

An Introduction to Tékumel



By **Donald A. Kaiser**

Introduction to Tékumel

June 24, 2002, Update

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A. Tsolyánu

Government: Empire
Current Emperor: Mírusíya hi Tlakotáni (the 63rd Seal Emperor), "Resplendent Flame"
Secret Police: The Omnipotent Azure Legion (OAL)
Capital: Báy Sü (Emperor resides in Avanthár)
National Color: Blue and Gold
Religion: Pavár's 20 deities (see below)

B. Yán Kór

Government: Feudal Monarchy under charismatic leader
Current Ruler: Baron Áld
Secret Policy: Surgéth
Capital: Yán Kór City (Baron resides in Ke'éér)
National Color: Green and Gold
Religion: Pavár's 20 Deities, The Lord of Sacrifice (a form of Vimúhla) on the Isle of Vrídu, The Mad One of Hlíkku from the city of Hlíkku

C. Mu'ugalavyá

Government: Oligarchy
Current Princes: Tu'umúnish Ssa'amúussa (1st Palace - NE)
Dilitlázish Ko'ól (2nd Palace - SE)
Gremendúish Fíru'úna or his son (3rd Palace - SW)
Herekkúnish Ketláino (4th Palace - NW)
Secret Police: The Company of the Mourners in Sable
Capital: Ssa'átis (1) First Prince resides in Kúrdis, (2) Second Prince resides in Khéiris, (3) Third Prince resides in Tráhlú, (4) Fourth Prince resides in Tlár
National Color: Red
Religion: Hrsh (possibly an amalgam of Vimúhla, Karakán, and Ksáru) whose primary shrine is on the forbidden island of Mu'úgalla, Vimúhla and the remainder of Pavár's 20 Deities

D. Salarvyá

Government: Feudal Monarchy
Current King: Griggatsétsa Churggilléshmu
Secret Policy: small ineffectual intelligence arm
Capital: Tsatsayágga
National Color: Black
Great Families: Churggilléshmu of Tsatsayágga Hrúchcháqsha of Chame'él
Thirreqúmmu of Koylúga Khekhkhéssa of Héru
Mreshshél-Átl of Lake Mrissúlt Gürrúshyúgga of Tsa'avtúlgú
Shiggashko'ónmu of Jaekánta
Religion: Shiringgáyi (a mixture of Avánthe and Dlamélísh) whose primary shrine is one the shores of Lake Mrissúlt) and Pavár's 20 Deities

E. Livyánu

Government: Theocratic Oligarchy
Current Leader: Chórhaz Lú Tlášhte, High Prelate
Secret Police: The Vrú'unek
Capital: Tsámra
National Color: None
Religion: The Shadow Gods

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By Donald A. Kaiser,
Compiled from the writings of Prof. M.A.R. Barker

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Tékumel

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Foreword

The complexity and sophistication of M.A.R. Barker's world of Tékumel sometimes is intimidating even to experienced gamemasters unfamiliar with the world. They often ask themselves, "How can I ever hope to master all the intricacies of the world in my game?" and when they cannot give themselves an adequate answer, they more-often-than-not decide to run a role-playing game in a different fantasy or science fiction setting.

As someone with a vested interest in promoting Tékumel, I had been searching for a long time for a way to make running a role-playing game in Tékumel less intimidating to potential gamemasters. I was therefore delighted when Victor Raymond, one of Professor Barker's "regulars" at his Thursday night gaming sessions, brought this introduction to my attention. This introduction, compiled by Don Kaiser in the late eighties, offered gamers a wonderfully clear overview of the world as it existed at that time.

I noted one potential difficulty with just reusing the introduction as an entrée for gamemasters today—that is, the world of Tékumel has continued to evolve since the late eighties, and some of the data in the introduction is obsolete. Rather than updating the introduction by retyping the text and doing the layout all over again—an effort which would never be profitable given current low production volumes and which would produce a work product which would itself become obsolete—I am addressing the issue by including a loose update page with the most current information on Tékumel in Prof. Barker's game. I shall post free updates of this data on www.Tekumel.com as they become available to me.

Enjoy!

Carl L. Bradt

May 2002

Front Cover: Emperor Tontikén Riruné “The Slave of Demons” 39th Seal Emperor during one of his secret ceremonies in the Golden Tower atop Avanthár.

End Illustration: A Priest of Belkhánu in high ceremonial garb.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TÉKUMEL

