

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY 1 ENCOUNTERS™ 1

THE PAGODA OF WORLDS™



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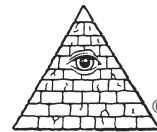
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*Every step is poetry
in motion
Let the rhythm take
your devotion*

– Carl Douglas,
“Dance the Kung Fu”

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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INTRODUCTION

An abandoned monastery sits in the middle of a monster-infested wilderness. Still protected from the worst of the monsters outside its walls by layers of mystical defense, it contains riches left behind by its former inhabitants. Moreover, it is home to a tower fitted with portals allowing easy access to far-off locations and even other dimensions. But adventurers hoping to take control also have to confront both natural monsters wandering throughout the surrounding wilderness, outside of the monastery's supernatural protection, and terrifying entities which have come in from the *other side* of the portals.

SUMMARY

Adventurers travel through the *wilderness* (p. 5) to reach (or discover) an abandoned *monastery* (pp. 5-10). Upon entering, they become trapped by countless *monsters* (pp. 14-16) outside and threatened by a different horde within. The most expedient way out is through interdimensional portals in a tall *pagoda* (pp. 10-13) in the center of the structure. *Secrets* (p. 7) found in old texts can unlock the mystery if the delvers are slow to catch on.

PROTAGONISTS

This encounter is best suited for a group of four to six adventurers built on standard 250-point *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* templates without notable assistance from magical gear, though these assumptions can scale somewhat. While most of the obstacles are best dealt with using extreme and entertaining violence (sometimes supplemented by running away), the protagonists should be capable of at least *some* cunning and stealth as well. Notably, scholarly characters are useful for figuring out clues to opening the pagoda that are scattered around the monastery, and thieves or similarly stealthy characters are useful for obtaining necessary items nonviolently (and therefore avoid using up resources in this exceptionally monster-rich environment). Most useful treasure is scattered or covered up, making the **Search** skill paramount for finding loot.

HOOKS

It's easy to get wandering adventurers to the pagoda. Local rumors, maps, or the traditional old man in a tavern can point delvers in the direction of an abandoned temple, where the former residents left riches behind. Wanderers who come

across the monastery in the midst of a monster-infested landscape may decide to take shelter there simply because it's a far more defensible position than being out in the woods. They may even be drawn there by the magical light atop the pagoda (indeed, the monastery's former subsidiary mission to provide shelter to wanderers is the reason there's a light in the first place). Delvers focused on a larger quest may be sent there because the monastery is believed to hold a relevant text or artifact (either in a shrine, p. 7, or through the doorway to another world), or they may be traveling to the pagoda specifically to take advantage of its gates to other worlds. In all cases, the real challenge is not getting into the temple complex, it's getting *out*.

N

As in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon*, most monster encounters refer to a quantity "N"; this is equal to the number of PCs and useful allies, hirelings, and other companions they have with them.

However, this encounter assumes 250-point delvers. For more experienced ones, sum the points in excess of 250 per character, and then add 1 to N for every 100 excess points. For example, a group of four 250-point heroes and two 300 point ones would have $N = 7$ (six delvers plus a total of 100 excess points). The GM may also need to make adjustments, using his best judgment, if the party is equipped with powerful magical items.

In case of fractions in calculations with N (for example, $N/2$ monsters where N is 5), round up.

IMPORTANT SKILLS

Any skill, spell, or trait particularly useful in overcoming an obstacle or facing a challenge is presented in **boldface**: "The iron demon can be overcome by winning a Quick Contest of **Cooking**."

CUSTOM FIT

Given a batch of adventurers suited for killing things and taking their stuff in low tech drag, this encounter puts very few demands on the setting's geography. The pagoda's location needs to be somewhat remote from civilization (though not necessarily *completely* isolated) in a wilderness poorly controlled enough that no one has stepped in to clear out the many, many monsters.

The assumed mix of undead outside and demons within may prove too easy for a party heavy on clerics, holy warriors, and others with the ability to easily brush off such threats. If so, replace some or all of these with natural monsters (like dire animals) in the wilderness and Elder Things inside the monastery.

Disproportionately powerful abilities aren't likely to make much of a difference in how things play out. Massive firepower (say, adventurers equipped with automatic weapons and grenades instead of swords and crossbows) can mow down monsters faster, but while the monsters are in infinite supply, bullets aren't. The thing to watch for there isn't how badly adventurers hurt monsters, but how badly they might hurt the structure. The GM can feel free to be creative if high-powered delvers start blowing up walls. Perhaps that'll let the undead and living monsters from outside in – or it may destabilize the dimensional portals and suck the adventurers into a different universe, leading to a whole new set of adventures to get back home.

Psycho Killer

This encounter is an excellent opportunity for adventurers to cut loose. The vast majority of the monsters encountered are unable or unwilling to talk, and the ones smart enough to provide any kind of conversation are in the middle of a war anyway. There's no reason *not* to kill everything that moves. That said, it's wise to limit other kinds of destruction. In addition to potential problems caused by messing with the structure (see *Custom Fit*, pp. 3-4), the key to figuring things out, at least for parties who need something to connect the dots for them, is in checking the libraries for clues. Massive attacks with fire, ice shards, tornadoes, and the like can wipe those vital clues out. It's not impossible to figure things out thereafter ("Hey, this jade thingy looks just like the jade bit on that door we can't open."), but it's harder.

SPIN-OFFS

The pagoda is essentially a spin-off waiting to happen. If the delvers can clear the monastery (it'll take some doing, but it becomes possible once they close the portals in the pagoda), the various levels of the pagoda provide immediate access to a variety of interesting locations. It becomes a hub for any number of adventures set in the worlds accessible from the pagoda:

- An elemental plane, or simply a world with radically different (mostly aerial) geography (*Second Level Events*, p. 11).
- An apparently infinite dungeon dimension suitable for ongoing exploration and adventure, or possibly just a back door to a more conventional mega-dungeon (*Third Level Events*, p. 11).
- A location on the opposite side of the world, allowing rapid shifting between seasons and cultural backgrounds (*Fourth Level Events*, p. 11).

- A dangerous Hellscape full of the worst demonic creatures and Elder Things, possibly involved in a conflict of cosmic consequences (*Fifth Level Events*, p. 11).

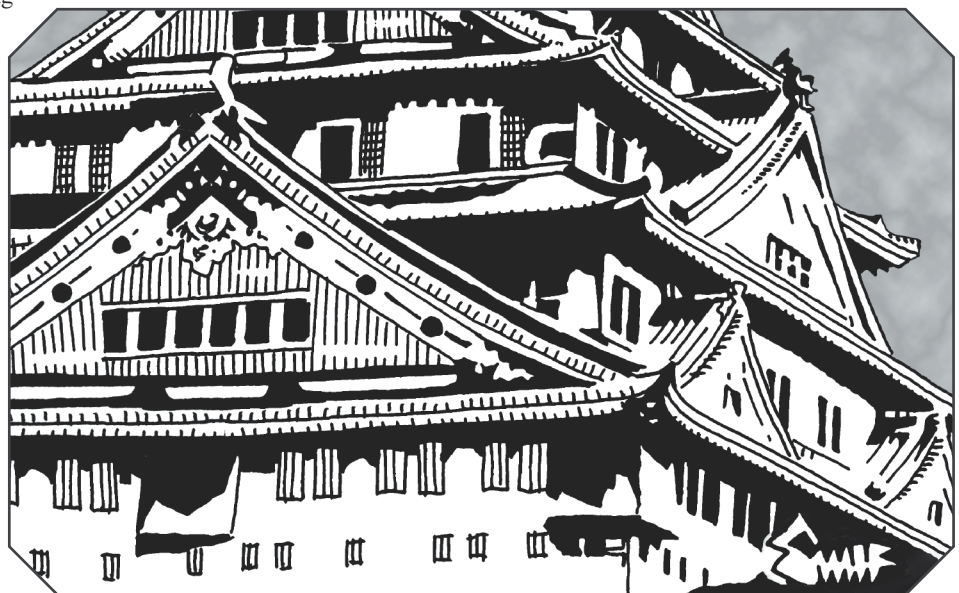
Enterprising adventurers may realize that either the infinite dungeon or Hellscape could be good places to turn a quick buck by harvesting the ample body parts of supernatural creatures. Extensive research at the pagoda (once things have settled down) might even allow magicians and sages to shift the portals' destinations for more varied travel. However, they may first wish to figure out how monsters originally broke through and occupied the monastery. Did they engineer the breach, or did someone on the pagoda side just forget to close the door? Is the pagoda potentially the equivalent of Normandy for an interdimensional invasion?

