

Young Ancient One
Issue #2
"The Mark of the Ancient Ones - Part 2"

by
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YOUNG ANCIENT ONE

"The Mark of the Ancient Ones - Part 2"

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RECAP PAGE

(Possibly done on parchment paper with a hand-lettered look and a simple brush-painting of Saa's mask on the page)

Legends tell of a hero. Part beast. Part man. Attacking from the shadows and striking down the unjust. This is the bTsan Saa, the Spirit Leopard, the defender of the poor and humble villagers of Lang Kah.

Behind every legend is an underlying truth. While the villagers regard this hero as a mystical creature, underneath the mask he is just a man: a kung fu fighter, a doctor's apprentice and husband to...

...Leung Tan knows her husband wears the hero's mask. Where the villagers have only awe for him, Leung is ready keep his feet on the ground and his head on straight.

PREVIOUSLY IN YOUNG ANCIENT ONE:

When the tyrant Emperor Tong's men, running a thinly-veiled protection racket, come to Lang Kah extorting taxes, the Spirit Leopard shows up and deals them a humiliating defeat.

Elsewhere, a mysterious old man steals an artifact from under the nose of Mahgra, a perverted demon warlord with an army of zombies. Stricken with a deadly ailment, the old thief stumbles into Lang Kah, seeking the Spirit Leopard.

Just as Leung Tan had cautioned, Captain Chau and his humiliated tax collectors return, out for vengeance. This time they brought their own legendary fighter, the Ghost Tiger. Although the Leopard defeats their champion, he quickly comes face to face with a weapon he's never seen before: the 15th century precursor to the modern hand gun.

Not realizing the danger he's in The Spirit Leopard takes a direct blast to the face...

PAGE ONE

Panel One - Chau fires his pistol at Saa, who instinctively hits the deck, arms crossed protectively in front of his face.

Panel Two - Inset on one. Realizing he's not dead, Saa peeks past his crossed hands.

Panel Three - Chau is frozen in place, smoke and bullet hanging in the air. Time has stopped. Saa is now standing next to Chau, whose face, a frozen picture of aggression, looks away from our hero. Saa scratches his head and looks on in puzzlement.

CHARACTER EFFECT

(A bouquet of question marks
appears above Saa's head)

Panel Four - Saa looks across the city square. In front of Dr. Sho's doorway is Sensang, who stands, leaning on the door frame, hands pressed together in a prayer-like gesture, head bowed. The black mold now covers his right arm and is spreading onto his chest.

Panel Five - Suddenly, everything unfreezes. The smoke has dissipated and Saa is now standing behind Chau.

SOUND EFFECT

--AAM!

Panel Six - Chau is puzzled. Saa has disappeared before his eyes. Next to him, Saa taps his shoulder.

SAA

(1-1)

Looking for me?

Panel Seven - Chau looks over as Saa clocks him in jaw.

PAGE TWO - THREE (TWO-PAGE SPREAD)

Panel One - Dr. Sho and Leung help Sensang lie back down on the cot. The black mold has spread just a little bit further.

SHO

(2-1)

How did he get **outside**? The door
was bolted.

LEUNG

(2-2)

Beats me. I was watching the fight.

SHO

(2-3)

You're a **feisty** one, old man.

SENSANG

(2-4)

Sensang. I am Sensang.

Panel Two - Sensang is back on the cot. Sho and Leung hover over him.

SHO

(2-5)

My name is Dr. Sho. You need to rest. I'll bring you some formula.

(separate - shout)

Apprentice!

SENSANG

(2-6 - small - muttering)

Come **near** me with that formula and I'll shove it up your --

SHO

(2-7 - shout)

-- Apprentice!

(2-8 - separate)

Where is that husband of yours?

Panel Three - Yao enters from the back room. Sho eyes him suspiciously.

YAO

(2-9)

Here! **Right** here.

(2-10 - separate)

We're all secure back there, in case that fight gets out of hand.

SHO

(2-11)

The fight is over.

Panel Four - Sensang reaches out, anxious at the sight of Yao. Yao gives Leung a "help me out" look.

SENSANG

(2-12)

bTsan Saa! We must talk.

YAO

(2-13)

Noooo...

LEUNG

(2-14)

We just saw the bTsan Saa **outside**.

(MORE)

LEUNG(cont'd)

Remember? Beating up **bad** guys? This is my **husband**. Silly man.

Panel Five - She picks up on it and leads Dr. Sho to the back room.

