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DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

Tian Xia

1,000 miles





DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

This Pathfinder Player Companion book works best with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Although it is suitable for use in any fantasy world, it is optimized for the Pathfinder campaign setting.

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THE DRAGON EMPIRES

When adventurers of the Inner Sea region wish to experience a land wholly unlike their own, few choices are as foreign and extravagant as Tian Xia, the continent on the other side of the world. Over five times the area of the Inner Sea region, the Dragon Empires are a thriving collection of nations rife with political intrigue, social turmoil, rich cultures, deadly monsters, and wondrous mysteries.

Tian Xia's history is both complicated and tragic, filled with the blood of countless peoples spilt in numerous despotic efforts to control the vast region. While Earthfall devastated Avistan and Garund on the other side of the world, it remains questionable whether humanity even existed on Tian Xia as of that point. Nonetheless, the resultant tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and incredibly long winter brought on by the destruction of Azlant transformed the lands of Tian Xia into the form that would eventually become the Dragon Empires.

Though numerous empires have controlled swaths of Tian Xia throughout the millennia, none were so successful and yet so short-lived as Imperial Lung Wa, whose dynasty lasted fewer than 500 years and yet whose dominance spanned nearly the entire continent. The collapse of Lung Wa ushered in the current Age of Succession and split many of Tian Xia's nations apart; among these disparate nations are the 16 countries now known as the Successor States, as well as other regions including the untameable Valashmai Jungle, naga-ruled Nagajor, and independent Minkai. All the same, the entire continent has felt the impact of the last empire's fall, and interaction with Imperial Lung Wa helped shape and establish almost every nation's current identity.

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This primer is designed to give players and GMs alike an introduction to the Dragon Empires, providing details to help create and customize characters for a campaign set in Tian Xia. For more information on any of the aspects detailed in this book, see the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dragon Empires Gazetteer*, available at local hobby stores or at paizo.com.

LIFE IN THE DRAGON EMPIRES

While the nations of Tian Xia are as varied and complicated as those around the Inner Sea, they nonetheless share a multitude of qualities that define all inhabitants of the region as residents of the Dragon Empires. These similarities range from religious to economical, and all help establish Tian Xia as the land that it is.

Tian Xia's most widely used calendar, the Imperial Calendar, was established over 7,000 years ago by the empire of Yixing, based on the year the first empire emerged from the Age of Ashes (the era following Earthfall and predating what became known as the Age of Ascendancy). To convert a date from the Imperial Calendar to Absalom Reckoning (the most common calendar in the Inner Sea region), simply subtract 2,500 from the year—thus, the current date in the Imperial Calendar, 7211 IC, corresponds to the year 4711 AR.

The shared philosophy known as *sangpotshi* also permeates much of everyday life in Tian Xia; it is the belief that one's birth is never accidental, and that one's karma and fate determine what station one will be born into. A person's deeds in past lives influence her current lot, and those born into nobility or royalty must have accomplished great things in previous lives, while the souls that inhabit mere peasants or beggars must have at one point committed truly grievous sins. Rebels and revolutionaries are viewed with scorn by many, who believe that the leaders of their nation reached such prestige through great deeds in previous incarnations—if a rebellion succeeds, however, the insurgents are seen as having a divine right and being fated to perform such deeds. It is thought that only by reaching one's maximum potential or by making unforgivable errors can one escape the cycle of reincarnation to reach the Great Beyond, where final reward or punishment is delivered.

Yokai is the Minkaian term for the creatures of the spirit world, from helpful kami to vengeful ghosts, and many regard such creatures with as much fascination as fear. Tian Xia is a land rife with superstition, as would be expected in a place where the otherworldly often interact with mortals on a daily basis, and such superstition can be a powerful force. Peasants and rulers alike respect the power of yokai, whose aid or interference can be of vital importance throughout the course of life. Both the dead

TIAN XIA ANALOGUES

As in the Inner Sea region, one of our main focuses in building the Dragon Empires was creating a land that in many ways drew connections to the real world while maintaining an overarching sense of fantasy. The benefit of drawing analogies to real-world history and mythology in this way is that players get to make their own connections between the real world and a fantasy world, creating characters that seem true to life and otherworldly at the same time. In the Inner Sea region, Osirion reflects certain aspects of Egypt and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings draws some of its qualities from Norse history (not to mention the many other nations whose cultures and histories reflect those in the real world), and we've drawn similar parallels between the Dragon Empires and real-world Asia.

For players, this means that if you've ever wanted to play a samurai character reminiscent of those in such famous films as Akira Kurosawa's Japanese epics, then Minkai can serve as a versatile environment with a rich history of its own in which to implement such a character in a fantasy setting, all the while maintaining many real-world traits. Chinese wushu masters and Mongolian horseback riders are likewise powerful images in popular culture and media, and characters inspired by such archetypes can be placed in fitting regions such as Po Li or Hongal, respectively.

All this being said, it is important to note that while Tian Xia may derive some of its peoples, customs, deities, and regions from those of real-world Asia, the land of the Dragon Empires nonetheless remains rooted in a fantasy setting with its own unique history and fictional qualities. In creating Tian Xia, we designed a cultural landscape where many nations' stories interweave, forming an elaborate continent which as a whole is entirely distinct from the real world; while we may have started with Asia in developing the Dragon Empires, where we inevitably ended up is Golarion.

and the magical are referred to as yokai, for the term is often simply used for things beyond mortal comprehension—which can be a great variety of things in a land as magical and mysterious as Tian Xia.

The use of magic is likewise viewed with both awe and fear in Tian Xia, for the powers of the arcane can lead to the salvation of a nation as quickly as to its destruction. Many think of magic as merely enhancing what is already present in the mortal world, leading to increased happiness if the world is in a good state or pain and suffering in a world that has been overrun by cruelty. Some nations seek to register every citizen with magical abilities in the hope of controlling such unknowable forces, while others let the arcane and divine wash over the land, letting the forces of magic thrive where they wish.

RACES

Tian Xia is first and foremost home to humans; with their fecundity and adaptability, their varied ethnicities populate most of the continent's diverse regions. However, five other races also reside in the Dragon Empires, from the foxlike kitsune to the shadowy wayangs, and the influence of these diverse peoples can be felt throughout the entire continent.

KITSUNE

The shapeshifting kitsune are known for being wily but noble, and their kind can be encountered both in settlements of their own and within mixed-race societies. Kitsune possess two forms—that of a human, which they adopt in places where their kind are misunderstood, and their true form as a humanoid fox. In both forms, kitsune possess vibrant eyes of golden, amber, or sapphire hues. Despite their irrepressible penchant for good-natured mischief, kitsune prize both loyalty and goodness, and make true companions. They delight in storytelling as well as the arts, and practice crafting lies by weaving tall tales and falsehoods into otherwise true accounts told to friends and strangers alike.

In human and mixed-race societies, kitsune spend most of their time in human form to avoid conflict with those ignorant of their kind, as folktales often portray them simply as troublesome pranksters. While this perception may be understandably deserved, it is not entirely accurate, as kitsune also possess worthwhile skills and steadfast devotion to causes they believe in. They get along best with elves and samsarans, whose whimsical natures often coincide with their own levity.

Charming and nimble, kitsune make excellent bards and rogues when they choose to pursue adventuring, though just as many adopt other occupations in alignment with their long-term goals.

Kitsune Racial Traits

All kitsune are humanoids with the kitsune and shapechanger subtypes. They have the following racial traits.

+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, –2 Strength: Kitsune are agile and companionable, but tend to be physically weak.

Medium: Kitsune are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Kitsune have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Kitsune can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Change Shape (Su): A kitsune can assume the appearance of a single human form of the same sex—this form is static, and cannot be changed each time the kitsune assumes this form. A kitsune in human form

cannot make its bite attack, but gains a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks made to appear human. Changing from human to kitsune shape is a standard action. This ability otherwise functions as *alter self*, save that the kitsune does not adjust its ability scores.

Agile (Ex): Kitsune receive a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics checks.

Kitsune Feats: At higher levels, kitsune can select special feats to grant them additional powers. These feats can be found on the Bonus Kitsune Feats sidebar on page 5.

Kitsune Magic (Ex/Sp): Kitsune add +1 to the DC of any saving throws against enchantment spells that they cast. Kitsune with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like ability: 3/day—*dancing lights*.

Natural Weapon (Ex): A kitsune has a bite attack in its natural form. This bite deals a base of 1d4 points of damage on a hit. This is a primary attack, or a secondary attack if the kitsune wields a manufactured weapon.

Languages: Kitsune begin play speaking Tien and Senzar. Kitsune with high Intelligence scores can choose bonus languages from the following: any human tongue, Aklo, Celestial, Elven, Gnome, Nagaji, Samsaran, Sylvan, Tengu, and Wayang.

NAGAJI

The nagaji are a race of ophidian humanoids with scaly skin that mimics the colors and patterns of snakes. While their physical forms most resemble those of stout humans, nagaji possess distinctly serpentine features, such as forked tongues and flat nostrils and ears. The origins of nagaji are often attributed to the nagas who inhabit Nagajor, and it is widely believed that nagas created them as a servitor race through crossbreeding, magic, or some other means. Although many outsiders think of the nagaji as little more than servants to nagas, they in fact have a remarkable amount of free will, and simply possess a drive to prove themselves as worthy to their naga masters, though just as many seek to prove themselves outside this racial obligation. Thus, many nagaji take to adventuring as both a source of income for their tribe and a way to test their mettle against the harsh and foreign elements outside their homeland.

All nagaji can trace their ancestry to Nagajor, their indomitable jungle homeland. They rarely form societies of their own outside the boundaries of the ruling naga class, but are nonetheless free to leave Nagajor if they wish to pursue their own goals, a fate which many choose in their pursuit to test their own strength.

Nagaji Racial Traits

All nagaji are humanoids with the reptilian subtype. They have the following racial traits.

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+2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence: Nagaji are strong and have forceful personalities, but tend to ignore logic and mock scholastic pursuits.

Medium: Nagaji are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Nagaji have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Nagaji can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Armored Scales (Ex): Nagaji have a +1 natural armor bonus from their scaly flesh.

Resistant (Ex): Nagaji receive a +2 racial saving throw bonus against mind-affecting effects and poison.

Serpent's Sense (Ex): Nagaji receive a +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal checks against reptiles, and a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

Languages: Nagaji begin play speaking Nagaji and Tien. Nagaji with high Intelligence scores can choose bonus languages from the following: any human tongue, Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Samsaran, Senzar, Sylvan, Tengu, and Wayang.

SAM SARANS

Samsarans are a race of quasi-immortal humanoids bound simultaneously to the material world and the realm of spirits. Almost ghostlike in appearance, samsarans have dark hair, white eyes that lack both pupil and iris, and pale blue skin, beneath which flows their crystal-clear blood.

A samsaran is aware of her previous lives through incomplete memories and dreamy recollections, and she knows that she will continue to live after death through reincarnation. Samsaran philosophy teaches that each life is but one incarnation of the many it will go through in its spiritual journey toward transcendence. Samsarans give birth to human children, whom they usually give to human societies to raise in a fashion befitting a human. Upon death, some of these children reincarnate as samsarans, but only if they have lived a life in keeping with harmony. Samsarans usually reincarnate as samsarans upon death, but one who has either fallen completely out of harmony in her latest life or who has lived in the most harmonious way possible instead faces a different fate, as her soul makes its way to the Great Beyond for its final punishment or reward.

In pursuit of spiritual perfection, samsarans generally live simple, ascetic lives apart from most other societies, though many choose to experience the richness of the world, and take to adventuring to deepen their understanding of life.

Samsaran Racial Traits

All samsarans are humanoids with the samsaran subtype. They have the following racial traits.

BONUS KITSUNE FEATS

A kitsune may select from the following feats any time she would gain a feat.

Fox Shape

You can change into a fox in addition to your other forms.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, base attack bonus +3, kitsune.

Benefit: You can take the form of a fox (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 112) whose appearance is static and cannot be changed each time you assume this form. Your bite attack's damage is reduced to 1d3 points of damage on a hit, but you gain a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks made to appear as a fox. Changing from kitsune to fox shape is a standard action. This ability otherwise functions as *beast shape II*, and your ability scores change accordingly.

Swift Kitsune Shapechanger

You can change shape more quickly than most kitsune.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, base attack bonus +6, kitsune.

Benefit: You can assume human or kitsune form as a swift action. If you have the Fox Shape feat, you can assume fox form as a swift action as well.

Normal: A kitsune's change shape ability is a standard action.

Vulpine Pounce (Combat)

You can change shape mid-charge and pounce on an opponent in the same round.

Prerequisites: Swift Kitsune Shapechanger, base attack bonus +10, kitsune.

Benefit: When you change shape into your kitsune form and use the charge action in the same round, you can make a full attack against your opponent.

+2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, -2 Constitution: Samsarans are insightful and strong-minded, but their bodies are frail.

Medium: Samsarans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Samsarans have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Samsarans can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Lifebound (Ex): Samsarans gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws made to resist death effects, saving throws against negative energy effects, Fortitude saves made to remove negative levels, and Constitution checks made to stabilize if reduced to negative hit points.

Samsaran Magic (Sp): Samsarans with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*, and *stabilize*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the samsaran's level.

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Shards of the Past (Ex): A samsaran's past lives grant her bonuses on two particular Knowledge skills. A samsaran chooses two Knowledge skills—she gains a +2 racial bonus on both of these skills, and they are treated as class skills regardless of the class she actually takes.

Languages: Samsarans begin play speaking Samsaran and Tien. Samsarans with high Intelligence scores can choose bonus languages from the following: any human tongue, Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Nagaji, Senzar, Tengu, Terran, and Wayang.

TENGUS

Tengus are a race of wingless avian humanoids with humanoid hands, clawed feet, and a beak that resembles that of a crow or raven. Matching the colors of these birds, most tengus' feathers are jet black; however, a few possess brown or blue-black coloration instead.

Ranging throughout almost all of the Dragon Empires, tengus have long suffered the scorn and abuse of the ruling humans, treated as a lesser race and relegated to the underclass. The recent fall of Lung Wa has allowed tengus to break free from the tyranny of other races, and the tengu nation of Kwanlai is testament to this achievement. Nonetheless, centuries of poverty and strife have made many tengus covetous of the wealth of other races, and tengus' reputation for thievery, deceit, and secrecy often precedes them wherever they go. While some tengus seek to dismantle such unfair stereotypes, others fit the bill by choice, thinking they may as well commit the crimes they are already so often accused of.

