

T4 ALIENS ARCHIVE™

MARC MILLER'S TRAVELLER®





Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

See how the Asyms get their name on page 5.

Discover the true history of the once-dangerous Controlled on page 22.

Read about the unusual dwellings of the “spidertaurs” on page 41.

Find out how you can create an intelligent-tree character, a Hresh, on page 65.

Just how many forms do the bizarre Nunclees have? Find out page 78.

Meet the fascinating Providers, a race that can “invent” new life forms, on page 82.

It's a bird! It's a dragon! No, it's a Trakii! See them on page 96.

The Future is Around The Corner

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The Forsaken Elves, Destination Games, 1996.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	.4
ASYM Racial Origins, Asym Physiology	.5
Asym Psychology	.7
Homeworld: Artoria	.8
Asym History	.9
Asym Society, Asym Character Generation, Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships	.10
Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Asym Encounter	.11
Native Asym Encounter	.12
BYE-REN Racial Origins, Bye-Ren Physiology	.13
Bye-Ren Psychology	.14
Homeworld: Bye-Ren-Ay	.15
Bye-Ren Society	.16
Bye-Ren History, Bye-Ren Character Generation	.17
Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Bye-Ren Encounter	.18
Native Bye-Ren Encounter	.19
THE CONTROLLED Racial Origins, Controlled Physiology	.21
Controlled History	.22
Controlled Character Generation, Other Game Rules	.24
Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Controlled Encounter	.25
Native Controlled Encounter	.26
DENAAR Racial Origins, Denaar Physiology	.28
Denaar Psychology	.30
Homeworld: Denaar, Denaar Society	.31
Denaar History, Denaar Character Generation	.32
Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Denaar Encounter	.33
Native Denaar Encounter	.35
GRAYTCH Racial Origins, Graytch Physiology	.37
Graytch Psychology	.38
Homeworld: Yuzma	.40
Graytch Society	.41
Graytch History	.42
Graytch Character Generation, Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Graytch Encounter	.43
Native Graytch Encounter	.44
HANA SAKA Racial Origins	.46
Hana Saka Physiology	.47
Hana Saka Psychology	.48
Homeworld: Shiro, Hana Saka Society	.54
Hana Saka History, Hana Saka Character Generation	.56
Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Hana Saka Encounter	.57
Native Hana Saka Encounter	.58
HRESH Racial Origins	.59
Hresh Physiology	.60
Hresh Psychology	.62
Homeworld: Shashwas, Hresh Society	.63
Hresh History	.64
Hresh Character Generation, Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships	.65
Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Hresh Encounter	.66
Native Hresh Encounter	.67
THE NEWTS Racial Origins	.69
Newt Physiology	.70
Newt Psychology, Homeworld: Marhaban, Newt Society	.73
Clothing and Equipment, Newts History	.74
Mystery of the Newts, Newt Character Generation, Other Game Rules	.75
Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Newt Encounter	.76
Mercantile Newt Encounter	.77
NUNCLEES Racial Origins, Nunclees Physiology	.78
Nunclees Psychology	.79
Homeworld: Trenamii, Nunclees History	.80
Nunclees Society, Nunclees Character Generation, Other Game Rules	.81
Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Nunclees Encounter, Native Nunclees Encounter	.82
THE PROVIDERS Racial Origins, Provider Physiology	.83
Provider Psychology	.84
Homeworld: Hydractus, Provider Society	.85
Provider History	.86
Provider Character Generation, Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Native Provider Encounter, Imperial Provider Encounter	.88
TEKUNDU Racial Origins, Tekundu Physiology	.90
Tekundu Psychology	.91
Homeworld: Yulani, Tekundu Society	.92
Tekundu History, Tekundu Character Generation, Other Game Rules	.93
Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Tekundu Encounter, Native Tekundu Encounter	.96
TRAKII Racial Origins, Trakii Physiology	.94
Trakii Psychology	.97
Homeworld: Trakiini, Trakii Society, Trakii History	.98
Trakii Character Generation, Other Game Rules, Travel and Starships, Quick Role-Playing Tips, Imperial Trakii Encounter	.99
Native Trakii Encounter	.100
WILDSTORM ART GALLERY	.101

INTRODUCTION

The Traveller universe moves to the rhythms of the massive Imperium. The milieus build upon its history, the origins of different incarnations of the empire, and its many encounters with the surrounding alien communities of stars dominated by the other major races—the Aslan, Hivers, K'kree, Vargr, plus the Vilani's brothers in humaniti, the Solomani and Zhodani. These races dominate the landscape of local stars, expanding and contracting with the regular tempo of their interstellar unions.

But within these vast expanses of space are thousands of worlds that have also spawned intelligent life. These “minor races,” dubbed so because their technologies have never achieved interstellar travel independently, are as evolved and varied as the major ones. The homeworlds of these races are sprinkled throughout the region of the Imperium, sometimes a part of it, sometimes independent, other times still absorbed into the community of a major alien race. Regardless, any member travelling among the stars does so as a guest of a superior technology.

Less than 10% of the Imperial population is non-Vilani. Of these only 10% come from the minor races. Still, their numbers can be staggering, considering the trillions that live under the Imperial starburst. Locally, they can dominate a region, and more often than not still dominate their homeworlds. In their niches, the minor races' influence can be very strong.

The New Minor Races

This volume presents twelve minor races for use in any Traveller campaign. Each is suitable for non-player and player character status.

Homeworlds: Homeworld locations are purposely left vague so you can place the aliens anywhere in the region of the Imperium. Of course, it is still possible to include these aliens into your game without ever specifying the location of their homeworld; most of the alien races have significant populations living in the Imperium, far from their homes.

Character Generation: Rules are given to create characters for each alien race using the existing Traveller rules. Generally, these characters utilize the existing character generation rules with modifications based on physiology, psychology, or technology.

Imperial Encounters: There is an encounter presented for each alien living in the Imperium. This gives both the referee and players a glance at the race filling a role in the mainly human interstellar community.

Native Encounters: There is also an example of each race encountered on its native world. This gives the referee a good example to build on and lets the characters experience a bit of the native culture for each race.

ASYM

Aysms embody every element of curiosity, tinkering, and collecting. They are asymmetrical bipeds from gatherer/omnivore stock. In their natural or defensive position, the head rests down into a fleshy cavity in the torso, making the Asym 1.3 to 1.5 meters tall. But when they need to they can extend the "head" with its single large eye and triangulated ears, on a telescoping neck another half meter. They have two arms, the left one very powerful and thick, the right very slender and delicate. They have two prehensile tails, one branching out from the base of the spine just above the legs, the other emerging from mid back. An Asym's legs are short and muscular, with broad, flat, tough feet.

The Asym native language is harsh and grinding, depending on the snapping of the tongue against the teeth as well as barks and groans developed in the body cavity, but humans can learn to imitate it. They call themselves the kotch-cho-ba, which translates to "home people" or "people of the guided eye," depending on the region of their homeworld. To humans, the most notable feature of the race at first glance is that their upper torso is asymmetrical. They are known, therefore, as aysms throughout the Imperium. They are also known colloquially as "pack rats" or "double tails."

Racial Origins

Asym are native to a rocky, harsh world where the deserts and rock wastes have gradually taken over from once-rich and fertile grounds. Their ancestors emerged from the dwindling grass and forest lands onto the widening wastelands as primitive gatherers. Their diet switched from grains and leaves to mosses and fungus-like growths. Specialization of their limbs appears to have occurred during this period. One arm developed great strength for lifting large stones and boulders, the other grew slender to reach and remove the meager nourishment growing beneath.

Competitors for the dwindling food supply forced the Asym to congregate into communities larger than a single family. The first tribes were pure hunters, preying on all other species and even each other, nearly wiping their own kind out; there is considerable evidence of cannibalism during this period. However, this can't have been a productive tribal lifestyle since they appear to have switched to cooperative gathering and protection from predators in just a few centuries.

Their world suffered a large meteor impact during this tribal period, now 12,000 standard years ago. A large ice asteroid impacted the southern hemisphere with cataclysmic effect. Archaeological evidence notes the passing of many species as the light of the sun was diminished drastically by dust carried high in the atmosphere. Many of the fallen species were competitors or predators of the primitive Asym, so when they emerged into the post-impact world their numbers swelled drastically.

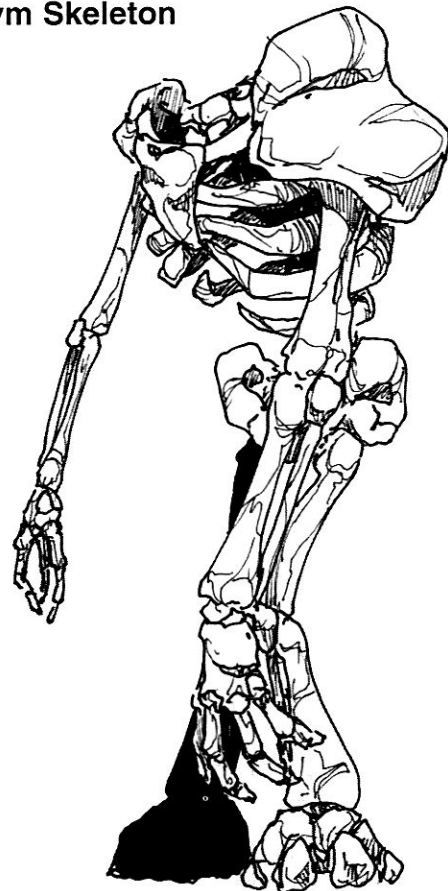
Agriculture and civilization soon followed, along with intricate vocal and written communication. The Asym have since dominated their world, reaching an independent tech level of 8.

Asym Physiology

A full grown Asym weighs 50 to 80 kilograms. At rest, they stand between 1.3 and 1.5 meters tall, though their telescoping necks can stretch this by another half meter.

Body Composition: An Asym stands on two legs supporting a thick, asymmetrical torso. The left half of the torso is dominated by thick muscles and bones to support the leverage of the powerful left arm. The large left shoulder is covered with a black,

Asym Skeleton



carapace plating. The right half of the torso is very much leaner, supporting the slender right arm. The spine down the mid back branches into two tails, the high tail and low tail; its brain cluster resides in the torso beneath the high tail joint. Their small head, which houses the single eye and triangulated ear structures, sits atop a telescoping neck. When at rest, the head rests in a fleshy cavity in the top of the torso, right above the mouth which is a slick, gravity feed hole at the base of the neck.

Skeleton: Asym have an interesting combination of endo- and exoskeletal bone structures. The interior bones of the torso and limbs all extend from the spine with its two tail hubs. These are silicon based, and generally just a little stronger than human calcium-based bones. The bones of the left shoulder and torso support a thick, rounded carapace that protects that region of the body. The carapace itself is a composite resin material secreted from a series of small glands along the ligaments connecting it through muscle to bone. From an evolutionary point of view, loss or injury of the stronger left arm would mean starvation, so added protection was a favorable trait. There are no bones in the head or neck, just cartilage-like materials to give them structure and strength.

Skin: Asym skin is two-layered. The outer layer is a fine but tough material, like thin leather, covered in fine hairs all over the body. This skin can vary in color from bright beige to reddish-orange, and varied coloration can form patterns on the individual. The inner layer of skin is a thicker muscle tissue that hugs the outside of the body. It can expand and contract, letting an Asym gather its skin toward one side of its body for temperature control. By gathering most of its skin toward its front half and standing with its back to a cold wind, the Asym is exposing less tissue to the extreme temperature. Skin fluctuation gives the Asym a multitude of interesting body expressions, integral to their non-verbal communication.

Musculature: Most Asym muscles are devoted to either locomotion or the use of the massive left arm, and then only for the brute lifting of a heavy object off the ground. The muscles are poorly adapted to other strenuous activities, so Asym involved in heavy industrial activity traditionally suffer debilitating muscular injuries over the long term. Asym muscle fibers are very much like a human's, able only to contract, requiring a flexor and extensor muscle for every joint. The muscles along the telescoping neck are about as strong as a human arm, so they commonly use the neck and head to brace objects or

even strike at enemies in desperate situations. An Asym's muscles account for almost 70% of its body mass.

Locomotion: Asym walk or run, approximating human speeds. They can also "bound," a technique that allows them to travel longer distances more quickly, with greater energy efficiency. The bound is a loping run that better utilizes the muscles of the lower leg and the springiness of the ankle and splayed foot for longer strides. When bounding, an Asym can shut down its conscious mind, virtually going to sleep, letting the rest of the nervous system keep it on course and away from danger. They can bound for periods of up to 10 hours without stopping, covering up to 75 miles in that time. Their bounding technique suggests that they were once migratory herd animals.

Asym can use one or both tails to aid in locomotion, grabbing and pulling on fixed objects. They can also use them to help when climbing trees or similar structures, making progress far easier than a human.

Arms: The Asym's uneven arms are their most readily distinguishable characteristic. The larger left arm is evolved to lift large boulders, while the more delicate right arm scoops fungus and moss from underneath. The left arm is jointed at the shoulder and elbow, then again at the wrist, though the latter has only a narrow range of motion. The hand and fingers are thick and brutish, the digits stubby and largely immobile. By comparison, the right arm is similarly jointed, but with extremely large range of motion. The four slender fingers of the hand are jointed in four places, each able to oppose any of the others. An Asym can pick up a small object with its right hand and manipulate it as well as a human might with both his hands.

Asym equipment is tailored to the unevenness of their arms. A rifle, for instance, has a molded stock to be couched in the powerful left arm, with all intricate firing and aiming mechanisms in easy reach of the right. Equipment designed for humans is very difficult for them to use, either too fragile for the strong arm or too difficult for the weak.

Tails: The Asym's tails are primarily evolved for balance, but they can manipulate objects and aid in locomotion. They are strong enough that an Asym can hang from just one of them, or use both to hang indefinitely. Because of their tails, Asyms prefer to sit either in chairs with split backs especially made for them, or if none are available they squat on the ground.

Senses: Asym possess senses equivalent to the human norms. The large lens of the single eye can

be manipulated for either mono or stereo vision; in the latter case the material of the eye separates to create two points of light intake through the single organ. The triangulated ears on the top of the head are better than human ears at detecting sounds and determining their direction and distance. Asym detect and distinguish small particles in the air using the fine hairs on the back of their arms and on the upper portion of the torso, a process duplicated by the sensitive membrane of the eye. Like humans, the sense of taste evolved as a defense against poisoned or spoiled foods but is now indulged as a means of enjoying different flavors; the Asym palate is decidedly more rugged than the human, so what they consider mild is probably too hot for human consumption. Finally, the Asym have a complicated and delicate series of nerve endings in their skin that give them a tactile sense equivalent to humans, though the left arm lacks sensitive feeling in the hand and fingers.

Reproduction: Asym have two sexes, male and female. Exchange of genetic materials is done through the mouth by young adults only; Asym beyond 25 standard years lose the ability. Fertilization can take place any time, though culturally they have intensive rituals that dictate mate selection and decisions to reproduce. The female's gestation period is a short twelve weeks, when she lays one, two, or three large, leathery eggs. These are cared for further by females other than the mother for another 8 weeks, during which time they sleep on the eggs to keep them warm and secrete a special solvent to soften the egg tissue.

Once born, the child must have intensive care for its first four years, then modest care for four more before establishing itself as an adult. Their complete life cycle is as follows: Child from zero to 8 years; young adult from 8 to 30 years; adult from 30 to 45 years; elderly from 45 years on. Life expectancy averages 59 years for males and 62 years for females.

Asym Psychology

The Asym are creatures of a world in decline, and much of their psychological profile reflects it. They tend to decry waste and revere the resources they have at the moment. Asym are given to experimentation as a means to better utilize or discover new resources. They fight their instinct to propagate freely by ritual and cultural mystique designed to preserve dwindling resources. Finally, they hold generosity and sharing above all other acts of kindness; conversely, hoarding and selfishness are regarded as crimes or mental disorders.

Super Ecologists: Their long history of struggle against waning resources has left its mark on the Asym psychology. More primitive civilizations deified the remaining streams and rivers, the newfound fungi and molds and the rock formations that spawn them. Even the present technological Asym civilizations hold sacred the knowledge that resources equal survival.

On the group level, Asym cultures are reusers and recyclers. Materials are put into application until they are simply worn out, and then they are cut up for components to make something else. Primitive craftsmen may have used the same leathers and wooden poles for their entire lives, making them into shelters and then weapons then tools and back to shelters again. Today an engineer focuses much more of his energy on maintaining a machine, keeping it running without looking to new sources for parts. Equipment is made to be reused as something else, and its component parts rendered down and recycled at every turn. Crimes against resources, such as wanton waste or destruction, carry the same or greater penalties as those against other Asym.

On a personal level, an Asym never litters or wastes. Every scrap has some usefulness. Humans think of them as "pack rats," since they never throw anything away. Asym habitats are veritable junk yards, stacked high with trinkets and pieces, components and boxes, all a jumble but instantly accessible by its owner. An Asym never prepares more than he is going to eat, and he always finishes what he makes.

Asym see even the most frugal, conscientious human as terribly wasteful. Packaging and food are commonly discarded and destroyed, materials squandered, fuels expended needlessly. Generally, in situations where Asym outnumber wasteful humans, they will band together to protest. Otherwise, an Asym keeps his feelings to himself and tries instead to lead by example.

Experimentation: Inventors hold high social rank among the Asym. They have a love of invention and experimentation, a reverence for those who tinker and try to make better from what they have. Great inventors are personal heroes among their kind, and they aren't particularly interested in whose ideas they were at first—the one who brings it all together to benefit the masses gets the glory.

As a recent historical example, anti-gravity modules were recently designed and brought to the market by an Asym industrial concern, Kat-mun-tu. They immediately captured the imagination of the public, drawing large amounts of new business. The execu-

tives in charge have been given stipends and estates by the local government, and the Asym responsible have achieved celebrity status, travelling for personal meetings and conferences. Asym societies lend the notoriety to inventors that 20th century Americans gave to great explorers or daredevils such as Lindberg and Armstrong.

On a personal level, Asym enjoy tinkering with components and improvising things. They examine every piece of equipment and try to make it run better, faster, or make it smaller and easier to produce. They do the same with plants, trying to engineer them for greater performance, and with games, works of fiction, systems of government... nothing is safe from the tinkering hands of the Asym. Asym dissect everything around them to find out how it works with an eye toward improvement. From the human perspective this constant tinkering is little better than pure chaos, but the Asym thrive in it. Humans find them meddlesome and at times annoying. Showing an Asym something you've created invites the response, "this is good, but what if we did this" or "I would have done it the other way."

Low Population Growth: Eons of gradual decline in the biosphere of their homeworld drive the Asym psyche. The natural tendency among life forms to propagate freely and quickly is now short-circuited in the Asym mind, overridden by the understanding that overpopulation leads to starvation and cultural death. The religions and teachings of precivilized Asym introduced value systems that foster a responsible control of reproduction. In the worst cases, some primitive cultures even embraced infanticide as a means of population control, but more often temperance and planning prevailed, and these have survived to the present day.

All Asym take their part in the continuation of the race very seriously. It is a weighty matter. Culturally, the decision to have offspring is not left just to the potential parents, but to the local village or community as a whole. Smaller, rural settlements have ancient rituals dating back thousands of years that dictate when and how many infants shall be brought into their world. More technologically advanced civilizations use government agencies or even lotteries to determine who will have offspring and who will not.

Accidental fertilization is dealt with harshly. Penalties can include death or sterilization in some remote regions. The shame associated falls upon the parents and the offspring, and most often they are banished from their community. Unplanned children grow into unwelcome adults, sometimes scarred or otherwise marked for easy identification.

To an Asym, human societies take their own propagation too lightly, allowing their people to bear young and have families without regard to the long term implications. They tend to treat humans known to be bastards or otherwise unplanned as "untouchable" and choose not to associate with them.

Virtuous Generosity: Generosity and selfishness occupy places in the Asym moral belief structure where humans place love and murder. The concepts of sharing and hoarding are the cornerstones of all major Asym religions and drive all aspects of morality and accepted behavior.

Among their own kind the Asym have moral and statutory laws to deal with the offenses of selfishness and hoarding. Punishments vary, but are more harsh than a human would figure, especially for offenses that they don't even perceive as a crime. Sentences can carry jail time for not offering shelter to the downtrodden, or food to the hungry. All Asym are not virtuous when measured by their own standards, just as all humans are not by theirs, so the jails are sometimes overcrowded.

Asym are astounded by the human's personal property laws, laws designed to enforce behavior that they feel is completely immoral. Imperial Asym tend to block out these common offenses by the humans around them. They prefer to donate their time and resources more readily than a human would in similar circumstances. Individual Asym have no desire to accumulate vast wealth and only want a fair share of what they've worked for.

Homeworld: Artoria

The Asym homeworld is a gradually dying planet, reworked by their hands to afford its inhabitants the best possible life. Gradual climatic change has been underway for millennia. The once-lush continents have given way to widening deserts and rocky wastes, forcing the flora and fauna to adapt or die out.

Artoria has three main seas of flowing water, covering a scant 20% of the world's surface. The first two are elongated, running north to south across the equator on opposite sides of the planet. The third is a round equatorial sea, dividing the western hemisphere. Though technically Artoria has one large continent, the large eastern hemisphere is considered the largest land mass, while the northern and southern portions of the western hemisphere rank second and third, respectively. The oceans are relatively shallow and are home to abundant life, suffering little from the gradual decline of the rest of the world's ecology.

The eastern hemisphere is especially rocky and mountainous, marked with deep ravines and enormous canyons. Most Asym reside on the northern portion of the western continent, where more natural life clings to the face of the dying planet.

The atmosphere qualifies as standard but tainted. Naturally occurring gasses and pollens require humans to wear filter masks when visiting. Asym don't miss these, so they need no special breathing apparatus off-world.

The planet suffered a significant meteor impact approximately 12,000 years ago, when the Asym were still barely civilized on its widening wastelands. The impact struck near the equator in the eastern central continent, near a large mountain range. The object, more than 10 kilometers in diameter and massing many millions of tons, left a deep crater and initiated a severe slippage of that continent's plate. Decades after impact the climate still reeled from the dust choking the upper atmosphere. Earthquake and volcanic activity directly resulting from the impact can be proven for two centuries later.

The repercussion on local life forms was devastating. More than half of Artoria's native species died out, and the rest suffered severe depletion from famine and lack of light. The Asym survived, due in large part to their growing intelligence. They certainly lost great numbers to the cataclysm, but hunted remaining species and sought shelter from the exotic, extreme weather associated with the disaster.

Artoria is the fourth planet in a twelve planet, single-star system. The rest of the worlds are what the scouts refer to as "hot rocks and cold rocks," offering nothing special to settlers or miners. There is a thin asteroid belt occupying an orbital position between the eighth and ninth planets, both large gas giants.

Artoria orbits its star once every 450 standard days, during which the planet rotates 270 times. The local day is 1.44 standard days, or 34.56 hours.

Asym History

Asym history is tied to the decline of their homeworld. Proto-Asym species grew up in a much richer environment. However, it is far from certain that their kind would have grown to intelligence and dominance on their world without the long-term climatic change. Other species may have responded more positively to a continuous lush environment, but events conspired to erase these from history's pages. The Asym adapted best, and the dying planet became theirs.

Early gathering clans of Asym wandered across all of Artoria's land masses, so the archaeological

record shows. By the time of the meteor collision, approximately 12,000 years ago, they had achieved a total population of more than 1 million. However, the impact sent them reeling, and how close they came to virtual extinction will never be precisely measured. They may have been reduced to a select few survivors, numbering only in the hundreds, as one theory suggests. It goes on to postulate that these few were somewhat further developed than their unfortunate kin. The fact that the Asym emerged from the immediate effects of the cataclysm and exploded across their world in rudimentary civilizations of all sorts may lend credence to that theory.

Early civilizations gathered on a variety of identifiable terms. The most successful were those that professed centralization of resources under some central authority, though succession of that authority was most often violent and unproductive. Several other civilizations resorted to ritualized and general cannibalism, and survived for surprising thousands of years before the inherent destructiveness of that practice wiped them off the map. By the development of rudimentary metalworking technology, Artoria was home to a balkanized population of Asym numbering in the hundreds of millions.

Since then the Asym have developed an impressive technology and consolidated their government under one body. The various Asym civilizations, regardless of government and location, shared an undeniable dependence on their diminishing resources and responsibility for its care. Most would be classified as separate religions rather than true nations by human observers. Though technically still balkanized, the separate governments are so in name only, enjoying the confidence of the masses only by strict cooperation in a multi-national effort to better their world. Some aspire to reverse the climatic trends using greater technology, perhaps purchased from the mighty Imperium.

Contact: Surveyors from the Vilani Imperium mapped Artoria, but in their haste failed to accurately assess the intelligence and growing technology. No significant contact was made, and no Asym left their homeworld for the greater community of the Imperium until the end of the Long Night. There are less than 100 humans who make their residence among the Asym on Artoria, mostly corporate traders desperately awaiting transfer to a better assignment. There are fewer than 1,000 Asym living in the Imperium, most serving on starships that have called at Artoria.

ASYM SOCIETY

The core of Asym society is the family. Since they reproduce from two sexes, family roles are not dissimilar from humans. Asym families tend toward matriarchal domination, though deference to elders of either sex is common. Ties of loyalty to ones immediate family are stronger even than those of humans, especially in protective roles. The desire for an Asym to continue in the footsteps of his parents is very strong, so much so that human observers might mistake their society for a caste-based system.

The duties of the family are more structured than the human norm. Services that humans leave to local government are accomplished at the family level. Waste removal, allocation of land for living structures and businesses, and similar functions are established by families and family groups.

Reproduction Rituals: The Asym make a special celebration out of impending marriages. The depth of commitment from marriage is greater than humans, and the celebration leading up to the joining of two Asym and their families is enormous. Entire villages and communities are shut down for meditation and rituals of friendship, the sharing of food and drink and the playing of games. No human ceremonies come close to their level of grandeur.

Conscription: Every Asym serves at least three years of conscripted service for the overall community of governments. This affords them an opportunity to travel extensively on their world. Duties include public works projects and community industrial services.

Asym Character Generation

Asym characters can be created using the standard process. Before generation, the player must decide if the Asym is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Asym characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15.

The Asym's Strength score is effective only when it can bring its more powerful right arm to bear. Otherwise, the character's Strength is treated as 5 points lower (minimum 1). Feats of manual dexterity (not speed or dodging ability) require the use of the smaller, right arm. When it cannot be used to perform a detailed action, the Asym's Dexterity is treated as 5 points lower (minimum 1).

Social Standing for an Imperial Asym is treated as for human characters. For native Asym, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 8.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Asym can choose any of the ten careers. Native Asym can select from the Army and Merchant services only, and they cannot take any starship skills or skill in any weapon greater than TL 8.

Asym males can serve up to 6 terms, while females can serve up to 10.

Mustering Out: Asym can never have more than 12 dice to roll on the Mustering Out tables.

Aging: Asym are unaffected by aging during character generation.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Asym requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Asym cannot use equipment specially fitted for humans, such as vac suits, chairs, etc., and vice versa. Non-intricate equipment, such as clubs and larger weapons, can be interchanged, but the user suffers a -4 penalty when trying to use it. Intricate human equipment, such as small weapons, electronics tools, etc., can be used by the Asym.

Asym can purchase equipment made for them on Artoria without difficulty, up to TL 8. They can purchase equipment made specially for them anywhere in the Imperium, but these have to be made to order and cost anywhere from 250% to 1000% of the normal price, often with significant time delays.

Vehicles: Asym can operate vehicles designed for humans. They can fit uncomfortably into chairs designed for humans. Any human vehicle can be refitted with an Asym chair at minimal expense.

Psionics: Asym can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Asym can learn to speak the human tongue, but it is very difficult for them. Humans, in turn, can also learn Asym, imitating the tongue grinding, barks, and groans, but it is generally very tiring to do. Communication is commonly accomplished through hand-held or helmet-mounted translators, available from Cr1000 to Cr5000. Higher priced models give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel and Starships

Asym are very comfortable on human ships and in human staterooms. Basic modifications to furniture, such as the rearrangement of pillows and angles of seat backs make them feel right at home.

Asym can use low passage berths with the same level of risk common to humans.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can introduce an Asym into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: Great strength in the left arm, great manual dexterity in the right; telescoping neck; double tail, prehensile and often used for balance.

Psychological: Super-ecologists, see humans as terribly wasteful; encourage experimentation; extremely generous, despise selfishness.

Imperial Asym Encounter

There are only a few Asym living in the Imperium. None of their kind left their homeworld of Artoria before the end of the Long Night, so there is no established presence anywhere outside their system. There are no Asym enclaves on distant worlds, no communities at all. Imperial Asym are solitary citizens. At most, they are second- or third-generation Imperial citizens.

Botchwa, Engineer and Supply Officer

Botchwa is typical of Asym in the Imperium, living and working on a starship that called on Artoria just over a decade ago. Possessing some level of innate skill and driven to see the great interstellar communities first-hand, he convinced the captain of the tramp freighter Guissard to give him working passage. He's never gone back to his home.

History: Botchwa was born to a small harvesting community on the north shore of the equatorial sea. Many generations of his family have harvested the shore plants and small animals of the sea, mainly go-ra-to-mass, a sweet-tasting squid-like creature about the size of a snail, and yu-tuk-to, a thick-leaved aquatic vine that turns into a nutritious paste when boiled. Botchwa grew up in the service of his family, working the harvesting platforms and piling the catch. Later, he gravitated toward the distribution and sale of that merchandise, where he learned the basics of brokering and marketing.

Botchwa left home to seek his own fortune in the industrial cities farther south, shifting from sea produce to manufactured goods. He accepted a position with a producer of machine parts, one recommended by a cousin also in that line. Their merchandise included primitive steam engines and petroleum-driven motors. Botchwa headed up a division that took these marvels of technology into more primitive areas of the world, helping to open markets and bring prosperity to severely impoverished regions.

Then the Imperium made itself known to the Asym. The first ships were independent traders, disorganized and operating often at cross purposes. The humans traded and left, offered terrific services and then never followed up on them, and the Asym grew to distrust the equal-armed bipeds. When ships representing Cleon's Imperium arrived, they first had to persuade the natives that theirs was a profitable offer. Botchwa, however, needed no convincing. He recognized a parallel between what he was doing with his company's simple steam engines and the Imperium's fantastic fusion power plants. The Asym applied for transfer to any service that would interact with the Vilani traders, but corporate and national hesitation left him with few opportunities. That's when Botchwa turned his attention to the humans themselves. He learned everything he could about the Imperial technology, combined that knowledge with his own and sought out starships. Disappointment followed, as captain after captain turned him down. Only the captain of the poorly equipped Guissard, an independent tramp freighter barely keeping ahead of the bank loan, agreed to give the Asym working passage.

Botchwa has never left the service of the Guissard, though the original captain lost the vessel to the bank and it has in turn gone through three more captains since then. He works as an assistant engineer and is generally in charge of supplies and recycling.

Present Situation: The Guissard makes irregular visits to about two dozen systems between the Asym homeworld of Artoria and the Imperial coreworlds. The Asym assistant engineer accumulates data tapes and volumes of technical manuals on all sorts of Imperial technology. Considering his origins, he has made remarkable progress to understanding advanced engineering, electronics, and mechanics. However, compared with trained Imperial personnel, his skill levels are still quite low. His chances of rising above the level of assistant engineer are very low.

Where he excels, however, is in the area of recycling and supply management, where his natural instincts are incredible assets. The Guissard's captain all but hands him the electronic clipboard when the ship makes port, letting the Asym evaluate the ship's stores, their needs, and the value of recycled materials on board. Previous captains have credited Botchwa with getting them through lean months when cargo revenues were low. New human crew members find the Asym's insistence on maximum use of recycling and environmental management

extreme, but soon come around. The humans know that his attention to these details is part of what keeps their vessel financially sound.

First Encounter: Player characters meet Botchwa for the first time on the docks of any starport he oversees a transfer of tin and aluminum, shifts electronic credits, and snags a passing clerk to check the status of various foodstuffs, water and oxygen he ordered for the freighter. When the player characters come by, he stands and offers them his seat, then asks if they would like a drink or nourishment, all through the translator computer hanging on a belt loop. They might be put off by his overt generosity, and he might equally be put off if the player characters fail to respond in kind. Characters looking for passage or work on a ship find a friend in Botchwa. On arriving at the Guissard, the captain rolls his eyes and makes it clear that the Asym has brought home "strays" before.

Subsequent Encounters: Botchwa is not in a position of great power or influence, so his impact on the characters' lives will be minimal. However, he is a friend easily made, one with a ship and access to some supplies. Botchwa can be a source of information, a messenger, even a companion or ally, but never really a patron.

Native Asym Encounter

Cultures and occupations vary widely on Artoria, just as among human societies. Selecting one example as the "norm" is impossible. However, Kurdwon exists within several cultures simultaneously and could encounter the player characters in a variety of situations.

Kurdwon, Singer of Songs

Asym songs are a form of entertainment, as are human songs, but that's where the similarity ends: Rhythm, melody, structure of notation . . . none of these are elements of Asym songs. Theirs are more akin to songs in the ancient Greek sense, those being epic stories of gods and heroes. But unlike those, Asym songs are contemporary tales, created by and for the common citizenry. Their creators can become quite famous, like Kurdwon, whose songs and performances are in demand all across Artoria.

History: Kurdwon comes from a poor urban area on the western hemisphere. His native culture puts great value on songs and singers, and Kurdwon was so trained at considerable expense to his family. Cultural edicts, however, forbade the singing of songs other than to honor the Earth Mother Goddess, and as a youth Kurdwon stayed within those bounds.

But in time he longed to sing songs as did nearby cultures, unfettered by religious edict, songs about common people and situations, and at age 24 Kurdwon broke with his family and has never returned.

His first sojourn into the greater cultures of Artoria were difficult. Singer of songs is an honorable profession among the Asym, but it is seldom a profitable one. He managed, however, to entertain where he could, accepting the overwhelming charity of his fans, literally singing for his supper. By the time he was 40, he gained considerable notoriety among a northern culture which quickly spread across the face of Artoria. Today Kurdwon makes public performances wherever he travels, pleasing his fans and accepting their generosity.

Present Situation: Kurdwon has gotten himself into a controversy. Technology has become available to record songs only recently, and the idea of it doesn't sit well with most Asym. The traditional song, upon which all modern songs are built, is a performance medium only, and many cultures have banned recorded songs as antisocial or even evil. But Kurdwon does not agree and has agreed, along with his sponsors, to be the first world-recognized singer to take full advantage of recorded media. The objections to his actions run deep in some Asym, to the point that he has received death threats.

First Encounter: Kurdwon is looking for body guards. Certainly, he can find plenty among his own kind, but he wants assurances that only Imperial technology can provide. The singer is quite wealthy and can pay well, the equivalent of Cr50,000 per month in gold. Player characters might be approached at the local starport or in any one of the cities, since Kurdwon has made it clear that he wants to recruit Imperials.

The Asym is extremely nervous. True to his kind, he is very generous, and he extends all the hospitality of his lavish lifestyle. He is convinced that Imperial technology is virtually magic, and that any human characters have gadgets that will stop bullets, bring him back to life after an attack, and so on.

Subsequent Encounters: Despite his best intentions, Kurdwon has guessed wrong, and the movement toward recorded Asym songs will not go well. In the coming years he will go through a period of absolute seclusion before making a comeback. Kurdwon will contact the player characters to escort him off world during his isolation, then to show him exotic cultures that engage in song and other forms of music. Kurdwon is an experimenter, like all Asym, and his dabbling in extraterrestrial music will be the basis of his comeback.

BYE-REN

The Bye-ren are a race of high-gravity humanoids. Technically not aliens, hundreds of generations of life in the depths of a deep gravity well have changed them physiologically and psychologically. From the point of view of modern humans, the Bye-ren are truly alien.

Their accepted Imperial name was given to them by the first explorers who discovered (or rediscovered) them during the Rule of Man. A Solomani of Chinese ancestry, the captain of the survey team named them in that ancient language, Bye-ren, essentially "the Others" or "Other Men." It is pronounced much like the word, "bureau." Their own name for themselves collectively is los-son, generally accepted to be a slurring over centuries of "lost ones."

The Bye-ren appear to be humanoid in the broadest terms, though the tremendous weight has made them very short and squat. Still bipedal and laterally symmetrical, they are still easily mistaken for nonhumans even by those who share their chromosome count.

(Editor's Note: This race is mistakenly called the "Rye-Ben" in the **Traveller** rulebook. Bye-ren is the correct name.)

Racial Origins

The Bye-ren are not native to their present homeworld. Historical records from nearly 40 centuries past indicate that they were transplanted Vilani settlers from early in the First Imperium. Their world, rich in mineral wealth but racked by a constant double earth-gravity, apparently drew mining interests with frequent interstellar contact for approximately a century. The remaining records are spotty at best and steeped in local legend, but it is clear that the overseeing prospecting company elected to abandon the facility, probably due to the difficulty of having humans work in a 2G environment. Cultural myth says that the Bye-ren are the descendants of a mining post that was left behind, forgotten. Almost 200 generations later, the Bye-ren barely resemble those miners who watched the last starships slip into hyperspace and beyond.

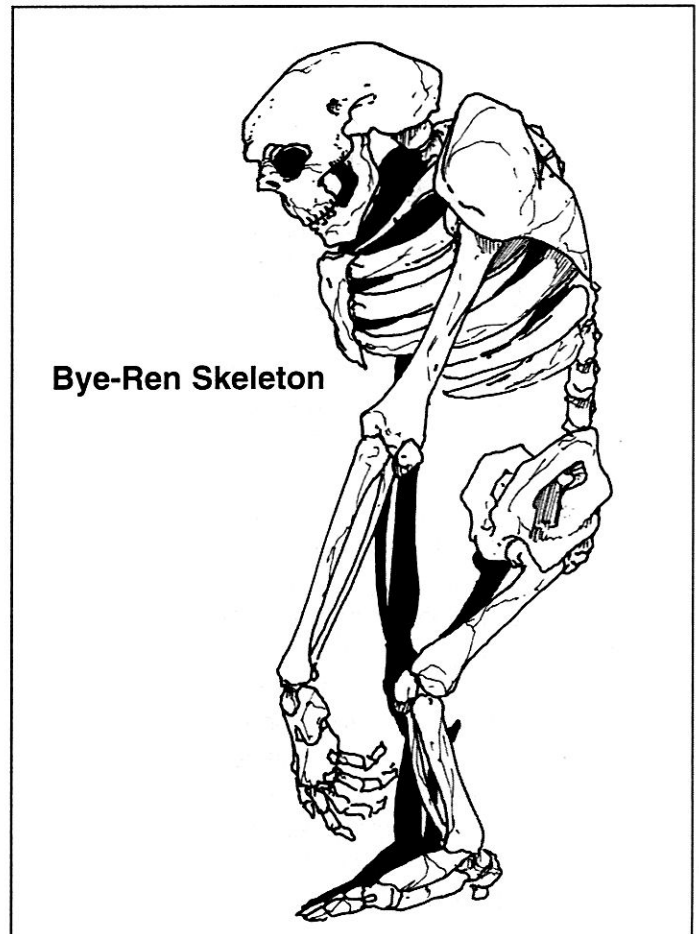
Their new homeworld, named Bye-ren-ay circling the star Deltii, has a size category of 9, or roughly 9,000 miles in diameter. The hard nickel core and abundant heavy ores give it a constant mean gravity of 2G. Its terrain is marked by high mountains and deep chasms. There are no significant expanses of plains, nor are there any free standing oceans of water. The atmosphere is terrifically dense in the valleys, but breathable in the highlands and mountaintops. Bye-ren-ay has no indigenous life.

Today the planet is still rich in minerals, many of them laying out on the surface, especially in the deep valleys. Except for the dense atmosphere and oppressive gravity, these are some of the most accessible ores in the entire Imperium. The Bye-ren regard these precious ores with a deep-seated cultural reverence, even though many of them have no practical use in the Bye-ren society. Undoubtedly, it was this richness that brought human miners to

Bye-ren-ay so long ago, but there are few or no records to actually bear this out. The remaining civilization is relatively low-tech, and long-term record keeping is not one of their racial strengths.

Bye-Ren Physiology

Bye-ren are, at first glance, quite inhuman, but they are derived from human stock. All Bye-ren stand between 1.2 and 1.4 meters tall and weigh between 350 and 450 kg. Their torsos and limbs are short and



thickly muscled, their necks virtually invisible beneath flattened, wide skulls. Genetically, they are pure humans, and they can bear offspring with other human beings.

Body Composition: They are bipedal, laterally symmetrical humanoids, but the constant pull of gravity over many generations has made them short and stout. Their features are low and look crushed. Their feet are broad and flat, and their hands and fingers unnaturally elongated. Their heads are the most strikingly different from the human norm, flattened across the top, with wide jaws and thick brow ridges. The brain case has been gradually altered over the centuries to give an unnaturally-squashed look, but apparently with no adverse effects to the nervous system or general intellect.

Skeleton: Bye-ren bones are drastically altered. The bones of the back and legs are naturally more dense and shortened. Those in the arms and hands are stretched and lengthened, reaching almost to the ground. Super-calcification is regularly administered from childbirth, along with a regimen of drugs to promote greater bone density. Unlike normal humans, their skeletons make up more than 25% of their total body weight. Even so, the unnatural stresses on the vertebrae, hips, knees, and ankles leads to rapid degeneration and frequent injury under the strain of Bye-ren-ay's gravity.

Skin: Bye-ren skin is very much like other human skin in variety of coloration and general appearance. The effects of gravity over time, however, are greatly accelerated. Wrinkles and stretching occur rapidly, giving them the appearance of great age when they are still children. Grotesque stretching begins by age twenty, often requiring surgery or stapling. Internal organs are put under the same sorts of pressure, which leads to a variety of uncomfortable conditions.

Musculature: The oppressive gravity has given the Bye-ren extremely dense, powerful muscles. They have developed to the point where they can conduct the normal day-to-day activities of other humans who live in single-G environs, so they are essentially twice as strong. In a single gravity they can lift twice as much. In normal situation, they can bend metal bars and smash things that other humans cannot. Particularly enhanced are the muscles of the back, abdomen, legs and shoulders. The unnatural strength can lead to ligament damage, so extreme caution (such as braces and belts) is exercised for heavy labor.

Locomotion: Bye-ren walk and run as normal humans do. However, their shorter legs make them slower in 2G than normal humans are in 1G. They

run rarely, since the gravity already puts a massive strain on the cardiovascular system, knees, and ankles.

Reproduction: The heavy gravity makes it difficult to conceive children and carry them to term. Many Bye-ren couples try for years to have a single offspring, and it is not uncommon for hopeful families to never have success. This unfortunate situation is the largest barrier to population growth — 200 generations have seen only a modest population increase to around 70,000 on Bye-ren-ay.

Bye-ren are humans and can procreate with other humans. The resultant offspring would no doubt have characteristics of both parents, including modest health problems, but nothing the medical technology of the Imperium could not remedy.

Life Expectancy: The much beleaguered Bye-ren body wears out rapidly in its native environment. Average life expectancy is just 28 Terran years for males and 32 for females. 40 years or more is considered venerable. Taken out of the heavy gravity, Bye-ren can expect to live as long as other humans.

General health problems plague Bye-ren through their short lives. Chronic back and knee problems are commonplace, as are broken bones and torn ligaments. Crippling ailments affect 80% of them before they reach 25 years of age. Their own medical technology offers few options for the afflicted, other than artificial braces and limbs or wheelchairs. Imperial medical technology is highly sought after, often at great price. Those Bye-ren in the Imperium enjoy a much healthier lifestyle than their gravity well-bound brethren.

Single-G Environs: Removed to normal gravity, Bye-ren have a long period of adjustment before acclimation. Simple acts like walking and general muscle control are not easy to master, and a Bye-ren let loose among fragile objects would likely crush or smash many of them through sheer awkwardness. This period can last a week or more. Returning to the native 2G environment takes little or no acclimation.

Once used to normal gravity, Bye-ren are especially strong and sure-footed. Their bones, skin, and internal organs are under vastly less strain, thereby functioning well and without discomfort. Few Bye-ren who enjoy life in the Imperium ever want to return to their homeworld other than to visit.

Bye-Ren Psychology

Bye-ren society and culture has been bent to the will of the immense gravity on their world. It has shaped who they are, quite literally. Vilani will note immediately their obsession with height and altitude, their

loathing of abandonment or isolation, the resultant level of importance put on long-term relationships, and their total disregard for luxury.

Altitude: On a very immediate, personal level, falling down on Bye-ren-ay has far more serious repercussions than for a Solomani on Terra. Simple falls can cause broken bones or bad bruises, and falling from any height can be fatal. Bye-ren parenting is traditionally very strict, enforcing complete caution on their young. This should not be confused, however, with acrophobia. Bye-ren are simply cautious, showing respect for heights and such dangers.

In social hierarchies, this manifests itself in a number of ways. Actual height or perceived height is associated with rank. The "Top Most" or "Highest" are common names for leaders. Tables and podiums are placed so that those in authority are sitting higher than those they control. To a human, these differences may at first seem ludicrous, but to the Bye-ren they are very serious, indeed. An underling walking up to a leader and taking a position on higher ground is a sign of rebellion or disloyalty. Altitude and authority are closely linked in their society.

In other human cultures, Bye-ren can sometimes take for granted that their perceptions of relative height hold true. One might perceive a worker to be in charge of a starport just because his station is above the warden's office. If the starship communications station is physically above that of the captain, the Bye-ren might very well be confused. Similarly, if his own position is above another, he might fall into habits of giving orders or taking charge, and he may take insult when others walk over him, such as on a gangway or large machine. Such confusion is short-lived, and a Bye-ren quickly realizes that others don't hold their prejudices, but in stressful situations their biases may get the better of them.

Abandonment: Though there is little firm record of distant Bye-ren history, their myth and legend tells a story of racial abandonment. Their culture and racial pride revolves around the fact that they were isolated and left behind on an alien world and they survived, even prospered under harsh conditions. Their reaction to abandonment is, therefore, understandably strong.

Leaving one's post or retreating to leave others behind is considered a mortal sin, akin to murder on other human worlds. Loyalty to one's companions and complete dedication to one's task or position is the measure of mental health. Those who think otherwise are considered dangerously insane.

Companionship is also very important. Few tasks are left to an individual. Team efforts are generally preferred. Bye-ren rarely initiate any activity alone. Loners are treated as being mentally unbalanced. In multi-racial situations, any companion will do, as Bye-ren are happy to share activities with Vilani, Solomani, Aslan, or others.

