

Oriental Adventure 1

- The Cult of the Barbed Tentacle

Synopsis

The players characters are demon hunters or other heroes who travel the land to fight evil. They spend a night with a monk who is abducted while they are asleep. Later, they find out that the area is terrorised by bandits with evil powers who seem to focus their raids on holy sites.

The bandits are actually cultists of the elder gods and plan to increase the shadowland overlap into this area by sacrificing 10 holy men in a terrible ritual. They hope that by obtaining the favour of these foul entities, they will be able to drive the occupational forces from their lands.

The Province of the Red-Gloved Daimyo

The following places may be visited during the travels in the province. Most are not fully detailed, since they do not play a major role in the adventure.

- **Order of the Dragon Sons:** These monks are known for their *dragon claws*, an exotic weapon unique to this order. The dragon sons are known for their secluded lifestyle and harsh discipline.
- **Order of Red Discipline:** This order focuses on psionics, especially Clairsentience. They also practise a martial art that involves divination. The monks wear red trousers and sleeveless vests and carry chopsticks with them which they use for agility practice (i.e. stealing food out of other peoples bowls - via *pick pocket* skill). Being "robbed" by a red discipline monk is considered a lucky sign in this province.
- **Sad Shrine:** This shrine is dedicated to a wailing spirit that causes nightmares and must be appeased regularly by burning incense and spilling sake. The holy man living here has become quite unpopular for his co-operation with the Daimyo's forces.
- **Ebony Shrine:** This 4-story pagode is built entirely of black wood. It is dedicated to a spirit of healing that manifests as a rude fat woman with a semi-transparent head. The peasants of the surrounding lands often come here to make small sacrifices.
- **Tree Shrine:** This display of exotic architecture is built into a huge hollow tree. It is dedicated to a tree spirit that knows everything that has ever happened in the forest surrounding his shrine and who also blesses wood weapons for a small gift. The spirit looks like a tall skinny man with 12 branch-like arms and a green mossy beard.
- **Merry Shrine:** People often sacrifice here because the resident spirit is hilarious and loves to tell stories. It is a small fat man with a huge hammer that leaves copper pieces wherever it strikes. The monk living here is known for his gluttony and love of rice wine.
- **Town of the Green Stones:** This town is built from the green mineral that abounds in the area. The material is remarkable because it shares a property of jade - if properly enchanted it can do massive harm to shadow creatures.
- **Town of the Dead:** This town probably has the biggest graveyard in the province - it covers about 40% of the town. The graveyard consists of elaborate tombs and is the hiding place of quite a few undead. The

locals see these creatures as ancestors however and treat them with great respect.

- **Shadow Gate:** This town was the site of a major battle which ended with the impalement of over 4000 captured soldiers. The site of this atrocity became a permanent portal to the shadow lands and therefore the locals are to this day too afraid to go there and bury the corpses. As a result evil spell casters are drawn to this site like flies. A small shrine was built on the edge of the overlap zone, which is maintained by 9 holy men who heal those hurt by the incursions from the Shadow Plane. Besides the Bamboo City this is a major stronghold of the pirate army, who enjoy the weak barrier to their demonic masters in this area.
- **Town of the Red Pagode:** This town is protected by a monastery of red monks who practise a martial art involving long poles which are used for sweep attacks and to make far jumps. The samurai have never defeated these sohei. However, they finally had to agree to accept the rulership of the Daimyo in exchange for some autonomy.

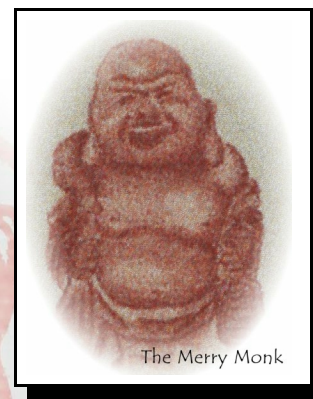
Events

The Merry Shrine

The adventure begins with the PCs travelling the road to Shadowgate, looking for an opportunity to fight the forces of the Shadow Plane and other demons. After a long day of travel through a forest of sinister looking trees they arrive at the Merry Shrine. The monk invites them to stay the night. They spend some time drinking sake and eating rice and vegetables.

After everybody has gone to sleep the shrine is attacked by 3 shadow swimmers intent on abducting the monk. They will

try to sneak in and grapple the monk (who is a level 1 shaman). The PCs will only be attacked if they wake (listen roll -8 vs. the intruders sneak). If they do not make the rolls, they will wake after the monk has been taken by the swimmers and the last one of them throws down one of the incense burners to set the shrine on fire. Since the creatures will probably be too fast for the PCs, they will get away in this case. The rest of the encounter is played as indicated in the flowchart (unless the PCs act in really unpredictable ways).



