

GURPS[®] *Traveller*[®] Planetary Survey 5

TOBIBAKTM THE SAVAGE SEA



By **LOREN K. WISEMAN**
and **SCOTT HARING**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

TOBIBAK



**Yankton
Seamount**

**Assinboin
Seamount
and Islands**

**Bester
Seamount
and Islands**

Groosbek Basin

**Groosbek
Island**

**1 HEX =
630.5 MILES**

Chou Basin

Great Basin

**Masterson
Seamount
and Islands**

Stygian Basin

**Seahaven
Downport**

Han Deep

**Karlsruhe
Seamount
and Islands**

Grendel Basin

**Foster
Seamount
and Islands**

**Shanghai
Island**

**Tuscany
Seamount
and Islands**

**Denmark
Seamount
and Islands**
**Mount
Hamlet**

**Lamotrec
Seamount
and Islands**

**Fennec
Island**

+ STARPORT

GURPS® Traveller®

Planetary Survey 5

TOBIBAK™

THE SAVAGE SEA

By Loren Wiseman and Scott Haring

Based on the award-winning Traveller science fiction universe by Marc Miller

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **GURPS Basic Set** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Page references that begin with CI indicate **GURPS Compendium I**. Other abbreviations are GT for **GURPS Traveller**, T:AIH for *Alien Races 3*, T:AIV for *Alien Races 4*, T:FI for *First In*, T:GF for *Ground Forces*, T:MC for *Modular Cutter*, T:RF for *Rim of Fire*, T:ST for *Starports*, and UT for **GURPS Ultra-Tech**. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

Water worlds have always fascinated science fiction fans, but **Traveller** coverage of them has always been a little sparse – something this book will remedy. Tobibak has the added interest of an enigma or two, animal and mineral wealth to exploit, mammoth hurricanes to dodge, and a primitive sophont culture to observe – and preserve – there is something here for almost every adventuring group.

The system's location in Corridor Sector makes it accessible to Spinward Marches campaigns (with a little travel), but it is not tied to any one location so heavily that it cannot be transferred elsewhere.

How to Use This Book

The Planetary Survey books are not rules; they're background, nearly system-free. They are designed as a series of adventure settings . . . not just worlds the PCs can visit, but also "offstage" places with their own history that can be used to drive adventures elsewhere. You can use this book:

● As is. Tobibak/Corridor is an official part of the **GURPS Traveller** continuity, located in a logical place and tied in to the history of the Imperium. Take it and run.

● Elsewhere. If you like the setting but don't want to take the party to Corridor, you can just uproot the world and put it somewhere else. Drop TobiCorp and replace it with your favorite oppressive megacorporation, swap in your favorite aquatic aliens, and change the history of the world to fit your requirements.

● In pieces. You're free to ignore all the details of location and history and treat the book as a generic guide to creating your own water world.

About the Authors

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of **Traveller** and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced, then came to SJ Games, where he is **Traveller** line editor and expert-in-residence.

Scott D. Haring remembers **Traveller** back when it was a major accomplishment to survive the character-creation process . . . A respected industry veteran (another way of saying "older than dirt"), he has previously written for **GURPS**, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *AD&D*, *Car Wars*, and many other games. He is also the former editor of *Autoduel Quarterly*, *The Gamer*, and *Pyramid* magazines. He lives in Buda, TX, with his lovely wife, Louise, a goodly number of cats, a dog, and a rabbit.

IISS DATA – TOBIBAK / CORRIDOR

Tobibak is a far binary star system in the Corridor Sector, located at 1011. Tobibak is the main world of the system, and the only inhabited planet. The only other world in the system is the gas giant Annubiak. Tobibak and Annubiak orbit the system's primary star, an M2 V called Tobibara. The system's secondary, named Tobiluna, is an M3 V star orbiting Tobibara in an elliptical orbit that varies from 212 to 245 AU distant (far enough out that orbital perturbations are minimal). Tobiluna has no significant satellites beyond several insignificant dust rings and a small asteroid belt.

The indigenous population of this water-covered planet, the Tobai, have only vague notions of either ownership or government and seem totally uninterested in offworld affairs. As a result, Tobibak is, for all practical purposes, a protectorate of the Ministry of Colonization (MoC), and all dealings with the world and its people must be cleared through MoC administrators. MoC's influence extends to Annubiak, and all vessels wishing to refuel there must have MoC permission to do so. MoC maintains a small orbital station (six commo personnel, plus two IISS observers) around Annubiak to process refueling requests from transient vessels in a timely manner. Approval is pro forma if the vessel's flight plan indicates it will leave the system after refueling.

Recent genetic tests have confirmed that the Tobai are a subspecies of the minor race known as Githiaskio (see p. T:AIV65), evidently transplanted to this world (along with several other offworld species) by an unknown agency. For this reason, Ministry of Colonization officials consented to bring a few Githiaskio (primarily IISS personnel) to the world. Other than physical resemblance, they have found little common ground with the Tobai. Githiaskio language and culture are radically different from that of the Tobai.

As with all such anomalies, the Ancients are the first hypothesis, but no physical evidence of their presence has ever been detected. Further investigation is indicated.

The world has abundant aquacultural and mineral resources; seafood harvesting and undersea mining are the main commercial

activities. This work is almost entirely done by offworlders, as the Tobai seem to have no interest in such activities. The Ministry of Colonization carefully regulates all commercial activity.

MoC's influence dwarfs that of any other Imperial agency, though the Scout Service does maintain a research station at Seahaven Orbital Starport (primarily to support the various contact and liaison personnel in the system).

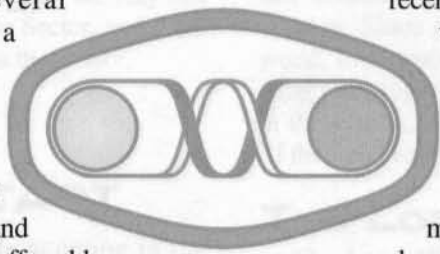
Seahaven Down Starport has undergone a recent upgrade under MoC supervision, and is now a Class IV facility operated by SPA personnel. MoC has also set up a network of orbiting satellites for communication purposes and to monitor the Tobibak weather and environment.

Criminal activity falls into two main categories: poaching (primarily of the marine creature known as the latimus, for the alleged anagathic compounds found in certain of its organs) and illegal searches for Ancient artifacts. Small numbers of Tobai are involved in these activities, but MoC normally declines to prosecute natives for minor infractions.

Ministry of Colonization personnel outnumber all other offworlders combined. Nearly all long-term visitors are Human, though Dolphins, Githiaskio, and Vargr are also present in small numbers. Other races are rare sights on Tobibak.

Starport: Seahaven Starport has orbital and surface components, both held by the Imperium and administered by the local port director, an SPA executive who coordinates with the MoC.

The downport facility is a series of landing platforms built in a shallow sea, connected to a large facility built entirely underwater and extending to the sea floor 160-180 feet below the surface (depending on tidal conditions). The entire downport facility is in the extralidity area, and it does not extend into the open water of Tobibak at all. The Tobai have erected no barriers of any kind at the extralidity line – the natives cannot enter the starport without significant effort and special preparation, and do not seem to care about the movements of offworlders.



IISS DATA – TOBIBAK / CORRIDOR

Seahaven Starport is primarily set up to handle bulk cargo, heavy machinery, and undersea equipment. There is also a higher-than-usual number of transient accommodations, due to the constant need for workers from offworld and a high turnover rate in local employment. Only a small minority of vessels (10% to 15%) pass through on their way to other systems; most incoming traffic is bound for Tobibak as a final destination.

Size: Diameter 9,030 miles, density 5.4.

Gravity: 1.17.

Atmosphere: Standard oxygen/nitrogen, with nothing extraordinary.

Hydrographic

Percentage: 99%

surface water, with no year-round polar caps (though significant ice fields

form at each pole during that hemisphere's winter). The dry land on the planet consists mainly of archipelagos of low islands, atolls, and sandbars. The highest point on Tobibak is Mount Hamlet, a rocky crag in an archipelago near the equator extending 70 feet above sea level (at low tide).

Population: The native population has never been accurately counted, but it is believed to be in excess of 1 billion. Earlier surveys did not count the indigenous population at all, listing only the approximately 90,000 employees of ToboCorp, a large corporate concern specializing in fishery and undersea mining. Today, offworlder population is 36,500, most of whom are employees of ShuKhuTam LIC (the current holder of the fishing and mining permits issued by the MoC), or the Ministry of Colonization.

Government: The Tobai are self-governing,

with a Clan/Tribal system. Offworlders are subject to the bureaucratic rule of the Ministry of Colonization.

Control Rating: CR 1 (free) for the Tobai, CR 4 (controlled) for offworlders. All large-scale commercial activity by offworlders (the only kind, as the Tobai do not engage in such things) is carefully regulated by MoC, with specific permission required for each operation and MoC overseers on site. Private possession of weapons in

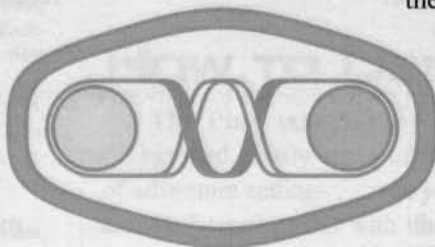
the waters of Tobibak are prohibited without special permission of MoC.

Private vehicles must be equipped with a tracking beacon so MoC can know their whereabouts at all times.

Activities within the extrality of Seahaven Down Starport are much less tightly controlled; for example, personal weapons are not banned.

Note: Classification of Tobibak as an Amber travel zone has been proposed, but political and economic interests on the sector level have prevented imposition of any travel restrictions so far. The IISS wants the classification, but local merchant interests stand to lose substantial income if access to Tobibak is restricted. So far, MoC believes it can protect the Tobai from the exploitation of the past while keeping access to the world open.

Tech Level: The Tobai are TL3. Commercial activity by offworlders requires TL9 equipment, and such activity is limited to commercial fishing and mineral extraction. Industrial activity and personal equipment is highly specialized to the undersea environment of the planet.



System Data

PRIMARY: TOBIBARA (M2 V)

Name (orbit)	Gravity		Hydrographic %		Population	Notes
	Diameter	Atmosphere		Climate		
Tobibak (0.64 AU)	9,030	1.17	Standard	99.99%	Normal	36,500*
Annubiak (2.4 AU)	34,102	1.02	NA	NA	Uninhabitable	– Gas Giant

* Not including an unknown number of Tobai, estimated to be in excess of 1 billion.

SECONDARY: TOBILUNA (M3 V)

Name (orbit)	Gravity		Hydrographic %		Population	Notes
	Diameter	Atmosphere		Climate		
Tobiluna Belt (1.7 AU)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	–



History

Tobibak is a backwater in Corridor Sector, and history has largely passed it by. It was for this reason that the odd nature of its inhabitants escaped notice for so long. Tobibak was, after all, only one of 20 water worlds in Corridor Sector, and there was nothing unique about it – on the surface.

BEFORE FIRST CONTACT

The Ziru Sirka focused its attention in the rimward and trailing regions of their empire, and the sector now known as Corridor received little attention from the Vilani. Tobibak is first mentioned in Vilani documents relating to a cursory survey of the sector (known to the Vilani as *Eneri* Sector) dating from about -2800 Imperial. Tobibak was then called *Giuunatobiibaaka*, or *Giuun* for short, and was used as a refueling stop for Vilani merchant starships headed toward more promising worlds. A few survey teams had landed on the world, and noted the presence of significant marine life but no arable land suitable for settlement. The surviving records are incomplete, so it is unknown whether any Vilani survey team observed the Tobai, but if they did, they did not recognize them as sophonts – the surviving portion of the survey notes the world had no sentient life-forms and little developmental potential.

Vargr bands moved into the Corridor Sector in -2400 to -1700, but Tobibak did not seem worthy of notice by the Vargr either. There is evidence Vargr ships used the world for refueling, but no indication they ever landed there for anything other than emergencies.

At about the same time Vargr were entering Corridor, Zhodani exploratory vessels first made contact with the Vilani in the region. The earliest record of Tobibak in Zhodani records dates from around -1800, and is a single entry in a listing of worlds in *Eneri* (Corridor) and *Provence* Sectors, with no other information. The main Zhodani interest in Tobibak came after the discovery of Tobai sentience (see p. 6).

There is no record that any official survey of Tobibak was undertaken under the First Imperium, but records from that era are spotty, and Tobibak was far from the center of the Rule of Man. Since there was no population on the world, it is doubtful the First Imperium did anything more than install a few navigational beacons in the system, but no trace of these has survived (if they ever existed).

THE LONG NIGHT

The Long Night brought chaos to Corridor Sector, and many bands of Vargr took advantage of this to settle on numerous worlds in the region. Some of these were already inhabited, and the “settlement” in these cases was undoubtedly contested. During this period, the sector received a significant Vargr element, which it retains to the present day. There is no evidence the Vargr took any special interest in Tobibak, although the wreckage of several Vargr starships from this era indicate the world was used for refueling and for minor repairs. Vargr are not the most meticulous record-keepers, and no written evidence from this period survives at all.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

As the Third Imperium expanded into what would later be called the Domain of Deneb, it came into increasing conflict with the Vargr worlds in Corridor, which lay across the only routes to the newly established settlements in the Deneb and Spinward Marches sectors. To secure Imperial control of Corridor (renamed from *Eneri* in recognition of its status as a connecting link with the new frontier), the Imperium fought a series of small actions between 220 and 348, collectively known as the Vargr Campaigns. These campaigns secured the vast majority of the worlds in Corridor for the Imperium, although many of the vital worlds in the sector are within a few jumps of extra-Imperial Vargr polities. Corridor remains heavily militarized to this day.

The name Tobibak first appears in 398, in the preliminary Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS) survey of Corridor undertaken for the First Survey (see p. GT18). The reason for the change from Giuunatobiibaaka to Tobibak is not known, but this is not the only case where world names were changed from Vilani to something more readily pronounceable by Galanglic speakers. The report includes the first known maps of the world's surface, and preliminary data on the ecosystem and lifeforms, including the first mentions of latimus, greattooth, and tobishrimp. Although not assigned a name, the Tobai are mentioned in this survey as a medium-sized predator known from one or two brief encounters. The survey was cursory (as were many) and no biological samples were taken other than the tobishrimp and the plankton-like organism that the shrimp fed upon. No mineralogical survey of the ocean floor was conducted. With the publication of the First Survey in 420, no further examination of Tobibak was undertaken for two centuries – there were many other worlds with far greater potential in Corridor.

For the next few hundred years, Tobibak continued to be used as a refueling site by starships headed for somewhere else. The Vargr participation in the various Frontier Wars (see pp. GT32-33) distracted official attention from Corridor's backwaters.

THE COMING OF TOBICORP

In 1040, the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service conducted a new and more detailed survey of the worlds of Corridor, as part of the upcoming Second Survey (see p. GT19). This more extensive underwater survey described the Tobai for the first time (naming them the *tobai squid*), but neglected to note their physical resemblance to the Githiaskio. The study identified the tobai squid as a large predator with a worldwide range, but skittish and prone to flee on sight. Long-range photographs were taken, but no actual biosampling was done. Evidently in response to the preliminary circulation of this IISS document (the official Second Survey was not published until 1065) a consortium of industrial concerns in Corridor sector formed TobiCorp LIC and acquired the rights to survey and exploit Tobibak. Settlement of the sector was advancing, and with the extensive development of nearby worlds, the population (and the demand for cheap food) was growing rapidly.

