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ADVENTURE

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

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Official Game Adventure

Black Courser

by Troy Denning



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Gaumahavi, Greater Purple Dragon



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Subarctic desert, high mountains
FREQUENCY: Very Rare (unique)
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any, but most active at twilight
DIET: Special (Carnivore)
INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: - 2
MOVEMENT: 15, Fl 40
HIT DICE: 16 (128 hit points)
THACO: 5
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 or dust storm and/or spell
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8/1-8/5-30
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Only hit by +3 or better magical weapons in astral (dust) form.
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%
SIZE: G (125' long)
MORALE: Fanatic (19)
XP VALUE: 18,000



Gaumahavi is a unique type of dragon. Though her long, snaky form is similar in appearance to that of an oriental dragon, she has little in common with them.

Thousands of years ago, Gaumahavi was the pet leopard of Surtava, the famous Ulgarian prince who gave up his power and wealth to seek enlightenment as a beggar, and who founded the Padhran religion now followed by the citizens of Ra-Khati. As a result of her close contact to the Padhra, Gaumahavi developed a soul. This newfound soul set Gaumahavi on a series of incarnations; her present incarnation is that of a great purple dragon.

Combat: In battle, Gaumahavi is a cunning predator who approaches combat in much the same way she approached hunting in her previous lives as predators. She uses her spells and breath weapons to disable her opponents, then keeps her exposure to a minimum while moving in for the kill.

Gaumahavi is the Great Dragon of the Desert Winds. As such, she has complete control over air currents within a 500-yard radius, and twice per day can create five rounds of dust storm causing 2d4 points of damage per round and knocking the victim off his feet (save vs. breath weapon for half damage and to retain footing). Gaumahavi's breath weapon, which she can use up to nine times a day, consists of a great cloud of powdery purple dust 100 feet long. This cloud is 5 feet in diameter at the base and 50 feet at the end. It does 8d10 points of choking damage to any breathing creature (save vs. breath weapons for half damage).

She can polymorph into any predatory animal or assume astral form at will. When in astral form, a shadow of her body, in the form of purple dust, remains on the Prime Material Plane. This form can only be struck by +3 or better magical weapons. By dissolving one dust body and forming another in a different part of the world, she is able to move over great distances instantaneously.

Gaumahavi can cast the following spells once per day: Wizard: 1) *color spray, gaze reflection*; 2) *darkness, 15' radius, whispering wind*; 3) *blink, wind wall*; 4) *dimension door, rainbow pattern*; 5) *telekinesis, teleport*; 6) *control weather, project image*; 7) *reverse gravity, vanish*.

Priest: 1) *animal friendship, locate animals or plants*; 2) *snake charm, speak with animals*; 3) *hold animal, summon insects*; 4) *giant insect, repel insects*; 5) *animal growth*.

Habitat/Society: Gaumahavi prefers to inhabit arid lands at high altitudes. She is by nature a solitary creature who avoids contact with men, though she is occasionally coerced into cooperating with certain powerful individuals. A nomadic huntress, Gaumahavi does not collect treasure.

Ecology: In astral form, Gaumahavi draws her sustenance from the mystic energies of Toril. However, in normal corporeal form, she is a voracious carnivore.



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Introduction

A wise sage once said that human beings cannot long live on the bitter bread of malice. Be

that as it may, Toril has no shortage of creatures who thrive on the fear of others or the pain of the innocent. To these evil ones, hatred is the stuff of life and the manna of immortality.

Once, possibly, they were men, and have since been turned into something else by their dark appetites. On the other hand, maybe they were never human at all, but simply masqueraded as men until their foul practices gave them away. Or could it be that they are still men—that the wise sage was wrong, that some men can live forever on the diabolic food of malevolence?

As any adventurer who has ever felt the chilling touch of one of these abominations will confirm, such questions are better left to the sages. When a mortal finds himself struggling against an evil being's cold grasp, there is no time for reflection. If a man is to survive an encounter with such a fiend, he must concern himself with only one thing: discovering his tormenter's weakness and using that weakness to destroy it.

Soon, this will be the very problem facing a small group of wanderers—your player characters—who have stumbled into the grasp of Ambuchar Devayam.

How to Use This Book

The Black Courser is the second installment in the Empires Adventure Trilogy, which also includes the first adventure, *Storm Riders*, and the final episode, *Blood Charge*. The Empires Adventure Trilogy is a series of AD&D® Game Adventures set in the new FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign world territories described in *The Horde* campaign set. They concern events derived from the Empires Novel Trilogy, *Horselords*, *Dragonwall*, and *Crusade*, also published by TSR.

The Black Courser contains a 64-page adventure book (you're reading it now), a color mapsheet, and a cover gatefold. The front side of the gatefold is a map to be used in *Part II* of *The Black Courser*. Do not show this map to your players, as it contains information they are not intended to see. On the back of the gatefold are statistics for various important NPCs and a new artifact, the *Stone Sceptre of Shih*. If you wish, use a pair of scissors to cut the gatefold off the cover.

The front and back inside covers contain reproductions of the descriptions of Sandiraksiva and Gaumahavi from *Storm Riders*. Both appear in the

early parts of the adventure, so you will need their descriptions handy.

The color mapsheet shows the city of Kuo Meilan and its subterranean facilities, to be used in *Parts IV and V*. Again, this map is intended for your eyes only. Do not show it to your players.

The 64-page booklet is the heart of *The Black Courser*. Before beginning play, read this book to familiarize yourself with the plot of the adventure. Don't try to memorize it, however. Simply familiarizing yourself with the story and organization of the book will insure an enjoyable adventure. If you don't have enough time to read the entire book, read at least the introductory material and, before each session, the events you plan to use.

Portions of the adventure are made up of a series of *events*. Each event is divided into sections: boxed text, DM's notes, and statistics (when needed). As an event begins, read the boxed text aloud. This sets the scene.

The DM's notes detail the action of the event, describing such things as combat tactics, NPCs, and treasure. Often, to identify key information, the DM's notes are divided into subsections by bold subtitles.

Statistics are located at the end of the encounter, where you can find them easily. Note that statistics do not include information on the monsters' morale. Unless indicated otherwise, all monsters in *The Black Courser* attack until destroyed—or until the party is destroyed!

Because *The Black Courser* occurs close to and inside Kara-Tur, many of its characters and monsters are of an oriental nature. In many cases, you will find it useful, but not necessary, to refer to the *Oriental Adventures* reference book. Some spells listed for the NPCs in *The Black Courser* are from *Oriental Adventures*. If necessary, substitute appropriate spells from the *Player's Handbook*.

A few terms might be confusing if you have not read *Oriental Adventures* or *The Horde* boxed set:

- <i>kalat</i>	a knee-length tunic, usually silk.
- <i>khahan</i>	the chief of Tuigan chiefs, emperor of the Tuigan nation.
- <i>khan</i>	leader of a Tuigan army.
- <i>kumiss</i>	a beverage made from fermented mare's milk.
- <i>lamellar armor</i>	armor of successive layers of protective material, such as hardened leather and small metal plates.
- <i>minghan</i>	1,000 soldiers.
- <i>noyan</i>	commander of a group of 1,000 soldiers.



- ordu* the Tuigan name for camp, used in the same sense as hometown or village.
- quiver-bearer* Tuigan name for a servant.
- shukenja* holy men or priests.
- taloc* a contest of proclamations.
- Tuigan* nomadic horsemen (detailed in *The Horde* boxed set).
- *tumen* a Tuigan army, 10,000 mounted men.
- wu-jen* sorcerers and magicians.
- yurt* a large dome-shaped tent of felt.

DM's Synopsis

Read through this synopsis before beginning *The Black Courser*.

In *Storm Riders*, a large force of Tuigan chased the PCs into a wealthy mountain kingdom named Ra-Khati. Unfortunately, Ra-Khati is rather xenophobic and seldom allows visitors to leave alive. Shortly after the PCs learned this, a messenger arrived from Ra-Khati's enemy, Raja Ambuchar Devayam of Solon. The Raja threatened to invade the mountain kingdom unless Ra-Khati's leader, the Dalai Lama, sent his daughter Bhrokiti and the magical black stallion Sandiraksiva to Solon as gifts.

After learning that Devayam had awakened the sleeping dragon Gaumahavi, and mistaking the huge army which had chased the PCs into Ra-Khati for Devayam's, the Dalai Lama agreed. The Dalai Lama offered the PCs their freedom in return for taking his daughter and Sandiraksiva to the Raja.

Before the PCs reached Solon, however, they were intercepted by the Raja's ally, the purple dragon Gaumahavi. The purple dragon urged the PCs to take Bhrokiti to Solon, but she wanted to have the Black Courser freed immediately. At this point, clever PCs realized that Sandiraksiva was a reincarnation of Gaumahavi's child, and that the dragon was working with the Raja in retaliation for all the years the Dalai Lama had kept the magical courser in captivity.

When the PCs arrived at the deserted city of Kushk, the appointed place for meeting the Raja's emissaries, they were intercepted by the same Tuigan army that had originally chased them into Ra-Khati. It quickly became clear that the army which the Dalai Lama feared did not belong to the Raja of Solon.

After inviting the PCs into his camp, Hubadai, the khan of the Tuigan army, showed them a diary which had come into his possession. The diary revealed the existence and rough location of an artifact called the *Stone Scepter of Shih*, supposedly the only means of destroying the Raja. The adventure ended with Hubadai suggesting

that the PCs guide him through Ra-Khati, then go to Shou Lung to recover the stone scepter.

As *The Black Courser* begins, Hubadai is preparing to move into Ra-Khati. He must take Khazari's southern flank by surprise, so he intends to move through Ra-Khati undetected – either by killing everybody his army encounters, or, preferably, by relying upon the PCs to guide him away from the natives.

Despite the possibility of recovering the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and destroying the Raja, some PCs may wish to keep their promise and deliver Bhrokiti to Solon. *Part I* is dedicated to this possibility. PCs following this course of action soon discover evidence that Ambuchar Devayam's threat to invade Ra-Khati was not so idle, after all. An army of assorted undead and foul monsters is marching toward Ra-Khati. Unless they flee the army, the PCs are given a short audience with the Raja. If they have both Bhrokiti and Sandiraksiva with them, the Raja thanks them for fulfilling their promise. He then returns the PCs to the edge of Solon, where they meet Hubadai's army again. If the party does not have both the horse and the princess, the Raja angrily sends them away, saying that he wants both of his gifts before he will accept either. Again, the PCs meet the Tuigan army. Whether or not the PCs gave the Raja what he wanted, they now have mysterious tattoos on their foreheads.

In *Part II*, the party must guide 40,000 Tuigan soldiers through Ra-Khati undetected – despite the PCs' own ignorance of the terrain. If Devayam now has Bhrokiti and Sandiraksiva, Gaumahavi breaks her alliance with the foul Raja for reasons of her own. She returns the Princess and the Black Courser to the party for safe-keeping, then goes off to fight the Raja's army of undead.

A short time later, mysterious tattoos appear on the foreheads of Hubadai, his personal guards, Bhrokiti and the PCs (if they weren't tattooed in *Part I*). Eventually, the PCs discover that the tattoos are the Stamp of Tan Chin, identifying them as the property of an ancient emperor from Shou Lung. When several tattooed Tuigan die, become zombies, and then march toward Solon, the party should realize that the tattoos mark them as the Raja's property. Upon their deaths, they will become the Raja's zombies. If they wish to avoid such a fate, the PCs must recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and destroy the Raja of Solon.

Clever party members will also realize that the Raja and the ancient Shou emperor Tan Chin are



one and the same. After learning that a powerful wizard named Shih chased Tan Chin out of Shou Lung, the PCs can guess at Am-buchar Devayam/

Tan Chin's goal: he intends to capture the mountain kingdom of Ra-Khati, then use it as a base from which to launch a reconquest of Shou Lung.

The rest of the adventure concerns the PCs' journey through Ra-Khati, their discovery of the Tan Chin's capital, the lost city of Kuo Meilan, and, finally, their recovery of the stone scepter. The next adventure in the Empires Adventure Trilogy, *Blood Charge*, details what they find when they attempt to destroy the Raja.

Beginning the Adventure

The *Introductory Encounter* of the *The Black Courser* assumes that you and your player characters have played the first adventure in the Empires Adventure Trilogy, *Storm Riders*. If not, you may need to make a few adjustments.

First, it is necessary to get the party into the general region of Ra-Khati, an unexplored mountainous wilderness. If you are already running a wilderness campaign, simply describe the terrain as growing colder and more rugged, then have the PCs stumble into the Tuigan army. The sentries will naturally take the PCs to Hubadai, who asks them to be his guests at the evening meal.

On the other hand, if your characters are tucked away in some civilized location such as Cormyr, perhaps they could be offered the opportunity to accompany a party of explorers on an overland expedition to the mysterious East. The journey would pass without incident until it meets Hubadai's army. Everybody except the PCs flees or perishes in the resulting fray. Hubadai, claiming to regret the misunderstanding deeply, invites the PCs to dinner to make amends.

However they come to join the Tuigan army, the PCs meet Bhrokiti, who tells them the sad tale of what befell her in *Storm Riders* (see DM's synopsis). Specifically, she mentions the following points:

- She is the Princess Bhrokiti of Ra-Khati, the daughter of the Dalai Lama.
- The foul Raja of Solon threatened to invade her father's country unless she was given to him as a bride, along with her father's favorite horse, the magical black stallion Sandiraksiva. Her father was reluctant to agree; but she volunteered for the good of her people.

- Both she and her father believed the Raja could carry out his threats, for a huge army had been reported on their border, and it was rumored that the Raja's ally, the purple dragon Gaumahavi had been awakened.

- As she and her escorts were traveling to meet the Raja's emissaries, they discovered that the army belonged not to the Raja, but to the Tuigan.

- On the other hand, the purple dragon has definitely been awakened, so she suspects the Raja is up to something.

- She also discovered the reason that the purple dragon, which normally does not interfere in the affairs of humankind, has become an enemy of her father. Her father's favorite horse, the Black Courser, is the reincarnation of Gaumahavi's child, and Gaumahavi resents the Dalai Lama's attempts to tame it.

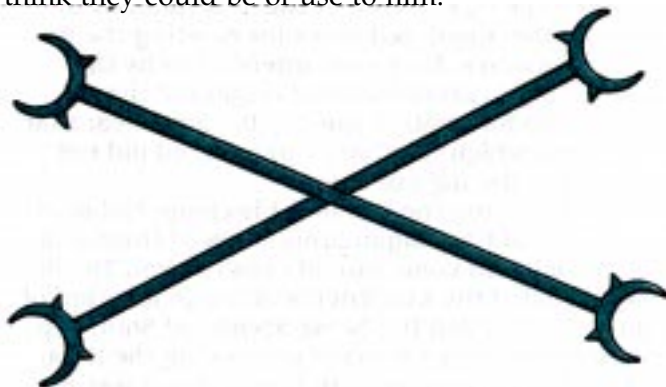
- The dragon's hatred for her father aside, Gaumahavi has little reason to remain faithful to her current ally, either. Many years ago, the Raja captured Sandiraksiva and used the horse to coerce Gaumahavi into making war on Ra-Khati.

- Fortunately, Bhrokiti has discovered a way to destroy the Raja, a very powerful magician that can control the dead. Somewhere in Shou Lung, there is an artifact called the *Stone Scepter of Shih*. It is her intention to recover this weapon and use it to destroy the Raja. She takes care to hint that anybody brave enough to aid her will be richly rewarded.

- Her escorts died battling the purple dragon, who is now trapped within a prism in Hubadai's possession.

- Her host, Hubadai, wants to sneak his army through Ra-Khati undetected, and wants her to lead the way. His only alternative is to kill everybody who sees his army, so Bhrokiti has agreed to help him. Unfortunately, she's led a sheltered life and doesn't know the way.

- Finally, she suggests that the PCs act as if they know the way through Ra-Khati, for she doesn't know what Hubadai would do if he didn't think they could be of use to him.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Small group
ACTIVE CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Strength Points
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil

NO. APPEARING:	Up to 6, but usually 1
ARMOR CLASS:	3 (torso), 0 (tail), - 2 (head)
MOVEMENT:	18, Fl 36 (B)
HIT DICE:	12 (75 hp)
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	by weapon (x4), 1d10 (tail)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>touch</i> , <i>fear</i> aura, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	silence, dark, hit only in light
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	H (12' long)
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	14,000

The dowagu are the creations of the Raja Ambuchar Devayam. They have the lower bodies and tails of giant snakes, except that their tails are covered with a thick, layered hide. They have man-like torsos with four arms and huge leathery wings. Their faces are gaunt and grotesque, with long, curved horns rising from their foreheads and equally long, wicked tusks protruding from their upper jaws. The dowagu are completely black, with beady blue eyes resembling stars. Unless caught in the full light of the moon or a magical light source, they are rarely visible as more than a shadow.

Combat: Dowagu rarely fight, for they are usually working under strict orders from the Raja. When they do fight, however, they are true terrors, attacking simultaneously with four weapons (usually a scimitar, flail, axe and spear) and their powerful tail. Any being unfortunate enough to see a dowagu in full light must save vs. paralysis or flee in fear for 1d12 rounds.

Creatures hit by the tail, or touching the dowagu with bare hands, must save vs. spells or take an additional 1d4 points of *chilling touch* damage and lose a point of Strength. If the victim fails a second save, this one vs. poison, the Strength loss is permanent, in addition, on a natural to-hit roll of 20, the dowagu entwines its tail about the victim. Entwined victims suffer no additional damage, but must save as if hit by the tail each round, or suffer the consequences as outlined above.

Defensively, the dowagu are always surrounded by a 5' sphere of *silence*. In addition, they can cause *darkness* (10') at will. If this is done at night and there is no direct source of light on the dowagu, treat the result as if it were *invisible*. Finally, the dowagu can be hit only if illuminated in the full effect of a magical light source, such as a *light* or *continual light* spell. Note that such spells cause no direct damage to the dowagu; they merely allow other weapons to inflict damage. If the dowagu is not illuminated, any attack directed against it simply passes



through its body as if it were a shadow. They are subject to the full effects of the *prism of Kushk*, however, for it simultaneously provides a magical light source and makes an attack.

Each day, a dowagu is able to cast up to four 1st level Wizard spells from the Illusion/Phantasm school as if it were a 10th-level Wizard.

Habitat/Society: The dowagu are generally solitary creatures, answering solely to their master and creator, the Raja Ambuchar Devayam. Although they prefer to dwell in desolate, arid locations, they are at home in any environment.

They can mark any creature with the Stamp of Tan Chin. One of their major duties is to wander the world searching out victims upon which to place the dark tattoo. This stamp cannot be removed, even by a *wish* spell, and always shows through any attempt to cover it up. (Makeup wears off, scarves or hats fall off, spells fail inexplicably, etc.) Upon dying, persons marked with the stamp become undead and march to Solon to join the Raja's army. Usually, such victims become zombies, but especially powerful characters (9th level and above) become a more advanced form of undead, such as a vampire, wight, groaning spirit, etc. The only way to escape this fate is to avoid death or to destroy the Raja.

Ecology: The dowagu are magical constructs created by the Raja Ambuchar Devayam. There are only six of them, though the Raja will create a replacement if one is destroyed. To feed, the dowagu entwine a victim within the coils of their *chilling* tail and draw away his strength. They rarely stop until the victim is an empty husk.



Introductory Event

As evening falls, Hubadai's yurt buzzes with activity. The general's quiver-

bearers drag extra rugs into the felt tent, roast fresh game over open fires, and stack skins of kumiss within easy access. Finally, a man wearing the purple kalat of Hubadai's personal nightguard arrives and addresses Princess Bhrokiti.

"Hubadai, the khahan's son and commander of five tumens, invites you to share his meat and drink this evening," says the nightguard.

From his manner, it is apparent that the guard does not expect a refusal.

DM's Notes. Assuming the PCs advise Princess Bhrokiti to accept the invitation, the guard leads them into Hubadai's dimly lit yurt. The guard carefully guides each guest into the felt tent, making sure that they do not step on the doorjamb—a sure harbinger of bad luck.

Inside the yurt, which is thirty feet in diameter, five khans are seated on rugs to Hubadai's left. They all wear soiled silk kalats and carry sabers and daggers in their belts. Twenty of Hubadai's nightguards stand at the edges of the tent, barely visible in shadowy light. To the Tuigan commander's right, a rug has been unrolled for Bhrokiti and any female PCs.

Hubadai formally welcomes his guests to his yurt, saying, "Welcome, Princess Bhrokiti and escorts, to the yurt of Hubadai Khan. The son of Yamun Khahan, the Great Emperor of All Peoples and All Lands, asks you to sit."

The khan motions the men to take seats on his left, and the women to take seats on his right. Half-a-dozen quiver-bearers appear out of the shadows and give cups of refreshments to the khan's guests. Bhrokiti's cup contains warm spiced wine (as do those of any female PCs), while the men's cups contain kumiss—a sour brew made from fermented mare's milk.

After his guests have been served, Hubadai raises his mug. "Let us toast our partnership."

If the PCs drink to the partnership, they are committing themselves unreservedly to Hubadai's service—at least in the khan's eyes. If they do not drink, Hubadai acts indignant, but secretly admires the PCs for driving a hard bargain.

What Hubadai Wants. After his toast, Hubadai explains what he wants from the PCs. He has just returned from conquering Semphar. His or-

ders are to attack Khazari from the southern flank—i.e., across its border with Ra-Khati. Having spent several weeks vainly searching for a route through Ra-Khati, he has decided to find some guides. The PCs are those guides. He wants them to lead him through Ra-Khati, preferably without being seen.

Should the PCs protest that they don't know the way, Hubadai thinks they are lying. Nothing they can say will persuade him otherwise.

Hubadai will offer the PCs up to 100 gp a day (each), a fine horse each, and their freedom upon reaching Khazari. If the PCs refuse his offer, Hubadai intimates, he will treat them as prisoners and force them to guide him through Ra-Khati anyway. He also points out that guides will be able to lead him around the villages of Ra-Khati, which he would otherwise be forced to destroy in order to maintain secrecy.

Realizing that the army her father fears belongs to Hubadai and not Solon, Princess Bhrokiti believes that the Raja's invasion threat is a bluff. She favors guiding Hubadai through Ra-Khati in order to save her countrymen.

A Chance for Freedom. After explaining what he wants, Hubadai orders the quiver-bearers to bring in the roasted mutton. As the Tuigan eat, they engage in a contest of proclamations. Hubadai starts it by saying, "A man's greatest pleasure is the feel of hooves pounding beneath his saddle, to watch the deer fleeing before his horse, and to see his arrows down his prey."

After Hubadai's proclamation, all the Tuigan applaud. The khan next to Hubadai speaks next, saying, "A man's greatest pleasure is to ride out in the morning and feel the cold stinging his cheeks, to flush the game from its lair, and to eat of its flesh in his yurt that night."

Again, the Tuigan applaud the saying. A third man speaks up, "A man's greatest pleasure is to speed across open plain with the wind in his hair, to feel hunger at the end of the day, and to fill his belly with the bounty of the steppes."

The Tuigan look to the PCs, subtly inviting them to participate in the contest. The rules of the contest are simple, though nobody explains them to the PCs. The proclamation must be spoken by a man, and it must start with the phrase "A man's greatest pleasure." It must also mention horses, feeling, and eating. Assuming a proclamation follows the contest rules, the Tuigan applaud it loudly. If it doesn't follow the rules, however, the Tuigan laugh uproariously at it. Remember whether or not any proclamation made by a PC follows the rules of the contest.



Culture Clash. After the PCs have had their chance to make a proclamation, Princess Bhrokiti says, "A woman's greatest pleasure is to walk her favorite horse into the field, to feel a soft breeze upon her nose, and to gather fresh flowers for the supper feast."

The room falls deathly silent, and the Tuigan men stare at Bhrokiti with their mouths agape. The Princess remains composed and simply returns their stares with a warm smile. After a long, tense pause, Hubadai says, "Teylas is wise indeed for forbidding women to play the taloc."

The Princess responds by saying, "If I am not good enough to play your games, I am not good enough to drink your wine." She stands and throws the contents of her cup into Hubadai's face, then turns to leave the yurt. The nightguards and the khans immediately step forward, drawing their weapons.

Assuming the PCs leap to her defense, the guards do not reach the Princess. After the preliminary clash, Hubadai yells, "Hold!" His men immediately back away, and Hubadai continues, "We have shared kumiss. Should friends allow the rudeness of a woman to come between them?"

If the PCs do not leap to Bhrokiti's defense, the guards seize her and Hubadai unceremoniously condemns her to die at dawn. Should the PCs ask for her life, or attempt to free her later, Hubadai will lift his sentence—in exchange for the *Prism of Kushk*.

Whether or not the PCs defend her, the Princess will leave the tent in a huff as soon as she is able. Hubadai will dispatch several guards to watch over her, then demand that the PCs stay with him to discuss men's business.

One of the first things to be discussed is the winner of the taloc. Hubadai calls for a vote to determine who made the best proclamation. If one of the PCs came up with a proclamation that followed the rules of the contest, the Tuigan declare him the winner. (Otherwise, Hubadai himself is declared the winner.) Assuming a PC won, the khan offers that PC a gift of his choosing. The khan will go so far as to give the PCs a magic weapon of moderate quality (no more than +1), 2,000 gp, or the party's freedom. He will not give up Sandiraksiva, however, saying that the horse is not his or anybody else's to give.

The Prism of Kushk. After the contest winner is declared, Hubadai turns the conversation to his next area of interest. Whether or not the PCs have agreed to guide him through Ra-Khati, Hubadai wants the *Prism of Kushk*. He intends to present it to his father as a gift, and is willing to go to great lengths to acquire it.

If the PCs have not already traded the prism to him in return for Bhrokiti's life, Hubadai will offer them "whatever they desire" in return for it.

Translate whatever they desire to mean a maximum of one magic weapon of moderate quality (+2 with one special power), up to 10,000 gp, or the party's freedom, if they are prisoners.

Should the party be unwilling to sell the prism, Hubadai begrudgingly lets them keep it.

Results. After bargaining for the *Prism of Kushk*, Hubadai is finished with business. He spends the rest of the evening drinking kumiss and swapping unbelievable stories with his men. If the PCs care to participate, they are welcome to. The more they exaggerate, the better, but any tale of an event the PCs have actually participated in will be greeted with sneers and guffaws, and the Tuigan will steadfastly maintain that such feats are unthinkable impossible.

By the time the night is over, the PCs should be in one of two situations. They might be obligated, as prisoners or by their word, to lead Hubadai through Ra-Khati. In this case, proceed with *Part II: Through the Mountain Kingdom*. Do not use *Part I: Solon*.

On the other hand, the PCs might have won their freedom in the taloc or traded the *Prism of Kushk* for it. In this case, in the morning, Hubadai will try again to hire them as guards. Should they refuse, however, he will keep his word and let them go free.

It seems most likely that free PCs will head for Solon, intending to deliver the Princess (and perhaps Sandiraksiva) to the Raja. In this case, Hubadai graciously offers to escort them to the border of Solon. Proceed with *Part I: Solon*.

Some parties may elect not to pursue either course of action, electing instead to flee their dangerous situation entirely. It won't work. Turn to *Event 3: Army of the Dead* in *Part I*. Modify this encounter so the party encounters the dead army somewhere along their route, then proceed with the rest of *Part I*.



Statistics

Statistics for Hubadai, the Tuigan khans, and Princess Bhrokiti will be found on the inside gatefold.



Part I: Solon

Use this section only if the PCs elect not to guide Hubadai through Ra-Khati. Presumably,

they have decided to fulfill their promise to the Dalai Lama and are taking Princess Bhrokiti to Raja Ambuchar Devayam in Solon.

Assuming the PCs won or traded for their freedom in the introductory encounter, and informed Hubadai where they were going, the Khan escorts them to the edge of the dust desert. In this case, begin this section with *Event 2: Parting Company*.

Since they were also supposed to take Sandiraksiva along as a dowry, however, the PCs may decide to steal (or recover) the magnificent stallion from Hubadai's camp. When and if they attempt to take the Black Courser from the Tuigan camp, use *Event 1: Stealing Sandiraksiva*. Needless to say, Hubadai will not be inclined to escort them anywhere (except to the executioner's block) if they steal the horse. After the PCs take Sandiraksiva and enter Solon on their own, proceed with *Event 3: Army of the Dead*.

It is also possible that the PCs have decided simply to leave the area. In this case, begin this section with *Event 3*, adjusting it so that they meet the dead army outside of Solon.

Event 1: Stealing Sandiraksiva

Use this encounter only if the PCs attempt to take Sandiraksiva from Hubadai's camp.

Hubadai keeps Sandiraksiva in a corral at the edge of camp, along with a hundred white mares.

DM's Notes. Twelve Tuigan nightguards watch over the horses. They are spaced at even intervals around the corral, which is made of rope strung between stakes. The corral is approximately 50 yards in diameter, and has a solitary gate on the southern end.

At the first sign of trouble, the guards sound the alarm. Three rounds later, fifty regular Tuigan arrive at the corral. Ten more Tuigan arrive at the beginning of each round thereafter.

Sandiraksiva herds his mares into one side of the corral, then places himself between them and the source of the disturbance. He attacks any dangerous-looking being that approaches him. If one of his mares is directly threatened, Sandiraksiva attacks with all his might. Should it become apparent that his mares are in no danger

and that someone is trying to capture him, the Black Courser will flee.

Perhaps the best way of capturing Sandiraksiva is to take his mares. If the party leaves the Tuigan camp with more than twenty-five of the mares, the Black Courser follows. Occasionally, he will try to free the mares by attacking the PCs. Of course, it will be difficult to sneak out of camp with so many mares, so the chances are good that the Tuigan army will follow them—at least until they reach the edge of the dust desert.

Should the Tuigan capture the player characters during their attempt to take Sandiraksiva, Hubadai punishes them. Assuming they have not agreed to guide him through Ra-Khati, their punishment shall be to do so—as prisoners, if necessary. If the PCs have already told Hubadai they would guide him through Ra-Khati, he confiscates all of their material possessions—including their weapons.

Statistics

The statistics of the nightguards and the Tuigan warriors are listed on the inside gatefold. The statistics of the Black Courser are listed on the inside back cover.

Event 2: Parting Company

After three days of following an ancient and rarely used road, the cold steppes give way to a barren desert. The horses' hooves begin to sink in the fine dust. Before long, the poor beasts must struggle knee-deep through silt.

Hubadai calls a halt. "Even Tuigan horses cannot swim through dust, my friends. This is as far as we will accompany you." He points toward the range of mountains along the northern horizon. "Solon lies near the base of that mountain range. Stay close enough to see its valleys and cliffs, and you will find Solon."

The khan motions to several of his dayguards. They ride forward and take the reins of your horses, then politely wait for you to dismount.

DM's Notes. After the PCs return his horses, Hubadai gives them one last chance to change their minds. "A man's greatest pleasure is to protect his woman, to take his weapons and to strike down all those who would do her harm," he says. "A good man would not deliver a princess to her father's enemies. He would kill those enemies and take her for his own."



If the PCs do not change their minds, Hubadai bows to Princess Bhrokiti. "May Teylas protect you," he says, "since your men will not." With that, he turns around and leads his army away.

Difficult Travel. Although they might not realize it, the PCs are standing on the Old Iron Road. Beneath the dust, which is about three feet deep here, is a pathway of rusting metal that leads directly to Solon. This pathway is about twelve feet wide. As long as the party stays on it, they are only knee-deep in dust.

However, if they wander off the path (by traveling in any direction except straight toward Solon), they sink 1d10 feet into the dust. PCs sinking more than six feet are helpless to extract themselves and suffer 1d8 points of suffocation damage each round until somebody comes to their aid.

Event 3: Dead Army

The day after leaving the Tuigan army begins calmly enough, with a long morning of trudging across the barren plain. As the afternoon begins, however, a great dust cloud is visible on the southwestern horizon.

DM's Notes. The dust cloud is caused by the Raja's army, although the party has no way of

determining this at the moment.

The only way the party can avoid the army is to turn around immediately. In this case, they run straight into a tumen from the Tuigan army. Proceed with *Event 6: Reunion*.

Advance Scouts. Should the party elect not to run from the dust cloud, they will meet the Raja's army. The first sign they see of it is a dozen giant vultures streaking out of the sky. They land, surrounding the party and bathing it in a great cloud of dust. An oni bearing a long naginata (oriental glaive) sits astride each bird.

Standing eight feet tall, the oni are fearsome-looking creatures with one or two long horns and from one to three eyes apiece. Nine of them have red skin, but there are also two black and one orange oni among them. Their arms and legs are covered with shaggy, coarse hair, and they have long, filthy talons on their hands. Each has a Chinese-like character (the Stamp of Tan Chin) tattooed on his forehead. (Although neither the PCs or Bhrokiti have a ready means of interpreting the character, it reads "Property of his Imperial Majesty, the Divine Tan Chin" in ancient Shou.)





The oni make no move to attack, but will not respond to attempts at communication, either. They do not hesitate to use force to keep the

PCs from leaving.

A few minutes after the oni land, seven giant lizards approach from the direction of the dust cloud. The lizards have scaly, mottled gray hides, particularly long and sinuous bodies, and stubby, webbed feet. They propel themselves across the surface of the dust desert by wriggling and using their feet like fins.

Atop each lizard's back sits a man, each bearing the Stamp of Tan Chin on his forehead. Six of the men wear complete suits of black scale armor and carry long, black lances. At their waists hang long curved sabers and short daggers.

