

JADE REGENT



MINKAI

NEVER HAVE I VISITED A LAND SO AT EASE WITH ITS OWN WONDERS. IN FIELDS GROOMED AND CULTIVATED FOR CENTURIES ON END, GENERATIONS OF PEASANTS GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY RITUALS, NOT EVEN LIFTING THEIR HEADS AS SPIRIT CREATURES TAKE SHORTCUTS THROUGH THEIR CROPS. IN THE CITIES STERN PARENTS WARN THEIR CHILDREN NOT TO DALLY NEAR THE DOCKS OR ON BRIDGES, LEST THEY MAKE THEMSELVES PREY FOR WHAT LIVES BENEATH. IN THE CAPITAL RISE MONUMENTS TO RULERS PAST, HONORED STILL AS BEINGS AS WISE AND MIGHTY AS THE GODS, WHILE UPON A THRONE OF JADE THEIR WORLDLY INHERITOR RULES OVER A REALM OF WONDERS.

—VIMERIDO “TOGASHI” RIRDOMERIO, *FROM WHENCE I RETURNED*

MINKAI

Known as the Empire of Dawn, or the Land of the Three Fires, Minkai is the easternmost nation of Tian Xia, and is renowned as a legendary place of mystery and marvels among the peoples of the Inner Sea. A land of endless riches and home to a proud people, Minkai fosters a tradition of national honor that breeds independence and a degree of aloofness. Wherever the nation's ships travel, they spread treasures and artistry of singular skill and coveted design. The people of Minkai, the Tian-Mins, thirst for opportunities to prove their strength and skill just as surely as the other peoples of Tian Xia, and might be encountered far from their homeland, driven by their need for adventure or by matters of great import. But nowhere is the genius, talent, and pride of this people better exhibited than in their ancient homeland, Minkai, a land of wonders unlike any in all of Golarion.

GOVERNMENT & IMPERIAL FAMILIES

For the majority of its history, Minkai has been ruled by emperors and empresses descending from one of five imperial families, each of which was blessed with the right to rule by the goddess Shizuru in the distant past. Today, however, most of these five families have been hunted to extinction by the oni of the Five Storms and their emissaries. The nation is ruled by a merciless warlord known as the Jade Regent, who for the past few years has indulged his cruel whims upon the nation, forcing the governors of the land's eight provinces and the numerous feudal lords to levy strict and exploitative laws upon an increasingly downtrodden population. Yet despite the legitimate families' demises, their works, monuments, and influences upon Minkai remains present even today, endlessly inspiring the peasantry with the hope that of one of their rightful rulers will return. The five imperial families are described below.

Amatatsu: This imperial family has a reputation for producing traders, explorers, and reformers. One member of this family, Amatatsu Aganhei, forged the trade route between Minkai and Avistan thousands of years ago, but his triumph was suppressed by the Teikoku family and he himself executed by the Teikoku shogun. When the Five Storms began slaughtering the imperial families, the Amatatsus fled across the trade route established by their ancestor and changed their name to Kaijitsu. Currently, Ameiko Kaijitsu is the only living true heir to the line.

Higashiyama: Members of this family were respected scholars and pious worshipers of the goddess Shizuru. This family ruled Minkai for much of the last 100 years since the fall of Lung Wa. Their downfall came when the Oni of the Five Storms, in the person of the Jade Regent, killed the previous monarch, Emperor Higashiyama Shigure. Rumors suggest that there may still be living heirs of this family, but that they have either allied with the oni or been hidden away in remote prisons under the Five Storms' control.

Shojinawa: Although the oldest rulers from this family have reputations for revering ancestral spirits, raising fantastic shrines, and creating grand public works, the memory of the Shojinawas' great works was soured by later generations' decadence and madness. Some claim the family was even cursed by the moon for dabbling in dark magic and bloody sacrifices under its gaze—and doubt one could tell the difference between an oni and a Shojinawa heir if forced to say which was which. The Shojinawa family was supposedly destroyed when their palace was consumed by a conflagration of freezing black fire.

Sugimatu: Historically, the Sugimatus were peacemakers and the imperial family most in touch with the needs of the people. Historians have granted members of this dynasty titles such as the Empress of Pleasant Rains, Emperor of the Sake Sea, and the Six Springs Empress. Rather than being intimidating titles, these names reflect eras that number among the most peaceful and bountiful in Minkai's history. Most members of the Sugimatu family were poisoned over a period of years, making it the first of the five families to fall.

