

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY 1 ENCOUNTERS™ 1

THE PAGODA OF WORLDS™



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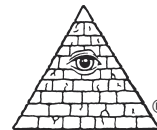
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*Every step is poetry
in motion
Let the rhythm take
your devotion*

– Carl Douglas,
“Dance the Kung Fu”

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

SUMMARY

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

PROTAGONISTS

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

HOOKS

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

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

N

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

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

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

IMPORTANT SKILLS

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

CUSTOM FIT

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

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

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

Psycho Killer

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

SPIN-OFFS

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

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

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

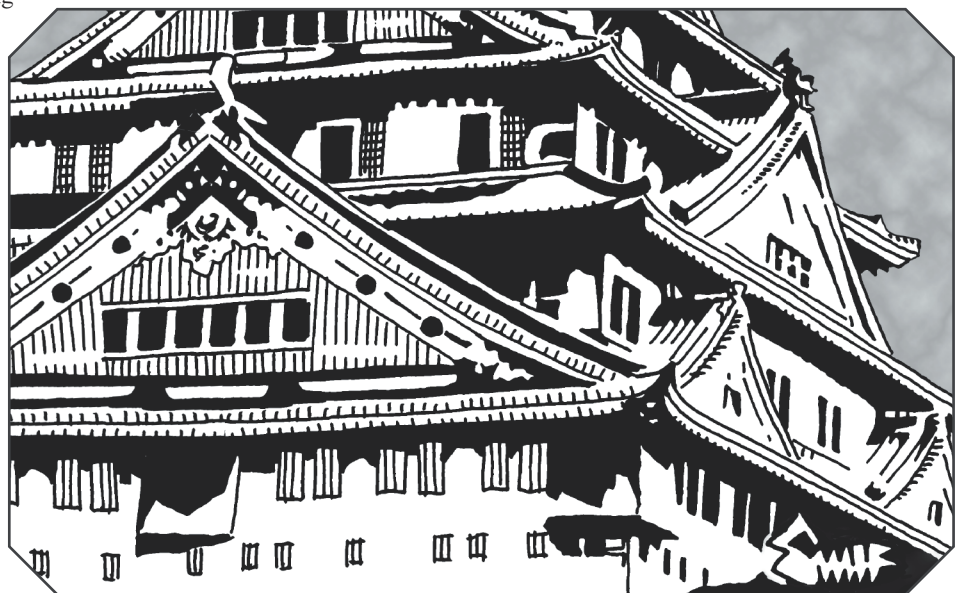
Enterprising adventurers may realize that either the infinite dungeon or Hellscape could be good places to turn a quick buck by harvesting the ample body parts of supernatural creatures. Extensive research at the pagoda (once things have settled down) might even allow magicians and sages to shift the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

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Looting

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

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

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

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

TREASURE TABLE

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

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

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

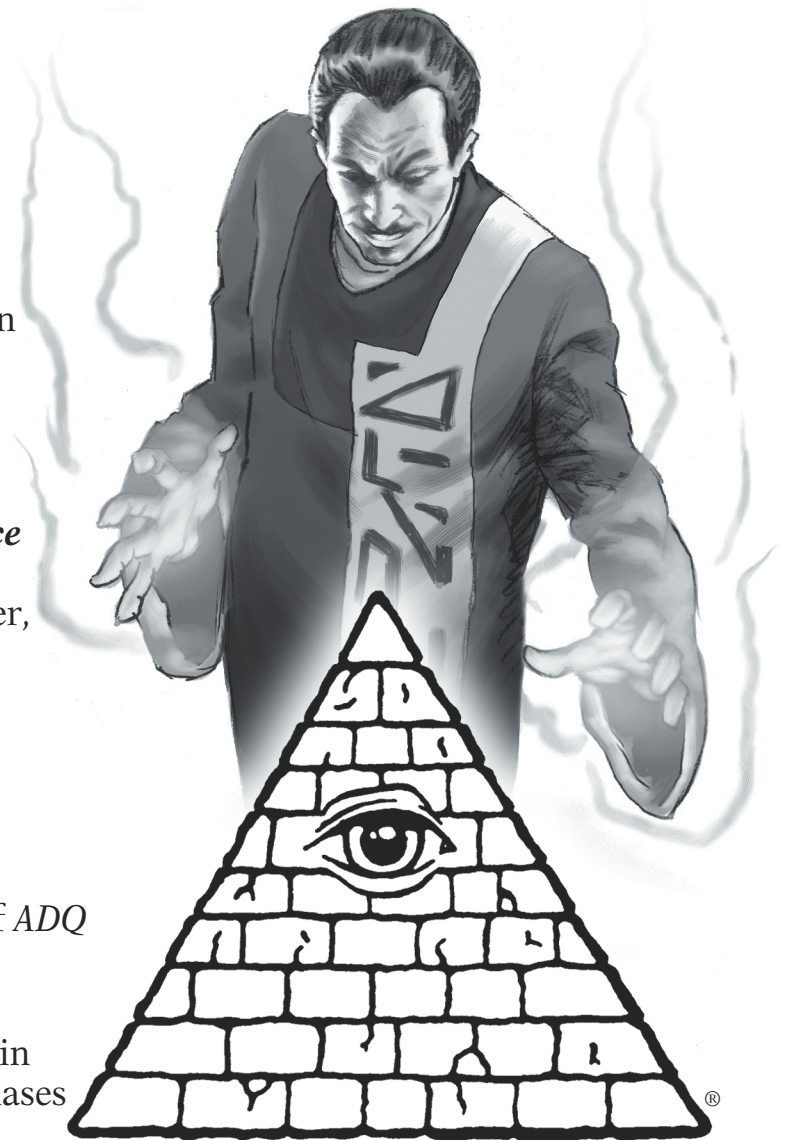
† Page reference is to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*. In games not using *Sages*, a delver may study this book for 15 weeks and then spend 1 character point on the skill to learn it.

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

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