Tengus possess a rich culture that combines aspects from the numerous societies their people have been a part of, though they are loath to share the more unique parts of their own culture with outsiders, as they are largely distrustful and scornful of others.

Tengu Racial Traits

All tengus are humanoids with the tengu subtype. They have the following racial traits.

+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Constitution: Tengus are fast and observant, but relatively fragile and delicate.

Medium: Tengus are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Tengus have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Tengus can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Sneaky (Ex): Tengus gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth.

Gifted Linguist (Ex): Tengus gain a +4 racial bonus on Linguistics checks, and learn two languages each time they gain a rank in Linguistics instead of just a single language.

Swordtrained (Ex): Tengus are trained from birth in swordplay, and as a result are automatically proficient with swordlike weapons.

Natural Weapon (Ex): Tengus possess a bite attack that deals 1d3 points of damage on a hit. This is a primary attack, or a secondary attack if the tengu wields a manufactured weapon.

Languages: Tengus begin play speaking Tengu and Tien. Tengus with high Intelligence scores can choose any language as a bonus language.

WAYANGS

Wayangs are a race of mystical, miniature humanoids that can trace their ancestry to the Plane of Shadow. When they traveled to Golarion during the Age of Darkness, wayangs found the perpetually blackened skies to their liking; however, when the sun reemerged, they were rudely surprised and found themselves trapped upon the increasingly inhospitable Material Plane. Those unable to escape back to the Shadow Plane were forced to flee to the darkest depths of Tian Xia's jungle islands.

Wayangs are gaunt and pixielike, with pointy features and skin the color of muted shadows. Regarding humans and animals as equally monstrous predators, wayangs are reclusive and survive via their wits and nimbleness. All wayangs possess innate arcane powers and a natural talent for manipulating shadow magic, and thus many tribes are aided and defended by oracles and shamans. Many perform tribal rituals of scarification and skin bleaching upon their own bodies, marking their flesh with raised white dots in ornate spirals and geometric patterns.

Shy and elusive, wayangs live in small, interdependent tribes and speak their own language. Tribes rarely associate with outsiders, as they prefer to avoid conflict rather than create it, and when forced to deal with sun-dwellers, most wayangs maintain a position of strict neutrality.

Wayang Racial Traits

All wayangs are humanoids with the wayang subtype. They have the following racial traits.

+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Wisdom: Wayangs are nimble and cagey, but their perception of the world is clouded by shadows.

Small: Wayangs are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a –1 penalty on their combat maneuver checks and to CMD, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

Slow Speed: Wayangs have a base speed of 20 feet.

Darkvision: Wayangs can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

Light and Dark (Su): Once per day as an immediate action, a wayang can treat positive and negative energy effects as if the wayang were an undead creature, taking damage from

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positive energy and healing damage from negative energy. This ability lasts for 1 minute once activated.

Lurker (Ex): Wayangs gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks.

Shadow Magic (Ex/Sp): Wayangs add +1 to the DC of any saving throws against spells of the shadow subschool that they cast. Wayangs with a Charisma score of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*ghost sound*, *pass without trace*, and *ventriloquism*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the wayang's level. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + the wayang's Charisma modifier.

Shadow Resistance (Ex): Wayangs get a +2 racial saving throw bonus against spells of the shadow subschool.

Languages: Wayangs begin play speaking Tien and Wayang. Wayangs with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: any human tongue, Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Goblin, Infernal, Nagaji, Samsaran, Senzar, and Tengu.

TIANS

From the lean, sun-scarred fisherfolk of the coasts to the ox-necked hill people who inhabit the icy northlands, the humans of Tian Xia are as diverse as the lands they inhabit. There exist seven distinct ethnic groups of humans in the Dragon Empires, each with its own history and culture. In addition, each group of humans possesses a distinct naming convention, usually going by their family name instead of their given unless this would cause confusion.

Tian-Dans: Xa Hoi is home to the proud Tian-Dans, whose eyes and hair are occasionally marked by vivid streaks of color, considered to be a sign of importance and usually betraying a knack for sorcery. While not all Tian-Dans are descendants of dragons, all are governed by the Dragon Kings of Xa Hoi, whom they contentedly serve. Tian-Dans are industrious, and function in thousands of tightly knit clans based on regional affinity and specializing in particular industries or occupations.

Languages: Draconic, Tien

Tian-Dtang: The magically inclined Tian-Dtang people are thoughtful and serene, and take life's various twists and turns with remarkable grace. As is the way of their culture, Tian-Dtang tend to be open and free-spirited, and regard the individual person as a force equal in power to any group. The Tian-Dtang, like the Tian-Dans, are dark-haired but relatively fair, and men often shave their heads completely or keep a single, braided lock drawn close to their head.

Languages: Dtang, Tien

Tian-Hwans: The broad-faced Tian-Hwans of Hwanggot hold strong traditional notions of gender roles, in which

women typically take positions of power and influence, while men make up the majority of the nation's farmers, artisans, and artists. Tian-Hwan culture also places emphasis on colors and their meanings, and Tian-Hwans are as a whole a peaceful, altruistic people.

Languages: Hwan, Tien

Tian-Las: Tall and muscular, Tian-Las inhabit Tian Xia's harsh northern steppes and vast plains. Well adapted to harsh and unforgiving climates, these nomadic horse-riders are renowned for their long braids and barbarous tempers. Though they are often exposed to the elements, Tian-Las' skin remains relatively light in color. Their diet includes more meat than that of the average Tian, much of it horseflesh.

Languages: Hon-La, Tien

Tian-Mins: Tian-Mins hail from Minkai, and their strong cultural influence can be felt throughout much of the Dragon Empires. Tian-Mins possess great variation in eye color, ranging from black or brown to blue and various shades of orange and yellow, and some believe that eye color reflects a person's personality and station in life. Highly cultured, they follow strict social codes bound to a complex system of etiquette, and place great value upon personal honor, which determines how one is perceived in Minkai culture.

Languages: Minkaian, Tien

Tian-Shus: The most populous of the human ethnicities in Tian Xia are the Tian-Shus, who populate most of the successor states emerging from the fall of Imperial Lung Wa, and have dusky skin, almond eyes, and dark hair. These class-conscious folk guard the traditional values of their ancestors while acknowledging individuals' achievements where they are deserved, though it is also widely accepted that social harmony comes from everyone accepting their proper places in life, and there is much to be said for humble and selfless service. Tian-Shus take great pride in the style of their dress, and wear the best clothing they can afford.

Languages: Tien

Tian-Sings: Ranging from peaceful traders to some of the most isolated individuals in Tian Xia, Tian-Sings are dark-skinned tribespeople who inhabit the Wandering Isles of Minata. Many Tian-Sings engage in extensive ritual piercing, scarification, and tattooing, complementing these decorations with jewelry crafted from the teeth of sharks and crocodiles. They are extremely diverse, with taboos and social strictures differing wildly from tribe to tribe, though all adhere to customs that yield to Minata's hot climate, and many cut their hair short and either dress lightly or disregard clothing altogether to combat the heat.

Languages: Minatan, Tien

AMANANDAR

Western Empire in the East

Alignment: LN

Capital: New Oppara (20,154)

Major Races: Taldans, Tian-Shus
(also elves, samsarans, and tengus)

Major Religions: Abadar, Irori,
Pharasma, Shizuru

Languages: Taldane, Tien



The hill forts that litter Amanandar stand as relics of savage wars between the Successor States. Formerly the city-state of Kamikobu, the trade haven suffered terribly in the downfall of Lung Wa, falling prey to the bandit lords of the surrounding nations. The city was helpless against the depredations of competing powers, but when General Orphyrea Amanandar—a Taldan military leader heading the nation's Eighth Army of Exploration—sailed her fleet into the Sea of Ghosts and marched her troops through Shenmen and into the city, her force proved powerful enough to protect Kamikobu and restore peace to the land. The general was made the governor of the city as a reward for her efforts, and under her hand, the settlement expanded into a full-fledged nation-state, its cities and farmlands now home to Taldans and Tian-Shus alike who live in relative harmony. General Amanandar renamed the city New Oppara and gave the surrounding lands her own family name.

Amanandar remains a colonial nation built on the pursuit of peace and prosperity, and its government enforces strict discipline. Every citizen of Amanandar must serve in the nation's military for a minimum of 5 years between the ages of 16 and 45 (the years need not be consecutive), and thus Amanandarans make highly formidable mercenaries and caravan guards. The difficulty in obtaining citizenship in the strictly population-controlled city of New Oppara drives would-be citizens out of the nation-state as well as drawing in new ones hoping to make their fortunes there.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Amanandar.

Honeyed Tongue: Having matured in the melting pot of New Oppara, you know the customs of the Tian-Shus as well as those of the Taldans, and you utilize this knowledge to create peace between rival groups. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks, and Diplomacy becomes a class skill for you.

Militia: As part of Amanandar's militia, you have trained extensively with groups. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks made while flanking an opponent.

BACHUAN

Children of the Revolution

Alignment: LN

Capital: Peijia (50,800)

Major Races: Tian-Shus

Major Religions: None (religion is suppressed)

Languages: Tien



Even with the collapse of Lung Wa, the mandarins of Pen Wa Province thought they could keep their petty and vindictive rule alive. But they had not counted on the arrival of Grandfather Pei, who taught harmony and unity, and rallied the oppressed peasants under a banner that would free them of the corrupt rule of tyrannical governors. Grandfather Pei preached to the downtrodden farmers and miners that all people were equal, and all should share in labor as well as in the fruits of their labors. His revolution overthrew the existing order, and heralded the establishment of a government that oversaw labor, production, and distribution of wealth, guaranteeing prosperity to all who deserved it. Unfortunately, the revolt's good intentions became tainted by the strict and subtle machinations of the leader who followed Grandfather Pei—his sixth wife, Pu Yae Men, known now only as Grandmother Pei.

Upon her husband's death, Grandmother Pei seized control of the Sun Chamber and immediately began to purge any who opposed her, cementing her status as the most powerful person in Bachuan. Now, with the aid of her organization of disciplined youths known as the Tiger Brigade, she spreads her harsh version of the philosophy her late husband promoted. Her citizens have become suspicious of strangers and paranoid of those in authority. Grandmother Pei is ruthless and expects her advisors to be so as well. Rumors of war between Bachuan and neighboring Hwanggot permeate the streets of the nation's cities, but the Grandmother's agents are swift in silencing dissenters, especially those who speak of the supposed atrocities Bachuan soldiers secretly commit against captured Hwans.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Bachuan.

Szaezan Crag Miner: You were a miner of the now-scarce ores of the Szaezan Crag, and have become adept at identifying minerals and gems. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Appraise checks, and Appraise becomes a class skill for you.

Tiger Brigadier: As a member of the Tiger Brigade, you are ready to guide the people of Bachuan and other nations. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Intimidate checks made against anyone whose age is one or more aging steps above yours, and Intimidate becomes a class skill for you.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

CHU YE

Kingdom of the Oni

Alignment: LE

Capital: Jyito (7,432)

Major Races: Giants, oni (also kitsune, samsaran, Tian-La, Tian-Min, and Tian-Shu slaves)

Major Religions: Fumeiyoshi, General Susumu

Languages: Giant, Hon-La, Minkaian, Samsaran, Senzar, Tien



Once a lesser province under the rule of Imperial Lung Wa, Chu Ye was renowned for its advances in nonmagical healing, and was the birthplace of such remedies as acupuncture and massage therapy. However, Chu Ye held a terrible secret—it was infested by oni, evil spirits who hid behind the disguises of mortals and used the surrounding people to sate their twisted pleasures. When Lung Wa fell, the oni revealed their monstrous natures, and in just over a year, the evil beings wrenched control of the nation from the humans who once ruled it. Now, a powerful voidlord named Tsuneni sits on the throne of Chu Ye, having claimed the title of shogun. Giants flock to the corrupted nation to serve the powerful oni they revere, while humanoids do whatever they can to escape the tyrannical shogunate.

The humans who once thrived in Chu Ye now make up a smaller class of slaves, not allowed to carry arms within the nation (a right is reserved exclusively for oni), and forced to serve their evil masters' every whim. A number of humans and other mortals, however, have formed a group of freedom fighters called the Mizu Ki Hikari. Because they may not wield weapons, these rebels hone their skills in unarmed combat, and train at the edges of the Chuyokai Forest, where they have assembled numerous bases of operation. While the haunted woods are plagued with all manner of terrifying monsters and thus largely prevent anyone in Chu Ye from reaching Wanshou to the south, the members of the Mizu Ki Hikari do their best to smuggle slaves out of the oni-controlled nation.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Chu Ye.

Acupuncturist: You have studied the ancient art of acupuncture, and use it to pursue enlightenment and healing. You gain a +2 trait bonus on all Fortitude saves made against poison effects.

Mizu Ki Hikari Rebel: You have trained in martial arts under the banner of Mizu Ki Hikari rebels. You gain a +1 trait bonus on damage rolls made with unarmed attacks.

DARKLANDS

Underground Realm of Monsters and Mystery

Alignment: CE

Capital: None

Major Races: Brain oozes, cave giants, denizens of Leng, haunted clockworks, hobgoblins, myceloids, oni, ratfolk, seugathi, troglodytes, underworld dragons

Major Religions: Lamashtu, Lao Shu Po, various fiendish demigods

Languages: Aklo, Undercommon



While the Darklands of Tian Xia are like those found beneath the Inner Sea region in that they are composed of three levels and contain untellable horrors, that may be where the similarities end. No duergar or drow inhabit the vast caves beneath Tian Xia; the complex networks of caverns are instead plagued by entirely different monsters, from eerie clockworks to boneless terrors.

Though there are numerous crannies that lead to the Darklands beneath Tian Xia, rumors tell of three particularly notorious entrances: the Ghost Path within the dormant volcano Mount Kumijinja; the Clicking Caverns near the border of Xa Joi and Nagajor, named for their armies of strange clockwork warriors; and a third entrance hidden within the elven city of Ayajinbo. Legends claim that the caverns below contain intelligent fungoid creatures that command legions of brainwashed humanoids, or underworld dragons said to orchestrate complex political schemes among the underground kingdoms. These scattered city-states provide little refuge for weary travelers, as the inhabitants—who range from humanoid rats to the dreaded oni—can effortlessly spot unpracticed interlopers. Nevertheless, those who become well versed in the ways of the Darklands beneath the Dragon Empires may discover riches beyond their wildest imaginings.

Traits

The following are regional traits for the Darklands.