Teikoku: A family of traditionalists and isolationists, the Teikokus were among the most militaristic of the five imperial families. This family founded the Teikoku Shogunate—the empire that predated Minkai. Its members were slain by the Oni of the Five Storms within the last half century, though it is said the fiends suffered considerable losses at the ancient family's hands.

CITIES & PROVINCES

Ever since the days of warring tribes and feuding clans, life in the land now known as Minkai has depended upon the bounty of the sea. As such, the oldest and largest settlements in the nation have risen upon the shores, and the culture of Minkai has grown and radiated from these centers of trade, learning, and government, coloring the lives and ways of all who live nearby. As these cities exerted their influences over the land, each became the hub of its own province, and the seat of an imperial governor who administers the emperor's will. Beyond the eight provinces exist three additional regions: the Ikkaku Peninsula, a harsh land home to a rugged people and ancient mysteries; the Osogen Grasslands, a vast plain home to reckless barbarian tribes; and the Higashita Coast, which technically falls within the province of Hiyouai, but whose people have developed a distinctive identity of their own.

Akafuto: The second largest port of Minkai and terminal of the empire's major fluvial route, Akafuto boasts a population of more than 40,000. A major center of lumber trade in the Tian Xia, it exports a variety of raw and semifinished products, and its large junks are the Minkai crafts most likely to be seen sailing along the coasts of Tianjing and in foreign ports in general. The most famous temple of Akafuto, Ukuashi-Ji, is dedicated to Kofusachi, who

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blesse the fields and the rich harvests that seasonally flow down the Tagiryu River and from Akafuto to markets across the nation. Akafuto is also the seat of the Juhimeiyō School, a monastic institute traditionally frequented by young nobles who aspire to become clerks at the imperial court. A city of remarkable political stability, Akafuto has been ruled by the governors of the Moniwa family almost continuously for 11 centuries. The current governor, Moniwa Kamon, was among the first to swear fealty to the Jade Regent; though doing so earned him the suspicion and loathing of many of his people, it also ensured the province would face relatively few changes under the new ruler's regime.

Enganoka: A younger city than Sakakabe, but similarly built in a favorable landing spot on the west coast of Minkai, Enganoka is an important commercial port. The trading activity concentrates in the open market located behind the port, with wares ranging from ordinary cereals and fish. Luxury goods are available in the Kuroi Yane market, one of Minkai's most famous and luxurious commercial venues. The chief exports of Enganoka are silk, coming from the mulberry orchards of the nearby hills, and rock alum, widely used to dye fabric and almost exclusively extracted in the domain of the governing Sikutsu family. Across the nation, Enganoka has a reputation for catering to decadent tastes—legal and illegal—that only the wealthiest can afford, giving rise to an oft unmerited condition among both city dwellers and nearby villagers known as “Enganoka arrogance.”

The Higashita Coast: Officially part of Hiyosai Province, the villages of the Higashita Coast are heavily influenced by the vast Seseragi Forest, said to have been the ancestral home of the legendary hero Okirori Tomoko. Tomoko was said to have mediated a resolution between the proud kami lords of the forest and the Warashi River, and ever since, those who have walked the forest's paths have been granted advice in the form of visions and whispers from its ancient guardians. Even beyond the forest, tales of the kami and ancestral spirits have ensnared the imaginations and traditions of what might otherwise be a string of poor coastal fishing villages. For generations, the coast dwellers have gathered riches from the sea, crafting incredibly fine works from driftwood, pearl, coral, urchin shells, and other materials of inherent beauty. Their artistry tends to have a morbid bent, with a focus on 114 types of gruesome and generally ironic deaths depicted in varied sculptures. Though sometimes grisly, this artwork has become incredibly popular across Minkai, and many go to great lengths to gather examples of all 114 deaths.

Hiyosai: Called the eastern treasury of Minkai, Hiyosai grew rich on the copper-mining activity in the hills south of town and the manufacture of bronze objects, which are exported to Kasai together with the raw material needed for the empire's coinage. With frightening unpredictability and varying organization, *siyokoys* (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3246) originating from coral complexes deeper in the Okaiyo

Ocean attack ships as they leave Hiyosai's port, dragging metal goods and sailors alike back to their dens in the coral ruins of the drowned city of Sangoshi. In response, the city's harbor patrol has grown into a veritable navy, captained by daring samurai and their students, who train endlessly with a variety of pole arms. Some families in and around Hiyosai claim to be descended from the survivors of Sangoshi, who were known for their unusual fairness and green eyes.

