

# ORIENTAL ADVENTURES

Gary Gygax

with David Cook and Francois Marcela-Froideval



**The rulebook for AD&D® game adventures in the mystical world of the Orient!**

TSR Inc.  
POB 756  
Lake Geneva,  
WI 53147

TSR UK Ltd.  
The Mill, Rathmore Road  
Cambridge, CB1 4AD  
United Kingdom

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## Special Thanks to

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Whenever a project of this size is put together, there are many people who give their time and extra effort to see it through. This is particularly true for *Oriental Adventures*, as there was much assembling and doublechecking of the fine details of rules and culture. No doubt there are some who have been left off this list, but they deserve every praise nonetheless.

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Thank you!

## Credits

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**Original AD&D® Game:** Gary Gygax

**Original *Oriental Adventures* Concept:** Gary Gygax with Francois Marcela-Froideval

***Oriental Adventures* Design:** David "Zeb" Cook

**Editors:** Steve Winter, Mike Breault, Anne Gray, and Thad Russell

**Cover art:** Jeff Easley

**Illustrations:** Roger Raupp, James Holloway, Jeff Easley, and Dave Sutherland

**Cartography:** Dave LaForce

**Product Design:** Linda Bakk, Mike Breault, and Steve Winter

**Typography:** Linda Bakk, Betty Elmore, and Carolyn Vanderbilt

**Keylining:** Dave Sutherland, Colleen O'Malley, and Linda Bakk

**Proofreaders:** Jon Pickens, Harold Johnson, and Bruce Heard

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## Preface

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The ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system has grown slowly. From its original roots in the "Fantasy Supplement" to CHAINMAIL Medieval Miniatures Rules, the AD&D® game grew to encompass a growing, changing, expanding fantasy multiverse. Other planes of existence than our own are dealt with, albeit rather cursorily. New classes of adventurer have been added, along with magic, monsters, and much else. Despite the growth and change, a whole segment of historically based material has been neglected.

CHAINMAIL dealt principally with European and Near Eastern history, and the same is true of the fantasy elements included in the work. When the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system was envisioned and created, it relied very heavily upon the former work, medieval European history, and mythos and myth most commonly available to its authors. Thus, D&D® gaming followed CHAINMAIL, and AD&D gaming followed after the D&D game. In its early development, the D&D game was supplemented by various booklets, and in one of these the monk, inspired by Brian Blume and the book series called *The Destroyer*, was appended to the characters playable. So too was this cobbled-together martial arts specialist placed into the AD&D game system, even as it was being removed from the D&D game. In my opinion, the point certainly went to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game players!

What's this? Is the creator of this whole system about to state that Oriental character-types are unsuitable adventurers? Never! The fact of the matter is that the admixture of Occident and Orient was an unsuitable combination. The games stressed a European historical base and mythology. Even though the AD&D game monster roster ranges far afield, it is still of basically European flavor. The whole of these game systems are Occidental in approach, not Oriental—at least not in the sense of what is known as the Far East: China, Korea, Japan, and Mongolia.

The year 1980 had not arrived when I began thinking about a version of the AD&D game that would feature Oriental campaigns and characters. Good intentions aside, it has taken this long to achieve the desired goal, and enlisted the talents of both David "Zeb" Cook and Francois Marcela-Froideval in order to arrive as early as 1985. Because the game system has changed over the intervening years, the exact nature of the approach taken herein differs from that which was originally envisioned. I am convinced that the alteration is for the better, and as you partake of the information herein, and put it into play, I am as certain you will concur. *Oriental Adventures* is a completely new resource for the AD&D game system. As you develop your *Oriental Adventures* campaign, it is recommended that you remove the monk character class from the European-type campaigns. Why? Because what is found herein is superior and in the proper surroundings as well!

*Oriental Adventures* covers the classes of adventurers, weapons, armor, spells, magic, and even the special monsters that make the legend and myth of the Far East so rich and varied. Now it is possible to place the monk, for example, in the proper setting, a place where he will encounter samurai and sohei, combat spirit creatures, deal with bushi and wu jen. Of course, schools of fighting are covered. So are the differences in weapons between China, Japan, and so on. Culture is also stressed. Honor, dignity, training in social graces and ceremonies are as important to adventurers in this milieu as are experience points and magical treasure. Think about that for a moment.

In fact, this new book is aimed at providing players and Dungeon Masters with the material they need to develop the "other half" of their fantasy world, the Oriental portion. Once this has been accomplished, it will be possible for adventurers to roam the whole world, those from the Occident marveling over the mysteries of the East, while brave characters from the Orient journey to the West to learn about the strange and incredible lore which that land holds. Similarities will certainly serve to highlight the vast differences.

The purpose of *Oriental Adventures* is to bring a new facet to the overall game. It offers what is essentially a whole new world for development of different AD&D game campaigns. The mechanics and rules are basically the same. How could they be different? We are all humans. The professions are fairly similar, but different enough to be exotic. One the exotic becomes mundane, the time has arrived for cross-cultural adventuring. This single volume brings you not only the world of the Far East, but also the meeting of East and West when the fullness of time warrants such contact.

*Oriental Adventures* is a landmark work in the game system. It brings not only new information; this book adds a whole new world. As such, this is a wonderful event that brings enthusiasts the best of two worlds...literally. So with the broad concepts behind the volume understood, it is high time to stop wasting time upon a Foreword. Sit down, put your feet up, and prepare to enjoy yourself thoroughly as you read all the new material, and note the similarities too, in *Oriental Adventures*, the latest addition to the AD&D game system. One more thing: Don't spend too much time merely reading. The best part of this work is the play, so play and enjoy!



