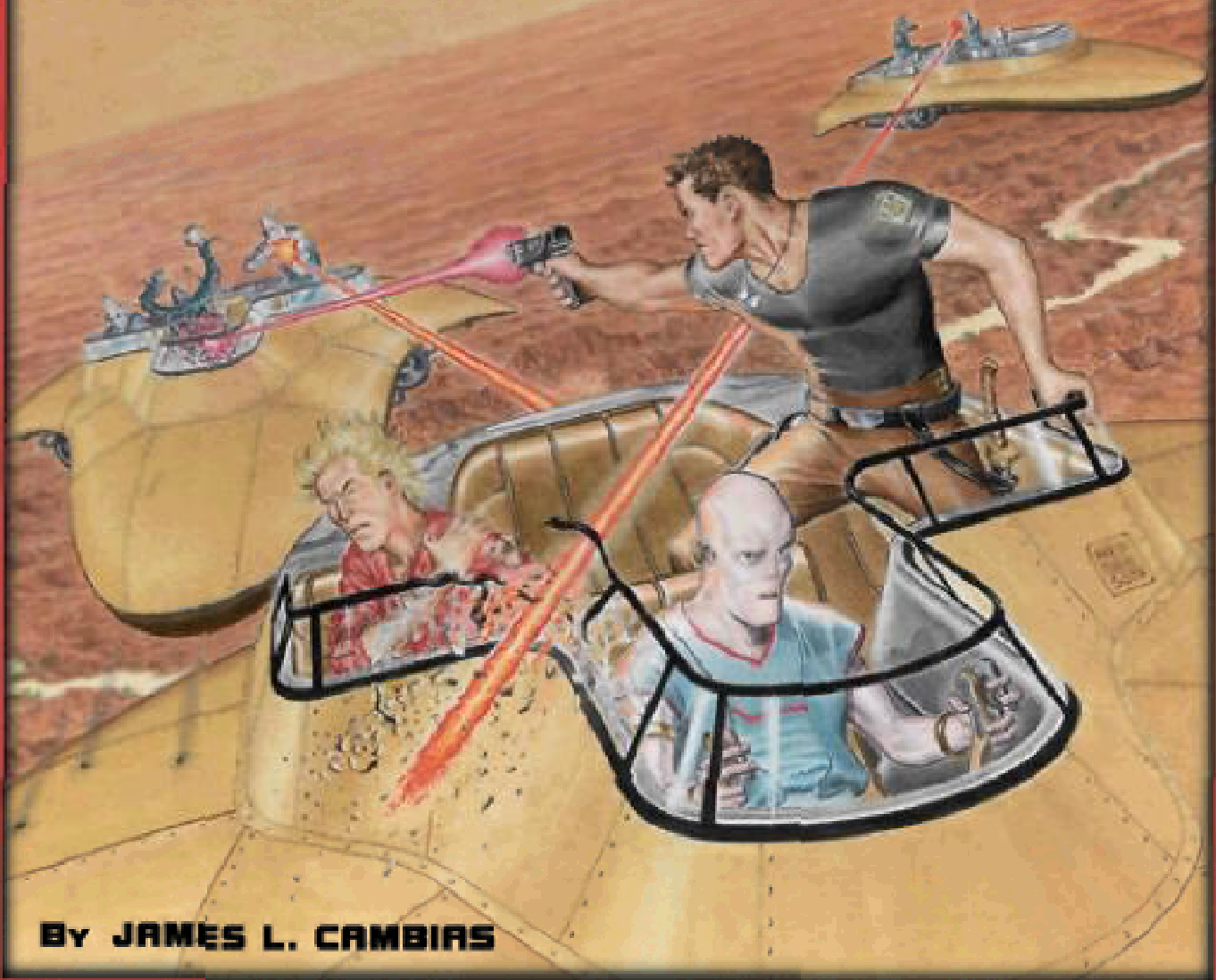


G U R P S

Jack Vance's

PLANET OF ADVENTURE



BY JAMES L. CAMBIAS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS

Jack Vance's

PLANET OF ADVENTURE™

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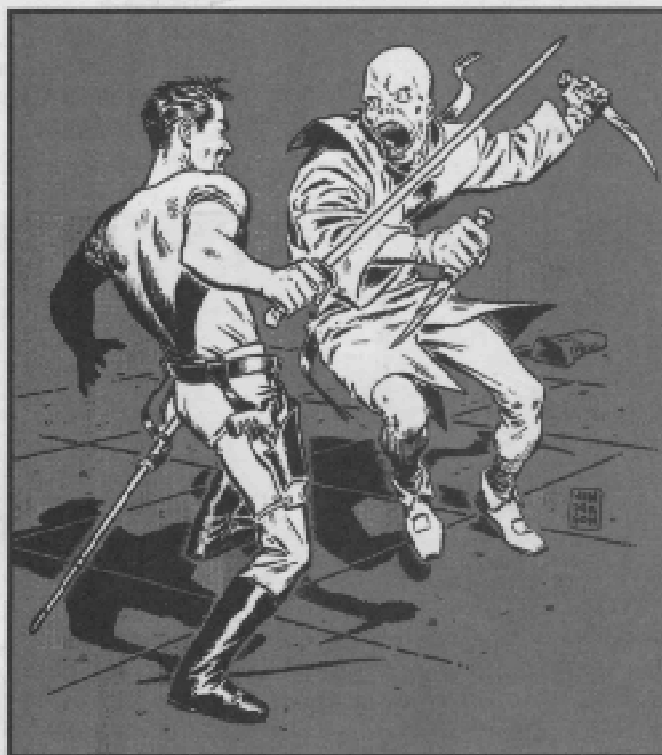
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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ABOUT GURPS

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GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/.

The *GURPS Planet of Adventure* web page can be found at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/planetofadventure/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*; those that begin with S indicate *GURPS Space*. The abbreviation for *this book* is PA.

For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

INTRODUCTION

Far off in space floats a planet with ale-colored skies . . . Jack Vance took us there. Vance introduced delighted Earthlings to the people, creatures, and customs of Tschai. It's a world of danger, where humans are ruled and exploited by strange alien races. With Vance's hero Adam Reith as your tour guide, learn the awful secrets of the Chasch, foil the treacherous agents of the Wanek, escape the hunters of the Dirdir, venture into the underworld labyrinth of the Pnume, and meet vivid characters like Traz Onmale, Zap 210, and the appalling Aila Woudiver.

GURPS Planet of Adventure lets you plan your own excursions on Tschai. Retrace Adam Reith's footsteps as intrepid scouts for Earth, or play natives of Tschai just trying to survive and make a few sequins. Tschai's depth and variety cry out for a long visit, with time to admire the scenery and get a feel for the place.

A talented author like Vance can imply a tremendous amount in just a few sentences. The game designer has to turn those references into rules and complete explanations. He can invent some things, but not too much . . . the feel of the original novels must shine through. If any errors remain, they are entirely the designer's fault.

Some of Tschai's mysteries have been left unsolved. What's the connection among the Pnume, the Phung, and the night-hounds? What are the goals of the Wanek? What will Earth do when it learns about Tschai? Those are for individual GMs to decide.

Here's *your* ticket to Tschai. Watch out for attenders, be careful at the eel-races, and keep your power-gun handy!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Cambias is very likely a Pnume. The evidence is strong: he is tall and pale, wears wide-brimmed hats and black clothing, avoids sunlight, and prefers quiet. He collects all manner of odd things, is fascinated by history, and plays games in which entire civilizations struggle merely for his amusement. He has been a freelance writer and roleplaying game designer since 1990, and is the author of *GURPS Planet Krishna* and *GURPS Castle Falkestein* (with Phil Masters). He once lived in New Orleans, was educated at the University of Chicago, and now lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and daughter.

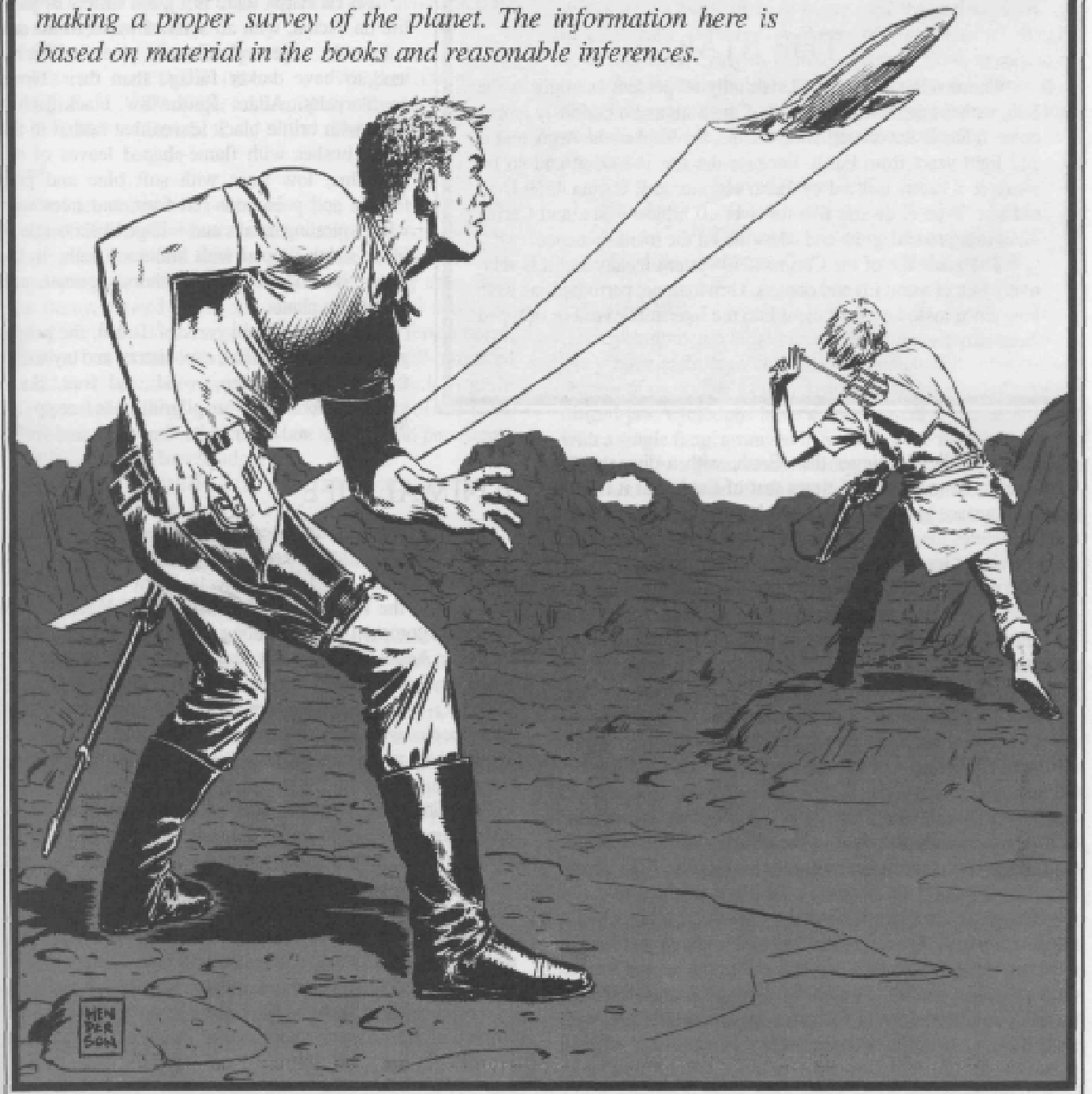
ABOUT JACK VANCE

Jack Vance is one of the grand masters of science fiction and fantasy. He published his first story in 1945. In 1950 he attracted notice with his innovative book *The Dying Earth*, and since then has risen steadily in critical acclaim and popularity. He won a Hugo award in 1963 for "The Dragon Masters," and again in 1967 for "The Last Castle" (which also won the Nebula award). He is considered one of the best world-builders in science fiction and fantasy, creating exotic yet plausible alien settings for his stories. Among Vance's best known works are his "Demon Princes" series (*The Star King*, *The Killing Machine*, *The Palace of Love*, *The Face*, and *The Book of Dreams*) and, of course, the four Tschai novels.



TSCHAI

Tschai has not been explored in any detail by Earthmen. All that we know about it comes from Adam Reith's travels, and he was more occupied with finding his way back to Earth than with making a proper survey of the planet. The information here is based on material in the books and reasonable inferences.



Carina 4269 is an old sun 212 light-years from Earth. It is a type K star, cooler and more orange-colored than Sol. Such an undistinguished star would never have drawn the attention of interstellar explorers, had it not been for radio signals broadcast from the Carina 4269 system toward Earth. These transmissions led Adam Reith to the weird and dangerous world of Tschai.

Tschai is Carina 4269's only planet. It circles at a distance of 1.12 AU (104 million miles), giving it a year of 516 standard days, or 488 Tschai days. It has two moons. Carina 4269 may once have had more planets; perhaps the close approach of the red star Hsi a few million years ago flung the other worlds off into deep space.

THE STAR

Carina 4269 is a type K2 star, only 60 percent as bright as the Sun, with a mass two-thirds that of the Sun, and a curiously amber color. It lies in the constellation Carina, the Keel of the Argo, and is 212 light years from Earth. Because the star is so dim and so far away, it is barely noticed by Earth astronomers. Carina 4269 is an old star. Type K dwarfs live for over 10 billion years, and Carina 4269 is approaching the end of its life on the main sequence.

The great age of the Carina 4269 system means that it is relatively free of asteroids and comets. Gravitational perturbations have long since tossed most of them into the interstellar void or dropped them into the star itself.

Tschai is slightly bigger than Earth, with a diameter of 8,240 miles. Its mass is 1.05 times that of Earth, but it is less dense. Its surface gravity is 0.99 G. A day on Tschai is 25 hours and 22 minutes long. Tschai doesn't have as much axial tilt as Earth, giving it less seasonal variation in temperature.

Like its star, Tschai is very old. The planet's core has cooled and its crust is thick. There is little geologic activity on Tschai; there are few volcanoes and no ranges of young, high mountains like Earth's Andes or Himalayas. Earthquakes are very rare. The planet's crust is honeycombed with caves.

Tschai's atmosphere is thick, with a surface pressure of about one and a half times Earth's. The air is composed of 74% nitrogen, 17% oxygen, 4% water vapor, 2% argon, 2% neon, 0.5% sulfur compounds, 0.25% carbon dioxide, and small amounts of other gases. There is also a good deal of airborne dust. The trace compounds give the air a noticeable brownish tinge when seen from space; from the surface the sky is beige and gray at the horizon, shading to blue-gray at the zenith.

The dense atmosphere creates a considerable greenhouse effect; without it, the world would long since have become too cold to support life. It also makes the sunlight on the surface dimmer than it would be on Earth, with an amber color. The density and composition of Tschai's atmosphere interferes with sensors; any attempt to scan the surface from orbit is at a -10 penalty.

NATIVE LIFE

Tschai has a very rich array of life forms. In addition to the native species, there are organisms brought from other worlds and new species created by genetic engineering. In some cases it is easy to see which creatures are native – Pnume, Phung, and night-hounds all share common features and are obviously Tschai-born. But many of the imported or modified species have lived on Tschai so long that they are completely adapted to local conditions and are effectively "native," making it hard to tell where they really originated.

PLANT LIFE

As on Earth, there is a great variety of plant life on Tschai, with all sorts of weird forms and colors. As a general rule, the plants of Tschai tend to have darker foliage than their Terran counterparts. Adam Reith saw black-limbed trees with brittle black leaves that rattled in the wind, bushes with flame-shaped leaves of red and blue, low trees with soft blue and gray foliage and poisonous red fruit, and trees with white spiraling trunks and foliage like a tangle of black string topped with luminous balls. In the desert he encountered cripthorn, spumet, and rack-belly plants.

In the populated parts of Tschai, the people grow keel trees, psillas, asponistras, and tayberries for shade, decoration, wood, and fruit. Some important food crops are pilgrim-pods (see pp. 70-71), grapes and other fruits, fern-pods, and spelt.

ANIMAL LIFE

Tschai's animals are even more varied than its plants. Animals native to Tschai tend to have complex mouth-parts, resembling those of Terran insects. Leap-horses, night-hounds, and the Pnume are all four-limbed, suggesting that this is the common pattern among the vertebrates of Tschai. However, Adam Reith also encountered the eight-legged pull-beasts and a related riding animal, and in the jungles of Charchen saw six-limbed creatures like monkeys. Either these species were imports from off-world, or else the animals of Tschai are more variable than Earth creatures in their basic body plan.

One interesting feature of native Tschai organisms is their surprising resistance to injury. Leap-horses are controlled by a bar driven right through their brains, while people routinely harvest meat from living herd animals without apparent harm to the beasts. It may be that Tschai's animals have a great deal of redundancy in their internal systems, as well as impressive powers of regeneration. Alternatively, those features may be the result of deliberate genetic tinkering by one of the many advanced races to settle on Tschai. In game terms, all of the "insectile" native species with four limbs are assumed to have Slow Regeneration (p. C164).

In the following listings, the habitats of creatures are abbreviated as follows: A = Arctic; D = Desert (including scrub woodlands); F = Forest; J = Jungle; M = Mountain; P = Plains (including steppes); S = Swamp; and SW = Salt-Water Aquatic. Fuller descriptions of these habitat types can be found in *GURPS Bestiary*.

Attanders

Attanders are nocturnal hunters and scavengers found in Kotan and Kislovian. They are black, vaguely humanoid creatures, with long clutching arms tipped with big claws. Attanders have no teeth, and use their claws to slice up prey or carcasses into bite-sized chunks. The claws are thus always coated with rotting flesh and filth. Any wound from an attander's claws is certain to become infected, requiring the victim to make a HT roll daily for 1d days to avoid slipping into unconsciousness.

ST: 10 **Move/Dodge:** 7/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/1 **Weight:** 100 lbs.
IQ: 6 **Damage:** 1d-2 cut plus infection
HT: 14/8 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** F, P

Berl

Berl are dangerous predators which haunt the fens and forests of Kotan. They are solitary omnivores with a broad and unspecialized diet. Berl are tall, slender bipeds, and their brown fur gives off an acrid odor. A berl's long arms have great horny, clawed hands and are normally held above the head. Their faces look something like those of Terran boars, split by a vast mouth full of sharp teeth. Berl are ill-tempered and kill even when they are not hungry. They attack by grabbing prey and pulling it close for a killing snap of the jaws. Berl do not run very fast, but they are tireless and persistent.

ST: 24 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 400 lbs.
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 2d-2 cut (claws),
or grapple then 1d+1 cut (bite)
HT: 12 **Reach:** 1 **Habitats:** F, P, S

Bombardier Birds

Bombardier birds are native to northern Kislovian. They are descended from scavengers much like vultures, but have developed their own unique way of killing live prey. Bombardier birds live in flocks of up to 100 adults, nesting in gorges or rocky cliffs. Sentinels circle over the surrounding countryside looking for prey. When a suitable victim appears (the birds prefer large herbivores), the sentinels alert the entire flock, and all the birds fly out to dive-bomb the prey with stones. Even a large creature like a pull-beast is likely to be at least stunned by the attack, and while it is immobile the birds can flap down and tear off strips of flesh. Fortunately, bombardier birds have great difficulty hitting a moving target. Double the penalty for the target's speed of movement when a flock attacks.

ST: 5 **Move/Dodge:** 18/9 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 10 lbs.
IQ: 3 **Damage:** 1d-2 cr
HT: 12/4 **Reach:** R, C **Habitats:** M, D



Charnel Birds

The Charnel Teeth islands off the west coast of Kislovian are home to strange and ugly-looking birds known variously as Charnel Birds, Ghost Birds, or Eye Birds. They have four wings which allow them to hover over the surface of the sea or glide long distances. A cluster of pink tentacles dangles from the body, ready to snatch up fish or floating carcasses. A thicker tentacle holds a single bulbous eye. Seamen consider the creatures to be the eyes and guts of drowned sailors, and make various signs of warding and protection when they are seen.

ST: 4 **Move/Dodge:** 16/8 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 12 lbs.
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 1d-4 cr (while grappled)
HT: 14/4 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** SW

Cyclodons

Cyclodons are large predators native to northern Kotan. They have eight legs and massive heads. The most curious feature of cyclodons is their jaw structure. Instead of a single hinged jaw, cyclodons have a dozen small ones, each tipped with a single fang, arranged in a circle at the front of the skull. The result is a great round toothy mouth, which can stretch wide enough to engulf a man's head. Cyclodons hunt by sight, and if blindfolded go completely berserk, charging about and biting randomly at anything they bump into.

ST: 20 **Move/Dodge:** 6/5 **Size:** 2
DX: 10 **PD/DR:** 1/2 **Weight:** 500-700 lbs.
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 1d cr*
HT: 10/16 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** A, P

* Anything bitten must make a ST test against the cyclodon to get free, or the cyclodon can automatically hit next turn.

Ghoul

Ghouls appear to be related to night-hounds (and thus to Prume and Phung as well). They are lean, long-limbed creatures who stand semi-erect and walk on their knuckles like Terran apes. Ghouls are scavengers and carrion-eaters, but are not above catching live prey if they have the advantage of numbers. They move about at night looking for recent corpses, and their keen sense of smell can even detect a buried body. Ghouls are clever, and can break into all but the most strongly fortified tombs. In combat they attack with their claws and sharp mouthparts; claw wounds from a ghoull become infected if the victim fails a HT roll. Ghouls are silent and stealthy, but smell horrible because of their diet.

ST: 12 **Move/Dodge:** 6*/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/1 **Weight:** 100-200 lbs.
IQ: 6 **Damage:** 1d-1 cut**
 (claw) or 1d-2 cr (bite)
HT: 14 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** F, J, S
* Move when knuckle-walking; move of 4 fully upright
** Roll vs. HT to avoid infection

Kar Yan

Kar Yan are subtle gray beasts native to the rocky badlands of Kachan. They have eight limbs in all, and can creep along on six or rear up onto their two rear legs to walk upright. The two forelegs are each tipped with a single dagger-like claw. Kar Yan are clever and stealthy hunters, who track their prey through the rocks in groups of two to four, communicating by rasping their claws together.

ST: 14 **Move/Dodge:** 8*/7 **Size:** 3 or 1
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/1 **Weight:** 400-600 lbs.
IQ: 6 **Damage:** 1d imp
HT: 12 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** D
* Move 8 on six legs, 4 on two.

Leap-Horses

Leap-horses are the most common riding animal on Tschai. They are native to the planet, with insectile faces and palps. Leap-horses are herbivores, but are willing to scavenge carcasses and consume grubs and larvae. To a Terran, they are bad-smelling creatures, and their springing gait is more like that of a gazelle than a horse. A leap-horse has a small knob-shaped tail and short horns. Their skin is prone to getting small horny growths like barnacles, which must be pared off. Leap-horse hides range from gray-green to black. Because of their springy gait, leap-horses are ridden with saddles and stirrups. Instead of a bit, they are steered with a guide-bar driven right through the brain! Like most native Tschai species, leap-horses have the Slow Regeneration advantage.

ST: 30 **Move/Dodge:** 14/7 **Size:** 3
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 1/2 **Weight:** 1,000 lbs.
IQ: 3 **Damage:** 1d-2 cut (bite)
 or 1d+2 cr (kick)
HT: 12 **Reach:** C, 1 **Habitats:** P

Night-Hounds

Night-hounds are among the most feared creatures on Tschai, because of their fierceness, stealthy persistence, and eerie intelligence. They are found everywhere on Tschai, and come out only at night (hence the name). Night-hounds are gaunt, hairless quadrupeds with the insectile face and mouthparts common to native animals of Tschai. Their eyes are blank white disks that seem to glow in the dark. They can see perfectly in the dark, and hunt by sight rather than scent. At night their low, wailing cries make the darkness terrifying. They are usually encountered in groups of six or more. Night-hounds develop from larvae, which are horny hemispheres as big as a man's fist and are often found growing on cave walls like barnacles. It is likely that night-hounds have the Slow Regeneration ability common to native species of Tschai.

ST: 12 **Move/Dodge:** 8/7 **Size:** 1
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/1 **Weight:** 100-200 lbs.
IQ: 6 (?) **Damage:** 1d-1 cut
HT: 14/10 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** any land

Pull-Beasts

The most common draft animals on Tschai are called simply pull-beasts. They are big animals, about the size of a Terran rhinoceros. Pull-beasts have eight heavy legs, with soft padded feet. Their heads are low-slung and look comically tiny compared to their huge bodies. Pull-beast faces look something like those of warthogs, with big tusks and four horns. They are herbivores, and their digestive tracts can process even the toughest grass of the steppes. Pull-beasts can be found almost everywhere on Tschai; in colder climates they put on a layer of insulating blubber, while in warm areas their skin hangs in loose folds. A smaller, related species, known as fat-humps, is raised for meat.

HUMANS OF EARTH

The few people of Earth in the Tschai novels don't seem very different from humans today. Adam Reith is an elite scout, highly trained and skilled, but is apparently an ordinary, unmodified human with no genetic improvements, cybernetic implants, or other add-ons. If such things exist in the world of the novels, they are only to correct medical problems. Similarly, Reith's attitudes are not very different from those of many modern readers. He dislikes cruelty, believes people should be free to govern themselves, and prefers a democratic system of government.

From the few clues in the novels, one can deduce that Earth has a unified government, which operates the Federal Space Agency, among other services. Earth doesn't appear to be a very militaristic society – the Space Agency is more like NASA than a "space navy." From some of Reith's remarks, Earth in his era sounds like a pleasant place, which suggests that many current problems have been solved.

Earth's technology level looks to be about TL10, with the addition of TL12 contragravity. The absence of biotechnology and cybernetics suggests that Earth follows the "safetech" technology path outlined in *GURPS Ultra-Tech 2* (no technology which modifies the human brain or body, no intelligent machines).

Since the focus of this book is Tschai, not Earth, referees can easily use whatever spacefaring human society they wish as the origin for visitors to Tschai. But in order to emphasize the exotic and alien nature of the planet Tschai, the "baseline" human society should be fairly close to our own.

ST: 200 **Move/Dodge:** 8/4 **Size:** 7
DX: 8 **PD/DR:** 1/2 **Weight:** 8,000 lbs.
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 2d cr (trample)
HT: 18/24 **Reach:** C, 1 **Habitats:** P

Sea-Scorpions

Among the more dangerous sea creatures of Tschai are the sea-scorpions. These are large four-legged arthropods with a long stinger-equipped tail much like that of a Terran scorpion. Sea-scorpions weigh about 200 to 300 pounds, and can be up to eight feet long. In the water they are relatively harmless, spending most of their time on the bottom eating smaller shellfish and scavenging dead things. Sea-scorpions are hermaphrodites, and their fearsome stinger is actually an ovipositor. When it comes time for them to breed, at the dark of the moons, they emerge onto land and seek out a warm-blooded host for their eggs. When a scorpion stings a host, it injects 1d eggs. The sting also injects a potent neurotoxin which paralyzes animals native to Tschai. Alien species are not paralyzed, but the venom causes intense pain and hallucinations. The larvae grow within the host organism and eat their way out. Once free, the scorpion larvae scuttle for the sea. Sea-scorpions are common in warm coastal waters; in areas where they are common, the human inhabitants often build their homes in trees or atop tall stilts for protection.



ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 2
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 2/4 **Weight:** 200-300 lbs.
IQ: 2 **Damage:** 1d-2 imp*
HT: 10 **Reach:** C, 1 **Habitats:** SW

* Successful sting injects venom which reduces all attributes by 1d from agonizing pain and implants 1d larvae which each do 1 point of damage per day.

Smur

The uplands of central Kislovan are home to the reptilian-looking smur, a carnivore which hunts by springing on its prey from ambush. The Carabas is inhabited by smur, and they hunt the humans who venture into the zone looking for sequins. Smur look vaguely like long-legged crocodiles, and weigh about 500 lbs. They are solitary creatures, and spend much of their time concealed by underbrush or tall grass, waiting for something to come by. Smur do not sleep, and so can remain watchful for days at a time. They attack by a sudden dash at the target, ending in a leap and a vicious bite. Happily, smur are not persistent hunters, and if their first few attacks fail to kill or cripple the prey, they give up.

ST: 30 **Move/Dodge:** 10*/6 **Size:** 2
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 1/3 **Weight:** 500 lbs.
IQ: 2 **Damage:** 1d+2 cut
HT: 12/20 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** P, D

* For 3 turns; move is 5 thereafter.

GEOGRAPHY

Tschai has two main oceans, the Draschade and the Schanizade. The Schanizade is the larger of the two, occupying nearly an entire hemisphere. Weather on the Schanizade can be terribly violent, with great storms raising mountainous waves. The Draschade is considerably more placid, and has a great deal of ship traffic.

Kotan

Kotan was the site of Adam Reith's crash on Tschai. It is a continent of dry plains, marshes, and forests, and is populated by humans and Chasch. The great Aman Steppe spreads across the middle of Kotan, dotted with ruined Chasch cities. The marshes of southern Kotan are haunted by cannibal tribes. West of the Aman Steppe are the Jang Pinnacles, inhabited by the degenerate Old Chasch.

The Dead Steppe is a vast, flat, gray waste roamed by dangerous tribes of nomadic Green Chasch and dotted by heavily fortified caravan depots. West of the Dead Steppe are the cities of the Blue Chasch; from there the land slopes down to the coastal lowlands. South of Kotan are the twin islands of Grenie and Horasin, hot places with dense jungles of huge gray-green trees.

Charchan

The continent of Charchan is covered by forests and jungles. Charchan is primarily inhabited by humans, but the Dirdir control a region in the far northeast.

The interior of Charchan is a wild region, covered by heavy forests shading into steppe and tundra to the north. The fertile east coast of Charchan is home to the Binth and the Walalukians, who rival the folk of Cuth in their sophisticated culture and advanced technology. There is also a large region controlled by the Dirdir and their Dirdirmen servants, centered on the cities of Eliasir and Anismna.

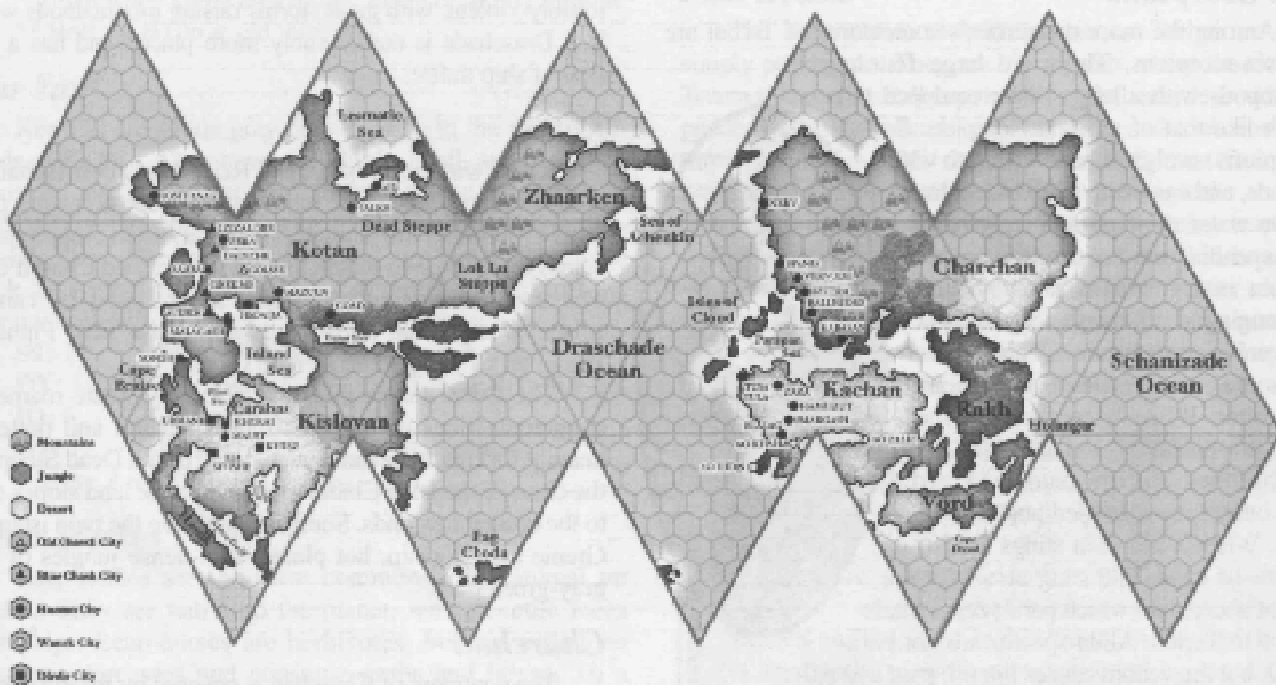
Kachan

Kachan is inhabited by men and Wanek. The west coast of Kachan is mountainous, and the waters of the southern Draschade Ocean are studded with islands. Some of the smaller islands are occupied by Wanek fortresses, while others are the haunts of pirates.

The north coast of Kachan is low and sandy. The Ish River empties into the Parapan, and remains deep and navigable for many miles to the south. The lowlands along the Ish are home to the Niss. The interior of the continent is called the Lokhara Uplands, a high plateau with edges eroded into great gorges and cliffs. The foothills are sparsely inhabited; the caravan stop of Hamil Zut is a town of perhaps 100 houses and 12 taverns.

The chief city of the uplands is Smargash, which is in the center of a fertile zone inhabited by the pugnacious Lokhars and their neighbors. To the south are the Lost Counties and the Infnets Mountains, while to the west is a region of chasms and badlands. East of the Lokhara Uplands is Lake Falas, a flooded rift valley where the Wanek have their biggest fortress, Ao Khaha. The eastern coast of Kachan is low-lying and swampy, with no harbors or navigable rivers.

TSCHAI



Planet Type: Earthlike **Diameter:** 8,240 miles **Gravity:** 0.99 G **Density:** 5.3 **Composition:** Medium-Iron
Axial Tilt: 12° **Seasonal Variation:** None
Length of Day: 25 hours, 22 minutes **Length of Year:** 516 Earth days, 1.41 Earth years (488 Tschai days)
Atmospheric Pressure: Dense (1.5 times Earth normal pressure)
Type and Composition: Polluted (74% nitrogen, 17% oxygen, 4% water vapor, 2% argon, 2% neon, 0.5% sulfur compounds, 0.25% carbon dioxide, 0.25% other; -10 sensor penalty)
Climate: Earth-normal **Temperature at 30° Latitude:** Low: 60° Average: 70° High: 80°
Surface Water: 60% **Humidity:** 76% **Primary Terrain:** Plains/Steppe
Mineral Resources: **Gems/Crystals:** Plentiful **Rare Minerals:** Ample **Radioactives:** Scarce
Heavy Metals: Scarce **Industrial Metals:** Ample **Light Metals:** Plentiful **Organics:** Plentiful
Moons: Two. Braz (small moon), orbits at a distance of 113,000 miles, with a period of 208 hours (8.67 standard days, or 8.2 Tschai days). It is 695 miles in diameter. Az (larger moon) orbits at a distance of 130,000 miles, with a period of 248 hours (10.33 standard days, or 9.8 Tschai days). It is 800 miles in diameter.

Biosphere

Dominant Life Form: See Chapter 1.
Other Significant Life Forms: See Chapter 1.

Civilization

Populations: 500 million humans, 100 million (or more) Pnune, 20 million Dirdir, 10 million Chasch, 50,000 Waneck.
Tech Levels: 0 to 12 (see text).
Control Ratings: 0 to 5 (see text).
Society: Highly factionalized and fragmented.
Starports: Class V at Sivishe, Class IV at Ao Hidis and Dadiche (and possibly elsewhere).
Installations: See Chapter 3.
Economic/Production: Agricultural, with some mining.

System Information

Star Name: Carina 4269 **Type:** K2V **Location:** 212 light-years from Earth
Biozone: 0.5-0.6 (theoretical) **Inner Limit:** 0.0 **Number of Planets:** 1

Planet	Orbit	Distance	Type	Diameter	Density	Gravity	Atmosphere	Notes
Tschai	1	1.12	Earthlike	8,240	5.3	0.99 G	Dense, polluted	See above

Kislovan

Kislovan is inhabited by humans, Dirdir, and a few Chasch. Northern Kislovan is a harsh region. West of the red and black Zopal mountains is the upland steppe known as the Carabas, where humans go to hunt sequins and Dirdir go to hunt humans. Khorai, home of the Khors, is north of the Carabas along the coast of the First Sea. West of there is Zsafatara and the country of the Thangs. The tip of Cape Braize is the ancient stone city of Steine, and 20 miles south is the Blue Chasch enclave of Songh, marking the limit of their sphere of influence on Tschai.

Southern Kislovan is low-lying, with broad salt marshes and barrier islands along the coast. To the east it becomes steadily more arid until reaching the Stone Desert.

Rakh and Elsewhere

Rakh's western coast is a mirror image of the coast of Kachan, girt with swamps and sandbars. The north coast of Rakh is dotted with numerous bays and inlets which serve as refuges for pirates. The east and south coasts are deeply sculpted by old glacial action.

THE MOONS OF TSCHAI

Tschai has two moons, Az and Braz. Az, the larger, orbits at a distance of 130,000 miles, circling Tschai every 248 hours (10.33 standard days, or 9.8 Tschai days). It is 800 miles in diameter. Its surface is rich in iron compounds, giving it a pinkish color.

Braz, the inner moon, orbits at a distance of 113,000 miles, with a period of 208 hours (8.67 standard days, or 8.2 Tschai days). It is 695 miles in diameter, which means that when Braz passes beneath Az it exactly eclipses the bigger moon. The surface of Braz is grayish-blue basalt, making it look pale blue when seen through Tschai's atmosphere.

Neither moon has any appreciable atmosphere, and neither is capable of supporting life. It is quite likely that at some point, one or more races established bases on the moons. However, there are no active moon bases at present.

The orbital motions of Az and Braz bring the two moons together every 49 local days. The period between the conjunctions of the two moons is the Tschai month. One orbit of Az is a Tschai week, 10 local days. Because Braz is considered the moon of ill omen, it is not used for time-reckoning.

Both Az and Braz occasionally eclipse the sun, since both appear bigger than Carina 4269 does in the sky of Tschai. Braz can sometimes eclipse Az, as well, and this is considered a bad omen. Every 267 years the two moons and the sun line up together in a grand eclipse, creating outbreaks of panic and religious fervor among the peoples of Tschai.

*And we, poor miserable humans:
pawns of the great folk, never knowing
which way to jump! I say Bevol take
'em all, and welcome!*

— Innkeeper, The Dirdir

South of Rakh and Kachan is the large island of Vord, a chilly and rocky place carved by glaciers. Vord's soil is thin and its growing season is short, so most of the inhabitants make their living by fishing, trade, or piracy. The southernmost point of Vord is Cape Dread, the accepted division between the Schandizade and Draschade oceans. East of Vord is the island of Holungar, which is thickly forested and sparsely inhabited.

HISTORY OF TSCHAI

Tschai is old. At times it is hard for Earth humans to comprehend just how old Tschai and its people really are. The entire history of civilization on Earth is a mere 5,000 years. Humans on Tschai have records reaching back more than 10 times as long, but even that mighty span is an eyeblink compared to the archives of the Pnume, which cover 10 million years of the planet's history.

The landscape is dotted everywhere with ruins, ranging from brand-new human ruins only as old as the Pyramids to really ancient structures built millions of years earlier. The oldest remains on Tschai are those of the Pnume. Once they lived on the surface of the planet in villages of little domes. A series of invasions by starfaring aliens drove them underground, and they began their great mission of recording all the races and civilizations which planted colonies on Tschai.

Adam Reith saw simulacra of more than 100 different species in the caverns of the Pnume. The oldest ones mentioned by the Pnume were the Shivvan, who came to Tschai about 7 million years ago. They were followed some time later by the Gjee, who founded eight empires before they were destroyed by the Fesa. The Fesa in turn abandoned Tschai when the red star Hsi passed close to Carina 4269 and the planet was convulsed by earthquakes and climate shifts.

The Old Chasch colonized Tschai 100,000 years ago, followed by the Blue Chasch in 90,000 B.C. The two races fought bitterly and brought in Green Chasch mercenaries. In about 60,000 B.C., the Dirdir came to Tschai and warred on the Chasch, driving them back to Kotan. The Dirdir brought the first humans to Tschai 50,000 years ago, and imported a second batch in 20,000 B.C. The Wanek are the most recent arrivals to Tschai, having established outposts on the planet only 10,000 years ago as part of their long, slow-motion war with the Dirdir.

Now another starfaring civilization has come across Tschai. The humans of Earth have sent their first mission there to trace the signals transmitted 212 years ago. Will Earthmen become another conquering power, carving out their own empire on Tschai? Only time will tell.

ADAM REITH

Adam Reith is a highly trained Federal Space Agency scout. He is an inch or two above average height, with dark hair, a broad forehead, and prominent cheekbones. On Tschai, he exhibits a wry sense of humor, a chivalrous streak towards women, and a strong dislike of cruelty. The character stats below represent Reith during his adventures on Tschai.

Before visiting Tschai, Reith naturally doesn't have his Secret, Allies, Dependents, or Enemies, but he does have Military Rank 3 in the Federal Space Agency and a 10-point Duty. Eliminate his Language (Tschaiian) skill as well, making him a 222-point individual.

Upon his return to Earth after the events of *The Phoenix*, Reith keeps Anacho and Traz as Allies, Zap 210 as a Dependent, and regains his Military Rank and Duty. He'll probably get a promotion and a positive Reputation once his superiors finish reading his report. It's unlikely that Reith will be sent into the field again as a scout, but he'd be the logical choice to command any large Earth expedition to Tschai.

Adam Reith

225 points

6'1" tall; 160 lbs. An Earthman with dark hair, dark eyes, and suntanned skin, dressed in sturdy, inconspicuous clothing.

ST 12 [20]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 12 [20].

Speed 6.25; Move 6.

Dodge 7; Parry 9.

Advantages: Ally (Anacho, 15 or less) [15]; Ally (Traz, 15 or less) [30]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Composed [5]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Fit [5]; Panimmunity (TL10) [5]; Rapid Healing [5]; Strong Will +2 [8].

Disadvantages: Dependent (Ylin-Ylan or Zap 210, 50 points, 15 or less) [-18]*; Secret (Earth human) [-20].

* Replace this with Enemy (Dordolio or Aila Woudiv-er) [-20] during *Servants of the Wanek* and *The Dirdir*, respectively, making Reith a 221-point character.

Quirks: Agnostic; Doesn't talk about his origin; Hates cruelty; Ironic sense of humor; Susceptible to beautiful women. [-5]

Skills: Astrogation/TL10-14 [4]; Beam Weapons/TL10 (Laser)-15* [1]; Brawling-14 [2]; Climbing-12 [1]; Ecology/TL10-13 [4]; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Sensors)-12 [1]; Electronics/TL10 (Sensors)-12 [2]; Fencing-12 [1]; Guns/TL10 (Pistol)-15* [1]; First Aid/TL10-12 [1/2]; Judo-15 [16]; Leadership-15* [2]; Mathematics-12 [2]; Mechanic/TL10 (Spaceship drive)-12 [1]; Piloting/TL10 (Space-boat)-14 [4]; Planetology (Terrestrial)-14 [4]; Parachuting-12 [1/2]; Survival (Desert)-14 [4]; Swimming-12 [1/2]; Tactics-10 [1/2]; Xenology-12 [2].

Languages: English (native)-15 [0]; Tschaiian-13* [1].

* Beam Weapons and Guns include IQ bonus; Leadership and Tschaiian include bonus from Cultural Adaptability.

ADAM REITH'S ADVENTURES

Most of what is known about Tschai was discovered by Adam Reith during his visit to the planet. Because Reith was more interested in finding a way home than in making a systematic survey, there are many places and things he never saw. A synopsis of his journey:

CITY OF THE CHASCH

The starship *Explorer IV* arrives at the Carina 4269 system. Just as the scout-boat crewed by Adam Reith and Paul Waunder is leaving the ship, the *Explorer IV* is destroyed by a torpedo fired from the planet below. Damaged by the blast, the scout-boat crashes in a forest on Tschai.

Reith bails out, but his shoulder is broken and his parachute snares in a tree. He can only watch as a band of Kruthe nomads come to investigate the wreck and behead Waunder. The Kruthe flee upon the arrival of a Blue Chasch flyer and, shortly thereafter, a Dirdir airship. The Blue Chasch drive away the Dirdir and carry off the scout-boat.

The Kruthe find Reith and take him to their camp. Reith learns their language and customs with the help of the Kruthe leader, Traz Onmale. When Reith becomes friendly with a girl of the tribe, she is murdered. Reith fights a duel with the killer and takes his emblem. After an attempted caravan raid fails, Traz Onmale is due to die and be replaced. Reith convinces Traz to abandon his emblem and leave the tribe. Reith recovers his communicator from the crash site and determines that the Chasch have carried his scout-boat off to the northwest.

In the ruins of a city they encounter the Dirdirman Anacho and save him from a Phung. The three men join a caravan heading westward. Reith is struck by the beauty of a female passenger, who is traveling with some priestesses of the Female Mystery and seems to be their prisoner; during a brief conversation she informs him that she is Ylin-Ylan, the Flower of Cath, and tells him of her people. Eventually, Reith tries to free the girl. He is foiled by the priestesses and is himself taken prisoner. Reith frees himself, then tracks them to the Seminary of the Female Mystery. He arrives just as the Rise of Clarification is going on, frees the male slaves awaiting sacrifice, and liberates Ylin-Ylan. They flee as the Seminary goes up in flames.

The two rejoin the caravan and journey to Pera, the City of Lost Souls. Ylin-Ylan's great beauty attracts the attention of Naga Goho, leader of the Gnashers. While Reith and Anacho are off scouting the Blue Chasch city of Dadiche, Naga sends his men

to collect Ylin-Ylan. For defending her, Traz is sentenced to hang. When Reith returns, he kills the Gnashier guards and hangs the executioner instead. He rouses the people of Pera and slips into the fortress to free Ylin-Ylan and take Naga Goho prisoner. The Perans hang Naga and begin organizing their own government.

Reith accompanies a drayman to Dadiche. He narrowly escapes capture by the Blue Chasch and is unable to get close to the scout-boat. While trying to evade the Chaschmen police, Reith witnesses a bizarre ceremony, in which the Chasch convince the Chaschmen that they are reborn as Chasch upon death.

On returning to Pera, Reith is invited to be town leader and help with setting up a government. After a week a party of Blue Chasch and Chaschmen come to arrest him. Reith and the Perans defy the Chasch and slay them.

Soon the Blue Chasch send an army against Pera. Reith and the Perans defeat the first attack; the Chasch then send their entire force against Pera. Reith lures a horde of Green Chasch to attack the Blue Chasch army, and while the battle rages the Peran militia is able to slip into Dadiche and seize the Blue Chasch city. He reveals to the Chaschmen how they have been deceived by the Chasch, and most of the remaining Chasch are massacred.

With Dadiche under human rule, Reith can easily get access to his space-boat, but learns it is a gutted hulk. Ylin-Ylan suggests that he might be able to build a spacecraft in Cath – her father is a wealthy nobleman and would reward Reith well for rescuing her.

SERVANTS OF THE WANЕК

Reith, Anacho, Traz, and Ylin-Ylan set out for Cath by sky-raft, but it breaks down over the Dead Steppe and they must take ship at Coad instead. In Coad they meet Dordolio, a Yao cavalier who has been searching for Ylin-Ylan. With him around, the Flower of Cath begins acting like a spoiled nobleman's daughter again.

At sea, Ylin-Ylan becomes jealous after seeing Reith flirt with a merchant's daughter. Dordolio challenges Reith to a duel, but after Reith shows himself to be Dordolio's equal in swordsmanship, Ylin-Ylan succumbs to *awaile* and leaps overboard.

The ship stops at Ao Hidis, where Reith is intrigued to see the Wanek spaceport seemingly unguarded. But without time to study the Wanek control systems and language there would be no way for him to steal a ship, so he and his companions continue to Cath. With Dordolio's reluctant guidance they purchase suitable clothing and head for Settra aboard the wheelway.

To his surprise, Reith is coldly received by Ylin-Ylan's father Lord Cizante. Cizante's secretary Helsse expresses interest in Reith's situation and takes him to a meeting of the Society of Yearning Refluxives, a persecuted group who believe humans originated on another planet. Reith is saddened to see the group is now a cult mired in mysticism and pseudoscience.



