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## SEASON OF GHOSTS

ADVENTURE PATH

### PLAYER'S GUIDE

By James Jacobs

# PATHFINDER

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### How to Use This Guide

Welcome to the *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path*!

This Player's Guide will help you prepare for a horror-themed campaign set in the rural regions of the nation of Shenmen, where your characters are hometown heroes who must rise to the occasion and defend the people of Willowshore from a sinister curse and from all manner of supernatural threats, all while also preparing for what might be a particularly cruel winter season. You'll begin as 1st-level characters who, if they haven't lived in Willowshore their whole lives, have come to be recognized and welcomed as locals after arriving in town in the recent past.

This Adventure Path is split into four parts, each taking place during a different season. With every passing month, your PCs grow more powerful and the threats facing Willowshore grow deadlier and more shocking. *Season of Ghosts* features some particularly significant plot twists and revelations, so if you've had some of these surprises revealed to you already, please consider other players' experiences before spoiling the secrets that await discovery during the later parts of this Adventure Path!

To play in this campaign, all you need is *Pathfinder Player Core* and a character sheet. With your Game Master's permission, you can also use *Pathfinder Second Edition* supplemental rulebooks, campaign setting books, and other accessories to further customize your character, especially since this campaign is set on the continent of Tian Xia, where the most common ancestries, faiths, and other elements aren't the same as those assumed in a campaign set in the Inner Sea region.

On the following pages, you'll find specific suggestions to help you create a new character for *Season of Ghosts*. This Player's Guide is organized into the following sections.

- **Character Suggestions (page 5):** Guidance, practical advice, and specific tips for creating a 1st-level character that fits seamlessly into this campaign.
- **Willowshore Gazetteer (page 15):** Much of what you (and your character) need to know about your hometown of Willowshore is presented in this gazetteer. Your GM has additional information about this town, should information you need not be present in this section.

### WHAT IS THE SEASON OF GHOSTS?

The *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path* is named for a traditional period in Shenmen that takes place during

### WHERE (AND WHEN) ON GOLARION?

The *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path* takes place exclusively in a small part of rural Shenmen, a haunted nation in the middle of the continent of Tian Xia. Specifically, the bulk of this adventure takes place in and around the town of Willowshore, which is presented in further detail beginning on page 15.

Of greater note is the time in which *Season of Ghosts* takes place—unlike other Adventure Paths, the events of *Season of Ghosts* occur roughly over the course of a year, starting on the first day of summer in the year 7108 IC (4608 AR in the Inner Sea region). Notably, it is set a hundred years in the past and only a few years after the start of the Age of Lost Omens!

the first few weeks of summer, when the woodlands see an increase in hauntings, spirits, and undead. While the cause of these increased hauntings is uncertain, these ghosts often lure people to their deaths.

In Willowshore, a massive feast and festival takes place on the last day of spring. Called the "Reenactment Festival," this gala is meant not only to celebrate the end of spring, but also to trick the evil spirits and ghosts believed to come out of the woods during the first few weeks of summer. As the festival's feast concludes, the town reenacts victims being snatched away by "ghosts" (played by townsfolk in paper masks). Those not involved in the faux abduction pretend to plunge into collective panic as designated wailers mourn loudly and others play out a search and rescue effort. The townsfolk believe this farce tricks real ghosts into thinking that someone has already haunted the settlement and that it entices them into seeking happier villages to inflict misery on once the season of ghosts begins the next day (on the first day of summer).

As fate would have it, your PCs are chosen this year to play the role of the town's abductees—reasons for their abduction are built in to the various *Season of Ghosts* backgrounds, so if you don't use one of these backgrounds for your character, work with the GM to create a reason similar to those presented there to explain why you're among the festival's abductees.

Once you're "abducted" from the feast, your captors roll you up in straw mats and carry you

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off into a forest clearing on the town's outskirts, where you're expected to stay overnight. With the first dawn of summer, the "abductees" are ransomed by whoever is in charge of that year's Reenactment Festival. This year, that honor falls to Choe Chun-hu, the beloved leader of Willowshore's millers. He has promised to bring the "ransom" (a selection of delicious breakfast delicacies) to the PCs in the forest clearing the next morning for them to enjoy before leading them back to town to proclaim the Reenactment Festival a grand success.

While it often rains during the summer, you luck out and spend a relatively comfortable night under the stars. Of course, staying overnight in any woodland carries some risk, and you've all have plenty of time to prepare for it. You can bring all your starting items and gear, as determined during character creation, with you during your abduction. Any items not brought along will be waiting for you back at home.

The *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path* begins when you and the other PCs awaken in a forest clearing on the first day of summer... but there's no sign of Choe Chun-hu or the breakfast he promised!

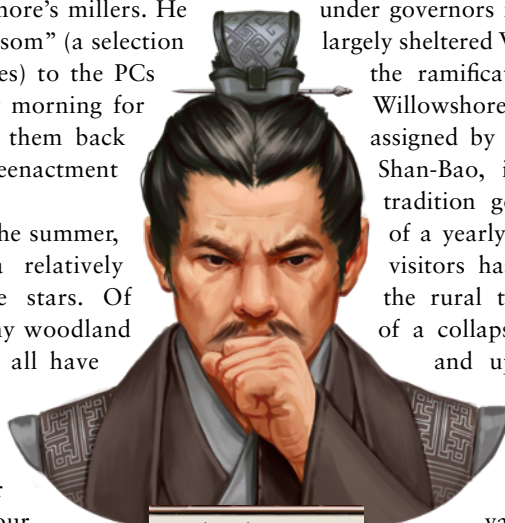
### IN THE YEAR 7108

*Season of Ghosts* begins on the first day of summer in the year 7108, over a century before the current year assumed for other Adventure Paths. While playing a campaign this far in the past could result in significant work to revise the setting in various parts of Golarion, *Season of Ghosts* requires very little work in this regard—Willowshore is a remote rural location that, for the first several years of the Age of Lost Omens, was largely ignored and left to its own devices.

The Age of Lost Omens began in 7106, a time during which powerful storms wracked much of Golarion. Willowshore was no exception, and the winter storms that blasted the region were among the worst in memory. Now, two years later, the people of Willowshore are somewhat nervous about the coming winter season. Even though the winter of 7107 was relatively mild, memories of the snow, high winds, and torrential rains of 7106 linger.

The collapse of the Lung Wa Empire is a less immediate concern to Willowshore, even though on

a larger regional scale, this political upheaval is one of the most important events to shape modern Tian Xia. While Shenmen's rule under Lung Wa ended in 7106, the fact that small towns like Willowshore had traditionally been ignored and left to their own devices under governors installed by Lung Wa edicts has largely sheltered Willowshore from suffering from the ramifications of the empire's collapse. Willowshore is fortunate that the governor assigned by the empire, a man named Heh Shan-Bao, is relatively benign as far as tradition goes, and if anything, the lack of a yearly tax collector or other imperial visitors has resulted in idyllic seasons in the rural town. Meanwhile, the mayhem of a collapsed empire has led to violence and upheaval in more urban areas.



Heh Shan-Bao

The largest change that hit Willowshore as the result of Lung Wa's collapse was the abandonment of the town by various lumber lords, who left their estates and lumber camps rather

than continue to supply the demands of the city of Sze, the closest large settlement to Willowshore. For the people of Willowshore, the loss of these unpleasant long-term visitors has been seen almost universally as a relief, and the visitors' manors and lumber camps have been left alone, in part out of fear that they could return at any time, but mostly because locals believe letting these buildings and locations be reclaimed by the woods is the most respectful way to usher Lung Wa's influence over Willowshore into memory.

The notion that jorogumo have taken control of Shenmen remains, at this point, a "ghost story" or "scary rumor." No jorogumo has visited Willowshore yet... at least, as far as anyone knows. Likewise, news that the ruler of Sze died and returned as a ghost has finally reached town, but not everyone believes these stories. The people of Willowshore are content to live as they always have—for now!

### ABOUT SHENMEN

While some nations in Tian Xia are inspired by certain real-life cultures, Shenmen is primarily inspired by horror traditions taken from a wide range of real-world stories. It's a fictional nation and isn't meant to represent more than these traditions of supernatural horror. During Shenmen's history, it was conquered by Lung Wa, picked up

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immigrants from Hwanggot, and was taken over by jorogumo. It features a mix of cultures as a result, and its people have adopted words from multiple languages for their names and places. In Shenmen, ghosts and monsters are a very real part of life, and the practices employed by its people arise from necessity, not superstition.

### HORROR AND CONSENT

*Season of Ghosts* is a horror-themed campaign, and as such, the GM and players should work together to ensure that the themes presented as this Adventure Path unfolds are appropriate for the game table. If you aren't comfortable with certain tropes or themes common to the horror genre, speak with your GM and the other players before beginning *Season of Ghosts* so you can arrive at a common ground where everyone at your table can enjoy the campaign equally.

### Character Suggestions

The following information provides context for creating characters that fit well with the themes present in the town of Willowshore and the nation of Shenmen and also helps you to build a character that will fit well in the overall storyline of *Season of Ghosts*.

### EDICTS AND ANATHEMAS

The heart of *Season of Ghosts* lies in the town of Willowshore, a rural community made up of a couple hundred people with varying beliefs and personalities. That said, the primary attitude in Willowshore skews markedly away from cruelty and other evil acts, and a fair amount of this Adventure Path relies on the PCs being motivated through compassion to protect their fellow townsfolk without any particular promise of monetary rewards. As a result, edicts and anathemas that promote evil actions or don't allow for cooperation with your fellow townsfolk aren't a great thematic fit for this Adventure Path. As always, though, as long as the individual PCs are able to work together and (in this case) wish to ensure the prosperity and survival of their shared hometown, most edicts and anathemas will function just fine. Work with your GM if you suspect your PC's edicts and anathemas might not be a good fit for a small-town hero!

### ANCESTRIES

As a citizen of the town of Willowshore, the most appropriate ancestries to choose for a PC are those that are represented significantly in the town.

### TENGU ANIMOSITY

While the people of Willowshore harbor no intrinsic dislike of their tengu citizens (and indeed, some of them, like Kawaka Myna, are well-respected business owners), the rulers of modern Shenmen, the jorogumo, loathe tengu and are known to fly into murderous rages when confronted by them. Since *Season of Ghosts* is set at the onset of jorogumo rule over Shenmen, remote Willowshore has yet to face any jorogumo visitors; as such, tengu PCs won't need to navigate this bitter animosity often. Should rumors or news of a jorogumo visit to Willowshore arise in the campaign, players of tengu characters should take note—your GM has advice in the adventures on how to handle such situations, so if you have concerns about playing a tengu PC, speak to your GM so they can provide advice customized to your table in a way they feel comfortable with.

