

# PATHFINDER

## CAMPAIGN SETTING™



# Distant Shores

# MAYBE YOU SHOULD STAY HOME



~Segada  
City of Keys

The Segadans are a generous people, but firm. Colonists without the proper paperwork are never allowed through their mountains to the continent's interior. Leoto, our expedition leader, tried to sneak past. We all miss him.



~Ular Kel  
Caravan City

In the Crossway market of Ular Kel, the city folk hate the horse tribes, the horse tribes hate the city folk, and pretty much everybody hates the Keleshites. But as long as you've got gold, everyone's your friend.



~Dhucharg  
City of Conquest

You want to go to the hobgoblin capital? Seriously? Look, I know the books say they're civilized, but in this case "civilized" means they give you a show trial before they behead you. Why not try a nice elven city instead?



~Anuli  
City of New Beginnings

When your queens are personally chosen by all the angels in Heaven, it's no surprise that things here are pretty cozy. But even then, people can get antsy after 10,000 years of the good life. Don't even mention Geb.



~Aelyosos  
City of Tides

Aelyosos is a pretty choice spot, all sparkling streets and friendly merfolk and hero-gods as civic leaders. But don't mess with the cyclopes—they can see more with one eye than you've ever seen with two.



~Radripal  
City of Arches

Do yourself a favor and hide any holy symbols while you're in Radripal, at least in the fancy districts. Vudra may have a thousand gods, but the folks in charge in Radripal don't care for the divine.

# PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING

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## On the Cover



Kerem Beyit shows us how to fight the powers that be as Rivani and Sajan take on an evil rakshasa overlord in the Vudran city of Radripal.



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## Reference

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd).

<i>Advanced Character Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Bestiary 4</i>	B4
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Mythic Adventures</i>	MA
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC



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## Going Off the Map

The Inner Sea region has long been the primary focus of the Pathfinder campaign setting. Its myriad nations have a near endless supply of challenges fit for adventurers of all personalities, classes, and levels. At the same time, however, there have always been hints of the wider world, people and things not found on the familiar map, cultures on entirely different continents linked to the lands of the Inner Sea by trade and legend. Now, at long last, the curtain is being pulled back on six of these far-flung cities, from Ular Kel among the steppes of central Casmaron to bustling Segada in the mountains of eastern Arcadia. By exploring these cities, characters from the Inner Sea can get their first glimpses of fascinating and unfamiliar cultures.

Yet while some adventurers—particularly Pathfinders—need little urging to venture over the horizon, others may be more rooted in the lands of their birth. The following section offers ideas and hooks to help give your party a compelling reason to explore distant shores.

### Aelyosos

Nearly any ship that travels east from the markets of Katapesh and Sedeq passes within sight of Iblydos. The archipelago's city-states provide much-needed protection from the Obari Ocean's terrors, which range from aquatic dragons to terrible storms to the daring pirates that brave it all in order to plunder the rich cargoes bound for distant Vudra or Avistan. To the captains of the Inner Sea region, Aelyosos is famous both for its beauty and for being among the first ports available to eastbound vessels.

For an Inner Sea resident, there are few better and faster ways to reach Vudra or southern Casmaron than on an eastbound merchant ship, and Katapeshi captains frequently hire additional mercenaries to fend off the Obari's dangers before attempting the trek. Many such guards sign on only long enough to reach Iblydos, famed for its cyclopean seers who can foretell the greatness of true heroes and grant them power beyond the ken of mere mortals. Even for the majority who do not earn mythic power, the archipelago presents countless opportunities—as the fabled birthplace of innumerable monsters, as a cosmopolitan waypoint on the way to even more distant lands, and as perhaps the first safe harbor for those forced to flee the Inner Sea region.

### Anuli

Covering much of Garund's southeastern coastline, Holomog is a prosperous nation whose people long ago dedicated themselves to the empyreal lords, and whose 14 queens channel divine energies into their respective provinces. Their nation is supernaturally bountiful—so long as their rulers remain of good spirits and

sound mind—and over its 9,000-year history, countless cities have been founded, grown to incredible size, and gradually been abandoned as local politics and resources shift, covering the verdant land in ancient, abandoned metropolises dating back to the Age of Darkness, attracting curious adventurers and treasure-seekers from across Garund and beyond.

Holomog's northernmost port, Anuli, is a city of trade and intrigue. Still recovering from a massive explosion that reshaped the city—the Paroxsys—its people depend more on foreign trade than their sister settlements, and adventurers from the Inner Sea region may want to peruse its legendary markets or arrange trade deals with Holomog or more distant nations. With the death of their provincial queen last year and no immediate heir named, factions within the city and beyond mobilize to take control of the throne in a nation where even a foreign-born pirate captain might rise to rule.

### Dhucharǵ

Devotion to the military is paramount in this vicious hobgoblin city, as most citizens believe that the nation of Kaoling is destined to one day dominate Tian Xia. However, despite the rigid order enforced here, an internal struggle between the autocrat Tsung-cha Kavangaki and dissenting members of the ruling Council of Nine has created a powder keg that could blow the city and nation into chaos. With vast military and financial resources at their fingertips, each leader would gladly hire the right foreign—and therefore unknown—agents to clandestinely work on his or her behalf in the city.

Intrigue aside, many of the leaders have also discreetly dispatched allies to hobgoblin strongholds in Avistan, including Isgar and Andoran, and even to the Bandu Hills of Sargava in Garund. There, they quietly look for hobgoblin leaders who might accept wealth and a prestigious title in Dhucharǵ for willingness to conquer new lands for Kaoling in the respective leader's name. In Isgar, some say that several hobgoblin tribes are doing just that, preparing for a long migration over the Crown of the World. Others claim that the goblinoids are simply looking for revenge for their losses in the Goblinblood Wars. Either way, an increase in hobgoblin raids around the Inner Sea might be part of a much larger plan masterminded from Dhucharǵ.

### Radripal

The Inner Sea region and Vudra have a long history of interaction, dating back to Maharajah Khiben-Sald's decade-long visit to Nex in 563 AR. The island nation of

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Jalmeray retains close ties to Vudra even to this day, and serves as a perfect gateway to adventuring in Radripal. Many of Jalmeray's Vudrani citizens have family or close friends in Vudra, and one could easily ask a group of Inner Sea adventurers to check on loved ones in Radripal from whom communication has ceased.

Agents working directly for the Thakur of Jalmeray could find themselves tasked with delivering important information, valuable relics, or even a diplomatic envoy to the City of Arches. The intended recipient could be a member of the corrupt Radripal bureaucracy, a trader working in the city's many bazaars, a representative of one of the religious organizations found in Silver Shore, or a community leader working for the Argent Council.

Because Lord Akishar maintains contacts throughout Vudra and beyond as part of his expansive trade empire, adventurers in the Inner Sea region may also find themselves embroiled in one of his schemes. Following such a plot back to its source would likely require heroes to travel to Radripal to cut off the corrupt organization's proverbial head. One of the most established of these contacts within the Inner Sea region is the Arkona family of Korvosa, who are actually rakshasas with strong ties to Radripal and Akishar himself.

## Segada

The easiest way to get adventurers from the Inner Sea onto the shores of Arcadia is to have them visit one of the Avistani colonies. These settlements are small and restricted from exploiting the land, making the long and dangerous journey across the Arcadian Ocean rarely worth the expense, but adventurers could end up in Elesomare at the request of the Eagle Knights, investigating claims of Lumber Consortium malfeasance. Or they could arrive in Canorus at the behest of the Chelish government to look into reports of a tragic attack on that tiny town. Or they could travel to Anchor's End for Kintargo's Vashnarstill family to figure out why the noble clan's contract to import goods into Chelias was transferred to a rival in Corentyn. Of course, the PCs might also book passage for their own reasons—the land of Arcadia is a legendary place, and anyone looking to find her fortune, study unusual magic, or hunt strange creatures could do far worse than Segada. Regardless of their reason for visiting, prospective travelers to Segada must wait along the coast and petition the government for entrance into the city—a law that might cause problems should a party from the Inner Sea region end up in the city by magic.

## Ular Kel

Though distant, Ular Kel is more than just a name on a map for the peoples of the Inner Sea region. Long-haul merchants and guards traveling east to Vudra, Kaladay, and other distant lands regularly pass through Ular

Kel, given its position atop some of the most important overland caravan routes on the continent. For those with magic, the journey is far shorter, and scholars and wizards of all sorts teleport into the city to consult the great Chirographica, a storehouse of knowledge to rival the greatest libraries of the Inner Sea region. Exiles, runaways, convicts, treasure hunters—for all of these, stories of the spice-laden markets of Ular Kel offer the prospect of starting over in a new land, far beyond the reach of even the greatest powers of the Inner Sea region.

Other Inner Sea residents might find Ular Kel calling to them more specifically. An outbreak of the Ghost Plague might send healers scurrying for information on how Ular Kel finally stopped it. Taldan diplomats or Lion Blades, concerned with Qadira's growing threat, might travel to Ular Kel to learn how the horse tribes beat back the Empire of Kelesh, or to try and convince them to attack the empire's eastern front once more. New prophecies from the Spire of Azi might rattle the church of Sarenrae to its core, forcing inquisitors to travel east to verify claims or put down heresy. Whether the goal is gold, gore, or lore, there's something for everyone in Ular Kel.





## AELYOSOS

Though many ships have crashed like waves against its coasts, few sailing through the fabled archipelago of Ibydos ever reach its interior. These islands are home to one of the world's oldest living civilizations, forged by an honored partnership between humans and cyclopes that staved off the Age of Darkness and founded a regional power led by hero-gods. Those traveling east from Katapesh and Jalmeray inevitably sight Aelysos, whose streets shimmer with emerald-green gardens and opalescent stucco facades. By night, its waters phosphoresce as iridescent waves flood the lowest districts, carrying with them merfolk bearing pearls, fish, and other fruits of the sea to trade with their terrestrial allies. Yet for all its seemingly delicate beauty, Aelysos also stands as a bastion against the Obari Ocean's greatest dangers.

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## City of Tides



### Overview

To most familiar with the Obari Crossing—the lucrative but dangerous maritime trade route that connects Katapesh with Vudra's prosperous markets—the Ibydan archipelago is a welcome opportunity to resupply and take shelter from the Obari Ocean's perilous waves and sea creatures. Rumors of warring locals, ferocious legendary beasts, all-powerful tyrants, and fallen kingdoms encourage the more gullible captains to weigh anchor and press on, yet most of these stories have grown out of an ever-changing tapestry of city-states that baffles both casual visitors and dedicated historians.

Aelysos is the westernmost noteworthy port on the island chain, and as a result serves as the first taste many travelers get of Ibydan culture and hospitality. Made beautiful by the tireless work of its citizens, the fruits of trade, and gardens famous throughout the Obari Ocean,

Aelysos is overall a peaceful place to do business. Its harbor is narrow, yet deep and protected. Its port sustains rows of warehouses that store trade goods from three major continents. Its people are cosmopolitan and welcoming, educated both by a constant stream of foreign ideas and the millennia-old tradition of cyclopean tutelage.

For all the bounty the sea brings, however, the water also threatens to destroy all that the city represents. Since the Age of Lost Omens began, powerful tides have swept in from the north, flooding several neighborhoods that are now disused. The harbinger of these waves is an immense thalassic behemoth that arrives every year, thrashing violently until appeased with offerings of gold, livestock, incense, and other valuables. The populace dares not resist, having failed once to save the city-state's sister city from the monster a century ago. Sahuagin have since occupied the lost sister city's ruins, using them as a launching point for raids against Aelysos's coast.

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Yet the city is not defenseless. The once-xenophobic merfolk have recently ascended to the continental shelf and waterlogged portions of Aelysos, helping to defend it against the sahuagin. Two hero-gods stand united in the city's defense, even as they clash over policy and politics. The citizens also consider it their duty to train and exercise, knowing that one day they may have to take up arms to fend off the aquatic menace that grows stronger every year, and to discourage their covetous neighbors from poaching the city-state's riches. In the meantime, the leaders hope that the gift of prophecy will return to their cyclopean allies, directing them to a decisive victory and lasting peace.

## Appearance

Aelysos occupies a narrow inlet on the northwest coast of the island Lalisri. Terraces along a steep, rocky slope to the north support a variety of fruit trees but few buildings. Likewise, the bare stone promontory to the southwest hems in the city, though atop this tower stand the many-columned temples that house Aelysos's dwindling cyclops population. The city nestles in the space between these two heights, dotted with lush gardens and parks kept green all year round.

The tides are predictable yet dramatic, flooding the low-lying areas for all but a few hours twice a day. As a result, the low hill at the city's heart is more often than not an island accessible only by patient swimmers and a pair of suspension bridges that cross a moat speckled with inundated roofs. Ornate structures constructed of local marble stand in this area, including the eclectic collection of shrines dedicated to Aelysos's resident hero-gods from throughout the ages. Rising water also makes an island out of a squat peninsula to the northwest, where the sprawling manor compounds cling to dignity despite portions having sunk into the waterlogged ground. Even the docks have adapted to the tides, most floating between pylons that allow them to rise and fall as much as 15 feet over the course of a day.

By night, the waves stimulate bioluminescent plankton in the water, causing the entire coast to shimmer with an aquatic aurora. By day, the city sparkles from the mica-laden stucco used in most utilitarian buildings, though the construction styles may seem haphazard at times—a result of past regimes' attempts to rebuild Aelysos to match their respective visions. Recent construction efforts have created fairly uniform neighborhoods to accommodate a refugee-fed population boom, but it's still considered a point of pride for a homeowner to maintain at least one doorway and room that could comfortably host a cyclops visitor.

## History

As the cyclops empire of Ghol-Gan fell into self-destructive decadence and squalor, many of its intellectual refugees fled to Casmaron and clashed with the human inhabitants

## AELYSOS

NG large city

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +2;

**Economy** +5; **Law** +2;

**Lore** +4; **Society** +3

**Qualities** academic, mythic sanctum, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** mythic oligarchy

**Population** 15,200 (11,660 humans, 2,424 merfolk, 516 geniekin [sylphs and undines], 146 cyclopes, 122 fey, 332 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Chief Myth-Speaker Phimater** (NG female advanced cyclops)

**Doua-Ilox** (N male merfolk ranger 12)

**Halcmonis** (NG male undine<sup>B2</sup> oracle<sup>APG</sup> of Gozreh 14)

**Hero-God of Gardens and Orchards Kelksiomides** (NG male human druid 16/marshal<sup>MA</sup> 5)

**Hero-God of Seasons and Spears Psomeira** (LN female human skald<sup>ACG</sup> 13/champion<sup>MA</sup> 6)

**Sjoweir** (CN female oceanid<sup>B4</sup> aristocrat 4)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 8th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

**Mythic Sanctum** This settlement is the seat of power for one or more living hero-gods, granting each of the hero-gods additional influence so long as they reside here. Decrease the Corruption score by 2, and increase each resident hero-god's effective mythic tier by 1 for the purpose of granting spells.



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of Iblydos. The cyclopes predicted Earthfall, and the famous seer Ishkorandos prophesied the cyclopes' and Iblydians' mutual destruction if they did not unite against the coming disaster. As the sky grew dark, the humans despaired and turned to the giants for guidance, and the latter opened their granaries, minds, and books in exchange for help forging a new nation from the world's ashes. For several millennia this partnership enabled both to thrive. However, as the cyclops patrons of Iblydos gradually dwindled in number, intellect, and prophetic power, many lashed out at the humans, only to then be chased off the islands or into the hills. Only a small population maintained their clarity and moved into human-built cities or temples.

As the cyclopean leadership faded, so too did ties between city-states, which fragmented, warred with one another, created ephemeral alliances, and fragmented again.

In the turmoil, the cyclopes began to prophesy once more, foretelling the coming of great heroes who would guide the proud islands for ages to come (see the Cyclopean Myth-Speaking sidebar on page 11). The subsequent rise of hero-gods indeed brought stability of sorts, for although the city-states still clash in politics, trade, and the rare war, these conflicts pale in comparison to the former chaos.

Scholars consider Pol-Liachora one of the nine great historical city-states. Its former capital, Liachora, dates back to the early Age of Destiny and boasts two of the first hero-gods to ascend via cyclops mysticism: the sisters Diaphorea and Aelyake. As legend tells, while Diaphorea ruled from the city, her sister struck out into the wilderness to clear the land for expansion—land then patrolled by the immortal hydra Syggasis. After Aelyake sliced off each of its heads in turn, she declared to her retainers that a new city would arise in that spot, as the cyclopes had foretold. When her followers protested, noting the lack of potable water, Aelyake proclaimed, “Then we shall slake our thirst with the blood of the hydra,” raising her hands and causing freshwater springs to arise where each head had fallen.

Named in Aelyake’s honor, Aelyosos has relied ever since on the eight great fountains fed by its founder’s mythic decree. Both Aelyosos and Liachora thrived as the combined nation of Pol-Liachora until the Age of Lost Omens, when Golarion trembled as Aroden died. As one, the cyclopes cried out, heralding a primordial leviathan that would mete out punishment for crimes long forgotten until the guilty repaid their debts. When the thalassic behemoth Ousmariku swallowed Liachora’s navy only months later, 10 of the archipelago’s greatest hero-gods challenged the beast, lost their lives, and failed to save the silver-arched city.

Refugees have crowded the inheritor-capital of Aelyosos ever since, fleeing from Liachora, whose ruins have since been claimed by sahuagin, or the fallout of other tragedies. Not content with the conquest of Liachora, Ousmariku returns to Aelyosos every year, gobbling up the tribute the city’s people throw into the sea to appease its wrath and buy another year of peace.

## Society

The highest authorities in Aelyosos and Pol-Liachora are its two surviving hero-gods: Kelksiomides and Psomeira. Together, they rule on large-scale decisions, deferring to the aristocratic oceanid Sjoweir on

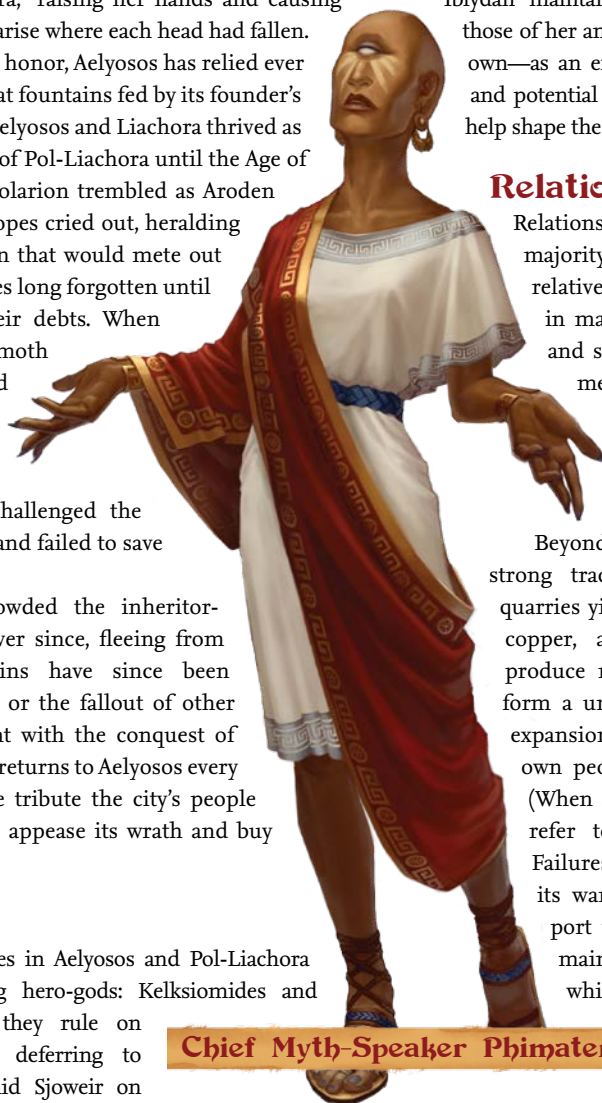
maritime matters and consulting the wise cyclops Phimater in any other circumstance. A council of guild, religious, military, and community leaders meets regularly to discuss and legislate significant issues, and although the council’s votes are nonbinding, the two oligarchs often honor their decisions. Several times a year, one or both of them hold public court to hear cases and settle grievances, leaving day-to-day operations to the city’s magistrates, notaries, and other public figures. The populace accepts the hero-gods’ rule, for they are semi-divine figures supported by millennia of tradition. Nonetheless, theirs is not an exclusive state religion. Most divine spellcasters in the city are oracles, though citizens whose lives are directly saved by a hero-god sometimes devote themselves to becoming clerics.

The oligarchs’ minimalist approach is as much a product of Iblydan culture as it is wise governance, for over the course of numerous regime changes, Iblydans have learned that there is no one right way to accomplish a task—be it government, farming, or just eating a meal. The typical Iblydan maintains well-intentioned rivalries—both those of her ancestors and those she devises on her own—as an extension of her drive for excellence and potential to someday seize mythic power and help shape the islands’ destiny.

## Relations

Relations between the city’s land-dwelling majority and the aquatic minority are relatively warm, supported by a lively trade in marine goods for bronze tools, glass, and spices. By the oligarchs’ decree, the merfolk and their kin have the run of the flooded sections of the city when the water rises, ensuring that even abandoned buildings see regular use.

Beyond its borders, Aelyosos maintains strong trade ties to Pol-Ptirmeios, whose quarries yield fine marble, diamonds, jadeite, copper, and iron, and whose vineyards produce renowned vintages. Together, they form a united front against Pol-Sylirica, an expansion-minded city-state known by its own people as “Sylirica of Seven Armies.” (When safely out of earshot, its neighbors refer to it instead as “Sylirica of Six Failures,” though none openly provoke its warriors.) While Aelyosos is the first port to welcome eastbound travelers, it maintains a deep rivalry with Hoiampeia, which prides itself on doing the same for westbound merchants. Like many city-states, Pol-Liachora keeps the beast-



Chief Myth-Speaker Phimater

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blooded city of Dhuraxilis at arm's length. Nearly any visitor from beyond the archipelago receives a warm welcome, and despite a distant history of conquering one another's lands, Iblydians rarely hold any animosity toward Vudrani, Keleshites, and Casmars—they merely indulge in a heightened sense of competition.

## Districts

Ten major districts make up Aelyosos.

**Floodmarket:** Due to its proximity to the docks, the district now called Floodmarket originally served as the city's principle bazaar, surrounded on nearly all sides by long warehouses and permanent storefronts. It suffers the brunt of the tidal fluctuation, staying flooded for most of the day and hosting brief market days when the waters recede. Its warehouses still stand open, inhabited now by mussels and crabs that feast on what the waves deliver.

**Hadaz:** With the loss of warehouse real estate along the south harbor, the shipping companies of Aelyosos expanded the piers to the east and constructed storage facilities outside the city walls. Houses have since sprung up nearby, catering both to those working the waterfront as well as to the many refugee immigrants fleeing from Liachora and other areas hit hard by the thalassic behemoth. Many permanent structures have appeared over the decades, but the city has been slow to provide the community essential infrastructure, leading to some resentment of those living within the city's walls.

**Hodmonos:** Despite the effective loss of the Floodmarket, Aelyosos still maintains many protected warehouses for more valuable goods. These have gradually taken over much of the grazing commons once reserved for livestock brought to market or ready for transit, including many of the Sylirican cattle driven up from the south. The city also manufactures finished goods to fill out merchants' holds and use locally, and the workshops of Hodmonos that hug the eastern wall are abuzz with the sounds of coppersmiths, weavers, carpenters, and jewelers.

**Kamsiodos:** The gentle slope of this middle-class neighborhood extends into the ocean, creating a mass of sandbars that protect homes from dangerous waves while making the coast entirely unsuitable for shipping.

**Pantheon Hill:** Legends attribute this low hill's creation to Aelyake, who buried Syggasis's decapitated body here where it had fallen. Samples of the soil have uncovered immense, strangely polished stones that curve like petrified bone, but confirming the myth at this point would require demolishing many of the marble administrative buildings and residences belonging to influential citizens. The southern end of the hill ascends steeply, and its shrines to hero-gods past and present are visible from nearly every part of the city.

**The Old Sewers:** During simpler times, the gravity-fed sewers were more than adequate to keep the streets clean

and urban smells to a minimum. When the tides swelled to unnatural heights, it was hard to tell which distressed citizens more—the rampant flooding or the sudden reverse flushing of untreated sewage as waves swept up the pipelines. Since then, workers have plugged most of the street-level entrances to the old sewer and diverted the flow elsewhere, yet this has simply created an underground warren for aquatic beasts. A beaching of globsters recently erupted from a previously sealed manhole in Hodmonos, and witnesses have glimpsed what might be lacedons clambering into and out of the old sewer exits.

**The Pearls:** Once prized as the most expensive part of town, the neighborhood's name has taken on a new meaning now that approximately half of it is flooded except during low tide. During these short hours, laborers maintain the waterlogged foundations and gradually expand the estates to tower over even the flood zone—much to the chagrin of the merfolk.

**Seer Heights:** Composed of an especially dense mass of metamorphic rock, this steep-sided acropolis is crowned with low retaining walls that create a relatively flat foundation for a dozen residences and a handful of truly ancient, columned temples of pitted marble. Cyclopes are the sole inhabitants of this area, save those few students and servants who reside here on a temporary basis. Several decades ago, the hero-god Kelksiomides led an initiative to terrace the northern slope, creating two narrow cliff gardens that the giants tend.

**The Shallows:** The sloping topography of Aelyosos helps the water drain back into the ocean during low tide, but one sunken stretch remains perpetually inundated by at least three feet of salt water. Several squat apartments that extend into the pond serve as improvised docks for recreational boating, though some residents also like to snatch up trapped fish here.

**Southgate:** In his push to beautify Aelyosos, the hero-god Kelksiomides has not limited himself to creating parks and enriching farmland, but has also spearheaded major renovations and construction to make more efficient use of space and improve living conditions. The Southgate district is the first completed project in this initiative, yet to the oligarch's dismay, it has strengthened his partner's hawkish stance by becoming a neighborhood dominated by recent immigrants who strongly support using Aelyosos's resources to crush their enemies.

## Sites of Interest

The City of Tides prides itself on its gardens and reputation as a safe haven for travelers, yet its streets are not entirely secure. Since the fall of Liachora, insidious elements have crept into the city-state that even a pair of hero-gods cannot police on their own—especially as they spend increasing amounts of time pursuing solutions to the city's greatest threats.

