

SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER®

## SEASON OF GHOSTS

ADVENTURE PATH

### Let the Leaves Fall

By Joan Hong









# PATHFINDER

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# SEASON OF GHOSTS

ADVENTURE PATH

ADVENTURE PATH 2 OF 4

## Let the Leaves Fall

### Let the Leaves Fall

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Chapter 2: The Enlightened Path

Chapter 3: In the Ruins of Wisdom

### First Long Night

by Tan Shao Han

### Sangpotshi

by Grady Wang

### Adventure Toolbox

by Joan Hong, James Jacobs, and Tan Shao Han

#### Treasure

Pilgrimage Gifts

New Alchemical Item

New Spells

Magic Tea

New Rituals

#### Creatures

Bakeneko

Dalgyal Gwishin

Nindoru, Meokdan

Nindoru, Sojiruh

Nindoru, Guhdggi

Nindoru, Idja

#### NPCs

Xin Yue

Zhi Hui



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## Chapter 1: Turning of the Seasons .....4

The PCs work with the town elder to create—and then act on—a plan to prepare the town of Willowshore for the coming winter. As the weeks roll on, though, strange supernatural events begin to trouble townsfolk, and the need to look beyond the Wall of Ghosts for answers becomes unavoidable.

## Chapter 2: The Enlightened Path..... 26

The PCs devise a ritual to open the Wall of Ghosts and, upon stepping through, set foot upon the Pilgrim's Path: the traditional meditative journey from Willowshore to the Tan Sugi monastery, where they hope answers await. The curse extends here, however, and with even greater power. Before the PCs finish the journey, they'll face supernatural storms, monstrous threats, and haunted shrines.

## Chapter 3: In the Ruins of Wisdom ..... 42

The Tan Sugi monastery lies in ruins, but worse, it's also in the grips of fiendish monsters and undead monks who have turned their backs on tradition. In order to learn valuable secrets about the nature of the curse afflicting their town, the PCs must purify the monastery and defeat the evil that has taken root within.

## LET THEM FIGHT!

While Chapters 2 and 3 of this adventure feature plenty of classic combat and exploration, the first chapter of "Let the Leaves Fall" is focused entirely on a wide range of downtime activities the PCs must pursue in their quest to prepare Willowshore for winter and to learn more about the curse afflicting the town. As such, there are few opportunities for combat during the bulk of this adventure's timeline, with the events of Chapters 2 and 3 potentially filling only a few weeks. While some groups will welcome the chance to roleplay and pursue downtime activities, you might find your group is eager for a fight now and then. In this case, you can add encounters with dangerous creatures in the wilds, or even a potential raid from a monster or group of monsters against a location in town. You can also adjust some of the hauntings found in the later part of Chapter 1 into combats against undead if you wish.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Let the Leaves Fall" is designed for four characters.

- 4 The PCs begin this adventure at 4th level.
- 5 The PCs should be 5th level before they attempt to walk the Pilgrim's Path.
- 6 The PCs should be 6th level before they explore the Tan Sugi monastery.  
The PCs should reach 7th level by the time they complete the adventure.






## Chapter 1: Turning of the Seasons

In 7020 IC, just over two centuries ago, Master Zhi Hui, a follower of Sangpotshi, traveled to the region in search of a legendary grove of sugi trees deep in the Specterwood. Rumors held that the tallest of these trees was the reincarnated spirit of an ancient hero named Tan Sui-Jing, who defeated a powerful fiend named Kugaptee, and Zhi Hui hoped to see this magnificent example of the cycle of life with her own eyes. When she arrived, the power she felt in the remote grove astounded her, and she knew that the towering tree at the center was of great spiritual significance. After meditating at the tree's base for 10 days, she decided she needed to build a monastery in the grove so that others could make the pilgrimage, then remain there to help preserve the site from harm.

Willowshore was founded that same year, for Zhi Hui needed a place to live for those who would help build the monastery. For the first few years, little work was done at the Tan Sugi grove (as Zhi Hui had taken to calling the site), for the establishment of Willowshore took up most of the pilgrims' focus. As Willowshore grew, Zhi Hui focused on creating the path between the new town and the sacred site. She knew that while the journey to the grove through the rugged terrain could be traversed by the hasty in less than a day, rushing the trip robbed the traveler of the chance to shed the distractions of day-to-day life, and so Master Zhi Hui sought to create a pilgrim's trail that would be traversed over the course of three days of patient introspection and self-reflection.





Thus, Master Zhi Hui traversed a path through the forest, choosing each footstep with intention. As she made her way through the woods, she found herself climbing up and over steep slopes, winding through seemingly-identical stretches of forest where one could easily lose their way, and skirting the shore of a large lake with a mirrorlike surface before reaching the Tan Sugi grove. The creation of this path—the laying of its stones, the building of a footbridge, and the construction of small shrines and buildings to serve as way stations—would take her and her followers the better part of a year to complete.

The creation of the Tan Sugi monastery took several more years. Every timber and every stone was chosen and placed with careful consideration. It would be 10 years before the monastery was completed, but in that time, Master Zhi Hui's disciples grew. To them, Zhi Hui's guidance was like a single autumn leaf alighting upon their minds—gentle yet arriving with the weight of a well-lived life, and always allowing the disciple the freedom to choose their own path. By the time the monastery was completed, dozens of pilgrims were making yearly treks to Willowshore to undertake the journey to the Tan Sugi monastery.

But soon after Zhi Hui passed away from natural causes in 7054, discord crept into the lives of the adherents of the Tan Sugi monastery. The arrival of newcomers to the monastery dwindled, then reversed as monks began leaving in search of enlightenment elsewhere. What none of the monks would ever learn or even suspect is that upon Master Zhi Hui's death, one of their own fell from grace. This monk was named Xin Yue, and his memories of past lives remained unusually strong. Xin Yue's grief poisoned them enough to allow the influence of Kugaptee, whose remains lay buried and unguessed at by most of the monastery's occupants, to creep into his soul. It was largely the subtle manipulations of Xin Yue that helped the discord to flourish among the monks.

By 7060, what few monks remained at the monastery had become corrupted by Kugaptee, and when Xin Yue offered himself as a sacrifice to the fiend, only to reincarnate before the other monks' very eyes, they felt that the truth of the Tan Sugi monastery had been revealed—this place wasn't one for quiet reflection and peace, but a cage-tomb in which a great power that would give them all rewards for service had been imprisoned for centuries.

These corrupted monks cut ties with Willowshore, and for the next two years, the people of Willowshore assumed that the monastery had been abandoned when, in fact, Xin Yue and their followers now spent their time exploring a way in which they could free

Kugaptee from his grave. Simply chopping down the sugi tree that grew over Kugaptee's remains would only release the fiend's soul into the Great Beyond—Xin Yue knew from his visions that what Kugaptee wanted was to instead reincarnate into the mortal realm, and to do so, the sugi tree needed to remain intact to serve as the raw materials for his new incarnation. Kugaptee wished to use what remained of his old enemy, Tan Sui-Jing, as his method of reincarnation into the world. In order to achieve such a goal, though, Xin Yue and the monks needed to spend decades in meditation and prayer to prepare the way.

In 7062, a group of woodcutters sent from the city of Sze came to Willowshore seeking a hidden sugi grove. They marched up the path to the Tan Sugi monastery, intent on harvesting its trees, only to be slaughtered by the monks. The bodies of the woodcutters were then used to perform a grand conjuration of nindoru fiends, which were subsequently sent down to Willowshore with a warning. Wearing the bodies of the slaughtered woodcutters and wielding their broken weapons, the resulting horror became known as the Night of Broken Blades, and from that date onward, the people of Willowshore frightfully ensured that no one else would ever dare visit the Tan Sugi monastery.

And so things went, until Governor Heh Shan-Bao made his disastrous attempt to remove the corruption growing into Tan Sui-Jing's sugi tree, a ritual that backfired and resulted in the deaths of everyone in town—and in the Tan Sugi monastery as well. When the mindscape was created, the region surrounding the monastery, including the entirety of the pilgrim's path leading to it, became engulfed within a Wall of Ghosts, and the monks who dwelled within died and rose as undead. As part of the mindscape, Xin Yue and their followers know that they've been repeating the years over and over but have been powerless to break free. Many secrets and revelations about the nature of the mindscape thus lie in wait for Willowshore's heroes to discover, yet the threats they'll encounter in the Tan Sugi monastery beyond the Wall of Ghosts will be the greatest dangers they've yet faced.

## Getting Started

It's fall in Willowshore, and as the leaves begin to turn, the summer rains are replaced by crisp autumn breezes, yet the end of the unusually rainy summer and the defeat of the monsters that had menaced the region bring the townsfolk little comfort. New leadership has been put in place, but the mystery of what happened to Governor Heh Shan-Bao (and his manor, for that matter), missing since the first day of summer, continues to perplex. However, even more

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worrisome is the strange curse that surrounds the region, one that prevents anyone from traveling too far from Willowshore and also seems to prevent anyone from neighboring settlements from visiting. Only one mysterious merchant, a strange man named Shinzo, seems able to come and go to Willowshore, and even he is unsure of why and has no insight into the curse's nature. As the days march forward into fall, one thing becomes clear: if the people of Willowshore are to survive the coming winter, food must be stored and reinforcements must be made so that the townsfolk can survive the seasonal storms to come.

While the locals can continue to stockpile firewood, pickle and ferment food for long-term storage, fortify structures against the cold, and store grain for safekeeping, there's only so much they can do on their own without aid and without inspiration. Fortunately for Willowshore, the townsfolk aren't alone in this plight—they have a band of heroes at their side to help prepare them for the worst!

This adventure begins on the first day of fall. Give the party time to rest and recover from the events of the previous adventure, but when you're ready to begin this adventure (preferably within a few days of the first day of fall), the party will be contacted by the town elders with an invitation to meet at the Willowshore Trade Office to discuss the town's immediate future.

When the PCs arrive, they'll be greeted by the town elder who now serves as Willowshore's governor, along with the elder who lost that bid for leadership, **Zheng Peng** (LN male human watch officer 3, representing the town guard and Willowshore's need to physically prepare for winter), and **Nadoya Sanmi** (NG female human family matriarch 3, representing Willowshore's farmers and the need to stockpile food and supplies).

While you can roleplay out this meeting if you want, summarizing the important points listed below can help get the adventure started quickly. The meeting begins with the town elder thanking the PCs for all they've done to help Willowshore so far but then noting that the work has only begun. The elder asks the PCs to continue to research the nature of the curse afflicting the town, but adds that it's more important to make sure that Willowshore is ready for winter at this point; the town has only three months before food and shelter will become its most important resources. In light of this need, the town elder asks the PCs to aid in the following three ways.

- **Townfolk Morale:** The town elder observes that the townsfolk are growing worried and fearful of the future, so whatever the PCs can do to keep spirits high and spread hope will be appreciated. An excellent way to do so would be to rebuild

and reopen the Cerulean Teahouse to the public as a traditional place to relax and gather (see Restoring the Teahouse on page 9), but taking part in the festivities for First Long Night on the 22nd day of the month might be an even better way to keep spirits high (see Week 3: First Long Night on page 15). Beyond these options, the PCs should be ready to provide help and aid to the townsfolk as needed in order to improve morale.

- **Food Stores:** Nadoya Sanmi notes that as long as the people of Willowshore remain trapped in the curse, food stores are important to build. She can suggest several activities the PCs can pursue to help Willowshore prepare for winter (see Gathering Food on page 10) but remains very concerned by the simple fact that Willowshore has always relied on trade to supplement its food supplies, and without that option available, the town's farmers and hunters are going to be hard-pressed to meet the upcoming demand.
- **Storm Preparation:** Zheng Peng tells the PCs that he has asked the town guard to help with repair work and storm-proofing of buildings, but he would be grateful if the PCs can help in other ways to ensure Willowshore is ready for the coming winter (see Increasing Security on page 11). While the summer's rainstorms were excessive, they're still nothing compared to the powerful winds, thunder and lightning, torrential downpours, and even periodic snowstorms that Willowshore expects to face in the coming months.

Anything the PCs can learn about the curse afflicting the town will help, and if they can determine any clues as to how to lift the curse, the town elder wants to hear about such information as soon as possible—but not at the expense of the three more immediate concerns above (see Researching the Curse on page 12). With the ledger the PCs recovered from Zoudou at the end of the previous adventure, they've got an excellent lead on where to go next, but interpreting Zoudou's notes will take time and work. If the PCs struggle with the text, the town elder suggests the PCs pay a visit to three locations in particular for aid: the herbalist You So-Jin at Graveside Manners (who has lived in Willowshore longer than anyone else and might have insights others have missed), the wizard Igawa Jubei at Mother's Coil (where the largest amount of old texts in Willowshore are stored), and Great Willow (the kodama who helped the PCs in the previous adventure determine the scope of the region's curse).

The meeting adjourns soon thereafter, allowing the PCs to begin the work of preparing for winter as they



see fit. With the exception of First Long Night, which take places on the last day of the third week of fall, the order in which the PCs work on these tasks is left to them—wise PCs don't focus on one category but instead spread their efforts across them all. The remainder of this chapter covers the wide range of downtime activities the PCs will face during these efforts. Even after the PCs learn how to defeat the Wall of Ghosts and make their journey to the Tan Sugi monastery in Chapters 2 and 3, they can continue to pursue the downtime activities in this chapter up until the end of fall, when this adventure ends.

## WILLOWSHORE

Full details of the town of Willowshore are presented in *The Summer That Never Was*, the first adventure in the Season of Ghosts Adventure Path. A map of Willowshore and its hinterlands appears on the inside front cover of this book. While all of the areas in and around town that have important roles to play in this adventure are covered extensively in the pages to follow, you'll want to reference the previous adventure for further details—or consult the free *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide* PDF, available at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com), for player-facing, spoiler-free notes on the town and region.

The unseasonably frequent rainstorms that plagued the summer months finally eases up during fall, giving way to a crisp autumn that, at least for the first month, offers some actually sunny days to enjoy. As time marches on, the days grow shorter and more overcast. Light rain might fall for a few hours twice a week or so, and blustery breezes grow more common as the leaves begin to turn, but overall, the weather during this adventure should certainly be bearable, if not actually pleasant. In the final few weeks, days remain overcast and a thin layer of frost replaces the morning dew as winter looms.

When this Adventure Path began, Willowshore was a 4th-level settlement, but at the end of the previous adventure, the bravery and actions of the PCs bolstered town morale and helped get several locations damaged by the monstrous invasion repaired; as a result, Willowshore is a 5th-level settlement when this adventure begins. The map on the inside front cover shows the location of all sites visited in this adventure, but you'll want to refer to the Willowshore gazetteer in the previous adventure for full details.

## WILLOWSHORE

N TOWN

Isolated town trapped in a cyclic mindscape

**Government** Appointed governor (town elder)

## SETTLEMENT 5

### WHO LEADS WILLOWSHORE?

Near the end of the previous adventure, the question of who should replace Willowshore's missing governor is answered. While the people of Willowshore assume this appointment will be temporary and hope that missing Governor Heh Shan-Bao will return soon, such an event won't occur during this Adventure Path. This adventure assumes that the PCs supported either Old Matsuki or Granny Hu to take on the role, but in your game, another NPC (or perhaps even one of the PCs themselves) might have taken on the role. Who exactly runs Willowshore is largely irrelevant, though, and in this adventure, that character is referred to as the "town elder." If a PC leads Willowshore in your game, choose a significant NPC in town the party has allied with to instead play the role of adviser and quest giver in this adventure.

**Population** 225 (73% humans, 6% half-elves, 4% halflings, 4% kitsune, 3% elves, 3% tengu, 2% nagaji, 5% others)

**Languages** Common (Tien), Elven, Halfling, Minatan, Nagaji, Tengu, Tian-hwa, Tian-min

**Religions** Abadar, Daikitsu, Lady Nanbyo, Pharamasma, Sangpotshi, several others

**Threats** impending winter, malicious spirits, struggling self-sufficiency, supernatural influences

**Teeth-Clenching Teamwork** Willowshore's residents help one another despite their differences. You can attempt to Request help from another Willowshore resident even if they're indifferent or unfriendly but do so with a -2 circumstance penalty.

**"Granny" Hu Ban-niang** (LN female Tian-shu retired guard captain) retired imperial guard captain and potential town elder

**Heh Shan-Bao** (LN male Tian-shu governor) appointed administrator of Willowshore; currently missing

**"Old" Matsuki Shou** (NG male Tian-shu family patriarch) retired carpenter and Willowshore's living history and potential town elder

## Preparing for Winter

In order to prepare for winter, the PCs must work to accumulate three different categories of Victory Points, referred to in this adventure as Preparation Points: Hope Points represent the townsfolk's attitude and morale, Food Points track Willowshore's food stores, and Security Points track the town's infrastructure and supplies for enduring the winter. The amount of points

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## WILLOWSHORE REPUTATION

Rules for building up reputation with the two political factions in Willowshore, Southbank and Northridge, appear in the previous adventure as well as on page 164 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*. It's likely that the PCs are at least admired by one of Willowshore's factions when this adventure begins, and they should have opportunities during this adventure to earn enough additional points to become revered by one of the factions by this adventure's conclusion. Reputation, along with any Preparation Points the PCs accumulate (see Preparing for Winter on page 7) will help determine how the people of Willowshore fare in the next adventure.

the PCs accumulate during this adventure for these categories will determine how Willowshore endures the dreadful events to come in the next adventure. At the same time, the PCs can research the curse afflicting the town as they work to learn more about the situation they all find themselves in.

All of the methods by which the PCs can accumulate these three categories of Victory Points play out as special downtime activities that have the preparation trait.

Downtime in this adventure is measured in weeks, with up to four individual PCs being able to attempt one preparation downtime activity each week. If your group has more than four PCs, the additional PCs can Aid other PCs' preparations. A PC can also pursue one additional non-preparation downtime activity each week if they wish, choosing from standard downtime activities like Craft, Earn Income, or Retraining as well as attempting Research checks to research the curse.

The point at which the PCs can begin Chapter 2 is determined by their accumulation of Research Points (see page 12), but once they decide to do so, they won't be able to pursue downtime activities during any week—partial or full—they spend in pursuit of this adventure's second and third chapter goals. Since most parties shouldn't need more than one or two weeks to play out those chapters in exploration and encounter mode, they should have plenty of time to build up Preparation Points.

As the PCs prepare, they'll also face weekly events that they'll need to take part in—see Willowshore Events on page 14 for more details. In particular, let the players know that First Long Night will take place at the end of week three. Full details on this festival are

covered in "First Long Night" starting on page 61, and the event itself is detailed on page 15. During week three of this adventure, preparations for First Long Night give the PCs an additional way to earn Hope Points.

## TRACKING PREPARATION POINTS


Keep track of the points the PCs accumulate during this chapter in a visual way so that the players have a constant visual reminder of their progress. Once you begin the third adventure in *Season of Ghosts*, all three of these categories of points are "spent" as winter's weeks proceed.

**Hope Points:** The party starts this adventure with 3 Hope Points. Of the three categories of Preparation Points, Hope Points are the most likely value to be periodically reduced during play. Inform the players that as long as they have a positive value for Hope Points, the townsfolk are productive and morale is high. The higher the value they can build, the better, but there isn't a specific number the PCs should know to aim for. If a week begins with negative Hope Points, all skill checks to earn Preparation Points take a -1 circumstance penalty as aid and cooperation from townsfolk diminishes. The PCs can earn Hope Points by completing weekly town events, by building up their teahouse (see Restoring the Teahouse on page 9), or by taking part in First Long Night festivities and events (see Week 3: First Long Night on page 15).

**Food Points:** If Old Matsuki serves as Willowshore's leader, his foresight gives the town a leg up here, and the party starts with 3 Food Points—otherwise, the party starts with 0 Food Points. The harvest season is only now beginning, and most of Willowshore's citizens haven't yet started to store food. Let the players know that if the PCs can secure at least 12 Food Points by the end of fall, Willowshore will reach the minimum amount of food stores needed to endure the winter—but earning more than 12 points will certainly help against unforeseen events and give the town a valuable cushion against potential starvation. The PCs can build up Food Points by pursuing weekly downtime activities (see Gathering Food on page 10).

**Security Points:** If Granny Hu serves as Willowshore's leader, she already has her agents working at shoring up the town's defenses, and the party starts with 3 Security Points—otherwise, the party starts with 0 Security Points. Preparing for winter in Willowshore involves repair work to roofs, weatherproofing walls and buildings, training in how to respond to emergencies with things like fire and flood drills, and other civic preparations. Let the





players know that if the PCs can earn at least 12 Security Points by the end of fall, Willowshore will be prepared for an average winter—but that additional points will be useful in dealing with unexpected emergencies. The PCs can build up Security Points by pursuing weekly downtime activities (see Increasing Security on page 11).

## Bolstering Hope

To bolster the town's hope, the PCs accumulate Hope Points. The most common way the PCs will be able to do so is during the town events, but they can further build up hope by restoring the Cerulean Teahouse to working order. Unlike other preparation point values, the PCs begin this adventure with 3 Hope Points already accumulated as a result of their actions in the previous adventure.

**Reward:** The PCs earn 40 XP upon earning 12 Hope Points for the first time.

## RESTORING THE TEAHOUSE

This adventure assumes that the PCs have secured control of the Cerulean Teahouse—if they haven't yet, consider having the town elder award the party ownership of the location as part of a reward for their actions in the previous adventure.

The Cerulean Teahouse still stands, but it was in rough shape after months of neglect even before it became the personal domain of a hedonistic monster during the first days of summer. Today, the place is in need of repair, refurbishing, and renewal before it can once again open its doors to the general public. The teahouse's sign has weathered and is barely visible, water leaks in through the doors and holes in the walls and roof when it rains, and a cold draft chills the bones in the evenings.

Still, the building's core is sound, and once repaired, the teahouse can serve well as a base of operations for the PCs in addition to bringing back a beloved local business.

### YAMI

When the PCs inherit the tea shop, they also inherit Yami, a white, leopard-spotted feral house cat who lived alongside the previous owner of the tea shop but went into hiding during the summer. The teahouse's previous owner, Qing Mai-Lai, found the cat as a kitten, curled up in the cooling embers of a campfire while she was walking through the village. Thinking the cat was black, she named it Yami, but upon giving it a proper cleaning, the cat turned out to be a light cream with brown leopard patterns. The name Yami stuck, and the cat became one of Mai-Lai's most

loyal companions, watching over the teahouse from the shadows while occasionally warming the laps of guests. Yami's return to the teahouse should be noted by one of the PCs the first time they visit the location during this adventure—which they can do with a successful DC 15 Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge to recognize the cat (and if no PC does so, their first visitor to the teahouse certainly will).

Unbeknownst to the PCs and the other villagers, Yami is more than she appears. In truth, she's a bakeneko—a magical creature awakened when a cat lives an unusually long life. Before the events that thrust Willowshore into its mindscape, Yami had already started her transition into a bakeneko. With the mindscape's repeating years, she has only grown stronger while retaining the same small cat form, yet she retains her feelings of admiration for the villagers (who have always treated her kindly no matter how differently events have played out each yearly cycle). Yami, like the villagers, doesn't recall the events of previous cycles, but she does recognize she's much more powerful than she should be given her age and experience—a feeling that grows stronger with each passing year.

### YAMI

Female bakeneko (page 82)

**Initiative** Perception +9

### CREATURE 3

The following downtime activities can be pursued to restore the Cerulean Teahouse.

## REPAIR AND RESTORE

**DOWNTIME** **MANIPULATE** **PREPARATION**

You spend the week cleaning, repairing, and restoring the Cerulean Teahouse. Attempt a DC 19 Crafting, DC 21 Architecture or Labor Lore, or DC 24 Athletics check. If you expend 10 gp on resources to help, increase the result of your check by one degree of success. Once the PCs earn a total of 5 Restoration Points, the Cerulean Teahouse is fully restored; they earn 80 XP and 1 Reputation Point with both factions.

**Critical Success** You make excellent progress, and the PCs gain 2 Restoration Points.

**Success** You make normal progress, and the PCs gain 1 Restoration Point.

**Failure** You fail to make any progress.

**Critical Failure** Setback! You've accidentally damaged the building, and the PCs lose 1 Restoration Point.

## BEFRIEND YAMI

**CONCENTRATE** **DOWNTIME** **PREPARATION**

Yami, the "local cat" who returns to the teahouse after

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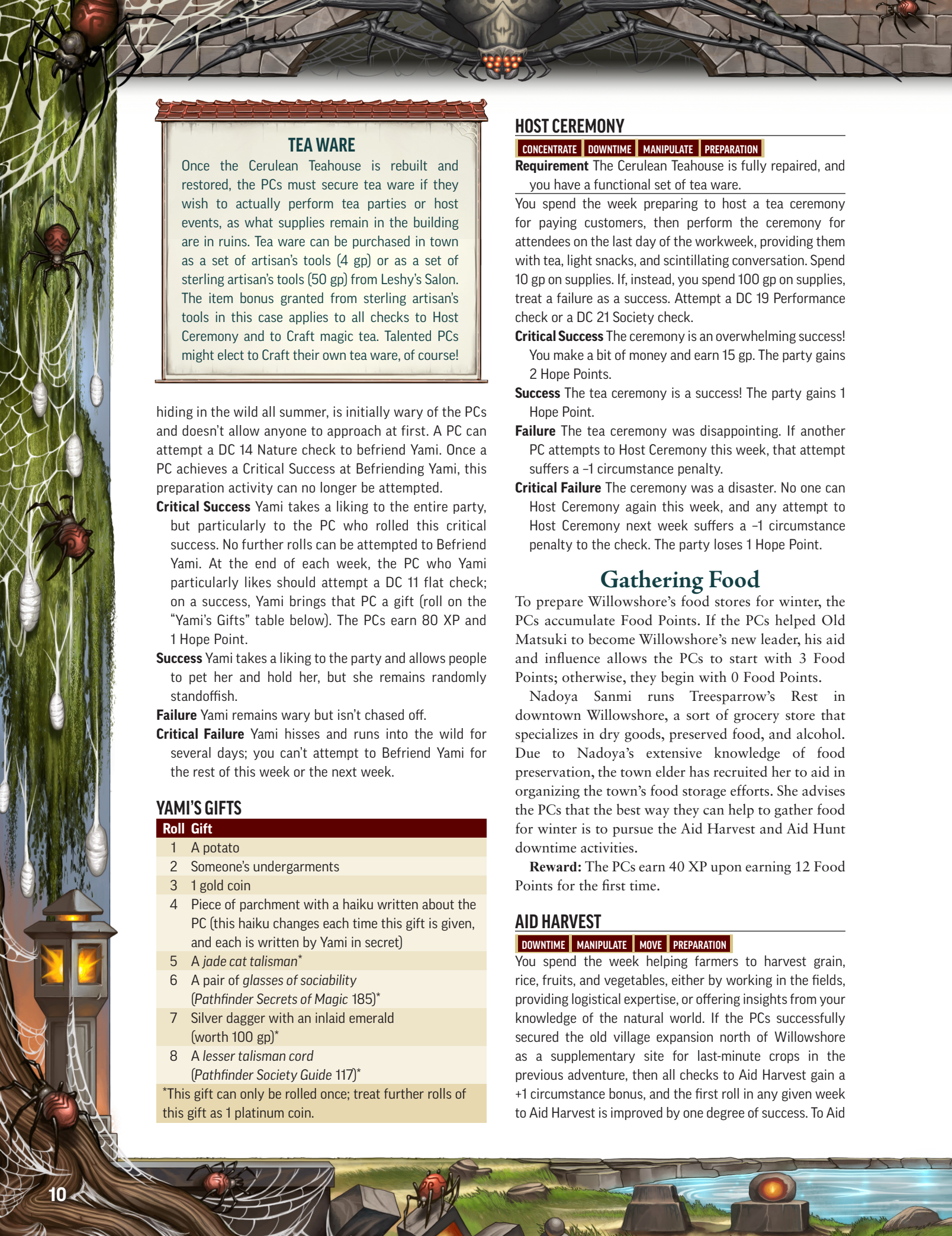
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### TEA WARE

Once the Cerulean Teahouse is rebuilt and restored, the PCs must secure tea ware if they wish to actually perform tea parties or host events, as what supplies remain in the building are in ruins. Tea ware can be purchased in town as a set of artisan's tools (4 gp) or as a set of sterling artisan's tools (50 gp) from Leshy's Salon. The item bonus granted from sterling artisan's tools in this case applies to all checks to Host Ceremony and to Craft magic tea. Talented PCs might elect to Craft their own tea ware, of course!

hiding in the wild all summer, is initially wary of the PCs and doesn't allow anyone to approach at first. A PC can attempt a DC 14 Nature check to befriend Yami. Once a PC achieves a Critical Success at Befriending Yami, this preparation activity can no longer be attempted.

**Critical Success** Yami takes a liking to the entire party, but particularly to the PC who rolled this critical success. No further rolls can be attempted to Befriend Yami. At the end of each week, the PC who Yami particularly likes should attempt a DC 11 flat check; on a success, Yami brings that PC a gift (roll on the "Yami's Gifts" table below). The PCs earn 80 XP and 1 Hope Point.

**Success** Yami takes a liking to the party and allows people to pet her and hold her, but she remains randomly standoffish.

**Failure** Yami remains wary but isn't chased off.

**Critical Failure** Yami hisses and runs into the wild for several days; you can't attempt to Befriend Yami for the rest of this week or the next week.

### YAMI'S GIFTS

Roll	Gift
1	A potato
2	Someone's undergarments
3	1 gold coin
4	Piece of parchment with a haiku written about the PC (this haiku changes each time this gift is given, and each is written by Yami in secret)
5	A jade cat talisman*
6	A pair of glasses of sociability (Pathfinder Secrets of Magic 185)*
7	Silver dagger with an inlaid emerald (worth 100 gp)*
8	A lesser talisman cord (Pathfinder Society Guide 117)*



\*This gift can only be rolled once; treat further rolls of this gift as 1 platinum coin.

### HOST CEREMONY

CONCENTRATE DOWNTIME MANIPULATE PREPARATION

**Requirement** The Cerulean Teahouse is fully repaired, and you have a functional set of tea ware.

You spend the week preparing to host a tea ceremony for paying customers, then perform the ceremony for attendees on the last day of the workweek, providing them with tea, light snacks, and scintillating conversation. Spend 10 gp on supplies. If, instead, you spend 100 gp on supplies, treat a failure as a success. Attempt a DC 19 Performance check or a DC 21 Society check.

**Critical Success** The ceremony is an overwhelming success!

You make a bit of money and earn 15 gp. The party gains 2 Hope Points.

**Success** The tea ceremony is a success! The party gains 1 Hope Point.

**Failure** The tea ceremony was disappointing. If another PC attempts to Host Ceremony this week, that attempt suffers a -1 circumstance penalty.

**Critical Failure** The ceremony was a disaster. No one can Host Ceremony again this week, and any attempt to Host Ceremony next week suffers a -1 circumstance penalty to the check. The party loses 1 Hope Point.

### Gathering Food

To prepare Willowshore's food stores for winter, the PCs accumulate Food Points. If the PCs helped Old Matsuki to become Willowshore's new leader, his aid and influence allows the PCs to start with 3 Food Points; otherwise, they begin with 0 Food Points.

Nadoya Sanmi runs Treesparrow's Rest in downtown Willowshore, a sort of grocery store that specializes in dry goods, preserved food, and alcohol. Due to Nadoya's extensive knowledge of food preservation, the town elder has recruited her to aid in organizing the town's food storage efforts. She advises the PCs that the best way they can help to gather food for winter is to pursue the Aid Harvest and Aid Hunt downtime activities.

**Reward:** The PCs earn 40 XP upon earning 12 Food Points for the first time.

### AID HARVEST

DOWNTIME MANIPULATE MOVE PREPARATION

You spend the week helping farmers to harvest grain, rice, fruits, and vegetables, either by working in the fields, providing logistical expertise, or offering insights from your knowledge of the natural world. If the PCs successfully secured the old village expansion north of Willowshore as a supplementary site for last-minute crops in the previous adventure, then all checks to Aid Harvest gain a +1 circumstance bonus, and the first roll in any given week to Aid Harvest is improved by one degree of success. To Aid



Harvest, attempt a DC 17 Farming Lore, DC 19 Athletics, or DC 21 Nature check.

**Critical Success** Not only is this week's harvest wildly successful, but supplemental foraging from the nearby wilds brought in even more food. The party gains 2 Food Points.

**Success** The crop harvest is a success, with a fair amount of surplus gathered. The party gains 1 Food Point.

**Failure** The crop yield is unimpressive; it's enough to help feed folks in the short term, but not enough to set aside anything for stores.

**Critical Failure** Disaster! The crop was infested with pests, riddled with fungus, or simply became spoiled. The party loses 1 Food Point.

### AID HUNT

CONCENTRATE DOWNTIME MOVE PREPARATION

You spend the week helping hunters and fishers to stalk game, check traps, and catch fish, either by using your skill at woodland survival, providing expert advice, or simply by lending your knowledge of the natural world. Attempt a DC 17 Fishing or Hunting Lore, DC 19 Survival, or DC 21 Nature check.

**Critical Success** You gather an impressive amount of food while not overhunting the area. The party gains 2 Food Points.

**Success** You catch and secure a fair amount of game and fish, but the area's bounty becomes scarce; no one can Aid Hunt for the rest of the week. The party gains 1 Food Point.

**Failure** You find only a few animals and catch a few fish; it's enough to supplement food for the week, but not enough to build up the town stores.

**Critical Failure** Your attempt to hunt and fish ends in disaster, with poorly managed hunts and overfishing overtaxing the ecosystem—and even worse, some of the fish and game previously gathered is revealed to be infected or spoiled and must be destroyed. No one can Aid Hunt for the rest of the week. The party loses 1 Food Point.

### Increasing Security

To prepare Willowshore's buildings and roads for winter, the PCs accumulate Security Points. If the PCs helped Granny Hu to become Willowshore's new leader, her aid and influence allows the PCs to start with 3 Security Points; otherwise, they begin with 0 Security Points.

Zheng Peng is Willowshore's captain of the town guard, a man the PCs likely rescued from his own jail in the previous adventure. That experience

### PREPARING FOOD

In Willowshore and much of Tian Xia, recipes aren't an exact science with unit measurements, but rather a tradition unique to each family and individual. Parents describe measurements for their dishes in pinches, handfuls, and obscure lines on the earthenware used to cook their meals. So while experienced villagers might offer tips and advice to the younger ones, they're always encouraged to "follow the flavor of home" and adjust ingredients by eye and taste. Intensive food preparation, like pickling or preserving food, is often a social affair that makes the time pass more quickly and the work seem less arduous. The prepared dishes are preserved in large, hefty clay pots and buried in the ground until they're ready for consumption during the winter. Kimchi, miso, onions, and radish are some of the more common foods prepared in this way.

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continues to be a source of humility for Zheng Peng, so he's eager to focus on the future rather than to dwell on the past. With his knowledge of defensive measures and his influence over Willowshore's militia, the town elder has recruited him to lead the efforts at preparing the town and its people for a winter without reinforcement. He advises the PCs that the best way they can help prepare for winter is to pursue the Aid Townsfolk and Reinforce Buildings downtime activities.

**Reward:** The PCs earn 40 XP upon earning 12 Security Points for the first time.

## AID TOWNSFOLK

**DOWNTIME PREPARATION**

You spend the week helping the people of Willowshore prepare for winter. This could entail physical labor, such as chopping wood to build up the town's supply of firewood or helping to harvest dead trees or branches to prevent deadfalls. Alternately, you could work to keep the town's workers' spirits up by providing entertainment or helping them to relax after a hard day's work. Finally, you can draw upon your knowledge of Willowshore and its history to remind folks what has and hasn't worked well in previous winters. To Aid Townsfolk, attempt a DC 17 Athletics, DC 19 Willowshore Lore, or DC 21 Performance check.

**Critical Success** You've really helped to bolster the town's spirits, and the citizens find your aid to be as inspiring as it is helpful. The party gains 2 Security Points. You can choose instead to gain 1 Security Point and 1 Hope Point.

**Success** Your assistance helps the townsfolk accomplish more than they could've on their own. The party gains 1 Security Point.

**Failure** The work proves to be more complicated, difficult, and tiring than expected. The party gains no Security Points.

**Critical Failure** An unforeseen setback or accident undoes a lot of the work, potentially damaging townsfolk morale. The party loses 1 Security Point. If this is the first time a critical failure was rolled for Aid Townsfolk this week, the party also loses 1 Hope Point.

## REINFORCE BUILDINGS

**DOWNTIME PREPARATION**

You spend the week lending your labors to the efforts to repair and reinforce buildings to prepare for the upcoming winter. Alternately, you could lend your skill at crafting to help direct those efforts or to handle delicate repairs or improvements. Finally, you could use your knowledge to come up with solutions to bolster the town's infrastructure

or to suggest unexplored methods of winter preparation. To Reinforce Buildings, attempt a DC 17 Architecture or Engineering Lore, DC 19 Crafting, or DC 21 Athletics check.

**Critical Success** The work went better than you expected! The party gains 2 Security Points.

**Success** Work proceeds on schedule without any accidents or setbacks. The party gains 1 Security Point.

**Failure** While reinforcements continue, the work has revealed underlying and unexpected damage or other unanticipated repair needs. The party gains no Security Points.

**Critical Failure** An accident hinders progress, be it a collapsing roof, a twisted ankle, or a painful mistake with a tool. The party loses 1 Security point from the damage caused by the accident, and the character who attempted this check must now attempt a DC 20 Fortitude saving throw to avoid becoming enfeebled 1 or clumsy 1 for 1 week (or until the condition is healed magically); the PC chooses which affliction they gain. If the Fortitude save is a critical failure, the PC gains both conditions.



Nadoya

## Researching the Curse

In the previous adventure, the PCs explored Willowshore's hinterlands, made contacts with supernatural allies, and heard the name "Kugaptee." They also had firsthand experience with the strange boundary that now contains the region and the more disturbing Wall of Ghosts that looms to the west of town. These discoveries posed more questions than answers, but as fall begins, the PCs have enough information to begin properly researching the nature of the strange curse that afflicts them all.

To investigate the curse and determine what steps can be taken to lift it, or at least learn how to lift it, the PCs must spend downtime investigating the topic, making use of the Research rules detailed on pages 154–155 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. Normally, Research resolves in exploration mode, but for this more obscure and hard to understand topic, the PCs must use downtime to seek answers. A PC who attempts to Research the curse takes a week of downtime (but as it doesn't have the preparation trait, a PC can Research simultaneously to any preparation downtime activity they attempt).

Willowshore has three important resources that the PCs can work with to research the curse (You So-Jin of Graveside Manners, Igawa Jubei of Mother's Coil, and the kodama Great Willow), or they can go at it alone if they're skilled in magical knowledge. You



should make the PCs aware of all of the potential avenues of research detailed below so that they'll be able to pick the route to knowledge that they're most skilled at.

## THE WILLOWSHORE CURSE

## RESEARCH 4

**You So-Jin** You spend the week talking with You So-Jin about Willowshore's history and discover things that many locals have forgotten; **Maximum RP 2**

**Research Checks** DC 17 Willowshore Lore or DC 19 Diplomacy

**Igawa Jubei** You spend the week investigating with the aid of Igawa Jubei at Mother's Coil, speaking with her or sifting through her collection of books; **Maximum RP 2**

**Research Checks** DC 17 Library Lore or DC 19 Arcana

**Great Willow** The strange spiritual guardian of the towering willow tree north of town helped to determine the extent of the curse in the previous adventure. You spend the week making several trips to and from Great Willow to gain further insight into the curse; **Maximum RP 2**

**Research Checks** DC 19 Nature

**Solo Investigations** You spend the week researching the nature of curses in general on your own, either using your own collection of tomes and reference materials or libraries held by others in town; **Maximum RP 3**

**Research Checks** DC 17 Sangpotshi Lore or DC 19 Occultism

**Studying Zoudou's Notes** If you can read Abyssal and Aklo, you can study Zoudou's notes on your own to learn what the noppera-bo discovered about the Wall of Ghosts; **Maximum RP 3**

**Research Checks** DC 17 Academia Lore or DC 19 Religion

**2 Research Points** The curse borders to the north, south, and east are subtle and hard to interact with without stepping directly through them, whereas to the west, the Wall of Ghosts is a visible barrier with recognizable spiritual elements—as such, it's likely an easier barrier to attempt to remove. Further, the ruins of the Tan Sugi monastery lie beyond this wall, and if this site can still be reached, the lore and libraries within will be invaluable in learning more about the curse itself. Construction on the Tan Sugi monastery began back in 7020, the same year Willowshore was founded, but the monastery was abandoned in 7062, and much of its lore was lost or forgotten.

**4 Research Points** The noppera-bo who dwelt in the abandoned lumber camp seemed to believe a

## PREPARATION AWARDS

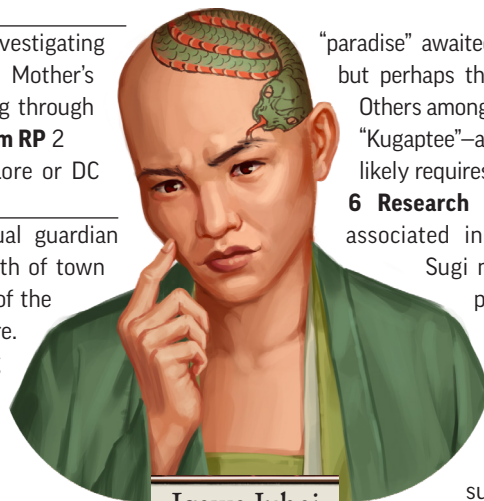
The first time the PCs reach 12 points in each of the three categories of Preparation Points, the party earns 40 XP, for a total of 120 XP if they earn at least 12 points in all three categories. In addition, each time the PCs reach 12 points in one of these three categories, they gain 1 Reputation Point to the faction of their choice.

