

The Dynasty of Gémulu

During the last centuries of the Empire of the Dragon Warriors, the subject peoples of western Salarvyá were united by a minor lordling called Gámulu from the city of Fénul in what is now the Chaigári Protectorate in Tsolyánu. Gámulu first obtained the allegiance of the lords of Khúm and Koylugá, then drove the last of the decadent heirs of the Dragon Warriors from Tsatsayágga, Nrikakchné, and the other rich metropolises of the western plains of Salarvyá.

Gámulu’s most deadly foes, however, proved to be the nonhuman Ssú, who had come forth to ravage what is now Pecháno, firstly to conquer the ruins of their ancient capital Ssuganár, and then on to sack the city of Benésh. Benésh never rose again and is now a grass-grown mound near the city of Mechanéno. When the Ssú moved north and threatened even the high eyries of the Hláka, the latter made alliance with Gámulu’s human forces, and the Ssú Wars raged for the next 25 years.

In the end Gámulu was victorious—the foe was driven back into the deep labyrinths beneath Ssuganár. Gámulu reigned for another decade, but perished of a wasting disease contracted while holding a victory celebration in the whispering ruins of that ancient city. Even today when a person dies of an unforeseen minor consequence of some great deed, men speak of it as ‘dying the death of Gámulu’.

The Fisherman Kings

Many of Gámulu’s sons had fallen in the Ssú Wars, and others died in the struggle for the Ebon Helm when he was gone. Hó Etéhltu, his 12th son, seized the throne and spent the remainder of his long life consolidating his domains, building the navy of small, fast galleys which give this dynasty the name of ‘The Fishermen Kings’. His black ships took Háida Pakála in the south, struck eastward as far as Peléis, and northwestward seized the Dragon Warrior strongholds on the isles of Gánga, Thayúri and Vrá. Jakálla was beseiged but untaken, and the vicious Hlutrgú prevented any expansion along the coasts of Káiija. In the end the Fishermen Kings were largely contained within the borders of present-day western and central Salarvyá, plus the northern peninsula of Háida Pakála.

The Doomed Prince of the Blue Room

During the reign of the 22nd king of Gámulu’s dynasty another ‘god’ was contacted: Ksárul, the Ancient Lord of Secrets, Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, Master of Magic and Sorcery, Worker of Transitions. Ksárul is also famed as the Rebel of the Gods. In some mythic age, at the mighty Armageddon known as the Battle of Dórmoron Plain, the Lords of Change and Stability fought, but even Ksárul’s allies came to see his overweening intellect as a threat. They turned against him and imprisoned him in an other-planar place called the Blue Room, where he is said to lie in eternal sleep upon a catafalque of deep azure-purple. According to legend this place can only be accessed with the aid of Keys, three of which are are known to exist. The endless search for the Keys goes on.

Even asleep, the powers of Lord Ksárul are great, and the mysteries of his faith spread throughout the realm of the Fishermen Kings. For a time there were religious persecutions between the Red Robes of Vimúhla and the silver-masked Black Robes of the Doomed Prince. Only the passage of centuries has brought about a tentative reconciliation and peace.

The Lords of Change

The surging wave of the Fishermen Kings took half a millenium to subside. The Red Robes dominated the west and the Black Robes the east, and secular power passed from ruler to ruler and dynasty to dynasty. In far Lívýánu the temples of Vimúhla gave way to faiths which had been old when Llyán’s empire was yet unborn: the dark cults of the Shadow gods. Some say that these are but other members of the race of beings known as ‘gods’, while others assert that they are combinations of familiar deities.

Although the worship of the other Lords of Change began during this period, there is no record yet of their opponents, the Lords of Stability, nor does there seem to have been any attempt to codify the gods and fit them all into one pantheon. Sáрку, the Lord of worms and Master of the Undead, is seen for the first time on monuments from the Kráà Hills and Dó Cháka. Shrines to Hrü’ü, the Supreme Principle of Change, are found in the now-ruined cities of Hmakuyál and Ngála. The goddess of pleasure, Dlamélish, rose to become the favourite deity of the lords of sybaritic Jakálla. Each of these deities had many lesser servitors, but was always served by one sub-deity who was a sort of steward: the Cohort of the god. Thus, the Cohort of Vimúhla is cruel Chiténg; that of Ksárul is Grugánu, the Knower of Spells; Sáрку is served by corpse-like Durritlámish; Hrü’ü’s Cohort is Wurú, the Many-Legged Serpent of Gloom; and that of Dlamélish is fickle Hriháyal, the Dancing Maiden of Temptation. Again, there are as man hypotheses concerning the natures and relationships of the Cohorts as there are scholars, and no one can say which is true. The truth is known only to the gods themselves.

SOURCES

Most sources books for this era are in either Salarvyáni or Pecháni:

Daggála Mukrotórr
Gupaggáli nga Shshí
(The Might of Our Ancestors)

in Salarvyáni, preserved in manuscript in the Royal Dome of Glory in Tsatsayágga

Dráka Gríllpa
Nganjjá pa Ssú
(Flee, Ye Ssú!)

in Pecháni, kept in the House of Skulls in Mechanéno

and a few relevant passages in the Imperial compilation.

Balamtsánikh hiWísu
(The History of the World)

in Tsolyáni, available almost anywhere in the empire