A spy follows the two men as they leave the meeting. Reith overpowers him and is surprised when Helsee stabs the spy. On the man's body he finds a scrap of paper written in Wanek chime-glyphs. Soon after they encounter Dordolio, who threatens Reith with assassination by the Twelve Touches.

The following day Helsee takes Reith to Zarfo Detwiler, a Lokhar who can possibly translate the Wanek writing. He has little success, but Reith is interested to learn that Zarfo once worked in the Wanek machine-shops. Reith recruits Zarfo for a scheme to steal a spaceship, but it will require a trip to the Lokhar country to recruit some others with the necessary skills.

As they finish their conversation, the two men are approached by a member of the Assassins' Guild, who informs Reith he has been selected for death by the Twelve Touches. With Zarfo's help Reith gets rid of the assassin, and learns that the contract was taken out by Helsee.

That evening Reith and his companions are invited to dine with Lord Cizante. After some accusations and counter-accusations, Cizante agrees to pay Reith 50,000 sequins in exchange for his immediate departure. Later, Reith and his comrades are attacked by fanatics of the Yearning Refluxives. With the Assassins' Guild, Lord Cizante, Dordolio, and now the cult as enemies, Reith decides it is high time to leave Cath.

Accompanied by Zarfo, Reith and his companions depart the next morning in Lord Cizante's car, driven by Helsee, who seems determined to deliver them into the hands of the assassins. They bully Helsee into driving them eastward to the borders of Cath.

At Black Mountain Lake Reith acquires a boat and the men set out down the Jinga river. One night Helsee disappears, apparently down a hole leading to the Phurte tunnels. At Kabasas he reappears, strangely altered and seemingly mad. He vanishes before they can learn anything from him.

The travelers take passage on a ship across the Parapan; when the captain attempts to rob them, they toss the crew overboard and pilot the vessel themselves. They cross the Parapan and sail up the Ish river as far as possible before joining a caravan for Smargash, the chief city of the Lokhars.

At Smargash Reith assembles a crew of retired Lokhar technicians, promising them great wealth if they can help him steal a spaceship and pilot it to an unnamed destination. That afternoon he again encounters Helsee. On Zarfo's advice Reith takes Helsee to a Dugbo magician. While Helsee is under hypnosis, Reith learns he is a Wanekman. All questions about what happened to him are unanswered, Helsee collapses, and the Dugbo pronounces him dead.

Reith and his Lokhar crew travel to Ao Hidis and steal a spaceship. Unfortunately the ship malfunctions and crash-lands in Lake Palas, far to the east. There, Reith and the others are taken prisoner by Wanekmen and brought to the Wanek fortress of Ao Khaha.

TRAZ

Traz is a youth of the Emblem tribe, born on the steppes of Kotam. He is short, strongly built, and lacks the characteristic drooping mustache of the Kruthe. He would be an ordinary member of his tribe except for the fact that he wears Onmale, the emblem of leadership and authority. Wearing Onmale, Traz becomes the leader of the Emblems, a person of great consequence and sagacity. He gains Status 2, and takes on the attributes of the emblem: confidence, authority, and sternness (treat as Charisma), and a Sense of Duty to the tribe. Traz is presented here without Onmale, as he did not wear the emblem during his adventures with Reith.

Traz

108 points

5'10"; 180 lbs. A stocky steppe nomad with light brown hair and suntanned skin, wearing typical Kruthe clothing.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 7; Parry 9; Block 8.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]; Composed [5]; Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Bloodlust [-10]; Callous [-6]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Delusion (Onmale is alive and affects his wearer's personality) [-10].

Quirks: Curious about other cultures; Doubts he is really worthy of Onmale; Hides emotions; Male chauvinist; Suspicious. [-5]

Skills: Area Knowledge (Aman Steppe)-12 [4]; Black Powder Weapons/TL5 (Flintlock pistols)-13* [1]; Buckler-14 [4]; Crossbow-14 [4]; Driving/TL6 (Motor-dray)-12 [2]; Fencing-12 [2]; Knife-14 [4]; Intimidation-12 [6]; Leadership-12 [6]; Motorcycle-12 [1]; Navigation/TL0-10 [4]; Riding (Leap-horse)-14 [8]; Survival (Plains)-12 [6]; Tracking-10 [2].

Languages: Tschaiian (Native)-10 [0].

* Black Powder Weapons includes IQ bonus.

Reith and the others are brought before some of the Wanek leaders to be interrogated. Astonishingly, one of the Wanekmen translators is Helsee, who was only in a trance at Smargash.

During the interrogation it becomes obvious that the Wanekmen are not translating accurately. In desperation, Reith put Helsee into a trance and compels him to translate correctly. The other Wanekmen draw weapons but are quickly overpowered by Reith and the Lokhars. Reith explains to the Wanek (via Helsee) that they have been systematically deceived by the Wanekmen. He and the others are permitted to depart, and not long afterward learn that the Wanek are expelling the Wanekmen from all their citadels.

*If the Dirdir come to
the Carabas to hunt men,
they can hardly protest if
men hunt Dirdir.*

*— Adam Reith,
The Dirdir*

THE DIRDIR

In Smargash, Adam Reith and his companions are trying to decide what to do next. At a festival Reith notices he is being watched. Soon a Dirdir hunting party arrives to capture him, but he flees with his companions. The hunters catch up with Reith's group, but disturb a Phung and the creature destroys them. Aboard the Dirdir sky-raft, Reith and his companions fly across the Draschade Ocean toward Kislovan.

The travelers journey to Maust, at the edge of the Carabas. Reith has decided to prospect for sequins in the Carabas to amass enough wealth to buy a space-boat, even though the Dirdir send parties into the Carabas to hunt humans. After an analysis of the situation, Reith realizes that the most profitable course is to hunt the Dirdir themselves and take the sequins they have gathered from their victims.

Traz, Anacho, and Reith lure several groups of Dirdir into ambush and kill them, accumulating a fortune in sequins. The three men narrowly escape a band of enraged Dirdir and get to the edge of the Carabas just in time. After foiling a plot to rob them at the inn, the three proceed by sky-raft to Sivishe, where the Dirdir have their spaceyards.

To conceal their activities from the Dirdir, Reith and his companions form a partnership with the odious crime lord Aila Woudiver. Charging exorbitant fees, Woudiver provides a warehouse and procures surplus components from the spaceyards for some hired technicians to assemble into a spaceship. As the work progresses, Woudiver's demands become increasingly outrageous and his demeanor blatantly hostile. When Reith's initial fortune is used up, he is forced to return to the Carabas to recover some of the sequins he had hidden there.

Upon his return to Sivishe, Reith learns that Woudiver has betrayed Anacho to the Dirdir as a fugitive. He is to be taken to the Glass Box, a huge arena in the neighboring city of Hei, where Dirdir hunt criminals before an audience.

Reith and Traz enter the stands outside the Glass Box. Reith descends into the vast arena and finds Anacho. Traz sets off explosives as a diversion while they elude Dirdir hunters and escape.

Enraged by Woudiver's treachery, the three men go to his house to confront him. But Woudiver is protected by a trap and takes them all prisoner. He tries to learn Reith's true purpose by torture, but discounts all Reith's accounts of Earth as madness. Unable to wring any more wealth from him, Woudiver hands Reith, Anacho, and Traz over to the Dirdir.

In a desperate gamble, Reith appeals to Dirdir arbitration. Naturally, the Dirdirman arbitrator decides against him, so according to Dirdir custom, Reith challenges the verdict by single combat with the judge – something no human has ever dared. Despite an attempt at treachery by Woudiver, Reith beats the Dirdirman. A Dirdir offers a further challenge, but Reith overcomes it as well. Taking Woudiver with them as a prisoner, the three companions depart as free men.

ANACHO

Ankhe at afram Anacho is a Dirdirman Intensive, formerly of the Sixth Estate. Like others of his race, he is tall, pale, and bald. When encountered by Reith and Traz he is a fugitive, having committed the crime of wearing Blue and Pink without surgical modification, and having murdered his rival Enze Edo Ezdowirram for revealing that fact to the Dirdir. Anacho still has all the arrogance of a Dirdirman, and looks on other humans as little better than animals (although his experiences with Reith and Traz will teach him otherwise).

Ankhe at afram Anacho **67 points**

6'3", 120 lbs. A Dirdirman with no hair, small features, and pale skin, dressed either in the tattered remains of stylish Dirdirman fashion, or else in serviceable traveling clothes.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.5; Move 6.

Dodge 5; Parry 8.

Advantages: Collected [5]; Fit [5]; Panimmunity (TL12) [10].

Disadvantages: Enemy (Dirdir, 9 or less) [-20]; Skinny [-5].

Quirks: Chauvinistic; Curious about Reith's origin; Proud. [-3]

Skills: Area Knowledge (Tschai)-12 [2]; Beam Weapons/TL12 (Plasma guns)-12* [1/2]; Brawling-12 [1]; Electronics/TL12 (Sensors)-11 [4]; Fast Draw (Sting)-12 [1]; Fencing-12 [2]; Knife-11 [1/2]; Mathematics-12 [6]; Mechanic/TL12 (Spaceship drive)-14 [8]; Philosophy (Dirdir)-11 [4]; Piloting (Air car)-12 [2]; Psychology (Dirdir)-9 [1]; Running-8 [1]; Savoir-Faire-12 [2]; Stealth-12 [2]; Tracking-12 [4].

* Beam Weapons skill includes IQ bonus.

Languages: Dirdir-11 [4]; Tschaian (native)-11 [0].

THE PNUME

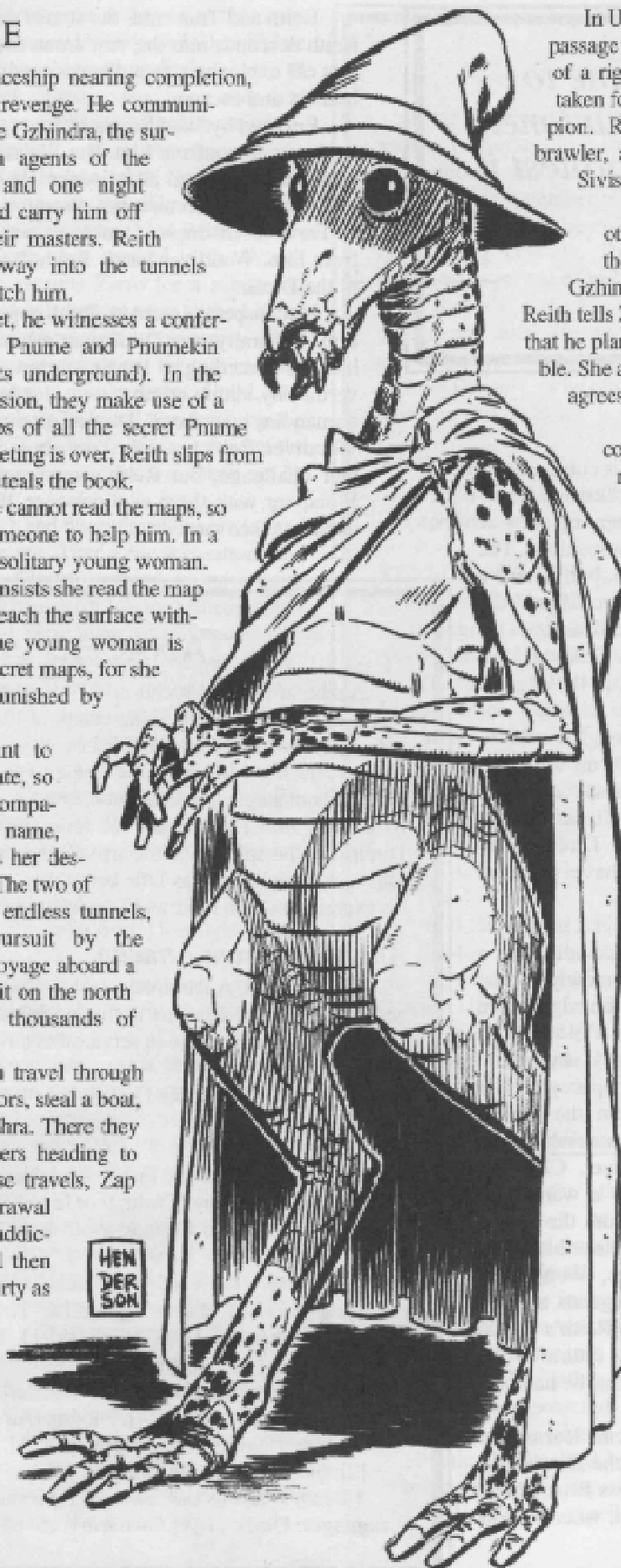
With Reith's spaceship nearing completion, Aila Woudiver plots revenge. He communicates with some of the Gzhindra, the surface-dwelling human agents of the mysterious Pnume, and one night they abduct Reith and carry him off to the tunnels of their masters. Reith escapes and slips away into the tunnels before anyone can catch him.

Hiding in a closet, he witnesses a conference among several Pnume and Pnumekin (their human servants underground). In the course of their discussion, they make use of a book containing maps of all the secret Pnume tunnels. When the meeting is over, Reith slips from his hiding place and steals the book.

Unfortunately, he cannot read the maps, so he looks about for someone to help him. In a dining-hall he sees a solitary young woman. He threatens her and insists she read the map and tell him how to reach the surface without being caught. The young woman is horrified to see the secret maps, for she will be dreadfully punished by the Pnume.

Reith is reluctant to leave her to such a fate, so he insists that she accompany him. She has no name, but Reith abbreviates her designation as Zap 210. The two of them travel through endless tunnels, narrowly escape pursuit by the Pnume, and finally voyage aboard a barge to a surface exit on the north shore of Kislován, thousands of miles from Sivilshe.

The two of them travel through the country of the Khors, steal a boat, and journey to Zsafathra. There they join a group of traders heading to Urmark. During these travels, Zap 210 suffers withdrawal symptoms from the addictive *diko* wafers, and then starts to undergo puberty as the hormone suppressants in the wafers wear off.



In Urmark, Reith wins enough money for passage to Sivilshe by discovering the secret of a rigged eel-race game. Zap 210 is mistaken for a harlot by the local fighting champion. Reith rescues her and defeats the brawler, and the two of them take ship for Sivilshe.

Zap 210 notices that two of the other passengers are Gzhindra. Along the way the two of them trick the Gzhindra into going off the wrong way. Reith tells Zap 210 where he has come from and that he plans to return to Earth as soon as possible. She asks if she can come with him, and he agrees.

They arrive in Sivilshe and Reith discovers the warehouse empty. A mysterious old man is waiting for him there, who takes Reith to where Anacho is hiding out – but insists on leaving Zap 210 behind.

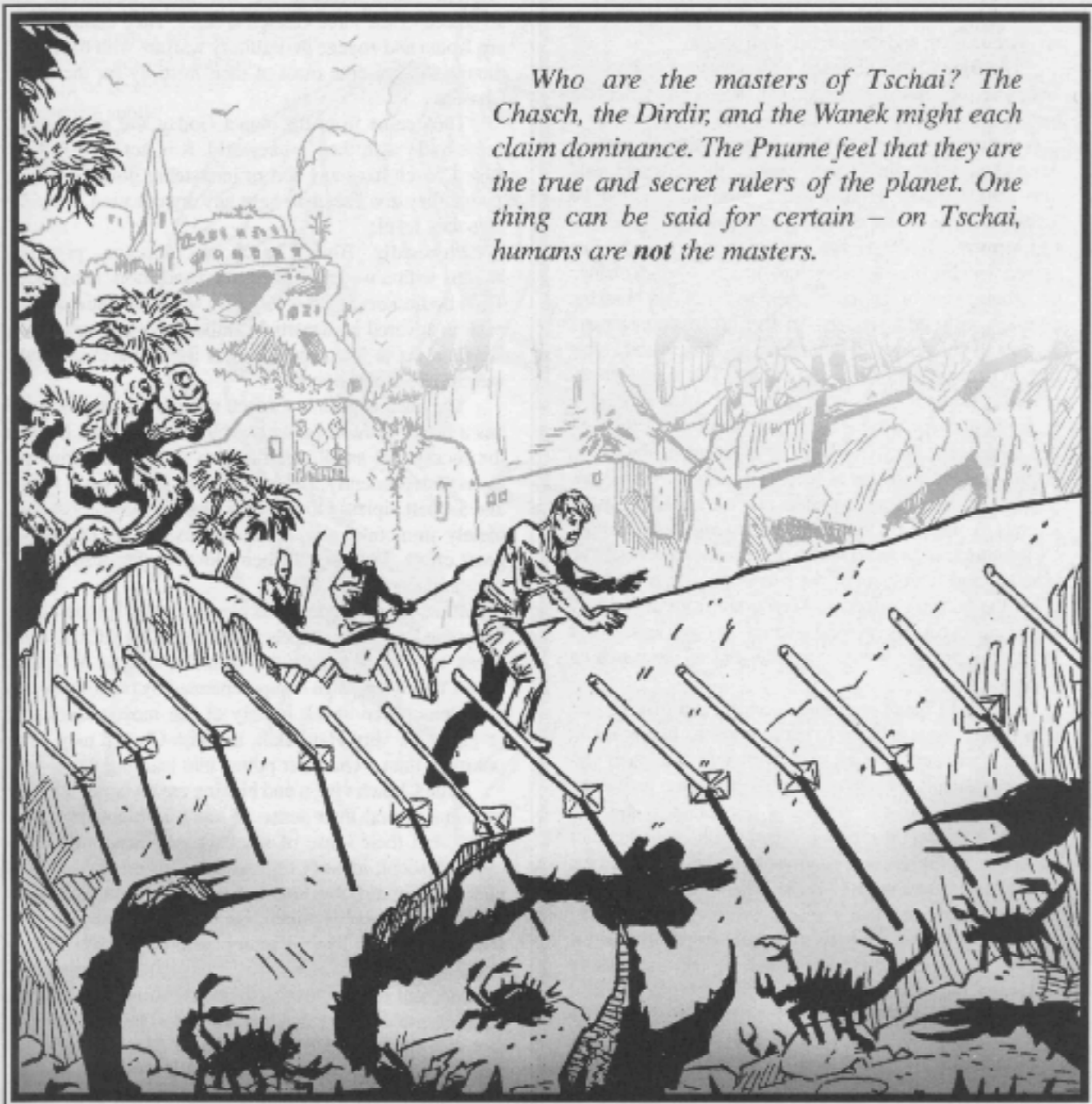
Anacho informs Reith that Woudiver was taken to the Glass Box and is no longer a threat, but for fear of the Dirdir he and Traz agreed to move the space-boat to the spot where Traz buried Onmale. The two make ready to leave at once, only to discover that Zap 210 has been taken back to the tunnels of the Pnume.

Reith boldly enters the tunnels and demands to speak to the leaders of the Pnume. They are preparing Zap 210 to be a permanent exhibit in Foreverness and want Reith to join her. But Reith says that he kept a copy of their master map, and it will be released to the Dirdir and the Chasch if he does not return. The Pnume reluctantly agree to let him and Zap 210 go. The two of them travel with Anacho to the place where the space-boat is waiting.

There, Reith discovers that Traz has taken up Onmale again and plans to return to his people. Anacho, Reith, Traz, and Zap 210 board the space-boat and take off on the long voyage to Earth.

THE MASTERS OF TSCHAI

*Who are the masters of Tschai? The Chasch, the Dirdir, and the Wanek might each claim dominance. The Pnume feel that they are the true and secret rulers of the planet. One thing can be said for certain – on Tschai, humans are **not** the masters.*



CHASCH FUN AND GAMES

One thing which unites all the Chasch races is their love of games and tricks. Unfortunately, the Chasch sense of humor is horribly sadistic, and their idea of fun is to watch a human or a Dirdir suffering terrible tortures. Anyone who falls into the hands of the Chasch can expect some kind of torment.

The Green Chasch are perhaps the least cruel of the Chasch races, if only because they lack the resources to come up with anything really elaborate. Green Chasch games are about what one might find in barbarian cultures anywhere: slitting the bellies of captives and then making them run a race while they bleed to death, watching the antics of someone impaled on a sharpened pole, or coasting a victim in pitch and then setting him ablaze.

The Blue Chasch, blessed with advanced technology and plenty of Chaschman labor, can devise really fiendish tortures. A human might be forced to walk along metal rods over a pit full of deadly white-eyed scorpions. To make it more challenging, the Chasch beat on the rods and send jolts of electricity through them. A prisoner could be locked in a glass maze with a Phung maddened by hunger and torments. If the victim can solve the maze he can escape with his life, though sometimes the Chasch change the arrangement of the maze, opening doors and blocking corridors with sliding panels. Another favorite punishment is to set a man in a tank of filth up to his chin, with his feet tied to prevent him from swimming. The liquid grows gradually hotter until the man must dive down and grope on the bottom for a valve to turn, at which point the tank gets colder until the victim must go down again and start it heating up, and so on for as long as he remains conscious.

Not all Blue Chasch pranks rely on elaborate stage-sets. A simple but effective torture is to place a blindfolded human in an arena with a blindfolded cyclodon. The gropings and fumbblings of the two as they discover each other, the human's efforts to keep away from the hungry beast, and its equally comical attempts to catch and devour the human provide hours of amusement to the watching Chasch.

The Old Chasch are more eccentric and playful, and their games are less likely to cause grievous bodily harm. On the other hand, they are more willing to mark their victims permanently, and are completely capricious in the way they choose victims – anyone is fair game to the Old Chasch. A caravan leader told Adam Reith about some of the things the Old Chasch do to visitors who stray from the safe zones in their cities: "These can be mere mischiefs, such as trapping you in a maze or dosing you with an essence that will cause you to exude a frightful odor for weeks. But if they become excited, or feel particularly humorous, the tricks may be cruel or fatal. On one occasion they stupefied one of my drivers with essence, grafted new features on his face and a great gray beard as well."

CHASCH

The Chasch are the oldest of Tschai's current alien rulers. The Old Chasch came to Tschai 100,000 years ago and settled on the plains of Kotan. Ten millennia later the Blue Chasch arrived, and the two Chasch subspecies soon came into conflict. Both sides imported Green Chasch mercenaries. The Blue Chasch drove the Old Chasch to a small region around the Jang Pinnacles and took over or destroyed the Old Chasch cities. Today, all three Chasch subraces live in a state of mutual hostility and suspicion.

BLUE CHASCH

The Blue Chasch are the most numerous and advanced of the three Chasch species. They control western Kotan and engage in desultory warfare with the Dirdir, though they reserve most of their hostility for the Green Chasch.

They came from the planet Godag and still conduct some trade with their homeworld. It is not known if the Blue Chasch have any sort of interstellar government; on Tschai they don't seem to have any organization above the city-state level.

Physically, Blue Chasch are massive, powerful beings, with a wedge-shaped torso and short, heavy legs. Their bodies are covered with blue scales of chitin, and the back is covered by a partial carapace, which curves over the shoulder to form epaulettes. A Blue Chasch generally weighs about 300 pounds.

The head of a Blue Chasch rises to a bony point and has a heavy brow hanging over the eye sockets. Deep in the sockets are small metallic eyes which can move and focus independently. Below the eyes is the nasal orifice and a small, lipless mouth. Their features are almost completely immobile; any change of expression requires a great effort. They signal their emotions by gestures and pheromones.

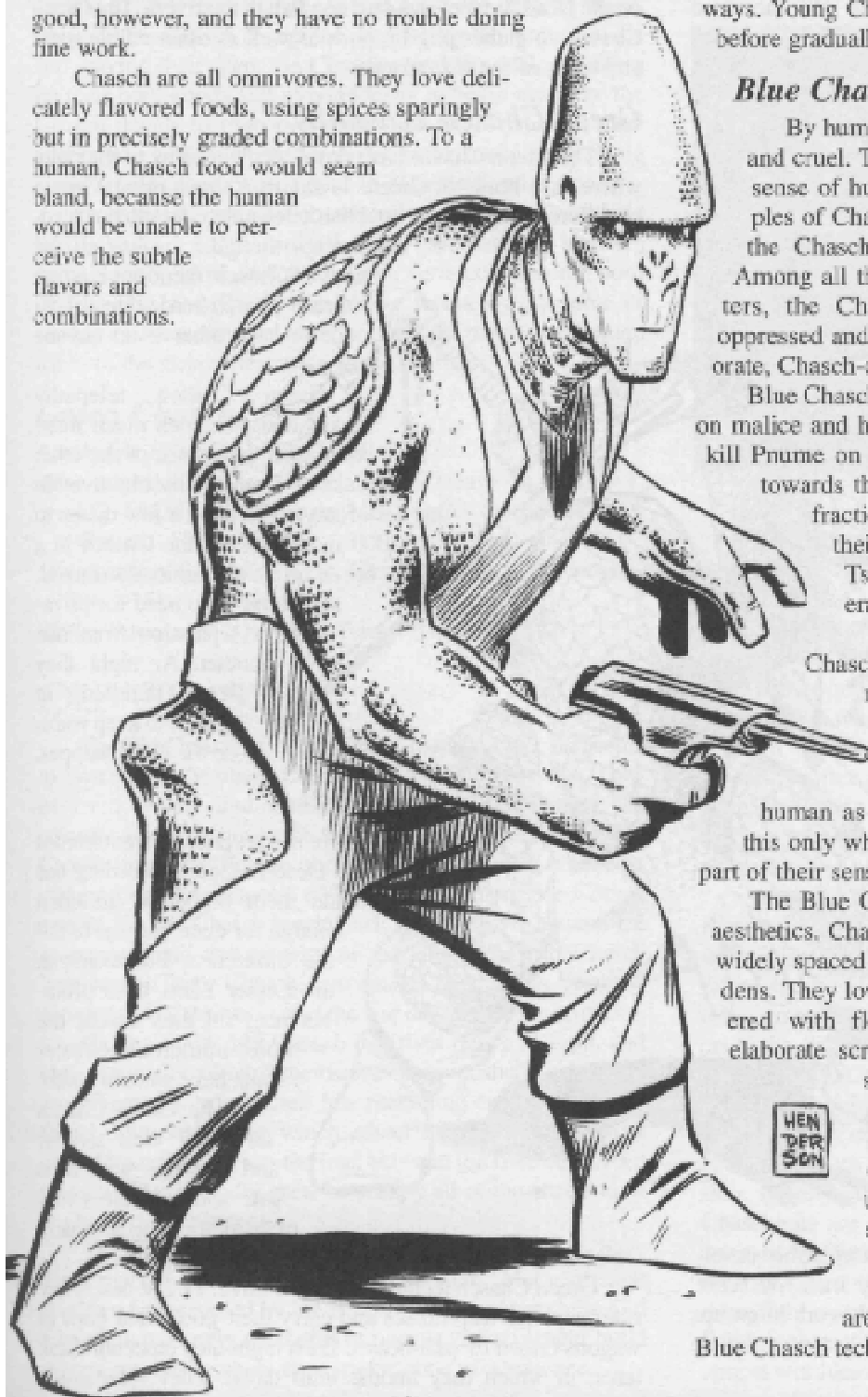
Blue Chasch communicate in fluting glottal cries. They can learn human speech without much difficulty, and speak to Chaschmen in the common tongue of Tschai. Blue Chasch language is supplemented by pheromones, so non-Chasch can speak it only at the most rudimentary level. It is a Very Hard skill, and non-Chasch may never put more than 4 character points into learning it.

Blue Chasch vision and hearing are no better than that of humans, and their sense of touch is blunted by their scales, but their sense of smell is very acute. They can track by scent, identify thousands of different odors, and pick up faint airborne smells from great distances. When their own sense of smell isn't enough, they employ mechanical aids like olfactory amplifiers and detector wands. Blue Chasch use a great variety of perfumes, incense, and essences. Their cities are full of gardens and flowering trees. They can use scents too faint for humans to notice or complex combinations of dozens of different smells.

Blue Chasch relations with all other species are based on malice and hostility.

Chasch are not particularly agile. They walk with a stiff-legged strut; this, combined with their scaly skin, gives them a low basic DX score. Their reaction time is good, however, and they have no trouble doing fine work.

Chasch are all omnivores. They love delicately flavored foods, using spices sparingly but in precisely graded combinations. To a human, Chasch food would seem bland, because the human would be unable to perceive the subtle flavors and combinations.



Blue Chasch scales provide all the protection they might need against the elements. They do wear clothes, as a symbol of status and rank. For instance, military officers wear tight suits of silver filigree, tall silver morions, and silver caps covering their joints.

The Blue Chasch have two sexes, though there is not much visible difference between males and females. Female Chasch go into heat several times each year and take a mate at that time. After a gestation period of about four months, the female gives birth to a single infant, referred to as an "imp," after which the parents go their own ways. Young Chasch live on meat for the first few years before gradually adopting an omnivorous diet.

Blue Chasch Psychology

By human standards the Blue Chasch are devious and cruel. They have a highly developed and sadistic sense of humor (see the sidebar on p. 18 for examples of Chasch humor). Perhaps the cruellest trick of the Chasch is their treatment of the Chaschmen. Among all the human servants of Tschai's alien masters, the Chaschmen are the most systematically oppressed and degraded. Even their religion is an elaborate, Chasch-orchestrated hoax.

Blue Chasch relations with all other species are based on malice and hostility. They constantly fight the Dirdir, kill Pnume on sight, and are, if anything, more hostile towards the other Chasch. It seems likely that this fractiousness works on a reduced level within their own society. All the Chasch cities on Tschai are independent of each other, cooperating only warily.

Chasch are great traders. The Blue Chasch of Dadiche conducted extensive commerce with the humans of Pera, using a caste of draymen to keep interlopers out of their city. They love to haggle, and take any gesture or nod by the human as a sign of agreement. Naturally, they do this only when it is to their advantage, and it may be part of their sense of humor to cheat humans.

The Blue Chasch have a highly developed sense of aesthetics. Chasch cities are very pleasant-looking, with widely spaced buildings and lots of trees, water, and gardens. They love decoration; all their machines are covered with floral patterns, grinning imp faces, and elaborate scrollwork. The Chasch hate to see blank space anywhere. To human eyes the result seems overdone, and sometimes makes it difficult to find and operate the controls of Blue Chasch machinery. (Anyone unfamiliar with Chasch equipment gets a skill penalty of -5, instead of the usual -4.)

Blue Chasch technology is roughly TL11; they lag behind the Dirdir and Wanek, but are better than Earth humans in most areas.

Blue Chasch technology has remained static for millennia.

Blue Chasch are solitary by nature, happiest when they can tend their own gardens without disturbance; they likely have a strong territorial urge. Civilization requires them to gather in cities and work together, so they turn their hostility toward other races in warfare and sadistic trickery. The Blue Chasch react vigorously to aggression, but they become passive and depressed once defeated.

Blue Chasch

80 points

Attributes: ST+2 [20]; DX-2 [-15].

Advantages: Armor Plates (PD 2, DR 3) [59]; Acute Taste/Smell +3 [6]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; Increased Speed +1 [25]; and Manual Dexterity +2 [6].

Disadvantages: Loner [-5]; Sadism [-15]; and Xenophobia [-15].

Quirk: Love decoration. [-1]

GREEN CHASCH

The Green Chasch are a primitive, barbaric people. Derived from the Old Chasch, the Greens reverted to a more primitive form of existence on a colony world. They were brought to Tschai to fight as mercenaries for the other Chasch, but have adopted a migratory life as nomads of the Dead Steppe. The Green Chasch possess the power of telepathy among themselves, but are no less hostile to outsiders than the Blue Chasch.

Green Chasch are huge (between 7 and 8 feet tall), massive, and thick-limbed. They weigh up to 400 pounds, and are very strong and tough. They have metallic-green scales and small, brooding faces under their massive brows. Their expressions reminded Adam Reith of the faces of predatory insects.

The Greens mate seasonally, traveling to a procreation area north of the Dead Steppe where they mate and gorge on fluke-fish and angbut. When the hordes return south they are fiercely territorial, unwilling to tolerate any strangers in their lands as they prepare for their young to be born.

The Green Chasch sense of smell is not as highly developed as the Blues'. They cannot normally track by scent. When hunting on the steppes, Green Chasch work in groups linked by telepathy; scouts fan out and drive game toward the main body of hunters.

Green Chasch have no spoken language. Among themselves they communicate via telepathy. In the past they learned the Blue Chasch and Old Chasch languages when they worked as mercenaries, but now have nothing to do with them. They use a simple code of colored banners to indicate their general mood and intentions to outsiders. When the Green Chasch fly yellow and black, for example, it signifies warlike intent, and the other peoples of the steppe know to keep away.

The Green Chasch are mostly carnivorous, keeping herds of leap-horses and pull-beasts to ride and eat, hunting game on the Dead Steppe, and catching fish in the rivers. The Green Chasch do gather pilgrim-pods as well as other edible roots and seeds of the steppelands.

Green Chasch Telepathy

The Green Chasch have developed telepathy to the point where each horde of Greens is almost a single mind. Greens of different hordes can establish telepathic contact, but reading

foreign thoughts awakes all the native Chasch xenophobia, so

Green Chasch hordes are as hostile to each other as to anyone else.

Green Chasch telepathy makes their societies much more communal than those of the other Chasch. Green Chasch live in hordes of anywhere from a few dozen to 1,000 members. All the Chasch in a horde are telepathically linked, and so have no need for privacy or separation from one another. At night they sleep huddled in groups to keep warm on the chilly steppes.

Society

There are several different hordes on the Dead Steppe. Inbreeding has made them physically different enough for even humans to tell the difference. For example, the Lesser Zants have protuberances on their heads; the more numerous Greater Zants have smooth heads.

The Green Chasch cover all their saddles and weapons with delicate and intricate swirls of decoration, occasionally

reminiscent of the styles of Earth's ancient Scythians.

Green Chasch technology is primitive, TL2 at best. They ride powerful leap-horses and carry their goods and imps in wagons drawn by pull-beasts. Each night they erect tall black tents, in which they huddle until dawn. They wear crude



leather aprons of leather and shoulder-harnesses to hold swords, battle-picks, catapults, and ammunition. The preferred weapon of a Green Chasch warrior is a huge sword hammered out of a single steel bar as thick as a man's arm.

The Green Chasch do have a few high-tech items, mostly tools and weapons. The preferred way is to take them by raiding, but some weaker hordes do trade with humans, swapping livestock, leather, smoked fish, and gold dust from the steppe rivers for pickles, metal tools, pigments, and cloth. Trading is done in complete silence. The Chasch lay out their goods and wait. The human traders then lay out what they are willing to offer in exchange. At that point one of three things happens: the Chasch accept the deal, taking the human goods and leaving their own; the Chasch reject the deal, gathering up their own goods and moving away to begin again; or the Chasch decide to grab everything and attack. Human merchants who trade with the Green Chasch usually bring along some sandblasts or plasma guns to deter the third option.

In battle, Green Chasch are truly fearsome. The whole horde works itself up into a berserk rage, and the warriors combine individual ferocity with an eerie coordination born of telepathy. Despite their primitive technology, a force of Greens can beat an equal number of Blue Chasch, and human tribes of the steppe flee rather than face them.

Green Chasch **120 points**

Attributes: ST+4 [45]; HT+2 [20].

Advantages: Acute Taste/Smell +2 [4]; Heavy Scales (PD 1, DR 1) [28]; and Telepathy (Power 20, Only with other Greens, -50%) [50].

Disadvantages: Berserk [-15]; Chummy [-5]; and Xenophobia [-15].

Skills: Telesend at IQ [4] and Telereceive at IQ [4].

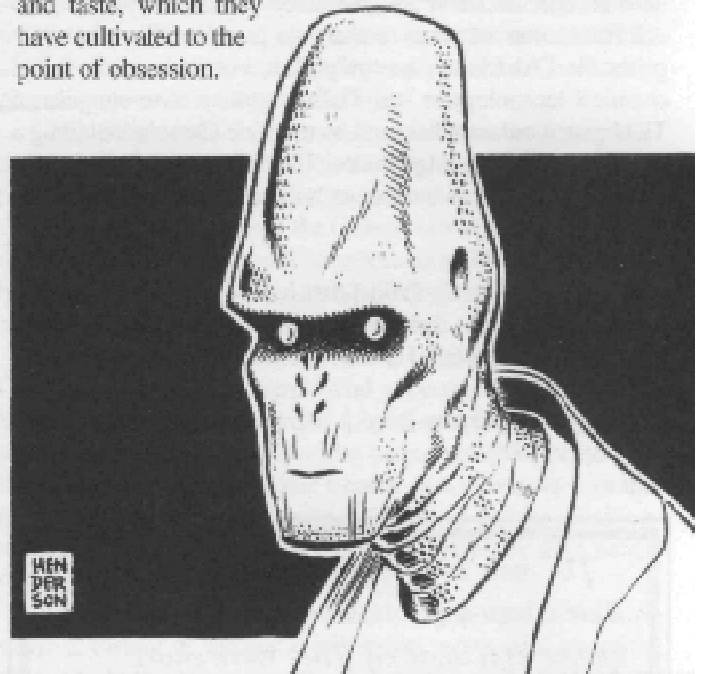
OLD CHASCH

The Old Chasch are the original Chasch species, and came to Tschai from the planet Zoör almost 100,000 years ago. They explored widely and settled many worlds, including the colonies which produced the Blue and Green Chasch. The Old Chasch drove the Pnume underground and for 10,000 years were the absolute masters of Tschai. When the Blue Chasch arrived, the Old Chasch fought back vigorously. To counter the greater strength and ferocity of the Blues, the Old Chasch brought in Green Chasch mercenaries. The Blues acquired mercenaries of their own, and the war dragged on for centuries.

Gradually the Old Chasch lost their desire to fight, and they eventually allowed themselves to be pushed back to the Jang Pinnacles, where their few remaining cities can still be found. The only thing which saved the Old Chasch from extinction on Tschai was the feud between the Blue and Green Chasch, which rapidly grew to occupy all of the attention of the two younger races.

The Old Chasch on other planets don't seem to have fared much better than the ones on Tschai. Many of their worlds were occupied by the Blue Chasch, and today the Old Chasch live on only a handful of planets and no longer build spaceships. Everywhere they are far gone in decadence.

Old Chasch are smaller than the other Chasch races and much more delicate. They resemble large silverfish with human limbs. Their tiny scales are a satiny ivory color and provide much less protection than those of the Blues or Greens. Old Chasch eyes look like small silver pellets, and can move independently. The Old Chasch have a highly developed sense of smell and taste, which they have cultivated to the point of obsession.



Old Chasch are omnivores, and have developed a fantastically elaborate and subtle cuisine, in which each dish may have dozens of contrasting and complementary flavors. Connoisseurs debate over tiny variations in the overtones of a spice or minute changes in the quality of essence; it is not known how much of their hypersensitivity is genuine and how much is merely pretense.

Old Chasch females seldom go into heat, and their young are often sickly and frail. Old Chasch population has been slowly declining for centuries; only their longevity and lack of adventurousness have kept them from dying out altogether.

Mentally, the Old Chasch are like a subtler and more eccentric version of the Blue Chasch. Their jokes are as sadistic, but the Old Chasch prefer to afflict their victims' emotions rather than physically hurting them. They are cupricious, honoring agreements only if it suits them to do so but holding others to the strict letter of the contract in all things.

If the Old Chasch seem more merciful than the Blues and Greens, it is probably because they are much more cowardly and lazy. They depend on human servitors for nearly all labor, and breed them to eliminate any personal initiative, aggression, or curiosity. So long as they serve the Old Chasch, Chaschmen are safe from all but the most minor tricks and annoyances, but rebelliousness or attempts to flee provoke the merciless glee of their alien masters. When the Old Chasch must fight wars, they hire tribes of steppe nomads, like the Ilanths, as mercenary soldiers. Their own Chaschmen are almost worthless in battle.

Old Chasch cities are collections of low white domes with many gardens and adarsk groves. Strangers are only permitted to visit the grassy oval marketplace in the center of town; any human who ventures beyond the marketplace is likely to fall victim to Old Chasch pranks, which can range from unpleasant to deadly.

The Old Chasch were once an advanced civilization. They have become decadent and lost much of their knowledge, but still have some remnants of their old grandeur. For most purposes the Old Chasch are only TL8, but their medical and chemical technology is still TL11, and they have supplies of TL11 gear similar to that used by the Blue Chasch, including a small store of nuclear torpedoes. They can maintain and operate advanced devices but cannot build new ones of their own.

Old Chasch

-13 points

Attributes: IQ+1 [10]; HT-1 [-10].

Advantages: Acute Taste/Smell +2 [4]; Extended Lifespan [5]; Independently Focussable Eyes [15]; and Scales (DR 1) [3].

Disadvantages: Dying Race [-10]; Sadism [-15]; and Xerophobia [-15].

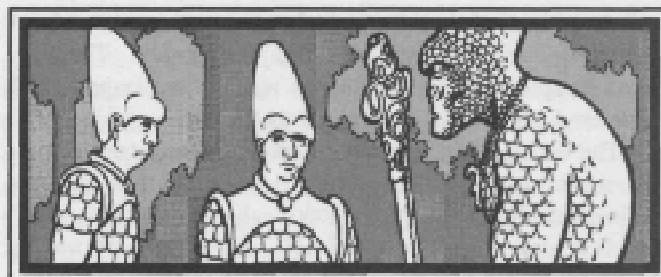
The men were as similar to the Blue Chasch as breeding, artifice and mannerism allowed. They were short, stocky, with bandy legs; their faces were blunt and almost chinless, with the features compressed. They wore what appeared to be false craniums which rose to a point and beetled over their foreheads; and their jerkins and trousers were worked with scales.

— City of the Chasch

CHASCHMEN

Chaschmen are the human servitors of the Old and Blue Chasch. They have been bred to resemble their masters, and suffer from the cruel deception that they will be reborn as Chasch after death. They are exploited and maltreated by their masters, who use them as the objects of the peculiar Chasch sense of humor when other victims are not available.

Physically, Chaschmen are standard humans with normal attributes and no innate advantages or disadvantages. They resemble the Chasch they serve very strongly. Blue Chaschmen are stocky and chinless, with short legs and stiff movements. In imitation of the Blue Chasch scales, Blue Chaschmen wear garments of metal scales, essentially the equivalent of scale armor, with PD 3 and DR 4. (Since the Chaschmen can use more advanced materials, their armor weighs only 9 lbs. for a torso covering.) Old Chaschmen are



small and slightly built, with gray complexions and tiny mouths. They are stooped and furtive, perhaps because the Old Chasch are more capricious masters than the Blues.

All Chaschmen wear false craniums which give their heads the appearance of the pointed Chasch skull. These skullcaps are DR 1 and cover the entire head from eyebrows up. For a Chaschman to be seen in public without his skullcap is as shocking and unusual as it would be for him to go out naked.

Chaschmen tend to be morose and dour. Their amusements consist mostly of heavy drinking and occasional fist-fights. Chaschwomen in a gay mood wear bits of tinsel on their false scalps and paint their noses red to look alluring; romantic relationships are terse and businesslike. When their Chasch masters are around, Chaschmen are concerned mostly with avoiding their attention. They do what they are ordered to as efficiently and unobtrusively as possible.

In combat, Chaschmen are startlingly vicious, perhaps enjoying the opportunity to give vent to all the frustrations of a lifetime. They view other humans as inferior beings because they will never be reborn as Chasch. If no Chasch are around, Chaschmen sometimes try to emulate their masters by playing cruel jokes on other humans, though they seldom approach the Chasch in the inventiveness of their pranks.

The Myth of Rebirth

All Chaschmen are taught that they have embryonic Chasch gestating within their skulls. When the Chaschman dies, the imp hatches and the human servant is reborn as one of the masters. This myth does much to reconcile the Chaschmen to all the miseries and deprivations of their lives, as they can look forward to a second lifetime of luxury and power.

Unfortunately, it is (of course) a lie. The Chasch keep the legend alive by a bit of stage magic at every human funeral. The dead human is brought into a mortuary and surrounded by a curtain while Chasch "obstetricians" split open the skull and place a newborn Chasch imp inside. If no imp is available, they use a realistic doll.

Chaschman

0 points

Advantages: One of Alertness +2; High Pain Threshold; or Patron (Chasch) [10].

Disadvantages: Delusion ("I will be reborn a Chasch") [-5]; Duty (to Chasch, 9-, not dangerous) [-5]; and No Sense of Humor [-10].

Skills: Gardening at IQ+1 [2].

Languages: Chasch at IQ [8].

CITIES OF THE CHASCH

The Chasch once had cities across Kotan, but now are limited to their settlements in the western part of the continent. Adam Reith visited the Blue Chasch city of Dadiche, where his space-boat was taken, and other Chasch cities are probably similar in most respects.

Dadiche is an old city, built nearly 20,000 years ago. As the site of the main Chasch spaceport it is a center for trade and manufacturing, although commerce with the homeworld has dwindled to a mere trickle. Dadiche has a population of about 1 million, half Chasch and half Chaschmen.

Dadiche is a very attractive city. The land around the city is carefully tended like a vast garden, dotted with ponds and groves of many different kinds of trees. Fresh-scented yellow-green acarak trees are widely planted around Dadiche, as in all Chasch cities. South of Dadiche itself is the industrial district, where factories and technical plants are located. These are sited so that they are downwind and downstream from the homes of the Chasch.

The main portion of Dadiche is walled for protection against Green Chasch raids. The wall is made of tough concrete and stands 20 feet high. On top of the wall there are metal prongs every 50 feet or so. Anything passing between two prongs is struck by a bolt of electricity (doing 2d damage); the bolt also triggers an alarm in the nearest police station. Entry within the walls is strictly controlled, for fear of infiltrators. The only humans allowed (other than Chaschmen) are the draymen bringing goods to trade at the markets of Dadiche. The draymen carry license tablets of glass and are not allowed to carry any weapons. They get a peculiar scent from the use of anel-leaves, and anyone who doesn't smell right will attract suspicion.

The Chasch residences are a collection of low flat domes and curving white surfaces half-covered by foliage. The city has three market districts: the North Market, the River Market, and the Bonte Bazaar. Draymen with goods to sell may go to any of the markets, and often make the rounds of all three if they can't find good prices. At the south end of the city is the

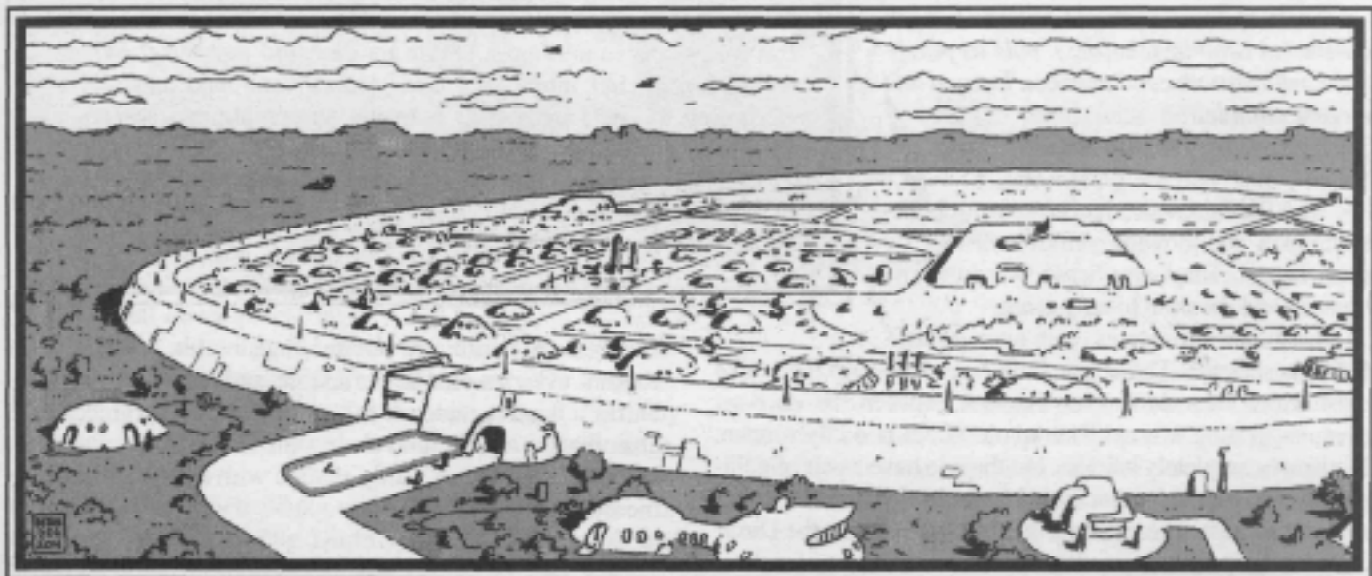
race-course, where the Blue Chasch watch captive Dirdir pull chariots in savage races. (The Dirdir use Chasch prisoners as quarry in their hunts, so they can hardly complain.)

