

# TRIBES

Tribes section of the Jungle Book, Revised and reformatted. (v2.12, December 2002)

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## INTRODUCTION

The tribes of the Malatran Plateau are descended of both the indigenous species of Abeir-Toril and the ancient spelljamming race which immigrated to this world millennia ago. Relations among the Nubari and other tribes are generally good.

The Nubari tribes are broad groups of villages tied by blood relation, though sometimes several generations removed. Individual villages sometimes war on other villages of their same tribe, but inter-tribal warfare is still far less common than intra-tribal dispute. The marked exception to this rule was the formerly male-dominated Huroola tribe.

Though Nubari tribal nations are primarily made up of nubari, other races may call a nubari tribe home. Katanga in particular enjoy the social life, order, and variety of activities that tribes offer.

Saru, katanga, and tam'hi have their own simple social structures described in their creature descriptions, and they do not form their own tribes. They may be adopted by the larger Nubari, or sometimes a band of saru will settle near a human village and mimic the Nubari's habits.

The korobokuru and shu are considered people by almost all the Nubari tribes. Like the Nubari, these races form tribes. On rare occasions, outcast or orphaned korobokuru or shu will join a Nubari tribe.

Some of the tribe descriptions are more whimsical than others, but players and writers should always feel free to create serious characters for the more humorous tribes, and vice versa. Don't feel constrained by the tone of a particular tribe; turn each one to your tastes, while still trying to capture the spirit of the original description. Variety is the spice of life . . . and of gaming!

## People

The concept of "people" is important to the Nubari. To most of them, all humans and demi-humans, including the saru, are people. The other creatures of the land are animals and thus can be hunted and eaten. Certain tribes have narrower or broader ranges of what constitutes a "person." In some cases, Nubari tribes consider only humans to be persons, or perhaps exclude the ape-like saru. Others include certain sacred animals as persons (the Simbara consider lions to be people - their wise ancestors, in fact).

The most common demi-human tribes considered not to be "people" are the diminutive shu and the ape-like saru (who themselves are interesting in their belief that all animals are people). None of the PC tribes that follow treat the shu or saru as non-people, but many NPC tribes will.

## Enemies of the Peoples

Common non-human enemies of the Nubari and other tribes of non-human people are the bullywugs, lizard men, mold men, sahuagin (an unusual fresh water breed), tabaxi, tasloi, wemics, and yuan-ti. While these creatures are arguably "people" by Nubari standards, they are wicked, alien, warlike, or just difficult to get along with. They raid the Nubari and other peoples with such frequency that the disparate tribes find it easier to get along, since - at least recently - they are too busy fighting off these enemies to fight each other.

As the heroes of the tribes explore their world further, more and more unusual enemies will certainly appear to threaten the Nubari and their neighbors.

Tribe	Primary Race	Skill Bonuses	Tribal Feats
Boo	-	<i>Diplomacy and Bluff are class skills</i>	-
Huroola	Nubari	men: Profession (Fishing), Profession (Boating) women: Profession (Hunting), Wilderness Lore	Discipline, Hardy, Light Sleeper
Jengi	Shu	-	-
Katimaya	Korobokuru	-	-
Koshiva	Nubari	Craft (Boat Making), Craft (Carving), Craft (Jewelry Making), Craft (Pottery), Craft (Weaving), Profession (Fishing), Use Rope	Life Blessed, Traders Background, Tree Topper
Lacerials	Lacerials	-	-
Oscray	Oscray	-	Reading/Writing
Rudra	Nubari only	Craft (Weaving) or bonus feat <i>Weapon Proficiency (Shortbow)</i>	Determined Soul, Hardy, Life Blessed
Saiyama	Nubari	Craft (Armor), Craft (Boat Making), Craft (Bowyer), Craft (Shield), or Craft (Weapon Smithing)	Gifted Learner, Talent, Traders Background
Simbara	Nubari	Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge(Rayanna Savanna), Move Silently, or Profession(Hunter) or +2 bonus to <i>Grapple checks</i>	Blood Of The Ancients, Determined Soul, Foe Hunter
Simbuki	Shu	-	-
Wise Ones	Nubari	Craft (Weaving), any Knowledge skill	Blood Of The Ancients, Discipline, Gifted Learner
V'rgan'a	Katanga	Profession (Fishing), Profession (Boating), Swimming, or one additional language	-
Zantira	Nubari	Brewing, Herbalism, Profession (Boating), Profession (Hunter), or +1 competency bonus to <i>Lasso or Knife attacks</i>	Foe Hunter, Light Sleeper, Talent

## TRIBAL ADVANTAGES

If a hero chooses to be a member of an established tribe, they may gain access to appropriate tribal skill bonuses and feats.

A hero can only be a member of one tribe, and should select that tribe when the character is created. It is permitted to delay the choice until the player is familiar with the world (by 2<sup>nd</sup> level), but once selected it cannot be changed. There may also be in game opportunities to join or change tribes.

### Primary Race

The primary race is the dominant race of the tribe. For most tribes the primary race is nubari.

Heroes of the primary race may start at 1<sup>st</sup> level as members of the tribe and gain access to the tribal feats, and may choose one of the available skill bonuses for their character.

Heroes of other races may start at 1<sup>st</sup> level as members of the tribe and choose one of the available skill bonuses. They do not get access to the tribal feats (except through tribal knowledge, see below).

Any hero may take tribal feats once they are familiar with the tribe. To do this the hero must be 2<sup>nd</sup> level or higher, and have at least two ranks in Knowledge(tribe).

### Skills Bonuses

These skills represent the common sorts of talents that members of that tribe learn and must be picked at first

level. These skills are free bonuses and do not count against your skill points available to your hero based on class.