Penalties on Bye-ren-ay for abandoning a post or routing in battle are especially fierce. Out in the Imperium, they are puzzled when others guilty of these acts aren't as harshly punished, and will be the first to call for stiff penalties.

Long-term Relationships: In keeping with their view of abandonment, the Bye-ren commitment to long-term relationships is very strong. They do not enter into friendships lightly or quickly, since to them such a relationship is for life. Marriage is sacred, and divorce is not tolerated. A betrayal by a friend or loved one is cause for extreme prejudice, and hatred of enemies is also considered to be for life. Among the local neighborhood of stars, the saying goes, "Cross a Bye-ren, and watch your back for life." Again, in alien societies, a Bye-ren can become confused when others don't hold these values.

Disdain Luxury: A great deal of Bye-ren racial pride centers on survival in a harsh environment. They have lead difficult lives for centuries without great wealth, barely managing to exist on the face of their rugged world. To them, opulency is equivalent to waste. There is little beauty in their lives. Their tools and housing are spartan and functional, with no adornment.

Since recontact, however, some inkling of artistic pursuits and luxurious accommodations has leaked into the society. Today, there are two camps among the Bye-ren: those who support the importation of new luxuries, and those who favor the traditional values of poverty. It is an important social issue, though not one that threatens to tear the fabric of their culture.

Homeworld: Bye-Ren-Ay

Bye-ren-ay is a derivation of the Solomani name given to the inhabitants. Technically, the world is the third circling Deltii, or Deltii-3. The natives have a variety of names for their world, few of them flattering or endearing, the most common being Gu-tes-tray, which translated means "home above death."

Star System Deltii is a slightly orange K8 star with four planets. The three other worlds are barren wastes devoid of atmosphere or standing water. Only Deltii-3, Bye-ren-ay, has atmosphere and is the only world in the system supporting any life forms,

and none of these evolved there. Anything alive there was brought, intentionally or unintentionally, by the humans who came to mine there 4,000 years ago.

There is no gas giant in the system.

Geography: Bye-ren-ay is a rugged, waterless world. There are no areas of plains nor any oceans. The landscape is a never-ending series of steep, rocky mountains separated by deep, plunging valleys. The deepest valley is 72 miles deep, virtually a crack in the planet running 200 miles around the equator. The highest mountain, Fre-thur, is 17 miles high, site of the largest single settlement of the same name.

The Bye-ren cling to the highest mountain tops and few plateaus where the atmosphere is thin enough to breath without special apparatus. Travel between these settlements is difficult. Ground transport is out of the question, since the terrain is simply too rugged. Small aircraft and blimps are employed, but the local technology has no anti-grav devices; only a few are available, imported from off world.

Dense Atmosphere: The atmosphere is extremely thick in the deep valleys. Those Bye-ren who must travel there, mostly miners, descend in complete containment suits. The air pressure alone can be enough to crush a less-sturdy creature.

Additionally, the deep atmosphere is thick with disease and basic molecular life forms, a stew of germs brought from off world by the Bye-ren themselves. The rich atmosphere serves as a massive incubator, so efficient that the risk of disease from the air alone is reaching dangerous levels even in the mountaintop cities. A human exposed to the deepest atmosphere, even for a moment, is infected by a variety of new strains of disease, calling for immediate medical attention. Storms whip up lethal strains, forcing the city dwellers to stay indoors behind air filtration systems.

Crystal Caves: The northern valleys are honey-combed with caves lined with brilliant crystals. They are common formations of no great value, but their beauty attracts Imperial tourists. Indeed, they are the only feature of the Bye-ren homeworld that attract anyone at all. Bye-ren guides can make a good living taking the Imperial elite through the caves on week- or even month-long journeys. Most starships that visit Bye-ren today carry passengers to or from the caves.

Time: Bye-ren-ay circles Deltii once every 375 Terran days, making its year very close to the Imperial norm. The world turns on its axis once every 145.5 hours, so a Bye-ren-ay day is just over six

standard days. There are 62 local days in the local year with no appreciable seasonal changes in climate.

Bye-Ren Society

The Vilani Maxim, ascribed to independent explorers in the time of the First Imperium, states in part that "a society reflects its environment absolutely." Nowhere is this more true than among the Bye-ren. Theirs is a grim and punishing environment that has spawned an equally grim and punishing society.

Leadership is absolute. There are few checks and balances, and appeals to higher authority are unheard of. The hierarchy is derivative of a mining company with workers on the lowest tier answering to supervisors, these to several levels of managers who eventually answer to the top man. The hierarchy of altitude comes into play, so that a high manager is superior to a low manager, etc. Physical positioning is all important among the Bye-ren leadership. All high managers and the top man reside at the highest elevations of Fre-thur, the highest mountain and largest Bye-ren community on the planet.

Punishment is generally more brutal than the human norm. Discipline is meted without hesitation, and use of electric prods as motivators is common. Severe pain or even mutilation is practiced in barter for prison time served. Some of the most remote worksites have reverted to trial by combat in some instances. Human observers might think this level of brutality masks a maniacal desire for domination, but Bye-ren do not look for minute crimes, nor do they trump up charges against the accused, as a rule. Their philosophy is that crime is counterproductive, and as such is simply not tolerated.

Family interdependence is further driven by the racial need for companionship and taboos against abandonment. All education is conducted at the family level. All responsibility for the conduct and welfare of the young and elderly is also family managed. There are no government social programs. Marriages are most often arranged either by the joint consent of the families involved or, failing that, through the local managers. Offspring are called for at times by the managers to bolster the workforce, and such consideration is granted by the general populace.

The work ethic is strong among the Bye-ren. Every individual is required to pull his weight, regardless of age or circumstance, and punishment for shirking responsibilities is severe. Remote settlements have gone so far as to drive chronically lazy offenders into the wilderness to die of exposure.

Raw materials are easily gathered, but difficult to move from one mountain peak community to another. The Bye-ren tend to utilize the minerals common to their locale. Fre-than, for instance, has abundant iron and red, granite-like stone, so its architecture is dominated by them. Another might have more silver and softer stone, so its architecture suffers a bit, but its jewelry may be quite intricate. Imported items from across the world are especially rare and, therefore, valuable.

The harsh Bye-ren-ay lifestyle leaves little time for entertainment or enjoyment. Physical games are simply too taxing in the oppressive gravity, so Bye-ren opt for more cerebral pursuits. Games such as chess are popular, as is reading or listening to music. Rest is extremely literal on Bye-ren-ay. The natives recline in deep cushioned chairs when possible and take the strain off their bones and circulatory systems.

Bye-Ren History

Prior to abandonment, the human miners on Bye-ren-ay were of mixed Vilani and Solomani stock, a mix of competent, hard-working laborers common across the First Imperium. Their exact numbers and identities have been lost to time. It is doubtful there were any children among them, as this was uncommon among the deep mining operations of the era. However, there must have been an adequate female-to-male mix to spawn further generations.

How the miners were left behind on Bye-ren-ay and never recovered is also a mystery. The original site is in a deep valley concerned mostly with silver and lanthanum extraction, which suggests some involvement with the lucrative hyperdrive industries. If the mining was illegal, or was part of a covert government operation, a sudden evacuation may have left some number stranded.

The first thousand years after the involuntary colonization were the most tenuous. The small communities of humans numbered only a few thousand, and their bodies were not well adapted to the harsh gravity. Records are spotty, but some settlements apparently flourished for a time and then vanished. Archaeological records show many abandoned sites across the planet. With no ready means to create new equipment, existing materials took on a special significance, even a religious role by late in the millennia. Many communities flourished or perished with the maintenance of the mining equipment they were left with.

The second and third millennia saw great increase in the population, up to 100,000 Bye-ren at

times. Physical adaptation to the gravity was slow but sure, and means to cope with the crippling ailments were discovered and distributed through the mountain peak communities. It was in this period that the race began to see itself as truly native to Bye-ren-ay rather than abandoned humans from distant stars.

The fourth millennia saw some disastrous social change. There are records of wars between rival mountain communities, though these were isolated and are now viewed as completely counter-productive. The level of disease in the deep valleys grew and wiped out some lower communities entirely. Technology kept pace with the deterioration of the Bye-ren bodies over the generations, but gradual suffering and impending doom filtered their way into the prevailing psyche. The end of the Long Night finds the Bye-ren wrestling with a severe identity crisis coupled with mass depression and resignation. Despite this, Imperial traders have found Bye-ren-ay to be a profitable port of call.

Contact with the outside world has had a mixed effect on the Bye-ren population. Certainly, reestablishing communication with other human worlds has had an uplifting effect on many, tearing down feelings of isolation. The technology, especially life-saving and anti-grav, has been welcomed with open arms. However, there is a growing movement of Bye-ren who want to cut off contact with the Imperium altogether. Their feeling is that widespread contact is ruining the culture of high-gravity humanoids that is uniquely Bye-ren. The conflict runs parallel to the poverty-abundance rift that is widening between families and communities.

Bye-Ren Character Generation

Bye-ren characters can be created using the standard process. Before generation, the player must decide if the Bye-ren is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Bye-ren characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15. The minimum Strength for a Bye-ren is 6 and minimum Endurance is 8.

Social Standing for an Imperial Bye-ren is treated as for human characters. For native Bye-ren, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 6.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Bye-ren can choose any of the ten careers. Native Bye-ren can select either the Army or Rogue career only,

and they cannot take any starship skills.

Bye-ren can serve up to 4 terms.

Mustering Out: Bye-ren muster out using the standard rules.

Aging: Bye-ren suffer aging every two years instead of four for the three physical characteristics.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Bye-ren requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Bye-ren cannot use equipment specially fitted for humans, such as clothing, vehicle seats, etc., and vice versa. Non-intricate equipment, such as clubs and larger weapons, can be interchanged, but the user suffers a -2 penalty when using it. Intricate human equipment is easily managed by the Bye-ren hands.

Bye-ren can purchase equipment made for them on their homeworld easily. They can purchase equipment made specially for them anywhere in the Imperium, but these have to be made to order, cost anywhere from 200% to 300% of the normal price, and often have significant time delays.

Vehicles: Bye-ren can operate vehicles designed for humans. They can fit uncomfortably into chairs made for humans. Any human vehicle can be refitted with a Bye-ren chair at minimal expense.

Psionics: Bye-ren can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Bye-ren can learn to speak Vilani easily. Humans, in turn, can also learn Bye-ren, which is no more difficult than learning a different dialect of their own language. Standard translators are also available.

Travel and Starships

Bye-ren are very comfortable on human ships and in human staterooms. Basic modifications to furniture, such as the rearrangement of pillows and angles of seat backs make them feel right at home.

Bye-ren can use low passage berths with the same level of risk common to humans.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Bye-ren into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: Native to high-gravity environment, so comfortable there. Short life span. Many ailments associated with life in deep gravity.

Psychological: Consider altitude a measure of rank or importance. Revile abandonment. View all

relationships as long-term. Disdain luxury.

Imperial Bye-Ren Encounter

There are a handful of Bye-ren living in the Imperium, emigrants to nearby systems where they find work suited to their increased strength. Most are miners or dock workers in the same subsector as their homeworld. Recruiters who can get transport to Bye-ren-ay seek out the natives for difficult, strenuous jobs. Few enough ships call at Bye-ren-ay that only a few hundred have managed to get offworld, most never return.

Referee's Note: Fur-than is a Bye-ren living in the Imperium. Her specific situation is left purposefully vague so he can be encountered anywhere. You can introduce her into the campaign any time the player characters are on a world where an independent mining contractor could set up business in a remote area.

Fur-than, Director of Deep Mining Operations

Fur-than's business, Consolidated Ores and Metals, is listed in the data-directories of a few dozen worlds, though getting hold of the proprietor is usually difficult. However, the reputation of the firm is a good one, and those who have employed the Bye-ren remark it.

CO&M contracts for specific jobs and hires help accordingly. Fur-than has between six and fifty employees on any given site, all personally interviewed and screened. Half a dozen or so are regular employees, long-term human acquaintances whom she values like family members. In turn, in their association with Fur-than they have come to know the importance placed on their companionship by the Bye-ren.

Fur-than maintains a small amount of mining equipment that the business owns outright. Additional equipment is leased as needed. They secure starship transport to get between jobs, taking passage on whatever merchant vessel may be going their way.

Their present job has them mining tacanite pellets from fissures in a frozen ice plain. The world is inhabited, but the remote location is harsh and barren. Huts and buildings have been erected, visited only by occasional supply convoys from the distant cities. The employees here are on-site for the length of the job, in this case about 15 months, and there are few leaves of absence. Operations consist of twice daily descent into the fissures to work the equipment and grav-lift out the pellets.

Fur-than manages the operation with an iron hand. She does so from an office built above the

main machine shed, connected by tunnels to the main shafts and elevators. The Bye-ren oversees the entire operation but spends most of her time working right alongside the other miners. Her endurance is far greater than the human crews, and more often than not she works both daily shifts.

History: Fur-than was originally recruited by the government of a nearby world as a laborer. Her ability to work long hours put her head and shoulders above the other candidates (figuratively, if not literally). Dedication and a deep commitment to her first manager let her climb the ladder quickly, taking on middle management functions after just a few years. Fur-than also had an affinity for the bookwork associated with her employer, and learned all she could from clerks and holo-programs, information vital to her when she started her business just a few years later.

First Encounter: The player characters will most likely encounter Fur-than on one of her infrequent trips to the populated parts of their job-site world. On this particular trip she is visiting the starport, supervising the transport of tacanite pellets on grav-trucks to consignment, most going elsewhere on this world, but some awaiting transport off-planet.

But on this day, Fur-than is in an especially foul mood, and she's searching for help in tracking down some missing men.

"They've been paid for the next four months, and now they've fled. Cowards!" If her low, grinding voice doesn't rattle the bulkheads, her pounding a heavy fist on the nearest table will. "I'd track them down myself, but I only have a few days here and, well, the locals look at me like I'm some kind of freak." She goes on to explain that she wants to hire the player characters to track down the missing men, and she'll accompany them for the first week.

In this case, the three missing human miners have skipped out on Fur-than and their contract with CO&M. They aren't natives to the present world, so are keeping a low profile near the starport to grab one of the infrequent transports off-world. It should be no big problem locating the men, and they are not dangerous. The brief employment should place them in the Bye-ren's debt, leading to other encounters, and it should demonstrate just how much importance their kind place on loyalty.

Subsequent Encounters: Fur-than's company moves from system to system to find work. It is not at all out of the question for characters to run into her again as they adventure. She may, in fact, seek them out when work dries up without new contracts in hand. They might receive a transmission from a passing courier ship asking for their assistance.

Should they get her in contact with important nobles, governments, or corporations through the characters, she will be most grateful. Additionally, Fur-than may want to make a pilgrimage back to her high-gravity homeworld and hire the player characters and their vessel to make the journey. Once there, she tries to convince others to leave the harsh, deep gravity and come with her to the stars.

Native Bye-Ren Encounter

Every aspect of life on Bye-ren-ay is tainted by the harsh environment and history of its people, including relatively simple business dealings. The lure of greater profits can take traders from the Imperium to the remote settlements where demand is great, but negotiations are solely conducted on their terms.

In-Yoi, High Manager of Imports

There are hundreds of independent settlements beyond Fre-thur, each with its own operation. Flying away from that central community on a messenger airship, everyday life becomes more and more savage with every passing mountain peak. The Ek-hun settlement is several hundred kilometers distant, and even the Fre-thurans speak of its harshness in hushed tones. It has a reputation for frontier justice and brutal retributions.

In-yoi is a female Bye-ren manager in charge of imports for the Ek-hun operation. She is a product of her settlement's harsh environment and temperament: difficult, fair, but ruthless.

History: In-yoi was born on another mountain peak settlement near Ek-hun. Her parents worked as contract miners for the operation there until her mother became embroiled in a blood feud over the rights to some leased equipment. Two of her brothers were slain, and her family fled. Convinced they would be followed, they elected to send the then-adolescent In-yoi to Ek-hun alone to live with distant relations. The stigma placed on her for being abandoned put her on the bottom rung of the social ladder.

In-yoi found work as a laborer and transport loader. She was challenged three times by superiors in her early years, forced to personal combat to protect her position. Each victory moved her up in seniority until she became a low manager of cargo handling. When merchants from the Imperium first arrived she sought out a lower position in imports, then jumped to middle management by challenging her immediate superior over faulty records. After that she fabricated an embezzlement of import funds and implicated the high manager, moving up in rank when he fled the settlement. She has been the high man-

ager of imports for the last 5 years.

Present Situation: The high manager is in charge of all incoming materials. Her office approves all outside contracts, signs off on all shipments into the settlement, and has the right to renegotiate such contracts on demand. Everyday business is filled with bribes and kickbacks, generously offered by those in the know, and expected even from off-worlders.

The high manager's office is located on a platform overlooking the loading docks on a cliff face near the main settlement. Airships dock there, along with adventurous overland parties who make the treacherous journeys through the poisoned deep valleys. In-yoi watches everything on several closed-circuit video monitors arranged on one wall of her office, walking out onto the balcony from time to time to see first hand what's moving on the docks.

In-yoi has five full time employees — pretty much thugs who enforce her authority or perform special tasks for her. They are all Bye-ren, toughened and scarred by life on the frontier. The thugs are always on call from her office or personal transmitter.

First Encounter: Characters coming to Bye-ren-ay to trade are told that they can get the best prices for trade goods, especially fusion power plants, in the frontier settlements away from Fre-thur. Postings are left there from all the frontier operations to attract the Imperium's representatives, including Ek-hun. Player characters calling at Bye-ren-ay get a remote invitation to distant Ek-hun, including a waiver of local docking fees for first time visitors.

In-yoi's thugs greet the ship with a brief, silent inspection, then direct the characters to accompany them to her office. There, she makes them wait several minutes before appearing, dressed in grimy coveralls, entering through a back door along the platform that holds her desk and chair — she is never physically lower than the humans she's dealing with.

Human characters can upset the negotiations any

number of ways:

Not offering a gratuity just for the pleasure of an audience with the high manager.

Failing to kickback 10% of the brokered price for anything sold at Ek-hun.

Mistakenly gaining a position higher than the high manager during any meeting.

Running afoul of In-yoi nixes an agreed-upon deal for at least a week, and can get the characters fines, jail time, or even personal challenges. Fines range anywhere from Cr500 to Cr5,000, depending on the severity of the crime in her eyes. Jail time is measured in weeks, generally no more than three, to give humans time to think about their strange ways. Suggesting that Bye-ren run their businesses poorly or illegally will draw a personal challenge from In-yoi herself. She prefers to fight bare-handed and wastes no time between challenge and contest. Losers get additional fines and jail time.

However, for their trouble, the characters receive good money for goods delivered to Ek-hun. They get an additional +2 DM on their Broker roll, provided they work diligently with In-yoi or at least take their punishments well.

Subsequent Encounters: In-yoi has been toying with the idea of sending her thugs to nearby worlds to attract more commerce. If she befriends the player characters, she offers them the opportunity to get a piece of the action. She needs their ship and knowledge of nearby worlds and cargos, and insists that her thugs do the rest.

Acceptance of her proposal puts the player characters into a situation that will sooner or later run afoul of Imperial law. The thugs end up stealing cargo, extorting kickbacks, strong-arming local officials, perhaps even undertaking kidnapping or murder in the name of commerce.

THE CONTROLLED

The rules governing Imperial contact with minor races during the first Imperium were ineffective and seldom enforced. The thousands of starships branching out ahead of the official Scout survey vessels were completely unregulated, disregarding recommended procedures in pursuit of greater profits. Technologically backward and primitive socially, the young civilizations grew innocently as the stars around them bustled with the flare of hyperdrives, until the day each of them was visited by vac suit clad bipeds crawling from silver skinned starships. Many such races were contacted and integrated smoothly, but far more were bungled on one level or another, the Imperials inflicting massive social or biological infections, even wiping out entire fledgling races unintentionally.

Still, no crimes committed by amateurs, intentional or otherwise, can compare with the ancient Scout Service's systematic dissection and reassemblage of a race and culture now known simply as the Controlled.

The Controlled are slender, winged humanoids native to a light gravity, dense atmosphere world in a backwater of the old Imperium.

Racial Origins

The Guy-troy, the native name for their race before Imperial intervention, are derived from bipedal, flying omnivore/hunter stock on their native world. They have been carefully molded by natural selection on their homeworld over hundreds of thousands of generations of Guy-troy and proto-Guy-troy forms.

Their homeworld is one of only six planets in their solar system, the lucky winners in the cataclysmic game of world building from dust and tiny worldlets in the system's infancy. It is a small world, marked with the bombardment of other worlds and asteroid strikes as recent as just a few centuries. However, none of these collisions have ripped away the original gasses from the primitive atmosphere, leaving their world with an unnaturally thick envelope of gasses for its size. This, combined with the generally rocky landscape with few open expanses of plains, has given rise to a menagerie of creatures to whom winged flight is the norm. Entire species are born, live out their lives, and then die flying or floating miles above the planet's surface. Unlike these, the slender Guy-troy are land-dwellers with the gift of flight.

Proto-Guy-troy hunted independently on the ground and through the low atmosphere, coupling only to mate. A recent near-miss by a large asteroid tore away a significant portion of the upper atmosphere, depleting much of their prey and drastically disrupting the local food chain. Entire species of floaters were wiped out in a single day. The Guy-troy were forced to cooperate with the more agile flyers living closer to the world's surface. Cooperation led to primitive language, then to culture and governments. The latter seems to have been the race's death nell.

Controlled Physiology

Guy-troy are slender humanoids with large wings that can carry them through dense atmospheres. Lesser atmospheres are unable to support their bulk, though they are perfectly comfortable on the surface of these worlds, their wings curled and tucked behind them. Adults are between 50 and 75 kilograms, standing roughly 1.25 meters tall. The extended wings have a span of up to 3.25 meters.

Body Composition: Guy-troy have a heavily muscled, spherical torso. The legs are thickly

Controlled Skeleton



muscled, jointed in three places below the hip, and sport razor sharp talons. The arms are extremely slender—a little more than twigs, also jointed in three places below the shoulder ending in delicate three-fingered hands. The large wings extend from the back of the creature atop a series of thick, specialized muscles that control their movements. The head is slender and pointed, with two eyes, two ears, and a mouth, extending above the back on a slender neck. From the human point of view, the head and neck are too far back for a "human with wings." Standing on the ground, a Guy-troy torso is more hunched forward with the slender arms dangling beneath, and wings curled back behind.

Skeleton: The Guy-troy skeleton is calcium-based, but is much more flexible and lighter than a human's. Semi-rigid compartmentalized joints exist along all expanses of bone, giving them terrific resistance to blunt impact damage. The spherical torso is encased in a cage of rib bones that support the wings, legs, and arms. They do not have a rigid spine. Rather, communicative tissues that run from the brain to the rest of the body are encased in cartilage-like materials that are internally secreted. Damage is self correcting and such tissues can regrow naturally.

Skin: Guy-troy are covered in a paper-thin layer of skin, given easily to tearing and deep bruising. All surfaces except the claws, arms and hands sport a fine coat of narrow feathers. Their coloration varies greatly. Natural colors include all manner of browns, greens, and grays. Males tend to be duller in color than females. Cultural tradition calls for dyeing of the feathers, so brighter reds and oranges are not uncommon to define rank or function.

Musculature: Guy-troy muscles work very much like a human's: working in only one direction, requiring an opposing muscle pair at every mobile joint. They are not very strong when compared with humans, but their digital dexterity is somewhat superior. The muscles of the neck are some of their strongest, so they use their head as a pushing or supporting appendage more often than a human might.

Locomotion: A Guy-troy can either walk, run, or fly. Walking, they can manage about half human speed. They can run for short distances in a confined space, or for greater distances if they can spread their wings, thus lengthening each stride with an aerodynamic glide. If they run they can keep up with walking humans.

Controlled History

There are two histories presented for the Controlled: the official and true stories. The official history of the race is available on any library data computer. The true story is presented for the referee and player characters so they can understand what has happened to the Controlled and why the ancient scouts selected them for historical and cultural eradication.

Official History: Imperial Scouts reached the homeworld of the Controlled during the later centuries of the First Imperium. What they found was a race virtually exhausted by savage wars, its cities and cultures destroyed, and only a handful of survivors living in the ruins. Teams of humans arrived on the scene to aid those still living, who were gathered from the face of their ravaged world and concentrated in a prefab city erected by the Scout Service. With their world destroyed, their many cultures wiped out, the survivors elected to seek human assistance to rebuild their society on the successful, Imperial model. The Controlled shunned their history, forsaking it for inclusion in the Imperium under human supervisions, determined to rebuild so that their warlike ways would never again be allowed to ravage their planet.

The True History: Almost all Imperials who have bothered to read the official history of the minor race known as the Controlled believe it as accurate. Virtually no Controlled accept this history as anything but a fabrication, but the truth of their history is lost to them. Soon after contact, the Scouts petitioned to eradicate their Red Zoned homeworld by stripping its inhabitants of their identity and history, reshaping their society. The sequence of events leading to the Emperor's unprecedented signing of Special Order 32-55 is itself virtually lost in bureaucratic history.

The first survey vessel sent to the Controlled's system never returned, nor did the one sent after it. Sector Control decided to follow up with a small squadron. The captain of that squadron returned word that he found both vessels, intact and flying, but was forced to destroy them both, along with their crews, when they matched vectors to engage. Then the squadron itself broke contact. A second squadron was dispatched, and it returned with a captured scout ship, its crew in the brig along with its new alien commander, nearly killed in battle, to whom they owed unerring loyalty.

The alien and affected humans were removed to an isolated research station for examination. The alien, the first of the Controlled ever studied by the Imperium, remained unconscious for several weeks. When it came to it unleashed its "emotional triggers"

on the humans of the station, taking it over along with several starships docked there. The exploits of the humans who managed to overcome the alien and destroy it is an adventure that may have saved all of human space from an extremely potent alien threat. They had found a world full of powerful aliens who could bend humans to fanatical loyalty at will. The planet was isolated and branded a Red Zone immediately, and the foundations of the Imperium shook all the way to Vland.

The situation was turned over from Scout Sector Command to a specially appointed task force from the Core, headed up by Ranson Masters. Masters immediately quarantined the planet and allowed no ships to land there. They were very lucky, in his estimation, that the natives had not already achieved space flight. All hyperspace-capable vessels had to call at a base set up in the outer system. Masters took no chances and forbade true starships to approach the dangerous planet. The race was studied from orbital stations for ten years before Masters filed his report and recommendations directly to the Emperor's advisory staff.

The report expressed all the dangers of this planet's inhabitants to the Emperor, and suggested that if even one of their kind were loose in the Imperium it could be a significant threat to all human worlds. However, Masters' report also pointed out that, while potent and threatening to human control of space, the race's "emotional triggers" could also prove to be a useful tool to the Emperor. His signing of Special Order 32-55 gave Masters free hand to isolate the planet and exploit its inhabitants in the interest of Imperial security.

Pre-Imperial History: The Guy-troy, as they called themselves then, were a barbaric race, inflicting punishment on their own civilizations and cultures more wantonly than even humanity. Eradication of rival cultures by full-blown warfare kept them balkanized and at a relatively low technological level—somewhere in the neighborhood of TL 5. The world was a landscape of ruins and deserted cities when the Imperium arrived.

The Guy-troy "emotional triggers" are a natural pheromone compound emitted on one another as territorial warnings to other Guy-troy and an indication of readiness to do battle. The same pheromones had an irreversible controlling effect on human beings: any human within just a few meters of a Guy-troy abandoned all other motivations and fell in line to serve their new masters.

The Cleansing: The Imperium attempted to duplicate the Guy-troy emotional triggers, but the

complex chemical compounds defied direct synthesis. Regardless, Masters' original plan was put into motion, since in his mind it was a better solution than exterminating the race altogether. The Special Order was initiated, extending through 20 consecutive generations of Guy-troy.

The Cleansing started at the family level. Family units were broken apart, children taken and isolated from their parents under the direction of Imperial overseers. Recorded history was systematically tracked down and destroyed, and education brought to a bare minimum for many generations. Their very languages were eliminated as children instead learned Vlandi under the tutelage of Imperial teachers. Reinstated education was implemented only after no pre-Imperial Guy-troy were left alive. After 20 generations, the Guy-troy no longer existed—their history and languages gone, replaced with fabricated Imperial substitutes, their very way of life modeled on the Imperial norm.

In addition, massive surgical and drug therapy rendered the glands responsible for the "emotional triggers" inert. The dormant glands are today of no greater consequence than a human's tonsils or appendix.

Still, with all the precautions taken by the Imperium's scientists, they failed to render Guy-troy history completely dead. Verbal tradition, myths, rumors passed down through centuries, all served to breed suspicion among the Controlled. The general impression is that their history has been altered, and that somehow the mighty Imperium is to blame, but there are few clues left to the truth.

The Controlled have an accurate and detailed racial history starting after the Imperium's intervention. In most ways it reads like the progress of any human-colonized world in the Imperium, with growth in commerce, population, and technology. There are only three major instances worth noting.

Three centuries ago, there was a short-lived movement to oust the Imperium from the Controlled homeworld. The movement began in the industrialized heartland of their culture among younger, highly impatient Controlled. At first unorganized, a leader emerged only after several years, a female named Huy-zu. Under her guidance, the movement grew from the youthful city dwellers and gained followers all over the planet, with the conviction that their homeworld was theirs, and they had a right to their history. The Imperium downplayed this campaign and Huy-zu, and employed other Controlled to discredit her and the other movement leaders. Commercial interest in the Controlled homeworld

was also great, and those business interests took similar measures to ensure the movement eventually dwindled. The history of this movement, interestingly enough, and the gradual growth of Huy-zu's memory as a local legend have not been altered by the Imperium, though they have continued to downplay its significance since the event.

The second major historical occurrence was the Bloodworm Rebellion just two centuries past. A significant population of Controlled in a southern archipelago (home of a creature known as a bloodworm) revolted from the centralized government and declared independence. However, before local military units could be dispatched, the Imperial Navy launched a flotilla with marines in an unprecedented move to squash the rebellion and bring the rebels back into fold. Explanation for the swift, uninvited intervention has never been forthcoming.

Finally, there are several investigations pending in local law enforcement of human interference in the local media. Various improper investment scandals have been uncovered, all leading to human sources. No direct links have been made to the Imperium or the Emperor's Palace.

Controlled Character Generation

Controlled characters can be created using the standard Traveller rules. Before generation, the player must decide if the Controlled is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Controlled characters have all six characteristics; roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15.

The Controlled character's flying speed is determined by adding up his three physical characteristics. Multiply the total by 10 meters for his maximum glide speed per turn in a standard atmosphere. Multiply the total by 20 meters for his maximum flying or gliding speed in a dense atmosphere, again per turn. A Controlled cannot fly but only glide in a standard atmosphere.

Social Standing for an Imperial Controlled is treated as for human characters. For native Controlled, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 9.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Controlled can choose any of the ten careers. Native Controlled can select any but the Merchant career. They are not restricted on skill selection nor on technological level of equipment training since they enjoy all the material benefits of the Imperium.

Controlled can serve the same number of terms and retire in the same manner as human characters. They do, however, accumulate an additional modifier against reenlistment, representing their natural tendency to become bored or frustrated with a single career. Starting with the second term in a service, the Controlled must take -1 DM to his reenlistment, then -2 at the end of the third term, and so on. Controlled can switch careers normally as outlined in the character generation rules.

Muster Out: Controlled muster out without modification.

Aging: Controlled use the standard aging rules.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Controlled requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Controlled are uncomfortable using certain equipment fitted for humans, such as vac suits and chairs, since there is no room for their folded wings on human designed models. They can use non-intricate equipment that is made for humans, such as clubs and larger weapons, without modification. Intricate equipment, however, is a bit harder to manipulate, incurring a negative modifier (usually just 1, 2, or 3 points), or in some cases cannot be used at all, at the referee's discretion.

Controlled can purchase equipment made for them on their homeworld, without difficulty, up to TL 12, the maximum technology level capable for the local industries. They can purchase equipment made specially for them elsewhere in the Imperium, but these have to be custom-made, costing anywhere from 150% to 300% of the normal price, and often have significant time delays.

Vehicles: Aside from the discomfort of human-style chairs, a Controlled can operate any human vehicle. Vehicles can be refitted with a Controlled chair at a modest expense, and takes up exactly the same amount of space.

Psionics: Controlled can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Controlled cannot speak the human tongue, nor can humans imitate the growling and chirping of the Controlled language. Both can learn and execute the written form of the other's language. Communication is commonly accomplished through hand-held or helmet-mounted translators, available from Cr1000 to Cr5000. Higher-priced models generally give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel and Starships

The Controlled are fairly comfortable on human starships. Long journeys, especially the week-long jump through hyperspace, can cause them some discomfort if they cannot spread their wings. Many steal time in open galleys or even cargo holds to fly around. The few starships designed for and operated by Controlled have very wide corridors and a dense artificial atmosphere mix so the crew can glide from work station to work station.

Also, it is against a Controlled's nature to stay cooped up too long with only a single purpose. Those not used to spaceflight are subject to irritability and moodiness as the days in hyperspace drag out. Other Controlled accept this behavior, but humans may find it especially annoying.

Controlled cannot use human-designed low passage berths. Those designed specifically for Controlled utilize a latent cell preservation process natural to their kind, and so are much safer than human models. In fact, the instances of death or discomfort by Controlled in their own low passage berths is so insignificant that they need not roll at all during the game.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Controlled into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: Flying and gliding ability. Desire for wide open spaces can have physical ramifications;

Psychological: Impatience. Moodiness. Terrific powers of concentration for short periods of time.

Imperial Controlled Encounter

There are many Controlled in the Imperium. In fact, they are common on the larger Imperial worlds. There are even enclaves in large cities that boast housing and entertainment catering to their tastes. They can travel freely as citizens, as the crimes against their race are long lost to them.

Agnudii

Agnudii had devoted his life to the quest for truth about his race and its history. Educated in the Imperium, he has returned to his native world repeatedly, looking for clues. Now he works closely with Jamison Yalnuraa in his search for the ancient Imperial Libraries, where Agnudii hopes to uncover more information about his racial origins.

History: Agnudii is an Imperial citizen, born to a diplomatic family on Dingir. His parents both worked

for Imperial nobility in the diplomatic service, giving him an affluent upbringing. When he was very young, his father worked closely with Duke Jamison Yalnuraa, the first human explorer to revisit the rimward world of Dingir under the banner of Cleon I. By the time Agnudii was of age, Duke Yalnuraa had long since returned to the Core, and the young Controlled went to Vland for his formal education.

While at university, Agnudii first heard the veiled rumors about his race and planet, how there were pieces missing from the complex puzzle. He started research locally but, fuelled by his youthful enthusiasm, soon became obsessed. Against his parents' wishes he quit school and travelled widely in search of information. In time he returned to school, switching the emphasis of his studies away from political science to history.

Present Situation: Agnudii is tracking a lead that may involve the Imperium directly in the current media scandals on his homeworld. He bribed information out of a disgruntled employee that the Marquis du'Blanchere, a favorite of the Emperor, is behind the censorship of certain Controlled mass media. Since getting that information, he has been shadowing the Marquis and his underlings across their home planet and beyond.

The characters are most likely to get involved in this plot from the other side, receiving a patronly advance on behalf of the Marquis to dispose of the bothersome Controlled. The Marquis would prefer to have the situation handled delicately, without involving anyone from his own office. The noble doesn't want a murder to land in his lap. He just wants Agnudii discouraged.

In their attempts to do so, however, the characters should learn of Agnudii's suspicions and have every opportunity to become sympathetic to his cause. They may find materials in the data banks of his hotel computers which contain incriminating evidence to the mass fraud and coverups, so when they finally meet Agnudii they can judge him fairly.

Subsequent Encounters: Agnudii's search for truth will not end with the Marquis. He is bent on uncovering all the facts of his world's past, and will stop at nothing. He may hire the player characters' ship for covert transport, or get in contact for them to track pieces of information. As the characters delve deeper into the situation, they note the subtle fingers of the Imperium all through the plot. Phony papers lead to uncooperative Imperial bureaucrats. Persistent investigation draws highest-level attention from local law enforcement, backed by persuasive Imperial agents. Will Agnudii ever find the entire truth

about his race? No, since that history is lost to time. But he can confirm that the Imperium wants no investigation.

Native Controlled Encounter

Given the official history of the Controlled and their turbulent past, a mystique has arisen about their instinct for warfare. Military theorists see a culture that has shunned its warlike past in favor of the Imperium's culture and history, and they wonder how terrible that past must have been, and what secrets hide in their alien chromosomes.

In reality, there is no special process by which the Controlled master the arts of warfare, no special chemical codes that might be exploited on other worlds by other races. But the mystique lives on, and some Controlled do what they can to maintain it.

Kar-Nuk-Toy, Military Consultant

Kar-nuk-toy is highly sought after among the military strategists of the burgeoning Imperium and on other worlds. His treatises, articles, and seven books on military campaigns are widely distributed in paper and electronic media. His success has led to near celebrity status both on his home planet and on distant worlds, but he keeps the media at arm's reach whenever possible.

History: Aside from being able to fly, Kar-nuk-toy lives a lifestyle not at all unfamiliar to a citizen of the Imperium. A son of a factory worker and a banker in a suburban area of an industrialized city, his education took him to several distant cities, but never off his homeworld. He studied political science and philosophy, then specialized in history, specifically military history. Kar-nuk-toy took a keen interest in the great campaigns and leaders, mostly Terrans or Vilani.

But his own past is markedly passive. He was bullied in his early years, and never served in public service though he had several opportunities. The school doctrine against dredging up unpleasantness from their racial past put him at odds with several teachers and student groups, but as he is apt to state "being a military historian doesn't make one a warmonger, no more than being a criminologist makes one a criminal."

Toward the end of his higher education, Kar-nuk-toy published two papers exploring the nature of true hatred and the military, which were largely ignored on his homeworld but gained remarkable notoriety off-planet. He received mail and accolades from distant worlds, as well as requests to write more papers and articles and to give lectures. Unbeknownst to

him at the time, the air of harsh militarism accorded his race by humanoids on other worlds was propelling him to greater fame. This fact was not lost on him for long, though, and the seeds of a successful business plan were firmly planted.

Kar-nuk-toy Enterprises: Kar-nuk-toy is the head of a very profitable consulting firm. The company has only twenty employees, mostly publicists and accountants, but draws in many millions of credits every year. He offers lectures on military doctrine, organization, tactics, history, the nature of leadership, fear, morale, and more, all presented in brilliant holographic brochures. He attracts military leaders and representatives from parsecs in all directions, each one paying between Cr20,000 and Cr100,000 to attend his lectures.

For the money, the client is afforded a great deal of luxury and information. All lectures are held at resort locations. After any scheduled lectures, clients are given some personal time with Kar-nuk-toy to address specific questions or issues peculiar to their worlds or situations. He offers insights into their problems, gives advice, then assigns others to follow up or schedule new meetings to check progress.

In addition, Kar-nuk-toy travels widely on his own world and others, doing the talk-show circuit, writing and publishing new books, and keeping his status up. However, he is no fan of the media, and would just as soon avoid them. He views them as a necessary evil and puts up with their hounding when he must.

Present Situation: Kar-nuk-toy is extremely busy when the player characters catch up with him. They are delayed at the starport when a swarm of reporters surround the dark-feathered alien, asking questions about his meetings with the government and how long he will stay. The entourage moves slowly down the crowded corridors until the Controlled is stuffed into a waiting grav-speeder and whisked away. They won't hear any more about this until they see a news brief that an attempt was made on his life.

Later, agents contact the player characters to come meet with Kar-nuk-toy at his hotel. They must agree to be picked up in secret and endure an uncomfortable ride with several silent, brooding Controlled in a low-tech automobile. Once inside, they are searched and brought into the consultant's suite.

Kar-nuk-toy explains that he is on this world to meet with several military leaders about quelling rebellion in the nearby hill country. Obviously, the rebels would rather he and his advice stay away, and

he's convinced they are behind the assassination attempt. He explains that he has researched the group and knows they are offworlders. He doesn't want to trust any of the locals, since any of them could be rebels. He needs additional security on this world, since his followers are merely unarmed businessmen, and he is prepared to pay handsomely.

Accepting his offer puts the characters in a position to take good pay for the next couple of weeks. They will have to protect the consultant from at least one more attempt on his life, but the rebels are low-tech and easily fended off.

Subsequent Encounters: An acquaintance with Kar-nuk-toy can be the key to getting close to military

authority on a number of worlds in the area. The consultant will gladly help out if the characters have had a part in saving his life. He can provide cash and transport for any sort of bloodless mission, but draws the line firmly against insurgency. If they need an audience with the military elite, Kar-nuk-toy will be happy to oblige.

Kar-nuk-toy also needs special couriers on occasion. His computer files and documents are often extremely private and sensitive, and there are those who would intercept or at least prevent delivery of such messages.

THE DENAAR

The Denaar are a race of intelligent beings native to a remote world within the boundaries of the old Second Imperium. Denaar is their Imperial name, from the name given to their star long before interstellar space flight. In their native language they refer to themselves as ahn-twar, which roughly translates to "human being," or, more formally, chi-nes-twar-kohn, meaning "children of the endless generations." Common parlance among other Imperials has labeled them the "intellect downloaders."

The Denaar are unremarkable creatures, physiologically speaking. What makes them unique is that each individual is part of a finite whole. The Denaar consist of just 1.7 million distinct intellects or personalities, each one occupying a series of host bodies. While the bodies grow old and die, each intellect passes in turn to a new one, making the Denaar essentially immortal.

Racial Origins

Independent archaeology, conducted by humans during the Second Imperium, suggests that the present Denaar species has been dominant on their world for more than 50,000 "generations," or approximately 250,000 years. They progressed gradually through obvious technological advances, tool use, agricultural, metallurgy, to their present pre-fusion civilization, at Tech Level 7.

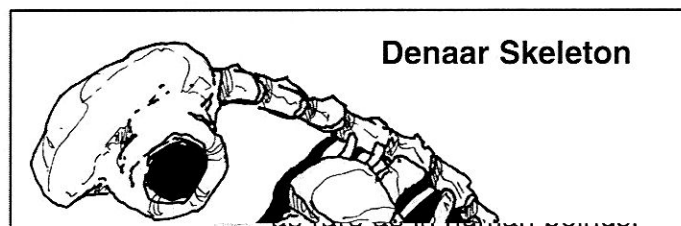
The Denaar are the only species on the planet that evolved intellect exchanges as part of procreation. Other species on nearby evolutionary branches have no equivalent process. The exact starting point of the present Denaarian personalities is unknown to modern Denaar or the humans who have studied them.

The archaeological record also indicates that there were approximately 2 million Denaarian personalities at their "base line." Gradual loss of intellects through accidental death have reduced that number to 1.7 million at year 0.



on a thickly carapaced central body cavity sporting two manipulative arms to the side and forward, two slimmer limbs from the bottom used for locomotion, and muscled hindquarters with two heavy hind limbs to the rear. The carapace can be black, deep purple, or even deep blue. All other body surfaces are covered with fine brown or yellow fur. The Denaar's brain and sensory organs are stored in the heavily armored central body cavity.

The Denaar's forearms are jointed in three places below the shoulder, giving each two "elbows" and a wrist. The hand has three manipulative balls, shorter and fatter than human fingers, but remarkably dextrous. Denaar find it difficult to use intricate



Denaar Skeleton

Denaar Physiology

Denaar are six-limbed, quadrupedal dual-vertebrates. Adults stand about 1.5 meters from ground to top of the back skull carapace and weigh from 70 to 110 kilograms. Their basic body construction centers

equipment designed for humans, and vice versa. The strength in the Denaar's hands and arms are equivalent to a human's.

The forelegs are very slender, jointed once below the hip, with a tough hooflike growth. The material of the hoof is rubbery and renewing, secreted from a gland located just above the heel. The forelegs are used strictly for locomotion, though for certain activities a Denaar can rear back on its hind legs and use four limbs to manipulate or move an object. The strength and dexterity of the forelegs is so poor that this body usage is rare.

A Denaar's hindlegs, by comparison, are extremely powerful, descending from the strong hindquarters. Each leg is jointed at a knee and ankle. Each hind foot has three round, bony fingers like the forearms, but these also have a thick, black nail used to get traction. In more primitive times, the hind feet could be used in combat to rake an opponent, but today the nails are commonly shod within a shoe or boot.

A Denaar's carapaced central body cavity holds all of its vital organs, sensory apparatus, and the core of its nervous system, the brain. In fact, aside from the limbs and an extension of the digestive system in the hindquarters, the Denaar essentially lives within the carapace. The carapace itself is very tough, similar to insect chitin, though layered like an armadillo's hide, so it's hard and flexible.

The Denaar ingest food and oxygen from the atmosphere to generate internal energy. The individual's mouth runs laterally along the underside of the central body cavity, between the forelegs. Three rows of teeth range from jagged to flat, owing to its omnivorous origins. Denaar breathe through six inlets at the back of the central body cavity, each opening behind its own flap of carapace—a winded Denaar holds all six flaps open to more freely vent air.

The Denaar hears through two hard, conical ears located at either side of the central body. Its two eyes afford it stereo vision, and are located behind retractable carapace flaps just above each shoulder. A common defensive posture is to grasp the forearms over the head, giving the eyes maximum protection. Denaar have no sense of smell, but can identify organic materials by licking them, usually kneeling over them to do so.

A Denaar's brain is split into two lobes at opposite sides of the central body cavity, connected by a thick stem. Each brain has an associated spine or nerve trunk that runs throughout the body. If one brain portion is severely damaged, the other can keep the body functioning, and if the nerves to one

brain section are damaged, the other can take over if its nerves are still intact. The brain stem also reaches to the surface of the bony skull structure at the front of the forehead, protected by an especially thick piece of carapace shell, uncovered only during the intellect transfer process.

Senses: Denaar have receptors for four of the five human senses.

Their eyesight is fully equivalent to that of humans, ranging slightly higher into the infrared spectrum, but not significantly so. The positioning of the eyes further to the sides of the Denaar's central body cavity gives them peripheral vision out to 135 degrees to either side of forward, as opposed to human beings' 90 degree range. Denaar eyesight is subject to deterioration with age, though their technology can easily repair failing vision.

Denaar hear as well as human beings on their homeworld, but the slightly higher atmosphere density there makes it more difficult for them to hear in what humans consider normal conditions. The ears on either side of the carapace section gather sounds in dense atmospheres easily, but their technology can easily compensate in standard or thin atmosphere conditions.