"paradise" awaited them beyond the Wall of Ghosts, but perhaps the truth is something else entirely? Others among them worshipped something named "Kugaptee"—a name that sounds familiar but that likely requires more research to learn more about.

**6 Research Points** The name Kugaptee is associated in certain old texts with the Tan Sugi monastery and was the name of a powerful nindoru fiend defeated hundreds of years ago by a hero named Tan Sui-Jing. The old legend says Tan Sui-Jing also perished in the battle and that she reincarnated into the towering sugi tree that served as the focal point of the Tan Sugi monastery. Perhaps more information about Kugaptee—including the possibility that the curse might be associated with the fiend—still resides within the abandoned monastery walls?

**8 Research Points** Before the Tan Sugi monastery was abandoned, the monks performed daily rituals to ensure the health of the sugi trees, but now that the place has been left to fall into ruin, the most likely source of the curse seems to be Kugaptee's influence seeping out into the region—particularly given the fact that the monastery appears to be hidden inside a cursed shroud of its own. By spending a little more time researching and drawing upon methods the noppera-bo were attempting to utilize in the previous adventure, the PCs could develop a specialized ritual that might allow passage through the Wall of Ghosts.

**10+ Research Points** The PCs successfully research the *Open the Wall of Ghosts* ritual and, at this point, can use the ritual to attempt to bring down the Wall of Ghosts at their leisure (page 27). They also now understand that they've learned everything about the curse that they can in town, and that more information surely lies beyond the Wall of Ghosts at the ruins of the Tan Sugi monastery. Grant the PCs 120 XP for completing this research.



Igawa Jubei

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## Willowshore Events

As the days unfold and fall hurtles toward winter, weekly events occur in Willowshore that demand the party's attention. These events play out in exploration mode and take less than a day to resolve. Playing out these events doesn't impact the party's ability to pursue any weekly downtime activities. It's best to resolve a week's downtime activities first before moving on to that week's event. A timeline of when these events occur appears below, while details of the events themselves appear later in this chapter. If an event takes place during a week when the PCs are out of town, that event should occur a day after their return, with any other "backed-up" events taking place every other day until you catch back up to the weekly schedule—the one exception to this is First Long Night, which always takes place on week 3. If the PCs miss this event by being out of town that whole week, they'll miss out on one of the best opportunities they have to earn Hope Points.

### FALL TIMELINE

Week	Event
1	An Offering for Daikitsu (page 14)
2	A Slithering Situation (page 14)
3	First Long Night (page 15)
4	Haunted Hair* (page 16)
5	The Missing Corpse (page 17)
6	The Faceless Ghost* (page 19)
7	An Icy Grasp* (page 19)
8	Stable Fire* (page 20)
9	Kimchi's Ascent (page 21)
10	Feast of the Kami (page 22)
11	The Face at the Foot of the Bed* (page 24)
12	Vanishings* (page 25)

\*This is a supernatural event, and when it occurs, the PCs lose 1 Hope Point.

### WEEK 1: AN OFFERING FOR DAIKITSU

A child named **Minhwan** (NG male human child 1) has been taking care of an injured fox in the forest. Yesterday, he went to visit the fox only to discover to his dismay that the fox had abandoned the makeshift shelter he had built for it. Dejected, he returned home, and that night, he dreamed of a white fox touching its nose to his head. Minhwan woke with the conviction that the fox was a messenger of the goddess Daikitsu telling him he had done a good job protecting the injured fox.

Minhwan approaches one of the PCs during this event and shyly asks what gift he should offer to Daikitsu (something that doesn't cost a lot of money, he's quick to add) and offers to do the PCs a favor if they help him pick out a good offering. With a

successful DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge (worshippers of Daikitsu increase their result by one degree of success), a PC knows that an offering of some sort of simple but tasty food, particularly inarizushi, left at Nine Ear Shrine in town would be acceptable. At your option, any other suggestion the PCs have (including pricier gifts of their own imparted to Minhwan) will work just as well.

**Reward:** If the PCs help Minhwan pick out a gift for Daikitsu in earnest, they earn 1 Hope Point and 80 XP.

### WEEK 2: A SLITHERING SITUATION TRIVIAL 4

A nervous-looking man approaches one of the PCs and introduces himself as **Matsu** (N human commoner 1), explaining that he has a problem that needs true heroes, but he seems wary about saying more. As long as the PC doesn't mock him or intimidate him, he'll reveal his problem soon enough—a nest of vipers has taken up residence in the pit of his outhouse, and he narrowly escaped a slow and painful death after he was nearly bitten while conducting his business inside. Blushing and stammering, Matsu begs the PCs to get rid of the viper swarm and offers 2 gp and an invitation to dinner if they can help.

**Creatures:** When the PCs arrive at the outhouse, Matsu gingerly unlocks the door then flees to watch the events from the safety of his window. He occasionally shouts out things like "please be careful!" and "you're doing better than I could!" while the PCs deal with the viper swarm. The viper swarm has made its way out of the pit, and they attack as soon as the door opens.

You can resolve this event with combat from the start if you wish, but you can also ask the PCs if they have any cunning plan for luring or chasing the snakes out of the outhouse. Success here is gauged by the result of a DC 19 skill check—the skill in question should be determined by you, depending on the nature of the PCs' plan. An attempt to lure the snakes out using bait could require a Nature check, while an attempt to smoke them out might require a Survival check. The invention of a complex device to scoop the snakes out might need a Crafting check, and someone with Wild Empathy or the ability to speak to animals might be able to convince the snakes to leave with a Diplomacy check. On a failure, the vipers attack, and you should resolve the encounter with combat.

### VIPER SWARM

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 249

**Initiative** Perception +12

### CREATURE 4

**Treasure:** If the PCs kill or relocate the vipers from Matsu's outhouse to a less dangerous location without



damaging his property, they earn 1 Hope Point in addition to the promised rewards. Matsu is a bachelor and an excellent cook, so his promised meal should be a significant reward all on its own. As dinner concludes, Matsu presents the PCs with a family treasure he has kept locked up and hidden for years—he figures the PCs are more deserving of it than he is since he can't even take care of a few snakes in his outhouse. He presents the PCs with this treasure, a *fiend bane rune* (*Secrets of Magic* 180), with a heartfelt thank you.

**Reward:** Regardless of how the PCs deal with the vipers, grant them 80 XP for getting rid of the snakes.

### WEEK 3: FIRST LONG NIGHT

First Long Night is one of the most anticipated holidays in rural Shenmen, and Willowshore is no exception—particularly now when the townsfolk could really use a day of celebration and distraction from the unsettling situation they find themselves in. During this week only, each PC has the option of taking the following downtime activity to help the town prepare for First Long Night and, potentially, earn more Hope Points.

#### AID FESTIVAL PREPARATIONS

**DOWNTIME** **MANIPULATE** **PREPARATION**

You spend the week helping townsfolk get ready for First Long Night, either by preparing food for the celebration, cleaning and preparing downtown's town square to host the event, or helping to craft outfits and other accessories for locals to wear during the festivities. To Aid Festival Preparations, attempt a DC 17 Lore (any Food, Games, Labor, or Willowshore), DC 19 Crafting, or DC 21 Society check.

**Critical Success** Your time preparing for the festival is not only efficient and helpful, but also highly enjoyable. During First Long Night, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to all skill checks to resolve the effects of any contests you take part in. The party gains 2 Hope Points.

**Success** Your assistance has helped Willowshore prepare well for First Long Night. The party gains 1 Hope Point.

**Failure** You did your best to assist but weren't able to contribute anything particularly helpful.

**Critical Failure** Your attempts to help backfire, with you getting in the way more than actually providing assistance, spreading frustration through the townsfolk. During First Long Night, you take a -1 circumstance penalty to all skill checks to resolve the effects of any contests you take part in as a result of being nervous about making more embarrassing mistakes. The party loses 1 Hope Point.

### On the Night of the Festival

First Long Night takes place during the fall equinox, which happens to occur on the last day of the week. This is an opportunity for your PCs to get some roleplaying time in with their favorite Willowshore NPCs. Read through "First Long Night" starting on page 61 to help present the festival for the PCs, perhaps taking time with each PC to determine how they wish to dress for the festival.

Note that the description of First Long Night in the section following this adventure assumes the celebration takes place in the modern era, after a century or so of jorogumo rule. Few changes to these traditions take place for the PCs, though, who exist in a timeline at the dawn of this new order in Shenmen. For the most part, fears about jorogumo in particular for the people of Willowshore should instead be fears about the curse afflicting the town, perhaps with some even hoping that a successful First Long Night will help lift the curse in some way.

The festival primarily takes place on the town square in downtown Willowshore, but smaller celebrations and events and feasts occur throughout the town. The bulk of the celebrations play out over a 6-hour span from 6:00 p.m. to midnight. During this time, the PCs can each take part once in the three traditional contests held during First Long Night, as detailed on page 62.



Infested Outhouse

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### SPIRITS AND HAUNTINGS

As the PCs make their preparations for winter and tend to the teahouse, strange rumors begin to spread among the villagers and frightening events interrupt their daily chores. These supernatural events grow more common as the weeks go by, replacing the more mundane weekly events. Each time one of these supernatural events occurs, reduce the number of Hope Points the PCs have accumulated by 1, as these unsettling events erode morale and spread fear through town.

The townsfolk see these events as evidence that the curse afflicting the town is growing in power, and you shouldn't dissuade the PCs from believing the same. In fact, these events are the results of attempts in the modern world, led by lumber baron Mago Kai, to exorcise the spirits that linger in modern Willowshore, a truth the PCs will discover (and fight back against) in the next adventure.

**Admiring the Moon:** If at least one PC earns 4 Victory Points in the Admiring the Moon contest, the party earns 1 Hope Point. Any PC who earns 6 Victory Points while Admiring the Moon wins an alchemical elixir for their victory, chosen from the following three options: a moderate cognitive mutagen, a moderate serene mutagen, or a moderate silvertongue mutagen.

**Bundle-Cutting:** If at least one PC earns 4 Victory Points in the Bundle-Cutting contest, the party earns 1 Hope Point. Any PC who earns 6 Victory Points while Bundle-Cutting wins their choice of a *striking weapon rune* or a *ghost touch weapon rune* for their overwhelming victory.

**Lantern Making:** If at least one PC earns 4 Victory Points in the Lantern Making contest, the party earns 1 Hope Point. Any PC who earns 6 Victory Points while Lantern Making wins three lesser elixirs of life for their overwhelming victory. Unlike the other two contests, the Lantern Making contest is a single event that can have only one grand prize winner. If no PC earns at least 6 Victory Points, then the winner is **You So-Jin** (NG female elf herbalist 4) of Graveside Manners. If a PC earns 6 or more Victory points, the PC who earns the most Victory Points is the grand prize winner. In the event of a tie, the grand prize is split evenly. The grand prize itself is a silk pouch containing several pearls and gems worth a total of 100 gp.

**Reward:** Regardless of how many contests the PCs win, the party earns 1 Hope Point for taking

part in First Long Night as well as 120 XP. If the PCs win at least 1 contest, they gain 1 Reputation Point to the faction of their choice. If they win all three contests, they gain 1 Reputation Point to both Southbank and Northridge.

### Shinzo's First Visit

The mysterious merchant Asahina Shinzo (in actuality, a powerful but exiled servitor of Pharasma known as a shinigami who appears in this adventure as a human man) pays a visit to the town during the festival along with his strange raven companion, Yix. As in the previous adventure, Shinzo should be enigmatic but friendly, and while he won't directly take part in any of the festivities, he does seem to enjoy watching the townsfolk's revels. As before, his cart of supplies should be tailored to serve the PCs' interests. You can create a list of items for the PCs to shop through, filling his cart with a dozen items of a level no higher than the party's level, or you can allow the players to "place orders" for items that will be available for purchase upon Shinzo's next visit.

During First Long Night, though, Shinzo gets into the festivities and offers his items for sale at a 10% discount (this discount doesn't apply to items the PCs place orders for).

### WEEK 4: HAUNTED HAIR

#### LOW 4

**Nakamura Yu Ming** (NG female human cook 4), known affectionately as "Mama Bao," is the owner of a small steamed bun shop near downtown Willowshore. As this week begins, she starts finding clumps of hair dangling from the ceiling of her shop that reappear each morning no matter how often she cleans them up. At first, she assumed the culprit was a mischievous kami or children playing pranks on her—at least until today, when her customers all bit into their steamed buns only to spit out clumps of hair mixed in with their fillings. Distraught, Mama Bao closes her shop and seeks out the PCs for help, asking them to come back to her shop to help solve the strange mystery by spending the night and seeing if they can catch the culprit.

Upon arriving at Mama Bao's shop, the PCs can swiftly confirm that all of the buns prepared the evening before have had hair mixed in with their fillings. A DC 14 Perception check confirms that the hair strands are all around the same length and came from the same head. With a DC 17 Society or Medicine check, a character notes that the hair is well-maintained and undamaged but appears to have been plucked from the scalp at the root and not cut with a blade.

The source of the hair is a spirit whose rest has been agitated by exorcists in the modern world attempting



to cleanse the ruins of Willowshore. Although the PCs won't be able to learn this truth at this time, they'll be able to take steps to appease the haunt.

The ghost haunting Mama Bao is that of Hinode Akari, a young woman who left Willowshore in search of a life of adventure, only to have her life cut short when she ran into Mama Bao's grandfather outside of town just two days into her journey. He had heard that a dollmaker in the city of Sze paid handsomely for long hair to use for his dolls, so he killed Akari, plucked each strand of hair from her head, and sold it to the dollmaker for enough money to last his family through the winter and open a small steamed bun shop.

**Hazard:** Akari lingered for decades where she had been murdered, but when exorcists begin to work their magic on modern Willowshore, her spirit becomes agitated enough to lash out at her killer's unsuspecting granddaughter. Despite her tragic story, Akari's haunting presence is initially more of an unnerving inconvenience than an actual threat, but that changes when the PCs stay overnight in the shop. The PCs are thus the first to spend the night in the shop after it becomes haunted.

An hour after midnight, the ghostly form of a young woman with long hair drifts into the shop through one of the doors, then proceeds to pull out her hair by the roots. She holds out handfuls of hair, and they slither through the air like worms to infest tomorrow's steamed buns and to form strange, braided patterns tangled in the rafters. If the PCs take no action, the haunt completes its uncanny rite after a minute before it fades away. After seeing the spectral image, a PC can attempt a DC 21 Willowshore Lore check (or can attempt a DC 21 check the next day to Gather Information) to recall an old story about a young woman's corpse that was found near Gourd Lake with every hair on her head plucked from her scalp. The woman was later identified as a local herbalist named Hinode Akari. If the PCs mention this tale to Mama Bao, she grows pale and then curses in shock as the pieces fall into place. She reveals that a few nights before the body was found, her grandfather came into a sudden windfall of money which he used to build the steamed bun shop. He told her parents that the money came from selling "an old collection of wigs to a puppet maker in Sze," but now Mama Bao recalls how evasive grandfather had been and suspects the awful truth.



Nakamura Yu Ming

## WRITHING HAIR

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +0 (trained)


**Description** A ghostly woman floats quietly through the shop, plucking hair and sending it slithering into the rafters or out to infest uncooked steamed buns.

**Disable** DC 23 Diplomacy to calm the upset spirit down, or DC 21 Religion to convince the spirit to abandon the haunting via prayer.

If the PCs use Hinode Akari's name or otherwise let the haunt know that they understand her story, checks to Disable this haunt gain a +2 circumstance bonus.

**AC** 22; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15

**HP** 54; **Immunities** critical hits, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 5

**Cyclone of Hair**  **Trigger** A creature attempts to interact with or speak to the haunt; **Effect**

The ghostly woman shrieks and rises into the air as her hair grows swiftly, snaking through the shop to tangle into the rafters or weave through the seating area. All creatures in the shop must attempt a DC 22 Reflex save to avoid becoming immobilized (or restrained on a critical failure). The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Routine** (1 action) The haunt targets one creature in the shop at random, preferring targets who are immobilized or restrained. The ghostly figure moves over to the victim and begins to strangle them with coils of her hair while she begins clawing through the target's hair as if ripping it out by the handful. The target takes 2d8+7 mental damage (DC 22 basic Will Save) from enduring the painful sensations of being strangled and having their hair plucked out, even though they're not actually being physically strangled or losing their hair.

**Reward:** If the PCs defeat or disable the haunt, the party earns 1 Hope Point. If the PCs discovered the haunt's story, Mama Bao promises to see to it that Hinode Akari's memory is honored to atone for her grandfather's cruelty, and the party earns 1 additional Hope Point. In addition, for helping a downtown business, the PCs earn 1 Reputation Point with Northridge if they defeat or disable the haunt.

## WEEK 5: THE MISSING CORPSE

One morning, **Elizeth Candora** (NG female human cleric of Pharasma 5), the head priestess of Her Fluvial Lady of Souls, requests a moment of the PCs' time in private. An elderly villager died from the flu the previous night; the corpse went missing sometime

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later that same evening, “as if it just walked away on its own.” She suspects that You So-Jin, the elven herbalist who minds Graveside Manners, animated the body with some sort of “alchemical concoction” but doesn’t have any proof one way or the other. She wants the PCs to investigate what happened to the missing body and offers gifts from the temple in exchange for solving the mystery.

If the PCs spend 10 minutes Investigating Her Fluvial Lady of Souls, a character who succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check spots what appears to be a set of shambling footprints leading north. The trail can be Tracked with a successful DC 20 Survival check, which leads the PCs to the south bank of the Ceiba River, about 200 feet west of Dawnstep Bridge—the trail seems to have led right into the river. If the PCs spend 10 minutes Investigating the

opposite shore, with a successful DC 18 Survival check, they can pick up the trail again; the shambling prints emerge from the river into mud and head northwest. By succeeding at a third DC 20 Survival check, the PCs track the prints through town to, of all places, the Cerulean Teahouse!

So-Jin has nothing to do with this mystery (and if the PCs accuse her of it, she grows frustrated and her attitude toward the party shifts down one degree). The actual perpetrator is none other than Yami, the bakeneko who has taken up residence in the PCs’ teahouse. For many months, the necromantically-curious bakeneko has resisted the urge to animate a zombie, but her resistance finally broke down this week. She used *create undead* to animate the corpse of an elderly woman who often left food out for Yami while she lived. Yami sees her animation as repaying a favor but understands that locals might not see it the same way, so she has had the zombie shambler remain in hiding in the bushes behind the teahouse.

If the PCs successfully track the zombie to the bushes behind their teahouse, they’ll find it deep in the shrubbery, crouched down and waiting patiently for Yami to return—it glances up at the PCs when discovered but doesn’t move, attacking only if it’s attacked first. As soon as the PCs discover the zombie, in any event, Yami quickly approaches to stand next to her zombie, then decides it’s time to confess her role in the shenanigan.

If the PCs have already befriended Yami (page 9), they might have already discovered the truth about the bakeneko, but regardless, Yami asks the PCs to let her “keep” the zombie, explaining that it dances well in the moonlight (and even orders the zombie to dance as a demonstration). Yami understands if the PCs want the zombie to be returned to death and brought back to the church, but stubbornly hopes the PCs will let her keep it. To convince Yami to let her zombie go, the PCs must succeed at a DC 21 Diplomacy or Intimidation check. If the PCs have already befriended Yami, they improve the result of their check by one degree of success.

If the PCs destroy the zombie or otherwise take her away against Yami’s wishes, or if they use Intimidation to get her to agree, the bakeneko grows surly and abandons Willowshore. At your option, the PCs might encounter her again in the future and have a chance to make amends, or she might return to torment the PCs to get revenge.

If the PCs don’t manage to track the zombie, it should just be a matter of time before they catch



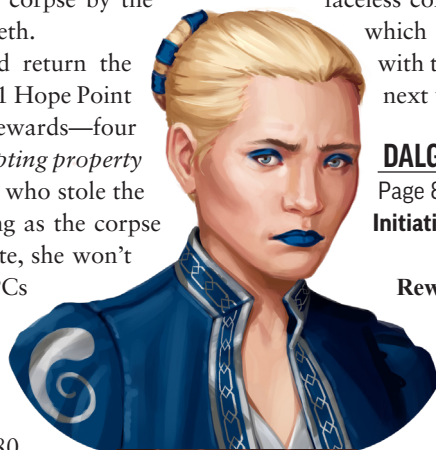
Hinode Akari



Yami making the zombie dance for her out behind the teahouse late one night, at which point the PCs should be able to recognize the undead corpse by the description given to them by Elizeth.

**Treasure:** If the PCs find and return the corpse to Elizeth, the party earns 1 Hope Point in addition to the promised rewards—four *lesser healing potions* and a *disrupting property rune*. Elizeth also wants to know who stole the corpse or animated it, but as long as the corpse is returned in an unanimated state, she won't press much for details. If the PCs managed to return the missing corpse while maintaining Yami's friendship, the party earns 1 additional Hope Point.

**Reward:** Grant the PCs 80 XP for discovering and returning the missing corpse.



Elizeth Candora

## WEEK 6: THE FACELESS GHOST

LOW 4

**Ho Jeong-hui** (CG male human town guard 2), known as one of Willowshore's most eligible bachelors, was cooking a late dinner at home an hour after sunset when he saw a figure outside his window. He grabbed a sword and headed outside, ready to confront the figure, expecting a prowler or miscreant. What he found was neither, and his encounter sent him fleeing to ask the PCs for aid.

Upon reaching the PCs, the still-shaken guard describes what he at first took for a long dark robe to be a vaguely humanoid shape made of mist and smoke, and when it turned to face him, the featureless stone mask it wore filled him with fright. He asks the PCs to head to his home and investigate the "faceless ghost" that's lurking in his backyard, refusing to go back home until the PCs have investigated.

**Creatures:** The figure Jeong-hui confronted was another restless spirit driven into action by the attempts in the modern era to exorcise the hauntings in Willowshore. In this case, though, the spirit is an actual undead creature: a dalgyal gwishin. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Religion check to Recall Knowledge after hearing the story of the frightening encounter recognizes the creature for what it is.

The dalgyal gwishin was drawn to Jeong-hui's home as a result of his popularity. It returns to skulk about the place every night, vanishing with every sunrise. If the PCs don't defeat the undead within three days, it

seeks out Jeong-hui wherever he might have gone into hiding and, if no PC remains behind to protect him, his faceless corpse is discovered the next day, after which the dalgyal gwishin chooses the PC with the highest Charisma modifier as their next victim.

## DALGYAL GWISHIN

CREATURE 5

Page 83

Initiative Perception +12

**Reward:** If the PCs defeat the dalgyal gwishin, the party earns 1 Hope Point and 1 Reputation Point with Northridge. If Ho Jeong-hui dies first, the party loses 1 Hope Point and 1 Reputation Point with Northridge.

## WEEK 7: AN ICY GRASP

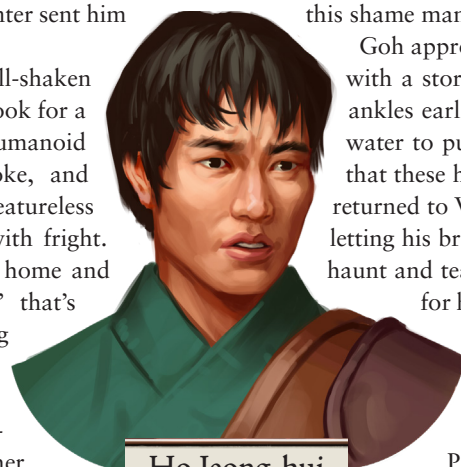
LOW 4

Fifty years ago, **Goh** (N male fisher 3) lost his only sibling to the Ceiba River when he left his younger brother unsupervised while he snuck away to play with his friends. Shame for his role in his brother's accidental drowning has haunted Goh for decades, but when the modern exorcists begin to work their magic against Willowshore's haunts from the living world, this shame manifests as a very real haunting.

Goh approaches the PCs, shaken and scared, with a story of feeling hands grabbing at his ankles earlier in the day after he got into the water to pull his skiff ashore. He's convinced that these hands belong to his brother's spirit, returned to Willowshore to carry him away for letting his brother drown. As Goh describes the haunt and tearfully recounts the shame he feels

for his role in his brother's death, allow each PC a DC 19 Sense Motive check to realize that it might be Goh's own shame that's causing the haunt. On a critical success, a PC theorizes that using Diplomacy to try to calm Goh down and to forgive himself could be the simplest way to end the haunt.

**Haunting:** Goh isn't far off from the truth, but it's not his brother's spirit that's the problem here—it's Goh's own shame. When he leads the PCs back to the spot on the river near his home where the incident occurred, no new haunting manifests despite the PCs' attempts to investigate. Relieved, Goh steps into the river as well, only to immediately be attacked by the haunting once more. The PCs must move quickly to save the elderly fisherman from drowning.



Ho Jeong-hui

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## GOH'S SHAME

## HAZARD 5

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT


**Stealth** +13 (expert)

**Description** A strange shadowy figure churns in the waters at Goh's feet.

**Disable** DC 21 Diplomacy to calm Goh enough that the haunt dissipates, DC 23 Religion to exorcise the haunt, or DC 25 Intimidation to "scare the shame" out of Goh

**AC** 22; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15

**HP** 54; **Immunities** critical hits, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 5; **Resistances** fire 5

**Grasping Hands**  **Trigger** Goh steps into the Ceiba River; **Effect** A shadowy figure that looks like a swimming child appears to grab ahold of Goh's ankles and begins to pull him deeper into the water; Goh becomes grabbed. The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Routine** (2 actions; emotion, enchantment, fear incapacitation, mental, occult) The haunt uses its first action to grapple with Goh and attempts to pull him underwater. Goh has a Fortitude DC of 19. In order to pull Goh underwater, the haunt must critically succeed at its grapple check against him with a result of 29 or higher to successfully restrain Goh. Goh is overwhelmed by terror and makes no attempt to escape, so it falls to the PCs to get him free from the haunt. If Goh is restrained and pulled underwater, the haunt must continue to grapple him in following rounds. If the haunt manages to critically succeed at grappling Goh while he's restrained, the man dies from a combination of fright and drowning, at which point the haunt immediately ends.


If Goh is pulled free and taken out of the water, the haunt loses one action and no longer attempts to grapple him. The haunt uses its second action to manifest the image of a frightening watery drowned ghost, causing one creature it targets within 30 feet to attempt a DC 22 Will save (the haunt always targets a creature who attempted to free Goh from its grip if possible).

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is frightened 1.

**Failure** The creature is frightened 2 and fleeing for as long as it remains frightened.

**Critical Failure** The creature is frightened 3 and fleeing as long as it remains frightened, or for 1 minute, whichever comes second.

**Melee**  grapple +15, **Damage** grapple

**Reset** The haunt ends if Goh dies and doesn't reset. If Goh is dragged out of the water, the haunt ends at the end of its next turn but resets immediately the next time Goh enters the river.

**Reward:** If the PCs disable or destroy the haunt, the party earns 1 Hope Point unless Goh perishes, in which case the party instead loses 1 Hope Point.

## WEEK 8: STABLE FIRE

Willowshore Stables had a rough time of things during the summer, and unfortunately for its proprietor **Kum Soon-chong** (NG male human veterinarian 3), fall has more peril in store. Near the end of this week, a plume of dark smoke starts to rise from the main barn of Willowshore Stables. The PCs should spot this smoke quickly or, at the very least, have their attention drawn to it by calls of "Fire!" in the streets.

As long as the PCs react quickly, they should be able to reach Willowshore Stables in time to help. By this point, the fire has engulfed the barn and the employees have managed to save the livestock by leading them into the pasture. However, the fire now threatens to spread into the pasture and potentially further into town. The PCs can assist in putting out the fire by taking the Fight Barn Fire activity.

## FIGHT BARN FIRE

EXPLORATION MANIPULATE MOVE

You help fight the fire that threatens to consume Willowshore Stables and, if left untended, that can potentially spread into the rest of town. To fight the fire, attempt a DC 19 Athletics check to actively fight the flames by joining a bucket brigade or creating fire breaks to contain the fire or a DC 21 Diplomacy check to organize townsfolk to help them be more efficient about their firefighting techniques. If you have magical spells that might help to fight the fire, you can use them to do so—expend up to three spells that the GM agrees would be helpful in fighting fires, then attempt an Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check (as is appropriate for your spellcasting tradition). The DC of this check is 17 if you used three spells, 19 if you used two, and 21 if you used one.

**Critical Success** Your efforts to fight the fire are enormously helpful. The party gains 2 Victory Points. In addition, your impressive efforts earn the party 1 Hope Point.

**Success** Your firefighting efforts help the townsfolk stem the blaze. The party gains 1 Victory Point.

**Failure** You did your best to assist but weren't able to contribute anything particularly helpful. Worse, you got burned in the process and take 3d6 fire damage (DC 19 basic Reflex save).

**Critical Failure** Disaster! Your attempt to fight the fire caused the flames to spread! Worse, you got badly burned in the process and take 3d10 fire damage (DC 19 basic Reflex save). The party loses 1 Victory Point.

If the PCs manage to achieve at least 3 Victory Points as they Fight the Barn Fire, they and the townsfolk manage to get the blaze under control quickly with a triumphant success. If the PCs achieve



0, 1, or 2 Victory Points, the fire spreads into the field and damages the fences before it's put out, resulting in a moderate success. If the PCs end up with -1 or fewer Victory Points, the fire engulfs the main building as well and burns it all down, field included, before the townsfolk contain the fire and keep it from spreading, resulting in a tragic success that costs the party 2 Food Points and 2 Security Points.

After the fire is put out, the PCs can investigate the badly burnt barn by spending an hour Investigating the ruins. The investigation turns up an eerie bit of evidence—a charred tengu skeleton with a mark of crime etched on the skull, whose head seems to have been severed at the neck by a heavy blade, even though the skull and skeleton lie in place apparently intact. Allow the PCs a DC 17 Willowshore Lore check (or a DC 17 check to Gather Information); on a success, they recall the short-lived reign of terror an arsonist named Nin Nok went on in Willowshore before she was captured and executed for her crimes—she was beheaded, and a mark of crime was etched on her skull to indicate her punishment in the afterlife before she was buried in an unmarked grave in the Bones of the Forgotten northwest of town. If the PCs then visit that graveyard, it'll take only 10 minutes of Investigating to locate an unmarked grave that appears to have been dug up from within—another example of restless spirits coming back from death as a result of exorcism attempts in the living world, but for now, it seems like simply one more “symptom” of the eerie curse afflicting Willowshore.

**Reward:** Grant the PCs 80 XP if they achieve at least 3 Victory Points fighting the fire and an extra 40 XP if they discover the unnerving mystery behind the fire. They also earn 1 Reputation Point with Southbank for earning 3 Victory Points. If they earned less than 0 Victory Points, though, they lose 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

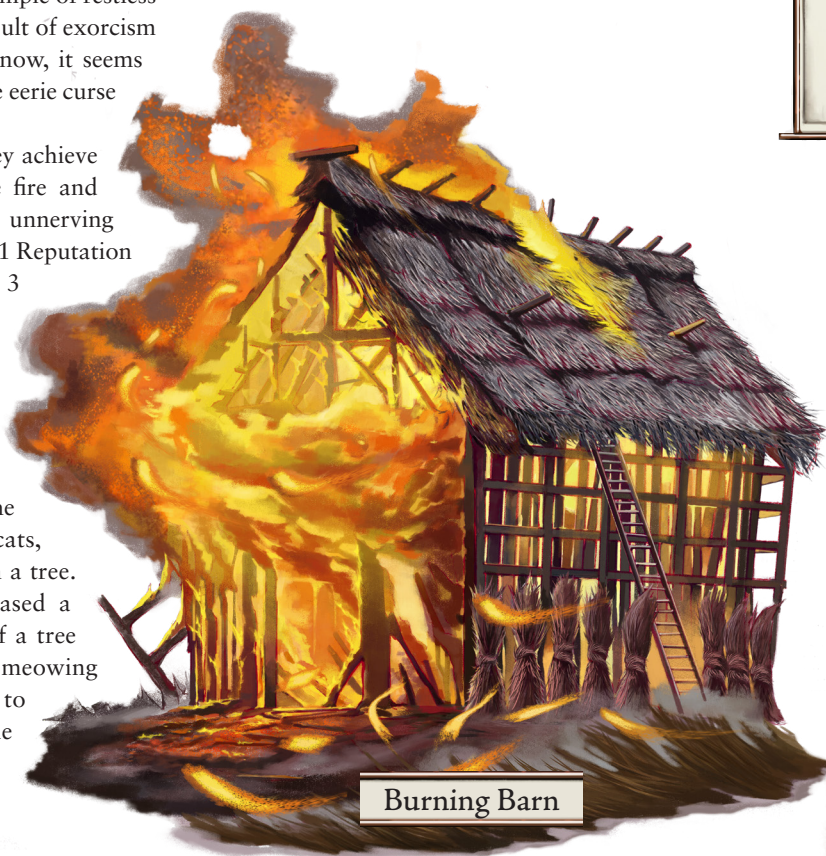
## WEEK 9: KIMCHI'S ASCENT

While the PCs are going about their downtime, they hear from one of the villagers that one of the village cats, Kimchi, has gotten herself stuck up in a tree. The fluffy orange and white cat chased a squirrel up to the highest branches of a tree just outside of town and has been meowing loudly enough for nearby villagers to hear. The cat is easy to spot from the ground, but she's 30 feet up, and it's too dangerous for the villagers to try and help her.

If the PCs decide to save Kimchi, it's up to them how to go about it. It's unlikely that a PC will be able to fly up to save the scared cat, so climbing the tree is the best bet, which requires a character to succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check to Climb. Once a PC reaches the cat, they must succeed at a DC 19 Athletics check to grapple the frightened animal (with a critical failure indicating the PC falls out of the tree!). Due to her squirming and claws, attempts to Climb down the tree take a -2 circumstance penalty unless the cat is secured in a bag or something similar. A character with wild empathy can calm Kimchi and guide her down on her own with a successful DC 19 Diplomacy check. Other methods of rescuing the cat could work as well with other DC 19 skill checks, at your discretion. Once she's back on solid ground, Kimchi meows happily and then turns tail and runs into the village.

**Reward:** If the PCs save Kimchi, the party earns 1 Hope Point. If disaster strikes and Kimchi dies, the party loses 1 Hope Point. Likewise, if no PC attempts the rescue, a local youth does, then slips and falls halfway down with Kimchi in their hands. Whether or not the youth and cat survive the fall is left to you to decide, but regardless, this also costs the party 1 Hope Point.

Grant the PCs 10 XP if they save Kimchi.



Burning Barn

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## WEEK 10: FEAST OF THE KAMI

With the supernatural events building in Willowshore, and with the good chance that the PCs have already endured the dangers presented in Chapters 2 and 3, this event offers the party a likely welcome opportunity to relax and recover from the growing grim horrors of their reality. Even if it promises to be the last “good” day of fall before the harshness of winter begins to metaphorically knock at the door, Asahina Shinzo’s arrival in town on the first day of this week should set the mood for a lighter tone—at least for a few days. Note that this event assumes the PCs have rebuilt the Cerulean Teahouse. If they haven’t yet, then this event doesn’t occur, and instead the party’s choice to leave the beloved local institution in ruins causes them to lose 2 Hope Points.

### Shinzo's Suggestion

The mysterious merchant Shinzo arrives at the Cerulean Teahouse early on the first day of the week, potentially waiting patiently outside the front door where he sets up his cart for the PCs to find him when they first step outside in the morning. He greets the PCs warmly, his “raven” Yix watching curiously from the top of his cart, and congratulates the party on their recent successes. If you feel the PCs missed a chance to learn something important in Chapters 2 or 3, Shinzo can be a method to introduce that information, but his real purpose for the visit is to admire the PCs in their progress for preparing for winter—particularly their efforts to build hope and morale.

To this point, Shinzo makes a suggestion. He notes that, in his experience, spiritual well-being is just as important as physical well-being—even if the town manages to fully prepare its food and shelter for winter, that doesn’t mean that its citizens shall thrive. While lifting the townsfolk’s spirits will help, it’s just as important to lift the spirits of the town’s actual spirits as well!

Shinzo explains further that he’s speaking of the kami present in the region. The PCs have already met the only kodama kami to dwell in the area, Great Willow, and might also have met the shikigami kami, Kohoshi, who guards the town’s Desna shrine, but Shinzo notes that many more shikigami dwell throughout Willowshore, quietly hiding within and protecting statues, works of art, gardens, and road signs. If the PCs were to create a special feast specifically for the town’s kami population, their delight will surely work wonders for Willowshore’s spiritual health.

### Preparing for the Feast

Shinzo suggests the PCs invite Great Willow and Kohoshi, of course, and also suggests they spend a

day or two making offerings and giving prayers to the town’s other kami to let them know of the upcoming feast, but he otherwise leaves the preparation entirely in the PCs’ hands. He also suggests they hold the feast on the last day of the week, to let word spread and to give the PCs time to prepare. He promises to return the day after the feast finishes with some special gifts for the party to use to enhance their teahouse, then (once the PCs have completed any other transactions they wish) leaves them to their plans and departs from town.

During the following week, each PC can Prepare for the Feast three times, but doing so prevents that PC from having the time to perform any downtime activities. A PC can mix and match what specific method they use to prepare for their three Prepare for the Feast activities, choosing from decorating, food and tea preparation, or invitations. Points earned by this activity should be tracked in a way that allows the players to keep track of them—let them know that they need to reach 4 points in a category in order to pull off that aspect of the celebration successfully. The more points they earn, the greater the party’s success will be.

## PREPARE FOR THE FEAST

EXPLORATION   MANIPULATE   MOVE

You spend time preparing the teahouse for the upcoming feast, either by decorating it in a way the kami will appreciate or by gathering and staging ingredients and resources for the feast. Alternately, you spend time out in town offering prayers and gifts to the local kami to let them know that they’ve all been invited to the feast. To add to the festive flair, ask each player to describe how their character decorates, prepares, or makes invitations—a PC who comes up with a particularly fun or amusing description can be rewarded with a +1 status bonus to their check at your option.

To decorate the teahouse, attempt a DC 17 Art Lore or a DC 19 Performance check. This check’s results earn the party Decoration Points.

To prepare for the banquet itself, attempt a DC 17 Food or Drink Lore or a DC 19 Crafting check. This check’s results earn the party Banquet points.

To invite the kami, attempt a DC 17 Religion or a DC 19 Diplomacy check. This check’s results earn the party Entertainment Points.

If Great Willow has been successfully invited, word spreads. Every check to Prepare Feast after Great Willow is invited gains a +1 circumstance bonus.

**Critical Success** The PCs gain 1 point as appropriate for the skill chosen, plus an additional 1 point for any of the three categories.



**Success** The PCs gain 1 point as appropriate for the skill chosen.

**Critical Failure** The PCs lose 1 point as appropriate for the skill chosen.

## Night of the Feast

The day of the banquet has arrived, and Willowshore is abuzz with townsfolk eagerly awaiting the event—while the feast isn't for them, word has spread, and the townsfolk have decorated the streets to celebrate the event with offerings and homages to Willowshore's kami. As the sun dips low in the sky and evening falls, an astonishing sight takes place—dozens of kami emerge from their wards, muttering and giggling and gossiping among themselves as they make their way up the streets toward the Cerulean Teahouse. They ignore the gawking townsfolk who watch the growing parade with delight, but as they approach the teahouse, they “oooh” and “ahhh” in wonder at the preparations made just for them.

Great Willow, if they were invited, towers more than a foot above the two-foot-tall shikigami, who themselves number nearly 40 in all—well over twice the amount of kami that anyone in town suspected dwelt within Willowshore. They bustle and hustle as they swarm into the teahouse and immediately settle in throughout the building, chattering among themselves about kami gossip and marveling—or perhaps mocking—the PCs' work. As the PCs perform the feast, the kami tend to ignore them and focus on the decor and the food, eventually providing their own entertainment as well.

## DECORATIONS

The kami appreciate artistry and creativity when it comes to decorating a gala like this and have a strange habit of treating inanimate objects and works of art as fellow people, complimenting these objects and even engaging in one-sided discussions with them. Their initial reaction upon arriving at the teahouse depends on how many Decoration Points the PCs have earned.

**3 or fewer Decoration Points:** The kami mock and tease the decorations and, as the night progresses, get a bit rowdy. As a result of the damage, a PC must successfully take the Repair and Restore Preparation downtime activity (page 9) before the teahouse will be fit for use again. The party loses 1 Security Point.

**4-5 Decoration Points:** The kami are impressed by the decorations and treat the teahouse with respect.

**6 or more Decoration Points:** The kami are overwhelmed by the decor and are inspired to fancy up their own wards when they return home after the feast. The party gains 2 Security Points.

## BANQUET

Once the kami settle in, they immediately expect to be served tea and snacks in the proper way—see the Tea Ceremony sidebar on page 24 for details. The quality of the tea and food served helps to bolster the feast, depending on how many Banquet Points the PCs have earned.

**3 or fewer Banquet Points:** The food and tea are serviceable but low quality—and the kami take note. The result of the tea ceremony is reduced by one degree of success.

**4-6 Banquet Points:** The food and tea are fine, and it falls to the PCs to make the best of it through presentation.

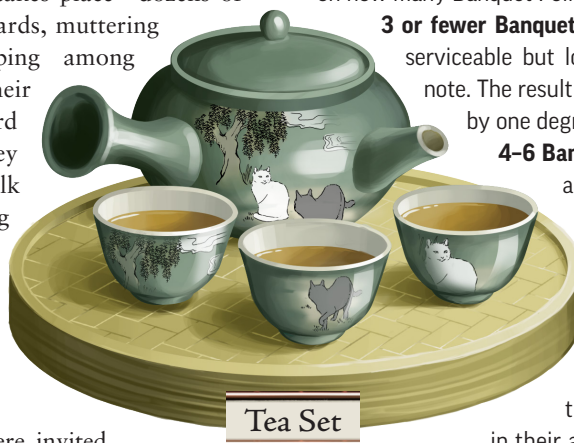
**7 or more Banquet Points:** The food and tea are exquisite and elevate the experience of the service for the kami, who are quite vocal in their appreciations. The result of the tea ceremony is increased by one degree of success.

