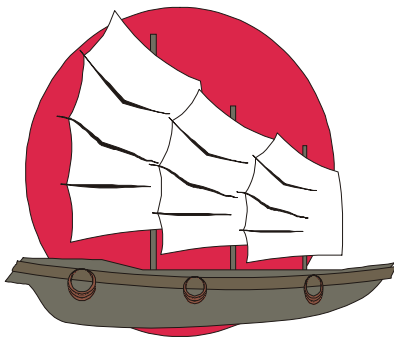


# The Floating Cities Gazetteer

## Introduction

East of the Province of the Red-Gloved Daimyo, well within the lawless lands, there is a region that is home to the so-called *boat people*, who live along the coast and on the vast river deltas in that area. Rather than settle in regular cities - which would be hard to build in this swampy part of the country anyway - these descendants of Coroan slaves live on boats and floating platforms. They live by fishing and by diving for the fantastic treasures hidden in the half-sunken Imperial temples littering the coastline and the swamps.



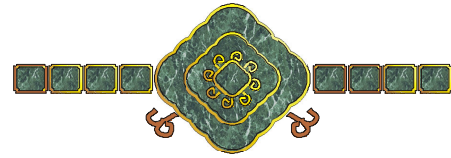
While they are a cheerful and happy people, their life is not easy at all due to the many terrors that prey upon man just below the waterline and the shapechangers that stalk the jungles.

## History

In the time before the civil war, the region that is now home to the floating cities was a rich coastal land dominated by 3 harbour cities. When the civil war erupted, however, these lands were devastated by powerful water elemental magic and are now a huge tropical swamp.

The death of the original population left a vacuum and the former Coroan slaves

(primitive bronze age humans from the East) used their impressive knowledge of boat-building to create the floating cities as we now know them.



## Customs & Religion

The Coroans are highly superstitious and very animistic. They have little in the way of formal religion but make offerings to many spirits, especially guixian to appease them. They are also in awe of shapechangers, as these creatures are part of the grand mythical tale of the founding of the Coroan kingdom. In fact the rulers of Coroa have the ability to switch into the form of a dragon in their family line.

The Coroans have many customs that seem annoying to Imperial people. For example they have no concept of private space and are quick to touch other people during a conversation. This culminates in their traditional greeting that involves touching each others face and they are very offended if strangers do not practise it, for refusal implies lack of personal hygiene in the other.

## Dress

Most Coroans wear wide pants made of thin undyed cotton cloth. The men go bare chested and wear shaggy beards. The women wear long sleeveless shirts. Both genders wear huge straw hats.

Coroan merchants prefer to dress like nobles from the Shattered Empire, keen to deny their "lowly" heritage. Needless to say they are not very popular.

## Food

Coroan meals always start with a vegetable or fish soup. Main dishes are



often based on pasta with chopped up meats and vegetables. There are a few spicy dishes that make the eyes watery.

## Important Sites

### Laon

Laon is the biggest among the floating cities (pop. 1200 - 1800) and one of the major trading nodes of that area. Merchants come up from the coast to trade basic necessities for animal hides and ancient treasures. There are excellent business opportunities in this city for those willing to brave the swamp monsters and river pirates.

The city is run by a pirate captain called One-Eyed Lu, who has become semi-respectable in the last few years. He protects the locals in return for services and while he is not a charismatic leader, he is clever enough to stay in power.

His opponents are the powerful merchant houses who have set up base here. While they co-operate with him, they would like to replace this stubborn old robber with a puppet leader to avoid the tremendous taxes he places on them. Laon is a chaotic collection of self-made ships, floating platforms and the odd shabby hut at the river side. The layout changes constantly, so the map provided here is not accurate but gives a good impression of what the city might be like at any given time. The places of interest are the luxurious junks of the merchant princes, the war galleon (powered by rowing slaves) of Lu, and the *Wine House of Earthly Pleasure*, a 4 story high balcony structure that is rumoured to be the best watering hole of the coast.

### Ma-Gog Delta

The Ma-Gog Delta consists of almost innavigable rivers and side arms and is infested with foul creatures and pirates. There are rumours that it contains a site

of great power but most people dismiss this as a tall tale.

### City of Fuxu

This city is a bit smaller than Laon and is bitterly poor. The locals suffer from constant raids by pirates as well as the punitive anti-pirate action undertaken by the samurai. Most buildings show damage and there are many sunken junks lying on the ground of the river that harbours the city.

### City of Teardrops

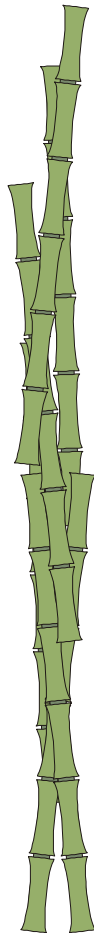
This city used to be a place of joy and free trade until it was conquered by a powerful wu jen pirate captain. Today, it is little more than a forced labour camp involved in some bizarre project no outsider has ever gotten his eyes onto and lived to tell the tale.

## Typical Creatures

The lands near the floating cities are wild and untamed. Besides the abundant animal life, there are many bizarre horrors that are adapted to the muddy environment. The most feared creatures are various carnivorous plants that are difficult to spot in this green hell.

There are two other great dangers for the tribes of the floating cities. First, there are quite a few pirates in these parts, who hunt slaves from their junks<sup>1</sup> to provide them with food. Who is a pirate and who a tribesman is a distinction that is not always clear!

The second great threat are the shapechanger gangs that roam the forests. Most of them are Hengeyokai but there are also quite a few werecreatures here as well.



<sup>1</sup> A junk is a highly manoeuvrable ship with about 20 crewmen.