You only gain one of the tribal skill bonuses if you start as a member of the tribe at first level, as it reflects previous experience.

### Tribal Feats

Only the primary race of a tribe have access to Tribal Feats at first level. These feats are like the Regional Feats in Forgotten Realms. If your hero chooses to be a member of an established tribe, you may select appropriate Tribal Feats. These feats represent the common sorts of talents that members of that tribe learn. These feats are not bonuses; you are still limited by the number of feats available to your character class and race.

You can acquire Tribal Feats from other tribes as you come in contact with them through adventuring. After 1<sup>st</sup> level, each 2 ranks of in Knowledge(tribe name) you have allows you to select feats from that tribe.

## LANGUAGES

All nubari tribes, with the exception of Saiyama, speak Malatran Common and their own tribal dialect as automatic languages. The Saiyama dialect is Malatran Common.

# BOO

The Tribe of the Boo are a cowardly tribe without any pride, and are very poor warriors. They travel the jungle, for no other tribes want them staying on their lands. They all have names beginning with "Boo".

Boos of the tribe are excellent at diplomacy and are routinely called upon by Bengoukee or the Council of Elders to travel with adventuring parties to provide much needed diplomacy and restraint.

## Boo Advantages

**Primary Race:** None.

**Bonus Skill:** Members of the Boo tribe get Diplomacy and Bluff as class skills.

**Tribal Feats:** None.

## History

The Boo people are believed to be a cowardly tribe without any pride. They are known as a collection of misfits and outcasts from across the jungle. While much of this may be true it is not the whole truth. The story of the Boo people begins many generations ago when they were part of the Huroola tribe.

Amidst the ruins of the end of the great Huroola wars rose a new leader - one of the new speakers named BenKelba. The Huroola speakers had declared that spears and all other weapons of war or hunting were taboo for all men. Yet BenKelba found herself at odds with her tribe. The dead ancestors had told BenKelba all Huroola were subject to the taboo against weapons, not just the men. BenKelba told everyone who would listen what the ancestors had told her but soon the other speakers stopped listening to BenKelba. She became an outcast in her own tribe. The ruling was handed down and the women took up the weapons of war. BenKelba was certain that her people would simply repeat the errors of their past.

She lived in fear of her dreams that told of the second downfall of the Huroola people. The second fall would mean the end of the Huroola. While this has not yet come to pass, it is no secret that the Huroola have never returned to the peak of their power when they ruled nearly 1/3 of the jungle.

As the years passed others began to believe in BenKelba's visions. The new Huroola leaders, jealous of BenKelba's surging popularity and fearful of losing theirs, formed a plan to rid themselves of BenKelba. Certain that she could not succeed they allowed BenKelba to take her followers and form their own Huroola village. In this village all would be equal and no one would be allowed to possess a weapon of war. They would live as the ancestors had told BenKelba.

BenKelba founded a village where all were welcome as equals within its domain. For a time the village prospered, but this made the Huroola leaders even more fearful of BenKelba. A plan was formed to discredit this new tribe. Tales were told across the jungle of the prosperity of BenKelba's village. It did not take long for these tales to

find their way to ears willing to come and take the "treasures" of the village. A black leopard katanga tribe raided the village one night as the weaponless Huroola tried in vain to defend themselves. In the end few of BenKelba's people survived. Those who did scattered into the jungle, unwilling to go back to the Huroola. BenKelba was wounded in the attack and escaped into the jungle. There as she drifted in and out of consciousness her ancestors spoke to her again and told her of the Huroola leaders treachery.

After recovering from her injuries BenKelba began to collect her far-flung followers. In an isolated part of the jungle they built a new village, far from the eyes of others. At the same time Timbala, the leader of the leopard katanga that attacked BenKelba's village began tell a tale of his defeat of BenKelba's people. In his story he stood in the middle of the village and yelled "Boo" and the people of the village dropped dead from fright. BenKelba knew that eventually information about her tribe - now known throughout the jungle as the Boo, would get out. Timbala or someone else would come looking for them. She decided in order to keep the village secret that a second village would be necessary. The second village would have nothing anyone would want and would be as nomads moving from place to place as the other residents of the area forced them to. This way, BenKelba reasoned, no one would come looking for Boos. Instead they would shun them.

Now there are two Boo villages. One is a moving trash heap that no one wants in his or her part of the jungle. The other is prosperous and peaceful, hidden away in a remote valley along the jungle's edge. Boos of the hidden village are a lot like the other Nubari tribes. They maintain small fields and trap the surrounding forest for game. They have huts made of rocks held together with a crude mortar. They make many of their tools from wood and stone. Today, years after the death of BenKelba, you could walk into the Boo village (if you could find it) and not find a weapon of war. The taboo still holds. The Boo use only rocks, clubs, traps and snares for hunting and defense.

At the same time the village supports a second Boo tribe. This one travels throughout the jungle making them well known and unwanted. In order to leave the hidden village, Boos must take an oath. They must promise the following:

- If attacked, surrender.
- If you can't surrender, run.
- Never reveal the presence or existence of the hidden village.
- Never attack anything that might become an enemy of the Boo.
- Make no show of power that would make others fear the Boo
- Take an outside name whose first syllable is Boo

Outside Boos may possess a weapon. Its use is limited to ceremonies, or in a last ditch effort, to defend comrades. If you must use a weapon to defend your comrades, make sure no one sees you do it. This prohibition loosely applies

to spell-casting as well. A Boo sorcerer is likely to specialize in spells that mislead or confuse, or that aid in escaping a confrontation. Few Boo sorcerers have many of the 'combat' spells popular with other sorcerers, although it does not carry the same onus as actually using a melee weapon in combat. A Boo that must cast a magic missile or use a blowgun dart to defend his comrades is sure to believe that he has failed in some way. Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent and risks retribution from the ancestor spirits. Frequent use will result in banishment from the hidden village.

