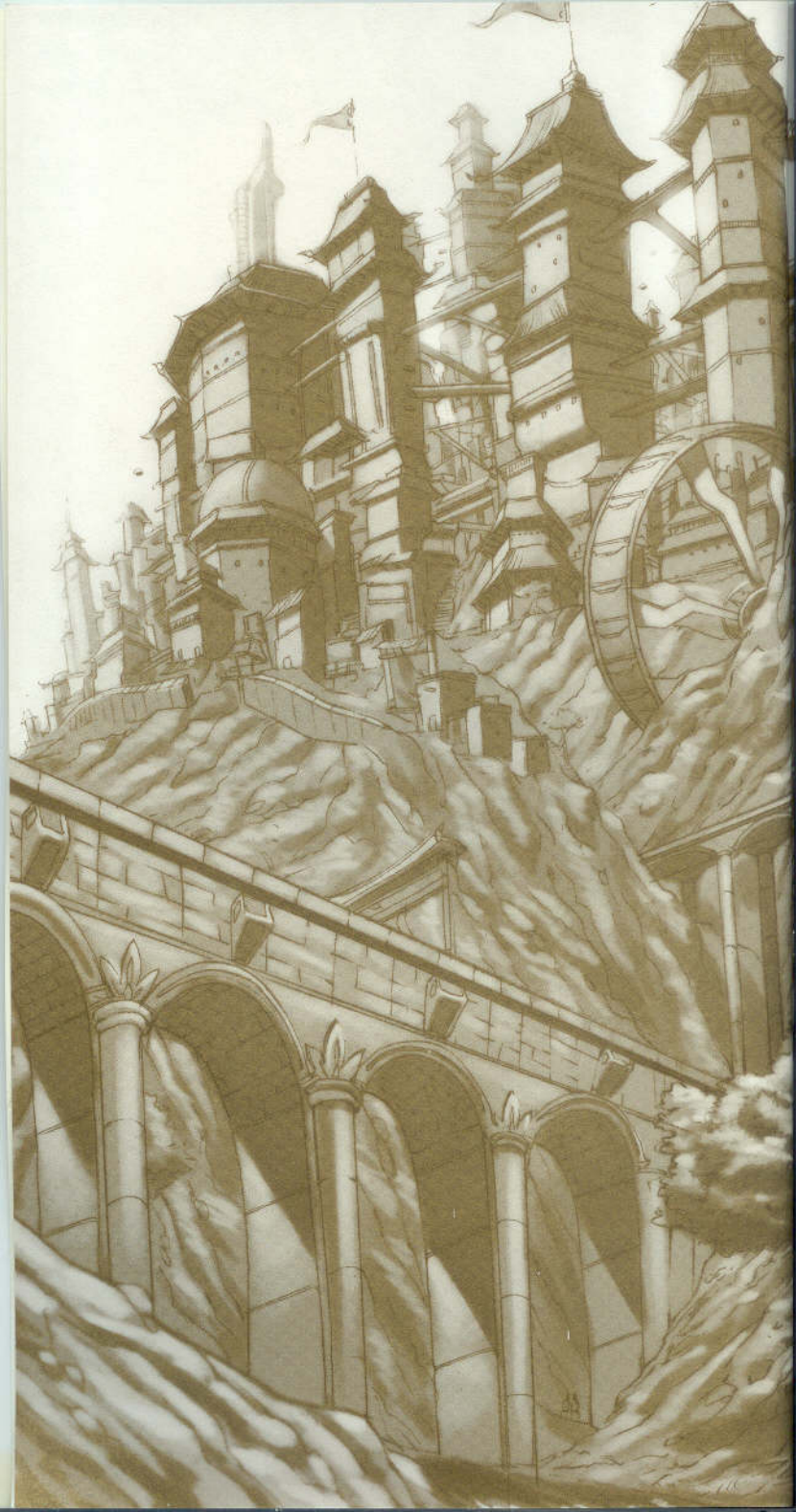


MERU

A Guidebook to the Exalted City



Chosen of the Unconquered Sun Edition, abridged





Welcome, Your Excellency!

By the grace of the Unconquered Sun, Your Excellency has come at last to dwell in Meru, the Exalted City. Your Excellency's presence here uplifts us all. The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities humbly presents this guidebook to both welcome Your Excellency to and prepare Your Excellency for a glorious new life at the heart of all Creation.

About this Guidebook

The tradition of the guidebook was established in Year 100 of Our Everlasting Glory, upon the transfer of the seat of the capital of the Realm from Rathess to the Exalted City. The original document is attributed to Her Most Luminous Excellency and Savior of Creation, Her Exalted Highness M-R-L-, may she live forever. That document, penned by Her Exalted Highness's own hand, praised the beauties of the White City, showing how none other was worthy to be the seat of Celestial rule.

Every year since that day, we honor that legacy by dutifully producing a new edition of this guidebook. The complete, unabridged edition of this text is available at the Library of the Deliberative or in the memory of I AM, who would be glad to converse at length with Your Excellency on any subject covered in this text.

About this Edition's Author

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities is humbled and honored that His Excellency Damarasak, the Student of Vows Made in Absentia, Deliberator in Good Standing, Chosen of the Unconquered Sun and member of the Eclipse Caste, has volunteered to pen this year's edition of our unworthy guidebook. By His Excellency's flawless reasoning, the observations and advice of a Chosen Exalt of the Unconquered Sun will prove invaluable as Your Excellency ascends to Your Excellency's rightful station among your Exalted peers.



Greetings, my Exalted peer, and welcome to Meru. I know well that the White City can seem intimidating and the duties of the Chosen can seem an impossible weight from the narrow mortal perspective you haven't yet shaken off. Nonetheless, the Unconquered Sun chose you for a reason. He'll put no burden on you that's too much to bear. In you, Our Lord invests the full power and the authority to expand the borders of Creation and rule it from its heart.

As for making your way in this overwhelming city of marble and adamant... that's where I come in.

I am Damarasak, the Student of Vows Made in Absentia, Chosen of the Unconquered Sun and member of the Eclipse Caste. My friends know me as Damar, an honor I hope you'll share with them someday. I was born, raised and Chosen in Meru. Although a rare few of my Solar peers can claim to know this city better than I do now, none knew it better when they were my age.

Now, in case you're only skimming this guide on your way to the nearest Public Offering Receptacle. I strongly urge you to reconsider. I'll know if you do offer it up, and my feelings will be terribly bruised. Instead, keep it and show it to me once we've been formally introduced. As a gesture of welcome, I'll draw my seal on it for you without a trace of irony. Then, if you return this signed copy to me at some point in the future, I'll gladly vote exactly as you request on a single upcoming Deliberative issue.

But that's enough about me for now. Once again, greetings and welcome to this, our Exalted City.

Damarasak
Student of Vows Made in Absentia

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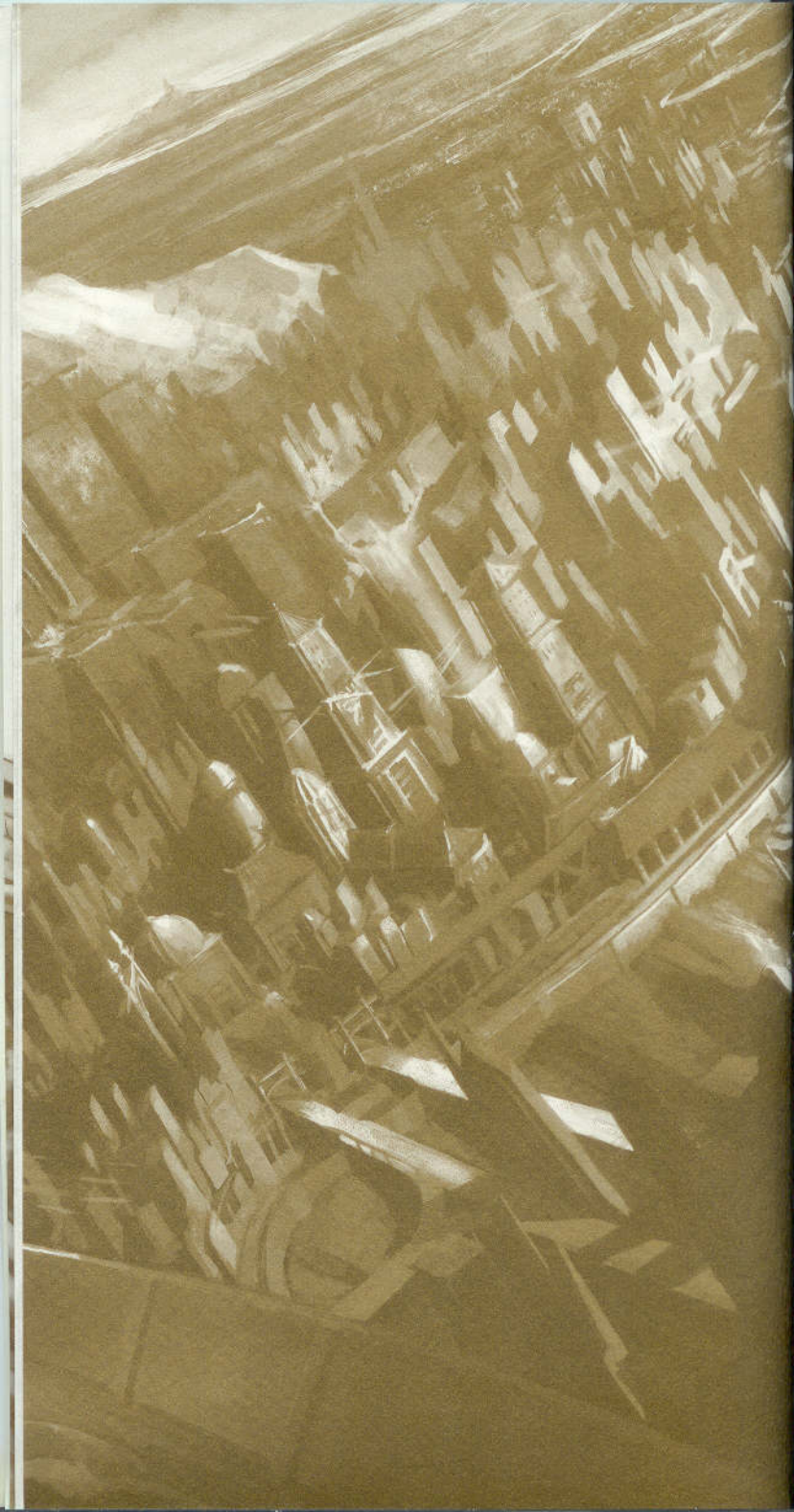
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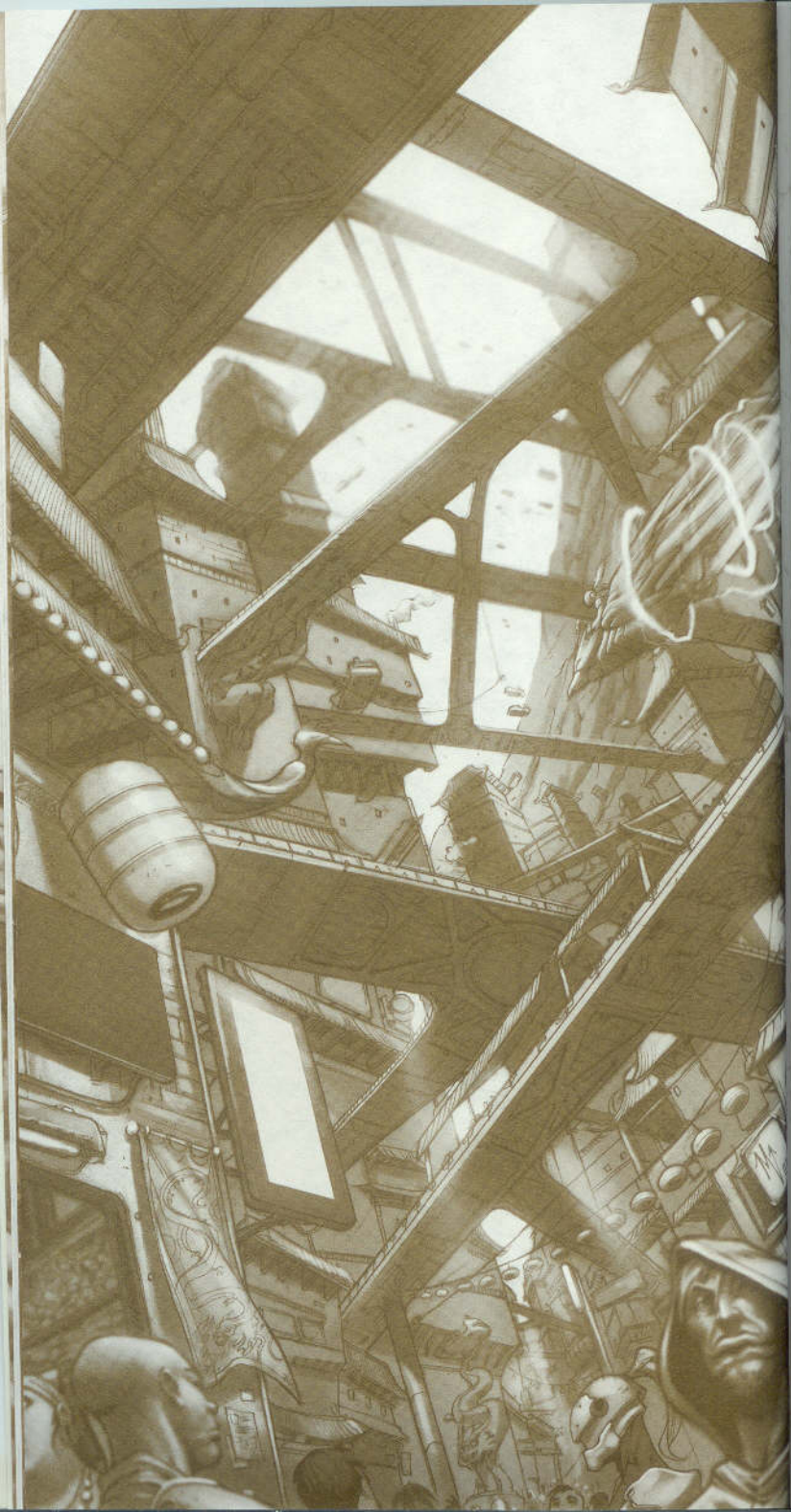
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CITY LIFE

If you had the divine fortune to be born and raised here as I was, you wouldn't need this guidebook. Since you're you, however, there are things you need to know about city life that might not have occurred to you. Yes, your life here will be one of ease undreamed of elsewhere. Yes, you'll have a staff of assistants, valets and other functionaries attending to your every need. Yes, every amenity and laborsaving invention known in Creation is at your beck and call here. Your life here won't be a hard one. But if you don't know the basic systems that make the wonders of city life available to you, you're no better in that respect than the teeming masses living beyond our shores. In fact, if you don't know simple things like where to find a hard mote, how to access I AM or where to park your skysled, you're actually quite worse off than the teeming masses who've lived here all their lives.