TobiCorp found the ocean of Tobibak teeming with plankton-like organisms and several species of marine arthropods that fed on them (tobishrimp). In addition, extensive undersea mineral deposits were located in several areas, ripe for exploitation. TobiCorp began harvesting seafood for export to the growing population of the worlds in Corridor Sector, and discovered that tobishrimp were especially attractive to Vargr, who found them delicious and highly desirable. TobiCorp expanded its operations and used some of the profits to finance mining operations.

In the process, they discovered that the lifeform known as the tobai squid was actually intelligent.

TOBICORP AND THE TOBAI

TobiCorp's records of the initial contact with the Tobai were either lost or willfully destroyed in an attempt to conceal the company's enslavement and near-genocide of a sophont race. It is reasonably clear, however, that the company did not initially consider the Tobai intelligent at the sophont level, despite some evidence of tool use and a social organization.

The Tobai, for reasons that will be discussed in detail later (see pp. 14-15), shunned offworld contact and were difficult to observe. The Tobai used very few tools (mostly baskets and nets woven of plant material). They tended to create these as needed and discard them afterwards, so it was a long time before any evidence of tool use came to light. Even when occasional tool use was discovered, Tobai were originally thought to be no more intelligent than otters (who sometimes use rocks to open shellfish) or beavers (who build structures). The corporation's original report to the Imperial Ministry of Colonization said as much. By the time more became known about the Tobai, company officials began to falsify reports and conceal data in order to protect their investment in Tobibak. If Tobai intelligence were to be discovered by the Imperial government, they would come under Imperial protection as a developing race, and the lucrative seafood export trade would undoubtedly be shut down.

THE DARK TIMES

Once TobiCorp began to suspect the Tobai were intelligent, the corporation attempted to use them as an unpaid work force. Company sophontologists were brought in to study them, and inroads were made into understanding their language and culture. Some Tobai began to cooperate voluntarily with TobiCorp – some in return for metal weapons, trinkets, and high tech gadgets; others out of a semireligious belief that the offworlders were gods.

Tobai were used as scouts to guide harvesting ships to schools of tobishrimp, and to prospect for mineral deposits. Corporate greed overcame morality, and TobiCorp began to use the Tobai for forced labor in undersea mineral-extraction facilities.

Some Tobai revolted, and the company responded with force. Tobai violence escalated, and the company's response became more oppressive. Entire tribal groups were rounded up and used as forced labor. Commando strikes were mounted against groups known for resistance. The belief in offworlder divinity was exploited, the "gods" demanding labor in return for dimly expressed religious benefits.

STRANGE HERITAGE

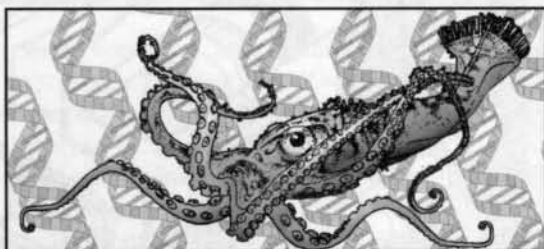
While all this was going on, TobiCorp continued to study the Tobai. The physical resemblance to the non-Human race known as the Githiaskio did not escape the scientists employed by TobiCorp, but evidently no one considered looking into the underlying causes – TobiCorp employees were not encouraged to speculate – until about 1098 (company records are unclear), when DNA tests were performed. The results were a thunderbolt. The Tobai and Githiaskio are very closely related, as close or closer than Vilani and Solomani. Detailed examination of the ecosystem of Tobibak showed beyond doubt that it had been assembled from a number of similar (but nevertheless distinct) biomes. Investigation soon showed, however, that the Tobai had been on the world for hundreds of millennia. The language of the Tobai, although imperfectly understood, was demonstrably not Githiaskian. The first explanation to occur to those reviewing the DNA results was, of course, that the Ancients had transplanted Githiaskio to Tobibak and tinkered with them, much as they had done with Humanity. This conclusion was given additional weight by the fact that a known Ancients site (on Antiquity, 0816 Corridor) was within six parsecs of Tobibak, and there were others in Corridor Sector.

The possibility that there were undiscovered Ancients artifacts (or even an Ancient installation) on Tobai reinforced the executive decision to keep TobiCorp's actions on Tobibak a secret. The potential profits from Tobibak had grown by several orders of magnitude. Special covert survey teams were established (calling themselves archaeological and sophontological surveys) and began a systematic search for Ancients artifacts.

THE WHISTLE-BLOWER

Shortly after the DNA tests were completed, Jacques Forbes-Hamilton, a TobiCorp xenobiologist, was overcome with an attack of conscience, and authored a report advocating more cooperation

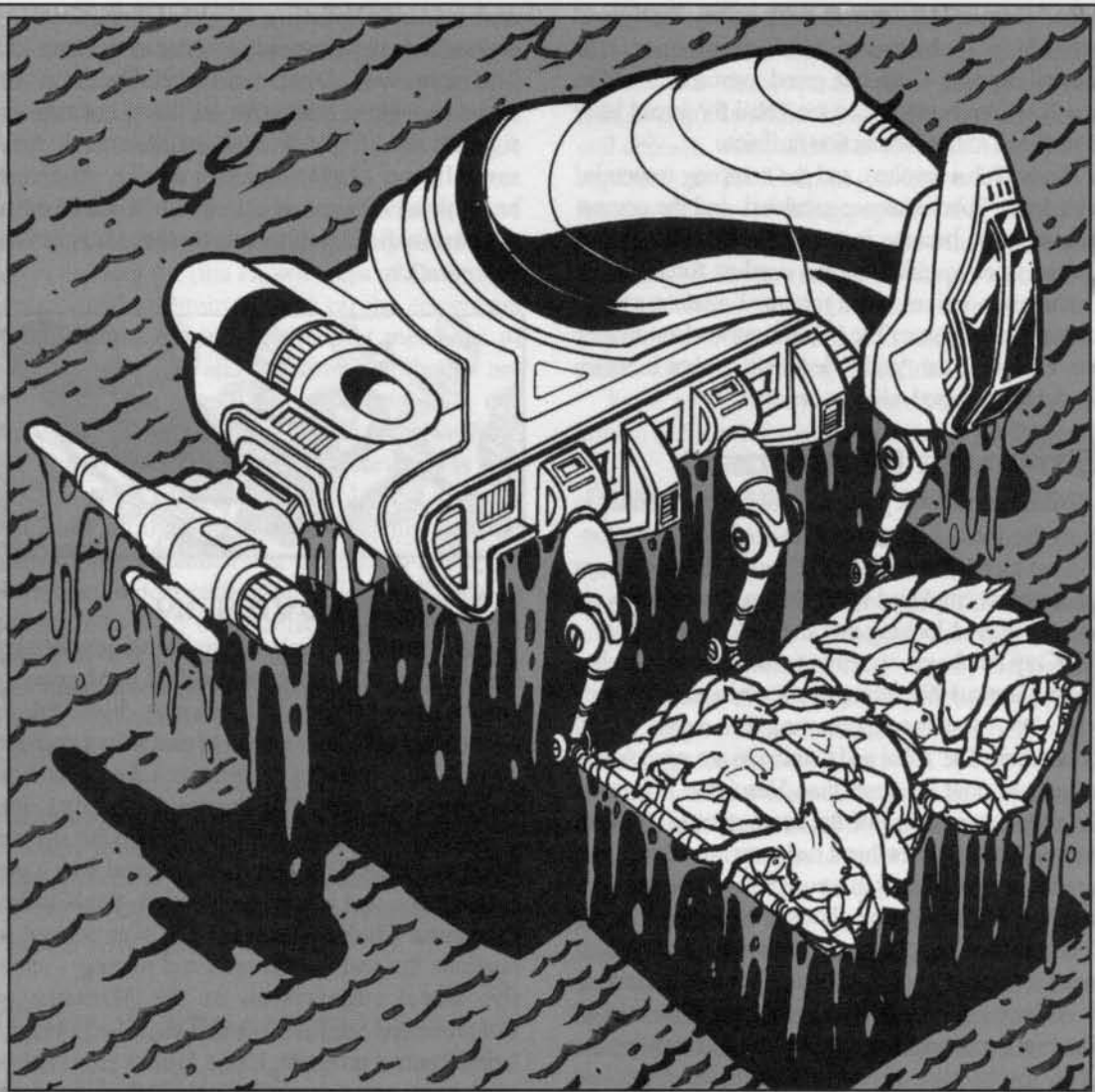
and less exploitation of the Tobai, arguing economic benefits would be better in the long run. The report was buried, and Forbes-Hamilton was smart enough to know that he dared not take his fight up the corporate chain of command. After several years of playing along to allay suspicion, he took advantage of an offworld vacation to prepare a full disclosure to the Ministry of Colonization.



MoC MOVES IN

As a result of Forbes-Hamilton's revelations, the Ministry of Colonization called in Ministry of Justice prosecutors. TobiCorp was dissolved, its charter revoked, and dozens of executives convicted of a laundry list of charges including genocide, slavery, and perjury. The Starport Authority (SPA) was brought in to upgrade and operate the starport (until that time, TobiCorp had operated it as a private entity), and a new corporation, ShuKhuTam (Shushaka-Khukish-Tamilaa) LIC was formed to continue the seafood harvests and mining – under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Colonization. ShuKhuTam and the MoC initiated a new contact program, hiring Forbes-Hamilton to head it up, and brought in sophontologists, biologists, and other scientists. The IISS provided several first contact specialists and other experts, including several Githiaskio, but MoC demanded (and received) direct, on-site supervision of the world. This was a departure from normal Imperial policy. Normally the MoC would not be given oversight of a developing race – that was usually a job for the IISS or the Imperial Navy.

Advances in decoding the Tobai language led to translation devices for Humans, based on similar devices used in Human/Githiaskio communication (although they still have some problems). The Tobai see all this as the result of some sort of war in heaven, where the good gods defeated the evil gods and have sent their agents to drive out the oppressors. On an individual level, many MoC workers don't mind being treated like angels of deliverance. Officially, of course, the Ministry of Colonization tries its best to introduce concepts like outer space and the Imperium to the Tobai, with limited success.



THE DAY KHALIK RED-SPOT WRESTLED THE GODS

Translations of Tobai oral folklore are highly speculative. Even the Githiaskio do not fully comprehend the nuances of Tobai language, although they have less trouble with it than Humans. Most Tobai are not actively hostile to offworlder interest in their legends, but few are willing to perform their songs for outsiders, and some of those that do are not above fabricating an “ancient saga” to string the offworlders along.

The Day Khalik Red-Spot Wrestled the Gods relates the tale of a Tobai hunter who was accidentally scooped up by what was probably a free trader trawling for seafood. The Tobai have only recently learned to distinguish maritime surface craft from spacecraft, but the tale seems to predate TobiCorp’s use of surface ships for fishing. The hero of the story briefly fought

several processing workers and then escaped, falling back to the sea many miles from his original location. He returned to his people triumphant, with a swatch of waterproof cloth ripped from the clothing of one of the workers. The swatch is still a totem for the tribe to this day, and was shown to the Githiaskio sophontological researcher Hassan Saunders (Laloowilli Hoataallila). He was unable to inspect it in detail, but believes it to be from a civilian starship crew coverall of the period of the Vargr Campaigns in Corridor under the Third Imperium (210 to 348).

Githiaskio translators believe “Red-Spot” refers to scar tissue from a wound acquired during the struggle, and is commemorated in the hero’s name (see p. 12).

Tobibak Today

Tobibak is an unusual world in many ways. The Tobai provide enough enigmas to keep a legion of social scientists busy for decades, even if the mystery of their origin is ignored.

THE PLANET

Less than one percent of Tobibak's surface is land, but that is a misleading statement. Most of what is above water at high tide is insubstantial, consisting of little more than scrub-covered sandbars and algae-laden mudflats. A comparison of the present world map with that executed for the First Survey (not quite 700 years ago) shows most of the major island groups have shifted positions by a few yards, some by a few miles, and a few have vanished entirely, swallowed by the relentless waves. On Tobibak, the land is temporary; it is the sea that is eternal.

UNDER THE SEA

No official name has been assigned to the ocean of Tobibak – it is called “the ocean” (or the “world ocean,” if the speaker is feeling especially poetic). *Kwithwoohe*, the Tobai word normally used for “ocean,” literally means “between,” and refers to that layer of ocean where light penetrates (the top few hundred feet under normal conditions of daylight – the Tobai can see in dimmer light than Humans). It is between the eternal darkness of the ocean depths (*hilkawi*) and the endless expanse of the sky (*yaakwihi*, which refers to both the land and the air beyond it). Outer space is a new concept to the Tobai, and they have yet to coin a word for it, using some kind of descriptive reference like *yaakwihinahiaakwihi* (“sky beyond the sky”).

Offworlders have applied their own terms for various regions of Tobai:

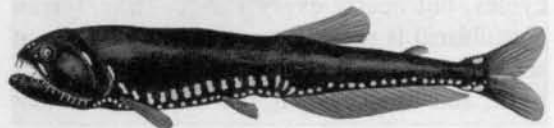
Seamounts are areas where the sea floor rises to within a few hundred feet of the surface. They occupy thousands of square miles, and are the areas of the greatest economic activity. Seamounts are often where mineral deposits occur, and their moderate depth means that long-term operations

can be conducted there without using extremely expensive equipment. The Karlsruhe Seamount is especially shallow in some areas, and is the location of Seahaven Downport plus several large-scale mining operations. Seamounts in the more temperate waters support great numbers of plankton, and consequently teem with tobishrimp and creatures that feed on them. The Turer, Assinboin, and Lamotrec Seamounts are the locations of the most lucrative tobishrimp and plankton fishing grounds.

Shallows are areas where the sea floor rises to within a hundred feet or less of the surface. Sunlight penetrates to the sea floor in these regions, and they teem with dense jungles of seaweed. Shallows are analogous to forests, and shelter a variety of the medium-sized lifeforms on Tobibak, including the Tobai, who use them as hunting grounds.

Trenches and Deepes: Below a few hundred feet, the sea is perpetually dark and plants cannot exist (at least those that depend on photosynthesis for food). Tobai rarely venture into the deeps, mainly because there is little food to be had there (although they often venture into regions of total darkness using their innate echolocation senses). Life exists in the depths of the world ocean, but takes on a radically different form from that higher up (see pp. 16-17). Some mineral-extraction operations take place here, but conditions are almost as hostile here as in deep space (if not more so). These regions are ill-explored and, because of this, are considered prime “hunting grounds” for those seeking evidence of Ancient activity on Tobibak.

A few Tobai legends speak of a race of evil monsters that dwell in the deepest depths of the world ocean. Some describe them as renegade Tobai, others as servants of the evil gods. Opinion is divided as to whether these are corrupted references to offworld deep-diving submarines, or racial memories of a long-extinct creature.



KALEIDOSCOPE

Extracts from the personal log of Dr. Jacques Forbes-Hamilton:

Few of us with the good fortune to be sent to Tobibak spend much time on the surface, and that is a great pity, because there is so much beauty to be found there. The endless expanse of the silver-blue sea and sky, like some heraldic blazon of azure and argent, is boring to some, but the interplay of cloud and wave produce an endless combination of pattern and color, reflecting and refracting each other. Often, there is no clear division between sea and sky; the distance, the mist, and the reflection of sky in water blur the horizon and merge everything into a vast sphere of silvery-blue. The larger islands tend to spawn cloudbanks, by some meteorological process I have never fully understood, and from a distance the clouds reflect the colors of the island and shallows below them. In the storm season, the thunderheads rise thousands of feet into the sky, and from a distance give the illusion of mountains on the horizon.