Darklands Delver: You are familiar with the byways and passages of Tian Xia's underworld. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks, and a +1 trait bonus on Survival checks made in the Darklands. One of these skills becomes class skill for you.

Slayer of the Deep: You have hunted monsters throughout the Darklands and know how to take advantage of their weaknesses. You gain a +1 trait bonus on damage rolls made against creatures of the aberration type.

DTANG MA

Feudal Kingdom of Sorcerers

Alignment: N

Capital: Ramparassad (75,350)

Major Races: Tian-Dtang

Major Religions: Hei Feng, Nalinivati, Pharama, Yamatsumi

Languages: Dtang, Nagaji, Tien



The lush jungles of Dtang Ma are rife with highly sought-after resources, and the nation remained a constant fixture of Imperial Lung Wa's desires for countless years. To the empire's continual frustration, however, Dtang Ma proved fiercely resistant to the advances of the expanding dynasty, and its powerful sorcerers proved able foes until Lung Wa declared all-out war on the jungle nation. The bloody conflict lasted 7 years, but Lung Wa finally succeeded in capturing Dtang Ma.

As it turns out, the Tian-Dtang didn't have to wait long for freedom. Only 2 decades later, Lung Wa collapsed, leaving Dtang Ma an independent nation once again. Only recently have its people been able to reestablish a secure government, but the magocracy has been able to reinstate itself in the same form that it took before the occupation. Corresponding to the nation's four traditions of sorcerous power (fey, music, stars, and storms), a confederacy of the nation's most powerful sorcerers rules over the country's provinces, with a fifth sorcerer acting as a supreme lord.

The people of Dtang Ma are as obsessed with magic as their leaders, and people from all over the country regard arcane magic as a means of maintaining peace and fostering knowledge. Alchemists from all over Tian Xia travel to Dtang Ma in search of the rare substances found only in its jungles.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Dtang Ma.

Dtang Ma Bloodline: As you were born in Dtang Ma and possess one of the favored bloodlines, your sorcerous powers are particularly potent. Select one of the following sorcerer bloodlines: fey, maestro, starsoul, or stormborn. Once per day, you may use one of your bloodline powers as if your sorcerer level were 1 higher than normal. This trait does not give you access to bloodline powers whose level requirements you do not yet meet.

Guerilla: You have spent much time in the rainforests of Dtang Ma, and know its secrets. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nature) checks as well as Survival checks made in the rainforest. One of these skills becomes a class skill for you.

FOREST OF SPIRITS

Sprawling Supernatural Wilderness

Alignment: N

Capital: None

Major Races: Fey, kami, kitsune, oni

Major Religions: Daikitsu, Desna, Fumeiyoshi, Sun Wukong

Languages: Senzar, Tien



In the far north of Tian Xia, just below the arctic circle, a dim and eerie pine forest looms out of the cold and fog. Of the mortals that dwell here, animals are the most prevalent, with any humanoids usually being no more than temporary visitors—for while the Forest of Spirits is largely peaceful, it is overseen by the kami, protective spirits that watch over the forces of nature. Most regard the forest as the primeval birthplace of the kami, as they are more prominent here than anywhere else.

Kami are not cruel beings, but they do not take kindly to those seeking to spread civilization's corrupting influence in their realm, and the Forest of Spirits has proven remarkably resilient to colonization of any sort. Legends tell of the lost empire of Zao, a kingdom led by a greedy samurai who exploited the mystical forest for its vast resources. It is said that the kami allied with fey and even a mighty forest dragon in order to decimate the people of Zao, leaving only the legend of its existence as a lesson to those who might think to repeat the empire's mistakes.

While civilization's touch is markedly less apparent in the Forest of Spirits, there remain some traces of its existence where the kami have allowed it. The Spirit Road winds up the coastline of the forest and serves as an important trade route connecting Minkai and Hongal. Small, tenuous settlements of conscientious fisherfolk, traders, miners, and respectful loggers dot the outskirts of the forest, the residents always wary of their impact on the kami's wards.

Traits

The following are regional traits for the Forest of Spirits.

Kami Talker: You have traversed the Forest of Spirits numerous times, and have learned how best to communicate with its otherworldly inhabitants. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against outsiders that have the native subtype.

Spiritual Forester: You grew up in a small settlement along the outskirts of the Forest of Spirits, and have learned much about the woods as well as about their supernatural inhabitants. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Knowledge (planes) checks, and one of these skills becomes a class skill for you.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

GOKA

Gateway to the West

Alignment: LN

Capital: Goka (300,450)

Major Races: Tians (also humans of other ethnicities, aasimars, dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, half-orcs, halflings, kitsune, nagaji, samsarans, tengus, and wayangs)

Major Religions: Abadar, Daikitsu, Fumeiyoshi, Hei Feng, Irori, Lady Nanbyo, Lamashtu, Lao Shu Po, Pharama, Shizuru, Sun Wukong, Tsukiyo, Yaezhing

Languages: Dtang, Hon-La, Hwan, Kelish, Minatan, Minkaian, Nagaji, Samsaran, Taldane, Tengü, Tien, Vudrani, Wayang



The largest and most prosperous city in all of Tian Xia, Goka is heralded the world over as a trading metropolis filled with countless wonders and all manner of people from across Golarion. It is said that in Goka, one can become rich in a single day and lose everything the next. Gambling is one of Goka's most eminent attractions, and the city possesses all manner of activities to bet on.

Throughout its history, the city-state has cycled between self-rule and subservience, but through it all it has remained the crown jewel of the Dragon Empires. Since the fall of Imperial Lung Wa, Goka has once again become a free nation, ruled by the honorable and progressive Nai Yan Fei and her advisors. The so-called Gateway to the West was built in the only major break in the expansive Wall of Heaven, and its majesty is perhaps only immediately rivaled by that of the indomitable mountain range behind it. The urban center has no shortage of splendors both within and beneath, for under the city lies layer upon layer of illicit subterranean marketplaces known as Undermarket. In these dark streets and tunnels, it is said that one can acquire anything if she goes deep enough, though each level of Undermarket becomes progressively more dangerous, as the lower levels are filled with degenerates from all corners of the world.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Goka.

Cosmopolitan: Your exposure to the many peoples intersecting in Goka and the tongues spoken there has given you a particular facility for speech. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Linguistics checks, and Linguistics becomes a class skill for you.

Undermarket Smuggler: You worked in Goka's Undermarket for a time, and have learned how to dodge the city's tax collectors and the port inspectors. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff and Sleight of Hand checks.

HONGAL

Tundra of the Horse Lords

Alignment: N

Capital: Ordu-Aganhei (8,227)

Major Races: Tian-Las (also giants, kitsune, samsarans, and Tian-Mins)

Major Religions: Abadar, Desna, General Susumu, Irori, Kofusachi, Yamatsumi

Languages: Hon-La, Minkaian, Senzar, Tien



Much of the nation of Hongal is composed of scrublands and icy tundra, and its people are a hardened group of nomadic horseback riders who travel these barren lands in groups of anywhere from dozens to thousands. Only two permanent settlements exist—the town of Muliwan to the south and the capital of Ordu-Aganhei near the northern border. Ordu-Aganhei marks the Tian end of the Path of Aganhei, a particularly important trade route between Tian Xia and Avistan. While the region's unforgiving weather tempts some to embrace the settled life, those who reside in the oases of civilization are looked down on by horse lords. Harsh winds constantly whip across the dry, rolling hills of the land, and a particularly powerful seasonal storm known as *quqotengir* (the “sky dragon's angry breath”) is especially feared, for those caught in its midst are often found later as strangely mutilated corpses.

In Hongal, one's horse is one's life, and the nomadic peoples' way of life is perhaps most aptly described by the local proverb, “A Hongali may cast her son, daughter, and husband from her tent in a storm, but she would follow them herself before casting out her horse.” Hongali horses are prized across Golarion as some of the best breeds money can buy. Each tribe of Hongali horseback riders is governed by a *baga bohd*, equivalent in power to a duke, and the most powerful tribe is overseen by the nation's ruling khan. The current khan is Kiriltai Khan, a ravenous, short-tempered man who is nonetheless known for his silver tongue.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Hongal.

Hongal Bloodrider: You belong to one of the nomadic groups of horseback riders that range throughout Hongal. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks.

Storm Hunter: You learned to hunt in the relentless winds of Hongal, and still make your arrows fly true. When fighting in windy weather, you treat the wind category as one level lower for the purposes of determining penalties on ranged attacks made with normal weapons.

HWANGGOT

Kingdom of Flowers

Alignment: NG

Capital: Haseong (151,650)

Major Races: Tian-Hwans (also kitsune, tengus, Tian-Dans, Tian-Dtangas, and Tian-Shus)

Major Religions: Desna, Hei

Feng, Kofusachi, Shelyn, Sun Wukong

Languages: Hwan, Tien



The peaceful nation of Hwanggot is renowned the continent over for having achieved a tranquility few other countries can even fathom. Through diplomacy alone, the leaders of Hwanggot managed for centuries to maintain the country's independence. When discussions with the ruthless empire of Lung Wa ultimately failed, however, the leaders of Hwanggot were forced to cede control of the rich and peaceful nation to the persistent conquerors. Though the avaricious aristocrats of Lung Wa sapped the Kingdom of Flowers of much of its resources in their pursuit of wealth and pleasures, the empire's collapse has enabled Hwanggot to flourish once again; its peoples' irenic ideologies never wavered throughout the temporary annexation and only continue now that it has regained its independence.

Hwanggot is regarded as a bastion of culture and art, and the many artistic masterpieces that come out of it are widely coveted. Though the principle philosophies of the Hwans have been entirely pacifistic for generations, some citizens are beginning to worry about tensions with Bachuan, Hwanggot's neighbor to the north. The current ruler of Hwanggot, Queen Hyun Eun-suk, is in the process of transferring control of the kingdom to her eldest daughter, Princess Hyun Geon-ji, and the heir's emphasis on bolstering Hwanggot's military forces may well spell the end for the peaceful empire.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Hwanggot.

Altruistic Diplomat: Your upbringing in Hwanggot has influenced you to be both peaceful and wise, and your arguments are consistently sound. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks. You must be Lawful Good, Neutral Good, or Chaotic Good to take this trait.

Hwan Artist: You grew up in Hwanggot, and your artistic talents were cherished and honed from an early age. You have been nurtured on the artistic spirit of Hwanggot. Choose one Perform skill. You gain a +1 trait bonus on checks with that skill, and it becomes a class skill for you.

JININ

Displaced Elven Nation

Alignment: LG

Capital: Ayajinbo (9,042)

Major Races: Elves (also some half-elves, samsarans, Taldans, and Tian-Mins)

Major Religions: Desna, Qi Zhong, Shelyn, Shizuru, Tsukiyo

Languages: Elven, Samsaran, Tien



When the terrible asteroid strike called Earthfall blotted the sun from the sky and the elves of the Inner Sea fled from the doomed region, not all chose to leave Golarion for the mysterious realm of Sovyrian. Some instead chose to travel through the perilous Darklands, seeking refuge from the cataclysm in Sekamina for hundreds of years. Though some of the elves chose to delve deeper into the eternal darkness, a band of the journeyers led by a courageous elven oracle named Jininsiel marched onward, and were rewarded for their persistence when they eventually stumbled upon huge veins of mithral that resembled nothing so much as the roots of a giant silver tree. Following these mithral nodes, the band of elves emerged in Tian Xia after centuries beneath the surface, and established the elven nation of Jinin, naming the kingdom after the brave leader of their journey, who died just a few weeks after seeing her people to safety.

Now, the elves of Jinin live in harmony with the wonders of nature that surround them, respectfully harvesting just enough of the rare ores from the Mithral Roots below the city of Ayajinbo to trade so that the citizens may live in comfort. Tians from far and wide come to see the silver gardens of Jinin and admire its massive stone towers, decorated with ornate designs of mithral and crystal. Having adopted the lifestyles of the samurai of Minkai, the elves are even more devoted to honor and tradition than are their western kin.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Jinin.

Conscientious Miner: You were one of the mithral miners of Jinin, and learned how to extract the delicate ore as well as determine its value. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Appraise checks, and a +1 trait bonus on Profession (miner) checks. In addition, Profession (miner) becomes a class skill for you.

Intrepid Delver: One of the elder elves in Ayajinbo told you many stories of the Darklands beneath the city, and your nerves have hardened to horrors others can hardly fathom. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

KAOLING

Brutal Hobgoblin Empire

Alignment: LE

Capital: Dhucharg (24,550)

Major Races: Hobgoblins (also ettins, hill giants, and ogres, as well as many human, elven, and samsaran slaves)

Major Religions: General Susumu, Yaezhing

Languages: Giant, Goblinoid



While under the rule of Lung Wa, the lands of Kaoling had little trouble fending off the routine hobgoblin attacks from tribes in the northern hills. However, when the empire collapsed and the six Successor States that arose out of the region's ashes were forced to defend their own lands, they found themselves helpless against the depredations of the hobgoblins, who swarmed over the landscape in brutal, highly efficient hordes, overwhelming the region and claiming it as their own. The goblinoids—always better at raiding than at holding land—showed unprecedented organization, restraint, and thoughtfulness while constructing their nation, and the country now known as Kaoling is the ultimate fruit of their labor.

Kaoling is populated primarily by hobgoblins, who rule over a secondary caste comprising the peoples they dominated in their conquest. These lesser subjects are forced to serve as slaves for their hobgoblin masters, and are punished with mutilation or execution if they misbehave. Those who perform admirably in their servitude are rewarded with increased power over their own kind, however, inspiring many slaves to turn on their own in an effort to live somewhat comfortably, or at least not in utter destitution.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Kaoling.

Indentured Blacksmith: As a former slave of the hobgoblins, you were forced to make many of the weapons and shields that your captors used in war. Choose either Craft (armor) or Craft (weapons). You gain a +1 trait bonus on the chosen skill, and it becomes a class skill for you.

Privileged Slave: You were enslaved by the hobgoblins of Kaoling, and obeyed your masters dutifully, turning your back on comrades in order to find favor with your slavers—all the while plotting your escape. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, and Bluff becomes a class skill for you.

