peak, and it is rumored to have magical properties.

The korobokuru have been seen again west of Nad Ho. An expedition into their lands to find their mines and open trade is being proposed by the district's dzong-pon.

A permanently sun-blinded beggar tells a story of a lost mine he and some companions found deep in the Po Yul Dzayul Range. It was filled with diamonds and other gem stones, more than they could carry, but his companions were killed by a spirit that nearly got him as well. The beggar wandered a glacier for days, blinded by the spirit's wrath, then he was found and brought to the city of Rokstang, where he is today.

The Plain of Horses

With its brutal climate and bleak terrain, the Plain of Horses is hostile to human settlement and resistant to civilization.

Several strong tribes control substantial regions of the country. The tribes constantly wage war against each other, and cooperation is virtually unknown.

Geography

The Plain of Horses is dominated by the towering Chigidi Mountains in the north and east. A vast stretch of the Chukei Plateau covers the western and central regions. The mountains are highest in the east, rising to heights exceeding 15,000 feet. The Anai River winds through the northern ranges.

The Plain of Horses is divided into several distinct topographic regions. The northernmost region is a tundra of treeless plains and frozen marshland. Beyond the tundra and south of the mountains is a taiga region of forests and the nation's best agricultural land. Further south are the steppelands, grassy plains that are suitable for grazing animals but are poor for farming. The plains become arid deserts in the southernmost region. Except for a few scattered oases, the desert is uninhabitable.

Climate

The Plain of Horses experiences extreme temperature variations. Temperatures. in the tundra seldom rise above freezing and often plunge to -60 degrees F. Temperatures in the desert regularly soar past 100 degrees, dropping to bitter cold at night. The entire country is very dry, and snow and rainfall are light. Earthquakes occasionally rock the mountain regions in the north and east.

Cities

Architecture in the Plain of Horses is simple and functional, though urban dwellers and nomads live quite differently. Nomads have modest village homes in which to spend the winter, but most of the year they lived in tents called *yurts.* A yurt is a movable home, circular in shape, made from several pieces of animal skin stitched together. It is empty inside, except for a small portable shrine and a small table for offerings. A nomad usually is accompanied by several vicious dogs; the dogs are tied outside the yurt to stand guard while the nomad sleeps.

A typical city consists of numerous offices, shops, houses, and medical facilities for people and animals. The city is surrounded by small farms and the mud huts of peasants, and the entire city may be surrounded by a stone wall. Outside the city, usually near major trade routes, are tradeposts consisting of two wooden buildings; two men occupy one Of the buildings, two donkeys occupy the other.

Most buildings are made of stone and mud; important buildings are multi-storied and made of brick. Wood or stone fences divide the city into various districts. Merchants' stalls are clustered together in the business district, with yurts set up in an adjacent district for traveling peddlers. Government offices and medical buildings are in the central district, The tax office is usually near the outskirts of the city, centered on a large plot of land to accommodate its many visitors. The prison is usually located next to the tax office, perhaps as a reminder to those taxed.

Temples are the most elaborate buildings. A typical temple might be built against a hillside, accessible by crimson gates topped with silver spires. It is a multi-leveled building made of pine or other fine wood. Its roof is painted gold.

Alamaqu

Alamaqu is a moderate-sized tent city located in a valley in the central Chigidi Mountains. It is populated by members of the T'aghurs tribe.

As the T'aghurs are an extremely mobile tribe, Alamaqu is not so much a city as it is a campsite for tents. The T'aghurs built a 20-foot stone wall to surround their campsite. The high Chigidi peaks protect the wall.

Inside the wall are thousands of *ger,* the distinctive white tents of the T'aghurs. Built over shallow pits which have been dug into the ground, the tents are arranged in long lines with wide paths between them for horse and ox carts. When the time comes in the winter to take their sheep herds to greener pastures, the T'aghurs pack up their tents and leave behind only a small garrison force to guard the area until their return.

Poor leadership has prevented the T'aghurs from prospering. Centuries ago, the founders of the tribe decided that three equal rulers would be preferable to a single one, and the tribe has since been ruled by a triumvirate. But in the absence of a single visionary leader to provide direction, T'aghur society has languished.

One of the triumvirate's more questionable decisions was to use elephants as war steeds. There are currently 300 elephants stationed in Alamaqu, ready for battle. The elephants are too sluggish and independent to make particularly good fighters, but the triumvirate stubbornly insists on keeping them.

Chegoyui

Chegoyui is the largest settlement in the southwestern desert of the Plain of Horses. It is populated by the Kahghun, a tribe of peace-loving traders.

Over the years, the Kahghun have gradually come to control all of the major trade routes leading from the Plain of Horses into Shou Lung. For the most part, they have successfully excluded themselves from tribal rivalries and have avoided the tribal wars which regularly rage across the Plain of Horses. They have also maintained a reasonably good relationship with Shou Lung. The Kahghun have made steady profits from Shou Lung's interest in quality horses.

Chegoyui is actually a collection of small villages surrounded by a stone wall for protection from the

祓氟绋俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏绋俛伏膚祓趺付腐

desert winds. Most of the dwellings are yurts made from sheep and camel skin. No building is more than a single story high. Even the qaghan's headquarters is a modest brick structure distinguishable only by the colorful flags flying from the roof.

Most of the local transportation is provided by ox carts, simple conveyances made of four wooden wheels and a few planks. It is common to see a train of 30 or 40 ox carts driven by a single man on horseback.

Camel caravans are used for desert travel. A trained man can handle up to two dozen camels, but an entire caravan may include several hundred camels. On long trips, camels can only carry full loads every other day. On any given day, half of the caravan will be loaded, the other half unloaded.

Haxkhun

Haxkhun is a small city of Fankiang herdsmen, bordered on the east by the Chigidi Mountains and on the west by dry steppelands.

Haxkhun is used mainly as a military outpost for Li-Raz. Though both cities are populated by Fankiang tribesmen, the people of Li-Raz consider themselves superior to those of Haxkhun. Haxkhun resents its second class status, but is totally dependant on Li-Raz for supplies and services. In turn, Haxkhun provides the first line of defense in case of invasion from the north or west.

Haxkhun is divided into two feuding sections. The western section is made up primarily of nomad herdsmen, while the eastern section is made up of professional military men. Each side has its own administrators and qaghan. It is not surprising that Haxkhun history is riddled with civil war, ranging from single-day skirmishes to bloody offensives lasting several weeks. When the conflicts become excessively violent, Li-Raz sends in soldiers to restore peace, but usually allows the citizens to fight it out among themselves.

Haxkhun experiences particularly harsh weather. Temperatures exceed 100 degrees in the summer and plummet well below zero in the winter. There is seldom more than an inch of annual rainfall. Strong winds blow all year long, creating sandstorms so severe that it is impossible to see more than a few feet.

Quaraqand

Quaraqand is remote community located deep within the southern range of the Chigidi Mountains. It is home to the ferocious Igidujin tribe.

The Igidujin began as a loose association of several primitive mountain hsing. After nearly a century of bloody infighting, the hsing were united by the Qajand family whose descendants still rule today. The Qajands are tyrannical and savage. Thieves and dissenters are killed without trial. Treason, the most common offense in Quaraqand, is punished by execution of the perpetrator, his family, and his livestock.

The Igidujin make frequent raids on neighboring villages' trade caravans, and nomad encampments. Many of these are raids to steal horses, but an Igidujin needs no formal excuse to satisfy his bloodlust. They are vicious killers, slaughtering their enemies to the last man, woman, and child.

The Igidujin's preferred weapons are war clubs called *chokhor modo* and *sidam.* The chokhor modo is a 3-foot club with leather loops on the shaft. The club is swung forward, then violently snapped to strike a blow backwards (D 1-8/1-8). The sidam is a similarly looped club used for throwing (treat as thrown club). Igidujin commanders also use trained hawks in battle, their claws and beaks sharpened to razor points.

Jugicha

Jugicha is the home of the Tsu-tsu tribe and is the second largest city in the Plain of Horses. Its citizens are excellent hunters, herdsmen, and livestock producers.

The city is a settlement of Fankiang rebels who broke with Li-Raz to establish their own community about 500 years ago. A realignment of hsing eventually developed into the Tsu-tsu tribe. About a century ago, the Tsu-tsu arranged a treaty with the Kashghun tribe with the idea of conquering the Fankiang in Li-Raz by attacking from opposite sides. The Tsu-tsu attacked from the north, but the Kashghun had a change of heart and decided not to participate. The Tsu-tsu withdrew. To this day, the Tsu-tsu and the Fankiang remain bitter rivals, while the treaty between the Tsu-tsu and the Kashghun, though still in effect, carries little weight.

The nomadic Tsu-tsu each have two homes — brick buildings for winter and tents for the summer. Much of the year is spent in the steppes with their herds of sheep and cattle. They are proficient horse breeders and also engage in pig breeding, an activity unique to the Tsu-tsu. They are also among the nation's best hunters and fishermen.

Li-Raz

Li-Raz is the largest city in the Plain of Horses. Populated by the Fankiang tribe, it is a rigidly controlled military society.

Not only is Li-Raz the Plain of Horses' largest city, it is arguably the most successful. It is certainly the most stable, thanks to the leadership of Chuqali Shilai. Shilai united the quarreling factions of Li-Raz and instituted a strict administrative structure that stands as a model for cities and tribes throughout the Plain of Horses.

Shilai achieved unity by establishing laws proclaiming two distinct classes. The Western Court comprises descendents of the original settlers of Li-Raz. The Eastern Court are the descendents of hsing who became part of Li-Raz through conquest or annexation. The members of the Western Court are united by their hatred of the powerless Eastern Court, thus ensuring a measure of order. Uprisings in the Eastern Court are quickly put down by the the military.

Though Li-Raz maintains a standing army of impressive size, it has a reputation as one of the more peaceful societies in the country. The chief rivals of Li-Raz are the Tsu-tsu tribesmen of Jugisha, the nation's second largest city. An uneasy peace currently exists between them.

Chuqali Shilai is an autocrat in every sense of the

word, and his headquarters is the most lavish structure in the Plain of Horses. Formally known as the *nom-satakon erughe* (Tent of the Bows and Quivers), it consists of four red brick buildings three stories high. One building is the living quarters, another has reception areas and meeting rooms. The third is the throne room. On one side of the throne are silver-plated bows and quivers of silver arrows. On the other side is a pile of silver-plated shields and saddles. The fourth building houses Shilai's herd of sacred white camels. Also in this building is a large white cart to carry Shilai's personal yurt. The yurt is made of camel skin sections sewn together with silver thread.

The standing army at Li-Raz consists of the following forces. All are mounted.

9,000 1st level barbarian archers
3,500 2d level barbarian archers
1,000 1st level barbarian swordsmen
500 2d level barbarian swordsmen
1,000 1st level barbarian spearmen

In times of emergency or war, Li-Raz can rally the following additional units from the surrounding territory.

25,000 1st level barbarian archers
20,000 2d level barbarian archers
2,000 1st level barbarian swordsmen
1,000 2d level barbarian swordsmen
3,000 1st level barbarian spearmen

Peqqir

Peqqir is located in an area of rolling hills and green forests in the taiga region of the Plain of Horses. It is surrounded by some of the nation's richest farmland. The Guychiang tribe is based here.

Peqqir is one of the country's most industrious communities. The Guychiang are superb farmers, using sophisticated irrigation techniques to grow vegetables, grains, cotton, and mulberry trees for silk. They mine the mountains for jade and iron. Their craftsmen produce fine jewelry, weapons, and leather goods.

The Guychiang are very protective of their city. Access to Peqquir is through a series of heavily fortified gates called *sibege.* Each sibege is guarded by a squad of armed soldiers. Passage requires a permit issued by city officials and payment of a gate tax each time a sibege is opened.

Places of Interest

Anai River

The Anai is the longest river in the Plain of Horses. It cuts through the Chigidi Mountains from the north, then extends west. Its numerous tributaries nourish the fertile farmland of the taiga region.

There are numerous inland lakes fed by the Anai, the largest of which is Lake Gusang. Like many of the lakes bordering the steppe, Lake Gusang is salt-producing. This particular lake produces white salt, but others produce green salt and red salt, depending on the color of the soil in the lake bed. White salt is preferred by the upper classes, green salt by every one else. Red salt is considered fit only for animals.

In warm months, the river is easily navigated by boats. When the river freezes in the winter, horse-drawn carriages and sleighs travel on the ice to transport passengers and commodities. Some believe that when the gajar-un ejin of the river is offended, he instantly melts the ice to plunge his enemies into the river. Likewise, he may instantly freeze the river to allow his friends to pass.

Chigidi Mountains

The rugged ranges of the Chigidi Mountains cover nearly half of the Plain of Horses. The northern slopes average between 7,000 to 10,000 feet, while many of the peaks of the eastern ranges top 15,000 feet.

The Chigidi Mountains provide a natural barrier against invasion from the north and east, but they also make life difficult for the tribes who have settled there. The mountains are rocky and barren, making farming nearly impossible except on the slopes bordering the taiga. There are few accessible passes, particularly in the eastern ranges. The peaks of the northern ranges are covered with ice and snow the year round. It is so cold there that even in summer a man's breath freezes and forms icicles on his nose and mouth.

Mount Or-Ghash, a western slope on the northern range, is a favored holy place of lamas and those on religious pilgrimage. The pass to Mount Or-Ghash is lined with 100 caskets set out at intervals of about 100 yards. The caskets are a memorial to Or-Ghash Gol, the most revered high lama to have ever lived in this part of the country. Pilgrims are required to place a *khtagh* (scarf) or other offering on each casket. The location of the real casket is kept secret by the high lamas living on the mountain. Every spring, they put a fresh set of clothes in the real casket. When the clothes are removed in autumn, they are torn and soiled.

Tribal Order

A tribal unit in the Plain of Horses can be divided into several parts. The main part is the tribe itself, called a *pu-lo.* A pu-lo is made of several clans, called *hsing.* Each clan is made of several tents, or *chang.* A tent consists not only of the nuclear family (parents and children), but relatives as well.

The tribal following of a ruling prince is called a *hoshio.* A hoshio can consist of only one pu-lo or several. The pu-lo making up a hoshio may occupy contiguous areas, or they may be spread out across the country. Since many hoshios consist of a single pu-lo, the terms are often used interchangeably; for convenience, it is easiest to think of the main unit as a tribe.

Currently, there are three major tribes in the Plain of Horses and three lesser ones. The major tribes are the Tsu-tsu) the Fankiang, and the Kashgun. The lesser tribes are the Guychiang, the T'aghurs, and the Igidujin. Allegiance to a tribe is tenuous at best; a nomad, for instance, may be formally a member of a tribe and still have little or no direct contact with tribal leaders.

Government

Because the Plain of Horses is not a unified nation, there is no single governing body. However, all tribal governments have a few elements in common.

The tribes are strictly autocratic; that is, one person is the absolute ruler with unlimited power. (The only exception is the triumvirate system of the T'aghurs where three rulers equally share power.) The leader is a male of superior strength and charisma with proven military ability. New leaders are usually, but not always, descendants of previous leaders.

Most of the larger tribes and cities have modeled their administrations after the government of Li-Raz. The autocratic ruler in this system is called the *qaghan.* All other officers are subordinate to the qaghan. (Note that small tribes and villages have no need for a formal government aside from a qaghan.)

Next on the hierarchy are the secondary officers. The chancellor is the qaghan's key advisor, while the *yabghu* is the secondary ruler. Also on this level are the second qaghan, an honorary position awarded to a previous qaghan or another relative of demonstrated ability, and the *apa qaghan,* an office usually held by the qaghan's oldest brother. The duties of these secondary officers are not clearly defined, but they all have roughly the same status and authority.

Next in importance are the military governors, called *chieh-tu-shih.* Since the qaghan appoints chieh-tu-shih as he sees fit, there may be any number of them. Each has authority over a specific district or clan. Under each chieh-tu-shih are a varying number of supervisors called *chigolgan.*

The lowest ranks of the administration are the *beg* and the *elchi.* The beg are financial officers in charge of tax collection and other revenues. The elchi are clerks and minor officers.

Taxation

Taxation of tribal members is based on the number of animals owned by a family. One horse or cow is equal to seven sheep. One camel is equal to two horses or fourteen sheep. Tax rates are kept reasonable; they are never levied merely to benefit the qaghan.

Traveling merchants are also taxed. If a merchant has paid the tax previously in the year, he is not required to pay it again on subsequent visits. Merchants must pay a certification fee at each market to have their scales inspected and approved prior to their use. This supposedly guarantees a degree of standardization in weights and measures. However, one common fraud is for a merchant to short-weight his scales, charging more for less, and there is always the chance that the local officials are corrupt, skimming a part of the short-weight profit for themselves.

The Military

Smaller tribes have no structured military organization. Either the qaghan or a leader designated by the qaghan gives the orders, and the soldiers follow his commands. All healthy males are considered part of the available tribal forces.

The armies of larger tribes are more formally organized. The basic military group is called a *muke,* which consists of a 100 men in units of 10 who belong to the same hsing. Ten muke comprise a *minggan.* For major battles, 10 minggan make up a *temu.* In emergencies, a hsing leader called a *po-shih* can hastily assemble a fighting unit drawn from available members of his clan.

The Li-Raz army also includes elite forces called the *ordo* who are under the direct command of the qaghan. The qaghan also controls seven personal guard units called the *keshig.* The *she-li* troops are additional elite forces who have no assigned commander. In all, the Li-Raz available forces exceed 70,000 fighting men.

Tactics

The armies of the Plain of Horses are masters of cavalry tactics. In a given unit, about 75 percent are mounted archers. The rest are mounted spearmen and swordsmen. Except when attempting a siege on a city, foot soldiers are almost never used.

Mounted archers are organized into groups of muke, normally working in groups of 10 (40 is typical). These muke operate independently or in coordination with other groups. Lancers and swordsmen seldom fight in groups smaller than the muke, relying on the mass of their numbers for shock effect.

Army tactics are characterized by surprise, mobility, and sheer force of numbers. A tribal army prefers not to attack unless their forces clearly outnumber the enemy and have a good chance of quickly overwhelming them. If they are outnumbered themselves, they will attempt to lure the enemy into an ambush by sending a small mounted unit to lead the enemy on a chase. After the exhausted enemy has pursued the unit for several hours, the main force swoops in from behind and attacks.

Social Customs

The people of the Plain of Horses are barbarians who live by their wits and natural instinct. They are proud, defiant, and resist change of any kind. They are fearful and hostile toward strangers. Though they respect the supernatural, they hate magic and those who use it.

Though an increasing number of the people are settling in cities and villages, the majority still consider themselves nomads with no permanent residence. Barbarians take pride in their ability to live without the comforts available in an organized community. They feel pity for the farmer who is tied to his land and cannot move freely.

They have more interest in leisure than work. If a barbarian wants to buy something, he may work on a caravan or as a mercenary for a few days. Otherwise, there is no salary high enough to make him work if he doesn't want to.

They are a very patient people, a quality especially helpful to the herdsmen who follow their free-roaming animals hundreds of miles in every direction. They are also very gentle, at least to their animals.

This is as much a matter of common sense as it is kindness; gentle horses, after all, are easier to handle than nervous ones. Barbarians refrain from killing even a serpent; serpents are related to dragons, and you never know when you'll need a favor. They pick lice from their clothing and put them back on the ground. Sheep about to be slaughtered receive an apology first.

They are remarkably liberal in their treatment of women. Women are allowed to hold government offices. In fact, some tribes prefer female rulers, as it frees the males from administrative duties and makes them available for the military. Women may own property and do with it as they wish. (However, no one, males included, is allowed to own land.) Women may choose their own mates and may have as many affairs as they wish. When a woman gives birth, the child is raised by the woman's family; the identity of the father is of no concern. Inherited property is usually passed through a daughter's children rather than a son's.

Because of the extreme weather, dress is more functional than fashionable. A typical outfit consists of a wool shirt, wool trousers, a wool hat, fur stockings, and leather sandals. Accessories might include a fox-skin scarf or a dog-skin collar. Both men and women sometimes bind their heads with cloth, particularly in the desert. A noble's clothing is often more elaborate; a high lama, for instance, might wear a red fur gown, a patterned silk scarf, and silver jewelry.

Horse-racing and wrestling are favorite sports. Literature' when available, is also popular, although most people being unable to read, content themselves with storytellers. There are few formal holidays, with the Festival of Spirits being the most widely observed. On this day, tribal families gather at *obos* (10-foot high structures of stone and wood) and make offerings of butter, cheese, and other food items to the spirits. Other holidays include the Midsummer Festival, a week of banquets celebrating livestock born in the spring, and the Summer Assembly, when families and tribes gather together for several days of discussion and gossip.

Status and Classes

The tribes of the Plain of Horses have rigid social systems, but they are not as formally observed in some tribes as in others.

The **taiji** comprise the ruling class, and includes dukes and princes. Membership in this class is hereditary. Intermarriage is encouraged.

Lamas are also a privileged class, but anyone can be a lama if he receives the proper training. Some tribes suggest that every family provide a son to be a lama, others actively discourage them. Since lamas often have no clearly-defined duties, it is an attractive career for the unambitious.

Commoners are the herdsmen, farmers, and other workers. Their main value to the upper classes is as tax payers and soldiers.

Slaves are the servants of the taiji and lamas. There is also a special group known as house slaves who serve commoners. Most slaves come from slave families, but some are destitute commoners who have sold themselves. The life of a slave isn't all bad; they are well-cared for and are exempt from military service.

Languages

Vocabulary is very precise. Asked about a particular camel, the owner will accurately tell its age, lineage, color, and personality quirks. There are specific names for hills, streams, trees, and other landmarks, but the names may vary according to the person asked. The major tribes have their own dialects. Many have developed alphabets which are easier to master than the written symbols used by other nations in Kara-Tur.

Religion

No single religion dominates the Plain of Horses. The more primitive tribes, such as the Igidujin, favor animism while the more sophisticated tribes, such as the Fankiang, favor the Path of Enlightenment. Regional variations of these and dozens of other tribal faiths abound.

The T'aghurs tribe, for instance, has a faith based on animism and ancestor worship. The main god of the T'aghurs is the sun. All of the tent openings of the T'aghurs face east to honor the sun. Their most significant holy day is the first day of summer. Once every year, all members of the tribe are required to make a pilgrimage to their ancestral home for a day of prayer.

Most nomads believe that every piece of land has its own god who watches over it. These gods are called the *gajar-un ejin.* Lush oases, mountain passes, and other sacred places are marked with obos. Especially sacred places have a number of smaller obos leading to the main obo. All temples are marked with obos, as are the principal government buildings in villages and cities.

Most temples are for the Path of Enlightenment. These commonly have small booths near the entrance. These booths contain prayer wheels which can be used for personal worship. The wheels are about six feet in diameter and are inscribed with scriptures around the circumference. Men and women often wait for hours to take their turn to spin the wheel and recite their prayers.

Inside a temple there may be as many as a hundred idols on the floor and several hundred scripture scrolls hanging on the walls. A temple typically contains a variety of religious items, including huge log drums, heavy bronze cymbals, and detailed mural paintings for contemplation.

Lamas

Lamas are the religious leaders of the Plain of Horses. Many supervise temples in the furthest reaches of the nation. Some reside in major cities. Still others have no permanent residence, offering their services to families, travelers, and herdsmen wherever they are welcome.

Lamas are respected in most places, barely tolerated in others, but have no genuine power or author-

ity anywhere. Some are organized in formal groups, others are free agents who wander here and there. Most adhere to the tenets of the Path of Enlightenment, but there are some who practice other faiths as well.

There are about 100,000 lamas scattered throughout the Plain of Horses. Lamas begin training as neophytes while still children and are accepted as holy men by the time they reach adulthood. Senior lamas with experience and education are called high lamas. High lamas wear bronze boxes around their necks containing tiny idols made of gold.

Women, too, may become lamas, typically at age 50 or at an earlier age if they are widowed. Female lamas, like their male counterparts, traditionally shave their heads bald.

The biggest problem for most lamas is keeping themselves occupied. Aside from temple supervision, there is little for them to do. Some fill their time by hiring out as guides. Officials in many larger cities are growing intolerant of the increasing number of idle lamas. Though they are reluctant to ban them outright, they are passing laws to discourage them from adding to their ranks. The city of Li-Raz restricts them in the following ways:

- Lamas may not speak to women in public places.
- Lamas must get permission to travel.
- Boys must be at least 14 years old to become acolytes.
- Acolytes must attend government-sponsored lectures about the worthlessness of the lama's life.

Lamas should be treated as monks and shukenja. Most are 1st or 2d level. Few high lamas exceed 3rd or 4th level.

Money and Commerce

Since so much of the land is unsuitable for farming, the principal industry of the Plain of Horses is livestock. Most of the livestock is sheep, with flocks ranging from several hundred to more than a thousand head. The sheep are black, white, and yellow, and are considerably larger than sheep found elsewhere in Kara-Tur. Herdsmen also raise large numbers of cattle, goats, camels, and horses, the nation's most valuable commodity.

Livestock management is very primitive. Herds graze on the vast grasslands of the steppe, and the nomad herdsmen follow their animals wherever they happen to roam.

Trade between tribes is minimal, although the Kahghun of Chegoyui does occasional business with some of the smaller tribes as well as with adventurous traders from Shou Lung. Horses are the main commodity, but weapons and wool garments are also traded. A few peddlers travel from village to village.

Camel Riding

Trips of any length across the steppelands are usually taken by camel. Camels in the Plain of Horses are the single-humped species as described in the *Monster Manual* and *Monstrous Compendium.*

Camels in a caravan are joined from nose to tail with ropes. If a rope breaks or falls off a camel, the camels behind it will stop. On a long caravan with many riderless animals, the last camel has a bell tied to its tail. If the bell stops ringing, the riders ahead are alerted that the last camel has broken loose.

Camels are tranquil but very stubborn. When the sun sets, a camel stops and lies down to sleep, regardless of the wishes of its rider. If a camel slips and falls, it will refuse to get up again without rigorous coaxing. If a camel is exhausted, it may refuse to get up at all, lying in the sand until it dies. Camels are considered useless as war steeds, as they will lie down rather than fight.

Relations with Shou Lung

No country has had a more profound influence on the Plain of Horses than Shou Lung. As the nations share a common border, the tribes of the Plain of Horses see Shou Lung as their biggest foreign threat. Likewise, Shou Lung sees the natives of the Plain of Horses as hostile barbarians who must be carefully watched and, if possible, controlled. Trade has flourished sporadically between the two nations, as have eras of violent warfare. An uneasy truce exists between them presently, although a border skirmish or an outright invasion of either side could occur at any time.

The tribesmen of the Plain of Horses feel they are superior as individuals to Shou Lung natives, but are aware that Shou Lung significantly outnumbers them. They believe the Shou Lung people are cunning and treacherous, more likely to take the Plain of Horses a section at a time rather than attempt an all-out conquest of the entire country.

Non-Player Characters

Chuqali Shilai
Qaghan of Li-Raz
Barbarian, 17th level;
LN, human, male.

Chuqali Shilai is the uncontested leader of the Fankiang tribe. Nearly 7 feet tall with rippling muscles and flowing black hair, he is an intimidating, fearsome warrior who believes wholeheartedly that the Fankiang are destined to one day rule all of the Plain of Horses.

Shilai makes an effort to be fairminded, but most administrative decisions are delegated to his subordinates. He prefers the company of soldiers to scholars, and has been known to order the execution of administrators who annoy him with details.

Shilai is a master archer, and he regularly practices on his private range. His prized possessions are his silver arrows and silver bow. He has a special keshig unit whose sole job is to recover his silver arrows after a battle.

Jeorug Khalaga
High Lama of Li-Raz
Monk, 2d level;
LG, human, male.

Jeorug Khalaga is the 18th consecutive generation of first-born sons in his family who became lamas.

Like the generations before him, he was born and raised in Li-Raz and received his training in the Temple of Seven Bells, the city's most respected religious center.

Bright and talkative, Khalaga excels in the art of *choir horal,* a religious debate where one lama poses philosophic questions to another lama in a group. If the lama who is asked the question cannot answer, he becomes the next questioner. At the end of the choir horal, the lamas throw a pinch of flour into the air, symbolizing the dispersion of their knowledge throughout the world.

In recent months, the rulers of Li-Raz have become increasingly intolerant of the lamas, so Khalaga has begun hiring himself out as a guide to make himself less visible in his home town. His cheerful disposition and encyclopedic knowledge of the Plain of Horses makes him a favorite of travelers.

Marash Rashi
Barbarian, 6th level;
LN, human, male.

Marash Rashi is an elderly Kashghun trader who lives in Chegoyui. He is short and squinty-eyed with a bent back and a toothless grin. A shrewd and disarming negotiator, Rashi is the most successful trader in Chegoyui, specializing in horses and other livestock.

Rashi is honest, but he is opportunistic and cunning. If Rashi finds a soldier in need of a new horse, he offers the horse on credit. He then bargains with the soldier to determine the value of the horse. In a separate bargain, they settle on the price, usually in livestock or animal skins instead of currency. A third bargain decides the payment terms; for instance, he selects 10 lambs from the soldier's flock which will be collected when they are full-grown sheep. When it comes time to collect, Rashi points out that some of the sheep are not yet fully mature, then offers to extend credit for another season, adding an extra lamb or two into the bargain. The cycle of credit can extend almost indefinitely. Since Rashi is the brother-in-law of the yagbhu, he has access to government muscle when his debtors refuse to pay up.

There are few products, animals, or services available in the Plain of Horses that Rashi doesn't know how to get. Rashi is generally willing to deal with tribal enemies of the Kashghun if the price is right. He is a favorite contact of Shou Lung traders who admire his wit and resourcefulness.

Qaland T'akk
Qaghan of Quaraqand;
Barbarian, 15th level;
LE, human, male.

Qaland T'akk is the arrogant, merciless leader of the Igidujin tribesmen of Quaraqand. He has waist-length gray hair and a rock-hard body with dark brown skin. A descendant of the ruthless Qaland Shurijah, T'akk has few interests other than warfare. His subordinates must meet weekly quotas for murdered enemies; those who fail to meet their quotas are personally executed by T'akk and his bronze sword.

T'akk believes it his destiny to conquer and control all the tribes of the world. He particularly despises the Fankiang tribe and Chuqali Shilai, the qaghan of Li-Raz. Fankiang herdsmen and trade caravans are among his favorite prey.

Razak Irdi
Barbarian, 6th level;
NG, human, male.

Razak Irdi is a Kashghun tribesman who formerly lived in Chegoyui. Seven years ago, Irdi stole one of the qaghan's prized huluk and headed north. To this day, he remains a nomad with no permanent residence.

Irdi shuns human contact, preferring the company of wild horses. He dabbles in horse theft and sometimes raids encampments for the sole purpose of setting the horses free. Considered both a criminal and a nuisance, efforts to capture Irdi have been fruitless.

A small man with thick legs and darting eyes, Irdi travels by night and sleeps by day. His horse is a black huluk named Dohju. They are accompanied by a herd of 20 to 50 wild horses and a dozen wild dogs. The horses and dogs appear to be totally devoted and obedient to Irdi.

Shajji Hoijarek
Qaghan of Jugicha
Barbarian, 10th level;
NG, human, male.

Shajji Hoijarek was a lama serving the Tsu-tsu temples of Jugicha when, at age 50, he renounced his religion to serve as the apa qaghan for his brother, qaghan Shajji Ghoijhi. The corrupt Ghoiji administration was in chaos, and after the inevitable rebellion, Hoijarek gathered together as many able advisors as he could find and took over as qaghan.

For the next 20 years, Hoijarek successfully brought order and prosperity back to Jugicha. He conquered the smaller neighboring tribes by killing their livestock and poisoning their water to force their surrender. He gave his people a sense of purpose by maintaining a strong stance against Li-Raz and the Fankiang. The Fankiang killed Hoijarek's wife and children in a raid; the Tsu-tsu joined him in a vow of vengeance. An aging man who moves stiffly and has difficulty breathing, Hoijarek knows he has only a few years left to see the fall of the Fankiang.

Torgoja P'a
High Lama of Mount Or-Ghash
Monk, 10th level;
LG, human, male.

Much about Torgoja P'a is shrouded in mystery. As a nomad with two black camels, he appeared 15 years ago in Alamaqu and in a matter of days, convinced rebel T'aghur leaders to abandon their plot to overthrow the triumvirate. Heading west, he paused in Peqqir to help design an irrigation project which enabled farmers to grown mulberry trees on mountain slopes. The Guychiang were so grateful, they wanted to build a temple in Pa's honor, but he declined and moved on.

P'a eventually settled on Mount OrGhash where for the past decade he has served as a high lama. Although pleasant and friendly, he has little to do with

the other lamas, preferring to spend his time with his camels. Respected for his wisdom, nobility and peasants alike seek him out for counsel. No one is turned away.

P'a is a rotund man with a short brown beard and bushy eyebrows. He dresses in an old red gown which has been torn and repaired countless times. He has a youthful face and appears to be about 30 years old, although he refuses to reveal his true age.

Yitriq Rukku
Qaghan of Haxkhun
Barbarian, 6th level;
NE, human, male.

Yitriq Rukko is the sniveling, cowardly qaghan of the Fankiang tribe in Haxkhun. Obese and shifty-eyed, Rukku has no administrative talent whatsoever, but the rulers of Li-Raz support him because he is easily controlled. Rukku resents Li-Raz for treating Haxkhun like a second-class city, but he dutifully bows and scrapes in their presence, acceding to their every request.

Rukku stages weekly horse wrestling contests in Haxkhun's central district, with the names of his chosen opponents posted the day before the match. If an opponent loses, he is executed. If an opponent refuses to participate, his family his executed. The object is to be the first to wrestle his horse to the ground. Rukku has his horse crippled before the match, so he always wins. Rukku uses the horse wrestling matches to eliminate dissidents and bolster his ego.

Horses

Horses are the tribes' most valuable resource. They are among the strongest and fiercest breeds in the world. The wild horses that roam the steppes are different in appearance from horses elsewhere in Kara-Tur. They are smaller, heavier, and have shaggy coats. Their legs and necks are short, making their heads appear disproportionately large. They are very strong and tough, able to subsist on any kind of vegetation. They can break ice with their powerful hooves to get to the frozen moss beneath or grind the driest fodder in their powerful jaws. Their power and endurance make them ideal war steeds.

The most desirable war horses are called *huluk.* The rib cages of huluk are near solid sheets of bone, which gives them natural armor and incredible strength. Instinctive fighters, they are able to kill wolves while still colts. Huluk are used to lead charges on the battlefield; huluk continue to charge and attack the enemy even if their riders are killed.

Soldiers bond closely with their steeds. When food is scarce, a soldier will feed his horse before his family, the horse being more valuable. Prior to a mission, a soldier will explain the details to his horse. If the horse listens patiently, it is a good omen. If the horse snorts and bucks, it is a sure sign of trouble ahead.

Herds of wild horses range from 20 to 1,000 head; a typical herd is 50 to 100 head. Of these, 10 percent will be huluk. In a typical herd, 60 percent will be medium warhorses, 20 percent will be heavy warhorses, and 20 percent will be light warhorses. Their statistics are as given in the *Monster Manual* and *Monstrous Compendium,* except that they have no less than 6 hit points per die; huluk have no less than 8 hit points per die. Additionally, these horses have an AC of 6; the AC of huluk is 3.

Suggested Adventures:

The White Camels

Set-Up: Fankiang herdsmen report to the qaghan of Li-Raz that they sighted a herd of white camels a day's ride west of the city. The qaghan sends the PCs and a group of soldiers to fetch the valuable animals.

The Plot: The camels are part of a clever scheme by qaghan Shaji Hoijarek of Jugicha to humiliate Li-Raz. Hoijarek had a herd of 40 regular camels stained white, then left them to graze in an area where they would be sighted by Li-Raz scouts.

A group of Tsu-tsu horsemen are waiting to ambush any Fankiang who come for the camels. Any subsequent groups sent to check on the previous groups will also be ambushed.

Notes: The DM may stage this is as a single battle between the PCs' group and the Tsu-tsu, or he may use it to trigger an all-out war between the two tribes.

The Northern Wastes

General Information

(The information that follows was compiled from correspondence from the explorer Sirya Redlock, a native of the region discussed, to the sage Elminster of Shadowdale. In places where inconsistencies were found, this scribe took the liberty of recording that which seemed most accurate.)

Friend Elminster:

I am delighted to learn of your interest in that region of Kara-Tur known as the Northern Wastes, and it will be a pleasure for me to share with you my meager knowledge. I hope you will come to agree with me when I say that the so-called Northern Wastes are in fact a thriving, diverse, and fascinating region.

The term "Northern Wastes" can be somewhat misleading. It sometimes leads to confusion with the true wastelands, the Land of Snow Demons, a little-explored expanse of permafrost tundra yet further north. However, since the term is in such common usage among the people of the warmer, southern lands, we too shall employ it.

The Wastes are sometimes known as the Ama Basin, after the great river that drains the region and empties into the Celestial Sea. This watershed includes the northern Koryaz Mountains and its forested foothills, and the taiga (evergreen forests) and swamps which stretch between the mountains and the fringes of the Land of Snow Demons.

Most of the indigenous humans of the Ama Basin fall into three "nations," or tribal groupings: the Issacortae, the Pazruki, and the Wu-haltai. They are not nations in the political sense, so much as groupings according to appearance, language, and culture. Of the three, the Issacort tribal confederation (from which, you may recall, my own mother came) is the most cohesive politically. On the opposite extreme, the many Wu-haltan clans form alliances only in times of need, and remain otherwise autonomous and often quite isolated.

There are a number of small native tribes besides the three nations. Some are recent immigrants from such nearby regions as the Plain of Horses and the Land of Snow Demons. Others, including primitive groups that still use stone and bronze tools rather than ones of iron, are of uncertain origin and seem not to be closely related to any known peoples. (Sometimes the korobokuru are classified as such a class of humans.) Many legends mention such tribes. Some people believe the tribes to be descended from the Ancient Lords, or Maraloi, who never used iron.

The semi-nomadic and non-literate nature of its inhabitants' lifestyle makes an accurate or complete historical calendar of the Northern Wastes impossible to assemble. Since things are not recorded in writing, and there is not even a universal calendar, as information is passed on by word of mouth, some events are exaggerated to epic proportions while others are forgotten. Such information as I was able to gather I have placed in the Timeline.

Places Of Interest

Palace of Balinaikal

This great, dark, sinking stone structure is found deep in the swamp. It is the center of an area ruled by a supremely powerful ogre mage, Balinaikal, who is known to slay or enslave all trespassers.

Valley of Nanayok

This valley is believed to have been the cultural and political center of the Maraloi. The valley is overflowing with ruins, most little more than piles of crumbling stones, covered by vegetation. Rumors speak of underground places here holding the secrets of the Ancient Lords. The entire valley is taboo to the Pazruki, although bold wu jen of that people have dared to explore it; but those who have returned have not made known any discoveries.

I noted with interest that Pazruki will never knowingly accept as gift or payment anything taken from Maraloi ruins.

Palevash

This isolated monastery was founded centuries ago by monks from Shou Lung. Many of its present members are former tribesmen from all over the Wastes.

The Pazruki hold Palevash in great regard, and respect its ownership of its valley. Other races and tribes, however, have been known to attempt to plunder its presumed wealth in the past.

Talmaruk

This, the Isle of the Cold Spirits, is a place haunted by all manner of malevolent spirits. Wu-haltan folklore says that the worst storms of winter come not from the north, but rather result from the concentrated exhalation of all Talmaruk's denizens.

Tomyris

Tomyris, the Meeting Ground, is the place most important to the Issacortae. The name specifically refers to a high, bald hill ringed by stone monoliths. Nearby are numerous dwellings, including those of the Zarina, the great shaman, and Amorg, the high king. The high king or queen usually lives away from Tomyris, with his tribe; while the great shaman remains here year-round, being responsible for the care of Tomyris.

Every autumn equinox, the chieftains of all the Issatort tribes leave their people and meet here. The great shaman performs important rituals in their presence, including foretelling the upcoming winter and year; and the high king passes judgement on any disputes that the chieftains could not satisfactorily arbitrate.

The chieftains also gather in times of emergency: hostile incursions, natural disasters, and the death of a high king or shaman. The latter selects his or her

祓氟紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

own successor, but it is necessary for the chieftains to officiate the ceremony. The former position is filled from among the tribal chieftains by their vote.

Races and Classes

Bringing characters to the Northern Wastes needn't be difficult. Southerners might come here willingly on some quest, brave the land to test their hardiness; or suffer under exile. Gajin characters may find themselves passing through on their way to mainstream Kara-Tur; to them, the northern tribes may be an introduction to eastern culture shock. And, of course, players may choose to play characters native to the region, working from the information on human and demihuman groups provided here.

Shamanism

In the Northern lands, spellcasters are classed under a single title-shaman. Among most of the humans and humanlike races, shamans play a very important role as advisers, protectors, and spiritual guides to the community. To the minds of the people, there is little active distinction between shukenja and wu jen. All are able to cast spells and work for the service of the clan. Hence they are shamans; men possessed of mystical power. Just where this power comes from and how it is shaped is of little concern to most. Because of this, wu jen shamans are surrounded by many aspects of religion; and shukenja are veiled in mysticism.

The core of this belief is animism. The original tenet of animism is a belief that natural phenomena (which can include flora, fauna, inanimate objects, places, and even weather) have souls or spirits or are the incarnations of gods. The word "animism" in fact comes from anima, which means "spirit." One form of animism is druidism.

Beliefs of specific animistic creeds vary. For example, some hold that bears are the only animals with souls; others see spirits in every living creature, or even inanimate objects; and still others believe in pantheons of divine figures that manifest themselves in nature. Rituals and taboos spring from these beliefs and vary accordingly. But all animists are unified by their respect for nature; their philosophies emphasize working with it, cooperating with rather than exploiting their natural environment.

It is not recommended that players run tribal shaman characters. This is primarily because the shaman is an integral part of a clan; such characters have little place in adventuring. Player characters from the Ama Basin interested in magic are better suited as Pazruki or korobokuru wu jen, not tied down to a clan or village.

The shaman's beliefs and philosophy need always be in the DM's mind when he creates shaman NPCs. In game terms, shamans may be shukenja, wu jen, or dual-classed characters (shukenja/wu jen or either of those with bushi). Of course, the culture and environment of the Northern Wastes necessitate certain modifications of those spell-casting classes.

All northern shamans (wu jen and shukenja alike) must take religion as an initial non-weapon proficiency. Shukenja from the northern lands replace their calligraphy requirement with chanting, rather than writing. Open non-proficiency slots may be filled by any proficiency permitted to barbarians of the shamans clan.

All shukenja shamans are first trained by other shamans, learning religious rituals as well as meditation (but, unlike shukenja, not unarmed combat). They are not sworn to poverty, nor is meat forbidden to them (unless as an individual taboo). They do have clan association and therefore family as well as individual honor. (As an aside, a shaman suffers a great loss of honor if he abandons his clan, as does the clan itself.) Shukenja spells are gained through meditation and communion with the spirits of nature.

Wu jen-classed shamans do not have written scrolls and tomes. Instead, to learn spells they consult sacred objects and pictographs drawn thereon. These suggest the patterns of thought and gesture that evoke magical power; the wu jen remembers these patterns, and orders them within his mind as a memorized spell. (This same method of learning spells is used by non-shaman wu jen native to the north, such as those of the Pazruki.)

Korobokuru Shamanism

The korobokuru do not have priests, as such; the head of the household performs religious services. There are members of korobokuru society who might be best described as wu jen shamans, however. They are called tusu, and they have the powers of wu jen. Most tusu are female, but males are not unknown and figure prominently in legends.

The tusu's main function in the community is to be the communication channel of spirits. To this end the korobokuru wu jen make great use of *commune with lesser and greater spirit* spells. Their method involves a careful ceremony to appease the spirit. This ceremony is almost always conducted with the assistance of the village chieftan (especially since he is the one seeking advice or information).

Foreigners

Of course, not all of the humans found in the Northern Wastes are natives. The following sorts of foreigners are most commonly encountered: adventurers, exiles, explorers, fugitives, kensai masters, miners (in the southern Koryaz mountains), wu jen hermits, and of course traders. Fur forms the bulk of that which such hardy, independent merchants bear south.

Hengeyokai

These shapechangers, seen throughout Kara-Tur, flourish in the wilderness of the Ama Basin. They often become the protectors (or, in some cases, the scourges) of human clans; and humans accord them great respect (sometimes tainted with fear and hatred), believing them to be particularly powerful manifestations of the spiritual forces of nature.

Issacortae

The Issacortae inhabit the northwestern portions of the Ama Basin. They are the most unified of the northern people, having at least a nominal high king, and a cultural center of sorts at Tomyris.

Issacort society is organized as follows. The most basic unit is, naturally, the family. A number of related families form a clan, comparable to the extended families of the south in terms of family honor and so forth, which looks to a matriarchal or patriarchal figure for guidance. Among the Issacortae, leadership positions, even military, are not held exclusively by males. A number of clans unite to form a tribe, led by a chieftain who is military leader and arbitrator of disputes. The eight tribes, finally, constitute the Issacort Confederation, led by one of the chieftains as high king or queen (see *Tomyris* and *Tayanulchi,* below).

The Issacort lifestyle is semi- nomadic, concentrating on the raising of reindeer and elk. A small amount of agriculture is practiced, but on neither a large scale nor in a consistent manner. Hunting and fishing are also pursued in an irregular manner.

Religion plays an important role in Issacort life, and shamans are employed to lead the many nature-oriented, animistic ceremonies. Shamans are equally male and female. Their order is not formally structured, but the most respect and awe is generally accorded to the great shaman of Tomyris.

The Issacortae are the tallest of the northern peoples, and predominantly of medium build. Their dark hair not uncommonly has curls and kinks; men and women alike prefer to grow it long, braid it, and tie it with leather strips.

The preferred weapons of Issacort barbarians are axe, shortbow, spear, sword and uchi-ne. Proficiencies they can choose from are agriculture, animal handling, bowyer, carpentry, chanting, dancing, fishing, horsemanship, pottery, rhetoric, running, singing, small water craft, snare building, survival, tanning, tracking, weaponsmithing, and weaving.

Korobokuru

These demihumans live in villages, raising crops, fishing, hunting and trapping for a livelihood. Each village is independent of the others, though friendly ties are frequently maintained by neighboring ones.

In most villages, the korobokuru are led by a chief and two sub-chiefs, all elected by an assembly of the village elders. These three korobokuru declare laws, judge disputes, and decide punishments; but they are subject to the will of the populace, represented through the village elders.

It is interesting that death is a punishment never awarded by korobokuru; indeed, they don't even consider it to be one. Rather, criminals must suffer physical and psychological pain, which can include beating, maiming, and exile.

Heads of households, rather than shamans, conduct religious ceremonies. The korobokuru do have a variety of shaman, called a tusu, that is almost always female; her primary function is to be a channel through which the village chief can consult the spirit world.

Korobokuru are considered by most humans to be dirty, smelly, unkempt, and very hairy; and this is by and large the actual case. The females wear blue tattoos on their faces and hands; though others (especially southerners) often find these quite hideous, the korobokuru consider them marks of beauty. Korobokuru weave cloth from hemp nettles and certain types of bark; they sew clothing from this, as well as from furs, feathers and salmon skin.

The lives of these little folk is difficult, and usually well occupied by trying to win life's basic necessities. When they do have leisure time, they enjoy dancing, telling stories (in a manner of half singing, half chanting), playing some games, and drinking large amounts of crude beer or any other intoxicating drink available.

Korobokuru villages are found scattered thoughout the Ama Basin. In a couple of areas (noted on the map), the korobokuru are actually the predominant race, but this is unusual. In the western of the two regions there is actually a village, led by one Pekaonit, that might even be described as aggressive. But this is certainly an exception to the normal korobokuru lifestyle. The vast majority of these dwarves are peaceful and reclusive, preferring isolated and peaceful locales in which to make their homes.

The preferred weapons of korobokuru barbarians of the Northern Wastes are axe, club, knife, spring bow (a device equal to the light crossbow, used especially for deer hunting), and sword. Proficiencies they can commonly choose from are agriculture, bowyer, brewer, carpentry, chanting, dancing, fishing, pottery, small water craft, snare building, survival, tanning, tracking, weaponsmithing and weaving.

Maraloi

This legendary race of men, or possibly spirit folk, ruled the Northern Wastes in millenia past. They were tall and fair and wielded powerful, alien magic. They used weapons and tools of bronze because iron was poisonous to them. The Maraloi (which means, "ancient lords" in Pazruk) were the particular foes of oni, ogre magi, and lesser humanoids, and managed to keep the upper hand until iron was introduced into common use in the Ama Basin. It is not known whether all of the Maraloi were slain, or if they departed, or if they became assimilated into human populations.

The Maraloi figure most prominently in the legends of the Pazruki, since ruins and relics of the vanished race are so often discovered in isolated valleys of the Koryaz Mountains. Among the Pazruki, a child of exceptionally light compexion or (most unusually) fair hair, is said to have the mark of the Maraloi. It is taken as a portent of great promise for magical ability.

Pazruki

The Pazruki are a nation of humans who primarily inhabit chiefly the northern Koryaz mountains. Native speakers of Pazruk are also found in the forest to the east and the forested hills to the north of the Koryaz, but those Pazruki have lifestyles more similar to those of the Wu-haltai and Issacortae, respectively.

The clans of those regions often intermarry, and customs and beliefs tend to be similarly blended.

In appearance, the Pazruki are small and slender. Their black hair is naturally straight, but traditionally both men and women shave it from adolescence on. Women then wear wigs of woven, dyed human and horse hair Men wear similar artificial beards (but not moustaches). I do not know the origin of this custom, but it may be the result of the accursed lice that breed in their homes.

The Pazruki are a pastoral people, primarily herding horses and sheep. Horses are utilized for their meat, milk and hides, as well as for riding and as the basic medium of wealth and exchange (other goods' values are expressed in terms of horses). Sheep are raised for their wool, milk and mutton. The last is the the staple food of the Pazruki.

Other animals raised include cattle, yaks and goats. Some fowl are kept, but not necessarily for food or eggs: the crowing cock is believed to ward off evil spirits.

Though herders, the Pazruki are not nomadic. The valleys of the northern Koryaz are large and fertile, so the livestock rarely depletes the grass supply. They do not need to move seasonally, either, because little snow reaches the valleys in the winter, and the animals can usually dig through what there is.

A small amount of agriculture is practiced, growing fodder to supplement the winter diets of prized horses.

Pazruk society is patriarchal; inheritance is passed from father to youngest son. (The reason for this is explained in a myth, wherein the hearth-goddess, Tabit, descended from the heavens and gave her blessing and the sacred gold neck-torc to Pazruk, the youngest son of the Father of All Tribes.) Polygamy is a common practice; also, it is customary, for the preservation of the clan, for a man to marry his stepmother or sister-in-law upon the death of his father or brother.

The basic socio-political unit of the Pazruki is the clan, or extended family. Each clan has its own patriarch and territory. Clans, usually speaking the same dialect, form loose alliances (often sealed by marriages) for mutual benefit. A Pazruk tribe consists of a network of such alliances. In dire times (natural disaster, invasion, etc.), the patriarchs of a tribe will elect one of their number to become the Great Father. (This brings great honor to the patriarch and his clan.) Once danger has passed, this title loses any weight, but patriarchs often retain it as part of their name.

Pazruk religion is animistic. There are no priests or shamans. Religious rites are conducted by the head of household or the patriarch, as appropriate to the particular ceremony.

Though the Pazruki have no priests, some do feel a calling to the discipline of magic. Such individuals, male or female, go alone into the wilderness (preferably after receiving their patriarchs blessing) and learn the ways of the wu jen. Some later return to their people, to serve as wise men and guardians.

The preferred weapons of the Pazruk barbarians are horsebow, axe, spear and sword. Proficiencies they are commonly skilled in include agriculture, animal handling, bowyer, carpentry, chanting, dancing, fishing, horsemanship, pottery, singing, survival, tanning, tracking, weapon smith, and weaving.

Spirit Folk

River spirit folk are to be found in the Northern Wastes. Their ways and purposes are mysterious and unknown to humankind, as they rarely meddle in the affairs of others. It is not uncommon, though, for people to make offerings to the guardians of rivers, hoping to avert extreme spring flooding, or seeking a good catch of fish.

The most notable northern river spirit is named Lasishal Ama. She is known for having assisted legendary heroes, and punishing those who have sought to despoil the land. Lasishal is believed to still reside in the mighty Ama River, wellspring of her life-force.

Wu-Haltai

The Wu-haltai are a heavyset people of medium height who are found in the eastern portions of the Ama Basin and along the seacoast. They live in small, permanent villages, supporting themselves by hunting, fishing, and raising some crops. (The climate in this region is more hospitable toward agriculture than that further inland, thanks to the moderating influence of the ocean.)

Villages are really extended family units. Although the leader is typically a patriarchal figure, the society is actually fairly egalitarian. Except as shamans, women rarely play leading roles, but are consulted in all matters.

Shamans are an integral part of Wu-haltan culture and politics. In small villages, very reverent and very superstitious, these people are capable of wielding more power than their counterparts in other cultures. This is not to imply that shamans are corrupt, for that is rarely the case; but more than one xenophobic shaman has helped keep his or her village tightly insulated from the rest of the world.

Such insulation is a common characteristic of most Wu-haltan villages, from the swamps to the forest to the seacoast. The vast proliferation of dialects attests to this fact. Each village is essentially self-sufficient, and need only have rare dealings with its neighbors. Within the community, however, individuals are not so independent. It is recognized that the village requires the cooperation of every single member, and no member will allow another to do less than his or her share.

The Wu-haltai have a rich and diverse culture. Each village has its own legends and folklore, in addition to popular tales known among all the clans. The pursuits of music, dance, and storytelling pass on the lore and wisdom of the village, since there is no written language; and therefore these pursuits are considered extremely important and honorable.

Wu-haltan barbarians conform very closely to the "forest barbarians" described in the *Oriental Adventures book,* page 5.

Social Customs

There are so many taboos that it would be impossible to list or describe them all. Some are common to an entire people; for example, among Wu-haltan fishermen, the biggest fish caught must be thrown back, because it belongs to the Lord of the Sea or the Guardians of Rivers. Other taboos may apply to tribes, clans, or individuals (e.g., wu jen).

Most taboos have some mythic or historic foundation. The people claim that breaking a taboo invariably results in bad luck. (The details of this are left to the DM's discretion. Penalties should not be too serious unless a very, very important taboo was broken. For example, a penalty of 1 on saving throws or hit rolls for the subsequent three hours would be suitable for breaking a minor taboo.)

Languages

The chief languages of the Northern Wastes are those of the three major human tribal groupings. In addition, many nonhuman groups, such as the hobgoblins and korobokoru, have their own distinct tongues and sometimes various dialects. It is worth noting that, although similar to those spoken in the west, the languages of oriental hobgoblins and hill giants are separate dialects, and the ogres of the region (and most of Kara-Tur) communicate in the tongue of ogre magi.

Each human language is in fact a family of dialects with a common ancestral tongue. Because there is little centralization or writing among the northern peoples, the language of each group has tended to develop and to change on its own. People of the same nation can communicate rudimentarily in their native dialects, since they have in common various basic terms, phrases and structures from their parent language. Within each dialect, numerous accents often exist, each from a different clan or group of closely related clans.

When characters learn a language, they are learning a specific dialect. (Of course, in some languages only one dialect exists, or survives in common usage.) Thereafter it is easier to pick up another dialect of the same parent language, simply by learning the relatively minor differences in syntax, vocabulary, and usage.

In game terms, a character that already knows a language or languages may use more language slots (as permitted by his Intelligence; see *Oriental Adventures,* page 9) to learn additional dialects springing from the same parent tongue. Since dialects are easier than totally new languages, three dialects may take the place, of one language slot; i.e., a character could, rather than trying a totally new language, expend a slot learning three dialectal variations on tongues he already knows.

It is common for people to communicate through different dialects in the same family It is very limited, however, as complex concepts cannot be conveyed. It's easy enough for people knowing Tchaltin-Pazruk and Erla-Pazruk to make and understand general statements like, "The Kala's cave is north of here," "I am bleeding to death," or "I'd like some roast boar, please." An attempt to explain the bureaucracy of Shou Lung, on the other hand, might be impossible. (In some languages it could be nearly impossible even within a dialect, just for lack of adequate terms.) Final arbitration on whether an idea can be conveyed is the DM's duty.

History

In centuries past no high king ruled over the nine tribes of the Issacort nation. This changed when a Wu-haltan horde led by Udegachan invaded first the territory of the Tayanulchi Issacortae, and then deeper lands. The Wu-haltai attacked settlements, drove off or killed animals, and desecrated burial grounds. Unprepared and disorganized, the Issacortae were found unable to defend themselves adequately, let alone retaliate.

The nine chieftains met at Tomyris to hold council and consult the great shaman, Mynorg. Mynorg declared that a high king, chosen from among the chieftains, must lead all the tribes to victory against the invaders. Mezin of the Tayanulchi was selected.

Under Mezin's guidance, the Issacortae turned the tide of the struggle. The Wu-haltan pillagers could not withstand the concerted, organized might of the Issatort forces. Finally, Mezin slew Udegachan himself in battle, and the Wu-haltai were driven back to their proper lands. Unfortunately, a stray arrow in that same battle found the high king.

This was a terribly unfortunate occurrence. The Issacortae repulsed the Wu-haltai, only to find themselves in a virtual civil war over who, if anyone, should succeed Mezin. The Tayanulchi held that, since the incursion was gone, there was no need for a high king; while the western tribes chose Argistis as the new ruler from Tomyris. The Tayanulchi refused to recognize Argistis, and in response the other eight tribes cut them off, going so far as to build a chain of fortresses — Rartu, Argistikhin, Eralaban, and Teishaban — to isolate the disowned ninth tribe.

When war again struck the Tayamchi, this time in the form of a humanoid incursion from the swamps, there were no allies to which they might turn. Indeed, other tribes and races moved in like vultures. Even Issacortae turned on their brothers to join in looting the disintegrating tribe.

After battling a bakemono horde at the Hill of Namaskar, Queen Triala of the Tayamulchi decided that her homeland was no longer safe. Guided by a divinely-inspired vision, or so she claimed, her people would leave in search of a new land. It would be a rich land where the reindeer would thrive, where the streams are almost choked with salmon, where the winters are mild and in summer the forest overflows with nourishment.

The clans elected to follow her vision; it provided more hope than what was promised by the wolfish tribes that surrounded them in the Ama Basin. Therefore they journeyed north, vengefully razing some humanoid territory on the way, into the Land of Snow Demons.

No one has since heard from the Tayanulchi, and it is unknown whether they found the land of their vision, still wander the barren tundra, or all perished in the northern ice.

In any case, the Tayanulchi have left their mark on the land and in the minds of the northern folk. The land of the Tayanulchi is dotted with monuments to their tumultuous history, including earthen fortresses, battlefields, and burial grounds that sometimes include hundreds of cairns. It is a desolate bit of countryside. The Issacortae prefer to avoid it, and not without reason. The region has become a haven for a wide assortment of fell creatures, including a large number of undead that accompany desecrated graves.

Non-Player Characters

Ayana No-Shui
(ay-A-nah no-SHOO-ee)
Symorok Valley
15th level wu jen
N, Human female (Pazruk)

Ayana is a most powerful magician, one feared and respected among her people. Since her childhood she was expected to become a wu jen because she bears the mark of the Maraloi: While most of her hair is jet black, her bangs are naturally white. Because her hair has this unusual quality, Ayana does not shave it as is the custom of her people.

After many years of living as a hermit, discovering the secrets of magic, and then testing her skills as an adventurer throughout Kara-Tur, Ayana chose to return to her home, the Symorok Valley. Now she serves as the prime counsel of the chieftain, Shan Khantayan.

Ayana No-Shui has lived more than 60 winters. She now resides on the fringes of the Symorok valley with her loyal friend and guardian, a tiger named Koba. The wu jen is willing to share her knowledge of magic and her travels, if the listeners are sincerely interested and pay her the kindness and respect she deserves.

Among the items Ayana has saved from her travels are an *amulet of communication, a bell of warning,* and *drums of thunder:*

Pekaonit (pee-KAH-o-nit)
Chieftain
Karoah
10th level oriental barbarian
CN,
Korobokuru male

The village of Karoah is led by a singularly ambitious and greedy korobokuru, Pekaonit. He is the chieftain of the Karoah village, a position he gained through right of birth. He has held the post, however, mainly through his violent nature, defeating or driving off all challengers. He is exceptionally squat and muscular, even among his own people. His humors are seldom pleasant or cheerful.

Pekaonit is incessantly stirring up trouble with other korobokuru tribes, as well as humans and humanoids. Pekaonit explains his unusual policies as intended to keep his people fit and competetive, lest in weakness they fall prey to their many hostile neighbors. Others say it's only a matter of time before some clan or another sets its mind on Karoahs destruction and succeeds. That time does not appear to be close at hand, however, considering the competent body of warriors that has developed as a consequence of Pekaonit's unusually belligerent leadership style.

Shan Khantayan (SHAN kan-TIE-an)
Chieftain of Symorok
Symorok Valley
8th level oriental barbarian
N
Human male (Pazruk)

Though he has passed 75 winters, this patriarch is still active and energetic. He recently even helped defend his clan against a band of hill giant raiders. Still, most of Symorok's residents will concede that the clan's father was never overly bright, and his age hasn't even brought much wisdom, as the recent battle also demonstrated, when he almost led the tribe to complete disaster in a rash attempt to pursue. Fortunately, Shan is well advised by the witch Ayana No-Shui (some suspect she effectively makes all the important decisions), so the clan contentedly continues to honor their absent-minded patriarch.

Shan Khantayan does have a streak of vanity. He is easily swayed by pretty jewelry or a pretty face, as well as flattery. Complimenting his favorite beard-mask, the one with gold thread woven in, is particularly effective. Most of the village knows this and uses it to great effect, Shan not being quick enough to see through their obvious manipulation.

Sirya (shah-BEE-ah) **Redlock**
Wanders
14th level ranger
CG
Human female (Issacort mother)

Sirya is half oriental, half occidental; her father was a western woodsman, her mother an Issacort shaman. Her profession, adopted from her father, is ranger, following the western style; while her appearance favors her mother's oriental blood. The most notable of her striking features, and that from which comes her nickname, is a lock of brilliant red in the back of her otherwise black hair. She grows this long and braids it and cuts the rest short.

Sirya suffers from a severe case of wanderlust; she is 38 years old and has never settled down for more than a year This has resulted in her traveling almost all of the Northern Wastes, and becoming perhaps the living person most knowledgeable about this region. She has also gone into the south some, and has visited her father's homeland.

In the Tayanulchi region, Sirya is most likely to be found consulting and sharing stories with Ayana No-Shui in the Symorok valley, or investigating ruins and battling humanoids with Lao Yaksulomai.

Sirya is generally friendly in dealing with strangers. Despite her great knowledge and skill, she is not con-

descending. She is very loyal to those she considers friends and those who depend on her. And, finally, she is always delighted to share information from her travels with those who inquire.

Items of Interest

Magical items in the Northern Wastes are not viewed in the same manner as in southern civilization, where magical items are often seen as simply more sophisticated and effective tools. In the shamanistic cultures, magical items win a sort of religious-reverence; because they are often associated with religion, and their power is believed to be derived from spirits who inhabit or are tied to the sacred or cursed item. Magical items are valued not so much according to their power as to association with legends and spirits. For example, a *spear + 1* engraved with pictographs that indicate the assistance of certain spirits, or one believed to have been used by a famous hero or deity, would be quickly preferred over an unadorned *spear +3* of unspecified origin.

Amulets

One of the functions of a shaman is to fashion amulets to protect and aid the members of his or her clan. Cursed amulets may also be created.

When more than one amulet of the same category (e.g., hunting) is worn, the effects are not cumulative; instead the most powerful one takes precedence. Among cursed amulets, too, this applies. When both cursed and beneficial amulets of the same category are worn, they negate each other.

Following are three examples of commonly fashioned amulets. (In addition, the DM may choose to create amulets that mirror the powers of other magical items like rings.)

Amulet of Communication: This allows a person to communicate clearly with anyone who understands another dialect of the same parent tongue. The maker of the amulet must know the parent tongue at the time the amulet is constructed. These amulets are much favored by foreign merchants and are not uncommonly found at the gatherings of the Issacortae chieftans each year. Bearers of these amulets often have special recognition as messengers or go-betweens for the different tribes.

Health Amulet: A common Northern belief is that illness is a form of possession, the influence of evil spirits that have taken control of the afflicted person's soul. A fever, for example, stems from the soul being subjected to flames by evil spirits. For this reason many health amulets also protect from possession, or even have powers of exorcism.

Health amulets come in countless varieties. The *moiganis,* for example, is supposed to protect against diseases of the lungs. It is left to the DM to devise individual health amulets and empower them as he sees fit.

For example: One powerful *moiganis* may keep the bearer from contracting any lung ailment, and may in addition provide a bonus of +4 on savings throws against inhaled spore attacks (yellow mold, basidirond, etc.).

Cursed health amulets increase the chance of contracting disease, or reduce the bearer's chance to save successfully against appropriate attack forms.

Hunting Amulet: These items will increase the bearer's chance of hunting successfully. In game terms, the DM can just arbitrarily provide more success; or, if he has access to the *Wilderness Survival Guide,* the benefits can manifest as a bonus of up to 35% on the chances listed on Table 31: Hunting Success (WSG, page 55).

Cursed hunting amulets, exist as well; when borne, the carrier has reduced chances of hunting success (up to -25 percent).

Mezin's Skull

Mezin was the first high king of the Issacortae, slain in battle against. the Wu-haltai *(see Tayanulchi)* and buried beneath a cairn erected upon the battlefield. A band of Wu-haltans subsequently raided the grave, intending to carry home the head of the Issacort high king as a war trophy. Not long thereafter, their village was annihilated by bakemono brigands, who carried off the skull (which had already gained some infamy; in fact, most bad luck in the region was blamed upon it). The bakemono were subsequently slain in battle with the Tayanulchi, and the skull was lost. It has since been reported on a number of occasions: once in the hands of a hobgoblin shaman, again among the curiosities of a traveling Pazruk wu jen, and still later in the possession of a party of oni. Its present location is unknown, but a number of respected shamans have asserted their belief that it rests somewhere in the Palace of Balinaikal.

The appearance of the skull is well-known. It is human, of course, blackened by grime and soot and age. Firmly lodged in the right temple is a broad, iron arrowhead.

The skull is not intrinsically magical, nor does it radiate magic. However, it does have two special properties. First, attached to the skull is a kuei with six hit dice, lawful neutral alignment, and the special powers of *mass suggestion* (at will) and, once every five years, *ancient curse.* The duty of this kuei is to see that the skull is always accorded proper respect, as befits the high king. If someone is disrespectful to the power of the skull or Mezin's name, the kuei will seek to punish that person until appropriate appeasement is made. Second, because of it's history, the skull has acquired an aura of ill fortune. If held by a non-Issacortae, the owner and all his associates suffer a -1 penalty in all actions. This guilt is associative to all who might be culpable in the illegal possession of the skull. Thus, if a chieftain or a shaman has claimed it, that person and all who serve him or are under his guidance are affected.

Some shamans believe the skull is of value for some unknown, powerful magic; but this has not been substantiated or elaborated upon. Certainly possession of the skull is a significant moral and morale advantage in the northlands. An Issacortae clan who has it would gain great honor, a rival nation would bring great dishonor to the Issacortae. This in itself is incentive to

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郭弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

claim the skull.

Sumpko's Mantle

If legends are to be believed, then Sumpko must certainly be considered to have been the greatest tusu of the korobokuru race. She (most stories refer to Sumpko as female) wandered far and wide, even through the strange lands of the south and into the netherworld, and much korobokuru folklore relates her adventures and the extraordinary things she encountered.

This ancient relic, a clothing article of hers, was endowed with magical power. It supplemented her ability so that she was a greater wielder of magic than is possible for normal korobokuru, and it also allowed her to see into spirit worlds.

If the wearer is a spellcaster, his spells take effect as if cast by a character three levels higher, regardless of racial maximums (e.g., Sumpko could have east spells as a 10th level wu jen, though korobokuru cannot rise above 7th level in that class). The mantle does not allow characters to learn spells as if of the higher level, only to cast the ones permitted by their actual level with greater efficiency.

The second power of the mantle is viewing of the astral and ethereal planes. By concentrating, the wearer may see into either of those planes (provided that the plane intersects the Prime Material Plane at the wearer's location). The wearer need not be a spellcaster for this power to operate.

The one side-effect of the mantle is that when the wearer is under great stress (as determined by the DM, but which happens only rarely), he must save versus spells at -4 or have his sight involuntarily focused on the astral or ethereal plane (equal chances of each) for 3d4 rounds. This makes the character effectively blind on the Prime Material Plane.

The mantle is sized to fit a korobokuru. It is made of wool from various northern animals, the yarn brightly dyed and woven in attractive patterns. Tiger fur lines the edges.

Sumpko is believed to have created the mantle with the assistance of various powerful spirits. She passed it on to her successor, and so for more than a century it remained in the village, until taken in an attack by hobgoblins and ogres. It has since appeared in the hands of various shamans in every corner of the Ama Basin. Some are known to have met gruesome deaths, it is suspected at the hands of evil spirits whose attention they won by eavesdropping on other planes.

Suggested Adventures:

Tomb Raiding

Before settling in the Koryaz Mountains, the ancestors of the Pazruki were a nomadic people. One aspect of this was that, in war, tribes did not have fields and homes each others' to burn and pillage. Instead, they would rob and desecrate each others' graves. It was great dishonor for the graves of one's ancestors to have been desecrated, especially by one's enemies in war.

This custom and way of thinking persists among the Pazruki. Rather than kill livestock or uproot gardens, it is a much more serious insult to desecrate the tombs of an enemy clan.

A scenario can be built around this in a number of ways. Characters might be charged with guarding a tomb against raiders; or they might, in a purely professional and adventurous way, rob a tomb without realizing what a terrible act it is, and then get caught or at least recognized; or, finally, they could intentionally desecrate a tomb as a matter of honor (i.e., their clan had been similarly dishonored, so they must execute just retribution). In the last case, it would be appropriate for a shaman to have emplaced a protective spell to summon a guardian spirit when the cairn is disturbed.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

FORGOTTEN REALMS™

Kara-Tur

VOLUME II

A complete guide to the Jungle Lands, the Island Kingdoms, Koryo, Kozakura, and Wa.

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A Sourcebook of Kara-Tur

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The Jungle Lands

The jungle lands of Kara-Tur, known collectively as the Malatra, encompass several peoples. Separated by differences in language and culture, the jungle civilizations nevertheless bear more resemblance to each other than to the cultures around them. The most common similarities and differences of the Kuong Kingdom, the hill tribes of the Purang, and the Seng of Laothan are described here.

"Tsk," Ama clucked reprovingly. "Do not think that because I am old I have forgotten what I once studied! The nun's lined face creased in a toothless grin. "Though why you are curious about barbarians outside the Kuong Kingdom, I have no idea.

"Still...I suppose I can tell you a thing or two. And," she added, her voice lowering confidentially, "I divine the future with joss sticks and entrails. I know better than most what passes even in this moment, in far places in these Malatra jungles. Why, at times I even advise the high priest's chief diviner!"

Ama patted the bamboo mat beside her, her gold bracelets rattling with the motion. "Well, then—what are you waiting for? Sit, and I'll tell you about the Kuong Kingdom...and about these so-called civilizations on our borders."

The Land

Laothan

Laothan is the northern jungle area of Malatra, sweeping in a curve from the T'u Lung border to the Dwai River near Jivatsa, The region is covered with a vast rainforest, fed by periodical monsoons, numerous streams and rivers, and the constant hot and humid climate. The rainforest is light jungle in the north and east, turning to medium jungle in the Phu River basin west and south of Cheinang. The ground underlying this vegetation is hilly; ridges are steep-sided, and most farming takes place in the valley bottoms or on hillside terraces.

The people of this region, called the Seng, are racially similar to the folk of neighboring T'u Lung, with epicanthic folds, brown eyes, and fine, straight black hair. Men wear simple loincloths when doing heavy manual labor or loose trousers and shirts. Women wear high-necked, form-fitting dresses with long slits up the side; village women and others who must labor combine a looser form of this dress with trousers beneath. Bright colors and hand-painted and dyed silks are favored by these people. Their food is hot and spicy, and their joyful approach to life is evident in the many festivals and celebrations they hold each year.

Purang

The hill country of the Purang lies between the dense jungles of Laothan and Kuong and the T'u Lung border, extending into vast highlands between Kataburi and Feng Nu. Although rainforest-type vegetation grows throughout the Purang, this region receives less rainfall, is more temperate, and is more easily traversed than the jungles of the lowlands.

The people of the Purang are racially different than those of Laothan or T'u Lung. They have round, brown eyes, a darker skin color, wavy black hair, and speak a different language in many dialects. Disparagingly called the "primitive people" by their neighbors, these tribesmen wear loincloths and hunt with blowguns and poison darts. They are fierce fighters who jealously guard their hill country from incursions by others. Among themselves they are generous and loyal, but are suspicious of and inhospitable to most strangers. Their contact with outsiders is limited, and trade and travel through the Purang is practically nonexistent.

Kuong

The Kuong is the southern jungle country of this region. The heaviest jungle in all of Malatra is found in the coastal strip south of the Dwai River, and stretches to and beyond the southern Himasla Mountains. Farther inland, on either side of the Kunong River basin, the jungle is of medium density, and extends to the west along the T'u Lung border. As in the Laothan, the underlying terrain consists of steep ridges and hills. To the south, high-elevation hill country feeds the Kunong River and delineates the southern boundary of the Kuong.

The folk of the Kuong are racially akin to the Purang hill tribes. Like them they are brown-skinned, round-eyed, and have wavy black hair Their language comes from a different linguistic stock, and is distinct from the other tongues spoken in Kara-Tur. Even in dress and temperament, the Kuong people differ from their neighbors. Their clothes are light silks and gauzy tissues; both men and women wear sarongs, billowing trousers of bright colors, and jewelry of gold and silver. A hospitable, industrious folk, the Kuong are notably more fatalistic than others of the Malatra. They are obedient to authority and unquestioning of the heirarchy and caste system to which they are born.

Geography

Akashnu Mountains

The Akashnu Mountains rise six to seven thousand feet above the surrounding jungle. The peaks are rocky, and the terrain is exceedingly rough. Mountain dwellers live predominantly in the valleys between ridges.

The Akashnu was the cradle of the Kuong, source of gems and precious metals. The wealth of that area helped the priest-kings of Suranatra grow strong and powerful. Yet since the capital moved from there, the mountain paths became lost and the byways dangerous. Now bandits and korobokuru live there, and travelers stay near the Srelanat Road.

Himasla Mountains

The Himasla Mountains stretch southward from the southern jungle region, and form a natural boundary

between the Kuong Kingdom and lands to the south and west. The mountains are rugged and little explored.

Cities

Architecture

In the northern Malatra, village architecture dominates the countryside. Most structures are simple huts woven of bamboo and palm leaf, built upon stilts raised above the ground. This offers protection from insects and night predators, and allows the floor to stay dry in the rainy and flood seasons.

While these stilt-huts are common among the Purang and the Seng, more elaborate structures exist in the towns of the Laothan. Also built on raised platforms, the Seng town structures are more sturdy and incorporate hardwoods from the rainforest. The houses of nobles often consist of interconnected huts, some as high as two stories tall. Fortresses and defensive structures in Laothan may be built upon a base of stonework, but the actual building is made of wood, as are temples and shrines.

In the Kuong Kingdom, village buildings are built of bamboo and palm leaf and are raised above the ground for the same practical considerations as those in Laothan. In towns and cities, however, structures are built to last forever, or at least as long as the divine priest-kings shall rule the land. All important structures, many businesses, and the houses and palaces of the well-to-do are made of stone. Quarried locally where possible, and often hauled long distances, exterior stone work is always carved and sometimes decoratively painted. Kuong cities grow up around a central core of temple and government buildings, and these are the most elaborate to be found in the kingdom. Every visible space on these structures bears carvings of the Lords of Creation or illustrates events from myth or history; some are set with precious gems and inlaid stones as well. Fortresses and defensive walls of Kuong construction are of imposing stonework.

Apanu

Apanu is a stone fortress on the northern border of the Kuong Kingdom. Built just south of the T'u Lung border as a show of Kuong force, it holds a garrison of 1,000 men.

