

# PATHFINDER

## CAMPAIGN SETTING™



FAITHS OF  
GOLARION

# Divine Overview



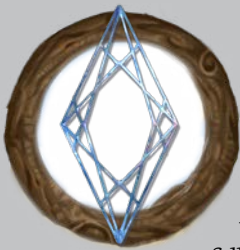
## CHALDIRA ZUZARISTAN

The Calamitous Turn is the neutral good goddess of battle, luck, and mischief. She grants the fortune of the righteous to those who follow in her footsteps, protecting those who would face down unbeatable odds to fight for justice.



## KETEPHYS

The Hunter is the chaotic good god of forestry, hunting, and the moon. The tight-lipped archer instructs his followers to care for the forest in exchange for its bounty, and bids them to protect the woods from his mortal foe, the demon Treerazer.



## GRANDMOTHER SPIDER

The Weaver is the neutral goddess of twilight, weaving, illusion, and family. Once a divine servant herself, Grandmother Spider prefers for her followers to learn their own lessons instead of blindly following the will of the gods.



## MAGRIM

The Taskmaster is the lawful neutral god of death, fate, and the underworld. Whispered to be the creator of the first runes, Magrim's traditions prepare living dwarves for the afterlife, and his forge repairs broken souls within the Boneyard.



## GRUHASTHA

The Keeper is the lawful good god of the *Azvadera Pujila*, one of Vudra's main holy books. He seeks to spread enlightenment to as many creatures as possible, until the day that the world has achieved such perfection that it becomes one with Nirvana.



## NIVI RHOMBODAZZLE

The Gray Polychrome is the neutral goddess of gems, stealth, and gambling. Always looking for her next thrill, the svirfneblin's reckless actions have both driven her deep underground in desperation and elevated her to godhood.



## HEI FENG

The Duke of Thunder is the chaotic neutral god of the sea, storms, thunder, and wind. He is delighted by the colorful and boisterous works of mortals, but his temper can flash faster than lightning, and his waves bring both great gifts and great woe.



## SHIZURU

The Empress of Heaven is the lawful good goddess of ancestors, honor, the sun, and swordplay. Shizuru embodies benevolence and harmony in both the lands and the heavens of Tian Xia, ruling over her divine court with wisdom, patience, and glory.



## KAZUTAL

Mother Jaguar is the neutral good goddess of community, liberty, and safety. Armed with the strength of courage and love, Kazutal and her followers fight to protect the places and people who are dear to them from threats both within and without.



## TSUKIYO

The Prince of the Moon is the lawful good god of jade, the moon, and spirits. He fights his difficult and quiet battles in the darkness, reaching out to the lost, the vulnerable, and those who have been rejected by the people around them.



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## ON THE COVER

Gruhastha spreads the light of knowledge, Nivi gambles with gems and fate, and Hei Feng beckons the oncoming storm in this beautiful cover by Igor Grechanyi!



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## REFERENCE

This book refers to several 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 [pfrd.info](http://pfrd.info).

|                                |     |                          |    |
|--------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| <i>Advanced Class Guide</i>    | ACG | <i>Bestiary 4</i>        | B4 |
| <i>Advanced Player's Guide</i> | APG | <i>Bestiary 5</i>        | B5 |
| <i>Advanced Race Guide</i>     | ARG | <i>Occult Adventures</i> | OA |
| <i>Bestiary 2</i>              | B2  | <i>Ultimate Combat</i>   | UC |
| <i>Bestiary 3</i>              | B3  | <i>Ultimate Magic</i>    | UM |

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# Introduction

**F**rom a hunter who prays to find the food that supports her community to an ascetic monk who seeks enlightenment or a young priest who provides comfort in the face of tragedy and loss, nothing permeates the world of Golarion more than faith. In the lands surrounding the Inner Sea, the names and general portfolios of the 20 core deities are common knowledge, and their robust churches enjoy the greatest influence within those realms. But the Inner Sea is not the only region of Golarion, and there are other pantheons beyond those most commonly worshipped by humans.

This book details 10 gods and goddesses who aren't ubiquitous in the Inner Sea but who are still highly influential among the nations and peoples they claim as their own. As cultures and religions spread and influence one another, fueled by explorers from both within the Inner Sea and beyond it, these faiths have slowly become more recognizable to the people of the Inner Sea region. This book provides all the tools to play a character or create an NPC dedicated to one of these

divinities, whether she is a desperate gnome following the path of Nivi Rhombodazzle in the hope of staving off the Bleaching, a chaotic and tempestuous warrior devoted to Hei Feng, or a peaceful priest of Tsukiyo leading the dead to their proper rest. The pages within also provide rules elements that allow devout characters to put their faiths into practice, including boons for characters with the Deific Obedience feat (see page 3) or levels in the evangelist, exalted, or sentinel prestige classes (for details on these prestige classes, see pages 198–203 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*).

## THE GODS' POWER

Although the divinities detailed in this book are obscure in the Inner Sea region, they are not minor in any sense of the term. Many are among the most exalted gods of whole nations or peoples, or at least highly respected among their peers. For example, while many mainstream religious scholars consider Chaldira Zuzaristan to be Desna's sidekick, halfling society holds Chaldira to be far more important, even among those halflings who do not

personally worship her. Likewise, many of these gods are important parts of pantheons that are not commonly acknowledged within the Inner Sea; Ketephys the Hunter is often considered a minor nature god eclipsed by Erastil, yet Ketephys is one of the gods who make up the elven pantheon and is equal in standing to any of the others. Clerics of these divinities are not limited by the worldly influence of their churches—a 9th-level cleric of Shizuru remains just as powerful in the River Kingdoms, where almost no one has heard of the goddess, as within Minkai, where Shizuru is exalted above all other gods.

The existence of different pantheons often prompts great treatises from religious loremasters, and even today there is no firm consensus on answers to the divine paradoxes that arise from this. For example, both Ketephys and Tsukiyo are undeniably gods of the moon, yet their differences equal or exceed their similarities—to say nothing of comparisons between these and other moon deities such as Thoth or Groetus. Some religious scholars resolve such contradictions by declaring that the association of these deities with the moon is simply metaphorical in nature, while others believe that these gods are multiple facets of the same celestial body. Others simply consider such questions to be part of the complexity of divinity: much as divine beings can be lovers and enemies simultaneously, or have a tacit alliance that nonetheless leaves an overarching rivalry intact, so too can multiple gods hold influence over similar aspects of the Material Plane.

The entries for the gods in this book list five domains and six subdomains for deities, and four domains and four subdomains for demigods. However, some deities have additional domains or subdomains attributed to them in other sources, and should still be considered to have those domains and subdomains. In some cases, the divinities detailed in this book might provide access to certain subdomains that are not listed in their entry. Players and GMs should treat the lists of subdomains provided in this book as a starting point, not a comprehensive list. Likewise, some of the divinities detailed in this book grant access to subdomains without also granting access to those subdomains' associated domains. For example, Gruhastha the Keeper grants access to the Purity subdomain, but not to the Protection domain. This exception to the rules, which normally allow a character to select a subdomain only if her god also grants its associated domain, is intentional, because it allows a god limited purview over a rather narrow element that is nonetheless vital to her nature. A character able to select a domain can take any subdomain granted by her divinity, even if the divinity does not also grant the subdomain's associated domain. The character receives all the abilities and spells normally granted by taking that subdomain, including the domain powers

of the associated core domain that aren't replaced by the subdomain, even though the divinity cannot grant that core domain by itself.

## FAITH IN PLAY

Just as this book's details about the gods' backgrounds, churches, priests, adventurers, and worship are intended to help Game Masters and players build worlds in which these divinities come to life, the rules presented in each section allow characters' faiths to become tangible factors in their lives and, in many cases, on the battlefield. Characters with the Deific Obedience feat (see below) or levels in the evangelist, exalted, or sentinel prestige classes can perform their divinities' obediences once per day to gain benefits and potential boons unique to their divine patrons. The divinities' obediences and boons are listed in their individual sections. Whenever an ability associated with a neutral divinity refers to a bonus, the type—sacred or profane—matches that of the character's bonus gained from performing her obedience. For more information about the prestige classes, options or information related to divinities not covered in this book, and similar topics, see *Inner Sea Gods* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Faiths*.

### Deific Obedience

Your reverence for a deity is so great that daily prayer and minor sacrifices grant you special boons.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks, must worship a deity.

**Benefit:** Each deity requires a different daily obedience, but all obediences take no more than 1 hour per day to perform. Once you've performed the obedience, you gain the benefit of a special ability or resistance as indicated in the Obedience entry for the god to whom you performed the obedience.

If you have at least 12 Hit Dice, you also gain the first boon granted by your deity upon undertaking your obedience. If you have at least 16 Hit Dice, you also gain the second boon. If you have 20 Hit Dice or more, you also gain the third boon. Unless a specific duration or number of uses per day is listed, a boon's effects are constant.

If you have levels in the evangelist, exalted, or sentinel prestige classes (*Inner Sea Gods* 198–203), you gain access to these boons at lower levels as a benefit of your prestige class. If you have no levels in one of these prestige classes, you gain the boons marked as exalted boons. If you later take levels in sentinel or evangelist, you lose access to the exalted boons and gain access to the new boons appropriate to your class.

If you ever fail to perform a daily obedience, you lose all access to the benefits and boons granted by this feat until you next perform the obedience.

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## Chaldira Zuzaristan

Like the halflings that revere her, Chaldira is both impetuous and opportunistic, leaping into situations that seem advantageous and trusting in her luck and optimism to see her through. Although primarily a trickster deity, Chaldira is no skulking troublemaker or shy swindler, but a pugnacious fighter who cannot abide bullies or cowards. She enters into trouble with her eyes wide open, but she always comes out unscathed with the help of her friends. In imitation of their lady, Chaldira's followers are impatient and aggressive do-gooders, leaping into danger to help innocents or to right wrongs, but they do so knowing that their own community—and their faith in Chaldira—supports them.

## THE CALAMITOUS TURN

*Demigoddess of battle, luck, and mischief*

**Alignment** NG

**Domains** Good, Luck, Trickery, War

**Subdomains** Agathion, Fate, Friendship, Tactics

**Favored Weapon** short sword

**Centers of Worship** Absalom, Cheliaz, Nidal,  
River Kingdoms, Varisia

**Nationality** halfling

**Obedience** Steal a coin or button from someone that isn't likely to miss it or need it. While unobserved, balance the coin or button on the edge of a weapon, flip it into the air, and call out how it will land. If you are right, find someone else to give the coin or button to—perhaps even its original owner—and explain how the token will bring good fortune. Gain a +2 sacred bonus on attack rolls with the type of weapon (for example, short swords) you used to balance the object. If you can't find someone to take the coin or button after an hour, or if you were wrong in calling how it will land, hide it somewhere where it will be found and where the finder might deem himself lucky for discovering it. In this case, you gain only a +1 sacred bonus on attack rolls with the weapon type.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Lucky Berries (Sp)** *goodberry* 3/day, *tree shape* (Small berry bush only) 2/day, or *speak with plants* 1/day
- 2: Confident Gambler (Su)** While many creatures rely on their luck, your faith allows you to control your luck to a small degree. Except when performing Chaldira's obedience, you can determine as a free action how an ordinary coin you flip or ordinary die you toss will land. If you use this ability for your own personal gain to the detriment of someone who is innocent or less fortunate than you are, you are likely to incur Chaldira's disfavor and lose the use of this boon until you atone, as set forth in the *atonement* spell. When used to recover the use of this boon, an *atonement* spell has an additional monetary cost equal to the amount you gained due to the misuse of this ability. If you instead return the amount you gained to the person you acquired it from (or to the person's family, community, friends, or other appropriate connection) and provide a genuine apology, then the *atonement* spell has no additional cost.
- 3: Auspicious Accuracy (Su)** Your ability to control your luck expands to desperate situations of life and death. A number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum once per day), when you would normally roll a miss chance percentage, you can instead

choose whether or not to hit. This ability manifests as a lucky turn of the blade or an awkward lunge that appears to be an overcorrection but actually places

your attack right where it needs to be. Observers are likely to consider you exceptionally fortunate in your attacks, rather than suspect that you are supernaturally guided to bypass effects that would cause you to miss.

### EXALTED BOONS

**1: Lucky Blessing (Sp)** *divine favor* 3/day, *blessing of luck and resolve*<sup>ARG</sup> 2/day, or *prayer* 1/day

**2: Fortunate Spells (Su)** When you create an effect that adjusts the luck of your allies, your devotion to Chaldira turns their luck even more strongly in their favor. Increase luck bonuses provided by spells or spell-like abilities you cast by 1. This ability stacks with other effects that increase a luck bonus, such as the Fortune's Child sentinel boon, but not with other uses of this boon.

**3: Providential Resistance (Su)** With a quick plea to the Calamitous Turn, you shield yourself against a devastating energy attack. Three times per day as an immediate action when you would take acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage, you can gain resistance 20 to that damage type for 1 minute.

### SENTINEL BOONS

**1: Lucky Miss (Sp)** *blurred movement*<sup>ACG</sup> 3/day, *blur* (self only) 2/day, or *blink* 1/day. Your appearance does not change when using these abilities, although they function as normal; onlookers are not aware you are subject to their effects until they see an attack or effect miss you due to one of these abilities (or until you engage in a plainly magical effect, such as stepping through a solid object with the *blink* spell-like ability), or if they have the ability to detect the effect through *detect magic* or a similar ability.

**2: Fortune's Child (Su)** Your luck is legendary, and you derive a stronger benefit from effects that aid your luck than other people do. Increase luck bonuses you receive from any effect by 1. This ability stacks with other effects that increase a luck bonus, such as the Fortunate Spells exalted boon, but not with other uses of this boon.

**3: Impetuous Ardor (Su)** Chaldira protects those who leap into combat without hesitation, and you cloak yourself in her favor when you dart across the battlefield toward your foes. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for movement that takes you closer to an enemy you can see.

**Chaldira, help me remember that luck is bolstered by bravery and that every calamity can be turned to advantage.**

—*Right-Side Up*

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## UNDERSTANDING CHALDIRA

The demigoddess of luck and lighthearted mischief, Chaldira Zuzaristan is one of two principal halfling divinities. She is also widely regarded as a companion or servitor of the goddess Desna. Many theologians consider Chaldira an impulsive firebrand who leaps before looking and gets into trouble she can't escape; the wise and calm Desna must then extricate her hotheaded friend time and again. Halflings and other followers of Chaldira believe this view misrepresents her—she knows the dangers of her actions, but she willingly accepts them rather than compromise against evil, knowing that her luck and her friends are among her greatest assets and won't fail her when she truly needs them.

Chaldira wanders the planes, looking for opportunities to fight oppression or simply accompany her friends on their travels. She takes a very expansive view of friendship, in that anyone who is not evil is a friend and will be actively treated as such. Divinities such as Desna accept this attitude easily, as they consider Chaldira to be a pleasant and stalwart companion, but more staid divinities such as Irori and Pharasma don't look forward to the times Chaldira decides to "help" them.

Chaldira's depictions vary, with her taking on the same appearance as the local halfling communities that worship her in different regions, but she almost always has dense curly hair, freckles, and a patchwork red-and-green coat that is held together with buttons.

Chaldira's favor and disfavor are rarely subtle. When she is pleased, a worshipper finds herself to be incredibly lucky, avoiding injury in even the most reckless endeavors. When she is displeased, luck turns sour: weapons fail and accidents such as broken straps or twisted ankles abound. Even at her most angry, however, this ill fortune doesn't impact the innocent or children.

## CHALDIRA'S CHURCH

Chaldira Zuzaristan's church is primarily devoted to the preservation of halfling customs and to the protection of the oppressed and innocent. Most worshippers of Chaldira are halflings, although the church has many human members—particularly in nations where slavery or tyranny is common—and several vanaras are devoted to Chaldira in her aspect as a lighthearted trickster. Chaldirans are very community focused and work hard to promote events that encourage community bonding and strengthen friendships.

Members of Chaldira's church fall into three categories: clergy, lay priests, and laity. The Chaldiran clergy is a very small group, no more than a handful of members in any nation, who are full-time professional leaders of the church. The clergy are responsible for establishing or

removing churches throughout their region of control, dealing with crimes against the church perpetrated by believers, and making official statements about church doctrine or position. Clergy are supported by offerings from the churches set aside for that particular purpose; most live humbly and travel frequently around their region. Clergy also work alongside the secular leadership of their appointed region, lobbying for laws to protect the underprivileged, limit slavery, and promote other efforts for equality and justice.

Lay priests are the most common religious leaders; nearly all are volunteers who have full-time jobs in addition to their service to the church. Along with the leaders of local congregations, lay priests include church clerks, youth ministers, militia chaplains, and other local church offices. Lay priests are known to be dogged and tireless, working hard for their congregations in the hours they aren't supporting their own families. They blend their secular professions with their religious obligations, such as by owning a trading company that provides discounted shipping (or even outright smuggling) for other worshippers.

Members of the laity are expected to be active participants in their community as well as in their local congregation. Congregations meet twice each month for services, although the lay priests might adjust meeting times for the convenience of the congregation, or to hear from a traveling clergy member. Services include only a few specific rites and devote a great deal of time to raucous congregation responses and socializing. Donations to the congregation are used to maintain the church building and the clergy but not to pay the lay priests; Chaldirans believe this practice keeps lazy and greedy lay priests out of their church hierarchy. Disputes between members are settled in the privacy of a congregational meeting, usually with a purely random event (such as a coin toss) to resolve minor grievances, but with semiformal duels for serious disputes. Youth care and education is particularly important to the church of Chaldira, as families are considered critical to supporting the community, and children are adored with unbridled optimism. Religious education of the young includes lessons from scripture and practice with various games of chance.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

No grand temples to Chaldira Zuzaristan exist. Just as halflings prefer to remain inconspicuous but eminently useful, even the largest Chaldiran worship spaces function predominantly as community centers or meeting halls where nonbelievers are welcome to participate in community-building activities. These facilities function as soup kitchens or homeless shelters as well, but Chaldirans aggressively solicit volunteers



from the community to operate these charitable establishments, reasoning that neighbors helping each other does more good in the community than when the clergy are the exclusive providers of charity. In these buildings, private areas exclusive to believers are situated behind unobtrusive entrances or down narrow corridors. These spaces contain functional altars built low to the ground to accommodate the height of Chaldira's usual worshippers. They also include armories and training rooms, from which believers can arm and train the community to repel oppression or invasion, as well as stockpiles of food to be dispatched to the needy in the event of a natural disaster or civil upheaval. In areas where the Bellflower Network operates, these private areas also include secret rooms where runaway slaves can hide. Many worshippers also maintain a shrine to Chaldira in their homes. These shrines include a few candles—normally in red and green—and a well-used whetstone.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Both lay and local priests of Chaldira Zuzaristan are expected to make efforts to support their community. Participation in community events and local politics is strongly encouraged. Priests frequently connect members of the congregation to each other for secular reasons, such as by referring a worshipper in need of a job to an overworked rancher who could use the help. Non-Chaldirans usually consider Chaldiran priests to be downright nosy, but the priests consider their activities to be community support rather than rumormongering.

Priests are present at all significant life events of congregation members, from births and weddings to funerals. Priests explore themes of luck and the community in these affairs, commenting on how a baby's birth is auspicious or how a married couple unites their two families. Rather than merely optimistic ramblings, skilled priests use these events to illustrate how good luck appears in every life, and how celebrating a fortuitous turn is an appropriate way to show respect to Chaldira.

Lay priests are expected to support their own families without financial assistance

from the church, so many sell their spellcasting services to interested buyers. Few Chaldiran priests are wealthy; most donate anything beyond their families' modest needs to the less fortunate, often with hopeful words about how opportunity awaits on the other side of troubling times.

Far from being stern leaders who cultivate an aura of gravitas, priests of Chaldira are witty and know many good jokes. While only a few priests are inveterate pranksters, most are willing to join local youths in telling tall tales or toppling hay bales. Part of this participation is instruction; it's important for priests to demonstrate a level of mischief that is harmless fun and to identify actions that would go too far.

Clerics of Chaldira Zuzaristan can prepare *mage hand* as an orison and *expeditious retreat* as a 1st-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

Devout adherents of Chaldira serve by keeping a keen eye out for danger and being prepared to jump in to help a friend or neighbor at any time.

They understand that they best serve Chaldira as a living example of her good-natured impetuosity and pugnacious dedication to thwarting evildoers. The devout train others to be vigilant and responsive, volunteering to help with youth or the downtrodden to deliver their messages of hope.

Most adventurers who follow Chaldira are just as quick to leap into danger, which causes worry or friction among their companions. Whereas devout followers of the Calamitous Turn feel their impetuosity serves as a sacred example, casual followers get into trouble mainly through impulsive actions, such as acting quickly to filch an apple when hungry, or hurling the first punch at a bully when intimidated. They aren't afraid to ask others to help them out of the trouble they get into, believing that people who aid each other while in trouble forge stronger friendships.

## CLOTHING

Chaldirans wear utilitarian clothing that doesn't impede opportunistic larceny or a sudden fistfight with a bully. They prefer to wear the colors green and

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## CHALDIRA'S PALADIN CODE

Paladins of Chaldira Zuzaristan are firm believers in luck, and they believe that righteous people are inherently more fortunate than the unrighteous. When the unrighteous appear to have a lucky turn, it is an invitation to an inauspicious downfall, often at the end of the paladin's blade. Paladins of Chaldira are quick to leap into battle even when they appear outmatched, trusting in their virtue and luck to carry them to victory. The code of Chaldira's paladins contains the following adages.

- I know that mischief brings joy to those who partake in it, but mischief must never come at the expense of another's well-being. Theft is not inherently wrong, but theft must not be employed when it furthers suffering.
- I will not hesitate to fight against those who oppress or attack the innocent.
- I will never fail to help a friend in need.
- I will acknowledge whenever I, or others, have benefitted from a lucky turn of events and praise the fortune that Chaldira bestows.
- It is my sacred duty to learn and explore.
- I freely serve my community and share my worldly goods with others, so I might demonstrate charity by example.
- I will defend children in particular from abuse and evil, so their unwritten future can remain bright.

red and consider buttons to be very lucky, often with extra buttons sewn into their clothing. Purely decorative buttons are seen as ostentatious or boastful, however, so Chaldiran clothing includes extra flaps or folds to put their additional buttons to use. Priests of Chaldira traditionally wear a green frock coat with several shiny buttons over a red shirt and a pair of red pants.

Many followers of Chaldira live as servants or slaves, and so have little choice in clothing. They wear twists of red and green string as bracelets or anklets to express their devotion. Even these unfortunates collect buttons whenever they can, keeping them in a pocket if sewing them onto clothing would invite trouble.

## HOLY TEXTS

Chaldirans circulate a collection of lively folktales and a serious self-help treatise.

**The Peltry Fables:** These folktales present the halfling Nolly Peltry, who lands in scrapes that require bravery and wits to overcome. The fables include a large cast of Nolly's friends and allies, such as a wise Chaldiran cleric, a farm family with a dizzying number of children, a grandmotherly rancher, and a supernatural white fox.

Foes include a gang of raccoons that are analogues for the deity Thamir Gixx. Nolly Peltry fables are popular with children, but even adults value their lessons about bravery, luck, and remaining true to friends.

**Right-Side Up:** This text includes liturgical notes and practical advice about helping people overcome hardship. Priests frequently loan their copy of *Right-Side Up* to those in grief or in need of counseling. The guidance is heartfelt and deeply philosophical, sprinkled with advice about staying positive and redirecting anger and grief to productive pursuits.

## HOLIDAYS

Chaldira encourages holidays of any kind as an opportunity for community interaction and celebrations of good fortune. The following holidays are particularly significant to Chaldirans.

**Jestercap:** 27 Lamashan is dedicated to pranks and jokes, and few consider it a religious holiday. As a day when good-natured mischief is celebrated, however, Chaldirans hold it sacred. Halfling pranks on this day are often legendary in scope, such as turning every horse in a city fluorescent green or renovating an unsuspecting villager's home into a royal palace overnight. Some Chaldirans plan their pranks for months in advance, masking their preparations as "religious obligations."

**Swallowtail Festival:** Desnans celebrate the autumnal equinox with feasting and storytelling. Chaldirans participate in this holiday as well, but use the opportunity to trade buttons, coins, or other tokens of good luck among each other.

## APHORISMS

Chaldirans have several affirmations that support their shared sense of optimism and brash bravado.

**How Lucky I Am!:** Although Chaldirans, like anyone, use this phrase when blessed with sudden fortune, they also utter this phrase when personally faced with an unexpected tragedy. They use it not as a sarcastic retort, but as an affirmation of their overall lucky character despite short-term misfortune, and as acknowledgment that a disaster often hides an opportunity for improvement.

