

Samsaran Compendium

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About the Author

Alexander Augunas has been a freelance writer for various *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME* compatible products since 2012. Alex is best known as the writer of Know Direction's tri-weekly blog, *Guidance*, as well as the *PACT MAGIC UNBOUND* series by Radiance House. In addition to writing for Everyman Gaming, LLC, Know Direction, and Radiance House, Alex has worked with companies such as Raging Swan Press, Loius Porter Jr. Design, Amora Game, and Paizo Publishing. Alex is a known kitsune aficionado and hopes to be writing well past his death.

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Author's Preface

Without a doubt, the *KITSUNE COMPENDIUM* has been Everyman Gaming's most popular product as of February 2015, and for that I am thankful. When I originally set out to design that product during the summer of 2014, I was terrified that it wouldn't be popular. That all of the publishers that I had originally tried to pitch the product to were right about players not wanting to invest in "weird, new races" in the *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME*. Thank you for proving them wrong.

Many players asked me right away what race I would choose for my next racial compendium. Honestly, I hadn't thought about it at the time. What WOULD I pick? Ultimately, I settled on a theme: my goal is to provide racial content for all of the "races of the dynasty," races whose nature lends themselves to the brilliant, rich mythology of the orient. The *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* is just the first step. Let's see where we end up together.

— Alexander Augunas, Everyman Gaming, LLC

Table of Contents

The following sections are presented within the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM*.

The Samsaran Condition (Pgs. 4–5): First, the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* discusses basic facts and information about samsaran and gives readers a glimpse into their racial psychology.

Life as a Samsaran (Pgs. 6–7): Next, the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* discusses the ecology of the samsaran race and provides 9 new alternate racial traits for samsaran characters to select from during character creation.

Samsaran Culture (Pgs. 8–11): After describing the race's ecology, the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* details a broad array of samsaran cultural topics, including their language, architecture, and several special occasions that they celebrate.

Samsaran Origins (Pgs. 12–13): Included in this section of the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* are two different takes on the samsaran's racial origin story. Also included are three new bardic masterpieces that correspond to each tale.

Samsaran Religion (Pgs. 14–15): In addition to briefly detailing how samsaran view religion and worship, this section provides a sample religion for samsarans, Samsarism, and includes one new subdomains that complement this philosophy.

Slumbering Samsarans (Pgs. 16–17): This section details slumbering samsarans, samsarans who have not spiritually awakened to the point where they can spontaneously reincarnate. This section includes one base alternate racial trait for such characters, plus a slew of additional options that allows the creation of a slumbering samsaran of any core race.

Reincarnation (Pgs. 18–19): As reincarnation is the central theme surrounding samsarans, this section explores the two major types of reincarnation in-depth. It also includes a new mystery for oracles, the reincarnation mystery.

Martial Combat (Pgs. 20–23): This section is devoted to presenting four new archetypes to the *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME* that personify the fighting style and spirit of samsaran

Samsaran Racial Traits

+2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, –2 Constitution

Medium: Samsarans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Samsarans have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Samsarans can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Lifebound (Ex): Samsarans gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws made to resist death effects, saving throws against negative energy effects, Fortitude saves made to remove negative levels, and Constitution checks made to stabilize if reduced to negative hit points.

Samsaran Magic (Sp): Samsarans with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*, and *stabilize*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the samsaran's level.

Shards of the Past (Ex): A samsaran's past lives grant her bonuses on two particular skills. A samsaran chooses two skills—she gains a +2 racial bonus on both of these skills, and they are treated as class skills regardless of what class she actually takes.

Languages: Samsarans begin play speaking Common and Samsaran. Samsarans with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: any human language, Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Nagaji, Tengu, and Terran.

warriors.

Samsaran Magic (Pgs. 24–27): Renowned for their magical abilities, this section adds new archetypes and class options for samsaran spellcasters.

Samsaran Feats (Pgs. 28–29): As impossibly long-lived creatures, samsarans have developed a number of unique tricks and techniques. This section explores a number of new feats themed around samsarans and includes samsaran favored class bonuses for over twenty classes.

Samsaran Traits (Pg. 30): Rounding out the *SAMSARAN COMPENDIUM* are new race traits and drawbacks for samsaran characters.

