

PATHFINDER[®] **ADVENTURE PATH**[™]

JADE REGENT

ADVENTURE PATH • PART 5 OF 6

TIDE OF HONOR



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ADVENTURE PATH™

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Doug Stambaugh, Florian Stitz, and Sung Yoon Ko

Contributing Authors
Dave Gross, Tito Leati, Sean K Reynolds, and Mike Welham

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“Tide of Honor” is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 12th-level characters.
By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 13th level.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, and *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*. These rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd.

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7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
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paizo.com

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JADE REGENT



HORSE, HORSE, TIGER, TIGER

Over the years, I have visited Asia, worked for a Japanese company, and helped represent the United States in the first World Taiji Festival in Sanya, China, so the launch of our Jade Regent Adventure Path has been a great delight. A little understanding of a culture can really help bring depth to your Pathfinder character and your campaign. There are many ways to learn about a country and its culture, but I believe two of the most beneficial and fun ways are through food and language.

Eating one's way through a culture is about as good as it gets. When I worked for a Japanese company, I spent time in Tokyo with my friend Masaaki, a soba gourmet. Soba is noodles made mostly of buckwheat, eaten cold and dipped in a sauce partially of your own making. And you must make lots of noise while eating.

One night Masaaki took me to a soba joint out on the edge of Tokyo. The owner of this place sits in front

of his shop grinding buckwheat every morning to make his own noodles. Then he opens shop. When the noodles are all sold, he closes. It does not matter if it is two in the afternoon, or one in the morning; he stays open until the noodles are gone, then he goes home.

Masaaki had already coached me in my slurping, and we sat down and went at it. Eventually a young Japanese man approached, complimented me on the noise I was making, and asked if he might sit with us and practice his English. We had a long, leisurely meal including exquisite sashimi and the best sake I have ever had.

The next night we went to Rocky Top, a bluegrass bar in Ginza where Masaaki's band played, then on to an after-hours geisha bar where Masaaki's banjo player, Kingyo, had a girlfriend, a geisha, who joined us. In this case, food and drink led to socializing, meeting various people I otherwise would not have known, and the culture began to seep into my pores.

With this experience under my belt, I was later asked by author Neal Barrett, Jr. to help him write a *Predator* comic set in Japan, which was published by Dark Horse. Experiences fit together in unexpected ways.

For 10 years I taught Tai Chi (Taijiquan) in Seattle's Chinatown, where Chinese culture bombarded me from every angle. My teacher was Chinese, and our school was in the oldest building in Chinatown. It is owned by a family association, Lung Kong Ting Yee (Four Families Association), which has roots going back to the fall of the Han Dynasty and the rise of the Jin. The story of the four founders of Lung Kong Ting Yee is chronicled in the famous Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The Four Families have traditionally supported Chinese martial arts, and so lent space to us for our classes.

Throughout the year, in Seattle, the various martial arts clubs hold banquets. There are speeches, mostly in Chinese, favorite martial artists mount a stage to demonstrate their wushu, and the host always begins by apologizing for not having enough food. Then the dishes begin pouring out of the restaurant kitchen in excess. Normally, the first banquet course is pickled jellyfish, or jellyfish salad. I have come to love it, and usually rate a Chinese restaurant by the quality of its jellyfish salad. At each banquet, my teacher would invite various people to fill the 10 chairs at her table. Once she invited a student at our school who had just been promoted to instructor. This instructor was Caucasian, and had very little experience with Chinese food or culture. With her chopsticks, she ate some of the first dish. As she chewed the somewhat challenging meat, she asked me out of the side of her mouth, "What is this?" I smiled. "Jellyfish." She spat it onto her plate. Our teacher's eyes grew wide, and that instructor was never invited to another banquet.

And tea, do not forget about tea. Call it "cha," and brew it right. Drink it with respect. Tea is the liquor that exhilarates without intoxicating, and it is incredibly intrinsic to almost every Asian culture.

Knowing a little about a language also goes a long way in understanding a culture, and demonstrates a willingness to understand that culture. Masaaki taught me how to greet old friends. Instead of the more formal "O genki desu ka," just exclaim enthusiastically, "Genki, genki!"

All languages have colloquialisms. In American English we have tons: "as old as the hills," "whistling in the graveyard," "there's more than one way to skin a cat." If I had just come to the US from another country, would these make any sense? And so colloquialisms exist in Japan and China. Masaaki explained that Yakuza was really three numbers in an archaic counting system: 8, 9, 3, ya-ku-za, a really bad hand in Japanese black jack. The Yakuza walk in the shadows so others might walk in the sunlight. Or perhaps, as Willie Dixon wrote, "If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all."

ON THE COVER

This month Wayne Reynolds introduces us to O-Sayumi, a geisha as dangerous as she is lovely and a major power player in the intrigues afoot in Minkai. Behind her, Lini and Sajan face a gigantic fire yai servant of the Five Storms, merely one of the many oni threats in store for them in this month's adventure, "Tide of Honor."

In Chinese, assuming I am not having the best of all possible days, my favorite response to "Ni hao ma?"—meaning "How are you?"—is "Ma, ma, hu, hu." This translates, literally, as horse, horse, tiger, tiger.

Huh? At first I did not understand. Then one of my wushu teachers offered a possible explanation: "Once, a great warrior came to an inn at a mountain pass. The inn was full to overflowing. Of course, the great warrior was seated immediately. He ordered wine and asked why there was such a crowd. The owner of the inn replied, 'Just above the pass lives a ferocious tiger. He kills all who try to proceed. So everyone stops here.' The warrior drank until he had consumed eight jugs of wine, then pounded the table with his fist and shouted, 'I will fight that tiger!' He mounted his horse and rode only a short distance before the tiger appeared. The warrior jumped from his horse, grabbed the tiger by the scruff of his neck, and punched the tiger in the head. The tiger immediately collapsed and the warrior celebrated. He had killed the tiger. But the wine had truly gone to his head, and ready to return to the inn, instead of getting on his horse, the warrior mounted the tiger, which awoke. Suddenly the warrior found himself on the back of the tiger."

So, this colloquialism means, "I am so-so." It could be better, it could be worse. The tiger is awake, but at least I am on his back, not in his mouth.

These are just a few examples of how understanding food and language can greatly modify the characters you play or the stories you might tell. You may be offered strange and disconcerting foods in Minkai. How do you deal with that? The blunt, straightforward speech patterns of the West could be construed as crude and insulting. Your character might not only have trouble gathering information, she might wind up fighting for her life because of a sentence gone wrong. The better you understand a culture, the more real your character and your adventure.



Pierce Watters
Sales Director