### Common Ancestries

The following ancestries are all represented to a certain degree in Willowshore. **Humans** are far and away the most numerous ancestry in Willowshore, with all of Tian Xia's human ethnicities being represented. Shenmen's proximity to nations like Jinin and Kwanlai has ensured that a noticeable number of **elves**, **half-elves**, **leshies**, and **tengu** (*Pathfinder Player Core 2* 32) live in the nation's towns, and Willowshore is no exception. Humans of Taldan ethnicity and **halfings** (largely folk emigrated from the nation of Amanandar just north of Shenmen) are present in Willowshore as well. **Kitsune** (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 120) and **nagaji** (*Pathfinder Impossible Lands* 46) aren't as widespread throughout Shenmen, but they're present in small numbers in Willowshore; note that both of these ancestries have a few more options to choose from in *Pathfinder Lost Omens Tian Xia Character Guide*!

### Uncommon Ancestries

These ancestries are less common in Willowshore—there might only be a handful living in town or none at all besides potential PCs, but they're still thematically appropriate for *Season of Ghosts*. You might wish to speak to your GM before selecting one of these ancestries to give them a chance to potentially adjust

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the campaign and give your choice more visibility among Willowshore's citizens.

Dwarves, gnomes, goblins, and orcs aren't present in notable numbers in Willowshore, but any of these peoples could have emigrated south from Amanandar to settle there.

Dhampirs (*Player Core* 2 42) would make an excellent thematic choice for a horror-themed campaign like *Season of Ghosts*, particularly those of the ru-shi lineage (*Ancestry Guide* 26), who trace their vampiric bloodline to a jiang-shi. Some ysoki (aka ratfolk; *Player Core* 2 28) live in Willowshore and would also make appropriate PCs.

Nephilim (particularly empyreans who have traveled to Shenmen from the nation of Tianjing on the opposite shore of the Sea of Ghosts) might have settled in Shenmen as well. Cambions who dwell in Shenmen are often regarded with fear and suspicion by those in Willowshore, but any PCs of such an ancestry in *Season of Ghosts* is already known to the other townsfolk as an "exception" to the expectation—speak to your GM about integrating such a character into this campaign in the event they wish to adjust certain aspects of the campaign to reflect your choice.

Hobgoblins (*Player Core* 2 12) PCs might have come to Willowshore from the western nation of Kaoling, but like cambions, they are often regarded with fear or suspicion.

While there aren't any duskwalkers (*Player Core* 2 48), tsukumogami poppets (*Lost Omens Tian Xia Character Guide* 48), samsarans (*Tian Xia Character Guide* 52), wayangs (*Tian Xia Character Guide* 70), or yaoguai (*Tian Xia Character Guide* 82) currently living in Willowshore, these ancestries still match certain themes in *Season of Ghosts*. Speak with your GM if you're interested in playing one of these ancestries, as they might have additional advice for you.

### Rare Ancestries

Any other ancestry not mentioned above (or in Inappropriate Ancestries below) is considered rare—while these ancestries can certainly work from a game balance perspective, they aren't particularly on theme for *Season of Ghosts*. If you wish to play a rare ancestry, speak with your GM first.

### Inappropriate Ancestries

Aquatic ancestries will find themselves literally out of their element in *Season of Ghosts*, as there are very few moments for such characters to shine. Willowshore

is located on the banks of a river and has a lake at its heart, so there is a source of water to dwell in, but speak with your GM before making such a choice for your character.

Androids are inappropriate for this campaign as well. Since *Season of Ghosts* is set roughly 100 years before the events of the Iron Gods Adventure Path, androids simply haven't spread far enough beyond the borders of Numeria to be logically encountered elsewhere in the world. If you wish to play an android in *Season of Ghosts*, you'll need to work with your GM to adjust your game's canon as needed to provide a logical in-world reason for an android's presence in Willowshore.

Finally, as one might guess from the title of this Adventure Path, undead ancestries would make for particularly awkward choices in *Season of Ghosts* and should not be chosen for a PC.

### CLASSES

In *Season of Ghosts*, your characters are assumed to be citizens of Willowshore. While Willowshore only has a population of 225 (excluding your PCs!), the town's history and placement make it open toward a wide range of potential character classes to be represented by its newest cast of heroes.

**Alchemists** are respected and adored in Willowshore for both their skill as herbalists and talent in crafting fanciful distractions for festivals. Local herbalist You So-Jin of Graveside Manners focuses more on the herbalism side of alchemical innovation, but access to her alchemist's lab and supplies, should you earn her support and friendship, will be of great use to you during the campaign. The surgeon research field is the most appropriate thematic choice for a Willowshore alchemist, but any research field will be of equal use in *Season of Ghosts*.

**Animists** are, like oracles, a strong thematic choice for *Season of Ghosts*, particularly those who practice as mediums or shamans. Apparitions associated with rural settings or old folk traditions are the best thematic choices, including Custodian of Groves and Gardens, Echo of Lost Moments, Impostor in Hidden Places, Stalker in Darkened Boughs, and Witness to Ancient Battles. Also, see Faiths on page 9 for additional guidance on religions.

**Barbarians** might be a complex choice for *Season of Ghosts* considering the lack of any established barbarian clans in the region. Though there are no such NPCs in Willowshore, there are plenty of locals

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who enjoy a good fight or appreciate physical strength. An animal instinct barbarian might be valued for their skills at hunting, while a spirit instinct barbarian might find themselves respected as a defender against the evil spirits that locals fear (and will certainly find their ability to harm incorporeal foes more easily to be a great boon during many combat encounters in *Season of Ghosts!*) Other instincts don't have a particular thematic tie to Willowshore, but none of them are particularly poor choices overall for this Adventure Path.

**Bards** will have many opportunities to influence NPCs, craft singular performances, or use music to their advantage at various points during *Season of Ghosts*, but no specific build is more advantageous over another in this Adventure Path. If you select enigma as your muse, Tan Sui-Jing (an ancient folk hero whose accomplishments in the past are now a part of Willowshore's legacy) or Great Willow (the strange kodama kami associated with the towering willow tree of the same name that looms atop a hill north of town) might be fun choices—speak with your GM to find out if any other mysterious muses might make sense. In Willowshore, Kazuma Oono, the director who runs the Seven-Colored Songbird theater, is known to periodically audition performers.

**Champions** are all appropriate for *Season of Ghosts*, provided their cause doesn't set them up to clash against the rest of the party. The classic example of a ronin who settles in a small town and becomes its protector is an iconic role for a champion in a campaign like *Season of Ghosts*. While there aren't many encounters in this Adventure Path that require the PCs to be mounted, there are plenty of opportunities in both urban and wilderness areas where having a mount in combat could be helpful.

**Clerics** should consider the additional information presented under Faiths (page 9) for guidelines on which deity to worship.

**Commanders** aren't particularly strong thematic matches for *Season of Ghosts*, but like fighters, they'll find many chances to shine during combat. Still, remember that there are a lot of non-combat challenges in this Adventure Path, so consider focusing some of your skill increases on options like Crafting, Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Society.

**Druids** will have ample opportunity to excel in *Season of Ghosts* as a result of the Adventure Path's focus on a year's worth of seasons and the town of Willowshore being a rural location. Temperate forests are the primary natural terrain featured in

this Adventure Path. The druid orders of animal, leaf, and storm are the most thematically appropriate choices for this Adventure Path, but all orders will find opportunities to shine in this campaign. The following animals are the most common in the region surrounding Willowshore, so choosing one of them as your animal companion will also be on theme (if you wish to choose a different animal companion, speak to your GM about how this animal might have become your companion under unusual circumstances): arboreal sapling, badger, bat, bear, beetle (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Grand Bazaar 54*), bird, boar, cat, horse, snake, or wolf.

**Exemplars** might find themselves clashing with the small-town themes and setting of *Season of Ghosts*, so make sure to keep the Adventure Path's rural setting in mind. Likewise, since this Adventure Path takes place over a century before the events of *Godsrain*, you'll want to work with your GM to determine where your divine spark comes from. When choosing epithets, consider the advice featured in Skills on page 9; you can work with your GM to narrow down choices as well so that they can provide curated, non-spoiler guidance as needed.

**Fighters** will find ample opportunity to shine in *Season of Ghosts*, but it's important to remember that there are a lot of urban and downtime elements in this Adventure Path. Consider bolstering your training in a skill like Crafting, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Society so that you'll still have moments to shine during the noncombat portions of this Adventure Path.

**Guardians** will face similar thematic challenges in this Adventure Path as commanders do, particularly when confronted by the numerous non-combat challenges in *Season of Ghosts*. As with commanders and fighters, make sure you're trained in skills like Crafting, Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Society so you still have something to work with during these portions of the campaign.

**Gunslingers** aren't a particularly good choice, thematically, for this Adventure Path, and beyond that, there are no resources for gunslingers to rely upon in the town of Willowshore. If you want to play a gunslinger, talk to your GM first, but it's probably best to save your ideas for a gunslinger PC for another campaign.

**Inventors** aren't common in Shenmen, but they're hardly unknown, and their knack for rigging up contraptions and creative solutions can be quite valuable in a rural area like Willowshore where access to a wider range of rare or specialized tools

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and gear aren't guaranteed. Indeed, Huo Tian-Zhe of Willowshore's smithy, Second Best, is well-known for his contraptions and creations, and he could make for an excellent ally or friend to a PC inventor. There's no inventor innovation that's more or less appropriate for *Season of Ghosts* than another.

**Investigators** will find plenty of opportunities to research information, track clues, and unravel mysteries during the course of *Season of Ghosts*, making them a particularly excellent choice for this Adventure Path overall. The methodologies of alchemical sciences and forensic medicine are the most thematically appropriate options for this Adventure Path.

**Kineticists** are a fine choice for *Season of Ghosts*, although there isn't much thematic support in Willowshore for an elemental or kineticist flavor—if you wish to play a kineticist, speak with your GM about potentially adjusting that in some way. In particular, a theme of “wood against metal” plays a subtle underlying role in this campaign; the people of Willowshore more align toward wood, while metal aligns more noticeably with certain elements that form a part of the campaign's opposition.