What is important in this scene:

- The intruders will make maximum use of their hiding abilities, often slipping behind trees etc. to hide when out of sight. They will use wide leaps etc. during their attacks, similar to *Jurassic Park* raptors.
- The raiders main goal is to abduct the monk, so they will do everything to ensure this goal, even if it means to sacrifice one of their team to distract the PCs.
- Describe the fight scene as dark and confusing.

The Shadow Goblin

When the PCs wander on the shadow plane, they will see all kinds of evil-looking things and maybe they will have to dodge the occasional gigantic shadow spider or shadow raptor (fighting them is probably not such a good idea).

After a while however they run into a wounded shadow goblin. This foul creature is wounded and will try to flee the PCs. If they capture him, they might help him and gain him as a guide or use him to extract information.

The goblin has seen the shadow swimmers running into the direction of Shadowgate (the town) and that the forces of darkness seem to gather there. He has heard that humans seem to support these dark forces as well as the "masters from beyond" (as he calls the creatures from the realm beyond).

The Other Shrines

The other shrines will be attacked over the next days, in the following order, one a day: Tree Shrine, Ebony Shrine, Sad Shrine. All will be attacked by the same team, led by Lang Feng. He is supported by 2 shepherds, 2 fishermen and 1 senior cult member. The shrines are all reachable within a days travel. The team will try to abduct the monks at the shrine and will flee or kill themselves rather than be captured (other than Lang).

If the PCs manage to question Lang, he will talk, if they promise to keep him out of this. He is really sorry for what he has got into. He only knows that he was ordered to abduct the holy men and bring them to the city of Shadowgate three days after the last raid. This would be just in time for the raid against the Shrine of the 9 holy men (of which he knows nothing).

The City of Shadowgate

If the PCs arrive in time, they can warn the holy men of the impending attack and prepare the monastery for the onslaught (the cult leader, 2 adepts, 10 lay members and a shadow swimmer, there are an additional 4 fishermen who guard the four holy men captured before (if one of the attacks was foiled, they will have taken somebody else)). The defenders are 9 clerics.

If they come too late, the clerics will be dead along with 4 other holy men. There will be a powerful servant of the Realm Beyond (a Skiver) which was given as a reward for spreading the Shadow Plane another 2 miles in this area.

What makes this combat interesting?

- There are several gates to the shadow plane near the monastery (determine their position on the map randomly) used by the forces of evil to travel to different positions. This makes combat somewhat surprising.
- If the Shadow Plane leak has spread, the special properties of the plane will become relevant, making it pitifully easy for the Shadow Swimmer to hide.
- The tone is one of darkness and paranoia instead of open combat.

Aftermath

The holy men will be very grateful and give the PCs one healing potion each, as well as use their remaining healing spells on them.

If the PCs hand over the cultists to the samurai, they will gain a coin of free passage, which protects them from harassment by the patrols. The cultists, however, will be burned alive, sacrifices to the Great Wheel of Law, the patron entity of the samurai.

NPC Section

Cultist

The lower ranking cultists are all commoners of low levels. The senior members have gained some levels in warrior or rogue. They are all humans. The following are three typical cult members.

Shepperds: Many of the cultists are shepperds who are disgruntled because of the constant requisitions by the samurai army. Human Com1: CR 1; Size M; HD 1d4+1; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +2 club (1d6); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and feats: Disguise +2, Handle animal +7, Hide +1, Innuendo +5, Listen +5, Move silently +3, Spot +3; Iron will, Skill focus (handle animal).

Possessions: club, shepperd's outfit, straw hat

Fishermen: Fishing is a common occupation here despite the dangerous sea. many fishermen are highly superstitious. Human Com1: CR 1; Size M; HD 1d4; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +2 kwanaga (1d8); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills and feats: Hide +3, Craft (Fishing) +5, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +7, Move silently +2, Search +3, Spot +3; Exotic Weapon proficiency (Kwanaga), Skill focus (craft, fishing).

Possessions: Kwanaga, fishermen's outfit

Senior Cult Member: These people have been with the cult for a while and have gained some spells as a reward for their faithful service. Male human Com1/Adp2: CR 1; Size M; HD 1d4 + 2d6; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Attack +4 melee (club: 1d6), or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +5; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and feats: Appraise +4.5, Disable device +5, Handle animal +4, Hide +1, Innuendo +4, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +2, Move silently +1, Open lock +1, Ride +1, Search +7.5, Spot +2, Wilderness lore +6; Skill focus (search), Toughness, Enlarge Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Possessions: club, robes, scroll of detect good, scroll of detect law, scroll of protection from good, scroll of cause fear

Adept Spells Per Day: 3/2 (usually: cure minor wounds X2, ghost sound, sleep, obscuring mist).