Citations

This product makes use of the following citations:

APG *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ADVANCED PLAYER'S GUIDE*

UM *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ULTIMATE MAGIC*

UCN *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ULTIMATE CAMPAIGN*

UC *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ULTIMATE COMBAT*

ARG *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ADVANCED RACE GUIDE*

ACG *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ADVANCED CLASS GUIDE*

The Samsaran Condition

“Oh young one, you know so very much of the nature of existence, yet understand so very little. Yes, the stories of old are. My people have each lived a million lifetimes, and the youngest souls among us will live for a million more. I understand why you are envious of this. Many are. You see our condition as a gift. We understand what awaits beyond the veil of death. We have peered past it and returned to live anew. Some of your people view us like messiahs. Others like demons. In seeking desire, the soul is predetermined to envy the gifts of others and fear those gifts that cannot be taken. But please understand, young one, our many lives are simultaneously the greatest gift that we are given and our most debilitating curse. For you see, the longer our souls become, the less meaning the lives they live possess. When you have seen as many years as I, have lived through as many wars as I, or have experienced as much suffering as I, you inevitably catch small glimpses of the cosmic pattern that lays behind every age. For as much as things change, mortal nature continues to be mortal nature. To expect otherwise is madness, and so our souls grow weary with the strain of our own existence. If I were to pull our souls from our mortal shells, mine would appear dusted and dull from a thousand aches and pains across a million lifetimes, whereas yours would glow with the untarnished brilliance of the moon. And so I beg of you, fair child, before you judge us, remember our gifts and our curses, and remembers yours as well.”

— Excerpt from *Wisdom of the Divine*, by Dali the Enlightened

Samsaran are timeless. Although some claim that all mortals are capable of reincarnation, samsarans reappear on the Material Plane fully formed in a new, youthful body after each lifetime, staving off their final judgment until they have lived in perfect harmony as spiritually awakened beings. Compared to other races, samsarans tend to become localized in specific regions; for whatever reason, they spontaneously reincarnate in close approximation to one another, ensuring that samsaran communities grow and thrive just as any other would despite their inability to birth new samsarans. In the rare instance that a samsaran does not reincarnate near her fellows, she is forced to journey to return to her people, perhaps as a first step before her ultimate reward or as punishment for accumulating a large amount of negative karma in a previous life.

From a distance, samsarans appear similar to humans, save for their blue skin and pupil-less eyes. But as one approaches closer, it becomes impossible to hide how positively alien samsarans are. Samsarans are virtually void of natural blemishes and their features appear flawless, as though they had been chiseled from lapis lazuli and their eyes lack coloration altogether; samsaran eye color is instead based on a slight tinge that permeates their otherwise ivory ocular orbs.

Despite how others, especially humans, often react to them, most samsarans have little worry or concern about being seen publicly, although they tend to prefer to keep among their own rather than mingle with other races. Samsarans claim that worldly attachments, such as friends, loved ones, or even pets and material possessions often interfere with the passing of the soul from the material to the astral and so they eschew these things whenever possible. Wise from a million lifetimes of experience, samsarans make helpful, if detached, companions.

Samsaran Psychology

Despite their varied experiences across millions of lifetimes, samsarans share a racially defining mentality.

Inter-Samsaran Relations: Samsarans are community-driven and live together in small settlements whenever possible. Young samsarans often reincarnate in the proximity of other samsarans, and they believe that similar souls are fundamentally attracted to one another. Even uncharacteristically wicked samsarans understand the importance of community.

Extraordinarily Knowledgeable: Having access to nuggets of experience from across a million lifetimes, all samsarans possess a girth of knowledge at their fingertips. Oftentimes this knowledge comes in flashes of insight so unexpected that the samsaran herself is puzzled as to where her knowledge came from. Most samsarans accept such occurrences and move on with their lives, playfully referring to the phenomena like a human would to a case of *deja vu*.

Unattached to Worldly Tethers: Where most other mortals obsess over material objects, samsarans almost completely eschew them save the most basic necessities. Samsarans believe that all forms of physical attachments ensnare the soul and cloud one's spiritual awakening, so they tend to keep only the most practical of possessions, eschewing even personal artifacts to ensure their soul's eventual salvation.