T'u Lung has shown no interest in crossing the river that marks their border with Kuong. The troops stationed at Apanu spend more time patrolling the jungle and escorting merchant caravans than anything else.

Banda

Banda is a town and fortress on the northern border of the Kuong Kingdom. Built just south of the T'u Lung border as a show of Kuong force, it supports a garrison of 1,000 men. The town is a silk manufacturing center and does considerable trade.

As at Apanu, the troops at Banda patrol the jungle and escort merchant caravans. Banda silk is remarkable for its light and gauzy weaves.

Beradandar

Beradandar is a nearly deserted city deep in the jungle between Ranguri and Parmahana. It was briefly famous as the temporary capital during the exodus from Parmahana.

Today only two temple schools and three monasteries continue to thrive as isolated centers of learning worth a pilgrim's journey.

Buyan

Buyan is a fishing village near the Parabin Shoals. Fishermen harvest many oysters and shellfish from the shallows.

The best pearls in the Malatra come from oyster beds near the Parabin Shoals. For Seng, the people of Buyan do an adequate job of finding them.

Cheinang

Largest city of the Laothan and seat of Thok Lian, Cheinang is a sprawling town of tiled wood and bamboo structures. The river is the heart of the city, with water markets and a small canal system to aid in transport and flood control. Thok Castle stands on a promontory overlooking the city.

The canals of Cheinang do not compare in extent or quality to those of Ranguri. A large number of their people live in houseboats on the water. Even though they have many temples, none are of permanent stone, and they allow wu jens to practice magic openly.

Deikhou

The town of Deikhou is a source of pottery, tiles, and other ceramic goods which are sold all over Laothan.

There is a small school in Deikhou which openly instructs wu jen in the magical arts. One of our temple sohei died last year in an attempt to assassinate Hueng, the master of the school.

Hueng is a 19th level wu jen.

Denokanburi

Denokanburi is the town and fortress that marks the juncture of the Srelanat Road and the Kunong River. This river port sees much official business, and is the transfer point of valuable gems and metals enroute to Ranguri.

The janyin (yakuza) do tremendous business in the protection and smuggling rackets in Denokanburi. The Yalaj family of janyin controls the town.

Dien Nyu

Dien Nyu is the largest wooden fortress on the T'u Lung border. It was built by Nuyen Sing in 594 as a deterrent to raiders. Nuyen soldiers man the fortress, but they are being secretly withdrawn in preparation for a confrontation with Thok Lian.

Durapatya

A small town built around a temple, Durapatya was founded by Vishnan IV in thanks for the spring of the elixir of youth which he found nearby.

The spring no longer has a magical effect, but remains popular with pilgrims and those desperate for a cure.

Enlasre

Enlasre is an undistinguished waystop on the trade road south of Javuhansa. Local hotsprings are of some interest to travelers.

The mineral waters at Enlasre are nice enough, but lost in the jungle nearby are the original springs created by a goddess. They bestow divine powers for a short time, and many travelers have searched fruitlessly for them.

Feng Nu

Feng Nu is chief village of the Blood Tree tribe of the Purang hillmen.

The Blood Tree cult is led by folk of bamboo spirit descent, and demands blood sacrifices for their holy tree groves. The wise avoid these hill barbarians.

Gaparurang

This town is the site of several foundries and metalworking guilds, most operating under temple subsidy. Gapapurang supplies Ranguri and the Temple with arms and armor, and custom metal items such as hoisting collars and winches for construction demands.

This town is best known for the nat spirits which infest it, a result of the problems at Visrana.

Garuji

The southernmost town of the Kuong Kingdom, the town, and fortress of Garuji guard the trade road through the foothills of the Himasla Mountains.

The priest-king is having a difficult time getting settlers to move into the area around Garuji. Odd creatures lurk in the jungle there, and garrison patrols continue to clash with mountain buso.

Javuhansa

At the headwaters of the Kunong River, Javuhansa is the terminus of the southern trade road. The open markets of the town feature ivory and gold, brought north by caravans and gathered from the local jungles.

Javuhansa is the best source of imported herbs, spices, and medicinals in the jungle countries. Many of them are magical, most are rare, and all are expensive.

Jivatsa

Jivatsa is an overgrown fishing village with a bustling boatyard and a market where goods from upriver are sold. Seng and Kuong mingle in the markets of Jivatsa.

The Seng sell drugs in the markets of this town, and sometimes their paid assassins do dirty work there as well.

Kataburi

Kataburi is a busy, medium-sized riverport which deals with the silk trade from Banda, and it is the source of the popular giant crayfish sold up and downriver.

Kataburi has a secret consort market near the waterfront (see *Mhou).* Also, there is a lovely temple dedicated to the river spirit which blesses the place with crayfish. Unforunately, they've seen fit to let a hengeyokai crayfish person, Devuri, be priest of the temple. He spends entirely too much time in the river, if you ask me.

Devuri has the skills of a 12th-level shukenja, and the abilities of a hengeyokai crab person. He is a former adventurer, and has many connections with the underwater denizens of the area.

Kataninh

Kataninh is chief village of the Rippling Grass tribe of Purang hillmen.

That tribe is the laziest of all Purang. They refuse to herd or farm and prefer to raid across the T'u Lung border for made goods.

Khon Tre

A simple village in the jungle, Khon Tre is a popular destination with fighters and adventurers hoping to improve their weapon skills. The town is the residence of Laothan's most famed weapon master, Loh Thieu.

Loh Thieu is not a Seng, but comes from a distant land. His fighting techniques are unusual, and, I must admit, even the match for our temple-trained sohei.

Lob Thieu is from Kozakura; his true name is Kashigawa Yoichi. He is a 15th-level kensai, skilled in the katana. He can also instruct in the use of the daikyu as if he were a kensai of 8th level, and the parang as if he were a kensai of 4th level.

Kumok

Kumok is chief village of the White Monkey tribe of the Purang hillmen.

That tribe is known to have hengeyokai monkey people among its members and relatives.

Kwang Tre

The trade town of Kwang Tre is protected by the castle and soldiers of Prince Kung Bien. The wealth of the Laothan hinterland flows through here to Cheinang, including exotic animals from Purang and pearls from Buyan.

Kung Bien is loyal to Thok Lian, but his troops and vigilance have grown lax and should pose no difficulty for the forthcoming Kuong offensive.

Luang

Luang is the chief village of the Burning Tree tribe of Purang hillmen.

These primitive people fancy they have a special affinity for fire, and claim their magicians can control it.

Lumpur

Lumpur is the chief village of the Twisted Palm tribe of Purang hillmen.

The Lumpur barbarians are skilled at lurking in

ambush in tree-tops and killing their enemies with long blowguns and poisoned darts. Their territory is best avoided.

Matsureya

Mahatsureya is a fishing village near the Sanamatra Reef. Because of the reef, the fishing is exceptionally good there.

The villagers consort with ningyo and other unnatural water creatures. Their temple practices are suspect and they are not to be trusted by travelers.

Manapurang

Manapurang is a hill town at the border of the Kuong Kingdom, the jumping-off point for gold prospectors and miners of jade and alabaster. Primitive hill folk make up half the population.

The odd dwarflike natives of Manapurang know where the riches are to be found in their hills. They hire out as guides, and do some gold mining themselves.

The natives of Manapurang should be regarded as korobokuru barbarians in terms of their abilities.

Marabaya

Marabaya is the largest seaport in the southern jungle country. Seafarers take on cargos of gold, silver, ivory, furs, and precious gems, and deliver silk, pottery, sugar, and other goods to be sold in the Kuong Kingdom.

Wako that work in local waters can be contacted through the small shipyard north of Marabaya.

Mhou

The town of Mhou is little more than a strongpoint on the border between Laothan and T'u Lung. It does little trade with outsiders.

Mhou's hidden trade is one of abduction. On secret raids across the border, they take livestock and sometimes women, whom they sell to Nuyen nobles. Some are even sent by caravan as far south as Kataburi, where unscrupulous Kuong may buy them and add them to their consort household. Laothan yakuza are present in Mhou.

Min Loh

A fishing village south of Tran, Min Loh is known as the best place to hunt sharks and, farther offshore, kraken.

Sea spirit folk live in Min Loh. They aid in the sea hunting.

NaLamh

The town of Nalamh is the largest silk producer in Laothan. Goods from here are sold mostly incountry, as is the ebony and teakwood which comes from the surrounding jungle.

In the jungle outside Nalamh, a palace sometimes appears. Those who enter it may not get out in time; if it fades from sight, those inside go with it and never return. The palace, its purpose, and origin, are mysteries.

Nardana

Nardana is a stone fortress built near the juncture of the Kunong River and the T'u Lung border. A garrison of 2,000 troops is stationed there.

The military there makes an occasional foray against the hillmen after they've raided water buffalo from local villagers. Sometimes they claim to destroy weretigers and other monsters in the area, but I think they only say that to justify their existence.

Nindamh

Nindamh is a river port on the Phu River. It is a shipping point for rare woods, scents, and natural oils in demand in Cheinang.

One of the few good things to come out of Laothan are perfumes and incenses made in Nindamh. Some are even magical in quality—all the more surprising.

Nyu Thok

Nyu Thok is a fishing village on the southern coast of the Laothan penninsula.

This boring village is said to shelter caves which are accessible only at low tide. There are contradictory stories about where they lead to and what is within them.

Patayang

Patayang is one of the most remote of Kuong towns. Near the western frontier of the Kingdom, it is a rich source of gemstones, and sends much wealth to the capital by way of Gapapurang.

Many people explore outside Patayang in search of wealth, and find only the carnivorous jungle ape instead. There is not even a worthwhile temple there.

Pursai

The wealthy town of Pursai has grown up on spices. Pepper, cocoa, vanilla, and saffron are the mainstay of the spice trade here.

The Old Man of Pursai is a ghost or crazed hermit who preys on spice harvesters. Striking at random, he slays gruesomely, then fades from sight before he can be caught. There is a reward for his capture, but none have caught him yet.

Ranguri

Ranguri is he largest city in the southern jungles. Located on the Kunong River, it is the capital of the Kuong Kingdom, seat of the Priest-King Vishnan VII, and headquarters of the kingdom's intricate temple and bureaucratic administration. It is built of stone, with flagstone paving, torch-lit streets, and running water in palaces and public places. It floods considerably during the rainy season, and an extensive network of canals facilitate drainage and transportation in the city.

Ranguri is called the Temple City, because at its heart is an interlinked complex of temples and palaces which have grown as large as a town.

Sayan

Sayan is the largest seaport in Laothan, and does

much trade with seafarers from more northerly countries. It is the seat of the powerful Nuyen clan, and stronghold of Prince Nuyen Phi.

Sayan is merely another center of decadence. Thok's spies abound there, and the priest-king has a few of his own there as well.

Srelanat

Srelanat is the site of the first and richest emerald mine in the southern jungles. It is a major trade town, located at the mouth of the Ranu River and at one end of the main overland route to the Kunong River,

Since the gem mines are on temple land, this town is under firm control of the temple and Priest Kalivan. Jinyan (yakuza) thrive in Srelanat.

Kalivan is related to the Jarvatya jinyan family of Ranguri, and he is in on the extensive gem smuggling business conducted out of Srelanat. Kalivan has the abilities of a 16th-level shukenja.

Thiam

Thiam is a minor source of pearls, but is best known for the jewelry and inlaid metalwork which is made there.

One of the oldest Seng holy sites is outside of Thiam, where they claim the monk Tulang moved a hill and created a spring. Now a monastery stands there, where they train people in that false religion of Ku Nien.

Thok Treng

Thok Treng is the original. home of the House of Thok. The town has benefited from minor trade concessions and is a stronghold of Thok loyalists.

Ninja are busy in this town stalking people targeted as troublesome to Nuyen Phi. The-murders appear to be accidents and have not yet drawn official notice.

Tran

Tran is a seaport at the mouth of the Phu River Compared to Marabaya, only a moderate amount of trade moves up or down the river. Tran's "floating city"—an interconnected mass of houseboats and water-borne businesses—is almost selfsufficient and is the center of "city" life.

Any vice and almost anything for sale can be found in Tran. Murder for hire is especially cheap, and the Sung ninja are easily found in the floating city.

Yanajalan

A squat and sturdy fortress on the road to the Kunong River, Yanajalan holds a garrison of 1,000 soldiers and is kept very busy ensuring safety on the trade road.

The garrison commander, Chou Yueng, is a half-foreign barbarian who got his post only by marrying into an aristocratic house. He is overzealous and extorts "road fees" from travelers for their passage.

Chou Yueng is a 13th-level samurai whose father came from T'u Lung. Non-native travelers who do not pay his road fee are detained for 1 to 10 days and may have their goods confiscated.

Places of Interest

Bang Nu

Rang Nu is a well-known source of furs and leather goods. Items are moved overland to Kompoa, and thence to Cheinang.

Bang Nu craftsmen claim their leather goods are of sufficient quality to bear enchantment, such as the making of magical armor. We've never seen any here, and I wouldn't trust their enchantments, anyway.

Binkohn

Binkohn supplies cut wood and camphor oil to passing vessels, and numbers several skilled woodworkers among its craftsmen.

Many bamboo spirit folk are in this area. Be wary if exploring or woodcutting, for they brook no intrusion into their secret places in the jungle.

Kompoa

In Kompoa, the unwieldy skins of elephants and hip popatami are turned into useful leather goods. The tanning and working techniques are unique; the goods make excellent armor and bring a high price as export items.

It is hard to believe that Kompoans are foolhardy enough to slay the elephant, sacred to Indra, for its skin. It is only a matter of time before the goddess destroys this town, Meanwhile, they grow rich on their sinful acts.

Parmahana

Carved stone walls and semi-collapsed structures are barely visible beneath a thick cloak of jungle growth. The former capital of the Kuong Kingdom, deserted for over 600 years, has been reclaimed by the Malatra jungle.

Much was left behind when the city was deserted, but disease and decay haunt the ruins of Parmahana. It has clearly been cursed by the gods, and it is certain death to go there.

Suranatra

Located in the southern foothills of the Akashnu Mountains, Suranatra was the capital of the Kuong Kingdom until territorial expansion forced the move to Parmahana for administrative-reasons. The city lies in ruins today, but is less overgrown by the jungle than Parmahana.

Vagabonds and thieves hide in the ruins of Suranatra. The place was partially razed to prevent the desecration of temples and holy sites.

Tua Koh

Once a mighty Laothan fortress, Tua Koh traded hands many times when the Kuong attempted to conquer the southern Laothan jungle. Destroyed in the final siege and battle, the ruins mark the boundary between Kuong and Laothan territory.

The deserted ruins are only partially overrun by the jungle. Scouts from Laothan and the Kuong Kingdom venture into the place from time to time, but wild ani-

mals are more of a threat there than men.

Visrana

An ancient and crumbling city, Visrana was discovered by temple soldiers of the Kuong Kingdom. When ancient spectres and other evil things were accidentally released from their long-sealed tombs, the ruins were quickly left to the jungle. Visrana and the area around it are forbidden to exploration by Priest-King decree.

Spectres, nat, and other unnatural creatures stalk the jungle around Visrana. Only the foolhardy venture there.

Government Politics

Government varies with each civilization found in the jungle country.

Laothan

Among the Seng of Laothan, Thok Lian is king. He is supported—or hindered—by a number of princes responsible far their ancestral territories, a compromise forced on the Thok monarchy when it first united the Seng. Lesser nobles receive, their power and land grants from the princes they serve; but this is generally a confirmation of traditional land ownership and authority. Those who are related to the Thok house receive their authority direct from the king, and are the most loyal and influential aristocracy in the country. Although the Thok have established a centralized government in Cheinang, the real business of the Seng is conducted on a local basis under the watchful eyes of this network of minor nobles and land-holding aristocrats.

Kuong Kingdom

The Kuong Kingdom is ruled with unquestioned authority by the Priest-King Vishnan VII. Both head of the civil government and head of the church of the Lords of Creation, Vishnan wields absolute and far-reaching power. He is held in awe by his people, who believe in his divinity. The royal family is foremost among the aristocracy, as much for their close relationship to divinity as for any other reason.

Lesser nobles have only as much power and authority as the priest-king specifically chooses to grant. They are usually empowered to rule provinces and lesser districts, provide military service, or oversee civil projects such as the construction of bridges and temples. A hereditary bureaucracy oversees the day to-day affairs of the kingdom, but Vishnan has the right—and often exercises it—of terminating an irresponsible bureaucrat's service and replacing him with a new appointee. The temple/monastery heiarchy has little impact on government, but the religious influence is seen in civil projects, Kingdom festivals; and which nobles are appointed to what offices (those with strong temple ties are favored).

Vishnan is assisted in ruling by a few advisors and councilors of his own choice, and by senior members of the temple heirarchy. The outlying territories of the kingdom are administrated by satraps hand-picked by the priest-king, as are his generals.

Purang Tribes

The tribes of the Purang are interrelated, but act as separate entities unless threatened by outsiders. Tribal government consists simply of a council of elders and a leader chosen by popular acclaim. When the chief loses his popular support, another is chosen in his stead.

There are five major tribes in the hill country. The most influential is probably the White Monkey Tribe, which is led by Chief Tuan and located in the hills around the village of Kumok.

Wu Jen

Wu jen are found as village shamans and hill country recluses among the Purang. In Laothan, they are more feared and respected, and can be found in some cities. They are hated and are almost unheard of in the Kuong Kingdom.

We believe that only those dedicated to the Lords of Creation have the wisdom to use magical powers properly. Those outside the clergy who work magic are abominations. A wu jen practicing his evil skill in the kingdom is publicly impaled. We know we have yet to catch them all, but we work at it.

The only wu jen in the Kuong Kingdom are dual-classed, with their second class being shukenja, sohei, or monk. Wu jen receive their training clandestinely from such dual-classed characters, who can be identified only by secret signs, passwords, and talismans.

Factions

Kuong Divine House

The family and relatives of Vishnan VII are the most influential people in the Kuong Kingdom. Foremost among these is the priest-king's dowager mother, the Lady Natiya, who has considerable influence with her son. It is her dream of empire and urging on of Vishnan that has spawned the new offensive against Laothan. Vishnan's brother, the Divine Prince Puran, is the military general responsible for the army of conquest.

Temple of The Lords of Creation

The chief administrator of most temple affairs is the High Priest Malvaya, a capable older man who held this position before Vishnan came to power. However, Malvaya does not care for Vishnan or the civil considerations acknowledged by the priest-king. This has led to subtle sabotage by Malvaya and other senior priests, in order to sway Vishnan's decisions to favor the temple. For instance, some temples fabricate reports of border unrest, in order to receive government money to support a greater number of temple soldiers. Most recently, Malvaya has hushed up diviners' predictions of ill fortune for Vishnan's military expedition. By doing so, the priest hopes disaster will weaken Vishnan's military strength and force him to rely on—and subsidize—temple troops for armed protection.

Thok House

The Thok believe the government should remain centralized in Cheinang under their leadership. However, the Thok rulers rely on princes to command the loyalty of the regional armies which support the throne. As such, the Thok must retain the loyalty of the princes. Thok Lian is a diplomat who has only partially succeeded in doing so; his tendency to talk and not act has alienated a good third of his followers.

Nuyen House

The house of Sayan Prince Nuyen Phi is the most vocal opponent of Thok Lian's rule. The Nuyen and their allies control a large Laothan army and territory from the T'u Lung border to Nalamh. Nuyen and his followers have decided to simply ignore any more edicts from Thok, but have yet to reinforce their position with concrete action.

Ninja

Foreign assassins and spies of T'u Lung heritage have settled in Sayan and offer their services to any client with money, The most active of the ninja is the Sung clan, who work throughout Laothan and even, disguised as merchants, spy in the Kuong Kingdom, Although based in Sayan, the Sung do not especially support Prince Nuyen. Their only concern is that routes of travel remain open in order to facilitate their work.

Yakuza (Jinyan)

Although minor yakuza activity takes place in Laothan, there is a large and well-established underworld in the Kuong Kingdom. The "yakuza" of Kuong (called jinyan there) have their origins in the temple priesthood. In a country where little is done without temple approval, bribery, extortion, and dispensing of special favors soon became a way of life for many of the clergy. Today's jinyan have evolved from priests with black market connections into an independent criminal network with temple ties. The most powerful jinyan family is the Jarvatya, based in Ranguri. They, like their fellows, support temple interests when it suits their needs.

Religion

There are three distinct religions found in the Malatra region. Each one is followed mainly by the people of a single civilization, but there is overlap in these beliefs and practices throughout the jungle territory.

The Path of Enlightenment

This philosophy, adopted from Shou Lung, is most popular with the Seng, who live in the northernmost area of the Malatra jungles and who have the most contact with outlanders who adhere to this philosophy.

The dominant school of the Path of Enlightenment among the Seng is Ku Nien. In addition to chanting meditations and ritual religious practices, this system provides guidelines for personal behavior, social formalities, and obligations of duty. The school of Ku Nien offers enlightenment to those who closely follow its strictures. Ku Nien is represented throughout the Seng region by an interrelated system of temples dedicated to that school.

The Elemental Tribes

The Purang hillmen recognize a wide number of nature spirits and deities, whom they have grouped into tribes based on each spirit's relationship to the elements. River, rain, and monsoon deities are members of the water element tribe; those of plant, field and stone are of the earth element tribe, and so on. The specific deities honored varies considerably from place to place. Although there is no strict organization or affiliation between shrines, those in any one area are usually dedicated to a particular elemental tribe. The magical abilities gained by followers of these sects often feature spells in harmony with the element of the individual's favored deity.

Lords of Creation

The Lords of Creation are worshipped by the people and rulers of the theocratic Kuong Kingdom. Adopted from a southwestern culture beyond the bounds of Kara-Tur the lords are a close-knit family of powerful deities; each one responsible for a different aspect of earthly existence. Followers of this religion may worship a single Lord of Creation, or many at once, but shukenja, sohei, and monks of this order are always dedicated to a single deity.

Lavish temples dedicated to one or more, of the Lords of Creation are very common in the Kuong Kingdom. They serve almost exclusively as places of worship and celebration, while an elaborate system of monasteries serves as administrative centers and training grounds for clergy.

Worshipers of the Lords of Creation have little of the philosophical perspective offered by the Path of Enlightenment, nor the respect for nature spirits found in those who follow the Elemental Tribes. These believers are among the most arbitrary and authoritarian to be found in the Malatra jungles.

Indian deities from the Legends and Lore book are suitable for use in the Malatra jungle region, and are especially recommended for the Kuong Kingdom. Hill tribes worship mostly animal or nature spirit deities, but sometimes favor Indra and her elephant, Garuda, or Yama and his water buffalo.

Agriculture and Commerce

The economy of the lowland dwellers in the Malatra jungles revolves around the growing of rice and supplemental fruits and vegetables. The Seng of Laothan have the most extensive system of rice-farming villages in the area. Among the Kuong, the dense jungle they inhabit requires many villages to employ a slash-and-burn style of agriculture. This forces such villages to move their location every 10 to 20 years in order to develop new, fertile farmlands. This has made rice growing less appealing to the Kuong, since it requires construction. of terraced dams and waterways, and has encouraged them to concentrate more on the

tropical fruits and vegetables. This is also the reason for the Kuong Kingdom's interest in the agriculturally well-developed Seng territories.

The Purang hill tribes pursue agriculture at a subsistence and gathering level, eating vegetables such as cabbage, tomatoes, and sweet peppers that grow well in the highland climate. They are predominantly hunters, and husbandmen of small goat herds in the Malatra highlands.

Other Resources

The Seng are skilled workers in leather and wood, but trade few of their goods outside their own country. Silver is mined near Kwang Tre, and jewelry from southern Laothan is popular among both the Seng and the Kuong.

The Kuong are master workers in stone, as evidenced by their temple cities, made of massive and elaborately carved stone. Gems mined in the Akashnu Mountains and precious metals found elsewhere are another source of wealth in this mineral-rich country.

The hill tribes exploit few natural resources, but utilize their hunting skills to capture or kill exotic and magical animals, which are in turn traded with the lowlanders. This is the single largest source of outside income and bartered goods among the Purang.

Political History

The dominant political force among the jungle civilizations has always been the Kuong Kingdom. Since its foundation under Vishnan I, the Kuong Kingdom has proven to be an agressive, imperialistic theocracy. From the ancient capital of Suranatra in the Akashnu Mountains, the kingdom spread its influence to the coast and to the Kunong River. When the capital was moved to Ranguri on the Kunong River, the priest-kings began to conquer territories farther north, even capturing Tua Koh, a major city and fortress of the Seng.

At that time, the Seng of Laothan were a scattered folk, ruled by tribal chiefs who called themselves kings, each influencing a relatively small territory. When the Kuong Kingdom made inroads into their territory, the Seng were forcefully united under Thok Hueng, who became the first monarch of Laothan. Hueng successfully led the defense of his people, repelling the Kuong invaders, and establishing a dynasty which has lasted almost 200 years.

The Kuong Kingdom, has since turned its interest to the inland jungle south of T'u Lung, and has ignored northerly expansion for the last 50 years. In the absence of a common foe, there has been growing resentment of the Laothan government among Seng princes who, in earlier times, would have been kings in their own right. The current ruler, Thok Lian, struggles to keep the Seng united and preserve his heritage in the face of internal dissent.

The hill tribes of the Purang were once considered a likely target for annexation by the Kuong Kingdom. However, the priest-kings found to their loss that the "primitive people" were both difficult to engage in combat and expert at hit-and-run tactics. The Kuong were unable to maintain a foothold in the hill country and were eventually forced to desert their plans of conquest there.

Mythology

In the time before man existed, the goddess Indra bestrode her elephant and rode across the heavens. Where the great beast stepped, the void compressed beneath its feet, leaving the hills and valleys of Malatra in its wake. Indra fell into a dispute with her brother god, Yama, who claimed much of the thus-formed land for his own Unable to wrest it from his control, Indra wept in anger and in so doing created the monsoons and the abundant waterways which feed the jungles of southeast Kara-Tur. Yama set animals and people to populate this country, and he has watched their progress with special interest ever since.

History

The Malatra lands were ruled after their creation by near-demigods, the powerful creations of Yama. Through the centuries, these god-touched men lessened in stature, and their descendents are the ordinary humans who populate the jungles today. In the Kuong Kingdom this heavenly descent is most clearly remembered: in that theocracy, priest-kings are head of the church as well as of Civil government, and are believed to be divine direct descendents of the Lords of Creation.

The history of this region is one of three distinct, yet interwoven, threads. Protected from most outside invaders by dense rainforests and fierce hill tribes, the jungle civilizations have warred between themselves and shifted territorial boundaries time and again.

Non-Player Characters

Thok Lian, monarch of Laothan;
human male, age 41.

Thok Lian of Laothan is a diplomatic fellow, but is more given to discussion than action. Although his speeches are inspiring, he dithers interminably when it comes time to make a decision. He knows nothing of the military and relies on subordinate princes for their skill and advice in such matters.

Nuyen Phi, prince of Sayan;
human male, age 30.

Nuyen Phi is arrogant and supremely self-confident. He has a passionate love of the military, considers himself a skillful general, and covets power and independence for himself. He is a persuasive speaker, and is charismatic enough to sway wiser heads to his way of thinking.

Vishnan VII, priest-king of the Kuong Kingdom;
human male, age 35.

Vishnan is regal of bearing and absolutely authoritarian in manner. He takes advice well when he asks for it, but only his mother is capable of swaying him from a decision already made. This capable fighter prefers high temple ceremony to the exertion of military endeavors, He has the abilities of an 8th-level

tary endeavors. He has the abilities of an 8th-level sohei. Vishnan has three wives, 12 consorts, and nine legitimate children, the eldest of which is the Novice-Prince Kavayah II.

Kavayah II, novice prince of the Kuong Kingdom; human male, age 14.

Kavayah is a scholarly youth, deeply immersed in the temple studies required of him before he can ascend to the throne. He has a talent for magic, and learns clerical spells easily.

Tuan, chief of the White Monkey Tribe; human male, age 62.

Tuan is a dour old man, respected because of his military exploits defending the Purang against Kuong invaders. He is opposed to accepting gifts from their army, and advises the tribes to bar Kuong passage through the highlands.

Suggested Adventures

Laothan

Thok Lian struggles to hold his throne in the face of growing opposition from separatist factions. Foremost among his opponents is Nuyen Phi, prince of Sayan, who commands the largest military force in Laothan. Phi is convinced that the Kuong Kingdom has no further designs on Laothan territory, and sees no need to maintain the "convenient fiction" that the Seng are united under Thok rule.

Purang

The hill tribes of Lumpur and Feng Nu have witnessed the stealthy passage of Kuong troops through their territory, en route to a secret jungle camp between Tua Koh and Kwang Tre. The Kuong have scrupulously avoided clashes with the hill tribes and have brought gifts to placate them for the intrusion. The Purang debate among themselves whether or not to accept this largess. One faction argues that the Kuong activities are none of their concern, while the other claims that accepting gifts is tacitly taking the Kuong side against the Seng. Other tribes have been alerted, and their fighters are quietly gathering in the highlands near the area of Kuong concentration.

Kuong

In the last 50 years, the Kuong Kingdom has consolidated holdings to the west and considerably increased the size of its army. Now, Vishnan VII has turned his attention once again to the agricultural wealth of the Laothan. Spies at the court of Thok Lian have kept the priest-king informed of the internal dissent and lax state of Seng defenses. Once again, the Kuong army of conquest is moving north, gathering in the Laothan jungle for a definitive blow at the capital of Cheinang. As soon as an adequate force has assembled there, Vishnan's army plans to take Kwang Tre and embark on the Phu River, traveling quickly downriver to take the capital by surprise.

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

The Island Kingdoms

The great empires of Kara-Tur have passed their prime. It will not be long until they collapse, their rotting and ancient structures able to bear no more. And who then shall become the cultural and commercial leaders of the world? The young nations of the south, the Island Kingdoms! I, the merchant Parman, would offer my own home, the Kingdom of Bawa as an example of the opportunities and potential which the spice-laden islands hold. I hope that I sound not too immodest in suggesting that Bawa will become great, a leader among the islands in the forthcoming era of peace and prosperity!

To detail all of the islands of the southern oceans is, sadly, beyond my resources. I will therefore treat only upon my home, the Kingdom of Bawa, and perhaps in passing its inferior neighbor and rival, the Kingdom of Bertan. Bawa is an advanced and civilized nation, epitomizing the future for many southern islands; but it also has unexplored, wilderness territories inhabited by headhunters and fantastic beasts, and these places are similar to the more primitive islands of the south.

Bawa is the name of both island and kingdom. The kingdom includes the island (albeit in name only in some wild regions) as well as the nearby island of Rukun.

The Land

The island of Bawa is of volcanic origin, though none of its mountains, are known to be active. Two regions, the Bavanese Plains and Bawani Mountains, are dealt with under individual headings.

Though the Kingdom of Bawa claims the entire island, wilderness still covers much of Bawa, most of it unexplored. (Bavanese eyes and interests have typically looked out toward the sea rather than in toward the jungles and mountains.) The hills in the northwest have always been wild and avoided by humans. The soil is poor, and few animals make it their home. Consequently, it is a desolate place, and a favorite haunt of monsters and fugitives. Some explorers have returned with tales of ancient ruins found buried in the hills. Not enough information is possessed to compare these ruins, if they do exist, with other remains on the island, such as in the mountains.

The jungles are the most wild and exotic part of Bawa. In the steaming vegetation is a plethora of fantastic and natural beasts. The natives of the jungles have learned how to coexist in a delicate equalibrium with their neighbors. Outsiders are more often wont to barge through the jungle, stirring things up and causing themselves no end of hassle. (This usually is termed "adventuring.") Some ancient, vine-covered ruins have also been discovered here. Some suggest a race of demon-worshippers; perhaps yuan ti once held the jungles in their sway, though now they are but rarely encountered.

Along the wilderness coasts, especially in the west, pirates are known to maintain strongholds.

Geography

Bavanese Plains

This is a fertile region, owing chiefly to the rich, dark soil that points to the island's volcanic nativity. The region is farmed extensively, with the help of irrigation from the rivers. Rice is the staple, raised to feed the Bavanese populace. Larger landowners are involved in producing spices and, in few cases, fruit orchards. A few animals are raised: poultry for their meat, cattle and goats for milk. Meat is not a very popular food in Bawa, and in fact a number of religions forbid its consumption.

Bawani Mountains

This volcanic range is suspected to be rich in mineral deposits, but the Bavanese have not tapped its resources. Most of it has yet to be explored. The most curious ruins have been discovered on the mountains. Their ancient inhabitants cultivated rice and other crops on mountainside terraces. It is. not known whether these people were the ancestors of the present day Bawani, or why they disappeared or gave up their way of life.

Kingdom of Bertan

Bawa's rival to the east is a very similar culture. The main geographical difference is that Bertan evolved as a collection of small islands, while Bawa has been formed on a single piece of land. Some of the Bertanese islands used to be pirate haunts, and this is one reason that Bertanese are sometimes derisively labeled as a nation of pirates.

Panjardu

This island, located to the northwest of Bawa, has acquired infamy of late since it became the new home base of many pirate bands. It had no previous human inhabitants, as far as is known.

Rukun

This island was given its name, meaning "cooperation," by the merchant families that first colonized it. Its history is well chronicled in the Bavanese timeline. Since the pirates were driven out, Rukun has turned to agriculture and fishing for its livelihood. Its most important products are flax and hemp, from which are made linen and rope. Most of the island is explored and settled. The one wild region left is the hills, where strange beasts are sometimes reported.

Si'rat

This island southwest of Bawa is in fact an active volcano. Its last major eruption was 269 years ago. The volcano is said to be frequented by strange spirits (perhaps fire elemental and magma/smoke para-elemental creatures). Since its last eruption, plants have taken hold on the island, and it is a haven for sea birds.

祓氟紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

Cities

Djagong

Djagong is an important town, as it is the hub of commercial activity in the southern part of the island. Goods come from the surrounding farms, across the sea from Rukun, and from the wilderness via Burur. From Djagong, goods go to Nadepa'an, thence to other island kingdoms or the mainland.

Despite the wealth that passes through its gates, Djagong is a squalid city, teeming with poor driven from the countryside by economic need. In this environment the yakuza thrive; and they are highly regarded by the impoverished populace, who resent the great merchants' affluence. (Most of the great merchant families originally from Djagong have moved to Nadepa'an, a much more beautiful and cosmpolitan place.

Ulama

The capitol of the province of Rukun is a humble, peaceful, and complacent town. Bawa's smallest province is in a pleasant, balanced state of prosperity, producing enough to support its people and trade with the main island of Bawa, and it has not faced any major external threats. Of late there have been more pirate attacks than usual on the ships going to Djagong, but the datu ascribes this to a passing trend; and even if not, the Bavanese navy can deal with the problem.

Places of Interest

Burur

Burur was founded in 122 as a frontier post after the Kabuayan Wars ended. It is the hub of trade with Bawani tribes, and the traditional point of departure for those who would brave the islands wilderness.

Dahari

The tombs of the Bavanese kings are beautiful stone structures. Nearby is a temple for the purpose of honoring the spirits of the deceased. Sohei from this temple are charged with guarding the tombs.

Inarem Bay

The deep waters of Inarem Bay are a popular feature in local folklore. Many say that it was once dry land, with a proud city upon it, but the people angered the gods and so the city was one day sunk deep beneath the waves. Others say that the Lord of the Sea holds court on the sea floor there. In any case, no one knows exactly how deep the bay is, or what lies at its bottom (apart from the-many ships known to have sunk there in storms). An undersea shelf extends out about 300 yards from the shoreline and then drops off into the depths unknown.

Nadepa'an

Nadepa'an is the proud, elegant capitol of Bawa. The name means "scented": the city is at the heart of the spice trade. Also, the abundant local flowers are used to make exotic perfumes that are known and prized as far away as Kozakura.

Among Nadepa'an's important buildings are the Tjipto Royal Palace (constructed during the reign of Tjipto, 244-253), the homes of the great merchant families, numerous temples, a monastery, and (youngest of them) the house of the Bertanese ambassador.

Nahdatul

Nahdatul is a spartan city. Some commerce flows through it, on account of the river; but most goes directly overland to Nadepa'an. Its more important function is as the military center of Bawa.

Government and Politics

The kingdom of Bawa is in theory an absolute monarchy: the king's word is law. Subservient to the king are the bureaucracy of royal officials (who come largely from the great merchant caste), the military leadership (which comes largely from the noble caste), and the provincial rulers. Provincial rulers of Nahdatul, Djagong, Burur, and Rukun are called datus. This title originally meant the head of a barangay. Each datu is like the king in miniature, having beneath him a small bureaucracy, a local militia or police, and the heads of the major landowning families of his province.

In reality, the king no longer wields so much power, though this is a voluntary arrangement. The trend began in the reign of Urip III, who increased the size of the bureaucracy to deal with administrative matters. His nephew, the present King Nahdat II, is quite content to leave the actual business of ruling to his bureaucracy; and when he is faced with decisions, he turns to his advisors for guidance. Therefore, most of the day-to-day business of government is handled by bureaucrats, who generally remain faithful to the interests of their merchant families; and all the courtiers vie to be the king's favorite and most influential advisor. (This is especially the case now; Nahdat's long time friend and advisor, Rasidaljo Ulama, passed away about a year ago, and no clear favorite has since emerged.)

Judging from the crown prince, Rasid, it seems likely that the current political arrangement will continue at least another generation.

Races and Classes

Two sorts of people inhabit Bawa.

Those known as the Bawani are the islands indigenous populace; they have been here since the dawn of time. Many now labor in the towns or serve on the farms, while others still live in their primitive state, practicing such brutal rituals as headhunting, and leading a mean existence. The Bawani are small and dark-skinned. They prefer to wear no more than loincloths and jewelry, and to run barefoot in the jungles. The Bawani of the farms and towns have, of course, adopted more civilized customs.

The newer people to the island are my own, the Bavanese. Legend states that we came across the sea from the west a thousand years ago. We settled in the fertile Bavanese Plain of northeastern Bawa and

farmed the land. The Bawani were initially friendly; they allowed us to settle peacefully, and shared with us knowledge of the rich spices for which the islands are now famous. It is sad that our peoples were unable to coexist forever so peacefully, but their refusal to abandon such uncivil traditions as headhunting have forever been a source of agitation. Those tribes that would not accept us had to be driven back into the jungles.

The Bawani

The earlier of Bawa's peoples are a curious race of savages, basically misunderstood by their Bavanese neighbors. Bavanese culture tends to put down the Bawani as being crude, ignorant, stupid, backward, lacking in ambition, and predisposed to random, senseless violence. Although this perspective might be understood, it is certainly not accurate. Whether Bavanese or Bawani culture is superior is not a matter to be addressed here; but instead it is necessary to provide some information on how and why the Bawani actually behave and how they view themselves.

The most oft-repeated charge against the Bawani is that they are brutal, violent headhunters and even cannibals. Cannibalism is a false charge; even the Bawani know of no instances of such, except in a couple of obscure myths treating upon unknown races. In fact, the Bawani are generally quite peaceful, interested in supporting themselves, their individual families, and their clans.

They do practice headhunting — certainly this is a truthful observation — but they do not perceive it as random or senseless. It is a cultural institution, evolving from ancient days of inter-tribal warfare, whereby young warriors proved themselves by severing the heads of enemies. It is seen. as a sort, of rite of passage, a release of the passion of youth before entering marriage and settled life. (For this reason one is advised to avoid the solitary company of such youths.) Despite the fact it's not a very constructive custom, it persists and causes trouble in times of peace. Youths aspiring to win the headhunter's feathers, like their fathers, sometimes attack strangers without apparent cause and in times of peace. Among Bawani, the other tribe simply exacts fair retribution by taking a head in return. When the less understanding Bavanese have been involved, the situation has been known to blossom into greater problems (the Kabuayan Wars being an example). Happily, some Bawani tribes, such as the Kabuaya, have foresworn the practice of headhunting without necessarily abandoning the rest of their lifestyle.

In other respects the Bawani are a most pleasant people, egalitarian among themselves and cooperative in dealing with their environment. Their livelihood centers on hunting and growing food; perhaps this is why the spirits they most revere are Agiment, the Forest Lord (also known as Irungut; he provides both game and illness); and his wife, the Maiden of the Garden, Madekit (also called I'uma).

The Bawani may be treated as jungle barbarians (see *Oriental Adventures,* page 15).

Castes

As some barangays (extended families) became more successful and powerful than others, a caste system evolved in Bavanese society. The castes fall into three groupings: noble families, propertied families, and laboring families, Beneath all of these are those without family, the outcasts..

Following, then, is a summary of Bavanese castes in descending order:

Noble
Royal Family (Nadepa'an)
Noble Families (Burur, Djagong, Nahdatul, Rukun)
Propertied
Great Merchant Families
Great Landed Families
Petty Merchant Families
Petty Landed Families
Laboring
Artisan/Craftsman Families
Unskilled Laborer Families
Outcasts
Those without established family

The noble and royal families are all related. Two families, Burur and Rukun, are actually branches of the Djagong and Nadepa'an houses, respectively. They became established as separate families when they received provinces to rule. These five families are also the only ones from whence come the kingdom's elite warriors and generals that could be best described as samurai. The best known of these living is Harijo Ten Rasid Nahdatul.

Great merchant families are involved in large-scale trade. They typically possess warehouses and one or more ships. Some such families concentrate on internal trade, others on external. The petty merchants consist chiefly of self-employed shopkeepers.

Landed families are the agricultural backbone of the nations. Petty landed families are usually concerned with growing such crops as rice for their own support, perhaps selling some surplus. Greater landed families, on the other hand, possess larger estates and hire workers. Besides food crops, they are involved in producing the spices for export.

The laboring castes are those whose members lack property and must therefore seek employment or (in the case of independent artisans) rent space from the higher castes.

The outcast caste includes all those who are considered to have no family; in this regard, they are actually outside the caste system. Outcasts can include criminals disowned by their families and foreigners whose families are unknown. For simplicity, someone without an established family is assumed to be below any of the established castes. Most yakuza are considered part of this caste, as their 'family' isn't of the normal, biological sort; and most Bawani also find themselves considered outcasts, since their families and tribes do not conveniently fit into the Bavanese system. (Some Bawani have settled and established families in the Bavanese fashion, thereby joining an appropriate caste.)

The Bavanese caste system is not so old and established as many others in Kara-Tur; it is actually fairly flexible. It is not unknown for individuals (particularly those of the outcast caste) to better themselves and begin a new family at a higher caste level. Such a family is at first eyed with much suspicion, but may become established and respectable within a generation or two. (Note that it is not possible to rise into the noble caste except by marriage; new noble families are established only by the order of the king, and are always associated with land ruled; e.g., Burur, Rukun.) Entire families may slowly elevate their caste status through the acquisition of skills and property. For example, a family of unskilled laborers may work to become known for some craft, such as pottery. They would thereby rise to the artisan class. If they subsequently managed to acquire property and own shops for selling their wares, they would rise to petty merchant level. Finally, they might become very successful and, over generations, acquire enough property to become involved in trade on a larger scale, in the process ascending to the height of a great merchant family.

Spirits and Religion

Spirits abound in the island kingdoms, and the prospective visitor may be well advised to familiarize himself with native teachings and customs related to the topic. The Bavanese have five categories for spirits: memedis (frightening spirits), lelembuts (possessing spirits), tujuls (familiar spirits), demits (place spirits, associated with holy locales such as temple ruins), and danjangs (guardian spirits, similar to demits).

These categories are not so much types of spirits as descriptions of the context and content of supernatural encounters. Any particular spirit might be considered a memedi or a lelembut, for example, depending on the situation.

In practice the concepts are also used as colorful metaphors. For example, rather than say a man has suddenly become wealthy, one is able to say that he has acquired a tujul; this implies that he now has a spirit to steal money or rice for him. (Whether this is actually the case might require the services of a witch and is not usually regarded as being worth the effort; it's easier to explain the matter by assuming there's a tujul.) Perhaps this casual usage exaggerates the presence of spirits on the island (particularly among schoolchildren, who are known to excuse the absence of their daily work by protesting, "A memedi frightened me on the way and I dropped it!" or "A lelembut possessed my dog to eat it!").

Be quite assured, however, that spirits do exist. Most danjangs and demits are unique creatures, befitting their unique, particular locale. There is, of course, a great proliferation of the non-unique varieties of memedis.

Most encounters with memedis are not fatal; all the same, it is always best to treat any spirit with utmost caution.

To placate the many spirits that dwell on the islands, the natives have a special ceremonial feast, called a slametan. This important ritual feast is performed on every important occasion, even if one has no reason to fear spirits; it has evolved into the common denominator of religious tradition on the islands.

Religion in Bawa and the other island kingdoms is as muddled and varied as elsewhere in Kara-Tur. Besides native cults, almost every major. faith of Kara-Tur has been imported to some island, at least to make some impact even if it isn't generally accepted. Accompanying mainland religion are monks, shukenja and sohei, while native sects usually have-their own peculiar shamans and witch doctors. As foreign religions gain popularity, these figures have tended to become less involved in specifically religious rites and more in activities such as healing, making potions, and dealing with spirits.

History

The Bavanese lifestyle was originally agricultural and simple. Nucleic families grew into the barangays, or extended families. Some barangays became more successful than others, particularly those that became involved in trade as well as agriculture. The villages of Nahdatul, Nadepa'an, and Djagong became towns, and the most powerful barangays became the ruling families from whence came Bawa's first princes. Ultimately, through marriage, the Nadepa'an barangay gained rulership of all the island.

During the reign of Urip III and, now, Nahdat II, we have experienced a time of unprecedented prosperity and commercial growth, one which seems likely to continue for a long time. For this reason, I invite my fellow merchants throughout Kara-Tur to examine Bawa, and consider it an excellent trading partner. I invite adventurers, too, to journey south. We are grateful to have clever, strong heroes to brave the wilderness and rid our island of the wicked beasts that roam the jungles and mountains; also welcome are priests to convert those Bawani who cling to old, evil customs (such as headhunting) that thwart progress.

Non-Player Characters

Aziz-Tagem, oyabun of the Bavanese yakuza;
Djagong;
11th level yakuza;
LN, human male.

Aziz-Tagem, the family head of the yakuza of the island of Bawa, is of mixed Bavanese and Bawani ancestry. He is undoubtedly the key figure of what little organized crime exists in the kingdom. Aziz is a keen organizer, ever concerned with expanding contact networks and building and reinforcing his family's foundations. He is particularly careful to avoid overtly crossing the authorities, since the yakuza are relatively young here. Bold yakuza are not encouraged to operate in the cities; Aziz-Tagem instead counsels them to pursue their ambitions in the wilderness, and then return when they're prepared to work more patiently.

Bimaru, Bertanese permanent ambassador to Bawa;
Nadepa'an;
7th level monk;
LN, human female.

The Bertanese ambassador is an enigmatic person, frequently the subject of gossip in the Bavanese capitol. She is clearly an ascetic and a monk, as evidenced by her appearance and mannerisms. Rumor has it the monk was taken from her monastery for the sole purpose of her present position. In any case, she is very serious, very competent, and single-mindedly devoted to the service of her queen. She does not circulate in Nadepa'anese society, except as necessary in conjunction with her position.

Bimaru is a woman of medium height and indeterminate age. She is very fit, athletic, and attractive. Her scalp is always clean-shaven and she prefers to wear black robes and walk barefoot.

Among the ambassador's advisorial staff is said to be a powerful sorcerer.

Harijo Ten Rasid Nahdatul, general of the Bavanese army;
Nahdatul;
12th level samurai;
LG, human male.

Harijo, a man in his late 40s, first made a name for himself as an adventurer, leading forays into the mountains and jungles from Burur. There he and his companions vanquished a great number of wicked spirits and fantastic beasts. Retiring from adventuring, Harijo acquired a position in the army. His skill and reputation allowed him to rise quickly. Now he is subservient only to the king in military matters.

Harijo presently resides in Nahdatul, carefully monitoring pirate activities. He desires, with the assistance of the military fleet and perhaps some merchant ships, to lead an invasion of Panjardu. Beside the fact that pirates are a trade menace, Harijo has a personal vendetta, which goes back to adventuring days, against one infamous pirate named Wibisono; and in addition, the taking of Panjardu would win great honor and ensure Harijo a place in Bavanese history.

Nahdat II, 16th king of Bawa;
Nadepa'an;
normal human;
LN, human male.

Nahdat is fat and slothful, content to relax and enjoy what he sees as an interminable era of prosperity. He leaves the details of running the government to his staff and blossoming bureaucracy; and most decisions are actually made by his advisors. Despite being an ineffective leader, the amiable king is much loved by his people.

Parman, merchant of the Ardjo family;
Nadepa'an;
normal human;
LN, human male.

Parman is a very successful merchant of Nadepa'an's richest non-noble family. He has easily enough personal wealth to live comfortably without working, so he devotes much of his time to "bigger issues" of concern to the whole nation. He meddles in politics a great deal, offering "the merchants' view" to the king, often without invitation. Among the things he supports are increased trade (of course) and wiping out the Panjardu pirate menace; and he is forever suspicious of all Bertanese, especially their woman ambassador.

Parman is also willing to take financial risks that he thinks may benefit the nation in the long run, such as exploration of the wilderness. He has financed numerous adventuring companies, in return receiving a share of the profits and information gathered during the explorations. His present object of attention is the Bawani Mountains; he wishes to search them for valuable minerals that he might mine and export.

Purung, chief of the Kabuaya;
jungle south of Burur;
6th level oriental barbarian;
LN, human male.

Of all the Bawani tribes, the Kabuaya have the best relationship with the Bavanese, though but a couple of centuries ago they were the most deadly of enemies. Under the leadership of such chiefs as Purung, the Kabuaya have increasingly forsaken their old ways and adopted the customs and lifestyle of the Bavanese. Purung would like to go so far as to establish a Bavanese province in the jungle, ideally with himself as datu; but as yet there is not enough Bavanese interest nor Bawani support to make such a course of action viable.

Rasid Nadepa'an, Crown Prince of Bawa;
Nadepa'an;
3d level kensai;
N, human male.

Although not lazy like his father, the 24-year-old crown prince is totally disinterested in matters of state. His passionate interest is swordfighting, and it is his ambition to become Bawa's greatest kensai. When Rasid manages to get into the wilderness, usually on the pretense of hunting, he enjoys testing his skill against any evil beasts he can encounter. In the course of such ventures, he has encountered and earned the respect of numerous Bawani tribes. For this reason some in the royal court predict that, while he is not likely to be any more involved in government than his father, Rasid V will have a reign marked by better relations and cooperation with the indigenous islanders.

Tappeng, chief of the Kabundusils;
Bawani Mountains;
14th level oriental barbarian;
N, human male.

Not without reason are the Kabundusils considered the most savage Bawani tribe. Though they are fairly isolated in a western mountain valley, their reputation extends all across the island. They are known for being ferocious, aggressive, and extraordinarily cruel. Other tribes live in fear of those times when the Kabundusil chief, Tappeng, leads a party headhunting, or decides (out of sheer malice, claim other tribes)

to pillage others™ rice fields and burn their dwellings.

Although Kabundusil culture seems predisposed toward evil, they do place great emphasis on the importance of honor, and they respect both cunning and physical prowess. This is why the adventurer Wibisono, now infamous as a pirate commander, has won such high regard in Kabundusil eyes.

Tappeng™s concerns include the usual inter-tribal rivalries and day-to-day matters, such as keeping his people fed and housed. On a larger scale, Tappeng is very apprehensive about the Bavanese, and he doesn™t trust the soft, wily, manipulative merchants whom he suspects really run the kingdom. Tappeng actively promotes struggle among the Bawani because he believes it necessary to keep fit, so as to withstand the inevitable push of Bavanese seeking to tap the as-yet untouched wealth of resources of the island™s wilderness.

Udi; wanders;
8th level wu jen (master of nature);
CN, human female.

This Bawani witch is a wanderer. Among her own people she is regarded as a hero, one who will stop at nothing to help any tribe in need. In particular she is interested in soothing intertribal struggles (and on this account has found herself at odds with the Kabundusil chieftain, Tappeng). She is very wise and knowlegeable, and no chief would miss a chance to receive her counsel. She is also a healer, familiar with the non-magic use of the island™s many exotic herbs in Curing.

Among the Bavanese, Udi is not thought of so highly. In fact, she has been made an outlaw by royal decree, and so risks her freedom whenever she enters civilized territory. This stems from the witch™s casualness in dealing with Bavanese law, custom, and property. She has no respect for the caste system, gleefully insulting nobles and great merchants, preferring to associate with humble folk and outcasts. She finds criminals a particularly intriguing group of people; and, though Udi is not particularly inclined toward violence or larceny, she has been willing to lend her talents to friends engaging in disreputable variations on Bavanese commerce.

Wibisono, pirate commander;
Panjardu;
4th level yakuza/9th level bushi;
LE, human male.

Wibisono was born into the petty merchant caste in Nahdatul, but at an early age he ran away to Djagong and joined the yakuza. For a time he operated successfully in this profession, but it failed to provide him with the excitement he desired. For this reason he forsook the yakuza and went into the wilderness. At this point he also switched to the class of bushi.

Among the Kabundusils, a particularly savage Bawani tribe of the mountains and western jungles, Wibisono lived for eight years, proving himself as a warrior and taking many heads from rival tribes. In this period Wibisono also had contact with numerous adventuring parties (usually on unfriendly terms); and he once had occasion to humiliate the rising hero of Bawa, the samurai Harijo Ten Rasid Nahdatul (ever since his sworn enemy).

Wibisono is now a pirate commander, leading forays from Panjardu to harass Bavanese and Bertanese sea trade with other islands and the mainland.

This former yakuza is crafty and, despite his drive for thrills and new forms of excitement, he also can be prudent and cautious. He has no intention of throwing his life away; he is perfectly willing to accept survival and cowardice over death and honor. He knows how he bears the hatred of the samurai, Harijo, and he knows also that Bawa will not long tolerate the large number of pirates that operate from Panjardu. Even now, Wibisono is actively seeking a new base of operations. In the eventuality of an attack on Panjardu, Wibisono is one man most likely to slip safely away, either to another island or to the remote jungles of Bawa. Harijo will not soon nor easily exact his vengeance.

Wildlife and Monsters

The southern islands are teeming with fantastic creatures, spirit and other. The monsters that follow are intended to supplement those provided in the Oriental Adventures book. They are certainly found in the island kingdoms; it is up to the DM to decide if any might be discovered elsewhere in KaraTur.

Alan (by David Cook)

Frequency: Rare
No. Appearing: 1-20
Armor Class: 6
Move: 9fl/18fl (MC: C)
Hit Dice: 4
% in Lair: 70%
Treasure Type: C
No. of Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: 1-4/1-4 or by weapon type
Special Attacks: Charge
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: High
Alignment: Chaotic neutral
Size: S
Psionic Ability: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil
Level/X.P Value: III/60 +4 per hp

This creature is a birdlike humanoid. It has the feathered wings of a bird and the body of a man. Although it only has stubby fingers on its wings, the toes of the creature are long and prehensile, able to handle items with great skill. The alan lives deep in the heart of tropical and sub-tropical forests.

The alan prefers to avoid combat, relying on its wings to make quick strikes and sudden escapes. Its

causes double normal damage. When fighting while flying, the alan can only make one attack per round. When fighting on the ground, the alan either batters with its wings or fights with a spear held in its toes. However, when using a weapon, the alan is limited to one attack per melee round.

The alan is highly intelligent and clever. It speaks the language of its race and the languages of human inhabitants living in or near its territory. The alan has little contact with man, but it is generally friendly and occasionally helpful when encountered. However, some have been known to be hostile, attacking lone travelers or raiding villages in the night. They are also known to be mischievous, resorting to pranks and tricks on unwary hunters. They live in small, ornately fashioned treehouses hidden in the branches of large trees. A lair typically has three to five such houses hidden in a single tree. Guards will be posted in nearby trees, hanging batlike from the higher branches. Once enemies are sighted, the guards fly back to the main tree, alerting all who reside there. If the intruders do not directly threaten the lair, the alans prefer to remain in hiding until the party is past. Should the intruders climb or threaten the tree, the alans wait until the enemy is in a disadvantageous position (climbing in the branches, etc.,) before swooping in to attack.

Gendruwo (Lessen Spirit)

Frequency: Uncommon
No. Appearing: 1-3
Armor Class: 5
Move: 24"
Hit Dice: 3
% in Lair: Nil
Treasure Type: Nil
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: By weapon
Special Attacks: Shapechange, fear, kidnapping
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, invisibility, etherealness
Magic Resistance: 35% (see below)
Intelligence: High
Alignment: Chaotic neutral or chaotic good
Size: Varies
Psionic Ability: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil
Level/X.P. Value: IV/180 + 3 per hp

Gendruwos are perhaps the most frequently reported variety of memedi. They are pranksters, playful spirits that delight in causing mischief among humans. They have the ability to shapechange at will to any form (though they do not gain any of the attacks or special abilities of that form); they are especially fond of appearing as the relatives of the object of their mischievous attention. They can, if they wish, inspire fear in the manner of common memedi (q.v.). They have magic resistance of 35%, but this doesn't apply to spells specifically intended for spirits (e.g., the resistance would apply to *hail of stone* but not *exorcism).*

The practical jokes of gendruwos are usually annoying but harmless; if there is a chance that harm was done, the gendruwos often go so far as to ask their victim if he's all right (speaking in an archaic form of the local tongue), and assisting him if he's not. In a more cruel mood, though, these spirits may lead children into trouble by appearing in the shape of their parents, or kidnapping them. Gendruwos can enter the ethereal plane at will, and they are able to bring others with them to the border ethereal. No saving throw is permitted, but from the border ethereal the kidnapped person may reenter the prime material plane. In order to effectively kidnap a character, the gendruwo must offer him a morsel of food. If the character accepts, the gendruwo can whisk him away into the deep ethereal, far from friends, home, and family.

Physical combat is something these spirits avoid, but if in a desperate situation without alternative, they may use available weapons to defend themselves.

Memedi, Common (Lesser Spirit)

Frequency: Uncommon
No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 6
Move: 24"
Hit Dice: 1
% in Lair: Nil
Measure Type: Nil
No. of Attacks: Nil
Damage/Attack: Nil
Special Attacks: Fear
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit; etherealness at will
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Semi-to High
Alignment: Neutral
Size: S or M
Psionic Ability: Nil
Attack/defense modes: Nil
Level/X.P. Value: II/22 + 1 per hp

The category of frightening spirits can be very broad. Most unexplained phenomena that frighten a person are likely to be described as memedi, and many spirit creatures presented in *Oriental Adventures* may fit the category.

Common memedi are incorporeal beings found throughout the southern islands, and they come in a variety of fantastic forms. They have in common the statistics above. Anyone who sees a memedi must save versus wands or be afflicted by fear (as per the wand). Common memedi have no other attack or ability, and are in fact quite harmless.

Six well-known types of common memedi and their appearances are:

Djim: These are apparently the spirits of deceased priests. They wear prayer robes and chant a lot.

Djrangkong: Skeleton.

Panaspati: This is a human body, but with the head between the legs. It walks on its hands and breathes fire.

Setan gundul: A little child with all hair on its head, save a topknot, shaved.

Uwil: Apparently the spirit of a dead sohei.
Wedon: A human shape wrapped in a white sheet.

Memedis are usually encountered singly, after dark, in lonely, out-of-the-way places.

Sundel Bolong (Lesser Spirit)

Frequency: Rare
No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 8
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 2
% in Lair: Nil
Treasure Type: Nil
No. of Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: 1-3/1-3
Special Attacks: Charm, fear (see below)
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, etherealness at will
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Low
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Size: M
Psionic Ability: Nil
Attack/defense modes: Nil
Level/X.P. Value: III/52 + 2 per hp

The sundel bolong is an evil spirit visible only to male characters. It appears as a beautiful woman with long, black hair that hangs below her waist. This hair hides the distinguishing feature of a sundel bolong: a gaping hole through the middle of its back.

Lone males are this spirit's typical victims. It appears to them — perhaps stepping out from behind a tree or rock — and beckons, wordlessly promising gratuitous, earthly delights. Characters who choose not to follow of their own will must save versus spells or be charmed into doing so anyway. If the charm fails, then the character sees the hole in the 'woman,' and realizes its supernatural character; he must then save versus wands or be struck by fear (see common memedi).

Characters foolish or unfortunate enough to follow a sundel bolong apparently find their expected pleasures abruptly terminated, as such men are always later found dead and horribly mutilated.

The sundel bolong avoids melee; its first defense is to inspire fear; then, it may retreat to the ethereal plane. If caught there, it may defend itself with its long fingernails.

Like many other spirits, the sundel bolong prefers to operate at night. It particularly likes to choose sentries as its victims.

Suggested Adventures

The Battle for Panjardu

Many people believe it inevitable that there will be a Bavanese invasion of Panjardu to quell the pirate threat originating in that island. There are a number of ways in which characters may get involved in such a campaign. As individuals, it may be exciting to precede the actual offensive as scouts, infiltrating the pirate hideouts to find their structure, defenses, and weaknesses. The actual battle may be played out with the BATTTLESYSTEM™ Fantasy Combat Supplement.

In detailing the pirates, the DM should feel free to add sinister, fantastic elements behind the apparently simple and random ocean-borne pillaging. Is there, perhaps, a rival island kingdom providing the the pirates with assistance and advice; or might there be informers among the great merchant families of Bawa and Bertan that sell knowledge of merchant ship schedules? Or, perhaps additionally, are such pirate commanders as Wibisono actually subserviant to powerful, ancient denizens of Panjardu: perhaps yuan ti, or a powerful oni with lu nat attendants?

Mineral Exploration

The merchant Parman intends to assemble an expedition to explore the Bawani Mountains for minerals that he might mine profitably. Player characters could be hired to accompany such a mission; the group could even consist entirely of PCs if some characters had appropriate mining knowledge and experience.

Though on the surface this appears to be an open-and-shut job, complications will be introduced when the explorers find their task taking them into the heart of Kabundusil territory. The Kabundusil chief, Tappeng, does not appreciate Bavanese intrusion, especially with the possibility of forthcoming mining operations. He will do his best to render the characters' task impossible.

Since it is likely that the characters will be outnumbered and could be easily overpowered by Tappeng's warriors, it will be necessary for the PCs to use their wit carefully to earn the natives' respect and then work out a compromise. (On the other hand, the natives might simply assault and split up the party, leaving members lost and separated in the wilderness.)

In searching for minerals, the party is likely to stumble upon various ruins in the mountains. These might become the objects of future expeditions.

Si'rat's Fury

The impact on Bavanese culture of Si'rat's next eruption will be profound. It will be up to the DM to decide the severity of the eruption (it could be anything from a relatively minor outpouring of lava to a Krakatoa-like cataclysm); but, whatever its eventual severity, the eruption will be preceded be by an influx of creatures from the planes of elemental fire and para-elemental magma. The presence of these in the southern wilderness jungle of Bawa could upset the local balance by driving the native monsters and Bawani north into civilized lands. Adventurers may be called upon to assist in dealing with these incursions; in finding their cause, the PCs may be led deep into the jungle and to Si'rat to face the elemental beasts (some of which may be intelligent and intentionally malevolent).

Putting two and two together, it might be suspected that a volcanic eruption is imminent. A difficulty for diplomatically minded players may be for their characters to stimulate Nahdat's relaxed regime into doing anything to prepare for the presumably forthcoming event.

Koryo

"Koryo is a proud land, a long peninsula that extends from Shou Lung down to the northern islands claimed by Kozakura," Meilung Kenshuii Shih began his letter to his western wizard friend, Elminster. "As a neighbor, Shou Lung has never seriously sought expansion into the rough mountainous territory that was the old "Chosen Empire," and these people have attained a culture only slighty influenced-by us. Constantly repelling invasions from Kozakura and the wild tribes of the northlands, the new nation called Koryo is battle-strong but very isolated, centered on the southern tip of the peninsula.

"I have come to know this land through the tales of Meo Cha and his sister Meo Li, whom it was my pleasure to host several years ago. Their father Meo Yungdo, is advisor to the first emperor of the Wanang dynasty of Koryo. At that time, however, the current emperor, Wanang Sun, was but a general in the service of the king of Silla. The land of Koryo was even then known as 'Choson.' Choson was ruled by the king of Silla, who had 15 years before conquered Koguryo and Saishu, uniting the peninsula.

"In a cruel endeavor, the king arranged to have these two children, then aged 19 and 17, kidnapped and sold into slavery. Whether he sought leverage against their father, or simple revenge for some slight, is unclear. The children managed to escape, however, and stow away aboard a ship they believed was bound for Xai Chung. But the vessel was in fact part of a secret armada assembled by the king of Silla for a planned invasion of Kozakura. The invasion fleet was demolished by a tsunami, and Meo Cha and Meo Li washed ashore at Yu Tai Shuni on the coast of Shou Lung, where I found them.

The naval disaster spelled doom for the king of Silla, who was forced to flee the throne. General Wanang Sun ascended in his place, and united the factions of Choson into the three kingdoms of the Empire of Koryo.

Eventually Meo Cha and Meo Li returned to their country. But while they resided in my house, their fantastic tales found the ears of an old dragon who loves to listen..."

Introducing Meo Cha

I am Meo Cha, 19 years of age, from the noble land of Choson, or "morning calm" in your tongue. Choson is ruled by the wise Sillan Empire, where it was but 15 years ago that our regal king conquered Koguryo and Saishu, uniting the peninsula against all threats. When I was six, my father had me taken to a prestigious military academy in the Koguryoan city of Pyong Do. I have been in the care of that school since that day, learning the art of war and the histories and knowledge of Choson.

My sister is Meo Li, and she is 17. She has spent her life at our ancestral mansion in Xai Chung, cloistered with my mother, my maiden aunt, female servants, and tutors. Li has been taught in languages, poetry, and calligraphy, as well as courtly manners.

The Land

Koryo, formerly Choson, is a loose association of three kingdoms, all descended from the Han people and bound together under a strong king, the warlord Wanang Sun. The current government is administrated through royal appointment, governors ruling the 21 city districts and reporting directly to the king. Each governor is autonomous, dealing with his district as he sees fit. While some of the current governors are personal friends and advisors to the king, most are political appointments that strengthen Wanang Sun's position with the people of ancient Saishu and Koguryo.

Geography

From Pan east to the Malu River, the Vorkani Mountains arch across our land and separate T'o na'Chee and Xi from the rest of Choson. You could see them in the distance from my balcony in Xai Chung.

To the west is Saishu, on the edge of the Celestial Sea, as you call it. We have always called it the Yellow Sea, a place of sea serpents and mysterious powers, like the green mist that turns men into fish or the blue ice that sizzles and smokes in the water, but burns with its cold touch. The fishermen of Ansong and In'ani are the greatest in the world, having caught the mighty eel Ghartii Nung, a full 100 feet long, and rid the Straits of Koryo of the menacing sea lion prides. The best ships are made in Ansong, and some are made with magic, so that they float better, sail faster and seem to fly above the waves at full sail! They also make a barge that doesn't rock with heavy seas. Many foreigners from Shou Lung and Wa buy boats at Ansong.

Our land is known for its extraordinary tides through the Straits of Koryo, where the flood will rise 30 feet in two hours or a boat can be stranded for hours in the muck, bait for the dikanie, the giant orange crabs that grow to 30- and 40-foot lengths!

The holy man Chiquong wandered to the southern tip of Saishu in search of a place for a hermitage, and, finding no suitable place, the mighty shukenja called an island up from the depths, a bleak and jagged desert of rock and sand. This place is called Su'un, and it is said that the hermit Chiquong lives there still, on that desert isle with only the wind as companion. It is rumored that he has fantastic riches and can foretell the future.

Lui Do-pah, the "Dragon's Teeth," is the sailors curse, the unnavigable straits south of Paektu-san. Hundreds of miles of jumbled reefs, treacherous shoals, and shifting islands have claimed many a sailor's life and a king's fortune in treasures. There are tales of ghost ships sailing through the tangled seas, and ugly sea dragons that eat entire crews!. We were very luck not to get lost there when we were caught by the tsunami, for all cursed ships are drawn to the "Dragon's Teeth."

In Taiku they have a fountain that lends invulnera-

bility to a bather for 10 days, and they guard this pool very carefully against misusers. Our most valiant heroes have bathed in the Taiku Fountain and drank its waters before their greatest battles. A berry grows in the Quang Muku Forest that makes a powerful love potion that has been used to trick lovers and destroy mighty houses, as when Prince Du-yang of Silla was killed by the jealous husband of a scheming woman, or when Queen Ki Hiar of Saishu fell in love with a pirate from Wa. Other powerful herbs are found in that dark and twisted wood.

The Dang Caverns are huge, and it is said that the entire Han clan sought refuge there when the skies caught fire, and Kanko rose out of Kang Ray. There are hundreds of entrances and levels, and bandits often hide there from the law. My old tutor says Cho Lu-k'u the wizard cursed the tunnel when he died there and it harbors evil monsters that hide from light. (When the king of Silla abdicated, he fled to Dang Caverns with his most loyal men.)

Cities

Tu Pe (according to Meo Li)

Called the city of the birds, every section of the city is named for a type of fowl, and there are hundreds of birds nesting on the huge stone bastions that form the ferry route. The current fashion in Tu Pe is to wear high-shouldered gowns of linen with silk belts and scarves, while I prefer the more conservative silk dresses, which don't show my neck so much. Here are the best seamstresses though, and a few great designers work with wu jen's skills to weave hypnotic and alluring masterpieces. My father won't let me travel there-he's afraid of the stories, or maybe he's been there, but I can't believe it is as bad as they say. I've heard of people robbed and sold into slavery visiting Tu Pe, and my own brother's experience supports that! It is rumored to be the port for all illegal trade with Kozakura, and they say some families are so strong, their patriarch might as well be king in their part of the "floating city."

People say that tiny people who ride rats live in hives under the floating city. These magic folk are called the Yio, and if they live in your house you will be honored and draw good luck. They have carried off babies and even killed those who disturb their nests, but usually they just steal bright objects: keys, bells, rings and such. Quite a nuisance, or so I've heard.

Things from the deep water get into the floating city. Last year a cuddlefish killed four men before it was caught, and sometimes sharks are found hunting in the shallows under the boat-city. Tur Pe is a wild place compared to my home, Xai Chung.

Tu Pe (according to Meo Cha)

Tu Pe is an excellent example of Choson—always ready, brothers in arms! The fortress at Quelpart relies on the Tenasu ferries for supplies and support, and so Tu Pe supports the entire Choson armada with daily barges. Its armed troops number 2,500 and in time of need, they have mustered 4,800 footsoldiers without conscription! The navy keeps three ships in Tu Pe Ray at all times, and they have been occasionally used to quell unrest in the floating slum that chokes the bay. The city has 16-foot walls of 2-foot depth, and five towers. The battlements are constructed for archery defense.

Tu Pe maintains a regiment of mounted troops to patrol the lands to the north along the coast to Karak, to watch for Kozakuran invasions. There is a fresh-water spring within the city and stores can last four months if under siege, two months if Quelpart must be supported as well. It is a port well known for trade and ships from Shou Lung and Wa stop there frequently, but Kozakurans very rarely. In the shelter of the ferry's huge stone bulwarks, a floating city has grown, starting around the year 1200 by our reckoning-it was begun by a large number of Karak refugees tying their junks to the famous "Long Pier." More boats, ships, and rafts were caught in the web or voluntarily added to the congestion until today the population of this mass of floating refuse equals that of the city! Second and third story buildings have been erected on this bobbing platform, and it is now considered part of Tu Pe, albeit the seedier section of town. The decks of the ships are the roads through this "city" and I've heard it is rotten underneath, springing leaks with the high tide. Most honest men avoid the floating city when visiting Tu Pe.

Currently, Tu Pe is ruled by Sanuk Doyo, a general of Silla and of noble birth. As governor, he has the honorary title, "Lord of the South Wind." His chief advisor is a wu jen named Xithiaz Jui, who can change men into beasts and fly. One of the most famous do jangs in all Choson, Renuki's school, is located at Tu Pe, and many young boys are sent there to test for admission.

Races and Classes

My mother used to tell me stories to scare me when I was bad, about the "nameless ones," the black night stalkers that slip in unseen and steal or kill. I got older and I forgot the tales, but now I know the truth! It was the nameless ones who kidnapped me! Only they could swing down from the rooftop and whisk me away from my father's guards. Those evil men used some magic powder, like a puff of smoke in my face, and I remember nothing more. I have heard that they can climb like spiders and feel neither heat nor cold. There are many different night brotherhoods throughout our land, and they fight among themselves about evil secrets, and I know this is true because I saw three dead in Lu Chan Street when I was 14.

There once was a civilization that lived in Quang Muku, but strange cannibals and savage tribes are all that remain of the ancient peoples. Myths of the local people include men 8 feet tall and a lost city of temples deep in the forest. The tribes of the forest trade talking birds of black and blue plumage, vine ropes and many fine perfumes.

Do Jang

The Do Jang of Won Kwang

My do jang was established 432 years ago by Won Kwang, a monk-scholar and philosopher we refer to as the Master. It is one of the 10 respected schools that teach the way of war and honorable martial arts. There are other do jang, but they are the dishonorable brotherhoods, those that instruct in ninja technique, and these are shunned by wise men. Won based our do jang in Pyong Do, and built its teachings on these five rules:

1. Loyalty to lawful rulers;
2. Honor to parents and friends;
3. Bravery in battle;
4. Strength in heart and mind
5. Mercy and justice in necessary killing.

Our daily routine was established by the Master, and it has seen no change in 432 years. We rise before dawn and don our "do bak," an all-white training uniform of white pants and short robe, tied with a colored belt to denote one's grade, or "gup." For two hours we exercise, then we meditate before taking a short breakfast of rice porridge. Study occupies the remainder of the mornings, save on holy days when we worship in the temple. Every neophyte is expected to learn calligraphy, military history, the art of war, armed and unarmed self defence, geography, animal husbandry, meditation, and courtly manners.

After-studies, we are permitted one hour of time to ourselves, and many of us pursue a hobby or handle personal business during this time. We report to the main building for a mid-day snack, a piece of fruit in season or dried fish. The rest of the day is spent practicing tae kwon do and weapons use under the eyes of the school masters. This is the time for perfecting our skills and testing to change gup. At sunset we begin worship with the chants of Ki Rho Zsa, and we burn incense by the idols in the shrine that Won Kwang built.

The evening meal follows the prayers, and it includes nuts and meat. No one is permitted saki or any type of intoxicant in the do jang. After our meal, the masters teach the power of focus, to enhance one's ki. A focused man feels no hot coals under his bare feet, nor the bite of cold winds-a focused man can go without food and water three times longer than an average man, live in a desert, or survive any disaster Often we work at focusing our ki for hours. When the master feels the session is completed for the evening, we are free to retire to our sleeping mats.

Beginning neophytes start at 10th gup and progress up the ladder to first gup, or black belt, as a student. Black belts are masters, but none are perfect, so there are varying degrees called "dan" that measure mastery. The following chart shows the 10 gup and their corresponding belts:

Gup	Belt	Level
10	white	0
9	white with yellow tips	1
8	yellow	1
7	yellow with green tips	1
6	green	2
5	green with blue tips	2
4	blue	2
3	blue with red tips	3
2	red	3
-1	red with black tips	3
Master	black belt, 1st dan*	4

* A black belt gains one dan/two levels and has the ability to learn special maneuvers.

Each color has a significance: white denotes innocence; yellow signifies the earth, in which we plant the seeds of tae kwon do, and the plant sprouts and takes root in this gup; green is the plant unfolding in growth, adding new skills like leaves; blue is the skies of Heaven that the plant stretches toward as it matures into a tree with training; red is warning of danger, a caution to opponents warning them away. This color signifies balance, agility, and it means that the wearer has learned all the kicks, blocks, and punches of his do jang, and now only works to perfect his spiritual and physical form; black is impervious to darkness or fear, and it denotes maturity and proficiency. Each do jang displays the degrees of black in different and often secret ways (for more on tae kwon do, see *Oriental Adventures,* page 101).

Many important generals have been trained at my do jang, including Wanang Sun himself. I hope only to travel in their footsteps.

Social Customs

Men and women often dress in the all-white linen tunics and pants that are universal work-clothes. Warriors wear heavy padded armor that provides warmth in the ill tempered winter months. Silk is rare and expensive in Koryo, so only the rich families can afford to adorn their women in fancy dresses of satin and silken veils. Archery is a respected, competitive art, as well as tae kwon do, which, in its varied styles and forms, is practiced by all male members of the community. War and invasion are constant threats which keep the people ever alert, and these people only trust their. own, often wrongly accusing strangers rather than malign a fellow Koryoan. They have a reputation for fearlessness in battle, and for high-spirited celebrations.