**Two Fistfuls of Trouble:** Chaldirans use this phrase to express when a person is in over his head due to his own actions, or when a situation seems dire but still must be overcome. It comes with the connotation that a little bit of mischief or danger—one fistful—is tolerable, but any more than that creates problems.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

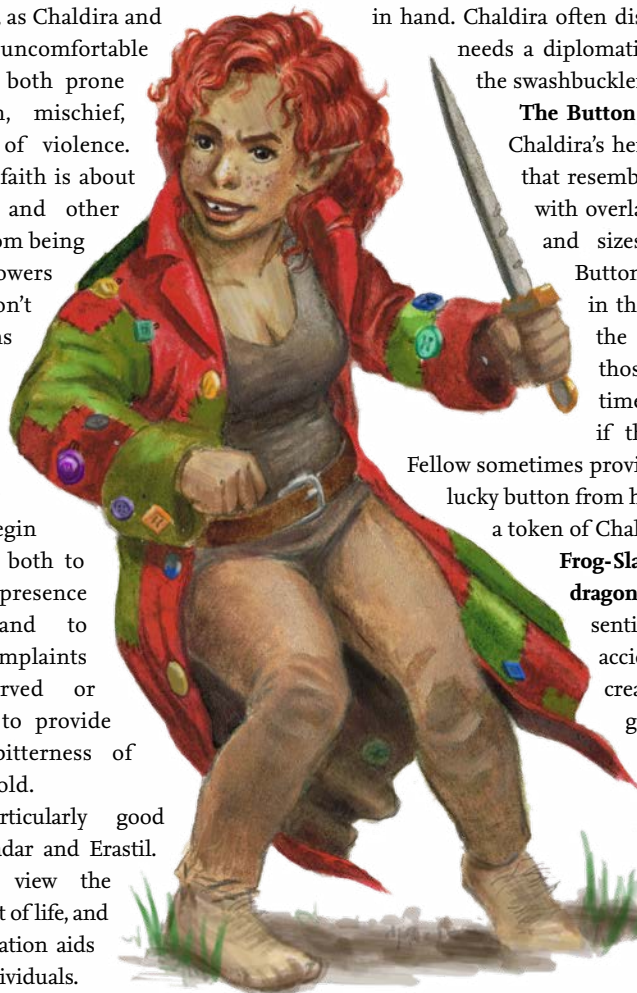
Like many mortals, most divinities view Chaldira as an impetuous crusader whose poorly planned actions land her in trouble more often than not. Most nonevil

divinities have been involved in one of Chaldira's escapades, and she gleefully recounts the tales even if they're embarrassing to her or other divinities. Despite her excessive candor, it's clear that Chaldira feels affection for other nonevil divinities and boldly proclaims most of them to be her close friends (despite what more aloof deities, such as Gozreh and Irori, may actually think).

Chaldira and Desna share a particularly close relationship. Chaldira is always welcome in Cynosure, Desna's realm within Golarion's pole star, and maintains several personal rooms there. She visits Cynosure several times each year, especially when she feels Desna needs cheering up with an invitation to adventure. The idea that Chaldira is Desna's servant is a mischaracterization, at least from Chaldira's perspective: she considers herself every bit Desna's equal. The two divinities are supportive friends, and their followers are similarly friendly with one another. Although Chaldira and Desna share many interests and spheres of influence, Chaldira places a greater emphasis on combat, and she considers Desna's focus on dreams to be too ephemeral.

Thamir Gixx is Chaldira's greatest foe. Many view the two halfling divinities as opposite sides of a coin, one good and one evil, as Chaldira and Thamir have several uncomfortable similarities: they are both prone to impulsive action, mischief, and quick displays of violence. Both insist that their faith is about protecting halflings and other downtrodden races from being bullied or abused. Followers of Thamir, however, don't care if their actions harm others. When Chaldirans hear that followers of Thamir are active in an area, they immediately begin community outreach, both to alert others to the presence of misanthropes and to listen carefully to complaints from the underserved or browbeaten—hoping to provide solace before the bitterness of Thamir's faith takes hold.

Chaldira has particularly good relationships with Abadar and Erastil. All three divinities view the community as a key part of life, and they agree that cooperation aids defense and uplifts individuals.



## REALM

Chaldira makes her home in Axis, the eternal city of order, though her demense there is not a proper divine realm. Called the Hearth-Grown House, Chaldira's domain is a rambling complex of apartments, feasting halls, and inns tucked in and around several prominent buildings in Aktun, Axis's heart. This location also allows Chaldira to keep an eye on her chief rival, Thamir Gixx, who lairs in shadowy byways beneath Axis's streets.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Chaldira has a vast network of allies across the planes, but she considers them friends rather than minions or servitors. The following are the most likely of Chaldira's friends to respond to spells such as planar ally.

**Angravva (unique vulpinal<sup>B2</sup> swashbuckler<sup>ACG</sup> 5):** Angravva is an androgynous, white-furred fox with a sly smile and a tendency to act before thinking. Angravva is always exquisitely dressed in green-and-cream clothing and only hesitates when they think their outfit might get mussed. A bold warrior and cheerful romantic, Angravva is rarely seen without their famed rapier, *Bravo's Barb*, in hand. Chaldira often dispatches Angravva when she needs a diplomatic solution to a problem, as the swashbuckler is notoriously charming.

**The Button Fellow (herald of Chaldira):** Chaldira's herald is a 10-foot-tall rag doll that resembles a gangly scarecrow sewn with overlapping buttons of all shapes and sizes. Jolly and talkative, the Button Fellow is a stalwart pugilist in the face of evil, but he prefers the role of comforter, assuring those who have fallen on hard times that better luck is coming if they are brave. The Button Fellow sometimes provides the downtrodden with a lucky button from his own body, which serves as a token of Chaldira's favor.

**Frog-Slayer (unique celestial giant dragonfly<sup>B2</sup>):** Granted limited sentience by a peculiar divine accident, this brightly colored creature is a stalwart champion of goodness. Darting eagerly into combat against evil, Frog-Slayer is as fond of showy aerobic maneuvers as she is the taste of giant frogs. Frog-Slayer will sometimes serve as a mount for halfling knights in need.

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# Grandmother Spider

The petulant mother, the weaver of the world, and the silver-tongued charmer who talked the lioness out of her mane, Grandmother Spider is a teacher, a trickster, and a folk hero popular in southern Garund, particularly among her so-called children, the anadi. Much like her elder brother, Achaekek, she entered existence as a device of older gods to enact their will, weaving destiny and time into the fabric of creation as they set about making the world. But she found her circumstances infuriating and rebelled, weaving herself a new destiny and spinning it into a duku to grant herself freedom. She resents her birth as a servant, and by extension despises arrogance, dominance, and comfort bought by the exploitation of others.

## THE WEAVER

Goddess of twilight, weaving, illusion, and family

**Alignment** N

**Domains** Charm, Community, Darkness, Luck, Trickery

**Subdomains** Curse, Deception, Family, Fate, Night, Thievery

**Favored Weapon** net

**Centers of Worship** Droon, Nurvatchta, the Shackles, the Sodden Lands

**Nationality** anadi

**Obedience** Spend an hour weaving something clever and useful that you will use to better your community, incorporating the stories or symbolism of Grandmother Spider. Kindhearted souls often interpret this to mean weaving blankets, clothing, or tapestries for those in need, while duplicitous worshippers take it to mean weaving a tall tale or confidence game that exploits someone who's taking advantage of the community or teaches someone a valuable lesson. Gain a +2 sacred or profane bonus on Bluff and Perform (oratory) checks and on saving throws against illusions. The type of bonus depends on your alignment—if you're neither good nor evil, you must choose either sacred or profane the first time you perform your obedience, and this choice can't be changed.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Charming Sort (Sp)** *sleep* 3/day, *eagle's splendor* 2/day, or *glibness* 1/day
- 2: Storyteller (Ex)** Much like Grandmother Spider, you can weave thrilling tales to buy yourself time or distract those around you, even when among those who know better than to listen to you. You gain the fascinate bardic performance and a number of rounds of bardic performance each day equal to your Charisma modifier + your Hit Dice, with a caster level equal to your Hit Dice. If you already have the bardic performance class feature, all your class levels count as bard levels for the purpose of determining your total rounds of bardic performance each day and the save DC of your fascinate performance.
- 3: One with the Night (Su)** Grandmother Spider welcomes cool darkness as a relief from the heat of the sun. You too have learned to embrace the starlit beauty of the evening, knowing that the darkness will give you shelter whether you are predator or prey. You gain darkvision with a range of 30 feet, or extend your existing darkvision by 30 feet. You need only half the normal amount of sleep or rest each day to avoid becoming fatigued.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: The Weaver (Sp)** *silent image* 3/day, *minor image* 2/day, or *borrow fortune*<sup>APG</sup> 1/day
- 2: Inspired Illusionist (Su)** Though you lack Grandmother Spider's ability to weave new fates, you can emulate some measure of her skill at seamlessly transforming figments into reality. Your illusions are especially convincing and persistent. Spells you cast from the figment or glamor subschools last twice as long, as if extended with the *Extend Spell* feat. You cannot further extend these spells by applying *Extend Spell* metamagic a second time. You add the following spells to your spell list of spells known: *silent image* (1st), *minor image* (2nd), *major image* (3rd), *hallucinatory terrain* (4th), *persistent image* (5th), *programmed image* (6th), *project image* (7th), *screen* (8th).
- 3: Willful Weaver (Sp)** What matters the reality if all the world believes the lie? The effects of your illusions are so strong they can override the physical world. Three times per day, you can cast a false version of a conjuration or evocation spell as if casting *shadow evocation* or *greater shadow conjuration*.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Trapper (Sp)** *animate rope* 3/day, *web* 2/day, or *spiked pit*<sup>APG</sup> 1/day
- 2: Net Master (Ex)** A trapper and a trickster rather than a true warrior, Grandmother Spider bests her foes through schemes, wits, and quick reflexes. You have learned to use the spider's patient guile in combat, trapping your foes within the spider's web. You gain Net Adept<sup>UC</sup> as a bonus feat, ignoring its prerequisites. If you already have Net Adept, you instead gain a +1 sacred or profane bonus on attack rolls with a net. When fighting with a net as a one-handed weapon and wielding nothing in your off hand, you also gain a +1 shield bonus to AC.
- 3: Binding Strike (Su)** You allow no chances for your foes to escape once you have the advantage. Those enemies you fell are bound and ripe for your stewpot, should you feel less than charitable in victory. When you confirm a critical hit against an opponent, you can forgo any additional damage to immediately bind your foe in sticky webs, paralyzing it and pinning it in place. This functions as a *hold monster* spell with a caster level equal to your Hit Dice. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

This I have  
heard, and heard  
once more, and  
so I think it  
true...

—Traditional opening  
to Grandmother  
Spider tales

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## UNDERSTANDING GRANDMOTHER SPIDER

Also known as Nana Anadi, Grandmother Spider began her life as a divine servant. She antagonized many other gods when the world was young, nipping at heels, stealing ambrosia, and making deities look like fools: she stole and copied Asmodeus's keys, leading to chaos, and swiped a portion of Sarenrae's fire to lead travelers astray. Eventually, she wove her own freedom and left behind divine control. Time tempered her antics; by the time she reached the Material Plane, she saw more value in teaching lessons and evening the odds than in spreading confusion.

Grandmother Spider delights in games, schemes, and misfortunes that upset expectations, insisting life is not a dance to be rehearsed, but a spiraling tumble down a hill, trying desperately to right oneself before hitting the bottom—thrilling, messy, and dangerous. The Weaver embraces this philosophy fully, sometimes taking advantage of others and sometimes being tricked herself, considering her failures to be just as important as her successes. She encourages pranks to teach valuable life lessons and loves laying the mighty low, though cruelty and predation draw her outrage.

Because life is so dangerous, Grandmother Spider is also a goddess of family, encouraging faith in friends and community. She is a protector of the downtrodden, and she is credited with guiding her children, the anadi and all spiders, out of darkness and into freedom.

In her human guise, Grandmother Spider is depicted as an old, dark-skinned woman wearing a bright duku and colorful clothing. In her spider form, she is depicted as a huge brown spider with black patterns and large eyes. Grandmother Spider's holy symbol is a diamond made of eight interwoven threads. Signals of her approval include the sound of laughter, the smell of a hearth fire, and a spider spinning a perfect dew-covered web outside of a window. Signs of her displeasure include objects vanishing and becoming impossible to find, cloth snagging on branches or fingernails, and obnoxious but invisible cobwebs sticking to the skin.

### THE CHURCH

Grandmother Spider's worship revolves less around the goddess herself and more around tales of her adventures. Her worshippers are numerous and casual, and her services are often mixed in alongside those of many other gods. Most of her prayers are short asides, uttered before trying something desperate and reckless. Adherents often see her as a teacher rather than a divine patron, and her actions as an example to learn from rather than emulate. This distance suits Grandmother Spider just fine, as it encourages her followers to think for themselves, rather than pleading to the gods for salvation.

Owing to their patron's disdain for pomp, the church of the Weaver is an informal and loose-knit organization, with much of the faith spread between clerics and apprentices rather than formal institutions. Young clerics spend hours listening to and reciting the fables of Grandmother Spider and incorporating careful, rhythmic meditations into their weaving. Senior clerics often arrange amusing tests for their juniors, more interested in their acolytes' ability to weather chaos and take setbacks in stride than their ability to outwit their elders. The church values insight and wit, but more than anything it celebrates the unique, hard-won wisdom that comes from failure and embarrassment.

The closest thing to a formal church of the Weaver is a collection of schools that share resources and staff across the western coast of Garund. Operating throughout Dehrukani, Droon, Nurvatchta, and even Kaz'ulu, these schools educate any willing students in the fundamentals of reading, mathematics, history, and art. Most students attend for only a few months every year—learning in the seasons between planting and harvesting—but the so-called Mama Schools play an important role in Garund's high rate of scholarship, and they provide many students the first step toward formal education at institutions like the Magaambya, the Brightwater School in Holomog, and Dehrukani's Ghameso School of Elements. The teachers emphasize that their purpose is to hone each individual into the best they can be and craft a more interesting world, without regard for loyalties or morality—a large part of the reason Grandmother Spider's adherents are granted nominal respect and safety among the militant, demon-worshipping Bekyar people.

Only in Nurvatchta does Grandmother Spider's faith rise to the level of national worship, with her clerics and oracles serving in many government roles and official services held regularly in true temples. The anadi celebrate their grandmother with song, stringed instruments, and circular dances, usually ending in feasts of game and fruit, especially ackee and mango.

### TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Few adherents build actual churches of Grandmother Spider, as most consider doing so to be inviting trouble—a temple would attract too much of the goddess's attention and therefore meddling. Grandmother Spider's temples consist almost entirely of small roadside or home shrines, which traditionally contain a loom or woven blanket, a stone spider figurine, and an offering bowl with fruit, usually mango. According to folklore, a shrine is not intended to honor the capricious goddess, but to placate her should she decide to visit: a loom busies her hands and the figurine appeals to her vanity, while an offering of fruit stops her from rifling through the house when she inevitably grows hungry.

Among the anadi spider-people, Grandmother Spider's temples are artistic affairs, built without windows to be more inviting to the goddess of twilight. Her adherents decorate the walls of shrines and temples alike with murals and web patterns, and dot the ceiling with silver or glass beads that seem to twinkle like the stars in candlelight.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Adherents of Grandmother Spider sing their prayers at sunset and in the first hour after. Kindly priests spend their days tending the community, reciting stories, and teaching children, while more vengeful worshippers wander the land looking for oppressors or prideful targets to bring low. Thanks to their goddess's association with luck, many powerful figures readily accept adherents of Grandmother Spider as advisors despite their reputation for sparking mayhem—most despots, warlords, and predatory merchants believe themselves too intelligent to fall into one of the Weaver's traps, or think that her cunning will target only their enemies.

A priest's primary duty in the faith is to spread the tales of Grandmother Spider and learn new ones whenever possible. Most take at least a few long trips in their service, both to learn the tales of foreign lands and appreciate how other cultures interpret familiar legends. A priest's secondary duty in the faith is to ensure that people get what they have earned—either in the form of payment or respect for those who have worked for it, or humiliation or worse for those who are arrogant or exploitative. In addition to these duties, priests are expected to know how to spin fibers and weave, as well as mind children and solve social troubles. The services a priest offers should never be free, however; Grandmother Spider demands that she and her followers receive due payment for their work, and so any community she supports must support her in return. A priest who feels taken advantage of is likely to depart in a manner that leaves locals gossiping about it or concealing scars for a generation to come.

Just as a grateful spider repays a warm hearth by catching pests and repays meddling with stinging bites, so too must priests of the Weaver meet kindness with kindness and cruelty with cruelty. Even the most wicked of her devotees will not raise a hand against someone who genuinely offers them a warm meal and a seat at the table, but even her kindest teachers must take revenge for wrongs done. More complex situations draw more complex results, and those who favor Grandmother Spider's priests while being cruel to others almost always meet sticky ends.

Grandmother Spider's worship draws more women than other genders, especially older women who have several children. Many serve as midwives and

caretakers in addition to performing their religious duties, lending their magic to ease pregnancy and labor pains. No strict hierarchy exists among the church, but priests generally defer to the elders, as surviving more than a few years in the scrutiny of Nana Anadi demands wits or strength of character, and so the older a priest is, the more canny she must be.

Clerics of Grandmother Spider can prepare *silent image* and *ventriloquism* as 1st-level spells, and *spider climb* and *web* as 2nd-level spells.

## ADVENTURERS

Most priests of Grandmother Spider fall into one of two categories: more sedentary worshippers of the Weaver, the patron of art, creation, and family; and wandering worshippers of Grandmother Spider, the troublemaker and folk hero. Their paths often intersect. Given their spiritual compulsion to travel at least once in their lives, Nana Anadi's faithful often journey to seek out adventures—at least short ones. Even those not specifically devoted to Grandmother Spider may call upon her while adventuring, as her stories encourage cleverness and wit but also warn against pride, and her worshippers seem especially ready to rebound from failure.



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## THE ANADI SPIDER-PEOPLE

Hidden within the rain-soaked cliffs, valleys, and plateaus of Nurvatchta dwell the people known as anadi, famous for their “web marriages” that involve three to five partners and complex, shared households. Until the last century, the nation was reclusive in the extreme, as its polite but distant residents rarely allowed visitors outside the trade city of Wuluva. Rumors circulated that the anadi transformed into hideous spider-creatures every sunset. Anadi are in fact a race of spiderlike humanoids (though they take offense to the word “hideous”) who know from a long and painful history that neighbors find their appearances disturbing, and they often use a racial gift for illusion magic to conceal their true natures. Kind, empathic, and soft-spoken, they are often too shy to travel beyond the borders of their isolationist nation.

Anadi faithful insist Nana Anadi originally led their ancestors from servitude, and when they were frightened by the darkness, she plucked the dewdrops from her web to hang in the sky and light the night. She is the primary goddess of the otherwise largely secular Nurvatchta, celebrated as an honorary monarch of the Empty Throne, though she has never once taken leadership of the nation, and most people never expect her to.

While her clerics are common in southern Garund, Grandmother Spider has a special fondness for oracles; superstition in many nations insists that Grandmother Spider plucks the threads of fate that tie a mortal soul to divinity, and that all oracles owe her their blessings and curses. She is also a favored patron of those druids who lay traps, but warpriests of her faith are all but unknown.

## CLOTHING

While the church of the Weaver calls for no specific vestments, every priest is expected to weave as a part of the faith and create a duku or shawl of interwoven silk and cotton representing the close ties between Grandmother Spider and the living world. The pattern of the weave is used to encode meaning and events important to the cleric’s life. The respect owed to any given member of the faith is easily estimated by the length and variety in that individual’s shawl, as those with especially long garments have generally led the most varied and harrowing lives.

## HOLY TEXT

Grandmother Spider’s stories are chronicled in dozens of different collections, some of which have been published so far afield that she is known only as a storybook character. One such collection stands out.

**Old Woman Makes the Stars:** The anadi cleric Raindrops-Sing-Her-Name Sescha composed this poem between the second and fourth centuries AR. It recounts most of the Grandmother Spider stories the anadi consider true, as well as their oldest prayers to the matron. The poem begins with “This I have heard, and heard once more, and so I think it true,” which has since become the standard opening to all Grandmother Spider stories.

## HOLIDAYS

Grandmother Spider’s adherents celebrate these holidays.

**First Rain:** The Weaver is known for her hatred of the rain, even as it brings new life. The first rain of each summer is celebrated indoors, with family and communities gathered together for several hours, obligated to entertain one another and talk.

**Longwalk:** In the cloudy nation of Nurvatchta, the winter solstice is celebrated as a day of freedom. According to tradition, the longest, darkest night of the year marks the night Grandmother Spider freed them from the shadows and guided them to their new homeland, stretching the night’s hours to conceal their escape.

## APHORISMS

Adherents like to quote bits of a hundred old parables, though a few are more common than others.

**A Lesson Hard-Earned Is a Lesson Hard-Forgot:** Perhaps the core of the church’s philosophy is that knowledge one earns for oneself is far more valuable than a lecture. People should go into the world and make their own mistakes, and help should come only if their mistakes threaten to stop the learning process.

**Give the Spider a Leash and She’ll Make a Web:** A reminder to Grandmother Spider’s adherents that an enemy’s tools are often their own tools, and that an oppressor can be brought down with his own means of oppression. Some, however, also wryly use the saying to suggest that Grandmother Spider and her followers can and will overcomplicate the simplest of situations.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Grandmother Spider makes a nuisance of herself with most other gods. Among the oldest gods, only she and Gozreh seem collegial—their rivalry features in many stories, but always as friendly jibes or family squabbling rather than true malice. She is especially loathed by Asmodeus, from whom she stole the keys to the cosmos, and her relationship with Sarenrae is tumultuous at best; while the Dawnflower is willing to make amends, Grandmother Spider seems to be insulted by the notion, and she antagonizes Sarenrae at every turn.

The Weaver’s pranks stop at the ascended gods—those who were once mortal—as she finds these elevated individuals fascinating. Her worshippers are expected

to bring gifts when visiting the temples of any of the ascended and always assume they are welcome, regardless of what the clerics of those respective deities might think.

Grandmother Spider's longest relationship is with her brother, Achaekek, who remains a servant of the gods. Though she often antagonizes the Mantis God in the way a younger sibling does, she returns to him often, coaxing him to rebel. The Mantis God refuses to acknowledge a meaningful relationship between the two of them, but he has on a single occasion expressed extreme displeasure when a follower killed one of the Weaver's priests, and thus his followers are cautious about accepting Grandmother Spider's adherents as targets.

Grandmother Spider's holds an odd rivalry with Mazludeh, matron goddess of Holomog. Mazludeh needed Grandmother Spider's weaving gift to seal away a great darkness that threatened to consume Holomog in its earliest days, and the Weaver agreed to help if Mazludeh would offer her three chances to try to break the Celestial Concordance that protected the divine nation. In the millennia since, Grandmother Spider has tried twice to outwit the goddess, only to fail, and she plots to unravel this bastion of order and stagnancy with her last attempt.

## REALM

The Weaver knows that permanent homes make for permanent commitments, which she does not abide. Instead, she carries her home with her in a hollowed-out gourd, which contains a large demiplane filled with cliffside dwellings tied together with webs and filled with her treasures and books.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Grandmother Spider's adventures have earned her the loyalty of a disparate cadre, who act on her behalf or answer the prayers of the faithful.

**Jaesh the Crocodile (herald of Grandmother Spider):** Grandmother Spider once crossed this crocodile, who demanded to eat her. She agreed to return at dawn and be his breakfast but insisted that if he found mercy in his heart and refrained from eating her, Jaesh would serve her instead. Jaesh agreed, and while he slept, Grandmother Spider tied his mouth shut so that he could not open his jaws to devour her. After 3 days of frustration, he begged Grandmother Spider to release him, and she did, but also turned him into a werecrocodile<sup>B4</sup>. Jaesh has served the goddess as a guardian ever since, though he steals offerings left for the Weaver to sate his constant hunger.

**Mister Lantern (unique d'ziriak<sup>B2</sup>):**

Mister Lantern tripped over Grandmother Spider one day on the road. When he tripped over her the next day, she asked where he went in such a hurry. Mister Lantern replied, "I must walk faster than the sun, as I fear the dark and mustn't let it set on me." Grandmother Spider thought him silly, but painted him with her brightest pigments to keep the dark at bay, and Mister Lantern was so delighted by her gift that he became an eager servant. He sometimes appears as an unwanted traveling companion to both Grandmother Spider and her followers.



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# Gruhastha

Gruhastha is a deity of peace, understanding, and self-improvement. He is both the divine messenger who brought the holy word of the *Azvadeva Pujila* to the people of Golarion and a living embodiment of that sacred text. His knowledge and compassion offer a pathway to perfection: the achievement of a universal understanding of the world, each creature's place within it, and how each person might best contribute to the completion and transcendence of the whole. Gruhastha's duty is to watch over the world until enough of its beings reach this enlightenment. When that day comes, his faithful believe, the world will be folded into Nirvana, and ultimate transcendence will arrive.

## THE KEEPER

Deity of the Vudrani holy book

**Alignment** LG

**Domains** Animals, Good, Knowledge, Law, Travel

**Subdomains** Education, Exploration, Friendship, Memory, Purity, Thought

**Favored Weapon** shortbow

**Centers of Worship** Absalom, Jalmeray, Katapesh, Mana Wastes, Qadira, Nex, Osirion, Vudra

**Nationality** Vudrani

**Obedience** Spend at least an hour teaching someone to read, analyze allegories, or otherwise improve her self-education skills. You can also use this time to study under a more learned teacher. If neither a student nor a teacher is available, spend the hour working on a literacy primer, book of fables, or other educational text to be donated to a school or library. After devoting an hour to this work, you gain a +2 sacred bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks for the next 24 hours.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Transcendent Mind (Sp)** *burst of insight*<sup>OA</sup> 3/day, *calm emotions* 2/day, or *communal share language*<sup>UC</sup> 1/day
- 2: Clarity's Blessing (Su)** The clarity of your teaching can shelter others from certain mental assaults. Once per day as a swift action, you can invoke Gruhastha's blessing to grant companions within 60 feet a +4 sacred bonus on saves against confusion and fear effects. You can protect a number of people equal to your Hit Die, and the protection lasts for an hour.
- 3: Keeper's Mercy (Su)** Though you are willing to use violence in the face of implacable evils, it is always a last resort and used as precisely and minimally as possible. Even in the midst of combat, you do your best to reduce true harm. For a number of rounds per day equal to your Hit Dice, you can cause your own attacks with unarmed strikes, weapons, and natural weapons or those of another creature within 10 feet of you to deal nonlethal damage. Damage dealt to creatures or objects that are not subject to nonlethal damage is not converted and remains lethal damage. An unwilling target can negate this effect with a successful Will save (DC = 10 + half your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier).