The Denaar have no sense of smell, instead relying on heightened taste. The long, narrow tongue can probe organic matter and identify it before consuming. The Denaarian palate is extremely sensitive, sensing vast differences in flavors where humans detect none. Incidentally, among humans the Denaarian diet has the reputation for being a monotonous series of pastes and mashed grains, though the natives seem to enjoy it.

Their tactile senses are also very good, especially in the ends of the manipulative ball-fingers on each forearm. They can get remarkable senses of touch through the hoof materials on all four legs, as well.

Denaar are no more or less receptive to psionic sensation and talents than humans. Psionic activities are not common on Denaar.

Communication: Denaar do not breathe through their mouths, nor do they have a larynx. They communicate by making various blowing and horn sounds through the six air ducts around the rear hemisphere of the central body cavity. Delicate variations of air passage, width of opening, combining different openings, and partially covering these holes with the flexible carapace over them allows the Denaar a wide range of possible sounds. To a human they sound like wheezing bagpipes, thus they are sometimes referred to as "pipers."

Humans are incapable of speaking the Denaar language and vice versa. Communication is only possible in written form (of which both races have several forms), or through computer-assisted translation devices.

Self-Preservation: Denaar reproduction is similar to that of other alien species found in the neighborhood of the expanding Third Imperium, but with one critical exception. While they procreate to make biological offspring, these infants grow to adulthood never developing higher brain functions independently. They only receive these when a parent "downloads" his higher brain functions into the young, abandoning the old body for a new one in the process.

The Denaar are asexual, though it takes two to exchange genetic materials and fertilize an egg. Each Denaar has both male and female sexual glands located in the mouth. A union cross-fertilizes the pair so that each comes away with a growing egg. Gestation occurs over a period of 12 months until the live newborn is dropped out through the mouth, weighing around 5 kilograms. Originally, the young were fed and raised by the parent until full sized, but their modern civilization places newborns into institutionalized care facilities. The parent/child relationship is devoid of emotional commitment since the offspring has only lower order brain activity, simply enough to conduct bodily functions.

When a Denaar feels its present body is no longer functioning at desired efficiency, it can voluntarily exchange it for a new one. The new body need not be one of its own offspring, though many Denaar prefer it. Exchange is strictly voluntary, and timing is up to the individual. Some Denaar exchange bodies frequently, every few years, while others wait out the expected lifespan of the body, roughly 50 years. Humans who have witnessed this refer to the process as "body bopping."

The actual exchange process occurs by touching cerebral stems, located behind flexible carapace flaps on the front of the body cavity. The exchange takes about ten minutes, and can even be interrupted without damaging either. Once complete, the old body dies and is abandoned, and the most common practice is to recycle them. Denaar can only exchange into new Denaar bodies; they cannot download into animal or alien bodies. A new Denaar body can only accept one intellect in its lifetime, so it cannot be later "hijacked" or used by another intellect.

Exchanges are so commonplace that a Denaar might start a conversation, pause to exchange

bodies, then continue right where it left off. Interestingly, neither the exchange of genetic materials nor the intellectual exchange are considered to be private matters among the Denaar, and they will perform either at any time or circumstance.

A Denaar whose body fails and dies before exchange can still be saved many months or even years after the fact. The higher brain functions retreat into a sort of hibernation. Other Denaar can bring old body to new and make cerebral stem contact, and the process occurs automatically. As long as either of the brain lobes are intact, a Denaar intellect can survive for up to 5 years.

Denaar are remarkably unconcerned about disease and serious injury. The availability of replacement bodies makes such concerns unimportant, which explains the Denaar civilization's severe lack of medical expertise despite otherwise advanced technology.

Sub-Racial Variations: The Denaar of the central highlands of the eastern continent are generally regarded as the physically strongest of their kind, owing to a primitive lifestyle fully two tech levels below the world norm. Highlands Denaar are pure hunters in the last virgin wilderness on their homeworld.

Their dense-city brethren, on the other hand, are most apt to be well educated, since they have more ready access to public and computer training facilities.

Denaar Psychology

Denaar are highly intelligent creatures, but theirs is a non-humanlike intelligence, and certain fundamental differences must be understood to use them in a campaign.

Memory: From a human's point of view, every Denaar should be a storehouse of amassed personal history. The intellect has survived intact for 250,000 years. However, the Denaar have different physiological mechanisms for retaining memory, and unique psychological needs for those memories.

Essentially, Denaar are equivalent to humans in both short- and mid-term memory, short-term being the retained information about day-to-day events in their lives, mid-term pertaining to events within the last few decades. However, beyond this, Denaar have the ability to sort, categorize, and discard the details of the distant past, favoring major events over daily concerns. For instance, a Denaar may well know that he was intimately involved with the invention of the internal combustion engine more than 3,000 years ago, but specific details have been

erased. Physiologically, the excess information is discarded to make way for more modern events. Emotionally, the Denaar are unfettered by the past, vast as it is, living instead for the day, for the moment.

Trying to tap the Denaars' memories to learn details of the distant, distant past, such as the origins of the species, is impossible. None have a direct memory extending back more than 5,000 to 10,000 years. Most remember events from the previous human interest in their world, during the Second Imperium, and from those experiences often have a mild distrust or merely humorous interest in Imperials.

From the point of view of education, Denaar are in constant need of retraining. The physical age of the student is irrelevant; the human notion that the young seek education to prepare for the productive years of their short lives has no application on Denaar. Instead, individuals seek training for the next phase of their extremely long lives, based on their desires or circumstances. The passing centuries tend to erase the details of education from a Denaar's mind, so retraining is important. An individual who once held the equivalent of a doctorate in his field may, after a couple of centuries, have to start completely over to relearn even its most basic precepts.

Attitude: The Denaars' longevity and unique body replacement fosters what humans interpret as a very risk-taking, devil-may-care attitude. To a human, most Denaar blunder into situations without a great deal of forethought, be they business transactions, travel plans, or whatever. Trial and error is widely accepted as a way of life, and what a human would call wasting time by many failed attempts is accepted practice among the Denaar. Among extreme cases, Denaar can be seen as thrill-seekers, taking unnecessary risks for the sheer pleasure of it. Denaar daredevils scale impossible cliffs, make orbital parajumps, and push their vehicles to the limits with a carefree abandon that makes most humans cringe. Regard for personal safety, or even the safety of other Denaar in proximity is taken far less seriously than among humans.

Business and governmental negotiations between Denaar and other species can be very difficult. Humans, for instance, have a hard time understanding their Denaar counterparts who are willing to make deals quickly, then change them if things aren't working out. Denaar, on the other hand, cannot fathom human insistence on research and forethought, why things need to be approached so carefully.

Homeworld: Denaar

Their homeworld circles an unobtrusive yellow sun in a remote region of the former Imperium. Denaar Prime is a typical solar system with seven worlds of which two are gas giants. There are a variety of moons, asteroids, rings, and comets.

Denaar is the second world from the sun. It is a modest sized world with oceans of water and a dense atmosphere. There are four main continents: two polar and arctic, two others of roughly equal size more equatorial. There are roughly 1.7 million intelligent inhabitants. There are enclaves of human beings, but their total residence on Denaar is less than 500.

The Denaarian year is 275 Terran days long. Their day is roughly 44.5 hours. There are roughly 148 Denaarian days in their year. Seasonal variations in climate do exist, but they are modest.

Denaar has no moons. Their technology is insufficient for the Denaar to have an offworld presence elsewhere in the solar system.

Denaar Society

The Denaar have developed a mechanized society based on territorial and technological expansion, so parallels can be drawn to human societies. However, their alien nature, especially with regard to the longevity of the individual personality, makes elements of their society very unusual from the human point of view.

Family: Denaar have no concept of family; there are no mothers, fathers, or siblings in their society. Having no sense of family tends to make them more individualistic, and it also serves to make bonds of friendship more important. The normal human sense of family is replaced by loyalty to friends and associates. Denaar don't "miss" the family bond since it has never been part of their culture.

Cities: Denaarian civilization passed through stages similar to that of humans, from gathering to agricultural to industrial. Their landscape, therefore, is divided in similar patterns, with wide ranges of sparsely populated farmland supporting large cities at major resource or natural waterway hubs. Their cities tend to be spacious by human standards—a benefit of zero population growth. In fact, their cities tend to wander over centuries, the populace abandoning older, still functional structures for more modern ones constructed on virgin territory.

Government: The Denaar have unified under a single government many times in recent history, but their cultural bias toward individualism makes this always difficult to maintain. In Year 0 there is a

single government unifying the Denaar on the western continent, while the other continent is balkanized into more than two dozen smaller nations.

The western continent is unified under the Yet-shir, the remnants of a colonial empire with its seat of power in the port city of Kal-ti-mor. The emperor Wor-ti-yum has held reign over the empire since its inception 220 years ago, but the various colonial states that comprise it are vying for independence even now. There are many fissures and cracks in the unity of the Yet-shir, and it is likely that it will fragment in the next few decades.

The already balkanized states of the eastern continent utilize a variety of governments. The northern coast is given to democratic governments, while the southern nations are mostly bureaucracies, both civil service and impersonal.

Law: Denaar have difficulty relating to many human laws. Entire volumes of human law, for instance, are built around notions of protecting the safety of the individual and those around him, concepts foreign to the semi-immortal Denaar. Weapons restrictions, for instance, are much less important on Denaar where only weapons that would annihilate the brain and snuff the intellect are controlled. Denaar also stumble over the complexity of human contract law, something deemed largely unnecessary in their society.

Commerce: Steadfast individualism has been a barrier to rapid technological advancement. It is rare for a Denaarian business concern to have more than 50 or 100 individuals, and most are much smaller still with fewer than a dozen. However, once started, a Denaarian entrepreneur tends to see his business through for a long time, often centuries. Whereas human business practice rewards those who move up through the ranks and devote themselves to the firm, the Denaar actually reward individualism and breaking away from one business to form another. Government and business even sponsored foundations that fund these rewards.

Denaar History

The Denaar have a history as rich as humanity's, up to the point where it reached out and grasped the stars. Details of that history are unimportant to game play, but a brief overview can help human characters understand them better and let those playing Denaar characters ground them in more than hearsay.

Early agrarian civilizations emerged virtually simultaneously on both equatorial continents. Abundant food supplies gave rise to many centuries of prosperity during which rose many forms of

government and civilization. Pre-technological civilizations lasted for many thousands of years in the absence of any great outside pressure to advance.

Technological advancements came largely in the same order as in human civilizations, though at roughly one third the pace. Exceptions are medical technology, made largely unnecessary by their nearly foolproof body replacement process, and computer technology, lagging due to a minor cultural bias against mechanisms that replace the power of the mind.

Contact: The Denaar were first contacted by scouts during the First Imperium, and their strange civilization was catalogued and filed as part of the First Survey. Contact was then sporadic, since their world was in a remote backwater region that offered no great industrial or mineral resources. Few Denaar left their homeworld then, since ships visited them at the rate of only a handful every century.

However, the rise of the Second Imperium saw a strange shift in Denaar's perceived importance. Once uncovered by the new governing Solomani, a fascination with the Denaars' natural immortality struck a chord with the burgeoning nobility. Research stations were established on their world, and many submitted to intense study. The myth of a "fountain of youth" spread quickly and Denaar became a thriving attraction for wealthy tourists. Little of the research was scientific, and the tourist industry was created by humans for humans. The Denaar accepted the human intervention in stride, even absorbing elements of Imperial technology to add to their own over time. The fall of the Rule of Man and the coming of the Long Night caused the flood of human ships slow to a trickle and then stop, and the Denaar once again dropped out of human knowledge.

In Milieu 0, Denaar has been visited by a mere handful of human starships. The Denaar realize that human activity in their neighborhood of stars is on the rise again, but no significant contact has been initiated by either side.

Denaar Character Generation

Denaar characters can be created using the standard process. Before generation, the player must decide if the Denaar is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Denaar characters have all six characteristics; roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15.

The three physical characteristics—Strength, Dexterity, Endurance—apply to the Denaar's current

body. Whenever the Denaar changes bodies, new characteristics must be rolled. Since the Denaar can select healthier bodies to inhabit, add 2 to each of these characteristics upon initial generation.

The mental characteristics, Intelligence and Education, apply permanently to the Denaar's personality, so are not rerolled when changing bodies.

Social Standing for an Imperial Denaar is treated as for human characters. For native Denaar, it refers to their standing on their native world only; offworld, their social standing is reduced to a maximum of 6.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Denaar can choose any of the ten careers. Native Denaar can select either the Army service or non-military careers only, and they cannot take any starship skills or skill in any weapon greater than TL 8.

Denaar cannot be forced out of service by injury during character generation. There is no limit to the number of terms a Denaar can serve, but since they cannot retain information forever they can only use skills from the 8 latest terms. Once a 9th term is served, for instance, all skills attained in the first term are lost, and so on.

Mustering Out: A Denaar can never have more than 12 dice to roll on the Mustering Out tables.

Aging: Denaar are unaffected by aging during character generation.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Denaar requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Denaar cannot use equipment specially fitted to humans, such as vac suits, chairs, etc., and vice versa. Non-intricate equipment, such as clubs and larger weapons, can be interchanged, but the user suffers a -4 penalty when trying to use it. Intricate equipment, such as small weapons, electronics tools, etc., cannot be used at all.

Denaar can purchase equipment made for them on Denaar without difficulty, up to TL 8. They can purchase equipment made specially for them anywhere in the Imperium, but these have to be made to order, cost anywhere from 250% to 1000% of the normal price, and often have significant time delays.

Vehicles: Denaar cannot operate vehicles designed for humans. They can fit uncomfortably into two adjacent human chairs as passengers. Any human vehicle can be refitted with a Denaar chair by sacrificing the space for two human chairs.

Psionics: Denaar can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Denaar cannot speak the human tongue, nor can humans adequately imitate the loud

pipings of the Denaar language. Both can learn and execute the written form of the other's language. Communication is commonly accomplished through hand-held or helmet-mounted translators, available from Cr1000 to Cr5000. Higher priced models generally give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel and Starships

Denaar are simply bigger than humans and require more space on a starship. A comfortable Denaar stateroom, for instance, would require 8 tons in hull interior. Workstations on bridges and at engineering or gunnery stations should also be adjusted for Denaar crew. Any starship workstation can be altered for Denaar use for Cr5000, done at any A or B starport.

Even with modifications like these, Denaar find the human ships to be very cramped. Corridors, doors, and airlocks are all barely large enough for them to squeeze through. Most Denaar like to spend as little time as possible on human ships. These can be extensively modified to better accommodate the Denaar on board, but only after significant expense, downtime at a qualified starport, and considerable loss of available cargo capacity.

Denaar cannot use human-designed low passage berths and none have been designed especially for them. Denaar resist the idea of keeping their replacement bodies in some sort of low passage instead of milling around in crowded staterooms or cargo bays. They universally feel this is a cruel and unnatural treatment for the bodies-in-waiting.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Denaar into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: Virtually immortal. "Body-bopping," downloading personality into new bodies at will. Herds of replacement bodies on hand at all times.

Psychological: Ancient beings, but their memories and experiences are roughly equivalent to that of humans. Devil-may-care attitude.

Imperial Denaar Encounter

This encounter is typical of Denaar living in the Imperium. Other Denaar can be modeled on this example.

There are only a few hundred Denaar who do not call their native world home. Most of these are individuals who left their world during the Rule of Man, as the guests of wealthy nobles or scientific founda-

tions. Armed with the means to preserve themselves, these individuals have been Imperials for as long as 2,000 years. Other Denaar have just recently left their homeworld and entered the Imperium, boarding visiting starships to explore the universe within the last century.

Players wishing to have Denaar characters can be of either sort, or start the campaign on Denaar, waiting for a passing starship to take them into the growing Third Imperium.

Rah-Tu

Rah-tu operates a far-trader in a stellar neighborhood within about 20 parsecs of his native world. He employs a human crew for his operations, being the only of his kind on the vessel.

History: Rah-tu's most recent occupations have all been associated with trade. Working backward, he left Denaar for the stars twenty years ago, tagging along on a tramp merchant vessel from human space in an ambitious scheme to trade among the stars. Before that, Rah-tu worked as a wholesaler of agricultural goods on Denaar, and before that as what amounts to a restaurant owner. Prior to his management role there he worked as a common laborer, though in centuries past he was involved in labor organization and at one time had political aspirations. When asked about his single greatest role among his people, Rah-tu points to his brief stint as a national labor organizer for a now-defunct nation on the eastern continent, where he held sway over tens of thousands of Denaar. Rah-tu has occupied over five dozen bodies since that time.

In the last twenty years he has established himself as a viable merchant, getting a bank loan on his previously owned vessel from an aggressive human-owned bank. Rah-tu trades in all sorts of commodities, helping bridge the gaps between isolated worlds left to themselves through the Long Night. He has only visited his homeworld three times in that period, mostly to keep his supply of replacement bodies at an acceptable, safe level. Rah-tu resides in a body roughly 15 years old, or about 30% through its useful life expectancy.

Nursery: Rah-tu keeps a nursery on his vessel for infant replacement bodies, mostly made from modified human equipment. The facility has incubators and life support equipment to keep four Denaar infants completely cared for at a time, including autodoc and computer-enhanced or -activated medical equipment.

He periodically visits his homeworld of Denaar to refertilize or otherwise procure additional replace-

ment bodies. Those infants born directly to him are placed into the nursery until fully grown. He also purchases bodies that are not of his genetic background, already full-grown, as is the common practice on Denaar.

Full-grown bodies are kept in a series of 15 stalls in a modified portion of the cargo bay. They are unnamed and cared for like so many barnyard animals.

Personality: Rah-tu is larger than life in every respect. He wears outrageous outfits of silks and furs, gathered from years among the stars. When asked for the Denaar's whereabouts, a dock hand might tell the players to look for a "six-legged buffalo buried in yesterday's laundry." Of course, Rah-tu's garb, while gaudy and bright, is perfectly fit to his form; he puts the local tailors through fits trying to please his requests. They scurry around taking measurements, creating patterns as they go, eager to please one of their best customers.

The Denaar keeps an autotranslator with him at all times, one that he's programmed to speak in Shakespearean verse and witticisms. It can make communication tricky, but Rah-tu insists that the ancient human bard was the most eloquent of his kind, and that he wishes to be thought of as so cultured and refined.

Rah-tu's quarters on his ship reek of buh-chu fungus, a strain native to his homeworld that hangs in great, grey and green clumps from the ceiling and walls of his triple stateroom. Ret-yu-chi lizards and Whup-du bats are allowed to scurry and screech freely through the room, scampering behind the furniture and diving down at guests. The seats are slimy cushions, oiled and cool, and the low, browning light reflects Denaar's cloudy autumn skies. Rah-tu does all his entertaining here, and insists on sharing drinks before discussing any business. Fortunately, he's been in human space long enough to know humans want nothing to do with native Denaarian drinks, so he stocks a variety of standard human beverages as well.

Rah-tu wants nothing more than to break the monotony of his present mercantile situation. The challenge of making the deadlines, keeping ahead of the bank payments, and (quietly) several unreasonable gentlemen who still hold him in some debt—all these things add up to make the seven-world route at least tolerable. But he's always on the look out for something a bit more exciting.

Present Situation: Far-Trader Rah-tu has contracted a complex series of pick-ups and drop-offs on a seven-world circuit. The timing is tighter than any

human ship would agree to, which is how the wily Denaar picked up the work. He's been plying the route for three years now, barely keeping to his schedule, gaining a reputation for burning out his crewmembers. Every starport bar on the route has an ex-crewman hanging around who can tell tales of unreasonable work schedules and dangerous speed under the direction of a crazed "piper."

Onboard, Rah-tu keeps his crew jumping, diving into systems from hyperspace at high speed, landing fast, transferring cargos at top speed, then jumping out as quickly. Human crews, used to a bit of R&R between jumps, find the Denaar's pace oppressive.

Subsequent Encounters: In space, characters might encounter Rah-tu's far-trader pulling 2-G's through a slow-approach pattern, barging ahead in line, or possibly taking up two docking bays at an orbital station. He has little regard for human protocols, and tends to aggravate other ship captains and station managers wherever he goes. He's not around for very long, but while he's in system Rah-tu is hard to ignore.

On the surface, the characters might run across the Denaar scouting out a new shipping contract. While other captains check out the usual cargo postings at the starport, Rah-tu is more likely to be carried on a grav-assist sedan chair through local jungles in search of mystic riches, some little more than rumors. Reckless, by human standards, but perfectly rational to a devil-may-care Denaar.

Native Denaar Encounter

This encounter is typical of Denaar found on their homeworld. Other such encounters can be modeled on this example.

Guy-Tar, Minister of Extraterrestrial Relations

Actually, the title refers to all creatures not native to Denaar, including Imperial humans. Guy-tar is an important bureaucrat in the government of a small country on the eastern continent. He is typical of higher ranking government officials, those likely to be encountered by Imperials coming to Denaar for adventure or profit.

Guy-tar's position affords him a higher social ranking and a level of affluence in the top 10% on all of Denaar. He wields influence all over his native country and beyond, affecting various elements of trade, especially with respect to offworlders, manipulating prices and policies to serve himself and his country. Again, however, like all Denaar, his approach can seem reckless and poorly planned to a human meeting him for the first time.

History: When asked about his background, Guy-tar responds in the typical Denaar fashion, working backward from the present. He has been in his present position as Minister of Extraterrestrial Relations, he will tell you, for more than 200 years. In fact, he was the first to be appointed to the post that had been vacant since the days of the Rule of Man. The handful of new arrivals from other systems necessitated the post's revival, and Guy-tar took the position. Before that, he worked a series of posts in the vast bureaucracy of his nation, climbing the social ladder as a contributor to a successful political party over three centuries. Prior to this he worked as a businessman, mostly in the construction and agricultural fields for several centuries back. When asked about his most significant contribution to his nation and world, Guy-tar insists he is living that role right now. To him, he has never been in a position of greater power and influence than right now.

Present Situation: Ships coming from offworld are still rare enough to grab the attention of governments and the news media. Video clips and print newspapers carry stories on all new arrivals to Denaar. Those that make planetfall are contacted by a variety of business and political leaders, not the least of whom are the agents of Guy-tar's office and government, inviting them to an audience in their homeland.

Guy-tar entertains in his home, an estate on a bluff overlooking the capital city of his nation. The grounds are overgrown and lush, maintained by a staff of gardeners, surrounding the helipad. Without anti-grav technology, and only winding mountain roads leading down to the city, helicopters are used to bring dignitaries to and from the estate.

Though the architecture is unusual, Guy-tar's manor is impressive, the equivalent of a 40-room mansion with more than a dozen outer buildings. There are few right angles in Denaarian architecture: the present style is a reflection of nature, the winding, knotted trunks of the native trees, recreated in building form with glass and steel. Gardens often grow through windows into portions of rooms and chambers, making it difficult at times to distinguish out of doors from indoors. Guy-tar has a staff of a dozen servants who tend the house and its guests, including butlers, cooks, and what are essentially sports-pros.

Guy-tar enjoys introducing humans to his sports-pros. Denaar's lust for excitement and challenge consumes much of their time, especially among the affluent, so great athletes or dare-devils are sought after for personal training. Guy-tar is a typical patron for

many of them, and they enjoy his favors and live on his estate. If a player character can introduce Guy-tar to some new thrill-sport, such as ablative atmospheric reentry, the Denaar might very well offer patronage to him for up to a year, paying as much as Cr100,000 per month. At any rate, the conversation may easily be derailed from trade to thrill-seeking at any moment.

Kept on track, Guy-tar will encourage any off-world vessel to sign contracts with his government to take consignment shipping on some regular schedule. The pay is not especially great, Cr5,000 per ton for 2-12 tons per visit. As an incentive, Guy-tar offers to help prospective merchants investigate the many riches of Denaar, a world with a thousand hidden treasures (more interesting, speculative cargos might make the other contracts worthwhile). He gestures around his home to brilliant works of art, to the unique spices on his table (which human senses find quite bland, for what it's worth), and hints at artifacts and treasures that the rest of human space would pay dearly for. Of course, it is up to the referee to put such items in the characters' paths.

The Minister is not interested in technology vastly beyond his world's TL 7.5. His position is also charged with keeping explosive technological growth at bay. He rejects offers to trade items beyond TL 9.

Subsequent Encounters: Guy-tar serves the interests of his nation at any first encounter, seeking only ships to carry government-consigned cargo on assigned routes. However, if the characters take the cargos, they may find over time that the Minister can introduce them to a variety of new adventures.

For instance, Guy-tar operates in a circle of affluent Denaar who sometimes seek adventure beneath other suns. He may hire the characters and their ship to take him and several wealthy companions on an adventurous junket, perhaps to climb another world's mountains or to ride small jet craft through the upper atmosphere of a gas giant. This could be an interesting meeting of cultures, human crew scratching their heads with their ship overrun by mindless, wandering replacement bodies.

Alternately, the Minister has many rivals on his world, and while he wants no advanced technology to penetrate his world's commerce, he's not adverse to using it himself. He may hire the characters to spy on a rival, or to set him up for embarrassment or blackmail (keeping in mind these things haven't the immense moral stigmas placed on them here as in human space).

GRAYTCH

The Graytch are octopedal omnivores native to a lush world in the backwaters of the burgeoning Third Imperium. Human prejudices have labeled them "spidertaur." They have a human-sized head and two-armed torso riding atop a six-legged body section, but that is the extent of their resemblance to Terran arachnids. The Graytch are unusual in that they have attained sub-light space travel without ever becoming the dominant life form on their homeworld.

Graytch is a Vilanization of the race's name for themselves, more precisely ga-ray-cha. Humans often refer to them as "spidertaur" or "spiders." Conversely, Graytch often call humans in-so-mai, literally meaning "having lost legs," used to refer to the lame or maimed.

Racial Origins

The Graytch homeworld, Yuzma, is extremely lush. The world's oceans cover more than 80% of the planet's surface, and there are no large continents. Most landmasses are fewer than 100 square kilometers, stretched out in long island chains snaking around the globe.

The dominant life form on the Graytch homeworld are the thay-tra, a race of semi-intelligent carnivores and omnivores. They range in size from 1 kilogram to massive 5,000 kilogram beasts, hunting and grazing on every island. Thay-tra have roamed Yuzma for hundreds of millions of years, long before the rise of the Graytch.

The evolutionary chain that lead eventually to the Graytch themselves has lived side-by-side with the dominant thay-tra for more than a hundred million years. Their biology is significantly different from that of the thay-tra, so much so that they cannot be easily digested by them and are more often than not poisonous. No threat or competition to the thay-tra, the small proto-graytch survived and flourished at the very feet of the planet's dominant species.

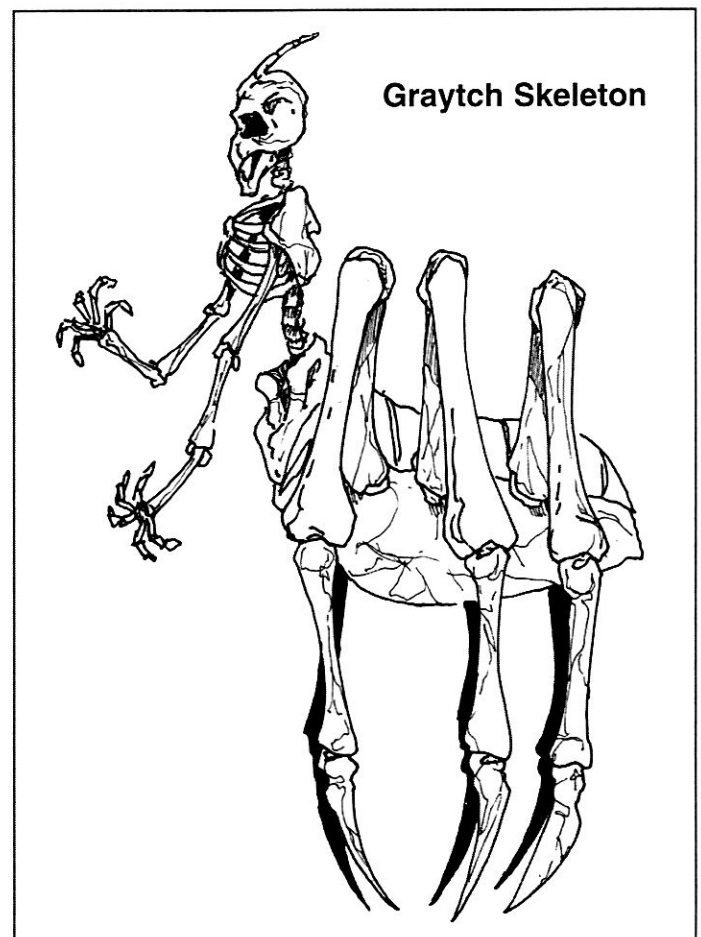
Pre-civilized Graytch took to the thick foliage of the equatorial islands of their world. Above ground level, they emerged successful in their niche, free to grow into their intellectual potential. Primitive tribal societies gave way to more sophisticated communities and civilizations, all based on the short-lived family unit. Graytch developed the use of tools and weapons which, combined with their superior organization, made them comfortably stronger than the thay-tra around them. However, Graytch are naturally passive creatures, and the thay-tra status quo has remained in place to the present day.

Graytch Physiology

Adult Graytch range from 75 to 125 kilograms. They are 1.5 to 1.75 meters tall from ground to the head, and between 2 and 2.25 meters from snout to rump.

Body Composition: Graytch have two main body sections, the torso and abdomen. Six legs emerge from the sides of the abdomen, and two shorter arms from the front of the torso. The head extends above the top of the torso.

Skeleton: A Graytch's skeleton is made from crystalline silicon, grown from ground stone which is essential to their diets. Graytch bones are roughly twice as strong as human bones, and approximately as flexible. The skeleton structure is wholly internal. The hands of the front forelimbs are the most delicate, made from more than 250 tiny bone sections each, which, combined with intricate musculature, makes them extremely manipulative.



Skin: Graytch skin is light tan to grey, covered in a fine layer of delicate fur except on the underbelly and the head and torso where it has light green or blue scales instead. Some hair on the back of the abdomen can grow very long, cut or styled according to cultural standards.

Musculature: Graytch muscle tissue has the ability to both contract and expand, unlike human muscles that can only contract. This small but important difference makes the creature appear deceptively thin and weak. Instead of a bulky flexor and extensor muscle, each Graytch joint has just one associated ball of muscle tissue. Range of motion is greatly increased, as each joint has muscle-powered movement in a nearly 360 degree arc. These factors combine to give a Graytch a gangly, twisted appearance.

Locomotion: The Graytch have three long legs on each side of their abdominal body section, each powerful and adapted for movement through the upper foliage of Yuzma's thick forests. They can move along flat, horizontal surfaces, but prefer three-dimensional environments. Graytch buildings, passages, and starship interiors are completely three-dimensional, which humans tend to think of as enormous jungle gyms. Graytch are perfectly comfortable working upside down with respect to their gravity well.

Each leg is about as powerful as a human arm, jointed in four places: the hip, two knees, and the ankle. The Graytch foot has three manipulative toes, each opposed against the other two. The toes are indelicate when compared with their hands, but a variety of Graytch equipment is tailored to be used by their feet.

Graytch are slightly slower than human walking speed on a flat, horizontal surface. However, they can move faster than human running speed through a three-dimensional environment tailored to their locomotion.

Arms: The Graytch's arms are jointed in three places: at the shoulder, an elbow, and the wrist. The arms are shorter and weaker than human arms, used for careful manipulation of smaller objects. The hands are extremely delicate, with four slender fingers that oppose against two bony stubs at either side of the wrist. Since the fingers can bend equally well in any direction, the hand has in effect two "palms."

Senses: Graytch have all five human senses. They see using stereo vision, the eyes protected beneath bony ridges in the center of the head. Their vision is equivalent to that of humans. Graytch ingest

food through a horizontal mouth beneath the nose-chin. Sensory glands along the inside of the mouth allow it to taste and smell what it wants to, but the functions are strictly optional. Its ears are mounted on the side of the neck, and can be manipulated more fully than human ears. The Graytch nervous system permits tactile sensory input equivalent to humans, most effective in the fingers of the fore-arms.

Reproduction: Graytch have three sexes, male, female, and neutral, born in a ratio of 3-3-1. Graytch males fertilize eggs in the female's body, where they gestate for 6 Terran months before being born alive. Newborns need one month of intense care before they can care for themselves. Childhood lasts just 6 more months as they gorge themselves and grow rapidly. Males and females form a strong family unit from conception until the children are full grown, a period of 13 months, before breaking apart again to pursue separate lives. An adult male or female rears young two to three times in its lifetime. Neutrals have no ability to spawn young, so endure none of the longing and abhorrence associated with the process. They are generally stronger and more even-tempered, and neutrals gravitate toward positions of authority in most Graytch cultures.

Life Expectancy: Graytch males have an average life expectancy of 45 terran years, females 43 years, and neutrals 37. Modern Graytch commonly use a variety of anagathics to extend that period by 25 years or more.

Graytch Psychology

Graytch are passive, nonviolent creatures when measured against human norms. Among males and females, their reproductive cycle drives their actions at different stages of their lives. Also, sharing their world with another dominant race has made them extremely tolerant of outside influences on their lives and aggressive in their search for harmony with their world.

Nonviolence: Graytch history is marred with violence and war just as brutal as anything humanity has inflicted upon itself. However, as a rule, Graytch are more pacifistic and, at least individually, given to peaceful solutions. This thinking is borne out in the philosophies of their earliest civilizations, embraced by virtually all Graytch. The teachings of a variety of religions and philosophers complement each other, forming a plush social quilt that affirms the race's natural affinity for nonviolence.

Most Graytch adhere to one of three major philosophical followings. A rare few denounce all of these,

or follow some relatively minor sect, and these are scorned by their peers. Small groups of these Graytch live in isolated communities on their homeworld, removed from the followers of the more mainstream philosophies. Devotion to particular philosophies has a profound impact on politics and personal interaction.

The largest philosophical following is built around the teachings of an elder Graytch from one of their ancient civilizations, Say-ta-chu. The Saychites, as they are called, are completely devoted to the pursuit of nonviolent solutions to all problems. Saychism is not a religion, per se, and its followers have been careful to keep their founder from being deified. Saychites pursue their beliefs individually, though they do congregate at times to celebrate the teachings of Say-ta-chu and share perspectives.

The second philosophical following, with about half the number of followers as the first, also consider themselves Saychites and refer to themselves as such. However, these have, from the point of view of the original Saychites, fallen from the purer understanding of their founder and placed him in immortal, deified stature. These True Saychites congregate regularly to share their belief with others, still believing in the pacifistic, nonviolent teachings of Say-ta-chu. To an outsider, the belief patterns and reactions of Saychites and True Saychites are virtually indistinguishable. However, to each other the methods of the other following are intolerable, as they will not associate with one another voluntarily.

There is a third major philosophical following on Graytch made up of followers of the writings and teachings of a more recent group of elders known collectively as the Ches-ni-chur. These Chesnichites also base their teachings on Say-ta-chu, professing a belief in nonviolence. However, their doctrines require the individual to make demonstrations of their faith, often calling for pilgrimages. Recognition by their peers for these demonstrations is extremely important to the rank and file Chesnichites. To a human, Chesnichites are everyday citizens until they feel compelled to become wandering peacemakers and diplomats, settling everything from disputes to wars.

For role-playing purposes, every Graytch is a member of one of these four groups, the Saychites, True Saychites, Chesnichites, or "others." Members of the four groups have visible contempt for each other, leading to poor cooperation and bickering. Essentially, however, there is no real difference in how any Graytch reacts to a situation; nonviolent methods are always preferred.

Reproductive Cycle: Graytch have no particular family attachment except during the reproductive cycle. Two or three times in their adult lives, males and females feel a strong desire to take a mate and give birth to young. The thirteen months from conception to birth to the child's becoming an adult is the only time Graytch have a strong family bond. The time leading up to child-rearing is marked by a biochemically induced yearning, anticipation, and anxious behavior. The thirteen-month family period is consumed with togetherness and family duties to the exclusion of other activity; careers and other matters are put on hold with no cultural or corporate stigmas. As soon as the children have passed out of the family to take their place as adults, the mother and father go through another biochemical mood change to be repulsed by one another. Hence, family roles and constant companionship are quickly replaced by feelings of abhorrence and revulsion. The small family disintegrates and the individuals move back into society, most likely to never contact each other again.

A Graytch in the initial stages of longing for a family becomes absent-minded and prone to mistakes and lapses of memory. Biologically, the Graytch's mind is resetting itself for the important role of parenting. Culturally, this period is held in reverence and absolutely accepted. Business duties, for instance, are changed for those in longing, reduced to an achievable level for the soon-to-be parent until they are temporarily phased out entirely. Susceptibility to the yearning is unpredictable, and may happen at any time during an adult Graytch's life.

During the thirteen-month family period the Graytch are not expected to make any other contribution to society. Everyday functions are completely replaced, so cultural and business institutions are well prepared to cover for absent employees. On starship crews, for instance, replacement personnel are common, and cross-training of ship functions is extremely necessary.

After the children have grown and gone, biological forces are put into motion to drive the family apart. The process is quick, and, from a human point of view, very unemotional. Attachment and long-term relationships based on the family are unheard of among the Graytch. Of course, decade-long friendships are common, as are extremely deep feelings, but they are never based on the parenting or rearing of mutual children.

Neutral Graytch are spared this process entirely.

Graytch can become confused by the dissimilar mating processes of their intelligent alien counter-

parts. They project their natural thinking on alien situations. For instance, when witnessing two humans falling in love, the Graytch naturally restrict their duties and expect less of them, professionally speaking. They cannot understand human couples with children wanting to continue to work normally, and they are completely puzzled by the long-term family relationships that humans hold so dear.

Tolerance: Graytch have a long cultural tradition of existing in harmony with their world, and it is a philosophy they carry with them to the stars. Their own situation, sharing their world with another dominant, albeit primitive race, naturally eliminates certain prejudices. The notion of racial superiority, for instance, is not part of their racial heritage, and they have a difficult time relating to other races who embrace it, such as the Solomani.

In mixed-racial situations, Graytch are more capable of adapting and tolerating unusual behavior than even humans. They are careful observers, willing to give space when it is required, holding in check any desire that might interfere with a process they are unfamiliar with or simply have never encountered. For instance, the unusual family habits of humans, very strange to a native Graytch, puzzle them and they display that emotion freely, but they do not present their process as superior.

Beyond tolerance, most Graytch are intensely curious about other intelligent aliens. The study of xenobiology, including the study of human beings, is a prestigious pursuit. To travel into Imperial space and live among aliens for any length of time is also socially rewarded. Since contact with the Third Imperium, educational institutions offering xenobiology and xenopsychology have been swamped with students. Graytch can be fascinated by fairly mundane places and stories, and at the same time indifferent to tales of great human adventure. They are just as likely to be compelled to visit a starport's fuel processing plant as to visit a vast series of crystal canyons on a nearby world. Predicting the Graytch reaction is impossible for humans, and they can find that unpredictability infuriating at times.

Homeworld: Yuzma

Once again, this is a Vilanization of their name for their star, more accurately "ga-ray-cha-la-ha." The ancient Imperial name for the star system was Maasrikyia, given long before human starships visited the world. Many older charts still label the system Maasrikyia.

The Graytch star is a bright white G3, mother to twelve separate worlds. Graytchla-4 is the Graytch

homeworld, hereinafter referred to simply as Yuzma. Other significant planets are Graytchla-3, Graytchla-5, and several moons around the gas giant Graytchla-8.

Geography: Yuzma is a modest size world whose surface is 80% covered with water oceans. The land masses are generally small island chains and clusters that dot the globe. The only great expanse of water unmarked by islands is on the southern polar region. Everywhere else there are islands clustered between 10 and 500 kilometers apart the world over.

Most islands, and especially the equatorial islands, are lush forests and jungles. The native trees grow very tall and have entire ecosystems that live in the canopies, among them the Graytch forebears. The ground level of the world is dominated by another race, the thay-tra, lumbering unintelligent creatures that coexist with the Graytch on their world. In fact, were it not for the Graytch civilization and technology, an outside observer would probably note the thay-tra as the world's dominant species and move on to his next assignment.

Time: The Yuzman day is a scant 8.35 hours long. Their year is 1,784.4 local days, or 620.8 Terran days. Graytch do not observe a sleep pattern in the same way that humans do, so the length of day or the passing of day into night has little impact on their activity cycle.

Present Civilization: Modern Graytch have a technological society, most of which is suspended above the surface of their world in the thick tree canopy of the equatorial islands. Entire cities exist there, suspended above the world, complete with transportation and power grids. The Graytch also have space-faring, though not star-faring technology, and have travelled and colonized their solar system extensively for the last six centuries.

Yuzma-3 has two moons, Chu-bar and Den-yit-la. The largest, Chu-bar, is about twice the size of the Terran moon. The Graytch have many domed cities and mining rigs on the airless and lifeless Chu-bar, which is rich in aluminum and iron ores. Den-yit-la, on the other hand, is little more than a ball of ice hurtling around. Many ancient Graytch civilizations connoted Chu-bar with the figure of the father, and the quicker Den-yit-la with the unruly child.

Graytchla-3, Thi-nu-lar, is a very small vacuum world burnt red beneath the blazing heat of the nearby star. A few Graytch have colonized here, in search of precious metals in deep mines. Daytime activity on Thi-nu-lar is impossible, and the cities are dug in deep beneath the surface.

Further out, Graytchla-5, So-cho, has a civilization and population that rivals Yuzma's own. A large world with very little water, So-cho's atmosphere and climate support Graytch with minimal adaptation. So-cho is home now to enormous ranches and farms, and is now the agricultural leader in the system.

Graytchla-8, Mor-si-ta, is a brilliant blue gas giant with a host of moons. Several of these are rich with petrochemicals, still vital to the industrial core back on Yuzma.

Graytch Society

Yuzma's history is marked by great social change, but its culture and society has settled into an industrial and intellectual status quo. For the individual, family, and company, life on Yuzma is prosperous and fairly uniform across the planet.

Family: During the reproduction cycle, the sense of family runs strong in male and female Graytch, their most powerful instincts being the protection and comfort of their dependent family members. When in the cycle, no other emotions can compete, blocked out by urges to procreate and rear young.

After the cycle, however, family members revert to virtual strangers. There is no extended family among the Graytch. Fathers do not acknowledge their sons, daughters never meet their sisters. . . in short, no contact is made purposefully after the young have grown to adulthood. Culturally, no records are kept so there is no formal means to track down a relative. Any Graytch who sought to do so, in fact, would be considered mentally unbalanced.

Neutral Graytch never go through the reproductive cycle, but they are equally uninterested in the identities of their biological parents.

Corporations: Business ventures on Graytch are similar to those among other industrial civilizations. A human can conduct business with Graytch firms with minimal translation difficulties.

What a human may also recognize is that business affiliations are the closest relationships Graytch have to family bonds. Among the Graytch, the depth of commitment and belonging that humans reserve for their families is given instead to their corporations. Management hierarchies resemble close blood ties, from the human point of view. Senior managers hold the status of family elders, and their employees grant them the appropriate respect and attention. These close bonds make Graytch business ventures slightly more organized and efficient than those of humans, if for no other reason than that employee turnovers and switching jobs are much less prevalent on Yuzma.

Cities: Graytch cities are suspended in the canopies of the great jungles due to their species' bias. Inhabiting the surface is uncommon, made necessary only by occupation or harsh circumstance. Some modern cities are so large that they span entire islands, like huge steel caps.

Graytch cities are fully three-dimensional. There are no "buildings." Offices and homes are clustered beneath roofs or on platforms, mixed and distributed in such a way that a human is easily lost. Nets and vines hang everywhere for Graytch to climb on, giving their cities the "jungle gym" appearance they're famous for. Sites or identifiable buildings are in fact clusters of platforms and open courtyards stacked against the thick trunks of the high living forest.

Government: Yuzma is united in a single world government, technically classified as a civil service bureaucracy. Administration is achieved by agencies that employ individuals for their expertise. These agencies are largely self-perpetuating, and the masses have little impact on selecting their leaders or activities. However, for the past several centuries this system has enjoyed the confidence of the race as a whole.

Each agency oversees a single aspect of government control. The Agency of Agriculture administers the world's food supply and allocation of farm resources, whereas the Agency of Transportation maintains and constructs roads and train nets. As bureaucracies go, the Graytchs' is fairly responsive—petitions by companies or individuals are addressed more quickly and completely than on most human worlds.

Agency leadership is selected internally, without input from the masses. Newcomers are hired according to expertise and start the promotion process. Males and females are promoted equally, though current cultural bias allows neutrals the fastest track to top management positions.

Interestingly, the agencies tend to be concentrated around their particular headquarters cities, and service diminishes with distance from that headquarters. For instance, the Agency of Trade Subsidies is located on an important equatorial island, and those nearby benefit greatly from its services. But those on the other side of Yuzma, equally entitled to services, find them much harder to get. It is not at all unusual for Graytch to set out on pilgrimages to seek out appropriate government representation or services.

Law: Crime and criminals among the Graytch are treated much as in other societies. Punishment is meted out by peers in a variety of formal rituals that span the face of Yuzma.

There are jails to restrain the movements of suspects in process of trial, but prisons, in the human sense, are rare. Nonviolent crimes, such as theft or embezzlement, are punished more often with banishment from a city or society. Long-term isolation from one's familiar companions and surroundings is a terrible fate and an effective deterrent.

Violent acts, such as murder, are treated not as crimes but as mental illness. Treatment programs keep the violators away from society where they can be monitored, counseled, and eventually cured.

A Graytch may become confused when confronted by traditional human law enforcement. They tend to show greater sympathy toward those who commit violent acts against them, considering the offender to be insane. Also, faced with one's own imprisonment, a Graytch may protest against such a barbaric custom, demanding instead his cultural right to banishment.

Humans facing Graytch justice may find the punishments ludicrously light. Repeat offenders may easily find themselves not only exiled from certain Graytch cities, but deported from Yuzma entirely.

Thay-tra: The Graytch's planetary roommates, the unintelligent thay-tra, hold a special place in their society. In many ways they still dominate the surface of the planet, beneath the canopy cities. Graytch rarely interfere with their activities, allowing them to run unhindered on the plains below.

Psychologically and culturally, the Graytch hold the thay-tra in odd reverence. The two races have shared the world since prehistory, long enough to engrain the relationship on the psyche. A Graytch is compelled to protect the thay-tra much like an adult human is naturally given to protecting children, even those that aren't his own.

The thay-tra are humanely exploited in other ways, however. Some are employed as beasts of burden by Graytch surface installations, especially agricultural bases. Others produce chemical compounds and other useful materials that are nondestructively harvested.

