

Snake Time

A One-Round D&D Living Jungle Adventure for Six Heroes of all levels (including High Level Retired)

by Tom Prusa

The most powerful allies in the fight against the Tamara are the Yuan-ti. But no one has heard from them in several moons. You are entrusted with a vital diplomatic mission, to reinforce the alliance between the Yuan-ti and the good tribes of Malatra. An easy mission, except that the fate of the entire jungle rests upon your success. An adventure for heroes of all levels, including High Level Retired.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player-voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly

recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

The Living Jungle Campaign

Players bring their own characters to Living Jungle events, and are responsible for keeping records of the characters experience, wealth and possessions. Look over the characters that are brought to your table, both to familiarize yourself with them and to check for unusual magic items or discrepancies. Magic in the Living Jungle is very rare, with permanent magic items being very, very rare. Most Living Jungle possessions will be ornamental, symbolic, or items carried for barter. If a player has an unusual item or items, question them where they got it. If you are not satisfied with their answer, you may disallow the item for the round.

During the course of the adventure, the PC's will earn experience points based upon completion of the story. If time does not permit the completion of this module, award 50-75% of the story award, depending on how far the heroes got in the adventure.

DM's please note: The maximum experience points available for this tournament is 1500. This is attainable only if the PC's do everything correctly and make it through the entire scenario.

This module is designed for characters of any level. Low tier refers to parties with an average character level of 1-5. High tier refers to parties of 6-12th level.

Fame

As stated in the Jungle Tales 2000 Compilation, fame and renown are a function of a heroes level times 10, expressed in percentiles. For example, a 3rd level hero has a base 30% chance of being recognized. A 5th level hero has a 50%. There are two exceptions to this rule, however. A first level hero has no chance of being recognized outside their own tribe, an 8th level hero has a base 100% chance of being recognized in all but the most isolated areas of Malatra. The DM is free to modify these numbers as he/she sees fit.

Contact The Campaign Directors

If you or your players have any further questions or concerns, you may contact the campaign

directors at jungle_tales@hotmail.com or join the list at jungle_tales@yahoo.com.

High Level Retired Heroes:

This is one of the two adventures per year that a high-level retired hero may play. For this adventure, the HLR hero is on his own, he may not take his cohort or his followers. HLR heroes receive triple experience points for this adventure.

Adventure Summary and Background

The adventure begins in the village of the Saiyama. Big Chief Reesta has a mission for them. No word has come from the snake-men in several months, and he is worried about the truce. Even more disturbing, there have been rumors of attacks on the Snake Mother, the leader of the Yuan-ti. He wants the heroes to seek out the Snake Mother and re-affirm the truce. With Bengoukee missing and the Spirit of Lion apparently dead, the aid of the Yuan-ti against the tamara is vital.

Note: Since Reesta is a HLR hero, he may actually be on the adventure. In that case, take him aside and brief him on the situation. He can then handle the introduction himself.

The adventure begins with the heroes receiving instructions from Reesta. It sounds like a simple mission, they are to travel to snake country, present a few gifts to the Snake Mother, offer the respect of Reesta, and get her to renew the truce between the yuan-ti and the good tribes of Malatra.

The trek down-river is mostly uneventful. They can spend one night at the village of the Rudra, who have a few things to say about the Yuan-ti. Several fisherfolk have been carried off, and the signs point to yuan-ti (or large snakes of some sort).

Traveling across country, the heroes encounter a kretch. The kretch attempts to flee from them, using his mimicry ability to draw them into a confrontation with a silver back gorilla pack. He then flees to a taboo area. There, the heroes meet a small guardian spirit. They can avoid it or break the taboo and enter. The area is a mostly decrepit ruin of the ancients, with little to find or recover. They do spot a clue about the missing Rudrans, however. If they enter, they are able to find their bodies, slain by unknown forces.

Reaching snake-man country, the heroes are met by a hostile group of yuan-ti. They must show

restraint, or the truce could be broken right then and there.

Assuming they do not break the truce, they are led to the home of the Snake Mother. She is gravely wounded, as a result of an attack by Rudran and Saiyaman forces. At least that is what the evidence shows. It is up to the heroes to convince her otherwise.

Some good diplomacy, and the heroes are charged with tracking down the attackers. This leads them to Kural, a renegade korobokuru shaman, and his spider katanga allies. The katanga have been polymorphed into various PC races. This makes it very difficult for the heroes to prove their innocence. After a pitched battle, they should be able to bring back proof that the spider katanga are involved. They also may encounter a tamara. With some once in a lifetime circumstances, they may be able to drop a mountain on him, slaying him. This proof of the tamara and spider katanga involvement satisfies the Snake Mother. For now, the truce holds.

PLAYERS INTRODUCTION

Another cycle of seasons has passed, and the tamara have been very quiet. But the word is still not good, as Bengoukee has been spotted, but not heard from. At least Mirmirani, wife of Big Chief Reesta, claims she has seen him. Others are not so sure.

The annual Council of Chiefs has just concluded, and while all had a good time, there are some disturbing rumors. There is talk that the yuan-ti may be considering breaking the truce. If so, the good tribes of Malatra would indeed be hard pressed to face the remaining tamara. It is for this reason that Reesta has asked you to stay behind when the guests of the Saiyama left.

It is the morning after the council has concluded, and you are gathered outside Reesta's hut. Mirmirani comes out of the hut, sees you, and turns back to the hut. "Reesta, the heroes you asked for are here already. Don't these people ever sleep?" Reesta emerges, gives his wife a hug, and tells her; "Not when de fate of de jungle be at stake, they don't. Isn't that right, mons?" He looks to you for confirmation.

"The fate of the jungle, again?" says Mirmirani. 'And I suppose you're going to tell me I can't go along!' "Not dis time, me little butterfly. Dis time you gots to stay here and watch de village. Dese heroes can handle dis

mission by themselves. Dey gots to go see the snake people” Mirmirani gives a shudder and says ‘Snake people? Better them than me. Yuan-ti give me the creeps.” She enters her hut, and you can hear her stomping about inside. Meanwhile, Reesta sits down next to you and smiles in that winning way he has.

“Well, I gots to thank you for staying for dis mission. We gots some trouble with the snake people. De truce, it may not hold. We can’t afford to get into a war wit’ de snake people while we gots another war wit’ de tamara to worry about. So I be askin’ you to take a gift or two to the Snake Mother, and to make sure that de truce, it still be good. I been hearin’ rumors dat de snake mother, she been attacked by a saru, a shu, and a korobokuru. I don’t know if dis be true, but we need to make sure she knows that dis did not come from us. Will you go and make sure dat de truce, she holds?

Of course, Reesta may be along on this adventure. If so, get together with him and let him do at least part of the introduction.

If the party agrees, Reesta provides them with a pair of canoes, traveling supplies (food, waterskins, spare arrows and darts, etc.), and two gifts for the Snake Mother. One is a jade statue of a cobra, the other is a divine spell fetish for a *true seeing* spell. If no one in the party has been to snake country before, they also get directions to her lands.

“One last ting I gots to tell you;” says Reesta. This be a peaceful mission. If you be attacked by some snake men, be sure you don’t kill none of them. If you have to, you be runnin’ away, you don’t be wipin’ them out. That would break de truce for sure, and we would be in big trouble. I be askin’ for your word on dis, I know de snake men not be easy to get along wit’ but for now, we be needin’ them. What do you say?”