Languages

The spoken language is grammatically similar to Kozakuran, but it is very distinct in vocabulary, with words perverted from Shou and Wa tongues, as well as the root Han tongue. The rudiments of the language can be learned in four to six weeks, and fluency can be mastered in three months of concentrated effort. For those who don't wish to learn, translators are easily found for most languages except Kozakuran, which is hated along with its people and culture.

Money and Commerce

Koryoan currency is based on the Shou Lung model, from fen to ch'ien, but the exchange rates are set to favor Shou currency two to one. Wa currency is equal in exchange, and Kozakuran money is not tender!

Non-Player Characters

No Ziar, "mole;"
Pan and the Vorkani Mountains;
9th level wu jen;
LE, human male.

The "mole" is very nearsighted, a short, squinting man with a shaved head and a hunched back. He carries a magical walking stick that allows him to call and speak to pond turtles. He is famous for his potions that turn men into aquatic beasts, and infamous for tricking helpless victims into a quick meal, a tuna or whitefish! He has affiliations with a yakuza family in Pan, and so has a tattoo on his left hand, a small blue feather on the heel. Always on the lookout to better himself, No Ziar will steal anything with magical properties.

His familiar is a raccoon, named Mita, who shares his delight in fresh fish, and grows twice its normal size for battle (causing double damage).

Somewhere, high in the Vorkani range, No Ziar has a keep and his hidden treasures.

Korax of Manchar;
wanders northern Silla between Koje and Foo Nakar;
10th level shukenja;
LG, follows the Way, human male.

This tall, wandering holyman has long, silver hair that he keeps tied back with a leather thong. He dresses in the all-white work smock of the common man, but a heavy leather girdle is laced at his waist, and this wide belt is worked with rainbow patterns and dyes and shimmering threads—it is a *girdle of stone giant strength.* On his right hand's index finger is a heavy iron ring that allows him a *minor globe of invulerability* once per day. These two magical items were given to him by an envoy of the Heavens, and he was bound to use them to better mankind. His kindness is well known, and often he will cure the wounded and sickly he encounters and leave before they can thank him. Wanang Sun, the king, has often called for his sage and magical advice. Also, on rare occasions, he has raised a lawful good warrior from the dead, but only if the warrior lost his life fighting evil.

Merquam Pang, merchant of Xi Hulang;
3d level fighter;
LN, human male.

One of the most successful merchants in all Koryo is Merquam Pang. This stocky, middle-aged man has lost one ear in a knife fight, but hears fine. He owns a fleet of 12 ships and employs a small army to protect his holdings, including shops in Tu Pe and Koje, a mansion in the capital city of Xi Hulang, an inn and pawn shop in the floating city and an estate in the farming country north of Bejung. Shrewd and intelligent, Pang has hired barbarians in the past to work on his trading vessels, and he doesn't care about the moralities of the business, as long as there's profit in it! He has personally met leaders of various underworld powers, the yakuza clans, and he has employed ninjas in the past. He has an unreasoning hatred for beggars. He is extremely jealous of his beautiful Shou wife, Mai Lan, whom he keeps cloistered in his mansion.

Bosturo, Master of the Muradi Lighthouse;
sage (0 level fighter);
CG, human male.

Bosturo has never cut his hair, and he wears gray braids that touch the ground behind him. It is his responsibility to keep burning the great oil lamp atop the lighthouse that warns of ganra ye-do, the flaming seas. This old man has faithfully fulfilled his duty for 49 years, and has used his time to chronicle his studies of the plants and animals of Koryo. He is an authority on the wilder plants from Quang Muku Forest, where he spent his early years of life, and he knows most of the potions that can be distilled from these herbs. Lonely for company, Bosturo is a talkative companion and often cuts his fees for pleasant conversation. In his studio he proudly displays a scroll of commendation given to him by the ex-king of Silla.

Crow Dz Pong, the "Wha'kai Choun" (Lord of High Water), the wu jen of mo'Ki Bay;
14th level wu jen;
LE, human male.

The Wha'kai Choun is feared throughout the lands north of Pyong Do and south of the Ziyero Ridge. This evil wizard holds sway over water, calling its elemental forces to do his bidding. Mariners who have escaped him tell stories of a man dressed in blue, running across the water to their ship, and water elementals rising in their path. Villages along the coast know his curses, high tides that flood or poisonous snakes infesting the town's water supply. He is a pirate and an outlaw, but he has been too sly to catch, so he continues to terrorize the coastline.

Crow Dz Pong dresses in deep blue robes and wears an aquamarine pendant the size of a chicken egg at his throat. The sky blue fur of a Ki-rin trims his coal-black boots and heavy hood. Two braided mustaches droop down to his chest, and a jewel is tied to each end. This pirate has two war ships, one captured from Shou Lung and the other a Koryoan vessel, and his second in command is a notorious murderer, Rantoon Gwa (ninja, 12th level). It is believed they have a secret fortress south of mo'Ki Bay, hidden by the Wha'kai Choun's magic and full of plundered treasures.

Dan Zor, "Master of Cheju" and hereditary leader of Saishu;
9th level samurai;
NG, human male.

Most men consider Dan Zor an important sage, and his people consider him the true leader of their island nation. While the king of Silla ruled all Choson, he abused the conquered Dan Zor and his lands with harsh taxes and martial law. But Wanang Sun protected Dan Zor and his family, and even arranged for his second son to marry Dan's first daughter. When the

king was forced to abdicate and Koryo was formed, Wanang Sun immediately set Dan Zor as the governor of Saishu, with the honorary title of "Master of Cheju." The wise warlord pulled back the troops and reduced the taxes, and won the trust of the people of Saishu as well as their leader.

Dan Zor is a 68-year-old patriarch, a thin man with long white hair tied back with a gold thong. His robes are ceremonial, embroidered with dragons and flaming salamanders, and on each shoulder is a flame as large as his head. Cut from hammered copper they glitter and reflect flashes of light when he moves. There are no rings on his fingers, but brass and silver wrist bands hide his cuffs. His body is healthy and strong, but his face shows his age, scarred with worry and fear. A devoted leader, he is spending all the public funds on rebuilding after the withdrawal of the Sillan troops.

He is the expert on Saishu Lore, and has the only surviving library in his land. Not only is Dan Zor always looking for good men and women to join in the civil works, he is getting too old to investigate many of the myths and legends he has read about in his library, and he seeks adventurers to work for him as well. Some of his quests include the search for the parrot-man of South Saishu, finding the Caves of Ghazz where the *mirror of perfection* has laid hidden for 750 years, locating the mythical springs of D'onto Yeudo, and destroying the sea-lion pride that's accosting In'ani shipping. Dan Zor believes in swift and just actions, and suspicious characters are thrown in jail or sent back to the mainland on the next boat.

So Golin-po, clanhead of Bakshi, "Hojyko Yada" (mountain badger);
15th level yakuza;
LE, human male.

The true power in the walled city of Ojy-do is the Bakshi clan, a yakuza family strong enough to manipulate the appointed governor, and So Golin-po rules the Bakshi and has masterminded their current success. This powerful warrior is seldom seen, guarded and watched by his minions. His forehead is shaved and his hair is tied in a tight black knot at the nape of his neck. A long series of tattoos cover his arms, chest, and back, and he lets glimpses of them show when meeting with his family. The city guard and all crime are under his control, and he takes personal affront to anyone who might try to swindle or thieve in his territory. He is ruthless and will order the deaths of any one who interferes with his control of Ojy-do.

"Hojy-ko Yada" lives in the largest house and compound in the city of Ojy-do, and it is a fortress. The clan master, So Golin-po seldom removes his weapons, a katana with ivory and jade handles and a matching wakizashi he got through his illegal Kozakuran connections. Daily he teaches his technique to students in his courtyard or formal garden. He loves to fight and will often bring those who offend him in for practice and behead them during battle. His coffers expand each year while the city falls into disrepair, and the honest peasants have run away or died opposing the Bakshi.

Wanang Sun, king of Koryo;
Xi Hulang(capital city);
12th level samurai;
LG, human male.

An able warrior and strategic genius, General Wanang Sun plotted to become king as he helped the King of Silla defeat Koguryo and Saishu, and he sowed the seeds that later helped him create a secure and prosperous kingdom. He has a reputation for being a very wise man, about 58 years old, who hasn't taken well to the pomp of office and still dresses in his warrior robe and training pants. Wanang Sun keeps his gray streaked hair short and a heavy longsword buckled at his side. He is a tae kwon do black belt master of the third degree, and he practices his art every morning as an example of his readiness to his people. His governors are very supportive of his policies and the few troublespots in the kingdom, such as Ojy-do and Tu Pe's floating city, are all infiltrated with his spies.

Wanang Sun has sponsored a secret society called the hichikung nio, a special army trained in military prowess and intellectual skills, and the king is deliberately placing these men in key positions in the local and regional bureaucracies, where they can influence the system to better the peasants' exsistence. Wanang Sun believes that to ensure his dynasty's survival, he must win the people to his banner. The petty lords of Silla, Koguryo, and Saishu might attempt to reclaim their independence after he dies, but if their people are happier under the King of Koryo, then the rebellions will fail. He is an openminded leader, but he is action oriented, and his reputation as an adversary in the fields of battle discourages all Koryo's neighbors and some outlaws, too, from thoughts of invasion or plunder.

Wanang Sun runs his government, and Xi Hulang, like an army, ensuring good supply lines, constantly building new defenses, and following strict laws and regulations, such as curfews, licensing programs, and yearly censuses. He only holds court with trusted advisors, his governors, or important guests of state. Two or three times a year he goes out into the city of Xi Hulang and visits the people and listens to their complaints and opinions, and then corrects, the wrongs or tells why he will not change the situation. This has endeared him to the stable workers of his capital city.

Xax Chung of Koje;
7th level bushi;
NG, hengeyokai (hare), male.

He is called the "hero of Koje" and while he would like to slip off to his own kind deep in the woods, he is bound to keep up the ruse of being human until he fulfills the geas placed upon him by a wandering shukenja who found him as a wounded hare and healed him. Xax Chung must watch over and fight to protect the people of Koje until Jisziat's tower, a prominent Koje landmark, is cast to the ground. He has saved the city from a giant dragon turtle and killed the tengu, Kwi'asp. Xax tamed and married the witch, Zartalla, and they live in a large ranch one mile north of Koje, with their children, servants, and cattle. People have

noticed that Xax never eats meat, but it is unquestioned. He is a man of medium build with wide brown eyes and lightning-fast reflexes, lending him almost kensai skill at arms. Around his neck he wears a brass chain with a symbol of the god of the warren, although it is cryptic to most who see it.

Pouri Lam, mistress of Foo Nakar, "First Emisary;"
8th level bushi;
LN, human female.

The mistress of Foo Nakar is the most powerful woman in all Koryo, the daughter of Masgar Lam, the late governor. An ex-general in Wanang Sun's command, her father was. given control of Foo Nakar, but he became sickly and for years relied on Pouri's support and aid. He passed away in secret, and the 27-yearold maiden continued his firm government for seven months before she had to admit his death to the city and the crown.

The king visited his old friend's burial mound and discovered the grass already thick upon it. He asked the daughter to explain and Pouri told the truth-how she had learned her father's administration skills and used them to execute the government until the proper time for his death announcement. The king realized this was no Ordinary girl and, trusting the skills of his old companion, he inducted Pouri Lam into the hichikung nio. The vacant governor's seat was a hotly contested prize in the Koryoan court, and King Wanang Sun had to give it as a reward, but here was a girl trained just as he would have her, already governing the city better than any he could pick! As he returned to Xi Hulang, he dictated a decree that named a close friend his new governor, moved the governor's post to the capital city, and established the position of First Emissary of Foo Nakar, naming Pouri Lam to the position, thus ensuring the continued good government in the city and his influence through the hichikung nio. The first emissary was responsible for the entire district in the governor's absence, which the sovereign made a constant state.

Pouri has long, jet-black hair that she wears in a bun during business, or down to her knees with gold chain tresses for formal occasions. She is an acknowledged beauty, but she has a quick wit and sly political mind, and men are often challenged by her intellect and argue with her, forgetting that she is a lady. During a pirate raid from the Malu river, she led her forces in routing the invaders and won a reputation as a brave fighter. Her decisions and rules, while not always popular, do benefit the people. For example, she raised taxes, but established a school that all children could attend to learn writing, history, and self-defense, much in the manner of the restricted do jangs in many of the cities. Pouri Lam has encouraged manufacturing, and her city exports many hand-worked woods, strange herbs from the Quang Muku Forest, and ceramics in the Foo Nakar style, kilned with spicewood and greensap firs which gives the objects a fragrant smell that won't wash away and a distinctive smoky glaze. She lives with loyal guards and servants in her father's house, one of the largest in the city Many men have come to woo her, but none have held her interest or won her heart.

Wildlife and Monsters

I heard that in the Naktong Moors, west of Konang Fen, where they mine peat, they have found magical beasts that live in the moors, unicorns and the s'domo rhan. The s'domo rhan is a giant beetle that can transform into a beautiful woman and lure men to their doom. A famous general, you'll have to ask my brother his name (Huat Rhu of Koguryo), led his troops into the moors and never returned. It's said that now they are zombies and peat mummies, wandering the moors, searching for fresh blood.

I used to daydream of the birdmen, those handsome rulers of the highest peaks. You know, I saw the skeleton of a birdman on display at the Nikanii bazaar, and the man who had it said he had killed a giant spider and found it in the thing's lair. The Krestung haunt the deeper recesses of Vorkani, a mighty vulture with a neck like a serpent and the head of a wolf! They fly in packs and have raided well-protected caravans, carrying off whole horses and even men! I've seen hideous pictures of those evil things.

Items of Interest

Wo-Ha Ui-jung

The Wo-ha Ui-jung are 10 magical vessels that were fashioned with arcane powers by the Han. Each is carved in the shape of a different animal, and their powers have played a major role in Koryo's past and present. There is a legend that the man who gathers all the Wo-ha Ui-jung together again will be the first emperor of the world! Here are the statistics and status of each:

The *standing monkey* cures blindness, allows *commune with lesser spirit* to the unskilled, and handling it causes the spell of *face* to be cast on the holder, as if it rubs off on the wielder. Its magic is called by filling the deep cup with rose petals. The king now possesses the standing deer, and he led an expedition to collect three of these vessels.

The *squatting toad* calls *creeping darkness,* makes the user grow 1d4 inches taller, adds +1 to Strength, +1 Dexterity and -1 Charisma, and permanently bestows the ability to swim on the wielder. It happens upon drinking anything from the cup. This will only happen once no matter how long the wielder attempts to recreate the ceremony. The king posesses this vessel, a gift from the people of Saishu.

The *sitting monkey's* user must follow a regiment of nightly ceremonies to keep the powers of this vessel. Incense must be burned in its cup at midnight, and a peculiar chant is required. It raises the user's level +2, adds +20% to all characters' ability to climb walls, and allows the handler *true seeing,* the 5th level shukenja spell; once per day. If the ceremony is continued over six months, the manipulator's toes become prehensile, making shoes uncomfortable, but allowing the character to hold on to ledges, ropes, and branches like a monkey. This change is the only permanent one. The sitting monkey is in the treasure rooms of the king.

The *sitting bull* instills surelife in any drinker from the cup, as in the 8th level wu jen spell, and a blanket protection from all disasters except physical blows from another character. The effect lasts one hour The king possesses this object, and many believe he uses it. It can only be used once per day.

The *sitting dog* is lost, last used by the hero Niofu Sangto, who defeated the Kozakuran navy in the Battle of Wui Eyong (Koryo 812). Obscure records list its powers, but there are confusing accounts; it might cause baldness and cure stricken crops or it could give the abilities to start fires with a gaze and sing a hypnotic song. The hero Niofu Sangto had a fortress on the coast somewhere east of Tu Pe, but it is lost as well.

The *standing bear* is lost and was held for years by a powerful yakuza clan in T'o na'Chee, the Yio Dufong. It gave any drinker from the chalice the strength of a bear (19) for three hours and a flushed, exciteable nature. The Yio Dufong would all drink from it before a battle, and they are still known as the "bears." The treasure was stolen and has not resurfaced.

The *leaping fish* was last used by the shukenja, Pitalla, when he cured mo'Ki of the ivory plague infestation. It is thought he carried it to Su'un and left it there. When this vessel, the fish's mouth, is filled with fine oil and lit, it glows pale blue and the user can ask for one wish to be fulfilled, as in the 9th level wu jen spell.

The *laughing hare's* cup must be filled with saki and drunk to initiate the magic. The wielder's hearing increases, and he can see objects twice as far away for half a day. He can also conjure one earth elemental during that time. This cup only works during the full moon.

The *dancing hart* holds the cup with its antlers. It is a lost relic and its powers are unknown, but certain arcane records call for filling it with the blood of an enemy. Some believe it is in the treasures of Toranu Gang-po.

The *coiled dragon* holds a huge vessel 1 foot in diameter, wide and shallow. It must be filled with liquid silver and one drop of blood from the user. Then that person can use the little pool as a mirror to view any scene in Kara-Tur the Heavens above. As long as the viewer concentrates, he can move his little window on the world anywhere he pleases, spying or searching. This relic was last carried by the Chinhan people but it has been lost for 2,000 years.

The great wu jen Kixa To'u created the *Ky Trencha Ukang,* a staff of eldritch powers. Fearing his creation, Kixa To'u transformed the staff into five magical scroll reels with enameled cases which were unbreakable (AC -2) and magically rewrote any spent, blank magic parchment placed inside. Only one of these scroll cases is still in existence, and it is owned by the wu jen Yuraka of Singye. The other reels have been lost for over five centuries. It is rumored that if all the pieces are brought together the staff will reform. Its powers were *bind at will, disguise at will, fire enchantment, polymorph other, wall of fire* (3x/day), *wall of iron* (2x/day), *major creation* (1x/day), *aura* (1x/week), *power word Stun* (1x/month). Its primary power is *call,* as in the 8th level wu jen spell, but the wielder of Ky Trencha Ukang need not have actually seen the person or spirit called; he just needs to know the correct name. Its side effect is insomnia and arthritis. It has an Intelligence of 17 and neutral evil alignment.

Secret groups have their own treasures: The green sleeping dust is made from the bija tree from the Quang Muku. It is primarily used by ninjas of the Soretyo family, a secret society based in Foo Nakar. Certain shady merchants can get it at a high price, but it is completely effective. The victim gets no saving throw if he inhales this dust.

The ninjas of Ojy-do, also known as the Fangs of Night, have five magical shurikens, stars made of stone that always hit their mark. The victim must save versus unconciousness (death) and suffers 2d4 points of damage. These are carried by the five highest-ranking warriors in the clan.

The Black Kumade is an obsidian weapon that is carried by Lin Goh, the clanmaster of the Panthers of Xi. This magical *javelin* +2 will return to its thrower and can be spun like a deadly baton forming a *shield* +3. It has been taken as the symbol of the ninja's passing or actions in Xi, a kumade painted black. This group controls the mountains east to the Malu River and they have a continuing war with the ninja clan of Manchar, the Vi'oontu (evening swallow that calls death).

Under Karak is a huge subterranean fortress built by the Kozakurans, with many unexplored levels (mostly flooded) and rumors of invaders still hiding below. It is an extremely dangerous place and few brave souls dare to enter, but somewhere below is the most valuable Koryoan relic, the Hu'i Wing. For many years it was the centerpiece of a shrine near Goisho, where the Wing-ta order of monks tended it. This object was stolen by the Kozakurans and carried to Karak where it was built into the fortress below the city. It is a huge copper brazier 8 feet in diameter, with an ornately carved lip of swimming dragons and sail-finned carp. A fire must be started in it—the hotter the better. When the brazier begins to glow with the heat, the dragons and carp become cherry-red and begin to flow around the lip of the brazier. Soon they are swimming, faster and faster, until they are a blur of flames spinning around the coals in the brazier. Any people who view the flames at this point will see them flash white as time is torn and fades into a picture of the future. An important event will be revealed, such as a disaster, a civil war, or an assassination, but it will not involve the personal destinies of the watchers, unless they are very important indeed! The vision will be the same event, but a different perspective for all, and it will come to pass in the next year. The knowledge can be used for good or evil, to prosper or aid, at the viewer's discretion. The object cannot be removed from this dungeon without destroying it, so it will stay where it lies, an old legend of the Han stolen by the evil enemy and lost for 10 generations or more.

Suggested Adventures

In Karak, 15 black ninjas were found dead in the streets one morning. It is evidence of a continuing war for the territory with advance forces of Kozakura. Many innocent people have been hurt or wounded, and about a thousand refugees camp outside Singye. The king is considering more troops for the area.

Two men and a dog returned from the Quang Muku Forest saying that they had discovered a lost city. The gold and gems they showed quickly gathered a new expedition, but they have been gone for six months now, and it is likely they'll never return.

The northern glades of the Quang Muku are watched over by the Cosalla Huin To, two powerful spirits that pose as twin children. They live in the upper branches like monkeys, but often follow travelers, punishing those who would invade or destroy and playing pranks on those of no ill will toward their home. Their singing charms man and beast, and they can call any creature in the forest to their aid.

Tigerworms, a type of carnivorous sea slug striped orange and black like their namesake, have infested E'Tyon Bay north of Singye, and have sunk four fishing boats and one merchant ship. Singye is offering a reward for the eradication of the worms.

High in the Sillan Mountains, near the headwaters of the Malu, is a village called Mu Tong where jade has been found. Some believe that there is a huge amount of jade hidden in the mountains by the Han people when they fled the encroaching forces of Shou Lung, and that these recent finds by the people of Mu Tong are evidence of the existence of that trove.

North of Koje, a village named Ra'koo has uncovered an old Han burial site and incurred a curse. Now no man, woman, or child can sleep in this village, and the people grow weak, desperate for someone to discover the source of their ailment and remove the curse.

In Koje, a group of 20 people were healed by a wandering shukenja, and they have erected a monument to the unknown healer.

The site of Old Bejung, which was covered in ash by the eruption of the Kanko volcano, has been determined and an entrance into ravaged ruins has been located by a man named Yuf Bawrax, an old northern barbarian who has shown others the way but won't enter himself. The city was destroyed in moments, and poisonous gas claimed the populace, so it is assumed that treasure abounds in this giant burial mound. Bawrax can be found in Bejung, usually at a tavern named The Sharpening House.

Giant snakes are destroying villages along the Tumen River and the people are desperate.

Konang Pen has caught fire and major sections of the city have been destroyed. They are impressing anyone who passes by into the rebuilding of important structures, like the city's defenses and needed housing and storage.

The Ziyero Ridge is infested with griffons and foo beasts, and the stouthearted can attempt to steal an egg or a pup or cub to raise as a fearsome and loyal mount.

The ex-king of Silla is amassing a secret army in the Dang Caverns and plans to conquer the kingdom of Koryo! He has made pacts with evil wu jens and terrible spirits from the deep pits to aid him in his quest. Some say that he pays his army very well, from stolen treasures and gems mined from the caves.

Rumors in Pan were that a party of adventurers, led by Glei Yuindo, had found the lost fortress of Toranu Ganppo, but they have all died of a mysterious illness before they could relate their tales.

A huge water monster has attacked Ansong harbor and sunk many ships, devouring all the fishermen. There is a handsome reward offered for its head. Eyewitnesses describe the beast as having the head of a lizard on a seal's body, with a long tongue that catches prey like a sticky lasso.

Wei Do peak is the site for the yearly ceremony honoring the king and his new dynasty. It is a three-day festival that culminates with a ritual beheading of the most notorious criminal in custody by the king himself, symbolizing his power over evil in the land. Many shukenjas and monks attend the gathering and bless the king and his court. There is a rumor that when the king fulfills his duty with the Golden Sword of Ammatok, a spirit appears next to him and consecrates his rule under the watchful guide of the Celestial Heavens. It is a pageant well worth seeing.

There is an outbreak of the ivory plague in Saishu and the island has been quarantined, but many fearless merchants are smuggling supplies and wares into the country and reaping incredible profits.

Kozakura

A middle-aged bushi in plain domaru armor bows before you. His posture is one of respect, but his eyes gleam mischievously and he eyes you with a sly knowingness.

"So," the man says, "you wish to venture in Kozakura?" He rolls the shaft of his naginata back and forth between his palms and regards you appraisingly. "There is much you must learn and understand before you can do so wisely—and safely." He gives a short laugh. "I am Konishi Tenjo, serving as your guide and instructor at the request of the head of my family. You are especially favored, to be so served by ninja."

For a moment the humor leaves his face, and Tenjo looks like the killer he is. "I trust what you learn from me remains a-secret between us? I spy for our family, and my knowledge is farreaching. It would be a great dishonor for you to share it with any who were not worthy of the information—a dishonor I would have to correct." His hands change their grip on the naginata, threatening for a moment, then the bushi-ninja smiles once more. "But I'm sure you understand me. Please—shall we begin?"

Geography

Forests

The mountains of Kozakura are covered with pine and cedar forests. The damper lowlands also host great stands of bamboo and groves of cypress.

The largest of these woodlands are recognized by name. The Fokobi Forest on Hinomoto is thick with bamboo and cypress, while cypress dominates the Ikuji Woods on Mikedono. The Minodati Forest southwest of Sudaiko is bamboo, cypress, and cedar. The great teak and mahogany woods of the Waturi Forest spread through several provinces west of Renkyu; the Atanu Woods near Chimotoge consists of the same sort of trees, The Kanfu Forest on Tenmei is host to cedar and bamboo.

The neighboring island of Kanshu is largely covered by the Chijoshi Forest, whose cedar and bamboo woodlands are home to the bamboo spirit folk of that island. Ryuten to the north is covered with teak and cedar, while Kabudono to the south supports mangrove, cypress, and bamboo.

Forests are less settled than most lands in Kozakura, and provide excellent hiding places for outlaws, bandits, masterless samurai, and dangerous creatures. This is a special problem in the wooded northern mountains and in places in the Waturi and Minodati Forests. The Bandit chief Higemoto is especially notorious in Sogai Province, emerging from his hiding place in the Minodati Forest in the spring to prey on Imperial Post Road travelers to the south, then disappearing back over the mountains in the winter.

The Waturi Forest deserves special mention. The type of wood which grows there and its location near Renkyu make it an ideal source for the wood needed in shipbuilding. The Renkyu shipyards draw heavily on this source of supply to meet their needs, and occasionally clash with local bamboo spirit folk who wish to protect their secret forest groves from woodsmen. Woodsmen are supposed to cut timber and bamboo only in. areas authorized by Katsuhara, the shugodaimyo, and troop patrols enforce this edict. The result is that most of the Waturi remains unexplored. While Katsuhara patrols keep bandits out of the area, other denizens of the woods operate undisturbed, making travel off the beaten path a dangerous proposition. An ancient shrine to the Lord of the Woods, honored by bamboo spirit folk, is located in the heart of the forest.

The bandit Higemoto of the Monodati Forest is a ronin, a 10th level lawful evil masterless samurai, who has recruited other ronin to his cause. He has over 100 followers, and is aided by the 7th level wu jen Katohara and the 6th level monk Nogori.

Imperial Post Road

The Imperial Post Road runs the length of Shinkoku. It passes through flat coastal lands for much of its length, staying mostly on the southern side of the central mountains. A series of post houses are stationed approximately every 20 miles, providing refreshment for imperial couriers and other traffic. This is the longest and best-kept road in the country.

The Post Road skirts the mountains, but seldom goes far into their heights. This has never been necessary, since most Kozakurans live in valleys near the coast, and mountain roads are hard to maintain and easy prey to bandits. Imperial troops are stationed at 100-mile intervals. They are expected to patrol the road and prevent bandit attacks.

The Post Road crosses the Dragon's Spine in two notable places. In the north, it cuts inland from the Jodo Plain, skirts Satoyama, then continues its path on the northern side of the mountains. In the southwest, a recent addition to the road cuts over the mountains at Chimotoge (Chimo Pass). This is sometimes called the Renkyu Road, and connects the capital with the naval base and economic center of Renkyu. The road is in poor and dangerous repair north of Todaijo, and is most often raided by bandits along the new Renkyu Road stretch.

Islands

Eburishima

Eburishima is an island of the Inland Sea, and is part of Tenmei Province. It is now inhabited only by fishermen, but once was a stopover for korobokuru emigrating to Tenmei.

The fishermen of Eburishima are also smugglers with strong ties to Kozakura yakuza and some wako from southern Shinkoku. They smuggle spices out of Tenmei and silks into it to avoid the trade tariffs.

Gatajima

Under nominal control of Kanshu, the island of Gatajima is a wind-swept place best known for its lack

of harbors. Steep cliffs and treacherous rocks surround it, making access difficult.

Exactly because it is difficult to reach, Gatajima is a favorite hideaway for those in need of such refuge. Only skilled sailors familiar with the surrounding waters can find a way past the rock-filled surf. Wako and other outlaws have hidden on Gatajima or stored valuables there from time to time.

Hinomoto

Hinomoto is the retirement home of Heavenly Brother (Nagikami), one of the deities that created Kozakura. The island has no distinctive mountain ranges, although the forested ridges that run the length of Gumi Province are sometimes called the Fokobi Hills. The Fokobi Forest fills the southern portion of Gumi Province. The people of this island make their living fishing or cutting timber for use in the repair of passing ships.

Itzuhachi in Mito Province is the largest town on Hinomoto. It is a shipping port and stopover for vessels traveling through the Straits of Ama. Omitsu Bay is a naturally sheltered body ringed with shallow coves ideal for small fishing craft. The smaller island of Itzujima is a rocky, bamboo-covered prominence surrounded by reefs. It is uninhabited, but hosts a large population of sea turtles and sea birds. Hai nu live along the northwest coast of Hinomoto and guard one of the entrances to the home of the Lord of the Sea.

Because of its religious importance, Hinomoto is also known as the Island of a Thousand Shrines. Temples and shrines dedicated to Heavenly Brother or his lesser aspects dot the island, from the coasts to the most remote forest lands. By decree of the first emperor, weapons are forbidden on the island, so that its holy peacefulness is not disturbed with warlike thoughts or deeds. This decree is often disregarded, but is still punishable by death if authorities choose to enforce it. No weapons are worn openly in towns or villages, except by samurai with special dispensation from the shugodai in Itzuhachi.

Kabudono

Kabudono is one of three large islands which are not under Kozakuran control, but which fall roughly within the Kozakuran sphere of influence. Kabudono is a low-lying landmass west of Hinomoto whose peaks are little more than overdeveloped hills. Those which flank the coast from northeast to southwest are called the Cormorant Hills. Forests of bamboo and plaintain are scattered across the southern half of the island. Fisherfolk and wako make Kabudono their home, as do hsing-sing in the southern forests.

Hagurejima rises steeply out of the ocean to the northwest of Kabudono, culminating in bamboo-forested mountain peaks. Shallow, sandy beaches ring the island to the west, while the eastern shore features numerous inlets and coves. It is a known mooring spot for wako and is often raided by Kozakuran war vessels.

The port town of Yoetsu is also a wako harbor, less harassed by Kozakuran vessels because of the concentration of wako junks found there. Kozakuran merchants avoid the place as well, but smugglers and small traders welcome the cut-rate goods they can acquire in the diverse marketplaces of Yoetsu. Almost anything can be had for a price in that port city, where most goods sold are the product of pirate raids.

The *Golden Lily*, junk of wako captain Pan Chu, regularly makes port in Yoetsu. Pan Chu and other wako captains can be contacted in the sake shops and businesses along the waterfront.

Kagu Ne

The islet of Kagune lies in the Inland Sea not far from Eburishima and Tenmei. It is a barren, sea-washed outcropping at high tides, and a treacherous stumbling block for vessels during sea storms. Kagune has no source of water, and no vegetation except saltwater aquatic plants.

Sea spirit folk report that an underwater cavern system beneath Kagune is occupied by sea dragons which have been sighted in the area.

The sea dragons beneath Kagune are young lung wang, but there are from 5 to 10 of them in residence at any one time, and they present a special hazard from their numbers if not their immature size.

Kanshu

North and west of Tenmei lies the island of Kanshu, one of three large neighboring islands not part of Kozakura but which fall within its sphere of influence. Kanshu lacks steep mountains, featuring instead forested hills, cleft valleys, and a rocky central spine of wooded ridges. The Chijoshi Forest covers most of the island, where little farmland is cultivated. People take their livelihood from the woods or from the ocean. The town of Iewara is the largest settlement on Kanshu, and is the center of trade with Kozakura and Wa.

At different points in time, invaders from other lands have attempted to start settlements on Kanshu. Yet each time, men, bamboo spirit folk, and shan sao of the Chijoshi Forest have successfully repelled the intruders. Kanshu remains an independent land covered with dense forests. The town of Iewara and the country around it are the property of Lord Betsui Kando, head of that clan of bamboo spirit folk. Iewara exports timber and supports a sizable fishing fleet. It is a crude and unrefined place to live, full of rough woodsmen and fishermen.

The island of Tanekashima at the southeast end of Kanshu is the site of modestly producing tin mines, and the home of the korobokuru who work them. They trade with passing merchants or with Iewara. An insectoid gargantua rampaged about the island a few years ago; it is feared that its eggs lie dormant in the remote hills and may hatch during an extended heat wave.

On the sufferance of Lord Betsui, Hojo Todahiro lives in Iewara, along with several hundred of his retainers and their samurai who fled with him into exile. Since he took up residence there, Iewara is aswarm with spies disguised as fishermen, mer-

chants, and diplomats. Representatives of all Kozakuran factions can be found in this town, as each faction attempts to help or hinder Hojo, or merely keep informed of his plans and actions. It is extremely dangerous for a spy to be exposed in Iewara, for should this happen, he immediately becomes a target of spies and assassins of an opposing faction.

Betsui Kando is an 18th level samurai, 52 years of age. Hojo Todahiro is an 8th level samurai.

Marujima

Marujima lies in the Inland Sea off the northern coast of Miyama Province. The island cliffs are a nesting place for a variety of sea birds, and sea turtles nest on the sandy northern shore. The shallows around the island are a popular place for Miyama fishermen to catch crab and lobster.

Ningyo, the red-headed merfolk, are sometimes glimpsed in the shallows around Marujima.

Matsujima

Matsujima lies to the northeast of Gizan Province. It is easily identified by its tall cliffs and steeply north-sloping profile. The passage between the Gizan coast and Matsujima is the deepest and safest channel at the southern end of the Inland Sea. A few fishing villages occupy the island, which is best known as a landmark for this channel.

Matsujima is also the refuge of the wu jen Yosuki. Villagers tend her isolated house, bring her food, and have vowed not to talk about her to outsiders. In exchange, she protects them from wako and the worst of stormy weather. Yosuki's house does not exist entirely on this physical plane, and she knows much specialized arcane lore. Some wu jen come to study under her.

Yosuki is a chaotic evil 20th level wu jen of mature but indefinate age. She is allied with no cause or faction, but operates solely to suit herself.

Mikedono

The island of Mikedono lies at the end of the Senshi island chain, created by gods as the result of a duel. Mikedono is over 200 miles long and averages 100 miles wide. The low mountain range that runs from east to west through Kumachi Province is called the Sunrise Range. The southward spur that dominates Akime Province is known as the Shibuno Peaks. The dense bamboo Benduri Forest lies to the south, and rich coastal rice paddies to the north.

Nakohama is the largest city on Mikedono. It is famous for its small-craft fishing fleet, for the imperial silver mint located there, and the pearl markets. Korobokuru have been brought in from Tenmei to run the silver mine and metal recovery operation, and near the mountains are communities of human miners.

Because the mint is here, the provincial governor, Akiyama Todo, has more power than most governors. He is corrupt and secretly skimming silver off the smelting operations. Todo has ties to the wako who normally prowl the waters off southwestern Shinkoku, but who would like to steal the government silver.

Yoemura is best known for the Light-Sparkling-Water School, the famous sword school of kensai master Ebusado. It is the most difficult school in all of Kozakura to gain entrance to, and the most highly respected.

Nakashima

Nakashima lies halfway between Shinkoku and Tenmei. The waters around the island are treacherous with submerged reefs and shallows, but the fishermen who live there make an excellent living off of abalone, pearl oysters, eel, and shellfish. Sharks are common in the area and make diving for pearl and abalone hazardous.

Shallow draft fishing craft have little trouble in the dangerous waters around Nakashima. Wako operating small vessels sometimes band together, raiding in this area and losing pursuit by cutting close to Nakashima.

Nishishima

Offshore of Toyaki Province in southwest Shinkoku, the island of Nishishima has densely forested hills and rocky beaches. It has always been a convenient hideout and stopover for wako, and is avoided by fishermen although the fishing there is good.

Pirates in the area who are initiating new members into their crews use Nishishima for ceremonial purposes. Their bonfires can be seen on the beaches on such nights. It is dangerous for unprotected persons to be about then, since evil spirits and ghosts often attend the initiation ceremonies and possess, haunt, or slay any likely victim.

Norinoshima

In the Inland Sea north of Miyama Province, Norinoshima is a hilly island with a deep, sheltered harbor. It has long been inhabited by fishermen and rice farmers. Hojo Todahiro gathered his fleet at this island at the close of the Hojo War and reorganized his allied armies after a series of indecisive land-and-sea strikes. Before the combined forces could fully assemble to embark on a decisive campaign, they were surprised by ships and men under command of Takenaka Sugawara. That island battle ended the Hojo War with defeat of Hojo Todahiro's forces in 1421.

The wrecks of Hojo Todahiro's fleet litter the bottom of Norinoshima harbor, and offer rewards for those brave enough to explore their hulks. Among the things lost on Todahiro's sunken flagship were enchanted armor and weapons and various magical devices of unknown type.

Obakuto

Southeast of Hinomoto lies the island of Obakuto. Its distinctive profile of tall, rocky spires on a jagged headland makes it an easily identifiable landmark for sailors and fishermen. The island is inhabited by barbarians who hunt the dragon turtles common in the local water.

The people of Obakuto worship a dragon turtle spirit deity, and sacrifice a human once a year to an ocean-dwelling dragon turtle in order to appease that spirit.

Ojimne

Off the southwestern tip of Tenmei is the island of Ojimne. It is a craggy, jagged pinnacle of dark rock placed amidst unpredictable eddies and currents. Passage between it and Tenmei is especially dangerous. Ojimne is uninhabited.

The ancient sage Kaure, hoping for enlightenment, once had himself put ashore on Ojimne at great risk to the boat which did so. When the boat returned for him a month later, the man was still alive, although there was neither food nor water on the island. Later, in Renkyu, he was seen to sell a small quantity of mixed and valuable items. Old coins, gemstones, and an unusual wakizashi had come with him from the island, but he refused to tell how he had come upon them. Kaure never returned to Ojimne, and refused to talk about his sojourn there. Others that have explored the island have failed to approach it safely, or have disappeared from knowledge after landing.

Okaroshima

In the Gulf of Mi, this island is fantastically eroded by the ocean. Its shore is riddled with caves worn from the rock, and spectacular blowholes shoot geysers of saltwater during high tides and storms. A shrine to the Lord of the Sea stands there, far away from the busy fishing villages on the sheltered northeastern shore.

The shrine on Okaroshima is sacred to sailors, fishermen, sea spirit folk, and others who are tied closely to the sea. The sect which tends it also has a monastery and pilgrim hospices nearby. Tribute to the Lord of the Sea is made in a ceremony here every year—an occasion so famous that the emperor himself attends in the fall of each year.

For those who wish to contact the Lord of the Sea or visit his kingdom, a pilgrimage to the shrine at Okaroshima is considered essential. The island itself is a good departure point for undersea journeys of that sort.

Ryuten

Ryuten is the third of three islands close to Kozakura but outside of its control. It lies to the north of Tenmei, easily seen across the narrow Suro Straights at the northern tip of Tenmei. Ryuten rises gently from the sea, and has narrow valleys, steep hills, and high, forested ridges. The temperate Obitake Forest covers most of the interior. Shizumi is the center of trade and commerce on the island.

The Suro Straits which separate Ryuten and Tenmei is known for its dangerously swift current. Vessels unfamiliar with the strait prefer to avoid it. Ryuten has vast tracts of unexplored lands where no one but humanoids and unnatural creatures live. These beings keep to the forested hills, while the humans of Ryuten stay in the coastal valleys. The only contact between the two are hostile clashes, and it is dangerous to explore far inland.

The folk of Ryuten are barbarians, with a rough tribal life and little culture of their own. They trade with the korobokuru of northern Tenmei for the metals mined there. Their leatherwork is prized and brings a good price as a trade item. The barbarian chief Joyui is lord of Shizumi, and has more contact with outsiders than most of his people.

Joyui is a 15th level barbarian of chaotic neutral alignment.

Senshi Islands

The Senshi Islands are a string of islands of varying size that stretch from Mikedono into the Gulf of Mi. Some are naked, ocean-washed rocks, but most support clusters of greenery and at least one or two sheltered inlets where fishing boats can moor.

As numbered on the map, the islands are named: (1) Heike, (2) Senshi, (3) Ojo, (4) Uemi, (5) Ieyaku, (6) Shimo, (7) Mishi, (8) Kamine, (9) Tsune, (10) Mifura, (11) Tojuki.

A myriad of small fishing boats work the waters in and around the islands. The Senshi chain is one of the best fishing grounds in Kozakura, but is most well known for its extensive oyster beds and the pearls which come from them. Most of the islanders either fish or dive for pearls, and many sea spirit folk work as pearl divers there. Boats avoid the treacherous currents on the eastern side of the islands, and junks steer well clear of that area.

Of these islands, Kamine and Tsune are rough rocks with no natural source of water. The others have springs or enough natural rock catch basins so that plants can grow. The island of Senshi is the most densely overgrown. On an eastward-facing shore there stands one of the most ancient sea god shrines in Kozakura.

Shinkoku

Kozakura's main island stretches over 1,400 miles from tip to tip. It varies in width from 350 miles at its widest, to 70 miles across at narrow Miyama Province. Northern Shikoku has cold, snow-filled winters and piney woods, while the southern end has humid summers and dense bamboo rainforests. The mountain range that runs the length of Shinkoku is referred to as the Dragon's Spine, a reference to the great earth dragon said to sleep beneath the lands of Kozakura.

Most people live as fishermen on the coast, or as rice farmers in the coastal valleys. Shinkoku is home to almost three-quarters of the Kozakuran population, is the largest rice-producing island in the country, and is the center of political intrigue in Kozakura.

Shinkoku is the center of Kozakuran culture and civilization, but the nonhuman creatures which lurk in the inland mountain wilderness are more than a passing problem to the people of this island. Uncaring about human politics and loyalties, they go about their own affairs, intruding on human territories and attacking or cooperating with civilized folk as they see fit. The unnatural and unhuman is not difficult to find in Shinkoku, once you stray from the beaten path.

Shizushima

The island of Shizushima stands alone in the bay of the same name. The island appears lush and fertile from a distance, with beaches of gravel and several promising inlets. However, the bay and the waters around Shizushima are devoid of fish, while apparitions and strange lights are seen on the island shores. It is considered to be a place of great evil and is avoided by all.

Not even the Konishi ninja are certain what secrets lie on Shizushima. Those who land on the island and venture out of sight of the shore do not return. Whatever darkness is upon the island remains there, and so it is best left alone.

Taibojima

Taibojima lies in the Inland Sea not far from the coast of central Tenmei. Commonplace fishing and farming communities are located there, the revenues from which go to Tenmei Province. Taibojima has tactical value as a naval port, and a permanent garrison of imperial troops are stationed there. The samurai serve as marines on naval vessels as needed.

Most of the samurai posted on Taibojima also served on naval vessels under Takenaka Sugawara during the Hojo War They are personally loyal to Sugawara's cause, even though they are now under the shikken's command. If war breaks out between the Takenaka factions, they will support Sugawara. Their commander, Lord Watanabe Subero, is fearful that this intention may be spied out, and for this reason is suspicious of any strangers who cross paths with samurai on Taibojima. Watanabe has restricted the movement of strangers on the island, requires that they carry travel passes, and keeps them under surveillance.

Watanabe Subero is a 9th level samurai of lawful neutral alignment.

Taramuri

Southeast of Obakuto is the low-lying island of Taramuri. Surrounded by a vast coral reef, the island is difficult to approach for any vessel with greater draft than a fishing boat. Taramuri is inhabited only by monkeys and su-monsters.

The su-monsters of Taramuri are so vicious that they have successfully discouraged fishermen from establishing a village on the island or exploring its interior. The scrolls of the ancient sage Chong P'ui refer to magical pools that are supposed to exist somewhere on the island, but this has not been verified in living memory.

Tenmei

The second largest island of Kozakura, Tenmei lies to the north of Shinkoku and forms the northern boundary of the Inland Sea. The central mountains of Tenmei are less high than those of Shinkoku, but are steeper and more heavily forested. The peaks to the northeast of Tanegawa are called the Gosuki Range; those to the southwest are known as the Teeth of Kanfu.

The largest population of korobokuru in Kozakura are in the forested Gosuki Range of Tenmei. The humans of Tenmei have little urge to mine for metals in the hostile high mountains, and gladly leave this occupation to the korobokuru who live there. Humans make their living farming rice and fishing the Inland Sea, and by trading in ceramics made with the unique clays found near the city of Yoshida.

Yoshida is the capital of Tenmei Province, and seat of the shugo-daimyo Suzuki Motosune. The Temple of Red Fog, a cult based near the volcano Daidake, has a strong but subtle influence on events in Yoshida, as explained elsewhere under Daidake. The northerly town of Tanegawa is inhabited by barbarian humans and korobokuru, as are the Gosuki Mountains. Trade in tin and copper is done through the port of Tanegawa, as is the smuggling of luxury goods from the island of Eburishima.

Oni are a problem both in the mountains and in the Kanfu Forest. They and other unnatural creatures give way only slowly before humans, and have slowed the settlement of Tenmei's interior.

Suzuki Motosune is a 12th level samurai of neutral alignment.

Wabekazan

Southeast of Mikedono is the island of Wabekazan, a volcanic cone of rough basalt rock. The island appeared virtually overnight almost 100 years ago, and still spews lava at infrequent intervals.

Wabekazan is bare rock which is hot with volcanic fires. There is nothing of interest on the island, and its lava flows and poisonous gases make it a dangerous place to explore.

Yarujima

Yarujima lies almost halfway between Shinkoku and the island of Hinomoto. Its single forested ridge rises above the ocean, dropping abruptly to a narrow strip of rocky shore. Watercourses run down steep ravines, and only where these streams flow into the ocean is the ground flat and fertile enough to farm.

Yarujima is also called Exile Island, for the hapless political prisoners who have been confined there throughout time. There is one village on the island, which holds only soldiers posted there as guards. One naval vessel moors there also and patrols the surrounding waters. It is forbidden for any to approach or land on Yarujima without a pass from the emperor or the shogun.

Powerful persons of great rank who are out of favor with the government are sometimes banished to Yarujima. Their location and activities can be more closely monitored than if they were simply expelled from Kozakura, and in this way they are not allowed an honorable death by hari-kiri. A garrison of bushi posted on the island guarantee the isolation of the exile. Hojo Todahiro narrowly missed this fate, which is usually equivalent to a death sentence. The last Honda regent lived out his days on Exile Island after his family's fall from power after the Tennu War.

Cities

Dojyu

The imperial capital of Dojyu is situated on a hill in the central Dai Plain overlooking the Dai River. Planned as an administrative center in the reign of the Empress Jumei, Dojyu has long since outgrown its original boundaries. The four wards of the walled Inner City flank the Dai River. The three wards of the Outer City sprawl around the fortifications and cluster around the two gates which give entrance to the Inner City. The Imperial Palace is a separate walled enclave in the heart of the city, an oasis of quiet amid the bustle of the capital.

The Inner City is divided into four districts, or wards. The First Ward contains the Imperial Palace and the buildings of the Imperial Court, their bright, red-tiled roofs visible from a distance. This is the home and residence of the emperor Gonijo and the Retired Emperor Gokammu. The Second Ward holds government buildings for administration and the residences of high officials and nobles. In the Third Ward are the residences of samurai and other retainers of the court nobles. In the Fourth Ward are the original shops of merchants and businesses which served the capital.

The business demands of the capital easily outgrew the bounds of the Fourth Ward, and three newer wards outside the walls hold the overflow of services, shops, and the homes of common folk. Warehouses, tanners, silk dyers, and sake brewers have their businesses east of the city, where the Dai River carries the effluvium of their work downstream. Upriver are country estates of the court nobles, used as pleasure retreats in the summer.

Only two gateways give entrance to the Inner City of Dojyu. The gates are large and wide, made of stone and fortified with battlements and decorative carvings. The gate which faces east is called the Sunrise Gate; that which faces upstream to the west is called the Sunset Gate. From these two gates the Two Gates yakuza gang take their name, the most powerful yakuza in Dojyu.

The three major schools of the Way of Enlightenment have their home temples in Dojyu. Umoroji, the seat of the school of Toro-dai, was moved to Dojyu from Fukama in 560, while the temple of Kanchai was founded in 701; both are located within the Inner City. The late-comer temple of Konjo was founded in 859, and is outside the Sunset Gate at a slight distance from the city.

Dojyu is home base of the Irridescent Peacock Society, whose highest members live in the Second Ward. Its secret Grand Master is Obuno Yoshigi, the 15th level neutral evil wu jen who is also advisor to Takegai Uezami, the Head Councilor of State. High priests of the three main temples in Dojyu are Kajume, 16th level Toro-dai priest; Niduro, 18th level Konjo priest; and Gamihara, 22d level Kanchai priest. Although these priests do not wander as do shukenja, they have the abilities of shukenja of the same level.

Fukama

Fukama was the original capital of Kozakura, the seat of rule of the Akimatsu clan in their home province of Shizume. For more than 500 years, Kozakuran emperors ruled from Fukama, until the capital was moved to Dojyu during the reign of the Empress Jumei. Once the home of courtier nobility who valued arts and culture above warfare, Fukama remains the cultural capital of Kozakura.

Fukama was never planned as a capital and grew up around Fukama Castle, the Akimatsu stronghold. The expanded castle is also called the Old Palace, and occupies the center of Fukuma. The Old Palace is used by the emperor on his northern tours, and sometimes serves as the residence of the retired emperor.

Fukama is divided into 10 wards, five of which were abandoned when the capital was moved and have since fallen into disrepair and ruin. The inner city, within Fukama Castle's outer earthworks, includes the residential and crafts districts. It is also the site of the oldest Way of Enlightenment temple in Kozakura, of the school of Toro-dai, founded in 463. Although the city is neglected by most nobility, it remains one of the few refuges for the once-powerful Honda clan. Honda Chimoshi is provincial governor of Shizume Province, and governs from Fukama.

The old capital has always been known for its artwork and handicrafts. Wealthy lords frequently commission art, pottery, or enamel work from this place. The Imperial Noh Troupe of Fukama is regarded as the best in Kozakura. They tour frequently, a good cover for the real work of star performer Watanabe Okaji. Okaji is actually a spy in the service of the emperor, with ties to the Konishi ninja.

Watanabe Okaji, noh troupe star and spy, should be treated as a 5th level ninja in terms of abilities and hit points. Honda Chimoshi, provincial governor of Shizume Province, is a 12th level samurai.

Gifu

Gifu was declared center of the shogunal government in 1119. Located in Tairayama Province near the Moro Province border, Gifu occupies a naturally fortified position on lands traditionally controlled by the Hojo clan. It was selected as site of the bakufu because it was easy to defend, centrally located, and flanked the Imperial Post Road between the former and the current capitals, the cultural and commercial centers of Kozakura.

Gifu has grown up around Hojo Castle, the greatest stronghold of that clan. The castle is situated on rocky bluffs, with only steep switchback roads leading up to it. The city of Gifu surrounds Hojo Castle, and extends down the mountainous road below. The bakufu conducts its business in the upper city, while the lower city is given to craftsmen, common residences, and services for the Post Road traffic.

Shikken Takenaka Okawa lives and works in Gifu. Once controlled strictly by the Hojo clan, the Takenakas have come into power in this city. They are especially resented by local lords of Tairayama Province, since they benefit from revenues and allegiances that

were once due only to the Hojo family.

Ninja of the Uji clan are based in this city. Also here is the Dark Cloud gang, an ambitious group of yakuza who occupy themselves with blackmail of government figures. Their head is Watagawa Takeshiro, who can be reached through discreet inquiries at the courier's office in Hojo Castle.

Watagawa Takeshiro is a 16th level yakuza originally from Wa. For more information on the Uji clan, see Ninja.

Jitogawa

Jitogawa is located on a humid river delta next to Shibinuma (Shibi Swamp). It is the center of silk production in Kozakura and has one of the few ports engaged in foreign trade because of the silk business which is done there. Its harbor is not as good as that of Renkyu, but is more developed than most in the country.

More foreigners are seen in this port than any other city in Kozakura; they are mostly restricted in trade and residence to the Foreign Ward, the city district nearest to the Shibi Swamp. In the summer, malaria and sometimes cholera sweep through the city, brought by swamp waters and miasmal vapors.

Jitogawa is the best place in the country to contact smugglers and arrange for long-distance shipping, except for direct dealings with wako. The city is run largely by the silk za, the guild which monopolizes the silk trade in Kozakura. The guild is most powerful in Jitogawa, and is supported by Takenaka Motofune, the shugo-daimyo of Naredo Province, who receives kickbacks from the silk trade.

Takenaka Motofune is an elderly 18th level samurai allied with the shikken's relatives, the Southwest Takenaka. See also Shibinuma.

Masakado

Masakado is the largest town in the far southwest of Shinkoku, and marks the terminus of the Imperial Post Road. A seaport located on a deep, sheltered natural harbor, the town is visited frequently by fishermen and trading vessels from nearby Wa. Masakado is home to many sea spirit folk. It is also known for its wicker and basket handicrafts and for a local red dye made from the roots of mahogany trees.

Masakado was the first city occupied by Hidegari Iegusa and the invaders from Wa in 984. Hidegari kept his naval headquarters in Masakado, and spent much time there before departing on his final campaign in the Southern War One of his retainers who survived the defeat claimed that Hidegari concealed a magical seal and a sword called Lightning-Stroke-Blade in Masakado, both items being heirlooms which Hidegari did not wish to put at risk by keeping with him in the forthcoming engagement. Subsequent lords of Masakado have searched for Hidegari's treasures, but they have never been found.

Lightning-StrokeBlade is an intelligent *katana* +2 which increases its user's Dexterity by 3 points one time per day.

Odako

Odako is the seaport at the Dai River delta downstream from Dojyu. It is the town through which sea trade with the capital is funneled, the home port of the Imperial Navy and Admiral Hiwa Itzusune's flag Ship.

Odako is probably the richest smuggler's port in Kozakura, operating virtually under the emperor's nose. The capital offers enough wealth and demand for exotic goods that smugglers find their readiest market in Odako. The Burning Junk gang of yakuza specialize in forging customs and tariff documents, and providing these to smugglers who wish to make their cargos look legitimate. Those who refuse their services, willing to take a chance on sneaking something past the port authorities, may discover to their personal loss why the yakuza are called the Burning Junk gang. The head of the gang is Ono Geku.

Ono Geku is a 9th level yakuza.

Renkyu

Renkyu lies on the forested plains of Dosaki Province, where the Tanokawa (Tano River) meets the sea beside the Waturi Forest. Blessed with a large and sheltered natural harbor and a nearby source of excellent timber, Renkyu has become the largest shipbuilding center in Kozakura. It is also the site of the Imperial Shipyards, a naval harbor, and the port of origin for the new vessels of the Imperial Navy.

Unlike most cities of Kozakura, Renkyu is governed by a council of guilds and trade associations (za). The shipbuilders, za is foremost among these, and cooperates closely with the shugo-daimyo of Dosaki Province in the management of Renkyu's affairs.

Besides shipbuilding, Renkyu is the site of a unique school of magical instruction. The wu jen Sanitobi received enlightenment while studying the esoteric ways of Konjo. As a result he gained unusual insights into the workings of magic. Specializing in water magic and alterations, Sanitobi adventured for many years and upon retiring had a small temple and school built in Renkyu. Students of the River Dragon Temple school apply the insights of Konjo to the learning of magic. These wu jen are famous for their elaborate ceremonial magic and spectacular results.

The shugo-daimyo of Dosaki is the bamboo spirit folk samurai Katsuhara Omitsu, who spends much time in Renkyu. He is young and ambitious, and has great popular support from his kin, since he protects the depths of the Waturi Forest from the intrusions of shipyard woodcutters.

The head of Renkyu's governing council is Rokuso Gohei, guildmaster of the fishing vessel boatyards.

Senita

Senita has thrived on the wealth of harvests from the Jodo Plain in Takako and Ashi Provinces. Still, this important trade center is best remembered as the false capital established during the Zakura Insurrection when, for 68 years, false emperors ruled a northern realm from this city.

Excellent horses are bred in the plains near Senita,

which is well known for its horse markets. Grains from the Jodo plain, a seaport, and trade along the Imperial Post Road have made it the wealthiest city of the north.

Sudaiko

Sudaiko nestles in rolling hills overlooking the ocean in Iwari Province. It is a town of middling size which has prospered from precious stones mined in the hills and mountains nearby. Amber, topaz, and opals come from Sudaiko, as well as delicate handicrafts like jewelry and jade carvings.

Shrines to earth spirits abound in the hills around Sudaiko, many built in thanks for the precious stones in the area. Sohei clash frequently in shrine and temple disputes over mineral-rich estate lands. Travelers in the country must take care not to trespass on gem-producing shrine lands, or they will have sohei or suspicious jito to deal with.

Todaijo

Todaijo is the northerly port city on Sora Bay in Kanahanto Province that was once the stronghold of Prince Miki. Miki was killed and his city destroyed by korobokuru in 2/45 (105). However, Todaijo was rebuilt over time, and remains a center of trade for the far north of Shinkoku.

Todaijo is a city haunted by ghosts and uneasy spirits. Its inhabitants have learned to live with this, and simply avoid certain buildings haunted by those who died violently at the hands of korobokuru. Korobokuru remain unwelcome in Todaijo, and sohei and shukenja do a great business casting wards and protections against spirits.

Places of Interest

Black Water Hall

Just downriver from the Sunrise Gate of the imperial capital of Dojyu is a warehouse district. Its buildings are in disrepair and roughclad figures slip through the shadows there at night. The building most of them go to and from is a warehouse built out onto a wooden dock. This is Black Water Hall, the most notorious gambling establishment in the capital.

The Two Gates gang of yakuza runs the gambling at Black Water Hall, a place that is cutthroat enough for most people. The real business of the hall, though, is to put people in touch with the other "services" of the Two Gates gang. Those that deal with protection money sometimes go there to deliver it, or receive it. Those with goods to sell—legal or otherwise—take their business around the back of the warehouse, away from prying eyes. People with information to buy or sell go to Black Water Hall if they don't mind a rough crowd. It's even a good place to start looking for someone, if that someone does shady business in Dojyu. One night or another, you're likely to find whoever you're seeking there. Some nights you can even make contact with my brothers, Konishi family ninja—although, of course, they never use that name.

Black Water Hall is an underworld hang-out, the largest one in the Dojyu area. It can be used as a lead-in to adventures, a place to meet contacts, or even as an unexpected night-spot for characters looking for an entertaining evening.

Chimotoge

Chimo Pass is the lowest pass and the most easily traveled route over the Dragon's Spine. The road through the pass is a recent addition to the Imperial Post Road. At the pass's summit, forests of bamboo and fern blend with cedar around the town of Chimotoge, which is a nexus of many smaller trails leading back into the mountains. Now that the Post Road runs through here, Chimotoge has prospered from trade with the hinterland, and is the home of the famed wu jen, Genbudo. Chin Castle has recently been completed, and guards the pass against bandits.

Chimotoge is in the middle of Fukudo Province, a territory traditionally ruled by the family of Takenaka Okawa. In a clever political coup, the retired emperor managed to appoint a provincial governor to this province, Ashigi Desugaki, who is loyal to imperial interests. Ashigi Desugaki has his seat of government in Chimotoge; Chimo Castle stands on state lands and was built with imperial money. The provincial governor has nominal control of the castle garrison, which consists of samurai in the emperor's service, such as those who guard the Imperial Post-Road.

This collection of military power in his home province is a thorn in the side to Shikken Takenaka Okawa. Chimotoge is a hotbed of intrigue because it is an imperial stronghold in the midst of the shikken's power base. What the shikken does not yet know, but may find out to his displeasure, is that Ashigi Desugaki is also secretly allied with Takenaka Sugawara, and can use his troops to support Sugawara's cause.

Another controversial resident of Chimotoge is the wu jen Genbudo. His mansion is isolated behind tall courtyard walls; few are admitted within, though nobles travel from as far away as Dojyu to retain his services. Genbudo is concealed by a screen when consulting with those who need his help, and so has never been seen by any outside his household. He has never left his home since moving to Chimotoge 60 years ago, but accomplishes his magical commissions either on the grounds or from a distance. There is a rumor that Genbudo is really the wu jen Goboro the Lame, who vanished after his duel with Ch'u Tei Zao over 200 years ago.

Provincial governor Ashigi Desugaki is a 9th level samurai, and is far more experienced in government than in the arts of warfare. Genbudo is a 25th level wu jen, one of the most powerful in Kozakura.

Daidake

This volcano on the island of Tenmei (V2 on the map) constantly smokes and steams, but has not erupted within living memory. Hotsprings and geysers are common in the area.

Three hundred years ago, followers of an outlawed sect of the Konjo School took refuge in Tenmei and settled on the fringes of the hotsprings at the foot of Daidake. They lived there, withdrawn from the world, practicing the unnatural rites and ceremonies

for which they were banished from Shinkoku.

These shukenja and their followers live there today in a village hidden within the maze of geysers and fumaroles at the base of Daidake. The Temple of Red Fog is the center of their worship and community activities, which include living sacrifices to the elemental earth and fire spirits of the volcano.

Those who intrude in the Red Fog territory uninvited seldom return to tell about it. Shukenja of this cult venture out into other parts of Tenmei, recruiting others to their beliefs; they are considered to have a closer bond to fire and earth spirits than most sects. They sometimes lend their services to lords who gift the temple with food, land, or money. The shukenja who leads the Red Fog cult is Hanomoto Genji.

Hanomoto Genji is a lawful evil 14th level shukenja. The shugodai of Tenmei Province, lawful neutral 12th level samurai Suzuki Motosune, is almost a Red Fog convert. He often confers with Hanomoto and is easily swayed by him.

Gensuyama

This volcano at the southwestern tip of Shinkoku (V1 on the map) is the only one in Kozakura to have erupted recently. Gensuyama is notorious for its dangerous lava flows. No villages exist between it and the sea to the south, a landscape of jagged basalt rock. In a violent eruption in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Reijo, ships at sea were hit with farflung pumice and volcanic rock. The mountain is considered to be the haunt of evil spirits.

Hermits from the mountains near Gensuyama claim that there is an entrance to the underworld land of the dead there. They also say that spirits that have escaped the underworld sometimes haunt the area. It is certain that kuei, poh, and con-tinh are encountered in that region.

Ichiyama

Massive Ichiyama (M1 on map) looms out of the surrounding mountain range, its snow-capped peak clearly visible from Dojyu, the distant capital. Ichiyama is a holy mountain, the highest one in central Shinkoku, and is believed to be the place where the island of Shinkoku began its formation. It is the site of many shrines and temples.

The northern flank of Ichiyama shelters a glacier and has many avalanches in winter. Farther down its slopes is the Temple of Kanchai-ryu, one of the most distinguished in Kozakura. The mountain is the home of at least one t'ien lung (celestial dragon), and tengu and ogre magi are often encountered there as well.

The celestial dragon of Ichiyama is an ancient creature with appropriate hit points and abilities.

See also Kanchai-ryu Temple.

Imperial Mint

The Imperial Mint at Nakohama is a thick-walled structure on a heavy stone foundation, resembling a castle behind fortifications. It is set in the hills overlooking Nakohama harbor, at the end of the trade road from the silver mines of Mikedonon island. Silver is smelted in the wellguarded structure and struck into coinage for the emperor.

The richest mines of Kozakura are in Mikedono, and the most coins produced by any imperial mint come from the one at Nakohama.

The mint is guarded by what amounts to a small army, an excessive number of troops who also serve as marines and accompany sea-borne shipments of coin to Dojyu. This is a precaution against wako boasts that they will one day capture one of the emperor's silver shipments, or perhaps take the silver reserves at the mint. The wako captain Pan Chu has hired ninja to spy out the mint, but has not yet made an attempt on the silver.

The Imperial Mint is built and fortified the same as a castle. It is guarded by 1,000 picked soldiers, averaging the abilities of 2d level samurai; all is overseen by 10th level samurai lord Hojo Kagohige.

Jade Pavilion

Set in the mountains north of Ichiyama, the Jade Pavilion stands on a hillside above Lake Nodoshin. The pavilion is a gleaming marvel in a cedar wilderness, made of light green and white jade, decorated with carving and golden lattices. It appears serene and deserted.

The Jade Pavilion was built by the Emperor Gofukakuji in 23/16 (1336). He intended it to be a summer retreat where he could meditate and enjoy the wonderful vistas, a different one from every window of the pavilion. Inside, tatami mats cover the entire floor, and art objects are displayed for contemplation-a style of design that has been popular ever since in fine

The Jade Pavilion contains a fortune in priceless artworks, but it is far better protected than it appears to be. Elite guards are posted in the wilderness, out of sight of the pavilion, but guarding all approaches to it. The current emperor seldom visits the place, but the guards remain. Inside, there are magical protections and traps to safeguard both the emperor's person and the contents of the pavilion. It is said that the artwork on display is rotated regularly; pieces not used are stored away in secret places in the building.

The Jade Pavilion offers a tempting target for thieves, but it is well guarded and can include subterranean treasure chambers if the DM so desires. It should be neither an easy nor a safe place from which to steal, and is recommended only for characters of the 9th-10th level of ability or greater. This is, after all, one of the emperor's personal retreats.

Kanchai-Ryu Temple

The Temple of KanchaiRyu is nestled in a high mountain valley on the southeastern flank of Mount Ichi. It is one of the oldest and most powerful temples in Kozakura, built immediately after the founding of the Kanchai school and main temple in Dojyu. The Ichiyama temple controls the wealth of many estates in Sudai and other provinces, and commands one of the largest sohei armies in Kozakura.

This temple stands near the Heavenly Bridge hot springs, a holy site connected with the creation of Shinkoku, and believed to be the first springs which

appeared in the newly created land. The temple and its setting are the destination of hundreds of pilgrims each year, and the temple grounds include pilgrimages, shrines, and hospices for those who travel here.

The abbot of Kanchai-ryu has the monastic name of Motsegai. He is a member of the Ikeda clan and has strong alliances with court nobility. In fact, members of the imperial family traditionally retire to this temple if they choose to take up a monastic life, as in the case of the monk Shoku—the Retired Emperor Gobidamu—who lives at the temple now. Since Shoku has gained the temple's support for Takenaka Sugawara at the request of the retired emperor, Kanchai-ryu sohei stand ready to aid in military ventures of the Northwestern Takenaka. Their armed presence dominates Sudai province, and they have clashed openly with the shikken's troops and allies. Travelers in this region are at risk if they are open supporters of the shikken.

The abbot Motsegai is a 22d level shukenja. Shoku, the monk and former emperor Gobidamu, has the skills of a 1st level samurai; since his retirement, he has become a 2d level monk. The head of the temple's army of sohei is Egetsui, a chaotic neutral 16th level sohei. He is also a hengeyokai crab person, although this is known to few.

Kazayama

Kazayama (M6 on the map) stands on the border between Iwari and Fukudo Provinces. The peak is better known as Broken-Dish Mountain, the site of the famous duel between the wu jens Ch'u Tei Zao and Goboro the Lame in 1215 (see Timeline) in which the top of the mountain was destroyed in magical battle.

Once a tall and snow-covered peak, Kazayama is notable now only for its peculiar dished-out shape. Curious glasslike stone and obsidian is scattered about the mountain slopes, one result of its magical destruction. The glassy rocks are made into knives and decorative items by locals. It is rumored that such instruments take enchantment very well and have arcane magical properties.

Kojiyama

Kojiyama (M3 on the map) is almost in the center of Takako Province. This lofty peak is snow-covered year round, and was the last stronghold of local resistance during the Hojo War. Today its inhospitable heights are the refuge of hermits, ascetics, and bandits.

The Imperial Post Road skirts the foot of Kojiyama, but the mountain is so rugged that few leave the road for its heights.

Hidden above the snow-line of Kojiyama is Frozen Waterfall Shrine, and a small monastery nearby whose members tend the shrine. The monastery is a series of natural caverns inhabited by both monks and nuns. This small sect accepts new members from any who are tenacious enough to find the hidden shrine and to endure the permanent cold at that elevation. Members of this order have mastered an unusual martial arts technique called Ice Shadow style, which keeps the fighter close to the ground and features leg sweeps and prone fighting. It is a difficult style to counter with traditional martial art forms, and is especially effective when fighting on slick, snowy, or icy footing. The head of this order is the nun Mitsubo, an old woman who founded the sect.

Mitsubo is a nun with the skills of a 28th level monk class character. The Frozen Waterfall Shrine is extremely difficult and dangerous to find; even most Kojiyama hermits are ignorant of its existence.

Kebinuma

The Kebi Swamp stretches between coast and mountain foothills at the northwestern end of the Dai Plain. It is worked by peasants who take eels, crawfish, and wild birds from the swamp. The Imperial Post Road skirts Kebinuma to the north, avoiding its trackless byways and malaria-carrying airs.

The swamp is a hideout of outlaws and other refugees, especially those fleeing from imperial justice or enemies in the capital. Peasants who work the Kebinuma stay near its edges, and seldom venture deep within where hostile rag-clothed starvelings live in seclusion in the depths of the swamp.

Light-Sparkling-Water School

The Light-Sparkling Water School is run by the famous kensai Ebusado. Located on an ocean-facing hillside in Yoemura (Mikedono Island), the school is a simple practice hall of wood and rice paper doors. The courtyard around it holds a forge and minka where Master Ebusado lives, with a larger minka shared by his students.

This school is named after kensai Master Ebusado's sword technique, inspired by the quick and elusive sparkle of light shining on water. The school is simple and small, and gives no hint of the quality of its weapon instruction. The best kensai and samurai in the land have come from Master Ebusado's school. It is very difficult to get admitted to, but training is inexpensive for those deemed worthy of it, and their fighting skills are noticeably superior to those of graduates from other schools. At any one time, there are no more than 10 students in training.

Master Ebusado is an elderly 20th level kensai. Only samurai or kensai characters may apply for advanced training at his school in Yoemura. There is only a 10 percent chance of there being an opening in the school at that time. If there is an opening available, characters are treated as if they were petitioning to learn a martial art (page 106, *Oriental Adventures)*, but have only half the chance of being accepted (5 percent instead of 10 percent). This percentage is modified upward by one percent for every honor point the character has above 50. Students who reapply to the school after having once trained there add 30 percent to their chance of acceptance.

Once accepted, characters train for twice as long as normal at one-quarter the regular expense. However, a character who trains in this way for three levels worth of advancement may, at the DM's option, add +1 to hit or damage with his sword, in addition to any other skill advancement due to the regular training. This process may be repeated over three more levels to add +1 to the other attribute. After six levels of

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

training at this school, a character has a maximum bonus of +1 to hit and damage. Once achieved, this bonus cannot be increased further.

Meruyama

Meruyama (V3 on the map) is located in the cool north of Shinkoku. This volcano is a sleeping giant which sometimes grumbles restlessly. It is the loftiest of all Kozakura's volcanos, but its unnaturally warm slopes seldom retain snow except in the deepest winter. The peak steams intermittently, occasionally belches ash and flows of mud, and is the cause of many earthquakes in the area.

Tengu and oni are especially bothersome around this mountain. Shinen-gaki are also met there.

Namikami, Temple of

The Temple of Namikami is located on the slopes of Tokuyama in Yokozu Province. It is one of Kozakura's oldest and most honored temples. Because of Tokuyama's strategic position at the juncture of four provincial borders, Namikami's wealthy estates have brought it considerable influence in the area, while temple sohei have determined the outcome of many border disputes.

The former shogun Hojo Kamuri (great-grandfather of Hojo Kawabuko) has retired to become the monk Setsu at the temple of Namikami. Because of his military training and high rank, he has taken charge of the sohei, who were practically leaderless since Futoro, the temple patriarch, was seriously injured two years ago. Namikami sohei have since "persuaded" many samurai in the northern provinces to stand behind Hojo Kawabuko's succession to the office of shogun.

Beneath the temple buildings are wells to provide water in case of siege. The masters of the temple have long believed that one of those wells leads to the place within Tokuyama where the goddess Heavenly Sister (Namikami) is entombed. The secret of the well and what lies beyond it perished with the premature death of the abbot 200 years ago, and is no longer known by those who live in the temple.

The monk Setsu, former shogun, is a 12th level samurai and 3d level monk. Futoro, the ill abbot of the temple, is a middle-aged 9th level sohei.

Nidoyama

Nidoyama, or Two-Peaks Mountain (M5 on the map), stands in western Maeshi Province. It is one of the few snow-covered mountains in Kozakura, and several small glaciers fill its narrow cleft valleys.

Nidoyama is unremarkable except that it holds glaciers, and that korobokuru refused to emigrate from this area when their fellows left for Tenmei ages ago. There are many river spirit folk in this area who have special ties to the run-off streams from the glaciers.

Satoyama

Satoyama (M2 on the map) lies at the northern edge of Hochi Province, and is another of the major mountains of Shinkoku. This peak supports impressive Sato Castle, the formidable fortress that has played a decisive role in border disputes between Hochi and Takako Provinces.

The unconventional lady samurai, Sato Kitashi, is shugodai of Hoichi Province. She is unmarried and the only heir of her father, shugo-daimyo Lord Sato Mikio. Kitashi spent her youth as a wandering adventurer about Satoyama, and knows its terrain as well or better than most of her retainers. The only opponents that have eluded her efforts to destroy them are kalau raiders who attack human villages, then disappear up into the cold heights of Satoyama. In the course of tracking the raiders, Kitashi has befriended the li lung (earth dragons) of the mountain. She says there are several dragon lairs and hidden caverns among the forested mountain slopes.

The dragons may prove to be useful allies to the Sato family. Since that clan is firmly aligned with shikken Takenaka Okawa, trouble is brewing between Sato Castle and the sohei army of Namikami Temple in Yokozu Province. Namikami Temple sup ports Hojo Kawabuko's succession, and has allies among the northern samurai. Takako Province, which lies between the two factions, is likely to be the battleground if war breaks out.

Sato Kitashi is a neutral good-aligned 10th level samurai.

Shibinuma

Shibinuma is the swamp which lies across the river from the southern city of Jitogawa. It is a waterlogged expanse of trees, flooded when an earthquake changed the course of the Jito River 50 years ago.

Shibi Swamp is trackless and full of dangerous quicksands. Fishermen work the waterways in flat-bottomed skiffs for the tremendous eel harvest, but they also report that giant leeches, snails, and other unpleasant creatures abound in the swamp as well. A few hardy religious recluses live in the swamp as well, but exactly where is difficult to determine.

Tokuyama

This snow-capped peak (M4 on the map) is the cornerstone of the boundaries of Takako, Ashi, and Yokozu Provinces. On its southeastern flank is Namikami Temple, whose warrior sohei patrol the area and greatly influence border politics between the three provinces.

Kamuri, the retired shogun and great-grandfather of Hojo Kawabuko, lives at Namikami Temple as the monk Bentori. Because of his background as a highly respected samurai, he has become a leader of the temple's sohei forces and planner of their military activities. The monk and the temple sohei support Kawabuko's bid to remain shogun, and have forced several of the northern samurai families to support Kawabuko as well. They deal harshly with anyone they encounter who openly opposes Kawabuko.

Government

The imperial court abounds with important-sounding ranks and titles, but most of these, like the court itself, serve a largely ceremonial function. Little of the work of government is conducted there. The bakufu is the true government of Kozakura. The organization of the shogunal government is explained here, not only to help understand the country, but also because characters who distinguish themselves may be rewarded with a government or military appointment.

Even though the bakufu is the true government power, the influence of the court must not be underestimated. The retired emperor, for instance, retains the authority to award provincial governorships. These appointments naturally go to vassals and clans which support imperial interests. Too, imperial favor and the prospect of marriage into that house give the emperor and his court influence in unlooked-for quarters. Although no longer directly involved in most government actions, the imperial court continues to work in its own interest behind the scenes.