Graytch History

Pre-civilization Graytch lived as gatherers in the jungle canopies of the equatorial islands on their world. They are well adapted to that environment and move through it easily. The canopy provided abundant edible vegetation, and predators were few enough that their numbers grew dramatically.

Two worlds evolved on Yuzma — the world of the surface and the world of the canopy. Graytch's relationship with the thay-tra on the surface below has

always been one of coexistence. Thay-tra predators avoided the primitive Graytch (in the rare instances when they encountered them), knowing them to be poisonous.

Early Graytch civilizations grew to the size of their home islands and stopped, the population dividing off into separate business communities. The harvesters congregated in a particular area separate from the basket makers, and so on. Conflicts between rival business communities on a single island were frequent, and civilization on many islands stagnated and reverted many times before ascension to stability.

Pre-industrial Graytch civilization gave rise to the greatest intellectual: Say-ta-chu, a proponent of non-violence and founder of all three modern philosophies. In his time, Say-ta-chu led an rather unremarkable life, only after his death were his teachings widely dispersed. His life was marked by widespread travel between the once-isolated islands, sometimes on boats, more often on primitive dirigibles. After all, even the surface of the water is part of the surface world, and there is to this day a cultural bias against exploiting the oceans fully. Contact between islands brought, at first, wars and invasions, but as the teachings of Say-ta-chu captured the thoughts of the masses, the Chain Wars, as they are known, ground to a halt. The human-dubbed "Pax Say-ta-chu" lasted many centuries as the Graytch built their civilization and technology.

The first primitive Graytch spacecraft were launched just over 600 years ago, tiny vessels propelled into orbit to open a new frontier. They embarked on a century of intensive, unmanned exploration leading to the first Graytch-manned missions and finally to colonization in earnest — space, after all, was psychologically part of their overworld, not restricted like the thay-tra dominated surface.

Probe surveys of So-cho, the world next farthest out from their sun, proved that it was virtually habitable by their kind as is. The first explorers there visited the world many times from their orbiting spacecraft, confirming the compatibility of the soil and the atmosphere, opening the door for massive migration in the centuries to follow. The riches of an entirely new world drew Graytch corporations and government agencies alike, and a prosperous age began similar to when Terran explorers opened up the New World.

Today, the Graytch have colonies to exploit the raw materials on many of the worlds in their star system, and So-cho's civilization rivals Yuzma's own,

especially in regards to agricultural output. But the Graytch never developed a stellar drive on their own, and so never reached out beyond their own system.

Contact: Scouts from the First Imperium visited Yuzma during the Graytch pre-industrial civilizations. They made brief contact with the sentient aliens in the forest canopies, noted the extensive population of thay-tra there, and departed. Their impact on society was minimal, since only a handful of islands were visited and these only briefly. The survey information sparked no great interest in the world or its nascent intelligent cultures. No other Imperials visited until the Rule of Man.

Anxious to develop allies among unprejudiced races, the Solomani overlords during the Second Imperium sought to reach out to new races. Armed with the old survey information, they visited Yuzma again. The ambassador and his expedition arrived to find the Graytch just emerging as an industrial society with little interest in the affairs beyond their system. The Imperial enclave lasted only a century or so, and while certain technology was left behind, its role in the developing Graytch technology was minimal. The Imperials did, however, succeed in recruiting several hundred Graytch to Imperial service, the forebears of the five thousand or so Graytch living in the Imperium in Milieu 0.

Graytch Character Generation

Graytch characters use most of the same character generation rules as humans.

Initial Character Generation: Graytch roll twice for Dexterity, keeping the better of the two scores.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Graytch can join any service, and are subject to draft. Terms start at adult-status of age 2, then proceed in 4-year blocks. Native Graytch should enter either the Navy or Merchant service, or other civilian careers, all with a maximum of 7 terms, and their skills cannot pertain to hyperspace capable equipment.

Aging: Standard aging.

Other Game Rules

Aside from difficulty using human equipment and transportation, all standard rules apply. Decrease skill level by 1 when employing equipment alien to the Graytch.

Translation: Graytch can learn to speak human languages and vice versa, but communication is much more commonly achieved using personal translators, manufactured by both races.

Travel and Starships

Graytch do well on board human starships, but tend to gravitate toward tasks in the "bowels" of the ship, such as engineering. They are more comfortable in the confining portions of a ship rather than on promenades and large, open staterooms.

Other than their hampered locomotion through starship corridors, Graytch adapt to human spacecraft easily.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

The Graytch can be easily incorporated into a campaign as a player character or by the referee as an NPC, simply by these role-playing suggestions.

Physical: Good dexterity, good mobility in 3-D environments, poor mobility in 2-D environments.

Psychological: Prefer nonviolent solutions, only short-lived family associations, tolerance and curiosity about alien cultures.

Imperial Graytch Encounter

Chen-su-nar is typical of Graytch who make their homes and living in the Imperium.

Chen-Su-Nar, Field Agent for The Bureau

Chen-su-nar is a male Graytch in the service of a large manufacturing firm, the Yu-su-ran Corporation, well-established and of good reputation on his native world. Yu-su-ran makes a variety of durable goods, including prefabricated products for housing and machine tools, in great demand on world and off. This successful corporation has a large number of middle and upper level managers in need of recreation, and supports that need through an internal agency, the Bureau of Adventure Travel. Chen-su-nar is a field agent for the Bureau, scouting out exciting vacations for executives and often accompanying these Graytch on their adventures to the stars.

History: Graytch is 38 Terran years old, placing him more than midway through his productive working life. He has always worked for the Yu-su-ran Corporation, starting when he reached adulthood as a worker in their prefab housing division. Even then he sought exotic vacation adventures for himself: he would live a meager existence by the standards of the other employees in order to accumulate wealth for expensive offworld junkets. He was the first Graytch in his division to take holiday offworld, and when he went for a second and then a third time, the corporate officers took notice.

Chen-su-nar received promotion out of the manufacture division into the research corps, attached to

the Bureau. He spent three years there, accumulating data and library information for the corporate travel office. When a position for field agent opened up, he leapt at the opportunity and bade farewell to Yuzma.

He has passed through the reproductive cycle of his kind twice, and his doctors inform him it is unlikely that he will go through the urges again. For his part he's glad, since field positions are generally only open to neutrals or those who have "served the race."

First Encounter: The Bureau does not provide ships for its agents, so Chen-su-nar must book passage on whatever ships present themselves. His first encounter with the player characters will be while in pursuit of transport, either soliciting the services of their ship or trying to book passage on the same ship as the Imperial characters.

Chen-su-nar travels alone, carrying his extensive pile of luggage along on a grav-porter unit. His own garb is not native, but practical — robes that conceal his face and general body form, protecting him from the winds of strange worlds that he usually finds far too cold.

His luggage is simple, leather and bark bags laced closed with twine; those mingled with plastic and aluminum cases acquired away from Yuzma. He keeps his hand computer close by and is usually wearing a specially made video cam headset.

His recording equipment is always on, feeding directly into the data banks. There is an accurate record of his every movement for the last five years.

Part of his luggage is an expanding aluminum cage he had designed especially for travel on human starships. The poles expand to fill any stateroom with a comforting web of bars and ropes, making it easier for him to get around. The entire kit weighs just a dozen pounds. Visitors to his stateroom will be surprised at the transformation. More than one captain and steward has asked that the contraption be removed, forcing the Graytch to prove that it won't damage the room's interior.

Chen-su-nar is extremely friendly and tries to make friends with all the humans he can. At starports he confronts people and interviews them about their homes and travels. Once on board, with a week between worlds in hyperspace, Chen-su-nar interviews all the passengers who will let him. Admittedly, his initial approach is sometimes gruff, but his manner is kind and gentle. Those put off by the hulking spidertaur early in a trip are often wooed into his confidence and friendship by its end.

When interviewing the player characters, he wants to know everything about their travels, espe-

cially with regard to other alien races they've met and unusual places they've been. He delights in tales of distant worlds and systems, and certainly won't tire of hearing them before the teller does. If the player characters offer anything particularly interesting, Chen-su-nar is prepared to hire them and their ship (if any) to take him there. He can pay up to Cr10,000 per person per week.

Subsequent Encounters: The spidertaur has many friends within several parsecs of his homeworld, and some that extend across the Imperium. The player characters could meet up with him again through a third party much later in the campaign.

Also, he spends half of his time accompanying wealthy Graytch executives to places he's already been, and these trips can be quite profitable. Chen-su-nar may contact the player characters long after their first meeting to charter their vessel or services as guides. The trips themselves will be unremarkable, since Graytch find many mundane places quite interesting, but the possibilities for adventure are great. Any other adventure can be greatly disrupted if the player characters are saddled with a bunch of rich Graytch tourists. Such meetings may also lead to further patronage by these executives for things other than just travel.

Chen-su-nar's recording equipment might also embroil him in the player characters' present situation. A chance encounter at a critical juncture might make the Graytch's recorded data banks the only picture of an enemy or suspect, witness to a crime, or even something more elaborate. Tracking the Graytch down might take the characters across several systems.

Native Graytch Encounter

Imperials visit Yuzma for a variety of reasons, though mostly trade and commerce. Player characters venturing through this part of the sector may happen upon a world rich with native wonders, presented by a wily spidertaur with piercing red eyes.

Co-Bo-Tra, Purveyor of Relics and Jewels

The various writings among the Saychites on Yuzma can be interpreted many ways, as is true of all detailed, ancient philosophies in the Imperium. Some Graytch uphold the pure peace-loving teachings, while others model their actions more on the sharing and sense of racial community. Few — well, probably just Co-bo-tra — have immersed themselves in the rare but undeniable verse dedicated to the mercantile life, blending pious learning and trade in the starports and hanging cities of his world.

History: The Graytch tolerate all interpretations of their philosophical followings. Indeed, tolerance is one of the most revered of those teachings. But a Graytch like Co-bo-tra can put even the most devout Saychite to the test.

Co-bo-tra worked nearly half his adult life for the Agency of Thay-tra Affairs, isolated on a northern island rich with thay-tra but poor in forest canopy and, therefore, Graytch population. The isolation drew those dedicated to the cooperative use of the planet with the thay-tra, but Co-bo-tra found himself lacking among them. The conviction held by his coworkers did not stir within him, and he secluded himself away. In time, a boyhood dream of becoming a merchant resurfaced, and he found justification for it in the obscure texts of the Saychites. Armed with his new-found zeal, he resigned his position and wandered the islands and canopy cities of Yuzma.

For three years he searched high and low, living a meager existence, hunting down trinkets and small items for trade on other islands. It wasn't until he reached the starports of the larger cities that he learned offworlders would pay more for a single item than he made from selling to his own kind in an entire month. He gave up wandering, set up a system of contacts and shipments from around Yuzma, and set up shop in the largest starport.

First Encounter: The starport is littered with advertisements, mostly three-dimensional, for Co-bo-tra's shop. Interpreters can tell the player characters that the signs promise the "wealth of Yuzma in one spot, all at reasonable prices." Other starship crewmen can vouch for the shop and its owner, noting they've made reasonable profits by investing in Co-bo-tra's goods and selling them in distant systems. When asked about the individual, other humans shrug their shoulders and say, "he's different."

Getting to his shop is an adventure in itself. Most of the starport is geared for Graytch habitation, so there are no paths or passages outside the human areas. Player characters must navigate the "jungle gym" architecture, moving down and to the southwest, following signs and asking frequently for directions. Fortunately, everyone along the way knows how to get to Co-bo-tra's shop. Unfortunately, the going can be treacherous, at some points in full view of the half-mile-or-so drop from the canopy to the thay-tra infested island below.

The red-eyed Graytch introduces himself before the characters realize they've even entered his shop. "In-so-mai! Welcome, welcome!" He rests in the midst of an unorganized mass of dusty knickknacks and gaudy baubles. They are in no particular pattern

or arrangement, and come in all shapes and sizes. "That is a gu-ju whistle, used by the Wa-ma-tri people of the distant southern islands," groans the tiny voice of the translator. "You may not recognize that, but it's a chair, human, carved from in-far-ri wood in the manner of the Fri-jor-ri peoples. It's an antique!" Every item the player characters pick up has a story behind it, and Co-bo-tra is eager to elaborate.

"That piece is a collector's item, humans. A gun-jel harp from the distant island of U-ma-tran-ji. Its handles are made from ke-lit bones and carved into the faces of angels (that being the closest translation). I paid an agency sky-driver (Cr5,000 equivalent) for it, but it was missing a string. For that I had to travel personally to the agro-farms sector of this city, barter for the gut of a ku-an-o beast, which I took to an elderly U-ma-tran woman who works in the docks. Now it's perfect, with the voice of sweet winds!"

Co-bo-tra has a variety of trinkets for sale from Cr50 to Cr15,000. A character wishing to make such a purchase can find something in that price range. He can expect to sell them as simple curiosities for 20-120% over his cost at any Imperial starport.

If the player characters inquire about more substantial cargos, the red-eyed Graytch can comply. He knows of three interesting cargos waiting for speculative transport offworld even now:

Yu-gu-ra-fi wood, 21 tons at Cr4,000 per ton.

Jan-jri husks, 2 tons at Cr100,000 per ton. The husks tend to stain metals deep purple, a lasting tribute in a cargo hold to their passing.

Kra-gri poles, 4 tons at Cr1,000 per ton. This cargo may seem uninteresting without a demonstration. The simple wooden poles resemble black bamboo, and are harvested from shallow waters. When squeezed correctly, they launch a seed pod with a chemical explosive, equivalent to a one-shot carbine.

Subsequent Encounters: Co-bo-tra is a fixture of the main starport on Yuzma, but he does sometimes travel to other islands or even to other inhabited worlds in the system. He is an extremely good source of information on the world, and can point player characters in the direction of Graytch patrons.

Some of Co-bo-tra's wares skirt local laws as well, and may get the player characters implicated in legal difficulties. Accepted tolerance for offworlders tends to protect them against some crimes, but trafficking in certain goods can still get them in trouble. There is a prohibition, for instance, against the sale of Kra-gri poles that Co-bo-tra fails to mention on purchase.

HANA SAKA

The Hana Saka are a minor race of large bipedal creatures native to a world just outside the traditional boundaries of the old Imperium. Even before the Long Night, their race has had little contact with Vilani star travellers. A statistically insignificant number of Hana Saka have ventured off their world.

The language of the Hana Saka is difficult for humans to manage. The sounds generated by the mouth are strange enough, akin to choking and wheezing. These are supplemented by tentacle gestures and slaps against the body. At best, a human can emulate these by slapping his own body with his hands, but this technique has never been mastered for effective communication. Hana Saka and humans are better served by psionic or electronic translation, the latter readily available in a variety of models anywhere in the Imperium. Hana Saka have very poor vision, and so have a written language akin to braille, utilizing raised letters they can scan with tentacle or torso.

Hana Saka is a Vilanization of the race's ancestral name. Though there are very few Hana Saka that have ventured into the Imperium, humans who have encountered them have dubbed them "suckers," because of their strange eating habits, or "ogres," attributed to them for their great size and, presumably, their unattractive appearance.

Racial Origins

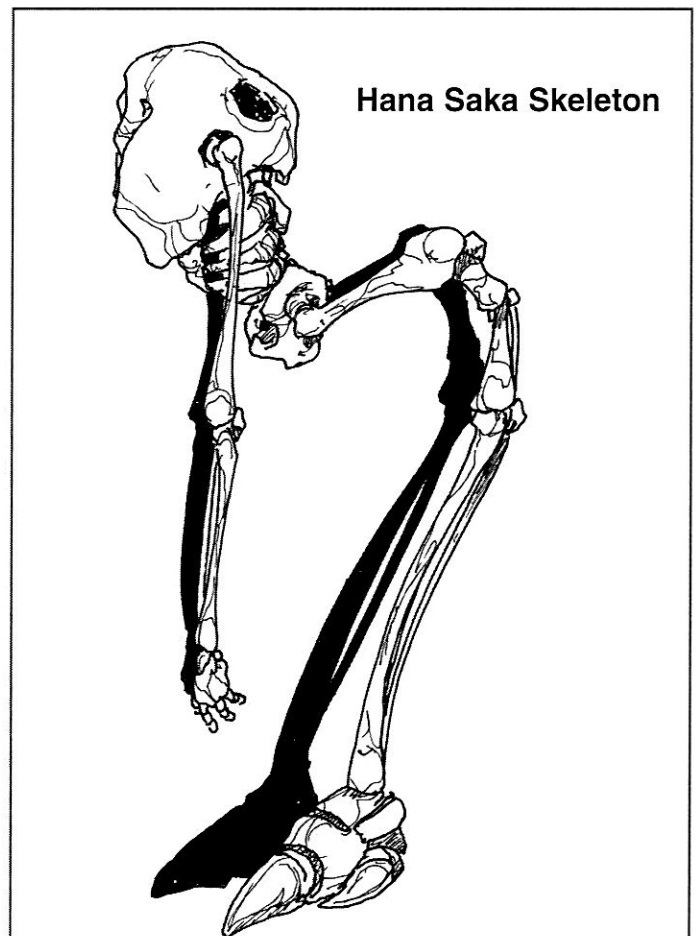
The Hana Saka homeworld, Shiro, is extremely earthlike in origin and recent geological history. It has wide expanses of ocean covering 70% of its surface, separating several large continents drifting slowly on massive plates. A healthy water cycle bathes the central continents with ample rainfall, nurturing an extensive ecology of plant and animal life. Shiro's only sparsely vegetated areas are the frozen poles and occasional deserts.

The Hana Saka trace their distant ancestry to ocean dwellers native to the relatively shallow continental shelves. These hexapedally symmetrical filters survive to the present day as unintelligent denizens of the oceans, but some of them took a foothold on the beaches several million years ago, the forebears of the modern Hana Saka.

In time, the land-dwelling hexapods adapted two of their tentacle appendages to locomotion and two others to more controlled manipulation, equating to legs and arms in the human sense. All four of these limbs developed linear calcium deposits running in strings through host cells, creating a net or mesh of thin bones to lend additional support to their functions. The end of the arms split into a four-tentacle hand, each one about twice as long as a human finger, much more flexible, and opposable in all directions against the others.

The pressure to find new food sources eventually drove the proto-Hana Saka inland, away from the oceans that spawned them. On the wide prairies of their original continent, they gathered into hunting and gathering communities, developed primitive communication, and entered an extended period of pre-history. The inland regions, however, were already home to dozens of competing species in

well-established niches. The relative versatility and intelligence of the Hana Saka enabled them to gradually edge these competitors out, but the long period of struggle — 40 centuries — left the race permanently marked. Their penchant for defensive posture and the widespread acceptance of monsters in their various mythologies certainly has its roots in this period.



Early Hana Saka civilizations clung to the original continent, but many migrated to nearby lands, armed with stone and eventually metalworking technology and weapons to make short order of newfound competitors. The first sea communities were also established during this time, gigantic communities clinging to primitive rafts miles across, adrift on the oceans to harvest the seas as necessary.

Modern Hana Saka dominate Shiro. They have achieved a modest technology using fossil fuels and complex mechanical engines, roughly equivalent to TL 5 or 6. There is no unified government on Shiro, classifying it as balkanized. Governments and cultures vary widely across the surface of their world.

Hana Saka Physiology

Hana Saka are derived from ocean-dwelling hexapod filters, adapted for life on their world's landmasses. They are upright bipeds standing 2.8 to 3.5 meters tall, weighing a robust 350 kilograms on average.

Body Composition: Hana Saka have six limbs that extend from a torso. The legs descend from the base of the torso, and the arms to either side. The long tentacles emerge from the back of the shoulder and can easily outreach the arms in all directions. They have no head, per se. Most of their sensory apparatus is huddled in the sensory cluster that can be completely shielded behind the middle torso.

Skin: Hana Saka are black or deep gray with no body hair. The interior of the fleshy folds and the undersides of the tentacles are generally lighter color, leaning toward blues and deep greens. The skin is thicker than a human's, but not so much that it provides greater protection against injury.

Skeleton: The Hana Saka's aquatic ancestors had only rigid tissues to maintain body shape and integrity, but the rigors of life without buoyancy forced the animals to adapt. Hana Saka have intricate nets of bone that extend through the torso, arms, and legs. These nets are comprised of linear calcium spurs penetrating host tissue cells of all kinds. The nets are not nearly as strong as human bones, but they are resilient and pliable, and so are very difficult to break. In effect, any point or points along the arm or leg can become a supported fulcrum (i.e., an elbow or knee) at will. A Hana Saka's arm may have one elbow, two, or even three or four as a situation warrants, or it may opt for none, leaving the limb one rigid extension. The bone nets give Hana Saka movement a much more fluid appearance, and renders them immune to the debilitating disorders common to humans with permanent joints such as elbows, knees, shoulders, and hips.

Hana Sakan tentacles and the fleshy portions of the torso have no bone nets. These are instead supported by soft but rigid materials akin to cartilage and are infused with muscle tissue.

Musculature: Hana Saka musculature more closely resembles that of a snake than a human. Where a human's body composition relies on a series of matched flexor and extensor muscles, the Hana Saka have long conduits of muscle tissue that can contract or expand at will, letting each one curl and twist with tremendous power. In the tentacles, for example, the muscle conduit can contract on one side while expanding on the other, making it curl in one direction with considerable strength. Hana Saka are far stronger than humans, since all of their muscle mass can be brought to a single task. Half of a human's muscles tend to play a supporting role, at best, in a given action, awaiting the call to return the body to its original, rest position.

Locomotion: Hana Saka are bipeds. When walking, they can keep up with humans easily. For greater speed, they "skip" rather than run, and can nearly keep up with a sprinting human which, considering their bulk, is quite remarkable. Because of the greater flexibility of their legs, Hana Saka can get better footing than a human on virtually any treacherous ground.

Manipulation: The "ogres" have two arms and two tentacles to manipulate their environments. The arms are extremely strong, bolstered by bone net along their entire length, and they can bend in ways that human arms simply cannot. The end of each arm is splayed into a four-tentacle hand. Each "finger" is roughly 10 centimeters long and can bend in any direction. Since each can oppose against the others or against the nub of the wrist, a Hana Saka's hand is more skillful and precise, and it can perform more tasks simultaneously than a human's.

The tentacles do not possess the great strength of the arms, but are very long, stretching to 3 meters from where they emerge at the lower portion of the shoulder along the creature's back. Hana Saka use their tentacles as readily as they use their arms: grasping items, supporting their body weight in awkward situations, lifting and pushing. They commonly hold an object with their tentacles while they work it with their hands. At rest, the tentacles hang low, nearly to the ground, or wrap around the waste.

In unarmed combat (pardon the pun), Hana Saka instinctively try to grab their enemies with both tentacles to draw them in close for the kill. This has a significant effect on their approach to battles and interpersonal relationships.

Senses: Compared with humans, Hana Saka have underdeveloped vision, but they more than make up for it with acute hearing and sonar. All of the sensory apparatus is protected behind the fleshy folds of the torso. These can be opened wide to allow the Hana Saka better use of all senses, or closed up for protection or rest. The single eye gives the creature a fair resolution and clear distinction between light and dark, but fine detail is lost to them. Their primary sense is, instead, hearing, bolstered with a sonar generating organ. The Hana Saka's hearing is equivalent to a Vargr's, and when necessary they can emit a low frequency pulse to map out surprisingly intricate details of their environs. Senses of taste and smell are equivalent to human, though Hana Saka consider themselves to be connoisseurs of various flavors and odors. They display a superior tactile sense through the tentacle fingers of both hands.

Cell Damage: Hana Saka have no separate set of nerves to pass along impulses from the brain. Instead, virtually every cell is a conduit of impulses along the cell walls. Also, virtually every part of a Hana Saka will grow back if lost — most notably the limbs or tentacles, and the fleshy folds around the sensory cluster. Regrowth is slow, taking as long as a year to replace a limb, but once back it's as good as new.

Nourishment and Energy Production: Proto-Hana Saka took their nourishment directly from the ocean, straining the shore waters of the continents where microorganisms and multi-cell plants stirred daily in the surf. Much of the impetus to move to the land, however, was a regional collapse of that nutritional source, due either to solar flare activity or some other widespread phenomenon. The proto-Hana Saka always had the ability to wash ashore with the tides onto small, slow-moving beach dwellers, smothering them and secreting digestive juices onto the victims for later filtration when the tide returned. Desperate for additional food sources, the proto-Hana Saka turned to this food source more and more, leading eventually to more sophisticated sojourns onto the dry land in search of food.

Modern Hana Saka are omnivorous, enjoying the entire bounty of their world. Food is gathered in the fleshy folds of the lower sensory cluster and held there while digestive juices are secreted onto them. After a moment, when the food has been softened and even liquefied, the useful portions are strained into the tiny mouth with a distinct sucking sound. Bits of food that are too hard or otherwise useless are then spat out. For instance, Hana Saka are fond of

terrestrial apples, and can pop an entire apple into their fleshy "mouth." One or two minutes later, the creature loudly sucks in the partially digested apple, then spits out the seeds and stem.

Incidentally, humans find eating in the presence of a Hana Saka disturbing, and those in the know keep their distance to avoid being spat upon.

Rest: Hana Saka do not sleep in the same sense as humans. When fatigued, they close up the fleshy tissue around their sensory cluster and allow their bodies to recover, but always retain a greater awareness of their surroundings than a sleeping human. There is no regular rest schedule, but an adult rests between four and six hours per day, divided into five to ten rest periods.

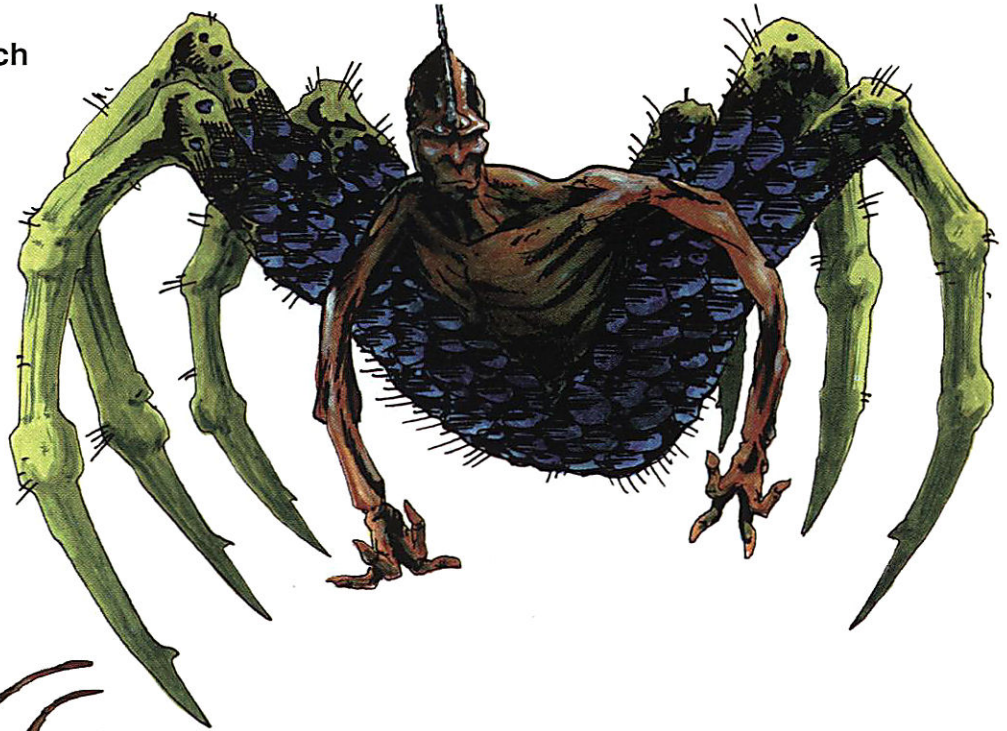
Reproduction: There are two sexes of Hana Saka. Males are only fertile for a brief period when they reach adulthood, at which time they expend themselves in an exhaustive mating period. The exact nature of the mating frenzy is governed by cultural edicts that vary widely across Shiro, but universally involves a large number of females in their locale. After his period of mating, the male has served his primary reproductive role for life. The fertilized eggs reside in the female indefinitely, awaiting the correct triggers to begin growing into fetal Hana Saka within the female's body. These triggers are a measure of the general health and even emotional health of the mother — a Hana Saka female cannot become pregnant unless she is in good health and her environment is stable. Once that happens, female Hana Saka nurture a litter of 3 to 8 young for a 12 month gestation period, and in their modern world virtually all of these survive birth.

Life Cycle: Physically, Hana Saka grow to full size in a period of 8 terran years during which they are protected and educated by community elders, not necessarily their birth parents. Emotionally, like with humans, Hana Saka don't reach the pinnacle of maturity until some time later, usually around 12 to 15 terran years. Males attain their fertility immediately after this period, which last for just a few days. Females become fertile any time after 12 terran years and remain so until roughly age 60. Males show the signs of age more quickly than females, losing physical mobility and strength after age 45, while females do not show these signs until after age 70. Male life expectancy is 55; females live to 100.

Hana Saka Psychology

Tracing ancestral roots to aquatic filtering creatures drives much of the Hana Saka psychology. They are an especially patient race, a product of their seden-

Graytch



Hresh

Controlled



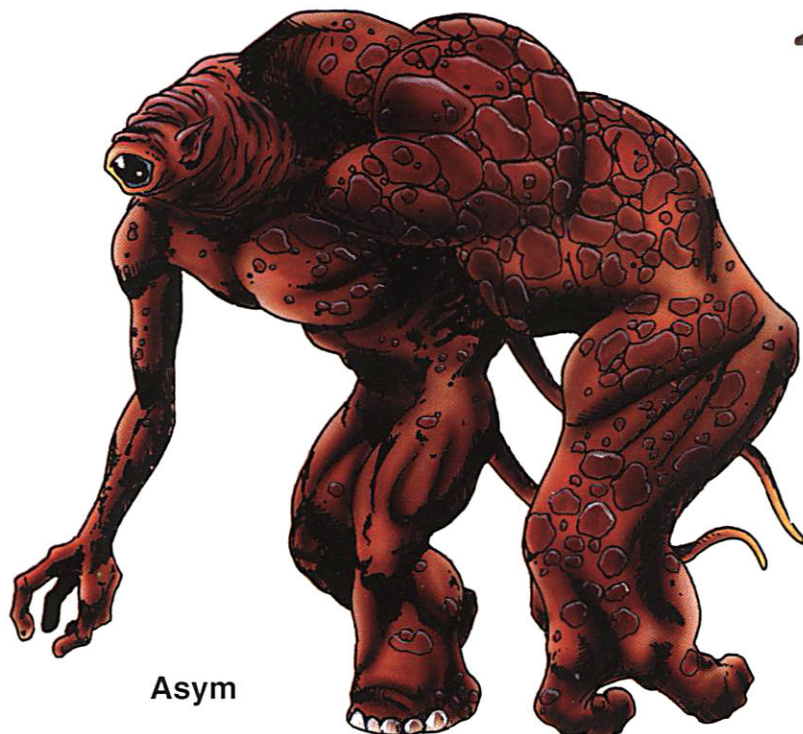
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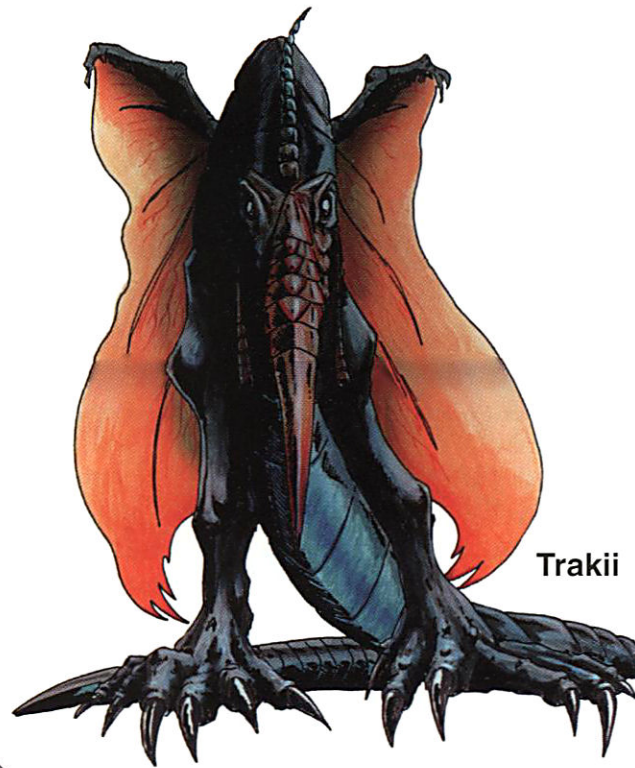


Hana Saka

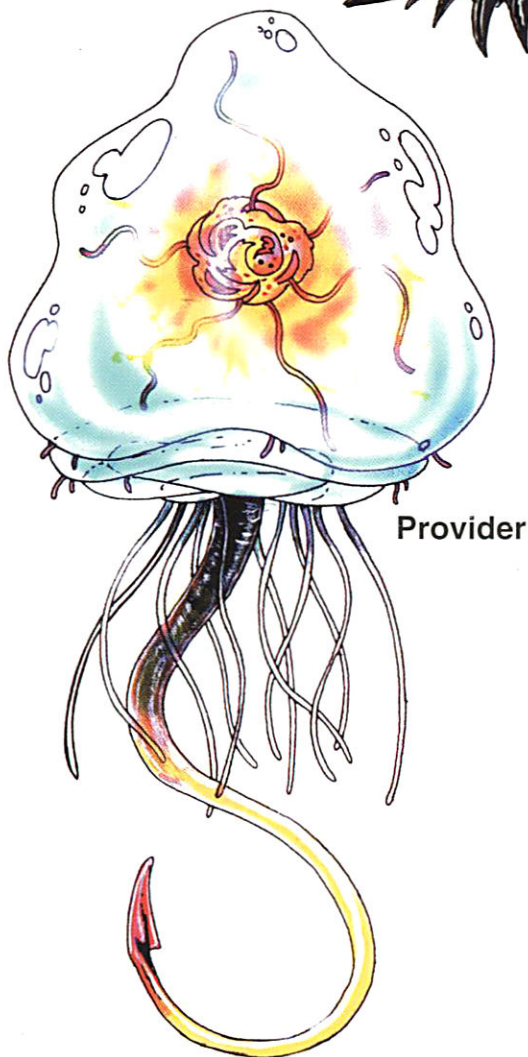


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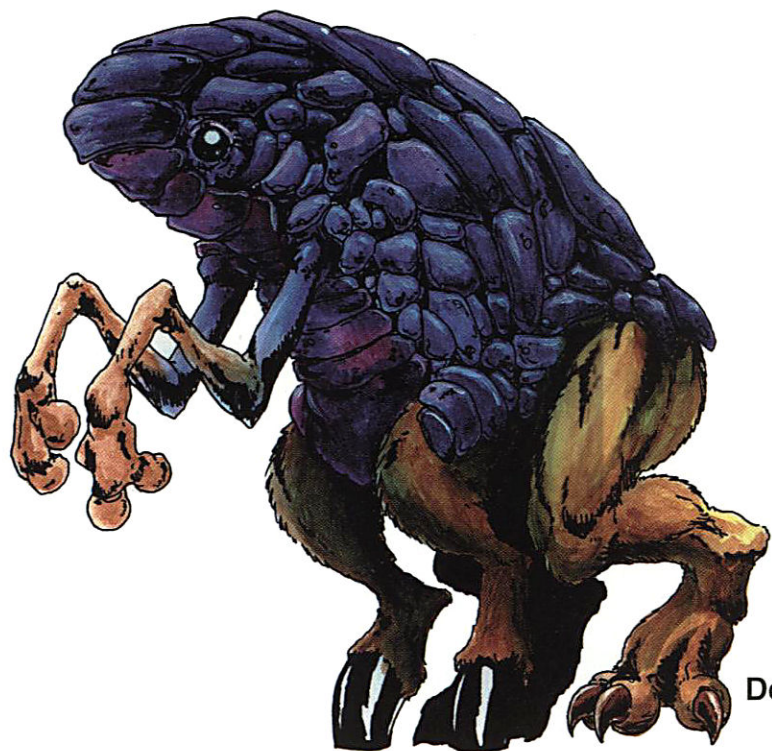


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Bye-Ren

All Aliens are relative size. Tekundu are considered Human Size.

tary lifestyle and long life expectancy. Special significance is given to all matters of reach, touch, and proximity, especially with regards to their tentacles.

Patience: Hana Sakan patience is renowned through explored space. Starship captains sometimes refer to them as "screen watchers," presumably because a Hana Saka just might watch a navigational view screen for the entire length of a jump. While this may be an exaggeration, it illustrates the human comprehension.

In the short term, a Hana Saka is unconcerned with the speed of daily routine. Human beings are constantly driving themselves and their technology to speed the activities of life, a concept that the Hana Saka find unimaginable. Delays that human beings find intolerable, such as waiting for the computer to boot up or an elevator to descend, are taken in stride by the ever-patient ogres. In fact, they find human impatience amusing. Their attitudes have shaped their tools and equipment as well. For instance, it is important to develop the technology of the crane to lift heavy objects, but improving it to be faster and ever faster is not something that occurs to the ogres. They might want to make a calculating machine more accurate or expand its functions, but reconstructing it just to make it faster is alien to the Hana Saka. Such patience, however, retards the advancement of technology within their civilization, since one driving factor in improvement of design or function is completely lost to them.

Tolerance of others is often a product of patience. Certainly the reverse is true for humans, who tend to be extremely intolerant of those who act or adapt too slowly. They are extremely tolerant in matters of interpersonal relations, better able to forgive disappointments, even consistent disappointments, ready to wait through another's problems.

In the longer term, the ogres' patience makes them excellent teachers. The Hana Saka are naturally given to nurture the lengthy learning process, take the time with slower pupils. They gain great pleasure from watching the gradual results of a concerted effort in learning. The same is true in the development of a business venture. A Hana Saka business manager is more likely to see a slow venture through to fruition, where a human might abandon it for growing too slowly.

Reach, Touch, and Proximity: Hana Saka place a great deal of significance on their personal space and ability or willingness to touch those close and to be touched by them. Humans in their company must adopt their accepted practices, or at the very least understand them in order to bridge the gap.

Reach equates to general power. A Hana Saka splaying its limbs and tentacles to their fullest is demonstrating his power, or at least his perception of his power. A leader addressing a crowd does so with his limbs fully extended; not doing so is a sign of weakness. Being able to reach another has its own significance. It can mean one has power over another, but more often means there is a bond of more than casual acquaintance.

Interestingly, there is no honor, satisfaction, or gratification in defeating an enemy at a distance. Traditional Hana Sakan combat is personal and close. They never developed ranged weapons and adopt human-designed missiles only grudgingly.

Touching other Hana Saka is as common and accepted as the human habits of looking each other in the eye or smiling at one another. Socially, there is a ritual. Hana Saka who intend to converse move within each other's personal space and touch each other with their tentacles. Not doing so is considered at best rude, at worst an insult or even challenge. Again, from the human perspective, to enter into conversation with someone and not meet their eyes is considered rude or at least strange, and Hana Saka place the same significance on touch.

Being out of reach of other Hana Saka can bring on great sadness. Proximity to others, even strangers, is a source of comfort. In crowded situations, they tend to let their tentacles wander, touching those nearby, almost absent-mindedly. Moving down a busy street, they do the same thing, like everyone in Manhattan trying to hold hands as they go, which can be very disturbing to a human.

Proximity to the handful of most important others in a Hana Saka's life is also important. For humans, too, a vid screen is seldom a good substitute for hugging a loved one, but in Hana Saka the feeling of isolation or even depression can be far more intense. They are just as able to perform isolated tasks or travel alone if necessary, but the ogres are not given to becoming hermits. In a new environment, a Hana Saka seeks out new companionship for the comfort of having others close by.

Humans in the company of Hana Saka are expected to adopt their habits. One must prepare to be touched and to touch others often, without warning or obvious significance.

Noise: For all their tolerance of others and most situations, Hana Saka abhor unnecessary noise. Physiologically, random sounds (especially loud ones) can interfere with their sensitive hearing, even damage it over time.

Even noises a human would consider subtle can annoy an ogre. The tapping of a pen, turning of pages in a book, even breathing can set them off. They become indignant and voice their objection sternly. The constant thrum of a hyperdrive for a week-long jump can drive them absolutely nuts. Most puzzling (or even amusing) to humans is that they insist humans chew loudly and repeatedly ask them to do so more quietly, all the while slobbering and spitting themselves like so many ballplayers at a rib roast.

Of course, there is a certain level of noise in their own environments, and still more when living in the Imperium. Safeguards are commonplace, most often some sort of one-piece buffer or abatement device worn over the fleshy folds, essentially an ear plug.

Extremely loud noises can force their essential hearing apparatus to temporarily shut down, effectively blinding them, which justifies their caution. The shut down can last as long as a minute and is associated with long-term discomfort. The only human equivalent is having a bright light suddenly blasted in one's eyes, but the loss of sensory perception and pain last longer with the ogres.

Homeworld: Shiro

The children of Terra, sprinkled all over this region of the galaxy, are drawn to the blue-green worlds that are most like their own. Swirled white with clouds and atmosphere, these are the most desirable worlds, where colonization is easiest, where citizens can live out beneath alien suns. Shiro, the homeworld of the Hana Saka, is such a world, and there are millions of humans living there now, sharing the world with the dominant native intelligent race.

The Star System: Shiro orbits a main sequence G8 star dubbed "Kethinari" on the star charts of the Imperium. The Shiro word for their sun is unpronounceable, but translates roughly as "light giver." Shiro orbits in the fifth orbital position of 12 total planets.

Planets one through four are "hot rocks;" six, seven, nine, eleven and twelve "cold rocks," using the banter of the star explorers. Planets eight and ten are gas giants, the former home to an orbital refuelling station privately owned and operated by a corporation of the Imperium. Like in human mythology, the strange paths of the other visible planets through the night sky fascinated primitive Hana Saka, and they've attributed all sorts of legendary characteristics to those worlds.

Geography: Shiro's surface is sporadically active with literally hundreds of tectonic plates. There

are twelve main continents, and a handful of others that would qualify if just a little larger. All the continents show the signs of recent geological plate movements, namely tall, young mountain ranges where plates are colliding. The coastal regions are characterized by lower plains, either forested or arid depending on the flow of the regional weather patterns. Rainfall on Shiro is slightly above the average for comparable areas on Terra, so there are some truly enormous river systems to drain the continental interiors.

The most populous Hana Saka continent is Earipida. The tall mountains of the north drain through a terrific, naturally-navigable river system through the fertile plains to the equatorial oceans. The bulk of the human population resides on a northern continent, Ausipica, around several large, inland lakes. Ausipica is generally colder than what Hana Saka find comfortable, but well within human tolerance.

Time: The Shiran day is 59.3 hours long. Their year is 168 local days long, or 415.1 Terran days. A female Hana Saka can expect to enjoy about 90 local years, a male somewhat less at just over 48 local years. The very long local day makes human adjustment difficult. Conversely, Hana Saka on human vessels often stay active through several sleep cycles before slumbering for several more. There is only minor seasonal variation on Shiro through the course of the year.

Present Civilization: Hana Saka dominate every continent on their world. Ausipica, site of the main human settlement, also has a dominant native population, outnumbering the aliens 4 to 1. Their technology enables them to ply the sea lanes in large ships, trading with other continents and regions easily, build roads and canals, clear waterways, and otherwise support a burgeoning industrial civilization. The Hana Saka have not developed any independent space flight technology, but they have contracted with human firms for a variety of useful satellites.

Hana Saka Society

The present Hana Saka culture is undeniably female-dominated. Females take all positions of responsibility and authority, from government to industrial to the family level. Females also dominate the trades and even industrial labor pools. Males are relegated to lives of comparatively little responsibility and seldom make a prolonged contribution to society other than to wander, mingle, and serve to propagate the race.

Household: Since the father is not present during pregnancy or birth, there is no male authority figure at the family level. Instead, the household is lead by a single female, usually the eldest of the group. A household is most often a single building with many apartments, or it can be an estate with multiple buildings to hold as many as three dozen Hana Saka. Only females and children are considered as part of the permanent members of a household. Males are strictly transients, given board in exchange for temporary service.

The leading female is generally selected on basis of age, but sometimes on position of authority in some outside endeavor. For instance, a younger female may take dominance of a household when she is promoted to a high position in her business. The transition is made graciously, but jealousies and challenges abound.

Lesser females perform household tasks per the wishes of the dominant female. She assigns menial activities, the management of the children, food supply, general maintenance and upkeep, to the others. She also appoints one lesser female to be liaison with the transient males. Males are generally expected to stay away from the dominant female of a household.

Special quarters are constructed within a household for the male transients, though they are given free run of the grounds. The lesser female in charge appoints quarters and general tasks and activities, and a male's willingness to conform has a direct correlation to how long he is welcome. A single household may play host to several dozen males in a local year, and a male can expect to change residences at least five or six times.

Ownership of property is rooted in these traditions. Males own virtually nothing but what they carry around with them. A male may, in some cases, accumulate personal possessions at households that he frequents, but this is technically part of the household. Most substantial property is held by the household or by business or government. Males are sometimes placed in positions to manage property, at least temporarily, but little more.

Architecturally, Hana Saka households tend to be very open. Doors are rare between rooms, and in the most moderate climes, so are walls. Larger structures have long patios and gardens opening onto functional rooms. Sleep chambers are large pits of cushions, allowing those in need of slumber to do so in reach of their companions — Hana Saka are always more comfortable sleeping in groups.

Government: The political structure of the household does not generally impact the various forms of government adopted by the Hana Saka. They are, however, both female-dominated. As in any large human society, there are many variations of government and its role in the daily lives of its subject Hana Saka, but there are some broad generalities. Historically speaking, there have been as many different Hana Sakan approaches to government as there have been on any human world.

Presently there is no single world government. Shiro is classified as a balkanized world by the Imperial Scout Service. The largest governments are aligned in one of three basic governmental types, and there are loose international allegiances between like-aligned governments.

Random Democracy: Several liberal nations have adopted a form of random democracy. Government positions are filled by lottery for four and eight year terms. These are structured to have many checks and balances, so a poorly qualified candidate cannot alter the course. These governments have been generally successful for the last three hundred years, but they are only adopted in countries with high standards of living and superior, universal education.

Commerce Governments: There are a handful of nations that have adopted governments that only deal in the facility of commerce. The government taxes individual households and businesses to maintain the infrastructure of commerce: building roads and canals, enforcing price controls, etc. Law enforcement and purely social matters are conducted at the household level.