There are treats here for the other senses as well. The lapping waves on the shore act as rhythm section to the wind in the reeds and grasses – an endless symphony for those above the surface. The sands and sea have an aroma unique in the universe, and the air is fresh and free of the metallic tang that the air recyclers impart to every breath underwater.

Closer inspection of an island's shoreline reveals a further kaleidoscope of light and color. The endless incoming waves sparkle like a myriad-faceted diamond, at once concealing and revealing the sands of the shallows.

Even the night has its attractions. The stars produce ample light, even in the absence of a moon, and they are reflected in the surface of the ocean so that, standing on a shore at night, it almost seems that one is floating in the endless depths of space. There is no sense of closeness or enclosure – only a glorious freedom.

I love this place, and I hope I never leave.

THE LAND

Tobibak is very stable geologically (at least at the present – there is evidence of higher levels of tectonic movement and volcanic activity in the distant past), but despite this most of the island groups are formed in uplifted areas caused by colliding geologic plates. The ridges (or seamounts) formed by these collisions catch sand and sediment, forming island chains that are eventually (over many thousands of years) worn away by tidal and storm action, only to be deposited in a slightly different location. In a few places, the ridges actually rise permanently above sea level, forming stable islands. Mount Hamlet is one of these.

Native plants have colonized the small land area on Tobibak, most of them descendants of maritime varieties that have adapted to a life on land. These are mainly ground-hugging creepers and low-lying brush, although some reeds and woody-stemmed plants have developed over the eons (the frequent storms prevent anything more than a few feet tall, however). A few visitors have (intentionally or not) introduced offworld plants. Some native animal species have developed the ability to exist on land for much of their life cycles, but nearly every variety (like Terran amphibians) is required to return to the water at some point in their life cycle. Islands are so far apart, and so ephemeral, that any creature that

remains completely landbound is almost certainly doomed to a watery grave in the long run.

The MoC tries very hard to restrict the spread of nonnative lifeforms on Tobibak, but a few alien creatures have established themselves in the years offworlders have been visiting. Terran interlopers include the rat and other rodents, assorted insects, and several varieties of bird (which clearly were escaped starship mascots). Careful study of where offworld creatures have established themselves can reveal the locations where illegal ships tend to make their landings (neophyte smugglers usually land on an isolated island rather than in the water).

WEATHER

The weather on Tobibak is not a matter of great concern to the Tobai, although climate affects their lives somewhat.

In general, the climate on Tobabak is pleasant. Conditions are warm near the equator and cool near the poles; seasonal changes occur, but the vast ocean evens out the extremes of temperature. Ice fields form around some of the polar islands during the winter, but there are no permanent ice caps and icebergs melt quickly. Hurricanes, however, are a regular occurrence. Without continental land-masses to break them up, storms are extremely powerful and very long-lived. It is to avoid the periodic storms that Seahaven Downport is mostly located beneath the surface of the sea.

ATMOSPHERE AND GRAVITY

Tobibak possesses a standard, pollution-free oxygen/nitrogen atmosphere. The slightly high gravity (1.17 G) means that newcomers may take a day or two to adjust, but the higher gravity is not a major factor in underwater operations, as the natural buoyancy of the water compensates nicely.

SETTLEMENTS

The major settlement on Tobibak is Seahaven Downport, located near the equator on the Karlsruhe Seamount, an area of shallows where the ocean floor rises to within a few hundred feet of the surface. The stable bedrock of the Karlsruhe Seamount gives the constructions of Seahaven a solid foundation.

The only structures of Seahaven Down that protrude above sea level are the string of landing pads. These are large, flat discs resting atop tall pillars and rising above the waves to form a stable landing platform for spacecraft. The remainder of the starport is completely under the surface of the sea, deep enough to avoid the turbulence of the surface storms (see p. 10).

The MoC maintains scientific research stations at various locations on Tobibak. Only the manned weather station at Mount Hamlet is above the surface; the rest are on the sea bottom and change locations from time to time. Most are in the shallows of the various seamounts, but a few deep research stations are maintained. These stations are primarily built from 50-ton cutter modules, because they are inexpensive and readily portable.

THE TOBAI

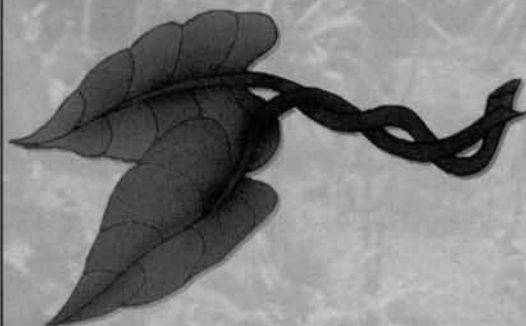
Physically, the Tobai are almost identical to the minor race known as the Githiaskio (see pp. T:AIV61-67). They have a cylindrical body (about 18" in diameter at its widest point) with a broad swimming "fluke" at one end and six tentacles clustered around a mouth at the other. Tobai are between 6' and 8' long, their length about evenly divided between body and tentacles. They respire oxygen dissolved in the water, and are capable of tolerating pressures at depths of up to 2,000' with no ill effects. This is far deeper than their eyes can see (even though they can detect light at very low levels), and they seem to have a form of sonar (lacking in the Githiaskio) that enables them to function in the total darkness of the deeps. Some observers believe this ability developed independently; others feel it was bred into them by whatever entity brought them to Tobibak.

TOUCHING THE SKY

Tobai venture out onto the land in a special religious rite and test of courage and stamina known as "Touching the Sky" (to the Tobai, the sky is anything above the surface of the water). Those who aspire to leadership positions (the rite is not mandatory, but very few Tobai have gone on to lead a tribe without passing this test) announce their intention, and are accompanied by tribal elders to the shore of an island after participating in a series of cleansing rituals. The candidate (a "reacher") must go ashore and return with a branch or leaf. Since Tobai can't survive very long outside of water and have difficulty even moving on land, this is a dangerous and arduous test, and few return from it. TobCorp and MoC anthropologists long wondered about the Tobai bodies found on various landmasses; at first it was thought to be a form of illness, similar to sick Terran whales' beaching themselves. After the Tobai learned to trust offworlders, the existence of the rite was revealed, although it is still considered an extremely private affair.

Tobai view attempts to help or rescue "reachers" as criminal, and the candidate who accepts assistance in any form must undergo the rite again (without aid) to cleanse himself of the dishonor. MoC has decided that the rite is voluntary on the part of the Tobai involved, and has ruled that outsiders should not interfere, even though it usually results in the death of the participant.

Githiaskio observers are mystified that any of the Tobai manage to survive the ordeal at all. Some believe the rituals of preparation enable the Tobai to resist the dehydration and internal injuries attendant upon removal from water. No Githiaskio has yet tried it, however.



Externally, Tobai differ from Githiaskio in several minor details of coloring and proportion. They have a few different blood types, and differ in details of some metabolic processes. Scans of brain activity differ, but not tremendously – Tobai and Githiaskio obviously think in slightly different ways.

Exposed to air, Tobai (like Githiaskio) lapse into unconsciousness within minutes from lack of oxygen, and die from dehydration and hypoxia shortly thereafter. When removed from the buoyancy of water, they suffer injuries to their internal organs after only a few minutes, and can move out of water only with great difficulty and great pain. Despite this, a few rare Tobai willingly leave the water to engage in the rite known as *Touching the Sky* (see p. 11).

SOCIETY

Tobai have a hunter/gatherer society. They use nets and spears to catch fish, and harvest underwater plants using primitive sickles. All tools are made from stone, bone, or shells; they have no fire and no metallurgy. What little metal they have has been obtained from offworld contact, either trade, theft, or salvage.

Tobai are organized into tribes of a few hundred to several thousand. Each tribe consists of a number of family groups (which observers have labeled *clans*) based on descent from a single semilegendary ancestor, but membership is fairly loose and clans with a surplus population will often “donate” members to those that have suffered a loss of numbers. Survival as an individual is very difficult, and solitary Tobai are rare. Individuals who are unsuitable for their clan or tribe are banished, but individuals who have reformed are readily taken back into the fold. If they don’t want to return to their own group, they can usually find another clan or tribe willing to take them – eventually.

Tobai mate for life, but the clan as a whole rears children. Lineage is through the clan rather than any individual. Clans and tribes are named for semimythical heroes from the past (which can include yesterday); lineage and history are related through songs and chants performed regularly.

Clans and tribes are ruled by groups of several *elders*, the number depending on the size of the tribe. The elders will occasionally choose a single individual (not necessarily from among their number) to temporarily oversee a specific task (like a hunt or a military campaign). Elders have authority and political power because of

their talents and accumulated wisdom; selection as an elder is not hereditary (except in the sense that you must be a member of a clan or tribe to rule it). Tribal elders are chosen in the same way as clan elders, but their apprenticeship is longer and they must usually perform some extremely dangerous feat (see p. 11). Existing elders psionically identify promising young Tobai, take them on as “apprentices,” and train them in their ways. Elders usually pass the mantle of leadership to the next in line while they are still active, both to enjoy a “retirement” and to be available as counselors during the next group’s early years of leadership.

Elders are expected to be religious leaders as well as political leaders, and many of them are shamans or healers as well.

Male and female Tobai share work and status; only pregnant females and the very young get special treatment. Even retired elders are expected to shoulder their share of the workload. Tobai who are unable to perform duties because of age, disease, or physical condition will seek some honorable means of death. Actual suicide is rare, but suicidal acts are not. Many simply head into the darkness of one of the ocean trenches, never to return; others may expose themselves to attack by a predator so the rest of the clan can escape. Some even manage an end so heroic that they live forever in the legend-songs of their clan.

Tobai surnames are based on physical features and feats, and can change over time if the Tobai does something extraordinary that merits a renaming. Elders bestow first names. Typical names, as best as they can be translated: Ilyik Cavediver, Terndock Brighteyes, Krickkick Greattooth-Slayer.

CULTURE

Tobai are respectful of all life – unnecessary killing is a great transgression against the way of things. Because they must eat to live and because they must kill to eat, the elders teach that hunting must be done with respect for the prey, and with appropriate thanks to the spirit of the food. A distinction is drawn between killing to obtain food (hunting), which is viewed as a necessity, and killing to protect the clan and tribe (what Humans call “war”), which is not to be undertaken lightly. War is something normally engaged in only by an entire tribe, but the excesses of TobiCorp led some individuals to acts of violence against the offworlders.



TRIBEMEETS

From time to time, when the omens are right and the elder councils agree (normally once or twice a year), dozens of tribes will gather in what is called a *tribemeet* to exchange stories and other important information, like fish migration, new tools, and the latest news about the offworlders. A secondary function of the tribemeet is to enable intertribal courtship and match the young hunters of each tribe against other tribes in sporting competitions. These games serve several functions, chief of which is to channel youthful exuberance into harmless areas.

The Hunt: The most common form of game is the “hunt,” where contestants must complete an obstacle course through a maze of seaweed. At intervals along the course, the contestants use blunted weapons on other Tobai manipulating targets or wearing costumes to represent various game and predators. The winner is the one who completes the course in the shortest time, dealing with each “target” along the way.

Cave-Diving: Where the local geology permits, competitors must enter a cave and complete a series of complex tasks in total darkness. Common tasks include locating an object without touching it, fetching (or leaving) an object in the depths of the cave without being discovered by other Tobai acting as guards, and describing the contents of a certain branch of the cave. Advanced tasks include mock combats with blunted weapons, similar to those in the “hunt.”

Skimmer Racing: Skimmer racing is a relatively new sport but rapidly growing in popularity. “Surface skimmers” are primitive sailing vessels with submerged hulls used by the Tobai in imitation of offworlder craft (with some advice on such details as sails and rigging). Humans find the craft ludicrous, and call them sailing submarines (the hulls are almost completely submerged – see p. 28).

TOBAI AND WAR

The Tobai rarely go to war, but when they do it's fierce and bloody. Their uprisings against TobCorp oppression were fantastically successful if you consider their lack of technology, which ultimately proved to be an edge they couldn't overcome. Some Tobai have managed to acquire slug-throwers and even laser rifles adapted for underwater use (probably in dealings with free traders and smugglers), but they are rare, and no guarantee of success in a fight.

That sonar sense they've got enables them to fight in total darkness, and they dive immediately when attacked, trying to get down into the blackness where they have an advantage. They are numerous, cunning, and absolutely without fear – but what makes them truly dangerous is they don't have anything resembling pride or machismo or whatever to make them stick around when they shouldn't. They don't care a whit if they run away, and they cannot be goaded into attacking. This makes them among the most deadly opponents I have ever faced.

– Major Cristobal Pu-Wei,
TobiCorp Security Detachment



Possessions: The Tobai understand the concept of ownership – individuals own the tools they make, everyone has personal weapons, jewelry, etc., and tribes trade goods with each other – but they claim no ownership of territory. “Who can own the living, moving sea?” they ask. Similarly, no one (in the Tobai way of things) owns the animal and plant life in the sea, the sea floor, or the minerals under it. One group makes temporary use of a given area, sometimes for several generations, but nothing belongs to one individual or one group permanently. If your tribe is hunting on a particular seamount, that seamount belongs to your tribe – for as long as you hunt there.

Occupations: Most Tobai have a main job they are particularly good at and which they do most of the time, but everybody does a little of everything so knowledge of their ways is not lost. Typical work includes net-fishing, hunting, plant harvesting, net and basket making, child care, and guard. Those particularly good at the ritual sports of the Tobai get time off from more mundane

duties to practice their skills – the Tobai name for what they do roughly translates into “hero.” Each tribe lives communally, with the elders allocating resources as they see fit. When tribes meet, it is usually to trade, to sing songs, to meet in games, and to compete for mates. Elders handle all of the negotiations for these events.

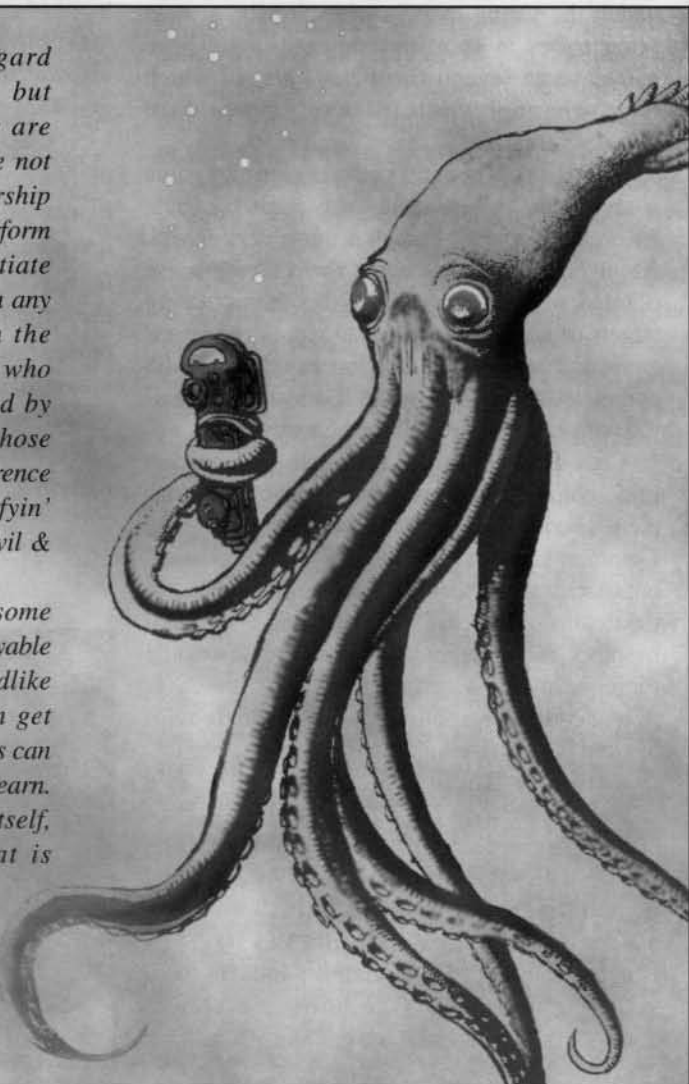
Crime and Punishment: Elders decide guilt and innocence and mete out punishment, usually a stint of forced labor at the most unpleasant jobs they have. Banishment from the tribe is used in extreme cases. They do not use the death penalty. Offworlders who commit a crime among the Tobai are turned over to MoC for punishment. So far, the MoC has managed to avoid the necessity of having a Tobai council of elders try an offworlder – no one is really sure what would happen in that event.

