

JADE REGENT



KASAI

“I’VE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER PLACE QUITE LIKE KASAI. THEY MAKE MUCH OF HONOR THERE, OF TRADITION AND MINDING YOURSELF, BUT REALLY, IT’S ALL ABOUT MAKING SURE THE CITY GETS ITS CUT OF YOU BEFORE YOU HEAD ON. IT’S ALL CONTRADICTIONS. ON THE SURFACE EVERYTHING’S BEAUTY AND DELICATE IDEALS, BUT YOU DON’T EVEN HAVE TO DIG TO FIND THE DARKNESS AND UGLY TRUTHS. YOU CAN BE AS POLITE AS YOUR MOTHER TAUGHT YOU AND STILL FIND OUT YOU’VE OFFENDED SOMEONE FOR LIFE. BUT IT CAN GO THE OTHER WAY TOO. SOMETIMES YOU GO LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UGLY BUT TURN UP A TREASURE OF THE SWEETEST SORT. I SUPPOSE THAT’S THE REAL REASON WHY I KEEP COMING BACK.”

—IOZIF THE DOUR, ULFEN TRADER

KASAI

Powerful warlords, fickle crime bosses, ingenious generals, and goddess-graced emperors have all had their glorious ambitions and insidious plots tested in the golden city of Kasai. The city's ageless, shining walls have seen the rise and fall of empires as its own influence withstands the test of time. Kasai has existed since before the foundation of Minkai, becoming the capital of the new empire after the old capital of Uddo was razed at the end of the Teikoku Shogunate. Since then, the city has flourished as the favored seat of the nation's imperial families, growing in influence and power, its prosperity mirroring that of the empire. But despite recent troubles, Kasai remains the treasure of Minkai, a gate for traders from across the world, the throne-city of an ancient empire, and the site of treasures and adventures untold.

KASAI

LN metropolis

Corruption +6; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +7; **Law** +6; **Lore** +6;
Society +1

Qualities holy site, prosperous, notorious, rumormongering citizens, strategic location, tourist attraction

Danger +20

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 164,200 (163,394 humans, 380 tengus, 112 kitsune, 97 wayangs, 217 other)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 30,400; **Purchase Limit** 200,000; **Spellcasting** 10th
Minor Items all available; **Medium Items** 4d4 items; **Major**

Items 3d4 items

KASAI CULTURE

A strict social hierarchy divides Kasai's populace, one determined by tradition and family heritage rather than material wealth. At the top of this order is the nobility, consisting of the imperial family, the clan lords and their families, and trusted retainers. Next come the samurai and lesser nobility of the empire. Commoners and free people such as farmers, artisans, and merchants follow—merchants actually being considered socially inferior in status to farmers and artisans as they do not create any goods. The final, lowest members of this social hierarchy are the *hinin*, meaning “non-persons.” This group comprises hereditary outcasts, itinerant entertainers, beggars, professional gamblers, and members of those professions that involve butchering animals and handling dead flesh.

Outside of this social hierarchy are the ronin and many religious figures such as monks and clerics. Because they exist outside of the hierarchy, their positions are less clear. Usually, it is safe to say that ronin rank somewhere between samurai and farmers. Clergy and monks should

always be shown respect, though they hold little sway over the secular lives of commoners.

Life is a struggle, and the people Minkai know this all too well. Sometimes all one can count on having is pride, and it can become as important to a person as his own life. In order to best maintain this pride, Minkai's culture insists that it be acknowledged in others, constantly giving them the opportunity to maintain their own dignity. Causing embarrassment for others can become cause for shame for oneself or one's family. Displaying negative emotions toward others is regarded as both a sign of weakness and an undignified act. Separation of personal life and public life is very important to the people of Minkai and serves as a means of preserving pride and propriety while maintaining hierarchical demands. As a result, strangers to Kasai often view residents' behavior as remorseless or aloof, but the passions of the locals are neither fewer nor cooler than those of any other race or culture; the people of Kasai are merely adept at the elaborate social interplay that weaves through every element of their daily lives.

KASAI GAZETTEER

The city of Kasai is a huge metropolis, and any gazetteer can only briefly touch upon the wonders of this beautiful and inscrutable city. Beyond the city proper, three outlying areas that are not considered to officially be part of the city support it from across the Hebigawa River: the Hitsugi District, controlled by the local yakuza; the Red Lantern District, which serves as the entertainment district; and the Reeds, a shantytown sprawl of *hinin* families.

Badger's Folly Bathhouse: The bathhouse of **Yu** and **Otaru** (NG female and male human expert 3) has long been known for its clean facilities, its attentive hosts, and the three stuffed badgers overlooking its main tub. A natural hot spring fuels the bathhouse, inviting guests to ascribe all manner of restorative properties to its salty waters. The Badger's Folly had enjoyed good business until Yu woke one morning to find a young guest disemboweled and floating in the bubbling water. Since then, it's rumored that the ghost of the victim boldly rises from the tub each night, hunting for the killer among the patrons and staff.