National Government

The shogunal government is based in Gifu, away from the intrigues and distractions of the imperial court at Dojyu. That location was chosen as much for its strategic and tactical positioning as for any other reason. Many adminstrative functions continue to be carried out in Dojyu, however, since the emperors presence and the facilities of state are necessary for much of the business of government.

Throughout Kozakura, shugo, or military governors, are the backbone of the shogunal government. Shugo were originally posted in each province to maintain law and order. Appointed from among worthy samurai families, they serve today as both high officials of the bakufu, and as local military governors. The central offices of the bakufu are staffed by shugo drawn from among the shogun's (or the shikken's) retainers, and are important positions in the power politics of Kozakura.

First among these central offices is that of Kanrei (chief administrator), traditionally assigned to one among the most powerful of the shogun's vassals: the Takenaka, Otomo, or Yamashita clans. It is also becoming more and more common for the chief administrator to be appointed from among the shikken's vassals instead. The current chief administrator is Yamashita Yoichi, a vassal of Hojo Kawabuko, with strong ties to the family of regent Takenaka Okawa.

Below the chief administrator the most important office is that of Head (shoshi) of the Office of Samurai. The shoshi has the responsibility of military planning, discipline, and police protection, and also commands the shogun's guard force in Gifu. The shoshi is customarily appointed from one of four shogun-loyal families. Since the close of the Hojo War, the composition of these loyal vassals has changed. The new vassal clans considered appropriate for appointment as shoshi are the Matsuhita, Sato, Tokushime, and Akiyama clans. The office is currently held by Matsuhita Kinnori.

The seven clans in line for these traditional appointments form a front line of support for the Hojo house. When they act together, they give the shogun (or the shikken) the necessary backing to dominate the rest of his vassals. There is also plenty of opportunity for dissension and infighting as families and individuals jockey for influence and position. Things are not yet stabilized under the Takenaka regency.

Other Offices

Subordinate to the above offices are several administrative organs. The mandokoro (finance office) is responsible for shogunal finances. The monchujo (document office) serves as a secretariat and repository of property records. The hyojoshu (judicial board) settles disputes, usually over land problems, and determines punishments. The bugyo-shu (administrative board) debates and establishes general administrative policy, while the bugyo encompasses miscellaneous functions.

Regional Deputies

Regional deputies represent the shogun's authority outside of Gifu. The post of governor general exists in Dojyu, with subordinate deputy governors (mokudai) in each province. Deputy governors have the responsibility of handling the civil government of the province, particularly of the public lands there, and is usually the same person who is military governor of the province. When the offices of military governor and deputy governor are not held by the same person, there is often a conflict of interest between their administrative duties, many of which duplicate each other.

Provincial Government

Like the imperial government, provincial government is a confusing, factional affair The power struggles at the top between the shikken, shogun, and imperial line are reflected in the official posts and appointments made in the provinces. Each faction usually has at least one representative within a province.

The top two positions in a province are the shugo-daimyo (military governor), appointed by the shogunal authorities, and the kokushu (provincial governor), who is appointed by imperial authorities. Each has a number of minor officials under him. Provincial government structure echoes that of the bakufu, with similar administrative offices on a smaller scale.

Shugo-daimyo. The shugo-daimyo is the samurai military governor of a province. Most of the territory in the province is held by his family or related families (hence the title daimyo). As shugo, his family was appointed to its post by the shogun of Kozakura. Now the position passes from father to son almost automatically. The shogun could step in and reassign the title of shugo, but seldom does. Such a punishment is reserved for families that threaten the shogun, either through treachery or ambition.

The shugodaimyo has wide authority in civilian

matters, and local military units are recruited in his name. However, he spends nearly all his time in Gifu, keeping himself at the center of the political scene.

Shugodai. One or more samurai, usually of the same family as the shugo-daimyo, are appointed shugodai, or deputy shugo. These men split their time between the capital of the shogun and the province. Each is responsible for a province or a district of a province. They are appointed to their position by the shugo-daimyo and are accountable to him. The shugodai handles most of the administration of the province and carries reports to the shugo-daimyo in the capital. Immediately under him are a number of offices, boards, and councils that handle the necessary affairs of the province.

Shugo-matadai. The shugo-matadai is the lowest level of shugo, the subdeputy shugo. Player character samurai are sometimes given a shugo post at this level. Shugo-matadai usually belong to the main family, or a branch family, of the shugo-daimyo. In some cases, the position of shugo-matadai is given as a reward for loyal service. The shugo-matadai is responsible for the administration of a district within a province.

Daikan. Daikan are often samurai, the local agents of the shugo-matadai. They collect the taxes and oversee the public lands. Their duties are similar to those of the jito. Unlike the jito, daikan are not bound to a single estate.

Jito. Jito are land stewards who supervise activities on both public and private lands. They are samurai representatives of the shugo-daimyo to each estate in the province. They oversee the collection of taxes and the implementation of edicts. They are often in conflict with the civil officals and non-shugo landowners.

Kokushu. The kokushu, or civil governor, has virtually no power in the province and thus spends most of his time in the capital. Nearly all his duties have been assumed by the shugo-daimyo. However, as governor he is entitled to a certain amount of the taxes from all public lands, provided that the shugo-daimyo can be convinced to give up this tax money.

Mokudai. The mokudai, or deputy governor, actually lives in the province. There he exerts what little authority the civil governor has. While theoretically in control of all public lands, these are more often managed by the jito of the shugo-daimyo. The mokudai is supposed to protect the interests of the governor, emperor, and the people. However, with no authority, he can do little more than file formal protests and rubber stamp documents. Indeed, his main purpose is to give official approval to the actions of the shugo-daimyo for the sake of appearances.

Seal bearers. Seal bearers assist the deputy governor in the detais of administration. The position has no power and very few duties. As such, it is given as a reward to local men in the province, especially those not favored by the shugo-daimyo.

Factions

Hojo Todahiro and Supporters

Hojo Todahiro lives in exile in Iewara on the island of Kanshu. He plots to regain his position as shogun and depose the Takenaka clan from power.

Foremost among those who supported him in the war were the Tanomitsu, Kashigawa, Oezuki, Todo, Mashikuni, and Yamabe clans. Of these, the Kashigawa and Tanomitsu traditionally held high posts in the bakufu, but even these honors offered no protection following their defeat.

The Tanomitsu, once the most powerful of the shogun's supporters, have suffered the most. Their leaders were executed, their families exterminated, and most of their holdings confiscated or burned to the ground. Those who survived have fled to shoen in remote provinces, or accompanied Hojo Todahiro into exile on the island of Kanshu.

The Kashigawa clan are Hojo vassals; most of these nobles joined Todahiro when he went to Kanshu. Other loyalists were stripped of properties and tax benefits by the shikken, and have withdrawn to provincial estates.

The Mashikuni clan is now allied with Takenaka Sugawaro's camp, the Northwest Takenaka. Mashikuni Kakuji, former shugo-daimyo of Sudai Province and Hojo ally, has given up on seeing Todahiro become shogun. He will go to any length to avenge the loss of his clan's properties to the shikken, even if this means supporting a Takenaka.

Court Nobles

The Ikeda and Takegai clans supported Hojo Todahiro's claim as shogun, seeing him as the only legal heir to the position. Imperial connections have protected them from Takenaka Okawa since he became shikken, but there is barely concealed hostility between these two factions. Head Councilor of State (Daijo-Daijin) Takegai Uezami communicates with the banished Hojo Todahiro regularly through spies and more conventional messengers.

The Yashima and Nakasendo clans have been wooed over to Takenaka Okawa through tax benefits and land gifts. The Yashima provide military support to the shikken, while the Nakasendo intrigue and spy for him at court.

The Ashigi and Motonari clans support Takenaka Sugawara as described under The Emperors.

The Emperors

Emperor Gonijo enjoys his religious functions in office, and would gladly retire to a temple. He has no interest in affairs of state. However, his father, the Retired Emperor Gokammu, hopes to restore the office of emperor to true political power. This is a grand dream, but highly unlikely, as it would require defeat of the shogun, and of all lords who have any hope of becoming shogun or shikken.

Some court nobles support the retired emperor in his plans, especially the Ashigi and Motonari. Gokammu views the division between the Takanaka brothers

as being to his advantage, and his court allies help him exploit this. Appearing to favor Takenaka Sugawara, they work through spies and quiet intrigue to widen the rift in the Takenaka clan.

Takenaka Okawa and The Southwesten Families

Shikken Takenaka Okawa plans to force Hojo Kawabuko to marry, produce an heir, then retire, leaving Okawa in power as shikken. He has not yet openly conflicted with his half-brother Sugawara, but if he goes through with this plan, it is only a matter of time before a Takenaka War erupts.

Reset with political intrigue and sometimes small rebellions, Shikken Takenaka Okawa relies heavily on the Southwestern Takenaka for support. He uses but does not trust his allies, the imperial Yashima and Nakasendo clans. Aside from these families, he puts his faith in only four clans in Kozakura. They are the most powerful clans in the land, besides the Takenaka and Hojo.

The Yamashita and Otomo are shogunal vassals, and bound to support Okawa because of his blood relationship to Hojo, at least until Hojo reaches 18. The Matsushita and Sato clans have strong marriage ties to the Southwestern Takenaka, and have dutifully honored their obligations to their relative, the shikken.

Takenaka Sugawara and The Northwestern Families

Sugawara unhappily moved aside for his brother at the close of the Hojo War, recognizing the expediency of having a relative of the shogun become shikken. Nevertheless, the northwestern Takenaka and their allies continued to intrigue against the shikken to benefit their favorite, Sugawara.

Now that the shikken's regency is drawing to a close, it has become apparent that Takenaka Okawa will not readily step down from power. Assured of help by imperial allies and Northwestern Takenaka supporters, Sugawara plans to fight to help the shogun come to power. Sugawara will gladly depose his half-brother, whom he regards as an incompetent regent. Among his important vassals and allies are the Tokushime, Akiyama, and Mashikuni clans, the imperial Ashigi and Motonari clans, and Katsuhara Omitsu, the powerful bamboo spirit shugo-daimyo of Dosaki Province.

Temples and Shrines

Temples and shrines care little for the secular disputes among the samurai. They usually support nobility which favors their particular temple or sect, and work against those who do them injury. However, two temples have demonstrated secular interests during the current unrest.

The retired former emperor Gobidamu is now a monk at the Temple of Kanchairyu on Mt. Ichi. That temple fought for Hojo Todahiro, and now supports Takenaka Sugawara, as Retired Emperor Gokammu has quietly requested. Similarly, former Shogun Hojo Kamuri (great-grandfather of Hojo Kawabuko) is a monk at the influential northern Temple of Namikami. This fierce group supports Kawabuko's succession, and has "persuaded" many samurai in the northern provinces to stand behind him as well.

Ninja

The most noteworthy ninja clan in Kozakura are the Konishi, a family which has served opposing factions simultaneously for years. Traditionally they accept contracts both from court nobles and from the shogun and his relatives. They are perfectly content to be hired by those who are likely to be victims the very next week. Konishi Ieyasu, clan head, particularly enjoys the irony of this situation, and subtly influences politics by choosing when to complete assignments (such as executions).

A younger but highly efficient family is the Uji clan, which has worked for the Takenaka and other powerful nobles over the past century. Clan head Uji Toyo does not find it acceptable to work both for and against the same employer. Two years ago he politely withdrew his family's services to the shikken, since the Uji have been retained on a long-term basis by Takenaka Sugawara to do work targeted against the shikken and his allies. Takenaka Okawa has not yet discovered this, although he suspects ninja actions against him.

The Irridescent Peacock Society

Though most wu jen lead solitary existences, many are in service to masters and some perform work for a fee. Since a large number of wu jen gathered for these reasons in Dojyu, some of the evil-aligned ones eventually banded together in the highly secret Irridescent Peacock Society. The society regulates magical practices among its members, and offers training, protection and aid to members in need of such assistance. Because such a group of wu jen acting in concert can be tremendously powerful, the group's existence is kept secret: ignorant of the society, samurai lords cannot feel their power is threatened by it. The society has secret recognition signs, dangerous tests for prospective joiners, and is organized in cells with limited membership.

During times of warfare, the services of wu jen are in much demand, and there is greater opportunity for personal rewards in the upheaval of strife. Recognizing this, the society supports the return of Hojo Todahiro to Kozakura, since they see this as the quickest route to open warfare. In the meantime, the society does what it can to encourage the outbreak of conflict, each wu jen working independently to create chaos for any convenient faction. For example, a society member may rot the crop in a clan's rice paddies, then leave "evidence" that an opposing clan did it. Some wu jen have even assassinated samurai lords or their relatives, leaving the clan to assume it was the work of an enemy family.

Yakuza

The peddlers and gamblers of this country were not organized into yakuza families until recently, when a few ambitious criminals from Wa saw opportunity to expand their operations in Kozakura. Yakuza families here are still loosely organized and growing, concen-

trating their activities in gambling, the protection racket, and the fencing of stolen goods. Families of special distinction have not yet come to light, and there is much opportunity for ambitious yakuza adventurers to shape and create an organization from scratch.

Races and Classes

Bamboo Spirit Folk

Clans of bamboo spirit folk live mostly in the heavily forested areas of Kozakura. The Katsuhara clan is probably the best known of these, having risen to prominence in Dosaki Province. More isolated bamboo spirit folk are found in mountain districts.

Of the Kozakuran bamboo spirit folk, many are famous woodsmen, guides, hunters, and scouts. The greatest numbers of these folk live in and around the Waturi Forest in the southwest. Rut the most notorious of the bamboo spirit folk live in Chijoshi Forest on the neighboring island of Kanshu. They are fierce and territorial, large in numbers, and have long protected their land from invaders. The most powerful among them are the Betsui clan, which has remained indifferent to Kozakuran politics even though Hojo Todahiro lives in exile near their territory.

Betsui Kando is head of the Betsui family and lord of Iewara on the island of Kanshu. He is an 18th level samurai, 52 years of age.

Hai Nu

The race of aquatic folk known as hai nu are especially common off the coast of southwestern Shinkoku, and along the Hinomoto coast. They do not welcome intruders into their territories, and fishermen avoid their waters.

Hai nu are encountered most often when they are salvaging shipwrecks or working pearl beds in shallow waters. Though they avoid humans, they are on good terms with many sea spirit folk. The hai nu of Hinomoto guard one of the entrances to the home of the Lord of the Sea, although they do not disclose its location.

Hai nu are detailed on page 122 of *Oriental Adventures*.

Hengeyokai

Hengeyokai live in isolated enclaves throughout Kozakura. Slightly more numerous than most are the monkey hengeyokai in southern Shinkoku, the fox hengeyokai in northern Shinkoku, and the rat hengeyokai in Tenmei.

Among the hengeyokai that have distinguished themselves in human circles are Wetuji, a female cat hengeyokai kensai of renown, and the recluse Onoye, the monkey hengeyokai who created the Monkey Style martial art form.

Wetuji is a 16thlevel kensai who uses the naginata. She wanders the countryside in search of adventure, and is 10 percent likely to accept a player character for training if asked. Onoye is a 20th level monk and is encountered only in the southwestern provinces of shinkoku.

Korobokuru

Korobokuru come mainly from northern Shinkoku or from Tenmei. The Shinkoku tribes have splintered and live in the remotest areas, while those in Tenmei are more visible and remain united under their chief, Ueyanbo.

When korobokuru migrated out of Shinkoku over 1,000 years ago, they left behind villages and settlements that fell into ruins and vanished. Yet many of the places once inhabited by korobokuru retain the magic of those people. Humans often feel uneasy if they stumble across old village sites, and korobokuru spirits linger to haunt any who disturb their rest. Kuei, tengu, and the nature spirits of rocks and trees are often met in abandoned korobokuru places.

In Tenmei, chief Ueyanbo and his people control large portions of the mountains in the northerly Gosuki Range. They take their living from the land, and in places mine copper, tin, and some silver. The metals are traded for humanmade goods, but otherwise the Tenmei korobokuru keep to themselves.

Ueyanbo is a middle-aged 11th level bushi of lawful neutral alignment.

Ninja

Ninja families dominate the spy and assassination business in Kozakura. They are universally feared and respected.

The most powerful ninja family in Kozakura is the Konishi. They can be contacted through temples and shrines to Chirasu, the goddess of stealth. Leave an offering with the priest and tell him you pray to meet one who is blessed by the goddess. Then go your way, and the Konishi will find you.

The Uji are another prominent ninja family They work frequently for the Takenaka clan, but avoid crossing paths with the Konishi. They aren't as large as our family, and are more difficult to find. I hear they can be contacted in Gifu.

River Spirit Folk

River spirit folk are tied not so much to the major rivers in Kozakura as to the ponds and idyllic streams which run into them. Humans encounter river spirits more often in those quiet waterways than anywhere else, and river spirit offspring prefer to remain near their home waters. This is especially important since the flow of streams and ponds can be easily changed by fallen trees, landslides, or human engineering and the river spirit person can only save his life if he is on hand to restore the watercourse to its natural route,

The Lord of the River, honored by river spirit folk, is rumored to live in various rivers. However, he has actually been encountered in the Tanokawa, the river which enters the sea at Renkyu. A shrine to that spirit deity is built out over the water of the Tano a day's travel from Renkyu. People who rely on the river for their livelihood and many river spirit folk make pilgrimage to the River Lord shrine. The shrine holds great wealth, and is protected by water spirits, elementals, and giant carp.

Sea Spirit Folk

Sea spirit folk are encountered most often in the southwest of Shinkoku and among the Senshi islands, where sea spirits have the most contact with humans. Underwater communities of sea spirit folk exist in Kagochi, Toyaki, and Miko Provinces and are local curiosities. The shogun values the aid of these folk in maintaining vigilance against possible invasion from Wa. This is no longer a pressing concern, but their assistance in the past is remembered with honor.

Sea spirit folk and some hai nu live together in communities underwater just off shore of the southwestern provinces. The largest of these are between Masakado and Nishishima. The waters there are left undisturbed by local fishermen and avoided by wako ships en route to or from Nishishima.

The sea spirit kensai Kamo Arahito is well known in Toyaki Province. He once confided to a lover that there is an extensive sunken city that spreads underwater and into caverns beneath the coast of Shinkoku. The Lord of the Sea sometimes dwells there and it is the place where his servants rest and run the affairs of the world below the water. It is well guarded and contains fabulous riches, all garnered from the ocean and tribute paid to the Sea Lord.

Kamo Arahito is a 9th level kensai of lawful neutral alignment.

Social Customs

Despite the instability of the political order in Kozakura, the country is undergoing remarkable cultural growth. In earlier times, the capital of Fukama in Shizume Province set the standard for cultural achievement. Now, though, new cultural centers are appearing in many distant provinces.

This artistic flowering is due to many factors. In the fusion between the civil and military aristocracy, the military class has embraced courtly standards of art appreciation. Recently, new styles of painting, calligraphy, and handicraft techniques have been borrowed from Wa and Shou Lung and have influenced Kozakuran efforts in these areas. Finally, temples of the Way of Enlightenment have expressed philosophies through the Konjo and Kanchai schools which have had lasting impact on artistic representation.

Some of these aspects of Kozakuran culture are described below.

Art

The greatest and most popular art of this day is undoubtedly painting. The newest vogue is ink painting, derived from a Shou Lung landscape style. This new monochrome style known as "water and ink" avoids vivid colors and places its emphasis upon skilled brushwork. The theme running through this artwork, as in architecture and other forms of expression, is one of man in harmony with nature.

A completely different type of art is the dramatic performance known as noh-kyogenk. Noh is a serious religion-based drama; noh, along with kyogen (comic interludes), form the heart of the great entertainments favored by the shogun and the imperial court. Noh theater has evolved into masked mime dance and song in precise dramatic styles, some serious, and some comedic. Several guilds of dance-actors are adept in the technique, which has become a skill admired and imitated by courtiers and some of the military elite.

Handicrafts as art forms are not neglected. Kozakura under the Hojo shogunate is known for its delicate "eggshell" pottery, intricate lacquered inlay work, jade and wood carvings, and sculptures of colored bronze.

In the realm of music, peasants enjoy the drum and three-string koto; the upper class favors both the three- and 12-string kotos and the lutelike biwa. The shakuhachi, or bamboo flute, is an instrument preferred by monks and priests. Among the upper class, stylized dance forms are becoming more and more popular as entertainment accompanied by music, and are often done by a solo performer to the music of a single koto player.

Literature is enjoyed by the educated, and poetry, popularized by noh dramas and comedies, has especially captured the interest of the court and the nobility. The earlier literary tales of courtly romantic intrigues are no longer in vogue; instead, epic tales and poems of military heroes, victories, and defeats are favored. Poetry reflects this interest, but is also used to express sincere feelings, love, appreciation of nature, and wit. Nobles show literary distinction if they can turn an apt phrase or make a play on a poetical allusion. Such displays are no longer shunned as courtly (and unmilitary) behavior.

Religion

Korobokuru

According to korobokuru legend, one of the animal spirits—probably Rear God or the Eagle Goddess—created the world and the islands of Kozakura. The korobokuru were undoubtedly the first settlers of the islands, which they say were given to them by Poinpeyuan, a great hero of their race, as a gift from the gods. They were allowed to keep the islands so long as they paid proper reverence to the gods and obeyed special taboos. Later stories tell how the korobokuru folk broke these taboos and humans then came to take the islands away.

The deities of any pantheon used in Kozakura should be considered to be the offspring of Heavenly Brother and Heavenly Sister. Fierce Wind Son and Fire Bright, mentioned in the mythology above, may be treated as wind and fire deities of the pantheon, or may be considered to live in retirement as does Heavenly Brother, no longer concerned with the affairs of the world.

Korobukuru deities are all animal spirits. Many of their heros have been elevated to the level of half-animalistic demigods.

Religion

There are two major religions in Kozakura: that of the Eight Million Gods, the most ancient belief system of Kozakurans, and the Way of Enlightenment,

brought to Shinkoku by Shou Lung priests.

The number of worshipers dedicated to the practice of a single religion is rather small, and consists of priests, monks, shukenja, sohei, and devout worshipers of the sect. These people do not entertain or practice the beliefs of other schools or shrines. Most worshipers, however, practice the rituals of more than one school or shrine. This group includes the majority of the common people, and far outnumbers those devoted to a single religious pursuit.

Eight Million Gods

This ancient religion is a collection of beliefs and rituals that relate to various nature deities. There is no great teacher or book for the Eight Million Gods, nor uniform rituals of worship. Observances vary from deity to deity and shrine to shrine.

Shrines dedicated to the Eight Million Gods fall into two categories—first shrines and normal shrines. First shrines have been officially recognized and supported by the emperor and other nobles for centuries. They are often located in the old districts of cities and provincial capitals, and are larger and more powerful than other shrines. Many establish branches in other provinces to promote their particular beliefs and acquire a larger economic base of support.

Normal shrines are often built and supported by local peasantry. They may commemorate past events, ensure good harvests, ward off evil influences, or even appease powerful evil beings. Local nobility also support shrines, particularly in towns or villages near their homes.

Regardless of the type, most shrines are independent and unrelated to others. They are usually associated with a site of natural beauty or legendary significance, and may be found on the slopes of major mountains, along river banks, by the sea, or hidden away in forests. Many important shrines are dedicated to the sun goddess and the emperor, who is believed to be of divine ancestry.

Worship at these places often consists of ritual purification, offerings of food or donations of money, and prayers. At least once a year major shrines have more elaborate festivals, involving sacred dances, bonfires, and processions through the streets.

Way of Enlightenment

The Way of Enlightenment was brought to Kozakura by Shou Lung priests in the year 462, during the reign of the Emperor Shotoken in the Eighth Cycle, and is almost identical to the Path of Enlightenment practiced in Shou Lung. This well-organized religion draws lessons from the life and speeches of its great teacher in an effort to guide men to spiritual perfection. This religion is divided into three main schools of belief in Kozakura.

Toro-dai is the most popular school. To attain spiritual elevation under these teachings, a believer need only repeat a single verse over and over. The power of the mystical chant eventually bestows enlightenment. Torodai is very popular with common folk, since it is an easy teaching to follow.

Kanchai reveals to its followers an elaborate structure of invisible spirit creatures, some good and some evil. These creatures seek to help or harm, according to their natures. Worshipers hope to gain the favor of good spirits and avoid the wrath of evil ones. The Kanchai school draws freely upon the ideas and beliefs of the Eight Million Gods, sharing many of the same deities, spirits, and fantastic creatures.

Konjo is the highly esoteric third school of the Way of Enlightenment. This school uses the strict methods of meditation and contemplation to show that material things are only passing illusions that will change and decay. What matters is the strength of the person's spirit. This school is very popular with samurai and the ruling lords, much of whose thinking is influenced by the Knojo school. Of all schools, it is the most difficult to follow and most true to the original intention of the Way of Enlightenment.

Temples. Each school is a nation-wide organization, encouraging worship in temples built to venerate a specific deity or group of deities. A temple is almost always associated with a particular school, and is often built on a site which has special religious significance to that school. If a site has meaning to several schools, there may be several different temples clustered around it. It is acceptable for the same deity to appear in two different temples, sponsored by different schools of the Way of Enlightenment.

The temples of Kozakura and the schools which sponsor them represent a powerful political force. The main temple of each school, located in the capital of Dojyu, ensures that the sect is represented in the affairs of the court. Provincial temples representing that school are branches of the one in the capital, contributing taxes to the order and giving the main temple a broad power base. Smaller so-called "subscription" temples represent the interests of the provincial temple throughout a province, collecting donations in their turn and providing sohei when called upon for support.

Monasteries. Monasteries are also associated with each school. Generally built in secluded places, they are centers of training and religious instruction. Many are merely meditative centers, while others incorporate harsh training in the martial arts, producing the monk character class. Where a monastery is located in more peaceful surroundings, emperors, nobles, noble widows, and samurai find it fashionable to retire to monasteries when they grow tired of the physical world. This retirement may be permanent, but many a retired warrior or statesman has returned to the world when needed by family, emperor, or cause.

Recluses

A number of hermits or religious recluses live in the forests and mountains of Kozakura. These persons have cut themselves off from the rest of the world and do their utmost to avoid discovery. In their lonely mountain huts and caves, they put themselves through grueling trials to purify their minds and bodies. These hardships cleanse their minds, enabling them to rise above pain and desire. After long periods of such cleansing, hermits may reach an enlightened

state. Some of these few come down from the mountains to found new schools or shrines that are based on the enlightenment they have received. They may also reveal new styles of martial arts as part of their teachings. Hermits are rare and hard to find, but sometimes take pupils to train in their esoteric beliefs.

Chirasu

Chirasu is one of the Eight Million Gods. She is the neutral evil goddess of stealth, patron of ninja, yakuza, and those who wish to carry out their actions undetected by others.

Most of the shrines of Chirasu are supported or were built by the Konishi ninja family. Some of the sohei or shukenja who tend the shrines are ninja themselves. Contact can be made with Konishi ninja at a shrine of Chirasu, which is usually located near or within a city.

Money and Commerce

Kozakura has an agrarian economy based on rice production. Rice is the measure of wealth, the basis of the tax system, and a medium of exchange. Since wealth is so closely tied to the existence of cultivated farmland in Kozakura, it is important to understand the system of shoen (estates) upon which this economy is based.

Shoen and Koden

Koden are public lands, the revenue from which goes to the state. Originally all koden were imperial properties. Koden gifted to vassals became shoen, private estates held in trust from the emperor. These properties are legally defined grants or subdivisions of the state, and as administrative units seldom follow natural geographical boundaries or local political considerations.

With the passage of time and the growth of the provincial military class, few public lands have been left to the state. Most of the country is divided into shoen, and a single land holder may have his estates scattered widely over all of Kozakura. Although a jito and other officials are generally on hand to administrate a shoen, it is not unusual for a land holder to simply collect his revenues from a distance as an absentee landlord, and never actually set foot on his property.

Tax

Estate-holders are taxed on the basis of how much land they hold, rather than on the population that lives on that land. Land capable of growing rice is taxed more heavily—and is considered more valuable-than most other types of property. The most common taxes are the land tax, the harvest tax, and the labor tax. The first two are collected once a year and paid for with rice; even the labor tax is sometimes paid for in grain rather than coin. Jito and other officials collect these revenues, and see that they are passed on to the provincial government and hence the state.

Resources and Production

The greatest single natural resource of Kozakura is its arable land and the wealth of rice that is produced on it. The grain has real value as a medium of exchange; consequently, one of the principal resources of every peasant or lord is the rice he can produce himself or collect from others. Peasants work hard to grow as much rice as possible. Some even have secret rice fields in the mountains, hidden away from the tax collectors.

Nobles, officials, and temples gather rice by collecting rents and taxes from the peasants. They also fund massive projects to reclaim land, transforming the new territory into usable rice fields with public works. Forests are cleared, bogs filled in, irrigation ditches dug, mountainsides terraced, streams diverted, and fields built-all by hand. The rewards of more rice production and more. rent money make such projects worthwhile, and continue to change the face of Kozakura.

Other items vital to the economy are lumber, fish, and metals mined in the mountains, and well-established industries thrive around these resources. Encouraged by their shugo, Kozakuran farmers have adopted improvements in farm technology. Better tools, new crops such as soybeans and tea, and the greater use of draft animals have changed the style of agriculture. Production is now possible on an expanded basis. Raw silk, hemp, linen, paper, dyestuffs, lacquer, vegetable oils, and other products of village economy are now produced in surplus for general sale.

Kozakurans have a small but growing interest in trade with countries beyond their borders, but as of yet, most of these products are used solely within the country. Silks and pottery are popular trade goods within Kozakura, and artisan handicrafts, such as enameled woodwork, always find a ready market.

The difficulties of long-distance transportation over Kozakura's rugged countryside have given rise to the office of the toimaru, a shipping agent who takes rice and other products of an estate on consignment and distributes them over a wide market. Several guilds and associations, called za, exist that engage in monopolistic trade practices. Authorized and protected by charters from lords or the government, za regulate the practices of a group of craftsmen, setting prices and determining what may be sold where. Brewers, weavers, carpenters and smiths are typically represented by a za, at least in populous areas with powerful patrons who will support their economic interests.

Towns and Cities

The growth of commercial and service classes has caused provincial towns to flourish, and sizable communities have grown up around some of the temples and shrines and at major ports and marketplaces. A new and growing merchant class is found in the towns. Some places, such as the shipbuilding center of Renkyu, are semiautonomous in government and are ruled in part by a merchant council.

The commerce and trade generated by these urban centers stretches the rice-based barter system to its limits, and coinage is in greater demand and usage than in the countryside. Pawnshops, moneychangers, and brokerages have sprung up in most towns to take advantage of the demands of cash-basis business.

Wako

The pirates of Kozakura usually prey on vessels near the southwestern tip of Shinkoku and into the Inland Sea. The newly formed Imperial Navy has not yet had much effect on curbing their activities. Kozakuran shipping sometimes travels far out to sea in an effort to avoid the pirates, who tend to lurk off the more commonly used coastal routes.

The greatest and most feared of the wako in Kozakuran waters is Pan Chu, the captain of a stolen war junk called the *Golden Lily* and master of a small fleet of pirate vessels. He and his fellows prefer to work out of Yoetsu on Kabudono, a friendly harbor for the wako and their cargos. Many merchants of Kozakura secretly trade with wako through yakuza middlemen, since the pirates are a source of cutrate goods.

Pan Chu is an 8th level barbarian of lawful evil alignment.
Kabudono].

Architecture

Kozakuran architecture has been influenced by religious philosophy, the demands of climate, foreign influences, and the Kozakuran lifestyle.

Construction

Because the land is often shaken by earthquakes, buildings are made of lightweight woods and materials like paper, which do the least injury to inhabitants in case of collapse. Stonework is used only where absolutely necessary, in the defensive walls of castles, or the foundations of temples and towers. The more common construction materials include bamboo, pine, cedar, and willow; paper, ranging from very heavy to translucent; straw, for matting and thatch; plaster, to fireproof walls; and clay, to strengthen walls and to make roof tiles.

Design

Most buildings share common design features. Floors are generally built on raised posts. This keeps the building dry in the rainy season, allows cool air to circulate underneath when it is hot, and discourages most vermin from entering the building.

Support pillars and crossbeams hold up the weight of the roof. This allows many of the walls to slide, or even be entirely removable. The roof itself is usually built along a single ridge-pole, with the rafters and beamwork that support it exposed beneath. Ceilings are seldom built, and walls often do not extend completely up to the top.

The roof sweeps down into wide overhanging eaves which extend beyond the walls of the house. In cities, roofs are commonly tiled to reduce the fire hazard, but wooden shingles, thatch, and reeds are also used. Beneath the eaves are broad sheltered verandas around the outside of the building.

Most houses have wooden shutters, extending from floor to ceiling, that can be fitted under the eaves in time of storm. Some have hinged shutters that swing up into the rafters when not in use. Most shops and businesses have horizontal shutters that seal the wide windows when closed, or that fold outward when opened. When open, one shutter can be propped up with legs and used to display wares, while the other is braced up and serves as an awning for the "display table" below.

Philosophy

The teachings of the Way of Enlightenment have affected architectural design. Among other things, the Way encourages persons to live in harmony with nature, and in harmonious surroundings. This has resulted in structures built along simple, clean lines; the use of natural woods and fibers, or discreet use of decorated materials; a simplicity of form which draws the eye to a noteworthy object upon entering a room-be it an art object, a flower arrangement, or the view outside the doors.

This philosophy is exemplified in the so-called "studio style" of design, which has been popularized in the last hundred years by Emperor Gofukakuji. In this style, tatami mats of woven straw are used to cover the entire floor. A special alcove, called the tokonoma, is set aside for the display of art objects. The Jade Pavilion built by Emperor Gofukakuji in 23/16 (1336) is a perfect example of this style of architecture, and is covered in further detail elsewhere. Variations on this theme are common now in the samurai and noble houses of Kozakura.

Landscaping

The natural setting of a house or the appearance of an estate's landscaping is as vital as the buildings in achieving a harmonious effect. This admiration of natural beauty has created a growing landscape business, and almost guarantees the employment of at least one gardener in any household that can afford his services. Although a natural view is preferred, some nobles go to great expense to enhance or alter the countryside if the vista is marred by some jarring element. Rock gardens, water gardens, and gardens of decorative plants are growing in popularity, as are walkways meant for meditation or nature viewing. Skilled gardeners and landscape artists are much in demand.

Foreign Influence

Shou Lung influences can be seen in the heavy roofs of temples, supported by darkened unpainted pillars and white plaster walls. A modified pagoda-style roof is seen on many temples, although residences and businesses have been influenced by this only to the point of adopting slightly flared eaves. Some styles of enameled and lacquered woodwork and carving are borrowed from Shou Lung as well.

Lifestyle

The design of Kozakuran buildings has a distinct effect on the lifestyle of the people who live and work in them. The lightweight construction of a house and the open spaces within it lend themselves to the practice of keeping the house open and cool during the hot, humid summers. For the same reasons, the house is usually difficult to keep warm during the winter. In winter, padded robes and layered garments are worn; persons sleep with thick futons on top of them, as well as underneath them; open fireplaces are uncommon indoors because of the fire hazard, so braziers are used to heat certain rooms.

In most households, a wide, deep firepit is built into the floor and kept warm with a pot of coals. In winter, the family sits around the pit, legs dangling within, and covers the top with a low table which comes to the waists of the seated individuals. Legs are warmed by the coals below, while upper bodies are draped in thick robes against the chill of the room. In this communal place handiwork is done during the winter. Meals are eaten there as well, usually cooked right at the tableside so that the housewife need not leave the warmth of the firepit nor disturb the table.

The communal nature and lack of privacy in Kozakuran life is evident in such a setting. Walls are usually of paper and seldom reach to the roof, with the result that voices and conversations can carry easily throughout a household. In fact, spy holes and hiding places are often purposely incorporated into a building's design, so that even whispered conversations can be overheard with ease. With moveable walls, rooms are easily rearranged, and personal private places may not remain so all day long. Rooms may be thrown open to air out, to cool off, or to provide more space in which to accomodate visitors or guests.

Types of Buildings

Homes. The simplest home of the commoners is the minka, or farmhouse. A minka is normally made of wood, with a thatched roof, an earth and wood floor, a firepit, and perhaps a straw-filled loft in which to sleep. Similar to the minka are the rowhouses found in cities. At their poorest, they are little more than wooden huts, with earthen floors and one or two rooms. Each is separated from others by a thin wooden wall, and roofed with simple planks. Entrances and interiors are screened by curtains. Since homes and businesses almost always share the same building, the front of the house is used for business on the street: selling, craft work, etc.

Commoners with more money live in larger and better appointed houses. The front has shutters used for display of crafts, and the building may include several rooms and more than one story. Successful merchants and innkeepers have small compounds with an minka of two or three floors, a small gate entrance, a stable and separate storehouses.

Samurai homes are organized around a compound where the master and his servants and retainers live. The samurai's retainers are housed in nagaya, a longhouse-style barracks one or two stories high. Their servants live on the ground floor while the samurai live on the second. Nagaya normally line the outer walls of the master's compound. Samurai of senior rank who are close to their lord are sometimes quartered in separate houses within the compound. The greater nobility have compounds filled with several mansions and nagaya.

Shrines and Temples. Shrines are small and modest affairs, usually set amid trees, by a stream, or in other natural settings. Many are marked with red-painted torii, an archway that leads to the shrine. Beyond the torii are statues of guardian spirits, set to ward off evil influences. Inside the grounds is a stone basin filled with fresh water, for purification before prayer. Across from this might be a small covered stage for performing sacred dances. In addition to the shrine building itself, there might be another outbuilding for storage.

Shrines are built of wood and thatch. No stone, plaster, or tiles are used in the buildings. The roofs are thatched, steeply pitched. The floors are set on posts raised above the ground. Inside, there is normally a single hall, decorated very simply. There are no statues or representations of the deity to be seen in the shrine itself. When located in a community, the shrine is often the center of village or neighborhood life. The old or the very young may pass the time there in talk and play.

Temples have much more imposing structures. Most are a collection of buildings centered around a single great hall on a stone foundation. Reached by a flight of broad steps, the hall holds huge statues of the deity or deities worshipped at that temple. Although they appear multi-storied from outside, they seldom have more than one floor, the inside having great pillars and lofty ceilings. Spaces between the pillars are designed to be closed off by portable screens and sliding walls, to accomodate the different purposes (sermons, prayer, ceremonies, etc.) for which the temple is used.

To the sides of the main hall are drum and bell towers, with a huge incense burner in the center for offerings. Other buildings include gatehouses with large iron-clad gates, many-storied pagodas, quarters for priests and monks, a library building for the holy sutras, and a smaller lecture hall, mainly used for the instruction of the clergy. A wealthy temple will also have a separate mansion for its abbot, quarters for the sohei, and one or more gardens or tea houses.

Castles. Built in defensible positions atop hills, mountains or islands, castles are large and elaborate structures. They are designed for defense, and are built atop massive stone foundations. The outer defenses start with walls pierced by several gates, each guarded by its own troop of soldiers. Outside the wall may be a moat, spanned by one or more bridges. The different courtyards of the castle begin inside the wall, and hold the mansions of the most powerful and trusted retainers of the castle's lord. Courtyards are designed for defense, each one rising higher than the one before, each separate from the others by walls, complex gates, and occasional moats.

Walls and buildings force attackers to travel a path

which makes them easy targets for defenders. The paths lead eventually to the gate to the main courtyard. The main keep, the tenshu-kaku is located there, standing several stories tall. Within the keep are armories, granaries, storerooms, a well, and council chambers; the top floor of the building serves as a watchtower from which the surrounding countryside or city can be observed. In time of war, the tenshu-kaku is converted into quarters for the lord, his family, and his men, and can withstand a long siege.

Imperial Navy

The emperor's navy is an impressive sight when gathered as an entire fleet. The large junks of war and smaller vessels are usually scattered at strategic locations around Kozakura, but are ready at a moment's notice to respond to the orders of the shogun, shikken, Soshi (Head of the Office of Samurai), or the admiral appointed by the Soshi.

The Kozakuran fleet numbers less than 20 war junks, and not quite twice that number of lesser vessels. It grew to that size after the Hojo War left a collection of war vessels in the hands of Takenaka Sugawara, who was forced by politics to turn them over to the emperor.

Katsuhara Omitsu, the shugo-daimyo of Dosaki Province, started the Imperial shipyards at Renkyu as part of a project to take advantage of the resources of the Waturi Forest. The shipyards are not working at capacity, and complete only four new vessels or two war junks a year.

The Admiral of the Imperial Navy is Hiwa Itzusune, a scion of the Hiwa clan of Miyama Province who married into the Takegai court nobility. He demonstrated some tactical seafaring skill during the Hojo War, but holds his position because of political favor. Hiwa's flagship is based at Odako, not far from the capital at Dojyu.

Admiral Hiwa Itzusune is a 14th level samurai with proficiencies in seafaring and fleet tactics.

History

In the Age of Gods, the waters of the world and the islands of Kozakura were created by the gods, while divine dragons created the vault of the skies and the seasons. It is generally agreed that the deities Nagikami (Heavenly Brother) and Namikami (Heavenly Sister) were responsible for these original creations. From these gods also sprang the numerous deities and divine spirits now worshipped in Kozakura.

Shinkoku was created when Heavenly Sister and Brother stood on the Heavenly Bridge and stirred the waters of the world with the Heavenly Jeweled Spear. Where water droplets fell off the spear back into the ocean, the sea coagulated around them and became land. The first droplet to become land was the holy mountain Ichiyama, around which the rest of Shinkoku formed. The Earth Dragon, liking what he saw in Shinkoku, laid down to sleep on the growing land, thus creating the Dragon's Spine, the mountain chain which runs the length of the island. Earthquakes which occasionally rock the island are caused by the Earth Dragon stirring in his sleep.

Tenmei was created when Heavenly Sister needed a new home after her banishment from Shinkoku by Fierce Wind Son, one of her offspring. Hinomoto was created when Heavenly Brother declared his retirement and went there to live. Mikedono was created accidentally in the course of war between the gods Fire Bright and Fierce Wind Son, who in the process made the Senshi Islands and used them as stepping stones to Shinkoku.

Heavenly Sister later died in childbirth, and was buried by Heavenly Brother atop a snow-covered mountain of Shinkoku. That peak is Tokuyama, where the borders of the northern provinces of Takako, Ashi, and Yokozu join. The temple of Namikami commemorates the holiness of that site.

So many gods and spirits sprang forth from Heavenly Brother and Sister that Heavenly Brother retired shortly after the death of Namikami. Today the greatest of the temples dedicated to Nagikami are located on the island of Hinomoto, where that god lives in seclusion.

The reign of the Earth Spirit emperors began after the retirement of Heavenly Brother. In that age, the demigod descendents of the gods ruled the lands. The tales of this time combine fiction and fact, embellishing and exaggerating known events such as the War of the Oni Kings, the Stone-Bearing Empress, and the deeds of Naka no Moriya.

Over time, Earth Spirit demigods intermarried with humans until their line grew weaker and all but vanished from Kozakura. Though this took place, the people of Kozakura continued to honor their deities, and the gods paid attention to strife between the human tribes. When asked by worshippers to take sides in their disputes, the gods finally chose Mori, the chief of the fierce Akimatsu tribe, to be leader of the people of Shinkoku. Mori was a descendent of the last of the Earth Spirit emperors. The gods supported his claim with displays of divine power, and Mori became the first emperor of Kozakura.

Political History

The way Kozakura is governed and the politics that control it seem strange to many outsiders. To understand the government of Kozakura, it is helpful to understand how the system developed.

Akimatsu Rise to Power. Local government and politics began with the Akimatsu clan and the Emperor Mori. The rise of the Akimatsu family was accomplished by skillful use of military might and diplomacy, especially marriage alliances. Through these marriages, the Akimatsu wed their daughters to the powerful nobles of other clans, then maneuvered and worked to see that the children of these marriages assumed control of the other clans. The Akimatsu gained tremendous influence through such maneuvers.

However, the Akimatsu clan was never able to create a strong tradition of imperial authority. Too much of their control relied on the cooperation of allied families, who had to be rewarded with titles, offices,

and land. Alone, the Akimatsu lacked the might to defeat their enemies.

Economic Base. The imperial capital of Fukama was initially situated on ancestral Akimatsu lands in Shizume Province, but the royal clan eventually dominated the fertile Dai Plain in order to maintain the position of emperor. From that power base, they gave lands to branches of their own family, to cadet families (lesser families related to their line), and allies. Over time, their daughters married into more outside clans, cementing the bonds of further alliances.

This eventually resulted in the capital being moved to Dojyu on the Dai Plain in 9/34 (514), in order to keep better contact with the actual property and economic foundation of the imperial court and the Akimatsu clan. To consolidate their land-holding position, the Akimatsu launched a series of campaigns against the korobokuru, who still held large portions of the islands. The land captured in these campaigns was dispensed to loyal families or added to their own territories.

Child Emperors and Regents. In time, the policies of the Akimatsu worked against them. After the first several decades, the family became quite large and split into several branches. Although only those from the main family line could become emperors, the other branches sought to control the emperor, usually through the marriage of a daughter to the emperor or one of his sons. The child of such a marriage could be named emperor and the child's maternal grandfather, often acting as regent (sessho), could effectively control the court. This became the most powerful position in the imperial court, controlling most appointments, land grants, and tax immunities.

The family most successful at this ploy was the Honda clan, and a long line of Honda regents were the power behind the throne in an almost uninterrupted string until their influence was broken by the Hojo clan in 1119.

Retired Emperors. With the naming of an underage emperor, the old emperor, his father, was forced to retire, often after a difficult power struggle. With time, this retirement became a tradition, and the powerful office of the retired emperor was established. A retired emperor was usually in his twenties or thirties, and controlled many of the functions of the court. At times there were two retired emperors, the father and grandfather of the current emperor. In such cases, the senior emperor (In) held the greater power.

Thus there were sometimes three main factions in the imperial court: the regent (sessho), the retired emperor, and the emperor. Each held some degree of power and influence, the regent having the most and the actual emperor the least.

Courtiers. At the same time, other groups and families were also striving to gather power. Ceremonial offices were created to provide official positions for favored non-imperial families. Courtiers rose to positions of power comparable to that of the imperial house, largely thorugh marriage to court-related persons and the elimination of rival families. Some of these courtiers, such as Murasoji in 1144, became regents instead of the emperor's grandfather.

Temples and Shrines. Temples also grew in power as they were granted lands by emperors, regents, retired emperors, and other nobles. Religious leaders connected to powerful families seldom hesitated to employ the power of their temples to further their families' interests. The favor was returned by daimyos and court members who aided their secular relatives. Religious disputes were often settled by armed troops of warrior sohei, raised to protect an order's interests. The practice of retired noblemen and widowed noblewomen entering a monastery encouraged entire clans to support the cause of a temple they were previously indifferent to.

Temples benefited from endowments and gifts made by the faithful, becoming wealthy landholders in their own right. This economic clout gave the religious sects political influence as well, reinforced with private military might separate from the samurai heirarchy. From low-key political influence to armed warfare in the streets of the capital, religious sects became a power to be reckoned with.

Capital Politics. The politics of the capital were complicated and demanded all the attention of the nobles. Indeed, to be forced to travel more than 20 or 30 miles from the capital was a terrible banishment. The provinces were regarded as the home of the uncultured and inferior and very little attention was paid to the clans in the provinces.

Forced to manage without assistance from Dojyu, provincial families grew in armed strength and landholdings, while the power of the Akimatsu and the other nobles of the court eventually weakened. With growing agitation from religious and provincial factions, court nobles lacked both the trained troops to win battles and the landholdings necessary to finance their enterprises. More and more they called upon provincial families related to their line. These families, in return for more land and rights, provided military muscle.

Military Class. The rising military class first took form as bushidan, powerful local individuals who banded together in large military cliques to take control of state lands in the provinces. The leaders of the bushi were mostly descendants of former district governors, holders of military commissions, and managers of family estates who had been sent out to the provinces from the capital. Many were younger sons of nobles for whom suitable positions could not be found at court.

At the top of the military heirarchy which thus took form were the daimyos, the local landholding lords. They were served in turn by samurai, who had the wherewithal to equip themselves with mounts and good armor, and by the lower-ranking zusa, the common footsoldier, refered to today by the generic term bushi.

The Shogunate. While the imperial court remained blind to the danger presented by the increasingly powerful provincial families, the new military class recognized that the imperial court was weak and in disarray. One family, the Hojo, precipi-

tated the Tennu War, breaking the influence of the Honda regents at court, and forcing the emperor to grant their family head the title of shogun, or warlord, in 1119.

Hojo Tademashi became the first shogun of Kozakura, establishing his shogunal government, the bakufu, at Gifu in 1120. Although of a lesser rank than the emperor and the sessho, Hojo had the advantage of military might behind him, and became the real ruler of Kozakura. However, the careful pretense was maintained that the shogun obeyed the will of the emperor. This continues to be necessary since the common folk believe the emperor is descended from the gods and is himself divine.

Even today, only daimyos of the proper bloodline, related to the emperor (however distantly), can be shogun. The title must also be bestowed by the emperor himself. While this is a mere formality, it means that only those who control the emperor can become shogun.

With the establishment of the shogunate, the military class became essential to maintenance of civil government in the capital. Samurai maintained security, and became an indispensable part of court politics. The court was and remains a cultural center, and this era saw the rise of the warrior-courtier to power.

Foremost among these warrior-courtiers and closest to the shogun in power were the kenin, the shogun's retainers who were men of proven loyalty, usually daimyos with their own followings of samurai. These kenin were supported with perquisites from the shogun: letters of confirmation and recognition of their landholdings (hence ensuring their economic status), honorary places in processions and state functions, and honorary appointments. However, if a kenin failed to live up to the standards expected of him, his title was given to someone more deserving,

Hereditary Shogunate. Kozakura is quite large, and even the shogun could not control all of it. His power base was the same as that of the early emperors: a collection of families and loyal clans. These included the main family line, various branches and cadet families, and allies. None of these alone were sufficient to maintain control or defeat the others. Retaining real power required a careful balancing act.

In the reign of the Emperor Ijo, 1242, the office of shogun became hereditary in the Hojo clan, passing from father to son or grandson. With this came all the ills and maneuvering that haunted the imperial succession. Other families used marriage politics to dominate the shogun, the Takenaka family being the most recently successful in this. Children too young to govern were given the title of shogun, resulting in the creation of shogunal regents, or shikken. Today the position of shogun is on its way to becoming what the position of emperor has—an empty title.

As a result of the Hojo War, a battle for succession to the shogunate, Hojo Kawakubo was named shogun in 1422. Takenaka Okawa became his shikken, and that remains the state of affairs today.

The political and military climate in Kozakura is fraught with tension. Recent events have been stormy, and have created an unstable situation in the country. Samurai and adventurers will find plenty of opportunities to help or hinder one faction or the other under the current circumstances. The significant event which has shaped today's problems in Kozakura is outlined below.

The Hojo War

Shogun Hojo Kikutake died in a fall from his horse at the age of 37 in 1415. His son, Todahiro, was only 17, rather than the legal age of 18. Hojo supporters disagreed over who was to become regent; the issue was complicated by the fact that, if Todahiro's two-year old son were to be made shogun, the shikken would be in power considerably longer than if Todahiro assumed the position. The dispute quickly grew into a question of which Hojo to support for the position of shogun, and the powerful families of Kozakura became divided along those lines.

Once war commenced, the bitter fighting raged on for six bloody years. When it was over Todahiro had lost. His eight-year-old son, Kawabuko, became shogun, and Hojo Todahiro was banished from Kozakura.

Kawabuko's maternal grandfather Takenaka Okawa, was appointed shikken, but this has angered and alienated families who favored his half-brother Takenaka Sugawara, the capable and popular general who commanded the pro-Kawabuko forces but who has no blood tie to the office. This has created a rift between the so-called northwestern and southwestern branches of the Takenaka clan. Okawa is supported mainly by the southwestern Takenaka, whose estates are concentrated in Fukudo, Naga-ido, and Naredo Provinces, and their allies. Sugawara is sup ported by the northwestern Takenaka, whose estates are concentrated in Dosaki, Iwari, and Sanyo Provinces, and their allies.

Now, nine years after the close of the Hojo War, Takenaka Okawa has been unable to unify the country, or completely strip his enemies of power. Tensions and unrest mount as the now 17-year-old shogun grows closer to legal age, a time when the shikken would have to step down from his position of power.

Non-Player Characters

Gobidamu, emperor's grandfather;
male, age 51.

Gobidamu is a monk at the temple of Kanchai-ryu on Mt. Ichi. There he is known by the name of Shoku, a quiet man of ascetic tastes. He is fond of meditation and writes poetry, but spends most of his time influencing the political policies of the temple. He has gained the temple's support for Takenka Sugawara, as his son, the Retired Emperor Gokammu, has requested. Gobidamu never leaves the temple, and has no interest in returning to the worldly life.

Gokammu, retired emperor;
male, age 36.

Gokammu is a slim man of medium height. He is ambitious and clever, and is encountered only in courtly circles in Dojyu. This forceful and charismatic personality is unforgiving of those who offend him.

He places great store in omens and signs, never undertaking a venture unless the time is a propitious one.

Gokammu plots to restore power to the office of emperor. Although he cultivates an image of neutrality, he is using his extensive connections to intrigue against both factions of the Takenaka clan and to undermine the power of the shogunate.

Gonijo, emperor;
male, age 15.

Gonijo is short for his age, and is not in robust health. He seldom laughs or participates in courtly amusements. As yet unmarried and without an heir, he enjoys religious pursuits and the stately rituals his office requires of him. Gonijo has little interest in affairs of state and has already indicated he would gladly retire to a temple if allowed to do so.

Hojo Haru, mother of shogun;
female, age 30.

Haru is an attractive woman with a calculating mind and an eye for power. She is the daughter of Takenaka Okawa, and was given at the age of 12 as bride to Hojo Todahiro. This union tied the Takenaka clan to the shogunate, a position of influence enjoyed by Haru. Since her husband's exile, she has carefully guided the actions of the young shogun, her son Kawabuko, to advance the interests of her family. She is not anxious for Todahiro's return to Kozakura, since she would have to give up much of the power she now holds if he returned.

Haru has taken the widower Yamashita Yoichi, the shogun's Chief Administrator, as her lover, to gain his support for keeping her father in power as shikken. Haru is a consummate schemer, and sometimes hires individuals to undertake work for her against the Northwestern Takenakas. She lives in Gifu in the shogun's household.

Hojo Kamuri, retired shogun;
samurai 10th level;
male, age 54.

Kamuri is the great-grandfather of the current shogun. Stepping down as shogun when his son assumed that position, Kamuri retired and became a monk known as Bentori, at Namikami Temple in the north. He is respected by the famed sohei of that temple, and Bentori has become a leader of their forces and military activities. The monk and the temple sohei sup port Kawabuko's bid to remain shogun.

Bentori is tall and muscular, an accomplished samurai especially admired for his archery prowess. However, he is not likely to be recognized as anything other than a monk or sohei by those unfamiliar with him. He may be encountered, along with other Namikami sohei, in any of the provinces near the temple.

Hojo Kawabuko, shogun;
samurai 1st level;
human, age 17.

Hojo Kawabuko is a proud and determined young man. He is cynical beyond his years, already adept at lies and subterfuge, and overconfident in his combat abilities.

Kawabuko is confined to Gifu under the watchful eyes of his mother and the shikken. He knows he is faced with early retirement or sudden death, and does not care for either. His allies are those with strong connections to the Hojo clan, and those who have been injured by the Takenaka. The shogun and his allies await an appropriate time to move against Takenaka.

Kawabuko is encountered in official circles in Gifu, or at the shogunal near the city. Once in a great while, he slips away from his guardians and travels incognito about Gifu en route to meet with allies conspiring against the shikken.

Katsuhara Omitsu, military governor;
samurai 9th level;
male, age 35.

Omitsu is one of the bamboo spirit folk. He is fair-skinned, slim, and related to the nature spirits of a bamboo grove deep in the Waturi Forest near Renkyu. Omitsu is outgoing and popular, gifted in the art of negotiation and bluff, and is a respected strategist.

As shugo-daimyo of Dosaki Province; Omitsu has overseen the construction of the imperial shipyards at Renkyu, the growth of the imperial navy, and the controlled exploitation of the Waturi Forest. Katsuhara Omitsu may be encountered anywhere in Dosaki or neighboring provinces, but is most often in Renkyu or in the Waturi Forest.

Konishi Ieyasu, ninja family head;
bushi 10th level/ninja 18th level;
male, age 63.

Ieyasu is a friendly, sociable elder of nondescript appearance, with a keen mind for the business end of ninja service. His adventuring days are behind him, but Ieyasu personally plans and supervises the most sensitive assignments undertaken by his ninja. His youngest daughter, Seichi, oversees the other business of this ninja family.

Ieyasu passes in everyday life as a bushi named Kumorigawa Ieyasu who has retired from service to a korobokuru lord in distant Haso Province. This claim to korobokuru ties allows the ninja family to maintain a pose of neutrality in local politics, and assures that bushi of "better breeding" pay little attention to their affairs. Ieyasu lives in the "Kumorigawa" family mansion in Dojyu, along with many Konishi ninja who also pass under the guise of bushi.

He is encountered as Kumorigawa Ieyasu most often in Dojyu or Gifu, but may be met anywhere in Kozakura that his presence is required to plan or supervise an assignment. Characters employing ninja services will interact with Ieyasu only on the most sensitive matters.

Konishi Seichi;
wu jen 7th level/ninja 14th level;
female, age 34.

Seichi is a willow-thin, beautiful woman often mistaken for a nobleman's wife or courtesan. She is vain about her appearance, which belies her skill as a wu jen. Even less apparent is her authority as her father's lieutenant, in charge of most activities of the Konishi

ninja family. She is ruthless, authoritative, and has a sadistic streak that comes out when interrogating victims for information.

In the guise of Kumorigawa Seichi, she occasionally works as a wu jen in Dojyu, where there is much demand for magical services. She is one of the few wu jen who know of the Irridescent Peacock Society even though she is not a member. (The society is ignorant of her knowledge, gained through Konishi ninja spies, and would attempt to kill her if they found this out.) Most often, however, Seichi is in residence at the Kumorigawa mansion. She can be encountered abroad in Kozakura when a demanding mission requires her skills.

Maatsuki;
wu jen 4th level;
hengeyokai (fox) female, age 22.

Moody and mischievous, Maatsuki is a member of the Irridescent Peacock Society in Dojyu. She is also a wandering practitioner of magic, and her travels carry her far from the capital. She may seek to join an adventuring party to pass the time, but turns on its members if she sees a chance to create havoc in keeping with the society's interests. She will attempt to recruit an evil-aligned wu jen character to join the society, or kill that character if the offer is refused.

Mashikuni Kakuji;
samurai 15th level;
male, age 55.

Kakuji is head of the Mashikuni clan. He is a heavy set, short-tempered man given to great rages and stubborn determination. Kakuji was formerly shugo-daimyo of Sudai, the wealthy province in which the capital and the Dai Plain are located. He supported Hojo Todahiro in the Hojo war, and was stripped of his office and lands when Takenaka Okawa became shikken.

After his clan's fall from power' Kakuji withdrew to his estates in Gizan Province. He hates the shikken, and is dedicated to avenging his clan's loss of power by deposing Takenaka Okawa. To this end, he has secretly allied the Mashikuni clan with the Northwestern Takenaka families, supporting Takenaka Sugawara. Kakuji openly favors war, and is quietly recruiting bushi and samurai to his cause. Characters may be offered employment by this nobleman or his representatives, or may encounter him or his retainers in the northern half of southwestern Kozakura.

Takegai Yodori;
shukenja 5th level;
male, age 28.

Yodori is a shukenja unattached to any shrine, although he is a follower of one of the Eight Million Gods. He is ambitious, energetic, and serious of demeanor.

Fiercely loyal to his clan, he serves as a courier for secret messages between Takegai Uezami (head of the council of state) and the family's allies. His messages are always memorized and no written copy of them exists. He carries a gold and ivory block bearing the chop of Uezami, which proves Yodori's authority as trusted courier.

Yodori is trustworthy, brave and reliable, and has even carried messages to the exiled Todahiro. He can be encountered anywhere in Kozakura while attempting to deliver a message. He may enlist the characters' aid in order to accomplish his mission.

Takenaka Okawa, shikken;
samurai 9th level;
male, age 43.

Okawa is reserved and aloof, manipulative and ambitious for power. He is an adequate administrator, and a fair but uninspired military leader. The art of diplomacy and reconciliation has never been a strong point with Okawa, and this has reduced his effectiveness as shikken.

Okawa sees his half-brother Sugawara as being jealous of his position of authority, and coveting it for himself. He is torn between the need to keep the Takenaka clan united, and frustration at Sugawara's continuing efforts to undermine his office.

The shikken is encountered in and around Gifu, or in Takenaka lands in the southwestern provinces.

Takenaka Sugawara;
samurai 14th level;
male, age 48.

Sugawara is slow to anger, and does not fight without a clear-cut reason. Once he is moved to take action, he acts swiftly and decisively. His skill as a fighter, a military leader, and a commanding personality have contributed to make him a very popular leader.

For the time being, Sugawara does nothing overt against the shikken. He bides his time on his home estates in Iwari Province, while his vassals intrigue and recruit allies to his cause. He may be encountered in the Northwestern Takenaka provinces, or characters might be offered employment by Sugawara's allies or relatives.

Uji Naraji;
bushi 1st level/ninja 6th level;
male, age 31.

Naraji is quick-witted and persuasive, a spendthrift who sometimes indulges in too much sake (although never when on a job). He looks younger than his years, and takes advantage of this to affect disguises. Naraji normally poses as a donkey-riding merchant tradesman, but may also be encountered as a mountain hermit or a masterless bushi.

Naraji takes assignments directly from the head of the Uji ninja family in Gifu. These days, his work is primarily to spy on Takenaka Okawa's vassals. He sometimes assassinates a samurai who threatens to grow too well-organized militarily Naraji can be encountered anywhere in the country, but most often travels between Gifu and the northern provinces. If characters are clearly allied with the shikken when encountered, this ninja may spy on them on the chance of learning more about their affairs.

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

Pan chu;
bushi 14th level;
male, age 40.

Pan Chu is the best of the wako admirals, an excellent fleet commander who captures merchant craft with ruthless efficiency and evades every attempt to catch him. Pan Chu takes no prisoners, and saves only captive vessels which have a purpose in war He is the most hated and feared pirate in Kozakuran waters.

Pan Chu is a 14th level chaotic evil bushi of middle years. He is Kozakuran-born, but of Shou Lung descent, and sails with a mixed crew of wako from Kozakura, Wa, and Shou Lung.

The *Golden Lily* is the war junk of the notorious wako captain Pan Chu. The junk is a fit match for Kozakuran naval vessels, and usually travels in company with one or two lesser pirate ships, subduing merchant vessels with fleet tactics.

The crew of the *Golden Lily* includes a wu jen responsible for weather control and aid in combat. The ship is bespelled with enchantments which save it from running aground or burning while afloat.

Wildlife and Monsters

Bakemono

Bakemono live in many places on Kozakura, but they are found in the greatest concentration in the central part of Shinkoku and on the island of Tenmei.

Bakemono have become especially troublesome in the high mountain villages laid waste during the Hojo War. Humans fled to the lowlands or elsewhere in the mountains, leaving behind ruins that have since been taken over by bakemono. Some of these creatures are organized into raiding bandit parties, especially in the. mountain highlands of Waya and Wakinasga Provinces in northern Kozakura.

In Tenmei, the bakemono are particular enemies of the korobokuru who emigrated there long ago. The two races fought long and hard over mountain territories. Korobokuru prevailed, but bakemono raiders are especially persistant in the hinterlands of that island.

Dragons

Dragons of all types inhabit the lands of Kozakura, though they avoid men and prefer undisturbed wilderness areas. Besides the common dragons of earth, sea, weather, and rivers, four dragon lords control the seasons and are honored in ceremonies of state and religious rituals. They can be glimpsed battling in the sky at the turn of the seasons, as one displaces the other and gains control of the weather.

The true names of the dragon lords are not known, but they are commonly called by the seasons they rule. The battles between Spring Dragon and Summer Dragon are especially vicious, and precipitate the stormy monsoon weather of that time of year A few hardy adventurers have sought out the dragon lords in their homes beyond the sky, and had dealings with them. The most famous to do this was the swordsman Ichiro over 500 years ago.

The chiang lung (river dragon) is hunted by unscrupulous men for the sake of the magical pearl lodged in its brain which gives it its power of flight. Li lung (earth dragons) are generally avoided, for wu jen advise that their ability to create earthquakes is also capable of awakening the Earth Dragon which lies beneath Shinkoku, an action which would have devastating results. Several lung Wang (sea dragons) have become greedy in their demands for tribute, especially those in the Straits of Ama and near the island of Kabudono, and these dragons are freely hunted by wako and seafaring samurai lords.

The dragon lords of the spring, summer, fall and winter have the abilities of an ancient t'ien lung (celestial dragon), but are twice the size and have twice the normal maximum number of hit points. In addition, each dragon lord can cast *control weather* and *plane shift* at will, and are always accompanied by 1 to 10 wind walkers.

Hsing-sing

These apelike humanoids live in the high mountains of central and southern Shinkoku and in the wilds of Kabudono. They keep to themselves except for minimal trade and their annual war rampage.

The hsing-sing of Azuma and Sudai Provinces are especially violent during their war rampages. Humans have organized to stamp them out in those areas, with the result that skirmishes and clashes between men and hsing-sing take place with increasing regularity in the mountains of central Shinkoku.

Hsing-sing are detailed on page 122 of *Oriental Adventures.*

Suggested Adventures

The Secret of Exile Island

The guard garrison of Yarujima is under attack by the Earth itself. Mudslides, walls of stone, flying boulders, and other problems plague them. PCs are sent to investigate the phenomena.

In fact, the island's great nature spirit has been angered by a wu jen's earlier secret attempt to conjure the ghost of a deceased exile. Humans are now under attack by the spirit of Yarujima. To solve the problem, PCs must win past lesser nature spirits and earth magic to the center of the island, and there propitiate the earth spirit with sacrifices. The greater earth spirit first confronts them in physical form, but, if injured, disappears back into the ground before it can be slain. If the spirit is slain, the island becomes a wasteland. If the spirit vanquishes the PCs, the garrison is destroyed and the soldiers are forced to leave.

Besides the reward of a service well done, the characters may find the remains and belongings of the wu jen Haditsu, who accidentally caused this problem.

Ikiryo of The Red Fog

Regeki, a shukenja of the Temple of Red Fog, is jealously hateful of certain distinguished persons in Yoshida on Tenmei. When his ikiryo slays them, the form of the shukenja is recognized, but local people fear to punish a member of the Red Fog order. PCs are asked to track the shukenja and bring him to justice.

Regeki flees into the wilderness near Daidake, but not before he glimpses his pursuers and becomes fixated with hate for them. As his ikiryo stalks the PC party leader, it becomes a race against time for the characters to catch the shukenja before his ikiryo slays their leader. He can be accompanied by one or more monks or sohei if the DM deems it useful.

The Caverns of Waturi Forest

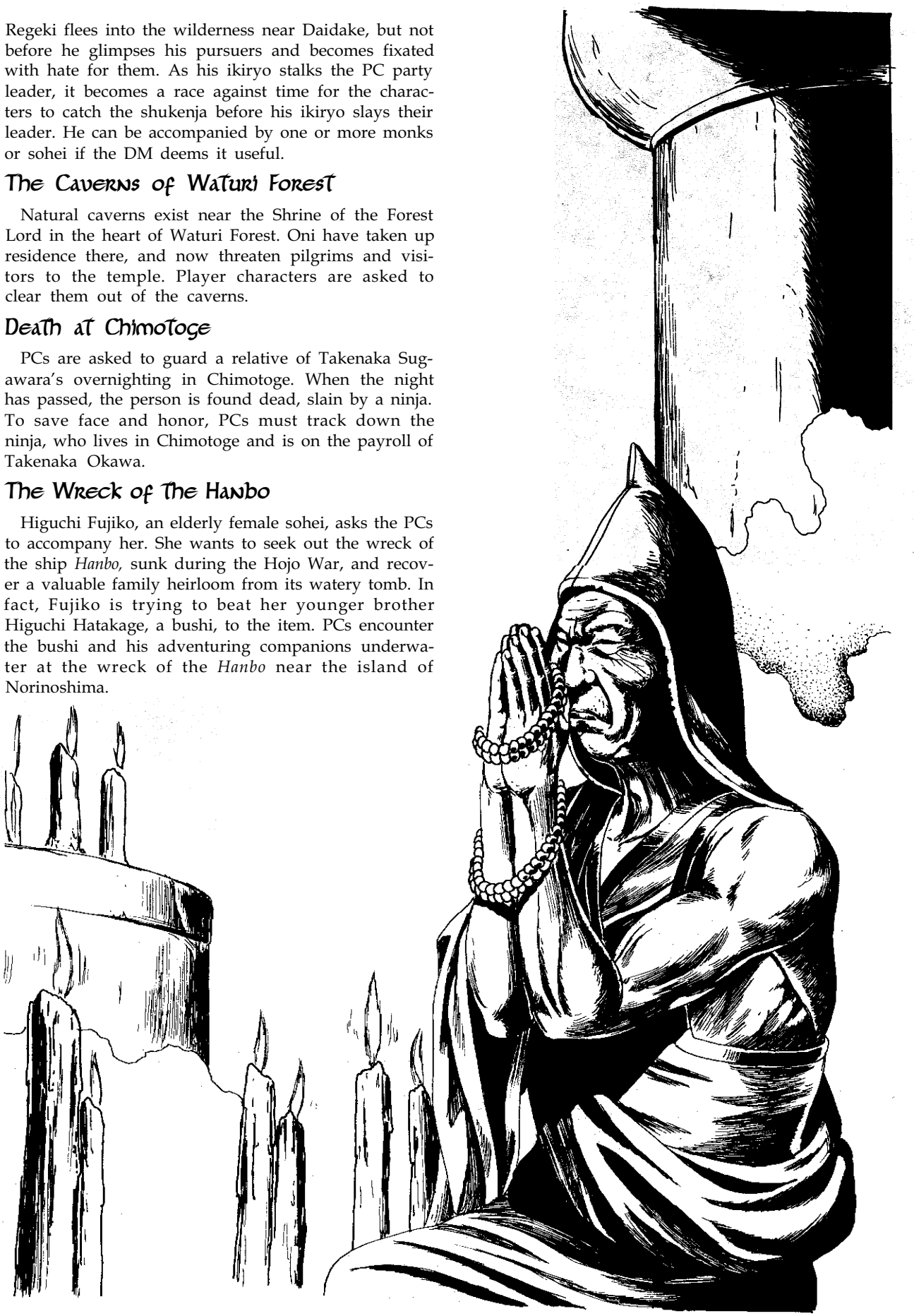
Natural caverns exist near the Shrine of the Forest Lord in the heart of Waturi Forest. Oni have taken up residence there, and now threaten pilgrims and visitors to the temple. Player characters are asked to clear them out of the caverns.

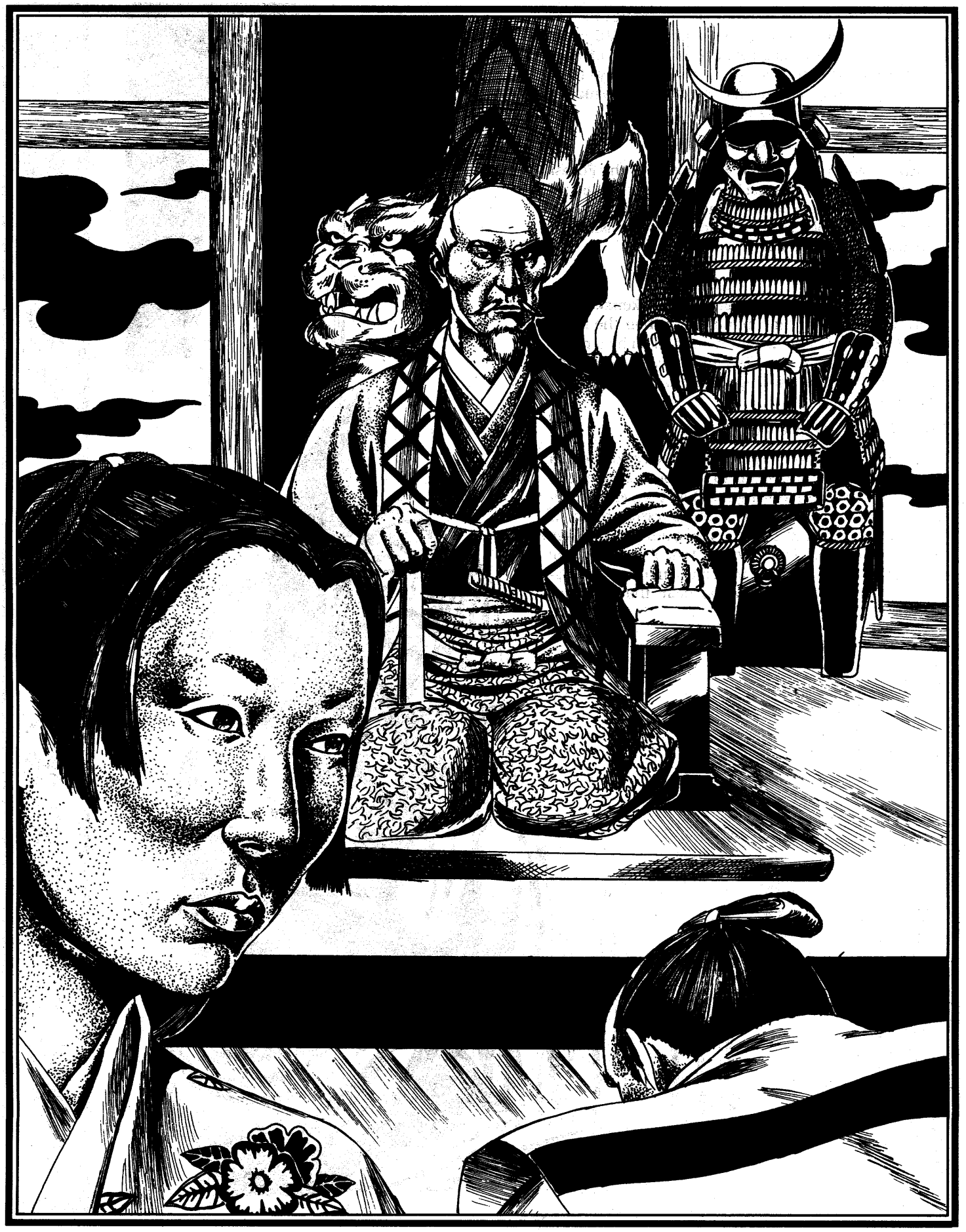
Death at Chimotoge

PCs are asked to guard a relative of Takenaka Sugawara's overnighting in Chimotoge. When the night has passed, the person is found dead, slain by a ninja. To save face and honor, PCs must track down the ninja, who lives in Chimotoge and is on the payroll of Takenaka Okawa.

The Wreck of The Hanbo

Higuchi Fujiko, an elderly female sohei, asks the PCs to accompany her. She wants to seek out the wreck of the ship *Hanbo,* sunk during the Hojo War, and recover a valuable family heirloom from its watery tomb. In fact, Fujiko is trying to beat her younger brother Higuchi Hatakage, a bushi, to the item. PCs encounter the bushi and his adventuring companions underwater at the wreck of the *Hanbo* near the island of Norinoshima.





Wa

After centuries of war, Wa has settled into an era of peace that has lasted longer than in any other nation of Kara-Tur. Peace brought a renewed interest in education and the arts, producing a flourishing culture and the promise of a secure future.

But change has not come without a price. The same rigid social system which ensures domestic tranquility borders on tyranny and oppression for most. Distinct social classes are inflexibly enforced, travel is closely monitored, even religion is regulated by the state. Prosperity is concentrated among the ruling military, condemning a staggering number of commoners to lives of hardship and poverty.

Regardless of their social status, the citizens of Wa are united by their fierce national pride and deep distrust of foreigners. Contact with the rest of the world is limited, and few details of Wa are known outside its borders.

Geography

Wa is a series of islands. Tsukishima is the largest and most densely populated, composed mostly of towering ranges of extinct volcanoes bordered by fertile lowlands. Uwaji, the capital of Wa, is located on the east coast, as are most of the nation's major cities.

The second largest island is Shidekima, separated from Tsukishima by the Sea of Blossoms. Shidekima is dominated by dry plains, making most of the land unsuitable for farming. Less than 5 percent of Wa's population lives here, with most concentrated in small fishing villages along the east coast.