Not many Tobai ever commit anything that offworlders would consider a crime; it doesn’t seem to be in them. As more Tobai become exposed to humans, though, that can be expected to change.

To say that the Tobai regard offworlders as gods is true, but misleading. To the Tobai, gods are feared and respected, but they are not especially revered. The Tobai worship their gods, in the sense that they perform ceremonies to placate and propitiate them, but they do not revere them in any way. It is becoming clear from the various legend/songs about gods who are outwitted and out-manuevered by Tobai tricksters that they honor those who can trick the gods (cross reference with Terran legend entries: Signifyin’ Monkey, Tyl Eulenspiegel, Loki, Devil & Daniel Webster).

There can be no doubt that some Tobai are engaging in a highly enjoyable game, matching wits with the godlike offworlders, to see what they can get away with, how many wonderful toys can they steal, and how much they can learn. This is not a problem in and of itself, provided we are aware of what is happening.

*– Dr. Ian Pattand,
IISS C&L Bureau
Preliminary Notes
on the Tobai of Tobibak*



LANGUAGE

Tobai speak in a language of clicks and whistles that sounds to the untrained ear like Githiaskian. Githiaskio can't make heads or tails out of it without training, but they at least possess the vocal apparatus to produce the sounds without using mechanical translators. A few dedicated Humans have made some progress in understanding the Tobai language without translators, but they cannot make the requisite noises to speak it. At first, these translators confused the Tobai; they believed the box was talking rather than the person holding it. This is still the case with Tobai who are unacquainted with offworlders, and has become something of a standing joke among Tobai who consider themselves cosmopolitan.

MoC regulations require all offworlders to use MoC-issued translators, which must be turned in periodically. MoC translators have the added feature of recording all dealings between the offworlders and the Tobai for MoC inspection later. There's a small black market in translators without the MoC recorders, for those who do not wish to have their transactions monitored.

Music

The Tobai have a beautiful, haunting musical style all their own. Some rhythm instruments are used (drums of greattooth skulls, scratchboards of greattooth hide, sistrums of bone and shell, and assorted clappers and rhythm stones), but most of the music comes directly from the Tobai's unique vocal structure, sometimes modified by the use of "singing tubes" or megaphone-like objects. Recordings of their music have attracted a small but dedicated following across the Imperium among both developmental sophontologists and musicologists.

Legend

The main purpose of Tobai music is to preserve information. The Tobai have no written literature, but their oral legend base is vast, carried in the collective memories of certain Tobai and passed down from generation to generation. There are elders (known as *singers*) who specialize in remembering and performing legend/songs. Tobai legend/songs contain tribal history, law, tales of heroism and sacrifice (see *The Day Khalik Red-Spot Wrestled the Gods*, p. 8), and the accumulated wisdom of generations of Tobai.

Meetings between tribes (see *Tribemeets*, p. 13) are vitally important to the Tobai because they present a regular opportunity to trade stories. Cultural historians working for the IISS or MoC have

CREATION?

The Tobai have no creator being, no overlying "great spirit," and if they have a creation myth, outsiders have not yet discovered it. The Tobai insist they and their world have always existed, because time has no beginning and no end – like the endless ocean in which they live.

Many sophontologists do not believe the Tobai, and continue to press for any story dealing with creation or creators. Those looking for evidence of the Ancients find the absence of a "creator myth" significant, although few can agree of what.

begun to transcribe the stories to create a permanent record, but it's hard work, and the number of stories to record is monumentally daunting. Many feel, however, that the legends of the Tobai contain the key to the mystery of their origins.

RELIGION

The Tobai believe in a vast pantheon of good and evil gods, mostly nature spirits. There is a god for each type of animal, representing the collective spirit of each type, not an individual creature, and it is these spirits that the Tobai propitiate when they perform the various hunting and eating rituals. There is a sun god, an air god, and gods for the tides, the currents, storms, and so on. Elders direct the worship and appeasement of these gods, and just about everything they interact with is considered to be a representative of some god or another. The gods are not omnipotent, are not omniscient, and in general care little about the everyday lives of the Tobai. Because they are more powerful than the Tobai, they must be propitiated – or outsmarted. Legends of heroes (called *hani*, "tricksters") who get the best of a particular god are very common.

The offworlders they have encountered have not changed this basic belief system, but have only added a whole new pantheon of gods to consider – those from "the sky beyond the sky."

Some Tobai – almost exclusively elders and their apprentices – have mystical powers: feats of strength and quickness, hiding and stealth, tolerance to pain, short-term survival in atmosphere, and others. The Tobai consider these to be gifts of their various gods. Researchers have not documented most of these abilities because the Tobai have resisted offworlder presence at their ceremonies until quite recently.

FLORA AND FAUNA

The bottom of the food pyramid on Tobibak is a collection of marine organisms collectively called plankton (here and on thousands of other worlds). Plankton is free-floating, either because it cannot move or is not sufficiently motile to move against the current and is swept along with it. Plankton consists of both plants and animals (including juvenile phases of larger lifeforms), and is to the ocean what grass is to the steppe or trees to the forest – the basic food source upon which all else depends. Tobishrimp feed upon the plankton (by one definition, tobishrimp *are* plankton), and are themselves eaten by larger creatures such as the Tobai or the latimus.

Plankton does not include sessile organisms, such as seaweed or kelp (which are anchored to the bottom of the shallows and form the second largest group of food plants on Tobibak). Tobai can eat some varieties of seaweed, and use others as a source of cordage for use in nets, ropes, baskets, bags, and pouches.

Several varieties of seaweed have adapted themselves to shallow water such as tidal pools, and many of these have made the transition to a terrestrial environment, colonizing the small land area on Tobibak.

Besides plant life, there are numerous forms of marine life in the world-ocean. Creatures similar to Terran mollusks, arthropods, coelenterates, sundry round- and flatworms, corals (but no reefs – Tobibak corals do not build reefs), fish, and even a few mammal-like organisms fill the seas with several million species (most of them less than an inch long and pretty mundane).



FLOATER

ST: <1 Move/Dodge: 3/0 Size: <1-3
DX: 9 PD/PR: 0/0 Weight: 1-8 lbs.
IQ: 2 Damage: 1d-4
HT: 15/2-8 Reach: C

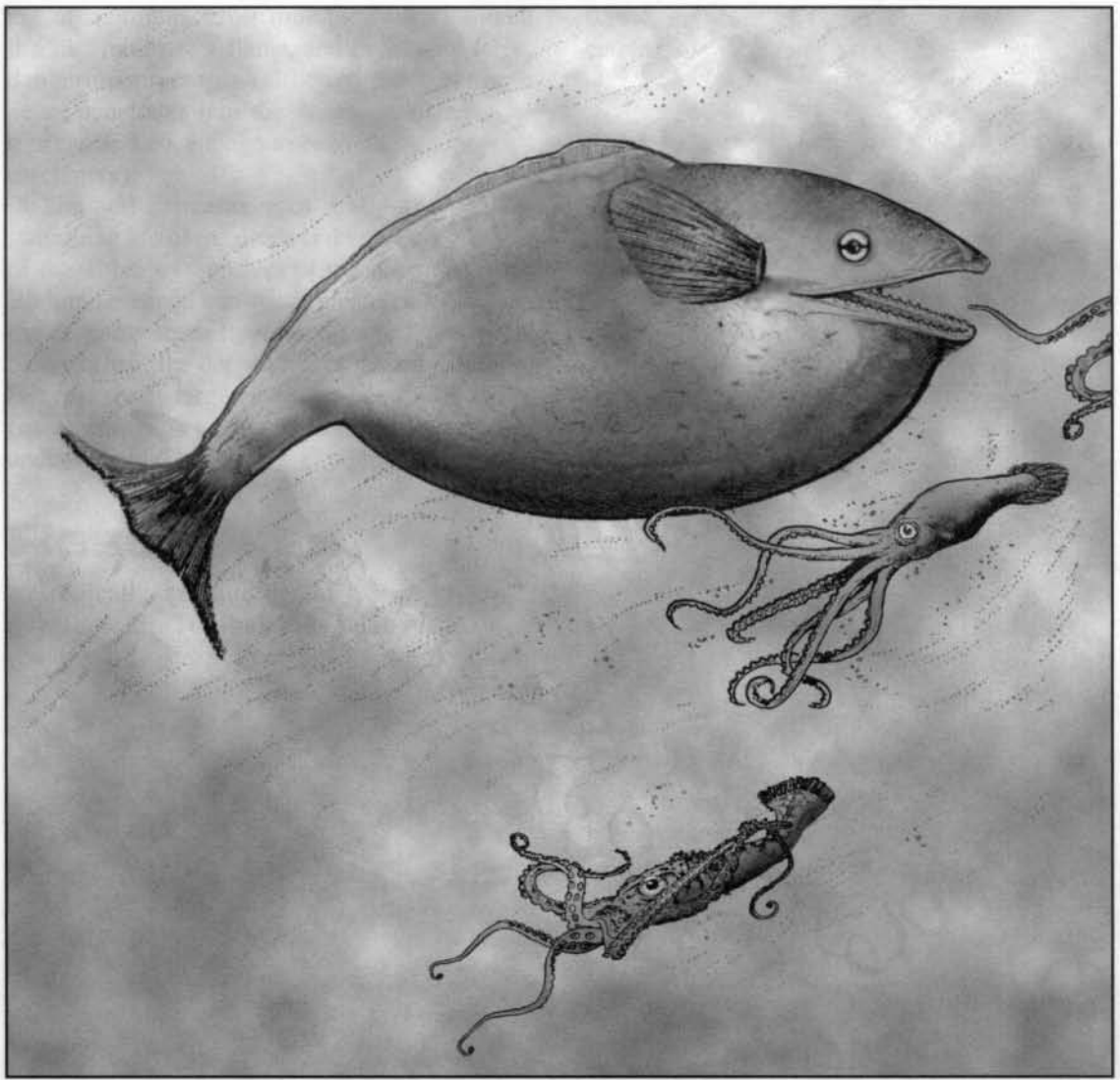
Floaterers are analogous to Terran jellyfish in overall body form and lifestyle, except that on Tobibak they operate in schools. Individual creatures consist of a central circular body with a gas-filled float to which are attached anywhere from a dozen to several hundred tentacles (depending on the species). Tentacles can be anywhere from 1-12' long, and are coated with thousands of small stinging cells, some of which inject a toxin and some of which inject a small barbed structure to trap prey. Floaterers drift in the ocean of Tobibak and dangle their thin, nearly translucent tentacles in hopes of entangling one or more victims. The toxin paralyzes the prey, the barbs prevent it from drifting off, and the tentacles contract to slowly draw the helpless victim into the digestive pouch located at the bottom of the float structure. Floaterers are a serious danger to beings less than a foot in length, but they are merely an irritation to Human- or Tobai-sized creatures. The toxin is painful but not deadly, and the tentacles are weak enough that anything with ST of 2 or greater can escape with ease. They present a threat mainly to unprotected swimmers and those who develop an allergic reaction to their toxin, although they can clog equipment.

Tobai find floaterers a delicacy, but even they try to avoid the tentacles.

TRAPPER

ST: 18 Move/Dodge: 0/0 Size: 1
DX: 14 PD/PR: 0/4 Weight: 500 lbs.
IQ: 1 Damage: *
HT: 10/20 Reach: C, 1-3

A sessile animal that looks like a large clump of seaweed, the trapper preys mainly on the small, swimming creatures that frequent the seaweed jungles of Tobibak's shallows, but can be a danger to a solitary diver. The trapper consists of a disk-shaped central body with a circular, tooth-lined mouth (like that of a Terran lamprey) lying flat on the bottom and concealed in the middle of a forest of dozens of tentacles that look like 8' to 10' lengths of seaweed. On contact, the trapper initiates a Quick Contest of ST versus the victim. If the trapper wins, the victim is enmeshed in the tentacles and takes 1d-2 damage from the teeth each turn he remains trapped. The victim remains trapped until he wins a Quick Contest of ST versus the trapper.



Trappers can be spotted before they attack by a successful Observation roll on any likely-looking clump of seaweed, with sufficient knowledge of the local animal life (GM's discretion for off-worlders; most Tobai can avoid them).

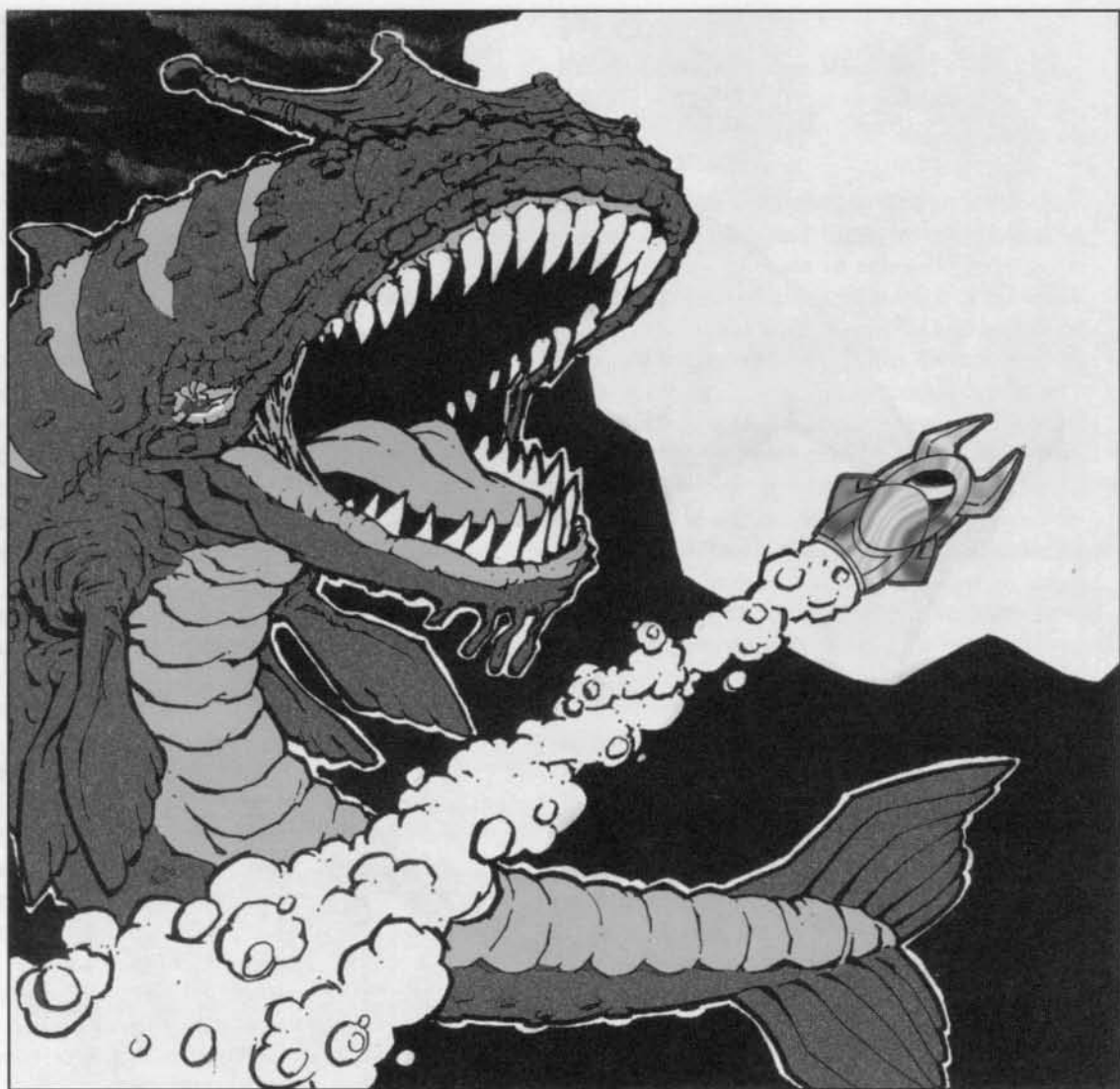
GREATTOOTH

ST: 16-18 **Move/Dodge:** 12/7 **Size:** 3
DX: 15 **PD/PR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 75-100 lbs.
IQ: 3 (5 when swarming) **Damage:** 1d cut
HT: 12/16-20 **Reach:** C

The largest predator on Tobibak is the greattooth, which has been described as a combination of a pufferfish and a shark. The species (named "Greattooth" because it possesses a mouth lined with several rows of large, wicked-looking teeth) can alter its apparent size by filling a system of subdermal bladders with water. Studies of the creature's lifecycle are incomplete, but it is believed this inflation is done as a form of threat display to intimidate rivals during mating. They

are aggressive but (mostly) solitary hunters, but a concerted group defense will convince one to seek easier pickings elsewhere. A greattooth hunts by sight, and they are not found deeper than light ordinarily penetrates, although (unlike the Tobai) they can withstand the immense pressures of extreme depths, and are sometimes attracted to artificial light sources, which can make them a problem for mine sites and other industrial operations. Almost all such sites have provisions against attack – protective shelters and sentries (a job for which Tobai are particularly well-suited).