KWANLAI

Rising Tengu Nation

Alignment: CN

Capital: Hisuikarasu (19,230)

Major Races: Tengu (also aasimars, kitsune, locathahs, Tian-Mins, and Tian-Shus)

Major Religions: Desna, Hei Feng, Lao Shu Po, Sun Wukong

Languages: Minkaian, Tengu, Tien



A nation of embittered and mistrustful tengu, Kwanlai emerged from the fall of Lung Wa with its people in disarray, so long had they been persecuted and held in contempt by Tian-Shus under the influence of the empire. In the 2 centuries since Lung Wa's collapse, Kwanlai has seen numerous clan wars and religion-based feuds, the nation's people distrustful of one another to a crippling fault. Recent years have produced some level of hope, however, as the leadership of Lady Sutarai-Gongen has bolstered the unity of Kwanlai's tengu, and the threat of outside enemies (especially the cruel and evil denizens of neighboring Wanshou) has inspired a national cohesion previously unknown.

While Kwanlai is primarily populated by tengu, its strong trade network and good relations with kindly neighbors mean that many Tians find their way to Kwanlai as well. Lady Sutarai-Gongen inspires goodwill among all of the nation's inhabitants, and so while civil conflicts may occasionally turn bloody, the rivalries rarely go beyond the level of individual grievances.

This is not to say that Kwanlai is on a direct path to prosperity, however. The nation still has much development left to accomplish before it can consider itself a securely cemented country in Tian Xia's dynamic landscape. What's more, the nation of Wanshou has attempted to invade twice over the last century—though it may be this threat more than anything that holds the tengu together in times of internal strife.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Kwanlai.

Border Guard: You are one of the warriors on the front lines between Kwanlai and Wanshou, and excel at combat against water-dwelling foes. You gain a +2 trait bonus on rolls to confirm critical hits against foes with the aquatic subtype.

Kwanlai Believer: You were raised in Kwanlai in one of the devout tengu churches, and your dedication to your cause makes your divine abilities particularly potent. You gain a +2 trait bonus on concentration checks made while casting divine spells.

LINGSHEN

Empire of Eternal Armies

Alignment: LN

Capital: Xiwu (226,000)

Major Races: Tian-Shus

Major Religions: Abadar, Hei Feng, Irori, Yaezhing

Languages: Tien



Lingshen is one of the most powerful Successor States left in the wake of Imperial Lung Wa's fall, its armies renowned across the continent for their disciplined and ruthless soldiers. King Huang and his generals offer enemies one chance to surrender; those who refuse are slain mercilessly, every man, woman, and child falling to the undiscerning sword of the Empire of Eternal Armies. The fear wrought by such vicious attacks usually ensures that the next victims to fall under the mighty nation's frightful gaze do not make the same mistake as their unfortunate neighbors.

Lingshen's armies are made so mighty in part by the fact that its soldiers may essentially die twice. When a soldier dies, her spirit is given over to a specially crafted terra-cotta warrior, so that she may fight on the battlefield once again. Only when this statue is destroyed is the soul finally set free for good. The sheer number of terra-cotta statues that protect Lingshen and its cities is enough to make rivals think twice before attacking, as the clay soldiers are molded after the likenesses of the nation's finest warriors, and it is rumored that the sculptors bargain with underworld dragons in order to imbue their creations with even greater supernatural strength, and perhaps more mysterious powers.

Each of King Huang's sons and daughters commands an army. While these generals' loyalty to their father is unquestioned, they frequently war in secret among themselves. Their father allows such strife so long as it doesn't threaten the safety of the nation, believing that conflict makes his children stronger.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Lingshen.

Heart of Clay: You believe you are destined for an afterlife of service as part of King Huang's terra-cotta army, so you do not fear death as others do. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Fortitude saves.

Lingshen's Finest: You are an elite soldier in one of Lingshen's numerous armies, and your discipline has made you a truly deadly foe. You gain a +1 trait bonus on all rolls to confirm critical hits.

MINATA

The Wandering Isles

Alignment: CN

Capital: None

Major Races: Tian-Sings, wayangs

Major Religions: Desna, Hei Feng, Lady Nanbyo, Lao Shu Po, Sun Wukong, numerous tribal cults

Languages: Aquan, Minatan, Tien, Wayang



The massive archipelago of Minata is home to a dizzying array of cultures, would-be nations, pirates, and confederacies, each isolated from the others by the turbulent sea that separates each small chunk of land. No one has succeeded in unifying the many islands, for the diversity of peoples and their beliefs ensures that each culture keeps a distance from the others.

While it is thought that even more islands exist than are detailed on most nautical maps, few explorers are foolhardy enough to traverse the dangerous seas south of the known Wandering Isles, where the treacherous waters are as frightening as the islands' barbaric inhabitants—the most primitive of which indulge in acts of debauchery such as cannibalism, headhunting, and necrophilia. While plenty of Minata's islands are populated by learned societies with complex histories and rich cultures, rumors and legends based on these more sensational and terrible aspects ensure that Minata remains a largely unexplored realm, full of both brutality and mystery.

Some legends whisper that Minata was once a great land bridge connecting Tian Xia with the southern continent of Sarusan, and that it was destroyed in an unknown calamity. Though most scholars dismiss these stories, brave adventurers sometimes return from the isles with inexplicable relics clearly not of Tian origin.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Minata.

Belem Pirate: The hidden coves and bays of the island of Belem have been your home throughout most of your career as a pirate, and the winding waterways of Minata have trained you well in the art of sailing. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks and Profession (sailor) checks, and one of these skills becomes a class skill for you.

Wayang Spellhunter: You grew up on one of the wayang-populated islands of Minata, and your use of magic while hunting has been a boon to you. Select a spell of 3rd level or below. When you use this spell with a metamagic feat, it uses up a spell slot one level lower than it normally would.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

MINKAI

Empire of Dawn

Alignment: LN

Capital: Kasai (164,200)

Major Races: Tian-Mins (also kitsune, tengus, Tian-Hwans, Tian-Las, and Tian-Shus)

Major Religions: Daikitsu, Desna, Fumeiyoshi, General Susumu, Hei Feng, Irori, Shelyn, Shizuru, Tsukiyo, Yamatsumi

Languages: Minkaian, Tien



A great empire that never bowed to Imperial Lung Wa, Minkai is a volcanic peninsular land of strong familial ties, ancient warrior traditions, and secretive ninja clans. Even at the height of Lung Wa's power, Minkai was able to stand apart from the empire, its strong culture and relatively inaccessible geographical location insulating it from the rest of Tian Xia's affairs throughout Lung Wa's regime. However, the Empire of Dawn's recent loss of its ruler—Emperor Higashiyama Shigure, smuggled away by his guards to an undisclosed location “for his own protection”—has delivered a major blow to the nation's morale, as the newly implemented leader, the mysterious Jade Regent, is proving to be a lackluster ruler, distracted from effective rule by his avarice and hedonism. The threat of civil war looms around every corner, and though the nation does its best to project a visage of prosperity and stability, it seems only a matter of time before Minkai can no longer hide behind its patently false image.

The capital of Minkai, Kasai, is the main center of commerce both domestic and foreign, and has long been considered the nation's crowning achievement. The opulence Kasai's leaders portray the city as possessing inspires countless visitors from Tian Xia as well as Avistan. The trade route from Minkai over the Crown of the World makes the nation as a whole largely independent, freeing it from reliance on commerce with the continually changing nations of Tian Xia's mainland.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Minkai.

Instigator of Rebellion: Your rage over the political repositioning within Minkai has led you to incite rage within your compatriots. You have become adept at organizing rallies in opposition to the government. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

Minkai Advocate: You possess strong ties to Minkai, and spread flattering words regarding your empire. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, and Bluff becomes a class skill for you.

NAGAJOR

Forbidding Serpentine Empire

Alignment: N

Capital: Zom Kullan (78,620)

Major Races: Nagaji, Nagas

Major Religions: Desna, Lamashtu, Nalinivati, Tsukiyo, Yaezhing, Yamatsumi

Languages: Nagaji, Tien



In southern Tian Xia lies the damp and tropical realm of Nagajor. The burning sun beats hot upon the jungle canopy and swampy grasslands, and the humidity is oppressive. Nagajor, for the most part, remains uninhabited jungle wilderness. The primary occupants—the snake-bodied nagas and their reptilian subordinates, the nagaji—rule the jungle with brutal efficiency. Both have inhabited the nation of Nagajor for thousands of years, the current matriarch being the most recent descendent in a long line of naga queens. While the nagas maintain that the nagaji were created by the nagas' patron goddess, Nalinivati, the vassals nonetheless possess free will, acquiescing to their masters' desires out of a sense of profound respect and national pride more than forced servitude.

Humanoids in Nagajor are greeted with varying degrees of apathy, the reigning nagas not caring to associate with such base beings and entirely unafraid of expansionists infiltrating their deadly wilds, which often take care of unwanted foreigners better than any guards. When nagas do communicate with outsiders, they usually do so through their nagaji servants, who are more impatient with humans—whom they deem as threats—and only a little more willing to waste time on the other races of Tian Xia.

The capital of Nagajor, Zom Kullan, is located in the center of a dormant volcano in a perilous and volcanically active mountain range. Rumors persist that this volcano remains dormant only because of a complex magical ritual the nagas constantly perform to calm the forces of nature.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Nagajor.

Jungle Resilience: Having grown up in Nagajor, you are used to the myriad poisons of its people, and have developed a strong immune system. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Fortitude saves against poison effects.

Snake Bleeder: You were a nagaji vassal of knowledgeable nagas, and they taught you much regarding how they concoct their various poisons. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks when brewing poisons, and Craft (alchemy) becomes a class skill for you.

PO LI

Spiritual Stronghold of a Fallen Empire

Alignment: LN

Capital: Changdo (145,800)

Major Races: Tian-Shus (also nagaji, samsarans, and Tian-Dtang)

Major Religions: The Eternal Emperor (see below)

Languages: Tien



One of the most powerful of the Successor States left after the collapse of Lung Wa, Po Li is home to the fallen empire's capital, Changdo, the Imperial City. Other than worship of the nation's leader, the Eternal Emperor, religion is entirely suppressed in Po Li. Though the last Eternal Emperor perished during the fall of Lung Wa, that fact has hardly deterred supporters of his divine mandate, who claim that it is only a matter of time before their leader is reincarnated and ascends the *Five Dragon Throne* once again. Oracles are the preferred mediums for channeling the divine within the realm of Po Li, whereas clerics are severely punished there.

While the fall of Lung Wa allowed many of mainland Tian Xia's nations to once again worship any gods they wished, this is not so for the people of Po Li. Opposition only shows itself in hurried whispers, as the oracles of the Eternal Emperor brutally reprimand heretics. Peasants within Po Li hoping to grant their children better lives sometimes claim that their son or daughter is the Eternal Emperor reincarnated. Official inquisitors of the Oracular Council take time to investigate such claims, and while most are summarily dismissed, a rare few children are taken to be raised among the oracles, either becoming members of the Oracular Council themselves or becoming wandering protectors of the weak and poor. Less scrupulous members of Po Lian society sometimes dress as blue-robed oracles and sell fake religious wares to unsuspecting buyers.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Po Li.

Chosen Child: The oracles of Po Li smiled upon you when your parents claimed you were of divine right, and you were raised with privileges few Po Lians can fathom. Your starting money increases by 900 gp.

Passionate Believer: Your faith was stifled while you lived in the religiously oppressive slums of Changdo, and the persecutions against you only spurred your own beliefs and made your convictions stronger. You gain a +1 trait bonus on saving throws against divine spells.

QUAIN

Land of a Thousand Heroes

Alignment: LN

Capital: Lanming (62,000)

Major Races: Tian-Shus (also kitsune and tengus)

Major Religions: Irori, Qi Zhong, Shizuru, Sun Wukong

Languages: Tien



One of the mightiest Successor States, Quain rules not through armies or the strength of its beliefs, but via the time-honored traditions of its people and its myriad martial artist heroes. Many of Tian Xia's most famous schools of martial arts originated in Quain or stem from some school therein, and thus the nation's people take great pride in their combat instructors. A dizzying proliferation of styles flourishes in Quain; some focus on inner perfection, while others strive to prove their mastery over other styles. It is said (with only slight exaggeration) that a village in Quain cannot claim a place on the map without at least two martial arts schools in the town. Among the most famous schools is the Dragon Temple, a mountainside retreat staffed and maintained by monks of Irori, and competition to study there is fierce.

Every cycle of the zodiac (a 12-year period), the legendary Celestial Dragon visits Quain, and the nation's king exchanges the heart of one of his daughters for the continued prosperity of the kingdom. During the last cycle, however, the King of Heroes, a fiend now only referred to as Burning Cloud Devil, tried to slay the Celestial Dragon, and his failed attempt is thought to have brought on 12 years of misfortune and natural disasters for the nation of Quain.

The bureaucracy of Quain is not only extensive and strong, but also efficient and directed toward the common benefit of the kingdom. Most of the bureaucracy's employees are eunuchs, taken as children and taught to perform important duties, including commanding the nation's armies, controlling its commerce, and conducting diplomacy with neighboring countries.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Quain.

Quain Martial Artist: Having grown up in Quain, you were taught under various schools of martial arts, and have used all you have learned to hone your fighting prowess. You gain a +1 trait bonus on damage rolls when using unarmed strikes.

Silvertongued Eunuch: You were brought up as part of Quain's strictly eunuch bureaucracy, trading your sexual potency for education and tact. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nobility) and Diplomacy checks.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

SHAGUANG

Desert of the Sky Spirits

Alignment: CN

Capital: None

Major Races: Tian-Las
(also numerous desert
and elemental races)

Major Religions: Desna, Lady Nanbyo, Lamashtu, Pharama

Languages: Auran, Hon-La



The vast desert of Shaguang is a desolate land practically void of civilization, the only people inhabiting the barren wastes being a smattering of Tian-La tribes known collectively as the Mutabi-qi. The Mutabi-qi roam Shaguang, never straying far from the oases that dot the wasteland, and possess a strict code of ethics, which requires them to share water with strangers and forbids them from killing an enemy in his sleep. Beyond these desert nomads, Shaguang is home to various monsters, including oversized vermin, death worms, lamias, and the undead.

More mysterious and terrifying than any of these beasts, however, are the Sky Spirits, which loom constantly in the cloudless sky overhead, becoming more prevalent as one nears the western borders of the desert, near the towering Wall of Heaven. What the purposes of these ominous figures are none can say—every Mutabi-qi tribe has its own stories explaining their origins, all of which vary widely, though each tale claims that the spirits dwell in a floating city in the sky, and some suggest that they did not originate in the deserts, but rather flew here from somewhere far away. While little is known of the Sky Spirits or their desires, the people of Shaguang are universally paranoid of the figures. The Sky Spirits, for their part, are not necessarily cruel, but their strange customs, unknown language, and dark skin make it clear that they are strangers, and the Mutabi-qi have learned to be wary of their neighbors.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Shaguang.