Anyone wishing to join the Boo is welcome to join the travelling tribe. This leads to the tribe picking up a lot of jungle misfits. A Boo, after proving their trustworthiness and belief in the Boo ideology, is told of the hidden village. Some Boos live their entire lives not knowing of the hidden village. Boos of the hidden village that wish to explore the jungle are sent to the travelling village for a year of "enlightenment".

The hidden village and thus the Boo tribe is led not just by a chief but by a council of women as well. Eligibility to the council is simple. A woman joins the council upon the birth of her first grandchild. The council selects a male to be the chief and make the day-to-day decisions of the tribe. The chief can be removed by a 2/3 vote of the council.

The outside village is ruled by "The Big Boo, chief of the Boo", again appointed and removed by the council. The current chief of the hidden village is Paedhi. The traveling village is ruled by Damboiki who's outside name is BooDos. BooDos is assisted by BooBlu, Tribal Surrenderer and chief elder. BooBlus' real name is Rubiki and she is a monkey katanga.

As Tribal Surrenderer, it is BooBlus' job to make it clear to any attacker that the Boos are, in fact, surrendering.

# HUROOLA

The Huroola are a xenophobic people, keeping themselves apart from the other Nubari tribes because of the lessons of their own tragic history. They live on the shores of the Dreaming River, north of Sleepy Lake.

The Huroola are also matriarchal, with men being forbidden upon pain of death from using weapons.

## Huroola Advantages

**Primary Race:** Nubari.

**Bonus Skill:** A matriarchal society, all males get +2 to Profession(Fishing) or Profession(Boating), all females get +2 to Profession(Hunting) or Wilderness Lore.

**Tribal Feats:** Discipline, Hardy, Light Sleeper.

## History

Many generations ago, the Huroola were a great, warlike people. Their men were brave and fearless warriors, and their women were wise "speakers for the dead," priests who are said to speak with the words of their ancestors. The tribe flourished despite the many instances of internal strife, and once ruled one third of the entire jungle. Often their men made war on other tribes, but they fought among each other just as often, stopping only when one of the villages in conflict was destroyed or negotiated a peace through the speakers, who were the administrators of healing and reconciliation. Finally, the cycle of revenge escalated beyond the means of any speaker to negotiate a peace or even a victory, and the Huroola very nearly destroyed themselves.

From the ruins of the Huroola tribe rose a new leadership of speakers. Consulting the ancestors and the spirits of the land, the Huroola speakers declared that spears and all other weapons of war or hunting were taboo for all men. From that day forth, only women of the Huroola tribes could make war, doing so only when the speakers commanded. The roles of both women and men changed drastically, as most (but not all) women learned to defend the tribes against predators and invaders. Most men learned to keep the homes, protect the fires, forage and set traps for food - but none could bear a spear, knife, or bow. Those few who disobeyed the taboo were punished to death by the speakers and the women warriors who obeyed them.

In the last few generations, some of the men of the Huroola have learned to speak with ancestors and the spirits of the land, and some of the first male speakers of the Huroola now guide the villages with their female elders.

It is unusual - but not unheard of - to find a Huroola man far from his village bearing weapons of war - but he knows that he may never return to his home, lest he be killed.

Huroola of either gender are rarely encountered away from their villages, which usually consist of 10-30 huts made of bamboo and reeds supported by dried mud. The villages are defended by female warriors, though about

half of the female population is gone during the day, hunting or exploring. The men remain behind, tending to the children and the homes, preparing meals, or crafting simple baskets, pots, and other tools - with the important exception of weapons.

Within a given village, 3-6 women and (rarely) one or two men act as the speakers of the village (the term "speaker" is used for both genders). These speakers keep the stories of the tribe alive in their nightly recitations of the dozens of tales of their ancestors, adding a new one whenever a woman of the village performs a particularly daring act of hunting or combat.

Both male and female members of the tribe dress in scant hide clothing and wear ornaments of brightly stained wooden and clay beads on leather thongs. When defending against invaders or leaving on a war party, Huroola warriors daub their faces with blue-stained mud, their hands with white chalk.

The Huroola women hunt boar, giant snake, and other jungle mammals and reptiles, while the men who hunt set traps for small game and (in those villages near a river) trap fish in nets. For a short time, women would join them and spear-fish, but in their wisdom, the speakers decided that using weapons so close to the men who were fishing with nets would remind them too much of the power they used to wield unwisely, and so spear-fishing is another taboo of the tribe.

Huroola women attack male hunting parties from other tribes on sight; their taboo against men bearing spears extends to anyone, regardless of tribe. In those rare instances in which a Huroola woman travels far from her home, she usually suffers men of other tribes to bear arms, though she will never permit a Huroola man to do so: each Huroola warrior is charged with immediately punishing those Huroola men who break the taboo, and there is but one punishment: death.



## JENGI

The Jengi are typical of shu tribes, living just close enough to the Nubari to be considered neighbors.

### Jengi Advantages

**Primary Race:** Shu.

**Bonus Skill:** None.

**Tribal Feats:** None.

### History

The Jengi do not encourage visitors, but they receive guests pleasantly, if not eagerly. No visitor is allowed to sleep within the circle of leafy huts of a Jengi village, though one may sleep just outside if there is no other place to go. That sleeper, however, will be watched by a group of six or more Jengi guards all night. The shu are very cautious when it comes to strangers.