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Push Toward Peace (Sp)** *know the enemy*<sup>UM</sup> 3/day, *enthrall* 2/day, or *suggestion* 1/day
- 2: Restore Lost Learning (Su)** The Keeper is an embodiment of a sacred text, and the written word is of tremendous importance to you. You have a sacred

connection to books and other written records that allows you to commune with them, even when they have been irreparably damaged. Given a fragment of a written or etched text, you can divine the missing portion of the text at

the rate of 100 words per day. Magical or cursed texts can resist this effect or return incomplete results at the GM's discretion.

**3: Call the Keeper (Sp)** You both learn from and teach the finest of Gruhastha's scholars. Once per day as a standard action, you can summon a Keeper of Lore (advanced manu manasaputra<sup>BS</sup>) to consult on a topic of your choice for 1 hour. A Keeper of Lore has a +25 bonus on Knowledge checks. A Keeper of Lore will not serve in combat except under the most desperate circumstances, and regular use of the manasaputra in combat is considered an abuse of Gruhastha's gift.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Speaker of Fable (Sp)** *speak with animal* 3/day, *animal messenger* 2/day, or *greater animal aspect*<sup>UC</sup> 1/day
- 2: Trace Corruption (Su)** You are a champion of the truth, and have been granted the divine insight to know when other creatures are being forced to act counter to their own natures. You can detect charms, compulsions, and possession effects, as per *detect charm* (Pathfinder RPG Adventurer's Guide 77), by concentrating for 1 round on a single creature within 100 feet. If you identify such an effect, you can concentrate for another round to obtain a glimpse of the effect's creator in your mind's eye. Such images are foggy and fragmentary, sufficient to determine the creature's type and a vague description, but not enough to identify individuals unless they bear unusual distinguishing marks. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to half your Hit Dice.
- 3: Sacred Tutelage (Su)** Though you are willing to confront dangers directly, you also educate fellow companions and like-minded faiths in the best practices for defeating their shared foes; as it is written in the *Azvadeva Pujila*, each warrior can aim only a single spear, but a teacher can aim ten thousand. As a swift action, you can provide divine guidance to your allies in combat. Allies able to see you gain a +2 sacred bonus on attack rolls. You can provide your guidance for a number of rounds equal to your Hit Dice per day (maximum 20 rounds). The rounds in which you provide guidance don't need to be consecutive, and you can end this ability as a free action.

There are many gates to transcendence, but all share the same keys: curiosity, wisdom, and compassion.

—The Book of Servants and Scholars

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## UNDERSTANDING GRUHASTHA

The Keeper was born a mortal human, and in fact was Irori's nephew. He followed his uncle's teachings toward divinity, but broke away from Irori's path in the search for transcendent knowledge. Legend claims that Gruhastha created such a profound sacrament when he wrote the *Azvadeva Pujila*—not only in its divine wisdom, but in the understanding that a book is the truest vessel of knowledge—that he became one with the text, and the perfection of his feat elevated him to godhood.

Gruhastha's faith seeks to spread enlightenment, which is defined as knowledge guided by wisdom and tempered by empathy. Ignorance and small-minded cruelty are anathema to Gruhasthans, who attempt to respond first with education and teaching by example, but will, if necessary, use force to defend against threats that cannot be reasoned with. The Keeper teaches that those who fail to achieve transcendence in this life will have another opportunity in the next, and sometimes the greatest mercy is to hasten the cycle by a turn.

In his human guise, Gruhastha is depicted as a beautiful young man with dark, burnished skin and wavy black hair that falls just past his shoulders. His wings are plumed in red and green, and a mandala of countless deities haloes his head. The mandala represents all the collected wisdom of the gods recorded in the *Azvadeva Pujila*. Gruhasthans do not attempt to artistically depict their god in the form of the text itself, for any such depiction would be incomplete and therefore imperfect, and no greater insult to the Keeper exists than to associate him with imperfect understanding.

Gruhastha's holy symbol is a mandala with four open books set as the gates of the compass points. The symbol shows that the heart of understanding is reached only through wisdom and learning, but that there are many routes to enlightenment, and all are equally valid. A lesser symbol is golden thread wrapped around the limbs, signifying that all who live in the world are linked both in life and spirit, and their fates cannot truly be separated.

Signals of Gruhastha's approval include books falling open to insightful passages, clouds parting to reveal clear light, and white birds singing a single, bell-like chime. Signs of his displeasure include inked letters running into indecipherable blurs, sudden headaches that make it hard to focus, and dissonant notes interrupting music.

## THE CHURCH

Learning is held in high esteem among Gruhasthans, and the church is active in educational initiatives of all kinds, from training teachers and constructing schools in rural villages to maintaining libraries and centuries-

old universities in cities. While the primary purpose of these endeavors is to spread the light of learning and teach moral empathy, the result is that Gruhastha's faith has a large number of educated, cosmopolitan adherents, and deep wells of local support where rural schools have lifted villages out of poverty.

Gruhasthans are committed to restorative justice, believing that most ordinary criminals are driven by ignorance and want, not deliberate malice. Thus, Gruhasthans promote education—not only of offenders, but also of the wealthier classes that determine the structural opportunities available and may be blind to obstacles standing in others' way—as well as social equality as ways to mitigate many of the societal ills that lead to crime. The church is often involved in community activities intended to achieve these aims. A corollary to this, however, is that Gruhasthans are keenly aware of the dangers posed by truly malevolent evils. They are particularly vigilant against threats such as demons and asuras, who seek to corrupt mortals. Just as the ignorant can be guided toward enlightenment, so too can they be misguided toward ruin. Gruhastha's faithful hunt such creatures relentlessly, viewing this task as a divine mission to stop them from slowing the world's transcendence.

Neither the church nor the god shies away from sensuality, in whatever form is healthy and brings out the best in its participants. The church encourages stable family formation as foundational to society, but remains agnostic about the particulars of such arrangements. As long as the relationships are harmonious, any children involved are given the warmth and guidance needed to thrive, and the net effect strengthens society, Gruhastha's church is likely to approve.

Vegetarianism is widely practiced among Gruhasthans, who try to avoid eating meat so that they take neither profit nor pleasure from the sufferings of other creatures. However, the church recognizes that not everyone is able to observe this practice, and so vegetarianism is considered laudable but not strictly required. It is also considered respectful of a priest who is a guest to eat any meal her host prepares, even if that meal contains meat.

The ultimate goal of Gruhastha's faith is to perfect the world enough to achieve alignment with, and transcendence into, Nirvana. Gruhasthans do not believe this to be an "end" of the world so much as a realization of its highest destiny: a communal exaltation beyond mortal imagining, when all souls become their most perfect selves and are reunited with the equally perfect selves of their friends, kin, and the gods themselves. Few Gruhasthans expect to achieve this in their lifetimes—the world is too damaged, its people too flawed—but all work toward it as a beautiful, if distant, dream.



## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Shrines to Gruhastha can be found in nearly every Vudrani settlement, even if the shrine is no more than a symbol of the Keeper's mandala with its four gates of learning, etched above the village school's doorway. Another common shrine is an elevated stone or wooden mandala, typically located near a market square or other community gathering place, inscribed with an alphabet and numbers in the local script. In wealthier communities, the pillar may be hollow and used as a miniature library to store books or scrolls. While such texts are often stolen, worshippers replace them regularly as a form of tithe to the faith.

Gruhastha's major temples always serve as centers of learning. The priests maintain extensive libraries, emphasizing community involvement and continually reaching out to the people. Temples are vibrant, busy places that welcome visiting intellectuals, support local students, and encourage scholastic gatherings across religious and national lines. In physical design as well as spirit, accessibility is key.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Gruhasthan faith is founded on a belief in the perfectibility of people: that most individuals, if equipped with an accurate moral compass and a clear understanding of the world, will guide themselves toward enlightenment and, eventually, transcendence. Accordingly, the Keeper's priests seek to equip as many people as possible with those tools, and then remove any barriers in their way. Priests range far afield to bring literacy to remote communities but also work intensively with disadvantaged groups in their hometowns. Believing that all people have wisdom to contribute, they collect folktales and tribal lore with the same assiduousness as they gather scrolls and books of formal scholarship, and they strive to keep threatened traditions from vanishing.

Gruhasthans approach all peoples with respect and humility, learning local dialects and customs rather than trying to impose their own, for they consider themselves perpetual students of the world, and far from perfection on their own quests for enlightenment. Religious services are tailored to appeal to community values, and the hours of services accommodate the rhythms of local life. In addition to uplifting individuals through education, Gruhasthans work to create safer and more equitable communities. At its simplest, this may mean ensuring that a village has clean water, sufficient food, and security from plagues and monsters. In more complex societies, however, this can mean attacking systemic barriers and challenging entrenched interests that keep people ignorant and oppressed. Priests are often political activists, but rarely revolutionaries. Except in the

most extreme instances, they believe in improving society through incremental change, not wholesale overthrow.

Clerics, inquisitors, and paladins of Gruhastha add *burst of insight*<sup>OA</sup> to their spell lists as a 1st-level spell, *object reading*<sup>OA</sup> to their spell lists as a 2nd-level spell, and *clairaudience/clairvoyance* to their spell lists as a 3rd-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

Champions of Gruhastha hunt supernatural corrupters of mortal civilizations, viewing this as part of the struggle for the world's soul that will determine whether Golarion eventually transcends into Nirvana or meets a darker fate.



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## GRUHASTHA'S PALADIN CODE

Paladins of Gruhastha are rare, for the Keeper's is not a martial faith. Those who champion his faith through arms typically do so out of need to travel to secluded villages or because they are sworn to protect specific holy sites or teachers. The code of Gruhastha's paladins contains the following adages.

- Transcendence requires tranquility. No one can learn who is hungry or afraid. My first goal must be to ensure peace and stability for the greatest number of people possible.
- Enlightenment requires truth. I will not deny knowledge to those who seek answers without ill will, even if it seems to be harmful in the short term, as those who have false information will follow a false path.
- All can find their way to enlightenment. Whenever possible, intelligent creatures should be reasoned with and their grievances understood. Even if no negotiated resolution is possible, the use of force is always to be regretted, for it represents a failure.
- Ignorance is not malice. The misguided deserve mercy. They should be shown the error of their ways and given a fair chance to make amends.
- Malice creates ignorance. Those who deliberately blind themselves to the concerns of others, the consequences of their actions, or the obligations of empathy spread and encourage these behaviors to those around them. Those who mislead others or argue in bad faith for the sake of their own selfishness must be opposed, and the truth of their actions revealed.

For the same reason, they venture into danger to rescue spiritual leaders, philosophers, and scholars who better humanity's collective soul, and to preserve valuable art or learning that has a similar effect. Other believers pursue these ends through economic means, sponsoring teachers in impoverished and war-torn regions, helping promising students from disadvantaged groups pursue their studies, and using their wealth and fame to support the vital daily work that advances the Keeper's mission, one soul at a time.

## CLOTHING

Gruhasthans favor simple, flowing robes made from plant fibers in practical designs and with little ornamentation beyond, such as a band of Vudrani embroidery about the hem or waist. If local custom designates particular dress or decoration for teachers, they may adopt that symbolism or—depending on the cultural context—dress in a way that subtly evokes it without unduly appropriating the honor.

## HOLY TEXT

Gruhasthans consider books to be sacred, as they are the perfect teachers: always available, inexhaustibly patient, and capable of conveying near-infinite lessons to clever and thoughtful students. Codex archons (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Monster Summoner's Handbook* 24) are among the god's primary servants, but innumerable other works are also valued and studied closely by religious scholars.

**Azvadeva Pujila:** The greatest holy text in the Keeper's faith is, of course, the *Azvadeva Pujila*, a work said to contain all the wisdom of gods and mortals in the world, and which is both Gruhastha's crowning achievement and an incarnation of the deity. Novices are often surprised to discover that the *Azvadeva Pujila* is written in informal language laced with a gentle sense of humor. Less than half the book is overtly about religion, and most of that content is concerned not with proscriptions or commands, but instead tells stories about the gods. These historical tales and parables explain each god's principles and deeds in a way that is easily understood by newcomers to religious study and yet is accurate enough to withstand the most expert theologian's scrutiny. The rest of the *Azvadeva Pujila* is filled with fables. Each tale has at least one simple moral lesson to offer, but deeper reading reveals multiple layers and messages woven into each fable, and scholars can spend lifetimes analyzing the wisdom found in the book.

## HOLIDAYS

Gruhastha encourages his faithful to celebrate local holidays of an appropriate nature, to broaden their life experiences and connect to other cultures.

**Azvadeva Dejal:** The third day of Desnus commemorates the revelation of the *Azvadeva Pujila*. Regional practices vary, as Gruhastha encourages adaptation to local customs, but the holiday always involves gifts of books, celebrations of new things learned, a ritual blessing of local animals, and a feast that incorporates no meat.

## APHORISMS

Some popular aphorisms taken from the *Azvadeva Pujila* are listed below.

**Any Bird Can Make a Quill:** Just as any bird's feather can be used as a writing quill, so any person can teach lessons to others. Just as each bird's feather creates a quill of unique shape and script, so each person's perspective contributes something irreplaceable to the whole.

**Every Teacher Is a Student, and Every Student a Teacher:** The relationship of teacher and pupil should not be a hierarchy of master and servant, but rather a two-way exchange. Prideful insecurity can blind both parties to enlightenment, and so Gruhastha bids his faithful to set it aside.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Gruhastha maintains cordial relationships with most good and neutral deities. His priests often work closely alongside Abadar's and Qi Zhong's, as their goals are usually compatible and their differences small. Irori, as Gruhastha's uncle, is a natural friend and ally, and Gruhastha serves as Irori's advisor. Nevertheless, points of friction still exist between their faiths. In particular, Irori views obstacles as challenges for individuals to overcome as a test of worthiness, not as society-wide injustices that must be addressed for the greater good, which can frustrate Gruhasthans, who take a more policy-minded and collective view rather than focusing on the achievements of exceptional individuals.

The Keeper stands in unswerving opposition to all deities who champion ignorance, deceit, and corruption. Norgorber particularly is an enemy, and Gruhastha's chosen are relentless about exposing the Reaper of Reputation's evil schemes. Ravithra, the goddess of nagas and snakes, is another deity whom Gruhastha has thwarted by revealing her intentions to the intended targets of her plots. Additionally, Gruhastha adamantly opposes Lamashtu, all the lesser demon lords, and the reckless cults of the Great Old Ones.

## REALM

The Garden of Perfect Enlightenment is Gruhastha's realm on Nirvana, which he deems more equitable and accessible than the sternly guarded mountain of Heaven, and thus a more perfect vision of transcendence. The Garden is a lush, expansive paradise encompassing every imaginable ecosystem and terrain, always adapted to allow some version of civilization to coexist alongside wildlife without disruption. Every settlement in the Garden has its own library and centers of learning, and every library connects to every other through a system of enchanted gates.

## PLANAR ALLIES

The following servants of Gruhastha are well known within the faith and suitable for calling via *planar ally*.

**Sa Ko (unique astral deva):** Once a formidable paladin of Gruhastha, Sa Ko continues her fight across the Great Beyond as an astral deva. When she is forced to kill a mortal creature, she records its name, what is known of its history, and the crimes that forced her hand in *Dhukkhar*, her book of mourning for the beings who will reach Nirvana only as the written records in her book.

### The Book of Servants and Scholars

**(herald of Gruhastha):** This unique codex archon (*Monster Summoner's Handbook* 24) collects the most insightful interpretations of the *Azvadeva Pujila*, as well as those that are most successful in translating the precepts of the Keeper's faith to a new culture. Inclusion in the Book of Servants and Scholars is considered one of the highest honors to which the faithful can aspire.



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## Hei Feng

Boastful, impulsive, and often drunk, Hei Feng rules the stormy skies of Tian Xia, always accompanied by his four loyal retainers, the Counts of Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning. Violent storms answer his call, and the sea's deep might obeys his whims. Commonly regarded as untrustworthy and intemperate, the Duke of Thunder is a compulsive cheat, gambler, and liar, and is prone to wild mood swings. He is easily stirred to anger, and while his temper usually subsides as quickly as it rises, he has been known to hold grudges for millennia. While the Duke of Thunder is a god of nature, he is less remote than most such gods—Hei Feng is fascinated by people and loves civilization, for better or tumultuous worse.

## DUKE OF THUNDER

God of the sea, storms, thunder, and wind

**Alignment** CN

**Domains** Air, Chaos, Destruction, Water, Weather

**Subdomains** Catastrophe, Cloud, Oceans, Protean, Storms, Wind

**Favored Weapon** nine-ring broadsword<sup>uc</sup>

**Centers of Worship** Dtang Ma, Goka, Hwanggot, Kwanlai, Lingshen, Minata, Minkai, Wanshou, Xidao

**Nationality** tengu

**Obedience** Take three swigs of strong liquor or saltwater, shouting a loud boast to any bystanders after each drink. If anyone responds to your bluster, challenge that person to a contest of drinking, bragging, or sword dancing. If you are defeated, concede graciously and give the victor a gift worth at least 10 gp; if you win, taunt the loser with more boasts and insults. If no suitable bystanders are nearby, engage in a whirling, stomping dance with a nine-ring broadsword for an hour, clattering the blade's rings until they throw sparks around you. Gain a +4 sacred or profane bonus on saves against electricity and wind effects for the next 24 hours. The type of bonus depends on your alignment—if you're neither good nor evil, you must choose either sacred or profane the first time you perform your obedience, and this choice can't be changed.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Disciple of the Clouds (Sp)** *hydraulic push*<sup>APG</sup> 3/day, *resist energy* 2/day, or *elemental aura*<sup>APG</sup> (electricity only) 1/day
- 2: Stormborne (Su)** Once per day as a standard action, you can call on a storm cloud to bear you into the air. This enables you to fly at a speed of 40 feet with good maneuverability. It lasts for 1 minute per HD (maximum 20 minutes). If it's dispelled or the duration expires while you're aloft, you descend at a rate of 60 feet per round for 5 rounds, then fall any remaining distance normally.
- 3: Thunderstrike (Su)** Once per day as a free action, you can declare one of your attacks to be a thunderstrike. You must declare the use of this ability before rolling to attack. If the attack hits and you deal damage, the blow lands with a clap of thunder that paralyzes your target and deafens foes within 10 feet of the strike for 1d4 rounds. A target that succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + half your Hit Dice + your Constitution modifier) negates the deafening effect and is stunned for only 1 round.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Disciple of the Fog (Sp)** *feather fall* 3/day, *fog cloud* 2/day, or *gaseous form* 1/day

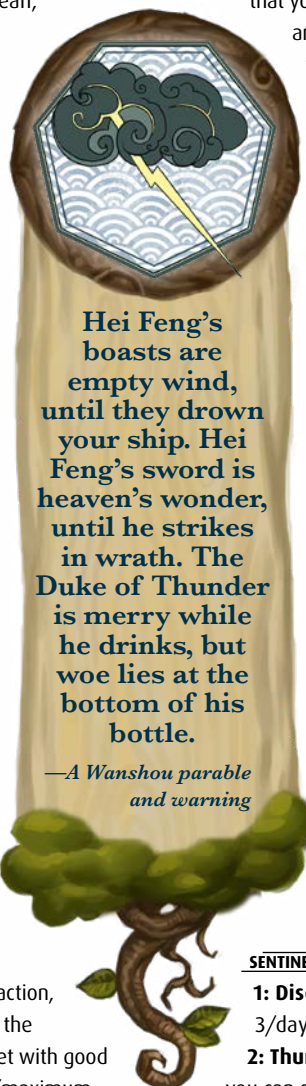
- 2: Blessing of Sea and Storm (Su)** As a full-round action, you can transmute a flask of either rainwater or seawater into a potion of any spell of 4th level or lower that you currently have memorized

and that otherwise qualifies under the standard potion rules. You lose the memorized spell, as if it had been cast, when it is transferred into the potion. If the spell requires a material component that costs more than 100 gp, you must also provide that component. The potion retains its magic for up to 24 hours or until used. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

- 3: Hei Feng's Rage (Su)** Once per day as a standard action, you can summon a cyclone of black wind and spiked lightning within 30 feet, which fills a 20-foot-radius area that extends 75 feet high. The cyclone cannot be moved once called. Creatures in the area take 4d6 points of electricity damage plus 1 point for every 2 Hit Dice you have (maximum +10) every round they're caught in the cyclone. You can dismiss the cyclone as a free action. Otherwise, it lasts up to 5 rounds; when it dissipates, it releases a clap of thunder that knocks all creatures in the area prone. A creature can attempt a Reflex save (DC = 10 + half your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier) to halve the damage taken, and a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + half your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier) to avoid being knocked prone.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Disciple of Destruction (Sp)** *shocking grasp* 3/day, *shatter* 2/day, or *call lightning* 1/day
- 2: Thunder's Vengeance (Su)** As a move action, you can surround yourself with crackling electricity that deals 2d6 points of electricity damage plus 1 point for every 2 Hit Dice you have (maximum 2d6+10) to each creature that attempts to strike you with a melee weapon or natural attack. You can maintain the aura for a number of rounds equal to your Hit Dice (maximum 20 rounds), but the rounds need not be consecutive. You can dismiss the aura as a free action.
- 3: Unstoppable Storm (Su)** As a free action, you can empower your lightning to overcome resistances. For the next round, whenever you deal electricity damage to a creature that has resistance to electricity, ignore an amount of resistance equal to half your Hit Dice (up to a maximum reduction of 10). You can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to your Hit Dice (maximum 20 rounds), but the rounds need not be consecutive.



Hei Feng's boasts are empty wind, until they drown your ship. Hei Feng's sword is heaven's wonder, until he strikes in wrath. The Duke of Thunder is merry while he drinks, but woe lies at the bottom of his bottle.

—A Wanshou parable and warning

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## UNDERSTANDING HEI FENG

Hei Feng is the patron deity of the tengu race, commonly depicted as a tengu with smoldering black feathers, glowing eyes, and a nine-ring broadsword that crackles with lightning. His manners are rude and his speech uncouth, and although he is capable of conducting himself with a courtier's polish when required, Hei Feng views such pretensions as ridiculous. When summoned to the Heavenly Court for official functions, he frequently interrupts his own flowery speeches with a belch or eruption of laughter. Yet the Duke of Thunder is no mere buffoon. He is a terrifying adversary, capable of unleashing massive destruction through the wind and waves. Whether his answer comes swiftly or slowly, Hei Feng answers provocations with overwhelming retaliation, and for this he is widely feared.

On occasion, Hei Feng regrets his excesses, particularly when they catch unintended victims. Sometimes the morning tide carries a lustrous pearl to the foundation stones of a home torn down by the past night's storms, or a child who loses her parents to the sea finds her nets filled with fish for the rest of her life. In such instances, people say, the Duke of Thunder is making amends.

Hei Feng is also known to be overcome with emotion when listening to music, gazing upon a painting or fireworks display, or watching the whirl and spectacle of costumed dancers. His taste in arts runs toward popular, less refined forms; he likes lion and dragon dancers, acrobats, and bawdy theater, but he has little patience for contemplating calligraphy scrolls or composing meditative poems. The one exception is that Hei Feng can be moved to tears by flower arrangements, particularly if they incorporate white lotuses or mirrors. These remind him of his much-adored wife, Lady Jingxi, the Poet of Dawn and Dusk, who left him centuries ago. Hei Feng misses his wife greatly and often weeps over her when deep in his cups, but in truth he was a neglectful husband, and his drunken protestations of love are directed more toward an idealized image than the real lady.

Hei Feng's holy symbol is a black storm cloud struck through with crackling lightning. Signs of his approval include pleasant winds or rapid tides that speed boats and ships on their way, while signs of disapproval come in the form of ominous thunderclaps, darkened clouds, and unheralded bolts of electricity.

## THE CHURCH

Hei Feng has no use for hierarchy or bureaucracy, and thus has little in the way of an organized church. His worshippers are mostly common people: farmers praying for rain, fisherfolk praying for the sea's bounty, sailors praying for fair winds and clear skies. His interest in the

"low arts" gives him a popular following among traveling performers, who liken their unpredictable crowds to uncertain weather, and who are equally at the mercy of either. Drunken masters and itinerant ronin also pay homage to the Duke of Thunder, whose foibles often echo their own. Finally, those whose lives have been altered by Hei Feng's disasters and amends sometimes come to worship him, although their reverence may be conflicted.

Hei Feng's holy days, however, are major festivals celebrated throughout the Dragon Empires. These day-long celebrations are filled with fireworks, spicy street food, and a potent rice liquor known as cloudless lightning. Dancers in raven and sea-dragon costumes parade through the streets, accompanied by drummers, gong beaters, and cymbalists, who do their best to recreate the deafening clamor of a thunderstorm on the ground. Performers with nine-ring broadswords clash in ritualized combat, shouting insults at each other and competing for the crowd's cheers. On these holidays, the entire community comes together to stage the loudest, merriest, and most colorful festival possible. If Hei Feng is pleased by their efforts, people hope, he will be too delighted to destroy the community with his storms and will instead bless it with bountiful fish and gentle rains so that he can enjoy their festival again.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Seaside shrines to Hei Feng can be found in nearly every coastal settlement in Tian Xia. Such shrines are typically built of sea stones, painted with praise and prayers, and adorned with pinwheels and fish-shaped wind chimes. They seldom have priests or even permanent attendants, and instead are maintained communally by local villagers.