The man riding the lizard in the center wears a black robe and carries a red staff. The crest of Solon, a skull with glittering eyes, hangs from his neck. He stops his lizard in front of the PCs and stares at them for several moments.

Dujungas. Finally, the man speaks, "I am Dujungas, High Commander of the Sacred Army. What are you doing in my path? Speak the truth or die."

Dujungas is using a *detect lies* spell on the PCs, and he means what he says. If he detects someone speaking something other than the truth, he points his red staff at the offender and utters a command word. A black beam shoots from the staff's tip. The victim must save vs. death magic or fall dead. Should the party resist the attack, Dujungas quickly cautions them against foolishness, then allows his oni bodyguards to use whatever force is necessary to subdue the party.

Assuming the PCs survive to tell the truth, Dujungas congratulates them on their wise decision to bring the Princess (and the horse, if they have it) to the Raja. He says an audience will be arranged immediately.

Meanwhile, as Dujungas interrogates the PCs, his army catches up. The ten thousand "enlisted men" are withered, desiccated corpses. They wear gleaming ring mail armor and carry shining swords in their hands.

The enlisted men are controlled by living, black-robed officers wearing the crest of Solon around their necks. Like Dujungas and his guards, the entire army, living and dead, bears the Stamp of Tan Chin upon their foreheads.

Results. After learning that Bhrokiti was the princess sent to the Raja, Dujungas arranges an audience with his master. Proceed with *Event 4*:

Audience. Should the party defeat or escape the onis and Dujungas, they have little choice except to flee the approaching army. In this case, they encounter the Tuigan army. Proceed with *Event 6: Reunion.*

Oni (12). AC 4; MV 9; HD 8; hp 32 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10 + 10 (polearm); THAC0 13; AL LE; XP Value 2,000 each; SA spells; SD nil.

Spells: *fly* (3 per day), become *invisible* (two per day), *cloud trapeze* (self only, once per day), and *cause fear* (at will).

Giant Vultures (12). AC 6; MV 3, F1 24 (D); HD 4; hp 16 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d10; THAC0 17; AL N; XP Value 175 each; SA nil; SD nil.

Dujungas' Bodyguards (6; Fighters 7). AC 0; MV 12; hp 42 each; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8 (lance or scimitar); THAC0 14; AL LE; XP Value 975 each; SA lance; SD nil.

Once per round a lance can shoot a stream of fire up to thirty feet, doing 1d10 points of damage.

Giant Lizards (7). AC 5; MV 15; HD 3 + 1; hp 25 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 17; AL N; XP Value 270; SA nil; SD nil.

Dujungas (Priest 16). AC 4; MV 12; hp 52; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (staff); THAC0 13; Str 10; Int 15; Wis 16; Dex 12; Con 8; Cha 7; AL LE; XP Value 5,000; SA spells, staff; SD staff.

Spells:

1) *command, magical stone, shillelagh, detect magic, cause light wounds, cure light wounds, protection from good*

2) *enthral, hold person, chant, spiritual hammer, augury, find traps, withdraw*

3) *prayer, speak with dead, animate dead, dispel magic (x4)*

4) *detect lie (x3), cause serious wounds, cure serious wounds, spell immunity*

5) *quest, flame strike, true seeing, raise dead*

6) *find the path, speak with monsters, heal*

7) *resurrection.*

Upon command, Dujungas' staff can shoot a *death ray* up to 50 feet. Individuals hit by this ray must save vs. death magic or die (they can be *raised* normally). This staff also prevents any normal missile attack from striking the cleric.

Event 4: Audience

Dujungas kneels in the dust and turns toward the southwest, uttering words in a strange and mystic language. A pair of immense golden eyes appears in the sky.

"Why do you disturb me?" demands a deep, resonating voice. The air itself trembles.

DM's Notes. The voice and eyes belong to Ambuchar Devayam. Dujungas quickly explains what



he knows about the party members and Princess Bhrokiti.

The eyes focus on the Princess, and the voice says, “A delicious looking morsel.” Then the golden orbs turn to the party members.

If the PCs have not brought Sandiraksiva, Ambuchar tersely informs them that he will not accept the bride without her dowry. The eyes begin to fade away and the voice says, “I grant you safe passage into and out of Solon—but do not return until you have the Black Courser.”

A moment later, the Stamp of Tan Chin appears on the forehead of each party member. These magical tattoos cannot be removed or hidden by any means. Nobody in the dead army will tell them what the stamp signifies. From that point forward, Dujungas ignores the PCs, and they are free to leave the desert. When the PCs return to the edge of the dusty plain, they find Hubadai awaiting them. Continue with *Event 6: Reunion*.

Should the party have somehow managed to bring Sandiraksiva along, the Raja teleports the party, along with the Princess and Bhrokiti, to Solon immediately. Proceed with Event 5.

Event 5: Visit to Solon

“You have done well,” says the resonating voice. “You shall be rewarded.”

The sky grows dark. You feel weightless, as if the ground has disappeared, and a terrible cold chills you to the bone. A few moments later, solid stone appears beneath your feet. It is still dark and terribly cold.

A pair of golden eyes stares at you out of the darkness.

DM’s Notes. The Raja has teleported the party to a chamber in his dungeon in the city of Solon. Sandiraksiva and the Princess have been transferred to holding cells elsewhere in the interdimensional dungeon. The PCs cannot find either the horse or the woman by any means, and the Raja will tell them only that the pair is safe.

The room, which is 20 feet by 20 feet, is located in the dimension of darkness; no torch, light spell, or magic item that casts a light can illuminate the chamber. PCs with infravision can see each other, but everything else in the room, including Ambuchar Devayam, is too cold to cast a heat signature.

Any attempt to leave the room meets with failure. Its walls have no doors or windows, and are made of thick, cold stone. In addition, the Raja has enclosed the party within a special form of *anti-magic shell* that surrounds everything in the room except himself. Any magic the party attempts to use simply fails.

After the PCs have had a chance to react to their environment, the Raja says, “You were very wise to deliver the Princess and the Black Courser to me, as the Dalai Lama wished. As a reward, you are granted free access into and out of Solon. And here is a little something for your trouble.”

As the Raja speaks these last words, a single, cold coin appears in each PC’s hand. Although nobody can see the coin yet, each party member has been given a simple, non-magical gold piece bearing an engraving of two eyes.

After rewarding the party, the Raja turns his attention to Gaumahavi. Presumably, the purple dragon is still trapped within the *Prism of Kushk*. The Raja interrogates them about her whereabouts and whether or not she knows they have brought the Black Courser to him. He seems quite concerned about the dragon, even if told she’s still trapped within the prism. (If the party has the *Prism of Kushk* with them and Gaumahavi is still inside it, the Raja confiscates the prism. After the party leaves, he frees Gaumahavi and attempts to use Sandiraksiva to coerce her into aiding him. Fortunately, the purple dragon is prepared for such treachery. She returns to the party in Part II, Event 3, as outlined there.)

Should the party attempt to attack the Raja at any time, he simply closes his eyes and disappears (*teleports* away). As a punishment, he leaves the party enclosed in the dark room without food or water for 48 hours (periodically reappearing to renew the *anti-magic shell*).

After he is finished with the party (whether or not he found it necessary to punish them for attacking him), the Raja teleports the PCs out of his realm. Here, they discover that each one of them has been marked with the Stamp of Tan Chin. These tattoos cannot be removed or hidden by any means.

Hubadai’s army is camped at the edge of the dust desert. He has been waiting for the PCs to return.

Event 6: Reunion

The Tuigan army is camped on the edge of the desert. An escort of twenty guards leading extra mounts rides out to meet you.

DM’s Notes. The guards do not appear hostile, even if the PCs escaped from the Tuigan camp or stole Sandiraksiva. If the PCs attempt to flee,



the guards quickly overtake them, but do not attack. Should the PCs attack, the Tuigan simply retreat out of range and ask the party why

they're being so cantankerous.

No matter what the PCs did before last parting company with Hubadai, the Tuigan bear them no hard feelings. Among the horse nomads, it is considered honorable for a prisoner to escape. Even if the PCs stole Sandiraksiva, the warriors are not hostile—before the khahan united all the tribes, horse thievery was an admirable pastime.

Hubadai welcomes the party back with a patronizing grin, explaining that he suspected they would not find Solon to their liking.

Teylas' Word. If the party took Sandiraksiva when they left and the Black Courser is not with them now, Hubadai asks what happened to the horse. He will not be satisfied by any answer except the truth, since he knows the horse would return to its corral if possible.

Upon learning that Sandiraksiva has been delivered to the Raja, Hubadai grows quite concerned. He tersely informs the PCs that it is a crime against "Teylas," the sky-god, to cage such a magnificent animal. He orders his shaman to consult Teylas to find out what should be done.

After a long ceremony involving a sweat bath, drums, and flashing mirrors, the shaman enters a trance. In a booming voice that sounds like thunder, the shaman commands Hubadai to release the purple dragon and ask for her aid. The shaman also says that the party must go to Shou Lung and recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*, unless they prefer the Raja's army to Hubadai's.

The audience ends a moment later when a lightning bolt strikes the shaman and his body disappears. Hubadai appears quite unconcerned with the loss. That is always what happens when he speaks with Teylas.

If Gaumahavi is still imprisoned in the *Prism of Kushk*, Hubadai insists upon freeing her. Continue with *Event 7*.

Guides. If the PCs did not give Sandiraksiva to the Raja, Hubadai points to the Stamp of Tan Chin and asks where it came from. No matter how the PCs answer, he says he's glad he doesn't have one, but will not elaborate further.

At this point, Hubadai orders his men to break camp. He assumes that the PCs are now prepared to lead him through Ra-Khati. If they indicate that they are not, he frowns at them in puzzlement and says, "I thought you would want to get rid of those marks." He will not say any more—





because he doesn't know anything about the marks. He's simply trying every means of persuasion he knows to convince the PCs to guide him. Once the party agrees to act as scouts, continue with *Part II: Through the Mountain Kingdom*.

Event 7: Freeing Gaumahavi

Hubadai places the *Prism of Kushk* outside his yurt, then draws his saber and strikes the crystal. A loud clang sounds and Hubadai curses in loud, then his sword blade snaps into three pieces.

"By Teylas' voice!" he exclaims. "That blade was forged in Shaar!"

He angrily turns to you. "Open this!"

DM's Notes. There are only two ways to release Gaumahavi. The first is to use the prism to seize another victim's spirit (see *Prism of Kushk* in the *Introduction*). Gaumahavi will be released when the new victim's spirit enters the prism. The second is to use a spell that causes darkness on the sphere. This spell must be of equal or greater level than the spell which was used to trap Gaumahavi in the first place. For example, if the (seventh level) *sunray* scroll in *Storm Riders* was used to trap Gaumahavi, then a seventh level or higher spell must be used to cause the darkness that will free her.

Should the PCs be forced to trap another spirit in the prism in order to free Gaumahavi, Hubadai has no trouble recruiting volunteers.

Angry Dragon. When Gaumahavi is freed, a terrible dust storm whirls around the prism. Slowly, the storm coalesces into the form of a sinuous dragon made of purple dust—Gaumahavi in astral form. Assuming the PCs were the ones who trapped her, the purple dragon turns to them and speaks in an angry voice that sounds like the howling wind:

*With tendrils of light
you jail what no man can touch,
bridle the spirit,
tame the feral winds,
and lock them in a cage of glass.
Now, life is a circle:
what you do always comes back,
and I shall repay in kind
your burden of eternal torment.*

The party has one round to protest before Gaumahavi attacks. If they inform her that Princess Bhrokiti and Sandiraksiva are with the Raja of Solon, the purple dragon assumes material form and repeatedly flicks out her forked, prehensile tongue—the reptilian equivalent of saying "hmmmmmm." After warning the PCs that they

had better not be lying, she turns back to dust and vanishes.

Should the party fail to tell Gaumahavi where the Princess Bhrokiti

and Sandiraksiva are, the purple dragon attacks. On the first round, she uses *color spray*, to stun as many PCs as possible. Next, she uses *rainbow pattern* to stun the others.

On the third round, she scoops up the stunned PCs (and Hubadai, if possible) and teleports them to a frozen wasteland. (She can *teleport* up to 1150 lbs, in addition to her own weight.) She leaves the party there for one day, then returns and stuns them again. This time she takes them to an unbearably hot desert. Gaumahavi will continue taking the PCs to unbearable lands until they think to inform her of Sandiraksiva's location. Upon learning of the Black Courser's location, she will return the PCs to their point of origin, then react as above.

After the purple dragon disappears, Hubadai shrugs his shoulders and says that Teylas works in mysterious ways. In the meantime, he suggests that if PCs want to prove their bravery and rescue Princess Bhrokiti, or at least get rid of the marks on their foreheads, they should go to Shou Lung and recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*.

Statistics

Gaumahavi's statistics are listed on the inside front cover.





Part II: Through the Mountain Kingdom

Use this chapter when the PCs agree

to guide Hubadai through Ra-Khati. Presumably, the PCs intend to go to Shou Lung and recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*, then use it to destroy the Raja of Solon. If this is not their goal at the beginning of *Part II*, it should be by the end of it.

Different parties might have a wide variety of motivations for leading Hubadai through Ra-Khati. The most noble, and the reason Bhrokiti wants the party to assume the duties of guides, is to lead the Tuigan army around villages and hamlets that Hubadai would otherwise annihilate in the name of secrecy. The PCs might also be traveling with the Tuigan because Hubadai is headed in the general direction of Shou Lung, or simply because he told them to be his guides. It is even possible that the PCs are traveling with the Tuigan with the intention of stealing Sandiraksiva at the first opportunity, then taking the horse and the Princess to Solon as the Dalai Lama asked. (If they succeed, it may be necessary to return to *Part I*.)

The reason the PCs are traveling with the Tuigan is not important, as long as they realize they are expected to act as guides. Hubadai has complete confidence in the party to fulfill this role, as he firmly believes that they know the trails of Ra-Khati. Nothing will shake this belief, and he construes objections as poor attempts to keep him from violating Ra-Khati's borders.

The Prism of Kushk. As *Part II* begins, it is possible for either Hubadai or the party to own the *Prism of Kushk*. If Hubadai possesses the prism, he guards it jealously, refusing to use it in even the most dire of emergencies (he intends to make a gift of it to his father, Yamun Khahan). Should the PCs possess the *Prism of Kushk*, he continually offers to buy it or trade for it. He truthfully explains that he wants to make a gift of it to his father.

Gaumahavi. Gaumahavi can be in one of three places: inside the *Prism of Kushk*, free and trailing the Tuigan army, or off battling the Raja. She is trapped inside the *Prism of Kushk* only if the PCs did not give Sandiraksiva and Bhrokiti to the Raja; otherwise, Hubadai should have followed Teylas' recommendation and released the purple dragon (see *Part I: Event, 7*).

If, for some reason, Gaumahavi is not in the prism and the PCs never turned Sandiraksiva over to the Raja, he is following the Tuigan army. She

appears at odd intervals (in the events below), attempting to kidnap Bhrokiti and free the Black Courser (she doesn't realize her child has chosen to stay with Hubadai).

If the PCs delivered Sandiraksiva and the Princess to the Raja, Gaumahavi should have been freed in *Part I: Event 7*. Her whereabouts remain unknown to the party until *Part II: Event 3*.

The Black Courser. No matter where the PCs left him at the end of *Storm Riders*, Sandiraksiva is now under Hubadai's care and protection (unless the PCs have since given him to the Raja of Solon). The moment Hubadai saw the horse, he realized he had to set the noble beast free—taking the Black Courser from the PCs, if necessary. He now keeps a corral of a hundred white mares for Sandiraksiva, but the Black Courser is free to come and go as he pleases. Sandiraksiva returns this good treatment by allowing Hubadai to ride him on special occasions. Note that when Hubadai is mounted on Sandiraksiva, Gaumahavi will not attack the Tuigan leader.

The Stamp of Tan Chin. If the PCs met Dujungas in *Part I: Event 3*, each of them now has a Stamp of Tan Chin on their foreheads (see the description of the dowagu in the Introduction for an explanation of the stamp's nature). Although they may not understand what the magical tattoo signifies, clever PCs should suspect that it would be better to have the thing removed.

The Stamp of Tan Chin can only be removed by the destruction of Raja Ambuchar Devayam. No other force, not even a *wish* spell, can erase the magical tattoo. If the PCs hope to avoid falling prey to the stamp's effects, they have only one option: find the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and use it to destroy the Raja of Solon.

Should the party not realize the dire consequences of bearing the stamp upon their foreheads, Hubadai's shamans hint that it is a mark of great evil. If requested, Hubadai gladly has a priest consult Teylas on the PCs' behalf. The Tuigan god will report that the only way to remove the mark is to recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and destroy the Raja of Solon, but will not reveal the nature of the mark's powers.

If the party members do not yet bear a stamp, it will not be long before they do. Its nature becomes more apparent *Part II* progresses.

The Status of the PCs. Hubadai might consider the PCs to be prisoners or hired guides, depending upon the arrangement they reached in



the *Introductory Event*. In either case, he treats them well, and allows them the freedom of his camp. However, they are escorted at all times by 20 Tuigan nightguards, except when they are scouting the path through Ra-Khati. While fulfilling these duties, they are escorted by five nightguards (see statistics on inside gatefold).

As a guarantee of the PCs' honesty, Hubadai always keeps Princess Bhrokiti with him while they are away from camp (assuming she is with the party). He never willingly allows her to leave camp with the PCs.

Different Types of Events. *Part II: Through the Mountain Kingdom*, contains three different types of events: events that occur in a chronological sequence, events that occur when the party reaches a certain area on the map, and events to be used only if the party undertakes a particular course of action (called Contingency Events).

Events occurring in a chronological sequence and those occurring at a particular area on the map are interspersed with each other, and should be used in numerical order. Look at the Map of Ra-Khati on the cover gatefold. As the party reaches a numbered location on the map, use the event with the corresponding number.

Note that the same numbers appear on many different paths. Each event that has a corresponding number in more than one place on the map contains separate instructions for each path the party could be upon. For example, when the party reaches location number six on the map, use the instructions for the *Way of Solitude* if they are on the green path, and the instructions for the *Road to Inner Peace* if they are on the brown path.

Also note that numbers are often skipped on the map. For example, there is no two, four, or five on the map. Events which have no numbers on the map are used in chronological sequence. It does not matter where the PCs are, as long as the event is used after they leave the location with the preceding number and before they reach the location with the following number. For example, Event Two can be used any time after the PCs cross the Great Chain Bridge (Event One) and before they reach the intersection of the Way of Solitude and the Road to Inner Peace (Event Three).

Contingency Events. Depending upon the PCs' motivations for guiding the Tuigan through Ra-Khati, the party may attempt a wide variety of things at unpredictable times. The Contingency Events below deal with common possibilities. Use them as appropriate.

Contingency Event A

Stealing Sandiraksiva

If the PCs attempt to take Sandiraksiva from the Tuigan camp before *Event 27: Horse Thieves*,

see *Part I: Event 1*.

Assuming they are successful and intend to take the Black Courser and the Princess to Solon, they travel otherwise uneventfully to the nearest edge of the dust desert they can reach; follow *Event 1* with *Part I: Events 3* through 7, as appropriate. If this is their second trip to see the Raja, modify the discussion and results accordingly. Hubadai's army will chase them as far as the edge of the desert, then make camp there and wait for the PCs to return.

If the party fails to take Sandiraksiva, Hubadai reacts as in *Part 1: Event 1*. Continue where you left off.

If the party attempts to take the Black Courser at or after *Event 27*, follow the instructions there, including the instructions for Hubadai's reaction.

Contingency Event B

Releasing Gaumahavi

If Bhrokiti is in Solon and the PCs release Gaumahavi from the *Prism of Kushk*, see *Part I: Event 7*. If Bhrokiti is with the party when Gaumahavi is released, Gaumahavi takes her, without comment, and teleports to Solon. A day later, when the Raja's agents continue to pursue Sandiraksiva, she realizes that Ambuchar Devayam has been deceiving her. She returns Princess Bhrokiti to the party, instructs the PCs to recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih* so they can destroy Ambuchar Devayam, then goes off to delay the forces of Solon.

Contingency Event C

Sneaking into Hubadai's Yurt

The PCs may decide to sneak into Hubadai's yurt, probably for the purpose of stealing the *Prism of Kushk*. If it is in Hubadai's possession, he keeps the prism in a locked chest near his sleeping rugs. After dark, Hubadai himself will be here. The yurt is guarded at all times by 20 nightguards (see statistics on inside gatefold). Their leader wears a ring that allows him to *detect invisibility*.

The nightguards' first priority is to protect their khan and his property. Their second priority is to capture any intruder alive. Hubadai punishes anyone caught in his tent alive and uninvited by stripping him of his possessions. The Tuigan commander will make it clear that the offender is lucky he isn't being stripped of his skin.

If the sneak attempt goes undetected, Hubadai



says nothing about it, even if the prism is gone. (If a PC too the prism, the party will occasionally find Hubadai staring at them speculatively, and

the *prism* might later find its way mysteriously back into Hubadai's possession.)

Contingency Event D

Warning the Ra-Khatians

At some point, the PCs may attempt to contact the Dalai Lama or warn other Ra-Khatians about the Tuigan army. Princess Bhrokiti advises against this, as she believes it is best for Ra-Khati if her father knows nothing of the intrusion.

Contacting natives will only be possible when the PCs are within ten miles of a Ra-Khatian village (see map). The PCs must first elude their escort, then convince the suspicious Ra-Khatians that whatever they are saying is the truth. Make a secret Wisdom check for the PC who does the most talking with the Ra-Khatians. Failure indicates that the Tuigan detected this subversive contact. That night, Hubadai will present the PCs with the bodies of those contacted.

Contingency Event E

Abandoning the Tuigan

At some critical juncture, the PCs may decide to leave the Tuigan in the lurch. First, they must elude their ever-present escort and get Princess Bhrokiti out of camp. As they attempt to sneak away, there is a 75% chance that they will meet two sentries. Unless silenced immediately, the guards raise the alarm and each round ten Tuigan warriors arrive to aid the guards.

After escaping the camp, the party must escape the search parties Hubadai sends after them. Allow one of the players to roll 3d6. If he or she rolls less than the difference between Hubadai's Wisdom score and the score of the PC with the highest Wisdom, the party evades all the search parties Hubadai sends out after them. This roll, may be modified by -2 if the PCs are using a magical means to hide, or if a thief of level seven or higher is directing their escape (the modifiers are cumulative).

If Hubadai's troops recover the player characters, he strips them of their possessions, doubles their guard, and takes Princess Bhrokiti under his personal guardianship. He makes it clear that he will not tolerate another escape attempt (though he will—he needs the PCs too badly to kill them).

Should the PCs escape, they quickly come across savage signs of Hubadai's anger: burned villages, sacked monasteries, wrecked caravans. Hubadai is sending the PCs a message—come back, or Ra-Khati will continue to suffer. If the PCs return, he greets them warmly, as if they had never left.

Normal Events

Event 1: Map Encounter

Hubadai leads the way as far as the Great Chain Bridge spanning the Jumpa River Gorge. Here, he stops.

"Lead my army through this mountain kingdom," he says, pointing across the river, "and you will be richly rewarded. Betray us, and you will beg for death."

DM's Notes. Hubadai sends five nightguards with the PCs to act as escorts, spies, and advisors. Basically, the warriors remain aloof and silent, as long as the PCs don't do anything that is clearly menacing to the Tuigan army. Should the party try to contact any Ra-Khatians, lead the army into a trap, escape, or attempt to go someplace where horses cannot travel, the escorts intervene, using force if necessary.

Assuming she is not with Ambuchar Devayam, Hubadai insists upon keeping Princess Bhrokiti with him, explaining that scouting duty is not fit for a lady. (This comment, of course, upsets Bhrokiti, but Hubadai pays her no attention.) He is using her as a hostage to ensure the PCs' good behavior, and does not hesitate to state this if questioned about it.

Should the PCs tell Hubadai that they don't know the trails through Ra-Khati, he does not believe them. He gruffly tells them that they had better learn the way through.

Assuming he is not with Ambuchar Devayam, the Black Courser is following the army of his own free will.

Statistics

The statistics for Hubadai, the five nightguards, Princess Bhrokiti, and Tuigan warriors in general are listed on the inside gatefold.

Event 2: Strange Awakening

"A man's greatest pleasure is to rise with the sun, to pull on his pants and jump into his saddle, and to ride the dusty trail all day!"

This proclamation is accompanied by a sharp jab as the yurtchi, the officer responsible



for organizing the camp, plants a boot in your ribs. After yesterday's long ride and a chilly night beneath the stars of Ra-Khati, it is hardly the ideal way to wake up.

DM's Notes. It is the morning of the second day inside Ra-Khati's borders. Although it is before dawn, the Tuigan army is preparing to ride.

As the party climbs into their saddles, the sun peers between the mountains. If the party has not already received the Stamp of Tan Chin, they notice the distinctive tattoo as the morning grows lighter. If she is with the party at this point, Princess Bhrokiti also bears a stamp.

Hubadai will allow the PCs to pause only a moment to attempt removing the mark. After their first failure, he grows impatient and tells them to begin scouting ahead.

Event 3: Map Encounter

After a hard morning's ride, the trail comes to a deep ravine. In the bottom of the gorge, a deep, gentle river flows back toward Kushk and the Great Chain Bridge.

A plank bridge suspended from liana vines hangs over the gorge and leads to a road running more or less directly northward. The road you follow continues straight ahead, following the river in a northeasterly direction.

A mani stone stands where the road and the bridge meet.

DM's Notes. A mani stone is a stone with a message carved into its surface. The message, written in Ra-Khatian, reads:

He who reads this has traveled far down the Forbidden Path. Now he must choose to cross the Bridge of Desolation and follow the Way of Solitude, or to continue along the Road of Inner Peace.

The mani stone is a simple signpost, naming the roads that intersect at that point. PCs are free to take the branch they wish.

The Bridge of Desolation. The bridge spans the canyon of the Gogrus River, and has not been used in some time. Its planks are too rotten to bear the weight of a horse. When a horse crosses the bridge, one or more planks give way under the strain. Make a Dexterity check for the character leading or riding the horse. Failure indicates that the character fails to save his mount; it plunges two hundred feet into the Gogrus River and is swept away, along with anything it was carrying. If the character was riding the horse, he falls through the bridge, too. Fortunately, he suffers only 10d6 damage (half normal) because his





horse lands first and breaks the water's surface tension. By frantic swimming, he can make it to a boulder sticking out of the water on the

near side of the river.

Should the PCs decide to travel the Way of Solitude, the bridge will have to be repaired before the Tuigan army can cross it. This will not please Hubadai, but he will reluctantly pause for two days while his men lay new planks on the bridge.

Should Bhrokiti be asked about the mani stone, she explains that its purpose is to help travelers choose the correct path. She makes the explanation sound somewhat mystic, and refuses to offer any advice as to which might be the best road.

Gaumahavi. If the PCs turned the Princess and Sandiraksiva over to the Raja in *Part I*, they see a purple cloud of dust approaching. When the cloud settles, Gaumahavi straddles the Bridge of Desolation in her astral-form. The Princess and the Black Courser stand near the mani stone. Gaumahavi says:

*My word was good, the Princess delivered,
yet my only payment was treachery and threats;
now, as a hundred years ago, mankind's enemy
sought my help through extortion and duress,
but once betrayed, a lesson learned
and care taken against further instruction.
Enemies become friends, and allies enemies;
I deliver to you what the Raja desired,
and return to stall the advance of death.
Before I leave, hear these words of guidance:
go to the tomb of stone soldiers,
and return with the weapon of Shih.
Only then will Bhrokiti be free,
or you escape a fate worse than death.*

After delivering her warning, Gaumahavi's dusty body simply dissolves and settles on the waters below. Under no circumstances will Bhrokiti discuss what befell her in Solon, saying only that Gaumahavi rescued her. She is not upset with the PCs for delivering her to the Raja, but she does treat them with a certain aloofness from that point forward.

Sandiraksiva gallops off to find his herd of mares.

Event 4: An Unpleasant Dinner

After a day of travel along the shores of Cherapuni Nor, the Sacred Bottomless Lake, the weather has grown cold and bitter. Hubadai

has called an early halt so that his men can find shelter and prepare a warm meal.

He has honored your party with a summons to his yurt that evening. As the nightguard pulls the entrance flap aside to let you in, the Tuigan leader looks up and says, "Welcome to my yurt, trusted scouts and elegant Princess of Ra-Khati. Hubadai Khan, son of the mighty Yamun Khahan, invites you to share his meat and drink this evening." He wears the same filthy kalat and trousers that he was wearing when you first met him.

As usual, the yurt smells of old sweat, sour milk, and unwashed clothing.

DM's Notes. After the party enters the felt tent, Hubadai waves the male characters to his left, and the females to his right. When Princess Bhrokiti moves to take her seat, as far away from Hubadai as possible, the khan objects.

"It is not right for a Princess to sit on the last rug," Hubadai says, patting the cushion immediately to his right. "Hubadai Khan asks you to take the seat of honor, next to him."

Regarding the khan coldly, Princess Bhrokiti stubbornly sits down on the last rug. "It is no honor to sit next to the despoiler of one's land," she says. "Especially one as barbaric, murderous, lecherous, and foul-smelling as a Tuigan."

Hubadai looks hurt. "Foul-smelling!" he cries. He looks to the PCs. "Is this true?"

No matter what the PCs answer, Hubadai still insists that the Princess sit next to him. She refuses, claiming that she will be unable to keep down the swill that Hubadai serves as food if she is forced to sit so close to him.

A fierce argument erupts, with Hubadai calling the Princess "the feeble, pampered daughter of a lazy, frightened king." Bhrokiti retaliates by calling Hubadai "an uncultured rogue and the illegitimate son of a she-horse." The Tuigan seems to take the last part of this pronouncement as a back-handed compliment.

The argument quickly degenerates. Unless she accepts the honor he offers her, Hubadai threatens, he will drag Bhrokiti the entire length of tomorrow's march behind his horse, then cut up what remains and feed it to the vultures. The Princess haughtily informs her host that she would prefer that to sitting next to him.

Finally, Hubadai grows so furious that he looks to the PCs in desperation. "Make her obey!" he commands.

The PCs must find a solution to the problem. If they side with the Princess, Hubadai casts them all out of his tent unfed, giving his guards orders not to allow the party to sleep in any of his yurts, which means they must sleep in the open—an



unpleasant prospect on such a bitter night. If they side with Hubadai, the Princess accuses them of being traitors.

Event 5: Shadow in the Night

“Wake up!” hisses a hushed voice. “Wake up this minute!”

It is still dark outside and bitter wind is howling through the camp. The last thing a sane person wants to do is wake up.

DM’s Notes. It is 3:00 on the morning following the argument between Bhrokiti and Hubadai. The furious Princess Bhrokiti is waking up the PCs to discuss last night’s events. As soon as the party is awake, she begins the discussion.

If the party supported her, she suggests that they abandon the Tuigan. She wants to go to Saikhoi and tell her father about the enemy invasion, then lead him and his army back to “slaughter the filthy infidels.” The Princess is so furious that she is conveniently ignoring the fact that Ra-Khati’s total population numbers less than the Tuigan army, and no amount of reasoning will make her see the foolishness of what she is proposing.

If the party remained neutral or supported Hubadai, the Princess is furious at the PCs, accusing them of betraying their word to protect her. She demands that they do something to avenge the stain upon her honor, though she is not sure what she wants done and shirks at any mention of killing Hubadai. Bhrokiti is quite irrational, and is simply venting her anger on the PCs.

Silent Watcher. As the Princess raves, periodically make a Wisdom check for each PC. Those passing the check notice a pair of pale blue eyes, about the size and shape of distant stars, watching them. PCs noticing the eyes must make a second Wisdom check; those making this check successfully notice a shadow, dark as night, associated with the eyes. The shadow has the approximate shape of a man. It appears to have a large set of wings folded on its back.

The shadow is a dowagu. *Detect invisible*, *infravision*, or other magical means of detection reveal nothing more than the vague shadowy outline. Even if the PCs reveal that they have detected its presence, the dowagu simply sits and stares at them. Under no circumstances will it communicate with them, and if they move to attack it simply closes its eyes, rendering itself completely invisible to all forms of detection, then leaves.

Should the PCs make too much noise, their ever-present escort comes to investigate the trouble.

Tattooed Tufgan. Shortly before dawn, the yurtchi comes around and wakes the party. As usual, the entire army is ready to ride by the time the sun rises.



When it is light enough to see faces, however, it becomes apparent that Hubadai now bears the Stamp of Tan Chin on his forehead. When he is told, he gasps, then holds up the entire army while he tries in vain to wash the thing off.

Finally, Bhrokiti laughs at him in a cruel, mocking voice. “Scrub all you like,” she says. “The tattoo will not come off.”

“What do you mean?” Hubadai demands, pointing at his forehead. “Where did this come from?”

“I put it there,” Bhrokiti responds haughtily.

“What for?” the Tuigan commander demands.

“You’ll find out soon enough,” Bhrokiti snarls.

“After I have marked your entire army.”

No sooner has she finished speaking than a dozen nightguards surround the party. “What is your will?” asks the sergeant.

Hubadai does not answer. Instead, he rubs his brow, then looks at Bhrokiti. “Remove it!”

She simply laughs at him.

Next, Hubadai turns to the PCs. “Remove it!” he orders.