For reasons not completely understood, greattooths sometimes gather in gigantic hunting packs. When this happens, nothing is safe – a swarm of hundreds or thousands of greattooths can kill even a latimus. A Greattooth swarm was responsible for the decimation of a dozen tribes at a tribemeet several centuries ago, as told in one of the Tobai's greatest legend/songs.



LATIMUS

ST: 150 Move/Dodge: 7 Size: 35
 DX: 13 PD/PR: 4/12 Weight: 5.5 tons
 IQ: 8 Damage: *
 HT: 70 Reach: C, 17

One of the few homeothermic (warm-blooded) creatures on Tobibak, the latimus is a large, peaceful creature that feeds on the teeming schools of tobishrimp using filter structures in its mouth similar to Terran baleen whales. The Tobai hunt it on occasion when there are a lot of mouths to feed (like at a tribemeet), but otherwise leave it alone. TobiCorp scientists, however, identified compounds in several of its organs that have an anagathic effect in some Humans, and this caused it to be hunted nearly to extinction. MoC has instituted a planet-wide ban on hunting, but poachers – some in league with greedy Tobai – are still a problem.

On the rare occasions that a latimus attacks, it inflicts 5d impact damage.

THE DEEPS

Anything deeper than about 2,000' represents *aqua incognita* to the Tobai. Native plant life in the region is nil (at least nothing has been found so far), but animal life is present, although sparse. Currents often sweep plankton down from upper levels, and life on the bottom consists of scavengers (both single and multicellular) who feed on the "rain" of decaying organic material, and various predators who feed on those scavengers.

Free-swimming predators inhabit the region above the bottom, and have evolved from life forms from higher up. Some varieties have found their eyes useless, and these organs have atrophied. Some forms of plankton display bioluminescence and many of denizens of the deeps are attracted to light, which has led to the development of luminescent "bait" organs in some species. One side effect of this is that scientific and industrial stations try to limit their

use of spotlights. Over time they attract animal life like moths to a flame, and eventually large, dangerous predators (although the greattooth never penetrates into the deeps, smaller predators can and do, enough to become a nuisance to machinery).

The odd appearance of many of the free-swimming life of the deeps is doubtless the origin of the Tobai's "monsters of the deep" legends. Bioluminescence can make creatures viewed in the darkness seem larger and more threatening. Nevertheless, the deeps of Tobibak are extensive (several times larger than the oceans of Terra, for example) and there is ample room for undiscovered species.

RESOURCES

Ironically, considering its history of being overlooked, Tobibak has many valuable resources. The world ocean itself, of course, is usable for refueling, but the MoC has banned this practice. Non-MoC/IISS/Navy vessels are required to buy fuel from the highport or refuel from Annibak.

The MoC realizes that extracting some of the wealth from the planet is necessary to justify the expense of their conservation and cultural outreach. The ministry exercises restraint in mining, as this is a sore spot with the Tobai, but the ocean

represents a renewable resource that could (if carefully managed) last essentially forever.

FOOD RESOURCES

Tobibak's abundant plankton feeds a vast number of tobishrimp, and both are valued exports. Tobishrimp are processed, flash frozen, and shipped to worlds all over the sector. Plankton are dried and exported as an animal feed and fertilizer to near-by agricultural worlds.

MINERAL RESOURCES

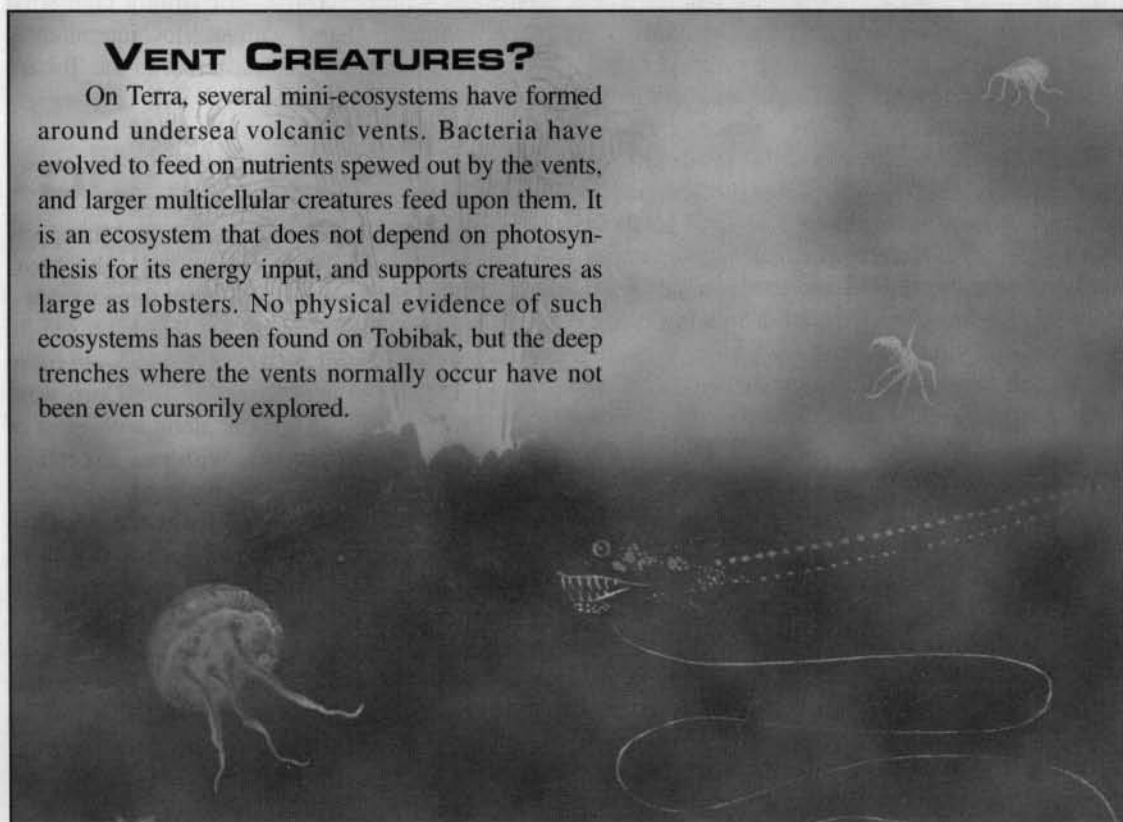
Tobibak has extensive deposits of minerals, including radioactives and incredibly beautiful crystals, in many undersea mountain ranges. TobiCorp made the most use of Tobai slave labor, and suffered the most damage from the Tobai rebels at the mining installations where they extracted this underwater wealth. Fishing vessels move faster than the Tobai could swim, but a mining camp had to stay in the same place and was harder to defend.

OTHER RESOURCES

A strong black market exists offworld for latimus parts, and smugglers are still a problem. Groups of treasure-hunters (calling themselves "scientists" or "researchers") are a growing nuisance to the MoC.

VENT CREATURES?

On Terra, several mini-ecosystems have formed around undersea volcanic vents. Bacteria have evolved to feed on nutrients spewed out by the vents, and larger multicellular creatures feed upon them. It is an ecosystem that does not depend on photosynthesis for its energy input, and supports creatures as large as lobsters. No physical evidence of such ecosystems has been found on Tobibak, but the deep trenches where the vents normally occur have not been even cursorily explored.



Extrastellar Relations

Anytime offworlders want to deal with the Tobai, they do it through the Imperial Ministry of Colonization. No business operations take place without MoC approval, and MoC observers usually accompany all scientific visits to the Tobai and live on-site at all commercial installations. Tobai are free to participate in any of these business ventures, but MoC goes to great lengths to make sure such participation is absolutely voluntary and amply compensated. The number of Tobai working for offworlders is small, but growing. The Ministry of Colonization also maintains all official contact with the various Tobai tribes (see p. 12).

THE MINISTRY OF COLONIZATION

The Imperial Ministry of Colonization normally administers worlds undergoing colonization, and in that sense they oversee developing worlds. The IISS has always considered intelligent but primitive races to be under their purview, and opposed (but was unable to prevent) MoC control of Tobibak. Only one person knows why Jacques Forbes-Hamilton went to the MoC with his revelations of TobiCorp's misdeeds – Forbes-Hamilton himself – but this was enough to allow the MoC to get their foot in the door. Careful political maneuvering managed to keep the IISS and the Imperial Navy from taking over. Bureaucratic in-fighting being what it is, this slim precedent has proven substantial enough to allow the MoC to retain control, at least so far. It would take the direct intervention of either the Archduke of Vland or the Emperor to displace the MoC, and neither of these worthies has seen fit to intervene. For the time being, at least, MoC's position on Tobibak is secure.

The MoC approach to administrating seems driven out of guilt over what TobiCorp did to the Tobai over the years and a desire to make up for the mistreatment. MoC is devoted to keeping the Tobai culture intact and allowing them to develop (or not develop) at their own pace. If some more radical viewpoints within and without the organization were listened to, Tobibak would be a giant

preserve with no offworld presence at all. Ordinarily, in situations where a developing sophont race needs to be protected, an Amber travel zone is imposed on the system. The Ministry of Colonization has yet to impose this, ostensibly because of the disruption to the sector economy the elimination of the trade in tobishrimp and Tobibak's minerals would cause. Some, however, accuse MoC of departmental jealousy – the MoC, they claim, does not want to lose control of Tobibak to the IISS, who administer most Amber Zones (or to the Navy, who administers most of those that the IISS doesn't).

To simplify things, the MoC has granted the fishing and mining licenses on Tobibak to a single offworld corporation, ShuKhuTam LIC, which was formed by a consortium of other offworld corporations. The big problem is with unlicensed businesses that want to cut corners, freelance artifact hunters, and smugglers that want to do business with the Tobai – or simply take what they want from them – without MoC interference. These represent the greatest threat to the Tobai's unimpeded development.

SHUKHUTAM LIC

When TobiCorp was dissolved (and its upper-level executives tried and jailed), the MoC approached business interests from three worlds – Shushaka (1109 Corridor), Khukish (1606 Corridor), and Tamilaa (2006 Corridor) – to fill in the gap. The physical assets of TobiCorp were rolled over into ShuKhuTam, along with most of the lower-level employees. With rare exception, however, the executives were replaced.

ShuKhuTam's licenses from the MoC to conduct operations on Tobibak specify that these operations must stay within certain parameters. The main principle of any commercial venture on Tobibak is that it leave no permanent damage to the world. Mineral extraction is limited to removing the relatively pure ores on the sea bottom (of which there are a great abundance). Any excavations must be refilled to match their original contours.

SEAHAVEN STARPORT

Under TobiCorp, Seahaven referred only to the downport section of the starport, but the SPA formally renamed both facilities. Officially, the installations are Seahaven Down Starport and Seahaven Orbital Starport, but they are commonly referred to as Seahaven Downport and Seahaven Highport.

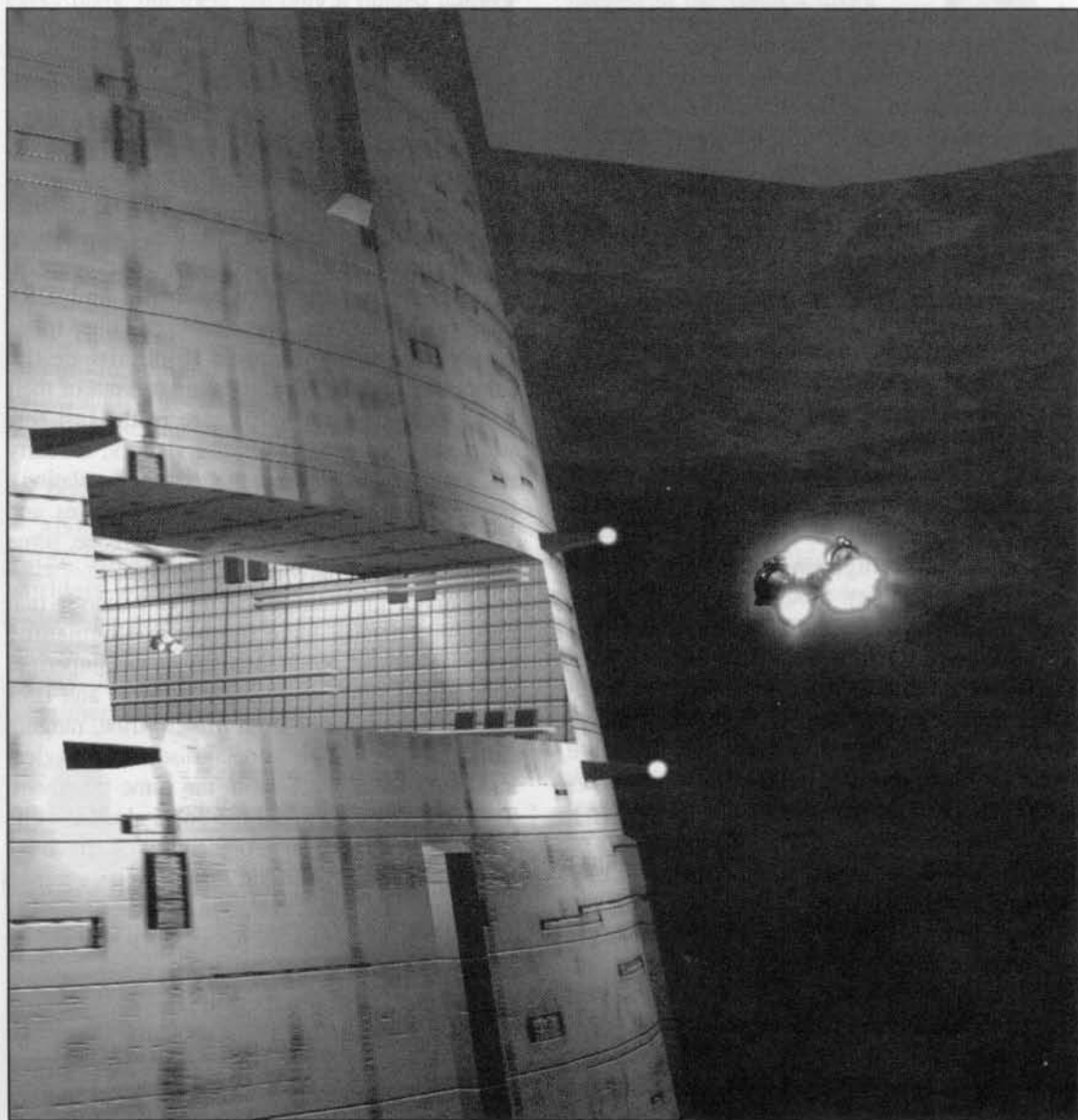
Seahaven Highport: The orbital component is located in a geosynchronous orbit over the downport. Because the facility was only recently constructed, it does not contain a fully operating shipyard, merely repair and maintenance bays for spacecraft. Other facilities are typical of a Class IV starport (see p. GT64 and p. T:ST10). The port director and most of the SPA staff are at the highport, as well as liaison offices for the IISS, Navy, MoJ, and other Imperial organizations. The main MoC offices for Tobibak are in the downport, but a small office suite is maintained here as well.