Traditionalist Governments: The traditionalists are a throwback to an age of imperialism, abiding by the rule of an upper class of households. The traditionalists are less concerned with individual freedoms, though they are seldom oppressive. Traditionalist governments are conservative, leading the fight against too much interstellar contact.

The Human Settlement: Humans first came to Shiro during the Vilani Imperium, and their culture weathered the Long Night among the Hana Saka. There are several million humans living on Shiro, most on the Auspica continent. The humans there are a sovereign nation, though they are not recognized by most Traditionalist Governments of the Hana Saka.

The human government is a civil service bureaucracy, and nearly 40% of the population is employed by the government. They enjoy a slightly higher technological level than the Hana Saka, but not over-

whelmingly so. Militarily, they have enough of a technological edge to enforce their right to exist there. The cities are highly industrialized, manufacturing a variety of goods for export across the sea lanes to the Hana Saka nations. Ausipica is especially rich in iron and coal, ideal for primitive industrialization. They have the finest railroads and ships on Shiro.

Liaison between the human population and the Hana Saka has had several turbulent periods, as described in the History section.

Law: Acts that adversely affect society as a whole are crimes: murder, theft, arson, etc. Corruption in the human sense is unknown within their society, but they do encounter it when dealing with the human settlement. They are suspicious of humans, generally, since they are given to lies and half-truths as part of everyday business. Punishment is handed out by courts in the Traditionalist and Random Democracy governments, or by the household in the Commerce Governments.

Hana Saka History

The Hana Saka emerged from their 40-century struggle against other semi-successful species armed with stone tools and some mastery of agriculture. All these factors conspired to let their population swell. They spread out over the original continent and fractionalized into hundreds of small communities, while their social structure and female dominance still in infancy. By this time they not only dominated their original continent, but there were no other species anywhere on the planet in contention for world supremacy.

Renowned Hana Saka patience held their technological growth to a slow pace. They only moved from stone to metalworking after about 8,000 years, then plateaued again for another 4,000 years before creating simple machines. Psychologically, the Hana Saka could not engage in an industrial revolution. Factories and processes developed in one area sparked no fierce competition as in the human example. Only now, after 20,000 years of development, can the Hana Saka be truly classified as industrial, and then only at tech level 5.

Raft communities are a phenomenon uniquely Hana Sakan. Even in their early civilization, coastal rafts carried fishermen out onto the oceans for days at a time, returning with a bountiful catch. These developed further into small households or groups of households given to life permanently at sea. Modern raft communities can have as many as a hundred households, all on wood- and steel-made boats lashed or welded together. Raft communities are a colorful aspect of Hana Sakan lifestyle, receiving a

disproportionate share of attention by human media, when in fact, raft dwellers account for only a minute percentage of the population.

Social development appears to have taken a firm hold during the stone age, with females seizing control of the primitive households. Male inferiority was established then, though they appear to have had a more important role in day-to-day activities in the community. Primitive governments ran the gamut from tribal to monarchical, all with a distinctly female flare. Periods of inter-community war were common, but aggression against civilian populations has been infrequent.

Contact: The first Vilani explorers arrived before the Long Night, when the Hana Saka were populous, but still quite primitive technologically. The first five contact vessels sent belonged to a single Imperial corporation, and it made a corporate decision to keep a distance from the Hana Sakans. They set up an agricultural and research base on a northern continent, away from the main body of the resident Hana Sakans, and the human colony was established.

Hana Saka-Human Relations: The human colony went through a sharp technological decline, cut off during the Long Night, just as the Hana Saka slowly grew theirs. The humans have always kept an edge, however, maintaining old equipment and ideas brought with them from the Imperium. Early trading between the humans and early raft communities forged a positive, cooperative relationship between the competitive species. The Hana Saka, however, saw the humans as a threat to their world dominance and, for centuries, tried to keep them on the northern continent. Subtle pressures were applied to discourage expansion, which appears to have worked in the long run.

Hana Saka Character Generation

Hana Saka characters can be created using the standard Traveller rules. Before generation, the player must decide if the Hana Saka is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Hana Saka characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15.

Social Standing for an Imperial Hana Saka is treated as for human characters. For native Hana Saka, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 9.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Hana Saka can choose any of the ten careers. They are not

restricted on skill selection nor on technological level of equipment training since they enjoy all the material benefits of the Imperium. Native Hana Saka cannot select any military or Merchant service. They cannot take skill in any equipment greater than tech level 6.

Female Hana Saka can serve the same number of terms and retire in the same manner as human characters. Males can only serve three terms, maximum. Hana Saka can switch services normally as outlined in the character generation rules.

Mustering Out: Hana Saka muster out without modification.

Aging: Female Hana Saka use the standard aging rules. Males must roll every two years after reaching age.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Hana Saka requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Hana Saka cannot use most equipment designed for humans. Clothing, chairs, and other equipment made for the bipedal humanoid structure are completely inappropriate for the Hana Saka. Tools and weapons may be manipulated by their slender fingers, but only with a negative modifier to success.

Hana Saka can purchase equipment made for them on Shiro without difficulty, up to TL 6 — their industries only operate up to that technology. They can purchase equipment made specially for them elsewhere in the Imperium, but these have to be made to order, cost anywhere from 150% to 300% of the normal price, and often have significant time delays.

Vehicles: Hana Saka can only operate human vehicles in emergency situations. To do so, they have to cram themselves into the operating space which is uncomfortable and restricts their already-limited vision.

Psionics: Hana Saka can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Hana Saka can mimic the human tongue, but humans have no chance of imitating the wheezing and body slapping of the Hana Saka. Both can learn and execute the written form of the other's language. Communication is commonly accomplished through console translators, available from Cr2000 to Cr8000. Higher priced models generally give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel And Starships

Hana Saka are fairly comfortable on human starships. In fact, the week-long jump period that humans

find so dreary is no problem at all for the patient Hana Saka. They tend to fix on a few simple functions for the duration of the trip, speaking only if spoken to.

Hana Saka cannot use human-designed low passage berths. None have been specifically built for their race.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Hana Saka into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: six-limbed with manipulative back tentacles, poor vision but acute hearing, females live much longer than males.

Psychological: patient and tolerant, most comfortable in close proximity or touching others, unnecessary noise disturbs them greatly.

Imperial Hana Saka Encounter

Almost no Hana Saka left Shiro during the period of first contact with the Vilani Imperium. The few who ventured to the stars did so as specimens for Imperial research and either perished or were returned to their world. No descendants of those Hana Saka call the stars their home.

Since recontact after the Long Night, Hana Saka have traversed into the Imperium for a variety of reasons. They are common enough that most Imperial citizens have at least heard of them and seen holovids, though their numbers are statistically insignificant.

Jusathra, Professor of History

Jusathra is a Hana Saka born on Shiro. She is 84 years old and has been a professional educator for most of that time.

History: Born to modest means, her mother was the leader of a household. She was raised by her mother and the other females of the household in a rural part of Shiro, away from the main cities spearheading industrialization. As with all Hana Saka, she has no record of who her father was.

The rural lifestyle allowed Jusathra to pursue her own education to its fullest, free from the pollution and poverty of the growing cities. On graduation from the highest levels of education, she engaged in a period of self-reflection and travel common to females of the comparative "gentry" class. During this time, she asked for and received a position teaching history on a continent distant from her own. She taught there for twenty years when a colleague suggested she apply to teach offworld, perhaps in the expanding Imperium.

Her many applications were denied, until her mother's household managed to entertain a visiting baron of the Imperium when she was home visiting. A favor was granted, and Jusathra was given a clerical position at the Teacher's University of Sylea. Her aptitude and unique patience and neutrality with regard to Vilani history served her well, and now she has full tenure and honors.

Present Situation: Jusathra's reputation for quality teaching has spread through the noble houses of Sylea. She spends very little time teaching classrooms, and instead works as a private tutor for several noble families. She is presently on an extended tour with one such noble family, taking an 18-world hunting trip with all the children. Jusathra is one of a small army of tutors, cooks, and other servants on the mission. Again, her patience serves her well.

First Encounter: The characters accept the patronage of the noble family, needing guides and transportation through the wilds of a backwater world just beyond the borders of the Imperium. The pay is good, but the family insists on bringing along so many people that it's barely worth the money. They also have a large alien creature, an ogre named Jusathra.

Characters friendly to the Hana Saka are engaged in lengthy conversations about local history. She knows, for instance, that there was an important cache of high tech military materials in this star system during the Vilani Imperium. There are no records of its exact nature, but there is no indication it was ever recovered, either. Jusathra will help the characters find it — for historical purposes only, of course.

The remainder of the adventure is guiding the noble family near enough to the valuable treasures without having them claim the find in the name of the Imperium. Jusathra's interests are purely historical.

Subsequent Encounters: Jusathra is close to hundreds of dukes, barons, and lesser nobles on and near Sylea, the seat of government for the growing Third Imperium. Friendship with her can lead to important contacts with powerful people, even into the Imperial Palace itself.

Native Hana Saka Encounter

Though the human settlement on Hana Saka is large, it is permeated with natives from all walks of life. Many offer unique services to the guest humans, setting up businesses right in their communities.

Nyukstra, Pain Therapist

Foreign worlds, no matter how accommodating, trouble human colonists with a variety of aches and inconveniences. The air on every world smells funny,

the atmospheric pressure is slightly different, the balance of nutrition is subtly off. Most colonists combat this with a regimen of drug therapy. However, some alien worlds offer their own cures.

Nyukstra is the head of a household on Auspica, the continent with Shiro's human settlement. She offers relief from general pains that has caught the attention of the humans.

History: Nyukstra's household has existed in the midst of the humans for generations. Their traditional business has been in supplying special herbs and flavors from around the planet, importing from distant continents through a series of old relationships. The humans consider these spices valuable, so the household has always been profitable.

Recent taxation levels, however, have made the trade somewhat less profitable, and Nyukstra has turned to other ventures. Chief among them is selling her techniques to relieve human pain, previously granted free to her close personal friends. Her reputation has grown, even to the point that other Hana Saka are hanging shingles for the same services.

Present Situation: Nyukstra's pain therapy business thrives in the human settlement. Every female in the household is employed in the process, and all transient males are charged with bringing in new customers. The work they do is legitimate, utilizing their sonar pulses with a complex method of massage (accomplished only with the use of extra manipulative tentacles). Customers are relieved of a variety of pain, but repeat visits are still necessary.

Many prominent humans visit Nyukstra's place of business, including the current president of the Human Union, an influential politician.

First Encounter: Human characters can visit Shiro in search of valuable cargo contracts, but these are only granted through the Human Union. Getting an audience with anyone in a civil service bureaucracy is difficult, so alternate methods must be sought out. A few credits in the right places and the characters learn of a pain therapist, Nyukstra, and her very important client, the President of the Human Union.

Subsequent Encounters: Nyukstra recognizes that her household could be even more profitable on a purely human world. Characters could introduce her to the concept of franchising, and escort her to other human worlds to help establish a wide business. Various pharmaceutical companies do not want local cures interfering with their profits, and may want to shut the operation down by covert means.

HRESH

The Hresh are a race of intelligent, free-moving photosynthesizers native to a double-star system on the fringes of the Imperium. When measured against the norms of a Terran ecosystem, the Hresh appear more plant than animal, but the independent evolution of their biology makes this distinction superficial, at best. At first glance, a human might mistake a Hresh for a bush or small tree. Indeed, they use a variety of chlorophyll just as green as any Earthly garden. But in terms of intelligence and freedom of action, the Hresh are viable citizens of the new Imperium. They are graceful, peaceful creatures, swaying their branches and leaves to the rhythms of their fertile world.

The Hresh have no spoken language. By adjusting their limbs and leaves in the breeze of their native world they formed a basis of sound communication. "Hresh" and other translations into Vilani are merely adaptations of their breeze-song. No human can emulate it, nor can a Hresh make the intricate sounds necessary for human speech, so communication is limited to translators and written form. Imperials routinely refer to the Hresh as "trees" or "bushes," which doesn't bother the photosynthesizers at all. They, in turn, refer to humans in their own breeze-song as "the leafless" or, less flatteringly, "blunt heads."

Racial Origins

The Hresh evolved in isolation on their homeworld of Shashwa, a lush world orbiting one yellow star in a binary star system. The second star is also a bright yellow, and together they illuminate all surfaces of the Shashwa with a minimum of 20% of Terran daylight at all times. Abundant stellar radiation and a rich hydrosphere support a world teeming with life.

Hresh are the dominant life form on Shashwa, and they are the only large free-moving photosynthesizers. There are millions of other species on the planet: carnivores, herbivores, filters, avians, and amphibians, filling all the ecological niches. The Hresh population is still relatively low, just a few hundred million, and their technology is virtually non-existent, so their dominance on the world has scarcely marked the face of Shashwa. A visitor from another world would judge the world rich with life but without a significant intelligent civilization.

Proto-Hresh were anchored plants native to the swamps and shallow riverbeds of Shashwa's plains. Frequently washed out of their soft-muddy beds by annual flooding, the proto-Hresh gradually evolved independent action of lower root structures to "grab on" to vital mudbanks, then to wander beyond the mudbanks altogether. With their basic photosynthetic energy manufacture intact, free-moving Hresh spread out across the face of Shashwa and their ranks swelled. They evolved intelligence as a means of dealing with the many challenging environments elsewhere on Shashwa, and as a defense mechanism against the world's many herbivores.

Pre-civilized Hresh wandered as individuals across the face of Shashwa in search of new

homes. Cooperation is the single greatest basis for their civilization, originating in the few geographical and climatic regions of Shashwa poorly suited to Hresh habitation. Cooperation born in these remote areas to share meager water resources spread to other Hresh in the more lush areas gradually over many dozens of centuries, until cooperative societies now dot Shashwa from pole to pole.

There is no evidence of outside interference with the evolutionary processes on Shashwa.

Hresh Physiology

Mature Hresh are large creatures, standing 3 meters tall with a ball of branches and leaves about 2 meters in diameter. They are not dense, however, weighing just 90 to 110 kilograms each. Their life cycle proceeds rapidly from seedling to sapling to maturity. Extremely old Hresh become immobile but continue to live for hundreds of years.

Body Composition: It is easiest to think of Hresh as basically tree-like. The main trunk is thick and woody, resting on a series of supporting root-tentacles. The nervous system clusters at a small brain nestled beneath thick bark at the top of the trunk, where the many branch-arms fan out above and around. No two Hresh are exactly alike.

Structure: The strength of the Hresh body lies in its fibrous, wooden body. Circulatory and nervous systems run beneath the hard surface, actually penetrating the fibrous material rather than through conduits like blood vessels. The trunk is very tough, and the branch-arms flexible. The root-tentacles, however, are quite vulnerable compared with the rest of the body, made from softer materials for greater flexibility.

Bark: The Hresh outer skin is toughest on the exterior of the trunk. As they pass from maturity to elderly, the bark thickens everywhere on the its body, limiting its mobility and cutting off the nervous and circulatory systems over time. Bark coloration varies from yellow and brown to bright orange and red, mostly due to the composition of the soil where it was a sapling.

Mobility: Hresh have no muscles, but they have developed the ability to expand and contract the fibers of their body at will, bending branch-arms and root-tentacles independently. This process leaves them with poor dexterity and agility when compared to humans, but the strength they can bring to bear is superhuman.

Locomotion: Hresh move around their world on their tentacle-roots. In casual movement, they creep along at just a few inches per hour, gradually pushing against the ground with their tentacle roots. When pressed, however, a Hresh can easily match human walking speed and even a little faster, but that is the limit of their locomotion. Highly motivated Hresh can employ their branch-arms to speed themselves along, pushing against the ground or grabbing onto fixed objects to pull themselves faster.

Branch-Arms: A Hresh has between 30 and 50 individual branch-arms, all attaching to the "shoulders" just above the brain junction at the top of the trunk. Each branch-arm is between 0.5 and 2.0 meters in length, with up to 10 additional branch-fingers along its length, all supporting 200-400 small, heart-shaped leaves.

Manipulation is managed wherever a branch-finger attaches to the branch-arm, acting as a two-fingered hand, opposing against each other. The agility of the manipulation is far below that of the complicated human hand, but the strength is far greater. Additionally, the Hresh brain can simultaneously control every branch-finger/branch-arm manipulator, letting it perform hundreds of small tasks at once.

Senses: Hresh duplicate all the human senses despite having no clearly identifiable specialized organs to do so. Their leaves, for instance, are extremely sensitive to the light falling upon them, better than duplicating human sight. Essentially, they can make out details at twice the distance of humans, observe minute detail close-up roughly twice as well, and they can distinguish light somewhat above and below the human spectrum. Hresh fan their leaves in a single direction when looking at an object far off, or bring them down close in clusters against anything they're scrutinizing close up.

Hresh take in atmosphere through their leaves, and they can sense particles in the air akin to the human sense of smell, though Hresh are unable to distinguish scents to the degree a human can. Instead, they can identify sweet smells from foul and general intensity of odor.

The Hresh nervous system runs through the fibers of its entire solid body. Sounds vibrate the branch-arms and trunk and are picked up and processed by the central brain. Hresh hearing is equivalent to that of humans. Also, their sense of touch relies on the same nerve endings, and are therefore not as sensitive as human touch. A Hresh is well aware when it has been hit or bumped into something solid, but the caress of a breeze or gentle touch is more difficult to discern and identify.

Their taste is limited to the water and fluid intake through their tentacle-roots, and then they only process enough variation to sense mineral content and toxins. Their sense of taste can keep them from taking in poisoned water, but that's about it.

Photosynthetic Priority: The Hresh obtain all their energy through photosynthesis, processing water and sunlight in their leaves, storing energy in their cells. Generally, a Hresh's tentacle-roots are able to take in sufficient water, and their leaves are displayed to adequate advantage that the individual creates energy without consciously thinking about it. However, in extreme situations where its level of stored energy becomes low, it can adopt a special state known to humans as "photosynthetic priority," shutting down certain body functions. If a Hresh gets close to death from lack of energy, the priority overtakes him involuntarily.

Photosynthetic priority robs the Hresh of conscious thought, limiting its brain to basic house-keeping functions to keep the body alive. The tentacle-roots dive deep into the ground in search of water, and the branch-arms extend fully in all directions as the creature takes to the ground. Fully splayed, its leaves extended and open, the Hresh occupies an area roughly 15 meters in diameter, unnaturally stretched completely out on the ground. The Hresh remains so, immobilized and susceptible to attack or other dangers, until its body's stores of energy have risen to an acceptable level, taking roughly 1 to 3 hours.

If reduced to photosynthetic priority in a darkened or water-free environment, the Hresh will never regain consciousness and will die unless aided. A Hresh has to be deprived of adequate light and water for at least two weeks before the priority will overtake him.

Grafting: The Hresh have a primitive technology for biological engineering based on the grafting of other native plants directly onto their bodies. A variety of special grafts that are fairly commonplace today:

Umbrella Leaves: Mainly cosmetic, these broader, flatter leaves are grafted onto the upper reaches of the Hresh's branch-arms. These tend to photosynthesize more efficiently than their natural leaf structures, but in their own culture it is common knowledge that the motivation is more often vanity rather than survival.

Darts: Projectile-hurling pods from a Shashwan desert plant are sometimes grafted onto the branch-arms. These fire a body-pistol-equivalent slug on demand. The pods and slugs regrow after 72 hours. It is common for a single Hresh to have twenty or more such dart grafts.

Vines: A variety of long, sturdy vines can be grafted onto a Hresh's body, giving it anchorage against strong winds, support for growth against rock formations, or even for suspension from high ridges against valley walls. Many modern Hresh use grafted vines to surround and protect nearby seedlings against herbivores or foul weather.

Water Globes: Taken from other desert plants, water globes can be grafted onto the body to extend a Hresh's time away from a water source. The globes vary depending on the source plant, but are generally about the size of a melon and hang off the trunk. Each such graft can give the Hresh another week away from a water source before entering photosynthetic priority.

Moss: Certain mosses can be grafted onto a Hresh for cosmetic or medical reasons. A certain type of local red moss, for example, keeps away several varieties of burrowing insect-like creatures. Another variety of grey moss attracts a helpful mite that burrows into the Hresh's fibers and prevents stiffness. Yet another provides the Hresh with chemical compounds that help prevent rot in especially wet regions. There are hundreds of such mosses, most of which have only a folk-endorsed benefit. Almost all Hresh have some sort of moss grafted onto themselves at some time during their mature lives.

Rest Cycles: The Hresh naturally slow their pace and rest during the night. Off their homeworld, Hresh set their stateroom lighting to darkness approximately 22 hours out of every 44, but they can alter this easily to accommodate their non-Hresh counterparts. During rest, they are generally more alert than a sleeping human.

Reproduction: Hresh seed pods are released three times in the Shashwan year, dropping off from every branch-finger/branch-arm crook. For a week prior to this, the growing pods make manipulation even more difficult than usual, and for a week after they are sore. Seed pods dropped into moist areas take root and grow into seedlings in a few weeks.

Seedlings are not free-moving, nor are they sentient. After a local year (equivalent to 1.8 Terran years), they develop a rudimentary intelligence as they become saplings. Saplings are also unable to move away from where their seed pod fell. After another year, the Hresh's roots develop strength and mobility, until it can crawl free and attain maturity, wandering the lush plains of its world.

Mature Hresh protect saplings wherever they find them, but tend to disregard seedlings as fodder for the herbivores of their world.

Life Expectancy: For its first year of life, a Hresh is a seedling, and for the next, a sapling. Once free-moving, it is considered an adult, attaining full size within another two years. Hresh can expect to live 90 to 180 years in maturity before losing mobility from old age. Then, a venerable Hresh can continue to live for up to 3 centuries, gradually retreating away from activity and communication with its kind. The oldest Hresh on record is still alive, 503 Terran years after emerging from the mud as a seedling.

The long Hresh life-spans make their view of time markedly different from that of human beings.

Hresh Psychology

The Hresh are an unusual species among the Imperium's minor races. They are intelligent beings, equivalent to humans or other so-called major races, and as intelligent beings, they are capable of rational thought and reason. However, as free-moving photosynthesizers, their psychological make-up is dominated by the mothering instincts, their unusual concepts of time and time's passage, and their cultural-based photosynthetic bigotry.

Mothering Instinct: Through their history, Hresh and proto-hresh have always provided shelter for a variety of smaller forms of life. Just as Terran trees provide homes for birds, termites, squirrels, and bees, Hresh are traditionally home for their Shashwan counterparts. Despite intelligence and civilization, they have never outgrown this role, and in fact embrace it as an important part of their lifestyle.

Hresh are tolerant of any small creature that wishes to nest in its branch-arms or burrow into its trunk. Their only condition is that the inhabitant's invasion is non-destructive, or at least minimally so. Hresh communities, which resemble small forests to begin with, are home and protector to hundreds of such species native to Shashwa. They even hang feeders in their branch-arms to attract the preferred ornamental or decorative little beasts.

It is not uncommon for a Hresh to have dozens of small creatures nesting in its bulk, or even thousands of tinier ones. Among themselves they think nothing of the buzzing and twittering of their respective menageries, but to humans it can be a bit unnerving. Conversing with a Hresh can be difficult enough without a dozen mosquito-equivalents swooping all around and a pair of avians making noisy housekeeping in its branch-arms. Imperials, especially ship captains in the know, only take on Hresh passengers who are willing to be cleansed of livestock before boarding or who submit to spending the entire jump inside a large sealed enviro-bag. Not taking these precautions can leave a stateroom infested with bugs and mites, smeared with droppings and nest seeds. Consequently, not many Hresh make the transition to living among humans, though there are many who have migrated away from Shashwa to distant worlds.

Psychologically, this leaves Hresh susceptible to protective instincts with regards to small creatures everywhere. Not only will they provide them with shelter, the now-intelligent Hresh lend them cultural aid, even moneys and medicines to help them through their lives. Hresh extend these courtesies mindlessly to any creature less than about half man-sized, which includes children. It would be difficult to convince a Hresh to harm a small creature that hasn't first demonstrated itself to be a significant threat. Watching a human actually harvest and eat such a small critter is doubly disturbing to them, considering their abhorrence for nonphotosynthetic diets.

Time: Hresh live an extremely long time, by human standards. They accept their mature livespans as the productive parts of their existence, but consider their immobile old age as equally important, a time for reflection and passage of wisdom to upcoming generations. Association with a human being can exacerbate the races' different views of time. To the human, a Hresh can seem a plodding, slow creature, unable to reach a conclusion or take decisive action. To the Hresh, a human can seem terribly impatient and reckless.

To put things into perspective, a friendship between human and Hresh can last the former's entire lifetime. But to the Hresh, the entire association may have taken just a small percentage of its long life. A Hresh can be intimately involved with several concurrent generations of a human family, and so be regarded as an important link to the past.

Among the humans of the Imperium, the Hresh often find work as record keepers, librarians, and historians. Corporations employ them for their longevity and their natural affinity for organization and a sedentary lifestyle.

Photosynthetic Bigotry: Much of Hresh culture is built around their photosynthetic nature. Primitive religions of sun and water worship have faded into their history, but basic cultural biases are slanted against herbivores and carnivores, even against filters. Hresh photosynthetic bigotry sites the destruction of living cells for sustenance as intolerable and unnecessary.

The Hresh do, however, make exceptions based on relative intelligence. Wild animals cannot be held accountable for their diets, so the Hresh cast no judgement upon them. They do, however, preach a doctrine of dietary purity to all intelligent, technological peoples whom they meet.

On a personal level, Hresh prefer their guests not ingest animal or vegetable materials in their presence. The Hresh offer substitutes, liquefied sugars and carbohydrates manufactured through the purity of photosynthesis, along with manufactured vitamin supplements. Of course, these can be flavored and seasoned, but leave much to be desired for the human palate, let alone that of the Aslan or Vargr. Openly eating animal or vegetable materials in a Hresh's presence is an insult, and they make their abhorrence of the practice well known in advance.

Culturally, the Hresh see themselves as prophets bringing the truth to the stars. Swaying non-Hresh to their photosynthetic diet is a lifelong ambition for some, and their government sponsors individuals who will travel to spread the word. They seem to focus much of their anger against "teeth": intelligent creatures have no need of teeth, and a Hresh will go so far as to suggest that they be surgically removed!

Incidentally, the hunting of animals, harvesting of vegetables, or the importation of these products is against the law across Shashwa, carrying strict penalties and swift punishments.

Homeworld: Shashwa

The Hresh homeworld is a lush paradise spinning beneath twin suns.

The Star System: Shashwa orbits the star the natives call Ushaw, or Eridii-A in Imperial reckoning. Ushaw is a brilliant yellow star with six total planets, none but Shashwa harbor any life. As Imperial explorers would say, it's nothing but "hot rocks and cold rocks."

Ushaw is part of a binary system with Yawash, or Eridii-B. The two stars orbit each other at approximately 75 AU (astronomical units). Yawash has two medium gas giants for satellites, each with a dozen or so tiny moons.

The two stars shine on Shashwa constantly, creating two "seasons." During the "dark" season, lasting approximately half the year, the planet's rotation carries its night side into complete shadow. During the "light" season, Shashwa is orbiting Ushaw between the two stars, so Yawash shines down on the night side when it is turned away from Ushaw, providing about 20% of the daytime solar radiation. This seasonal variation has a tremendous effect on all of Shashwa's variable ecosystems.

Geography: Shashwa is a large world whose surface is 60% covered with water oceans. The terrain varies greatly, from deserts and mountains to vast plains and river systems. The planet circles Ushaw without a significant tilt to its axis. The only seasons, therefore, are a product of its existence beneath two stars. Temperature variation from equatorial to polar regions is also less severe than might be expected, again due to the additional solar radiation falling constantly on the planet from the more distant stellar companion.

Shashwa's oceans tend to be small and broken up across a single world continent. They teem with life, especially where the enormous plains rivers empty into them. Each delta is a unique ecosystem, lush and inviting — the preferred real estate for Hresh.

The northern hemisphere is characterized by vast fertile plains, overgrown with the Shashwan equivalents of grasses and forests. These lands are natural homelands for the Hresh, whose communities not only dot the landscape, they are the landscape. The southern hemisphere is mostly less inviting, with rocky mountain ranges and arid, steppes regions. The local flora is more sparse, but the Hresh have populated much of these areas as well, using their simple technologies to make the most of the available soil and water resources.

Approximately one-third of the present Hresh population lives in the harsher climes of the southern hemisphere.

Time: The Shashwan day is 43.9 standard hours long. Their year is 359.2 local days, or 657 standard days. The "dark" and "light" seasons shift gradually, but generally occupy half the local year.

Present Civilization: Hresh communities are difficult to distinguish from the other forests on Shashwa. Their impact on the planet's surface is minimal, and an outside observer might easily assume there is no intelligent, dominant life form on Shashwa.

Hresh Society

Hresh history is remarkably lacking in social change. So far, population pressure has not even come close to stretching their world's available resources. This, combined with their natural caring, mothering instincts have made intraracial warfare and strife distinctly absent from the pages of their history. Instead, the present Hresh society is a slowly progressing, prosperous culture, expanding in harmony with its environment, using primitive biological technologies to better its condition, accepting contact with interstellar races that come calling.

Communities: The community is the basis of Hresh social organization. There are no cities, as that word implies structures. Hresh communities are more or less "herds" of their kind, congregating. Communities are centered on water-rich areas like shorelines or along rivers, or, on the southern hemisphere, around areas subtly altered to provide the necessary water resources.

An individual's membership in a community is a simple matter of being at that site at a given time. A travelling Hresh can wander into a new community and expect to be fully welcomed into it, given a place to fan its leaves and sink its roots.

There is community pride, akin to family pride among humans, but the strength of that emotion isn't nearly so deep. Pride in one's community manifests itself subtly, as warm feelings, glowing praise and boasting about the community's accomplishments. A mature Hresh may have been part of many communities in its time, and hold pride in all of them.

Away from their brethren, Hresh hold no sense of community with aliens. It does not see its human starfaring companions as an extended community. The loneliness associated is difficult for a Hresh to cope with, and they eventually seek others of their kind with whom to sunbathe.

Industry: Hresh have no significant technology of their own. They have independently mastered pottery and biological grafting, but little else. There are imported products to provide electrical power and such, but these are rare oddities that aren't taking the slow-paced Hresh culture by storm.

Hresh pottery is intricate and varied. They use it for storage, decoration, and written communication. Potters are very highly placed in their social hierarchy. The mud and clay from special sites is traded across the continent as a primitive form of currency.

Biological grafting is a specialized science, but its principals are basic enough for all of them to experiment. The benefits of grafts, discussed in Hresh Physiology, are well known in all communities.

Imported items from the Imperium are fairly common. Every community has something, from a compact fusion power plant to computer translators and communicators. Individually, they are valuable among the curious, but they have only local impact. The Hresh are loathe to embrace these technological marvels, and they see little practical use for them, as a rule. More often than not, Hresh agree to trade with Imperials, bartering for pottery or minerals just to be polite, rather than out of any real need.

Government: There is no overriding world government. Within any community there are leaders selected, generally immobile elders consulted on matters of law. Human notions of government control simply don't apply to the Hresh.

Once off their world, Hresh are amazed by the control and bureaucracy humans place on one another in the name of government. The notion of individuality that can vary so widely that it can sometimes jeopardize progress or the lives of others is foreign to them, and they do their best to isolate themselves from it. Imperial Hresh are notorious for delaying necessary government functions, like paying taxes or applying for permits, since they have a natural mistrust of any overall controlling entity.

Law: Hresh law is based on soil or water rights, misrepresentation, and failure to provide. Every Hresh has a right to soil and water, and denying it for any reason is a crime. Misrepresentation, such as fraud, is not common, but does occur, so there are laws to guard against it. Failure to provide for those in need, which in human space is simply bad manners, is criminal among the Hresh. Humans could run afoul of these basic laws easily when

travelling among the Hresh communities. Laws and punishments are handed down by community elders. Punishment for humans is generally banishment. Punishment for offending Hresh varies from banishment to community service.

Hresh History

The history of the Hresh is a history of their culture. There are no great geo-political changes, or rising and falling empires as in the histories of other races. The Hresh history is a gentle, slow-paced tale, handed down by elders through breeze-song or presented in characters and art on pottery from ages past.

Proto-Hresh were completely rooted plants, competing mindlessly for sunlight and water resources. Tracing their genetic pool back this far, the Hresh find themselves related to virtually every other plant species on Shashwa.

Pre-civilized Hresh were entirely independent creatures, without communication or any sense of brotherhood with others of their kind. Still, able to propagate and move freely, these Hresh swept out over the easily populated lands of the northern hemisphere, preferring coastlines, riverbeds, and swamps. Unable to cooperate, the free-moving Hresh were prey to herbivores and various diseases, keeping their numbers relatively very low.

The Hresh consider the beginning of their civilization to coincide with the emergence of their breeze-song communication: the events are one and the same, steeped in legend and dozens of different beliefs and fairy tales. Popular legend places this date about 40,000 years ago, but archeological evidence suggests it was more like 250,000 years ago. Since then, cooperation has fostered the formation of communities, the ability to ward off unintelligent herbivores and control their numbers, and the development of their two chief technologies: pottery and grafting. Clearly, progression of their culture and technology has been at an extremely slow pace.

Contact: The Eridii binary system was first visited and catalogued during the Vilani Imperium, but the Hresh were not recognized as an intelligent race on Shashwa; it was listed as a rather ordinary, fertile world in a backwater area. Not until potential settlers arrived during the Rule of Man were the Hresh discovered by the Solomani to be intelligent, free-moving creatures. The original ranches and farms set up by the humans proved unprofitable, and after 200 years they were gone again. Contact

since then has been periodic, at best; sometimes decades pass between starship visits from the nearby human worlds.

Hresh have been taken by Imperial ships off of Shashwa for many centuries, taking jobs and citizenship. Entire communities of Hresh live on worlds very distant from their home, and individuals who travel among the stars spread the wisdom of photosynthetic diets.

Hresh Character Generation

Hresh characters are generated in much the same way as human characters.

Initial Character Generation: Hresh characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2D6 for each of them except Dexterity, which gets only 1D6. Additionally, in instances where a Hresh can get itself into position, anchor itself into the ground or against a solid object, it gets +4 to their effective Strength.

Intelligence is universal, but Education is based on home culture. Imperial Hresh are educated in the Imperial style, so the Education characteristic applies normally. The Education score of a native Hresh, however, refers to its local education and can be used to compare against other natives. Once offworld, a native Hresh's education is considered a 2 in the vastness of the Imperium.

Social Standing for an Imperial Hresh applies normally, since there are Hresh nobles. The Social Standing for native Hresh is a local stratification, very subtle by human reckoning. It has to do with reverence to elders and judgement by the elders.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Hresh can select any non-military career; they traditionally haven't the psychological makeup appropriate for military work. Native Hresh can only choose civilian careers, and they cannot take any skill that suggests a technological level higher than 3. Hresh terms last eight years.

Mustering Out: A native Hresh cannot take any mustering out benefit that would be higher than a tech level of 3, but they can accept various passages and membership in the Traveller's Aid Society.

Aging: Mature Hresh are immune to the effects of aging. Once they reach the age of 90, there is a 5% chance per year (noncumulative) that they have become venerable and must retire from play. A venerable Hresh becomes immobile, but may live for several more centuries, gradually losing the ability to think and communicate. Players cannot play venerable Hresh as characters.

Other Game Rules

Clearly, the strange Hresh require some special consideration in a Traveller campaign.

Equipment: Human personal equipment cannot be used by Hresh. The modifications necessary aren't worth the expense. Imperial Hresh can have custom equipment made for them, at 250% to 500% of the normal price, sometimes taking three times as long to get. They can seek specialized grafting to take the place of some personal equipment. Emplaced equipment, like radar devices or fusion generators, can be operated without modification.

The Hresh have no equipment that humans would want to use.

Vehicles: Hresh cannot use vehicles designed for humans, except to ride in larger passenger or cargo areas. When they do use vehicles, the most common choice is generic grav sleds, where several of them can pile onto the back. The sensation of motion, incidentally, is highly sought after by orators, since the wind through the branch-arms can be controlled. Otherwise, Hresh usually don't seek vehicle transportation, even on Imperial worlds, preferring to walk, sometimes over vast distances.

Psionics: Hresh have no psionic potential.

Translation: Hresh breeze-song is impossible to emulate by humans, and they cannot imitate human speech. Many have learned the written form of each others' language and can communicate that way. Otherwise, frequent visitors to Shashwa bring translation computers, similar to those used for Hivers, that display motion and give song, then translate back into remote headphones. These translators are expensive, from Cr5,000 minimum up to Cr20,000, depending on the model.

Travel and Starships

Once a starship has braced itself against a Hresh passenger's personal ecosphere, they make excellent guests. They are content to live in human-sized staterooms for any length journey, even over several consecutive jumps. Once settled into their staterooms, they adjust the lighting to a familiar rhythm of day and night, settle their tentacle-roots into the sink or shower, and relax for the duration. Stewards don't have to feed or entertain them, and they never complain. A large number of Hresh travelling together are content to take up space in the cargo holds, provided there is light.

Hresh make poor crew members on a human built ship. They cannot manipulate most controls effectively, and their training and backgrounds are seldom space-oriented. However, a workstation

could be modified to Hresh specifications, requiring an extra ton of space plus a refit of Cr10,000 at any class A or B starport.

Hresh cannot use low passage berths. Frankly, they find the entire concept of such rather amusing.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

Hresh are the embodiment of motherly virtue and charity, tempered by an abhorrence of all diets but their own. They can be adapted into a Traveller campaign easily by a player or the referee by following these quick role-playing tips.

Physical: Don't require food, only sunlight and water. Photosynthetic priority can overtake them in emergencies. Personal menageries of small Shashwan creatures. Can graft on specialized pieces.

Psychological: Extreme mothering instinct, especially for smaller creatures. Slow-paced concept of time. Actively campaign against eating of vegetable or animal cells for sustenance.

Imperial Hresh Encounter

There are thousands of Hresh communities among the human worlds of the Imperium. They model their offworld communities after those on Shashwa, adapting, of course, to the local environment and conditions. The humans on the various host worlds interact infrequently with the strange, reclusive Hresh. Their enclaves are good examples of how two alien societies that don't compete for resources.

The Hresh enclave on Dingir is in a secluded region of the south polar region, just within the so-called "tree line." The humans think of the region as deserted and desolate, many of them are unaware that there is an alien civilization living on the bottom of their world. There are approximately 30,000 Hresh living on Dingir in a single large community, and their liaison officer is Yushwasha.

Yushwasha, Liaison to Dingir

Yushwasha is an important figure among the Hresh of Dingir, more likely than any other to have business communication with humans.

History: Yushwasha is descended from a small group of Hresh who immigrated to the Solomani Rim during the Rule of Man, just like all of his brethren on Dingir. Those descendants dropped their seeds and left, so the entire community is grown on Dingirian soil, and they consider themselves to be natives.

The Dingirian Hresh tend not to travel on the rest of the world, preferring the isolation of their

southern climes. Relations between the Hresh and humans are performed by several liaisons, and Yushwasha continues a long tradition among his kind on this world.

There is no official liaison with the Dingirian government, and there is no office of Hresh relations in the orbital palace. Only those humans whose business brings them in contact with the Hresh maintain communication with them at all. In this case, the two enterprises in closest proximity are the remote foresters of the Royal Forestry Commission, and the strip miners of the Racanite Corporation. Yushwasha is liaison to the latter.

Yushwasha had no previous occupation; dwellers in the community frequently do not, taking only social roles. He maintained a key role in the sun welcoming ceremonies, regarded as an important post among his kind. When the previous liaison to the Corporation approached his own immobility, he sought the council of the community elders and they proposed Yushwasha be trained as a replacement. The young Hresh paid close attention and learned what he could, travelling several times in the company of his predecessor to the corporate mining sites. When his mentor could no longer make the journeys, Yushwasha went on his own. He has held the post for 24 years.

The Racanite Corporation has strip-mined many regions on the southern continents of Dingir, searching for basic metals that are cheaper to mine than import from offworld. There are significant deposits of bauxite and platinum beneath the traditional site of the Hresh enclave, proven reserves that the corporation would like to exploit. Yushwasha has negotiated for them to take over the site as the enclave grows in the direction of other lands, but the process will take more than 200 years, far too long for impatient corporate accountants.

First Encounter: Yushwasha has never petitioned for human assistance before, but he finds himself in a position where he feels he must. A dangerous blight has begun affecting his community, and he suspects that it was introduced by the Racanite corporation to remove the Hresh as an obstacle to their ambitions.

The Hresh can contact the player characters any time they are on Dingir, be it at the starport or in a city. They receive a message that asks them to come to Dingir's southern-most large city, travel due south 50 kilometers by grav or tracked vehicle, and they will be contacted for gainful employment. If they follow instructions, they find themselves in a

desolate part of the world. Yushwasha will penetrate their compound unnoticed, just another tree among the scrub grass.

When he presents himself, Yushwasha can be a startling, magnificent sight. The characters awaken to find the Hresh standing in the middle of their compound, its branch-arms extended high, gathering the dim, polar sunlight. Yushwasha offers greeting through the speakers of its computer translator and thanks the characters for coming. The nests of a dozen local avians buzz with activity and swarms of insects cluster beneath the swaying leaves.

After getting over their initial shock at their patron, the characters learn that Yushwasha wants their help investigating the blight that has infected his community. He can provide some technical data, but the player characters are probably best served visiting the community and investigating firsthand. Yushwasha suggests penetrating the mining corporation to find out if they've invented this disease to force the Hresh out of their way. Yushwasha has no idea how he intends to pay the player characters, and is open to suggestion on how to proceed.

Subsequent Encounters: The player characters may come back to Dingir many times on their travels. It is an important world on the route between Sol and Sylea in the growing Third Imperium. Whenever they call, Yushwasha and his community will gladly extend their hospitality. They can protect the characters from pursuers, hiding them in the wastelands, or help them locate items lost in their wilderness such as downed satellites or meteors. Dingir's Hresh know the southern polar regions better than any of its humans.

Yushwasha may at some time want transport offworld and call on the player characters for their help. He may need transport to a corporate conference or noble retreat. Alternately, he may want to travel with others from his community to Shashwa to consult with elders there. Escorting several Hresh across space can be an adventure in itself as they espouse their doctrine of photosynthetic diet, drawing attention wherever they go.

Native Hresh Encounter

The Hresh homeworld, Shashwa, is a lush and green ball from orbit, with thick foliage covering most of the world's landmasses. Selecting landing sites is difficult, since there are no structures or cities to speak of — enough to drive a navigator insane. Defining where the Hresh communities end and the forests begin is extremely difficult for humans, but not for the Hresh, to whom the forests

and jungles between the communities are well known, and those who make their way among them without a community to call their own are known as uhursh, or "wanderers."

As an uhursh, Osawah is not typical of Hresh on his world. However, it is probably easier to introduce the Hresh into a campaign by introducing the player characters to one example before dumping them into an entire community. Osawah presents the ideal opportunity for such contact.

Osawah, Hresh Wanderer

Osawah is a Hresh who has at times been part of many different communities, mostly along the coastlines of the northern hemisphere. Now he is a uhursh, a wanderer without a community, living independently in the wilderness areas between communities. His life of isolation appeals to him, and he enjoys his solitary nomadic lifestyle.

History: Osawah grew as a seedling and sapling in the mudplains of the far northern hemisphere, joining a community specialized in avian husbandry. Their aviaries, grown of mammoth native trees bent and shaped to form giant chambers, are the wonder of the planet, and many Hresh travel from all over Shashwa to observe and trade for rare species to live in their own branch-arms. Osawah enjoyed this life for two decades before his unsettled ways sent his tentacle-roots on a pilgrimage to the equatorial regions to study under the elder potters of the communities there.

But the potters' life never suited him, and Osawah resigned from that vocation and took to the life of the uhursh. They are accepted as part of the general society of Hresh, surveyors of the wilderness, breeze-song storytellers, and carriers of news from community to community. They can spend many years on their own, away from any other Hresh contact. Uhursh are viewed by other Hresh as unkempt, their leaves and branch-arms disorganized and messy. Wanderers almost never have grafts.

First Encounter: As stated earlier, an inexperienced human pilot has no idea where to make planetfall on Shashwa. Picking a random spot on the globe is more likely to set the ship in the middle of the wilderness rather than adjacent to a Hresh community. In such a case, they're more likely to run into a solitary wanderer like Osawah as their first Hresh contact. Caught unawares in the forests by an intelligent, free moving photosynthesizer, the player characters may be startled, but not nearly so startled as Osawah.

A likely planetfall scenario would place the player characters and their ship in a clearing in the tall forests of Shashwa. Some characters prepare vehicles and pack gear while others take scanner readings of the surrounding forest, challenged to pick a direction. Osawah is witness to all of this, keeping his distance around the perimeter of the camp, amazed by all the technology being wielded by such otherwise-pleasant little creatures.

The humans' first interaction with the silent Hresh can be somewhat comical. A scout may lean his laser rifle against a tree, then find it lying on the ground with no tree at all. A character might hang his utility belt in a tree, then the tree isn't where he thought he left it. Push will come to shove when a player character tries to break off a branch, nail up a scanner dish, or chop a tree for some wood — Osawah flails its branch-arms wildly and scurries off into the adjacent woods, screaming in breeze-song. The Hresh responds to coaxing to come out, but is startled by loud noises, fire, and smiles. Teeth make him especially nervous.

Subsequent communication will be difficult. Unless the player characters have an universal translating device of some kind, they are reduced to the level of simple sign language. Any translator has

basic written Hresh in its banks — they've been part of the Imperium for centuries. Osawah is very curious about the player characters, and his mothering instincts come to the forefront, especially if they have any small pets. He is glad to describe his own physiology as he asks questions about the characters and their vehicles and equipment. In time, when the characters have gained his confidence, Osawah is glad to be their guide around Shashwa. He will try riding in their vehicles, handling their equipment, and so forth. Osawah has heard of the Imperium and starfaring teeth creatures, but has never met any.

Incidentally, Osawah and other Hresh can come to like Aslan. Even though they have the most ferocious teeth of all the major races, they clearly have no interest in eating a photosynthesizer, preferring herbivores. The enemy of my enemy ...

Subsequent Encounters: Osawah cannot be tempted off of Shashwa, but he will always be there when the player characters come calling. He agrees to keep a translator if one is offered, and he will even allow a transponder to be embedded into his bark so the characters can locate him easily. The wanderer can be instrumental if there are any adventures on Shashwa.