**Magi** will find their abilities useful throughout *Season of Ghosts* but aren't particularly tied, thematically, to this Adventure Path's plot. Of course, that also means a magus character will be relatively free from thematic clashes when making choices about their increasing power!

**Monks** are a strong thematic choice for Willowshore, as the town was originally founded to serve as support for a remote monastery. While that place, the Tan Sugi monastery, is now in ruins and no longer operational, a monk's lifestyle can still be exceptionally rewarding in Willowshore proper, if only as part of the town's rich history and legacy. See Faiths on page 9 for additional guidance on religion or belief.

**Oracles** are perhaps an even stronger thematic choice for *Season of Ghosts* than clerics as far as divine spellcasters are concerned. Most oracle mysteries are strong thematic choices in this Adventure Path, with Battle, Cosmos, and Flames being the least so. Also, see Faiths on page 9 for additional guidance on religions.

**Psychics** aren't well represented among Willowshore's citizens, but their magical practices are known and admired. Those who focus their studies and powers on themes associated with lore, discovering ancient secrets, or battling supernatural forces will find themselves with no shortage of opportunity in *Season of Ghosts*.

**Rangers** are quite valued among Willowshore's people, as their survivalist abilities and hunting acumen help the town maintain its self-sufficiency when it comes to gathering food. The town's Silvermist Lodges are the traditional locations where local rangers would gather, but today, a ranger could be based out of nearly any part of town or the hinterlands beyond. If you gain an animal companion, consult the suggestions listed for druids on page 7. If you take the Favored Terrain feat, the terrain of Forest is far and above the most common terrain you'll face during *Season of Ghosts*. The aquatic (in the form of lakes and rivers) and Mountain terrains have much more minor roles to play, after which there are even lesser roles for Plains, Sky, Swamp, and Underground. *Season of Ghosts* doesn't feature arctic or desert terrains.

**Rogues** will find many uses for their skills in *Season of Ghosts*, particularly when it comes to those associated with navigating the politics of a small rural town. Consider the advice for Skills on page 9 when choosing where to focus your training.

**Sorcerers** are an excellent thematic choice for this Adventure Path, as Willowshore is steeped in many supernatural and mysterious traditions. All sorcerer bloodlines could be equally interesting in *Season of Ghosts*, but the most thematically appropriate ones are imperial or undead.

**Summoners** should consider the local regions (forests, with some low mountains and plenty of rivers and lakes) when building their eidolon, but apart from that, they'll find they have a wide range of choices available to them during *Season of Ghosts*. The most thematic selections for eidolons in this Adventure Path are anger phantom, beast, devotion phantom, plant, or psychopomp.

**Swashbucklers** are like fighters in that they'll find plenty of chances to show their stuff in this campaign's battles, but they should consider also training other options to explore during downtime or while in urban areas when fighting isn't the best solution.

**Thaumaturges** are excellent choices for *Season of Ghosts*. Like the investigator, they'll be faced with a wide range of mysteries and ancient secrets to explore and uncover. All thaumaturge implements could find thematic links to build from in this campaign, but perhaps none more so than the lantern, considering Willowshore's strong tradition with its *Eternal Lantern* (page 18). While you can't select this particular lantern as your implement, a lantern crafted in its image would fit right in!

**Witches** are perhaps an even more thematically appropriate choice for a spellcaster than sorcerer for

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*Season of Ghosts* due to their ties to a mysterious patron and the horror-adjacent themes built right into the class. Speak with your GM when choosing your patron to receive additional guidance, but the patron themes of Faith's Flamekeeper, The Resentment, Silence in Snow, or Wilding Steward are always going to be excellent choices for this Adventure Path. When choosing a familiar, keep in mind that Willowshore is associated with a traditional guardian. Visitors can find a large stone spider statue in a shrine just off the road along the town's eastern edge—as such, choosing a spider familiar is quite on theme!

**Wizards** will find their mastery over magic to be something the people of Willowshore quite value, provided their focus isn't on something unsettling and frightening! That said, all schools of magic will have ample opportunities for use during this Adventure Path. A PC wizard might wish to pursue an alliance or friendship with Igawa Jubei of Mother's Coil, who is Willowshore's resident wizard and a scholar of all things magical.

### FAITHS

Willowshore features two temples—one devoted to Daikitsu and one to Pharama—but the townsfolk are much more diverse in their faith. In addition to these two faiths, both Abadar and Lady Nanbyo count many worshippers among their flock, and most townsfolk pay homage to a wide range of other deities. Their worship is reflected in the large number of small shrines to various faiths scattered throughout town. Some of these shrines, like those devoted to Daikitsu and Pharama, are in well-known locations, but many are private shrines or shrines that have been all but forgotten.

Shrines to the following deities are found in Willowshore; if your character worships one of these deities, then they'll automatically know the location of that shrine: Abadar, Calistria, Daikitsu, Desna, Ketephys, Kofusachi, Lady Nanbyo, Lao Shu Po, Nalinivati, Pharama, Qi Zhong, Shelyn, Shizuru, Tsukiyo, and Yaezhing. If you choose to worship a deity beyond those listed here, speak with your GM—your faith might even result in another shrine being added to Willowshore's list!

Note that certain faiths, such as those of Arazni, Casandalee, or Noctacula, either don't yet exist or haven't yet undergone the significant changes they made in the hundred or so years after the start of the Age of Lost Omens. Likewise, while Aroden's death is only a few years in the past, his faith isn't significant

in Tian Xia—and certainly not in Willowshore. Your character should avoid worshipping such deities because of Adventure Path's timeline.

Beyond the town's wide range of deities, many in Willowshore are followers of Sangpotshi. Indeed, the original founders of the town were adherents to this belief. They built the Tan Sugi monastery up in the hills to the west as a remote place to pursue enlightenment through this philosophy, and they founded Willowshore first to support those who toiled to build the monastery and later as a trade hub to support the monks. The Tan Sugi monastery is now abandoned and has been left to ruin (and, some maintain, to various ghosts and monsters), but many in Willowshore still follow the path of Sangpotshi.

### LANGUAGES

In *Season of Ghosts*, the primary language spoken is Tien—this language is referred to as Common in this Player's Guide and throughout the *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path*. The languages of any of the common ancestries listed above (elven, halfling, kitsune, nagaji, and tengu) might find frequent use as well.

General-use languages that will be handy to know include Aklo, Chthonian, Fey, and Necril.

More specific languages that aren't as useful for the entire campaign but might become situationally important for a small number of encounters include Draconic, Empyrean, Goblin, Hwan, Minkaian, Requian, and Samsaran.

### SKILLS AND FEATS

You'll face a wide range of challenges and opportunities in *Season of Ghosts*, particularly when it comes to downtime. This Adventure Path spans an entire year, after all, and now and then, you'll be spending weeks at a time pursuing various downtime activities. Skills that feature often in combat encounters (or immediately following), such as Acrobatics, Athletics, Medicine, and Stealth, will be consistently useful throughout the campaign, with some of them (particularly Athletics) having significant other applications during various downtime pursuits.

Of the four skills associated with magical traditions, Nature and Religion will have significant opportunities to shine throughout the entire Adventure Path. Arcana comes into its own more in the second half of this four-part campaign, as does Occultism.

Skills that help with social interaction, such as Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Society, will see constant

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use throughout *Season of Ghosts*. Deception will often be useful in encounter mode, of course, to Create a Diversion or Feint, but its chances to shine outside of combat are minimal (if important) during the first half of the campaign—in the second half, skill at Deception becomes much more important.

Being able to subsist or to help the remote town of Willowshore with the same goals makes Survival an important skill throughout the campaign. Thievery will likewise be of great use, both in dealing with hazards but also periodically for certain downtime activities or for challenges that might require more subtlety.

Crafting becomes an important skill after the first act concludes. Thereafter, you'll increasingly be called upon during downtime events and activities to build, repair, or otherwise use this skill. While opportunities to use Performance to accomplish goals will be less common, each adventure will have a few moments where skill in this area can solve problems with ease.

An extensive number of Lore skills are helpful in this campaign. When a downtime activity becomes available, a specific Lore skill will often have a lower DC than more generalized skills like Deception or Society. The most important Lore skill in this Adventure Path is Willowshore Lore, as one would expect of a campaign set almost entirely within and around this small town! Other important Lore skills that will have more than a couple of opportunities to shine in the campaign include Academia, Art, Engineering, Farming, Hunting, Library, Sangpotshi, and Tea Lore. Lore skills that will have only one or two chances to shine include any to do with non-tea food or drink, Architecture, Cooking, Fishing, Fortune-Telling, Games, Genealogy, Guild, Herbalism, Jorogumo, Labor, Mercantile, Midwifery, Qi-Zhong, River, Sailing, Scouting, Theater, Underworld, and Warfare Lore.

One new lore skill worthy of note that isn't represented in *Player Core* but that will become increasingly useful in this campaign is one associated with a specific family of new monster introduced in *Season of Ghosts*. Once your group discovers this new type of monster, becoming trained in its lore will help you prepare for combat against them or otherwise research plot elements to come. That said, not having any particular training in this specific Lore skill when you begin *Season of Ghosts* is not only fine, but part of the unfolding plot of the campaign. It's mentioned here merely to prepare you for future opportunities for those players who enjoy building their character's level choices out beforehand.

You should avoid feats that work best in large cities or that rely on long-distance travel beyond what you could do in a few days, as these elements don't play a role in *Season of Ghosts*. Feats that help you to interact with other townsfolk, that would bolster your ability to be self-sufficient, or that would generally prove useful to anyone living out a year of their life in a remote woodland town will be more useful than normal.

### ARCHETYPES

As you grow more powerful, the option to select an archetype can help you further customize your character and make them more thematically appropriate for *Season of Ghosts*. Most multiclass archetypes work well for a *Season of Ghosts* campaign (with the exception of gunslinger), while other thematically appropriate archetypes from *Player Core 2* include the following: blessed one (associated with one of the deities who have shrines in Willowshore), bounty hunter or duelist (particularly when used to create a ronin-themed character), herbalist, marshal, or martial artist. The ritualist archetype is particularly well-suited to this campaign, as *Season of Ghosts* features a wide number of rituals and offers many opportunities to use them. Additional archetypes from *Lost Omens Tian Xia Character Guide* that are solid choices include spirit warrior and wandering chef.