LEUNG

(2-15)

Dr. Sho. Maybe you could show me how you mix that formula?

SHO

(2-16)

Ah, yes. The formula has **so many** interesting applications...

Panel Six - With some privacy, Yao is more aggressive with the old man. He sits on a chair near Sensang's cot.

YAO

(2-17)

Start talking. What just happened out there?

SENSANG

(2-18)

I am of the Order of the **Ancient Ones**,

(2-19 - separate)

a practitioner of the **mystic arts**.

Panel Seven - Close on Sensang.

YAO

(2-20)

Mystic arts?

SENSANG

(2-21)

I am a sorcerer. A **chronomancer**.

(2-22 - separate)

My specialty is the manipulation of time itself.

(2-23 - separate)

Out there, I froze the moment so you could avoid the blast from that weapon.

Panel Eight - Yao is skeptical.

YAO

(2-24)

That is crazy, **crazy** talk.

SENSANG

(2-25)

Do you have another explanation?

YAO

(2-26)

OK.

(2-27 - separate)

And this black stuff?

Panel Nine - Sensang looks at the black mold with disgust.

SENSANG

(2-28)

This is a curse from the Mahgra.

YAO

(2-29)

The Mahgra?

SENSANG

(2-30)

An ancient **demon**. The order has
battled it for centuries. It is a
carnomancer.

YAO

(2-31)

Carnomancer. Like you.

Panel Ten - Sensang points to himself.

SENSANG

(2-32)

No! Chronomancer... Carnomancer...
It's **different**!

(2-33 - separate)

Pay attention! The Mahgra is a
sorcerer of the flesh. It finds a
human host and **infests** that body
then spreads into others --

(2-34 - separate)

-- they become **empty** shells,
zombies, an army of the living
dead.

Panel Eleven - Dr. Sho re-enters the room, but Leung holds
him by the shoulders, tugging him back towards the formula
kitchen.

SHO

(2-35)

I hope that answers your --

LEUNG

(2-36)

But **how?** **That's** what I'm asking.
How does it work?

Panel Twelve - Sensang holds his mysterious treasure: a ceremonial dagger with three edges (not unlike a tent stake) and an ornate, carved, crystal head. (Note to Andy and Bill: To whatever extent you can, make sure the head appears to be made of crystal or glass. This is important to the resolution in issue #3).

YAO

(2-37)

This demon. What is it after?

SENSANG

(2-38)

The Mahgra cares only about Mahgra.
 It will spread itself over the
 entire world, destroying everything
 to pursue its pleasures.

(2-39 - separate)

The Order sent me to **steal** this
 weapon from the its lair.

(2-40 - separate)

It is the **Shenpa Phurpa**. It's only
 purpose is to destroy this demon.

Panel Thirteen - Yao is back to skeptical. Sensang is irritated by the insinuation that follows.

YAO

(2-41)

So. You were **in** his lair, **with** the
 weapon and you didn't **use** it on
 him?

SENSANG

(2-42)

Mahgra **feeds** on selfish desires. My
 hatred would only make me a more
 inviting host.

(2-43 - separate)

One must be **devoid** of ego to use
 the phurpa. We've trained one such
 for years...only **he** can strike with
 a pure spirit.

(2-44 - separate)

You **must** return the phurpa.

Panel Fourteen - Yao puts a reassuring hand on Sensang's shoulder (careful only to touch shirt, and not the black ooze).

YAO

(2-45)

Look, we'll just get you back on your feet --

SENSANG

(2-46)

It's too **late** for me. I should be **dead** already.

(2-47 - separate)

I've only survived this long by slowing **time** around the infected area, but when I helped you --

YAO

(2-48)

-- you let your guard down.

Panel Fifteen - Leung and Sho return. Leung's eyes are glazed over.

SHO

(2-49)

...and that's how it works.

Panel Sixteen - Sensang pulls his shirt down, revealing his left bicep. On it is a tattooed mark. It is that Dr. Strange demon symbol we got a glimpse of last issue.

SENSANG

(2-50)

You **must** take the Phurpa. Don't wait for Mahgra to come looking for it.

(2-51 - separate)

This is the **mark** of the Ancient Ones. Seek it out and you will **find** them.

Panel Seventeen - Close on Leung who looks astonished and maybe a little frightened by the mark.

PAGE FOUR

Panel One - Night: Ghost Tiger, Captain Chau and the other tax collectors are on horseback. They are still in armor, but their hands are bound behind their backs. The horses are tied together with rope. The men's legs are also bound to the horses. Some of the other collectors are unconscious.