by Donald A. Kaiser, compiled from the writings of Prof. M. A. R. Barker

I. History

- A. **Times of the Ancients:** Té-kumel was first visited by mankind some 60,000 years in the future. Té-kumel's solar system lay upon an important trade route and the Lords of Humanspace decided to build a star base on Té-kumel. Thus, they poisoned the deadly purplish vegetation, cleared the lands and seas of many of the dangerous lifeforms, cleaned the atmosphere of the clouds of yellowish gas, and drove the native inhabitants, the Ssú and the Hlúss, onto reservations. They shifted the planet's orbit to conform to a standard day and added great eternal gravity engines to the planet's core to bring the gravity up to Terran standard. As the centuries passed, Té-kumel became a residential pleasure planet for mankind and his allies (and some of his foes also came - uninvited). A planet-wide network of underground tubeway cars was built, and the sprawling estates were filled with interesting animals and exotic flora from all the worlds of Humanspace. Thus it remained until -
- B. **The Time of Darkness:** No record exists of this time, but folk memory laments of a time in which the hills rose up, the seas walked the land, flame spouted from the brazen mouths of the mountains, and the stars went out forever. For reasons unknown, Té-kumel and its solar system had fallen - or were thrust - through a warp in the fabric of space-time itself into a pocket dimension in which no other matter had previously existed. The same fate befell 772 other worlds of Humanspace (the "planes of existence"). It is said, though it cannot be known for sure, that the Time of Darkness lasted fifty centuries.
- C. **The Latter Times:** During the Time of Darkness, certain enclaves of humanity endeavored to retain the technologies of the Ancients. Cut off from the raw materials and finished goods once brought in from the stars, they hoarded the products and devices of the Ancients against the coming Darkness. These enclaves became known as the Cities of the Latter Times, and their caches are filled with everything from toiletries to aircars. But even the people of these enclaves eventually succumbed to the Darkness, and abandoned their cities to join the rest of Té-kumel's survivors in learning the ways of agriculture and a less technological way of life.
- D. **The Historical Empires.**
 1. **The Empire of Llyán of Tsámra** (approx. 25,000 B.P.): The oldest written records date back some 25,000 years, and tell of an empire founded by a soldier/adventurer named Llyán "in the days which came after the Latter Times" whose capital was apparently at Tsámra (now the capital of Livyánu). Very little else remains: names of places and people whose meaning are now lost, fragments of walls, rings of monoliths, shards of pottery, golden scrolls, and, in the underworlds which underlie many of the ancient cities, chambers, halls, labyrinths, and occasional hoards of thick coins stamped with the image of a naked man holding a wand or two-handed sword. The Scholars of Llyán's time also compiled voluminous compendia of spells and magical instructions utilizing energy from the planes beyond (e.g. The Book of Ebon Bindings). It is unfortunate that so little of this wisdom has been preserved.
 2. **The Three States of the Triangle** (approx. 25,000 B.P.): Contemporaneous with - or perhaps just subsequent to - the Empire of Llyán of Tsámra, there arose a confederation of three city-states in what are now the southern plains of Tsolyánu. No material artifacts of this culture have been identified for sure because the city/capitals of this confederation - Úrmish in the west, Jakálla in the south, and Thráya in the East - have been rebuilt many, many times, and any smaller sites lie buried at the bottom of metres of sediment from the Mssúma river delta. Almost all evidence of the Three States of the Triangle come from their conquerors, the Dragon Warriors.

3. **The Dragon Warriors** (approx. 24,000 B.P.): The Dragon Warriors were the Nlüss people, great barbarians from the mountains north of modern Mu'ugalavyā. At the end of the Empire of Llyān of Tsāmra, some unknown scholar in Nlüss contacted the first of mighty beings from the Planes Beyond - Vimúhla, Lord of Fire. Nlüss culture was based upon violence, and the chiefs and tribal shamans seized upon the religion of Vimúhla to spark the greed of the tribes, unite them, and lead them out in a mighty wave into the lands of the south. Soon, the squalid log huts of the village of Malchāiran were transformed into the proud towers of the capital of a theocratic empire. Within 200 years, the Empire of the Dragon Warriors stretched from the borders of the Shén States to the towers of Tsatsayāga (now the capital of Salarvyā). The Empire of the Dragon Warriors maintained its internal cohesion for only some 200 years after this, for by the year 500 of their dynasty remote regions began to split away, each ruled by one of the original conquering tribes, and the next 1500 years were filled with petty wars, personal intrigues, rivalries and vengences - and always endless, pointless, self-serving greed.
4. **The Fisherman Kings** (approx. 22,000 B.P.): During the last centuries of the Empire of the Dragon Warriors, a lordling from the city of Fénul, Gámulu, united the people of western Salarvyā to drive out the last decadent heirs of the Dragon Warriors. He spent the next 25 years at war with the non-human Ssú (see below), who had come forth from the mountains north of western Salarvyā, before finally driving them back into their strongholds below Ssuyál. His twelfth son, Hó Etéhtu, seized the throne of the Ebon Helm, and spent his long reign consolidating his domains in western and central Salarvyā and the northern peninsula of Háida Pakála. It was he who built the navy of small, fast galleys which give the dynasty its name. During the reign of the 22nd king of Gámulu's dynasty, contact was made with a second of the gods, Ksárul, the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room (see below). The mysteries and doctrines of Ksárul's faith spread throughout the realm of the Fisherman Kings, and it was through the establishment of the faith of Lord Ksárul that the Salarvyāni language (then called Bednálljan) spread as the medium of scholarship, literature, and diplomacy. At the end of the reign of the Fisherman Kings, the worship of the remaining Lords of Change appeared: Hrū'ú, Supreme Principle of Change; Sárku, Master of the Undead; and Dlamélis, the Green-Eyed Lady of Fleshly Joys.
5. **The First Imperium (Bednálljans)** (approx. 21,000 B.P.): The First Imperium began when Nayári, a 13-year-old nomad girl, arrived in Purdānim (a city now lost.) There she learned the ways of the courtesan and was passed from hand to hand, like a pretty toy, rising to become Chief Wife of the Clanmaster. Continuing to hunger for power, she took five years to lay her snares, and when all was ready the pretty toy turned upon her owners and destroyed them. Seven years transformed Nayári the child-courtesan into Queen Nayári of the Silken Thighs. She employed intrigue, war, poison, the dagger, and the delights of her body to secure alliances - and suddenly deceased husbands - and acquire Fasiltum, Tumissa, and Sokátis. She combined the rag-tag armies of her city-states into one force, and within four more years had defeated the last quarrelsome heirs to the Dragon Warriors' empire in Mu'ugalavyā and the 55th descendant of Gámulu in Salarvyā. Nayári ruled with an iron fist, putting down revolts swiftly and ruthlessly, and perished by the very arts which she was a great exponent: kissed with poisoned lips by a young lover. Her children warred briefly and bloodily, and she was succeeded by her son Ssirandár I, who renounced his mother's ruthless policies and spent the next 50 years building and unifying. He started the Sákbe Road system and moved his capital from Purdānim to Jakála. Utékh Mssá, his grandson, moved the capital a second time about a hundred years later, this time to a virgin site - Béy Sū. Missionaries went forth to the unknown lands preaching the faiths of the Lords of Change, and for the first time in millennia the isolation of the non-human enclaves were broken. As the centuries rolled along the societies grew ever-more formalized and conservative, borne down by the panoply of imperial glory and the weight of hoary tradition.