## ENTERTAINMENT

One thing that intrigued the kami about the invitation to a banquet was the opportunity for entertainment, and whispers and guesses as to what sort of show they might be treated to remains a frequent topic during the feast. Once the meal is over, though, the kami as a group begin demanding the “post meal show.” Have each PC describe what they're doing to entertain the kami, then select an appropriate skill for them to attempt a check to determine how well they do. A feat of strength might call for Athletics, while a juggling act might need Acrobatics. Performance is a great choice for a majority of entertainments, while a PC who relies on magic might roll Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion. Regardless of the skill chosen, the DC for success is 19. Depending on how many Entertainment Points the PCs have earned, they might gain bonuses to their rolls, and if at least 2 PCs succeed at this check, the kami grant them an additional reward (see After the Feast on page 24).

**3 or fewer Entertainment Points:** The kami have impossible-to-meet expectations and are harsh critics. All skill checks to entertain take a -2 circumstance penalty.

**4-6 Entertainment Points:** The kami are eager for entertainment, and all skill checks to entertain gain a +1 circumstance bonus.



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## THE TEA CEREMONY

When it comes time to serve the kami, one of the PCs must serve as the organizer for the service and attempt a DC 17 Tea Lore check or a DC 21 Society check. Other PCs can Aid this check by rolling either Tea Lore or Society. The results of this check are modified by how many Banquet Points the PCs have earned.

**Critical Success** The kami are overwhelmed by the quality of the service. Not only do they pay back their hosts as detailed in Success below, but also bless the Teahouse with supernatural power. From this point on, all checks to Host Ceremony (page 10) and to Craft food and tea here (including the magical teas detailed in the Adventure Toolbox) gain a +1 status bonus. The PCs gain 1 Food Point and 1 Hope Point.

**Success** The kami are delighted by the ceremony, and upon returning home, they pay back their hosts for the rest of winter by helping to protect the town's food stores. The PCs gain 1 Food Point.

**Failure** The kami are disappointed but don't openly mock the PCs for their service.

**Critical Failure** The kami are insulted by the ceremony and abandon the feast partway through. The PCs don't get a chance to perform for the kami (see Entertainment on page 23), and worse, the kami decide to make up for the insult by periodically raiding Willowshore's food stores. The PCs lose 1 Food Point and 1 Hope Point.



Tea Kami

PCs earn 1 Hope Point and 40 XP, regardless of the success of the feast itself.

**Decorations:** If the PCs earned at least 4 Decoration Points, they earn 1 Security Point and 20 XP.

**Banquet:** If the PCs earned at least 4 Banquet Points, they earn 1 Food Point and 20 XP.

**Entertainment:** If the PCs earned at least 4 Entertainment points, they earn 1 Hope Point and 20 XP. If at least two of the PCs succeeded in their skill checks to entertain the kami, then at some point during the night, the spirits leave a gift for the PCs to find the next day.

**Reputation:** If the PCs earned at least 10 points overall among Decoration, Banquet, and Entertainment Points, they gain 1 Reputation Point to the faction of their choice.

## The Next Day

**Reward:** If the PCs successfully entertained the kami (see After the Feast, previous), they'll find a gift waiting for each of them in the Cerulean Teahouse. The kami are observant and insightful, and these gifts are all tailored to each character—you should choose a 5th-level permanent item for each PC that fits their interests. (+1 *armor potency runes* or wands of 2nd-level spells make excellent options if a more specific magic item doesn't make sense).

As promised, Shinzo returns that day as well, either to congratulate the PCs on their success or to commiserate with them on their failures. Even if they completely failed, though, Shinzo applauds the attempt, and as long as the PCs at least tried to put on a good banquet, the mysterious merchant hands over a large book bound in green cloth that exudes the fine scent of tea. This book contains copies of all of the magic teas presented in this volume's Adventure Toolbox (page 76), as well as the *Winter's Breath* ritual (page 81).

## WEEK 11: THE FACE AT THE FOOT OF THE BED

The supernatural events that have been frightening the townsfolk continue this week, only this time it's not one of the NPCs who are targeted by a haunt, but instead one of the PCs themselves!


As this week begins, choose one PC at random to be the target of this minor but unnerving haunting. One night during this week, that PC has a harrowing nightmare where they step outside their home to find that everyone in Willowshore but they've changed—

**7 or more Entertainment Points:** The kami are taken with the PCs and their personalities. Not only do all skill checks to entertain gain a +1 circumstance bonus, but each result is improved by one degree of success.

## After the Feast

**Reward:** After the PCs complete their entertainment for the gathered kami, the banquet comes to an end. Whether or not the kami had a great time or were disappointed, they suddenly realize they've been away from their wards for quite a long time and quickly disperse through the streets, forming a delightful spectacle of supernatural delight to the townsfolk. The





they're going about their business normally, but each and every person's head has been replaced by a tiny cloud of fluttering blood-red butterflies. The other townsfolk ignore the PC, who increasingly becomes aware of something unseen that's coming after them, stealthily pursuing them. Just as this unseen stalker is about to reveal themselves, though, the PC awakes—only to see a disembodied ghostly face staring at them from the foot of the bed. Worse, the face watching them sleep is their own! As soon as they look upon this ghostly face, the face breaks apart into a cloud of red butterflies that swoops around the PC, their wings like razors that cut the flesh. An instant later, the butterflies are gone, and the PC lies awake in bed—and is exposed to a sinister curse that combines echoes of their own soul with Kugaptee's growing influence over the region, as Mago Kai's exorcists inadvertently give the fiend's spirit greater power while working to exorcise Willowshore's ruins. Whether or not that PC finds a dead, blood red butterfly crushed on their pillow is left for you to decide.

At your option, other PCs can experience the Face at the Foot of the Bed as this adventure continues, but no one PC should ever face this curse more than once.

## FACE AT THE FOOT OF THE BED

## CURSE 5

RARE CURSE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

You've come face-to-face with your own ghost, and something is keeping it trapped.

**Saving Throw** DC 19 Will; **Effect** You realize that you've witnessed your own ghost, peering back from the future in an attempt to warn you of what will soon kill you, only for that same unknown force to tear your ghost away and leave you cursed with the conviction that what will eventually kill you now knows where you are. You suffer a -1 penalty to all saving throws against fear effects. Additionally, each time you're reduced to 0 Hit Points, you grow that much closer to your true death and become stupefied 1 for the next 24 hours. This duration doesn't stack but does reset each time you nearly die.

## WEEK 12: VANISHINGS

As fall comes to a close, the sunny days are a thing of the past and rain and wind become the new norm. Temperatures drop, frost dusts the ground each morning, and on the first day of the final week of this adventure, the first vanishing takes place.

In the modern world of the living, Mago Kai's exorcists have finally managed to isolate what they believe to be the true nature of the supernatural hauntings that infest the ruins of Willowshore, and their first successful and complete exorcism of one

## SOME EXTRA DAYS

Each month of fall consists of 2–3 additional days beyond the 4-week mark, so that there's technically an extra week's worth of time during this adventure beyond the 12 weeks of events presented in this chapter. How these extra days manifest in your game is up to you; it could be time the PCs spend recovering from the previous adventure. It could be time spent pursuing the content of Chapters 2 and 3. You could end with a second week of vanishings, repeating week 12's event on week 13. You could also create a new event of your own design, perhaps one to give your group the chance to earn a few extra Hope, Food, or Security Points as you see fit.

of those hauntings causes the spirit of the associated villager—who, to the PCs, still appears to be living a normal life here in town—to vanish. This exorcism causes that individual to vanish from Willowshore as well, the first “true death” to hit the mindscape in its 115 years. This villager won't return if the mindscape resets but neither does their soul move on to enter the River of Souls—they're instead banished to an awful, hidden mindscape buried “behind” the Willowshore mindscape, a place where Kugaptee's influence is that much stronger.

Choose the villager to vanish from among those the PCs have befriended, but avoid choosing one whose role has become significant to a specific character. More of these vanishings will take place as the next adventure begins, and the PCs' investigation into what's causing these disappearances makes up a primary goal of that adventure. If you have access to the entire Season of Ghosts Adventure Path, you can reference the next two adventures to select an NPC who doesn't have a specific role to play going forward, but otherwise, any of the following townsfolk could suffer this unfortunate fate: De-ge (page 30 of the previous adventure), Goh (page 19), Ha Hai-er (page 12 of the previous adventure), Ho Jeong-hui (page 19), Matsu (page 14), Kum Soon-chong (page 20), Sumika (page 19 of the previous adventure), or Nakamura Yu Ming (page 16).

It's best to time this event to take place on the last day of fall, so that you can start the first day of winter—and the next adventure—with this unnerving event fresh in the players' minds. That adventure, “No Breath To Cry,” continues to explore the ramifications of this strange vanishing, but presents Willowshore with an entirely new set of perils as well!

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## Chapter 2: The Enlightened Path

The timing of when to begin Chapter 2 depends on two factors—the PCs' creation of the *Open the Wall of Ghosts* ritual after earning at least 10 Research Points while researching the Willowshore curse (page 12) and the PCs drawing close to 5th level. Since most of the XP awards earned in Chapter 1 come as the result of weekly events, it's likely that the PCs won't be nearing 5th level until well into the second month of fall; the *Open the Wall of Ghosts* ritual accounts for this with its requirement that it be cast on a day with a crescent or new moon, which means that it can be cast during the last half of any month (notably, week 3 and 4, week 7 and 8, and week 11 and 12) of this adventure. If the timing of your game is such that it'd work better for the PCs to cast the spell in the first half of a month, simply change the ritual's

requirement so that it must be cast during a waxing or full moon, or just omit the requirement entirely.

You might find that your players don't realize that their best hope for discovering what's going on in Willowshore lies beyond the Wall of Ghosts at the Tan Sugi monastery, especially if a group is more concerned about being unable to head toward the coast and contact Willowshore's most important trade partner, the coastal fortress of Karahai. In this case, use the town elder, the mysterious merchant Shinzo, or any other NPC that the PCs have bonded with to push them toward investigating the Wall of Ghosts, since the old monastery to the west will certainly have greater resources than Willowshore does as far as combating curses goes.





## Through the Wall of Ghosts

The Wall of Ghosts resembles a thick curtain of white mist through which the shapes of countless ghosts float and churn. Now and then, a figure comes close enough to the edge of the mist to reach out, its features turning bestial and monstrous before the wall reabsorbs it. The Wall of Ghosts cuts across the western edge of the Willowshore mindscape, blocking access to the rugged, mountainous region beyond it which cradles the ruins of the Tan Sugi monastery. The wall extends upward to a height of 50 feet, and while a character who climbs a tree or flies high enough to look over this wall can see the forested mountains to the west, any attempt to cross over the wall at this height causes more mist to plume upwards and engulf the character as they do so.

Any character who attempts to pass through the Wall of Ghosts is automatically turned around to reemerge where they entered. As they do so, they're also exposed to an overwhelming sense of fear and horror as the ghosts in the wall flow through them and fill their minds with terror and feelings of overwhelming, impending doom. Such a PC must succeed at a DC 24 Will save. On a failure, the PC is frightened 1 upon emerging from the Wall of Ghosts, and on a critical failure, they're frightened 3 and fleeing as long as they remain frightened.

The timing of when the PCs complete their research into the nature of Willowshore's curse and develop the *Open the Wall of Ghosts* ritual depends on them, but once they do so, they can travel to the Wall of Ghosts to open the wall at their leisure. This adventure assumes they do this during the second month of fall, leaving them plenty of time to tackle the challenges that remain ahead for them in Chapters 2 and 3. The Wall of Ghosts runs the length of the mindscape to the west, but only one road leads through the wall—the so-called “Pilgrim's Path,” which exits Willowshore to the northwest. Regardless of where along the Wall of Ghosts the PCs perform the ritual, when they make their way through the supernatural barrier, they find themselves stepping onto the Pilgrim's Path on the far side.

As the PCs approach the Wall of Ghosts, the sounds of wildlife, the rustle of wind through tree branches, and even the sound of their own footsteps grow eerily quiet—a side effect of Kugaptee's growing influence. This might concern PCs who didn't experience an unsettling “dampening” of ambient sound the last time they drew near to the Wall of Ghosts. As they step into view of the wall, read or paraphrase the following.

---

Stretching as far as the eye can see to the north and south, a cascading wall of silvery mist rises fifty feet into the air and

the surrounding woods. The mist seems to rise up from the ground, looking almost like a ghostly sheet of foamy water as it flows upward before fading away. Yet, this aspect is far from the most unsettling quality of the wall, for within the mist, ghostly shapes churn and float into and out of sight. Every now and then, one draws close enough to the edge to reach out an arm or to press a face against the mist—acts that distort those limbs and visages into feral, monstrous caricatures of humanity, before some unseen force within the mist yanks them back into the foggy depths.

### PERFORMING THE RITUAL

Casting *Open the Wall of Ghosts* requires rice grains and incense worth 60 gp. If the PCs are admired by at least one of Willowshore's factions, then the town supplies the rice and incense needed for the ritual; otherwise, they'll need to purchase the costly components themselves in town.

The ritual must be cast within 40 feet of the Wall of Ghosts, but the exact location along the wall's length is up to the PCs. Casting the ritual takes a day; the PCs shouldn't be interrupted by foes during this day, although you don't need to let the players know that they'll be safe during the casting of the ritual!

Rules for the ritual appear on page 79 of this book's Adventure Toolbox. If the PCs are successful in casting the ritual, an immense rippling effect washes through the Wall of Ghosts. This ripple pushes the swarming ghostly figures away, deeper into the mists, and removes the weird sound-dampening effect the wall had on the surrounding terrain.

For the remainder of the year, any time one of the casters of *Open the Wall of Ghosts* (be they a primary or secondary caster) approaches within 40 feet of the Wall of Ghosts, a 10-foot-radius tunnel-like gap opens in the fog bank. This tunnel allows onlookers to see a somewhat overgrown road winding into the foggy forest beyond—this is the Pilgrim's Path. If the PCs cast the ritual along the road leading out of Willowshore, it'll look like a tunnel in the fog has opened around the road, but if the PCs cast the ritual elsewhere along the Wall of Ghosts, the road will seem to start abruptly at the edge of the fog wall. No matter where the PCs cast the ritual, when they step into this fog tunnel, they set foot onto the Pilgrim's Path. The tunnel remains open behind them, and if they step back out of the wall, they'll reappear on the Pilgrim's Path leading back to Willowshore regardless of where along the Wall of Ghosts they entered.

**Reward:** If the PCs critically fail in their attempt to cast the ritual and end up fighting two ghosts, grant them XP as normal for this fight unless they're already 5th level. Regardless, once the PCs successfully cast *Open the Wall of Ghosts*, grant them 80 XP.

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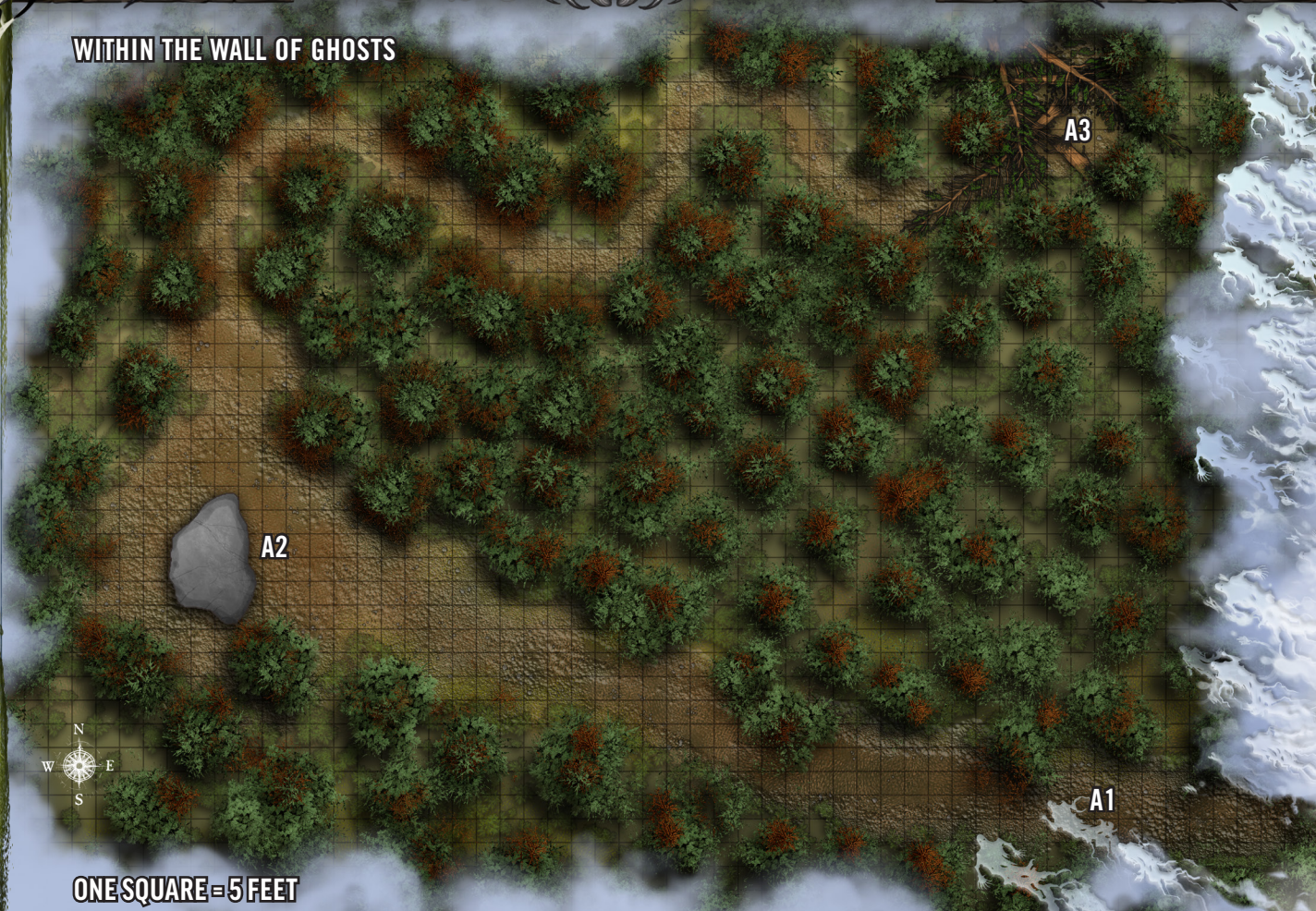
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## WITHIN THE WALL OF GHOSTS



## INTO THE WALL OF GHOSTS

While the ritual opens the Wall of Ghosts for the PCs, the supernatural barrier continues to resist their entry and actively works to prevent them from beginning their walk along the Pilgrim's Path. The PCs must confront the sinister forces within the Wall of Ghosts directly if they intend to complete their journey to the Tan Sugi monastery.


When the PCs complete the ritual, step into the Wall of Ghosts, and set foot onto the revealed Pilgrim's Path, the fog surrounds them again, cutting off their retreat and trapping them in what appears to be a fog-shrouded woodland—yet something about the woods seems strange. The terrain is all wrong, with the road appearing to wind through a small, forested valley rather than forested hills. With a successful DC 20 Willowshore Lore or DC 22 Religion or Society check, a PC confirms that the terrain matches where the Tan Sugi monastery ruins stand, though no sign of the monastery is apparent. With a critical success, they know that the forest is nearly 1,000 years younger than expected, from an era before the monastery was built. In addition, the spiritual atmosphere of the forest within

this area feels off. The sensation of being watched from the foggy undergrowth, the lack of any animal calls or even a soft breeze, and a pervasive feeling of impending doom make for an unnerving atmosphere all around.

The party has entered another mindscape, unique from the one they've just exited, that's heavily influenced by the dead Kugaptee's dreams. In this version of the Pilgrim's Path, the seed that was Tan Sui-Jing's soul and that sprouted the sugi tree that would contain Kugaptee in his grave was removed, and his presence permeates the forest. This mindscape gives the PCs the opportunity to witness a snapshot of the history behind the great sugi tree, Kugaptee, and, by extension, the Tan Sugi monastery.

Use the Within the Wall of Ghosts map for the following encounters. Regardless of how long the PCs remain here, it seems to be late afternoon, but thick fog obscures sight of the sky above. Creatures viewed through more than 60 feet of fog are concealed. As with the Willowshore mindscape, attempts to step through the thicker fog surrounding the region (as shown on the map) result in the character emerging from the fog in the opposite direction from where they entered it.





Movement through the thick forest off the paths is hindered by difficult terrain.

## A1. ENTRANCE

The 20-foot-wide entrance and exit from this mindscape remains static as long as the PCs leave the situation within this small mindscape unresolved; attempts to exit through the Wall of Ghosts anywhere else function as if the PCs attempted to enter the wall before performing the ritual.

If the PCs exit this mindscape, they step out of the Wall of Ghosts on the road leading back to Willowshore regardless of where they entered. On return trips into the Wall of Ghosts, they can either step back into the mindscape at this point or recast *Open the Wall of Ghosts* elsewhere to create a temporary portal back to this location.

## A2. TAN SUI-JING'S GRAVE

The dirt trail comes to an end at a fifty-foot-wide clearing. A smaller trail leads into the woods to the north, while at its center sits a large slab of cracked, crumbling stone. A woman's corpse lies atop the slab, her chest a gaping, gory hole and her left arm extended, as if pointing toward the northern path. Curling coils of fog writhe up from the hole in the corpse's chest, slithering up and merging into the fog that surrounds it. Under the body, deep furrows on the upper surface of the stone seem to form a word, although it's impossible to be sure what it says when viewed from the side.

The corpse on the rock appears only recently dead, with the blood pooled in the crater of its chest not yet clotted. All onlookers can see that the corpse's heart is missing, but identifying the dead woman requires a character to succeed at a DC 20 Willowshore Lore or a DC 22 Religion or Society check to Recall Knowledge. A character who succeeds knows that the body is that of Tan Sui-Jing, a legendary heroine said to have defeated a powerful fiend nearly a thousand years ago at the site where the Tan Sugi monastery was built.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check while observing the tendrils of fog that rise out of the corpse's chest can spot distorted and silently screaming humanoid faces rising up from the hole before they fade and merge with the surrounding fog. Finally, once a PC climbs up onto the slab or observes it from a height, the word carved into the stone can be read by anyone who understands Aklo: "Kugaptee."

In this mindscape, the tree that grew above Kugaptee's grave never took root, for its seed, Tan Sui-Jing's soul, has been ripped away. The corpse's

outstretched hand points the way for the PCs, and was Tan Sui-Jing's dying attempt to provide a trail for her would-be avengers. With a successful DC 15 Medicine or DC 20 Perception check, a PC can tell that the grievous wound's source was a large, clawed hand that ripped through her chest to gouge out her heart.

Splatters of blood lead away from the corpse to the northeast; Tan Sui-Jing's heart (as well as her soul) was carried away by the strange vulture in area A3. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Survival check to Track the drips of blood left on the trail can lead their group to the vulture's location, but they can also simply follow the northern trail to the vulture's nest.

Although greatly weakened, an echo of Tan Sui-Jing's soul persists in this mindscape; her voice can be heard among the whispers and provides guidance to the PCs. While investigating Sui-Jing's body, the PCs make out a voice whispering, "Find the seed." PCs investigating the clearing and who succeed at a DC 18 Survival check find footprints in the leaves and mud. They can Track these prints to the tree used by the vulture. If they fail, they can take 10 minutes to Search the vicinity and find a trail used by the vulture that leads to its lair.

## A3. THE SOULTHIEF'S NEST

LOW 5

A ten-foot-high deadfall of trees lies in a rotting mound in this forest clearing. Blood spatters several of the decaying timbers, and an opening in the center emits a foul, rotten stink.

**Creatures:** Kugaptee's dream influence over this mindscape manifests as a ravenous and cruelly intelligent vulture that, even now, hunkers in its nest while it chews and pecks at Sui-Jing's heart. Fortunately for the PCs, her soul is tough and resilient. The vulture snarls in anger as it notices the PCs approaching and attacks at once, demanding in a raspy voice that they leave at once, lest they find themselves added to its fine meal! As it lunges, three spherical clots of blood rip free from the heart and transform into shrieking cacodaemons that look like distorted human faces—close inspection reveals the faces to be similar to that of the corpse at area A2, save that these faces possess glowing yellow eyes and mouths filled with sharp teeth.

If the PCs don't leave at once, the vulture and cacodaemons attack; they have little interest in talking to anyone. Once a battle begins, they pursue the PCs throughout the mindscape and fight to the death; they can't exit the mindscape, though, and return here if the PCs flee back to Willowshore. At your discretion, the PCs might endure strange nightmares of a vulture eating their hearts until they return to finish this job.

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## HEART-EATING VULTURE

## CREATURE 4

UNIQUE CE LARGE BEAST

Variant giant vulture (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 289)

**Perception** +10; low-light vision

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +12, Stealth +11

**Str** +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**AC** 21; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Wis** +8

**HP** 68; **Immunities** sickened

**Death Burst** When the heart-eating vulture is slain, its body spasms and thrashes as it falls to the ground while red light begins to shine through splits in its flesh. At the end of the round, the heart-eating vulture explodes into a 10-foot-radius blast of red nindoru butterflies, their razor-sharp wings and claws inflicting 5d6 slashing damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save), leaving behind only the heart it clutched in one of its talons.

**Speed** 10 feet, fly 35 feet

**Melee** ♦ beak +12, **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing plus carrion fever

**Melee** ♦ talon +12 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+4 slashing

**Carrion Fever** (disease) As giant vulture, but DC 21.

**Projectile Vomit** ♦ As giant vulture.

## CACODAEMONS (3)

## CREATURE 1

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 70

**Initiative** Stealth +8

**Treasure:** The vulture's nest is filthy with its feathers, but a few of these feathers have magical effects. Spotting these magic feathers among the trash requires a PC to succeed at a DC 15 Nature check or a DC 18 Perception check to Seek. There are three magic feathers in all: an *anchor feather token*, a *holly bush feather token*, and a *ladder feather token*.

## PLANTING THE SOUL SEED

## LOW 5

Once they've slain the vulture and cacodaemons, the PCs can retrieve the somewhat gnawed-upon heart from the ground where the vulture dropped it as it died. The sound of a faint whispered voice calling out "save me" from the heart should encourage the PCs to do so, and once a character has picked it up, the urge to return the heart to the corpse's chest in area **A2** fills their mind.

**Hazard:** As soon as the heart is taken, the ambience of the mindscape shifts. Night falls, plunging the foggy forest into darkness, and the feelings of doom and of being watched intensify. At this time, Kugaptee's dead but dreaming mind takes a more active role in opposing the party, causing the following hazard to manifest throughout the mindscape.

## KUGAPTEE'S ANGER

## HAZARD 6

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +22 (expert)

**Description** The sound of toppling trees and thunderous footsteps fills the air, as if some immense giant had taken notice and now slowly approaches through the forest.

**Disable** DC 23 Nature or Religion to offer prayers against the evil to reduce Kugaptee's Anger's actions during its routine to 1 (see below) for 1 round; Placing Sui-Jing's heart into her corpse at area **A2** is the only way to disable this hazard

**Terrifying Roar** ⤴ (auditory, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult) **Trigger** A PC picks up Sui-Jing's heart; **Effect** A thunderous roar ripples through the forest. All of the PCs must attempt a DC 22 Will save. The haunt rolls initiative.

**Critical Success** The character is unaffected and is temporally immune to Terrifying Roar for 24 hours.

**Success** The character is unaffected.

**Failure** The character is frightened 1.


**Critical Failure** The character's frightened condition increases by 2. If this would increase the character's frightened condition value above 4, the character is instead fleeing until the end of their next turn.

**Routine** (2 actions) The sound of something immense striding just out of sight through the forest, darkness, and fog fills the air. The haunt's first action is to unleash a Terrifying Roar (DC 22 Will with the same effects as Terrifying Roar above). The second action is to infuse the trees of the entire mindscape with malevolent life, causing clawlike branches to lash out at each PC. These claws inflict 4d6 slashing damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save) to each character. A character standing on the path or in a clearing gets a +1 circumstance bonus to this saving throw, and the character who carries Sui-Jing's heart gains a +4 item bonus to this saving throw. On a PC's turn, they can take further action to protect themselves from the clawed branches. By Raising a Shield or by Dropping Prone, a PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Reflex saving throw. A prone PC can Take Cover to gain the benefits of greater cover against the claws (increasing their circumstance bonus to this Reflex save to +4). A PC who Tumbles Through on their turn and succeeds at a DC 22 Acrobatics check gains a +2 status bonus to their Reflex saves against the clawed branches. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Stealth check to Sneak improves the result of their Reflex save by one degree of success.

If a PC successfully used Nature or Religion to pray against the evil on the previous round, Kugaptee's Anger has only 1 action; randomly determine if it uses its Terrifying Roar or lashes out with trees with this action.

**Planting the Seed:** A PC who's adjacent to Sui-Jing's body can place her heart in her chest as an





Interact action. Doing so causes Kugaptee's Anger to howl in pain and frustration, then to sound as if the unseen giant were fleeing into the distance. Sui-Jing's body sinks into the stone, and then an immense sugi tree grows up out of the ground, consuming the stone and harmlessly pushing any adjacent characters aside. As the tree grows to a height of nearly a hundred feet, its branches unfurl and drive away the fog... and then reality fades and the PCs find themselves back on the Pilgrim's Path northwest of Willowshore near the Wall of Ghosts. Now, the foggy tunnel through the wall can be traversed with ease. For the remainder of the campaign, stepping through this tunnel sets the PCs onto the Pilgrim's Path, as detailed in the remainder of this chapter.

**Reward:** Grant the PCs 60 XP for finally gaining access to the Pilgrim's Path.

## The Pilgrim's Path

With the completion of the ritual to open the Wall of Ghosts, the PCs are free to undertake the traditional walk from Willowshore to the Tan Sugi monastery. Before they set off on the journey, though, make sure the players are familiar with commonplace lore about the monastery and the Pilgrim's Path. This information is presented to the PCs in the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide* as well.

### COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The Tan Sugi monastery was founded by a Sangpotshi monk named Zhi Hui in 7020 and was built around an ancient sugi tree said to have mystic properties. Willowshore was originally founded to support those who built the monastery and the long trail that leads to it, also known as the Pilgrim's Path. Zhi Hui passed away in 7054, and as the monks of the monastery began to drift away, Willowshore shifted focus to the lumber industry. By 7060, the monastery had been fully abandoned, but when a group of woodcutters attempted to harvest the ancient sugi trees that grew there in 7062, tragedy struck. The woodcutters returned to Willowshore with broken weapons and ruined bodies, and while the undead woodcutters were defeated by morning, dozens of townsfolk perished to their battered tools. The event is remembered today as the Night of Broken Blades, and few visitors have made the journey to the ruined monastery in the 46 years since. The place is regarded as cursed, haunted, or worse, yet there are those in town who can't help but wonder what treasures and lore might still lie abandoned in the ruins.

The monastery is located in a secluded valley many miles to the west, surrounded by steep mountains. The only safe path to and from the site is the Pilgrim's Path. While the last stretch of the trip to the monastery from Willowshore along the Pilgrim's Path is only a 13-mile hike, traditionally those who would seek knowledge made the trek slowly, pausing to spend the night three times at three shrines along the way. These shrines—one on a floating platform in a lake, one near an ancient dead tree, and one on a secluded, rocky perch overlooking the path below—represented the traveler's past lives, their future lives, and their current life. By turning the short hike into a multiday meditative trip, the seeker of knowledge and enlightenment adopts a mindset better suited to receiving the teachings of the monks of the Tan Sugi monastery.

### WALKING THE PATH

Regardless of how long the PCs intend to be away, the mindscape has become influenced by the traditional four-day journey. In order to reach the ruined monastery, they must spend those four days and three nights following the Pilgrim's Path traditions. Consider having Shinzo pay a visit to Willowshore just before the PCs set out in order to give them a last chance to purchase supplies; if a PC had items on "order," then they should be available at this time, regardless of how much time they expected to have to wait.

Once the PCs step through the Wall of Ghosts and begin their trip, they'll soon realize that reality is even more confined here than in the Willowshore hinterlands. The Pilgrim's Path (and the Tan Sugi monastery complex detailed in Chapter 3) are the only regions accessible in the mindscape. A character who leaves the Pilgrim's Path and travels into the surrounding wooded mountains finds themselves returning to the Pilgrim's Path not long after losing sight of the trail, having been turned around without noticing the change in direction. This even affects flight; a character who flies higher than 120 feet finds themselves veering back downward, but not before noting that fog obscures clear line of sight over the treetops beyond a half mile or so. As long as the PCs remain on the Pilgrim's Path, though, they can travel unimpeded in either direction.

Another curiosity is that travel along the Pilgrim's Path can't be rushed. No matter how fast or how slow the party moves, they'll reach the next waypoint shrine after 8 hours of travel (or the monastery itself on the fourth day of travel). This distortion of distance is even more noticeable if the PCs travel back toward Willowshore, for no matter how many days along the Path they've traveled, returning to the Wall

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## FORESTED PATH

## LAKESIDE PATH

## MOUNTAIN PATH

**PILGRIM'S PATH**  
**ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET**

of Ghosts entrance never takes more than an hour. Previously passed shrines are mysteriously skipped on a return trip, and the next time the party enters the Pilgrim's Path, they must start their trek over from the beginning, revisiting each shrine in succession. Notably, the status of each shrine remains as it was the last time the PCs visited; encounters don't "reset," and items left or alterations made to the shrines persist.

A PC who experiences these strange effects can attempt a DC 20 Occultism check to Recall Knowledge; on a success, they come to the conclusion that the Pilgrim's Path is a more constrained version of the same curse that contains Willowshore and its hinterlands, and they realize that what's happening on the Path could indicate that a deeper revelation about the nature of the curse does await discovery at the Tan Sugi monastery.

The weather along the Pilgrim's Path isn't in sync with that in the greater Willowshore mindscape, and instead changes by the day along the journey. If the PCs retreat to Willowshore and start their walk up the Path over again, they'll experience the same weather on each day of the journey.

Unless otherwise indicated, the forest surrounding the Pilgrim's Path is difficult terrain. The map of the Willowshore hinterlands on the inside of the front cover of this book shows the route that the path takes as well as where several of the encounters occur during the journey.

## The First Day

On the first day of travel, as the PCs make their way toward the Bridge Shrine, the weather along the Pilgrim's Path is crisp and cloudy. While the PCs know that the physical distance from the Wall of Ghosts (area A) and the Bridge Shrine (area B3) is about 5 miles, this leg of the journey along the Pilgrim's Path was intended to be taken slowly, so that the traveler arrived at the shrine at sunset. For the first half of the day spent traveling, the path winds through dense forest, while the route traveled in the afternoon curves along the eastern shore of Mirror Lake. Here, as the PCs look out over the lake, they can see all the way to the opposite shore as well as the mountains beyond. Traveling further than a few hundred feet out into the lake, however, brings a swimmer to the edge of the Willowshore mindscape.



One thing the PCs should note immediately as they travel further down the Pilgrim's Path is how strangely preserved it appears. The road was once well-traveled, but in the 46 years since the monastery was abandoned, the road became overgrown and increasingly indistinguishable from the surrounding woodland. As the PCs travel it, though, the Pilgrim's Path appears as it did while it was in use over half a century ago.

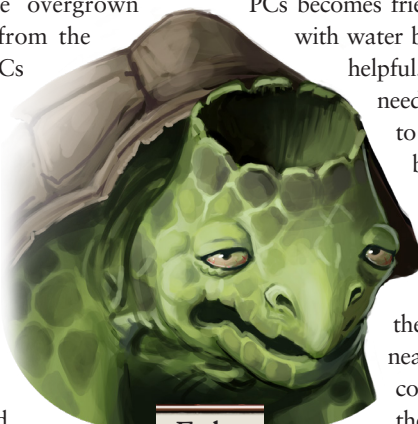
## B1. TORMENTED KAPPA LOW 5

This encounter takes place soon after the PCs begin their journey and uses the Forested Path map on page 32.

**Creatures:** About 30 minutes after the PCs begin their trek toward the monastery, they round a corner and find a lone kappa trudging at a snail's pace down the path in the same direction that the PCs are heading. This kappa, whose name is Enko, was tricked by a storm hag named Iogaka into spilling the water in his head bowl when she told him to beg for his life on his hands and knees. Thoroughly entertained by the kappa, Iogaka picked the terrified Enko up and flew into the air with him in her clutches, cackling with cruel delight and dropping him off near the Wall of Ghosts, far from any source of water.

Far from his home in Mirror Lake, Enko has been painstakingly making his way back home with his 5-foot speed to refill his head bowl with water, but now and then cries out in fear and waves his arms as a slight breeze wafts by. This "breeze" is Iogaka's voice, carried via voice of the storm, and she issues tormenting whispers to Enko as she promises to pick him up and drop him off "at the edge of the world" over and over whenever he gets back to his home.

Upon spotting the PCs, Enko drops down on his hands and knees and begs for mercy. He apologizes for getting in the PCs' way and crawls pitifully to the side of the path to let them pass, but doesn't attack or even look a PC in the eye. Enko is frightened and wary; as a result, his initial attitude is unfriendly. If made hostile, he doesn't attack but instead just faints from fear. If made at least indifferent, Enko explains his plight, hoping that the PCs aren't Iogaka's agents. Now and then, more whispered taunts reach Enko's ears, causing him to cry out in fear. A PC who leans in close can hear Iogaka's torments with a successful DC 15 Perception check. Fortunately, the storm hag has no way to tell that Enko might have just met allies—her voice of the storm ability is one-way only.



Enko

Enko only wants to get back to Mirror Lake, and if the PCs offer to escort him, he can't believe his luck. In fact, he remains wary and nervous until he's back in the water, at which point his attitude toward the PCs becomes friendly. If the PCs refill his head bowl with water before reaching the lake, he'll become helpful. Without this mercy, the PCs might need to carry him if they want to make it to Mirror Lake (and the Bridge Shrine) by nightfall; at such a slow speed, the mindscape's distance-distorting effects don't allow the PCs to cover that much ground in a day.

If the PCs assist Enko, he thanks them over and over to the point of near absurdity. If the topic of Iogaka comes up, he also warns the PCs that the "storm mother" is a terrible and frightening monster who can hurl lightning and blasts of wind that can strip flesh from bone. Enko isn't sure why Iogaka took to tormenting him recently, but if he's at least friendly, he'll tell the PCs that she's got a particular and strange distaste for the scent of burning incense—a weakness that Enko warns is tough to take advantage of, given Iogaka's mastery over wind.

Enko is, like the PCs, a trapped soul in the mindscape and has no insights into the nature of the curse other than to note that here, the edges of the curse seem to follow the Pilgrim's Path. Though he laments that he can't do laps across the lake anymore, he has mostly acclimated to his new (if lonely) life along the shore.

### ENKO

### CREATURE 2

Male kappa (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 147)

**Initiative** Perception +9

## B2. SERPENT AMBUSH

## LOW 5

This encounter takes place in the mid-afternoon. Use the Lakeside Path map on page 32 for this encounter.

**Creatures:** The wilderness west of Willowshore is known for its dangers, and it isn't long after the PCs begin their journey that they're ambushed by such a peril in the form of a pair of amphisbaenas. The two monsters lie in wait on either side of the path, one hidden among the detritus of the forest floor and another in the shallow water at the lake's edge. As the PCs pass between them, the monsters attack, fighting to the death.

If the PCs are escorting Enko, one of the beasts attacks him unless the PCs take steps to defend him.

### AMPHISBAENAS (2)

### CREATURE 4

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 15

**Initiative** Stealth +12

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**Treasure:** If the PCs escorted Enko to the lake and he survives this fight, the kappa gratefully splashes into the lake and sighs in relief, then tells the PCs to “wait right there for a few minutes.” He swims underwater, then returns 5 minutes later with treasures he knew had been lodged in a sunken boat nearby. He gives them these items—a +1 *striking silver shortsword* and a *wand of endure elements* carried on a *minor sturdy shield*—as thanks for their kindness before retreating back into the lake’s depths.

**Reward:** If the PCs successfully escort Enko to the water, grant them 40 XP.

### B3. BRIDGE SHRINE

### MODERATE 5

This encounter takes place in the evening, with the PCs arriving at the Bridge Shrine just as the sun is setting. It uses the Pilgrim’s Path Bridge map found on page 36.

The path leads up to a river’s edge, where a twenty-foot-wide rope bridge hangs a half-dozen feet over the slowly flowing river surface below. A hexagonal wooden shrine stands in the center of the river, its roof providing shelter from the elements while also offering a viewing portal in the center

to allow those in the shrine to contemplate the flow of water below. Several long-handled dippers for bringing up draughts of river water for drinking lean against the central hole’s railing, along with a half-dozen delicate-looking clay vials. A total of six wicker mats lie around this central hole, affording places to sleep above the river.

Master Zhi Hui’s original path along the northern half of Mirror Lake required the construction of a bridge over the North Sugi River, where it flows into the lake. Rather than build something grandiose, she had a simple rope bridge constructed over a point in the river, then erected a hexagonal wooden pagoda at the center to help anchor the bridge. This pagoda is the first of the Pilgrim’s Path’s three shrines—a place where travelers could take shelter mid-crossing and gaze through an opening at the platform’s center to contemplate the river’s flow below.

Zhi Hui felt that time spent along the shore of Mirror Lake provided an opportunity for self-observation and reflection. She hoped that pilgrims, when stripped of the distractions of others and the mundane problems of daily life, might see in their reflections a true vision of who they are when unburdened. To aid in this, each pilgrim would chant a repetitive prayer meant to invoke the cycle of reincarnation, then retire to sleep above the gently flowing waters. Any PC who’s an expert in Religion or who follows Sangpotshi knows this from local lore automatically, while others can attempt a DC 18 Religion Check to Recall Knowledge.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge remembers that the shrine washed away a decade ago during a flood, yet here it stands, looking well-cared for yet still abandoned.