In Pursuit of Perfection: Samsarans believe that they live countless lives in pursuit of spiritual perfection, and that a soul only moves on to its just reward when it obtains enlightenment. Most samsarans agree that the only way to achieve this state of being is to leave a meaningful life filled with wisdom and meditation, though a rare few instead claim that worldly experience, not introspection, readies a soul for the afterlife. Virtually all samsarans cycle through this sort of phase every few lifetimes, and as a result almost all samsaran have experienced at least one adventurous past life.

Five Facts About Samsarans

The five following facts represent key bits of information that virtually everyone who has heard of these humanoid knows.

#1 – Samsarans are Uncannily Human

Pale blue skin and pupil-less eyes notwithstanding, samsarans appear convincingly human to a casual observer. Upon closer inspection, however, the differences between samsarans and humans are often perceived as being so eerily similar yet hauntingly different that the initial reaction of many observers is one of confused revulsion. Humans especially experience an uncomfortable sense of uncanniness when in the presence of a samsaran, obsessing over the decidedly inhuman aspects of samsaran physiology and psychology.

Scholars are unsure as to why samsarans primarily assume a humanoid appearance. Some theorize that their souls take on a form similar to their first humanoid life out of familiarity as a result of their soul's entrapment to its former material identity. Others theorize that samsaran souls assume a form that will appeal to the sympathies of mortal races, ensuring that they will be cared for as youths. As most humanoids in the world are human, this is the most widely-accepted theory by most scholars and is supported by the fact that in very rare instances, samsarans that resemble other, non-human races exist. For these non-human samsaran, similar reactions are held: uncanniness and contempt from their "parent" race.

#2 – Samsarans are Wise Beyond Their Years

As beings with memories spanning a million lifetimes, young samsarans often wiser than what their biological age would suggest. Samsaran children embody this especially; as youths, they are less grounded in their newly reincarnated identities and their resolve against worldly wants and desires is stronger when they are young, resulting in a stronger connection to their past lives. Despite any reservations about their unnerving appearance, people in positions of authority often keep a samsaran in council for their unique insight on past events.

#3 – Samsarans Are Skillfully Diverse

Anyone who has experience working with a samsaran quickly learns never to be surprised at the diverse range of talents she possesses. Although a samsaran's abilities effectively reset with each lifetime, she retains many useful tips and techniques that make her more proficient at skills that she has little to no experience with. Samsaran spellcasters often have access to magic normally beyond the reach of members of their vocation while martially inclined samsarans will possess special tricks and techniques that hint at the guidance of a master's hand. These fragmented memories make a samsaran a much more diverse individual than many of her peers.

#4 – Samsarans are Physically Fragile

For all the benefits that living a million lifetimes brings to a samsaran, one universal flaw permeates them all: samsarans are fragile folk, as though their material bodies recognize their inconsequential existence relative to the cos-

mic scheme of samsaran existence. Samsarans claim that this relative fragility is due to the nature of the Soul Cycle; reincarnation, according to samsarans, is dreadfully taxing for the soul by the very nature of its stages (birth, growth, disease, and death). Over time, many samsarans claim that the quality of physical body that their souls manifest becomes increasingly feeble as the soul becomes restless for its final, just reward in the afterlife.

#5 – Samsarans are Devotedly Spiritual

Whereas members of other races vary in how much they adhere to a religious tradition, virtually all samsaran are deeply devoted individuals. For most samsarans, religion is not a matter of belief, but of experience and acceptance. Their guiding memories of their past lives help samsarans to acknowledge divine truths and commit their lessons to everyday life. This unshakable faith in the power of divinity makes samsarans powerful supporters of the world's religions, and most samsarans respect and even honor deities to whom they haven't wholly committed themselves to. Most religious organizations welcome a samsaran's devotion and offer support and sanctuary whenever possible. That said, samsarans themselves are drastically preferential to goodly relations with strong, established hierarchies and traditions. Samsarans claim to have seen firsthand the promised rewards of the afterlife and prefer religions whose traditions and tenants persevere across their countless lifetimes.



Life as a Samsaran

Although large samsaran-controlled regions exist, it isn't entirely correct to call these places 'kingdoms,' as the constantly reincarnating samsarans do not acknowledge any divine right to rule among their people. To them, a samsaran who was a beggar in one life might be a god in the next, making such distinctions in the material meaningless. Instead, samsarans rule by necessity, and those who dedicate themselves to defending the samsaran realm are also those who lead it. Such samsaran, those who deal with the unenlightened folk beyond their borders, are often seen as a sort of martyr by their peers, folks who would risk their souls becoming ensnared in material suffering by virtue of their investment in worldly defenses, no matter how essential these things might be. Most samsarans would rather spend their days alone, pursuing spiritual enlightenment at their own pace.