### GEAR

*Season of Ghosts* takes place in Tian Xia, and as such, the following uncommon weapons from *Player Core* are accessible to every PC upon character creation: kama, katana, khakkara, nunchaku, sai, shuriken, and temple sword.

The following uncommon weapons from *Player Core 2* are accessible to every PC upon character creation: daikyu (advanced weapon), tengu gale blade, and wakizashi.

Additionally, all of the weapons listed on page 127 of the *Lost Omens Tian Xia Character Guide* are available to every PC upon character creation.

### BACKGROUNDS

Unlike most Adventure Paths, *Season of Ghosts* takes place almost entirely in and near the town of Willowshore and assumes the PCs are all long-term citizens of this settlement. As such, it's likely that your PC has family or close friends in town—you should work with your GM to create these additional NPCs to help populate Willowshore! Each of the custom

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backgrounds offered in this Player's Guide comes with suggestions as to where your PC lives in town, so you can use this to help you decide who in your character's immediate family is in town and who might not be. Keep in mind, though, if you decide to have important family members located outside of the Willowshore hinterlands, you likely won't be able to visit them during this campaign!

When you create a character for *Season of Ghosts*, you can choose one of the following two methods for selecting your character's background.

### Standard Background

If you wish to simply pick a standard background from *Player Core*, good thematic choices for *Season of Ghosts* include artisan, bounty hunter, charlatan, cook, criminal, detective, entertainer, farmhand, gambler, guard, herbalist, hermit, hunter, laborer, martial disciple, merchant, scholar, teacher, street urchin, and warrior.

Additional standard backgrounds are available in *Player Core 2*; good thematic choices from that book include pilgrim, root worker, servant, or ward.

**Seasonal Boon:** Instead of gaining a specific seasonal boon (an additional benefit that characters who choose *Season of Ghosts* backgrounds gain), you instead gain the option to, once per season (summer, fall, winter, or spring—thus, once per act during *Season of Ghosts*), gain a +4 status bonus to a check attempted to resolve any downtime activity; you can choose to apply this bonus after you roll the check.

### Season of Ghosts Backgrounds

The six new backgrounds presented on the following pages are available to all characters in the *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path*. Each of these rare backgrounds is tailor-made to match the themes of this Adventure Path and includes a bit of flavor about the Reenactment Festival and why you were chosen to be one of the festival's abductees.

**Seasonal Boon:** Each of these backgrounds grants you a seasonal boon. You can use a seasonal boon at any time as a free action (with a trigger as described in your background), but only once per season (summer, fall, winter, spring—corresponding to the four acts of the *Season of Ghosts Adventure Path*; your GM can let you know when a new act begins and your boon is available for use once more). If you don't use a seasonal boon during an act, that use is lost—unused seasonal boons don't carry over into the next act.

### CLOSE TIES

RARE

You've forged a close friendship with one of Willowshore's notable citizens, and you have a long tradition of sharing tea with each other while chatting about shared interests, plans for the future, town gossip, or other matters of note. Work with your GM to choose one of the NPCs mentioned in the Willowshore Gazetteer (other than Granny Hu or Old Matsuki)—your GM might have suggestions for which NPC makes the most sense for your character or might know something about an NPC's eventual role in the campaign that would give your character a compelling story beat. You could be an employee or apprentice of this NPC, a close relation or friend, or even a friendly competitor in some way.

Your home is likely relatively close to the place of business or home of your NPC ally.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely spent time with your NPC ally and might have made plans to get together the next day on the first day of summer, perhaps to have tea together. You were chosen to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival because your NPC friend or ally suggested the experience would be fun or good for you, or because they'd done it the previous year at your urging and now "it's your turn."

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Charisma or Intelligence, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Tea Lore skill. You gain the Specialty Crafting skill feat (choose a specialty associated with your allied NPC), and your allied NPC begins with an attitude of friendly toward the party (rather than indifferent, which is the initial norm for all Willowshore NPCs).

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** Someone in the party makes an NPC in Willowshore friendly; **Effect** Your reputation precedes you, even if you aren't the one making the attempt to influence an NPC. The NPC is made helpful instead of friendly. Making an NPC helpful can unlock additional support from their location in Willowshore—your GM has more information about this mechanic.

### FOLKLORE ENTHUSIAST

RARE

Willowshore is a small town in a rural part of Shenmen, but that doesn't exempt it from the world of the strange and unexplained. There are plenty of mysterious events and haunting legends about Willowshore or its hinterlands, and as a result of your upbringing, you've become particularly interested in learning more about them. While much of the regional folklore comes from one

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of Willowshore's many religions and local faiths (of which you might be a practicing member or perhaps instead have a secular interest in the lore), you've noticed that these beliefs also influence artisans and crafters in ways they might not even realize. You're convinced that many of these local beliefs have roots in a deeper, historical event of great significance and hope one day to learn more about Willowshore's true history.

If you're religious, your home is likely near a shrine associated with your faith—if your faith isn't represented among Willowshore's shrines, speak with your GM about potentially having a shrine to your faith in or near to your home.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely spent time chatting with others about ghost stories and sharing spooky legends and tales. You weren't chosen to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival so much as you volunteered, eagerly, for the chance—you might have even participated in previous years as an abductee!

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Religion skill and the Art Lore skill. You gain the Oddity Identification skill feat.

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** You're about to roll any check to Recall Knowledge; **Effect** You have a flash of insight as you recall an old parable, obscure legend, or applicable tale to the topic at hand. This Recall Knowledge check loses the secret trait. Increase the result of your check to Recall Knowledge by one degree of success.

### NORTHRIDGE SCHOLAR BACKGROUND

RARE

The political faction of Northridge is focused on modern pragmatism and urban growth. While there are certainly those in this faction who regard those of Southshore as rubes, bumbling yokels, or stubborn traditionalists who would prefer Willowshore never grow, most of those following this local faction instead put their energy into developing Willowshore, envisioning a time when the town might grow into an important hub for trade. Your interests lie more along the concept of Willowshore as a place for learning—a school, library, or even small university could do so much for your town! Of course, as invigorating as it is to study and learn, you also understand that expanding Willowshore in such a way will require lots of hard work, and your childhood helping to lay foundations or raise buildings has given you a physique that eludes the typical scholar.

Your home is likely somewhere along the northern banks of the Ceiba River to the east of downtown Willowshore.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely helped to run some of the festivities or spent time simply sitting back to people-watch. You volunteered to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival because the experience of taking part in one of the town's longest-running traditions is an honor you've always wanted to experience.

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Constitution or Strength, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Academia Lore skill. You gain the Additional Lore feat.

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** The party's reputation with Northridge increases; **Effect** Increase the party's reputation with Northridge by an additional 2 points (your GM has information about Willowshore reputation).

### OUTSKIRT DWELLER BACKGROUND

RARE

While Willowshore is a lovely small town, even a population of 200 is a bit much for you. Whether you grew up in the town's outskirts, or you grew frustrated and overwhelmed with town life and decided to move to the fringes, you're only really at home when you're surrounded by nature. You don't look down on those who live in town, and you might be among the hunters, trappers, fishers, or herbalists who provide important support to those who lack such forestry skills.

Your home is on the outskirts of Willowshore and might not even be represented by an actual building on the map. With the GM's permission, you might even dwell in a small building further out in the Willowshore hinterlands, but no further than a couple of miles from town.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely showed up late and weren't intending to stay for long, but your friends and allies (the other PCs) convinced you to stick around. You were chosen to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival at the last minute when someone else had to back out (perhaps as a result of overindulging during the feast), and your friends (the other PCs) convinced you to join them on what would be a fun, shared experience. Since it involves sleeping out under the stars in the woods, well, that's a pretty lovely way to end an evening!

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Nature skill and the Hunting Lore skill. You gain the Terrain Expertise (forest) skill feat.

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** You're about to roll initiative; **Effect** Something about the situation triggers your defenses, allowing you to react to sudden peril more quickly. You gain a status bonus to your initiative roll equal to the number of seasons since you've started

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*Season of Ghosts* (+1 during summer, up to a maximum of +4 during spring in the Adventure Path's final act). If you can communicate a warning to other PCs, they gain this bonus to their initiative as well.

### SOUTHBANK TRADITIONALIST BACKGROUND

RARE

The political faction of Southbank represents the original founders of Willowshore, a hearty band of settlers whose skills and focus tend toward the earthy and humble. While there are certainly those in this faction who regard Northridge as vapid urbanites, merchants, and power-hungry politicians, most in Southbank devote their energy to helping Willowshore stay fed, honoring its long-standing traditions, and remaining relatively self-sufficient. Your interests in Willowshore's history are closely tied to the traditions of farming and building what you need with your own two hands, as well as taking part in the shared oral history of the region. Whether it's enjoying discussions with local elders about the past or helping newcomers learn Willowshore's ways, you're always eager to help uphold the town's traditions.

Your home is likely located south of the Ceiba River, on the southernmost outskirts of town.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely spent time helping to set up the feasts, assisted in running some of the events, and otherwise worked behind the scenes. You were chosen to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival because you lost a bet, owed a favor, or otherwise got pressured or tricked into the role by a family member, friend, or coworker. Perhaps someone who was going to be one of the abductees but had to back out at the last moment, so you ended up taking their place.

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Charisma or Constitution, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Farming Lore skill. You gain the Hobnobber feat.

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** The party's reputation with Southbank increases; **Effect** Increase the party's reputation with Southbank by an additional 2 points (your GM has information about Willowshore reputation).

### WILLOWSHORE URCHIN BACKGROUND

As with any settlement, not all of Willowshore's citizens are born into easy lives. You grew up on the town streets, either as an orphan or hardscrabble youth who was forced at a young age to help provide for your family. You might technically have had a home of your own, but for various reasons, you had, or preferred, to live most of your childhood outside of those walls. You might have

run with a gang of kids (some of whom might even be fellow PCs), or you could've been a loner who managed to survive against all odds. Regardless, your childhood was one of forced ingenuity, desperation, and physicality. Hardly a week would've passed without you having to jury-rig a solution to some problem or to simply use your reflexes or brawn to solve a situation quickly before things escalated. While you might have left your old life behind you now that you're all grown up, the time you spent on Willowshore's streets has made you the person you are today.

You might still be technically homeless, subsisting on the street and never sleeping in the same place twice in a row. You might keep a small shanty or hideout somewhere in town as well. It's also possible that, despite your childhood, you've been fortunate enough to find a family or home, in which case your home could be anywhere in Willowshore.