TIGER

(4-1)

That is **not** the weapon of a true warrior.

(4-2 - separate)

The emperor chose **me** to bring down the Spirit Leopard.

CHAU

(4-3)

And you were SO effective.

TIGER

(4-4)

No less than your "blaster."

Panel Two - Zombie eyes appear in the forest all around the riders. A weaselly tax collector looks terrified. Chau is annoyed with him. Tiger is alert and scans the woods.

WEASELLY RIDER

(4-5)

D-d-did you hear **that**? There's **something** in the woods.

CHAU

(4-6)

Silence, fool! You've already disgraced us enough.

TIGER

(4-7)

No. He's right. There's something there. I can **smell** them.

Panel Three - The horses rear up as a dozen or so EMPTY ONES swarm over the riders. The unconscious men are pulled from their horses even as Chau and Tiger struggle to avoid the disgusting, filthy hands of the zombies. Their bindings make struggle futile. Chau squirms while Tiger scowls his feline scowl.

CHAU

(4-8)

Demons!

TIGER

(4-9)

RRRRRAARRR!

Panel Four - The men are pulled down into a quagmire of zombie arms and heads, until only their hands, grasping for freedom, can be seen above the horde.

PAGE FIVE

Panel One - Yao and Leung sit among the animal furs in their house. Leung looks disturbed. Yao is still excited.

YAO

(5-1)

You've been pretty quiet ever since we left Sho's.

LEUNG

(5-2)

That old man. Sensang. Do you believe him?

Panel Two - Close on Yao as he recalls his strange and exciting experience.

YAO

(5-3)

I don't know.

(5-4 - separate)

What happened was the most **amazing** thing. So **silent**.

(5-5 - separate)

All I could hear was my own **breath**, and this **roar**, like a distant **wind**. Everything was **completely** still.

Panel Three - Yao can see she's feeling very disturbed by the day's events. He puts an arm around her.

YAO

(5-6)

What's wrong?

LEUNG

(5-7)

That **mark** Sensang had on his arm --

(5-8 - separate)

-- do you remember my dream?

YAO

(5-9)

The one about living in a **castle** and sleeping on a **solid gold bed** with twenty young boys and --

Panel Four - She smiles and elbows him.

LEUNG

(5-10)

-- be serious!

(MORE)

LEUNG(cont'd)

(5-11 - separate)

The dream about my mother.

YAO

(5-12)

The one where she's taken.

LEUNG

(5-13)

That one. That mark on Sensang's arm...

Panel Five - Close on Leung

YAO

(5-14)

The mark of the Ancient Ones.

LEUNG

(5-15)

That same mark is in the dream.

Panel Six - Same. Yao is concerned.

YAO

(5-16)

Are you **sure**?

LEUNG

(5-17)

I'm positive. I never remembered it before, but it's always **been** there. Now that I've **seen** it I **recognize** it.

(5-18 - separate)

All this time I thought --

(5-19 - separate)

-- mother just left.

(5-20 - separate)

Now I'm not so sure.

PAGE SIX

Panel One - In Mahgra's lair: The empty ones drag Chau, Tiger and the other men in. It takes four of them to hold Tiger. Mahgra greets them, sizing them up like judge at a dog show.

MAHGRA

(6-1)

Well, well. What have we here?

(6-2 - separate)

Quite a nice **catch**.

(6-3 - separate)

Strong, fighting men.

Panel Two - Mahgra grabs the weaselly rider who recoils in fear from Mahgra's unsavory appearance.

MAHGRA

(6-4)

Where do **you** come from?

WEASELLY RIDER

(6-5)

Aaahh!

MAHGRA

(6-6)

"Aaahh?"

(6-7 - separate)

I haven't heard of this land

"Aaahh".

Panel Three - Chau pipes up, defiant.

CHAU

(6-8)

We are in the service of Emperor
Tong! You must --

MAHGRA

(6-9)

No. You have a new master now.

Panel Four - Mahgra opens his mouth and a putrid, grey mist floats out and snakes it's way into the mouth, nose, ears and even eyes of weaselly rider.

Panel Five - The collector's eyes go completely white and his mouth hangs open, slack. He now stands at Mahgra's side, a zombie in fine Chinese armor.

Panel Six - Tiger gets angry and struggles against his captors.

TIGER

(6-10)

Free him! Now!