Baku Theater: Named for a mythical creature that eats nightmares, this theater hosts performances in a variety of styles from across Tian Xia, from recitals of traditional music and kabuki plays to wayang shadow puppetry and Po Lian throat singing. However, what sets the performances of this theater apart from others is its use of illusions and subtle magic to enhance shows. **Daichi** (CN male wayang summoner 8) owns and manages the theater, and he and his son **Dijo** (CN male wayang sorcerer 3) create the majority of the magical effects the place is known for. The wayangs tend to keep backstage, letting their human staff deal with the audience and most business partners. Twice

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LOCATIONS IN KASAI

- 1 Inu Island
- 2 Golden Ghost Pagoda
- 3 The Reeds
- 4 Red Lantern Row
- 5 Jade Mantis Dojo
- 6 Baku Theater
- 7 Sorrowful Tiger Sake House
- 8 Offices of the Hitsugi Gumi
- 9 Badger's Folly Bathhouse
- 10 Setting Sun Cemetery
- 11 Temple of the Sun's Blade
- 12 Monastery of the Thunderous Cricket
- 13 Rising Dragon Dojo
- 14 Tortoise Feather Stable
- 15 Temple of Woe
- 16 Imperial Jade Eye Academy
- 17 Tree of Souls
- 18 Flying Leopard Dojo
- 19 Imperial Garden
- 20 Teardrop Teahouse
- 21 Fox's Grove
- 22 Imperial Palace

a year, the pair invite the city's small wayang community to the theater for major cultural holidays involving elaborate shadow plays, festivities, and, some say, a strange blurring of the boundaries between the Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow.

Flying Leopard Dojo: This immaculately maintained dojo has few students. The harsh, lone instructor, **Chen Lau Wan** (LE male human monk 8), teaches a variety of martial arts and archery, but also serves as an agent of the Kusari-Gama. He goes out of the way to create friction between his two chief rival dojos, the Jade Mantis Dojo and the Rising Dragon Dojo, using such conflicts as a crucible in which to test potential students—and taking note of those who show promise with the intention of recruiting them into the Kusari-Gama. Lately, he has been attempting to recruit Saeko, mistress of the Jade Mantis Dojo, and orchestrated a recent attack by the Rising Dragon that left her school disgraced. He hopes shame and desperation will help bring her into the arms of the Kusari-Gama. (The Kusari-Gama are described in detail in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Faction Guide*.)

Fox's Grove: The walled structures in this neighborhood serve as homes to some of the most desirable courtesans in the city. The courtesans living here serve as mistresses and escorts to the senior members of the military and the lesser nobility. They will not serve anyone of lesser status and are treated as near nobility. One such courtesan of note

is **Shimada Mari** (N female human witch 6), who secretly holds the reigns of the Hitsugi Gumi yakuza group. The leader of the Hitsugi Gumi, Eguchi Zoisaito, is so besotted with Mari that he willingly does anything for her. Mari is often secretly visited by Zoisaito, whom she believes she controls through a combination of spells, hexes, and drugs. The yakuza boss is among the youngest and most effective leaders the Hitsugi Gumi has ever had, largely thanks to the sound strategies and covert mystical support that Mari provides.

Golden Ghost Pagoda: Once the pride of the city, the gold-plated Kourin Pagoda now looms as a tower of terrors in the heart of Kasai. Locally known as the Golden Ghost Pagoda, it only appears on nights when no natural light shines upon its surface. Formerly, this pagoda was a monument to Setsuna Kuga of the Perfected Blade, who established Kasai in ages past. Four centuries ago, the remains of many interred in the pagoda were stolen by a mysterious band of thieves, driving the spirits of the desecrated bodies mad. Not long after, the priests of the Temple of the Sun's Blade moved to seal the unquiet spirits in the pagoda, but their exorcism failed spectacularly. After this attempt, the pagoda withdrew from the heavens' light, only to appear on moonless and cloud-covered nights. Since then, none have been able to successfully abate the anger of the spirits resting here, and its grounds remain closed and guarded—against both those who would enter, and anything that might attempt to leave.

Imperial Garden: The imperial garden is the largest maintained garden in the city, with a wide variety of ornate ponds, meditation gardens, and rarified plant life not found anywhere else in Tian Xia. Rumors hold that strange fey and spiritual beings traverse this sacred garden and have had pleasant discourse with numerous past emperors. These stories have largely faded in local memory, though, as no new tales of such encounters have occurred in years.