The river here is 10 feet deep, and a character can Swim in the river with a DC 15 Athletics check.

**Creatures:** Two swarms of blood-ravenous brood leeches dwell in the water under the shrine, a tangle of writhing predators that normally would pose a threat only to those who enter the water, but combined with the haunting that infuses the shrine, these brood leeches are likely to become much more dangerous. Once the leech swarms surge up into the shrine, they display an additional unnerving quality; as they seethe on the floors, they form the word “Kugaptee” over and over as they swarm about. Once the brood leeches begin combat, they fight to the death, though they won’t pursue prey beyond the edges of the map.



Arms of the Drowned


### BROOD LEECH SWARMS (2)

### CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 156

Initiative Perception +9





**Hazard:** Whether the PCs decide to stay and rest or continue across the bridge, shortly after they arrive at the central shrine itself (or as soon as a swimming PC reaches the halfway point across the river), the surface of the river below starts rippling violently. What at first appears to be water bubbling up to the surface quickly resolves into a nightmarish vision of hundreds of ghostly arms scrambling up out of the water from the lake's depths. Spirits of the drowned have accumulated in these waters, driven to fury by Kugaptee's influence. These hands reach up on either side to grab onto the bridge's planks, but also rise through the hole at the center of the shrine or up over its outer railings, the better to snatch at the PCs.

At the same time that this haunt activates, a plume of water sprays up through the central hole in the shrine, tossing both swarms of brood leeches up into the shrine and allowing them to attack PCs in the central structure.

## ARMS OF THE DROWNED

## HAZARD 3

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +20 (expert) to catch glimpses of ghostly figures drowning in the water below.

**Description** Ghostly arms rise up from the water to clutch and grab, while a geyser of leech-infested water sprays up into the central shrine.

**Disable** DC 20 Religion to offer prayers to calm the haunt, or DC 23 Intimidation to threaten the unquiet spirits away

**AC** 19; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +12

**HP** 46 (BT 23); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 5

**Rising Waters** ➤ **Trigger** A creature swims more than halfway across the river, ends their turn in the bridge shrine, or sets foot onto the northern bridge; **Effect** Ghostly arms rise up from the river to grab and shake both bridges. Creatures standing on the bridge must attempt a DC 20 Reflex save or be knocked prone. A blast of river water sprays up inside the shrine to deposit two brood leech swarms in the shrine. The haunt and the leech swarms then roll initiative.

**Routine** (3 actions) Ghostly arms flail about and attempt to grab creatures in the shrine or on either bridge. Each round, the haunt uses 3 actions to attempt to grapple a PC on the bridge or in the shrine. If a PC is restrained, the haunt can use one of its actions to drag a PC into the river. A PC who's restrained in the river risks drowning.

**Melee** ♦ ghostly arms +12, **Effect** grapple

**Reset** The haunt deactivates and resets at the start of any round in which the PCs aren't in the river, on the bridges, or in the shrines, but the leech swarms remain in the shrine for 10 minutes before retreating back into the water below.

**Enlightenment Reward:** If the PCs defeat the haunt and the leech swarms, then spend the night in the shrine, they awaken feeling refreshed and energized but also find that the dippers have mysteriously filled with water from the river. Should they approach the dippers, they are also filled with the strange urge to use them to fill the six delicate clay vials; doing so causes each of the six vials to become a moderate ghost charge (*Advanced Player's Guide* 253).

Whether or not the PCs create these alchemical bombs, they all gain a +1 item bonus from the shrine to all Reflex saving throws until the end of this adventure. In addition, grant the PCs 40 XP for achieving enlightenment from the Bridge Shrine.

## The Second Day

On the second day of travel, the overcast clouds grow darker, and by noon, rain starts to fall. During the afternoon, the rain douses small flames, imparts a -1 circumstance penalty to Perception checks, and increasingly causes discomfort. As the PCs approach the Garden Shrine at the end of the day, each must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist becoming fatigued by the rainfall. Characters who took significant precautions to avoid the discomfort of traveling in the chill rain (such as by casting *endure elements* or wearing winter clothing) automatically succeed at this saving throw. Once evening sets in, the rain worsens to a downpour, increasing the Perception check circumstance penalty to -2 and causing creatures further than 60 feet away to become concealed.

The first half of the day's walk is along the shore of Mirror Lake and then along the northern bank of the West Sugi River. By the second half of the day, the path begins to wind upward in elevation but doesn't quite enter truly mountainous terrain. The surrounding forest grows more and more overgrown.

## C1. HUNGRY FOLIAGE

LOW 5

This encounter takes place a few hours before noon, and uses the Lakeside Path map found on page 32.

**Creatures:** Kugaptee's death dreams have influenced not just the animal life, but the plant life in the mindscape as well. At this point along the path, a pair of twisted, broken burls of wood resting on the forest side of the path are in fact bloodthirsty mandragoras. The hideous plants twitch to life as the PCs approach, and as they unfold into their vaguely human shapes, they feverishly whisper the word, "Kugaptee." Coupled with their distorted frames, this should remind the PCs of the strange shrine to Kugaptee that they likely encountered in the lumber camp in the previous adventure. The mandragoras fight to the death.

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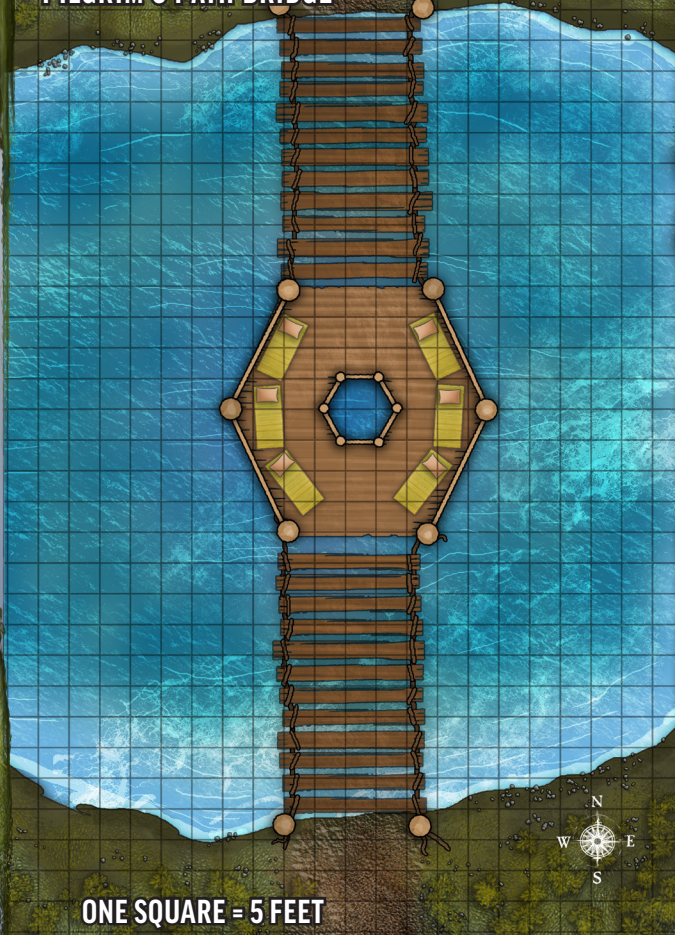
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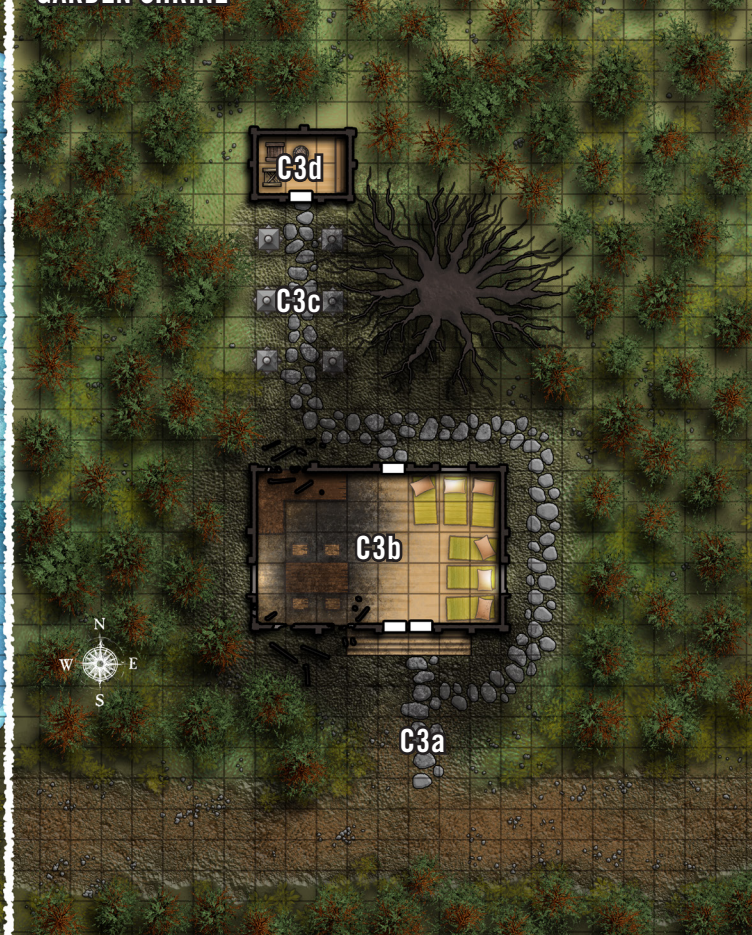
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## PILGRIM'S PATH BRIDGE



## GARDEN SHRINE



## MANDRAGORAS (2)

## CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 170

**Initiative** Stealth +20

**Treasure:** Each time a mandragora is slain, it cries out Kugaptee's name one last time before splitting in half to reveal a clot of crystallized blood at its core. Each of these clots is a *fear gem* talisman.

## C2. THE GIRL IN THE TREE

## LOW 5

This encounter takes place a few hours before sunset, and uses the Forested Path map on page 32.

**Creatures:** As the PCs travel, they hear the sound of a young woman sobbing coming from a large hollow at the base of a dead tree at the edge of the road ahead. The mournful sounds are interrupted by hiccupping sobs and cries of "Big sister! Where are you? Big sister, help me!"

These plaintive calls for help come from what appears to be a young human woman named Yeri, who now huddles in the hollow tree's base. In 7098 (10 years ago, from the PCs' perspective), Yeri's big sister, Yuni, convinced her to sneak out of town and

walk along the Pilgrim's Path on a dare to check out the abandoned monastery. Foolishly, they left town in the afternoon and didn't bother to walk the path slowly. As night fell, the two sisters were attacked by a horrifying monster—a penanggalan. In the fight, the two women were separated. Yuni eventually made her way to the abandoned monastery where she met her fate (area E2), while Yeri was slain by the penanggalan.

When the Willowshore mindscape came to be, Kugaptee's influence drew back Yeri's soul and transformed her into the very thing that slew her—a penanggalan. Every day, Yeri wakes from what she believes was a nightmare of being chased by a "flying head," then seeks shelter near the Pilgrim's Path to wait for her sister to return. Every night, however, she succumbs to her new nature, slithers out of her body, and hunts the surrounding woodlands for victims to feed upon. The hollow tree she died in serves as a preservative force in the same manner most penanggalans use baths of vinegar, and each time she wakes she forgets what she is.

As Yeri, the penanggalan appears as a plain-looking human woman dressed in filthy clothes and clutching a



string of beads tightly wherever she goes. If asked about the beads, she says she inherited them from her mother, and as the one thing she has to remember her by, they've always brought her comfort. She keeps her high-collared jacket wrapped tightly around herself, claiming that she's cold if the PCs ask, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check catches a glimpse of a faint scar that curls all the way around her neck. Once the PCs begin to interact with her, they can attempt a DC 20 Willowshore Lore or a DC 25 Society check to recognize her as someone who went missing 10 years ago.

The disguised monster begs the PCs to help escort her to the abandoned monastery, saying that her big sister Yuni is waiting for her there. If the PCs agree and escort her, soon after night falls, her true nature takes over and her head detaches from her body; she attacks as the PCs prepare to rest for the night. If the PCs refuse to escort her to the monastery (be it by leaving her behind or trying to escort her back to Willowshore), or if they confront her with the fact that she's been missing for a decade, she grows increasingly distraught until finally her monstrous nature takes over and her head detaches, driving her to attack on the spot. Once the penanggalan attacks, she fights to the death.

### "YERI"

### CREATURE 6

Elite female penanggalan (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 6, 200)

**Initiative** Deception +14

**Reward:** As soon as the penanggalan is slain, her body crumbles to dust, leaving behind a ghostly image of Yeri as a human. Yeri sighs in relief at being released, and as she fades away, she asks the PCs to find her sister Yuni "and save her too." Yeri's ghostly form then fades entirely, leaving behind her *holy prayer beads* as a parting gift.

### C3. GARDEN SHRINE

### MODERATE 5

This encounter takes place in the evening, with the PCs arriving at the Garden Shrine just as the sun is setting; it uses the map for the Garden Shrine on page 36.

The forested path reaches a break here, next to an ash-strewn clearing astride the path. A partially-burned wooden cottage sits near the path, while a five-foot-wide rock walkway winds around the ruins to a ruined garden beyond. Here, the scorched remnants of a burned oak tree loom tall, while at the far end of the charred clearing sits a small stone

shrine. The rock pathway leads up to it, with this last stretch flanked by three pairs of unlit stone lanterns.

While traversing this leg of the journey, Master Zhi Hui was delighted to find a grove of wildflowers, berries, and wild radishes growing in an idyllic clearing here. The floral beauty and the delicious taste of the fruits and root vegetables made an excellent spot for a shrine, where pilgrims could enjoy a simple meal and contemplate the values of enjoyable repasts at the end of a day of travel while also ensuring that they did not overindulge in food or drink. Any PC who's an expert in Religion or who follows Sangpotshi knows this from local lore automatically, while others can attempt a DC 18 Religion Check to Recall Knowledge.

The 5-foot-wide stone path (area C3a) leads around the cottage (area C3b) to a small garden in the backyard (areas C3c and C3d). The stone path offers solid footing, but anyone who steps off the path finds that the ash-caked mud is difficult terrain. The six stone lanterns that flank the path at area C3c are meant to burn cone-shaped incense, and offer enough protection to allow such burning even in a rainstorm.

When the PCs first arrive, the place appears to have burned relatively recently. The cottage (area C3b) is badly burned, but enough of the roof remains intact to offer at least some shelter from the rainstorm. The garden shrine itself is located in the stone building in the back (area C3d), the contents of which survived the fire intact. In addition to a modest shrine, additional supplies for upkeep and repair were stored here. A character can use these supplies to patch up the roof and walls in the main cottage with a successful DC 18 Crafting check and an hour's work (failure indicating that the supplies were ruined in the attempt). Once these repairs are made, the PCs can sleep in area C3b comfortably; otherwise, when they awaken the next day, the damp causes them to rise fatigued for the day unless they succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save.

**Creatures:** Unlike the Bridge Shrine (area B3) and the Mountain Shrine (area D3), the Garden Shrine once had keepers to tend to it. Four caretakers dwelled here, shrine tenders who took great delight in providing travelers with a comfortable place to stay at the approximate halfway point to the Tan Sugi monastery. The caretakers enjoyed providing meals and comforts for pilgrims, but after the monastery was abandoned, the group opted to stay



Yeri

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on, living as hermits who would periodically offer shelter to the odd trapper or hunter. This all came to an end in 7062, when the woodcutters sought out the Tan Sugi monastery. The caretakers tried to turn the woodcutters away but were unsuccessful... and when the woodcutters returned along the path that evening as undead monsters, they lit the Garden Shrine on fire.

The shrine's four caretakers perished in that fire and now exist as undead guardians. Transformed into combusted, the four caretakers rise up from the ashes to confront the PCs as soon as they enter area **C3b**, crying out in pain as the sensation of their bodies burning drives them to attack. The rain pouring down through the partially burned roof of the cottage sizzles and steams when it drips onto the combusted but doesn't impact them. If a combusted chases a PC outside of the partially ruined shelter into the rainstorm, though, they function as if sickened 2 as long as they remain in the downpour. They can't lower this sickened condition on their own, but it ends automatically if they take shelter from the rainfall inside of areas **C3b** or **C3d**.

### COMBUSTED (4)

*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 80


**Initiative** Perception +6

### CREATURE 3

**Treasure:** A search of the shrine (area **C3d**) uncovers the aforementioned repair supplies, along with a clay pot containing a dozen cones of particularly fine lavender incense. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Nature or Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows that, among other things, lavender incense is said to stimulate the appetite. Each cone of incense is worth 25 gp. A PC who Searches the shrine and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check also discovers a cunningly crafted silver and oak incense burner that shields the incense within from being extinguished by wind and rain. This incense burner is worth 50 gp and is shaped like a dragon's head, so that the smoke wafts from its nostrils.

If the PCs place a cone of this incense in each of the stone lanterns at area **C3c** and light the incense, a feeling of calm settles over the area. If the combusted at area **C3b** haven't yet been encountered, the incense causes them to be slowed 1 during any combats.





Once lit, the cones of incense continue to burn in the lanterns for the remainder of this adventure, constantly renewing as they burn.

**Enlightenment Reward:** If the PCs light incense in all six of the stone lanterns and then spend the night in this area, they find that a fresh layer of green grass has sprung up from the ashes. A half dozen bright blue orchids have likewise bloomed among the roots of the burned oak tree. If the PCs approach the oak tree, they are overcome with the urge to pluck all six of the flowers. Each of these flowers, upon being plucked, becomes a consumable item that can be activated as if it were a dose of lesser healing vapor (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 54).

Whether or not the PCs pluck the flowers, they all gain a +1 item bonus from the shrine to all Will saving throws until the end of this adventure. In addition, grant the PCs 40 XP for achieving enlightenment from the Garden Shrine.

## The Third Day

The rain lets up with the dawn, but a thick fog rolls in and persists for the first part of the day. Past noon, the wind picks up and disperses the fog. As the afternoon wears on, frequent gusts of powerful wind can snuff out handheld flames, and impose a –1 circumstance penalty to physical ranged attacks. By the time the PCs reach the Mountain Shrine, the rain returns in force, and the PCs face a full-blown thunderstorm. See area **D3** for more details.

Travel increasingly becomes vertical during this day's trip, with the path having several switchbacks and steep slopes to navigate. The forest remains on either side of the path, although cliffsides and ledges often encroach. Once the fog has been dispersed, the view to the east allows glimpses of Willowshore. Beyond that, the haze surrounding the hinterlands gives the region the unnerving appearance of being trapped under a bowl made of dark clouds.

### D1. A VOICE IN THE FOG

**LOW 5**

This encounter takes place an hour after the PCs leave the Garden Shrine and uses the Mountain Path map on page 32.

**Creatures:** The fog grows thicker and the path grows steeper. Have each PC attempt a Perception check. The PC who rolls the highest catches a glimpse of what appears to be a dimly lit lantern, but a moment later, the light is extinguished and the fog swallows the vision up.

The figure glimpsed up the path is a will-o'-wisp that has just Gone Dark. At this point, the western edge of the path is a 30-foot cliff that drops into the forest below; the tops of the trees are about equal with the

path. As the PCs approach, the will-o'-wisp screams out in what sounds like the voice of a frightened woman, then flies down to the ground below the ledge. It lights up again, so that to the PCs on the ledge above, the glow looks like the flickering of a lantern through the branches. The will-o'-wisp calls up in a trembling voice, crying out, "Help me! I fell! I think I broke my leg!" Roll a Deception check to Lie to the PCs.

The will-o'-wisp hopes to lure one PC down off the path and into its clutches; if a climbing PC falls, so much the better. Climbing down the cliff side is possible for a character who succeeds at a DC 20 Athletics check. The monster attacks as soon as a PC approaches its light, rolling Deception for initiative. If the PCs don't fall for the ruse, the will-o'-wisp Goes Dark and then flies up to attack on the ledge, rolling Stealth for initiative. Unlike most will-o'-wisps, this creature appears as a small mass of glowing, blood-red butterflies when it becomes visible, rather than as a skull-like face—a side effect of its genesis from Kugaptee's dreams. It fights to the death.

### WILL-O'-WISP

**CREATURE 6**

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 333

**Initiative** Deception +12 or Stealth +16

### D2. A WHISPER IN THE WOODS

**LOW 5**

This encounter takes place in the early afternoon and uses the Forested Path map on page 32.

**Creatures:** The steep inclines and slopes of the mountains, path taper off here for a while, winding through flat but densely forested terrain, but this stretch of pathway becomes particularly grim as dozens of human heads in varying states of decay hang by their hair from tree branches on either side of the road. As the PCs draw near, the heads begin to whisper and hiss, decaying lips twitching as soft, menacing voices swirl in the air. Unnerving phrases like, "You will join us soon," or "We welcome you to our family," or "Join our voices and become one with Kugaptee," taunt the PCs.

One head in particular is different than the others; this one is little more than a skull, and it sits in the middle of the path, facing the PCs. As soon as anyone approaches within 30 feet of the skull, it rises up into the air and commands the PCs to stop and turn back, informing them, "You are not welcome here; you lack the true insight needed to be one with Great Kugaptee!" This is a taunting skull, and it attempts to Demoralize the PCs if they don't turn back. It attacks if anyone comes within 10 feet of it or attempts to pass it, at which point two other heads join the fight—a pair of festering gnashers who tug free of their rotting

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hair leashes to attack as well. In the fight, the taunting skull focuses its Incessant Goad on spellcasters, hoping to force them to make physical attacks against it rather than using magic. The three beheaded fight until destroyed.

### TAUNTING SKULL

*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 74

**Initiative** Perception +13

### CREATURE 5

### FESTERING GNASHERS (2)

*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 74

**Initiative** Perception +8

### CREATURE 1

### D3. MOUNTAIN SHRINE

### MODERATE 5

This encounter takes place in the evening, with the PCs arriving at the Mountain Shrine just as the sun is setting; it uses the map for the Mountain Shrine on page 38. As the PCs approach, the storm intensifies with a peal of thunder and a flash of lightning. The penalty to ranged attacks imposed by the storm increases to –2 and now also applies to Perception checks.

A waterfall pours over a fifty-foot-high cliff into the river below, the sound of the cascading water somewhat obscured by the howl of the wind and the pounding of the rain. A rickety wood bridge allows passage over the river, while a narrow set of steps wind up off the path into the escarpments to the north.


When Master Zhi Hui first ascended these mountain, she was drawn to the majestic waterfalls that cascade into this lake and was taken by the site's beauty. In light of rivers' symbolism in so many myths and parables about the cycle of life and death, this seemed the perfect place to set up the Pilgrim's Path's third shrine, to parallel the Bridge Shrine's position. Unlike that shrine, though, the presence of the small lake here, where river waters gather and linger, does not symbolize the cycle of life to death; it asks the pilgrim to contemplate each life as something to be enjoyed and also gives the pilgrims a perfect place to bathe and wash at the end of a tiring day of climbing. A PC who's an expert in Religion or who follows Sangpotshi knows this from local lore automatically, while others can attempt a DC 18 Religion check to Recall Knowledge.

The actual Mountain Shrine isn't visible from the Pilgrim's Path. While the PCs could Climb the rain-soaked cliffs up to the shrine with successful DC 25 Athletics checks, an easier route is to take the steps at area **D3b** up to the lakeshore at area **D3c**. The lake (area **D3d**) averages 20 feet deep, and a character who succeeds at a DC 25 Athletics check can Swim in the storm-tossed waters. A creature who doesn't swim moves 20 feet south toward the waterfall just north of area **D3a**; a creature who goes over the waterfall plummets 50 feet into the water below, taking 15 damage from the fall.

A rope is strung between two pulleys affixed to poles on either side of the lakeshore between areas **D3c** and **D3e**. A cave at area **D3f** contains six

Iogaka





reed mats for pilgrims to sleep on, along with several towels and brushes to aid in bathing, while the actual Mountain Shrine (area **D3g**) sits inside a 25-foot-high stone shrine. A creature on the raft can move it along the rope's length by attempting the following activity.

### MOVE THE RAFT ➡➡

You attempt to move the raft to the east or west between the lakeshores by tugging on its ropes. Attempt a DC 15 Athletics check. Other creatures on the raft can Aid this check.

**Critical Success** The raft moves 25 feet.

**Success** The raft moves 15 feet.

**Failure** The raft moves 5 feet.

**Critical Failure** The raft doesn't move.

**Creatures:** This close to the monastery, Kugaptee's influence is stronger still, and a direct manifestation of his wrath now claims the shrine as her home: a storm hag named Iogaka. The same cruel creature who tormented the kappa Enko (area **B1**), Iogaka is also the cause of the foul weather that has plagued the PCs on their journey along the Pilgrim's Path. The storm hag sees the Mountain Shrine as her personal domain—a place where she can look out over the valley below and bask in the glory of the storms she often conjures into being. The PCs' intrusion into this domain is a deep and personal insult.

With her ability to see through the storm, unless the PCs are stealthy and avoid using the raft to cross the lake, she spots the PCs from her position in the shrine. If the PCs are attempting to cross the lake on the raft, she waits for them to get 1/3 of the way over before she casts *lightning bolt* at them so that she'll catch a few PCs in the spell as well as the pulley on the opposite shore. The violent damage caused by the lightning bolt automatically destroys the pulley, causing the raft to begin drifting south toward the waterfall to area **D3a**. At the end of each round, the raft drifts 20 feet closer to plummeting over the edge. As long as the rope anchored at area **D3e** remains intact, a PC can continue to Move the Raft, but the DC for the activity increases to 25. Of course, on the second round, Iogaka moves to the post at area **D3e** and slashes at the rope with her claw; the rope has AC 17 and 15 Hit Points. If she destroys the rope, the raft floats uncontrollably toward the falls unless one of the PCs on board has some means of propelling it or anchoring it (such as by using the *anchor feather token* found at area **A3**).

Iogaka is accompanied by a pair of spark bats. She sends the bats out to attack the PCs in the lake while she uses wind blasts against them, but as soon as a PC confronts her in melee, she calls the bats back

to her side to defend her. Iogaka fights to the death but won't pursue the PCs beyond the immediate area if they flee. If Iogaka is slain, the thunderstorm immediately begins to abate, and within an hour, it has reduced in power to a light drizzle that, by the next morning, gives way to a clear blue sky.

### Iogaka

### CREATURE 5

Variant female storm hag (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 128)

**Initiative** Perception +12

**Sickened by Incense** If Iogaka begins her turn adjacent to lit incense, she becomes sickened 1 and must attempt a DC 27 Fortitude save; on a failure, she instead becomes sickened 3 by the incense. If she ends her turn adjacent to lit incense, she becomes slowed 1 until the end of her next turn by the nausea it causes her.

### SPARK BATS (2)

### CREATURE 2

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 106

**Initiative** Perception +7

**Treasure:** The cave (area **D3f**) is a relatively comfortable and dry place to rest for the night. In addition to the towels and scrubbing brushes to aid bathing in the lake waters, four bars of invigorating soap (page 74) sit on a small ledge. Over in the shrine (area **D3g**), a *lesser thurible of revelation* decorated with images of sugi trees sits on the central stone platform. Iogaka has filled the thurible with mud and dead fish, so it must be cleaned out before it can be used.

**Enlightenment Reward:** If the PCs defeat Iogaka, bathe in the lake's waters, and then spend the night resting in this area, they awaken to a cold but clear day. If the raft was destroyed the previous night, it has been mysteriously and fully restored to functionality. In addition, the PCs all gain a +1 item bonus from the shrine to all Fortitude saving throws until the end of this adventure. Grant the PCs 40 XP for achieving enlightenment from the Mountain Shrine.

## The Final Day

If the PCs didn't defeat Iogaka, then the stormy conditions of the third day continue for the remainder of this adventure (or at least until she's defeated). This adventure assumes the PCs defeat her, though, and when the PCs wake on the final day of their journey, they do so to clear blue skies. Despite the clear skies, the temperature remains cold, dropping further as the day goes on and feeling more and more like winter than fall. As the PCs approach the monastery, turn to Chapter 3.

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## Chapter 3: In the Ruins of Wisdom

The final leg of the journey sees the path rise over a crest and then descend into a valley at the top of a mountain, for the Tan Sugi monastery is built within the ancient, forested caldera of a small and long dormant volcano. About an hour before sunset (and the PCs' arrival at the ruined monastery), they'll come to the end of the Pilgrim's Path, where a small shrine stands next to a plain wooden arch that looms over the path. As the PCs approach, the chill in the air suddenly abates. As a comforting fall warmth settles over the area, the sound of singing birds and chirping cicadas fills the air, and even the scent of the surrounding forest grows more vibrant and soothing.

Master Zhi Hui's spirit senses the PCs' approach, and while her ghost remains trapped within the

monastery for now, the fact that the PCs have walked the Pilgrim's Path gives her a chance to reward them, depending on how many of the three shrines the PCs have managed to achieve enlightenment at.

**Fewer than Three Shrines:** The PCs feel that some unseen force is disappointed in them. They understand that they should retreat along the path to seek enlightenment at the shrines they missed. Upon returning to these shrines, give them more insight into how to achieve enlightenment in the form of additional visions or mysterious urgings from beyond. They can continue to progress toward the monastery instead if they wish but do so without the rewards below.

**All Three Shrines:** If the PCs have achieved enlightenment at all three shrines, they feel a sense of





welcoming pride but also an unmistakable sense of peril at what lies ahead. In addition to these feelings, the PCs also experience an urge to investigate the small shrine alongside the path. If they do so, they find within the shrine several potent magic items—gifts manifested here by Zhi Hui’s power, in much the same way that Kugaptee’s greater presence has manifested so many monsters in the mindscape.

This volume’s Adventure Toolbox presents several different magical items. Choose one for each PC that’s appropriate for their abilities, themes, and interests; alternatively, you can use the items presented in the Adventure Toolbox as templates to create customized gifts of your own design.

## Tan Sugi Monastery

The Tan Sugi monastery was constructed in a way that honors and complements the sugi trees that first brought Master Zhi Hui to the region. Nestled in a thickly forested dormant caldera, the monastery was built around the tallest tree in the region—the same tree that grew from Tan Sui-Jing’s body over the grave of her nemesis, the nindoru Kugaptee. The monastery’s creators cleared away several trees but incorporated this tall sugi tree, as well as nine smaller ones, into the monastery’s design then proceeded to decorate the walkways and wooden buildings surrounding the grove with motifs of nature. Depictions of plants, animals, and various spirits were carved into the wooden walls and stone foundations of the monastery, and small shrines dot the southern courtyard to provide shelter for visiting spirits. A gate at the southern side of the monastery welcomes visitors, but the pathways laid throughout the grounds are now mostly overgrown by thick, spiky weeds. The six wooden buildings that make up the monastery have tall tiered roofs that arch to a height of 40 feet, but at nearly a hundred feet, the central sugi tree more than doubles this height, looming properly over the entire compound. A map of the Tan Sugi monastery can be found on the inside back cover of this Adventure Path.

The monastery was designed not only to house monks but also as a place for pilgrims to come and meditate. The central path leads to the main hall, where monks and visitors gathered daily to pray and meditate, while five outbuildings served the monks as living quarters and other facilities. When Master Zhi Hui first built the monastery, she wanted to create spaces throughout the grove for observation, meditation, and introspection unique to the Tan Sugi monastery.

Today, the monastery is in ruins. The once well-maintained courtyards are overgrown with weeds. Mud and fallen leaves litter the walkways,

and holes in the roofs and walls have allowed the rain to damage most of buildings’ interiors. After the devout monks abandoned the monastery in the wake of their leader’s death, those who remained fell under Kugaptee’s influence, and when the region was transformed into a mindscape, those monks died as well. Unlike the PCs and the citizens of Willowshore, though, the monks rose as undead minions of Kugaptee and now serve at the whims of the nindoru fiends who rule the ruins.

### RESTING

The entire monastery should feel unsafe to the PCs, and until they discover the hidden library (area E11), it’s best to retreat from the ruins should the need to rest arise. Once the PCs have walked the Pilgrim’s Path, the strange distortions fade, and the 3-mile hike along the path back to the Mountain Shrine is the safest place to retreat to for a night’s rest. Whether or not enemies from the monastery seek out the PCs to attack them if they do so is left for you to decide.

### PURIFYING THE MONASTERY

Four statues throughout the monastery have been desecrated and corrupted by Kugaptee and the nindorus. To stem Kugaptee’s influence from overflowing into Willowshore and to reach the underground area of the monastery, the PCs must purify these four statues. As the PCs restore each statue to its original state, Kugaptee’s hold on the monastery weakens.

The statues can be purified in any order, and purifying a statue triggers a corresponding event within the monastery regardless of which statue is restored. As each statue is purified, Kugaptee’s hold over the ruins diminishes, and the oppressed, lingering spirit of the monastery’s founder, Master Zhi Hui, grows more powerful and more able to assist the PCs.

The four statues are located in the courtyard (area E2), the main hall (area E3), Pharasma’s shrine (area E5), and the burial garden (area E12). As each statue is purified, the following events on page 44 take place. To purify a statue, a PC must perform the following activity; other PCs can Aid in this activity using any of the skills allowed by Purify Statue.

### PURIFY STATUE

**CONCENTRATE** | **EXPLORATION**

**Requirement** All hostile creatures in the encounter area where the statue is located are defeated.

You spend 10 minutes offering prayers to the statue’s guardian spirits, cleaning or repairing damage done to

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the statue, or removing malignant encrustations and supernatural markings. Attempt a DC 20 Religion check, a DC 22 Crafting check, or a DC 24 Thievery check.

**Critical Success** The statue is purified.

**Success** The statue is purified, but as you do so, a weakened blast of pure loathing lashes out as it's driven from the statue. You take 2d6 mental damage (DC 22 basic Will save).

**Failure** The statue remains unpurified. A blast of psychic rage lashes out at you, inflicting 5d6 mental damage (DC 22 basic Will save) to you and anyone who attempted to Aid your attempt to Purify the Statue.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but 10d6 mental damage, and no one can attempt to Purify this particular Statue again for 1 hour.

### First Purification

Purifying the first statue allows Master Zhi Hui's ghost, which up until this point has been trapped within Kugaptee's grave (area E16), to temporarily manifest before the PCs. She emerges from the statue, a forlorn and despondent figure whose expression softens to relief and gratitude as she gazes upon the party. She addresses the PCs in a soft, ephemeral voice.

"Thank you for this kindness. It has been so long since I've been able to see beyond the engulfing darkness, but it still pulls at me. I will not be able to remain for long, but I can remain long enough to answer a question you may have for me. Know that there are other statues. Cleanse them and I can aid you further."

Zhi Hui's ghost can remain present long enough to answer one question the PCs might have for her before Kugaptee's influence draws her back into the spiritual oubliette in which she has been imprisoned since her death. See page 92 for a list of answers she'll have for potential questions asked of her. Once she answers her question, or once a few minutes have passed, she cries out in pain and appears to be ripped to bloody shreds before she vanishes entirely, pulled back into Kugaptee's grave (area E16).

### Second Purification

Purifying the second statue causes the secret doors to the hidden library (area E11) to not only unlock, but to glow with a soft radiance the next time the PCs approach either of them. Zhi Hui manifests again,

thanking the party once more and encouraging them to keep going and purify the remaining two statues. She has time to answer two questions this time before she's ripped apart, but as she goes, she cries out, "Seek the hidden library... my friend, Yen Rui, can help..."

### Third Purification

Purifying the third statue causes Kugaptee's hold on the monastery to weaken even further. The sensation of a great shadowy weight lifts from the PCs. They realize that they'd been spiritually oppressed by an overwhelming psychic presence ever since entering the ruins, only to find it now gone. If the storm still rages because the PCs haven't yet defeated the storm hag Iogaka, the storm ends now (and Iogaka herself vanishes from the mindscape). The sound of birds and

insects builds in the surrounding forest, bringing a hint of nature back to the region, although within the ruins, things remain unnaturally grim. Zhi Hui's ghost manifests again, and this time she can remain long enough to answer three questions before fading away, but she fades peacefully rather than appearing to be ripped apart by unseen talons.

### Fourth Purification

When the fourth and final statue is purified, the sickened trees within the monastery become healthier, and the overgrown weeds in the courtyards wither so that passage through areas E2 and E13 are no longer treated as difficult terrain. The water in the southern courtyard (area E2) becomes pure and no longer shows fiendish reflections, the magical barrier over the entrance to Kugaptee's Grave in the treasury (area E15) fades, and Zhi Hui can aid the PCs in their final fight in area E16.

Zhi Hui manifests again and thanks the PCs for their service but warns them that, in order to fully remove Kugaptee's influence over the ruins, they must travel into his grave below the monastery and defeat Xin Yue, the one who allowed this corruption to spread in the first place. Zhi Hui can manifest at will and remain as long as she wishes at any of the statues. She will answer any questions the PCs wish to ask. She also offers to cast spells on the PCs as she's able. The PCs can rest safe and secure at any of these statue sites in the monastery. See page 92 for further details.



Zhi Hui





## MONASTERY FEATURES

The Tan Sugi monastery is a gloomy compound set in the shadow of the grove's giant sugi tree. Screams and ghostly whispers rise and fall with the wind, and the steady creaking of swaying tree branches lends itself to the eerie ambiance. The PCs can explore the monastery in any order but must complete the purification of all four statues scattered throughout to gain access to the subterranean level where Xin Yue toils before Kugaptee's grave.

While the monastery's nindorus and undead enjoy tormenting followers of Sangpotshi, killing the living and consuming their souls, ages have passed since they've last had visitors. As such, those who dwell here don't always jump at the first opportunity to engage in combat with the PCs, and many of them will engage in unsettling conversation before, inevitably, they attack.

The monastery is made of wood with stone floors. Ceiling height within the colonnaded walkways is 15 feet, while in the larger chambers, this height rises to 40 feet (or 60 feet in the central main hall). The monastery has no artificial light sources, but during the day, walkways are brightly lit and the chambers are dimly lit by sunlight. There are no windows facing out of the monastery; those facing into the courtyards are all currently shuttered and have no glass. Moving through an open window counts as difficult terrain.

Overhanging, steeply sloped rooflines adorn the tops of the monastery's buildings and colonnades. A character can Climb these external walls with a successful DC 15 Athletics check but transitioning from the wall to the overhang and onto the roof is tricky and requires them to succeed at a DC 25 Athletics check.

Numerous openings in the colonnade walls and internal buildings allow easy access for Medium or smaller creatures. Large creatures moving through these areas treat them as greater difficult terrain.

## E1. GRAND GATE

The Pilgrim's Path leads to the front of a wooden gatehouse built into the monastery's southern wall. Shredded fulus adorn the bamboo bars of the wooden gate, and a lone wind chime jingles in the wind as it dangles from a rickety post protruding over the top of the gate.

As most of the monks left the monastery in the years following Master Zhi Hui's death, they each left a non-magical fulu affixed to the gate. For some, this act was a way to settle the guilt they felt

for abandoning the monastery. For others, it was a silent wish for someone to come after them and continue the monastery's traditions and teachings. Regardless, the creatures who took up residence in the monastery had no need for such things and shredded them all as they claimed the grounds as their own, leaving up the ruined remains hanging in mockery.

The gates themselves are closed but can be opened with ease, allowing access into the empty gatehouse beyond.

**Treasure:** The nindorus were lazy in dealing with the fulus, believing no one would actually make it to the monastery to begin with, and as a result, three magic fulus—a *ghostbane fulu* (*Secrets of Magic* 160) and two *spirit-sealing fulus* (*Secrets of Magic* 160)—survived the destruction.

## E2. COURTYARD

LOW 6

A polluted-looking creek connects over a half-dozen small ponds in this weed-tangled courtyard. Sugi trees, their trunks and branches bearing dark growths of some sort of mold or moss, grow fitfully amid small stone shrines throughout the area, while the bridge that once connected the pathway between the gatehouse to the south and a larger building to the north lies in ruins.

The thick weeds in this courtyard creates difficult terrain. Any fish or frogs that the pond and creeks once housed have long since died or been eaten, and the 3-foot-deep water looks to be polluted with green silt that forms into a foamy brown crust along the edges.

A 3-foot-tall stone statue of a kodama kami stands in the northeast section of the courtyard at area E2a. Coated with thick, foul-smelling black mold, this statue is one of the four that must be purified in order to gain access to Kugaptee's grave and speak to Zhi Hui's ghost.

**Creatures:** In 7098 (a decade prior to the current year from the PC's perspective), two sisters attempted to walk the Pilgrim's Path only to each meet horrific fates. The doom that came to the younger sister, Yeri, is detailed in area C2 (page 36), but her older sister, Yuni, made it all the way to the monastery courtyard before she was attacked and killed by a now-long-dead tiger kept by the corrupted monks as a pet and guardian.