The Jengi live by hunting, and by foraging to a small extent. Jengi hunting parties usually consist of most of the tribe, and they are a formidable force indeed, organized and deadly. Employing a combination of teamwork and carefully-laid traps, the hunters can bring down even the most dangerous predators of the jungle.

Unlike most of the Nubari and korobokuru tribes, the Jengi shu have no concept of individual challenges. Should a boastful korobokuru lose his temper and challenge a shu warrior in a Jengi village, he will be surprised to find himself suddenly set upon by all the shu in sight. There is no such thing as individual honor among the Jengi; they share it among themselves, just as they share the dangers of survival.

## KATIMAYA

A loose translation of "Katimaya" is "borrowers," and the korobokuru of this tribe do have a great fondness for things belonging to others.

These korobokuru live near but not on the River of Laughing Idols, downstream from the Koshiva, whose excellent pottery is often the target of Katimaya raids.

### Katimaya Advantages

**Primary Race:** Korobokuru.

**Bonus Skill:** None.

**Tribal Feats:** None.

### History

The Katimaya do not practice agriculture, except foraging for those fruits and vegetables which require little effort to collect. Hunting is considered hard but necessary work, and it carries some status. Those Katimaya with a more honest nature make good hunters and defenders.

It is in trading, raiding, and scavenging that the Katimaya prosper (this not a typical trait of all korobokuru).

The Katimaya take great pride in a successful raid. A warrior is not considered a true adult until he has stolen his first weapon. Thus, any group of Katimaya encountered will have a variety of weapons, ranging from rough clubs to decorated mahogany spears.

Katimaya raids are carefully calculated affairs, planned weeks in advance. During the raid itself, the korobokuru creep into a sleeping village, gathering up as many goods as possible. Inevitably, one of the raiders loses his nerve and lets loose a terrific ululating scream, at which point all the raiders run shrieking back into the night. The Katimaya themselves claim that these are not shrieks of fear, but screams meant to wake and terrify their victims.

Some victims decline to exact revenge for these comical raids, though others pursue the thieves with a vengeance. The Koshiva are among the former. The one productive skill of the Katimaya is the secret of brewing a fermented drink they call ru'uka. Perhaps it is because they are generous in trading this drink with the Koshiva that the latter have never exacted a punishment for the many pottery raids.

Evenings in the Katimaya villages are always celebrations. Boasting contests are common, with the winner decided by the consensus of the tribe. Boasters who include physical proof with their tales, such as a claw with a tale of escaping a leopard, tend to win such contests.

The chief of the Katimaya is Yrbom, a canny warrior and thief who has been outboasted only once in his life. Yrbom has been chief for nearly 20 years and has scavenged from almost every tribe known. He is a grand boaster, said to be able to talk his way out of a leopard's jaws.

# KOSHIVA

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The Koshiva, or “boat-people”, derive most of their food from fishing the River Of Laughing Idols. Fishing and boat-making are hallmarks of the Koshiva, but their tree villages are the most spectacular feature of their villages. The Koshiva are not warlike, spending their time developing their pottery, carving and jewelry-making skills.

## Koshiva Advantages

**Primary Race:** Nubari.

**Bonus Skills:** +2 bonus to Craft(Boat-Making), Craft(Carving), Craft(Jewelry Making), Craft(Pottery), Craft(Weaving), Profession(Fishing), or Use Rope.

**Tribal Feats:** Life Blessed, Traders Back-ground, Tree Topper.

## History

Rare hunting parties will bring back a boar or some other jungle beast for special occasions, and older women and men also forage to supplement their diet.

Their village is one day downstream from Saiyama. Woven bridges, cunningly-fitted tree-houses, and open platforms sprawl across their territory, sometimes even crossing over a narrower portion of the river.

The Koshiva are not warlike, though their hunters (both men and women) make good defenders on the rare occasions when they are raided by the korobokuru (very rarely, since the jungle dwarves are terrified of water and rarely approach Koshiva villages), lizard men, or evil caiman katanga. They are an industrious people, especially clever with crafted items. Their pottery, carving, and jewelry-making are among the finest of the Nubari.

Koshiva women wear elaborate head ornaments contrived to raise their hair in tall coifs. The higher the hair, the greater the relative social position of the woman. Woe to she who presumes too high a station, for the other women will catch her and cut her hair short. "She wears her hair too high" is the phrase used to describe haughty or arrogant Koshiva women. Koshiva men, on the other hand, shave their heads almost completely, leaving simple ornamental shapes of hair. Men never let women shave their heads; only their closest male friends are given this privilege. It is considered bad luck to let a woman shave a Koshiva man's head.

Other tribes, including the shu and korobokuru, are especially friendly with the Koshiva. But the river tam'hi, though rarely seen, are well-disposed to most of the Koshiva villages; on the rare occasions that the Koshiva harm or show disrespect to the river, relations between the tam'hi and the Koshiva turn drastically worse. The usual Koshiva reaction to these times is to make amends as soon as possible, usually in the form of repairing damage, seeking advice of the tam'hi, and offering restitution in the form of gifts.

# LACERIALS

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Lacerials are not native to Malatra, but claim to come from some other realm or world. Most Malatran residents don't understand the concept of other worlds, and it is widely known that the Lacerials fled some catastrophe in the Valley Of Spirits (Year Of New Peoples, 1997).

They are now settled as one tribe along the River Of Laughing Idols, 100 miles east of the tribe of Rudra.

## Lacerial Advantages

**Primary Race:** Lacerials.

**Bonus Skill:** None.

**Tribal Feats:** None.

## History

Lacerials are intelligent, bipedal lizards descended from creatures similar to dinosaurs.