**1. Daskadei:** This extensive campus serves most of the city's educational needs and draws scholars from across Iblydos and beyond. Children receive state-funded instruction in language, mathematics, philosophy, and the sciences until the age of 14, at which point they can choose to continue their studies for a modest tuition. The higher university considers its instruction in ancient history and philosophy unparalleled, and regularly funds expeditions across the island or to distant lands to uncover vanished cities and lost writings. **Aphaes Kirnaeus** (NG female human abjurer 8), Professor of Cyclops Reclamation, takes a special interest in the ruins along the border with Pol-Sylirica, but knows the territory is dangerous. She and her staff regularly hire mercenaries with a scholarly bent—or at least, respect for learning—to accompany her students and protect them from the hippogriffs, wyverns, and minotaurs that frequent the hills. Reports of a bizarre winged leucrotta have her especially concerned.

**2. The Drowned Temple:** This roofless temple dedicated to Gozreh consists of 18 basalt pillars and a bowl-shaped font for offerings. It once extended a modest distance into the harbor, but the tides flood it entirely for all but a few minutes each day. In the aftermath of the first floods, citizens flocked to the temple to pray for a respite. When that failed, distressed petitioners began vandalizing the structure, blaming Gozreh for their woes. Feelings have mellowed since, yet a mild stigma still falls upon those who worship the Wind and the Waves. The high priest Halcmonis seeks to nurture the city, repairing both the damage dealt by the tides and the besmirched reputation of his faith. Most donations come from the residents of Yxinche (see page 11), and Halcmonis readily redistributes these fine pearls and polished corals to assist those harmed most by dangerous weather or shipping accidents.

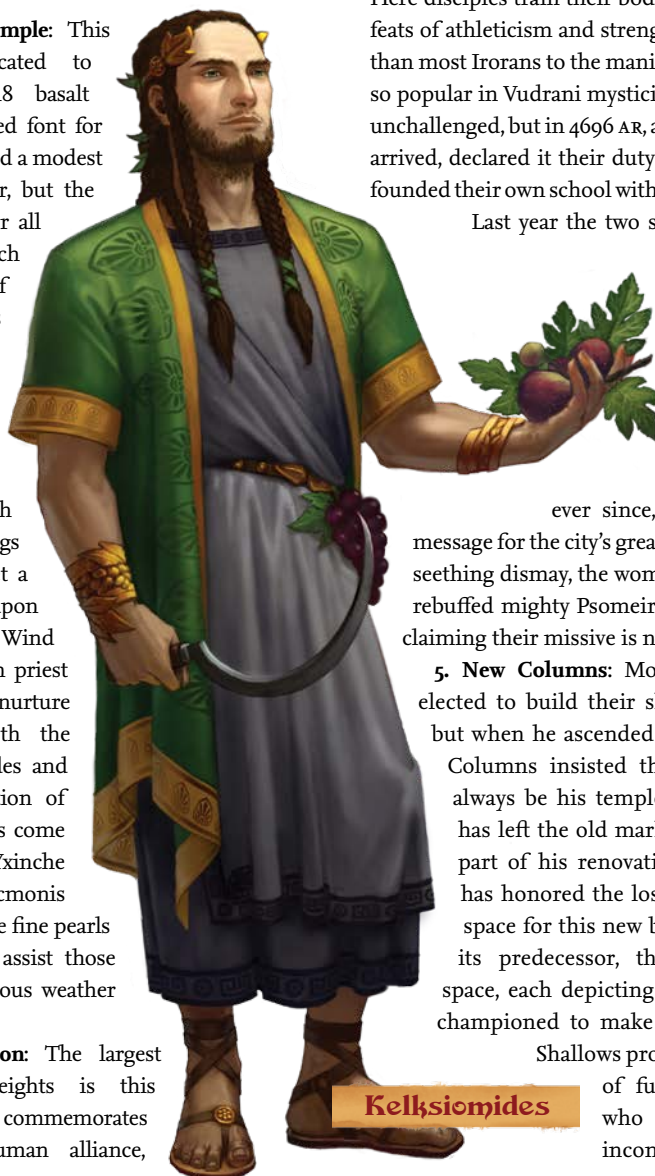
**3. Halls of Revelation:** The largest building in Seer Heights is this monumental temple that commemorates the ancient cyclops-human alliance,

acts as an advanced academy, and houses the giants' cult of foresight and mysticism. Here the chief mythspeaker Phimater recites aloud from the *Prognostica*, a half-written tome in whose blank pages a cyclops can read chapters yet unwritten, though the failure of prophecy has made both book and giants nearly useless in foretelling events. More than a dozen have gouged out their own eyes in despair, yet they now claim that blindness has enabled them to see the future once more—a future typified by catastrophes and betrayal. Led by the charismatic **Impholistes** (CN male cyclops bard 4), this Mystery of Fallen Fate has butted heads with traditionalists, especially when the blind disciples descend to the streets to proclaim their terrible predictions.

**4. The Kleosium:** Irori's popularity in Aelysos stems largely from the Iblydan tradition of excellence and personal apotheosis, and the Kleosium stadium is one of two large buildings in the area dedicated to his worship. Here disciples train their bodies to perform extraordinary feats of athleticism and strength, dedicating less attention than most Irorans to the manipulating of internal energies so popular in Vudrani mysticism. For millennia they went unchallenged, but in 4696 AR, a quintet of Kurgess's faithful arrived, declared it their duty to best Irori's devotees, and founded their own school within sight of their competitors.

Last year the two schools announced a special decathlon open to the public to settle who was superior, but they were dismayed when the statuesque **Esocate** (N female udaeus<sup>B4</sup> slayer<sup>ACG</sup> 7) triumphed. She has remained in the arena ever since, insisting that she bears a message for the city's greatest warrior. To the oligarch's seething dismay, the woman's squadron of udaeoi has rebuffed mighty Psomeira each time she approaches, claiming their missive is not for her.

**5. New Columns:** Most of Aelysos's hero-gods elected to build their shrines atop Pantheon Hill, but when he ascended in 134 AR, Thonis of Thirty Columns insisted that the marketplace would always be his temple. A century of tidal floods has left the old market virtually unusable, so as part of his renovation program, Kelksiomides has honored the lost hero-god by setting aside space for this new bazaar in Southgate. As with its predecessor, thirty pillars surround the space, each depicting one of the exports Thonis championed to make Aelysos rich. Nearby, the Shallows provide ample cover for dozens of fuath and haniver gremlins who delight in stealing and inconveniencing shoppers in any



**Kelksiomides**



way possible. Desperate to restore order, the municipal guards have issued a bounty on gremlins, though eager hunters racing through the markets have caused nearly as much trouble as the gremlins would on their own.

**6. The Odeon Triumphant:** Constructed following Pol-Liachora's victory over the fourth Sylirican invasion, this steep-sided amphitheater springs from the rocky southern slope of Pantheon Hill. It can comfortably seat as many as 4,000 spectators during the regular poetic, dramatic, and musical performances, and the oligarchs occasionally use it to make public proclamations. Its procession and stage are sufficiently elevated so that they stay above water, yet the encroaching tides are a boon rather than a hindrance, allowing curious merfolk to access the theater with relative ease. Several years ago during a three-day series of plays honoring the founder Aelyake, the stone seats reverberated with the sound of draconic screeching, and the baritone actor suddenly began to speak with a woman's voice. Performers have periodically spoken in tongues on the stage ever since, leading some to question whether the odeon is haunted, or whether some deeper mystery is responsible.

**7. Shrine to the Founders:** Space on Pantheon Hill is limited, and as new hero-gods arise and seek places to build their shrines, the city decommissions and respectfully dismantles those of long-dead champions. The Shrine to the Founders serves as a combined museum and temple that allows citizens to pray to the vestiges of past heroes who can no longer grant spells. Or at least that was the case until 3 years ago, when an astral deva materialized before visitors and claimed to be the purified soul of Zdokirae, one of the hero-gods who had died fighting the behemoth Ousmariku. After uttering a dire prophecy whose meaning scholars continue to debate, he departed, promising that when next he appeared, the calamity he had foretold would follow soon after.

**8. Shuttle and Seine:** With its entrance safely on dry land, this weathered tavern perches over part of the Floodmarket and has catered to fishers, oysterers, and dockworkers for decades. The aging owner **Belonipe** (CN middle-aged female human expert 4) represents the fourth generation of family ownership, and she has listened sympathetically to her clientele's woes as the glut of fish the merfolk use to trade has driven prices down and proud families out of business. These disgruntled workers have formed the Sandpipers' Union, which meets in this tavern to discuss the smuggling they must resort to and their growing resentment of the city's aquatic inhabitants. Desperation is beginning to make the union dangerous, and it may not be long before they take up arms against the merfolk and any terrestrial sympathizers—especially since a disguised maenad began attending the meetings.

**9. Yxinche:** Earthfall's impact lashed Ibydos with tsunamis and shattered its western coasts, even causing an ancient cyclopean town to slide into the ocean. When

## CYCLOPEAN MYTH-SPEAKING

Ibydos is an archipelago imbued with monstrous power and mythic potential, from the thanatotic magma of Mount Ebaios to the rare harpies, minotaurs, chimeras, and worse born with legendary strength. Just as the cyclopes were key to the Ibydians' surviving the Age of Darkness, so too are they the traditional gatekeepers of mythic power, harnessing their diminished prophetic powers to foretell the means of a hero's mythic ascension. In the millennia since the tradition began, hundreds of mortal paragons—warriors, artists, leaders, and explorers—have immortalized their names and delivered prosperity to their people by becoming hero-gods.

Myth-speaking is a ritualized soothsaying that allows a cyclopean cabal to sense a mythic font, short-lived phenomenon, primordial creature, or other extraordinary task woven into a petitioner's fate that might allow the mortal to achieve semi-divine status—i.e. the trial that earns a creature its first mythic tier (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 10). The cyclopes often deliver these predictions in a disjointed tale of deeds to come, hinting at the challenges ahead. The rite is physically taxing and costly to perform, so only those who have demonstrated excellence and meet the community's approval tend to qualify for a myth-speaking. Occasionally the cyclopes perform the ritual for one who has already ascended; however, the giants' prophetic vision is disrupted in the presence of a mythic being, making it increasingly difficult to discern the future the higher the petitioner's tier.

With the death of Aroden and the failure of prophecy, attempts at myth-speaking have failed with troubling regularity. Combined with the deaths of so many hero-gods while fighting Ousmariku and the passage of time, these failures have ensured that few mythic NPCs remain in Ibydos. Those that remain grow increasingly worried that they are the last of a dying tradition—and perhaps the last hope of defeating the behemoth that threatens the Obari Ocean.

the merfolk ascended from the depths, they adopted this coral-encrusted site just outside Aelyosos's harbor as their home. Although they are gregarious for their kind, the merfolk remain aloof and often view the claims of their human allies with suspicion. Especially outspoken in his misgivings is **Duoa-Ilox** (N male merfolk ranger 12), who has spent the past 5 years petitioning and later demanding that he be afforded a formal myth-speaking so that his people might have a true champion to lead them against the sahuagin. Attempts to explain that the ability has died out fall on deaf ears, and he is rallying an ever-larger gang of aquatic miscreants to harass Aelyosos until it acknowledges his claim.

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## Iblydan Warfare

Martial Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
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### Ranged Weapons

Gastraphetes	65 gp	1d10	1d12	19–20/x2	120 ft.	12 lbs.	P	—
Phaleros	5 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	20 ft.	3 lbs.	P	—

Exotic Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
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### One-Handed Melee Weapons

Doru	4 gp	1d6	1d8	x3	20 ft.	6 lbs.	P	Brace
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## Iblydan Weapons

The following weapons are common in Iblydos.

**Doru:** Balanced by a metal butt, this large spear is weighted so that it can be used in one hand by a proficient wielder. You can use a doru two-handed as a simple weapon. You can also use a doru as a one-handed martial weapon, but its critical hit multiplier decreases to x2.

**Gastraphetes:** The gastraphetes, sometimes called a “belly bow,” is an oversized crossbow reloaded by pressing one end against the ground, the other against one’s abdomen, and locking the string in place through ratchet action. Reloading takes a full-round action, uses two hands, and requires that the wielder be standing. Wielding a gastraphetes requires two hands, and due to the weapon’s bulk, firing it while standing without support (such as a wall, a window, or a stand) imposes a –4 penalty on attack rolls; you take no penalty for firing a gastraphetes while prone. A Large or larger creature can use a gastraphetes one size smaller than itself without any support, but takes the normal penalty for firing an inappropriately sized weapon.

**Phaleros:** A phaleros is a type of metal javelin that stores a splash weapon in a small cage between the haft and the spearhead. When a phaleros strikes its target, the spearhead compresses toward the haft and breaks the payload, showering the target with its contents as though you had struck the target’s square with the splash weapon. On a critical hit, you instead treat the target as though it had suffered a direct hit from the splash weapon. A phaleros is reusable, and reloading one with a splash weapon is a process that takes two rounds and provokes attacks of opportunity.

## 1st-Tier Champion Path Ability

Mythic characters of at least 1st tier who gain mythic power from a cyclops myth-speaker can select the following mythic path abilities.

**Myth Slayer:** When you use the surge mythic ability against a creature whose mythic tier or rank is higher than yours, you add the difference between your tiers as a bonus to the surge result; if the surge applied to an attack roll, the attack also deals additional damage

equal to your tier. In addition, you can use the surge mythic ability twice per day without using one use of mythic power, but only when the roll modified is against a mythic creature.

## 1st-Tier Universal Path Ability

Mythic characters of at least 1st tier who gain mythic power from a cyclops myth-speaker can select the following mythic path abilities.

**As Foretold (Su):** Just as the cyclopes foretold your mythic ascension, so too can you foresee your own greatness. As a full-round action you can expend two uses of mythic power to roll your mythic surge die and add 10 (treat any result of 21 or higher as 20). At any point within the next 10 minutes, you may use the result of the roll as the result of any one d20 roll you are required to make. If you do not use the result within 10 minutes, it is lost. You can use this ability to replace an attack roll or saving throw only once per day each.

**Seat of Power (Su):** You can grant divine spells, but doing so requires considerable effort and only functions over a limited area. When you choose this path ability, choose a temple, monument, tree, or similar structure to serve as the principle holy site for your burgeoning religion. This site has a limited area of influence that extends in all directions a number of miles equal to 10 times your mythic tier. This functions in all ways as the Divine Source universal path ability (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 51) with two limitations. First, you can only grant spells to followers who prepare their spells within your holy site’s area of influence. Second, you must spend at least 10 minutes in contact with the holy site and expend one use of mythic power each day to continue granting spells to your followers. While doing so, you may choose to expend two additional uses of mythic power in order to increase your effective tier by one when determining what level spells you can grant. If you later gain the Divine Source path ability, this ability instead permanently increases your effective tier by one when determining what level spells you can grant, and once per day by spending at least 10 minutes in contact with your holy site, you can regain one use of mythic power for every 3 tiers you possess.

# Distant Shores



## KELKSIOMIDES

### The Green Warden

Hero-god of gardens, orchards, and terraces

**Alignment** NG

**Domains** Good, Plant

**Favored Weapon** sickle

**Maximum Spell Level** 9th

**Center of Worship** Aelyosos

**Nationality** Iblydan



Kelksiomides was born in a village of vintners and subsistence farmers in the hills of Pol-Ptirmeios, where he learned the arts of horticulture from his parents and the language of the vines from his grandfather. In turn, he developed labor-saving devices for tilling, irrigating, and fertilizing the soil that quickly earned him a glowing reputation across the city-state. When he came of age, it was his privilege to cart his family's wine to the capital for the annual tasting competition, and when their cask won top honors, the council unilaterally decided that he should receive the cyclopes' blessing.

The giants spoke of future tragedy that would grant him both immortality and humility. Kelksiomides was puzzled, for typical myth-speakers told of fearless monster slayers and arcane prodigies, whereas his path seemed mundane and depressing. Fate struck when he returned home to find his village burned and his family slain by Sylican raiders. The forces of Pol-Ptirmeios rounded up the 17 perpetrators and dragged them back to the ruined village. There he forgave them, proclaiming that new life shall always succeed misfortune, and they too would have their chance to redeem themselves for their crimes. With that, a tree emerged from the shattered homes and bore a single fruit infused with mythic power.

Kelksiomides believes in restoring hope and life when all seems lost, a drive that inspired him to emigrate to Aelyosos following Liachora's destruction. He encourages others to cultivate beauty, reap the harvest, and share its fruits to inspire others to do the same. He is averse to violent retribution, though ruling a vengeful city with a hawkish co-ruler sometimes forces him to act against his teachings.

His priests are often farmers, gardeners, and druids who dutifully work during planting and harvest seasons but travel more widely to teach and mediate disputes during the rest of the year. Like all hero-god faiths, his is a young one—focused more on doing the most good in what remains of Kelksiomides's life rather than establishing a strict dogma.

Clerics and oracles of Kelksiomides may learn and prepare *plant growth* as a 2nd-level spell, but when doing so they can only use the spell's enrichment effect. They may also learn and prepare *goodberry* as a 1st-level spell.

## PSOMEIRA

### The Divine General

Hero-god of seasons and spears

**Alignment** LN

**Domains** Law, War, Weather

**Subdomains** Seasons, Tactics

**Favored Weapon** doru

**Maximum Spell Level** 8th

**Center of Worship** Aelyosos

**Nationality** Iblydan



Psomeira served as a guard in Liachora, where she became the youngest captain on record, and 2 years later, the giants of Seer Heights summoned her to foretell her ascension. She made no special effort to fulfill her destiny, quietly weathering public critique that she was not fulfilling her potential as she continued to excel in her civic duties. When Ousmariku crashed into Liachora, Psomeira rallied the defenses and led the charge to drive off the beast.

Those few refugees who watched the counterattack witnessed a brilliant flash of light as Psomeira's spear struck the behemoth, after which it scattered her army with its claws and withdrew into the ocean. The city lay in ruins, and Psomeira was assumed dead. Psomeira reappeared 10 years later in Aelyosos, where she called for a closed meeting of the city's leaders and emerged as one of its oligarchs.

She sternly deflects queries about what occurred during her defense of Liachora and subsequent disappearance, insisting that only through duty and regular military drills can the city prepare for the final confrontation with Ousmariku. Psomeira takes her own advice seriously—especially since the death by old age of her rival Spalkis, hero-god of skirmishers and sheep-stealing, and her rise as an eminent demigod of warfare in Iblydos. Her holidays mark the changing seasons, which signal the beginning and end of military campaigns. She and Kelksiomides sometime clash over priorities, but even he knows better than to oppose her when the harvests are done and field hands are idle. Despite her dedication to Aelyosos and cooperation, Psomeira quietly departs the city for a week every year, reappearing each day only long enough to answer her priests' prayers before slipping away once more.

Priests of Psomeira are often physically fit, educated in battlefield tactics, and trained in the spear and shield. Most play an active role in the city's armed forces, and they promote cooperation and unity in all local endeavors. Like their patron, priests value the safety of Aelyosos and their comrades, but never to the point of xenophobia.

Clerics and oracles of Psomeira may learn and prepare *coordinated effort* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 212) as a 3rd-level spell.

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## ANULI

Though doubly blessed with prosperity and longevity, the ancient nation of Holomog struggles against stagnation. Its people long ago reached the boundaries set by Elysium, Heaven, and Nirvana, but now a few of their cities press against those limits. Holomog's northernmost port, Anuli, infuses chaos into the normally sedate country as it strives to recover from a mysterious explosion more than a century ago that destroyed half the city, wiping out its infrastructure and leadership. Called the Paroxsys, the blast uncovered vast new mineral wealth and offered the opportunity to rebuild the city in preparation for an invasion that never came. A hundred years later, Anuli bears deep scars on both the physical city and the psyches of its citizenry. Some push to continue peaceful reconstruction, while others advocate for war with the undead nation of Geb.



# Distant Shores



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## City of New Beginnings

### Overview

The northernmost city of Holomog and the capital of the Nwanyi province, Anuli has always been a city dedicated to pushing boundaries. Having recovered from cataclysm a century ago through a combination of Holomog compassion and foreign aid, it has since become even more of a cultural melting pot than before. Outsiders mostly recognize Holomog as a nation of queens magically tied to their charges, alternately describing it as a paradise of virtuous “angelwives” or a nightmarish land where women enslave their menfolk, yet neither rumor captures the reality. Holomog queens—the *omwa*—do smile with the beauty and warmth of the sun, but the sun burns as well, and too much of it will scorch even a nation into ash.

Born from an ancient assemblage of city-states that predate Earthfall, the Celestial Concordance of Holoma

Provinces is among the largest, oldest, and most diverse of Garund’s nations. When the Age of Darkness plunged Golarion into chaos, the scattered city-states of Nne Lolo Holomog turned to their empyreal lords in supplication, much as Nidal turned to the dark god Zon-Kuthon. The lords of Elysium, Heaven, and Nirvana negotiated—their philosophical differences mediated by the empyreal lord Mazludeh—and in exchange for fealty they mystically bound the welfare of the city-states to the outlook of their rulers, called *omwa*. A stable and benevolent queen would bring fair weather, fertile fields, and prosperity to her people, while her subjects’ happiness in turn influenced her own health. Though far from a perfect system—a few *omwa* have found ways to abuse those outside their borders while keeping their own citizens content—the divine providence of the Celestial Concordance saw Holomog through the Age of Darkness and has ensured millennia of prosperity ever since.



# Distant Shores

Governance of Holomog generally falls to women. An omwa rules each province as a house mother runs her family's affairs. A painful divine ritual known as the Crucible theoretically weeds out those unworthy to rule: a potential queen strong enough to survive the ritual is torn open physically and spiritually, her back becoming the anchor point for hypnotic fractals that appear to be great wings and connect her soul to the Positive Energy Plane. This conduit allows the plane's life-sustaining energies to flow into her province. From that moment until her death, she will thrive or suffer as her land and people thrive or suffer. Omwa, inspired by their divine transformation, normally select their successors from among their daughters. If no successor is clear, the Celestial Concordance affords the nation 7 years to settle on a new leader before the empyreal lords intercede directly, an event that invariably appoints sound but unpopular leadership.

Though many foreign academics speculate that the capacity to become an omwa is somehow connected to the ability to bear children—explaining why omwa are always women—the fact that many omwa have been sterile, were assumed to be male at birth, or display intersex traits attests that this theory is incorrect. At least one man has survive the Crucible, with undesirable results. In any case, Holomog values a leader's bravery, compassion, education, and ability to nurture her community far more than the biological ability to bear children.

Holomog's northernmost province of Nwanyi has always been more restless than her sisters. Thanks to an economy based largely on trade with other nations and a hostile border shared with the undead nation of Geb, her fortunes depend as much on foreign affairs as her rulers' divine connection to the land. The people's resiliency was truly tested in 4606 AR when a massive explosion—the Paroxsys—destroyed much of Anuli, the provincial capital, wiping out the queen and all her obvious successors. The empress and the leaders of other provinces rushed to save lives and begin rebuilding, leaving Anuli's people to select their own leader. For the first time in Holomog's history, instead of greeting whichever woman the current queen marked as her successor, Anuli's citizens elected their next ruler: the unlikely druid, Botoji.

While many Anulites clamored for war—pointing to Geb as the obvious culprit behind the blast—Omwa Botoji preached peace and turned the city toward reconstruction. With Botoji's passing last year—almost as unexpected as her predecessor's—Anuli is once again unsure of its future. Most expect to elect their next queen, just as their ancestors did, while the empress and the rest of Holomog expect a return to succession controlled by the omwa. Meanwhile, numerous factions—from traditionalists to warmongers to chaos cults—grasp for power in the sudden vacuum.

## ANULI

NG large city

**Corruption** +2; **Crime** -2;

**Economy** +4; **Law** +2; **Lore** +1;

**Society** +8

**Qualities** academic, magically attuned, prosperous, strategic location, superstitious

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council

**Population** 14,800 (11,339 humans, 888 aasimars, 385 lizardfolk, 296 ganzi, 1,892 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Merchant Admiral Di Nema** (LN female human fighter 13)

**Minister of Administration Kwana ke Botoji** (LG female human cleric of Mazludeh 17)

**Minister of Farms and Beasts Mwesi Gwaro** (N male human druid 7/expert 5)

**Minister of Peace Amaro Pogolum** (N female human aristocrat 6/cavalier<sup>APG</sup> 11)

**Minister of Reconstruction Omune Botoji** (NG female aasimar alchemist<sup>APG</sup> 15)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 85,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 8th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4



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## Appearance

Modern Anuli is squeezed between Oyster Sound and Crater Lake, straddling a massive hill that divides the city into districts and earned the settlement its original appellation: the City of Stairs. While the city was once nestled among sea cliffs, millennia of quarrying and construction transformed the settlement into a gentle slope descending into the harbor. Today, Anuli's most recognizable feature is the massive Crater Lake, a bowl-shaped depression formed in the Paroxsys, which marks the city's western boundaries. The treelined rim of the crater stands as a testament to the city's ability to bounce back from disaster.

Poised in the shadow of the Magebe Mountains, Anuli sees frequent rainfall. Greenery stretches from horizon to horizon, while lush gardens spill over the countless towers, terraces, and footbridges within the city itself like verdant waterfalls. The assembled nurseries—coaxed along with magic from the House of Green Mothers—provide much of Anuli's food crop, supplemented by rice and yams from the surrounding farms. Countless colorful birds, lizards, and small dinosaurs navigate the terraces and plazas: all even-tempered domestications of wilder cousins, bred to handle urban tasks like collecting refuse, fertilizing flowers, and clearing away spoiled fruit.

Thanks to Holomog's mastery of civil engineering, Anuli has rebounded beautifully in the century since the Paroxsys wiped out half the city. Aside from the perfectly circular lake, visitors see little trace of the blast that reshaped the terrain. Glistening white limestone and marble towers, decorated with brilliant mosaics of blue and gold, stretch toward the heavens and cast long shadows on the streets and plazas below. Grand fountains, shaded open spaces, and domes feature prominently in Anuli's architecture, and offer respite from the Garundi heat.

Anuli's reconstruction attracted the most brilliant engineers from across the 14 provinces of Holomog. The nation normally offers few opportunities for innovation, and thus many of Anuli's new towers feature eclectic designs: spirals, domes, unusual angles, and organic shapes intermingling with the usual imposing statues, rooftop gardens, and raised promenades of Holoma tradition.

## History

To ensure their grace was used as a tool of preservation rather than conquest, the empyreal lords limited Holomog's maximum size, and the province of Nwanyi marks the furthest northern reach of the Celestial Concordance. Sharing a border—however wild and impassable it may be—with the undead nation of Geb has made Nwanyi the most militant of Holomog's provinces. This trait served the entire nation well when they repelled Shory incursions and Geb's early expansion, but such attitudes have proven problematic in recent years.

Nearly 4 centuries ago, the pirate queen Mastrien Slash arrived in Anuli in pursuit of her ship, stolen by the traveling troublemaker Durvin Gest. Though Gest moved on, Slash assimilated quickly into Holoma culture. Her bravery, exciting tales, and bold charisma saw her rise quickly in various families, until she finally succeeded Aboile Biko as matriarch of the province in a controversial appointment that deeply divided the city. Ever proactive, Omwa Slash led the provincial army north to assault Geb, only to be turned to stone along with her entire army.