Demonic Servitors: Shadow Swimmers

These vile creatures hail from a swamp in the shadow lands which coincides with the graveyard in the town of the dead. They are amphibious creatures that worship the beaked terror, a creature from the realms beyond that is known for its connection to cannibalism. The shadow swimmers are completely gray and look like humanoid lizards, except for their amphibian skin. Their outline looks undefined, just like that of a shadow and they have a tendency to melt with those in dark surroundings. Their motions are fluid, almost as if their outline was able to change more than befitting a humanoid. Their preferred class is monk, as with the example below. (stats: Shadow Troglodyte)

Shadow Troglodyte (Outsider) Mnk1: CR 3; Size M; HD 2d8+6 + 1d8+3; hp 28; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 45 ft.; AC 20 (+1 Dex, +3 Wis, +6 Natural); Attack +3 (2 claws 1d4+2) and +1 bite (1d4+2), or +3 tonfa (1d6+2) and +1 bite, or +3 monk (1d6+2) and +1 bite; +3 javelin (1d6+2); SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +7; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Hide +8/+12, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +6, Move silently +11, Spot +3; Dodge, [Improved unarmed strike], [Multiattack], [Stunning fist], [Weapon Focus: Javelin].

Specials: +2 luck bonus on all saves, cold resistance (8), darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, shadow blend (9/10th concealment in shadows), stench (30 ft., fort DC 13, 1d6 temp. str damage)

Possessions: tonfa, 2 javelins.

Lang Feng

Lang Feng is a master thief who had to flee the city of bamboo after a run-in with the daimyo (he tried to steal her katana). Unfortunately, he ran into Hai Pri, who was in dire need of a skilled thief. Hai Pri uses Lang to abduct people, sometimes aided by other cultists. Lang is not happy with his job, but sees no way how to quit now without becoming a target for the high priest. He will be very reluctant to fight however, preferring to flee in the face of strong opposition.

Personality: Lang is earnest and professional - not much of a talker. He has seen much evil and is very cynical. However he is not happy with his current job and might be talked into turning against his master.

Appearance: Lang is small and seems a bit stout for a thief. He usually wears black robes and ashigaru armor. He is armed with an axe and defends with a tessen, 3 other axes are on his back in a star arrangement.

Male human Rog2: CR 2; Size M; HD 2d6+2; hp 13; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Armor); Attack +0 melee, or +3 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N; Str 9 (-1), Dex 15 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 9 (-1), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 13 (+1).

Skills and feats: Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2, Forgery +4, Gather information +5, Hide +2, Innuendo +7, Listen +2, Move silently +2, Open lock +6, Pick pocket +6, Read lips +4, Search +0, Spot +2, Tumble +7, Use magic device +2; Blind-fight, Shield Proficiency.

Possessions: throwing axes (4, 1d6), tessen, masterwork ashigaru armor, potion of hiding, dust of immobility.

Hai Pri

Male human Clr2: CR 2; Size M; HD 2d8+4; hp 15; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 armor); Attack +3 mace (1d8+2), or +4 dart (1d4+2); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7; AL CE; Str 15 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 17 (+3), Cha 14 (+2).

Skills and feats: Concentration +9, Heal +8, Hide +3, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +3, Move silently +3, Spot +3. Discipline (+2 concentration, +1 will saves), Dodge

Special: Rebuke Undead, +1 lv on evil spells, +2 on a single save per day.

Possessions: Hawk's feather talisman (levitate), lamellar armor, heavy mace (1d8), 12 darts

Cleric Domains: Evil, Guardian

Cleric Spells Per Day: 4/3+1: light, resistance, 2X cure minor wounds, cause fear, doom, shield of faith, protection from good

The Clerics of Shadowgate

Male human Clr1: CR 1; Size M; HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Attack +2 staff (1d6+2), or +0 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; AL LG; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and feats: Climb +4, Handle animal +2, Hide +0, Knowledge (nature) +1, Listen +1, Move silently +0, Spot +2; Combat casting, Quicken spell.

Possessions: Leather Armour, Quarterstaff, Scroll of Heal Light Wounds

Cleric Domains: Fire, Healing.

Cleric Spells Per Day: $3/2+1$. (Light, Resistance, Virtue, Protection from Evil, Entropic Shield, Burning Hands)