The Lacerials are a solitary people. While not hostile to outsiders, they avoid prolonged contact with non-Lacerials. Many native Malatrans are quite willing to avoid them, particularly the Rudrans. The Rudrans were viciously attacked by a small group of misguided Lacerials just before they moved to Malatra. The Rudrans have an insulting nick-name for their unwanted neighbors: Garuda-People.

## OSCRAY

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Oscray are also not native to Malatra and came to the jungle when their sky ship crashed (Year Of New Peoples, 1997).

Their single village lies on the Rayanna Savanna, three days north of the Wise Ones tribe.

### Oscray Advantages

**Primary Race:** Oscray.

**Bonus Skill:** None.

**Tribal Feats:** Reading/Writing.

### History

The Oscray are a race of demi-humans originally descended from Orcs. They are adapting to Malatran life very well and on more than one occasion have remarked that jungle life “is a lot more fun than running from elves all the time.” Malatrans really don’t understand this comment, but welcome their new friends anyway.

Oscray have adapted well to their new homes and neighbors for two reasons. First, they are still uneducated in the ways of the jungle and rely greatly on the Simbara and Wise Ones to help them. Second, though naturally aggressive, the Oscray live a week to ten days travel from all sorts of evil and violent races: brutish lizardfolk, black leopard katanga, hyena katanga, and others. When Oscray get the desire for battle, they have a wide variety of opponents.

## RUDRA

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Rudra also live on the River Of Laughing Idols, one day downstream from the Koshiva, deriving their livelihood from it. Aggressive and suspicious people, rudrans are quick to strike out if others hunt their territory. Visitors to rudra often come bearing gifts to show their respect for these proud and somewhat xenophobic people.

### Rudra Advantages

**Primary Race:** Nubari. Non-nubari, other than saru, may not begin as members of this tribe.

**Bonus Skills:** Proficiency in Short Bow (which is really a feat, of course) or +2 in Craft(Weaving).

**Tribal Feats:** Determined Soul, Hardy, Life Blessed.

**Special Quality:** Rudrans will almost never offer honorary tribal memberships to non-rudrans.

### History

Nestled against a crook in the River of Laughing Idols is the proud tribe of Rudra, the river people. Fishers and hunters, they derive their livelihood from the river and zealously protect their territory. Their homes are built on stilts to accommodate the swelling river banks, and there are two towers in which warriors sit to watch for trespassers and other threats.

They are an aggressive and suspicious people, quick to strike out if others hunt in their territory. For this reason, many other tribes give them a wide berth. And when others opt to visit the Rudra, they bring numerous gifts, which make them more welcome. The only people the Rudra seem openly to accept are the saru, who are mobile and seem to pose little threat to their way of life.

All Rudra youths are taught to use the spear and bow. Even the few spellcasters in the village are proficient with those weapons.

Rudra villagers are among the tribes to weave rough linen and coarser fabrics. All of the adults and most of the children wear at least some fabric clothing. The more prestigious villagers wear long, white togas, while most others dye their clothing red or brown.

The village is ruled by a chief and his two hand-picked assistants. The chief is selected through a rigorous contest, in which the most able and clever warrior rises to power. The contest often proves fatal to lesser challengers. The chief reigns for three years, when another contest is called. The current chief, M'tlak has held his position of authority for 12 years and shows no sign of weakening. He is a bull of a man, with great shoulders and impressive muscles.



# SAIYAMA

The largest tribe in the living jungle a mere days walk from Fire Mountain, Malatra's only known active volcano. This tribe is large, numbering 600 men, women, and children, concentrated mostly all in one village on the bank of the River Of Laughing Idols.

Its central location and access to the river make it the home of the largest bartering market in Malatra. Nearly anything made anywhere in Malatra sooner or later can be found and traded for here. The language of this tribe is also the language of trade, and is known as Malatran Common.

## Saiyama Advantages

**Primary race:** Nubari.

**Bonus Skills:** +2 competency bonus to Craft (Armor), Craft (Boat Making), Craft (Bowyer), Craft (Shield), or Craft (Weapon Smithing).

**Tribal Feats:** Gifted Learner, Talent, Traders Background.

## History

As well as nubari, the tribe also counts a number of other humanoid races among its tribe, mainly katanga, korobokuru and a few shu. Members of other races (saru and tam'hi) often visit, but are not considered a part of the tribe. In this respect, the tribe is the most unusual of all the nubari tribes; each of the other tribes is far more homogenous.

Its central location and access to the river make it the home of the largest bartering market in Malatra. Nearly anything made anywhere in Malatra sooner or later can be found and traded for here. The language of this tribe is also the language of trade, and is known as Malatran Common.

The original name of the tribe was Saiyama (meaning "near mountain"), but the name was changed after Big Chief Bagoomba became the leader following the death of the last chief. Chief Toloka and his family were killed by evil caiman katanga 30 years ago, and a new chief had to be chosen from among the warriors of the tribe.

Bengoukee, exalted witch doctor of Chief Toloka, proclaimed that the hunter who killed the largest predator before the next full moon would be the new chief. During the competition, a young, inexperienced warrior named Bagoomba was returning from a hunting expedition when he came across two monstrous creatures battling near the river. In the end, both creatures perished, one of them falling into the river.

Seeing an opportunity to become chief, Bagoomba returned to the village and told Bengoukee the animal he killed was too large to carry, and that he and the elders needed to see the creature where he slew it. By the time Bengoukee and the elders arrived, the slain beast had been set upon by scavengers so no one could tell whether Bagoomba had slain the creature himself. Finally, Bengoukee declared Bagoomba chief - though many protested. In fact, Bengoukee knew Bagoomba to be a liar, but seized the opportunity to control the largest tribe of the



jungle through an oafish buffoon. Bagoomba's first official action was to rename the tribe, much to the chagrin of Bengoukee.