And just as a tip, don't think the locals will help you if you need it. They've been trained not to offer information to one of us as if we didn't already know it. If you stop some mortal on the street and ask him something, he's going to assume he's being tested on how well he understands his place in our civilization. If he actually stops groveling long enough to answer you, the best you're going to get is effusively polite directions to the nearest Interaction Kiosk.

Don't let this happen to you. It undermines the mortals' faith in us when they think we need them for anything. Worse, it makes you look like a know-nothing freshman Deliberator in a city where word travels fast.





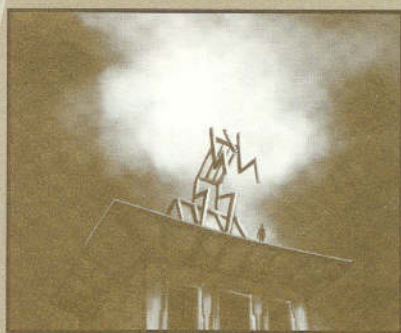
OUR CLIMATE

The locals of the Exalted City have a saying as regards the climate. It goes: "If you don't like the weather, you're on the wrong island." Every day in Meru is always the same dry, cloudless 25-degree perfection from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Every night is perfectly chilled, 20-degree stillness beneath an endless sea of stars, where auroras of the Earth Bole's ambient Essence dance with the ever-changing moon and the distant Maidens. Never will a gust of wind disturb your elaborate coiffure. Never will a raindrop darken your robes. Rain, as we say, is for farmers. Our sky mantis infrastructure grid sees to that.

Of course, exceptions prove the rule. The Little Cities replicate the weather systems of their homelands. Nature conservancies established around unclaimed demesnes are not included in the sky mantis grid. Certain resorts and attractions around the city are zoned for different weather conditions and operate within closed, autonomous weather sectors. But perfection reigns everywhere else—even in Quiet Meru.

WEATHER CHANGES

If the weather doesn't suit you, you have three options. (Four, if you count getting over it.) First, you can prop up a portable sky mantis tower over your manse and adjust the weather to your heart's content within your personal boundaries. Second, for a broader change, you can apply for an adjustment to the control pylon central to the sky mantis grid sector you frequent. (Such adjustments are costly and time-consuming, though, so the more political pull you have, the more likely your request will be granted.)



Third, you can put forth a motion in front of the Deliberative to have the entire sky mantis grid adjusted to your liking.

Trust me, though, when I say that if you didn't fight in The War, your motion isn't even going to be seconded. The weather in Meru is just the way the Senior Deliberators like it.





COMMUNICATION

The wondrous convenience of telecommunication within Meru cannot be overstated. Infallible/Messenger crystals are available at most Interaction Kiosks and in most parcel drop boxes, and they're available on order through I AM as well. You can also send messages anywhere in the Realm directly through I AM, though you'll have to wait until your intended recipient actually checks for sent messages. I AM can record voice and/or text at any Interaction Kiosk or from your resplendent personal assistant, or it can transmit information from a recorder of everlasting glories. For private or personal business, you can pick up prayer transceiver modules at any reasonably well-stocked store.



For delivery of packages and written correspondence, Meru offers a wide variety of private couriers. I AM has a listing of registered courier services, ranked by quality, but I prefer the Dexterous Midnight Runners, as they've proven themselves loyal, discreet and extremely punctual on many occasions. The Ministry of the Treasury's own Immaculate Order of Postal Carriers is doggedly reliable as well, despite being much slower than that of most private couriers. The Immaculate Order guarantees that it will get your package or letter to its destination undamaged. What it doesn't guarantee is confidentiality, so it's best not to send anything by post you don't want anyone but its intended recipient to see. Nonetheless, the Immaculate Order's deliveries are all free of charge to Solar Deliberators, as a show of respect to our station.

MONEY

Any legal currency that pays into the Order Confering Trade Pattern is valid and accepted in Meru. Whether you used jade, gossamer, silver, gold, salt or what have you back home, it doesn't matter. Unless you were from some forsaken barbarian scrapland that uses seashells, leaves or some other preposterous legal tender, your money is good here.

But none of us carry money.

What I recommend is immediately upon setting foot on the shores of the Blessed Isle proceed to the nearest Ministry of the Treasury currency exchange pagoda. (If you have access to an Infallible Messenger, you can arrange for one to meet you at your port of entry.) Once there, arrange to convert all of your worldly wealth into jade and deposit it in the Bank of the Treasury. Then—I can't stress this enough—get at least one hard mote. Any store that has access to I AM can use a personalized hard mote to verify your wealth and identity with the Bank of the Treasury. Just show it to one of the store's maneki neko spirits, and the transactions will sort themselves out. You won't even have to talk to anyone.

HARD MOTES

A hard mote is a rectangular sliver of solid Essence available at any Ministry of the Treasury pagoda or at the Bank of the Treasury itself. Simply feed a mote of Essence into a registered motic press, and it crystallizes into a slim, attuned wafer. (This service is free for Celestial Exalted.) You can personalize your hard mote with your name, face, family seal, anima banner icon or any other distinguishing symbol.

Any piece of civic technology that requires a commitment or expenditure of a single mote of Essence works as it should without that expenditure as long as you have your hard mote with you. The mote it cost you to make it isn't even committed into the wafer. The only time you have to commit a mote to a hard mote is if you want to allow someone not attuned to it to use it to access your wealth.



MANEKI NEKO SPIRITS

Every merchant in Meru employs one of these pushy, disingenuously obsequious spirits. When you walk into any reputable establishment, the first thing you'll see is a white or golden cat spirit wearing long robes and a coin medallion. (If you don't see him, don't worry. He'll be right with you.) Maneki neko can access bank records via I AM through their medallions for a one-mote tip. They're also discrete personal shoppers and shameless gossips.



THE PEER ECONOMY

In time, you'll find that actual money means very little to you. Once you've been around long enough, you'll have more money than you know what to do with. This, I can tell you, has already happened to most of your Exalted peers. Getting what you want from them will require more than money, especially here in Meru where anything they want is theirs for the asking. Therefore, in our



rarefied sphere, the coin of the realm (as it were) is service. Doing things for one another that no one else can do, or sharing access to things we alone control forms the foundation of our peer economy. Suitable peer commodities include access to magical materials or useful prodigies, mortal breeding stock, unique favors, voting influence and timely applications of our unique caste abilities.

Do not offer these things to anyone beneath you in station, however. Less refined commodities suffice for them—such as money, blessings or even simple acknowledgement. It's called the peer economy for a reason.

TRANSPORTATION

GETTING HERE

Arrangements to get you from your home to the Blessed Isle have already been made, as you've no doubt already been told by the Dragon-Blooded minders who've come to fetch you. (It's possible you're en route already.) But while you're busy signing off on the particulars of your arrival parade and your Banquet of All Peers, do spare some thought for your family, your staff and your belongings.

You'll be expected to live at least two years out of every five here on the Blessed Isle from now on, so if you intend to have the trappings of your pre-Exaltation life imported, you'll have to make those arrangements on your own. The Immaculate Order can transport your belongings, but the people are another story. There are three main ways to get here from wherever you came from: by sea, by air and by gate.



SEA

Water travel is the least expensive way to travel to Meru, though it's also the slowest. The larger the vessel is, the fewer routes it can take from the shore to the city itself. The larger a waterway is, the more traffic it's bound to have and the longer the passengers are going to have to wait to clear customs.

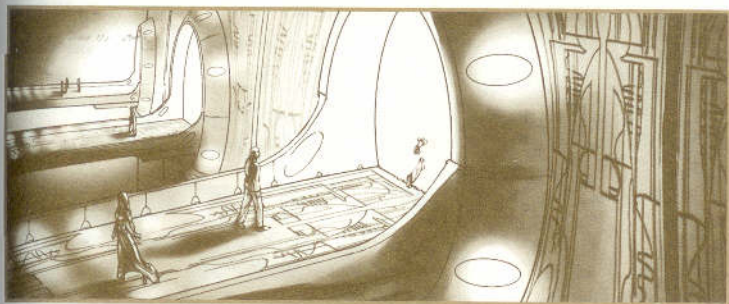
If you're moving your family and staff to an estate on the Blessed Isle, any port and inland waterway will suffice. If you want to bring them into Meru proper by boat, however, you have only three choices: the Caracal River (to the south), the Serpentine River (to the west) and the Dawn River (to the east). Each of those three rivers begins high up on the mountain, and canals connect each of them all throughout the limits of the Exalted City. If your guests don't mind changing vessels several times, they can travel from your home port of call almost to the front gate of your manse without spending more than an hour on dry land in between.





AIR

Travel by air is the safest, least exciting means of reaching the White City. Meru is open to traffic of any sort of flying vessel, from scudding passenger skyships to skysleds to personal cloud trapezes to Swift Spirits of Winged Transportation. Do be aware, however, that airspace over the Blessed Isle is restricted. All private aircraft are expected to land at coastal temples of Vanileth and present valid Ministry of Transportation documents. Most air traffic bound for Meru proper will be directed over I AM to the temple of Vanileth nearest the passengers' intended destination. You can also rent or buy a private airfield from the Ministry of Transportation.



GATE

Meru has the largest per-capita distribution of gates of auspicious passage of any city in Creation. In the Little Cities alone, you can barely cast a shadow without darkening one such gate. However, only we Celestial Exalted are allowed to schedule an appointment to use these devices through the Ministry of Transportation, which is a long and frustrating process that greatly favors your elder peers. Travel through a gate of auspicious passage is free, but avoiding the Ministry scheduling headache by taking some other form of transportation is well worth the cost.



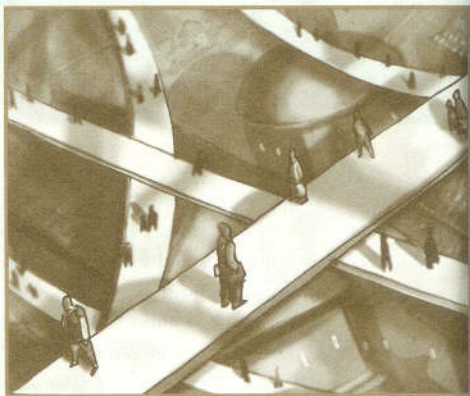


GETTING AROUND

Your options for travel within Meru are many and varied. I won't insult you with the details of how to use the public transportation systems that cover the city's ground and canal routes. If you do choose to use public transportation, keep your hard mote handy and leave your dignity in its small box at home.

At ground level, you can walk or ride a mount anywhere in the city you might want to go. Mortals are restricted to the pebbled gray paths that run alongside all the vehicle paths that branch off the main roads. You can take these gray roads yourself, if you're in a hurry, but it's gauche. In most cases, you should stick to the golden arteries marked on your city map. These wide, clean streets are reserved for Celestial Exalts and their retinues. (If you see unauthorized pedestrians or vehicles on a golden artery, you can report the infraction at the nearest convenient Stone Journeys shrine.) Land mounts and vehicles are available on order from the Ministry of Transportation through I AM or at any Ministry rental pavilion.