When the PCs fail, the sergeant asks, “Shall we kill them now, Khan?”

Allow the PCs an opportunity to convince Hubadai that their deaths would be foolish. Particularly effective arguments include:

- noting that both they and the Princess bear the marks, so it can’t be all that bad;
- that if he kills the Princess, he’ll never get rid of the mark;
- that he needs them to guide the way through Ra-Khati;
- that the mark is necessary to pass through Ra-Khati.

Arguments that won’t work include:

- denying that the Princess is responsible for the stamp;
- claiming that Ambuchar Devayam is responsible for the mark;
- saying that it will fade in a day or two.

If the PCs fail to convince Hubadai to spare their lives, the khan turns to the sergeant. “Kill the Princess first. If the mark goes away, there will be no need to slay our scouts.”

As the nightguards move toward her, Bhrokiti looks aghast. “You wouldn’t dare!” she snaps.



The nightguards draw their sabers.

Allow the PCs to react. Hubadai will not allow the Princess to be killed, giving the order to stop just as a

nightguard raises his sword against her. Should a fight break out, he orders his nightguards to stop the instant one of the PCs is injured. As the tension begins to fade, he tells the sergeant of the nightguards to kill Bhrokiti if the mark causes him any harm, then orders the PCs to take their positions as scouts.

Statistics

Statistics for the nightguards are listed in the Introduction.

Event 6: Map Encounters

After the morning's excitement, the ride has been tense. Fortunately, it has also progressed without incident.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are two possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail). The trail narrows and runs along the edge of a steep cliff for several miles, overlooking the waters of Cherrapuni Nor. Eight giant tentacles come shooting out of the waters and wrap themselves around eight of the people in the party (including its escort). Randomly select those who are not attacked, and have the remainder make a surprise check.

The party has been attacked by the Monster of Cherrapuni Nor, a huge octopus that has adapted to living in the cold waters of high mountain lakes. It tries to pull as many of its victims into the waters as possible, then devour them one at a time. (Statistics are listed at the end of this event.)

After the encounter, several members of the PCs' Tuigan escort voice their suspicions that the party led them into the trap deliberately.

Gaumahavi. If Gaumahavi is free and has not yet made her peace with the PCs (see Event 3), she appears as the party walks along the path. She coalesces over the water, asks the PCs where Sandiraksiva and the Princess are, attacks once with her breath weapon, then dissolves.

In camp that night, the Tuigan are full of stories of how Hubadai single-handedly chased a great dragon away. Should the PCs care to investigate, they will discover that he was riding San-

diraksiva, and that not a single blow was exchanged.

Road of Inner Peace (brown trail). At this point, a road runs to the east off the main trail. A mani stone stands at the intersection. Its Ra-Khatian inscription reads:

On the Road of Inner Peace, there are many detours. While it is noble to pursue a goal with dogged determination, sometimes it is better to follow the Way of Strange Sites.

The PCs may choose the road they wish.

Statistics

Giant Cold-Water Octopus. AC 5; MV 3, SW 12; HD 10; hp 65; #AT 9 (8 tentacles, bite); Dmg 1d6 (x8), 1d12; THAC0 10; AL N; XP Value 2,000; SA entwinement; SD ink, color change.

The giant cold-water octopus evolved from the giant octopus of ocean waters. The fifth Dalai Lama had the latter magically altered and imported to rid the mountain lakes of a now extinct species of giant, man-eating trout.

Camouflaging themselves by changing their color to match the sapphire blue waters of mountain lakes, they are nearly invisible to the casual observer. When they successfully grasp an opponent, the suction cups on their tentacles help the octopus grip its prey. The victim must make a successful Dexterity check or be dragged toward the octopus's maw, where he suffers 1d12 damage as the creature attempts to eat him.

If it appears the battle is going against it, the octopus emits a jet of black ink, changes color to match the resulting cloud, then swims away.

In the waters below the cliff, the PCs can find a *battle axe* +2 that belonged to an earlier victim of the octopus.



Event 7: Visitor

Unfortunately, Hubadai and the Tuigan are growing accustomed to the cold weather in Ra-Khati. They no longer find it necessary to stop before dark in order to prepare shelters and warm food. Instead, they have taken to sleeping side by side in groups of ten, relying on the close press of bodies to keep warm. They eat warm meals by placing a slab of frozen meat next to their skin in the morning. By the time they stop in the evening, the meat is warm.



DM's Notes.

That night, the PC with the highest Constitution grows so cold that he awakens with the shivers.

He finds himself face-to-starry eyes with the dowagu. His skin is frost-bitten where the shadowy creature was dragging its cold claw over his body.

In a raspy voice, the dowagu whispers, "My master wants his bride and her dowry. It would be a mistake to break your promise."

The dowagu closes its eyes. By the time the PCs can reach for a weapon or attack, it is gone.

NPC Reactions. Bhrokiti or Hubadai dismiss any report of the dowagu as a bad dream.

Event 8: Map Encounters

It is a particularly cold and bitter day. All day long, the howling wind drives pellet-like snowflakes into your face, stinging your eyes and turning your cheeks to ice.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are three possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail): The PCs meet a group of 12 monks coming down the trail. They are on a pilgrimage to the Cherrapuni Nor. Upon spying the monks, the PCs' Tuigan escorts loosen their swords and suggest killing the monks.

Should the PCs suggest it might be wiser to convince the monks to turn back, the Tuigan reluctantly allow them to try. The monks turn back only if the PCs imply that they will use violence to keep them from continuing, or if they tell the monks about being attacked by the Monster of Cherrapuni Nor. In this latter case, the monks question the PCs about the specific location of the attack, then return home to get their fishing spears.

If the PCs do not convince the monks to turn back, the Tuigan attack. The monks defend themselves, fighting the PCs as well as the Tuigan.

Road of Inner Peace (brown trail). At this point, the road splits. A mani stone stands at the intersection. Its Ra-Khatian inscription reads:

The Road of Inner Peace is often long and tedious. Fortunately, the Path of Ultimate Bliss is somewhat shorter and much more exciting.

The PCs are free to choose the path they wish.

Way of Strange Sites (light green trail). The *Way of Strange Sites* is a narrow path that winds



through the mountains, along cliff-sides, crossing and recrossing deep ravines and gorges, and over innumerable passes and sad-

dles. All along the way, there are tiny houses and monasteries clinging to cliffsides, hanging from mountaintops, and built into the bottoms of the ravines. The Tuigan escorts insist upon searching each building. Though most show signs of being inhabited, they are all deserted when they are searched, as the skittish inhabitants ran away into the hills at the sight of foreigners.

After a couple of days of riding this path, Hubadai catches up to the PCs, riding the Black Courser. "A man's greatest joy is to take his horse and his sword, to find an unknown trail, and to ride until he finds where it ends," he says. "But this is no time for such nonsense. My father is expecting me in Khazari. Are you sure you know where you are going?"

Regardless of his skepticism, Hubadai will abide by the PCs' decision.

Statistics

12 Monks (fifth level priests): AC 6; MV 18; hp 20 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (staff) + 1; THAC0 18; Str 15, Int 10, Wis 15, Dex 15, Con 11, Cha 9; AL LG; XP Value 270.

In combat, the monks attack bravely and intelligently, taking full advantage of the Snow Leopard martial arts style's flexibility, using a wide variety of chokeholds, judo throws, pain touches, and circle kicks.

Event 9: Marked Men

This evening, the Tuigan make camp in the shadow of a towering mountain. The horsewarriors turn their mounts out to graze on the delicate tundra grass of high meadow, and the khan pitches his tent at the base of a massive cliff that rises over ten thousand feet to the summit of the mountain.

DM's Notes. That evening, the PC to whom the dowagu gave his message in *Event 8* awakens from a screaming nightmare. The unfortunate character is shivering madly, and suffers from the conviction that the dowagu has returned.

If the PCs investigate, the character who was touched sees the dowagu crouching over the sleeping form of one of Hubadai's nightguards. The shivering PC is the only one that can see it. The dowagu looks toward the unfortunate PC,

appears to wink, then goes to another sleeping form and crouches over it.

If the PCs sound the alarm, the dowagu simply closes its eyes and disappears. The Tuigan make their irritation known, then go back to sleep.

Angry Nightguards. In the morning, twenty nightguards bear the Stamp of Tan Chin upon their foreheads. Several of the marked men, one for each member of the player-character party, approach the PCs and demand that Bhrokiti be turned over to them, attacking when the PCs do not comply immediately. They will not listen to any claims that the Princess is not responsible for the tattoos.

As soon as two of the PCs are seriously injured, Hubadai appears and chastises his nightguard for fighting without his command. He orders the men who actually attacked put to death, and commands the rest of the guard to take turns flogging each other.

The nightguards obey immediately, though as they flog each other, they complain bitterly that the PCs' witch (meaning Bhrokiti) has put a curse on them. After the nightguard punishes its members, Hubadai turns to Bhrokiti. "See what you have done, witch? If something terrible happens to those men," he warns, "I will have no choice except to turn you over to them."

Statistics

See the interior gatefold for the statistics of the nightguards.



Event 10: Stormy Reconciliation

Despite waking to a bleak gray dawn and a driving snowstorm, the khan insists upon breaking camp and traveling in the hazardous weather. The wind howls all day long, driving the temperature well below freezing. By late afternoon, even the horses are shivering, and two feet of powdery snow covers the trail.

DM's Notes. Hubadai calls an early halt so that his men can find shelter and prepare warm meals. After the sun goes down, the temperature quickly falls to 20 degrees below zero.

Make a Constitution check for each PC. Those failing the check discover numb, white blotches on their skin and suffer 1d12 points of frostbite damage. Roll 1d4 to determine the location of the damage:



Number Result

- 1 Toes frostbitten. Each hour, PC suffers 1d4 points additional damage until obtaining shelter and a source of heat. Afterwards, victim suffers 2d6 hours of excruciating pain, during which time he cannot walk and must stay in shelter.
- 2 Hands frostbitten. PC cannot use hands until he obtains shelter and allows them to thaw. Must remain in shelter for 1d6 hours, suffering excruciating pain, before hands recover.
- 3 Face (nose, ears, cheeks) frostbitten. Each hour, PC suffers 1d8 points additional damage until obtaining shelter and a source of heat. Victim suffers excruciating pain for 1d6 hours, and must remain inside or become frostbitten again.
- 4 Victim falls prey to hypothermia, becoming irrational and disoriented, and not realizing that he needs shelter. Unless guided to shelter and a source of heat, victim suffers 2d6 points of damage per turn. Victim must remain in shelter for 1d8 hours or immediately begin suffering from hypothermia again.

Special Consideration. After his yurt is set up, Hubadai invites the PCs to share dinner with him. After the meal, he invites them to sleep in his tent, since, like the rest of his army, they have no tent of their own.

Princess Bhrokiti immediately refuses. Hubadai then rephrases his invitation as a command. He has no desire to have his guest and scouts freeze to death. Bhrokiti still refuses.

Hubadai demands to know why the Princess won't share his tent. The Princess looks to the PCs for their advice. Sleeping in the same room as another person would violate her wu-jen taboo, but, knowing how skittish the Tuigan are about magic, she is hesitant to tell Hubadai the truth. The PCs must find a diplomatic solution to the problem.

If told the truth, Hubadai's bodyguards insist that the Princess and the PCs sleep outside. Even the khan cannot change their minds, and he knows better than to try. Otherwise, Hubadai insists that the PCs and Bhrokiti sleep in his yurt, using force to enforce his will, if necessary. He most emphatically does not want his guides and hostage freezing to death.

Fortunately, there is one possible solution to this impasse, however. If the PCs request it, Hubadai will agree to erect a set of interior walls for the Princess' convenience, though he will clearly find a request to do so strange.

**Event 11:
Hermit**

With three feet of fresh snow on the ground, the morning dawns clear and relatively warm – the temperature is at least five degrees. Hubadai insists upon traveling immediately, ignoring his subordinates' concern about the high likelihood of avalanches after such a heavy snow.

The morning passes without incident, though the horses find the deep snow difficult to plow through. By midday, the temperature has risen to almost ten degrees.

The trail rounds a bend as it passes over the shoulder of a mountain. A long-haired, bushy-bearded man stands in the center of the road. He studies the horses with wild, crazed eyes for several moments, then screams in terror and leaps off the side of the road.

The Tuigan immediately draw their bows and spur their horses forward.

DM's Notes. Unless the PCs stop them, the Tuigan shoot the fleeing hermit in the back. The Tuigan will reluctantly hold their fire, if ordered to do so by the PCs. However, they will insist upon capturing the wild-eyed man (they believe he is running because he knows they are Tuigan).

Unfortunately, the hillside is so steep that the party cannot follow on horseback. They must slide down the mountain after the hermit.

Upon being caught, the hermit stubbornly refuses to talk, at least until the slightest threat is made toward him. In response to questioning, he will explain that he fled because he doesn't like to waste his time talking, especially not to agents of Solon.

Should the party ask why he believes they are agents of Solon, he points to the tattoos on their foreheads. "You're wearing the Stamp of Tan Chin, aren't you?"

The hermit can explain that the Stamp of Tan Chin is the mark used by Solonese soldiers to identify each other. It is also a magical tattoo that "protects the wearer against death after he dies" (i.e. makes him undead), and transports him to Solon to take his place in the Raja's armies. The hermit does not know why the mark is called the "Stamp of Tan Chin." He's never heard of Tan Chin, but that's what the mark is called.

The Tuigan will allow the PCs to release the hermit, providing the man agrees to travel in any direction except toward the main army.



Event 12: Map Encounters

As usual, the khan insists upon leaving at dawn. The long days of constant

travel are beginning to take their toll on man as well as beast. No matter how hard they are driven, the horses seem to do no more than plod along at a weary pace.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail). The canyon which the road has been following widens at this point. On both sides of the road, there are dozens of stone houses. As the party rides into the village (which might be too small to be marked on your map), several children come out to greet them. The Tuigan warn the PCs that unless the village is empty when the army reaches it, it be destroyed and everybody in it slain.

The PCs must find the town leader and persuade him to evacuate his village within three hours. This will not be an easy task, for the villagers are not accustomed to deserting their homes upon command. The arguments that will convince the headman to leave are:

- The Padhra (or any padhrasattva) appeared to one of the PCs and told him to ride to this village and evacuate it on this date. The headman will accept this at face value and immediately order the village's evacuation.
- A dragon is coming up the road. The headman will want to know the color of the dragon. If the color is red, green, blue, yellow, purple (especially purple), or gold, he orders his villagers to evacuate. Otherwise, he orders them to prepare for battle.
- A flash flood is coming down the canyon. The PCs will have to explain how they beat the flood here, then the headman will evacuate.
- Any other explanation which strikes you as believable, or as appealing to the peculiar superstitions of the Ra-Khatians.

The headman will not believe the PCs if they tell him an army is coming. If there was an army in the mountains, he counters, he would have heard about it by now.

If the village still has not been abandoned by the time Hubadai arrives, the Tuigan destroy it and slay everybody in it. However, if the PCs suggest taking the inhabitants prisoner, Hubadai

agrees to make them quiver-bearers (slaves) instead of killing them. In that case, he puts them to work as porters for the Tuigan supply train. In either of these last two cases, the Princess blames the PCs for the villagers' fate, saying they should have evacuated the town.

Road of Inner Peace (brown trail): The PCs begin encountering intricately detailed ice-sculptures of various men and beasts. After several miles of this, they hear a painful moan, then a white lizard standing six feet at the shoulder comes around the bend. Another moan sounds from behind them, and the lizard's mate leaps onto the trail directly behind them. The party has met a pair of Katakoro basilisks.

As coincidence would have it, the party's escorts are all surprised, and the Katakoro basilisks turn two of the Tuigan to ice in the first round. In subsequent rounds, the remaining three Tuigan attempt to help the party fight. Unfortunately, whenever a horsewarrior hits one of the white lizards, he is turned to ice on the following round. The basilisks attack until destroyed.

The statistics for the Katakoro basilisk are listed at the end of this event.

Gaumahavi. If Gaumahavi is free and has not yet made her peace with the PCs (see Event 3), she appears instead of the basilisks. She coalesces over the path, asks the PCs where Sandiraksiva and the Princess are, attacks once with her breath weapon, then dissolves.

In camp that night, the Tuigan are full of stories of how Hubadai singlehandedly chased a great dragon away. Should the PCs care to investigate, they will discover that he was riding Sandiraksiva, and that not a single blow was exchanged.

Path of Ultimate Bliss (orange trail): At this point, a narrow rocky road crosses the main trail. A mani stone stands at the intersection. Its Ra-Khatian inscription reads:

The Path of Ultimate Bliss is a wonderful trail, but those wishing to reach the end of their journey sooner should follow The Wag of Strange Sites.

The PCs are free to choose the path they wish.

Way of Strange Sites (light green trail): At a huge, monolithic mountain of sheer granite, the road ends. It becomes a pair of narrow footpaths, one running along the north face of the mountain, and the other along the south face. Both paths cling precariously to the cliffs, and are so narrow that any horse foolish enough to set foot on them would surely plunge to its death.

Hubadai is furious, suspecting the PCs of deliberately leading him to this dead end. He warns them that the next detour will be fatal.



Statistics

Katakoro Basilisk (2): AC 4; MV 6; HD 10; hp 50 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; THAC0 11; AL n; XP Value 2,000 each; SA gaze; SD nil.

The Katakoro basilisk has two forms of attack: biting with its toothy mouth, or its gaze. Its gaze turns victims to ice (save vs. petrification to negate). If the ice should happen to be melted before the character is returned to normal, the victim's molecules are permanently dispersed and nothing short of a *wish* spell can reassemble them. The only way to recover a victim that has been turned to ice is to *plane shift* him to the plane of ice, where the ice sculpture will change into a stone statue. A *flesh to stone* spell will then turn the victim back into his human form.

Treasure: the lair is located in a small cave to the left of the trail. In the cave, the party can find a *wand of metal and mineral detection*, and a *two-handed sword* +2 with the ability to *heal* its wielder once per day. These items are scattered among the bones, offal, and miscellaneous junk that lines the bottom of the cave.

Event 13: Procession

A well-maintained path leaves the main road, quickly disappearing into a forboding side canyon.

DM's Notes. If the PCs take the army up the side trail, skip to *Event 14*. Otherwise, continue with this event.

A few miles later the sound of a thousand deep voices chanting in unison fills the canyon, ringing off the walls with an eerie rumble. The sound is caused by a procession of 1,000 monks on a pilgrimage to Cherpuni Nor. They will not turn back for any reason. Fortunately, the PCs can return to the intersection with the side road and guide the army into the foreboding canyon.

Should the party fail to do so, the Tuigan slaughter the monks, but they lose two thousand men doing so. Hubadai warns the PCs that it would be better if they didn't allow any other such meetings to occur. Skip *Event 14* and go directly to *Event 15*.

Event 14: Citadel

The side trail winds through a narrow, dark canyon for thirty miles, then begins to climb toward a distant pass. A huge citadel straddles the road as it goes over the pass.





DM's Notes.

Should the party wish to turn back, the Tuigan suggest that the citadel is guarding the pass, and express their confidence that

the road continues on the other side.

The walls of the citadel are manned by a thousand clay golems. If the party approaches to knock on the gate, the golems remain impassive. The instant they attempt to enter the citadel, however, the fifteen golems closest to the point of entry attack. Others will reinforce the attackers if the party does not retreat.

Tsepo Gart. A few minutes after the PCs approach the citadel, Tsepo Gart appears atop the gate tower in a puff of smoke. He tells the PCs to go away, that he has no intention of opening the gates to let a bunch of riff-raff pass through his home—especially riff-raff belonging to Tan Chin. He refuses to say anything more.

When Hubadai arrives, he develops a simple plan for gaining entrance to the citadel. Several thousand of his men will attack the walls, while a hundred of his elite nightguards scale the mountain behind the citadel, then lower themselves into it with ropes. They will slay the stubborn householder and open the gates.

Compromise. Fortunately for the PCs, Tsepo Gart is willing to change his mind now that he sees the size of Hubadai's forces. If approached again, he agrees to allow the army to pass as long as it remains blindfolded while inside the castle. Hubadai doesn't mind this, but wants to kill Tsepo Gart so that his army's presence remains secret. Strangely enough, Tsepo agrees to these terms. (He wears a *ring of regeneration*.)

Assuming the PCs successfully negotiate this strange deal (or any other suitable deal), Tsepo Gart says that he owes them a favor. Although he offers to give each PC up to 100 gp for their services, he subtly hints that they would be far wiser to ask him for information.

Tsepo can tell them that Tan Chin presently lives in Solon under the name of Ambuchar Devayam. Two thousand years ago, Tan Chin was the emperor of Shou Lung, but he was overthrown by a noble wizard named Shih. From what he has been able to observe over the centuries, Tsepo suspects that Tan Chin/Ambuchar Devayam's goal is to reconquer Shou Lung and take back what he lost two millennia ago. Probably, Tsepo theorizes, Ambuchar wants to first conquer Ra-Khati and use its inhospitable terrain as his base and staging area for this war of conquest.

Statistics

Tsepo Gart (Priest 15). AC 4; MV 12; hp 60; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); THAC0 13; AL CM; XP Value 8,000; SA spells; SD ring of regeneration.

Spells:

- 1) *create water, cure light wounds (x2), light, faerie fire, animal friendship*
- 2) *charm person or mammal, speak with animals, dust devil, fire trap, produce flame, slow poison*
- 3) *hold animal, flame walk, meld into stone, stone shape, continual light, call lightning*
- 4) *giant insect, produce fire, cure serious wounds (x2), neutralize poison, control temperature 10' radius*
- 5) *animal growth, spike stones, transmute rock to mud, cure critical wounds*
- 6) *conjure fire elemental, heal*
- 7) *earthquake.*

Treasure: Tsepo Gart has a hoard of 100,000 gp, 25 jewels worth approximately 100 gp each, and several magic items: *potion of rainbow hues, potion of sweet water, potion of vitality, ring of regeneration (wearing), ring of fire resistance, ring of wishes (one wish remaining), and a gem of seeing* (all described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If they defeat Gart, the Tuigan insist upon taking the gold and jewels for themselves, but gladly allow the party to have the magic items.

Event 15: Coulee of Living Rocks

After a long day's travel over narrow, precarious paths barely wide enough for riding, the trail drops into a boulder-strewn canyon, with a cliff falling away sharply on the west side. Although it doesn't look comfortable, the canyon is the first campsite you've seen all day that is large enough for the Tuigan army.

DM's Notes. As the sun has already dipped behind the mountain peaks to the west of the canyon, the Tuigan escorts suggest that they make camp here. If the PCs wish, however, the Tuigan agree to push on. In this case, the PCs and the army end up traveling all night, and Hubadai insists that they keep moving the next day, as well. Tomorrow night, the only available campsite will also be a boulder-strewn field.

As Hubadai's quiver-bearers are clearing a level spot for his yurt, one of them screams in horror. A nightguard rushes to the spot immediately, only to see a boulder scampering away on two leg-like appendages. The nightguard attacks with his sword, which shatters on impact. The boulder counterattacks with a vicious kick, killing the guard.



Zombie. Unfortunately, the guard had been marked with the Stamp of Tan Chin. As he dies, a terrible wail echoes off the mountainsides, then his corpse rises and starts ambling straight toward Solon—irrespective of the fact that the route takes him over a cliff. The zombie falls off the cliff in silence, then picks its tattered self up at the base and continues toward Solon.

Rock Attack. An instant later, dozens of boulders come to life, and the frightened Tuigan begin attacking rocks indiscriminately. The PCs have wandered into a community of over a hundred galeb duhr. The unusual conglomeration is due to the Ra-Khatian habit of leaving a small gemstone on a rock as they pass through “the Coulee of Living Rocks.” This custom also accounts for the fact that the galeb duhr did not leave when they heard the PCs coming, for they cherish gemstones.

The galeb duhr counterattack as soon as the Tuigan start swinging their swords. Dozens of warriors fall during the battle, including at least six that bear the Stamp of Tan Chin. As these six unfortunates die, they become zombies and start walking toward Solon.

A particularly large specimen, standing 14 feet tall, attacks some or all of the party. As the PCs are finishing off this galeb duhr, a boulder three feet in diameter comes to life behind them. Princess Bhrokiti reacts instantly, firing her *magic missile* at the thing. Although her attack does not destroy the rock, it does drive it off.

Statistics

Galeb Duhr. AC - 2; MV 6; HD 11; hp 44; #AT 2; Dmg 7d4; THAC0 9; AL N; XP Value 6,000; SA spells; SD immune to lightning and non-magical fire, saves with +4 bonus vs. magical fire.

Spells (cast as 20th level wizard): *move earth, stone shape, passwall, transmute rock to mud, wall of stone*, all once per day; at will: *stone shape*. The galeb duhr can *animate* two stones (AC 0; MV 3; HD 9; Dmg 4d6; THAC0 11).

Treasure: the PCs’ galeb duhr has an assortment of various gems worth 7,000 gp, which are revealed when it is cracked open in defeat. Hubadai will demand this treasure, but reluctantly allows the PCs to keep it if they object.

Event 16: Unfortunate Reaction

The fighting seems to stop all at once. The rocks that have not been destroyed simply fade into the ground and disappear.

No sooner have the boulders disappeared, however, than a dozen nightguards turn toward Bhrokiti. “Witch!” says one. “For what you have done to our friends, you will die.”

DM’s Notes.

Unfortunately, Hubadai is not within earshot. The PCs must save Bhrokiti; if they fail, the Tuigan also turn on them. Any characters that die must be raised within two rounds, before they walk off the cliff and disappear.

The PCs must hold the nightguards at bay until Hubadai comes, which takes five rounds unless the party somehow speeds up his arrival.

Once he does arrive, Hubadai is willing to let his nightguards kill the party—at least until the PCs inform him that the warriors also wish to kill Bhrokiti. Upon learning this, he frowns, obviously fighting an internal emotional struggle. Finally, he looks at Bhrokiti and says, “I would like to save you, Princess, but I warned you that if your tattoo caused my men any harm, there would be no choice except to allow your execution.”

At this point, alert PCs should deny that either the Princess or themselves created the tattoos. Hubadai accepts even the flimsiest proof of their innocence and orders his men to spare the lives of the party members.

From this point forward, the Tuigan treat the PCs and Bhrokiti with a hostile aloofness.

Event 17: Map Encounter

The Tuigan escorts pass the day in hostile, marked silence. They speak only when asked a direct question, and only then with clear reluctance. All five men keep their bows at hand, as if looking for the slightest excuse to plant an arrow in your backs.

DM’s Notes. At this point, there are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail): The trail splits. A mani stone at the intersection reads:

The Way of Solitude is long and trying. Those brave enough to risk the Trail of Many Hazards may find the Road of Inner Peace more to their liking.

Road of Inner Peace (brown path): After ascending the cliff at the deserted Rainbow Monastery, the Road of Inner Peace reaches an intersection. The mani stone at the intersection reads:

The Road of Inner Peace continues and continues and continues. On the other hand, the Way of Perfection is short and the reward great.



Path of Ultimate Bliss (orange trail):

The canyon which the road has been following widens at this point. On both sides of the road,

there are dozens of stone houses. As the party rides into the village, several children come out to greet them. The Tuigan warn the PCs that unless the village is empty by the time the army reaches it, the entire thing will have to be destroyed and everybody in it slain.

The PCs must find the town leader and persuade him to evacuate his village within three hours. This will not be an easy task, for the villagers are not accustomed to deserting their homes upon command. The arguments that will convince the headman to leave are listed below:

- The Padhra (or any padhrasattva) appeared to one of the PCs and told him to ride to this village and evacuate it on this date. The headman will accept this at face value and immediately order the village's evacuation.
- A dragon is coming up the road. The headman will want to know the color of the dragon. If the color is red, green, blue, yellow, purple (especially purple), or gold, he orders his villagers to evacuate. Otherwise, he orders them to prepare for battle.
- A flash flood is coming down the canyon. The PCs will have to explain how come they beat the floor here, then the headman will evacuate.
- Any other explanation which strikes you as believable, or as appealing to the peculiar superstitions of the Ra-Khatians.

The headman will not believe the PCs if they tell him an army is coming. If there was an army in the mountains, he counters, he would have heard about it by now.

If the village still has not been abandoned by the time Hubadai arrives, the Tuigan destroy it and slay everybody in it. However, if the PCs suggest taking the inhabitants prisoner, Hubadai agrees to make them slaves instead of killing them. The Princess blames the PCs for the villagers' fate, saying they should have evacuated the town.

Way of Strange Sites (light green trail): The road ends here, becoming a narrow trail impassable to horses. Hubadai is furious, accusing the PCs of deliberately leading him astray.

Event 18: Shadow Attack

A deafening horse whinny breaks the tense silence of the night.

DM's Notes. The whinny comes from the corral holding Sandiraksiva's mares. A dowagu is attempting to capture the Black Courser. Although the Tuigan warriors are bravely attempting to defend the corral, they lack the necessary magic to win the battle.

The Dowagu. As the party looks toward the source of the noise, they see the dowagu silhouetted against the moon over the corral holding Sandiraksiva's mares. The dowagu appears to be made of a black shadow that has somehow taken solid form. It has cold blue eyes that resemble stars, with two horns protruding from its head. The shadow monster's mouth is open and two long yellow tusks protrude over its lower lip. Two great, leathery wings hold it aloft, and in its four arms it holds four weapons—a scimitar, an axe, a spear, and a flail. It has wrapped its huge, snake-like tail around Sandiraksiva and is lifting the giant horse off the ground.

As the PCs approach, Hubadai rushes up to their side. "A man's greatest pleasure is to hear a startled whinny in the middle of the night, to pull on his pants and find his sword, and to rush out to kill the fool who would steal his horses." He starts forward to battle the dowagu, but his own bodyguard restrains him, noting that Yamun Khan has ordered them to protect him from unnecessary harm. The PCs must face the dowagu without Hubadai.

As the party reaches the corral, the Black Courser breathes its fireball at the dowagu. The flames shoot right through the shadow monster, not affecting it in the slightest.

Fortunately, Sandiraksiva is a very heavy horse and it is all the dowagu can do to lift him. Any PC can save the horse by grabbing it or climbing onto his back, an indignity Sandiraksiva is willing to suffer this once.

If the PCs aid the horse, the dowagu attacks them. The Tuigan are more than happy to allow the PCs to battle the shadow monster, as they are extremely fearful of such magical spirits and their weapons don't seem to have any affect on the terrifying creature.

The Prism of Kushk. The best way to defeat the dowagu is to use the *Prism of Kushk*. Clever PCs will realize this on their own. However, if the PCs do not think of it, Hubadai will send a messenger to suggest this course of action. (If the prism belongs to Hubadai at this point in time, he will lend it to the PCs readily.)



Gaumahavi. As the battle against the dowagu ends, Gaumahavi should be in one of three places: in the *Prism of Kushk*, following the PCs and the Tuigan from a distance, or stalling the advance of the Raja's undead army. Unless Gaumahavi is locked inside the *Prism of Kushk* and the PCs manage to defeat the dowagu without releasing her, Gaumahavi appears after the battle. She tells the PCs that the dowagu is Ambuchar Devayam's servant, and that sending the shadow monster after Sandiraksiva is clear evidence that he has betrayed their agreement.

If she has not already turned against the Raja in an earlier encounter, Gaumahavi does so now. She points to the marks on their foreheads. "If you wish to avoid a fate worse than death," she tells them, "you must go to Shou Lung and recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*. Use it to destroy Ambuchar Devayam and you will save not only Ra-Khati and Shou Lung, but perhaps even yourselves. In the meantime, I will meet the Raja's army and slow their advance." If asked, she will tell the PCs to search for the scepter in the city of Kuo Meilan, but will say no more.

In the event that Gaumahavi still remains imprisoned in the *Prism of Kushk* after the battle with the dowagu, the Padhra sends word of the Raja's treachery to her via a telepathic message. Should the PCs ever release her from the *Prism of*

Kushk, she reacts as above.

Vindication.

Assuming the PCs save Sandiraksiva from the dowagu, they and Princess Bhrokiti are vindicated in the eyes of Hubadai's warriors. Although the Tuigan remain unsure about where the tattoos came from, the Tuigan find it difficult to mistrust someone who would risk his life to save a horse.

Cowards. If the PCs do not attempt to save Sandiraksiva, Gaumahavi appears and rescues her child (even if Hubadai must release her from the *Prism of Kushk*). Afterwards, she chastises the PCs for their cowardice, then tells them that if they don't want to become zombies in the Raja's army, they must recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and use it to destroy Ambuchar Devayam. In this case, the Tuigan remain suspicious of the PCs and the journey continues on an uneasy footing.

Statistics

The dowagu's statistics are in the Introduction.





Event 19: Map Encounter

Regardless of the previous night's excitement, Hubadai insists that the army ride at dawn.

DM's Notes. At this point are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail): A caravan of 10 dead yaks and one dead driver lies on the road. Their bodies are covered with small mushrooms, eight of which are phycoids (see "Fungus" in the Monstrous Compendium). As the party passes, the phycoids attack. Their statistics are located at the end of this event.

Trail of Many Hazards (yellow path): After crossing the mighty Gogrus River Chasm on a suspension bridge made of liana vines, the Trail of Many Hazards forms a T-intersection at the Road of Inner Peace. The PCs can approach this intersection either from the Trail of Many Hazards or the Road of Inner Peace. Those approaching from the Road of Inner Peace (brown path) should not be encouraged to take the Trail of Many Hazards. From this side, it looks like nothing more than a side trail, and the mani stone marking this as a major intersection is hidden from view. Nevertheless, some PCs may wish to follow this trail. It will lead them to the Way of Solitude. See the "Way of Solitude" in this event when they reach the appropriate location.