6. **The Golden Age of Ēngsvan hla Gānga (the Priest-Kings or Engsvanyāli)** (approx. 19,000 B.P.): The Golden Age of Ēngsvan hla Gānga began when a crippled, middle-aged priest from the island of Gānga, Pavār, contacted the Lords of Stability: Thūmis, Lord of Wisdom; Hnālla, Supreme Principle of Stability; Avānthē, Mistress of Heaven; Belkhānu, Lord of the Excellent Dead; and Karakān, Lord of War. The doctrines of these new Gods touched the hearts of the common people, those who had no part in the glory of the Temples, and who were weary of the rituals and the bloody sacrifices of the old faiths. Whole regions threw aside the Lords of Change: e.g. the Mssūma River basin all the way from Jakālla to Bēy Sū and the areas around Thrāya and Ūrmish. None of this was accomplished without turmoil; the priests of the old faiths waxed wroth, and the kings and princes sent forth soldiers and inquisitions. Eventually, as all things must, the furor died away, the zealots became plump priests, and the temples of the Lords of Stability stood side-by-side with those of the Lords of Change. By the third century after Pavār's death, secular power began to shift away from the kings of the First Imperium to the Hierophants of the Isle of Gānga, and by the ninth century the last king of the Bednālljans stole away from Bēy Sū. The capital was moved to Pavār's island, and thus began Ēngsvan hla Gānga: "the Kingdom of the Gods". Ēngsvan hla Gānga lasted for over ten millennia, and during that time the exploration and conquest of most of the great continent was completed, and the Sākbe Roads grew into thick serpents of stone bearing the commerce of dozens of nations. Engsvanyāli legates held court from the Tsolēi Isles to the wilds of Nuru'ūn, and from Yān Kōr to Hāida Pakāla and the Farisē Isles. The Kingdom of the Gods was the greatest flourishing of human culture since the Times of the Ancients. Art, architecture, music, literature, science (even to the repair of some of the simpler devices of the Ancients), and a thousand other crafts and skills all thrived. This is not to say it was a utopia: the Priestkings were theocrats and those who opposed their laws were either executed or enslaved. Ēngsvan hla Gānga perished suddenly, as vast seismic convulsions of the planet tilted Pavār's island, drowning the metropolis of the Priestkings in the sea. The shallow inland sea of Yān Kōr rose up, and the Spouting Mountains of the Shēn and Drichte Peak erupted, burying those regions in ash. Nowhere escaped the physical, economic, and political consequences of the disaster. Local loyalties and hatreds, long suppressed, re-emerged, and war was reborn. Within two centuries after the first paroxysm, the Kingdom of the Gods was picked apart by a thousand greedy scavengers, and another time of darkness overspread the land at least as total and Stygian as that which had come to Tēkumel long ago.
7. **The Time of No Kings** (approx. 9,000 B.P.): During The Time of No Kings, history becomes a confused babble: seals, coins, stelae, and other artifacts cry the glories of this or that "Omnipotent Emperor of All the World" - and naught else is known of most of these potentates beyond their names. However, it is to this period that many of the present-day folk legends refer: the warriors Hagārr of Parānta, Chirenē of Nlūss, and Pendārte of Khēiris; and the Undying Wizards: Nyēlmu the Necromancer, Subadīm the Sorcerer, Thōmar the Ever-Living, Turshānmu the Summoner of Demons, Metāllja of Salarvyā, and Qiyōr the Many-Tongued.
8. **The Second Imperium** (current date 2364): By the time the histories began to be written again, the foundations of the Empire of the Petal Throne had already been laid. The first Emperor is known only by his clan-name: "the Tlakotāni". There are no records of his antecedents, who he was, or how he came to subdue the other petty states then ruling in the region. All that is certain is that he had a considerable body of supporters, an army of sorts, a base of operations around Bēy Sū, and an ancient technological device which struck awe into his contemporaries: the Seal of the Imperium, which could produce impressions upon any material. Surviving legends indicate that even the first Tlakotāni may have practiced the royal seclusion which has become the hallmark of Tsolýāni government. Currently, the 61st Seal Emperor resides on the Petal Throne in Avanthār: Hirkāne hi Tlakotāni.

II. The Five Empires

A. Tsolyánu

Government: Empire
Current Emperor: Hirkáne hi Tlakotáni (the 61st Seal Emperor)
"The Stone on Which the Universe Rests"
Secret Police: The Omnipotent Azure Legion (OAL)
Capital: Béy Sú (Emperor resides in Avanthár)
National Color: Blue and Gold
Religion: Pavár's 20 Deities (see below)

B. Yán Kór

Government: Feudal Monarchy under charismatic leader
Current Ruler: Baron Áld
Secret Police: Surgéth
Capital: Yán Kór City (Baron resides in Ke'ér)
National Color: Green and Gold
Religion: Pavár's 20 Deities
The Lord of Sacrifice (a form of Vimúhla) on the Isle of Vrídu.
The Mad One of Hlíkku from the city of Hlíkku.