Paikai and Machukara lie to the north of Tsukishima and, like Shidekima, are also sparsely populated. The cluster of islands comprising Paikai are covered with rugged mountains and stretches of volcanic ash and gravel. Machukara, the northernmost region of Wa, is a land of dense forests with much of its wilderness still uncharted.

The rest of Wa is collectively known as the Cuter Isles. The largest is Huyusha, located off the southern coast of Tsukishima. The Isle of Devils, the Isle of 1,000 Pines, and the Isle of the Gloomy Temple are also part of the Outer Isles, as are the dozens of charted and hundreds of uncharted islands to the south and west of Tsukishima. A number of the smaller southern islands were presented to Shou Lung as an appeasement about 150 years ago, but these remain unsettled.

Mountains are the most prominent physical feature of Wa. Nearly 80 percent of Wa is covered with mountains, and the high peaks extend as far as the eye can see. The Ikuyu Mountains are the most extensive, reaching from the northern tip of Tsukishima all the way to the southern coast of Tsukishima, effectively dividing the island in half. Numerous mountain passes, many of them quite trecherous, link the east and west coasts. The most frequently traveled is Hayatoge Road, the shortest route between the trade cities of Iiso and Tifuido.

There is no major river in Wa, although there are many tributaries and streams flowing from the mountains to nourish the crops. The largest inland body of water is Lake Sari, nestled among Wa's most fertile farmlands. The seas surrounding Wa are rich with sea life, providing a steady living for the fishermen living in rural villages that line the coasts.

The seas also keep the air moist, making for lush vegetation and distinct seasons with plenty of rainfall. Summers are hot and humid, winters are cold and snowy.

No country has suffered more from the whims of nature than Wa, and its citizens have had to learn to live with the ever-present threat of natural disaster. Typhoons regularly blow in from the ocean, bringing torrents of rain to destroy crops and raging winds to demolish buildings. Earthquakes rock the landscape, sometimes causing avalanches capable of burying entire villages. Many of Wa's volcanoes are still active and can erupt without warning.

Islands

Machukara

Machukara is the northernmost island of Wa. Because of its dense jungles, it remains largely unexplored.

Machukara is actually a part of the Paikai province, but it usually is thought of as one of the Outer Isles.

The government has not yet decided quite what to do with Machukara. Its strategic position would seem to make it ideal for a military base, but the shallow reefs surrounding it make it impossible to dock ships. Clearing away enough of the jungle to establish a colony seems unfeasible. The trees tower hundreds of feet in the air and grow so close together that no sunlight reaches the jungle floor. Vines as thick as a tree trunk and as tough as marble grow in vast tangles. Where there is no jungle, there is treacherous swampland. Savage orange gorillas with blazing red eyes and silver-scaled serpents whose poison can fell an elephant are only a few of the dangerous creatures said to exist there.

As far as the government is concerned, Machukara is unpopulated. Yet, reports from travelers contradict this. A fishing boat sailing off the northeast coast sighted a garden of giant white lilacs growing along an inlet. A single petal, they reported, was larger than the sail of their ship. Venturing closer, they saw a group of small, hairy men tending the garden. The hairy men vanished into the jungle as the ship approached.

On another occasion, a ship blown off course by a hurricane was heading toward the northern coast of Machukara. The strong winds parted the trees and revealed a 100-foot ivory column with a face carved in the top. The face abruptly blew a gust of wind at the approaching ship, filling its sails and sending it back out to sea.

Over the years, expeditions have been sent to explore the interior of Machukara. None have

被氣緋俛伏膚被趺付腐郛弗伏緋俛伏膚被趺付腐

returned. Desperate refugees have also sought asylum on the island. The most famous of these is Tazu-ei, the son of a noble who became disgusted with the dissension in his family and fled to Machukara seeking a life of simplicity and peace. Like all the others who have sought refuge in Machukara, he has never been heard from again.

The Outer Isles

This is the collective name for the small islands that border the main islands of Wa. Some are occupied by primitive races with exotic cultures. Others are inhabited by dangerous creatures. Many of the islands have yet to be thoroughly explored.

The Outer Isles are not considered separate provinces. Instead, they are under the jurisdiction of adjacent mainland provinces; for instance, the Isle of One Thousand Pines is part of the Jasuga province, and the Isle of Devils is part of the Aru province.

The four largest of the Outer Isles are also the closest to mainland Wa. As is true of all the Outer Isles, it is strictly forbidden to visit them without approval from the shogunate.

The Isle of Devils is the largest of the Outer Isles. This is where the Spirit of Wa banished the devils who once roamed the mainland. A devil cannot leave the island unless a man agrees to take his place.

The Isle of One Thousand Pines is a densely forested island that once served as a prison colony for Wa. The prison was later moved to the larger island of Ibhei, and the facilities at the Isle of One Thousand Pines were abandoned. Kazuo Tokuri, the nephew of former shogun Matasuuri Shogoro who was framed for plotting a coup, was the last prisoner held here. His spirit still haunts the prison ruins.

The Isle of the Gloomy Temple lies just off the southernmost peninsula of Tsukishima. The island is a vast beach containing dozens of empty galleries and shrines. When the tide rises, it appears that the buildings are floating. Ghostly deer roam the beach when the tide is low. The gods have declared the Isle of the Gloomy Temple to be a place of special sanctity. If either a birth or a death takes place on the island, it is written that the gods will unleash the nine plagues on Wa. No one knows what the nine plagues are and no one is eager to find out.

The Isle of the Black Tree is adjacent to Ibhei Island. At the dawn of time, a gigantic oak tree grew here, casting a shadow that reached the mainland. The tree grew to such a height that it collapsed from its own weight. Fortunately, it collapsed to the south. Remnants of the tree, now nothing but black stone, are scattered on the island, which is otherwise completely barren. The black stone pieces are priceless gems resembling diamonds. However, as soon as a stone is removed from the island, it turns back into common oak.

The rest of the Outer Isles form an irregular chain extending south and west of the Isle of the Gloomy Temple. None have been explored extensively, so details about them are vague.

The Isle of Firando is noted for the abrupt shifts in weather which are determined by the moods of the primitive tribes who live there. If the natives are angry, the skies grow stormy and bleak. If the natives are happy, the sun shines brightly and the winds smell sweet. A large temple dedicated to the god Priapus, who grants fertility to infertile women, is located here.

The Isle of No Mosquitoes is indeed free of mosquitoes, thanks to a monk who drove them all away a thousand years ago when the natives were kind to him. There are two races who live here—the falconmen (haya-to) and the bearmen (kimaso). Each is convinced their ancestors are the ones who were kind to the monk and are hence responsible for the mosquito-free environment. This disagreement has resulted in a bloody civil war which the falconmen and bearmen have waged for hundreds of years.

The Isle of Immortality has many prospering fishing villages and accomplished craftsmen. However, all of the natives are hopelessly despondent because they are all immortal. They have long since grown bored with life and long for the release of death. If they throw themselves from a cliff, strong winds blow them back. If they try to drown themselves, they float on the surface of the water. It is not known why they have been cursed in this way.

The Isle of the Long Legged and Long Armed is home to a race whose legs are twice the length of their bodies and whose arms dangle to the ground. More oddly, the natives never exceed an inch in height. Their tiny artworks are highly sought treasures by wealthy collectors of mainland Wa.

The Isle of Gargantuas is an island of giant monsters. War rages constantly between the insectoid gargantuas and the reptilian gargantuas while earthquakes and volcanic eruptions lay waste to the earth around them. The island is ruled by a krakentua, an intelligent monstrosity with the body of a man and the head of a kraken.

The Isle of Poison at first appears to be a normal island of tidy villages and pleasant craftsmen. Closer inspection shows the inhabitants all hover an inch or so from the ground. The entire surface of the island is poison, and the citizens have developed this special ability in order to survive. They conceal the secret of the island from visitors, taking great delight when the unwary drop dead upon setting foot on the sand.

The Isle of Pearls is a desert island where a full-sized pearl takes the place of each grain of sand. The only occupants of the island are a race of hai nu who fiercely guard the pearls from raiders.

Other Outer Isles rumored to exist include the Isle of Liars, the Isle of Glass, the Isle of Madness, the Isle of Ghosts, and the Isle of the Long Haired and Long Eared Barbarians. There may be dozens, perhaps even hundreds more of these tiny islands in the uncharted waters to the west of mainland Wa.

Paikai

Paikai is the name given to a group of islands comprising a single province located to the east of the northernmost peninsula of Tsukishima. The main island is rocky and mountainous with sparse coastal farmlands. The remaining islands are mostly ash and

gravel and are unsuitable for habitation. The south and west coasts of the main island border the Sea of the Long Morning.

Fudo Oieto is the daimyo of Paikai, but it is common knowledge that the true ruler is Shiz-ti, arguably the finest magician in all of Wa. Ordinarily, such an obvious puppet regime would not be tolerated, but even the shogun fears the power of the mysterious Shiz-ti.

Shiz-ti resides in a stone temple at the peak of the highest mountain in Paikai. He has never been seen to leave the temple, at least not in a form recognizable as Shiz-ti. Inside the temple is a pagoda lit by candles made of tengu fat. There are four rows of wooden idols resembling devils carrying cloth sacks. The sacks contain hell-winds. A hell-wind has the force of a hurricane and is released if a sack is opened.

Behind the rows of idols is a larger idol, a gigantic brass image of Ontogo, the god of darkness. The idol has curved horns, a hooked nose, and the feet of a falcon. It sits astride a brass statue of a wild boar.

Shiz-ti has a mysterious affinity for boars; they roam freely in his temple and throughout the city. A caged boar whose fur has been dyed yellow is kept at the foot of Shiz-ti's mountain. Citizens are required to pay their respects each week by circling the cage three times while reciting prayers.

The small northern islands are actually cemeteries containing the bodies of Paikai nobility and monks and sohei who died in the service of Shiz-ti. The dead are honored in an annual ceremony called the Festival of Seagulls. Plates of raw meat are placed on the graves at dusk. Seagulls, supposedly the souls of the dead, swoop in from the coast during the night and eat the meat. The meat is always gone by dawn, but the seagulls are never seen. Perhaps something more formidable than a seagull takes it.

Boats navigating the Sea of the Long Morning are sometimes greeted with the eerie sight of the ghost ship of Hidegari slowly making its way along the coastline. About 500 years ago, the legendary seaman Hidegari Iegusa engaged in a fierce battle with a fleet of warships from Kozakura. The battle went against Hidegari, and with his sails ablaze and his crewmen dead, his ship vanished into a sudden fog. The ghost ship is recognizable by its glowing hull and sails of flame.

The following are always on duty at Shiz-ti's shrine:

30 1st level sohei
16 2d level sohei
10 1st level monks
4 2d level monks

Cities

Akkaido

Located on the southern coast of Tsukishima, Akkaido is one of Wa's principal port cities. The city is built into the hills surrounding a natural harbor holding hundreds of fishing vessels and commercial ships.

For hundreds of years, Wa traded extensively with the other nations of Kara-Tur. However, when Matasuuri Nagahide became shogun in 1754, he vowed to rid Wa of all foreign influences. Foreign merchants were ordered to leave. Those who lingered were executed.

Under this new policy of restriction, Akkaido became the only port of entry for foreign cargo and remains so to this day. Under the watchful eye of Matasuuri Ieysuna, the province daimyo, dozens of trade ships dock here each day filled with exotic goods of all variety. Because of the limits on allowable imports, these goods are quickly and eagerly consumed, mainly by Wa's upper classes who are among the few who can afford them.

Jejima Horoto, cousin of Ieysuna, is one Akkaido's wealthiest importers. A page from his record book shows the following goods received on a typical day.

1,000 pieces of lumber
375 pieces of ebony
31,000 cases of pepper
785 rabbit skins
2,725 cow hides
8 elephant tusks
80 giant carp skins
8,200 cases of white sugar
12,000 cases of black sugar
150 cases of sugar candy
7,850 bolts of cotton
3,250 cases of Kozakuran nuts
200 bolts of yellow silk
20 cases of cloves
1,200 spools of sewing thread
100 spools of gold thread
71 boko tree roots
84 tea pots
12 chests of assorted books
760 bundles of plain parchment

In addition to its reputation as a trade center, Akkaido is also noted for its prospering fishing industry. Many of the smaller fishing boats are owned and operated by individual fishermen, but the fleets owned by large companies account for most of the business. Jejima Tyo, brother of Horoto and another cousin of the daimyo, is one of the most successful. Tyo owns eight tuna boats which fish the coastal waters in units of two, trawling a large net between them to scoop up the catch.

Tyo's fortunes can be attributed in part to a lucky accident. Early in his career, hisnet scooped up a furious ningyo king. Asa result of Tyo's skillful negotiations, the ningyo not only refrained from destroying his fleet, he agreed to become Tyo's partner. The ningyo regularly guides Tyo to the richest tuna schools, and they split the harvest. The ningyo also presented Tyo with a *biwa of charm* to lure fish close to the boats. Tyo's soothing melodies wafting on the sea breezes are a familiar sound to sailors and fishermen navigating the coastal waters of Akkaido.

Akkaido has a high population of students and scholars who come to sample the exotic tales and arcane information brought by foreign visitors. Official permission for intellectual exchange must be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it is suspected that a growing number of curious students

are arranging covert meetings with cooperative foreign teachers.

The shipbuilders of Akkaido are the best in Wa. A two-man fishing vessel can be constructed in a week, and a large one, such as those used by Tyo, takes a month. A large merchant ship can be completed in five months, while warships take from four to six months, depending on the armament.

Akkaido's harbors typically accommodate 500 ships of various sizes. Armed patrol boats continually cruise the coasts of Akkaido at a radius of five miles to prevent the illegal entry of unauthorized vessels.

Aru

In a remote area on the northwestern coast of Tsukishima, the town of Aru is an isolated community nestled at the foot of the Ikuyu Mountains. Pilgrims from all parts of Wa journey to this holy city to worship at the Shining Temple of Bishamon.

Because travel in Wa is restricted, religious pilgrimage serves the dual purpose of spiritual renewal and sightseeing. Although access to Aru is difficult, requiring a trip through some of the most rugged passes of the Ikuyu Mountains, the persevering traveler is rewarded with one of the nation's most breathtaking landmarks, the Shining Temple of Bishamon.

For many, particularly commoners and peasants, the Shining Temple of Bishamon is the definitive center of spirituality. The entrance to the temple is a gate guarded by huge ebony lions with golden eyes and crystal teeth. A stairway of 3,000 steps leads to the main place of worship atop a high hill; palanquins are available to carry wealthy visitors. The stairway is flanked by rows of wooden pillars dyed red and topped with ivory spires.

A brass bell hangs from the branch of a towering apple tree in front of the temple. The bell rings hourly in homage of Bishamon, the Wide Hearing. The apples are said to grant immortality to the deserving and death to the dark-hearted. Only Bishamon may pluck these apples.

Inside the temple is a huge marble idol of Bishamon, cross-legged and covered in gold. Behind it is a mural of the shining sun covering the entire wall. In long rows in front of the idol are 3,333 small brass statues of Bishamon's principal priests from the past hundred centuries. The statues have multiple heads and dozens of arms, representing the good deeds of these holy men. A complete ceremony, which true believers of Bishamon are expected to perform annually, includes an individual prayer of thanks to each of the 3,333 priests.

What little industry there is in Aru is directed to the service and comfort of visiting pilgrims. Along with numerous inns and stables, there are a number of merchants trading in holy texts and religious articles. Street peddlers do a brisk business in souvenirs such as ceramic apples and brass necklaces made of 3,333 beads.

Chozawa

Chozawa is a moderately sized castle town near the east coast of Tsukishima. Some of Wa's finest military units are based here.

Chozawa is a city built around the daimyo's castle and is a typical example of the castle towns which serve as headquarter cities for Wa's ruling class. Chozawa Castle, occupied by daimyo Muki Nobi and his subordinates, is located on the high ground between the Kiga River and the Akano River. The community has grown up around it.

The homes of the highest retainers are located next to the castle; the more highly paid the retainer, the closer his residence. The main streets of the city are lined with shops. Merchants generally occupy the main streets and artisans the back streets. Each trade and craft is assigned to a specific district. There is even a specific district for the primary shrines and temples. Chozawa has two pleasure districts, licensed and monitored by city administrators. The pleasure districts are located on the outskirts of the main city.

Chozawa Castle is actually a cluster of nine buildings enclosed in a square stone wall. The main building is six stories tall. It has white walls, red railing and roof tiles, and black lacquered trim. Other buildings in the castle compound include a three-story secondary quarters and a single-story structure with a flat roof used for observation of the stars. A 30-room, two-story structure atop the outer wall is called the Long House (tamon yagura) and is used to store weapons. Behind the central mansion is a spacious park for the exclusive use of the daimyo. His private shrine is also located in the park.

Muki Nobi is perhaps the finest general in Wa, and his troops are noted for their discipline, loyalty, and savagery, the latter best illustrated by the story of the River of a Thousand Eyes. Ten years ago, Nobi heard rumors of a peasant rebellion organizing in the mountains west of Chozawa. Nobi allowed the peasants to believe their attack would catch him off guard, then intercepted the peasant forces as they poured out of the mountains. All 600 of the invaders were killed, while Nobi's forces suffered only modest casualties. As a warning, Nobi had all the enemy bodies decapitated and their heads thrown into the Akano River. For months to come, shocked fishermen would tell their incredulous families about the hundreds of heads bobbing along the Chozawa coastline. The heads eventually washed out to sea.

In Chozawa Castle, Nobi has the following troops stationed and ready:

20 3d level mounted samurai
40 2d level mounted samurai
180 1st level foot samurai
10 2d level sohei
50 1st level sohei
120 1st level bushi

Additionally, Nobi has access to the following troops stationed in his province:

400 1st level mounted samurai
1,000 1st level mounted samurai
700 1st level foot samurai
2,000 1st level bushi
200 1st level sohei

Fochu

Fochu is the largest city on the southwestern peninsula of Tsukishima. The farmland here is among the least productive in Wa. Fishing and weaving are the primary occupations of its citizens.

The barren lands and relative isolation of the Fochu province make it an undesirable territory for the ruling class. The shogun tends to assign it to his least skilled administrators. The current daimyo, Bokika Hokio, is none too pleased with his assignment, and rumors abound of an impending insurrection.

Because of the poverty and ignorance of the peasants, Fochu is shunned by travelers. Even the most curious students of culture find little of interest here. Corruption abounds, and differences of opinion are more likely to be settled in a bloody street fight than in a courtroom.

The forests to the east of Fochu are the home of Oeura, better known as the Peachling Girl. Although the Peachling Girl prefers the company of animals to human beings, she remains a hero to the peasants and a mysterious champion of the oppressed.

Hotomori

Hotomori is the headquarters city of the largest province in Wa. It is situated on the southern coast of Tsukishima and is surrounded by rolling hills, rich farmland, and numerous farming communities.

Hotomori is a carefully planned city designed to take advantage of the area's natural resources. Hotomori Castle, the land parcels for retainers, and the commercial districts were all carefully laid out in consideration of water availability to the farmlands, easily the most productive in all of Wa.

A coastal city, Hotomori has neither good waters for fishing nor a strong export business. But it does have a thriving shipbuilding industry. Wa's finest warships are built here. It is one of the nation's major naval bases.

Thanks to the even hand of the daimyo, Yorifusa Ti, Hotomori is a model city, trouble-free, prosperous, and secure. Over the years, the shogun has recognized Ti for his successful administration by awarding him with additional holdings. The province is now the wealthiest of any of Wa's 50 fudai daimyos.

Considering the province's wealth. the three-story Hotomori Castle is relatively small, but the design does reflect Ti's single known vice-his obsession with gold. The castle has golden trim, solid gold spires, even golden bird cages hanging from the trees. It is said that beneath the modest castle are vast catacombs containing Ti's inestimable treasure hoard.

The warships of Hotomori are the primary combat vessels of the Wa navy. The ships are small, easily maneuverable, and, thanks to the ingenuity of the builders, quite deadly. Hotomori has a fleet of 250 of these ships ready at all times.

A typical ship has 48 1st level bushi or samurai crewmen to do the rowing and fighting, seven 2d or 3d level samurai officers, and one 3d to 5th level samurai captain. The ship has 16 oars on each side. Armaments include both ballistae and catapults (typitally, two of each).

The crewmen stand while they row. The Wa navy has developed a special rowing technique whereby the oars barely strike the surface of the water. The sound of the rowing is imperceptible until the ship is within two or three shiplengths from an enemy.

Ibhei

Ibhei is the capital of Huyusha Island, located south of Tsukishima. Unsuitable for farming because of its rocky terrain and unusable as a port due to its shallow reefs, Huyusha is used as a prison colony.

Though actually one of the Cuter Isles, Huyusha has closer ties with mainland Wa than any of the other small islands which surround the continent. Its terrain and proximity to Tsukishima make it an ideal location for a high security prison. The Sea of Patience, with its frequent storms and density of dangerous sea life, makes escape from the island virtually impossible.

Since most of Wa's hardened criminals are executed, the prison population of Ibhei is not particularly dangerous, composed mainly of political prisoners and social outcasts. Insubordinate administrators that have not yet outlived their usefulness are also sent here. Ibhei's most notorious prisoner is the wu jen Toda no Nagamori who once plotted to overthrow the emperor. He has been held in his Cell of Perpetuity for more than 1,500 years.

The isolation of the island has a special appeal for scholars, particularly those whose ideas are not in harmony with government policy. Solitary thinkers sit on the rocky shoreline and stare silently into the ocean, recording perhaps a single line on paper each day.

Iiso

Situated on the eastern coast of Tsukishima, Iiso is the third largest city of Wa and its greatest commercial center.

Iiso was long the capital city of Wa and home to its shogun. When Matasuuri Shogoro became the shogun in 1663, he relocated the capital to Uwaji where it has been ever since. Shortly thereafter, a plot was discovered in Iiso to organize displaced samurai in a coup. The attempt failed, and the rebellious samurai were executed after a bloody battle lasting six months. To prevent a recurrence, the remaining military forces in Iiso were split up and relocated. Armaments and all but the most crucial military supplies were also redistributed.

A citizen from those days would barely recognize modern Iiso. The city that was once a major military base is now Wa's greatest center of commerce and finance. The nation's wealthiest merchants and traders make their homes here. It is said that for every one of the 800 bridges that span Iiso's numerous streams and rivers, there are a hundred businessmen scheming to sell the water.

No single enterprise dominates the economy of Iiso. There are dozens of major wholesale networks handling products ranging from rice cakes to lacquered pottery. Iiso's diverse industrial base includes cotton

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

spinning, textile weaving, and meat processing. The coast of Iiso has the nation's largest shrimp farms, and its oyster beds produce some of the world's finest pearls. Shrewd investment advisors and moneylenders occupy Iiso's bustling financial district.

The most impressive examples of Iiso enterprise is the Oshichiro Rice Exchange located on the shore of Iiso Bay. The Rice Exchange comprises 150 warehouses and handles over a million koku of rice annually. The policies of the Rice Exchange set the price of rice for the entire country, making owner Oshichiro Yoto an enormously powerful man. It was Yoto who developed the marketing system whereby rural wholesalers called tonya buy up goods from rural villages, then arrange for their shipment to a major commercial center such as Iiso. Yoto was the first government-approved financial representative (kuramote) appointed in Iiso to supervise this process.

In addition to its business activities, Iiso is also noted for its fine teahouses. The tea ceremony was originally the exclusive province of the shogunate, but it is now extremely popular with businessmen who appreciate its formality and spiritual overtones. A gracious performance in a tea ceremony implies a trustworthy partner for a business transaction.

There is a certain uniformity to the teahouses of Iiso. Those entering must first crawl through a low doorway called a nijiriguchi to remind them of their servility. The interior of the teahouse is designed with sloping floors and angled ceilings to give a sense of confinement. The rooms are separated by byobu screens; one room, the chashitsu, is for the guests, while the adjacent room, the katte, is where the preparations for the ceremony are made. The tea is boiled in a ro located in a corner of the main room.

Jasuga

Jasuga is the largest city of Wa's most desolate province. Located on the west coast of Tsukishima, its sandy soil makes farming difficult. The citizens make their modest living as fishermen and weavers.

Jasuga is all but ignored by the rest of Wa. The citizens produce nothing of value, and the area has no resources worth exploiting. As in neighboring Fochu, the shogunate assigns its least talented administrators to handle the affairs of Jasuga. Resentment continues to build among the ruling class of these neglected provinces, but the shogunate taxes them heavily to keep them weak.

Jasuga stages an annual wrestling tournament which the residents hope will eventually become a national event. So far, there has been little interest outside the immediate area. The citizens, however, have shown intense interest in the sport and now train year round.

Jasuga wrestlers attack at +2 in hand-to-hand combat.

Juzimura

Juzimura is a large farming community in the Hotomori province, centered in southern Wa's riches farmland. Its well-tended rice fields produce bountiful harvests every year.

The flatlands of Juzimura are generously laced with river tributaries, making them ideal for growing rice. Nearly 100 percent of the agricultural land surrounding Juzimura contains rice fields. Production far exceeds local consumption, and the excess is regularly taken to Iiso for trade. Consequently, the farmers of Juzimura enjoy an affluent standard of living.

The community is built up along both sides of a winding road which follows the twists and turns of the Dajima River. Residential and business districts line the tributaries of the river and sprawl in many directions. The main road turns 90 degrees at the center of town. At this junction, the city administrators have constructed a large sign board. News and announcements are posted here every day for all to use.

Just north of the community are the ruins of the Juzimura Castle. Originally used by the city administrators, the castle was seized in 1755 by radical worshippers of Chantea who brazenly displayed their holy symbols even as the shogun announced his intention to rid Wa of every vestige of the forbidden faith. The radicals were killed and the castle destroyed in what is now considered to be the final stand of the Chantea cult. Today, the citizens of Juzimura scrupulously avoid going near the ruins. It is assumed, but by no means verified, that there are no Chantea cultists still actively practicing in Juzimura.

Kurahito

Kurahito is located on the east coast of Tsukishima. It is a noted center of learning, medicine, and spirituality.

Kurahito grew from a tiny fishing village to what is now the fourth largest city in Wa. All of the arts, particularly literature, flourish here. It has a thriving shipbuilding industry which specializes in commercial vessels. It boasts superb medical facilities and the nation's most skilled healers. Kurahito is also known as the city of the Great Temple.

While the Shining Temple in Aru is the favored shrine of the lower class worshipers of Bishamon, the Great Temple of Bishamon in Kurahito is the favored shrine of the nobles and upper classes. Even those of lesser faith are drawn to the Great Temple to gaze at the 500-foot-high statue of Bishamon, Wa's most awesome work of art.

The temple is a massive structure made of wood resting on a stone platform. After ascending a long flight of golden stairs, the temple is entered through an ivory gate. Inside is a long hallway whose walls are intricately etched with scenes from Wa's history. The hallway leads to the Golden Hall where the giant statue of a smiling, crosslegged Bishamon sits on a podium of walnut laced with gold. The podium is surrounded by incense stands burning lemon blossoms, Bishamon's favorite scent. The statue is made of solid bronze, plated in gold. His eyes are made of huge black pearls, and his teeth are blue diamonds. Priceless paintings from history's finest artists decorate the walls.

In the garden behind the Great Temple is Kurahito's second most famous landmark, the Fountain of Kuma-

shi. Kuma-shi was a samurai general whose troops were massacred by invading Shou Lung troops over a thousand years ago. Suffering from exhaustion and thirst, he prayed to Bishamon for relief. When Bishamon directed Kuma-shi to fire an arrow into a rock, a gushing fountain appeared. Invigorated by this miracle, Kuma-shi was able to eventually drive back the invaders. The fountain has never run dry. Bishamon allegedly creates miracles for favored worshippers who drink from the Fountain of Kuma-shi.

Nakamaru

Nakamaru is a coastal city located on the northernmost province of Tsukishima. Surrounded by prime forests, the city is noted for its lumber industry.

Nakamaru has undergone significant changes from its days as a somewhat insignificant village to the thriving port city of the present. Nakamaru was originally established as a military outpost bordering on a large korobokuro settlement. As the korobokuro retreated into the hills, Nakamaru expanded into a city of modest size.

However, with its limited opportunities, its isolation from the rest of the country, and its extreme seasonal changes, Nakamaru attracted only those uncomfortable with the sophistication of the more urban areas. Nakamaru became a haven for the uneducated and the unpolished, drawing more than its share of vagabonds, outcasts, and criminals.

Nakamaru's reputation changed somewhat after its successful stand against the invasion of Shou Lung. Its standing increased further as its economy expanded, harvesting the forests to create a major lumber industry and developing its shipping business to become a thriving port city. Today, Nakamaru is second only to Akkaido as a trade center specializing in foreign exchange. As its trade diversified, so did its population—no community in Wa has a more significant number of foreigners.

Nakamaru is the original home province of the Marasuuri family. The shogun keeps a close watch on the city, awarding its administration to those he favors to ensure its security. However, the diversity of the population and the severe distinctions among its factions creates jealousy and unease. Conflicts among the factions, particularly those represented by the yakuza gangs, often end in bloodshed. It remains to be seen whether officials can continue to contain the violence.

Ojichizu

Ojichizu is a growing community located in northern Tsukishima just east of the Ikuyu Mountains. Ojichizu was nearly destroyed by the eruption of Mount Matazan about a century ago. In recent years, much of Ojichizo's resources have been directed to rebuilding.

The heaps of ash which still surround Ojichizu are a grim reminder of the disaster which claimed the lives of nearly half of its citizens. The 75-foot granite statue of Bishamon which welcomed visitors is now buried to its neck in solid rock. The fertile lands on which once grew the nation's finest apple orchards are forever ruined.

It is a tribute to the diligence of the citizens that they have been able to rebuild so quickly. Realizing that farming is no longer a realistic option, Ojichizu has been redesigned as a tourist center. Dozens of small but inviting inns line the roads leading to Mount Marazan. The rows of houses with their simple planked roofs and latticed fronts have been decorated with colorful murals to welcome visitors. Guides conduct tours of the landmarks demolished by the volcano. Street peddlers even sell souvenir wooden models of the half-buried Bishamon statue.

Ojichizu's brush with extinction has affected its citizens in different ways. Some feel that the disaster was punishment from the gods for crimes committed by their ancestors. As descendants of the survivors, they are clearly cursed. Others say the gods merely intended to cleanse the city of the spiritually weak. As descendants of the survivors, they are clearly blessed. These factions engage in lively debates which frequently turn to shouting matches. They have been known to enlist the services of puzzled visitors to settle their arguments.

The age of the average resident of Ojichizu is steadily growing older, and this has the city administrators worried. Citing limited opportunities, fewer and fewer of Ojichizu's young people are choosing to remain. The aging trend also leaves the city particularly vulnerable to criminals, and Ojichizu has appealed to the shogun for a special police force to help protect them. The shogunate has not yet responded.

Rukimbaru

Located on the east central coast of Tsukishima, Rukimbaru is another former capital and second largest city of Wa. Rukimbaru has a tradition of excellence in industry and education and is also a major religious, political, and cultural center.

As a former capital city of Wa, Rukimbaru maintains strong ties with Uwaji, the current capital. Tawata Road, which links the two cities is the nation's busiest thoroughfare, As the home of the emperor, the military governor, and numerous shogunate deputies, Rukimbaru's political importance is second only to that of Uwaji.

The economy of Rukimbaru is strong and diverse. Iron mines border the city on the north, while terraced rice fields border the south. The industrial districts specialize in textiles, tools, and art works, as well as Wa's finest sake. Rice, vegetables, and silk are transported daily from Rukimbaru's busy ports. Of all the major urban centers, Rukimbaru has clung most tightly to tradition. Craft secrets have been passed from father to son for generations, and these skilled artisans produce the finest lacquerware, furniture, and jewelry in the nation.

With its many museums and schools, Rukimbaru is an important center of culture and learning. The Shinobugaoka, Rukimbaru's foremost university, sits on a hill overlooking the city, It houses the nation's greatest library, some volumes are thousands of years old. The shrines of the religious district are also centu-

ries old, making Rukimbaru a major spiritual center. The wooden temples in this district are among the oldest structures in existence.

Located on the northern edge of the city, the Imperial Palace is Rukimbaru's most famous landmark. The palace is no longer as imposing as it once was, as it has been burned and rebuilt a number of times over the years. However, it is still quite beautiful. The mansion is white stone with pink latticework. It is surrounded by similarly designed sat dairi, smaller residences for the emperor's guests, staff, and relatives. The many paths that wind through the palace grounds are lined with willow trees. Taking twigs from these trees is an offense punishable by execution. Little government work is performed at the Imperial Palace these days, but many ceremonial functions are held there.

Rukimbaru is also rightfully noted for its beautiful tea gardens (called rojo). The city has specifically reserved isolated areas for tea gardens, far from the distractions and stress of the city's commercial districts. A typical tea garden is entered through a rojiguchi (garden gate). Inside the gate is a rack on which samurai visitors can hang their swords; weapons are unwelcome in the solace of a tea garden. The compound contains a large tearoom which as many as 10 can occupy comfortably and a smaller tearoom for parties fewer than four A corner of the compound is reserved for the main garden, filled with cherry trees, plum trees, and rose bushes. Also in the garden is a low stone basin called a tsukubsai, a meditation bench, and a sunazetchin area containing polished pebbles and ocean sand.

The following forces are always on duty at the Imperial Palace:

75 2d level mounted samurai
100 1st level foot samurai
60 1st level bushi
85 1st level sohei

Additionally, these forces on duty in the city are available to protect the palace:

250 2d level mounted samurai
600 1st level mounted samurai
400 1st level foot samurai
100 1st level sohei

Semmishi

Semmishi is a city of moderate size located on the east coast of Tsukishima between Uwaji and Iiso. It is mainly noted for its lively entertainment districts.

Informally known as the City Without Night, Semmishi is a conglomerate of theaters, inns, baths, gambling dens, and brothels. If a vice or pleasure can be imagined, it is available in Semmishi. The entertainment districts were originally established for the entertainment of merchants and traders, but their notoriety soon attracted a regular clientele of nobles and officials. Even members of the shogunate have been known to partake of the lurid pleasures of the ageya, meeting houses where beautiful geishas are sent to entertain eager clients.

It is not surprising that Semmishi is shunned by the purehearted and condemned by the clergy. An oft-cited example of the corruption of Semmishi is the Iku-In, a shrine located in the heart of the city. Originally built as a memorial dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Great Fire of 1674, the structure was allowed to fall into disrepair It is now used for wrestling matches.

Shidekima

Shidekima is the second largest island of Wa. It is separated from Tsukishima by the Sea of Blossoms. Shuni and Jotai are its only two provinces.

Cut off from mainland Wa, Shidekima has remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years. Shidekima has little interaction with Tsukishima—the simple folk of Shidekima are of no interest to the sophisticated mainlanders—but they yield to no one in their loyalty to Wa.

The durability of Shidekima is largely due to their stable government. The Romuki clan has been the ruling family for more than a thousand years. Since the family has repeatedly proven their administrative capability, the shogunate routinely approves the appointment of each successive generation. Currently, Romuki Gohei is daimyo of the Shuni province and his twin brother, Romuki Yoshitada is daimyo of the Jotai province.

Visitors to the island will immediately notice that all of the shrines on the island are painted bright red. A thousand years ago, Romuki Hai, the first of his family appointed daimyo, discovered a tiny boat made of a seashell which had washed ashore. The scarlet sails of bright satin had been ripped by a storm. The occupants of the ship were three fairies. Hai repaired the sails and, as a reward, the fairies promised that no war on the island would last more than a day if the temples were painted red and that he and the generations of his family to come promised to wear nothing but scarlet robes.

As it happened, the fairies promised more than they could deliver. Shidekima has not only suffered its share of wars, the strategically located island has proven to be a tempting target for invaders. The Romuki family, however, has vowed to uphold their promise, and to this day, scarlet remains the most prominent color in Shidekima.

The terrain of Shidekima is unspectacular. It is low and flat, except for the highlands on the southwest coast. There are no major forests, and the sandy soil makes farming difficult. The most notable geographic feature is the Death Meadow of Shuni, actually a barren plain in the center of the Shuni province filled with small boulders. About 200 years ago, the province was invaded by a hoard of evil spirits resembling foxes with nine tails. Pursued to this plain, the fox spirits hid in the boulders and remain there to this day. Anyone who touches one of these cursed boulders dies instantly.

Industry in Shidekima is limited. Many small fishing villages dot the coasts of Jotai, while the highlands of Shuni provide adequate pastures for goat herds. Because the island has been isolated for millions of years, animal life has developed somewhat differ-

ently. Swimming rabbits, carnivorous deer, and talking dogs are among the curious species attracting the interest of scholars and collectors.

Tifuido

Tifuido is the largest city on the west coast of Tsukishima. It is a center of great wealth and gentle souls.

Assessed at more than 1,000,000 koku, Tifuido is the richest province in Wa. It is bordered on the west by an inviting seacoast, on the north by the towering Mount Cho, and to the south and east by fertile farmland. Agriculture, mining, and printing are among its major industries, but there are few endeavors undertaken by its resourceful populace that are not successful.

The people of Tifuido are noted for their good will, which can be attributed in no small part to their excessive wealth and uncanny good fortune. Its rice fields receive the precise amount of needed rain and sunshine, ensuring bountiful harvests. The hills are rich with diamond mines and veins of gold. Old timers recall a day when the sky cracked open and rained pearls over the city, a gift from a benevolent spirit.

To its credit, Tifuido remains uncorrupted by its wealth and instead has encouraged an appreciation of the arts. The government has a permanent Arts Council which grants generous stipends every year to promising poets, authors, painters, and musicians. No city has more libraries or concert halls. Among its many museums is the famous Pavilion of Eight Banners which houses a vast collection of rare and exotic musical instruments.

Music fills the streets of Tifuido, as musical instruction is an integral part of a child's training from the day he takes his first step. The children demonstrate their talent during the Festival of the Golden Stair, the grandest celebration held in Tifuido and one which attracts spectators from across the nation. The festival is held on the first day of spring. The city's children gather at the base of Mount Cho and, as the sun sets, play their instruments as they ascend the golden stairway carved in the mountainside. When the music reaches a crescendo, a host of butterfly spirits dressed in pink robes and green wreaths pour from the clouds to dance and sing along.

Tomo

Tomo is a minor city located between Uwaji and Iiso. Most of its citizens earn their living by farming its grassy plains.

Tomo is mainly notable for its historical significance. On these plains, Matasuuri Shogoro fought a coalition of enemy daimyo in 1661 in a battle that lasted nearly two years. Much of Tomo was destroyed in the process, and sections of the city lie in ruins to this day.

Uwaji

Uwaji is the capital and largest city of Wa. It is the home of the shogunate and a major financial and political center.

Uwaji is not only the most important city in Wa, but actions taken here can affect all of Kara-Tur. More than half a million people live here, including the shogun and his advisors and scores of the nation's top financial and military leaders.

Uwaji is located on the east coast of Tsukishima, securely bordered on the west by the Ikuyu Mountains. The busy Tawata Road links Uwaji with Rukimbaru, and numerous smaller thoroughfares give easy access to the rest of the region.

Ikuyu has a large industrial district, with craftsmen specializing in pottery, garments, and cosmetics. Trade flourishes in the financial district, which teems with Wa's shrewdest tycoons. Fuzitsu Diyawa, who manufactures over half of the draperies purchased in Wa, has an office here, as does Kihone Munaeyuni, a speculative lumber dealer who made a fortune after the Great Fire of 1765 destroyed most of the city's wooden buildings.

In the aftermath of the Great Fire, the wooden walls which divided the city into its various districts were replaced with stone walls. Each district is accessible by a gate called a kido which is closed off at night. The kido are made of wood are fortified with iron strips to make them fire resistant. Standing over each kido is a two-story jishimbansho (guard tower). Each district is dominated by a three-story hinomiyagura (fire tower); larger districts have several hinomiyagura.

There are many interesting landmarks in Uwaji. In the center of the city is a small park containing a single gingko tree which thrives on the goat's milk poured daily over its roots. The soul of the city is said to reside within this tree. Like a voice echoes in a valley, the Bridge of Whispers, located in the financial district, repeats phrases spoken to it. Visitors claim they can still feel tremors where Dyogo once stood, a suburb of Uwaji that plunged into the sea during the earthquake of 1676, killing its entire population.

But the most striking landmark, of course, is Uwaji Castle, the home of the shogun. When the capital was relocated, the shogunate found the castle in shocking disrepair. Stones were missing from parapets, the gardens were overrun with weeds, even the roof leaked. The daimyos of six adjacent provinces were summoned to assist in the rebuilding.

The refurbished castle stands as a testament to their skill. The castle compound is as beautiful as it is immense, covering an area the size of a small town. The shogun's mansion, known as the Palace of Imperial Prosperity, is six stories tall and made entirely of black marble. Ivory pillars trimmed in gold surround the mansion, as do many elaborate pagodas and shrines. The castle grounds also contain a lavish art museum, the shogun's personal peach orchard, and an outdoor amphitheater for the staging of noh dramas.

The following troops are always on duty on the grounds of Uwaji Castle:

60 3d level mounted samurai
115 2d level mounted samurai
450 1st level foot samurai
80 2d level bushi
320 1st level bushi

Additionally, these troops are available within the

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city limits:

1,500 1st and 2d level mounted samurai
2,200 1st and 2d level foot samurai
1,200 1st and 2d level bushi
475 1st and 2d level sohei

Places Of Interest

Dyogo

Dyogo is the residential district of Uwaji which plunged into the ocean as a result of the Great Earthquake. Articles from this lost city surface on occasion, but no organized recovery operation has yet been attempted.

The loss of Dyogo was perhaps the greatest natural tragedy in the history of Wa. When the Great Earthquake struck without warning in 1676, the chunk of earth containing the coastal village of Dyogo broke loose into the ocean, sinking without a trace. Nearly 5,000 homes were lost. Not a single person survived.

In spite of the staggering amount of treasure which sank with the city, there has been no recorded instance of a successful salvage attempt. The tormented spirits of the dead citizens are said to haunt the city. This seems substantiated by the observation that no matter how hard the winds blow, the surface above the sunken city remains calm. Rumors also persist that the Celestial Emperor has sent a tun mi lung to protect the city from desecration.

No one is certain what treasures await the explorer who is daring enough to search the watery ruins of Dyogo. It is known, however, that the disaster occurred on a holy day for worshippers of Jikoku. The sacred Summer Temple of Jikoku, filled with the bodies of more than a hundred priests and acolytes bearing precious offerings, is among the ruins.

Ikuyu Mountains

The Ikuyus are the highest and most expansive mountain range in Wa, covering about 80 percent of Tsukishima and dividing it into western and eastern sections. Many peaks are over 15,000 feet high. The Ikuyus contain about 350 volcanoes. Many are still active.

The Ikuyu Mountains are the most beautiful natural features in all of Wa. The highest peaks are capped with ice and snow the year round. Calm lakes fill the bowls of the inactive volcanoes, while lush green forests surround their bases.

There are several features of the Ikuyus of interest to the traveler:

Hayatura Road is the largest and most-traveled pass linking the east and west coasts of Tsukishima. Because it is heavily used by traders journeying between Iiso and Tifuido, it also attracts many bandits. The pass is regularly patrolled, but there are many hiding places in the foothills; unescorted travel is not recommended.

About halfway on the Hayatoge Road is where the wandering shukenja Samon met his end nearly 2,000 years ago. While on a religious retreat, Samon betrayed his vows and courted and married a beautiful peasant girl. When he awoke the next morning, he found a great serpent coiled next to him, the true form of his bride. Horrified, he ran off into the mountains. His spirit is still occasionally seen by evening travelers.

The Jufosu Range is an area of the southern end of the Ikuyus. It is home to a tribe of rokuro-kubi, vicious humanoid creatures indistinguishable from humans except for their snake-like necks which they can stretch to a length of 20 feet. The rokuro-kubi prey on the farming villages on the perimeter of the Jufosus. Efforts to extinguish the rokuro-kubi have thus far been unsuccessful.

The Origanaya Range is an area of the northern end of the Ikuyus which contains settlements of korobokuru originally driven out of the region now occupied by Nakamaru. The korobokuru keep to themselves, but harassment from Nakamaru raiders is increasing the chances of a violent retaliation.

Mount Fo, an inactive volcano, is the second largest peak of the Ikuyus and is located just north of Tifuido on the west coast of Tsukishima. A silver cord tied to a tree at the top of Mount Fo stretches across the Sea of Blossoms to attach to a similar tree at the top of Mount Chusa on the island of Shidekima. The cord was placed by order of Komoku the Wide Gazing to prevent Shidekima from drifting away. The trees to which the cord is attached are heavily guarded at all times.

Mount Matazan is the highest point in all of Wa, reaching an elevation of 18,000 feet. Mount Matazan is an active volcano, although it has not erupted in nearly 100 years.

Mount Tobu, located on the northwest coast of Tsukishima, is the source of the dreaded Tobu hurricanes whose powerful winds can last for days, sinking ships as far as 100 miles from the coast. Three centuries ago, a woman named Tobuyuki used to visit her lover in a house at the peak of this mountain. Her lover incorrectly suspected that Tobuyuki was secretly a dragon and extinguished all the fires in his village on the night of her visit. With no light to guide her, Tobuyuki was unable to find her lover's home. She wandered aimlessly in the mountains and was killed by wolves. She cursed herself and the world, then created a storm to destroy her lover's village. Her spirit still haunts the mountain, occasionally appearing to produce devastating hurricanes.

Lake Sari

Lake Sari is the largest body of fresh water in Wa. It is located north of Juzimura in the Hotomori province.

Bordered on the north by rolling green hills and on the south by thick pine forests, the beauty of Lake Sari is unequalled. The serene waters are clear blue and filled with goldfish. The ever-present mists which swirl gently over the surface make Lake Sari an ideal spot for both recreation and spiritual renewal.

Although Lake Sari is located in the domain of the Hotomori daimyo, the lake itself, along with the surrounding forests, are the property of the shogun. The shogun maintains a vacation residence on the shore

for himself and his advisors. However, tourists and locals alike are allowed free access to the lake, as long as they do nothing to compromise the environment.

Legend has it that a chiang lung named Kai lives in a grand mansion at the bottom of the lake. If the dragon's name is written with a stick on the surface of the lake, the dragon will appear. The name must be written in a particular area of the lake, but few seem to know precisely where it is.

Mount Matazan

Mount Matazan is not only the largest active volcano in Wa, it is also its highest peak, towering 18,000 feet above sea level. Located in the north central Ikuyu Mountains, Mount Matazan is a popular attraction for both tourists and religious pilgrims.

Because of their power and beauty, volcanoes are highly regarded by the citizens of Wa. There is none more admired than Mount Matazan. Its majestic cone slopes gently to a wide plateau surrounding the entire mountain. The plateau holds six beautiful lakes and dozens of holy shrines. There are numerous trails and roads winding upward, and thousands of visitors climb from base to peak every year. Bathhouses appear at regular intervals along the main roads, supplied by the waters from the hot springs which flow freely from the mountainside. Water from these springs is particularly invigorating; a visit to the bathhouses of Mount Matazan is often recommended by Wa physicians for the infirm and decrepit.

Curiously, the vegetation at the base of Mount Matazan is sparse. The single exception is the Garden of the Bloom Lady, an area lush with cherry trees and wild flowers. When the Spirit of Wa first established the island, the beautiful Bloom Lady competed here with her unattractive sister, the Rock Lady, for the hand of Ninigi, the August Grandchild. Ninigi chose the Bloom Lady for his bride, and the spurned Rock Lady cursed the Bloom Lady's plants to live short lives. To this day, the spirit of the Bloom Lady guards this garden. A shrine to the Bloom Lady is located beside a natural fountain which gushes ice-cold water the year round.

Though still active, Mount Matazan has not erupted since 1675 when lava streamed from its peak for three solid days. The lava destroyed vast stretches of valuable farmland, and dozens of villages were buried in ash. Nearly half the population of the prospering farm community of Ojichizu was destroyed. Scholars warn that another eruption, perhaps even more devastating, could occur at any time.

Although there has been no noticeable activity from Mount Matazan in over a century, thick black smoke rises continually from its peak. This is a reminder of a sad incident which occurred to Emperor Kocchi in the first year of Chisho shortly after he claimed the island from the Spirit of Wa. While exploring his new realm, the emperor discovered a striking young woman in a nightingale nest. Instantly smitten, he took her to his palace to become his bride. The woman, however, was actually a consort of the Celestial Bureaucracy. After the wedding, she fled to the top of Mount Matazan, the highest point on the island, and returned to her celestial home. The emperor followed her, watching helplessly as she ascended into the heavens. So broken-hearted was he that a flame burst from his chest, igniting a clear stone she had left him containing her image. The burning stone is now lost inside the crater, but smoke still streams from it to this day.

The River of Three Routes

The River of Three Routes is taken by new spirits on their way to the afterlife. The living are not privy to the location of the river.

There are two likely locations for the River of Three Routes (also called Sanzu-no-Kawa). The most obvious is in the Ikuyu Mountains, probably in the vicinity of Mount Matazan. The river may also be one of the tributaries feeding Lake Sari. Of course, it could also be beneath a stone or inside a seashell. Regardless of its location, the river is the ultimate destination for all the spirits in Wa, for here it is determined how a spirit will spend eternity.

As the name suggests, the river has three branches. One branch leads to the Beast Life, the second to the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts, and the third to the Great Hells. Whatever route is taken, the spirit is examined along the way by ghostly judges. After the completion of its trials, the dreadful King Judge evaluates the spirit and gives a sentence of punishments. Only upon the completion of its sentence can the spirit find peace in the afterlife.

Of course, it is difficult to get an accurate description of the River of Three Routes, but some details are known.

The River Basin of Offering, also known as Sai-no-kawara, is a barren river bed filled with dust. Here, the spirits of infants who suffered in life from the neglect of their parents wander the banks for eternity. The sight of these pathetic creatures brings grief to the heart of the most callous soul.

Chu-u are ghosts without legs. They may be found anywhere on the Three Routes. The chu-u were neither virtuous enough to pass the judges' examinations nor malevolent enough to merit additional sentencing. They are directed to crawl along the Three Routes in search of spirits who will testify on their behalf to the King Judge.

Jizo is the wanderer of the Three Routes and scourge of the devils who prey on the more defenseless spirits. Jizo is armed with a staff of glass rings. Violets grow in his footsteps. He regularly patrols the River Basin of Offering to protect the child-spirits.

Government

The government of Wa is based on an elaborate hierarchy of administrators. The hierarchy is inflexible and strictly observed, and administrators are required to submit to all who rank above them. Wa's years of peace and stability are evidence of the success of the system.

However, the same system which has maintained stability has also promoted corruption. Since advancement in the administration requires the. explicit approval of high-ranking officials,

cronyism and nepotism are intrinsic and accepted. Shifting alliances, conspiracy, and treachery are hallmarks of the political life in Wa.

Although the emperor is supposedly the monarch, all real power lies in the hands of the shogun and the daimyos. The shogun determines national policy while the daimyos are responsible for regional administration. The shogunate and daimyos are assisted and advised by a complex arrangement of officers, advisors, and deputies. Understanding this system of government is key to understanding the nature of life in Wa.

Emperor

Centuries ago, the emperor was the supreme ruler of Wa. This is no longer the case. The emperor's duties are entirely ceremonial, with all actual administrative power in the hands of the shogun.

The shogunate maintains close ties with the Imperial Palace. The military governor, a trusted subordinate of the shogun, lives on the grounds of the Imperial Palace and closely monitors the activities of the emperor. Officials called kuge denso relay the shogun's wishes to the Imperial Palace, and the military governor makes sure that the emperor approves them all as presented. All major administrative appointments and privileges sanctioned by the state are thus controlled by the shogunate.

The emperor's favored consort is the shogun's beautiful granddaughter, Kishi Yunoko. The shogun not only introduced them, but encouraged the relationship. Kishi makes regular reports about the emperor to her grandfather.

Shogun

The shogun is a military governor who has absolute authority in Wa. His whim is law. The current shogun, Matasuuri Nagahide, resides in the capital city of Uwaji and has personal holdings in excess of 2 million koku.

The shogunate establishes all national policies, including the establishment of tax rates, tax collection, and the appointment of daimyos. The shogun has the power to demote or promote administrators as he sees fit. He can confiscate land, realign provinces, and transfer daimyos to different fiefs. Policy is made in the name of the emperor, but all decisions are made by the shogunate.

The closest administrators to the shogun are the members of the Three Families. The Three Families are blood relatives or direct descendants of the shogun, but can sometimes be families with an exceptional relationship with the shogun. The loyalty of the Three Houses is considered absolute and unconditional. The personal holdings of the Three House administrators totals 2.5 million koku.

After the Three Houses, the next most powerful administrators are the kinsmen, also known as the gokamon. Kinsmen are the eldest sons of the shogun. Like the Three Houses, the loyalty of the kinsmen is absolute. The personal holdings of the two kinsmen of Wa totals 1 million koku.

Daimyos

Daimyos are military rulers appointed by the shogun to administer the affairs of the provinces. A daimyo's duties are very specific. He is expected to provide military service, efficiently govern his province, and maintain order. He is also obligated to provide the state any assistance requested by the shogun.

The shogunate maintains strict limits on the size of a daimyo's domain and the size of the armed forces under his jurisdiction. Of the 250 daimyos in Wa, only 20 have personal holdings in excess of 200,000 koku. Over half have personal holdings less than 50,000 koku.

Although the daimyos have autonomy in the day-to-day operations of their provinces, the shogunate is careful to ensure that no daimyo becomes too independent. The shogunate regularly directs daimyos to finance expensive castle construction and repair in order to reduce their wealth. The most effective control is the shogunate policy of sankin kotai which requires the wife and children of a daimyo to live in a special residence called a yashiki in Uwaji. The family members are not allowed to leave the city, effectively making them hostages of the state. The daimyo divides his time between his province and the yashiki. Not only does this guarantee the cooperation of the daimyos, it also ensures that daimyos from more distant provinces make regular trips to the capital, enabling the shogunate to maintain communication with them.

In spite of these controls, abuse of authority is common, particularly among daimyos in remote provinces. Bribery is an accepted way of doing business in many provinces. Embezzlement is common. However, even where abuse is suspected, it is tolerated by the shogunate so long as order is maintained and taxes are paid.

There are two main types of daimyos. The fudai daimyos, also known as house daimyos, are considered to be the most loyal and are the favored administrators of the shogunate. The fudai daimyos typically have personal holdings of 50,000 koku or less. The assessed value of the provinces governed by fudai daimyos totals 7 million koku.

The tozama daimyos, also called outside lords, are the less favored governors whose administrative abilities are considered inferior to those of the fudai daimyos. There are 145 tozama daimyos. The assessed value of the provinces governed by the tozama daimyos totals 9 million koku.

The loyalty of the tozama daimyos is presumed but questionable; uprisings against the shogunate are most likely to originate in the tozama provinces. The shogunate is quick to relocate any tozama daimyo whose popularity with the commoners seems to be increasing. Tozama provinces are also heavily taxed to keep, them weak. The shogunate assigns fudai daimyos to provinces adjacent to provinces governed by tozama daimyos to watch for signs of uprisings. A coalition of several tozama provinces could be strong enough to threaten even the capital city. However, there are too many tozama provinces in too many

remote areas to keep a close watch on them all.

A daimyo has two types of retainers, the chigyo-tori and the kuramai-tori. The chigyo-tori are upper class retainers who receive a grant of land; they tax the farmers who work the land and give a percentage to the daimyo. The kuramai-tori are lower class retainers who receive a stipend of a fixed amount of rice. The retainers are collectively known as kashindan.

The kashindan are organized according to their rank. The highest level of kashindan are the karo who act as the daimyo's advisors and handle key administrative duties. In wartime, they serve as generals of the daimyo's forces. Next are the han, middle level administrators whose responsibilities include finance and internal security. Next are the lower level retainers in charge of tax collection, educational affairs, and religious regulation. At the bottom are the ashigaru (soldiers) and civil servants who perform routine administrative functions.

Hatamono

After the daimyos, the next most powerful administrators are the hatamoto (also called bannermen). The hatamoto are military leaders who answer directly to the shogun. There are about 5,000 hatamoto in Wa. It is estimated they could rally more than 800,000 emergency soldiers if necessary.

A hatamoto has personal holdings of less than 10,000 koku—usually much less. The shogunate discourages association between commoners and the less affluent hatamoto and often retires them early, relocating them to a castle town and awarding them a modest annual stipend. This is sometimes counterproductive, as an unemployed hatamoto with time on his hands can easily get into trouble.

Offices of The Shogunate

There are a number of counselors and advisors to the shogun who make and execute national policies. All are highly regarded posts; all appointments must be approved by the shogun.

The three principal bodies are the tairo, the roju, and the hyojosho.

The tairo are the Great Elders who advise the shogun on the state's most important affairs, including determination of new laws and supervision of the major daimyos. There are never more than five tairo, sometimes only three. If a new tairo is needed, he is selected from the fudai daimyo. All tairo have holdings in excess of 100,000 koku.

The roju are the Council of Elders. They are responsible for the supervision of lesser daimyos. Members of the roju are selected from the fudai daimyo whose holdings are in excess of 25,000 koku. The senior counselor is called the kahan. The kahan is responsible for affixing the seal of the shogun to official documents. Additional duties of the roju are supervision of internal affairs in the shogun's province, shrine and temple administration, and regulation of currency. The roju also supervise the compilation of official national maps.

The hyojosho are the judges who make up the executive court, the highest court in Wa. The hyojosho is made of representatives of the roju along with selected city commissioners.

Next on the hierarchy are the wakadoshiyori, the junior elders who are subordinate to the roju and have similar duties. The wakadoshiyori supervise the hatamoto, regulate the staff and advisors of the major daimyos, and inspect public buildings. There are from four to six members of the wakadoshiyori.

The metsuke are the secret police of the shogunate. Their principal function is to keep an eye on the daimyos and report any suspicious activity. There are 16 fulltime metsuke. They report directly to the roju.

The jisha-bugyo are commissioners responsible for the control of the religious establishment and supervision of priests and clergymen. There are four of these commissioners.

The yedo machi-bugyo are supervisors in charge of the police and local governments. There are two of these supervisors.

The kanjo-bugyo are finance commissioners. They deal mostly with legal matters that the administrators of the provinces are unable to handle themselves. There are four of these commissioners.

Other officers include the sobashu, in charge of internal communications; the rusui, in charge of administration of the Uwaji Castle; koke and soshaban, in charge of local and provincial ceremonies; and the ometsuke, handling discipline of the daimyos.

Local Government

Government posts within a province are held by fudai daimyos or hatamoto. Tozama daimyos are not allowed to hold these posts.

Gundai and daikan are official agents who supervise the affairs of local government. Gundai are deputies of the shogun administering to lands assessed at 10,000 koku or more. Daikan are deputies administering to lands assessed at under 10,000 koku.

The chief local administrators are the headmen called shoya. Their assistants are called kumigashira. A particularly favored headman may preside over several villages.

Law

National laws of Wa are determined by the shogunate. Daimyos and local officials may pass laws exclusive to their own provinces so long as they compliment national laws and meet the approval of the shogunate.

The shogunate attributes Wa's harmony and order to the precision and severity of the law. Justice is quick and harsh. Large rewards are posted for information leading to the capture of a suspected criminal, and these rewards are presented without question. Convicted criminals are granted appeals only in extreme circumstances.

Execution is a common punishment for most offenses. Theft, murder, and treason are all punishable by death. The entire family of a criminal convicted of a severe crime may be executed with him. Execution is usually by crucifixion or beheading. Crucified bodies are often left to rot in the sun, and the

heads of criminals are impaled on poles along well-traveled roads, all as warnings of the importance of obeying the law. Executioners are highly respected professionals, routinely honored on festival days.

Following are some of Wa's legal cornerstones:

The Rules for the Palace and the Court (also known as Kinchu Kuge Shohatto) was a decree issued by the shogunate in 1663 to define the role of the emperor. The decree states that the emperor is to devote himself to learning and leave the details of governing to the shogunate. The shogunate appoints ministers to assist the emperor in his duties. These ministers have authority over the princes of the royal blood.

The effect of the Rules for the Palace is to limit the role of the emperor to ceremonial functions and ensure that none of the emperor's descendants are in line for the shogunate. The shogunate requests approval for all major government appointments from the emperor, but this, too, is a mere formality.

The Rules for the Military House (also known as the Buke Shohatto) formalized the principles of national law and stands as the constitution of Wa. Its clauses prescribe that:

- Military arts will not be pursued at the expense of academic subjects.
- Those who give shelter to lawbreakers will be considered lawbreakers themselves.
- Landholders are required to expel soldiers guilty of treason or murder.
- Sanctuary will not be given to citizens plotting treason or rebellion.
- Unauthorized repair or construction of castles is forbidden.
- Marriages of lords will not be privately contracted.
- Extravagant or brightly colored clothes are forbidden except on festival days without the consent of the government.
- Commoners may not ride in palanquins, except for doctors, invalids, and the aged.
- Daimyos should choose capable advisors to serve them.
- Drunkenness and lewd behavior is prohibited under all circumstances.

Keian no Furegaki is a set of rules directed to farmers. The rules encourage production and punish laziness. Highlights:

- The husband must work in the field, and the wife must work at the loom. Both must work at night. The husband should rise early and cut the grass before going to the fields.
- If a wife neglects her household duties, her husband must divorce here, regardless of her beauty.
- Farmers are forbidden to squander their money on sake or tobacco.
- Farmers are forbidden to wear silk. All clothes must be made of cotton or hemp.
- Bamboo trees must be planted around the house. The fallen leaves must be used as fuel.

The Code of One Hundred Articles not only sanctions personal revenge, it encourages it as a matter of honor. The code permits a man to receive official permission to destroy another man who injures his father or his lord. Official permission for revenge killing is not required for samurai, as they have kirsute gome—a right inherent to their class allowing them to kill members of the lower classes who offend them.

Regulations vary in villages according to tradition and local customs, but a few laws are common to all. Commoners are not allowed to change occupations without permission from the daimyo, which is rarely given. Commoners are not allowed to travel outside their immediate district without permission, rarely given except for funerals, weddings, and official holidays. The sale and acquisition of land is forbidden. The policy of sukego allows the government to requisition horses and men for days at a time to work on roads or repair government buildings.

Domestic problems are usually settled by the decision of a Five Man Group. Where this is not appropriate, family courts comprised of village officials are available to make judgements.

Races and Classes

Bushi

Bushi are warriors who fought proudly and bravely during Wa's bloody centuries of war, but in the current era of peace, they are more likely to be found working the rice fields or serving on the administrative boards of city government.

Bushi have had difficulty adjusting to modern Wa. Men of action are often disoriented in times of peace, but where the samurai have adapted by becoming governors and scholars, many bushi are adrift and useless.

A sharp rift divides the ranks of the bushi, pitting the young against the old. Young bushi, strangers to times of war, have contented themselves with administrative positions in castle towns. Preferring academics to military discipline, they are considered cowards by the old bushi.

With only military skills to offer, many of the old ranks have nothing to do but reminisce about past glories. While some have found work as laborers and guards, others have become mercenaries, vagabonds, and bandits, some even taking up with the ruthless yakuza gangs in the north.

The assimilation of the old guard bushi into mainstream society is a problem that has yet to be adequately addressed by the nation's rulers. The possibility of a violent revolt by these sad, frustrated old soldiers should not be taken lightly.

Geishas

Geishas are professional female entertainers who are trained from childhood in music, dance, poetry, and other gracious arts. Geishas are adept at bringing pleasure to both samurai and commoners, although generally only the wealthy and the powerful can afford their services.

In former times, the geisha was avoided and even scorned by the more sophisticated of society, but she is now accepted and respected by all. The skills of the

geisha were originally intended for the enjoyment of wealthy merchants. However, as the geisha's schooling and training improved, so has her status with the samurai.

Personal relationships with geishas is considered to be improper, but many find their beauty and grace hard to resist. Rich merchants have been known to make outright purchases of geishas as their consorts. Live-in geishas are increasingly becoming a status symbol in many urban areas of Wa.

Along with their artistic skills, geishas make talented cooks, nannies, and conversationalists. They are also experts at the art of of manipulation. There is no better spy than a geisha who has endeared herself to a vulnerable ruler. The favored geisha of the emperor is the granddaughter of the shogun. It is not surprising that the shogun himself is the person who introduced them.

Kabukimono

Kabukimono are loosely organized fraternal groups of soldiers. Their colorful costumes and proud songs highlight the parades of many holidays.

The kabukimono groups typify the problems of having too many military men with too much time on their hands. At best, their juvenile needs for excitement are merely annoying; drunken kabukimono may throw stones through shop windows, but they usually pass out in the street before they can do any real damage. But at their worst, kabukimono can be dangerous. They have been known to assault women, set fire to eta residences, and engage in violent street fights which result in death for participants and bystanders alike.

Kabukimono are easily recognized by their gaudy costumes and long hair; bushy sidewhiskers are considered a symbol of masculinity. They carry absurdly long swords and prefer pretentious names such as Band of the Cods and Soldiers of Iron.

Machi-Yakko

The machi-yakko are youth gangs whose members are the sons of shopkeepers and merchants. Originally organized for social functions, they are becoming increasingly involved in political activities.

The machi-yakko were organized in response to the increasing reports of violence and terrorism from the kabukimono, but no major clashes have occurred. To complicate matters, the kabukimono are officially recognized and sanctioned by the government, but the machi-yakko are not.

The machi-yakko are convinced the government has no interest in protecting commoners from the kubukimono, and they have vowed to stand up to them. A serious altercation seems inevitable.

Ronin

Ronin are displaced samurai who have no masters. Many have abandoned the military to become farmers and craftsmen.

The large number of ronin in Wa is due to the shogunate's decision to reduce the number of fiefs and reorganize the administration; too many strong rulers was thought to be a threat to the nation's stability. With no master to serve, these former samurai warriors were faced with finding a place in a society that no longer had a use for them. Many drifted to the countryside where they quietly became farmers. The more ambitious became traders and merchants. Others, ashamed of their status, relocated to a different part of the country and became anonymous laborers.

Many ronin feel betrayed and forgotten. The shogunate is well aware of their discontent and is mindful of an uprising. In fact, there have been two organized ronin rebellions within the last century. The first occurred in 1755 when a group of militant ronin sided with a radical Chantea cult in their siege of Juzimura Castle. The siege was short-lived, and all of the rebels were executed. The second occurred in 1760 when a ronin plot to assassinate the shogun was uncovered in Iiso. The assassins were intercepted and executed, but the proximity of the attack prompted the shogun ate to monitor the activities of the ronin more closely.

Still, ronin are generally respected by the common people of Wa for their integrity and sense of duty. The ronin character is illustrated by an incident which occurred in Uwaji about a century ago. A minor lord named Hayo Nuraiyi was visiting a superior officer on the grounds of Uwaji Castle. The officer insulted Hayo's parents and Hayo, rightfully offended, drew his sword and wounded him. Although the officer was clearly in the wrong, drawing a sword within the castle grounds is an offense punishable by death. The authorities seized Hayo's fief and ordered him to commit seppuku (suicide). Hayo's 33 retainers lost their status and became ronin.

The ronin waited patiently for four years, then broke into the home of the officer and killed him and all his samurai, thus avenging the honor of their former master, even though the action ensured their own deaths. The ronin gave themselves up to the officials and were sentenced to seppuku. Their selfless loyalty made them national heroes, and today, a small temple in their honor is one of the most revered memorials in Uwaji.

As explained in *Oriental Adventures,* ronin are treated as samurai in all respects except those relating to property and attracting fighting men. Many of the ronin of Wa, however, have suffered their loss in status through no fault of their own. Rather than a result of dishonorable acts, these ronin are merely victims of administrative reorganization. All ronin, regardless of how their status was achieved, may regain full samurai status by the decree of a daimyo.

Samurai

These noble warriors comprise the ruling class of Wa. In this new era of peace, the samurai have put the ways of war behind them to concentrate on learning and lawmaking.

The samurai of Wa have undergone a profound change in the last few centuries. Once fierce, uncultured men of action, they have become polished, educated administrators. Samurai formerly concentrated on military training to the exclusion of everything else. They now divide their training between military

studies and academic subjects.

One aspect of the samurai personality that has not changed is their devotion to honor. Samurai cherish honor above all else, including their own lives. Disgraced samurai will voluntarily forfeit their status to become ronin. Especially dedicated samurai may respond to extreme disgrace with seppuku.

Social Customs

From the most powerful samurai to the lowliest laborer, the people of Wa are convinced that they are the favorites of the gods and are hence superior to the people of all other nations. To a large extent, this attitude is justified. No other country can boast Wa's long record of peace. Nowhere do citizens hold education and culture in higher regard. And nowhere, of course, are the citizens more arrogant.

The people of Wa have deep black hair, high cheekbones, and almond eyes. Folds of skin on their eyelids give the appearance of a slant. They are generally shorter and heavier than people in other parts of Kara-Tur. They most closely resemble the people of Kozakura and speak different dialects of the same language (with 65 percent comprehension between them).

The people of Wa are unerringly polite, but they have a deep mistrust of strangers. As it has been ingrained from an early age that outsiders were responsible for the black eras of Wa history, they are especially suspicious of foreigners, sometimes outright hostile. Strangers in Wa, particularly those who obviously look it, would do well to keep to themselves.

If an outsider happens to make friends with a Wa citizen, he will likely find the friendship to be a frustrating one. The people of Wa are notoriously reluctant to express their feelings; a soldier impaled on a spear will resist displaying his agony to his dying breath. They reserve their deepest feelings for their families, and their love of children is especially profound. A father may allow a smile to crease his face and even laugh out loud when playing with his baby.

They are meticulous about their hygiene, sometimes obsessively so. Visitors to Wa have joked that the residents wash themselves before entering a stream to bathe. Families of all classes take great pride in their possessions and homes; it is rare to find so much as a horse stable that isn't spotless.

The clothing of the common people is simple, usually cotton pants and blouses or a kimono, a loose cotton or silk robe, tied with an obi (sash). Footwear is either geta (sandals on wooden blocks) or zori (flat sandals made of wood or straw). Bright colors, except on holiday or other special occasions, are considered bad taste. Governors and other ruling class members dress more extravagantly, often wearing elaborate armor pieces laced together with dyed leather strips to create colorful patterns. Accessory pieces, such as helmets and sheaths, are sometimes made of gold or silver and decorated with valuable gems.

Wa's rich cultural life began as a simple desire for entertainment, but because of their fertile imaginations and compulsion to excel, artistic expression has flourished. As illiteracy is virtually unknown, all forms of literature are immensely popular. Hosigawa Orie, a monk from Rukimbaru, produces spellbinding tales of samurai warriors and beautiful geishas, while the folk tales of Muna-ku, steeped in Wa history, both entertain and educate. Poetry is also popular, particularly the short-verse haiku. A common recreation is the creation of linked haiku dozens of verses long spontaneously composed by a circle of participants, each verse added by the next man in the circle.

It is said that the emotions suppressed by the people of Wa find expression in music. From the sweet sounds of children echoing the whistles of meadow fairies to boisterous young warriors mimicking the melodious laugh of the continh, music is everywhere. No artist is more respected than a virtuoso of the samisen (a stringed instrument resembling a guitar). It is rumored that even the mightiest samurai have been reduced to tears at the annual Festival of the Golden Stair when the daimyo of Tifuido performs his haunting compositions on the *biwa of calm.*

With the development of wood block prints, art is no longer solely for the enjoyment of the ruling class. The simple lines of the ukiyo-e wood cuts are now available to all, and even the poorest laborers can enjoy the intricate prints prominently displayed on shop fronts and building walls. The colorful nanga paintings, with their deep philosophic and mystical implications, are favored by monks and scholars, while finely inked byobu (folding screens) are favored by the samurai. Elegant sculptures of wood, clay, and precious metals can be found in temples and shrines throughout the nation.

Dramatic presentations may be as informal as the simple pantomimes of wandering minstrels or as elaborate as the full-scale productions in the spacious theaters of Semmishi and Uwaji.

Besides the joruri puppet shows, two styles dominate traditional Wa theater, noh and kabuki. Noh dramas tend to be the more serious of the two, concentrating on sprawling and often ponderous tales of redemption, betrayal, and tragedy. Noh actors are exclusively male. Wearing starkly painted masks, they perform the story to the accompaniment of lutes, percussion, and the chants of a solemn chorus. Perhaps the best known noh work is "The Narrow Road to the Sea of Blossoms" by the Tifuido dramatist Su-to which tells the story of a dishonored samurai general's death march through the Ikuyu Mountains, recounting the tragic details of his life which led him to his sorry state. A full production lasts 30 hours and is usually performed in three parts over three successive days.

By contrast, kabuki dramas are less cerebral and more spirited. These performances feature energetic dancing and singing and rarely last more than a couple of hours. Like noh dramas, kabuki actors are exclusively male. The most popular kabuki playwright is Mika Zorrui of Semmishi whose sentimental stories of family honor and battlefield courage are accessible to audiences from all walks of life. Two of his best known works are *The Wise Carp,* the story of

a talking fish who negotiates a settlement between two feuding brothers, and *The Vulgar Maiden,* the tragic tale of a scheming geisha whose betrayal of her daimyo is revealed by the ghost of her murdered daughter.

Although many festivals and holidays are unique to specific provinces, there are a number of special celebrations that are observed throughout Wa. The New Year is celebrated on the fist day of the year and is highlighted by visits to shrines and temples. Unless there is a national crisis, the day is reserved for contemplation and prayer and no work is done.

Memorial Day is held to honor Wa's war heroes, both living and dead, and is marked by parades, dramatic presentations, and songs by the families of veterans. Warrior cemeteries are decorated with spring flowers, and a meal of fish and bamboo shoots is placed on the grave of each soldier.

The Snow Festival takes place on or near the first full moon of the month after the first major snowfall of the winter. As snow is thought to be a symbol of protection sent from the gods, the Snow Festival is particularly significant to families with young children. Shrines of snow are built in the family garden, and children are directed to say prayers on behalf of the family.

The Ox Festival is a day of recreation. Citizens participate in games of skill and competitive tournaments. Many cities stage special sporting events and invite neighboring communities to compete. Most notable are the boat races at Akkaido and the wrestling tournaments at Jasuga.

The Festival of the Dead is held to pay tribute to family ancestors and takes place at the year's first harvest. Large banquets are prepared as offerings to the gods and ancestral spirits. Monks and other spiritual leaders give public sermons, while nobles spend much of the day in temples honoring past generations. The day concludes with lengthy prayer services led by the heads of each family.

Standard Measurements

The standard area measurements in Wa are the cho and the tan. The standard volume measurement is the koku.

1 cho = 10 tan = about 2.5 acres
1 koku = about 1 bushel
1 tan produces about 1 koku

The amount of koku produced in an area of land also indicates its value. Hence, a productive holding might have a value of 1,000 koku while a poor one might be valued at only 10 koku.

Social Order

The class system of Wa is rigid and strictly observed. Although the system is not specifically enforced by law, each group enjoys privileges and greater status than those below it. Since successive generations of the same family are generally locked into the same class, a child's status is determined at birth. It is rare for a citizen to achieve a status higher than the one he had at birth, but it is not unheard of, especially for those who find favor with the ruling class.

Lords. These are the members of the ruling class who exert total control over the rest of the populace. The absolute monarch is theoretically the emperor, but in practice is the shogun, with the emperor relegated to ceremonial duties and having no real power. The daimyo are samurai with authority over specific regions or provinces. Other members of this class include the counselors and administrators of the shogunate along with other principal officers of the realm.

Shi. These are the soldiers and warriors who answer directly to members of the ruling class. In the military state of Wa, shi is the highest rank a citizen of the lower classes can ever reasonably hope to attain.

No. Since agriculture is the backbone of the Wa economy, farmers are the highest class of workers and business-people. Fishermen are also included in this class. Interestingly, farmers are often less affluent than the merchant and artisan classes below them. However, their higher status assures them of access to military protection and preferential treatment in certain legal matters. Wealthy farmers have the highest status within this class, and day laborers have the lowest.

Ko. These are the artisans and craftsmen, including painters, woodworkers, weavers, authors, performers, shipbuilders, and carpenters. Preferential treatment is given to artisans who demonstrate exceptional talent in their area, but the highest status is reserved for those whose skills are military-related.