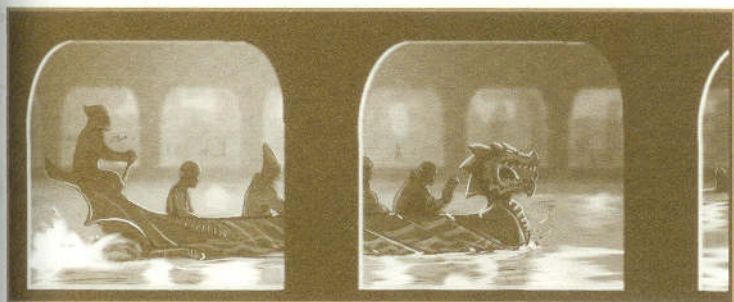
If ground travel doesn't appeal to you, you can ascend to the Web instead. The Web is a network of adamant loobridges that spans vast portions of the city 100 feet above street level. (Only Exalted pedestrian traffic is allowed on the Web.) To use it, you can literally walk on the right-hand side or glide on an Essence-powered conveyor on the left. Each strand of the web goes only one way, though, so pay attention to the signs at each nexus before stepping out and making a fool of yourself.



Should even the Web not be high enough above it all for you, most of the tallest buildings in the city sport takeoff and landing balconies for all forms of air travel. All Ministry buildings offer disposable transcendent phoenix pintons, windblades or belts of aerial mobility. More buildings than not have mooring masts for skyships on top. Rare is the building in



Meru that doesn't have an aerial rickshaw, skysled or warbird platform on the roof as well. Many even have private balconies for the casting of various air-transportation spells. The Ministry of Transportation does prefer that those of us with access to air vehicles remain above rooftop level in flight—for what that preference is worth.



If you'd like to travel within the city by canal, don't just walk to a pier and get on the first flat-bottomed boat full of mortals you see. (Just because you used to be one of them doesn't mean you have to travel like them anymore.) Also, unless you're trying to impress someone, don't feel obliged to reserve a private gondola either. Simply go to the nearest Water Journeys shrine, show it your hard mote, tell it how many are in your party, and wait. Within a minute, a Ministry of Transportation skiff will materialize with a Pilot of Water Journeys ready to serve you. These skiffs might not be the sleekest, fastest or prettiest boats on the water, but they can travel on any river or canal in the city, and any vessel not carrying one of your Solar peers must yield the right of way to them.

HOUSING

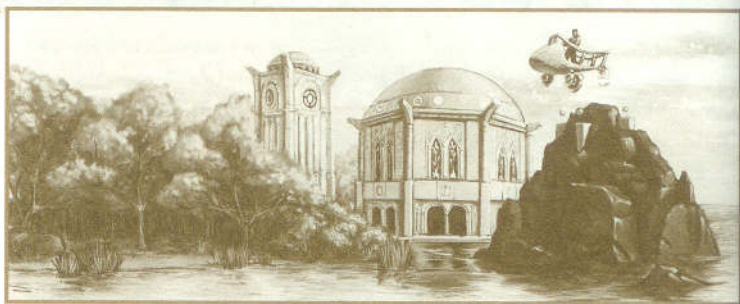
As I mentioned before, you'll be expected to live at least two out of every five years with us on the Blessed Isle. That rule has been in existence as long as the Deliberative. (In fact, it was one of the Deliberative's concessions to Solar Queen M-r-l- that convinced her to step down as Creation's sole ruler.) But just because you have to live here, that doesn't mean you have to live like a peasant.



YOUR CITY MANSE

One of the perquisites of coming here as a new member of the Solar Host is that a fully staffed and stocked palatial manse is waiting for you in the Exalted City. You have your choice, in fact, of all the vacant manses on the mountain. Your Sidereal advisor will sort through the numerous listings with you once you've arrived, helping you choose the size, décor and aspect of your new city home. As a word of advice, though, don't expect to simply apply for and be granted a richly appointed Solar-aspected manse in the Zenith Ring of the city. Most of them already belong to your elder peers, and attunement rights to the rest are bound up in endless probate arbitration. As a freshly reincarnated Exaltation, you'll most likely have to settle for one of the many perfectly nice Earth-aspected manses farther down the mountain's slopes.

Granted, you'll still be living in a palace in the White City, but there are palaces and there are palaces.



YOUR BLESSED ISLE ESTATE

In addition to your city manse, you're also entitled to an estate elsewhere on the island with its own RPCs to govern. Manses outside our city limits tend to be slightly less powerful, but the selection of décor, location, aspect and community culture is broader. Competition for choice real estate is not so fierce on the rest of the Blessed Isle as it is on the mountaintop.



MERU INHERITANCE LAWS

Although you carry the Exaltation of a Lawgiver who was granted and accumulated property in his or her long life, your new incarnation has no legitimate claim to any of that property. Things were different just three short centuries ago, but alas how times do change.



Now, what the Deliberative grants upon Exaltation, the Deliberative will appropriate upon your death and either reassign to a new Exaltation or fold into some public works sorcery or technical project. If you want to leave a manse to your family, your Lunar or even your next incarnation, you'll have to buy a demesne of your own and build one on it.



YOUR HOME ABROAD

Your previous incarnation was in charge of a large principality in Creation that extends well beyond the Blessed Isle's shores. Now that you've Exalted, a similar burden of governance falls on you (and through you, on your chosen Dragon-Blooded daimyos). It might be the same region or one farther from the Blessed Isle, depending on how choice a position the remote principality is where you're expected to be. You're allowed to have as many grand palaces throughout that principality as you wish, but the Treasury isn't going to just give them to you. You'll have to raise domestic revenue to fund construction of homes abroad.



WORSHIP

Every neighborhood in Meru has at least one all-purpose temple in it where Exalted and mortal alike may offer their respects to the gods of Yu-Shan whose devotion to their proper duty upholds the foundation of this world we rule. (The schedule of official holy days and recognition ceremonies at these shrines is determined every Calibration for the year to follow.) Every diocese has at least one temple dedicated to each of the Five Maidens, to Luna and to the unified Elemental Dragons. Most importantly, each of the five major archdioceses of Meru is home to one of Creation's preeminent temples to the Unconquered Sun.

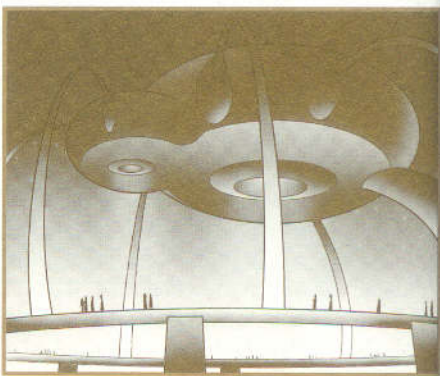
THE RADIANT TEMPLE OF THE BRONZE TIGERS

Located in the Evening Shadow Archdiocese, this temple stands astride the Dawn River. Its eastern wall and its roof are made entirely of Chiaroscuro glass, allowing the glory of the rising sun to illuminate its worshipers all morning. When viewed from the Dawn River delta, the bronze tiger statues that stand to either side of this temple appear to support the summit of Mount Meru between them. When the Year's Dawning parade begins after every Calibration, these bronze tiger statues descend from their place and lead the festivities.



THE INGENUOUS TEMPLES OF THE COPPER SPIDERS

This name refers to two identical temples—one in each half of the Twilight Archdiocese—built in the shape of enormous pattern spiders. Each temple is located at the north and south nexus of the Web footbridge network. During the Autumn Dirge Reminiscence, these temples descend from the Web on filaments of Essence and lead the march to Hero Monuments Park.



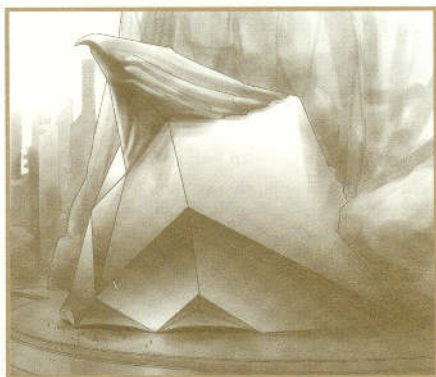
THE EXCLUSIVE TEMPLE OF THE IRON WOLF

The entrance to this temple is hidden near the western base of Mount Meru in the deepest black heart of the Morning Shadow Archdiocese, well away from the imposing, featureless temple itself. Only members of the Night Caste are allowed past the gates of this forbidding violet-and-gray edifice, and they do not speak of what rites are conducted there.



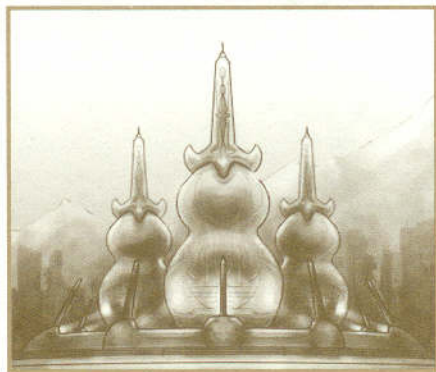
THE SILENT TEMPLE OF THE QUICKSILVER FALCON

This temple is located within the black crown of the Eclipse Archdiocese, at the pinnacle of Quiet Meru. Our worship services are often silent meditations on the rotating solar corona that hovers above our altar. On an unrelated note, our temple resonates with our caste ability to bind a speaker to any oath he makes aloud while he stands within its confines, and the solar corona flares whenever an oath is spoken in the temple.



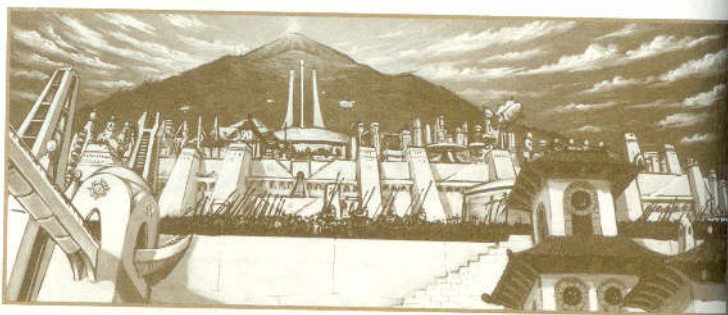
THE ETERNAL TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN BULL

The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull, built at one of the highest stable points in the city proper, is the central seat of our worship of the Unconquered Sun. This vast edifice of gold, amber glass and white marble reflects Our Lord's glory to all points of Creation from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. With the right equipment, every point in Creation is visible from the top of this temple's highest spire.



RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES IN MERUJ

The most ardent God-Tending Itinerants spend every day traveling from temple to shrine to shrine to temple, celebrating some noteworthy god's holy day. This guidebook is no place to try to list every minor religious event in our city. I AM can provide you this year's comprehensive list. You can, however, count on the following ceremonies and services taking place regularly:



SOLAR MASS

Every temple of the Unconquered Sun, from your parish temple to the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull itself, holds mass four times daily: at dawn, at midday, at sunset and at midnight.



ASCENDANCY

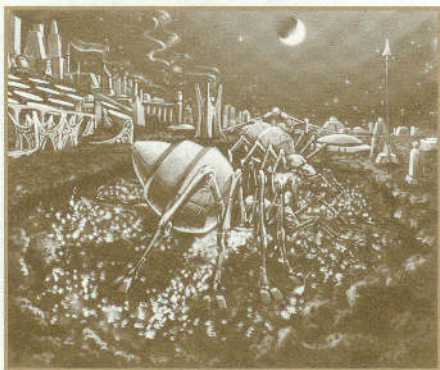
Ascendancy is the year-long festival that occurs every 25 years in celebration of our victory over the Primordials. Each Ascendancy celebrates the contributions of one of the Solar castes to the war effort, lionizing survivors of that caste from that era and venerating those who fell in the conflict or have fallen since. The Victory Parade—consisting of enslaved demons, paradestridders, captured behemoths, visiting gods, available Solar heroes and more—winds its way from the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull, down around the Mountain to the base over the course of that year.

FOUNDERS' DAY

This holiday celebrates the founding of the Solar Deliberative in Year 109 of our Everlasting Glory, as well as the grace of Solar Queen M-r-l- who stepped down to make way for it.

AUTUMN DIRGE REMINISCENCE

This somber march commemorates Celestial Exalted heroes who have fallen in service to or defense of Creation. The march begins from two separate points (beneath each of the Ingenious Temples of the Copper Spiders) and converges on Hero Monuments Park in the Morning Shadow Archdiocese. It takes place on the night of the first crescent moon in the month of Ascending Water.



REINCARNATION FESTIVAL

You'll see this going on when you arrive. Whenever a destined Celestial Exalt awakens to his power, a week-long welcoming festival is held, culminating in the Banquet of All Peers at the Victory Pavilion.