If they ask, he won’t deny them the right to defend themselves, but he stresses that it had better be a matter of life and death. If the truce is broken, many innocents will die. In fact, if the war against the tamara is lost, the whole jungle may die.

Encounter One: Rudra Village

Travel down the River of Laughing Idols is swift and uneventful. As you near the end of the 2nd day of travel, you approach a village of the Rudrans. While they are not usually friendly to non-nubari, they might have news of the snake-men, since they are much closer to snake country.

Check to see if any heroes have favorable relations to the Rudrans. Some possibilities:

1. A member of the Rudran tribe.
2. Someone who has either honorary membership, or an item that guarantees welcome in the Rudran village (from the module ‘Sound of Silence’, for example.)

People who are not welcome in the Rudran village include:

1. Lacerials – known as garuda people here.
2. Plantmen – they’re just too strange for the Rudrans
3. A party that has no ‘normal’ races. By Rudran standards, normal races include nubari, tam’hi, shu, and korobokuru.

The Rudrans aren’t actively hostile, but the reception should depend on the party make up, and the list above. Favorable reactions outweigh unfavorable. Thus if even one hero is welcome (a tribe member or bearer of a medallion that ensure welcome), use the favorable reaction text.

If reactions are favorable.

As you beach your canoes, a small group of Rudran warriors awaits you. “welcome to our village, (insert name of hero who is welcome). It is many a moon since we have seen you. What brings you to our village with such a strange company?” You recognize the speaker, it is Hotib, the leader of the hunters of this village.

Wait for a response. If they tell him about there mission, he has more to say.

“The snake people. You should speak with our elders. We have concerns about the snake people. I will say no more now, but I do invite you to stay the night and join us in for meat. Later, you will meet with N’kila, the chief. Come, I will lead you to a hut where we put honored guests. (name(s) of welcome heroes),

I ask that you vouch for these others, they are not known here.

If the party merely states that they are passing through, he wants to know what direction they are headed. If they mention snake country, see above. Otherwise, he just invites them to stay the night, and to have supper with them.

If reactions are unfavorable:

As you beach your canoes, a dozen warriors await you with spears and bows pointing at you. "What brings you to our village? We do not like strangers here."

If the party tells of their mission, emotions cool. If the party is hostile, they may even be asked to leave. Judge the reactions based on party actions and responses. Respect and civility will be met with the same, hostility will be met with more hostility. Assuming they don't get kicked out of the village, continue:

"I am Hotib, leader of the hunters of this village. If you seek the snake people, I think you should speak with our chief. I will take you to a hut you may use for the night. Meat will be provided, please do not wander around the village. Our chief will come to you when he thinks it good."

If the party is hostile enough to get kicked out, they lose the clues they will get from the chief. Continue with the next encounter.

The heroes are led either to a hut near the chiefs hut (favorable reaction), or to one near the edge of the village (unfavorable).

If they wish to mingle, only those with a favorable reaction are treated with even common courtesy. Most non-Nubari are treated with suspicion. Mothers pull their children into huts when they approach; warriors glare at them, that sort of thing. Not hostile, just suspicious. Favorable reaction people get better treatment, as do those accompanying them. Again, only those who are tribesmen or who have a welcome by the tribe are allowed near their children.

The heroes are fed a supper, consisting of fruit, roast tubers, fish, and meat. If they have an unfavorable reaction, they get sparse portions, just enough to call it a supper. If they have a favorable reaction, they get bigger servings, but not a feast by any means. Later on, the chief approaches.

Chief N'kila approaches you as you finish supper. He wastes no time with pleasantries. "I hear that you go to see the snake men. We have had troubles with the snake men. Two fisherfolk, Earan and Troki, went missing three days ago. We sent out trackers, and they found their fishing gear near the river. The tracks indicate snake men took them. Or maybe snakes. But the tracks led towards snakeman country. We did not follow, the Rudrans will not be the ones to break the truce. But if you can find out what happened to our people, we would be grateful. If the snake men have killed them, they will pay. No one kills a Rudran and gets away with it. I said we would not break the truce, we are people who keep our word. But if they have slaughtered Rudrans, the truce is no more. If you can, will you find our people?"

The heroes may try to convince him that the truce must hold, but he is adamant. If the snake men have broken the truce, it is no more. If those who took his people were acting against the wishes of the Snake Mother, he expects reparations and apologies. If it was something else entirely, he would like to know that too.

The heroes can agree or not, as they wish. If they do not agree, he cuts the conversation short, asking them to be gone in the morning. If they agree, he thanks them, and asks them to visit on their way back, to share what they have learned. He also gives them descriptions of the two missing fisherfolk. Earan is a tall nubari with a scar from a caiman bite on his left arm, Troki is a shu with a tattoo of a waterfall on his belly.

When they have finished talking to the chief, he leaves. They can spend an uneventful night, and continue in the morning.

Tracking the missing Rudrans:

Rain yesterday washed out any tracks that remain. They cannot track the missing Rudrans.

Encounter Two: Kretch

Having left the river, you are headed east towards snake country. The jungle is thick here, and going is slow. Of course the hunting is good, so food is not a problem. According to your directions, it should be at most two more days travel before you reach the swampy area where the snake men rule.

But wait, something is wrong. Ahead of you, the jungle is quiet. Very quiet.

Allow heroes to make Listen rolls (DC 15). Those who succeed can tell that someone is attempting to move quietly away from them, but is not very good at it. Those who can beat DC 20, can tell that the creature is large, at least as large as a saru or oscray.

If they proceed in the direction of the sounds, they come upon something they probably don't expect. They cannot sneak up on it, this would require moving slower than the creature is. They will lose it. If they allow it to move away, they will run into it later in the day.

As you approach the stealthy creature, you are surprised by something that has not been seen in almost a year. It is a kretch, a green four-armed servant of the tamara. Even more surprising, he takes one look at you and charges, in the other direction!

The heroes may charge after, they may track carefully, or they may ignore it. Given the past history with the kretch, it is unlikely they'll ignore it, but that is up to them. The kretch is outnumbered, outmatched, and sees no reason to die uselessly. He'll attempt to hide in the taboo area. Kretch have very little fear of taboo spirits, and are smart enough to know that many heroes are reluctant to break a taboo.

Charge after or Tracking:

The kretch uses his abilities to keep ahead of them for as long as he can. He can move through the trees almost as fast as he can on the ground. Aarakocra and other flying heroes will not catch him any faster, the jungle cover here precludes flying ahead. Well, they can fly ahead, but he doesn't exactly travel in a straight line. So they'll be no closer than anyone chasing him on the ground.

Tracking is DC 10 or Wisdom – DC 15. Even Listen rolls DC 10 can get a good idea of which way he's going. Shortly, they'll encounter the taboo spirit, and eventually the kretch.

Ignore it:

Point out that the kretch is heading in approximately the direction they were heading. If they want to be sure of avoiding it, they'll have to make quite a wide swing through the jungle. If they just keep going, they encounter the taboo spirit. If they swing around, the kretch follows them. They should be able to spot or hear him, in which case he flees to the taboo area again. (they don't

absolutely have to go to the taboo area, but make them work to avoid it.)

The Challenge:

The kretch has been in the area for a while, and has good knowledge of the area. Specifically, he knows there is a small pack of silver-back gorillas about ½ mile to the north-east. He'll flee that way for a few rounds, and then using his mimicry power, utter a challenge to the bull gorilla of the pack. The gorilla responds, and his pack moves towards the heroes.