Parties approaching the intersection from the Trail of Many Hazards, however, have no trouble noticing the intersection and its mani stone. The stone reads:

The Trail of Many Hazards is over. Will you now follow the Road of Inner Peace to the heart of all wisdom, or turn away from enlightenment and go toward the edge of the world?

By "the heart of all wisdom," the mani stone is referring to the capital city of Ra-Khati, Saikhoi.

Road of Inner Peace (brown path): The Road of Inner Peace has two locations marked "19" along its path. See the Trail of Many Hazards in this event for what occurs at the second site, where the yellow path intersects the brown path.

At the first location, where the brown path meets the orange, the Road of Inner Peace fords the Akundi River at the base of the Sacred Whispering Waterfall. It then intersects the Road Less Traveled. A mani stone standing at the site reads:

You have crossed the Akundi River and stand at the base of the Sacred Whispering Falls. You have chosen to turn away from the heart of all wisdom, and must now choose between going backwards on the Road of Inner Peace or taking the Road Less Traveled.

"The heart of all wisdom" refers to the capital city of Ra-Khati, Saikhoi. By traveling away from Saikhoi, the party is moving "backwards" along the Road of Inner Peace—even though they are still traveling in the correct direction to reach Khazari.

Way of Perfection (purple trail) and the Path of Ultimate Bliss (light green): Both of these roads lead to Saikhoi, the capital city. Proceed with Event 20.

Statistics

Fungus, Phycoid (8): AC 5; MV 3; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4 + 2/ 1d4 + 2; THAC0 15; AL ne; XP Value 975; SA infection; SD nil.

The phycoid fungus resemble fibrous blobs of milky, decomposing matter with capped fungi growing out of them. When attacking, they extrude a tube and spit a highly alkaline glob up to 12 feet. Any victim hit by one of these globs must save vs. poison. Those failing sprout mushroom-like growths 1d4 + 4 rounds later, taking an additional 1d4 + 4 points of damage. If a *cure disease* is not cast upon the unfortunate individual within 1d4 + 4 turns, he dies and becomes a phycoid host.

In the pocket of the dead driver, there happens to be two potions that can *cure disease* and two *potions of longevity*. On his finger is a *ring of animal friendship*.

Event 20: Siege of Saikhoi

Note: Use this encounter only if the PCs are leading the Tuigan over the Way of Perfection or the Path of Ultimate Bliss. Otherwise, skip this event and proceed with Event 21.

The trail crests a high hill that overlooks a broad valley. In the center of the valley, between two huge lakes the color of sapphires, stands a barren granite mountain. A high red wall, with no visible gate, runs around the mountain's base. Inside the wall, several hundred white structures stand on the rocky hillside as if sprouted from the cliffs themselves.

A red citadel covers the top of the mountain, enclosing five acres. The fortress stands ten stories tall, with no apparent entrance.

DM's Notes. This is the city of Saikhoi, the capital of Ra-Khati. After the PCs study the city for a



few moments, alarm bells begin ringing inside the walls. One of the Tuigan escorts says, "I'd better tell Hubadai." With that, he turns his horse away and rides toward the main body of the army.

The PCs have made a critical mistake and led the Tuigan directly to Saikhoi. In order to preserve the secrecy of his army's movements, Hubadai is determined to sack the city and enslave or kill everybody in it. The Dalai Lama will be equally determined to prevent anybody who sets eyes on Saikhoi from leaving Ra-Khati. If they are to prevent a major battle, the PCs must arrange a compromise.

After he learns of the city's presence, Hubadai sends for the PCs and begins battle preparations. By the time the PCs arrive, Princess Bhrokiti has been taken away by Hubadai's nightguard, and is nowhere in sight. After studying the PCs with an angry expression for several moments, Hubadai asks, "Why have you led me to this city? You know that I must kill any who see my army."

No matter what the PCs say, Hubadai is determined not to turn around, for he is already running behind his father's schedule for attacking Khazari. At the same time, he is determined to kill anyone who sees his army, as he does not want any reports of its presence slipping northward to Khazari. The PCs cannot say anything that will change his mind on these two points.

However, Hubadai is not anxious to waste his time by sieging Saikhoi, and is open to suggestions that do not involve turning around or allowing anyone to see the main body of his army. He will allow the PCs an opportunity to negotiate a compromise with the Dalai Lama.

Negotiations. Hubadai's conditions for compromise are straightforward and simple. Every man, woman, and child in Saikhoi must be blinded so that no one will see his army pass. Although the PCs might object to these terms, Hubadai steadfastly refuses to alter them, and tells them that if they wish to save the lives of the citizens of Saikhoi, they must deliver his message and return with an affirmative answer.

A group of 25 sohei (guards) will meet the PCs outside the walls. After blindfolding the party, the sohei lead them through a series of secret passages into the Potala, the huge citadel that serves as the Dalai Lama's residence.

If these characters have already met the Dalai Lama in *Storm Riders*, he seems astonished to see them, and asks them what has become of his daughter and the Black Courser. He will cast a *detect lie* on the speaker(s) that recounts the tale, stopping the individual and demanding the truth whenever he varies from the authentic version of what happened.

When the PCs explain about the Tuigan army and present Hubadai's demand, the Dalai Lama

frowns and asks (again) about his daughter. After being told that she is with Hubadai's guard, he reluctantly agrees to the Tuigan

demands—provided the Tuigan soldiers are also blinded, so that they will not set eyes on the sacred city of Saikhoi. He then sends the PCs back to the Tuigan commander.

Of course, Hubadai will never agree to having his army permanently blinded. Fortunately, neither Hubadai or the Dalai Lama wish to fight, so they will agree to a compromise, providing the PCs can think of one that prevents the Tuigan from seeing Saikhoi and which prevents the Ra-Khatians inside from seeing the Tuigan, but which does not involve turning the Tuigan army back. Examples of successful solutions might include: moving the army past Saikhoi under cover of darkness; blindfolding the army and having them ferried past the city by a contingent of monks, then taking the monks as hostages until the Tuigan army reaches Khazari; somehow making the army and the city invisible to each other, and so forth.

Failure. If the PCs do not negotiate a successful compromise within one day, Hubadai attacks the city, easily sacking it and the Potala. When Bhrokiti begs for the lives of her 10,000 fellow Ra-Khatians, however, Hubadai agrees to take them along as slaves. (In this case, the Dalai Lama has disappeared and no one knows what happened to him.)

Amazingly enough, Bhrokiti will not blame Hubadai for Saikhoi's destruction. Instead, she holds the PCs responsible, claiming that they should never have lead the Tuigan army into the center of Ra-Khati in the first place, and that they should have been able to negotiate a treaty that prevented the Tuigan from sacking the city.

No matter how the episode ends, Hubadai insists upon moving north immediately.

Statistics

See Event 24 for the statistics of the Dalai Lama and the sohei.

Event 21: Map Encounters

For a change, the day is a warm one, and even your Tuigan escorts seem in a good mood.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:



Way of Solitude (green trail): A small footpath, too narrow and precarious for horses, runs westward into the mountains. To the east, a well-

maintained suspension bridge hangs over the Gogrus River Chasm, and the Way of Solitude continues northward. A mani stone near the three-way intersection reads:

Perhaps you are tired of the Way of Solitude. If so, cross the bridge to the Road of Inner Peace. If it is company you are seeking, however, follow the Road to Nowhere until you reach Lagiluri.

Road of Inner Peace (brown path): A well-maintained suspension bridge hangs over the Gogrus River Chasm, while the Road of Inner Peace turns eastward. A mani stone near the bridge reads:

Here, the Road of Inner Peace takes time to find itself. If you prefer a more direct route, cross the Bridge over the Gogrus to the Way of Solitude.

The Road Less Traveled (red trail): The road runs along a cliffside just above Nor Mansowar, the great lake to Saikhoi's north. As the PCs lead the Tuigan along this precarious path, alarm bells begin ringing in Saikhoi as the city's lookouts spy the huge army. If consulted, Hubadai wishes to continue northward. He will send a detail to watch the city, and if anyone is foolish enough to follow them, he says he will stop long enough to kill them.

Path of Ultimate Bliss (orange trail) and Way of Strange Sites (light green trail): On both of these roads, the trail narrows and runs along the side of a steep cliff for several miles, overlooking the waters of a high mountain lake. Eight giant tentacles come shooting out of the waters and wrap themselves around eight of the people in the party. Select those not attacked randomly. Have the remainder make a surprise check.

The party has been attacked by a smaller cousin of the Monster of Cherrapuni Nor. Like the Monster of Cherrapuni Nor, the creature the PCs now face is a huge octopus that has adapted to living in the cold waters of high mountain lakes. It tries to pull its victims into the icy waters, then devour them one at a time.

Statistics

Giant Cold-Water Octopus. AC 6; MV 3, SW 12; HD 9; hp 55; #AT 9 (8 tentacles, bite); Dmg 1d6 (x8), 1d10; THAC0 11; AL N; XP Value 1,400; SA entwinement; SD ink, color change.

The giant cold-water octopus evolved from the giant octopus of ocean waters. The fifth Dalai Lama had the latter magically altered and imported to rid the mountain lakes of giant man-eating trout.

Camouflaging itself by changing its color to match the sapphire blue waters of mountain lakes, it is nearly invisible to the casual observer. When it successfully attacks an opponent, the suction cups on its tentacles help the octopus grasp its prey. The victim must make a successful Dexterity check or be dragged toward the maw, where he suffers 1d10 damage as the creature attempts to eat him.

If it appears the battle is going against it, the octopus emits a jet of black ink, changes color to match the resulting cloud, then swims away.

In the waters below the cliff, the PCs can find a sack with three vials containing potions to *raise dead*, one potion of *healing*, and three potions of *water breathing*.

Event 22: Avalanche

For several hours, the trail has been little more than a narrow path running along the cliffsides and steep slopes of tremendously high mountains. In order to avoid tumbling off the mountainside, it has been necessary to dismount and lead the horses on foot.

It is surprising, then, when several Tuigan riders gallop up the trail. One of the horses slips, then both the beast and its rider plunge off the mountainside and fall to their deaths. Ignoring the fate of their companion, the other four riders continue at full speed.

DM's Notes. When the riders catch up to the PCs, they dismount and demand that the party return to the main army. If asked for an explanation, they explain that there's been an avalanche. Only the PCs' powers can save Hubadai and Princess Bhrokiti.

Two miles back down the road, the trail is covered with boulders and ice. Hundreds of Tuigan soldiers have climbed up the cliffside above the trail and are fighting a colony of coomb giants hand-to-hand. Dozens more are lying on their bellies at the edge of the trail, firing arrows at something on the cliff below.

Precarious Situation. As the main army was riding along this section of trail, a colony of coomb giants ambushed it. Hubadai was knocked unconscious and fell from his saddle. Princess Bhrokiti leaped to his aid, but was not strong enough to keep him from falling off the trail. They both tumbled a hundred feet down the cliff, landing in a heap on a small ledge.



Unfortunately, the coomb giant colony has cave entrances both above and below the trail, and several of the brutes have been trying to reach the ledge to capture the unconscious Hubadai and Princess. The Tuigan archers have kept the giants from reaching their goal, but they cannot descend the cliff to aid the Princess and khan.

The PCs must find a way to rescue the pair. When they reach the lower ledge, three coomb giants will leap out of their caves and land on the ledge to oppose them. Although the Tuigan archers will be able to keep the rest of the colony at bay, they do not dare to fire into this melee. The PCs must handle the three coomb giants on the ledge by themselves.

After the Battle. Once the PCs return the Princess and Hubadai to the road, the Tuigan warriors will form a human shield around the injured pair and escort them to safety. When he and Bhrokiti recover consciousness, Hubadai (who has suffered 100 hp of damage) will gracefully thank the male PCs for saving his life.

Unfortunately, when he turns to express his gratitude to Princess Bhrokiti (and any other women involved in his rescue), he can't think of the appropriate words to thank a mere woman for such a brave deed. Instead, he simply nods to her and asks how she feels.

Bhrokiti grows furious. "I'm fine!" she snaps. "All I did was throw myself into an avalanche, grab your ankles to keep you from plunging

thousands of feet, then fall a hundred feet, land on a narrow rock shelf, and survive an attack by an army of giants! I do that sort of thing everyday – no need to thank me!"

She turns away and asks to be carried someplace where she won't have to look at Hubadai.

Statistics

Coomb Giants (3). AC 3; MV 15; HD 10; hp 48 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 +4/1d8 +4; THAC0 11; AL NE; XP Value 2,000; SA can wield two weapons at once; SD can be knocked off feet only on a THAC0 roll of a natural 20, even when killed.

Coomb giants are exceptionally small, oriental forms of hill giants. They evolved in the deep gorges and chasms of the Katakoro mountains. Because they often inhabit sheer cliffs, they have developed exceptional dexterity and balance (which is why they can only be knocked off their feet with a natural 20).





Event 23: Map Encounter

All day long, the sky is filled with ominous grey clouds, and it looks as if a

blizzard is about to break out at any moment.

Finally a terrible wind howls down off the mountain tops. On its breath it carries a sharp, bitter frost that nips at your nose and ears.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail): A group of monks leaps off the mountainside and ambushes the party. The five Tuigan escorts are automatically surprised and knocked unconscious. The PCs, however, may make checks for surprise and react normally.

Ten monks attack the PCs, trying to capture them alive (so they strike to subdue). If they prevail, the monks tie up the PCs and their escort, and then interrogate them for nearly an hour. They repeatedly ask about the Tuigan army's destination, its size, what it's doing in Ra-Khati, who is commanding it, how it has remained undetected for so long, etc. Finally, the lookout reports that the main body of the army is coming and the monks disappear into the mountains, leaving the party bound on the trail. When he arrives, Hubadai dispatches several patrols to capture the ambushers, but the warriors return without finding the monks.

Should the PCs prevail, the surviving monks enter a trance and reveal nothing about why they attacked the PCs. If the PCs do not release their prisoners before rejoining the Tuigan army, Hubadai has the unfortunate men "interrogated." The PCs never see their prisoners again.

The monks' statistics are listed at the end of this encounter.

Road of Inner Peace (brown path): As dusk falls, choose one PC at random. This character catches a glimpse of a dowagu's shadow. Unfortunately, the thing disappears immediately. Any NPCs to whom the incident is reported believe the character is seeing things.

The Road Less Traveled (red trail): The Road Less Traveled rejoins the Road of Inner Peace. A mani stone at the intersection reads:

Congratulations! You have taken the Road Less Traveled and that has made all the difference. Now, you may proceed down the Road of Inner Peace in full confidence of reaching your goal.

Path of Ultimate Bliss (orange trail): A caravan of dead yaks lies on the road. Their bodies are covered with small mushrooms, eight of which are phycomoids (see "Fungus" in the Monstrous Compendium). As the party passes, the phycomoids attack. Their statistics are located at the end of this event.

Statistics

10 Monks (Priest 5): AC 6; MV 18; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (staff) + 1; THAC0 18; Str 15; Int 10; Wis 15; Dex 15; Con 11; Cha 9; AL lg; XP Value 270.

Fungus, Phycomoid (8): AC 5; MV 3; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4 + 2/1d4 + 2; THAC0 15; AL ne; XP Value 975; SA Infection; SD nil.

The phycomoid fungus resembles fibrous blobs of milky, decomposing matter with capped fungi growing out of them. When attacking, they extrude a tube and spit a highly alkaline glob up to 12 feet. Any victim hit by one of these globs must save vs. poison. Those failing sprout mushroom-like growths 1d4 + 4 rounds later, taking an additional 1d4 + 4 points of damage. If a *cure disease* is not cast upon the individual within 1d4 + 4 turns, he dies and becomes a phycomoid host.

In the pocket of the dead driver, there happens to be two potions that can *cure disease* and two *potions of longevity*. On his finger is a *ring of feather falling*.

Event 24: Map Encounter

The road climbs higher into the mountains, and it snows all day long.

DM's Notes. At this point, there are several possible events, depending upon which path the PCs are following:

Way of Solitude (green trail) and Path of Ultimate Bliss (orange trail): As dusk falls, choose one PC at random. This character catches a glimpse of a dowagu's shadow. Unfortunately, the thing disappears immediately. Any NPCs to whom the incident is reported believe the character is seeing things.

Road of Inner Peace (brown path): A group of monks leaps off the mountainside and ambushes the party. The five Tuigan escorts are automatically surprised and knocked unconscious. The PCs, however, may make check for surprise and react normally.

Ten monks attack the PCs, trying to capture them alive (so they strike to subdue). If they prevail, the monks tie up the PCs and interrogate them for nearly an hour. They repeatedly ask about the Tuigan army's destination, its size,



what it's doing in Ra-Khati, who is commanding it, how it has remained undetected for so long, etc. Finally, the lookout reports that the main body of the army is coming and the monks disappear into the mountains, leaving the PCs bound on the trail. When he arrives, Hubadai dispatches several patrols to capture the ambushers, but the warriors return without finding the monks.

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The monks' statistics are listed at the end of this encounter.

Statistics

10 Monks (Priest 5): AC 6; MV 18; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (staff) + 1; THAC0 18; Str 15; Int 10; Wis 15; Dex 15; Con 11; Cha 9; AL lg; XP Value 270.

Two monks carry *potions of longevity*.

Event 25: Yumbu Citadel

The road enters a small, grassy valley filled with beautiful liana vines, flowering trees, and shrubs of a hundred different colors.

There, as the road starts to climb back into the mountains, it passes through the gate of a massive, golden citadel. The gate remains open. There is no alarm from the citadel.

DM's Notes. The party is looking upon the Fortress of Life. Inside are several thousand monks and nuns dressed in golden robes. None of them show any sign of alarm as the party, or the Tuigan army, approaches. In fact, several residents invite the PCs and the Tuigan inside.

In the citadel's main courtyard is a huge fountain of shimmering, golden waters. A sign, written in Khazari rather than Ra-Khatian, invites all who desire to drink from the Fountain of Eternal Life. The residents of the citadel will politely decline to say anything about the sign or the fountain, though they will inform the PCs that they have reached Khazari's southern border.

Should the PCs warn the residents of the citadel to flee, they politely decline, saying that they have nothing to fear from anyone. However, they will agree to hide inside the citadel's building and stay out of sight, if so requested.

The PCs' Tuigan escorts drink from the fountain as soon as possible, and also water their horses. When Hubadai arrives, he starts to drink from the fountain, but Bhrokiti warns him not to, and avoids the waters herself. If asked for a reason,

Bhrokiti explains that she has no use for eternal life, and that neither does Hubadai. He forbids his soldiers to drink from the fountain, then asks the PCs if they think this would be a good place to spend the night.

Side Effects. As the sign says, the fountain is the "Fountain of Eternal Life." Anybody who drinks from its waters becomes immortal—for as long as he or she remains within Yumbu Citadel. Unfortunately, the waters have the opposite effect upon those who leave; when a character steps outside the citadel after drinking from the fountain, he ages at an accelerated rate.

If any of the PCs drank from the fountain, keep careful track of the number of hours they spend inside the citadel. Once they leave, they age 1d6 years for each hour, or portion of an hour, they spent inside the citadel after drinking. The only thing that will reverse this process is a *potion of longevity* or a *wish* spell.

Massacre. After his army passes through the citadel, Hubadai tells his men to kill all those inside. He is trying to preserve the secrecy of his troop movements.

Fortunately, he can easily be dissuaded from this course of action. If the PCs point out that the residents are not likely to leave the citadel, suggest that killing the residents might have a bad effect on those who drank from the fountain, or point out that it might be against the wishes of Teylas to kill those who have been granted eternal life. Hubadai decides not to kill the inhabitants.

If the PCs fail to point this out, several thousand of Hubadai's soldiers die mysteriously when they try to kill the inhabitants of the citadel. Seeing the better part of valor, Hubadai decides to let the inhabitants alone.

Event 26: Disappearance

"A man's greatest pleasure is to rise at dawn, to hear the cold wind of death whistle in his ears, and to feel his sword's hot steel cut down his enemies," says the yurtchi. A swift kick in the ribs accompanies his proclamation, then the officer says, "Time to ride. Today we fight!"

After more than a month of travel through Ra-Khati, the Tuigan army has finally reached Khazari's southern flank. The road now runs along the bottom of a steep-sided canyon, descending into a huge vale that can only be the kingdom of Khazari.



"Where is the Princess?" the yurtchi asks.
"The khan wishes to see all of you."

DM's Notes. The reason the khan wishes to see the PCs and Bhrokiti is to give them their freedom. Judging by the absence of enemy troops at the canyon mouth, the khan believes the PCs have fulfilled their agreement and smuggled his army through Ra-Khati without alerting the Khazari. In return, he intends to discharge them before the fighting begins.

Unfortunately, Bhrokiti has disappeared during the night. No matter where the PCs look, she cannot be found. When this is reported to Hubadai, he orders a search of the entire camp and the surrounding vicinity. Though Hubadai's men (and presumably the PCs) spend the rest of the day searching for her, the Princess remains lost.

Finally, as dusk falls, Hubadai summons the PCs to his yurt. "Where is she?" he demands. "I warn you, if this is a trick to hold me here until the Khazaris are ready, you will pay dearly!"

Ransom. As Hubadai speaks, the PC with the highest wisdom feels a scroll appear in his hand. On the scroll is a message:

I have the Princess. If you wish to see her alive, leave for Yumbu Citadel at midnight. Bring the Black Courser.

The message is written in a contorted script that appears to be made of black shadow. Its only seal is the silhouette of a dowagu.

Of course, Hubadai demands the scroll. When he gives it to his scribe to read, however, the script fades away. The PCs may decide whether to tell him what the scroll said or not.

Whether or not the PCs tell Hubadai what was in the scroll, he washes his hands of the Princess, telling the PCs that they are free to go after her if they wish. If the PCs ask him for Sandiraksiva, he winces, then glances at the stern faces of his nightguards. Finally, he proclaims, "A man's greatest pleasure is to have a fine horse, to take it out riding, and to feel its hooves pounding the earth."

The PCs are expected to interpret his meaning from the proclamation. Because he said nothing about a woman or princess, he is implying that Bhrokiti is not worth as much to him as a good horse. He will not agree to ransom Bhrokiti with Sandiraksiva.

Hubadai ends the audience, telling the PCs that he intends to attack Khazari at dawn. If the PCs

decide to steal Sandiraksiva in order to ransom the Princess, proceed with *Event 27*. If they intend to rescue her without stealing the Black Courser, proceed with *Event 28*.

Event 27: Horse Thieves

Hubadai keeps Sandiraksiva's white mares in a corral at the edge of camp.

DM's Notes. There are no guards at the corral tonight. This is Hubadai's doing. Although he could not say so in front of his guards in *Event 26*, he secretly loves Bhrokiti more than he values Sandiraksiva. Therefore, he arranged to leave the corral unguarded tonight. In addition, he has given conflicting orders to the nightguards concerning any disturbances at Sandiraksiva's corral. It will require the first ten nightguards a full turn to reach the corral after any significant noise is created. Each round after that, however, ten more guards will show up.

Even with Hubadai's secret aid, stealing Sandiraksiva will still be far from easy, however. The Black Courser defends his mares and himself to his full abilities, but will not flee unless it becomes clear that the mares are in no danger.

Perhaps the best way to "capture" Sandiraksiva is to steal one of the mares and flee with it. The Black Courser is sure to follow.

Should the guards capture the PCs while they are attempting to steal the Black Courser, Hubadai will chastise them verbally. Then he will order the guards to set the PCs free at the edge of camp, and not to allow them back into camp unless they have proven their bravery by rescuing Bhrokiti.

If the PCs leave camp to rescue Princess Bhrokiti with the Black Courser in their possession (or following them), proceed with *Event 29*. If they leave camp without the Black Courser in their possession, proceed with *Event 28*.

Event 28: Turned Back

The night is cold and moonless. A fierce wind howls through the mountains with an eery, high-pitched wail.

DM's Notes. A mile out of camp, a dowagu settles behind the PCs. "Show me the horse!"

Unless the PCs can comply, the dowagu snaps, "I want the horse! If you do not have it here within the hour, the Princess will die—and be the Raja's bride forever!"

With that, the shadow monster raises its wings, blotting out the feeble light of the stars behind it. The wind howls even louder, echoing through the



valley with a wail that sounds like a woman screaming. An instant later, the dowagu is gone.

Should the PCs attack the dowagu before it can speak, it rises into the air. "Fools!" it says. "You have one more chance: bring me the horse!"

If the PCs return to camp to steal Sandiraksiva, go back to *Event 27*. Even if the PCs have already tried to take the Black Courser, the corral remains unguarded. If the PCs decide to ignore the dowagu and continue forward without the horse, proceed with *Event 29*.

Event 29: Dowagu Ambush

The wind howls more loudly with every step toward Yumbu Citadel. In the dark, the road becomes a treacherous test of balance and luck, with horses stumbling over loose rocks, stepping into unseen holes, and unexpectedly brushing against the canyon walls.

DM's Notes. Five miles outside of the Tuigan camp, a chilling voice booms, "Stop!"

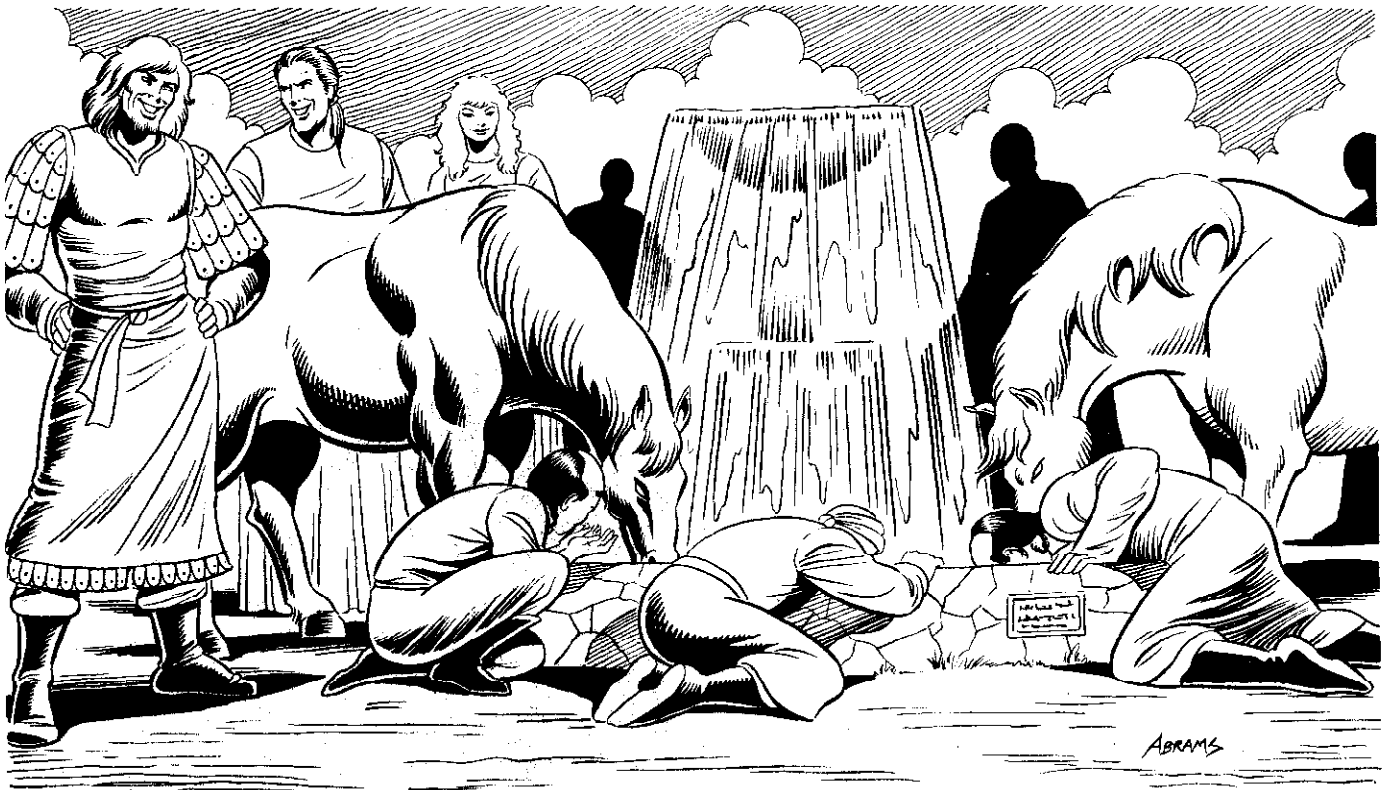
The voice belongs to a dowagu, one of five lurking nearby unseen. A hundred yards down the road, a faint light illuminates Bhrokiti's form. She is bound to a pillar of rock that has been driven into the middle of the road. She has been gagged with a black cloth, but appears otherwise un-

harmed. A moment later, the light fades and the dowagu's shadowy form slithers in front of the PCs. If Sandiraksiva is not in plain view, the dowagu asks to see him.

At this point, the dowagu expect the PCs to try something tricky. If attacked, the creature on the road will act surprised, fight for a short time, then flee. As the PCs approach the princess, however, his four fellows will leap out of the shadows and attack.

Should the PCs be foolish enough to believe the dowagu actually intends to make a trade, however, the shadow monsters will play along. The one on the road will ask for Sandiraksiva's reins (or take the reins of the mare Sandiraksiva is following), then invite the PCs to go get Bhrokiti. As the PCs approach the Princess, the dowagu's four confederates will leap out of hiding and attack.

Hubadai's Rescue. Three rounds after the dowagu spring their ambush (or when it looks as if the PCs are doomed), Hubadai comes charging down the canyon with five hundred men, including fifty shamans. The dowagu that originally met the PCs on the road and three of the others





turn to meet the Tuigan charge. A massive battle ensues, with the Tuigan shamans casting light spells everywhere while their comrades

attack the dowagu with sabers and axes. The dowagu and Tuigan are locked in battle for several rounds.

Meanwhile, the last dowagu moves toward Bhrokiti, intending to take her (and the Black Courser, if possible) and flee to Solon. The PCs must prevent him from succeeding.

Should the PCs fall in the ensuing combat, Hubadai and his most powerful shaman break through the dowagu line and barely manage to save the Princess.

The Gratitude of a Princess. After the battle is over (Hubadai's men eventually defeat the dowagu they were facing), Bhrokiti goes over to Hubadai and kisses him long and hard. The astonished khan asks, "What mean you by such familiarity?"

"You know very well what I mean by it," Bhrokiti responds, "or you would not have come to rescue me!"

Hubadai flushes and glances at his men. "I was only thinking of the Black Courser!" he objects.

Bhrokiti remains unconvinced. Taking Hubadai by the arm, she says, "Of course you were. Now take me back to camp. I haven't had a thing to eat all day, and I'm hungry."

Explanations. If asked to explain why he changed his mind and showed up at the last minute, Hubadai explains that he never changed his mind. He always suspected the dowagu were laying a trap, and allowed the PCs to bait it by going to rescue the Princess. He followed at a safe distance with five hundred of his best men.

Of course, he claims that he was only thinking of the Black Courser when he did this. However, PCs using a *detect lie* will know that he is not telling the truth about why he came to their rescue. He was far more concerned with Bhrokiti's welfare than the Black Courser's.

Statistics

Statistics for the dowagu will be found in the Introduction. Statistics for Hubadai, his nightguards, and the princess are on the interior gatefold.



Part III: Khazari



By the end of *Part II: Through the Mountain Kingdom*, the PCs have led the Tuigan through Ra-Khati more or less successfully. With Hubadai's help, the party has also defeated the do-wagu, and should be troubled by the Raja's vile creatures no more. At the same time, however, the PCs should realize that unless they recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih* and use it to destroy Ambuchar Devayam, they will become zombies and join the undead armies of Solon when they die. Clever PCs may even realize that the Raja Ambuchar Devayam and the ancient emperor of Shou Lung, Tan Chin are one and the same. Most likely, they will not know much about the scepter's location, save that it is in Shou Lung.

Also by this time, Gaumahavi has realized that the Raja intended to double-cross her all along, whether or not she has been freed from the *Prism of Kushk*. If she has been freed, she is somewhere between Solon and Ra-Khati, harassing Solon's armies. The Black Courser is still with the Tuigan, occasionally serving as Hubadai's mount.

Although Hubadai is taking pains to conceal the fact from his men (and from himself!), it should be obvious to the PCs that the khan and Princess Bhrokiti are in love. The Princess will do whatever she can to persuade the party to stay with Hubadai for as long as possible, though she tries not to allow her feelings for Hubadai to interfere with her duty to Ra-Khati.

Study the Shou Lung Map below. It shows the relative positions of Ra-Khati, Khazari, the Tuigan advance, and Kuo Meilan. Do not show it to the PCs; it is for your reference only.

Event 1: Dismissal

After a short, restless night, at dawn Hubadai sends a messenger to summon you to his yurt.

DM's Notes. When the PCs arrive, Hubadai offers them breakfast: goat meat and mare's milk. After everybody has eaten, he says, "A man's greatest pleasure is to hear the stories of foreign visitors, to share his meat with welcome guests, and to drink his kumiss with loyal friends."

When Hubadai pauses, Bhrokiti responds, "A woman's greatest pleasure is to sit beside a great leader, to enjoy his meat and his wine, and to be with him as long as possible."