Gary Gygax  
September, 1985

# Introductions

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It is with great pleasure that I write this.

For one thing, I finally have the chance to introduce new readers and gamers to a long-time fascination of mine—the Orient. The Orient is rich in variety and diversification. Though there are similarities among its many lands, each land has its own unique outlook and style. This is part of what makes the Orient mysterious and exciting—the exploration and discovery of entirely different cultures. Thus, the *Oriental Adventures* book is broad in scope—it does not restrict itself to a single country or time period. Presented here is material drawn from Japan, China, Korea, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines. The historical periods that provide inspiration are equally broad—Heian, Kamakura, Sengoku, and Tokugawa Japan; Han, T'ang, Sung, and Ming China; ancient Korea; even the Mongol invasions.

The second pleasure in writing this comes from the reading I had to do to prepare. The *Oriental Adventures* project spurred me to read materials I would otherwise never have seen. Some of it was thrilling and some not. The variety of topics was huge—legends, folktales, literary epics, genealogical histories, philosophy, religion, poetry, architecture, land management, government, history, martial arts, sociology, anthropology, military affairs, economics, and fiction. The bulk of this material deals with Japan, with China a close second. This is not due to any oversight. Most of the material available deals with Japan, through the choice of various writers. From the standpoint of gaming, Japan's history and culture provides greater opportunities for adventure and advancement. Although often seen as a rigid society, Japan has had several periods of tumultuous upheaval where a person of any rank could make his name—the Sengoku period or the collapse of the Heian government being only two. Of course, anyone who looks carefully at China will find the same occurred there. However, fewer people cared to write about it.

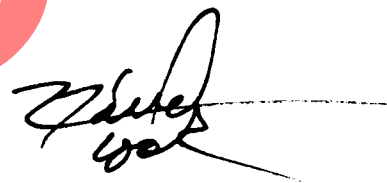
Thirdly, it is a great pleasure to write this because I get to rip into a new

challenge. In preparing *Oriental Adventures*, there were many goals to meet. Foremost of these was the interesting but conflicting demands of historical accuracy and fantastic imagination. There is very little point in doing a book about Oriental culture if the material is not accurate. But accuracy can often be unplayable or just unacceptable. Accuracy here would mean stricter class structures, less chance for player advancement and less adventure. It would mean more fiddly rules for little details that would get in the way of play. And rules that might apply to a Japanese culture would certainly be incorrect in a strict Chinese culture! Furthermore, the world presented had to be what people think the Orient is, not necessarily what it actually is. Thus, reference works and sources of ideas went beyond books and included popular Japanese movies about samurai and ninja, the whole family of Hong Kong kung-fu movies, comics, and even those endearing monster epics of giant reptiles and funny dinosaurs.

Fourthly, the *Oriental Adventures* book allowed me to create the framework of a new world—Kara-Tur. Throughout these pages are references to the lands of Kara-Tur—Shou Lung, T'i Lung, Kozakura, and more. Each is broadly modeled after a specific land and era in the Far East, allowing a huge diversity in the styles of play. As further products are released for the *Oriental Adventures* rules, there will be expansions and additional detail on the fictional continent of Kara-Tur. Of course, creating a new continent in your own campaign (and having your players discover it) is an equally lively and exciting approach.

Finally, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to write this Introduction for a personal reason—this is the last part of the book to be written. With these closing words, I have finished an exciting, challenging, and sometimes nerve-racking project. Take it and discover the lands of mystery contained inside.

Wahoo!



David "Zeb" Cook  
September 17, 1985

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Dungeon Masters and players: prepare yourselves to enter a whole new world—the world of *Oriental Adventures*! The material in this book will enable you to play the AD&D® game as you've never played it before.

In the lands of *Oriental Adventures*, characters are not judged solely on their prowess with sword and spell. Oriental characters' social skills and personal honor are just as important as their combat abilities. When was the last time politeness and proper manners really mattered in your campaign? How can characters associate with nobility if they know nothing of courts or court etiquette? How many AD&D characters worry about how their actions reflect upon their families and comrades? These and many other intricacies of social interactions and responsibilities are brought to light in this volume.

Don't get the idea that *Oriental Adventures* characters don't fight. Pages and pages of Oriental weapons and armor are described and illustrated here. From the favored weapons of the ninja to thin pieces of cloth that actually stop arrows, the arms and defenses of the Orient are yours in the lands of Kara-Tur. Have a favorite monster from Japanese films? Find it under Gargantua in the Monsters section! Want to learn a martial arts style or create a new style? You can do it in the new worlds opened up to you in *Oriental Adventures*!

Don't anyone tell Zeb, but he didn't write the last part of this book. This is the last part of *Oriental Adventures* to be put to paper. Steve Winter, the shogun of TSR editors, set off on his honeymoon (through the Orient, coincidentally enough) midway through this project and he passed the editorial katana on to me. A lot of late nights and deadline crunches later, I'm now able to breathe a sigh of relief.

Things are winding to a close as I write this. Most of the book is with the printer. My pals in Graphic Arts Services no longer scream and run away when I approach. Gasping noises from Jon Pickens's office indicate that he is finally surfacing for air after proofreading these pages for weeks. I no longer assume that the light at the end of the tunnel is just the headlamp of yet another oncoming train.

I'm happy that my job is done, but I'm happier still that you'll soon be enjoying the grand vistas opened to you by *Oriental Adventures*. Now that my task is ended, yours may begin. So strap on your o-yoroi, loosen your katana and wakizashi in their sheaths, and go out there and win one for the daimyo!



Mike Breault  
October 2, 1985

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