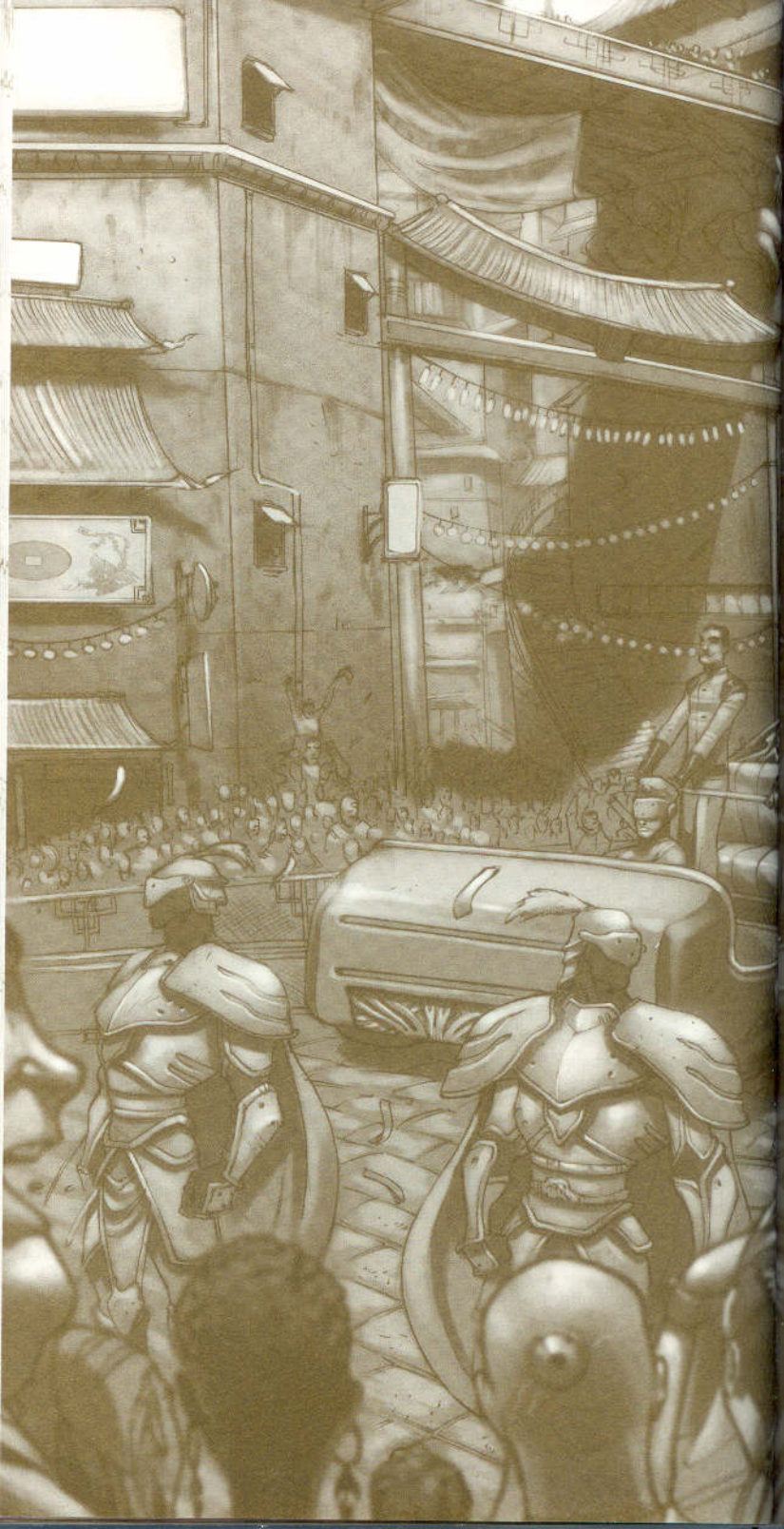
CALIBRATION

During this ill-omened period of the year, it's traditional for every Solar Exalt in Meru to withdraw to the Eclipse Archdiocese for a period of reflection and meditation. A feast is held every night in the Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation. Meanwhile, Calibration is the only time during which mortals are allowed to set foot on the golden pathways normally reserved for us.



YEAR'S DAWNING

After Calibration when we emerge from the Eclipse Archdiocese, we hold a parade around the outer perimeter of the Zenith Ring. Year's Dawning lacks the pageantry of an Ascendancy parade, but it's still a nice gesture. It reassures the rest of Meru (and Creation) that we are still strong and everlasting.





THE CITY IN BRIEF

The Exalted City is divided into five archdioceses, each subdivided into dioceses and parishes and neighborhoods. The archdioceses are as follows, corresponding to the diagram at right:

THE ZENITH ARCHDIOCESE



Also known as the Zenith Ring, this archdiocese is the crown of our holy mountain, and the seat of our rule over all Creation.

THE TWILIGHT ARCHDIOCESE



This archdiocese is split in twain, corresponding to the north and south slopes of Mount Meru. Within this divided district are our foremost academies and temples of divine manufacture.

THE DAWN ARCHDIOCESE



This archdiocese covers the area of the eastern slope of Mount Meru not already part of the Zenith Ring or either half of the Twilight Archdiocese. This archdiocese is also known as the Evening Shadow Archdiocese.

THE NIGHT ARCHDIOCESE



This archdiocese covers the area of the western slope of Mount Meru not already part of the Zenith Ring or either half of the Twilight Archdiocese. This archdiocese is also known as the Morning Shadow Archdiocese.

THE ECLIPSE ARCHDIOCESE



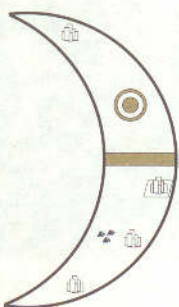
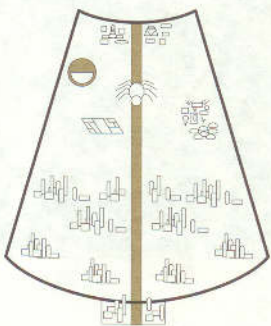
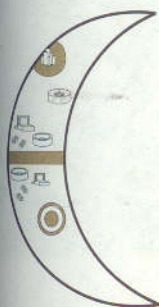
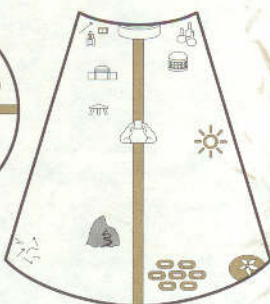
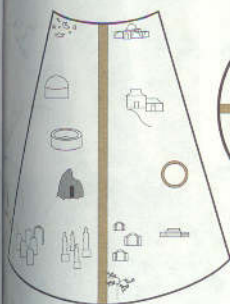
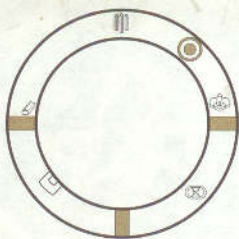
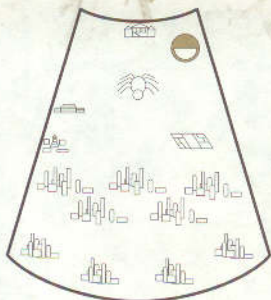
The center of the Eclipse Archdiocese lies within the crown of Mount Meru beneath the surface of the Zenith Ring. It is separate from the Quiet Meru of mortals and the deeper caves of the Jadeborn. The eastern and western suburban areas covered by the mountain's shadow at its sharpest relief are also part of our district.

- Zenith Ring
- The Ruling Palace of Meru
 - Crown Boulevard
 - The Crown Residence of the Solar Queen
 - The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull
 - The Order Conferring Trade Nexus
 - Sky Mantis Garden
 - The Birthplace of Rivers Demesne
 - The Holy Peak
- The Twilight Archdiocese
- Northern Slope:
- The Palaces of the Divine Ministers
 - The Manufactory Districts
 - The Institute of Biological Improvement
 - The Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy
 - The Library of the Deliberative

- The Northern Marketplace
 - The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spider
- Southern Slope:
- The Palaces of the Divine Ministers
 - The Manufactory Districts
 - The Southern Marketplace
 - The Academy of Divine Enlightenment
 - The Blessed Menagerie of the Exalted City
 - The Conservancy of Unexpected Little Forms
 - The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spider

The Dawn Archdiocese

- The Thousand-Forged Dragon Aerie
- The Sunflower Mirror Maze
- Hero Monuments Park
- The Eye of Meru Balcony
- The Proving Grounds



The Lotus School



The Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse



The Heavenly Unity Service



The Victory Pavilion



The Waistrider Museum



The Radiant Temple of the Bronze Tigers

The Night Archdiocese



Total Rejuvenation Hospital



The Broken Gateway



Solar Queen Meru's Tomb



The Dragon's Graveyard



The Fallen Stars Memorial



Turning Cycle Hallowed Grounds



The Dreaming Archer Resort



The Hanging Gardens of Meru



The Ortery



Echoing Glory Arena



The Exclusive Temple of the Iron Wolves

The Eclipse Archdiocese



The Yu-Shan Embassy



The Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation



The Bank of the Treasury



Celestial Expeditions



The Silent Temple of the Quicksilver Falcon



The Singing Garden



The Auru-Lai Theater District



Little Opal Spire



Little Rathess



Little Clepsys



Little Chiaroscuro



Little Malleas





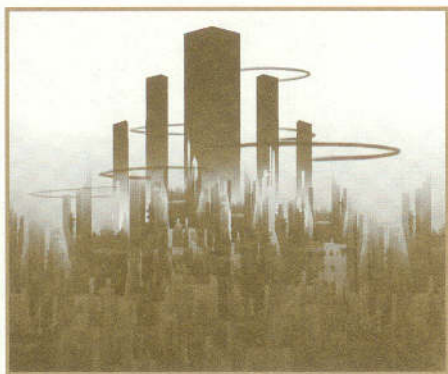
THE ZENITH ARCHDIOCESE

THE HEIGHT OF OUR CIVILIZATION

Within the Zenith Ring, no shadow falls at midday. Under the unblinking eye of the Unconquered Sun stands the center of our worship, the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull. From these lofty heights do we rule Creation in the Senate Chamber of the Deliberative. Our Meru homes are here. It is the highest, most holy heart of this world we rule.

THE RULING PALACE OF MERU

What was once the banquet complex for the Carnival of Meeting is now the capitol of our government. It consists of one tower of ivory, surrounded by five structures with dome ceilings, supported by sturdy arches. The tower houses the Senate Chamber of the Deliberative and has no roof so that we may conduct the business of ruling Creation beneath the approving gaze of the Unconquered



Sun. The surrounding domes house the suites and offices of the Deliberators and those whose work supports us. From the northernmost dome in this pentagon, and counting clockwise, they include the Solar Dome, the Lunar Dome, the Sidereal Dome, the Terrestrial Dome and the Banquet Hall. It is in the halls and colonnaded breezeways between these domes that most of the deal-making and power-brokering that informs our judgment in session is done.

The Senate Chamber proper consists of the Senate floor and its surrounding galleries. Those not of Celestial rank are not allowed onto the floor from the galleries, though any recognized speaker may address the assembly from the projector stations in the gallery. The floor is divided by Celestial rank. Our circle of rulership stations takes up the center ring. Arrayed around us is the Great Circle, containing the Crescent of the Lunar Society and the arc of our Sidereal advisors.

TIPS FOR NEW DELIBERATORS

- Don't sit in anyone else's station of rulership (your Sidereal advisor can show you which station is yours)
- Don't presume to interrupt any of your elder Solar peers
- Don't presume to correct any of your elder Solar peers
- Be aware that your vote is a commodity to be traded by your elders
- Using Charms in session isn't forbidden, but there's no discreet way to do so
- The Lunars, Sidereals, Terrestrials, gods and mortals in attendance can say whatever they wish, but remember that only our votes carry any weight

CROWN BOULEVARD

Crown Boulevard is actually a network of golden streets and private canals that encircles Meru in the center of the Zenith Ring. The land this network incorporates is reserved for our in-city manses. Solar-, Air- and Earth-aspected manses are available here, provided by the Celestial Housing Authority. Uncapped demesnes are available at auction as well, though you must have the design of any



future manses on those sites approved by the Housing Authority. Manses built on Crown Boulevard must be not only geomantically sound, but they must harmonize geomantically with the rest of their neighborhood as well.



THE CROWN RESIDENCE OF THE SOLAR QUEEN

If you can imagine the Crown Boulevard as a single manse, this palatial estate is the hearthstone of that manse. This cyclopean fortress and the vast forest conservancy that surrounds it was once the seat of Solar power and home of Solar Queen *M-r-l-*. Today, it's only the latter, though it's no less impressive. It is the largest single manse in the Zenith Ring, capping a nigh-untamable demesne of Solar-aspected Essence. All Solar Exalted once had private chambers here as well as elsewhere in Crown Boulevard. Only those who are as old as Solar Queen *M-r-l-* still retain that honor, however. Those who have died and whose Exaltations have been reincarnated are not allowed within the Crown Residence's expansive grounds.



THE ETERNAL TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN BULL

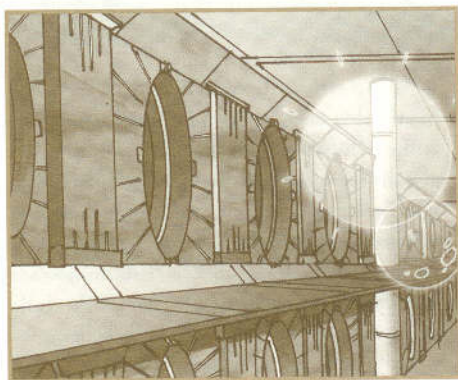
Our prime temple honoring Our Lord stands at a slightly higher stable altitude than the Ruling Palace, diametrically opposed to the capitol across Mount Meru's peak on the north side. A private balcony has been reserved for you, accessible from the Web.