The name was then changed to Tribe Of Former Big Chief Bagoomba when Big Chief Bagoomba was killed at the Battle Of Blood Bridge during "The Year Of Tigers Return" (2000). Since then, the elders of the tribe have been squabbling with each other over who should replace him.

Recently a new chief has been appointed, Reesta Nifari, husband of Mirmirana the daughter of Bagoomba. The tribe now goes, once again, by its original name.

Unlike smaller tribes, the Saiyama has several crafts to trade, including weapons, pottery, jewelry, and food. This latter export has helped establish the tribe's power in the region, since it is so important to smaller tribes during seasons of drought or excessive rain. Since the Saiyama is a melting pot of Living Jungle races, specific dress, strict rituals, and long-time traditions vary between elders and families throughout the tribe.

This tribe boasts the largest contingent of warriors (200 250) and has not been attacked in the lifetime of the oldest tribeswoman. The chosen weapon of this tribe is the spear.

# SIMBARA

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The Simbara, or People of the Lion, as their name suggests, revere the great cats of the plains. The Simbara live on the Rayanna Savanna. They believe firmly that the greatest of their warriors and shamans are reborn as lions. It is also said that the greatest of Nubari warriors can wrestle a lion into submission, stealing away some of its strength and wisdom in the victory. In actual practice, though some of the Simbara boast of wrestling a lion, none really have done so. The few who have tried in recent memory died in the attempt. Clever warriors will sometimes attempt to shame their rivals into "dancing with the lion," hoping the great cat will dispose of their nemeses.

One curious legend among the Simbara is that other tribes speak of an animal called tiger, the antithesis of the noble lion. Should lion and tiger ever meet, a terrible apocalypse will occur. Most Simbara simply refuse to believe in this thing called tiger, but others fear it terribly. No Simbara has yet seen a tiger and acknowledged it for what it is, saying, "That? It is only a striped leopard."

Simbara culture is based largely on status and achievement, so pride often gives way to arrogance among the more adept warriors. Threats and boasting are not uncommon, though the Simbara have devised contests of strength, dexterity, and endurance to keep their young warriors from killing each other while competing for attention and praise. This same pride often leads the Simbara on raids against their neighbors, the object of which is to prove their prowess by stealing cattle or weapons without bloodshed - though almost inevitably a fight ensues when the raiders are discovered. The Simbara win far more often than they lose, though they are feared and distrusted by the tribes who have suffered most from their raids.

Aside from war and raiding, the Simbara are a hunting-based tribe, although they also practice limited agriculture, raising potatoes and other tubers, as well as some grains which they use for a sort of porridge. When hunting, they most often prey on deer-like game (antelope, gazelles, sable, and other herd animals), but they also relish boar, water buffalo, and tapirs. Most Simbara tribes also raise cattle and pigs. However, to call a warrior a "pig herder" is a dire insult.

Constructing straw huts in small clusters, the Simbara rarely relocate, though flash fires and other natural disasters displace villages occasionally. They seek out homes near water holes, or not far from the jungle's edge. Water is never so scarce that they suffer, but dry periods make water very precious.

The Simbara are a tall, thin people. They wear minimal clothing during the day, favoring coarsely woven robes and simple cloaks on cool evenings. They value bone and fiber ornaments and armor. Basket weaving and bone carving are the predominant crafts, though the quality cannot rival that of other tribes' products.

Their warriors carry tall, oval shields and prefer the spear. When they go to war with villages of their own tribe or (more often) with other tribes - usually over water or hunting rights - the Simbara are fierce and brave. Using fire in war, however, is considered evil and dishonorable, though some of the villages will stoop to burning the huts of their enemies. Any village accused of using fire in such a manner is almost always attacked immediately and relentlessly, until destroyed by the other local Simbara tribes. Individuals accused of such a crime are dealt with in much crueller fashion; there is no greater taboo among the Simbara than using fire in combat.

## Simbara Advantages

**Primary Race:** Nubari.

**Bonus Skills:** +2 to Grapple checks, Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge(Rayanna Savanna), Move Silently, or Profession(Hunter).

**Tribal Feats:** Blood Of The Ancients, Determined Soul, Foe Hunter.

## SIMBUKI

Although Shu tribes are commonly found in the fringes of the jungle, one exception is the Simbuki shu which, oddly enough, live on Rayanna Savanna.

### Simbuki Advantages

**Primary Race:** Shu.

**Bonus Skills:** None

**Tribal Feats:** None.

### History

A race similar to halflings, shu are extremely secretive and shy. They make up their total lack of body hair with all-over tattoos, paintings, and piercings.

The Shu are impartial to all other races, and they will not attack others unless they are assailed first. The Shu, as a whole, tend to isolate themselves from the other tribes of Malatra. Many younger Shu see the need for their race to trade and interact with others of the jungle, but this view is not widely accepted by Shu elders. Shu are zealous foes of black leopard Katanga, who often prey on lone Shu travelers.

## WISE ONES

Priding themselves on their intellect and their ability to treat all beings equally, the Wise Ones are residents of the Rayanna Savanna and uneasy neighbors of the Simbara.

The Wise Ones revere knowledge and honor the Tontor (elephant) as a being of great intelligence. Apparently the elephants agree, for there are always a number of elephants near all Wise Ones villages. Wise Ones are among the most cunning of weavers in all of Malatra.

### Wise Ones Advantages

**Primary Race:** Nubari.

**Bonus Skills:** +2 Craft(Weaving) or any Knowledge skill.

**Special Bonus:** All Wise Ones start at first level with woven thatch armor (Treat as leather armor with maximum DEX bonus of +8. Weight is 10 lbs).