As you move after the kretch (or move to avoid the kretch), a single piercing cry echoes through the jungle. It is followed quickly by another, not so deep, but similar.

Pause for Wilderness Lore rolls. DC 15 (10 if a ranger, no roll at all for a saru) to recognize it as the challenge for leadership of a pack of silver-back gorillas.

Moving quickly into sight are a pack of a dozen silver-back gorillas. The largest male utters the challenge roar again. He is posturing, pounding on his chest, throwing dirt and twigs at you, and in general, getting ready to fight the bull male of your party for dominance.

The bull male of the party is seen as:

1. Any saru. If more than one, the largest.
2. The largest male in the party.

These qualifications do not include aarakocra, plantmen, lacerials, lizardmen, or any katanga in animal form. They are not seen as a challenge for leadership. They may be seen as a threat, particularly lizardmen or tiger katanga, but they are not seen as a threat to leadership.

The challenged hero has three choices.

1. Fight – The bull fights until taking 1/3 damage, then retreats.
1. Run – If the party immediately flees, the bull issues a few more roars. He sounds pretty satisfied with himself, but does not pursue.
2. Posture and back down. A wilderness lore roll of 15 (10 for rangers, automatic for saru) lets them realize how to back down gracefully. They must respond with a bit of roaring and posturing, then gradually move back and grovel a bit. If they do this, the gorilla sounds satisfied, and leads his pack away.

Low Tier

Silver Back Gorilla Male: Large Animal; HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atks 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+5), bite +2 melee (1d6+2); SQ Scent; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +18, Listen +6, Spot +6; Intimidate +1

The gorilla does not necessarily insist on attacking, provided the heroes back down.

High Tier

Silver Back Gorilla Male: Large Animal; HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atks 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+6), bite +4 melee (1d6+3); SQ Scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +18, Listen +8, Spot +8; Intimidate +4

The gorilla does not necessarily insist on attacking, provided the heroes back down.

Encounter Three: Taboo!

It takes the kretch five minutes to reach the taboo area, if they can catch him before that time has elapsed, he'll turn and give as good an account of himself as he can.

Low Tier

Kretch Soldier: CR 3; Large Outsider; HD 3d8+12; hp 25; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural); Atks horn +9 melee (1d8+6, horn), 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+3, claw), bite +7 melee (1d4+3, bite), spear +9 (1d6+6, spear); SA polymorph any object 3/day nonliving objects only; SQ mimic animal sound, never sleep, 270 degree vision, fear immunity, poison immunity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Listen +8, Search +8, Spot +8, Knowledge (Military Tactics) +4; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multi-Attack.

High Tier

Kretch – Veteran: CR 6; Large Outsider; HD 7d8+35; hp 68; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); Atks horn +14 melee (1d8+7, horn), 2 claws +12 melee (1d6+3, claws), bite +12 melee (1d4+3, bite); spears

+10/+10 (1d6+6, spears); SA Three/day polymorph any object (non-living only); SA polymorph any object 3/day nonliving objects only; SQ mimic animal sound, never sleep, 270 degree vision, fear immunity, poison immunity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Jump +4, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Listen +12, Search +8, Spot +12, Knowledge (Military Tactics) +10; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multi-Attack, Scent, Track.

Taboo Area:

As you follow the kretch, you come to an area where the jungle is cleared. Up ahead, you can spot the reason for the clearing. The remains of an ancient's dome stands, covered with vines. The roof is collapsed, and little remains of this ancient dome. The jungle has nearly covered over this area, but there are no trees in a clearing of nearly 20 nubari lengths. As you step into the clearing, a small ghostly form appears before you. "Go back, this area is not for you. Go back, taboo." You should not enter the taboo area, but the kretch's tracks are plain, heading for the ancient building.

The spirit before them is a small taboo spirit. Knowledge – taboo (DC 12), or the taboo sense feat allows the heroes to determine that this is not a guardian spirit; it will not attack to keep them from entering.

Taboo spirit: Small Outsider; HD 2d8; hp 14; AC 14; Atks nil; SQ incorporeal.

The taboo spirit does not attack. If attacked (*magic missiles* are about the only thing the party might have that can hurt it), it disappears.

If the heroes choose to talk to the spirit, it will talk to them.

"Why do you seek entrance to the place of the old ones? For many seasons I have guarded this place. Never has the taboo been violated. Now, violators come all the time. Some came a few days ago, another came a moment ago, and now you come. Why do you seek to violate this space?"

If the heroes say they want to drive out the violator, the spirit agrees to let them pass. That is, provided they agree to harm nothing in the building of the ancients. If they ask who else has

violated the space, the spirit replies that they looked like the heroes. The spirit has not had much contact with Nubari, or anyone else. To it, all peoples look the same. If there is a saru present, he does say that there was one of those, just like the one who just entered. He cannot tell the difference between a kretch and a saru.

If the heroes respect the taboo, figuring the kretch just ran straight across and out the other side, they can circle the clearing. They find no tracks leading out, the kretch is holed up in the building.

Combat with the kretch:

The kretch has holed up in the building, climbing to the top (20 ft. off the ground). He is on what is left of a pillar that used to support the roof. Enough vines and creepers are there to give him partial cover (20% miss chance), and a +5 circumstance bonus to his hide roll. If the heroes enter the building, he expects to be spotted, and attacks by throwing spears at them. He'll use his *polymorph objects* ability to transform rocks and pebbles into spears, giving him virtually unlimited ammunition.

Note: There is room for Aarakocra and other flying characters to maneuver. They can attack him from above.

When the kretch is defeated, the heroes can look around a bit, if they want to.

- Search – DC 5, or Spot – DC 10, finds two fresh graves. If they dig up the graves, they find the two Rudra fisherfolk. They were slain by spear thrusts in the back.
- Spot – DC 10, notes that they have no tribal markings at all. These have been removed. They also have no weapons. Other gear was buried with them, with the exception of their fishing gear, which was found by the river.
- Tracking – DC 20, finds tracks of those who buried them. The tracks appear to come from nubari, at least four different ones, with at least one saru.
- Tracking - DC 25, determines that the tracks included a korobokuru, as well as a nubari, a saru, a shu, and a tam'hi. The tracks are only visible inside, the recent rains washed out any sign outside of the dome.

Searching the Dome:

If the heroes choose to search the dome, they can find two items of the ancients. One is a tablet with writing on it. Search DC 15. The DC to read the ancient writing is 30. Translated, it is a list of supplies from one of the spelljamming ships that brought the ancients to Malatra. It includes

foodstuffs (wine, caviar, pate' and truffles), a list of weapons (wheellocks, composite bows, and Greek fire launchers), and a list of spell components (many of which the heroes will recognize).

The second item is a ceramic knife, which is still very sharp. Search DC 20. It is slightly unbalanced, which gives it a –1 to hit, but its sharpness makes it plus 1 to damage, as well as making it *keen*.

Certs are provided for these items. The heroes garner no actual penalties for taking these items.

After dealing with the spirit, the kretch, and the bodies, the heroes should continue on to snake country.

Encounter Four: Snake Attack

Two more days of travel allow the heroes to reach snake country. Allow any healing necessary while they travel, then move on.

The ground is getting softer, and the trees are no longer forest giants, they are cypress and other swamp growth. Further confirmation that you have entered snake country comes quickly. A group of a dozen snake men appear about ten nubari lengths in front of you. "Mammalsssss! Snake Killerss!" screams one, and half of them go for their bows, while the other half grab spears and slither forward.