PAGE SEVEN

Panel One - Empty ones, including the freshly minted tax collector, pile on Tiger, beating him into submission.

MAHGRA

(7-1)

That one probably won't make the
transition --

(MORE)

MAHGRA(cont'd)

(7-2 - separate)

-- he'll **resist** me. It always
destroys them when they resist too
hard. Waste of a perfectly good
body.

Panel Two - Mahgra stands face to face with Chau and explains

MAHGRA

(7-3)

You won't resist, will you?

CHAU

(7-4)

Wh-What do you want?

MAHGRA

(7-5)

Oh, just for you and your men to
serve me as slaves for all
eternity.

(7-6 - separate)

How does **that** sound?

Panel Three - Mahgra places his large hand under Chau's jaw and pries it open. His own mouth is open, ready to spew his evil mist.

CHAU

(7-7)

W-wait! I can show you a whole **town**
full of slaves.

(7-8 - separate)

One in particular!

(7-9 - separate)

He's a **sorcerer** like you.

Panel Four - Mahgra releases Chau, intrigued by the mention of sorcery.

MAHGRA

(7-10)

A sorcerer you say?

CHAU

(7-11)

We just did battle with him.

(7-12 - separate)

One man against these elite
fighters.

MAHGRA

(7-13)

I'm not sure that requires sorcery.

CHAU

(7-14)

He **moved** like no man could.

(7-15 - separate)

One moment he was in front of me,
then he was behind me, as if he
just **blinked** there.

Panel Five - Close on Mahgra, very interested. This sounds familiar.

MAHGRA

(7-16)

"Just blinked"...

(7-17 - separate)

This sorcerer. Was he an **old** man?
Did he have a **mark** on his shoulder?

CHAU

(7-18)

I don't know.

(7-19 - separate)

He wore a mask.

Panel Six - Mahgra places a large hand around the back of Chau's neck in a gesture both intimidating and genial. He leads Chau away from the others.

MAHGRA

(7-20)

Tell me **more** about this town.

PAGE EIGHT

Panel One - Morning. Outside Dr. Sho's office, Sogma and Pabu wait like Jay and Silent Bob. Yao approaches.

YAO

(8-1)

Sogma and Pabu: My favorite law
men.

(8-2 - separate)

Please tell me this is a social
visit.

Panel Two - It's Sogma's turn to grin as Pabu looks sheepish and shows a blackened hand.

SOGMA

(8-3)

Ask **Pabu**.

PABU

(8-4)

I thought I could make my own black-powder blaster.

(8-5 - separate)

That stuff burns pretty fast!

SOGMA

(8-6)

That black powder blaster wasn't enough to stop the Spirit Leopard though, was it?

Panel Three - Same. Yao plays along. Sogma and Pabu start to get fired up.

YAO

(8-7)

Oh no?

SOGMA

(8-8)

It was **amazing**.

PABU

(8-9)

Spirit Leopard is **truly** a mystical warrior.

Panel Four - Same. Yao gives them a raised eyebrow and a teasing grin.

YAO

(8-10)

I heard he's just Elder **Ling** in a **mask**.

SOGMA

(8-11)

Yeah, right. How could it be Elder Ling when he **saved** Elder Ling the other day?

PABU

(8-12)

Besides, Elder Ling doesn't have magic powers.

Panel Six - Same. Pabu and Sogma are getting out of control again.

YAO

(8-13)

And the Spirit Leopard does?

SOGMA

(8-14)

For sure!

PABU

(8-15)

Didn't you see the fight yesterday?

SOGMA

(8-16)

You should've seen it.

PABU

(8-17)

Should

(8-18 - separate)

of

(8-19 - separate)

seen it.

Panel Seven - The men are transforming into raging fanboys, pantomiming the battle.

SOGMA

(8-20)

Captain Chau tried to **blast** Saa --

PABU

(8-21)

-- with that blaster --

SOGMA

(8-22)

-- and Saa just disappeared --

PABU

(8-23)

-- into thin air --

SOGMA

(8-24)

-- and reappeared --

PABU

(8-25)

-- and **decked** the guy!

SOGMA
(8-26)
It was **awesome**!

Panel Eight - The tale winds down, leaving Yao beaming with pride.

PABU
(8-27)
Yeah, awesome!

SOGMA
(8-28)
And magic.

YAO
(8-29)
Wow! I keep missing the good ones.

PAGE NINE

Panel One - In the dojo. Yao and Leung talk as they spar.

YAO
(9-1)
These Ancient Ones must be fascinating.