Despite her unceremonious end, Omwa Slash's brief reign and extensive writings left a deep mark on the city's character. So-called "mastriens" agitated for war with Qadira over control of the neighboring island of Tirakawhan a century after the Pirate Queen's death, and later founded the city's infamous "charitable" pirate league called the Red Sisters. Even a hundred years after the Paroxsys—a disaster many believe to be retaliation for Omwa Slash's aggression—many in the city rattle their sabers and demanded vengeance against Geb in a display uncharacteristic of the Holoma.

In addition to the uncertainty caused by Omwa Botoji's passing, Anuli struggles with a recent upsurge in chaos cults. Despite the nation's prosperity, 10,000 years of tradition leave little room for innovation, expansion, or excitement, and while many Holoma love that stability, a vocal minority yearns for something new. Some feel a need for change so acute that they bend their knees to the protean lords, and missionaries from several distinct chaos cults flocked to Anuli alongside relief workers and engineers after the Paroxsys.

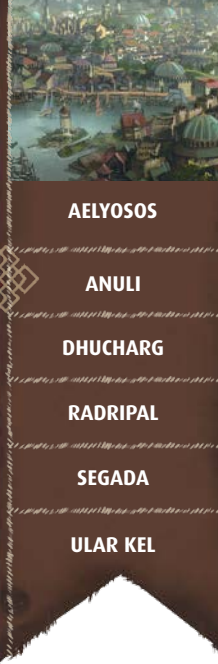
## Society

Anuli struggles with the Holoma ideal of balance a bit more clumsily than any of her neighbors—an unfortunate side effect of the new social and political territory explored in the City of New Beginnings. In the wake of widespread disaster and reconstruction, material practicalities have supplanted spiritual enlightenment as Anuli's primary concern. The city administration provides every citizen a free education in both the mental and physical arts. Many students elect to study combat as their physical discipline, giving rise to a number of martial academies throughout the city, and history and arcane magic remain popular choices for mental disciplines. Despite the tragedies it has suffered, Anuli remains a deeply spiritual city. Arshea, Bharnarol, and Rowdrosh are highly favored among Anulites, but Arqueros, Falayna, and other martial-minded celestials grow in popularity alongside them. The Green Faith likewise remains popular, thanks



**Grace "The Rhino" Owano**

# Distant Shores



to the late Omwa Botoji's own faith and potent druidic magic.

Anulites bond over food, owing both to Holomog's rich culinary traditions and Anuli's access to foreign spices and wines. Families enjoy large, communal meals and often invite neighbors. In good weather, most neighborhoods hold nightly potluck dinners. The residents supplement their largely vegetarian cuisine with the sound's abundant seafood, creating a variety of simmered, heavily spiced dishes served alongside or on top of fritters and flatbreads. The city's ingenious cooks candy or ferment any fruit that grows within their nation, and Anuli exports more wine than any other city in Holomog.

Anuli's human population shares the streets with high numbers of aasimars, unusually common throughout Holomog due to the nation's pact with the empyreal lords. Anuli's proximity to the mysterious city-state of Murraseth leads to a sizeable minority of catfolk as well. Garund's populations of orcs and elves both live further north, and thus Anuli sees more of their wandering half-blooded children than of any full-blooded members of these two races. A smattering of permanent lizardfolk and grippli residents have immigrated here from the nation of Droon far to the south, and traveling merchants, performers, and beast trainers of both these races are common sights.

## Relations

Anuli and the Nwanyi province share a close, if tense, relationship with the rest of Holomog. While Holomog's empress, Omwa Holo Enyana, has forbidden war with Geb, the currently leaderless Nwanyi province resumes the mobilization it had begun and halted a century ago. Because Empress Enyana exerts no direct control over the military, the political situation has devolved into an awkward detente—the empress refuses to condone invasion and the provincial military refuses to stand down; each side attempts to undermine the other on the local level and in the national capital of Udo.

Anuli's strongest support comes not from within Holomog, but from Nex, Anuli's ally in hatred of Geb. Relief efforts from the Arclords arrived at Anuli's gates within days of the Paroxsys, and trade relations remain strong to this day as Anuli exports food in exchange for building materials and constructs. Access to the vast wealth of southern Garund has also encouraged a steadfast trading alliance with Qadira, though relations took generations to mend in the wake of the Tirakawhan War 300 years ago.

## Districts

Anuli's geography divides the city into roughly five districts. Wealthy neighborhoods lie south, along the trade roads to other provinces, while military and martial outposts congregate in the city's northern regions.

**Cutridge:** Anuli quarried much of the stone it required for reconstruction directly from the slopes of its newborn crater, creating picturesque terraces leading down the eastern slope to the water's edge. Over time, the city's residential districts expanded to fill these terraces with lush parks, apartments, and small shops, all neatly organized along concentric streets. The communities range from relatively wealthy near Spineback to cozy in the middle terraces, eventually transitioning to schools, martial academies, and government buildings closer to the water's edge. The winding stairways prohibit moving large amounts of goods easily, inhibiting larger industries and making each terrace feel more like its own small town than a city neighborhood. Several trade guilds have petitioned the city to construct more accessible roads between the various levels of Cutridge, but neighborhood groups oppose the idea.

**Fisher's Row:** Fisher's Row, a remnant from Anuli's earliest years, clings to the edges of Oyster Sound. Fisheries, shipwrights, warehouses, customs houses, and traders' guilds occupy most of the winding district, interspersed with stubborn communities of anglers.

**The Ladder:** As much a natural wonder as a district, the Ladder is a series of terraces formed on the western half of Anuli's distinctive crater, where the Igwon River cascades down the steep incline and breaks into a thousand smaller creeks, watering a dizzying array of gardens and farms. The district is largely uninhabited, save for daily visitors and a handful of druid and shaman caretakers. The Ladder supplies much of Anuli's food supply, as well as more exotic plants from which essential oils and spell components can be extracted.

**Slopeside:** Millennia ago, Anuli pulverized its sea cliffs, creating a long, sloped industrial district leading to the sea. Inexpensive apartments and neighborhoods—mostly filled with immigrants—rest alongside perfumeries, dye houses, tailors, masonry workshops, forges, tanneries, and brewers. Nearly every block has been leveled and rebuilt a dozen times—especially after the Tirakawhan War—and all of Slopeside rests atop a confusing network of old basements, steam tunnels, sewers, and entire buried buildings.

**Spineback:** Profoundly damaged when the Paroxsys tore apart the land and raised the earth of this district by nearly a hundred feet, most of the towers, statues, and roadways here have been heavily rebuilt or modified to account for shifted foundations. Some buildings, though, still display the cracks and scorches they received a century ago. Spineback features the tallest buildings in Anuli (and some of the tallest in all of Holomog) and offers commanding views of the entire city, the sea, and savannas beyond. Spineback's towers include housing, private libraries, museums, artist communes, and the city's elite magic academies.

## Sites of Interest

Though Anuli is largely peaceful, it has some of the dangers inherent in all large cities.

1. **Apex Trading House:** Anuli's various trading guilds all operate from a single government-controlled headquarters, the largest building along the harbor. All foreigners arriving in the city are required to register at the Apex, with a trade guild or family clan vouching for their character and assuming responsibility for their actions. Anuli owes much of its recent prosperity to Merchant Admiral Di Nema who speaks for the collected guilds and arbitrates trade disputes, though she has taken far-reaching liberties with her position since Omwa Botoji's death.

2. **Boscaje Tower:** The local headquarters for the colorful Greenblade warrior sect, Boscaje Tower operates as both



a martial school training in its own style of hit-and-run combat and a fortress dedicated to patrolling the unruly northern border. The Greenblades in Anuli focus on hunting undead beasts that cross into Nwanyi from Geb. The aging veteran **Ten Lives** (N female catfolk<sup>B3</sup> ranger 11) oversees the training program, but frequently argues with her field commander, **Grace "The Rhino" Owano** (CN female human bloodrager<sup>ACG</sup> 10) over how to run their militia amid the growing security tensions.

3. **Brightwater School:** While far from Holmog's most elite center of arcane magic, Anuli boasts one of the greatest abjuration schools in Garund, formed by relief workers who flocked to the city in its hour of need. Overseen by the shockingly young **Sunrise Temboma** (CG female aasimar abjurer 15)—a prodigy hailing from Fisher's Row—and built on the remains of a summoners' guild destroyed in the explosion, the Brightwater School specializes in containing and dismissing unwanted magic and planar visitors. Most of their advanced work is theoretical examination of the very substance of magic, but many within the school feel they have some responsibility to protect the city from a second Paroxsys.

4. **The Endless Market:** Stretching from the warehouses of Fisher's Row and up into Slopeside, Anuli's grand thoroughfare hosts a kaleidoscope of market stalls, permanent shops, restaurants, and artists from across the city and beyond, all jockeying for attention amid a sea of shoppers and street performers. Many traders establish a permanent presence here, with or without physical shops, offering goods from across Garund, Casmaron, and even exotic Avistan, while others come and go with the seasons. Dozens of alleyways snaking away from the Endless Market each specialize in (and take their name from) one good; Spice Alley, Sword Alley, Shoe Alley, Potion Alley, and others cater to foreigners' needs, racial specialties, and—rumor has it—the angelic host itself.

5. **House of Green Mothers:** Equal parts school and temple, the House of Green Mothers embraces Holmog's ancient tradition of living in balance with the world. Instructors cultivate plants and animals to address the city's various needs—from foodstuffs to caretakers—while their alchemists- and druids-in-training tend to the sprawling grounds and menagerie. **Grandmother Hafuma** (CG female human alchemist<sup>APG</sup> 8/ranger 4) and her adopted daughters form the core of the school's staff, just as her clan members have for 800 years. A huge number of citizens—even those with no other magical potential—attend the Green Mothers' classes long enough to bond with a familiar or animal companion, making the complex a beloved fixture in the city and widely supported by rich and poor alike.

# Distant Shores

**6. Ouroboros Salvage Company:** While Crater Lake provides cool breezes and breathtaking views, fishing remains largely limited to Oyster Sound on the other side of Anuli. The fish from Crater Lake show a number of strange deformities—from unusual sizes and colors to extraneous limbs—which the city's arcanists and druids alike have yet to explain, and the lake bottom seems to shift regularly. This all makes the task of recovering art, lore, and family treasures lost in the Paroxsys a dangerous endeavor. While a dozen salvage operations work to retrieve lost treasures and artifacts from beneath Crater Lake, Ouroboros remains the most successful thanks to their heavy reliance on semiaquatic lizardfolk immigrants. The official company directors remain largely anonymous, leaving the daily operations to **Overseer Tresskass** (LN female lizardfolk fighter 3/rogue 6). Despite the excellent pay, Ouroboros suffers a high turnover rate, as some workers report strange sights and beasts deep below the blue waters, and others fail to return at all.

**7. Provincial Palace of Nwanyi:** The Provincial Palace houses most of the government offices for the entire province, in addition to serving as home for the omwa and her clan. The original palace was obliterated in the Paroxsys, and the new palace of white towers and fruiting gardens was among the first buildings reconstructed. Today, it stands in the center of tense rivalry in the wake of Omwa Botoji's sudden passing. Even with 6 more years afforded by the Celestial Concordance before Anuli must select a new omwa, three strong frontrunners have already emerged. Minister of Administration Kwana ke Botoji served as her mother's right hand and oversees the practical operations of Nwanyi. A traditionalist and high priestess of Anuli's temple of Mazludeh (see page 23), Kwana favors a return to tradition, with successors appointed by standing omwa, inspired as they are with divine insight. Her younger sister, Minister of Reconstruction Omune Botoji, stands in strict opposition, favoring democracy and drastic change to help their ancient nation survive in a rapidly changing world. Omwa Botoji's adopted daughter, Minister of Peace Amaro Pogolum, holds the middle ground, firmly of the opinion that bickering over political positions distracts from foreign enemies—namely Geb—who stand to wipe out Anuli.

**8. Queen's Cup:** Anuli's most popular watering hole for soldiers, travelers, and adventurers, the Queen's Cup suffered massive cracks in its walls and foundation during the Paroxsys, all of which have been "creatively" patched by its eccentric clientele over the years. Ownership traditionally passes to the eldest regular when the current owner retires. The current proprietor **Suka al-Pashka** (NG female human fighter 8)—an immigrant from Tirakawhan—gained control only a few months ago,

## FAMILY IN HOLOMOG

Most of Holomog's population is divided up into clans 12 to 200 strong, made of the eldest mother—called the house mother—and her siblings and descendants by both blood and adoption. Personal property is treasured but generally humble, while the clan as a whole owns land, businesses, ships, legacies, and other major properties. The house mother's sisters and daughters advise her and manage individual concerns, while other family members develop their own trades, often traveling or having children before the politics, careers, or clan affairs become too demanding.

Holomog has no tradition of marriage. Individuals belong to their mother's clan unless adopted into another family in the wake of tragedy or as reward for performing a great service. Romances are generally short and passionate—lasting only a few months or years—before lovers part ways amicably, and even the longest liaisons rarely see anyone adopted into a new clan. Men help raise their nieces and nephews, and while all Holoma know the identities of their mothers, it's rare for Holoma to know their biological fathers or, if they do, to spend nearly as much time with them as with their uncles.

and still occasionally contracts visitors to help wrap up loose ends from her adventuring days.

**9. Shrine of the Wily Linguist:** Temples both new and ancient cover Spineback, but the smallest is perhaps the most unusual. A tiny, neurotic church of archivists and arbiters here worships Asmodeus, known locally as the Wily Linguist, thanks to a minor role he played in aiding Mazludeh in mediating, recording, and filing the Celestial Concordance between the mortals of Holomog and the forces of Elysium, Heaven, and Nirvana. Visiting Asmodeans might be somewhat torn between amusement that a nation of angel-worshippers pays him some honor, and consternation that they invariably depict the notorious god as a woman. **First Arbiter Oluche** (LN female human cleric of Asmodeus 6) struggles to keep her temple afloat, organizing fighting tournaments and poetry competitions for the temple's annual Days of Wrath celebration that helps fund their archives through the rest of the year.

**10. The Tower of the Ninety-Four:** This gleaming white tower, capped in a golden sunburst rather than the traditional garden, contains individual shrines for Mazludeh—Holomog's matron goddess—and the 93 empyreal lords recognized by the nation. Some claim its libraries contain original drafts of no less than a thousand holy texts, some dating back to the Celestial Concordance. Hundreds of clerics, oracles, acolytes, and scholars operate from this central temple, making it one of the busiest locations in Anuli.

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## Ganzi

In every corner of creation, the raw chaos from which the world sprang gnaws, trying to drag reality back into the raging madness that spawned it. The Maelstrom extends tendrils into reality anywhere planar energies touch the Material Plane, like creeping ivy finding purchase in a stone wall. In any place influenced by the Outer Planes, those vines bear fruit: the ganzi. Unlike the crossbreed aasimars and tieflings, ganzi are mutations caused by generations of exposure to chaotic energies in the Material Plane.

The ganzi share many traits with the Maelstrom's true children: proteans. They are fluid and flexible, resilient, resistant to the energies of decay and entropy, and can sense the delicate currents of chaos that bind the planes together, alerting them to danger and deception and allowing enterprising ganzi to stir those eddies and rewrite a creature's fortunes. They also share the proteans' curiosity and disdain for order, compulsively wandering the world to see what can be seen.

**Physical Description:** No two ganzi look alike, but most appear human with one or two unusual physical qualities—often slowly-shifting patterns of birthmarks on their hands, feet, or faces. A rare few display reptilian or birdlike qualities such as scaly skin, feathery hair, or needle-sharp teeth. An unfortunate few are born missing major features, or with ears, eyes, or fingers in unusual places on their bodies. Their hair and eyes invariably shine in vibrant colors, which shift over the course of weeks or months. Less common than aasimars, tieflings, or geniekin, ganzi are often mistaken for these other races.

**Society:** Ganzi tend to distrust organization and tradition, and rarely form strong communities or cultural touchstones. Instead they blend into the wilder fringes of their parent culture, joining artist conclaves, anarchist collectives, dissidents, protesters, or revolutionaries challenging tradition.

**Relations:** Ganzi excel at blending in with other races, despite their bombastic tendencies and unusual physical traits. Most simply appear as excitable humans. Many ganzi never realize their true heritage, mistaking their strange abilities for sorcerous aptitude.

Those who recognize a touch of the planes in their blood get on well with other native outsider races—geniekin especially. Their experiences as outcasts in a larger society means they appreciate the challenges faced by half-elves and half-orcs, even if their struggles are different.

**Alignment and Religion:** As might be expected for a people touched by otherworldly chaos, ganzi tend to reject rigid codes and laws, but they feel no strong pulls toward good or evil, and tend most often toward chaotic neutral alignment. Ganzi who honor the gods prefer those who guide them on their journeys, such as Desna, or who reward quick wit, such as Calistria and Cayden Cailean.

**Adventurers:** Ganzi naturally slip into (and out of) the role of adventurer as they explore the world. Most succumb to a wanderlust that carries them out into the wilderness or drives them to explore the strange corners of their home communities, while others find that their natural impulse to test limits and poke at holes earns them enemies from whom they must flee.

## Ganzi Characters

Ganzi are defined by class levels—they do not have racial Hit Dice. Ganzi have the following racial traits.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, –2 Intelligence:** Ganzi are expressive and strangely resilient, but have difficulty focusing.

**Native Outsider:** Ganzi are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Ganzi are Medium creatures.

**Normal Speed:** Ganzi have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Ganzi can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Skilled:** Ganzi have a +2 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Survival checks.

**Quibble:** Once per day as an immediate action, a ganzi can twist probability and alter the luck of a single creature within 30 feet, forcing it to reroll a single d20 on a roll it has just made. The target must take the second result, even if it is worse. A ganzi may use this ability after the target has rolled, but must use it before the GM declares if the roll was a success or failure. Unwilling creatures may resist a ganzi's influence with a successful Will save (DC = 10 + 1/2 the ganzi's level + the ganzi's Charisma modifier). This is a curse effect.

**Maelstrom Resistance:** Ganzi have acid resistance 5, electricity resistance 5, and sonic resistance 5, and gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells of the polymorph subschool.



Ganzi



# Distant Shores

## Holomog Traits

The following traits are available to characters from Anuli.

**Anuli Engineer (Regional):** Your family helped to rebuild the ruined city of Anuli, and that tradition runs in your blood. You gain a +2 bonus on Perception checks to notice unusual stonework, traps, and hidden doors in worked stone and artificial constructions. Knowledge (engineering) is always a class skill for you.

**Balanced Education (Regional):** Your upbringing focused on strengthening mind and body in equal measure. Once per day, you can draw on this training to apply a physical ability modifier to a skill check instead of its usual mental ability modifier, or apply a mental ability modifier to a skill check instead of its usual physical ability modifier. You can only exchange ability modifiers between the following pairings: Strength with Intelligence, Dexterity with Wisdom, and Constitution with Charisma.

**Celestial Community (Racial, Aasimar):** Having been raised among other aasimars, you have a stronger connection to your planar heritage than most of your kind, and have more thoroughly explored your magical talent. You may expend your once per day spell-like ability to spontaneously cast *cure light wounds* (CL equal to your character level), but doing so is draining and you take an amount of nonlethal damage equal to half the number of hit points you heal.

**Creative Reality (Racial, Ganzi):** Straightforward answers bore you, for they only encourage people to depend on others rather than find out for themselves. You have grown adept over the years at convincing people of falsehoods and couching your honest answers in so much doublespeak they may as well be lies. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, which increases to +5 when attempting to convince someone an honest answer is a falsehood.

**Empyrean Pantheon (Faith):** Your faith in the empyreal lords accommodates numerous gods, and you are gifted at adapting their wide variety of focuses and lessons to your own life. Select either the law or chaos alignment descriptor. You may cast spells with that descriptor, even if your alignment or that of your god would normally not allow it. Doing so applies the good descriptor to the spell if it does not already apply.

**House of Green Mothers Pupil (Magic):** You studied at Anuli's center for druidic magic long enough to begin bonding with a familiar. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Handle Animal checks. You may substitute this trait for Iron Will as the prerequisite for the Familiar Bond feat (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Familiar Folio*).

**Pact Servant (Faith):** The faith of Holomog focuses on finding the good in unusual places and appreciating the nuances of virtue in the world. You may treat Asmodeus as if he were a lawful neutral deity for the purposes of determining your own alignment as a cleric, inquisitor, or other divine spellcaster. You may not select the evil domain unless your own alignment also contains an evil aspect.

## MAZLUDEH

### Mother of Hearth and Wall

NG goddess of balance, community, negotiation, and twilight

**Domains** Artifice, Community, Good, Knowledge

**Subdomains** Agathion, Archon, Azata, Cooperation (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*), Family, Memory

**Favored Weapon** heavy shield

**Symbol** seven eggs encircled by a snake eating its own tail

**Sacred Animal** anaconda

Once the empyreal lord of community stewardship and loving sacrifice, Mazludeh was popular in the ancient city-state of Udo when the Age of Darkness fell. Her people cried out to her for protection, and the Mother of Hearth and Wall spurred her fellow empyreal lords to cooperate despite their philosophical differences, saving untold millions. With the signing of the Celestial Concordance, Mazludeh found herself in the role of the newly formed nation's matron goddess.

Mazludeh acts as a guardian of knowledge, protector of settlements, and guiding hand for those who strengthen their community, either literally by creating strong walls, dwellings, and monuments, or figuratively as parents, guards, and especially educators. Her clergy serve not just as spiritual guides, but often as city planners, architects, archivists, engineers, and farmers, all the while striving to maintain a careful balance between the needs of individuals and the needs of the entire community. Her worshipers depict her most frequently as an enormous serpent whose shaggy mane is heavy with figs or eggs, or as a medusa-like woman with serpents for hair, leading many scholars to speculate her divine agency predates humanity, and that she may have once been worshipped by serpentfolk or lizardfolk in a bygone age.

Like Irori, Mazludeh emphasizes personal improvement and balance. She prizes empathy, curiosity, and bravery as great virtues, and may send signs of her approval in the form of fresh eggs on a worshiper's pillow or small, nonvenomous snakes that curl into the corners of homes and devour pests. Mazludeh's faith emphasizes loving deference built upon trust rather than immutable rank or roles. Subordinates should excel in their tasks and submit to authority not because they must, but because they trust their leaders to see a wider perspective, and understand that their success benefits the entire community. Conversely, she also teaches that those who betray the trust of others have no place as leaders or parents.

Alchemists, aristocrats, and engineers of Holomog especially revere their serpentine goddess, as their work values knowledge and benefits the most from the cities she fosters, but nearly every citizen pays her some basic honor as a sort of celestial diplomat to the other empyreal lords.

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## DHUCHARG

Like a well-oiled machine, the militaristic hobgoblin nation of Kaoling churns in an endless cycle of war, slavery, and hierarchical bureaucracy, and its engine is Dhucharq, the nation's capital. Dhucharq is a thriving urban center that places the hobgoblins' dominance, cruel social structure, and unwavering laws on full display. Here, the military's bureaucrats gladly trample the weak, and the Council of Nine makes unchallenged decisions that ripple throughout the hobgoblins' lands. Yet among this immoral, tightly ordered culture there are still unexpected glimpses of beauty and serenity. The city's luxurious geisha houses sit among lush gardens, and the gridded canals burble pleasantly, if one listens closely enough. Still, visitors must remain on guard in Dhucharq, as a misstep could easily cost them their freedom or their lives.

# Distant Shores



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## City of Conquerors

### Overview

From belching forges and foundries to the sprawling central keep, one thing is clear about Dhucharg: it's a city built for war. Local industries are focused on arming and sustaining Kaoling's vast armies, and most citizens of age are members of the military, with even those citizens not personally involved in wartime activities expected to indirectly contribute to the nation's martial glory. The city's most populated districts are devoted to barracks, training, strategy, and command. The vast military bureaucracy, known as the General Staff, oversees day-to-day life, regulating nearly everything and assigning complex ranks to everyone, all in the name of order.

At the apex of power in Dhucharg is the Council of Nine, the generals who rule the city and nation, and Warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki, the supreme leader.

Loyalty to Warlord Kavangaki and the Nine is expected of all citizens, and those who show even the slightest disrespect are swiftly and severely punished. The bureaucracy keeps meticulous records of any dissent, whether real or imagined. Such strictness may not be necessary, as citizens typically accept their leaders and their places in society with gusto. Most truly believe that Kaoling, with its roaring war engine and committed masses, will one day dominate Tian Xia, and perhaps continents beyond.

The only denizens outside of Dhucharg's rigid social hierarchy are visitors, who are watched carefully and punished harshly should they violate the smallest edict. The huge slave population—mostly humans, elves, and samsarans—resides firmly at the bottom of the hierarchy. They are chattel to their hobgoblin overlords, many of whom delight in abusing slaves when they've run out of subordinates to torment.



# Distant Shores

Despite the ruthless order that Dhucharg's leaders enforce, there are subversive elements in the city. The Blue Lantern District—the only place in Dhucharg where luxury is abundant, and where peaceful teahouses and geisha houses eschew harsh military protocols—provides a good cover for troublemakers and dissidents, who often meet in seedy basements or under cover of harmless entertainment to advance their agendas. Some, such as the document forgers who cater to visitors and disgraced military members, simply wish to make money while avoiding the bureaucracy's prying eyes. Others, such as the scattered underground elven resistance and residents devoted to the worship of Irori, wish to see Dhucharg's entire cruel, bloated regime go up in flames.

## Appearance

As befits its martial nature, dourness and utilitarianism—with more than a hint of intimidation—permeate Dhucharg. A wide moat surrounds the city, its black depths glassy and foreboding. Stretching inward from the moat like wheel spokes is the canal system, which functions as a mode of transportation and separates the city's districts. Outside the city's walls, a shantytown filled with petitioners seeking residence creates a modicum of chaos, but the city does its best to maintain order there, even if that means occasionally wiping out troublemakers.

Inside the moat, reinforced stone walls circle Dhucharg, even on its sea-facing side. Peppered along the walls are square watchtowers in which the city's fearsome, katana-wielding guards stand vigilant. Nine gates lead into the city; each is dedicated to one member of the Council of Nine, who adds flourishes to his own gate and personally sees to its security and upkeep. The city's streets are mostly built along a rigid grid, with the exception of those in the Blue Lantern District and Slave Quarter. Much of the city was built with gray stone, although some structures are made from black coal-fired bricks fashioned from clay found at the bottom of the Sea of Eels. Only the most prestigious buildings receive much outer ornamentation. Decorated in schemes of red and black, these are the most impressive and imposing structures in the city.