The corrupted monks were delighted when Yuni's spirit came back as a ghost and left this courtyard for her as a place to haunt. She remains trapped here to this day but stays hidden within the small shrine

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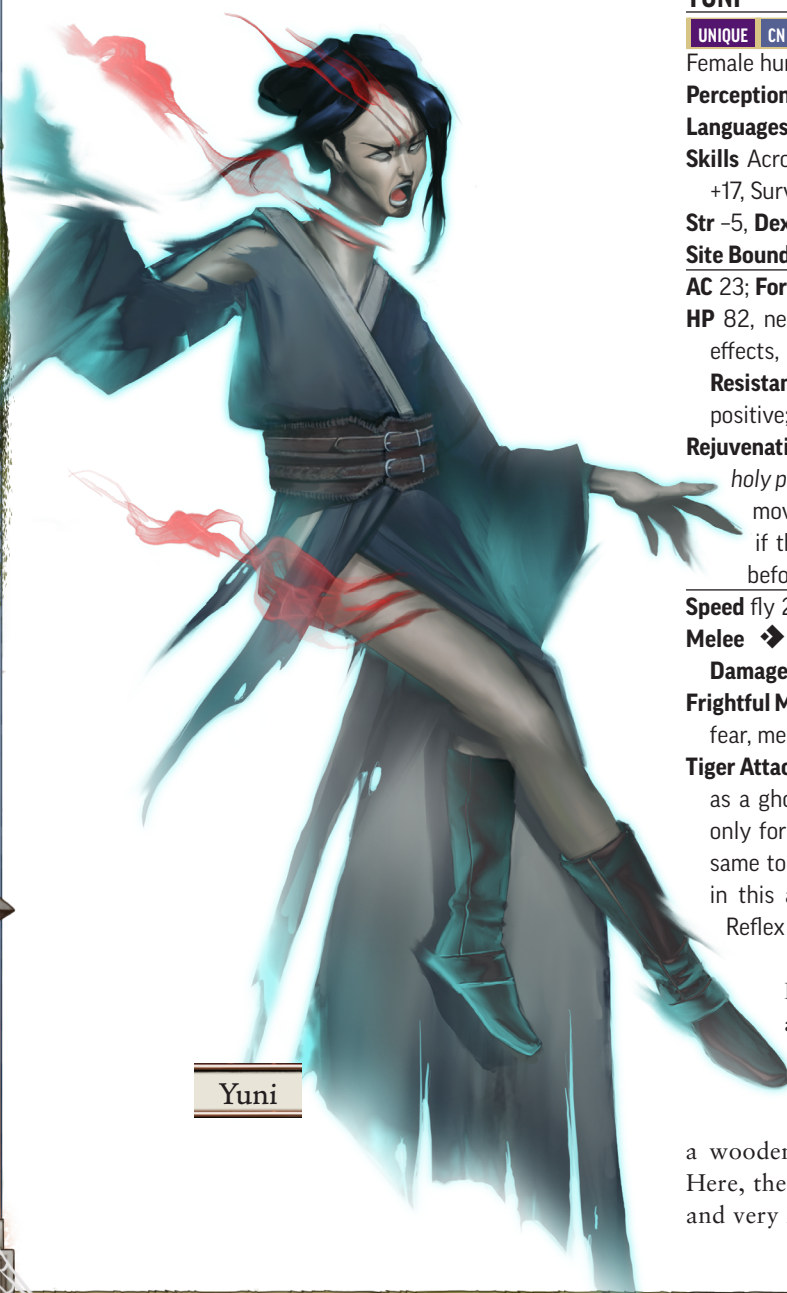
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located in area **E2b** in the southwest corner of the courtyard until someone approaches within 30 feet. At this point, her tiger-torn ghostly figure rises up from the ground where she was mauled to unleash her Frightful Moan before attacking. She can't leave area **E2** but continues to attack with her ranged options as long as her enemies remain in sight.

If one of the PCs carries Yeri's *holy prayer beads* from area **C2**, though, Yuni's ghost doesn't continue her attack after the first round of combat. Instead, on her turn on the second round, she approaches the PC who carries the beads and says, "Give me my sister's beads! They aren't yours!" If the PC refuses, Yuni returns to attacking, demanding the return of the beads each turn.



Yuni

If a PC gives the *holy prayer beads* to Yuni, the ghost ceases to attack as she cradles the beads impossibly in her incorporeal hands. She gazes at the beads for a moment, then asks, "Where is my little sister?" If the PCs tell the truth, Yuni cries out in sadness but then thanks the PCs for their honesty; she returns the beads to them, saying, "You deserve these now. Thank you for helping Yeri find peace," before she too fades away to nothingness. She does this as well if the PCs successfully Lie to her about Yeri's fate, but if Yuni sees through the lie, the beads fall through her hands to the ground, and she attacks in a renewed fury, fighting until destroyed.

## YUNI

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female human ghost (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

**Perception** +15; darkvision

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Deception +15, Society +13, Stealth +17, Survival +15

**Str** -5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4

**Site Bound** As ghost.

**AC** 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

**HP** 82, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

**Rejuvenation** (divine, necromancy) Returning her sister's *holy prayer beads* and revealing her fate allows Yuni to move on (although she'll return as a ghost next year if the PCs don't break the Willowshore mindscape before then).

**Speed** fly 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ ghostly hand +15 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 negative

**Frightful Moan** ♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) DC 25, as ghost.

**Tiger Attack** ♦♦ (divine, conjuration) Yuni cries out in pain as a ghostly tiger appears to rip and tear at her body, only for additional ghostly tigers to appear and do the same to all creatures in a 30-foot emanation. Creatures in this area take 4d6 slashing damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save).

**Hazard:** The polluted water in the creek and ponds here causes a drinker to become sickened 1 if they fail a DC 15 Fortitude save. The water is murky with filth in most places, save for the middle, where a wooden bridge once crossed over it (area **E2c**). Here, the water is dark, clear, and very reflective—and very haunted.



## FIENDISH REFLECTION


## HAZARD 3

UNIQUE HAUNT

**Stealth** DC 23 (expert)

**Description** Reflections viewed in the water here appear monstrous and fiendish.

**Disable** DC 20 Religion to exorcise the haunt, or DC 23 Intimidation to turn the fear back on the haunt and overwhelm it

**Frightening Visage**  (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) **Trigger** A creature looks at the water; **Effect** The creature sees its reflection on the water's surface distort into a fiendish version of themselves; they must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or become frightened 2 (and fleeing for as long as they remain frightened on a critical failure).

**Reset** The haunt resets immediately and can trigger again the next round.

**Reward:** If the PCs purify the kodama statue, grant them 40 XP.

## E3. MAIN HALL

## MODERATE 6

This open-air chamber has a sixty-foot ceiling. In between regularly spaced archways in the walls that allow views into the surrounding courtyard, intricate depictions of the hills and forests of the Specterwood are carved and painted in fading colors. A fifty-foot-tall stone statue of a tree rises in the center of the chamber, its branches extending over the room. Circular rows of moldy cushions lie on the ground around the statue.

This open structure was the first stop for visitors to the monastery. The giant stone tree statue is a half-sized replica of the Tan Sugi tree, which grows not far to the north in area **E13**. The monks carved this statue from stone blocks hauled into place and bound together with magic so that pilgrims could meditate before and touch a close approximation of the sacred tree since only the monks themselves were permitted to enter the northern courtyard where the actual tree grew.

The sugi statue is one of the four statues that must be purified in order to gain access to Kugaptee's grave and speak to Zhi Hui's ghost, but before this process can be started, the haunt within the tree must be defeated.

**Creatures:** The most dangerous peril within this chamber is the statue itself (see the following Hazard), but the same fell energies that have corrupted the statue manifest other entities among the moldering cushions. Four of these cushions are wrapped not in fungus-riddled cloth, but ittan-momen tsukumogami,

and these monsters rip free from the damp stuffing they cover to attack the PCs once the hazard triggers. They pursue foes throughout the monastery and fight to the death.

## ITTAN-MOMEN (4)

## CREATURE 2

*Pathfinder Bestiary 3 276*

**Initiative** Stealth +8

**Hazard:** When Kugaptee's influence seeped into the monastery, the statue here served as a spiritual guardian of the grounds and initially absorbed and purified much of the evil energy. Over time, the continuous influx of this energy overflowed and corrupted the statue. Now, the entire chamber brims with evil energy so strong that even the nindoru fiends are reluctant to enter, and the statue has become haunted by Kugaptee's presence.

## KUGAPTEE'S TREE

## HAZARD 6

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT


**Stealth** +15 (expert)

**Description** The branches of the stone tree statue animate, extend, and lash out at intruders.

**Disable** DC 25 Religion to exorcise the haunt, or DC 28 Intimidation to appear overwhelmingly strong of body and mind

**AC** 22; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12

**Hardness** 14; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 10

**Pulse of Fear**  (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult) **Trigger** An intruder to the monastery begins their turn in area **E3**; **Effect** The stone statue lurches to life, its branches whipping through the air as a horrifying roar rips through the monastery—a roar that seems to come from underground. All intruders within the monastery must attempt a DC 21 Will save. The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is frightened 1.

**Failure** The creature is frightened 2.

**Critical Failure** The creature is frightened 2 and fleeing for as long as it remains frightened.

**Routine** (3 actions) Kugaptee's tree lashes out with its branches, using its three actions to attempt branch Strikes against any creature in reach. Targets that are within reach but are outside of area **E3** have cover from the surrounding archways. The haunt favors targets in area **E3** but otherwise selects its targets randomly.

**Melee** branch +17 (magical, reach 40 feet), **Damage** 1d8+9 bludgeoning plus 1d8 mental

**Reset** 1 hour

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**Treasure:** A *spellguard shield* left behind by an ill-fated looter who visited the monastery a few years before the mindscape formed lies among the moldy cushions just east of the statue.

**Reward:** If the PCs purify the sugi statue, grant them 40 XP.

## E4. INFIRMARY

## MODERATE 6

A large hole has been torn into this room's northern door. Shredded cots, ruined chairs and tables, and other debris adorn the floor, and deep, long gashes have been carved into the walls. A thick rancid smell permeates the chamber, while battered shelves lie in a heap against the western wall.

**Creatures:** The monks once used this room to treat the sick and injured, be they fellow monks or travelers in need of aid. What was once a simple infirmary has been thrown into complete disarray by two of the monks who once worked here. After joining Xin Yue in the worship of Kugaptee, these two rose in undeath as kurobozus after the mindscape engulfed the region. The two undead lurch toward the PCs as they enter but don't attack at once. Instead, they rasp out in unison, "Have you come to join Kugaptee? Are you here to escape the prison of life?" The undead are eager to sacrifice the PCs to their fiendish god and swiftly attack as soon as it becomes apparent the party

doesn't intend to offer themselves up. They pursue foes throughout the monastery but avoid area E2, as they still fear and respect the ghost there.

## KUROBOZUS (2)

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 157

**Initiative** Perception +14

**Treasure:** The cabinets and shelves are in tatters, but two *moderate healing potions*, a set of expanded healer's tools, and a pair of *healer's gloves* can be found in the debris.

## E5. PHARASMA'S SHRINE

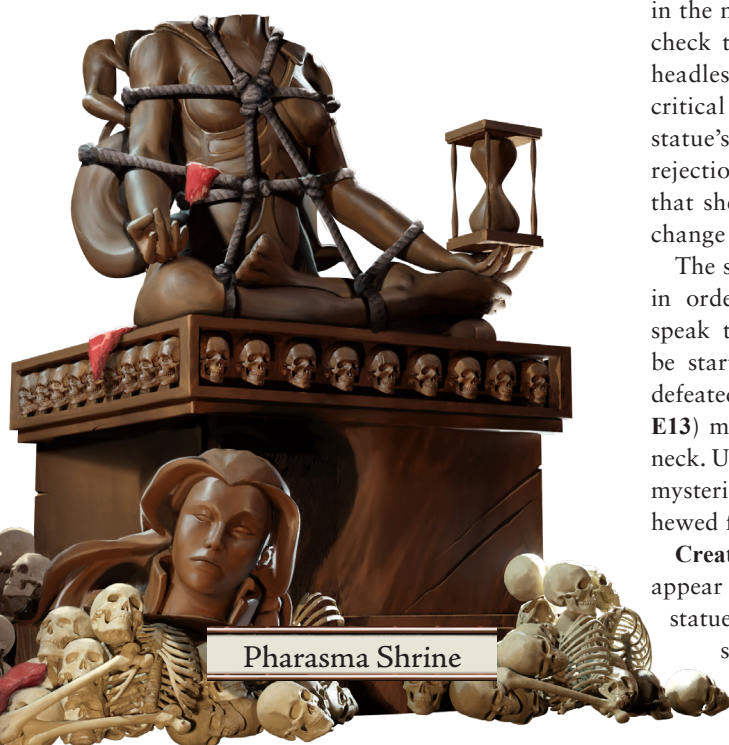
## LOW 6

A wooden statue of a regal-looking woman sits in a meditative pose atop a low dais to the south of this otherwise empty room. Bones, dead leaves, and chunks of mummified flesh lie in heaps around the statue, whose missing head appears to have been hewn off by a single blow. Bloodstained, moldy ropes have been wrapped tightly around the statue, amid which many more old bones with bits of dried meat have been affixed.


The monks of the Tan Sugi monastery followed the teachings of Sangpotshi, but they erected this statue of Pharama here out of respect for the role she plays in the cosmic cycle of life and death. The nindorus hold no such respect and defiled this statue on the very first day of summer after they appeared in the monastery. With a successful DC 10 Religion check to Recall Knowledge, a PC can identify the headless statue as depicting Pharama; with a critical success, they confirm that the nature of the statue's defiling is meant to represent a fundamental rejection of her power over life and death, indicating that she's blind to the truth of it and powerless to change her ways.

The statue is one of the four that must be purified in order to gain access to Kugaptee's grave and speak to Zhi Hui's ghost. Before this process can be started, the creatures in this chamber must be defeated, and the statue's missing head (found in area E13) must be placed atop the stump of the statue's neck. Upon successfully purifying the statue, the head mysteriously reattaches itself, as if it had never been hewn free in the first place.

**Creatures:** When the PCs enter, creatures who appear to be three robed monks kneel before the statue, as if in prayer. These monks are, in fact, sojiruh nindorus, and rather than praying, they're meditating on the futility of Pharama's presence in the multiverse and







preparing to ritualistically rebind the statue in a fresh coil of rope they've placed on the ground before themselves. If the fiends notice the PCs, they rise up and turn to face them, their stitched mouths twitching unnervingly as they greet them. The sojiruh are eager to find out why the PCs have come to the shrine and work to convince them that the idea of life after death is a myth. "After death, there is only us!" they promise, offering to kill the PCs to prove their points. You can use these fiends to reveal bits of information about the monastery (such as that the monks who remained are now all undead, that they're led by someone named Xin Yue, or even that the ghost of the monastery's founder is imprisoned here), but it shouldn't be long before the fiends grow weary of conversation and issue a challenge to the PCs.

The challenge is simple. The PCs are to run a circle around the central courtyard, moving from this room to area E1, then to area E7, area E6, area E3, area E4, and finally back here. The nindorus know that dangers are likely to oppose the PCs' passage through many of these areas but nonetheless tell the PCs that if even one of them can make their way through this circuit before the nindorus can complete the rebinding of Pharama's defiled statue, they'll reward them with a valuable treasure.

The nindorus don't care if the PCs actually run the race honestly or cheat; should the PCs leave during this challenge, upon returning to this room, they'll find the three nindorus haven't even started rebinding the statue. They welcome back the PCs with "treasure" in the form of nindoru wisdom: "You have run a circuit as we challenged you to, yet as with your cycle of life and death, the cycle itself is meaningless, hollow, and not to be trusted." With that, the three nindorus attack. They attack as well if the PCs refuse to race, opening combat with Stolen Screams. The nindorus fight to the death, pursuing foes throughout the monastery.

### SOJIRUH NINDORUS (3)

### CREATURE 4

Page 85

**Initiative** Perception +11

**Reward:** If the PCs purify Pharama's statue, grant them 40 XP.

### E6. REFECTORY

### SEVERE 6

Several ruined tables and broken benches lie in heaps within this refectory. The chamber might have once been a fine and relaxing place to take a meal, but now it feels cold and empty.

The monks once ate together twice a day here. Presently, the tables and seat cushions have all been ruined by the same monks who, as undead, know that their days of eating are behind them. Dirty bowls and plates are scattered across the few tables that still stand, while more lie scattered on the floor.

**Creatures:** A trio of undead monks stand listlessly in this chamber, mournfully staring at a room that once brought them camaraderie, even after they betrayed their brothers and sisters for Kugaptee. The three kurobozus look up as the PCs enter and ask, "Do you realize what a pleasure it is to be able to eat?" The two undead continue to ask the PCs about their favorite meals, pushing them for more and more details; if they learn that any of the PCs knows about tea, they ask them to fetch supplies from the pantry (area E8), brew them some tea in the kitchen (area E7), and then return here to serve them.

If the PCs do so, they must Host Ceremony (page 10) to properly present the tea to the three kurobozus. If the PCs critically succeed, the kurobozus are obviously satisfied with the tea, even though they can't taste it, and after they swallow, the tea simply leaks out through holes in their chests. The creatures thank the PCs for their compassion and also mention, "We know you seek to purify this place, and in thanks for your kindness, let us offer some as well. We used the interloper's magical axe to cleave the head of your death goddess free then placed the head in the upper boughs of the sugi tree, as far from her body as we could reach. You'll need to retrieve it if you wish to rectify our desecration of her statue." With that, the three kurobozus crumble to dust. On a success, the kurobozus simply thank the PCs and crumble to dust without offering this advice.

If the PCs return to this room without being ready to serve tea to the three undead, or if they fail in their attempt to Host Ceremony, the three kurobozus cry out in anguish and attack, fighting until destroyed (although they don't pursue foes from this chamber).

### KUROBOZUS (3)

### CREATURE 6

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**Initiative** Perception +14

**Reward:** If the PCs satisfy the kurobozus with a tea ceremony, grant them XP as if they'd defeated the creatures in combat.

### E7. KITCHEN

### TRIVIAL 6

A long clay furnace occupies the southeast portion of this simple kitchen. A large cooking pot atop the furnace

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bubbles beneath under a stained lid, a fire burning in the hearth below it. Elsewhere, ruined tables and shelves lie scattered on the floor.

The monks cooked their meals here, usually consisting of rice, greens grown in the garden or foraged from the forest, and soup or stew. The guhdggi nindoru from area **E9** is in the process of slow-cooking a vat of stew originally consisting of poorly chopped, unpeeled onions, several whole cloves of garlic, a radish sliced up with its claws, and the liver and intestines of an unfortunate kurobozu who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The nindoru adds to the vat of stew each time it comes across a new ingredient, slurping down the now-rancid slosh alongside the souls of its victims and, periodically, rewarding the “starving” meokdands who he lords over.

**Hazard:** If a PC pulls the lid off the stew, a boiled eyeball stares up at them from the foul-smelling, haunted concoction.

## UNHOLY HUNGER


## HAUNT 6

UNIQUE HAUNT

**Stealth** DC 25 (expert)

**Description** A miasma of foul-smelling vapor with shrieking faces barely visible in the steam bubbles up from the soup.

**Disable** DC 19 Cooking Lore to neutralize the haunted stew with the addition of a few select spices from nearby shelves, or DC 25 Religion to exorcise the haunt

**Worse Than It Smells**  (conjunction, occult) **Trigger** A non-nindoru creature takes the lid off the cooking pot; **Effect** All creatures within 15 feet of the pot must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or become sickened 2. The triggering creature instead must attempt a DC 24 Will save to resist the compulsion to dip their face into the stew and swallow a mouthful of the stuff (this effect has the enchantment and mental traits). On a failure, the triggering creature takes 5d6 poison damage (DC 24 basic Fortitude save).

**Reset** The haunt resets 1 round after the lid is replaced on the cooking pot.

**Treasure:** If the haunt is defeated, the fluid in the pot quickly evaporates, leaving behind a sticky residue that a character can harvest after 1 minute of work and with a successful DC 22 Crafting check to produce 5 doses of poison that functions the same as hunting spider venom. On a failure, a character produces only one dose, and on a critical failure, they produce no doses but are exposed to the poison. In addition, a full set of sterling artisan’s tools for brewing and serving tea can be gathered from the utensils in this room.

## E8. STORAGE

Thick layers of dust cover the shelves and containers stored in this pantry.

**Treasure:** Most of the food stored here has long since rotted away, but a PC who spends a minute Searching here finds a large supply of tea leaves, including a tin of rare tea worth 150 gp. Using some of this rare tea to cover the raw materials consumed when crafting magic tea grants a +1 item bonus to the Crafting check. Using all of it to perform a tea ceremony for the undead in area **E6** grants a +2 item bonus to the check to Host Ceremony.

A PC who takes 10 minutes Searching this storeroom and succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check discovers a very cleverly hidden treasure under a loose floor stone in the southwest corner of the room—a *type II bag of holding* that contains an astounding amount of jewelry, statuettes, and other fine art, worth a total of 200 gp. The bag itself belonged to a thief named Kalen Bray, who now “lives on” as an undead prisoner in the monastery basement storage room (area **E14**). He stashed this bag containing all the stolen wealth he’d pilfered from homes in Willowshore here before he was captured. When the PCs discover this stash, a successful DC 15 Society or Willowshore Lore check allows a PC to recognize the stolen objects as things that went missing a month or so before the last day of spring earlier in the year.

**Reward:** If the PCs return the stolen items to the townsfolk of Willowshore, grant them 60 XP and 2 Hope Points.

## E9. DORMS

## MODERATE 6

Twin rows of narrow, uncomfortable-looking bunks are this room’s only decoration, although several have been crushed and then pushed together under a hole in the roof to the northeast, forming a damp-looking nest made of rubble. The sheets and thin mattresses on the bunks are moldy and smell awful. To the north, three partially collapsed dressers are slumped against the wall.

This area served as the main living quarters for the monks. The monks rested in these beds, sleeping in shifts since there were more monks than beds, and used the dressers to the north to store their meager personal belongings. Even the founder of the monastery, Zhi Hui, slept here with the others.

**Creatures:** One of the largest of the nindorus dwelling in the ruins today, a guhdggi, has taken up residence here, crushing several of the beds into the damp-looking



nest. The creature spends most of its time wallowing in its nest, periodically getting up to lumber out of the monastery to walk around in the surrounding woods and trod Pilgrim's Path up to the mountain shrine and back. During these excursions, it gathers more ingredients for the stew it has been cooking in area E7 for the past few months. At your discretion, if the PCs leave the monastery before they defeat the guhdggi, they could encounter the hopping nindoru along the path.

The guhdggi is attended by a group of five simpering meokdans who massage its flanks and legs, constantly begging it for food. When they're good, the guhdggi feeds them some of the foul-tasting stew, but usually, the meokdans aren't good and have to settle for eating bits of rubble.

Upon spotting the PCs, the guhdggi rouses from its nest and waves them over, asking them to share stories of their journeys. The nindoru is legitimately eager to hear a tale from each PC, but each time the PCs start a story, allow the characters to attempt a DC 22 Perception check to Sense Motive for the group as a whole. On a success, the PCs note the way the nindorus lick their lips and do their best to hide the rumbling in their stomachs.

Eventually, the guhdggi asks the PCs to go "fetch dinner" from area E7, intending to share the haunted meal with them. If the PCs carry the pot all the way here without opening it, the pot retains its haunted nature but doesn't trigger if the guhdggi opens it. However, any non-nindoru who accepts and eats a serving still takes 5d6 poison damage (DC 24 basic Fortitude save). After this meal, the guhdggi shares one of its own tales of wandering, mentioning its strolls through the monastery. You can use this as an opportunity to reveal to the PCs one of the hidden dangers or treasures in the monastery that they haven't yet found.

If the PCs humor the nindoru with stories and partake of the poison meal without attacking, the fiend rubs its belly and, in an almost disappointed voice, says, "You've been such great guests; it's a shame that we'll have to eat you all now too." They attack at once, but gorged and slightly drunk on the foul

concoction, the guhdggi begins the fight sickened 2. The meokdans are so ecstatic about the fine meal that they're slowed 1 for the first two rounds of combat, as they take too much time to compliment the chef with belches and gurgles of satisfaction.

Once combat begins, the nindorus fight to the death.

## GUHDGGI

Page 86

**Initiative** Perception +14

## CREATURE 5

## MEOKDANS (5)

Page 84

**Initiative** Perception +9

## CREATURE 2

**Treasure:** The monks took most of their personal effects with them when they left, but one of the monks forgot a *sightsight ring* (Treasure Vault 154) that they'd hidden in a small tear under their mattress. A PC finds the ring if they succeed at a DC 22 Perception check while Searching in the room.

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Guhdggi



## E10. LIBRARY

## MODERATE 6

The walls of this library have been charred black, and the tatters of burned and ash-grayed shelves drip dirty rainwater onto the floor where the roof has caved in. Books and scrolls have been shredded to pieces, and all of the furniture has been overturned.

Few books remain in the burned rubble of what once was the Tan Sugi monastery's library. The monks spent decades building up the monastery's library as a storehouse of religious knowledge, but all of that was destroyed when Xin Yue and her followers confronted the last few remaining monks here with their pet hell hounds. The resulting fire left the room in ruins, the final non-corrupted monks in the monastery dead, and Xin Yue with the conviction that she'd made the right choice.

The secret door to the hidden library (E11) can be found by a PC who Searches and succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check, unless the PCs have purified at least two of the statues, in which case the door glows softly once they approach within 20 feet of it, making its discovery automatic. The door unlocks if it's glowing; otherwise, a PC must either Force Open the door with a successful DC 27 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with a successful DC 25 Thievery check.

**Creatures:** A pair of lumbering ijda nindorus shamle through this room, periodically sifting through the ashes with their broken katanas, lifting up a ruined page to peer at it before discarding it or simply staring into the distance. They don't react to the PCs' arrival until they're attacked (in which case they fight to the death), addressed, or approached. In the latter two cases, one of the ijdas continues to ignore the PCs while the other asks in a deep, hollow-sounding voice, "Do you remember? What was here? Do you remember? Who was here?" The PCs can Lie to the fiends by making up a story, or they can attempt to tell the truth as far as they know. In either case, they must attempt a DC 22 Deception or Diplomacy check.

**Critical Success** The nindorus are astounded at the revelations, and one of them reveals the location of the hidden *warding tablets* in the room (see Treasure, below), saying, "Then surely you must remember this?" The nindorus don't attack unless the PCs do during their first meeting, but if the PCs return later to this room, the fiends attack at once, having forgotten the encounter already. If the PCs attack the nindorus before leaving, the distracted fiends roll flat checks for initiative rather than Perception checks.

**Success** As critical success, but the fiends don't mention the treasure.

**Failure** The fiends shake their empty cage-heads, then mournfully say, "If you don't remember, why lie to us? Perhaps your dying screams will reveal the truth!" before they attack.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the PCs' fumbling narrative so enrages the fiends that for the first two rounds of combat, they're quickened 1; they can only use the extra actions to Stride or Strike.

## IJDA NINDORUS (2)

## CREATURE 6

Page 88

**Initiative** Perception +15

**Treasure:** While the library is in a complete state of disrepair, not everything was destroyed in the fire. Diligent PCs who spend at least 10 minutes Searching through the rubble uncover a set of blank *warding tablets* (*Secrets of Magic* 163) under a layer of ashes.

## E11. HIDDEN LIBRARY

## SEVERE 6


Shelves line most of this room's walls, while a low round table sits in the middle of the room, surrounded by sitting cushions. A skeleton lies slumped over the table, a writing quill in hand and an open book under the skull.

The skeleton belongs to Yen Rui, the last loyal monk of the Tan Sugi monastery. She had fought to the end to resist Kugaptee's corruption, only to be forced into this room while the remaining monks perished in the nearby library. She managed to maintain magical wards to prevent entry into the library, but she hadn't expected the traitors to simply lock the doors, sealing her in and turning this chamber into her crypt. She perished of thirst, but not before she did her best to ensure her research on Kugaptee was recorded.

**Creatures:** Yen Rui's spirit dwells here now, but rather than manifest as a ghost, her potent magical abilities infused every single text stored in this hidden library. She now exists as a disembodied presence in the room, unable to leave yet empowered well enough to prevent Kugaptee's faithful from entering. If she must, she can manifest physically in this room to protect it—treat these manifestations as three elite poltergeists, but it's unlikely she'll need to do so to defend the room against the PCs.

Yen Rui greets the PCs soon after they enter the room, speaking in a disembodied voice that seems to whisper from all corners of the room at once. She does her best to soothe the PCs' fears that she might be a sinister ghost or haunt, promising that she can help if they tell her what they're here for. She listens quietly as the PCs speak and provides what guidance she





can, urging the PCs to continue to purify the statues, giving them advice on the monastery's layout (she doesn't know what dangers await in the rooms now but can, at the very least, tell the PCs where the other corrupted statues are), and promising that they can rest and recuperate here knowing that the evils in the monastery won't interrupt their sleep. You can use Yen Rui to answer other questions the PCs might have. Some of these responses might be similar to answers that Zhi Hui can give (page 92); alternately, you can have Yen Rui admit ignorance but then suggest the PCs continue purifying statues so they can ask these questions of Zhi Hui herself.

### YEN RUI'S POLTERGEISTS (3) CREATURE 6

LN elite poltergeists (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 264)

**Initiative** Stealth +16

**Treasure:** The open book under the skull contains Yen Rui's notes, giving the PCs access to the information above if, instead of speaking to her, they decide to destroy the poltergeists.

The majority of the books and scrolls stored in this room concern the teachings of Sangpotshi, but a smaller selection of particularly rare books comprises a significant collection that, as a whole, grants a +2 item bonus to Sangpotshi Lore, Nindoru Lore, and Religion checks while Investigating or Recalling Knowledge on topics related to this philosophy; the collection in all is 12 Bulk and worth 600 gp. This collection's greatest value to the PCs, though, is their use in the next adventure when learning the truth about the Willowshore mindscape.

A full search of the shelves here takes an hour, but if the PCs are on friendly terms with Yen Rui, she presents the following important items to the PCs as thanks, causing them to float off their shelves. These treasures include a *lesser tome of restorative cleansing* (*Treasure Vault* 113), several scrolls (a *scroll of entangle fate*, a *scroll of life's fresh bloom*, a *scroll of prophet's luck*, a *scroll of sacred nimbus*, a *scroll of tomorrow's dawn*, and a *scroll of wall of mirrors*; all of these new spells are detailed in this volume's Adventure Toolbox, starting on page 75), and a large book bearing the title *Watchers of the Cycle*. The first half of this book contains hundreds of short parables and stories culled from a wide range of religions, each curated for the lessons they can impart to a follower of Sangpotshi. If a character references this book while researching any topic relating to Sangpotshi or reincarnation, they gain a +1 item bonus to any Sangpotshi Lore or Religion checks to Recall Knowledge. The second half of the book contains the formulas for several rituals,

### REINCARNATION

If the PCs learn *reincarnate* from *Watchers of the Cycle*, they'll be able to use the ritual normally to bring the dead back to life in a new body. When they do, the reincarnated creature remains a part of the Willowshore mindscape and receives no insight into the nature of the mindscape, and they're "alive" only in the context of being a trapped soul within the mindscape, just as the PCs have been since the start of this Adventure Path. Later in this Adventure Path, knowledge of *reincarnate* will become incredibly important, as the PCs will use this knowledge to research a method by which they can undo the Willowshore mindscape and return everything to the modern, living world.

including *gnaw at the moon*, *last night's vigil*, *ransack the night*, *regale the lost ones*, and *sweetest solstice* (all of these rituals are detailed in this volume's Adventure Toolbox, starting on page 78). The final pages of the book contain the formula for the ritual *reincarnate* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 242). *Watchers of the Cycle* is worth 90 gp.

**Reward:** If the PCs speak with Yen Rui and manage to learn what she knows, grant them 120 XP.

### E12. BURIAL GARDEN

MODERATE 6

The air in this chamber feels humid and unusually warm. A row of four twenty-foot-long wooden planter boxes filled with earth sit in the middle of the room, each overgrown with diseased-looking weeds, damp-looking fungi, and glistening vines. A low table with moldy cushions around it sits to the east, near a small wooden door to the northeast; a statue of a stag covered with damp, diseased vines stands near this door.

The northeast door leads down to the storeroom (area E14).

Before the monastery was abandoned, this large room served the monks as a place to grow food, cultivate flowers, and dispose of the dead. To the monks of the Tan Sugi monastery, the concept of being reincarnated as a plant, as Tan Sui-Jing was, represented a specific form of enlightenment, and when a monk died, they were buried in the planter boxes here so their remains could nurture the plants their spirits hoped to reincarnate into. Once a body was reduced to bones, those bones were exhumed, powdered, and then sprinkled back into the soil. In

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this way, the monks hoped to bolster Tan Sui-Jing's vigil over Kugaptee's grave. Perhaps a grim tradition to some, to the monks (who believed that once the spirit moved on from the body, a new body awaited them), the remains left behind after death were simply a relic of the past. This place once had potent magical effects to help give the plants here a place to grow and thrive despite being indoors, but those effects quickly faded once the monastery was abandoned.

The abandonment of the monastery and its fall to those corrupted by Kugaptee manifests within this chamber physically, for the beautiful, hearty, and nutritious plants that grew here have been replaced by diseased weeds and parasitic fungi. The air in this room is humid and thick with foul-smelling spores; a non-plant or non-fungus creature that begins its turn in this room must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). This effect has the poison trait, and if a character critically succeeds at the saving throw, they're temporarily immune to it for 24 hours.

The stag statue is one of the four statues that must be purified in order to gain access to Kugaptee's grave and speak to Zhi Hui's ghost, but before this process can be started, the dangerous fungi in this chamber must be defeated.

**Creatures:** Once the PCs begin to move through the room, several clots of fungi growing throughout the planter boxes begin to shudder and lurch to life. Given life by Kugaptee's death dreams and infused with their sadism and cruelty, these fungal monsters rise up and attack, eager to murder the PCs and drag their bodies into the dirt to be used as fertilizer. The creatures consist of two slime molds (mindless predators that still attack with an unsettling sense of cruelty, preferring to seek out lower Hit Point targets) and six chaotic evil fungus leshies, each of which incorporates fragments and pieces of bone into their malformed, barely-humanoid-looking bodies. Apart from the wet sound of shifting fungal matter, all these creatures remain eerily silent as they fight, and they don't pursue foes out of this room.

### FUNGUS LESHIES (6)

### CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 219

Initiative Stealth +8

### SLIME MOLDS (2)

### CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 193

Initiative Stealth +8

**Treasure:** If the PCs kill the fungi, a PC who spends 10 minutes Searching the room uncovers a

few treasures left behind by the monks: a *primeval mistletoe* tangled up in the remains of one of the fungus leshies, and a *verdant staff* lying under several nasty-smelling vines on the ground behind the stag statue.

**Reward:** If the PCs purify the stag statue, grant them 40 XP.

## E13. THE TAN SUGI

## MODERATE 6

A massive, one-hundred-foot-tall sugi tree towers over this overgrown courtyard, bathing the monastery in its shadow. Glistening coils of rot and decay spread up from several of the tree's roots to wind along its trunk, while many branches above are thick with immense spiderwebs. A large silver-bladed axe lies embedded in the side of the tree trunk about four feet off the ground; crusty rivulets of black sap glisten and run down from the wound.

This unusually enormous sugi tree grows at the site of Tan Sui-Jing's death following her battle with Kugaptee. It's the very one that she reincarnated into in order to keep the dead fiend from reincarnating himself. The decay spreading up from the roots starts in an underground chamber below (area E16); while it has reset every year for the past 115 years, Kugaptee's growing influence as the result of Mago Kai's meddling in the real world has accelerated the process—if the PCs don't put a stop to it, by mid-winter, the Tan Sugi tree will fall, and Kugaptee will escape, an event that will destroy the entire mindscape, absorb the souls trapped within (including the PCs) into Kugaptee, and release the powerful fiend into the modern world. The implications of Kugaptee's escape into the modern world are beyond the scope of this adventure, but it will be discussed briefly in the Adventure Path's final volume of "what if" scenarios at its conclusion.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check notes that the affliction sickening the tree will kill it in a few months, and its source seems to be coming from somewhere underground.

As the PCs approach the tree, allow them to make secret DC 24 Perception checks. Those who succeed notice something shimmering with a faint blue glow in a clot of spiderwebs among several branches about 75 feet up near the tree's trunk (after dark, this DC drops to DC 17). With a critical success, a PC notices that the source of this glow is a wooden statue head wrapped partially in spiderwebs.

To Climb the sugi tree, a PC must succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check.



**Creatures:** The source of spiderwebs that shroud the sugi tree is another manifestation of Kugaptee's thoughts—a colorful but frightening ogre spider. However, the enormous spider isn't the only occupant in the area. The first time the PCs enter the courtyard, the spider lurks in the branches above, visible at a height of 50 feet but motionless for the moment. Down below, squatting among the tree's roots as it gnaws and chews at the bark, is an unsettling figure—an undead kitsune dressed in rags. This individual was one of Xin Yue's most loyal followers, a horticulturist monk who forgot his name as well as much of his previous life when he was reborn in the mindscape as a kurobozu. Now, the undead monk simply refers to himself as the Chewer, as he has taken it upon himself to gnaw at the sugi's roots in an attempt to quicken its decay. So far, his efforts have had minimal results, but closer inspection reveals several infected areas among the roots where he has been chewing.

The Chewer straightens up and spits bits of bark out of his mouth as he notices the PCs, then invites them to join him at his “meal,” noting that “more teeth will bring down this forlorn tree more quickly—surely you aren't cruel-minded enough to let it continue to suffer?” The Chewer is delighted to speak to the PCs but doesn't really have much to reveal to them other than to confirm that this tree grew from the remains of a great heroine from the past. As long as the tree still grows, her soul remains trapped and outside of the cycle of life. The undead monk hopes to use this line of reasoning to recruit the aid of the PCs and quickly grows impatient and angry if he's contradicted. It shouldn't be long before the Chewer is compelled to attack, at which point he draws his temple sword and fights until destroyed. Once combat begins, the ogre spider clambers down from the tree to join the fight as well. While the Chewer won't pursue fleeing PCs, the ogre spider will, taking disturbing advantage of its eerie flexibility to chase the party through the monastery.

## THE CHEWER

## CREATURE 6

Variant male kurobozu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 157)

**Initiative** Perception +14

**Items** +1 striking ghost touch temple sword

**Melee** temple sword +18 (magical, monk, trip),

**Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

## ELITE OGRE SPIDER

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 249

**Initiative** Perception +15

**Treasure:** The axe embedded in the tree trunk belonged to the leader of the woodcutters who came to the monastery back in 7062; he was slaughtered after making only one swing with the axe. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Athletics check can pull the axe free. Over the years, Tan Sui-Jing's influence has further enhanced this axe with magical properties, and it's now a +1 *fiend bane striking silver battle axe* (*Secrets of Magic* 180), but until Xin Yue is defeated in Kugaptee's grave below, this weapon bears an unsettling quirk—each time it's drawn, unsettling urges to bury the axe in the skull of a friend invade the user's mind, causing the user to become frightened 1 unless they succeed at a DC 20 Will save (this quirk has the emotion, fear, and mental traits and vanishes as soon as Xin Yue is defeated).

The glowing statue head lodged in a web 75 feet up is the missing head to the statue of Pharama in area E5. Once the Chewer and the ogre spider are defeated, the glow increases, reducing any DC to notice it by 10.



The Chewer

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The glow fades as soon as a PC touches the head but fills that PC with the urge to return the head to the statue—that character gains a +2 item bonus to any checks to purify that statue.

## E14. STORAGE ROOM

## MODERATE 6

This large basement might have once been used to store gardening equipment, barrels of fertilizer, lumber, and repair tools, but today it's more like a slaughterhouse. The entire room is littered with the dismembered corpses and splattered internal organs of beasts and humanoid creatures, and the stink of decaying flesh makes the cool air an agonizing chore to breathe.

The monks once used this large space as a storage area for materials and seasonal equipment, but most of the items were taken or donated when the monastery was abandoned. Since taking over, the Kugaptee cultists have been using this chamber as a dumping ground for sacrificial victims they've gone through over the years. The cold temperature slows decay just enough to make things truly awful in here.

**Creatures:** In addition to being a dumping ground for carcasses, this chamber provides access to the route leading to Kugaptee's Grave, and as such, Xin Yue didn't want to leave the place unguarded. A kurobozu, once the monastery's cook, now watches over this chamber, attended by Xin Yue's favorite pets—a trio of slavering hell hounds that look more like burning feral foxes than they do dogs. As the PCs arrive, the kurobozu is entertaining itself by playing fetch with the hell hounds, using a well-chewed human skull for the game. Upon spotting the PCs, the hell hounds immediately bare their teeth and growl menacingly, but the kurobozu holds out a rotting hand to stay their attack, then proclaims that "it's rude to interrupt someone's idle moments. Why are you here? Why should I not feed you to my pets?"

If the PCs don't immediately attack, they'll find this nameless kurobozu somewhat eager for conversation. Potential answers to some questions the PCs might pose are listed below, but after answering a few, the kurobozu grows weary and, with a snap of its fingers, sics the hounds on the party. Once combat begins, they fight until destroyed.

**Who are you?** "I can't remember, but it doesn't matter. I serve at Xin Yue's whim, and she serves the great Kugaptee."

**Why are there so many corpses here?** "Leftovers. Food. Decoration. What other use do corpses have? If you mean what are we doing with the bodies before they become corpses, though, well, Xin Yue needs fresh

flesh and warm blood to sate Kugaptee, to provide him with strength so that he may rise from his grave. Are you here to volunteer your meat and juices?"

**Who is Xin Yue?** "She is our focus, our reason, our purpose. Great Kugaptee bid us to follow her so we do. She has only killed and offered souls to Kugaptee since we arrived. I think. She's quite unpleasant to be around. You must think that's quite disturbing coming from someone like me. You'll understand when you meet her."

**Who is Kugaptee?** "We can arrange a meeting. Just hold still..." (At this, it orders the hounds to attack.)

## KUROBOZU

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 157

**Initiative** Perception +15

## HELL HOUNDS (3)

## CREATURE 3

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 205

**Initiative** Perception +9

**Prisoner:** When Xin Yue took over after the monastery was mostly abandoned, she and her followers used some of this chamber's storage alcoves as improvised prisons for captured sacrifices, usually wandering hunters or explorers who stumbled upon the ruins.

When the mindscape formed, this room's sole prisoner, a small-time thief named Kalen Bray, perished along with the other monks, yet he did not rise as a kurobozu. Instead, he rose as a zombie that retained his memories from life—and each time the mindscape cycle resets, those memories remain. Over the past 115 years, Kalen has lost track of just how many times things have reset, and his damaged memories have merged so that he simply believes he's languished here "forever."

