

A Description of Chagári Protectorate

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1. Geography

Two main terrain features dominate Chaigári protectorate, Kákri Midállu peak and its surrounding ranges, and the Kanáyagari River.

Kákri Midállu is the youngest of the three major mountain ranges in the vicinity, the others being Tláni Hidállu peak and the oldest being the Chayéngar range. All of these ranges have been caused by the collision of the Salarvyáni continent with that containing Tsolyánu.

Even though Téकुmel lacks the uranium in its core which keeps the Earth's core fluid, its larger size led to a greater release of gravitational energy when it collapsed to provide a much larger fluid core with a longer cooling time. That plus the larger energy it received from its sun (until recently by geological time) have combined to give Téकुmel a fluid core and a plastic mantle. This leads to volcanoes, earthquakes, and continental drift. Since continents are more common than oceans on Téकुmel, continent-continent collisions are more common than continent-ocean collisions.

Continent-continent collisions are spectacular. The Himalayas of northern India are the product of a continent-continent collision and are the highest mountains on Earth. Lake Baikal in Russia sits in a hole caused by a fault resulting from that collision, even though it is over 1500 km away from the point of impact. In this case, the Tsolyáni-Salarvyáni continent moving north collided with the eastward moving Yán Koryáni-Jannuvyáni continent. In the Chaigári region the initial impact created a series of east-west trending overthrusts which flung up the Chayéngar range and another series of ranges south of it. The Kanáyagari River runs in a gap between these ranges. After the initial collision, the Salarvyáni portion of the continent rotated first one way, flinging up a series of northeast-southwest trending overthrusts on top of the east-west ones, and then the other throwing up more overthrusts in the northwest-southeast direction. Where these secondary overthrusts overlapped the original east-west overthrusts, mountains were piled on top of mountains. The results are the spectacular Tláni Hidállu and Kákri Midállu peaks. In the course of all of this, the 10-km thick continental crust of Salarvyá was shortened by a hundred kilometers. All of that rock went up.

The other major geographic influence on the Chaigári is the Kanáyagari River. For the best part of 50 million years there has been a Kanáyagari river winding back and forth across its valley, working and reworking it. The valley is broad, flat, and steep-walled with a thick soil layer regularly recharged with fresh loam eroded from the mountains and brought down by fast flowing streams.

2. Geology

The mountains immediately north and south of the Kanáyagari River are the oldest and hence the most eroded in the region. In some cases only the metamorphosed core of the original mountain remains, yielding marble, slate, and a few heat produced gemstones. In other places, whole cliff faces of sandstone and limestone present themselves for easy quarrying for building materials.

A type of coal can also be found, but it is purplish in color and extremely malodorous. Any who can afford to use charcoal. Seeps of oil are also found here and there in the Chaigári, but this is particularly nasty stuff, evil smelling and extremely corrosive. Areas around such pools are devoid of normal life, although Food of the Ssú can be found growing there, and any who fall into such a pool could well find it the most unpleasant experience of their rapidly diminishing lives.

3. Agriculture

The broad, rich valley of the Kanáyagari is somewhat cooler than the dusty plains of the Imperium and although Dná grain is cultivated, harder grains such as wheat are more common here. As well, many specialty fruits and vegetables not commonly available in the Imperium are available here, but the reverse is also true.

High quality Ngálu fruit does not flourish here and therefore the Chaigári produces little decent wine with the possible exception of Fénul. Some of its berry concoctions are drinkable and mildly amusing to the connoisseur. Those who can afford to, import wine. Hekéllu is somewhat well known, however for the quality of both its wheat and barley beers.

Chaigári is chiefly known for its animal husbandry and land too poor to grow crops is used to graze the huge herds of chlén, hmá, and hmélu, chlén at the lowest and hmélu at the highest. Final fattening of animals is often done at the lower elevations in recently harvested fields or fields allowed to lie fallow. This also helps enrich the fields.

4. Ethnicity

Chaigári protectorate was conquered from the Salarvyáni a little over three hundred years ago and many of its citizens claim Salarvyáni descent. Most of these live in and around the town of Fénul. Since the conquest there has been a steady stream of political refugees and more recently refugees from Ssú activities. Also some wealthier Salarvyáni choose to reside in Fénul owing to the lower and more consistent Tsolyáni tax structure.

Hekéllu contains few Salarvyáni, by contrast. Hekéllu was rather badly damaged during the conquest and since it was already long overdue for Dítlána, the town was leveled and built anew. Many of the Salarvyáni left at this time and were replaced by Tsolyáni. Tsolyáni had been colonizing the area for some time prior to the conquest in any case. Today only the lake fishing clans and some of the merchant clans claim direct Salarvyáni descent, and even these people appear to be Tsolyáni due to intermarriage.

Tsolyáni form most of the population of Hekéllu with the exceptions noted above and except for some native menials. Tsolyáni also dominate, if not form the majority of the population of the area around Hekéllu and the Kanáyagari river as far east as the big bend. Agricultural clans from Ferinára and Sokátis have heavily colonized these areas.

Of the Tsolyáni in Hekéllu, most are from eastern based clans of scribes and officials and also merchant and transportation clans. Tsolyáni in Chaigári average 1-2 cm taller than their cousins in the Imperium, owing to a diet higher in protein.

Most of the mountainous areas and portions of the river valley are populated by indigenous Chaigári tribesmen. These people owe a great deal ethnically to the Kililamuyáni and Jannuvyáni stock. Short and of wiry build, they are poor agriculturists, being at best subsistence level farmers. They are far better herdsmen, hunters and mountaineers. Lately they have been used as miners and quarrymen. Although their small stature suits them to mining, their light builds do not. There are better miners to be found elsewhere in the Imperium and some of these have begun moving into the area.