LEUNG
(9-2)
You're going to go looking for them. Aren't you?

Panel Two - Yao is fired up. Leung throws a punch. Yao blocks.

YAO
(9-3)
Think how much they could **teach** me!
(9-4 - separate)
And you should have **heard** Sogma and Pabu today. They're **totally** in awe of Spirit Leopard now.
(9-5 - separate)
Think what an edge I'd have if I learned to stop time like old Sensang did.

LEUNG
(9-6)
Are you **listening** to yourself? You used to talk about **helping** people.

Panel Three - Leung throws a high kick. Yao ducks under it.

YAO

(9-7)

I **am** helping people!

LEUNG

(9-8)

And Sogma and Pabu gushing over
Spirit Leopard; Tell me that's **not**
going to your head.

Panel Four - They stop fighting. Yao shrugs. Leung rolls her eyes.

YAO

(9-9)

Come on. It's not like that.

LEUNG

(9-10)

Oh no?

YAO

(9-11)

I **have to** seek out these Ancient
Ones.

LEUNG

(9-12)

So you can become the **magical** hero
of Lang Kah.

Panel Five - Yao puts his hands up, defensive.

YAO

(9-13)

Wait a minute.

(9-14 - separate)

I owe Sensang that much. He saved
my **life** and he'll probably **die**
because of it.

(9-15 - separate)

Besides, if I find this order of
Ancient Ones, maybe I can find out
what happened to your **mother**.

LEUNG

(9-16)

Oh, so you're doing this for **me**.

YAO
(9-17)
And Sensang.

Panel Six - Leung makes an exaggerated show sniffing in the air.

SOUND EFFECT
Sniff. Sniff.

LEUNG
(9-18)
You smell something?

YAO
(9-19)
No.

LEUNG
(9-20)
Really? It's quite **strong**.
Overwhelming.
(9-21 - Separate)
Like somebody just dumped a big
load of **crap**.

PAGE TEN

Panel One - Yao resorts to his best puppy-dog expression, but Leung remains stern.

LEUNG
(10-1)
This is what I've been trying to
tell you all along.
(10-2 - separate)
Playing hero to this town...
(10-3 - separate)
...you've just endangered them.

YAO
(10-4)
That's not true.

Panel Two - Leung gets a bit more heated. It's time for Yao to get some tough love.

LEUNG
(10-5)
No?
(10-6 - separate)
Why did Tong's men return
yesterday?
(MORE)

LEUNG(cont'd)

(10-7 - separate)
Something to do with being
humiliated by you, maybe?

YAO

(10-8)
Yeah, but --

LEUNG

(10-9)
-- and what if you hadn't **been** here
when they arrived?

Panel Three - Yao's looking chagrined as Leung reaches new levels of exasperation.

YAO

(10-10)
Sogma and Pabu have --

LEUNG

(10-11)
-- Oh, puh-leeze! Those two?
(10-12 - separate)
They injure themselves getting out
of **bed** in the morning.

Panel Four - Yao's expression gets serious as he tries to stand his ground, but he's hopelessly overmatched.

YAO

(10-13)
Well I can't be everywhere at once.

LEUNG

(10-14)
Thank you, master debater. You make
my point **for** me.

(10-15 - separate)
You've got this whole village
snowed into believing you're some
kind of magical creature who **fights**
for them.

(10-16 - separate)
Now they have **no** idea how to fight
for themselves.

(10-17 - separate)
What are they gonna do when you go
looking for these Ancient Ones?

Panel Five - Yao is back to sheepish as Leung drives it home.

YAO

(10-18)

But --

LEUNG

(10-19)

And what's going to happen when
something rolls into town that even
the Spirit Leopard can't handle?

(10-20 - separate)

Sensang didn't **think** about all that
when he put this **bug** in your ear...

PAGE ELEVEN

Panel One - Dr. Sho's office, night. Past Sensang, who sleeps
on a cot in the darkened room, to a door, ajar. Someone peeks
in.

CAPTION

(11-0)

"...I've got a few words to put in
his ear too."

Panel Two - Leung approaches Sensang, who is still sound
asleep.

LEUNG

(11-1)

Old man. Are you the one in my
dreams?

Panel Three - Leung's hand pulls the blanket from sleeping
Sensang's shoulder revealing the mark of the ancient ones.

LEUNG

(11-2)

How many wear this mark?

Panel Three - Close on: Sensang grabs Leung's hand.

Panel Four - Leung is startled.