Mutabi-qi Explorer: You belong to one of the nomadic Mutabi-qi tribes that wander the wastes of Shaguang, and you are adept at navigating the seemingly endless desert wastes. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks and Survival checks made in the desert.

Sky Spirit Worshipper: As the child of a Mutabi-qi shaman, you have seen the sky spirits that roam above and know that the world is rife with unexplainable and terrifying mysteries. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saves against fear effects.

SHENMEN

Cursed Land of Spiders and Ghosts

Alignment: NE

Capital: Yin-Sichasi (4,900)

Major Races: Tian-shus (also evil fey,
jorogumos, wayangs, and other
monsters)

Major Religions: Fumeiyoshi, Lady Nanbyo, Lao Shu Po,
Pharama

Languages: Aklo, Tien



Though it sat firmly in the middle of Tian Xia during the height of Imperial Lung Wa's expansion, the tempestuous territory of Shenmen was hardly a crowning jewel of the empire. Instead, it was ruthlessly and quietly exploited, its forests hacked down for lumber and its silver mines gutted for rare ores. Few people lived in the eerie realm of Shenmen even during booming times of expansionism, though, for it is well known that the nation's woodlands and hills are plagued by terrifying monsters that strike in the dead of night, which seems all the longer in the cursed land thanks to the perpetually unfavorable weather. The rulers of Lung Wa often transferred insubordinate nobles and government officials to Shenmen as punishment for their shortcomings, and thus the land was filled with corrupt and despicable lords and ladies who only increased the misery inherent in the murky nation.

When Lung Wa collapsed, the rulers of Shenmen found themselves unprotected against the evil monsters that overwhelmed the land with a vengeance, brutally disposing of the corrupt officials and appointing their own cowed servants as leaders of the few settlements that remained. It is said that vile jorogumos head most of the organized cruelty in Shenmen, demanding male sacrifices from the leaders they appointed in the nation's various townships—demands that the leaders fearfully acquiesce to, making offerings of either ensnared travelers or captured peasants from other villages.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Shenmen.

Aberration Hunter: You refuse to give in to the monsters that feast on your people, and hunt them instead. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity against aberrations.

Shenmen Prospector: You were a talented laborer in the silver mines of Shenmen, and have seen many wonders in the haunted caverns beneath the surface of the cursed nation. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Appraise and Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks.

SHOKURO

Kingdom of Exiled Samurai

Alignment: LN

Capital: Mukinami (22,870)

Major Races: Tian-Mins, Tian-Shus (also elves, kitsune, and Taldans)

Major Religions: Abadar, Daikitsu, General Susumu, Pharasma, Shizuru

Languages: Elven, Minkaian, Tien



Under the rule of Imperial Lung Wa, the farmhands of Shokuro's provinces were forced to work day and night in order to meet the ravenous demands of the empire's aristocrats, who ceaselessly feasted on the nation's harvests. When Lung Wa fell, Shokuro erupted into civil war, and the region emerged from the conflict battered and without a government. Neighboring Lingshen swooped in and claimed the lands as its own, forcing the peasants back into the same desperate servitude they were fated to endure under Lung Wa. All of their rebellions failed miserably until a samurai named Toriaka, a wandering ronin from Minkai, happened upon the desperate nation and led the people to independence.

Now, Toriaka rules Shokuro as a fair and kind shogun, maintaining the nation's freedom and ensuring its independence by upholding a strong and well-organized military, as well as continuing to provide neighboring nations with foodstuffs at reasonable prices, bolstering Shokuro's economy. Despite the initial tragedies faced by the nation after Lung Wa's fall, it has quickly become apparent that Shokuro has fared incredibly well among the Successor States. The country's capital, Mukinami, is governed by the Sun Shogun and a council of four advisors known as the Four Pillars. While bickering among these advisors can hinder national progress at times, the open-minded and just Sun Shogun is able to keep the vast majority of his people happy and continue to spur growth.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Shokuro.

Freedom Fighter: You come from a family of farmers, but are determined to fight for your rights. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks made with improvised weapons. If you do not possess the Catch Off-Guard or Throw Anything feats, you still take penalties on these attack rolls as normal.

Rebel Leader: A close relative was an important player in the rebellions that led to the independence of Shokuro, and passed on her passion to you. If you take the Leadership feat, you receive a +1 trait bonus to your Leadership score.

TIANJING

Beloved of the Heavens

Alignment: NG

Capital: Zetang (26,370)

Major Races: Aasimars (also samsarans, tengus, Tian-Mins, Tian-Shus, and Tian-Sings)

Major Religions: Desna, Kofusachi, Qi Zhong, Shelyn, Tsukiyo, empyreal lords

Languages: Celestial, Tien



Even at the height of its power, Imperial Lung Wa knew better than to try to conquer Tianjing, a mysterious nation ruled and populated by benevolent aasimars. Said to be the descendents of extraplanar celestials who guarded the realm from ancient evil, Tianjing's current inhabitants retain only a fraction of the splendor and strength possessed by their ancestors, though this fraction was all they needed to deter the avaricious depredations of Lung Wa. Instead, Lung Wa showered the aasimars with support in the form of resources, gifts of art to augment their culture, and anything else they might need. The aasimars happily accepted such shows of kindness, and became a nation focused on philosophy and artistry, losing sight of their original purpose: to spread good will and protect Tian Xia from evil.

When Lung Wa fell, Tianjing had nearly become too dependent on the empire to defend itself from the aggressive Successor States that now surrounded it on all sides. The celestial nation fell victim time and time again to the raids of small bands of outlaws and renegade armies, and its people hurried to reacquire the militaristic ways of their ancestors, spilling blood for the first time in generations. It was only through the freehearted benevolence of a leader named Sulunai that Tianjing was able to recover from its defensive impotence. Now, the citizens of Tianjing retain the splendor of their diverse culture while maintaining the good will set forth by their ancestors, resorting to violence if absolutely necessary and proving incredibly resilient.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Tianjing.

Heavenly Touch: Growing up, you were exposed to everyday miracles performed by your half-celestial friends, and some of this magic rubbed off. At will, you can touch a dying creature to stabilize it as a standard action.

Tianjing Temple Guard: You were a stalwart guard of one of Tianjing's magnificent temple cities, and your resolve proved to be of great use during bandit raids. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity made with polearm weapons.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER



VALASHMAI JUNGLE

Here There Be Monsters

Alignment: CN

Capital: None

Major Races: Catfolk, gripplis, lizardfolk, xills, degenerate humanoids, monsters

Major Religions: Lamashtu, various demigods and forgotten cults

Languages: Abyssal, Catfolk, Draconic, Grippli, Infernal, pidgin Tien



This vast and unforgiving jungle covers the southernmost portion of Tian Xia. Filled with endemic and inimical animals, plants, and humanoids, the Valashmai Jungle seems a place completely inhospitable to civilized people, but numerous ancient ruins and lost cities prove that societies did at one point exist beneath the treacherous canopies. The most impressive of these remains belong to the Valashaians, a race of 15-foot-tall reptilian humanoids who left their mark throughout much of the jungle.

While explorers who hack their way through the thick foliage are sure to find artifacts and relics that make their search worthwhile, getting into and out of the jungle is no easy feat, and the farther inland one travels, the more perilous the immense rainforest becomes. In portions of the Valashmai, sunlight never reaches the forest floor, and life in all its riotous splendor struggles against itself. Massive insects, toxic plants, armored reptiles, and bloodthirsty mammals are locked in the endless battle that is survival in these unforgiving wilds. Above the jungle canopies, numerous mountain ranges soar into the heavens, though their frequently erupting volcanoes and carnivorous plant life make them ill suited for providing refuge for adventurers seeking sanctuary. But while only the bravest journeyers need apply for the destructive trials of the Valashmai, its myriad treasures and great secrets offer plenty of temptations for the foolhardy.

Traits

The following are regional traits for the Valashmai Jungle.

Jungle Diplomat: You know the ways and mores of the tribes of the Valashmai Jungle, and how to handle delicate communications with different groups of people. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.

Valashmai Veteran: You have traveled to the Valashmai Jungle on numerous occasions, and your prowess in traversing the jungle wilderness makes you a formidable guide and explorer. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Perception checks, and a +1 trait bonus on Survival checks in jungle terrain. One of these skills becomes a class skill for you.

WALL OF HEAVEN

Where Earth Meets Sky

Alignment: N

Capital: None

Major Races: Tian-Las, Tian-Shus (also giants, oni, yetis, and worse)

Major Religions: Desna, Irori, Lamashtu, Tsukiyo, Yamatsumi

Languages: Aklo, Hon-La, Senzar, Tien



The enormous mountain range known as the Wall of Heaven defies even the liveliest of imaginations, for the vast line of peaks and valleys runs from the arctic circle almost all the way south to the equator. The mountains of the Wall of Heaven often stand in excess of 30,000 feet, towering over the westward sea and the various low-lying nations to the east. Nearly every mountain of the chain holds its snow year round, and the winds that howl through the region's valleys and passes plague the dreams of those who dare traverse them.

Regardless of the inhospitality of the perpetually frozen mountain range, there exist points where civilization has made its mark, namely in the myriad monasteries that call the mountain peaks their home. Monks who seek to test their mettle or gain incredible power at one of these monasteries attempt to surmount these eminent alps, but few make it to the top before fleeing from the bloodcurdling heights.

While the cliffs and ridges themselves prove formidable foes to climbers, the Wall of Heaven is also home to other wonders and monsters both mundane and otherworldly. Portals to other planes are said to exist in the crags of the highest peaks, including a ruptured barrier between reality and dreams—a gateway to the dreaded nightmare realm of Leng. Whether the rumors of these extraplanar passages are true or not, few care to find out, and most who dwell near the Wall of Heaven can't help but flinch at the things that go bump in the night.

Traits

The following are regional traits for the Wall of Heaven.

Master of Peaks: You have made it to the summits of a number of the Wall of Heaven's peaks, and your body is used to the effects of both extreme cold and high altitude. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Fortitude saving throws made against the effects of cold dangers and altitude sickness.

Seasoned Climber: Your time on the slopes of the Wall of Heaven has improved your ability to surmount great peaks. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Climb checks, and Climb becomes a class skill for you.

WANSHOU

Post-Apocalyptic Kraken-Ruled Swampland

Alignment: CE

Capital: Numijaan (17,890)

Major Races: Boggards, kappas, Tian-Mins, Tian Shus

Major Religions: Hei Feng, Lady Nanbyo, Lamashtu, Lao Shu Po

Languages: Aquan, Boggard, Minkaian, Tien



Once the single largest rice producer in all Tian Xia, the nation of Wanshou has fallen into sinister hands since Lung Wa's collapse. When the overworked people of Wanshou revolted against the few imperial guards left after the fall of the empire, they quickly overwhelmed their oppressors. Their bloody celebration was short-lived, however, as the weather in the region turned on them, producing storm after storm in a torrential wave of cataclysmic typhoons. The nation was devastated, and much of it simply eroded away. Some of the desperate few who remained called for divine powers to end the ceaseless tempest, but what answered their cry for help was the malignant Zhanagorr, an elder kraken who saved the nation under the condition that he would rule over its survivors as a god-king.

Today, the descendents of the humanoids who didn't perish in the ancient storms serve Zhanagorr and his monstrous minions as a slave caste, worked to the bone to provide for their cruel master. Some have succumbed to either madness or self-hatred, and worship the elder kraken as their impatient and unforgiving lord, but these corrupted oracles and lunatics are relatively few among the disheartened people of Wanshou, who are still forced to produce rice for trade with Chu Ye and distant Bachuan, supplementing Wanshou's other exported goods, such as ships and slaves. Few know the kraken's motives in taking over the nation, but some speculate he seeks to wage war against neighboring Xidao, a rumor that has struck significant fear into the populace of that aquatic nation.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Wanshou.

Rice Runner: You grew up as a slave in Wanshou, harvesting rice for your kraken despot, and you know how to move agilely across sodden and unsteady ground. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Acrobatics checks, and Acrobatics becomes a class skill for you.

Swamp Rebel: You grew up hiding in the swamps from the monstrous overlords who enslaved you and your people. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Stealth checks in swampy terrain, and Stealth becomes a class skill for you.

XA HOI

Empire of the Dragon

Alignment: LN

Capital: Ngon Hoa (148,400)

Major Races: Tian-Dans (also nagaji, Tian-Dtang, Tian-Hwans, and wayangs)

Major Religions: Abadar, General Susumu, Irori, Nalinivati, Shizuru

Languages: Draconic, Tien



The opulent nation of Xa Hoi is regarded as an enigma by most, for the thriving coastal nation's prosperity is due in no small part to the wisdom and impartiality of the rulers who have overseen it for nearly 3,000 years—a dynasty of sovereign dragons in human form. The influence of draconic heritage can be seen in almost every facet of Xa Hoi, from its stunning architecture to its merciless justice system, and rule under the Dragon King is nothing if not impartial.

The people of Xa Hoi are split into thousands of different clans organized by regional affinity instead of race or ethnicity—and in fact, nagaji and wayangs often exist in the same clans as humans without significant conflict or prejudice. Each of these clans specializes in certain trades or industrial ventures. Mining is an important fixture of Xa Hoi's economy, and clans of prospectors are abundant in the Kim Loai Hills to the northwest. Fishing and other marine endeavors are also profitable, and the nation is renowned for its superb pearls and finely constructed warships. Xa Hoi prides itself on its expertly trained military both at land and sea, and the so-called Dragon's Teeth comprise tens of thousands of draftees who would die to defend their country. While punishment for misdeeds in Xa Hoi is harsh (usually taking the form of either death, disfigurement, or conscription), the dragon-masked judges who deliver such chastisements are renowned for their incorruptibility.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Xa Hoi.

Clan Artisan: You were raised in one of the numerous clans of Xa Hoi, and learned a valuable trade in your early years. Pick one Craft skill. You gain a +2 trait bonus on checks with that skill, and it becomes a class skill for you.

Xa Hoi Soldier: You were a soldier in one of Xa Hoi's extensive armies, trained under the oversight of one of Pham Duc Quan's draconic brethren. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Reflex saves.

DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

XIDAO

War-Wearied Aquatic Nation

Alignment: N

Capital: Yashabaru (22,400)

Major Races: Locathahs (also cecaelias, krakens, merrows, sahuagin, and tritons)

Major Religions: Hei Feng, Nalinivati, Qi Zhong, various demigods

Languages: Aquan, Tien



The shallow sea of the Xidao Gulf separates mainland Tian Xia from Minkai, and is home to numerous aquatic creatures both intelligent and mindless. Among the most prominent of these water-dwelling races are the locathahs, who have built numerous undersea cities on the ocean's floor and rule much of Xidao in the same fashion as any land-dwellers' system of government. The locathahs' dominance over the Xidao Gulf is only hindered by the treacherous underwater trench known as the Aya-Maru, a vast gash in the center of the nation's seabed home to malevolent merrows, sahuagin, and worse.

Locathahs are generally friendly with the sailors and fisherfolk of neighboring nations, who often leave offerings to the fishlike denizens of Xidao upon "trade spires"—stone obelisks that jut out of the ocean. Locathahs are much more willing to protect foreigners if presented with such gifts before travelers and fishers make their way across the dangerous waters.

One of Xidao's more enigmatic features is its wai-gaa, or "insubstantial lands." These masses of underwater sludge and mud break away from the seafloor and, borne by trapped gases, rise to the surface, becoming small floating islands that range throughout the gulf. Wai-gaa sometimes carry ancient temples and other mysterious traces of civilization to the surface, relics that are nonetheless destined to drift back to the bottom of the ocean when the gases beneath the floating island finally give out.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Xidao.

Pearl Diver: You were a pearl harvester for a nation bordering Xidao, and you know just what clues to look for when searching for a worthwhile haul in the briny shallows. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Appraise and Swim checks.

Trench Navigator: You've sailed the treacherous waters of the Xidao Gulf in your past, and you can navigate their dangers adroitly. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks, and a +1 trait bonus on Profession (sailor) checks. One of these skills becomes a class skill for you.

ZI HA

Sacred Land of Reincarnation

Alignment: LG

Capital: Sangpo-Jong (20,340)

Major Races: Samsarans, Tian-Las (also giants, hobgoblins, Tian-Shus, Tian-Mins, and fiendish troglodytes)

Major Religions: Pharama, Qi Zhong, Shelyn, Shizuru, Tsukiyo, Yamatsumi

Languages: Giant, Hon-La, Samsaran, Tien



The mountains of Zi Ha are divided into three categories: the Enlightened Peaks to the south, under the direct control of the samsarans; the Savage Peaks in the northwest and northeast, primarily occupied by giants and other barbaric denizens; and the Wild Peaks in the central lowlands, left to the untamed animals. When people speak of Zi Ha, however, they are referring to the parts ruled by the elusive samsarans, who offer the only civilization in the region, and only to those who can master their illusions.

Zi Ha is the ancestral home of the mystical and peaceful samsarans, who dwell in cities on the peaks of the region's many mountains, magical settlements connected by well-maintained roads that wind through unforgiving cliffs and vales. The samsarans keep interactions with outsiders to a minimum, usually only leaving their sacred cities to trade. While the samsarans have little in the way of military defenses, they protect the valleys between their cities by obfuscating them with illusory magic.

Samsarans aren't the only denizens of Zi Ha, however, as the mountains are also filled with unpredictable and deeply spiritual taiga giants. These giants usually attack anyone who trespasses upon their lands, but at other times will descend peacefully to human and samsaran villages to trade for supplies, maintaining a strict code of silence as they do so. In the extensive cave systems of Zi Ha, there are also said to lurk fiendish reptilian creatures that constantly wage war with one another.

Traits

The following are regional traits for Zi Ha.

Discerning Beliefs: You helped the samsarans maintain the magical boundaries around valleys in the Enlightened Peaks, and learned the secrets of avoiding such illusions yourself. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws to disbelieve illusions.

Sound of Mind: You have lived in the mountains of Zi Ha and found utter tranquility among the samsarans of the region. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects.

ARCHETYPES

Presented below are four archetypes with a distinctly Tian flavor. The lotus geisha is a bard who seduces individual foes and empowers allies with her magical wiles. The sword saint possesses the resolve and determination of a samurai, but focuses on the first strike. The white-haired witch manifests her powers in the form of incredible feats of agility. Yokai hunters hail from the Forest of Spirits and other lands rife with otherworldly beings, and use mysterious powers to track otherworldly quarry.

LOTUS GEISHA

The lotus geisha of Minkai are renowned for their powers of seduction, and tales tell of lotus geisha disarming foes and bolstering allies. The lotus geisha is an archetype of the bard class.

Weapon Proficiency: A lotus geisha is proficient with all simple weapons, plus the butterfly sword, fighting fan, iron brush, sai, shortbow, and shuriken. See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for details on these Eastern weapons. This replaces the normal bard weapon proficiencies.

Enrapturing Performance (Su): At 2nd level, a lotus geisha gains the ability to execute an enrapturing performance in addition to her bardic performance ability. An enrapturing performance is exactly like a bardic performance with the following exceptions.

A lotus geisha can use an enrapturing performance to recreate the effects of any of her known bardic performances, but she focuses the performance on only a single target within range. While other creatures see and hear a lotus geisha's enrapturing performance, only the target of this ability is affected by it. A lotus geisha cannot have a bardic performance and an enrapturing performance in effect at the same time. Every round spent engaged in an enrapturing performance counts against the total number of rounds per day she can use her bardic performance, and she cannot use this ability if she does not have any more rounds of bardic performance left for that day. Starting an enrapturing performance is a standard action; at 7th level, it becomes a move action, and at 13th level, it becomes a swift action.

A lotus geisha adds a +2 bonus to the DC of Will saves made to resist the effects of her fascinate, frightening tune, and suggestion enrapturing performances. When a lotus geisha uses her enrapturing performance ability to emulate inspire competence, inspire courage, inspire greatness, or inspire heroics, any bonuses to AC or on ability checks, attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks increase by +1. For example, a lotus geisha using inspire heroics as an enrapturing performance would grant her target a +5 morale bonus on saving throws and a +5 dodge bonus to AC, instead of the usual +4 bonuses.

This ability replaces well-versed.

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, a lotus geisha gains Spell Focus (enchantment) as a bonus feat. At 5th level, she gains Greater Spell Focus (enchantment) as a bonus feat. These bonus feats replace bardic knowledge and lore master.

SWORD SAINT

Sword saints hail from lands where samurai are prevalent, and are often ronin who wander the world seeking new challenges to perfect their intricate style of swordplay called *iaijutsu*. The following benefits apply only when a sword saint is using a sword and carrying nothing in his other hand. The sword saint is an archetype of the samurai alternate class (*Ultimate Combat* 18).

Iaijutsu Strike (Ex): A sword saint can perform a lightning-quick iaijutsu strike against the target of his challenge to inflict devastating wounds while drawing his sword. After the sword saint has challenged a foe but before he has attacked the target of his challenge, he may choose to use his iaijutsu strike as a full-round action, making an attack roll with his weapon as normal. In order to use this ability, the sword saint's weapon must be sheathed at the start of his turn. If he successfully hits his opponent with an iaijutsu strike, his attack deals an additional +1d6 points of damage. This bonus damage increases by an additional +1d6 at 3rd level and every two levels thereafter to a maximum of +10d6 damage at 19th level. Any extra damage as a result of a successful iaijutsu strike is not multiplied by a critical hit.

After making an iaijutsu strike, a sword saint takes a –4 penalty to his AC until his next turn, but his weapon is now drawn and he may continually to fight normally. Regardless of whether he hits his opponent with the iaijutsu strike, a sword saint cannot use this ability on the same foe more than once per day.

At 10th level, a sword saint learns to focus faster and is able to make an iaijutsu strike as a standard action, and the penalty to his AC is reduced to –2.

This ability replaces a samurai's mount.

Brutal Slash (Ex): At 3rd level, a sword saint's iaijutsu strike becomes even more deadly. If a sword saint threatens a critical hit with his iaijutsu strike, he adds a bonus equal to 1/2 his class level to the attack roll to confirm a critical hit. This ability replaces mounted charge.

Terrifying Iaijutsu (Ex): At 5th level, a sword saint's iaijutsu strike devastates the morale of foes that witness it. When a sword saint successfully hits with an iaijutsu strike, all foes within 30 feet must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the sword saint's class level + the sword saint's Cha modifier) or become shaken for 1d4+1 rounds. This ability replaces banner.

Roaring Iaijutsu (Ex): At 14th level, a sword saint's iaijutsu strike deafens foes upon impact. When a sword saint successfully hits with an iaijutsu strike, all foes within 30 feet

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must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the sword saint's class level + the sword saint's Str modifier) or be deafened for 1d4 minutes. This ability replaces greater banner.

WHITE-HAIRED WITCH

A white-haired witch concentrates her mysterious powers on improving her prowess in melee, using feats of agility and her prehensile hair to deal extreme damage. Rogue talents and advanced rogue talents marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*. The white-haired witch is an archetype of the witch class.

White Hair (Su): At 1st level, a white-haired witch gains the ability to use her hair as a weapon. This functions as a primary natural attack with a reach of 5 feet. The hair deals 1d4 points of damage (1d3 for a Small witch) plus the witch's Intelligence modifier. In addition, whenever the hair strikes a foe, the witch can attempt to grapple that foe with her hair as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity, using her Intelligence modifier in place of her Strength modifier when making the combat maneuver check. When a white-haired witch grapples a foe in this way, she does not gain the grappled condition.

At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, a white-haired witch's hair adds 5 feet to its reach, to a maximum of 30 feet at 20th level.

The hair cannot be sundered or attacked as a separate creature. In addition, a white-haired witch further improves her ability to control her hair as she progresses in level, gaining the following abilities.

Constrict (Ex): At 2nd level, when the white-haired witch's hair successfully grapples an opponent, it can begin constricting her victim as a free action, dealing damage equal to that of its attack.

Trip (Ex): At 4th level, a white-haired witch who successfully strikes a foe with her hair can attempt a combat maneuver check to trip the creature as a free action.

Pull (Ex): At 6th level, a white-haired witch who successfully strikes a foe with her hair can attempt a combat maneuver check to pull the creature 5 feet closer to her as a free action.

Strangle (Ex): At 8th level, when the white-haired witch's hair is grappling with an opponent, that creature is considered strangled, and cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

This ability replaces hex.

Rogue Talents: At 10th level, a white-haired witch learns a rogue talent, using her white-haired witch level in place of her rogue level. At 12th level and for every two levels thereafter, she gains an additional rogue talent. A white-haired witch cannot select an individual rogue talent more than once, and can select from among the following: assault leader*, combat trick, finesse rogue, major magic,

minor magic, positioning attack*, resiliency, surprise attack, and weapon training. At 18th level and 20th level, a white-haired witch can choose from among the following advanced rogue talents: another day*, defensive roll, improved evasion, opportunist, redirect attack*, slippery mind, and thoughtful reexamining*. This ability replaces major hex and grand hex.

YOKAI HUNTER

Yokai hunters possess a supernatural tether to the spirit worlds that shroud mortal existence. They use their powers to peer into the realm of the dead, and are adept at hunting those who dwell in the realm between the Material Plane and the Great Beyond, the supernatural beings Tians refer to as *yokai*. The yokai hunter is an archetype of the ranger class.

Favored Yokai (Su): A yokai hunter possesses a supernatural ability to sense beings connected to the spirit world, such as kami, oni, and ghosts, and is formidable at fighting them. At 1st level, a yokai hunter gains a +2 bonus on weapon attacks and damage rolls against one of the following creature types (and subtypes, if applicable), which are considered yokai for the purposes of this archetype: aberration, dragon, fey, magical beast, outsider (native), and undead (incorporeal). (A GM may choose to alter this list for the purposes of her campaign.) At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, a yokai hunter may select another favored yokai from this list, gaining a +2 bonus on weapon attacks and damage rolls against that yokai.

In addition, whenever a yokai hunter sees a favored yokai that is disguised or has not made its otherworldly essence known, he gains an automatic check to identify the creature as such. To make this check, a yokai hunter rolls 1d20 and adds his yokai hunter level and Charisma modifier (DC 10 + 1/2 the yokai's Hit Dice + the yokai's Cha modifier). A successful check means that the yokai hunter recognizes the creature's ties to the spiritual world. Regardless of whether the check is successful, a yokai hunter gains the bonus on weapon attacks and damage rolls against favored yokai.

This ability replaces favored enemy. Ranger abilities that rely on a favored enemy instead rely on this ability.

Yokai Sense (Su): At 7th level, a yokai hunter can sense yokai he has identified with his favored yokai ability as though he had blindsense out to a range of 60 feet. This ability replaces woodland stride.

Resist Yokai (Su): At 12th level, a yokai hunter can attempt to shrug off the magical energies of a yokai. He gains a +4 insight bonus on saving throws to resist the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of favored yokai. In addition, once per day as a standard action, a yokai hunter can shed an effect placed on him by a yokai as *break enchantment*, using his yokai hunter level as his caster level. This ability replaces camouflage.

COMBAT

FIGHTING STYLES OF THE DRAGON EMPIRES

While the Dragon Empires are filled with myriad magical wonders, they are also home to some of Golarion's greatest martial artists and most honorable warriors. These talented combatants train for years in order to harness their unique abilities to disable, maim, and utterly destroy foes.

NEW FEATS

The fighting styles of Tian Xia are varied and originate from hundreds of schools of training. While some concentrate on knocking out foes or rendering them unable to fight, others only make the battle more deadly via incredible abilities that deliver devastating effects. The following feats complement monks and other melee classes that focus on close-quarters combat.

Blinding Flash (Combat)

You can temporarily blind your opponent by using your weapon or shield to flash sunlight into its eyes.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: As a move action, you can expertly angle

the blade of your weapon or shield to reflect light into an opponent's eyes, dazzling your foe for 1 round. This feat functions as a gaze attack, and the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Dex modifier) to resist the effect. This is a sight-dependent effect, and does not work on creatures that are already blinded or creatures that do not rely on sight as their primary sense. You must be wielding a weapon or shield with a polished or reflective surface in order to use this feat. You must be in an area of bright light to use this feat.

Disorienting Blow (Combat)

When you successfully strike your opponent with your Stunning Fist, you leave it in a state of confusion.

Prerequisites: Stunning Fist, base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: You must choose to use this ability before making an attack roll with your Stunning Fist, and this effect replaces other effects or conditions that would be caused by Stunning Fist. If you successfully hit your opponent and it fails its Fortitude save, it becomes confused for 1 round. Additional disorienting blows to the confused target add to the duration of its confusion. This feat is otherwise subject to all of the limits and conditions of Stunning Fist.