Low Tier

Yuan-ti (NA 10). See Monster Manual page 190.

High Tier

Yuan-ti (NA 12): See Monster Manual page 190.

Roll for initiative. Half of the yuan-ti fire bows in the first round, no matter what the heroes' actions. It takes the closing yuan-ti at least two rounds to close, so player actions can stop melee attacks.

The 'combat' actions of the yuan-ti.

- Round one: ½ of the yuan-ti fire arrows. ½ close to within 20'.
- Round two: If the heroes have not responded by attacking, the closing yuan-ti slow their movement, moving to within 10'. The yuan-ti with bows fire another round.
- Round three: If the heroes still have not attacked, the yuan-ti leader yells for his side to cease attacks. He is not in time to stop the third round of arrows. The yuan-ti with spears

cease movement, although they keep their spears at the ready.

- Round four: One last yuan-ti fires arrows. Another one clubs him on the side of the head, finally getting him to stop attacking. Diplomacy can proceed.

If the heroes respond with any action that harms a yuan-ti, they are in trouble. It will require a diplomacy roll of 15 or better to get them to cease the attack at this point. Note: This does not include such spells as a *hold person* or *entangle*, which the yuan-ti recognize as specifically non-damaging. *Magic missiles* or *acid arrow* are a different story. Also, if the heroes do not respond to melee attacks for one full round, the yuan-ti stop and talk.

If the heroes get into a full-fledged battle here, the truce is in grave danger. Don't push them, but remind them when they declare they will attack "Well, so much for the truce, I guess", and proceed to the combat. The yuan-ti with bows put them away and close after those with spears get into melee combat.

Since this could actually break the truce, have the yuan-ti speak while fighting.

"The Snake Mother said we should honor the truce, but I knew you would not honor it. Mammals can never be trusted."

Special Note: Any reptilian races are not targeted in the initial rounds, and are only targeted if they fight upon the side of the mammals. A table of nothing but reptiles does not draw attacks, and may proceed directly to diplomacy.

Diplomacy:

The leader of the snake men introduces himself as Sssilisiss, hunter of the snake people. "Why have you come here mammals? We see that you believe the truce still holds. Why would you attack the Snake Mother and think that we would not kill you?"

Obviously, the heroes have not attacked the Snake Mother, and should say so. Sssilisiss points at any nubari, korobokuru, tam'hi, shu, or saru and says, ***"This one attacked, I recognize them. If it wass not them, then it wass their brother. It is hard for the true people to tell the difference among the lower orders. But your kind did attack our Great Mother, why should you not be killed?"***

Let the heroes talk their way out of this. Telling the truth, that Reesta has sent them with gifts for the Snake Mother, and to re-affirm the truce, has a positive effect. Even more positive is the fact that he wants to assure the snake people that the good tribes of Malatra are not in on any attacks on the Yuan-ti. Let the heroes use logic, things like "Are all snake men in complete agreement, or do some act against the interests of the snake people?" Sssilisiss hates to agree with mammals, but he knows enough to pass the buck to his leader when confronted with an unknown situation.

"Very well, We will take you to our leader. But she is wounded as a result of mammal attacks. I will take no chances. You will surrender your weapons to us here, and your spell fetishes, or go no farther. Else one side or the other dies here. We can take no chances with another treacherous attack. Oh, and we know that some of you are shape-shifters. You will assume human form, or agree to be bound and gagged before we go on."

There are some players in the jungle who have sworn never to leave their animal form. Those players do not have to assume human form, but they do have to agree to have their paws (or whatever) bound before Sssilisiss will take them any farther.

The surrendering of weapons and fetishes is a non-negotiable demand. Sense Motive (DC 10) reveals that he is quite sincere. Mammals have wounded the Snake Mother. It would be worth his life to bring a group of armed mammals into the presence of the Snake Mother. This stricture even applies to reptilian heroes, even snake katanga. They are working with mammals, after all. And in the rare case of a table of all reptiles, they still have to give up their weapons, because they are not yuan-ti. (There is a trial yuan-ti somewhere out there. He will have to agree to be bound and gagged no matter what the party makeup, he should be thankful that he is not killed on sight, as a traitor).

Encounter Five: The Snake Mother.

The trip to the village of the Snake Mother has been arduous, but not dangerous. The snake men have led you though paths you would have difficulty finding on your own. For the last day, you were blindfolded. But you have

not been mistreated, although the snake men are certainly not friendly.

Now you see a small village, with an ancient dome in the center. A ramp leads up into it, and many carvings of snakes and yuan-ti adorn the building. It is not a building of the ancients, being made of granite instead of ceramic.

The villagers gather as you enter, and it is a good thing you have guards with you. The villagers are all hostile. Many a yuan-ti is wondering if you are to be sacrificed by the Mother.

A snake man larger than a saru moves to meet you. "Sssillisiss, have you then captured those who attacked our leader?"

Sssillisiss replies; "No Possil, these came on their own. They say they bring gifts for the Mother, and word from a chief of the mammals. I did not know what to do, for the Mother said we were not to break the truce, so I brought them here. We can always kill them if she decrees."

Possil agrees. "You have done well. The Mother must be consulted. I will see what she says." He turns and enters the dome. In a few minutes, he returns. "The Mother says she will see them. But listen you mammals. The Mother is still weak from a treacherous attack by mammals. I know not if it was you, but there will not be another. If you attempt to harm her, your dying will take longer than you can believe. Is that clear, foolish ones?"

Let the PCs respond. He insists on a response before he will lead them inside.

The Snake Mother

Possil and six guards lead you into the dome of the Snake Mother. It is the largest hut you have ever been inside, with the exception of those of you who entered the Temple of the Lion. Inside are more carvings of yuan-ti and snakes in various poses, most defeating people like you. At the center of the dome is a fire that burns with a cold blue flame. Behind it on a long low bed rests the Snake Mother, a being of almost legendary power. Even Bengoukee would have feared to face such a being. Around her stand six other yuan-ti. From their size, they are the elders of the snake men.

For now, she is not so fearful. She is almost three saru lengths long. She has a snake's body and the face of a beautiful Nubari

female. But the face still bears burn scars, and her arms do as well. Her movements, while strong, are not as agile as you would expect. Clearly she is still in pain.

"Bring them closer, Possil. I would see them better;" she says. Her voice resonates with power, but it also bears a slight quaver, as though she cannot properly control the power that she obviously has.

Snake Mother: Female Yuan-ti Shaman 10/ Witch Doctor 10: Large Magical Beast; HD 10d6+10D4+80; hp 160 (currently 100), Init +4; Spd 30 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 20 (+4 *mage armor*, -2 size, +8 natural); Atks +15 melee (1d10+5 bite), +10 tail (constriction); SA constriction for 1d8+5 if tail hits; AL LN (evil tendencies); SV Fort+15, Ref +10, Will +20; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 22, Cha 20.

Applicable Skills & Feats: Concentration +20, Knowledge – Nature +11, Languages – all in jungle except Oscray and Iacerial, and she can understand Iacerial; Listen +11, Knowledge – Arcana +15, Knowledge – Ancients +10, Knowledge – Lore +10, Sense Motive +16, Spot +14, Wilderness Lore +11; Spell Focus – Transmutation, Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Fetish Preparation, Turn Undead, Turn Elemental, Taboo Sense.

Shaman Domains – Plant, Animal

Divine Spells (4/5/5/5/4/3) Saving throw 16+ spell level

Arcane Spells (4/7/7/6/6/3)

Note: she will only cast spells in this adventure in boxed text. If someone actually attacks her, she has access to the worst you can think of. (yes, even a fireball or lightning bolt).