C. Mu'ugalavyá

Government: Oligarchy
Current Princes: Tu'umúnish Ssa'amússa (First Palace - NE)
Dilitlázish Ko'ól (Second Palace - SE)
Gremendúish Fíru'úna (Third Palace - SW)
Herekkúnish Ketláino (Fourth Palace - NW)
Secret Police: The Company of the Mourners in Sable
Capital: Ssa'átis (First Prince resides in Kúrdis)
(Second Prince resides in Khéiris)
(Third Prince resides in Tráhlú)
(Fourth Prince resides in Tlár)
National Color: Red
Religion: Hfsh (possibly an amalgam of Vimúhla, Karakán, and Ksáru)
whose primary shrine is on the forbidden island of Mu'ugalla.
Vimúhla
the remainder of Pavár's 20 Deities.

D. Salarvyá

Government: Feudal Monarchy
Current King: Griggatsétsa Chruggilléshmu
Secret Police: small ineffectual intelligence arm
Capital: Tsatsayágga
National Color: Black
Great Families: Chruggilléshmu of Tsatsayágga
Hruchcháqsha of Chame'él
Thirreqúmmu of Koylúga
Khekkhéssa of Héru
Mrishshél-Átl of Lake Mrissútl
Gurrushyúga Tsa'avtúlgú
Shiggashko'ónmu of Jackánta
Religion: Shiringgáyi (a mixture of Avánthe and Dlamélish) whose primary
shrine is on the shores of Lake Mrissútl
Pavár's 20 Deities.

E. Livyánu

Government: Theocratic Oligarchy
Current Leader: Ásqar Gyárdánaz (presides over the central
council of the priesthoods of the Shadow Gods)
Secret Police: The Vnú'neb
Capital: Tsámra
National Color: none
Religion: The Shadow Gods

III. The Priesthoods

- A. In the interests of peace among the different sects, a Great Concordat of the Temples was formed. This prevents any overt religious hostility: there is no fighting in public, no unfriendly use of magic, and no proselytising. This cannot prevent covert bigotry and violence, of course, and what takes place in the sanctuaries, the catacombs, and in remote wildernesses is known only to those present - and perhaps to the ever-watching gods.

B. The Five Lords of Stability

1. **Hnálla:** the Supreme Principle of Stability, the Lord Whose True Name May Not Be Known, Master of Light, and Foe of Change. He seeks light without darkness and the ultimate presence of Changeless Radiance throughout the cosmos. He aids those who serve Stability, and those who are industrious, pious, temperate, and of dignified main. His followers wear white.


2. **Karakán:** the Lord of War, and Master of Heros, the Ultimate Warrior on the Final Day. He seeks stability through active change, but change always towards a more stable social order: war for the expression of courage, war for the destruction of the Dark and the victory of Light. He aids those who are valorous. His followers wear scarlet red.


3. **Thúmis:** the Lord of Wisdom, Knower of Arts, Hidden Seeker of Eternal Knowledge, and the Sage of the Gods. He seeks total wisdom, cognition without the limitations of the ego, and an understanding of the Universe. He aids those seek knowledge for the benefit of society, and those who heal, teach, and study. His followers wear grey.


4. **Avánthe:** the Mistress of Heaven, Maid of Beauty, and Mother of Devotion, Wife (in a non-physical sense) to Hnálla. She stresses a patterned rhythm of cooperation and symbiosis, and her ceremonies commemorate the cycles of nature: the spring, sowing, the rains, the harvest, etc. She aids women in all circumstances, those who maintain the clan and community, supporters of justice, and those who struggle against Change. Her followers wear sky-blue.


5. **Belkhánu:** the Lord of the Excellent Dead, Master of the Paradises of Teretané, and Opener of the Gates of Heaven. His sphere is not of this world, but of the life after death: the journey of the spirit-soul onward to the farther planes. He aids those who are close to death, those who mourn, those who would contact the dead, those who fight against Change, and those who are attacked by the undead, an abomination to him. His followers wear yellow.



C. The Five Lords of Change

1. **Hrú'ü:** the Supreme Principle of Change, Master of Negation and Non-Being, Opponent of Permanence, and Dispenser of Calamities. He seeks the Dark, an end in chaotic form, a negation of this world, and a return to the Nullity which existed when Time was not; then from this would bring forth a new reality, only to bring this new reality down: Change without cessation. He aids those who fight for Change, those who bring about their own glory with no thought of others, and those who are secretive and of a grasping nature. His followers wear purple.


2. **Vimúhla:** the Lord of Fire, and Power of Destruction and Red Ruin, maker of Thunders, and All-Consuming One. He is the catharsis and the cleanser through the flame, seeking to annihilate all matter, then to have the cosmos reborn in the heart of the flame. He aids those who fight heroically and fanatically for change, those who start conflagrations, and those who revel in destruction and pillage. His followers wear flame-orange.





3. Ksarul: the Ancient Lord of Secrets, Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, and the Master of Magic and Sorcery. Ksarul seeks knowledge, like Thumis, but for the Doomed Prince wisdom is not to be used for the benefit of others. For him, knowledge is power, and power is the individual's greatest goal. He aids those who would learn forbidden secrets, those who would contact the dwellers on other planes, seekers of knowledge, and those who would serve him against stability. His followers wear black.



4. Dlamelish: the Green-Eyed Lady of Fleshly Joys, Mistress of Demons, and Obsidian Princess of the Damned. She seeks the exestential reality of the Now - changes as they occur at every moment, and the pleasures and pains of sense perception. She aids those who seek sensual pleasure and immediate gratification, those who engage in her orgies and her ceremonies in the service of the Demons of the Dark, and those who are hedonistic, selfish, and uncaring of others. Her followers wear green.