During the Reenactment Festival, you likely enjoyed the revelry... perhaps a bit too much! Festivals were always times of excitement in your childhood, and this one is no exception. You were chosen to be an abductee during the Reenactment Festival simply by chance—maybe your name was selected by a blind draw, or perhaps someone dared you to take part, or you could simply have craved the attention.

Choose two attribute boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Strength, and one is a free attribute boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Engineering Lore skill. You gain the Charming Liar feat.

**Seasonal Boon** ♦ **Trigger** You (or an adjacent PC) are about to roll a recovery check; **Effect** You gain an automatic critical success on the recovery check rather than rolling it as your hearty physique, tenacious attitude, or just plain old luck continues to help you survive the way it had during your childhood. If you're adjacent to a PC who's about to roll a recovery check, you can instead use this boon to grant them this effect.

### Background Adjustments

You can add one of the following two adjustments to any background (including a Common one) to further modify your choice to match your vision for your PC.

**Family:** You and one (or more) other PCs are close family members (siblings, parent/child, married, etc.). If you take this adjustment, the other PC(s) who are your family must also take this adjustment. Choose one of the following to replace the skill feat you otherwise would've gained from your background. (You and your sibling need not share the same choice—a sibling who wants to keep their background's skill feat can pick "Typical" from the list.)

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**Bickering:** You have a long-standing feud with your sibling(s). Whenever your sibling(s) critically fail a significant skill check or attack roll and you witness their failure, you gain a +1 status bonus to your saving throws until the end of your next turn as you secretly (or perhaps not so secretly) delight in their failure.

**Close-Knit:** You and your sibling(s) work well together, and you go all-out to help them when they're badly hurt. When you provide Aid or Administer First Aid to your sibling(s), the DC is 5 lower than normal.

**Typical:** You have a standard relationship with your sibling(s); don't change your background's skill feat.

**Foundling:** You aren't a native to Willowshore, but you did grow up in the town. You might have adoptive parents, or you could've grown up on the streets. Choose one of the following to replace the bonus feat you otherwise would've gained from your background.

**Bitter:** You appreciate the town of Willowshore but still resent the conditions that resulted in you being abandoned or left in the town. You gain the Intimidating Glare skill feat.

**Mysterious:** You keep secrets, and very few in Willowshore (if anyone) know your history before

### ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

Although Willowshore is your character's home, and they might have close family dwelling in town, *Season of Ghosts* doesn't incorporate any potential PC family members into the adventure plots at all. If your character has parents, siblings, children, romantic partners, or other family living with them in Willowshore, talk with your GM about whether you'd like them to play purely a background role or, with the GM's aid, take up a more integral part of the campaign's plot. In particular, let your GM know if you're comfortable potentially having family members become threatened by elements in *Season of Ghosts*, and make sure the other players are okay with this element as well. Again, there are no plot elements in *Season of Ghosts* that directly imperil any PC's family (beyond the existential peril facing all of Willowshore's inhabitants), but for some players and groups, involving family in stories like this one can make the experience more challenging and rewarding.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTER OPTIONS

	Ancestries	Classes	Languages	Skills	Archetypes
<b>Strongly Recommended</b>	Humans, elves, half-elves, halflings, kitsune, leshies, nagaji, tengu	Animist, bard, champion, druid, investigator, monk, oracle, ranger, rogue, thaumaturge, witch	Common (Tian)	Athletics, Diplomacy, Nature, Religion, Society, Willowshore Lore	Ritualist
<b>Recommended</b>	Other core ancestries, dhampirs, duskwalkers, hobgoblins, leshies, nephilim, ratfolk, samsarans	Alchemist, cleric, fighter, magus, psychic, sorcerer, summoner, swashbuckler, wizard	Aklo, Chthonian, Elven, Fey, Halfling, Kitsune, Necril	Arcana, Crafting, Deception, Intimidation, Occultism, Survival, Thievery	Blessed one, bounty hunter, duelist, herbalist, marshal, martial artist, spirit warrior, wandering chef
<b>Appropriate</b>	All other ancestries (save those below)	All other classes (save those below)	Draconic, Empyrean, Goblin, Hwan, Minkaian, Nagaji, Requian, Samsaran, Tengu	Acrobatics, Medicine, Performance, Stealth	All other archetypes (save those below)
<b>Not Recommended</b>	Androids, aquatic ancestries	Gunslinger	All others	—	Assassin, gunslinger multiclass, pirate, vigilante, viking

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you settled in the town, in part because you've taken to learning about Willowshore by watching rather than engaging in conversation. You gain the Streetwise skill feat.

**Outgoing:** You're grateful for the sense of belonging the townsfolk of Willowshore have extended to you and always do your best to repay that kindness. Once per week when you attempt a skill check to resolve a downtime activity that could benefit Willowshore (several of these activities are detailed in the adventures, and your GM can always make the call if another activity would qualify) and you fail that check, you instead succeed at the check, or if you critically fail at that check, you instead simply fail that check.

### HOME AND HEIRLOOM

The final step for creating your *Season of Ghosts* character is to choose where you live in Willowshore. The town map presented on page 16 shows all of the buildings in Willowshore. If you chose a *Season of Ghosts* background, that choice suggests where in Willowshore your home is most likely to be located, but you need not be limited by this suggestion—you can pick any unlabeled smaller building on the map as your character's home (note that your GM might have suggestions or plans for certain buildings beyond the expected scope of the adventure, so before you settle on your home, you'll need GM approval).

Once you've chosen your home, pick one of the following four sets of treasure. When you start *Season of Ghosts*, the treasure you selected is still stored back home. While you won't have access to it when the first adventure begins, it won't be long into the adventure before each PC will have the opportunity to return home and gather their family treasures for use!

When selecting these treasures, each player must choose a different option—only if there are more than four players in the group can you choose a treasure already selected by another player.

- Two *minor healing potions* and one piece of common adventuring gear worth 2 gp or less of the PC's choice.
- One *predictable silver piece* (*Player Core* 2 307) and a vial containing one dose of *oil of potency*.
- Supplies for an alarm snare, 10 sp, and two lesser ghost charges (*Player Core* 2 285).
- One cold-iron chunk worth 10 gp.

### THE EIGHT PRACTICES

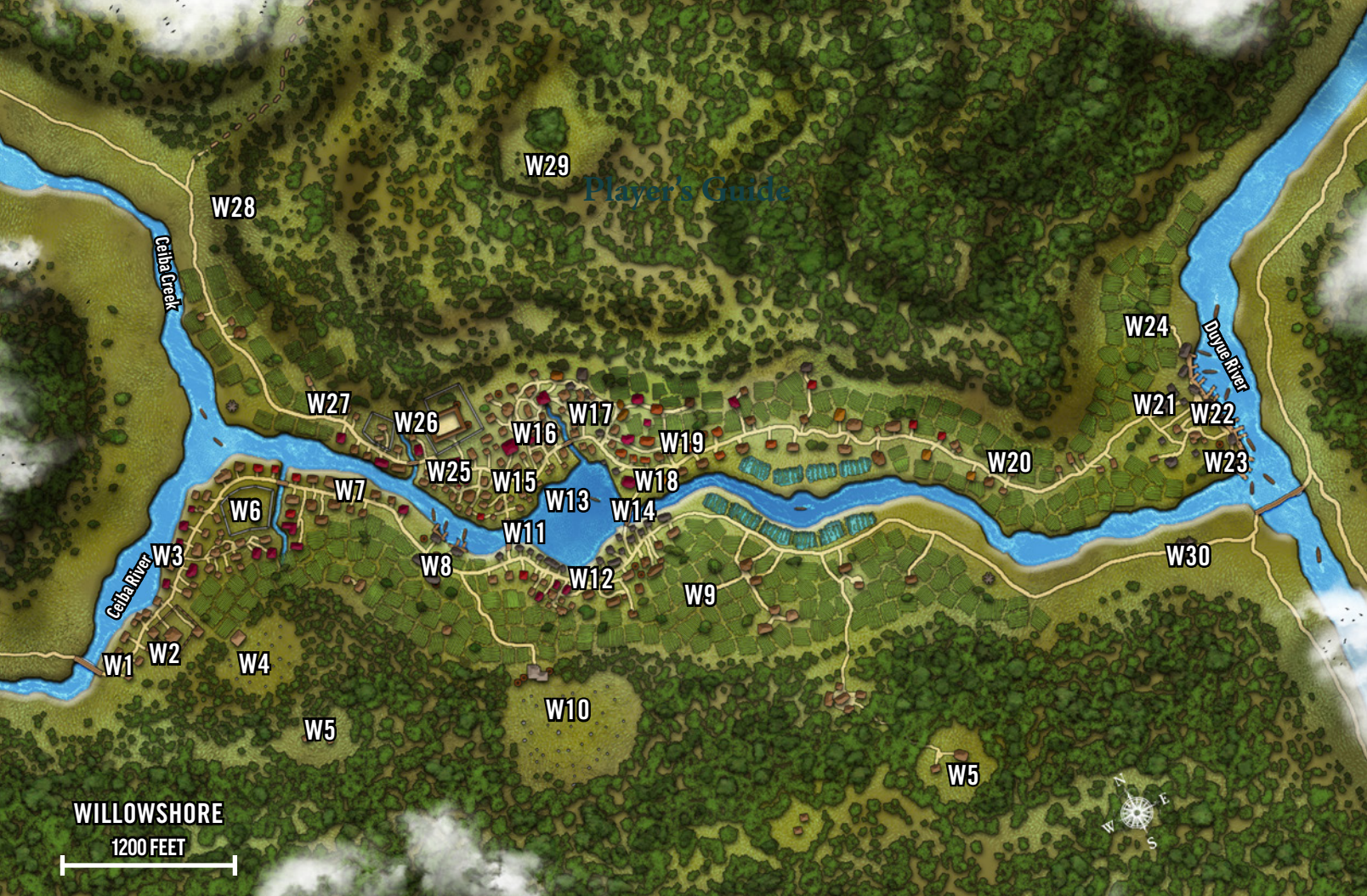
The people of Willowshore follow these eight bits of advice during the first several weeks of summer—the season of ghosts. These beliefs are primarily local superstitions, and their capacity to actually help in an encounter with any sort of malicious spirit is hotly debated.