Of these dramatic sights, none is more awe-inspiring than Dhucharg-jo, or Dhucharg Castle, as many call it. Situated in the center of the city, Dhucharg-jo is Warlord Kavangaki's palace, and its five towers are each capped with a curving red or black roof. Surrounding the castle is a maze of winding paths and gates meant to protect the place and to convey the warlord's power and prestige. Behind the castle, the taller but narrower Pagoda of the Nine houses Kaoling's ruling council; its militant splendor is often the second thing a visiting ship sees as it approaches the city. Of course, the first sight is likely

## DHUCHARG

LE large city

**Corruption** +3; **Crime**

–4; **Economy** +3;

**Law** +8; **Lore** –2;

**Society** +4

**Qualities** darkvision,

insular, militarized, racially intolerant (elves), superstitious

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council

**Population** 24,550 (22,000 hobgoblins, 1,000 humans, 500 elves, 500 samsarans, 250 ja noi, 200 half-ja noi, 100 others)

### Notable NPCs

**Councilor Himoko Na-ichi** (LE female ja noi ninja<sup>UC</sup> 11; *Pathfinder Adventure Path #52: Forest of Spirits* 90)

**Shogun Jenji Tukozaami** (NE male hobgoblin investigator<sup>ACG</sup> 10)

**Warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki** (LE male hobgoblin fighter 4/samurai<sup>UC</sup> 12)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 8,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 50,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 5th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

### QUALITIES

**Darkvision** Most citizens have darkvision, and thus nights provide no cover for thieves and other criminals. Merchants lose little inventory to dishonesty. Decrease the Crime score by 1, and increase the Economy score by 1.

**Militarized** The populace is devoted to the armed forces. Civil and military law is intertwined, punishments are harsh, and loyalty to the state is expected. Increase the Law score by 4, and decrease the Society score by 4.



AELYOSOS

ANULI

DHUCHARG

RADRIPAL

SEGADA

ULAR KEL

the enormous clouds of black smoke belching from the Sword District's forges—a herald of the war machine that fuels the nation.

## History

The history of Dhucharg is intrinsically tied to Kaoling's roots. For centuries, Imperial Lung Wa quickly quashed hobgoblin uprisings in these lands, but as soon as one hobgoblin warlord succumbed, another rose to take his place. When Lung Wa fell, the hobgoblins realized they stood unopposed, and the next attack on surrounding lands was the largest the region had ever seen. The hobgoblins seized control of six squabbling nations between Jinin and Lingshen, but rather than continue their assault, they decided to fortify their holdings and build a nation. Kaoling was born, and almost immediately

thereafter, in 7110 Imperial Calendar (4610 AR), Dhucharg's stone walls rose.

In the century since, Dhucharg has ascended from a glorified military camp to the martial and political hub of a formidable Tian power. The nation's first warlord, Moyoshi Shoda, understood the importance of maintaining absolute law, order, and loyalty in his new capital; it was he who created the General Staff to manage the nation's military as well as the city's affairs. Shoda then formed the first Council of Nine from his most trusted generals. Even to this day, the Nine give the appearance that they're allies, though the truth is more nuanced.

Shoda's organizational skills did not prevent him from exemplifying hobgoblin brutality. In the city's early days, soldiers caught breaking even relatively mundane protocols received swift court martials and highly visible public executions. Slaves suspected of subversive activities were tortured brutally before being executed in front of their families. Even high-ranking military



**Warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki**

officers disappeared if rumor held that they disagreed with Shoda's policies.

Although law enforcement in Dhucharg is no longer quite as openly violent, the warlord's successors have maintained an iron grip on the city. Current warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki built a coalition to oust his predecessor and enjoys the unwavering support of most council members. The exception is Himoko Na-ichi, a devious councilor whose strength rivals Kavangaki's, and who would like to see Dhucharg focus less on internal mundanities and more on expanding Kaoling. Though Kavangaki tries to stymie her, Na-ichi has powerful allies, and is far too high-profile to simply disappear.

## Society

Daily life in Dhucharg is surprisingly peaceful given the settlement's focus on warfare. Law enforcement is strict, but regimented structure among the social classes—and most citizens' genuine belief in the city's greatness—ensures that few citizens step out of line. Military members are organized into a rigid hierarchy; outside of the military, the General Staff assigns all free citizens a *shimujin*—or non-military—rank that denotes their usefulness to Kaoling's military institutions.

The more a citizen contributes, the higher her *shimujin* rank. Non-military samurai and ninja masters rank the highest, for example, while armorers and weaponsmiths are middling, and merchants, cooks, artisans, entertainers, and others without a direct military use are usually lowest. A person's rank is not immutable, and reapplication after a particularly useful accomplishment, such as unveiling a dissident, often results in the General Staff granting a higher rank. Thus, wicked but clandestine deeds designed to advance one's station are commonplace in Dhucharg, as one's rank determines everything from available living quarters to how one is treated in public. Most citizens wear a visible sign of their rank, and different colors and styles of clothing are used to denote one's societal importance.

Dhucharg does not offer the same opportunities for advancement to all its residents. The city is also home to a sprawling slave population that powers its forges and foundries, performs menial tasks, and generally makes life comfortable for the city's free folk. Largely descended from prisoners of war captured in Kaoling's infancy, the city's slaves suffer abominable treatment despite their societal importance. The slave class is subject to its own ranking system in which the most loyal slaves are given—and often abuse—power over weaker and less compliant slaves.

# Distant Shores



Religion is something of an afterthought in Dhucharg, but as long as faith feeds commitment to the state, it's tolerated. General Susumo—also called the Black Daimyo—and Yaezhing, Minister of Blood, are the most popular deities. Priests of the latter carry out the city's public executions, and the former is the patron of the many wicked samurai who call the city home, including the prestigious Order of the Eclipse. Only devotees to Irori keep their activities secret—because the Irorans cast a critical eye toward Dhucharg's government, the authorities would eradicate followers of the Enlightened One if they ever ferreted them out.

## Relations

Predictably, the list of Kaoling's—and, by extension, Dhucharg's—enemies is long. The border nations of Jinin, Lingshen, and Zi Ha are the most hated. Mere mention of the elven nation of Jinin provokes rage in many citizens due to hobgoblins' deeply ingrained racial biases against elves. Kaoling also regularly invades Zi Ha; the last conflict, of which Warlord Kavangaki is a veteran, was nearly successful.

Dhucharg's few allies include many of the Tian-La tribes of Shaguang and Hongal, and a few Gokan merchant companies. In these partnerships, Dhucharg trades its excess arms and armor for textiles, culinary delicacies, and sometimes slaves. The Gokan merchant companies in turn excel at smuggling the hobgoblins' well-made goods to buyers throughout the world.

Dhucharg's citizens know little and care even less about cultures and regions outside of Tian Xia. Some are aware of the Goblinblood Wars, but they consider their kin's defeat a result of Avistani hobgoblin weakness rather than human strength. A hobgoblin who leaves Avistan or Garund to live in Dhucharg is usually viewed with suspicion, although they may sometimes find a comfortable place in society after time.

## Districts

Dhucharg is made up of the following districts.

**Banner District:** Impeccably clean and laced with regalia glorifying Kaoling's conquests, this district is home to high-ranking military officers and visiting dignitaries.

**Blood District:** This district houses the majority of the city's common soldiers. In the center is a large gladiatorial arena, which offers strictly structured entertainment, and a track where beastmasters train and race bovine yzobu (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex 124*).

**Blue Lantern District:** One of the few places in the city where comfort is emphasized, this district is filled with meandering garden paths, fragrant teahouses, and vibrant geisha houses. In a sign that the "lesser" races are not particularly welcome here, the lanterns

that mark these establishments glow blue only to those with darkvision.

**Command Quarter:** The General Staff governs the nation from this central district, which bustles with activity from citizens seeking various permits in endless bureaucratic offices. Visitors also come here to seek the paperwork needed to stay in the city either temporarily or permanently.

**Foreign Quarter:** Visitors granted permission to stay in Dhucharg are usually relegated to this district, which contains a bevy of inns, merchants, and guides. The city's three main slave markets are also here, effectively ensuring that visitors are never under any misconception about how the city thrives.

**Ja Noi Quarter:** Although a small number of ja noi oni (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #52: Forest of Spirits 90*) live throughout the city, this quarter almost exclusively houses these dangerous residents. Ja noi particularly hate humans, and many human slaves have gone missing here. This quarter is also home to many of the city's half-ja noi, although their human parentage inevitably causes swiftly quashed conflict with their ja noi neighbors.

**Mustering Fields:** Located outside the city walls, this area mainly houses pens for the military's war mounts, including yzobu and horses. Military drills take place on the several training grounds here; when Kaoling goes to war, these fields easily convert to temporary barracks.

**Port District:** This area contains warehouses, fisheries, and sundry merchant stalls that cater to docked ships. The Sprawl, a shantytown filled with hobgoblins who don't have official residency papers, is south of the city and west of the port. The city's guards occasionally purge this area, but somehow, the population usually bounces right back.

**Slave Quarter:** Downwind of the Sword District, this district houses the majority of Dhucharg's slaves. The slums are tightly packed; buildings sprawl and the poorly planned streets are more akin to alleyways, underscoring how little Dhucharg's hobgoblins care for its most vulnerable population.

**Sword District:** This churning district is home to the city's many forges, foundries, and factories, which produce arms, armor, and other war implements for the entire nation.

## Sites of Interest

Dhucharg's carefully regimented streets and brutally precise layout cannot completely squash the chaos that arises whenever large numbers of humanoids live in close proximity.

**1. The Bloody Ear:** In the Slave Quarter, hidden deep in an expansive slum basement, is the illicit tavern known as The Bloody Ear. A clientele consisting mostly of elven slaves spends its precious free time drowning sorrows in smuggled liquor and trading horror stories;

patronage is invitation-only, and layers of secrecy obscure the establishment's very existence. Tavern keeper **Ellenia Shereed** (N female half-elf rogue 7), one of the handful of free half-elves in the city, is also the leader of a secret and scattered elven resistance movement. Small as it is, the resistance movement enjoys the clandestine patronage of Jinin, perhaps suggesting that it will eventually become a political force on its own. As it is, though, one word to the right bureaucrat or to a single councilor could bring The Bloody Ear and the fledgling resistance to a violent end.

**2. Dhucharg-jo:** Also called Dhucharg Castle, this massive palace is on an island in the center of the Command Quarter. Home to Warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki, the castle boasts a veritable army of slaves to ensure that the warlord lives in obscene luxury. The castle also houses the warlord's personal Crimson Sentinels, membership in which is a great but largely ceremonial honor reserved for soldiers who have shown the utmost bravery and ferocity in combat.

A third but little-known group also resides in the castle: the Dragon's Teeth, Dhucharg's secret police. These elite warriors are mostly ninjas, though there are a few inquisitors and investigators among their ranks. Founded 50 years ago when an unpopular warlord feared for his position, the Dragon's Teeth serve at the warlord's whim. By virtue of the group's original charter, the Dragon's Teeth are outside the control of the General Staff and the Council of Nine. Their activities are largely confined to rooting out disloyalty to the state, but in recent years Kavangaki has also leveraged them to silence his personal enemies. The organization's current leader, Shogun Jenji Tukoami, has compiled impressive surveillance on potential usurpers and dissidents, ingratiating himself with the ruthless Kavangaki. However, rumors in the Command Quarter claim that Tukoami is secretly allied with Himoko Na-ichi. Some of the boldest say that the two are building a plot that could cause the warlord's regime to implode overnight.

**3. Mercenary House:** This weathered, two-story building in the heart of the Foreign Quarter is the primary place in Dhucharg for adventurers and mercenaries to find work. Run by the building's owner, **Zhang Li Song** (N female hobgoblin

brawler<sup>ACG</sup> 6), the Mercenary House matches the needs of patrons with the skill sets of hirelings, and through these arrangements, talented adventurers can earn quite a bit of prestige and coin. Of course, the government tightly regulates all contracts and taxes all earnings, and the Mercenary House takes its own cut.

The government has strictly forbidden open assassination contracts, but that has only led to murder-for-hire requests that are elaborately coded—and grossly profitable for all involved. It's an open secret that any adventurers who inquire about "rat infestations" are truly asking whether there are any available assassination contracts. Li Song knows about and tolerates these illicit activities because they make her wealthy, but when assassins are caught, she is careful to produce records that leave her blameless. She would be willing to pay dearly, of course, to silence anyone who might leak information implicating her in anything untoward.

**4. Ministry of Blood:** Located in the Command Quarter, this is Dhucharg's temple of Yaezhing. The vicious priests who call the ministry home happily work with the General Staff and Council of Nine to carry out the public executions of those found guilty of high crimes, typically sedition or treason. Less severe public punishments, such as flogging for petty theft and similar crimes, also take place on the ministry's grounds. In rare cases, the priests carry out executions of slaves at owners' requests, although such matters are usually left for private citizens to handle themselves.

Inside the ministry, convicted criminals and surrendered slaves are held in cells overseen by **Genji Yamata** (LE male hobgoblin inquisitor<sup>APG</sup> of Yaezhing 7), the temple's high priest. Some citizens claim that the temple includes a secret dungeon housing the warlord's enemies, although others spread rumors that the priests are actually allied with Himoko Na-ichi and her supporters.

**5. Pagoda of the Nine:** Located atop a hill in the Banner District, this nine-tiered pagoda provides housing for the generals of Kaoling's ruling Council of Nine. Each floor is reserved for a specific general, and the councilors usually split their time between the capital and the region of Kaoling where their regiments are stationed. Four times



**Purtha Ramalen**



# Distant Shores

each year, however, the generals convene in Dhucharg to handle council business, including votes on important military matters or, more rarely, potential new trade alliances. When this happens, the generals' personal troops camp around the hill that supports the pagoda, and the Command Quarter swells with newly landed foreign diplomats and dignitaries hoping to bend the council's ear. It's during these times, many say, that anyone who would strike against the generals or the warlord might find the easiest time fomenting rebellion, as the guards' hands are usually quite full.

**6. Palace of the Black Daimyo:** On the border of the Blood District and the Ja Noi Quarter sits the city's temple of General Susumu, the Black Daimyo. The palace is home to the Black Daimyo's sizable clergy, who double as lords for the city's samurai. These samurai are the largest non-military force in Dhucharg, and make regular public showings of loyalty to the city's leadership. Warlord Kavangaki claims to be the temple's greatest supporter; some say that high priest **Kirino Tsu-Chang** (LE male hobgoblin warpriest<sup>ACG</sup> of General Susumo 7) secretly covets a place on the council. Recent political maneuverings, including the public defeat of **Councilor Chi Sha-zhan** (NE female hobgoblin fighter 8) in a duel, might suggest that these plots are already in motion.

**7. Senshi's Arena:** Also known as the warrior's arena, this stadium in the Blood District is one of the only places outside the Blue Lantern District where sanctioned entertainment takes place. Every month, the arena hosts elaborate duels between military members who either have scores to settle or simply enjoy blood sports. Admission fees directly benefit the military rather than the combatants, who must abide by strict rules when fighting. Nonetheless, successful duelists take great pride in their wins and many have leveraged them into higher social ranks.

**8. Silk Orchid:** This famous geisha house in the Blue Lantern District is home to Dhucharg's most talented geisha, who are consummate dancers, singers, and conversationalists. The most popular geisha here is the Vudrani known as **Purtha Ramalen** (N female half-orc bard 6), who is renowned for her mesmerizing dances and relaxing, throaty songs. Beneath Purtha's elaborate hair and makeup is a calculating individual who leads the city's underground group of Irori worshipers and is always looking for ways to subvert what she sees as the city's messy leadership and ineffectual bureaucracy.

**9. War College:** The closest thing in Dhucharg to a university, this elite military training academy is located in the Foreign Quarter, where it can best intimidate diplomats. Here, hobgoblin recruits who have shown leadership potential and great battle prowess study advanced battlefield tactics and work with mentors to help plan upcoming martial campaigns. Hobgoblins throughout Kaoling covet a place in the academy, and

## RANK IN DHUCHARG

The General Staff assigns ranks to every resident in Dhucharg, whether military member, civilian, or slave, and each category includes its own convoluted system of titles. In general, military members rank higher than shimujin, or civilians, who themselves are considered far superior to slaves. Due to the nature of Dhucharg's bloated bureaucracy, titles and ranks within categories are sometimes fluid. However, the general breakdown described below never changes.

**Military:** At the top of this class is the Council of Nine, consisting of the warlord's most trusted generals. Below them are the shoguns, who typically command regional units. **Taslai**, roughly equal to colonels, are the next highest ranked, followed by lieutenants, and then a slew of field offers including captains and commanders. The massive soldier rank includes thousands of commoners.

**Shimujin:** The top-ranked shimujin in Dhucharg are the senseis, the masters of the city's many private samurai and ninja orders; usually retired military members, they often provide elite training to the children of high-ranking individuals. Below the senseis are the artisans who manage and sometimes own the city's forges and foundries. Below them are the free citizens who provide skilled labor directly related to war efforts. At the bottom of the pile are the vast class of artisans, entertainers, and common workers whom the state deems least useful.

**Slaves:** The most loyal slaves are those who carry the *nulichi*, or "first slave," designation, allowing them to work as servants in the Banner District or even Dhucharg-jo. The remaining slave ranks increase numerically—from two to ten; the higher the number, the worse the slaves are treated. All slaves are tattooed or branded with their assigned rank; some older slaves are covered in ink and burns, as a slave's ranking is as changeable as her owner's whim.

even a few foreigners travel from distant Avistan and Garund in hopes of attending. **Taslai Nariko Gamiyata** (LN female hobgoblin samurai<sup>UC</sup> 9), the college's chancellor, is ruthlessly strict with her students, but her tactics have turned out some of the best officers in Kaoling's history.

## The Growing Darkness

As a stable nation ruled by hobgoblins, Kaoling has developed its own institutions, hierarchy, and social standards. While these are influenced by the culture of nearby Tian kingdoms, the culture of Kaoling is distinct from those of its neighbors. Things that are avoided or shunned in other lands are embraced by the hobgoblins of Kaoling, especially the ideas of celebrating darkness as a favorable time for important acts and embracing oni as powerful champions to be promoted and followed.

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## Order of the Eclipse

Hobgoblins have long taken advantage of the tactical edge darkvision gives them when fighting in darkness, particularly against elves, humans, and samsarans. As the ruling class of Kaoling, hobgoblin samurai have adopted the benefit of darkness as a spiritual alliance that forms a guiding principle in not only how they fight, but every aspect of their lives. This has given rise to the order of the eclipse, a respected samurai order devoted to darkness itself. Although the order is not officially restricted to hobgoblins, its edicts make it difficult for any samurai without darkvision to operate in its ranks.

**Edicts:** The samurai cannot create light where it is not necessary—anything that can be done in darkness should be. The samurai must belong to a military organization (within Kaoling this is likely to be a warband commanded by a senior samurai, who in turn answers to Warlord Tsung-cha Kavangaki or one of the Council of Nine). The samurai must enforce his place within this order and societies that recognize its authority, obeying those senior to him without question and demanding total obedience from those beneath him. The samurai must take every opportunity to extinguish the lights of his foes.

**Challenge:** The order of the eclipse samurai gains a +1 bonus on all Intimidate checks made against the target of his challenge. This bonus increases by 1 for every four levels the samurai possesses.

**Skills:** An order of the eclipse samurai adds Perception (Wis) and Survival (Wis) to his list of class skills. In addition, whenever he makes a Perception check to notice an invisible creature or object, he receives a bonus on the check equal to 1/2 his samurai level (minimum +1).

**Order Abilities:** A samurai that belongs to the order of the eclipse gains the following abilities as he increases in level.

**Dark Rider (Su):** At 2nd level, whenever the samurai is on his mount, both he and his mount share any of the following senses if either of them possesses it: darkvision, low-light vision, scent, and see in darkness. This applies regardless of the source of the sense (including senses gained from spells or magic items), but only while the samurai is mounted. If the samurai and mount both have a sense but one has an improved version (such as a samurai with darkvision with a range of 60 feet riding a mount that has darkvision with a range of 90 feet), both receive the improved version of the sense.

**Eclipsing Blade (Sp):** At 8th level, the samurai can cast *darkness* on a weapon he is holding. The *darkness* does not affect the vision of any order of the eclipse samurai, or that of their mounts. The spell immediately ends if the weapon leaves the samurai's hand. He may do this once per day, plus one additional time per day for every four levels he possesses above 8th (to a maximum of four times per day at 20th level).

**See in Darkness (Ex):** At 15th level the samurai can see perfectly in darkness, even magical darkness, as the universal monster ability of the same name.

## Oni-Kin

Within Kaoling, those oni that take the form of hobgoblins—known as ja noi—are treated as honored champions. While ja noi have an overwhelming need to engage in regular battle and command troops, and can be dangerous if too much time passes between fights, this drive is easily met by Kaoling's regular military operations, and most hobgoblin soldiers are only too willing to fight at a ja noi's command. While other oni are respected for their size and strength, they are generally treated as valued allies rather than members of Kaoling society. Ja noi, by contrast, are embraced as revered cousins, and closely integrated into Kaoling communities.

Though rare, sometimes such close association leads to children being born with one ja noi and one hobgoblin parent. These half-ja noi offspring are known as *kanabo*, a term that can also be used to refer to an iron club or translated as meaning “the strongest,” which is how the hobgoblins of Kaoling view the oni-kin among them. Kanabo inherit much of their oni parent's vitality, mystic power, and cunning, but lack the ja noi drive to fight even when no foe is present.

## Creating a Kanabo

Kanabo is an inherited template that can be added to a living, corporeal humanoid of the goblinoid subtype. A kanabo uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**CR:** HD 10 or less, as base creature + 1; HD 11 or more, as base creature + 2.

**Alignment:** Lawful evil.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to outsider (native). Do not recalculate HD, BAB, or saves.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor improves by +1.

**Defenses/Qualities:** HD 11 or less, gains regeneration 1 (acid and fire); HD 12 or more, gains regeneration 5 (acid and fire).

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A kanabo with an Intelligence or Wisdom score of 8 or higher has a cumulative number of spell-like abilities set by its HD. Unless otherwise noted, an ability is usable 1/day. Caster level equals the creature's HD (or the CL of the base creature's spell-like abilities, whichever is higher).

HD	Abilities
1-2	<i>Doom</i> 3/day, <i>magic weapon</i> 3/day
3-4	<i>Bull's strength</i> , <i>command</i> 3/day
6-8	<i>Fly</i> 3/day
9+	<i>Alter self</i> (at will), <i>monstrous physique I</i> (at will), <i>Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic</i>

# Distant Shores

**Abilities:** A kanabo gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and a +2 bonus to Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

**Skills:** A kanabo with racial HD has skill ranks equal to 6 + its Intelligence modifier for each racial HD. Racial class skills are unchanged, and class level skill ranks are unaffected.

## HONORED OF KAOLING

CR 4

### XP 1,200

Kanabo hobgoblin samurai 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 18)

LE Medium outsider (goblinoid, native)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 52 (4d10+24); regeneration 1 (acid and fire)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** resolve 2/day

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk naginata +10 (1d8+5/×4)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +8 (1d8+5/×3)

**Special Attacks** challenge 2/day (+4 damage, +2 to Intimidate)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th, concentration +4)

3/day—*command* (DC 11), *doom*, *magic weapon*

1/day—*bull's strength*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The honored of Kaoling depends on his mount to track down foes. If a fight seems likely, he casts *bull's strength* and *magic weapon*.

**During Combat** The honored of Kaoling moves to be adjacent to the most powerful foe as soon as possible, preferring to fight in melee without his mount. If this isn't a realistic option, he remains mounted and uses his longbow. If badly injured, the honored of Kaoling seeks to fall back long enough for his regeneration to heal him.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack

**Skills** Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Perception +6, Ride +7, Stealth +4, Survival +6

**Languages** Giant, Goblin, Tien

**SQ** dark rider (low-light vision and scent when mounted), mount (yzobu), mounted archer, order of the eclipse, weapon expertise (naginata)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** mwk mountain pattern armor (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*), mwk composite longbow (+5 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk naginata (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*)

## YZOBU MOUNT

N Large animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 22 (4d8+4)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** gore +5 (1d6+3)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 4

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Iron Will, Run

**Skills** Perception +7

**SQ** combat trained, tricks (attack, combat riding, come, defend, down, guard, heel, stay, track)

AELYOSOS

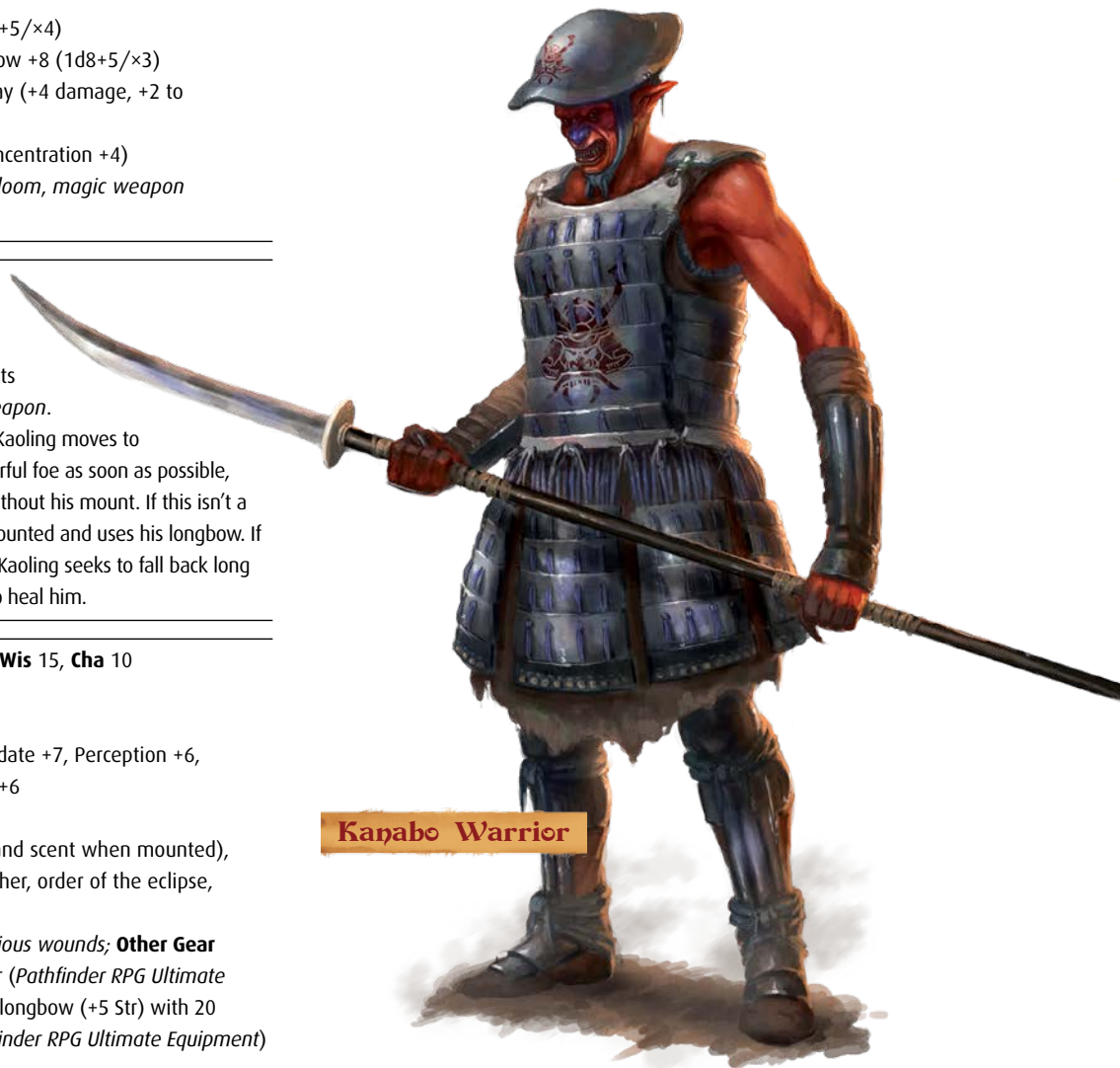
ANULI

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Kanabo Warrior



## RADRIPAL

The Vudrani “City of Arches” acquired that epithet both for the prominent stone span under which any who travel the holy Matra River must pass, and for the extreme differences between the lifestyles of those who live on opposite sides of the city’s dividing ravine. On one side, elegant manors house tastefully attired residents, while on the other, the upper stories of tenements lean together over cramped streets, using every bit of space available to house the city’s miners. Radripal’s two halves are connected by the Archwalk, a natural stone bridge which spans the river gorge that separates wealth from poverty, piety from secularism, and humanity from the embodiment of earthbound evil. Yet despite its differences, Radripal is one city, held together by each side’s need for the other and compromises as delicate and treacherous as the Archwalk itself.