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth and Magic* are *required* to use this encounter. Although all of the loot herein is given weight and value, detailed descriptions of some treasures are found in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*, and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*. Other volumes in the *Dungeon Fantasy* series are useful, as is *GURPS Magic*, but are not necessary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing RPGs since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice which slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for loremasters of healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, an eighth-level rogue, and a pack of dogs.



CHAPTER ONE

THE PAGODA

COMPLEX

The action of this encounter takes place in and around an abandoned monastery. The locals say that the walls dividing worlds are very thin in the vicinity, which is why, generations ago, a religious order decided to build a great pagoda there as well as a monastery around it. From there, they could contemplate an infinity of worlds. Unfortunately, a moment of carelessness or deliberate demonic action (see *Spin-Offs*, p. 4) several years ago allowed creatures from beyond the world to invade, driving out or killing off the monks. The temple's ward

prevents these interlopers from getting out into the rest of the world (just as various other monsters in the region have been unable to get *in*), but for now, they guard a considerable storehouse of riches. They spend most of their time lurking in the shadows and fighting one another, but they'll be more than happy to kill mortal invaders.

For maps of the monastery and the pagoda, see pp. 8 and 12-13.

THE WILDERNESS

The monastery is surrounded by mostly overgrown wilderness, with few signs of habitation beyond a couple of graveyards within sight of its walls. The land is mostly light forest with occasional grassy clearings and some small marshy areas abutting the streams passing through. The area is abandoned, and with good reason: it's full of monsters. The region is particularly lousy with undead from graveyards. When the monastery was occupied, it was easy for the monks to keep the dead in their graves, but now they're out of control, at least within the vicinity of the pagoda.

EVENTS IN THE WILDERNESS

There are dangerous things in the countryside around the monastery – specifically, within about two hours' walk (approximately an eight-mile



radius). If the adventurers first come into this area during the day, these threats are not particularly active; roll *hourly* on the "Wilderness" column of the *Monster Table* (p. 15).

However, once they've spent four hours exploring *or* do something especially noisy and flashy (ordinary combat won't do it, but creating storms or calling down pillars of flame from the sky would suffice), their presence becomes known and things get much more dangerous. Bloodthirsty creatures, attracted by the signs of people passing through, emerge from their hiding places and converge on the adventurers' location. Roll on the *Monster Table* every *half-hour*.

After nightfall the animals grow bolder while more undead and evil spirits emerge from the graveyards; roll on the *Monster Table* every *five minutes*.

If the adventurers enter the monastery, any monsters left outside will pursue up to the front gate but won't enter. Roll *three times* on the *Monster Table*; those monsters remain in sight of the gate and will attack anyone who comes out. If adventurers manage to make it past the mass of monsters when leaving, continue to roll every half-hour (day) or five minutes (night).

THE MONASTERY

The monastery of the Pagoda of Worlds is an ancient spiritual (but not religious!) foundation. Over its long life, as the monks within focused their life energy through meditation and martial *kata*, the monastery's walls became imbued with their chi. This mystical protection forms a still-functional perimeter that keeps hostile creatures out. Unfortunately,

it cannot keep monsters from showing up *inside* the walls. A careless mistake with the portals several years ago allowed creatures from other worlds to invade the monastery, killing most of the monks and driving off the rest. Some monsters still inhabit the building, trapped within its walls, waiting to prey on the living.

The structure is made mostly of brick and stone about a foot thick (DR 156*, 94 HP), with heavy wooden structural members. The walls are six yards high on the outside, with the tiled roof sloping down to four yards high around the courtyards. The high ceilings have many exposed beams about eight inches thick (DR 8*, 30 HP), more than sturdy enough to support a person's weight and wide enough to walk on carefully. However, they're liberally decorated with layers of cobwebs and lightweight blown trash like leaves and scraps of paper and decayed fabric.

The temple and its surroundings have normal levels of mana and sanctity. Despite the name, the monastery is more a school and place of contemplation than what clerics or druids would consider a sacred space.

Let there be a separate kitchen for the Abbot and guests, that the brethren may not be disturbed when guests, who are never lacking in a monastery, arrive at irregular hours.

– *Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 53*

ROOMS

The monastery contains a few singular locations which require individual descriptions as well as a large number of similar rooms which can be described generically. Many of these are decorated with fabric hangings or wooden paneling, though all are in poor condition. Many interior doors have been destroyed over the years, but those that remain are locked. There are no windows.

For an explanation of **Search** and its cumulative modifier (CM), as well as more on looking for loot in general, see *Looting* (pp. 9-10)

Front Gate

The front gate is heavy wood bound with iron (treat as an extra-heavy, ironbound door; see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 18), decorated with brass bosses and painted an auspicious crimson. It is wide open, but can be closed and barred. However, the mystical protection on the monastery is such that monsters cannot cross the doorway. Travelers fleeing the fearful creatures outside are entirely safe from them as soon as they pass the threshold. They could even stand just inside the gateway and hurl spells and missiles at the creatures outside the monastery without fear of reprisal, though more monsters will quickly take their place.

Front Courtyard

The courtyard is stone-paved and contains many wooden pillars about a foot thick, arranged in concentric circles. They were used in martial-arts training and for various kinds of ceremonies. They were once painted with inspirational slogans and mystic teachings, but the writing has worn away to illegibility. The ground is littered with leaves, dust, and other debris which has blown in over the years, but searching for

anything interesting lost among the debris will turn up bones and other decayed remains. A few are clearly human, but a suitable **Hidden Lore** or **Physiology** roll reveals that some are remains of demons, while others are remains of Elder Things.

The yard itself is usually devoid of threats, as there are no good places for creatures to lurk. If the PCs spend enough time here, check for wandering monsters (p. 7) every half-hour, as usual.

Rear Courtyard

The rear courtyard is much like the front one: stone-paved, littered with several seasons worth of leaves and the occasional bone. It is dominated by the tall pagoda at its center. The door, set in its south corner beneath a slight overhang, is locked (see *The Pagoda of Worlds*, pp. 10-13).

Great Hall

The great hall, at the back of the monastery, is a high-ceilinged room with a forest of pillars. It would normally be filled with monks at regular intervals for prayers and large-scale lectures. Now, it's an empty space which is kept clear of monsters of every description. At intervals around the walls are 2 x N rabid demon dogs (p. 16). They're dormant (not quite *sleeping*, but close enough), but will awake at loud noises and bright lights and attack anyone they find. There is also a devotional statue of a great sage on a dais at one end of the room which will come to life if disturbances in the room go on for more than 10 seconds; see *Sage Statue* (p. 16). It's too big to fit through the doorway, so it stays in the room and goes back to rest on the dais if left alone. There is no appreciable loot in the hall; the GM should make this clear after the first search attempt (successful or not).