In life, Kalen hailed from Absalom, and he came to Shenmen solely to plunder items to sell to collectors throughout the Inner Sea Region. After hearing of the abandoned monastery, he made his way over to survey the grounds, only to be captured by Xin Yue's monks. The monks initially intended to sacrifice him in a few weeks, but when the mindscape formed a week after Kalen's capture, his new undead state rendered him useless for such a purpose, and so they've simply left him here to literally rot.

Kalen has so many memories of escaping his cell only to be slaughtered by nindorus that he's long since given up trying to escape. He's since learned that it's best to remain still and "play dead." Once the PCs defeat the kurobozu and its hell hounds, Kalen stirs from his torpor and calls out to the PCs from the



northwesternmost alcove, where he is chained to the floor with manacles. “Well, this is new! People who aren’t monsters? Who might you be?”

Kalen Lies to the PCs, claiming to have been a hunter who took shelter in these ruins during a storm only to be captured by the evil monks who live here, and asks the PCs to defeat the monsters that now live in the ruins above so he can finally escape. With his vague memories, he can give the PCs some maddening and confusing clues—telling them that he and the monks who dwell here became undead at the same time “many, many years ago,” but he can’t remember why. In fact, until the PCs’ arrival, he’d come to believe that all life had perished in the world.

Kalen is evil, but not particularly dangerous, and if the PCs help him escape he won’t cause much additional mischief in the region—instead taking to a life lurking in the woods and eventually running afoul of a monster that finishes him off. He’s not bothered by his undead appearance, stating, “It’s nothing some new clothes and a mask can’t hide.” In return for promising to let him out, he reveals to the PCs the location of the stash of treasure he hid in area **E8**.

### KALEN BRAY

### CREATURE 2

Male husk zombie (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 170)

**Initiative** Perception +5

## E15. TREASURE CHAMBER

Empty shelves and barren platforms that hold unadorned weapon and armor racks, along with open, dust-filled treasure chests, provide hints to the possible treasures once held here. Only one chest near the west wall remains closed. A double door to the south is carved with a spiraling rune that has been painted red.

The spiraling rune on the southern door can be identified as a warning by anyone who’s at least trained in Religion or Sangpotshi Lore, or by someone who succeeds at a DC 20 Society check. If the PCs haven’t purified all four of the statues in the monastery above, Kugaptee’s influence remains strong, and a *wall of force* bars access to the doors. Once they’ve purified the four statues, though, this barrier vanishes, and the PCs can open the doors with ease. Beyond, a

long, winding stairwell spirals down into the darkness, making a complete but lazy revolution before reaching area **E16**.



Xin Yue

**Treasure:** While it might look like this treasure chamber was looted long ago, any PC who succeeds at a DC 17 Sangpotshi Lore or a DC 20 Religion check knows that such intentionally empty treasuries aren’t unknown in monasteries devoted to Sangpotshi. Rather than hoard wealth, the monks often built false treasuries like this room in defended areas to drive home the fact that material wealth had little meaning to them.

This belief doesn’t so much apply to the corrupted monks who inherited the monastery, and they’ve been keeping some of the more valuable treasures they’ve collected from victims who stumbled into their clutches before the mindscape formed. Within the closed chest are 1,600 cp, 430 sp, 54 gp, 120 gp in assorted bits of jewelry, an *emerald grasshopper talisman*, a bloodstained +1 *chain shirt*, and a *wand of restoration*.

## E16. KUGAPTEE'S GRAVE

## SEVERE 6

Glowing rivulets of red fluid wind along the floor to pool in the center of the room, illuminating this damp, cold thirty-foot-high cavern. The fluid looks like blood but drips from several enormous tree roots that hang down from the ceiling or protrude from the walls, giving the impression of runny sap. This glowing substance accumulates in a ten-foot-diameter pool in the middle of the cave, surrounding what appear to be four immense stone fingers and a thumb, each tipped with a red crystal talon. These digits protrude from the ground, as if some buried statue were reaching up from below to gather the liquid in the palm of its hand.

The winding stairwell from area **E15** descends nearly 60 feet below ground before reaching this cavern. With a successful DC 18 Nature check to Recall Knowledge, a PC identifies the tree roots as those of a sugi tree, but even if they’re the roots of the 100-foot-tall one in area **E13** above, they seem far too immense. This entire chamber is a supernatural manifestation of the ancient clash between Tan Sui-Jing and Kugaptee that transformed everything into a larger-than-life replica. As with the roots, Kugaptee’s petrified fingers that extend from the ground, each standing 5 feet tall, are much larger than those he possessed in life.

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The fluid dripping from the tree roots is fresh, warm blood, another manifestation of the ancient clash as Kugaptee leeches Tan Sui-Jing's reincarnated life of its power, absorbing the blood into his still mostly-buried corpse below. The tree roots shown on the map don't reach the floor, allowing the PCs to move over the ground below them with ease.

**Creatures:** The primary architect of the monastery's corruption and the central victim of Kugaptee's influence stands shin-deep in the pool of blood in the center of the room. This individual is Xin Yue, and she has spent almost the entirety of the past several months, starting a few weeks after the first day of summer, in a constant cycle of prayer here as she works to guide Kugaptee's spirit back to life. Left unopposed, her work results in the collapse of the Tan Sugi tree above and Kugaptee's awakening, but hopefully the PCs put a stop to this process before that event comes

to pass in the dead of winter. She's attended by six kurobozus, who gather around the room and watch raptly as her work continues.


When Xin Yue notices the PCs, she addresses them as follows.

"Ah, yes. I've been expecting you. Great Kugaptee foretold that townsfolk playing at being heroes would arrive soon. Your arrival is timely and saves me the hassle of sending for you. Great Kugaptee stirs in his grave, but he needs more time to finish the consumption of Sui-Jing's soul. Your flesh, your blood, and your lives will quicken this process. You should feel honored to be chosen such a role. Since you've been so kind as to come directly to Kugaptee to die by my hand, it's only proper that I introduce myself. I am Xin Yue, and I shall be the blade that severs you from the trap you know as the cycle of life and death."

Xin Yue's singular goal is to bring about the revival of Kugaptee, and if the PCs allow her to finish her speech above, she rolls for initiative with Diplomacy; if they attack her before she finishes, she rolls with Perception. She knows that waking Kugaptee means the complete destruction and consumption of the mindscape they're trapped in, and she draws extreme pleasure from the idea that her soul will become one with the fiend she worships.


A fight against all seven foes in this room is well beyond even an Extreme 6 encounter, but the PCs have help on their side, assuming they've purified all four statues and have the aid of Zhi Hui. Once combat begins, the ghost of the monastery's founder manifests at the PCs' side, then raises up her arms and transforms into spiritual energy that flows up into the Tan Sugi tree's roots. The immense roots thrash to life and coil down to constrict and crush the six kurobozus, leaving Xin Yue to face the PCs on her own—much to her frustration and rage.

Once the PCs defeat Xin Yue, the combat is only half complete. Her body splits open as her Profane Reincarnation takes place. While she reincarnates as a sojiruh nindoru, Kugaptee's petrified fingers suddenly flex and shudder. Zhi Hui's scream of agony rips through the cavern as the tree roots appear to wither and decay, and the crushed bodies of the six kurobozus reincarnate as well, each splitting open to release a meokdan nindoru. Back-to-back, these combats entail a Low 6 encounter and a Moderate



Shadow of Kugaptee





6 encounter. At your discretion, if the PCs need aid in the final fight, you can have Zhi Hui's ghost manifest again, but only to cast healing spells on the PCs.

### **XIN YUE**

Page 90

**Initiative** Diplomacy +17 or Perception +15

### **CREATURE 7**

### **MEOKDANS (6)**

Page 84

**Initiative** Perception +9

### **CREATURE 2**

## **Concluding the Adventure**

Once the PCs defeat the final nindoru, a roar rips through the cavern. A shimmering form made from bloody mist and shadows coils up from the center of the cave to tower over the PCs, a shape that never quite settles on one form, reaching out with multiple arms and demonic heads atop coiling stalks. And then, a moment later, the entire cavern suddenly seems to shrink around the PCs. A sense of vertigo, as if suddenly being lifted up into the air, causes stomachs to lurch while the surrounding roots grow smaller but more numerous. The roots wrap around the form of Kugaptee, shrouding it and cutting off the roar. A moment later, the PCs find themselves in a cramped, root-filled cavern barely large enough for them all to stand in. No sign of Kugaptee's fingers remains, and Xin Yue's dead human body (and her gear) lies on the ground, finally at peace. The fiend's grave has been restored, and the immediate threat he poses to Willowshore is no more.

The stairs leading back up to area **E15** are much shorter. When the PCs return to the surface, they find the monastery still in ruins, but the presence of all the undead, monsters, haunts, and nindorus has vanished. More importantly, the Tan Sugi tree now stands healthy at the monastery's core, with no spiderwebs or diseased streaks in sight. Zhi Hui's ghost appears before the PCs one last time, thanking them for their service. This exchange will be the last opportunity the PCs have to speak to her, so allow them enough time to get any final answers from her they can. In particular, the PCs should know now that Willowshore isn't cursed but is a cyclic mindscape that keeps repeating the same year over and over after the town's governor tried (and failed) to perform a ritual meant to further protect everyone from Kugaptee. Now that the PCs have put things right in the monastery, the threat from Kugaptee has been removed, but they remain trapped in this mindscape with no knowledge of how long they've repeated the same year. If the PCs haven't explored

the Hidden Library and recovered its valuable books, Zhi Hui can lead them to this location as well.

Once the PCs have finished speaking to Zhi Hui, her spirit fades away, merging (for now) with the Tan Sugi tree. If the mindscape resets, everything starts over, but if the PCs can break the mindscape, Zhi Hui's soul will finally travel to the afterlife.

## **RETURN TO WILLOWSHORE**

Now that the threat posed by Kugaptee has been resolved and the PCs have gathered the important books and documents they'll need to research the mindscape further, there's nothing more to do other than return to Willowshore and finish the last several weeks of fall. Information for how the PCs can further research the mindscape and discover the whereabouts of Heh Shan-Bao appears at the start of the next adventure, which begins on the first day of winter.

When the PCs return to Willowshore after ending the Kugaptee threat, their fame grows. They earn 2 Reputation Points with both of Willowshore's factions. The people of Willowshore are eager to hear about the PCs' adventures and what they've learned about the curse as well, but the knowledge that the town isn't cursed but trapped in a mindscape could confuse or even distress the townsfolk, especially when it becomes apparent that the PCs haven't actually found a solution for the problem. If the PCs keep what happened at the monastery secret, they lose 4 Hope Points and also lose 4 Reputation Points with each faction since their secrecy breeds concern and frustration. If the PCs do speak about what happened, they can either Lie (with Deception) or tell the truth (with Diplomacy), in which case one PC must attempt a DC 22 skill check. The other PCs can Aid this check. On a success, they earn 1 Hope Point (or 2 Hope Points on a critical success); on a failure, they lose 1 Hope Point (or 3 Hope Points on a critical failure).

While the PCs might believe that Kugaptee's influence caused the hauntings in Willowshore, this assumption is wrong, and as the final weeks of fall will reveal, there are still more supernatural events to come. The revelation that something else entirely is causing these haunts remains a mystery that the PCs shall confront and investigate in the next adventure, culminating in their discovery that Willowshore's ex-governor has become trapped in a mindscape of his own. And the greatest and most staggering discovery yet—that the governor's failed ritual not only created a mindscape, but killed the entire town and trapped its inhabitants within for over a century—will soon be made clear as the cold months of winter take Willowshore into its grasp!

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# First Long Night



As autumn's days yield to the burgeoning night, those who dwell in Shenmen's countryside begin preparations for winter. These preparations are organized around rural families' observation of First Long Night, an evening spent together in solemn commemorations of deceased kin as well as witnessing the community's hopeful aspirations.

While First Long Night speaks to the autumn equinox, it isn't uncommon for pre-festivities to begin a fortnight or two before. Such a practice has its roots in local adaptations of Tian-Shu religious traditions; since the imperial Yixing, adherents of Pharama and Sangpotshi originally set various dates in early autumn for paying respects to the dead and making peace with one's mortality.

First Long Night is a very physical event, even before the date of the festival arrives. As anticipation builds, locals work more exuberantly in hopes of getting ahead of duties so as to have time to prepare for the festival, working to the tempo of resonant folk songs with the lyrics and cadence often containing insights into traditional farming techniques or local legends. Fall's crisp breeze carries the scent of wood-smoked preserved meat and rendered lard as townsfolk prepare food stores, while the noise of construction for temporary festival grounds goes on well into the evening. Everything is vivid, loud, and fun, and everyone is a little more spirited than usual in ghost-haunted Shenmen. The pulsing sweat and pouring blood, the songs, the race to beat the turn of seasons... all intended to remind both the living and dead of the tenacity of life—be it a life still being lived or one that exists only in a spirit's memory.

Even though the occupying forces of Lang Loi and her cronies think they have a stranglehold on spider-cursed Shenmen, First Long Night presents a quiet defiance, as people remember what it means to live for themselves and how often that requires shared commitments to mutual respect and survival. These tiny subversions lead to bolder ones; to survive haunted winters without official support, even the most law-abiding residents are willing to break the jorogumo occupiers' laws to seek itinerant exorcists,

bandit arms dealers, and wandering mercenaries to provide weapons or solutions to overcome the cold season's undead threats. While the jorogumo normally consider these acts of asserting or accumulating power treasonous and punishable with excruciating death, for reasons known only to themselves, they don't generally enforce such punishments near First Long Night.

## Festival Celebrations

While other Tian might characterize First Long Night as a grim, humorless vigil against winter and monsters, Shenmen's inhabitants celebrate it as a festival of cautious hope, where they protect life's little joys that might otherwise be drained dry by uncaring overlords, be they arachnid, ghostly, or otherwise. The following celebrations are key among the ways in First Long Night is observed.

### COLD NIGHTS, WARM HEARTS

Hot desserts (such as sesame and peanut soup) and brewed tea are shared between all, along with mooncakes, glutinous rice balls, and fruits. Local syncretic beliefs encourage such generosity, stating such warmth and unity are sure to impress visiting ancestors or benevolent spirits who might then return in future years and bring good fortune with them.

### COMMUNAL REVIVALS

While a history of brutal regimes have fractured many social bonds, First Long Night is a time when communities reforge these connections. From checking on neighboring villages to feeding the families next door, each small step brings Shenmen's community closer again.

### ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

First Long Night sees many embarking on dangerous journeys to do good deeds, clean graves, and perform last rites. Helping others this way also helps oneself; after all, it's simpler to feed or bury neighbors rather than deal with undead arising from their starved corpses.

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### IN WILLOWSHORE...

Note that much of this article explores how the festival of First Long Night exists in the modern day. During this volume's adventure, the impact of over a century of rule under the jorogumo isn't as much a factor in how the festival's traditions have grown. The adventure has advice on how these changes might affect some of the celebrations and traditions where the lack of 115 years of jorogumo rule wouldn't apply.

### GHOSTS... OR ANCESTORS?

Some in Shenmen fear becoming undead less than witnessing loved ones undergoing such pitiable transformations. Regardless, by cleaning ancestral graves, they prevent the sleeping dead from arising as violent undead. Some seek to exorcise undead who were once family, and thus return their purified spirits to the fold as respected ancestors.

### BRIBING FUMEIYOSHI

Many scatter silver dust near grave sites to bribe Fumeiyoshi, hoping he would accept these offerings and not feel the need to create more undead. Greedy bandits might lurk in wait to rob villagers or pocket the strewn silver dust; villagers often don't mind (providing they escape unharmed), as that simply draws Fumeiyoshi's wrath upon the thieves instead.

### SEASONAL MARKETS

The hubbub of a village's celebrations often draws merchants, priests, and other visitors; locals are quick to host such travelers and offer to purchase their goods and services with food, drink, and hard- hoarded silver dust.

### AGILITY UNDER OPPRESSION

Releasing colorful lanterns into the sky, cutting ropes, poetry praising the moon—these traditions might appear irrelevant oddments. However, they fulfill twofold purposes: one, they allow isolated villages to bond over shared imaginations of a Shenmen identity; two, they allow surreptitious honing and preservation of practical knowledge and skills, right under the jorogumo's haughty noses.

## Traditional Contests

The following three contests serve as traditional highlights for First Long Night festivities. Each of these games are resolved via four skill checks attempted over the course of a set amount of time to accumulate Victory Points (*Gamemastery Guide* 148). Prizes can vary from little more than accolades and bragging rights to actual valuables or increases to reputation (examples of prizes that can be earned by winning these games are presented in this adventure on page 16). In this adventure, the assumption is that a single PC takes part in a contest and doesn't compete against other PCs, instead competing against fellow villagers. A PC who earns at least 4 Victory Points wins the contest, while a PC who earns at least 6 Victory Points achieves an overwhelming win and might earn additional rewards (see page 16 of this adventure for examples).

The DCs of the skill checks to earn Victory Points for these contests assume that participants are 4th-level, both because it's during this adventure's first chapter that First Long Night takes place and because this level is appropriate for the most skilled locals in typical small towns and villages to find challenge. Feel free to increase or decrease these DCs if you wish to challenge PCs of different levels.

### ADMIRING THE MOON

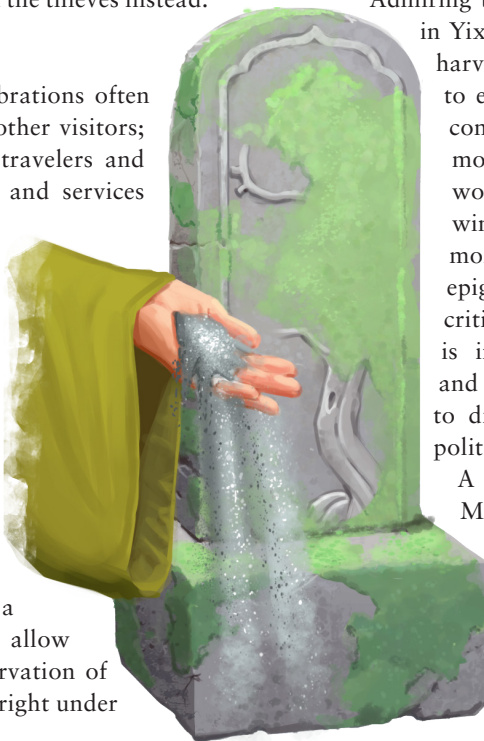
Admiring the Moon is a game with roots in Yixing courtier culture. Facing the harvest moon, participants gather to enjoy mooncakes and tea while composing poetry to extol the moon's grace and beauty. Elegant wordplay and evocative verse win accolades and praises, while more labored metaphors and epigrams spur encouragements and critiques. As the night goes on, tea is invariably replaced with wine and spirits, and poetry gives way to discussions on metaphysics and political philosophy.

A typical bout of Admiring the Moon involves an hour of eating, drinking, and composing poems.

### ADMIRING THE MOON

**CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION**

**Skill Checks** DC 17 Art Lore, DC 19 Performance, DC 21 Religion





## BUNDLE-CUTTING

Encouraged by onlooking fellows, participants strive to cut hanging bundles of straw loose from tightly-woven lattices. There's an additional twist to this contest, as each participant begins the contest bound in twine ropes. Stone daggers are laid on the ground some distance away so that participants must first undo their own bindings, then dash to retrieve daggers, and finally run back to cut as many bundles free as they can within a time limit.

Bundle-cutting evolved from training exercises to help villagers deal with being captured and bound by bandits or caught in woodland traps—techniques that are equally useful in escaping the webs of the giant spiders and similar creatures who have long posed dangers to the locals, even before jorogumo rule. Once a participant escapes their bindings, the cutting of other bindings represent swift action to rescue and release allies who have been bound.

Such exercises, of course, have applications in overcoming the webbing of jorogumo as well. To reduce suspicions and shed implications of sedition, the ropes and knots are designed to look unlike webs at all; the loud farming songs sung during these games are also off-putting to the sophisticated eardrums of city-dwelling collaborators and jorogumo occupiers alike. Thus, through this innocuous contest punctuated by laughter, song, and cheering, Shenmen's people sharpen their skills in plain sight. Perhaps these skills might be used one day not simply to slice straw, but also to cut through silken webs and mottled carapaces.

This contest is much faster-paced than the others with a typical bout of bundle-cutting resolving over the course of 1 to 2 minutes, depending on the song chosen (regardless of the time, the contest still resolves via four skill checks).

## BUNDLE-CUTTING CONTEST

**CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION**

**Skill Checks** DC 17 Thievery, DC 19 Athletics, DC 21 Survival

**Special** Before any skill checks can be attempted, a participant must Escape (DC 17) from their bonds. If a participant Escapes on their first attempt, they can attempt the four skill checks to win bundle-cutting without penalty. If a participant requires two Escape attempts to get free, they take a -1 circumstance penalty to their four skill checks. If a participant requires three or four Escape attempts to get free, their following skill checks take a -2 circumstance penalty. A fifth Escape attempt is always successful, but after this, the participant takes a -3 circumstance penalty to their following skill checks.

## LANTERN MAKING

Sky Lanterns were originally developed during the days of Shu for sending military signals. The ancient practice now has a different cultural significance: representing reunions and people's wishes finding their ways to the heavens.

These sky lanterns have bamboo frames and are made of oiled rice paper. They incorporate designs of fanciful shapes like birds (but never crows or ravens due to the famed jorogumo's intense dislike of tengu), dragons, and other flying creatures.

For a while, spiders were extremely popular motifs for lantern design, perhaps as a sign of flattery to the jorogumo overlords; however, that trend fell out of favor several years ago. Officials wishing to curry Lady Lang Loi's favor sponsored a grand lantern making ceremony and commissioned a massive lantern shaped like a golden orb-weaver spider, which was so large as to eclipse even the harvest moon. This gigantic lantern eventually crashed in spectacular fashion. The ensuing conflagration burned down several buildings, but the collateral destruction of a large statue of Lady Lang Loi resulted in her public accusations and punishments against the officials and artisans involved, on charges of encouraging disrespect and fomenting rebellion.

After such an inauspicious incident, most lantern making ceremonies have resumed their rural, less high-profile focus. In a fitting nod to its military, functional origins, villages now also use lantern making ceremonies for basic communications. While the jorogumo purge on scholarship has led to the loss of specialized knowledge like signaling techniques, it's still possible to share simple yet vital information with released sky lanterns. On First Long Night, if the horizons are filled with flying lights, it reassures many to know their neighbors are still alive and able to construct sky lanterns. On the contrary, if a nearby village doesn't release its own sky lanterns on this important festival, it's very possible they've fallen to ghosts or worse. In such situations, neighboring villages might dispatch their bravest members to investigate, bring aid, and, if necessary, provide exorcisms for the unquiet dead.

A lantern making ceremony involves two hours of designing and crafting lanterns, culminating in the lighting and release of them all at once; the winner of the contest is the one whose lantern evokes the most admiration from the spectators.

## LANTERN MAKING CEREMONY

**CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION**

**Skill Check** DC 19 Crafting

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## Festival Fashion

While exact styles and outfits worn during First Long Night can vary from town to town, certain touchstones persist throughout Shenmen.

### RED STRINGS

By wearing red strings around the wrist, festival-goers honor a Sangpotshi tradition that asserts such threads absorb ghostly influence and fall off after resisting hostile spirits. If one falls, don't pick them up unless you wish for return visits from the undead! Instead, leave them to be washed away by winter's storms.

### MOONCAKES AND TEA

Communities gather to share these delicacies, shaped like the fullness of the harvest moon, pairing them alongside strong, aged tea. Wealthier kitchens stuff mooncakes with luxurious ingredients, such as osmanthus-infused lotus paste and salted eggs, while humbler pantries conjure simpler fare from salt, pepper, fried shallots, or crushed tangerine peel. A festival-goer typically travels with a small wicker basket on the belt to hold extra mooncakes.

### LIGHTLY ARMED

Weapons bearing magic that impart lasting illumination are popular for serving as light sources that can be used for defense as needed. While not all undead possess such extreme light vulnerability, they can all see in the dark, and not having to have a hand free to hold a torch or lantern can mean the difference between life and death.

### MINIATURE LANTERNS

Not everyone can afford a glowing weapon, and even those who do often wear a single miniature lantern candle that's traditionally hooked via a short chain to a belt or buckle. Lighting this personal lantern in the last minutes of the night as the sun rises symbolizes the end of First Long Night.

### DRINKING WITH THE CRICKETS

Villagers regularly feed crickets to spiders, hoping to discourage tattletales (represented by the noisy crickets) and symbolically satiate the jorogumo's hungers. In fall, many leave tiny bowls of alcoholic grain-mush as overtures to these crickets' spirits, both to beg forgiveness as well as give thanks for their roles as sacrificial proxies. Festival-goers often carry a few small gourd containers to carry alcohol so they can refill empty bowls as needed or, alternatively, small wicker cages that contain crickets that can be fed to spiders.

### WEARING THE FOREST

To ward off rain and snow, festival-goers favor capes, conical hats, and shoes of waxed straw or bamboo. These materials are ever-present, naturally water-repellent, and easy to work with. Their muddy browns also provide admirable yet affordable camouflage within Shenmen's monster-filled wilderness.

Locals refer to this practice as "wearing the forest."



## Festival Foods

The following two treats are wildly popular during First Long Night.

### SHENMEN SALT AND PEPPER MOONCAKES

*These thin, flaky baked goods are popular in Shenmen for commemorating the harvest moon of First Long Night. While more patrician diners might scorn these peppery biscuit-like discs as not being "proper mooncakes," villages across resource-scarce Shenmen swear by these layered pastries' swirl of savory saltiness, peppery heat, and citrus notes.*

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon white pepper powder (add or reduce to taste)
  - 1 tablespoon rose-infused sugar
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons salt (add or reduce to taste)
  - 2 handfuls crushed tangerine peels
  - 2 cups fried shallots
  - 1 cup sesame seeds
  - 1 cup melon seeds
  - 1 portion Tian-Shu flaky pastry dough (also known as Tian-Shu water-oil dough), rolled out into a 24×24 inch sheet (approximately 60×60 cm)
  - 1 cup lard
  - 2 egg yolks, beaten
- Heat oven to 350°F (180°C).
  - Make the filling by mixing 1 cup each of shallots, peels, and both seeds onto a baking tray, and bake until the seeds turn yellow. Then pour them out into a bowl to cool.
  - Mix and knead the pepper, sugar, salt, and remaining shallots evenly into the pastry dough. If the dough is too dry, add lard.
  - Separate the kneaded dough into 8 3×3 inch (approximately 7.5×7.5 cm) balls.
  - Mix and knead each ball again. Add lard as needed to smoothen the texture.
  - Separate the filling of shallots, peels, and seeds into equal portions, and allocate 1 equal portion to each ball of dough.
  - Pinch each ball to seal them, flatten them into discs, and pinch again to seal them evenly. Ensure the dough is as thin as possible without letting the filling stick out.
  - Arrange the sealed pastries on a lined baking sheet, and brush each with beaten egg.
  - Bake for about 20 minutes in the middle of the oven, or until golden brown.
  - Serve mooncakes with tea, preferably fermented or aged.



### BLACK SESAME SOUP WITH PEANUT-FILLED GLUTINOUS RICE BALLS

*These nutritious, nutty soups, as black as Shenmen's ill-lit skies, possess a roasted, bittersweet tinge and are often consumed as evening desserts to fortify the body against the night's cold and damp weather. Glutinous rice balls, often filled with ground peanuts, are sometimes added; these rice balls provide an additional sweet surprise and remind diners of the possibility of hidden joys even on the darkest nights.*

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups roasted black sesame seeds
  - 1/2 cup jasmine rice
  - 3 1/2 chunks rock sugar
  - 1/2 tablespoon salt
  - 2 tablespoons roasted sesame oil
  - 12 cups water
  - 1 bowl glutinous rice flour
  - 1 bowl toasted ground peanuts
  - 1/4 cup sugar
- Ground the roasted sesame seeds into fine powder.
  - Place the roasted sesame powder, jasmine rice, rock sugar, salt, and roast sesame oil into a pot.
  - Add 6 cups of water into the pot.
  - Bring to a simmer and cook on low heat, as you want slow cooking for a smoother soup.
  - Over the next hour or two, stir regularly to even out the texture of the soup; let the rice grains be totally cooked and absorbed into the soup. Add water as needed, and be careful not to let the soup burn.
  - Mix the glutinous rice flour with a bit of water, and pinch into dough. If the dough becomes too thin, add more water to retain its elasticity; be careful not to let the skin break.
  - Pinch the dough into wrappers, each approximately 1 1/2 inches (3.8 cm) wide.
  - Mix the sugar and toasted ground peanuts to get the filling.
  - Stuff each wrapper with filling, and pinch to seal into balls.
  - In a separate pot, add the rice balls and 6 cups of water, and bring to a boil. Stir carefully to ensure the rice balls don't stick to the sides of the pot or the ladle. Once the rice balls float to the top, remove them and deposit into the sesame soup.
  - Serve the soup and rice balls in small bowls. Eat when warm.

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# Sangpotshi



Faith in the cycle of reincarnation is widespread across Tian Xia, and Sangpotshi is the organizing philosophy around how reincarnation works and what purpose it serves. Most followers don't see Sangpotshi as a belief that competes with worship of existing gods, but rather complements these faiths. The philosophy focuses on how to live a mortal life well. Some are skeptical about the practice, seeing it as an attempt to "cheat" the regular order of the afterlife, but Tian deities and their followers hold a different perspective. After all, reincarnation is as valid a judgment as any that a soul might face. Sangpotshi teaches followers that reincarnation is an exercise in conviction, for each life presents as many occasions to stray from one's tenets as it does opportunities to improve oneself.

Sangpotshi is also known as the River of Life. The name isn't metaphorical—it describes a parallel to the River of Souls, which carries the souls of the dead to Pharama's Boneyard. Those who believe in reincarnation teach that these souls enter the River of Life instead, whose currents carry souls back to mortal life as many times as they're destined to continue the cycle of rebirth. The cumulative effects of lived actions across all lives determine the circumstances of a soul's next life. Tian deities, their representatives, and like-minded allies protect the River of Life from disruptive forces who would prey on souls in transit, but they don't always succeed. The influence of supernatural manipulation or the taint of undeath can tear a soul from the cycle of reincarnation, transforming it into a *nindoru*—a destructive category of fiend that seeks to disrupt the cycle of reincarnation and to destroy the lasting works of mortal life by diverting a soul from its path to enlightenment into corruption and cruelty.

## The Nature of Reincarnation

Theories abound about what factors determine the lot of a reincarnated soul, and the most popular schools of thought exist as "paths," each with unique practices. The **Heavens Path** originates from the teachings of Vudrani philosopher Bhoja Pandiri, who believed gods judge how mortals lived and assign their station in their next life.

Adherents of the **Earthly Path** believe fate is a natural occurrence. Actions have observable consequences within a single lifetime, so the logical conclusion is fate follows the same rules across multiple lifetimes. How people treat each other is what matters most.

The **Traveler's Path** is the final major practice. Rather than focus on philosophical pursuits, the Traveler's Path encourages the physical act of exploring the nature of existence. Adherents of this path find role models in the eponymous Sangpots, enlightened individuals who gained such a profound understanding of the universe that they merged with it.

Some believe that the true nature of reincarnation lies somewhere between these various beliefs. A soul's fate and destiny isn't a quantifiable force that can be measured any more than one can measure the total amount of good will or suffering in existence. It can instead be best imagined as individual ledgers in which anyone can write an entry. The faithful servant of a deity might receive a positive entry from a divine representative, while a victim might place a debt on the ledger of their aggressor, and a criminal who feels intense guilt for their actions might leave a demerit on themselves long after society and their victims have forgiven them. It's also up to those submitting entries to act on them, for there's no objective outsider enforcing these judgments. It's simply the sum of what people believe they owe each other and themselves, and the extent of their motivation to act on those beliefs.

Such convictions might be the force that allows those who believe in reincarnation to choose to be born anew. The greatest heroes and villains throughout history are those who accomplished what they believed they must do. In that sense, fate is malleable, and each path can find substantial evidence to validate its teachings. The most powerful priests and mystics of every path claim to be able to see the fated connections an individual has accumulated with others all of their lifetimes. They follow those threads to understand patterns of behavior and cycles of reckoning between people. Their knowledge enables them to identify people's deepest desires, arbitrate disputes between souls, and demand immediate fateful reckoning.

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Another key tenet of Sangpotshi is adherence to moderation. The end goal of Sangpotshi is to become an ideal version of oneself and to transcend mortal suffering. Sangpotshi mystics teach that suffering comes from desire. They don't pass judgment on whether individual desires are good or bad, but they point out that desires create attachments to the mortal realm that cause souls to stagnate and suffer. Someone who becomes obsessed with a goal, for example, becomes unhappy if they can't accomplish it. They might pursue their goal to the detriment of other aspects of their life. Alternatively, someone who achieves a desire might fear losing what they've acquired, focusing on preserving the status quo instead of being satisfied with what they possess.

Spurning desire doesn't mean abandoning life goals or societal responsibilities. Sangpotshi frowns on those who abandon their obligations to avoid attachments, viewing that as its own extreme, though followers sometimes choose to set aside their circumstances if doing so doesn't harm others. The philosophy instead provides guidance on how to live well within one's circumstances and settle one's spiritual accounts. That guidance includes not diving too deeply into past lives. Most followers of Sangpotshi believe there's a reason people—samsarans excluded—don't remember their previous lives. They understand that rebirth gives them an opportunity to wipe their slate clean and shed attachments that have run their course or become unhealthy. Sangpotshi mystics prize their ability to access information about prior incarnations but are careful to use it in moderation. They only peek into the past when they believe it's relevant to a problem plaguing someone in the present.

## SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

People in Tian Xia sometimes seek out a Sangpotshi mystic when they encounter difficulties in their life to learn if those difficulties are the result of a spiritual connection. Some types of these relationships occur frequently and are common knowledge in most Tian Xia cultures. Individuals tend to encounter the same people who impacted them in prior incarnations.

Kindred ties arise from those who developed strong connections in previous lives, though the nature of those connections varies. They might have been family, close friends, or compatriots, such as farmers working communal land together or soldiers fighting in the same warband. These relationships can be propitious or antagonistic. Two friends who took care of each other throughout a previous life could now have a propitious relationship as spouses or parent and child. Those same relationships can also be antagonistic due

to a spiritual debt. Perhaps a con artist stole someone's life savings, causing their premature death—that relationship can manifest in the next life as a spouse or child who causes great financial loss. Such a loss can be deliberate, such as through theft, or indirect, such as due to a health crisis.

Mystics are careful to warn people not to use spiritual relationships as an excuse to justify resentment, nor to make assumptions about what spiritual bonds exist. Going back to the previous antagonistic example, a spouse who steals could be subconsciously taking revenge for a theft in a previous life, or they could be starting a new cycle of anger and resentment where none existed before.

Friendships can be the start of new relationships or the recurrence of weaker spiritual bonds. Ephemeral friendships might be due to a single spiritual bond from a previous life that results in the souls parting once resolved. Perhaps two strangers came to someone's aid in a previous life. They become study partners in their next life under the tutelage of the soul they helped, and when they learn the skills they need to attain their dream jobs, they then drift apart.

A good destiny can improve one's position at birth. A great hero from a previous life might be born into a wealthy family in the next because of the good will they incurred from many other souls. The past doesn't dictate the future, though, and Sangpotshi warns that you should respect people for their behavior, not their status. A wealthy heir could become cruel and greedy in their new life because they lack empathy for others.

Sangpotshi followers believe some births into bad situations result from fate, but they again warn that it's dangerous to make such assumptions. Some powerful mystics choose to reincarnate into difficult circumstances because it can cause their powers to manifest more quickly. Other souls that are close to becoming Sangpots take oaths of self-sacrifice, choosing to suffer ill fortune to prevent it from falling on innocent souls. The assignment of souls into new bodies is unknowable in many respects. A fallen branch can choose where it washes ashore no more than a soul in the River of Life chooses where it reenters life. Fate can improve one's odds of being born into certain circumstances or encountering specific events in one's life, but it never guarantees such occurrences.

How one responds to their current situation is the most important aspect of Sangpotshi and fate. Receive good fortune with humility and face trouble with a positive attitude. Sangpotshi tells people to do good whenever possible, exercise good judgment, and live by the rule of treating others as you would want others to treat you.



## Past Life Curiosity

So why would anyone ever want to know about their past? Perhaps someone feels they're in an unjust situation and can't tolerate it any longer. Take the example of a worker under an oppressive boss. Such a person might seek out a mystic and ask if the boss oppresses them because of something they did in a past life. The answer might be no, in which case the worker might feel free to leave their situation to find a better working environment.

If the answer is yes, the worker might find comfort in knowing their suffering has a purpose and stay so that they can end their spiritual debt. If they leave, they could find themselves working under the boss again in the future or, worse, become related to them in a future life where they can't escape their debt so easily. Perhaps the mystic sees that their troubles will only last another year, and if they wait it out, their relationship with their boss will improve or the boss will leave. The mystic might also see another way to resolve the debt, such as telling them why their boss is so angry, enabling the person to confront their boss and resolve their problems directly. Mystics share details about someone's past life when they fear that ignorance will result in a bad outcome.

## CYCLES OF LIFE

Sangpotshi takes a long view on life. Its texts describe cycles that mirror life, death, and rebirth—the rise and fall of civilizations, the renewal of nature after a disaster, and the familiar behaviors people fall back on when confronted with change.

Some cycles are constructive and should be preserved, but others perpetuate suffering that might not be within the power of individuals to break. Even negative cycles can help souls grow toward eventual enlightenment, with the difficulties that arise from constant economic peril being one such example. Nonetheless, those who follow Sangpotshi agree that, without a doubt, poverty causes immense suffering and should be counteracted. At the same time, fate dictates that different behaviors and beliefs lead to unequal outcomes. Followers of Sangpotshi do what lies within their power to combat inequality while accepting that one must live with the reality of its existence. They encourage those who lament their situation to examine what they can learn from their experiences. This introspection can lead to enlightenment and change. If everyone treats each other well, they might eventually eliminate poverty. Sangpotshi's guidelines help followers nurture positive cycles and escape or counter negative ones.

Followers are also careful to protect the balance between the natural and urbanized worlds. They see all living creatures as on the same path and treat them with the dignity they would want to receive in turn. Helping others is a duty, though they're careful to assist in ways that allow others to learn and grow rather than become reliant on external aid. They promote sustainable methods of living, taking only what one needs and in ways that minimize harm. Such choices aim to preserve existing cycles so that future generations have access to the same opportunities that past ones did. This desire to preserve and uplift means that violence is a last resort, but it isn't anathema. Destructive forces seek to corrupt the cycle of reincarnation, and Sangpotshi followers defend the River of Life through all means at their disposal.



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## NINDORUS

Nindorus are among the greatest enemies of reincarnation and the Sangpotshi philosophy. All creatures that consume souls are threats to reincarnation, but nindorus elicit additional enmity because they are a corruption of Sangpotshi itself.

These fiends take many forms, but many share identifiable traits, such as long broken limbs, heads trapped (or even replaced) by baskets or cages, wounds that seep clouds of blood-red butterflies, faces that emerge from within faces, or the utilization of broken weapons and tools held together by sinister forces. Corruption runs so deep within them that their yearning for what they've lost becomes twisted, manifesting as an appetite for reincarnated souls above all others.

The fiends aren't completely isolated from creation, though. They can amplify their selfish thoughts to manifest objects or even minions that serve them

alone. The most powerful can manifest entire societies or realms from only their thoughts. Nindorus treat these creations as prized possessions but forget about them as soon as they're destroyed. Some scholars see this behavior as a mockery of reincarnation, drawing a parallel between an individual's life and the ephemeral existence of a fiend's tool. Such speculation comes from nindorus behaving as the destructive opposites of Sangpotshi mystics. They have access to similar repertoires of occult spells, and they tend to stalk temples and boundaries between nature and civilization—the same places Sangpotshi mystics often patrol. Critics of such theories point out that those locations are also where nindorus can find their preferred prey and insist that base instincts drive nindorus, dismissing the notion that they have any organized purpose.

See pages 84–89 of this adventure for more information about nindorus. Future volumes of *Season of Ghosts* will provide more information about these sinister fiends.

## Player Options

These options can be unlocked by following the ways of Sangpotshi or by studying texts and lore containing Sangpotshi secrets. In this adventure, the PCs can unlock these options at the end of the adventure by removing the evil influences present in the monastery and then studying the texts found within.

### NEW FEATS

#### CALM AND CENTERED

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

**Prerequisites** master in Occultism

Your occult connection to the world helps you deal with being frightened or stupefied. When your frightened or stupefied condition values would decrease, decrease the value by 2.

#### COMFORTING PRESENCE

FEAT 10

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE EMOTION GENERAL MENTAL SKILL

**Prerequisites** master in Occultism

**Trigger** An adjacent ally becomes frightened or stupefied.

You use your occult connection to your allies to take on the fear and confusion they feel. Focus on your own calmness and pull in your nearby allies' emotions. Reduce the frightened and stupefied condition values of adjacent allies by 1, and increase your frightened and stupefied condition values by the same amount.



## GO WITH THE FLOW

FEAT 7

UNCOMMON GENERAL SECRET SKILL

**Prerequisites** master in Occultism

**Frequency** once per day

**Trigger** A creature detects your attempt to Impersonate, and you're within 30 feet of at least one other creature.

You have an occult connection to the world that helps you blend in with the cacophony of life around you. Attempt an Occultism check against the creature's Perception DC. On a success, the creature mistakenly identifies another creature within 30 feet of you as you instead.

## NEW SPELLS

### CYCLE OF RETRIBUTION

SPELL 1

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MENTAL

**Traditions** divine, occult

**Cast** >>> somatic, verbal

**Range** touch; **Targets** 1 creature

**Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

An understanding of how violence begets more violence fills your target, causing it mental anguish when it attempts to take violent actions. The target must attempt a Will saving throw.

**Critical Success** The target is unaffected.

**Success** The next time the target takes a hostile action, the target takes 1d4 mental damage; the spell's duration then ends.