Their language has been identified as a dialect of Jannuvyáni, but has borrowed a great deal from Tsolyáni and Salarvyáni. Because they tend to be quite insular, large variations in dialect can be found from mountain valley to mountain valley. In the north and west the Tsolyáni influences dominate and in the south the Salarvyáni becomes transcendent. Banditry is endemic among the tribesmen and while some of this may be attributed to the Kililamuyáni, the locals make up the bulk of the bandits. Tsolyáni proverb, "A Chaigári herdsman is a bandit who has stolen many animals."

5. Economy

The Chaigári has several major industries and it depends on the year that is the largest income earner. Mining and quarrying are the largest industries in most years, however. In various places may be found tin, lead, zinc, silver, and gold. While almost no iron production exists in Chaigári, iron is found in western Kililámu and southeastern Milumanayáni and a lot of ore finds its way to Hekéllu. Most ores are concentrated in Hekéllu for trans-shipment to the larger centers but there is a small domestic steel industry that supplies Hekéllu armorers.

Many gems and semi-precious stones are also brought out of the mountains. Jadeite, lapis lazuli, agate, carnelian, tiger eye, amethyst, and quartz are found in abundance. Opals, rubies, emeralds, garnets, diamonds, and sapphires are also found. An ornamental quartz called a Chaigár is peculiar to the foothills of Kákri Midállu peak and is found nowhere else in the world. The rich translucent brown variety and the dark blue variety with pale veining are the most valuable. The pale blue, yellow, and purple varieties are too close in appearance to other types of ornamental quartz found elsewhere to be as valuable.

The Chaigári and surrounding area produce abundant building quality stone. Limestone, sandstone, and slate are so common that kiln-dried brick is rare in Hekéllu and sundried brick is found as a temporary building material or in some of the river side villages. Even many of the poor live in sandstone buildings with slate roofs. The buildings of the rich, the temples, and the major public buildings are commonly faced with fine limestone and rich marbles. Gneiss and schist are also found and inlays of agate, quartz, and lapis lazuli are also seen. Basalt and granite are not to be found as the nearest sources are in the Hundránu Rise outside of Sokátis. Hekéllu therefore presents a pleasing facade of red, pink, white, cream, grey, blue, and even black buildings with grey slate roofs. Ample supplies of sand, gravel, and limestone have also led to a thriving cement and concrete industry. Much of the stone for export is at least rough dressed in Hekéllu or Fénul and thus the masonry clans are quite powerful in both towns.

The next leading export is meat. Huge herds of hmélu and hmá roam the rough ground and foothills of Chaigári. Hekéllu and Fénul both have packing industries, Hekéllu for shipping to the Imperium and Fénul to Salarvyá. Animals for export are slaughtered in the late fall to early spring in order that they may be shipped in cooler weather. They are usually lightly salted or smoked for preservation, but not heavily so as salt or wood for smoking both have to be imported.

In addition, the higher reaches of the mountains contain game animals, such as Tsi'l, which are hunted for their meat. Most such game is exported to places like Fasiltum where it is served at the feasts of the wealthy. It is considerably cheaper in Hekéllu and it is a rare middle-class feast there where it is not included.

Chaigári is also known for the quality of its chlén beasts. Most of these are peeled in situ but poorer armor producers are shipped out loaded as beasts of burden and sold at their destinations along with their cargoes. Some of the hides are merely treated to preserve them and shipped while others are turned into finished products in Hekéllu and Fénul. There are thus several thriving armorers' clans in both towns and those in Hekéllu also make some steel armor on occasion with iron ore from Kililámu.

Farming is mostly for domestic consumption and in fact dná grain often has to be brought in from Ferinára to meet needs, due to the shorter growing season and the shortage of arable land. Wheat and other rare hard grains are more common here and many of these are exported for specialty baking. The higher unit value of these grains usually means a net profit for Chaigári in most years.

Fishing is also worthy of note. Lake Kanayagára produces several species of edible fish, mostly for domestic consumption. The mountain streams also produce some excellent eating fish, although not in significant quantity. There are also several species of shellfish to be found in the lake and streams and these are considered gourmet delicacies. They are caught and rushed live in tanks of water to Sokátis and Fasiltum to grace the tables of the truly wealthy. Additionally, there is a species of bottom dwelling fish in the lake that can be jigged for. While the fish itself is virtually inedible, in the fall the female produces a roe which commands a fancy price indeed at the tables of the very wealthy (up to 50K per kg in Fasiltum, more elsewhere). The fish can get up to 6 m in length and a single female can produce up to 10 kg of roe. However, a single fisherman is lucky indeed if he gets more than a bite or two in a season. They fight hard once hooked, struggling for hours or even days, and frequently escape or sink the boat and eat the fisherman. Even when a catch has been boated it is a male as often as not. There is even a small chance that a female has already laid her eggs.

Although there are occasional woods and forested areas in the mountains, all hardwoods must be imported. The softwood forests of the Chaigári do produce some tall straight spars that are rafted down the river to Jakálla to make masts. These are superior to the usual hardwood masts because they do not require splicing to make a full mast and their lighter weight leaves the vessel lighter and less top-heavy.

Another Chaigári revenue earner is trade, between Tsolyánu and Salarvyá in Fénul and Hekéllu and between Tsolyánu and the states of the northeast in Hekéllu. Hekéllu is the effective head of navigation of the river for large barges and hence serves as headquarters for large numbers of carters, bargemen's, and mercantile clans. One clan is able through a clan secret to produce ice, even in summer. It is they who ship roe and other valuable perishables by refrigerating them. The price is very high, however, and the process is dangerous and leads to periodic damage by fire or explosion to the clan house.