Larger towns may build Sanctuaries of the Fifty Sacred Storms. These structures each consist of a skeleton of conductive metal tipped with a lightning rod and grounded in the earth. The walls are built of colorful, alchemically treated paper. The pavilions are invaluable shelters in electrical storms—when lightning strikes the sanctuary, it ignites the paper, consuming the walls in sheets of multicolored flame, but the metal skeleton prevents its occupants from being harmed by the strike. This pyrotechnic display is meant to sate Hei Feng's appetite for destruction while simultaneously reminding him that the people threatened by his storms are the very ones who create such marvels for his glory. In this way, each temple serves as an offering to placate the god's anger and blunt his furious tempests.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Hei Feng's priests tend to exist at the margins of civilization without being fully civilized themselves. A village priest is more likely to be a blustery drunkard than a pillar of the community, and he may spend more time throwing



dice with singers and performers than ministering to the people's needs. While the priest's intercession in moments of crisis can be critical, Hei Fengans are seldom interested in the routine tasks that create day-to-day stability, and their neglect of mundane matters frequently contributes to the crises that eventually demand their attention. Even in the tengu nation of Kwanlai, Hei Feng's priests have no appetite for the deliberation necessary to build a civil society. Rather than serving as a stabilizing influence, the faith amplifies the tengus' fractious tendencies. Nevertheless, Hei Feng's priests have shown little inclination to change.

Many priests choose not to attach themselves to a community at all, preferring to wander freely in search of new comrades and adventures. Itinerant storm priests are stock figures in the folktales of the Dragon Empires, where they are portrayed equally as heroes blessing the needy or fighting off terrible dangers and as villains who unleash random destruction on innocents. Some of these legends are rooted in truth—Hei Feng's raw elemental might and independent credo can draw priests of considerable power. As those priests roam across half-tamed lands, they may be called upon to defend against marauding threats in poor and lawless places. While such priests are happy enough to unleash immediate force in response, they typically lack the discipline to maintain long-term vigils against possible recurrences. When the task of keeping an ageless enemy contained is left to a Hei Fengan, that containment is all but certain to fail in time.

Most priests try to cultivate four close friends, mimicking the four counts in Hei Feng's retinue. To these friends, they swear the Fourfold Oath of Eternal Camaraderie, written in seawater but more binding than blood. Outside that close circle, Hei Fengans' loyalties fluctuate wildly: all-consuming in one moment, absent in the next.

The Duke of Thunder requires no specific rites from his priests. He enjoys boasts and tall tales more than prayers, and prefers showy sword dances to hymns. As long as fireworks and festivals are offered in his name and no one dares slight him, Hei Feng is content. He seldom assigns his priests tasks other than channeling his wrath and, occasionally, interceding to keep him from destroying a lively community whose loss he might later regret.

Clerics and antipaladins of Hei Feng can prepare *gust of wind* as a 2nd-level spell, and *lightning bolt* and *hydraulic torrent*<sup>APG</sup> as 3rd-level spells.

## ADVENTURERS

Devout Hei Fengans serve as intermediaries for threatened communities that are requesting their god's mercy or aid,

and as conduits for Hei Feng to express his wrath at the disrespectful and his delight at the colorful. Benevolent worshippers ask nothing in return for their intercession, while evil-aligned Hei Fengans demand tribute for their aid. In either case, because Hei Feng's faithful are wanderers both driven by short-term passions and devoted to a tempestuous god, adventures find them easily. Hei Fengans' elemental powers and love of conflict can make them valuable additions to a party, especially if swearing the Fourfold Oath of Eternal Camaraderie to their compatriots binds them to a semblance of reliability.

Casual worshippers light fireworks and offer toasts to the Duke of Thunder for good weather before setting off on long journeys. Traveling performers often carry bronze charms of nine-ring broadswords, which they rattle for luck before taking the stage. Sailors purchase calligraphy scrolls of prayers written in special inks, which burn in bright colors when the scrolls are ignited to carry their prayers for smooth seas and fair winds to Hei Feng.

## CLOTHING

Hei Feng's faithful usually dress in bright colors, though stormy blues



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## HEI FENG'S ANTIPALADIN CODE

Antipaladins of Hei Feng are self-sufficient wanderers who roam the land, offering great aid or—more commonly—great destruction at their own whims. They are rarely deceptive about their intentions, and desperate people can ask them for help, knowing that these antipaladins will keep their word if they agree to offer assistance. Any slight, however, will be met with overwhelming retribution. The code of Hei Feng's antipaladins contains the following adages.

- The blessing of the storm comes in lightning. I am permitted to offer sincerely altruistic aid, so long as that aid comes in the form of violence visited upon others.
- The clouds warn of coming rain. My wrath may be sudden, but it is honest. I may trick a foe with boasts or cunning, but I do not pretend to be a friend to those I intend to harm. Such sycophancy is cowardice.
- The wind cannot be chained. I stay nowhere for long, and I do not abide oaths that try to restrain me for longer than a month. If I make such promises, they have no weight, and those who trust them are fools.
- My last word is a thunderclap. None shall insult me, or my god, without paying a terrible price. My revenge will be unstoppable and absolute.

and grays accented with incandescent white-gold are also popular. Their attire tends to be motley and somewhat rumpled. Priests carry nine-ring broadswords, while more casual followers may wear miniature versions of the swords as charms.

Hei Fengans often wear metallic jewelry pieced together into elaborate arrangements that allow electrical energy to dance and spark dramatically around the wearer. Their clothes may be somewhat singed as a result, but this is regarded as a badge of honor rather than an embarrassment among the devout.

## HOLY TEXT

Religious texts are not of great importance in Hei Feng worship. Prayers are short, so they can be inscribed in pyrotechnic ink on sacrificial scrolls, and they are never written the same way twice, since the Duke of Thunder appreciates novelty and gets bored with repetition.

**Fourfold Oath of Eternal Camaraderie:** The oath of friendship that Hei Feng swore to his four counts is the only constant text in Hei Feng's faith. According to tradition, it appeared in sigils of lightning across a storm-blackened sky, but was so awesome that, even in that transient flash, it was seared into the memory of every Hei Fengans across the Dragon Empires that same night.

## HOLIDAYS

Regional holidays of Hei Feng vary according to seasonal floods, droughts, lightning storms, and the migrations of economically significant fish and bird populations. These local phenomena determine when localities hold celebrations to attract the Duke of Thunder's favor. There are also two major holidays celebrated across Tian Xia.

**The Festival of Sea to Sky:** This holiday falls on the final night of the Sea Dragon's zodiac sign and continues into the first day of the Swallow sign, which immediately follows it. The Festival of Sea to Sky is a riotous celebration filled with drinking, feasting, and fireworks.

**The Mirror Poet's Farewell:** This holiday 5 days after the autumn equinox marks the date on which Lady Jingxi left Hei Feng. The Mirror Poet's Farewell is a solemn occasion for meditation, ritual mourning, and gestures of appreciation for one's ancestors and loved ones—especially those who have been wronged or neglected.

## APHORISMS

Hei Feng is fond of aphorisms, particularly those known in Tian Xia as “drunkard's wisdom” that sound ridiculous or nonsensical at first, revealing profundity only after consideration.

**Fate Falls on a Feather:** Destiny is unknowable, and random chance can alter the course of a life in an instant. There's no sense trying to plan for a future that may never come; the wiser course is to live moment to moment, floating free upon the winds of fate.

**Heaven's Majesty Is Change:** The celestial cycle's tumult is eternal. The heavens bring creation and destruction, loveliness and loss, but above all they bring change. Nothing in the sky is permanent, and this evanescence is its power, its glory, and its tragedy.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Hei Feng is mostly indifferent to the doings of other deities and seldom bothers interfering with their mortal followers. He enjoys teasing Abadar, Irori, and Shizuru, whom he views as hopelessly stiff-necked, and he encourages his faithful to show the same casual disrespect. This is performed in a spirit of irreverence rather than malice, however, as Hei Feng does not actually bear any ill will toward the three deities, and he recognizes their importance in supporting the aspects of mortal civilization and law that bore him senseless.

Hei Feng is friends with Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, whose nature is much like his own. Their friendship is punctuated by frequent quarrels, however, and it is not uncommon for their carousing to erupt into titanic brawls. Hei Feng is fond of Desna and Kofusachi as fellow free spirits, but he feels that he must always be careful in their company, as they disapprove of his destructive tendencies. The Duke of Thunder

finds it wearying to keep himself restrained and begs off spending too much time around them.

The only deities that Hei Feng truly loathes—whenver he bothers to notice them—are Fumeiyoshi, Lord of Envy, and Lao Shu Po, the Old Rat Woman. He views their sneaking cowardice and miserly spirit with contempt. He is less offended by Lady Nanbyo, Lamashtu, and General Susumu, for all three of these evil deities embrace open conflict and destruction, which Hei Feng respects.

Beyond Hei Feng's relationships with the major deities of the Dragon Empires, there is one lesser goddess of great importance to him. Lady Jingxi, the Poet of Dawn and Dusk, is Hei Feng's estranged wife. She is usually portrayed as a gentle, lovely tengu lady dressed in white and wearing a white lotus in her feathers. Hei Feng speaks of Lady Jingxi with operatic longing, but he doesn't really wish to reconcile (nor does she, since he was a thoughtless husband). However, his sentiments extend to his followers, who are expected to honor Lady Jingxi's shrines and worshippers with far more respect than Hei Feng demands for himself.

## REALM

The Pavilion of Ten Thousand Explosions, set in the seas surrounding the island world of Yanjira in the Maelstrom, is Hei Feng's tumultuous home. Storm clouds churn eternally across its sky, pierced by blinding spears of lightning and multicolored fireworks. Wind-whipped seas rise up in towering waves, crashing onto rocky, fang-like shores that tear the waters into froth. The constant chaos invigorates the Duke of Thunder and his divine servants, who cavort happily in the fury and have little patience for those unable to keep up.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Hei Feng's four retainers, the Counts of Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning, are never far from his side.

**Baofeng, Count of Wind (unique keketa protean<sup>B3</sup>):** Spectral winds whistle constantly around this dragon-like protean, whose scales shift continuously through shades of blue and white. The cleverest and most patient of the four counts, Baofeng is the one most often delegated to deal with mortal worshippers. His favorite gifts are priceless paintings and calligraphy scrolls, which he eats with great enjoyment.

**Quiyu, Count of Rain (unique tengu):** Graceful and soft-spoken, the white tengu Quiyu always appears in slightly damp clothes and surrounded by a fine, misty drizzle. When called by mortals, she interprets questions and instructions literally as if translating them from another tongue, often selecting alternative meanings that lead to chaotic results.

Quiyu is a 15th-level sorcerer with the air bloodline.

**Kaishun, Count of Thunder (unique leonal agathion<sup>B3</sup>):** This leonal takes the form of a tiger that is invisible except for his black stripes and blazing eyes. On sunny days, Kaishun spends most of his time sleeping, but when storms beckon, his roars can be heard for miles.

**Lixia, Count of Lightning (unique half-celestial kitsune<sup>B4</sup>):** Prancing between the clouds so fast she can barely be seen, Lixia is a white fox with nine tails. Lixia's curiosity cannot be contained, but she has little care what damage she may leave in her wake. She often jumps to the earth in a flash of lightning to examine anything that catches her attention.





# Kazutal

Kazutal gained worship among the early humans of central Arcadia when she was a more aggressive goddess. In those ancient times, when the world was far more dangerous and difficult to navigate, she was called upon for protection and the bolstering of might. However, in the past few millennia, her strength has been tempered with compassion. Eager to forge strong bonds in society while resisting tyranny and aggression, Kazutal commands her faithful to both provide for and defend those around them, ensuring that those who live in these communities are both willing and able to protect them. Today, her churches and followers act as guardians for their communities, helping those in need and opposing threats to peace.

## MOTHER JAGUAR

Goddess of community, liberty, and safety

**Alignment** NG

**Domains** Community, Good, Liberation, Protection, Strength

**Subdomains** Agathion, Defense, Freedom, Friendship, Home, Resolve

**Favored Weapon** machete (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Melee Tactics Toolbox* 19)

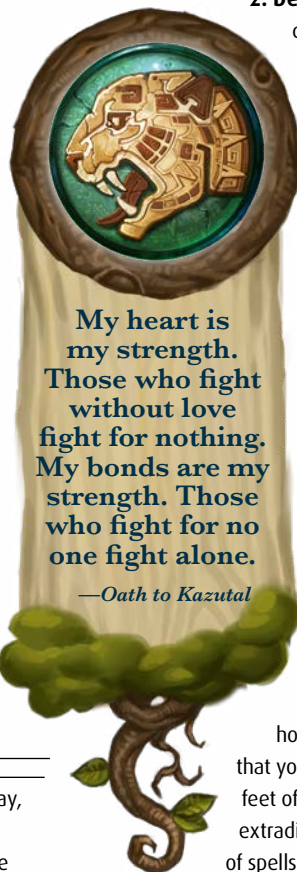
**Centers of Worship** Razatlani

**Nationality** Razatlani

**Obedience** Gather with others for an hour and discuss a topic that threatens the bonds of your community, family, or friendship. If you and your allies are fortunate enough that no such malady is currently a challenge, read and recite passages from *She of Grace and Might* to remind yourselves of your goals and aspirations for the day. If you are traveling alone, find others to speak to about the beneficial strengths of community and freedom to develop that community into a more positive place. Guide any arguments during this discussion toward understanding and acceptance, even if afterward not all parties agree on the final resolution. Gain a +2 sacred bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Strong Ally (Sp)** *liberating command*<sup>UC</sup> 3/day, *mirror image* 2/day, or *dispel magic* 1/day
- 2: Liberating Surge (Su)** When your allies are threatened, you have the tools to alleviate them of their imposed limitations. Once per day as a standard action, you can cast either *break enchantment* or *freedom of movement* as a spell-like ability targeting one of your allies within 300 feet whom you can perceive. The spell has a caster level equal to your character level.
- 3: Shared Expertise (Su)** You know that your bond to your allies is your greatest benefit. Each time you complete your obedience, you can select a bonus teamwork feat. You must meet the prerequisites for this feat. All of your allies are treated as if they possessed the same teamwork feat as you for the purpose of determining whether you receive the benefit of the teamwork feat. As a free action, you can grant this feat to all allies within 30 feet who can see and hear you. Allies do not need to meet the prerequisites of the bonus teamwork feat. You can grant this feat for a number of rounds per day equal to your Hit Dice. These rounds need not be consecutive. You can select a different teamwork feat for this boon each time you complete your obedience.



**My heart is my strength. Those who fight without love fight for nothing. My bonds are my strength. Those who fight for no one fight alone.**

—Oath to Kazutal

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Preparation (Sp)** *anticipate peril*<sup>UM</sup> 3/day, *anticipate thoughts*<sup>OA</sup> 2/day, or *magic circle against evil* 1/day
- 2: Defending Shield (Su)** Your dedication to protecting your community manifests as a way to shield yourself and others. Three times per day as a standard action, you can summon a mystical glowing shield that sheds light as a torch. This shield manifests in a square within 30 feet of you, and it can share your space or that of any of your allies. If the defending shield is in a creature's square, it grants that creature a sacred bonus to its Armor Class equal to your Wisdom modifier. You can move the shield to a different square within 30 feet of you as a swift action and can dismiss the shield as a free action. The defending shield lasts for 10 rounds each time it is summoned.
- 3: Bountiful Refuge (Su)** You know the benefits of a communal meal shared with friends and family. Once per day, you can create a safe extradimensional space that you and your allies can occupy for a number of hours equal to your Hit Dice. The space holds as many as eight creatures (of any size) that you designate, all of which must be within 30 feet of you when you use this ability. Creatures in the extradimensional space are hidden beyond the reach of spells (including divinations) unless those spells work across planes. Creatures within the space can see the environs outside of the space, but those outside cannot see inside. Within the refuge is a bountiful table set with as many chairs as the number of creatures invited in, and the table holds a delicious feast that acts as the *heroes' feast* spell with a caster level equal to your Hit Dice.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Dedicated Might (Sp)** *true strike* 3/day, *bull's strength* 2/day, or *heroism* 1/day
- 2: Caring Defender (Su)** Protection of self and community is paramount to you. You gain a +2 sacred bonus to your Armor Class. When using the aid another action to increase an ally's Armor Class, this sacred bonus increases to +4 and the ally gains an additional +2 bonus to her Armor Class against attacks.
- 3: Allied Actions (Su)** You understand that any actions undertaken for good are multiplied by those within your community. Once per day as a standard action, you can cast *battlemind link*<sup>UM</sup> as a spell-like ability. In addition, once per day you can cast *deflection*<sup>APG</sup> as a spell-like ability. The caster level of these spells is equal to your character level.

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## UNDERSTANDING KAZUTAL

Kazutal, also known as Lady Jaguar, Mother Jaguar, and She of Grace and Might, was worshipped differently thousands of years ago. In ancient times, the Razatlani spread across

Arcadia, subjugating other peoples and establishing their own rigid and tyrannical empire. The Razatlani prayed to Kazutal for strength in battle and protection from injury, much as people do today, but few considered her a goddess who cared at all for society or freedom. In this age of chaos and warfare, most of Kazutal's worship was focused on military might, until the catastrophe of Earthfall disrupted the grasp of the Razatlani Empire.

After Earthfall, Kazutal's surviving clergy used their forces to help other survivors make it through the first few centuries of darkness. Since people depended upon their neighbors to survive, they called on Kazutal's strength to protect every member of the community, as the loss of one person could spell the death of the rest. Through these efforts, a stronger bond of friendship and family blossomed in Kazutal's church. She became a guardian among the ashes, a patron of defense instead of war. Her church grew during that dark time, as her followers sought to unite Arcadia's survivors in the far reaches where the Razatlani Empire had expanded ages ago.

Kazutal recognizes the importance of improving connections and relationships within a community as the pinnacle of proper protection, for a society with strong community bonds can withstand the worst assaults. Her concept of community revolves around a sense of solidarity and responsibility; actual laws are of less importance, and the restraints of any oppressive dogma must be torn down. Kazutal's priests teach that only a free and open society can truly be strong—cultures that harbor internal hatreds will destroy themselves when placed under pressure.

Kazutal's holy symbol is a jaguar's head on a circular green background. She is depicted as a Razatlani warrior woman dressed in green, black, and gold, wearing a living jaguar as a shawl around her shoulders. Signs of her approval include food tasting richer, chance meetings with friends, and safe havens appearing when needed. Signs of her anger usually involve animals and public opinion turning on offenders, forcing them to make efforts to reconcile with others or risk social censure.

## KAZUTAL'S CHURCH

Kazutal's faith is popular in Arcadia, and her church there holds a great deal of earthly power. Her temples officially have a clear hierarchy, but outside of battle, an individual's actual authority is measured by respect—a wise old cleaning man might hold more influence than an experienced but rash priest. While different branches

of Kazutal's church vary in how they revere Mother Jaguar, all seek to serve and defend their communities. At its most basic, the church of Kazutal provides protection for those who are in need or are afraid, while also providing security for the neighborhoods in which they live.

Most of Kazutal's followers are clerics or warpriests, but inquisitors, paladins, and rangers also spread the word of Lady Jaguar. Most priests of Kazutal are trained in medicine to provide care to others and prevent destructive diseases from weakening the populace. Many are also skilled at combat, training with the machete and club as their chosen weapons against evil and corruption.

Those who know of Kazutal's priests mostly through their military might are often surprised to see the faith's emphasis on love. The type of love is irrelevant: love of friends, family, neighbors, and country are seen as just as powerful and exalted as romantic love. A person who loves nothing is viewed as cowardly, while one who loves only intangible concepts is seen as suspicious, and one who cannot express his love is considered tragic. Even the church's foes can find respect from Kazutal's faithful, so long as those foes fight out of love.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Places of worship dedicated to Kazutal vary depending on the communities in which they are located. Some are nothing more than small shrines that share a space with shrines to other divinities, while others are massive structures filling a prominent plaza in a city or town. Ancient temples of Kazutal are stepped pyramids; these temples are typically found in Razatlan and the parts of Arcadia that were once controlled by the ancient Razatlani Empire. The main temple of Kazutal stands in the center of Tlascalxia, the capital of Razatlan.

Most churches and temples dedicated to Kazutal follow the typical architectural style of the settlements in which they reside. Kazutal's church in Segada is constructed of stone and timber and has a layout common to Mahwek design, while those in the Land of Northern Lakes are made of crushed stone and cement reinforced with iron.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Priests of Kazutal begin the day with a series of prayers to their patron, asking for guidance in the day's tasks so that they can be of the most use to others. They also ask for protection for their community, family, and friends, and make affirmations to do their best to protect those in need. Many traveling priests make a point to improve the life of at least one other being during their day. If they fail to do so, their evening prayers ask Kazutal for forgiveness and the strength to succeed in their task the following day, as Kazutal doesn't expect every attempt to be a success. Dedication to the cause is enough, as nearly all significant improvements to culture come in steps, not overnight.



Priests within a single church spend their days fostering civic pride, visiting people within the church and in town, and listening to members of the community to identify and fix neighborhood problems. As many churches provide protection and healing services to the vulnerable and less fortunate, priests of Kazutal spend much of the day overseeing and participating in these services. A number of Kazutal's priests serve in civic roles in the towns and cities in which they live. Some sit on city councils, serve as governors, and even become heads of state.

Many priests are also skilled in combat, and those who are not tend to focus heavily on spells that guard others from foul influences and physical harm. Priests do their best to keep an eye on predatory members of their own communities, and they are quick to offer shelter and security to those who are being victimized. They are stalwart warriors for smaller—and sometimes persecuted—communities that exist within the larger whole, so long as those communities are not inherently harmful.

Adventurous members of the church wander the world to unravel the wrongs they find. These wandering Kazutali heroes can become popular among those they aid, engendering positive feelings in distant towns and nations, and can also be a source of pride for the communities from which they hail.

Clerics and warpriests of Kazutal can prepare *beast shape I* as a 3rd-level spell, *beast shape II* as a 4th-level spell, and *beast shape III* as a 5th-level spell. Paladins of Kazutal can prepare *blessing of fervor*<sup>APG</sup> and *freedom of movement* as 4th-level spells.

## ADVENTURERS

Devout adventurers of Kazutal travel among the cities and nations of Arcadia, always alert for situations that poison settlements and communities. They root out corruption and oppression in the places they visit, seeking a way to uplift and support the cheated and oppressed.

All but the worst tyrants and most evil rulers welcome the arrival of a priest of Kazutal. Followers of Kazutal happily provide needed aid, often providing healing services or counsel. Adventuring priests of Kazutal are known for their compassion, but also carry a reputation for strength in battle and dedication to protection, never backing from a fight once diplomacy has failed.

## CLOTHING

While many who worship She of Grace and Might follow their own communities' customs on dress, most clergy wear a stole with a

spotted design reminiscent of a jaguar's coat. Some of these are actual pelts from jaguars, but others are simply painted or dyed cloth, supple leather, or artificial fur. Many adventuring priests and worshippers of Kazutal wear practical clothing determined by their role, but all wear jewelry that bears her symbol. Worshippers of Kazutal who are serving in local militias or as city guards and who are particularly dedicated to the goddess's concerns of protection and strength wear a metallic badge that features her holy symbol.



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### KAZUTAL'S PALADIN CODE

Paladins of Kazutal proudly defend their communities and encourage strong relationships among the people they know and with whom they interact. Kazutal's paladins prefer friendship to violence, but they never back down from their responsibility to stand up for those weaker than themselves or those they consider under their protection. Their tenets include the following affirmations.

- Bonds are what give our society strength. Though families and communities are complex and ever changing, I will focus to maintain the positive connections with my own family and community, and encourage others to do the same.
- No law, price, or justification can legitimize slavery. I will free slaves where I find them and will never enslave another creature to act against its own will.
- Conquest is destruction. I will always fight to defend others from violent subjugation, and no tyrant will ever receive my deference.
- I understand that failure is expected, and that my life belongs to more than myself. If I give my life for others, I do so fully respecting its worth, and I will do my best to prevent others from committing pointless sacrifices.
- Love is the province of the brave. If I value something, I must not hide my feelings. I will show the world my love by protecting that which I cherish. My example lends my strength to those who share my love but fear to act.
- I will defend liberty, even when it challenges established community and family standards. Those who are true to themselves forge the strongest relationships with others, and I must protect them so long as they do no harm and do not infringe on others' liberty in turn.

### HOLY TEXT

Kazutal's predominant dogma is preserved in *She of Grace and Might*, a text that has seen dozens of revisions since its first incarnation thousands of years ago.

**She of Grace and Might:** This text begins by describing the formation of the Material Plane and how humans came to be upon a world assumed to be Golarion. It goes on to describe how various groups of humans and humanoids came together to provide a defense against the dangerous and foul aspects of the world. It also outlines a number of ways in which people can work together to form more unified communities, be they municipalities, social circles, or family structures. Much of the newer text is quite practical, sometimes even forming the basis of law in some regions, while the older material is more esoteric.

### HOLIDAYS

A number of Kazutal's holidays involve parades, as the events evolved from marches of troops into more positive celebrations. Competitive sports are also a popular form of celebration and community building, and some temples assemble their own athletic teams.

**Evolutia:** This holiday celebrates the role priests of Kazutal played in soothing some of the scars of the Razatlani Empire when its brutality shaped the continent of Arcadia. In the days leading up to the holiday, celebrated in late summer on the date that the empire originally fell after the Battle of the Bone-Splintered Heart, Kazutal's faithful place requests at the temple for something they want or need, and the community is responsible for providing it. On the day of the holiday, the temple is filled with tables overflowing with food, where visitors and the faithful alike are encouraged to eat with one another.

**Festival of Flowers:** This colorful festival originated in Razatlan, but it has since spread throughout Arcadia. It takes place over the course of 2 weeks and involves numerous feasts, plenty of dancing, and costumed participants in parades featuring elaborate displays decorated with millions of flowers. More information about this festival, including an associated ritual, can be found on page 52 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Shores*.

### APHORISMS

Kazutalis speak many phrases common to one another in their casual conversation.

**Hold Your Heart Boldly:** Kazutal's devoted often use this phrase to encourage their comrades to show courage in the face of adversity, both in confidence of action and the bravery to invite hurt by openly showing love.

**My Strength Extends to You:** One of the most common Kazutali aphorisms, these words cross worshippers' lips regularly during services. The phrase is also an offer of community granted to strangers who the devoted meet in their social interactions or travels in foreign lands.

### RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Kazutal is friendly with most of the good deities worshipped in Arcadia, such as the triune of deities associated with agriculture and providence known as the Three Sisters. She has even befriended deities from other pantheons in Golarion. She is friendly with Erastil, appreciating the god's concern for family and community, though they disagree on some of the finer points. Kurgess and Kazutal get along well due to their shared goals of community and strength. Kazutal agrees with Milani's stance against tyranny, but she believes the young goddess is often too brash.

Kazutal has often conferred with Jaidi, a relatively obscure deity from the ruined continent of Azlant, due to that goddess's focus on agriculture and self-sufficiency, both things that help form a cornerstone

of a strong community. Lady Jaguar has good relations with many divinities who are not true gods, such as the empyreal lords and the goodly god kings and hero deities of Arcadia, and tends to ally with them as a way to bolster their power and influence.

Kazutal tries to walk the balance between the forces of law and chaos, and thus she doesn't strongly associate with others who are too far on either end of that spectrum. She opposes all deities who impose tyranny or sow pain and suffering. One of her greatest foes is a cruel and evil divinity known as Ohachtsik the Destroyer; this god of death and destruction attempts to thwart Kazutal's kindness by preying upon mortals who venerate her.

## REALM

Kazutal maintains her realm, known as The Root of the Sky, on Nirvana. Her palace is built atop a massive pyramid surrounded by idyllic parks in the center of a sprawling city. The celestial inhabitants of Kazutal's realm maintain order, ensuring that no negative influences come to affect those who live within the realm.

## PLANAR ALLIES

The outsiders who serve Kazutal are a varied lot in many ways, each speaking to and for another aspect of their patron goddess.

**Kanantik (herald of Kazutal):** This couatl serves as one of Kazutal's most powerful manifestations of protection. Mortals who worship Kazutal have learned of Kanantik's mighty acts: ending the predations of the Seven Dozen Brothers, sending the Dread Boar to the Placid Lands, and single-handedly defeating the Nasijiil, a terrible divine dragon spawned from the depths of Xibalba. Kanantik responds to requests for aid with readiness and enthusiasm, especially if the besieged, downtrodden, and exploited require her services.

**Kwasimil (unique xacarba<sup>B2</sup>):** Kwasimil began her existence ages ago in the deepest regions of the Abyss. While she was sowing mistrust among the populace of Razatlan, a powerful priest of Kazutal banished the cruel fiend and then promptly followed Kwasimil to prevent the xacarba from starting her plot anew. The two struggled with each other at first, but over centuries, the Kazutali priest miraculously gained Kwasimil's trust and friendship. Now, Kwasimil is one of Kazutal's most devoted followers, and she eagerly accepts tasks that improve societies and ensure people work together to provide for their communities instead of finding differences.

**Maguel (unique agathion<sup>B5</sup>):** This jaguar-headed agathion serves as Kazutal's general and is skilled in various techniques of one-on-one battle and numerous arts of war. Worshippers who pride

themselves as great warriors often call upon Maguel. Maguel differs from Kazutal about how strictly orders should be followed or how rigidly one must adhere to rules, as Maguel is much more inclined toward hierarchy and obedience. The two enjoy discussing their differences in lengthy and passionate debates, knowing that they learn from one another every time due to their mutual respect and shared core values.



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## Ketephys

Part of the elven pantheon alongside Findeladlara and Yuelral, Ketephys oversees forestry, hunting, and the moon. The reserved deity answers the prayers of his followers quietly but reliably, helping the lost find their way or directing game to the starving. In return, he expects his followers to revere the forest and help it to bloom forever by never taking more than they need and always giving back to it. The Hunter himself is silent and elusive and has never been known to miss a shot, though he rarely uses his powers to cause harm. When he hunts alongside his silver hound and golden hawk companions, he disturbs not so much as a petal on a wildflower. His silver arrows may bring death to those he hunts, but far more often they carry his blessing.

## THE HUNTER

God of forestry, hunting, and the moon

**Alignment** CG

**Domains** Animal, Chaos, Good, Plant, Weather

**Subdomains** Azata, Feather, Fur, Growth, Moon, Seasons

**Favored Weapon** longbow

**Centers of Worship** Kyonin, Sovyrian

**Nationality** elf

**Obedience** Go into the woods sometime between dusk and dawn. Find a set of animal prints, and track the creature down. When you find the creature, do not kill it, but instead kneel down near it and thank it for being part of the forest. Leave an appropriate food offering for this creature, and go without waking it up if it is sleeping or frightening it if it is awake. If it accepts your offering, once you have left or it awakens, you gain a +2 sacred bonus on Handle Animal and wild empathy checks. You can also attempt Handle Animal checks untrained, even if the task would normally require that you be trained. If there are no woods nearby, you can track an animal through a different kind of natural terrain instead. If you cannot access natural terrain of any kind, you cannot perform this obedience.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Woods-walker (Sp)** *feather step*<sup>APG</sup> 3/day, *chameleon stride*<sup>APG</sup> 2/day, or *burst of speed*<sup>UC</sup> 1/day
- 2: Moonlight Vision (Ex)** You hunt at night, during Ketephys's hour, and your experiences have heightened your perception in poor lighting conditions. You gain low-light vision. If you already have low-light vision, you instead gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. You also gain a +4 sacred bonus on Perception checks at night.
- 3: Verdant Camouflage (Ex)** You know how to disappear as well as the Hunter himself does. You can use the Stealth skill even when being observed, as per the ranger's hide in plain sight ability, and whenever you are moving at half speed or slower, you have concealment from enemies. You gain a +4 sacred bonus on Stealth checks while in the forest.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Nature's Remedy (Sp)** *goodberry* 3/day, *resist energy* 2/day, or *remove disease* 1/day
- 2: Beckon Creatures (Su)** Your connection to the animals of the forest is deep, and they come running when they hear your call as quickly as they would come to help Ketephys. You gain wild empathy as per a druid of

your character level. Once per day as a standard action, you can let out a cry and all animals within 200 feet immediately come to you as quickly as possible. They will not take unnecessarily dangerous risks to reach you, such as leaping over wide streams. This is a magical call, and animals respond even if unable to hear the call due to environmental conditions or deafness. For a number of minutes equal to your exalted level, you can communicate with these animals as if you had cast *speak with animals*. They are automatically friendly to you but are not obligated to do what you ask.

**3: Heal Poison (Ex)** You have studied the venoms and poisons of the natural world enough to avoid their effects and help your allies. You gain immunity to poison. As a standard action when an ally is poisoned, you can attempt a Heal check to study the poison. If the result of your check exceeds the DC of the poison by 5, you immediately neutralize the poison and reverse the instantaneous or permanent effects caused by the poison, such as ability damage.

You do not heal hit point damage or ability damage or drain caused by any other effects, and you must attempt a separate check for each poison affecting your ally. You must be adjacent to your ally to use this ability. If you fail, you cannot use this ability for either that ally or that poison for 1 week.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Nature's Offense (Sp)** *entangle* 3/day, *gust of wind* 2/day, or *earth tremor* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Wilderness* 228) 1/day
- 2: Forest's Ward (Su)** You are a sacred guardian of the forest, protecting the wilderness as Ketephys does, and the forest protects you in turn. Whenever you are in the forest, you gain a +2 sacred bonus to AC. No matter what terrain you are in, creatures of the animal type must succeed at a Will save (DC = 10 + your Hit Dice) or be unable to attack you unless you harm them first.
- 3: Hunter's Shot (Ex)** You have practiced Ketephys's art of archery for so long that you can ignore effects that would ruin shots for lesser archers—some say your aim is as good as that of the Hunter himself. You ignore cover or concealment from plants, though trees large enough to completely block your vision still provide total cover to the target. You also take no penalties on your ranged attacks due to the effects of wind, and you ignore any miss chance caused by mundane or magical winds. This ability functions no matter what terrain you are in.

If you take from the forest, you are part of the forest. Protect it as you protect your home, or it will forsake you.

—The Ways of the Woods

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## UNDERSTANDING KETEPHYS

Though commonly worshipped among the elves of Golarion, Ketephys's power is strongest in Sovyrian, the secret ancestral home of elves, where they retreated after the Starstone struck in –5293 AR. The elves returned to Golarion in 2497 AR out of necessity when the demon Treerazer, Lord of the Blasted Tarn, moved into Kyonin after being exiled from the Abyss, threatening the sacred *elf gate* known as the *Sovyrian Stone*. The normally restrained Ketephys was livid to see the corruption of Kyonin's forests, as once-lush, green woods turned to poison and decay, and the earth rotted under the demon's influence. Ketephys personally led a team of expert archers as part of the battle to save Iadara, restore the forests, and drive Treerazer into the Fierani swamps. Though now returned to his normal peaceful state, Ketephys still swears to eliminate Treerazer and his influence from Golarion completely.

Ketephys's influence is generally weaker on Golarion than in Sovyrian, but nevertheless many elves in Kyonin worship him. Elven rangers and hunters worship him almost exclusively, as do many smaller communities. Some non-elven hunters worship Ketephys, and the open-minded god accepts these followers so long as they respect nature appropriately.

Ketephys appears as a russet-skinned elf with the eyes of a hawk, with hawk feathers in place of his hair. He wears a cloak of gray feathers, a simple hunting jerkin, and fur wraps around his ankles; his feet are bare. He is never without his two companions: a hawk named Falling Star and a dog named Meycho. He treats these animals as equals, not pets or servants, and when the three hunt together, each has equal say in their quarry.

Signals of Ketephys's approval include beams of clear moonlight, the silent appearance of an animal, or the sudden opening of nearby blossoms. Signs of his displeasure include branches catching on clothing, loud snapping of twigs underfoot, or seemingly solid ground turning into mud when stepped on.

## THE CHURCH

The worship of Ketephys is popular throughout Kyonin and among elves all over Golarion. Many elves worship the Hunter alongside the gods Findeladlara and Yuelral as part of a trio of elven deities, hoping the combined power of the three may have greater impact. They may also worship an elven pantheon that includes both the trio of elven gods and the goddess Calistria. Polytheism causes no jealousy among the elven gods, and all parties accept such worship. Smaller communities dependent on hunting for survival are more likely to worship Ketephys exclusively.

Churches of Ketephys teach survival skills, including archery, and there is a special ceremony when an elven

child receives her first bow. Most churches have archery targets set up nearby, and church leaders serve as instructors. The church also treats animals for injuries or illnesses and teaches others how to care for animals. Services are held just after moonrise and often outside if the weather permits. Families attend together. Services tend to be either practical or meditative. Sometimes, no words are spoken at all, in favor of tending local flora or silently taking in the beauty of the wilderness.

A Ketephysian elf goes on a solo hunt as a coming-of-age ceremony, though animal companions may accompany the young hunter. In traditional communities, the elf must not return without having killed a prey animal. The elf then prepares her catch for her family and the observing priest to prove she can help provide for the community. She often makes a garment from the fur or skin of this creature, which becomes a personal keepsake. The community's priests consider the creature to be a guiding spirit for the young elf's future, and the hunter is expected to ensure the overall health of that animal species whenever possible from that point onward. More modern communities instead accept a foraged meal or the death of an unnatural creature that is plaguing the forest.

It is the sacred duty of Ketephysians to keep the forest as healthy as possible and to never take more from it than is needed to survive. While hunting honors Ketephys, killing for sport dishonors him—the closest that Ketephys will accept to trophy hunting is the hunt of demons, undead, and other beings that corrupt the wild. Ketephysians sometimes embark on nonlethal hunts of animals, tracking down creatures to count their numbers and monitor the current health of the forest.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Ketephysians tend to build simple wooden structures for their churches, which also serve as wilderness outposts or hunting lodges. The attendants tend to be more interested in keeping the grounds or teaching visitors than in performing religious services, and the buildings themselves are usually covered with birdhouses, flowers, insect nests, plants, rotting logs, and other natural forest paraphernalia of all kinds. Some communities build one temple to honor a trio of elven deities—Ketephys, Findeladlara and Yuelral—and these temples are uniformly elaborate. The portions of these buildings dedicated to Ketephys are minimally decorated, however; in many cases, the Hunter's shrine is nothing more than a wild garden in the back of the church, filled with plants attractive to native fauna.

Traveling followers of Ketephys often create shrines in the woods, typically by arranging stones into the shape of his holy symbol: a hawk in front of a crescent moon, a few feet in diameter. Additional travelers who happen on these shrines leave small offerings around the edge, which usually take the form of broken arrowheads or items useful

for wilderness survival. Ketephysians say that if travelers are lost in the woods and find such a shrine, they should stand in the middle and spin around at least six times while asking Ketephys to guide their way. When they stop spinning, Ketephys points them in the direction of home.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

The structure of the Ketephysian church is loose, without a designated leader, and most high priests in Kyonin serve the elven pantheon as a whole. Many dedicated priests of Ketephys are either leaders in smaller communities or loners who travel around the forests, organizing hunts against unnatural beings that threaten the wilderness and helping any people or animals they come across. Elves make up the overwhelming majority of Ketephysian clergy, and most of the remainder are half-elves. A few gnomes, halflings, half-orcs, and humans take up the Hunter's mantle, though most of these adherents are lone wanderers, rather than community leaders.

At the first full moon of the year, priests of Ketephys from all over Golarion meet in a secret copse of woods not far from Iadara. In addition to numerous hunts and friendly competitions, the most important purpose of the meeting is to combine the magical abilities of the assembled clergy to verify that Treerazer remains blockaded in his twisted tree fortress of Witchbole. The clergy take it as their responsibility to watch the fortress for any resurgence of activity from the demon lord of pollution, as well as prepare for battle in the event they detect any expansion of the demon's territory. While priests of Ketephys don't consider themselves soldiers, they are prepared to take up their bows in service of the Hunter to drive out Treerazer, just as their forbearers did. The group also discusses any ongoing threats to the forests of Golarion to look for patterns, in case another great evil seeks to corrupt the woods, and they sometimes send out small groups after the meeting to investigate anything of concern.

Back in their home communities, Ketephysian priests provide more than just spiritual assistance to their neighbors. Priests of the Hunter pride themselves on their archery skills and give lessons to the community, even to those who don't worship Ketephys. They also teach general survival skills and frequently take small groups of their followers on multiday trips into the woods, teaching them how to build shelters, forage for food and water, hunt, and protect themselves from the elements. Priests take great care to both gain and impart knowledge of local flora and fauna, so that any of their followers can work to help the forest if it is in need. Ketephysian clergy are usually amenable to working with clergy of other divinities to help

provide for the community, and clergy of the elven pantheon in particular work together frequently.

Clerics of Ketephys can prepare *arcane mark* as an orison, *charm animal* as a 1st-level spell, *animal aspect*<sup>UC</sup> and *hold animal* as 2nd-level spells, and *aspect of the stag*<sup>APG</sup> as a 4th-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

Ketephysian followers often go adventuring, either alone or in small parties, preferring natural environments. They frequently set off to eliminate threats to a particular forest, but some adventurers are simply curious and want to see more of the world. Their skills in survival, tracking, and ranged combat make Ketephysians well-suited to the adventuring life, though they may fall short when faced with social situations, as the church of the Hunter doesn't train its faithful in social graces. Ketephysians usually avoid being in urban settings for any longer than necessary.

Other adventurers typically appreciate Ketephysians in their parties. Though often just as quiet as their god, followers of Ketephys get along well with others and aren't known for proselytizing. Their faith can help make inroads with goodly elves, and their survival



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## THE HUNTER'S SACRED BEASTS

Denizens of forests all over Kyonin recognize when Ketephy has hunted nearby. His arrows do not harm woodland creatures, but instead leave his mark, a small white crescent. Animals marked by Ketephy live a charmed life from then on, with divine providence protecting them from hunters and other predators. When these beasts reach the end of their natural lifespan, they go to the god's divine realm, the Amaranthine Forest, alongside all the other creatures blessed by Ketephy. Ketephy also uses these creatures as his eyes and ears, picking up on their fear if there's a threat or seeing through their eyes to observe the forest. Hunters who spot creatures marked with the white crescent smile at knowing Ketephy watches their woods—and also know not to waste their arrows.

When Meycho and Falling Star hunt, they similarly do not kill their prey, but leave their own marks: a half moon for Falling Star and a full moon for Meycho. Ketephy's followers searching for animal companions frequently look for creatures bearing Ketephy's mark, though the Hunter's blessing does not offer these creatures immunity from all dangers. Some followers paint or dye a small mark on their own animal companions as a sign of faith.

skills can help any party survive an expedition through the wilderness. Ketephy's followers typically try to avoid unnecessarily killing opponents, though they do not hesitate to do what is needed to protect themselves, their friends, and their forests.

## CLOTHING

Followers of Ketephy frequently go barefoot as the god does himself. They wear light armor or simple, close-fitting garments, following the same brown-and-white color scheme that the god prefers, with gold and silver accents. Those with long hair keep it tied back so it doesn't fall into their eyes and potentially ruin a shot. For religious celebrations or personal ceremonies like weddings, followers wear nicer attire and worked leather, but even then they still avoid elaborate garments or intricate jewelry. They often wear patterns with moons or feathers and incorporate flowers or leaves into their attire.

## HOLY TEXTS

Ketephy has nothing in the way of official holy books, but a few texts provide his divine insight.

**The Ways of the Woods:** Ketephy rarely speaks outside directing organized hunts and even more rarely commanding archers in battle, but this book collects his

occasional comments over several millennia. Most of the text is survival advice and admonishments to revere nature.

**Tales of Meycho and Falling Star:** Every elven home with children has this book of parables, recounting the lighthearted adventures of Ketephy's dog companion, Meycho, and his hawk companion, Falling Star. Most tales involve Meycho getting into trouble in the woods and Falling Star helping him get out of it, and each tale typically teaches a specific survival lesson.

## HOLIDAYS

Ketephy's communities tend to have feast days after successful hunts and large harvests, though these don't occur on the same day each year. Worshippers of Ketephy celebrate the following holiday.

**Reclamation:** Golarion communities that follow Ketephy celebrate Reclamation, a day in memory of the elves' return from Sovyrian to drive Treerazer from their forest. This is a day of feasts and demonstrations of physical prowess, including archery competitions and gymnastics. The holiday begins with a solemn ceremony in which everyone walks through a mock gate made of stacked stones, and continues well into the night with parties and dancing. The celebration in Iadara is citywide, and even those who don't particularly follow Ketephy join in.

## APHORISMS

The following phrases are common among Ketephy's followers.

**Let No Arrow Fly out of Your Sight:** Literally, this phrase admonishes careless archers to avoid shooting into the air or into the woods without being able to see where the arrow will land, but many elves use it to chide others who say careless or unkind words without consideration for who might hear.

**The Forest Remembers:** When a hunter takes aim to kill for sport, beyond the needs of the community, an ally might interrupt with this phrase. Ketephy's followers believe that if you take too much from the forest, it will remember and will withhold its bounty in the future.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Ketephy enjoys a close relationship with the elven deities Findeladlara the Guiding Hand and Yuelral the Wise. The Hunter is comfortable letting the other two speak for him on many matters, and elven followers and priests of any of these three know that they can call on the other two for help. The three are not universally aligned, though; most notably, Findeladlara's refusal to answer non-elves is sometimes at odds with Ketephy's and Yuelral's acceptance of half-elven and non-elven followers. Nevertheless, the elven gods aren't jealous of their followers' worship of additional gods, and the three work together to increase the impact of elven magic on Golarion.

Ketephys has an uneasy relationship with Erastil. The two approve of each other's focus on archery and hunting, and they have even participated in such activities together. However, Ketephys strongly disapproves of Erastil's insistence upon a particular lifestyle for everyone. While Ketephys delights in marriage and children, he also sees that many people are happier and more fulfilled following paths that do not involve settling down in that way. Erastil views this opinion as the capriciousness of elves, and looks down on many of the Hunter's followers as immature. Ketephys has a more amicable relationship with Gozreh, and the two gods align together in the fight against any who would threaten the natural world.

Ketephys is sworn to defeat Treerazer, Lord of the Blasted Tarn. Although Treerazer is holed up in a massive, twisted tree fortress known as Witchbole, Ketephys and his followers keep a careful eye on the nascent demon lord. Ketephys also watches Cyth-V'Sug, Prince of the Blasted Heath, demon lord of fungus and parasites and Treerazer's former master. Though Cyth-V'Sug expelled his spawn from the Abyss, Ketephys fears the two demon lords could work together to corrupt Kyonin and Golarion.

## REALM

Ketephys inhabits the Amaranthine Forest, an endless expanse of lush woods, bubbling streams, fields of wildflowers, and rolling hills in Elysium. Fortunate souls join Ketephys on his daily hunting parties, though the hunt is only for ritual and practice, as the spiritual beasts who inhabit the realm never actually die. The days are short, and evening stretches for hours under a moon that's always full. Some trees grow into the shape of living cabins, which house the residents of the realm, though no one but Ketephys can ever find the god's personal cabin.

## PLANAR ALLIES

The allies of Ketephys do their best to aid a follower in serious need—most of all his loyal animal companions Meycho and Falling Star, who act as Ketephys's heralds.

**Falling Star (unique celestial hawk):** The golden hawk that soars above Ketephys's head while hunting also answers the pleas of the Hunter's followers. She appears to children lost in the woods, guiding them to safety. Her sharp cries helped signal troops in the war against Treerazer, and the image of a golden hawk spurs on elven archery units to this day.

**Meycho (unique celestial riding dog):** This large, silver hunting dog often acts as a team with Falling Star to

help followers in need. He fights more aggressively than his hawk friend, and his loud bark sends evil creatures running.

**Rhondialle (unique ghaele azata):** The proud azata Rhondialle frequently joins Ketephys in the Amaranthine Forest for hunts, and the two have a close, if competitive, friendship. Rhondialle's outbursts when she loses are legendary, while Ketephys accepts both victory and defeat with his typical quiet grace. The tall, red-haired azata carries a massive bow in addition to the greatsword favored by ghaeles.



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## Magrim

Magrim's role as a divinity is preparing dwarven souls for judgment, escorting them to the River of Souls, and ensuring they appear before Pharasma when their appointed time comes. He is the oldest of the dwarven divinities, senior brother to both Torag and Angradd. Although the priests of Magrim acknowledge that Torag is the Father of Creation and greater in rank than his older sibling, Magrim's place as the eldest earns him the respect of nearly all other dwarven deities. He fills the role of ancestor to the gods, the root and the originator of the first dwarven clan—that of the dwarven deities—and though he is not the leader of that pantheon, this grants him a solemn and unique prestige.

## THE TASKMASTER

*Demigod of death, fate, and the underworld*

**Alignment** LN

**Domains** Earth, Law, Repose, Runes

**Subdomains** Ancestors, Inevitable, Souls, Wards

**Favored Weapon** hammer

**Centers of Worship** Highhelm, Larrad, Janderhoff, Rolgrimmudur, Tar-Kazmukh, Undercroft

**Nationality** Five Kings Mountains, dwarf

**Obedience** Using a chisel and hammer, carve the rune for “repose” on a stone entryway or cave entrance. If no appropriate entryway is available, carve multiple runes on a stone surface, creating an arch of runes related to Magrim. These runes can be marked on a stone surface representative of some entryway or passage, such as the stone cover of a book of knowledge (representing the entrance to greater learning), or the first stone of a road leading to a new land. Once you have finished carving your runes, spend at least 10 minutes maintaining the tools you used for this obedience. Gain a +2 sacred or profane bonus on saving throws against necromancy spells and death effects. The type of bonus depends on your alignment—if you’re neither good nor evil, you must choose either sacred or profane the first time you perform your obedience, and this choice can’t be changed.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Rune Master (Sp)** *rune trace* (Pathfinder RPG Adventurer’s Guide 61) 3/day, *share language*<sup>APG</sup> 2/day, or *symbol of healing*<sup>UM</sup> 1/day
- 2: Runes of Comprehension (Sp)** Once per day you can cast *communal tongues*<sup>UC</sup> as a spell-like ability. Each creature touched is marked with a glowing rune, which changes to represent the language that creature is able to speak and understand at any given moment.
- 3: The Task Ahead (Su)** Once per week, you can give a willing creature an opportunity to prepare for the afterlife. This functions as a *geas/quest*, but the task assigned is one randomly determined by the GM and is lawful in nature and in keeping with the tenets of Magrim. Only a creature that is willing to be the target of this ability, without coercion, can be affected. After the task is completed, the target creature receives the benefit of an *atonement* spell.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Grave Watcher (Sp)** *deathwatch* 3/day, *gentle repose* 2/day, or *blessing of the mole*<sup>UM</sup> 1/day
- 2: Rune of Measurement (Su)** You can learn about the

judgment passed on the soul of a deceased creature. As a standard action, you can cause runes to appear on an adjacent, unattended corpse, which you can read to attempt to gain insight into

the deceased or its soul. If the creature has been dead for a year or less, you can attempt a Knowledge (planes) check with a DC equal to the DC for a monster lore check about the creature when it was alive. If successful, you learn information as if you had used the appropriate Knowledge skill to learn about the creature when it was living. If the creature has been dead for more than a year, you have a 75% chance of learning what plane its soul was sent to by Pharasma and a 25% chance of learning nothing. If the soul has not yet been judged, has somehow escaped judgment, or has been reincarnated, you receive nothing (which is indistinguishable from the 25% of the time this ability fails). The results of multiple attempts to learn about the same corpse within a year are always the same.