Imperial Jade Eye Academy: The imperial academy of mysticism teaches the arcane arts to those with the talent and wealth to attend. While the school teaches a variety of classes on divination and elemental control, it also holds classes on herbalism, alchemy, and various ancient medical traditions. **Soseki** (CG male human wizard 10) is the court-appointed head of the academy. He is said to have been raised in the wilderness by a kitsune woman and is regarded as both a trickster and something of a problem-solver. A frequent attendant of the imperial court, Soseki cultivates the appearance of a corrupt bureaucrat for the benefit of the Jade Regent and his minions, but is popular with his school's students for his wisdom and subtle sense of humor. Those who encounter him quickly notice his jade eye, a potent magical object passed down among the school's masters that supposedly grants the ability to see anything within the academy grounds.

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Jade Mantis Dojo: The instructor of this dojo, **Saeko** (CG female human monk 4), teaches kenjutsu, the art of the sword. She has only been running the dojo for a few months after her father died and left it to his only child. Until recently, the dojo had been faring well under her supervision, and though the students are few in number, they showed promise and were doing well in competitions. Lately, however, members have been afflicted with an illness that has kept them incapacitated and incapable of protecting their dojo's honor. During a challenge from the Rising Dragon dojo, they were incapable of effectively defending their dojo. As a result, their dojo's sign was taken, leaving them humiliated.

Monastery of the Thunderous Cricket: This monastery is dedicated to seeking the perfection of mind and body under the guidance of the god Irori, yet many of the monks here are deaf or hard of hearing. The giant, golden bell in this monastery is a well-known magical landmark capable of amplifying the voice of any who speak into it by a hundredfold. An old story about the bell tells how it was once used by a lowly initiate of the order to awaken everyone in the city when the inhabitants were overcome by magical slumber. Supposedly, the young monk had discovered the bell's properties when she was nearly deafened by the chirping of a cricket within. The monks guard the bell jealously, ensuring that no one uses it for selfish or mischievous reasons.

Offices of the Hitsugi Gumi: The Hitsugi Gumi control both the law and the crime in the three districts that fall outside the walls of Kasai. Members of the yakuza group all have some degree of tattooing that serves as an indication not only of service, but also of rank, and a few higher-ranking members even have spell tattoos granted to them by yakuza sorcerers (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic* for details). **Eguchi Zoisaito** (LE male human rogue 4/samurai 3) currently serves as the head of the family, his rise over his sisters after their father's death proving as meteoric as it was unexpected. He is a man of few vices, but the one he indulges in too frequently is visiting the Fox's Grove, which he does almost nightly. From the Hitsugi Gumi's public office, which operates as a legitimate importer of clay and building supplies, Zoisaito and his followers uphold the traditions of the Eguchi family and maintain law and order in the Hitsugi District, the Red Lantern District, and the Reeds.

Red Lantern Row: Much of Kasai's entertainment and adult recreation can be found along this main thoroughfare through the Red Lantern District, where patrons come to relieve stress and let themselves forget their worries for a little while. Large brothel facilities are located just off of Red Lantern Row, as are numerous theaters, inns, sake taverns, teahouses, and gambling dens, as well as a rather vigorous black market. This part of town is surrounded by the Hebigawa River and the canal system on all sides. The

only way into or out of the Red Lantern District is over one of the seven bridges crossing the river and canals. Members of the Hitsugi Gumi stand guard upon these bridges, and all who enter the district must leave any weapons they might have in their care, so as to prevent the district's varied conflicts from becoming deadly. However, those willing to pay an "exception tax" can purchase a wooden token to tie to their weapons, which permits such weapons to be carried in the district so long as they are kept sheathed.

The Reeds: The only part of Kasai that might be considered a slum, the Reeds are where the vast majority of the city's hinin population lives. Numerous families live in cramped, interconnected houses, where crime and poor sanitation prove to be constant dangers. Despite the residents' low status, most accept their lot in life, but this isn't always the case. The irascible **Mother Mariku** (LG female human bard 3), a 72-year-old widow who has only left Kasai once in her life, vocally disapproves of the Hitsugi Gumi, the increasing influence of the Temple of Woe, and—in quieter tones—the Jade Regent. While she would never do anything more provocative than giving a yakuza tough a public tongue-lashing or grumble about the Jade Regent, most know that she'd open her home and cook at least one fine meal for any who did.

Rising Dragon Dojo: Instructor **Isamu** (LN male human monk 7) is flush with pride after his dojo's recent victory over the Jade Mantis Dojo, with which the Rising Dragon has harbored a decades-long feud. The surprising thing is that the Jade Mantis traditionally offered significant competition, but the Rising Dragon's recent victory was so complete that Isamu's students brazenly stole the opposing school's sign. Currently, the Rising Dragon students proudly display the Jade Mantis Dojo's sign upside down beneath their own outside their dojo.