The TAS hostel is minimal, but there are ample quarters for starship crews and other transients.

Seahaven Downport: Seahaven Downport consists of a number of roughly mushroom-shaped landing pods above the surface of the water, connecting to the subsurface component located 160' to 180' below sea level (depending on the state of the tide) in the equatorial region of the Karlsruhe Seamount. The extrality zone encompasses the entire downport facility – the rule of thumb is that if you are dry, you are on Imperial territory.

OTHER INSTALLATIONS

Most installations on Tobai are put together using 50-ton cutter modules to allow optimum flexibility and ease of relocation. Recently, the MoC has acquired several expandable base modules (see p. T:MC48), which it uses for various purposes.



Science/Survey Stations: Science and survey stations are located near interesting phenomena. Installations studying the Tobai are located in the hunting grounds of the group being studied, sited so as not to disturb the group any more than necessary. A typical science station will consist of a central laboratory module or two (see p. T:MC51), with one or more cargo modules (p. T:MC46) for supplies, and a quarters module (p. T:MC55) or expandable base module for the station personnel.

Staff of research or survey installations are assembled to study a specific subject over a set period of time, and disperse once the study is completed. Long-term social and cultural studies rotate personnel as necessary, usually allowing each person a week's rest and recreation at Seahaven every 4-6 months.

Licensed Mining Stations: The nature of mining on Tobibak dictates that much of it takes place at extreme depths, deeper than Humans (and sometimes even Tobai) can operate without protection from the extreme pressure. Most mining is carried out using remote-controlled equipment at extreme depths, but in the shallows workers operate equipment while wearing diving gear.

Mining stations are larger, and contain three or four cargo modules (p. T:MC46) for equipment and supplies, a logistics module (p. T:MC51) or two for maintenance and repair of mining equipment, enough quarters modules (p. T:MC55) to shelter the 30-70 workers (depending on the size of the installation), and a recreation module (p. T:MC55) if the station is going to remain in place for more than a few weeks. Mining staff usually serve tours of one or two years (with week-long R&R visits to the starport every six months). It is boring, monotonous work, and turnover is high, even though the pay is higher than average because of the hazards involved.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Colonization, the IISS maintains a series of satellites in various orbits around Tobibak. Most of these are in geosynchronous orbit, and include a global positioning system (GPS) for use by vessels on the surface of the world (including underwater), navigational beacons for spacecraft, and a series of weather monitors (some of which are in polar orbits for better coverage).

The nature of the GPS satellites means that even unlicensed vessels can make use of them, somewhat to the chagrin of MoC. However, attempts to encode the signals met with complaints from almost everyone on Tobibak (including most MoC employees) because it was

necessary to change encryption fairly often. The system caused a major inconvenience to all concerned, and did not achieve the desired reduction in illegal activity on Tobibak. The policy was abandoned shortly after it began.

TOBAI/OFFWORLD RELATIONS

The Ministry of Colonization maintains permanent missions to the more settled tribes and "floating missions" to nomadic tribes. In both cases these consist of cutter modules, usually a communications module (pp. T:MC60-61), one or more bulk cargo modules (p. T:MC46) for supplies, and luxury quarters (p. T:MC52) for the MoC representatives, in addition to normal quarters (p. T:MC55).

HUMANS

The Tobai got a bad first impression of humans, but they're starting to change their opinions. Some tribes deal with humans on a regular basis — working for "pay" (usually barter, as the concept of money is only just now starting to catch on among the younger Tobai), trading information for goods ("A talkative Tobai can, in one afternoon, save you a month of surveying."), or simply putting up with MoC and IISS observers, historians, and scientists. Other tribes want nothing to do with Humaniti or the Imperium, and the MoC tries to keep out of their way. Actual bloodshed is rare in the last few years (at least against official visitors; casualty rates among illegals are a matter for speculation), but the Tobai remember TobiCorp's excesses, and while most realize that those days are gone, some don't trust anything with only four limbs.

A major problem at the present time is that many Tobai still have trouble distinguishing between official representatives of the Imperium and "others." Just as reaction to MoC and IISS representatives varies from tribe to tribe, ranging from full cooperation to open disdain, smugglers and other illegals get about the same treatment. The MoC has tried to tell the Tobai about the difference between their representatives and freelancers, but the Tobai don't seem to care much. And since the Tobai communication network is word-of-mouth across the planet, even when MoC does get word of illegal operations, it's usually far too late to do anything about it.

The Tobai have been told about the Imperium, the existence of thousands of other worlds, and outer space. They seem to understand the concept,

but don't dwell on it much because of the lack of impact it has on their daily life. A new type of Tobai song has emerged in the past several decades, however: fantasy imaginings of what some of these other places would be like. They are interesting, but like the cargo cults of ancient Terra, their interpretations are considerably wide of the mark. They do, however provide insights into the Tobai mindset.

GITHIASKIO

The presence of the Githiaskio has gone a long way to convince the Tobai that the "new gods" are friendly to their interests. Almost all of the Githiaskio on Tobibak are serving with the Contact and Liaison Branch of the IISS, and the others are associated with various universities (no merchant Githiaskio has come to Tobibak – yet). The MoC tries to have at least one present with every party, but there are only a limited number available (less than 20 at any given time).

Some of the Githiaskio on Tobibak have had a problem adjusting to a race of beings that look like them but do not behave as they expect – unlike Humans, the Githiaskio have no experience in dealing with variations on their kind. The concept has proven more than a little disconcerting to many. Training and familiarization can overcome the problem, but many Githiaskio find themselves misled by Tobai body language and nonverbal clues. This disadvantage is more than offset by the Githiaskio ability to reproduce the Tobai language, and Githiaskians remain the MoC's best hope of achieving rapport with the Tobai.

VARGR

About 1,400 of the ShuKhuTam are Imperial Vargr. Since the Tobai usually only see offworlders when they're wearing cumbersome underwater gear, they don't have much of a concept of the different starfaring races – upright bipeds all look pretty much alike in a wetsuit, rebreather, and flippers. Thus, they treat the Vargr just like they treat everybody else from offworld, which the Vargr really appreciate.

The Vargr reaction to the alien appearance of the Tobai varies with the individual, but most adjust within a few weeks. Their adjustment to the Tobai's behavior may take longer, however, and the Vargr have less facility with the Tobai language than most Humans.



Many Vargr have difficulty adjusting to the maritime environment on Tobibak. Aside from those who suffer from a mild agoraphobia, many are prone to physical ailments. Their fur must receive special treatment to restore oils lost from its near-constant immersion in water, and to avoid a fungal infection of their hair follicles (similar to athlete's foot in Humans – irritating and annoying, but not normally debilitating). Many Vargr develop a form of contact dermatitis caused by wearing a wet suit (treatable by topical antibiotic creams and by avoiding the water for a week or so), and all of them require special compartments (that their Human compatriots have nicknamed "hair-locks") where warm, dehumidified air quickly dries their fur.

ZHODANI

The Zhodani have quite an interest in the Tobai – many scientists believe that the "powers" possessed by certain Tobai are psionic in nature, and the Zhodani have expressed a concern that the Imperial MoC bureaucracy may be stifling the psionic emergence of a new race. No Zhodani have visited the world while MoC has been in charge, but their possible presence when TobiCorp was in charge is a matter for debate.



OTHER RACES

The IISS brought along nine uplifted Dolphins from the Contact and Liaison Branch. The MoC was wary at first, but the Tobai's respect for all living things has made this a non-issue. The Tobai are stunned by the speed with which the Dolphins can swim, and have named them *Liilakhwakii* – "faster than thoughts." The Dolphins are working hard to learn the Tobai language, but are so far having no more luck than anyone else – they can learn to understand it, but need translators to "speak" it. Dolphins, of course, breathe air, and need rebreathers or similar devices, but otherwise, they have completely adapted to Tobibak (for Dolphin racial templates, see pp. T:RF33-34).

So far, no other aquatic sophonts have been brought to Tobibak. The MoC is concerned that the Tobai may suffer some form of "culture shock" from exposure to too wide a variety of offworlders, and has placed a temporary moratorium on introducing any more.

TAKING THE TOBAI OFFWORLD

For years, the MoC has offered transportation to any Tobai who wanted to go into space. No elder has yet agreed, but some younger, more adventurous Tobai have recently expressed interest, a result of contact with Githiaskio.

Early experiments have not been encouraging. Tobai get claustrophobic in a Githiaskio-style spacesuit, and are uncomfortable even in very large tanks (any tank, after all, is smaller than the Great Ocean, and their innate sonar sense makes it hard for them to be “fooled” into thinking they are not confined – the approach used with other claustrophobes such as the K’kree). An additional complication is that water is *very* heavy – the larger the tank, the more expensive and difficult it becomes to get it off the ground. Some Tobai have successfully entered transparent tanks on a specially fitted g-carrier, and have gone flying above the surface of the planet, but so far none have entered space. There were concerns over how jump space would affect Tobai, but the Githiaskio tolerate it well, so there is every reason to believe that Tobai would also.

There are rumors that Tobicorp *did* manage to take some Tobai offworld, but all records of such an effort – if it took place – have vanished.

OFFWORLD EQUIPMENT

MoC makes use of a variety of specialized equipment on Tobibak, but some of the items are familiar to almost every seasoned spacefarer (see p. GT112 and pp. UT22-26, as modified by the *safetech* discussion on pp. UT2-9).

SPACECRAFT

The most common spacecraft on Tobibak are the various transport starships (mostly *Akkigish*-class subsidized merchants, *Marava*-class far traders, and a few larger bulk transports, all operating under ShuKhuTam’s license from the MoC.

100-Ton Shuttle: The MoC maintains three planetary versions of these vessels on Tobibak for VIP passenger transport and liaison.

50-Ton Modular Cutter: The workhorse of the Imperium sees heavy service on Tobibak, and the MoC maintains almost 100 of these highly versatile vehicles.

Other Spacecraft: System defense is the responsibility of the Imperial Navy, but aside from a liaison office at Seahaven Highport, there

is no permanent naval installation in the system. The Imperial 59th Fleet undertakes regular patrols from the naval base at Strand (0916 Corridor, the subsector capital), that pass through the system at regular intervals because of the proximity of the Vargr frontier.

SURFACE & SUBSURFACE VEHICLES

The MoC requires all vehicles used on Tobibak to carry a location transponder, to enable them to be tracked at all times. Most vehicles are fitted out for use both above and below the surface of the water.

G-Carrier: The most common vehicle equipping small parties is the G-carrier (see p. T:GF91), fitted for underwater use (usually by fitting an improvised “water lock” in the cargo section). Expeditions that require longer sojourns underwater make use of a variety of submersibles, of which the *Argosy*-class (see p. 25) is typical.

Air/Raft: Air/rafts (see p. GT147) are used for short hops around a larger installation, such as a survey base or mine. For obvious reasons, the vast majority of those used on Tobibak are closed versions.

FISHING TRAWLERS (TL8)

ShuKhuTam LIC operates a fleet of old surface trawlers on Tobibak, inherited from Tobicorp. They are wooden-hulled and quite primitive to look at, but have been updated several times over the years with modern power systems, navigational aids, and automated trawling equipment. The trawlers are designed to submerge to avoid storms, but with a crush depth of 216', they cannot submerge too deep. These trawlers are normally manned by a crew of two fishermen and one MoC observer, although there is room on board for another person if necessary.

Subassemblies: Body +10, Mast +4, Open mount +0.

Powertrain: 8.07-MW RTG; 10-MJ lead-acid battery; two 4-MW screw propellers.

Occupancy: XRCS, NCS **Cargo:** 280,000 cf

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/80	4/80	4/80	4/80	4/80
Mast:	4/80	4/80	4/80	4/80	4/80
Open Mount:	4/80	—	—	—	—

Equipment

Body: Computerized maneuver and diving controls; Robotic minicomputer (Complexity 3); Terminal; 10' crane (for stowing mast, ST 100); Bilge pump (5 gallons/minute); Emergency sup-

port unit; External cradle (500 lbs., loaded with four-man lifeboat); Full fire suppression; Two GPS; IFF; Transponder; Inertial navigation system; Laser communicator (200-mile range); Limited life support (20 man-days); Two precision navigation instruments; Provisions (100 man-days); Searchlight (9-mile range); Nontargeting active sonar (Scan 17, 10-mile range); 6,000 sf top deck; Winch (ST 100).

Open Mount: Surface-search nontargeting AESA (Scan 20, 30-mile range); Light amplification; LLTV (100x); Radio (1,000-mile range); Searchlight (9-mile range); Thermograph (Scan 15, 5-mile range). All open mount components ruggedized.

Design Notes: This vehicle uses a flotation hull with mediocre hydrodynamic lines. It has an extra heavy frame with standard materials, and is robotic and submersible. Armor is standard metal. Its electronics are a mix of TL6-9 components. Four bunks are provided for the crew, and it has 55 cf of empty space. The open mount is atop the 200' mast.

ARGOSY-CLASS SUBMARINE

The *Argosy* is a civilian version of the IISS Pelagic Survey Vessel (see pp. T:FI34-35) intended for transport and liaison duties in aquatic environments. The IISS has supplied eight to the MoC to perform extended surveys of the depths of the world ocean. The vessel's crush depth of 25,000 feet has proven adequate so far, although the

deepest trenches (such as the Grendel Deep – 30,872 feet) require the use of remote probes (see p. T:FI33).

Subassemblies: Body +5, Superstructure +2

Powertrain: 3.7 MW NPU, 27 MJ energy bank, reactionless thruster (72,000 lbs. thrust).

Occupancy: 3 CCS, 5 bunks

Cargo: 350 cf

Armor:	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200
<i>Sup:</i>	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200	–

Equipment

Body: Computerized maneuver and diving controls; Searchlight (9-mile range); LLTV (100x); Towed passive sonar (Scan 19, 20-mile range); active sonar (Scan 17, 10-mile range); Radscanner (Scan 17, 10-mile range); Neural activity scanner; Inertial navigation system; Microframe computer (Complexity 8); Four terminals; Full fire suppression system; Vehicle bay for four robotic probes; Science lab; Total life support (8 people).