1. Do not call a ghost a ghost.
2. Do not pat people on the head or shoulders.
3. Avoid entering bodies of water when a ghost is nearby.
4. Do not eat food that has two stick-like objects protruding from it.
5. Do not lean against walls during the day.
6. Do not whistle at night.
7. Do not leave laundry out at night.
8. If you hear someone call your name from behind you at night, do not turn around.

### Willowshore Gazetteer

In 7020, the Tan Sugi monastery was founded by a Sangpotshi monk named Zhi Hui. Built around an ancient sugi tree said to have mystic properties, the Tan Sugi monastery was incredibly remote, nestled in a wooded valley within an unsettled reach of Specterwood. Willowshore was originally founded to support those who built the monastery, and the long trail that connected the town to the monastery became known as the Pilgrim's Path. Once construction of the monastery ended, Willowshore's focus shifted to an increasingly self-sufficient lifestyle that only periodically needed to support the monks.

Zhi Hui passed away in 7054, and as the monks of the monastery began to drift away, Willowshore itself shifted focus to the lumber industry. By 7060, the monastery had been abandoned, but when a group of woodcutters attempted to harvest the ancient sugi trees that grew there in 7062, tragedy struck. The woodcutters returned to Willowshore with broken weapons and unliving bodies that evening, and while these undead woodcutters were defeated by morning, dozens of townsfolk had perished during the struggle. The event is remembered today as the "Night of Broken Blades," and few visitors have made the journey to the ruined monastery in the 46 years since. The place is regarded now as cursed, haunted, or worse.



As the years wore on, Shenmen officially enlisted Willowshire to become part of Lung Wa’s lumber harvesting ambitions. Things started out well, with the construction of infrastructure including bridges and a dam. However, the lumber bosses who ran the harvesting operation soon became loathed for their exploitation of Willowshire’s ascetic past. Worse, they began to present the settlement (now properly called a town) as a “getaway” for Lung Wa aristocrats to hunt for sport and indulge in food and drinks forcefully seized in the empire’s name.

When Lung Wa collapsed in 7106, Willowshire’s lumber lords took their wealth, abandoned their estates, and fled. Most of the soldiers stationed in town returned to Shenmen’s capital or deserted their posts, leaving behind those who had put down local roots. Willowshire’s remoteness saved it from rampant banditry and external political conflicts that had begun to plague Shenmen, but as you will soon discover when you begin to play *Season of Ghosts*, the time has come for Willowshire to face the new world.

### PEOPLE OF WILLOWSHORE

Most of Willowshire’s citizens identify by when their

family first settled in town, often affecting which bank of the Ceiba River they live on. The first wave of townspeople were either those who worked on the monastery or were paid to settle in Willowshire by the monastery. These folks originally lived south of the river and are thus referred to as Southbankers. Those who arrived after Lung Wa took control, meanwhile, settled on the river’s northern banks, called Northridge due to its prominent incline. These settlers included workers for the lumber bosses, businesses that wanted convenient access to the lumber, and imperial guards.

Though these two factions in Willowshire today use the names Southbank and Northridge, one’s allegiance isn’t solely determined by where they live or work. Southbank residents are traditionalists, keen on maintaining Willowshire’s culture and living simply off the land. Northridge residents, meanwhile, focus on pragmatism and urban growth. Many in Northridge are open to the idea of jorogumo ruling Shenmen, while Southbankers on principle think jorogumo are evil monsters and best avoided.

Despite disagreements, both sides have a consensus on putting Willowshire’s survival and safety first. Plenty of residents have their own opinions that lean in

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neither direction and consider themselves unaffiliated with either faction. Overall, Willowshore values giving all one has to offer. In many ways, the village has no choice, especially as the events of this adventure evolve.

As you play *Season of Ghosts*, your actions and choices as a group will build reputation with these two factions; your GM has all the rules and guidance needed to track reputation and implement its effects in the game as play progresses.

Current trending topics in Willowshore focus on the recent exodus of the lumber lords, rumors of jorogumo seizing control of the nation, and preparations for the upcoming season of ghosts.

### WILLOWSHORE

### SETTLEMENT 4

#### TOWN

Isolated lumber town

**Government** Appointed governor (Heh Shan-Bao)

**Population** 225 (73% humans, 6% half-elves, 4% halflings, 4% kitsune, 3% elves, 3% tengu, 2% nagaji, 5% others)

**Languages** Common (Tien), Elven, Halfling, Minatan, Nagaji, Tengu, Tian-hwa, Tian-min

**Religions** Abadar, Daikitsu, Lady Nanbyo, Pharama, Sangpotshi, others (represented by small shrines)

**Threats** malicious spirits, ravenous vermin, struggling self-sufficiency, supernatural influences, territorial beasts

**Teeth-Clenching Teamwork** Willowshore's residents help one another despite differences. You can attempt to Request help from another Willowshore resident even if they're indifferent or unfriendly, but you do so with a -2 circumstance penalty.

**"Granny" Hu Ban-niang** (intimidating female Tian-shu retired guard captain) retired imperial guard captain

**"Old" Matsuki Shou** (nostalgic male Tian-shu family patriarch) retired carpenter and Willowshore's living history

**Heh Shan-Bao** (nervous male Tian-shu governor) appointed administrator of Willowshore

### WILLOWSHORE LOCATIONS

Significant buildings and important people found in Willowshore are detailed on the following pages, with numbers corresponding to the locations on the map on page 16. Unlabeled buildings are wooden structures that might be shops, homes, farmhouses, storerooms, or have

other usage depending on their location and, with the GM's permission, can be selected as homes for any PC.

### W1. Eternal Blaze Ironworks

In the days of the monastery's construction, the Eternal Blaze Ironworks was responsible for creating metal items from cookware, woodworking tools, and small metal parts, such as hinges, locks, and keys for chests. **Yong Wu-Xiu** (industrious female kitsune blacksmith) inherited the business from her father about a decade ago.

**Wares:** metalworks, adventuring gear (especially cookware), metal armor, metal weapons, metal shields

### W2. Willowshore Stables

Willowshore Stables is the town's veterinary facility for household animals, pets, and livestock. Incidentally, Willowshore Stables' use of livestock as beasts of burden influenced the village's food culture, causing many households to avoid the consumption of beef. The owner, **Kum Soon-chong** (caring male human veterinarian), and his teenage son, **Meng-sung** (dutiful

male human veterinarian), are well-known for their affable attitudes and compassion for all kinds of animals.

**Wares:** animal rentals, barding, saddle bags, land vehicles

### W3. Abadar Shrine

This elegant shrine houses a 3-foot-tall limestone statue of Abadar that holds a shovel in one hand and a trowel in the other. The statue was reportedly taken to Goka first to ritualistically invite Abadar's divine blessings at the Grand Bank before being ferried back to Willowshore.

### W4. Graveside Manners

Willowshore's residents practiced cremation in its early days to prevent undeath. The tombs in this old cemetery house the urns of many of those early settlers. Today, only a few families use Graveside Manners as a burial ground. The headstones remain free of lichen and moss thanks to the graveyard's keeper, **You So-Jin** (mysterious female elf herbalist). Once a pilgrim who frequented the Tan Sugi monastery, So-Jin settled in Willowshore after the monastery's collapse and



Old Matsuki

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maintains an herbalist shop—the primary reason anyone visits Graveside Manners today.

**Wares:** alchemical elixirs and tools, alchemical reagents, fresh and dried herbs

### W5. Silvermist Lodges

The Silvermist Lodges are split between two small compounds in the woods south of town. At each location, the lodges' woodwork conforms to the grain of the wood, giving the buildings an organic look associated with elven architecture. In the days when Willowshore first tried to become self-sufficient, eight elven adventurers came and took up an offer to settle in the village, seeing the request as a short-term contract given their life spans. Though none of these original eight elves live in Willowshore anymore, they left many offspring and descendants behind.

**Wares:** animal parts, snare supplies

### W6. Matsuki Estate

The man that Willowshore calls “Old” **Matsuki** (nostalgic male human carpenter) once apprenticed to the head carpenter of the Tan Sugi monastery. After taking leave from his master, he led his family to construct a large Tian-shu/Minkaian estate to house all two dozen of them. Reportedly, the superstitious patriarch then made sure that the outer walls were whitewashed with limestone containing blessed salts and holy water. Today, Old Matsuki is the most influential of Willowshore's Southbank faction and serves as the faction's spokesman.

### W7. Thrice-Blessed Inn

Willowshore's Thrice-Blessed Inn began as the Thrice-Blessed Brothel, for it was founded by three clerics of Kofusachi, Calistria, and Shelyn. Political complications forced the brothel's owner, **Mother Otis** (canny genderfluid half-elf innkeeper), to shut down the establishment only a few years before Lung Wa's collapse. With the aid of Willowshore's local lawyer, Luo Xi Yang, Mother Otis was able to rely upon an obscure law that prevented their eviction and allowed them to continue to operate the building as an inn.



Eternal Lantern

### THE ETERNAL LANTERN

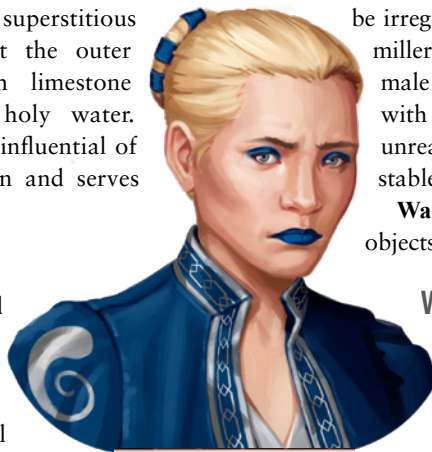
This minor artifact is an immobile object gifted to the town of Willowshore by the founder of the Tan Sugi monastery, Zhi Hui. For the town's entire history, the *Eternal Lantern* has stood sentinel near the settlement's heart, its light never wavering after Zhi Hui placed a few copper coins within it. Some believe that it's possible to receive blessings from the deities whose shrines stand in Willowshore by placing copper coins within the *Eternal Lantern* in exchange for additional protection, but for the most part, the people of Willowshore have become used to the ever-burning lantern at the southern steps of Dawnstep Bridge.

### W8. Milling Houses

Willowshore has numerous millhouses, including two powered by water, three by wind, and ten powered by people or draft animals. The abundance ensures that losing one or two mills to routine maintenance or malfunction never jeopardizes the village's needs.

Work at the mills is intense, and the hours can be irregular due to the demand each day. The millers' leader, **Choe Chung-hu** (supportive male human miller), keeps morale high with encouragement, pushing back against unreasonable demands, keeping wages stable, and offering midnight snacks.