Armory

The monastery is dedicated in roughly equal proportions to contemplation of cosmic infinities and beating people up. These rooms, marked with an **A** on the map, are dedicated to the latter. Use the "Armory" column of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -3).

Cell

The small, unmarked rooms on the map were the uniform cells in which the monks lived. Each was furnished with a wooden sleeping platform and a low stone-topped table which might hold a brazier for warmth in colder months or a lantern or candles for light. Monks with sufficient talent were allowed to draw or paint appropriate designs on the wall, from allegorical paintings and mythical scenes to carefully written slogans and advice.

While monks were not materialistic, they were allowed some personal possessions. At the moment they were forced to flee, individual monks could have had any number of items in their rooms, from books to badges of office to prayer aids. Use the "General" column of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -4).

Libraries

The masters of the monastery wrote a lot, and junior monks were put through a great deal of book learning.

The monastery, therefore, contains a number of libraries (marked **L** on the map). The rooms are equipped with tall bookshelves (indifferently connected to the walls at this point), lecterns for standing readers, and low desks for reading and writing (but no chairs, as monks typically sat on the floor or cushions), but are largely unadorned. The philosophy was that the written word was sufficient decoration.

For some reason, the libraries also attract monsters. Monsters appear on a 5 or 6 on the room's initial monster check (*Wandering Monsters*, p. 7) rather than just a 6.

In the years which have passed, the libraries have sadly decayed. Most text are now useless fragments. However, some are more durable than others, so some useful texts remain. Use the "Library" column of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -3). In addition, each successful search in the library reveals a "secret" from the list below, a bit of the monastery's history which adventurers can use to fill in the gaps of what they can figure out on their own. Following up a search with a successful **Research** roll reveals the next *two* secrets!

Secrets are found in this order:

1. Barriers between worlds are very thin around the monastery.
2. Initiates at the monastery were able to travel great distances and return quickly.
3. The masters were able to unlock the secrets of many worlds.
4. The pagoda is at the crossing of many paths, some to very pleasant places, others to very bad ones.
5. The dimensions can be unlocked with jade keys.
6. The ways to other worlds can be locked only from one side.
7. Keys may be borrowed from the most honored masters.
8. Keys kept by gilded masters open the ways to other worlds past gates in the pagoda.

Shrine

The monastery holds six shrines to notable former leaders, marked **Sh** on the map. Each room has a plaque over the door(s) indicating the name of the deceased: Honored Master Sheng, Honored Master Leng, Honored Master Weng, Honored Master Ang, Honored Master Wang, and Honored Master Tang.

The shrines are lavishly painted with allegorical scenes and pictures from the honoree's previous and imagined future lives, and colored ribbons are hung from the rafters. The focus of each shrine is the body of a particularly important monk turned into a shining statue. After his death, he is coated in clay, dried, fired, and covered in gold leaf. The statue is further dressed in fine silken robes and adorned with an elaborate jade necklace (see *Key Hunt*, p. 10). It is set on a low platform and surrounded by images of divine protection.

The malign energies at work in the monastery have turned these statues into gilded zombies (pp. 14-15), and the protective statues around them are N-2 rabid demon dogs (p. 16). They are usually dormant and remain that way unless touched or disturbed by noise. Anyone moving around in the room must win a Quick Contest of **Stealth** vs. Per 12. (For harsher realism, roll against the dogs' Per 12 *and* the zombie's Per 11 and use the best margin of success!) If any intruder fails, the zombie and demon dogs become fully aware and active instantly

to attack any interlopers. The necklace can be lifted from a dormant zombie with a Quick Contest of **Pickpocket** vs. the zombie's Per 11 *in addition to* the contest against Stealth.

Monks, pilgrims, and people from the surrounding region used to visit these shrines and make offerings, so the shrine rooms tend to have a lot of loot. Use the "General" column of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -2). If any foes remain, each additional search requires a new Quick Contest to avoid disturbing them!

Storeroom

It wasn't all chanting, transcendence, and flying kicks. The monastery had many storerooms, marked **St** on the map, to support the daily needs of the residents. In addition to holding quotidian items, the storerooms also served as a treasury for tribute from various petitioners. Use the "General" column of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -3).

Storerooms have well-like cisterns, about two feet across in the center of the floor with a wooden cover, and eight to 10 feet deep. In addition to the monster check, roll 1d. On a 1-3, the cistern contains only water. On a 4, it has an item from the "General" column of the *Treasure Table*. On a 5, it contains N leaping leeches (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 22). On a 6, it has an item *and* the leeches.

Prelate's Cell

The leader of the monastery had much the same lodging as his subordinates, but more in the way of books and other items. The prelate's cell, marked **P** on the map, looks like any other cell, but with a single sleeping platform and more debris to search through for stuff. Successfully looting the room finds a treasure from the "General" *and* "Library" columns of the *Treasure Table* (p. 9); **Search** (CM -2).

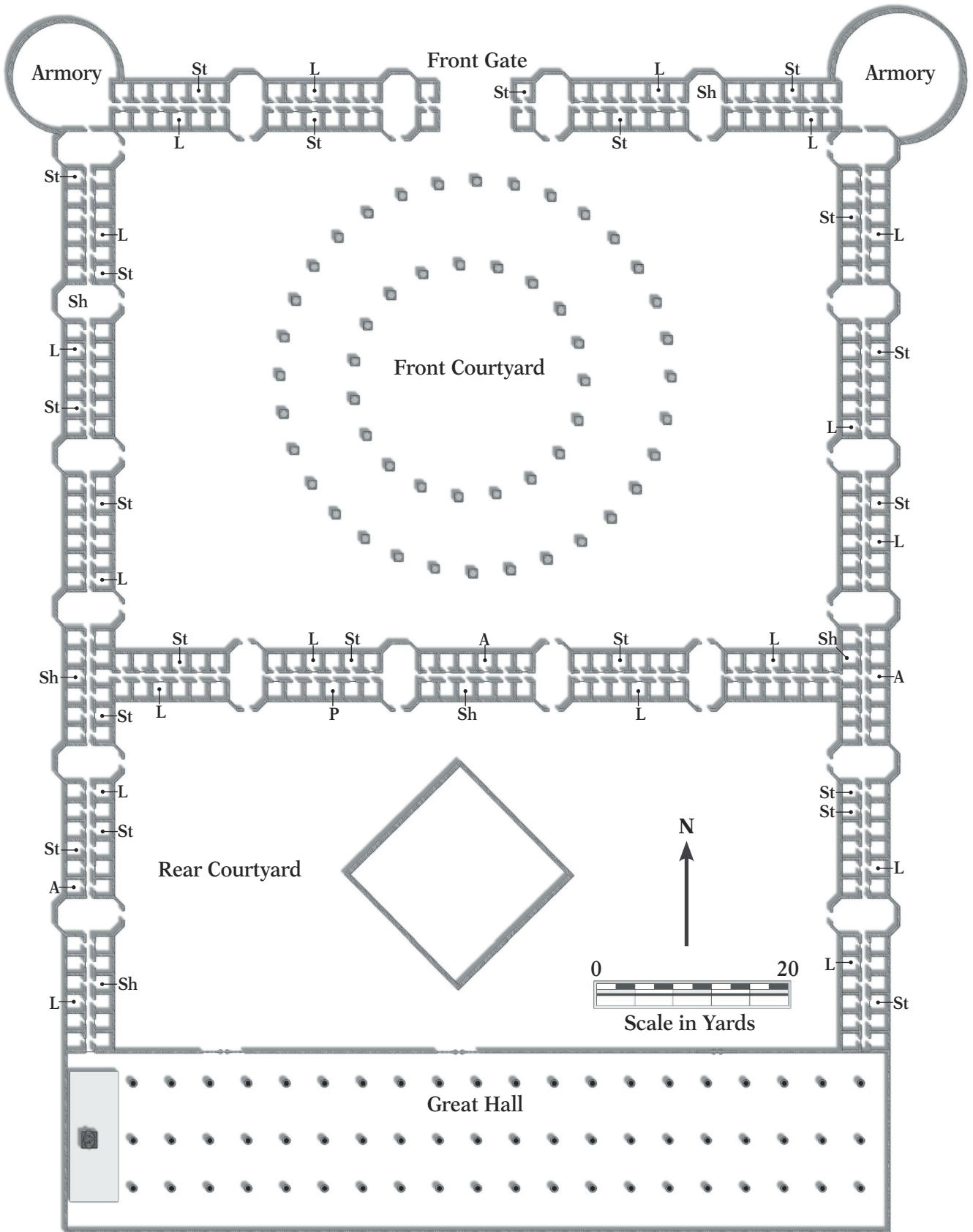
EVENTS IN THE MONASTERY

In the bulk of the monastery, there are three things worth doing: fighting monsters, collecting loot, and looking for ways to get into the pagoda.