**Failure** The first time in a round when the target takes a hostile action, the target takes 1d4 mental damage.

**Critical Failure** Each time the target takes a hostile action, the target takes 1d4 mental damage.

**Heightened (+1)** The mental damage increases by 1d4.

### FATEFUL CONDEMNATION

SPELL 6

UNCOMMON AURA ENCHANTMENT INCAPACITATION MENTAL

**Traditions** divine, occult

**Cast** >>> somatic, verbal

**Range** 30 feet; **Targets** 1 living creature

**Duration** 1 minute

You draw upon the target's negative fate to afflict it and its nearby allies with the unintended consequences of its past lives. Spiritual echoes of the target's past lives instill overwhelming feelings of doubt, regret, and despair into the minds of the target and its nearby allies. The effects depend on the target's Will save.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature takes 4d6 mental damage, and then an aura of shimmering mist with a 10-foot emanation surrounds the creature. This mist isn't dense enough to affect sight, but it does cause the creature and any of its allies in the aura to take a -1 status penalty to all skill checks.

**Failure** As success, but the creature takes an initial 8d6 mental damage and is then slowed 1 for the duration of the effect.

**Critical Failure** As success, but the creature takes an initial 16d6 mental damage, then is slowed 1 for the duration of the effect. Any of the target's allies who begin their turn in the 10-foot emanation is slowed 1 for 1 round.

### FATED HEALING

SPELL 1

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MENTAL LINGUISTIC

**Traditions** divine, occult

**Cast** >>> somatic, verbal

**Range** 30 feet; **Targets** 2 creatures who are hostile toward each other

**Duration** 5 rounds

You speak about the consequences of actions people take against each other and how it's possible to break cycles of violence simply by making a different choice. The targets regain 1d4 Hit Points at the end of their own turns while the spell is in effect. If a target uses a hostile action against the other target, the spell ends for the target that used the hostile action.

**Heightened (+1)** The targets regain an additional 1d4 Hit Points at the end of their own turns.

### LIFE'S FLOWING RIVER

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON EVOCATION

**Traditions** occult

**Cast** >>>> material, somatic, verbal

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** 1 minute

You create a volume of faint shimmering light that resembles a flowing river and sheds dim light for 10 feet on each side. The river begins in an adjacent square to you and extends in a straight 5-foot path to its maximum range or until it hits a solid wall, whichever comes first. A creature that begins its turn in the river or enters one of the river's spaces must attempt a Will save.

**Critical Success** The creature ignores the river's effects until the start of its next turn.

**Success** The creature treats all squares occupied by the river as difficult terrain until the start of its next turn. If the creature is undead or a nindoru fiend, it takes 2d6 mental damage.

**Failure** As success, but the creature is also knocked prone. If the creature is undead or a nindoru fiend, it takes 4d6 mental damage.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature is pushed 20 feet along the river's path in the direction of flow. If the creature is undead or a nindoru fiend, it takes 8d6 mental damage.

**Heightened (+1)** The mental damage increases by 1d6.

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Several unusual magical items, spells, and rituals await discovery by the PCs in this adventure.

## Pilgrimage Gifts

The following items represent possible gifts the PCs can earn at the start of this adventure's third chapter. You should assign one of these items as a reward to each PC, as described on page 43. Items not used can either be placed in area E14 of the monastery for the PCs to discover later or instead might be offered for sale by the mysterious merchant Shinzo after the PCs return to Willowshore once they complete their duties in Chapter 3.



Branch of the Great Sugi

### BRANCH OF THE GREAT SUGI

ITEM 7

RARE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 360 gp

Usage held in one hand; Bulk 1

This large tree branch is alive, despite having been harvested from the sugi tree it once belonged to. This long, flexible, and limber branch is a +1 *striking whip*. When used to Strike, the branch snaps with the sound of a cracking whip but fills the air surrounding the point of impact with the pleasant scent of freshly cut cedar and a sprinkling of fallen leaves on the ground.

**Activate** ♦♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You place the *branch of the great sugi* on the corpse of an evil creature, then cause the branch to suddenly grow into a sugi tree, up to 25 feet tall with a 2-foot-wide trunk. As it grows, it emits a pulse of soothing energy, restoring 3d8+8 Hit Points to all creatures in a 10-foot burst. A character can Climb the tree with a successful DC 10 Athletics check, and its branches effortlessly support the weight of any Medium or smaller creature. The sugi tree reverts to its whip form after 1 hour unless you transform it back before then.

**Activate** ♦ Interact; You transform the *branch of the great sugi* from its tree form back into its whip form.

### GHOST SCARF

ITEM 7

RARE ABJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 360 gp

Usage worn belt or scarf; Bulk –

This 6-foot-long scarf shimmers with the silvery light of the River of Souls while worn, providing illumination equivalent to that of a candle. You can deactivate or activate this radiance as an Interact action. The dangling lengths of a *ghost scarf* softly billow in the presence of haunts, granting the wearer a +1 item bonus to all Perception checks and Perception DCs to resolve discovering a haunt or rolling initiative when a haunt triggers.

**Activate** ♦ envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The scarf extends silvery

threads that wrap around a weapon you carry, granting the effects of a *ghost touch* property rune to that weapon for 5 minutes. If the weapon already bears a *ghost touch* rune, you instead gain a +1 item bonus to Fortitude saves against effects from incorporeal undead for 5 minutes.

### HAIRPIN OF BLOOMING FLOWERS

ITEM 7

RARE EVOCATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 360 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

The flower that adorns this hairpin is a blooming lotus flower that varies in color; it regrows in a day after the item is activated. Whether or not the hairpin's flower is in bloom, as long as you wear it and it's invested, it grants a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks.

**Activate** ♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You pluck the flower from the hairpin and scatter the petals, creating a flurry of color in a 10-foot burst centered on you. You become concealed for 1 minute or until you move from your current location. Any creature within the 10-foot burst when you Activate the Item must succeed at a DC 23 Reflex save or become dazzled until the end of its next turn (or blinded until the end of its next turn on a critical failure). The flower blooms again the next day.



## RED THREAD KNOT

ITEM 7

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 360 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

This small length of red thread is knotted six times, with a loop at each end so it can either be worn as a bracelet or anklet, or hung from a strap.

**Activate**  $\curvearrowright$  envision; **Trigger** You critically fail a save; **Effect** The knot unties one of its six knots, altering your fate in the process. Treat your saving throw as if you failed the check rather than critically failed the check. This is a fortune effect. Once the sixth knot unties, it becomes a non-magical red thread.

## RESOLUTE MIND WRAP ITEM 7

RARE ABJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 360 gp

Usage worn headwear; Bulk –

The followers of the Tan Sugi monastery understood the value of protecting the mind from the intrusion of violence and anger and infused this strip of striped green and brown cloth with their beliefs. Wrapped around the head, the stripes almost evoke the patterns of sugi branches coiled around the wearer's skull. The *resolute mind wrap* grants you resistance 5 against mental damage.

**Activate**  $\curvearrowright$  envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You attempt a Will saving throw against a mental effect; **Effect** The *resolute mind wrap* clings more tightly to your head, granting you a +1 item bonus to your Will saving throw. If you succeed at this saving throw, the resistance to mental damage granted by the *resolute mind wrap* increases to 10 for 1 minute.

## ROOT BOOTS

ITEM 7

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 360 gp

Usage worn boots; Bulk L

The soles of these plain leather boots look like coils of flattened roots. The boots allow for full-foot flexibility despite their sturdy make and smell faintly of evergreen trees. While worn and invested, your footsteps sound like rustling leaves, granting you a +1 item bonus to Stealth checks in a forest or wooded area.

**Activate**  $\curvearrowright$  envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The small roots extending from the soles of these boots allow you to move freely and easily across wood. For 10 minutes, you gain a 20-foot climb Speed on trees and other wooden surfaces, and you don't need to use your hands to climb.

**Activate**  $\curvearrowright$  envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You're standing on earth, and something attempts to

move you against your will; **Effect** The roots extend from your boots to grip the ground, granting you a +4 item bonus to your Fortitude DC against effects that attempt to move you, such as Shove or Pull.

## SPIRIT FAN

ITEM 7

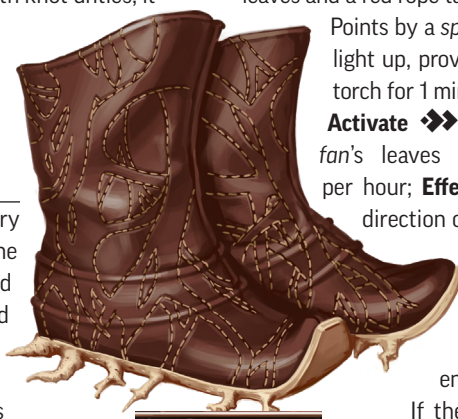
RARE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 360 gp

Usage held in one hand; Bulk L

This elegant black, gold-tipped +1 *striking fighting fan* (Treasure Vault 25) is adorned with images of three golden leaves and a red rope tassel. If a creature is reduced to 0 Hit Points by a *spirit fan*, the golden leaves on the fan light up, providing illumination equal to that of a torch for 1 minute.

**Activate**  $\curvearrowright$  envision; **Requirement** The *spirit fan's* leaves are illuminated; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You sweep the *spirit fan* in the direction of a single target you can see within 30 feet, releasing the life energy in the form of a streak of golden light. The *spirit fan* goes dark. If the target is a living creature, the energy restores 3d8+8 Hit Points. If the target is undead, it takes 2d8+8 positive damage (DC 23 basic Fortitude save).



Root Boots

## New Alchemical Item

This new alchemical item isn't initially for sale in Willowshore, but once the PCs discover bars of it while traveling Pilgrim's Path, additional doses can be found for sale in town.

## INVIGORATING SOAP

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE HEALING PROCESSED

Price 28 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

**Activate** 10 minutes (Interact)

This slender bar of pine-scented soap can only be activated when you're immersed in water. Upon activation, the soap covers you in a sudsy foam that quickly fades, filling you with energy and soothing away aches and pains. It immediately restores 10 Hit Points and removes the fatigued condition. If you begin an 8-hour period of rest immediately after using invigorating soap, you regain an additional 10 Hit Points from resting.

## New Spells

The following six spells are said to have been originally created by Zhi Hui, founder of the Tan Sugi monastery. In truth, the spells predate Zhi Hui, and their use was merely advocated by her in life. Even



though she lacked the skill to cast all six of these spells, she made a point of preserving their knowledge and making them available to her followers. After her death, knowledge of these spells faded alongside the Tan Sugi monastery's traditions. In this adventure, they exist only in the form of six fragile scrolls hidden away in a secret room in the monastery ruins.

## ENTANGLE FATE

## SPELL 4

**RARE** **DIVINATION** **MENTAL**

**Traditions** arcane, occult

**Cast** ♦♦ somatic, verbal

**Range** 30 feet; **Targets** 2 to 4 creatures in range

**Saving Throw** Will; **Duration** 3 rounds

You cause a swirl of energy to entangle the fates of all caught within the blast. Each creature in the area must attempt a Will save.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature's fate becomes distorted, and momentary conflicting glimpses of the immediate future cause the creature to become flat-footed until the start of its next turn.

**Failure** As success, but the creature is flat-footed for the duration of the spell. If more than one of the targets failed to resist this spell, the creature also becomes

stupefied 1 for the duration of the spell as its fate and those of the other creatures continue to clash and strain against each other.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but any creature that becomes stupefied 1 for the duration of the spell also becomes enfeebled 1 and clumsy 1 for the spell's duration.

## LIFE'S FRESH BLOOM

## SPELL 4

**RARE** **HEALING** **NECROMANCY** **POSITIVE**

**Traditions** divine, primal

**Cast** ♦♦ somatic, verbal

**Range** 30 feet; **Area** 20-foot burst

**Duration** sustained up to 5 rounds

The ground around you blooms with life, sprouting sparkling grass, flowers, and small shrubs. Each living and non-nindoru creature that starts its turn standing on the ground in the area recovers 1d6 Hit Points and gains a +5-foot status bonus to its Speed until the end of its next turn. Nindoru fiends and undead that start their turn in the area of *life's fresh bloom* instead become sickened 1 unless they succeed at a Fortitude saving throw.

**Heightened (7th)** Increase the Hit Points restored to 1d8 and the sickened condition value to 2.

**Heightened (10th)** Increase the Hit Points restored to 1d10 and the sickened condition value to 3.



Life's Fresh Bloom

## Let the Leaves Fall

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## PROPHET'S LUCK

## SPELL 4

RARE DIVINATION FORTUNE MISFORTUNE

**Traditions** arcane, divine

**Cast** ➤ verbal; **Trigger** You or a creature within range attempts a saving throw against an obvious threat.

**Range** 60 feet; **Target** 1 creature

**Duration** 10 minutes

You prophesize the result of the triggering saving throw as either a success (including a critical success) or a failure (including a critical failure). The target gains a +1 status bonus to the save if you predict success or a -1 status penalty if you predict failure. If you predict the result correctly, fortune favors you, and you gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws. If you predict incorrectly, fortune spurns the target, imparting a -1 status penalty to its saving throws.

**Heightened (6th)** The save bonus or penalty increases to +2 or -2.

**Heightened (9th)** The save bonus or penalty increases to +3 or -3.

## SACRED NIMBUS

## SPELL 4

RARE CONJURATION GOOD

**Traditions** divine, primal

**Cast** ➤➤ somatic, verbal

**Range** 30 feet; **Area** 10-foot square

**Saving Throw** Reflex; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

You summon a small, fluffy white nimbus cloud that floats 10 feet above the ground and rains down pleasantly warm sanctified water. The rain deals 5d6 good damage to fiends, undead, and creatures that have a weakness to good damage in the area at the end of your turn. When you Sustain the Spell, you can move the cloud at a fly speed of 15 feet to anywhere in the spell's range. The water dissipates as it makes contact with any creatures or surfaces, leaving only a bit of humidity in its place.

**Heightened (+1)** The damage increases by 1d6.

## TOMORROW'S DAWN

## SPELL 4

RARE ABJURATION LIGHT

**Traditions** occult, primal

**Cast** ➤➤ somatic, verbal

**Duration** sustained for up to 1 minute

The golden light of a new dawn and the promise of life beyond death radiates from your body. You cast bright light in a 20-foot radius (and dim light for the next 20 feet) and gain mental resistance 5. Any nindoru fiend or undead that begins its turn adjacent to you must attempt a Will save with the following results.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected and immune to this spell's effects for the remainder of the spell's duration.

**Success** The creature is sickened 1 until the end of its turn.

**Failure** The creature is sickened 1. In addition, it becomes slowed 1 until the end of its next turn.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but sickened 2 and the creature remains slowed 1 for the rest of the spell's duration.

**Heightened (6th)** You gain mental resistance 10.

**Heightened (8th)** You gain mental resistance 15.

## WALL OF MIRRORS

## SPELL 4

RARE CONJURATION

**Traditions** arcane, occult

**Cast** ➤➤ somatic, verbal

**Range** 120 feet

You create a solid wall of shimmering reflective glass up to 50 feet long and 20 feet high. The wall is an inch thick and stands vertically. You must create the wall in an unbroken open space so its edges don't pass through any creatures or objects, or the spell is lost. Each 10-foot-by-10-foot section of the wall has AC 10, Hardness 10, and 40 Hit Points, and it's immune to critical hits and precision damage. Everything on each side of the wall is concealed from creatures on the opposite side. If a creature Strikes the wall, the wall causes the creature to endure the mental anguish of that attack's pain as well; the creature takes 4d4 mental damage and can resist this damage with a basic Will save.

**Heightened (+1)** The Hit Points of each section of the wall increase by 10.

## Magic Tea

Special ingredients, unique brewing methods, and magical enhancements transform common teas into consumable items that provide additional benefits. The PCs are rewarded with the following recipes for magic tea after they entertain Willowshore's kami (page 24).

**Tea (trait):** Magic tea is a type of potion. It activates when you drink it, which uses it up. Magic tea has the potion and tea traits. When you craft a dose of magic tea, the raw materials you supply are in the form of unusual and costly tea leaves. The process of crafting magic tea includes infusing the leaves with magical reagents, purifying the water, and steeping the tea in the water, resulting in what's essentially a particularly delicious-tasting potion. You can activate magic tea with an Interact action as you drink it or feed it to another creature, as if it were a potion. You can also activate magic tea with a 10-minute activity that requires sterling tea ware (these artisan's tools can be shared by up to four people who take this activity simultaneously) to prepare the tea and then consume it or present it to someone during a short tea ceremony, after which the magic tea's effects begin; activating magic tea in this way enhances its effect, as detailed in each entry's Tea Ceremony below.



Once you drink a dose of magic tea, you're temporarily immune to that particular type of magic tea for 24 hours.

### COVENANT TEA

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL POTION TEA

Price 10 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)

This green tea is often steeped in a pot with a dried persimmon. Traditionally, all participants in a complex discussion start their conversation with a tea ceremony involving *covenant tea*, with each member of the group enjoying the covenant of the shared beverage. Some have been known to use trickery and sleight of hand to ensure only those whose goals align with the tea preparer are served *covenant tea*, while others in the group are served non-magical (but still delicious) green tea, thus subtly tipping the balance in discussion toward those the tea server favors. This practice has resulted in some regions referring to *covenant tea* as "trickery tea." Regardless of what you prefer to call the tea, when you drink it, you gain a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks and to your Perception DC for 10 minutes.

**Tea Ceremony** The duration increases to 1 hour.



Covenant Tea

### ENERGIZING TEA

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL POTION TEA TRANSMUTATION

Price 20 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)

This sweet and refreshing tea is made by adding a mixture of honey, lemon slices, and sliced ginger. This is considered to be the bare minimum when serving *energizing tea*, and many go above and beyond by adding additional citrus fruits or berries to the mix or refusing to serve the tea at all without accompanying it with a full platter of spiced pastries and sweets. This golden tea has energizing properties and, when consumed, grants you a +1 item bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics checks for 10 minutes.

**Tea Ceremony** The duration increases to 1 hour.

### LONGNIGHT TEA

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL NECROMANCY POTION TEA

Price 12 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)

This tea is brewed with a mixture of matcha, turmeric,

and 10 drops of morning dew, creating a fragrant but mildly bitter tea. The bitter aftertaste is said to be the most important element of *longnight tea*, for it's believed that this flavor lingers on the tongue and aids in keeping you awake and alert. The tea is favored by scholars and soldiers alike, although the value to which each attributes the ability to endure long nights without sleeping varies—and is often the subject of unusually impassioned debate. When you drink *longnight tea*, it grants you a +1 item bonus to saving throws against sleep effects for 1 hour.

**Tea Ceremony** The duration increases to 8 hours, and the tea removes the fatigued condition.

### MOON BLOSSOM TEA

ITEM 9

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE DIVINATION MAGICAL POTION TEA

Price 150 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)

This bright and citrusy tea is traditionally made with green tea combined with orange rind shavings and flower petals plucked during a full moon. Some claim to be able to tell the difference if these petals were plucked at other times, but this does not alter the tea's effects.

The tea leaves have a chance to anticipate unexpected encounters. After consuming the tea, you gain a +2 item bonus to all initiative rolls for 1 hour and gain the following reaction.

**Evade Peril** ☞ (envision); **Trigger** You roll a failure on a Reflex save; **Effect** You get a success on the Reflex save instead. Reduce the remaining duration of *moon blossom tea* by 1 hour; if this reduces the duration to 0, the duration ends. This is a fortune effect.

**Tea Ceremony** The duration increases to 4 hours.

### PEACE IN DREAMS TEA

ITEM 6

UNCOMMON ABJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL POTION TEA

Price 50 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)

This creamy tea is made from warm soy milk steeped with whole, dried chrysanthemum flowers and honey and brewed from when the sun first touches the horizon to when it has fully set. Consuming this tea causes mild drowsiness, aids in sleep, and protects from harmful mental effects. You gain a +1 item bonus to all saving throws against mental effects for 1 hour.

**Tea Ceremony** The effects last for 8 hours, and as long as you're asleep, the item bonus increases to +2.

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## RESURRECTION TEA

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL NECROMANCY POTION TEA

Price 25 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

**Activate** ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)  
*Resurrection tea* was named for its repugnant taste, said to be “strong enough to kill the living,” and its incredible medicinal properties “powerful enough to raise the dead.” The primary ingredients in this medicinal tea are ginseng and jujubes, enhanced with additional herbs, shaved deer antlers, sugi tree bark, and a variety of mushrooms stewed for several hours in a large pot to form a brown, pulpy, and viscous liquid. The bitterness and earthy taste make the tea rather unappetizing. The tea restores 2d8+5 Hit Points, and you reduce the DC of recovery checks by 1 for 8 hours.

**Tea Ceremony** The tea reduces the DC of recovery checks by 3.

## SPIRITSIGHT TEA

ITEM 7

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE DIVINATION MAGICAL POTION TEA

Price 60 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

**Activate** ♦ Interact or 10 minutes (concentrate, Interact)  
*Spiritsight tea* exudes a soft blue glow, creating illumination equal to that of a candle. When consumed, your eyes take on a soft glow as well, and you can see invisible creatures and objects for 10 minutes; such creatures appear to you as translucent shapes, and they’re concealed to you. You gain a +1 item bonus to Perception checks to Seek incorporeal creatures.

**Tea Ceremony** The duration of being able to see invisible creatures and objects increases to 30 minutes, and the duration of the item bonus increases to 8 hours.

## New Rituals

The following rare rituals can be researched or discovered during “Let the Leaves Fall.” *Open the Wall of Ghosts* can be researched by the PCs early in the adventure, but the other rituals here must be discovered during play in the final chapter. These other rituals are all treasures of the monks of the Tan Sugi monastery, and since that site’s fall, the rituals themselves have fallen into relative obscurity.

## GNAW AT THE MOON

RITUAL 2

RARE DIVINATION

**Cast** 1 hour; **Cost** mooncakes and rare tea worth 100 gp;

**Secondary Casters** 3

**Primary Check** Diplomacy (expert); **Secondary Checks** Crafting, Occultism, or Religion

**Range** 30 feet; **Targets** yourself and the secondary casters

**Duration** 8 hours

It’s said that after his demise at the hands of jealous Fumeiyoshi, Tsukiyo’s lunar corpse was left unguarded as the heavens mourned; this provided a humble matron-rat opportunities to nibble at moon flesh and sip upon god blood, a meal which propelled her first steps of apotheosis into Lao Shu Po. *Gnaw at the moon*, an obscure folk magic ritual popular among Shenmen’s downtrodden, allows you to honor the Old Rat Woman’s audacity and unlikely ascent.

This ritual can only be performed on a night when the moon is visible in the sky above; you can’t perform this ritual during a totally moonless night, while indoors, or while underground. Performing this ritual on the night of the full moon reduces the DCs of the ritual’s skill checks by 2. You set out offerings of mooncakes and cups of tea on a flat surface (such as a table or a tray on the floor), assiduously ignore this food and drink, and praise the night’s beauty while admiring and thanking the moon.

At the end of a successful ritual, bite marks appear on the mooncakes, and some of the tea disappears as if sipped while no one was looking. Supposedly, the ritual and offerings gain Lao Shu Po’s attention, who sends her rodent children to eat and drink their fill and grant stolen blessings of moonlit sight. The effusive admiration for the moon is said to avert Tsukiyo’s displeasure for commemorating the event of his murder; after all, old tales warn against giving offense to the moon, lest it slice your ears in retribution...

**Critical Success** The targets gain darkvision.

**Success** The targets gain low-light vision.

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** You and the targets are drained 1 for 24 hours. Your ears feel lacerated and raw as your earlobes become crisscrossed with tiny cuts.

## LAST NIGHT’S VIGIL

RITUAL 2

RARE HEALING NECROMANCY

**Cast** 8 hours; **Cost** rare sticks of incense worth 10 gp

**Primary Check** Occultism (trained) or Survival (expert)

**Range** 10 feet; **Target** 1 creature whom you love

Obscure folktales state on the first day of spring, the Mother of Secrets wanders Tian Xia to dispense her blessings of health upon the frail and old. These stories claim the winter goddess is often drawn to lovers, friends, or families who hold sincere affection and genuine respect for each other. *Last night’s vigil* is a folk ritual inspired by these stories, offering a chance at respite for those who wish the goddess’s esoteric gifts not for themselves but for their loved ones.

This simple ritual can only be performed at night, in the presence of someone whom you love, and who’s ill, hurt, or otherwise unwell. You must stay awake through the night, keeping the sticks of incense lit to guide



the goddess's passage. If you're indoors, you should keep a door or window slightly ajar to receive her holy presence. If performed on a winter night, the DCs of the ritual's skill checks are reduced by 1; if performed on the last night of winter before spring, the DCs are instead reduced by 2.

If the ritual is successful, you fall asleep for the briefest of moments to the sound of snowfall and the swishing of a horse-tail whisk. When you awaken moments later, your loved one smiles at you, hopefully in better health.

**Critical Success** The target's Hit Points are fully restored, and all diseases that are equal or lower level than twice the ritual's level that they're currently suffering from reduce their stage by one. If this reduces a disease's stage below 1, it cures that affliction.

**Success** The target's Hit Points are fully restored, and one disease of a level that's equal to or lower than twice the ritual's level that they're currently suffering from reduces its stage by one. If this reduces the disease's stage below 1, it cures that affliction.

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** You're fatigued for the next 24 hours.

**Heightened (4th)** You can choose when you perform the ritual whether it affects curses or diseases.

**Heightened (6th)** You can affect curses and diseases simultaneously.

## OPEN THE WALL OF GHOSTS

## RITUAL 2

RARE CONSECRATION NECROMANCY

**Cast** 1 day; **Cost** rice grains and incense worth 60 gp; **Secondary Casters** 3

**Primary Check** Occultism or Religion (expert); **Secondary Checks** Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation

**Range** 40 feet; **Target** the Wall of Ghosts

**Duration** 1 year

Your research into the nature of the so-called Willowshore Curse has revealed a possible method of opening a doorway through the eerie Wall of Ghosts found west of town. By starting with a *consecrate* ritual and then applying Sangpotshi theories of the cyclical nature of life and reincarnation, along with insights gleaned from Zoudou's notes, you've created a magical ritual that can quiet the angry spirits that haunt this misty barrier and allow other creatures to pass through into the regions beyond.

This ritual is unlikely to grant total protection from the ghosts or evil spirits within the wall itself, so once you open the wall, you and your allies might need to face additional dangers within before you can exit the other side. In addition, the ritual must be performed during a crescent or new moon (a time that equates to the second half of each month).

**Critical Success** The ritual succeeds and offers unexpected

protection while you're passing through the Wall of Ghosts. While navigating the Wall of Ghosts (page 28), you and the secondary casters to the ritual gain a +2 status bonus to Armor Class and saving throws.

**Success** The ritual succeeds. See page 27 for more.

**Failure** The ritual fails.

**Critical Failure** The ritual fails spectacularly, and two of the ghosts trapped within the wall tear free and attack. Treat each of these ghosts as a ghost commoner (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 167), save that their ghostly hand attacks deal mental damage rather than negative damage.

## RANSACK THE NIGHT

## RITUAL 3

RARE DARKNESS EVOCATION

**Cast** 1 hour; **Cost** blessed salt, citrus fruits (such as yuzu or limes), and rare spices worth 25 gp × the spell level; **Secondary Casters** 3

**Primary Check** Religion (expert); **Secondary Checks** Arcana, Intimidation, or Occultism

**Range** 30 feet; **Target** yourself and the secondary casters

**Duration** 12 hours

When Fumeiyoshi was punished by the Celestial Court for deicide and fratricide, the rat who would become Lao Shu Po robbed the cangue-bound Fumeiyoshi of a sizable chunk of his shadow. This fully catalyzed the rat's transformation into Lao Shu Po, the new Tian goddess of night. *Ransack the night* is a Laoite ritual allowing you to mimic this divine thievery and shroud yourself in the night's cerements.

This ritual can only be performed at night. You dig narrow troughs into the dirt and toss blessed salt as well as the juice of citrus fruits into these gashes in the ground. Performing this ritual in an area actively haunted by undead or frequented by fiends reduces the DCs of the ritual's skill checks by 2.

If the ritual is successful, a smoky black miasma, said to be the blood and tears of Fumeiyoshi himself, emerges from the broken earth to augment and enhance your spiritual aura, helping you to remain undetected by fiends and undead.

**Critical Success** Fiends and undead who are 5th level or lower treat you as if you were concealed. If you take a hostile action against a fiend or undead, you lose this concealment against that fiend or undead until the end of your next turn.

**Success** As critical success, but when you lose concealment against a fiend or undead, you don't regain concealment from this ritual against that fiend or undead.

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** The miasma occludes your senses instead; for 24 hours, the targets treat fiends and undead as if they were concealed.

**Heightened (+1)** Increase the level of affected creatures by 2.

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## REGALE THE LOST ONES

## RITUAL 2

**RARE** **NECROMANCY**

**Cast** 4 hours; **Cost** fees for opera actors, their meals, facial paint, costumes, incense, and offerings of alcohol, tobacco, and food for the lost ones with a total value of  $2 \text{ gp} \times \text{the spell level} \times \text{the settlement's level}$ ; **Secondary Casters** 3

**Primary Check** Performance (expert); **Secondary Checks** Acrobatics, Occultism, or Religion

**Target** a settlement with a level equal to or lower than twice the ritual's level

**Duration** 1 year

Autumn's shorter days herald an increase in hauntings, which only intensify during winter's cold, dark nights. As fall draws to a close, some of Shenmen's villages hire or set up Tian opera troupes to enact rituals to *regale the lost ones*, where they perform dramas drawn from literary classics and historical events that incorporate acting, music, acrobatics, and martial arts.

These ritual performances fulfill a dual purpose; not only do they bring cheer to the living, but they also entertain and placate the "lost ones"—a euphemism for ghosts and other spirits—and seek to reduce the likelihood of attacks from such entities. Performing this ritual during the season of fall reduces the DCs of the ritual's skill checks by 2.

If the ritual is successful, sentient undead and other spirits become less hostile, allowing villagers to focus their efforts on dealing with mindless undead and other more physical threats. This ritual can only be attempted once per year per settlement; additional attempts to *regale the lost ones* in the same settlement automatically result in a Critical Failure.

**Critical Success** Haunts and undead in the settlement that are level 3 or lower become easier to defeat. Reduce all Disable DCs for affected haunts in the settlement by 2, and all affected undead within the settlement begin combat frightened 1. If the PCs perform this ritual during this adventure, they gain 3 Hope Points (page 8).

**Success** Haunts in the settlement that are level 3 or lower become easier to notice and defeat. Reduce all Disable DCs for affected haunts in the settlement by 1. If the PCs perform this ritual during this adventure, they gain 1 Hope Point (page 8).

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** Haunts and undead in the settlement that are level 3 or lower become more difficult to notice and defeat. Increase all Disable DCs for affected haunts in the settlement by 2, and all affected undead within the settlement gain the elite adjustment (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6). If the PCs perform this ritual during this adventure, they lose 3 Hope Points (page 8).

**Heightened (+1)** Increase the level of affected haunts and undead by 2.

## SWEETEST SOLSTICE

## RITUAL 2

**RARE** **CONJURATION**

**Cast** 1 hour; **Cost** sesame paste, sugar, rice balls, food dye, cooking pots, and utensils with a total value of  $2 \text{ gp} \times \text{the spell level} \times \text{the settlement's level}$ ; **Secondary**

**Casters** 3

**Primary Check** Cooking Lore (expert); **Secondary Checks** Diplomacy, Performance, or Religion

**Target** a settlement with a level equal to or lower than twice the ritual's level

On long winter nights, many families in Tian Xia share a dish of glutinous rice balls. Wealthier families also dye these rice balls an auspicious pinkish-red in jujube juice and might serve or stuff them with expensive sweetened pastes of red beans, sesame, taro, or lotus. *Sweetest solstice* is a folk ritual that incorporates this tradition and allows entire villages to experience communal goodwill by celebrating a luxurious version of this dish together.

This ritual is performed over 1 hour of cooking a soup of crushed black sesame and sugar in several large cauldrons while good-natured jokes and puns praising Daikitsu, Kofusachi, and other benevolent deities are uttered; quips inspired by Hei Feng and Sun Wukong are usually included in these jovialities, for these rambunctious deities are always ready for feasts and humor. Each time a joke or pun is made, a rice ball is dropped into the boiling soups.

This ritual can only be performed once each winter season. If performed on the night of the winter solstice, the DCs of the ritual's skill checks are reduced by 2.

If the ritual is successful, the delicious black sesame soup, like the longest of nights, seems never-ending and even hides windfalls of chewy sweetness. Sometimes, this small mercy of hot meals, and the hope for pleasant surprises to come, is all a community needs to endure the bleakest of winters together.

**Critical Success** The pot contains enough black sesame soup and rice balls to feed a hot meal to everyone in the settlement for a month. The casters of the ritual gain a +1 status bonus to saves against emotion and fear effects until the end of winter.

**Success** The pot contains enough black sesame soup and rice balls to feed a hot meal to everyone in the settlement for a week. The casters of the ritual gain a +1 status bonus to saves against fear effects for 1 month or until the end of winter, whichever comes first.

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** The soup becomes tainted; it not only provides no nourishment but spreads food poisoning through the town (this might have disastrous effects, as detailed in the next adventure). The casters of the ritual become particularly affected by illness and become sickened 4 and can't reduce the condition for 12 hours.



## WINTER'S BREATH

**RARE** **CONJURATION**

**Cast** 1 hour; **Cost** 15 gp; **Secondary Casters** 1

**Primary Check** Cooking Lore or Tea Lore (expert);

**Secondary Checks** Diplomacy or Society

**Range** 40 feet

The cold and dour months of winter are an excellent time to gather with friends and family to enjoy a pot of hot tea. The so-called "breath" in this ritual refers to the steam that wafts up from a freshly brewed cup while held in the hands and inhaled. Despite the ritual's name, it can be cast during any season, but unless it is cast during winter, the DCs for successfully casting *winter's breath* increase by 2 (or by 4 if the ritual is cast during summer).

When you cast this ritual, you call forth a magical pavilion consisting of a colorful tent or decorate an area within range with a large number of colorful banners. In either case, the ritual also creates a full supply of teas and tea ware for the casters to use and serve up to six guests (which can include the casters). During the ritual, all the guests must be polite and well-mannered. The tea created by *winter's breath* is always delicious, but the effects of the tea and taking part in the ceremony of its serving depend on the success of the magic. At the ceremony's end, the ritual is completed and you and the secondary caster attempt your checks as normal. If the ceremony is interrupted at any point, the tea vanishes and the ritual is disrupted.

**Critical Success** The ceremony is a true delight.

The tea casts *restoration* and *endure elements* on each guest. Each guest also gains 10 temporary Hit Points and a +1 status bonus to saves against emotion effects for the next 12 hours.

**Success** As critical success, except guests must choose which of the

## RITUAL 3

two spells are cast on them, and they don't gain the status bonus to saves.

**Failure** The tea leaves a bitter, unpleasant taste in the mouth, and no benefits are granted.

**Critical Failure** Rather than invigorate and delight, the tea is disappointing and depressing. You and your guests are sickened 3 and can't reduce the condition for 12 hours.

**Heightened (5th)** The *restoration* and *endure elements* spells are heightened to 4th level, and the temporary Hit Points granted are increased by 4.

**Heightened (7th)** The *restoration* and *endure elements* spells are heightened to 6th level, and the temporary Hit Points granted are increased by 8.

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## NEKOMATAS

Bakenekos mostly see their animated but mindless zombies as amusements, though they also use them as guardians or even as agents for revenge. Still, they do their best to ensure that undead they animate aren't left to wander free. Most tales of "evil bakenekos" in fact refer to a similar and much more dangerous creature, the *nekomata*—a level 6 Medium-sized variant of the *bakeneko* whose bite causes a debilitating disease of the mind.

## Bakeneko

A *bakeneko* comes into existence when the life of a cat is extended past its normal lifespan, whether through incredible fortune, magic, or other means. With each passing year, the feline becomes more and more monstrous—growing in size, becoming more intelligent, and gaining an affinity for magic. Eventually, they become able to walk upright on their rear legs, pursue new hobbies, and learn languages. Despite this expanded intellect, many *bakenekos* prefer to enjoy the first decades of their ascension continuing their lives as usual as a (particularly oversized) house cat. For some, they do so because they want to acquire knowledge of the world that they couldn't comprehend as cats, but for others, it's just a desire to live out their lives with their current families and loved ones before moving on to what comes next.

*Bakenekos* enjoy dancing above all other pleasures and can't resist nodding their heads, tapping their paws, or swishing their tails in time to music. They often animate corpses simply to watch them dance—a pastime that often spells trouble for nearby settlements should the undead get free from the *bakeneko*'s control. *Bakenekos* typically have a playful and mischievous demeanor, and while they aren't inherently evil creatures, they're still feared for their ability to animate corpses and command fire. Villagers are often frightened half to death by the sight of a flaming cat strolling alongside a walking corpse, and *bakenekos*' association with evil and the occult has caused some villages in Tian Xia to vilify all cats.

### BAKENEKO

### CREATURE 3

RARE CN SMALL BEAST

**Perception** +9; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Deception +8, Occultism +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10

**Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

**AC** 20; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

**HP** 35; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5; **Resistances** fire 5

**Cat at Heart** When a *bakeneko* is killed, they immediately reincarnate into a normal house cat who can never again become a *bakeneko*.

**Feel the Beat** *Bakenekos* love to dance. If a *bakeneko* begins their turn within 30 feet of a source of music, they become slowed 1 until the start of their next turn as they follow their compulsion to move to the rhythm of the tune by swishing their tail in time, stomping from one hind leg to the other, or clapping their front paws.

**Flammable** Thanks to their high-fat diets, *bakenekos* secrete flammable oils from their skin that coats their fur. If a *bakeneko* takes any fire damage, their entire body lights up in flame, turning them into a furry fireball until the end of their next turn. While burning in this way, a *bakeneko*'s Strikes inflict an additional 1d6 fire damage.

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** ♦ claw +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+5 slashing

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 20; **2nd** *animate dead* (zombie only, *Advanced Player's Guide* 214); **Cantrips** (2nd) *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*

**Ritual** *create undead* (zombie only)

**Skilled Ritualist** *Bakenekos* can only create zombies with *create undead* but can perform the ritual without secondary casters and lower the casting time to 4 hours.



# Dalgyal Gwishin

A dalgyal gwishin is a faceless, undead spirit that wears a stone mask. This forlorn undead forms from the soul of a mortal who died a lonely death with no one to remember them, and is similarly unable to remember what it looked like in life. A dalgyal gwishin wanders the land of the living in search of any trace of who they were when they were alive. Full of anger, they remain envious of well-loved or famous individuals who are surrounded by close friends and admirers—the type of people who would never share the dalgyal gwishin's fate.

While a dalgyal gwishin has little more than a ghostly body made of mist, the featureless stone mask it wears on its head is solid. Even the stolen faces it claims are transitory, cracking off after a day to form what looks akin to a fragile porcelain death mask. Some of these lonely spirits keep these masks and add them to a collection in a remote and forlorn lair, hoping to find companionship in an ever-growing display of silent faces.

## DALGYAL GWISHIN

## CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL UNDEAD

**Perception** +12; **lifesense** (precise) 120 feet, no vision

**Languages** Common, Necril (can't speak any language); **telepathy** 120 feet

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Intimidation +12, Stealth +13

**Str** -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

**Lifesense** The dalgyal gwishin senses the vital essence of living and undead creatures within the listed range.

**AC** 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

**HP** 58, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

**Frightful Presence** (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 19

**Stone-Faced** While the dalgyal gwishin has no physical body, its stone face is solid. It can't pass through solid objects.

**Speed** fly 40 feet

**Melee** ♦ head +12 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+2 bludgeoning plus 2d6 mental

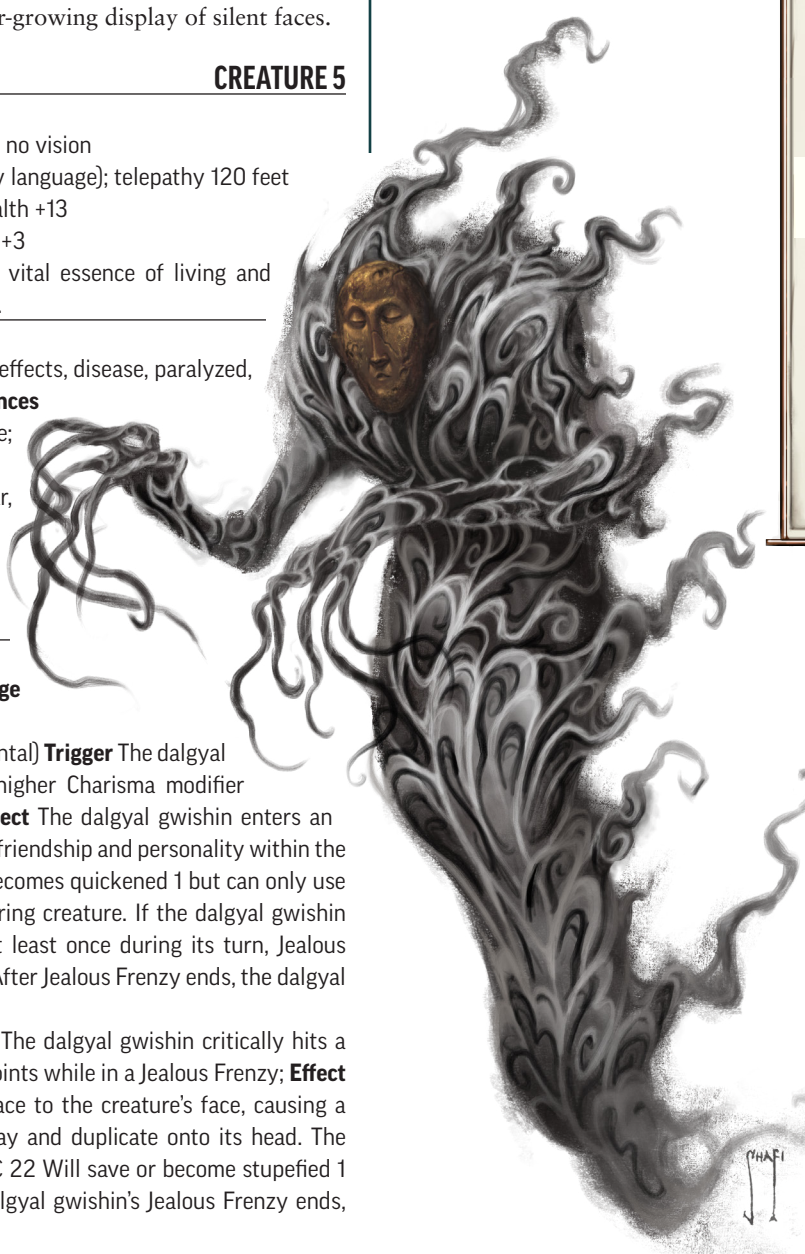
**Jealous Frenzy** ⚡ (divine, enchantment, mental) **Trigger** The dalgyal gwishin Strikes a creature that has a higher Charisma modifier than itself; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The dalgyal gwishin enters an envious frenzy as it senses strong ties of friendship and personality within the creature it struck. The dalgyal gwishin becomes quickened 1 but can only use its quickened action to Strike the triggering creature. If the dalgyal gwishin fails to Strike the triggering creature at least once during its turn, Jealous Frenzy ends. It also ends after 1 minute. After Jealous Frenzy ends, the dalgyal gwishin is slowed 1 for 1 minute.