Hubadai winces at Bhrokiti's proclamation and glances at his nightguards uneasily, but does not object to the Princess' boldness. Instead, he says, "I thank you for your kind words, Princess of the Mountain Kingdom. But we are about to ride into

battle, and this fight is not yours or your friends'.

You have served me well, and now

your obligation is discharged. You are free to go."

Hubadai looks away from the Princess as he speaks these last words.

The princess looks pained. "If we are free," she says, "then are we not free to ride at your side as long as we wish?"

Decision. Princess Bhrokiti wishes to stay with Hubadai as long as possible. She suggests riding north into Khazari with the Tuigan army, arguing that in time of war, they will be safer with Hubadai's men than riding alone. Once they reach the Silk Road, they can turn east toward Shou Lung.

If the PCs refuse, Bhrokiti reluctantly agrees to leave the Tuigan army and go with them to recover the scepter. In this case, the party makes its way north alone, reaching the Silk Road and turning east to the Serpent Cliffs without incident. Here, Hubadai's army will catch up to them; continue with *Event 3*.

Assuming the PCs agree with Bhrokiti however, continue with *Event 2*.

Event 2: Skarou

After two days of riding, the Tuigan army comes to a river that the khan's rough map identifies as Shyok Muren. It is a rather shallow, narrow stream filled with clear water.

Across the river sits Skarou, a small village surrounded by a stone wall. The gates to the village remain open, and the residents take no notice of Hubadai's army other than giving it an occasional glance.

"They're mocking us, Khan!" says one of Hubadai's subcommanders.

"Then we shall have to teach them some respect," Hubadai responds. "Tell the men to prepare torches. We'll raze this village as an example to the others in Khazari."

"Wait!" Bhrokiti says. "Perhaps there's another explanation."

Hubadai's subordinates roil their eyes, but the khan himself does not appear so skeptical. "What?" he asks.

Bhrokiti shrugs. "I don't know – but it seems very strange for them to behave this way."

DM's Notes. If the PCs suggest that Hubadai send someone to investigate, he thanks them for volunteering and sends them into Skarou (Bhro-



kiti remains behind). Otherwise, he simply razes the village. The scroll in Donazar's possession is found by soldier and delivered to Hubadai.

Donazar the Sage. As the PCs ride into Skarrou, they are met at the gate by a small contingent of unarmed Khazari soldiers. "We've been expecting you for several weeks," the men say in Common. "Please come with us. Donazar has a message for you."

The escort leads the PCs to a modest dwelling inside the village. After the guards show the party into a sitting room, a wizened old man puffing on a clay pipe comes out to meet them. He squints at the marks on their foreheads, then says, "Where'd you get that? I haven't seen the Stamp of Tan Chin in centuries."

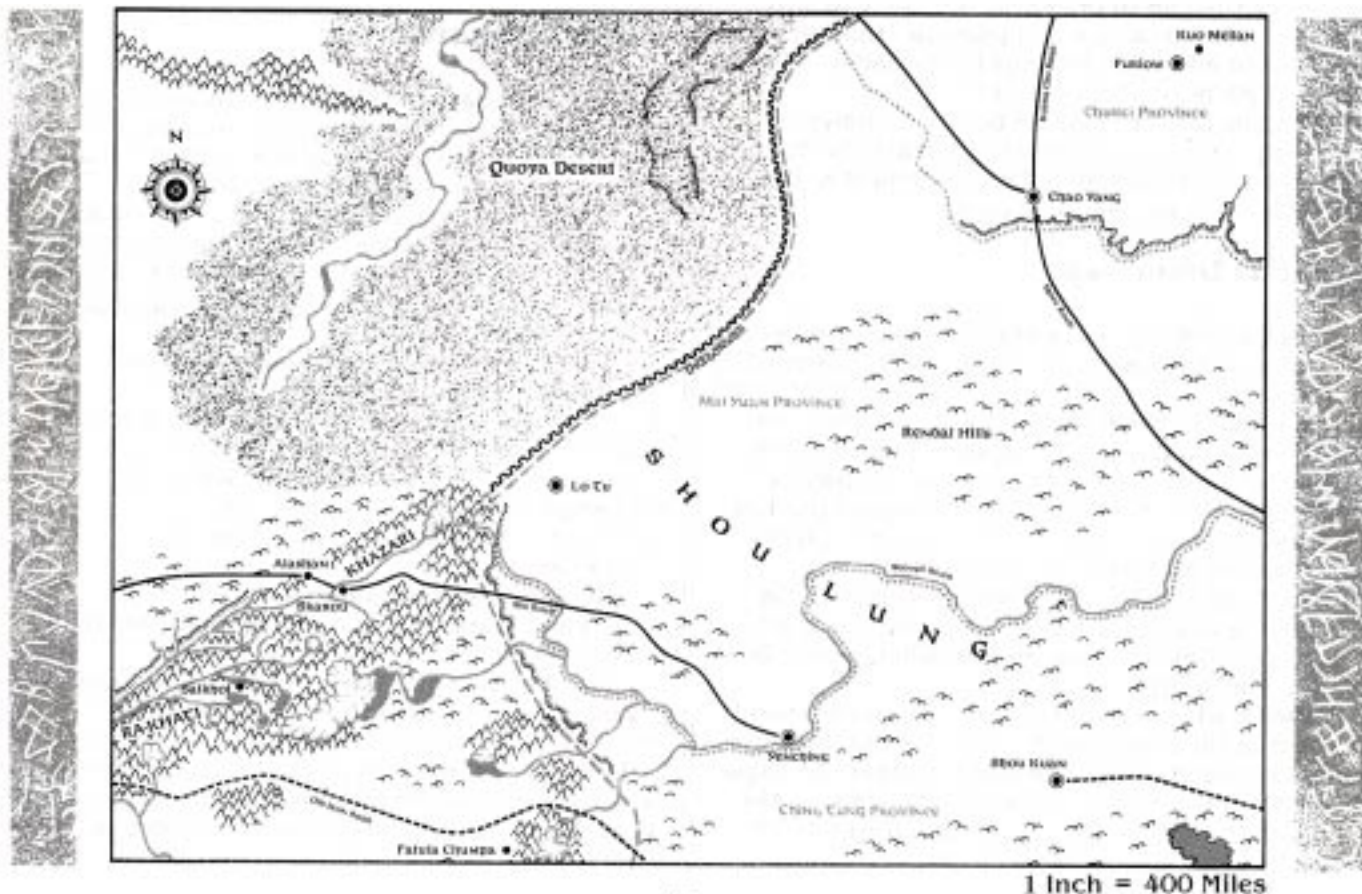
If asked about the mark or Tan Chin, Donazar says that when he was just a boy, Tan Chin was the emperor of Shou Lung. All of his subjects were marked with the Stamp of Tan Chin. Donazar is familiar with the legend of how Shih defeated Tan Chin and chased him out of the country, but does not know what became of the foul emperor after that. Although Donazar has heard of the

Raja Ambuchar Devayam, he is not aware of any connection between the Raja and Tan Chin—though he takes care to emphasize that his ignorance does not mean that no such connection exists.

Donazar can tell the PCs that Tan Chin made his capital in the center of the province of Chu-kei, in the north of Shou Lung. The capital was named Kuo Meilan, and has been lost for hundreds of years. Although many men have gone to search for it and the fabulous wealth rumored to be buried there, no one has ever returned from such an expedition—at least not anyone who claimed to have found the city. Donazar can tell the PCs nothing more about the city.

After discussing the mark of Tan Chin, Donazar says, "Ye don't look like Tuigan barbarians." Once the PCs explain their situation, Donazar nods, saying, "The tides of fate toss men about like sampans on the sea, do they not?" He then takes a scroll out of his robes and gives it to one of the player characters. "This is for a man named Hubadai, from his father. Would you please do me the courtesy of delivering it to him? I'm afraid I don't get out much with these old bones."

New Orders. The scroll is written in Khazari (which Princess Bhrokiti can read). It explains that Khazari has already surrendered, so Hubadai is hereby ordered not to make any attacks





within its borders. Instead, he is to join his father in Shou Lung, somewhere between Lo Tu and Yen-ching. It seems the Shou sent an assassin to kill the Khahan, and he is determined to avenge this insult by conquering the empire.

Of course, the Princess is delighted, since that means that the party can travel with Hubadai for a few weeks longer. Continue with *Event 3*.

Event 3: The Serpent Wall

As the Silk Road leaves Khazari, it climbs over a high, rugged pass known as Repo La, which means Broken Wall Pass. After three days of slow, tedious riding, the road finally passes between Nas and Ahn Trango Shan, the twin guardian peaks that mark Khazari's eastern frontier. From there, the route travels through a frozen, tundra-covered plain for another three days. Finally, it reaches the top of a steep cliff of yellow rock that runs as far as the eye can see in both directions.

"The Yellow Serpent Border," Princess Bhrokiti explains. "According to the books in my father's Repository of Proscribed Geographical Knowledge, all the land between here and the end of the world belongs to Shou Lung."

DM's Notes. To the northeast, a distant, broad plume of smoke and dust is rising—broad enough that it must be at least a hundred miles long. The armies of Yamun Khahan, nearly 200,000 strong, have already breached the Dragonwall (a barrier thousands of miles long that has defended the Shou from the horse barbarians since time immemorial). The Shou are retreating before the advance, burning everything they pass to keep the Tuigan from making use of it.

If the party separated from Hubadai's army in *Event 1*, it catches up to them at this point, and Hubadai reveals that he has received orders to meet his father in Shou Lung (see *New Orders* in *Event 2*). Of course, Bhrokiti is delighted to be able to travel with Hubadai for a few days longer.

After a short pause at the Yellow Serpent Cliff, Hubadai leads his army down the steep road, then turns northeast toward the smoke and dust. Hubadai insists that the PCs and Bhrokiti accompany him, as his father is sure to have scouts that can help them find the *Stone Scepter of Shih*.

Event 4: The Tuigan Camp

After two days of riding, you finally reach the main body of the Tuigan army. An ocean of men and horses is moving at a slow pace toward the southeast. As Hubadai leads his own army into the swarm, he and his men

are hailed with wild, high-pitched greetings.

DM's notes.

Hubadai makes sure to keep the PCs and Bhrokiti near him, as they might otherwise be mistaken for enemies and killed by his father's soldiers. After sending a messenger to report his return to his father, Hubadai arranges his army into four long columns, then falls into line with the rest of Yamun Khahan's armies.

Toward dusk, a messenger approaches Hubadai, inviting him and his guests to dine in his father's yurt that evening. The armies continue riding until after dark, when they finally stop to make camp. Hubadai takes Bhrokiti and the PCs, and rides past miles of campfires. At last, they dismount a hundred yards from a huge yurt and a guard leads them into the khahan's tent.

Yamun Khahan sits on a pile of cushions at the back of the dimly lit yurt. He is a broad-shouldered, sharp-eyed man with a lean, weathered face and a permanent scowl. To his right sits Koja, a small, timid-looking man with a scribe's tools in his lap. He is shaven bald. Yamun offers his guests food and kumiss, then immediately settles down to business, ordering Hubadai to report all that he has done since they parted.

Hubadai's report includes an account of meeting the PCs, awakening one morning with the Stamp of Tan Chin on his forehead, and the necessity of recovering the *Stone Scepter of Shih* in order to avoid becoming a zombie soldier in Ambuchar Devayam's army. After hearing the report, the khahan is silent for several moments. Finally, he turns to Koja and asks, "What do you know of Tan Chin and this stamp, Grand Historian?"

Koja replies, "A little more than your son has reported, Mighty One. There are documents at the Red Mountain Temple that speak of an ancient Shou emperor named Tan Chin. He was an evil man who thought only of himself and his evil consort, Meilan, for whom he named his capital, Kuo Meilan. According to legend, he learned the secret of commanding the dead, and intended to raise a great army to conquer the world.

"Before he could do this, however, a great wu-jen named Shih-Hai Kwai created a scepter that could dispel armies of dead with a single wave. Shih-Hai took his weapon and went to Kuo Meilan to destroy Tan Chin, but only succeeded in chasing the evil emperor away. Nobody knows what happened to Tan Chin after that, though many believe that he has taken the name Ambuchar



Devayam and now lives in Solon. There are even those who believe that he intends to return to Shou Luna and conquer it."

The Khahan's Word. The khahan seems rather inattentive until Koja gets to the part about Devayam conquering Shou Lung. At this point, however, he perks up and asks, "And the only way to destroy this Tan Chin is with the *Stone Scepter of Shih?*"

When Koja confirms that it is, the khahan frowns. He does not want anybody but himself conquering Shou Lung, so he wants this Ambuchar Devayam destroyed. On the other hand, much of what he has heard is based on myth and legend. Needing as he does every available man for conquering Shou Lung, he is not anxious to send Hubadai's armies north on what could very well turn out to be a wild goose chase.

Finally, he reaches a decision. He tells the PCs that he will provide them with mounts and supplies so that they may find Kuo Meilan and recover this scepter. Unfortunately, however, he needs Hubadai with him, so they will go alone. His last condition is that Princess Bhrokiti will remain with his army, since facing the hazards of deserted cities is no task for a woman of royal blood. (In reality, he is keeping her hostage to ensure that the PCs do as he commands.)

Surprisingly, Bhrokiti does not object. Realizing that she would only be in the way on such a hazardous undertaking, she is more than happy to stay with Hubadai. However, should the PCs approach her in private, she reluctantly agrees to sneak away with them that night.

Koja can tell the PCs that Kuo Meilan is rumored to be somewhere near the city of Fukiow, in the center of the Province of Chukei. Unfortunately, Chukei is more or less northeast of their present position, and the army is moving southeast, so the PCs will have to proceed on their own.

If the PCs attempt to take Bhrokiti and sneak out of camp, proceed with *Event 5*. If they agree to do as the khahan commands, proceed with *Event 6*.

Event 5: Escape

Being much larger than Hubadai's army, Yamun Khahan's army has a much better equipped camp. The khahan has given the princess a private yurt near his own, so care must be taken when going to fetch her.

DM's Notes. The PCs have no difficulties until they reach Bhrokiti's yurt. Unfortunately, six of Hubadai's nightguards stand outside the tent. The PCs must overcome the sentries without making a great deal of noise or allowing the guards to call out.

If the PCs overcome the guards in complete silence, when they enter Bhrokiti's yurt, they find the Princess lying beneath a heavy fur blanket, still dressed in her nightclothes. Next to her lies Hubadai, sound asleep and also dressed in his nightclothes. (Yes, she has violated her wu- jen taboo against sleeping in the same room as another person. She no longer has any magical abilities.) Have the first PC peering into the yurt make a Wisdom check. Failure indicates that he gasps and awakens Hubadai. If awakened, Hubadai calls for his guards at the beginning of the following round – unless the PCs silence him first.

If the PCs make any noise at all in overcoming the nightguards, Hubadai appears at the door to the yurt at the beginning of the next round. Once again, he calls for help unless the PCs manage to silence him first. Note: if it appears the PCs are going to cause any serious injury to Hubadai, Princess Bhrokiti will scream the alarm herself.

Should the PCs make a great deal of noise overcoming Hubadai's guards, or if Hubadai manages to call for help, ten nightguards appear at Bhrokiti's tent at the beginning of each round. In this case, when the PCs are captured, Yamun Khahan will threaten them with all sorts of terrible punishments, but will eventually release them and send them north to recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*. He will not allow Princess Bhrokiti to go with them.

Explanations. Bhrokiti refuses to explain what Hubadai was doing in her tent, firmly stating that her personal affairs are none of the PCs' business. If Hubadai's presence caused any inconvenience to the party, she blames them for not having the common sense to wait until he left and then to come back for her.

Whether or not the PCs are successful in fetching Princess Bhrokiti, proceed with *Event 6*.

Statistics

The statistics for Hubadai and his nightguards are listed on the interior gatefold.

Event 6: Shou Ambush

From the Tuigan camp, riding even remotely eastward is out of the question. The Shou armies are retreating before the Tuigan advance, burning everything they pass. A curtain of

smoke is rising along the entire horizon like a great, impassable wall.

DM's Notes. It requires only a few hours of riding for the PCs to leave the Tuigan army far behind. If Princess Bhrokiti is with them, however, they soon notice a plume of dust trailing them at a distance of ten to twelve miles. Hubadai and twenty nightguards are following about an hour behind.

Before Hubadai catches them, however, the PCs are ambushed by a Shou patrol. As they reach the bottom of a deep gully, 25 ragged men armed with crossbows and swords appear at the top of the far side. A moment later, 25 more rush into view on each of their flanks, and then 25 step into view behind them.

Addressing the party first in Shou, then in Tuigan, the captain of the patrol informs the PCs that they are his prisoners. If the PCs show no sign of comprehending either language, he will resort to his awkward Common. Five soldiers fire their crossbows at any character reaching for a weapon or trying to cast a spell.

The Shou captain believes the PCs are Tuigan scouts. He orders his men to take their weapons, then begins interrogating them about their orders, Tuigan strength and troop movements, plans, and so forth.

No matter what the PCs tell him, the captain treats them as if they are Tuigan, and is determined to take them to his commander for further interrogation and, he implies, execution. If Princess Bhrokiti is with the party, Hubadai and his men reach the ambush site about an hour later, but are turned back by a flurry of crossbow bolts from the Shou patrol.

The Shou captain will not willingly release the party. The PCs will have to escape, either by using magic to influence the captain, or by overcoming their guards and riding or sneaking off. At night, the party members will be bound hand and foot to each other and a convenient tree, and guarded at all times by ten guards. (Any character passing both a Dexterity and a Wisdom check can work his hands free without the guards noticing.)

The ninety sleeping Shou, and the captain, will only awaken if there is a great deal of commotion. Treat them as surprised for two rounds; after that, they will all be fully alert.

Should the PCs fail to escape after five nights, they are delivered to the army commander, who interrogates them for ten endless hours, then has them put to death.

When the PCs escape, proceed with *Event 7*.

Statistics

Shou Captain

(Warrior 8). AC 4; MV 12; hp 40; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8 (sword) + 1; THAC0 13; Str 16; Int 10; Wis 12; Dex 13; Con 13; Cha 9; AL LN; XP Value 650; SA nil; SD *scale armor* + 1.

Shou Soldiers (99; Warrior 3). AC 6; MV 12; hp 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 1 (crossbow quarrel); THAC0 18; AL LN; XP Value 65 each; SA nil; SD nil.



Event 7: Spy

For nearly a day's ride (or two days' hike) after escaping the Shou patrol, the countryside has been barren. Although there are many small villages in this part of Shou Lung, they are all deserted. The fields have been burned and nothing of value is left in the homes.

Finally, however, this swath of destruction comes to an end. After a mile of unburned fields, you spy an undeserted village ahead.

DM's Notes. As the PCs approach the village, a bell begins to ring. Citizens with torches run to and fro, setting fire to everything within reach.

The Shou peasants have mistaken the PCs for Tuigan scouts. Having heard stories of the Tuigan atrocities, they are following their prefect's instructions, setting fire to their possessions and fleeing as rapidly as possible. The same thing will happen anytime the PCs approach any other village either riding or leading horses.

As the PCs ride into the deserted village, a lone, glassy-eyed beggar with unkempt black hair approaches and kneels, touching his forehead to the ground repeatedly. "Mercy for the wretched!" he cries. "Show mercy to your servant, and I shall repay your kindness a thousand times."

The man is the village outcast, a vagrant pariah named Yolti. He is a bitter, treacherous man, willing to betray his fellows and his countrymen for a small price (one gp will do). Yolti has spent his life as an itinerant wanderer, and has decided to use his knowledge of geography to elevate his station in life by serving as a guide to the invading Tuigan army.

Yolti offers his services to the party, assuming they are Tuigan scouts. Nothing the party says will convince him they are not Tuigan (he assumes they are trying to travel incognito). Should the party hire him, Yolti can lead them directly to Kuo Meilan, for he once deserted an expedition on the city's doorstep. At first, he will be curious



what the party wants from there, but will stop asking questions the instant it appears he has irritated the PCs with his questions. Yolti will

always strive to be helpful and solicitous, so much so that the party may become suspicious of his motivations. If he senses this, he becomes paranoid and behaves even more suspiciously — by hiding his sleeping place, never letting anyone ride behind him, etc.

Statistics

Yolti: AC 10; MV 10; hp 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 20; AL ce; Str 8; Int 12; Wis 8; Dex 10; Con 14; Cha 7; XP Value 15; SA nil; SD nil.





Part IV: Kuo Meilan

After many days of travel, the party has finally arrived at Kuo Meilan. Study the fold-up map that came with *The Black Courser*. (This map is for your use only. Do not shown it to the player characters until after the adventure.) As apparent from the cutaway side view of Kuo Meilan, the city was built on a small, man-made hill. The interior of the hill is nearly hollow, and houses the secret quarters from which Emperor Tan Chin ran his administration in ancient times. Half of the fold-up map details the seven subterranean levels of these facilities, as well as what remains of Tan Chin's palace.

The rest of the sheet maps the city itself, and details Kuo Meilan's circular plan. Certainly, Kuo Meilan was the best-fortified city of its time, with its system of eight walls arranged in ascending, concentric circles. Through this ingenious arrangement, the palace would become more secure as defenders withdrew toward the core of the city, always in a position to shower arrows and other missiles down on their attackers. Is it any wonder, then, that after Kuo Meilan finally fell, it became a haven for all sorts of foul creatures who wished to avoid the more comfortable environs of civilization?

Encounter Procedures

Unfortunately, space prohibits a detailed description of what the PCs will find in each nook or cranny of Kuo Meilan. Instead, it is necessary to use the Kuo Meilan Random Events Table to generate encounters as they move through the battered ruins of this once splendid metropolis. Instructions for using the table are provided below, under the heading *Using the Kuo Meilan Random Events Table*.

Not everything that the party finds in Kuo Meilan will be random, however. Each section, or "circle," of the city is detailed as a separate event in Part IV. As the PCs move through each circle, if they are clever enough to look in the right places, they will discover certain information or items that will prove of benefit to them later. Other times, if they make the mistake of looking in the wrong places, they will find unpleasant surprises. These special places are noted on the map with large red numbers. As the PCs explore these locations, consult the corresponding number in the description of the appropriate circle, and run the resulting event. **Important:** if the PCs scale any walls, use random event 5, then 8, and 13 if they scale more walls (start at 5 again if they climb more than three walls). Do not place a checkmark in any of these boxes. (There is nothing to pre-

vent the PCs from flying over the walls, however.)

Unlike the earlier parts of *The Black*

Courser, the only event in Part IV that the PCs are sure to have is Event One, which occurs as they approach the city. After it is finished, the PCs will enter Kuo Meilan's first circle. What happens after that is up to them and their fate.

After glancing at the Kuo Meilan Random Events Table and reading the instructions for how to use it, begin this section with Event 1.

Using the Kuo Meilan Random Events Table

1. Roll 1d6:
 - a. whenever the party moves into a new circle of the city (for example, when they enter the Ring of Abject Drudgery);
 - b. whenever the party pauses to investigate something;
 - c. whenever one turn passes, if the party is moving about;
 - d. whenever one hour passes, if the party is hiding for the purposes of resting.
 - e. after the party finishes one of the planned events.
2. On a result of 1-3, there is no random event. The PCs may continue exploring Kuo Meilan.
3. On a result of 4-6, the party has random event. Roll 1d10. Add 1 to the roll for each of the following conditions (additions are cumulative):
 - a. if it is night;
 - b. if Yolti is with the party;
 - c. if Princess Bhrokiti is with the party;
 - d. for each circle of Kuo Meilan that the PCs have entered (IMPORTANT). For example, if they are in the outermost circle, the Ring of Abject Drudgery, add 1 to the roll. If they have reached the innermost circle, the Circle of Divine Delights, add 8 to the roll.

All additions are cumulative. For example, if the party reaches the Circle of Divine Delights at night, and they are accompanied by Yolti, you would add 10 to the roll—8 for the number of circles, 1 for night, and 1 for Yolti's presence.

4. Consult the Kuo Meilan Random Events Table and run the event with number corresponding to your result.
 - a. Most events should not be used more than once. These events are noted by a square at the beginning of their description. Place a light checkmark in this square when the event is used. If an event with a checkmark in the square is rolled a second time, use the

The City of Kuo Meilan

G = GATEHOUSE
T = CORNER





event with the succeeding (higher) number. If that event also has a square with a checkmark in it, keep going up the list until you reach an event without a checked box. Note that events with no box may be used as many times as they are rolled.

5. The Kuo Meilan Random Events assumes your party will have about five random events per circle. If you find you are having far more or far fewer than that number, it may be wise to adjust the frequency with which you check for random events.

Kuo Meilan Random Events Table

1. **Ghost.** The party meets a more or less friendly ghost. Instead of attacking, it semi-materializes, causing the PCs to save vs. spells or flee in panic for 2d6 turns. It speaks to those who remain behind: "Go back, go back, go back! All the treasure in the world is not worth the horrors of Kuo Meilan." After it speaks, the ghost fades away. If attacked, the ghost will defend itself with every means at its disposal.

AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg touch causes victim to age 10 years; THAC0 11; AL le; XP Value 7,000; SA magic jar; SD struck only by silver (½ damage) or magic weapons.

2. **Giant Ants.** As the PCs move through a rubble-strewn area, 2d10 giant warrior ants crawl out of their holes and attack.

AC 3; MV 18; HD 3; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; THAC0 16; AL nil; XP Value 175 each; SA on a successful hit, sting for additional 3d4 poison damage, save reduces to 1d4; SD nil.

3. **Wight.** A twisted humanoid with mummified flesh, cruel burning eyes, and sharp claws leaps off the wall and attacks the party. In its pocket are three potions: *healing*, *extra-healing*, and *vitality*.

AC 5; MV 12; HD 4 +3; hp 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; THAC0 15; AL le; XP Value 975; SA energy drain: victim loses one level per hit; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapons, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells. Wights suffer 2d4 points of damage from holy water, and are annihilated by *raise dead* spells.

4. **Jiki-niku-gaki.** Three invisible humanoids with long fangs and sharp claws attack the PCs. The gaunt humanoids become visible after the initial attack and attempt to carry off the most feeble member of the party.

AC 6; MV 12; HD 3; hp 12 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/ 1d4/ 1d8; THAC0 17; AL ce; XP Value 650 each; SA *invisible* and *polymorph* into insect at will, *passwall* once/day; SD regener-

ate damage at 1 hp/turn, immune to *charm*, *hold*, *drowsy insect*, and *sleep* spells.

5. **Centipedes.** As the PCs pass by, 2d12 foot-long centipedes crawl out of cracks in the stonework. The giant insects attack immediately, defending against what they perceive as an assault on their lair.

AC 9; MV 15; HD 1-1; hp 2 each; #AT 1; Dmg nil; THAC0 20; AL n; XP Value 35; SA poison; SD nil. Note: those bit by giant centipedes receive a +4 modifier on their save. Those failing are paralyzed for 2d6 hours.

6. **Goblin Rat.** The PCs meet 1d8 short, foul-looking ratmen carrying an assortment of rusty weapons. They are accompanied by 1d8 huge, particularly disgusting rats. In stilted common, the ratmen demand the party's money, weapons, and food. If the party refuses, the goblin rats attack, shifting back and forth between their forms. They do not flee until half of their number have been killed.

AC 7; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 17; AL le; XP Value 120 each; SA victim has 5% chance of contracting plague when hit; SD shapechange.

7. **Bakemono.** The PCs are approached by 1d10 short, deformed humanoids with a variety of horns, stunted wings, hooves, huge noses, floppy ears, etc. In wretched Common, the bakemono ask the PCs first for food, then for money. Should the PCs comply, 1d10 more bakemono appear and also begin begging. Each time the PCs show any charity, another 1d10 bakemono appear. The only way to get rid of the bakemono is to attack; the foul little creatures will scatter after half their number have been slain. Otherwise, they simply follow the PCs around, making it impossible to move quietly. While the bakemono are following the PCs, add two to the 1d6 roll used to determine if a random-event occurs.

AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 20; AL ce; XP Value 15 each; SA nil; SD nil.

8. **Yellow Musk Creeper.** As the party walks past a large ivy-like plant climbing the walls, several of the yellow musk creeper's flowers turn toward the leading PC and attack, spraying puffs of yellow pollen into his face. For



each successful attack roll, the PC must save vs. spell or be entranced and walk toward the plant,

where he will be entwined in the creeper's vines. Two rounds later, the plant's roots begin burrowing into his brain, draining 1d4 points of Intelligence/round. If his Intelligence is reduced to 1 or 2, he becomes a Yellow Musk Zombie. If it is reduced to 0, he dies. Zombies can be cured by destroying the mother-plant, then casting a *neutralize poison* on the victim. However, it requires four weeks of rest for the victim to regain his lost Intelligence points (a *heal* spell will restore them immediately).

AC 7; MV 0; HD 3; hp 24; #AT 2d12; Dmg see above; THAC0 17; AL nil; XP Value 650; SA gas; SD nil.

9. **Giant Ants.** The party encounters 1d6 giant worker ants. The ants attempt to take food or some shiny item from the party, then leave.
AC 3; MV 18; HD 2; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 16; AL nil; XP Value 35; SA nil; SD nil.
10. **Centipede, Megalo.** Check for surprise. A 5' centipede creeps up and attacks the last PC in line.
AC 5; MV 18; HD 3; hp 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; THAC0 17; AL n; XP Value ; SA if hit, victim must save vs. poison or die; SD nil.
11. **Yellow Musk Zombie.** The party meets a yellow-skinned man with a fixed, glazed look and a foul, musky odor. The yellow musk zombie attacks with its rusty weapon. It wears a suit of yellowed scale mail (AC 6) and a ring of dull yellow metal (gold, 10 gp).
AC 6; MV 6; HD 2; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 19; AL nil; XP Value 120; SA nil; SD extra hp, cannot be turned, immune to *hold*, *charm*, *illusion*, *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.
12. **Zorba.** The PCs come across 10 bakemonos throwing rocks at a creature resembling a panda-bear. The zorbo has taken refuge beneath the eaves of a large stone building, and is timidly hiding from its attackers. The PCs can drive the bakemonos away by dispatching at least half of their number. If the zorbo is approached by the party, it attacks.
Bakemonos: AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 20; AL ce; XP Value 15 each; SA nil; SD nil.
Zorba: AC 10 (first round only; see SD); MV

15 (cl), 9; HD 4+ 2; hp 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2 +special (see SA); THAC0 17; AL n; XP Value 650; SA damage bonus = 10 -its current AC; SD absorbs AC of surrounding environment on first round of combat; any time the zorbo hits, one random protective item turns to dust and zorbo absorbs the item's AC/defensive bonus (but never has a worse AC than the previous round). The Zorba's SA and SD both last only 10 rounds after the beginning of combat.

13. **Choke Creeper.** The next time the party pauses, several thick-stemmed vines creep up and attack from behind. The choke creeper is 1d100 + 60 feet long, and has 24 to 64 branches, each of which can make a separate attack (but no single-party member ever suffers more than four attacks per round). Anyone fleeing from the choke creeper must make a Dex. check or trip over more vines, suffering an additional 1d4 attacks from the carnivorous vine, and making another Dex. check when they flee.

Even if they have previously been attacked by a choke creeper and are taking precautions to avoid another one, there is still a 50% chance that the party will stop in the vicinity of one of the carnivorous plants. If one of the party members is a druid, ranger, or has a non-weapon proficiency in agriculture or herbalism, however, this chance is reduced to 5%.

AC 6 (5 for main stalk); MV 1/2; HD 25; hp vines: 1hp per 10 feet of parent vine's length, stalk: 1 hp x 25 per every 20 feet of length (between 75 and 160 hp; #AT 4 per individual max.; Dmg 1d4; THAC0 7; AL nil; XP Value 3,000 (exception to normal experience point calculations); SA victims hit by a vine must make a bend bars/lift gates roll to break free, or chop the vine off the main stalk. There is a 10% chance each round that held victims will be strangled and die; SD immune to fires doing less than 1d12 damage.

14. **Kuei.** A seemingly normal person approaches the party. It is a kuei, the incorporeal spirit of a deceased citizen of Kuo Meilan. When the kuei moves to within ten feet, a random party member must save vs. spells or the kuei successfully *possesses* him. *Possessed* characters attempt to chase all intruders (which means every living creature) out of the city.

AC -4; MV 18; HD 3; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 17; AL ce; XP Value 2,000; SA *possess* three; SD + 1 or better weapon to hit, *ethereal* at will, immune to normal cold, fire, and physical attacks (weapons simply pass through their bodies), immune to *ESP*, *charm*,



enchantment, illusion and all water-based spells. Suffer half damage from magical cold and fire.