TEMPLE ETIQUETTE

- Do not look in the Hierophant's eyes
- Do not look upon the Unconquered Sun when the Hierophant does so
- Do not expose your anima in the Hierophant's presence
- Do not let your caste mark flare unless the Hierophant does so first and commands you to do so
- Do not speak the Hierophant's name aloud in the presence of mortals

THE ORDER CONFERRING TRADE NEXUS

Formerly a parlor where the gods could remotely monitor the progress of the Games of Divinity, this squat complex of white marble serves a more important purpose now. Within is the central control hub and holographic monitoring chamber of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. The complex offers convenient gates of auspicious passage to Creation's primary trade nexuses and is linked by tunnel to the Bank of the Treasury in the Eclipse Archdiocese.





SKY MANTIS GARDEN

The Sky Mantis Garden is the control center of the sky mantis infrastructure grid. Grounded in the constant temperance of Earth-pected Essence Mount Meru provides, the sky mantis infrastructure keeps our skies routinely clear and our weather pleasantly balmy. Yet the Garden itself is anything but. A tour of the Garden's towering Essence-accumulators and coordination antennae reveals the fluid chaos of the natural weather patterns it keeps at bay, with pouring rain, leaping lightning, scouring wind and battering hail. Once per season, Saechan the Storm Conductor puts on a performance at the Sky Mantis Garden that is not to be missed.



THE PAGODA SKYWAY OF THE MINISTRIES OF ORDER

Most of the Air-pected manses of the Zenith Ring are devoted to powering the fleet of multi-story traveling pagodas that make up the office buildings of the Ministries of Order. Since mortals make up the overwhelming majority of our governmental bureaucracy but they aren't allowed access to most of the roads and canals that crisscross this archdiocese, these broad, elevated streets of adamant have become the primary arteries of inter-diocese traffic. These glimmering streets are restricted to Ministry pagoda traffic, though this restriction does not apply to us.





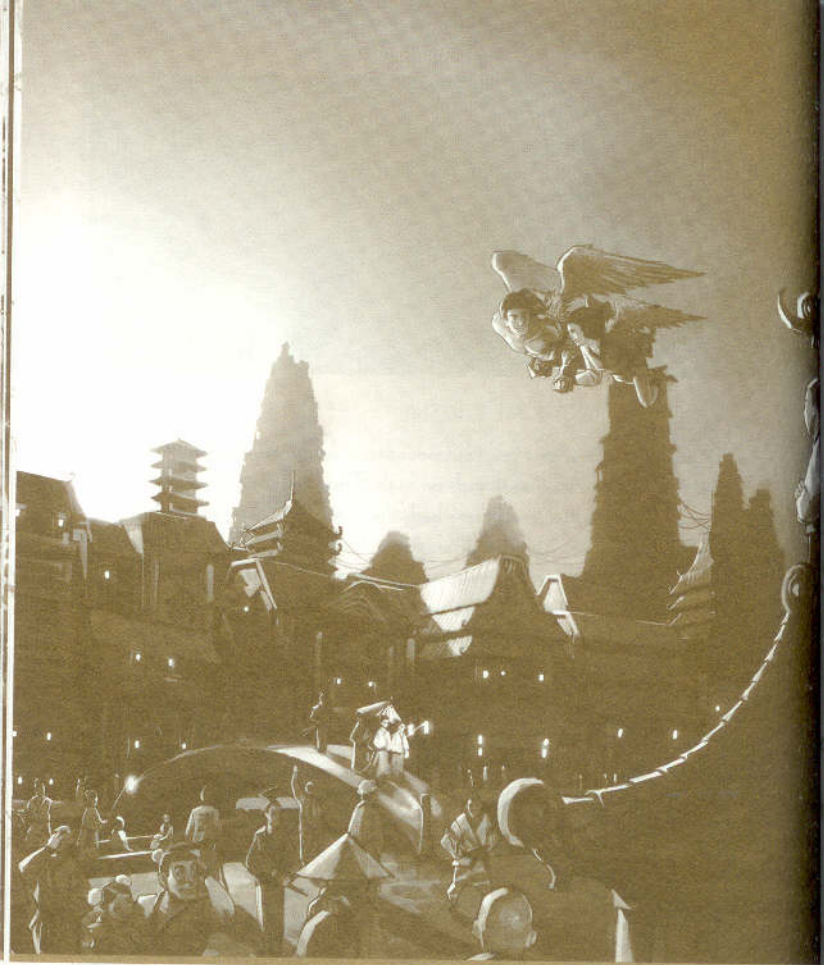
THE BIRTHPLACE OF RIVERS DEMESNE

Unlike those on smaller, less important mountains, the rivers that adorn Mount Meru do not trickle down from snowmelt on high. There never has been snow on the peak of Mount Meru. (Even if there had, the temperature at which we keep the weather would have melted it all off long ago.) In fact, the Serpentine River, the Caracal River and the Dawn River all spring from the same place, the Birthplace of Rivers Demesne. This demesne is, by default, the highest altitude at which a Water-aspected demesne exists in Creation. No attempt has ever been made to cap this demesne, per the dying wish of the last Terrestrial scion of the Takohashi-no-Caraku clan—most of whom fell defending a wounded, recuperating Ré-Kia from Lykkennan, the Cavern That Devours Cities, in the Primordial War.



THE HOLY PEAK

The Holy Peak is the most powerful uncapped demesne in Creation. It is there that the Essence of our entire mountain coalesces into one luminous bead before hurling itself upward to splash against the night sky into the fractal aurora that always glows over Mount Meru. My wife likens this elemental process to water eternally dripping from a stalactite—only viewed upside down. She would not be so poetic, I think, if she had ever visited the gaudy tourist ghetto that has bloomed at the summit of the main approach to the Holy Peak. What once was a sacred place now throngs with mortal God-Tending Itinerants and off-duty Dragon-Bloods who pay more attention to each other than they do to the site they've come to witness.



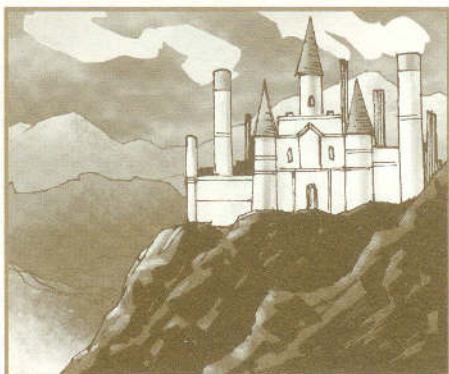
THE TWILIGHT ARCHDIOCESE

HOLDING BACK THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE

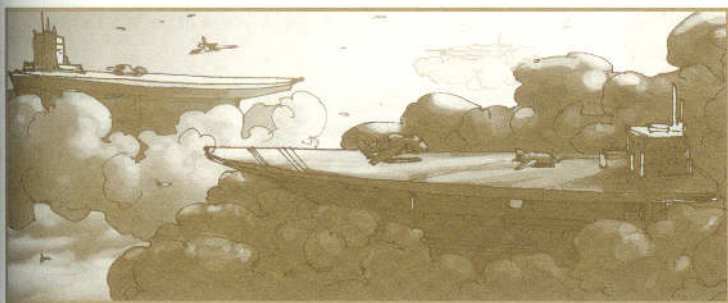
The northern and southern slopes of our mountain make up the Twilight Archdiocese. It is here that our most prestigious centers of learning and our most advanced magical and scientific laboratories stand. It was into the Twilight Archdiocese that I AM was installed. It was in the Twilight Archdiocese that the thousand-forged dragons that protect Creation were first constructed. Here it was that the heart of the Sword of Creation was first forged. Ever more esoteric and fantastic wonders are born (or at least conceived) there every day.

THE PALACES OF THE DIVINE MINISTERS

In the foothills of the northern and southern slopes of the Twilight Archdiocese stand the former homes of bygone allies—the Divine Ministers of the Primordial Autochthon. Part cathedral, part manufactory, these queer structures of brass and jade and strange carbon alloys are wreathed in captured lightning, glimmering Essence and vented steam. Active at all times of the day and night, these facilities are

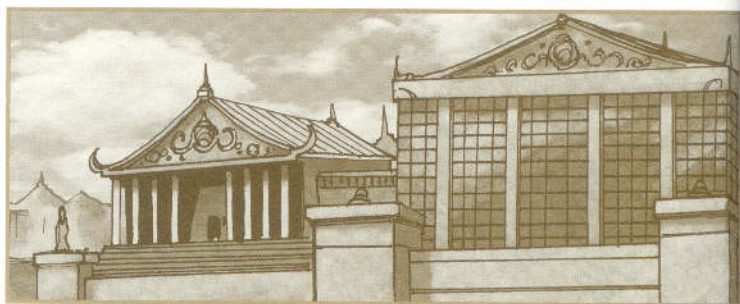


capable of producing components for everyday wonders in quantities unequalled elsewhere on the Blessed Isle, though they do so through automated mechanisms that mimic biological processes. Automaton, elementals, enslaved demons and apprentice Exalted engineers maintain and upgrade the machinery within the palaces, working to make Creation ever more comfortable. Automaton tour guides are available in the narthex of each palace.



THE MANUFACTORY DISTRICTS

Much of the ugliest work of modern-day manufacture is handled either off the mountain or deep within Quiet Meru where the unpleasant byproducts and laborers can't bother anyone. The construction of many of the wonders to which we've all grown so accustomed, however, relies on components produced at the Palaces of the Divine Ministers. Since many of those components can be produced only at the palaces and are too delicate or volatile to transport far, other less sophisticated factory cathedrals have been constructed around the palaces. These installations make up a manufactory district that sprawls over the foothills and lower slopes of the Twilight Archdiocese. It is there that mass-produced components are assembled into the everyday wonders that we take for granted—from our city's Interaction Kiosks to your home's thousand comforts lounge to your child's resplendent personal assistant to our navy's cargo preservation spindles. The northern manufactory district is home to the Blessed Isle's largest air wharf; the southern district relies on its Caracal River port to deliver its finished wonders to all Creation.



THE NORTHERN SLOPE

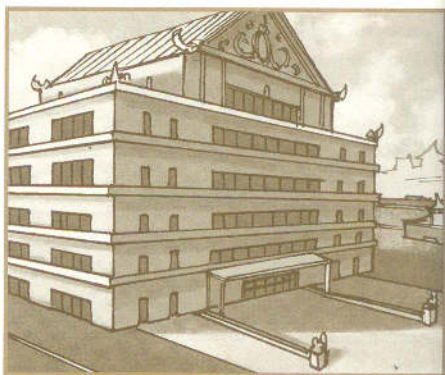
THE INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT

I list this attraction primarily as a curiosity, as it isn't terribly likely you or I will ever have need of the fruits of the research conducted there. Professors at this institute are pioneering the bizarre field of "biothaumaturgy." Unlike those who practice traditional healing arts or can perform the healing Charms of the Exalted, biothaumaturges study ways to augment damaged or weak tissue with technomagical apparatuses. Their literature suggests that, in time, advancements will allow biothaumaturges to replace organs and appendages entirely—even perfectly healthy ones! Such talk is exactly as frightening as it is exciting, which I suppose is true of the infancy of every inspired field of science.

There is one novelty that this institute has produced thus far that's already won widespread acceptance: the skin mount amulet. These trinkets allow you to socket a hearthstone right into your flesh without having to attune the trinket, and they provide a greater return on your attunement to your manse. Even better, the designers craft them with detachable faceplates that you can change out to better accessorize with your wardrobe. Professionally made ones cost as much as two hearthstone amulets, but they're well worth it in my opinion.

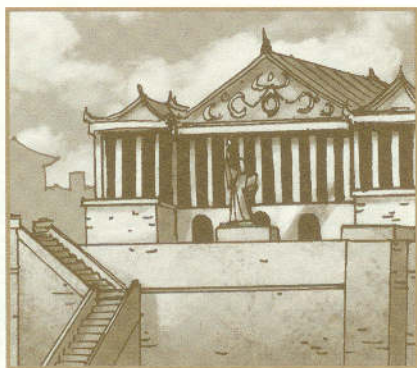
THE ACADEMY OF VOCATIONAL THAUMATUROY

Downslope from the aforementioned institute is the Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy. It is here that skilled mortals who lack the divine sanction to study the more enlightened arts and sciences eventually wind up, learning such skills as Interaction Kiosk repair, aerial rickshaw maintenance, alchemical brewing and demon-grooming and care.



THE LIBRARY OF THE DELIBERATIVE

The highest point in the Twilight Archdiocese's northern slope that borders the Zenith Ring is the vast Library of the Deliberative. Here is kept every memory crystal, dreamstone, omniscient literary advisor, scroll, book and stone tablet bearing official Deliberative and Ministries of Order information. In the deepest archives are also stored the written edicts of Solar Queen *M-r-l-*, the original charter of the Deliberative and even the diary of Brigid. The Library is likewise home



to acre upon acre of immaculate warehouses full of copies of works of art in all media. Replicas of the greatest works of literature, music, sculpture, architecture and even academia are at your disposal here, and legions of clockwork efficacy servitors scurry around the endless racks and rows of storage space like pattern spiders over the Loom of Fate.

Gates of auspicious passage connect our library to the even larger Library of Sperimin and the Great Library of Denandsor, though use of those gates is by appointment only. Contact your Sidereal advisor to arrange an appointment.