Personality: The Snake Mother is thought by some to be cruel, but she is mainly concerned about the survival of her people. She recognizes the need for the truce. She also recognizes the need to keep the leadership of her people, if the are to survive the tamara. She is also aware that there is a faction among her people who feel that they should make peace with the tamara, and wreck havoc upon the mammals. While she is a strong leader, she is not a god or a dictator.

To the PCs she will be fair, but as will be seen, she will have to do certain things that the heroes might feel are questionable.

Speaking with the Snake Mother:

She looks you over carefully. "Possil, these are not the ones." Possil looks rebellious and stubborn. She turns to you; "So you have

come from Reesta. How is the new chief and his bride?"

Let the heroes make their pitch, present their gifts, and ask for the truce to continue. When they are finished, a snake man steps forward.

If they ask about the attack on her, one of the elders steps forward.

"Our leader was looking for a ruin of the ancients where she would find a magical device that could help us, and you (put plenty of scorn into the previous two words) against the Tamara. A korobokuru, a tam'hi, and saru, a nubari, and a shu attacked her without warning. Her guards were slain, and only through the use of her great magical powers did she escape with her life. We feel that the korobokuru was surely the treacherous Bengoukee, only he had the power to bring down the fire from the sky that nearly slew our leader. And for such a thing, the lives of four of our best warriors, all our traditions demand a life from your tribes. What say you, mammals?"

The snake mother disagrees.

"I have already spoken, Tessaril. These are not the ones;" says the Mother. "It may be our tradition, but it would not be right."

Tessaril looks stubborn, and the rest of the elders and the warriors also look upset. "If they are so beholden to the truce, are they not brave enough to offer themselves for the jungle. You know that many of our warriors have died aiding the fight against the tamara. Remember that I lost my brother in the Jungle of Lost Tribes. He fell allowing such as these to escape. (In the module – Forgotten Father, a group of yuan ti did indeed stay behind and die so that a group of heroes could escape with the news of the Forgotten Father. This is a good time to remind them of that). "Now, it is their turn to prove how much they desire peace. Let one of them give his life to make up for the evil that was done to us!"

The Snake Mother looks at you. "This is not right, but my people must speak with one voice. My warriors were slain by people of your kind. Is there one among you who is brave enough to give his life for the future good of the jungle?"

The elders look satisfied at that, and all turn to look at your party.

Yes, she is asking that one of the heroes to volunteer their life to keep the truce. Let the heroes use logic, she agrees with them. Let them say that they had nothing to do with the attack on her, and she agrees with that too. But without such a sacrifice, she fears the truce will not hold.

If the party absolutely refuses, the elders are quick to speak up.

Tessaril is outraged. "These creatures have no honor! How can we keep a truce with such as they? If you can not see this, perhaps you have grown too old and should be.." He stops at the baleful look in the Snake Mother's eyes, but he does not back down. "I apologize for my hasty words, but you know I am right. Honor must be satisfied. A life for a life. It is our way."

Do what you can. You can't force someone to sacrifice himself or herself, but if they are playing in the proper spirit, someone or more than one will volunteer. If someone asks "Will I really be dead", you can say "Yes, but this is the sort of thing where you would certainly be guaranteed a reincarnation, your death to prevent a civil war among the Yuan-ti, and a war between the yuan-ti and the good tribes of Malatra." In fact, you can say that the co-ordinators of the jungle do guarantee a re-incarnate in this circumstance, because we do. (Well, we would if someone was really going to die. But they don't know that at this point.)

If no one volunteers:

If no one at the table volunteers, the elders look satisfied. **"I told you they had no honor. The truce should not hold, for they cannot be trusted."**

The Snake Mother disagrees. **"Their honor is different than ours. Less, to be sure, but it is to be expected from the lesser races. They do not always speak with one voice, as our race does. Still, there is something they might do."**

Proceed to the post-sacrifice request, later in this encounter. Of course you'll have to delete any reference to a dead hero, because there won't be one.

If someone volunteers:

If you can get someone to volunteer, the elders look satisfied. One of the warriors immediately moves outside, and the crowd noise gets loud and excited.

If you have multiple volunteers, choose based on who volunteered first, who has the highest

charisma, who is the highest level, whoever is the most insistent, however you want.

The Snake Mother insists that all leave except the volunteer. Take that player aside and explain to him/her what is going to happen.

The Snake Mother waits until you are alone. "This is not right, and I will not permit it;" she says. "To me, honor was satisfied when you volunteered your life for the jungle. So here is what we will do." She whistles, and a small lizard comes running up to her. A powerful spell unfolds, and suddenly you see a copy of yourself standing there. "Come, I will now make you unseen. Steal out to the edge of the village, and wait for your friends, for they, and the jungle will have need of such courage in the days to come." She then casts a spell, and you find yourself invisible. Taking the double, she moves towards the entrance.

The entire village is focused on the sacrifice; the invisible hero can make their way to the safety of the jungle without incident.

Why is she doing this?

The Snake Mother obviously does not care about the life of a mammal, or at least of a non-snake man. She does care about having her decisions challenged. She knows it is not the time to challenge her people, not for a mammal. But she will NOT have her decisions challenged. So she will let the hero go. A Sense Motive check (DC 5, the Snake Mother is not hiding her motives here) reveals this to the volunteer.

Set up with the volunteer.

Ask the player to help you out here. She should say nothing about what is really happening to the others until she meets them outside the village. Also, tell her you will give her a chance to say some last words. Ask her to play along, remembering that a polymorphed lizard is taking her place. Ask her to either say nothing, and just shake her head, or to keep her response to no more than one or two words, something like "Just do it," or "get it over with."

In case the player asks, here are the game mechanics. The Snake Mother uses a *polymorph other* on the lizard, then a *change self*. She then uses a fetish to cast a *dominate monster* on the lizard, allowing her to control its actions. When the lizard is slain, she will use a fetish that allows her to *polymorph any object* to transform the body of the lizard to a dead body of the hero, preventing it from resuming its normal shape after death. The

invisible hero can then sneak out of the village while the crowd is focused on the sacrifice.

When you return to the table, make a show of giving the volunteer a 'posthumous' hero point, she has certainly earned one. If no one volunteers until learning of the guaranteed reincarnate, they do not get the hero point.

The entire village is gathered as the base of the dome. Tessaril is standing near a post. "We will make him take a long time to die;" he proclaims, and the crowd hisses in anticipation. "No," says the Snake Mother. "This one has behaved with honor, choosing to die for the sins of his fellows, wrongdoings he did not commit. He will have a clean death, and a quick one."

You who watch your friend, see that the Snake Mother has either enchanted him, or given him a poison to dull any pain. Still, there is a fatalistic look in his eyes; you cannot say he goes to his death willingly, only that he is resigned to it.

The Snake Mother brings your friend down to the post. "Have you any last words, brave one;" she asks. (Look at the volunteer, let him make a response). Quickly he is bound to the post.

Possil is ready. With a firm thrust, he drives a longspear entirely through your friend's heart. As the blood pumps out, your friend slumps to the ground. No cry did he make, not even a grunt. The crowd hisses in response to a brave death. From their attitude, most did not take pleasure in your friend's death. They seem to think that it was something that had to be done to satisfy their honor. But at what cost?