Panel Five - Sensang's eyes snap awake.

SENSANG

(11-3)

No.

(11-4 - separate)

No!

(11-5 - separate)

He's **here!** The **evil** one has come.

Panel Six - Leung turns away from the old man, distracted by -
-

SOUND EFFECT
AAIIIIEEEEEE!!!

Panel Seven - Leung looks astonished and terrified as she looks out the office window.

PAGE TWELVE

Panel One - Large Panel. A villager recoils in terror as a horde of EMPTY ONES storms into the city square.

Riding herd over the mob is MAHGRA.

MAHGRA
(12-1)
Sensang! I know you're here
somewhere, old man!
(12-2 - separate)
We can do this the **easy** way or we
can do it the **hard** way.
(12-3 - separate)
Honestly, I think the hard way is
so much more fun.
(12-4 - separate)
He's here somewhere, my Empty Ones.
The one who finds him gets to eat
as **many** villagers as he wants.

Panel Two - Leung slams the shutter.

SOUND EFFECT
Slam

LEUNG
(12-5)
What did you bring -- ?

SENSANG
(12-6)
Run! Get the Spirit Leopard. He
must take the artifact.

Panel Three - Leung exits Sho's office where a zombie awaits.
NOTE: This guy should be Japanese and have a sword or some
suitable weapon strapped across his back. He's not going to
use it but I want to establish the zombies come from all
walks and many are fighting men who still have their weapons,
which will come in handy in issue #3.

Panel Four - The Zombie leers down at her with an evil grin on it's face. It grabs her left arm.

Panel Five - Leung leaps into the air, planting her left foot on the Empty One's chest and back-kicking across it's face with her right.

LEUNG
(12-7)
Oh no you **don't**!

PAGE THIRTEEN

Panel One - Past the zombie, on Leung, who runs towards her home.

LEUNG
(13-1)
Husband!

Panel Two - Looking back at the first, Leung runs into a second zombie. This one is the weaselly rider who Mahgra converted earlier.

Panel Three - Leung is on the ground with two Empty Ones towering over her.

LEUNG
(13-2)
Not good.

Panel Four - Large Panel - The Spirit Leopard flies in and simultaneously delivers kicks to the faces of both zombies. He's holding the melon hammers that he took off the tax collectors at the beginning of issue one. Strapped to his back is the sword.

SAA
(13-3)
Oh **man**, did you two pick the wrong girl in the wrong town!

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel One - Past Saa, who lands in a cool pose, to the door of Leung's house SLAMMING shut.

SAA
(14-1)
Get yourself --

SOUND EFFECT
 (above the door)
 SLAM!

SOUND EFFECT
 (smaller, near the door's
 handle)
 BOLT!

SAA
 (14-2 - connected -
 smaller, muttering)
 -- inside. Bolt the door.
 (14-3 - separate)
 Don't mind me.
 (14-4 - separate)
 I got this.

Panel Two - Saa spins and delivers a hammer powered uppercut to the tax collector zombie.

SAA
 (14-5)
 Threatening Elder Ling is one
 thing...

SOUND EFFECT
 WHACK

SAA
 (14-6)
 ...he's a politician, so he kind of
 has it coming...

Panel Three - Saa delivers a would-be lethal hammer blow across the jaw of the other, sending its head twisting to the side. The first zombie is already on the ground.

SAA
 (14-7)
 But picking on a **lady**...

SOUND EFFECT
 KE-RACK!

SAA
 (14-8)
 ...**that** pisses me off.

Panel Four - Past Saa as the two Empty Ones pick themselves up. One zombie's head dangles to the side, the neck clearly broken.

SAA
(14-9 - O.P.)
Aw, crap.

Panel Five - Back on Saa, who looks over his shoulder and sees a dozen or so zombie brothers lurking behind him.

SAA
(14-10)
Double crap.

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel One - The Empty Ones pile on Saa. They hold his arms but he manages to kick one in the face.

SOUND EFFECT
SMACK

Panel Two - Close on the mob of zombies, pummeling downward, no sign of Saa under the dog pile.

Panel Three - Saa crawls out of the dog pile, between zombie legs.

Panel Four - Saa stands up. Dusts himself off.

SAA
(15-1)
Ok. Zombies.
(15-2 - separate)
Not too bright.
(15-3 - separate)
I can use --

PAGE SIXTEEN

Panel One - Another Empty One who wasn't part of the melee and catches Saa unaware, grabbing him by the neck.

SAA
(16-1)
-- URK!