THE NORTHERN MARKETPLACE

The lower half of the northern slope of the Twilight Archdiocese upslope from the manufactory district consists of the insulating layer of the northern marketplace. The marketplace's lowest levels—with the largest access tunnels to Quiet Meru and conveniently within driving distance of the air wharves—see more traffic than anyplace else in Meru. The mortal workforce throngs over this area, visiting the enormous commercial centers that supply the average person's everyday needs. It was thought at one point that by offering supplies in bulk and reducing costs on goods that were so easy to mass produce, we could reduce the frequency with which mortals would need to emerge from Quiet Meru to restock. This was an inaccurate assumption, to say the least.



The higher up the slope one travels, the more specialized and pricey the goods on offer become. From Derja's Row—home to the Blessed Isle's premier manse architects—to the Bazaar—a neighborhood of street markets selling esoteric sorcery components—to Vani-leth's Pride—the largest air vehicle dealership in Creation—to the studio of Lufong—the madman who gave us not only the Vibrant Storm Hammer, but also the Blue Ong—the establishments of the northern marketplace can satisfy any material (or materiel) need.

THE SOUTHERN SLOPE

THE SOUTHERN MARKETPLACE

Unlike its twin across the mountain, the marketplace on the southern slope of the Twilight Archdiocese specializes in products biological in nature—once you rise above the swarming mortal commercial districts, of course. It too has a Bazaar, but the sorcery components on offer here primarily include living creatures, exotic plants and by-products of both. Above that are exotic and chaomorphic pet stores, servitor-golem auction blocks and designer disease boutiques. Memory-, body-, Essence- and awareness-enhancing drugs are also sold primarily in this area.



THE ACADEMY OF DIVINE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Academy of Divine Enlightenment is located three quarters of the way up the southern slope of Mount Meru. Its campus has grown to the size of a metropolis of its own over several centuries around the Glorious Arch—the first Celestial Gateway to Yu-Shan constructed after the Primordial War. Originally, the first of the Exalted came here to learn about their newfound power at the feet of the gods, and to ask questions about this world that seemed so large and untamable. When they had learned all the gods could teach them, a handful of enlightened Celestial scholars remained in the vicinity of the gateway to educate the next generation of Celestial (and even Terrestrial) seekers of knowledge. In time, their manses grew into dormitories, and their laboratories grew into classrooms and lecture halls. Today, the campus dominates both the physical space of the upper southern slopes and the world of academia. Nowhere in Creation can you find more learned scholars in the fields of Sorcery, Technology, Social Engineering, Geomancy or even Necromancy. Our Twilight Caste peer Silur, known as the Unimpeachable Empiricist, currently holds the university's High Seat of Brigid Far-Strider.



What's often forgotten in the shadows of the Academy's many towers is the Glorious Arch itself. Although this gateway to Yu-Shan is not quite as popular or frequently traveled as the newer one in the Eclipse Archdiocese, it is still fully functional. It's also the site of the Academy's legendary Calibration "festivities" leading up to and coming down from the yearly Carnival of Meeting.

THE BLESSED MENAGERIE OF THE EXALTED CITY

While somewhat calm for many Exalted tastes, the Blessed Menagerie remains a perennial favorite attraction on the Twilight Archdiocese's southern slope. The habitats of the Menagerie are cordoned off by Essence wall generators cunningly hidden within the habitats, and the climate within each is precisely regulated by portable sky mantis towers to match that of the exhibits' true habitats. If you ask an attendant, you can enter the habitats and interact with the animals. Your Lunar companion can enter as well and sample the heart's blood of any creature that catches his or her fancy. For a nominal fee, you can even rent a self-image projection garment that either renders you invisible or wraps you in a sheath of Essence that disguises you as one of the animals so you can interact with them as one of their own.



Beneath the Menagerie in an upper level of Quiet Meru is the Meru Aquarium. Like those in the Menagerie, the Aquarium's habitats are precisely regulated to mimic their inhabitants' homes and are open to exploration for the asking. For some reason, the mollusk exhibit always seems to be packed with Water-aspected Terrestrial adolescents who take great delight in squirting each other with squid ink. The Whale Theater is truly spectacular, however.

THE CONSERVANCY OF UNEXPECTED LIFE FORMS

The Southern Twilight Slope is home to a plethora of biogenesis laboratories. From this area's many Wyld-containment spheres, womb-sarcophagi and Essence chrysalises have sprung such creatures as the builder bug, the beast of resplendent liquid, the chillikin and the coffeur spider. But not every creature designed by Exalted hand is equally useful. Those that are too dangerous to release but too beautiful or pitiful



to destroy go instead to the Conservancy. Technically a sub-district of the Menagerie, the Conservancy also takes in abandoned chaomorphitic animal test subjects that are too hardy to perish but are useless for scientific research. Creatures that failed to meet their creators' expectations also have a place here, as do those that fail to live up to the vaunted promises that earned them the research subsidies that paid for their genesis. For a nominal fee, animals in the Conservancy are available to private collectors and research laboratories who believe they can find a use for these misbegotten beasts. Whether your needs are academic, culinary, predatory or coital, the managers of the Conservancy ask no questions.



THE DAWN ARCHDIOCESE

THE RISING OF OUR RADIANT GLORY

The eastern slope of Mount Meru is the first thing the Unconquered Sun saw when the sun first rose over Creation. Therefore it's only fitting that our proudest monuments and testaments to our achievements—all made possible by Our Lord's power—stand on that slope to catch the sun's first rays every day.

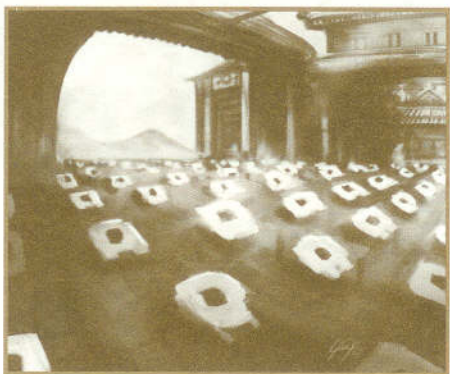


THE THOUSAND-FORGED DRAGON AERIE

At this highest northeastern corner of the Dawn Archdiocese, Terrestrials in dragon armor led by their captains in jade warstriders and their Dawn Caste general, Alosha Who Broke the Charge, patrol an installation of imperishable adamant. Within is our prime repository of thousand-forged dragons. Other silos dot Creation, but our proudest line of defense—beneath the Sword of Creation, of course—is here on Mount Meru. The manse compound of towering minarets that fronts the dragons' aerie houses the primary control center, from which any functional thousand-forged dragon can be activated and even remotely controlled. The Aerie also puts on a spectacular changing of the aerial guard every sunset, and the parade that brings a new thousand-forged dragon from its factory cathedral in the Twilight Archdiocese to the Aerie is likewise grand.

THE SUNFLOWER MIRROR MAZE

Much of the central eastern slope of Meru is dotted with towering Essence-mills and Solar Essence collectors. These arrays take in the Essence of the sun as its glory rises above and converts it into the energy that powers our modern conveniences and appliances. The lowermost of those is the Sunflower Maze. Its collection dishes move on ball-and-socket hinges to follow the sun from dawn to well past midday. While the



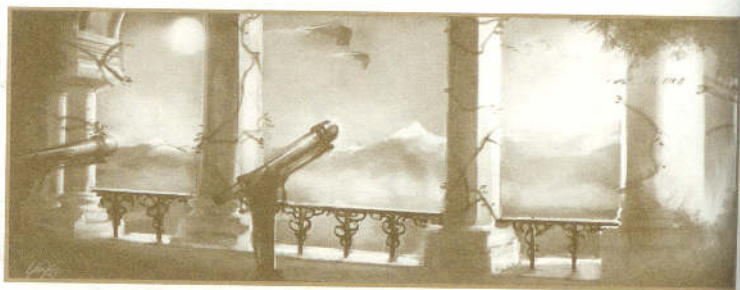
sight of this several-acre array is a breathtaking marvel of modern magitechnology in itself, it also boasts a more lowbrow attraction beneath. In the shadows of the collection dishes, rising up the array's support stalks hangs a multi-level entertainment complex. The ground level is devoted to the sprawling mirror maze for which the park is named. Above that is a vast casino and resort, topped by an amusement park like none other on the Blessed Isle. Admission is by appointment for any mortals who can afford it, but Exalted are welcomed any time of the day or night. Admission is free to Celestial Exalted, but the park's proprietors make more than enough profit from the gaming tables.

HERO MONUMENTS PARK

Diametrically opposing the Broken Doorway that lies in the Night Archdiocese is Hero Monuments Park. Here are constructed monuments of all shapes and sizes, which lionize heroic acts performed in service to Creation. As these monuments are paid for by proud Celestial Exalted patrons, it should come as no surprise that most of the monuments recognize the achievements of Solar, Lunar and Sidereal heroes. Of particular note are the following:



- **The Spear**—a 100-foot-tall spear with a haft of marble and a head of gold. It commemorates the heroism of Ardent Dawn, who captured Cecylene, the Endless Desert.
- **Argentum**—a palace made entirely of silver filigree with a radiant, house-sized crown of gold in the center. It stands to thank the Lunar Exalted for their services and remind them of their never-ending duty to us.
- **Noscio**—a library of blank scrolls populated by thoughtless automatons. It praises Kuhane the Blind Astrologer, whose ignorance defeated the Seven Forbidden Wisdoms.



THE EYE OF MERU BALCONY

The Eye of Meru is the tremendous orb of orichalcum, starmetal and moonsilver that floats above Mount Meru some thousand yards higher than the summit, traveling an orbital path parallel to the perimeter of the Zenith Ring. During the Year's Dawning parade, we of the Zenith Caste march directly beneath this floating orb. The Eye of Meru is the primary targeting mechanism of the Sword of Creation, as well as the broadcasting aerial for I AM, the linchpin of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern and the flight-control monitor for the Blessed Isle's many temples of Vanileth. Originally, use of the Eye was restricted to those with Deliberative authorization carrying out official business. In recent years, however, that restriction has eased and the Balcony has opened on the highest and easternmost point of the Dawn Archdiocese. On this elevated platform are many telescopes that allow breathtaking views over 180 degrees of the horizon. Any visitor can use these telescopes for a nominal pittance. Exalted visitors can also activate one of the Balcony's many Interaction Kiosks and access the Eye of Meru directly. Anything the Eye can see, the viewer can see as well, with a few restrictions by Exalted station. Naturally, none of those restrictions apply to us.



THE PROVING GROUNDS

The best artifact and Essence-based weaponry is designed and produced in the Twilight Archdiocese, and those opposing slopes even offer small open ranges at which to test new technology. The Proving Grounds on the eastern slope, however, are much larger and offer a much better sense of the scale of what our modern weaponry is capable. Located at the lowest southeastern corner of the Dawn Archdiocese, the Proving Grounds extend one mile up the slope of the mountain and an equal distance out into the foothills. This area is not zoned for construction, which allows it to retain its ruggedness. Portable sky mantis towers dot the area as well, allowing for a variety of weather conditions to really put one's experimental or redesigned hardware through its paces. On-site crews maintain the firing ranges and other testing facilities. They can rapidly assemble pre-fabricated houses or other buildings against which to test larger weaponry. They also maintain an on-site prison facility that provides ample human resources against which to test smaller weapons or Charms.

THE LOTUS SCHOOL

Located near the base of the mountain in crystal-clear Lake Releps, the Lotus School is the premier martial arts academy in the Exalted City. The school itself is built in the shape of a tremendous water lily that seems to float on the surface of the lake but actually reaches all the way to the lakebed many fathoms down in darkness. Classes are segregated by martial arts



potential, with the most skilled Exalted students studying in the blossom of the lotus and the least skilled mortals in the outbuildings in the mud around the roots. Students of every status and social class are welcome at this school, but be aware if you attend that all students start out as equals and progress to the next higher level only at their teachers' sufferance.

THE AMARANTHINE DRAGON BATHHOUSE

Bathhouses of all shapes and sizes stand all over Creation and cluster on our mountain where leisure time is most in abundance. Chief among them, in my opinion, is the Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse. It stands some short distance up the eastern slope convenient to the Dawn stretch of the Victory Parade route. The entrance is built into the mountain itself, carved to resemble the open claws of a dragon coiled in repose



on the slopes. Within are 10⁰ vast anonymous public baths and numerous private baths available by reservation. Menus that include everything from breakfast to bright morning are available in the private baths. The personnel menu has a picture and profile of every mortal, Terrestrial, demon and god on staff. Access to preferred personnel is by appointment or available to the highest bidder for their services.

The bathhouse backs up to the Dragon Belly Family Water Park and Public Pools Complex built for the entertainment of the denizens of Quiet Meru. Visitors of appropriate rank and station may pass from bathhouse to park and back, but denizens of Quiet Meru are not allowed into the bathhouse from the park side.