The Ikkaku Peninsula: The northernmost lands of Minkai are poor and scarcely inhabited, but those who do make their homes amid the frosty cliffs prove exceptionally proud and independent. Most eke out hard lives from the cold stone of the Kamifushi Mountains and the varied mineral treasures found within. Several villages, however, benefit from the region's geological instability and mineral richness, being home to mineral springs. Such springs are often accompanied by temples dedicated to Desna, Kofusachi, or Qi Zhong, and boast remarkable medical, spiritual, or magical healing properties. Few of these mystical resorts promote their remarkable waters, however, believing that the spirits guide those most in need to the springs—which sometimes prove quite treacherous to reach. Though over the past decades this region has been largely untouched by the rule of the Jade Regent, its residents are just as traditional and patriotic as any of Minkai's people. Many staunchly oppose the changes sweeping the land and shelter fugitives from new implemented imperial laws.

Kasai: The largest and most prosperous province of Minkai hosts the capital and the highest number of feudal domains, which are mostly located in the bountiful land between the Tagiryu and Kamiteki rivers. Kasai is a bustling city with more than 100,000 inhabitants, and the main center of foreign commerce. Founded to serve as a hub port connecting the main sea lanes of the Xidao Gulf to Uddo, the previous capital, and the fertile inland of southeastern Minkai via busy fluvial routes, Kasai experienced rapid growth during the Teikoku Shogunate. When Uddo was razed and abandoned with the end of Teikoku rule, Kasai was already the most important community of Minkai, and so it was chosen as the new capital. As the current seat of the empire, Kasai hosts the imperial palace, the palace of the governor, various holy monuments, and the busiest port in Minkai. From the imperial palace, the Jade Regent rules the land, his edicts being meted out with ruthless efficiency by legions of servants, soldiers, and more sinister agents. The city of Kasai is presented in detail in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #54.

Oda: The granary of Minkai, Oda's countryside hosts the most productive rice paddies in the empire. The city itself has seen the coming and going of thousands of Tian immigrants, recruited to work as farmhands in the rich estates of the local feudal lords. Oda is the Minkai city with the most resident foreigners, mostly Tian merchants,

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artisans, and restaurateurs, who have come over the generations to support their own communities across the Xidao Gulf and beyond. Numerous criminal groups have grown influential in Oda, with bandits preying on farmers and travelers headed to the city, several yakuza groups running discreet rackets in the city itself, and pirate junks watching for poorly guarded merchants ships sailing too close to Aogaito Island.