# Distant Shores



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## City of Arches

### Overview

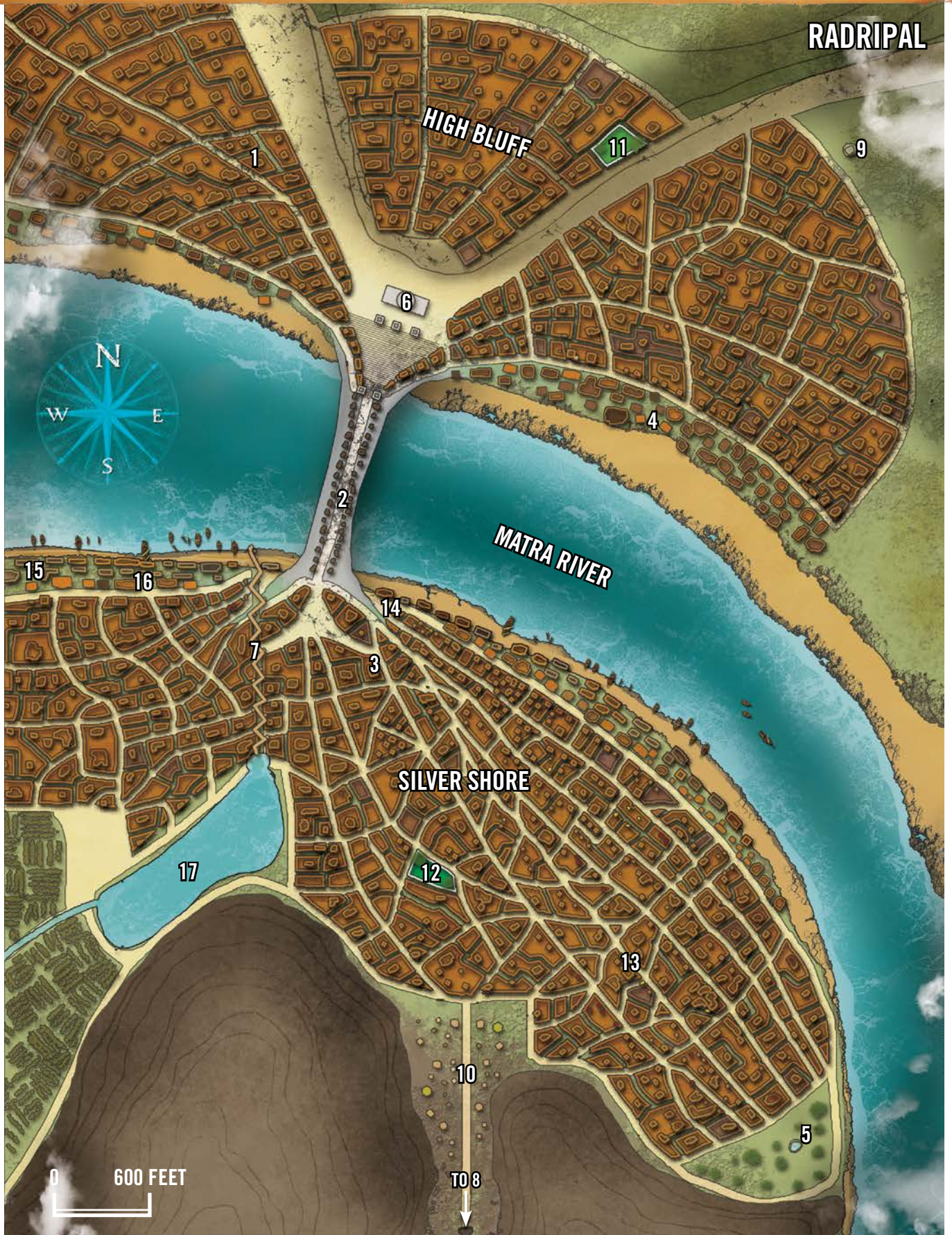
A thriving center of art, faith, and trade, Radripal serves as the capital city of the Danamsa mahajanapada, but its prosperity comes as a steep cost. The disparity in quality of life, influence, and autonomy between the city's upper and lower classes is stark. The regional rajah, Lord Akashar, and his family have ruled the area from Radripal for over 300 years, and use their control of the city's large silver industry to maintain their power. With an international trade network stretching to locations as distant as Korvosa in northwestern Avistan, Akashar's family and allies see the city as but one piece of a greater plan to amass as much wealth as they can. Nevertheless, Akashar exploits the people of his city so subtly that even his political enemies see him as a sensible, pragmatic ruler rather than as the megalomaniacal tyrant he truly is.

### Appearance

Radripal occupies two sides of a deep gorge created by the Matra River as it flows through the rocky Mindisira Highlands. The land on the north side of the canyon is topped with fine stone homes, civic buildings, parks, and polished silver towers stretching into the sky. While the canyon wall here is sheer, the terrain at the top of the bluff is relatively level, and the dense city spreads around the largest building in Radripal, an onion-domed black marble temple in the center of a wide plaza which sits on a small hill, raising it above its neighbors.

A natural stone bridge stretches across the wide canyon. Half a mile long and more than 200 feet wide, the archwalk is sturdy enough to support a wide, paved thoroughfare upon which the city's merchants have created a thriving bazaar.

The buildings on the southern side of the canyon are primarily one- and two-story clay brick homes, packed



# Distant Shores



tightly together amid winding streets that thread the hilly terrain. The canyon walls here are less steep than their counterparts across the Matra, allowing for terraced structures and switchback roads to cling to the slope all the way down to the riverbank.

On the southern river bank, wide mudflats left in the wake of annual flooding from the monsoons host a morass of boats, as well as dozens of small temples and shrines, the latter dense enough east of the bridge to prevent access to the water in places. Although there are no walls surrounding Radripal, the steep hills and the canyon, along with the chokepoint formed by the bridge, ensure that the city is well-defended.

## History

The people of Radripal claim that the romantic union of the gods Ashukharma and Matravash created the natural bridge that now connects the city's two halves, and that their followers united as well, joining the two villages formerly separated by the canyon. Despite this, no historical records of Radripal exist prior to those from 4 centuries ago that provide accounts of travelers stopping to trade by the archway over the river. The landmark provided an easy-to-find meeting place for commerce, and as structures sprang up with permanent inhabitants, the area soon became a thriving settlement.

In 4405 AR, engineers digging an irrigation canal that would become the Vindresh Reservoir struck silver, drawing a rush of prospectors from across Vudra. Among the most influential of miners was the rakshasa now known as Lord Akashar (then going by the name Detri Mehti), who already maintained a dozen other silver mines throughout Vudra. Using his expertise to locate the richest vein of silver in the area, Akashar founded the Mindisira Mine. It took less than a year to establish a monopoly on Radripal's silver industry—competitors were bought out, run out of town, or suffered unfortunate accidents—and with the settlement's primary product under his sole control, it was only a matter of time until he and his family took over the city's official government as well.

In the intervening three centuries, Radripal has grown, in no small part due to the careful guidance of Akashar and his family, who take turns serving as the city's mayor, using their shapeshifting abilities to take on new identities when necessary. Whenever political opposition becomes a threat, the rakshasa closes the mine and all related industries, blackmailing the city into supporting his regime.

## Society

On Radripal's northern side, known as High Bluff, humans of Vudrani descent and a few wealthy Keleshites and Tians live in comfort amid wide boulevards, well-maintained

## RADRIPAL

LN large city

**Corruption** +4; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +5;

**Law** +5; **Lore** +3; **Society** +0

**Qualities** holy site, prosperous, silver surplus, strategic location, tourist attraction; **Disadvantages** wealth disparity

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** overlord

**Population** 22,623 (16,431 humans, 2,602 vanaras, 1,488 vishkanyas, 915 tieflings, 263 rakshasas, 924 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Argent Council Chair Nanjis**

**Hagnadesh** (CG female human oracle<sup>APG</sup> 12)

**Chief Engineer Ridook** (N female vanara<sup>B3</sup> expert 8)

**Head Librarian Mizria Shamar** (LE female rakshasa arcanist<sup>ACG</sup> 4)

**Mayor and Rajah Lord Akashar** (LE male rakshasa sorcerer 8/rogue 4)

**Mine Overseer Jinshar Hekredash** (LE male human rogue 13)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 9th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

**Silver Surplus** Radripal's surplus of silver has made for a very competitive market for silver goods. Items made of silver can be purchased for as little as half the normal cost. The additional cost for making an item of alchemical silver is halved in Radripal's marketplaces.

**Wealth Disparity** A vast chasm separates the wealthy and the poor of Radripal. In High Bluff, increase the Lore score by 2 but decrease the Society score by 2. In Silver Shore, increase the Society score by 2 but decrease the Lore score by 2. The statistics remain unchanged on the Archway. Additionally, increase the base Corruption score in the entire city by 2.

parks, and ornate homes. Many have connections to Lord Akashar and his international trade conglomerate, and work in academia, business, or government, almost exclusively in managerial or intellectual capacities. The Bluffers, everyone knows, don't like to get their hands dirty—at least, not literally. Whether or not most of the residents of High Bluff know the secret of Lord Akashar's true form is uncertain, but they respect the rajah and the status and order he brings to Radripal, and attribute their prosperity to his authoritative guidance and influence.

The rakshasa and his allies do everything they can to encourage this belief, and any Bluffer who doesn't enthusiastically spout the party line soon finds himself under unwelcome scrutiny from both the government and his neighbors.

Most citizens of High Bluff possess a condescending attitude toward the citizens of Silver Shore, on the south side of the city, whom they see as a burden borne by the city's leaders and civic institutions. Bluffers who work at institutions such as Prandreh University or the Archive of the Known tend to hold less elitist views, and are more likely to frequent businesses and temples on the other side of the river.

Silver Shore is diverse and bustling, with vanaras and vishkanyas making up a sizable minority of the primarily Vudrani population. The district's access to the Matra river and its traffic ensures that merchants, adventurers, and pilgrims are always coming and going. The density of the population in areas such as the Slide or Omratajan allows the communities in the area to meld with one another in ways that would be impossible in High Bluff. Slopers (as residents of Silver Shore are called) consider religion an integral part of their daily lives. It isn't uncommon for a Sloper to send up prayers or leave offerings a dozen or more times a day to as many gods, whether in shrines in their homes or in the many temples that fill the district, particularly the Templestep neighborhood.

Regardless of on which side of the river a citizen of Radripal lives, nearly everyone in the city has a near-religious respect for silver and the vital role it plays in ensuring the city's ongoing prosperity and relevance throughout Vudra. In Silver Shore, especially the Omratajan neighborhood, many inhabitants work intimately with silver, as miners, refiners, jewelers, or exporters. In High Bluff, residents tend to wear and live among silver decorations, and often owe large portions of their wealth to the silver industry across the river.

## Relations

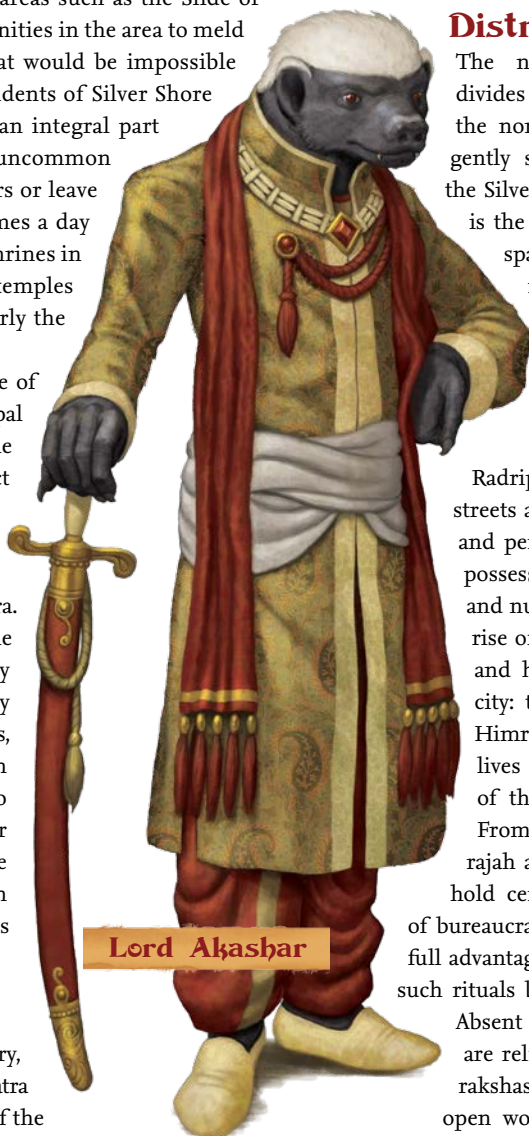
Radripal's large silver industry, strategic location along the Matra River, and position as capital of the

region of Danamsa have earned the city many allies—and a few enemies—throughout the centuries. Lipror, the City of Lotuses, which stands on stilts and piers amid the holy waters of the Matra delta, trades heavily with Radripal. The two cities share a strong veneration of Matravash, and the clergy from each make annual pilgrimages along the river to pray at the holy sites in the other. From the dense jungles of southern Vudra, the vishkanya of the tree-choked city of Tanadesh send seasonal envoys to study in the ashrams and on the ghat steps of Radripal's temple district, hoping to carry wisdom and patience back to the chaotic and tumultuous region they call home. The rakshasas who hold the eastern city of Vaktai in their malevolent grasp maintain strong ties with their kin in Radripal's High Bluff district, and trade in fine goods such as art, candies, jewelry, wine, and even slaves, though the last are contraband in Radripal and much of the land between the two cities.

## Districts

The natural bifurcation of Radripal divides the city into two primary districts, the northern High Bluff and the more gently sloping southern rise known as the Silver Shore. Connecting the two sides is the Archwalk, the natural bridge that spans the Matra and keeps the two interdependent halves of the city linked to one another.

High Bluff, so named for the steep bluff upon which the district stands, is home to the wealthiest and most powerful of Radripal's citizens. The wide, orderly streets are lined with silver arches, spires, and pergolas, and most of the buildings possess walled gardens, enviable views, and numerous outbuildings. The central rise of High Bluff overlooks these villas and hosts the largest structure in the city: the great onion-domed palace of Himradri, where the city's ruling family lives and from which the business of the city government is conducted. From the Himradri's grand steps, the rajah and other officials and dignitaries hold ceremonial proceedings in matters of bureaucracy, commerce, and justice, taking full advantage of the grandeur imparted upon such rituals by the backdrop of the Archwalk. Absent from these proceedings, however, are religious functions of any kind. The rakshasas who rule the city allow no open worship of any god in all of High



**Lord Akashar**



# Distant Shores



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Bluff, for they believe themselves the only true beings in the city worth such veneration. As such, High Bluff has no temples or public shrines among its structures, and private altars exist only in citizens' homes.

The southern half of Radripal, called Silver Shore, is a foil to High Bluff in nearly every way. While the district abuts the Archwalk at a height comparable to that of its counterpart across the river, the terrain slopes evenly down to the river to either side of the natural bridge, allowing access to the water for both worship and travel. The streets of Silver Shore are narrow and winding, and the buildings are small, nondescript, and often squeezed into any space into which they can fit. The shoreline west of the arch is dominated by scores of ashrams, shrines, and temples dedicated to hundreds of Vudrani deities, and forms a neighborhood known as Templestep for the flights of wide stairs that lead from the temples down into the river. A complex irrigation system carries water from the Matra up the rise to Vindresh, the hilltop neighborhood surrounding a lagoon from which the city's farmland is watered. Near Vindresh is Omratajan, "the source of silver," a neighborhood populated by jewelers, metalworkers, and the miners who work the Radripal Vein that stretches deep into the mountain to the city's south. The eastern slope of Silver Shore is the city's commercial and industrial center. Trade goods are brought ashore from moored boats in the deep waters of the river via small launches that navigate the shallows and mudflats of the flood plain, and these goods are traded and refined in the factories, artisans' shops, and markets of East Slope.

## Sites of Interest

The following locations are among the most prominent or important sites in the city of Radripal.

**1. Archive of the Known:** Radripal's largest library, situated near the campus of Prandreth University, boasts that everything known to a citizen of Radripal can also be found in its extensive collection. While such claims are likely hyperbolic, it remains the most extensive archive in the region. Head Librarian Mizria Shamar ensures that the secret of her family's true identities and any of their less scrupulous business or civic dealings are omitted from the official record, but in all other matters, she is helpful to patrons. She respects knowledge and those who cherish it, and is more than willing to assist in research efforts as long as the requestor does not threaten her family's position in Radripal.

**2. Archwalk Bazaar:** Occupying the wide surface of the Archwalk, this bazaar of shifting, seasonal merchants' stalls serves as a conduit between the two sections of the city. During holy days, celebrations often erupt along the cobblestone road down the center of the arch, with revelers taking their festivities to virtually the doorstep

of their rakshasa masters, who forbid the open practice of religion within High Bluff. The faithful of the northern half of the city welcome the dancing, music, and colors of such events, both because they need travel only a short distance to participate without angering Lord Akashar, and because such crowds and joyous celebration makes for good business in the bazaar, in which many of High Bluff's residents have an interest.

**3. Argent Palace:** One of the most opulent buildings in Silver Shore, the Argent Palace functions as the civic heart of the district, even if the formal center of government is elsewhere. Made up of representatives of the district's trade and artisans' guilds, influential families, and religious institutions, the Argent Council meets weekly to discuss matters affecting the people of Silver Shore. While the council has no more official power than any citizen of Radripal, they do have a great deal of personal influence, and there's no denying that the organization has helped the district more than the city government, largely by cutting the bureaucracy of the Himradri out of as many of Silver Shore's affairs as possible. Criminal matters, civil disputes, and responsibilities such as organizing public services and repairing communal infrastructure are all handled within Silver Shore, without involving the Himradri at all. When the council must take a matter across the river, it ensures that the district's various factions present their case as a unified front. The Argent Council's leader, an outspoken woman named Nanjis Hagnadesh, uses her position both to help the people of Silver Shore and to organize a growing resistance movement against the tyranny of Lord Akashar and his cronies.

**4. Ashukharma's Eye:** Containing one of the few temples not situated on the banks of the Matra, Ashukharma's Eye is a natural cave in the steep wall of High Bluff. Followers of Ashukharma hollowed out the chamber behind the eye-shaped opening and built a temple to their goddess there. Visitors can also access the temple from a nondescript public square; in the center of the square is another opening shaped like a smaller version of the one in the bluff, containing stairs that descend into the ground and emerge within the temple. Lord Akashar has recently become aware of the cult, and rather than crushing them, has instead blackmailed them into serving as his informants. They now use the hidden temple rooms to secretly observe Silver Shore's river banks and report any suspicious goings-on.

**5. East Slope Park:** This swath of green in the southeastern corner of Silver Shore houses the city's modest menagerie, featuring a wide selection of Vudrani wildlife as well as more exotic beasts from as far off as Avistan. Particularly notable are the venomous najra lizard from the Narhari Desert, a psychic white tiger, a Bhopani manhound, and a firepelt cougar

from distant Varisia. For the past 10 years, residents of High Bluff have petitioned to have the menagerie moved across the river for their own enjoyment, but to date Lord Akashar and his family have been strangely unwilling to entertain such requests.

Apart from the menagerie, East Slope Park also offers a respite from the bustle of business in the nearby markets, industrial facilities, and warehouses, and during the day many workers take breaks here to relax. Entry to the park after sundown is strictly prohibited, but rumors hold that a secret fighting ring has begun holding tournaments at night under the cover of the park's trees.

**6. Himradri:** The great onion dome of the Himradri is perhaps the most iconic landmark in Radripal save for the natural arch it overlooks. Within its austere marble halls, Lord Akashar, his family, and their trusted agents



**Nanjis Hagnadesh**

operate their vast empire of exploitation. From the bureaucracy that keeps Radripal functioning to envoys weaving a web of intrigue that spans continents, every aspect of the Himradri serves to grow and maintain the rakshasa's power. Most of those who work in the building know nothing of these complex machinations, serving as pawns in the city's courts and bureaucracy or as servants in the residential section of the edifice, where Akashar's private family home makes an opulent contrast to the starkness of the rest of the Himradri's interior.

**7. Matravash's Ladder:** This intricate irrigation system, designed and still operated by the vanaran engineer Ridook and her apprentices, carries water from the Matra up to the reservoir at the top of the hill. The system of pulleys and conveyors is completely self-sustainable, and is powered by a giant waterwheel near the Templestep neighborhood. Residents of the Vindresh neighborhood guard the ladder and the reservoir it feeds in shifts that cover both day and night.

**8. Mindisira Mine:** The largest silver mine within 1,000 miles, the Mindisira Mine employs more than half of Radripal's citizens in some fashion, either directly as miners, or indirectly as crafters and merchants. The mine's overseer, Jinshar Hekredash, reports directly to Lord Akashar and uses any means necessary to ensure the rakshasa's monopoly on the city's foremost industry remains intact. Because he is the face of the mine, Hekredash deflects most of the people's complaints about the silver industry's exploitation of the city's poor from the Himradri, making him both one of the most hated and one of the most powerful people in the city.

**9. Oublette:** On the outskirts of High Bluff, a crude and ancient stone building stands alone on a small hill. It is a simple dome carved from weathered stone, with an arched entrance and no ornamentation of any sort. Inside is a stone bench, and a hole. Children often dare one another to throw something down the hole and try to hear when it strikes the bottom of the pit, claiming that it's bottomless. Adults, by contrast, tell a darker tale, of Lord Akashar casting opponents into the oublette and leaving them to starve. Though most Bluffers dismiss such stories as slander, there's no denying the mournful cries that are occasionally heard issuing from the pit.

**10. Omratajan Camp:** The ramshackle huts, canvas tents, and temporary structures that make up this dense neighborhood near the entrance to the Mindisira Mine are home to a majority of the miners who ensure the city's lifeblood—silver—continues to flow. Despite their daily handling of precious silver ore, these workers are among the poorest in the city, for the corruption of the mine's management ensures that they see very little wealth when they return home for the night. The camp's residents are an untrusting, insular lot, who

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make up for their cold suspicion of outsiders with a nearly unassailable loyalty to one another. Due to this silent code of mutual support, crime and violence within the slums is rare, with the exception of strong-arming from the mine's management. Miners who are seen as troublemakers are swiftly dealt with via vigilante justice and intimidation, and resources are found for mining families in need. The rare riots that break out in the camp are usually caused by the miners' attempts to deal with newcomers who they suspect of being management spies.

**11. Prandreth University:** The largest institution of higher learning in Danamsa, Prandreth University offers scholars training in the arcane and esoteric arts, and arcanists, bards, occultists, psychics, and wizards from across Vudra congregate in its High Bluff campus to share information and expand their intellectual horizons. Students at the university can be identified by their distinctive saffron-dyed sashes, and are instructed by their professors to remain above the local politics of Radripal. Aside from visits to the holy sites in Templestep, most students keep to the company of their classmates and instructors, and remain on campus when possible.

**12. Silver Circle:** This park in Silver Shore was constructed by followers of Omrataji to glorify their god and serve the communities in which silversmiths live and work. A silver circle, laid into the stone outcropping atop which the park sits, marks its borders and is magically protected against tarnish. Inside the circle are shade trees and soft grasses, and the people of Silver Shore often spend summer evenings there, enjoying the light of the sunset reflecting off the river and watching the water traffic below the park.

**13. Spicemarket:** One of the score of individual markets located in Silver Shore, the Spicemarket is by far the most famous. Named for the wide array of spices traded within—cinnamon, curry, gundra root, saffron, vanilla, vetala peppers, wursalt, and more—the true draw of the market is not its flavors and aromas, but rather the excitement of finding love. Unmarried people from throughout Danamsa come to the Spicemarket hoping to meet their future spouses. Whatever a customer's preferences, there's always a seller offering what one seeks. Using a complex lexicon of codes, gestures, and bartering, potential matches find one another based on the specific "spice" requested. Despite being a place of business, the Spicemarket is not a brothel but a sort of community-run matchmaking service, and no money changes hands except in transactions of actual spice. Visitors to Radripal often visit the market simply to see what it's all about and find themselves overpowered not just by the market's tastes and smells, but by the nearly palpable sense of hope, potential, and mystery it exudes.

## VUDRANI CASTES

Members of Vudrani society belong to one or more castes, which define their roles within society and bring with them different cultural traditions. While most Vudrani remain in the caste into which they are born, the boundaries between the castes are fluid, and one Vudrani may move from caste to caste over the course of her life as her role within her community changes.

The four castes fill the roles of artisan, priest, scholar, and warrior. No caste is more powerful or carries with it higher status than the other three, and each Vudrani recognizes that the four work together symbiotically—without any one, the rest would be unable to function to their fullest potential. Within each caste, however, there are varying degrees of hierarchy, such as more learned scholars taking on leadership roles within their caste, mentoring the younger and weaker, and bearing larger responsibilities in the community at large.