Panel Two - Saa holds the zombie's wrist with one hand and drives his sword into the zombie's gut with the other.

Panel Three - The zombie throws Saa to the ground. His sword comes free, trailing black blood behind it.

Panel Four - Past Saa, on the ground, looking up at the smiling zombie, guts hanging from the wound Saa gave him.

SAA
(16-2)
What **are** you?

PAGE SEVENTEEN

Panel One - Large Panel. Saa spins in the air and decapitates the creature with his sword.

Panel Two - Inset on One. Saa comes to rest as the Zombie head falls.

SAA
(17-1)
So you **can** be hurt.

Panel Three - Six (or more) - As many panels as Andy wants filling the bottom of the page. Depictions of sword and zombie mayhem with zombie heads a-flying!

PAGE EIGHTEEN

Panel One - Past Mahgra on Saa who stands triumphant, sword drawn and bloody. All around him are the decapitated bodies of the Empty Ones. One zombie head is still in motion as it bounces on the ground.

MAHGRA
(18-1)
And what are **you** supposed to be?

SAA
(18-2)
I am the bTsan Saa: **defender** of
Lang Kah.

Panel Two - Close on Mahgra's calm face.

MAHGRA
(18-3)
Great.
(18-4 - separate)
Do you know how much it hurts me
when you --

Panel Three - Mahgra, now ENRAGED, makes the spell-casting gesture (a la Dr. Strange), index finger, pinkie and thumb extended. Mahgra is backed by many, still-animated zombies.

MAHGRA
(18-5 - connected -
shouting)
KILL MY EMPTY ONES!?

Panel Four - Mahgra, still gesturing, conjures up a torrent of body parts from the corpses of his slain Empty Ones. A snaking column of arms, heads, bones and flesh slams in to Saa and hurtles him into a wall.

Panel Five - The zombie parts have re-formed into a kind of perverse, flesh-and-bone net that hold Saa helpless against the wall. Zombie hands grab and cling at Saa's limbs. Bone Spikes hold parts of the netting in place. Even a severed head can be seen here and there, biting into Saa. The hero still grips his sword. Mahgra pulls Saa's mask off.

MAHGRA

(18-6)

I **doubt** I'll find creaky, old
Sensang under here.

(18-7 - separate)

As I suspected. Just a villager.

YAO

(18-8)

What do you want?

MAHGRA

(18-9)

I wonder if you already know?

Panel Six - Mahgra smashes one of his leather clad fists into Yao's forearm, cracking it.

SOUND EFFECT

KRACK!

PAGE NINETEEN

Panel One - Saa is slumped forward against his rotting, zombie restraints. Mahgra ducks down so he can look Saa in the eyes, and takes his sword.

YAO

(19-1)

Huff

(19-2 - separate)

Huff

MAHGRA

(19-3)

Want to talk about it? You DO know
why I'm here, don't you?

YAO

(19-4)

Huff

(MORE)

YAO(cont'd)

(19-5 - separate)

Huff

(19-6 - separate)

Go to **hell**.

Panel Two - Mahgra slashes with the blade, tearing Saa's shirt and slashing a bloody X into his chest.

SOUND EFFECT

Shik. Shik.

MAHGRA

I followed someone here. On old man. He has something that **belongs** to me.

Panel Three - Close on Yao's defiant but exhausted face.

MAHGRA

(19-7 - connected)

You **know** what I'm talking about.

YAO

(19-8)

Screw you.

Panel Four - Mahgra cocks his sword arm back, ready to run Yao through.

MAHGRA

(19-9)

Well, I **tried** to be nice.

LEUNG

(19-10 - shout - O.P.)

Stop!

Panel Five - Leung, Mayor Ling, Sogma, Pabu, Dr. Sho and a number of other villagers have gathered. Leung struggles to rush forward as Sogma and Pabu hold her back.

LEUNG

(19-11)

Let him go, you **freak!**

Panel Six - Mahgra approaches Leung. She's fuming. He's trying to look as charming as a centuries-old flesh monger can.

MAHGRA

(19-12)

Nobody told me about the **beautiful** women here. I could use a new...

(MORE)

MAHGRA(cont'd)
 (19-13 - separate)
 ...plaything.

LEUNG
 (19-14)
 Get bent.

PAGE TWENTY

Panel One - Close on Yao, furious.

YAO
 (20-1)
 Get **away** from her!

Panel Two - Mayor Ling inserts himself between Mahgra and Leung, a surprisingly strong move.