5. Sarku: the Five-Headed Lord of Worms, Master of the Undead, Guide into Darkness, and the Demon-Lord of Decay. He seeks a slower, colder winding-down in Hru'u's final Nullity: the certain transition of life and death, the survival of the intellect even after death. He aids those who serve the undead, those who worship the intellect and care little for the needs of the body, and those who send the living down to him in the unutterable stillness of death. His followers wear earth-brown.



D. The Five Cohorts of Stability



1. Dra: the Uncaring, Singer of the Hymns of Heaven, and Cohort of Hnalla. He represents the total disinterest of the Perfect Light in the phenomenal things of this universe. He does not even care enough to aid his worshippers, and if he does so, it is done carelessly and sloppily. His followers wear particolored white-and-tan.



2. Chegarra: the Hero-King, Swordsman of Glory, Victorious Lord, and Cohort of Karakan. He is "Courage Applied": the experienced warrior of many battles, the resourceful ruler, and the patron of armies. He aids warriors in battle, those who marshall the forces of stability, those who face the Dark courageously, and those who rule justly and well. His followers wear checkered red-and-white.



3. Ketengku: the Many Eyed, Knower of All, Master of Scrolls, and Cohort of Thumis. He is "Wisdom Applied": the patron of scholars, physicians, apothecaries, scribes, architects, engineers, and all those who use knowledge for the benefit of society. He aids those who study the mysteries, those who learn languages and travel abroad, and those who combat the egotistical doctrines of Ksarul. His followers wear grey and white.



4. Dilinalla: the Lovely Maiden of the Turquoise Crown, Aid of Lovers, Solace to the Weary, Handmaiden of Avánthe and Spiritual Daughter of Hnalla. She is "Woman as Woman Alone": femininity without the polarity of male-versus-female; the innocent virgin, the beloved daughter, the loyal syster, the platonic confidante to whom a lover may confide, the wise woman of many years, and even woman in love with woman. She aids women in all circumstances. Her followers wear blue and white. She accepts no priests into her order, and her rituals are barred to males.



5. Qon: the Ancient One of Pleasures, Guardian of the Gates of Hell Against Those Who Would Come Forth, and Cohort of Belkhanu. Qon protects the spirit-soul against the perils of the Hereafter. He is also the active antagonist of Change, but on a more personal level than is Chegarra. He aids those who are attacked by the powers of the Dark, those who combat Change, and those who fight the Demons of other planes. His followers wear yellow and white.



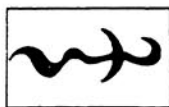
E. The Five Cohorts of Change



1. **Wurú:** the Unnameable, He Who Appears Where Evil Dwells, the Many-Legged Serpent of Gloom, and Cohort of Hürü'ü. He is the active antagonist of Stability. He aids those who promote Change and overturn permanency, and those who fight the minions of Stability. His followers wear particolored mauve-and-purple.



2. **Chiténg:** the Lord of Red-Spouting Flame, Drinker of Blood, Reaper of Cities, and Cohort of Vimúhla. He seeks to spread death by the flame, as does his Master, but he is more oriented toward group action: he is the patron of the armies of Change, the besieger of cities, and the overseer of torments. He aids those who combat Stability, those who besiege and devastate and plunder, and those who inflict atrocities. His followers wear orange and purple, and are often employed as torturers and executioners.



3. **Grugánu:** the Knower of Spells, Black Sword of Doom, Reader of the Incantations of the Dark, and Cohort of Ksáru. He combs the planes for knowledge and sorcery which may aid his Lord. He aids Ksáru's followers in their quests for personal knowledge, and may provide special devotees with magical devices and spells. His followers wear black and purple.



4. **Hriháyal:** the Dancing Maiden of Temptation, Harlot of the Five Worlds, Mistress of the Unspeakable Acts, and Cohort of Dlamélish. She outdoes even her Mistress as the supreme orgiast. She is the patroness of the Thirty-Two ancient Mysteries and members of her Inner Temple may witness - or join - performances of the Thirty-Two Unspeakable Acts (the last of which is said to be a sacrifice to a demon while at the heights of sexual extasy). She is also the patroness of gambling. She aids those who engage in public debauchery, those who are given to greed and avarice, and those who serve her Mysteries. Her followers wear green and purple.



5. **Durritlámish:** the Black Angel of the Putrescent Hand, He of the Rotted Face, Opener of Catacombs, and Cohort of Sáru. He marshalls the legions of the undead, and serves his Master in the places of the Dark. He aids those who serve the undead, those who join with the dwellers of the Dark, those who protect the tombs and necropolises, and those who sacrifice their victims to him on the Orgy of Inimitable Demise. His followers wear brown and purple.



IV. The Four "Palaces" of Tsolyánu - the bureaucracy of Tsolyánu is divided into four "Palaces" according to function, following ancient Engsvanyáli tradition:

- A. The Palace of the Realm:** This department is in charge of domestic affairs, public works, taxes, the judicial system, trade, transport, the Sáke Roads, the necropolises, and labour. Every town of more than 5,000 has a branch of this Palace.
- B. The Palace of Ever-Glorious War:** This department deals with all military matters: recruitment, supply, training, deployment, fortifications, the Sáke Road Guard, the Tomb Police, and strategic issues. Offices exist in major cities only.
- C. The Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods:** This department maintains surveillance over relations between the temples and their interactions with the government. It collects taxes from temple lands, organises public ceremonies, and sees to religious issues affecting the state. Branches of this Palace are found in all large cities and in some of the smaller towns as well.
- D. The Palace of Foreign Lands:** This department has charge of external relations, foreign trade and shipping, customs, diplomacy, and the Imperium's embassies and legates abroad. This Palace is only represented in border towns and cities, ports, Bý Sú, and, of course, Avanthár.