Near the center of Dadiche are the spaceyards, a single large building where Chasch and Chaschmen technicians work on ships scattered around the factory floor. Along the sides are machine-shops, foundries, and other specialized workshops. All interlopers will be stopped and questioned. The spaceyards only produce a few small ships a year. Dadiche does qualify as a Class V spaceport, although in terms of actual traffic it's probably closer to a Class III facility.

The Chaschmen live in small row-houses or tenements, and are not even permitted electric lighting. A few taverns serve Chaschmen, where they amuse themselves in their typically morose fashion. Since the Chaschmen look forward to the day when each of them will be reborn as a Blue Chasch, their homes are very simply furnished, with little in the way of possessions or decoration beyond the absolute necessities.

Law and order in Dadiche is maintained by a corps of four Chaschmen who wear purple and gray uniforms. They use low-slung electric motorcycles to get around and are armed with stun-wands (see p. 93). The police have authority over other humans but not the Blue Chasch. For minor offenses the police enact appropriate penalties (usually a fine or a beating with electric rods). Serious offenses are judged by the Chasch who command the human police.

Chasch justice is as harsh as one might expect. Prisoners suffer a variety of sadistic punishments, often with an ironic relevance to the crime committed. For minor offenses such as trespassing or disobeying the traffic regulations, the punishment is likely to be exhausting, painful, and degrading, but not fatal. Serious crimes like theft or assault on a human are punished with torments which can be survived, though often they leave the criminal permanently scarred or crippled. The most serious crimes – murder of a human, any assault on a Blue Chasch, theft of Chasch property, or any other crime which threatens the established order – are punished with elaborate and sadistic methods of execution. The Control Rating for Blue Chasch and Old Chasch cities is usually 6 for humans.



DIRDIR

The Dirdir are more widespread than either Chasch or Wanek, and the Prume fear them most of all. Dirdir have been on Tschai for 60,000 years. They arrived during one of their periodic waves of expansion and fought the Chasch to a stalemate. About 10,000 years later a Dirdir exploration vessel visited Earth and carried off a large number of humans to serve as slaves. Perhaps the Dirdir found something unsatisfactory about the first batch of humans, for about 20,000 years ago a second voyage to Earth fetched another stock of slaves to add to Tschai's mix of human tribes.

At present the Dirdir live on the continents of Kislovian and Charchan. In Kislovian they are concentrated on the Hauk peninsula, which is the site of the Great Sivishe Spaceyards. In the interior of Kislovian is the Dirdir hunting preserve, the Carabas, where men risk death to hunt valuable sequins. The Dirdir settlements in Charchan are on the northeastern coast. However, Dirdir and Dirdirmen can be encountered almost everywhere on Tschai.

The home planet of the Dirdir is Sibol, a dry world beneath a bright star, hundreds of light years from Tschai. Dirdir have a great empire, the result of thousands of years of expansion. At present they are quiescent, but could easily enter an expansionist phase again and conquer more planets. The Dirdir have almost no government at any level. Their periods of expansion have been more like a general surge than planned colonization.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Some of these were not human, but tall attenuated creatures, hairless, pale as parchment, with austere countenances, languid and elegant attitudes.

— *City of the Chasch*

The Dirdir are slender beings with bone-white skin and glowing yellow antennae on their heads. They are fierce warriors and hunters, and speak in hissing tones.

Dirdir are vertebrates, with a tough cartilaginous skeleton. The Dirdir skull rises to a sharp blade-like crest which runs down into the face between the deep-set eyes, suggesting a nose. The whole effect is oddly human. Dirdir are completely hairless, but they do have a pair of golden antennae streaming backward from the forehead on either side of the crest. The antennae glow brightly when the Dirdir are in the grip of strong emotion.

HOW MANY SEXES?

The Dirdir reproduce sexually, and two parents are required, just as with humans. What makes things complicated is that there are 12 kinds of Dirdir male reproductive organs and 14 kinds of female organs, and only certain types are compatible. For example, a male Dirdir with Type 1 male organs can mate with a Type 5 or a Type 9 female, but no others. A Type 5 female only matches a Type 1 male, but the Type 9 female can mate with a Type 1, Type 11, or Type 12 male. The differences in reproductive organs suggest that the primitive ancestors of the Dirdir may have been separated into several distinct populations, and were on the verge of splitting into multiple species before developing civilization and becoming a single population again. Or it may have been a deliberate genetic modification.

Each male and female type has a specific set of theoretical attributes (much as male humans are supposed to be strong and aggressive, and female humans are expected to be nurturing). As with humans, Dirdir seldom exactly fit the model for how their reproductive type is supposed to behave. Instead of tolerating individual variations, the Dirdir get around this problem by keeping their exact style of reproductive organs a tightly guarded secret. As long as an individual's organ type is unknown, he (or she) can behave as he chooses. But if a Dirdir's exact sexual type becomes widely known, then he must adhere to the model of "proper behavior" for that type, regardless of personal inclination.

The result is that Dirdir devote a great deal of effort to keeping their secret. Males and females are visibly different, so that can't be concealed, but it is possible to keep others from learning what kind of male or what kind of female.

In order to have some sort of sex life, Dirdir have developed a number of customs and institutions. Some rely on anonymous notices; a Type 1 male might post a message reading "Male seeks Type 9 female for discreet encounter." Alternately, a group of Dirdir might assemble for a "dark gathering," in which the lights are doused and individuals seek out partners by touch alone. Couples who have achieved a level of trust may want to try a "trial marriage," in which they live together without publicly announcing their sexual types. Trial marriages can last for decades, and are probably the closest thing the Dirdir have to a human romantic relationship.

As one might expect, keeping sexual type a secret breeds a general furtiveness in all things. Dirdir are drawn to each other like all sexual beings, but must keep their desires controlled and secret. According to one Dirdirman, "A matter so complicated absorbs a great deal of attention and energy and, perhaps, by keeping the Dirdir fragmented, obsessed, and secretive, has prevented them from overrunning the worlds of space."

Female Dirdir are shorter than males, and to Adam Reith's eyes seemed less flexible and resilient. A female Dirdir's head is wider at the scalp and more pointed at the chin than a male's, and their skin is somewhat darker in color — a pallid gray subtly shaded with mauve, rather than the male's ivory white.

Dirdir are very strong, with lightning-fast reactions. Dirdir are warm-blooded, and seem to be comfortable in cool climates despite their origins on the hot plains of Sibol. Dirdir blood is a whitish-green ichor, probably based on copper compounds. A Dirdir's skin is tough, almost like insect chitin. Within their tough skin, they are surprisingly fragile; it's hard to hit a Dirdir, but easy to injure one. Dirdir are about the same height as a human of the same ST. Their hands and feet are clawed, and their teeth are needle-sharp.

Dirdir are descended from hunting creatures, and can run for long distances. The Dirdir gait is a kind of hopping lope, almost like a lizard walking erect. They can run faster than humans for short distances, and keep up a steady jog all day if they choose to.

Dirdir have no voice boxes and speak in hissing, lisping voices. Their hearing is keen and biased towards high frequencies. Their language is complex; short Dirdir words and phrases require whole sentences of human language to translate. When hunting, Dirdir use a more primitive, instinctive language as the higher centers of their brains shut down.

The Dirdir appear to be entirely carnivorous. They eat raw meat, and prefer to catch their food live. Humans are a favorite prey because they are clever enough for a challenging hunt. They tend to take their meals in small groups, corresponding to a hunting team.

Dirdir are born alive after a fairly short gestation period. After a brief time of being fed prechewed meat by their mothers, the young are able to survive on their own. Dirdir children develop very quickly physically, but their mental development lags. Within a few years they can survive on their own, but are little better than wild animals. Until adolescence Dirdir understand only the instinctive hunting language and are effectively presentient. Full intelligence arrives only with sexual maturity at about age 15.

Dirdir train their young and keep them more or less as domestic animals. Young Dirdir can learn to use tools and

perform technical tasks. The children of a clan live in a pack, overseen by a couple of adult keepers. Only when they become adults and begin to exhibit a sexual type are young Dirdir accepted into society. They are educated in language and deportment, and begin trying to move up the caste ladder.

Dirdir garments have colorful flounces and trailing ribbons, and are adorned with bright sashes. At times the effect seems comical, with the pale and austere Dirdir dressed up in such a dandyish way; at other times the effect is sinister, the clownish attire of the Dirdir contrasting with their deadly and implacable ferocity.

Dirdir clothing reflects rank and status in their caste-based society. Inspectors wear cages of silver on the backs of their heads and flaps of leather on their arms trailing almost to the ground. All the elaborate adornment of their clothing shows an individual's status and role in society.



DIRDIR PSYCHOLOGY

It is hard for humans to comprehend the Dirdir mind. They have a much greater division between the logical, "higher" brain functions and the basic instinctive levels. When hunting, Dirdir virtually shut down their conscious minds, reverting to a semi-wild way called the "Old State." Dirdir find the Old State to be a profound and enjoyable experience. As they become predatory hunters again they can get rid of all the stresses imposed by their stratified society. In the Old State everything is simple, black-and-white; there is the hunter and the prey, and nothing else matters. The Dirdir exists only in the present. Human students of meditation or Zen may recognize the concept.

The Dirdir love of the hunt colors all their attitudes. When faced with difficulties, they can draw on their predator instincts, becoming excited and fanatically dedicated to achieving their goals. As they get more excited their brains shift closer to the Old State, making the Dirdir more determined and eager.

Dirdir are seldom subtle. Since much of their existence takes place at a semi-instinctive level, they don't bother with deep-laid plans or social maneuvering. This doesn't mean the Dirdir can't be clever – a hunting team can be diabolically cunning as they maneuver prey into a trap or track a fleeing animal. But they are not good at advance planning and do not like to defer gratification.

THE OLD STATE

When Dirdir enter the "Old State" many of their higher mental functions shut down. They lose much of their ability to use language or do things like mathematical calculation, but their perceptions and reaction time improve dramatically.

In *GURPS* terms, the Old State is a form of Stress Atavism (p. CI105). When a Dirdir is in combat or other stressful situation, it must make a Will roll to avoid the mental shift. However, Dirdir rather enjoy the Old State, and seldom try to resist its onset. Recovery from the Old State happens when the Dirdir has a chance to rest and make a Will roll once the stressful situation has passed. Dirdir who sleep or pass out while in the Old State wake up rational. The Old State does not cost any Fatigue.

While in the Old State, Dirdir can only communicate in their ancestral hunting language. This tongue allows them to coordinate chases and fights, but cannot express any subtle or complex concepts. They *can* use weapons, even energy weapons, but can't reload or change power cells.

In the Old State a Dirdir gains Combat Reflexes, Fit, High Pain Threshold, Intuition, and a level apiece in Alertness and Enhanced Move. In the Old State they suffer from the disadvantages of Bestial, Illiteracy, and a whopping 12 levels of Primitive.

The Old State is a disadvantage worth -10 points, though Dirdir consider it an advantage and make no attempt to overcome or cure it.

Dirdir science and technology proceeds the same way, under no systematic program and with no long-term goal in mind. Scientists among the Dirdir often operate in the Old State, relying on subrational intuition to resolve problems instead of logical thought. The result is a surprisingly slow pace of scientific progress – roughly 20,000 years per TL. However, if the Dirdir ever face a serious threat requiring scientific discovery, the problem would be attacked by dozens of research initiatives, causing a burst of discovery and invention. Dirdir technology is presently about TL12.

In a seeming paradox, these anarchic and individualistic beings are grouped into a rigid set of 28 castes, each of which has its characteristic virtues and social roles. To rise in caste, a Dirdir must be accepted by the higher group by displaying its proper virtues, while simultaneously managing not to violate the proprieties of the lower level.

Of course, in such an anarchic society, the upper castes do not rule the others, at least not directly. They do exercise great influence, however, as the lower castes strive to rise by emulating their superiors. The highest Dirdir caste can affect the direction of society's efforts by example, rather than by command. If the Excellences decide a war with the Chasch would be a good idea, they begin forming initiatives of their own, and the lower orders will almost certainly follow suit.

For example, among the fourth through 13th castes of Dirdir, one of the primary virtues is *zs'hanh*, a contemptuous indifference to the activity of others. Among the higher castes (or "Excellences"), the quality of *pn'hanh*, a keen observation of others which translates as "corrosive or metal-bursting sagacity," is more esteemed. There are dozens of similar qualities.

The other important function served by the upper castes is as arbitrators. In any dispute between Dirdir, the wronged individual can raise a cry of *dr'ssa dr'ssa, dr'ssa* and appeal to a higher caste for arbitration. It is customary for the highest individual available to serve as arbitrator, so this job often falls to Excellences. The arbitrator makes his judgment on the spot and settles the matter. If one of the aggrieved parties doesn't accept the ruling, he can appeal by challenging the arbitrator to a duel then and there. The winner of the duel is vindicated; the loser's antennae are pulled out and he becomes a pariah. Dirdir duelling practices are refreshingly

DIRDIR CULTURE

Dirdir society is very alien by human standards. They are not a cohesive race, and many of their cultural norms have evolved to allow them to cooperate without sacrificing any of their treasured personal independence. When Dirdir society is confronted by a problem, one or more individuals will form a *znan-dih*, or "initiative." He then organizes a band of hunters – the *tsau'gsh* – who have claimed the right to prosecute a quest or a task in order to win status and reputation. If one initiative fails, another Dirdir may assert *h'so* or "marvelous dominance" and organize another.

This reliance on individual enterprise explains much about Dirdir history. Even though they have had space travel for over 60,000 years, the Dirdir haven't conquered all space because there is no concerted plan of expansion. At times the whole race takes on an expansionist fervor, and initiatives head out in all directions, exploring and conquering. But when the urge has burned itself out, millennia can go by without any activity. At present the Dirdir are in such a quiescent phase, but it may be rearing its end.

The Excellent reached its great arms to the front in a clutching, ripping gesture. It vented a gurgling scream and poised to leap.

"A moment," said Reih, stepping back. "What are the rules of combat?"

"There are no rules. I kill as I choose."

– The Dirdir

simple: one Dirdir issues a challenge, then they fight right away, bare-handed.

The Dirdir code also requires individuals to help other Dirdir in need. One in need of assistance gives the cry of *hs'ai hs'ai*, *hs'ai* and all Dirdir within hearing will come to his aid. To fail to help someone in trouble leads to a tremendous loss of status.

It seems likely that the elaborate Dirdir code of conduct, with its rigidities and gradations of caste, evolved as a way to keep a race of touchy predators from destroying each other in battles for dominance. The Dirdir are very obedient to their traditions and social rules, because to defy them would bring about a war of all against all.

THE GREAT SIVISHE SPACEYARDS

The biggest Dirdir spaceport is on the island of Sivishe at the head of the Ajean Gulf, off the southwest coast of Kislovian. The Dirdir themselves live in the metropolis of Hei, connected to Sivishe by a causeway. The noise and pollution of the spaceport, the shipyards, and the associated industries are unpleasant to them, so they leave the island to "sub-men."

The Dirdir have a point. Sivishe is a filthy industrial jumble of factories and tenements surrounding the spaceyards themselves. The people of Sivishe are a mix of human subraces from all over Kislovian: Thangs, Kherman, and Sad Islanders, among others. Quite a few have some Dirdirman blood. The humans build and maintain spaceships for the Dirdir.

The Dirdir do not rule Sivishe directly. There is a human Administrator who governs the city. He has the authority to levy taxes, adjudicate disputes, and punish criminals entirely as he sees fit. The only check on the Administrator's power is the Dirdir – if they are displeased with the way he does his job, the Administrator goes to the Glass Box in Hei and doesn't come out again.

The Sivishe spaceport and associated facilities are a Class V port in *GURPS* terms. The Dirdir can build and maintain starships and small craft. Adam Reith was able to construct a space-boat at Sivishe out of scrap, spare parts, and a few stolen components. The Sivishe spaceport lacks an orbital station; ships must be atmosphere-capable to use the port. This is no handicap for the Dirdir, whose ships have contragravity and are streamlined and capable of planetary landings.

Security at the spaceyards is fairly tight. This is due to the instinctive paranoia of the Dirdir; there are no records of anyone ever stealing a spaceship from Sivishe. The landing field

THE GLASS BOX

The Glass Box in the city of Hei is a vast and impressive structure: a huge box of gray glass 5 miles long, 3 miles wide, and 1,000 feet high. It dwarfs all other structures in Hei, looming over the spires where the Dirdir live. Within, the Box is a single huge open space which duplicates the environment on the plains of Sibol, the Dirdir home planet. There are rocks, cliffs, caves, plants native to Sibol, thickets, and brackish ponds. Everything is colored in shades of ocher, tan, and yellow, lit by bright lamps duplicating the harsh light of Sibol's sun. The lights go dark every few hours in imitation of Sibol's short day, although the periods of darkness last only a few minutes, perhaps as long as an hour.

The Glass Box is the chief Dirdir sporting arena, and also serves as a training ground and place of execution for criminals. Surrounding the main arena are galleries for spectators, color-coded by status. The highest tiers, for Dirdir and upper-class Dirdirmen, are decorated in purple, scarlet, mauve, and white. The lowest galleries are gray, for the "sub-men" laborers. A maze of color-coded ramps and escalators provides access to the galleries; there is no charge for admission. The highest galleries afford the best view of the field, from a height of several hundred feet. The bottom galleries are only 40 feet above ground level, so a sufficiently daring person might be able to climb down into the arena.

During the hunting events, several people may be in the arena at one time; with proper cover and concealment a man can last for days before being caught. Some hunts are training sessions for young Dirdir, with slow or crippled humans; others are open to Dirdirmen Immaculates. The Dirdirmen hunters wear gloves with artificial talons.

In most hunts the prey are released first, and are given a few minutes to find a place of concealment before the hunters can begin tracking. Prey are not allowed weapons, although they might be able to improvise something from rocks and tree branches in the arena. While humans are the most common prey, the Dirdir also pursue captive Chasch and Wanek in the Glass Box (Pnume have secret escape routes from the arena). As the hunt begins, the Dirdir give their hunt-calls, then plunge into the chase.

There is no way for the prey to "win"; it is a hunt, not a gladiatorial combat. Especially clever or tough quarry may evade the Dirdir hunters for hours or days, but they will eventually catch him. If a victim fights off the hunters or kills one, that merely makes other Dirdir eager to win prestige by bringing down such a dangerous opponent.

and spaceyards are protected by high fences and sensors. Dirdirmen police patrol the perimeter at random intervals and respond quickly to alarms. A security guard who catches an intruder may be permitted to hunt the culprit in the Glass Box, and this makes the police very attentive to their duty.

Near the landing field are warehouses for interstellar trade. Dirdirmen merchants buy goods from all over Tschai for their masters, and the Dirdir deal directly with the Pnume at Sivishe. It may seem strange that Pnume and Dirdir trade even when a lone member of either species is likely to be killed by the other if caught, but the lure of gain is strong enough to overcome any dislike.

Status

Because Dirdir status is so carefully graded, it is hard to fit into the standard *GURPS* Status scale. It is more useful to buy levels of Dirdir status at a cost of 1 point per level, and then convert it to standard *GURPS* Status at a rate of 5 to 1. Thus, Dirdir of the fifth grade are considered to be Status 1 in game terms, and so on. Dirdirmen can buy up to 5 grades of Dirdir status, or the equivalent of *GURPS* Status 1. Reaction modifiers are +1 or -1 for every 5 levels (round down) of Dirdir rank.

Dirdir

36 points

Attributes: ST+1 [10]; DX+2 [20]; HT+2 [20].

Advantages: Acute Hearing +2 [4]; Alertness +1 [5]; Claws (+2 damage) [15]; Damage Resistance 1 [3]; Double-Jointed [5]; Enhanced Dodge +1 [15]; Sharp Teeth [5]; and Ultrahearing [5].

Disadvantages: Callous [-6]; Code of Honor (Dirdir) [-15]; Hidebound [-5]; Incurious [-5]; Reduced Hit Points -4 [-20]; Secret (sexual type) [-5]; Selfish [-5]; and Stress Atavism (the "Old State"; see sidebar, p. 26) [-10].

Dirdirmen are divided into four castes: the Immaculates, Intensives, Estranes, and Cluts. The Immaculates are considered to be almost Dirdir, as they have been bred to an uncanny similarity to the masters. They average nearly 7 feet tall, have pure white skin, and are utterly hairless. Their noses are ridged beaks, and they sharpen their teeth to points.

DIRDIRMEN

Dirdirmen are the human servants of the Dirdir, the product of some 50,000 years of selective breeding and acculturation. Of the humans in service to aliens on Tschai, the Dirdirmen seem to be best integrated into the society of their masters.

Dirdirmen have been bred to look as much like Dirdir as possible. They are very tall and slender, with long arms and legs. Their heads are long and narrow, and their complexion is pale and sallow. Women are paler still, almost chalk-white. Dirdirmen have delicate facial features, with tiny, sharp noses, round eyes, and small ears. Men are completely bald, while women have a patch of fuzz at the back of their skulls.

Despite their distinctive appearance, Dirdirmen are entirely human and can interbreed with other human

subraces. The distinctive Dirdirmen traits appear to be recessive; hybrids tend to take after their other parents. The fact that humans have only two sexes makes them appear somewhat ridiculous to the Dirdir, but high-caste Dirdirmen of the "Immaculate" caste are permitted to undergo surgical alteration to select one of eight reproductive types, each of which is compatible with only two varieties of the opposite sex. Like the Dirdir themselves, modified Immaculates keep their exact type a secret. The process is called the Anguish, suggesting it is less than pleasant, but the social benefits are tremendous. Modified Immaculates are permitted to wear blue and pink, and for a Dirdirman of lower caste to do so without undergoing the Anguish is a terrible crime.

The Dirdirmen are unaware of their origin on Earth. They have lived so long among the Dirdir and have absorbed their culture so completely that they are convinced they are related to the Dirdir. According to a Dirdirman legend (known as the Doctrine of Bifold Genesis), in the distant past on Sibol the Great Fish produced an egg which floated to the shore and up the beach, where it split. Half rolled into the sunlight and gave rise to the Dirdir, while half rolled into the shade and produced the Dirdirmen. The Dirdirmen explain the existence of all other human races as the result of interbreeding and degeneration.

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Intensives are shorter than Immaculates (only 3 to 6 inches taller than the human average) and their skin has a faintly ruddy tinge. Estranes are those who show signs of non-Dirdirman blood (no more than 1/32, or a great-great-great-grandparent). Cluts have at most 1/8 outsider ancestry, and are denied many prerogatives. Outsiders are considered "submen" and get a -2 reaction from Dirdir and Dirdirmen.

Dirdirmen of the lower castes are ordinary humans for game purposes. Immaculates add 6-12 inches to their base height, and have the advantage of Status 1 within Dirdir/Dirdirman society.

The Dirdirmen are fairly well integrated into Dirdir society. Much of their culture is modeled on the Dirdir, and the same virtues are prized. However, since Dirdirmen are humans and lack the instinctive desire of the Dirdir for proper behavior, additional means are needed to make sure they conduct themselves appropriately. There are officials called Derogators who ensure that all Dirdirmen behave in a manner proper to their caste and station. Dirdirmen who try to assume prerogatives beyond their station are punished by a separate class of men known as Castigators. If the guilty person flees to avoid punishment, the Derogators may hunt him down. Serious offenders may merit pursuit by one or more Dirdir "initatives."

Dirdirman

16 points

Attributes: DX+1 [10].

Advantages: Collected [5]; Fit [5]; and Panimmunity (TL12) [10].

Disadvantages: Odious Racial Habit (cannibalism) [-15] and Skinny [-5].

Skills: Psychology (Dirdir) at IQ-1 [2].

Languages: Dirdir at IQ [4].

THE WANEEK

The Wanek are in some ways the most alien race on Tschai. Their language and ways of thinking are very mysterious, both to humans and to the other alien races.

They are present on Tschai because of the Dirdir; the two civilizations have been fighting a desultory space war with each other for millennia. To

keep the Dirdir from using Tschai as a base or staging area for assaults into Wanek

space, the Wanek came to Tschai 10,000 years ago and constructed fortresses on Rakh, Kachan, and nearby islands.

From there they can monitor Dirdir space traffic and launch torpedoes at Dirdir ships.

The Wanek-Dirdir war has long since become a stalemate. The Dirdir have tired of the entire conflict. The only obstacle to peace is the Wanek, who have declined all offers of an armistice. Their purpose is obscure – the Wanek do not attack Dirdir planets, and even on contested worlds like Tschai they have left Dirdir cities and civilian spaceships alone. Either they are holding out for some hoped-for concessions from the Dirdir, or they have some long-term strategy requiring centuries to put into effect. (The stalemate may also be the result of meddling by the Wanekmen; see below.)

Apart from their fortresses, the Wanek have no settlements on Tschai. They do not consider the planet a permanent settlement; as soon as they accomplish whatever enigmatic goals they pursue in their war with the Dirdir, the Wanek will evacuate Tschai. There are about 50,000 Wanek on Tschai; each fortress has about 5,000 Wanek except the main installation at Ao Khaha, which has twice as many. There may be undersea forts as big as the surface bases. Among the fortresses of the Wanek are Ao Hidis, a port on the western coast of Kachan, the big main citadel of Ao Khaha on the western shore of Lake Falas, and Ao Zalil on the eastern shore of Lake Falas.

The Wanek have taken on a group of human servitors, the Wanekmen, to facilitate communication with the other species of Tschai.

Through the Wanekmen, they do a surprising amount of trade with the humans of Tschai: Wanek-

built sandblasts are found on caravans in Kotan, and many ships use Wanek electrostatic jets for propulsion. While giving

the humans advanced technology and becoming

important economic partners may be part of

some deep-laid Wanek plan, it is more likely that the trade is conducted by the

Wanekmen solely for their own benefit.



The Wanek are black creatures somewhat larger than humans, with a heavy torso, short legs with webbed feet, and long arms ending in three-fingered hands. They vaguely resemble big black frogs. Wanek legs are not very flexible, and they seldom sit down. A Wanek's head is its most alien feature: squat and neckless, with two large, black eyes that flicker at half-second intervals. At the base of the skull is an organ which emits chiming sounds for communication. The mouth is lipless and wide. Wanek have no external ears or noses, completing the frog resemblance.

passive system used by humans, but a kind of active "radar" using pulses of ultraviolet light. This enables the Wanek to see just as well underwater as in air, and to function just as well at night as during the day (in fact, Wanek vision works better at night, because there is less interference from sunlight).

Psychology

The Wanek have a strange "stroboscopic" view of things. To a Wanek, things do not move or change continuously, they jump suddenly from place to place. A Wanek can consciously control its pulse rate, speeding up or slowing down its brain and senses. At their slowest rate, Wanek operate at about one-tenth normal speed, emitting pulses every two seconds.

This kind of stop-motion view of the world makes for a very different way of thinking. Humans perceive continuities; Wanek notice discontinuities and changes. To a human, an object retains its identity even when it has been altered – a car with new tires is still the same car. To a Wanek, though, the car has been changed. Wanek patterns of thought have certain advantages. Because they do notice even subtle changes, they are more alert. They are not as easily fooled by superficial similarities between things, and they pay great attention to how things change and why.

Of course, there are problems associated with the Wanek mentality. Their perceptions make them extremely good at inductive reasoning, but deduction and imagining possibilities are very hard for them. Original creation is rare and treasured among the Wanek. The highest-order savants are the Original Masters, who have created new works or made new discoveries. Nevertheless,

the Wanek have achieved a very impressive level of technology, fully the equal of the Dirdir and better than the Chasch.

Wanek communication also works by a series of pulses. A Wanek emits a chime, which is composed of vibrations of many different frequencies, carrying as much information as a sentence of human speech. The Wanek write in rows of rectangles of different sizes and shapes, each of which represents a chime of a given distribution of frequencies. Much of a Wanek ideogram's meaning depends on context, and extremely tiny differences in the proportions of a rectangle can make an enormous difference in meaning.

It is extremely difficult for individuals of other species to learn the Wanek language, and apparently the Wanek find it equally hard to learn other languages. Understanding Wanek chimes is a Very Hard skill for any non-Wanek, and all non-Wanek require some artificial means of generating chimes. Because of the carefully guarded Wanekmen monopoly on

THE ULTIMATE ARGUMENT: TORPEDOES

The most powerful weapons available on Tschai are the nuclear torpedoes of the spacefaring civilizations. The Dirdir, Wanek, and Blue Chasch have substantial arsenals, and the Old Chasch keep a small stockpile of warheads as a deterrent. It is unknown if the Pnime have their own nuclear weapons.

Typical torpedoes are the equivalent of TL10 space-combat missiles, equipped with reactionless thrusters and capable of hitting any part of the planet's surface or near orbit. For attacks against spaceships, the typical warhead is a relatively small 1-kiloton device doing $12d \times 2,000,000$ concussion damage. Strikes against ground targets use a 10-kiloton warhead, capable of doing $12d \times 20,000,000$ concussion damage. This is the kind of weapon the Wanekmen used on Settra and Ballisidre.

Torpedoes are kept ready in torpedo-pits, armored underground silos hardened to withstand anything short of a direct hit by another torpedo. Each Chasch city and Wanek fortress has about half a dozen torpedo-pits, while the Dirdir have well-protected launch complexes in southern Kislovan and northeast Charchan, with 100 torpedo-pits each.

Use of nuclear torpedoes is rare – the attack on Cath was the first in centuries. The attacks on Settra and Ballisidre must have required an elaborate campaign of lies and deception on the part of the Wanekmen to maneuver their masters into pressing the button.

An adult Wanek stands about 6'6" tall, and weighs about 240 lbs. Its skin is entirely black, although Wanek vision can detect patterns and shadings invisible to human eyes. The Wanek seen by Adam Reith on his visit to Tschai showed little variation, which suggests that either male and female Wanek are similar in appearance, or females remain in seclusion and Reith never saw any. Given their amphibious nature, it is very likely that the Wanek reproduce underwater, probably by spawning.

Wanek are fully amphibious, with gills and lungs. They prefer a moist environment even on land. Wanek don't usually wear clothes, but in hot and dry environments they wear protective suits of layered plastic and hoods with hollow tube-shaped goggles to protect their eyes.

Perhaps the most unusual thing about the Wanek is their nervous system. A Wanek's entire neural apparatus works in a series of split-second pulses. Wanek vision is not the simple

"I am a Lokhar," snorted the black-skinned old man. "I do not addle my brains and drain my pockets with drink; not before noon, at any rate."

*— Zarfo Detwiler,
Servants of the Wanek*

translating, an Unusual Background is required for anyone who wishes to learn the Wanek language. Those who have had contact with the Wanek, like Lokhar technicians, can take a 5-point Unusual Background, "Extensive Contact With Wanek." That allows a basic familiarity with the language — no more than 1 character point spent on the skill. Wanekmen take the 10-point Unusual Background "Wanekmen," which allows them to buy Wanek language with no restrictions.

Society

Wanek society on Tschai is a military garrison rather than a permanent colony, and so may not be typical of life on other Wanek worlds. The Wanek on Tschai are content to remain within their fortresses; all of their dealings with other species are handled by the Wanekmen. The Wanek appear to operate as a kind of meritocracy, with high status going to those who have made notable accomplishments in science, scholarship, the arts, or military affairs.

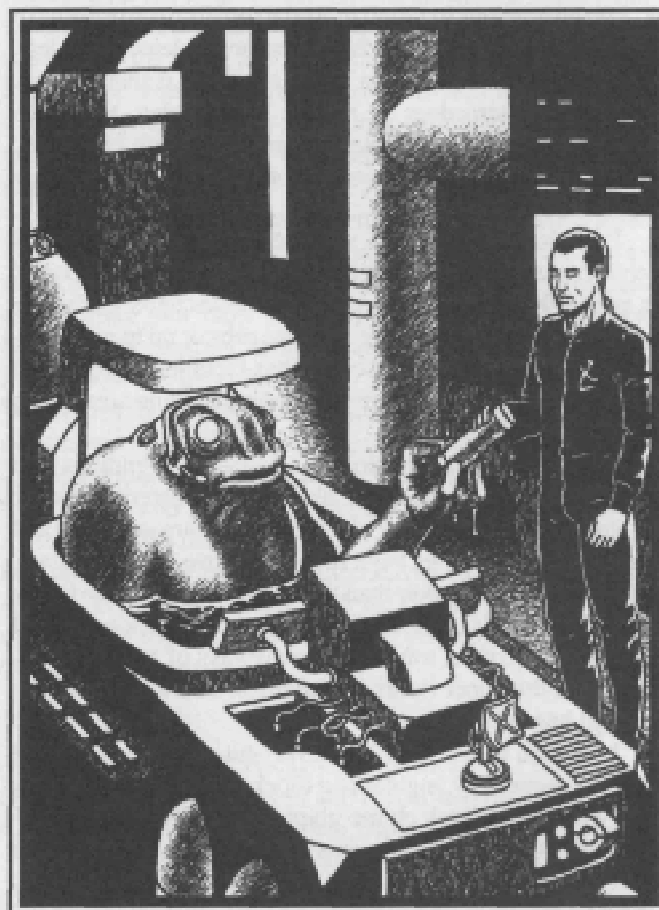
They are social beings by nature, at least among themselves, and individual Wanek try to find the role in which they can best serve the community. A Wanek who strives to do things beyond his ability wins nothing but the scorn of the group. Policies are set by committees of the highest-level Wanek, and executing those policies is delegated to lower-level groups.

Honesty and obedience are highly prized virtues among the Wanek. An individual who consciously lies or even is sloppy about accuracy is considered "blind" or "incomprehensible" by the others. Privacy, on the other hand, means little to the Wanek. They keep secrets from enemies when they must, but day to day privacy is unimportant. In cities like Ao Hidis, where Wanek and humans mingle, the Wanek don't care if the humans gawk at them so long as they aren't disturbed or interrupted in their activities. (This may be a consequence of different visual apparatus. If a Wanek looks at another Wanek, they can perceive each other's pulses. A human looking at a Wanek emits no pulses, so to the Wanek the human "isn't looking.")

The Wanek are not a warlike race. This actually makes them more dangerous: Wanek fight wars using nuclear torpedoes, heavy sandblasts, and other weapons of mass destruction. They are great believers in threats and deterrence, so by placing fortresses on Tschai they can neutralize it as a Dirdir base without having to conquer and occupy the whole planet. However, because Wanek tend to value the good of the community more than individual benefit, they are content to suffer "acceptable casualties" and expend lives in pursuit of strategic advantage. They are also perfectly willing to expend alien lives if it benefits the Wanek civilization as a whole.

Because most of their people on Tschai are soldiers or technical experts, the Wanek have had to delegate a lot of the work in their fortresses to humans. All interaction with the humans is handled by Wanekmen. The biggest employer of human labor is the spaceport and yards at Ao Hidis. Because the Wanekmen don't want anyone to challenge their monopoly on contact with the Wanek, they encourage a high turnover among the other human workers, so that few have time to learn any of the Wanek language.

The highest-paid workers are the Lokhars, who spend decades laboring in the Wanek machine shops. After 20 or 30 years a Lokhar can retire with enough money to buy a farm or a business, with enough left over for a pretty young wife. They keep their jobs for long periods because of the length of time needed to turn a barely literate back-country Lokhar into a spaceship technician. Even so, most of the Lokhars learn only a few Wanek technical terms, not enough to speak the language or read Wanek chime-glyphs with any certainty.



FORTRESSES OF THE WANEEK

The Wanek have fortresses scattered across Kachan, Rakh, and some of the islands of the Draschade Ocean. In all there are about a dozen on land, though there may be some secret facilities hidden underwater. Each fortress is self-sufficient, with its own power generators, food-synthesis vats, and arsenals. They usually house a few thousand Wanek and a like number of Wanekmen.

AO KHAHA

The citadel of Ao Khaha is the command center for all Wanek operations on Tschai. It is about twice as big as the other Wanek fortresses, with 10,000 Wanek and (until the expulsion) as many Wanekmen. It has buried bunkers and torpedo-pits capable of retaliating even if the entire above-ground complex is destroyed. Important prisoners or interesting discoveries are likely to be carried to Ao Khaha for examination by the highest-level Wanek savants, and it is the likely place for diplomatic meetings.

A Wanek fortress is about a quarter-mile across, surrounded by a wall of black glass 100 feet high. The wall has DR 5,000, and its smooth, slippery surface imposes a penalty of -3 on all attempts to climb it. At the top, fortress walls have a system of ultraviolet light beam sensors to detect intruders. If the Wanek are expecting a major attack, or if their sensors have detected torpedoes or aircraft approaching, the entire fortress is shielded by a powerful force field, with DR 1,000. Because of the drain on the generators, the force field is only used in battle conditions.

Each fortress is armed with heavy sandblast emplacements, buried silos for nuclear torpedoes, and a squadron of six armed flyers. Seaside or island fortresses have submarine pens capable of holding three full-size subs or up to nine minisubs. Only the Ao Hidis spaceport has facilities to repair and refuel spaceships, but all fortresses have a landing area where ships can put down.

Within the walls are dozens of massive buildings and towers, all made of the same black glassy material. Wanek architecture is not beautiful; the proportions are graceless and ungainly. The buildings have round windows of black glass, which appear even darker than the black material of the building walls themselves. Balconies made of frail-looking crystal surround some of the towers, and walkways of the same substance link the upper floors of buildings. The walls and windows all have DR 500.

Inside the Wanek buildings, everything is black glass and black concrete, very angular and blocky. The walls are decorated with large Wanek chime-glyphs. The only other decorative touch is the use of large lens-shaped skylights filled with water; these create a pleasant effect when the sun shines

through them, as if the whole place is an undersea cavern. Because the Wanek are amphibious, all their fortresses contain sections which are partially or even completely flooded.

Wanek

46 points*

Attributes: ST+1 [10].

Advantages: Amphibious [10]; Dark Vision [25]; Damage Resistance 1 [3]; Gills [10]; Imperturbable [10]; Speak Underwater [8]; and Ultrasonic Speech [0]. (Note that Wanek speech isn't actually ultrasonic, but it is simplest to model that way.)

Disadvantages: Color Blindness [-10]; Low Empathy [-15]; and Reduced Move -1 (on land only) [-5].

WANEEKMEN

The Wanekmen are the youngest of the human servitor races on Tschai, but they have served their alien masters for nearly 10,000 years. They have prospered in the service of the Wanek, although their masters have not integrated them into their own society the way the Dirdir have.

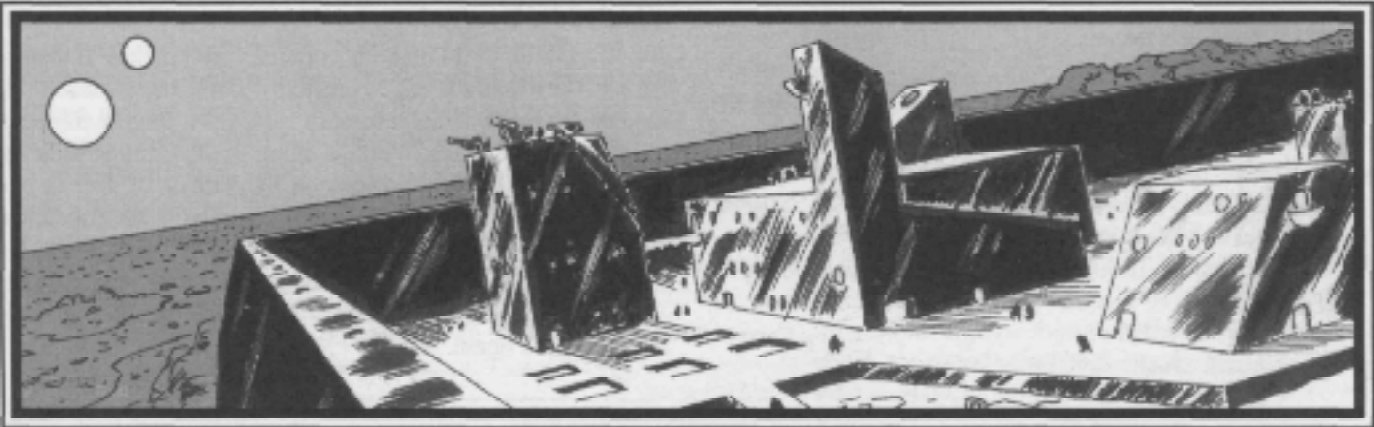
Wanekmen are pale humans, with skins as pale as flour and dense black hair trimmed very short. They are smooth-faced and saturnine, and Adam Reith found their expressions subtly repulsive. Wanekwomen are attractive, with lustrous dark hair and eyes like black pearls.

Wanekmen generally dress in one-piece black garments made of advanced plastics. These suits keep water out, yet allow the wearer's skin to breathe and sweat to evaporate. They function as diving-suits with the addition of a hood, gloves, and flippers. Wanekmen usually wear a wide leather belt to carry tools and instruments. Officers among the Wanekmen wear silver bracers and a silver medallion.

*Wanekmen stood on
the deck, perhaps a dozen,
curiously alike; slender
men with death-pale skins,
saturnine or, in some instances,
ascetic features.*

— Servants of the Wanek

There are not a great many Wanekmen; their entire population is no more than that of the Wanek. While Wanekmen only marry within their small subrace, both sexes sometimes take lovers of other human races. These relationships are seldom really affectionate, as the Wanekmen consider their paramours to be little better than toys or pets, and keep them only as long as they are amusing. Hybrids are never accepted into the society of Wanekmen.



The Wanekmen have found a very comfortable niche on Tschai. As the only beings who can communicate with the Wanek, they are indispensable middlemen. Wanekmen manage all trade between Wanek and other races, and act as interpreters for diplomatic missions. They do no work themselves, but pass on Wanek orders to the Lokhar craftsmen working in Wanek factories and to the Blacks and Purples of Ao Hidis.

It did not take long for the Wanekmen to realize that their monopoly on communication with the Wanek gave them a great deal of power. By controlling what the Wanek heard and what others heard from them, they could effectively control Wanek policy and bend things to their own benefit. In commercial negotiations the Wanekmen may state one price to the customer and another to their masters, then pocket the difference. In diplomacy the Wanekmen interpreters can subtly twist the words of both sides to make sure nothing upsets their comfortable situation. (It is possible that the Wanekmen of Tschai have contributed to keeping the long Dirdir-Wanek stalemate going, in order to ensure the Wanek maintain their position on Tschai.)

Keeping up their position on Tschai requires tight discipline from the Wanekmen. They must make certain the information they give their masters doesn't contradict what others at distant fortresses are saying. They must keep any of their number from developing ties of friendship or attachment with either Wanek or other humans, for fear of being compromised. And they must ruthlessly put down any sign of competition among the other human races of Tschai. Like their masters, the Wanekmen insist on complete obedience to the leadership of their society.

Of course, a society based on systematic lies and contempt for all outsiders is not an especially healthy one. Wanekmen are cruel and cold-hearted even among themselves. Genuine trust and affection are rare, and each Wanekman is constantly maneuvering for his own advantage. It is this almost complete lack of kindness and sincere emotion which makes them seem so repellent.

To guard their position, the Wanekmen have established a network of spies in the most advanced human communities on Tschai, in Cath and eastern Charchan. They have been unable to infiltrate the Dirdirmen communities, but don't consider them a threat because the Dirdir themselves wouldn't permit their humans to become too powerful. Above all, the Wanekmen guard their monopoly on the Wanek language.

The musical instruments used to produce chimes are not permitted to fall into the hands of outsiders, and even the Lokhar technicians in the spaceyards are not allowed to learn more than a few dozen necessary Wanek terms.

The ultimate example of Wanekmen ruthlessness is their willingness to launch nuclear attacks against perceived threats to their position. When the Yearning Refluxives of Cath attempted to send signals to the "mythical" human homeworld 212 Earth years before Reith's visit, the Wanekmen rained down destruction on Setra and Ballisidre, killing thousands. They were able to blame the attack on the Dirdir. More recently, it was Wanekmen who fired upon the *Explorator IV*, killing all of her crew except Adam Reith and Paul Waunder.

Unfortunately, their attack on the *Explorator IV* left a survivor, and the efforts of the Wanekmen to capture and kill Adam Reith led to their downfall. Reith and his companions were able to make the Wanek aware of how the Wanekmen were deceiving them, and the response was quick. The Wanek expelled all Wanekmen from their fortresses and severed all contact with them. How the Wanek will communicate with other races now that they have dismissed all their interpreters remains to be seen.

In the wake of their expulsion, the Wanekmen live a miserable existence. They are scattered about in small groups, residing in the human communities near the Wanek fortresses. The fact that most Wanekmen know no trade or craft beyond their mastery of the Wanek language hasn't helped them prosper. In communities where the pre-expulsion Wanekmen took a high-handed tone, exploiting and bullying other humans, they have suffered terribly, reduced to the most degrading kinds of labor. A few of the women have traded on their beauty and mysterious allure to become concubines of rich or powerful men. If the Wanekmen can band together and take control of some land for themselves, they may be able to survive as another human tribe of Tschai, but otherwise it seems likely that in another couple of generations they will be nothing but a memory.

Wanekmen

-6 points

Advantages: Unusual Background: Wanekmen [10].

Disadvantages: Callous [-6] and Paranoia [-10].

Customization Note: After their expulsion from the fortresses of the Wanek, the Wanekmen gain the additional disadvantage Social Stigma (Outcasts) [-5].

PNUME

The Pnume are the original inhabitants of Tschai, but for millions of years they have shared their world with a series of invaders from space. The Pnume have never resisted any of the invasions of their planet; instead, they simply retreated underground and developed an extensive hidden civilization. Nothing happens on Tschai that the Pnume do not hear about. All the other races of Tschai regard them with fear and suspicion. Pnume are seen from time to time on the surface wearing their black cloaks and broad-brimmed black hats, but their motives are always mysterious and they come and go without warning.

APPEARANCE

Pnume are biped vertebrates, slightly taller than humans. Their bodies are slender but very strong. A Pnume's head looks rather like a horse skull, with complicated rasping mouthparts resembling those of an insect. They have three digits on hands and feet, and can use their toes as fingers to pick up and manipulate objects. The articulation of their legs is the reverse of the human arrangement – the knees bend backward, so that a Pnume walking forward looks like a human walking backward. Their skin is yellowish-white, mottled with black and red spots.

Though Pnume normally walk upright, they can drop backward onto all fours, swinging their head completely around. In this posture they can run swiftly and bear a striking resemblance to night-hounds. Pnume are heavy creatures for their size, and cannot float. They occasionally employ buoyancy devices to enable them to swim, and can sometimes be found far out at sea, paddling along on mysterious errands.

Pnume are entirely nocturnal. They are never seen on the surface of Tschai during the day, and the glare of full daylight would certainly blind unprotected Pnume eyes. They can see by starlight, but not in complete darkness; even their deep tunnels have faint sources of light. Pnume hearing is keen, and they detest loud noises. Their underground world is a place of dimness, shadows, and whispers.

Like many species on Tschai, Pnume are very resistant to damage and injury, though they are not invulnerable. Either because of long-ingrained cultural stoicism, or because of some peculiarity of anatomy, they are fairly impervious to pain, and heal quickly.

All Pnume wear black cloaks, and on the surface they don broad-brimmed black hats which hide the sky. They usually go barefoot, and seem to be able to operate comfortably in any climate. Pnume seldom carry weapons, preferring to rely on their tremendous strength and their vast network of escape tunnels.

Pnume Psychology

The mind of a Pnume is very hard for humans to understand. They love secrets, appreciate order and regimentation, and have a tremendous reverence for history. Pnume combine tremendous curiosity with puzzling apathy; they want to know everything that happens on the surface of Tschai, but have no desire to affect events. The best way to describe their attitude is a kind of racial solipsism: none of the other races on Tschai is quite *real*, and all the events of the planet's long history are nothing but a series of pageants for the entertainment of the Pnume.