15. **Ant Lions.** The party comes across the lair of an Ant Lion. As each character passes the lair, he must make a DEX check or fall into the tapering pit. (PCs who have previously encountered ant lions and who are taking precautions against such misfortunes stand only a 10% chance of falling victim to the trap.) In the bottom of the lair is a scroll with one *raise dead* and one *cure disease* spell on it, a potion that *neutralizes poison*, and a potion of *healing*. (These items can be found each time the party encounters an ant lion).
AC 2; MV 9, br 1; HD 8; hp 32; #AT 1: Dmg 5d4; THAC0 12; AL nil; XP Value 1,400; SA pit trap; SD nil.
16. **Scorpions.** The party meets two giant scorpions. The bitter smelling insects attack immediately.
AC 3; MV 15; HD 5 +5; hp 20 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d10; THAC0 15; AL nil; XP Value ; SA poison stinger (third attack); SD nil.
17. **Shinen Gaki.** A man-shaped column of moving fire tries to get the PCs to follow it into an old, wooden building. If the party is foolish to do so, the Shinen Gaki ignites the building and attacks.
AC 0; MV f 18; HD 4; hp 16; #AT 1: Dmg 1d8 (fire); THAC0 17; AL ce; XP Value; SA *invisible* and *polymorph* into insect at will, *passwall* three times per day; SD immune to all fire, *charm*, *hold*, *drowsy insect*, and *sleep* spells, hit only by +2 or better weapons, regenerates at 3 hp per turn, but saves at -2 vs. water based attacks and suffers a +1 hp per HD of damage done.
18. **Wraith.** A black, vaguely man-shaped cloud approaches the party and attacks.
AC 4; MV 12 fl 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 23; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; THAC0 15; AL le; XP Value 3,000; SA energy drain (when hit, victim loses one level); SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon, immune to poison, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *death*, and cold-based spells. Vial of holy water causes 2d4 points of damage, and *raise dead* spell utterly destroys it (save vs. spells to negate).
19. **Ghouls.** As the party passes through a rubble-choked city, they meet 1d8 ghouls. The ghouls leap out of their hiding places and attack.
AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1d6; THAC0 19; AL ce; XP Value 175 each; SA when hit, victim must save vs. paralysis or remain immobile for 1d6 + 2 rounds; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, but a magic circle of *protection from*





- evil* keeps them at bay.
20. □ **Oni, Common.** As the party passes a large, broken down building, an oni leaps

out of the ruins and attacks. The eight-foot monster has three eyes, a single horn in the middle of its forehead, and dirty, thick talons. Its arms and legs are covered with thick green fur.

AC 4; MV 9; HD 8; hp 32; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 (glaive) +2; THAC0 13; AL le; XP Value; SA *polymorph self* and *fly* three times per day, become *invisible* twice per day, and *cause fear* at will; SD nil.

21. □ **Dun Pudding.** The PCs encounter a pool of viscous, tan liquid in the middle of the road. As they skirt or turn away from it, the dun pudding attacks.

AC 7; MV 12; HD 8 + 1; hp 33; #AT 1; Dmg 4d6; THAC0 13; AL nil; XP Value 4,000; SA dissolve leather in a single round, dissolve metal at half the rate of black puddings, 2 rounds for chain and 4 rounds for plate; SD immune to acid, cold, poison.

22. □ **Goblin Spider.** As the PCs pass the goblin spider's hidden lair, a woman's voice cries out to them, "So, I have caught you at your little game. You might as well confess; the punishment will go easier on you." The hairy spider is mimicking a sentence it heard ages ago. As soon as the PCs move to investigate, or turn away, the spider leaps out of its lair and attacks, attempting to drag a random PC back into its small cave.

AC 4; MV 18; HD 7; hp 28; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8; THAC0 13; AL ne; XP Value; SA victims must check for surprise with -2 modifier, any victim hit by both attacks is grasped and must make a successful bend bars/lift gates roll to free himself, but the goblin spider cannot make attacks while grasping the victim; two or more characters with a combined strength of 20 can pull the victim free (he cannot help to free himself); SD + 1 or better weapons to hit.

23. □ **Buso.** The party meets a particularly tall and lean creature that resembles a ghoul. It has gangling arms and a single yellow eye in the middle of its forehead. The Buso attacks savagely and mindlessly.

AC 4; MV 12; HD 8 +2; hp 34; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/ 1d6/ 1d10; THAC0 13; AL ce; XP Value; SA creatures within ten feet are subject to the buso's fear aura. Those with less than 1

HD flee automatically, others must save vs. paralyzation or remain motionless while within aura; SD nil.

24. □ **Me-zu Oni.** The party comes across a horse-headed, ogre-sized humanoid sitting upon a garden wall. As the PCs approach, it picks up the naginata (similar to a glaive) at its side. Although its apparel is somewhat tattered, the me-zu oni, whose name is Hoi No Piu, wears the golden robes and armor of the Celestial Bureacracy. It will not attack unless attacked first, and will readily, if somewhat sadly, converse with the PCs in any language they choose. Many years ago, the me-zu oni was sent to escort the Imperial Consort Meilan to the Law Courts of the Afterlife, but she still refuses to go, and he has not been able to force her to go against her will. If the party indicates that they expect to face Meilan, the me-zu oni will offer them his *naginata* +2. He will not agree to help them, however, as he has committed himself to a hundred years of meditation to deliberate upon his failings.

AC 2; MV 12; HD 10 +5; hp 55; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 + 8(Str) +2(weapon); THAC0 11; AL ln; XP Value; SA *polymorph self*, *fly*, *invisible*, *fear*, *fireball* at will, become *ethereal* or *astral* twice per day, cast spells as 10th level wu-jei; SD regenerate 3 hp per round, sight abilities as *true seeing* at all times. Spells: 1) *burning hands*, *color spray*, *hold portal*, *spider climb*, *feather fall*; 2) *darkness 15' radius*, *fog cloud*, *knock*, *shatter*; 3) *blink*, *haste*, *wraithform*; 4) *dimension door*, *wall of fog*; 5) *distance distortion*, *passwall*.

25. **Variety.** Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1, repeat event number 9; on a roll of 2, repeat number 11; on a roll of 3, repeat number 13; and a roll of 4, repeat number 15; on a roll of 5 or 6, erase all the checkmarks in the boxes. All random events may be used again.

Event 1: Kuo Meilan

For several miles, the landscape has been eerily stark, completely barren, and littered with the sun-bleached bones of tens of thousands of human, humanoid, and unidentifiable creatures. In all directions, the dry, yellow earth is cracked and parched, with no plants in sight. Miles ahead, a small, dark mound rises off the horizon.

DM's Notes. As the PCs move closer to it, it becomes apparent that the mound is, in fact, a city, or at least it used to be. Unlike the surrounding countryside, the city is lush and overgrown—



but only with the hardiest and wildest of vegetation—giant ferns, thousands of different vines, huge thorny bushes, etc. From a hundred yards away, the PCs can see hundreds of two-foot-long ants crawling beneath the heavy tangle of vegetation that covers the city walls.

The city is surrounded by a moat of brown, fetid water 40 feet wide. The moat is crossed in four places by vine-covered, age-stained bridges.

If Yolti is with the party, he informs them that this is Kuo Meilan. He volunteers to stay outside the city with the horses, explaining that he has never actually been inside the city anyway. Should the party allow this, he disappears during the first night with all possessions entrusted to him.

Event 2: Kuo Meilan City Gates

A short ramp passes between two gate towers and leads up to a pair of dilapidated city gates. On each gate, peering out from beneath the tangled overgrowth, is the crystal effigy of a young oriental woman. Although she is extremely beautiful, her expression is one of piercing knowledge and sinister intent. An arch above the gates has been inscribed with Shou characters.

DM's Notes. If the PCs translate it, the inscription reads, "This is Kuo Meilan, so named in honor of the First Imperial Consort, Meilan, who loves the emperor more than she loves life itself." The busts, of course, are of Meilan. Any attempt to remove them will activate a *magic mouth* spell warning against such foolishness. If they are removed anyway, they will fetch 100 gp once back in civilization.

Assuming the PCs entered Kuo Meilan without circling around to one of the other gates, they are at the south gate on the map.

Event 3: Circle One, The Ring of Abject Despair

After passing the gate houses, the ramp enters the city proper. Directly ahead, a second wall rises 20 feet above the narrow, sandy street. In stark contrast to the surrounding countryside, Kuo Meilan is teeming with life. This ward of the city is filled with thorny bushes, long tangled vines, giant ferns, and many other types of hardy plantlife. The undergrowth is crawling with two-foot ants, centipedes, and other animal life.

DM's Notes. This ward is where the plebians and serfs made their homes. The party will find

little of interest here, save the long-rotted remnants of tiny, crowded houses that were shabby and dilapidated even when they were new. Roll for random events as normal when the PCs pass through this ward.

Event 4: Circle Two, The Ring of Contemptible Gains

A narrow ramp runs ten feet up the ward's inner wall, then turns and passes between two vine-covered towers. On the wall of each tower, the golden effigy of a young oriental woman overlooks the road.

Like the first circle, this ward of the city is gorged with plant life. However, hundreds of small buildings rise twenty to thirty feet out of the undergrowth.

DM's Notes. Again, the effigies are of Meilan. If anyone attempts to remove them, a *magic mouth* warns against such foolishness. Nothing will happen, however, if the warning is ignored. The effigies are worth 500 gp each.

This ward is where Kuo Meilan's merchants did their business. The buildings are their shops. The first floor was dedicated to sales, while the second and third floors were where the inventory was stored and the shopowner's family lived. Any time a PC climbs to the second or third floor of one of these flimsy structures, there is a 15% chance that the entire thing will collapse (doing 2d6 + normal falling damage).

If the PCs are in this circle after dark, they will hear a woman's eerie, blood-curdling screams all night long.

Gifts for a Queen. The first building that the PCs check is crammed full of wooden crates, all marked with the Stamp of Tan Chin. Below the stamp is a Shou sentence reading, "By the order of his Imperial Majesty, gifts for the First Consort." The crates are crammed full of expensive (and now moldy) silks, jewelry, perfumes (long since fouled), and over two thousand pairs of exotic shoes. Total value: 7,000 gp. Value of the jewelry, which is all the PCs can carry: 2,500 gp.

Weapon Merchant's. The fourth building the PCs check was a weapon merchant's shop. Although all the armor has long since fallen into useless disrepair, there is a wide selection of weapons. On the third floor are a *naginata* +1 (glaive), a *daikyu bow* +1, a *katana sword* +2 (with the ability to bestow *strength* upon the



wielder once per day), and a *tetsubo* +1(*club*).

Roll normally for random encounters while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 5: Circle Three, The Ring of Engrossing Diversion

Again, a narrow ramp runs up to the next ward, passing between two octagonal gatehouses. Ivory effigies of the same oriental woman hang on the tower walls. Though the effigies are partially obscured by a curtain of ivy, it is possible to see that the lips of one of the faces are turned upwards in a great, ludicrous smile. The lips on the other are turned downward in an exaggerated frown.

Here and there, huge stone buildings of various shape rise out of the brambles and briars that fill this ward.

DM's Notes. There are no *magic mouths* on these effigies. This is the entertainment precinct. At one time, actors, actresses, and other performers lived in gaily colored tents that filled the empty spaces between the huge theaters lining the outer wall of this ward. Like the performers themselves, the tents have been gone for hundreds of years, but the auditoriums where they performed still stand—homes to their lost spirits.

Scripts. If the PCs take the time to search any of the auditoriums, in the office vaults they find several dusty scripts portraying Tan Chin's life. The scripts are fictitious accounts of brave deeds attributed to the emperor, obviously written in order to flatter him. Allow any character reading such a script to make an Intelligence check. Success indicates that he realizes the scripts are subtle mockeries of the emperor's rule.

Ghostly Performance. As the PCs approach any of the locations marked 5a, a ghostly actor appears and calls out to them in the Shou language, "Come, come and hear a tale of woe and terrible injustice." (If Yolti or Bhrokiti are with the PCs, they can act as translators.) A moment later, several other spirit actors appear on stage in costume. A man and a woman are sitting in immense golden thrones while an endless stream of haggard peasants come before them to lay down small gifts of gold and other materials. As this continues, the narrator explains, "In their love for Tan Chin and his consort Meilan, the people come to Kuo Meilan every year bearing gifts."

As he speaks, the procession slows and the gifts grow smaller. The consort rises and begins

striking peasants dead with her bare hands. "The first consort is much beloved of the people, and goes among them often."

When the floor of the stage is littered with dead actors, the flow of peasants and gifts suddenly stops. Tan Chin finally seems alert, and motions Meilan to go offstage. As she obeys, the narrator says, "One year, the peasants do not come. Concerned for their welfare, the emperor sends Meilan to investigate."

She returns an instant later, pursued by an angry mob of peasants. "Someone is forcing the peasants to rebel against their rightful lord." Tan Chin rises and waves his hand; all of the dead peasants rise as zombies and slay their fellows pursuing Meilan. "The benevolent emperor must call upon his loyal forces to protect his beloved."

Meilan returns to the emperor's side. An old man, supporting himself on a black staff, enters the stage at the head of yet more peasants. "The foul wizard who corrupted the peasants comes to attack. The emperor's loyal troops go to his defense, but Shih slays them all." As the narrator speaks, the zombies attack the wizard, but he waves his staff at them, spewing fire and destroying them. Next, he advances on Tan Chin, cudgeling him severely. "He even dares to attack Tan Chin himself, and the emperor is forced to flee." The emperor disappears.

As the wizard turns to face Meilan, she leaps at Tan Chin's throne, twisting the chair's arm, and the wizard drops through the floor. An instant later, the peasants attack her and she falls. "The faithful Meilan imprisons her lord's attacker, but falls to the wizards' evil supporters."

An even more translucent form, a ghost's representation of a ghost, rises from the fallen consort and chases the peasants away, then slowly begins circling the trapdoor through which Shih fell. The narrator says, "Meilan's love for the emperor is so great that she serves him even in death, guarding the prison of her lord's enemy until the forgotten emperor returns. Is this not as sad a tale of woe as you have ever heard?" The ghosts fade away, and not even the dust on the stage is disturbed.

Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 6: Circle Four, The Ring of Honorable Defense

As in the previous circles, a narrow ramp leads up to the next ward of the city, running between two small gatehouses. The effigies of the oriental woman are made of rusty iron.

DM's Notes. As the PCs pass between the towers, one of the effigies speaks, "Who requests



ABRAMS

entry to the Ring of Honorable Defense?" Any statement involving a declaration of loyalty to Tan Chin, or simply displaying the Stamp of Tan Chin, is an acceptable answer. Otherwise, the

other effigy begins screaming, "Alarm! Alarm!" If this happens, add a + 1 modifier to the d10 roll when determining random event numbers. The effigies have no value if removed from the wall.

The main body of Tan Chin's army was quartered in this ward. It is filled with overgrown drill fields, barracks, and officers' quarters. If the PCs take the time to search any of the Homes of the Great Officers, they find the following:

- 1st Search **Incriminating Diary.** A diary, confiscated from a "subversive" priest, details specific crimes committed by Meilan, including murder, torture, thievery, blackmail, extortion, etc. There is a note attached to the diary instructing a lieutenant to take this prisoner to the lower prison level for execution—and to make sure that he doesn't *teleport* the prisoner to the treasure vault this time.
- 2nd Search **Potions.** There are three vials containing *neutralize poison* potions.
- 3rd Search **Scroll.** There is a scroll with three *raise dead* spells on it.
- 4th Search **Trouble.** Roll for a random event with an additional +4 modifier.

Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 7: Circle Five, The Ring of Venerable Contemplation

The ramp leading into the city's fifth ward is lined with statues of an ugly brute with wings and claws, clad only in a loincloth and a belt. From each belt hangs a pair of drums.

The effigies hanging from the gate houses guarding the entrance to this ward are made of green jade.

DM's Notes. Anyone attempting to remove the two effigies without first deactivating the traps guarding each is attacked by a 3d10 lightning bolt. The effigies are worth 1,000 gp each.

This is the temple level. It is filled with huge stone temples at one time dedicated to the various gods of the Shou pantheon. Shortly before



Shih sacked Kuo Meilan, however, they were all converted to temples of Lei Kung, the ugly god portrayed in the statues lining the ramps lead-

ing to this level.

In any of the temples, the PCs can learn that Lei Kung is the celestial Duke of Thunder, whose duty it is to beat his drums during thunderstorms. He is also the vengeful punisher of wicked deeds that have not been punished by human courts. Any character examining the texts used to instruct priests of Lei Kung realizes that one of the primary duties of his clerics is to ferret out even minor misdeeds of others so that their god has someone to punish. The text implies that if no misdeeds can be found, it is sometimes permissible to attribute invented misdeeds to one's enemies—though it is best to keep this secret, since doing so is itself a minor misdeed.

A careful search of any temple yields the following: *cloak of the bat*, one *heal* potion, two *cure serious wounds* potions, and a small pair of *drums of deafening* attached to a belt. When beaten, these drums attract Lei Kung's attention. These items will be found in the first temple only.

Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 8: The Ring of Blissful Leisure

The entrance to the sixth ward is majestic and grand, with banisters of jade and turquoise carved in the likenesses of great, serpent-bodied dragons. As always, the ramp is flanked by two octagonal towers. On each tower, the carved jasper effigy of a now-familiar beautiful oriental woman hangs over the vine-choked path.

DM's Notes. As the party enters the ward, one of the effigies asks, "By whose invitation do you enter the Ring of Blissful Leisure?" Any statement involving Tan Chin, or the display of a Stamp of Tan Chin, is an acceptable answer. Otherwise, the effigies begin crying, "Intruders! Intruders!" If this happens, add a +1 modifier to the d10 roll when determining random event numbers for this ward.

The sixth ward is where the nobles lived. The party finds 1d10 x 100 gp worth of treasure in each mansion. In the second mansion, they also find a *potion of undead control* that affects all types of gakis and buso, but no other undead. In

the third mansion, they find a scroll with a father's advice to his son concerning how to survive in Kuo Meilan.

Basically, the scroll counsels sucking up to the emperor's consort and never, ever letting anyone find out about even his most minor misdeeds. It goes on to discuss Meilan's favorite method of disposing of political opposition: reporting their misdeeds, real or exaggerated, to the god Lei Kung, then waiting for the god's avatar to strike the victim dead. It advises the youth to become an ardent worshiper of the thunder god and to ferret out Meilan's own misdeeds so that he can employ this method against the imperial consort if the need ever rises.

Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 9: Circle Seven, The Inner Ring of Favor

A wide ramp runs between a pair of large, circular towers, leading up to a gate guarded by yet another pair of octagonal towers. The walls of this gateway are lined by crystal effigies of the same oriental woman who is portrayed all over the city. Two huge effigies, made of what appear to be extravagantly large diamonds, hang on the closed gates.

The ramp area is clear of vegetation or other signs of life. It shows signs of a fire.

DM's Notes. As the PCs approach the gate, the effigies demand, "Who begs entrance to the Inner Ring of Favor?" The only acceptable answer is displaying the Stamp of Tan Chin. Otherwise, the effigies belch fire, causing 5d10 of fire damage to every creature on the ramp (save to take half damage and jump clear of the ramp). This occurs every time someone tries to pass the gate without displaying the Stamp of Tan Chin, or any time a character attempts to remove one of the effigies. (The crystal effigies are worth 100 gp each; the diamond effigies are worth 10,000 gp each.)

This ward is the Castle Precinct, where the emperor's advisors and counselors lived. PCs discover 2d10 x 100 gp worth of treasure in any mansion they search. In the third mansion, the PCs encounter the spectre of an old man. Noticing the stamps on their foreheads, the spectre asks, "Is the emperor returning?" To a positive answer, it responds, "Good. Meilan is weary of holding Shih; she cannot resist the Law Courts much longer." It then leaves.

A negative response to the spectre's question causes it to attack. Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.



Statistics

Spectre: AC 2; MV 15, Fl 30 (B); HD 7 +3; hp 31; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 13; AL le; XP Value 3,000; SA successful hit drains two levels; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold-based spells, poison, and paralyzation attacks. Suffers 2d4 points of damage from *holy water*, and *raise dead* destroys it completely (save to negate).

Event 10: Circle Eight, The Circle of Divine Delights

Like all of the other wards, Kuo Meilan's last ward is ringed by a high wall. Six towers are spaced at even intervals around the wall. Atop each tower stands a full-sized statue of an oriental woman holding a javelin.

DM's Notes. The statues are, of course, Meilan. No matter how the PCs approach the last ward, the nearest statue turns to the leader and asks, "Who seeks entrance to the Circle of Divine Delights?" The only correct answer is to display the Stamp of Tan Chin and say something like, "A devoted slave of the great emperor." Otherwise, the statue hurls the javelin at the PC, which strikes as a 7d6 *lightning bolt*. Another javelin appears in the statue's hand immediately, though a particular statue will not attack the same character more than once. Each character attempting to enter this ward receives similar treatment.

Inside the ward, the PCs find the ruins of Tan Chin's palace (detailed on foldup map). A great cloud of steam is billowing out of the palace (from the Font of Meilan). Roll normally for random events while the PCs are in this ward.

Event 11: The Palace of Ultimate Felicity

Other than great clouds of steam billowing from its battered walls, the palace seems quiet.

DM's Notes. As the PCs enter the palace, they see the Font of Meilan filling the building with billows of steam. A woman's voice booms, "Who dares enter the Palace of Tan Chin?" A moment later, Meilan's spirit manifests itself in the steam above the fountain. "Answer!"

Avoiding a Fight. Meilan's spirit is a cross between a groaning spirit and a spectre, with the added ability to cast priest spells. Fortunately, there are two ways for the PCs to avoid fighting it. They can claim that Tan Chin sent them to destroy Shih. After examining their foreheads, Meilan shows them to the entrance of the subterranean floors beneath the palace.

If the PCs have collected the proper information and equipment from the city, they can summon Lei Kung's avatar to take care of Meilan

for them. The procedure is simple: beat the *drums of deafening* (from Circle Five). An ugly blue-skinned brute with wings and claws appears, asking who summoned him. The PCs must recite specific crimes committed by Meilan (listed in the diary from Circle Four). Since they have been deafened by the drums, this may prove difficult unless they can cure the problem quickly. Otherwise, the speaking character must save vs. Intelligence to make himself understood. Assuming the PCs do this successfully, the avatar seizes Meilan and leaves. The PCs may explore the palace at leisure.

If the PCs don't do either of the above, Meilan attacks. Should they reduce her to zero hit points, they have 1d10 turns to leave the palace before she returns fully recovered. (She cannot be fully destroyed until the phylactery containing her life essence is destroyed. This phylactery is a life-sized, crystal statue of her located in the vault below Kuo Meilan.)

Palace Rooms. The palace has been abandoned for years and is a total wreck. However, a quick guide, corresponding to the letters on the map, includes:

- (a) Dining and Reception Hall
- (b) Library (books no use)
- (c) Hall (stairs lead to subterranean levels, see Part V.)
- (d) Kitchens
- (e) Hall
- (f) Left Secretary's Office
- (g) Right Secretary's Office
- (h) Meilan's Parlor
- (i) Tan Chin's Private Office
- (j) Night Guards' Post
- (k) Meilan's Dressing Chambers
- (l) Master Suite
- (m) Tan Chin's Dressing Chambers
- (n) Personal Servants' Station
- (o) Font of Meilan, steam piped up from the Pool of Despair in the lower prison (described in Part V: Seventh Level).

Meilan. AC 0; MV 15, Fl 15 (B); HD 7; hp 35; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; THAC0 13; MR 40%; AL LE; XP Value 10,000; SA *death wail* (save vs. death to negate), drains 1,000 XP on hit; upon seeing her, save vs. spell or flee for 1d10 rounds; SD magic resistance 40%, +1 or better weapon to hit her, immune to *charm*, *hold* and *sleep* spells, as well as poison,



cold-based, and paralyzation attacks. *Raise dead* spell causes 4d10 points of damage (save vs. spells for half), keeps her life essence in a crystal statue of herself in the treasure vault.

Spells:

- 1) *command*, *magical stone*, *shillelagh*
- 2) *enthrall*, *hold person*, *heat metal*
- 3) *pyrotechnics*, *stone shape*

Treasure: If the PCs take the time to search for her treasure, they find it in room I. It consists of:

- four each: *elixir of health*, *potions of extra-healing*, *healing*, *cure serious wounds*,
- a scroll with four *restoration*, four *neutralize poison*, and two *raise dead* spells on it,
- a *ring of delusion*, and
- a crystal ball with *ESP*.

Part V: Beneath Kuo Meilan



The PCs have worked their way into the innermost ring of Kuo Meilan and are now ready to go after the *Stone Scepter of Shih* itself. The scepter is located in the imperial treasure vault, on the fourth level of the dungeon. Unfortunately, the PCs have no way of knowing this, or of reaching it easily even if they do, for the only way of reaching the treasure vault is via a *teleport* pad located on the seventh (lowest) level. Of course, the PCs will have to discover this for themselves.

In the days of Tan Chin, Meilan kept a zoo of exotic and dangerous creatures on one of the subterranean levels of the city. After the city's fall, however, many of the creatures escaped their cells and their descendants now wander through all levels of the dungeon. These hideous beasts may be encountered at any time, any where. Encounters with them will be generated using the *Meilan's Zoo Table*. Instructions for using this table are located below, under the heading *Using Meilan's Zoo*.

In addition, each level of the city's subterranean works is detailed as a separate event. In these events, you will find descriptions of the dungeon level's purpose and any items or monsters the PCs find there.

Using Meilan's Zoo

- Roll 1d6:
 - whenever the party moves onto a new level;
 - whenever they enter a new room or chamber.
- On a result of 1-5, they do not meet any creatures descended from Meilan's zoo.
- On a result of 6, the party meets a creature descended from the zoo. Roll 1d10. Add 1 to the roll for each level the party has descended (for example, add 1 if they are on the first level and add 7 if they are on the seventh level).
- Consult the *Meilan's Zoo Table* and run the event with the number corresponding to your result.
 - Most events should not be used more than once. These events are noted by a square at the beginning of their description. Place a light checkmark in the square when this event is used. If an event with a checkmark is rolled a second time, use the event with preceding (lower) number. If that event is also checked, keep going down the list until you reach an event without a checked box. If all boxes are checked, erase all the checkmarks; each event may be used again. Note

that events with no box may be used as many times as they are rolled.

- Meilan's Zoo Table* assumes your party will encounter about three zoo creatures per level. If you find your PCs are meeting far more or far fewer than that number, it may be wise to adjust the frequency with which you check for random events.

Meilan's Zoo Table

- Roll Again.** Roll again, modifying the roll by +11 (do not add any other modifiers to this roll). The party encounters the resulting monster.
- Behir.** The PCs meet a hungry behir. AC 4; MV 15; HD 12; hp 48; #AT 2 or 7; Dmg 2d4/2d4 + 1 or 2d4/ 1d6 (x6); THAC0 9; AL ne; XP Value 10,000; SA lightning bolt (24 pts.), swallow victim whole on roll of 20 (see MC); SD immune to electricity, poison.
- Bulette.** A hungry bulette tracks the PCs. AC -2/4/6; MV 14 (3); HD 93 hp 36; #AT 3; Dmg 4d12/3d6/3d6; THAC0 12; AL n; XP Value 4,000; SA 8' jump; SD nil.
- Chimera.** The king of the dungeon, a chimera, resents the PCs' intrusion and attacks. AC 6 (rear)/5 (front)/2 (flank); MV 9, fl 18 (E); HD 9; hp 36; #AT 6; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1d4/1d4/2d4/3d4; THAC0 11; AL ce; XP Value 5,000; SA breath weapon (3d8 fire); SD nil.
- Cockatrice.** The PCs hear an eerie bird call, similar to a turkey's. A moment later, a cockatrice scrambles out of its lair and attacks. AC 6; MV 6, fl 18 (C); HD 5; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; THAC0 15; AL n; XP Value 650; SA chance of petrification on hit (10% x victim's AC); SD nil.
- Gas Spore.** Check for surprise. A gas spore floats up behind the last person, attempting to shoot its rhizomes into the victim. AC 9; MV fl 3; HD 1-1; hp 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1; THAC0 20; AL n; XP Value 120; SA if spore contacts exposed flesh, shoots rhizomes into victim, who must have a *cure disease* cast on him or die in 24 hours; SD upon taking any damage, explodes, causing 6d6 pts. damage to all within 20 feet (save vs. wands for half damage).



7. □ **Gorgon.** A gorgon comes galloping down the hall and attacks.
AC 2; MV 12;
HD 8; hp 32;
#AT 1; Dmg

2d6; THAC0 12; AL nil; XP Value 1,400; SA breath causes petrification (save vs. petrification to negate); SD nil.

8. □ **Hell Hound.** The PCs hear a mournful bay. A few minutes later, a starving hell hound slinks up. If the PCs feed it, the beast becomes a loyal pet, leaping into the fray ahead of them at every opportunity. If they do not feed it, the hell hound attacks.
AC 4; MV 12; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; THAC0 15; AL le; XP Value 420; SA breathe fire for 5 pts damage, seize victim on roll of 20; SD immune to fire, surprised only on 1 or 2, see hidden or invisible creatures 50% of the time.
9. □ **Leucrotta.** The PCs hear an old man's voice crying, "Is someone there? Have you come to help me?" When they go to investigate, the leucrotta leaps out of a dark corner.
AC 4; MV 18; HD 6 + 1; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6; THAC0 13; AL ce; XP Value 975; SA when hit, victim's shield or armor must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed; SD two kicks for 1d6 each in retreat.
10. **Osquips.** The PCs are attacked by a pack of 2d6 dog-sized, six-legged rodents. The osquips attack until half their number are slain.
AC 7; MV 12, br ½; HD 3 + 1; hp 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6; THAC0 16; AL nil; XP Value 120 each; SA nil; SD nil.
11. □ **Manticore.** The PCs meet a manticore with a nasty disposition. It attacks at first sight.
AC 4; MV 12, fl 18; HD 6+3; hp 27; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1d8; THAC0 13; AL le; XP Value 1,400; SA tail spikes (four volleys of 1d6 spikes, each spike doing 1d6 damage); SD nil.
12. □ **Mimic.** The PCs come across a large treasure chest. The instant anyone touches it, the mimic attacks.
AC 7; MV 3; HD 8; hp 32; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; THAC0 13; AL n; XP Value 1,400; SA glue holds anyone touching it fast (dissolves five rounds after mimic dies, or after three rounds of exposure to alcohol); SD camouflage.
13. □ **Oblivix.** The dungeon walls are covered with moss for a distance of several hundred

feet. As the party moves through this section, they pass a small section of oblivix. Each member must save vs. spell or lose all his memories (including spells) of the last 24 hours. Spellcasters must save before those without spells.

AC 10; MV nil; HD 1-1; hp 2; #AT nil; Dmg nil; THAC0 nil; AL ne; XP Value 35; SA steals spells, can create pseudopod to cast them if attacked; SD nil.

14. □ **Otyugh.** The PCs come across a pile of offal blocking the way. An otyugh lurks inside, and will not take kindly to being disturbed.
AC 3; MV 6; HD 6; hp 24; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d4 + 1; THAC0 15; AL n; XP Value 650; SA on a roll of 18 +, grab opponent and squeeze for 2-4 points/round, with +2 bonus to the attack roll for biting; SD nil.
15. □ **Roper.** As the PCs pass what appears to be a pillar, a roper attacks.
AC 0; MV 3; HD 10; hp 40; #AT 1 strand per person (maximum of 6) and 1 bite; Dmg -/5d4; THAC0 11; AL ce; XP Value 7,000; SA victims hit by strands must save vs. poison or lose 50% of their Strength and be dragged toward maw; SD immune to lightning, half-damage from cold-based attacks, penalty on save vs. fire of -4.
16. □ **Rust Monster.** A rust monster gets wind of the party and rushes out to feed.
AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 20; #AT 2; Dmg nil; THAC0 15; AL nil; XP Value 270; SA any hit by a tentacle causes a metal item to rust away, magic items have 10% chance per + 1 modifier of resting this effect; SD nil.
17. □ **Shambling Mound.** The PCs encounter a mass of rotting vegetation in the hall. The shambling mound attempts to ambush the party, but will pursue them if it must.
AC 0; MV 6; HD 11; hp 44; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; THAC0 9; AL n; XP Value 6,000; SA if hit twice, a victim is entangled and suffocates in 2d4 rounds; SD suffers half-damage from cold-based and edged and pointed weapons, immune to damage from blunt weapons and fire-based attacks, lightning adds 1 HD (with appropriate hp) to mound.
18. □ **Water Weird.** The PCs come across a pool of water. As they pass, the water weird attacks.
AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 15; #AT 0; Dmg nil; THAC0 15; AL ce; XP Value 420; SA if hit, victim must save vs. paralyzation or be pulled into water, each round victim must make another save or die by drowning; SD suffers only 1 pt. of damage from edged and pointed weapons, fire-based spells cause half



normal damage (none if the weird saves), cold-based spells act as *slow* spells, when reduced to 0 hp, reforms in two rounds, *purify water* destroys it.

19. **Xorn.** The PCs meet a xorn. The xorn comes forward and gently attempts to take all of the party's precious metals. If allowed to do so, the xorn does not attack. Otherwise, the PCs must fight.
AC-2; MV g, br9; HD7+7; hp35; #AT4; Dmg 1-3(x3)/6d4; THAC0 13; AL n; XP Value 4,000; SA none; SD immune to fire and cold, suffers half damage from electrical attacks (none if xorn makes its save), but *move earth* stuns it and flings it back 30 feet, *stone to flesh* or *rock to mud* lowers its AC to 8 for one round, and passwall inflicts 1d10 + 10 points of damage.
20. **Giant Bats.** The PCs are attacked by a flock of 2d6 giant bats.
AC 8; MV 3 fl 18; HD 1; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; THAC0 19; AL nil; XP Value 35; SA rabies (1% chance per pt. of damage); SD missile attacks against bats suffer -3 modifier.

Event 1: First Level

The stairs descend into a circular, bricked hallway. The inside wall is lined with doors.

DM's Notes.

