

The Journey West

Synopsis

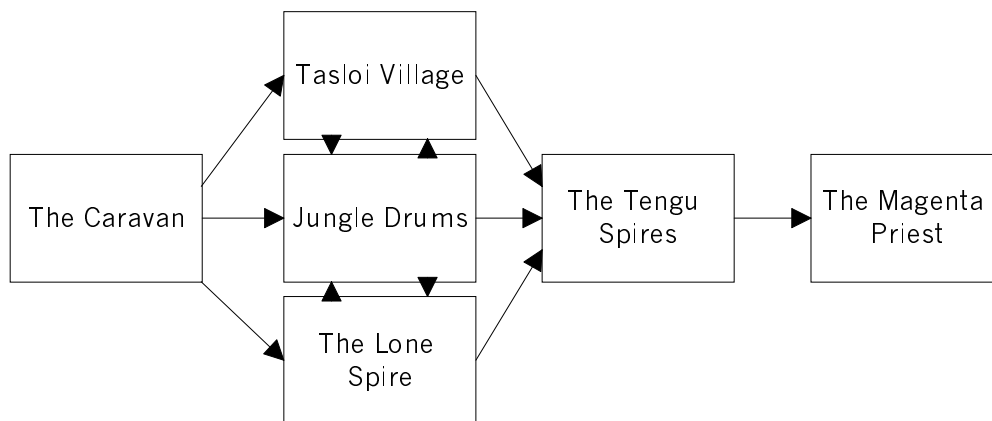
The PCs are hired by General Zhen (or maybe some other minister of the Jade Emperor they might owe a favour) to travel to the Tengu Spires and find the Magenta Priest, a powerful oracle that lives somewhere near the spires. They are to give him a present and ask him who is responsible for the united front of the orcs, trolls, and hobgoblins in the North. This adventure is for 4 characters of level 6 but can probably be scaled up and down due to the large amount of minor enemies.

What You Need

For this adventure you need some maps from the map section of www.oriental.hardpoints.de (pick what you like), the Tengu Spires Gazetteer, and the NPCs and Monsters books. Some of the spells here likely originate in my Way of the Wu Jen pdf.

The Event Diagram

The Players are likely to encounter at least some of the events in the flowchart but - depending on the route they take, they might miss some of them. Start out with the description in "The Caravan" and move on with one of the events in



the jungle, based on the route the players have decided on.

The Caravan

The PCs are equipped with the following items for their quest:

- a normal riding horse for each character
- a (non-combat trained) elephant (AC 104 hp, AC 14) to carry their equipment and to clear away obstacles, along with an animal handler (human exp 3, LN, AC 11, 8 hp)
- Food for 2 weeks (which is the travel time one way)
- a perfect ruby worth 1000 gp as a gift to the Magenta Priest
- healing potions of choice worth up to 400 gp in total.

The characters are to follow the Huang He river downstream up to the tiny village of Cho Cho, where they are to enter the forest and travel towards the Tengu Spires with a local guide (exp 2, AC 12, 8 hp, LG).

There are several options for the PCs which will become apparent after one day in the jungle. They can travel towards a lone spire they spot if they climb up on the trees or fly (the guide advises against disturbing the "hornet", refusing to talk about it). They can go straight for the Tengu Spires (which will leave them *fatigued* after noon due to all the hacking at the plants etc. Characters



with the Endurance feat are exempt from this). Or they can take a path that goes 30 degrees of their intended direction

Movement in the Jungle

Unless moving on a path, characters are reduced to quarter speed (round up to 5 feet blocks). Moving into heavy undergrowth requires hacking a way through (hardness 2, 10 hp) to enter the square.

After 4 hours of hacking through the jungle, characters become *fatigued*, after 8 hours they are *exhausted*. The endurance feat gives 4 hours free without negative effect (i.e. after 8 hours the character is only *fatigued*).

Of course all this does not affect fliers, those climbing in the trees (i.e. the tasloi) or those shamans with the nature domain.

The total time of travel to the Spires is 10 days, however, taking the path up to the Tasloi village will cut 4 days off that time.

which is unknown to the guide and leads to the tesloi village.

Jungle Drums



If the PCs stay in the dense jungle, they will encounter tesloi hunters who rejoice at their opportunity to hunt human flesh. This encounter is complex and consists of several steps.

- A lone tasloi hunter lies waiting in the trees, looking to spot the PCs

(which should be easy, make secret spot checks to see if the PCs *spot him* in return. Due to his position he gets a +6 bonus on his hide roll). After the PCs have passed him he will let out a wolf-like howl, attracting a hunting party after 2 hours. Meanwhile the tasloi will pepper the PCs with arrows, aiming at their animals (requiring ride checks to keep them from panicking) with a sneak attack and retreating into hiding after each attack.

- The hunting party consists of 8 regular tesloi and 2 additional hunters, mounted on red spiders. They will come from behind, trying to stay in the trees and using their spiders to cover themselves while launching arrows. The normal tasloi will hide until the PCs are within charge range (they will charge through the trees). No hunter wants to die, so any wounded creatures retreat and they will all retreat after a spider is killed.
- If the hunting party is repelled, the tasloi call their revered ancients for help. These creatures take 2 days to arrive from their burial caves.
- Meanwhile there will be one attack per day and one per night, keeping the PCs on the edge and most likely fatigued.
- As soon as the revered ancients arrive (2 of them answered the call), they join the attacks (preferably one at night). They will cast webs on the sleeping folk (who will get no save) and use ghost sound to simulate an attack from the other side before starting their (ranged) attacks.

Tasloi resources: the tasloi will take turns to attack, usually using a third of their power and breaking off attacks as soon as the enemy seems to get close. If they lose more than a third of their numbers, they will likely retreat for ever.