**3: Death Words (Su)** When you deliver the killing blow to a creature, you gain the ability to ask it a single question as if you had cast *speak with dead*. Asking the question is a standard action, which you must use within a number of minutes equal to your Hit Dice.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Lawgiver (Sp)** *command* 3/day, *ghostbane dirge*<sup>APG</sup> 2/day, or *explosive runes* 1/day
- 2: Endbringer (Su)** Three times per day as a standard action, you can drive back undead creatures. This functions as if you had used the Turn Undead feat (though you do not need to have the channel energy ability or expend uses of channel energy to do this), and the save DC is 10 + half your character level + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (whichever is highest).
- 3: Soulforged (Sp)** Once per day, you can show a creature within 60 feet a flash of what work remains in order for them to be ready for the afterlife. The target must attempt a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + half your character level + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier [whichever is highest]). If it fails its save, you show it a mental image of its destined plane in the afterlife, depending on the creature’s alignment and its adherence to its ethos, if it succeeds at finishing its mortal business. If the target is good-aligned, it is fascinated for 1d4 rounds on a failed save. If the target is neutral-aligned, it is confused for 1d4 rounds on a failed save. If the target is evil-aligned, it is staggered for 1d4 rounds on a failed save.



Every soul is crafted—hammered and then tempered by life. Some are then ready for their next task. Others must go back into the fire of the forge.

—Magrim’s Measure

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## UNDERSTANDING MAGRIM

Known as the Taskmaster, Magrim oversees ensuring that dwarven souls have appropriate, fulfilling tasks in life and are prepared for the next step of their existence after death. When dwarves fall short of this state of readiness, Magrim seeks to reshape them through whatever means are necessary to allow them to fulfill their roles. In life, the purpose of these tasks is to build something great and feel satisfaction in having done so, while the labors Magrim provides in the afterlife are meant to give the souls of departed dwarves eternal purpose and contentment.

Magrim is not a divinity who revels in complex plans or obscure destinies, instead preferring to act as straightforwardly as possible. As a lawgiver and overseer of the dead, Magrim believes in ensuring that all creatures have the tools needed to do all the things asked of them. While Torag created the dwarven race at his forge and sends them riddles and omens to help guide them, it was the more staid Magrim who taught the first dwarves how to properly commune with their gods.

Magrim is also the keeper of a series of named runes, which he uses to judge the qualities and temper of a dwarven soul before bringing it before Pharasma. Each rune has its own power related to a specific concept and, on rare occasions, Magrim loans such runes out to his most faithful followers to aid them in accomplishing specific tasks. However, most runes in the possession of his church are holy runeplates, infused with the power of runes as taught to his followers, but not the true runes Magrim carries for his own use.

Magrim is depicted as an ancient dwarf with black iron skin and molten orange eyes. His head is bald, and the white hair of his beard is woven into multiple braids of varying thickness. He wears a thick blacksmith's apron made of stone and holds a red-hot blacksmith's hammer in his rune-carved stone blacksmith's gloves.

Magrim's holy symbol is a cave or tomb entrance that is carved with runes. While he rarely interferes in mortal life with divine omens, the results tend to be obvious and spectacular when he does so. Signs of Magrim's approval include mundane tools and crafts becoming magical when created, runes becoming wards of protection, and stone splitting cleanly beneath hammers and chisels. Signs of his disapproval involve crafted items shattering, magical runes turning against their caster, and metal objects becoming blazing hot for just long enough to burn whoever is touching them.

## THE CHURCH

Services to Magrim within each community normally follow centuries-old traditions of how that clan or nation has always honored the Taskmaster, but when dwarves

find themselves cut off from knowledge of their traditions (or a new community of dwarves grows from ones with different older traditions), his holy tomes provide a number of specific practices the deity always finds acceptable. Services take place indoors, preferably within a stone cavern or building, but if no such structure is available, even a temporary woven roof or tent will suffice. The names of Magrim and the other dwarven divinities are spoken, in order of age, followed by a list of priests of Magrim going back as far as records allow. A short instructional period is spent learning about runes and all forms of written language, and then reviewing local laws. The officiant then speaks of all tasks performed well since the last service and calls for a list of known needful tasks that should be undertaken by the community.

The primary goal of the church of Magrim is ensuring the dead are left at peace, which requires that the proper funeral rites are observed. Bodies of the deceased are to be treated with respect, cleaned and dressed or wrapped appropriately, and then placed in a secure location where they are kept safe from the predations of necromancers and the undead. The church is also a strong proponent of traditional dwarven culture, working to ensure that the dwarven language and values change as little as possible regardless of time or distance. This is seen as key to preparing living dwarves for their eventual judgment before Pharasma, because dwarves who follow dwarven values have a road map for how to live their lives. A dwarf forging a unique path through the world is not considered evil or disrespectful, but to be taking a tremendous risk with eternal consequences.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Each dwarven community has a single place dedicated to the worship of Magrim, which is also almost always a place of work, such as a forge, mine, or even a bakery. Normally, these are businesses that were founded by priests of Magrim in the early days of the settlement, which naturally evolved to be joint crafting sites and temples. In most cases, they are still owned privately, with priests of Magrim given access to them during hours when work is not being done.

A minor shrine to Magrim might be little more than a kiln marked with a single rune. Larger temples are most often mines or forges, designed first and foremost as places of satisfying work, but with runes describing Magrim's philosophies as the primary decoration. While these function as normal workplaces during work hours, before and after the workday the faithful can gather to learn runes, receive history lessons, and hold services for the dead.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Priests of Magrim almost always have other roles within their community as well, often as artisans, clan leaders,



and advisors to the community's leaders, though they themselves almost never take a position of leadership within a government. The church focuses on overseeing the preparation of funerals: seeing to it that traditional rites for cleaning and dressing of the deceased's body are followed, that the body is interred in a proper tomb or burial site, and that such sites are maintained and guarded. Priests also instruct the young in reading and writing. The church provides free guidance to all who ask on how to lead a life that will earn the desired reward in the afterlife.

A typical priest of Magrim begins each day by seeking an enclosed place of stone or ceramic to pray to Magrim for wisdom and even-handedness. While caves are used for this purpose if available, the priests of each community develop their own traditions about where such prayers occur, and these rarely change. After prayers, ablutions are made, and then the priest eats breakfast in a public place. During this time, those seeking advice from the priest may approach and explain their concerns or confusion. No answer is immediately given; instead, the priest sets aside a time for the petitioner to return. This time is never any earlier than the next day so that any advice given will benefit from both careful thought and prayer.

In most cases, the priest then goes to work, which often takes place within a business that doubles as a temple to Magrim. Work is seen as sacred, and if it must be interrupted for some religious matter that cannot wait, the work is put aside until it can be taken up again with the priest's full attention. At the end of the work day, when others go to spend time with family and friends, the priest instead stays and engages in any duties required by the church. Holy objects are cleaned and tended to, bodies are prepared for funerals, and graves are maintained. If possible, services are held after sundown, to return the temple to the darkness in which dwarves lived before the Quest for Sky. Finally, the priest has an evening meal, often with friends and fellow worshippers, though this time may also be used to mentor struggling journeymen who have not found satisfaction in their work, or to meet with those who asked for guidance on prior days.

Clerics and oracles of Magrim can prepare *arcane mark* and *disrupt undead* as orisons, *symbol of mirroring*<sup>UM</sup> as a 2nd-level spell, *greater brand*<sup>APG</sup> as a 4th-level spell, and *firebrand*<sup>APG</sup> as a 7th-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

The majority of adventurers who serve Magrim are either dwarves who defend tombs and graves of their settlements (who call on Magrim in his role as dwarven god of death and the underworld), or scholars and historians who wish to have access to the troves of lore kept by his church and sometimes granted by the deity directly. In either

case, these adventurers are extremely cautious when dealing with anything that might be considered tomb robbing or the destruction of lore containing knowledge of traditions and history. Destroying the undead or tomes of fell magic is always acceptable, but breaking into a still-sealed tomb, disturbing bodies or the possessions of corpses that remain lying in state, or setting fire to records and histories that bear no such traces of evil magic is never allowed.

It is very rare for any non-dwarves to worship Magrim, though certainly those who follow Pharasma may call on his name when dealing with dwarven burial sites, along with any person forced to deal with perverse magic that damages or destroys souls. Some casual worshippers follow his edicts simply because their forefathers did, but even among these less devout, disturbing a sealed tomb is generally considered anathema.



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## MAGRIM'S PALADIN CODE

Magrim places order and unchanging dependability above benevolence, but as the keeper of the dwarven afterlife and patron of the dead, he also insists on respect and security for the tombs of his faithful and those buried in keeping with his teachings. Thus, a small number of holy warriors periodically arise from the ranks of his most devout agents to protect tombs from the ravages of undead and prevent the spread of undeath from interfering with their demigod's goals. While all paladins of Magrim serve the demigod in their own way, each is also dedicated to this code.

- The dead have earned their peace. I shall see them put to rest with respect, and do my utmost to keep their graves and tombs honored and undisturbed.
- Should some force or custom insist on treating the graves of the passed as anything other than a place of quiet memorial, I shall do all in my power to end this practice.
- The undead have stepped out of the natural order of life and death, and they threaten the sanctity of the grave. I shall seek to destroy them when possible, and keep them from the resting places of others.
- Rituals, magic, and tortures that damage the soul undo the work of the Taskmaster. I will destroy those who use these methods, and seek to repair those who have fallen victim to these crimes.
- Though I shall not do the work for them, I shall aid others in completing tasks that are important to them whenever it is possible and moral, so that they will not go to the grave with unfinished business.

## CLOTHING

Magrim's faithful normally dress themselves entirely in garments of black and white, though the balance of those two colors depends very much on each supplicant's task. In their role as counselors and teachers, priests favor white; when they're digging, fighting, or forging, black is the primary color. Wearing white for funerary preparation is considered a sign of disrespect to the dead, as any stain left from the body will be visible. If clothing of another color is needed, such as when in disguise or wearing an unrelated uniform, the faithful generally wear a reversible black-and-white cloth wrapped around one forearm.

## HOLY TEXT

Magrim's holy texts are guidebooks on preparing for the afterlife, and how and why to respect tradition as the voice of the dead.

**Magrim's Measure:** The primary text of the Taskmaster's faithful, *Magrim's Measure*, is a long list of the traditional

methods for doing nearly everything common to dwarven life, and a list of which dwarven god oversees each activity.

**Journey of the Last Breath:** A less prosaic book than *Magrim's Measure*, *Journey of the Last Breath* informs dwarves of the eternal nature of the afterlife and gives guidance on what kinds of overarching life choices are likely to lead to various assignments in the Great Beyond after death. It doesn't promote any specific ethos a dwarf should follow, but simply shows how what one does in life is used to judge the final destination of one's soul.

## HOLIDAYS

Magrim's church has a specific set of ancient traditional holidays that has not changed since before the Quest for Sky. Though the holidays of all dwarven gods other than Droskar are observed, the primary one is Runefeast.

**Runefeast:** Runefeast marks the occasion of Magrim teaching the first runes to dwarves and instructing them on the proper way to pray to the dwarven gods. It is celebrated on the summer equinox, but the date must be determined by counting forward from the previous Runefeast using complex runic calendars, rather than celestial observations. If a community loses its runic calendars, a journey must be undertaken to find an older set in another dwarven settlement and copy all of the relevant information.

## APHORISMS

Magrim's focus on practical, straightforward ways of handling things is carried on in his formal teachings, which include some of the oldest religious texts among dwarves. If something sounds like an allegory or parable, it's likely because the original context has been lost, while the words have been shared unchanging for centuries.

**Tomorrow May Not Come:** This is a warning not to put off things one needs to take care of, because death can come unexpectedly.

**Tradition Is the Voice of Our Ancestors:** Magrim teaches that traditions exist for a reason, and to ignore those traditions is to ignore the thought and preparation that made such actions traditional.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Magrim gets along well with most other dwarven deities, and they with him, not least because he rarely involves himself in any of their areas of concern even when he disagrees with them. He feels his younger brothers Torag and Angradd are both too protective and too willing to place doing the right thing over the need to maintain order, but he respects them both for doing their work and leaving him to do his. He is one of the few divinities to get along well with his half-sister Drannigvit, who he works with to ensure any vengeance that dwarves must carry out to uphold tradition is handled within their lifetimes, so it does not become unfinished business that might lead

to them becoming ghosts or other undead. The only dwarven god that takes issue with Magrim is Droskar, who covets Magrim's place as Taskmaster. Magrim responds to Droskar's ongoing enmity by largely ignoring it, describing Droskar as lost, nontraditional, and shortsighted, but not important enough to expend any effort on.

Magrim works closely with Pharasma, and honors her role as goddess of death. He is an ancient dwarven deity, but when he was young, Pharasma already sat on her spire in the Boneyard, judging the souls of all things born mortal. While Magrim is cordial and proper with all deities who treat him with respect, the Lady of Graves is the only god to whom he is deferential, treating her as a respected elder. In return, whenever a soul that is damaged or broken enters the Boneyard, Pharasma requests the Taskmaster repair it at his forge.

Magrim also has good relationships with most other deities with strong ties to runes, and sometimes acts as a conduit for Irori and Nethys to interact when Nethys's desire to dissect Irori for study causes friction. Similarly, Magrim and Magdh have friendly debates on the nature and origins of runes. However, Magrim despises the daemon harbinger Stygidvod, who Magrim claims stole knowledge of runes from the souls of dead dwarven priests and who encourages mortals to fear aging and seek radical means of achieving immortality.

## REALM

Magrim has two realms in the Great Beyond. His original home is the Cloister, beneath Heaven in a cave not far from the realm of Torag, which Magrim established when the dwarven deities excavated the interior of the mountain of Heaven while digging up to the surface of the Outer Sphere. He spends little time there personally, but maintains it for dwarven petitioners. His other realm is the Runebarrow, a vast cave tomb set in the Boneyard, which is accessed through a single cave mouth that is guarded by a rune of protection known as the Grathark. Only Magrim, his agents, and psychopomps in the service of Pharasma can pass through the opening beneath the Grathark without Magrim's permission.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Magrim's planar servants are selected for efficiency and loyalty above any other concern.

**Hruet (herald of Magrim):** Magrim found this half-celestial buggane<sup>B4</sup> drifting in the Astral Plane as an abandoned infant. Though Magrim normally does not interfere with matters that don't concern him, Hruet's mole-like appearance softened the deity's heart, and its golden tusks piqued his curiosity. Hruet was raised

in Magrim's Cloister in Heaven and on reaching adulthood became one of the demigod's most trusted servants.

**Kvathenine (unique great wyrm brine dragon<sup>B2</sup>):** A truly massive and ancient brine dragon, Kvathenine petitioned Magrim for aid when some of her children were slain by agents of Droskar, who then sought to steal their souls. Kvathenine aids the chosen of Magrim in recompense, usually offering good advice instead of direct action unless the works of Magrim are threatened directly.



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## Nivi Rhombodazzle

The ultimate high roller, Nivi Rhombodazzle is said to have bought her divinity from Torag in exchange for a gem. Though her worship is relatively uncommon on the surface world, Nivi counts itinerant gamblers and shiftless but good-natured rogues among her worshippers, and many gnome adventurers who routinely travel underground carry a die with seven pips on one side, hoping that Nivi Rhombodazzle will share a little of her outrageous fortune with them. Most outsiders' knowledge of Nivi comes through contact with one of her risk-taking lay worshippers, and travelers in the Darklands who have dealings with the swirfneblin may learn of Nivi from them—for her faith is strongest in the depths of the earth.

## THE GRAY POLYCHROME

*Demigoddess of gems, stealth, and gambling*

**Alignment** N

**Domains** Community, Earth, Luck, Trickery

**Subdomains** Caves, Deception, Fate, Thievery

**Favored Weapon** light hammer

**Centers of Worship** Dwimovel, Darklands

**Nationality** gnome

**Obedience** Engage in a game of chance in which money, gems, or items worth at least 10 gp are at stake. This must be a wager that both parties enter into willingly. Offer a prayer out loud to Nivi Rhombodazzle before the wager begins (for example, if the wager involves dice, offer up the prayer before the dice are rolled). If you are alone and there is no one else to wager against, make a bet against yourself on Nivi's behalf, setting aside the stakes as an offering in the event that Nivi's side of the wager wins. Spend time privately reveling in the exciting thrill of making a risky wager and preparing yourself for the inevitable moment when the dice turn against you. Gain a +4 sacred or profane bonus on Bluff and Sleight of Hand checks. The type of bonus depends on your alignment—if you're neither good nor evil, you must choose either sacred or profane the first time you perform your obedience. Once made, this choice can't be changed.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Gambler's Essentials (Sp)** *true strike* 3/day, *augury* 2/day, or *haste* 1/day
- 2: Gambler's Egress (Sp)** Nivi Rhombodazzle fled from angry creditors long ago, and her worshippers are encouraged to learn from her wisdom. Three times per day as a swift action, you can cast *litany of escape*<sup>uc</sup> as a spell-like ability, targeting yourself or an ally.
- 3: Gambler's Prayer (Su)** Three times per day as a standard action, you can offer up a quick prayer to Nivi Rhombodazzle that also serves as a wager with the demigoddess. Using this ability is similar to activating a *rod of wonder*; choose a single target within 60 feet and then roll on the *rod of wonder's* Wondrous Effect table to learn the result of this ability. If you roll a result of 88–90, the gemstones that erupt are blessed by Nivi, dealing an additional amount of bludgeoning and piercing damage equal to your Charisma bonus on each successful strike.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Faithful's Fortune (Sp)** *bless* 3/day, *misdirection* 2/day, or *heroism* 1/day

- 2: Gemstone Guardian (Sp)** Once per day as a standard action, you can summon a Huge earth elemental. You gain telepathy with the earth elemental to a range of 100 feet. The earth elemental follows your commands perfectly for 1 minute for every Hit Die you have before vanishing back to the Plane of Earth. The earth elemental won't follow any commands that cause it to bring direct harm to a gnome or svirfneblin, though it can be commanded to grapple or restrain such a creature.
- 3: Seven-Pipped Gem (Su)** As an immediate action, you can gain a luck bonus on a single d20 roll equal to half your total Hit Dice (minimum 1). You can use this ability after you have rolled, but must declare the use of this ability before you know the result of the check. If this roll is made as part of a Sleight of Hand check or game of chance, the luck bonus is instead equal to your total Hit Dice. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma bonus (minimum 1). Once you have used all of your daily uses of this ability, you can attempt to use this ability one additional time, but there is a 50% chance that instead of gaining a luck bonus on the roll, you instead take a penalty equal to the bonus you would have received.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Communal Combatant (Sp)** *divine favor* 3/day, *shield other* 2/day, or *prayer* 1/day
- 2: Stone Strikes (Ex)** Once per round when you deal damage to an opponent with a weapon from the hammers weapon group or any weapon with "gnome" in its name, you can attempt a sunder combat maneuver check as a free action against any weapon or armor the target of the attack is wielding or wearing. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You gain a +2 competence bonus on your combat maneuver check for each size category larger than you the target is.
- 3: Strength of the Earth (Ex)** You gain the ability to enter a defensive stance, as per the stalwart defender<sup>APG</sup> class feature, treating your sentinel levels as stalwart defender levels when determining the total number of rounds you can use this ability each day. While in a defensive stance, you gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +4 morale bonus to Strength and Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves. While you are fatigued from using this ability, you can also use your stone strikes ability whenever a creature damages you with a melee attack, though you can still use stone strikes only once per round.

May She-Of-  
All-Colors-And-  
None help these  
dice roll well—  
but not too well.

—A common  
prayer to the Gray  
Polychrome

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## UNDERSTANDING NIVI RHOMBODAZZLE

According to legend, Nivi Rhombodazzle was a gnome who loved the thrill of high-stakes gambling. While she was successful more often than not, she discovered, as most gamblers do, that luck inevitably runs out. Nivi's love of gambling was born not from the rush of victory, but from the excitement of the bet itself, an attitude that ultimately brought her into a situation where her debts outweighed her charms. Keeping one step ahead of her creditors, Nivi fled beneath the earth and into the Darklands. While the exact details of her early adventures underground are shrouded in mystery (mystery that some say is perpetuated by Nivi herself), what is known is that she ultimately became the first member of the svirfneblin race. Whether her transformation into a svirfneblin was a result of strange eldritch energies in the Darklands, or was part of the blessing she received when she was granted divinity by Torag in exchange for a special gemstone, is unknown.

Some of Nivi's most fervent, if desperate, worshippers include those unfortunate gnomes who have begun to succumb to the Bleaching due to a lack of novelty and excitement in their lives. These unfortunate souls often turn to the Gray Polychrome in the hope that a divinity whose faith and existence are founded upon chance can provide them with new and exciting experiences. Some of Nivi's worshippers who have suffered the Bleaching repeat second-hand legends passed down by gnome storytellers that Nivi suffered the Bleaching during her time in the Darklands before becoming a svirfneblin; these stories often allude to the idea that even if a gnome cannot come back from the Bleaching, she might achieve new life as a svirfneblin with Nivi's blessing.

Nivi Rhombodazzle appears as a svirfneblin with gray hair, dressed in gray and red, and covered in precious jewelry made from gems. Her favor and disfavor take the form of wild strings of fortune or misfortune, though most followers accept that sometimes Nivi might cause failure without malice, just to make life more interesting.

### NIVI'S CHURCH

The church of Nivi Rhombodazzle has relatively few rites or rituals outside of individual svirfneblin settlements, due to the fact that most who hear the call to serve the Gray Polychrome share her impetuous and independent nature. Svirfneblin clerics of Nivi often travel the dangerous roads of the Darklands, looking for isolated svirfneblin towns in need of excitement. Despite this, Nivi's faith believes in the value of community, as games of chance are best enjoyed with friends or acquaintances. Though Nivians are rarely responsible and tend to flee when their debts grow too deep, they are loyal and often take great risks to aid their

friends or help other people flee from danger if required. A Nivian church can be found hiding in any svirfneblin town, lurking in the basements of pawn shops and gambling halls and providing emotional support (though rarely financial assistance) to the bored or desperate people attracted to such places. The two largest churches of Nivi are the Cult of the Shining Diamond and the Blue Twilight.

The Blue Twilight represents the closest thing to a true orthodoxy amongst Nivi's worshippers. Priests of the Blue Twilight wear brooches shaped like six-sided dice, cut from a single large sapphire. In some instances this brooch is also a functional die, perfectly balanced and used in particularly important games of chance, such as wagers where a Nivian arbiter has been entrusted with overseeing the game. Questions of rank and leadership within the Blue Twilight are resolved through high-stakes gambling, sometimes via card games but most often using these holy dice.

The Cult of the Shining Diamond consists largely of surface gnome lay worshippers led by a small number of svirfneblin priests. Priests of the Cult of the Shining Diamond wear a die-shaped brooch like their Blue Twilight counterparts, but rather than carving the die from sapphire, it is instead carved from stone and set with diamond pips. The Cult of the Shining Diamond is considered somewhat disreputable, as it is not above converting gnomes to the faith by using the threat of the Bleaching as a cudgel. While the priests avoid explicitly promising that worshipping Nivi will protect a gnome from the Bleaching, they do take great pains to mention Nivi's gnome heritage in sermons and frequently imply that the svirfneblin physiology was created by Nivi so that her chosen would not need to fear the Bleaching's effects.

### TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Nivian temples are typically, though not always, modest affairs. Many Nivian shrines are little more than simple stone monuments with a lipped depression that allows a worshipper to roll dice in a ceremonial wager without fear that the die will roll out of the shrine and become lost (an extremely dire portent). Art and motifs in such shrines typically depict dice, cards, and other games of chance, surrounded by frescoes invoking themes of incredible luck or acts of particularly clever deception. Every shrine to Nivi has a depiction of her seven-pipped die etched somewhere on its surface.

In larger svirfneblin settlements, true churches double as emergency shelters and hiding places. Typically carved directly into the stone walls of a cavern or particularly huge stalagmites, these churches reflect the focus on pragmatism and function necessary for surviving in the dangerous caverns of the Darklands, with any ostentatious or valuable art and gems kept hidden inside the church where they won't serve as a temptation



to drow, duergar, or derro spies. Nivi's temples almost always have secret escape tunnels or hidden rooms within them, ensuring no one who takes refuge in the building is ever trapped inside.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Nivian priests see it as their duty to ensure that those who are able to are living life to the fullest. Though those outside the faith often look down on this goal, as Nivians are well known for spurring themselves and others to gamble far beyond the boundaries of responsibility, surface gnomes who worship Nivi Rhombodazzle hold this duty particularly sacred. Ever vulnerable to the ravages of ennui, gnomes believe that Nivi's call is not just an exhortation toward a desirable way of life, but also a bulwark against the encroachment of the Bleaching.

In svirfneblin communities, Nivian priests serve as valuable advisors to secular leadership, casting auguries to divine favorable times for mining expeditions, providing blessings to expedition leaders, and accompanying expeditions into particularly dangerous territories. Nivian priests are often called upon to arbitrate, using their wisdom and their access to divine insight to reach ideal solutions. If wisdom and magic fail to provide a solution, priests of Nivi Rhombodazzle turn to their dice to decide the final resolution of the dispute.

Nivian priests are rare in surface communities, though their goals are largely the same. While most svirfneblin consider Nivi to be a purely svirfneblin demigoddess, priests of Nivi among surface communities rarely pay any mind to the race and ancestry of their followers. A Nivian priestess who converts a human considers that human to be just as much a part of her family as her own children, and it is not uncommon for Nivians to find themselves the caretakers of orphanages or other shelters for those whose fortunes have turned against them. Outsiders are often shocked at what the caretakers teach in these orphanages, though; a child raised in a Nivian orphanage is likely to know the rules for every game of chance played in the region, and their education is heavy on statistical probability but short on many other sciences. These children often grow up to become priests of

Nivi themselves, spreading Nivi's word when they leave to seek their fortunes.

Clerics of Nivi Rhombodazzle can prepare *expeditious excavation*<sup>APG</sup> as a 1st-level spell and *greater invisibility* as a 4th-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

Adventurers who worship Nivi and call upon her for divine aid sometimes seem suicidal to outsiders, raising the ante far past the point where any reasonable person would cut and run. These individuals see battle against a fearsome opponent as the supreme example of a daring wager, with their very lives serving as the stakes bet against an unknown reward. Despite this predilection toward risky behavior, clerics, inquisitors, and others who serve Nivi are regarded as valuable allies, since Nivi's followers have access to effects that support or protect their comrades.