Oh, and if anyone points out that one spear thrust certainly wouldn't kill the volunteer, point out that this was not an attack, it was a coup de grace, with a voluntarily failed saving throw at the end. Have the volunteer confirm this for you.

Post-Sacrifice request.

The Snake Mother comes to you. "Honor has been satisfied, the truce will hold, for now. But there is one thing you could do to ensure that it will hold for longer than just now. Those who slew my guards are still out there, somewhere. Would you see to it that they are brought to justice? After all, they are also responsible for the death of your friend."

Assuming the heroes agree, the Snake Mother brings out a fetish. She also has several items brought forth.

“These are the items that the attackers dropped.” You see two cloaks that bear Rudra tribal markings, as well as a longspear and a spell fetish that seems powerful.

The spell fetish can be identified by Knowledge – Arcana – DC 15 as that for a *flame strike*. It is only useful to a shaman that has fire as one of her domains, and will not act as a scroll.

“Pick whichever item you think would be most appropriate. I have a fetish here that will allow me to locate the holder, and with that knowledge, you can track these evil ones to their lair.”

Obviously, the heroes should pick the fetish, the other items were deliberately left behind to implicate the Rudrans. The fetish was dropped in the haste to get away. If the heroes don't realize this, allow a Knowledge – Lore (DC 10), or Knowledge – Tribes (DC 10), or Intelligence (DC 12) to realize that the other items are probably from the slain Rudrans.

If the heroes do not pick the fetish, the longspear works as well. The Rudran cloaks should be obvious to the characters. If not, if they choose one of them, she questions them as to why. She is not be satisfied, and decides on her own to use the fetish.

If the heroes ask why she has not used the fetish before, she replies that she would have as soon as she was stronger; the heroes' arrival has forced her hand. If the truce is to hold, action must be taken now.

Before she casts the spell, she hands one of the heroes a ruby. Choose reptiles over mammals, and shamans over other classes.

The Snake Mother speaks; “I have fears that the tamara just might be behind this, although probably not directly involved. If so, when you find these attackers, you might need my help. If, and only if, a tamara is present, crush this gem and I shall come to you. I am too weak to face a tamara alone, if I ever could, but together we may be able to prevail. At the least, I should be able to offer you escape.”

“Now, choose the one who is your best guide.”

When the hero is chosen, she asks for their qualifications. A ranger, pathfinder, or even jungle tam'hi should be the likely choices. If none of those are present, the one with the highest Wilderness Lore skill should be the choice. When the choice is made, she continues;

“Come hither, then.” And grasping the hero by the forehead, she begins using a fetish to cast a powerful spell. As she does so, you have a vision. Your sight flies like an Aarakocra, across the jungle. There, in a cave near Fire Mountain, you see a korobokuru with many fetishes on a staff. The image burns itself into your mind, such that you will never forget that location, or how to get there. When the spell is complete, you feel both weak, and energized. You have knowledge of the one who caused the death of your friend, and threatened the truce. It is time to go.

“Hurry, for the spell only locates them where they are now, and you must reach them before they move on. If you can find proof that your tribes had nothing to do with the attack on me, bring it back here. It will aid in keeping the truce.” With that, the Snake Mother dismisses you, and moves back into her dome. She looks tired, as well she might after such powerful spellcastings.

Ask the hero if they have ever played the modules Swarm or Comes the Tiger. If so, they recognize the korobokuru. It is Kural, the Katimayan shaman who attacked Bengoukee and joined the Tamara. If not, tell them it looks a little like Bengoukee, but it is not he.

The heroes are given back their weapons, as well as their 'dead' friend's items, and escorted to the edge of the village. Let the 'dead hero' surprise his friends if he wishes. At any rate, he can clearly see where the heroes are escorted, and can join them easily.

Encounter Six: The cave:

Four days of hard travel lie behind you. The ‘guide’ is certain that the cave that hides your quarry is just ahead.

If the heroes send someone to scout, they see a cave mouth, wide, but not too tall. There are no guards visible. If they check for tracks, they spot the same footprint they found near the graves of the Rudrans (tracking DC 10 to find, 15 to identify as the same).

When they enter the cave, they find a small cave, leading to a tunnel heading deeper into the earth. The tunnel is only 5' high, but is at least 8' wide. It twists and turns for a bit, until they come to a trap.

The tunnel has wound around, going steadily down into the earth. You must be over 10 nubari lengths below the surface now. As yet, you have seen no sign of life, other than an occasional footprint in the dirt.

Now you are come to an obstacle. The tunnel ends in at a pit, deeper than your lights shine. Across the pit, the tunnel continues. The pit is a good three nubari lengths across, much farther than most of you can jump.

Of course *fly* spells will get the party across, but low level parties won't have such things. Examination of the edge of the pit can pick up a clue.

On a Search (DC 10), or a Spot (DC 15), someone notices half of a footprint at the edge of the pit. It looks as though someone just walked off the edge. If they drop a torch down into the pit, it seems to drop for a good 100' feet before hitting the ground. The inside of the pit must be reflective, for the torchlight shines all the way up to the tunnel.

In reality, the pit is all of 5 ft. deep. A *permanent illusion* has been cast over the pit, making it seem incredibly deep. Anyone who attempts to climb down and back up is subject to the illusion, unless they disbelieve. That is, have them make three climbing checks – each way – at DC 20. People who watch see them climbing down and back up. If they fall, they think they are falling to their doom. All that happens is that they land on the stone of the pit, and have their breath knocked out of them. When they stand up, they are still caught in the illusion; they just think that the pit is not as deep as they thought.

Let the party deal with this illusion. If someone picks up on the illusion and makes a disbelieve roll, they can move through a lot faster, but in no case will they take any serious damage.

The purpose of the illusion is twofold. First, it keeps animals and lesser parties from proceeding down the tunnel. Second, there is an *alarm* spell hidden on the floor of the 5 ft. pit. It warns the sorcerer inside of the parties approach.

When they have bypassed the pit, proceed to the final encounter.

Encounter Seven: Kural and the Spiders.

This is as good a place to explain what's been going on as any. Kural, working with the Tamara, has been trying to break the truce. He gathered together four spider katanga allies. With the help of the sorcerer among them, he had all four of them *polymorphed* into various PC races. Using several ancient spell fetishes, he was able to wound the Snake Mother, as well as destroying her guards. They left the cloaks of the murdered Rudrans as proof that the good tribes of Malatra were behind this attack. They are recuperating from the attack. The Snake Mother was more than they bargained for. Only the fact that they were able to attack with surprise allowed them to win, and even so, they were not able to slay the Snake Mother.

Thwarted at that plan, they now intend to polymorph the spider katanga into snake men, and perform a similar attack on Reesta and Mirmirani.

Note: Since the spider katanga are shape changers, they are not permanently locked into those forms, they can shift out at any time they like.

At last you can see some light at the end of the tunnel. The tunnel roof rises, the tall members of the party can finally straighten up. At the tunnel's end it opens out into a large cave. The entrance is an arch, made of stone carved with ancient ruins.

The heroes probably want to stop and 'power up.' Give them a round or two at most, then Kural invites them in.

"Welcome friends and tribesmen. Don't stand out there muttering your magics, come in and be at peace. We have no quarrel with any of you. Come ahead." At the mouth of the tunnel you spy a saru, looking in your direction. He waves his hand, beckoning you to come forward.

The heroes may move forward or not, but Kural keeps encouraging them to come ahead. Unless the heroes come in swinging and casting, Kural attempts to recruit them.

The cave is a full ten Nubari high by 20 wide. Several arches similar to the one at the entrance help support the ceiling, which does not look terribly stable.