CAVERNS OF THE PNUME

The Pnume have a web of caverns and tunnels underlying the entire surface of Tschai, with entry points everywhere. In some regions one is never more than a mile from a Pnume tunnel entrance. The doorways are always carefully hidden, and where there is danger of detection, there may be locks, armored inner doors, and booby-traps.

Within the tunnels, light comes from dim blue buttons set in the ceiling. They cast a faint light, weaker than moonlight but enough to allow the Pnume and Pnumekin to get about. The walls are bare rock or plaster, although where natural crystals or colorful minerals exist, they are polished and serve as decoration. Many of these decorations conceal door controls, peep-holes, or communications devices.

The smaller passages are no more than a yard wide; those which see more traffic are two or three yards across. Bigger tunnels for motor-drays exist, and there are underground canals for powerboats and barges. Elevators connect different levels at key points, and some of the freight elevators can lift entire motor-drays.

The arrangement of Pnume tunnels is determined partly by the needs of transport and access and partly by the presence of natural caves and the existence of easily bored rock. As a result, the underground tunnel network is extremely confusing, with passages going over, under, around, and through each other. Making matters worse, many of the tunnels are secret, with shortcuts between main passages restricted to the higher levels of security clearance. With no stars or sun to help, getting lost in the Pnume caverns is ridiculously easy. Anyone without the Absolute Direction advantage or a compass is at a penalty of -8 to all Navigation skill rolls.

Individual Pnume show little emotion, and are content just to watch whatever goes on. The only things which move Pnume to take action are the desire to secure interesting specimens for the caverns of Foreverness and the need to protect their secrets. Threats of harm mean little to Pnume; they cannot be tortured or bullied. A captive Pnume will remain silent until death. Of course, it's not wise to torment beings whose race has a network of secret tunnels with openings everywhere.

Above all, the Pnume hate disorder. Loud noises or hasty and undisciplined activities offend their sense of propriety. No Pnume will ever willingly behave in a boisterous or disorderly manner, and they react very harshly when others do so.

The Pnume have a well-developed sense of aesthetics and appreciate and cultivate beauty whenever possible. Their tunnels are decorated with polished crystals and mineral veins. It appears that the Pnume don't produce any art of their own. This may be one reason for their obsession with collecting and preserving the artifacts of aliens on Tschai.

Pnume Society

Once the Pnume lived on the surface of Tschai, in villages of little domes. Then alien beings dropped down from the sky and seized their planet. Other species might have reacted by fighting back against the invaders, or perhaps by giving way to despair and dying out. The Pnume did neither. They retreated underground, into Tschai's vast network of caves, and waited for the aliens to leave.

Centuries passed. More aliens came and fought with those already on the surface. The Pnume observed, kept records, and extended their tunnels. The secrecy they adopted for protection became a habit and then an instinct.

Modern Pnume society is dominated by secrets. Each level of status has an attendant lore of secrets, and learning things reserved for a higher level is a crime punishable by death. The Pnume hierarchy is graded into classes; Class 30 is the highest. (The highest level a mere Pnumekin may attain is Class 6.) As with the Dirdir, 5 levels of Pnume status equals one level of *GURPS* Status, and GMs may allow characters in Pnume society to buy status in fractional 1-point increments to reflect this.

As one might expect, Pnume society is run like a vast espionage agency or secret society. The identity of the rulers is a secret from the lower levels, and advancement is based on merit and clandestine monitoring by superiors. At the top (or the bottom, for the highest-status Pnume live in the deepest tunnels) are the Monitors of Foreverness, who set long-term policy and oversee the collection of exhibits for the Pnume Museum of Foreverness. The Monitors in turn exert authority

THE MUSEUM OF FOREVERNESS

The deepest levels of the Pnume tunnels are called Foreverness, a vast museum of the planet's history. In huge natural caverns and artificial galleries, the Pnume have a tremendous store of archives, artifacts, and dioramas depicting the past 10 million years on Tschai.

An important part of Foreverness is the Field of Monuments, where specimens of all the races which have visited Tschai are carefully preserved. There are nearly 100 species represented, from the Shivvan to the Wanek. Humans are also represented, with specimens of all the major human subraces on Tschai, including some groups now extinct. The Pnume wanted Adam Reith as a sample of home-planet humanity, but he was able to persuade them otherwise by a little blackmail. Future visitors to Tschai may not be so lucky.

To prepare a specimen for Foreverness, it must be injected with two special drugs. Liquid One "invigorates and tones, opening the passages for Liquid Two." Liquid Two is the actual preservative: it paralyzes the subject and halts all biological activity. (It is not known if the effects of Liquid Two can be reversed. It would require at least TL10 medical technology and a first-class research hospital with all the latest equipment, as well as some extremely skilled physicians.) The figures in Foreverness are all fringed with a luminous gold and silver halo, possibly indicating a stasis field or some kind of protective force field (though it may simply be how the Pnume prefer to light their exhibits).

through the Section Wardens (a translation of a term for superlative erudition combined with high authority), each of whom directs a region with about 100,000 inhabitants. The Wardens are the lowest-level individuals who are allowed to look at maps showing all the tunnels and passages. A Section Warden is Class 25 in the Pnume hierarchy.

Wardens are served by a variety of lower-level officials, including the Listening Monitors, who are chiefly concerned with keeping order among the Pnumekin. Internal discipline is maintained by the order of Silent Critics, who observe behavior and correct errors. Punishments for Pnume are generally limited to a loss of status or a transfer to ignominious duties. Pnumekin get harsher penalties: suspension over an abyss, mind-altering treatments, or execution.

The exact number of Pnume on Tschai is unknown. Many of them live in deep caves and are never seen even by Pnumekin. Probably their population is somewhere around 100 million, but GMs who want to make them more of a threat can raise that to billions. They could probably organize an army to drive all outsiders off of Tschai, but that is not the Pnume way.

Despite their secretive nature, the Pnume do trade with the surface world. Dotted around the planet are surface access points where the underground canal system of the Pnume joins the waterways of Tschai. Access is strictly controlled at these locations, and most of the commerce with surface-dwellers is handled by Gzhindra.

Internal discipline is maintained by the order of Silent Critics, who observe behavior and correct errors.

Pnume

100 points

Attributes: ST+4 [45]; DX+2 [20]; and HT+2 [20].

Advantages: Acute Hearing +2 [4]; Double-Jointed [5]; Extra Legs (Armless while using them, -30%) [4]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Night Vision [10]; Regeneration (slow) [10]; and Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Curious [-5]; Delusion ("everything on Tschai is for our amusement") [-5]; Stubbornness [-5]; and Weakness (Sunlight, 1d stun per minute) [-30].

Skills: Stealth at DX [2].

PNUMEKIN

The human servants of the Pnume are the Pnumekin. They are on the small side, with a slender build and classically regular features. Pnumekin are very pale, with coal-black hair trimmed as short as velvet. They go barefoot and dress in the same black cloaks and hats as the Pnume. Like their masters, Pnumekin are extremely stealthy, walking with one foot in front of the other. Other humans find the Pnumekin have a distinctive odor, like a combination of camphor and sour milk. (The odor is a result of the Pnumekin diet, in particular the *diko* wafers. After a couple of days eating surface-dweller food, the scent disappears.)

Names are unknown among the Pnumekin. Individuals are designated by group, area, and zone. So Adam Reith's female Pnumekin companion was of Group Zith, Athan Area, in the Pagaz Zone. Her ranking was 210. Another person in the same group would refer to her by number, and one from another group would have no reason to refer to her at all.

Pnumekin appear androgynous and sexless, because they receive an addictive hormone suppressant called *diko* which prevents them from maturing sexually. *Diko* is a wafer with a sweet-salty flavor, and Pnumekin have some with every meal. They become irritable and unhappy if deprived of *diko* for more than a few days. A specialized group of women called "mother-women" do not get the suppressants, and spend their lives in nursery caves having up to 12 children. Inbreeding and dietary deficiencies mean that only half the children survive. Since there are even fewer men who are able to father children, all Pnumekin look very much alike because they are all related.

"On the surface," he said, "life goes differently, and sometimes becomes very boisterous indeed."

*— Adam Reith,
The Pnume*

GZHINDRA

The Pnume are not jailers. Pnumekin who can't behave properly in the Shelters are free to declare themselves Gzhindra and leave. Other Gzhindra are ejected as punishment for boisterous behavior. As Gzhindra they can perform useful functions for the Pnume, while a dead Pnumekin is of value only to the fungus farms.

Gzhindra wander on the surface, wearing black hats and capes or hooded robes. They wear boots, while as Pnumekin they went barefoot. Though they are exiled, Gzhindra still serve the Pnume. They conduct trade with surface races, spy on humans and others, help track fugitives sought by the Pnume, and occasionally acquire new specimens for the Museum of Foreverness.

The Pnume supply the Gzhindra with *diko* wafers as one way to ensure their loyalty. The other method is night-hounds . . . rebellious Gzhindra don't live long. To make sure their agents can't reveal too much about Pnume civilization, all Gzhindra are given a powerful post-hypnotic command not to tell anyone about life in the Shelters.

Though they live on the surface, the Gzhindra are not part of human society. They are wanderers in what to them seems wild and dangerous territory. They feel safest in the places other humans shun: mountain caves and moors where night-hounds lurk. Gzhindra keep apart from other humans, ignoring them when they can, hiding and fleeing when they must. For protection they use electrical defenses.

Gzhindra use the same racial package as Pnumekin, save that they add the disadvantage Involuntary Duty to the Pnume [-10].

From birth Pnumekin are conditioned to avoid boisterous behavior. The Pnume define "boisterousness" as any kind of disobedience, any interest in the opposite sex (unless the human is a breeder, of course), and any visible displays of emotion. Even noticing another person is considered rude.

Pnumekin who exhibit boisterous behavior are strictly punished. Minor wrongs may result in the offender being hung over an abyss in the dark until overcome by terror. Major offenses are punished with mind alteration or death.

Note that most Pnumekin *like* their silent life underground. To them, the surface world (the *ghaan*) is a strange and threatening place, full of wild and violent humans, dangerous aliens (both called *ghian*), and uncontrollable weather. The Shelters are peaceful, safe, and predictable.

Most Pnumekin live in same-sex dormitories with others of the same age and security classification. They do their jobs, and are permitted a few leisure-time activities like growing crystals or collecting and polishing stones. Pnumekin serve the Pnume by tending the fungus farms, making items in workshops and foundries, and digging new tunnels.

When Adam Reith entered the Pnume tunnels to rescue Zap 210, he threatened to release a stolen map of the underworld to the Dirdir and Blue Chasch unless the Pnume promised to stop breeding new Pnumekin. The Pnume agreed, but it remains to be seen if they will keep their promise. If so, the Pnume will have to start hiring human agents directly. Gzhindra and Pnumekin in their black cloaks will no longer be seen on Tschai.

Pnumekin

-2 points

Attributes: ST-1 [-10].

Advantages: Night Vision [10].

Disadvantages: Addiction (*Diko*: cheap, highly addictive, legal) [-5] and Sterile [-3].

Skills: Stealth at DX [2].

Languages: Pnumic at IQ [4].

Customization Notes: A Pnumekin who gets over his addiction must buy off the Sterile disadvantage as well.



PHUNG

It was a gaunt, man-shaped figure seven or eight feet tall, legs somewhat apart, head bowed as if in intense concentration, one hand under the chin, the other behind the back. The head was covered by a soft hat with a drooping brim; a cloak hung from the shoulders; the legs seemed encased in boots.

—City of the Chasch

Phung are relatives of the Pnume, but instead of maintaining a complex underground civilization, they remain on the surface as mad wanderers. Phung are notorious for their insane behavior and capricious violence. “As mad as a Phung” is a watchword among humans.

Phung and Pnume have the same long, gaunt face with insectile mouthparts. Phung have the same resistance to injury as Pnume and their strength is even more fearsome. Phung appear to be entirely impervious to pain, and can recover from terrible damage (a severed Phung head remains conscious for several days). Like the Pnume, Phung dress in black capes and hats, but instead of going barefoot they wear tall black boots. They are bigger than Pnume, standing between 7 and 8 feet tall. The nature of the link among Phung, Pnume, and night-hounds is obscure, and is covered in more detail in the sidebar, p. 38.

A very important difference between the two races is that the Phung have no fear of daylight. They come out at whatever hour suits them, although twilight and dawn are their favored times. Another key difference is that Phung grow horny plates on their forearms; these brachial plates grow continuously and often need filing down. Phung are entirely bipedal, lacking the Pnume ability to run on all fours like a night-hound.

Phung are solitary creatures, never seen in groups. They haunt wilderness regions, especially ruined cities and badlands full of convenient caves. Phung are often found in caves used as night-hound hatcheries. When Phung encounter humans or other races (except, perhaps, Pnume and Pnumekin), they react with a kind of comic hostility.

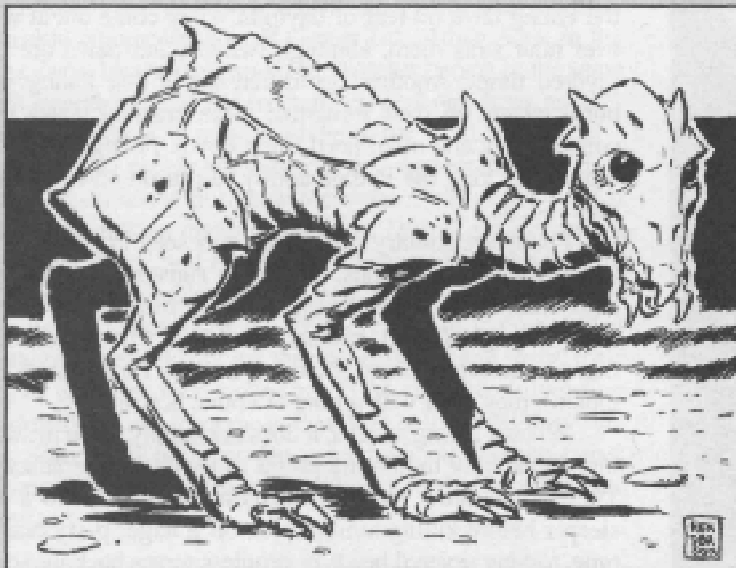
When a Phung attacks, it does not simply wade in swinging. Apparently the Phung prefer to terrify before attacking. They often throw stones from concealment, wake a lone sleeper before killing him, or pick off a larger party one at a time, tossing severed heads or headless torsos back into camp as a grisly warning. Sometimes they capriciously spare one or more members of a group. Occasionally a Phung will not attack a party directly, but will instead sabotage vehicles, destroy provisions, and watch them starve to death or resort to cannibalism to survive. The simplest description of a Phung’s behavior is that it acts like the killer in a slasher movie. This may be deliberate.

Although they live alone and build no towns, Phung are not completely primitive. They use tools, even oil lamps. They wear (and presumably make) clothing and boots. They sometimes use weapons, though they apparently prefer melee weapons, like swords, to guns. Phung certainly understand machinery; even if they don’t know how to operate a device, they can probably figure out how to destroy it.

PNUME, PHUNG, AND NIGHT-HOUNDS

The exact relationship of Pnume and their kin, the Phung and night-hounds, is cloaked in mystery. The simplest possibility is that Pnume, Phung, and night-hounds are three entirely distinct species (though certainly related); any similarities among them are simply due to a common heritage. This theory doesn't explain why female Phung and Pnume are never seen; perhaps all three species are hermaphroditic.

A more complex theory is that all three are actually the same species. The evidence is scanty but suggestive. Adam Reith encountered a Phung in a cave full of night-hound larvae. Pnume look like right-hounds when on all fours. Angry Pnume make noises like right-hounds. Pnume sometimes send hounds after fugitives or enemies and may use them as spies. And the steppe nomads believe Phung are born from the corpses of Pnume. From this one might deduce the following life cycle: larva to night-hound to Pnume to Phung. Night-hounds are probably sexless, while Pnume and Phung are adults capable of reproducing. The Phung may be males and Pnume female, or possibly vice-versa. Or perhaps the Pnume are also sexless, and only the "mad" Phung actually breed.



Alternatively, the system imposed on the Pnumekin by the Pnume may mirror their own reproductive habits. The Pnume may be sterile "workers" who tend the equivalent of "queens" in a fashion similar to Terran ants. In this arrangement Phung could be fertile males or queens before breeding.

There are still other theories. Pnume and Phung may both be adult forms of different night-hound subspecies. Perhaps some environmental factor determines if a hound transforms into a Pnume or a Phung upon reaching adulthood. Possibly the Phung stage comes before the Pnume stage, with the creatures going underground and joining society upon achieving full sentience.

One thing which Phung seem to lack entirely is language. No one has ever heard a Phung utter anything more than inarticulate howls. They sometimes engage in elaborate pantomimes of emotion, like some sort of homicidal street clowns, but don't speak.

Phung **221 points**

Attributes: ST+10 [110]; DX+4 [45]; and HT+4 [45].

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Ambidexterity [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Damage Resistance 2 [6]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Regeneration (regular) [25]; and Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Bloodlust [-10]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Mute [-25]; Reclusive [-10]; and Trickster [-15].

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY

Oh, the Blue Chasch hate the Green Chasch,

And the Green Chasch hate the Blue Chasch.

The Old Chasch hate the new Chasch,

And everybody hates the Pnume.

- traditional folk melody among the

Tomle tribe of Hrer, in eastern Kotan

One driving force behind events on Tschai are the wars and alliances among the surface alien powers and their relations with the humans and Pnume. While grudges and traditional animosity seem to be important factors in diplomacy, alliances of convenience are possible between even the bitterest enemies, if they both profit by the ruin of some third party.

THE INTERSTELLAR SITUATION

Most of the information about the balance of power in space comes filtered through the humans of Tschai, and so may be entirely inaccurate. Apparently, however, the Dirdir are the dominant power in this section of space, with dozens or possibly hundreds of planets under their control. The Dirdir thus have tremendous resources, and are very advanced technologically, but so far their decentralized society has prevented them from overrunning all other races.

The Dirdir have been at war with the Wanek for a very long time. The conflict began

more than 10,000 years ago, but active fighting died down within the first couple of millennia. Since then, things have dragged on in a stalemate, as described on p. 11.

Dirdir-Chasch relations are poor, but stop short of actual war. The Chasch are so much weaker than the Dirdir that they dare not open formal hostilities, and the Dirdir don't really care that much about the Chasch. Dirdir who land on Chasch planets are executed to amuse the Chasch, and Chasch who venture into Dirdir space are hunted and eaten. Otherwise they ignore one another.

Relations among the various races on Tschai can be summed up fairly simply: everybody hates everybody else.

The Chasch and the Wanek do not appear to have much contact at all aside from Tschai. The inscrutable Wanek and the xenophobic Chasch are poor choices for allies, and certainly no true friendship exists between them.

Now that spaceships from Earth have ventured as far as Tschai, how the old powers will react to the new arrivals

becomes important. If Earth and other human colony planets are strong enough to rival the Wanek or Dirdir, they may be approached by one side or the other as potential allies. However, if the Dirdir let their old attitudes toward "sub-men" determine their policy, they may attack Earth immediately.

Depending on the GM's choice, this could work out in different ways. The Dirdir might smash the humans just as they crushed the Chasch, and Earth could wind up under Dirdir control just like Tschai. Or the humans might be strong enough to halt the first major Dirdir initiatives and fight them to a stalemate the way the Wanek did. Or, just maybe, the Dirdir have finally met their match!

RELATIONS ON TSCHAI

Relations among the various races on Tschai can be summed up fairly simply: everybody hates everybody else. Blue Chasch and Dirdir are in a standoff because both have nuclear torpedoes and mines and so could wipe each other out if it came to all-out war. Dirdir would love to drive the Wanek off Tschai and slaughter the Blue Chasch. The Dirdir trade with the Pnume at Sivishe and elsewhere, yet Pnume caught by Dirdir are killed, and whenever the Dirdir locate a Pnume tunnel entrance they flood it with poison gas and seal it off with concrete. By the same token, lone Dirdir are sometimes carried off by the Pnume to become permanent exhibits in the Museum of Foreverness.

Chasch and Wanek have little contact on Tschai, since their outposts are on different continents. Blue Chasch aircraft do range out over the Draschade Ocean and sometimes encounter Wanek flyers or submarines. They don't attack one another on sight, but these encounters can hardly be called friendly – both sides usually keep their weapons charged and ready.



HUMANS OF TSCHAI

Tschai is home to nearly 9 billion humans, with a history going back almost 50,000 years. There have been great empires on Tschai, sophisticated and cultured societies, and regimes of dreadful cruelty. Yet for all that period the humans of Tschai have been a subject species, under the thumb of Dirdir, Chasch, Wanek, and Pnume. Their status as subjects of cruel masters has made them a little cruel themselves, and their limited technology makes for hard lives. Nevertheless the people of Tschai can be as good (and as evil) as their cousins on Earth.



After Adam Reith's visit to Tschai, great changes are afoot among the humans there. The knowledge that there is a world where men have no masters but men, and Reith's own exploits in revealing the trickery of the Chasch, defeating Dirdir hand to hand, and outmaneuvering the Pnume have inspired a new spirit of assertiveness and confidence among the humans of Tschai. There is increasing discontent with the alien masters, and new outrage at the way humans are exploited and degraded. Given time, of course, the Dirdir and Chasch can probably suppress this discontent, but with help from Earth humans may be able to claim their rightful position among the masters of Tschai.

PHYSICAL TYPES

The humans of Tschai are descended from two bands of *Homo sapiens* removed from Terra by Dirdir explorers. The first batch, captured in about 50,000 B.C., were related to the modern Asians. The second captives, acquired some 20,000 years ago, were early Europeans. Since arriving on Tschai, humans have interbred and hybridized and adapted to a hundred different environments. The alien masters have manipulated their genes and directed their breeding to promote or eliminate certain traits.

The result of all this is a very great diversity of physical types, as great or greater than exists on Earth. Where humans on Earth can be grouped into four or five races with fairly similar traits, the folk of Tschai defy any such convenient classification. Instead, each tribe or nation represents a discernable physical type, and groups living only a few miles apart may be as different as people from two continents on Earth.

In size the people of Tschai vary greatly. The smallest subraces are the dwarfish Marshmen of Kotan and the Sieps of the Ojzanalai mountains, both averaging a little over 4 feet in height. The tallest people of Tschai are probably the Dirdirmen, especially their Immaculates, who can be as tall as 7 feet; among the "wild" humans only the Niss of Kachan are as tall. The slimmest people of Tschai may be the frail-looking jungle-dwellers of the lower Jinga river in Charchan, while the stockiest on average are probably the Grays.

ADVENTURE SEED: THE REVOLT

After Adam Reith led the people of Pera to their tremendous victory over the Chasch at Dadiche, he showed the Chaschmen of Dadiche how the aliens had misled and tricked them. Most, of course, refused to change their long-held beliefs. A few, however, were infuriated to discover that the entire basis of their existence was a lie. Motivated by anger and inspired by Reith's victory, they began to spread the word among the Chaschmen in other cities, organizing them into a secret network of rebels and heretics, planning for the day when the humans will rise up and smash their oppressors.

Naturally, in the course of 50,000 years, the Chasch have dealt with other revolts among their human servitors. They have a very well-developed system of internal security and monitoring, with spies, listening devices, and a variety of interrogation techniques. If the rebel Chaschmen continue with their efforts, their organization will soon be infiltrated, betrayed, and destroyed. The rebel leaders will suffer some lingering and entertaining form of execution, and things will go on as before.

Except for one thing – this time, the rebel Chaschmen may be able to get help from the humans of Earth. It's not a sure thing, of course: the Federal Space Agency is very reluctant to provoke a conflict with enemies as powerful as the Chasch. But a successful revolt would put the Chasch cities in friendly human hands, creating a strong and advanced human power on Tschai.

The first task facing the rebels is finding a way to open communications with Earth. A followup expedition could land almost anywhere on Tschai, so Chaschmen rebels would have to travel long and far across the planet to find them. The second obstacle is keeping everything secret from the Chasch themselves until the time is right for an uprising. Will this revolt end as so many others have, or will humans finally escape the oppression of the Chasch?

Coloring varies widely and seems to have no direct connection to factors like climate and sunlight. Pale skin and albinism are more common than on Earth, perhaps because Tschai's dense atmosphere filters out all the harmful rays of

Carina 4269. Skin colors range from flour-white,

among the Wanekmen and Dirdirmen, through parchment-tan, honey-color, and mustard-

yellow, to gold. The dark brown skin of Earth's Africans and Melanesians is absent. One skin color which exists on Tschai but not on Earth is the grayish hue, often with tinges of purple. This may be a trait introduced by the Dirdir (who also have a faintly mauve color at times), or a mutation since humans came to Tschai. Dark gray skin approaches a true black, the color of charcoal.

Hair and eye color are equally varied.

Hair can be anything from platinum blonde to black, and can be red or even orange. Texture is usually straight. Eyes can be literally white, blue, green, yellow, brown, or black. Unlike the races of Earth, the people of Tschai can have any combination of skin, hair, and eye color – some tribes have very pale skin and very dark hair, or vice versa. The features of specific groups are given in detail in the society descriptions.



ORIGINS

Despite all theories and claims to the contrary, humans are native to Earth. About 50,000 years ago the Dirdir raided Earth and took a few hundred early Asians as slaves. They returned about 20,000 B.C. and snatched some Caucasoids from the steppes of what is now the Ukraine. Since then the humans have interbred, mutated, hybridized, and adapted into a wide variety of forms.

While it is obvious to Terrans that Earth is their native world, it is not at all obvious to humans of Tschai, and many of them will vigorously dispute such an outlandish claim. The arguments a Terran can advance are easy to refute. An Earthman might point to the kinship between humans and other life on Earth, but someone from Tschai doesn't have the technology to do a genetic analysis comparing Tschai-life and Earth-life. Meanwhile, the recorded history of humans on Tschai goes back almost 10 times longer than the history of humans on Earth, which seems a convincing argument for Tschai as the true home of humanity.

To further confuse the issue, the alien masters of Tschai have promulgated their own accounts of the origin of humanity. Among the Dirdirmen there is the Doctrine of Bifold Genesis, which asserts that humans and Dirdir both arose on Sibol. The presence of humans on other Dirdir planets supports this theory. The Chasch have told their human servitors that humans are a larval form of Chasch, and with proper treatment can hatch into a Chasch imp at death. This serves as a method of social control and appeals to the Chasch sense of humor. The Pnume do not inform the Pnumekin of their origins at all. Only the Wanekmen have no illusions about where they come from, which is why they found contact with Earth to be a threat and did their best to prevent it.

Earthmen who expect the folk of Tschai to flock to their banner and stand in awe of them because they come from the One True Home of humanity are in for a rude awakening. Even a man of Tschai who knows the truth of human origins is still likely to consider Tschai his home and Earth a distant, unfamiliar place.

HYBRIDS

Despite the tremendous variability among the peoples of Tschai, each group does generally breed true. If a tribe from northern Kotan has yellow skin, red hair, and black eyes, then all members of that tribe are likely to have the same coloring. The people of Tschai are often reluctant to marry outside their own culture. That being said, cross-breeding is not unknown, especially in cosmopolitan cities like Sivilshe or in ports that see sailors from distant lands. Hybrids (the common Tschai term for people of mixed ancestry) occupy a social position which is often uncomfortable but which sometimes offers advantages.

Hybrids whose parents are both "wild" humans are unfortunate beings, unwelcome in either the maternal or paternal tribe. In a port city where hybrids and strangers are common, they can live normal lives, but hybrids born to

more primitive or isolated societies may be killed as infants or driven out to become lone wanderers. The fact that many hybrids are forced into desperate lives as bandits or beggars only reinforces the prejudice against them.

Conversely, hybrids with a parent among the Dirdirmen, Chaschmen, or Wanekmen may derive some benefit from their mixed status. Some Dirdirman hybrids can be accepted in Dirdirman society, especially if their appearance is not grossly different from that of other Dirdirmen. Chaschmen hybrids are less common, but often find a role as traders between Chasch cities and human communities. Wanekmen exploit their hybrid offspring (what few there are), giving them small token gifts or meaningless privileges in exchange for service as spies or informants.

HUMAN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

Just as Tschai's humans have a tremendous variety of physical types, so their societies and cultures differ widely. At one extreme are the most degraded primitives, like the cannibals of Rakh and Kislovan or the marshmen of Kotan. At the other are civilizations as cultured and advanced as any on Earth, such as the Bintah, the

Walalukians, the Shemolai, or the Yao. In between are numberless tribes, kingdoms, and enclaves, with a dazzling array of customs, habits, and beliefs.

CONTROL RATINGS

Most human societies on Tschai have fairly low control ratings; petty crimes are rampant and many people go armed. The default control rating is about 2 in most places, 3 in urbanized cultures like Sivilshe. Weapon restrictions are few – subtract 1 from the local control rating when determining what weapons are allowed. On the other hand, civil liberties are alien concepts on Tschai. All governments can arbitrarily arrest or detain people, confiscate property, and inflict dreadful punishments. Once someone has actually run afoul of the law, treat the society's control rating as 2 greater than the base to determine how trials are conducted and how harsh the sentences are.



If there is any common feature of the human cultures of Tschai, it is cruelty. The humans of Tschai have been reminded almost daily for 50,000 years that human lives are not valuable, and they have taken the lesson to heart. Trivial crimes are punished with death, robbery and murder of strangers is common, and even in civilized regions like Cath there are duels, cut-breaks of random mass murder, and licensed assassination bureaus. Life is difficult, laws are harsh, and entertainments are brutal. Tschai is not a planet for the weak or faint of heart.

Without his emblem the tribesman was a man without a face, without prestige or function.
— City of the Chasch

There are compensations. Paperwork and bureaucracy are rare; even the most urban and advanced societies have a refreshingly laissez-faire attitude compared to civilization on Earth. The very lawlessness of Tschai means that things like class-action suits or restraining orders are unknown. If somebody doesn't like what you're doing, they'll try to raise a mob and stop you. If they can't, they'll leave you alone. Public opinion is represented by clubs and brickbats rather than polls.

The following survey is only a small sample of the many cultures of Tschai, representing those Adam Reith visited. It is

possible that Adam Reith misunderstood some of what he saw or jumped to conclusions about the cultures he visited. Moreover, cultures change over time, especially in the wake of major events like the ones accompanying Reith's visit. Later travelers on Tschai may find these descriptions only partly accurate (i.e., GMs may wish to change some details to keep their players from being too confident).

THE KRUTHE

The Kruthe are one of many human tribes who wander the steppes of Kotan. They discovered Adam Reith and Paul Waunder's wrecked scout-bout. Since the Kruthe beheaded Waunder and would have gelded and enslaved Reith, they cannot be said to have given their visitors a friendly welcome.

Kruthe have honey-colored skin and blond or brown hair. The men wear bushy drooping mustaches but shave their chins. Their features are strongly marked – the men in particular have prominent noses, cheekbones, and chins. Both men and women tend to be big and strong, if only because life on the steppes weeds out weaklings.

Men of the Kruthe dress in loose brown and black striped trousers, shirts of dark blue or red, short black capes, and tall black leather hats with earflaps. They usually go armored in woven metal vests and carry flexible rapiers and hand-catapults. The most important items of personal decoration are the emblems which the men wear on their hats. These are typically about four inches across, and control virtually everything about a man's position in society. By contrast, Kruthe women wear shapeless and ragged smocks of plain gray cloth.

There are about 500 Kruthe, of which maybe 100 are emblem-men and half as many are young warriors who will someday take up emblems. The death rate among emblem-men is high; there are twice as many women as adult men. The tribe moves about in a dozen giant motor-drays, each of which can carry 30 or 40 people plus all the goods of the tribe.

THE EMBLEMS

Among the Kruthe, the emblems worn by the men define almost everything about an individual's social position and personality. The emblems are so important that the tribesmen often call themselves the "Emblem-men" or just the "Emblems."

Emblems are intricate and elaborate designs of silver, copper, stone, and wood, worn by men of the tribe during all waking hours. The emblems are thought to be semi-divine; they have names (a man *takes the name of his emblem as a surname*), detailed histories, idiosyncrasies, and rank. The most exalted of the emblems is called Onmale, and whoever wears it is automatically the leader of the Kruthe tribe. This is not without hazard. If the tribe suffers persistent bad luck, then obviously the man wearing Onmale is unworthy and must die to expiate the wrongs of the tribe.

Only those men who wear emblems are truly members of the tribe. Young men waiting to gain an emblem are second-class members; all others are either slaves or women. The Kruthe use the two terms interchangeably, and improve the resemblance by gelding their slaves.

A free man of the Kruthe can gain an emblem in one of several ways: he may inherit one, take it from its wearer in a duel, or make one himself. Newly made emblems are rare, as they are considered to have acquired no personality or virtue. The wearer of a new emblem is at the bottom of the hierarchy until he can accomplish some noteworthy feats.

Perhaps it is inaccurate to say that a man of the Kruthe "wears" an emblem. According to their beliefs, he *becomes* the emblem, taking on the personality and history of the item. Property belongs to the emblem rather than the wearer, and passes to the next wearer. Some emblems have existed for thousands of years and have built up a complicated history and society. Some emblems are enemies of each other, and have fought many duels over the years. The tribe keeps records of how well various emblems have performed in fights against each other, and an emblem can gain in status as its record improves. Some of the emblems are thought to carry a curse; the wearers are doom-haunted. Other emblems have a reputation for toughness or berserk courage.

In game terms, each emblem confers one or two associated *GURPS* advantages and disadvantages and a Status rank. Any Kruthe who wears the emblem gains those attributes. Nonbelievers can ignore the way the emblem is supposed to behave, but risk challenge as being unworthy of the emblem.

Government and Society

The Kruthe are led by a chief who wears Onmale. Onmale is not an absolute ruler, however; he commands the Kruthe warriors in battle and decides where to move in the course of the tribe's migrations across the steppe. The power of the chief is rivaled by that of the magicians, or judges. Their emblems are pink globes (the symbol of the holy moon Az), and they are in charge of making sure everything is done according to proper religious practice. By selectively remembering religious laws and manipulating the omens, the magicians can thwart or override the chief.

Disputes among emblems are resolved by private duels, by the judgment of the chief, or by appeal to the judgment of the moons. *The last is carried out by the magicians: they spin a disk about the size of a coin, colored pink on one side (representing the moon Az) and blue on the other (for the moon Braz).* If it comes down pink side up, the moons favor the one who has made the appeal; if it comes down blue, the appeal is denied. The magicians have weighted disks to use when they want to bias the judgment. The religion of the two moons is widespread, and is described more fully on p. 67.

Women among the Kruthe are merely slaves. As a consequence, Kruthe women are a sad, spiritless lot. They dress in rags and seldom even have time to clean themselves. Kissing and affection are rare; the basis of a relationship among the nomads is brute force. The children of a man's slave-women are his; girls are his slaves also, but boys are raised to be warriors.

The Nomad Life

The Kruthe tribe wanders the Aman Steppe in big six-wheeled motor-drays. Power for the drays comes from Chasch energy-cells, which the Kruthe get by trade or by stealing them from caravans and other nomad groups. They also use electric motorcycles for scouting (though not for warfare). When the tribe is encamped, the drays and living quarters are hidden under sheds made of camouflage fabric, faired into the contours of the ground. The need for stealth is great; the nomads have to hide from Chasch or Dirdir aircraft (both races find great sport in strafing nomad camps), and from other tribes of nomads. To spot caravans or attackers, the Kruthe use a large four-winged kite to carry a small boy aloft as an observer. Attrition among the boys is high.

The Kruthe raise flocks of multilegged animals related to pull-beasts. The animals graze on the steppe, and the tribe lives on flesh carved from the still-living beasts. While the carving hurts, the animals seem to be able to survive it, and they regrow the lost body parts. The butchering is done by a hefty woman who is also in charge of gelding slaves.

The nomads do trade, bringing preserved meat and hides to trading posts on the eastern steppe. However, the Emblems consider trade to be unworthy of their dignity and are not very good at it. They prefer to get things by stealing from caravans and fighting other tribes. Small groups can be overwhelmed, looted, and enslaved. Medium-sized or well-armed parties (with at least 20 warriors and some energy weapons) can sometimes negotiate a payment to the Kruthe in exchange for being allowed to pass unmolested. Of course, the Kruthe are

perfectly willing to take sequins and then attack anyway, preferring to strike by surprise when travelers are fording a river or otherwise disorganized.

In battle the Kruthe ride fierce leap-horses and carry hand-cataapults and rapiers. They try to strike hard and quickly to overwhelm the defenders. Sometimes it works, and sometimes the enemy have sand-blasts or mounted escorts and drive off the Kruthe. They are brave but not stupid, and they are perfectly willing to run away and fight another day rather than lose much of the tribe's military strength in a single battle.



The Kruthe are typical of the nomads of the Aman steppe. Other tribes include the Kite-Fighters, the Mad Axes, the Berl Totems, the Yellow-Blacks, and the Red Feathers. It seems likely that most tribes are named for sacred objects analogous to the emblems of the Kruthe.

ILANTHS

The Ilanths, one of the steppe tribes, have found it is more profitable to guard caravans than to plunder them. Ilanth mercenaries escort caravans all over the steppes of Kotan, and they can be found in all the depots and caravanserais in small groups, keeping to themselves. Often two or three Ilanth brothers or cousins take service together, in order to have some reliable allies.

Ilanths are proud, handsome men, with broad shoulders and narrow hips. They have sharp features and yellow skin which they rub with yellow pollen to increase its luster. Ilanths varnish their

black hair into stiff plumes. In battle or escorting caravans, the Ilanths wear long-billed black caps crowned by jawless human skulls, making them a very daunting sight to raiders. More daunting are their weapons: shortswords, black-powder rifles, and black-powder pistols or Chasch blasters. In towns or depots the Ilanths are less fearsome-looking. They dress in square berets of brown velvet, decorate their yellow skin with beauty marks, and carry only daggers and rapiers.

Ilanth men consider themselves to be irresistible to women when they wear their finery. Given the harsh treatment of women among the Kruthe and other nomad tribes, the Ilanths may not be far wrong. Their attitude stems from Ilanth women, who are the leaders of their society. All property passes through the female line, and men traditionally put their earnings into the keeping of their mothers or sisters while out soldiering. Consequently the Ilanth women have found a profitable niche as money-lenders and bankers; the fearsome reputation of Ilanth warriors means their sisters have little trouble collecting on debts.

Ilanths do not marry; men may have relationships with dozens of women in different towns, and women may entertain any man of the tribe they wish. Children take the name of their mother's family and remain in the maternal clan-house. While Ilanth men pursue women of other tribes and races, the women do not admit outsiders to their houses and almost never form relationships with non-Ilanth men. An especially valiant outsider who could win a position alongside the Ilanth mercenaries might be accepted as one of the tribe, but he would have to be a mighty warrior indeed.

The Ilanth tribe is led by a matriarch, whose lovers are chosen from the bravest and most handsome of the Ilanth men. The consorts of the matriarch are called princes, and are famous across Tschai.

Ilanth

50 points

Attributes: ST +2 [20]; DX +2 [20]; HT +2 [20].

Advantages: Attractive [10].

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10]; Overconfidence[-10].

RELATIONS WITH ALIENS

On the steppes of Kotan, humans and aliens are about as close to equality as any place on Tschai. The nomad tribes are hostile to all outsiders, human and alien alike. Outsiders are robbed if they are weak, and avoided if they are strong. The Dirdir and Blue Chasch are the most powerful groups commonly encountered in Kotan, and nearly everyone keeps out of their way. Green Chasch are seen as a somewhat more powerful nomad tribe; the human nomads prefer not to face them directly, but occasionally shadow them on their raids against the Blue Chasch in the hope of picking up some useful scraps. If the Green Chasch grow too aggressive, the human tribes can join together in a confederation and restore the balance. Phung and Pnume are feared, but when encountered by a large group of nomad warriors a single individual doesn't stand a chance.



COAD

Coad is a great port on the Dwan Zher. It is the terminus of the north-south caravan route which runs as far as Tosthanag on the Schanizade Ocean. As befits a major trade nexus, Coad is a very cosmopolitan place. On its streets one may see members of almost every race on Tschai. Even Dirdir visit Coad from time to time in search of entertainment and exotic goods. It is said that anything is for sale in Coad – if you have the money.

Because it lies on one of the few patches of solid ground in a marshy region, Coad is a compact town. Its houses are built of weathered timber, with enormous high-peaked roofs and many gables, ridges, dormers, and tall chimneys.

The natives of Coad are a race known as the Tans, after their skin color. They have narrow, fox-like faces with prominent cheekbones, pointed chins, and reddish or dark brown hair cut in a ledge across the ears and foreheads. Tans of both sexes usually dress in knee-breeches, embroidered vests, and round black hats resembling pie-plates. They are affable people, tolerant of outsiders and relatively honest in their dealings.

Caravans entering Coad stop at the terminal at the north end of town, a large compound surrounded by hostleries, taverns, and warehouses. There are also repair-shops for motor vehicles, merchants' offices, and a small enclave of Ilanths. The best hotel at the caravan terminus is the Grand

Continental. When a caravan has just arrived, all the rooms are likely to be full, and travelers must sometimes agree to share quarters with a stranger.

Because Coad is so crowded, motor-drays and leap-horses are not allowed in the city. People either walk or ride in palanquins borne by gnarled little men with long noses and stringy black hair, natives of the nearby island of Grenie. Grenians have long held a monopoly on the trade and guard their position jealously.

Slavery is common in Coad; indeed, slaves are one of the chief commodities traded there, as steppe tribes bring captives to sell. The Slave-Takers' Guild procures slaves and tracks runaways in Coad, and travelers may be invited to pay insurance against the possibility of being rounded up by the Guild and sold. The standard rate is 10 sequins a week; in exchange the Guild will see to it that no unauthorized dealer captures or sells a visitor. Natives of Coad know this is nothing more than a con game practiced by Guild members – the slave-takers are only allowed to catch runaways whose masters have posted a bounty.

Coad has two dozen ships in the harbor at any given time. Most of the vessels are small traders that operate on the waters of the Inland Sea or ply up and down the coasts of Kotan. Bigger ships bound across the Draschade to Charchan or Kachan call at Coad every couple of days, and ships sailing across the Schanizade leave weekly.

Coad's government is fairly democratic by Tschai standards. All decisions are made by a Council of Guilds. The most important guilds are the Longshoremen, the Sailors, the Shipwrights, the Moneylenders, the Chandlers, the Fishermen, the Corpse-Washers, the Metalworkers, the Taverners, the Apothecaries, the Notaries, and the Rope-Makers. Each of them has a vote on the council. Two more votes are held in annual rotation by some of the two dozen minor guilds. The Council of Guilds is naturally most concerned with the welfare of its members, but since just about everyone in Coad belongs to some guild, the result is a generally benevolent government. Corruption is so pervasive that the people of Coad don't even consider it a problem; bribes and gifts to officials are simply part of the cost of doing business. Positions in the government are given to aged guild members as a reward for long service, which means they aren't terribly efficient. On the other hand, a government staffed by superannuated tradesmen is pretty safe from the bloodier forms of tyranny.

Corruption is so pervasive that the people of Coad don't even consider it a problem; bribes and gifts to officials are simply a part of doing business.

PERA: CITY OF LOST SOULS

The city of Pera lies at the western edge of the Dead Steppe, where the desolate steppe gives way to the fertile coastal plain. It is the point of departure for caravans across the steppes and the depot for trade with the Blue Chasch at Dadiche.

Pera is a sadly decayed and impoverished city. It was obviously once a grand place, but now comprises an expanse of ruined halls and toppled monuments surrounding a central citadel. The population is only about 5,000 people, living in rude dwellings built of rubble and slabs of concrete. Most of the men are involved in trade, while women and girls cultivate irregular farm plots outside the city.

Pera is not a nice place to live. Most people who live there are exiles or fugitives. In Pera they struggle for the rudiments of life, try to get a few sequins from trade, or scabble in the thin soil for food. The inhabitants of Pera are a mix of many human races. There are a few Ilanths, some Grays, some Marshmen, a substantial number of steppe nomads, and some Chaschmen exiles and hybrids. They have no local customs to speak of, and the main thing the people have in common is terror of the city's rulers, Naga Goho and his Gnashters.

The best place to stay in Pera is the Dead Steppe Inn, a grand old building with a many-gabled roof built at the foot of the central hill. The inn boasts fine high-backed chairs, attractive chandeliers made of black iron and colored glass, and decorative terra cotta masks on the walls. It is the most civilized place in Pera, and all the more prosperous travelers and merchants stop there.

Trade between Pera and Dadiche is conducted by draymen who operate big motor-drays along the route between the two cities. The road passes through a ravine called Belbal Gap, where the Gnashters of Pera (see pp. 47-48) had a roadblock and a toll-collecting post. From Pera to Dadiche is a distance of about 20 miles – a morning's ride by motor-dray, but a two-day march for an army.

After Adam Reith's visit, the rule of Naga Goho and his Gnashters came to an abrupt end. The city is now governed by a five-man Council of Elders. The new government has raised a militia and equipped them with white uniforms; for the first time the people of Pera have some spirit and confidence. Following the fall of Dadiche, Pera has suffered from the decline in trade, but did gain much in sheer loot. It remains to be seen if the people of Pera can make their city prosper as free men.

The Gnashters

For more than a decade before Adam Reith's visit, Naga Goho and the Gnashters ruled Pera. They were a bandit gang, preying on caravans and isolated depots, until Naga made a tremendous discovery: the Gnashters could take the city of Pera under their "protection" and set themselves up as a government. In exchange for keeping away other bandits (which wasn't hard), they could live a luxurious life and take whatever they wanted from the city.

There were benefits to the Gnashter regime. The ex-bandits drove the Phung out of Pera, kept trade open with Dadiche, and replaced universal banditry and anarchy with their own depredations. Where once the people of the city had lived in a state of total war, all against all, the Gnashters brought a kind of order. Robbery, murder, and rape were abolished for everyone . . . except the Gnashters themselves.



There is no code of law in Pera. Anything Naga Goho dislikes is against the law, and anything he and his men enjoy is permitted. Naga resolves conflicts by confiscating whatever is in dispute. There are no trials beyond Naga's snap judgments. Complaining is high on the list of things Naga Goho doesn't like.

Gnashter "protection" does come with a price. All wealth is taxed, and travelers must pay a "sojourn tax" or be enslaved and sold. Permanent residents must pay a yearly tribute. In all cases, the amount of tax is based on how much the person has – half is generally about right. Woe to anyone who tries to hide his wealth; if discovered, he loses everything and is horribly punished.

Naga Goho demands other forms of tribute as well. Any good-looking girl who catches the eye of a Gnashter must go to the citadel when called for, or her family will suffer. Needless to say, Pera must provide all supplies and equipment for the Gnashters without charge.

Disobedience and defiance are punished harshly in Pera. In the central plaza of the city, there are flaying-stocks where offenders are skinned alive, impaling-poles decorated with the dessicating corpses of Naga's victims, and iron cages where men die slowly of thirst and exposure. For minor "crimes" the punishment is usually enslavement.

About 50 Gnashters live in Naga Goho's mansion atop the central hill. They are strong, big-boned men, once hardened bandits but now going a little soft from easy living. The Gnashters dress lavishly, in dull red gowns, stylish black leather slippers, and caps hung with baubles. In battle, or when terrorizing townsfolk, their "uniform" is a maroon vest and black kilt. They carry rapiers, hand-catapults, and clubs. A typical Gnashter has ST 13, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 12, with the advantages Combat Reflexes and Patron (Naga Goho). Gnashters all have the disadvantages Bully and Laziness. Important skills are Axe/Mace-12, Brawling-12, Crossbow-12, Fencing-12, Intimidation-10, and Riding (Leap-horse)-12.

Naga Goho is the leader of the Gnashters. Goho appears to be a title of rank among the bandits, as he is sometimes called "the Goho." Naga is a tall, thin man with a fox-like face, who generally wears an embroidered surcoat to show his rank. He never goes out without at least two Gnashter bodyguards. He has ST 12, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 12, with the advantages of Ally Group (Gnashters), Combat Reflexes, Status 1, Strong Will +2, and Toughness (DR1). Naga's disadvantages are Bully, Greedy, Lecherousness, and Sadism. He has the same skills as the other Gnashters, but he also has Intimidation-12, Merchant-11, and Tactics-11.