The most revered members of each caste are those who possess psychic abilities, especially kineticists within the warrior caste, spiritualists in the religious caste, and occultists among the scholars. Vudrani hold that these powers are evidence of mental fortitude and spiritual enlightenment—every non-psychic has something she can learn from one who has unlocked the powers of the mind.

Only non-Vudrani or those who turn away from the caste system are ostracized from the system. One who refuses to take part is seen as a burden and not granted the benefits that come with caste membership. It is possible, however, for emigrants to Vudra or non-humans who make their home within the subcontinent to join a caste so long as they adhere to the proper tenets with the same dedication that the Vudrani demonstrate.

For more on Vudrani castes, see page 60 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Races*.

**14. Slide:** The modest buildings of this neighborhood, located on the steepest portion of Silver Shore beneath the Archwalk, are stacked atop one another, pressing in on the narrow streets that wind chaotically through this slum. Home to the poorest of Radripal's citizens, the Slide is a frequent hideout for criminals on the run from authorities either within Radripal or from elsewhere in Vudra, because even the city watch tends not to brave the steep, mazelike alleys except in the most dire of circumstances. As such, the Slide is home to a thriving black market, conducted out of crumbling homes and blanket-covered rooftops. The market moves on an almost weekly basis, as Akashar and his henchmen attempt to crack down on commerce they can't control, but he hasn't yet been able to stomp it out.

**15. Suyuddha Ghat:** The largest and most prominent of Templestep's ghats, this wide stairway descends from the temple of Suyuddha to the Matra, and is lined on both sides by smaller ashrams to other Vudrani deities. Prophets, healers, and pilgrims flock to the ghat daily to bathe in the Matra's waters, pay respects to their patron gods, and teach their faiths' holy tenets.

**16. Templestep:** The holy Matra is revered even by those who direct most of their worship to other gods, and the architecture of the temples in Radripal pays homage to the Matra's importance. Most are built on the river's shores, and face the river, with high arched windows open to the breezes from the water. They also have wide staircases that descend into the water, allowing those traveling by boat to tie up their craft alongside the steps and ascend them into the temples. Ceremonial cleansings, baptisms, and other water-focused ceremonies also use these staircases.

**17. Vindresh:** A series of pumps, known as Matravash's Ladder, drives water up into the lagoon around which the hilltop neighborhood of Vindresh clusters. The city's farmlands are irrigated from this reservoir, making it one of the most important resources in the city. The residents receive a discount on their rent or on purchasing land in the neighborhood in exchange for ensuring that the pump system continues to function and the reservoir is kept full and free of pollution. The city leadership imposes severe penalties on any unauthorized individual caught tampering with the reservoir.

## Vudrani Religion

The people of Vudra worship a pantheon of thousands of deities. Most Vudrani do not consider themselves followers of a single faith, instead giving all gods equal respect and veneration, praying to them in turn as their areas of concern become relevant to individuals. Even clerics, who gain divine power from a specific deity, pay respect to other gods as the situation requires, and—except in cases of veneration to deities of opposing alignments—suffer no consequences for doing so.

Most of the gods of Vudra share a series of narrative holy books, lengthy sagas that detail the gods' adventures, miracles, and conflicts with one another without prescribing rituals or dogma. The most famous of these books is the *Azvadeva Pujila*, which recounts the stories of such gods as Gruhastha, Omrataji, Raumya, and even the mortal Irori as he labored to attain perfection.

While hundreds of gods are worshiped in any given city or region in Vudra, most communities hold only a few as local patrons, often based upon the industries, geography, ideologies, and dangers that define the area. In Radripal, the influence of the rakshasas in High Bluff has curtailed the veneration of many deities, but three gods nevertheless define the City of Arches more than any others: Ashukharma, Matravash, and Omrataji.

## ASHUKHARMA

The Divine Divide

*CN goddess of canyons, cliffs, gorges, and ravines*

**Domains** Chaos, Earth, Protection, Strength

**Subdomains** Caves, Defense, Entropy, Resolve

**Favored Weapon** greatsword

**Symbol** a deep, jagged gorge in dry earth

**Sacred Animal** goat



Ashukharma is the goddess of canyons, gorges, and ravines, and is often seen as a divisive force—her canyons hinder travel, form boundaries between nations, and pose serious threats to those who attempt to navigate their steep sides. At the same time, she's also a protector, for those same ravines can be used as natural defenses against enemies and dangerous beasts. Ashukharma's worshipers venerate both of the goddess's aspects, recognizing that they are not opposed, nor even two sides of the same coin, but simply the same principle used in different ways.

The *Azvadeva Pujila* tells of Ashukharma's battles with her former lover Dinehdal, god of mountain peaks. Spurned when he chose the trio of goddesses known as the Cloud Sisters over her, Ashukharma vowed to travel as far from Dinehdal as possible. Thus she walked the earth as a mortal, leaving a trail of crevasses in her wake, marring the very mountains atop which Dinehdal found his solace.

When Ashukharma reached the bank of the mighty Matra River, she found the waterway's patron, Matravash, beset by Gavidya the Numberless, an asura rana who took the form of a seemingly endless host of foul creatures. Overwhelmed by Gavidya's power, Matravash pled for aid from Ashukharma. The Divine Divide assented and formed steep walls around Matravash to protect her. Together the goddesses drove the asura rana back into Hell. In so doing, Ashukharma found the wounds on her heart healed, and she took the river as her new lover, thanking Matravash for showing her that Dinehdal's betrayal did not mean the end of love.

Scorned lovers, or those who feel a rift forming between themselves and friends or family, also commonly pray to the Divine Divide, in the hopes that they can safely weather the dangerous emotional terrain through which their life path leads them. Members of Matravash's cult also hold Ashukharma in particular reverence, even along the long stretches of the river that do not flow through a canyon.

Prayers to Ashukharma often involve contemplation on the palms of the hand, as followers believe that the creases and lines therein hold signs from the goddess—miniature canyons formed through the toil of daily life yet capable of serving those who know how to read their meaning.

# Distant Shores



## MATRAVASH

The Wide Water  
*LN goddess of the Matra River*

**Domains** Community, Law, Travel, Water

**Subdomains** Cooperation, Loyalty, River, Trade

**Favored Weapon** whip

**Symbol** lotus blossom floating on a winding river

**Sacred Animal** fish



Matravash is the goddess of the eponymous Matra River, which flows nearly 2,500 miles through Vudra and serves as the primary means of travel into the nation's heart from the west. She is seen as a facilitator of civilization, for the river connects communities and allows for the easy sharing of ideas, efficiency in trade, and ultimately passage into the greater waterway of the Obari Ocean—a symbol to Matravash's faithful of the Great Beyond as the final destination of the River of Souls.

The Wide Water is closely associated with lotus blossoms, which grow in abundance on her calm waters, especially in the warm estuaries near the river's delta. The *Azvadeva Pujila* speaks of the river's origins, when the entire length of the waterway was rife with deadly rapids. Entranced by the beauty of the lotus blossoms in sheltered eddies, Matravash calmed herself to accommodate the flourishing plants, and found that the travelers who began to ply her waters were welcome visitors. Thus did both Matravash and the lotuses earn their reputation as peaceful, calm, and contemplative entities.

Despite her position as a goddess of law, Matravash is often seen as a friend to the oppressed, for the Matra offers those without hope in their current homes an escape route which can take them to better places and new opportunities, and her priesthood is scrupulous about not revealing the whereabouts of fugitives who have broken no laws.

As with any river fed by heavy seasonal rains such as Vudra's annual monsoons, the Matra swells in its banks regularly, and those who live on or near the water are accustomed to flooding. Matravash tends to these river dwellers closely, setting into motion seeming coincidences that keep those unprepared for such forces of nature out of harm's way. In populated areas, Matravash restrains her waters to rejuvenate the soil of the flood plain without overexerting herself and disrupting the lives of those with whom she has formed an almost symbiotic relationship. Thus are floods seen as the river's gift to farmers rather than the wrath of an angry goddess; expected cycles of ebbing and flowing associated with health and fertility rather than natural disasters.

## OMRATAJI

The Spirit in Silver  
*NG god of silver, silverwork, and silver mining*

**Domains** Artifice, Earth, Good, Nobility

**Subdomains** Friendship, Leadership, Metal, Toil

**Favored Weapon** spiked chain

**Symbol** a shimmering silver star

**Sacred Animal** mole



Omrataji is the god of silver and all those who work with it, from the miners who pull it from the earth to the artisans who shape it. Followers of Omrataji believe silver is the most valuable of elements, because of its effectiveness in defeating evil outsiders, vampires, and lycanthropes. Omrataji has become a patron of crusades against such evils, not by fighting them directly—though he isn't against such action in times of need—but rather by ensuring those who oppose them have access to the finest of weapons needed to defeat them. Despite his reputation as a crusader deity, Omrataji's main focus is as a god of crafting and the relationships that arise within the silver industry.

Omrataji's followers believe that the act of trading, sharing, or otherwise passing silver from one person to another is a gesture of friendship, camaraderie, and charity, even if such practical transactions are part of a financial arrangement rather than acts of altruism. One of the most common axioms spoken by Omrataji's faithful is, "May the silver flow freely from your purse," indicating that the speaker wishes wealth, communion, and generosity upon the subject of his blessing. Omrataji's followers aren't naive about the power of wealth to divide and oppress, but they do maintain optimism that commerce can be purified into something that uplifts everyone in society, rather than being used as a tool to reduce the power of the already powerless. They attempt to teach others to manage their resources well and navigate the nation's economic systems with a sense of confidence.

In Radripal, where the silver industry has for so long been a tool of the city's corrupt rulers, Omrataji's faithful ever prepare for an eventual revolt against the rakshasas. The underground movement's leadership believes that the people hold the power to cut off the flow of silver from Lord Akashar and his cronies rather than the other way around. Omrataji, for his part, urges temperance and an attempt to show evildoers the error of their ways rather than allowing their passions to lead them to outright rebellion.

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## SEGADA

Far across the Arcadian Ocean stands the vast continent from which the ocean takes its name. Isolated geographically by seemingly endless waves and untouched by foreign invasion, the people of Arcadia built powerful empires, developed amazing feats of engineering, and made the most of their bountiful lands. Their isolation was not a curse, but rather a boon, for the people of Arcadia focused their resources inward toward their own communities, rather than warring with others. Arcadia itself is a land of towering mountains, broad prairies, lush forests, and deadly deserts, and the various nations that fill its expanse have good reason to protect their bountiful land from those who would exploit it. Built high in a mountain pass just beyond the Grinding Coast, Segada serves as a gateway to the treasures and mysteries of this legendary region.

# Distant Shores



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## The City of Keys

### Overview

Situated in the most forgiving pass in a range of perilous mountains, a thousand feet above sea level, Segada overlooks a thin strip of land between the mountain range and the Arcadian Ocean known as the Grinding Coast. A settlement has existed here for thousands of years, and this mountain pass has always served as a stronghold protecting one side of the mountain range from the other, monitoring passage in and out of the continent's interior. This strategic location makes the city one of the most important settlements in the nation of Degasi.

To the north, the range breaks into craggy cliffs that fall into the Atnumees Sea, beyond which lie the fabled lands of Valenhall. To the south, the mountains swoop into rolling hills before spreading flat into the Shraedar Peninsula that juts into the Arcadian Ocean. Nearby mines supply gold, iron ore, and coal through Segada to

the other cities in Degasi, where artisans manufacture goods and trade with neighboring nations, bringing Degasi wealth and bolstering Segada's importance.

Segada is a bustling city, and still growing. Many of the city's buildings have been built in the last century as trade has increased, and new buildings go up each month at the city's edges. Music fills the streets as the day winds down, and aromas from hundreds of establishments seek to draw in the tired and hungry.

In recent years, Segada has become a hub of trade not just between Arcadia's eastern shores and its bountiful interior, but between the continent and foreign settlers as well. Though mass shipments are banned from leaving the eastern shores of Arcadia, many merchants and nations of the interior are eager to expand outward. Today, Segada continues to monitor passage through the mountains, but now the process is more a bureaucratic endeavor than a strictly military concern.





# Distant Shores

## Appearance

Visitors to Segada arrive at the city after a lengthy climb through treacherous foothills, making it a welcome sight to most. Spread across stark variations in elevation, the city is blanketed in long shadows in the dawn and twilight hours. Towering pine, spruce, birch, elm, and maple trees cover most of the mountains in a wash of green that shifts to a thousand shades of burning red and orange in autumn.

The center of the city is densely populated, though toward the edges of the district, the homes and businesses become larger and farther apart, allowing for lush gardens and open fields for children to play in. Terraced gardens and homes carved out of the stone climb the sides of the cliffs, and a few palatial dwellings grace the cliff tops, commanding views of the entire city. Most of the buildings are crafted from stone and timber and feature wood tile roofs, though some of the finer buildings use slate tiles as roofing material. Over the last few decades, builders have begun incorporating metal into new structures, such as the “climbers” that scale the cliff faces (see page 49), and the massive metal-and-stone bridge that spans the gap.

Segadans tend to spend much of their time outside, taking meals with their families in the city’s numerous parks, and relaxing in the shade of the maple trees while watching their children play.

## History

Situated near a clean water source in one of the safest sections of the Akrandida Mountains, the site upon which Segada stands was first used as a camp for hunters and travelers crossing the mountain range. Over time, it grew from camp to village to the full-fledged city it is today.

Controlling this point hasn’t ever been easy. A syrinx (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary*) monastery-city in the mountains to the south considered the rocks atop Segada’s waterfall sacred and harassed early Segadan settlers. After a series of bloody battles, the humans enlisted the aid of heroes new to the village and drove back their feathered antagonists. Since this defeat, the syrinx have rarely bothered the city.

A few centuries ago, wyrwoods<sup>B4</sup> from the Grinding Coast banded together in an effort to expand their territory and overtake the pass. Segada—a large town at this point—found itself under attack from hundreds of these constructs. Segadan forces were decimated in the first onslaught, and sent pleas to the capital of Degasi for aid. Degasi and its allies joined the fight against the cruel wyrwoods and their war machine constructs in a series of battles that would later be called the Gearwars. Many who came to Segada’s aid in these times remained, and by the time the fighting ended, the city had tripled in size.

Just over a hundred years ago, the discovery of gold, coal, and other valuable minerals in the nearby

## SEGADA

LN large city

**Corruption** +1; **Crime** +1;

**Economy** +2; **Law** +3;

**Lore** +1; **Society** +4

**Qualities** insular, prosperous, restrictive, strategic location, supportive

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** autocracy

**Population** 19,036 (13,335 humans, 1,578 gnomes, 1,514 halflings, 1,500 wyrwoods, 681 skinwalkers, 228 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Head Investigator Tadrán Datotek** (LE male human investigator<sup>ACG</sup> 9)

**High Council Member Ojiham Nekero** (LG male human rogue 11)

**High Council Member Skawahann Duburra** (N female gnome arcanist<sup>ACG</sup> 8)

**Mayor Wanakeena Awasuul** (NG female human fighter 5/psychic<sup>OA</sup> 9)

**Peacekeeper Captain Tekawenda Ulash** (LN female human fighter 9)

**Spirit Writer Walela Tithawahn** (CG female human sorcerer 17)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 11,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 7th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

### QUALITIES

**Restrictive:** Those who settle in Segada are prohibited from owning property in certain districts and sometimes pay higher prices for goods. This disdain rarely involves violence toward foreigners, though the city guard monitors strangers to ensure they don’t leave the western boundaries of the city without the appropriate paperwork. Decrease both the Corruption score and the Lore score by 1.

**Supportive:** Despite the city’s legal restrictions, Segada provides aid to its citizens. A number of programs provide food and shelter to the less fortunate. Everyone in Segada is guaranteed at least two meals a day and a place to sleep with a roof over their head. Increase the Society score by 2.



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## Society

Even though Segadan life is strictly regulated, the vibrant city explodes with art and entertainment. Music and storytelling floats from taverns and theaters throughout the city, and lush parks provide spaces for the Segadan people to partake in their sporting pastimes.

Segada's citizens are largely a quiet, contemplative people, reluctant to voice an opposing comment or answer a question too quickly. Many Segadans reflect on the entirety of a question and consider as many different elements as possible before responding—if they respond at all, as many take the opportunity to ponder as a gift. Few important decisions are made hastily, and concern for the strength of the community is always paramount. Segadan culture is one that appreciates companionable silence and feels no pressing need to fill it.

With Segada's focus on maintaining a strong border, its military presence is hard to miss. Lookout bastions stand proudly on ridges overlooking the lowlands. The soldiers are fierce and work as a tight unit in a variety of military maneuvers, stopping massive supernatural beasts, protecting the city from monstrous constructs, and securing the border against foreign influence.

Despite the strict delineation between locals and foreigners, the city has a strong social network in place to make sure that all people—including newcomers who have immigrated to the city—have what they need to survive. The city includes a few locations called mash houses that serve corn mash free of charge throughout the day for those less fortunate. Though some of the alleys in Segada have homeless youth sleeping beneath the eaves of buildings, the city provides shelters to put a roof above the head of anyone who seeks help. Many shelters only allow people to stay for a few days, but some Segadans have lived in places like this their entire lives.

Humans make up the majority of Segada's citizens, but many other peoples also live within the city. Halflings who have abandoned the dangers of the Grinding Coast and wish to live in civilized comfort reside in the safety of the city, and in recent generations the government has accepted wyrwood immigrants. Many gnomes from the tall peaks of the Akrandida

Mountains find welcome here, and these creative and artistic folk often make a living singing and dancing in the city's numerous dance halls and theaters.

## Relations

As one of the largest cities in the nation of Degasi, Segada's strongest allegiance is to its country and the three other nations that share in its trade coalition. Traders bring food from the central plains into Segada, where they sell it in exchange for the precious metals Segadan miners pull from the earth south of the city.

From their forested enclaves, tribes of halflings regularly bring carts loaded with lumber and wild game to sell in the city's markets, competing against the wyrwoods with whom they share the coast, as those small constructs make up for their size with undying dedication to their work. While the city deals with some wyrwoods, not all of those inhabiting the coast are benign—many wyrwoods resent humanoids, and assemblages of more violent individuals often raid nearby settlements. Thankfully,

Segada's military strength is a well-known deterrent, and there hasn't been a notable assault on the city itself in decades.

In recent generations, Segada has been faced with a new challenge: the arrival of settlers from Avistan. While the Linnorm Kings have long maintained their northern outpost of Port Valen, from which many seek fabled Valenhall, these new colonists are a different breed. The Segada Protocol permitted the formation of three settlements: the Chelish settlements of Canorus and Anchor's End, and the Andoren logging town of Elesomare. Segada promised to provide protection to the three settlements as long as they followed the rules outlined in the Segada Protocol, and the city trades with the Avistani for seafood from the coast in exchange for gold and sundries. A year ago, terror struck the Chelish colony of Canorus, and the surviving townsfolk have since moved south to the larger settlement of Anchor's End, leaving Segadan forces to patrol only two Avistani settlements.

## Districts

As it has grown, Segada's unique geography has separated its various districts. But as its population swells, the central district has become increasingly crowded. In response to the surge in residents, the



**Mayor Wanaķeena Awasuul**

# Distant Shores

city government has begun to focus on expansion, allowing new buildings to spring up on the edges of the city.

**Central District:** The largest level area in the middle of the city contains the oldest and most important buildings in Segada. The city government offices and largest parks can be found here.

**The Stacks:** Over time, people built upon the ridges overlooking the central district. Land upon either side of the stacks is expensive, and land use is highly restricted even for the wealthy, requiring a hopeful builder to seek a multitude of permits.

The Northern Stacks hold the Riverhead Amphitheater and the thriving entertainment district that surrounds it, as well as a number of large estates and high-end shops on the eastern face of the ridge. The climber that ferries people up the side of the cliff runs until late at night, and after it closes revelers must descend the long staircase to return to their homes. Many people have fallen to their death on these stairs while intoxicated.

The Southern Stacks serve primarily as a residential neighborhood for Segada's elite. To protect the affluent Segadans who live in this area, the city guard stands sentinel on the only access to this exclusive neighborhood—the Kankadanda Bridge. Here they check would-be pedestrians' names against a specific list for those with permission to enter the Southern Stacks. Those living in the neighborhood must contact the guard if they wish to receive visitors or have laborers work at their homes.

**Western Lows:** Though it wasn't an intentional creation of the city government, most halflings and gnomes moving into Segada gathered together in their own portion of the city's Western Lows, a place colloquially referred to as the "Small Quarter." This part of the city is also home to many Arcadians who have moved to the city from the continent's interior.

## Sites of Interest

Segada's topography not only shapes its districts, but creates prominent spaces and pockets of isolation within the bustling city. The following are a few notable sites in the City of Keys.

**1. Blueberry Park:** Separating the Central District from the more residential neighborhood to the south, Blueberry Park provides a lush respite from day-to-day toil. Plenty of trees shade the soft grass, and at any point in the day one can find children playing and families enjoying a picnic. When late summer comes to Segada, the numerous blueberry bushes in the park sag with fruit and the park fills with people carrying away basketfuls.

The pond in the southern end of the park is a favorite swimming hole for Segadans, and the northern end of the park houses a boundball court surrounded by log benches for spectators. Popular throughout much of Arcadia, this sport has a long tradition, and variations

of it date back millennia. Although the exact rules and dimensions of the field have changed since the game's inception, current standards dictate that boundball is played on wide fields of trimmed grass where players use every part of their body but their hands to put a hard rubber ball through one of two vertically aligned hoops set opposite the field from one another.

The ball used in boundball is made of hard rubber and is the size of a small squash. Since the players bounce the ball off their chest, hips, shins, and feet, many of the players are covered in bruises and scrapes. While most of the players wear little more than short pants and thin hip guards, one player on each team uses a flat baton to knock the ball through the hoop, and another has oversized gloves and is the only player allowed to pick up the ball during play.

Once a year, a boundball tournament between 12 of Arcadia's qualifying nations occurs in one of seven cities. The tournament's location rotates between these cities each year, and Segada's chance to host the championship is coming up in 2 years. Construction has already begun on a new park on the north side of town to host the event and the expected celebrations. Thousands of people from across much of Arcadia flood the host city for each event, and host cities welcome the gold they bring with them.

**2. Cliffside Citadels:** Watchposts on the cliffs have existed in some form since the first group of Arcadians settled this mountain pass. Originally built to defend against the dangers of the Grinding Coast, the current citadels perform similar duties, though their primary task is now to guard against those foreigners who might slip past Segada and into Arcadia's interior. The threat of rogue clockworks and disgruntled wyrwoods still lingers, however. The citadels also serve as stations for Segada's city guard, a highly trained force of peacekeepers led by Tekawenda Ulash and her twelve lieutenants.

**3. Climbers:** Challenged by Segada's varying elevations, the city's engineers devised a unique solution to ascending the cliffs that shelter it. These metal and wood structures, called "climbers" by Segadans, run on geared tracks attached to the sheer face of the ridges and work like giant elevators. A zigzag staircase runs alongside the climbers for use when the devices are shut down at night or for maintenance. Most of the city's climbers run only from dawn to dusk, but the one leading to the northern stacks runs until late at night, a fact frequently protested by its nearby neighbors.

Segada purchased these metal machines from the city-state of Three Craters in the Land of Northern Lakes far to the east—a mostly-barren landscape pitted with crater lakes, strange geological formations, and specks of monster-infested forests where the residents dig into the earth to mine precious metals, highly pure iron, and skymetals.

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**4. Crow-in-the-Spruce:** This lively beer hall serves the people living in the Western Lows. Its drinks are varied and strong, and patrons rave about the food, but the institution's greatest draw is its regular boasting contests. People cram into the building to hear the best storytellers and jokers sling wit at one another. Once a year, the Crow-in-the-Spruce hosts a championship, and the winner gets to bring home the Squawking Cup, a ceramic mug carved with an image of a crow that is rumored to be magical.

**5. Deori Estate:** Home to the first Avistani to gain Segadan citizenship, this building is a regular stop for Chelish settlers visiting Segada. **Pimm Deori** (CG male human bard 7) was born in Arodus 4679 AR, just 13 days after the first Chelish ship landed on the eastern coast of Arcadia, making him the first Avistani on record to have been born on the Grinding Coast. As Pimm reached adulthood, he worked



to improve relations between the Avistani settlers and the indigenous Mahwek people. Over time, the pressures of the expansionist politics of Cheliox disenchanted him; he turned his back on his homeland and instead worked to learn all he could about the lands past the mountains. Pimm has made his home in Segada for most of his adult life. Many Chelish settlers in Anchor's End feel betrayed by Pimm's aspirations, and claim that his wife **Sokanon** (CG female human sorcerer 8) swayed his allegiance, pointing to her mixed heritage despite the fact that she's a greater advocate of colonial expansion than Pimm.

**6. House of Keys:** Central to Segada's prosperity is the strong city government. The House of Keys holds the city council alongside dozens of licensing offices. Every aspect of city life passes through these halls at some point. The House of Keys contains a number of diplomatic offices, and the building's great hall is where the members of the Arcadian coalition signed the Segada Protocol into law. The few Avistani currently living in Segada have been petitioning the city government for their own embassy within the House of Keys, but their efforts have yet to earn a majority vote. This building also serves as the office for Mayor Wanakeena Awasuul whose residence, called the House of Tall Stones, is across the green from the House of Keys.

**7. Kankadanda Bridge:** Built a hundred years ago, this marvel of engineering was made possible by the addition of the wyrwood population to Segada. Some in the city complained that it would destroy the aesthetics of the city, and others protested the excessive noise as it was being built, but the bridge was constructed in record time. The Kankadanda Bridge stands as a monument to Segadan engineering and shows the strength not only of this city, but of the nation of Degasi as well.

**8. Oland Estate:** Perched high above the city, near where the twin falls plunge into Snowmelt Lake, sits the residence of **Louma Oland** (LN male human aristocrat 3/expert 5). Years ago, a fire destroyed a wing of the house after the roof was struck by lightning during a violent thunderstorm. As he was rebuilding, Oland erected a tall metal tower over the roof of the mansion, claiming that the structure would harmlessly draw away lightning strikes and funnel them into the mountain. Oland receives few visitors, but those who come away from the estate claim that the elderly man has become obsessed with lightning, and performs experiments whenever dark clouds gather above the city.

**9. Open Arms Mash House:** This unassuming structure is one of the city's many mash houses that operate to ensure that every citizen is fed, yet a secret hides within its walls. Operated by **Surantif Alamon** (LE male human rogue 7), the mash house serves as a gathering place for the petty criminals that make up the Stone Rats thieves' guild.

