

The Tengu Spires Gazetteer

Overview

In the mountains east of the Jade Emperor's province, accessible only through the foul bloodrain jungle inhabited by Tasloi tribes, lie the Tengu Spires. The homestead of the enigmatic Tengu race is semi-mythical and few can claim to have been there. However, it is said that the Tengu are a benevolent race that will help the Empire in times of need.



History

The first known information on the Tengu Spires comes from the days of the Naga-Noth empire. Myth talks about the Tengu as servants of the evil necromancers who rewarded them for their loyal service by creating the human-headed subspecies. Many sages consider this tale untrue pointing out the many good deeds attributes to Tengu.

During Imperial times, the Tengu rarely interfered with outsiders and were left alone after swearing to help the Emperor in times of need. Little was heard of them until the civil war, when they fought valiantly against the Emperor's assassin, yet had little influence on the outcome of the war. Again, they retreated into seclusion and are mostly

mythical in the lands of the humans nowadays.

About a century ago, the tengu made a pact with Guardians of Xue (*Way of the Spirit*), keeping several important artefacts for them in the cave of the Magenta Prophet.

Customs & Religion

Tengu society is divided into two castes, the crow-headed and the human-headed Tengu. The rulers are human-headed and wield powerful magic while the common folk have beaks and raven faces.

Beyond this basic division, there is little



social variance. The common Tengu accept the rules of their betters without question, especially since birth with one or the other feature is seemingly random. The rulers on the other hand have little use for wealth and power and rule with a wisdom that defies the playfulness of their underlings.

Tengu in the Shattered Empire

While similar to the tengu described in the OA manual, there are several subtle differences. First of all the crow-headed tengu are small and their leaders medium-sized. Second, the human-headed tengu cast wu jen spells instead of shugenja ones.

The first change may seem arbitrary to you but conforms with what I have seen during my trip to Japan.



The Wings of Fury

These highly individualistic warriors love flamboyant uniforms and fighting styles. Usually, wings fight as individuals but some train together to profit from their co-operation.

There are many weapons used by the wings but the most popular ones are the katana-wakizashi and axe daishos wielded by the Tengu samurai. The axe daisho consists of a masterwork dwarven waraxe and a masterwork handaxe. A good-natured rivalry exists between the two types of samurai but this is very playful as most things done by the Tengu.



Tengu are allowed to pursue any career they like and usually their choice is based on what will be most beneficial to their community. No occupation is considered less important than another unless it is contrary to the current needs of spire the Tengu lives in.

Due to their isolated location, the spires do not need a strong military. Their warriors called *wings of fury* fight in a highly individualistic style, supported by the powerful magic of their human-headed leaders.

Some human-headed Tengu shun their society and live as hermits, specialising in dangerous and highly idiosyncratic magic. These outsiders have little contact with their brethren but have sworn to help their brothers in the case of war or disaster.

The Tengu as a whole have little use for 'gods' or spirits, falsely believing that

souls to evaporate upon death. This results in a *carpe diem* stance which manifests itself in their playfulness. Their other philosophical beliefs centre around the community, obeying their ruling caste, and helping each other out. The hermits on the other hand believe that immortality can be achieved through magic (leading quite a few to various forms of lichdom). While the other Tengu disdain this view as anti-social and thus 'evil', they leave the hermits alone as long as they ward off intruders and keep their promises towards the community.

Dress

The Tengu prefer gaudy clothes, seeing humans and their ilk as boring. No colour combination is too wild, no pattern too flamboyant for them to use it. The ruling class wear wide robes of distinguished cuts while the lower ranks dress mostly in pants and shirts.

The hermits dress like the ruling class but usually wear a purple cap indicating their outcast status.



Creatures

The accursed bloodrain jungle is home to many twisted creatures such as fiendish tigers, all kinds of snakes, and the ubiquitous blood-red parrots that are highly prized by mages as familiars. The greatest predators of the jungle are the giant Red Jungle Spiders, patches of fiendish stranglevine as well as the many tribes of Tasloi and their undead protectors.

The spires themselves are populated by the Tengu, their pets, mostly winged monkeys (treat as *air creature*-templated monkeys) or various birds, and the odd Tasloi kept as a food reserve.

Food

The Tengu are entirely carnivorous and eat mostly small game that they hunt in the forests. One of their specialities is Tasloi brain, a custom heavily criticised by those of good alignment.



Important Sites

The Tasloi Burial Caves

Just below the Tengu Spires lie the burial caves of the Tasloi. Not only do their dead rest here, it is also the home of the revered ancients. Occasionally, the Tengu come here to hunt but most of them regard this as a spooky place to be avoided.

The Hornets' Nest

This lantern-like building near the border of the bloodrain jungle is home to a tengu wu jen with elemental mastery in fire. She hates intruders and tries to scare away those who approach her home with increasingly lethal spells.

The Well of Times

Only the Tengu know where this unholy place is hidden. The Magenta Prophet lives there. Rumours have it that the well spouts blood and is a site of great evil.



Important Personalities

Blackwing

Blackwing is a human-headed tengu with a love for exotic things. While this makes him target of frequent criticism, Blackwing goes on to collect items from all over the known world. He also commands a mercenary unit of flying creatures that help the tengu in the time of need.

Shiny Feather

Phoenix Bird

One of the most powerful hermits, Phoenix Bird has the declared goal to become a fire creature and runs many experiments which often leave her half-burnt. She has access to many fire spells. Her home base is the Hornets' Nest.

Magenta Prophet

This golem-like automaton was created by some powerful spirit and given to the Tengu. Unable to lie and knowing everything ever uttered within 400 miles, the prophet was deemed a terrible danger and hidden deep within the Tasloi burial caves where no one would ever find it. Only a select few are shown the secret entrance that leads to the Well of Times and few are happy with the prophecies they hear.