LING
 (20-2)
 Leave this village at once.
 (20-3 - separate)
 You've made a terrible mistake. We
 have nothing that you want.

MAHGRA
 (20-4)
 Your little cat **killed** quite a few
 of my minions. I could use a few
new servants.

LING
 (20-5)
 What are you --

Panel Three - Mahgra opens wide, grey mist flowing from his mouth into Ling's.

LING
 (20-6)
 -- URK!
 (20-7 - separate)
 No!

MAHGRA
 (20-8)
 Don't resist...

Panel Four - Mayor Ling falls dead on the ground. Mahgra looks disgusted. Yao strains against his bonds.

MAHGRA

(20-9)

I **hate** it when they resist.

(20-10 - separate)

OK. Who's next?

YAO

(20-10)

Damn you! Free me and we'll settle
this like --

SENSANG

(20-11 - Shout - O.P.)

Enough!

Panel Five - Past Yao and Mahgra to Sensang, standing outside of Dr. Sho's place. The black mold has almost completely covered him from chin to toe. His face and left arm are the only clear areas.

He holds the Phurpa above his head with his left hand.

MAHGRA

(20-12)

Sensang. Still alive.

(20-13 - separate)

You amaze me.

SENSANG

(20-14)

Leave them alone, **Mahgra**. It's **me**
you want.

Panel Six - Past Sensang to Mahgra

MAHGRA

(20-15)

Oh no, dear chronomancer. Not you.

(20-16 - separate)

Just that little trinket.

SENSANG

(20-17)

Come here and I'll **bury** it in your
chest.

PAGE TWENTY ONE

Panel One - Mahgra opens his shirt, baring his chest.

MAHGRA

(21-1)

Oh, please, take a stab at it.

Panel Two - Sensang's face is screwed up frustration.

MAHGRA

(21-2 - O.P.)

Ah, but you're not the **one**, are you?

(21-3 - separate)

You're not the one they've **trained** to destroy me.

Panel Three - Wider, the old man stands defiant even as Mahgra and the zombies make a tight ring round him.

MAHGRA

(21-4)

It's your **move**, old, old man.

(21-5 - separate)

Don't worry. I'm patient. I can wait **hundreds** of years.

Panel Four - Close on Sensang's hand. The black mold has advanced past the elbow and is closing in on the Phurpa.

MAHGRA

(21-6 - attached)

Of course, it won't be **quite** that long, thanks to my little, black gift.

Panel Five - Close on Yao's fearful face.

Panel Six - Close on Mahgra's sinister eyes.

Panel Seven - Close on Sensang's angry, determined face.

SENSANG

(21-7)

Goodbye, **demon**.

PAGE TWENTY TWO

Panel One - Close on Sensang's hand, now empty, a dazzling glow of light around it. The phurpa has disappeared.

Panel Two - Sensang's body, covered in black gunk, crumbles to the ground, blackened flesh falling away from bone. Mahgra is enraged.

MAHGRA

(22-1 - shout)

No!

(22-2 - separate)

Damn you, Sensang! Where is it?

Panel Three - Mahgra kicks the black mound that was Sensang.

SOUND EFFECT

Splurch

MAHGRA

(22-3)

Where **is** it?!

Panel Four - Yao, still bound, tries to seize the opportunity.

YAO

(22-4)

It's **gone**. We have nothing you want now. **Leave** my village.

MAHGRA

(22-5 - shouting)

You!

Panel Five - Mahgra closes in on Yao, really cheesed off, pointing at him with an accusing finger.

MAHGRA

(22-6)

You are not someone to give **me** orders!

(22-7 - separate - shouting)

You have already cost me too much.

Panel Six - Yao's eyes and mouth pop in shock as Mahgra runs him completely through the gut with his sword. Mahgra is furious.

MAHGRA

(22-8)

Live by the sword, **die** by the sword, little hero.

ALTERNATE RECAP TEXT

The Mark of the Ancient Ones - Chapter 2

Previously: After stealing an artifact from the demon Mahgra, a mysterious old sorcerer stumbles into the Tibetan city of Lang Kah seeking its protector, the Spirit Leopard. The local hero has his hands full. Just as his wife had predicted, Emperor Tong's humiliated tax collector Captain Chau has returned to the town, seeking vengeance. Although Spirit Leopard defeats their champion, the deadly Ghost Tiger, he is unable to avoid a blast from Chau's new weapon: the 15th century precursor to the modern hand gun.