THE YAO

The Yao are among the most advanced and civilized human societies on Tschai. Their accomplishments won them the singular "honor" of having two of their cities destroyed in nuclear attacks. In the wake of the catastrophe the Yao have become decadent, obsessed with status games and petty intrigues.

Cath

The Yao live in Cath, a large and fertile region in southwestern Charchan. Cath is a low-lying region approximately the size of France, rising in the east to a range of mountains. The landscape is dotted with patches of forest, half-abandoned villages, and some impressive ruins. The total population of Cath is about 20 million.

GOZED

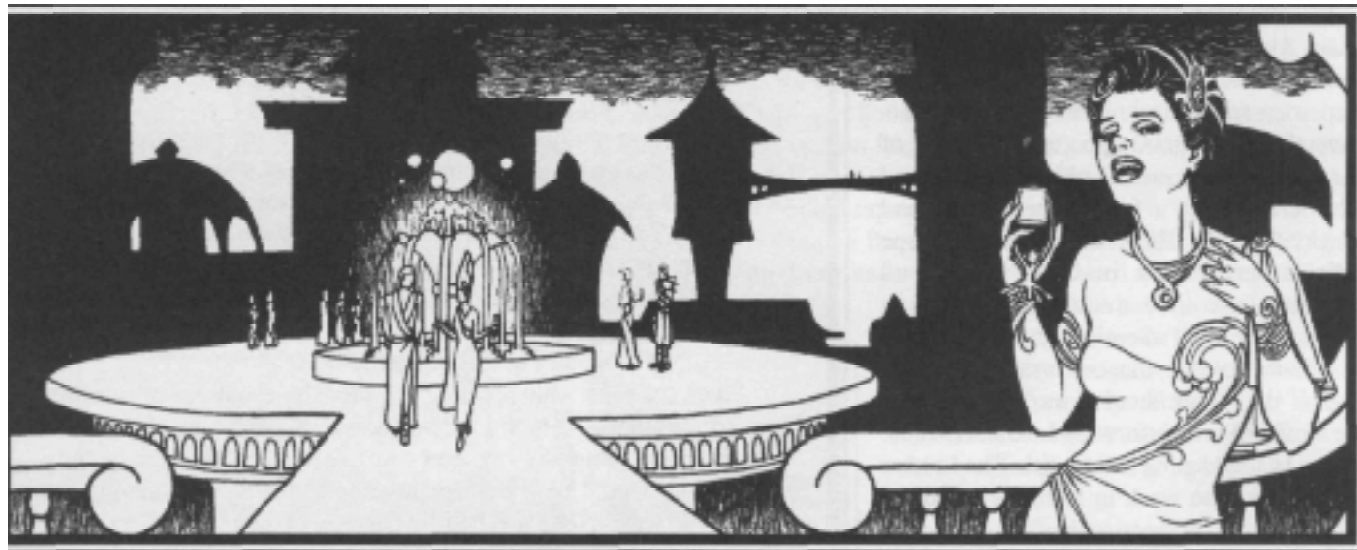
The island of Gozed lies off the coast of Kotan, near the straits connecting the First Sea with the Draschade Ocean. It is a mountainous island, covered with thick woods. The interior of Gozed is almost uninhabited, as the dense forest is home to several kinds of dangerous animals, and the mountain slopes are haunted by Phung.

Gozed's human inhabitants are white-skinned people, who go naked except for sandals. They make their living by fishing from small boats which they launch from the beach. They are experts at making fiber and rope from the tough plants of the jungle, which they use primarily for huge fishing nets. All the people of Gozed live along the seashore, in huts of woven branches and reeds, built high up in the trees at the edge of the forest. Their homes are built above ground for protection from the deadly sea-scorpions, which infest the waters around the island and come up onto the shore to spawn.

The sea-scorpions are revered by the people of Gozed. During the spawning seasons, one woman of the tribe is chosen as the Sea Mother. She is left alone on the ground when the scorpions come looking for hosts in which to implant their eggs. The people of Gozed believe that this sacrifice can protect them from the scorpions and ensure bountiful yields of fish.

The chief port of Cath is Vervodei, a handsome if somewhat dilapidated city with wide streets and flat-faced buildings of glazed brick. As is common on Tschai, they have steep roofs covered in brown tile. The total population of Vervodei is about 100,000, and there are usually around half a dozen ships in port. According to natives, the Dulvan Inn in Vervodei is an adequate hotel.

Vervodei is linked to Settra by wheelway, a kind of monorail which connects all the main Yao towns. The countryside around Vervodei is quite pleasant, but then the wheelway route crosses Audan Moor, a desolate and spooky region haunted by Phung and night-hounds. Although no denizens of the moor have ever interfered with a wheelway carriage, travelers on foot are not so fortunate. Only large and heavily-armed groups dare to go onto the moor at night.



To the east of Settra are weirdly beautiful flatlands with many ponds and slow streams. The mountain country has many quicksilver mines and is the home of the camp for the insane. The mountains mark the border of Cath; beyond them is the wilderness where the Hoch Har tribes live.

Settra

The chief city of the Yao is Settra, located in the center of Cath amid charming countryside full of ponds and watercourses, dotted by great mansions where the leaders of Yao society have their seats. Manor houses are often built on little islands for protection against night-hounds or assassins and have high-pitched gables and elaborate balconies. The area is a rich farming region, and their great estates make the Yao lords very wealthy indeed. Settra and its environs are home to about 5 million people, with 1 million in the city itself. All the people of central Cath are pure Yao, but in Settra there is a foreign-born population of several thousand (mostly technicians and merchants).

Settra suffered terribly from the missile attack 212 Teran years ago; the receptories, the Palace of Arts, and the Golden Webs were all destroyed. But the city has been restored to a portion of its former splendor. The buildings in the heart of the city are three and four stories, built of glazed brick with heavily tinted windows. In the outer reaches of Settra the houses are mostly small cottages of timber with tile roofs.

The most common vehicles in Settra are three-wheeled electric taxis. Aristocrats own big, luxurious cars, but farmers still carry their produce on carts drawn by pull-beasts or heavy leap-horses. Traffic is not heavy in Settra, as the streets are broad and the city is well-planned and dispersed. Nevertheless the streets are terribly potholed and badly maintained. For long-distance travel there are air-cars available for charter, and the wheelway.

The center of Settra is the Oval, a grand avenue lit by pastel-colored globes and surrounding a large park. The Oval is where most of Settra's older businesses have their offices. The wheelway depot stands at one end of the Oval, and the Travelers' Inn is just down the street. It is considered

essential at certain seasons for the elite to make an evening promenade around the Oval, but at other times doing so would lead to ridicule.

The Mall is a broad avenue opening off the Oval, lined with great mansions. The wide grassy median of the Mall is where the cavaliers fight their duels. Nearby is the Circle, where the rite of Pathetic Communion is held, in which those who have killed while in the state of madness known as *awaile* are publicly tortured to death. Pathetic Communion events draw large crowds, and since the tortures can go on for hours, the spectators bring picnics and sometimes sleep out when the process goes on all night.

At the edge of the city is a great outdoor market called the South Ebron Mercade. The neighborhood around the Mercade has become a prosperous business district. Most of Settra's foreign-born residents live near the Mercade, and there one may find small taverns catering to Lokhars or Cloud Islanders.

The People

The Yao of Cath are an old and handsome race, derived from the First Tans and the First Whites, two of Tschai's ancient human groups. The oldest are the Golden Yao, considered the purest and best-looking. Most of the Golden Yao are aristocracy, but a few impoverished families jealously guard their pedigrees even though they live as common laborers. Golden Yao tend to be slim and graceful, with light brown skin and dark hair. Their eyes are golden like topaz, which is the origin of the term "Golden Yao."

Other Yao have interbred with neighboring peoples, producing two other sub-types. The Black Yao, who have dark eyes and tend to be more stocky than the Golden Yao, make up the bulk of the rural population, especially in the south. The despised and somewhat eerie Gray Yao, with pale gray-green eyes and brown hair, are found in scattered villages and in small enclaves in the big cities. They are said to be related to the Dugbo, and the other Yao consider them all to be nothing but thieves and beggars.

in the past couple of centuries a great many foreigners have settled in Cath. The decline of Yao interest in technology has created a demand for technicians, and merchants have also found good opportunities. Most of the newcomers are Lokhars or Cloud Islanders, though a few of the Purples and Blacks from Ao Hidis have tried to escape their ancient rivalry in Cath. The Cloud Islanders have little trouble functioning in Yao society; their skeptical, cynical attitude lets them observe the customs of the Yao even if they think them absurd. Conversely, the bluff and straightforward Lokhars find the Yao to be maddening and foolish. The Lokhar technicians who work in factories or on the wheelway in Cath keep to themselves and are viewed as curious and alien by the Yao.

Cath is human country. There are no Dirdir, Wanek, or Chasch there. Wanekmen are sometimes seen in port cities (and have a large network of informants and spies throughout Cath). A few Dirdirmen exiles settle in Cath, where they are unlikely to be disturbed but don't have to give up the advanced comforts of life. Chaschmen are never seen in Cath at all. Naturally, the Pnume are everywhere in secret. Many of the abandoned mines in the mountains of eastern Cath are now part of the Pnume tunnel system.

Society

The Yao are obsessed with status and engage in endless maneuverings to improve their relative position. They have a tremendously complicated system of etiquette which governs every aspect of life. Among the Yao, one rises in status by mastering the intricacies of proper behavior for a higher position in society. But it isn't easy; proper behavior includes keeping up with fashion, and fashions change constantly.

The Yao use the term "place" to denote status. Instead of a pyramid, Yao society is organized like a very tall, thin

PROSTITUTION

Prostitution on Tschai is common and in many places is respectable and legitimate. A common symbol of a woman for hire is an orange sash; any woman wearing one is assumed to be available. Among the Yao upper classes, where marriages are political alliances rather than love matches, it is common for a man to have a favorite courtesan or a mistress of the demimonde. In places where prostitution is considered unseemly (as among the Lokhars), the role is filled by women of the Dugbo or other outsider groups.

There are some cultures in which the whole concept of prostitution is meaningless. Among the barbarians of the Kotan steppes, all women are property anyway, and live like slaves. For them, getting paid for sex would be a tremendous improvement. And among the Khors, who wear masks and mate in a frenzy of anonymous lust, there is no need for professionals.

ladder. No two people are precisely equal; each Yao is superior to some and inferior to others. Normally, relative position is obvious – a wealthy lord has higher status than a laborer – but among near-equals there is constant jockeying for precedence and place.

This concern for place is strongest at the upper levels of society. Poor peasants can't spare the time or effort to worry about the peasants in the next cottage. Middle-class Yao do their best to behave in a respectable manner. But among the upper classes, place is of vital importance and status games are played for blood – literally.

The leaders of the Yao are the lords of the great manor houses; each controls lands and commands the loyalty of an extended clan. The highest caste are called the Aegis and are all pure-blooded Golden Yao. The manors are named after colors and gems: the Blue Jade Palace is one of the more important manors, and its lord is a powerful figure in Cath. One of its many rival houses is the Gold and Carnelian. The most important Yao lord is honored with the title of Prince by his fellow nobles; those who aspire to the position must compete fiercely to gain place. Though the position carries a great deal of prestige, being Prince does not bestow any authority beyond what the lord already commands.

A Yao gains place through participation in the "Round," the yearly cycle of social events – balls, water-parties, masques, and other diversions – and the ongoing change of fashion. Some parts of the Round are fixed, like the Banquet of the Season, when young women entering society are presented to the Princess. Other parts of the Round are governed by changes in fashion. At one time it may be "in" to cultivate an interest in the sciences and invite savants to lecture at one's manse, but to do so a few weeks later would be hopelessly passé. Nobody decides the changes of fashion; they emerge out of a sort of mass consensus of all the upper-class Yao. A bold person might try to be a leader of fashion, but doing so requires iron nerve and perfect timing. If society fails to follow, the would-be fashion leader is left looking ridiculous.

A Yao gains place through participation in the "Round," the yearly cycle of social events – balls, water-parties, masques, and other diversions – and the ongoing change of fashion.

Even religion is governed by the market. During its annual course the Yao change their habits of worship, going through atheism, philosophical deism, strict personal religion, avish ritual, ecstatic experiences, mysteries, animism, decalant antinomianism, and then back to atheism again. Occasionally new cults are adopted into the Round and old ones discarded. Once, 150 Tschai years ago, the Cult of Yearning Reflexives was popular, but since the destruction of Settra and Ballisidre it has fallen into disrepute.

THE TWELVE TOUCHES

Among the Yao, assassination is an approved method of disposing of one's enemies, and has become an exacting and well-respected profession. There are half a dozen licensed assassination companies in Cath. This is considered an improvement on the old system of clan warfare and vendettas. One of the best-respected firms in the business is the Security Assassination Company of Settra.

Assassins are required to notify the victim that he is the subject of a contract and specify the means to be used. The assassins try to do their jobs with a minimum of fuss, and often try to secure the cooperation of the victim to make everything go smoothly. They are courteous to a fault. Victims who flee are safe if they can get out of Cath, for the assassination companies' charters are not valid in other lands. Fighting against one's assassin is frowned upon, because he is merely an honest tradesman trying to do his job.

Of course, assassination is different from mere murder. Assassins are members of a guild, and are highly trained in all the traditions of their art. Any non-guild member who goes about killing people is a common murderer meriting the harshest punishments, both for manslaughter and false advertising.

One of the most picturesque and disturbing methods of assassination is the Twelve Touches (known more prosaically as a Type 18 contract). At intervals of a day or so, an authorized assassin pricks the victim with a small twig. The 12th touch is fatal. Only the Assassins' Guild knows for sure whether the Twelve Touches are a cumulative contact poison, a single time-release dose, some kind of combination toxin requiring 12 different ingredients, or merely harmless sticks which cause death by the power of suggestion.

Clothing is the most immediately visible sign of one's place, so the Yao are fanatical about the niceties of dress. Again, this is most important among the upper classes, as they can afford to dress properly for every occasion. Lower-class folk in Cath content themselves with loose breeches of green or tan, worn with jackets and blouses of subdued colors. Middle-class Yao dress in more complicated suits with elaborate ravats.

Among the upper-class Yao, clothing is extraordinarily specific and elaborate. When buying a new outfit for his visit to Cath, Adam Reith chose from among "the garments a wealthy vegetable grower might wear to an intimate funeral," the lounge clothes of an elderly philosopher at his country

estate, and the clothes of a younger philosopher on a casual visit to the city." The cavalier Dordolio dressed to go abroad in a coat made of green and purple strips of soft leather, pleated yellow breeches buckled at the knees and ankles, and a square cap of soft fur fringed with gold beads. Aboard the ship returning to Cath, Dordolio wore a somber maroon suit, with shoes and a billed cap of black velvet.

While a foreigner might be amused or appalled by the complexity and extravagance of such a vast array of clothes, the upper-class Yao rely on dress as a vital social signal. Those at the highest levels have great difficulty dealing with someone who is not dressed properly. They cannot address someone without knowing his place, so the most polite thing is to ignore the person entirely.

An equally important sign of social rank is one's name. Each Yao has several names, using different names in different circumstances and with different people. For example, Adam Reith traveled with a Yao woman he rescued from the Female Mystery cult. Since her father is lord of the Blue Jade Palace, she is called Blue Jade Flower, or Beauty Flower at lesser functions. She also holds the title Flower of Cath in her own right. Her "flower name" used at demonstrations and pageants is Ylin-Ylan, a flower that grows in Cath. Her court name is Shar Zarin, which is what she would tell the Princess at the Banquet of the Season. And she has other names for more private moments. Her child name, used by her close family, is Zozi. Her friend name is Derl. Her secret name is L'lae, for use only with her lover, and she has one other most secret name which was not revealed. Since Blue Jade Flower was speaking to her friend and lover, she probably left out some of her names: there would be a name for use with servants, another for strangers, and possibly one for enemies as well. Soldiers have field-names and foe-names, and all scholars and literary men have a pen name.

Since each person can have up to a dozen names, which name to give in any situation is a matter of great delicacy. Giving your servant-name to a social equal is an insult; giving your friend-name to a superior is very presumptuous. A man who asks a woman's name is sounding out her feelings about her based on which one she tells him, and for a man to tell a woman his secret name without being asked is rather like kissing her without permission. The Yao skillfully use their names as part of social maneuvering.

The endless struggle for place among the Yao can turn violent. Duelling is still an active institution among gentlemen of the Yao. Someone who fails to behave properly may find himself challenged by a cavalier. Conversely, there may be situations in which etiquette demands one issue a challenge or lose place.



Duels are not normally deadly – victory usually comes at first blood or when one combatant is disarmed or surrenders. Knowing when to surrender is a key skill, since giving up too soon would cause one to lose place. The rapier is the favored weapon, and duellists favor a showy fighting style, full of stamps and feints. Fights to the death are very rare; such a challenge cannot be withdrawn, and attempting to surrender or back out would mean social annihilation. Of course, “accidental” fatalities can happen in any duel.

Government

The Yao are governed by the lords of the great manors, who meet with the Prince to decide matters of defense, trade, and so forth. Most of the lords’ energy is devoted to faction politics and efforts to gain place, so while the council and the Prince often announce important new policies, in practice little gets done. Only if Cath is actually threatened with invasion are they likely to rouse themselves to any sort of effectiveness.

At the lower levels, there is little government of any kind. The Yao do not have written laws or regulations. Everything is governed by custom and fashion. In practice, this works as a kind of common law system – something is illegal if most of the people think it is illegal. In the cities, order is maintained by patrolmen, who carry staves with incandescent tips and wear red and black striped uniforms. The patrolmen also watch for fires and enforce the rules of proper conduct for strangers. Patrolmen are “coops on the beat” rather than detectives, and are not very good at investigating crimes.

Theft, robbery, and fraud are generally considered criminal in Cath, but crimes of violence can often be excused if they are committed according to proper form. Duels are one example of legal violence; another is sanctioned assassination (see p. 51 for more about Yao assassins). One kind of violence which is definitely not approved is the amok rage known as *awaile*. When someone enters a state of *awaile*, patrolmen come running to subdue the culprit, while everyone else in the vicinity flees.

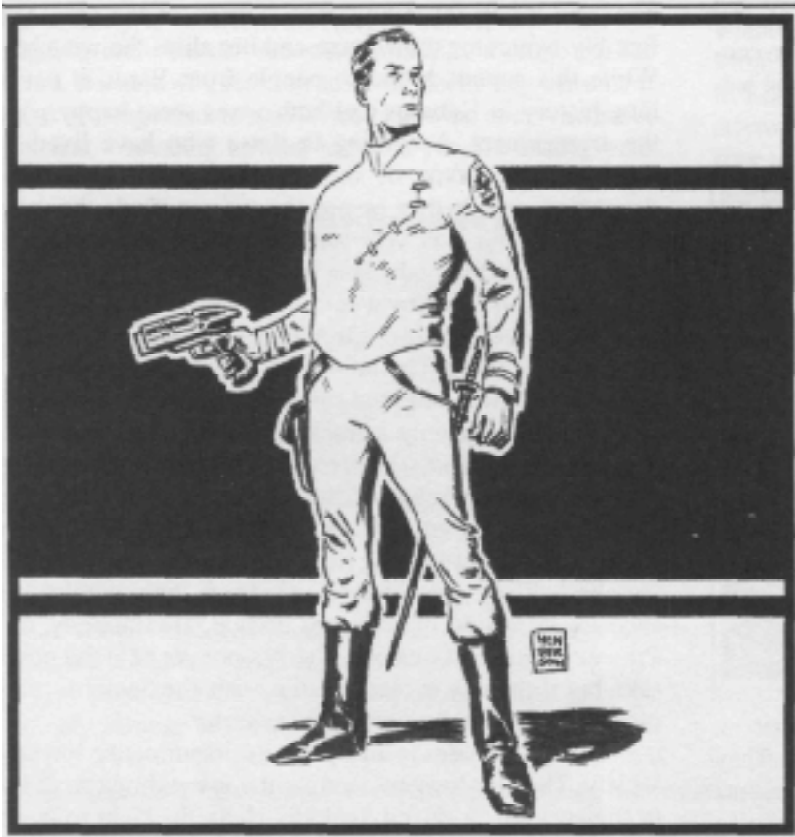
AWAILE

It is commonly said that “the Yao are as sensitive to shame as an eyeball to grit.” Their culture has a complex and intricate set of social rules, and sometimes people are trapped by circumstances in a position where shame and loss of “place” is unavoidable. When that happens, the result is often bloodshed. The Yao are subject to a strange form of homicidal madness known as *awaile*, which strikes those who have reason to feel shame. While in a state of *awaile*, the individual kills as many people as possible, regardless of the age, sex, or kinship of the victims. Yao in *awaile* may kill their own families, or simply walk down the street attacking every person they encounter.

When the afflicted person can kill no more, apathy and depression set in. If the killer is not captured during his rampage, suicide is generally the end of *awaile*. (*Awaile* may not seem so strange to modern Americans familiar with the phenomenon of people “going postal.”) Yao of either sex and any age can give way to *awaile*, although it does seem to be somewhat more common among the status-obsessed middle and upper classes.

The Yao have developed a severe punishment for those who kill in a state of *awaile*. The rite of Pathetic Communion is a drawn-out execution by torture, with its severity based on how many people the culprit killed. As one observer described it, “Each execution has its particular flavor and style and is essentially a dramatic pageant of pain, possibly enjoyed even by the victim.” Executions are popular spectator events, and whole families attend. The torturers are called Ministrants, and wear distinctive costumes; the subject is known as the Expiator.

The defense of Cath is handled by the caste of cavaliers, who command the army and make up the most elite regiments. Once they were mounted troops, riding spirited leap-horses into battle and assailing foes with rapiers and hand-catapults. They still ride on parade and respect a good leap-horseman, but now the cavaliers ride battle-cars or motorcycles and use power-guns and sandblasts as well as swords. There are some 2,000 cavaliers in Cath, each of whom in theory commands a company of 100 men. Actually, less than half the companies are at full strength, and at least a quarter are paper companies with no troops at all. The quality and armament of the soldiers varies depending on the cavalier in charge. Those with a serious interest in military matters have well-trained soldiers armed with power-guns or rifles; traditionalists prefer handsomely uniformed javelineers who know how to drill but not how to fight; and apathetic cavaliers command bands of green troops armed with whatever they happen to bring along.



At one time the Yao were an aggressive people, pushing the Hoch Har beyond the Black Mountains and making all the nearby regions tributary to Cath. Of late, however, their martial spirit has declined. The cavaliers spend more time perfecting their rapier-dueling techniques than they do mastering tactics or logistics. Heavy weapons and technical subjects are left to specialist regiments staffed by foreigners and mercenaries. This has made the Yao better neighbors, but the weakness of Cath's defenses makes it vulnerable to raids and invasions, and it may not be long before the rituals of the Round are disrupted by war.

Technology

The Yao are among the most advanced human cultures on Tschai. Overall they are about TL6, but they lag behind in certain areas, particularly aeronautics. Since it is easy to buy air-cars from the Wanekmen or the Dirdir, the Yao have little need for aircraft of their own. Air-cars can be hired in all the major cities of Cath for an exorbitant fee.

The Yao seem to be better theoreticians than engineers. Many of their devices have elaborate and ambitious designs which fail in use because they are too complex. (In game terms, all Yao machinery or weaponry malfunctions on a roll of 14 or higher and requires twice as much maintenance as usual.) Most sophisticated machinery in Cath is made by foreign technicians, or else is imported stuff made by the Dirdir or Wanek.

The decline of Yao engineering and craftsmanship may be a recent development, part of the general decline in self-confidence and pragmatism following the missile strikes that smashed their two leading cities. The Yao were unable to retaliate against their attackers, so instead turned on the elements in their society which had provoked the devastation. The Yearning Reflexives were proscribed, and science and technology in general fell into disrepute. The upper classes of the Yao devoted themselves utterly to amusement and the pursuit of place, since otherwise the shame would drive the whole nation to *awaile*.

A Yao technology which epitomizes their preference for elegant design over practicality is the wheelway, a form of rapid surface transport analogous to railroads. Instead of a track, the wheelway has a wedge-shaped concrete slot extending across the landscape. Each car has two wheels, and the Yao point with pride to the resulting reduction in friction. They are less proud of the wheelway's bumpy ride, frequent breakdowns, or the way the cars wobble at low speeds. Wheelway cars move at about 100 mph in the country, slowing to 60 mph near towns. Each car is operated by a driver who rides above the front wheel. Since there is only one wheelway slot, dispatching and route planning are important to avoid collisions. Cars run eastward in the mornings and westward after noon.

Cath is a rich country, so the Yao are able to buy a good many advanced devices, which does compensate for the decline of their own technical skills. They have air-cars and some larger flying platforms, acquired from the Wanekmen and Dirdir, and the army has sandblasts, power-guns, and battle-cars. Since all these things depend on power cells which only the alien masters can provide, they pose no threat to their rule.

Yao

-16 points

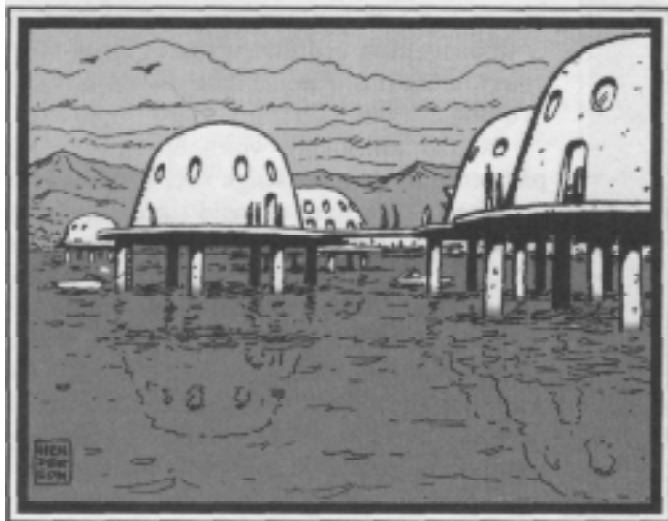
Disadvantages: Susceptibility to *Awaile* [-15].

Quirks: Has several names, each for use in a different situation. [-1]

THE HOCH HAR

The Hoch Har are ancient enemies of the Yao. They once inhabited all of Cath, but over the course of centuries the invading Yao drove the Hoch Har out of the lowlands and beyond the Black Mountains. They survive today in a handful of fishing villages around Black Mountain Lake and in some mountain valleys.

Physically the Hoch Har are not that different from the Yao, suggesting that a good deal of interbreeding accompanied the conquest. The Hoch Har are stocky people with dark eyes and hair, but with skin somewhat paler than that of the Yao. Centuries of conflict have given them an inveterate hatred of their neighbors in Cath, and many of their customs and habits seem to be chosen deliberately to oppose those of the Yao. Etiquette, for example, is considered a sign of weakness and a love of the trivial. They pride themselves on direct speech, an egalitarian society, and utter pragmatism. In practice this makes them nearly as hard to deal with as the Yao themselves, as it is very hard to get a Hoch Har to compromise or back down from a position. Their confrontational manner leads to any number of brawls and battles with outsiders.



Most of the Hoch Har make their living as fishermen on Black Mountain Lake and the nearby mountain streams. They live in villages built on stilts in the lake, for protection against Phung and night-hounds. A few hamlets survive in mountain valleys, where the people raise herds of meat animals and tend orchards. None of them do any mining in the mountains for fear of the Pnume.

KABASAS

The city-state of Kabasas is the commercial depot for the whole Jinga river basin. Its ships carry a great deal of the trade between Charchan and Kachan, venturing as far as Rakh and the Isles of Cloud. The seafarers of Kabasas also make up a good proportion of the pirates in those waters, and the distinction between a merchant of Kabasas and a pirate may depend on how heavily armed the ships they encounter are.

Kabasas is a crowded place. The houses occupy the banks of the Jinga river not far from the river mouth, and the city climbs the hills above. The streets are lined with arches and colonnades, giving relief from the tropical heat. For some reason each building in Kabasas is built with one wall slanting either inward or outward from the base, giving the whole place an unsettling appearance to strangers.

Kabasas has about 200,000 people, and dominates the surrounding countryside and coast. The inhabitants of Kabasas are slender, alert people with flowing brown hair, wide cheekbones, and burning black eyes. They have a reputation for being sharp traders, vicious fighters, and skilled sailors.

The women of Kabasas are particularly handsome and love to flirt and tease, but it is dangerous for strangers to express any interest in them. If a man shows interest in a woman she calls other women to her aid and they all attack the suitor. He, in turn, calls on nearby men to help him, and a general donnybrook ensues. If the man can forcibly overcome the woman and her allies, he wins her. While this sounds brutal to people from Earth, it has a long history in Kabasas and both sexes seem happy with the arrangement. According to those who have lived in Kabasas, the fervor of the combatants varies greatly depending on whether or not the woman finds the man attractive – and it is very rare for a man to overcome a woman who actually dislikes him.

Kabasas is ruled by a caste of nobles, much like Cath who are actively involved in business, especially in trade by sea or by river. The nobles of Kabasas are known as Sealords, and it is essential for a lord to have a ship of his own, even if it is only a small riverboat. Membership in the caste of Sealords is hereditary, passing through the male line. The number of Sealords is fixed at 100, but there is a high rate of attrition due to deaths at sea, so once every 10 years the existing Sealords meet to nominate new members. They also choose one from their number to serve as Prince during the next decade. Traditionally, the Prince is the oldest Sealord who has not yet held the position, but if the city is faced with a crisis the Sealords may pick a younger and more vigorous leader.

Though Kabasas is only one city, its influence spreads widely. The city loosely controls the lower Jinga river up to the swamps. A dozen Sealords claim the right to trade on the river, each taking a stretch of the main stream or a tributary as his territory. They guard their monopoly jealously; any rival traders on the river may be attacked. On the sea, the other Sealords are similarly protective of their trade routes, each claiming a monopoly on trade with a port on the Parapan. Of course, it is much harder to keep interlopers out of a port or a sea than to guard a stretch of river, but this is the justification the Sealords use for piracy against ships of other nations.

Visitors to Kabasas often stay at the Sea Dragon Inn, a grand establishment on the heights, with a splendid view of the city and harbor. The hotel is a sprawling collection of pavilions, galleries, and towers, with more than 200 rooms.

KHORS

The Khors inhabit Khorai, on the north coast of Kislovan. They are fierce and suspicious folk, whose religion and mating habits are inextricably bound. Their quickness to take offense would ordinarily keep travelers from stopping in Khorai, but the country of the Khors lies near the Carabas, so many sequin-hunters pass through on their way to brave the dangers of the Dirdir in the search for wealth.

Khors have mustard-yellow skin and pale eyes. Both men and women wear black gowns and tall black hats. They are actually rather small people, so they wear big hats to make themselves look taller, and train their hair upward into a stiff thicket. Khors have a well-developed sense of smell and are very particular about odors. Men of Khorai carry daggers, which they draw at the slightest offense, and 8-inch iron darts with needle tips, which they can throw with painful accuracy.

There are dozens of ways to offend a Khor. Anyone arriving in a Khor community at night is assumed to be an enemy, and is likely to be attacked without warning. They are not talkative, and consider excessive volubility a crime against nature. Because of their keen sense of smell, they consider it a sign of antagonism to stand directly upwind or downwind of someone – standing upwind suggests you are casting your

Men of Khorai carry daggers, which they draw at the slightest offense, and 8-inch iron darts with needle tips, which they can throw with painful accuracy.

own odors at the other person as an insult, while standing downwind indicates you are trying to approach by stealth. Male visitors should never even acknowledge the presence of a Khor woman, for the men assume anyone looking at their women does so with lustful intent. Women should similarly avoid looking at Khor men. No strangers may look at children in Khorai, as the adults will suspect them of laying a curse. Above all, outsiders must never enter, look at, or make reference to the sacred groves of the Khors.

Villages in Khorai are clusters of dull brown brick houses topped with conical roofs of black iron. Each village has its sacted grove, a copse of huge *dyari* trees covering an acre. The tree trunks are decorated with carvings of men and women engaged in various sexual activities. At the center of the grove are the two huts where the Khors keep their masks.

Masks are made of wood and leather, and each community keeps enough masks for all the adults. The male masks have long pointed chins, bulging cheeks, and bug eyes. Female masks have long noses and exaggerated grins. At night the Khors enter the sacred groves and put on masks, symbolizing that they have changed souls. In place of the daytime soul, the night soul is an archetype of Man or Woman. Wearing their masks, the Khors engage in ecstatic dances, then pair off for lovemaking. The rites can go on all night, but at dawn the people put aside their masks as though nothing has happened.

Khors do not marry. Women live in their mother's home and are protected by their uncles and brothers. Since just about any man of the community could be the father of any child, all Khors are very protective of children. Khor communities are very harmonious and close-knit, though this comes at the cost of fewer close personal relationships.

THE NISS

The Niss are the inhabitants of the lower Ish river in northern Kachan. They live in the area between the coast and the Lokhar Uplands, and are impressive and fearsome-looking people. Niss are among the tallest people on Tschai, with adults of both sexes routinely reaching seven feet in height, rivaling only the Dirdirmen Immaculates. They have pale complexions and curved, beaky noses. Combined with their lanky build and flowing black robes, their long noses make the Niss look like big predatory birds.

The Niss are herdsmen, raising leap-horses famed for their quality. Their women do excellent leatherwork and silversmithing, making ropes of braided hide, elaborately decorated tack and harness for leap-horses, and crudely beautiful goblets and ornaments of silver. Niss women live in small permanent settlements, while the men are often gone for long periods riding the range with their herds.

Men of the Niss have a very touchy sense of honor. Any insult is grounds for a fight. The two greatest crimes among the Niss are stealing a man's horses and seducing his woman. Either offense will bring the injured party and all his kinsmen on the trail of the culprit, bent on killing him or at least gelding and mutilating him. Fortunately, outsiders do not often find Niss women attractive, as they are as big and hawk-faced as their husbands. Niss of both sexes are notably prudish.

It is possible that there is some connection between the Niss and the Pnume. Though the Niss are much bigger and fiercer than Pnumekin, their pale complexions, prudishness, and fondness for black clothing point to a Pnume influence. Perhaps the Niss are descendants of Gzhindra, or of some failed attempt to create Pnumekin warriors capable of driving the various alien races off the surface of Tschai. Or perhaps the Pnume are still active patrons of the Niss, keeping the connection hidden.

Zsafathrans are genially ironic, sometimes calling themselves a "destiny-blasted race, doomed to a succession of disappointments." In fact, they know themselves to be fortunate in their peaceful lives.

Khorai is good farming country, and the Khors live well. Their preference for small communities means they do little manufacturing or trade. A few towns have water mills or windmills to process grain and small smelting-works where ore is available near the surface. The technology of the Khors is late TL4 or early TL5. Alien high tech is rare among the Khors, in part because they have little to offer in exchange.

The main source of foreign goods is the stream of sequin-hunters who pass through Khorai on the way to the Carabas. A few Khors run shabby inns for travelers, and in the port towns travelers can pay to berth their boats for up to a year. Since many of the sequin-hunters never return, a steady supply of used boats become the harbor-masters' property. Khors are generally honest, so a sequin-hunter who survives can count on finding his boat as he left it.

The Khors have no government above the village level, and don't seem to need one. Disputes between communities are resolved either by appeal to omens and auguries or by a general brawl between the inhabitants. There is no need for a standing army, since the Khors are far more warlike than their neighbors.

ZSAFATHRANS

Zsafathra lies to the west of Khorai, on the north coast of Kislovan. It is very pleasant countryside, low-lying and abundantly watered, once a swamp but now drained by canals. The climate is mild, and a variety of fragrant trees and flowering vines flourish in Zsafathra.

Life in Zsafathra is good. The people live in airy pavilions set amid waterways and shaded by gauzy purple *ouinga* trees. Travelers are welcome, and the Zsafathrans don't ask nosy questions of strangers who don't cause trouble.

The people of Zsafathra are solidly built, with ruddy gold complexions and straight black hair which they wax and shape elaborately. They are not warlike people, and make their living mostly by farming and fishing. Zsafathrans are always on the lookout for a profit, but are basically honest and trustworthy. Their customs and personalities are not as rigorously bound by tradition as those of the Khors, but neither are they as totally amoral as the Thangs. Zsafathrans are genially ironic, sometimes wryly calling themselves a "destiny-blasted race, doomed to a succession of disappointments." In fact, they know themselves to be fortunate in their peaceful lives.

In the past, bands of warlike Khors raided Zsafathra, sacking villages and carrying off what loot they could find. The Zsafathrans did not fight back directly, but adopted a cunning strategy. While Khor war-bands ravaged the Zsafathran countryside, most of the Zsafathrans retreated to defensible islands while a few small bands of warriors counterattacked the homes of the Khor invaders, defiling their sacred groves. The Khors, returning home with all they had stolen from Zsafathra, were appalled to discover they had to abandon their own villages until the groves could be purified again. The Zsafathrans try to deal with other threats in the same way, avoiding direct confrontation but seeking to make attacking them more trouble than it is worth.

THE LOKHARS

The Lokhars, who live in the highlands of Kachan, are among the more sensible and likable of the peoples of Tschai. If the Lokhars restricted themselves to the highlands of central Kachan, they would be no different from any other quarrelsome, mercenary hill tribe. But for centuries Lokhar men have worked in the Wanek factories in Ao Hidis. A substantial proportion of the humans on Tschai who know how to repair and build spaceships are Lokhars.

Lokhar men have charcoal-black skin and pure white hair, while Lokhar women have chalky white skin and black hair. The traits are partly natural and partly the result of cosmetics. All Lokhar children have a grayish complexion; girls have dark hair and boys have pale blond hair. At puberty, Lokhar men dye their skin to emphasize the difference, and women use cosmetics and skin dye to make themselves pale. Both men and women of the Lokhars are sturdy folk with a reputation as hard workers.

Lokhars are willing to undertake very hard or dangerous tasks. Usually, however, their motive for doing so is greed. Lokhar men don't spend 20 years working in Wanek factories to learn about space-boats or alien technology, but to go home wealthy men, able to buy land and wives. They fight a great deal, both serious fights and "friendly" brawls. Lokhars are brave in battle, even though their wars are mostly among themselves. Their manners are coarse, but not without good humor. Lokhars are hearty eaters and consider themselves abstemious when they do not drink before noon.

The Lokhar Uplands are a rugged but fertile region, supporting a population of several million Lokhars, along with smaller numbers of neighboring tribes. The two greatest Lokhar cities are Smargash and Blalag. Smargash is the larger of the two, with a population of 100,000. It is the center of trade for the entire uplands; in addition to Lokhars one can find Dugbo, Xar, Zhurveg, Seraf, and Niss. Wanek-men come to Smargash to recruit Lokhar workers. One occasionally sees Pnumekin on mysterious errands or Dirdirmen engaged in trade. Dirdir come to Lokhar country very rarely, usually seeking a fugitive. The Lokhars are not especially intimidated by Dirdir, perhaps because their proximity to the Wanek means the Dirdir cannot strike at them with any great force.

clumps of forest – more like a collection of villages than a city. At the center of Smargash is a large open common where the annual festival is held. During other times of the year it is used as a dancing-ground.

Blalag is the old Lokhar capital, and is still the seat of what passes for a government. At one time the Lokhars had a system akin to the Greek *agora*; every adult male citizen could vote on laws and make speeches to the other members. Once the Lokhars spread across the uplands and had a population in the millions, this arrangement became unworkable. To remedy the situation, the Lokhars tried to limit the number of eligible assemblymen, proclaiming that no man who had ever committed a felony or been found liable in a lawsuit would be able to sit in the assembly at Blalag, nor would any of his descendants.

Had the Lokhars been a less disputatious people, that would have been an elegant solution. Instead, it was followed by a wave of suits, duels, and vendettas as the members of the assembly strove to make their enemies ineligible. When the dust cleared, fewer than 100 Lokhars still met the qualifications. Since these were all quiet-tempered and law-abiding, they got nothing but contempt from their fellow Lokhars.

Today Blalag is a declining city of less than 50,000 people, three days' travel from Smargash across the moors of the central uplands. It is home to the 62 Virtuous Men, the rulers of the Lokhars. The Virtuous Men deliberately affect a modest and inoffensive manner, so the Lokhars often abuse their rulers shamelessly. The Virtuous Men all hire Niss bodyguards, and sometimes are ruled by them. In the assembly, the Virtuous Men enact new laws for the Lokhars and resolve disputes among communities in the uplands. Unfortunately, their edicts and proclamations are seldom obeyed. Clans do take their disputes to the assembly, but inevitably the loser resorts to open warfare as a "court of appeal." No warriors would ever go fighting abroad simply because the Virtuous Men declared war, but Lokhar clans often send out war-bands

others' looting expeditions.

The strife of the Lokhars and their neighbors goes on year-round, except during Balul Zac Ag, the "unnatural dream time" when Carina 4269 passes into the constellation of Tartusz. For 34 days all slaughter, slave-taking, pillage, and arson come to a halt in the Lokhar Uplands. Anyone who kills a man during Balul Zac Ag is accursed, an outlaw whose own family may not protect him, feed him, or shelter him. Such outlaws usually fall victim to some old enemy, but a few manage to get away to Cath or Kislován and shun the company of other Lokhars thereafter.

The Great Fair at Smargash takes place during Balul Zac Ag, and is the biggest event of the year in Lokhar country. Lokhars and all the surrounding peoples come to Smargash to trade, resolve feuds, spy on enemies, and enjoy the entertainments of the fair. The city's population doubles, filling all the inns. Niss herdsmen bring splendid leap-horses to sell, and their wives display leathercrafts and silver work. Zhurvegs sell woven rugs, Xars bring woven baskets and salted lake-fish, Scrafs sell essences and perfumes, and Dugbo tell fortunes, run gambling games, and sell charms.

The Lokhars themselves are not specialists – they farm where the soil is good, cut timber in the hills, and raise herds of pull-beasts and fat-humps. Lokhar craftsmen are very good, making tools and weapons both for their own use and for trade. Their mechanics are skillful, and can keep the old motor-carts that ply the upland roads running despite years of terrible abuse. Nearly every Lokhar village has its shade-tree mechanic with a yard full of gutted vehicles and scavenged parts. Lokhar technology is a mixture: most items they make themselves are TL4, but many Lokhars have worked in Wanek machine-shops and understand extremely advanced equipment.

Lokhars have no racial package as such, though all Lokhar take the racial quirk "Uses cosmetics to enhance sex-based pigmentation." Otherwise, they are normal humans.



PURPLES AND BLACKS

The city of Ao Hidis has grown up around a Wanek citadel, but the human town is a major port in its own right. "Ao Hidis" is properly the name of the human community, while the Wanek name is unpronounceable, but all humans except Wanekmen use the name to refer to the entire city.

Natives of Ao Hidis are divided into two hostile communities, the Blacks and the Purples. They are generally the same in build and features – round-headed people with a compact frame – but their complexions are distinctly different. Purples have a plum-colored cast to their skin, shading to mauve on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. Blacks are dark gray mottled with black.

Purples and Blacks do not mingle with each other, and speak only to their own kind. In effect, Ao Hidis is two cities, though the Purples and Blacks are not segregated and may even live in the same building. When outsiders visit Ao Hidis, they must decide whether to patronize Purple or Black businesses and stick to their choice, because anyone entering a Purple shop with goods from a Black establishment, or vice versa, will be resented, insulted, or even attacked. Privacy is important to the Blacks and Purples; a shop or booth with an open front is open to strangers, but a closed shop or tavern is for members of the appropriate group only, and strangers who go in may not come out.

The nature of the difference between Purples and Blacks is unknown. Some blame diet, others the effect of some disease. The same mother may have children of either type. A Purple child born to Black parents is abandoned, left on the doorstep of the nearest Purple household. It is claimed that unions of Blacks and Purples are sterile, but this may be a myth – inter-color affairs may explain why sometimes a child doesn't match its parents.

NEIGHBORING TRIBES

At the Great Fair in Smargash Adam Reith saw members of several other cultures of central Kachan, including:

Human Things

These mysterious people wear pottery faceplates to hide their features. They practice a fatalistic religion which maintains that humans are being punished for the sins of past lives. Human Things consider humans to be the lowest form of life, and practice rigorous purity and self-control in the hope of being reborn into some higher form. Most distressing, they abominate the idea of bearing children, and often mutilate themselves to make it impossible. Needless to say, the community is small, gaining new members only by conversion.

Zhurvegs

This tribe is famed for the high-quality woven rugs which they sell at bazaars all over Kachan. According to rumor, the rugs are made by legless children, kidnapped and crippled by the Zhurvegs themselves. This is a distorted version of the truth. The Zhurvegs do buy unwanted children (to offset a persistent problem with infertility caused by the vegetable essences used to make dyes), and many of them do serve long apprenticeships in the workshops of weavers and rugmakers. Grown Zhurvegs find the tale amusing, and do not contradict outsiders when they speak of it.

Serafs

These secretive and long-lived people are famed for their knowledge of perfumes and essences, which they have developed to a degree surpassed only by the Chasch. They wear white robes and helmets covered with spines, and speak little. The religious beliefs of the Serafs involve silent meditation, and require the faithful to face east at sunset and cry out "Ah-oo-cha!" Serafs claim to possess the secret of immortality, a complex elixir which they seldom give to outsiders. The formula is a carefully guarded secret. (GMs can decide for themselves whether the Seraf longevity drug is real or just a myth.)

Xars

These morose folk from the swamps around Lake Falas are short, bull-shouldered men with congested complexions. They go in for elaborate adornment, working their hair up into rigid varnished columns a foot or more tall, and dress in rich robes of gray and green. Xars are burly and strong, and have long noses. They have a fair amount of contact with the Wanek at Ao Khaha, and so have access to advanced technology, including sky-rafts. Perhaps dealing with the Wanekmen is what has made the Xars so morose; they assume they are being cheated in every transaction, and suspect a catch in any agreement.

DUGBO

The Dugbo have no cities of their own. They can be found all over Kachan and Rakh, and sometimes as far away as Cath or the Isles of Cloud. Shunned by the people they live among, the Dugbo eke out a precarious living as entertainers, fortune-tellers, and mountebanks . . . with occasional forays into theft, prostitution, and music.

Human Things consider humans to be the lowest form of life, and practice rigorous purity and self-control in the hope of being reborn into some higher form.

aveling together from town to town. More-settled Dugbo are rammed into slums in cities like Ao Hidis or Smargash and an little taverns or magic shops. Their original homeland is unknown, but they look more like the inhabitants of Kotan than the other folk of Kachan. Dugbo have light gray or hazel eyes, sometimes so pale as to look almost luminous. They have fair skin and reddish hair, and their features have a fey, eerie quality.

The customary dress of the Dugbo is ragged castoff garments from other tribes. The only exception is the costume of the Dugbo dancing girls: flounced skirts of black, old rose, and ochre, worn with scarves of thin silk. The dancing girls polish their skin with wax and scent themselves with hazerater. Dugbo men work their hair into knobs with scented rease.

Dugbo are said to worship demons, and do possess a great deal of knowledge about occult matters. They are also skilled at making and flying kites, including musical kites which play waa, wailing notes as they swoop and dive. Dugbo make and play a variety of musical instruments – drums, oboe-flutes, and slide-whistles, among others. The most prosperous Dugbo can achieve modest respectability as musicians or music instructors in Cath or the Isles of Cloud.

It is interesting to speculate that the Dugbo are either the product of a failed attempt to create servants for one of the alien races, or the remnants of the servitors of a race which has abandoned Tschai. The “demons” they worship may be garbled memories of their vanished alien masters, and their sorcery may be the remnants of advanced medicine and pharmacy. Their fey and alien-seeming appearance may be the result of breeding and manipulation like that which produced the birdfirms and Chaschmen, and this would also explain their lack of a homeland. It is also worth considering that the Dugbo may still be in contact with their alien patrons, acting as spies and agents on Tschai for some other starfaring civilization.

Dugbo

40 points

Attributes: IQ +2 [20].

Advantages: Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Outsiders) [-5].

Primary Skills: Animal Handling (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Merchant (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Gambling (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Scrounging (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Survival (Woodlands) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; and either Needlecraft (P/A) DX [2]-12 or Woodworking (P/A) DX [2]-12.

Dugbo Magic

The Dugbo are reputed to be sorcerers and miracle-workers. Their necromancers sell a variety of magical potions and paraphernalia: jugs of medicinal salve, “junction-stones” which are reputed to facilitate telepathy, love-sticks to guarantee fidelity, and curses which the buyer reads, then burns, to send blights against enemies. Other Dugbo magicians claim to be able to remove curses through elaborate rituals involving incense, hypnotic music, and acupuncture.