Tasloi Hunter

Tasloi Rogue 3, HD: 3d6+3 (16hp), Ini: +1 (dex), Speed: 20 feet, climb 40 feet, AC 15 (+1 size, +3 dex, +2 natural), Attacks: +2 club (1d6) or shortbow +6 (1d6), Face/Reach: 5ft., SA: sneak attack +2d6 SQ: low light vision, light sensitivity, evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex Bonus to AC), Saves: Fort+2, Ref+6, Will+1, Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8, Skills: Climb+10, Spot+7, Search+8, Listen+7, Hide+14, Move Silently+14, Tumble+10, Balance+10, Ride+7

Feats: Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, AI: CE

The tasloi hunters (8 per tribe) take turns looking for interesting prey. They are armed with a short bow, 20 arrows, a wooden club, and several (nonmagical) charms.

Red Jungle Spider

HD: 4d8+4 (22 hp), Ini: +3 (dex), Speed: 40 ft., climb 20ft., AC: 14 (-1 size, +3 dex, +2 natural), Attacks: Bite +4 (1d8+3), Face/Reach: 10 ft. x 10 ft. / 5 ft., SA: Acid Spittle, SQ: Acid Resistance 5, Fire Resistance 3, Vermin, Saves: Fort+5, Ref+4, Will+1, Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int-, Wis 10, Cha 2, Skills: Climb+14, Hide +6, Jump +8, Spot +13

Feats: -

The acid spittle is a line of 15 feet with 3d6 acid damage and ref DC 13 for half.

Total Tribal Resources

8 hunters, 3 spiders, 30 common tribe members, 2 revered ancients (adepts). Note that at any given time, some of those will rest or guard the village. Only the ancients are available for all attacks.



Revered Ancient (Undead)

Hit Dice: 6d12 (39 hp), Initiative: +4 (feat), Speed: 10 feet, climb 30 feet, AC: 20 (+1 size, +9 natural), Attacks: +7 half spear or +7 fist, Damage: 1d6+6 or 1d2+4, Face/Reach: 5x5 feet / 5 feet, Special Attacks: fear aura, improved grab, Special Qualities: Cold of the Grave, Undead Mastery, Fire Vulnerability, Lowlight Vision, Light Sensitivity, Saves: Fort+2, Ref+2, Will+7, Abilities: Str 18 (+4), Dex 10 (+0), Con -, Int 9 (-1), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 12 (+1), Skills: Concentration+5, Spellcraft+3, Knowledge (Religion)+1, Climb+4, Hide+4, Move Silently+4

Feats: Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, CR: 5, AI: CE

Equipment: half spear, holy symbol (face mask)

Spells Usually Memorised (3/3/2):

lv 0 - ghost sound, detect magic, cure minor wounds

lv 1 - cure light wounds, endure elements, bless

lv 2 - cat's grace, web

Spells usually active if expecting combat: endure elements (fire), cat's grace on one hunter, bless

Since they take turns, they can attack day and night, causing the PCs to be exhausted to the maximum.

Tasloi Village

Either by following the path found in the jungle, by tracking a tasloi, or other means, the PCs can discover the ewok-like city of the Tasloi. There are 10 guards patrolling around the city warning the others with a cry - which causes the hasty retreat of those resting and the ca. 20 non-combatants dwelling in the village.

The tree houses of the tasloi are small and dirty. Of particular note is the

makeshift temple to the honour of the spider demon, which is littered with the flayed skin of former sacrifices, mostly animals but also the occasional human or tasloi. The city contains little of value other than crude little statuettes made of some semiprecious stone (5 pieces worth 30 gp each) and the *mask of the spider demon*, a gift from that spirit and of questionable value to the PCs.

Mask of the Spider Demon

This minor artefact was found by the tasloi of this village 130 years ago in the jungle. While evil, it is usable by characters of any alignment without any corrupting effect.

The person wearing the mask hears whispering sounds in his heads, warning him of dangers and pointing out opportunities. This effectively results in a +2 bonus to search, spot, and listen. There is also a +4 bonus on initiative and the wearer is never flat-footed.

However, at a crucial moment, the mask will fail its wearer, feeding him false sensory impression, which effectively grants all of his enemies the same advantages as if they were invisible.

To magical and mundane analysis, the mask registers as chaotic evil (as if a 10 HD evil outsider), non-magical, and made of an unknown soft material that is easily damaged but regenerates after a second. Anyone touching it can already hear the voices in his head, teasing, promising, and begging.

The Lone Spire

If the PCs stumble upon this lone spire standing in the middle of the jungle, they will have to fight a semi-lethal duel against the tengu wu jen Phoenix Bird who is not to happy about visitors. The spells hurled at the PCs become

increasingly lethal if they fail to leave the tengu alone. This encounter is really an unnecessary waste of resources but one that can be easily ended.

The Tengu Spires

After the terrible trip through the Bloodrain Jungle, the heroes will finally arrive at the base of the cliff that is home to the Tengu Spires (see the gazetteer for further details). They will be received without hostility and will be shown the way to the Magenta Priest.

The Magenta Priest

The Magenta Priest is bizzare construct made of red steel that lives in some lonely cave near the spires and is rumoured to know everything ever uttered by an intelligent being. Of course, the wise man already expects the PCs and will tell them the following:

1. A powerful creature with strong ties to the shadow plane holds sway over both the goblinoids of the North and the samurai of the South.
2. The goblinoids are unwitting pawns of this creature, the samurai are willing allies.
3. There are also enemies within ready to put the warlords of the Empire at each others throat - this is the Red Sash Society!