**Wares:** De-husked grain, grain flour, stone objects



Elizeth Candora

### W9. Nine Ear Shrine

This mud-wall hut looks like a grain storage hut from the outside. Its interior descends 10 feet underground into an enclosed space lined with stone, in the middle of which sits a 15-foot-tall marble statue of a nine-tailed fox. A large spiritual rope made of hay hangs off its neck. The walls of the basement are decorated with painted carvings that depict stories of Daikitsu.

Fifteen years ago, a desperate mother of the Ouh family hid her baby here as the family was rounded

# SEASON OF GHOSTS

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up for execution by a corrupt guard. By the time the guards learned about the missing offspring, a large skulk of foxes had surrounded the temple. Unwilling to tempt divine wrath, the guards retreated. Allies of the family soon arrived to rescue the baby, at which point the foxes vanished.

That baby, **Ba-Ming Ouh** (devoted female human priest), grew up under the care of distant relatives. While she shows signs of the Ouh family's inclinations toward the veneration of nature, Ba-Ming wishes to return her life debt by serving Daikitsu. While some question her intentions, most Willowshorers support her dedication.

**Wares:** fulus, scrolls, talismans

### W10. Lady of Souls

One of Lung Wa's chief concerns when they first expanded into Willowshore was to reduce the likelihood of an undead uprising. They solved it by building a cathedral to Pharamasma.

**Elizeth Candora** (empathetic female human cleric), a second-generation Taldan from Goka, is the current priestess here. Having once visited Willowshore and the Tan Sugi monastery as a child, Elizeth never imagined that becoming a cleric of Pharamasma would lead to an opportunity for her to permanently return to the village she vividly recalls. She sees the coincidence as fate arranged by Pharamasma's hands and therefore serves dutifully and diligently. She's fond of spending time alone in the graveyard with her flute and often plays the instrument there to help soothe the spirits of those recently buried therein.

**Wares:** consumable religious items, divine scrolls

### W11. Dawnstep Bridge

After the Thrice-Blessed Brothel was established (but before it became an inn), Willowshore's population had grown enough in size to be considered a town by Shenmen standards, meaning that a lit lantern must be maintained at all times within the town near the entrance, at a major crossroads, or at a bridge. The lack of a lit lantern at one of these locations suggests that the town is abandoned, which is believed to invite vermin, ghosts, dangerous beasts, and worse. Today, Willowshore features two such lanterns, but the one that stands here, the *Eternal Lantern*, is both its oldest and most notable.



**Zheng Peng**

### W12. Industrial District

Willowshore's Lung Wa lumber bosses had a host of other businesses related to materials taken from the woods. Many industrial workers came to Willowshore explicitly for this work, leaving family and friends behind.

After the lumber bosses left, Governor Heh seized control and ordered the laborers to continue working. Upset that they had no choice in the matter, they've been gathering late at night under the guidance of **Kawaka** (devoted male tengu guild leader), a senior bookmaker, to discuss how they should negotiate with the governor to release those who want to leave and fairly pay those who elect to stay.

With the collapse of Lung Wa, many of the businesses that once thrived here have closed up shop. The only ones still functioning are Cloud Paper House (a paper mill run by Kawaka), Jadeite Essentials (a distillery), and Rebel's Leatherworks (a tannery).

**Wares:** alcohol, essential oils and perfume, glassware and glass items, hide and leather items, paper and paper products such as spellbooks and formula books

### W13. Woodraft Lake

The first governor appointed to Willowshore by Lung Wa made an effort to tame the notorious Ceiba River through various engineering feats. Part of that effort, plus the demand for wet storage for wood, led to the construction of the Willowshore Dam—and by extension, Woodraft Lake.

Many protested the construction at first, as the resulting lake would submerge some homes and farmlands—including the village's shrine to Lady Nanbyo. A few imprisonments later, all complaints ceased. The dam was completed in due time. While the governor earned himself a promotion and left Willowshore soon after, they didn't get to enjoy before a landslide buried them on a bright sunny day. While the story's veracity is somewhat dubious, subsequent governors have never stopped Willowshore's villagers from treating the lake as a shrine to the Widow of Suffering.

### W14. Willowshore Dam

Willowshore's dam is a minor engineering marvel. Its main body is constructed out of immense, precisely fitted slabs of dark-gray marble, carved with a carefully

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calculated curvature. The dam has two giant wooden gates that can be closed or opened to lower the level of the lake. Turning the wheel that controls the gates automatically causes a bell to ring, signaling anyone downriver to move away to safety.

### W15. Downtown Willowshore

Downtown Willowshore remains a major hub of activity in town. To the northeast stands the governor's home and office, which also serves as the village's bank and treasury. South of the manor lie the imperial barracks, commanded by **Zheng Peng** (stoic male human watch officer). To the north of the crossroad is the stage for the village's weekly Shu Opera performance, which is part of the Seven-Colored Songbird theater, a venue officiated over by **Kazuma Oono** (gregarious male kitsune director). Nearby on opposite sides of the road is one of Willowshore's busiest stores, Treesparrow's Rest, and Willowshore's only public bathhouse, the Happy Kappa. Treesparrow's is a family-owned grocery store run by **Nadoya Sanmi** (friendly female human family matriarch), while the Happy Kappa's owner, **De-Ge Hua** (chatty male halfling bathhouse owner) is famous in town for his obsession with cleanliness.

**Wares:** alcohol, bathing, entertainment, grains, household supplies and tools, preserved foods, rations

### W16. Luo and Laws

Lung Wa's laws, after being revised time and time again by self-serving rulers, are a bag of contradictions allowing independent lawyers, such as **Luo Xi Yang** (eager female human lawyer), to make a decent living attempting to make sense of them. Promised by the lumber lords who invited her here that rural life would be less stressful, Xi Yang arrived with only the essential 10-volume Imperial Compendium. Quickly, the lawyer discovered that Willowshore's legal issues were as complicated, if not more so, than what she'd previously encountered in the city of Sze, and thus her library grew to a size that doubled the one in her former home.



Luo Xi Yang



Dami

### W17. Mercantile Street

Willowshore's newer businesses, particularly those associated with woodcarving, are mostly found in one of the red-brick buildings along Mercantile Street. To ensure the lumber lords would never favor anyone, the woodcarvers came together to form a guild, through which young apprentices have the opportunity to intern at different shops during their apprenticeship. **Yun Mong-Un** (talented female human woodcarver), the woodcarver's current elected guild leader, is a product of such training. Though heaped with praise for her work, Mong-Un would rather be a painter or jewelry maker.

**Wares:** artwork, wood items, wooden religious symbols

### W18. Second Best

When **Huo Tian-Zhe** (humble male human inventor) arrived in town with his father from Karahai (Willowshore's closest neighboring settlement to the east) five years ago to assist with the maintenance of Willowshore's dam, the urban-born son thought he was about to show the "second-rated smiths of the countryside" how to get things done. Quickly, Tian-Zhe realized his skills were subpar to even the youngest apprentice of the Eternal Blaze and that his fancily-designed farm gadgets were more akin to toys than machines of marvels. Humbled, Tian-Zhe asked his father to stay in Willowshore so he could learn to be a "smith of use." Begrudgingly accepting the request, Tian-Zhe's father nevertheless gave his son a handful of gold to order a new shop sign. As a reminder to himself, Tian-Zhe boldly named his workshop "Second Best."

Tian-Zhe's products have garnered some loyal customers, and his knowledge of machinery won over Yong Wu-Xiu such that the old smith tasked him with the maintenance of the dam.

**Wares:** adventuring tools, alchemical ammunition, alchemical bombs, clockwork gadgets, and simple armor, metal weapons, and shields

### W19. The Hand of Spring

Willowshore relied heavily on home remedies, herbal droughts, and traveling priests for medical care until

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the arrival of Doctor **Damihansig Mababangloob** (kindly male human doctor), whom everyone calls Dami for short. Dami uses a mix of acupuncture, purified chemicals, and surgery to provide care. Though his treatments aren't what Willowshore is used to, Dami has developed quite a reputation for being a charitable doctor who cares more about his patients than monetary gain.

**Wares:** alchemical healing items, healer's kit supplies, nonmagical healing items

### W20. Mother's Coil

Magic was traditionally seen in Willowshore as either a manifestation of divine blessing, one's connection to the spirit world, or just a trick of the hand and mind. Most folks didn't quite understand it as a topic to be studied and learned until the arrival of Anjal of Thulsadus, an old nagaji wizard. Arriving about 15 years ago, Anjal found the weather of Willowshore to be gentle on their dryscale condition and thus bought a plot of land from a farmer looking to relocate to the city of Sze. Overnight, a Nagajor-styled tower of dark basalt appeared, much to the awe of the villagers.

Though curious about magic, most villagers find the topic to be formidable and unapproachable, not to mention impractical. Thus, Anjal had only one apprentice, Jubei, a child they raised after she was abandoned in Willowshore by a pair of irresponsible "parents" who posed as well-off merchants but then fled town without paying their bills. Infuriated that anyone dared endanger a child so, Anjal's Nalinivatian beliefs prompted the old wizard to take the terrified Jubei in as their own.

Jubei has since grown into a capable young adult. While Anjal's death last year was tragic, Jubei is determined to continue studying the arcane arts through the books her adopted parent left behind.

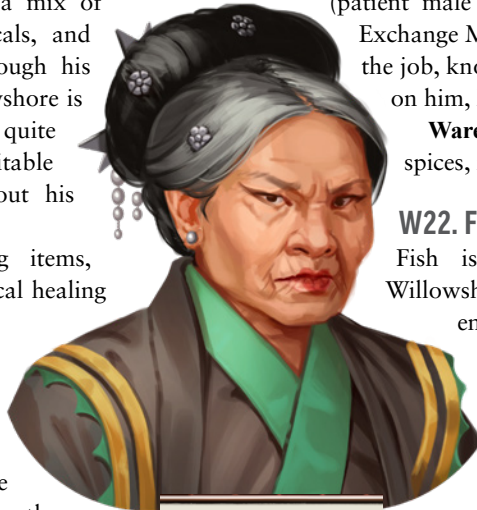
**Wares:** arcane and occult scrolls, formulas and recipes, wands

### W21. The Ceiba-Duyue Exchange

When Governor Heh Shan-Bao took office in Willowshore, he ordered several new warehouses and a trade office to be built here, hoping to expand the town's industry and connection with the coastal

fortress of Karahai. On Granny Hu's advice, Shan-Bao handpicked the local Kofusachi priest, **Kim Gu-won** (patient male human cleric), to take the post of Exchange Manager. Gu-won reluctantly accepted the job, knowing that with what Granny Hu has on him, he wouldn't be able to refuse.