Not all who pray to the Gray Polychrome do so in hopes of gaining divine power. Many stalwart warriors and cunning spies hide a die with a seven-pipped face in a pocket or offer a prayer for luck before combat or engaging in some risky behavior.

These lay worshippers of Nivi Rhombodazzle are much more focused on Nivi's history as a gambler, and may not even be aware of her importance among gnome and svirfneblin communities.

## CLOTHING

Worshippers of Nivi Rhombodazzle dress in plain, though finely made, clothes woven in shades of gray.

Designs on the clothing, if any, tend to portray either dice or the wearer's preferred game of chance. Wearing gray not only pays homage to the Gray Polychrome, but also shows attentiveness to the lessons taught by Nivi's ascension—gray tends to blend in regardless of the location and circumstances, making it easy for a gambler who has stretched her luck too far to make an unobtrusive exit, or for an adventurer faced with overwhelming odds to quietly slip away unnoticed.



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## NIVI'S FAITHFUL

Nivi Rhombodazzle is most commonly worshipped by gnomes, and svirfneblin in particular, but members of other races may come to worship her through a variety of different circumstances. One of the most common ways that non-gnomes are exposed to Nivi is, perhaps unsurprisingly, during games of chance. Whether witnessing a gnome gambler displaying exceptional luck or skill in a game of chance or simply asking about the odd seven-pipped die worn by one of her worshippers, many who inquire into Nivi's faith find the stories of the daring gnome who braved the Darklands and emerged a divinity exciting and inspiring.

Surface gnomes are most likely to convert to Nivi's worship once they have begun to succumb to the Bleaching, or after witnessing another gnome succumb. Nivi's focus on high-risk gambling provides an intense emotional rush that can keep a long life exciting and interesting, and she stands as a beacon of hope given that there are virtually no known instances of svirfneblin succumbing to the Bleaching. While few gnomes dare to emulate Nivi's journey from the surface into the Darklands, more optimistically believe that worshipping her can provide some protection from the Bleaching's deleterious effects.

## HOLY TEXT

Nivi Rhombodazzle's holy texts offer lessons for the faithful, but tend to focus less on theology and more on excitement.

**The Book of Seven Wagers:** The premier holy text for the Nivian faithful, the *Book of Seven Wagers* details Nivi's life prior to her ascension. Each wager is presented in the form of a parable marking a particular event from Nivi's mortal life and teaching the importance of one of her core tenets: cleverness, community, fate, knowledge of stone and gems, luck, skill, and wisdom.

## HOLIDAYS

Nivi's followers typically see any holiday that encourages large gatherings as a great opportunity to either experience exciting events that help stave off the Bleaching or to gather groups for games of chance. The following holiday is of particular significance to Nivians.

**Day of Bargained Ascension:** Celebrated on the day of the new moon of Rova (which Nivi's followers refer to as Torawsh as a sign of respect to Torag), the Day of Bargained Ascension is perhaps the most notable and unusual of Nivian holidays. This high holy day celebrates Nivi's transformation into a godling by Torag after Nivi gifted the dwarven deity an exceedingly rare gemstone. The day is marked with gambling, encompassing everything from

dice games to wagers on athletic competitions, and Nivians often come with rare valuables to bet with one another.

## APHORISMS

Nivians typically utter the following aphorisms, believing Nivi to have uttered them first.

**The Worse Your Luck, the Greater the Payoff When It Turns:** This simple saying is the best-known Nivian aphorism, both evoking the circumstances of Nivi's ascension and exhorting her followers to continue pressing forward even when nothing goes their way. Many Nivian priests who find themselves in trouble chant this saying in a quiet hymn, reminding themselves that as long as they are alive, there is still a chance for their luck to change and their circumstances to improve.

**There's No Such Thing as "Too Lucky":** This saying serves as both a reminder to enjoy the blessings life brings, and also a warning that if someone's luck seems too good to be true, there may be more to it than meets the eye.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Nivians have a special relationship with the followers of Torag, though the exact nature of that relationship varies depending on which side is providing the explanation. Followers of Torag see Nivi as a somewhat hapless, though good-natured, divinity whose freewheeling habits are best mitigated by a firm guiding hand, and they tend to adopt a similar mindset with regards to her worshippers. Followers of Nivi Rhombodazzle see Torag and his followers as stuffy but generally decent folk in need of more world-wise allies to help file off their overly stern rough edges. Outliers of each religion may have a less appreciative view: some followers of Torag view Nivians as bad influences prone to leading the faithful away from the narrow path, while more self-interested Nivians tend to see the relationship between Torag and Nivi as one where Nivi got the better of a musty old god by trading a gemstone for divinity.

Nivians tend to get along famously with followers of Cayden Cailean and Desna, as the free-spirited and adventurous nature of those deities is highly compatible with the behaviors espoused and encouraged by Nivi and her priesthood. While Cayden Cailean and his followers tend to be much more boisterous than the more subdued Nivians and Desnans tend to lack the more community-focused, stable tendencies of Nivi's worshippers, both faiths view Nivi Rhombodazzle and her followers as kindred spirits and allies. Nivians often feel a strong need to "adopt" Desnans and Caydenites they encounter, seeing the worshippers of these gods as rambunctious but entertaining allies.

Nivians avoid followers of Asmodeus as much as possible, since the Lord of Law's emphasis on adherence

and enforcement of contractual obligations often leads his followers to treat gamblers fleeing their debts with persistent cruelty. Few but the bravest Nivians dare engage in games of chance where Asmodeans hold the reins of power. Some Nivians also view followers of Iomedae as being little different from Asmodeans in practice, since their adherence to law and order is similar in many regards; both paladins and Hellknights are viewed as potential threats by cautious Nivians.

## REALM

Nivi's affinity for earth and caves is reflected in her home on the Plane of Earth, but she is unusual among the gods for not maintaining a stable divine realm of her own—though some rumors claim she lost hers in a bet. Instead, Nivi tends to set up temporary residence in massive, jewel-studded caverns deep within the Eternal Delve or on the Material Plane. Nivi has few enemies, and she occasionally agrees to serve as a neutral arbiter between powerful entities who wish to meet and parlay, though all visitors to any of Nivi's abodes are required to play at least one game of chance before conducting any other business.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Nivi's status as a demigoddess of earth and gems is strongly reflected in the powerful allies who serve her.

**Quiet (unique svirfneblin rogue 20):** Quiet is said to have known Nivi since her days as a mortal being, though his exact relationship with her varies depending on who is telling the story. Some priests claim that Quiet was Nivi's father or brother, while others claim that he is in fact the creditor Nivi fled before entering the Darklands. Proponents of the latter theory claim that Quiet's longevity and his status as one of Nivi's most trusted servants is payment for the debt Nivi owed him so long ago. Regardless of his true origins, Quiet appears to be an unassuming svirfneblin in almost every regard, except that his eyes are crystal-clear diamonds with irises of gleaming sapphire. The exact abilities Nivi has bestowed upon Quiet are unknown, though Nivians who know of him agree on several points: he can instantly travel to any location where there are worshippers of Nivi Rhombodazzle, he can be slain but always returns to life the next day, and he has the ability to command creatures of earth and stone.

**Rummbrrlar (unique earth elemental):** Rummbrrlar is a massive earth elemental who takes the shape of a dragon-sized mole with a body of pure diamond. Occasionally Rummbrrlar accompanies one of Nivi's faithful for an extended period of time; during such sojourns he shrinks to the size of a common garden mole, though he can still burrow through the earth at truly astonishing velocities. Rummbrrlar is known to have an odd sense of humor, and while in his tiny

form, he enjoys riding in backpacks and dispensing sage wisdom at inopportune moments.

**Seven-Eyes (herald of Nivi Rhombodazzle):** Seven-Eyes is a sapient magical die who has accompanied Nivi since her days as a mortal, and it is said that he is the template upon which all Nivian holy symbols are based. Seven-Eyes can bestow supernatural luck upon any creature who carries him, blessing her and protecting her from harm, though the seven-pipped die refuses to use his powers to influence any wager wherein he serves as the instrument of chance. Any roll made with Seven-Eyes is guaranteed to be fair, a fact he shares with anyone who will listen.



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## Shizuru

The peerless jewel and the glory of heaven, Shizuru is the most exalted deity in the pantheons of Tian Xia, worshipped by mortals, spirits, and dragons alike. She rules the Heavenly Bureaucracy with wisdom and benevolence and embodies the virtues of honor, reverence to one's ancestors, and unyielding bravery. The radiant goddess is the patron of samurai and other honorable swordfighters, and is sometimes credited with bestowing the warrior code of ichimeiyō upon the Dragon Empires. She is charged, too, with ensuring the fertility of the soil, the health of the rivers, and the bounty of farm and field upon which civilization depends. Beneath Shizuru's golden gaze, the land flourishes, and its people are blessed.

## EMPERESS OF HEAVEN

*Goddess of ancestors, honor, the sun, and swordplay*

**Alignment** LG

**Domains** Glory, Good, Law, Repose, Sun

**Subdomains** Ancestors, Archon, Day, Heroism, Honor, Light

**Favored Weapon** katana<sup>uc</sup>

**Centers of Worship** Amanandar, Goka, Jinin, Minkai, Quain, Shokuro, Xa Hoi, Zi Ha

**Nationality** Tian-Min, dragon

**Obedience** Spend an hour practicing sword forms beneath the sun. Meditate in silence as you practice, focusing on executing each form more perfectly with each repetition. At the end of your practice, make an offering to your ancestors, and vow that your deeds in the day to come will honor their memory. Gain a +2 sacred bonus to confirm critical hits with any one sword for the next 24 hours. You can use this chosen sword as your divine focus to cast divine spells.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

**1: Radiant Warrior (Sp)** *bless* 3/day, *blinding ray*<sup>ARG</sup> 2/day, or *searing light* 1/day

**2: Smite Darkness (Su)** Three times per day, when a creature casts a darkness spell or uses a darkness-creating ability within 30 feet of you, you can call upon Shizuru's guiding light to block it. Attempt a check (1d20 + your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier) against the dispel DC of the spell as an immediate action. If you succeed, the target spell or effect fails and is wasted; otherwise, it is unaffected.

**3: Channel Heaven's Fury (Su)** Three times per day as a free action, you can call upon Shizuru's might to imbue either a damaging spell or a weapon strike with a blinding burst of sunlight, which causes it to deal positive energy damage instead of its normal damage type. You must declare the use of this ability before rolling to attack or casting the spell, and if the attack or spell fails, the ability is wasted. This positive energy damage does not heal living creatures.

### EXALTED BOONS

**1: Guardian of the Ancestors (Sp)** *sanctify corpse*<sup>um</sup> 3/day, *lesser restoration* 2/day, or *speak with dead* 1/day

**2: Release Death's Grip (Su)** Your touch bolsters the living against the terrors of undeath. As a standard action, you can touch someone afflicted with the dazed, paralyzed, sickened, staggered, or stunned condition and grant that creature another saving throw

to resist the effect. You can use this ability once per day plus one additional time per day for every three Hit Dice you have (maximum 6 times per day).

**3: Return to the Grave (Su)** Once

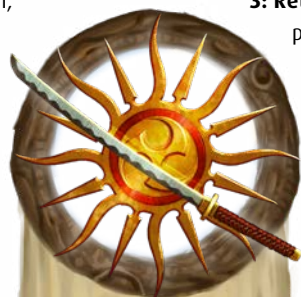
per day as a full-round action, you can call upon Shizuru's glory to help you return an undead creature to the grave. The chosen undead must be within 60 feet. The undead must succeed at a Will save (DC = 10 + 1/2 your Hit Dice + your Charisma modifier) or suffer a flurry of shining sword slashes across its body, which gradually fade over the duration of this effect. The undead loses either its damage resistance or its spell resistance (choose one) for a number of rounds equal to your Hit Dice (maximum 20 rounds). Additionally, if the undead is unable to rest because of some grievance or trauma, you become aware of what that is, and how you might address it to give the soul peace.

### SENTINEL BOONS

**1: Blessed Blade (Sp)** *magic weapon* 3/day, *weapon of awe*<sup>APG</sup> 2/day, or *deadly juggernaut*<sup>uc</sup> 1/day

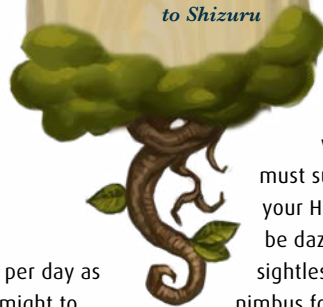
**2: Dazzling Grace (Su)** As a free action, you can surround yourself with a glowing nimbus of sunlight that shines bright light within 60 feet. While so illuminated, you gain a +4 bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity. Enemies who attempt such attacks against you must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + 1/2 your Hit Dice + your Constitution modifier) or be dazzled for 1d4 rounds. This does not affect sightless foes. You can maintain this glowing nimbus for a number of rounds per day equal to your Hit Dice (maximum 20 rounds). The rounds in which you manifest the nimbus don't need to be consecutive, and you can dismiss it as a free action.

**3: Swordmaster of the Sun (Su)** Once per day as a free action when fighting with any sword, you can cause your blade to glow with increasingly bright golden radiance after every blow you land. After each hit, you gain a +1 sacred bonus on the damage rolls for subsequent blows, cumulative up to a total equal to your Hit Dice. This damage bonus lasts for the duration of the combat or for a number of minutes equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1 minute), whichever is lower. This effect applies only to a single sword; if you fight with two or more weapons, your other weapons are unaffected.



**The Empress rules and shelters all under Heaven's gaze. By her grace, the land prospers. By her sword, it knows peace. While Shizuru reigns above, the world must bend toward justice.**

*—Calligraphy scroll in Kasai's holy shrine to Shizuru*



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## UNDERSTANDING SHIZURU

Shizuru is the perfect sovereign and the perfect warrior, encompassing the glory of Tian Xia. In ancient times, when dragons ruled the Tian empires, even the mightiest of them paid homage to Shizuru; when humans rose to make civilizations of their own, it was Shizuru who taught them her code of honor and her flawless swordplay. She rules with immaculate composure born from the confidence of an empress who has fought and won her own battles—Shizuru's reign is wise, measured, and just, for she has no need to prove herself to others or defend her pride.

Yet for all her golden glory, a shadow lies upon Shizuru's joy. She loves the moon god Tsukiyo with such devotion that when he was slain by his envious brother Fumeiyoshi, Shizuru convinced the god Qi Zhong to return him to life. Tsukiyo was deeply affected by his death and revival, however, and returned as a god of madness as well as the moon. Shizuru found herself unable to fully understand her lover's transformation, and struggling to easily accept the changes in his personality and perspective. Today, she harbors fears that Tsukiyo might resent her actions, guilt that she might have acted against his interests, and grief that she cannot fully comprehend the person he has become. Though Shizuru still loves Tsukiyo deeply, she mourns the loss of the uncomplicated love they once shared, and castigates herself for her inability to embrace everything that Tsukiyo now represents, particularly since she is partially responsible for his transformation.

Shizuru is usually depicted as a beautiful samurai in golden lamellar armor, as a regal gold-scaled dragon, or as both simultaneously. Signs of her approval include a golden flash of sunlight on a sword's blade, a single translucent carp's scale falling like a feather from the sky, and the calligraphic character for "dragon" appearing in spilled liquid or windblown debris. Her disapproval is signaled by sudden rust or dullness on a blade, armor cracking apart, or plants and wildflowers turning away from the source of disapproval as if the greenery were seeking the sun's warmth elsewhere.

## THE CHURCH

Shizuru's faith is devoted to maintaining a just and dignified order in which all people have clearly defined places that enable them to contribute to the welfare and happiness of society. Shizurans also consider it their sacred obligation to protect both farmlands and wildlands from wanton destruction or corruption. Their considerable martial skill and the quasi-military organization of their church are dedicated to furthering these ideals. Despite this, Shizuru's faithful know that the beauty of life is wasted on war, and their most common prayers are for peaceful times.

Every Shizuran occupies a specific rung in the church hierarchy, from worshipper to 1-month monk to instructor of priests, but the complexity of the organization and the temporary nature of certain positions (such as the 1-month monk, who is assigned to tend a particularly lonely or dangerous shrine for 1 month as a test of discipline) makes it impossible for most outsiders to keep them all straight. Thus, most Shizuran priests are simply called "Honorable Master" by lay worshippers, and it is understood that the honorific encompasses almost all the ranks in the faith.

Of special importance to Shizuru's church are the imperial dragons of Tian Xia, who treat Shizuru as a combination divine god and mortal empress. Even the most greedy and vile of imperial dragons pays at least some regard to the will of Shizuru; few dare to attack her clergy without strong provocation, for fear of invoking the wrath of their heavenly ruler. This is encouraged by the church, which treats nearby dragons as respected guardians and indulges a dragon's behavior so long as it remains a net benefit to the areas it claims as its own.

Shizurans typically carry themselves with courteous reserve. They display an outward humility that masks deep pride, and conduct themselves with grave politeness while never entirely overlooking any insult. In this, they follow the example set by their draconic goddess, who carries herself with the quiet but profound confidence of one who knows her own strength well, and who is not easily roused by insults but notes them nevertheless.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Because Shizurans consider themselves responsible for both the righteous administration of cities and the fertility of the natural world, they can be found in both urban temples and remote monasteries, or even isolated forest shrines tended by a single dedicant. In towns and cities, Shizuran temples are conjoined with temples of Tsukiyo. Larger Shizuran temples are built around a sword school, where students learn swordplay under the guidance of priests.

All Shizuran holy sites incorporate either a sundial or a mirror made from gold and mercury in their design. Most also have astrological tablets and charts of celestial omens that correspond to seasonal tasks such as planting and harvest cycles. Priests use these tools to forecast eclipses, which are of great holy significance.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Shizuru's worship has a strong undercurrent of asceticism. Her priests tend to be remote from the world, seldom actively engaged in the day-to-day lives of those they protect. A priest is perceived as a somewhat distant figure—revered and trusted without question,

regarded with a hint of awe, and never treated with casual familiarity. In part, this notion comes from the highly disciplined and solitary nature of most Shizuran pursuits, which often involve spending extensive time in focused concentration that others are loath to interrupt.

Just as Shizuru distracts herself from Tsukiyo's absence by performing her divine duties, many of her faithful seek an escape from their own haunted pasts and complicated feelings. For such worshippers, it is easier to focus on the simple purity of sword mastery and honorable, selfless service to "the people" as an abstract idea, rather than becoming entangled with closely known and imperfect individuals. Thus, Shizuran priests can come off as haughty and distant when, in fact, they are trying to avoid recreating old pains.

Regardless of their reclusive image, Shizurans are greatly respected in their communities, and are often called upon to deal with danger. Local leaders seldom ask their aid lightly—it is widely, and correctly, believed that Shizuran priests will abandon a community that repeatedly wastes their time on trivial tasks—but a Shizuran priest is considered almost as good as a patron spirit for protection.

Wandering priests are also treated with respect, for most assume that a Shizuran would not waste time on aimless travels and must be embarked upon a task of heavenly importance. Locals vie for the honor of hosting and helping such a dignitary, even if they do not care about the underlying righteousness of the mission and want only the bragging rights of having personally assisted the Empress of Heaven. Even the vilest tyrant hesitates to openly strike a Shizuran, since the dishonor that accompanies such an action is catastrophic.

Clerics of Shizuru can prepare *color spray* as a 1st-level spell, *scorching ray* as a 2nd-level spell, *unbearable brightness*<sup>ACG</sup> as a 4th-level spell, and *prismatic spray* as a 7th-level spell.

Paladins of Shizuru can prepare *searing light* as a 2nd-level spell, *heroism* as a 3rd-level spell, and *sunbeam* as a 4th-level spell.

## ADVENTURERS

Dedicated Shizurans travel across the Dragon Empires, and even farther abroad, to confront and put an end to the myriad evils that threaten peaceful lives. Given her emphasis on swordfighting, most of Shizuru's sworn servants are fighters, paladins, samurai, or members of other martial classes who can develop the skills to truly excel with the katana.

Casual worshippers are also common throughout Tian Xia. Many followers of other divinities honor Shizuru as the rightful Empress of Heaven. They ask her favor before battle, or plead for her intercession when subject to an unjust mortal ruler. Those who hope to absolve dishonored ancestors of past misdeeds, or who hope to secure heaven's acceptance for the restless ghosts of those who could not obtain proper funerals, also may petition Shizuru for aid.

## CLOTHING

It is easier to identify a Shizuran by his weapon than his dress. Shizuru's faithful may be wealthy or poor, clad in silks or humble rags, but their blades are always carefully protected, beautifully maintained, and of the finest quality that they can afford. Formal attire within the church is adorned with gold: either golden lamellar armor, wing-shouldered robes of stiff gold silk, or a headband or sash of golden embroidery if the priest is unable to afford more lavish costuming.

## HOLY TEXT

Only a single holy text is credited to Shizuru herself.

**Fifteen Wisdoms:** The Empress of Heaven's primary holy text, this scroll lists 15 short aphorisms, each one followed by a brief paragraph that elaborates



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### SHIZURU'S PALADIN CODE

Much of Shizuru's paladin code overlaps with the warrior code of ichimeiyō, which is so closely aligned with the goddess's tenets that those outside the faith may perceive no distinction between them. In addition to the tenets of ichimeiyō, the Empress of Heaven's paladins are expected to obey the following precepts.

- Both my sword and my swordplay have been entrusted to me by those who have mastered their craft, and both deserve to be wielded by a skilled hand. My training will be consistent, and I will impart my training to others, as others passed my training down to me.
- I will honor the ancestors who have come before me and provided for my life.
- Though the bonds of love extend across any distance, I will not stretch them further by separating lovers.
- The Empress rules all under Heaven. I am a guardian of the land and its health, as well as of civilized empires that live upon it. I will defend nature from the twisted influence of undead and aberrations, and seek mutual peace with creatures that defend nature from humanity.
- My personal conduct reflects on my family and my god; I will conscientiously maintain my reputation for the sake of theirs, even on the battlefield.
- The strategy of war involves deception by nature, but the flag of peace is sacrosanct. I accept no negotiations from those who have attacked a foe under the pretense of arbitration or truce for their own gain; they have destroyed the trust that reconciliation requires.

upon it. The aphorisms advocate restraint, self-discipline, and the need for certainty before committing oneself to action—but require total devotion to the cause once the decision to act has been made. Most scholars believe that the Wisdoms themselves are the direct word of Shizuru, and the interpretive paragraphs have been added by the wisest and most learned of her priests.

### HOLIDAYS

Although not a regular holiday, any lunar or solar eclipse is marked by solemn celebration. On these rare occasions, Shizuru is able to reunite with Tsukiyo. Sadly, such moments are always too fleeting, and at the conclusion of the eclipse, the lovers once again part.

**Festival of the Ruling Sun:** Shizurans celebrate the summer equinox, when daylight is longest. The Festival is marked by feasting, flower dances, and the ceremonial taking and renewal of vows. The day is also commemorated

with mochi towers: stacks of soft, flattened rice cakes dyed a vibrant green with pandan leaf, and crowned with an orange to represent the sun overlooking the verdant land.

**Heaven's Beneficence:** Believed to be when Shizuru grants her blessing to all under her gaze, this day is celebrated on the first day of the Sky Dragon's month, and is considered doubly auspicious in years that fall under the Sky Dragon's sign. It is a day for self-improvement and new beginnings, and is often chosen for weddings and the launch of major endeavors. It is also a day to remember the honored dead with prayers, incense, and symbolic gifts of fruit and wine placed on their memorial markers.

### APHORISMS

Shizuran aphorisms include the following sayings.

**All Under Heaven's Gaze Is Beauty:** Shizurans appreciate both the crowning arts of civilization and the wonders of the natural world, valuing neither above the other, for both represent Shizuru's glory. This can also be used as an admonition against those who judge others by their appearance or trade, as mortal beings of all kinds are necessary to keep the earth in harmony.

**The Sun Is Crying:** Often used to save face by attributing the speaker's own tears on a sunlit day to Shizuru, this phrase is used for situations that involve complex emotions that aren't easy to express, such as feeling both happy and sad at the same time. Sun showers are considered a sign that the goddess herself is both happy and sad; sun showers during a wedding are considered a sign of a love so powerful that it reminds Shizuru of Tsukiyo.

### RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Shizuru views the other divinities of Tian Xia as her subjects—divine, of course, and worthy of courtesy, but entitled to no more deference than a gracious empress would show her more independent-minded courtiers. She rarely presses the issue, understanding that celestial relations are best kept harmonious by diplomacy, but underlying all her interactions with other Tian divinities is the unspoken understanding that Shizuru is their ruler. Because of this understanding, Shizuru can tolerate deities such as Yaezhing, the cruel Minister of Blood, and even Lady Nanbyō, the Widow of Suffering. So long as her subjects obey the edicts of the Heavenly Court and pay due homage to her, she feels bound by celestial law and honor to allow them a degree of leeway in handling their own affairs. She does not extend this assumption to foreign gods. These she treats as befits their nature: civilized divinities are accorded the respect due to fellow heads of state, while the fouler and more treacherous gods are dealt with like over-presumptuous demons.

Among the deities that Shizuru interacts with regularly, she is friendly with Abadar, Irori, and Qi Zhong, the god of medicine, as each of these deities plays an important

role in the maintenance of just and stable societies. She deeply admires Shelyn, in her guise as the Lady of Chrysanthemums, valuing the grace and beauty that Shelyn confers upon her court. Shizuru rarely crosses paths with Iomedae, but when the two goddesses do chance to meet, their interactions are like those of long-lost cousins. Both deities have much in common, but Shizuru is far older than Iomedae—she is an empress who won her crusade, and now has had to concede to the harsh realities of ruling a functional society. Shizuru regards Iomedae's zeal with tolerant amusement, yet nurtures a small and rebellious fondness for the Inheritor's unfettered idealism.