Wandering Monsters

The monastery is full of monsters which have filtered in from the pagoda's portals (mainly from the fifth floor, p. 11) and down the stairs, since the pagoda's one-way locks only keep things *out*. They're mostly holed up in disused cells, but sometimes wander the complex themselves. Every time adventurers enter a new room whose occupants aren't otherwise determined, roll a die. On a 6, the room is occupied; roll on the "Monastery" column of the *Monster Table* (p. 15). Also, roll a die every half-hour of in-game time. On a 6, roll on the "Monastery" column of the *Monster Table*; the party runs into that threat in the hall, yard, etc.

Monsters in rooms with doors are taking temporary shelter from ongoing conflicts with other monsters and aren't expecting trouble, so they can be taken unaware by stealthy delvers. Those in rooms without doors are lurking, lying in wait to attack anything that might come in, but won't risk their position by leaving the room to investigate nearby disturbances. (The GM can decide which cells have doors or roll 1d; on a 1-3, there's a door; on a 4-6, there isn't.)



MAP OF THE MONASTERY

Key: A = Armory. L = Library. P = Prelate's Cell. Sh = Shrine. St = Storage.

THE PAGODA COMPLEX

Looting

Most of the monastery's current occupants carry little if anything in the way of material possessions (a few carry weapons, but nothing else), but since it was a well-off institution before the inhabitants were forced to flee, there's still plenty of loot to be found if delvers look for it.

Anyone can spend a minute to poke around a room for valuables, making an unmodified **Search** roll. If the roll succeeds, roll on the column of the *Treasure Table* (below) indicated for the area. If for some reason an area without an associated column is searched, use the "General" column. (If the entire

party lacks the Search skill, the GM may take pity on them by changing this to a simple **Per** roll.)

Further searches can be performed, but are less likely to turn up anything worthwhile. Each type of room is listed with a *cumulative modifier* (CM) for Search, which penalizes all subsequent searches. For example, cells have CM -4, so the second search in a cell is at -4, the third at -8, etc. On a critical success, no penalty is incurred for that search. On a critical failure or if the total penalty is -12 or worse, there's nothing valuable left in the room, though clever delvers may find some use for the rubbish which fills each room (using broken furniture for improvised clubs, torn clothing for kindling, etc.).

TREASURE TABLE

Roll on this table as directed to find random treasures around the monastery. All items are from the *Basic Set* or *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers* unless noted otherwise. If no weight is listed, treat as negligible.

Roll	General	Armory	Library
1-3, 1	1d silver pennies (each \$4)	Shuriken spinner and 10 shuriken (\$45, 1.25 lbs., p. 32*)	Primer on Philosophy (\$25, 3 lbs., p. 13†)
1-3, 2	2d silver pennies (each \$4)	Blooming knife (\$150, 1 lb., p. 32*)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Enhanced Parry 1 (Unarmed)
1-3, 3	1d 2-carat agate beads (each \$60)	Quarterstaff with gilding and red silk fringe (\$205, 4 lbs., +3 to reactions)	Primer on Esoteric Medicine (\$75, 3 lbs., p. 13†)
1-3, 4	1d×5 silver pennies (each \$4)	Meteoric iron dagger (\$400, 0.25 lb.)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Mind Shield
1-3, 5	Scribe's kit in extensively carved box (\$250, 2 lbs., +2 to reactions)	Dragonbone nunchaku (\$500, 2 lbs., p. 33* for dragonbone)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Immovable Stance
1-3, 6	Agate beads on a silver chain (\$345)	Matched throwing axes with extensive geometric reliefs (each \$300, 4 lbs., +2 to reactions)	Primer on Hidden Lore (Demons) (\$50, 3 lbs., p. 13†)
4-6, 1	Icon (watercolor, 1 sq. ft.; \$400, 0.75 lb., p. 15*)	Red-enameled gauntlets (\$600, 2 lbs., +2 to reactions)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Light Walk
4-6, 2	Portable Shrine (\$400, 8 lbs., p. 23*)	Fine kusari (\$700, 5 lbs.)	Primer on Hidden Lore (Elder Things) (\$50, 3 lbs., p. 13†)
4-6, 3	Icon (encaustic painting, 1 sq. ft.; \$700, 0.75 lb., p. 15*)	Fine cutlass (\$1,200, 2 lbs.)	Textbook on Esoteric Medicine (\$150, 6 lbs., p. 13†)
4-6, 4	1d 2-carat jade beads (each \$240)	Silver-coated katana (\$1,950, 5 lbs.)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Breaking Blow
4-6, 5	Icon in silver iconostasis‡ (\$2,000, 1 lb.)	Halberd enchanted with Puissance +1 (\$5,150, 12 lbs.)	Thesis (Philosophy, 8 points) (\$200, 12 lbs.)
4-6, 6	Portable Shrine, Blessed (\$2,000, 8 lbs., p. 23*)	Scale armor with extensive beaded designs (\$3,360, 35 lbs., +2 to reactions)	Handbook fragment (p. 10) on Pressure Points

* Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*.

† Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*. In games not using *Sages*, a delver may study this book for 15 weeks and then spend 1 character point on the skill to learn it.

‡ New item; an iconostasis is a frame with a stand *or* a frame with mounting points, suitable for placing on a shrine.

Trigrams



Handbooks and Fragments

The monastery taught many martial-arts techniques, and wrote extensively about many of them. Careful sifting through the bits and pieces of old books can eventually reconstruct such texts. Reconstructing a handbook requires at least 10 fragments on a given topic and a successful roll against **IQ** or **Research** by a literate character at +1 per additional fragment past 10. If this roll fails, subsequent attempts are at a cumulative -2 (-5 for a critical failure). A finished handbook is \$150, 6 lbs. – except for the one that teaches Enhanced Parry, which is \$750, 24 lbs. Individual fragments weigh 1/6 of finished handbook weight and have no inherent resale value.

Anyone may study a handbook for 15 weeks on the road or in town and then spend 1 point to learn its skill permanently. For a handbook that teaches an advantage, this becomes five weeks of study per point (minimum 15 weeks), after which the student may pay its full value in character points to acquire it. The cinematic martial traits taught by handbooks have *no prerequisites*; e.g., a delver can learn Light Walk despite lacking Trained by a Master, Acrobatics, and/or Stealth! There are no training costs for this initial learning (the handbook is the “teacher”), though the delver may pay for further training to improve the trait from there (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*, p. 43).

Under the Hood: Handbooks

Handbooks are a variant of *Manuals* (*Sages*, p. 13), but with the new “knowledge type” modifier below. In addition, these *specific* handbooks are doubled in weight due to the fragmentary nature by which the PCs must collect them.