**Wares:** beverages, divine scrolls, foods and spices, fulus, raw mineral, textiles



Granny Hu

### W22. Fisheries

Fish is an important food source for Willowshore. Locals traditionally capture entire schools of fish, preserve those above a certain size, and raise small ones in their backyard ponds. Today, this practice has been expanded, though the fishers have yet to reach a point where the fishery ponds here can be maintained indefinitely.

**Zatoku** (observant female ratfolk fisher) is Willowshore's foremost fish keeper; her ability to sense weather changes gives her the perfect edge in her occupation.

**Wares:** dried or smoked fish and shrimp, fertilizer, fishing gear, insect bait

### W23. Dock

After the construction of the dam, Willowshore's old dock was blocked off, thus requiring the construction of a new dock at the mouth of the Ceiba River. The new dock is operated and managed by **Rajul Samudra** (serene male nagaji shipwright), who was hired by the Ceiba-Duyue Exchange specifically for his boat-building skills.

**Wares:** river boat rentals and sales

### W24. The Mushroom House

This remote brick farmhouse smells of decay and manure. Everyone knows that mushrooms aren't the only things growing in the farmhouse, though. For the right price, the Mushroom House can grow almost anything. **Luda Bama** (manipulative female halfling smuggler), a spry, elderly halfling woman, is the head of this illicit market, which she runs with the explicit permission of Granny Hu.

**Wares:** adventuring gear, drugs, poisons, tattoos

### W25. The Cerulean Teahouse

Willowshore's lumber bosses thought very highly of themselves, and the idea of mingling with the "common

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folk” rankled them. Aristocrat Qing Mai-Lai’s solution was the establishment of this fine structure, close to the lumber lords’ estates.

The Cerulean Teahouse took off quickly, thanks to its plentiful offerings of extravagant food, drinks, and performances. However, once the novelty wore off, business quickly died. Still, Mai-Lai persevered, first by changing the teahouse’s focus to banquet catering, then by collaborating with The Leshy’s Salon as a storefront, and finally as a flexible bed-and-breakfast. Just days after Mai-Lai finally paid off the loan on the property, news of Lung Wa’s collapse reached Willowshore. Mai-Lai called it quits at that point and announced her retirement, but her attempts to transfer control of the Teahouse to family met with complications after it became apparent that none of her relations wanted to move to Willowshore. When Mai-Lai passed away early in the previous winter, ownership of the business was still undetermined, for Mai-Lai never submitted a will. Today, the Cerulean Teahouse stands vacant and is slowly falling into ruin.

### W26. Abandoned Estates

The abandoned lumber lords’ estates, after being thoroughly picked clean, were left to serve as the occasional rage room or dare challenge. An abandoned shrine to Desna sits in one of the houses, and many have questioned if someone should accept the goddess into their home instead of leaving her bereft in the estate ruins.

### W27. The Leshy’s Saloon

The local leshies don’t recall when they came to the region, just that it was long before Willowshore was founded. They didn’t officially join Willowshore until the expansion of the settlement made it inevitable. With allied families keeping the greedy lumber lords away, the leshies built their own tea farm business, taking to the roads with brewed tea and teaware stashed in rectangular bamboo backpacks. Some would shout slogans, while others used a simple temple block to inform customers of their arrival. These traveling merchants soon became an attraction and staple of Willowshore life. Ever since the Cerulean Teahouse closed, **Mountain Summit Grass** (irreverent agender leshy teamaker), the leader of this band of leshies, has been increasingly focusing on creating bespoke blends of tea for individual local customers they favor.

**Wares:** clay pottery tea ware, tea leaves

### W28. Bones of the Forgotten

Willowshore, like many remote villages, has its own set of laws. Grievous crimes were punished with exile unless the individual’s skill or knowledge was needed—the punishment was then permanent imprisonment. Executions were rare, as being exiled into Specterwood was often a death sentence in itself.

Particularly vile criminals had a Mark of Crime tattooed onto their scalp, and after death, this tattoo was transferred to the bones through carving, meaning even in death and decomposition, the mark remained. Bodies with a Mark of Crime—be it from Willowshore, another village, or Lung Wa—can only be buried in this overgrown and unkept area.

While graves were unmarked in the past, a few wooden posts have been erected recently and paper shuriken hung off them, seemingly in silent protest that the ones buried beneath might have died an unjust death. Or perhaps this is an attempt to stave off the rise of a bitter, vengeful ghost.

### W29. The Great Willow

Willowshore rests at the foot of a mountainous region known geographically as the Trimountains, named due to the three major peaks in the area. In her memoir, Master Zhi Hui noted how she found an ancient willow tree of unusual size at the summit of the lowest of these mountains. After befriending the kodama kami who protected the tree, Master Zhi Hui learned vital information that eventually led her to the Tan Sugi grove to the west. For this knowledge, the kodama of the so-called “Great Willow” has received much reverence from both Willowshore and visiting pilgrims over the years.

**Wares:** foraged foods and nonmetallic raw materials

### W30. Spider Gate

After the Night of Broken Blades, Willowshore’s governor caved to the demand for a new lantern at the entrance of the town to augment the protection afforded by the *Eternal Lantern* at the town’s heart. While the original plan was for the carpenters of Willowshore to build a torii gate or Tian-shu gateway on which lanterns could be hung, a Lung Wa aristocrat offered a free stone guardian spider from his garden since it no longer fit in with the garden’s decorations.

Most Willowshorers thought the giant statue was the ugliest thing they’d ever seen. Nevertheless, they assumed the statue housed a guardian spirit and respected it accordingly. In time, villagers accepted



their unique entrance guardian, even adopting it as their mascot and naming it “Ugly Cute.” The lantern Ugly Cute holds in its fangs is a regular lantern, unlike the *Eternal Lantern* found at Dawnstep Bridge, but the people of Willowshore value it just as much and strive to keep it lit at all times.

### WILLOWSHORE HINTERLANDS

Beyond the town’s borders lies the rugged terrain of its hinterlands—rolling forested hills rising to verdant mountains to the west, while to the east, the region’s largest river eventually flows into the Sea of Ghosts. Where this river meets the sea stands Willowshore’s closest neighbor, the coastal fortified market called Karahai, yet even this location is a day’s ride from town.

The immediate hinterlands feature a number of minor sites of interest. The **Duyue River** is the largest waterway in the region with Willowshore founded on one of its tributaries, the **Ceiba River**. A shallower tributary, **Dragonfly Creek**, winds south to an open area of rugged stone known as the **Gorge of Fangs and Teeth**—a natural quarry that supplied the stone for Willowshore’s roads and foundations. **Gourd**

**Lake**, downriver from Willowshore, provides excellent fishing, but those who would ply its waters would do well to make offerings to the kappas who dwell in its depths and cavort on its southern shores. **Green Silk Peak**, nearly 2,000 feet high, is the highest point of elevation in the hinterlands, while the natural sinkholes known as the **Eyes of Fumeiyoshi** are the opposite—barren pits in the ground where nothing grows and gritty water has pooled.

Signs of habitation beyond Willowshore are sparse in the region, but they do exist and are largely abandoned. To the northeast stand the burnt-out ruins of an abandoned roadhouse once known as **Canary Inn**, while a remote **Hunter’s Hut** stands near the headwaters of the Duyue River. To the north can be found an old expansion once intended to support Willowshore, but these buildings and farms were soon abandoned when it became apparent the stream that flowed through the area tended to dry up at random intervals each year. To the west, near the source of the Ceiba River, are the remains of the old **Lumber Camp** abandoned a few years ago by the local lumber lords—a location that’s slowly being reclaimed by the forest. And in the low mountains northwest of town, at the far end of the trail

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known as **Pilgrim's Path**, stand the ruins of the **Tan Sugi monastery**—a place reputed today to be the den of monsters, ghosts, or worse.

The forest surrounding Willowshore is part of the much larger woodland known as Specterwood, although here in Willowshore's hinterlands, the haunts and ghosts notorious for plaguing these woods aren't as dangerous. Wildlife is abundant with deer and boars making up the primary large game in the region, and more dangerous predators like black bears, wolves, giant stag beetles, and enormous spiders comprise the greater perils of the hinterlands to those who travel too far from the roads or explore the wilds after dark.

### BEYOND THE HINTERLANDS

*Season of Ghosts* takes place almost entirely within the town of Willowshore and its immediate hinterlands, as presented on the map (page 16), but there's a whole world out there beyond the borders of the map! When events might send you beyond the Willowshore hinterlands, your GM will have the information you need, but it's easiest to focus on Willowshore and its hinterlands when seeking inspiration to create your character.

Brief notes about what lies beyond the hinterlands down the six roads and trails that lead off the map are summarized below.

**Central Northern Road:** This partially ruined road winds through several fields that have gone fallow amid the ruins of a village that was abandoned many years ago, then eventually comes to an end at a large wetland known as Moon Marsh for the way the orange, night-blooming flowers that grow there shine under the moonlight.

**Eastern Northern Road:** This road connects Willowshore with numerous small but distant villages and towns scattered throughout Specterwood and eventually finds its way to the Gossamer Mountains. The next closest settlement down this road is Foxhollow, but it's three days' travel and even smaller than Willowshore.

**Eastern Road:** This road leads to the trade fortress of Karahai and represents Willowshore's major economic link to the rest of Shenmen. Karahai has a small village (quite a bit smaller than Willowshore) nearby—the trade fortress itself being one of many economic hubs along the west coast of the Sea of Ghosts.

**Northeastern Road:** This road leads to a recently established farmstead on a bluff overlooking the Sea of Ghosts, a cattle ranch owned by a notoriously ruthless expatriate politician from the city of Sze who doesn't have much to do with Willowshore.

**Northwest Trail:** This old overgrown trail leads off into the forest; most folks believe it leads to a long-abandoned shrine, but few travel this remote path today.

**Southern Road:** The southern road is a long overland route that eventually connects to better maintained roads and more populous villages and towns several days' travel to the south, but most in Willowshore call it the "Apple Road," as it leads to a grove of wild apple trees that produce particularly delicious fruit every fall.

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*No matter how terrifying, I want the truth.*