(a) **Bedchambers.** Each door opens into the bedchamber of a palace servant. Some of these doors are ajar, others are closed. The PCs can find 1d10 gp in any chamber, and a potion of *healing* in the third room they search.

(b) **Hall.** The hall has stairs on the far side which descend to the second level.

(c) **File Room.** This room contains all the information Meilan could discover on every person in the city. Stuck in amidst the old papers is an ancient scroll with a *cure disease* and a *flesh to stone* spell on it.

(d) **Supply Room.** It is locked and trapped (1d10 fire damage). It contains the long-rotted remains of foodstuffs.

In the center wall of both rooms (c) and (d) is the steel pipe which carries steam from the pool on the seventh level up to the Font of Meilan. Anyone touching the pipe with bare skin suffers 1d10 damage.

Event 2: Second Level

The stairs descend into another circular, bricked hallway. A series of the doors line the inside wall.

DM's Notes

(a) **Captain's Room.** There is a *katana* +2 (treat as a one-handed bastard sword) hidden in this room. The secret stairway leads down to the secret hall in the vagabond exercise area on the third level.

(b) **Lieutenant's Room.** This room has a *dagger* +1 with the power to *levitate* its wielder 1/day.

(c) **Sub-Officers.** The PCs can find 1d6 gp in each of these rooms.

(d) **Barracks of Elite Guard.**

(e) **Gymnasium.**

(f) **Armory.** PCs may arm themselves with any type of standard weapon in this room. Beneath the counter is a *stone to flesh* scroll.

Event 3: Third Level

The stairs descend to a square, bricked room.

DM's Notes. This is the training level. Once any character (or group of characters) enters room (b), the one-way door slams shut behind them. It will not open to allow passage from the inside (although any parties which notice the one-way nature of the doors can jam them so that they stay open). Anybody caught past a one-way door must work his way counterclockwise through the different rooms of the vagabond training level.

Entry Room. The secret stairway here goes down to level four.

(a) **Preparation Room.**

(b) **Training Rooms.** Although these rooms were once filled with elaborate and deadly ambushes, wandering monsters have long since activated all of the traps. Their bones and carcasses can be seen strewn all over this level.

(c) **Debriefing Room.**

(d) **Secret Observation Hall.** This can only be reached from the stairway to the captain's chamber on the second level, or by going all the way around to room (c) and discovering the secret door here. There is a potion here that *neutralizes poison*, a *stone to flesh* rod (two charges left), and a scroll with one *raise dead* spell.

Event 4: Fourth Level

The stairway leads down to a short hallway with two openings along its brick walls.



DM's Notes. The fourth level was Meilan's zoo. On this level, the party has an encounter with one of Meilan's zoo animals on a roll of

five or six instead of just a six.

(a) Cage Pits. These cage pits once held Meilan's exhibits. Now, the pits are empty or filled with the skeletons of long-dead creatures.

(b) Entryway. The secret door leads to the grandstand for the arena (g), and the stairway leads down to the fifth level.

(c) Access hallway. It was used to lead creatures to the beasts' staging area (d).

(d) Beasts' Staging Area.

(e) Men's Staging Area. The stairway comes from the upper prison (fifth level).

(f) Gladiatorial Arena. During any battle that occurs here, ghostly laughter will echo through the chamber from the grandstand (g).

(g) Grandstand.

(h) Zoo's Supply Room. Characters taking the time to search this room thoroughly discover the zookeeper's stash of emergency supplies: potions of *extra-healing*, *fire resistance*, *giant strength*, *healing*, *invisibility*, *plant control*, and *poison*.

(i) Imperial Treasure Vault. Surrounded by a solid brick wall ten feet thick, it cannot be reached from this level. The wall has been permanently and specially enchanted to dispel any magic used in an attempt to pass or peer through it. Anyone casting *passwall* on the wall suffers 3d10 points of damage. The only way to reach the imperial treasure vault is via the *teleport* pad on the seventh level.

Event Five: Fifth Level

The stairs descend into a square, brick-lined room with a single door on the left-hand wall.

DM's Notes. This is the upper prison level.

(a) Holding Area. There is no apparent way out of this room, for both of its visible doors can be opened only from the other side. However, a thief making a successful open locks roll can open these doors, providing he first disables or survives the traps placed on them (otherwise, the doors spray acid on the opener, causing 2d6 points of damage). The secret door leads to the main cell block (b).

(b) Main Cell Block. For the most part, the cells are locked and filled with the ancient remains of Meilan's enemies. There is nothing of interest in any of them, though you should roll

for a random event any time one is opened.

(c) Guardroom. PCs searching this room find two *crossbow quarrels* +2, a *mace* +2, a *cursed battle axe* -2, and a *warhammer* +2. Anyone hit by the warhammer must save vs. spells or be *charmed* by the hammer's wielder. The single desk in the room is locked and trapped (explodes for 2d6 on all in the room, destroying the contents of the scroll). Inside the desk is a scroll with one *flesh to stone*, one *neutralize poison*, and two *raise dead* spells.

There is also a written order from Tan Chin ordering the captain of the guard to remove the "Immortal Meilan" from her personal temple and place it in the treasure vault, then to wait there for further orders.

The stairs in guardroom lead up to the staging area for the arena on the fourth level, and down to Meilan's Private Temple (sixth level).

Event Six: Sixth Level

The stairway descends into a small, brick-lined room. The remnants of magnificent silk tapestries hang on the walls, and a small arch opens to the left.

DM's Notes. This is Meilan's Private Temple—that is to say, it is where the emperor Tan Chin came to worship his consort, Meilan. The stairs in the foyer lead up to the upper prison and down to the lower prison. The archway leads into the steamy confines of the main temple (a).

(a) Temple. The roof in this room is domed, with a pipe in the center running upward toward the surface. (This is the pipe that carries steam to the Font of Meilan in the palace.)

(b) Pool. This pool is actually on the seventh level. A circular balcony overlooks it. Occasionally, Tan Chin would have beautiful young maidens thrown off this balcony into the boiling waters below, believing that doing so would keep Meilan young forever.

(c) Dais. At the front of the room is a raised dais, with a crystal pedestal standing in the middle of it. The *Immortal Meilan*, a crystal statue of Meilan, once stood on the pedestal. Beneath the dais, which is trapped with a 10d6 *fireball* that fills the entire room (and destroys the scrolls beneath the dais), is a small treasure: 1000 gp, 100 gems totaling 2,500 gp in value, 10 pieces of jewelry worth 1000 gp, a scroll with one *raise dead*, three *heal*, and two *neutralize poison* spells, another scroll with two *cure disease*, one *rock to mud*, and two *stone to flesh* spells, two potions of *extra-healing*, two potions of *healing*, and a *cursed scepter* -2. The *cursed scepter* also functions like a *ring of delusion*, enhancing the possi-

bility that the party may believe it is the *Stone Scepter of Shih*.

(d) and (e) Robing Rooms. These are both filled with many beautiful robes and other raiment that crumble to dust as soon as they are touched.

Event Seven: Seventh Level

The stairway opens into a small room enclosed on three sides by brick walls. The fourth side is open, however, overlooking a pool of boiling, steaming water.

DM's Notes. This is the lower prison level.

(a) Pool. Any character looking into the pool sees that the bottom is covered with bleached human bones. Above the water line, the walls of the pool are steep and slime-covered, so that anyone attempting to climb out of the water must make a successful climb walls roll or fall back in. He also sees a stairway leading down (h).

(b) Holding Cell.

(c) Main Cellblock.

(d) Execution Chamber. The six-sided platform at the edge is hinged so that it dumps anyone standing on it into the boiling pool. (See (h) for results of falling into the water.)

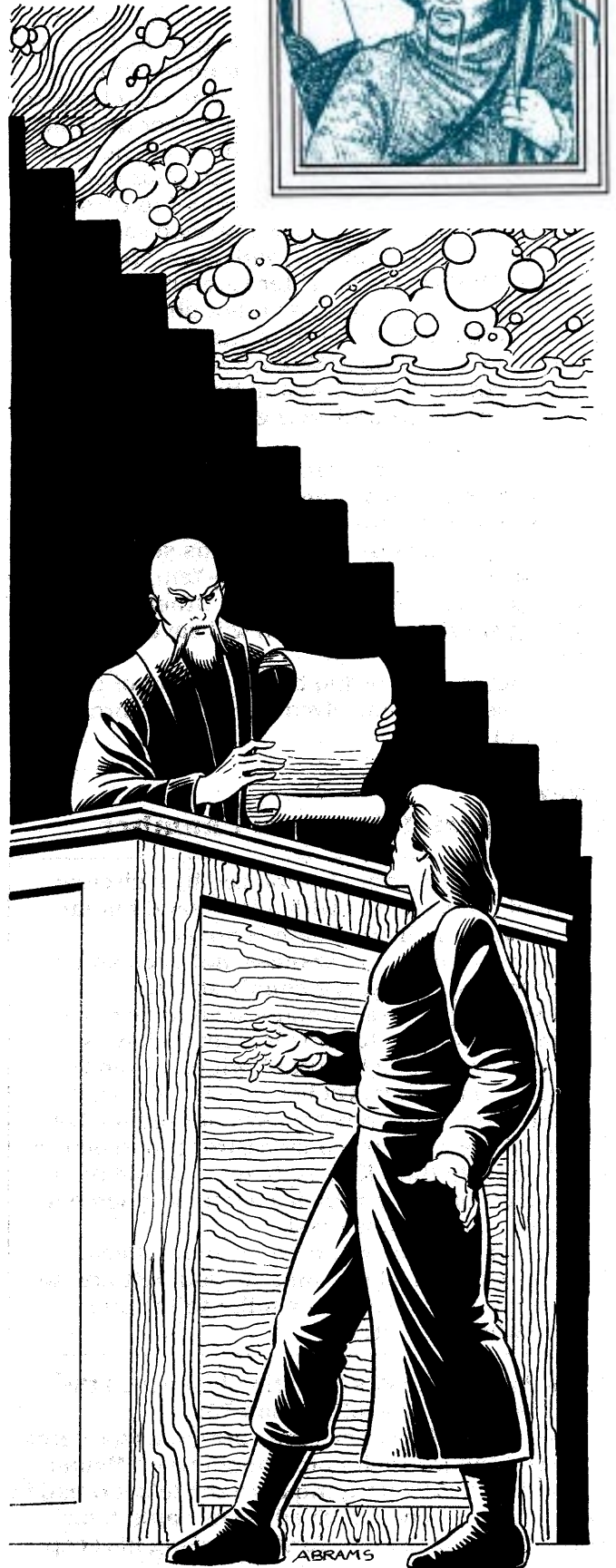
(e) Torture Chambers. These are filled with various devices for causing pain, none of which are functional any longer. The circular platform at the edge of the water is a *teleport* pad that sends anyone standing on it into the imperial treasure chamber (event 8).

(f) Guardroom. It has an unlocked desk containing a scroll with one *raise dead* and one *water breathing* spell, and two potions of *extra-healing*.

(g) Hallway.

(h) The Stairway to the Law Courts of the Afterlife. There appears to be a stairway leading down into the center of the pool. Anyone entering the pool suffers 1d10 damage from boiling water each round (protection from fire halves the damage). It requires one round to reach the stairway, which continues downward for a seemingly infinite distance.

Anyone going down the stairway for five rounds (suffering damage each round), suddenly finds himself standing before a bench in a dimly lit courtroom. A yellow-robed man with ebony skin sits behind the bench. Although the PCs don't have any way of knowing it, the figure is Yen-Wang-Yeh, the god of the dead and the chief judge of the Ten Law Courts of the Afterworld. The chamber is a sort of branch courtroom Yen-Wang-Yeh set up to receive the victims Tan Chin and Meilan threw into the boiling pool.





Yen-Wang-Yeh begins reciting a long list of everything the character has ever done in his life. The character has one round to turn and

run back up the stairs. On the second round, the judge of the dead looks up and asks, "Do you have anything to add?" After listening to the reply, Yen-Wang-Yeh says, "As I thought. You are assigned to the Fifth Court of the Hereafter, to labor there until you have corrected the errors of your life, or until the Celestial Heavens come crashing down around your ears, whichever comes first. Next!"

Once Yen-Wang-Yeh pronounces his sentence, the character dies on the spot and his body collapses in the courtroom. If the party recovers the character's body (which means someone else must briefly go before Yen-Wang-Yeh), they may use a *raise dead* to recover him. Otherwise, nothing short of a *wish* spell will save the character.

Characters *teleporting* to the bottom of the stairs also find themselves standing before the judge of the dead.

Event 8: The Imperial Treasure Chamber

The steaming pool is replaced by a circular, domed room packed with a thousand human-sized stone soldiers. There is no feeling of movement, no cold darkness, not even an uneasy feeling. The scene simply shifts.

A steel pipe rises through the middle of the room, and on the far side is a small dais. A crystal statue of a beautiful oriental woman stands on the dais. On her face is a diabolic expression that almost makes her seem alive. Next to the woman is a jade throne, and on the throne rests the withered body of an old man. In the crook of his arm lies a long wooden pole capped with a stone crest.

The walls of the room are lined by shelves piled high with silver coins. To your left are two more circular platforms similar to the one upon which you stand.

DM's Notes. The PCs have finally reached the imperial treasure vault (at pad T3).

Stone Soldiers. The stone army was gathered here waiting for their commander when Meilan tricked Shih into stepping onto the *teleport* pad in the palace. When he arrived in the vault, Shih turned the entire army to stone (using his scerp-

ter). A *stone to flesh* will restore any soldier to life. Any soldier restored to life will fight the PCs to the death.

(T1, T2, T3) Teleport Pads. Only one character may use a *teleport* pad at a time. As long as one character is standing on a pad, no one else may come through from the other end. In addition, the pads are not two-way; they do not *teleport* the user back to the same place from which he came. Instead, they send the user to another location that Tan Chin once needed to frequent.

The pad marked T1 sends its user back to the *teleport* pad in the lower prison (seventh level). The pad marked T2 sends its user to the location of a *teleport* pad that once existed on the third floor of the palace. Unfortunately, all that exists there now is a thirty-foot fall into the hot waters of the Font of Meilan. Individuals stepping onto pad T2 fall into the fountain, suffering 3d6 falling damage and 1d10 damage per round from the scalding waters of the fountain. T3, the pad on which characters arrive when *teleporting* into the treasure vault, sends its user over a thousand miles away, to a pad in the palace of the Prefect of Shou Kuan, which is currently occupied by Yamun Khahan and his Tuigan horse-warriors. Unfortunately, the pad in Shou Kuan no longer works; anyone *teleported* to that distant city is stuck there with the Tuigan (see Shou Kuan, below). To use pad, T3 to leave, a character must step off of it and not step back on it for at least 10 minutes. (Each subsequent arrival on the pad restarts the 10-minute delay.)

The Immortal Meilan. The crystal statue houses Meilan's life force. If the PCs show any interest in the treasure, the statue uses *ventriloquism* to make it appear that the old man in the throne is speaking: "I wouldn't do that, if I were you," an aged man's voice speaks. "Touch a single coin, and that entire army will attack." She will respond to queries as long as her spell lasts (11 rounds), urging the PCs to leave the treasure alone and to put an old man out of his misery. Note that during such an exchange, both she and Shih remain perfectly motionless.

If it becomes clear that the PCs are not going to kill Shih, the statue attacks with its spells. Since the Immortal Meilan is powerless to move or gesture, it may be difficult to determine where the spells are coming from. After exhausting its spells, the Immortal Meilan remains motionless.

If the statue is destroyed without casting a *raise dead* on the life essence in the same round, Meilan manifests herself in spirit form and attacks. See her statistics in *Part IV: The Palace of Ultimate Felicity*.

Shih and the Scepter. The effort of using his staff to turn an entire army to stone exhausted Shih, weakening him to the point that even the



effort of standing could have killed him. In order to survive, he entered a death-like slumber.

When the PCs try to take the scepter from his hands, Shih awakens. He quickly points it at them and, eyeing the Stamp of Tan Chin on their heads, demands to know who they are and what they want. Assuming the PCs tell him that they need it to destroy Tan Chin (he does not know who Ambuchar Devayam is, or have any idea how much time has passed), he agrees to give them the scepter, on three conditions:

1. they destroy Meilan's spirit before they leave;
2. they use the staff to destroy Tan Chin;
3. they throw the staff into a pool or vat of molten rock when they are finished. The *Stone Scepter of Shih* is described on the interior gatefold.

If the PCs do not satisfy Shih's requirements and/or agree to his terms, he refuses to yield the staff, using it on them if he must.

Treasure. There is over 100,000 gp worth of silver, and many other valuable items, in the vault. However, it will prove impossible for the PCs to carry all of this. By searching through the treasure, they can find the following special items: a gem-encrusted gold tiara (2,000 gp), a diamond necklace (1,500 gp), four platinum bracelets (500 gp each), a bag of black pearls (1,000 gp), a pair of diamond earrings (1,000 gp), and a platinum brooch inlaid with sapphires and rubies (2,500 gp), a scroll with one *neutralize poison* and two *stone to flesh* spells, a scroll with two *raise dead* and four *restoration* spells on it, and five potions to *cure light wounds*. The *Immortal Meilan*, if the PCs are foolish enough to leave it intact, is worth 10,000 gp, but only to characters of evil alignment.

As DM, you must use your judgement and the encumbrance rules in the *Player's Handbook* in deciding how much of this treasure the PCs can take when they leave. Remember, thieves only receive experience points for treasure belonging to them at the end of the adventure.

Leaving. The only way to leave the vault is via the *teleport* pads (see notes, above). If the PCs end up returning back through the city, you may either generate encounters as they leave or simply rule that, having worked their way into Kuo Meilan, sneaking out is simple and requires no encounters. If the PCs find themselves teleported to Shou Kuan, proceed with the next event.

Statistics

The Immortal Meilan (Wizard 7). AC 5; MV 0; HD 7; hp 56; #AT 1 spell; Dmg. by spell; THACO n/a; AL LE; XP Value 1,400; SA spells; SD can only be injured by magic or +2 or better weapons, *raise dead* must be cast on life essence in same round statue is destroyed, or Meilan manifests

herself in spirit form (see *Part IV: Palace of Ultimate Felicity* for stats).

Spells:

1) ventriloquism, phantasmal force, charm person, hypnotism

2) blindness, improved phantasmal force, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter

3) spectral force, suggestion

4) shadow monster

Shih (Wizard 18). AC 10; MV 6; hp 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 +5 (staff) -2; THACO 17; Str 2; Int 18; Wis 18; Dex 2; Con 2; Cha 15; AL LG; XP Value 7,000; SA *Stone Scepter of Shih*; SD none. Spells: Shih hasn't studied his spells in hundreds of years.

Soldiers of Tan Chin (1000, Fighters 5). AC 4; MV 12; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (sword); THACO 16; AL LE; XP Value 270; SA nil; SD must be turned to flesh before he can attack.

Event 9: Shou Kuan

The imperial treasure vault is replaced by the snowy courtyard of a small mansion. The courtyard is filled with dozens of Tuigan.

"How did you find us?" demands a familiar voice.

DM's Notes. The voice belongs to Hubadai. Yamun Khahan has called Hubadai and the other khans together to discuss their current situation: four Shou armies have ambushed and chased them into the city of Shou Kuan. Currently, the entire Tuigan army is under siege.

Yamun Khahan will be quite interested in the PCs' explanation of what has befallen them, particularly in the part about being *teleported* into his army's midst. Sensing a possible escape from his problem, he will have the PCs and his shamans spend hours trying to reverse the operation of the *teleport* pad. Unfortunately, nothing will succeed. The pad simply doesn't work, and the PCs are stuck in the siege with the Tuigan.

Should the PCs have more than 20,000 gp in treasure with them, Yamun will demand his share, claiming 90% of what they have (but no magic items, as he doesn't trust magic). He will dismiss any objections, saying that whatever he wishes to take is his by right of plunder.

Should the PCs try to leave the city via any means, they find themselves facing hundreds of hostile Shou soldiers. The Shou nation is a strong



one, with plenty of magic at its disposal, so it is very unlikely that the PCs will be able to develop an escape that the Shou cannot counter.

Event 10: Wrapping Up

The Black Courser ends after the PCs (we hope) recover the *Stone Scepter of Shih*. If they were teleported to Shou Kuan, they have little choice but to spend several weeks trapped in the city with Tuigan. *Blood Charge*, the third and final adventure in the Empires Adventure Trilogy, will pick up the story at this point.

If the PCs leave the treasure vault via the city of Kuo Meilan, they can look forward to a long and uneventful ride back to Shou Lung's border, for the war has moved well south of their route. In *Blood Charge*, they will rejoin the Tuigan army at the border, as it withdraws from Shou Lung.

If you do not intend to play the final adventure in the series, however, you may need to adjust the ending. Should the PCs be trapped in Shou Kuan with the besieged Tuigan army, it is possible that they might discover an ancient tunnel that leads out of the city, well past the Shou lines. Unfortunately, this tunnel will collapse before the main body of the Tuigan army can use it. If the PCs are not trapped with the Tuigan army, they are free to go where they wish.



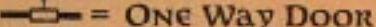


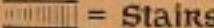
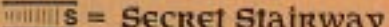
The *Stone Scepter of Shih* will prove of little use to them. As soon as it becomes clear that they don't intend to do as Shih asked and use it to destroy Tan Chin, the staff undergoes a mysterious transformation. The next time they attempt to use it, it turns to lead and loses all of its magical powers.

The PCs will be free to wander the lands of Kara-Tur (see the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ *Kara-Tur* boxed set), or even the wild horse plains of the Tuigan (see the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ *The Horde* boxed set).



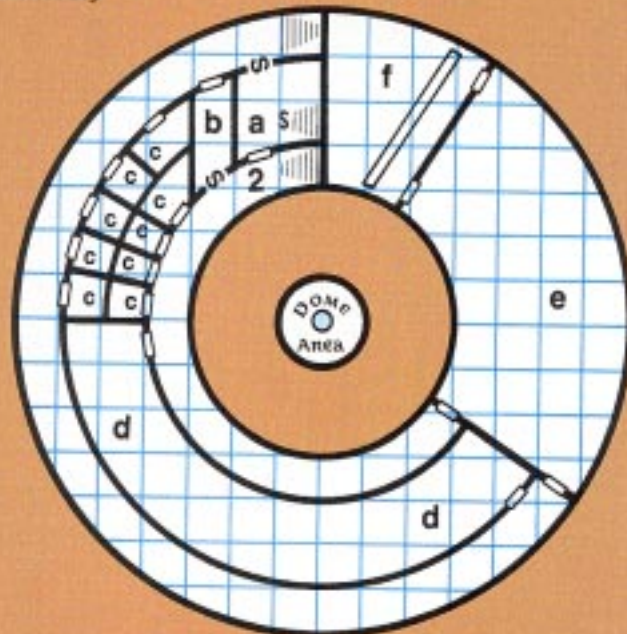
Beneath Kuo Meilan

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

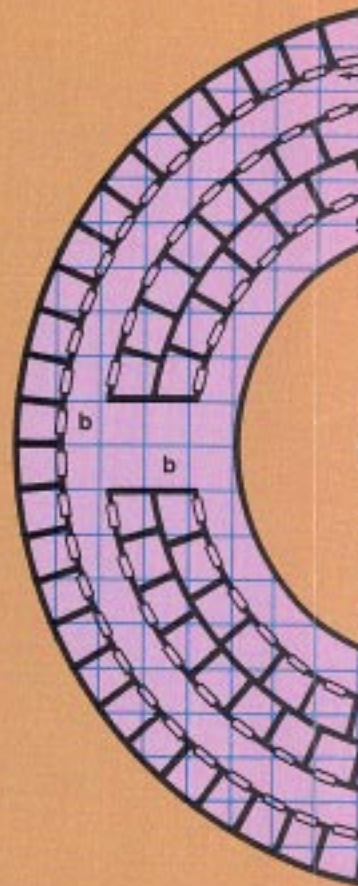
- Key**
-  = DOOR
 -  = SECRET DOOR
 -  = ONE WAY DOOR
 -  = SECRET ONE WAY DOOR
 -  = TELEPORT PAD
 -  = STAIRS
 -  = SECRET STAIRWAY



First Level



Second Level

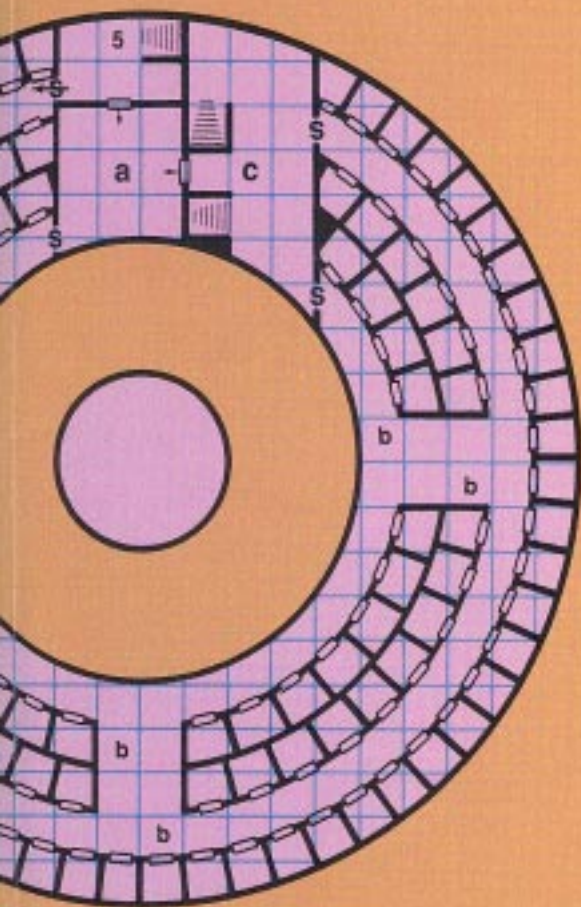


The City of Kuo Meilan

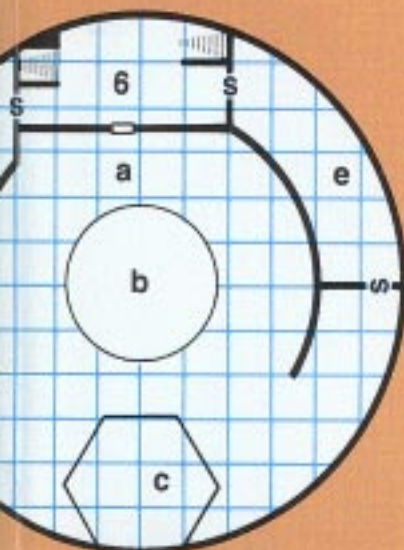
Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