V. The major power blocs of Tsolyánu

- A. **The Imperial Party:** These are the men and women most loyal to the system and most resistant to change. Their objectives include expansion only through political and diplomatic means, an end to the war with Yán Kór, and the perpetuation of the status quo.
- B. **The Royalist Party:** This bloc is made of members of the great clans and include many high-level administrators, bureaucrats, landholders, and functionaries. This party also desires the status quo - but with themselves in Avanthár instead of the present coterie.
- C. **The Priestly Party:** This bloc is split, of course, between the devotees of Stability and Change, but cooperation is temporarily useful since the short-term goals of the temples are the same: the expansion of the temple's power and the establishment of theocratic control over the Empire (similar to that existing in Livyánu).
- D. **The Military Party:** This bloc is made up of members of the military, members of the military temples, and members of certain militaristic clans. This party is also divided between the supporters of Karakán and Vimúhla (though not as divided as the Priestly Party). As a whole, however, they desire a quick and successful end to the war with Yán Kór, even though this would mean gains for the Royalist Party, who would be called upon to provide administrators and governors for any newly-conquered lands.

VI. The non-human races of Tekumel

- A. **Ahoggyá, "The Knobbed Ones":** These four-armed and four-legged creatures, originally from the star system of Achnar, are brown, grey, or dun in color and are tremendously strong. Their four arms extend out at equidistant intervals from under a domed, heavily-armored carapace on top of the body. Between and below the arms are the eyes and other organs: two eyes and a fanged mouth on one side, and two eyes and other organs on the other three sides. Their thickly-muscled legs extend out from the base of the body below the arms in a permanent crouch. They are from 1.41m to 1.60m in height, and tend to be gruff, rude, boisterous, and insensitive, obeying their own alien customs and displaying little interest in man's concerns. Some Ahoggyá, however, do serve as mercenaries in human armies for two or three years before returning home. They have no curiosity about religious matters, and are abysmally poor sorcerers; in fact, one in ten is a "psychic dampener". They live in the swamps on the southwest coast of Salarvyá, across the sea in Háida Pakála, and in a large region in the far southeast called Ónmú Tlé Hléktis, an autonomous state.



- B. **Hláka, "The Furred Flyer":** These slender, light-boned flyers, originally from the star system of Ensis, have leathery wings and short greyish or brownish fur. The head is humanoid with three close-set eyes (often bright blue). Their arms and legs are relatively weak, and they hate walking for any distance. They also possess a powerful prehensile tail which ends in a rapier-like bony blade (which they often poison before combat). They are from 1.40m to 1.59m in height. The flying talents of this species makes them valuable as scouts, but they are very skittish and will fly off at the slightest pretext. The Hláka are generally neutral to man's doings, talkative, curious, and a bit scatterbrained. Hláka may serve as mercenaries for three years at a time, but always insist on going home to their mountain eyries in Kilalámmu - often never to return.



- C. **Hlutrgú, "The Swamp Frogs":** These tough, rubbery, and violently inimical little beings, originally from the star system of Algenubi, have a rotund body, four limbs (each with a usable six-fingered hand), and a skull-like head with a mouth full of needle-sharp fangs. They are totally hairless and are of a mottled greenish, greyish, or blackish hue, and range from 1.23m to 1.71m in height. They are one of man's most implacable foes. However, the Hlutrgú prefer the isolation of their bogs in the Káija Protectorate to conquest and are only occasionally encountered during a raid on a human village or harassing shipping.



D. Hlüss, "The Spawn of the Old Ones": These insectoid beings are one of the indigenous species of Tékumel. They have a long, segmented, scorpion-like body, four high-arched legs, a prehensile tail with a paralyzing sting, two smaller forearms, and a broad, flattish head with three eyes and a sharp proboscis extending out above a set of razor-sharp mandibles. They are covered all over with a light, chitinous-appearing exoskeleton and range from greenish blue to shiny black in color. They normally remain on all fours, but can rear up and use their central pair of legs as tearing weapons. They range from 1.22m to 1.62m in height when on all fours, gaining about another metre if they rear up. They are another race which hates mankind, and are allies of the Ssú. They are inquisitive, greedy for magical devices and weapons, and love to set gems in a kind of cement (which they secrete) all over their bodies, making a Hlüss warrior a fearsome and magnificent spectacle. They prefer to dwell on their lonely island of Hlüssuyal, but frequently venture out in their hive-shaped ships. They can be detected at sea by their constant buzzing/humming sound, and on land they may be smelled at a distance of 30-40m as they give off an acidic, sweetish odour.



E. Hokún: These crystalline creatures, originally from the star system of Markab, have a gaunt, preying-mantis-like appearance. They range from 1.63m to 2.21m in height, have a chitinous translucent exoskeleton, and ride upon steeds which are actually members of the Hokún race, specially mutated and bred for this purpose. They are contemptuous of man and hunt them with slim lances or other weapons of a glassy substance. In the past, the Hokún have cooperated with man and have ruled large communities of men as near-demigods. When mankind eventually threw off the yoke of Hokún slavery, however, the Hokún retired to the island of Benré Sà on the other side of Tékumel.



F. Miháli: These creatures, though generally humanoid, are probably the most alien of the non-human races. Originally from the system of Dorsum, the Miháli have two arms, two legs, and are essentially man-like (with four breasts). They have five fingers on each hand with a sixth functioning as a thumb. Their head is reminiscent of a great cat with up-pointed ears and large opalescent red eyes. They are almost hairless but have a skin colouration varying from dull green to reddish brown, and are about as tall as man but with a more slender build. They have the ability to change shape and can adopt the appearance of any other being of comparable size; they can only use four limbs, however, and their eyes always remain a gleaming red color. They are gifted with great sorcerous and interdimensional powers, and it is said that they may even exist on more than one plane at the same time. Thus, their motives are completely unintelligible by man: one moment friendly, the next hostile, the next gone through some interdimensional doorway. They are very rare, and many people believe them to only be creatures of myth.