Across the cave stand Kural, the traitorous Katimayan shaman stands with a shu, a nubari, a saru and a jungle tam'hi. The shu, nubari, and saru range in front of them, the tam'hi stands about two nubari lengths to his right.

"Welcome my friends. Have you come to join in on the winning side. For surely none can oppose the tamara, they are the new way. Join us, and revel in the power that they offer."

Of course Kural does not expect them to join him; he and his allies are fully 'powered up'. Give the heroes a chance to respond, but very quickly, the battle should be joined. Kural has only one thing more to say, before the battle starts.

"As we spoke, none shall be left alive. Take them, my allies." To your shock, all four of Kural's allies begin to change shape. And it's a shape you recognize. They are changing into a foe even more hated than the kretch. Yes, all four of them are spider katanga!

The spider katanga interpose and attempt to prevent anyone from attacking Kural or the sorcerer.

Low Tier:

Spider Katanga Ftr4 (3): Medium Shapechanger; HD 4d10+10; hp 32; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d8+3/x3, longspear), or +7 melee (1d8+3 + poison, bite) and 6 claws +5 melee (1+1, 6 claws); SA improved grab, poison; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +10, Jump +9, Listen +3, Spot +10; Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative; Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longspear).

SA: Poison— Fort save 14, damage Str 1d6/1d6.

Equipment: Longspear, daggers, assorted bone fragments.

These spider katanga prefer to fight in biped form, using their longspear until the party gets to close. Then they go with six claw attacks and a bite.

Spider Katanga Sor4: Medium Shapechanger; HD 4d4+8; hp 24; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +4 *mage armor*); Atks +2 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Hide +5, Spot +5, Improved Initiative, Multi-attack, Toughness.

Equipment: bone dagger, spell fetishes.

Arcane Spells (6/7/4): 0 level: *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, 1st level: *alarm*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, 2nd level: *acid arrow*.

The sorcerer prefers to stay back and casts spells under all circumstances.

Kural, male korobokuru Shaman 5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid; HD 5d8+15; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 hide armor); Atks +5 melee (1d6+2/x3, halfspear); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Hide +5, Spot +5, Knowledge (Tamara) +3, Undead control, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Equipment: halfspear, hide armor, spell fetishes, gem to summon tamara.

Domains: Fire, Evil. Domain Spells: *burning hands*, *produce flame*, *magic circle against good**

Divine Spells (5/4/3/2): Saves = 14 + spell level; 0 level: *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *inflict minor wounds* x2, *resistance*, 1st level: *bane*, *cause fear*, *cure light wounds*, *sanctuary*, 2nd level: *inflict moderate wounds*, *hold person* x2; 3rd level: *blindness/deafness*, *meld into stone*.

* Already cast.

Kural starts out casting *bane* on the party. Then he switches to *hold person* for a couple of rounds and then *blindness*. If someone closes with him he'll use his *inflict moderate wounds*. He saves his *meld into stone* and *sanctuary* for escape.

Note: If the party is all 1st and 2nd level, drop the hit points on the spider katanga fighters by 10. Leave all other stats the same.

High Tier:

Spider Katanga Ftr8 (3): Medium Shapechanger; HD 8d10+16; hp 82; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +4 *mage armor*); Atks +14/+9 melee (1d6+7/19-20/x3, halfspear), or +14 melee (1d8+3 + poison, bite) and 6 claws +12 melee (1+2, 6 claws); SA improved grab, poison; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +5, Jump +15, Listen +3, Spot +10; Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative; Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (halfspear), Improved Critical (halfspear).

SA: Poison— Fort save 14, damage Str 1d6/1d6.

Equipment: halfspear, daggers, assorted bone fragments.

These spider katanga prefer to fight in biped form, using their longspear until the party gets to close. Then they go with six claw attacks and a bite.

Spider Katanga Sor8: Medium Shapechanger; HD 8d4+16; hp 36; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +4 *mage armor*); Atks +5 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Hide +5, Spot +5, Improved Initiative, Multi-attack, Toughness, Great Fortitude.

Equipment: bone dagger, spell fetishes.

Arcane Spells (6/7/7/6/4): 0 level: *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, flare, mage hand, ray of frost, resistance*, 1st level: *alarm, endure elements, mage armor, magic missile, silent image*, 2nd level: *acid arrow, see invisibility, web*; 3rd level: *dispel magic, slow*, 4th level: *polymorph other*.

The sorcerer prefers to stay back and casts spells under all circumstances. She prefers to start by slowing as many opponents as possible, then hit them with magic missiles. There are too many katanga in the jungle for her to completely trust her *polymorph other* spell very much, but she does use it if someone closes to melee.

Kural, male korobokuru Shaman 9: Medium Humanoid; HD 9d8+27; hp 72; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 hide armor); Atks +8/+3 melee (1d6+2/x3, halfspear); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Hide +5, Spot +5, Knowledge (Tamara) +5, Wilderness Lore +3; Undead Control, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Lightning Reflexes, Spell Penetration.

Equipment: halfspear, hide armor, spell fetishes, gem to summon tamara.

Domains: Fire, Evil. Domain Spells: *Burning Hands, Produce Flame, Magic Circle Against Good**, *unholy blight, fire shield**

Divine Spells (6/5/5/4/3/1): Saves = 14 + spell level: 0 level: *cure minor wounds, detect magic, inflict minor woundsx2, resistancex2*, 1st level: *bane, cause fear, cure light wounds, inflict light wounds, sanctuary*, 2nd level: *cure moderate*

wounds, inflict moderate wounds, hold person x2, silence 15' radius; 3rd level: *bestow curse, blindness/deafness, searing light, meld into stone*; 4th level: *freedom of movement**, *inflict critical wounds, spell immunity** (immune to *magic missile, and hold person*); *flame strike* (only deals 4d6 points of damage)

*Already cast.

Kural likes his fire spells. He'll start with a *flame strike*, preferably on someone he recognizes, or a spell caster. Then he'll switch to *hold person* and *searing light*. If someone close to melee, he switches to his *inflict* spells. He saves his *meld into stone* for escape, if he needs it.

Note: If the party is all 5th and 6th level (just barely high tier, but far too tough for the low tier), reduce the fighters hit points by 20, and drop the sorcerers level to six (drop any 4th level spells). All other stats may remain the same.

Development: Kural is losing.

If/when Kural begins to fear for his own life, he has an out. Make sure to do this while he still has enough life left in him to beat any chance the heroes have to stop him.

Knowing that the battle has turned in your favor, Kural plays his last card. He reaches into a pouch and pulls out a ruby. With a gesture, he throws it down to the ground, where it shatters. "Tajiratha, come to me" he yells desperately. A black cloud begins to form next to him. Those of you at the blood bridge know of this cloud, as do those who escorted the vizarathu back from the Valley of Lion. A tamara comes!

Kural has no more interest in the battle. If the heroes concentrate on the Tamara, he flees. If they pay attention, they may be able to finish him off before the Tamara takes a hand. But that is unlikely.

Any remaining spider katanga want no more of this battle either; allow attacks of opportunity as appropriate as they flee. They do not stay to fight. In their thinking, the heroes are all dead, and once the Tamara gets started killing, he may not choose to stop.