**Tribal Feats:** Blood Of The Ancients, Discipline, Gifted Learner.

### History

They revere shamans and witch doctors, and it is the oldest of these people who make up the tribe's council. The council serve as advisors to the chief and act as jurors when anyone is charged with committing a crime against the village. The current chief is Arkari, the highest-level shaman in the village. She is 70 years old, and for the past year she has been scrutinizing the council; she will pick her successor when she feels it is time to step down.

The Wise Ones are peaceful, though the council makes sure one-half of the village's youths are trained in the arts of combat. They realize other tribes in the area are not so peaceful, being especially wary of the Simbara. The most agile and healthy of the youngsters are selected for the training. The others are encouraged to study arts of the mind, and to pursue shaman or witch doctor training. Because of this, the tribe members look like thin, scholarly people and muscular, active ones. There is little in between.

The Wise Ones are gatherers and fishers, and their trade is woven baskets. It takes years to perfect the skill of basket-weaving, and the baskets the Wise Ones make range from small containers the size of a man's fist to large ones as big as a hut. The latter are used for feasts to honor the elephant. It is the Wise Ones' skill at weaving that make their huts remarkably water-proof. So tight is the thatch woven, that nary a drop finds its way inside, even during the hardest showers of the rainy season. The most skillful weavers often continue to embellish their homes, making some into true works of art. Some few warriors wear cunningly woven thatch armor, and most tribe members have at least one piece of clothing made of straw or thatch, usually a skirt or sun cape.

## V'RGAN'A

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The Wise Ones' totem animal is the Tontor (elephant), which they consider the wisest of the jungle animals. The shamans speak daily with the great beasts to learn what is transpiring in the area. Injured elephants somehow find their way to the village, where shamans heal their wounds. Sometimes the thankful beasts stay on for years. In fact, there will always be 2d4 elephants living on the edge of the village. A shaman is considered blessed by the gods if an elephant selects him or her for a companion. Such a shaman soon finds a place on the council.

The V'rgan'a tribe is made up of many different races, however katanga do seem to be the majority.

Their village is on an island in a lake, 2 days journey from Dokuba Swamp, located between the Huroola lands and the hunting grounds of the Yuan-Ti.

### V'rgan'a Advantages

**Primary Race:** Katanga.

**Bonus Skills:** +2 Profession (Fishing), or +2 Boating, or +2 Swimming, or can speak one additional language (effective +1 in Speak Language).

**Tribal Feats:** None.

### History

The tribal founders worship the Elemental Nobles and have constructed a hut to their honor. The hut contains the following: A fire pit with an ever-burning fire, an opening in the ceiling to let the air in, a patch of earth swept of all debris except ground, and a small flowing stream diverted from the shore of the lake and through the hut. One person is always on duty at the hut to keep the flame lit, water clean, earth swept, and the opening clear. It is considered an honor to stand watch over the Elementals' Hut, and many of the founders have done so countless times.



# ZANTIRA

Members of the Zantira tribe live on Sleepy Lake, far downstream from the Huroola. The Zantira, or "Raft Dwellers", fashion their floating homes from bamboo, grasses, reeds and other available material. The Zantira believe that so long as they live upon the water they will be protected from the water spirits and worship Jung'r'na, which is their name for the water elemental noble Nigella.

## Zantira Advantages

**Bonus Skills:** Either +1 competency bonus to lasso or knife, or +2 to Brewing, Herbalism, Profession(Boating) or Profession(Hunter).

**Tribal Feats:** Foe Hunter, Light Sleeper, Talent.

**Special Quality:** Zantira do not get the standard half-spear proficiency like other nubari. Instead, the men get javelin and the women get short bow.

## History

Malatra's better known Nubari tribes have settled near Fire Mountain, at the edge of the Rayana Savanna and especially along the River of Laughing Idols. Much of the land near the mysterious borders of Malatra is considered dangerous, taboo, or both. One area of such trepidation is the land engulfed by the mists of Sleepy Lake and Dreaming River. The area shrouded by the mists are taboo to all Nubari and most other inhabitants of Malatra. Even the Zantira, who live upon the waters of Sleepy Lake, fear the mists.

Members of the Zantira tribe live on Sleepy Lake far down river from the xenophobic Huroola tribe. The Zantira, or "raft dwellers", fashion their floating homes from bamboo, reeds, grass, fish bones, sticks and other readily available materials. There are approximately 250 Zantira, divided into 12 separate family-group villages. These villages are tied approximately 100-200 feet off the shores of Sleepy Lake and are thatched together by intricate floating bridges. Zantirans travel to and from shore on small rafts made from the same material as their homes.

The Zantira are small people, rarely exceeding 5'6" in height or 150 pounds in weight. Since they make their homes upon the water, families tend to be small in number. Zantirans will rarely have more than two children. It is considered a great insult to be called "the third one", because the phrase implies the child was unwanted and most likely a mistake. In the event a son is not born, the second daughter often is sent to live with other relatives or with a family whose children are grown. This is especially the case with more prestigious families.

The Zantira have very dark skin, for there is no shade from the blazing Malatran sun upon the lake. Due to the extreme heat and lack of shade, Zantira villagers wear scant, woven clothing. The men of the tribe wear necklaces made of crocodile teeth, representing successful hunting expeditions. Zantira women often weave tiny fish bones in their hair as a form of decoration. Both males and

females use a green dye extracted from a local plant to color their skin during tribal water ceremonies.