G. Nyaggá: This aqueous race, originally from the star system of Alhena, is warm-blooded and mammalian and is the only non-human race to be able to interbreed true with humans. In form, however, they are the most alien of the non-humans. Their bodies are essentially a long tapering cylinder about 3m in length, without fins or scales, a sickly grey-white colour, and ending in an eel-like tail. The head is round and bulbous, soft and segmented, rather like a human brain. A central black-lipped mouth is surrounded by a ring of six jet-black eyes. At the junction of the body and head is another ring of muscle from which six long tentacles emerge; these are retractable and are covered with tiny suckers and cilia, which the Nyaggá use for hands. Fully extended, the Nyaggá are about 5m in length. They remain aloof and generally do not bother human shipping, and come ashore only for brief raids, as they can only survive for an hour or two out of water. They cannot - or do not - communicate with man. They live in Lake Parunál to the east of Yán Kór and Saá Allaqí.



H. Páchi Léi, "The Forest Dwellers": These forest-dwellers, originally from the star system of



Arcturus, have four short legs, a soft, grey-green, pear-shaped body, covered with small knobs and pendulous protuberances, four slender upper arms, and a heavy-jawed, toothy, animal-like head. Their huge platter-shaped eyes permit them to see well in the dark, and an atrophied "sixth sense" gives them a good chance of perceiving ambushes, secret doors, and physical dangers within a 3m range. They range from 1.53m to 2.01m in height. The Páchi Léi are friendly, loquacious, and active in human affairs. They enjoy politics and social interaction, and many of them have gained high posts in the army, priesthoods, and administration of the Tsolyáni Imperium. They hate the Mu'ugalavyáni, to the west of their homeland of Pán Cháka, however, because of certain massacres that the latter perpetuated upon them.

I. Pé Chóí, "The Listeners": These forest-dwellers, originally from the star system of Procyon, are



covered with a chitinous exoskeleton (jet black for males and chalk white for females). They have two powerful rear legs, four smaller upper limbs ending in three-fingered hands with an opposable thumb, and a segmented prehensile tail. The head is long and slender, with two large green eyes, a tapering snout, and two fan-like ears at the back of the skull. The Pé Chóí have excellent hearing and vision and can perceive very faint sounds at a range of 60m or more or detect secret doors, traps, and other dangers within a 3m range, even if they are just passing by. They range from 1.63m to 2.21m in height. The race also possesses a simple form of telepathy which can detect the presence (but not the thoughts) of creatures within 2m. Through this same sense, the Pé Chóí can detect whenever another of their race has been killed, and if they find the perpetrator they can become unforgiving enemies. One interesting feature of the Pé Chóí is their double set of lungs: one in the upper torso, and one in the lower abdomen. It is because of these lower lungs that most Pé Chóí are terrified of water (they are very poor swimmers and can easily drown in a half-metre of water). They enjoy human society, join human institutions, and copy human dress and customs. They possess considerable psychic talent and are frequently found in the scholarly contingents of the temples. Their homeland is in the Dó Cháka forests between Tsolyánu and Mu'ugalavyá.

J. Pygmy Folk, "The Little Ones": These small beings, originally from the star system of Mirach,



superficially resemble rodents. They have a sharp-featured face, large ears, greyish or blackish fur, two muscular rear legs, two upper arms with three-fingered hands and an opposable thumb, and a vestigial tail. Their sight and hearing are excellent. They see easily in pitch darkness, and can hear very faint sounds even through a stone wall 30cm thick. They range from 0.43m to 0.91m in height. The Pygmy Folk live in subterranean burrow-like towns in the northern plains of Yán Kór. They are often capricious, sometimes cruel, and yet they are generally friendly to man. They are renowned for their greed and avarice, however. In battle they make ferocious opponents and will fight to the last. However, they generally try to avoid fights with a large party and may then resort to traps and ambushes.

K. Shén, "The Demon Warriors": These great reptiles, originally from the star system of Antares, are armored all over with shining black scales. They are roughly humanoid, standing erect on two powerful rear legs, with two forearms ending in three-fingered hands with an opposable thumb. There is a thick prehensile tail with a mace-like knob on the end which they can use as a secondary weapon in combat. Their curved beak-like snouts, double row of needle-sharp teeth, and crest of glittering spines (which normally lies flat against the skull, but rises when the owner is enraged) gives them a ferocious appearance. The Shén range from 1.83m to 2.31m in height, and are very strong, but a little clumsy. Their psychic and magical talents are weak, and they are temperamentally disdainful of sorcery. They dislike over-refinement and delicacy, and they value physical power, ferocity, and endurance instead. They are mildly friendly towards man, rather harsh and abrupt in manner, and laconic of speech. They prefer the heat of their great enclaves south of Livyánu and come north only for brief periods to serve as mercenaries. They also never forget an offense: e.g. they still hate the Ahoggyá because the latter once cooked and ate some Shén captives - a perfectly natural act for the Ahoggyá. Generals still do not dare to place a contingent of Shén in the same wing as a battalion of Ahoggyá: there is more chance of their battling one another than of attacking the foe. The Shén are divided into genetically determined lineages or "egg-groups" which can be friendly, neutral, or dangerously hostile to one another (Shén can detect the "egg-group" of other Shén by smell), and fights between hostile "egg-groups" are spontaneous and violent.