Finally, Shizuru remains deeply in love with Tsukiyo, whom she treasures deeply, and yet feels their different perspectives lead them down separate paths most of the time. When Tsukiyo leaves, she lets him go without question, understanding his new need for space if not the reason why. She views their separation as a torment, but one that is painfully bittersweet, for she is unspeakably proud of Tsukiyo and the quiet battles he fights in the darkness. She considers it necessary for Tsukiyo to give comfort to those who Shizuru's light cannot reach, and prefers to be separated by their obligations than by the chasm between them she does not know how to cross.

## REALM

Shizuru's domain is the Palace of the Eightfold Mirror, located in the tier of Clarion on Heaven's celestial mountain. The Palace comprises countless shrines linked by ornamental walkways, torii, and ceremonial fountains, and the sun never sets on its slopes. Some of the shrines belong to Shizuru's most honored servants, while others house functions of the Heavenly Bureaucracy, such as the eight thousand and eight celestial scribes who dutifully record all the lineages of Tian Xia.

At the center of these shrines, guarded by stone lion-dogs, stands the Palace itself. Here, Shizuru carries out her formal duties and, on rare and legendary occasions, convenes the Heavenly Council, the imperial conclave that all Tian divinities are bound to attend.

## PLANAR ALLIES

Shizuru takes on several creatures as servants. Notable creatures include the following.

**Eyes of the Sun (unique advanced foo lions<sup>B3</sup>):** This mischievous pair of identical golden lions claims to be brother and sister, although they regularly change which of them claims to be which. They never appear apart from one another and like to baffle summoners by insisting on ludicrous names. As a result, both lions are usually referred to collectively as the "Eyes of the Sun," in the interest of both efficiency and dignity. The lions serve Shizuru with unfailing loyalty, but are

irreverent (though harmless) pranksters to everyone else, which some believe the Empress permits as useful tests of her subjects' self-discipline.

**Shinonome (herald of Shizuru):** The wise and graceful celestial sky dragon<sup>B3</sup> Shinonome, whose scales shimmer the pale blues and lavenders of dawn, serves as Shizuru's herald to both Golarion and the other divinities of the Heavenly Bureaucracy. Utterly devoted to her liege, Shinonome is tireless in her duties, but she strives to serve intelligently and not with blind fanaticism. Her favorite offerings are poems written by master swordsmiths and swords forged by legendary poets.



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# Tsukiyo

Tsukiyo is the god of the moon, revered most widely in Tian Xia for his wisdom and his role in guarding sacred spaces, from cemeteries to primeval forests—but he was not always so. Murdered by his brother in a fit of envy, Tsukiyo was returned to life by divine medicine and his lover's will. Yet despite his miraculous recovery, Tsukiyo had experienced a transformation in death that left him more contemplative and less socially engaged, and he began avoiding the boisterous people and settings that had appealed to him before his rebirth. The new Prince of the Moon leaves many of his peers uneasy, for it remains unclear whether death itself changed him, or whether he witnessed something dire while beyond the pale that inspired his eccentricities.

## PRINCE OF THE MOON

*God of jade, the moon, and spirits*

**Alignment** LG

**Domains** Darkness, Good, Law, Madness, Repose

**Subdomains** Ancestors, Archon, Insanity, Moon, Night, Souls

**Favored Weapon** longspear

**Centers of Worship** Goka, Jinin, Minkai, Nagajor, Tianjing, Wall of Heaven, Zi Ha

**Nationality** Tian-Min, samsaran

**Obedience** Find a quiet place from which to study the moon. Contemplate its transition from full to half to crescent to nothing at all, then back again, comparing its transformation to your own accomplishments. If unable to study the moon clearly, seek a quiet place and spend 1 hour studying a jade trinket while mentally retelling one of Tsukiyo's parables that pertains to your recent experiences. Gain a +4 sacred bonus on saving throws against effects that cause the confused or fascinated condition or that deal either Wisdom damage or Wisdom drain.

### EVANGELIST BOONS

- 1: Lunar Phantom (Sp)** *lesser confusion* 3/day, *darkness* 2/day, or *blink* 1/day
- 2: Collective Vision (Su)** When using the vision of madness granted power from the Madness domain, you can target creatures within 30 feet of you instead of having to touch a single target. You can target a maximum number of creatures equal to 1 for every 4 Hit Dice you have (maximum 5). If you don't have access to the Madness domain, you instead gain the ability to use the basic version of the vision of madness granted power, touching a single target as a melee touch attack, a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier, as listed in the vision of madness description.
- 3: Moonlit Maze (Su)** Once per day, you can point at a creature within 60 feet and transport it, as per *maze*, to a shadowy labyrinth illuminated by moonlight overhead. For every minute the target spends at rest or spends aimlessly wandering the maze, it is healed 1d2 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma damage. However, each time the target fails an Intelligence check to escape the maze, it takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

### EXALTED BOONS

- 1: Spirit Shepherd (Sp)** *hide from undead* 3/day, *calm emotions* 2/day, or *helping hand* 1/day
- 2: Soothing Moon Aura (Su)** You can radiate soft silvery moonlight from your body at will as a free action, illuminating a 20-foot radius with dim light as a 2nd-level spell. For a number of rounds per day equal to 1 + 1 for

every 4 Hit Dice you have (maximum 6 rounds), you can intensify this light as a standard action. The intensified light suppresses darkness effects as per *daylight* heightened to a 7th-level

spell, though it still creates only dim light. Furthermore, it suppresses all harmful compulsion, emotion, and fear effects in the area, as well as any harmful effects from madness (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 250 or *Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 182). These rounds don't need to be consecutive. You can deactivate the intensified aura as a free action.

### 3: Knight of the Green Crescent (Su)

Once per day as a standard action, you can summon an advanced kirin (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 290, 168) that resembles an elegant jade hare. Its breath weapon deals 8d8 points of cold damage. The kirin follows your commands perfectly for 1 minute before returning to Heaven, but it doesn't obey commands that would violate its alignment; particularly egregious commands could cause it to attack you.

### SENTINEL BOONS

- 1: Cleansing Jade (Sp)** *magic stone* 3/day, *stone discus*<sup>ACG</sup> 2/day, or *searing light* 1/day
- 2: Banishing Jade (Su)** You gain the ability to smite evil once per day as per a paladin of your character level. If you already have the smite evil class feature, this adds to the number of times per day that you can smite evil. When you use your smite evil class feature, you can transform either your weapon or your armor into enchanted jade for 1 minute or until the smite evil effect ends. Your transformed weapon gains the *ghost touch* special ability. Furthermore, if the target of smite evil is an undead creature, the bonus on damage rolls for the first hit with that weapon increases to 3 points of damage per paladin level you have (including any sentinel levels), and your first attack with that weapon also gains the *disruption* weapon special ability (DC = 13 + your Charisma modifier). Your transformed armor gains the *ghost touch* special ability, and if the target of smite evil is an undead creature, the armor grants you a +2 sacred bonus on saving throws against the creature's spells and effects as well as a +2 sacred bonus to AC against its attacks.
- 3: Reincarnated Champion (Su)** You increase the time that you can remain dead before being revived by *breath of life* by a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum +1). Once per week as a swift action, you can cast *breath of life* (CL 20th) on yourself, even when you would be otherwise unable to take actions, such as when you are dead.

We are as the moon, first small and vulnerable, then bright and vibrant, at last wise and mysterious, all to be reborn and live again.

—Tears of Jade

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## UNDERSTANDING TSUKIYO

Untold millennia ago, the Prince of the Moon spent as much time roistering with the other gods as he did flying out to vanquish evil. He and his lover Shizuru were the epitome of romantic love, and Tsukiyo's happiness inspired unquenchable envy in his brother, Fumeiyoshi. In a fit of rage, Fumeiyoshi murdered Tsukiyo, cutting a wound so deep that it left the moon forever scarred. Unwilling to accept her lover's death, Shizuru convinced Qi Zhong to ply his greatest medicines undo death itself, and three nights later, life returned to the fallen god. For Fumeiyoshi's crime of fratricide and deicide, the other gods condemned him to live within his brother's grave, from which he would always envy his betters.

Tsukiyo's death and rebirth changed him into a god of transformations and transitions, from those of the lunar cycle to the shepherding of souls to the afterlife. His personality changes gradually over time, ranging from coolly judgmental to brimming with quiet compassion. Despite occasional outbursts of passion, Tsukiyo is reclusive and even shy. This predilection shapes his divine undertakings; he rarely participates in monumental affairs, but he doesn't hesitate to connect with individual mortals to offer silent support in times of need. Despite his reserved demeanor, he is an unshakable advocate for the frightened, the lost, and the misunderstood—particularly those maligned by society for thinking or perceiving the world differently from their neighbors. Though this often takes him away from the light of mainstream civilization and the sun, his lover Shizuru seems to understand and provide him space, so that both can combat injustice in their own ways.

Tsukiyo appears in art far less frequently than Shizuru, but when he does, it is as a Tian-Min man with long silver hair and a peaceful, understanding smile. His age often changes in symbolic reflection of the moon's phases. His green robes seem woven from flexible jade, and he wields a spear crafted from spun moonlight.

### THE CHURCH

Tsukiyo's church is decentralized, united more by common traditions than by any ruling authority. Priests work alone or in small groups to attend to a larger region's needs. This is because Tsukiyo's goals are generally modest in scope, with little interest in glory, crusades, or the wholesale defeat of evil. Instead, the church promotes tasks such as education, purification, and introspection.

Many of Tsukiyo's followers embrace a wandering lifestyle that lets them travel the land, much as their patron patrols the sky. This attracts a large number of wilderness enthusiasts who seek a stronger moral

compass than many nature divinities provide. In practice, Tsukiyan regularly adopt natural wonders as sacred sites, such as Kasai's Tree of Souls, which runs with healing sap. The faith also plays a central role in Minkai politics; Tsukiyo is believed to have created the Jade Throne, a physical representation of rulership and divine right that emphasizes his role as Prince of the Moon and thus a ruler of Heaven itself. He likewise encourages emperors to embrace peace and contemplation as they issue edicts that affect diverse populations.

Because Tsukiyo's priests regularly defend and foster those who think differently than their neighbors, his church functions as a haven for those who would otherwise be belittled or demonized for their mental differences: the neurodivergent; those with mental illness, epilepsy, or learning disabilities; and even those censured for using the wrong hand to write. His faithful include many such individuals, who perceive Tsukiyo's idiosyncrasies, self-conscious behavior, and purposeful isolation as a reflection of their own experiences. Whether they find strength in his example, his stories, or his magic, such worshippers are far better equipped to recognize others like themselves and know what kind of support to provide. Although the church has only an informal hierarchy, it encourages this same mental diversity in its communities' leadership roles.

Worship and ceremonies are events for self-reflection, healing, and inclusion, so they tend to be upbeat, with soft music. Each community's version of a ritual is slightly different, for every congregation revises its traditions as needed to ensure a welcoming environment for all members. As a result, sudden sounds and lights are very rare, and special effects such as fireworks are virtually unheard of in Tsukiyan ceremonies. Jade, which represents both harmony and purity, appears frequently in rituals, and it is common to bury the dead with a jade token, or with a green-painted talisman if the valuable stone is outside an individual's means.

### TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Tsukiyo's conventional temples appear in settlements where his beloved Shizuru's houses of worship appear. The two faiths construct structures that abut one another, allowing for both the practical and symbolic intersection of the deities' resources. There are no firm standards for these conjoined temples, though in practice Tsukiyo's tend to be somewhat smaller, and Shizuru's often occupy whichever side enjoys the most direct access to sunlight throughout the year. These temples typically feature a central courtyard, atrium, or skylight to admit moonlight and allow astronomers a sheltered place to track the moon's passage across the sky. Even more common are dim, quiet rooms where visitors and priests alike can retreat to hold conversations or seek peace.

Tsukiyo's numerous rural shrines are more likely to appear without a conjoined shrine to Shizuru. Although most often built in forests, these shrines appear anywhere that is sufficiently underdeveloped, providing seclusion without being inaccessible to an able traveler. They often serve as havens for priests and travelers, and are especially common in the Forest of Spirits and Wall of Heaven.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Tsukiyo's priests serve a wide range of functions. Though all priests are expected to fulfill these tasks as needed, it's typical for them to favor a smaller set of responsibilities as befits their passions and abilities. The most common responsibility is counseling; priests provide spiritual and psychological support to troubled individuals—particularly those labeled by society as insane. Where madness stems from possession or a curse, a priest endeavors to cleanse the affliction. Where psychological abnormalities are intrinsic to the person, a priest instead provides assistance, teaching the community to respect and even celebrate that person's identity, using spiritual concepts to explain their idiosyncrasies more easily. However, Tsukiyo's faithful defer to the desires of those they counsel and seek more serious treatment for those who wish it, especially in the case of mental issues that are causing or aggravating internal suffering.

Priests also take a role in mortuary practices, both ensuring the proper treatment of bodies and watching over the dead. Tsukiyo's faithful regularly patrol cemeteries, tending to the grounds as they watch for signs of supernatural disturbance. Whether it's the vengeful ghost of a loved one or the haunted mausoleum of a late ruler, a priest of Tsukiyo is typically responsible for calming the disturbance.

Tsukiyo's priests travel regularly and rarely stay in the same community for more than a few months unless a patient requires ongoing assistance. Each priest travels a large circuit of communities that overlap both the circuits of other Tsukiyans and more secluded regions with few inhabitants. The latter serve as retreats; Tsukiyo's priests regularly withdraw to wooded refuges to meditate and recharge. Each settlement typically knows where

the nearest such refuge is, in the event of an emergency.

Although many of his priests are clerics or paladins, Tsukiyo sponsors a large number of oracles—particularly among those who already have a preexisting affliction. A modest number of druids, inquisitors, and rangers also serve the church and fulfill some priestly duties. Because Tsukiyo returned from the dead, the many-lived samсарans are especially well represented among his followers.

Tsukiyo's clerics, inquisitors, oracles, and paladins add *faerie fire* to their spell lists as a 1st-level spell and add *calm spirit*<sup>OA</sup> and *darkvision* to their spell lists as 2nd-level spells. Clerics and oracles of Tsukiyo can prepare *rainbow pattern* and *wandering star motes*<sup>APG</sup> as 4th-level spells; inquisitors can learn these as 3rd-level spells.

## ADVENTURERS

Thanks to their tendency to travel, devout Tsukiyans easily fall into the adventuring life as an extension of their duties or out of a desire to assist misunderstood innocents. This is especially true of mentally divergent worshippers fleeing the intolerant communities of their youth in search of acceptance, often finding this love and support in an adventuring group. Tsukiyans' empathy makes them natural envoys, particularly to maligned cultures or when dealing with outcasts from traditionally hostile groups.

Tsukiyo's worshippers sometimes adventure to protect the dead and quell restless spirits. They also help companions come to terms with the underestimated shock of adventuring, lending a sympathetic ear and calming words to those who would otherwise cope with the horrors of dungeoneering in unhealthy ways.

## CLOTHING

Tsukiyo's followers favor green and white for their clothing, with more expensive outfits incorporating silver or jade accessories. The exact style and cut are largely up to individual choice, so clothing ranges from formal robes to utilitarian garb. These outfits typically include multiple layers in different shades, with several places where the wearer can tie back part of a jacket, cape, or other outer garment to display the lighter colors beneath. Tsukiyans often adjust their outfits over the course of a month to evoke the phases of the moon.



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## TSUKIYO'S PALADIN CODE

The paladins of Tsukiyo are patient teachers and wardens. They tend not to settle in any one community, either wandering from town to town or living a reclusive existence away from noteworthy settlements. However, these paladins are rarely far from communities in need, and they readily answer the call to shield a victim or destroy an undead menace. Their tenets include the following affirmations.

- I am the voice for those who go unheard, be they spirits who cannot speak or those whom society has judged as broken or insane. I shall open the doors for others to listen to the voiceless when I can, and when I cannot, I will speak in the words of the voiceless, not my own.
- I am the eyes for those who cannot understand the truths of others who are not like them. I shall teach others how to accept, support, and celebrate those who think and speak differently than they do.
- I am the guide for mortal minds and souls. I shall offer kindness and aid to the lost, the frightened, the confused, and the dead. I shall calm restless spirits, and I shall banish violent ones with what compassion I can provide without endangering others.
- A different perspective can bring both fulfillment and pain. I do not judge those who wish to remain as they are, no matter what disadvantages it may bring them, nor do I judge those who suffer and wish to be changed.
- There is no shame in madness, and so I do not make madness shameful by imposing it on my enemies as a punishment. Though darkness and attacks on the mind are tools I may use to vanquish the unjust, my actions will never force lasting insanity upon my foes.

## HOLY TEXT

Tsukiyo's holy texts primarily take the form of parables, each with several layers of meaning intended to teach humility, empathy, and spiritual traditions.

**Tears of Jade:** The most common 28 parables told by the faith make up *Tears of Jade*, the canonical holy text, which provides a different story for each day in the lunar cycle. Priests regularly produce illustrated or reinterpreted versions of these stories to ensure they are as accessible as possible in both language and medium.

## HOLIDAYS

Tsukiyo's faithful celebrate every eclipse, believing these represent the fleeting moments when their god reunites with Shizuru in Heaven. In addition, the phases of the moon provide a number of occasions for reflection.

**Darkest Night:** Tsukiyans celebrate a lunar new year marked by the last new moon before the spring equinox, commemorating the three nights that Tsukiyo was dead. Between ritual meals, a participant conveys to her neighbors what about them inspires envy in her and how she aspires to have the same quality; they in turn must take some step to help her attain that goal—symbolically quelling the envy in each other that led Fumeiyoshi to kill his brother. Hares feature prominently in the celebration, for it was a hare that found Tsukiyo's body and carried Shizuru's request for aid to Qi Zhong.

## APHORISMS

Tsukiyo's faithful create new sayings inspired by natural observations and phrases they've overheard.

**No Matter Its Phase, the Moon Is Whole:** A community might be quick to judge someone who looks or acts differently than the majority of its members do, even assuming these differences make that person inferior. This saying is a reminder that perspective changes with time, and that regardless of idiosyncrasies or appearance, everyone is a whole person and worthy of respect.

**Even Hares Are Heroes:** Although normally skittish, a hare guarded Tsukiyo when he was most defenseless. Tsukiyans use this phrase to encourage bravery in each other; but it can just as readily convey that, for a vulnerable or scared person, completing a seemingly minor task requires courage or energy that's too rarely celebrated.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Tsukiyo's outward eccentricity ensures that most gods pay him cautious respect for having returned from death and witnessed what lies beyond. This affords him considerable influence, as even evil divinities are willing to listen to him out of sheer curiosity when he visits. When others seek him out, he is likely to retreat in contemplation.

His brother Fumeiyoshi is among his greatest enemies, having slain Tsukiyo out of jealousy for his love of Shizuru. Tsukiyo views his brother with a mix of scolding disdain and heartfelt pity for the villain's harrowing banishment. Fumeiyoshi has developed numerous plans to destroy his brother a second time, but Yaezhing regularly intercedes with the threat of even greater punishments. Tsukiyo never thanks Yaezhing, for the former believes that Yaezhing's love of harsh punishment inflicts emotional scars that may never heal.

Tsukiyo gets along well with Pharamasma, and their priests regularly work together when maintaining cemeteries or destroying undead threats. Likewise, he and Nalinivati find each other fascinating, with each holding esoteric secrets that intrigue the other. This friendship attracts numerous naga worshippers to Tsukiyo, many who find symbolic similarities between the act of shedding one's skin and the moon's ever-changing face.

Without a doubt, Tsukiyo's dearest ally is his lover Shizuru, though his transformation has complicated their relationship. The moon god cannot always handle the overwhelming emotions she inspires, and often retreats to center himself. His constant departures sometimes cause other gods to call him uncaring or cruel, but despite their hardships, the couple remains as devoted to each other as ever. Tsukiyo knows that Shizuru cannot understand him as he is now, but loves her deeply for giving him the space he needs without question.

Although it was Qi Zhong who restored Tsukiyo to life, their friendship often breaks out in argument about the treatment of the mentally divergent. To the former, there is no malady so powerful that it's beyond the ability of medicine to heal, including any expression of mental abnormality. Tsukiyo firmly rebukes this misguided interpretation; from his perspective, insisting that those who think and perceive differently from an arbitrarily decided ideal need to be "cured" is tantamount to erasing their personalities.

## REALM

Tsukiyo's divine realm is the Grove of Green Shadows, a forested region along Heaven's third tier, Clarion. Countless secluded homes hide under the canopy of translucent jade leaves. Tsukiyo's own home is a small palace made of marble and mithral, though he rarely occupies it in favor of traveling. The grove stands on the opposite side of the Holy Mountain from Shizuru's home, the Palace of the Eightfold Mirror.

## PLANAR ALLIES

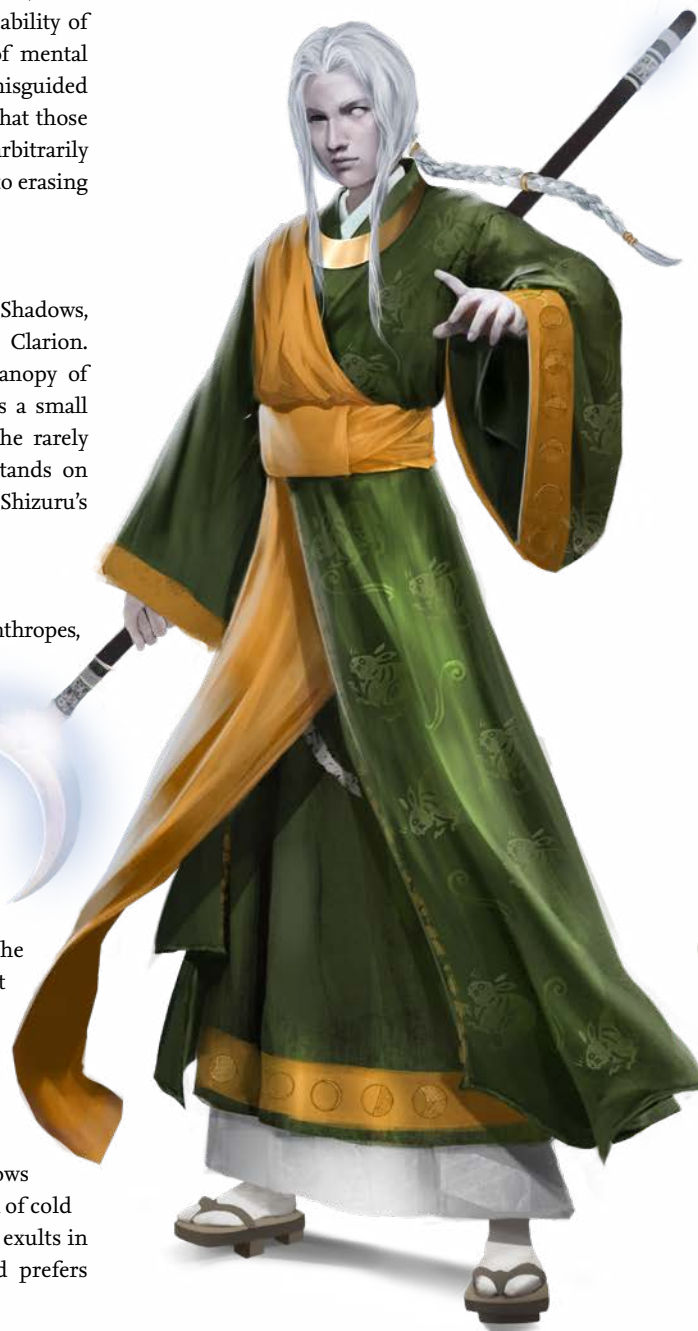
Tsukiyo's host consists of angels, celestial lycanthropes, kami, kirin, and other unique creatures.

**Dusk Ronin (unique star archon<sup>B3</sup>):** Believed to be the child of Tsukiyo and Shizuru, the Dusk Ronin lacked the forbearance of her mother, and constantly confronted Tsukiyo over the toll his absences took on Shizuru. When the Dusk Ronin lost her temper and struck her father in anger, Shizuru exiled the archon as punishment. The Dusk Ronin is not truly a divine servant, but answers calls from the faithful of either of her parents. She most often comes to the aid of Tsukiyo's followers, both as penance and to better understand her father and others like him.

**Kihyo (unique phoenix):** This eerie bird glows with a cool moonlight that deals a combination of cold and divine damage (similar to *flame strike*). She exults in any opportunity to calm undead spirits, and prefers being paid with jade carvings.

### Lady of the Green Crescent (herald of Tsukiyo)

When Tsukiyo's corpse crashed to the ground, it sent the nearby animals running—all but one hare oft-maligned for her cowardice. However, she remained by the god's side, washed his face, and fended off thieves and scavengers until Shizuru's arrival. Once revived, Tsukiyo praised the hare's loyalty, and she has since served as his herald. The Lady of the Green Crescent is a unique jade-bodied emperor kirin<sup>B3</sup> with a hare's features. She and her kirin children usher the dead back to their tombs, watch over Tsukiyo's faithful from afar, and provide comfort to those who would otherwise suffer alone.



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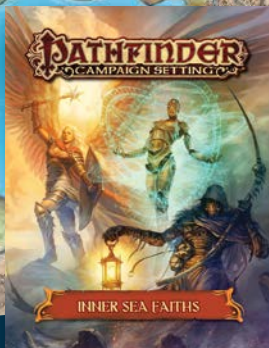
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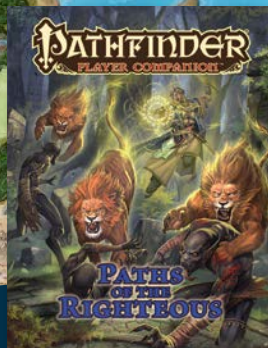
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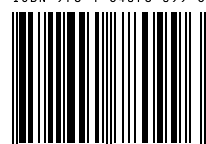
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