# Distant Shores

**10. Riverhead Amphitheater:** Built hundreds of years ago, this magnificent amphitheater sits on the ridge overlooking Snowmelt Lake. The theater holds daily and nightly events for most of the week, including storytelling, dances, musical concerts, boasting matches, and even live art installations. The most famous local celebrity to grace its stage is the sometimes-troublesome **Uanae Deepsky** (CG male human bard 11). Uanae plays here at least once a week, and after his performances he spends his nightly earnings buying drinks in taverns near the Riverhead for those that came to see him perform. This inevitably turns into a huge street party that can last until dawn.

Uanae is a multitaled artist. Thousands of people fill the benches to see his plays and hear his awe-inspiring singing voice. His storytelling wraps listeners in a warm embrace, and he's proficient with nine different musical instruments. Despite his popularity, however, Uanae doesn't have a home, retains few possessions, and is generally seen by many as a shiftless soul. People in the city put him up for the night, feed him, and look after him, and the next morning he sets out to the streets to "sing the praises of the city" or "let the city speak through him." Some see him as a failure of modern society and shun his nontraditional antics, to which he replies, "People know what not to do by seeing others do it."

**11. Sixteen Finches:** Strict Segadan laws make it difficult for people to indulge in many vices, but the Sixteen Finches attempts to address this issue. For customers who know the right code words, this eatery also provides a dazzling array of intoxicants. More discerning clients with long-standing patrons to vouch for them can make use of one of the house's twelve private rooms. A woman named **Kuta** (CN female gnome mesmerist<sup>0A</sup> 5/rogue 5) runs the place, and walks a careful line with the local enforcers, employing both bribery and exploitation of legal loopholes to avoid the notice of the higher authorities. A few Segadans claim that the city government turns a blind eye to her activities because of a wealth of blackmail material she keeps locked away in the house's thirteenth private room, which is never open to patrons. Kuta hires her own guards, many recruited directly from the ranks of off-duty city watch, to patrol not only the interior of the building, but a number of blocks around the establishment.

**12. Snowmelt Lake:** Twin falls fill this crystal-clear lake that serves as a welcome respite from Segadans' day-to-day concerns as they paddle small boats out onto the cool water. During concerts at the Riverhead Amphitheater, the lake is filled with couples sharing romantic moments; it is currently fashionable to row out to the center and recite poetry for the object of one's desire. A local folktale claims that the ghost of a forlorn lover, separated from his beloved when they drifted too close to the crashing waterfalls and drowned, haunts the area. Many have reported seeing his translucent figure

## THE SEGADA PROTOCOL

After the arrival of Avistani would-be colonialists to the Grinding Coast 36 years ago, the Mahwek people called a Grand Council to be held in Segada among the members of the four-nation coalition. Some wanted to drive out the arriving settlers, while others took their arrival as a sign that the time was ripe to trade with other continents. The lure of trade, as controversial as it was, led the coalition to draft legislation known today as the Segada Protocol.

The congress laid out a set of rules governing how the nations of Arcadia would deal with this breach of their long isolation. Many elders pushed to continue the old practices, citing the bleak times just before the Age of Darkness when the Azlanti stormed Arcadia's eastern shores. Others pointed to the knowledge and power to be gained by working with the newcomers.

After weeks of deliberation, the Arcadian nations halted Avistani settlers in their tracks. The Segada Protocol permitted them only three settlements on the Grinding Coast, and those on the condition that they maintain peaceful and supportive relations with the city of Segada and any allied halfling or wyrwood settlements. No Avistani would be permitted within Segada without proper paperwork, or descend the mountains into Arcadia's interior without an Arcadian guide and a letter of endorsement from the Segadan authorities. The three designated Avistani settlements could trade with Segada, but would only be allowed to ship 15% of their income or goods back to Avistan.

The Segada Protocol also increased the size of the Segadan guard and created a new agency that regularly inspects the Avistani settlements, both for their own protection and to ensure that they are following the law.

weeping on the rocks below the waterfall during the Waning Light Festival.

**13. Snowmelt Locks:** Run by the Orenta family, the Snowmelt Locks were originally built to protect the city from spring flooding some 200 years ago. After a recent perceived slight from an Uise matriarch, **Sagowin Orenta** (LN male aristocrat 3/expert 4) slows down the river's flow each time a new shipment of grain arrives at Uise Mill.

**14. Uise Mill:** The largest and oldest mill in Segada perches on the edge of the cliff where the waters from Snowmelt Lake plunge into the lowlands to form the Turusee River. The mill receives and processes grain and spices from the central plains, and then stores them in warehouses to the south. Dependent on the flow of the river for power, the Uise family is embroiled in a petty rivalry with the Orenta family, which manages the locks that control the flow of the Turusee.

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## The Power of Festivals

It's common for Arcadians—and all people—to celebrate important events and milestones, and over time, those celebrations often become traditions. Some begin as small personal observations, marking the birth of a child or the union of two lovers, but other festivities involve celestial events, the changing of seasons, or important moments in a culture's collective history. These larger celebrations unite communities and provide a sense of shared identity.

The following are three important festivals that take place in the City of Keys. While most Segadans simply celebrate these events with friends and family (and those who travel to the city to partake in the festivities), powerful rituals take place at the center of the dancing, feasting, and music. These rituals follow the rules for occult rituals presented in *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* and allow people with no spellcasting ability to participate in creating magical effects that benefit both them personally and their community.

### Festival of Flowers

With its focus on regrowth and strengthening the community, the Festival of Flowers is relatively new in Segada, though it has been celebrated with great enthusiasm in the southern empire of Razatlan for centuries. Followers of Kazutal, goddess of community, liberty, and safety, brought this colorful festival to the city about a hundred years ago, and the people of Segada immediately embraced the practice. Within a decade, it had become a cherished tradition.

The Festival of Flowers is a 2-week-long party filled with feasts, dancing, and parades of beautiful, elaborately costumed young men and women who carry ornate flowered sculptures. Prior to the festival, 21 honored participants are chosen to take part in the ritual. Though they are chosen to represent all the areas and communities within the city, the selection process is highly political, and powerful families maneuver to have their children selected for this honor.

The Festival of Flowers starts on the evening of the waxing half moon that occurs closest to the spring equinox, and concludes on the morning after the full moon. This festival draws thousands to Segada, and the streets surge with foreign merchants and exotic performers. Music and singing echo throughout the pass, and nearly everyone indulges in the festive mood.

At the height of the festival, the high priest of Kazutal begins the ritual with the selected honored participants, who are called the Twenty-One Petals. During the next few days, the Twenty-One Petals compete in dozens of events, eventually whittling the group down to just seven. The culmination of the festival is the crowning of the Seven Petals and the performance of a ritual in which they serve as the secondary casters.

### FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

**School** divination; **Level** 4

**Casting Time** 12 hours

**Components** V, S, M (100 lbs. of flowers per caster, a feast consisting of 1,000 gp worth of food and drink), F (set of 7 silver cups worth a total of 1,500 gp), SC (7)

**Skill Checks** Knowledge (nature) DC 30, 1 success; Perform (dance) DC 30, 1 success; Perform (sing) DC 30, 2 successes

**Range** touch

**Target** primary caster and secondary casters

**Duration** 3 months or until discharged

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **SR** no

**Backlash** The next time the casters attempt a check, they must roll twice and take the worse result.

**Failure** All casters receive a -1 luck penalty on saving throws for 1 year.

#### EFFECT

The ritual takes place from sunrise to sunset, and involves the performance of dozens of traditional songs and dances. At the completion of the ritual, the Seven Petals drink a special brew made from herbs and fungus from seven silver cups.

The primary and secondary casters gain a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws for 3 months following the ritual. At any point during this time, a caster can roll twice for a single saving throw and take the higher result, but once this reroll is used, the luck bonus ends.

### Harvest Bounty Festival

Although Segada is not a farming community, it still shares the ancient rites practiced by its sister communities in the lowlands, since the ancestors of most of its residents are from those settlements. Among these is the celebration of agricultural bounty that marks the beginning of the harvest season, during which farmers and farming communities offer up the first of their crops to ensure a fruitful season.

The festival takes place on the summer solstice and involves lively dancing, storytelling, feasts throughout the city, and sporting tournaments. Celebrants give thanks for having enough, pledge to assist their neighbors, and eliminate grudges they've held.

### HARVEST BOUNTY FESTIVAL

**School** transmutation; **Level** 8

**Casting Time** 24 hours

**Components** V, S, M (a feast capable of feeding at least 1,000 people), F (ceremonial sickle worth at least 500 gp), SC (up to 100)

**Skill Checks** Perform (oratory) DC 33, 2 successes; Knowledge (nature) DC 33, 3 successes; Profession (cook) DC 33, 3 successes

**Range** touch

**Target** one creature

# Distant Shores

**Duration** 30 days; see text

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **SR** no

**Backlash** The primary caster is sickened for 1d4 days.

**Failure** The casters are nauseated for 24 hours.

## EFFECT

At the completion of this ritual, one of the casters is selected as the target for the effect. The selected caster gains the ability to cast *commune with nature* as a spell-like ability once over the course of the next 30 days, and the ability to cast *plant growth* (enrichment only) five times over the course of the next 30 days. The caster level for these effects is equal to the character level of the primary caster. In addition, all casters who celebrate the festival gain a +1 morale bonus on Diplomacy checks for 48 hours.

## Waning Light Festival

Celebrated on the fall equinox, the Waning Light Festival has different names among different communities, such as the Blessing of the Sun and Night of Spirits. The Waning Light Festival involves feasting, dancing, and music as the participants bid farewell to the long days of sunshine until the ascendant sun is welcomed back (during a winter solstice festival called Long Dark Night). It is the culmination of a period of cleaning residences, preserving and storing foods, and preparing for winter. People make sure that others in their community have the things they need, and tradition calls for people to give gifts of used items to one another. People also take time to remember those that have died during the year, celebrate their lives, and offer hope that they found a peaceful rest.

During the performance of the ritual, the primary and secondary casters dress in flamboyant costumes that represent various types of birds. These costumes are made of feathers and decorated with elaborate beaded panels. They lead dances and musical performances and recite traditional stories. Celebrants make small, decorated breads and exchange them with their neighbors.

### WANING LIGHT FESTIVAL

**School** divination; **Level** 9

**Casting Time** 9 hours

**Components** V, S, F (each caster must wear a ceremonial costume worth 500 gp), SC (up to 12)

**Skill Checks** Knowledge (religion) DC 29, 3 successes; Perform (dance) DC 29, 3 successes; Perform (percussion) DC 29, 3 successes

**Range** primary and secondary casters

**Duration** 2 hours

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **SR** no

**Backlash** All casters become exhausted and gain 1

temporary negative level (DC = 16 + the primary caster's Charisma bonus to remove after the first day).

**Failure** All casters gain 1 temporary negative level (DC = 16 + the primary caster's Charisma bonus to remove after the first day), and the primary caster takes 4d6 points of damage.

## EFFECT

At the completion of the festival, the primary and secondary casters are charged with magical energy. For the next 2 hours, any creature they touch gains a resistance bonus on their next 5 saving throws equal to 1 for every 5 Hit Dice the primary caster possesses. It's considered auspicious if it rains during the festival, even more so if thunder and lightning crack through the sky. If the ritual is performed in these conditions, the benefit is doubled, instead granting the bonus on saving throws for the next 10 saves.

Since the casters must touch a celebrant to bestow the boon, the 2-hour period after the ritual turns into a huge parade as the casters wind through the city to greet the populace. Segadans gather along the streets to reach out and touch one of the casters as they pass.



Priest of Kazutal

AELYOSOS

ANULI

DHUCHARG

RADRIPAL

SEGADA

ULAR KEL



## ULAR KEL

To the weary caravan driver, the Grass Sea of central Casmaron seems to go on forever, its sighing, yellow-green waves broken only by the dirt track of the trade route. Yet just when supplies grow low and mercenaries begin to mutter, a shape rises on the horizon: domes and spires jutting from behind gates guarded by immense stone beasts. This is Ular Kel, the Caravan City, Jewel of the Steppe and de facto capital of nomad-ruled Karazh. Squatting atop a vital oasis and marking the crossing of two great roads, it is a paradise of trade and learning, a vast organism whose veins flow with gold and water in equal measure. While anything can be bought and sold within the city, Ular Kel itself remains staunchly independent, kept free from the great empires that would conquer it by the cunning of the Water Lords and the might of the allied Kara horse tribes.



# Distant Shores



Aelyosos

Anuli

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Segada

Ular Kel

## The Caravan City

### Overview

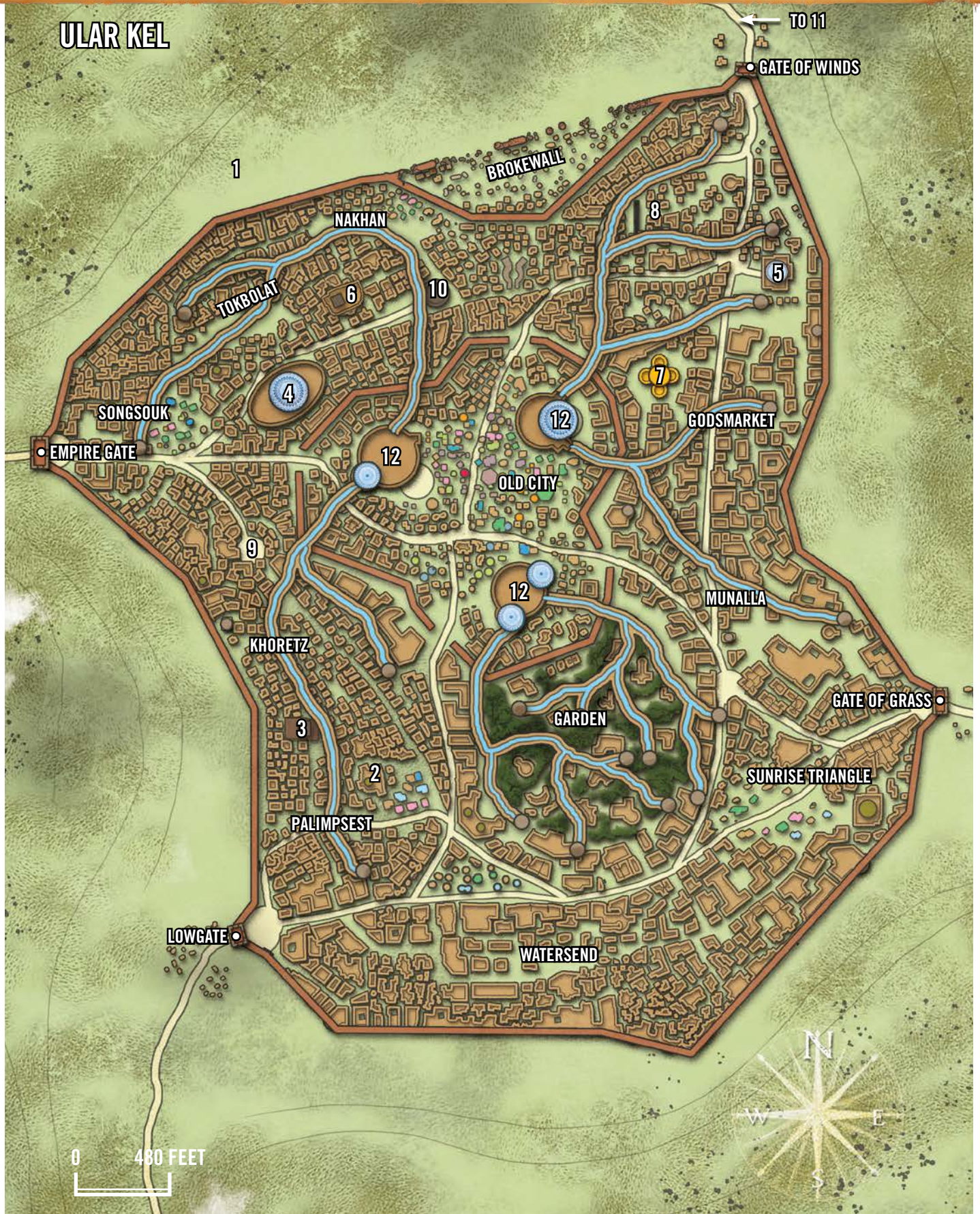
Ular Kel is a crossroads. From Lowgate, wagon ruts lead south to Vudra's Impossible Kingdoms. To the north, through the Gate of Winds, brave travelers wind their way to ports on the Castrovin Sea. West takes one out the Empire Gate (more formally the Gate of Failed Empire) to the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, and east through the Gate of Grass to xenophobic Kaladay. All of these paths meet in the Crossway, the grand bazaar at the city's center. Trade isn't limited to this single nexus, however—nearly every intersection in the city harbors its own market of tents or shops, many dealing in specialized wares. Even between these, barrow-runners weave through the crowd, working on commission to carry goods from one part of the city to another in hopes of being the first to catch a buyer.

In the arid steppe, where the nearest river or spring can be days away, water is life—and thus power. From ancient

palaces atop their three great fortress-cisterns, the Water Lords rule Ular Kel with iron fists, dispensing water to their citizens through a system of elevated aqueducts in exchange for taxes on every transaction that takes place within the city. They in turn maintain the uneasy truce with the horse tribes that have kept the region free of foreign rule for millennia, paying tribute while also stockpiling vast magical and military defenses against both the nomads and the long arms of empires.

While Ular Kel's population swells and ebbs with the transient caravan population, the city is far from just a stopover. Endless trade has brought cultural riches as well as gold, and priests and scholars from across Golarion flock to the city's shrines and libraries. Peerless artisans fill the city's shops, perfecting exotic skills and shipping their wares to all corners of the globe. The city prides itself on its cosmopolitan nature, and most of its humanoid citizens make it a point not to blink at the

## ULAR KEL



# Distant Shores

variety of so-called “monstrous” peoples settled among them. As the oft-repeated saying goes, “Everyone’s gold is the same color,” and crusades and pogroms are bad for business. City guards are dedicated to protecting the populace from serious danger, while blatantly accepting bribes in small matters—a practice to which the Water Lords turn a blind eye, as it helps fund the guard’s upkeep. Of course, anything that happens beyond the city walls is no concern of the guard, and axe beaks<sup>B3</sup>, behirs, death worms<sup>B2</sup>, and even vulture-headed rukhs<sup>B4</sup> have been known to hunt within sight of Ular Kel, making settling outside the gates a risky proposition.

## Appearance

The first thing a traveler sees upon approaching Ular Kel is a red sandstone wall 20 feet high, constructed from magically quarried blocks the size of houses. Each gate is guarded by a pair of massive statues, carved in the shapes of nagas, garudas, manticores, and lammasus, respectively. Local history holds that in times of siege, the stone creatures animate as golems, striding forth to lay waste to invaders.

Once through the gates, visitors are bombarded by the cries of a thousand hawkers, the ring of steel on blacksmiths’ anvils, and the scents of spices and ox dung. Unlike the outer walls, most structures in the city are built from mud brick, usually several stories tall but soaring even higher in Godsmarket and the Old City. Pockets of purely residential buildings are rare; most residents combine their business with their homes, living above or behind the endless rows of shops. Individual buildings often contain multiple businesses or families, and larger structures usually feature picturesque central atriums with gardens in which meals are taken during fine weather.

Ular Kel’s elevated aqueducts are a marvel of magic and engineering, carrying spiderwebbing streams of fresh water above the heads of the populace and spilling regulated trickles down into pools and troughs. While in theory anyone may drink from any point along the aqueducts, in practice the obvious roadside pools are left for travelers and the poor, with neighbors in better areas sharing pools hidden in pocket gardens or colorful tiled courtyards off the main avenues. Diverting water into private indoor pools is a right reserved for only the most powerful citizens. Aqueducts also create nominal political allegiances, as each stream begins life in one of the huge, windowless cisterns called Water Houses, and the Water Lord controlling an aqueduct in a particular neighborhood can cut off the flow to specific pools as a punishment.

## History

Thousands of years ago, Ular Kel was a simple oasis in the middle of the Grass Sea, marking the intersection of two great trade routes. Hundreds of miles from any city, claimed only on principle by the nomadic Kara

## ULAR KEL

N large city

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +2;

**Economy** +5; **Law** +0;

**Lore** +3; **Society** +6

**Qualities** academic, holy site, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

**Danger** +10

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** council

**Population** 20,400 (15,750 humans, 1,100 halflings, 550 elves, 450 gnomes, 2,550 other)

### Notable NPCs

**Hakan Ulzhan Kaskyrbai** (LN female human cavalier<sup>AP6</sup> 12)

**Speaker of the Concord Jorgyz Erasyn** (N male human bard 4/aristocrat 5)

**Water Lord Azat Ihnkara** (LE male human rogue 10)

**Water Lord Comelis Nurasili** (NG female human wizard 8)

### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp;

**Spellcasting** 9th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4



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Segada

Ular Kel

horse tribes, the oasis remained free for all to use until the day Altyn Batyr, the spellcasting han of a minor horse tribe, came up with the idea of fortifying the watering hole and charging passing caravans for its use. Though other nomads mocked his “Dead Tribe”—for only the dead settle in one place—Batyr’s idea proved extremely lucrative. Assuming the title of Water Lord, Batyr invited caravan guards, merchants, and exiles from other tribes to join his banner, and soon the camp grew into a proper fortress, and then a city: Ular Kel, the beating heart that pumps wealth into the trackless steppes of Karazh.

The city’s subsequent growth wasn’t always so easy. Infighting and coups between Water Lords frequently plunged Ular Kel into street fighting and bloodshed, sometimes multiple times in a single generation. Plagues brought in by caravan-borne vermin wracked the population. Foreign nations attempted to annex the city, their armies broken only by the horse tribes’ ability to strike like lightning and vanish again into the steppes. Yet the greatest threat to the city always remained the horse tribes themselves. Traditionally pacified by hefty tribute and the threat of the city’s magical defenses, the tribes have nevertheless sacked the city several times. The last of these assaults took place several centuries ago, when a han believing himself the fifth reincarnation of Sogys Taramai (see page 63) led several tribes against the city, breaching the north wall before finally being rebuffed.

## Society

The Water Lords rule Ular Kel absolutely, yet not harshly. Laws are relaxed and tailored for the benefit of citizens, and the omnipresent taxes are low enough—and the flow of trade great enough—that even the most powerful merchants find it prudent to accept the status quo rather than disrupt business.

Since the city's founding, recognition as a Water Lord has depended entirely on a person's ability to take and hold one of the great Water Houses. As with nobility anywhere, the title tends to run in families, with dynasties changing only through coups—yet this has recently begun to change. While the northern Water Houses are held by the Ihnkara and Nurasili families, the southernmost currently belongs to an alliance of powerful merchants calling themselves the Concord of Peers. Though their control of a third of the Water Council hasn't resulted in any significant changes in governance, many citizens' imaginations are piqued by the group's supposedly egalitarian internal structure.

Beneath the Water Lords and their allies and advisors—particularly the Robed Council, the coalition of spellcasters that oversees the city's military magic—the city's most powerful citizens are resident merchants. While guilds are common—especially when it gives locals an advantage over caravanners—the city is a hotbed of capitalist competition, and rules generally remain loose. Beneath these plutocrats is the middle class, which includes almost everyone else—ordinary scholars, priests, artisans, and workers. At the bottom of the social structure are nomads from the horse tribes, yet this low status is a bit misleading: the disdain is mutual, and every resident of the city knows that stepping outside the city walls puts them at the Kara's mercy.

Overall, society is fluid, and honorifics are either self-granted or based on wealth and achievement rather than lineage. Still, not everyone is content with the Water Lords' absolute dominion. The most violent dissenters form a group called Oasis, a secret society dedicated to toppling the Water Lords and making water free to all. While most citizens steer clear of radical politics, the common idiom “Even their trees drink first”—a reference to the lush private gardens atop the Water Houses—expresses frustration with the Water Lords' rampant cronyism.

Knowing that a certain amount of crime is inevitable, the Water Lords quietly allow several

thieves' guilds to operate within the city, so long as they limit their violence and target primarily travelers. The most unusual of these is the Open Hand. Led by a genderless figure named **Shizyk** (NG human monk 5/rogue 4), these worshipers of the Empyrean Lord Korada steal to help the city's poor. More traditionally motivated thieves' guilds include the tattooed Mafets, who may or may not be led by one of the secretive creatures from which the guild takes its name.

## Relations

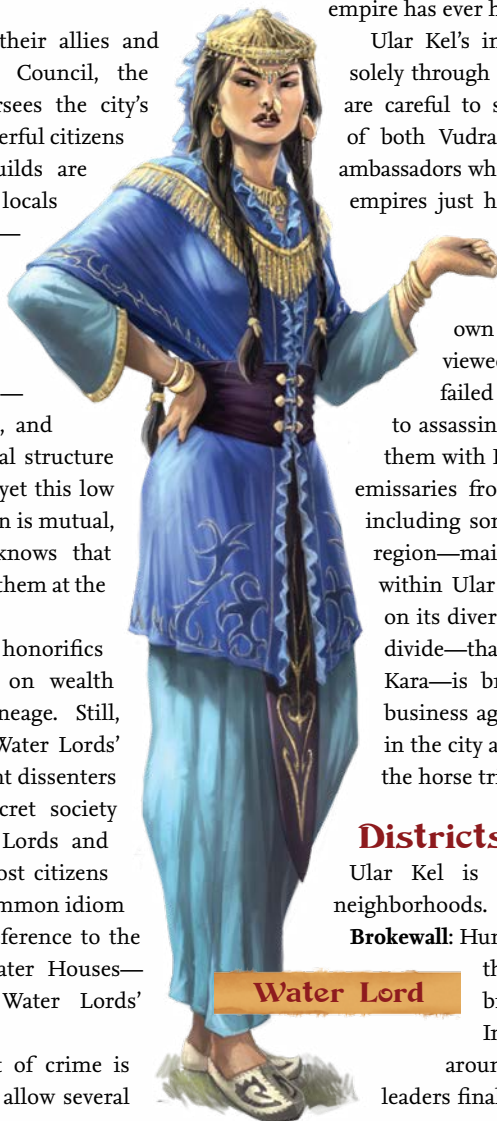
Over the ages, many nations have sought to take the great trade city for their own, only to be rebuffed by the combined might of the city's defenses and the martial prowess of the unified horse tribes. Though Karazh—the relatively unpopulated region of which Ular Kel is often considered the capital—is little more than lines on a map, the horse tribes are nevertheless fiercely devoted to defending the sovereignty of the steppe, and no other empire has ever held it for long.