Enhanced Ki Throw (Combat)

You enhance the force of your *ki* throws, enabling you to devastate your opponents as you slam them to the ground.

Prerequisites: *Ki* pool class feature, *Ki Throw* (see the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*).

Benefit: When using the *Ki Throw* feat, you can expend 1 *ki* point to amplify the force of your attack. If your *ki* throw succeeds, when the target hits the ground, it takes damage as if you had hit it with an unarmed strike.

Feinting Flurry (Combat)

Your subtle flourishes mislead your enemy, tricking it into changing its footing.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, flurry of blows class feature, Combat Expertise.



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Benefit: While using flurry of blows to make melee attacks, you can forgo your first attack to make a Bluff check to feint.

Hold the Blade (Combat)

You can take your opponent's weapon after being stabbed in the back.

Prerequisites: Improved Disarm, base attack bonus +10.

Benefit: Whenever an enemy deals damage to you with a melee weapon as part of a flanking attack or sneak attack, you can make a combat maneuver check to disarm against that opponent as an immediate action. You must have at least one hand free when you use this feat. When you use this feat, you take a -4 penalty to your AC until your next turn. You can only use this feat once per round.

Improved Feinting Flurry (Combat)

Your first melee attack throws your opponent completely off guard.

Prerequisites: Dex 17, flurry of blows class feature, Combat Expertise, Feinting Flurry, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: While using Feinting Flurry, if you successfully feint, your opponent is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC until the end of your turn.

Normal: A successful feint causes your opponent to be denied its Dexterity bonus to AC against your next attack.

Quivering Palm Adept (Combat)

Your quivering palm strikes are more potent than most.

Prerequisite: Quivering palm class feature.

Benefit: Add +2 to the saving throw DC against your quivering palm attacks.

Quivering Palm Versatility (Combat)

You can alter the way you apply a quivering palm's vibrations to an opponent's body to cause extreme pain, put it in a coma, or destroy its memories.

Prerequisites: Quivering palm class feature, base attack bonus +13.

Benefit: After successfully using your quivering palm attack on a creature, you can produce one of the following effects instead of killing the creature, as long as you do so within a number of days equal to your monk level.

Coma: The subject falls unconscious and is helpless for a number of days equal to your monk level.

Memory Loss: The subject falls unconscious for 24 hours and awakens with huge gaps in its memory. The target's memories of the recent past (a number of consecutive days equal to your monk level) are completely obliterated, and can only be restored by a *wish* or *miracle* spell.

Pain: The subject takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per monk level you possess.

NEW SAMURAI ORDER

Samurai may select the following samurai order at 1st level.

Order of the Black Daimyo

While samurai who follow the order of the warrior typically adhere to the principles of bravery and duty in order to live a life that emphasizes honor, there exist others who are motivated by more selfish goals. These evil samurai follow the order of the Black Daimyo, and may be vicious warlords or warriors in the service to some ruthless lord. They usually worship General Susumu, the patron god of sadistic samurai, and they uphold the virtues of violence and pride above all other things.

Samurai of the order of the Black Daimyo function exactly like samurai of the order of the warrior—they simply pursue war and glory instead of honor and heroism.

You must choose the desired effect before the quivering palm's attack roll is made. Unless the target succeeds at its Fortitude save against your quivering palm attack, it succumbs to the desired effect when you will it (a free action). This feat is otherwise subject to all of the limits and conditions of quivering palm.

Sleeper Hold (Combat)

By maintaining a grapple hold on your opponent, you can cause it to lose consciousness.

Prerequisites: Greater Grapple, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: You must declare that you are using this feat before you make a combat maneuver check to maintain a grapple (thus a failed check to maintain the grapple ruins the attempt). If you maintain a grapple for a number of consecutive rounds equal to your opponent's Constitution bonus (minimum 1 round), you can attempt to knock out your opponent. The victim must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or else it falls unconscious for 1d4 rounds. Each successive round you attempt this, the target takes a cumulative -1 penalty on its saving throw. When you use this feat, you take an additional -2 penalty to your AC. Creatures that are immune to bleed damage, stunning, or critical hits are immune to this ability.

Stunning Fist Adept (Combat)

Your Stunning Fist strikes become even deadlier.

Prerequisites: Stunning Fist, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: Add +1 to the saving throw DC against your Stunning Fist attacks. This bonus does not stack with feats that grant you bonuses to the DC for saving throws against your Stunning Fist attacks, such as Mantis Style (see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*).

FAITH

GODS OF THE DRAGON EMPIRES

Faith is part of everyday life in Tian Xia, and the gods affect everyone from the lowliest beggar who adheres to the ways of Lao Shu Po to the most powerful priestess of Tsukiyo, the Prince of the Moon. Even those who dismiss the gods must bear witness now and then to the workings of the divine, for their miracles and catastrophes can be felt in every corner of the Dragon Empires.

MAJOR DEITIES

Most residents of the Dragon Empires recognize a pantheon comprising 20 of the region's most influential and powerful deities. While six of the following divine beings are also worshiped in the Inner Sea region, the rest hail from Tian Xia and its neighboring regions.

Abadar (LN), the god of cities and merchants, is as prevalent a deity in Tian Xia as he is throughout the rest of Golarion, though in the Dragon Empires he is also regarded as the God of Walls and Ditches, and symbolizes humanity's depredations on nature in order to establish civilization.

Daikitsu (N), the Lady of Foxes, is the goddess of rice, agriculture, and kitsune. Thought to appear as a beautiful kitsune woman with snow-white fur and nine tails, Daikitsu is prayed to by artisans, farmers, and families, and is revered for her blessings of handmade crafts, harvests, and the hearthstone.

Desna (CG) is the Goddess of the North Star in Tian Xia, and is worshiped as a bringer of luck by all manner of folk, from wayward travelers and sailors to thieving scoundrels and gamblers. In the Dragon Empires, she is depicted as a beautiful, butterfly-winged Tian-Min woman.

Fumeiyoshi (NE), the Lord of Envy, is the god of graves, envy, and dishonor, and is the patron of oni and undead. He was banished to undeath by Shizuru after killing his brother Tsukiyo, and grieving Tians sometimes make offerings to him in hopes of placating the Lord of Envy, lest he cause their loved ones to rise once more as undead horrors.

General Susumu (LE) is the patron god of samurai who dedicate their lives to pursuing war and glory rather than honor and heroism, and his influence can be felt most on the battlefield, where he sometimes leads his massive army of ghostly warriors just to feel the rush of battle once more.

Hei Feng (CN), Duke of Thunder, is the god of the sea, storms, wind, and tengus. He is worshiped by sailors

praying for safe voyage as well as by farmers hoping for rain, but he is an unpredictable and chaotic god, and his gentle breeze can just as quickly turn into a violent tempest.

Irori (LN) is worshiped throughout much of Golarion, and in Tian Xia he is known as the Enlightened One. He is widely worshiped as the god of knowledge, martial arts, and self-perfection, and many monks walk his path in the hope of one day achieving true inner strength.

Kofusachi (CG) is known as the Laughing God, and is revered as the god of happiness, prosperity, and discovery. Worshiped by wanderers and good-hearted libertines, Kofusachi is depicted as a plump, smiling bald man.

Lady Nanbyo (CE), the Widow of Suffering, has taken many husbands, but all have met terrible and tragic ends, as is befitting of the Tian-Sing goddess of earthquakes, plagues, and suffering. She delights in catastrophes, and inflicts chaos and trauma wherever she goes.

Lamashu (CE), called Grandmother Nightmare in Tian Xia, is worshiped by the monstrous denizens of the Dragon Empires, and has birthed countless horrors from her mutilated womb. The depraved human cultists who worship her can often be found in the distant wilds, such as the Valashmai Jungle and the Wall of Heaven.

Lao Shu Po (NE), appearing as an immense, six-legged rat, is often worshiped by thieves, wayangs, and any others who seek to hide their doings in the dark of night. Many who seek to gain power through theft find their way to Old Rat Woman's cults.

Nalinivati (N) was Nagajor's first queen, and gave birth to the nagas in ages past before ascending to godhood via her own sorcerous powers. The Serpent's Kiss is thought by some to be romantically involved with Daikitsu; she is worshiped by sorcerers, nagas, passionate lovers, and those who adore snakes, and is often invoked in fertility rituals.

Pharasma (N) is known as the Mother of Souls in the Dragon Empires, and those who worship her regard life and death as natural parts of nature's course. While Tian worshipers do not concentrate on Pharasma as a goddess of prophecy, she is still the divine judge of all mortals who pass through her Boneyard.

Qi Zhong (NG) is the Master of Medicine, and is the one who brought Tsukiyo back to life at the request of Shizuru. He taught mortals the importance of the elements as well

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as their connection to magic and healing, and both sages and traditional Tian healers worship him.

Shelyn (NG), the Lady of Chrysanthemums, lends inspiration to lovers and artists alike, and her influence can be seen in superbly crafted poems and masterfully executed tea ceremonies. While she does not always agree with the capricious Kofusachi, the two remain close friends.

Shizuru (LG) is the goddess of honor, the sun, and swordplay, and is commonly worshiped by samurai and other noble swordfighters. The Empress of Heaven is rarely seen with her lover, the moon god Tsukiyo, except during solar eclipses.

Sun Wukong (CN) loves trickery and drunkenness, and is thought to have gained immortality by sneaking into Pharasma's Boneyard and erasing his name from her records. The Monkey King can often be found on the Material Plane, where he takes the guise of a drunken martial artist and frequently causes mayhem.

Tsukiyo (LG) was killed by his brother Fumeiyoshi, who was jealous of Shizuru's love for the Prince of the Moon. Jade is sacred to followers of Tsukiyo. He is the patron of samsarans, and often worshiped via scattered shrines within the Forest of Spirits.

Yaezhing (LE), the Minister of Blood, is the enforcer of divine justice as well as god of murder and harsh punishment, and metes out sentences to mortals as well as deities. His worshipers are often cruel judges, executioners, and assassins, and his followers regard punishment as more important than proof of guilt.

Yamatsumi (N) is the god of mountains, volcanoes, and winter, and his touch can be felt in rolling green hillsides as well as towering volcanoes that rain ash upon innocents. Those who worship him do so in the hope of appeasing the Mountain Lord and averting his fickle wrath.

OTHER RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES

While the 20 core deities in Tian Xia's pantheon are the most prominent in the Dragon Empires, several other beliefs permeate daily life throughout the land as well.

Ichimeiyō is the code of honor all warriors in the Dragon Empires are expected to abide by, and mandates that samurai and other noble fighters not only train in swordplay, but also improve themselves in all walks of life. Honor is tantamount to those who follow ichimeiyō.

Pao-Lung was a great teacher who spread beliefs that established meritocracies across Tian Xia, for it was his belief that a virtuous ruler is key to the success of a nation, and that any who are wise, moral, and fit enough to serve in the highest seats of government should be able to do so.

Sangpotshi, the River of Life, is a way of life that likens mortal existence to the flow of a river that meets a waterfall. Followers of sangpotshi believe that through

MOON SUBDOMAIN

Full details on subdomains, including the *moonstruck* spell (this subdomain's 4th-level replacement domain spell), can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

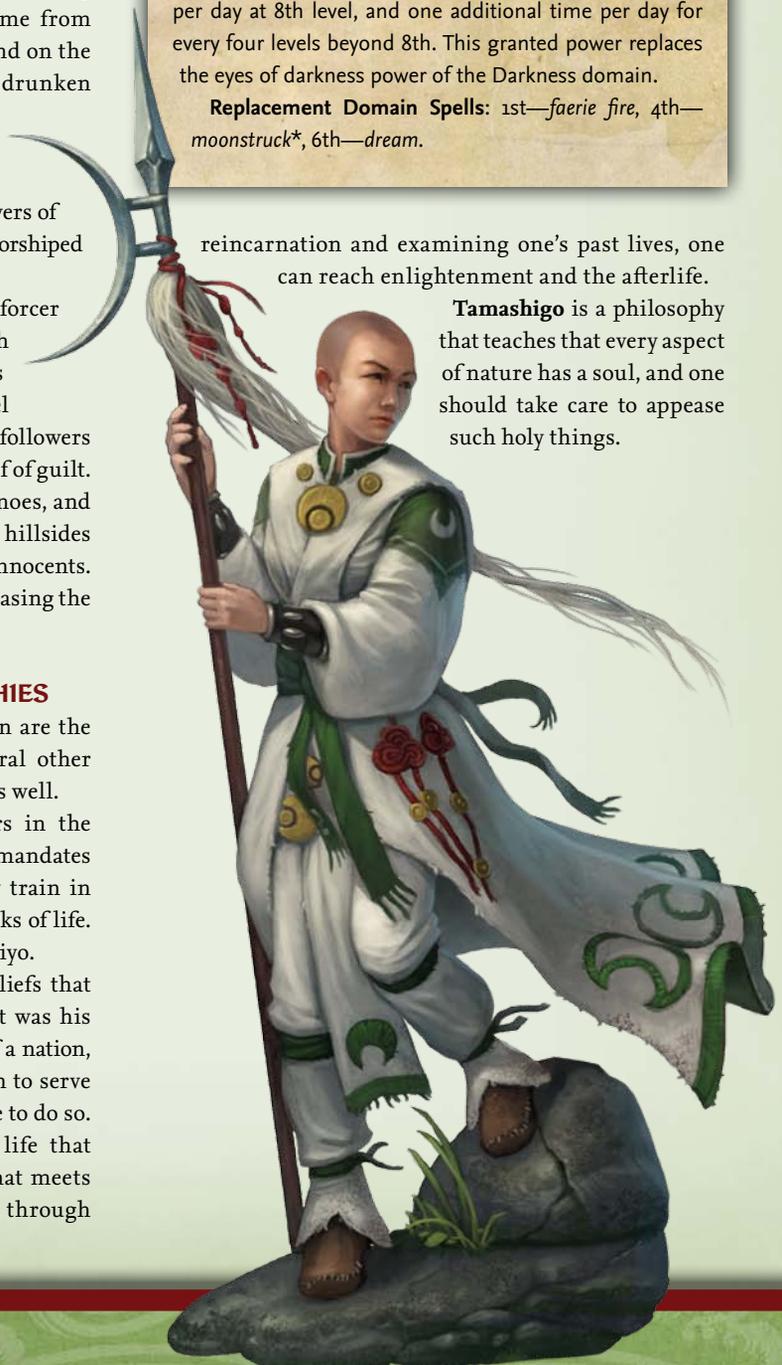
Associated Domain: Darkness.