Enhanced Esoteric Knowledge: As for “Esoteric Knowledge,” but with two additional features: the manual can teach even non-scholars a single level of an advantage (in which case the study time is five weeks per point, minimum 15 weeks) and the student is exempt from any prerequisites. The latter benefit applies *only* to actual study, not to Book-Learned Wisdom;

a scholar who wants to “Book-Learn” Light Walk needs to have Trained by a Master, Acrobatics at 14+, *and* Stealth at 14+. (This is one of the rare times that a scholar-martial artist comes out ahead!) +5 CF.

Key Hunt

If the delvers go straight for the pagoda (below), they’ll find that they can’t get in. The doors to each level of the pagoda, including the first, are secured with magical locks. The locks are very visible and obviously magical. They’re prominently displayed, glowing jade plates deeply engraved with a trigram, a series of three short lines which are either solid or broken in half (see the diagrams above).

The gilded zombies in the shrines (p. 7) happen to be wearing pendants exactly matching these locks; each comprises a small piece of jade with an engraved trigram, set into a wooden core wrapped with colorful threads, hanging from a silk ribbon. One of the gilded zombies has a pendant with trigram #1, another with #2, and so on. When one of the pendants is inserted into the matching lock, the door opens; it locks again immediately on being closed. The keys are only needed to get *into* the pagoda; the doors can be opened from the inside without a key. To reach successive levels of the pagoda, adventurers must obtain the appropriate pendants and use them in order; to reach the top level, they must obtain all six. As keys, these pendants are unique and priceless; if sold for prosaic value alone, each is worth \$30,000.

The GM has a few ways to decide which shrine zombie holds which key. He can go in the order of the names listed (Sheng has #1, Leng has #2, etc.). Or he can roll 1d for the number; if this indicates a pendant that they already have, assume that they find the lowest-leveled key (e.g., if they have #1, #3, and #4, and the die comes up a 4, they’ve found #2). But the most fun way may be to print out the symbols above, cut them out, put them in a bag, and then draw from it when the players discover a pendant. (Make sure to include the thin line below each trigram, so you know which side is down!)

THE PAGODA OF WORLDS

The pagoda proper is a six-level tower in the center of the rear courtyard. Each level contains a portal to another world which may be opened and closed at will, but it also contains threats which must be overcome first. Like the rest of the monastery, the pagoda is made from stone with some thick wooden beams where necessary.

The pagoda is topped with a sturdy mast-like structure supporting a yard-thick stone sphere. This sphere begins to glow as the sun goes down, reaching a brightness like the full moon at midnight, and dims thereafter, going out entirely at

dawn. Particularly ambitious looters could attempt to remove it, but since it’s both very large and very heavy (nearly 2,500 lbs.), it may not provide a great return for the effort (\$10,000, and good luck finding a buyer!).

To enter a given level in the pagoda, one requires a key (see above) matching that level’s magical lock, which *cannot* be picked manually and resists lockpicking and door-opening magic with an effective skill of 25. The first floor requires the key with trigram #1, the second with trigram #2, and so on.

Access to each floor past the first is from a stairway in the west corner, with an open doorway to the stairs to the south and the curving stairs heading north and up to reach a locked door. Each level past the first contains a portal to another dimension, typically a door which may be locked or barred from the pagoda side but not from wherever it leads.

EVENTS IN THE PAGODA

The pagoda is somewhat more thickly inhabited with monsters than the rest of the monastery, and rather less was left behind (no hidden treasure). In addition to the listed threats, roll on the *Monster Table* (p. 15) once for each level, and continue to check for wandering monsters (p. 7) if the delvers spend more than half an hour there. The sixth level is an exception; it has no monsters.

For further thoughts on the worlds beyond the portals, see *Spin-Offs* (p. 4).

First Level Events

Aside from several decayed decorative banners around the edges of the room, the first level is disappointingly empty of anything portable. The first level contains a sage statue (p. 16) at the center of the room. It will animate and attempt to crush anyone in the room if touched (by delvers *or* monsters), but otherwise stays where it is and doesn't move.

Second Level Events

The second floor is painted entirely white, with long but nearly transparent gauzy curtains hanging from the ceiling here and there. The room is inhabited by N/3 toxifiers (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 26) lurking quietly among the curtains.

The room contains a door, closed but unlocked, in the north corner. Even slightly intelligent observers (roll against **Architecture** at +5 or **IQ**) should realize that the door couldn't possibly lead to another room; the other side of the doorway would be the outside of the pagoda. This is the first of the pagoda's doorways to other worlds. The portal opens onto a stone ledge about 20 feet square. The ledge is on a near-vertical cliff, subject to occasional gusts of chilly wind. The cliff is rough, with occasional small patches of scrubby vegetation, and provides sufficient natural handholds for anyone interested in climbing it, but both top and bottom are lost in clouds. The hazy outlines of very tall pillars, with both tops and bottoms likewise obscure, are sometimes visible through swirling mists in the extreme distance.

Third Level Events

This room contains a simple labyrinth made entirely of bare stone extending from floor to ceiling. The maze contains two basilisks (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth and Magic*, p. 5), an erupting slime (*Dungeons*, p. 23), and two shadow warriors (*Born of Myth and Magic*, p. 21). The monsters' activities are not coordinated, but none are happy to see invaders.

An unlocked but closed door sits near the east corner. This portal leads to a similar chamber with a number of doors around the room. Those doors reveal long, branching, cave-like tunnels and doors opening on similar rooms.

If delvers explore long enough, they'll start encountering an infinite variety of monsters, but no windows or even signs of an outdoors.

Fourth Level Events

The walls of this level are overgrown with vines and the floor covered with several inches of sticky mud (everyone is at 1/2 Move if using basic combat, or +1 movement point per hex for tactical combat). Swimming through the mud are N/2 phase serpents (*Born of Myth and Magic*, p. 17), who are unhappy to be disturbed.

In the center of the room is an open pool of apparently unlimited depth, which serves as a portal. To cross over to the other side, one must become completely submerged; attaching ropes or cords will keep the user on the pagoda side. However, anyone going under in the pool comes up on the other side, and vice versa.

The pool on the other side of the portal is set in a wooden platform on posts about the same size and height as the pagoda's fourth level. The platform is in the middle of a swamp, the weather is distinctly warm, and the time is clearly not what it is at the pagoda (daytime if it's night at the pagoda or vice-versa).