Ular Kel's independence is not maintained solely through force, however. The Water Lords are careful to send regular gifts to the rulers of both Vudra and Kelesh in the hands of ambassadors who remind the leaders of the great empires just how useful it can be to have an unaffiliated city as a neutral meeting place and haven for activities outlawed in their own lands. While Keleshites are still viewed with some suspicion after a failed attempt several generations ago to assassinate the Water Lords and replace them with Keleshite agents, expatriates and emissaries from a dozen different nations—including some as far away as the Inner Sea region—maintain their own cultural pockets within Ular Kel. The citizenry prides itself on its diversity, and even the greatest social divide—that between city folk and the Kara—is bridged daily by marriages and business agreements, with nomads settling in the city and city folk seeking adoption by the horse tribes.

## Districts

Ular Kel is divided into a dozen major neighborhoods.

**Brokewall:** Hundreds of years ago, conflict with the horse tribes led to a siege breaching the city's northern wall. In the aftermath, a slum grew up around the rubble, and when the city leaders finally rebuilt the wall, they brought



Water Lord

# Distant Shores



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Ular Kel

its course south, leaving the shantytown outside the city proper. Formally named Brokewall, it's often called "Horsetown" for the fact that many Kara traders prefer to pitch their gers here instead of trapping themselves behind the city walls. Since the district is formally outside of the city guard's jurisdiction, it's also a popular site for smugglers and thieves, and traders looking for a great deal on recently stolen merchandise often quietly stop here on their way out of town.

**Garden District:** This lush park and community farming space is traditionally open to all—a gift from a past Water Lord dynasty that sought to curry favor with the common people. The handful of beautiful manor houses within are reserved for the Concord of Peers and their allies, but many of the city's best inns line the edges of the district.

**Godsmarket:** Ular Kel's temple district caters to a wide variety of gods from cultures across Golarion, and—along with Palimpsest—represents the best place to buy and sell magic of all kinds. Coffee shops and smoking parlors fill the spaces between houses of worship, hosting good-natured theological debates between priests of different faiths.

**Khoretz:** While undines<sup>B2</sup> are unusually common throughout the city—a fact often attributed to secret magic inherent in the city's springs—many of Ular Kel's obviously nonhuman residents make quiet homes in Khoretz. Here, ratfolk<sup>B3</sup> hawkers and tengu gamblers rub up against centaur mercenaries, naga scholars, and even the occasional lammasu<sup>B3</sup>.

**Munalla:** The large structures in this neighborhood are primarily warehouses for stockpiled goods or communal dwellings called *muna*, in which several families pool finances and responsibilities in order to live and work as one. The fact that some of these intentional communities act more like gangs and criminal syndicates is a constant source of shame to the district's law-abiding residents, yet even the criminal groups are surprisingly familial in how they treat members and neighbors.

**Nakhan:** A middle-class neighborhood, Nakhan caters to local tradespeople and artisans, while still remaining close to the vibrant street life of Tokbolat. Local thieves know to give Nakhan a wide berth, lest they encounter the Skin Sisters, a secret cabal of female lycanthrope vigilantes who regularly leave burglars and cutpurses splayed open across rooftops and walls.

**Old City:** Beneath the looming pillars of the Water Houses, countless traders and caravanners do business in the Crossway, while status-hungry aristocrats vie for the honor of living inside the original city walls alongside the Water Lords' most trusted retainers. While the gates of the Old City are rarely closed, the Water Lords nevertheless keep them in good working order, as more than once the city's aristocrats have holed up behind the ancient walls while the rest of the city suffered from riots or plague.

**Palimpsest:** Partially destroyed and rebuilt during the Great Scroll Fire, this district houses scholars, tutors, and sages, as well as a wide variety of arcane-oriented shops and apothecaries. Constantly shifting illusions catering to all five senses line the streets as different magical practitioners vie for customer attention. It's common knowledge among locals, though, that the greatest spellcasters keep a low profile, often seeking out their clients rather than the other way around.

**Songsouk:** Ular Kel's Keleshite quarter is named for its many message-bird roosts, as well as its preponderance of buskers from Tokbolat. While both the buildings and the residents tend to display the Padishah Empire's beauty and wealth, the neighborhood is widely assumed to be full of spies seeking to undermine Ular Kel's independence, and romantic relationships with Keleshites are considered highly risqué among the city's elite. Significantly more undines are born here than in any other part of the city, though no one can say why.

**Sunrise Triangle:** This district takes its name from the city's second-largest tent bazaar, where shoppers can find everything from exotic weapons and fine art to brightly colored dawn melons and grass snake fried in its own synesthesia-inducing venom. As the closest market to the Gate of Grass, it boasts many bizarre relics from mysterious Kaladay—some of them even genuine.

**Tokbolat:** In addition to legendary locations like the Hanging Coliseum, Ular Kel's entertainment district includes a huge variety of open-air bars, restaurants, and brothels (the latter fenced off with woven screens), nearly all featuring hired musicians. Those looking to win or lose money can also find a million ways to empty their purses, from games of chance and sport dueling (magical and non-) to publicly challenging the psychic au-au bird at the Purple Precept Cabaret.

**Watersend:** Poorest of Ular Kel's recognized districts, Watersend is so named for the fact that the aqueducts stop well short of its streets, forcing residents to haul water from public basins to the north. While it would be easy enough for the Water Lords to extend the aqueducts, grumbled rumors among the residents suggest that the aristocracy finds the arrangement useful for keeping the city's underclass in its place.

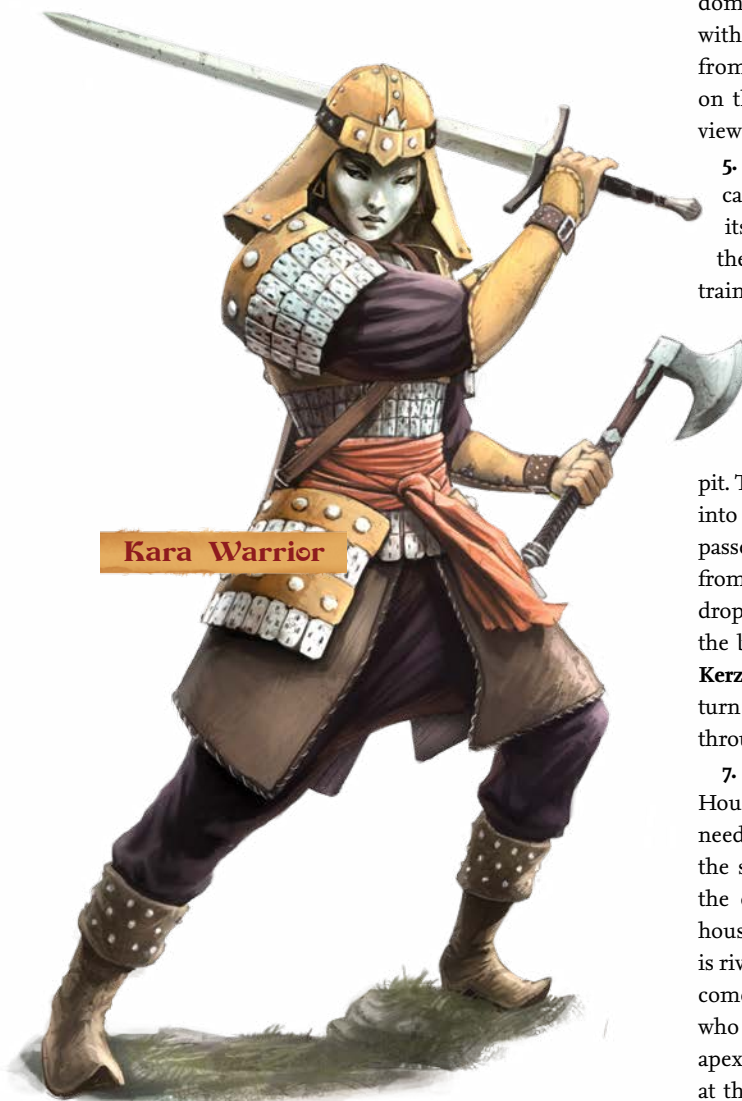
## Sites of Interest

Ular Kel's importance as a trade city ensures that it bustles with a diverse, vibrant population, and its thoroughfares and alleys are full of secrets and opportunities.

**1. The Burrows:** In the city's early days, many settlers and would-be invaders tried to undercut the Water Lords' monopoly by digging their own wells. As was quickly discovered, however, the oasis itself is far from natural, fed by vertical shafts directly beneath the Water Houses, with a source somewhere far below the reach of ordinary

picks and shovels. Lateral tunnels aimed at tapping the Water Lords' wells proved equally useless, as those attempts not collapsed by the Water Lords' minions all ended mysteriously and catastrophically before striking water. Today, these abandoned tunnels connect cellars and basements throughout the city, extending even to several ruined entrances beyond the city walls, their darkened corridors inhabited by thieves, smugglers, and more disturbing denizens.

**2. Chirographica:** "All things come to Ular Kel, and the best of these is knowledge." Such is the motto of the Chirographica, one of the greatest centers of learning in all of Casmaron. Part library, part university, and part magical academy, the Chirographica is home to scholars and arcanists of all stripes, who carefully hoard esoteric secrets from across the world. Not a library in an ordinary sense, the Chirographica is instead an association of collections maintained by separate and sometimes feuding factions, making getting an answer out of the Chirographica's warren



of halls something of an adventure in itself. Visitors from the Inner Sea region would do well to start their inquiries with **Betha Cormis** (NG female halfling wizard 4/rogue 1), a Taldan Pathfinder who's spent the last 5 years worming her way into the stacks.

**3. Hall of the Serpent:** While originally created as a residence and refuge for the city's sizable naga population, today the Hall of the Serpent acts as a sort of city hall for Ular Kel's non-humanoid residents, where they can settle internal disputes and organize against persecution by more common races. Rumor holds that the Many-Locked Vault beneath the hall contains a great weapon created by the nagas in case the city government should ever turn on their kind.

**4. Hanging Coliseum:** The center of Ular Kel's fighting arts, the Hanging Coliseum—also sometimes called simply the Arena Dome—draws gladiators from across Casmaron and beyond. Unlike a standard coliseum, the sand-floored arena is completely roofed by a massive dome studded with row upon row of stacked balconies, with the most prestigious box seats actually hanging from the ceiling on chains, allowing spectators to lie on thick rugs and look down on proceedings through viewing holes.

**5. Iridian Cathedral:** The blue dome of this 80-foot-tall cathedral is crowned by the long fin of a windcatcher, its majesty reflected in the polished stone plaza at the building's foot. As the birthplace and primary training center of the Iridian Fold, the cathedral is largely restricted to members of the sect, though all those who truly seek to understand the philosophy are welcomed and educated by the resident teachers.

**6. The Maw:** The most infamous bar in the city, the Maw's creaking wood floors act as a cap for a huge pit. The strange stone-lined fissure extends straight down into a pool of shimmering green mist, and nothing that passes through that cottony shroud is ever seen or heard from again. Patrons are invited to pay a silver piece to drop their cup—or anything else—into the open well in the bar's center, and retired adventurer and owner **Yima Kerzu** (NG female human fighter 4) has a standing offer to turn over ownership of the bar to anyone who can descend through the mist and return with proof of what's beyond.

**7. Spire of Azi:** Even taller than the majestic Water Houses, the Spire of Azi is visible for miles as a thin needle of gold stabbing upward into the sky. Erected on the site where the Sarenite priestess Goerel once saved the city from a rampaging azi dragon, its flared base houses a temple of Sarenrae, whose popularity in the city is rivaled only by that of Abadar. Yet today, the spire's fame comes not from history but from those Sarenite mystics who climb the countless steps to the tiny platform at its apex. From there, these ascetics spend long days staring at the sun, deliberately blinding themselves in an effort

# Distant Shores

to better understand Sarenrae's will. Though the practice often draws scorn from foreign Sarenites, who believe that the goddess would never condone such senseless self-injury, the incidence of prophetic visions and oracular magic is exceptionally high among those who pay the Blinding Price.

**8. Spirit Wall:** Widely regarded as one of the most beautiful sights in the city, the Spirit Wall arose on the ground where the tormented victims of the Ghost Plague were called together and finally put to rest. Curving like a snake, its 50-foot length remains tied to the spirit world, shimmering between translucence and opalescence and frequently manifesting messages along its length, both notes for those bereaved family members who leave offerings and strange koans and prognostications interpreted by priests and scholars.

**9. Statue of Altny Batyr:** Fifteen feet tall, this weathered stone statue is old enough that it is believed to have originally stood outside the city, before the city expanded to enfold it. The man depicted, wearing a starched jacket and pointing east, is Altny Batyr, the first Water Lord. Those who touch the statue's hand on the summer solstice find themselves suddenly staring at a glowing red stripe on the ground, visible only to them and zigzagging off into the city. No two people's stripes lead in precisely the same direction, and few even make it to their stripe's end point, as the hallucination lasts only until midnight before fading. Local legend has it that one of the glowing trails leads to Batyr's secret tomb, still full of ancient treasure, giving rise to the holiday of Founder's Folly, during which children and adventurers chase magical stripes through the city, much to the amusement of the neighborhood's residents.

**10. Tower Corybantic:** The greatest theater in Ular Kel is actually several theaters stacked on top of each other. Inside the cylinder of the Tower Corybantic, each floor is a separate cabaret featuring a unique selection of delights. Productions range from the breathtakingly artistic to the blasphemously carnal, with audiences observing from balconies or joining the revelry according to the whims of each theater's artistic director. Higher theaters are more exclusive than lower ones, and bouncers on the staircases wrapping the tower's exterior ensure that no one ascends higher than their finances allow, with the topmost theater reserved for the city's elite and personal guests of current owner **Libruno Osmet** (N male elf bard 5/aristocrat 4).

**11. Trade Palace:** Located a short ride north of the Gate of Winds, this unique castle acts as the embassy and temporary home for any horse tribe trading with the city. Built by the Water Lords as a gift (or tribute, depending on who you ask), the palace is two stories of bare stone rooms and corridors, its top and sides deliberately left unfinished and open to the elements. Each horse tribe that takes up residence finishes the palace to its own

## THE HORSE TRIBES

The unforgiving steppes of the Grass Sea breed a hard people, tribes of nomadic herders who forsake farming in favor of life on horseback. Though they refer to themselves as the Kara—the root from which Karazh takes its name—the term itself holds little significance to them, and most outsiders simply refer to them by the word's literal translation of “horse tribes.”

The horse tribes of Karazh consist of 13 “great tribes” and numerous smaller ones, each ruled by a leader called a *han*. Though the tribes are largely independent, at various points in history—including the present—the clans have been united under a single *hakan*, the leader of the strongest tribe, who speaks for the entire nation from the wooden Horse Throne. These periods of unification generally occur in the face of outside threats, and rarely last long, falling to intertribal raiding within a generation or two. The current hakan, Ulzhan of tribe Kaskyrbai, has proven a strong and steady leader, ushering in an era of peace and plenty that many hope will last, even as they sharpen their blades for the inevitable collapse.

Life among the Kara revolves around the horses that are their companions and greatest possessions. While the people live in round-walled felt gers that are easily collapsed and moved when a tribe's herd seeks new forage, the horses are left free to roam when not working, wandering among the tents and even standing guard at night or fighting riderless for their tribe in battle. Outsiders often marvel at the magnificent intelligence of Kara horses, but the nomads are quick to point out that the bond is as much about training the rider as the mount. City folk who buy Kara horses are rarely prepared for what they get.

tastes, turning the stone foundation into an amorphous explosion of colorful canvas as new side chambers and upper stories are added. When the tribe moves on, all of the additions are taken down and carried away, leaving a blank slate for the next tribe and ensuring that no tribe has any more claim on the palace than any other.

**12. Water Houses:** Rumored to contain the flooded remains of earlier fortresses, the Water Houses are three immense stone cylinders that capture all the water from Ular Kel's springs, and from which all the aqueducts extend. While the interior chambers and workings of the presumably magical cisterns are a state secret, known only to the Water Lords' most trusted guards and retainers, the magnificent palaces constructed atop the towers are intentionally public displays of power, with soaring minarets and private gardens whose trees stretch roots down through gratings into the water below. Any who wish to call on a Water Lord have no choice but to

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Ular Kel

ascend via exposed and heavily guarded staircases or special slave-cranked elevator platforms, though it's widely presumed that the Water Lords themselves have secret magical portals leading throughout the city.

## The Iridian Fold

In 3789 AR, two men walked out of the grass beyond Ular Kel's walls, bereft of horses or wagons. Judging by the chain running between them, city guards assumed that the two men—one wearing armor, the other a veil—must be survivors of a slave caravan. Yet the men refused to say where they came from, instead demanding an audience with a Water Lord.

Then as now, the Water Lords did not simply grant audiences to any penniless travelers who requested them. Rebuffed for their arrogance, the two men—moving and speaking in eerily perfect unison—took up residence at the foot of the Water Houses' stairs, spending exactly 8 hours in front of each. No matter how many guards the Water Lords sent to remove them, the unnamed men

defeated them with perfectly coordinated magical and physical attacks, quickly drawing crowds.

At last, after 3 days, the son of a Water Lord brought his lover to see these men who would not be moved from his doorstep. As he watched his guards huddle in fear, he asked the strangers what they wanted, to which the men replied, "Only to teach you." When they'd heard what the strangers had to offer, the noble sons—now known to history as Mitrae the Wise and Loyeru Shieldbreaker—were so moved that they became disciples on the spot. For the next 10 years, the strangers known collectively as the Teacher instructed the people of Ular Kel in the tenets of what they called the Iridian Fold. Then one afternoon they walked off into the grass, leaving Mitrae and Loyeru to lead the congregation. To this day, theories about the Teacher's nature and fate abound, with many believing that the pair were celestials in disguise.

Despite being almost a thousand years old, the Iridian Fold remains one of the most mysterious and least-understood philosophies on Golarion. Not precisely a religion, it instead preaches the beauty of blending the souls of two male lovers—not in a metaphorical sense, but a literal one. Through learning to move, fight, speak, and eventually think in perfect synchronicity, two bonded men called *szerik* can systematically break down the walls of selfhood between them, eventually coming to exist as a single spirit in two bodies. This state of enlightenment—described as "shared mind, shared heart"—and the monastic teachings that help *szerik* reach it, are collectively known as the Iridian Fold.

While many members of the Iridian Fold choose to mimic the Teacher in their style of dress and pursuit of magical and martial prowess, the group's most universal symbol is the chain each *szerik* pair wears. Neither a holy symbol nor a sign of bondage, the chain running between the two men is seen as a physical representation of their union, the emotional and spiritual bridge between them. While the mantra "Be the chain" reminds *szerik* that the metal links are merely a symbol, and pairs may occasionally unhook the chains out of necessity, most strive to maintain them at all times as a teaching tool.

The Iridian Fold's practice of only accepting men into its ranks has an unusual rationale. The group's holy texts teach that, unlike men, women are born carrying a thousand soul-voices inside them—the seeds of potential children—and that this "cacophony" prevents the proper blending of the adult woman's spirit with another. Not everyone accepts this reasoning, however, with many women over the centuries having pointed out that the texts in question were written not by the Teacher but by his early students, and that this misogyny may be



Iridian Fold



# Distant Shores

apocryphal. As a result, a secret splinter sect known as the Iridian Choir (a mocking reference to the “thousand voices”) quietly trains female and mixed-gender pairs, and even unions of more than two partners.

One of the best ways to represent a szerik pair’s growing bond and practiced synchronicity is with teamwork feats, making inquisitors and cavaliers particularly good class choices. Below are several new teamwork feats designed for the Iridian Fold, but able to be taken by any character.

## Bonded Mind (Teamwork)

You and your partner are so close that you can almost read each other’s minds.

**Benefit:** As long as you can see each other, you and an ally who also has this feat can trade nonverbal messages. These function as the *message* spell, except that you don’t need to whisper or point, and you cannot be overheard.

## Exceptional Aid (Teamwork)

You’re always ready to lend your partner a hand.

**Prerequisite:** Bonded Mind.

**Benefit:** When you successfully use the Aid Another action to assist an ally’s skill check, and the ally also has this feat, the bonus is +4 instead of +2.

## Share Spells (Teamwork)

You can share individual magic with your partner.

**Prerequisite:** Bonded Mind, ability to share spells with an animal companion, eidolon, familiar, or phantom, caster level 1st.

**Benefit:** You can cast a spell with a target of “you” on an ally as a touch spell, as per the share spells familiar ability, so long as the ally possesses the Bonded Mind feat.

## Special Delivery (Teamwork)

Your partner can carry your spells to their targets.

**Prerequisite:** Bonded Mind, Share Spells, ability to deliver spells through an animal companion, eidolon, familiar, or phantom, caster level 3rd.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are in contact with an ally who has the Bonded Mind feat and you cast a touch spell, you can designate the ally as the “toucher,” as per the deliver touch spells familiar ability.

## Take the Hit (Teamwork)

You can shield your partner’s body with your own.

**Prerequisite:** Bonded Mind, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** As long as an ally with the Bonded Mind feat is adjacent to you, you can choose to absorb up to half of the hit point damage from any attack that strikes him, as if subject to a *shield other* spell. Using this ability is an immediate action, and it only applies to one attack, even if the ally is hit by multiple attacks as part of the same action.

## Trade Initiative (Teamwork)

You’re an expert at helping your partner respond faster, and vice versa.

**Benefit:** After initiative is rolled but before enemies’ initiative is revealed, you may trade the results of your die roll (not including modifiers) with an adjacent ally who also possesses this feat.

## The Legacy of Sogys Taramai

The concept of the Kara as a nation is one forced upon them by history, and the tribes might never have unified at all if not for the Empire of Kelesh. In 417 AR, the Padishah Emperor commanded the great general Hasham Niar to take the “unsettled” land of Karazh and create a new satrapy, with Niar as its ruler. Leading thousands of soldiers and settlers, the general began systematically pushing east into the Grass Sea, founding new towns and killing any nomads that might pose a threat—which is to say, any he encountered.

In response, a young nomad warrior named Sogys Taramai rose to prominence, uniting the scattered tribes by words and force and fighting back against the invaders. For the first time in history, the world saw the true strength of the Kara, their near-psychic bonds with their steeds and their unparalleled knowledge of the steppe making them unstoppable in battle. Their daring raids massacred invaders, pushing the Keleshites steadily out of the tribes’ ancestral lands. Though Taramai himself was mortally wounded while slaying Niar in the final battle, he swore publicly to return from death one day to lead his people off the steppe and into the Land of No Winters—an unknown place most storytellers assume to be either Heaven or Kelesh.

## Litchinas

Though Taramai is long dead, and that first Keleshite invasion now little more than scattered stone foundations crumbling amid the grass, his legacy remains a point of great cultural pride among the Kara, with several leaders since having claimed to be his reincarnation. Taramai also pioneered the now-standard Kara practice of wearing the litchina—a metal face mask sculpted to match a given warrior’s face, so that the enemy can never read any fear or pain in a Kara’s expression. Each warrior must earn his or her litchina in battle, and most Kara would sooner fight naked than go without theirs.

To be worn properly, a litchina must be attached to a helm or headpiece of some sort (usually via small hooks). While worn in this manner, it grants the wearer a +1 competence bonus to Intimidate. A magically enhanced litchina can count as occupying either the head, headband, or eyes slot (determined at the time of item creation). A standard litchina costs 100 gp and weighs 2 pounds.

Aelyosos

Anuli

Dhucharg

Radripal

Segada

Ular Kel

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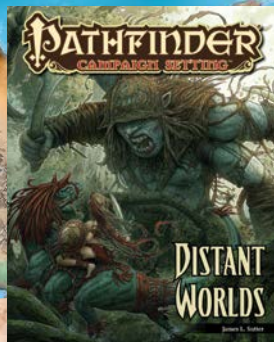
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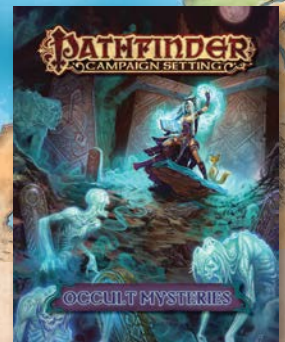
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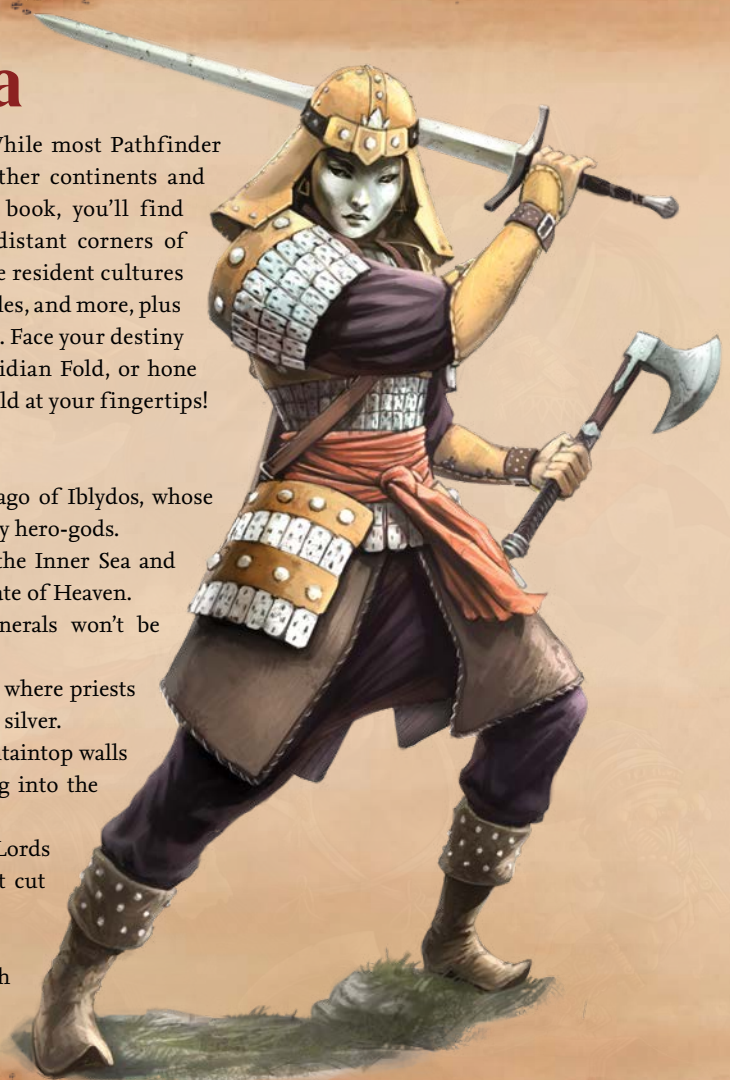
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- ▶ Ular Kel, Caravan City and Jewel of the Steppe, where Water Lords and nomadic horse tribes rule over massive trade routes that cut through the Grass Sea of central Casmaron.

*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Shores* is intended for use with the Pathfinder campaign setting, but can be easily adapted to any fantasy world.



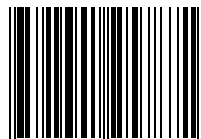
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