THE HEAVENLY UNITY SERVICE

Headquartered in an adorable marketplace of steelsilk tents, "romantic" bungalows and "topiary wonderlands" known as Heavenly Unity Plaza is this absolutely precious organization. Its motto is, "Even destiny needs a helping hand from time to time." The organization's ostensible goal is to help mortals (and even the Exalted!) find their perfect matches and mates. Boasting an 85 percent success rate—a statistic likely cre-



ated from whole cloth—the service claims it can find the perfect mortal partner for any Exalt, the perfect Terrestrial breeding match for any Dragon-Blood, the most compatible Lunar for every Solar and the best Sidereal advisor for a Celestial Exalt. All of the service's work in the latter categories is purely theoretical, but mortals and Dragon-Bloods flock to Heavenly Unity Plaza as if they had no hope of companionship without it. Ever since the Deliberative eased the breeding restriction on the Terrestrials, the Heavenly Unity Service has been freshly infused with new money that shows no sign of ever drying up.

THE VICTORY PAVILION

This breathtaking site, one hour east downslope from the capitol is where our public banquets are held. Its village-sized lapis lazuli dome rises above golden pillars embossed with animate bas-relief sculptures that reenact our earliest glories over the Primordials. On-staff people of the air shepherd living lanterns beneath the dome, and the rotating stage in the center of the Pavilion has seen

history's finest performances. Your Banquet of All Peers will be only the first of many celebrations you'll attend here.



THE WARSTRIDER MUSEUM

This museum is extremely popular with Exalted and mortals alike, not least because it's cheap enough for mortals to get in. The entrance leads to a moving walkway that whisks visitors through a brief but quite entertaining tour. Thereupon, visitors learn the basics of warstrider design, construction and pilot training. They are then shown a full-motion simulation mockup of a warstrider factory-



cathedral and finally a full-scale Essence-image simulation of a warstrider battling a tyrant lizard cavalry. (That simulation is a bit graphic for my tastes, I admit.) At tour's end, the walkway deposits visitors in a gallery of replica warstriders that have served with particular distinction in history. The First is a particular standout, as it looks especially primitive next to its modern cousins. A replica of Solar Queen M-T-L's towering orichalcum Titan-class warstrider, Everlasting, dominates the others on display, its golden exterior beaming with the sun's reflected radiance beneath the open sky.

What visitors truly come for, though, is the simulation plaza. Mortals are not allowed past the antechamber, but even that area is full of Essence-image warstrider pilot-training simulators as well as The Arm—a fully functional scout-class warstrider arm that visitors line up to learn how to manipulate. The plaza itself is the real attraction, though. There, Exalted visitors and their Half-Caste children can try out the real thing for an hour after a brief orientation exercise. Only paradestridders (i.e., decommissioned warstriders with no weapons) are available, but even they are exhilarating once you get the hang of piloting them.



THE NIGHT ARCHDIOCESE

PAUSING TO REMEMBER WHAT HAS PASSED

Taking up the western slope of our mountain, the Night Archdiocese remains cloaked in shadow well after sunrise. Some parts of it along its westernmost radius don't see natural light until midday. But this slope is what the sun last sees during its final descent into darkness every evening. Therefore, in somber reverence, we have built our monuments to those things that have been taken from us. Not all is dreary bleakness in the Morning Shadow district, though. On these slopes, you can also find the premier leisure resorts on the Blessed Isle.

TOTAL REJUVENATION HOSPITAL

With medical franchises located throughout Creation, the Total Rejuvenation Hospital is our world's most successful provider of health care. Its skilled doctors can cure any mortal frailty from infertility to REDS to Broken-Tile Organ Condition. Its professional acupuncturists can correct any naturally occurring disarrayed Essence condition and most known imposed ones. Its thau-



maturges of internal surgery can regrow and reattach organs or body structures from the essential elements of damaged parts. On-staff Dragon-Bloods can even cast healing Charms against the most severe ailments. The Total Rejuvenation Hospital's services might seem crude or inefficient compared to the powers at our command, but payment for those services is less costly than what favors our peers tend to ask in return for healing Charms. Also, emergency medical teams from the Hospital can be dispatched at a moment's notice, and remote-care physicians can be hired out for extended service contracts.

THE BROKEN GATEWAY

Lying at the border of the Zenith Ring and the Night Archdiocese is ancient wreckage that covers an area of several city blocks. This wreckage is all that remains of the first and largest gateway that originally led from Creation to Yu-Shan. At the height of the Primordial War, the gods managed to disrupt their masters' enjoyment of the Games of Divinity from the viewing



parlor in the center of what is now the Order Conferring Trade Nexus. When the enraged Primordials flooded into Creation from all directions to discipline the gods, the gods destroyed this gateway behind them, cutting off a major line of supply and retreat.

Most of the debris from that act of heroism has since been quarried and refashioned into the newer Celestial Gates, but enough has been left in the blasted crater to remind us what sacrifices are sometimes necessary to ensure the safety of Creation.



SOLAR QUEEN M-R-L-'S TOMB

Unlike most of our peers and Lunar consorts, who traditionally prefer to be entombed in their mortal homelands or in Sijan, Solar Queen M-r-l- has openly stated that she intends to be buried on Meru itself. In accordance with her wishes, construction began in Year 3000 of Our Everlasting Glory on her city-sized final resting place. Construction has stopped and started many times in the centuries since, and the design changes with Solar Queen M-r-l-'s whim, but it appears to be nearing completion. Towering golden automatons patrol its white-marble walls day and night. The members of Solar Queen M-r-l-'s mortal dynasty have all transferred their residences therein. The bulk of Solar Queen M-r-l-'s expected grave goods have been shipped in from the far points of Creation. Applications are even available at long last for mortals and Dragon-Bloods who wish to be preserved and entombed with the Solar Queen upon the advent of her death.

—The Emperor



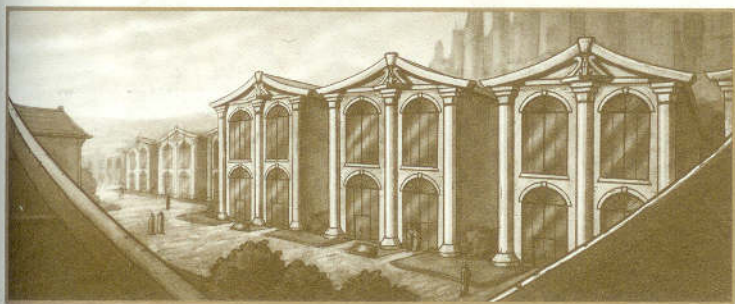
THE DRAGONS' GRAVEYARD

While the Terrestrial fallen are too numerous to be praised individually, the Dragon-Blooded who serve us best understand their worth when they visit this holy memorial on the low slopes of the Night Archdiocese. There stand the tombs of those Terrestrials whose heroic actions and sacrifices during the Primordial War and since exemplify the loyal service for which the Dragon-Blooded were Exalted. Who can look upon the tombs and memorial statues of these Immaculate Dragons and not be reminded of how their power magnifies our own?



THE FALLEN STARS MEMORIAL

In the time of the Primordial War, the gods were prevented from raising arms directly against their Primordial creators. Instead, they granted us our power so that we would cast down their wicked progenitors for them. For this act, the enraged Primordials slew as many of the rebellious gods as they could, littering the earth with fallen starmetal. Those the fallen gods had Exalted turned against each other and destroyed themselves. All knowledge of these gods who made the ultimate sacrifice would have been forgotten after their passing, were it not for the renegade Primordials Autochthon and Cata. They preserved the fallen gods' memories and designed this memorial to thank them posthumously for giving their lives for Creation. It is forbidden to write the names of these gods—which Autochthon took with him when he left Creation in Year 121 of Our Everlasting Glory—but monuments of jade-steel alloys carved in their image stand proud and imperishable in this somber place.



TURNING CYCLE HALLOWED GROUNDS

Across the Serpentine River from the Fallen Stars Memorial lies the memorial garden of Creation's most noteworthy mortals. Thousands of marble mausoleums cover this grim, sprawling expanse, each storing hundreds of memory crystals and a single crystal viewer. On these crystals are stored the names and deeds of countless mortals who performed valued services for their Exalted lords. Wealthy mortal families can even rent niches to store the ashes of deceased honored ancestors there, though shelf space doesn't come cheap. Any mortals you favor in life can be included here after their passing, but the application paperwork is more of a hassle than the memorial is worth.

THE DREAMING ARCHER RESORT

The Dreaming Archer Resort is one of the only places in Meru where you can regularly find snow. Several miles of slope here are covered in deep drifts, dense snowpack and frozen lakes. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of Lunar General Faro-Shan, the Dreaming Archer, the Deliberative zoned this area for faux-Northern climate,



strictly regulated by the local sector of the sky mantis grid. The Dreaming Archer's manse stands at the top of the slopes, surrounded by an elite, luxurious ski resort. The terrain downhill offers ski slopes, windblade valleys, ice-skating plazas and breathtaking scenery unlike any outside the frozen North. Celestial Exalted are the resort's preferred clientele, but extremely wealthy lower-class citizens can apply for a spot on the resort's waiting list.



THE HANGING GARDENS OF MERU

Between the main channel of the Serpentine River and the southernmost border of the Night Archdiocese is this fantastical arboretum tended by a veritable army of Wood-aspected Dragon-Bloods. The Hanging Gardens boast flora from Creation's disparate corners and everywhere in between, artfully grown among the beams of a support structure designed by graduates of the Academy of Divine Enlightenment's College of Geomancy. Our more jaded peers find this place stale and somewhat boring, but there is no more peaceful and romantic environment than the garden's transparent walkways and floating observation decks.

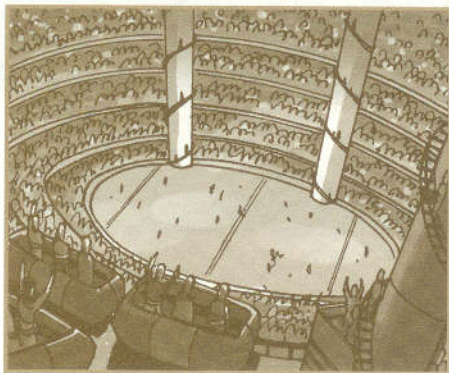


THE ORRERY

The Orrery is a timeless, thoughtful gift from the Sidereal Exalted to the Golden Children of the Solar Host. It resides in a mirrored dome that superficially resembles the Jade Pleasure Dome in Yu-Shan. Within, the Orrery appears to be just that: a vast, mechanical wonder that simulates the movements of every celestial body in the night sky from season to season. That's true only when the Orrery is empty, though. By design, however, the Orrery is actually a delightful playground and childcare facility. Golden children (and other Exalted Hall-Castes) can run and climb and swing and play together from any armature or celestial body of the display they can reach. A dedicated staff of obedient clockwork efficacy servitors and mortal caretakers mind, monitor and feed the children, keeping them entertained and out of your way while you carry out your duties elsewhere. The Orrery is open every hour of the day and night, and no reservations are required.

ECHOING GLORY ARENA

The Echoing Glory Arena is one of the most versatile and well-attended attractions of its kind. This marble coliseum seats 100,000 spectators in the floor and mezzanine levels alone, and supports a fleet of hovering suites. It rises some five stories in the air on marble pillars enwrapped by spiral staircases and offers ample air- and ground-vehicle parking. The



central pit of the arena can be modified to accommodate any event from singular duels of honor to sorcery competitions to yeddim rodeos to mock naval engagements to agata polo matches. The arena also hosts educational reenactments of historical military engagements once a week during Ascendancy.



THE ECLIPSE ARCHDIOCESE

THE SHROUDED CROWN

Our archdiocese is unlike the others. It has no symbolic resonance like the others do, and most of it exists off the surface of the mountain itself. To be honest, I suspect it was named as it was to maintain an illusion of parity between the castes in the city. Nonetheless, we have made it our own, populating it with wonders and worshipers from around Creation. And it is within the suburban borders of Meru's opposing shadow districts that the safest and best points of travel into and away from Meru can be found.



THE YU-SHAN EMBASSY

The gods once tended Creation from homes on Mount Meru, while the Primordials ruled in Yu-Shan. Today, the gods have taken the Primordials' heavenly homes and ceded their former Creation homes to us. Of course, the august divinities are still welcome in Creation, and when they come, we attempt to make them as comfortable as possible. To that end, the area around the central Eclipse



Archdiocese gate (beneath the surface of the Zenith Ring) is set aside for those gods who most frequently travel into Creation. We lease to them office and sanctum space, as well as mortal servants to tend to the minutia that lesser spirits handle for them in Heaven. It is here that the gods deliver to us the wishes and approval of our Celestial patrons, and many Sidereal advisors meet their divine supervisors here rather than traveling all the way to the Celestial City. The embassy surrounds a celestial gate to Yu-Shan, and it is this gate rather than the Glorious Arch that sees the most traffic between realms.