THE NEWTS

The intelligent race known as the Newts acquired interstellar travel during the Ziru Sirka (the Vilani Imperium, also known as the First Imperium), although the precise time when this occurred and the details of how the acquisition was accomplished are a matter for some conjecture. As a rule, the conservative Vilani preferred to retain the secret of jump-drive for themselves, but the Newts are one of several races who managed to acquire the technology of jump-drive somehow. Perhaps the Newts' conservative racial philosophy appealed to the Vilani, or perhaps some other factor was involved. Historical records from that period are fragmentary, and usually contradictory, but not unusual for worlds just emerging from the so-called Long Night. Archaeological research on Marhaban (the homeworld of the Newts) has shed little or no light on the question, primarily because the whole affair is not a matter of burning urgency to the Newts, who conduct the few archaeological excavations that take place.

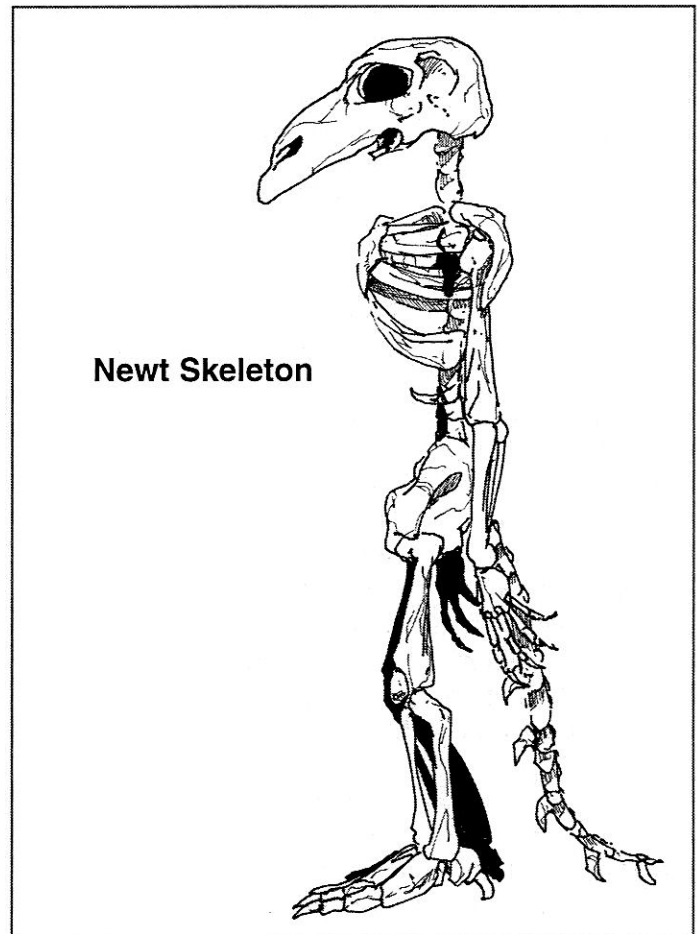
Whenever the technological exchange occurred, it eventually resulted in the distribution of the Newts throughout the region trailing and coreward of Core sector. Newts are dominant on less than a dozen worlds, most of them in and around Lentuli subsector, representing a short burst of interstellar colonization that occurred shortly after their acquisition of the jump-drive technology.

Also known as Bwaps or Wabs from their name for themselves, Bawapakerwa-a-a-awapawab, Newts tend to occupy positions as merchants or bureaucrats, and Newt enclaves tend to be found on worlds located along major trade routes and in mercantile areas. As a reflection of the cosmopolitanism encouraged by interstellar trade, many non-Newt governments (planetary and sub-planetary) employ Newt bureaucrats at surprisingly high levels. Even the Third Imperium (formerly the Sylean Federation) employs Newts in a variety of governmental positions, even though no Newt world is presently under the control of the Third Imperium.

Racial Origins

The race known to Humaniti as the Newts is native to Marhaban, a world in the Lentuli subsector of the Old Expanses. Newts developed from an omnivore gatherer that passed from a semi-aquatic phase to a largely landbound arboreal existence. Before attaining civilization, Newts lived in densely wooded jungle/swamps, excavating under and among the root systems of large trees to form dens for the communal protection of their young and infirm, and climbing from branch to branch among the upper tree canopies to forage for food. It was during this period of their existence that the major features of their cultural and ritual interactions were formed. A shift in climatic patterns on Marhaban caused the jungle areas which formed their native habitat to shrink, forcing them into increased competition with the other animals of the region. The discovery of tools and agriculture permitted the Newts to gain a tremendous advantage over their competition, and put them on the road to civilization. Because of their environment, fire (and its derived technologies, such as advanced metallurgy, pottery, and glass-making) was not developed for use until much later in their progress than is typical. Chemistry also lagged behind, as many reactions require fire as a source of heat. For several thousand years, Newt metallurgical technology was largely confined to cold-working relatively pure chunks of metal (primarily nuggets of

gold and native copper) which would occasionally be found. Metallic iron was known from bog iron deposits and serendipitous finds of meteorites, but



because it is almost impossible to refine or work without fire, the Newts-made iron was in pigments such as red ochre (iron oxide), without knowing that the metal and the red paint were connected. For whatever reason, Newt technological development has been slow, especially when compared to that of the various races of Humaniti. Newt scientists are, however, very thorough.

Newt Physiology

Physically, the Newts are not unusual. They are upright, bipedal quadrupeds with an internal skeleton and bilateral symmetry. Adult Newts average 1.4 meters in height, and mass between 30 and 50 kilograms. There are two sexes, male and female, but both sexes are externally identical.

The basic Newt body plan is a central torso with two pairs of limbs, a head and a tail. The first set of limbs (the arms) are specialized for manipulation, and end in a hand equipped with three slender fingers and a shorter, opposable thumb. Newts have no fingernails, claws or similar structures, but their palms and fingers (except for the tips) have an irregular surface evidently developed to aid in climbing. A thin webbing membrane can be found between the digits of the hands and feet, extending about half the distance to the first knuckle. In some Newts, this extends all the way to the ends of the digits, and is usually surgically removed from the hands after birth, as the webbing would obviously interfere with the developing Newt's manual dexterity. The hands are similar in overall power to a human of similar size, but the length of the fingers and their number make it slightly difficult for them to use tools designed specifically for the human hand (Newts must shift their grip in order to operate the safety on a human weapon, for example), and vice versa. The second set of limbs (the legs) are specialized for locomotion, and end in four-toed feet that resemble the hands, but are larger and not as facile. Wrist and ankle joints are similar to those of Terran primates, and are unremarkable. The feet, like the hands, also have a surface consistent with an arboreal origin. The long, thick tail is used as a balancing organ (and, occasionally, as a portable, built-in stool), has no spikes or other natural weaponry, and is not prehensile. What purpose the tail served during the tree-dwelling phase of the Newt's pre-history is unknown.

Because their skin must be kept constantly moist, Newts are uncomfortable in humidity of less than 98%. With special clothing, however, they can exist indefinitely in humidity as low as 25% provided

they have adequate water. In conditions of less than 25% humidity, Newts must wear sealed environment suits or spray their entire skin with water every few minutes (if their skin dries out completely, it loses most of its flexibility and will develop painful lesions).

The head contains the brain and the primary sensory organs (paired eyes and ears), enclosed within a protective skull. The brain has four lobes, and shows the usual convolutions. A central spinal cord is sheltered within an arrangement of bony vertebrae in a spinal column similar to countless other species on many worlds. The shoulders contain ball/socket-type joints similar to the brachiating shoulder girdle of Terran primates, further evidence of significant arboreal development. The construction of the hip joints are consistent with a long, well-established bipedal posture — Newts have clearly walked upright for hundreds of millennia.

The torso consists of a rib cage surrounding and protecting the digestive, reproductive, and excretory systems, vital organs such as the heart and lungs, in addition to two vocal sacs used in speaking. The body cavity also contains paired kidneys and an organ serving a function similar to the liver, as well as other organs.

Respiration is solely through the paired nares (nasal openings) located on each side of the upper surface of the protuberant muzzle (Newts cannot breathe through their mouth). Air is taken into the lungs, where oxygen is transferred to and waste gasses removed from the bloodstream. The waste gasses are exhaled, and the cycle repeats. Respiration is under semi-autonomic control, and Newts can close their nares by means of sphincter muscles when external conditions dictate (evidently a holdover from the semi-aquatic lifestyle of their remote ancestors).

The Newt digestive tract is similar enough to that of Terran lifeforms to be able to digest many of the same chemical nutrients, although Newts require different amino acids (Newts can subsist on commonly available foods, along with a few easily-synthesized dietary supplements). Newts have 36 teeth (dental formula 2/0/4/3), well-adapted to an omnivorous diet, but the lack of canines indicates that plant matter played a large role in the development of the Newt diet. Newts have a single stomach, and a typical arrangement of intestines feeding into a cloaca which (as in Terran birds) is shared with the paired kidneys.

The circulatory system is closed, with a four-chambered heart and a copper-based hemoglobin that gives a slight bluish tint to any areas of skin that are unpigmented, such as the palms of their hands,

their lower torso, and the underside of their tail. Blood vessels connect the heart, lungs, and the tissues of the body. Arteries (blood vessels carrying blood away from the heart) and veins (vessels carrying blood back to the heart) are connected at their extremities by a system of capillaries. The kidneys act as a filter, removing waste products from the bloodstream, and sending them to a cloaca.

The reproductive system in Newts is completely internal in both male and female. Newts are oviparous, each female incubating a single, non-amniotic egg in a special pouch in the lower abdomen for 212 standard days. After hatching, the young remain in this pouch for several weeks, occasionally sticking their head out to be fed. After six to eight weeks, the young Newt is strong enough to survive on its own, and is sent to a "nursery" to be raised among other young Newts of the same clan.

Senses: Newts are primarily sight-oriented (much as humans are) and their paired eyes give them stereoscopic vision (vitally important in a climbing race). Color vision was developed as an adaptation to their arboreal environment, both to enable them to move through the trees and to help in locating food. The Newt visual acuity and frequency range are effectively identical to that of normal humans.

Newt ears are located on the head, small holes leading to the auditory canal, which can be closed off at will by sphincter muscles. Newt hearing is slightly less acute than human, as they lack external earlobes, and this also makes it more difficult for them to determine the origin of sounds by bi-location. The range of frequencies detected is (as with vision) effectively identical to that of normal Humans.

Newt fingertips are more sensitive than those of humans. In addition, their skin can discern differences in temperature and humidity.

Their sense of smell is not significantly different from normal Humans.

Communication: Newts communicate primarily by sound, although sight is an important secondary channel. Newts use their tongue, lips, and teeth to modulate sounds created by a set of vocal cords, but the air used to vibrate these vocal cords is supplied by paired air sacs totally separate from the respiratory system. The evolutionary origin of these sacs is a matter for conjecture. Most experts believe they developed out of primitive swim bladders, possibly for use as a signaling mechanism during mate selection in the proto-Newt ancestor. Over time, signaling during courtship led to the organ's use during more general communication.

Newt conversations are extremely complicated.

Communication is a ritual, and must follow well-established, traditional procedures. Newts have little patience with non-Newts who try to communicate outside of these procedures. The only exception is for emergencies — it is permissible, for example, to interrupt a conversation to announce that the building is on fire and suggest an immediate evacuation.

Language: From the few words of the Newt language (Wawa-pakekeke-wawa, literally "sounds of knowledge") given in this document, readers may conclude that it is overly simplistic and highly repetitive. While it has only 2 vowels and 12 consonants (including a click represented by "-") in the standard alphabetic transliteration to Galanglic, Wawa-pakekeke-wawa is highly tonal, meaning that each syllable can be spoken in one of five different tones, and a word can have a different meaning depending upon the pronunciation. Tonal variations are represented by subscripts following each syllable, thus the word for "Tree of Life" — Wapawab — would be written as Wa3pa1wab5, which is a totally different word from Wa3pa1wab4, or Wa3pa1wab3. Wawa-pakekeke-wawa is the only living Newt language, although several minor dialects exist that are of importance only to scholars. Several different Newt languages were in use in the period before Vilani contact, but Wawa-pakekeke-wawa rapidly achieved supremacy, and the others seem to have died out before the Long Night. In its written form, Wawa-pakekeke-wawa is a syllabary (each possible syllable is represented by a unique symbol), with diacritical marks above each symbol to indicate tone.

Verbs are always placed at the end of the sentence, which means that a running translation of a spoken conversation is relatively slow (each sentence must be completed before the full meaning can be rendered...the difference between "We contract accept" and "We contract accept not" illustrates this problem nicely). Mechanical translations of Wawa-pakekeke-wawa therefore tend to be slower than those of most other languages, aggravating the problem of dealing with Newt bureaucrats.

Fortunately for the other races that must deal with them, Newts have little trouble learning other languages (although their accent can be a little hard to understand at times), and Newt modules for electronic translators are available wherever Newts are prevalent.

Sub-Racial Variations: Individual Newts are distinguishable by their body markings, although Humans may not be able to detect many of the subtleties of these markings. Newt body markings vary from clan (or "tree") to clan, each one having a dis-

tinct pattern and color combination. The pattern is determined by genetic factors, the color determined partly by genetics and partly by careful manipulation of the mother's diet during the formation of the individual egg. Greens, blue-greens, browns, yellow-browns are the usual colors, normally in patterns of darker colors over a lighter base color, with parts of the belly and tail showing the pale blue of unpigmented skin.

Newt Psychology

In a cultural sense, Newts are fairly uniform, and show only minor differences in social organization and behavior, despite being scattered throughout a large region of known space. In this, they are similar to the equally conservative Vilani. It is remarkable that this level of social and cultural uniformity remained virtually intact throughout the 1700+ years of the Long Night, and this has led some to conclude that Newt culture and society must have a deeper basis in their genetic make-up than other sophonts.

Nurseries: In the clan nursery (a sort of boarding school), young Newts are sheltered, fed, and trained in the customs and traditions of their race and their clan. At the same time, they are given the technological background and education necessary to a citizen of the interstellar community at large. Newts are considered mature after 14 years, and at that age enter a period of testing and training to determine how they are to be fitted into their proper place in the universe. Training is completed after four years, and the mature Newt (at 18 years of age) may then enter into an occupation or pursue further education (depending upon the results of the earlier testing and training).

Newts who have become too old to pursue their careers, or who have chosen to retire (this is an individual decision, of course, but usually occurs between 65 and 75 standard years) are also sent to nurseries, where they serve as teaching assistants, baby-sitters, and spiritual advisors to the growing Newt juveniles.

The concept of a spiritual soul is unknown to the Newts, who believe that after death, the Tree of Trees will absorb their unique essence (the molecules of their physical body and the energy level that made it alive) and redistribute it among other Newts yet unborn. This belief in a form of reincarnation is the closest thing the Newts have to an afterlife or immortality. They have no special ceremonies associated with death, other than any which may be part of an individual clan's tradition. Other members of the clan see to the body's burial as soon as reason-

ably possible after death. Some clans practice cremation, with the ashes scattered into the nearest undeveloped area (jungle or swamp is preferred).

Newts born with webbing between their fingers are believed to be marked for some special purpose (even though the webbing is removed shortly after birth), and it is up to the individual Newt (with the possible help of the clan's Pannawa-aa-naa) to determine what that might be.

Homeworld: Marhaban

The Newt Homeworld of Marhaban (A 4697DB-A) is also the name of the K8 star it orbits, located in the Lentuli subsector of the Old Expanses sector, approximately 40 parsecs from Sylea. The Marhaban system contains a total of eight major planetary bodies (including one small gas giant) and hundreds of smaller bodies. It is occasionally confused with another world named Marhaban (located in the Lishun sector), a desert world completely devoid of moisture and a source of some puzzlement to the casual reader of astrographic documents. Marhaban was the name given the system by the Vilani, but the word seems to be borrowed from another language than Vilani. The Newt name for the world is Wa-bawapakerwa-a-a-awa-pawa-bawabawaba, a term that, like the Newt word for themselves, defies literal translation, but seems to mean something like "small branch of the great tree that floats in the vast ocean."

Marhaban has a 21 standard hour day, and a 358 day year — remarkably close to Terran standard. Marhaban's axial tilt is very small, however, and seasonal variation in climate is minimal.

Marhaban's land area consists of a single main continent and a number of archipelagoes and smaller islands in a relatively shallow sea.

Newt Society

The basic underlying principles of Newt society closely parallel those of other mechanized societies, including Sylea, Vland, and Terra. The prime motivating force in Newt society, and the most difficult concept for outsiders to grasp, is the Newt world view, summed up in the word "Wapawab" ("tree of trees").

The Newt world view is not really a religion by the usual criteria, but it dominates almost every facet of their lives, and is followed with an intensity usually reserved for religious belief by other cultures. This view holds that each individual has a place in the Wapawab, a term which has its origins in the species' primordial habitat, but has been expanded

over the centuries to include place of duty, native country, and bloodlines. Literally translated, Wapawab means "tree of trees", and might be best rendered idiomatically as something like "ecosystem," but the term means much more than that to the Newts. The literal tree is intricately tied into a local and planetary ecosystem, providing shelter for hundreds of individuals of all species, converting water and minerals into food, absorbing carbon dioxide and excreting oxygen, and so on. The figurative tree, or "Tree of Life" is much harder to define. Originally, the "Tree of Life" represented a collection of loosely related clans or tribal groups, and was roughly equivalent to the city/state in other cultures. This is made more confusing by the fact that there also exist a seemingly infinite number of lesser "trees" (with a lower-case "t"), each of which is also called Wapawab, and in which an individual Newt may simultaneously claim membership. The figurative trees can consist of a few individuals or many thousands (millions in the case of the ultimate "Tree of Life"). Even non-Newts can be members of some trees. Both literal and figurative trees exist as part of a planet, which is part of a solar system, which is part of a cluster, which is part of a galaxy, which is part of the cosmos. Everything the Newts do reflects this complex, wheels-within-wheels, patterns-within-patterns outlook. Every individual Newt is raised and educated to take great pride in being one small, functional and unique cog in a vast, ever-living, ever-changing universe of interlocked cogs and patterns. Their greeting ritual, for example, seems like meaningless formality and windy chit-chat to non-Newts, but essentially reflects the statement: "I am in this place, and doing this job to keep the Cosmos operating properly. Where are you, and what do you do to keep the Cosmos operating properly?" Another complicating factor is the fact that an individual's place in the various "trees" can change, sometimes once or twice in a lifetime, sometimes twice a month.

From the human perspective, Newts are obsessed with minutiae, rituals, patterns, and the proper order of things. Driven by this innate, internal desire to see everything in its proper place (properly labeled and cross-indexed, of course), the Newts make excellent bureaucrats, bookkeepers, mathematicians, and (to a lesser extent) lawyers, scientists, and historians. In the latter two occupations, they seldom do groundbreaking research on their own, but in partnership with others, they can often see patterns or make correlations with data that their co-workers miss.

The Newts' obsession with ritual and proper con-

duct often makes them difficult for humans to deal with, especially those in a hurry. Anyone who violates protocol will be immediately lectured on the proprieties of the situation and the importance of procedure, usually at great length. Dealing with Newts takes time, but trying to speed things up only aggravates the situation, and takes more time. The situation is not helped by the relative slowness with which electronic translators process the Newt language.

Criminal behavior is rare among the Newts, and considered the worst form of mental disorder among them, as it is disruptive of the proper order of things. The Newt definition of crime, however, can sometimes be at variance with what other races might consider to be the norm. The elimination of a highly disruptive influence is considered good, even if it involves the death of an intelligent being to restore the cosmos to proper order. Fortunately, exile from a world/subsector/sector is usually remedy enough for most Newt judges. Newt bureaucrats have been also been known to "shanghai" troublemakers (kidnap the offenders and place them in cold sleep on the next starship headed for the most remote destination possible).

Newts can adapt to any day between 18 and 36 hours in length, requiring between 5 and 8 hours of sleep per 21, which they usually take in several small naps distributed throughout their day as time permits.

Family/Clan Relationships: Among the Newts, family ties are less important than the individual's position in their clan and in the "Tree of Life." Newts consider the ties of occupation, duty, and (especially) clan to be of overwhelming importance, while viewing parent and sibling relationships to be relatively insignificant. Ask a Newt "Who were your parents?" or "Do you have any brothers or sisters?" and you will most likely receive a puzzled look in reply, followed by "I suppose I do. . . I never really thought about it" or words to that effect.

Cities: Newt cities are unknown outside of the planets they control. In larger starports, there is often a Newt "quarter," a section of the community where Newts make their home on a temporary or permanent basis. Newts require little in the way of special habitations other than provision for high humidity and occasional fungicide treatments.

Government/Law: The Newts have no overall government. Each world is self-governing, without recourse to the other worlds except in the sense that all follow the same general set of principles. The few worlds that are completely Newt-controlled are classed as government type D (Religious

Dictatorship), because the Newt worldview is pursued with a religious fervor, even though it is not a religion per se. Law levels are usually very restrictive (A or higher), with high levels of official harassment of the citizenry reflecting the obsession of the Newts with "proper" behavior. Newt worlds in general are governed by councils of Pannawa-aa-naa, (literally "old wise ones," or Elders), the same name applied to the informal groups of older Newts that serve as clan leaders, high government officials, and the repository of the "laws" (the traditional ways of doing things) for the individual clan and/or polity. All Newt public officials, police, bureaucrats, judges, inspectors, et cetera, are appointed by the ruling council. To outsiders, it seems like an incredibly chaotic way to govern anything: there are no terms of office, no elections, no system of checks and balances. . . indeed, no limits on power whatsoever, except the Newts' sense of "tree" family and tradition. In practice, however, tradition has the force of law, and Newt public officials will often resign their positions when they feel that they are no longer "doing their part to keep the cosmos operating properly."

Commerce: Newts often unite for business ventures, but no Newt megacorporations exist, perhaps because no Newt has ever determined that the cosmos requires one. Newt entrepreneurs tend to devote themselves wholeheartedly to their businesses to the exclusion of all other activities (but not always. . . perhaps their place in the cosmos requires them to do other things from time to time). The idea of a vacation will be almost completely alien to a Newt (this does not mean they never rest; Newts need sleep like most other sophonts). Newt businessmen have no particular advantage over other races, except for a certain single-mindedness of purpose.

Clothing and Equipment

Newt clothing normally consists of a loose-fitting Kaftan-like garment covering most of the body and a hood covering the head (giving rise to another, less-common nickname: "Towel-heads"). The cloth of these garments is permeated with a network of fine tubes, through which water flows to keep the cloth moist. A waterproof outer layer helps keep the moisture next to their skin. In occupations where they must handle objects that could be damaged by moisture, Newts wear thin, waterproof gloves covering their arms. In extremely dry situations, Newts carry a small sprayer, misting their face from time to time.

All clothing, vac suits, hostile environment suits

and other body coverings is colored with a stylized representation of the individual wearer's body markings, since recognition of the body pattern plays such a vital part in the Newt greeting ritual. The only exceptions are military combat uniforms, which bow to the needs of camouflage and concealment. Newt military full-dress and fatigue uniforms do have individual markings. All of this tends to make Newt clothing highly individualized, and Newt vac suits and similar outfits slightly more expensive.

Newts, being roughly similar in size to Humans, can use the vast majority of Human tools and equipment without modification, but a few minor accommodations are necessary. Chairs require an opening in the rear for the Newt's tail, for example. Joysticks, control yokes, handgrips, and other items must be replaced with similar items form-fitted to Newt hands for 100% efficiency of operation. Clothing such as vac suits, hostile environment suits, and so on will obviously have to be specially constructed with the Newt body form in mind (the only "one size fits all" vac suit, after all, is the rescue ball).

Electronic equipment must be especially well sealed to avoid the detrimental effects of the high humidity Newts require, but this is a standard feature of such equipment at TL-10 and above.

Newts History

At the time of their contact by the Vilani, the Newts had achieved tech level 7, and had stabilized there for at least two centuries. Within 75 years, the Newts had advanced to TL10, a totally unheard-of rate for technological advancement, which had never occurred in their entire history, and would never be repeated. Newts are not driven by intellectual curiosity as are Humans or Hivers, and advances in technology were slow until contact with other interstellar cultures brought a synergy that spurred a short-lived period of technological advance coupled with an equally brief period of interstellar colonization. The progress slowed after a few centuries, however, and Newt society achieved stability once again, except for the steady expansion of Newt mercantile operations along major trade routes.

Under the Rule of Man, the position of the Newts did not alter significantly. The Newts had no trouble adapting to life under the Second Empire (it would appear that they felt the new humans were simply another facet of the kaleidoscopic cosmos).

During the Long Night, interstellar trade ceased for centuries, and the Newts lost their technological acquisitions from the Vilani. Records are scant, but excavations on Marhaban and the other Newt worlds

indicate several centuries passed without interstellar contact. At some point between -1100 and -900, interstellar travel began again, and the Newt desire to restore order to the universe reasserted itself. It was during this period that the so-called "Bwap Diaspora" occurred — Newt merchant vessels began traveling farther and farther from Marhaban, re-opening markets closed by centuries of barbarism and decay.

In Milieu 0, formal representatives of the Sylean Federation made contact with Newt merchants at about -240, but they have yet to come upon a Newt-controlled planet (although Human Merchant ships reached Marhaban at about -112).

Contact: Newts were first contacted by scouts of the Ziru Sirka, and their entry in the encyclopedia of the Argushiigi Admegusha Bilandin (Vilani Repository of All Knowledge) is the earliest historical mention of their existence. At some unspecified time after this initial contact, the Newts acquired jump drive technology from the Vilani.

Mysteries Of The Newts

There are several aspects of Newt history which remain unknown:

- When, exactly, and how did the Newts acquire jump drive technology? Why did the Vilani choose to single out the Newts as one of the few races to give the secret of the jump drive?

- How have the Newts managed to retain such a consistent culture throughout the 1700+ year isolation of the Long Night? Almost all other races who have undergone such fragmentation developed considerable cultural variation under similar conditions, and over periods of time less than half as long.

Newt Character Generation

Newt NPCs can be interesting and valuable additions to a campaign, but it is doubtful that players will find them rewarding. The following modifications should be implemented when generating Newt characters.

Initial Character Generation: Generate Newt primary characteristics using one of the methods described on page 15 of the basic rules, but after the final values are determined, subtract 4 from Strength and Endurance. Newt names are incredibly long and complex, so a shorter "nickname" should be chosen by the referee and/or player for use in play. Newts sometimes adopt an Anglic name for the convenience of those around them.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Skills are acquired as noted in the basic rules, except for the following: The first level of Administration, Broker, Bureaucracy, Business, Law, and/or Trader skills

acquired counts as two levels (making it impossible for a Newt character to have Broker 1, for example, only Broker 2+ or none at all). Any subsequent levels in these skills accumulate normally.

Newts may not enter the Agent or Rogue careers (for obvious reasons).

Newts may not possess the following skills (re-roll any such results that do occur): Bribery, Forgery, Gambling, and Streetwise.

Newts have no hereditary titles of nobility in their own culture. A high Social Standing merely indicates the level of respect within Newt society. Newts may be granted Imperial titles, at the option of the individual referee.

Advanced Education: Newts may enter any advanced college, school or academy. Entry to the Merchant Academy is automatic, provided the character meets the prerequisites.

Mustering Out: Mustering out is no different from the normal character generation procedures.

Aging: Newt characters roll for the effects of aging beginning at age 31 rather than 35. Otherwise, follow the aging rules as outlined on page 22 of the basic rules. The Newt lifespan is the same as that of the Human.

Psionics: Psionic ability in Newts is rare, but not unknown. Determine Psionic potential as noted on page 123 of the basic rules, but implement an additional DM -3 over and above the other modifications. Newts have no psionic institutes of their own, but they can be trained at Psi Institutes along with other sophonts.

Other Game Rules

Players with no experience in dealing with Newts (the precise definition of "experience" is up to the individual referee to decide) have a DM of -3 on the Reaction Table whenever interacting with one. Referees may reduce this DM for any knowledge of Newt customs and rituals. Players may gain such knowledge by study (via books, expert systems, libraries, or other data sources) or by direct association with Newts. In general, the more complicated the Newt/Human interaction, the longer it will take to learn the rituals and customs involved. To learn the proper way a Human greets a Newt (which differs from Newt-on-Newt greetings) may take several days of intense research and practice. To be able to deal with a bureaucrat or official with relative speed and facility may take a month or two. To learn the ins and outs of trial procedure or contract negotiations may take months or even years.

Official interactions with Newt bureaucrats should

take about 25% longer than a corresponding interaction with a human (assuming that one of the parties in the interaction has an efficient translator, and that the PCs involved are familiar with Newt procedures and do not try to rush things). Otherwise, the referee is the best arbiter of how long such interactions should take (bearing in mind what will make for the most interesting and challenging outcome of the adventure).

Players with Newt characters must bear in mind that there are certain activities that their characters may not engage in. Newts may not knowingly lie (although they may withhold the truth if protocol demands it). Newts may not break the law, unless by doing so they can restore the proper balance of the cosmos. Newts will not obey orders that are disruptive of the proper balance of the cosmos, in their view. Disorder and disorganization make Newts nervous, and they will find it difficult to resist the urge to reorganize and rearrange their immediate surroundings.

Newt NPCs may serve as any of the four types of NPC discussed in the basic rules (page 154), but they are primarily useful as spear carriers and troublemakers.

Equipment: Because of the general resemblance of the human and Newt body forms, most equipment designed for one race can be used by the other without penalty. Computer keyboards, kitchen knives, and thousands of other items fall into this category. Items which require a close ergonomic fit to a particular race, such as pistol grips, vac suits waldos, filter masks, and the like require a negative DM when used by a member of another race. Newts receive a -1 DM when attempting to use such equipment not specifically designed to fit them (and the same is true of non-Newts trying to make use of Newt-specialized items). Newt-specific equipment is generally more scarce than human-specific equipment, but the price is the same. Items such as vac suits, rebreathers, or body armor must be specially designed for an individual race, and are not interchangeable. Such equipment designed for Newts costs 110% of the normal price (multiply the price by 1.1). The referee should determine the relative availability of any Newt-specific equipment a character wants to acquire.

Military: Newt military forces are usually restricted to the defense of their homeworlds or large Newt enclaves. Newts are occasionally found in mercenary units, but are usually segregated from other races because of social and logistical problems.

Travel and Starships

Newts are roughly the same size as humans (both in height and weight), and fit comfortably into Human spaceships and transports with few problems. Most chairs, seats, and acceleration couches can be adjusted to allow for the tails of Newts (and many other aliens as well). Life support requires only minor adjustments for Newts (primarily to humidity levels, although Newts require additional water in their diet as well). Newts can tolerate human standard gravity, atmospheric mixtures, and light levels for indefinite periods. They can exist on human food with only minor supplements, and their waste products can be processed by human sanitation machinery without difficulty. Converting human low passage machinery to accept Newts is not difficult, and requires only an hour or two's work (an Easy Electronics task).

Quick Role-Playing Tips

Introducing Newt characters into a campaign can be facilitated by bearing the following in mind:

Physical: High humidity required for good health.

Psychological: Compulsive organizers, painstaking and methodical.

Imperial Newt Encounter

This encounter is with Kerwa-waapa, a typical Newt working for the Third Imperium as a customs inspector. Kerwa-waapa is thus in a position to meet almost any group of starfaring characters returning from outside the borders of the newly formed Third Imperium.

Kerwa-Waapa, Customs Inspector

Kerwa-waapa, like all of her kind, requires that everything proceed according to the proper form, and at its proper pace. While this can make her a bit of a pest to groups that are in a hurry to get to their final destination (or those with something to hide), one of Kerwa-waapa's other traits can prove a blessing in disguise: her natural loquacity. Kerwa-waapa is quite talkative (even for a Newt), and her conversation tends to run towards the interesting tidbits she has discovered in the course of her work. Since she routinely inspects ship's papers and crews from all points of origin, Kerwa-waapa is in a position to uncover bits of information that may interest the group, and may let them slip if she is not turned to other topics (such as giving lectures on the proper protocols to be pursued by a ship's crew when undergoing inspection by an Imperial customs official).

The referee must use discretion when imparting information through Kerwa-waapa. The quality of the

rumor will vary with her reaction to the characters: high rolls on the Reaction Table result in very useful rumors, middle range rolls give less useful ones, and low rolls yield no information at all. Naturally, if Kerwa-waapa discovers anything amiss (such as cargos not listed on the ship's manifest), her reaction will be very negative. Rumors passed on in this way will tend to be things like: "How odd. . . I saw a shipment of Helvetan water cult statuettes just like these only yesterday. The papers classified them as reproductions, just like these." or "Pity you aren't bound for Igushin. . . they're offering a premium for Tigrian pineapples there right now. . . seems the local crop caught some kind of blight and is only half what was forecast."

Mercantile Newt Encounter

This encounter is with Pawa-ba, a Newt merchant captain, the owner/operator of the free trader Wabawapakerwa-a-a-awa-pawa-bawabawaba (loosely translated as "Even smaller branch of the great tree that floats in the vast ocean" — the difference between the ship name and the name for the Newt homeworld is tonal). Pawa-ba (a nickname, since his full name is too long for this short section, as it requires over two minutes to pronounce) works the less-travelled trade routes in or near Core sector but not yet taken over by the expanding Third Imperium. Pawa-ba's crew consists mostly of Newts, but he

hires other sophonts from time to time, and might be persuaded to give working passage to the characters if he and they have a common destination.

Pawa-ba was born with webbing between his fingers and toes, and although this was surgically removed when he was very young, he believes that this gives him a special position in the cosmos. Humans who have met him describe Pawa-ba as being almost childishly naive in his approach to life. Pawa-ba believes that he need not make any conscious plans, instead trusting the Tree of Life for his future (and the future of his ship and its crew). Despite this "go-with-the-flow" attitude, Pawa-ba has been remarkably successful, partly due to the fact that his mercantile instincts are extremely good, and partly to that Pawa-ba seems to get more lucky breaks than a dozen merchant captains deserve. If a starport has a broker looking for 20 metric tons of Mallificen allspice, it just so happens that Pawa-ba arrives that very hour with that very amount in his hold. If a dealer in rare sculptures happens to mention to Pawa-ba that he wants a particularly rare piece, it will coincide that Pawa-ba had seen that very sculpture for sale at his last port of call, and bought it on a whim. The characters may be in a position to take advantage of Pawa-ba's unique talent, at the referee's discretion.

NUNCLEES

Nunclees are one of the more unusual intelligent life forms in the known galaxy. In fact, there is considerable debate among scientists and biologists as to whether they are an intelligent creature at all. The base creature, after all, is merely an insignificant worm, without great intelligence or power. However, they can gather into a conglomerate mass, a self-symbiotic relationship that, with greater numbers, has greater intelligence and mobility. The Nunclees, as most Imperials know them, are the highest order of the conglomerate, made up of thousands of individual worms joined together into a tentacled mass.

The Imperium's Scout Service has yet to actually classify the Nunclees. They defy standard classification, despite the fact that their Supreme form is undeniably intelligent. Volunteers have been taken to established research stations for analysis. The Emperor has yet to meet a Nunclees face to face, as is the tradition for species that puzzle the experts. His judgment takes precedence.

The Nunclees have no spoken language. The conglomerate mass exchanges information through electrical impulse, and these can be shared by touching another mass or by exchanging individual component worms. Computer translators must make contact with the Nunclees itself to gather these impulses and evaluate their data. The name Nunclees has no known origin. Colloquially, they are known around the Imperium as "worm balls."

Racial Origins

The Nunclees homeworld, Trenamii, is a watery world with vast areas of swampland. The component worms are an extremely simple life form, many billions of years old, native to the swampy regions feeding on decay in the damp soil. Archaeological evidence proves that the component worms have remained unchanged for all that time.

Civilization, however, or at least evidence of conglomerate forms of Nuncleen life doesn't show up until 50,000 years ago. The biological advance from single worm life to full Supreme Nunclees was apparently swift, perhaps no more than 100 years. Individual worms banded together into larger, more effective forms. The impetus to do so is unclear, since individual worms thrive to this day in the same swamplands where they evolved.

The Nunclees civilization grew quickly and has remained unchanged for 40,000 years. Their technology is simple agrarian, using muscle power, fossil fuels, and natural materials. In many ways they are primitives, but their biological makeup makes them a most intriguing race.

Nunclees Physiology

A Nunclees can take on many forms at will, dividing into smaller pieces, growing from small remnants of the original. To understand the Nunclees, one must examine the component worms, how they congregate, and the several forms they commonly take as catalogued by the Scout Service.

Component Worms: The building block of the Nunclees is the single worm. Each one is roughly 8 centimeters long, half a centimeter in diameter, and

weighs about 10 grams. They are gray or pink, lined with tiny blood vessels visible beneath the skin. It is a simple animal that can perform all the tasks necessary for survival. It can eat and digest food, contract its muscular body for locomotion and digging, all controlled by a miniscule brain and alien nervous system.

As a component part, the individual worm contributes everything to the success of the greater whole. It is essentially one slender muscle that can channel nervous impulses, contributing its brain to the conglomerate intelligence.

Least Form: A grouping of roughly 200 component worms is called a Least Form, weighing in at about 2 kilograms. These are self aware and able to sustain more damage than the individuals would separately. In fact, these are their only two characteristics. Joint protection may be the only impetus to conglomerate in the first place.

Lesser Form: The lesser form is equivalent to the mass of four Least Forms, or about 800 worms and around 8 kilograms. The Lesser Form protrudes short extremities for the sole purpose of locomotion. The four tentacles are only about 20 centimeters long.

Median Form: Median Nunclees are intelligent insofar as they can perform simple tasks and follow instructions, much like an obedient dog. They are equivalent to four lesser forms at 3200 worms and 32 kilograms. Medians have eight tentacles that reach out to 40 centimeters.

Supreme Form: Supremes are highly intelligent, cognizant creatures, with complete reasoning and problem-solving abilities. A Supreme is equivalent to about four Median Forms, or 12,800 worms at 128

kilograms. They have eight tentacles that reach out 60 centimeters. Supreme Form conglomerates are arguably as intelligent as human beings.

Division: A form of Nunclees can divide into its lesser forms at will. These forms are stair-stepped, and there are no intermediate forms. For instance, a Supreme cannot divide off two Medians and remain half a Supreme. Its only option is to become four Medians, or sixteen Lessers or even 64 Leasts. The act of division takes two to three minutes. In doing so, a Nunclees is voluntarily giving up its individuality and most of its intellect, at least temporarily.

Life Cycle and Regrowth: A Nunclee never actually dies, nor is it born. Only the individual component worms are mortal creatures. These are asexual, dividing when they store enough energy from food intake. In conglomerate forms, the component worms only divide on the consensus of the whole, then only to repair damage.

Each form below Supreme can grow new worms or gather loose worms from the environment to make the ascension to the next level. The conditions must be right, and there seems to be some overriding mass consciousness that dictates how many of each form there will be in a given area of the swamp. Nevertheless, ascension is fairly common on their homeworld, as the Nunclees still have predators.

All the following information about Nuncleen physiology is presented with respect to the Median and Supreme Forms. Least and Lesser Forms are insignificant life forms for purposes of Traveller play.

Strength: Supreme tentacles have roughly the power of a child's arm. They cannot compare individually to that of a human, though they can bring several to bear on a single object.

Agility: The Nunclees are slower than humans. Speed is not an essential survival trait for their race, so has never been developed. As long as a handful of component worms survive the onslaught of a predator, the perpetuation of the race is preserved.

Moisture: All Nunclees require a higher level of humidity and ambient moisture than humans find comfortable. Staterooms converted for their use are steam baths, with water dripping down the walls, ruining paper and unprotected electronics alike.

Nunclees Psychology

Undeniably intelligent, the Nunclees are also unemotional and passive. Motivation is difficult, owing in large part to their unique survivability. They process data remarkably well, but are not given to emotional bonding or reactions. Also, they are unable to distin-

guish easily between aliens and other Nunclees. To them, any intelligent creature must be one of their own.

Lack of Motivation: Human motivation is a derivative of the survival instinct. Actions must be taken in order to survive, or at least to better the quality of life. These motivations are lacking in the Nunclees, since their survivability is rooted in a much simpler process. The Nunclees have no fear of death, since their component worms will go on to join into other larger forms. They have an acceptance of their place in the food chain, but know deep down that their race will survive.

Humans find Nunclees very difficult to motivate. Convincing them to take action, even in pressing situations, can be maddening. They are content to wait patiently for the outcome of events rather than react and interfere with them, even for their own benefit. The starship may be plummeting into the sun, and a Nunclees would rather contemplate the implications than apply itself to change the outcome. They are not impossible to motivate, provided a logical scenario can be put to them.

Unemotional: Nunclees have no great attachment to themselves as conglomerate creatures, much less any emotional regard for others. Bonding and friendship are unknown to them. Love, an outgrowth of survival instinct in most races, is foreign to them. The one-on-one relationships that give humans such comfort and even reason to exist are absent in the Nunclees.

In interactive situations, the Nunclees have no regard for the welfare of others. On their own world, a companion that plummets to the bottom of a ravine will merely reassemble into other Nunclees forms. Only Nunclees who have existed among humans for a long period of time recognize quickly and consistently that their new companions are more fragile. Even then, the loss of companions doesn't affect them, as they have no understanding of the trauma of separation, and are completely baffled by the ramifications of unrequited love.

One Brotherhood of Intellect: There are no other intelligent life forms on the Nunclees homeworld. Therefore, they consistently use signs of intelligence to identify others of their kind. The humans and other aliens they encounter are treated just like more of their own. The ramifications are many.

Worms tend to leap off of a Nunclees onto the other intelligent creatures around them; they do this among themselves all the time as a sort of greeting, or perhaps to keep the component worm genetic pool in constant motion. Most aliens find it disgust-

ing, but the higher forms of Nunclees can do nothing to stop it. Also, the Nunclees leave a trail of semi-digested paste around their companions; it's an uncontrollable urge to share with other intelligent creatures. The paste smells bad and is difficult to clean off of floors and bulkheads.

Homeworld: Trenamii

The Nunclees homeworld has spawned a single intelligent life form, but teems with other life.

The Solar System: Trenamii is the fourth world of a fifteen-world system circling a young main sequence G7 star. The fifth world, Usugua, is also partially habitable by humans, and two different terraforming companies have established settlements there. The ninth and fourteenth worlds are gas giants. Trenamii has two moons, Yui and Dretai — jagged, captured asteroid bodies that move swiftly through the Tranamiin sky.

Geography: The entire equatorial region is dominated by thick, muddy swamps. The annual rainfall is measured in meters. Steaming jungles, lush with native plant and animal life, are a botonist's dream, as many from the Imperium have set up camps to study the local biology for unusual or useful compounds. Toward either pole, the swamplands give way to relatively lifeless rocky plains and low mountains.

Despite the abundant hydrographic percentage, there are no large seas on Tranamii. Most areas drain into honeycombed rock that reaches miles below the surface. Much of the world's water is continuously locked in the planet's atmosphere and terrific weather systems.

Time: The local day is 21.3 hours long. The year is 450.3 local days, or 504.3 standard days. Yui circles Trenamii every 8.8 hours, Dretai every 17.1.

Nunclees History

Though intelligent, the Nunclees have little social stratification, and therefore no organized history. Development, however, can be broken down into three distinct phases shared by the majority.

The Age of Discovery: The first archeological evidence of conglomerate Nunclee life forms appears 50,000 years ago. Component worms can be found tracing back far before that. Only then are there definite clusters of worms layed out in the fossil record. The fossils show conglomerate forms identical to those still utilized today. Archaeologically speaking, the Nunclees advanced to their highest form in the wink of an eye. There is no discernable progression of time from single to Supreme in the fossil record.

The Age of Discovery, referring to the race's discovery of conglomerate forms and communication, is pivotal to the advancement of the race both physically and psychologically. Evidently, greater size and collective intelligence gave the primitive Nunclees an advantage over other competitive species on their world, and their numbers swelled dramatically. Simple forms of communication allowed them to assemble enormous populations quickly in regions rich in foods and raw materials, and to disassemble them in times of famine or poor rainfall. These advantages alone propelled them to mastery of their world before the first rung on the ladder of technology had been climbed.

The Age of Technology: Many thousands of years passed before the Nunclees developed any true technology. Presumably there were no significant pressures to do so early on, and arguably there are few pressures even today. Regardless, they slowly managed to take control of their environment on some levels, developing technologies to better advance the species on their world.

First, they learned to manage the swamp soils to better provide nourishment. Not true agriculture, the Nunclees encourage the natural processes that fertilize the soil and provide them with food. These same techniques are used today by Nunclees all over their world.

Second, the Nunclees invented simple application of tools and materials. To this day they use only natural materials, such as stone and fibrous shafts from local plants. Still, using them to manage the swamplands and build shelters has further increased their numbers. Note, however, that the Nunclees have never developed weapon technology, since there is no drive to protect themselves as individuals from predators or each other.

The Age of Mastery: The present age of Nunclees is still unfolding. As their numbers swell to dominate the world, they are expanding to take over other life forms as well. For instance, the Nunclees have converted most native plants into nurseries for their millions of component worms. Certain animals are commonly captured by least and lesser forms and controlled. In such cases, the individual animal is covered in worms that tap into its nervous system and slave it to their will. Techniques develop slowly, but the fabric of all life on their world is currently being reshaped in their image.

Nunclees Society

Nunclees live as individuals. There is no community effort in accomplishing tasks, which explains their

slow technological growth. Cooperation to manage a goal is unknown to them, though many individuals may be working toward the same goal.

The only social stratification is based purely in physiology. Dominance is maintained by the most intelligent Supreme forms, followed in descending order by the Medians, Lesser, Least, and then the component worms themselves. Beyond that, there is no social organization among the Nunclees.

Nunclees Character Generation

Nunclees characters can be created using the standard Traveller rules. Before generation, the player must decide if the Nunclees is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Supreme Nunclees have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15. Nunclees pass through the character generation as Supremes. Median Nunclees suffer a -4 penalty to Strength and Endurance, have their Intelligence reduced to a maximum of 2, and have no Education or Social Standing.

Social Standing for an Imperial Nunclees is treated as for human characters, though in Median form they have no Social Standing. For native Nunclees, it refers to standing on their world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 1.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Nunclees can choose any of the ten careers. They are not restricted on skill selection nor on technological level of equipment training since they enjoy all the material benefits of the Imperium. Native Nunclees cannot select any space-related service. They cannot take skill in any equipment greater than tech level 2.

Nunclees serve terms and retire in the same manner as other human characters. They can switch services normally as outlined in the character generation rules.

Mustering Out: Nunclees muster out without modification.