Water ceremonies are an intricate part of the Zantiran lifestyle. Before each sunset the families will gather on the center raft and give thanks to the water spirits for providing food and protection. The Zantira believe that as long as they live on the water, they will be protected by these water spirits. The Zantira maintain that each night the water spirits guard the rafts and ward off both the evil black leopard katanga, who hunt the shores and shallows of Sleepy Lake, and the swimming garuda who occasionally approach the water villages. In ancient times, the Zantira lived on the land near Sleepy Lake, but the villages were constantly ravaged by the merciless black leopard katanga. As Zantira witch doctors have recounted for generations, on the night of the most savage attack of the black leopards, a great watery form rose from Sleepy Lake and engulfed the evil katanga. The water spirit spoke to the Zantira and offered them protection from their enemies. The water spirit, known as Jung'r'na, told the people to fashion floating homes, and they would be safe upon the water. To this day, Zantira can only rest peacefully upon the water.

The Zantira believe that the water spirits protect their floating homes from drifting into the dangerous mists. Though they live near the perpetual mists of Sleepy Lake and Dreaming River, no Zantira has ever ventured into the unknown fog and returned to tell about it. In addition, even though Sleepy Lake has a large crocodile population, the Zantira are not menaced by the creatures. The crocodiles will not come onto the rafts. Most Zantiran villagers believe the water spirits keep the crocodiles at bay. Some of the more "progressive" Zantirans believe the friendly caiman katanga that live in Sleepy Lake keep the crocodiles from disturbing the villages. Of course, this belief is never pronounced publicly for fear of upsetting the water spirits. Others compromise and believe that the water spirits have instructed the caiman katanga to control the crocodiles.

Despite the protection offered by the water spirits, the Zantira still train their strongest for battle. In the event of war, the Zantira will travel to shore to prevent the enemy from invading their homes. Because they choose to fight on soil, their training rituals take place on solid ground, so the warriors can become accustomed to their "land-legs". Their weapon of choice is the javelin. Zantirans prefer the range advantages of the javelin, in the event they must attack from their rafts. Additionally, Zantiran women often train with the bow in the event a raiding party tries to cross the water to their homes. Male Zantiran adventurers gain the javelin proficiency at no cost, and female Zantiran adventurers gain the short bow proficiency at no cost.

The Zantira are hunter-gatherers. The women and children of the tribe forage for the numerous plants that grow either on the edge of the lake or under the water, while the men hunt crocodiles, turtles, and frogs. The root of one of the plants they gather, the Shameo Water Lily, is ground to extract the juice, which is then fermented to provide Shameo, a colorless, bitter, alcoholic beverage. Zantiran men hunt the plentiful crocodiles using lassos and

javelins. They are careful not to confuse the crocodiles they hunt with the small population of caiman katange the inhabit Sleepy Lake. The most skillful hunters take pride in their use of knives, rather than javelins, to kill the crocodiles. The best crocodile skins are made into armor (hide armor, AC 6, weight 30) and along with Shameo, comprise the tribe's main trade items.

Zantiran spearfishers prowl Sleepy Lake for the dangerous S'repic fish. These flesh-eating fish are sought for their tasty meat and their large, shiny, silver scales, which the Zantira use to ornament their bodies and clothing. S'repic are long, slender fish, often reaching lengths of four feet. They sometimes dwell under the Zantira rafts, hoping to catch morsels of fallen food or, as legend has it, unfortunate children. Woe to the bad Zantiran child who must endure stories of the monster under the raft.

Zantira are so accustomed to life upon the lake, they are unable to sleep unless water is beneath them. In rare instances, some Zantira will wake during their fifteenth year of life to discover that they can no longer find rest upon the water. These Zantira, called Goval or "travelers," are destined to walk the land of Malatra for no less than ten years in search of rest. Despite their reluctance to leave the comfort and safety of the village, the Zantira Goval learn many useful skills while traveling, often becoming witch doctors, wizards, or warriors of great power. If they survive, some time after their twenty-fifth year a time of sleeplessness will again occur, and the Goval must return to the lake to find rest. Upon returning, they are referred to as Goval'Ma, or "true travelers" and are hailed as leaders.

The current chief is Manyuk V'Domo, a Goval'Ma witch doctor of great power and vision. V'Domo returned from his travels sixteen years ago, at the age forty. During his travels he learned much about the other tribes of Malatra and forged a friendship with The Wise Ones of the savanna. V'Domo brought the peaceful ways of The Wise Ones back to the Zantira raft villages. Through his guidance, the Zantira have become a unified tribe. V'Domo has decreed that during the vernal equinox, all Zantira must come together in the middle of Sleepy Lake to trade, perform sacred water rituals, arrange marriages, and settle any disputes between families. Most inter-tribal conflict has ceased as a result of this yearly gathering.

Because the Zantira live such a great distance from the other tribes, many Nubari do not understand their love of and reliance upon the waters of Sleepy Lake. This does not prevent the Zantira from trading their wares or adventuring to other villages. The Zantira hold no ill will toward any of the other Nubari tribes, and they will freely associate with them.

## EDITORS NOTES

- Saiyama, Hoorola, Koshiva, Rudra, Simbara, Wise Ones, Zantira tribes from Jungle Book v1.0.
- Additional information about the tribes taken from the Living Jungel web site [<http://www.livingjungle.org/>].
- Katamaiya and Jengi tribes from the Living Jungle web site.
- Tribe of the Boo from Jungle Tales, May 2001.
- Simbuki, mentioned in the Jungle Book entry for Shu, and in Jungle Tales, November 2001. (Another tribe, Bentfang, is also mentioned).
- V'rgan'a tribe from Jungle Tales, October 2002.
- Oscray and Lacerials tribal information from racial entries in the Jungle Book.

- Stephen Gryphon  
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