Sup: Radio (50,000-mile range); Two radios (5,000-mile range); Searchlight; PESA (Scan 13, 2-mile range); Air-search AESA (Scan 13, 2-mile range); 2-man airlock.

Design Notes: The *Argosy's* body has submarine lines. It uses an extra-heavy frame, standard materials, is submersible, and has heavy compartmentalization and roll stabilizers. The *Argosy's* surface has a basic chameleon system, basic sound baffling, and an electrified surface.

Fishing Trawler Statistics

Size: 150'x40'x65'

Payload: 5,600,000 lbs.

Lwt: 7,674,192 lbs.

Volume: 393,370 cf

Maint: 16 man-hours/day

Price: MCr47.42

HT: 11

HP: 240,000 [Body] 1,200 [Mast] 40 [Open Mount]

wSpeed: 15 mph

wAccel: 0.31 mph/s.

wDecel: 6 mph/s

wMR: 0.3

wSR: 8

uSpeed: 8.5 mph

uAccel: 0.1 mph/s

uDecel: 6 mph/s

uMR: 0.3

uSR: 8

Surface draft 14.5'. Submerged draft 96.8'. Crush depth 72 yds. Submerged weight 24,585,625 lbs.

Argosy-Class Submarine Statistics

Size: 18'x12'x30'

Payload: 8,879 lbs.

Lwt: 28.04 tons

Volume: 3,500 cf

Maint: 13 hours

Price: MCr2.416

HT: 12

HP: 8,106 [Body] 867 [Sup]

wSpeed: 40

wAccel: 25

wDecel: 15

wMR: 0.75

wSR: 6

uSpeed: 35

uAccel: 5

uDecel: 15

uMR: 0.75

uSR: 6

sAccel: 1.3

Surface draft 5.1'. Submerged draft 20'. Crush depth 8334 yds. Submerged weight 218,750 lbs.

Characters

TOBAI

TOBAI 41 POINTS

Attribute Modifiers: ST -1 [-10].

Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell +2 [4]; Faz Sense [10]; Extra Arms (No Physical Attack) (×4) [20]; Extra Fatigue +2 [6]; Extra Flexibility (entire body) [10]; Sonar Vision [25]; Subsonic Hearing [5]; Ultrahearing [5].

Disadvantages: Aquatic [-40]; Bad Sight (Nearsightedness) [-25]; Color Blindness [-10]; Poor Grip [-5]; Primitive/TL3 [-35].

Quirks: Dislike enclosed spaces; Find chemical taints in the water highly unpleasant; React strongly to very bright light. [-3]

Skills: +2 to Free Fall [2] (if a Tobai ever makes it to space).

NOTES ON ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

These are almost identical to those of the Githiaskio (see p. T:AIV65).

Extra Arms, Extra Flexibility, Poor Grip

Like the Githiaskio, Tobai can use all tentacles equally effectively, also suffer from Poor Grip, and must use two or more tentacles for many tasks, especially handling a weapon. Tobai limbs can deal unarmed blows (punches), but do -1 damage when doing so and suffer the -2 to hit from Poor Grip.

Aquatic

Tobai use their full normal Move score in water. They will die of suffocation within minutes on land.

Bad Sight & Color Blindness

Tobai poor vision is the equivalent of Bad Sight (Nearsightedness), and cannot be corrected, because their brains aren't evolved to handle better vision. They are restricted to blue-green wavelengths (Color Blindness).

SENSES

Like Githiaskio, the Tobai can use all combat abilities normally against a submerged foe at close quarters, so long as both vision and Faz Sense are not actually blocked or incapacitated.

PRIMITIVE

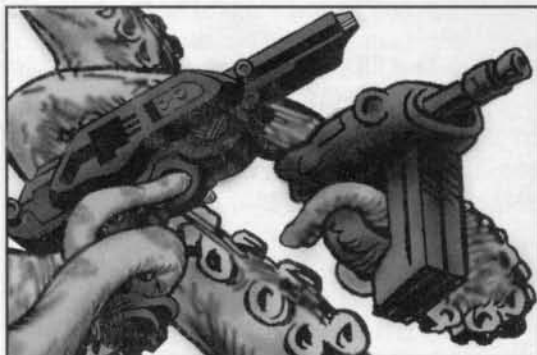
Tobai are very backward compared to the Imperial norm, and this results in some odd approaches to life from time to time. As an example, the Tobai view combat as a highly personal affair, and by extension warfare is simply one-on-one combat writ large. They do not view objects as worthy subjects of attack, and their raids on TobiCorp facilities concentrated on attacking and damaging the personnel rather than the materiel. An unmanned drilling rig would be ignored by Tobai (unless there was something they wanted that could be pried loose). Of course, the Tobai definition of "inanimate" differs slightly from the Imperial norm – many Tobai see translation machines as "alive."

QUIRKS

Tobai display an excessive claustrophobia as a result of their surroundings. While not as bad as that of the K'kree, it places a significant obstacle in the path of their technological development.

PSIONICS

Certain Tobai have talents which they consider to be magic or divine gifts, but which are in reality psionic, which limits their ability to teach



(or even completely understand) them. Tobai shamans must have both Psychokinesis Power 4+ and Telepathy Power 4+ (40 points), and may acquire Emotion Sense, Levitation, Life Detection, Mental Blow, Mental Stab, Metabolism Control, Mind Shield, Telereceive, or Telesend, but only as a result of study under another shaman. Tobai shamans may not learn more than IQ/4 of these skills (round down), and regardless of IQ may not spend more than 1 point per skill.

Prospective Tribal leaders who choose to undergo the ritual of "Touching the Sky" (see p. 11) have a vastly greater chance of survival if they have Levitation to counteract the force of gravity while they are out of the water, and Metabolism Control to reduce their need to respire while out of the water.

CHARACTER DETAILS

Tobai characters have the same equipment limitations as Githiaskio (see p. T:AIV65).

HUMAN CHARACTERS

NARSES MELASEVA, SPA PORT DIRECTOR 135 POINTS

Age, 68; 5'11", 140 lbs. She has brown hair and blue eyes. Outwardly she is an average, middle-aged human female.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].
Speed 5; Move 5.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Administrative Rank 5 [25]; Alcohol Tolerance [5]; Legal Enforcement Powers (Director's Discretion) [5]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Mathematical Ability [10]; Security Clearance (SPA) 3 [15]; Status 2 [5]*; Wealthy [20].

Disadvantages: Compulsive Behavior (Generosity) [-5]; Duty (To the Tobai, to help them develop their full potential; 12 or less) [-5]; Manic-Depressive [-20]; Obsession (Shelter developing cultures) [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

Quirks: Impatient with underlings; Relishes her position. [-2]

Skills: Accounting-12 [1]; Administration-16 [6]; Area Knowledge (Corridor trade routes)-14 [1]; Computer Operation/TL10-14 [1]; Diplomacy-

13 [2]; Economics-13 [2]; History-12 [1]; Law-14 [4]; Leadership-14 [2]; Politics-15 [4]; Research-14 [2]; Writing-13 [1].

Languages: Galanglic (Native)-14 [0].

* Includes +1 for Wealth.

Maleseva was born and grew up in Corridor, and knows it like the back of her hand. She entered the Starport Authority after graduating with highest honors from the University of Camh Ranh, and rose through the ranks of administration in various starports throughout Corridor Sector – her uncanny ability to fit in in even the most unusual surroundings and his devotion to her job helped her earn the highest evaluation ratings, and helped her earn promotions faster than her peers. Her generous nature helped her win the support of her underlings as well. When the SPA took over Seahaven Starport, Maleseva called in every favor she had amassed in her career in order to be able to help nurture a developing race and help it achieve its destiny.

DR. JACQUES FORBES- HAMILTON, MoC 107.5 POINTS

Age 38; 5'7", 120 lbs. With black hair and brown eyes, Jacques' good looks and wit make him a favorite of friends and co-workers alike. He is an intense worker, but is very outgoing in less formal environments.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].
Speed 5.25; Move 5.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Attractive [5]; Eidetic Memory 1 [30]; Intuition [15].

Disadvantages: Curious [-5]; Low Pain Threshold [-10]; Obsession (Justice for the Tobai) [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

Skills: Biochemistry-15/TL10 [4]; Botany/TL10-14 [3]; Chemistry/TL10-14 [3]; Climbing-10 [1]; Fast-Talk-13 [1]; First Aid/TL10-13 [0.5]; Gardening-14 [1]; Geology-11/TL10 [0.5]; Guns (Pistol)/TL10-16 [8]*; Hiking-9 [1]; History-14 [3]; Leadership-13 [1]; Orienteering-14 [2]; Politics-13 [1]; Prospecting-12 [0.5]; Research-13 [1]; Sex Appeal-13 [4]; Swimming-11 [1]; Teaching-12 [0.5]; Xenobiology (Terrestrial)-12 [0.5]; Xenology-14 [3].

Languages: Galanglic (Native)-13 [0]; Gvegh-12 [1]; Vilani-13 [1].

* Includes +2 for IQ.

The first job Jacques Forbes-Hamilton ever held was with TobiCorp, who hired him immediately after he graduated from the University of Corridor at Strand with a degree in biochemistry. His job was to examine the biosphere of Tobibak and determine its suitability for commercial exploitation, but the more he learned about the world, the greater his unease. He noticed the uncanny physical resemblance of the Tobai and the Githiaskio, but all attempts to bring this to the attention of his superiors were met with cold hostility and a suggestion that he restrict himself to his duties and not speculate.

Jacques pulled a few strings and managed to get some Tobai DNA samples, which he compared to Githiaskio. He was only mildly surprised

to discover that the two races were the same species, but the next discovery astonished him: the lab already had records of DNA analyses dating back over two decades – and his report was not the first on the subject. He had enough institutional savvy to realize that he was not in a position to do anything, so he decided to keep a copy of the lab report, arranged to hide the DNA samples where his superiors could not lay hands on them, and bided his time.

The rest became history. When Forbes-Hamilton revealed the extent of TobiCorp's crimes to the MoC, he became famous throughout the sector. He now occupies the position of Director of Tobai Affairs under the MoC governor of Tobibak.

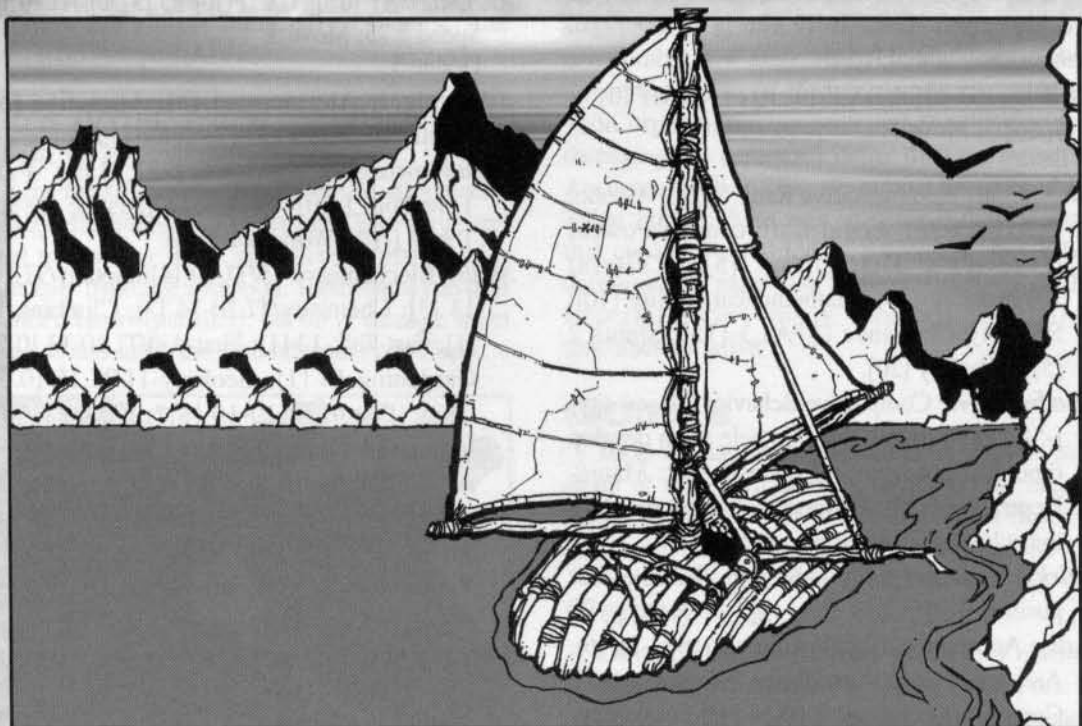
TOBAI THE SAILOR

Once the Tobai had the concept of ships and sailing explained to them, they adapted it to something they could have fun with. They have built small vessels that are really little more than a framework with some flotation pods (made from the bladders of greattooths). A small pilot's harness is below the water, and masts extend great sails above the surface. The little ships catch the wind and carry their pilot at great speeds (not as fast as a swimming Tobai in a burst, but they can easily outdistance a swimmer at distances of a half-mile or more). The Tobai have created an entire new sport out of these "surface skimmers" (from the Tobai's point of

view, of course; air-breathers call them "sailing submarines" and find them quite silly-looking), racing them at various distances, sometimes in specific patterns, sometimes in a straight line. Offworlders with appropriate breathing apparatus can also pilot these craft, and the Tobai have great respect for any who do.

There is something compelling about a people that can adapt so quickly to such a radically new concept. This race, if there is any justice in the universe, will go far.

*– Dr. Vladislav Thingling,
IISS Liaison office, Tobibak*



Adventures on Tobibak

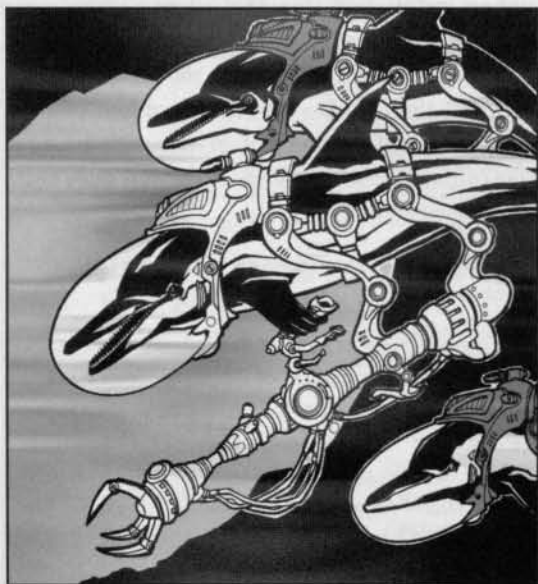
Tobibak was ignored by the universe at large for quite a long time, but nevertheless presents some interesting situations. The Tobai pose several questions that don't really have simple answers:

- How will they react to high-level technologies? What changes will exposure to the wider universe make to their philosophy and culture?
- What will happen if and when conclusive evidence of an Ancient manipulation is discovered?
- What will happen when they learn to make use of their psionic potential? Will they be allowed to do so, or will they be forced to abandon psionics like the rest of the Imperium? How will the Zhodani react?

These are long-term questions, however, and most *Traveller* GMs are seeking short-term inspiration. Here are a few:

MoC ADVENTURES

The Ministry of Conservation is anxious to maintain control of Tobibak, both for bureaucratic institutional reasons and because the MoC believes it can serve the Tobai's best interests. To retain control, they must continue to regulate the exploitation of Tobibak's resources, gradually



bring the Tobai into the modern world without culture shock, undo the damage done by TobiCorp – and prevent the Scouts or the Navy from wresting control away from them. Proper resolution of the following situations could prove that the MoC has things well in hand and deserves continued stewardship. Improper resolution, on the other hand . . .