G = Gatehouses

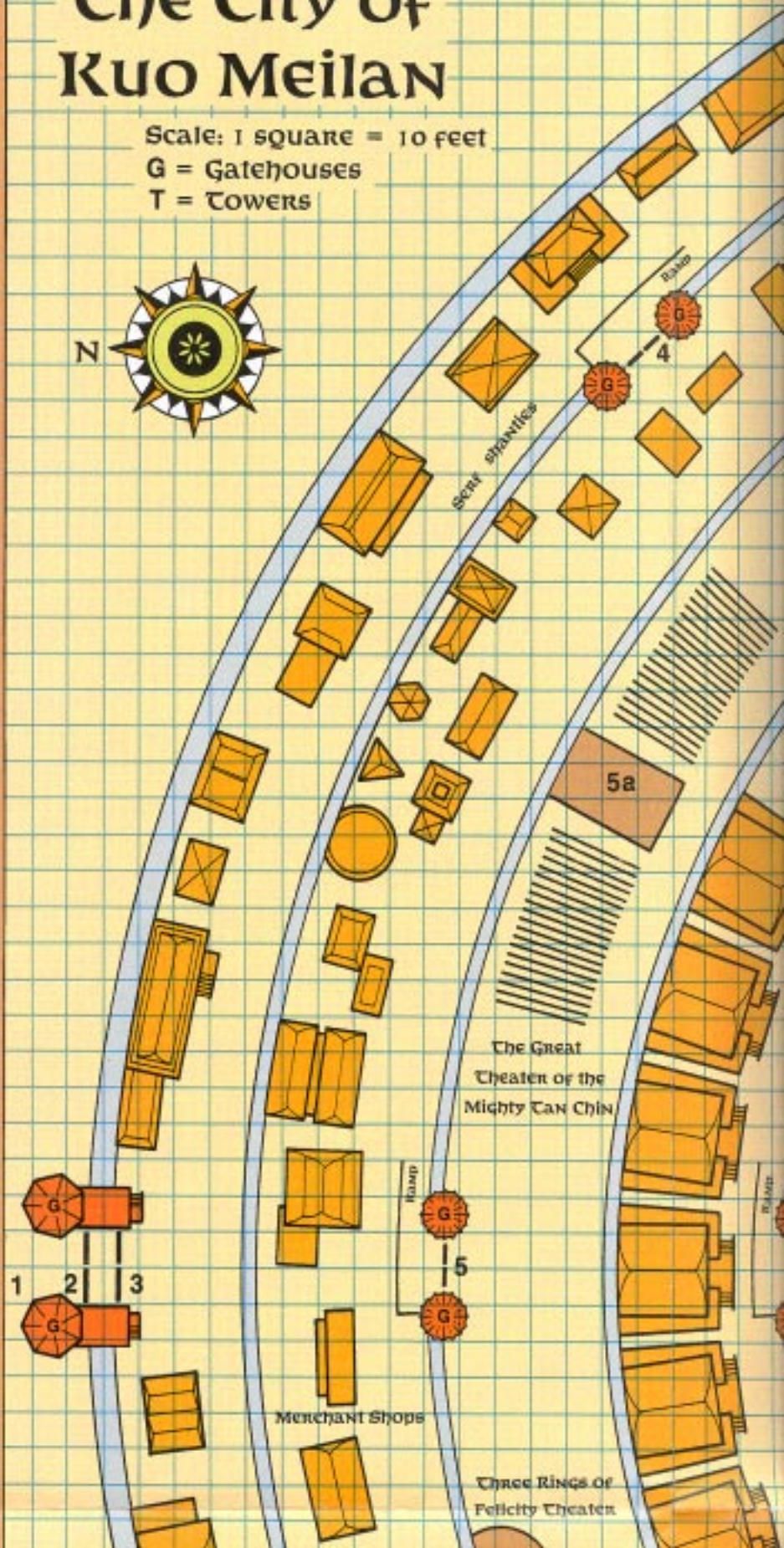
T = Towers



Fifth Level



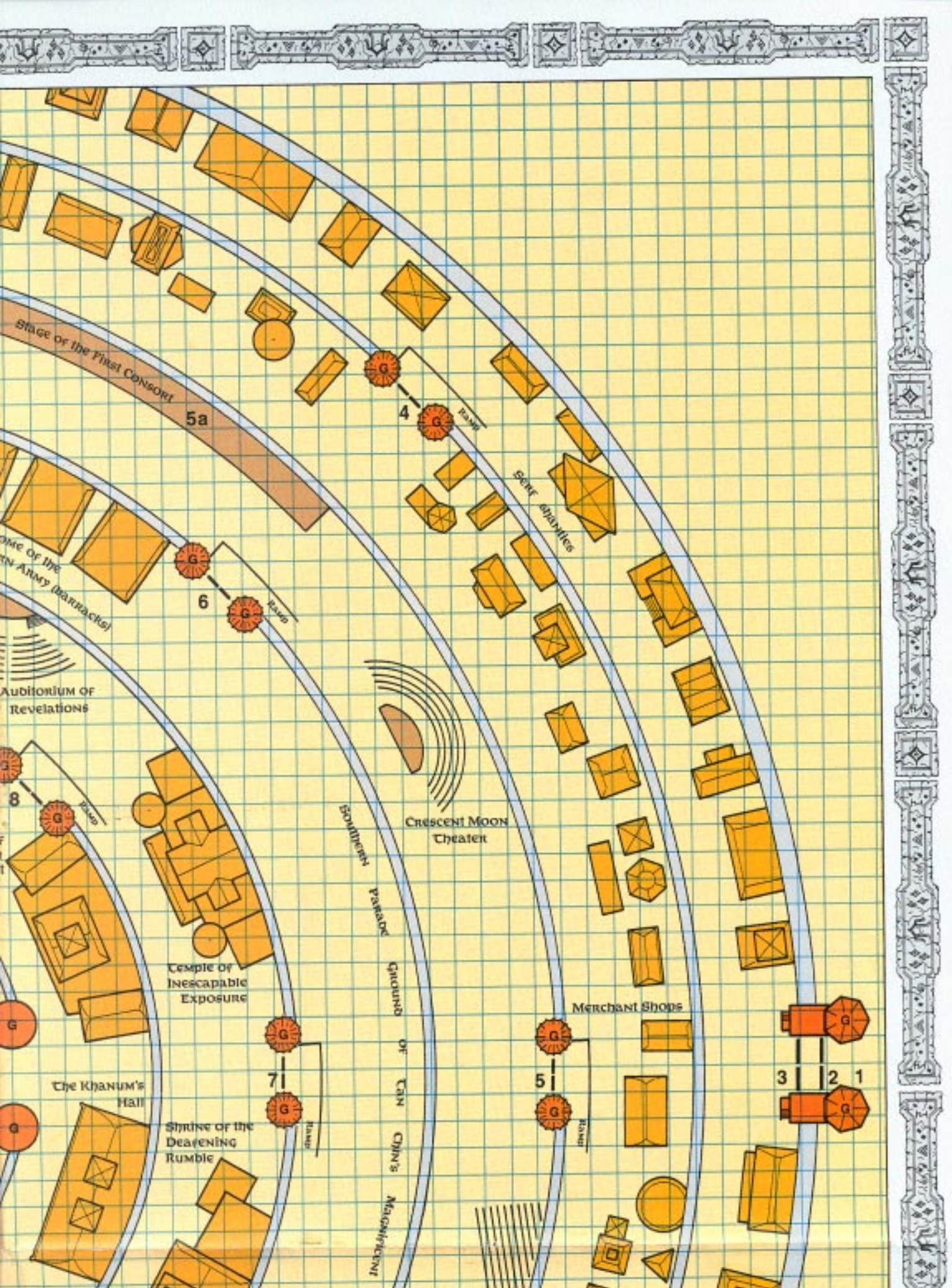
Sixth Level

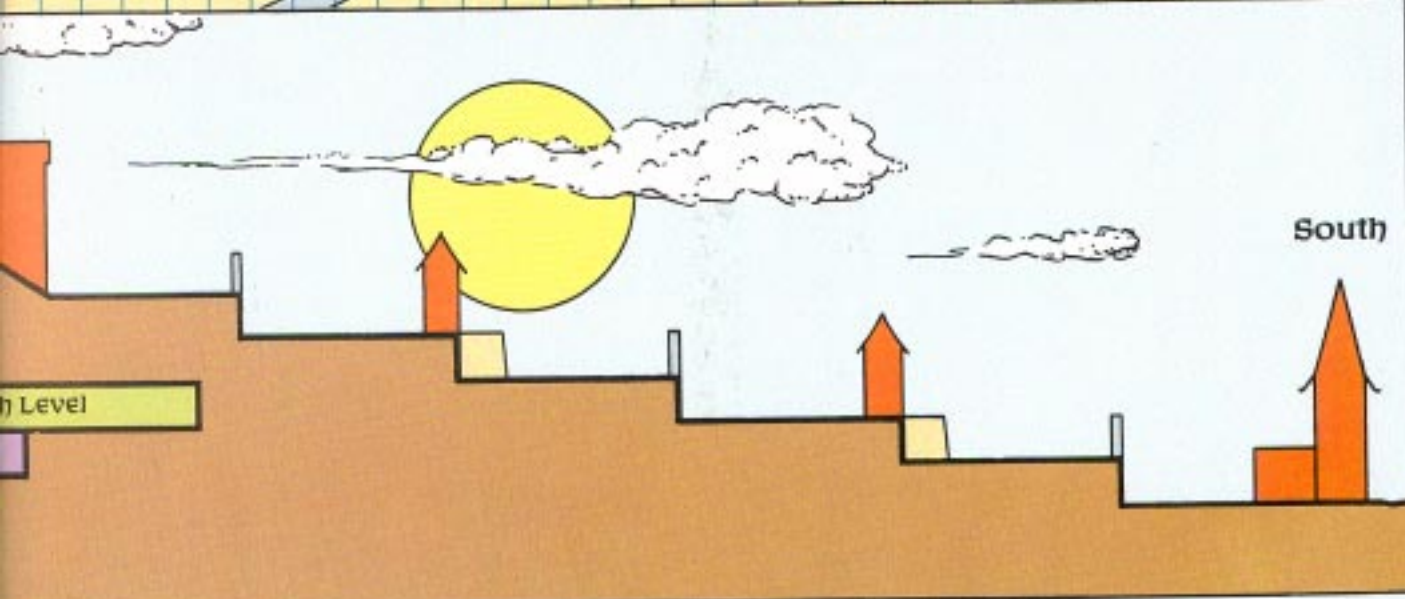


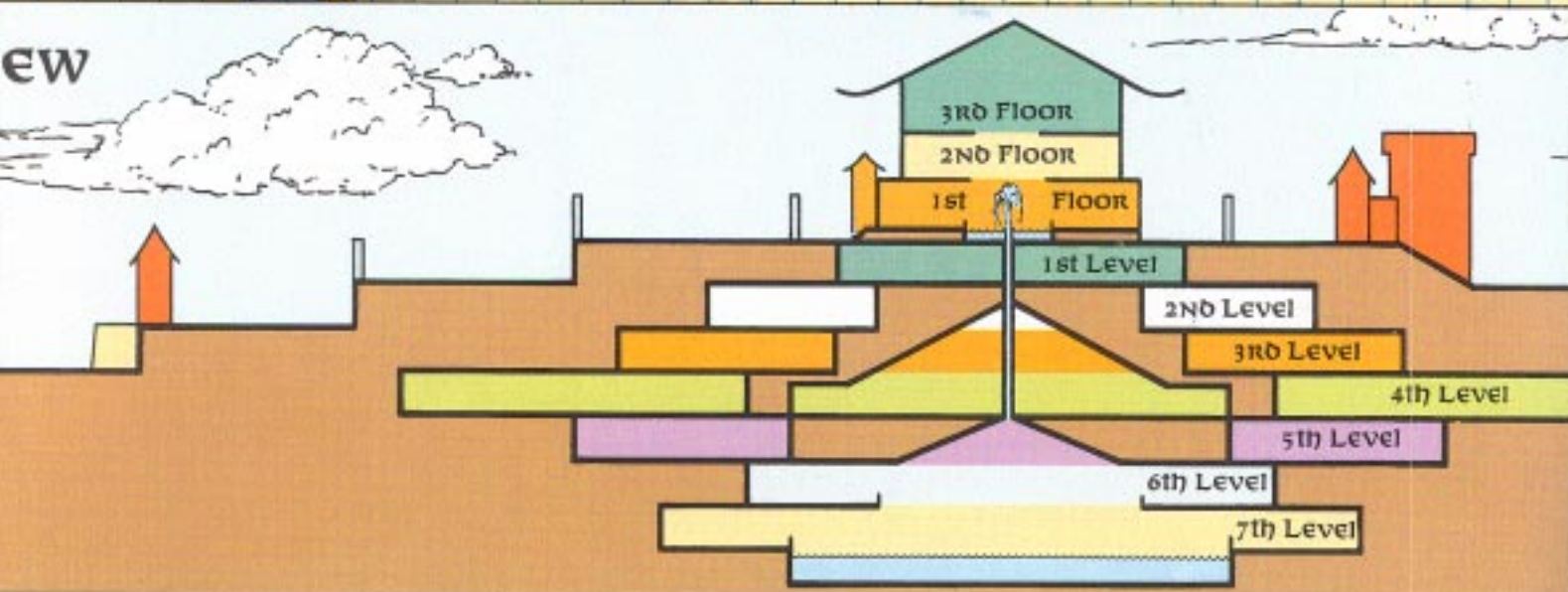
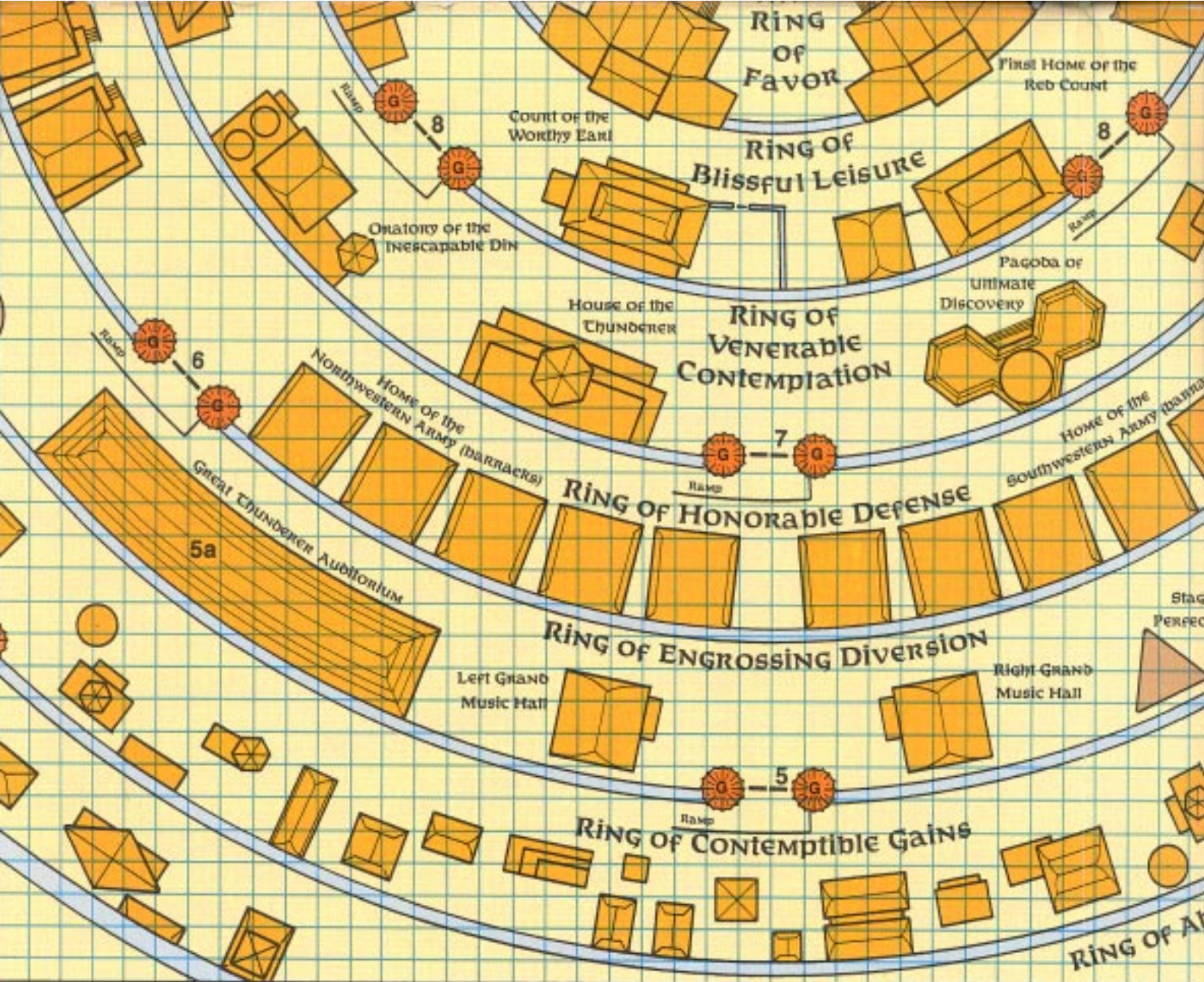
The Great Theater of the Mighty Tan Chin

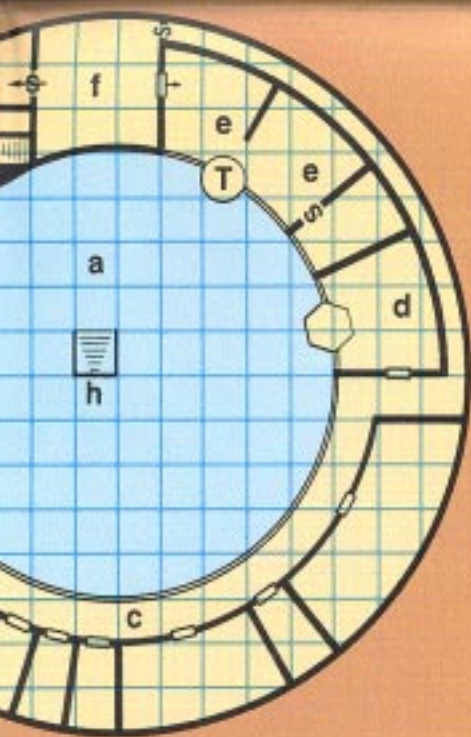
Merchant Shops

Three Rings of Felicity Theater









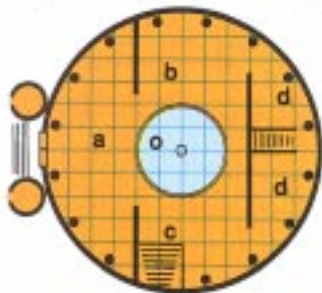
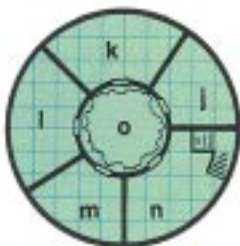
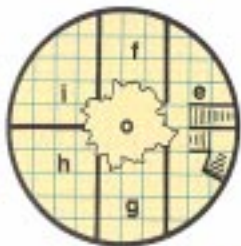
Seventh Level



Palace of Ultimate Felicity

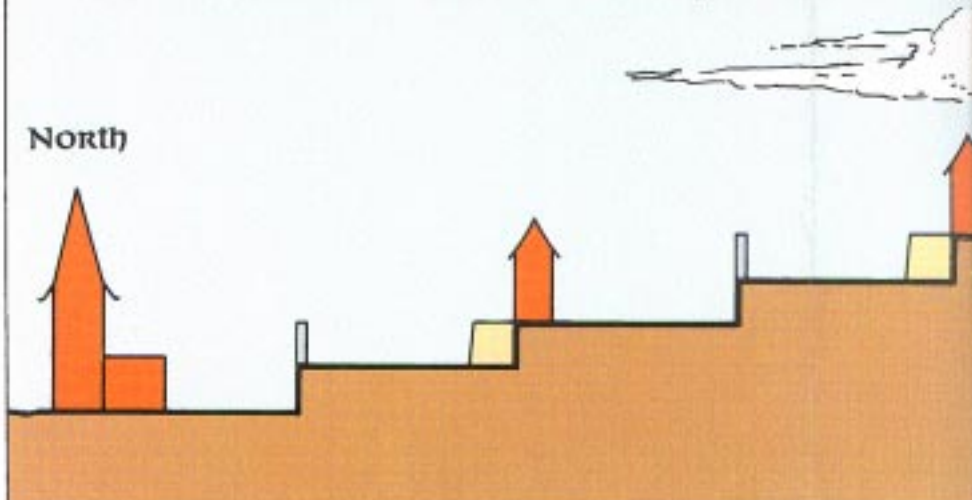
Event 11, Part IV

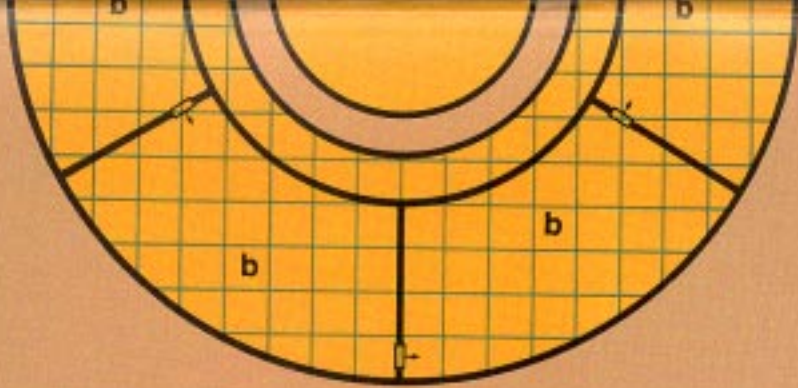
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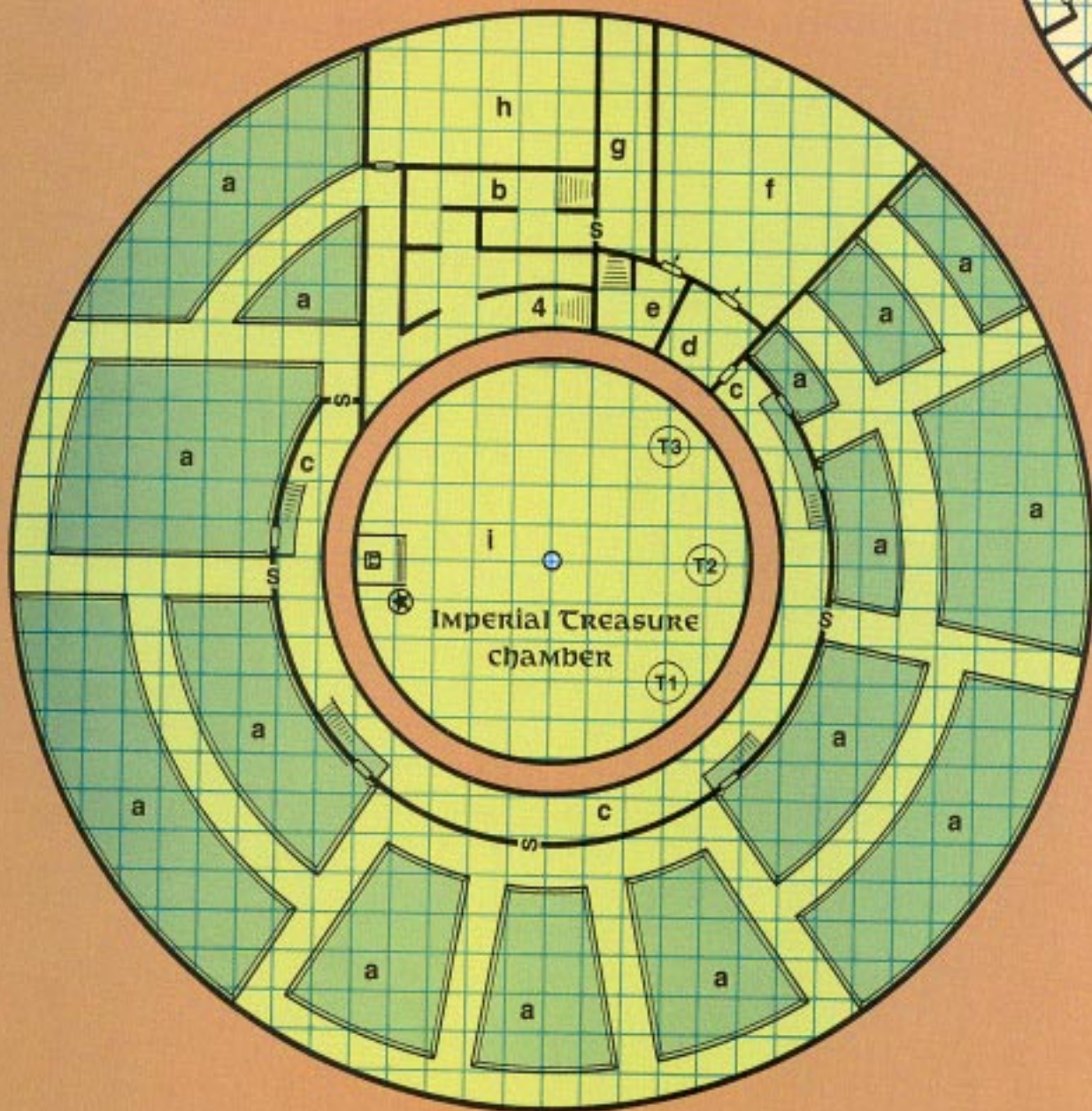
Kuo Meilan Cutaway View

North





Third Level



Fourth Level

Hubadai, General of the Tuigan

Warrior 16

STR 16	WIS 10	INT 13
DEX 14	CON 16	CHA 30
AC -2	MV 12	hp 112
#AT 2/1	Dmg 1d8+3 (sword) +1	
AL CN	THAC0 2	

Equipment: *lamellar armor* +5, *ring of protection* +2, *sword* +3, *ring of teleportation* (once per day, to any location wearer has visited while wearing ring), *helm of reflection* (turns magic used against wearer back on the user), steppe horse with AC 4 barding (see *The Horde* boxed set for statistics on steppe horses).

Hubadai is the khan of the Tuigan army. He is a stern but fair commander, a determined enemy, and a loyal friend. He tends to place a lower value on human life than men from other cultures. Hubadai is a wise and capable leader who is no more fearful of risking his own life than those of his men. Though he demands unquestioning obedience from his subordinates, he rewards loyalty well, treating his allies with warmth and respect. Hubadai is overeager to please his father, Yamun Khahan, the ruler of the Tuigan tribes.

Typical Nightguard, Warrior 7: AC 5; MV 12; hp 35; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8 (sword); STR 14; INT 12; WIS 10; DEX 14; CON 14; CHA 10; SA nil; SD nil; AL LN; THAC0 14. Equipment: lamellar armor, sword, horse bow, 40 arrows, dagger, steppe horse.

The nightguards are Hubadai's personal bodyguard, selected from his finest warriors.

Typical Khan, Warrior 10: AC 4; MV 12; hp 42; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (sword); STR 14; INT 12; WIS 12; DEX 12; CON 14; CHA 11; SA nil; SD nil; AL LN; THAC0 11. Equipment: lamellar armor, *sword* +1, horse bow, 40 arrows, dagger, steppe horse.

The khans are the chiefs of the various ordus which make up Hubadai's armies. They are generally loyal to Hubadai and jealous of outsiders.

Typical Tuigan, Warrior 3: AC 5; MV 12; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (sword); STR 12; INT 10; WIS 10; DEX 11; CON 13; CHA 10; SA nil; SD nil; AL LN; THAC0 18. Equipment: lamellar armor, sword, horse bow, 40 arrows, dagger, and steppe horse.

The Tuigan warriors are a loyal and superstitious bunch, regarding outsiders with an air of suspicion and awe.

Princess Bhrokiti

Wu-jen 2

STR 11	WIS 15	INT 17
DEX 16	CON 15	CHA 18
AC 3	MV 12	hp 10
#AT 1	Dmg 1d6 (hand) or 1d8 (foot) + 1	
AL CG	THAC0 20 (19 missile)	

Spells: *Comprehend languages*, *magic missile*.

Ki Power: focus ki for +3 bonus on initiative for one round, once per day.

Taboo: Bhrokiti cannot sleep in the same room as another human being. After violating this taboo in Part III, she no longer has her wu-jen powers.

Princess Bhrokiti is the sole heir of the Dalai Lama of Ra-Khati, a fact which does not please her at all. She has little concern for the spiritual matters which dominate the government of Ra-Khati, and finds the xenophobia of her countrymen stifling. Realizing she can never hope to lead a people with whom she has so little in common, she would much rather leave Ra-Khati to pursue the life of a wanderer. On the surface, she is a spoiled princess, but she has a sound basic character and will sacrifice her own welfare for the benefit of others.

The Stone Sceptre of Shih

The Stone Sceptre of Shih was created by an unknown ally of the powerful wizard Shih for the sole purpose of overthrowing the evil emperor and necromancer, Tan Chin—now known as Ambuchar Devayam. A simple wooden staff capped by a stone pommel, the sceptre must be wielded by a character of lawful good alignment to utilize its full benefit, though characters of any good alignment can use it to some effect as outlined below.

Minor Powers:

- *Protection from Undead:* as scroll spell.
- *Attack Non-corporeal Creatures:* can be used as a normal weapon against non-corporeal creatures (ghosts, spectres, groaning spirits, etc.).
- *Immunities:* bearer is immune to level draining and aging attacks, paralysis, *fear*, *magic jar*, and *chill touch*.
- Plus +5 in normal combat.
- *Magic Resistance:* bestows a magic resistance of 50% upon bearer.

Major Powers:

- *Petrification:* once per day, can cause any intelligent being of 7 HD or less looking upon it to turn to stone (save vs. petrification at -2 to negate).
- *Destroy Undead:* at will, causes any undead of 3 HD or less within 50 feet to burst into flames and be destroyed. Undead of 3 + 1 to 7 HD must save vs. rods or be destroyed similarly. Undead of more than 7 HD must burst into flames for one round, suffering 5d10 magical fire damage (save vs. rods for half-damage.)
- *Rescue:* at will, negates the effects of level draining and aging attacks, paralysis, *fear*, *magic jar*, and *chill touch* for one individual.

Dangers:

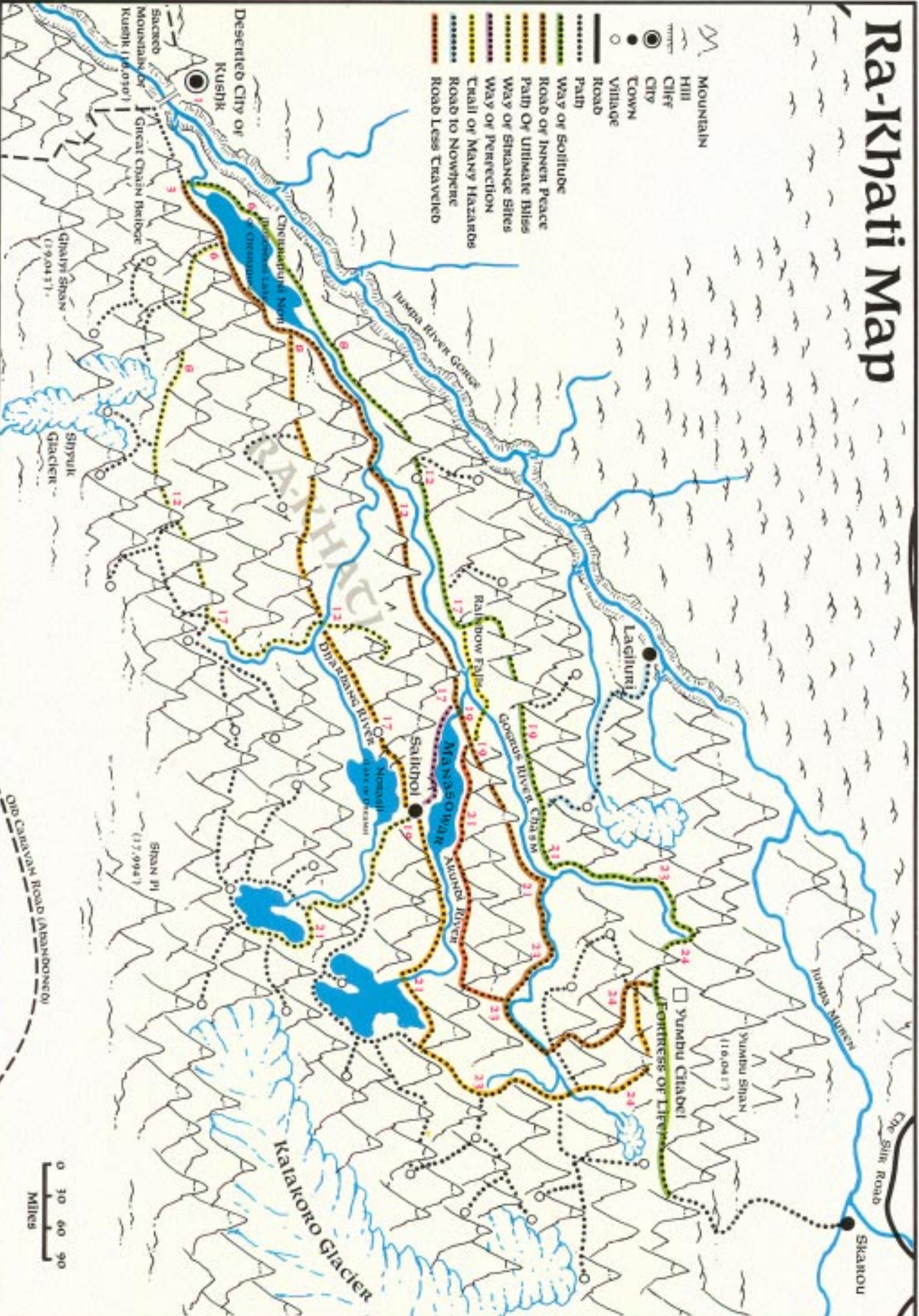
- *User Alignment Restrictions:* Lawful good: can use any of the staffs powers. Chaotic and neutral good: can use minor powers only. Chaotic, lawful, and true neutral: wield staff as normal weapon. Chaotic and neutral evil: suffer 1d10 electrical damage per round when grasping staff. Lawful Evil: 1d10 electrical damage, save vs. rod or fall unconscious for 1d10 rounds when grasping staff.
- *Minor Power Costs:* any time a minor power is used or activated, bearer loses 1d4 hp.
- *Major Power Costs:* any time a major power is used, bearer loses one point of Constitution (permanently). Not even a *wish* spell restores this loss.
- *Use Restrictions:* if it becomes clear that the bearer has no intention of facing Tan Chin/Ambuchar Devayam, the Stone Sceptre stops functioning.

Corrupting Effect: Each week, the bearer becomes more distrustful of authority. By the end of a month, he cannot help uttering insulting remarks to anyone who styles himself an emperor, king, president, raja, dalai lama, etc.

Weakness: The Stone Sceptre of Shih can only be destroyed by submersion in molten rock.

Ra-Khathi Map

- MOUNTAIN
- HILL
- CLIFF
- CITY
- TOWN
- VILLAGE
- ROAD
- PATH
- WAY OF SOLITUDE
- ROAD OF INNER PEACE
- PATH OF ULTIMATE BLISS
- WAY OF STRANGE SITES
- WAY OF PERFECTION
- TRAIL OF MANY HAZARDS
- ROAD TO NOWHERE
- ROAD LESS TRAVELED



0 30 60 90
Miles

Sandiraksiva, The Black Courser



CLIMATE/TERRAIN: High mountain meadow/tundra
FREQUENCY: Very Rare (unique)
ORGANIZATION: Solitary or herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day
DIET: Special
INTELLIGENCE: Average (8-10)
TREASURE: None
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVEMENT: 28, Fl 30
HIT DICE: 8 (45 hit points)
THACO: 13
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 or breath weapon
DAMAGE / ATTACK: 1-8 + 7/1-8 + 7/or 5-30 (breath)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Only hit by + 1 or better weapon
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 55%
SIZE: L (8' at shoulder)
MORALE: Fanatic (19)
XP VALUE: 5,000



While accompanying Prince Surtava on his search for enlightenment, Gaumahavi (see her entry) bore a litter of cubs. Like its mother, one of those cubs developed an animal soul and began a series of reincarnations. That cub was Sandiraksiva.

Currently, the cub's enchanted soul inhabits the body of a supernatural black stallion. Unfortunately for Sandiraksiva, this fact has not eluded the Raja of Solon, Ambuchar Devayam. The Raja captured Sandiraksiva and used him to coerce his mother, Gaumahavi, into aiding him in the first war between Solon and Ra-Khati. During that war, Sandiraksiva was captured by the Dalai Lama, who had no idea of the stallion's true nature. Since then, the magnificent horse has remained imprisoned in the Dalai Lama's citadel.

As his great size might suggest, Sandiraksiva is exceptionally strong, and he can carry or pull as much as any two normal draft horses. He is also extremely fast, and can easily outrun even the fleetest riding horse. Unlike most horses, he has split hooves and can climb the rocky environment of the Katakoro Mountains with ease.

Combat: Sandiraksiva is not aggressive by nature, but will fight tenaciously for his freedom. In combat, he uses his forehooves to lash out, and will resort to his breath weapon when pressed.

In addition to his great strength, Sandiraksiva has several special abilities. Every other round, he can fly up to 800 yards (then he must pause and rest for a round). His most potent weapon is the fireball he can breathe once per day for 5d6 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

Because of his enchanted nature, Sandiraksiva cannot be hurt by anything short of magic or magical weapons of + 1 or better.

Habitat/Society: Although he would prefer to graze the high altitude meadows and tundra lands of the Katakoro Mountains, Sandiraksiva has been imprisoned by either the Raja of Solon or the Dalai Lama for the last 50 years.

During most of this adventure, he will be confined to an immense iron cage that has been sealed to prevent tampering. This cage cannot be damaged by anything except magic or magical weapons, has been *wizard locked* and trapped with a *glyph of warding* by the Dalai Lama himself, and has been especially enchanted so that the entire structure acts as a *ring of spell turning* — with the addition that it is 75% likely the entire spell will rebound on the caster (see the description for the *ring of spell turning* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Once out of the cage, Sandiraksiva will attempt to assemble a brood of mares. He will not tolerate the presence of any other stallions in this herd.

Ecology: Like most horses, Sandiraksiva eats grass, grains, hay, and the like. However, the Black Courser's supernatural strength, speed, and powers are energized by the light of the moon. If he is not exposed to moonlight for a substantial period each night, he begins to lose his strength. This loss corresponds roughly to the amount of moonlight he missed. For example, a 30% reduction in exposure results in a 30% loss of movement, damage, flight capability, etc. On totally moonless nights he lapses into complete inactivity, but since he knows when they will be, takes precautions beforehand, when possible. Strength is recovered in 1d6 rounds as soon as he returns to full moonlight.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]
2nd Edition



Official Game Adventure

Black Courser

by Troy Denning



The Purple Dragon is caged!

But Ra-Khati isn't out of danger. The evil Raja Ambuchar Devayam is holding the Dalai Lama to his promise. If the player-characters don't deliver Princess Bhrokiti and the Black Courser to him—and even if they do—the Raja's foul army will once again march on the Hidden Kingdom. What is it that Devayam really wants with Ra-Khati?

Only your player-characters can discover the awful truth. When they do, their journey will take them to the farthest reaches of Shou Lung. Providing they can escape the diabolic assassin sent to stop them, they will

find the lost city of Kuo Meilan. There, they must penetrate to the lost city's wicked heart and find the Stone Sceptre of Shih. Only armed with this artifact, and the secret connecting it to Ambuchar Devayam, can they hope to save Ra-Khati—or themselves!

The Black Courser is the second adventure in the *Empires Adventures Trilogy*, taking place in the new FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign world territories described in *The Horde* campaign set. The *Empires Adventures Trilogy* is also set amidst the turbulent events portrayed in the *Empires Novel Trilogy*. This adventure is designed for four to eight player characters of levels 6-9, and can be played as a separate, stand-alone module or as a follow-up to FRA1, *Storm Riders*.

Look for the other *Empires Adventures: Storm Riders* (available now) and *Blood Charge* (coming soon!).



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