There are three ways to handle Dugbo magic in a campaign. It can be total fakery, nothing but sleight of hand, suggestion, and mumbo-jumbo. Fortune-tellers use vaguely worded predictions helped by shrewd observation of the subject’s reactions . . . and perhaps some secrets passed along by Dugbo tavern-keepers and dancing girls. Necromancers sell potions that are nothing but flavored water. And sorcerers are simply stage magicians. (Actually, no matter how “real” the

GM wants to make Dugbo sorcery, it will always include a generous helping of illusion and fraud.)

Perhaps Dugbo “magic” contains a solid core of folk medicine and herb lore unknown to the other peoples of Tschai. The Dugbo practitioner Adam Reith encountered showed a good knowledge of hypnosis and acupuncture, and over the years Dugbo herbalists may have isolated all kinds of useful drugs in the plant life of Tschai. This version of Dugbo magic fits well with the idea that the Dugbo are ‘orphaned’ clients of a vanished alien civilization. It also means that they are very wise in the ways of drugs and poisons, with access to TL8 or even TL9 wonder drugs and untraceable venoms.

Or the Dugbo may be psionic. Green Chasch are telepathic, so psionics exist in the universe of Tschai. Perhaps the Dugbo have developed some chancy and unpredictable psi powers. The elaborate rituals and drug use involved in Dugbo sorcery may be necessary to focus their abilities. It’s possible to combine the ideas of psychic Dugbo and Dugbo as masters of herbal medicine – maybe one of their mysterious potions is a psi-enhancer drug!

Psionic Dugbo could even be considerably more powerful than their marginal condition indicates. Their miserable lives may be a blind to fool the non-psionic majority, while the Dugbo manipulate rulers and even aliens with their minds. The powerful “psionic Illuminati” Dugbo might have ties to one of the alien civilizations of Tschai, or might be a “fifth force” of their own.



THANGS

The home of the Thangs is northwest Kislovan, where the Second Sea meets the Schanizade Ocean. However, Thangs can be found throughout Kislovan in a variety of mercantile professions . . . and less savory occupations. They are especially numerous in the towns at the edge of the Carabas.

Thangs cheat each other and strangers with equal enjoyment.

Thangs are usually lean, dark people, but since they freely marry outsiders they have a wide variety of sizes and coloration. The most universal trait among Thangs is unbridled greed. They control a major share of the commerce across the Schanizade Ocean. Visitors are always welcome in Thang country, as long as they leave with fewer sequins than they brought.

Thangs cheat each other and strangers with equal enjoyment. They consider tricking others to be proof of skill and cleverness, and greatly esteem those who get rich by bilking others. Over the years, the Thangs have developed many ways to lure customers into their clutches: they are good cooks, keep comfortable inns, and provide all manner of interesting entertainments.

The Thangs are among the leading slave-traders of Kislovan. In keeping with their love of trickery, they are very good at getting strangers to agree to labor contracts which amount to slavery. When that fails, they resort to more direct means, drugging or kidnapping their victims. Traders who regularly do business in Thang cities are immune to thuggery and slave-taking, but small parties of strangers are perfect targets.

Prosperous Thangs accumulate wives and concubines from all over Kislovan and the shores of the First and Second Seas. The distinction between wives and slaves is subtle; wives cannot be sold, but are definitely subordinate to their husbands. Single women, however, can own property and engage in business just like men. A great many women never marry, contenting themselves with a series of temporary liaisons. Even married Thang women are bold and assertive despite their husbands.

Thang

4 points

Attributes: DX +1 [10]; IQ +1 [10].

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Callous [-6]; Greed [-15]; Odious Personal Habit (Swindling) [-10].

Thang Fun

Thangs have developed intriguing games and sports to efficiently separate suckers from their sequins.

Stilt-matches are battles between men on 10-foot stilts swinging padded clubs. Each match begins with four men, and lasts until only one is standing. Spectators can bet on individual fighters, or take to the ring themselves in hope of winning the purse.

Brat-houses are a great way to vent frustrations, frequently patronized by parents and nursemaids. A brat-house features a child specially trained to be annoying and



whines, customers can pelt him with mud (10 bice a tall), dung (6 packets a sequin), or prickly-burrs (5 ser sequin). It costs double to pelt the adult managing the brat-house instead of the child.

Eel-races are a competition peculiar to the Thangs. A tank of different-colored eels is connected to a basin by a long chute. Spectators bet with the eel-master on which eel will emerge from the chute first. Adam Reith discovered that one eel-race was fixed, and it is likely all of them are.

Orange tents indicate shows by dancing girls, wearing loose garments of gauze or nothing at all. The Thangs are not musical, so usually the accompaniment is played by musicians from Hedaijha or by Jugbo from Kaechan. Orange is generally the symbol of sexual entertainment – any woman wearing orange in Thang country is likely to get unwanted attention.

The entertainment district of Urmank offers no-holds-barred fighting, each Ivensday, open to anyone who cares to take on the champion, Otwile. Fighters wear no protection, carry no weapons, and observe no rules. Just staying in the ring with Otwile is an accomplishment: challengers win 100 sequins or lasting 5 minutes, with a bonus of 20 sequins for each broken bone. Actually *winning* a fight against Otwile is worth 2,000 sequins, but so far this has not happened.

JRMANK

The capital city of the Thangs is Urmank, a major port and trade center. It has a population of about 100,000 people, a mix of Thangs, Grays, and others. Jrmank looks disorderly, with high, narrow houses of slack timber and brown tile lining twisting streets. The harbor usually has half a dozen ships at anchor or tied up to a stone quay. Behind the waterfront is a great round plaza surrounded by a low brick wall. A thousand years ago it was a rotunda, built by the tyrant Przelius. Today only the floor remains, housing the main market of Jrmank. The market is decorated with orange and green banners and has stalls selling anything one might want, all unbled together. Beyond the bazaar is an area devoted to

Any woman wearing orange in Thang country is likely to get unwanted attention.

OTWILE

Otwile is the champion brawler of the arena in Urmank. To date no man has beaten him in the Ivensday bouts (Adam Reith did overcome Otwile, but it was a private quarrel, not an arena fight). He is a huge man with a bald head, a much-broken nose, and rock-hard muscles. Otwile is a shrewd fighter, who can size up his opponents and take advantage of their weaknesses, but if he loses his temper he's likely to make mistakes. His preferred fighting style is to make an all-out attack right away, taking a few hits himself in order to land some crippling blows on his opponent and using his high skill to target vital spots.

Otwile

212 points

ST 16 [70]; **DX** 14 [45]; **IQ** 9 [-10]; **HT** 14 [45]

Speed 7.00; Move 7.

Dodge 8; Parry 13.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Reputation +2 (Unbeatable fighter) [10]; Toughness (DR 2) [25].

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10]; Bully [-10]; Obnoxious Drunk [-1]; Unattractive [-5].

Skills: Body Language-12 [10]; Brawling-18 [16]; Intimidation-11 [0]; Wrestling-14 [2].

Languages: Tschaian (native)-9 [0].

entertainment, then the Thang mausoleums, and finally the Old Town, a district of mud huts and crude shacks where Grays and the poorest Thangs live.

Urmank is ruled by a tyrant, as it has been for centuries. The temperament of the Thangs makes it pointless to enact laws, so the tyrant rules by decree, backed up by force. Becoming tyrant requires political maneuvering, assassination, bribery, and skullduggery on a Machiavellian scale.

SEQUIN-HUNTERS OF THE CARABAS

Money on Tschai comes in the form of sequins, only found in a region of northern Kislovan called the Carabas. There, uranium salts in the soil form nodes of chrysopine, which crystallizes into sequins. Each node contains 282 sequins of various colors, depending on the age of the node. A newly formed node contains mostly low-value clear and white sequins, but if a node is undisturbed, the sequins in it change color and become more valuable.

Unfortunately, getting rich is not a matter of going out and digging up nodes. The Dirdir have claimed the Carabas as a hunting preserve. So while men hunt sequins, the Dirdir hunt them!

THE LUCKY MARINER INN

The Lucky Mariner Inn is not the finest establishment in Urmank, but it is satisfactory and reasonably priced by Thang standards. Adam Reith found its decor intriguing, especially the iridescent sea-worms swimming in glass jars set in alcoves along the walls. The actual room rate is fairly low, but the management makes a hefty profit by a series of fees and surcharges. The inn offers a great many tempting services to guests, but there are hidden costs. Customers may use the depilatorium free of charge, but rental of razors or tweezers costs money and water for washing off afterwards is very expensive. Guests who have eaten too much may get strong purgatives for a mere 10 bicc, but there is a steep charge for use of the restroom when the medicines start to take effect!

Besides providing the Dirdir with a grand source of entertainment, the dangers of the Carabas also serve as a kind of bloodstained monetary policy for Tschai's economy. If money is tight, more men will risk death to hunt sequins, and the supply increases. If the supply of sequins is too great, men will find better things to do than play live bait for sadistic Dirdir. This also means the Dirdir can regulate Tschai's economy by controlling the number of hunting-parties in the Carabas. If they wish to stimulate growth, then they need only issue fewer hunting permits to Dirdir. To prevent inflation, more Dirdir hunters can keep the supply of sequins low.

Maust

Most sequin-hunters enter the Carabas through the town of Maust. Maust stands between Khorai and the Carabas, about 50 miles south of the First Sea. (A few hunters enter the Carabas from Zimle, at the eastern end of the preserve.)

Maust is a jumble of tall, narrow buildings of dark timber and blackened tile, with high gables and crooked rooflines. It has a permanent population of about 1,000 people, along with another 500 sequin-hunters on their way into or out of the Carabas. The people of Maust are a mix of all types, though Thangs are the most numerous. Sequin-hunting is the sole basis of the town's economy; most goods and supplies are brought in through Khorai.

Visitors to Maust are confronted by a swarm of boys selling items and yelling advertisements. There are many ways to spend sequins in Maust, and the inhabitants encourage travelers to live it up. The shops in Maust sell all kinds of useful gear: charts, handbooks, sequin-grading kits, camouflage netting and spoor eliminators, tongs and forks, monoculars, talismans, and prayer powders. Mountebanks sell bogus "node locators" and noxious chemicals said to repel Dirdir. Everything is marked up by at least 50 percent.

Hunters can also find many amusements in Maust. Men about to enter the Carabas often want one last fling; those who make it out with sequins are usually in the mood to celebrate. Maust can accommodate all, with taverns, bordellos, gambling parlors, and a couple of superb restaurants. Adventurous men who expect to die shortly are unlikely to be sedate – brawls, duels, and murder are nightly occurrences.

Some people in Maust get their sequins more directly, stealing them from successful hunters. At least one hotel is run by a band of Thangs who have installed secret passages into all the rooms and rob guests as they sleep. Other crooks lie in wait on the road back to the coast to intercept returning travelers.

The Carabas

At the edge of the Carabas is a great gateway called the Portal of Gleams, the traditional entry for sequin-hunters. Beyond the gate is a barren plain called the Foreland, which extends about 10 miles to the Hills of Recall. Midway between the Portal of Gleams and the Hills of Recall is a rock outcrop called the Boulder Patch which provides good cover and a place to rest.

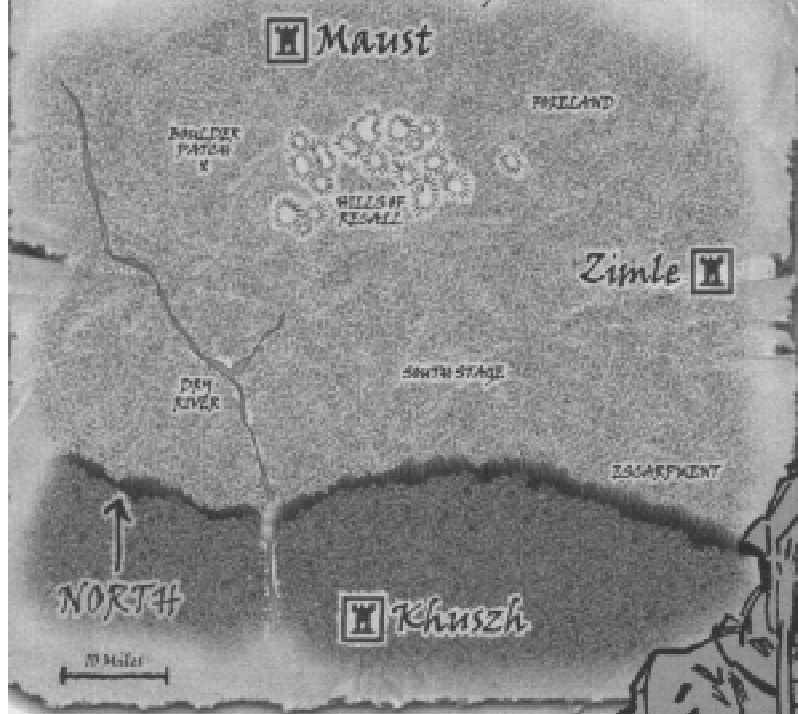
Beyond the Hills of Recall is the heart of the Carabas, a savannah called the South Stage, which extends about 30 miles, then drops down to the forested lowlands of southern Kislovan. Khuszh, the Dirdir hunting-camp, is 10 miles beyond the South Stage. The edge of the Carabas is not marked; only the Dirdir and the long-time inhabitants of Maust know the exact borders.

Sequins are found throughout the Carabas, but the richest deposits are in the Hills of Recall and the South Stage. The few deposits in the Foreland are mostly clears and milks, since that portion of the Carabas gets searched pretty thoroughly. Finding a node is a matter of luck, since nobody has ever been able to

RULES OF THE HUNT

The Carabas is a no man's land, subject to no law or authority. But certain informal rules have arisen over the centuries, respected by the sequin-hunters and Dirdir alike. First, aircraft are not allowed. The Dirdir prefer to hunt on foot, and if humans could flit in and out it would spoil the fun. So any air-car entering the Carabas is likely to be fired upon by missiles and armed flyers. Next, no energy weapons. A power-gun makes a man the equal of a Dirdir, so any human caught carrying advanced weapons gets an agonizing death by nerve-fire torture. Last is the only concession the Dirdir make to humans: the edge of the zone is sanctuary. A human who gets out of the Carabas is safe – at least from the Dirdir. A Dirdir who pursues a victim beyond the Carabas may face an indignant mob of humans. Worse, the Dirdir will lose status in Dirdir society for having violated the rules of the hunt.

The CARABAS of TSCHAI



make a thorough study to determine where they occur. Individuals actively searching for nodes roll vs. IQ twice a day; a successful roll means a node has been found. With a cursory search, only one roll per day is allowed. Those who are fleeing Dirdir hunting parties or otherwise distracted can't search at all (although individuals with the Serendipity advantage may get a roll while hiding out in the Carabas).

At any given time there are about 20 Dirdir hunting parties in the zone, each with 2 to 4 members. Dirdir men Immaculates sometimes hunt in the Carabas as well. The hunts last 3 to 6 days, and normally take about one man per day. The Dirdir avoid killing humans right away; instead they subdue the prey, then drive him with nerve-fire implants until sunset, when the unfortunate human becomes dinner. Roughly half the sequin-hunters fall victim to Dirdir; there is a 25% chance per day of encountering a hunting party. Sequin-hunters use a variety of methods to avoid the Dirdir. Fringe-runners lurk along the edges of the zone, ready to dash for safety at the first sign of pursuit. Others rely on elaborate camouflage, wearing puff boots so as not to leave footprints. Many sequin-hunters work only at night, hiding during the day or taking drugs to remain vigilant. The Dirdir find all human tricks entertaining, adding spice to the chase.

No less dangerous are the other sequin-hunters. The Carabas is full of greedy, determined men willing to risk death for sequins; it's no surprise that they're also willing to kill for them. About 10% of the fatalities in the Carabas

are at human hands instead of Dirdir. Sequin hijackers lurk near the Portal of Gleams, hoping to catch someone with a good haul. (Adam Reith pioneered a variant on this technique, attacking Dirdir parties to recover the sequins they took from their prey. Others may learn of his success and copy it. The Dirdir are likely to respond with bigger hunting parties or by carrying power-guns.)

The Carabas is wild and dangerous country. A man might avoid Dirdir and humans, only to break a leg in the hills, drown in a water-hole, or fall victim to wild beasts. The most dangerous animals in the Carabas are the smur (p. 9), reptilian predators which strike swiftly from hiding and drag men to their tree-top nests for food. Curiously, the Carabas seems free of night-hounds.



AILA WOUDIVER

Aila Woudiver, a humble dealer in sand and gravel in Sivishe, is easily the worst creature, human or alien, encountered by Adam Reith on Tschai. That's quite a distinction, but Woudiver certainly merits it.

His tastes are so depraved and expensive that they consume virtually all the profits from his criminal enterprises.

Woudiver's gravel business is merely a cover for a variety of illicit businesses. Cargo pilferage and smuggling are his specialties, but he also dabbles in the slave trade, prostitution, fencing stolen goods, racketeering among the city's poor laborers, and anything else which offers a chance of profit. Woudiver's main advantages are a widespread network of informants, tough and brutal henchmen, and a complete lack of ethics or moral restraints. When Woudiver's spies bring him word of something he can profit from, he and his goons simply muscle in. Adam Reith and his companions had to deal with Woudiver when they needed some stolen spaceship parts, because he would have learned about the operation anyway, and either taken over or informed on Reith to the Dirdir.

Woudiver's repulsiveness starts with his physical appearance. He is a grossly fat man. His skin is an unpleasant mustard-yellow, combining the least attractive shades of the Marshmen complexion and the coloring of the Dirdirman. (Woudiver's employees sometimes call him "Big Yellow" when he's out of earshot.) He claims his father was a Violet Immaculate Dirdirman, and says his mother was a "noblewoman of the north." Reith's comrade Anacho, a Dirdirman himself, guessed that Woudiver's father was probably a low-caste Dirdirman or hybrid, while his coloring suggests a Marshwoman mother.

Even if he were a pure-blooded Immaculate, Woudiver would still be an appalling person. His tastes are so depraved and expensive that they consume virtually all the profits from his criminal enterprises. An exhaustive catalog of Woudiver's vices would go on for pages, and would include sadism, pedophilia, and cannibalism. His pretensions to a Dirdirman heritage cause Woudiver to maintain a country estate where he hunts men as the Dirdir do (though he cheats and uses a rifle), and afterward to enjoy obscene banquets featuring his human prey as the main course.

Woudiver dresses extravagantly and affects a refined mode of speech. When things are going his way he is colossally arrogant and bullying, but when things turn against him he whines and complains endlessly. He lies as easily as

breathing, and his promises and guarantees are worthless. Those encountering Woudiver should learn to hate him quickly.

At all times Woudiver is accompanied by his bodyguard Artilo and his servant Hisziu. Both men are loyal to Woudiver out of greed and fear, and have done so much evil in their lives that no appeal to conscience or mercy will work on them. They are both sadistic bullies, but Artilo is a bloodthirsty killer while Hisziu is a coward and a sneak. When there is serious trouble to deal with, Woudiver can call in a dozen other goons, and his connections in Sivishe's underworld give him access to all kinds of criminal specialists. On his home turf, with time to prepare and make arrangements, Woudiver is an extremely formidable enemy. Outside of Sivishe he is not nearly as dangerous. He is usually armed with a Dirdir plasma-gun.

Aila Woudiver

95 points

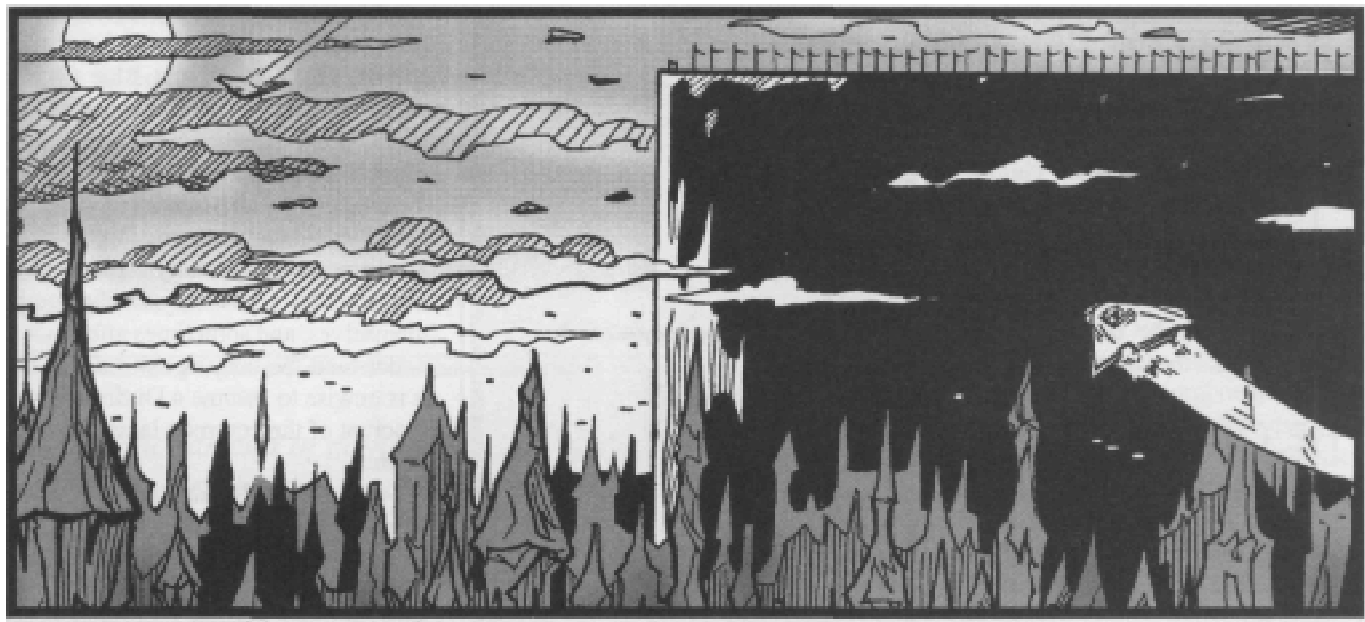
ST 11 [10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Speed 5.00; Move 2.

Dodge 2.

Advantages: Ally Group (Artilo and Hisziu, 15 or less) [30]; Ally Group (Sivishe underworld, 12 or less) [60]; Filthy Rich [50]; Reputation +2 (As a powerful crime boss; among the underworld of Sivishe) [5]; Status 1 [0]; Strong Will +2 [8].





Disadvantages: Bully [-10]; Fat [-20]; Gluttony [-5]; Greed [-15]; Lecherousness [-15]; Odious Personal Habit (Grossly depraved behavior, up to and including cannibalism) [-15]; Reputation -4 (As ill-mannered, evil, offensive scum; to everyone) [-20]; Sadism [-15]; Unattractive [-5].

Quirks: Claims to be a Dirdirman; Dresses extravagantly; Suspicious; Unimaginative; Whines when he doesn't get his way. [-5]

Skills: Administration-14 [6]; Area Knowledge (Sivishe)-14 [4]; Beam Weapons/TL12 (Blaster)-11 [1/2]; Cooking-14 [4]; Driving/TL12 (Dirdir air-car)-10 [2]; Holdout-12 [2]; Intimidation-14 [6]; Merchant-14 [6]; Savoir-Faire-14 [0]; Streetwise-14 [6]; Tracking-10 [1/2].

Languages: Tschai (native)-12 [0].

SIVISHE

The city of Sivishe is the home of the largest Dirdir paceport and spaceship yards. It sits on an island, surrounded by salt flats. A causeway connects Sivishe with the Dirdir city of Hei.

Sivishe is a polluted town of factories, warehouses, and emements. The spaceyards are the reason for the city's existence, but they have spun off a number of workshops for metal fabrication, chemical extraction, and the manufacture of electronic components. Sivishe is a center for trade; raw materials and exotic plant and animal products from all over Tschai are unloaded at the docks for transport off-world. In return, the spaceships bring high-tech devices and homeworld luxuries for the Dirdir.

The population of Sivishe is about 1 million, a mix of human types from all over Kislovian. There are Thangs, Khernan, Sad Islanders, and many Dirdirman hybrids. Interbreeding has created a recognizable Sivishe type, overweight with yellowish skin ranging from brown to white.

The worst parts of Sivishe are southeast, where the warehouses and brickyards stand on the salt flats. Laborers and

jobless immigrants live in tenements or crude shacks of scrap lumber. Conditions improve toward the west, where grand mansions stand with a view over Sivishe toward Hei.

Sivishe's administrator is Clodo Erlius. He has absolute power in Sivishe, but if he doesn't satisfy the Dirdir, he will be hunted to death inside the Glass Box. Thus, Erlius bases all his decisions on what will please the Dirdir, rather than what is best for Sivishe. There are no street beggars because the Dirdir don't like being importuned. But since the Dirdir don't care about human poverty, Erlius does nothing about the slums. The city police are ruthless, concerned with maintaining order rather than promoting justice. When a crime occurs, *somebody* is punished – usually the first person the police find at the scene. All offenses carry a fine, which a criminal can sometimes pay directly to the police. Offenders who can't afford the fine are either sold into slavery (for minor crimes) or executed (for crimes of violence). An individual of sufficient wealth can get away with anything as long as he can pay the fines. The only real crime is bothering the Dirdir, which they punish themselves by hauling the culprits to the Glass Box.

Life in Sivishe is harsh, but people do find time for amusement. The most popular entertainment is the daily races. A dozen men compete, carrying glass globes on long poles. Whoever gets his globe intact to the finish line wins the race. There are no fouls, so the races are brutal affairs in which combat skills are as important as speed. The most successful racers tend to be very fast or very tough. Fans gamble huge sums on the races, and bookmakers sometimes try to fix the results by intimidation or poisoning.

Religions in Sivishe are many and varied. There are dozens of temples, emphasizing self-abasement and practical results. Worshippers generally pray for some way to escape the misery of life in Sivishe. Certain cults have complicated doctrines with esoteric metaphysical jargon, appealing to those with a smattering of education. Others have a refreshing simplicity: the believers make the proper signs, give a cash donation, and get a blessing. No fuss, no waiting.

LANGUAGES

On Tschai there are only six different languages: Pnumic, Old Chasch, Blue Chasch, Dirdir, Wanek chimes, and the common human tongue. Human servants of the alien masters speak the common tongue, which is extremely convenient for travelers. Local habits may be unfamiliar, but everyone speaks the same language.

THE COMMON TONGUE

All the humans of Tschai speak the same language (Tschaian) with remarkable uniformity. Adam Reith learned it from steppe nomads and had no difficulty communicating with Yao, Lokhars, Pnumekin, or Khors. The first groups of humans brought from Earth were small, and presumably all spoke the same language. Since their arrival, there has been no opportunity for isolated groups to develop their own language.

There are some "secret languages" spoken on Tschai, usually by members of cults or secret societies. These languages are either artificial (usually following the same grammar as the common tongue), or else are derived from alien languages. In no case are they "native tongues" for anyone on Tschai.

Even among the Dirdirmen, Chaschmen, and other human servants of the alien masters, the common tongue is what humans speak among themselves.

The language of Tschai is unlike any Earthly tongue. It is syntactically regular, made difficult by a large number of tenses, moods, and aspects. For humans from Earth, the language of Tschai is a Mental/Hard skill to learn, and the reverse would be true for a person of Tschai studying any of Earth's languages.

The single human tongue on Tschai does settle one ancient question – communication is not the key to universal peace. People of Tschai can communicate with each other easily, yet the planet has a history every bit as bloody as Earth's.

ALIEN LANGUAGES

A fraction of humans speak the languages of the alien masters. Knowing an alien language can be highly useful. Not only can one act as an interpreter, but two speakers can use an alien tongue as a method of secret communication.

SOME TSCHAI WORDS

<i>Tschai</i>	<i>English</i>
Issir	Sword
Tatap	Father
Vam	Mother

Numbers

Aine	1
Sei	2
Dros	3
Enser	4
Nif	5
Hisz	6
Yaga	7
Managa	8
Nuwai	9
Tix	10

Days of the Week

Aineday
Illday
Drosday
Azday
Nifday
Ivensday
Yagaday
Bevolsday
Nuwaiday
Brazday

The aliens have very different attitudes about letting humans learn their speech. Old Chasch and Blue Chasch teach Chaschmen their language as part of the hoax that humans are reborn as Chasch. Dirdir permit Dirdirmen to use their language, and fluency in Dirdir is a badge of status among higher-caste Dirdirmen. Especially pretentious Immaculates speak only Dirdir among themselves, and sometimes affect not to understand the language of "sub-men." It is unwise to assume a Dirdirman is as ignorant of the common language as he seems.

Wanek and Pnume have almost no human speakers. The Wanek chimes are incredibly hard to learn, and the Wanekmen jealously guard communication between their masters and other races. Any human other than a Wanekman who knows more than a few symbols may well be threatened or even assassinated by Wanekmen. The Pnume keep their spoken language secret, even from the Pnumekin, although Pnumekin do learn the written form.

The attitudes of the aliens toward Tschaian are similarly variable. All Pnume learn human speech – and as many other tongues as they can – the better to eavesdrop on others. Many Dirdir and Chasch know the human language, though Chasch often pretend not to. Wanek never learn other languages at all.

The language of the Dirdir is a Hard skill for humans, and the human language is likewise Hard for Dirdir. Blue Chasch, Old Chasch, and Wanek are Very Hard skills. Humans cannot put more than four character points into either Chasch language, and only Wanekmen get to learn Wanek. The Wanek can learn the writing of other species as Very Hard skills, but they can't learn other spoken tongues at all. Pnumic would be a Hard skill if other races could learn it, but the Pnume do their best to make that impossible.

RELIGIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS

Religions of Tschai are numerous and diverse, a patchwork of local tribal faiths and cults combined with a broad streak of superstition. It is possible that the alien rulers of Tschai discourage the growth of religious movements which might unite humans and make them hard to manage.

MOST TSCHAI RELIGIONS INCLUDE WILD AND HOSTILE demons, to be placated or kept away by the rituals of the faith. Perhaps the humans of Tschai find this kind of belief satisfying because they have lived for thousands of years at the mercy of powerful nonhuman beings. Many gods of Tschai are monstrous or inhuman in appearance.

The three religions of Tschai about which Adam Reith was able to learn the most are the worship of the moons, the Female Mystery Cult, and the quasi-religious Society of Yearning Refluxives.

At the far end of camp Reith found an enormous machine mounted on a truck: a giant catapult with a thrust-arm fifty feet long. A siege engine? On one side was painted a pink disc, on the other a blue disc: reference, so Reith assumed, to the moons Az and Braz.

— City of the Chasch

AZ AND BRAZ

One of the widespread religions on Tschai is the worship of the moons, Az and Braz. It is practiced by the nomads of Kotan and has many adherents among sailors, who have carried it to all parts of the world.

Moon worshippers believe that the moons are divine beings as well as celestial bodies. According to the doctrines of the faith, humans originally lived on the moons. The pink moon Az is a realm of perpetual bliss and spiritual perfection. The blue moon Braz is the abode of evil, a place of eternal torment for the damned and the home of demons. Nights when Braz alone is visible are considered ill-omened, but worst of all are the times when Braz eclipses Az, all the evil spirits can roam freely, and humans must use protective rituals and symbols to keep evil at bay.

Long ago, according to the priests, the two moons collided, and thousands of human souls fell to Tschai. When a moon-worshipper dies, the tribe's judges decide if his soul should return to Az or to Braz, based on a number of factors — the deceased's life and manner of death, his faith and support of the judges during life, and how well-regarded he was by members of the tribe. Pious people always go to Az, as do popular individuals with powerful friends. Those who did evil, openly scoffed at the judges, or died in a disgraceful manner go to Braz.

Once a person's fate is decided, the body is cooked to a fine powder, which is mixed with animal blood and molded into a cake. The cake is lashed to the head of a huge catapult

missile, which is launched into the sky when the right moon is overhead. The judges conceal a firework shell inside the cake of ashes, so when the missile reaches its greatest height, the watchers below see a burst of colored fire, assuring that the soul has reached its proper reward.

THE FEMALE MYSTERY CULT

The Female Mystery Cult is an ancient and bloodthirsty religion practiced in secret all over Tschai. Its center is the Seminary of the Female Mystery, near Fasm Junction in western Kotan. Only women may be devotees of the cult.

The doctrines of the cult are a weird combination of puritanical asceticism and bloody fertility rituals. The cult's fundamental belief is that the creative power in the universe is female. The adherents of the cult have gradually derived a dualism: female is good, male is evil, leading inevitably to the idea that sexual relations between men and women are evil. The current Female Mystery Cult places a premium on virginity, and believes that youth, beauty, and most forms of pleasure are tainted by association with men.

Members of the cult practice what they preach. Many live in remote seminaries, where they rigorously avoid all forms of pleasure. They shave their heads and mutilate themselves to destroy any trace of sexual attractiveness, and use similarly gruesome means to ensure their continued chastity. They dress simply, in black robes and red shoes.

It is surprising that the cult manages to attract any members at all. But many women spend their lives as little better than slaves; some see in the Female Mystery a vindication of all they have endured. The cult attracts women with good reason to hate men, and who have little pleasure in their lives to miss. There are about 4,000 cultists in all, living in half a dozen remote seminaries, secret urban chapter-houses, or as tribal witch-women on the steppes. Adam Reith's visit to the main cult center resulted in a temporary drop in membership, but the survivors are even more fanatical afterward.

The Seminary of the Female Mystery

The center of the Female Mystery Cult is a remote mountain stronghold near Fasm Junction in the Dead Steppe of Kotan. The Seminary of the Female Mystery occupies an irregular flat valley a quarter-mile across, surrounded by crags and cliffs. An old ravine entering from one side is filled by a four-story building of massive stone blocks; around the edges of the valley are sheds of timber and wattle. One side of the grounds is occupied by a raised stone platform, surrounded on three sides by a two-story building to form a stage. This is the scene of the cult's dreadful Rites of Clarification.

The seminary is home to about 200 cultists, who support themselves by tending small farm plots in the nearby mountain valleys. They trade in some of the nearby communities, selling curses, amulets to ward off love, and hand-knitted woolens. They also rob and murder passing travelers. The simple lives of the cultists allow them to amass a substantial treasury, which they spend every three years on the costly Rite of Clarification.

The Rite of Clarification

Once every three years the cult conducts the great and dreadful Rite of Clarification. This sadistic extravaganza demonstrates all the cult's doctrines in graphic terms. For more than a year before the Rite, the priestesses are busy making preparations. They purchase dozens of male slaves and send out a team of tough, determined women to find the most beautiful female virgin in the world. The searchers spend months looking for a candidate, often venturing overseas in their quest.

Gala events were in progress. Flames from dozens of flambeaux cast red, vermilion and orange light upon two hundred women who moved back and forth, half-dancing, half-lurching, in a state of entranced frenzy.
— *City of the Chasch*

During the Rite of Clarification the priestesses wear only black pantaloons and boots. The male slaves are tortured and degraded in various ways. Music comes from a band of organ consisting of male singers, who are scorched by jets of flame when the organist wishes them to sing. Emaciated clown men with bleached skin and painted eyebrows caper grotesquely and defile themselves before the approving priestesses. Androgynous mimes act out scenes of men oppressing women, and women rebelling and punishing their oppressors. Each "act" on the stage ends grimly, as burly priestesses seize the men and suffocate them with a transparent membrane over the face. Drugged smoke keeps the men quiescent.

The high point of the Rite is especially horrid. The chosen female virgin is locked in a cage of glass rods; then a huge idiot man, maddened by drugs and various torments, is turned loose on the stage. As the brute struggles to open the cage, the priestesses greet the victim's shrieks with cheers. When the idiot finally gets in to ravish and kill the girl, the audience goes into a frenzy, slaughtering all the remaining captives with their bare hands. The cultists believe they are literally possessed by a divine power at this point; the brief period of ecstatic release makes up for years of repressed desires.

THE YEARNING REFLUXIVES

The Society of Yearning Refluxives (also known as the Redeemers) is a quasi-religious organization centered in Cath. Originally the Society was a rational group of scientists interested in contacting the supposed home planet of humanity. When their efforts to signal Earth brought a devastating attack in which thousands were killed, the Society went underground and declined into a pseudoscientific cult.

About 200 Tschai years ago, a coterie of Dirdirmen were expelled from the academies at Eliasir and Anismna for the crime of "promulgating fantasy" – namely, that humans are not native to Tschai, nor are they descended from half of the Primordial Egg. Since these men knew the true origin of humans and even which star to beam their signals at, it seems likely they came across some records of the Dirdir expeditions to Earth.

The exiles settled in Cath, which was an advanced country without much Dirdir influence. The ex-Dirdirmen may have hoped the proximity of the Wanek would keep the Dirdir from taking any action against them. They established a philosophical organization, the Society of Yearning Refluxives, dedicated to establishing contact with the homeworld of humanity and perhaps someday returning there. For a few decades the Redeemers attracted many of Cath's best minds and was very fashionable among the elite Yao. Great lords donated large sums to support the Refluxives' projects, and there was great pride and optimism as the antennas were completed and switched on, sending a powerful radio signal at an invisible star which the Refluxives maintained was the original home of the human species.

The result was a rain of missiles which destroyed the two most important cities of the Yao. Most Yao blamed the Dirdir, though it was in fact the Wanekmen who launched the attack. However, the people of Cath reserved their greatest hatred for the Society of Yearning Refluxives.

The Society went underground, adopting a cell system and meeting in secret. Those who had supported it publicly renounced the connection, and the few who dared remain loyal were hounded out of public life. It became irredeemably unfashionable for anyone in Cath to adhere to the doctrines of the "cult," as it became known.

Over the past century and a half, attitudes have softened a little. The "cult" is no longer actively persecuted. Members discreetly advertise their meetings, and sometimes even dare to recruit new followers. They are still terribly unfashionable, but nowadays the "cult" is considered more ridiculous than dangerous.

Nor are the people of Cath far wrong – the Society of Yearning Refluxives *has* become thoroughly ridiculous. Over decades of persecution and public scorn, all but the most fanatical members fell away, and the remaining core became highly mystical in their beliefs. Today the Yearning Refluxives believe that Home (their name for Earth) is a world of bounty, with golden mountains crowned with opals and forests of dreams. Instead of trying to signal by radio, the Yearning Refluxives have turned to telepathy, trying to broadcast thought-signals to the Human Magi who inhabit the homeworld. (The fact that telepathy is unknown among humans on Tschai doesn't seem to matter.) They believe that once the Human Magi become aware of the plight of their lost brothers on Tschai, they will flit across the light-years in an instant by means of their mental powers. All who have kept the faith and believe in the Society's doctrines will be taken off to Home, leaving the unbelievers to suffer on Tschai.



The members of the Society are not a very impressive bunch. They are mostly crackpots, socially inept, gullible, and not very bright. Most are members of the lower middle class who have been unable to keep up with the constant struggle for status in Yao society. A few are from decayed noble families. The Yearning Refluxives attract most of their new converts from foreigners, since they don't share the Yao disdain for the Society.

If spaceships from Earth do ever land on Tschai, the Yearning Refluxives are likely to be disappointed. The diplomats, explorers, and scientists of the Federal Space Service are hardly the all-powerful Human Magi of the Society's doctrines. The Yearning Refluxives might denounce them. A few fanatical Refluxives might even try to assassinate visitors from Earth. Cunning aliens like the Chasch might begin actively promoting the Yearning Refluxives in order to discredit the whole notion of contact with men from Earth.

OTHER RELIGIONS OF TSCHAI

In the sophisticated culture of the Isles of Cloud, religions come and go with great frequency, driven more by fashion than by faith. One recent sect there was the Pansognatic Gnosis, which was fairly popular because it only required a worshipper to recite the litany once a day. By contrast, Tutelanics involved lots of memorizing and never attracted much of a following. The Convocation of Souls got a mixed response; respectable middle-class families thought the priests were far too familiar, but many of the older adherents enjoyed the attention.

In Murgan, they follow a businesslike religion, paying sizable tithes to the priests, who take all responsibility for appeasing the god Bisme. Like many religions of Tschai, the people of Murgan are more concerned with averting divine attention rather than communicating with the gods.

The creation myth of the Zsafathrans maintains that humans are the offspring of the union of the sacred Xyxyll bird and the sea-demon Rhadamth. As with most things, the Zsafathrans don't take their myths very seriously. Still, it is unwise to kill a Xyxyll bird in Zsafathra.

Demons

The people of Tschai believe in all kinds of demons and malevolent spirits. It is probably safe to say that demons get more attention than any gods do, though in some cases it is hard to tell the difference. Demons are routinely invoked in curses, and there are many rituals to repel or propitiate them. Some demons are garbled remnants of gods from forgotten religions; others may be based on real alien races which have visited Tschai in the past.

Demons and devils invoked by humans of Tschai include the demon Harasthy, the Prume's First Devil (and presumably other Prume devils), Bevol, and nine-headed Sagorio. Depending on the believer, demons either live on the blue moon Braz, beneath the sea, or invisibly among men. Under the ground is not a common place for demons or departed souls in Tschai myths, because the subsurface world is of course the domain of the Prume.

PHILOSOPHY OF A CARAVAN-MASTER

“‘Evil’?” Baojian laughed sadly. “On Tschai the word has no meaning. Events exist – or they do not exist. If a person adheres to some other system he himself will swiftly cease to exist – or else becomes mad as a Phung.”

– City of the Chasch

DAILY LIFE

The customs of the people of Tschai are a strange mix of the familiar and the bizarre. Since they must satisfy basic human needs, many aspects of their lives would be perfectly familiar to anyone from Earth. On the other hand, the unusual environment and the presence of several powerful alien races has created some very strange habits indeed.

While there is great variation among Tschai's cultures, they can be generally grouped into primitive TL2 societies, more widespread TL4 cultures, and a handful of advanced TL6 groups. The TL2 societies are mostly small tribes in remote regions, like the jungle dwellers along the Jinga river in Charchan or the Marshmen of Kotan. They often lack metal tools and draft animals, but are classed as TL2 because they do understand the use of such things even if they are not available. The most common technology on Tschai is TL4. In all urban societies the technology of daily life on Tschai resembles that of Earth in the 18th century. Even among the Chaschmen, amenities like running water or electric light are not available. Finally, a few cultures are TL6, like Cath or places under Dirdir influence like Siviſhe. They manufacture motor vehicles and have some of the basic modern comforts, but other conveniences are uncommon. The aliens have whatever advanced devices they want, but humans can't afford them.

ENTERTAINMENT

Life on Tschai may be difficult, but that doesn't mean people don't have fun. Most entertainment is the work of itinerant performers or is homemade.

Music and Dance

The humans of Tschai seem to be very musical people. Nearly every culture has its own styles of music and characteristic instruments. Among the Yao, gongs and drums are used to produce a sound which Terrans might find similar to an Indonesian gamelan ensemble. The Lokhars add concertinas to the percussion. Elsewhere Adam Reith saw flutes, lutes, and long glass tubes blown like bottles.

In Siviſhe, a synthesis of human and alien musical styles has produced a subtle and complex form. The instruments

used there are strange things: bronze tubes studded with velum-wrapped cones, which the musician rubs to produce low brassy tones; vertical wooden tubes with strings set across slots to produce twanging resonant sounds; wooden slide-horns vaguely resembling trombones; and batteries of 42 drums ranging from pillbox-sized to vast kettledrums. Musicians of Siviſhe use these instruments to play simple melodies over and over again. At each repetition they introduce subtle variations, so that over time the entire piece changes and evolves.

Musical performances are often accompanied by dancers. Women dancers are often considered little better than prostitutes, and in bawdy establishments they do lascivious dances wearing little or no clothing. More "artistic" dancing is the preserve of men. Among the Yao, for example, a style of "gait-dancing" has developed. Men stride sinuously back and forth in time to the music, in what looks like a hybrid of military drill and tango moves.

Games

For quieter amusement, people on Tschai are fond of games. They play a form of chess on a board of seven by seven squares, using 10 pieces on each side. As in chess, each piece can only move and capture in certain ways, but there is the additional complication that certain pieces can only capture certain others.

Cards are also known on Tschai, though the deck is entirely unlike those of Earth. The Tschai deck has four suits and four colors, with four cards in each color of each suit, for a total of 64. Unlike Terran card games, which rely on a random order of the deck, card players on Tschai are permitted to arrange the cards, and each game has dozens of preferred "stackings" which can be employed.

There is also a very complicated game called Az-Braz, played with a red-and-blue disc and small numbered chips. The rules by which one can take or give up chips change depending on whether the disc is red or blue.

Az-Braz and card games are usually played for money. Gambling of all kinds is common and popular on Tschai. Any sort of competition attracts betting – races, combats, even full-scale battles. Among the Yao, duels between cavaliers always attract gentlemanly side-bets, though it is considered poor form for the actual combatants to place bets.

FOOD AND DRINK

The cuisines of Tschai are likely to seem very strange and even a little alarming to a visitor from Earth. A few familiar food items made the trip from Earth to Tschai: Adam Reith saw lentils, breads which appeared to be made of wheat flour, and a fruit which might have been a kind of grape. But the majority of foods on Tschai are native plants and animals.

Pilgrim Plant and Watak

The most useful food plant on Tschai is the pilgrim plant, which grows just about everywhere. It is easy to overlook: a low weed with small white globules growing along its stringy stalk. But the globules, called pilgrim pods, are extremely

grim pods almost indefinitely, although the taste is bland and soon becomes monotonous. Cooks on Tschai use pilgrim pods in everything from stews to bread. They fill a role much like potatoes on Earth – a simple, filling, starchy food.

Almost as useful to travelers is *watak*, which grows in arid regions all over Tschai. *Watak* plants look like clumps of tough black grass, about knee-high. The plants themselves are tough and inedible, but their roots store as much as a gallon of watery, acrid-tasting sap. When crossing a dry steppe or desert, *watak* can make the difference between life and death. However, drinking too much of the sap can be dangerous. The plant contains a toxin which can cause deafness. Each week that someone drinks a quart or more of *watak* sap a day, he must make a HT roll to avoid hearing loss. A TL8 filtration canteen can remove the toxin from the sap, leaving it safe to drink.

The fact that both pilgrim plant and *watak* are so widespread and so useful suggests that they have been deliberately planted in desolate regions of Tschai. The most likely candidates for doing this are the Pnume, but it is conceivable that some bygone race scattered the two plants as an aid to travelers. It is even possible that the pilgrim plant is the product of genetic engineering. If so, it might have other effects on those who live on it.

CLEANLINESS

People on Tschai don't keep as clean as people on Earth do. That's not surprising on a planet where few humans have running water and soap is unknown. In colder climates, the people simply don't bathe at all, contenting themselves with washing their faces and hands in scented water. Where the weather is warm enough to allow one to bathe without freezing to death, people scrub with a mix of oil, sand, and ashes (much like the ancient Greeks and Romans), then rinse off.

When the technology is available, as in major cities, there are public baths. These are usually modest affairs, where a sequin will get the customer a room, a tub full of water, a bowl of scrubbing mixture, and a towel. Most people on Tschai value their privacy, so communal bathing is very uncommon.

Staples

The most common food is a coarse gruel, made from either wheat or pilgrim-pod. Depending on the region and the chef, it can be almost a soup, or as thick as oatmeal. The basic porridge is fairly bland, but when possible the people of Tschai accompany it with spicy conserve or pickles.

Another common dish is soup, which is especially prevalent where sanitation is poor and the water is dangerous to drink. Simmering soup gets rid of most disease-carrying organisms. Soups are usually accompanied by coarse bread.

Those with money can get much more interesting dishes on Tschai, however. Some are familiar enough – pancakes heaped with shredded meat, for example – but others are distinctly exotic. Pickles are a very common item on Tschai, and pickling is an entire branch of cookery unto itself. Both meats and vegetables are pickled. In his travels Adam Reith had pickled reed-walker, pickled fern-pod, and pickled bark in broth.

As usual Reith could not identify what he ate, and did not care to learn.

Meats are often heavily spiced, which may be the result of poor refrigeration. Some chefs turn this into a virtue, flavoring meat with flower petals or turning it into strongly flavored sausage. Fish are often salted or pickled. Insects are eaten almost everywhere, smoked, made into paste, or raw.