L. The Shunned Ones: These hideous, gangling beings, originally from the star system of Regulus, are rarely seen outside of their sealed cities in the barren planes of northern Yán Kór. They are humanoid, very tall (ranging from 1.85m to 2.33m in height), and possessed of extremely long, bony limbs. Their face is puckered and wrinkled like a rotting fruit and has only a pair of round, black, pupilless eyes for features. The mouth lies hidden in a mass of wrinkles at the base of the throat. The Shunned Ones wrap themselves in voluminous, flapping robes of dust-brown or night-black. The most unpleasant thing about them, however, is their terrible stench, which can be detected up to 60m away, even in a mild country breeze! The Shunned Ones are totally inimical to mankind and his allies. They are mighty sorcerers, and their objectives in searching the ruins of ancient Téकुmel are focussed upon the acquisition of magical devices and equipment rather than treasures of gold or gems. They never stay away from their sealed cities for extended periods, however, as they do not breathe normal air but a corrosive, yellowish gas, and thus must take a breathing supply with them.



M. Ssú, "The Enemies of Man": This race was once master of the land areas of Téकुmel, while their cousins, the Hlüss, ranged over the coasts and seas. There are several sub-species of Ssú: the smaller Grey Ssú, whose enclave lies just north of Salarvyá and Pecháno; the larger Black Ssú, who dwell on a large island in the western ocean; and the recently discovered Red, Green, and Blue Ssú, from the island archipelago of the Nóm. All Ssú have the same general appearance: a central torso set upon a narrow abdomen from which four legs extend out at equidistant points, two upper arms ending in three-digit "hands" (the largest digit acting as a thumb), and a head which is superficially man-like with two eyes, nostril slits, and a mouth shaped like a vertical oval. Their outer integument is wrapped around their limbs like paper on a roll, and the loose ends of this "skin" keep pulling away in ragged fragments, giving the Ssú something of the appearance of a tattered mummy. Like the Hlüss, they can rear up on their back legs to fight and will occasionally use their middle limbs to hold a shield or weapon (though only the Black Ssú are adept at this). In height, the Grey Ssú range between 1.71m and 1.90m, and the Black Ssú range between 1.83m and 2.41m (little is yet known about the other Ssú races). The Ssú smell rather like musty cinnamon, and their language sounds to humans like a high chiming, rippling up and down the scale like a chorus of little bells (these characteristics allow the Ssú to be detected at a distance). They see well in the darkness, and prefer to work in dim blue light. The Ssú are another race which hates mankind, and are allies of the Hlüss. They are excellent magic-users, and they also possess a limited hypnotic ability which can immobilize humans or cause them to turn and fight their friends.



GREY SSÚ



BLACK SSÚ

N. Swamp Folk: This swamp-dwelling race, originally from the star system of Unukalhai, have their home in the watery bogs along the Putuhénu River in Mu'ugalavyá. They are about the same height as men and have a rotund, rubbery, doughy white body, four slender legs, two upper arms with four-digited hands and an opposable thumb, and a head with rather humanoid features. The skull, however, is long and backward-slanting, with a bony crest rising from the forehead and curving out over the back. A flexible "drapery" of skin depends from this crest and falls down behind the shoulders to join the body again at the base of the spine. They cannot use other-planar magic at all (except for the technological devices of the ancients), and one in five is a "psychic dampener". However, they do have a natural ability to sense "wrongness", changes in direction, sloping passageways, and interdimensional nexus points. The Swamp Folk fit in very well with man's culture, and their talents at sailing make them the mainstay of the Mu'ugalavyáni navy and commercial shipping industry. They are usually friendly, courteous, and eager to copy the ways of men, except in their own enclaves where they preserve something of their ancient customs.



O. Tinaliya, "The Gnome-Like Ones": These small beings, originally from the star system of Algol, dwell in the foothills of the Tláshite Heights in Livyánu. They have four outward-bowed legs, a spherical abdomen upon which the torso is centrally placed, two long arms ending in three-fingered claw-like hands with an opposable thumb, and sloping heads with huge eyes and vaguely humanoid features. The body, arms, and legs are divided into bulbous segments, and is covered all over with a horny integument, usually tan, russet, or deep brown in colour. They are quite small, ranging only from 0.56m to 0.75m in height, and are intensely curious, learned, materialistic, often generous, and disturbingly literal-minded. They cannot comprehend exaggerations, jokes, idioms, and figures of speech, and this sometimes results in misunderstandings. They live in communal underground cities and emerge mostly to seek knowledge and to "see the world." They are good fighters, moreover, and the Livyáni have several legions of Tinaliya serving under their own leaders as a defence against the Mu'ugalavyáni, whom the Tinaliya despise. The Tinaliya are also noted for their magical talents, and especially for their skills with mechanical devices and the devices of the ancients.



P. Urunén: This race, originally from the star system of Betelgeuse, has its home in the sub-polar regions around the south pole. They have only recently again come into contact with the races of the northern continent through the ancient tubeways. They are quite humanoid in appearance, with an erect, muscular body, two rear legs, and two man-like forearms ending in four-digited hands with an opposable thumb. The Urunén are covered with brownish fur as short as the nap of velvet, however, and there is a long tail which is not used in combat. The head is quite alien, moreover, being long-snouted, triangular, and has the brain-case at the back, with eyes set wide apart on each side. They are slightly taller than man, ranging from 1.45m to 1.93m in height. The Urunén are intelligent, proud, jealous, and suspicious of other species. They are also good scholars, exhibit psychic talents about on a par with mankind, and show an ability to dissemble and play at diplomacy, and it is likely that their cleverness will make them difficult allies and dangerous foes.



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