Samsaran Biology

Samsarans are flawless, humanoid creatures that reincarnate into a new mortal body when their previous one dies.

Life Cycle

For most creatures, a life cycle consists of birth, growth, and eventual death. For samsarans, however, life consists of reincarnation, growth, and death before repeating over and over again. When a samsaran reincarnates, she doesn't rejoin the world as a bouncing infant; she spontaneously manifests as a fully developed youth. The exact, physical age that a samsaran manifests at varies from individual to individual, ranging from as young as an 8-year old human and as old as a 15-year old human; practically an adult. Younger reincarnations are significantly more common than older ones, with a staggering 99% of samsarans reincarnating as prepubescent children.

Physically, samsarans grow and develop almost identically to humans, maturing around 15 years of physical age or about seven years after their manifestation. After maturing, samsarans all but stop aging, their souls delaying the physical of old age by means of their enlightenment. After maturing, the samsaran's body appears to stop aging by all accounts for nearly six decades following their manifestation. Henceforth, a samsaran ages at a rate of one physical year per five years experienced, so that a samsaran aged 150 years has the physical condition of a human aged 30 years.

Although they are capable of siring children, samsarans give birth to mortal children, not samsarans, and for reasons none understand, they nearly always give birth to human children of a veritable rainbow of shapes, sizes, and ethnicities. Such children are rarely reborn as samsarans themselves if they live a harmonious life in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, but most samsaran-born humans live ordinary lives and die as humans do. Because of this, most samsaran parents opt to give their human children up for adoption in nearby human lands and adopt newly-manifested samsaran children into their familial units instead. In rare cases, samsarans may give birth to members of other humanoid races dwelling in nearby lands, especially if they themselves lived a lifetime as a member of said race.

Samsarans have the same sexual dimorphisms as humans and a healthy samsaran can live to be nearly 800 years old.

External Physiology

An average samsaran stands about 6' 3" and weighs 155 lbs. Samsarans are built almost identically to humans, but they possess thin, gaunt frames and their pale complexion can often give the impression of sickness to those unfamiliar with samsaran physiology.

Although they are almost physically identical to humans, most samsarans are effortlessly spotted from among their human peers. Their flesh and hair is tinted blue and their eyes lack irises altogether, appearing as white orbs that emit a soft, white light. Samsaran skin is almost always pale, though darker shades of blue aren't unheard of, and it lacks any sort of blemishes or physical imperfections, giving them an unnatural beauty that unnerves humans as much as it inspires them.

Internal Physiology

Although capable of eating anything that humans nourish themselves upon, samsaran society possesses strict dietary guidelines that regulate their consumption. As a samsaran can remember fractions of every past life she's ever lived, not just those where she was humanoid, many samsarans refuse to eat the meat of "noble beasts," animals with a high level of spiritual awareness. Fruit, vegetables, fish, and poultry make up most of a samsaran's diet as a result, although more ruthless samsarans sometimes forgo this tradition, taking delight in the destruction of another's creature's mortal coil.

Perhaps the most startling trait that the samsarans possess isn't the color of their skin or eyes, but the color of their blood. Unlike virtually every other humanoid, samsarans possess colorless blood that flows as clear as mountain spring water. Often attributed with the purity of their bodies and souls, some find this trait to be the most unnerving aspect about samsarans. Folks otherwise able to overlook their unblemished, periwinkle skin or alien, featureless eyes are quickly off-put by what many would consider to be the most basic of all humanoid traits: the presence of red blood within their veins. This feature has its benefits, however. Their lack of blood can make samsaran warriors seem invincible, as the enemy has few other ways to gauge how much damage a samsaran has taken at a casual glance and many foes ultimately surrender to samsarans because they believe them to be will incarnate.

Though awakened samsarans are never born naturally, a female samsaran can become impregnated, typically giving birth to human offspring. The resulting child has the potential to be born with a number of features that hit at her lineage, such as pale skin or dark, blue hair, though such children never possess their mother's blue skin or white eyes. Although they often keep the child long enough to wean it, a samsaran's supernaturally long lifespan means that they would be forced to watch their human offspring grow old and eventually die, so most samsarans opt to give their children up for adoption rather than force either parent or children to endure this hardship. Samsarans try to find human couples living in nearby villages that are unable to conceive children of their own to give their children to, and some samsarans conceive human children specifically so mothers who are incapable of conceiving do not remain childless.