DIPLOMACY

MoC representatives are assigned to regain the trust of a tribe heavily victimized by TobiCorp. They will need scientists, sociologists, linguists, and diplomats. They will need pilots, technicians, mechanics, mountains of translator boxes, and a lot of presents and trade goods. A couple of Githiaskio would come in handy. A few armed escorts will prove vital if things go sour. This is a long-term adventure and will not be resolved overnight – building trust takes time.

SUBVERSION

A few employees of ShuKhuTam LIC are looking to do a little business of their own on the side. They have been buttering up the elders of a remote tribe that just happens to sit astride one of the main latimus migration routes. They have cultivated contacts with offworld markets for anagathics. They are looking for a few starship operators who can keep their mouths shut, and maybe a body-guard or two. All of this, of course, is in violation of MoC regulations, and the Ministry would be very interested in proof of these activities. Can you make it back to Seahaven with the evidence before the plotters catch up with you?

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A tribe of Tobai is beginning to understand the difference between legitimate businessmen and smugglers, and have captured one of the latter red-handed. The tribal elders have decided to conduct their own trial, but the MoC is concerned about the precedent this will set. Should the tribe be persuaded to transfer the trial to an offworlder court?

CORPORATE DRONES

ShuKhuTam LIC is in constant need of workers for the mining stations on Tobibak. Adventurers with appropriate experience might find themselves assigned to one of ShuKhuTam's stations for a year or two. Perhaps the corporation is looking for undercover agents to uncover corruption or illegal acts by one of the station managers. Alternatively, perhaps the MoC is looking for independent verification that everything ShuKhuTam does is on the up and up.

IISS ADVENTURES

The Scout Service is genuinely torn. Institutional rivalry requires that it continue to search for a reason to make the MoC look bad and allow an Amber Zone classification the IISS would administer. A concern for the well-being of developing races requires them to act in the best interest

of such races, all other things being equal. Problem is, the MoC seems to be doing a good job . . .

FIELD WORK

Members of the IISS might be assigned to one of the scientific stations on Tobibak, looking for clues to the origins of the Tobai, studying the ecosystem (or geography, or climate) of Tobibak, or excavating the unusual wreckage that was recently discovered in a hidden undersea valley.

Careful linguistic study of new Tobai legends (and re-examination of the old ones) might reveal any number of things. A change in how a single word or phrase is translated could answer any or all of the questions posed under *Ancient Enigmas*, below. Note that this study and translation need not take place on Tobibak itself – indeed, it can be done anywhere, and is one of the ways a GM can persuade a group that a journey to Corridor Sector might prove enriching.

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

Traveller GMs relish alternatives as a means of keeping the players on their toes. Of course, these suggestions are not mutually exclusive. Feel free to mix and recombine ideas and parts of ideas to suit an individual campaign.

ANCIENT ENIGMAS

How much evidence of Ancient activity remains on Tobibak? Are there a few enigmatic artifacts, or a complete Ancient scientific base (automated or with a crew in suspended animation), lying dormant just waiting to be activated? (See pp. T:AI1106-118 for a timeline and some suggestions on artifacts and other things the adventurers might encounter.) What was the purpose of the Ancients in experimenting with the Tobai? Why did they need an aquatic race of servitors? Did they breed the sonar sense into them, or did that evolve after the Ancients were destroyed? What was it about Tobibak that attracted the Ancients' attention in the first place? What if one of Yaskoydray's descendants managed to elude destruction and the entrance to his pocket universe is on Tobibak? On the other hand, what if it *wasn't* the Ancients who carried the Tobai to Tobibak?

TOBICORP TRIUMPHANT

Take Jacques Forbes-Hamilton out of the equation, and TobiCorp is still doing business at the old stand. If MoC never took over, what stage has the Tobai rebellion reached? Fighting the

Tobai is a little like fighting the wind – they don't have a capital to capture, no industrial base to destroy. If someone were to teach the Tobai modern guerrilla warfare, TobiCorp would find itself in serious trouble. If they were to locate an intact Ancient installation, they might make the jump to megacorporate status overnight.

TOBICORP REDUX

TobiCorp is not dead, and its executives managed to avoid prison. It changed its name and did legitimate business for decades, far away from Tobibak and the Tobai. But there are some very valuable research notes still hiding in a sunken installation that MoC doesn't know is there, waiting for the right persons to go get it. Of course, adventurers must dodge the MoC and the IISS, but there's also the little problem of the Tobai, who will assume that anyone with knowledge of the place is an agent of the evil gods and their one-time oppressors.

MONSTERS FROM THE DEEP

Is there a basis in fact for the Tobai legend of the evil beings in the depths of Tobibak? What could survive in the stygian blackness and enormous pressures of the depths of the ocean? Another ancient genetic experiment? A dormant Ancient warbot that awakens periodically? An undiscovered lifeform? An undiscovered *sentient* lifeform?

EDUCATION

Serving members of the IISS C&L Branch might be assigned to help train and educate a tribe. Show the Tobai the benefits of modern technology, and help them discover their own potential.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Haunted Mountain: New Tobai legend/songs begin to speak of a haunted mountain (under the sea, of course). MoC and IISS officers will be concerned that this represents some nefarious plot: smugglers using high technology to frighten the primitive Tobai away from the area while they perpetrate some outrage on a defenseless group of latimi, a long-dormant Ancient site reawakened for some reason, or the remnants of some TobiCorp science experiment gone awry . . .

Swarm: The party is part of a science station or mining site attacked by a greattooth swarm just as a massive storm system shuts down communications and makes it impossible to leave. What defenses can the group improvise from the available materials? Is the best option to hunker down and try to outfight the swarm?



Tour Guide/Babysitter: The first Tobai have finally made it into space. MoC and the IISS will need escorts, specialists, perhaps even bodyguards to show them the universe, keep them out of trouble, and, of course, make certain that their trip to space is pleasant and educational.

Psi: Adventurers with psi talents might be contacted (by the psi institute they attended, by their mentor, by one of the many psionic undergrounds) and asked to go to Tobibak and help the Tobai learn the truth about their wild talents. The group would need a cover story, since psionics is suppressed and persecuted within the Imperium – perhaps they might pose as legitimate scientists or businessmen.

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WORLDS WITHIN JUMP-6 OF TOBIBAK

Khouth Subsector

HEX	NAME	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	POPULATION*	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN	NOTES
0509	Naxx-Iygo	III	7,495	1.02	Corrosive	50 Normal	79,868	Colony	2	6	2.5	
0510	Pamock	III	4,645	0.89	Std	10 Normal	669,059	RepDem	1	9	3.5	
0608	Desolate	IV	9,700	1.02	Corrosive	20 Warm	40	Anarchy	1	9	2.0	Xboat base
0609	Semiplast	III	4,836	0.78	Std	10 Normal	5 mill.	Colony	1	8	3.5	
0709	Mowanda	IV	2,678	0.73	none	None Frigid	458,728	Oligarchy	2	9	4.0	Amber zone

IAN Subsector

HEX	NAME	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	POPULATION*	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN	NOTES
0411	Daban	III	5,056	0.98	Trace	40 Cold	889.4 mill.	Techno	5	8	4.5	
0511	Linux' Cha	I	3,618	0.76	V. Thin (T)	20 Cold	888,094	Multiple	5	8	0.0	
0512	Beta Regilis	II	5,801	0.85	Thin (T)	30 Warm	772,123	Military	4	5	2.5	Scout base
0513	Kumorle	IV	3,028	0.79	V. Thin	10 Cold	24.1 mill.	Techno	5	10	4.5	Scout base
0611	Ikhur	IV	7,133	1.04	Thin	60 Cool	379,092	Oligarchy	1	9	4.0	
0614	Dywosik	III	2,898	0.56	Thin (T)	70 Cool	935,915	RepDem	4	9	3.5	
0714	Teras	IV	4,004	0.89	V. Thin	80 Cold	470	RepDem	4	9	2.5	Naval base
0807	Bersha	I	5,347	0.76	Thin	20 Tropical	9,016	Anarchy	1	6	2.0	
0815	Lysio	IV	4,507	0.79	Dense (T)	40 Warm	984,576	RepDem	4	9	4.0	Scout base
0816	Antiquity	V	2,505	0.45	V. Thin (T)	30 Cold	28,713	AthDem	0	10	4.0	Naval base

Khukish Subsector

HEX	NAME	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	POPULATION*	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN	NOTES
0906	Yopogirp	V	5,433	0.71	Thin (T)	80 Cool	7,566	AthDem	0	10	3.0	
0910	Drayne	IV	6,527	0.84	Std (T)	40 Normal	8.26 bill.	Oligarchy	6	10	3.0	Amber zone
1005	Mount	V	6,696	0.83	Std (T)	50 Warm	3.4 mill.	Bureau	4	8	4.0	Scout base
1006	Wieresh	IV	5,098	0.84	Thin	90 Cool	85,310	Oligarchy	0	8	4.0	
1010	Byla Hosu	II	5,886	0.76	Thin	40 Normal	119,312	Oligarchy	2	8	3.0	
1107	Formation	IV	5,595	0.7	Trace	10 Cool	7,681	Techno	5	10	3.5	Naval base
1109	Shushaka	V	7,746	1.01	Std (T)	20 Normal	8.32 bill.	Bureau	5	12	6.0	
1207	Courage	I	4,250	0.91	None	None Frigid	420 mill.	Bureau	6	6	3.0	
1209	Kaasu	V	10,772	0.97	Std (T)	100 Warm	9.34 bill.	Oligarchy	6	13?	6.0	Naval base
1210	Nocturne	IV	8,679	1.02	Std (T)	100 Normal	44,081	Colony	6	10	4.0	
1307	Hannel	III	5,221	0.78	Std	80 Tropical	29,366	RepDem	4	6	2.5	Scout base
1309	Asatarief	III	5,068	0.71	Thin	60 Normal	6.6 mill.	Bureau	4	9	4.0	Scout base
1408	Xinox	II	8,506	0.91	Std (T)	100 Tropical	364,336	Techno	2	5	2.5	
1409	Langour	III	3,920	0.68	Std (T)	20 Warm	921,434	Bureau	4	9	3.5	
1609	Ghowl	II	2,757	0.48	V. Thin (T)	10 Cold	122,904	Bureau	6	8	3.0	

Strand Subsector

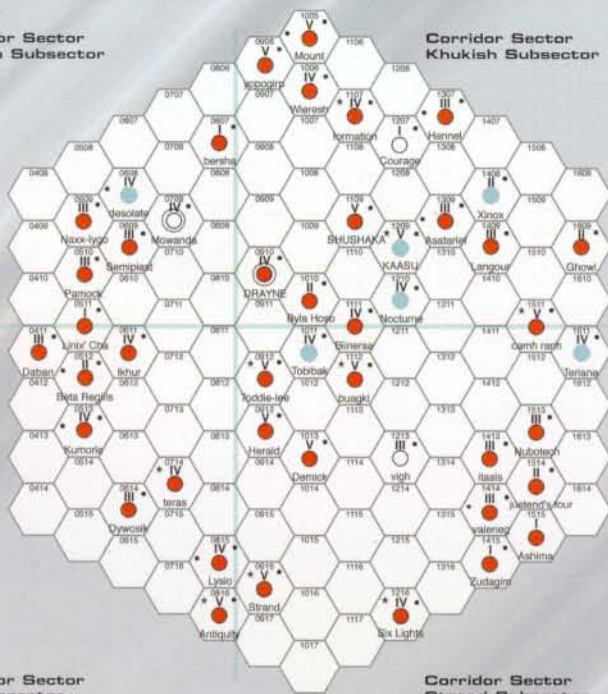
HEX	NAME	STARPORT	GRAVITY	DIAMETER	ATMOSPHERE	CLIMATE	POPULATION*	GOV TYPE	CR	TL	WTN	NOTES
0912	Toddie-lee	V	3,379	0.69	Std	60 Normal	96,084	AthDem	0	12	4.0	Naval base
0913	Herald	V	3,216	0.72	Thin (T)	10 Cool	8.0 mill.	Captive	2	9	4.5	
0916	Strand	V	4,787	0.78	Thin (T)	50 Tropical	6.2 mill.	Techno	2	10	4.5	Naval base
1013	Demick	V	5,429	0.82	V. Thin	20 Cold	752.7 mill.	Multiple	6	11	5.0	
1111	Biinersa	IV	8,016	0.99	Thin (T)	90 Cool	84,895	Clan/Tribal	1	9	4.0	
1112	Buagki	V	3,366	0.71	V. Thin (T)	60 Cold	9,281	Techno	3	10	3.0	Naval base
1213	Vigh	III	2,292	0.39	None	None Frigid	352	Techno	4	9	2.5	
1216	Six Lights	IV	5,487	0.88	Std (T)	70 Cold	94,624	RepDem	1	8	3.5	Naval base
1413	Itasis	III	4,589	0.77	Thin (T)	20 Cool	9,518	Multiple	3	9	2.5	
1414	Valeneg	III	4,087	0.61	Trace	20 Cool	1,298	AthDem	0	7	1.5	Scout base
1415	Zudagim	I	6,311	1.08	Dense	20 Normal	8.33 mill.	Bureau	6	6	3.5	
1511	Camh Ranh	V	6,468	2.4	Dense	60 Cool	1,637	Techno	1	12	3.5	Depot
1513	Nubotech	III	3,540	1.2	Std	20 Warm	47,530	Techno	2	9	3.0	
1514	Justend's Four	II	5,906	1.3	Std	70 Normal	72	Anarchy	0	6	1.5	
1515	Ashima	I	4,290	0.72	Thin (T)	30 Normal	8.56 mill.	RepDem	1	9	3.5	
1611	Teriane	IV	6,563	0.59	V. Thin	100 Cool	845.3 mill.	Dictator	5	9	5.0	

* Starport personnel not included.

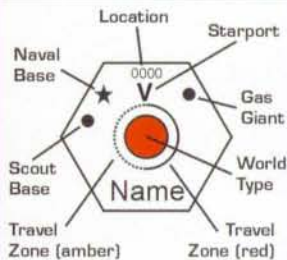
Corridor Sector
Khonth Subsector

Corridor Sector
Khukish Subsector

Jump-6 Map for Tobibak



LEGEND



World Types

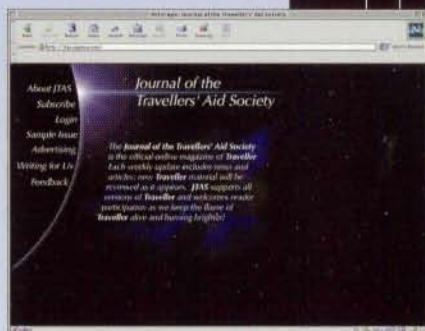
- Asteroid
- Vacuum
- Desert
- Normal
- Water

Worlds with population over a billion are named in all caps, e.g., **DRAYNE**. Worlds with population 10,000 or less are named in all lower-case, e.g., **bersha**. Worlds between these extremes are capitalized normally, e.g., **Tobibak**.

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Still waters run deep . . .

The world called Tobibak lies slightly off the beaten track in Corridor Sector, a world 99% covered by ocean and overlooked by history for many centuries. When Humans came, it was to exploit, not to settle, but Tobibak was already inhabited – by a primitive intelligence mysteriously similar to another aquatic race from many light years away. TobiCorp exploited the natives as unpaid labor, using them to help mine the sea bottom and harvest the teeming schools of shrimp for sale offworld.

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AND SCOTT HARING

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MARC MILLER

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