Sho. These are the merchants and shopkeepers. Their relatively low status reflects society's modest opinion of citizens who neither risk their lives for the protection of others, farm the land, nor create useful items. The most successful merchants have accumulated wealth exceeding the classes above them, sometimes including the ruling class. This inequity fuels resentment and unease, particularly with the samurai who often grudgingly turn to the merchant moneylenders when in need of a loan. Wealth determines status within this class, with the rich businessmen at the top and the poor street peddlers at the bottom.

Eta. These are Wa's outcasts, the poorest and least connected members of society. Hated and scorned by all higher classes, theirs is an existence of misery and destitution. The eta are gravediggers, fish cleaners, and animal renderers, responsible for the work no one else wants to do. Many become criminals. If an eta demonstrates exceptional skill or courage, it is possible he may rise to higher status.

Village Order

Since the principal industry of Wa is farming, most of the populace is organized into farming towns and villages. A province may have hundreds of these villages, all directly answering to a daimyo who is usually headquartered in the province's largest city.

A village is comprised of a number of holdings of varying size. A village may have as many as 100 holdings or as few as 10, but a typical range is 20-50.

Here's how the holdings break down in Ishakura, an

average farming village of the Juzimura province:

Holdings under 5 koku: 12
Holdings of 5-10 koku: 5
Holdings of 10-20 koku: 2
Holdings of 20 or more koku: 1
Total holdings of Ishakura: 20

Note that Ishakura has many more small holdings than large ones. This is typical of most farming villages in Wa. The holdings under 5 koku were actually quite small, seldom more than 1 or 2 tan. After taxes, there were not enough crops to live on, forcing these farmers and their families to work for larger landholders. The ruling class has an intentional policy of tying the majority of farmers to small farms to lock them into their status.

Rice, the primary crop of Wa, requires a lot of effort to grow. New plants must first be raised in special seedling beds, then planted one by one in long rows. Weeding and hoeing must be done every day until harvest time. A holding of 10 koku takes the full-time labor of four or five men, a 20 koku holding takes the labor of 10 men. Since this is more labor than a family can furnish, communities count heavily on the cooperation of neighbors to get the work done. Family members from other villages are often brought into help. Many farms employ indentured servants called genin who live in crude shacks next to the family house. In hard times, as many as 10 percent of the village population are genin.

The administrators of a village are the shoya (headmen) and the kimori (agents of the daimyo). The shoya may also have several kumigashira (headmen assistants) if appropriate to the size of the territory. Five Man Groups (also called gonin-gumi supervise the activities of five households. Only landholders can become members of five-man groups or participate in village meetings, Large landholders are referred to as hon-byakusho while smaller ones are called kosakunin.

Here's how the population of Ishakura breaks down:

Shoya: 2
Kimori: 1
Farmers (also called hayakusho: 20
Parents and grandparents: 18
Boys under 15 years old: 24
Boys over 15 years old: 13
Farm workers (also called nago): 28
Genin: 11
Servants: 3
Total males: 120

Additionally, there are 108 females, including daughters, wives, and grandparents. Ishakura also has 44 horses, 21 oxen, and 178 buildings, including storehouses and stables.

Goning-Gumi

Also known as the five-man group, these are representatives of five households in a village with jurisdiction over the actions of their five families. Approving marriages, seeing that taxes are collected, and preserving order are among their responsibilities.

In spite of its pretenses, the five-man group has little real power. Their elaborate plans and frequent meetings result in nothing more substantial than rules for tying up dogs and keeping the ditches clean.

In reality, the five-man group is a surveillance organization in service of the government. Since this is common knowledge, the five-man group seldom learns anything of consequence from the families it presumes to represent.

Family Order

The family is the basic social unit in the villages of Wa. In addition to the nuclear members (husband, wife, and children), a village family includes relatives, workers, and servants among its members.

Here are the members of the Kamano Muiji family. Muiji is one of the headmen in the village of Utumoi in the province of Fochu.

1 headman
1 wife of headman
2 sons
2 daughters
1 wife of son
1 female servant
1 male servant
2 workers
2 wives of workers
2 daughters of workers
1 father of wife
1 mother of wife

The family also has two oxen and three horses. Their farm is valued at 50 koku.

Like the other social orders of Wa. family status is explicit and inflexible. The man of the house (the headman in the example above) is the absolute authority and requires complete submission from the rest of the household. Just below him is the oldest son. After him, status falls off rapidly, with all other males clustered near the bottom, barely above the female family members. The sole exception is the head of the family's father-in-law, who may occasionally be consulted in matters specifically pertaining to him.

Younger siblings of the oldest son can find life to be harsh. In difficult times, these children may be forced to accept substandard food and clothing rather than deny the eldest son. Because of their extravagant lifestyles, samurai have an especially difficult time providing for extra children. Many samurai children suffer poverty within the walls of a lavish home. Some are adopted out. Others are turned into the streets to make their own way.

Women are expected to submit to their husbands and to males in general. A wife's primary function is to bear children, her secondary functions are to attend to her husband, children, and home. Wives are rarely able to initiate divorce, but husbands have no difficulty. Barrenness, disease, and laziness are sufficient grounds for divorce. If his status is sufficiently high, a husband can announce mikudari-han, a public declaration that he no longer wishes to be married. In this case, his divorce is effective immediately.

In spite of their second class status, a woman's life is not necessarily one of misery. Males are taught from childhood the necessity of respecting women, and allowing harm to befall one's wife or daughter is a grave assault to the family honor. A husband who mistreats his wife may find himself the victim of her vengeful brothers.

Architecture

From the splendor of the shogunate castle in Uwaji to the humblest minka in the fields of Fochu, the architecture of Wa has a number of elements in common. Builders favor wood and clay instead of stone in deference to the ever-present threat of earthquakes. Structures are built on wooden posts and beams, and walls are thin, sometimes made of heavy paper. Roofs are tiled wherever possible, supported by a center pole with ridges extending to the perimeter of the building. Decorations are usually simple, and every effort is made to keep buildings harmonious with their surroundings. Narrow platforms often line the sides of houses to emphasize the relationship of the home and the family garden.

Several craftsmen contribute their skills to the construction of a building. Daikuz are carpenters who carve planks of wood into the needed shapes with sharp hoes called chona. Yanefuki (roofers) carefully place the roof tiles, while ishiku (stone masons) chip away stone with hammer-like kanazuchi. Saken (plasterers) knead clay balls which are pressed into the walls to add support. Kararishi are the metal-working artists who create intricate ornamentation which decorate takonoma (nooks) set in the walls of the rooms. Tatamiya are the weavers who make the tatami mats to adorn the floors.

Minka are the peasant homes common to rural areas, single-story structures with one to four bedrooms. A typical minka has a central earth-floored area (doma) with a raised interior porch called a hiroshiki. Adjacent to this area are living and meeting rooms, bedrooms, and storerooms. Decorations may include shoji screens and woodblock prints. The back yard is filled with a lush garden, often containing a manmade spring.

High walls divide cities into distinct districts, and visitors to neighboring districts must pass through guarded gates. The narrow streets are crowded with shops and vendors. The vast compounds of the samurai mansions dominate the cities, but even these magnificent structures pale before the splendor of the daimyo castles of the headquarter cities.

A typical castle may rise as high as six stories. The central castle building, called a donjon, is surrounded by four smaller ones, and all are connected by watariyagura (corridors) peaked with stately yagura (turrets). Several smaller compounds surround the castle, all enclosed by a high stone wall and a deep moat. Beyond the moat are still more compounds, surrounded by yet another wall and another moat. This fortified series of moats, walls, and gates guarantees a difficult time for any enemy who dares attempt an assault.

Religion

Although Wa has no official state religion, only the Path of Enlightenment is formally sanctioned. Other religions are tolerated at best, actively suppressed at worst. There are over 75,000 shrines and temples in Wa, the vast majority of them dedicated to the Path.

There are a number of sects who openly worship the Eight Million Gods. While not openly encouraged, it is accepted as a non-corrupting religion. The Nine Travelers, the oldest faith of Wa and practiced by many of the lower classes, is also tolerated, though the Nine Travelers precept that any man can rise to become emperor is considered offensive by the upper class.

Worship of Chantea is strictly prohibited and punishable by death. Originally introduced by a strange race from the west, the Chantea faith was officially eradicated after the Juzimura rebellion of 1755. However, it is suspected that Chantea worshippers still practice the forbidden faith in isolated areas of the country.

Four spirits are believed to guard the land. Jikoku is the Guardian of the east. Zocho, the Watch of the Lands, guards the south. Komoku the Wide Gazing guards the west, and Bishamon the Wide Hearing guards the north. Of all, Bishamon is the most beloved. All appear as mighty warriors dressed in golden armor. They carry swords and spears and ride demonic steeds.

Money and Commerce

The basic policy of the government is to tax citizens to the point of depletion. Provinces are typically taxed at the rate of 40 to 60 percent. The rate may exceed 60 percent in tozama provinces or in domains of daimyos the shogunate feels are growing too strong. Taxes are levied on sales of craft items, fish, fruit, and vegetables, but the vast majority of tax revenue comes from levies on rice farmers.

After allowances are made for bad weather and other natural disasters, taxes are assessed on the basis of the kenchicho, a survey of wet and dry fields. Payment can be made in rice, cash, or a combination as determined by the authorities.

A typical tax on a farmer's production of 10 koku of rice would be 5 koku. The remainder is left for the family. This is hardly enough for a family to live on, but the government assumes that farmers have the foresight to grow enough grain and vegetables to see them through the year.

However, in practice, this system is not as severe as it seems, thanks to the government's poor record keeping and inefficient tax collectors. The kenchicho is supposed to be revised every five years, but this is rarely done. Therefore, improvements and additions that increase a farm's production are overlooked. Tax collectors sometimes delegate the actual collection to unmotivated subordinates who are easily fooled by quick-thinking farmers claiming losses due to flooding or insects.

Penalties for discovered underpayment of taxes can be harsh. Fines are usually levied on the entire village,

although sometimes the five-man group representing the guilty family is held responsible. If taxes remain unpaid, the headman of the village can be held responsible. If necessary, he may be tortured for punishment and his property confiscated to make the payment. One way or another, the taxes are collected, and the government isn't particularly choosy about whose pocket they come from.

Resources

Barely 15 percent of the land area of Wa is suitable for growing crops, but farmers have learned to make maximum use of what is available. Flat sections shaped like steps are cut into mountains to create terraced fields which are irrigated by natural mountain streams. In regions of moderate weather, farmers alternate their crops by season, enabling the land to be used for most of the year Because farmland is so precious, farmers tend to their fields with great diligence, often laboring long into the night pulling weeds or cutting new irrigation ditches.

Rice is by far the main crop. It is grown both in paddies (wet fields that are deliberately flooded) and in hatake (dry fields). One cho (about 2.5 acres) produces 10 koku of rice (about 50 bushels). Other popular grain crops include wheat for bread and noodles, and barley for medicines and beer.

Orchards include apple, peach, chestnut, and mulberry trees. Mulberry leaves are fed to silkworms which then produce silk cocoons. Virtually every farm also has an ample number of tea bushes. These bushes are sometimes planted in rows to mark the boundaries between farms. Bamboo fields are also common, particularly in the north. Bamboo is not only eaten, it is also used by weavers to make baskets and tatami (floor mats).

Since it is an inefficient use of farmland, farmers raise very little, livestock. However, all farmers who can afford them have oxen and horses to help with the work. Dairy cows are a rarity, as most milk comes from goats.

The oceans of Wa provide a rich harvest for fishermen, with tuna, salmon, mackerel, and squid available in abundance. Seaweed is also collected, to be eaten raw or dried to make flour. Occasionally, a lucky fisherman will find an oyster bed containing valuable pearls.

Most fishing is done by offshore vessels. These small boats, such as those of the many fishing villages which dot the shores of Shidekima, leave at dawn and return with the day's catch at sunset. Larger boats which dock at Akkaido and other major ports may venture out to sea for several weeks at a time.

Wa craftsmen are among the worlds best and particularly excel in the fine arts. Vividly dyed silk brocades are among Wa's most popular exports, while Wa's exquisite porcelain vases and finely lacquered walnut furniture can be found in palaces throughout Kara-Tur. The refinement of woodblock art, which can produce hundreds of beautiful copies of the same work, is a growing industry unique to Wa.

Non-Player Characters

Angoi Saiwai;
samurai ronin 6th level;
NG, human male.

Saiwai's father, Angoi Suwari, was a samurai administrator wrongfully accused of aiding a ronin plot in Iiso to assassinate the shogun. Following Suwari's execution, his name was cleared. Still, rumors of wrongdoing continued, making life miserable for the Angoi family.

Unable to tolerate the persistent gossip, Saiwai requested relocation to another province. The daimyo denied his request. Disgusted, Saiwai voluntarily gave up his samurai status to become a ronin. He now works as a farmer in a quiet village of Hotomori.

Tall and thin, cynical and serious, Saiwai is obsessed with revenge, blaming the government for perpetuating the hurtful lies about his father. Lately, he has been considering the offers of his friend, Chisson Yui, to join him in organizing the ronin into a unified force. Saiwai would gladly participate in any insurrection against the government—the more violent, the better.

Baiyosho Degi, member of the Tairo;
monk, 15th level;
LN, human male.

Baiyosho Degi is a fervid advocate of the Path of Enlightenment as the one true faith. He was instrumental in its adoption as the only formally sanctioned religion in Wa.

With his family providing generations of faithful service to the shogunate, Degi was assured a place as a jisha-bugyo commissioner, but his intellect so delighted Matasuuri Nagahide that he was promoted to the tairo, highly unusual for one not of the samurai class.

What so impressed the shogun was Degi's radical interpretation of the Path of Enlightenment. In a series of private lectures, Degi explained that the Path is not a philosophy of spirituality as much as a blueprint for social order. The path advocates a natural hierarchy, explained Degi, with the fundamental principal of the universe being the submission of the son to the father. The shogun interpreted this as a sign of his divine right as absolute monarch and a justification of the rigid political system he helped establish. The shogun couldn't have asked more of a religion.

Many attribute Degi's rapid ascension in the administration to manipulation and cold calculation. Degi sees it merely as recognition of his wisdom. Fleshy and expressionless, he is a brilliant scholar, a loner baffled by the needs of others for social contact, totally disinterested in the arts and recreation. His loyalty to the shogun is absolute.

Bokika Hokio, Tozama daimyo of Fochu;
samurai, 16th level;
LE, human male.

When Bokika Hokio served as daimyo of Juzikura, he brazenly gave sanctuary to Chantea priests, knowing full well that worship of Chantea was forbidden by the state. Hokio saw no harm in their simple faith; if the deity did indeed exist, worshiping him might result in better harvests. As a nephew of the shogun,

祓氣紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

Hokio had little fear of reprisal.

He was wrong. In 1753, the shogun surrounded Juzikura Castle with a force of 15,000 samurai, but found the defenses impregnable. After weeks of futile and bloody battle, the shogun offered to allow Hokio and his officers to retain their status if they surrendered. With dwindling supplies, Hokio agreed. The Chantea priests were executed, and Hokio was relocated to the barren and isolated Fochu province. The shogun allowed Hokio to remain a daimyo, but his status was reduced to tozama. Juzijura Castle was destroyed two years later when it was taken again by Chantea cultists.

Hokio today is a bitter and vengeful man. A giant of a man with fiery red eyes and rippling muscles, he has an explosive temper and no tolerance for disobedience. His temper is legendary. His attention to administrative details is cursory at best. He is actively recruiting sympathetic accomplices for revenge on the shogunate.

Chison Yui, ronin leader;
samurai 8th level;
LG, human male.

The soft-spoken, solidly built Chison Yui is the son of a metalworker in a village near Hotomori. At an early age, Yui was sent to a school taught by ronin where he displayed exceptional talents. As an adult, he established an ironworks in Hotomori, selling to many prominent samurai and thus increasing his contacts in the community. A craftsman by trade, his quick mind and inspiring charisma have made him the unofficial leader of the sizable ronin population of Hotomori.

Yui has become increasingly concerned about the shogunate's disregard of the ronin's problems. He is weighing the possibility of organizing a rebellion to demand reinstatement of their former status or restitution for their mistreatment. So far, the government is not aware of his militancy.

Funada Mitsuhide, daimyo of Nakamaru;
samurai, 17th level;
LN, human male.

Funada Mitsuhide is a shrewd and powerful old man. He rarely reveals the sharpness of his mind, but he misses nothing. He is related to the shogun, as his father is an uncle of Matasuuri Nagahide. He has a wispy white beard, a heavily lined face, and a jagged scar running from behind his ear down the length of his neck. (For more about Mitsuhide, see OA 4, *Blood of the Yakuza).*

Fuzitsu Diyawa;
bushi, 5th level;
NE, human male.

Fuzitsu Diyawa is the wealthiest merchant in Uwaji, perhaps the most successful businessman in all of Wa. He is so obese that even rising from his chair requires the help of two assistants. His flesh is as white as paste, and his laugh resembles a schoolgirl's giggle. He continually brushes wisps of white hair from his eyes.

Diyawa's father was a ronin who used embezzled funds to go into the drapery business with the father-in-law of the shogun. Diyawa took control of the family business after his father's death. Bribes to the proper officials brought him important government contracts and made him rich. Diyawa now supplies furnishings for the castles of all the major daimyos. He is also a frequent informant to the metsuke secret police, for which he receives additional favors from the shogunate.

Horifusa Ti, fudai daimyo of Hotomori;
samurai, 17th level;
LG, human male.

Horifusa Ti administers to the largest province of Wa and is the wealthiest of all the fudai daimyos. Ti has bright blue eyes, a pleasant smile, and an open face. He is analytical, fair-minded, and genuinely enjoys the company of others. He makes frequent visits to the smallest farming villages to discuss issues face-to-face with the peasants.

Ti's single vice is his love of gold and jewels. He is so obsessed that he willingly accepts a lesser tax payment if remuneration is made in gold instead of rice or other currency. Ti regularly sends Hotomori warships on salvage operations to recover booty from sunken vessels. He rarely spends any of his treasure, instead keeping it secretly hidden away in the catacombs deep beneath his castle.

Ti's wife, Suki, is a former consort of the Celestial Bureaucracy, cast out from the heavens when she became too old. Many wonder why Ti chose such a dull and withered woman for a spouse. Her appeal is clear to Ti—when Suki is upset, she cries pearls instead of tears.

Ido Kunarakuai, member of the hyojosho;
samurai, 11th level;
LG, human male.

Ido Kunarakuia is the chief justice of the executive hyojosho court at Uwaji, a post he has held for two decades. He is 70 years old, a dark, imposing man whose wrinkles and sagging face make him appear even older. The shogunate pays him an excessively high salary to make him resistant to bribes.

Kunarakuia is wise and stern, respected by nobility and commoners alike for his common sense approach to the law. He was once approached by a merchant who suspected his wife was having an affair with a neighbor, but didn't know who it was. Kunarakuia asked the man if he owned a dog. The puzzled merchant said he did. Kunarakuia loaned the merchant enough money to throw a banquet big enough to invite all the neighbors. Whichever neighbor the dog seemed to know best, explained Kunarakuia, would be revealed as the guilty party.

Kunarakuia's successful career has been at the expense of his family. His neglected wife asked for a divorce, which he reluctantly granted. To his eternal shame, his three daughters all work as geishas in the pleasure districts of Semmishi.

Ionoi, advisor to the daimyo of Kurahito;
samurai 1st level;
LG, human male.

Ionoi is a 1-inch-tall refugee from the Isle of the

Long Legged and Long Armed. Twenty years ago, Ionoi was banished from the island for having legs that were too short (the legs of this race normally are twice the length of their bodies). He was set adrift on a tiny bamboo raft which eventually washed ashore near the city of Kurahito. Ionoi was found on the beach by Tenkinjo Gasahan, a young man who would one day be daimyo of Kurahito.

Gasahan nursed Ionoi back to health, and they became fast friends. Ionoi, a learned man of high character, became Gasahan's personal tutor, Over the next two decades, Gasahan listened to over 1,500 lectures from Ionoi, on subjects ranging from philosophy to botany, from ancient history to music theory. Today, Ionoi remains Gasahan's closest adviser. His existence is still a secret.

Ionoi speaks in a high squeak. He is barely able to waddle with his short legs, so he uses his dangling arms to push himself along the ground. His love for Gasahan is boundless.

Jutei-Ni, wife of the daimyo of Rukimbaru;
normal human;
LG, human female.

Jutei-Ni is the daughter of a Rukimbaru grocer. When Jutei-Ni's father died, her mother sold the business and used the money to bribe an official into appointing her as a cook in the household of Matasuuri Kimmu, the daimyo of Rukimbaru. Jutei-Ni, bored with her kitchen duties, would slip away to the castle library to read and study.

She was discovered one day and was brought to the young daimyo for punishment. But Kimmu was charmed by her independence and imagination, and her full lips and flowing hair She, too, was taken with his kindness and handsome face.

They were married within the year.

Jutei-Ni is inquisitive, charitable, and passionate. In a fairer world, she rightfully would be a daimyo herself, but she is content with being the unofficial first advisor to her husband. Against official policy, she encourages foreign studies and urges leniency for criminals with families. She advocates laws protecting animals and promotes reinstatement of the Chantea cults as an officially recognized religion. Her outspokenness has earned her many enemies.

Kai Chiang Lung;
LN, river dragon.

Kai is the river dragon who resides at the bottom of Lake Sari. He may be summoned during nights with a full moon; his name must be written in the water on the area of the lake which reflects the moon's image. This method of summoning Kai is not commonly known.

If Kai appears, he will ask the summoner for a treasure to decorate his mansion. If suitably impressed with the offering, Kai will hear the request of the summoner. Whether Kai chooses to grant the request depends on how much effort is required, if the lake has been maintained to his satisfaction, and the identity of the summoner—Kai is partial to painters, writers, and scholars.

Kai takes his guardianship of Lake Sari quite seriously. Those who violate its beauty are sure to feel his wrath. On particularly pleasant summer days, Kai *polymorphs* into a red-bearded gentlemen and lounges in a drifting rowboat. On these days, Kai engages fellow boaters in philosophic conversations, offering intriguing tidbits about the mysteries of Wa.

Kisha Yunoko, concubine of the emperor;
NG, human female.

Yunoko is the adopted daughter of daimyo Matasuuri Ieysuna and granddaughter of the shogun. She is 19 years old, delicate, and gentle. She has soft green eyes, silky black hair, and has the singing voice of a nightingale.

With the encouragement of the shogun, Ieysuna had Yunoko trained in the arts of a geisha since the day she took her first step. At age 16, the shogun invited her to attend a state function at the Imperial Palace where she was introduced to the emperor. As the shogun had hoped, the emperor was instantly smitten with Yunoko and asked that she remain with him. Yunoko became his favored geisha and eventually his concubine. At the instructions of her grandfather, Yunoko regularly makes secret reports about the activities of the emperor.

Initially, Yunoko enjoyed the attention and the lavish lifestyle at the Imperial Palace, but she soon grew weary of the isolation and began to feel guilty about betraying the trust of the emperor. She also began a secret love affair with Tekinjo Yojairo, the military governor in residence at the palace.

Yunoko longs to leave the emperor, but fears her father will suffer retribution from the shogunate if she does. She also fears for the life of Yojairo if their affair is discovered. She is increasingly despondent, increasingly desperate, and increasingly willing to consider any scheme that might help her out of her dilemmas.

Korai Anteki, machi-yakko leader;
bushi, 7th level;
LG, human male.

Korai Anteki is the son of Korai Urushi, a merchant who ran a modest rice wholesaling operation in Iiso. When Anteki was a young man, his father went out of business over a six month period when his customers mysteriously stopped buying from him. Humiliated, Anteki had no choice but to sell his business to Osahichiro Yoto, Iiso's largest rice trader, for an obscenely low price.

Convinced that his father was a victim of a conspiracy sanctioned by the government, the angry Anteki joined a newly organized machi-yakko gang and, owing to his sharp mind and skill with a dagger, soon became their leader. Anteki's gang wages relentless covert war against Iiso's business establishment and Osahichiro Yoto in particular. Anteki has sunk Yoto's rice barges; set fire to his warehouses, even assassinated the leaders of his private militia.

Anteki is short, wiry, and determined. His arrogance is matched by his courage and his unyielding belief in his cause.

Krakentua, ruler of the Isle of Gargantuas;
CE, monstrosity.

An immense monstrosity with the body of a man and the head of a kraken, the krakentua is a powerful demon spirit with an insatiable appetite for power and destruction A decade ago, the krakentua was severely wounded in a struggle with the more powerful ocean spirits and fled to the Outer Isles of Wa. He took up residence on the Isle of Gargantua where he amused himself by observing the endless, bloody battles between the insectoid and reptilian garganutas while nursing himself back to health and plotting his next move.

The krakentua was recently contacted in a dream by Shiz-ti, the powerful wu jen of Paikai. Shiz-ti promised the krakentua the rule of all the southern islands of Wa in return for his help. The krakentua tentatively agreed, but has not yet heard from Shiz-ti regarding the details. The krakentua is deciding whether to wait for Shiz-ti or proceed with his plan to train and recruit an army of gargantuas for an assault against southern Wa.

Lakana Luri-Tai;
wu jen, 7th level;
LG, human female.

Luri-Tai is the niece of Muki Gohei, the daimyo of the Shuni province of the island of Shidekima. She was the prize pupil of the Master of the Grand Sky, perhaps the greatest sorcerer in Shidekima's history. Eight years ago, the Master of the Grand Sky ascended into the starry night, never to be seen again.

Luri-tai has since continued her studies on her own, specializing in astronomy and astrology. She spends every night studying the sky, gazing into the heavens so intently that she must be forcibly moved indoors in case of a thunderstorm or typhoon. Rumor has it that Luri-Tai has visited the sun and the moon and that she can speak with the stars.

Luri-tai's expertise is recognized throughout the nation, and court astrologers from all corners of Wa regularly consult her for her interpretation of stellar activity. She shares her knowledge freely, having little interest in wealth or material possessions.

Luri-tai is a short, plump woman who has little social contact because of her paralyzing shyness. She is naive and easily manipulated by those who would take advantage of her generosity Her uncle looks out for her, but worries that she will someday by tricked into using her knowledge for an improper purpose.

Matasuuri Ieysuna, kinsman daimyo of Akkaido;
samurai, 19th level;
LG, human male.

Matasuuri Ieysuna is the eldest son of the shogun. Tall, handsome, and dignified, he rules his province with a firm hand, insisting on formality at all times. In his administration, rudeness and poor hygiene are grounds for imprisonment. Sensitive and prudish, he finds kabuki drama vulgar and musical performances by females of any age obscene.

Ieysuna's sense of propriety has served him well as an administrator; Akkaido is one of Wa's most prosperous and troublefree provinces. Ieysuna employs a vicious police force to administer quick and brutal justice. Ieysuna himself avoids violent encounters; he has never participated in a battle of any kind and has no intention to.

Matasuuri Kimmu, kinsman daimyo of Chozawa;
samurai, 16th level;
LG, human male.

The second son of the shogun and brother of Ieysuna, Matasuuri Kimmu rules only because his heritage obligates him to. Personable but indecisive, he is adored by the people of Rukimbaru, but is considered a buffoon by his subordinates. Kimmu knows he lacks the necessary skills for a strong leader, but resigns himself to his fate and does the best he can. His loyal and sensible wife Jutei-ni actually makes all the crucial policy decisions, much to the eternal gratitude of Kimmu.

A strapping, robust young man not yet 40 years old, Kimmu would prefer the life of a sailor or farmer to the stifling existence of an administrator. He loves outdoor recreations and sponsors province-wide athletic competitions each spring, paying for prizes from his own pocket.

Matasuuri Nagahide, shogun of Wa;
samurai, 23d level;
LN, human male.

Presiding over an unprecedented era of peace and prosperity, Matasuuri Nagahide is arguably the most successful shogun in the history of Wa. The nation's stability is due to Nagahide's philosophy of government—he values control over conquest and analysis over action, putting him in clear contrast to past leaders who preferred the quick solutions provided by a sharp katana.

The differences between Nagahide and his ancestor Shogoro Matasuuri, the great general who unified Wa, are summarized in these verses from a popular folk song:

If the rose bush refuses to bloom,
Shogoro will cut it down.
If the rose bush refuses to bloom,
Nagahide will wait until it does so.

Nagahide is a towering, broadly built warrior, his craggy face creased by a permanent scowl. He is a cunning strategist, a brilliant general, and a spellbinding speaker. He is patient, decisive, and utterly humorless; if leadership gives him any pleasure, he conceals it completely. He broods incessantly and is plagued by skull-shattering headaches which he presumes are punishment from the gods for having thoughts not specifically pertaining to the welfare of the state.

Nagahide's obsession with order leaves little room for mercy. The story is told of a village headman who approached Nagahide about a daimyo who was abusing the peasants. Nagahide had the matter investigated, determined the guilt of the daimyo, and had him replaced. Nagahide then had the headman and his family executed for the crime of approaching the shogun's palanquin without permission.

Matasuuri Unteki, Three House daimyo of Iiso;
samurai, 17th level;
CN, human male.

Matasuuri Unteki is the younger brother of the shogun and, as one of the Three House daimyos, he is one of the most powerful men in Wa. He is also one of the most despised. He is shaggy-haired, pencil-thin, neurotic, pompous, greedy, and ruthless. His policy decisions are products of paranoia rather than reason. He is prone to wild mood swings; the song of a child sends him into giggling ecstasy, the sight of a dead fly reduces him to sobbing despair

Unteki's crazed edicts are legendary. He once ordered an insubordinate han administrator to commit suicide, then confiscated the daimyo's fief because it was understaffed. When his dog died, he declared that all residents of Iiso would honor dogs by bowing to them on the street and addressing them as Sir Dog and Madam Dog.

In spite of Unteki's eccentricities, Iiso is prosperous and ordered, thanks to the skilled officers the shogun has instated in his brother's administration. Since Unteki considers himself an artist and scholar, he is usually too preoccupied to take much interest in the affairs of state. He spends much of his time preparing the literature lectures his officers are required to attend twice a month. He is also heavily involved in the monthly production of kabuki and noh plays, casting himself in the lead roles.

Muni-Ku;
LG, human female.

Like her mother and grandmother before her, Muni-ku was a cook in the service of the daimyo of Tifuido. On the day of an important banquet, she became convinced that the head cook had prepared a soup for the daimyo accidentally using poisoned mushrooms. Unable to convince anyone of the danger, Muni-ku ate the soup, thereby saving the daimyo but fatally poisoning herself.

As Muni-ku lay dying in her bedroom that evening, she was visited by Suku-nabiko, a dwarf god with moth wings and a cloak of raven's feathers. The god examined her, then produced a ghostly moth which he said knew everything in the world, including the cure for her poison. The moth flew into Muni-ku's mouth, she swallowed it, and the god vanished.

Not only did Muni-ku recover completely, she found her knowledge of the world had grown remarkably. With an endless supply of fascinating tales, she quickly became a renowned storyteller who endeared herself to peasants and nobility alike.

Today, Muni-ku is a strong, smiling woman of 80 years, traveling from village to village to delight young and old with her rich stories of Wa's history and leg ends. In honor of her benefactor, she wears a robe made of raven's feathers. The source of her knowledge and her robust health remains her secret.

Nobu Chuya, wakadoshiyori inspector;
bushi, 7th level;
LE, human male.

Nobu Chuya is the younger brother of Nobu Subari. A former karo administrator in Jasuga, Chuya's remarkable mathematical ability so impressed the shogun that he was promoted to a prominent position on the wakadoshiyori council. At age 22, Chuya is easily the youngest shogunate advisor holding an executive position.

Chuya is Wa's chief inspector of public works. Thanks to his amazing mind, he remembers specifications and tax records for more than 10,000 government buildings and retains farm production records for every major city in Wa. He can multiply and divide multiple-digit figures in his head, recalling the answers six months later if necessary.

As a person, however, Chuya is contemptible. He is a drunkard, a lecher, and a cheat—pudgy, pig-eyed, and unprincipled. He spends much of his time in the pleasure districts of Semmishi where no vice is too indecent for his enjoyment. He freely accepts bribes and has a lucrative business as a loan shark. With a growing number of enemies in both the nobility and the underclass, Chuya is ripe for a fall.

Nobu Subari, Tozama daimyo of Jasuga;
samurai, 10th level;
LN, human male.

Nobu Subari is the square-faced, hulking daimyo of Jasuga, probably the poorest province of Wa. Though honest and hardworking, Subari is slow-witted and unimaginative, hardly suited for the demands of governing.

But for a twist of fate, Subari would likely have been a happy farmer instead of an inept daimyo. Fifty years ago, the shogun and some of his close advisors were taking the emperor on a pleasure cruise at Lake Sari. A storm arose, capsizing one of the boats carrying the emperor's provisions. All items were recovered except for a crystal containing the emperor's image. Divers could not find it. A peasant woman, observing the situation from the shore, offered to dive for the crystal if the shogunate would raise her infant son to be a ruler. The desperate shogun hastily agreed. Miraculously, the woman recovered the crystal and her son, Subari, eventually fulfilled the shogunate's promise by becoming daimyo of Jasuga.

An avid sportsman, Subari has successfully promoted the sport of wrestling among the peasants. He is resentful, however, that his idea of holding a national wrestling tournament in Jasuga has been ignored. As his resentment increases, he is listening more closely to neighboring Bokika Hokio's solicitation of allies for a rebellion.

Muki Nobi, Three House daimyo of Chozawa;
samurai, 19th level;
LN, human male.
NE, human male.

Muki Nobi's father, Toyo Nobi, was a key military advisor and the closest personal friend of shogun Matasuuri Nagahide's father. When Muki was 11, his father took the family on an outing near Mount Matazan. They were attacked by bandits, and except for Muki, the entire family was killed. At midnight, Muki quietly made his way into the bandit camp and slit their throats while they slept.

Unknown to Muki, the entire incident had been observed by a tribe of tengu. Impressed with his savagery and sympathetic to his plight, the tengu invited him to their village. He spent the next two years with the tengu, receiving intensive training in guerilla tac-

tics, swordsmanship, and the military arts.

On his return to civilization, Muki was eagerly welcomed by Matasuuri Nagahide who assured him there would always be a place in his administration for a cherished family friend. After a brief stint as military governor, Muri was appointed daimyo of Chozawa where he has proven himself to be a brilliant leader and a loyal ally.

Muki is a broad-shouldered powerhouse with bright blue eyes and a bushy black moustache which droops below his chin. A man of action, he relishes any opportunity to lead his hand-picked troops into battle. He is a brutal, unforgiving soldier, decreeing that the decapitated heads of state enemies be impaled on poles and paraded through the streets.

Oe-Ura, the Peachling Girl;
kensai, 7th level;
LG, spirit folk female.

A poor farmer from Fochu was fishing one day when he discovered a peach floating down the Nanaichi River. He retrieved the peach from the water, and a female child burst from it. He took the child home where he and his wife raised her as their own.

The girl grew quickly. Although she lacked the ability to speak, she proved herself a tireless worker around the village and delighted the peasants with her dazzling acrobatic skills. She also became proficient with weapons, able to throw two spears at the same time to bring down two flying birds.

As her stature grew with the peasants, the daimyo decided she was a threat to the tranquility of the state. On her 14th birthday, he ordered her executed. Her parents hid her in the jungle, and they were were executed in her place.

In the subsequent seven years, the Peachling Girl has become the champion of the peasants in Fochu province, emerging from her jungle hideaway to battle oppressive government soldiers and intercept thieving tax collectors. Dark-skinned and clad in cam ouflaged leather, few manage to catch more than a fleeting glimpse of her. She shuns the company of humans, preferring the companionship of her three pets—a dog, a monkey, and a parrot.

Osari Daizan, daimyo of Tifuido;
samurai, 15th level;
LG, human male.

Osari Daizan presides over what must surely be the happiest province in Wa. A small man with a round white face and a permanent grin, Daizan thoroughly enjoys his job; like his subjects, he is cheerful, good-natured, and quite prosperous.

Osari is a descendant of Ababuio, the deity of good luck. Osari carefully observes the family tradition of fishing for jellyfish. According to Ababuio, if a jellyfish is caught daily, then fortune will follow. Needless to say, Osari can be found at the beach with his fishing net at dawn every day.

Osari has a deep respect for artists, musicians in particular Government-salaried minstrels stroll every street of Tifuido, and music instruction is made available to all citizens at no charge. Osari himself is an accomplished musician, and often gives public performances with his biwa of calm.

Rumuki Gohei and **Rumuki Yoshitada,**
daimyos of Shidekima Island;
samurai, 16th level;
NG, human males.

The Rumuki twins are the daimyos of the two provinces of Shidekima; Gohei is the daimyo of Shuni, Yoshitada the daimyo of Jotai. Nearly 7 feet tall, full-bellied, bald, and always clad in red, the brothers are virtually identical, except for the star-shaped birthmark on Gohei's head.

Their personalities are also indistinguishable. Roth are arrogant, stubborn, and eccentric. Roth are inordinately sympathetic to the downtrodden; Gohei made room in his palace for the children of parents who were lost at sea, while Yoshitada buys new shoes every year for the peasant families in his province. They can also be mercilessly cruel; both routinely execute the entire families of criminals convicted of crimes as minor as curfew violations. Both share a deep distrust of technological advancements, an attitude which has kept their provinces the most primitive in Wa.

Gohei and Yoshitada surround themselves with capable advisors, but they rarely solicit or consider their advice. On all important matters of state, they consult only each other. Their affinity is unique and powerful; together they are able to communicate with a minimum of words and solve problems that would baffle a coliseum of scholars.

Shiz-Ti;
wu jen, 16th level;
CE, human male.

Shiz-ti is a baby-faced man with large ears, a pock-marked face, and a high-pitched nasal voice. He is short, plump, and has an annoying habit of picking his teeth with his fingernails. He is Wa's greatest wizard and one of the most dangerous men in Kara-Tur.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Shiz-ti received an appointment at an early age as a minor advisor to the tairo. He received numerous reprimands for spending more time on supernatural investigation than on state affairs. In 1765, Shiz-ti was arrested for attracting a falling star which fell in the merchant's district and killed 200 people. The following day, the Great Fire ravaged Uwaji, eventually destroying half the city and killing 100,000. The charges against Shiz-ti were withdrawn and, as he requested, he was relocated to the island of Paikai to oversee the affairs at the Temple of the High Moon.

Shiz-ti is the absolute monarch of Paikai, ruling through the puppet daimyo Fudo Oieto. He spends his time studying in the catacombs beneath the Temple of the High Moon, located at the peak of Paikai's highest mountain. He has no human associates, preferring the company of wild boars, hundreds of which wander the corridors of the temple.

Shiz-ti envisions Wa as an island nation populated only by animals and plants, which he is convinced was the true intention of the gods. To this end, he believes it is his moral obligation to rid Wa of all human life. He has yet to determine a suitable procedure for imple-

menting his plan.

Takae Suju;
monk, 8th level;
LG, human male.

Takae Suju is a grim, studious man of 48 years. A man of few words and a chronic insomniac, he spends long nights pouring over scholarly texts, making copious notes in bound journals which line the walls of his small home.

Suju was a devoted student of Baiyosho Degi and served as the military instructor at Uwaji. A true believer in Degi's interpretation of the Path of Enlightenment, Suju took the analysis a step further and advocated that samurai of all ranks should take a more active role in national leadership. This was not a popular idea with the shogunate, and Suju abruptly found himself banished to the island of Huyusha to minister to the prisoners at Ibhei.

Undeterred, Suju continues his studies on the rocky shores of Huyusha. He has written a series of books, as yet unpublished, advocating an overhaul of the Wa political system. So far, he has wisely kept his ideas to himself.

Tazu-ei;
barbarian, 6th level;
CN, human male.

Tazu-ei was born into a noble family of Nakamaru. Disgusted with the dissention among his family members as they jockeyed for positions of power, Tazu-ei renounced his status and fled to the wilderness of Machukara. He was never again seen by his family and is presumed dead.

But Tazu-ei is very much alive. He readily adapted to the challenges of the jungle and has sworn off all contact with the civilized world. He has befriended a race of intelligent orange gorillas who will make him their king if he teaches them to build and use ships. He is considering it, intrigued by the idea of leading a band of gorilla pirates.

Tazu-ei is hot-tempered and fearless. He wears no clothes and, thanks to a jungle disease, all his facial hair is gone. He has waistlength black hair, sharp fingernails several inches long, and deep scars covering his body

Tekinjo Gasahan, Three House daimyo of Kurahito;
samurai, 16th level;
LG, human male.

Teninjo Gasahan is the brother-in-law of the shogun and daimyo of the coastal province of Kurahito. A thin, pale loner, he is a thoughtful but aloof administrator; he keeps his advisors at arm's length and, except for the tiny Ionoi, has no friends. Five years ago, Gasahan discovered that his wife, his only brother, and two senior members of the tairo were plotting his assassination. Gasahan had them all executed. Shattered by their betrayal, Gasahan became withdrawn and cynical, unable to bring himself to trust anyone but Ionoi.

Because he has no close friends or especially loyal officers, Gasahan is generally considered the most vulnerable of Wa's major daimyos. His enemies would do well not to underestimate him. Beneath his brooding cynicism, he is perceptive and extremely intelligent, well aware of the conspirators who surround him. He is also aware of the mounting pressure from the shogunate to take a new wife to ensure an heir to his office. He intends to resist the pressure as long as possible.

Tekinjo Yojairo, military governor at Rukimbaru;
samurai, 13th level;
LG, human male.

The eldest son of Tekinjo Gasahan, Yojairo is a handsome, virtuous man of 35 years. Although his heritage assured him of a prominent government position, his loyalty and keen managerial skills would have made him a welcome addition to any administration regardless. He has been military governor at Rukimbaru for nearly a decade, acting as the intermediary between the shogunate and the emperor.

But Yojairo's service has changed him. Increasingly aware of the inequities between the nobility and lower classes, he has become profoundly affected by the misery of the nation's poor and disgusted by the hypocrisy of the shogunate. He was repulsed by the arrangement between the emperor and Kisha Yunoko, the shogun's own granddaughter. His sympathy for Yunoko has blossomed into love; they have had a secret affair for nearly a year. So far, no one is aware of his relationship with Yunoko or his growing discontentment.

Woto Jubojiro;
bushi, 6th level;
NG, human male.

This swarthy, fearless warrior was one of the key lieutenants in Matasuuri Nagahide's national army. A resourceful and deeply spiritual man, Jubojiro once led a military unit into the northern Ikuyu Mountains to suppress a korobokuro uprising, only to encounter an ambush. His unit defeated, Jubojiro retreated to a cave. Before falling asleep, he freed a bee trapped in a spider web. The bee came to him in a dream and told him to fill the cave with empty jars. Jubojiro awoke and did as the bee requested; by morning, all of the jars had filled with bees. Allied with the bee swarm, he singlehandedly defeated the korobokuro.

Jobojiro assumed that his place in the Nagahide administration was secure, but shortly after Nagahide became shogun in 1754, a government reorganization was instigated, and thousands of bushi were displaced. Jobojiro found himself among the unemployed.

Jobojiro retired to a small farming village near Juzimura where he has worked as a beekeeper for nearly 20 years. He grew increasingly bitter as his government continued to place younger bushi in important administrative jobs while ignoring the plight of the older bushi. Now 60 years old, he is waiting for an opportunity to retaliate.

Yuchimo Ein, Shining Temple of Bishamon monk;
monk, 8th level;
LN, human male.

Yuchirno Ein is one of the higher-ranking monks who permanently reside in the Shining Temple of Bishamon at Aru. His responsibilities include spiritual instruction, acolyte supervision, and preparation of special services for visiting dignitaries. Ein is a pleasant, friendly man,

extremely talkative and good-hearted.

Bue Ein has two secret vices of which he is deeply ashamed. First, he is an insatiable gossip, often guilty of inflating the truth to make it more interesting. Second, he is a compulsive gambler wagering on everything from cricket races to the number of temple visitors wearing patterned kimonos. Unfortunately, he has a spotty success record, forcing him to borrow heavily from disreputable moneylenders. He lives in fear that if he is found out, he will be forced to resign his position at the temple. Since he truly loves his work, he would do almost anything to prevent this from happening.

Yuminoi Bowida, Roju representative in Fochu; samurai, 10th level;
LE, human male.

Yuminoi Bowida is a cruel brute assigned by the roju in Uwaji to monitor Chantea activity in Fochu. Since daimyo Bokika Hokio has a history of sympathy for the Chantea cultists, the shogunate no longer trusts him to adequately regulate religion in his province.

Bowida delights in his job, taking advantage of his kirsute gome privilege to execute peasants he suspects of Chantea worship. He is not above manufacturing evidence. Bowida and his equally brutal flunkies are hated by the commoners and barely tolerated by the local administration.

Suggested Adventures

Following are a series of adventure plots the DM may use in preparing a Wa campaign. Each adventure includes the following information:

Set-Up: How the PCs become involved in the adventure and the problem presented to them.

The Plot: Background information, events of the story, and likely encounters.

Notes: Other possible complications, suggestions for expanding the adventure, and general information for the DM.

The DM should feel free to expand or modify these adventures as he sees fit. Symbols of the Sun is a longer adventure, the others should be playable in a single session. Alternately, the DM may wish to link some or all into a long campaign.

Symbols of The Sun

The PCs are called before the tairo at Uwaji Castle. The tairo explains to them that in 1663, Matasuuri Shogoro was given three symbols from the Spirit of the Sun in recognition of his efforts to unify Wa. When Matasuuri Nagahide became shogun, he decided the symbols were bad luck and gave them all away. Recently, the Spirit of the Sun visited Nagahide in a dream and became offended when he learned Nagahide no longer had his gifts. The tairo instructs the PCs to retrieve these gifts—a sword, a mirror, and a pearl, all which glow like the sun. The tairo gives the PCs authorization papers to present to the proper officials, asking for return of the items.

The sword is in the Temple of Bishamon at Aru. The daimyo of Hotomori has the pearl. Oshiro Yoto, a businessman in Iiso, has the mirror. The PCs may visit these locations in any order they wish.

1. Hotomori

Set-Up: Daimyo Yorifusa Ti graciously receives the PCs, but says that the glowing pearl has regretfully been misplaced.

The Plot: The pearl is actually safely stashed away in Ti's catacombs beneath the palace. He is reluctant to part with such a valuable treasure. The PCs will either have to bargain with him or attempt to steal it.

Notes: It should be very difficult for the PCs to break into Ti's catacombs and steal the pearl. They will have to get past tough guards, deadly traps, and the monsters Ti has engaged to guard the treasure vault.

If the PCs offer to bargain, Ti suggests that a treasure of sufficient quality might help him remember what happened to the pearl. If the PCs don't have any treasure to trade, Ti mentions that a sunken boat full of treasure has been discovered just off the coast. Salvage operations have been hindered by the sharks and giant octopi infesting the area.

2. Aru

Set-Up: Upon reading the authorization papers, the monks at the Temple of Bishamon order the sword removed from the temple. The PCs notice the sword no longer glows. The monks have no explanation.

The Plot: The sword is a clever copy. A few months ago, Yuchimo Ein pawned the original in a disreputable pawn shop for money to pay off a gambling debt. He is trying desperately to get enough money together to buy it back.

Notes: Unless Ein is confronted with direct evidence, he won't admit to his crime. If the PCs are stumped, it is possible that Ein could become overwhelmed with guilt and confess. The PCs could either buy back the sword or break in and take it; stealing it could have some unfortunate consequences with the local police. It is up to the PCs whether they expose Ein or give him a break.

3. Iiso

Set-Up: The glowing mirror was given to businessman Oshichiro Yoto as a gift from the shogunate. Arriving at his office, the PCs are told that the building was robbed the previous night and all valuables, including the mirror, were taken.

The Plot: Yoto's office was robbed by the machi-yakko gang led by Korai Anteki as part of their ongoing efforts to harass him. Anteki delivers a message to Yoto telling him that the valuables will be returned if he agrees to give a raise to his employees. Otherwise, the valuables will be destroyed and some of Yoto's key lieutenants will be assassinated. As representatives of the shogun, Yoto demands that the PCs bring Anteki to justice.

Notes: A meeting should be arranged between the PCs and Anteki's machi-yakko. If the PCs can't find him, Anteki will find the PCs. Anteki gives an impassioned defense of his cause and agrees to return the mirror if the PCs join Anteki on a machi-yakko raid. If the PCs turn in Anteki, the machi-yakko will likely seek them out for revenge.

The TellTale Diary

Set-Up: The PCs are sent to Rukimbaru to pick up the diary of Kisha Yunoko and return it to the shogun. The diary contains Yunoko's monthly report about the emperor's activities.

The Plot: The PCs are welcomed by military governor Tenkinjo Yojaro, who says he wasn't aware the diary was to be picked up so early this month. As Yunoko is away with the emperor on an overnight holiday, Tenkinjo fetches the diary, then requests that the PCs stay so the emperor can greet them the next day.

After the PCs retire, Tenkinjo realizes to his horror that he accidently gave the PCs Yunoko's personal diary containing references to their secret love affair That night, Tenkinjo sends a squad of his trusted men dressed like burglars to attack the PCs and take the diary.

The next morning, Tenkinjo announces the burglars were apprehended and the the diary was recovered. He gives the PCs the real diary. Observant PCs will notice this diary is different from the previous one. Tenkinjo denies this. He arranges a hasty audience with the emperor for the PCs, then sends them home.

Notes: Tenkinjo will do anything to keep the diary out of the PCs' hands. If the PCs fight off the bandits, Tenkinjo arranges an ambush on their way home.

If the PCs read the diary or otherwise find out about the affair, Tenkinjo begs them to keep his secret. He may lose his job and possibly his life if he is dishonored. The PCs should also think twice about telling the shogun. The shogun could care less about his granddaughter's love life as long she doesn't publicly dishonor the family; he might come down hard on the PCs for stirring up unnecessary trouble.

The Angry Dragon

Set-Up: Kai, the usually passive river dragon residing in Lake Sari, has been on a rampage lately. He has destroyed valuable farmland along with many of the villages in the Juzimura province. The PCs are directed to pacify Kai without harming him.

The Plot: A few weeks ago, the Celestial Bureaucracy decided to send Kai a young female chiang lung to be his mate. While the female was grazing in the woods, she was killed by a band of bushi hunters. The furious Kai has been on a rampage ever since.

Kai attacks the PCs on sight; he has nothing to say to them or anyone else until he receives an apology. If the PCs snoop around the local villages, they hear about some bushi hunters who claim to have killed a dragon. The bushi are nasty and attack nosey PCs just to have something to do.

If the PCs tell Kai they know about his mate, Kai says he will return to the lake if the murdering bushi are killed. Kai then requests the PCs give his dead mate a proper burial in Lake Sari.

Notes: The DM can make Kai harder to find by requiring the PCs to discover the secret of summoning him by writing his name on the lake. This information could be obtained from Muni-Ku, from negotiation with a wandering wizard, or from a vague omen (such as a dream instructing them to "write in the moonlight").

Murder in Fochu

Set-Up: The roju in Uwaji order the PCs to investigate the murder of Urumi Gitsi in Fochu. Gitsi was an officer of Yumonia Bowida, a roju representative sent to Fochu to monitor Chantea cultists. It is suspected that militant Chantea worshippers are responsible for the murder.

The Plot: It was Gitsi's job to go from door to door in the farming villages of Fochu and display holy symbols of Chantea to the peasants. If the peasants did not spit on or otherwise show their disapproval of the symbols, Gitsi would turn them over to Bowida to prosecute them for heresey.

There are a lot of peasants who despise Gitsi, but in truth it was Fochu who killed him. The murder occurred in the tiny village of Diti. Bowida was insulted when Gitsi's bow of greeting wasn't sufficiently low enough and killed him on the spot. Since the killing occurred in broad daylight on a main street, everyone in Diti knows the truth, but they're too afraid of Bowida to say anything.

Bowida tells the PCs that he has determined the entire village of Diti was involved in a conspiracy to kill Gitsi. Botida plans to burn down the entire village as punishment, which he claims is full of Chantea cultists. Daimyo Bokika Hokio hates Bowida and is actually sympathetic to the Chantea religion, but he does not wish to draw undue attention to Fochu—Hokio is secretly recruiting rebels for an insurrection against the shogunate. If burning down Diti will quickly resolve this problem, so be it.

If Bokika feels that the PCs suspect him of the murder, he implicates them as Chantea cultists. Failing this, he attempts to have them assassinated.

Notes: Baiyosho Degi might want to accompany the PCs on this mission so he can observe first hand how Chantea has corrupted Fochu. The DM could have Degi discuss with the PCs his interpretation of the Path of Enlightenment and stress to them the importance to the state of religious control. The PCs could also run into an actual Chantea cult hidden away in Fochu; the cultists might attempt to convert them to the Chantea faith. A violent clash between the two religious factions is possible, with Degi and Hokio on opposite sides, the PCs in the middle, and Bowida making trouble for everyone.

The DM might also wish to explore how the Chantea faith came to Fochu: could there be secret emissaries from the Forgotten Realms somewhere in Wa?

Caves of The High Tide

Set-Up: Uwaji has been experiencing a series of tremors lately, and the shogunate fears a recurrence of the great earthquake which nearly destroyed the city in 1676. Sailors report seeing a group of ningyo carrying rocks to the caves along the shoreline at night. This shoreline is where Dyogo was located before the earthquake broke it off into the ocean. The shogunate orders the PCs to investigate.

The Plot: The caves along the Dyogo shoreline only appear at night when the tide is low. The ningyo have determined that winds blow into the caves at low tide

and are trapped inside when the water rises again. When the winds try to escape, they create tremors. The ningyo want to prevent another major earthquake which destroyed their undersea lairs just off the coastline, and they are filling the caves with rocks.

The ningyo aren't entirely convinced that the PCs have their best interests at heart and fight them off if they interfere. However, if the PCs figure out what the ningyo are up to and reassure them, the ningyo welcome their help. If the caves are sealed, the tremors will cease.

Notes: It is possible that ghosts and other undead from the sunken city of Dyogo remove the rocks during the day, since these undead are eager for more cities to plunge into the ocean to add to their ranks. This could increase the tension between the PCs and the ningyo as they blame each other for the mysterious disappearance of the rocks. They may later ally to battle the Dyogo undead.

The Daimyo's Duck

Set-Up: Osari Daizan, daimyo of Tifuido, is upset because his new pet duck won't eat. He requests help from the PCs.

The Plot: Daizan's pet is a rare blue mandarin duck that was a gift from a collector. The duck is sad because he wants a mate. Daizan offers the PCs any resources they need to find him one.

Notes: Since the duck is not native to Tsukishima, the DM can use the search for a mate as a reason for the PCs to explore the other islands of Wa. Possible homes of blue female mandarin ducks include Shidekima (encounters with exotic wildlife, the Death Meadow of Shuni, and the eccentric Muki brothers), Machukara (encounters with the savage Tazu-ei, a haunted ivory monument, and pirate ships manned by orange gorillas), and the Outer Isles (encounters with a civil war between the bearmen and falconmen on the Isle of no Mosquitoes, the deadly ground on the Isle of Poison, and the monstrous krakentua on the Isle of Gargantuas).

The Wanton Daughter

Set-Up: Ido Kunarakuai, chief justice of the executive court, orders the PCs to journey to Semmishi and locate a geisha named Fu-shora, recognizable by her green eyes and moon-shaped birthmark on the nape of her neck. Kunarakuai explains that the girl is needed as a witness in an important trial.

The Plot: Fu-shora is actually the youngest daughter of Kunarakuai who ran away from home over 10 years ago. Kunarakuai hopes he can reconcile with her and convince her to abandon her wanton ways. He is too ashamed to tell the PCs the truth about Fu-shora and has come up with a ruse to get them to find her.

Fu-shora has been working as a geisha in one of the more sordid pleasure districts in Semmishi. Unknown to Kunarakuai, Fushora was recently purchased by Nobu Chuya to be his personal concubine. Chuya keeps her in a lavish apartment in Semmishi and visits her weekly.

If the PCs ask around in Semmishi, they learn the whereabouts of Fu-shora. However, Fu-shora has grown accustomed to Chuya's lavish lifestyle; regardless of how repulsive she finds Chuya, she refuses to return with the PCs. If the PCs tell her who sent them, she reveals that Kumarakuai is her father; still bitter about her parents' divorce, she will be more determined than ever not to return home.

If the PCs are eloquent enough, they may be able to convince her to change her mind. Alternately, they could kidnap her. In either case, Chuya will be very angry if he finds his expensive purchase missing.

Notes: The DM should use this adventure to expose the PCs to some of the seedier aspects of life in Semmishi. Their search for Fu-shora might take them to a barbaric gambling den where wagers are made on armed warriors who duel to the death, to a group of black marketeers who deal in exotic weapons and magical devices, and to an opium den for an encounter with dangerous drug dealers.

Chuya is wealthy, resourceful, and has contacts in all levels of Semmishi society. He could cause trouble for the PCs in any number of ways. He could bribe them, then have them arrested for robbery. He could have them drugged, then leave them to the mercy of violent street punks. He could also simply hire assassins to kill them.

Theater of The Absurd

Set-Up: Matasuri Unteki, daimyo of Iiso, is planning an elaborate presentation of the noh drama *The Narrow Road to the Sea of Blossoms.* The shogunate orders the PCs to do whatever Unteki requests to ensure a successful production.

The Plot: Unteki has cast himself in the lead role and plans to literally take the show on the road. In the name of authenticity, the play will be performed as the actors journey on foot from Iiso into the Ikuyu Mountains by way of Hayatura Road. Five hundred randomly selected Iiso citizens will accompany the performers to serve as an audience. Unteki instructs the PCs to maintain order and make sure the three-day performance is uninterrupted.

Notes: The PCs must deal with a number of problems arising as the performers and audience journey through the mountains. Some of the captive audience members may look for an opportunity to escape; the PCs must round them up if they do. The group may be threatened by bandits, wild animals, and landslides. The ghost of Samon may harass them. Political factions hostile to the daimyo may make assassination attempts.

Unteki may cast male PCs in the roles of women and force them to participate in the play. Unteki is likely to deal harshly with bungled lines and poor performances. Worse, Unteki may issue some of the deranged edicts for which he is famous. For instance, he may suddenly decide that the reason Wa natives are so stocky is because they eat too much. He then orders everyone to eat only grass and weeds so they will be as slim as jackrabbits. After a violent passage in the play, he might order everyone to throw away all weapons (making a subsequent encounter with bandits, for instance; particularly difficult). He may order the execution of audience members whose applause he deems insufficiently enthusiastic.

Strangers on the Shore

Set-Up: Returning home from a routine mission in northern Tsukishima, the PCs discover a group of survivors from a shipwreck washed ashore on a desolate beach. They are unarmed, desperate for help, and obviously foreign.

The Plot: The foreigners are at the mercy of the PCs. The PCs should remember that Wa's national policy is extremely hostile to foreigners; shipwrecked outsiders are often executed without a hearing. Before they decide what to do, the PCs should find out who the foreigners are, where they came from, and what they want.

Notes: It is up to the DM to decide the identity and mission of the foreigners. They could be fugitives from justice, adolescents running away from home, or scouts for an invading army. They could be from Shou Lung, from the Outer Isles, or even from somewhere in the occidental Forgotten Realms. They could be seeking a valuable treasure and offer to split it with the PCs if they assist them. They could be political refugees seeking asylum. They could be Chantea missionaries, curious scholars, or lost travelers carrying a mysterious disease.

Two more points for the DM to keep in mind: (1) Because the strangers are from a different country, there will likely be severe communication problems; (2) Wa officials will not act kindly to citizens who illegally aid foreigners, regardless of the reason.

The Wrestlers of Jasuga

Set-Up: To placate daimyo Nobu Subari, the shogunate has decided to send the PCs to participate in the wrestling tournament at Jasuga as representatives of their province. Although the shogunate doesn't put much stock in Subari's tournament, they make it clear they would still like the PCs to win.

The Plot: Bokika Hokio, who also has wrestlers participating in the tournament, has conspired with Subari to make sure the PCs lose. Hokio figures if the PCs can be shown up as inferior warriors, it will make it easier to sell his citizens on the idea of a revolution against the shogunate.

Notes: The tournament should be staged as a series of matches. If the PCs win the first few, Hokio and Subari have no qualms about cheating; they will match the PCs with especially tough opponents, they will use magical items against them, they will even attempt to drug the PCs before a match begins.

The DM is encouraged to use his imagination in staging the tournament. Tag team matches, free-for-alls, and specialty matches (such as blindfolded opponents fighting on a plank suspended over an active volcano) could all be included.

Rescue from Paikai

Set-Up: Rumuki Yoshitada, daimyo of Jotai on Shidekima Island, has mysteriously vanished. Rumuki Gohei, daimyo of Shuni, requests the help of the shogunate in finding his brother. The shogunate sends him the PCs.

The Plot: The PCs have a Hotomori warship at their disposal in Tifuido. They can take the ship to Shidekima Island to meet with Gohei. Gohei then arranges a meeting with Lakana Luri-Tai who tells them that the stars have revealed that Yoshitada was kidnapped by a powerful wizard from the north.

The powerful wizard is Shiz-ti. Shiz-ti is currently holding Yoshitada prisoner in the catacombs beneath the Temple of the High Moon in Paikai. Shiz-ti believes that Yoshitada has untapped psychic powers. By studying Yoshitada, Shiz-ti hopes to develop his own psychic abilities.

Gohei insists on accompanying the PCs to Paikai. Gohei has a special bond with his twin and can sense where he is located.

If the PCs obtain an audience with Shiz-ti, he denies holding Yoshitada; Gohei will know he is lying. Shiz-ti has enough resources to make a rescue attempt exceedingly difficult.

Notes: The DM may wish to elaborate on the interaction with the NPCs. For instance, the shy Lakana Luri-Tai may be reluctant to speak up in the presence of a large number of male PCs. She may also become smitten with a particularly handsome PC and ask to be taken along on the mission. Because of the stress from his brother's disappearance, Gohei may be more eccentric than usual. He may flatly forbid the use of technology he considers too advanced, such as ships that use oars instead of sails.

The trip to Paikai could also be eventful. The ship might be assaulted by pirates, blasted by a Tobu hurricane, or met by the ghost ship of Hidegari Iegusa. Shiz-ti may also decide to drop falling stars on the ship.

Access to the Temple of the High Moon should not be easy. The PCs could encounter herds of rampaging boars, Shiz-ti's undead armies, and evil spirits armed with hellwind sacks. Shiz-ti himself will likely intervene if the PCs get too close to their goal.

Lairo's Last Stand

Set-Up: Two days ago, Osari Lairo, the 101-year-old great-grandfather of Osari Daizan, stole a rowboat and headed out to sea. Daizan requests the help of the PCs to rescue him and find out why he left.

The Plot: The PCs find the old man steadily rowing south in a small boat. He tells them that in his lifetime, he has had more than 20,000 wives from every corner of Wa. He has become bored with the women of his native country but still wants to have a few more wives before he dies. He is heading for the Outer Isles in search of the legendary Isle of Women where he intends to spend his final days.

Notes: If the PCs wish to bring Lairo home, he won't be able to put up much resistance. However, he will then spend the rest of his life miserable and frustrated.

If the PCs are sympathetic, they may help him with his search. They may have to stop at other Outer Isles along the way to get directions and deal with any problems they encounter there. The Isle of Women is populated entirely by beautiful, lonely women, more than happy to welcome an eager man, regardless of his age. The happy Lairo will find many willing wives among them.

Appendix: Using The Forgotten Realms™ campaign setting

Using The Maps

The maps enclosed in this package, and those in related sourcebooks and other products, are provided without a normal superimposed hex grid. Instead a sheet of clear printed plastic is enclosed with this boxed set for use with the Forgotten Realms Maps.

The first map is, in fact, two maps, displaying all of the region that is Kara-Tur. One of these maps shows political boundaries while the other shows geographical features.

The second set of three maps focus on three areas of vital interest in Kara-Tur. The first shows Kozakura, Wa, and southern Koryo. The second shows central Shou Lung. The third shows the heart of T'u Lung and some of the southern regions. The scale on these maps is 1 inch = 90 miles.

The third set of maps provides detailed views of selected regions: Kumaike province of Kozakura; the region surrounding the city of Cham Fau in Shou Lung; the island of Bawa; and several other locales. These areas are of particular interest to adventurers. The scale on these maps is 1 inch = 30 miles.

Finally, maps of specific locations are also included. The scale of these maps varies, but is quite detailed.

Also included in the set is a sheet of clear plastic, overprinted with a hex grid and scale for both of these maps. Rather than print the grid on the maps themselves, these plastic grids may be used to determine distances and duration of travel. There are five hexes per inch, so that each hex is six miles on the enlarged maps, and 18 miles on the rough maps.

Using The hex grids

The ungridded maps may be used in play for general discussion and explanation. The grids are used when moving along the map.

When using the grids for determining straight distance, place the corner point (marked with the "x" over the place the traveler is starting from (usually, but not always, a city). Use the straight row of hexes directly above that "X-Hex" to determine how many hexes it is from that starting point to the destination point

Unfortunately, roads, streams, and other commonly used methods of travel do not move in straight lines, so that the "true" distance between points may be larger than presented. Again, set the "X-Hex" on the starting point, and center the final destination in one of the hexes. Then follow the method of travel, counting each hex as a hex to be moved through. For short distances of a few days travel between cities, such as within Cormyr or Sembia, this method may be used with each day's move. For longer journeys, from Scornubel to Irieabor, for example, it may be worth lightly taping the plastic grid to the map with masking tape. Adhesive tape is not recommended for this, as it does the job too well and may damage the map when removed. For extremely long journeys, several waystops may be determined and measured en route from one side of the map to the other. See the examples below of using the grid and the map.

Each FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game campaign should reflect the personality and desires of the DM and his players. To that end, the DM should feel free to make notes or otherwise mark-up his map to reflect changes in his world. If a group of players set up an adventuring headquarters in an abandoned (and unmarked) tower in T'u Lung, the DM should feel confident in placing that on the map as a starting point. Similarly, if an enterprising group sets out to build an empire in the Jungle Lands, improving roads and pushing around the other city states, that may be recorded on the map as well.

With each hex covering six miles from side to side, there remains a lot of room within each hex for the DM to develop, set adventures in, or further detail.

Movement Using The Maps

The section above explains the mechanics of determining distance between specific locations using the Realms Maps. For parties moving across the realms, the DM uses the above procedure with the following notes.

There are two methods for determining movement on the Realms maps. The first is more accurate, and time consuming as well. The second is less accurate, but moves faster.

The first method of movement considers the number of miles that the party may move in a single day through the various types of terrain. That number is divided by six for the number of hexes that may be traveled in a day. The remainder is considered "change" and added to the next days, travel.

Example: A party is moving 17 miles per day across normal terrain. Seventeen divided by six is 2 5/6ths. The party moves two hexes and 5/6th of another in that day. The next day the party travels another 2 5/6th hexes, for a total of 5 2/3 hexes, etc. Hex movement is taken from the center of the starting hex.

The second method is to round all such fractional movement to the nearest whole number, leaving halves alone, and figuring in standard hexes only. For example, our party above at 17 miles per day will move three hexes, period.

The "standard" movement rates for typical speeds and encumbrances, according to the DMG and WSG, are provided on the table below.

According to the DMG:

Movement afoot in hexes per day

Encumbrance	Terrain		
	N	R	VR
Light (or None)	5	3	2
Average	3	2	1
Heavy	2	1	1/3

Movement mounted in hexes/day

Encumbrance	Terrain N	R	VR
Light horse	10	4	1
Medium horse	7	3	1
Heavy horse	5	2 1/2	1
Draft horse	5	2 1/2	1
Cart	4	2 1/2	-
Wagon	4	2 1/2	-

According to *Wilderness Survival Guide:*
Foot Movement in *hexes/half-day* Number after slash indicates accelerated movement. See WSG, page 31 for effects of moving exhaustion and fatigue.

Encumbrance	Terrain N	R	VR
None	2.5/3	2/3	1/2
Light	2/3	2/2.5	1/1.5
Moderate	2/2	1.5/2	1/1
Heavy	1/2	1/1	.5/1
Severe	1/1	.5/1	.33/.5

Selected movement rates of creatures

Creature	Terrain N	R	VR
Donkey	1/2	1/1.5	.5/1
Draft Horse	1/2	.5/1	.5/.5
Heavy Horse	1.5/2.5	1/1.5	.5/1
Light Horse	2/4	1/2	.5/1
Medium Horse	1.5/3	1/1.5	.5/1
Mule	1/2	1/1.5	.5/1

Selected movement rates of vehicles

Vehicle	Terrain N	R	VR
Small Cart pulled by pony	2	1	-
Medium Cart pulled by medium horse	1	1	-
Small Wagon pulled by heavy horse	2	1.5	-
Large Wagon pulled by heavy horse	3	2	-

When using either method, consider the following rule of thumb. If the party is in the same hex as their destination city, allow them to "press on through the night" and reach the city, rather than enforce any system which forbids the party to travel that extra few miles and instead camp in wilderness within sight of their destination.

Terrain types and Movement

In the above tables, ground terrain is defined as either *normal, rugged,* or *very rugged.* The types of terrain are as follows.

Normal Terrain in the Realms
- Any well-maintained road, regardless of surrounding terrain
- Open, rolling ground, including both the farmland of Shou Lung and the open steppes.
- Hard-backed, flat desert, such as a dry lake
- Light forest laced with paths
- Terrain which does not fit into the other categories

Rugged Terrain
- Normal terrain in snow (assumed about 5 inches or so deep)
- Uneven ground (including all listed Moors)
- All listed Hills
- All Forests and Woods up to six miles (one hex) from the edge
- Most desert terrain
- Paths through Very Rugged Terrain

Very Rugged Terrain
- Rugged terrain in Snow (assumed about 5 inches or so deep)
- Normal Terrain in Snow (assumed about 10 inches or so deep)
- All Mountainous terrain
- All Swamp terrain
- Glaciers
- Deep Forests (the exception being those forests inhabited by a civilized race which tends the trees

The table below covers the major terrain types on the enlarged maps, in regards to movement classification, climate, and terrain type for encounters.

Movement Class
- N Normal
- R Rugged
- V Very Rugged

Climate
- A All
- C Cold
- T Temperate
- S Sub-tropical/Tropical

Terrain Type for Encounters
- 1 Swamp
- 2 Forest
- 3 Plains/Scrub
- 4 Desert
- 5 Hills/Rough
- 6 Mountain

祓氟紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

High Mountains	V	A	6
Medium Mountains	V	A	6
Low Mountains	V	A	6
Broken Hills	V	A	5
Steep/ Foot Hills	R	A	5
Rolling Hills	N	A	5
Forested Hills	R	A	2
Moor/Hill	R	C/T	5
Light Snow Field	R	C	A
Heavy Snow Field	V	C	A
Coast	*	A	*
swamp	V	A	1
Marsh	V	A	1
Sandy Desert	N	A	4
Rocky Desert	R	A	4
Primodial Forest	R	C/T	2
Heavy Forest	V	C/T	2
Moderate Forest	R	C/T	2
Light Forest	N	C/T	2
Heavy Jungle	V	S	2
Moderate Jungle	R	S	2
Scrub Brush	N	A	3
Heath	N	C/T	3
Tundra	N	C	3
Plains	N	A	3
Clear(Farmland)	N	A	*3*

* = As terrain for the adjoining area.

Traveling Through Mixed Terrain

Often the DM is faced with the situation where the player-characters move from one type of terrain to another (for example, leaving a mountainous road to avoid pursuers or plunging into a heart of a forest). Use the following rule of thumb for such movement on the days when such a change is made.

Moving from Normal to Rugged: halve the remaining miles that could be covered that day had the travelers remained in normal terrain.

Moving from Rugged to Very Rugged: halve the remaining miles that could be covered that day had the travelers remained in rugged terrain.

Moving from Normal to Very Rugged: quarter the remaining miles that could be covered that day had the travelers remained in normal terrain.

Moving from Rugged to Normal: Increase by half the number of remaining miles that could be traveled that day, had the party remained in rugged terrain.

Moving from Very Rugged to Rugged: increase by half the number of miles that could be traveled that day, had the party remained in very rugged terrain.

Moving from Very Rugged to Normal Terrain: double the remaining movement that may be traveled that day, had the party remained in very rugged terrain.

The above rules of thumb assume that movement is possible in the new terrain (for example, a cart cannot move in Very Rugged terrain and therefore, if taken into that terrain, cannot move). Further, it is assumed that the travelers are making a concentrated effort to move through that terrain over several miles, as opposed to "hiding in the woods until the imperial patrol passes."

A party may remain in the type of terrain they choose for purposes of movement (a group in a hex containing hills and plains may remain in the plains). This applies up to the point that they must obviously enter the type of other terrain, at which point all penalties take effect. A group in a hex with plains and swamp may remain in plains, but if their travel would take them across swamp terrain, they would suffer the penalties of the swamp. For other effects of mixed terrain in a hex, see Encounters below.

Water Movement in The Realms

General movement for waterborne travel is covered in the *DMG* (pages 54-55) and WSG (pages 44-46). One important point to discuss here is the "falls-line."

Many of the rivers, such as the Fenghsintzu, are navigable along their entire length by galleys and ships. Others are navigable only to the last cascades of that river. These cascades are called the "falls-line," and above that point normal sea-going ships cannot travel. Small skiffs, rafts, and shallow-bottomed barges may still move upriver, subject to any further falls, cascades, or obstructions.

When players choose to have their characters move along a previously uncharted river or stream, include in the encounter table the chance of a cascade, section of white water, or falls, according to the area the stream passes through. Mark these locations on the map (as they, unlike monsters, will not move away from the area) for future travelers.

Encounters in The Realms

Individuals traveling across country may encounter a number of unplanned adventures en route from point A to point B. These random encounters may aid or hurt the player-characters in their ultimate goals, or provide an evening's adventure in themselves. This section deals with determining what creatures are found where, and how the DM may create his own tables for random encounters.

When player-characters are traveling through known or unknown lands, there is a chance for random encounters. Random encounters are determined by the following method.

- Determine the terrain the player-characters are traveling through,. both as to *type* and *population.*
- Determine if an encounter occurs in this area.
- Determine the type of encounter.

The DM may determine if an encounter takes place either by *time* or *location.*

In determining if an encounter occurs by time, use the method described by the *DMG,* page 47, checking to see if an encounter occurs in the area the player-characters are traveling through at the time of the encounter. If the travelers pass through plains in the morning, a check should be made, regardless of whether they have passed through other terrain as well (though only one check should be made per time period).

Chance of Encounters per Time

If determining encounters by location, one roll is made each time a new hex is entered. Check the following table for whether an encounter occurs.

Terrain	Civilized	Border	Wild
Plain	l in 20	1 in 12	1 in 10
Forest	1 in 12	1 in 10	l in 8
Swamp	1 in 12	l in 8	l in 8
Mountains	1 in 10	l in 8	l in 6
Desert	1 in 20	1 in 12	1 in 12
Hills	1 in 20	1 in 12	1 in 10

The DM should choose the method he or she is most comfortable with, with the note that the later system will provide more encounters for a fast-moving party in a day, and fewer encounters with a slow-moving group.

The type of terrain for an encounter is determined by the terrain in the hex. Many different types of terrain may be in a hex at the same time, so use the idea of terrain hierarchy. Certain types or terrain will take precedence over other types for purposes of encounters.

Precedence:

Swamp
Forest
Plains
Desert
Hills
Mountain

A hex which contains multiple types of terrain will be considered the terrain of the higher rank for purposes of encounters. For example, if a hex contains Mountains and Hills, the terrain is Hills for purposes of encounters. If a region is both swamp and plains, it is considered Swamp. Roads and paths are always considered to be the terrain surrounding them for purposes of encounters.

After determining the terrain, determine the status: Civilized, Wilderness, or Borderland.

Civilized regions are those under human or allied-race control, and have suitable patrols, population, and defenses from most invading creatures Areas within 18 miles of major cities, and six miles of towns are considered Civilized.

Wilderness regions are those not under the control of any lawful-group, and usually are a breeding ground of foul beasts.

Borderlands are where these two areas meet.

If the hex under consideration lies within a civilized area, any encounters there are considered civilized, while those totally with the other reflect wilderness encounters. If this line runs through the hex itself, then the area is borderlands, and the encounter can either be wild or civilized.

Borderland encounters' status is totally up to the DM. Things to take into consideration in this decision include the nature, terrain, history, and current status of the region. A "borderland" encounter in a kingdom that has long been at peace will likely be civilized, while one that has been recently overun by invading armies will produce more wild encounters.

Having determined the terrain and status of an encounter, go to the appropriate table to determine the type of monster encountered. The DM may have specific tables for certain locations in the realms of his own creation (see below), or those in the back of the *Monster Manual II* book.