Tamara (Tajiratha- the weapon master): CR 13; Medium Outsider; HD 12d8+84; hp 138; Init +9; Spd 50 ft.; AC 20 (+5 natural, +5 Dex); Atks +15/+10/+5 melee or ranged (by weapon +7,

ranged weapon strength bow – 1d8+5), +12 melee (1d10+2, bite); SA fighter feats, rake 1d8+2; SQ SR 30, DR 30/+5, Scent, Fast Healing 2; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 20, Con 25, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +9; Move Silently +11; Hide +15. **Feats:** proficient and specialized with all weapons he carries, possesses all feats listed on the fighter list.

The Tajiratha prefers to use a strength longbow (+5 to damage), a great two-handed scimitar (damage 2d6+9, crit 19-20 x3); or a pair of kukri (1d4+7 with main hand, 1d4+4 with off hand, three attacks with main hand at +13/+8/+3 and two with off hand at +13/+8).

There is no low tier/high tier version of the Tamara. He is too much for any of them to handle. They have two choices if they want to survive, flight, or the Snake Mother.

If the heroes try to take him on for a round or two without the Snake Mother.

Let them have their best shot. Given his damage reduction and spell resistance, it is unlikely they can hurt him much, and almost certain they can't kill him without an incredible string of critical hits and spell penetration rolls. The Tamara toys with them, letting the heroes feel the despair he knows they will. His actions:

Special Note: If anyone has the vial of mercury from "Ten Times the Hero," and smashes it at his feet the fumes do cause damage to him. Only 1d6, but it also stuns him for a round. He doesn't like this, and responds by trying to hurt that person pretty badly. If they put it on an arrow, and hit, the effects are the same.

1st round: He fires a bow at one of the heroes towards the back. Instead of hitting the hero, he hits the arch above then entrance. It splinters, and some large rocks fall from the ceiling. The hero he fired at can make a reflex roll (DC 14 – low, 18 high) to avoid being hit for 2d6 (low) or 4d6 (high) points of damage.

2nd round: If a hero is closed with him, he uses a sunder feat to break their weapon. If not, he uses his bow to shoot a bow they are aiming at him. (-4 to hit for a called shot).

3rd round: He uses his improved trip to spill a hero to the ground, stopping to put his heel on their throat (improved grapple). Then he laughs and

backs off, growling, "Is there any in this rabble who can challenge me? I doubt it. Well, come and die little ones."

If the heroes do manage to hurt him, he gets serious. Don't just slaughter the heroes out of hand, but hurt some of them real bad. If they still haven't summoned the Snake Mother by the end of the 5th round, it's time for people to start dying. Just make sure you don't kill the one with the gem first, so they have a chance to save the rest of the party.

When the summon the Snake Mother:

A mist forms, and slowly appearing where the gem shattered is the Snake Mother. She still looks weak, but much better than when you last saw her. The tajiratha watches with interest, his laughing countenance turning serious as he sees his opponent. "You! At last, meet your death. Drawing a pair of weapons you haven't seen before, he move quickly towards the Mother."

If someone tries to interpose, allow it. The tamara brushes them aside with a gesture. (Subdual damage, using his full strength and skill to toss them across the cave.

However it does buy them enough time for the Snake Mother to use her most effective spell fetish, a *power word stun*. For game purposes, she makes her spell penetration roll (not all that difficult, considering that it is an ancient device, at 20th level of use). The tamara is stunned for five rounds.

The Mother pulls out a potent fetish. Invoking it, you SEE a word fly across the room and strike the tajiratha. The tamara weapon master is thrown back against the cave wall, where he slumps to the floor. He is not dead, but he is out of the fight.

"Quickly," says the Snake Mother. "We have only a few moments. We must flee. Such magic as we have used could cause the cave to collapse, and he will soon be up and aware."

Give the heroes a chance to think of the broken arch and suggest something to the Snake Mother. If they do not, she notices the arch as they begin to flee.

If someone asks about bringing the roof down, the Mother stops and looks around. She smiles. If they don't ask, she sees the broken arch and asks what happened.

“He might have a problem with his instant healing if a mountain fell upon him. Who is the best shot among you?” she asks. “Hurry, we have no time.”

Press them, they have only seconds to answer. When they choose (they can choose two, if they want), she continues:

“Place this gem at the base of the arch. Give us a few rounds to get out of here. When the tamara begins to stir, wait no longer. You must hit it. But be warned, when the gem is shattered, an earthquake will result. Waste no time, or you will be entombed with the Tamara, forever.”

The gem is hardness 5, AC 20 (for low tier, make it AC 10). It has 5 hit points.

Fleeing:

The Snake Mother is obviously too big for the tunnel. She responds by polymorphing herself into a parrot, and flying out. If the heroes had not figured out that the pit is an illusion, she warns them about it, and tells them to run faster.

After the hero(s) shoot the gem, give them two rounds before the earth shakes get really violent. They can make it to the pit, (they can hear her warning about the pit, so they know it's an illusion.

After that, rocks start to fall, and the footing gets treacherous. Behind them they hear a loud boom as the roof of the cave falls in, and a scream of pure hatred, suddenly cut off.

Have the heroes make two reflex rolls (DC 12 low, 20 high). Damage is 2d6 (low), 6d6(high), reflex saves halve the damage.

Just as you clear the cave, there is another boom, and rocks shoot out of the cave mouth. (all take 1d6 shrapnel damage). The Snake Mother looks satisfied. “Let’s see the Tajiratha heal from that.”

She turns to you: “You have done a service to me and mine. Spider katanga, we should have known. The truce holds, and when my people here this, you may be sure that there will be a worse curse word than that of mammals. Spiderss! They shall rue this day. “

“Go back to your tribe and chief and tell him that he owes you much. For by your actions has a grave danger to your people, and mine, been avoided. I go know, but know that I will remember you.”

With that, she resumes parrot form, and flies off towards the swamp. You are left standing, battered, bloody, and bruised, but feeling very good. A tamara lies dead, by your hand. Yes, it was a fetish of the ancients, but it was your hands that struck the killing blow. And Kural is finished once and for all. All in all, it has been a good day. A very good day.

If you have a lot of time left, you can role play them returning to the Rudran village to tell what happened to their fisherfolk, and back to the village of the Saiyama to report to Reesta. Otherwise, tell them that they do so, and pass out the rewards from Reesta.

Note on the rewards: Reesta is all about sharing the wealth with those who are fledgling heroes. His tradition is that no first level hero who has gamed with him has ever walked away without a gift from Reesta. This is reflected when he passes out rewards. There are enough that each hero gets two choices. He starts with the lowest level hero, works up to the top, and then back down. So the highest-level hero gets the last choice in the first round, and the first choice in the second.

Here Ends Snake Time

Experience Point Summary:

To determine the experience point award, determine how much of the adventure they completed. Then add the discretionary role playing award.

Story Award	1,400 XP
Role playing Award	0-100 XP
Total possible	1,500 XP

If the party did not complete the adventure, award them 50-75% or even 90% of the award, depending on how close they came.

Treasure Summary:

If it's not on this list they can't have it. All Living Jungle treasure is certed, unless specified otherwise.

- Ceramic dagger from the ruin of the ancients.

- Ceramic tablet (packing list) from the ruin of the ancients.

Rewards from Reesta:

- Arcane spell fetishes for *hold monster*, *dispel magic*, and *suspended silence*.
- Divine spell fetishes for *flame strike*, *cure critical wounds*.
- Ranger spell fetish for *hunter's mercy*.
- Brew of hastiness
- Raptor Hide armor
- Long spear of Reesta
- Necklace of the Saiyama (2)
- Brew of Tracking
- Brew of Hiding