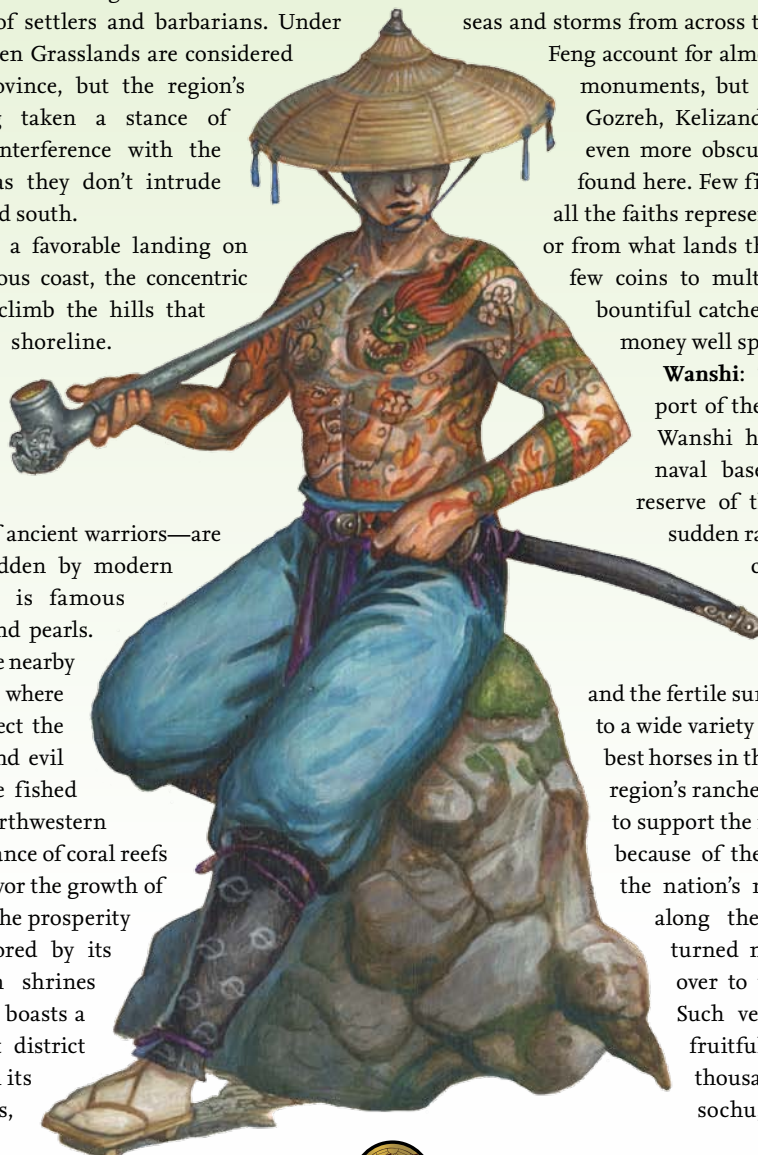
The Osogen Grasslands: Near the Forest of Spirits, Osogen is inhabited by two kindred of barbarians: the Utare, fishermen and hunters who keep to the coasts, and the Yumogu, proud nomadic herders with a reputation for deceit. Both peoples were slowly driven back to the grasslands by the Minkai people in a centuries-long struggle that largely subsided before the rise of the Teikoku Shogunate. The Yumogu and the Utare have never been able to seriously challenge the might of the empire since then, but the southern reaches of Osogen have been contested between generations of settlers and barbarians. Under imperial law the Osogen Grasslands are considered part of Sakakabe Province, but the region's governors have long taken a stance of disinterest and noninterference with the barbarians, so long as they don't intrude upon the more civilized south.

Sakakabe: Built on a favorable landing on an otherwise treacherous coast, the concentric terraces of Sakakabe climb the hills that overlook the narrow shoreline. The lowest terraces lean on the ruins of a stone fortress built millennia ago, whose ancient stone walls—adorned with reliefs of ancient warriors—are almost completely hidden by modern structures. Sakakabe is famous for trading in silver and pearls. Silver is extracted in the nearby Sankyodai Mountains, where several fortresses protect the mines from bandits and evil humanoids. Pearls are fished along the entire northwestern coast, where an abundance of coral reefs and natural lagoons favor the growth of oysters and conches. The prosperity of Sakakabe is mirrored by its culture. Besides rich shrines and temples, the town boasts a refined entertainment district that is famous for both its teahouses and theatres,

which are second only to those in Kasai. The high standard of living of the town's middle class, coupled with the somewhat lenient attitude of its governor, has allowed the yakuza to thrive in most of their traditional activities, especially gambling. The openness and appeal of these games have become something of an attraction for visitors, lending the city's single yakuza group a measure of legitimacy not found elsewhere in the country.

Shogokabe: This rugged city overlooks a large bay at the confluence of many nonnavigable streams and irrigation canals. The chief fishing port in Minkai, it boasts a mile-long wharf from which a multitude of junks sail every day to fish the bountiful waters of the Sorui Gulf. Shogokabe is a pacific and welcoming town, known throughout the nation for its symbol and regional specialty, the purple Sorui squid. The fishermen of Sorui are highly practical when it comes to both their work and their faith, and the city's wharves are lined with dozens of shrines dedicated to deities of the seas and storms from across the world. Statues of Hei Feng account for almost three-quarters of the monuments, but images of the faiths of Gozreh, Kelizandri, Valani, Dagon, and even more obscure faiths might also be found here. Few fishermen claim to know all the faiths represented along the sea front, or from what lands they hail, but if tithing a few coins to multiple deities wins them bountiful catches, the sailors consider it money well spent.

