

The great country of Wa was settled by the last survivor of the Ochalean royal family and his guard. The pregnant wife of the youngest son and her guard were visiting her relatives when the Thyatian king committed his coup.

They realized that they had to disappear before they were killed themselves.

Over the next several centuries they had several villages from Ochalea and the Hinterlands disappear, to regroup on Oceania and start the country of Wa. Along the way a group of gnomes found them and became part of the country.

During the 1000 years since the coup, a separate nation developed, the Emerald Empire. Although humans are the predominant race in Wa, there are other races present.

Humans are the dominant race in Wa, as they are in the *Player's Handbook*. They rule the mighty Emerald Empire, though they are the youngest race of that empire. The humans of Wa group themselves into eight major and five minor clans, each tracing its ancestry to one of the original samurai and to the young prince from Ochaela who escaped to the island of Oceania. The members of these clans share a bloodline and a strong sense of heritage and identity.

Certain traits and tendencies, from physical characteristics to particular aptitudes and social roles, define each clan.

Clan designations, however, mean little to the masses of peasants and outcasts, lower-class humans whose only loyalty to the clans is in the form of the taxes they pay to the lords who rule and protect them. A heimin (peasant) farmer may live in Lion lands, send tithes of food to Lion castles, and rely on the Lion army for protection, but he is not a Lion—he is heimin. Criminals, actors, geisha, gamblers, the eta, and others whose professions make them unclean are known as hinin (outcasts). Like the heimins, hinins are not members of the great clans, though they or their ancestors might have been at one time. Ronins (samurai with no family and no clan), though they are technically members of the noble caste, also lie outside the clan structure.

Hengeyokai are intelligent, shape-changing animals, able to shift freely between human and animal forms, as well as a bipedal, animalistic form. Several sub-races exist, defined by the kind of animal form they can assume. They are typically found on the fringes of human-settled lands, where they can mingle in human form but retreat to solitude when they desire.

Hengeyokai are currently only found in Wa.

Korobokurus are dwarf like humanoids that live in barren wilderness areas where they seldom come into contact with humans. They live in simple villages, tending small farms in secluded areas. They typically avoid any contact or involvement in the affairs of the world outside their farms, but occasional individuals, driven by wanderlust or inspired by some contact with human civilization, find their way into human lands.

Korobokurus are currently only found in Wa.

Nezumi, or “ratlings” as they are often called by humans, are a race of bipedal ratlike humanoids. In Wa, they are an ancient race native to Oceania. Before the coming of the emperor and his samurai, the ratlings of Wa lived in the ruins of the last empires grand cities. On an apocalyptic day nezumi legend dubs “The Terrible Day When Air Became Fire and Heaven Fell From Its Perch to Crush Our Glorious Home Beneath Its Blackened Corpse,” the coming of the Shadow Dragons which destroyed Oceanian culture. The empire of the ratlings was destroyed and the Shadows was born. In the aftermath of that event, the ratlings have become hardy and wily scavengers, eking out a meager existence in the midst of Wa’s greatest horrors.

Spirit folk are the descendants of humans and various spirits of nature. Spirit folk have three distinct

racess—bamboo, river, and sea spirit folk. All tie very strongly to the natural world as well as to the society of humans. Spirit folk are currently only found in *Wa*.

Vanaras are a race of monkeylike humanoids, possessing brave hearts and inquisitive minds. Vanaras are currently only found in *Wa*.

Gnomes are present in *Wa*. They have a city/settlement in the mountains. They are part of the culture and have advanced the technology level of the empire far beyond that of other nations because they have had the blessing of the royalty.

Dwarves and Elves are present in the empire. They have played multiple roles throughout history because of their willingness to deal with the empire on a clandestine level with the rest of the world.

Dwarves: Whether the barbaric korobokurus are present in the campaign or not, standard dwarves are paragons of civilized culture in the lands of *Wa*. Their sense of honor equals that of the noblest human samurai, and their accomplishments in the art of war are no less impressive. Dwarves are master builders, and may have constructed your campaign's equivalent of the Great Wall of China. Their societies tend to be martial; feuds between dwarven warlords and their loyal samurai are all too common.

Elves: Elves in the lands of *Wa* are found either in pristine woodlands, secluded from the warfare and politics of human realms, or else in the very thick of those politics, as diplomats and courtiers in the halls of the daimyos. They are usually either very barbaric or very civilized—sometimes different elf cultures represent both extremes in the same campaign.

Gnomes: In cultures that revere elders and respect education, gnomes often find high station—though usually behind the thrones of power. Gnomes are the master bureaucrats of some societies in *Wa*, often tutoring younger humans in preparation for the examinations that are required to enter and advance in the complex machinery of government. They retain their traditional affinity for more concrete machinery as well, devising fireworks, kites, and clockwork items.

Half-Elves: The character and culture of half-elves in an *Wa* campaign depends largely upon the role of elves. If elves are civilized courtiers, then half-elves are extremely common, accepted among both humans and elves, and generally quite adept and maneuvering among both societies. If elves are reclusive and wild, half-elves are quite rare, and neither humans nor elves know quite what to do with them. In such a case, half-elves can be treated as poorly as half-orcs usually are.

Half-Orcs: Oddly enough, some societies in the lands of *Wa* accept orcs as equal members of a large and orderly nation. Such societies are rare, but they do exist. Most orcs, even in such munificent cultures, find themselves at the bottom rungs of society, unable to rise high in societies that prize intelligence and education. Half-orcs are nevertheless common in such societies, though they almost always come from common backgrounds. A half-orc's highest ambition is usually to serve as a temple or palace guard. In empires where eunuchs are important, many half-orcs become eunuchs, and even eunuch warlocks (see the prestige class description).

Other halflings are fierce nomads who ride shaggy warponies on the steppes just beyond civilized society. These warlike halflings may be the people whose invasions the dwarf built Great Wall was built to repel.