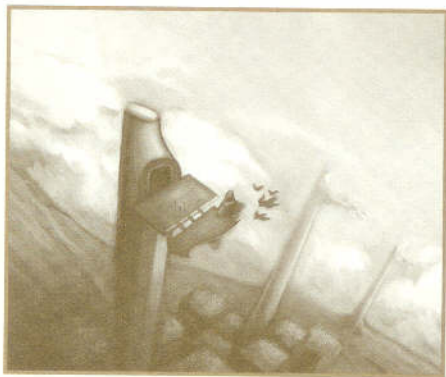


THE BANQUET HALL OF RESPONSIBLE MEDITATION

In the deepest shadows beneath the Zenith Ring stands this stone and mortar banquet hall large enough to seat and serve every member of the Solar Host. It was constructed entirely by mortal means, and only mundane means of lighting the space and regulating the climate are in evidence. No Essence-powered or otherwise magical amenity exists here. We don't even allow demon slaves, elemental servants or divine workers on the premises. Mortals do all the work, and it is as mortals that one comes into the hall. It is in this reserved and humble state that traditionally minded Exalted observe the five-day period of Calibration at year's end. It saddens me, however, that few of us observe Calibration here anymore. The lavish feast in the Banquet Hall of the Ruling Palace of Meru gains in popularity and attendance every year.

THE BANK OF THE TREASURY

The vaults of the Bank of the Treasury lie deep beneath the Zenith Ring, connected by tunnels to the surface. These tunnels extend upward into tall towers of marble that terminate in broad skyship mooring sites. There, flying Ministry barges surrounded by squadrons of warbirds and platoons of guards in Air Dragon armor dock to unload or pick up the invaluable cargo they ferry across all points of



the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. Legions of clerks from the Ministry of the Treasury work diligently with dedicated animating intelligences to maintain the stability of the Realm economy from this, its central hub. Likewise, legions of Dragon-Bloods, gunzōsha, bound demons and automated security mechanisms stand tireless vigil safeguarding the physical wealth lying in the cubic acreage of the vaults. It's against the law to write much more about the Bank's security, but suffice it to say that any wealth deposited there is as safe as it can be.

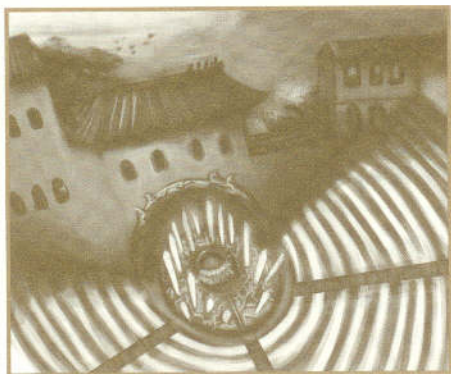


THE THREE MIRRORS CHAMBER

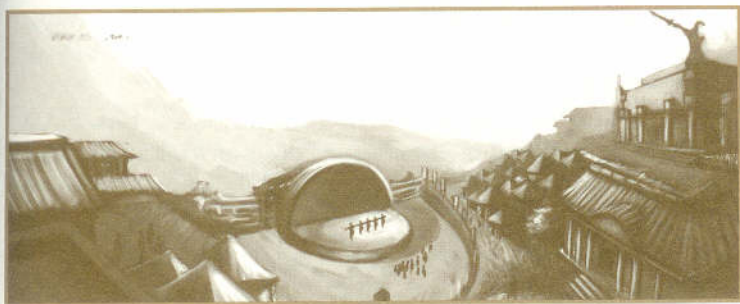
This attraction is located just inside the primary passageway that leads from the Zenith Ring into the Eclipse Archdiocese. It admits only one person at a time, and that person enters an empty circular chamber some 100 yards across. When the visitor stands in the exact center, a control apparatus rises from a recess in the floor and an enormous mechanism descends from the ceiling, humming with Essence running through star metal wiring. The center of this mechanism is a triangle of conjoined mirrors that surround the visitor. At first, only the visitor's image is reflected into infinity around him. At a command from the control apparatus, however, those images are replaced by discrete images of the visitor's past lives or previous Exalted incarnations, who surround him and look at him in the center. The control apparatus allows a visitor to highlight an individual incarnation and isolate it in the mirror before him. He can then access IAM for any historical information on that incarnation in the database.

THE SINGING GARDEN

The Singing Garden is a strange new attraction that owes its construction to the patronage of our Solar peer, Elegant Sonah—who teaches sorcery and design at the Academy of Divine Enlightenment. It takes up an amphitheater unto itself, with seating for approximately 10,000 guests. At its center is an enormous construction of crystal, orichalcum and green jade that consists of a circular organ console surrounded



by crystal cylinders of varying heights. Within each cylinder is a mortal of exquisite beauty attached to a green jade frame that fits in the base of the cylinder. Each cylinder is connected to a key on the circular organ console. When a key is pressed, the corresponding cylinder's mortal projects a single precise note that the crystal amplifies to stage volume. Each key likewise controls the movement of the cylinder's base through the labyrinthine patterns that line the stage. When Sonah plays the organ console, the crystal cylinders seem to sing and dance in a most intricate and ingenious way.



THE AURU-LAI THEATER DISTRICT

The most popular theaters of drama, opera, symphony, dance, Essence-image projection and more can be found in the Auru-Lai Theater District at the western base of Mount Meru, where the rising sun casts its shadow. From the Elaborate Proscenium in the foothills to the Apex at the very border of the western Eclipse Archdiocese, this district is the home of the largest, most expensive and most exclusive theaters in the White City. IAM can supply extensive programming information for each theater and help you book reservations. Most theaters keep a private balcony suite set aside for Solar walk-ins and will be happy to hold or restart performances for you if you arrive after the curtain parts. They do this in honor of the eponymous Eclipse Caste founder of the district, who was notoriously late for every performance.

THE LITTLE CITIES

Much of the eastern portion of the Eclipse Archdiocese at Mount Meru's base consists of miniature regions we call the Little Cities. Each is bounded by gated Essence wall generators that contain discrete climate systems from elsewhere in Creation. Arid desert districts abut temperate forest districts, frigid tundra districts and stranger weather systems still. At the border of each district is a gate of auspicious passage that leads back to the real city from which each "little" version is named. These gates all lead into a spiraling central boulevard that connects to several major arteries that lead into and away from the Exalted City. The inhabitants of the Little Cities are either those immigrants to Meru from abroad who prefer the company of their own kind or Ministries of Order officials whose job responsibilities require frequent travel between Meru and its outposts of civilization elsewhere. Little Cities of particular note include:

- Little Opal Spire — This Little City of eponymous construction is home to the children and other relatives of many of the soldiers who are stationed in the Opal Spire Protectorate. They trade in fascinating Wyld prodigies brought back by their more adventurous family members.
- Little Rathess — This proud community of our most fearsome non-human allies connects to the jungle city of pyramids that was once the capital of the Realm. Few of the savage Dragon Kings deign to live in this Little City, but such convenient access to the storied wonders of their home makes this one of the most popular Little Cities.
- Little Clepsys — This region occupies what was once Lake Hano. That freshwater body is now a saltwater body with a community of Clepsys' pearled buildings floating in the center.
- Little Chiaroscuro — The oppressive heat of this community is not for the weak of constitution, but the beauty of the shimmering glass towers is well worth at least a tour. I personally find the artificial tang of salt in the air to be too much for someone born and raised at the Elemental Isle of Earth.
- Little Malfeas — This hellish ghetto is the only one that has no gate of auspicious passage, and for good reason. It is less an immigrant community or trading center and more an internment reservation for the Demon-Blooded offspring of irresponsible sorcerers, as well as a holding area for captured or bound demons awaiting deportation.



CELESTIAL EXPEDITIONS

From its headquarters beneath the Zenith Ring, the travel service known simply as Celestial Expeditions organizes trips to the most interesting places beyond and the most dangerous places in all of Creation. The waiting lists for these vacation expeditions are long, and passage is prohibitively expensive for all but the Celestial Exalted. Nonetheless, short of leading crusades beyond Creation's borders with the military, Celestial Expeditions offers the best and safest chance to explore what lies past the limits of the world we rule. The greater Celestial Expeditions service is divided up into the following four branches:

- **Dirge Safaris**—These expeditions launch into the bleak depths of the Underworld from a small Blessed Isle shadowland strictly maintained by Dragon-Blooded monks. Each expedition's clients set the itinerary, whether they want to tour the Obsidian City of Stygia, mine soulsteel for experimental devices or taunt the souls of fallen rivals who haven't reincarnated.
- **Hell Safaris**—These dangerous expeditions lead small groups into the Demon City of Malfeas, where our defeated foes languish within the body of their leader. Sorcerers can interview prospective demon slaves or collect mystical materials that are unavailable anywhere else. Solar cardinals and archbishops can bring groups of bishops and priests here to show them an example of what Creation could have become if not for the Solar Exalted. It's been my experience that no one else tends to bother.
- **Wyld Safaris**—Trips into the unformed Wyld are the most popular expeditions this service offers. Tourists sail in a bubble of stable Creation into the currents of inexplicability in which the raksha dwell. Eclipse Caste passengers are even allowed to debark and speak with the locals. No two Wyld Safaris are ever the same, but they are always wondrous, terrifying and exhilarating.
- **Behemoth Expeditions**—This new service was added recently to Celestial Expeditions' repertoire at the behest of some of our more powerful Solar peers, and it gains in popularity rapidly. The service's founders allow popular behemoths to range freely in unpopulated expanses of Creation. Passengers on these expeditions can go simply to look at these creatures, to fight them hand to claw, to ride them or to do whatever else they please with them. New behemoths in the service's "stable" include the Peerless Mantis, Tahamoku the Island, Arad the Hunter and Karbydis With No End. The Maker of Rubble is no longer available on the roster.





OTHER AREAS AND ATTRACTIONS IN MERU

QUIET MERU

Quiet Meru is the name of the city beneath the surface of the White City. It's there that Meru's least wealthy mortal families and the legions of service personnel live. Mortals aren't forbidden life on the surface of our city, of course, but not every mortal who can afford to live in our city can afford to live among us beneath the light of the Unconquered Sun.

Quiet Meru is lit by Essence-powered lanterns, and its water-purification and waste-management systems are equal in quality to those on the surface. For some trips between archdioceses, Quiet Meru provides the most efficient and expedient pathways. Do be discreet when using them yourself, though. Mortals live in that place to remain out of our sight. Going out of your way to travel among them only confuses and upsets them.



THE GOLDEN CHILDREN EXCITING JOURNEY

Once per year, the Ministry of Education and Proper Childcare hosts this delightful event that acquaints the children of our Solar peers with the city their Exalted parents' efforts won for them. Every year, participating children from ages 5 to 15 gather at the Dawn Archdiocese's Victory Pavilion and climb on the backs of the Desirable Prayer Dragons provided by the Journey's Sidereal guides and enjoy a whirlwind tour of some of Meru's most significant and educational sites. The itinerary changes every year, but it always begins at the Victory Pavilion and ends at the Orrery where the children can be picked up. Reservations for this tour can be made through IAM.



RESTAURANTS

Every archdiocese has its own selection of exotic restaurants offering cuisine from all over Creation. You can find a decent Varajtul barbecue, Clepsys sushi bar, Aquaine café or even a Chtaroscuran diner anywhere in Meru you'd care to look. Personally, I prefer to seek out exotic cuisine in the Little Cities. Others of our peers simply travel abroad when their cravings demand it or hire foreign chefs to join their cooking staff and travel with them from manse to crusade and back again.



SCHOOLS

The Ministry of Education and Proper Childcare has built countless schools in Meru, both in its many archdioceses and down in Quiet Meru. Meru schools offer the most complete and progressive primary and secondary schools for mortal children, as well as the most competitive and rewarding apprenticeship and vocational education programs. Meru is also the home of Creation's best Golden Children Academies and Terrestrial Pre-Exaltation Cultural-Inculcation Centers. It is also the only place in Creation the Sidereals chose to build their own pre-Exaltation learning centers for their own kind. If you have any school-aged children who predate your Exaltation (or if you are school-aged yourself), your Sidereal advisor will help you choose the school most suited to their (or your) academic needs.

Further Information

I AM is fully conversant in expanded articles on all of the locations and events described in this guidebook. You need only query I AM at a convenient Interaction Kiosk. The complete expanded edition—including all original text dating back to the first edition, as well as all contributor-cited corrections and updates—is also available at the Library of the Deliberative.

Updates and Corrections

If Your Excellency is interested in updating or correcting information that makes up the expanded edition of this guidebook, I AM would be pleased to receive and incorporate Your Excellency's observations. Corrections and updates will also be accepted at the Library of the Deliberative or the offices of the Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities.

Upon our receipt of Your Excellency's corrections and updates, a corrected abridged bound edition of the guidebook will be delivered to Your Excellency's preferred receiving address before sunset of the following day.

Other Editions

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities has produced an expanded series of guidebooks with alternative members of Your Excellency's retinue and personal staff in mind. Alternative-focus guidebooks are available on request through I AM, the Library of the Deliberative or the Ministry offices for the Chosen of Luna, the Chosen of the Maidens and the Children of the Elemental Dragons.

Other Publications

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities also offers the following materials on request:

Golden Children Exciting Journey Travelogue

A book of educational puzzles for Your Excellency's children to complete during the Golden Children Exciting Journey.

The Role of Glorious Divinity

A modern treatise on the rights and responsibilities of the Exalted vis-à-vis the gods of the Celestial and Terrestrial Bureaucracies, as dictated by His Most Luminous Excellency, Ur-Dai-Ken, the former Supreme Hierophant of Meru.

Instructions for Mortals

A complete list of the religious expectations and codes of acceptable conduct by which any mortals for whom you are responsible must abide, as well as maps that clearly delineate areas restricted to ones of their station.