Building One's Own Monster Encounter tables

The DM may use the following table for creating his own table. This method is based on the sum of one 8-sided die and one 12-sided die, producing a range of 2-20. Monsters are arranged according to their stated frequency in that terrain type.

Die Roll	Type of Monster
2	Very Rare or Unique monster
3	Very Rare monster
4	Very Rare or Rare Monster
5	Rare Monster
6	Rare Monster
7	Uncommon Monster
8	Uncommon Monster
9	Common Monster
10	Common Monster
11	Common Monster
12	Common Monster
13	Common Monster
14	Uncommon Monster
15	Uncommon Monster
16	Rare Monster
17	Rare Monster
18	Very Rare or Rare Monster
19	Very Rare Monster
20	Very Rare Monster

When a choice is provided, the DM makes the choice between the two options at the time of creating the table.

Instead of a common monster, the DM may place in that slot two rare monsters, and have the choice of which monster the party encounters. Instead of an uncommon monster, the DM may place in that slot two very rare monsters, and have the choice of which monster the players encounter. This decision may be made by the DM at the time of the encounter, or may instead be decided by a roll of the die (1-3 first monster listed, 4-6 second monster listed).

袚氟紼俛伏膚袚趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚袚趺付腐

祓氟紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐郛弗伏紼俛伏膚祓趺付腐

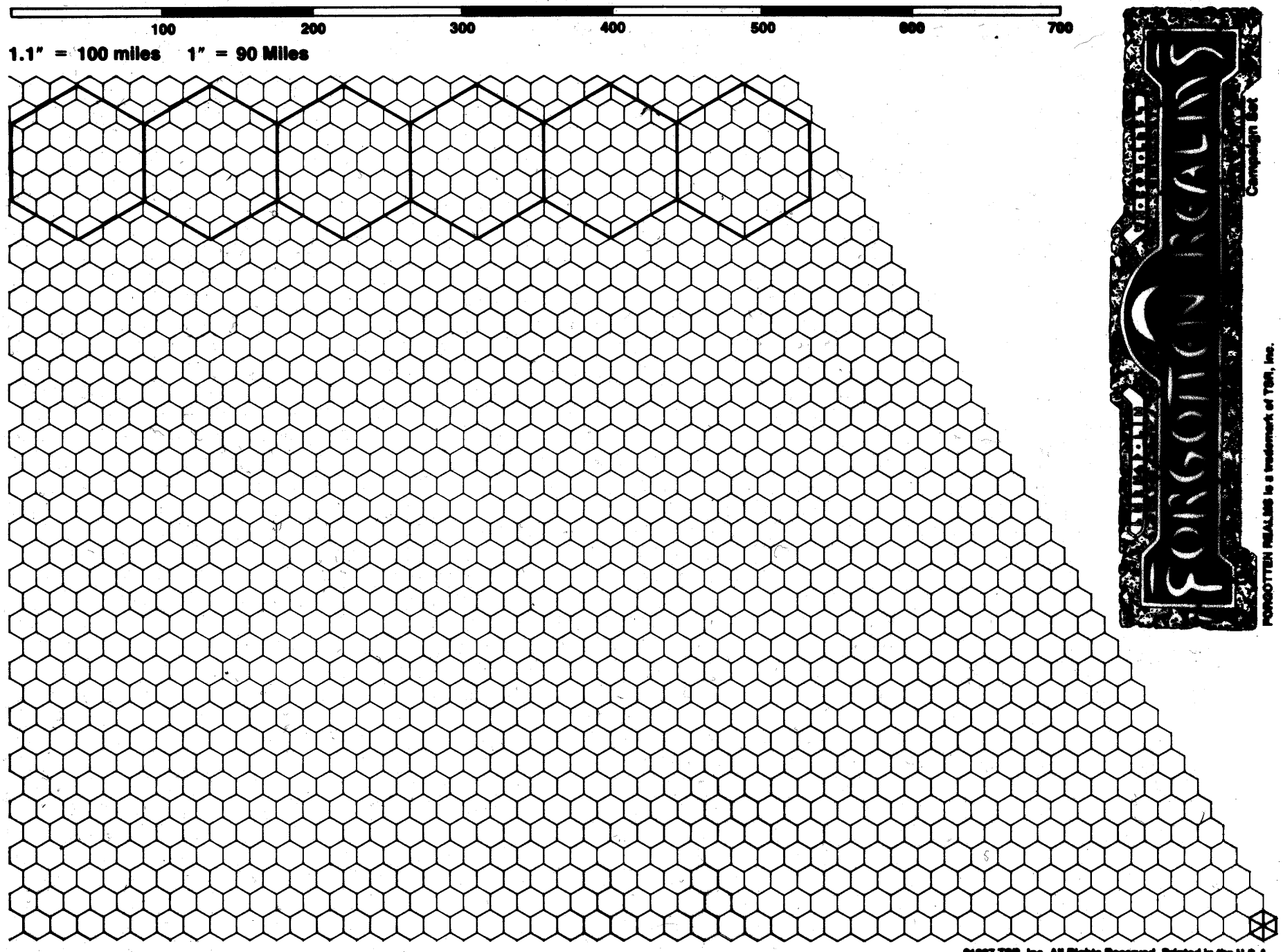
Bringing characters from other worlds

The world of Kara-tur has a huge number of portals and other gate-type devices which link that world with other areas of the Realms, with the Outer Planes, and with alternative material planes containing other AD&D® campaigns. Player-characters from these campaigns may discover methods of traveling to Kara-Tur (either through the Astral Plane, by devices, or free-standing portals), and begin adventures in the Orient.

Certain items are gained and lost when making the transition into Kara-Tur.

- The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting is the AD&D® campaign world, so that player-characters who are not strictly AD&D® game format (such as a dwarvish cleric/thief/illusionist/paladin with a 24 natural strength) cannot enter the Realms without modification to fit the AD&D® game rules. Illegal classes would be dropped, ability scores would be reduced to racial limitations (though they may be increased later by magical or other means), and special abilities over and above those provided for characters are removed. The DM, at his own judgment, may choose to let such individuals into his FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign (such as letting a kender from Krynn make the transfer), but that decision rests solely on the DM.
- Similarly, magical items that are "special" to a particular world may not make the transfer to the Realms, either being destroyed, being returned to their original plane, or being stripped of the player and placed somewhere in the Realms. In general, this is reserved for extremely powerful items—in particular, Artifacts.
- The physics of the Realms are slightly out of sync with the rest of the planes, so that gunpowder and many technological devices which operate on electronics do not function. Equivalent devices may be developed by player-characters. DM's judgment is advised as to what may be allowed into the world.
- The gods of the Forgotten Realms are a fairly open-minded group (as such beings go). Clerics of faiths not listed as the major religions of the Realms may still receive spells as normal, though they may not receive the benefits of belonging to a organized hierarchy, and may be called upon to explain the nature of their faith more often than those of established churches.

Characters from other campaigns may span the range from low-level wanderers to extremely high-level powers that have challenged a god or two in their time. The style of the campaign is set by the levels and powers of these individuals.



FORGOTTEN REALMS

Campaign Set

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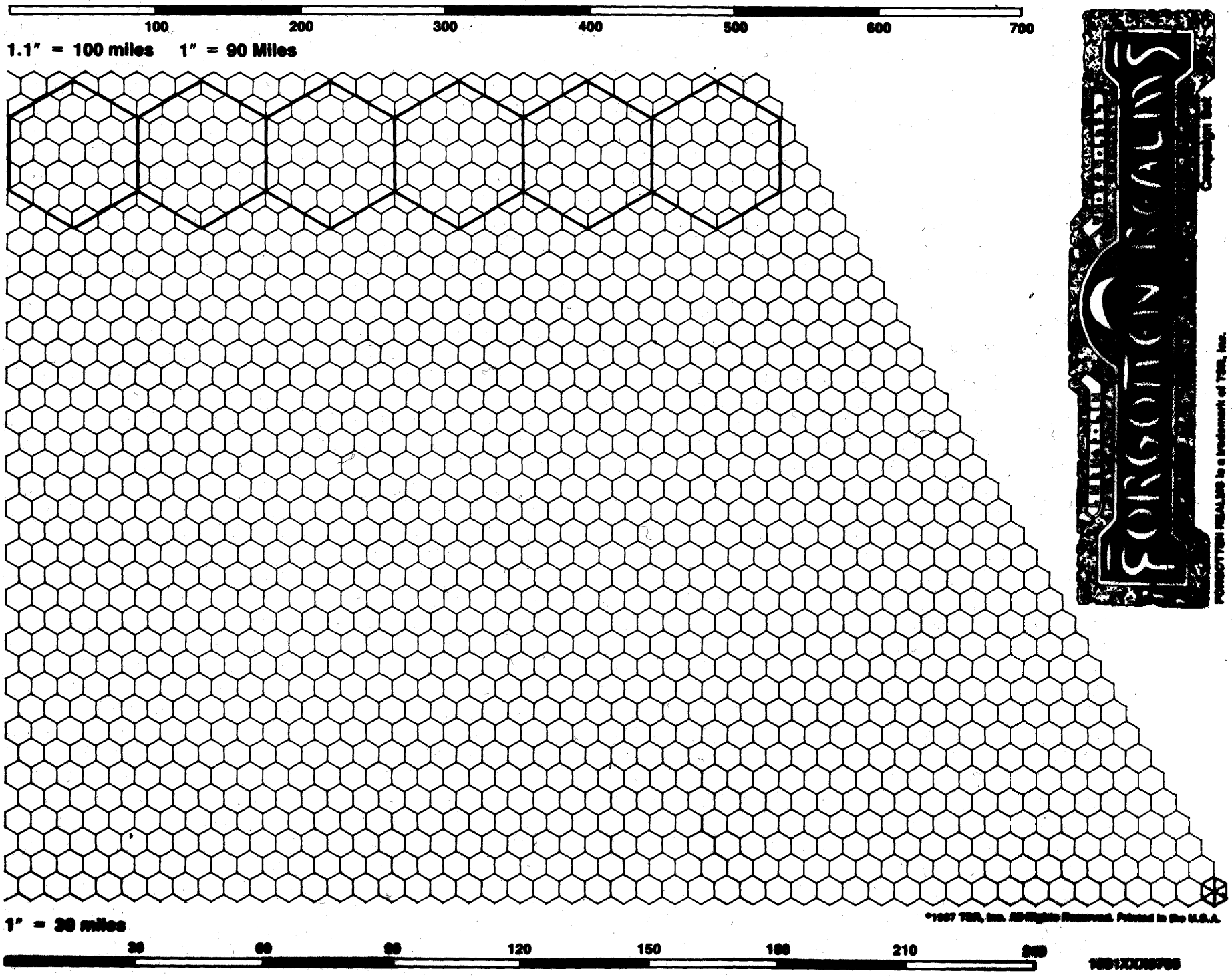

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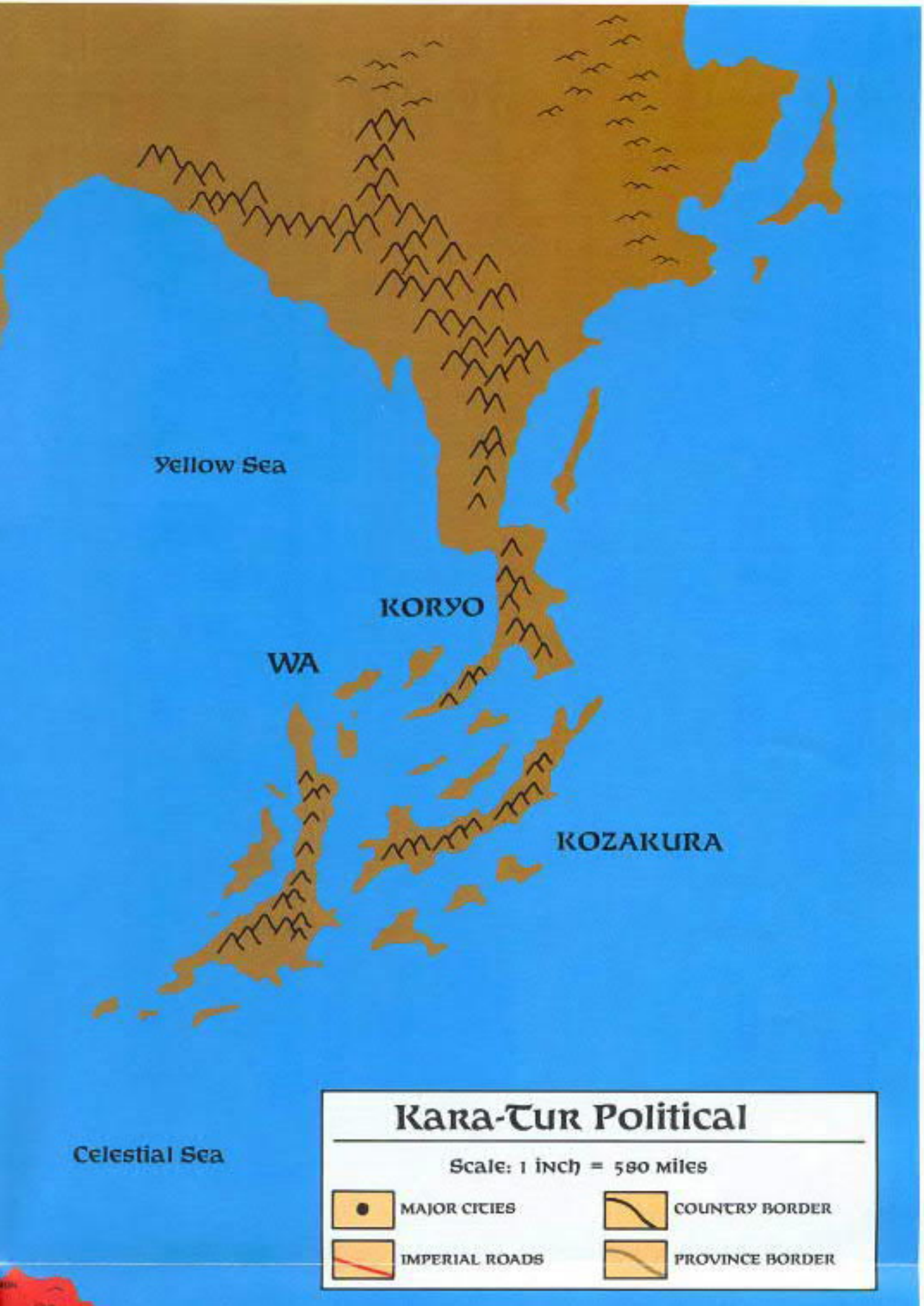
Kara-Tur Topography
Scale: 1 inch = 580 miles
MOUNTAINS
FOOTHILLS
ROLLING HILLS
FOREST
JUNGLE
SWAMP/MARSH
CLEAR
CLIFFS
RIVER
RICE VALLEY

(Humanoibs)
(Issacontae)
Tomyris
(Issacontae)
(Humanoibs)
Palace of Balinaikai
(Wu-haitai)
Anqistikhin
(Paznuki)
Tayanuchi Lands
(Paznuki)
(Kokobokunu)
(Wu-haitai)
Palevash
(Paznuki)
Horse Plains
Kangs'ie
Hutan
Chukei
Fukiow
Chao Yang
Mai Yuan
Dragon Wall
S H O U
Miniow
Lo'shan
Wai'an
Shengti
Hisepeng
Liaopei
Tierie
Tsingtao
Yenching
Tai Tung
Ching Tung
Shou'kuan
Kirin
Hungste
Linshung


Yellow Sea
KORYO
WA
KOZAKURA
Celestial Sea
Kara-Tur Political
Scale: 1 inch = 580 miles
MAJOR CITIES
COUNTRY BORDER
IMPERIAL ROADS
PROVINCE BORDER

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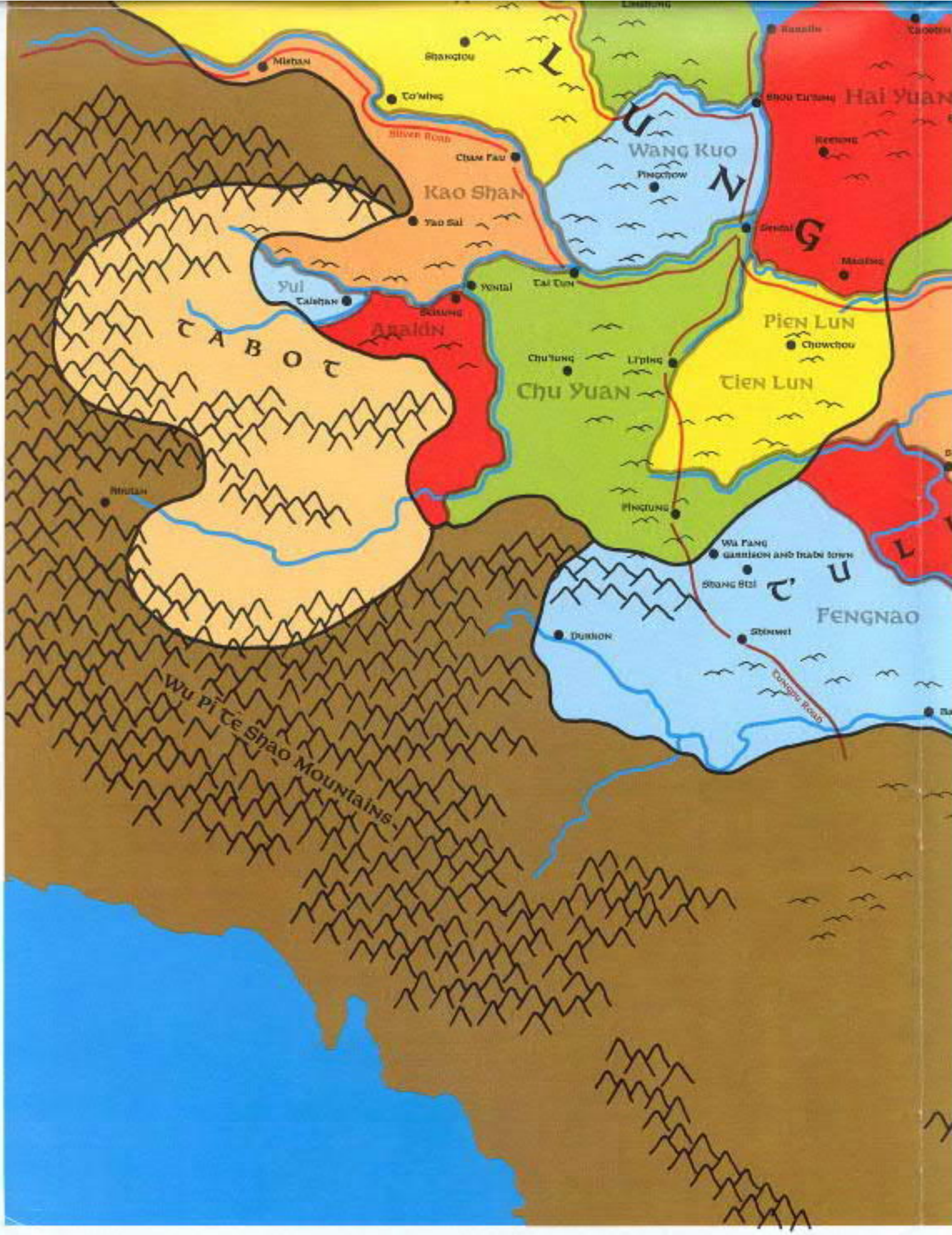
JUNGLE
RICE VALLEY



Mishan
Shangtou
To'ming
Silver Road
Cham Fau
Kao Shan
Yao Sai
Wang Kuo
Pingchow
Hai Yuan
Keetung
Sentai
Maoling
Yui
Taishan
Yentai
Tai Tun
Pien Lun
Chowchou
Chu'lung
Li'ping
Chu Yuan
Tien Lun
Pingtung
Wa Fang
Shang Stai
Fengnao
Shinmei
Tungpu Road
Wu Pi Te Shao Mountains

IMPERIAL ROADS
PROVINCE BORDER
Jeukung
Nipo
Awana
Ausa
Ausa
Pembin Chao
Wai
Wai
S'keh Yanbo
Bashan Do
Hachoni
Kichai
Pajayang
Makasaya
Bawa
Himasia Mountains

Shentsa
SHOULUNG
FORGOTTEN REALMS
Scale: 1 inch = 90 miles
LAKE
RIVER
CITY
TOWN
ROAD
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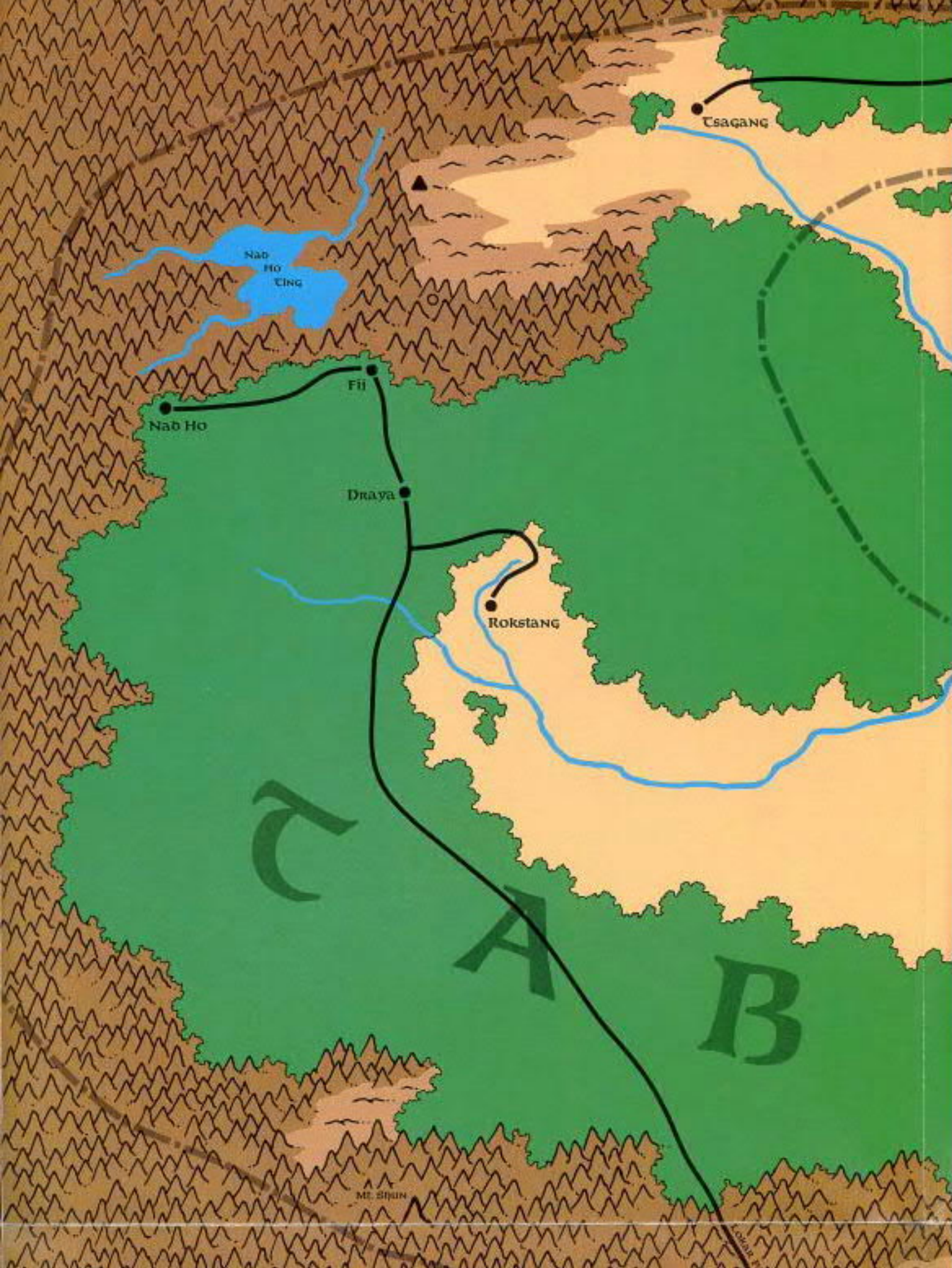
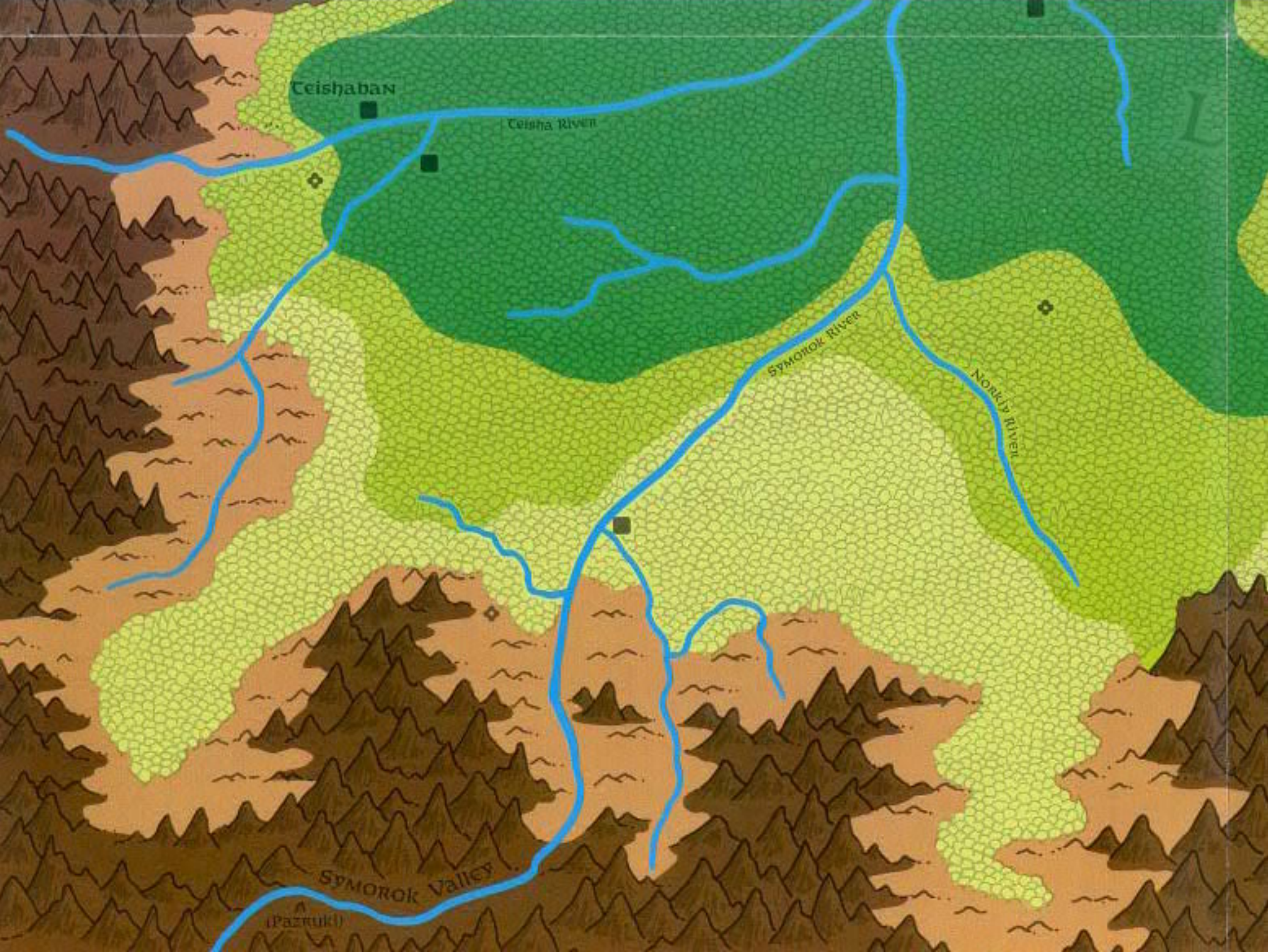
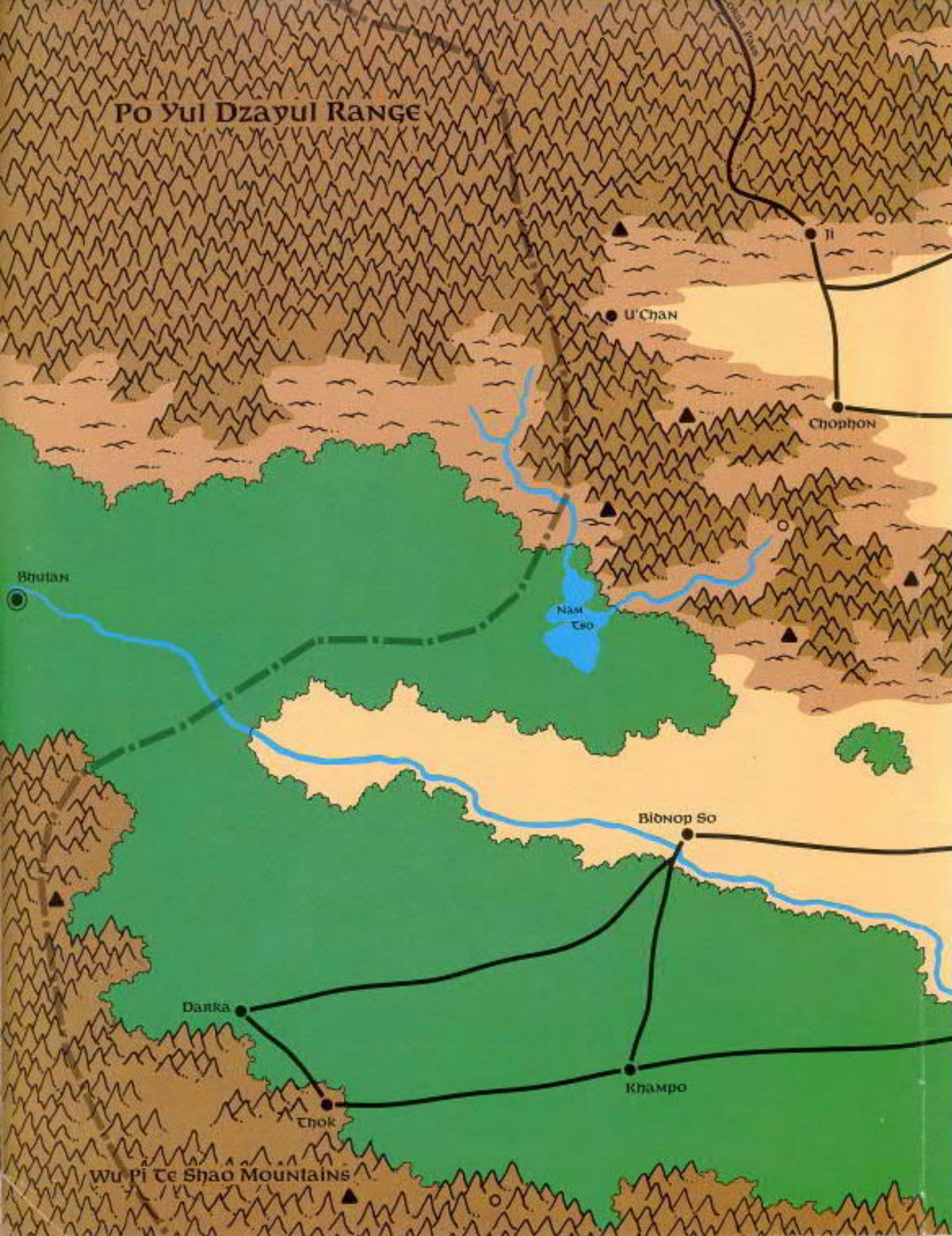
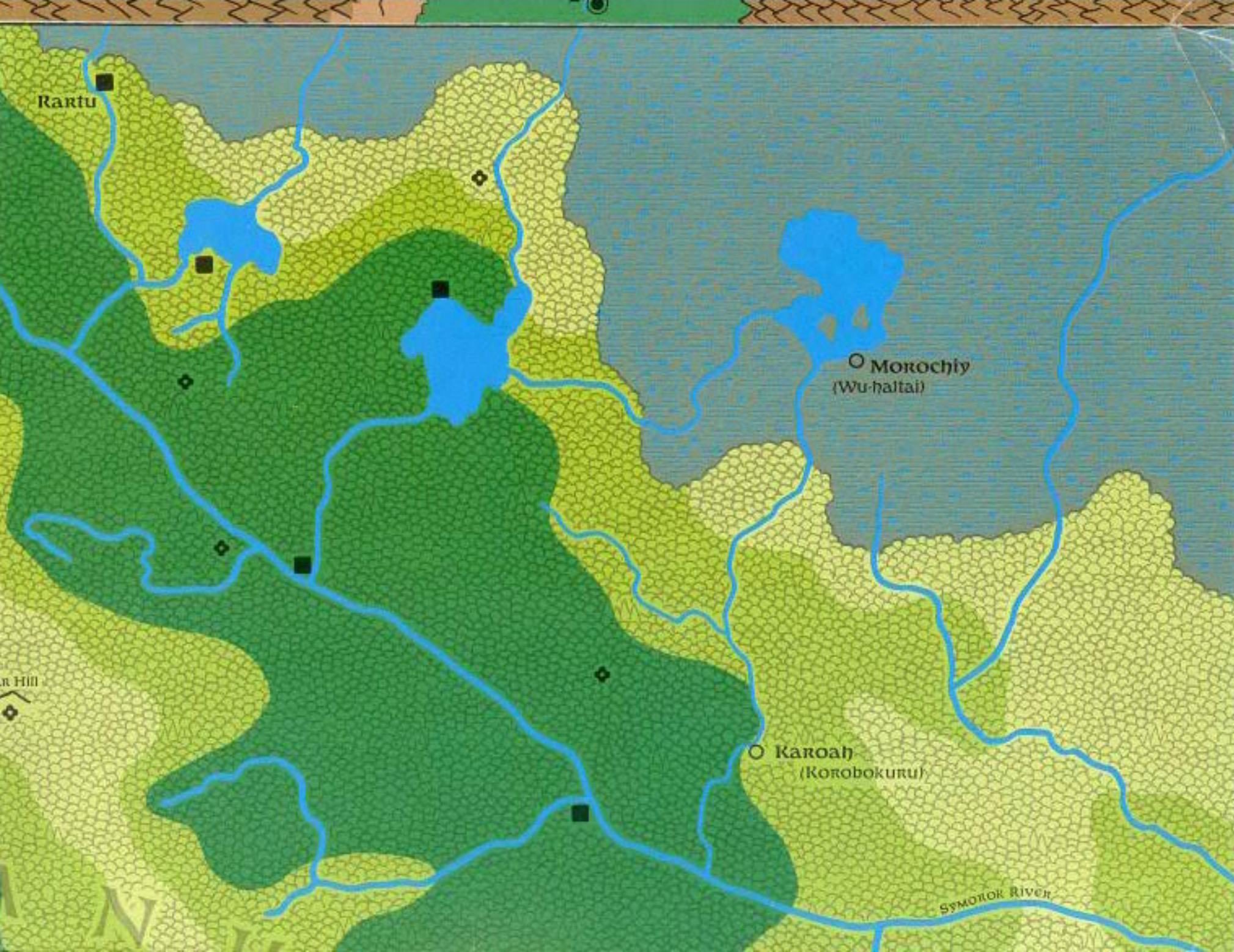

Tsagang
Nab
Ho
Ling
Fij
Nab Ho
Draya
Rokstang
TAB
Mt. Sijun

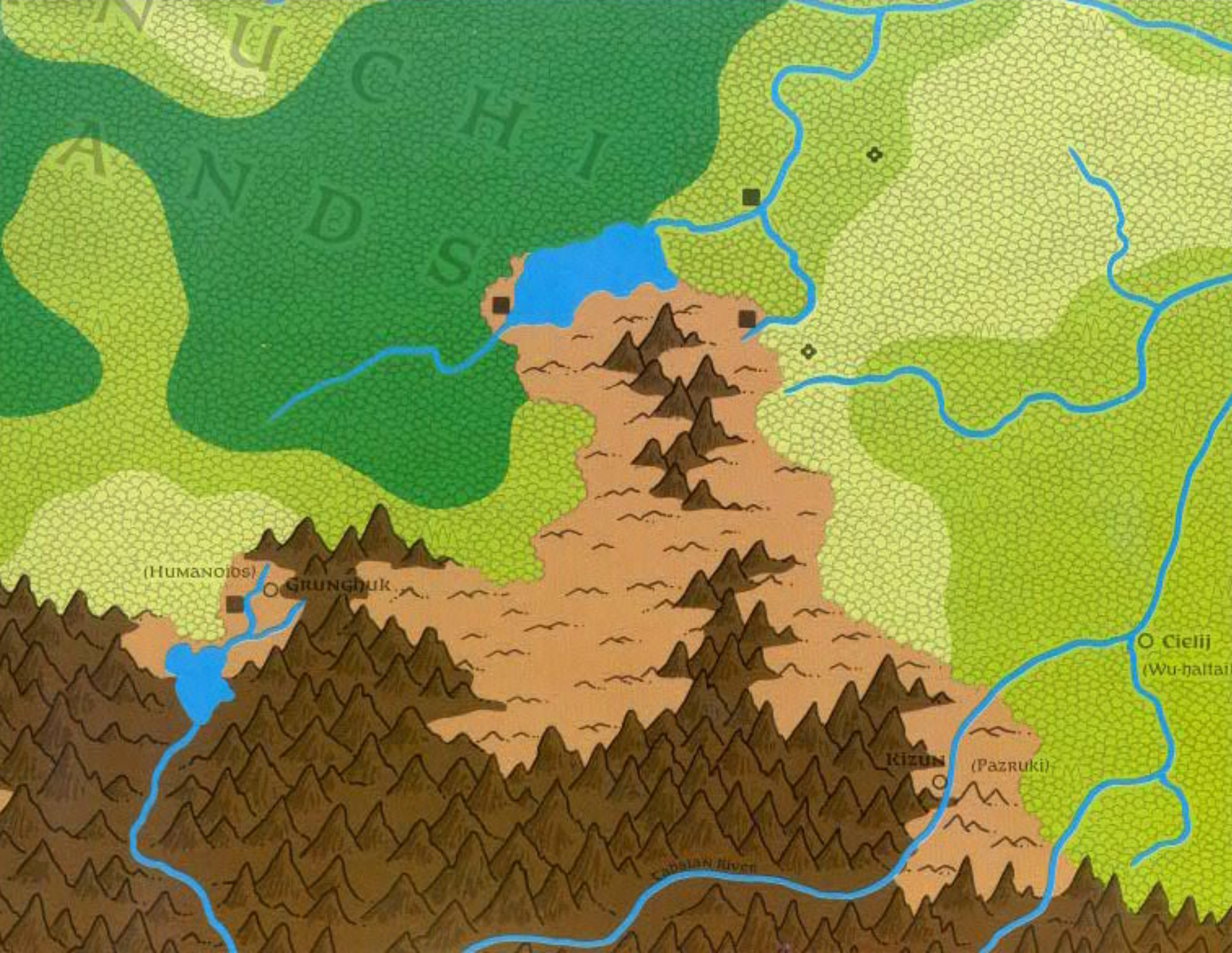
FORGOTTEN REALMS
Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles
FORGOTTEN REALMS is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc.
Cayanut River
Argistikhin
(Issacottae)
O Kiysym
Erlaban
Erla River
Namaskan Hill


Teishaban
Teisha River
Spmorok River
Norkiy River
Spmorok Valley
(Pazruk)

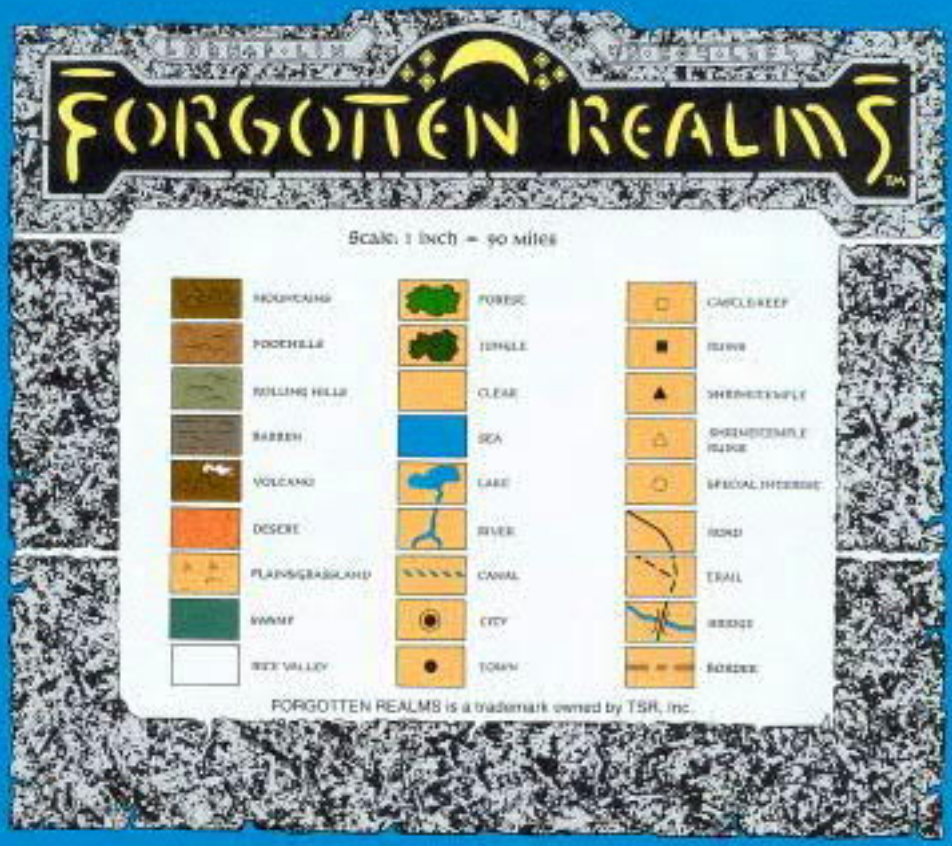
Mt. E'kwong
Tsetu
Talung
Motra
Joy
Haraki Ridge
Hun Chao
Pim Tung
Pabex
Mesku Peak


Po Yul Dzayul Range
Ji
U'Chan
Chophon
Bhutan
Nam
Tso
Bishop So
Danka
Khampo
Thok
Wu Pi Te Shao Mountains


Rartu
Morochiy
(Wu-haltai)
Karoah
(Korobokuru)
Symorok River



(Humanoids)
Grunghuk
Cielij
(Wu-ḥaltai)
Kizun
(Pazruki)


FORGOTTEN REALMS
Scale: 1 inch = 90 miles
FOREST
JUNGLE
CLEAR
SEA
LAKE
RIVER
CANAL
CITY
TOWN
TRAIL
FORGOTTEN REALMS is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc.

Islands of Wa

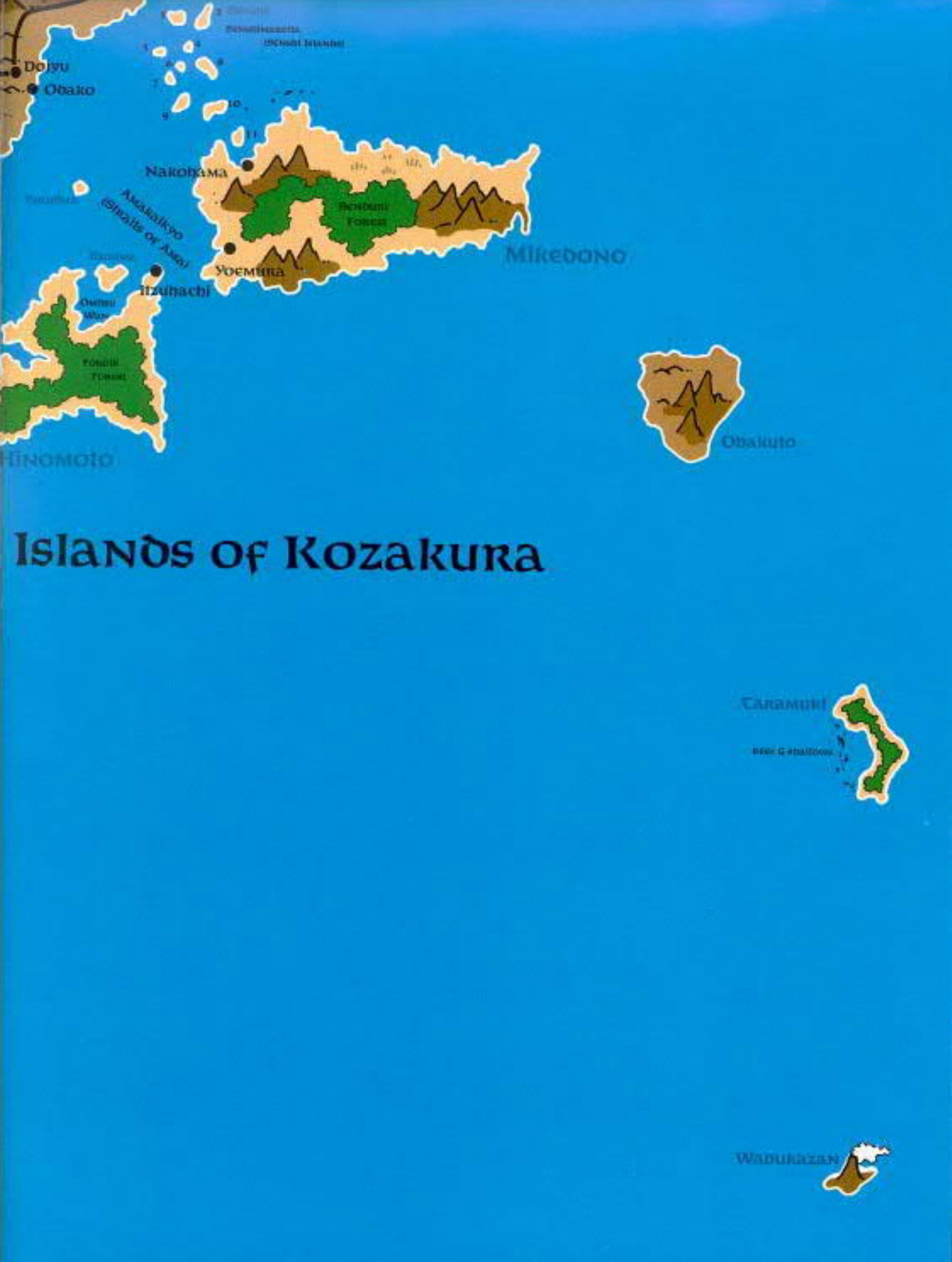
Yellow Sea
In'ani
Cheju
Saishu
Ansong
Taiku
Machukara
Straits of Koryo
Ziyero Ridge
Oiy-do
Mo'ki
Koguryo
Pyong Do
Muradi Lighthouse
Ganra Ye-do
Sea of the Long Morning
Paikai
Kanshu
Chiloshi Forest
Iewara
Mount Matazan
Tsukishima
Oiichizu
Inland Sea
Aru
Kurahito
Renkyu
Sudaiko

Xi
Yaru R.
T'o na'chee
Vorkani Mins
Foo Narar
Singye
Koryo
SILLA
Wic Do Peak
Xai Chung
Manchar
Koje
Goisho
Pan
Kang Bay
Hoparatu River
Belung
Cumen R.
Xi Hulang
Karar
Konang Pen
Kanko
Dang Caverns
Tu Pe
Quelpart
Paekiu-san
Sea of Kozakura
Akabowan (Akabo Bay)
Dragon's Teeth
Lui Do-pah
Shizumi
Sorekaikyo (Sorei Straits)
Sonawan (Sona Bay)
Tobaijo
Norekaikyo (Nore Straits)
Tenmei
Tanegawa
Iobo Plain
Yoshiba
Senita
Okahira
Takeo
Fukama
Shinkoku
Kuba

Isle of No Mosquitoes
Isle of Thandor
Outer Isles
Isle of Gargantuas
Isle of Poison

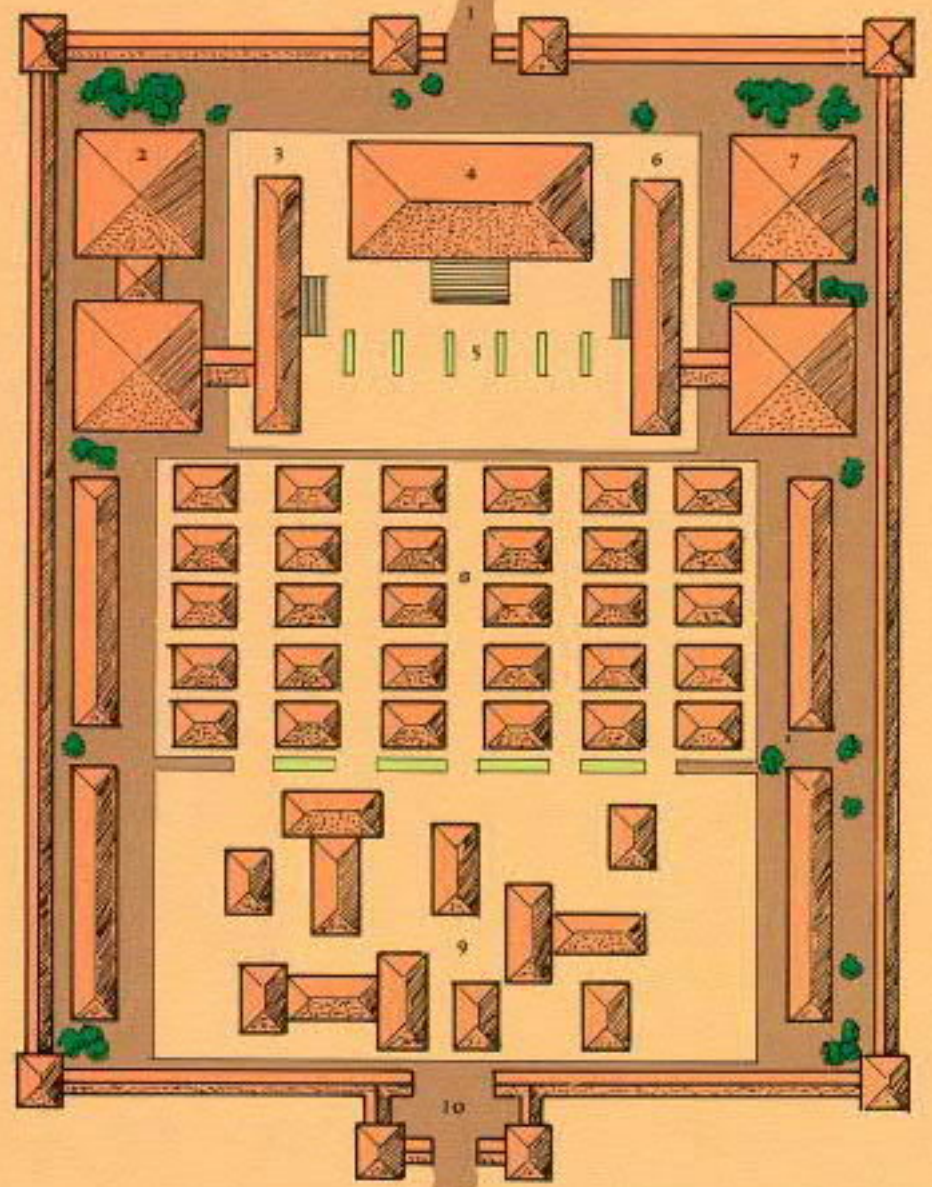
Shidekima
Jotai
Death Meadow
Mount Tobu
Shuni
Mount Fo
Tifuido
Sea of Blossoms
Ibhei
Huyusha
Isle of the Black Tree
Isle of 1,000 Pines
Wesuchi R.
Jufosu Range
Jasuga
Juzimura
Dajima R.
Nanaichi R.
Fouchu
Akkaido
Sea of Patience
Isle of the Gloomy Temple
Ibhei
Huyusha

Ikuyu
Chozawa
Rukimbaru
Akano R.
Tawata Road
Dyogo (Bunken City)
Uwaji
Tomo
Semmishi
Iiso
Umiai R.
Masakado
Jifogawa
Chimotoge
Kabudono
Yoetsu

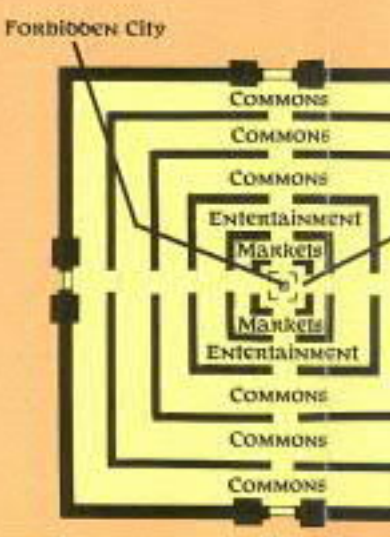


Islands of Kozakura

Forbidden City of the Emperor



1. Gate of the South
2. Palace of the Jade Emp
3. Hall of the Mandarins
4. Hall of Judgement
5. The Great Court of th
6. Hall of Faith
7. Emperor's Palace
8. Halls of the Governme
9. Guest Palaces
10. Gate of Heaven



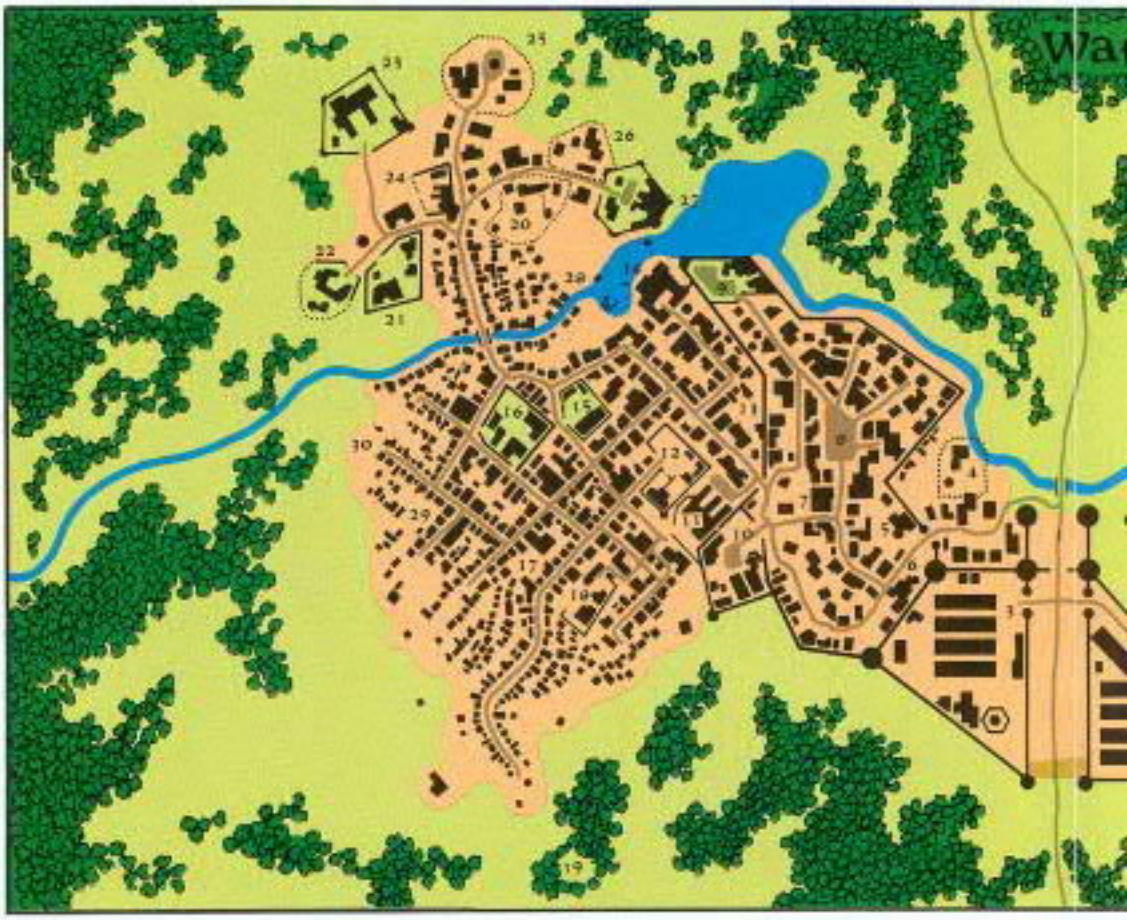
Kao Te'Lung Basic

E'do Formal Gardens

Empress
arins
of the Throne
rnment

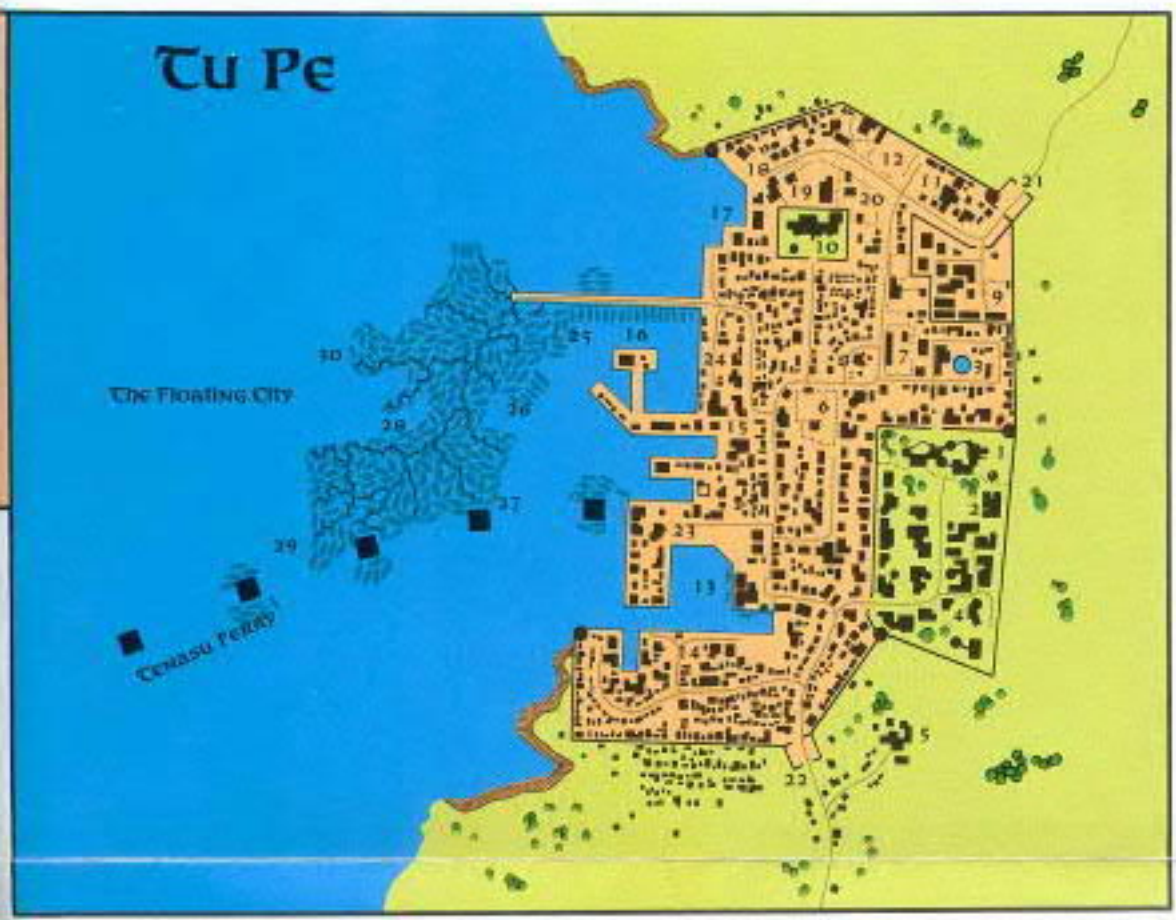
Government

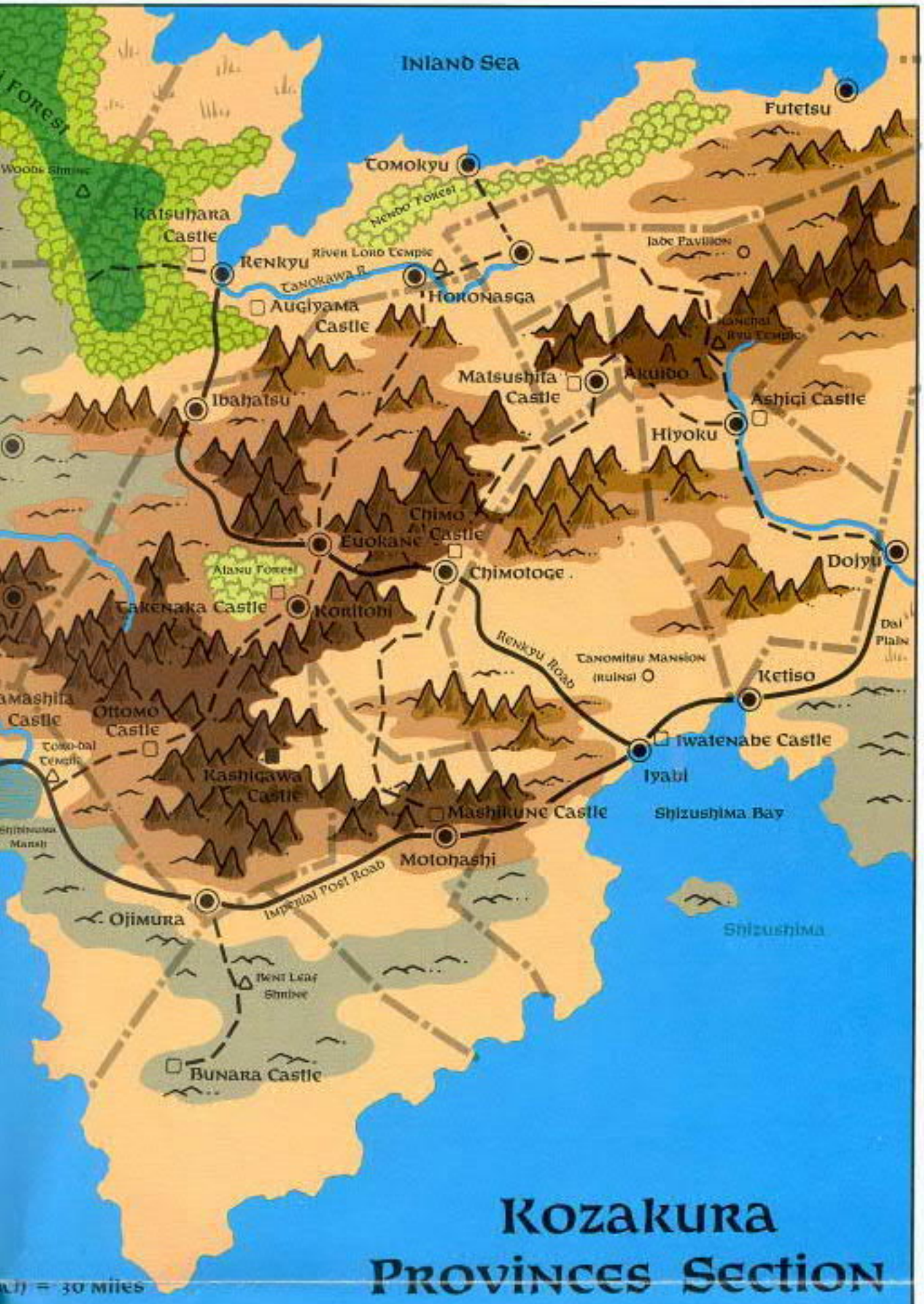
asic Plan

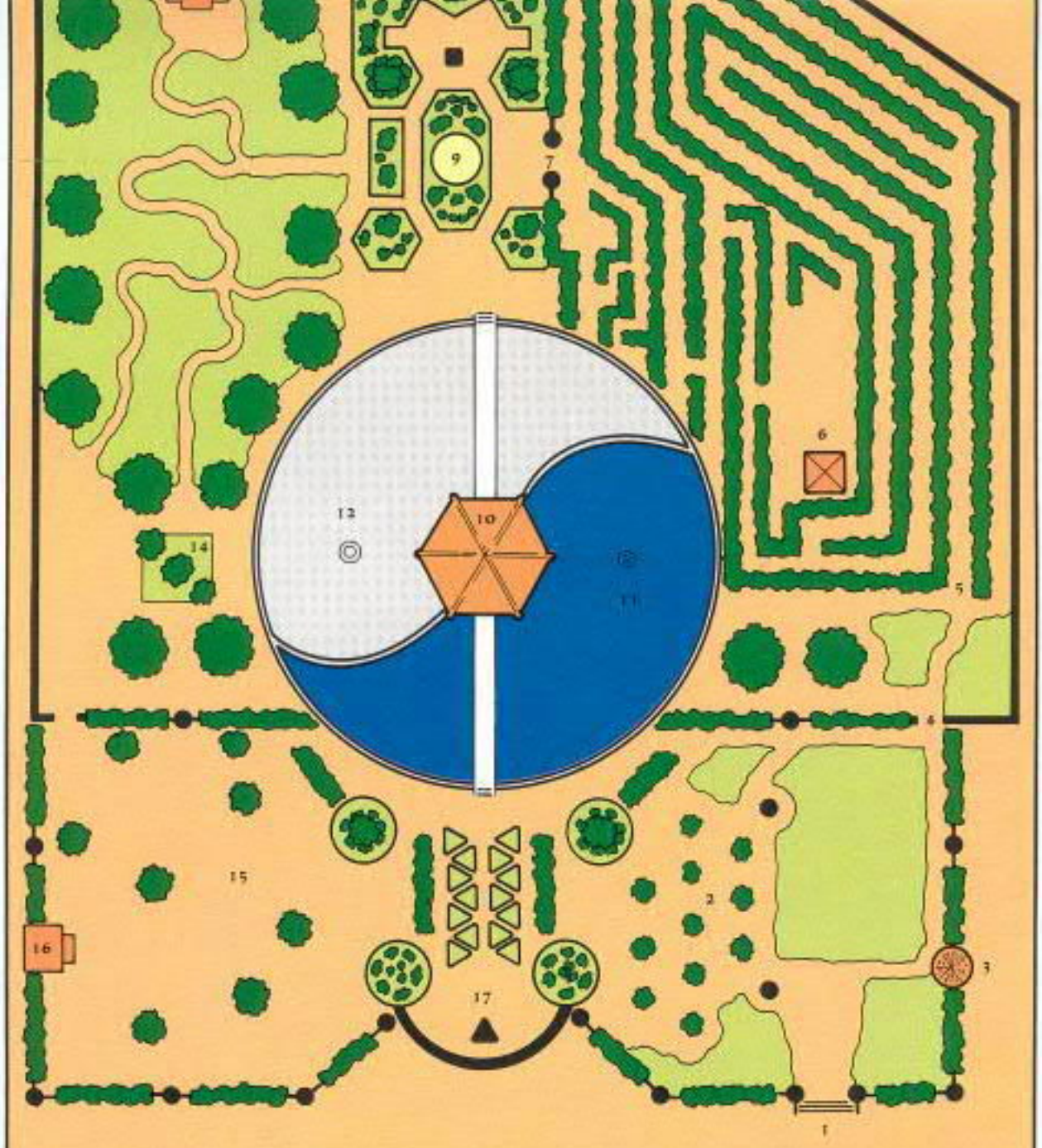


1. Palace of the South Wind, Governor's residence
2. Xithiax Jui, the wu jen's house
3. The Fountain of Anumka, spring fed
4. Jio Zung the hero's mansion
5. The T'u Ohmna ("evening mist") Inn
6. The Menori Trading Compound (cooperative market)
7. S'sent Cankto, the blacksmith and his livery
8. The Hashanii Temple
9. Tu Pe Garrison and Stables
10. Menuki Do Jang
11. North Watch Inn and Stables
12. Genbo Trang the merchant and his "yard"
13. The Royal Docks and the Tu Pe boatyards
14. Zunit Riang the moneychanger
15. The Warehouses of Mukin Wong
16. Gui Fak's pier and fishery
17. Kwin Jong the Soothsayer's Tower
18. The Vix Festival Hall
19. Bokuki Neeka, the master potter, and his yard
20. Hijawai's Stockyards
21. The High Gate
22. The Nokani Gate
23. The Smiling Dragon (tavern)
24. The Dolphin's Rest (tavern)
25. The Bazaar (street market)
26. The Saliqish Inn
27. Swonaku Kung's Tavern
28. Togu Yandi, the arms seller
29. The Southwatch Dock and Inn
30. Diyantu Family House

1. The Gate of Yanching, across the Southern Passage Highway
2. The Wafang Fortress and Garrison, east compound
3. The Wafang Garrison, west compound
4. Bok Chu's Inn
5. Nubo Jusa's House, the money-changer
6. Rankow the Wu Jen's house and towers
7. The merchant Yo Ven Cha's warehouse
8. The Market Square
9. Sonuk Du's Mansion and observatory
10. The Master Potter
11. The blacksmith Wogentu's yard
12. The butcher Man'lo's stockyard
13. The Fanu clan house
14. The mansion and rice paddies of the Hoji clan
15. The Gai clan mansion
16. The Qu Tung School of martial art
17. Banda Inu the seer's house
18. The mercenary Gwec's house and stables
19. The Fox's Clearing, where the rain shrine stands
20. The merchant Wiscu Chon's Yards
21. The Uisa To School compound
22. Fandro the merchant's mansion
23. The Yang Keep
24. Xircon the arms-seller
25. The stables of Han So
26. Fan'intu's Inn
27. The Donang clan home
28. Unibo the interpreter's house
29. Wise Mara's house
30. Tanungo the barbarian's shop




Inland Sea
Futetsu
Tomokyu
Mendo Forest
Woods Shrine
Katsuhara Castle
Renkyu
River Lord Temple
Tanokawa R.
Iabe Pavilion
Horonasga
Augiyama Castle
Matsushita Castle
Akuido
Ashigi Castle
Ibahatsu
Hiyoku
Chimo Castle
Euokane
Chimotoge
Dojyu
Alanu Forest
Takenaka Castle
Koritobi
Renkyu Road
Tanomitsu Mansion (ruins)
Ketiso
Dai Plain
Ottomo Castle
Iwatenabe Castle
Iyabi
Kashigawa Castle
Mashikune Castle
Shizushima Bay
Motohashi
Imperial Post Road
Ojimura
Shizushima
Bent Leaf Shrine
Bunara Castle
Kozakura
Provinces Section
= 30 miles



1. The Ganji Gate, or Gate of Dawn's Rays
2. Eleven bonzai junipers, gifts from the Kozakuran Court
3. The Bell Tower of Sandor
4. The Gate of Lenn
5. The Maze of Torlak Zo
6. The great brass pyramid of Yo'un
7. The Magical Gate of Fa
8. The statue of Minchu the Horrible
9. The Golden Globe of Forgetfulness
10. The E'bo pagoda
11. Concave wading pool with obsidian tiles, drain in center forming Yin
12. Convex wading pool with white opal tiles, fountain in center forming Yang
13. The War Shrine of Pendax, under the hanging gardens
14. The three elms of the wu jen Choi'ax
15. The Mas'zing Gate and the Field of Wandering Trees
16. The Shrine of the Holy Balance
17. The Temple of Absolute Knowledge