Setting Sun Cemetery: For centuries most locals have believed this ancient cemetery is haunted, and residents of the surrounding neighborhood built a small shrine to appease the restless dead here. The Setting Sun Cemetery was once a part of a larger temple's grounds before the canal system was installed. Since the waterways were constructed—over 200 years ago—the cemetery has been cut off from the sacred temple grounds, insulting the souls laid to rest here to the point that some make their displeasure known in and around the graveyard's grounds. Bodies are still occasionally buried here, typically by the Hitsugi Gumi, who do so to purposefully dishonor fallen enemies and traitors.

Sorrowful Tiger Sake House: This sake house is a favorite hangout of ronin and disenfranchised samurai, as well as the local constabulary, who frequently visit to stop drunken brawls. The owner and operator, **Arundo** (LN male human samurai order of the ronin 10), is a tough old warrior whom his guests know well enough to understand that if they ruin his sake house, he will ruin them. Arundo

also runs an employment service of sorts for warriors in need of work. He has contacts in the city's import office, the yakuza, and several lesser noble families as well, doing his best to match warriors in need with tasks suited to their skills.

Teardrop Teahouse: This teahouse is considered to have the most talented geisha in the city and is frequented by some of Kasai's most notable clientele. The Teardrop Teahouse is actually a base of operations for a quiet congregation that worships Lady Nanbyo, goddess of suffering. **Shura** (CN female human cleric 5), the teahouse's night manager and leader of Lady Nanbyo's local flock, downplays the wantonly destructive elements of her goddess's faith in favor of propagating or soothing sorrows. For some, she and her geisha offer a soothing balm to the trials of a hard life; for others, the geisha's subtle advice and seductions encourage strife. Shura seeks to balance the pains of those who come through her teahouse's doors, doing her best to alleviate the pains of the undeserving while increasing the suffering of the wicked—all as she and the house's icy geisha judge.

Temple of the Sun's Blade: Devoted to Kasai's patron Shizuru, goddess of ancestors, honor, swordplay, and the sun, this temple is the largest and oldest in the city. The temple grounds and the nearby homes of its priests and significant support staff are surrounded on all sides by Kasai's canal system, with the only access being via ornate bridges. This temple and its faith, though popular with the masses, are currently in disfavor with the Jade Regent. In the past, many of the temple's clergy were entrusted with important positions in the city's constabulary and judiciary administrations, but now rumors grow that Shizuru's faithful will be lucky to retain possession of their temple, as new laws impose heavy taxes on both religious structures and canal-front properties, and the public's faith has been shaken since the priests' failed exorcism of the Golden Ghost Pagoda.

Temple of Woe: Worship of Yaezhing—god of harsh justice, punishment, and murder—was never popular in Kasai before the rise of the Jade Regent, but it has grown considerably in recent years. Since then, many of the city's judges have been appointed from the temple's growing priesthood, while the ranks of the city's constabulary are recruited from the temple's flock and attendant monks. With the backing of some of the nobility,

the head priest of the Temple of Woe, **Tsunan** (LE male human cleric 11), has petitioned for an audience with the Jade Regent, intending to request that he be allowed to seize the Temple of the Sun Blade's grounds and repurpose the site for the worship of Yaezhing. The petition claims that Shizuru has abandoned the city and her clergy are no longer capable protectors. It goes on to assert that the faithful of the Temple of Woe can maintain order in Kasai with the protective authority of Yaezhing guiding them.

Tortoise Feather Stable: The stable and livery of **Aburatsubo** (NG male human monk 4) houses and protects the personal steeds of some of the city's wealthiest and most esteemed residents. Aside from providing unparalleled care, the stable also once served as a strange sort of dojo, where Aburatsubo trained some of the best sumo wrestlers in the nation. Today, Aburatsubo is retired, having left the world of competitive wrestling after his last protegee embarrassed and betrayed him. He still maintains a fighting ring within one of his barns, as some part of him refuses to abandon the passions of his youth even if he says he's completely retired.

Tree of Souls: An order of priestesses devoted to Tsukiyo protect this giant cherry tree, treating it and every foot of earth within 121 steps of its boughs as sacred ground. The faithful claim that the tree is immortal and its precious sap possesses incredible healing properties—though tapping the tree for this fluid would be considered the ultimate sacrilege. Some tales refer to the tree as the soul of the very empire of Minkai, going so far as to even claim that the empire cannot fall until the great tree of souls does. But worryingly, the tree has not bloomed in 3 years. During this period the tree has suffered from an infestation of oversized cicadas that appear to be slowly eating away at its roots. All attempts to heal the tree have only slowed the infestation's damage, as the insects prove highly resistant to both physical and magical means of removal and spawn at an impossible rate. **Osuzu** (NG female human druid 11) is the head priestess tending the tree and has requested the assistance from followers of Tsukiyo and druids from across the country. Despite the urgency of her call for aid, few—and none of especial talent—have answered.