Aging: Nunclees use the standard aging rules.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Nunclees requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Changing Forms: During a game, a Supreme Nunclees can divide into four Median Nunclees at will. The player retains control over only one of these, though the referee may want to give him more control. If all four Medians are together, the player can elect to recombine into Supreme form.

The player must adopt the lesser size and intellect of the Median form once adopted. Think of it as the player changing his one human character into four dogs, then plays one of those dogs until they can be recombined.

Division and recombination takes about five minutes. The entire Supreme can be reformed from component worms also.

Damage: Nunclees characters are never really injured or dead as long as there are worms to divide and recombine. So long as there are any component worms left alive, the character can regrow to Supreme form in as little as three days.

Equipment: Most all human equipment is poorly suited to the Nunclees. They prefer using no equipment at all, or their own simple tools if forced.

Vehicles: Nunclees can operate human vehicles, but can be quite uncomfortable while doing so. There are no vehicles designed specifically for their use.

Psionics: Nunclees have no psionic potential.

Translation: Nunclees have no spoken language. Communication using computer equipment that traces their electronic impulses is possible. Such units are available from Cr2000 to Cr5000. Higher priced models generally give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel and Starships

Nunclees are fairly comfortable on human starships, moderating the humidity accordingly. No special consideration is required for their comfort. They cannot use human-designed low passage berths, but can voluntarily break down to just a handful of worms and letting the rest die to conserve meager resources.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

Nunclees are easily managed in a Traveller campaign as either player or non-player characters by adopting these common characteristics and mindset.

Physiological: From Supreme form, they can break into four Median form and back again; can regrow from just a single component worm.

Psychological: Intelligent but unemotional, with no concept of companionship or cooperation. Difficult to motivate.

Imperial Nunclees Encounter

A few thousand Nunclees live and work in the Imperium. Their unique abilities make them ideal for certain hazardous functions, especially in industrial ventures.

Cartray, Chemical Disposal Engineer

The cleanup of hazardous primitive worlds newly entering the Imperium is a thriving business. Some of the more undesirable duties are well suited to the Nunclees.

History: Cartray is a Supreme Nunclees that has accepted citizenship in the Imperium. He was recruited by the Bell*Trenton Chemical conglomerate ten years ago on his native planet, one of fifty Nunclees to accept employment at that time. Bell*Trenton is a huge corporation with Imperial charter to reckon with the chemical waste sites left over from the Long Night. Their alien research division noted the particular survivability traits of the then newly-discovered Nunclees and notified their personnel division. Cartray received a name, job, and citizenship through a strange translating computer brought by the Bell*Trenton team.

Present Situation: Tredus is a high population, industrial world recently accepted into the Imperium. During the Long Night, it returned to using fossil fuels to maintain its industry and economy, creating major pollution hazards as it went. Part of their deal with the Imperium is the employment of high-tech cleanup teams to reverse the damage they've done, and Bell*Trenton got the contracts.

Cartray is integral to the operation, working hands-on in the investigation of new dumps and analyzing the manpower and time required to clean them up. He is also well aware that Bell*Trenton is overstating the need for equipment, taking advantage of their Imperial charter by embezzling funds. Of course, the Nunclees has no idea this practice is illegal or immoral.

The player characters may be on assignment with one of the various secret services within the Imperium to root out fraud. When investigating Tredus, they find tight-lipped human employees everywhere, but one worm ball has all the information they need. Others will try to stop them or even kill the Nunclees to keep the credits coming in from the Imperium.

Subsequent Encounters: Since he'll be out of a job with Bell*Trenton, Cartray can assist the adventurers in a variety of dangerous missions. He finds life in the Imperium compelling and wants to visit more of it.

Native Nunclees Encounter

To a human, the vast majority of Nunclees are virtually mindless gatherers living a primitive existence on their swampy world. Encountering them without the proper translator leaves the Nunclees with no means to interact, so they basically don't. A newcomer making planetfall could, however, become a curiosity among the Nunclees.

Wartoy

Wartoy is a Supreme Nunclees like most others of his race. Confronted with unusual aliens—namely humans from the Imperium—he sees an opportunity to investigate and analyze.

History: Wartoy is a conglomerate of indeterminate age. It has spent most of its life working to drench a particularly rocky bit of land to make it suitable for habitation. This has been the creature's single-minded focus until it meets the travellers.

First Encounter: Wartoy is especially curious about the newcomers. It offers them some of its half-digested food, but that seems to repel them. It sprinkles worms on them but they oddly brush them off. It even gives them every opportunity to join it in reclaiming the rocky soil, but they are strangely uninterested. He sees nothing to do with them but take them to other Nunclees and let them observe their strange ways.

Subsequent Encounters: The characters may encounter other Nunclees in later visits and run into the same reactions.

THE PROVIDERS

The universe is governed by a set of undeniable realities. Gravity and the inflexibility of the periodic table conspire to make the stars, their systems and the galaxies what they are. The biologist can rely on certain realities in his own field, as well, namely the overriding principles of natural selection. Or can he? The Providers are a minor race that has hijacked that process on its home world, in doing so sending hundreds of textbooks into the recycler units.

The Providers are an aquatic race that dominates a water world in the distant reaches of the old Imperium. Their kind developed intelligence very early in the evolution of their world, and have circumvented natural selection for millennia. All the world's plant and animal life has been carefully designed by the Providers and none can reproduce without their assistance. They are the only truly intelligent race on their world.

Human scouts named them Providers after first contact during the Vilani Imperium. Their race has no spoken or written language, relying on body movements for communication, so they have no "name" for themselves. Electronic translation devices are manufactured by both Providers and humans. The Providers have not escaped the human penchant for naming newfound life after creatures with whom they are already familiar. Vilani refer to them as "yunii," and Solomani as "jellyfish," after buoyant, multi-tentacled sea creatures native to their homeworlds.

Racial Origins

The Provider homeworld is Delta Retigulii-3, a large world with deep water oceans covering 90 percent of its surface. The star and world are relatively young, just over 1 billion years by scientific reckoning, making them among the youngest to have spawned an intelligent life form.

The origin of the Provider race is mysterious. Their biology is unmistakably linked to the rest of Delta Retigulii-3, but they are a far more advanced creature than any other on that world. They attained intelligence and a large, trillion-cell body when the other living bodies on their world were still pond scum. Their evolutionary history simply does not exist. There is no fossil record of any proto-Provider creatures, no slow progress from simple to complex form, nothing. The record shows they appeared on Delta Retigulii-3 approximately 500,000 years ago and have remained unchanged ever since.

Imperial scientists have put forward two theories. The first involves the mysterious Ancients, generally accepted as a race capable of such tinkering with a planet's ecology. However, this predates any other Ancients activity by hundreds of thousands of years and so is largely discounted. The second theory suggests the Providers were deposited on their world by some natural event, such as an ice asteroid impact, but just how the creatures got into the asteroids or survived the impact is unexplained. Vilani scientists are generally unconvinced of either theory. Among their own kind, the Providers see little value in investigating their own origins.

Regardless of origins, the Providers are the mother species of their world. No other life form has

the ability to divide independently, relying solely on the enzymes and biology of the Providers for propagation.

Provider Physiology

Providers are aquatic creatures and function best when immersed in water. However, in taming the landmasses of their homeworld, they developed a number of biological means to exist comfortably out of the water. Both circumstances are weighed in each section pertaining to their physiology.

They are large creatures, roughly spherical, between 1.4 and 1.8 meters in diameter. Their longest dangling tentacles trail as much as 3 meters below and behind them.

Body Composition: A Provider is a buoyant creature of the deep oceans. It can vary its buoyancy to a degree to float higher or lower, adjusting the density of its large gelatin sack. The sack is mostly transparent, revealing the various organs and the brain cluster at its base. Dozens of thin tentacles hang below the creature. The shorter ones are stronger, extending out to one meter from the base of the gelatin sack to gather food or manipulate other objects. The longer, dangling tentacles have very little strength, but can extend up to 3 meters from the sack. The dangling tentacles are employed to feel for food or obstacles, and they constantly gather mucous rich with organic material from the water. The Provider regularly draws the dangles into the gelatin sack, taking in the harvest of mucous to nourish its vast reproductive process.

Outside the water, Providers rest on grav carriages. They rest their tentacles in the carriage

where they are kept comfortably moist, extending them only when necessary to gather objects. The gelatin sack and extended tentacles are covered with a millimeter of glistening, clear oil, an extra skin of single-celled creatures of their own design. The Provider is cool to the touch, but the clear covering doesn't come off. Without grav technology, Providers are unable to leave their oceans.

Locomotion: Providers have a series of three water jets at the base of the gelatin sack for propulsion. Each can draw in about a pint of water and expel it under muscular force. For the most part, however, the Providers drift at the mercy of the ocean currents.

Provider Psychology

Biology and environment are the guiding forces that shape patterns of thought in an intelligent creature. Over centuries, they conspire to mold the intellect to better survive. The Providers are extremely alien creatures, far removed on many levels from the habitats and biology of primitive humans, and their psychology is understandably different.

Fear and Flight: Providers have never had any predators on their native world, and this has had a profound effect on their psychology. Entire chapters of human psychology texts simply have no correlation among them. List the attributes of human behavior related to self preservation — fear, caution, flight, even territoriality are all rooted in a long history of predatory animals preying on humans and all their evolutionary forebears. Without them, these concepts are foreign to the Providers and their behavior and reactions are very different.

Confronted by an enemy or hostile opponent, a Provider understands the danger and can assess the situation on its own merits, but he has no inherent defense mechanisms or flight triggers working against him. Like the K'kree, lacking these hindrances actually strengthens them in these dangerous situations, since all their actions are based on judgment and intellect and none on deep-seated instinct. However, in instances of sudden confrontation it is the flight-prone human who might survive where the slower, free-thinking Provider may not.

In unfamiliar settings, Providers are unused to guarding against predatory animals. Wandering one of Terra's oceans, for instance, a Provider does not distinguish between the passing of a harmless whale or a dangerous shark. A Provider can learn which animals might be harmful from those that are not, but it is not his first course of action to even consider the dangers in the first place.

This isn't to say, however, that Providers have no concept of danger. On the contrary, they are well aware of the hazards of speeding along on a grav carriage or of investigating unknown caves along the ocean floor. Everyday occurrences of danger are not lost on them. In this sense, degrees of caution are as varied among the Providers as they are among humans.

Sense of Creation: Confronted with undeniable evidence that every living thing on their world is spawned from their bodies, it is understandable that the Providers have difficulty understanding human notions of creation myth. Indeed, all indicators point to the Providers themselves as the cradles of all life, and this gives them a distinctly divine point of view.

Providers literally hold the power of life and death over all the client life forms swimming in their oceans. They give birth to new animals as they are needed, most often harvesting less useful forms for the raw materials. Providers have no compunction about destroying the animals they have produced, sometimes with an almost carefree abandon that might trouble a human witness.

With this in mind, the Providers cannot understand why humans and other intelligent creatures don't have the same attitudes toward the lesser creatures that share their worlds. To a Provider, unintelligent animals are merely beasts of burden, tools, or raw materials. The concept of pets is especially foreign to them, and an intelligent creature displaying affection or emotion toward a lesser animal is viewed as a form of insanity by their kind. In a strange environment, a Provider might ingest someone's pet or favorite riding animal without a second thought.

Of course, the Providers aren't confronted with the same moral dilemmas as human beings when it comes to relative intelligence. A human who is easily capable of killing docile herbivores for sustenance draws the line at slaying chimps, dolphins, or even tigers wantonly, since these approach their level of intelligence. None of the lesser creatures created by the Providers come anywhere near their intellect.

In conversation (possible only through computer-enhanced translation), Providers take on a very regal air. They hold themselves in extremely high regard, and many humans can't help feel that they look down upon other intelligent races. After all, from the Provider perspective, how important can a creature be if it cannot shape life and, therefore, an entire world as it wishes. Many humans find Providers snobby and openly avoid dealing with them because of it.

Homeworld: Hydractus

The Provider homeworld is a hydrogen-rich body in the remote regions of the expanding Third Imperium. Technically dubbed Delta Retigulii-3, it is more commonly known among star voyagers as Hydractus.

The Star System: Hydractus is the fifth of twenty-three worlds in its system. The single G9 star burns brightly at its center, mother to a very young system for this part of the galaxy. Both star and planets are in the neighborhood of a billion years old, compared with three to five billion for most of its neighbors. The star's atomic fire burns white hot, and many of the other planets are still cooling.

The paths swept out through the ecliptic plain by the planets are still littered with worldlets unclaimed by gravity. The frequency of free bodies is much higher and astrogation has to take this into account when making approach to Hydractus. Most of the worldlets are hydrogen- or water-ice chunks no more than a meter in diameter, but others are larger and heavier and pose some hazard to navigation.

Geography: Hydractus's surface is covered with 90% water oceans. The land surface area is divided into three significant continents and a variety of tiny islands. The continents are clustered on the southern hemisphere of the world, and are named Aquaria, Estuaria, and Polanthus by human cartographers. In essence, all the continents are geographically similar, with jungle lowlands at the coasts giving way to young, towering mountains in the interior. The plants and animals of the jungle regions are, like all life forms on Hydractus, spawned by the Providers, carefully placed and tended by them constantly.

More important to the naturally aquatic Providers is the terrain of the ocean floor. The planet is young enough that tectonic activity is especially high. As smaller surface plates crumble and turn, access to geothermal heat creates hot spots on the ocean floor. The Providers congregate near the fifty or so most significant hot spots. Tectonic activity is such that hot spots can disappear and new ones emerge on their world within just a few generations.

After hot spots, the second most important terrain features to the Providers are the various currents. The strong continental current circles the three continents at a distance of a few hundred miles, looping far enough north to move through the naturally warm waters of the equatorial oceans. Virtually half of the Provider civilization resides in the flowing waters of the continental current. Other significant currents are the north polar current and the west ocean current.

Time: The Hydractan day is 20.5 hours long. Its year is 473.2 local days, or 404.2 Terran days. Passage from day to night is significant only to the surface and near-surface Providers, and passes unnoticed by the majority, deep-dwelling creatures.

Present Civilization: The Providers propagate across the oceans and continents of their world. They create and place other living creatures on it at their pleasure. Also, they have developed a significant biological technology for their own use, so many of the living creatures they create are merely tools for their use.

Provider Society

Hydractus's native children are strong individualists. Indeed, their biology requires no mutual effort for personal reproduction, and the teeming oceans provide for their needs without community participation. A single Provider can be born, live out its life, and die without ever having significant contact with others of its kind. But why, then, are there congregations of Providers at the hot spots, in the ocean currents, and on the three continents? The answer lies not in necessity, but in preferences of occupation, diet, and temperature.

Occupation: The term "occupation" is lent to the Providers by human explorers to better identify with them, although Providers have no actual jobs or careers. For them, occupation refers to only to the life forms an individual prefers to produce for its world. Any Provider can reproduce any infant life form on its world from a single cell sample. So, no matter where it is, an individual can make a contribution by sampling local flora and fauna. However, preferences run strong, and an individual can find it uninteresting, even disgusting to reproduce certain varieties of life. For example, most Providers don't care for the creation of flora at all. The relatively few that do tend to live near the surface or on the continents themselves, nearer the light of their star. In a less broad example, a Provider may prefer to create a handful or even one specific animal and range widely to seed that form through the oceans.

Diet: Preferences in diet shape the Provider society, as well. The motivation is significantly stronger than in humans, and Providers congregate in geographical areas where their preference can be satisfied. For instance, those with a taste for a gelatin-rich fish tend to congregate together where they can reproduce that fish in quantity and revel in enjoying their bounty. From a human perspective, this would be the same as moving to Italy just to satisfy a taste for Italian food, which on the surface

seems ridiculous. The bond of similar taste preferences is as strong as the linguistic bond in different human nations or worlds.

Temperature: Similar to preferences in diet, individual Providers find comfort in different temperatures and this, too, can be the catalyst to forming communities. The warmest waters on Hydractus are in the equatorial waters or in the deep oceans at the hot spots. Providers who prefer warm waters congregate in these places. The coolest spots are at the polar regions and out of the water entirely, on the continents, and these draw a different set of Providers. A bond of loyalty and comfort exists between those who have similar preferences, and they bask in their waters in huge floating villages.

Friendship and Loyalty: Friendship in the human sense is a derivative of the group survival instinct. Groups of primitive humans had a better chance of bringing down prey and warding off predators than individuals. However, neither of these motivations have influenced Provider thinking, and their sense of friendship is based instead solely on shared preferences. Individual Providers feel a close association with others who share their taste in occupation, diet, and temperature and prefer to congregate with them. There appears to be no animosity between Providers of opposing viewpoints, but this is difficult to quantify for human observers.

When among other intelligent beings, Providers broadcast their preferences to attract companions and seek out preferences in the aliens around him. For instance, a Provider that prefers to reproduce flora in the warmer climates may feel most comfortable in the company of a human horticulturalist, or may seek out the companionship of the ship's engineer and spend its time basking in the warmth of the power plant. Once companions have been selected, Providers are not particularly talkative — proximity is all they seek. Understandably, Providers rarely share dietary preferences with aliens.

The many loyalties that bind Provider communities together are difficult for a human to penetrate and understand. In fact, their activities appear quite random to a casual observer. Human scientists and contact specialists are constantly at work on Hydractus to unravel these mysteries, and their progress is painfully slow.

Harvesting and Seeding: The Providers are the cradle of all life on their world. The process itself is quite remarkable. They can internally synthesize and duplicate any cell from a single example. Further, they have an innate ability to alter the genetic makeup of a new living thing, modifying it inside its body

to give birth to a totally new life form to serve some new purpose. Gathering raw materials for the synthesis is called harvesting, while the release of new life forms is called seeding.

There are thousands of "standard" life forms utilized by the Providers to help tame their watery world: specialized luminous fungus, tasty seaforms of all types, beasts of burden of all size, even swift message carriers with rudimentary psionics. These standard forms are gathered and seeded virtually everywhere on Hydractus to serve everyday purposes.

However, every Provider has the ability to modify a given organism to a new or more specialized task. One in need of a brighter luminescent fungus can harvest the original form and attempt a transformation. The Provider need to do nothing more than desire the altered form, leaving its complicated biochemistry to accomplish the task. The success rate is fairly low, usually no more than 20%, leaving the would-be inventor making several attempts before getting it right.

Physically, harvesting requires the Provider to ingest a sample of the original form in the normal manner. The long tentacles detect and identify, the shorter gather and feed into the mouth at the creature's base. Incubation of new forms takes anywhere from days to weeks depending on the complexity of the animal. Attempting to synthesize new forms takes the longest of all. Virtually all Provider life forms are born in an embryonic state directly into the water, left to grow independently of the parent.

Provider History

The history of the Providers is not generally known either to them or to Imperial observers. Interestingly, history is far more important to the humans among them, and it is they who will unravel it one piece at a time over the next few hundred years. When they do, it is certain that the Providers themselves will find the information only mildly interesting as they go about their daily lives.

Arrival: Providers are an ancient race originally spawned in a distant part of the galaxy. Their mother race grew to intelligence beneath the light of a star on the verge of nova. Unable to escape, they managed to preserve the essence of their being by encoding complex genetic data onto inorganic structures at a molecular and even atomic level. The supernova that erased their civilization from the galaxy blasted these scant thousands of "seeds" across space for the next few billion years. One settled into the gravity well of the newly forming Delta Retigulii star and fortunately merged into the fifth planetary path being swept out

by the primitive Hydractus worldlet. When conditions in its oceans reached a survivable state, this single seed that had travelled thousands of light years over billions of years unleashed its cargo of genetic data. Picking from simple organic compounds in the churning oceans, the first Provider assembled quickly and grew to adulthood.

The similarities between the Providers and their long-dead mother race are in form only. The ancient pre-Providers were vastly more complicated creatures, possessed of remarkable intelligence. In fact, all they lacked was a working interstellar drive to save their civilization. Providers have no inherent knowledge of this history, of their origins or the nature of the pre-Provider civilization or intellect. They are as ignorant of their origins as any intelligent race, the veil of a billion years is almost impossible to penetrate.

The Servile Wars: The present-day passive Provider civilization belies a bloody and troubled history. From the first spawning of young by the Original Provider, a conflict has stirred between two diametrically opposed motivations: freedom of action and duty to one's parent. Whether this internal conflict is shared with the pre-Providers or is some sort of glitch in their atomic encoding is unknown and unimportant. What is important is that it has led to struggle and war, some recent and still boiling just beneath the surface.

From a purely human point of view, the conflict appears to be generational and not unlike similar problems in human society. Offspring rebel against the authority of their parents and wish for greater freedoms. But the notion of parent and child is foreign to the Providers, and they have no compassion or understanding as humans display in those relationships. The situation is much more servile in nature, and Provider offspring are obliged and bound to the parent to perform service at their direction. Preferences are circumvented by the servile obligation, hence the inevitable conflict.

Actual conflict has erupted throughout history. To isolate a single incident is impossible, but there are identifiable patterns. Regional unrest grows among the younger generations against the older, master Providers until the slaves must accelerate the only genetic release from bondage, namely the deaths of their masters. These wars are absolute, and since the slaves outnumber the masters sometimes by more than 10 to 1, they can also be quick. Special war animals are spawned to serve in the battles, then recalled and harvested following victory. With the elimination of the masters, preferences are freed and the communities disintegrate.

Servile wars are common enough that every community goes through one every three to six generations. The extermination of the master class within every community is expected, even encouraged socially. However, there are philosophies and great thinkers posing arguments against their brutal necessity. These are fostering more attention all the time, but are embraced by a small minority of Providers.

Continental Colonization: Providers developed the technology to comfortably and safely explore above the ocean's surface just over 300 years ago. In that time, they have mapped and explored the three land continents of their world, with the caution and trepidation equal to that of humans exploring the bottoms of their oceans. Special forms of life have been spawned to reach out onto the shores of these strange places, since Hydractus is too young to have evolved any native life forms.

Providers with an affinity to work on the dry continents are viewed as slightly unstable. They see themselves as pioneers, showing a pride in their unusual, rugged lifestyles all too familiar among humans who challenge their frontiers.

Technology: Provider technology is based purely in biological forms and is a direct offshoot of their spawning ability. They have managed to create a series of organic structures that have limited anti-grav ability. However, beyond this their technology is primitive, without fire, metallurgy, or medical advances whatsoever.

Provider Character Generation

Provider characters are the most unusual of all alien races. They are so different from human beings that standard character generation cannot encompass them. It is recommended that Providers be used only for non-player characters in your campaign. Assign skills as necessary, though their native skills such as the creation of new life forms have no correlation to any Traveller skills. For combat, an adult Provider can withstand 25 points of damage before being destroyed.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Provider requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Providers cannot use most human equipment. They can manipulate the workings of most items with their tentacles, but prefer not to. Human accommodations, such as clothing or seating, have no meaning to the Providers. They have no concept of manufactured equipment, utilizing specialized life forms for different functions.

Vehicles: Providers cannot operate vehicles designed for humans

Psionics: Providers can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Travel and Starships

Providers are uncomfortable on human ships, requiring special humidity and even holding tanks for long journeys. They do not enjoy hyperspace transport and avoid it when possible.

Providers cannot use low passage berths with the same level of risk common to humans.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Provider into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: Enormous jellyfish with long, stronger tentacles and shorter, more delicate ones.

Psychological: Sense of personal creation, cradle of life. No fear or flight reflex. Bizarre temperature preferences. No sense of friendship or loyalty.

Native Provider Encounter

The Provider lifestyle is apparently random, their actions automatic and no more indicative of intelligent life than a cow's meandering around the barnyard. Player characters visiting the Hydractus cannot interact with the natives, so no specific encounter is presented for them.

Imperial Provider Encounter

Thousands of Providers live and work on other worlds of the expanding Imperium. Their unique adaptation to the aquatic environment and their ability to create living organisms for specific tasks makes them ideal terraformers.

Bluqua, Researcher for QTRW

Several Providers have found work as specialists with QTRW, a contract terraforming company with subsidiaries in most of explored space. Since every new world is so different, the adaptability of the Provider employees makes them especially valuable.

History: Like many of his kind, Bluqua was recruited right from its homeworld of Hydractus into the service of QTRW. They have outposts on the continents and on two floating platforms where prospective Provider employees are tested and recruited. The general impression among young Providers is that service off-world is well paying and

can be quite rewarding, almost in a religious sense. In many ways they see themselves as too important a species to be isolated to a single world. Why their own technology or biology never solved the interstellar equation is left unanswered.

Bluqua was tested and offered a position immediately after its own parent Provider died in an unfortunate accident. Free of parental control, Bluqua sought out off world employment as a means of expanding its horizons. Its first assignments were simple ones, helping to tame nearly-habitable worlds on the fringes of human settlement. It learned quickly to make new organisms to provide missing nutrients, restrung complex nucleotides, and remove dangerous trace elements from water and soil samples. Five years of service and twelve worlds later, Bluqua felt good about having touched so many systems.

But its own limitations vexed Bluqua. A Provider, after all, can only create a finite number of organisms, affecting a restricted area of a single planet. To more effectively terraform, it desired the technology to create self-replicating forms, something no Provider can do naturally. Self-replicating organisms can increase geometrically, dominating an entire region or even a world in a short time. For instance, covering a cool world with a dark-colored moss can reduce its albedo and warm its surface. It would take thousands of Providers to do this normally, but a self-replicating organism — based on a Provider original — could do the job much more efficiently. Bluqua is now immersed in practical experimentation with a team of human biologists for QTRW, working to change its own biology to reproduce offspring that can reproduce themselves.

Present Situation: Bluqua works mainly at a research station on a small water world within 20 parsecs of Sylea, funded entirely by QTRW. The research is very secretive, since positive results could be extremely valuable. Improved terraforming techniques can command enormous contracts from megacorporations and the Imperium itself. Security at the station is tight.

There are no other Providers at the facility. It is visited weekly by supply hovercraft vessels originating in a more populous region of the planet, and that's it.

However, field research is often required on distant worlds with unique terraforming needs. Bluqua is on one such journey when the player characters first meet it.

First Encounter: QTRW maintains no ships of its own, so all interstellar travel is on commercial starships. The main body of the research team, half

a dozen or so humans, simply book passage in standard staterooms. Bluqua, however, has to be treated as cargo. While it could survive in the open air of a starship interior for the duration of a star voyage, it finds such exposure personally uncomfortable. It insists on a pool or full-aquatic bay for travel, which is most often erected specially in the cargo hold. It is impossible not to notice when Bluqua is on board, since half the stewards are drenched and unhappy, and the ship's crew are generally annoyed with the strange demands of the "jellyfish" passenger.

On board, Bluqua is always anxious to meet the other travellers. It asks for audiences with other passengers, using its research team companions for liaison. Bluqua asks through its computer translator about distant worlds the human travellers have visited and what they've seen, always looking for unique terraforming problems to solve. Bluqua will certainly want to dine with the adventurers. Stewards put up tables outside the Provider's pool in the cargo hold and serve a fine meal at QTRW's expense.

There are others on board for this journey who are interested in Bluqua, and their intentions are less than honorable. Industrial saboteurs have tracked the research team to this vessel, and have an entire week in jump transit to capture the Provider or steal its valuable carcass. Their plan is to disable the ship just out of hyperspace, signal a waiting vessel to match vectors, then jettison with Bluqua in tow. But

one of the human research team members learned of their plan, although all that the ship's security could find was a "painted airlock."

The adventurers' first meeting with Bluqua is in deep hyperspace, caught in a kidnapping plot against it. The ship can be of any size, from a luxury space liner to a simple free-trader. The ingredients: a scared research team with no counter-insurgency skills, a crack team of industrial terrorists posing as normal passengers, your party of travellers cut off from outside aid, and a Provider in the cargo hold.

Subsequent Encounters: A grateful QTRW will reward the travellers handsomely for saving Bluqua. Their security personnel will also keep the adventurers in mind when they need covert assistance. Bluqua, too, holds the humans who saved the live of so valuable a creature in high regard. The Provider is often in need of transport, protection, and even has QTRW pay for the exploration of candidate worlds for experimental terraforming techniques.

In an interesting twist, Bluqua may want to work with the travellers to tame the continents of Hydractus. Only a Provider with such broad offworld experience would even consider such a thing. The very idea that a human can perform some task better than a Provider is unheard of there, but Bluqua is an innovator. In such a situation, it may become Bluqua who has to protect the humans from extermination by violently skeptical Providers.

TEKUNDU

Extremes of climate erase unfit species the galaxy over. Only the most adaptable survive. The remote world of Yulanii poses a common challenge to its various species, namely a lack of usable surface water. The humans who live there, the Tekundu, are a remarkable example of human adaptability in harsh conditions.

The Ancients placed the Tekundu on this arid world, in the same period that they seeded human stock to many dozens of worlds in this region of space. That modern scientists can attribute their placement to the mysterious Ancients is because of two things: First, they share the genetic stamp of Terra's own. Second, Yulanii has no evolutionary chains long enough to have spawned such a complicated race. They are titans of intelligence and evolution on a world of scrub grasses and burrowing insects.

The Tekundu language is difficult to manage but not impossible for Vilani explorers. Their name for themselves translates essentially to "human being." Visitors from the Imperium have dubbed them "camels" or "bloaters," in direct reference to their very visible hydro-storage ability. Computer translators preprogrammed with Tekundese are available. A citizen of the Imperium can learn their language as easily as any other strange human tongue.

Racial Origins

Yulanii is a large, standard atmosphere world on the outskirts of the expanding Imperium. Early explorers noted the absence of free standing water and moved on. With hydro rich worlds aplenty on the expanding frontier, none took notice of Yulanii or its humanoid minor race. In fact, the first survey of the world listed Yulanii as uninhabited.

Tekundu are of homo sapiens stock, transplanted from Terra to Yulanii more than 100,000 years ago. The size and nature of the original settlement is unknown. The development of their hydro-storage cells is also a matter of some debate. While it is possible that the Ancients selectively altered the transplanted humans, as they did with the Vargr and other races, it is also possible that this function is naturally evolved.

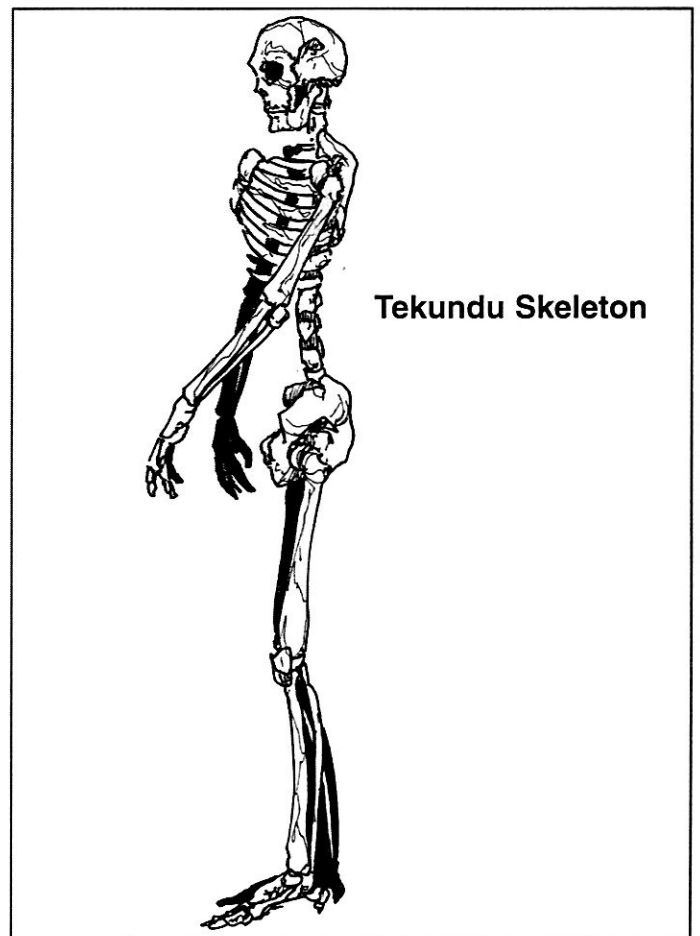
Tekundu Physiology

Tekundu are human beings. Unless otherwise discussed here, their physiology matches that of the rest of humaniti.

Hydro-storage: Tekundu fat cells have the ability to store a great deal of water, more than that stored in normal human tissues. The process is biochemically primitive and unsophisticated. Tekundu vacuole walls are stronger than in human cells, and they can stretch more easily to accommodate a greater volume. Each fat cell can take on eight times the water of a standard human cell.

This single adaptation lets a Tekundu gorge on water when available, filling its fat cells to capacity. Fully laden, the Tekundu can go for weeks without taking on additional water, which can often mean the difference between life and death on the arid world of Yulanii.

Outwardly, the fully gorged Tekundu is bloated, grotesquely so to a normal human. The portions of their bodies normally given to fat accumulation swell noticeably. On males, this tends to be along the stomach and lower back, on females on the upper legs and sides. A totally gorged Tekundu shows bloating everywhere on his body: the face, arms, even fingers and toes are oversized and, consequently, less dexterous.



Tekundu Skeleton

However, a gorged Tekundu uses its internal water supply quickly enough. In a matter of days the bloated Tekundu shrinks down to normal human size, then to a gaunt, sunken shadow of its bloated self. In the hydro-poor state, a Tekundu's skin hangs loose in places and they seem to alien observers to be extremely unhealthy, even near death. Actually, their internal biochemistry is unchanged, though they are in need of an outside source of water.

Tekundu are most comfortable, physically and emotionally, when they have an excess load of water. In a constant water rich environment, such as on a starship or other worlds of the Imperium, they maintain a noticeably bloated hydro-level.

Size and Weight: Tekundu maintain the rough skeletal and muscular build of standard humans. Adult males are roughly 2 meters tall, females just slightly shorter on average. Weight depends greatly on hydro-storage. A male Tekundu's median weight is between 70 and 100 kilograms. Gorged, he can weigh as much as 30 kilograms more, or about 10 kilograms less when hydro-poor. Females' median weight is between 50 and 80 kilograms, gorged up to 25 kilograms more and hydro-poor 5 kilograms less.

A filled Tekundu loses water weight of between 2 and 4 kilograms per day in the absence of any outside water source. A hydro-poor Tekundu can drink his fill in just an hour or so, reaching maximum weight and size as it does so.

Skeleton: The human body is barely capable of maintaining its standard weight in an upright, bipedal posture. The additional weight of water storage takes its toll on the Tekundu bone structure as it ages.

Adult Tekundu are more prone to back and knee injuries. General deterioration of the spine, knees, and feet is common. Older Tekundu tend to suffer extreme curvature of the spine and are often immobilized by general leg or hip failure.

Tekundu technology offers a variety of belts and harnesses for structural support to the body. The medical sciences of the Imperium are vastly superior, and can be brought to bear to minimize and even reverse all the maladies associated with physiology.

Musculature: Their nomadic lives make the Tekundu stronger and more hardy than other humans. Their leg muscles, especially, tend to be more fully developed, from both the added weight of water they must carry and the great amount of running associated with their lifestyles.

Skin: Tekundu keep themselves covered from the harsh sun, so tend to be very fair skinned. Their hands, arms, and faces see more sunlight than the rest of the body, so tend to be sharply darker.

Tekundu Psychology

Though genetically human, millennia on a different world have molded the Tekundu psyche quite differently. With no animals of comparable size or complexity to share their world, they harbor a racial feeling of isolation. Associated is an understanding that they are guests on their world, not part of it. Their harsh environment also makes them especially intolerant of weakness; they adore endurance and displays of endurance.

Isolation: Tekundu are completely alone on their world, sharing it with no other significant species. Whether they understand it or not, humans evolved in the company of thousands of competitive species, and this helped shape the human psyche. The company of woodland creatures, beasts of burden, even predators had a marked impact on their development. The Tekundu have had none of that for the last 5,000 generations.

The sense of isolation manifests itself in two distinct ways. First, Tekundu are very self-reliant. They approach problems as if they alone will have to deal with them, even in the company of others. When a Tekundu cannot solve a problem as an individual, he turns only to other Tekundu for assistance. Seeking aid from a non-Tekundu doesn't even occur to them.

Guest Status: Yulanii is not the Tekundu homeland. They instinctively know this, as surely as a Terran knows he belongs on Terra. There is no oral tradition of placement by the Ancients, nor are there specific tales of origins or beginnings. But the race knows they are not native to this world. By comparison, Vilani and Zhodani, transplanted during the same time period by the same means, grew in a mere handful of generations to believe that they were, in fact, natives. But their worlds were lush and populated already, not barren like arid Yulanii. None of the backdrop had been prepared in advance for the Tekundu's grand play, so it's always felt to them like a stage.

This mass understanding has inexorably shaped the Tekundu myth. In their legend, the Tekundu are never seen as creators, but instead as a people with some sort of unfulfilled destiny. After all, if they are not from Yulanii, then there must be some purpose for their presence there. And since their history presents no obvious climactic events, that destiny remains unfulfilled. Individually, a Tekundu often feels that he may play an instrumental part in that racial destiny, and so rarely shy away from adventure or exploration. Also, there is prejudice against sloth, since a wasted life contributes nothing to the supposed racial destiny.

Endurance: Endurance is praised by necessity. The harsh conditions of Yulanii demand it. Primitive Tekundu went so far as to commit infanticide against the children of weaker people, to eliminate the weak from the tribes. Today, their love of durability is displayed in heroic games and sports, generally more lengthy and violent than those found on other human worlds. Marathon races are common, as are great treks across dangerous deserts. A Tekundu that perceives weakness in another human off world tends to disregard that person's general worth and opinions. Their world has left the Tekundu with little compassion for the infirm.

Homeworld: Yulanii

Yulanii is an markedly arid world with almost no primitive native life form.

Star System: Yulanii is the second planet in a seven-planet system, orbiting a bright G4 star. Part of a relatively old system, Yulanii is subject to comparatively few meteor impacts. The sixth world is a small gas giant.

Yulanii has one moon, a bright white nickel-iron world without life of its own. The moon, Yulanwatay, appears about twice the size of Terra's moon.

Geography: Yulanii has no free-standing oceans (a hydrographic percentage of zero). What moisture there is has been locked in the frost caps at either pole and deeper in the ground. Deep aquaphers enrich certain regions, such as oases of brush and primitive trees. Swatches of green on the planet's surface betray the existence of the underground lakes, and are the only significant sanctuaries for life on Yulanii.

There is virtually no tectonic activity on Yulanii. The northern hemisphere is marked by low hill country. The desert areas there are stony and difficult to traverse. The south is darkened by black sand deserts that stretch from the pole to just short of the equator. These areas are particularly harsh, the albedo raising air temperatures well into the hundreds every day. Yulanii's weather systems drive hot winds from the south northward, and occasionally stir gentle rainfalls nearer the northern frost cap.

Time: The Yulanii day is 28.5 hours long. It orbits its star once every 248.3 local days, or 294.8 Terran days. Patterns of light and dark are close enough to the human norm that visitors can adjust without difficulty.

Tekundu Society

The Tekundu have emerged as a socially sophisticated race, valuing morality and experience above the less-positive attributes appealing to many humans.

Family: The family is extremely important in Tekundu society. In most oases, for instance, leadership is derived from the strongest families, measured in loyalty and emotional stability. The bond of family relationships is more strongly felt than in human societies of the Imperium. "Blood is thicker than water," the common human saying, is unerringly true among the desert-dwelling Tekundu.

Family leadership is most often attributed to the strongest male, but there are no firm rules. A strong male who does not meet the rest of the family's expectations on some level may lose their support. Ultimately, sex or age are only guiding principles in family leadership, and a very young man or elderly woman can be achieve the role. The perception of leadership is granted by the approval of the other members, and nothing else.

Challenges for family leadership are uncommon and rarely tolerated. Someone who seizes control temporarily by eliminating the accepted leader is quickly dispatched, but this doesn't keep the ambitious from trying on occasion.

Families tend to live in the same building or in close proximity. Streets and neighborhoods in Tekundu villages bear the names of the predominant families there.

Oases: The management of each oasis is critical to the survival of the race. Managing councils are organized for each, appointed or elected by the families. In a democratic oasis, for instance, the council is usually elected, the electorate comprised of the family leaders. Oases can be quite large, with thousands of families. Campaigning for office, however, is not an accepted practice. Nominations are made and accepted humbly and graciously. Debates are encouraged, and public meetings are the forum for decision making.

Managing councils concern themselves with the allocation and protection of resources. Water management is foremost on the agenda, along with its application to agriculture. The most successful oases have, in fact, grown into the surrounding deserts through careful irrigation, making the deserts bloom.

Alignment: Oases are generally aligned into groups. A large, successful oasis may have considerable influence on trade and family ties over another. Rarely does a group of like-aligned oases have a

single leader, but they share similar goals and regularly trade as a block. The leader of the most powerful family in the dominant oasis can hold considerable influence over the entire group.

Morality: Tekundu hold strict codes of morality and are intolerant of variation. Moral virtue is rooted in truthfulness and self-reliance. Theft, murder, and injury to others are unacceptable. Additionally, conduct toward elders and other family members is highly structured and also protected under the consequences of immoral behavior.

Offenses against accepted morality are dealt with harshly. Thieves and murderers are staked out in the desert to die of exposure. Lesser criminals may have their hands or feet amputated, their tongues cut out, or their eyes put out. Indignation directed against moral criminals follows them the rest of their lives. Families shun their own, forcing them to live as outcasts or wanderers after offenses against the moral fabric of their society.

These harsh punishments are an effective deterrent. As severe as the penalties are, few are subjected to them.

Tekundu History

The Tekundu are one of the few Ancients-transplant races that has a deep-rooted understanding of their status. The notion of racial destiny has marked their history more than any other factor.

Prehistory: Primitive Tekundu civilizations grew up close to the perimeter of the northern frost cap, where the underground lakes are more frequent. Then, like today, the population of a single oasis is very isolated. Governments and religions, even languages varied among these peoples separated in some instances by only a few miles of rocky desert.

The Rule of the Pretenders: Later civilizations tamed the intervening deserts and brought previously isolated oases together. During the thousand-year period when the Tekundu emerged into metalworking, they underwent tremendous social domination by persuasive despots. The Pretenders, as they are now collectively known, emerged one at a time to rule over portions of the Tekundu civilization, banding together those who believed in their vision of the racial destiny. Some turned them against each other, vying for world dominance in the name of that destiny. Others tried to bring the different oases together to prepare for an as-yet-unseen challenge. The Pretenders lost their powers when their versions of prophecy failed to emerge. The Tekundu are now extremely skeptical of speculation about the racial destiny handed down by political figures.

Recent History: The Tekundu have accumulated superior technical expertise within the limits of their material knowledge. Restricted to the use of metals and muscle power, they have devised a variety of clever mechanical means to pump water from below ground and irrigate simple crops. Windmills and primitive steam engines are employed.

Contact with humans from the Imperium has only confirmed their understanding that they are not of this world. It has opened the door for new speculation about the racial destiny and new pretenders touting unique insights.

Tekundu Character Generation

Tekundu characters can be created using the standard Traveller rules. Before generation, the player must decide if the Tekundu is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Tekundu characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15. They suffer a loss of 1D6 points from their Dexterity score when fully gorged.

Social Standing for an Imperial Tekundu is treated as for human characters. For native Tekundu, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is reduced to a maximum of 7.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Tekundu can choose any of the ten careers. They are not restricted on skill selection nor on technological level of equipment training since they enjoy all the material benefits of the Imperium. Native Tekundu cannot select any space-related service. They cannot take skill in any equipment greater than tech level 3.

Tekundu serve terms and retire in the same manner as other human characters. They can switch services normally as outlined in the character generation rules.

Mustering Out: Tekundu muster out without modification.

Aging: Tekundu use the standard aging rules.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Tekundu requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Virtually all human equipment is suited well to the Tekundu. Difficulties arise when they are fully gorged, inflating their bulk beyond human norms. Their own clothing is designed to fit loosely or stretch with the changes in their bodies. Equipment is indelicate, so that they can manipulate

it easily when in their gorged state. Clothing and equipment from the Imperium is generally not adapted for such use. Tekundu find Imperial clothing tight fitting and uncomfortable. They prefer their own equipment, even as low tech as it is, since they can't get their fingers into Imperial items when gorged.

Vehicles: Tekundu can operate human vehicles, but can be quite uncomfortable in a human seat when gorged.

Psionics: Tekundu can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Tekundu can learn the human tongue and vice versa fairly easily. Both can learn and execute the written form of the other's language. Communication is commonly accomplished through console translators, available from Cr1000 to Cr2000. Higher priced models generally give better quality and detail of translation.

Travel and Starships

Tekundu are fairly comfortable on human starships, moderating their water intake accordingly. No special considerations need be made for them. They can use human-designed low passage berths.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

Tekundu are easily managed in a Traveller campaign as either player or non-player characters by adopting these common attributes.

Physiological: Hydro-storage, going through patterns of gorging and dehydration.

Psychological: Comfortable isolationists. Sense of a racial destiny. Respect for endurance.

Imperial Tekundu Encounter

Many Tekundu are convinced that the destiny of their race and their people lies somewhere among the stars. Some go so far as to undertake personal quests through the worlds of the Imperium and beyond in search of that destiny.

Tchuk

Tchuk is a wanderer and adventurer, determined to unlock the secrets of the universe and his peoples' place in it.

History: Tchuk is a younger son in a large family on Yulanii. As a young man he took work in the irrigated fields beyond the oases, gaining some mechanical expertise. The monotony of agricultural life failed to hold his interest, however, and Tchuk was on the verge of rebellion when the first ship from the Imperium arrived at his oasis.

Tchuk befriended the captain and crew of the merchant vessel, pestering them enough that they eventually engaged his services. Tchuk took them all around the oasis to help them trade their wares. When they left, he stowed away until deep into jump space. Angry and unwilling to keep him on his ship, the captain put him out at the next starport with a low passage ticket to return.

Tchuk hasn't been back to Yulanii.

Present Situation: Tchuk is very interested in Ancients' sites. He works when he can to earn passage in search of them. Presently, he's convinced that there is more information at the Imperial Library at the University of Sylea. He's taken work as a baggage handler at a local starport to earn the money for the voyage.

Previous to this, however, he fell prey to con artists. They showed him some ruins on a remote planet, convinced him they were constructed by the Ancients, and relieved him of quite a lot of money. At first, he was taken in, but later tracked the con men down to demand a refund. Rebuked, the Tekundu broke into their offices and took several gemstones he found there as the refund. He has no idea how much they're worth, or that they have value at all. The con men are hot on his trail, though, and catch up to him just after he befriends the characters.