Fifth Level Events

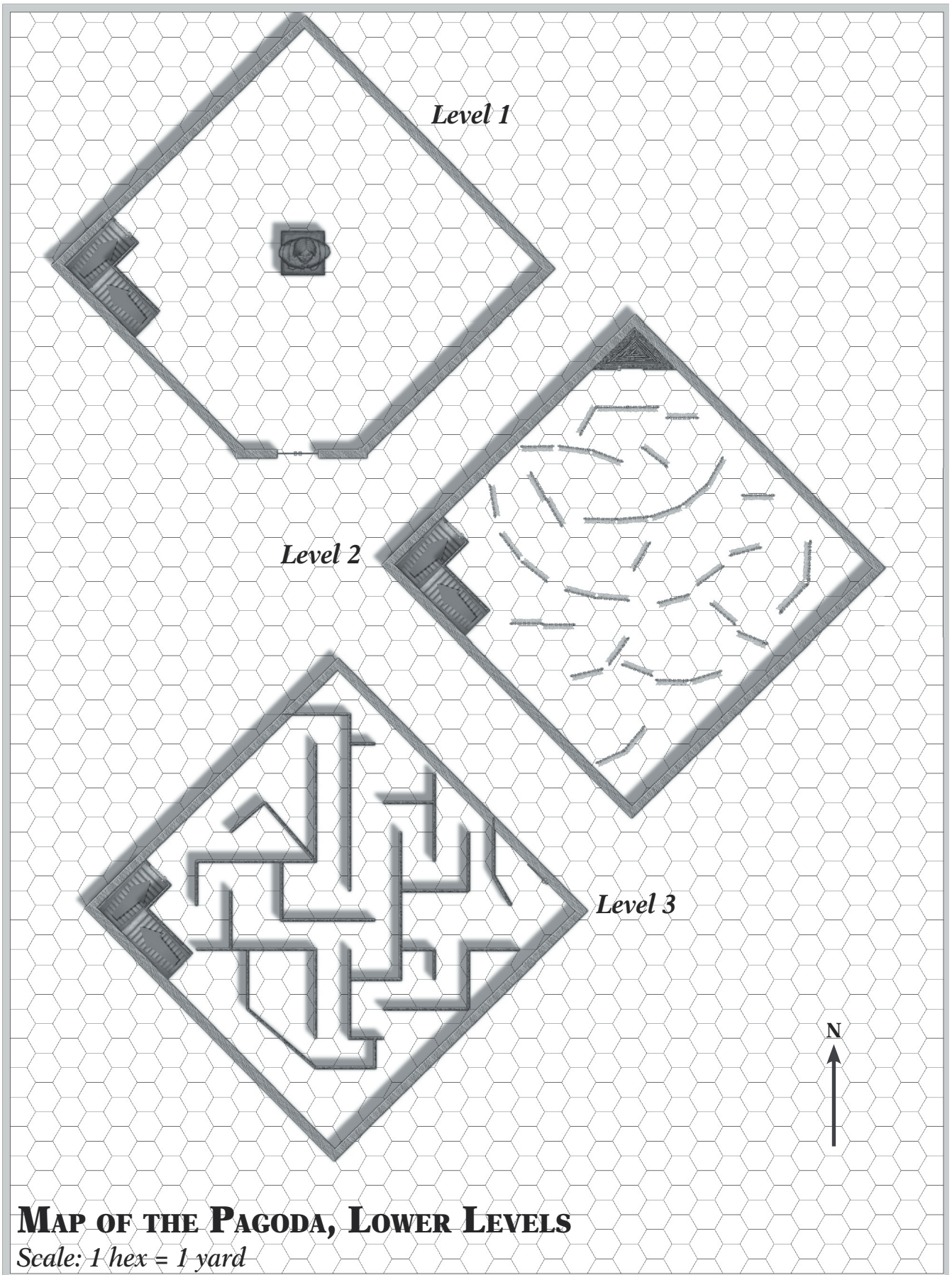
A well-equipped but slightly mad Watcher at the End of Time (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 34) stands in the middle of the room. It won't move unless someone (or something) comes within three yards of it or makes distinctly threatening moves (for example, aims a missile weapon at it), at which point it will burst into violent action. It has Berserk (Battle Rage) (6), and its swords are enchanted with Puissance +1. The zig-zag corridor leading to the portal in the southern corner is coated with frozen runes (*Dungeons*, p. 20). The door can be closed and barred, but it is wide open; it is where the monsters in the monastery are coming from.

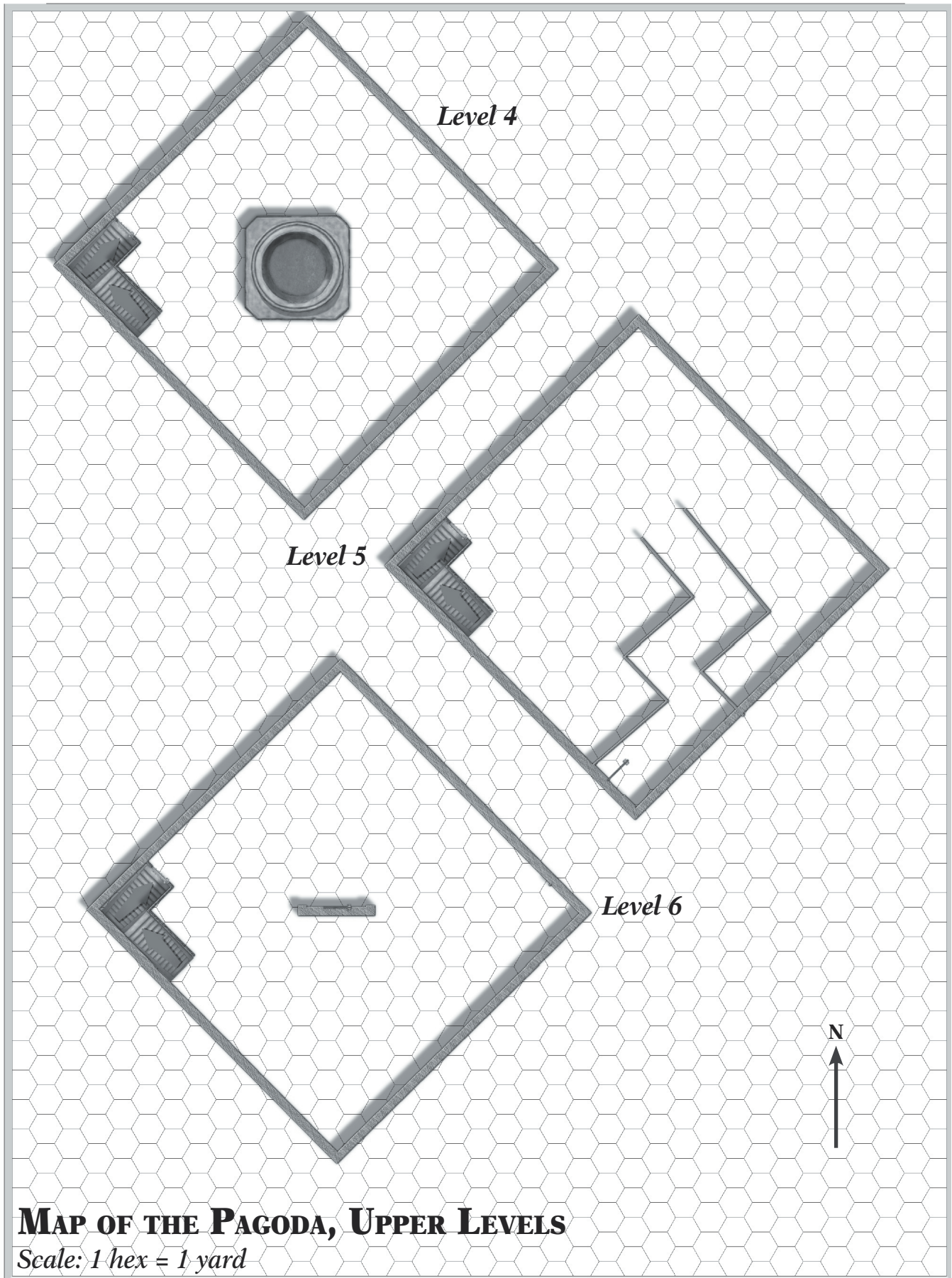
The portal leads to a slightly raised stone and earthen platform, about a foot above ground level, surrounded by a circle of jagged pumice monoliths, in the middle of a scorched plain barren of vegetation. A faint red glow comes from deep cracks in the ground. The sky is full of unfamiliar stars and visibly swirling nebulae of various colors. If visitors wait long enough, they'll see unpleasant creatures who are definitely hostile if approached. This world is a sort of battlefield between demons and Elder Things and is an exceptionally dangerous place to stay; they have superiority of numbers and *cannot* be banished (they are not outsiders here).

Sixth Level Events

Unless someone follows the adventurers up there, the sixth level is empty save for a doorway set into a vertical stone slab in the center of the room.