Lifebound

A samsaran isn't born of flesh and blood like other humanoids are. Instead, a newly reincarnated samsaran's body is forged from the primal, life-giving energies of the Positive Energy Plane itself. Though being spontaneously created leaves the samsaran's physical body as being weaker than a typical humanoid's, the higher than normal levels of positive energy within the samsaran's body gifts them with their longer lives and affords them additional protection against life-stealing magic and attacks. What's more, many undead cannot bare a samsaran's touch and undead loathe the taste of a samsaran's crystal-clear blood as it burns their throats like acid.

Shards of Memory

When a samsaran reincarnates, she retains brief flashes of memory of her previous life, which samsarans call shards. Despite these flashes of emotion and memory, samsarans are under no direct impulse to act in a manner that befits her former life and most choose to retrospectively study their past lives in search of lessons to apply to their current incarnation. As a result, each samsaran becomes a new, individual being with each reincarnation, as different from her former self as a child is from its mother or father. That said, samsarans benefit greatly from the lessons of their past lives, and many recall historical facts and information from generations earlier as easily as though they were reading a tome on the subject. In some cases, skills and talents from one lifetime pass onward into the next, gifting a young samsaran with a skill set that exceeds that of her peers.

Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits may be selected instead of existing samsaran racial traits.

Deja Vu (Ex): As a samsaran spiritually awakens, some recall tricks and techniques that they have learned during their past lives. At 1st, 8th, and 16th level, such samsarans gain Skill Focus in a skill of their choice as a bonus feat. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.

Destined Sorcery: Samsarans have a deep connection with

spiritual harmony and are in tune with their own destiny. If the samsaran is a sorcerer or bloodrager with the destined bloodline, she treats her caster level as 1 higher when casting her bonus spells and bloodline powers, and the saving throw DC of such spells increases by +1. This trait does not give samsarans early access to level-based powers; it only affects powers that she could already use without this trait. This racial trait replaces samsaran magic.

Enlightenment: Samsarans who have achieved enlightenment possess great understanding in all things. Such samsarans gain Breadth of Experience^{APG} as a bonus feat. Additionally, they choose any two Knowledge skills and treat them as class skills regardless of which class she actually takes. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.

Immortal Spark (Ex): Some samsaran's connections to the Positive Energy Plane are so powerful that they are able to stave off the effects of aging, even on other creatures. Such samsarans gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) checks and on saving throws against death effects and can use *lesser age resistance^{UM}* once per day as a spell-like ability. This racial trait replaces lifebound and shards of the past.

Martial Past Life (Ex): Samsarans who were warriors in their past lives often pass down this knowledge to their future incarnations. At 1st level, such samsarans gain one combat feat as a bonus feat. The samsaran is treated as though her base attack bonus was +1 for the purpose of meeting the prerequisites of this feat. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.

Past Life Talents: Particularly well-lived samsarans are able to generalize for virtually any task, as they have experienced doing just about every vocation imaginable across their multitude of past lives. All character classes are considered favored classes for the samsaran, allowing her to gain either +1 hit point or +1 skill point whenever she takes a level in any class. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.

Past Life Tongue: Many samsarans recall various tongues that they spoke in their past lives, making the acquisition of new languages effortless. Such samsarans gain a +4 racial bonus on Linguistics checks, and learn 2 languages each time they gain a rank in Linguistics rather than 1 language. This racial trait replaces samsaran magic.

Skillful Past Life (Ex): A samsaran's past life gives her natural ability at a specific skill. A samsaran chooses one skill. That skill becomes a class skill for her and at 1st level, she gains one additional skill rank and one additional skill rank whenever she gains a level thereafter. These skill ranks must be spent on the skill that the samsaran gained as a class skill from skillful past life. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.

Mediator: Recalling experience as countless beings and peoples, many samsarans are skilled diplomats and mediators. Such samsarans treat Diplomacy as a class skill and gain Skill Focus with this skill. Additionally, when the samsaran attempts to change a creature's attitude with a Diplomacy check, she can do so up to three steps rather than just two. This racial trait replaces shards of the past.