Completely absent from the Tschai diet is milk, or anything made from milk. The native animals of Tschai are not mammals, and the Dirdir didn't bring any herd animals from Earth. Once a human infant on Tschai stops nursing, he'll never have milk again. People of Tschai are probably lactose intolerant as adults. They use animal fat for cooking and spread their bread with nut paste, jelly, or a kind of pâté.

Wine and Beer

Since they don't have milk and often can't trust the water, most people of Tschai drink a lot of alcoholic beverages. Beer is the most common, if only because it is easy to make. People on Tschai drink their beer cold from stone jars or serve it hot. To a Terran it has a sour taste, often flavored with spices or flowers. Since hops (the standard flavoring for beer on Earth) aren't grown on Tschai, a visitor might find the taste of beer there very strange indeed.

Wines are also common, and are apparently made from grapes. The wines of Tschai compare very favorably with the best of Earth's vintages. Whites are the most common. Adam Reith had some very soft and delicate-flavored white wines, some tingly ones resembling champagne, and a few harsh and astringent ones.

If you have wine and a little ingenuity, it isn't hard to make harder liquors. On Tschai, distilled liquors are referred to as "distillation." Distilled liquors are expensive and not very common, and aren't as strong as whiskey or vodka. Distillations are more like fine old brandies, and are consumed by connoisseurs, not people looking for a cheap drunk.

There are a few beverages which aren't alcoholic. Teas are made from various herbs and flowers. They range from insipid to acrid. A few teas are made from intoxicating plants - pepper-tea is a mild narcotic. Caffeine doesn't occur in any plants on Tschai, so Terran coffee addicts will have to bring along an adequate supply of beans.

The soup, the bread, the pickles: all be skar-at-flavored, and if we did not use them of purpose, they'd infest us to the same effect, so we make a virtue of convenience, and think to enjoy the taste.

— Innkeeper, The Dirdir

CLOTHING

Many distinctive outfits worn by men of Tschai are described with the specific cultures and peoples. If any clothing can be called "standard" on Tschai, it is probably the outfit Adam Reith wore during most of his adventures: loose rousers of brownish-gray canvas, a shirt of homespun linen, and a black short-sleeved vest. Dressed like that, a person can go almost anywhere on the planet without attracting attention.

Textiles available on Tschai include linen, silk (not true silk, but an extremely similar fiber made by native insects), wool from native animals, leather, and felt. Many dyes and colorings are known, and fabrics can be found in all shades. Brightly colored silks are among the few human-made items which the Dirdir buy in quantity. Synthetic fabrics are extremely rare; only the Wanek and Wanekmen wear them. Any high-tech fabric like nylon will attract a good deal of notice, and most people will assume it is alien-made.

Though the Yao are probably the most particular about matching garments to status, it is true that in most places a person's clothing indicates a lot about who he is. The notion of "dressing down" is unknown. A stranger is likely to be judged by what he wears, so Terran explorers disguised in simple work clothes will get all the reaction modifiers for someone of low wealth and status.

Cleaning clothes is a difficult and time-consuming process in most societies on Tschai. Clothes are cleaned by soiling them with borax. Most people don't bother, contenting themselves with brushing off their clothes and sprinkling hem with scent to hide the smell. Rich people buy lots of clothes, going through a dozen outfits in a year.

TRADE

The various peoples of Tschai conduct a fair amount of trade, both among themselves and with other planets. Cultures on the planet exchange various foodstuffs and manufactures, while the Dirdir and Chasch both ship raw materials and goods from Tschai back to their homeworlds for advanced technology and luxuries.

The chief obstacles to trade on Tschai are the generally poor quality of the infrastructure, and the planet's fragmented and anarchic politics. Very few countries have paved roads - Cath is one notable exception - and things like railroads are even more scarce. Trade moves by caravan or boat, so regions far from easy water transport are underdeveloped and poor. The steppes of Kotan, for example, could be a breadbasket on the order of the Ukraine or Kansas given adequate transportation.

The lack of rapid communication makes it impossible for traders to know what price to expect or what is in demand in distant places. Traders on Tschai load up a ship or a caravan with whatever they can get cheaply and think will bring a good price, and then take it far away to sell. Sometimes they choose right and make a fortune, but more often they barely break even.

Tschai's multitude of governments and tribes don't make trade easy. There are tariffs, transit fees, and bribes to pay in the advanced societies, and elsewhere banditry and raiding are a constant peril. At sea one must contend with pirates, some of whom are supported by coastal towns to protect their own trade routes.

Given the difficulties of moving goods on Tschai, it is only logical that traders tend to specialize in relatively portable, high-value goods. Only in Cath and in the Dirdir-controlled portions of Charchan and Kislovan is there large-scale commerce in bulk products like ore and grain.

SEAFARERS OF TSCHAI

The lack of good roads makes sea travel the most efficient and rapid means of travel for humans (except for air-cars and flying platforms, but those are too rare and expensive to use for hauling freight). Ships on Tschai are a strange mixture of technologies. Merchant ships are usually broad-beamed wooden ships about 100 feet long, with high sterncastles and elaborately decorated bowsprits, much like the vessels that plied Earth's seas in the days of Columbus and Magellan. However, these antique-seeming vessels often have auxiliary engines - Wanek-made electric impellers driven by power cells. They are likely to be armed with energy weapons or sandblasts instead of black-powder cannon.

Since few nations on Tschai are wealthy enough to maintain a professional navy, there are very few purpose-built warships. Most ships are merchant vessels with ample room for cargo. In wartime they may be fitted out with extra guns and sail as privateers. The only actual warships are those owned by pirate bands and the small navies of Cath and some port cities. Warships are long and narrow motor-galleys, using

oars most of the time but switching to electric impellers in battle. They carry rams and energy guns, but the primary tactic is boarding the enemy ship. Consequently, warships carry large crews compared to merchant vessels. A typical merchant ship might carry 12 to 20 men, but a warship the same size would have 50 to 100.

Sailors on the seas of Tschai are much like their counterparts during Earth's age of sail. Ships are often crewed by a startling mix of nationalities and racial types, so that a vessel sailing the Schanzade Ocean may have a crew of Lokhars, Thangs, Coadars, and Hedajhans under a Yao captain.

Pirates!

Piracy is common on the seas of Tschai. Many merchants are perfectly willing to attack and rob a smaller vessel, and port cities like Coad or Kabasas encourage their own ships to fight interlopers in order to preserve their trade monopoly. Island states like Hedajha or the Isles of Cloud consider any passing ship fair game.

Pirates on Tschai's seas are rational businessmen, not berserkers. They don't attack ships which look too well-defended, and they much prefer to intimidate their foes into surrendering rather than subdue them in a long and bloody battle. A typical pirate ship carries a pair of heavy sandblasts or energy-cannon, and some 20 or 30 pirates. The standard tactic is to approach the target ship and demand surrender. If all goes well, the victim gives up; the pirates loot the ship of valuables and let the crew depart unharmed (though passengers may well be taken captive for ransom or to sell as slaves).

If the target vessel puts up a fight, the pirates can get mean. Their whole business depends on merchants being willing to surrender when challenged, and so they punish resisters harshly. They will use their heavy weapons to knock down the enemy's masts and disable his rudder, and will rake the deck with sandblast fire and volleys of catapult darts. As soon as the target is immobile, the pirates

The crew trimmed sails, coiled down lines, then unshipped a clumsy blast-cannon, which they dragged up to the foredeck.

Reith asked Anacho, "Who do they fear? Pirates?"

"A precaution. So long as a cannon is seen, pirates keep their distance."

— Servants of the Wanek

CARAVANSERAIS AND INNS

A *caravansera* is a depot and way station for caravans, combining the functions of an inn, a warehouse and a huge stable. On the steppes of Kotan, caravanserais are heavily fortified and guarded forts along the caravan route. In cities, caravanserais are generally located on the outskirts of town, near the market or the warehouse district.

Accommodations at a caravansera are seldom luxurious. Rooms tend to be small, furnished with straw pallets or wood-frame beds of leather thongs. The cookshops catering to caravan traffic emphasize large portions of plain, cheap food. A good model is the quarters and cuisine at North American truck stops in the 1990s: moderate comfort, no frills, and low prices.

Inns have a bit more variety in their levels of service and comfort. Cheap places may offer little more than a cot or pallet in a common room, while expensive hotels offer every amenity the customer can think to ask for – at a suitable markup, of course.

Most of the inns Adam Reith frequented had private bedrooms with one or two beds, and a large common room for guests to eat and socialize in. Lower-class establishments have long tables with benches, finer places have smaller separate tables with chairs. All inns serve food and drink.

Some inns, especially those run by the rapacious Thangs, pose dangers to the traveler. In low-class joints there is the risk of being robbed in the room while sleeping (some cheap hotels are even built with secret passages to let the owners slip into rooms and rob the guests). High-quality hotels have a more refined technique, offering myriad extra luxuries and services, each with a hefty surcharge that only appears on the final bill.

come alongside and board. Neither passengers nor crew can expect much mercy – the pirates will punish them for resisting with all kinds of inventive tortures and abuse, and any survivors are certain to be sold as slaves.

What this means is that pirate attacks are all-or-nothing affairs. The pirates try to pick on foes who won't fight back, but once fighting begins, both sides are locked in a battle to the death. Merchants try to look as well-armed and tough to beat as possible, so that pirates will simply stay away.

The alien masters of Tschai do most of their travel by air (or by submarine, in the case of the Wanek), and so are entirely safe from seaborne pirates. If for some reason a Dirdir or Chasch did wish to travel by sea, any pirates who did attack them would be subject to devastating reprisals.

Sometimes the crew of a ship will decide to rob their own passengers, and either blame pirates or simply deny the victims ever came aboard at all. As with piracy, the best defense is to look sufficiently intimidating to deter any attack. Since merchants who rob their passengers can't afford to leave any witnesses, victims of this kind of piracy are liable to wind up tied to a ballast stone somewhere on the bottom of the sea.

CARAVANS OF TSCHAI

The only way to move passengers and goods across the steppes of Kotan is by caravan. The steppe tribes are strong enough to stop any small party of travelers, and could easily rip up or block a rail line. Consequently everything going across the steppes has to be loaded into big wagons or motor-drays and carried over land.

A typical steppe caravan has 60 or 70 huge wagons, each 50 feet long with six 10-foot wheels. About half of the wagons are motor-drays with electric motors; the rest are pulled by teams of a dozen pull-beasts. There can be up to 500 people in a big caravan – teamsters, llanth guards, cooks, farriers, merchants, and passengers. There is a commissary wagon, where the caravan cook and his helpers prepare food for the entire company, and entertainers often travel along to pick up money from their fellow caravaneers at night.

Naturally, such a rich store of goods and potential slaves is tempting for the steppe tribes, so caravans must be well-guarded. Usually a sixth of the wagons are gun-carts, armed with four heavy sandblasts or Chasch mortars. In addition, a dozen or so llanth scouts mounted on leap-horses ride ahead and to the sides of the caravan, watching for raiders. When attacked, a caravan turns into a temporary fortress – the wagons circle about, with the bigger motor-drays and gun-carts on the outside and the pull-beasts and other livestock inside the circle. The gunners keep up a steady fire against the attackers, and the llanths remain mounted, ready to ride out and counterattack.

When the Green Chasch are being aggressive, or if the steppe tribes have formed a strong confederation, two or more caravans may join together into a huge force capable of handling any foe. The chief danger to a caravan on the steppes is that the nomads may get some heavy weapons capable of disabling the wagons. Since a caravan can't afford to get stuck on the steppes, disabled vehicles must be abandoned. Occasionally the nomads get lucky and catch a caravan unawares, or set an ambush and catch the wagons crossing a river. About one caravan a year falls to the steppe tribes, out of perhaps a score of caravans which set out.

The dream of every steppe-tribe leader is to catch a caravan by surprise and capture all the vehicles and weapons intact. With the firepower of a whole caravan, raiders could take on other caravans in open battle and even capture fortified depots. This has happened many times in Tschai's history; either the merchants combine and send out a strong punitive force, or the caravan trade shuts down for a decade or so until the nomads have used up or broken their stolen weapons.

MONEY

The standard unit of currency on Tschai is the sequin. Sequins are disc-shaped crystals, approximately half an inch across and less than a quarter-inch thick. They are made of a hard, glassy substance which forms naturally in deposits of radioactive salts found only in the soil of the Carabas (see p. 61). Sequins come in eight different colors: clear, milk-white, pale green, sard (pale blue), blue, emerald, scarlet, purple.

NODES

Each node contains exactly 282 sequins. Nobody knows why the number is constant, but it is assumed to be an effect of the crystallization process. The youngest nodes are the lowest in value, and naturally the areas closest to the entrance have the fewest rich nodes.

When a searcher discovers a sequin node in the Carabas (see p. 62), roll 1d to determine its age. It takes 23 years for a node to develop from all whites to all purples, but most get picked up well before they reach maximum value. Add 1 to the age roll in the Hills of Recall, and 2 in the South Stage.

Die	Age	Age	clear/ white	pale green	sard	blue	emerald	scarlet	purple
1	1 year	1	282	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	1d/2 years (round down)	2	141	141	0	0	0	0	0
3	1d years	3	71	141	70	0	0	0	0
4	1d years	4	35	106	106	35	0	0	0
5	1d+1 years	5	18	70	106	70	18	0	0
6	1d+1 years	6	9	44	88	88	44	9	0
7	2d years	7	5	26	66	88	66	26	5
8	2d × 2 years	8	2	16	46	77	77	46	18
		9	1	9	31	61	77	62	41
		10	0	5	20	46	69	70	72
		11	0	2	13	33	57	70	107
		12	0	1	7	23	45	64	142
		13	0	0	4	15	34	55	174
		14	0	0	2	9	25	44	202
		15	0	0	1	5	17	35	224
		16	0	0	0	3	11	26	242
		17	0	0	0	1	7	19	255
		18	0	0	0	0	4	13	265
		19	0	0	0	0	2	8	272
		20	0	0	0	0	1	5	276
		21	0	0	0	0	0	3	279
		22	0	0	0	0	0	1	281
		23+	0	0	0	0	0	0	282

in purple. The purples are rarest and most valuable, the greens and milks are the most common. One purple sequin is worth 100 clear or white ones, a scarlet is worth 50, an emerald is worth 20, blue is worth 10, a sard is worth 5 and a pale green is worth 2. Tears and milks are equal in value.

For convenience, sequins are often glued to strips of leather or paper in sets of 10. Otherwise they are carried loose, like coins. Since sequins are quite pretty (especially the brilliant scarlets and purples), they are sometimes used as jewelry or as decorations on clothing.

Sequins are almost impossible to counterfeit. The colors are distinctive, and anyone on Tschai can recognize the true hues of even a purple sequin. Presumably one could duplicate the formation of sequins with a suitable supply of radioactive salts, but since it takes years for radioactive decay to transform clears into purples, the effort isn't worth the bother.

The value of a sequin is approximately equal to \$1 in *URPS* terms; prices vary tremendously and all transactions involve haggling. In this book, the abbreviation \$ refers to *URPS* dollars and sequins interchangeably.

For sums smaller than a sequin, the folk of Tschai use small disks of ceramic or metal called "bice." One hundred bice equals a sequin. Bice are minted locally in hundreds of towns and come in a great many styles and designs, generally about the same size as a sequin. Because there are no standard bice, they become valueless if one travels more than a day or so from the place they were minted. Prudent travelers should cash in their bice for sequins, or else spend them all before moving on.

PRICES OF COMMON ITEMS

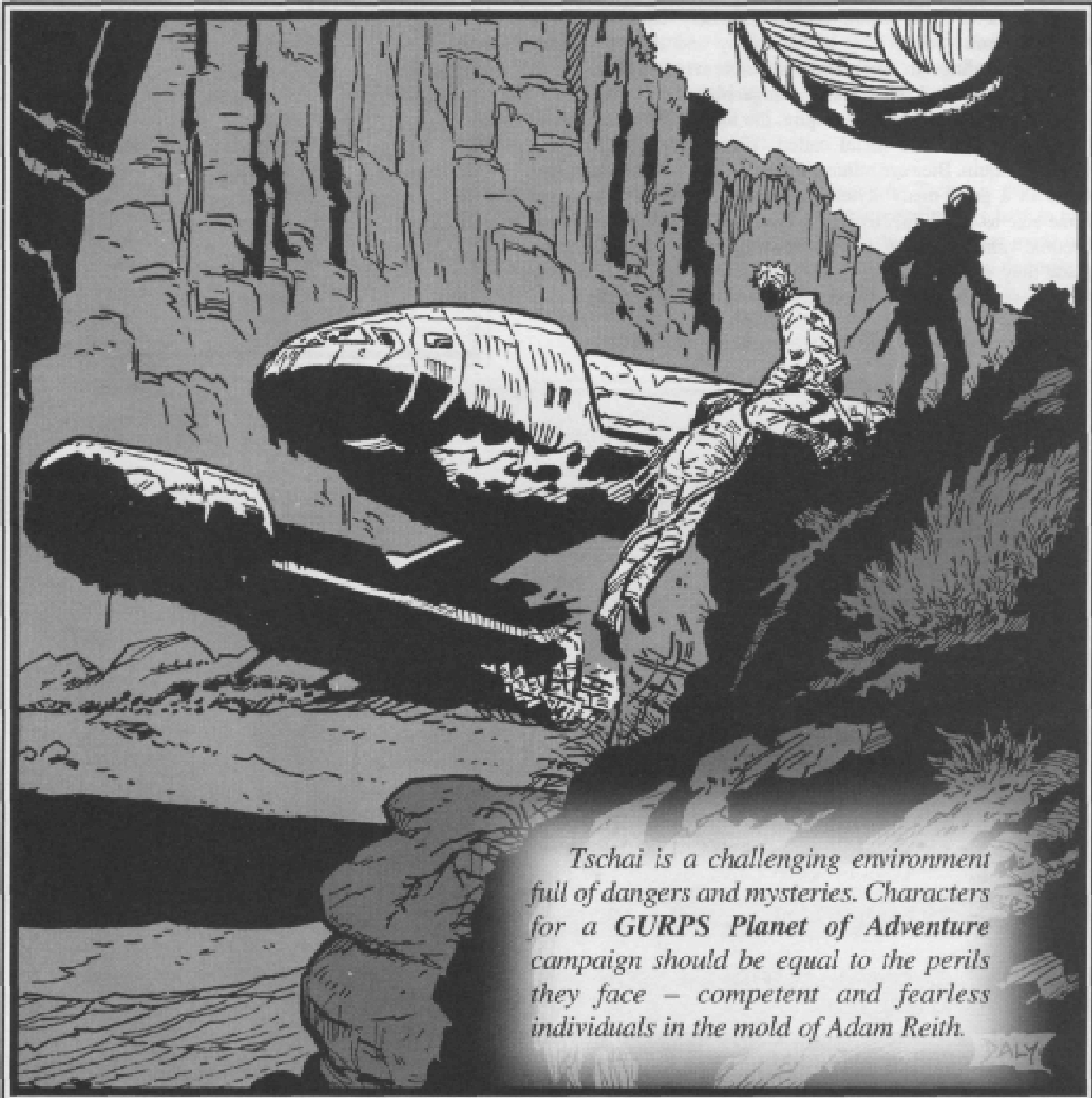
Clothing:	
Work clothes	\$10
Underclothes	\$2
Sandals	\$5
Caravan fare	\$1/2 miles
Guide, per day	\$30
Hotel:	
Expensive	\$100/night
Cheap	\$5/night
Warehouse rental	\$500/month
Boats:	
Powerboat	\$100
Rowboat	\$50
Ships:	
Sailing ship passage	\$4/day
Small sailing ship, charter	\$30/day
Small sailing ship, purchase	\$8,000
Small motor vessel, purchase	\$10,000
Spaceships:	
Space-boat	\$200,000
Salvaged hull	\$1,000

JOB TABLE

Job (Prerequisites), Monthly Income

	<i>Success Roll</i>	<i>Critical Failure</i>
<i>Bar Jobs</i>		
Trigand* (any Combat skill at 12+), \$100	PR	3d/3d and captured
Trirate (any Combat skill at 12+; Sailing, Boating, or Shiphandling 12+), \$30 × 1d	lowest PR	3d/3d, LJ when ship sinks
Trervant (all attributes 7+), \$80	IQ	-1i/-1i, LJ
<i>Truggling Jobs</i>		
Caravan Guard (Riding 12+, any Combat skill 12+), \$250	lowest PR	LJ/2d, LJ
Trayman (Driving 12+), \$200	PR	LJ/1d, LJ
Tugbo Mountebank* (IQ 11+, any Medical skill 12+), \$50 × 1d	lowest PR	-1i/-1i, beaten for 2d
Trtainer* (any Artistic skill 12+), \$20 × PR	PR	-1i/-2i
Trmer* (Agronomy 12+, ST 10+), \$200	12	-1i/-2i, LJ
Trilor (ST 12+, Sailor, Shiphandling, or Boating 12+), \$200	12	LJ/2d, LJ
Trpy (IQ 12+, Stealth 12+), \$250	IQ	LJ/2d, LJ
<i>Trverage Jobs</i>		
Trrtisan (any Craft skill at 14+), \$40 × skill	Best PR-2	LJ/-2i, LJ
Trssassin (any Weapon skill, Poisons or Traps at 14+), \$400	Worst PR-2	LJ/2d, LJ
Trrchant* (Merchant skill 14+), \$30 × PR	PR-2	-1i/-2i
Trrea Captain (Shiphandling and Navigation 14+), \$400	Worst PR-2	LJ/2d, LJ
Trrechnician (IQ 11+, Mechanic or Electronics 14+), \$500	IQ	-1i/LJ
<i>Trromfortable Jobs</i>		
Trrcessful Merchant* (Merchant skill 14+, at least \$1,000 in capital), \$60 × PR	PR-2	-1i/-2i
Trro Cavalier* (Status 2), \$750	IQ	1d/2d
<i>Trrealthy Jobs</i>		
Trrobleman (Status 3+), \$2,000	Savoir-Faire skill	1d/-1 Status

CHARACTERS & EQUIPMENT



Tschai is a challenging environment full of dangers and mysteries. Characters for a GURPS Planet of Adventure campaign should be equal to the perils they face – competent and fearless individuals in the mold of Adam Reith.

ALIEN CHARACTERS

Since there are several different intelligent species on Tschai, players are not limited to human characters. However, playing a nonhuman character should not be undertaken lightly, from a desire to have the most powerful "combat monster" in the party. The aliens on Tschai are truly *alien*, and to play one properly requires a player who can understand a being with very different thought processes and motivations. Of the aliens on Tschai, the ones best suited for use as PCs are the Dirdir and the Blue Chasch. Wanek are too alien and incomprehensible, Green Chasch can't leave their hordes, Old Chasch are a reclusive and dying race, and the Pnume cannot be seen by day.



Anyone with a nonhuman character should put some thought into why this alien would associate with a bunch of human adventurers. One possibility is to make the other characters members of the appropriate human servitor subrace. A Dirdir might have loyal Dirdirmen allies, and a Blue Chasch could command a party of Chaschmen. In that situation, the human PCs will have to behave like proper servants, deferring to their master rather than taking initiative, and taking an appropriate Duty or Sense of Duty.

POWER LEVELS

The Tschai novels are exciting space opera adventures, with a doughty hero overcoming seemingly impossible odds to get home. To run *GURPS* adventures in the same mode, GMs should allow fairly high-powered characters. Tschai is certainly a challenging enough environment to make 150- or even 200-point individuals appropriate. The power level depends on what kind of campaign the GM wants to run. A "street-level" campaign about the adventures of a band of

the characters were too powerful; 100 points is about right for that. But a campaign which will pit the PCs against the Dirdir in a battle for the fate of an entire planet is best suited for more formidable individuals – 200-point Federal Space Agency scouts or even 500-point characters in the mold of *GURPS Lensman* or *Black Ops*.

The default power level for a Tschai campaign assumes player characters of 100 to 150 points (about right for a group of Earth scouts or secret agents). The templates below are based on 100 points (with some exceptions). They can easily be beefed up with extra advantages or higher attributes if the GM is allowing higher-value characters.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

Since the Tschai novels are well-known and widely-read space adventure novels, they form part of the "consensus reality" of most science fiction roleplaying campaigns. As a result the existing *GURPS Space* character creation rules are perfectly adequate for creating individuals for a Tschai campaign. Some specific issues are covered below.

ADVANTAGES

Blessed, Clerical Magic, and Divine Favor

In all of Adam Reith's travels on Tschai he saw no evidence that the gods of the various religious cults had any real existence. Certainly none of the priests he saw had any miraculous gifts. None of these advantages should be allowed in a Tschai campaign.

Claim to Hospitality

This advantage is rare on Tschai; few inhabitants of that world are willing to put up a stranger without getting paid. One exception is that members of a human tribe or clan may be able to claim hospitality from other clan members living abroad. Lokhars working at the Wanek spaceyards in Ao Hidis, for example, might be willing to entertain a visiting Lokhar, at least for a while.

Cybernetic Implants

Neither Adam Reith nor any of his fellow officers aboard the *Explorator IV* were described as having any cybernetic modifications. It appears Earth in the Tschai universe doesn't encourage the use of bionics except perhaps as aids for those with legitimate medical problems. Nor do cybernetics appear among any of the cultures of Tschai. GMs should feel free to make any characters with mechanical "improvements" take the Unnatural Feature disadvantage to reflect the surprise and fear it would likely inspire among the people of Tschai.

Diplomatic Immunity

Diplomatic immunity is only useful when the local authorities are willing to respect it. A Terran diplomat on Tschai is just another human unless some local government agrees to grant him immunity. This advantage may be allowed in a "post-contact" setting, but during the period of the novels and immediately after it is useless.

Gadgeteer

Technology on Tschai doesn't advance very quickly. The alien masters take thousands of years to progress from one tech level to another, and humans are accustomed to think of advanced technology as something created by the aliens rather than by humans. It is very unlikely for a Tschai human to have the Gadgeteer advantage at all.

Earth humans, especially the versatile and skilled people of the Federal Space Agency, may well be Gadgeteers. This should probably be limited to the 25-point "realistic" level rather than the "cinematic" style.

High Technology

Though large portions of Tschai are undeveloped and fairly primitive, the Dirdir and other alien civilizations have advanced equipment. This advantage would only be appropriate for visitors who have gear *better* than anything available to the Dirdir or the Wanek – TL13 or better. Earth humans with TL10 gear are well-equipped by Tschai standards, but their equipment isn't magical.

Literacy

All human cultures on Tschai seem to be literate. Literacy is the norm, and doesn't count as an advantage. Illiteracy is a disadvantage, as described below.

Magic

Adam Reith saw no evidence of real magic on Tschai, despite plenty of superstitions and quackery. Even the Dugbo sorcerers seemed to use scientifically plausible means like hypnosis and acupuncture rather than supernatural powers. GMs shouldn't allow mages on Tschai, although it might be amusing to permit a character with the Delusion "I am a magician."

Military Rank

The Federal Space Agency seems to follow a system of ranks resembling those of modern-day naval organizations. If the campaign involves the exploits of a group of Terran explorers operating under orders, they should have their proper Space Agency ranks. Space Agency personnel stranded on Tschai and cut off from contact with Earth don't need to pay for Military Rank because there is nobody to exercise authority over.

Civilian caravan masters get what is effectively a level of Military Rank because they command the caravan guards while crossing the steppes. This authority only exists in the wilderness, and only in the context of protecting the caravan.

Panimmunity

Terran explorers are likely to have Level 2 Panimmunity (see p. CI28), while the Dirdir and Wanek can get Level 3. Other Tschaiian races cannot take this advantage.

Psionics

The Green Chasch are telepathic among themselves, which makes it at least possible for other races and individuals to use psi powers as well. The most obvious candidates for psionic abilities are the Dugbo. None of the human servitor races (Chaschmen, Dirdirmen, Wanekmen, and Pnumekin) shows any sign of psionic ability, and it's likely their masters bred it out of them long ago. Since Adam Reith wasn't surprised to learn about Green Chasch telepathy, psionic powers may be known on Earth. A skilled psionic would be a natural choice for a party of explorers visiting Tschai on a followup expedition.

*Pera is a tumble of ruins.
The people here are little better than
fugitives. They have no pride or
self-respect; they live in holes, they
are dirty and ignorant, they wear
rags. What's worse, they don't seem
to care.*

*— Adam Reith,
City of the Chasch*

Status

Status is very culture-specific on Tschai. A high-ranking Kruthe like Traz was considered nothing but a barbarian by the Dirdirman Anacho. In campaigns which involve a lot of traveling around and encountering new cultures, GMs may wish to use the following optional rule from *GURPS Space*: PCs outside their home society can get a point-cost reduction on Status, since much of the time they will be among strangers who won't recognize their rank. Using the modifiers for Reputation on page B17, Status in a large and influential group (the Dirdirmen, the Yao) would get a 1/2 discount, while Status in a small or obscure group (Khors, Emblem-men) would cost 1/3 normal.

Wealth

Wealth is only useful if you can spend it. A person with a billion-dollar fortune back on Earth still may not have enough sequins to buy lunch on Tschai. Unless the campaign is going to involve lots of interstellar travel, Wealth should refer to the character's Wealth on Tschai. Note that until contact has been established, Terrans will suffer from a severe shortage of sequins. The GM may allow visiting space explorers to bring a supply of trade goods in order to keep them from worrying about money.

Even the advanced societies on Tschai don't seem to devote much effort to keeping comprehensive databases on everybody. And many regions of Tschai are still too lawless and primitive to bother. Being Zeroed is not an advantage on Tschai.

DISADVANTAGES

Addiction

All Pnumekin and many Gzhindra are addicted to the sweet-salty wafers called *diko*. *Diko* is highly addictive, legal, and cheap (the Pnume provide it free to their servants). Addiction to *diko* is a -5 point disadvantage. Since *diko* contains hormone-suppressing drugs, addicts must also take the Sterile disadvantage. *Diko* give its users an unusual body odor, like a combination of camphor and sour milk.

Code of Honor

The most honor-bound people encountered by Adam Reith on his visit to Tschai were the Yao and the Dirdir. The Yao Code of Honor is similar to the Gentleman's Code described on p. B31, but substitutes the person's manse or noble patron for the flag. Like the Gentleman's Code, the Yao Code is worth -10 points.

The Dirdir Code of Honor is more rigid. A proper Dirdir must: avenge all insults to himself or his sept; complete all initiatives or die trying; aid anyone who cries *hs'ai hs'ai*, *hs'ai*; and exhibit the virtues of his rank and sex. The Dirdir Code is worth -15 points.

Duty

Characters who are serving officers in the Federal Space Agency have a Duty to the FSA worth -10 points; they are on duty nearly all the time they are off Earth, but the job is only sometimes life-threatening.

Most members of servant races (Dirdirmen, Chaschmen, etc.) have a Duty to their masters which is not generally life-threatening and requires them to serve Fairly Often. Consequently it is an 0-point Duty.

Gzhindra have an Involuntary Duty to the Pnume, enforced by hypnotic suggestion and the Pnume control of the *diko* supply. Gzhindra are required to serve Fairly Often and do face considerable risks, so their Duty is worth -10 points.

Odious Personal Habit

One distressingly common Odious Habit on Tschai is cannibalism. Dirdir eat humans (and other sentient races), and their Dirdirman servants do the same. Social climbers like Aila Woudiver in regions under Dirdir influence also indulge, and the Marshmen of southern Kotan are also rumored to eat men. Among groups like Dirdir, Dirdirmen, and Marshmen it is not a disadvantage, but everywhere else on Tschai cannibalism is a -15-point disadvantage. Players who take this disadvantage really do have to roleplay it – a cannibal character who never tries to eat humans isn't a cannibal!

Cultures on Tschai show a great mix of technologies, with leap-horse-riding nomads existing alongside spacefaring civilizations. However, the low-tech inhabitants of Tschai do *not* ordinarily need to take the Primitive disadvantage. Simply because they don't have advanced equipment doesn't mean they don't understand it or can't use it. Most people on Tschai know all about motor vehicles, energy weapons, and contra-gravity flyers. Local tech level limits are mostly the result of economics. The Primitive disadvantage would only be suitable for someone from an extremely remote and isolated community with no knowledge of advanced technology at all. Such enclaves may indeed exist on Tschai.



Secret

Nearly everyone on Tschai makes a positive fetish of being secretive. Dirdir conceal their sexual types, Chasch keep the true origin of their young secret, Wanekmen hide their manipulation of the Wanek, and the Pnume are mysterious about everything.

A Dirdir's sexual type is a Secret worth -5 points, as revealing it will restrict the Dirdir's freedom of action, but not result in harm or imprisonment. All Dirdir take this Secret as part of the racial package.

Earth humans visiting Tschai should probably take the Secret "human from another world," worth -20 points. There are lots of people on Tschai who don't want to see humans learning about a world of men who have no masters but themselves, and would certainly try to capture or harm an envoy from Earth.

Subjugation

This racial disadvantage might seem suitable for humans on Tschai, but for the fact that the majority of them do not live under the direct rule of the alien masters. Chaschmen may be oppressed by the Chasch, and Pnumekin kept under strict discipline by the Pnume, but most humans on Tschai are not slaves to the aliens. The masters of Tschai do inspire fear among humans, and human governments are careful not to offend them, but the same would be true of equally powerful human kingdoms.

Xenophobia

All Chasch suffer from Xenophobia, but it differs slightly from the disadvantage described on p. B36. While the Chasch do hate and fear other races, they express this through a desire to trick and mistreat the aliens, rather than avoiding or fleeing them. They do suffer the normal reaction penalty.

Humans with Xenophobia are uncommon on Tschai. The variety of human types and the presence of powerful aliens make it hard for Xenophobes to function well in society. Dislike of one or more *specific* races is quite common – usually whatever alien race the human has most frequent contact with.

SKILLS

Beam Weapons

This is the skill used for operating all the energy weapons in use on Tschai. The most important types are Dirdir plasma guns and Chasch blasters. The usual penalties for unfamiliar types apply. Lasers and sonics are not in common use on Tschai.

Black Powder Weapons

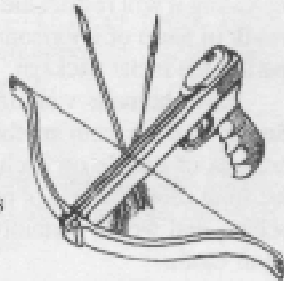
Muzzle-loading pistols are used in a few regions of Tschai where energy guns are unavailable or too expensive. Black powder rifles and muskets are almost unknown. The guns used on Tschai are flintlocks, similar to the Wogdon pistol described on p. B208.

Buckler

Bucklers are used by some cultures on Tschai, often in combination with rapiers. The Buckler skill also applies to knife-foils, which can serve as bucklers for defense as well as offensive weapons. The user's Block is (as usual) half his buckler skill. Fighters who are accustomed to the standard buckler of Earth's past have a -2 penalty to Buckler skill when using a knife-foil, and vice-versa.

Crossbow

Small crossbows, known as hand-cataapults, are quite common on Tschai. Hand-cataapults use the Crossbow skill, and anyone familiar with Earth crossbows can use cataapults with no penalty.



Disguise

Disguising oneself as a member of a different human culture gives a -2 penalty to Disguise skill. Disguising oneself as one of the human servitor races is at a -4 penalty because those groups are so distinctive. Humans masquerading as Dirdir or Pnume suffer a -6 penalty, and may require specially made masks and false hands. It is almost impossible for a human to be disguised as a Chasch because of their highly acute sense of smell, and a human disguised as a Wanek cannot speak their language without special equipment; both carry a penalty of -8.

Fast-Draw

Stings are normally kept folded up, and consequently get their own specialization of Fast-Draw skill. A successful Fast-Draw (Sting) roll can be combined with the Extension Attack maneuver for a devastating attack at the beginning of a combat. A critical failure requires a quick DX roll – if it succeeds, the weapon is merely dropped; if it fails, the sting is jammed shut and won't open at all! (GMs with a Chasch-like sense of humor may have the sting open uncontrollably on a critical failure, stabbing the user or one of his companions instead of the enemy.)

Fencing

Fencing skill is widely used on Tschai, as it is the proper skill for the Tschai rapier and the sting. GMs who are fanatics about accuracy may impose a familiarity penalty of -4 for Earth fencers using Tschai weapons, but it is truer to the planetary romance genre to let a fencer employ his skill with alien weapons. In a highly cinematic campaign the GM might want to substitute *The Sword!* from *GURPS Swashbucklers*.

First Aid and Physician

Humans, even bizarre-looking Dirdirmen, are still human, and can use medical skills on each other with no penalty. The biology of the alien races of Tschai is very different, both from humans and from one another. Unless a would-be physician has specialized in the medicine of a given species, there is a -2 penalty for treating an alien. First Aid requires only that the medic has some familiarity with the patient's species.

Human medics usually learn First Aid and Physician skill at the predominant TL of their society – TL4 for nomads and small tribes, TL6 for urban cultures, and higher for servant races. Travelers who expect to spend a lot of time away from all civilization may study up on TL0 medicine.

Gunner

Gunnery is most often used with sandblasts, Chasch mortars, and atomic torpedoes. Each counts as a separate type of weapon and gets the usual penalties for familiarity and tech level.

Hypnotism

Both the Pnume and the Dugbo practice hypnotism, and can achieve some remarkable effects by combining drugs, acupuncture, and other means. With a successful Pharmacy roll, the hypnotist can halve the victim's Will for the purpose of resisting hypnotic suggestions. Even more impressive, once the subject has been hypnotized, the Pnume and some Dugbo magicians seem to be able to implant commands. The process is described under Mindwipe, below.

Knife

Knife-foils, the unique weapons used by the nomads of Kotan, require both Knife and Buckler skill to use effectively. Because of the knife-foil's unusual shape, there is a -2 unfamiliarity penalty for anyone who is accustomed to conventional knives. Knife-foils cannot be thrown.

Mindwipe

Pnume and Dugbo hypnotists have developed the ability to use Mindwipe on hypnotized subjects. The skill is used as described on p. B171, although it is not necessary for the hypnotist to be psionic. The subject must be in a hypnotic trance before Mindwipe can be used. Mindwipe is done verbally, so the subject must be able to hear and understand the hypnotist. The victim can try to resist by opposing his Will to the hypnotist's Mindwipe skill, which is why both Dugbo and Pnume use Will-reducing drugs.



Naturalist

A human from Earth would suffer a -5 penalty to Naturalist skill on Tschai (the usual penalty for an unfamiliar environment). Naturalists on Tschai are at -2 if they are on another continent on that world. Since few humans on Tschai study pure science, Naturalist skill is the most common kind of biology knowledge.

Navigation

The strange constellations and hazy skies of Tschai give visitors a -5 penalty when navigating on that world. Outsiders who venture into the confusing labyrinthine tunnels of the Pnume are at a -8 penalty without instruments, -6 with a compass or inertial navigation system.

Piloting

Operating the various flyers used on Tschai requires the Piloting specialization for Contragravity craft. The usual penalties for unfamiliarity apply, especially when using vehicles built by a different species. Chasch-built craft impose an extra -2 penalty on anyone unfamiliar with their styles of decoration.

Riding

The most common riding animal on Tschai is the leap-horse, an erratic and vicious beast controlled by means of a steel bar driven through the animal's brain. Leap-horse riding defaults to horse or camel riding at -4. The especially large breed ridden by the Green Chasch has an extra -1 penalty for unfamiliar riders because the animals are so powerful.

Savoir-Faire

The cultures of Tschai have a maddening variation in what is considered proper behavior. Outsiders get a -4 penalty in all foreign human cultures, and a -6 penalty when trying to fathom the manners of the alien races.

Shield

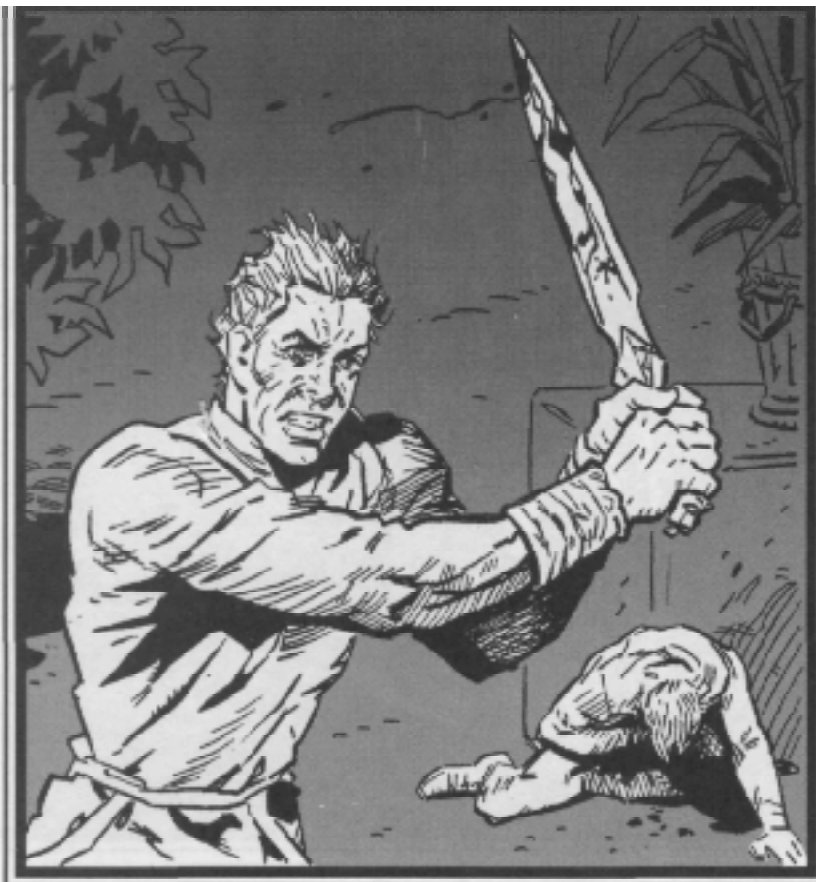
Most races do not use shields, which are ineffective against sandblasts and only marginally so against hand-cannapults. However, the Dirdir do carry transparent shields on their initiatives, which are highly useful against the guns carried by their quarry.

Spells

Magic doesn't work in the universe of *GURPS Planet of Adventure*, but many of the people of Tschai don't know that. GMs may allow some mystical characters (like Dugbo or Kruthe magicians) to purchase Performance/Ritual (Magic) to reflect their knowledge of spells which don't happen to do anything.

Xenology

Since Earth humans have had no contact with the Dirdir, Chasch, Wanek, or Pnume yet, a knowledge of Xenology doesn't provide any factual knowledge about those races. It does allow one to make basic guesses about the aliens – what they might eat, how they might reproduce – but not much else. Characters with the Unusual Background "Tschai experience" or "Old Tschai hand" can apply their Xenology skill normally.



NEW DISADVANTAGES

Susceptibility to Awaile -15 points

When one of the Yao has suffered unendurable shame he may succumb to *awaile*. The Yao must make a Will roll every day for a week after suffering the shame; on a failed roll he enters *awaile*. While in the state of *awaile*, the Yao is effectively Berserk. However, the victim of *awaile* cannot snap out of it until he is physically subdued or unconscious; thereafter he enters a suicidal depression.

Entering *awaile* is highly serious and may have dreadful consequences, but it can only happen once in a person's life and may not happen at all.

The Old State -10 points

The Old State is a form of Stress Atavism unique to Dirdir, in which the consciousness reverts to that of a presentient hunter. When a Dirdir is in combat or some other stressful situation, it must make a Will roll to avoid the mental shift. However, Dirdir rather enjoy the Old State, and

Old State happens when the Dirdir has a chance to rest and make a Will roll after the stressful situation has passed. Dirdir who sleep or pass out while in the Old State wake up rational. The Old State does not cost any Fatigue.

While in the Old State, Dirdir can only communicate in their ancestral hunting language. They can coordinate chasing and fighting, but nothing more complex. They *can* use weapons, even energy weapons, but can't do anything like reload or change power cells.

In the Old State a Dirdir gains a level of Alertness, Combat Reflexes, a level of Enhanced Move, Fit, High Pain Threshold, and Intuition. The Dirdir suffers from the disadvantages of Bestial, Illiteracy, and 12 levels of Primitive.

NEW MANEUVER

Extension Attack (Average) *Defaults to Weapon skill-2*

This maneuver allows the fighter to attack with a sting (or other telescoping weapon) while extending it to full length. A successful Extension Attack lets the fighter use the energy stored in the folding weapon rather than his own ST. Damage for a successful Extension Attack has an effective ST 16, so the basic Thrust damage is 1d+2 (plus the weapon modifier). Obviously, the extension attack maneuver can only be used once per combat; afterward the sting is used as a rapier.



CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Most of the character templates below are designed with characters of 100 or more points in mind. Some of them, such as the supercompetent Federal Space Agency scouts, are more costly. The racial templates are intended to be used with one of the career templates, so players can mix and match background and job skills. Racial templates for the subject human races are listed with their alien masters.

*As my associate you are
safe from thuggery, kidnap
and slave-taking.
— Cauch the Zsafathran,
The Pnume*

Brigand **100 points**

A regrettably large number of bandits, brigands, and pirates infest Tschai. Most of them work by intimidation and bluff, but the robbers do have to be able to win a few battles. Clever brigands may set themselves up as rulers of some remote place, offering protection from other thieves in exchange for an immoderate tribute. Others hire out as mercenaries when there's a good war available, or work as caravan guards when they aren't robbing caravans. Pirates have nautical secondary skills but are otherwise very much the same.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].
Advantages: One of Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Daredevil, or Luck [15]; and one of Alertness +1, Ambidexterity, or Toughness (DR 1) [10].
Disadvantages: A total of -20 points from Bloodlust [-10]; Bully [-10]; Greed [-15]; Laziness [-10]; Reputation (As bandits) -2 [-10]; Secret (Bandit) [-20]; or Semi-Literate [-5].
Primary Skills: Beam Weapons/TL11 (blaster) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-13*; Brawling (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14; Carousing (P/A) HT+1 [4]-12; Crossbow (P/E) DX+2 [8]-14; Intimidation (M/A) IQ+4 [10]-14; Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Streetwise (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12.
Secondary Skills: One of the following packages: *Steppe:* Area Knowledge (Steppe country) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12, Riding (Leap-horse) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Survival (Plains) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11. *Urban:* Area Knowledge (choose city) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12. *Pirate:*

Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12, Gunner/TL12 (Sandblast) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Navigation/TL4 (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Seamanship/TL4 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12.

* Beam Weapons gets +1 for IQ 10.

Caravaneer **100 points**

Most of Tschai's surface is wild and uncivilized country. A caravan leader has absolute authority while his train is on the road, and is ultimately responsible for getting everyone and everything safely to the caravan's destination. Caravaneers must know about the operation of their motor-drays and wagons, how to deal with nomads, how to defend the caravan against bandits, and how to deal with troublesome passengers. They must also keep an eye on the balance sheet.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].
Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Military Rank 3 [15]; Status 1 [0]; and either Danger Sense or Intuition [15].
Disadvantages: Duty (to the caravan, 12 or less) [-10]; and one of Bully, Honesty, or Paranoia [-10].
Primary Skills: Animal Handling (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Area Knowledge (Caravan route) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Driving/TL6 (Heavy wheeled) (P/A) DX [2]-12; Leadership (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Mechanic/TL6 (Vehicles) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Navigation/TL6 (M/H) IQ+2 [2]-14*; Packing (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Teamster (M/A) IQ [2]-12.
Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12; Crossbow (P/E) DX [1]-12; Beam Weapons/TL12 (Blaster) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-14*; First Aid/TL4 (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Gunner/TL12 (Sandblast) (P/A) DX [2]-12; Survival (Plains) (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

* Navigation includes +3 bonus for Absolute Direction; Beam Weapons includes +2 bonus from IQ.



Cultist

40 points

While many of Tschai's religions are devoted to the spiritual well-being of members and the search for meaning, a few practice bizarre rituals or adhere to dangerous and violent beliefs. Cultists of the more dangerous religions may be found spreading the word of their faith, kidnapping victims for sacrificial rites, hunting down enemies of the one true god, or simply robbing unbelievers to enrich the temple's coffers. This template assumes that clerical powers or divine favor do not exist. The Cultist template is less expensive than others; it can be customized by adding skills from mundane life, or left at its low value for "cannon fodder" adversaries. Cult leaders can add Religious Rank.