Balanzia, circa 2310

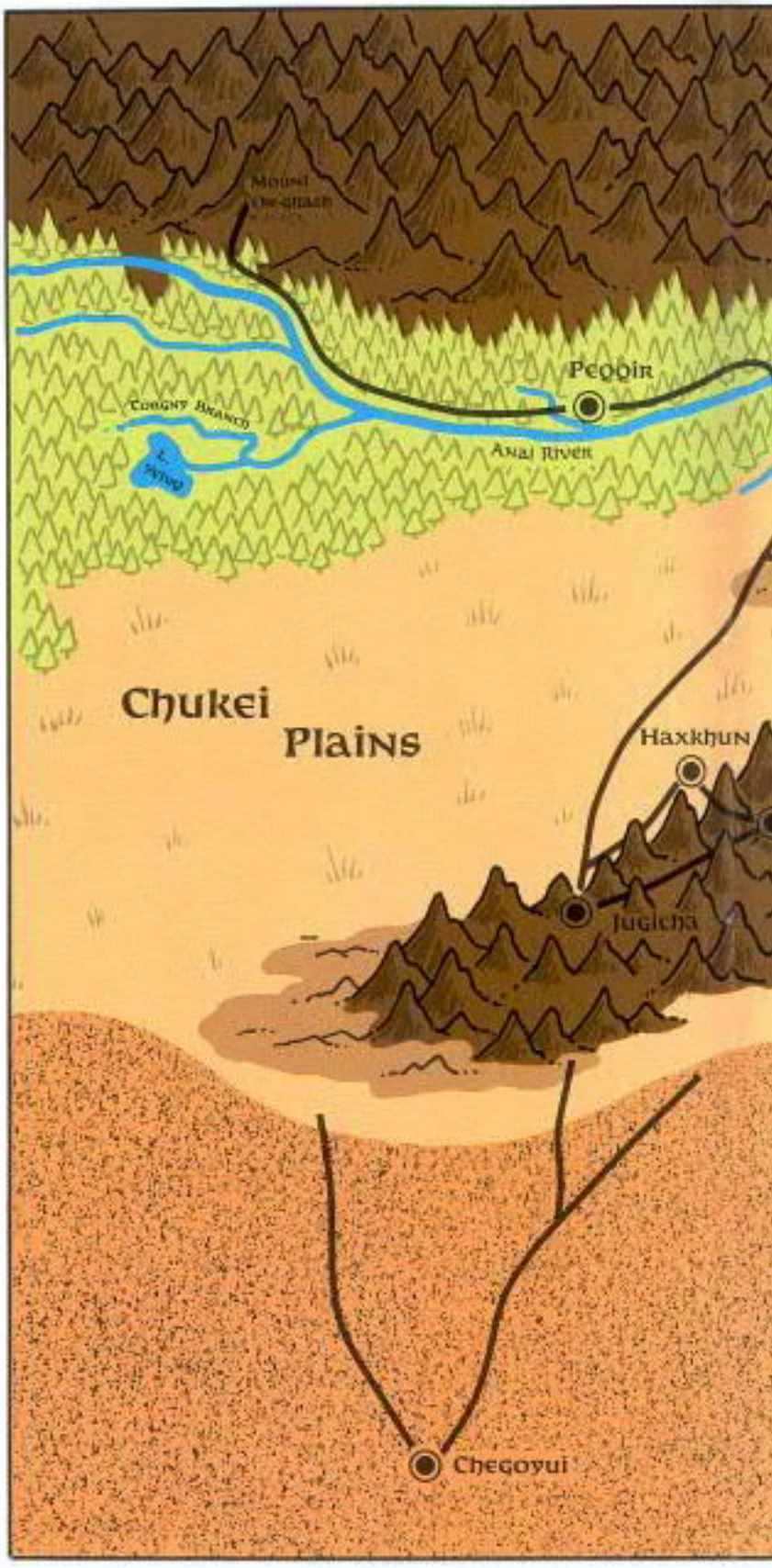
Balanzia, circa 2607

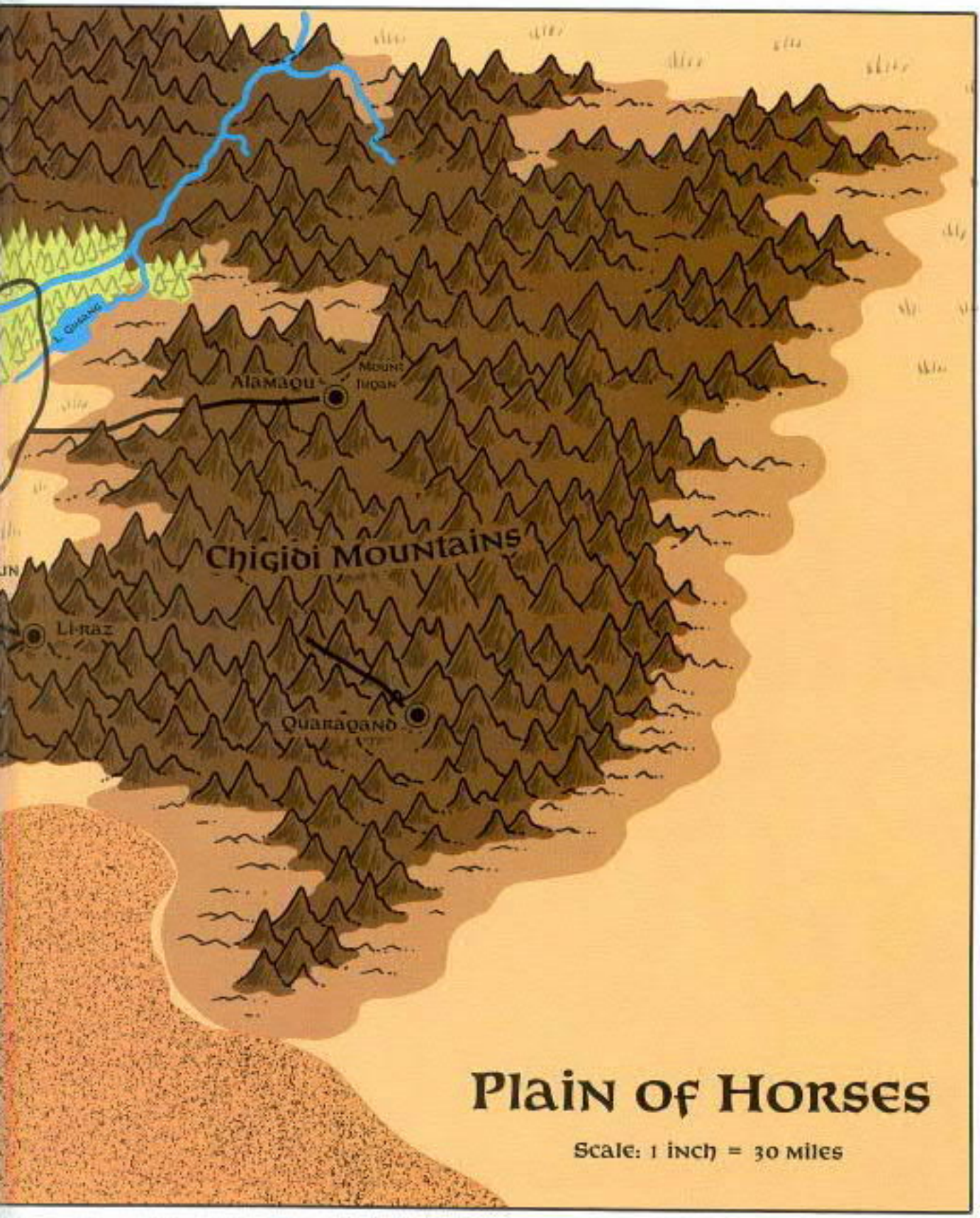
Ba

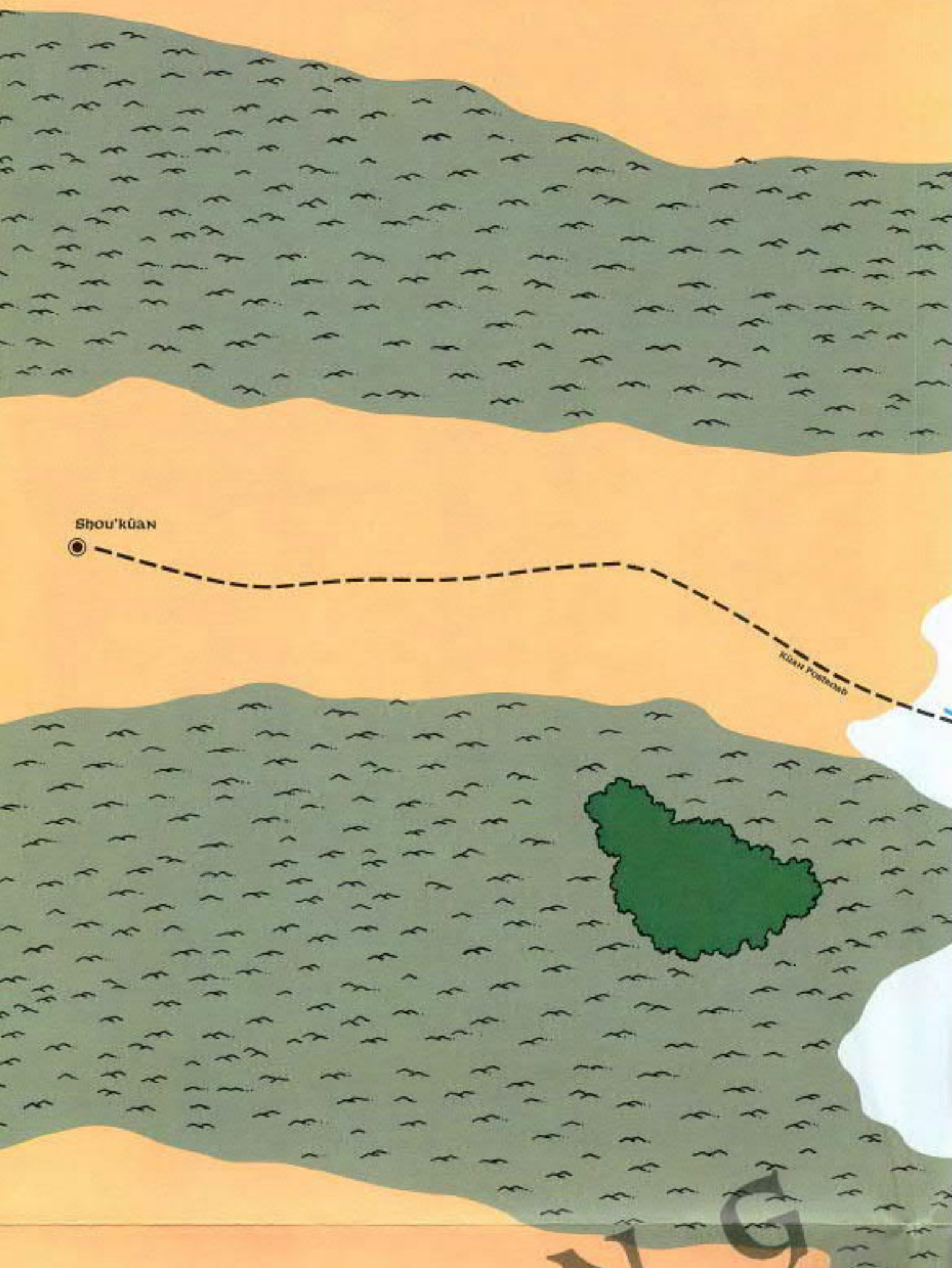
1. The sh
2. The do
3. The ca
4. The M
Empe
5. The co
6. The to
7. The Gr
Asivna
8. The ho
9. The sh
10. The Mi
11. The Co
12. The te
13. The wa
14. The ho
15. The ol
16. The Ye
17. The Gr
18. The Ma
19. The Fo
20. The Ill
21. The ya
22. The W
23. The Be
24. The W
25. Nendr
26. The Ca
27. Captal
28. The M
29. The Ga
30. The Ga
31. The Ga
32. The Gi
33. The L
the Ma
34. The E
35. The ya
Tabot
36. The ya
37. The M

Balanzia, circa 2310

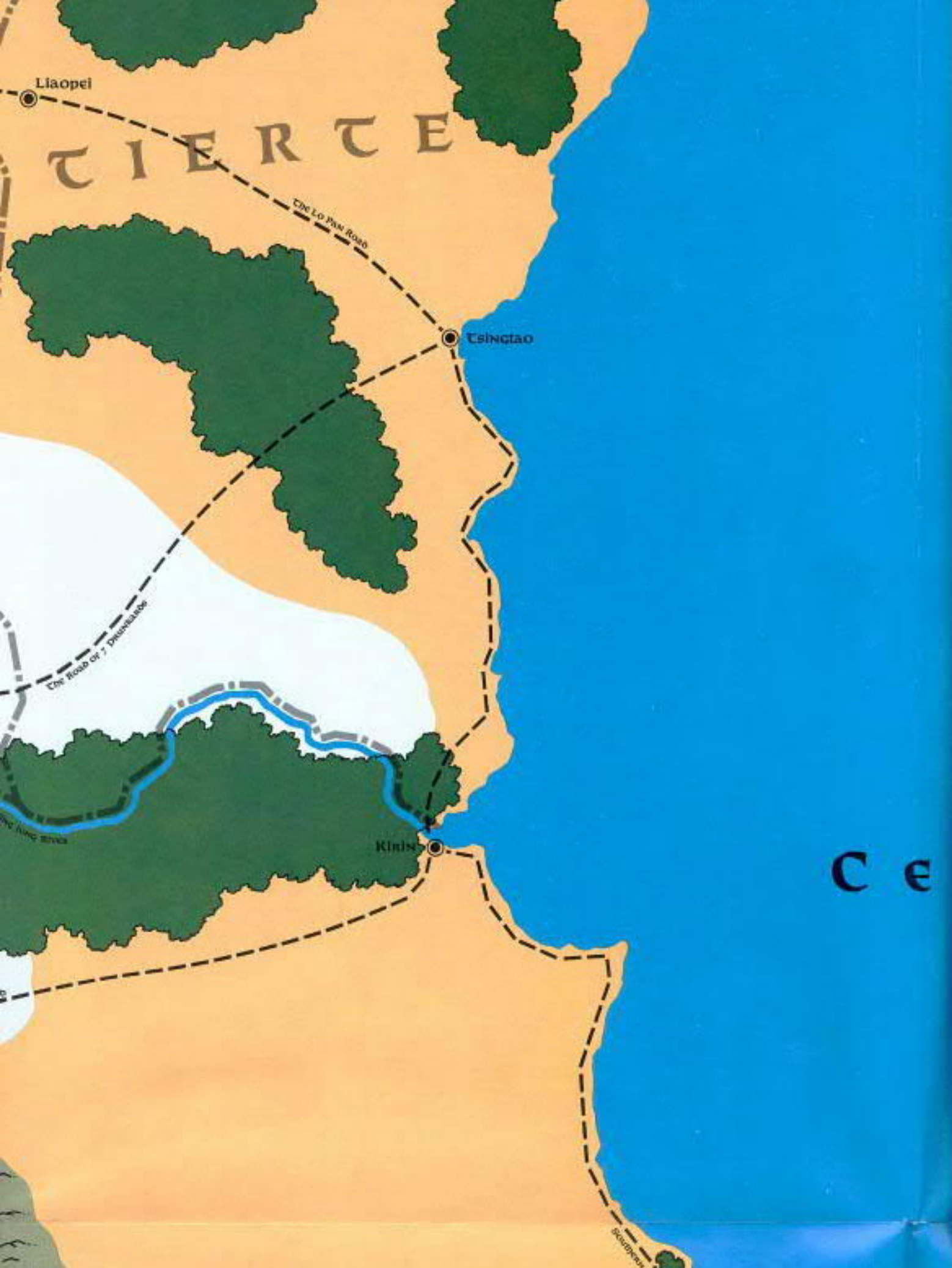
e shipyards of the master wright Pokan
e docks of Balanzia
e castle of E'tuing clan, lords of Balanzia
e mansion of Wai Ubo Chung, cousin to the
peror of T'u Lung
e compound of the Ty clan
e towers of Angu Riz the wu jen and seer
e great mansion of the merchant Rhot Chu
ivna
e house of the money-changer, Keno
e shop of Tugudo the Lance-maker
e military school of Wan Tonki
e Cotnui park and zoo
e temple of the East
e warehouses and homes of Xu
e house of Zittra the Witch
e observatory of Minkra the Sage
e Yellow Magpie Inn
e great sea tower of Horsa the Warrior
e market
e Fendo clan house
e library of Ont the Wise
e yards of Yekolba the blacksmith
e White Dog Inn
e Bonaku Boarding House
e Wachuni clan house
ndra the Wu Jen's home and tower
e Cantun clan house
plain Onakoo Wee's home
e merchant Zia'ui Denti's house
e Gate of Hang'to
e Gate of Shuza
e Gate of Benchu
e Great Sea Wall
e Left Sea Tower of Balanzia, housing
magic bowl of Tru Jakee
e E'nnuka Suindu Inn
e yards of Gheta Xax, the merchant of
bot
e yards and storehouse of the Bahn clan
e mansion of Pudda the Strong

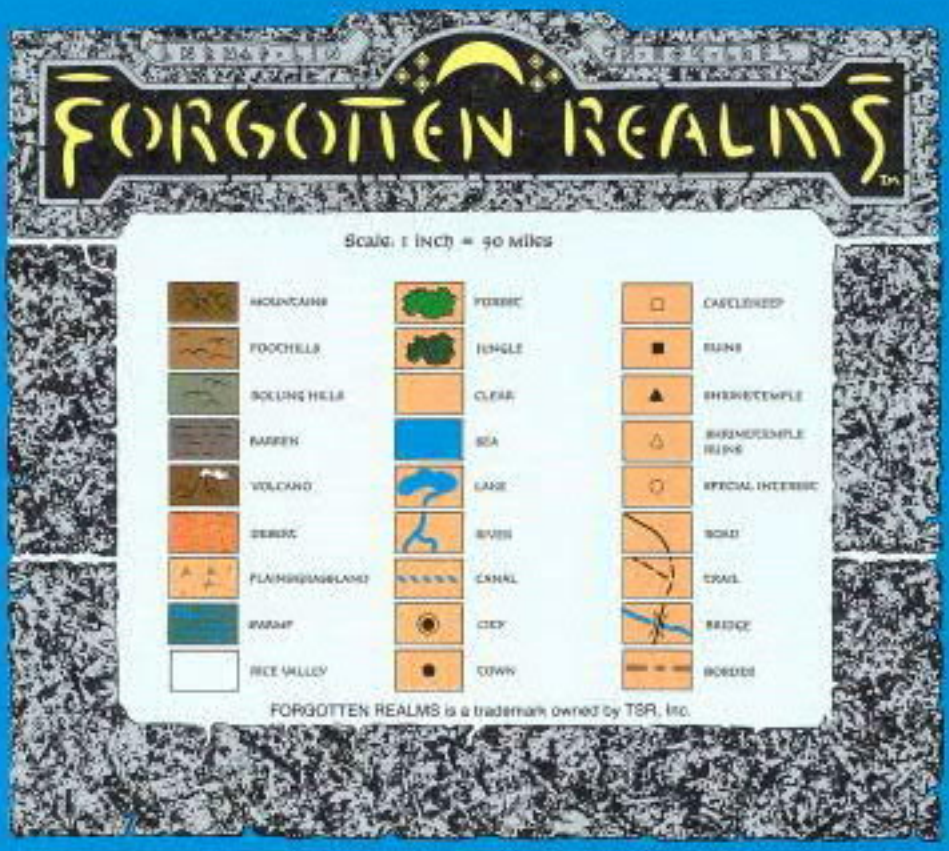



Alamaqu
Mount Iuqan
Chigidi Mountains
Li-raz
Quanaqand
Plain of Horses
Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles


Shou'kûan
Kûan Postroad

Hsi-feng
Spectre's Bridge
Taitung
Bridge of Taitung
Tofing Bridge
The Klareng Highway
Yang Road
The 7 Falls Bridge
Linshung
TUNG


Liaopei
TIERTE
The Lo Pan Road
Tsingtao
The Road of 7 Drunkards
Kinin
Ce



e l e s t i a l

S e a

CH'ING
CO'MING
Upper Hungsie River
KAO SHAN
1032XXX0703
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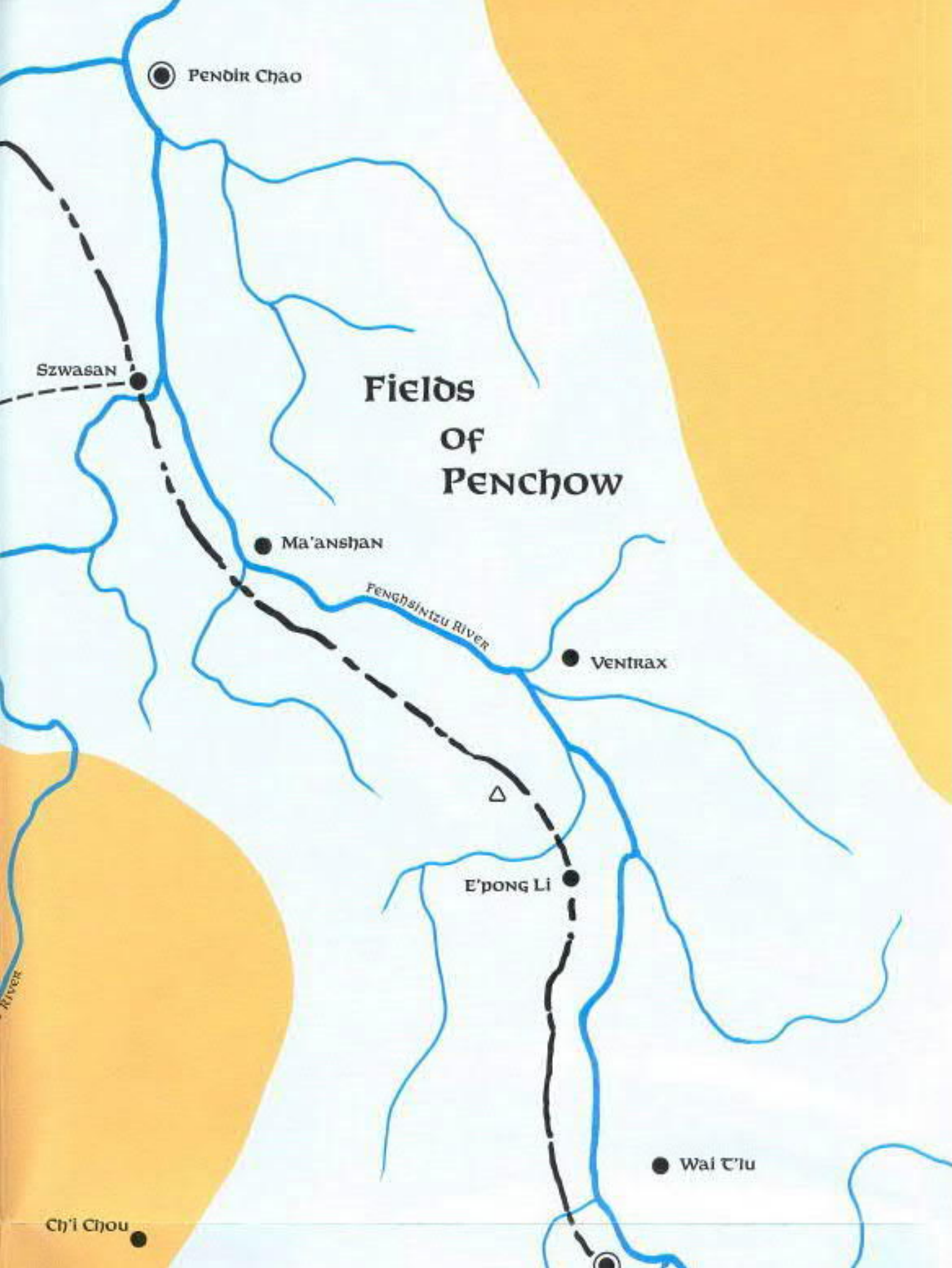
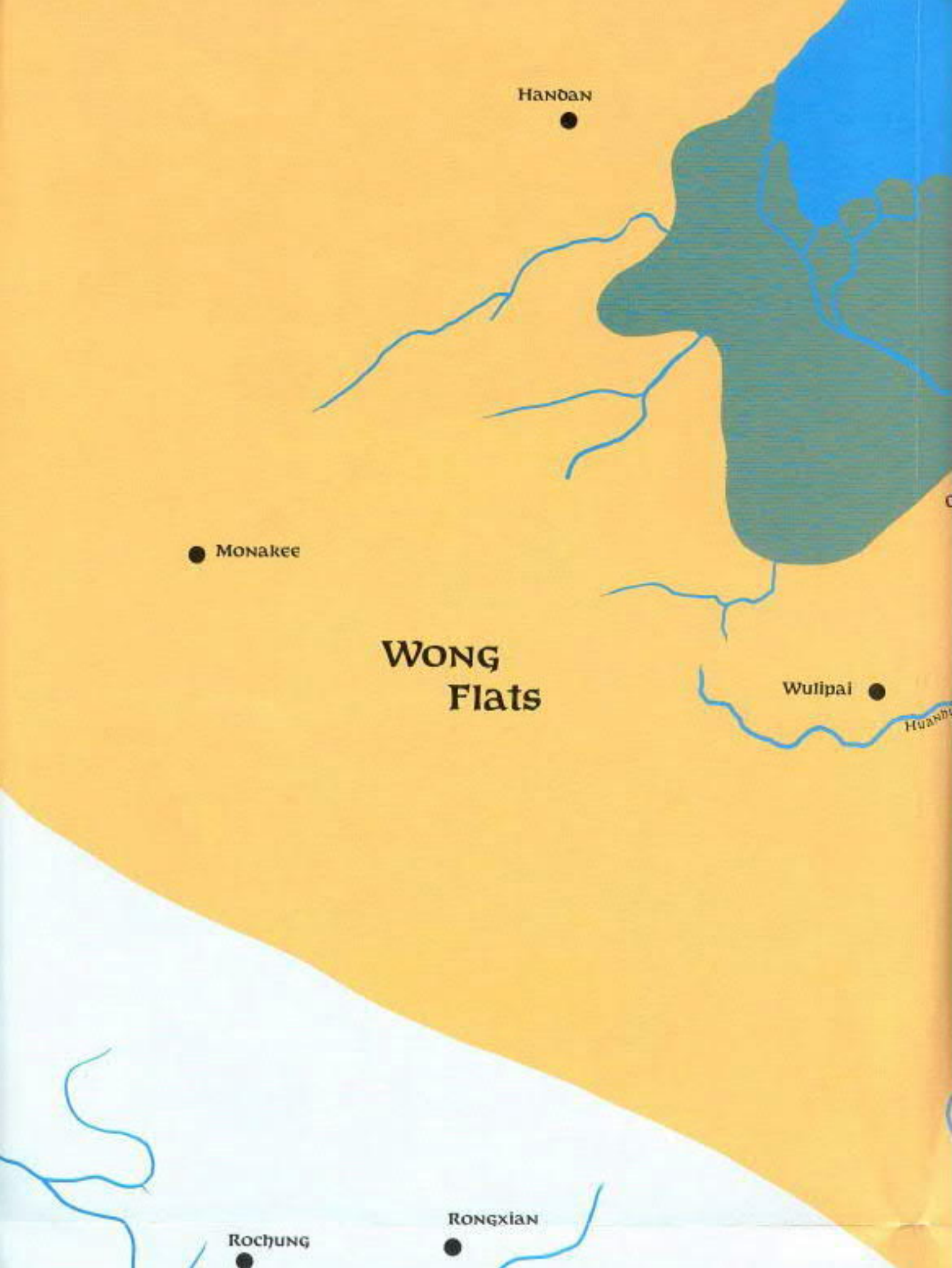
HUN
Shangtao
The Kiameng Highway
Grand Canal of the Second Empire
The Silver Road
N
WAN
Pingchow

NGSTE
The Hio Bridge
The Chan Lu Bridge
White Bridge
Chan Lu River
NG KUO

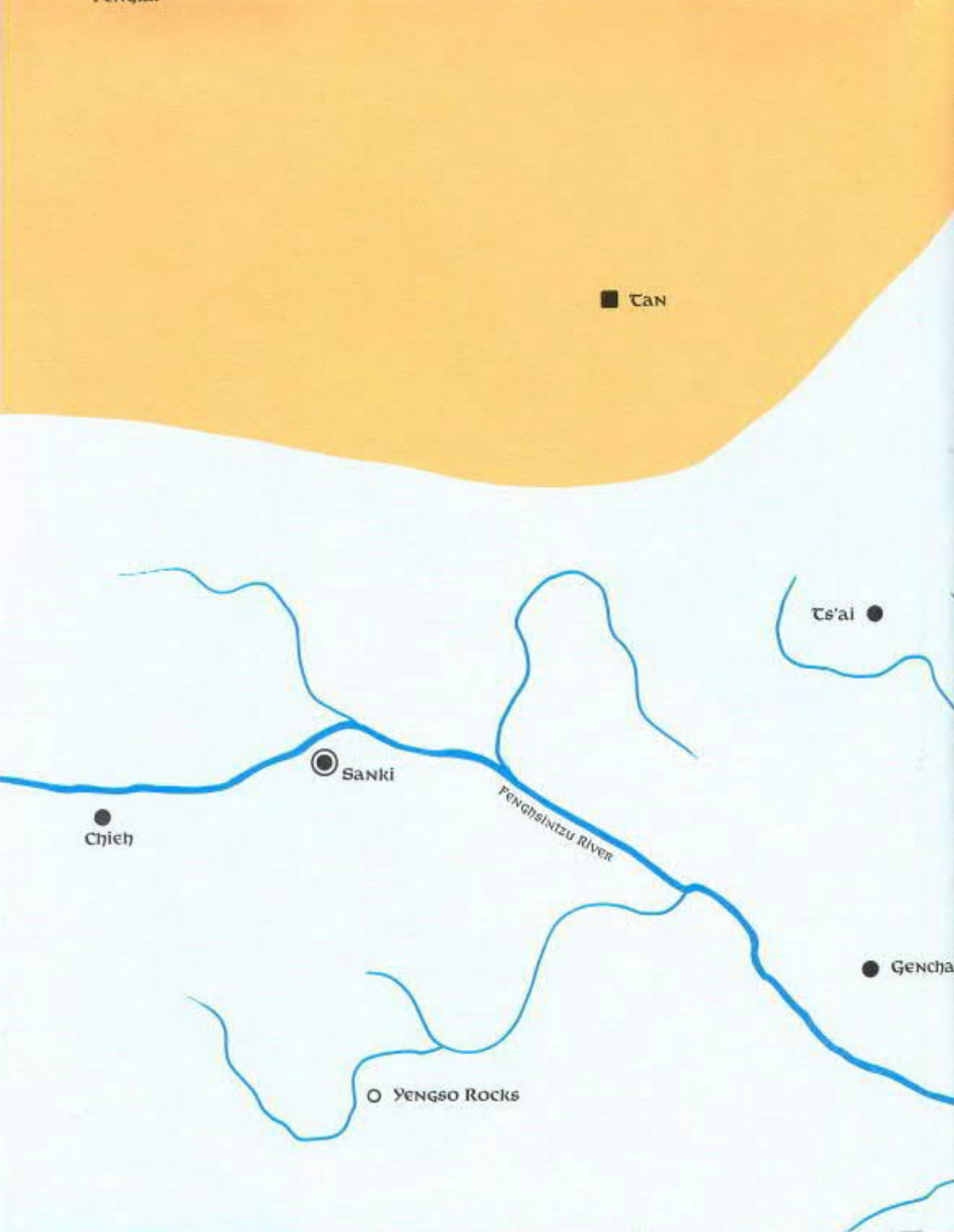
Taoshin
The Keelung Road
Karat'in
HAI
YUAN
(KARATIN)
Keelung
7 Master's Highroad
Shinian Bridge
(destroyed)
The Stamford Road

Ningbo
Dulesi
Tran
Hojuro
P'u
Dabu River
T'hai
Salt Flats
Fengtai


Pendir Chao
Szwasan
Fields
of
Penchow
Ma'anshan
Fenghsintzu River
Ventrax
E'pong Li
Wai T'lu
Ch'i Chou


Handan
Monakee
Wong
Flats
Wulipai
Rongxian
Rochung

Go S'tena Quarries
Chanung Marsh
Nikaro Monument
Caishiji
Gawai
Akensai River
Yantai
Qingyi River
Anping
Chengde


Tan
Ts'ai
Sanki
Chieh
Fenghsintzu River
Gencha
Yengso Rocks

Y'cho Kang
Dazu
Kokuru
Youtingpu
King Wai's Canal
Hsia
Longcangsi
Fo Liche Gai
Zhengding

Rochung
Shosun
Bex Ya
Ferry
Ji'nancheng
Dakarazu Palace
Wai
Lai Sao
Donu S'ai
Kau Ne

Baoguosi

Rintai Plains

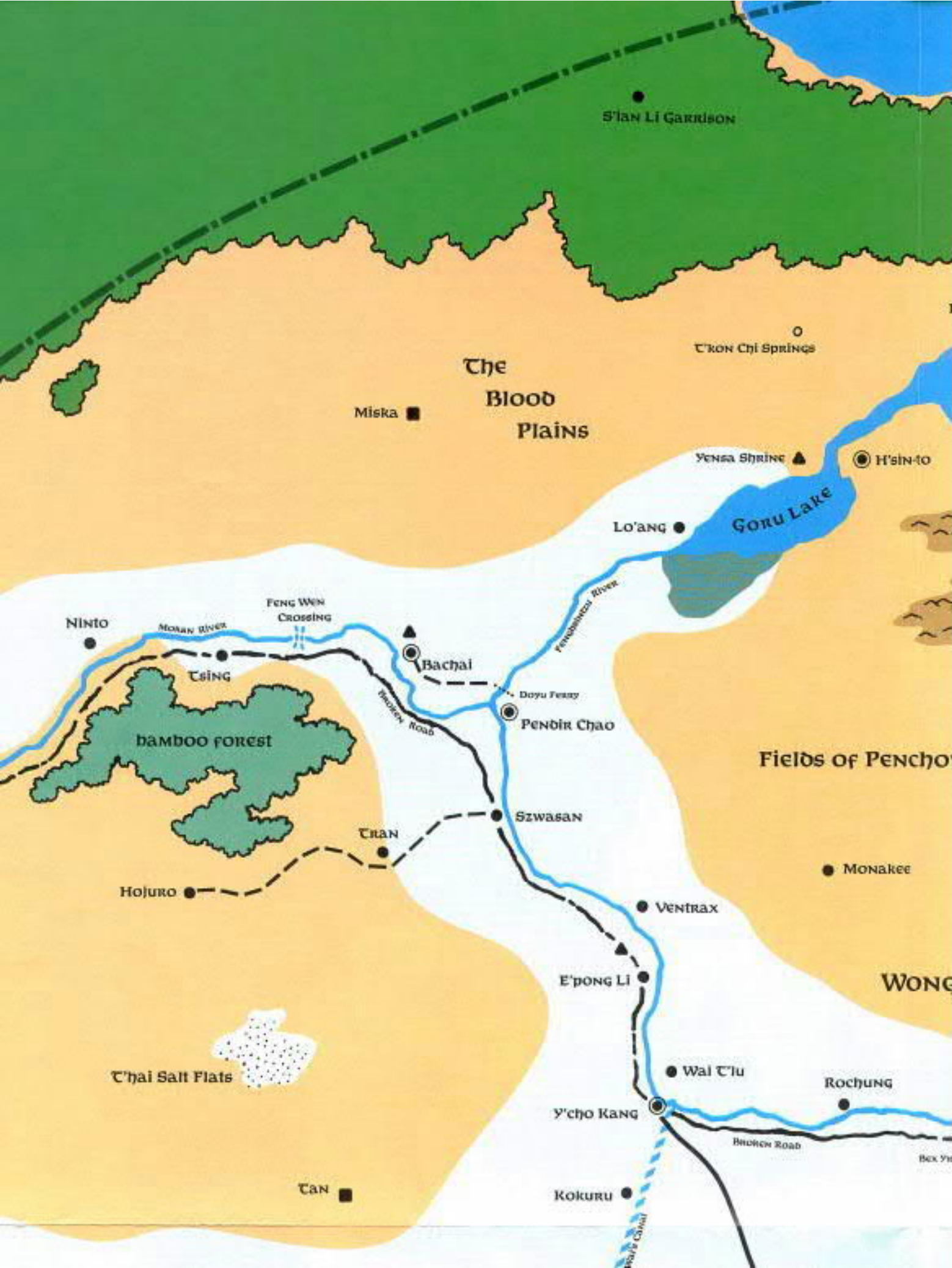
Zhoukoudian

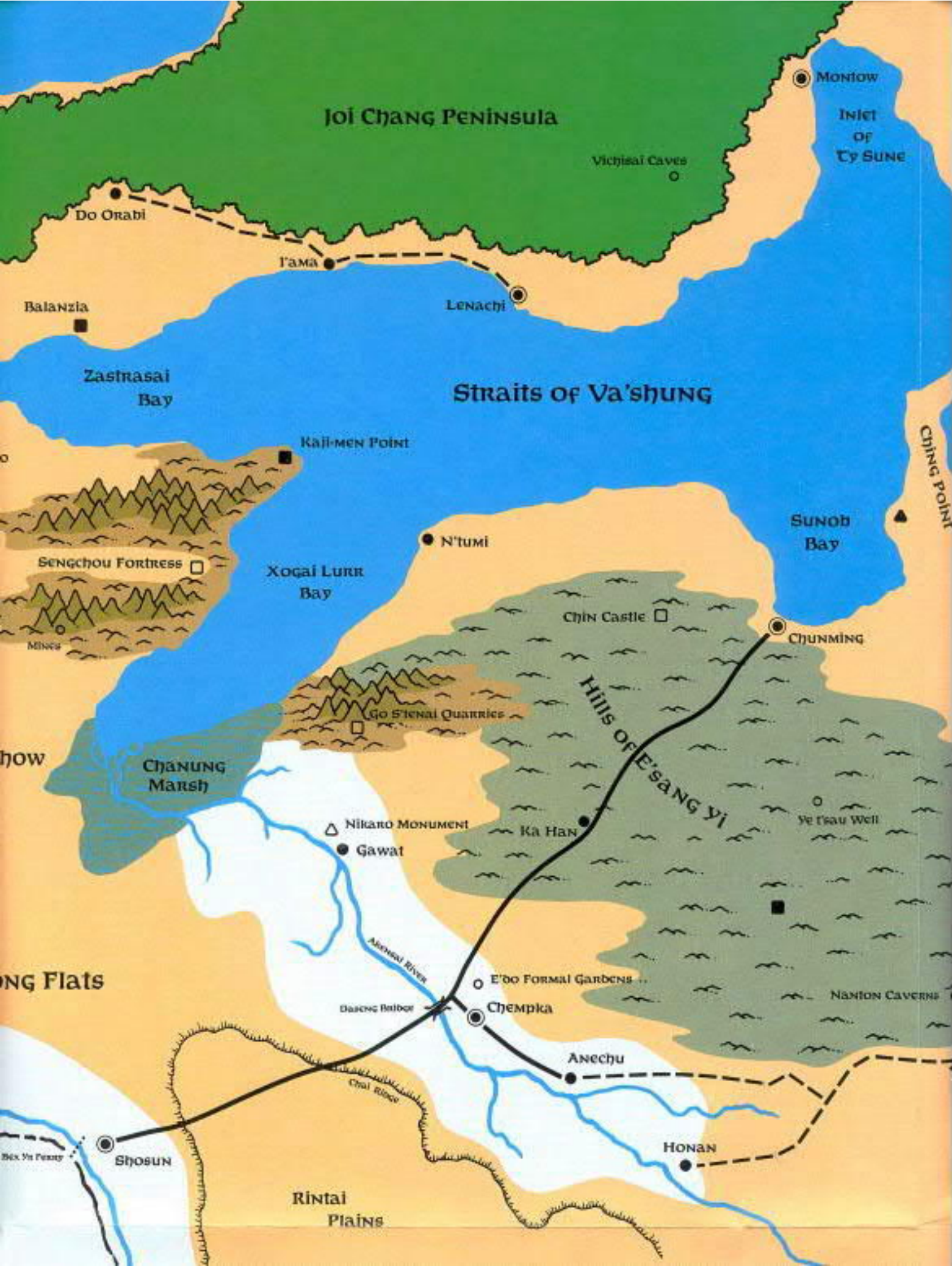
Yiheyuan

I'wa Geiser

Hijan

Changmen

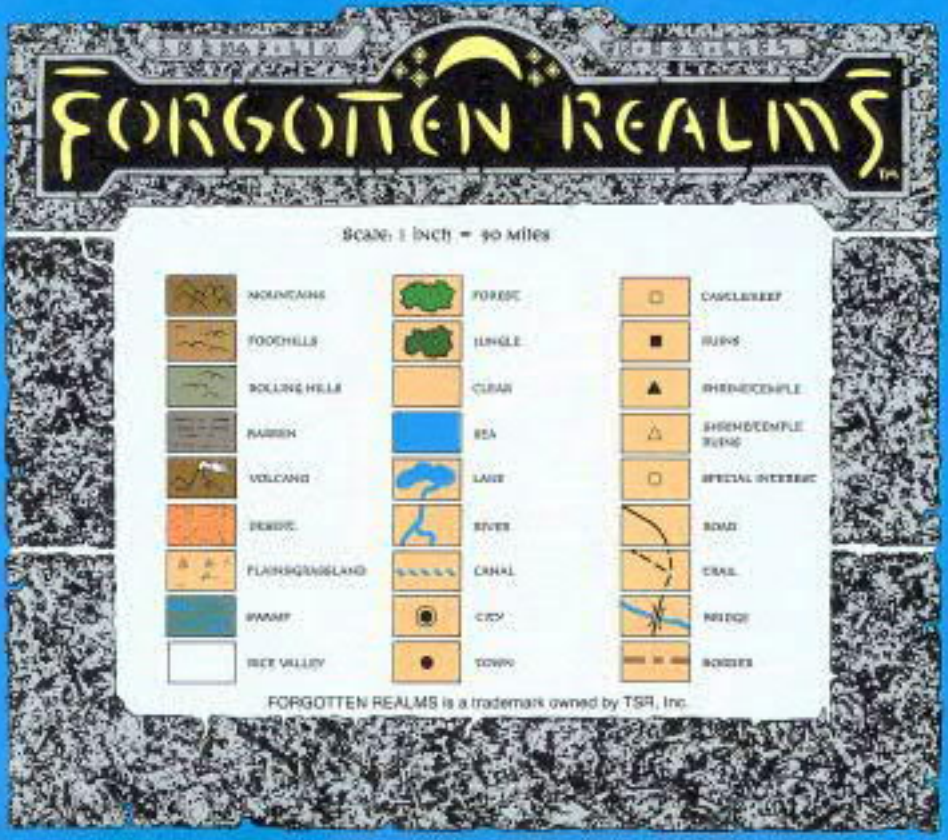

S'lan Li Garrison
T'kon Chi Springs
The Blood Plains
Miska
Yensa Shrine
H'sin-to
Goru Lake
Lo'ang
Feng Wen Crossing
Ninto
Mokan River
Tsing
Bachai
Fenghsingtzu River
Doyu Ferry
Pendir Chao
Broken Road
bamboo forest
Fields of Pencho
Szwasan
Tran
Hojuro
Monakee
Ventrax
E'pong Li
Wong
T'hai Salt Flats
Wai T'lu
Rochung
Y'cho Kang
Broken Road
Tan
Kokuru



Joi Chang Peninsula
Montow
Inlet of Ty Sune
Vichisai Caves
Do Orabi
I'ama
Lenachi
Balanzia
Zastrasai Bay
Straits of Va'shung
Kaji-men Point
Ching Point
Sunob Bay
N'tumi
Sengchou Fortress
Xogai Lurr Bay
Chin Castle
Chunming
Mines
Go S'tenai Quarries
Hills of E'sang yi
how
Chanung Marsh
Nikaro Monument
Ka Han
Ye t'sau Well
Gawat
Akensai River
ong Flats
E'do Formal Gardens
Nanton Caverns
Daseng Bridge
Chempka
Anechu
Chai Ridge
Shosun
Honan
Rintai Plains

Te Pachan Castle
Pe Nok
Zawgun's Landing
Ausa
Caves of Won Yetai
Xifung Reefs
Fae-oo Temple
Ux
Be'anu
Qi Dao
Keeling
La Island
Re'asun
Cura Twi Caverns
Tsing Tower
Chin

Panjarbu
Nahbatul
Bawa
Bavanese
Plains
Kingdom of Bertan
Inarem
Bay
Diagong
Bawani Mountains
Burur
Ulama
Rukun
Si'rat
BAWA
Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles


FORGOTTEN REALMS
Scale: 1 inch = 90 miles
MOUNTAINS
FOOTHILLS
ROLLING HILLS
BARREN
VOLCANO
DESERT
PLAINS/GRASSLAND
SWAMP
RICE VALLEY
FOREST
JUNGLE
CLEAR
SEA
LAKE
RIVER
CANAL
CITY
TOWN
CAVE/LAIR/KEEP
RUINS
SHRINE/TEMPLE
SHRINE/TEMPLE RUINS
SPECIAL INTEREST
ROAD
TRAIL
BRIDGE
BORDER
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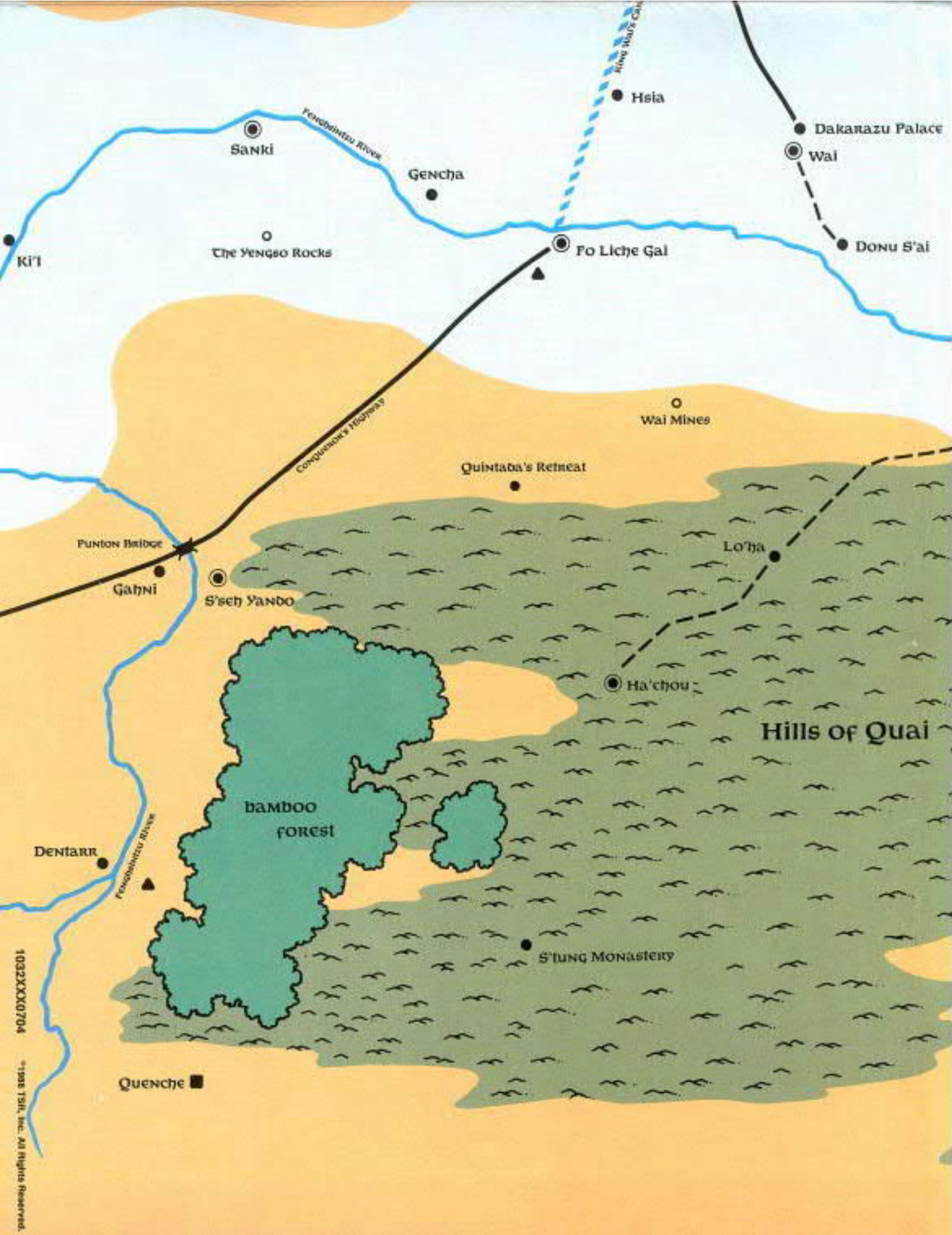
Hsia
Dakarazu Palace
Wai
Sanki
Fenghuangzu River
Gencha
Ki'i
The Yengso Rocks
Fo Liche Gai
Donu S'ai
Wai Mines
Conqueror's Highway
Quintaba's Retreat
Punton Bridge
Gahni
S'seh Yando
Lo'ha
Ha'chou
Hills of Quai
bamboo forest
Dentarr
Fenghuangzu River
S'lung Monastery
Quenche
1032XXX0704
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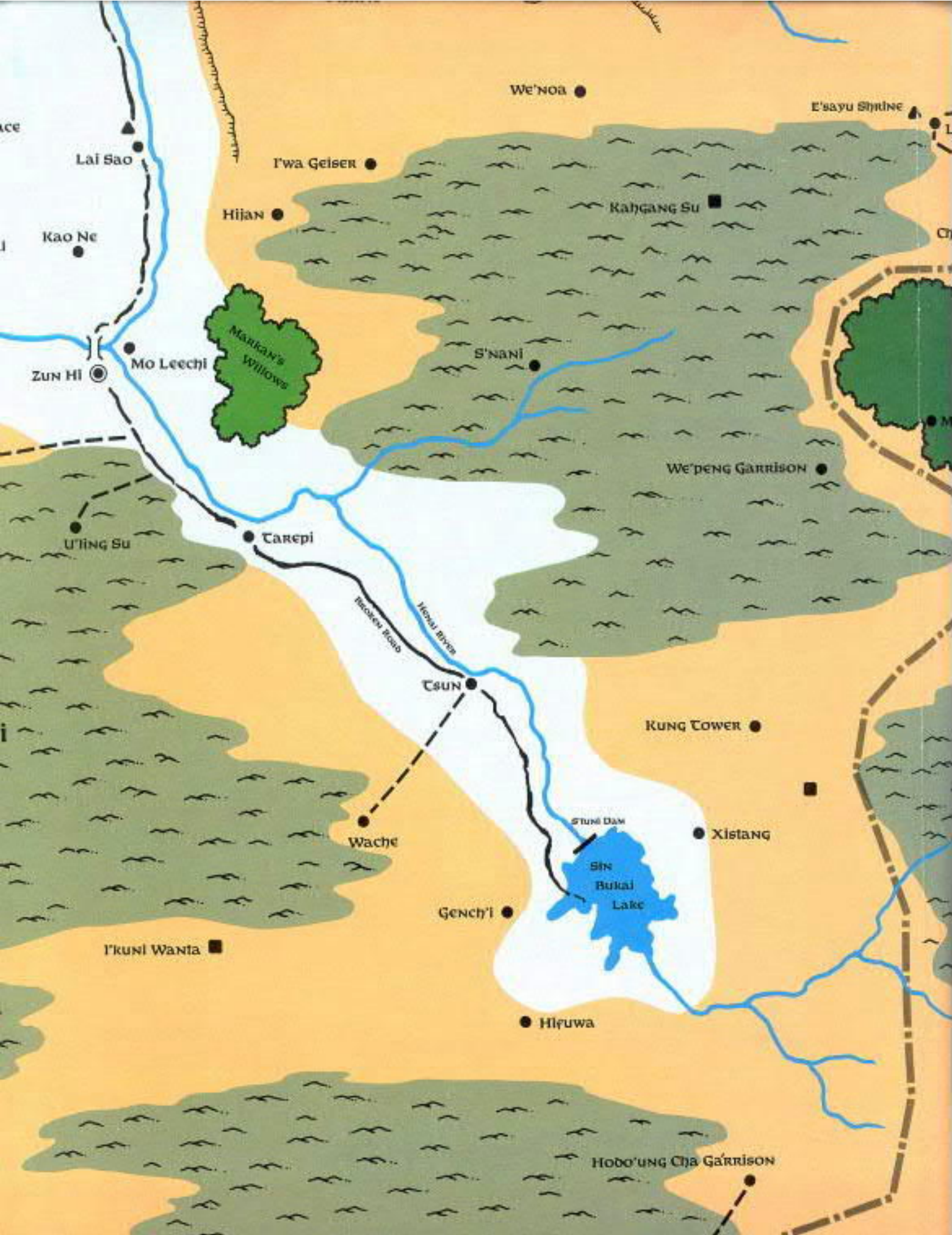
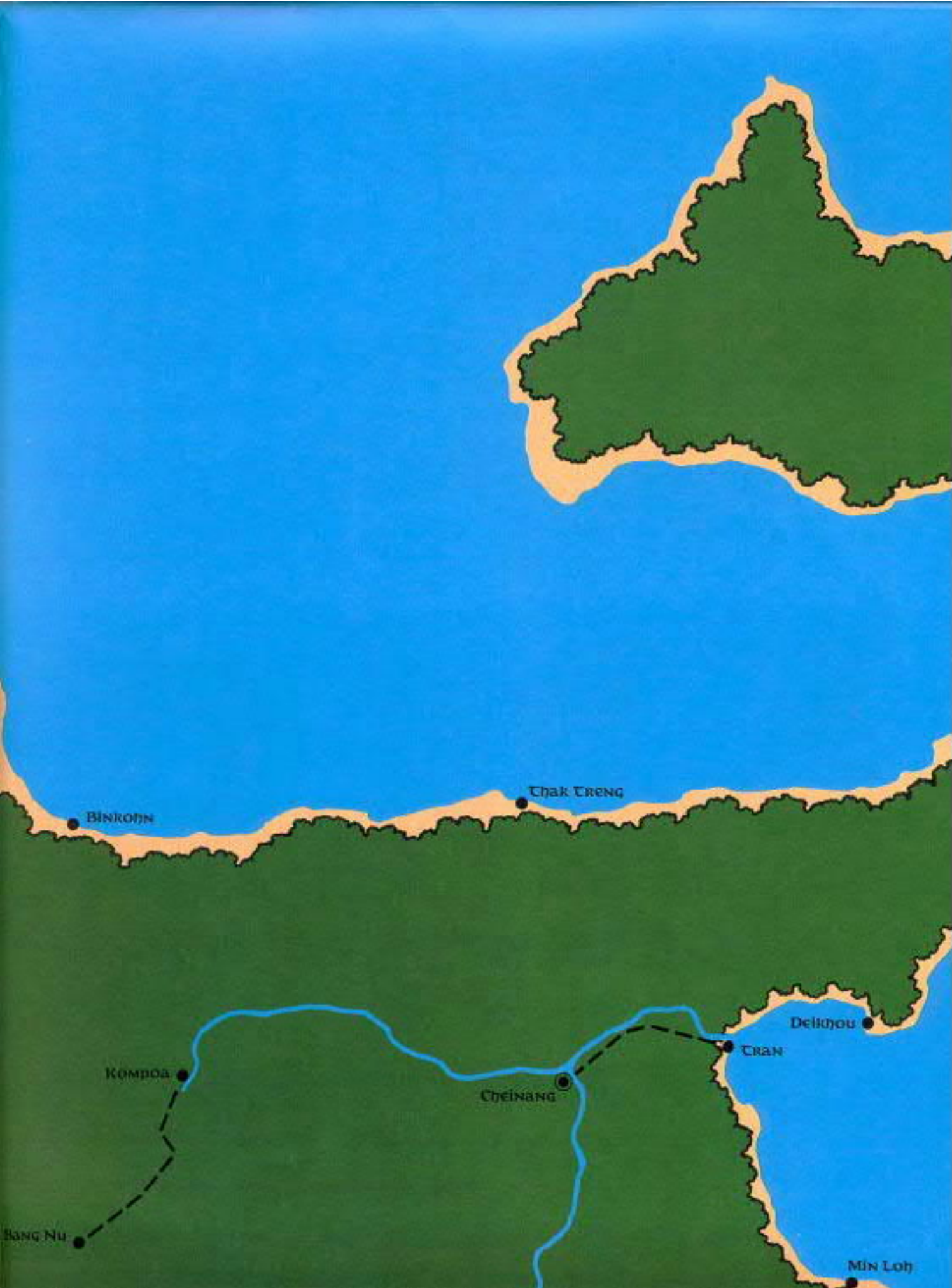
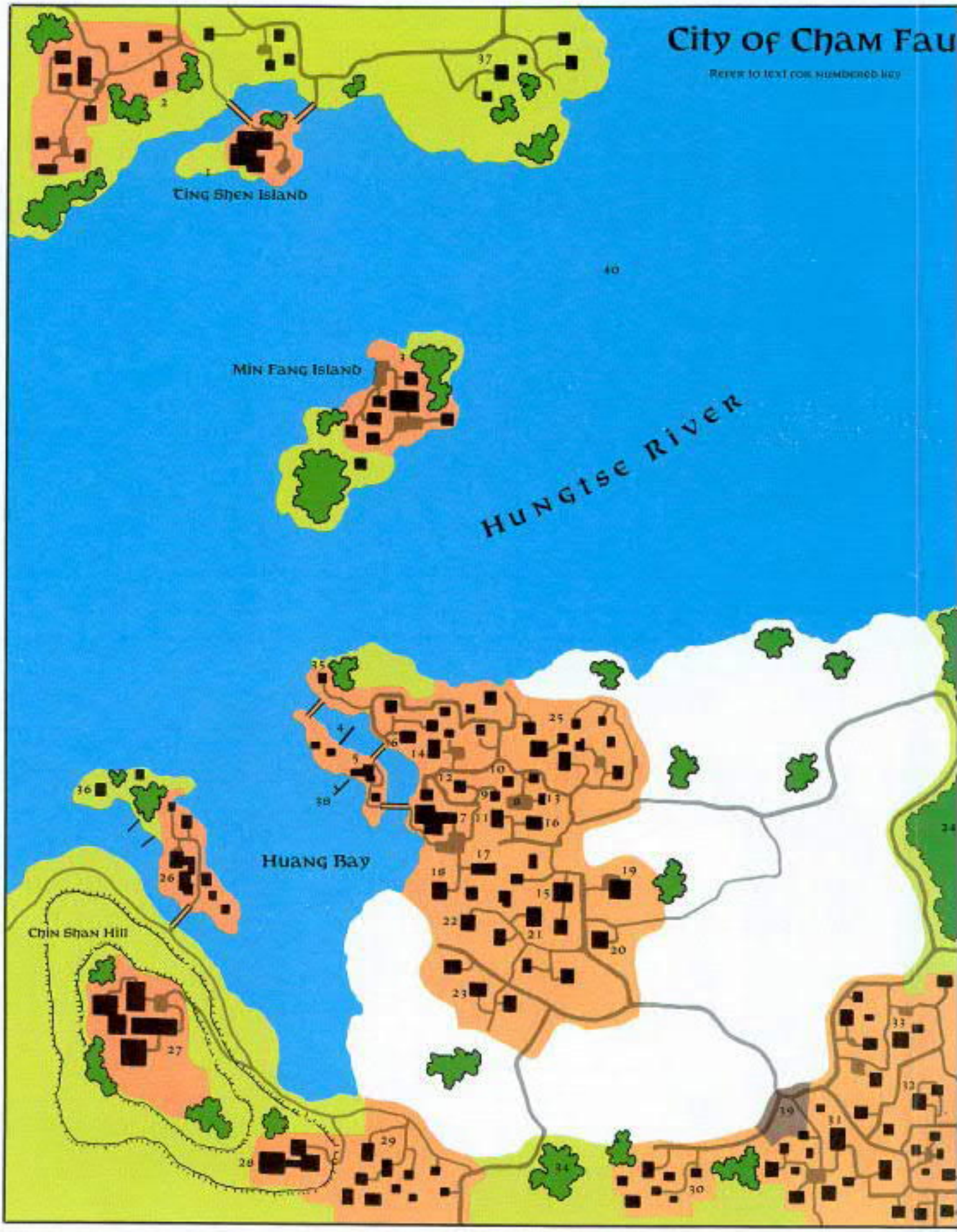
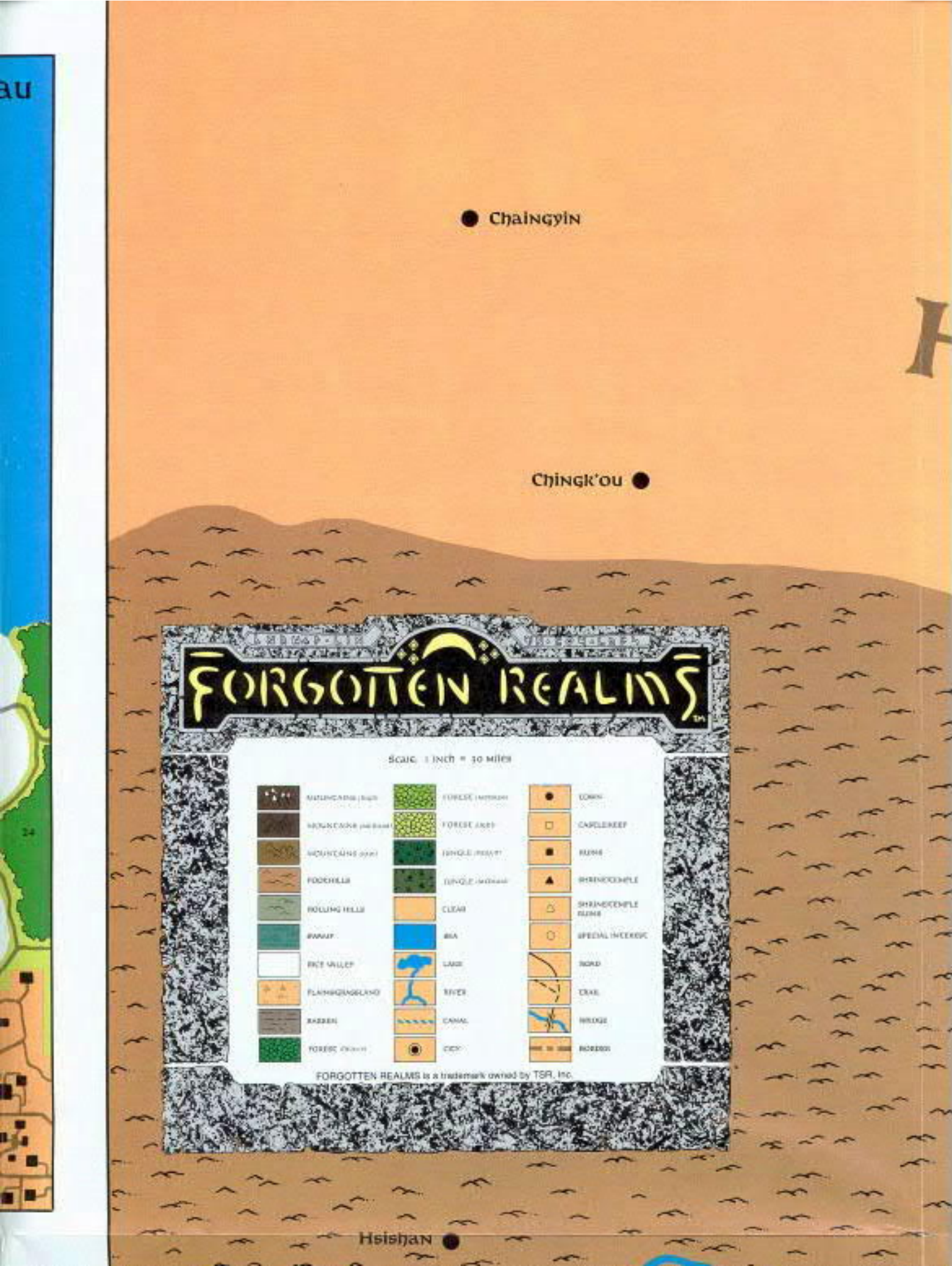

We'noa
E'sayu Shrine
Lai Sao
I'wa Geiser
Hijan
Kahgang Su
Kao Ne
Markan's Willows
Zun Hi
Mo Leechi
S'nani
We'peng Garrison
U'ling Su
Tarepi
Broken Road
Hewai River
Tsun
Kung Tower
S'tung Dam
Xistang
Wache
Sin Bukai Lake
Gench'i
I'kuni Wanta
Hifuwa
Hodo'ung Cha Garrison

Anhwei
Se'Notan
Li
Hang
Cheboru
Hanchi
Shoals
Dien Nyu
Sayan
Thiam
Mhou
Khon Tre
Punsai
Luang
Nalamh
Kataninh
Kumok


Thak Treng
Binrohn
Delkhou
Tran
Kompoa
Cheinang
Bang Nu
Min Loh


City of Cham Fau
Refer to text for numbered key
Ting Shen Island
Min Fang Island
Hungise River
Huang Bay
Chin Shan Hill


au
Chaingyin
Chingk'ou
FORGOTTEN REALMS
Scale: 1 inch = 30 miles
FOOTHILLS
ROLLING HILLS
RICE VALLEY
FLAMINGSGRASSLAND
BARREN
FOREST
CLEAR
SEA
LAKE
RIVER
CANAL
CITY
CASTLE/KEEP
RUINS
SHRINE/TEMPLE
SHRINE/TEMPLE RUINS
SPECIAL INTEREST
ROAD
TRAIL
BRIDGE
BORDER
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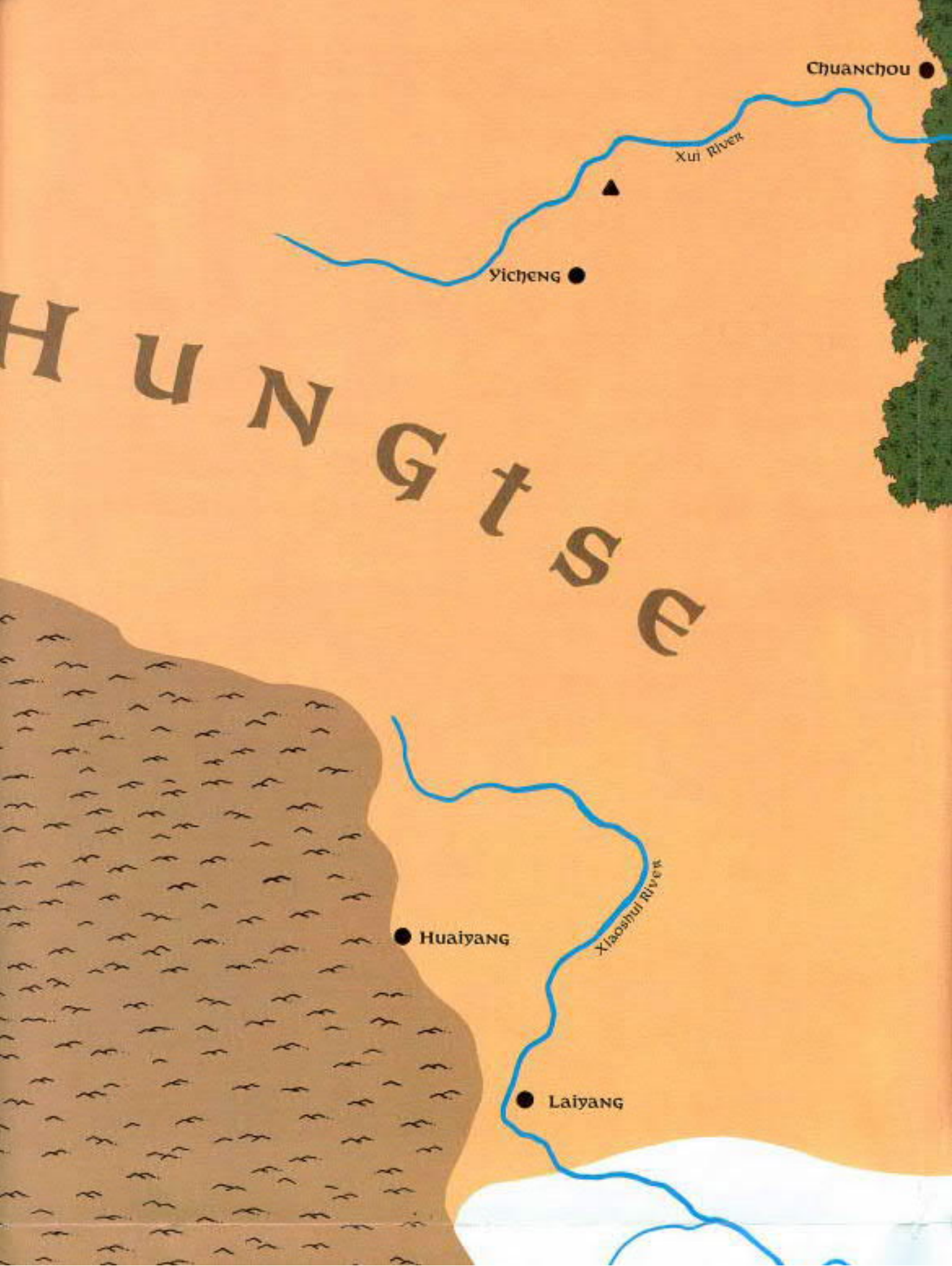
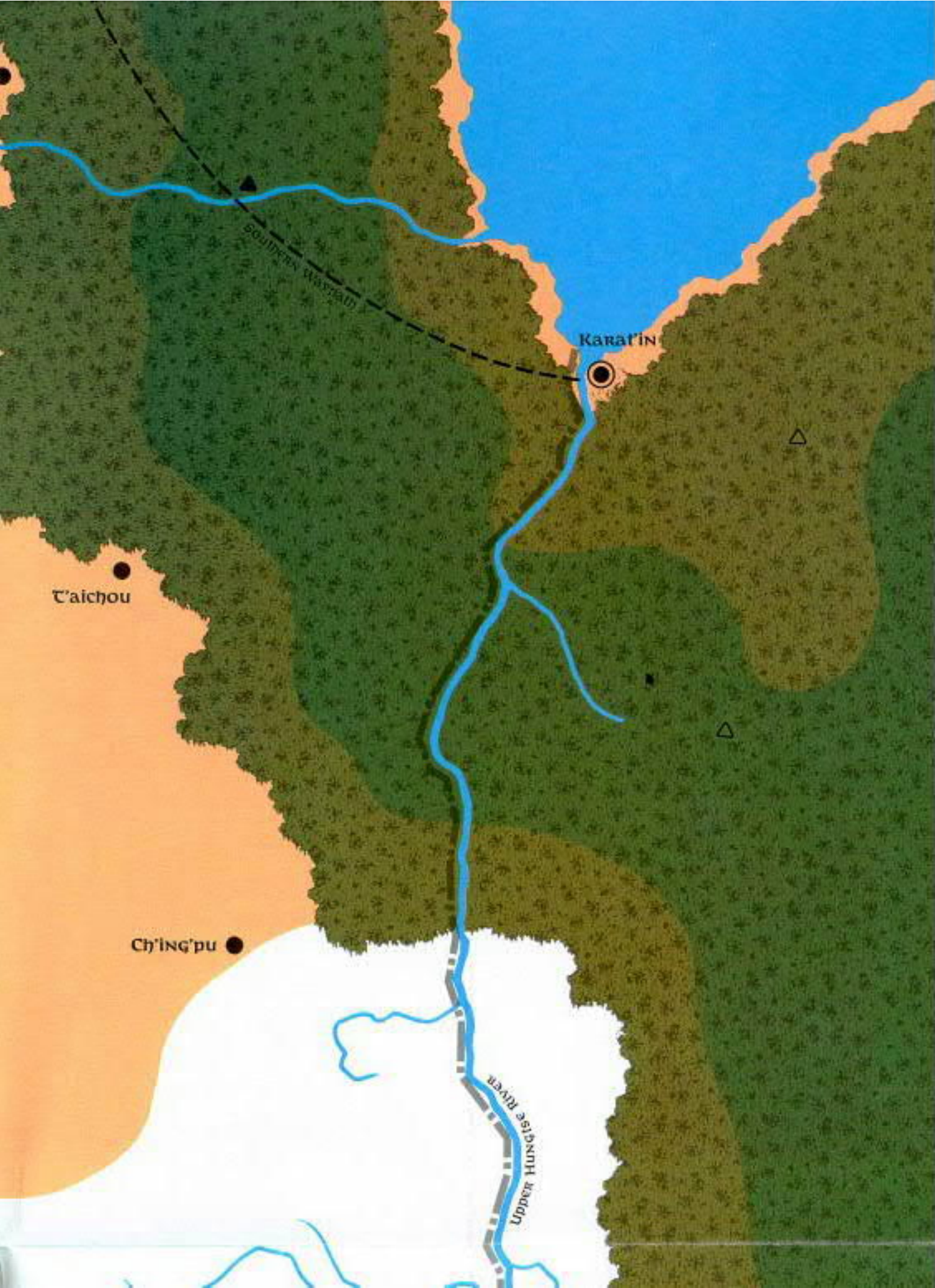
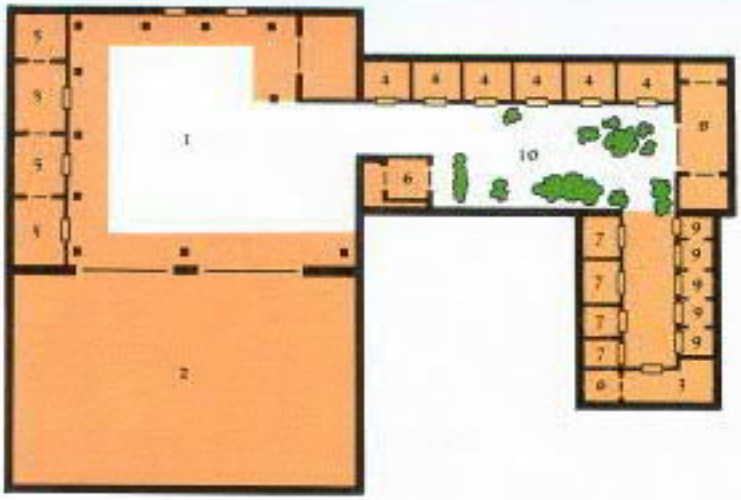
Hsishan

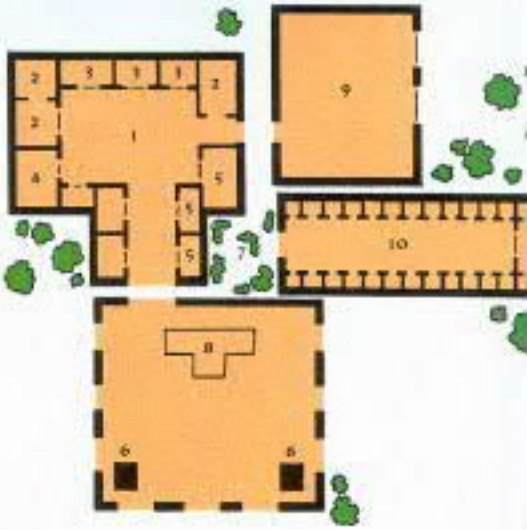

Chuanchou
Xui River
Yicheng
Hungtse
Huaiyang
Xiaoshui River
Laiyang


Southern Wastelands
Karat'in
T'aichou
Ch'ing'pu
Upper Hunqise River



Wang Ho School of Kung Fu

1. Court of Challenges
2. Main Practice Hall
3. Master Hung's Rooms
4. Student's Rooms
5. Meditation & Practice Rooms
6. Baths
7. Family Rooms
8. Eating Hall/Kitchen
9. Novice Rooms
10. Garden

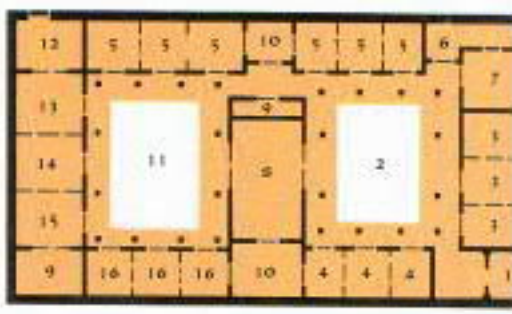


White Tiger Monastery

1. Main Dojo
2. Practice Halls
3. Meditation Rooms
4. Library
5. Abbott's Rooms
6. Lesser Immortals
7. Temple Gardens
8. Main Altar
9. Granary & Storehouse
10. Monk's Cells

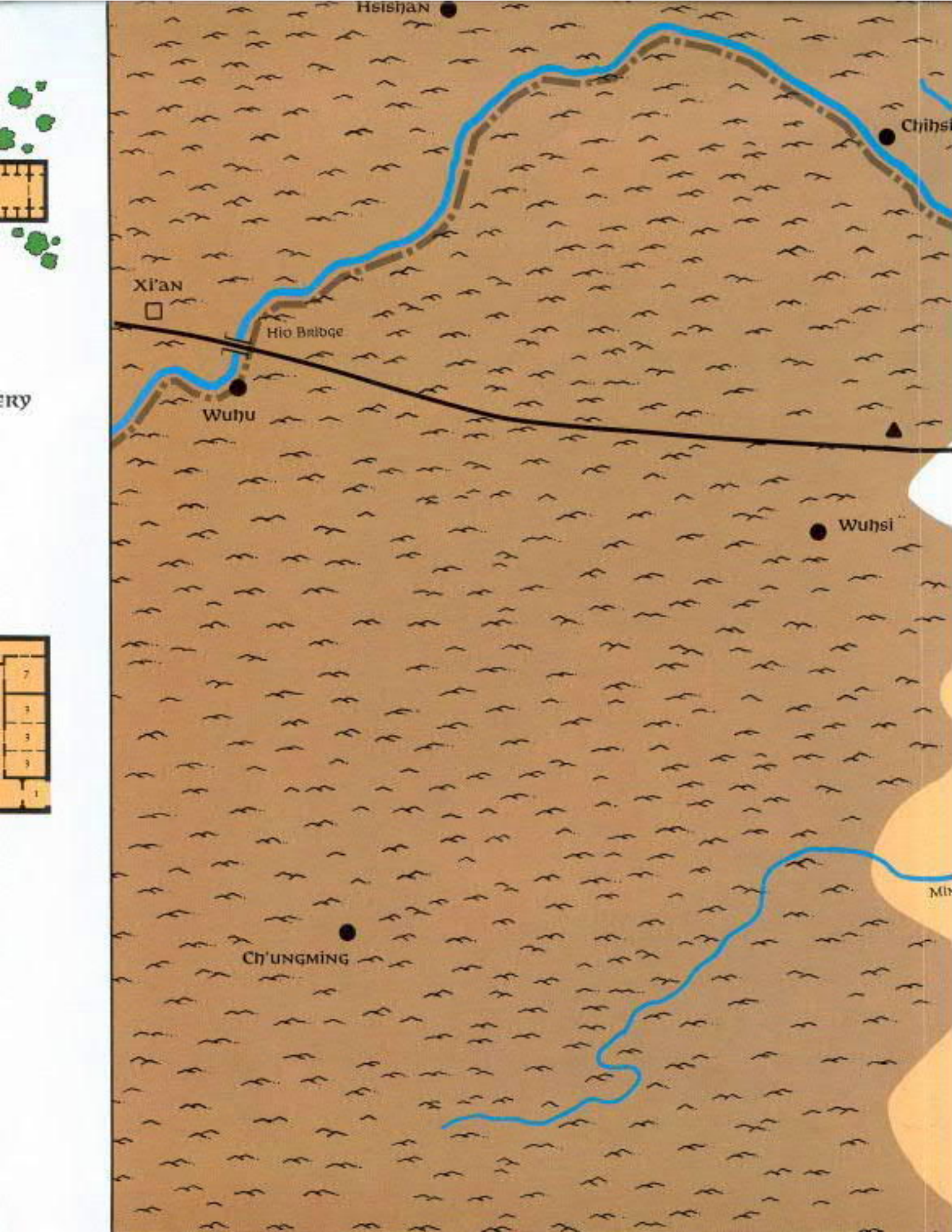
Inn of the Lucky Dragon

1. Main Dining Room
2. Hall of Banquets
3. Kitchens
4. Pantry
5. Great Courtyard
6. Communal Rooms
7. Lord's Room
8. Private Rooms
9. Bath
10. Family Quarters
11. Stable
12. Granary
13. Storage



House of Chan

1. Entryway
2. Outer Courtyard
3. Servant's Rooms
4. Guest Rooms
5. Children's Room
6. Pantry
7. Kitchen
8. Guest Hall
9. Storage
10. Bath
11. Inner Courtyard
12. Courtyard
13. Clan Head
14. Wife
15. Eldest Son & Wife
16. Relatives Rooms


Hsishan
Chihsi
Xi'an
Hio Bridge
Wuhu
Wuhsi
Ch'ungming

ihsi
Mawei
Chan Lu
Bridge
Chan Lu River
Tan
Min River
Wang Kuo
Deng
Fenghsien
Shoahsing
Jiayu

Taihe
Shoutu'ling
(capitol)
White Bridge
7 Masters Highroad
Hai Yuan
River
Cham Fau
Shinian
Bridge
Huan River
Ch'u Jen

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