The portal leads to a hilltop earthen platform surrounded by carved stone pillars in an architectural style distinctly reminiscent of the monastery. From the platform, visitors can see a town not far away. Should they travel there and ask around, they'll find they're about 50 miles away from the monastery. Obviously, this is the safest way to escape the monastery without having to fight through the monsters gathered outside the gate.





CHAPTER TWO

CONFLICTS

Monsters inside, monsters outside, monsters everywhere, but of very different kinds. Those around the pagoda fall into two rough classes. Outside the monastery is a mix of undead roused from nearby graveyards and largely unintelligent but dangerous natural creatures. They mostly ignore one another, but both are happy to feed on living people.

Inside the monastery are largely a mix of demons and Elder Things, with a smattering of undead resulting from the bodies of monks left behind by those who fled. There's not much to be done about the undead, but if pressure from demons and Elder Things gets to be too much, there is something that beleaguered adventures can do. These particular creatures have come through the portal on the fifth floor of the pagoda (p. 11), a battlefield between two disorganized but seemingly infinite armies locked in an eternal struggle. In a word, they hate each other. Though demons and Elder Things rarely seem to care one way or another about each other, these particular ones are fighting a war. If delvers flee a group of demons and run into another group of Elder Things, the monsters are as likely to fight one another as the mortals who made them collide. And rabid demon dogs will attack *anything*.



NEW MONSTERS

A few threats are unique to the monastery.

Fireball Demon

A fireball demon moves with literally blazing speed. This small but nasty creature is the demonic embodiment of flame. It has two blade-like limbs at its sides, a rarely used foot-like projection (usually kept tucked under its spherical body), and a sharp horn pointing directly ahead. Its claws inflict minimal damage, but its burning aura is an ongoing danger, and its size and speed makes it difficult to hit. Its impaling attack is as dangerous to the demons as to their enemies; while stuck to a delver, it continues to burn him . . . and killing the demon will make it explode, doing even more damage!

One of the demons' weaknesses in the monastery is their high speed. Since their top speed is much higher than their Basic Move (see *High-Speed Movement*, p. B394), their maneuverability down the long, narrow corridors is terrible. They exercise particularly poor judgment in extended combats or when chasing elusive targets, and tend to move at maximum speed, which can result in hitting walls, hopping around to a new orientation, and taking off again.

ST: 8 **HP:** 8 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 14 **Will:** 8 **Move:** 2/18 (Air)
IQ: 8 **Per:** 10
HT: 10 **FP:** 7 **SM:** -3
Dodge: 12 **Parry:** 12 **DR:** 2

Aura of Fire: 1d burning. This harms anyone who *touches* or *is touched* by the demon.

Claws (18): 1d-1 cutting + aura of fire; Reach C.

Death Blast: 3d burning explosion.

Horn (18): 1d+1 impaling + aura of fire; Reach C. May get stuck, as for a pick (p. B405).

Horn Slam (18): Variable impaling + aura of fire. Made as a Move and Attack; damage is 1d-2 at Move 1-3, 1d-1 at Move 4-6, 1d at Move 7-12, and 1d+1 at Move 13+. The demon takes damage as well; see *Slam* (p. B371). May get stuck, as for a pick.

Traits: Berserk (6); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; DR 18 (Limited, Heat/Fire); Enhanced Dodge 3; Flight (Cannot Hover); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Head, No Neck, No Vitals); One Leg; Striking ST 3.

Skills: Brawling-18.

Class: Demon.

Gilded Zombie

When noted holy men at the monastery died, they were preserved in special shrines. The body was placed in a sitting position, wrapped, and covered in clay. The clay was fired to make a hard ceramic, and the whole assembly covered with gold leaf, producing a shining gold statue vaguely resembling the person at its core. Now that the monastery has been taken over by various creatures from other worlds, the mystical energies generated by the conflict have reanimated these bodies as angry monsters in their own right.

ST: 15 **HP:** 15 **Speed:** 7.00
DX: 16 **Will:** 11 **Move:** 7
IQ: 11 **Per:** 11
HT: 12 **FP:** - **SM:** 0
Dodge: 11 **Parry:** 13 **DR:** 4

Punch (18): 1d+2 crushing; Reach C.
Kick (18): 1d+4 crushing; Reach C, 1.

Traits: Bad Temper; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Extra Attack; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous); Seven Secret Kicks (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 30).

Skills: Acrobatics-15; Flying Leap-15; Karate-18; Parry Missile Weapons-14; Power Blow-14.

Class: Undead.

Notes: Gilded zombies do not negotiate. They're not evil; they're just in a bad mood and disinclined to communicate. Their innate DR allows them to make bare-hand parries of missile weapons at 11 and they can attempt Power Blow for a devastating 3d+5 damage, but they're extremely shiny and get -5 to Stealth attempts. The effects of Seven Secret Kicks are already factored into the attacks above; **Power-Ups** is not required. In addition to acquiring the jade key (p. 10), completists looking to strip every bit of loot from the monastery can recover \$280 worth of gold leaf from a gilded zombie.

Hopping Ghost

Technically more like a vampire than an immaterial spirit, a hopping ghost is a peculiar brand of undead characterized by its stiffness from rigor mortis and layers of tightly wrapped shrouds. Instead of walking or running, they move with prodigious leaps, and their ability to move across just about any surface lets them attack from unorthodox angles.

They kick, bite (and attempt to drink their victim's blood), and carry with them a debilitating stench of death, making them more formidable opponents than they might appear at first.

ST: 15	HP: 15	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 2
IQ: 10	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: -	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 9	DR: 2

Bite (16): 1d cutting + follow-up 1 HP/second; Reach C. If the ghost is injured, every 1 HP drained replenishes it 1 HP.

Kick (14): 1d+1 crushing; Reach C, 1.

Slam (16): 1d crushing at up to 9 yards – or 2d crushing at up to 18 yards if the ghost first takes two Concentrate maneuvers to crouch and prepare.

Stench of Death (Resisted by HT-1): Smell-based emanation in a 2-yard radius. Those who don't resist (roll every second they're within the area) are *nauseated* for minutes equal to margin of failure: -2 to all attributes and skills, -1 to active defenses, and possible vomiting (see p. B428).

Traits: Bad Smell; Clinging; Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous); Lamé (see Notes); No Fine Manipulators; Super Jump 2; Unfazeable.

Skills: Acrobatics-15; Brawling-16; Jumping-16; Stealth-15.

Class: Undead.

MONSTER TABLE

Roll on this table as directed to find out what monsters the adventurers encounter.

Roll	Wilderness	Monastery
1-3, 1	N/5 Crushrooms (p. 22*)	N-1 as-Sharak (as many different types as numbers permit; p. 21*)
1-3, 2	N/2 Flaming Skulls (p. 23*)	N+2 Doomchildren (p. 22*)
1-3, 3	2×N Giant Rats (p. 24*)	N/5 Peshkali (p. 25*)
1-3, 4	1.5×N Horde Zombies (p. 24*)	N+2 Fireball Demons (p. 14)
1-3, 5	N/3 Flaming Skulls (p. 23*) and N/2 Hopping Ghosts (above)	3/4×N Shadow Warriors (p. 21‡)
1-3, 6	1 Lich (p. 23†) and N/2 Horde Zombies (p. 24*)	N/3 Ciuaclá (p. 7†)
4-6, 1	N/2 Hopping Ghosts (above) and N/2 Horde Zombies (p. 24*)	N/2 Demons from Between the Stars (p. 9†) and 1 Sweeping Void
4-6, 2	N/2 Acid Spiders (p. 21*)	N/2 Demons of Old (p. 10†)
4-6, 3	N Foul Bats (p. 23*)	N/4 Eyes of Death (p. 14†)
4-6, 4	N+1 Ravenous Giant Rats (pp. 38† and 24*)	N/4 Spheres of Madness (p. 28†)
4-6, 5	N Undead Foul Bats (pp. 38† and 23*)	1 Mindwarper (p. 25*) and N/2 Void Brutes (p. 33†)
4-6, 6	N/5 Crushrooms (p. 22*) and N/2 Flying Ghosts (p. 16)	N-1 Rabid Demon Dogs (p. 16)

* Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*.

† Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*.

‡ Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth and Magic*.

Notes: Hopping ghosts suffer from something resembling *Lame* (Missing Legs). Both legs are under the shroud, but they're wrapped together tightly enough that they count as one. Though their horrible scent makes it easy to figure out hopping ghosts are in the vicinity, they're harder to find in time than it might appear. A favorite tactic is to nestle in a corner of a room near the ceiling and jump down on unsuspecting victims. They tend to rely on initial slam attacks to knock over their victims and count on their stench to keep them off balance until they can bite them to death. In combat, they can jump 2 yards straight up or make a standing broad jump of 9 yards.

Flying Ghosts

A particularly dangerous variant of the hopping ghost is the flying ghost. Sages may argue that it doesn't *really* fly ("it just jumps very, very well!"), but it makes little difference. A flying ghost has Move 2 (ground)/12 (air), but can spend no more than one turn in the air; it must touch down on some surface after air movement. However, since it still has *Clinging*, just about any surface (the side of a building or a tree branch) will do. It also kicks a little harder, doing 1d+3 damage.

Rabid Demon Dog

Despite the name, demon dogs are associated with order and spiritual protection, not infernal powers. Unfortunately, the demon dogs around the pagoda have been driven mad, so they'll attack anything that moves.

ST: 17 **HP:** 17 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 13 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 9
IQ: 4 **Per:** 12
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** - **DR:** 6

Bite (16): 1d+2 cutting; Reach C. Infectious; see Notes.
Blunt Claws (16): 1d+4 crushing; Reach C.

Traits: Absent-Minded; Combat Reflexes; Berserk (15); Discriminatory Smell; Quadruped; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Tracking-15.

Class: Divine Servitor.

Notes: The rabid demon dog's madness is caused by a contagious disease. Anyone bitten must roll against HT. If the roll fails, the infected victim becomes delirious, short-tempered, and even violent in two hours. Treat the victim as having Absent-Mindedness, Bad Temper (15), and Berserk (15). Those already possessing Bad Temper or Berserk lower its self-control number by 3 (minimum 6). The victim can recover naturally with another roll against HT (roll daily), or be cured with the **Cure Disease** spell or **Esoteric Medicine** (treatment takes about an hour).

Sage Statue

The monastery features a few larger-than-life-sized statues, depicting venerable figures of the monks' philosophy. They are infused with mystical energy and can animate to defend their home against invaders. However, they're not

working particularly well right now, so they are indiscriminate about targets.

ST: 30 **HP:** 30 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 6
IQ: 8 **Per:** 10
HT: 14 **FP:** - **SM:** +2
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 4

Punch (15): 3d+6; Reach C, 1.
Kick (13): 3d+7; Reach C-2.

Traits: Automaton; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous, No Blood); Mute; Pressure Support 3; Striking Surface (see Notes); Unfazeable; Vacuum Support.

Skills: Karate-15.

Class: Construct.

Notes: Striking Surface makes its hands count as brass knuckles and its feet as boots. Like the gilded zombies, the sage statue is coated with gold; \$800 worth, if anyone can defeat it.

Sweeping Void

In the realms of Things Man Was Not Meant To Know, the darkness of infinite space itself takes on volition. A sweeping void is something between a monster and a region of general malevolence, a moving area of cold and complete darkness. It mostly wanders aimlessly, but it is attracted to living creatures, sucking the warmth and life force out of them before moving on.

Sweeping voids are exceptionally hard to hurt. Material weapons can't touch them, and most attacks which *can* hit them do little damage. They can be driven off fairly easily with loud noises, but in the monastery, that's likely to attract unwelcome new attention.

ST: 0 **HP:** 12 **Speed:** 5.75
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 5
IQ: 4 **Per:** 10
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** varies
Dodge: 8 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 0

Interstellar Chill: Anyone in the area of the sweeping void must roll against HT twice per turn. Failing the first roll does 1 HP of injury; failing the second reduces FP by 1. Ignores DR. (The area is also magically darkened; see Notes.)

Traits: Brontophobia (12); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Insubstantiality (Affects Substantial; Always On); Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; No Eyes; No Head; No Neck); No Manipulators.

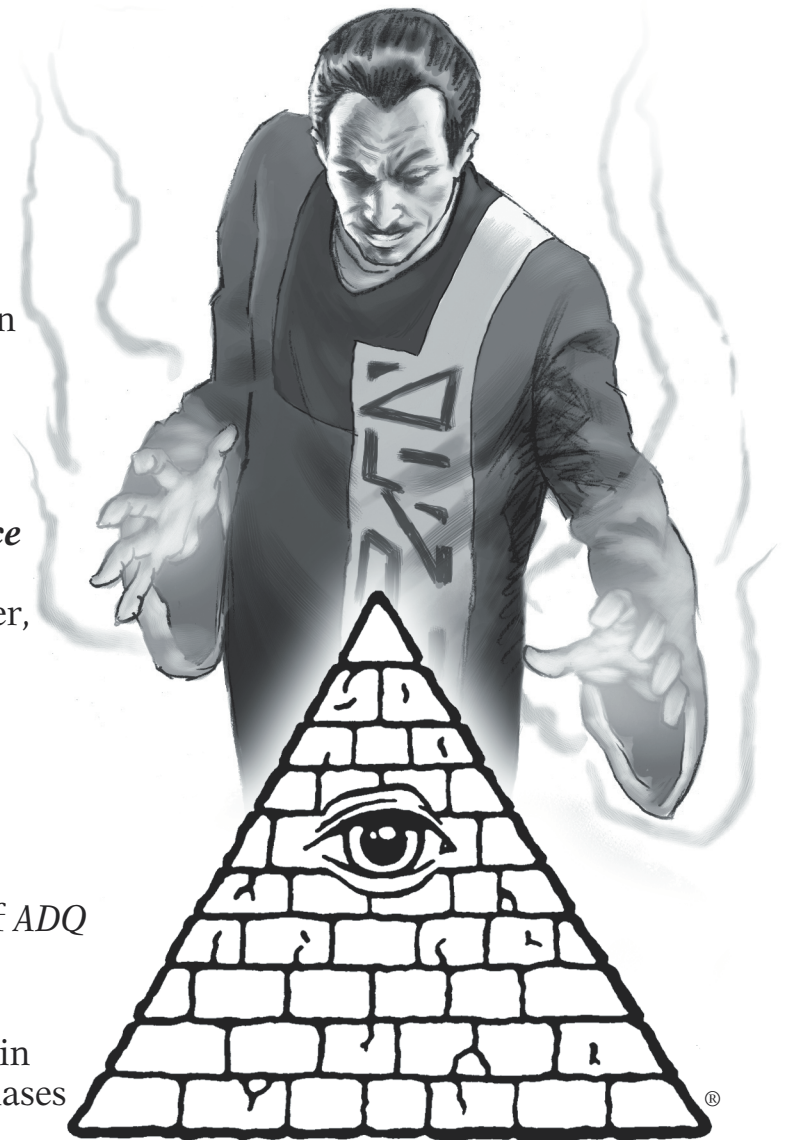
Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Comes in a variety of sizes, usually covering 1d+5 square yards (SM +3 to +4). The space it encompasses is pitch black; *only* Dark Vision allows sight into, out of, or through the area. Unwilling to negotiate.

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