Wanshi: The main commercial port of the south coast of Minkai, Wanshi harbors a well-defended naval base, built to protect the reserve of the imperial fleet from sudden raids. Like Shogokabe, the city of Wanshi bases its economy on fishing and farming rather than on commerce, and the fertile surrounding plains are put to a wide variety of agricultural uses. The best horses in the empire come from the region's ranches, with the majority sold to support the imperial cavalry. In part because of the city's association with the nation's military, canny farmers along the Awahana River have turned much of their rice crop over to the production of sake. Such ventures have proven so fruitful that now hundreds of thousands of gallons of sake, sochu, wine, and medical



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN MINKAI

Aquatic	Forest	Hills	Mountains	Plains	Creature	Avg. CR	Source
1–12	—	—	—	—	1d6 ningyos	4	<i>Pathfinder</i> #37 80
—	1–8	—	—	—	2d6 sagaris	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 234
—	9–15	1–9	1–8	1–10	1d12 tengus	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 263
—	16–21	—	—	11–16	1d6 oni, spirit	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 209
—	22–27	10–16	9–15	—	1 rajju	5	see page 90
—	28–36	—	—	—	1d4 tanukis	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 259
13–49	—	—	—	—	2d6 kappas	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 166
50–66	37–41	17–21	16–21	17–21	1 kirin	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 168
—	—	22–30	—	22–32	1d6 oni, kuwa	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 208
—	—	31–37	22–28	33–39	1 baku	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 31
—	42–46	38–43	29–34	40–47	1d8 foo lions	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 120
—	47–54	44–52	35–42	48–56	1d6 oni, ja noi	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #52 90
—	55–60	53–57	—	57–63	1d6 penanggalens	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 216
67–77	—	58–63	43–51	—	1 yuki-onna	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 287
—	61–68	64–71	52–59	64–71	1d4 manananggals	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 190
—	69–75	72–77	60–63	72–79	1d6 vampires, jiang-shis	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 278
—	76–84	—	—	—	1 kami, zuishin	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 165
—	85–94	—	64–69	—	1 nue	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 204
—	—	78–84	70–76	80–89	1d4 oni, ogre mage	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 221
—	—	85–89	77–84	—	1 jorogumo	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 156
—	—	90–98	85–94	90–96	1 oni, earth yai	13	see page 88
—	95–100	—	—	97–100	1 adult forest dragon	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 94
78–91	—	—	—	—	1 kami, suiijin	14	<i>Pathfinder</i> #52 88
92–100	—	—	—	—	1 sea bonze	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 239
—	—	99–100	95–100	—	1 ancient underworld dragon	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 103

alcohols flow down the river for sale in Wanshi every year. This practice makes the nearby hills and forest a favorite home of many tanukis (*Bestiary* 3 259), which prove to be both a curse and a blessing for the regional brewers.

ADVENTURING IN MINKAI

Although a highly civilized land, Minkai is not without its dangers and opportunities for adventure. Noted here are just a few of the most infamous sites across the empire.

Aogaito Island: While technically the feudal domain of the Kinoshita family, Aogaito Island, with its numerous coves and nearby shoals, has long served as a base for piracy in the Sorui Gulf and beyond. While the younger members of the Kinoshita family insist that their family has no ties to the pirates that hunt near their lands, their patron, Domeki, is said to be either too senile to effectively combat the threat—or the secret master of the seafaring bandits.

Sangoshi: The island city of Sangoshi crumbled into the sea long centuries ago, drowning a metropolis of beauty, art, and science beneath the waves. In the centuries since, the nearby coral reefs have overgrown the underwater ruins, transforming them into a vast maze of living caves. Large numbers of eel-like siyokoys dwell in the sunken city, from which they raid the western coast of Minkai. Legends say

that every 44 years the strange wonders of Sangoshi rise from the water for one day, only to sink again at day's end.

Seven Venoms Springs: A cluster of mysterious hot springs connected to an ancient temple of Nalinivati, these acrid smelling pools are said to bubble with the poisons of seven deadly nagas buried beneath the mountain. The springs are notoriously difficult to find, supposedly hidden by the illusions maintained by the temple's mysterious caretakers.

The Three Fires: The collective name for Mount Kazunan, Mount Kumijinja, and Mount Yogan, the Three Fires are a trio of active volcanoes that run along the spine of the Kamifushi and Kyojin Mountains. Legends say that each is a passage to a vast realm of fire deep beneath Minkai, where underworld dragons hoard the greatest treasures of the earth.

Uddo: The nation's capital under the rule of the Teikoku Shogunate, Uddo was razed during the battle that marked the downfall of the Teikoku family and the rise of the modern nation of Minkai. In the centuries since its destruction, the city has largely been reclaimed by nature, leading bandits to frequently use the maze-like ruins as hideouts, tempting tomb raiders to plunder the ancient tombs of Teikoku shoguns, and serving as the source for endless tales of deathless soldiers and enraged rulers past.