Subsequent Encounters: Tchuk is eager to engage any adventurers travelling through the Imperium. He has few technical skills to offer, but he's handy with a crossbow and willing to work long hours of manual labor. The characters hear at starports, for years to come, of a young barbarian out to uncover the secrets of the Ancients.

Native Tekundu Encounter

Yulanii's children are hardened barbarians of the desert plains. One intriguing individual is a woman of some repute among the human visitors to their world.

Kriss, Desert Guide

The black sand wastes hold many riches, both mineral and historical. Kriss is a renowned guide well-travelled in those bleak regions.

History: Kriss was once the leader of her family on a northern oasis. However, noteworthy citizens of other families tended to rub her the wrong way. Tired of always being at odds with the other families, she lost the favor of her siblings and children and was forced out. Kriss packed a few things and left, never to return.

Since then, she has learned the ways of the southern people, where water and resources are even more scarce than elsewhere. She makes a living as a guide in the black sands of the southern hemisphere.

Present Situation: Pure mineral possessions are easy to find, though finding paths to and from the potential mining sites is something Kriss brings to the table. More valuable are the ancient art treasures of primitive Tekundu peoples, since oases buried for centuries beneath the black sands yield intricate pottery, vases, paintings, and other exquisite art forms of considerable value. Other Tekundu prize these ancient artifacts and pay top credit for them, and off-world they're almost priceless. Museums and art galleries know Kriss well and offer her a fair price to guide archaeologists to the right places.

Present Situation: Kriss has been working with a museum from an established world of the Imperium, guiding a team of two dozen diggers from site to site in the deepest black sand. The offworlders have provided all-terrain vehicles and higher tech equipment to make the journeys smoother, but they need Kriss' expertise to find buried oases worthy of excavation.

After two months in the wastelands, they have returned, and local rumors are buzzing: the museum diggers have unearthed a special artifact, a totem of one of the greatest pretenders, lost for ages. To the locals, the totem has a mystical, almost magical significance, and they resent that it will soon be lost to the Imperium. Angry mobs have surrounded the archaeologists' compound, not letting them get to their starship to fly away.

The player characters can get caught up in this plot on a number of levels: they may be employees of the museum team, offering transport or security, or they may be visiting Yulanii for the first time. Either way, they meet Kriss under intense circumstances as she tries to fulfill her contract and get the museum team off the world.

Subsequent Encounters: Kriss will never leave Yulanii. However, she is a valuable contact on this fringe world, especially when asked to help unearth other riches from the black sands.

TRAKII

Trakii (pronounced DRA-ki) are aerial carnivore hunters native to a dense atmosphere world. Their race is extremely ancient, when measured by recorded history and length of a single civilization. They are graceful, stately beings that once dominated an thick envelope of air over their world. But their world is now polluted and their numbers have dwindled. For centuries they have been locked in a death struggle against the abominations — their own offspring bent on savagery and destruction.

The term Trakii is a combination of Vilani and Solomani dialects, harkening to the resemblance of the race to legendary dragons. For all intents and purposes, the Trakii are dragons, huge reptilian flyers with long necks. The first Vilani explorers to encounter them no doubt looked for their lairs and piles of golden treasure.

Trakii speak a low, droning language that is difficult for humans to decipher. The sounds are easy enough to duplicate, but the language, like the race itself, has a very different concept of time. The language is full of descriptive dialogue and endless modifiers, so that a simple reference to a nearby mountain can take literally hours. Their name for themselves is an indecipherable poem that can take the afternoon. Calling another Trakii by name can take more than a day for the recounting of all its ancestors and their achievements. Humans don't want to listen closely for so long, nor are Trakii willing to absorb entire communications in mere minutes. Computer translators are available, but these do nothing to close the gap in perceived time. Humans colloquially refer to them as "dragons." They refer to humans by reciting their experience with the bipedal aliens, tracing back several generations if necessary.

Racial Origins

Trakiini is a world of modest size with tremendous mountain ranges, oceans, and deep valleys. The Trakii are the most successful race the planet has ever spawned, growing from individual carnivores to small communities to a world-dominating civilization for more than 200,000 years. Other species that once competed against their primitive forebears for resources, were domesticated during the millennia of civilization, and now run wild again. They, like the flora, are reclaiming Trakiini, roaming unchecked through the ruins of abandoned cities.

The present-day Trakii trace racial ancestry to small, efficient hunters of the high mountains, gliders and flyers of all variety. The impetus to intelligence came with the gradual thinning of the atmosphere over eons, making their flight less efficient and so less of an advantage over other predators.

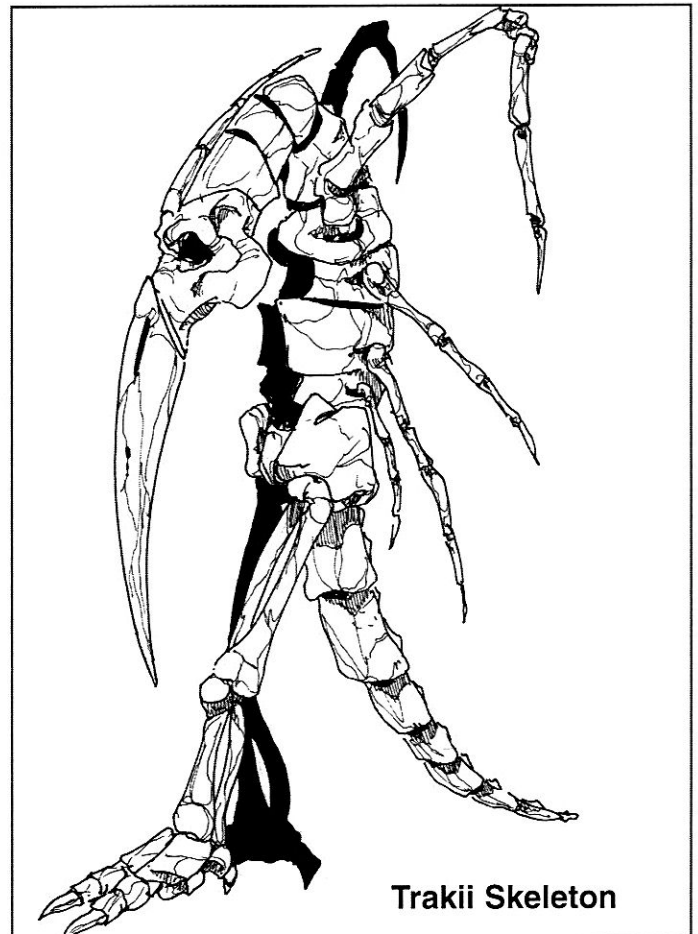
Trakii Physiology

The dragons are extremely large, measuring 5 meters from snout to tip of tail, with wingspans as much as 10 meters. One flying alongside a scout ship compares favorably in span, if not mass. They weigh between 150 and 200 kilograms.

Body Structure: The Trakii are winged bipeds with thick, leathery hides. Their wings are manipulated by powerful muscles along the back of the narrow torso. The beast stands on two strong legs, these dexterous enough to serve more delicate functions of holding objects and eating. The neck is long and narrow, sporting an aerodynamic head with a long

beak along a narrow skull. The Trakii has a long tail for balance which can also be employed for manipulation of objects and even as a weapon.

Skeleton: Honeycombed for strength, Trakii bones are calcium based. Flesh doesn't extend all the way to the end of the alien's toes or beak.



Trakii Skeleton

Musculature: Like human muscles, those of the Trakii only contract, requiring a flexor and extensor at each joint to give full range of motion. Their strongest muscles are in the back, powering the wings, and the legs, necessary for seizing prey and crushing it. Compared to a human, their legs are far stronger, though the human has an edge in manipulative dexterity and balance.

Skin: Trakii hide defies puncture from most natural attack forms. The thick, leathery material is the equivalent of cloth armor. The skin of the wings is stretched thin between long bones, and circulation there is very poor. Tears to the wings can take several years to heal correctly. A significant wing injury is virtually fatal.

Trakii coloration runs from silvery-grey to deeper reds and oranges. Their bellies are light turquoise, matching the color of the native sky for camouflage against prey below.

Senses: The Trakii are superior to humans in sight and hearing, inferior in touch and smell. A Trakii in pursuit of prey can make out subtle movements more than two miles distant. The rustling of tiny animals in the brush a hundred yards away can draw their attention. However, their fingers lack soft tissue for fine tactile sensation. They can only sense pressure and extremes of heat. The swift-moving hunters have little need for smell, defaulting to their taste buds to warn of tainted meat.

Reproduction: In more civilized times, Trakii mated for life. However, their numbers are so small now that couplings of males and females is infrequent. The impregnated female lays a soft egg, no bigger than a baseball, after a seven month gestation period. She deposits the egg among the crags and ravines of the high mountains, out of reach of most that would feed on them. When the egg hatches, the baby Trakii takes immediately to flight, growing to full size in just a few months.

Over the last 10,000 years, however, a random mutation has occurred, possibly due to poisons introduced into the atmosphere by the Trakii civilization. A growing percentage of their young are abominations, powerful but unintelligent, savage and cruel. Abominations cannot be detected before hatching, and cultural and ancestral bias doesn't allow the parents to hover over it in the meantime.

Life Cycle: Newly hatched Trakii instinctively hunt small animals as they grow. Childhood ends after three months, when they have reached full size. Maturity is measured culturally, generally acknowledged after 60 years of tutoring and life experience.

Trakii are termed venerable after 200 years of age and ancient after 500. There are Trakii still living that are more than 1,200 ears old.

Trakii Psychology

The ancient Trakii are very different from human beings, especially with regard to time, its use, and impressions of its passage. They are intolerant of impatient humans and think of hurrying little beings as inferior. They consider all dialogues to be continuous and all relationships to be for life. There is also a racial resignation to the decline of their civilization that affects all Trakii.

Superiority: No creature that exists for just a few dozen years can be terribly wise, or so the Trakii believe. They have a difficult time accepting a human's opinions or decisions since they can't have thought about the situation for nearly long enough. Humans pressing a point with a Trakii are best served by indicating that their objectives are long-term, either by their family or their race as a whole. For instance, a human seeking the aid of a Trakii in battle has little chance convincing the alien on his own. However, if he implores the Trakii on the basis that he fights an enemy who his father and grandfather also fought against, the dragon may lift its head and take notice. Similarly, Trakii are more easily convinced to act when a shorter-lived being is representing a multi-generational struggle of its people. Otherwise, Trakii are indifferent to the affairs of such creatures, preferring to keep to themselves.

Never-ending Relationships: Trakii think in terms of extended dialogues with others, and any aliens dealing with them have to fit into that mold: a human makes the acquaintance of a Trakii and passes time — considerable time — in wandering conversation; the next time the two meet, the Trakii expects to pick up the conversation exactly where it left off, even if that was decades before. They consider it rude of shorter-lived creatures if they cannot do so. Trakii are sometimes confused by the quick-passing generation of others, and extend relationships to subsequent generations without input from the newcomers. A dragon might encounter the grandson of a human it met years before, reassign the relationship to him, and start the dialogue anew.

Resignation: The Trakii have accepted decline as inevitable. Racially, they have adopted this as a reality, and it affects their ability to participate in altering that outcome. For instance, humans travelling with a Trakii through ancient ruins on their world might come across information or equipment that could help the dragons against the abominations.

But not only will the Trakii refuse, it is confused why such a notion would occur to the humans in the first place. They want no part in setting things right, and instead find solace in being a part of the dwindling numbers. They are proud to be among those writing the final chapters of their race.

Conviction: While the Trakii may appear to be idle conversationalists, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Trakii place significance on everything they utter. If it's worth saying, it's worth saying right, and therefore it is worth remembering or confronting. They do not expect human listeners to remember the details of past conversations, but they expect the gist to be noted and the significance honored. A tale about a fallen comrade, for instance, is part of their ritual of passage, and a human privy to it must be reverent and attentive.

Homeworld: Trakiini

The Trakii homeworld is relatively young. The solar system around its G6 star coalesced about 2 billion years ago. As such, the system remains rich with asteroids and meteorites. Large impacts still occur fairly regularly, two or three per century that cause significant environmental impact. Meteors are so common that the night sky of Trakiini is virtually alive with falling stars.

There are three other significant planets in the solar system, all further from the sun. The last of these is a gas giant. Trakiini has no moon.

Geography: Still a very young world, with rampant tectonic activity. Continental drift has thrust up enormous mountain ranges and widened for spectacular oceans. There are few areas of vast plains on the world. Most life clings to rocky crags.

There are two significant mountain ranges that ring the world. The equatorial mountain range runs virtually uninterrupted around the center of the planet, with peaks regularly reaching 10 miles into the air. The second is almost halfway to the south pole, also ringing the planet, but interrupted by two separate oceans. The south polar range is shorter, but boasts seven of the ten highest peaks on Trakiini, including the colossal Askranii mountain, more than 15 miles tall. Not far from it is the Yalipii trench, almost 8 miles below sea level. Proto-Trakii grew to intelligence in the highlands of the southern range.

Time: The Trakiini day is 41.2 hours long, or 1.71 standard days. Its year is 234.3 local days, or 402.2 standard days.

Trakii Society

Historically, the Trakii had a marvelous sense of society. Their hierarchy produced magnificent architecture and dress, stately grace and mannerisms befitting a proud and ancient race. They encouraged a nobility and monarchy of blood lines, but tightly governed by wisdom and compassion. The long-lost Trakii royal families soared like gods above the cliffs and crags of their world.

Today, there is virtually nothing left of that society. The few remaining Trakii are loners and individualists, unwilling to taint the memory of the great civilizations of their ancestors. Psychologically, they are embarrassed by any longing for the greatness of history. Instead, they remain proud to participate in the final passage of their kind.

Trakii meet rarely, and then only to mate. The drive to reproduce has diminished, but there is still the raw instinct to survive. Trakii may go many years without seeing another of their kind, without uttering a word. Individuals are generally aware of the other Trakii within a day's flight in all directions, but hesitate to make contact, preferring the isolation.

Trakii History

The Trakii can trace their civilization back 200,000 years, longer than any other recorded alien race. They survived through the period of the Ancients apparently without incident. If the Ancients took an interest in the dragons, they did so from afar, as there are no historical records that even remotely indicate their contact.

The earliest civilizations clung desperately to the crags of the southern mountain range. Large meteor impacts on Trakiini have a catastrophic effect on the local climate, forcing all life forms into remission for unpredictable lengths of time, the most successful species adapted through hibernation or intelligence. The first significant technological leap for Trakii was the adoption of herding and husbandry. A more stable, controllable food supply not only let their populations swell, but gave them some insurance against meteor-climate changes. With husbandry came tool use and stone architecture. Their gradual climb brought the race to world domination with huge nations and magnificent cities, their population in the tens of millions.

Decline: Two separate factors induced general decline of the Trakii civilization. First, a particularly destructive series of impacts in a short period of time cut their numbers by 70%. Twelve large impacts in two centuries hammered their world and nearly wiped their kind off its face. Second, the social impe-

tus at the time was to break away from technology and revert to more primitive lifestyles. The impacts were seen by many Trakii as a sign to do just that. Their civilization slipped slowly away from them for several centuries before the appearance of the first abominations.

Abominations: The first abominations appeared nearly 400 years ago. Physically, they are indistinguishable from their normal Trakii brethren. Psychologically, however, they are quite different. The abominations are savage and cruel, uninterested in intelligence and communication, bent on destruction and the pleasures of the hunt. Abominations are wanton cannibals, destroying their own kind for meat. Abominations are without compassion or great wisdom. They never cooperate and often die as a result. Today there are more living abominations than true Trakii, and they have contributed greatly to the decline in population and civilization.

Trakii Character Generation

Trakii characters can be created using the standard Traveller rules. Before generation, the player must decide if the Trakii is a native to his own world or a member of Imperial society.

Initial Character Generation: Trakii characters have all six characteristics. Roll 2d6 for each of them, and modifications may make them ultimately range from 1 to 15.

Social Standing for an Imperial Trakii is treated as for human characters. For native Trakii, it refers to their standing on their native world only. Offworld, their Social Standing is at minimum 7 and can go as high as 13.

Acquiring Skills and Expertise: Imperial Trakii can choose any of the ten careers. They are not restricted on skill selection nor on technological level of equipment training since they enjoy all the material benefits of the Imperium. Native Trakii can choose only the Army or Rogue careers. They cannot take skill in any equipment greater than tech level 3.

Trakii can serve the same number of terms and retire in the same manner as human characters. They can serve dozens of terms, though, and build high levels of skill. Trakii can switch services normally as outlined in the character generation rules.

Mustering Out: Trakii muster out without modification.

Aging: Trakii ignore the aging rules.

Other Game Rules

The unique nature of the Trakii requires special consideration for certain aspects of game play.

Equipment: Trakii cannot use most equipment designed for humans. Personal equipment constructed for the bipedal humanoid structure are completely inappropriate for the Trakii. Intricate devices, such as tools or consoles, can be managed but with some difficulty.

Trakii can make primitive equipment for themselves. They can purchase equipment made specially for them elsewhere in the Imperium, but these have to be made to order, cost anywhere from 150% to 300% of the normal price, and often have significant time delays.

Vehicles: Trakii cannot operate human vehicles.

Psionics: Trakii can test for psionic potential just like human characters.

Translation: Trakii can learn human languages and vice versa, but the time delay in communication is enormous and impractical. Translators are available, available from Cr2000 to Cr8000, but these penetrate only the linguistic barrier, not the time lag.

Travel and Starships

Trakii manage quite well on human starships, though they become uncomfortable if they cannot perch or spread their wings over a period of many days. Neither staterooms nor cuisine need special consideration when a Trakii is on board.

Trakii cannot use human-designed low passage berths. None have been specifically built for their race.

Quick Role-Playing Tips

A player or referee can better introduce a Trakii into a campaign by remembering these quick role-playing tips:

Physical: large winged creatures. Flyers. Extremely long-lived.

Psychological: superiority over shorter-lived races. They think of relationships as one long conversation. Resigned to the decline of their race and civilization. Hold deep convictions.

Imperial Trakii Encounter

There are only a handful of Trakii living off-Trakiini. They are employed for their longevity and passion for historical detail.

Wuthunderabay, Historian to The Royal Court of Duke Banifold

Duke Banifold of the Predeian Cluster is a favorite of Cleon, a distant cousin of considerable wealth. The Duke models his court after the most lavish in

history, from a variety of cultures. He employs a Trakii to be no more than a magnificent display to impress guests. Wuthunderabay is nothing more than an interesting possession to the Duke, but grows more powerful in his court with every passing year.

History: Wuthunderabay is a venerable Trakii, 626 years old. He was born when their civilization was already in decline, but before the appearance of the abominations. His full name is extensive, tracing through thousands of ancestors and their accomplishments. He can recount battles against 27 abominations and shows the scars of several of them.

Wuthunderabay was first encountered by human explorers just over a century ago. Subsequent visitors offered to take him to the stars, and there he met Duke Banifold, who offered him a place in his household.

Present Situation: The Trakii is the official historian of the Duke's court. He accompanies the Duke on all state visits and is a permanent fixture at court. Wuthunderabay tends to dominate and intimidate, just as the Duke desires. But the Trakii has its own plan: to patiently assume more and more responsibilities from the Duke, over a time period so gradual that he won't ever notice. Starting with simple recording of history, he is now charged with assigning and inviting guests to functions, and with the accommodations for those guests.

Subsequent Encounters: Travellers wanting to meet with the duke need the blessing of Wuthunderabay. They can also contact him to meet other nobles through the Duke's court.

Native Trakii Encounter

Native Trakii are always encountered individually. Visitors to Trakiini might travel for days through the ruins of stone cities before finding a living Trakii, and there is an equal chance of encountering an abomination first.

Ikutheranimus

Ikutheranimus is a female Trakii who makes her home in the ruins of an ancient city. She flies over it and sits on its highest structures, keeping an ever-watchful eye on her domain.

History: Ikutheranimus is young, only 140 years old. Her entire life has been a constant struggle against abominations that covet her city, dead as it is. She shows deep tears and rips to both wings, so she cannot fly at full efficiency any more. She has mated three times in her life and laid her eggs on the cliffs that rise high over the ruined city.

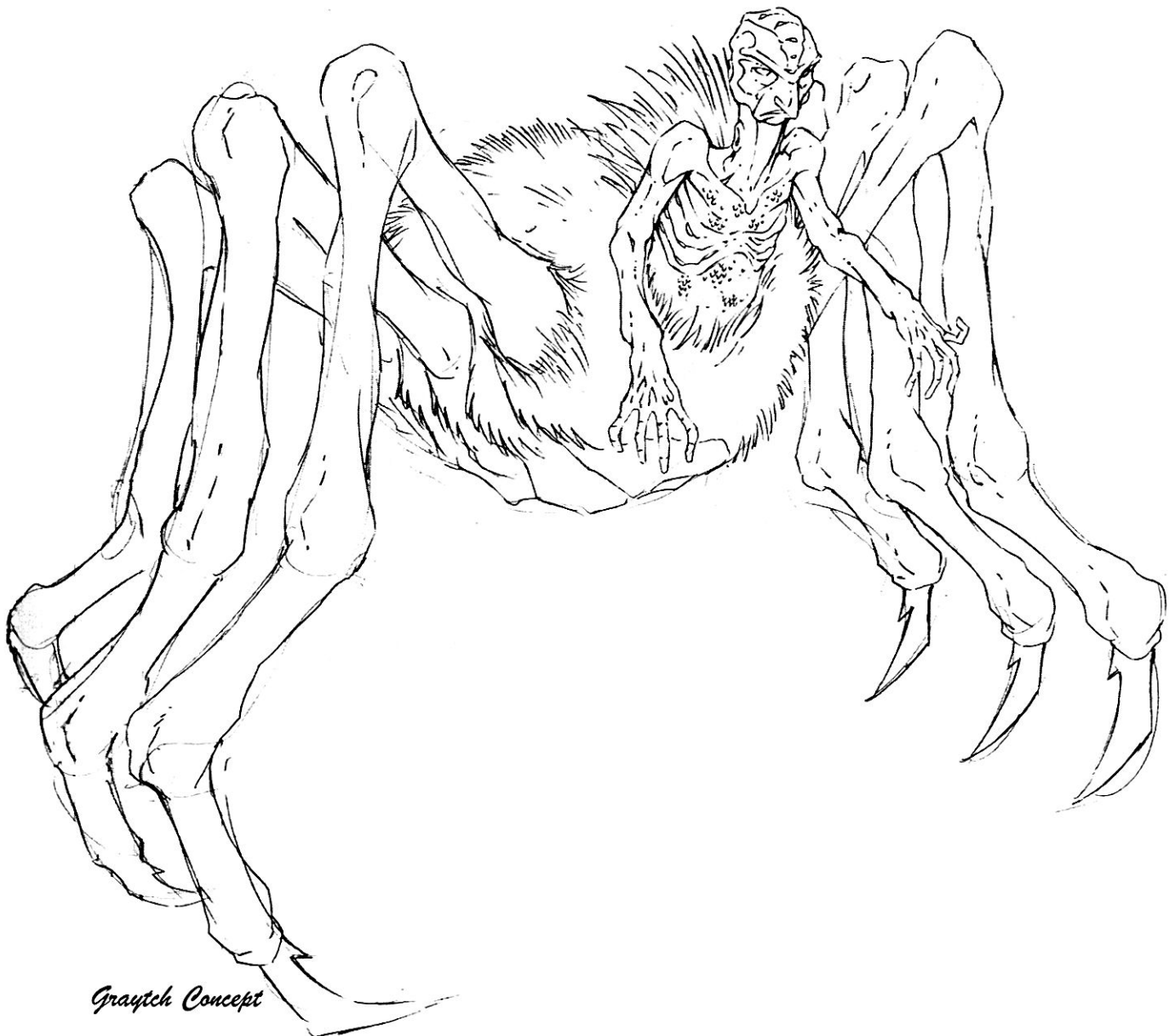
Present Situation: The Trakii is extremely protective of her domain. She is also very proud of it, and knows its history well. This city, built into the foothills and mountainsides of a huge range, and was once the seat of government over the entire plains below and the mountains as far as the eye can see. She gladly takes travellers through the city, telling them the importance of every crumbling structure, the most important events that took place there, the most prominent Trakii who visited there. . . She marvels at the view of the city from the mountains and soars over it in reverence.

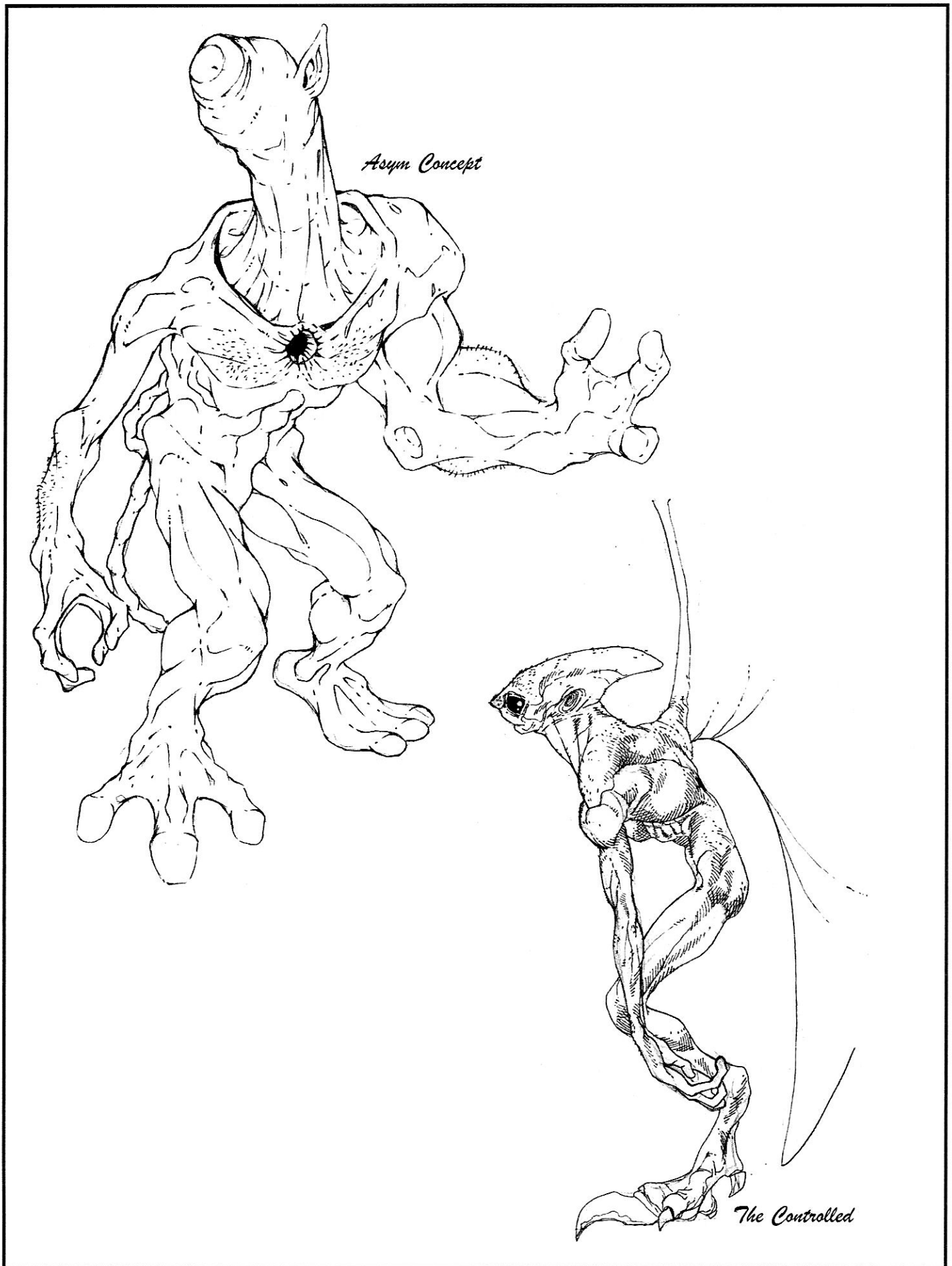
Intruding abominations, however, are closing in, roosting a little closer every passing month. She acknowledges that her final confrontation with them is at hand, but is neither sad nor nervous. Her posture is purely ceremonial, as if a passage of history is nigh and her part in it is written and accepted.

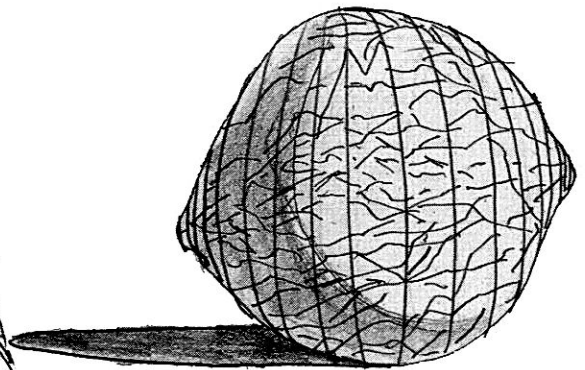
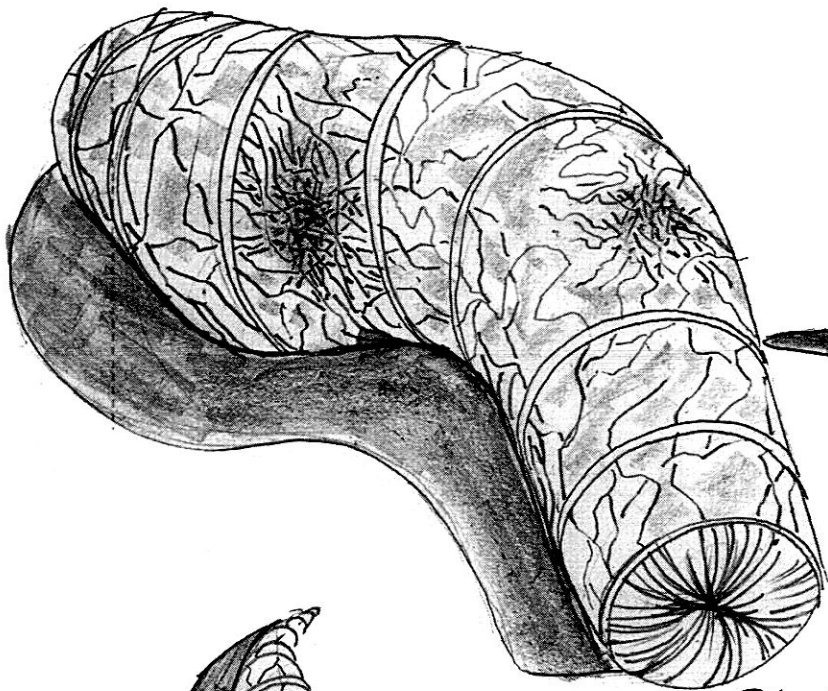
Subsequent Encounters: There will be no future encounters with Ikutheranimus. The next time travellers visit her city she is not there, her body discarded on the rocks of the foothills, and abominations roosting in her once-magnificent city.

Wildstorm

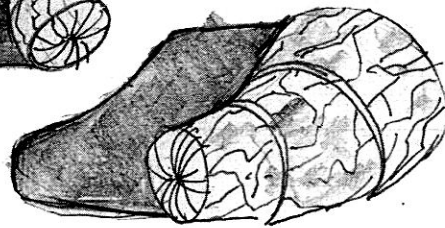
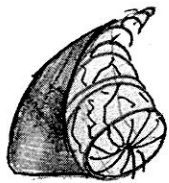
ART GALLERY



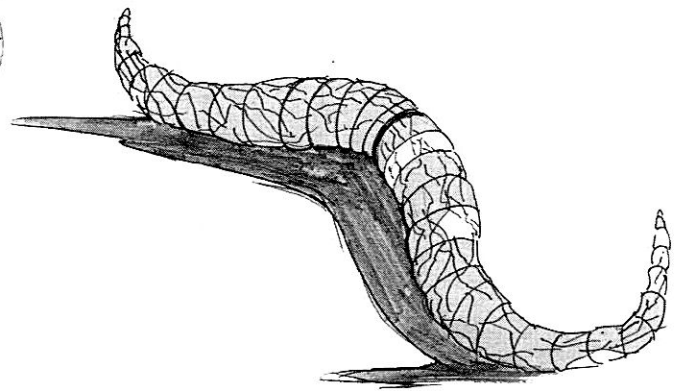




Constricted Nucleus



Relaxed Nucleus



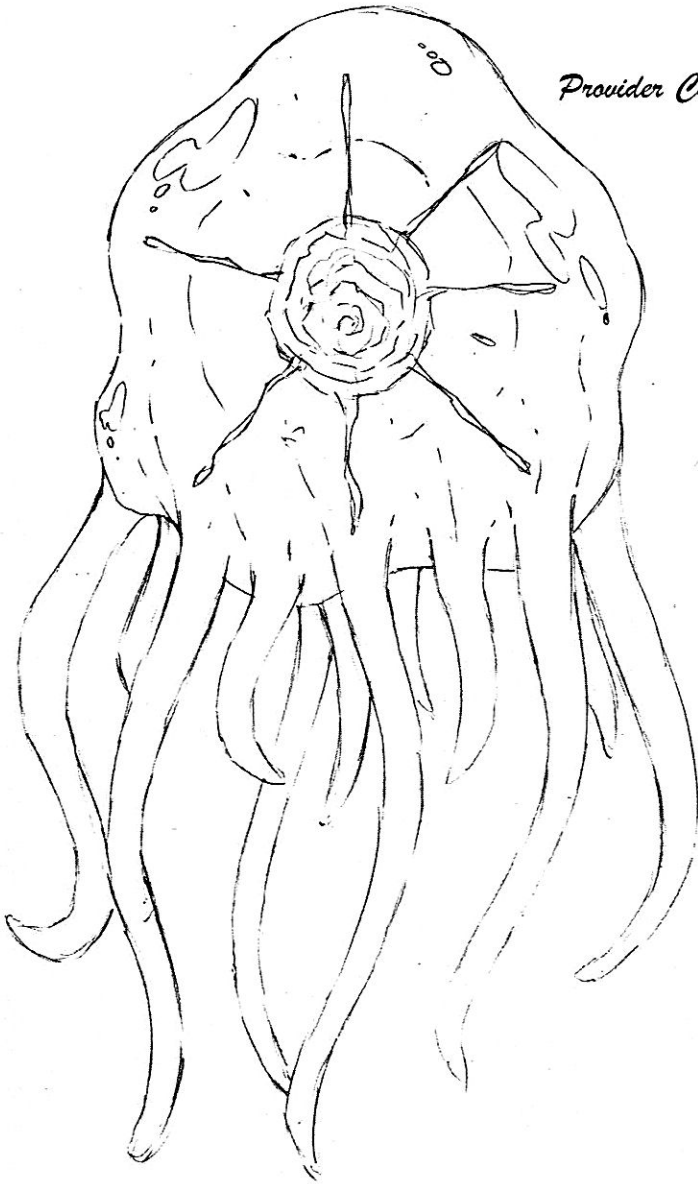
Joined Nucleus



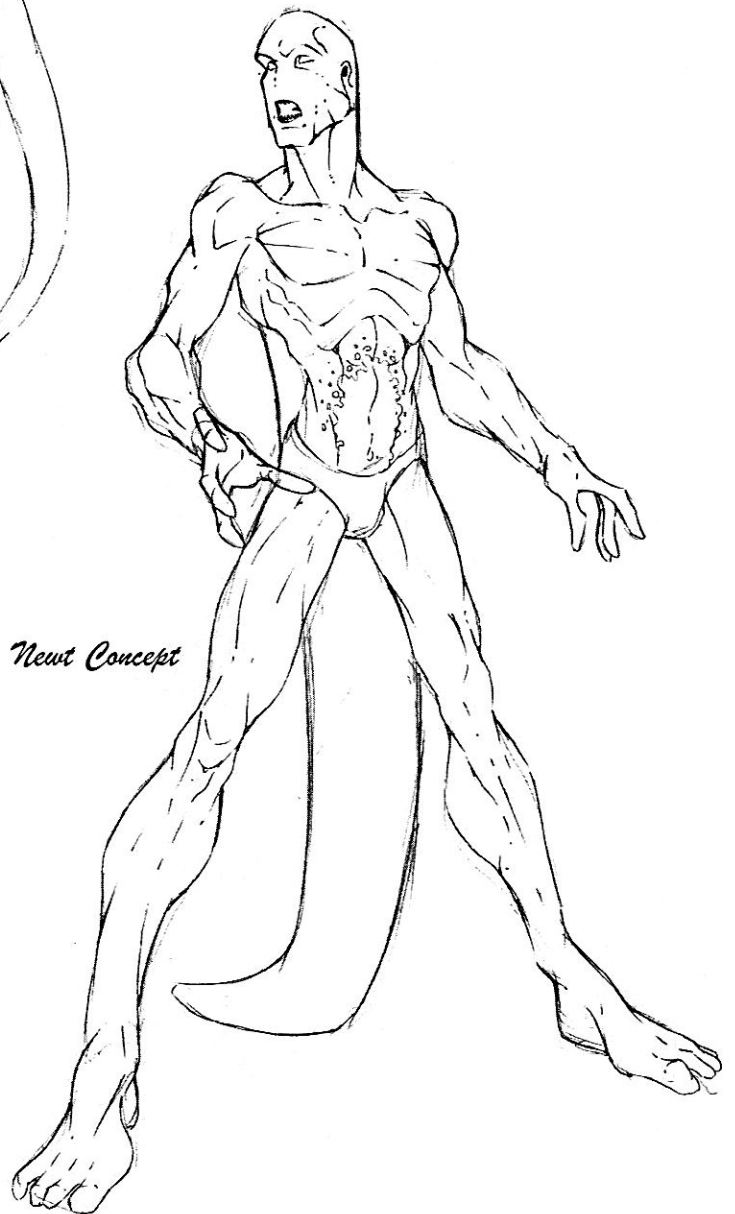
Denaar



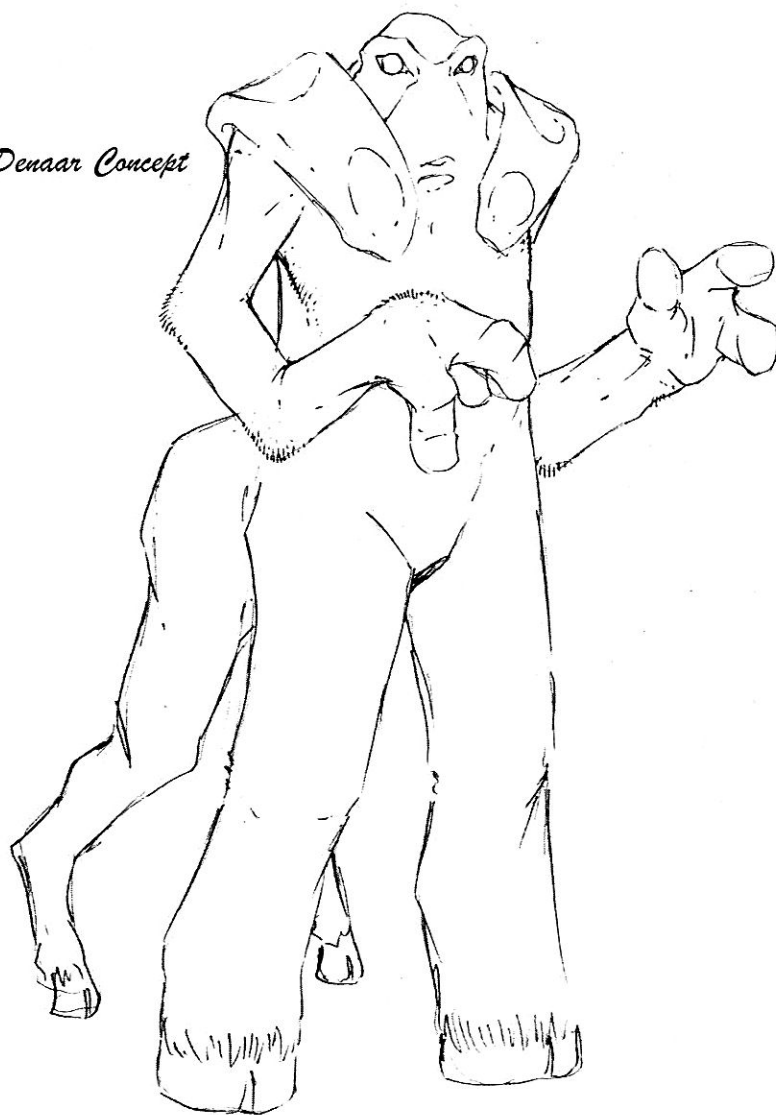
Provider Concept



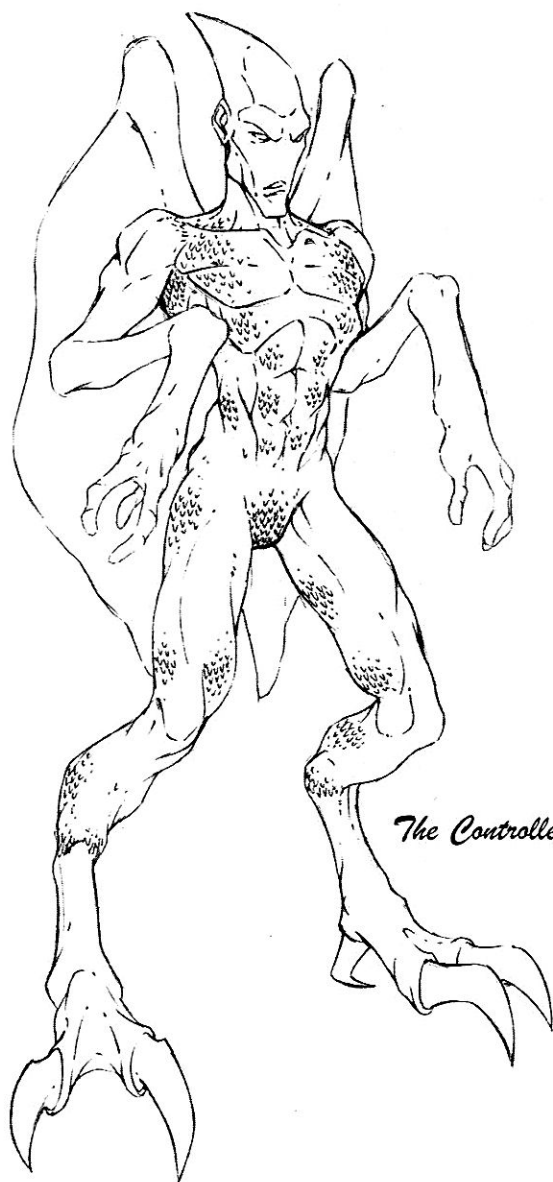
Newt Concept



Denaar Concept



The Controlled Concept



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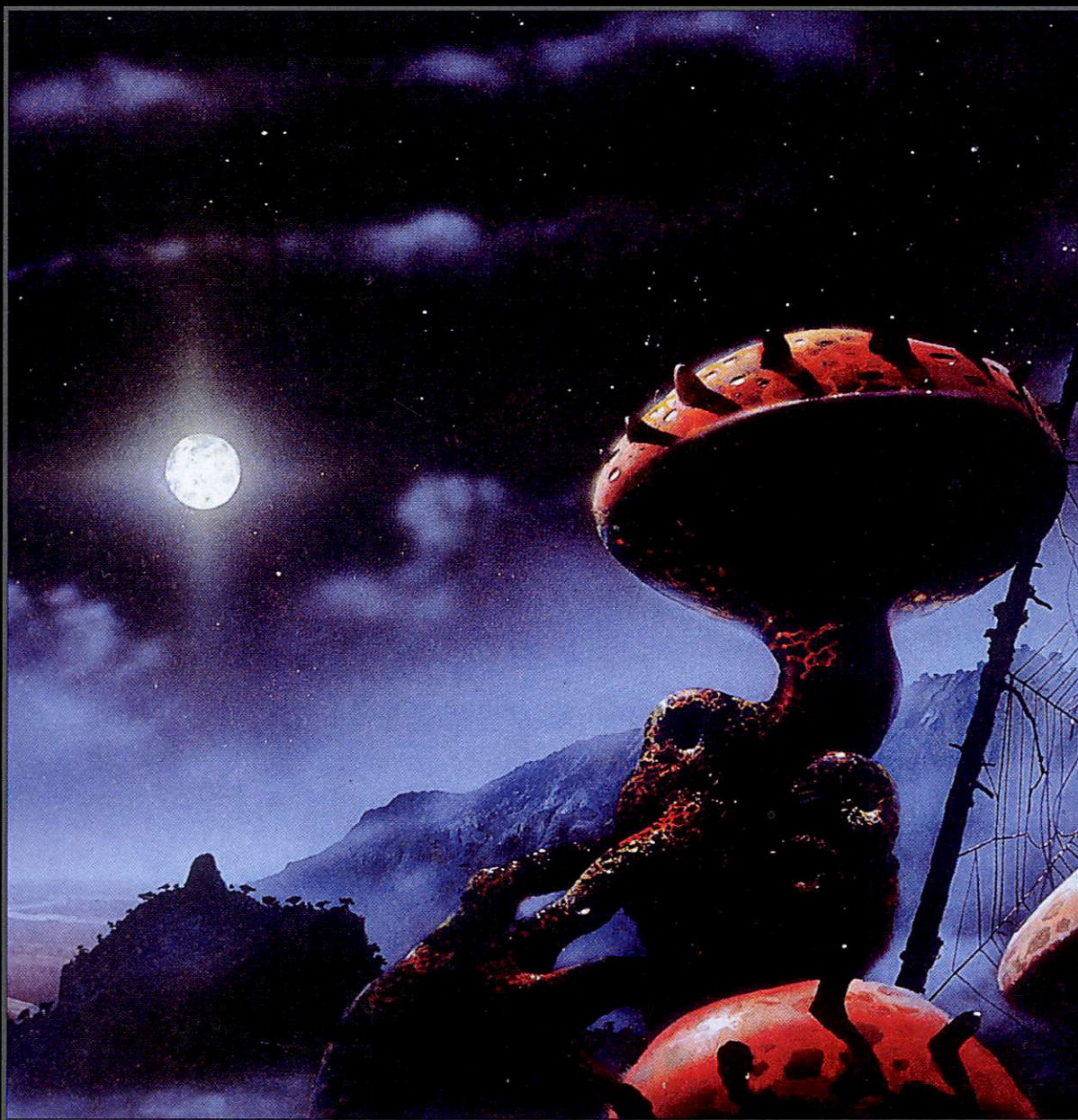
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