**Peel Face** ⚡ (divine, necromancy) **Trigger** The dalgyal gwishin critically hits a creature or reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points while in a Jealous Frenzy; **Effect** The dalgyal gwishin presses its stony face to the creature's face, causing a ghostly imprint of that face to peel away and duplicate onto its head. The triggering creature must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure). The dalgyal gwishin's Jealous Frenzy ends, and it doesn't become slowed.



## FACELESS HORROR

The dalgyal gwishin's most significant physical trait—the lack of a face—is shared with the living aberrations known as noppera-bos. Despite this shared feature and the ability to steal faces, the two creatures don't cooperate and are more often bitter enemies. Anyone slain by a dalgyal gwishin leaves behind an unnerving faceless corpse.



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### NINDORU TRAIT

Nindorus are chaotic evil fiends that rise from corruptions to the cycle of reincarnating souls and live on the Material Plane. Although they often have elements in their appearance that make them seem undead, they're actually living beings. Most nindorus have darkvision, are immune to death effects, have weakness to silver, and possess the power to manifest objects or creatures from their thoughts.

## Nindoru

When an evil mortal soul that has been reincarnated multiple times is wrenched from the cycle of souls and corrupted, it can undergo a horrific transformation into a fiend known as a nindoru. A force for entropy and the breaking of cycles, nindorus are hideous creatures whose bodies often appear distorted, who wield weapons that have been shattered yet still function, and whose true face is often hidden from view. They display traits one might expect to see in an undead creature, such as decaying flesh or exposed bones, yet a nindoru is very much still alive.

Each nindoru epitomizes the fracture of a specific cycle, be it one from the natural world or from societal traditions. To the nindoru, nothing is more delicious than the consumption of a creature who has reincarnated multiple times, with those who are theoretically about to ascend to true enlightenment presenting the tastiest meal. Those slain by a nindoru are themselves torn from the cycle—the lucky ones move on to the Boneyard for judgment, but many are instead corrupted to form more of these horrific fiends.

Followers of Sangpotshi find nindoru to be particularly abhorrent and count them among the greatest threats imaginable. Most commonly found in regions of the world where the reincarnation cycle is strongest, nindorus are, like rakshasas and oni, associated most strongly with the Material Plane.

### MEOKDAN (HUNGRY NINDORU)

As the least of their kind, meokdans suffer a constant and painful hunger, for they lack the ability of more powerful nindorus to derive nourishment from a reincarnated soul. This hunger drives the meokdan to constantly seek food and often compels them to eat dirt, stones, and refuse that offer little (if any) nutritional value. Regardless of how much they eat, a meokdan always remains painfully thin in stature. Regardless of how hungry they get, they never starve to death.

A meokdan's emaciated frame appears human in shape, with thick, tangled hair that grows directly from their face as well as the rest of their head, leaving only the meokdan's gaping mouth visible. Their arms appear to be broken and unnaturally long, with equally long fingers tipped with ragged nails. Small, open sores pockmark their skin.

Meokdans epitomize the cycle of food, from consumption to the creature themselves being consumed in the end, be it by predators or the environment growing from their remains.

### MEOKDAN

### CREATURE 2

RARE CE MEDIUM FIEND NINDORU

**Perception** +9; darkvision

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril

**Skills** Athletics +8, Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Occultism +6

**Str** +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

**Items** bone morningstar

**AC** 17; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

**HP** 32; **Immunities** death effects, fatigued (from the effects of starvation or thirst), sickened; **Weaknesses** silver 5; **Resistances** negative 5

**Soul Shred** Creatures killed by a meokdan are difficult to bring back to life or animate as undead. The meokdan automatically attempts to counteract any attempt to resurrect or animate any creature that it has killed



(counteract modifier +7, counteract level 2). If the meokdan who slew the creature is itself slain, the creature can be brought back from death or become undead normally.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ bone club +10 (magic), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ shattered bone club +10 (magic), **Damage** 1d4+6 slashing plus 1 bleed

**Melee** ♦ bite +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 18, attack +10; **2nd** *item facade*; **1st** *illusory disguise*, *phantom pain*; **Cantrips (1st)** *telekinetic projectile*

**Manifest Bone Club** ♦ (concentrate, conjuration, occult) **Requirement** The meokdan isn't carrying a bone club; **Effect** The meokdan reaches down its throat into its stomach and pulls out a human femur that it can wield as a bone club. After the meokdan Strikes a creature, the bone club shatters, but its sharp fragments remain in roughly the same shape; Strikes with a shattered bone club inflict slashing and bleed damage. After the meokdan Strikes with a shattered bone club, or if the meokdan drops the bone club, the club is destroyed, and the nindoru can Manifest a new bone club.

**Quick Snack** ↻ **Trigger** The meokdan critically hits a living creature with its bite; **Effect** The meokdan Snacks on the creature.

**Snack** ♦♦ The meokdan attempts a bite Strike against an adjacent creature or chews on a handheld object they're carrying. If the creature is living or the object is food, the meokdan gurgles in delight and restores 1d8+8 Hit Points. If the creature is undead or a construct, or the object is inedible, the meokdan shrieks in frustration and gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and saving throws until the end of its next turn. The meokdan can't Snack again for 1 round.

## SOJIRUH (SHRIEKING NINDORU)

A sojiruh comes into existence when a creature who has dedicated multiple lives to achieving enlightenment turns their back on these goals and deliberately tears themselves away from the cycle of reincarnation before their death. These monstrous creatures are the most common nindoru and are also the most hated by followers of Sangpotshi, since so many of these fiends rise from fallen members of that very philosophy.

This type of nindoru relishes the flavor of an oft-reincarnated soul and finds this life force tastes best when consumed while the physical body still lives and screams. To sojiruh, the sound of a perfect scream from the body it feeds upon is akin to the perfect wine pairing with dinner.

A sojiruh's mouth is stitched shut with lengths of its own hair. Despite this, they can speak freely, their hollow-sounding voices issuing clearly from sealed lips. They only stretch these stitches when they choose to shriek and scream. Their arms are long and broken-looking, while their chests are little more than rib cages filled with red wet butterflies that crawl through and cling to the creature's ribs and organs. When a sojiruh screams, the wings of the butterflies in its chest flutter frantically.

Sojiruh symbolize the cycle of reincarnation come undone from its purity and becoming mired in decay and corruption.



## REINCARNATED SOULS

In some cases, you'll know if a creature a nindoru attacks has a reincarnated soul. Ancestries like samsarans are always reincarnated souls, and a PC's backstory or even their background can often indicate the presence of a previous life. All of the PCs in *Season of Ghosts* qualify as reincarnated souls, as they've relived their lives over and over for decades. If you ever need to determine if a creature's soul is reincarnated for the purpose of adjudicating a nindoru's ability, attempt a DC 11 flat check—on a success, it has a reincarnated soul.

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## NINDORU DEMIGODS

The most powerful nindorus are demigods, although their cults are quite rare. Prone to reincarnation after death, nindoru demigods like Kugaptee are more properly known as “nindoru ascetics.”

## SOJIRUH

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM FIEND NINDORU

**Perception** +11; darkvision

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Intimidation +11, Occultism +10, Religion +9

**Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

**Items** broken shortsword

**AC** 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

**HP** 58; **Immunities** death effects; **Weaknesses** silver 5; **Resistances** negative 5, sonic 5

**Soul Shred** As meokdan, but counteract modifier +11, and counteract level 2.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ broken shortsword +14 (agile, finesse, magic, versatile S); **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing plus 1d6 mental

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** *item facade*, *shatter*, *sound burst*; **1st** *fear*, *ventriloquism*; **Cantrips (1st)** *ghost sound*, *telekinetic projectile*

**Manifest Armor** ✦✦ (concentrate, conjuration, occult) The sojiruh manifests a layer of armor on its body that appears to be made of interlocking bones and wicker weaves, increasing its AC to 21. The armor is permanent but collapses and vanishes if the sojiruh takes a critical hit from a Strike that inflicts bludgeoning, force, or slashing damage, reducing its AC back to 17.

**Ruin Wielder** When a sojiruh wields a broken non-magical weapon, they do not take any of the disadvantages of the weapon being broken. While the sojiruh wields it, the weapon becomes a +1 *weapon* that deals an additional 1d6 mental damage on a successful hit.

**Stolen Scream** ✦✦ (auditory, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult) The sojiruh targets a creature within 30 feet that it can see and then inhales, creating a sound identical to that of the target's scream. The targeted creature must attempt a DC 21 Fortitude save, after which they're temporarily immune to that sojiruh's Soul Scream for 24 hours. If the creature becomes frightened as a result of Stolen Scream and has had a past life, the sojiruh restores 2d8+8 Hit Points.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature takes 2d6 mental damage.

**Failure** The creature takes 4d6 mental damage and is frightened 1.

**Critical Failure** The creature takes 8d6 mental damage and is frightened 3.

## GUHDGGI (WANDERING NINDORU)

A guhdggi forms from the corrupted reincarnated souls of those who have trod the same pilgrimage route through multiple lives. This type of nindoru looks like a bloated frog with long, slender human arms instead of front feet. Its eyes appear bulbous and blind yet are capable of sight. A guhdggi always carries a large wicker cage strapped to their back, while dozens of cords and straps affix a trove of broken weapons, tools, and items to their belly and flanks. When they walk, they do so with the aid of two long spears clutched in their forearms, stumbling and hopping in an ungainly gait. The most unsettling feature of the guhdggi is its second face, revealed when the frog-like mouth opens to reveal a

Sojiruh



human face peering from its throat amid a tangled nest of butterflies. This face has long, dark, animated hair capable of inflicting painful lashes, the lengths of which hang from the corner of the frog's mouth when its lips are closed.

While the guhdggi is no longer capable of movement as swift as most humanoids walk, they still enjoy traveling while harboring a ferocious jealousy of those who can do so with greater ease. One would do well not to underestimate the stumbling stagger of a guhdggi, though! The fiend particularly delights in lying in wait along isolated sections of pilgrimage routes to ambush travelers, trapping victims in their cages and feeding upon their captive's mind and memories of previously visited places.

Guhdggis embody the cycles of repeated journeys and the concept that every journey taken ends at the start of the next. Central to this concept is the notion that no journey ever truly begins or ends—they just emerge from the previous one.

## GUHDGGI

## CREATURE 5

RARE CE LARGE FIEND NINDORU

**Perception** +14; darkvision

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +13, Intimidation +11, Occultism +11, Religion +12, Stealth +11, Survival +14

**Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2

**Items** broken spears (2), cage

**AC** 21; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

**HP** 80; **Immunities** death effects, fatigued; **Weaknesses** silver 5;

**Resistances** negative 5

**Soul Shred** As meokdan, but counteract modifier +13, and counteract level 3.

**Speed** 15 feet

**Melee** ♦ *broken spear* +14 (reach 10 feet, magic), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing plus 1d6 mental

**Melee** ♦ *hair lash* +13 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+6 plus Grab

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** *slow*, *wanderer's guide*; **2nd** *item facade*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (1st)** *daze*, *know direction*

**Belch Butterflies** ♦♦ (evocation, occult) The guhdggi opens both of its mouths and, from its innermost humanoid mouth, belches forth a blast of red butterflies in a 15-foot-cone. All creatures in the area must attempt a DC 22 Reflex save as the hideous insects' razor sharp wings and tiny claws slash and cut away at exposed flesh. The guhdggi can't Belch Butterflies again for 1d4 rounds.

**Critical Success** The creature takes no damage from the butterflies.



## NINDORU TRAITORS

While most nindorus are purely chaotic evil in nature, legends tell of exceptionally rare nindorus who manage to escape their own nature and ascend, reincarnating after death into kami or other more benevolent spirits and shedding the nindoru trait as they do so. Of course, these "traitors" are regarded as the most delicious meals imaginable by the nindorus left behind.

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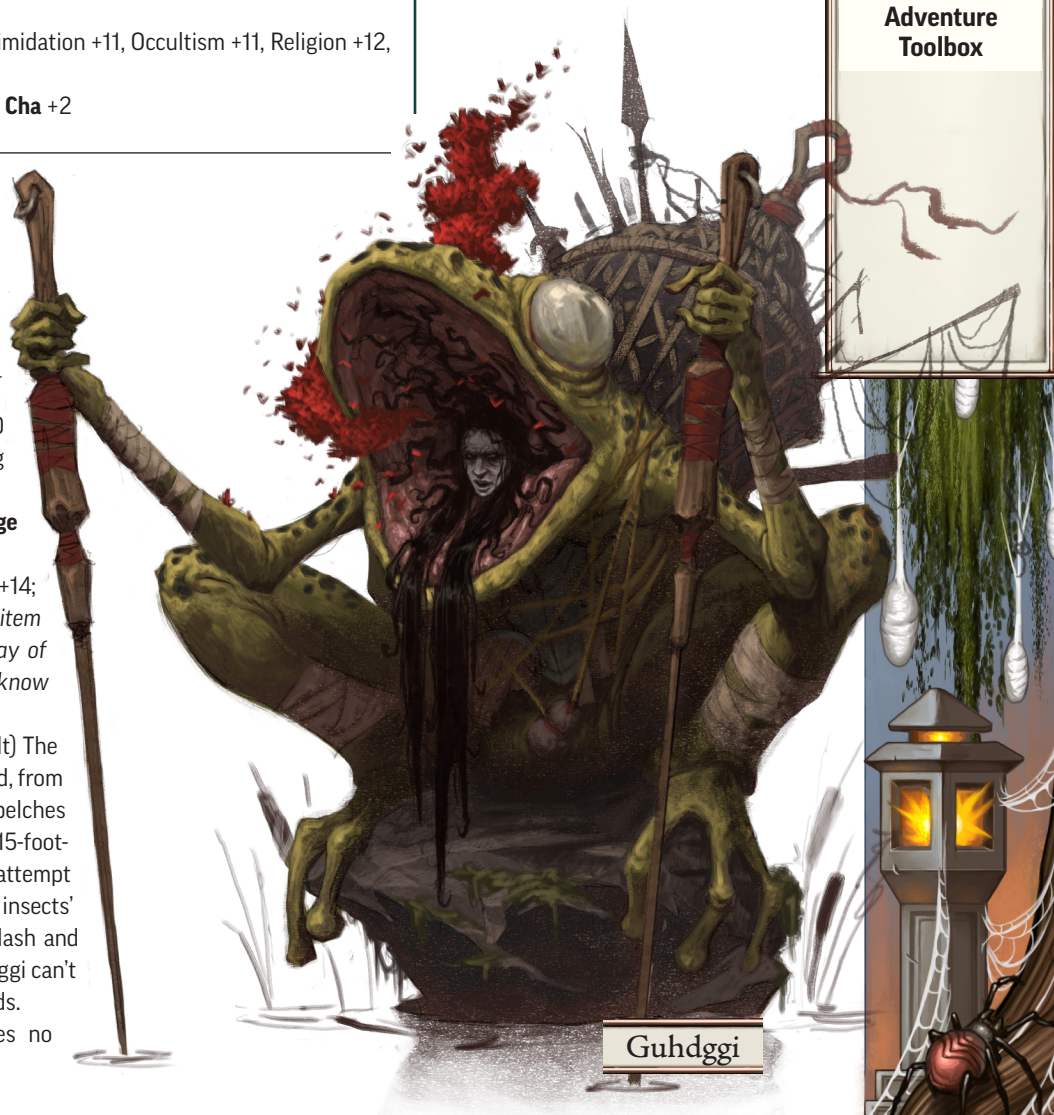
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## NINDORU BUTTERFLIES

One of the strangest shared traits of the various types of nindoru are the blood-red butterflies that seem to follow them around, nest on their bodies, or periodically emerge from their wounds. These unnerving insects are physical manifestations of the nindorus' thoughts and symbolize the countless past lives they once lived but turned their backs on. Nindoru butterflies never last long once they flutter more than a few feet from their source, fading away into smoke that quickly dissipates into the air.

**Success** The creature takes 2d6 slashing damage from the butterflies.

**Failure** The creature takes 4d6 slashing damage, 1d6 persistent bleed damage, and is sickened 1.

**Critical Failure** The creature takes 8d6 slashing damage, 2d6 persistent bleed damage, and is sickened 2.

**Cage Prey** ♦ (attack) **Requirement** The guhdggi has grappled a Medium or smaller creature with its hair lash and doesn't have a creature caged; **Effect** The guhdggi attempts an Athletics check opposed by the grabbed creature's Reflex DC. If it succeeds, it places the creature into the cage it carries on its back. The guhdggi's hair lash no longer grapples the creature, and it can't attack a creature in its cage.

The caged creature is grabbed. It takes 2d4+6 mental damage when first caged and at the end of each of its turns while it's caged. A caged victim can attempt to Force Open or Escape the cage with a DC 22 check, or it can attack the cage's wicker bars, but only with unarmed attacks or with weapons of light Bulk or less. Other creatures can attack the wicker bars as well but can't attempt to Force Open the cage or aid a caged creature's Escape if the guhdggi can resist. Attacks against the cage resolve against the guhdggi's AC, and if the cage takes at least 16 bludgeoning or slashing damage from a single attack or spell, the caged creature gets free.

If the guhdggi dies, its cage crumbles to fragments.

**Lurching Skewer** ♦♦ The guhdggi Strides, then makes two spear Strikes, one with each of the two spears it wields. Both Strikes must have the same target. Apply the guhdggi's multiple attack penalty to each Strike normally.

**Manifest Tool** ♦♦ (concentrate, conjuration, occult) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The guhdggi manifests a tool from its thoughts. If its next action is to attempt a skill check that could be affected by the tool it chose, it gains a +2 item bonus to the skill check. The tool is then destroyed.

**Ruin Wielder** As sojiruh, but as a +1 striking weapon.

## IJDA (FORGETFUL NINDORU)

Ijdas are creatures of forgetfulness. Born from souls who were once enlightened but then renounced it and their role in the cycle of reincarnation, they curse the futility of their existence and find pleasure in leading others to the same fate.

Ijdas appear as towering humanoids, their bodies bloated and constantly bursting with small red butterflies that flutter away before melting into mist. Their arms are overly long and so broken as to writhe more like tentacles, affording them an unsettling combat style with greater reach than most large creatures enjoy. They wear clothing and capes made of moldy straw and wield broken swords whose shattered blades still float roughly in place. Their most unsettling features are their complete lack of heads; instead, where a head should be sits a wicker cage filled with a writhing cloud of butterflies. Yet still, they see, hear, and speak without issue, as if their heads remained in place.

Formed without heads or even brains, an idja's mind is shared among the flocks of butterflies in their head cages or bursting from their bodies, and as each of these insects escapes and fades away, these forgetful fiends lose another potential thought. Unable to learn new things, any actions they take stem from memories etched into their souls or directives they blindly follow from other nindorus or creatures they've come to accept as superiors. Their movements, words, and reactions are all conducted via a type of muscle memory based on how their souls believe they should respond to their



external stimuli. As a result, most now serve as brutal guardians, since their forgetfulness also prevents them from being able to sleep.

## IJDA

## CREATURE 6

**RARE** **CE** **LARGE** **FIEND** **NINDORU**

**Perception** +15; darkvision

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril

**Skills** Athletics +16

**Str** +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** broken katana

**AC** 23; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

**HP** 100; **Immunities** death effects, emotion effects, fatigue, sleep; **Weaknesses** silver 5; **Resistances** mental 5, negative 5

**Aura of Forgetfulness** (aura, enchantment, mental, occult) 30 feet. A creature who begins its turn in the aura must attempt a DC 21 Will save.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune to Aura of Forgetfulness for 24 hours.

**Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Failure** The creature is slowed 1 until the end of its next turn, as it has trouble remembering what it intended to do.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but slowed 2.

**Soul Shred** As meokdan, but counteract modifier +14, and counteract level 3.

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ *broken katana* +17 (deadly d8, magic, reach 15 feet, two-hand d10, versatile P); **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing plus 1d6 mental

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** *phantom pain*, *shatter*; **2nd** *item facade*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** *true strike*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *daze*

**Manifest False Memories** ♦♦ (aura, concentrate, emotion, enchantment, mental, occult) The ijda releases a cloud of red butterflies from its body, each of which carries a false memory that infects those they brush against. All non-nindoru creatures within 10 feet of the ijda must attempt a DC 21 Will save. The ijda can't Manifest False Memories for 1d4 rounds.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is stupefied 1 until the end of its next turn.

**Failure** The creature is stupefied 1 and confused until the end of its next turn.

**Critical Failure** The creature is stupefied 1 and confused for 1 minute. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns to end the effects.

**Ruin Wielder** As sojiruh, but as a +1 striking weapon.



## OTHER NINDORU

Many other types of nindoru exist beyond the four presented on these pages. Others include the corpse-copying akashtis (sobbing nindoru), infiltrators of society known as kagekumas (lurking nindoru), the dead defiling shisagishins (crooked nindoru), and the powerful and brutal argyrzeis (headless nindoru).

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# Xin Yue

## *Priestess of Kugaptee*

Xin Yue remembers all of their previous lives. They originally saw this ability as a blessing from the gods which allowed them to use their accumulated knowledge to better their station in life each time they died and were reincarnated. While they slightly preferred being reincarnated as a woman, because it matched their first body, they quickly grew to enjoy their lives in a man's body as well. Ultimately, to Xin Yue, the actual form of their body was unimportant as long as their soul remained whole.

As a follower of Sangpotshi, each lifetime they lived saw them growing ever-nearer to enlightenment. They befriended long-lived spirits who were always happy for them to visit in their latest body. As their lives continued on, they eventually attained enlightenment. It was during what would have been her final reincarnation that she came to the Tan Sugi monastery and drew Kugaptee's attention. Though trapped in death below the Tan Sugi when Zhi Hui passed away, Kugaptee crept his influence into Xin Yue's dreams when her grief was most profound. Over the awful months to follow, the nindoru's influence over Xin Yue grew. In these dreams, Xin Yue and Kugaptee increasingly engaged in lively debates over the value of reincarnation, and over time, this corruption grew to the point that Xin Yue dedicated herself to the nindoru demigod, whom she had come to consider as the Lord who "opened her eyes to the frivolity of enlightenment."

Xin Yue then turned her attention to the few remaining monks at the monastery and began to lure them over to the worship of Kugaptee. However, it wasn't until Xin Yue offered herself as a sacrifice to the fiend before the other monks' eyes—only to be reincarnated into her current body—that they converted as well. To them, Xin Yue had revealed that the Tan Sugi monastery wasn't a place for peace, but a cage-tomb that, if they could release its bound prisoner, would grant great power and rewards immediately, rather than waiting for countless reincarnations through a chance at something they might never even earn.

Xin Yue's current body has the form of a human woman with a short build, shoulder-length cropped hair and a long black braid that hangs to her calves.

She strikes fearful respect into her followers by saying terrible things with a cheery attitude and a kind smile on her face. Always polite even as she threatens and promises punishment, her politeness isn't a facade. Even while butchering her victims in the most prolonged and painful way possible, she smiles at them and earnestly thanks them for their sacrifice.

When Governor Heh Shan-Bao's ritual slew the people of Willowshore and plunged the region into a mindscape, Xin Yue and her monks perished as well. However, they didn't return to life within the mindscape. Their proximity and devotion to Kugaptee kept them from life, and they've spent each cycle of the past 115 years as undead. To Xin Yue, this new body is a shameful and horrific burden, and she only hopes that by helping Kugaptee to achieve what he desires—using the incarnation of his old enemy's body, now the sugi tree that grows over his grave, as the raw building blocks of a new living body—that she too shall be reborn into a new body. She has little interest in what kind of body she might attain, just that it be one of living flesh.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

Xin Yue fabricated the circumstances for the Tan Sugi monastery to fall and for Kugaptee to awaken, and she has been working toward his revival ever since. Like the heroes, Xin Yue has been trapped in the mindscape for the past 115 years, but due to her connection with Kugaptee, she has retained the memories of each passing cycle. She has kept tabs on the townsfolk of Willowshore, but after a century of repeated failures to break their own cycle, she discounted them as a threat to her work. As such, she was truly surprised when she received a vision from Kugaptee that showed the PCs opening the Wall of Ghosts.

Despite her nearly skeletal, undead appearance, Xin Yue continues to foster her politeness; she doesn't hide her intent in any way. She has no personal grudge against the heroes. Although she might come across as reasonable, as long as Kugaptee's presence remains within the mindscape, she can't be reasoned with to stop her pursuits and will fight to the bitter end to achieve her goal.



## XIN YUE

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Female variant deathless acolyte of Kugaptee (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 88)

**Perception** +15; darkvision

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +17, Deception +15, Diplomacy +17, Intimidation +17, Occultism +13, Religion +15, Sangpotshi Lore +15, Society +13

**Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6


**Items** +1 striking wounding shortsword


**AC** 25; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +17

**HP** 90; negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious


**Field of Past Regrets** (aura, divine, necromancy) 40 feet.

All creatures within the aura who have at least one past life (including all PCs in *Season of Ghosts*) recall failures in their past lives and are bolstered against repeating them, gaining a +1 status bonus to saving throws against mental effects. Living, non-nindoru creatures within the aura feel the pain of all their past lives, as well as their own current pain when they endure mental attacks, and gain weakness 3 to mental damage.


**Chastise Heretic**  **Trigger** a creature within 60 feet who Xin Yue can see casts a divine spell; **Effect** Xin Yue attempts to counteract the triggering spell using her spell attack modifier and a counteract level of 4. If the spell is counteracted, the caster takes 1d10 persistent mental damage. If Xin Yue fails to counteract the spell, the caster is temporarily immune to further uses of this ability for 24 hours.

**Profane Reincarnation**  **Frequency** once every 1,000 days; **Trigger** Xin Yue is reduced to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** Xin Yue utters a shriek as her undead body splits open and her shortsword becomes broken. She's instantly reincarnated as a sojiruh nindoru (page 86) with the elite creature adjustment (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6).

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee**  **shortsword** +16 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

**Divine Spontaneous Spells** DC 25, attack +17; **4th** (3 slots) *air walk*, *divine wrath*, *harm*; **3rd** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *crisis of faith*, *harm*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *deafness*, *harm*, *sound burst*, *spiritual weapon* (shortsword); **1st** (4 slots) *command*, *fear*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips (4th)** *daze*, *divine lance*, *guidance*, *read aura*, *shield*

**Near-Death Experience**  (divine, emotion, mental, necromancy) **Trigger** Xin Yue reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points and causes them to gain the dying condition; **Effect** Time appears to slow down to the dying creature as the immense stress of their near-death experience

pushes their brain into overdrive. The target sees their life flash before their eyes, and the urge to resist death grows strong. The target reduces the DC of their recovery checks by 2, but if they lose the dying condition, they must attempt a DC 25 Will save.

**Critical Success** The creature is empowered by the experience and gains fast healing 5 for 1 minute.

**Success** The creature is empowered by the experience and gains fast healing 1 for 1 minute.

**Failure** The creature becomes depressed by the experience and becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

**Critical Failure** The creature reels from the experience. They become stupefied 1 and doomed 1.



## Let the Leaves Fall

Chapter 1:  
Turning of  
the Seasons

Chapter 2:  
The  
Enlightened  
Path

Chapter 3:  
In the Ruins  
of Wisdom

First Long Night

Sangpotshi

Adventure  
Toolbox





# Zhi Hui

## *Benevolent Monastic Ghost*

Before Zhi Hui arrived at what would become the Tan Sugi monastery, she lived as a nomad among the spirits of the Specterwood after being abandoned there to appease angry spirits by the villagers of a small, now long-forgotten village. Rather than succumb to monsters, Zhi Hui was instead discovered and raised by kami. She followed their guidance and achieved enlightenment at the age of 15 before setting out on her own to explore Specterwood. Years later, she heard the story of a grove of sugi trees that towered over the rest of the forest, with trunks as large as entire huts. Wondering how sugi trees could grow to such extremes, Zhi Hui set out to find the grove. It took her three more years to find the trees, for this part of Specterwood was wild and unexplored, but she knew she'd come across a place of immense significance even if she didn't yet know what it meant.

When Zhi Hui initially founded both the Tan Sugi monastery and Willowshore, she'd simply hoped to create a place where disciples of Sangpotshi could dedicate their lives to the pursuit enlightenment. The sugi grove instilled a sense of awe in her, and she discovered that a high concentration of spiritual energy caused the trees to grow abnormally large. She soon uncovered the grove's sinister secret—that a great evil slumbered beneath its roots and only the spiritual resistance of a heroic soul who had reincarnated as the tallest tree in the grove kept that evil from escaping its death. Following this discovery, she scoured the resources available to her and reached out to friends throughout Tian Xia before finally determining the nature of the evil. A nindoru demigod named Kugaptee was buried beneath the Great Sugi, and she dedicated herself to protecting the sugi trees that in turn protected all of the villagers from the fiend.

After Master Zhi Hui's passing, her spirit initially remained tied to the monastery to oversee the protection of the grove, but as her followers left or became corrupted, her spirit became trapped in Kugaptee's clutches as well. Now, she can do little to stop the events that unfold and are leading to a dire situation: Kugaptee's awakening.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

As the PCs purify statues in the monastery, Zhi Hui can answer more of their questions and cast spells on them; once all four statues are purified, she can cast spells and answer questions at will and can even aid in combat as long as the fight takes place in one of the encounter areas that contains a purified statue. Certain questions the PCs might ask Zhi Hui are answered as follows.

**Who/What is Kugaptee?** “Kugaptee is a nindoru fiend whose existence stands in opposition to the philosophy of Sangpotshi. Nearly a thousand years ago, he was defeated by Tan Sui-Jing. She perished in the fight as well, but her soul reincarnated as a towering sugi tree that grew over Kugaptee's remains, serving as a seal that would keep his soul trapped. The central sugi tree in this monastery is that very tree. But it has sickened, for Kugaptee strives for rebirth. His influence is the source of the monstrosities you've been facing. This monastery was once a sacred place, with monks who cared for the land, the animals, and the spirits. At the same time, and even before the monastery, it has been a site that kept Kugaptee's immense evil sealed away beneath the surface. I had hoped that this monastery would stand guard over Kugaptee's grave for many generations to come, but I failed to see how my own death would affect my followers. No one was ready to take my place. Worse, one of my students, Xin Yue, became corrupted by Kugaptee, and even now toils below in his grave to see the fiend's soul reborn. Now, the fiends who have gathered here have been desecrating the statues scattered throughout the monastery to amplify Kugaptee's influence.”

**What can you tell us of the curse that afflicts Willowshore?** “This monastery was built in this sacred grove of trees, but unknown to me at the time, the Great Sugi seals away a powerful and evil fiend named Kugaptee. It is this fiend's influence that has caused the tragedy unfolding now. It is no mere curse that traps you and Willowshore. Time itself has been stolen from you. We are all trapped in a cycling mindscape that repeats every year, beginning on the first day of summer and ending on the last day of



spring. Each time the cycle repeats, your memories have been reset. I retain my memories, but I know not how often the cycle has repeated, and until now have not been able to see further than Kugaptee's darkness. But I know who started it—your governor, Heh Shan-Bao. He sought to bolster the Tan Sugi, but it needed no bolstering. His attempt backfired and opened cracks into Kugaptee's grave—cracks that plunged us all into this cyclic mindscape. It was enough to whisk Heh Shan-Bao away even from this mindscape that traps the rest of us. While I cannot say how many years we've repeated this cycle, I do know that something has changed this time—whether due to Kugaptee's growing strength or other outside forces. What is important is that you have been given the chance to change our fates, and you must not waste this opportunity if you wish to free us all. To stop the cycle, you must uncover the truth of what happened, and that begins with ending Kugaptee's influence over this mindscape."

**How can we escape?** "I do not know the answer you seek. If anyone does, it would be Heh Shan-Bao. He caused all of this, but he is now trapped within his own mindscape. Once Kugaptee's influence has been diminished, there will be trails to follow and clues to seek that will surely lead you to where your governor has gone. Find Heh Shan-Bao and you will get closer to understanding what is happening now and how to escape from this cycle of malice."

## ZHI HUI

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE LG MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

**Perception** +18

**Languages** Aklo, Common

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Diplomacy +17, Medicine +17, Nature +15, Occultism +13, Religion +17, Survival +15

**Str** -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

**AC** 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

**HP** 85, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

**Rejuvenation** (divine, necromancy) Purifying the four statues and defeating Xin Yue in Kugaptee's Grave below the Tan Sugi monastery allows Zhi Hui's ghost to fade.

**Speed** fly 35 feet

**Melee** ♦ ghostly hand +15 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d8+7 negative

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 25, attack +17; **4th** *life's fresh bloom* (page 75), *remove curse*; **3rd** *heal* (×3), *remove disease*; **2nd** *restoration*, *restore senses*; **1st** *sanctuary*; **Cantrips** (4th) *divine lance*, *read aura*, *stabilize*

**Incarnate Skill** ♦♦♦ (divination, divine) Zhi Hui peers into a willing creature's soul and searches through their past lives. That creature permanently trades proficiency rank from one skill they're currently expert in with a skill in which they're untrained, both of their choice. Zhi Hui can only perform this activity once per character.



## Let the Leaves Fall

### Chapter 1: Turning of the Seasons

Chapter 2:

Chapter 3:

Chapter 4:  
the Ruins  
Wisdom

Chapter 5:  
Night

Chapter 6:  
hi



## Next Month

### NO BREATH TO CRY

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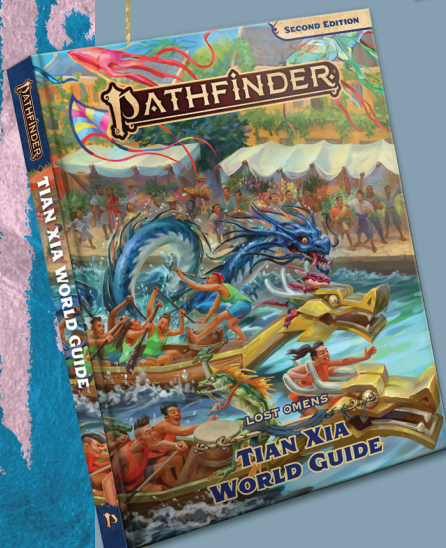
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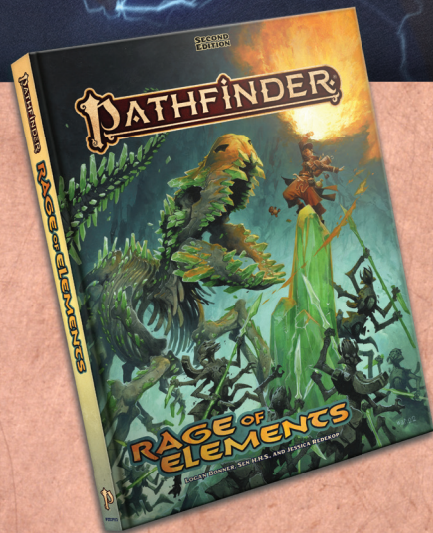
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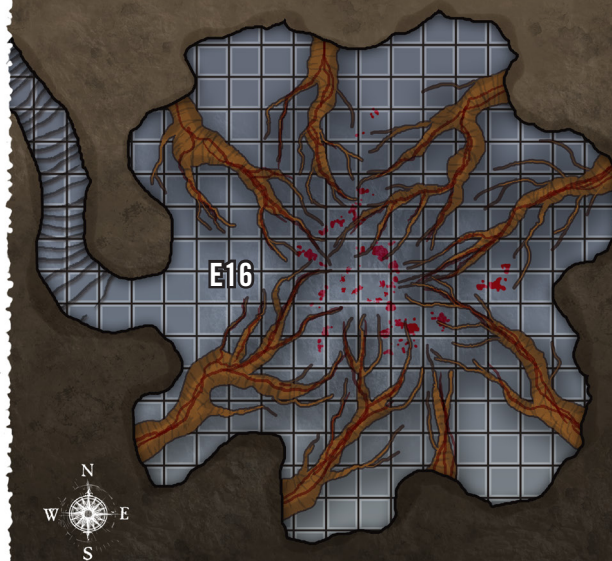
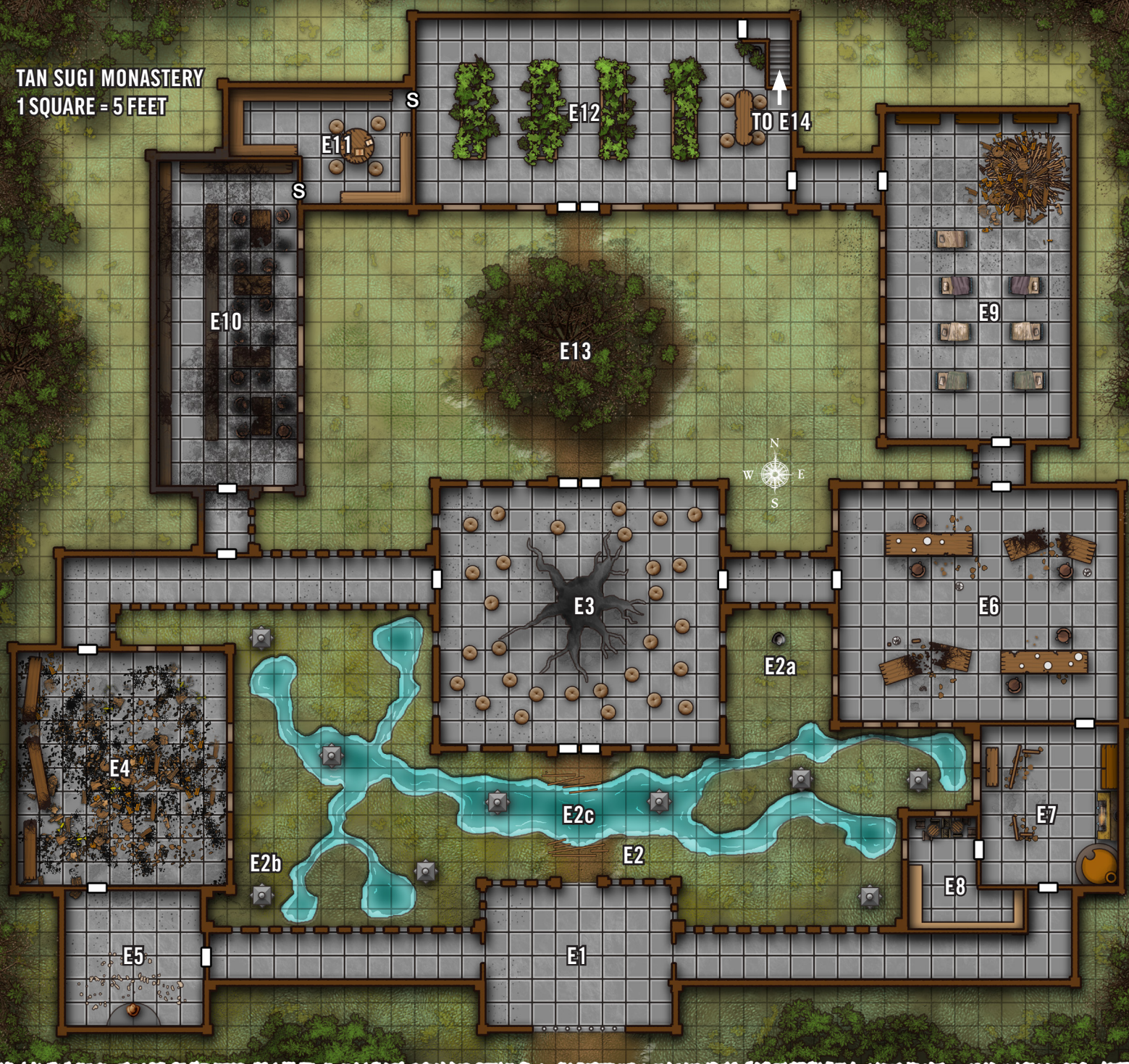
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TAN SUGI MONASTERY  
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# BEYOND THE WALL OF GHOSTS

**T**he town of Willowshore is cursed! As fall begins, the town's newest heroes find themselves in the position of leading preparations for the lean times to come. Yet the curse itself must be investigated as well, and when it becomes apparent that the answers might lie in a ruined monastery, the heroes must find a way to pass beyond the eerie Wall of Ghosts that blocks the only path! The Season of Ghosts Adventure Path continues with "Let the Leaves Fall," a complete adventure for 4th- to 6th-level characters.



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