Moonfire (Su): At 8th level, you can launch a blast of blazing moonlight from your eyes at a single target within 30 feet as a standard action. Moonfire deals 1d8 points of damage per two caster levels, and the target is dazzled for 1 round per caster level. This damage is the result of raw divine power, and cannot be blocked by energy resistance. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Wisdom modifier) reduces the damage by half and negates the dazzle effect. You can use this ability once per day at 8th level, and one additional time per day for every four levels beyond 8th. This granted power replaces the eyes of darkness power of the Darkness domain.

Replacement Domain Spells: 1st—*faerie fire*, 4th—*moonstruck**, 6th—*dream*.

reincarnation and examining one's past lives, one can reach enlightenment and the afterlife.

Tamashigo is a philosophy that teaches that every aspect of nature has a soul, and one should take care to appease such holy things.



MAGIC

ARCANA OF THE DRAGON EMPIRES

The majority of magicians and spellcasters in Tian Xia keep the source of their powers to themselves—for while there are plenty of mages serving the cause of good in the Dragon Empires, many are nonetheless tainted by the blood of treacherous oni or possess powers over the terrifying and awesome concept of the void. Even those nations that rely on spellcasters for safety and prosperity often keep a wary eye on their magical allies.

Presented below are a new sorcerer bloodline and a new wizard school, both of which mesh well with the themes of a campaign set in Tian Xia. Feats and spells marked with an asterisk (*) are located in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*. Feats and spells marked with two asterisks (**) are found in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*.

ONI BLOODLINE

As slaves of capricious oni lords, your ancestors were forced to yield to their masters' hedonistic desires, inevitably tainting their descendents with oni blood. Now, you wield the powers of the oni thanks to your vile heritage. The oni bloodline is an additional bloodline for the sorcerer class.

Class Skill: Intimidate.

Bonus Spells: *ray of enfeeblement* (3rd), *invisibility* (5th), *fly* (7th), *charm monster* (9th), *cone of cold* (11th), *greater dispel magic* (13th), *waves of exhaustion* (15th), *trap the soul* (17th), *dominate monster* (19th).

Bonus Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Enforcer*, Fast Healer*, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Proficiency (katana [see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*])

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever you cast a spell of the charm or compulsion subschool, you gain a bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate skill checks equal to the level of the spell for 1d4 rounds.

Bloodline Powers: While some would call you cursed, you have learned to unlock the powers of your oni heritage. Your emergent cruelty becomes more dominant as your power increases.

Touch of Agony (Sp): At 1st level, you can make a melee touch attack as a standard action that wracks a living creature with agonizing pain. The target takes 1d4 points

of nonlethal damage each round for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your sorcerer level (minimum 1). You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Altered Form (Sp): At 3rd level, you gain the ability to change shape (as the spell *alter self*) for a number of minutes per day equal to your sorcerer level. These rounds need not be consecutive. At 17th level, the duration of this effect is no longer limited, and you may remain in your chosen form as long as you want.

Windborne (Sp): At 9th level, you can turn gaseous (as the spell *gaseous form*) for a number of rounds per day equal to your sorcerer level. These rounds need not be consecutive. At 11th level and every two levels thereafter, your speed while gaseous increases by +10 feet, to a maximum speed of 60 feet at 19th level.

Oni Healing (Su): At 15th level, if your hit points drop below 0, you automatically stabilize and begin regenerating 2 hit points per round for a number of rounds per day equal to your sorcerer level. While regenerating in this way, you are not affected by spells or effects that would cause you to continue dying, such as *bleed*, but if you take any acid or fire damage, you stop regenerating for the rest of the day (but remain stabilized) and you are affected by such effects as normal. You still die if your hit points reach a negative number equal to your Constitution score, regardless of whether you are regenerating. This ability only works once per day—if you drop below 0 hit points a second time, you do not benefit from this ability.

Hedonistic Master (Su): At 20th level, you fully embrace your oni heritage to unlock its maximum potential. You gain the ability to change your shape between your natural form and that of any one Large humanoid creature of the giant subtype at will (as the spell *giant form I*). You must choose which creature you wish to be able to change into when you reach 20th level; once you make this decision, you cannot change it. You can switch between your forms at will, and can assume your giant form for as long as you want. In addition, you gain SR equal to 6 + your sorcerer level, and whenever you cast a spell of the charm or compulsion subschool, the spell's DC increases by +2.

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VOID ELEMENTAL SCHOOL

The void is a complex idea considered by some to be a fifth element—one that comprises thought, space, spiritualism, and insight. Wizards who tap into its mysterious powers gain control over energies that bind the earth to the heavens and the planes to their mysterious and eternal alignments, as well as the powers that stitch living beings to their spirits. The void elemental school presented here is an additional arcane school for the wizard class.

A wizard who specializes in the void element gains a number of school powers and one bonus spell slot of each level that the wizard can cast, from 1st on up. This bonus spell slot must be used to prepare a spell from the void elemental school's spell list. Unlike a normal arcane school, the void elemental school requires the wizard to select a single element (air, earth, fire, or water) as his opposition school. A wizard must expend two spell slots to prepare a spell from his opposed elemental school as normal. He does not need to select a second opposition school.

For the sections below, a single asterisk (*) denotes a spell from the *RPG Advanced Player's Guide*. A double asterisk (**) denotes a spell from *Ultimate Magic*.

Void Magic: Add the following spells to your wizard spell list at the listed spell level: 1st—*keen senses*, 3rd—*twilight knife**, 4th—*wandering star motes**, 6th—*true seeing*, 8th—*moment of prescience*.

Void Awareness (Su): Your ability to recognize the void allows your body to react to magical manifestations before you're even aware of them. You gain a +2 insight bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities. This bonus increases by +1 for every five wizard levels you possess. At 20th level, whenever you would be affected by a spell or spell-like ability that allows a saving throw, you can roll twice to save against the effect and take the better result.

Reveal Weakness (Su): When you activate this school power as a standard action, you select a foe within 30 feet. That creature takes a penalty to its AC and on saving throws equal to 1/2 your caster level (minimum -1) for 1 round. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Intelligence bonus.

Aura of Prescience (Su): At 8th level, you can emit a 30-foot aura of void energy for a number of rounds per day equal to your wizard level. Allies within this aura gain a +2 insight bonus on ability checks, attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Void Elementalist Wizard Spells: 0—*guidance*; 1st—*gravity bow**, *keen senses*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd—*continual flame*, *haunting mists*, *invisibility*, *masterwork transformation***, see *invisibility*, *share memory***; 3rd—*arcane sight*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *nondetection*, *seek thoughts**, *tapestry's embrace*, *twilight knife**; 4th—*minor creation*, *moonstruck**, *wandering star motes**; 5th—*fabricate*, *major creation*, *mind fog*, *telepathic bond*, *teleport*; 6th—*greater dispel magic*, *legend lore*, *true seeing*, *mage's lucubration*; 7th—*greater teleport*, *simulacrum*, *vision*; 8th—*mind blank*, *moment of prescience*, *orb of the void***, *whirlwind*; 9th—*foresight*, *mage's disjunction*, *time stop*.

NEW SPELL

Presented below is a new spell that exemplifies the dark powers of the void.

CALL THE VOID

School evocation;

Level sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Reflex for half; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell surrounds you with an aura of nothingness that channels the mysterious energies of the Dark Tapestry. Creatures adjacent to you

when this spell is cast and at the start of your turn take 2d6 points of damage. In addition, creatures affected by your aura are fatigued, cannot breathe, and cannot speak or cast spells with somatic components. Creatures adjacent to you are allowed a Reflex save to halve the damage and negate the fatigue effect, but cannot breathe or speak regardless of whether their save is successful as long as they are adjacent to you.



SOCIAL

HONOR IN THE DRAGON EMPIRES

Tian legends describe honor as a gift passed from ancient spirits to mortals to help them maintain balance on the Material Plane. To the Tian people, honor is more important than power, love, and law. It is the standard by which every person is measured.

Although not required to play in the Dragon Empires, the following mechanic allows honor to be tracked with points. Before introducing it into your game, make sure everyone in the group agrees and wants the addition.

HONOR POINTS

A character's honor is represented by points, with a possible range of 0 to 100; a score of 0 represents someone who is untrustworthy and regarded as devious, and a score of 100 represents someone whose honorable deeds precede her. Honor is not a measurement of fame or goodwill so much as a gauge of loyalty, trustworthiness, and fairness. One could be a kindhearted-but-flighty shogun with an honor score of 0, or a cruel-but-stalwart monk with an honor score of 100. A character cannot have more than 100 honor points or fewer than 0.

Honor is handled differently for PCs and NPCs, since it's unlikely for an NPC's honor score to change during the course of a game (barring influence from a PC or GM), but a PC's honor score may change often.

NPCs' Base Honor Points: An NPC's base number of honor points is generally equal to his CR \times 5, modified by whatever modifiers from "Gaining and Losing Honor" the GM chooses to apply. However, NPCs who deviate from the strictures of Tian society may have strongly disproportionate honor scores.

PCs' Base Honor Points: At 1st level, a PC starts with a number of honor points equal to his Charisma score (not his Charisma

modifier) + 1 (for 1st level). Whenever a PC's experience level or Charisma score increases or decreases, his total number of honor points increases or decreases by the same amount. A PC can gain or lose honor points during play as well.

GAINING AND LOSING HONOR POINTS

As a campaign progresses, PCs gain honor points by gaining levels and increasing their Charisma scores. In addition, there are a number of in-game events that can alter a PC's honor score. Some of these events modify the honor of every PC directly involved in the event—for instance, defeating a powerful oni would boost the honor points of every PC in the party. In other cases, an event may only modify a single character's honor, such as when a PC loses an iaijutsu duel to a less honorable opponent. Many of these encounters require events to be "public"—in order for the honor adjustment to occur, there must be surviving witnesses who can spread the news. A GM may delay applying honor adjustments 1d6 days or as appropriate to represent the time it takes witnesses to spread word of the event.

It's possible to earn multiple honor adjustments with a single act. For example, a group with an Average Party Level of 11 who defeats a fire yai would earn the +1 bonus for defeating a creature whose CR is at least 3 points above the party's APL and the +3 bonus for defeating a powerful oni.

The following modifiers do not represent all possible adjustments—if a PC does something particularly honorable or dishonorable, the GM may adjust the PC's score as she sees fit, consulting the list below.

SPENDING HONOR POINTS

Once per game session you can "cash in" some of your honor points to gain favors or to secure gifts



DRAGON EMPIRES PRIMER

and loans. Spending honor points in this way reduces your honor by a random amount. If you attempt to spend honor points and do not have enough to pay for the use, your honor score is reduced to 0 and you do not gain the boon.

Diplomacy/Intimidate Boost: You gain a +5 circumstance bonus on either Diplomacy or Intimidate checks for the remainder of the game session. **Cost:** 1d6 honor points.

Favor: You gain a favor from an NPC ally. **Cost:** From 1d6 to 5d6 honor points, depending on the GM's whim and the difficulty of the favor. Favors might include unhindered passage through enemy territory, an audience with a person of importance, access to private resources, and so on.

Gift or Loan: An NPC ally grants you a gift or loan. The gift or loan in question must be one that the NPC could actually grant (subject to GM approval—requests for particularly expensive gifts or loans may be refused). The

gift or loan can be in the form of wealth or a single item. A gift is permanent, but a loan lasts only for the game session in which it is granted. **Cost:** 1d6 honor points per 2,000 gp value of the gift. For a loan, this honor point cost is halved, but at the start of any game session in which the loan is not returned or repaid, the halved cost must be paid again to extend the loan for that game session—this extension counts as your use of honor for that session.

CONSEQUENCES OF HONOR POINT LOSS

Beyond the shame of losing honor, dropping to 0 honor points is demoralizing. As long as any character has 0 honor points, she takes a –2 penalty on all Will saving throws and Charisma-based checks. Individuals with 0 honor who have adopted a code of honor or serve honorable institutions may shame their lord or temple and suffer additional penalties.

GAINING AND LOSING HONOR

Event	Honor Modifier
Party is publicly defeated in an encounter of a CR lower than APL	–5
Party publicly flees an encounter of a CR lower than APL	–3
Party publicly defeats a monster whose CR is 3 or higher than APL	+1
Party publicly defeats an oni whose CR is higher than APL	+3
Complete a noble deed for an individual with an honor score of 50 or more and tell no one	+2
Up to once per month, achieve a result of 30 or higher with a public Perform check or art-related Craft check*	+2
Engage in public slander with the intent to dishonor another individual with greater honor	–4
Challenge and defeat in combat a person who has publicly dishonored you	+3
Up to once per month, achieve a result of 30 or higher with a public Diplomacy or Intimidate check	+2
Publicly adopt a strict code of honor	+8
Willingly (i.e., without being magically influenced) break one of the tenets of your code of honor	–2
Publicly slay an honorable opponent who has already surrendered	–5
Excessively brag of your accomplishments**	–1
Public drunkenness**	–2
Party publicly tricks a kami in a battle of wits	+1
Craft a magic item worth at least 40,000 gp	+1 per 40,000 gp of item's cost
Publicly destroy an evil artifact worth at least 40,000 gp	+1 per 40,000 gp of item's cost
Publicly use an evil artifact worth at least 40,000 gp	–2 per 40,000 gp of item's cost
Successfully complete a standard adventure (module or Adventure Path installment)	+1
Successfully complete an Adventure Path	+10
Be convicted of a petty crime	–2
Commit an act of treason or betray an honorable lord	–10
Be directly responsible for the death of an honorable ally or loved one under your protection	–20
Defeat an honorable daimyo or temple master in combat	+20
Become a daimyo or temple master	+80

* If this performance or work of art recounts the heroic accomplishments of another character via the Craft (any visible work of art like painting or sculpture) or Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing) skill, the +2 bonus also applies to the target of the performance or work of art. If the performance or work of art mocks and dishonors a character with fewer honor points, the performer or artist gains 2 honor points and the target loses 2 honor points. However, an individual who creates art with the intent of dishonoring someone with more honor points risks the –4 slander penalty for such an act if she can be associated with the performance or artwork. Every additional character the performer or artist attempts to honor or dishonor imparts a cumulative –5 penalty on the Craft or Perform check made.

** If this act is performed as part of a class ability, the individual incurs no penalty.

PATHFINDER

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