Charisma, Wealth, a higher IQ, and skill levels in Psychology and Leadership.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Patron (religion, 9 or less) [10]; Single-Minded [5]; Strong Will +2 [8]

Disadvantages: Fanaticism [-15]; Struggling [-10].

Primary Skills: Bard (M/A) IQ+4 [8]-14; History (Cult) (M/H) IQ [4]-10; Teaching (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12, Theology (M/H) IQ+4 [12]-14; and either Performance/Ritual (Cult ceremonies) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12 or Sacrifice (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-11.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+2 [4]-12; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-10; Panhandling (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11.

Dancing Girl

80 points

Women dancers are often encountered as entertainers in taverns or caravan depots, particularly among the Dugbo and the Thang. Among the Yao, dance is a mostly male art form. The majority of dancing girls are skilled entertainers, but sometimes their job description shades into the role of a courtesan or prostitute. As a result, nearly all dancing girls are assumed to be somewhat disreputable. They dress in gauzy clothes and anoint themselves with haze-water; the more blatantly provocative dancers wear orange.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Beautiful [15]; Double-Jointed [5]

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Loose woman) [-5]; Struggling [-10].

Primary Skills: Courtesan (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Dancing (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Sex Appeal (M/A) HT+2 [8]-14; Singing (P/E) HT+2 [4]-14.

Secondary Skills: Carousing (P/A) HT [2]-12; Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-12; Pickpocket (P/H) DX [4]-12.

Magician

80 points

The Dugbo are the best-known practitioners of "magic" on Tschai, though the witch-women of the steppe country and others also make money by pretending to have supernatural abilities. This template is for a mountebank who knows a little folk medicine and a lot of stage magic. To create a Dugbo magician with hypnotic powers, add the skill Mindwipe (M/VH) at IQ for 8 points.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Charisma +2 [10]; Manual Dexterity +4 [12].

Disadvantages: Bad Sight [-10]; and either Delusion ("What I do is magic") [-5] or Secret (Faker) [-5].

Primary Skills: Fortune-Telling (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Hypnotism (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; Naturalist (M/H) IQ+1 [4]-13; Occultism (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Physician/TL4 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX [4]-14.

Secondary Skills: Crossbow (P/E) DX [1]-10; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Kite Flying (P/E) DX [1]-10; Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-12; and either Jeweler/TL4 (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10 or Mechanic/TL4 (Clockwork and small gadgets) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11.

Do you require a diuretic or a vermifuge? We supply these at only a nominal charge.

— Innkeeper,

Servants of the Wanek

Merchant

100 points

Trade on Tschai is a difficult and dangerous business. Overland shipping runs the risk of attacks by raiders, while shipping by sea faces pirates. It's impossible to predict when a shipment will arrive, and the lack of rapid communications means a merchant can't know what prices his goods will fetch until he gets to the market. The most daring traders on Tschai have all the qualities of the merchant-adventurers of Earth's past: courage, determination, adaptability, and insatiable greed.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Charisma +1 [5]; Comfortable [10]; and two of Common Sense, Mathematical Ability, Status 2, or increase Wealth to Wealthy [10 each].

Disadvantages: Greed [-15]; one of Extravagance, Honesty, Miserliness, or Overconfidence [-10].

Primary Skills: Accounting (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; Area Knowledge (Trade route) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Merchant (M/A) IQ+4 [10]-16; Navigation/TL4 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; Riding (Leap-horse) (P/A) DX+2 [4]-12; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-11; Carousing (P/A) HT+2 [8]-12; Crossbow (P/E) DX [1]-11; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Survival (choose type) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; and one of the following combinations: Driving (Heavy wheeled) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-12 and Mechanic (Vehicles) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; or Animal Handling (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Packing (M/A) IQ [2]-12, and Teamster (M/A) IQ [2]-12; or Meteorology (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Seamanship/TL4 (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13, and Shiphandling/TL4 (M/H) IQ [4]-12.

Musician

50 points

The people of Tschai all have a great fondness for music, with the possible exception of the Thangs. Musicians on Tschai play a startling variety of instruments, many of which appear to be based on alien devices. Since recorded music is unknown on Tschai, most musicians travel about to find new and appreciative audiences.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Absolute Timing [5]; Acute Hearing +3 [6]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Musical Ability +3 [3]

Disadvantages: Alcoholism [-15]; Lecherousness [-15]; or the combination of Clueless [-10] and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Musical Composition (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-14*; Musical Instrument (type) (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-14*; second Musical Instrument (M/H) IQ [4]-13*; third Musical Instrument (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12*; Performance (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Singing (P/E) HT [1]-13*.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+2 [4]-12; Carousing (P/A) HT [2]-10; Mimicry (P/H) HT [4]-10; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12.

* Includes bonus from Musical Ability.



Sequin-Hunter

75 points

The men who venture into the Carabas (see p. 61) to search for sequins are tough and determined. They risk death at the hands of the Dirdir, at the claws of their fellow hunters, or from the harsh conditions of the Carabas itself. Sequin-hunters come from all over Tschai, and are either desperate men with nothing left to lose, or foolish optimists who can't believe they will fail. Astoundingly, there are a few who have made multiple trips into the Carabas, who are hooked on the danger and the chance of a big reward.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: A total of 20 points from Absolute Direction [5]; Alertness +1 [5]; Collected [5]; Composed [5]; Daredevil [15]; Fit [5]; Luck [15]; Single-Minded [5]; or Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Delusion ("The Dirdir won't catch me!") [-15]; Greed [-15]; On the Edge [-15]; or the combination of Overconfidence [-10] and Stubbornness [-5].

Primary Skills: Camouflage (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Crossbow (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14; Prospecting (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Running (P/H) HT [4]-12; Stealth (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Survival (Plains) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12.

Soldier

50 points

The advanced societies of Tschai have professional military units for defense. Soldiers may not individually be as formidable as primitive warriors, but a unit of trained troops can defeat many times its number of disorganized warriors or nomads. In most of Tschai's cultures there is little distinction between soldiers and policemen. This template is intended for the kinds of "spear carriers" encountered as guards, police and enemy soldiers.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: A total of 10 points from Alertness +1; Composed; Legal Enforcement Powers; and Military Rank 1 [5 each].

Disadvantages: Duty (to the army, 15 or less) [-15].

Primary Skills: Beam Weapons/TL11 (Blaster) (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; Gunner/TL11 (choose type) (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Knife (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; and Driving/TL6 (Heavy wheeled) (P/A) DX [2]-11, Motorcycle/TL6 (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12, Piloting/TL11 (sky-raft) (P/A) DX [2]-11, or Riding (Leap-horse) (P/A) DX [2]-11.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Cooking (M/E) IQ [1]-10; First Aid/TL6 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Leadership (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Running (P/H) HT+1 [8]-12; Scrounging (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Survival (choose area type) (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

Spy

100 points

There is a tremendous market for spies on Tschai. Spies are either freelancers or dedicated agents with a steady employer. They are only in the business of gathering information; if you want an assassin or a thief, hire one.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Imperturbable [10]; and five 2-point Contacts [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (to employer, 15 or less), Glory Hound, or Greed [-15]; and Curious, Single-Minded, or Stubborn [-5].

Primary Skills: Detect Lies (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14; Disguise (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Lip Reading (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Shadowing (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14.

Secondary Skills: Any five of Area Knowledge (specific city) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Beam Weapons/TL11 (Blaster) (P/E) DX+3 [2]-15*; Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Forgery/TL4 (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Running (P/H) HT-1 [2]-9; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Streetwise (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

* Beam Weapons includes bonus for IQ 12.



Technician

75 points

Being a technician is not the most exciting career, but the pay is good and it is one of the few ways for humans to learn about the aliens' advanced technology. Retired technicians can be an asset to any adventuring group. Note that only Lokhars can take the Unusual Background: Trained in Wanek technology, or learn the Wanek language.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Any two of Ambidexterity; Comfortable; Common Sense; Mathematical Ability; or Unusual Background (Trained in Wanek technology) [10 each].

Disadvantages: Any two of Code of Honor (Pirate's); Deep Sleeper; Gluttony; Overweight; Skinny; Unfit; or Workaholic [-5 each].

Primary Skills: Driving/TL6 (Heavy wheeled) (P/A) DX [2]-11; Mathematics (M/H) IQ [4]-11; and any three of Armory/TL12 (Sandblasts) (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-14, Electronics/TL12 (choose type) (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-13, Mechanic/TL12 (choose type) (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-14, Metallurgy/TL12 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-13, or Shipbuilding/TL12 (Spaceboats or Starships) (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-14.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; Carousing (P/A) HT [2]-10; Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-11; Piloting/TL12 (air-car) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-12; Scrounging (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ+1 [2]-12; and Area Knowledge (City) (M/E) IQ [1]-11, Dirdir (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-9, or Wanek (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-8.

Terran Scout

150 points

"A scout isn't trained," Deale told him. "He exists: half acrobat, half mad scientist, half cat burglar, half—"

"That's several halves too many."

"Just barely adequate. A scout is a man who likes a change."

— *City of the Chasch*

The Federal Space Agency's specialists in planetary exploration and alien contact are the scouts. They are

selected for adaptability and determination, then rigorously trained in all the skills necessary to survey an alien world. Scouts are usually deployed in teams of two. They land on a planet, perform preliminary surveys, and then return to the mother ship. The job of a scout is to bring back as much information as possible, and that means they don't take foolish chances. Scouts have a reputation as nearly superhuman beings, but in person they are usually modest and unassuming.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20] HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Cultural Adaptability [25]; Fit [5]; Military Rank 2 [10]; Panimmunity (TL10) [5]; one of Absolute Direction, Alertness +1, Composed, or Versatile [5]; and one of Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, or Luck [15].

Disadvantages: Duty (to PSA, 12 or less) [-10]; and one of Curious, Sense of Duty (to comrades), Stubbornness, or Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Astrogation/TL10 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Ecology/TL10 (M/H) IQ+2 [6]-14; Piloting/TL10 (Spaceboat) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Planetology (Earthlike) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Survival (Desert) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Xenology (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13

Secondary Skills: Choose 14 points' worth from Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Sensors or Communications) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Electronics/TL10 (Sensors or Communications) (M/H) IQ [4]-12; First Aid/TL10 (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Guns/TL10 (Pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-14*; Judo (P/H) DX [4]-12; Linguistics (M/VH) IQ [8]-12; Mechanic/TL10 (Space drives) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Navigation/TL10 (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Parachuting (P/E) DX [1]-12; or Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12.

* Includes +2 bonus for IQ 12+.

Terran Spacer

100 points

The men and women who crew the spaceships of the Federal Space Agency aren't as glamorous as the scouts, but they are very good at what they do. Where scouts are generalists, spacers are specialists, though the service encourages cross-training so that no ship is crippled by the loss of a key

crew member. A spacer might be pressed into service with a large expedition to the surface of Tschai, might be wrecked on the planet, or (if Earth establishes peaceful relations with Tschai's overlords) might actually visit the place as a tourist.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Acceleration Tolerance or G-Experience [10]; Military Rank 1 [5]; Versatile or Single-Minded [5]; Pan-immunity (TL10) [5]; and either Common Sense, Mathematical Ability, or 2 additional levels of Military Rank [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (to FSA) [-10]; and one of Gregarious, Honesty, or Sense of Duty [-10].

Primary Skills: Astrogation (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Free Fall/TL10 (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Piloting/TL10 (Starship) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Vace Suit/TL10 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; and any two of the following: Computer Operation/TL10 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Computer Programming/TL10 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Electronics/TL10 (Sensors or Communication) (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Electronics Operation/TL10 (Sensors or Communication) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13, Engineer/TL10 (Starship) (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Gunner/TL10 (Laser or Missile) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-12, Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13, Mechanic/TL10 (Starship engines) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13, Physician/TL10 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, or Tactics (M/H) IQ [-]-12.

Secondary Skills: A total of 9 points from among the following: Astronomy/TL10 (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12; Carousing (P/A) HT [2]-10; Guns/TL10 (Gauss pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-14*, Physics/TL10 (M/H) IQ [4]-12; or Piloting/TL10 (Space-boat) (P/A) DX [2]-12.

* Includes +2 bonus for IQ 12+.

Thief **70 points**

In the fairs and caravan depots, pickpockets try to snatch pouches of sequins from the unwary. In big cities like Sivilshe or Settra, burglars slip into the houses of the rich. Thieves on Tschai don't seem to have any professional organizations, but do well enough on their own.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Ambidexterity [10]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Night Vision [10]

Disadvantages: One of Greed; Kleptomania; On the Edge; or Trickster [-15].

Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (Town or depot) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Holdout (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Running (P/H) HT-2 [1]-8; Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; and any two of Climbing (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14, Lockpicking/TL4 (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-17*, or Pickpocket (P/H) DX+2 [8]-16*.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Crossbow (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

* Includes bonus for Manual Dexterity.

Warrior **100 points**

The people of Tschai do a lot of fighting, both with each other and with enemies like Phung and Green Chasch.

Advanced societies, like the Chaschmen, Dirdirmen, and Yao, have professional soldiers. Low-tech societies like the nomads of Kotan have warriors. The main difference between a warrior and a soldier is that a warrior owns his own weapons and equipment, and fights at his own choosing rather than when ordered. In return, he gets a share of the glory and the loot. Some warriors take service as mercenaries, guarding caravans or fighting in other people's wars.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Toughness (DR 1) [10]; and either Combat Reflexes or Danger Sense [15].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; and one of Berserk, Glory Hound, or On the Edge [-15].

Primary Skills: Riding (Leap-horse) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-12; Stealth (P/A) DX+1 [4]-12; and 24 points' worth from Beam Weapons (Blaster) (P/E) DX+3 [4]-14*, Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock pistols) (P/E) DX+3 [4]-14*, Broadsword (P/A) DX+3 [16]-14, Buckler (P/E) DX+3 [8]-14, Crossbow (P/E) DX+3 [8]-14, Fencing (P/A) DX+3 [16]-14, or Knife (P/E) DX+3 [8]-14.

Secondary Skills: Brawling (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Cooking (M/E) IQ [1]-10; First Aid/TL4 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Leadership (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Running (P/H) HT+1 [8]-12; Survival (choose area type) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12

Yao Assassin **85 points**

The members of the Guild of Assassins in Cath are hard-working, honest tradesmen who kill people for a living. They strive to give good service, and take pride in their work. Assassins generally work for one of the assassination companies, which function as Patrons to their operatives. Members of the Guild also watch out for one another. The assassins of Cath tend to specialize, with some concentrating on poisons and traps while others become masters of blade combat. For the most part Yao assassins don't use energy weapons in their work, perhaps because any vulgar murderer can blast someone with a power-gun.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Patron (company, 9 or less) [10]; and 20 points from Ambidexterity [10], Combat Reflexes [15], Resistant to Poison [5], Single-Minded [5], and Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Duty (to company, 12 or less) [-10]; Susceptibility to *Awaiile* [-15]; and either Honesty or No Sense of Humor [-10].

Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (city) (M/E) IQ+2 [3]-14; Disguise (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Holdout (P/E) DX [1]-12; Shadowing (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; and any two of Blowpipe (P/H) DX+1 [8]-13, Crossbow (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Darts (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Garrote (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Karate (P/H) DX+1 [8]-13, Knife (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Knife Throwing (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Lockpicking/TL6 (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-15, Poisons (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14, or Traps/TL6 (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-15.

Secondary Skills: Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Driving/TL6 (Auto) (P/A) DX [2]-12; Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13.

The cavaliers of the Yao are the warrior caste, charged with defending Cath from invasion and with upholding the glorious military traditions of the Yao people. But the cavaliers are not what they were. Where once they charged into battle on fierce leap-horses, swinging their swords and blasting away with pistol and catapult, they now devote their time to arcane social rituals while the actual business of soldiering is left to commoners and mercenaries. Still, they do occasionally show flashes of the ancient spirit.

"A thousand details go into the conduct of a cavalier," stated Dordolio. "At the academy we learn degrees of address, signals, language configuration, in which I admit a deficiency. We take instruction in sword address and principles of dueling, genealogy, heraldry; we learn the niceties of costume and a hundred other details."

— Servants of the Wanek

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Military Rank 4 [20]; Status 2 [10]; either Comfortable or Patron (lord of a manse, 9 or less) [10]; and one of Combat Reflexes, Daredevil, Handsome, or Intuition [15].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Yao) [-10]; Susceptibility to *Awailé* [-15]; and either Bad Temper, Bully, Extravagance, Impulsiveness, Laziness, Obdurate, Overconfidence, Self-Centered, or Struggling [-10].

Primary Skills: Beam Weapons (Blaster) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13*; Carousing (P/A) HT+2 [8]-12; Dancing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Fencing (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Gambling (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Heraldry (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; History (M/H) IQ [4]-10; Politics (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12; Riding (Leap-horse) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+4 [4]-14*.

Secondary Skills: Any three of Administration (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ [2]-10; or Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9.

* Beam Weapons includes +1 bonus from IQ 10; Savoir-Faire includes Status bonus.

TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

The range of technologies on Tschai is remarkable, from human tribes living a near-Stone Age existence to the mature interstellar civilization of the Dirdir. What is particularly odd to Terran eyes is the way that advanced and primitive tech exist side by side: Chaschmen who work in the Blue Chasch spaceyards light their homes with oil lamps, and nuclear-powered motor-drays are guarded on the caravan route by Ilanths riding leap-horses and carrying swords.

ALIEN TECHNOLOGIES

The most sophisticated technology is that of the Dirdir and Wanek, who have interstellar travel, contragravity, force shields, and reactionless thrusters. Blue Chasch equipment is considered obsolete by Dirdir standards, so call it TL11 (the Chasch do have TL12 contragravity, however). Old Chasch have lost much of their high technology, but still have stocks of their old equipment.

The Pnume don't seem to be as advanced as the spacefaring invaders of Tschai. Since the Pnume have had literally millions of years to develop their technology, their lack of high technology must be a deliberate choice. Evidently the Pnume use only as much as they need for a comfortable existence. Pnume technology is about TL8.

None of the alien civilizations use personal computers, nor do they appear to make much use of automation or robots. Perhaps this is the "normal" technology path for spacefaring civilizations, while the humans of Earth for some reason advanced their computer technology much more quickly than usual. At any rate, the other civilizations appear to be no more than TL8 in computer technology.

All the advanced societies on Tschai follow what is called the "safetech" path in *GURPS Ultra-Tech 2*. This means nothing that modifies the human (or Dirdir, or Chasch) brain, no obvious cybernetic or genetic modifications of the body, and no artificial intelligences or nanotechnology. Since none of the alien civilizations employ these technologies, GMs may decide that such things are simply impossible in a *GURPS Planet of Adventure* campaign.

CHASCH TECH

Blue Chasch technology lags a little behind the Dirdir and the Wanek, but seems to be as good or better than most equipment available to Earth humans. The base Tech Level for the Blue Chasch is TL11. They have airships held aloft by contragravity, and use personal force fields in dangerous situations; assume their contragrav and force field technology is TL12. In combat the Blue Chasch carry blaster weapons which fire dazzling purple-white stabs of energy, and mortars which launch a variety of grenades. Chasch blaster pistols do 6d+12 impaling damage, have a 1/2 damage range of 180 yards and a max range of 360 yards. They get 45 shots from an advanced C cell and cost \$2,000.

Olfactory Amplifiers

One area of technology in which the Blue Chasch are second to none is that of smell. Smell is their most highly developed sense, and they have a whole range of devices to extend and improve it, just as humans use optical devices to help them see.

Olfactory amplifiers come in two varieties. Sensor antennae are feathery devices like giant moth antennae, about a meter from tip to tip, worn on a special headset. They are tuned to detect faint odors to which the Chasch themselves are not particularly sensitive, permitting the Chasch to smell a broader range of substances. The antennae are connected to earphones which give a simple readout of the molecules detected, using different musical notes for each substance. Anyone of any species can operate sensor antennae with the proper training. With a successful Sensor Operation (Sensor Antennae) roll, the user can identify traces of organic molecules and track by scent. Sensor Antennae function like a TL11 Bioscanner (see p. S70). They cost \$1,000 and weigh 0.5 lbs.

Detector wands are used to increase the sensitivity of the excellent Chasch sense of smell. The device consists of a wand attached to a face mask by a long tube. The wand incorporates a small intake fan and filter devices which increase the concentration of trace molecules in the air. Essentially, the device boosts the Chasch's own sensitivity, providing an extra 2 levels of Acute Smell. Those who don't have a Chasch sense of smell don't get as much benefit (humans gain only 1 level of Acute Smell), and those with the Anosmia disadvantage can't use detector wands at all. Detector wands cost \$500 and weigh 2 lbs. They can run for 1,000 hours on a C cell.

Blue Chasch Sky-Raft

The Blue Chasch sky-raft which recovered Reith's scoutboat was a big cargo carrier, 50 feet long and 20 feet wide, controlled from an ornate belvedere in the stern and decorated with carved lanterns and balustrades. Similar vehicles are used by the Blue Chasch and Old Chasch for war, passenger transport, or pleasure cruising. This craft mounts a pair of mortars, a favorite weapon of the Blue Chasch; more dedicated war flyers carry blaster cannon equivalent to semi-portable blasters, pp. S75, S82.

Subassemblies: Body +5.

Powertrain: 230-kW NPU w/ 4,000-lb. reactionless thruster; 30,000 lbs. contragravity.

Occupancy: 2 XRCS, 12 XRS, 12 XR

Cargo: 1,000 c/5,000 lbs.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	3/100	3/100	3/100	3/100	3/100

Weaponry

2 × TL11 Electromag Mortar [Body:L, R] +2

Equipment

Body: TL11 long-range radio; 10-mile Scan 17 AESA; olfactory scanner (chemscanner + bioscanner); INS and terrain-following radar; winch ST 100.

Statistics

Size: 50' × 20' × 4' **Payload:** 10,000 lbs. **Lwt.:** 30,000 lbs.
Volume: 4,000 cf **SizeMod:** +5 **Price:** \$366,000

HT: 5 **HP:** 3,000 [Body]

aSpeed: 150 **aAccel:** 3 **aDecel:** 12 **aMR:** 3 **aSR:** 5
Stall speed 0. Can hover.

That is not the Dirdir way! You project your own concepts into the Dirdir mind. Remember, they do not look upon organization as an end in itself; this is a human attribute.

— Anacho, The Dirdir

DIRDIR TECH

The Dirdir are a very advanced species, though their rate of technological progress is uneven. The Dirdir might be perturbed to learn how fast humans have rocketed up the technology scale, going from TL3 to TL10 in less than a millennium. It may be that the fragmented and secretive nature of Dirdir society makes it hard for them to develop new technologies, and they do not seem to have much interest in scientific research for its own sake. Moreover, the Dirdir don't like to be dependent on their technology; they use tools and weapons when necessary, but a Dirdir should be able to hunt and fight bare-handed.

Overall, Dirdir technology seems to be about TL12, but they do seem to lag behind the standard *GURPS* technology progression in a couple of areas. Dirdir computers are about TL8, as are any devices which rely heavily on computer processing power. Dirdir sensors split the difference – they have highly advanced detectors, but lack the filtering ability provided by advanced computers – so call them TL10.

Dirdir medical and biological technology is TL12, but Dirdir medicine is designed for their own species; humans and Dirdirmen must get along with TL10 medicine. They do not appear to use genetic manipulation on themselves. Dirdirmen were created by a combination of recombinant DNA tinkering and old-fashioned selective breeding.

Weapons

The most common Dirdir weapons are power-guns, which fire blasts of hot orange plasma along an ultraviolet laser beam. They are used both as personal sidearms and as heavy weapons on Dirdir fighting vehicles. Power-guns are similar to the plasma blasters described on pp. S75, S82. The Dirdir weapons don't splash plasma over a large area, however; only the target is hit. Dirdir also make use of sandblasts when armor penetration is required. They have nuclear torpedoes for use against spaceships or cities.

When burning, the Dirdir carry nerve-fire, the equivalent of a *neurolash*. The victim must roll HT-3 (with bonuses for Strong Will or High Pain Threshold); a successful roll leaves the victim conscious but at a penalty of -2 to ST, DX, IQ, and all skills. The effect lasts for 15-Will turns. On a failed roll the victim is completely incapacitated for 20-Will turns. Besides the standard *neurolash*, Dirdir nerve-fire is also available as a small needle-shaped implant. The implant is equipped with barbs to make removal difficult (a surgeon with a TL8+ operating room may be able to get it out harmlessly, but otherwise pulling out an implant does 2d damage). It requires a successful unarmed combat hit to insert the implant into a victim, and then it can be activated by means of a small remote control unit. The effect is the same as a *neurolash*, but hits automatically, of course. The intensity of the nerve-fire can be adjusted with the control unit. A nerve-fire implant's power cell contains enough energy to keep a prisoner in continual agony for a day, or up to 10 days of intermittent use.

Dirdir use force-shields much like those described on p. S86, providing PD 4 against all attacks. Unlike the Chasch, the Dirdir prefer shields which require skill and fast reactions on the part of the user. They also employ solid shields of transparent plastic, with PD 4 and DR 20.

Dirdirmen sometimes wear artificial claws in imitation of their masters. They can be either gloves with talon fingertips or gadgets like brass knuckles with blades attached. Dirdirmen claws turn punching damage into cutting damage, and protect the hand with DR 1. They are not commonly used by other humans, although hybrid poseurs like Aila Woudiver might wear claws as an affectation.

Other Technology

Glow Bulbs are the Dirdir equivalent of flashlights or lanterns: spheres about the size of a golf ball which are activated by a brisk tap. Glow bulbs are about as bright as a 20-watt lightbulb, and can illuminate an area 2 yards across. A glow bulb can operate continuously for a year, after which it is discarded. They cost \$10.

Tracking Buttons are small black buttons which emit a homing signal. The buttons are about half an inch across, made of a glossy black material which is almost unbreakable. They attach using a static adhesive, but are easily removed with a slight twist. They cost \$50, weigh almost nothing, and can be detected up to 100 miles away.

Tracking Devices come in a variety of models. There are *infrared detectors* to locate prey by body heat and other sensors which detect an individual's carbon dioxide exhalations or scent. The infrared detectors reduce darkness penalties to -1 as long as the target is emitting heat. Carbon dioxide sniffers or scent detectors are the same as Bioscanners (see p. S70).

Dirdir Air-Car

Dirdir-built air-cars are used everywhere, by Dirdir, Dirdirmen, and humans alike. Like most Dirdir craft, the air-car is long and sleek with rakish crescent fins. It carries four people; a fighter variant replaces two of the passengers with heavy sandblasts.

Subassemblies: Body +3.

Powertrain: 60-kW NPU w/ 1,000-lb. reactionless thruster; 1,500 lbs. contragravity.

Occupancy: 1 CS, 3S with crash webs *Cargo:* 8 cf/200 lbs.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	2/10 open	2/10 open	2/10 open	2/10 open	2/10 open

Equipment

Body: TL12 inertial navigation system; autopilot; TL12 AESA with 5-mile range (scan 15); TL10 communicator (5,000-mile range).

Statistics

<i>Size:</i> 9'x 5'x 4'	<i>Payload:</i> 1,000 lbs.	<i>Lwt.:</i> 1,356 lbs.
<i>Volume:</i> 170 cf	<i>SizeMod:</i> +3	<i>Price:</i> \$35,000

HT: 12 *HP:* 150 [Body]

aSpeed: 340 *aAccel:* 15 *aDecel:* 16 *aMR:* 4 *aSR:* 3
Stall speed 0. Can hover.

Dirdir Airship

The Dirdir only operate a few of these big craft, mostly as passenger carriers between their main enclaves in Charchan and Kislován. Because of the risk of attack by Wanek or Chasch, it carries fairly heavy armament, and could easily be used as a warship with little modification. It is only



lightly armored, but its size gives it decent ability to withstand damage, and it could be fitted with force shields for use in battle. The Dirdir often strive to make their craft beautiful to behold; this one has three decks, a central rotunda, balconies of black wood and copper, an ornate scrolled prow, numerous observation cupolas and weapon ports, and a tall vertical fin. Dedicated warships are more austere and functional.

Subassemblies: Body +6, superstructure +4.

Powertrain: 110-kW NPU w/ 4,000-lb. reactionless thruster; 70,000 lbs. contragravity.

Occupancy: 5 RCS, 12 cabins *Cargo:* 5,000 cf/36,000 lbs.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	3/10C	3/10C	3/10C	3/10C	3/10C
Sup:	3/6 wood	3/6 wood	3/6 wood	3/6 wood	-

Weaponry: 8 semi-portable plasma blasters (1F, 1B, 3R, 3L) +2.

Equipment

Body: TL12 radio (5,000-mile range); TL12 INS, TL12 AESA (scan 19); TL12 Thermograph (Scan 11); TL12 Terrain-following radar.

Statistics

Size: 60' x 10' x 20' *Payload:* 34,000 lbs. *Lwt.:* 68,800 lbs.

Volume: 12,000cf [Body], 600cf [Sup] *SizeMod:* +6

Price: \$1,100,600

HT: 12 *HP:* 6,000 [Body] 750 [Sup]

aSpeed: 125mph *aAccel:* 1 *aDecel:* 12 *aMR:* 3 *aSR:* 5
Stall speed 0. Can hover.

WANEK TECHNOLOGY

The Wanek are among the most advanced civilizations. Their technology is at least the equal of the Dirdir in most respects. Wanek civilization is generally TL12, with a strong emphasis on electrostatics. The Wanek are not especially fond of gadgetry. They don't wear clothes unless they need protection from hostile environments, and they don't carry much equipment.

Wanek have starships, contragravity flyers, and all the other appurtenances of interstellar civilization. Like the Dirdir, they seem to be at about TL8 in computer technology. Just about all Wanek gear is completely waterproof and pressure-resistant, and can be used underwater if at all possible.

The Wanek developed the sandblast, now in widespread use. They have since perfected a smaller and more portable version, but its use is confined to soldiers. In combat Wanek wear personal force fields similar to those of the Chasch. Sandblasts aren't as effective underwater, so the Wanek employ small rocket-torpedo guns like Gyroc weapons for undersea combat. Unlike the Dirdir, the Wanek prefer to wage war at a distance using nuclear torpedoes and heavy weapons.

Since they are amphibious, Wanek underwater equipment is naturally the best. To travel long distances, Wanek make use of underwater impeller-packs, which use electrostatic jets to reach high speeds. They are identical to the Aquasled described on p. UT114, with a top speed of 30 mph and an endurance of 8 hours on a D cell. Wanek use larger submarines to carry loads between their island fortresses, and generally seem to prefer watercraft to flying vehicles. Their spaceships are built to float and land in water, and some of them can function as submersibles as well.

Wanekmen make extensive use of artificial gills, allowing Wanekmen to breathe underwater for up to five days at a time. They weigh 10 lbs. and cost \$500. The outer garments of Wanekmen are much like the TL8 wet suits described on p. UT22; they function as diving suits but are comfortable enough to use as everyday wear. Wanekmen bodysuits have DR 1.

SPACESHIPS

Spacecraft in the universe of Tschai are highly advanced, with faster-than-light drives, reactionless thrusters, and contragravity. Even small space-boats are capable of interstellar travel, and in practice there is no real distinction between starships and spaceships. The faster-than-light drive is probably a kind of warp drive (and the reactionless thrusters and warp drive may in fact be the same system).

Wanek spaceships are bulky, functional craft, designed to operate as well underwater as in air or space. Like all Wanek vehicles, they are black and featureless on the outside. It's likely that Wanek ships are armed with railguns and torpedoes.

Blue Chasch ships are flamboyant and excessively decorated. The Chasch build few ships nowadays, so many of the vessels in service are decades or even centuries old. If the GM allows, the Chasch would be certain to equip their ships with "chameleon" surfaces, so that they can display all kinds of gaudy colors and patterns. The Chasch probably arm their ships with particle-beam cannons and torpedoes, and employ powerful force screens for protection.

Dirdir spaceships tend to be long and spindle-shaped, with elaborate fins and sponsons. Ships built purely for war are more functional. The Dirdir designers are likely to sacrifice armor for speed. Dirdir weapons are probably fusion guns, torpedoes, and particle beams.

HUMAN TECHNOLOGIES

Among the humans of Tschai, the general tech level is TL4: sailing vessels, steel weapons, oil lamps, and wind and water power. More advanced societies, like Cath or Sivilshe, are TL5 or 6. There are also primitive jungle and marsh tribes limited to TL2. The highest human-built technology is TL6; anything more advanced is alien equipment. The alien masters of Tschai try to keep humans from becoming more advanced (although they're more concerned about the possibility of humans organizing into large and powerful states), but simple economics does the job for them. It is always easier to get alien tech than to unify the people of the planet into a single economy and raise the general tech level.



VEHICLES

Although motor vehicles are less common on Tschai than on Earth, there are some types which adventurers are likely to encounter. On the steppes, caravans depend on motor-drays while raiders often use electric motorcycles. At sea, pirates often sail motor-galleys.

Motor-Dray

This big vehicle is typical of the drays used by caravans on the steppes of Kotan. It is built with TL6 human technology, but power is supplied by a Chasch radiothermal generator. The dray can be converted to animal power with a team of pull-beasts. This is a pure cargo carrier, but variants are numerous. Similar vehicles fitted with 50 passenger seats serve as long-distance buses on the roads of Kachan and Kislovan. Others have bunk space for 20 as barrack-wagons on the caravan routes across Kotan. With sandblasts mounted at the corners, a motor-dray becomes a gun cart suitable for repelling steppe raiders. The dray's armor is open-frame protection against collisions, not gunfire.

Subassemblies: Body +4, six off-road Wheels +1.

Powertrain: 500-kW TL11 RTG w/ 500-kW wheeled drivetrain.

Occupancy: 1 RCS, 1RS Cargo: 2,000 cf/60,000 lbs.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	3/10 open	3/10 open	3/10 open	3/10 open	3/10 open

Equipment

Body: ST 100 Winch [F]; cargo ramp [B].

Statistics

Size: 10'×10'×30' *Payload:* 60,000 lbs. *Lwt.:* 100,000 lbs.
Volume: 2,520 cf [Body] *SizeMod:* +4 *Price:* \$58,400

HT: 11 *HP:* 3,000 [Body] 120 [Whl]

gSpeed: 50 *gAccel:* 3 *gDecel:* 10 *gMR:* 0.5 *aSR:* 4
 Very high GP. Off-road speed 8.

Motor-Galley

The pirates of the Draschade Ocean favor long sleek motor-galleys driven by electrostatic impellers (with oars as a power-saving backup). They have a shallow draft, allowing them to be hidden away in small fjords along the coast of Kachan or Rakh. Pirate galleys don't carry much protection, however, and a few well-placed shots from a sandblast or an

energy cannon can disable or sink one. They are built with TL4 technology save for the propulsion and power systems, and often use TL6 navigation instruments. Weaponry varies tremendously, but usually includes at least one sandblast. Often the pirates run the weapon off the same power supply as the motor, reducing the ship's speed when it is firing.

Subassemblies: Body +5, Open Mount -1.

Powertrain: 200-kW NPU w/ 200-kW hydrojet; 12 rowing positions.

Occupancy: 14 XRCS, 1 XCS, 1 cabin, and 20 hammocks

Cargo: 60,000 lbs.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	2/10N	2/10N	2/10N	2/10N	2/10N

Weaponry: 1 sandblast (F).

Statistics

Size: 7'×10'×60' *Payload:* 64,000 lbs. *Lwt.:* 88,800 lbs.
Volume: 5,460cf [Body] *SizeMod:* +5 *Price:* \$41,800

HT: 8 *HP:* 1,500 [Body]

wSpeed: 20 powered, 5 rowed *wAccel:* 1

wDecel: 0.3 *wMR:* 0.05 *wSR:* 4

Draft 4 feet.

Steppe Motorcycle

This tough motorbike is built for off-road travel on the steppes of Kotan; it carries extra power cells to give it long range. Steppe nomads use them for scouting and raiding, and Chaschmen police ride them on patrol in and around the cities of the Chasch. It is not very comfortable, but it is dependable and can go almost anywhere. The bikes are built with human TL6 technology but use Chasch TL11 power cells.

Subassemblies: Body +0, two off-road Wheels -2.

Powertrain: 2 Chasch E cells w/ 50-kW wheeled drivetrain.

Fuel: Power for 10 hours' operation.

Occupancy: 1 XCCS, 1XCS Cargo: 2,000 cf/60,000 lbs.

Statistics

Size: 3'×2'×7' *Payload:* 400 lbs. *Lwt.:* 800 lbs.
Volume: 7 cf [Body] *SizeMod:* +0 *Price:* \$5,960

HT: 12 *HP:* 27 [Body] 6 [Whl].

gSpeed: 180 *gAccel:* 10 *gDecel:* 10 *gMR:* 1.5 *aSR:* 2
 High GP. Off-road speed 30.

WEAPON TABLES

The weapon tables below use the same format as those in *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Space*. Cost and weight assume a fully loaded weapon, and all the effects of improved technology are included in the weapon stats. Legality classes are listed, although on Tschai weapons are seldom controlled.

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Type	Damage	Reach	Cost	Weight	Min ST	LC	TL	Special Notes
Dirdirman Claws	cut	thr	C	\$100	1	-	4	4	Use Brawling or Karate bonuses; DR1.
Knife-foil	imp cut	thr sw	C C,1	\$400	4	9	4	4	May be used as buckler.
Tschai Rapier	imp cut	thr+1 sw-2	1 1	\$500	2	7	5	4	Max. thrust damage 1d+1. Max. swing damage 1d.
Sting	imp	thr+2	1	\$800	1	-	4	8	Extension attack uses ST16.
Stun-wand	Spcl.	-	1	\$650	2	-	5	10	Armor over DR2 protects fully; victim must roll vs. HT-3, adjusted for Will, with a penalty equal to the number of prior successful stun-wand hits, and +3 for High Pain Threshold. If successful, victim is at -2 on ST, DX, and IQ for 15-Will turns, minimum of 1; if hit on a limb, that limb is useless for the same period. If unsuccessful, the victim can do <i>nothing</i> for 15-Will turns; on a critical failure, he passes out for 20-Will turns, minimum one minute. Low Pain Threshold doubles <i>all</i> penalties. See pp. S75, S83, "Type 1 neurolash," for more information.



Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Modf	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	RoF	Shots	ST	Rel	Cost	LC	Hld	TL
Chasch Blaster	Ver.	Imp.	6d+12	10	6	190	360	2	3~	22/c	5	-1	\$500	3	-1	11
Dirdir Power-gun	Ver.	Spcl.	4d+12	7	5	130	260	1	3~	10/2B	5	-1	\$300	3	+3	12
Energy Cell	Crit.	Imp.	3d	14	0	10	100	5	20	100	0	0	\$600	4	+1	10
Hand Catapult	Crit.	Imp.	1d-3	10	1	140	175	4	1/2	1	7	0	\$200	4	-4	4
Sandblast	Ver.	C.	4d-2	11	13	750	4,000	12	20	25,000	12T	-1	\$1,200	0	Ne	11
Scout Pistol	Ver.	Spcl.	9	0	50	900	.1	3	~	50/tAA	7	-1	\$1,000	2	+2	10

WEAPONS

Humans on Tschai use a combination of advanced alien-built energy guns and their own low-tech missile and melee weapons. Firearms are rare, and are limited to crude black-powder pistols. Nobody makes cartridges or caseless ammunition, because the effort would be better spent on getting energy weapons.

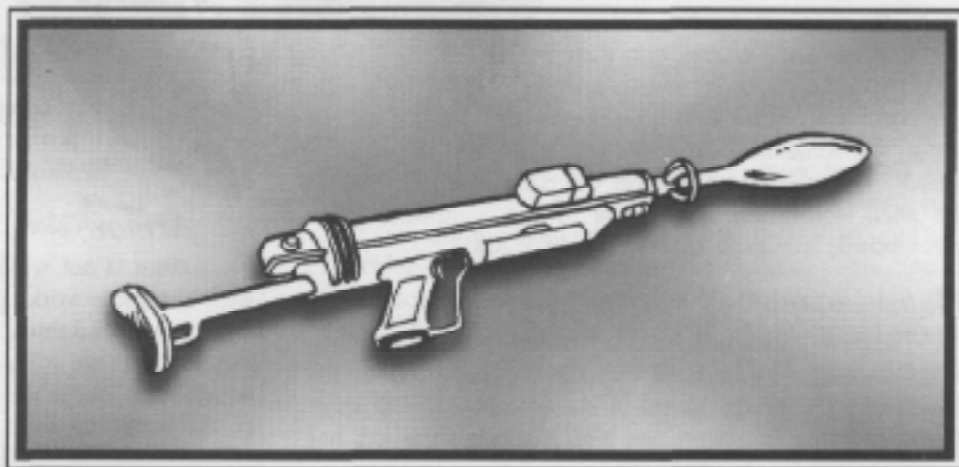
Rapiers

The Tschai rapier is a long flexible sword with a flaring diamond-shaped tip like the tail of a stingray. It is primarily a thrusting weapon, but the edges of the flaring tip are sharp and can slash. Rapiers are widely used on Tschai; Adam Reith saw them among the steppe nomads of Kotan, the cavaliers of Yao, and in several other societies.

Knife-foils

A unique weapon combining the functions of a buckler and a

sword in one object, the knife-foil is popular with the nomads of Kotan. A knife-foil is shaped like an isosceles triangle, nine inches wide at the base and a foot in length. The points of the triangle are elongated and sharpened for stabbing, and the long edges are sharpened for slashing. It is held in the hand with the base just above the wrist and the blade extending six inches beyond the knuckles. Knife-foils use the Knife skill for attacks and the Buckler skill for defense, and do not suffer the combination weapon penalty. Used as bucklers they have PD 1.



Stings

A favored melee weapon among Dirdirmen, a sting has a spring-loaded telescoping shaft with a pointed tip. When folded, the sting is about six inches long and the tip is safely retracted. By thumbing the catch, the powerful memory metal shoots out to its full length of four feet, driving the tip into a foe with great force. Once extended, a sting can be used as a rapier for thrusting attacks, and the springy steel makes it very good for whip attacks as well. For the initial attack, a sting can be used for an Extension Attack maneuver, (see p. 82) doing 1d+4 damage. Subsequently it does normal thrusting damage (impaling) and requires Fencing skill. It has no cutting edge. Winding a sting back to its retracted position takes 1 minute.

Other Swords

Since melee weapons are still commonly used in almost all human societies on Tschai, there is naturally a great variety among swords and knives, with many types essentially identical to weapons used by cultures in Earth history. The Gnashers of Pera, for example, used fairly ordinary broadswords with guards and stabbing tips, much like European swords from the 17th or 18th centuries.

Guns

Firearms are relatively rare on Tschai. In most cultures it is easier to get an alien-made energy gun than a gunpowder slug-thrower. In remote areas like north and central Kotan, black-powder pistols are sometimes used by Hamh caravan guards, who need the firepower but can't easily get alien tech. These are similar to the single-shot black-powder flintlocks described on p. B208.

Hand Catapults

The most common missile weapon in low-tech communities on Tschai is the hand catapult, a pistol-sized device which uses the energy stored in elastic cables to fire short feathered bolts. The range and hitting power are good, but

reloading a catapult takes a great deal of time. Steppe nomads often carry several pairs of catapults in battle. They are fired using the Crossbow skill. Hand catapults cost \$200 and weigh 4 lbs.

Power Guns

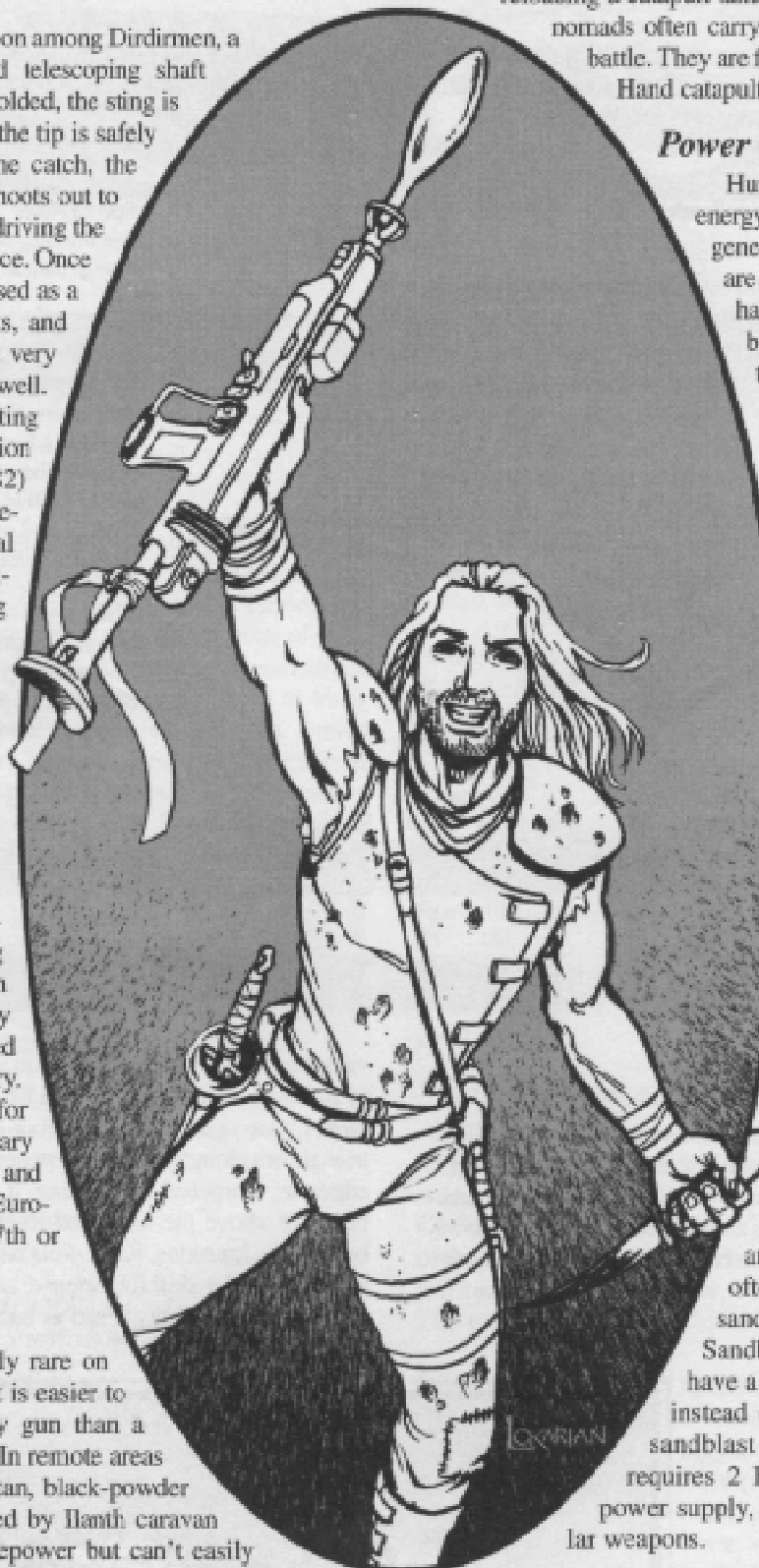
Humans on Tschai group most energy weapons together under the generic term "power guns." They are all alien-built, though some have been lovingly preserved by human owners for centuries. The most common energy weapons in human hands are Dirdir plasma guns and Chasch blasters. Because of problems with getting proper components and trained armorers for maintenance and repairs, all human-owned power guns have a malfunction number of Crit.

Sandblasts

The most common high-tech weapons found in human hands are sandblasts. First introduced by the Wanek, these guns accelerate tiny particles of silicon to near light speed so that each grain hits with the power of a bullet. Sandblasts can maintain an awesome rate of fire as long as they have power. The Wanek and other advanced civilizations use precisely shaped silicon spheres for ammunition, but humans often employ ordinary grains of sand, sorted through a sieve. Sandblasts loaded with plain sand have a malfunction number of Crit. instead of the usual Ver. Though a sandblast itself is fairly light, it requires 2 E cells or a constant 80kw power supply, so most are used as vehicular weapons.

Armor

Armor is not widely used on Tschai. In most cultures with the metalworking technology to make it, there are energy guns and thrusting swords which make armor obsolete. Helmets are still sometimes used, usually steel casques which splay out at the bottom to protect the wearer's neck on the back and sides. Cavaliers of Yao wear elaborately



decorated helmets on the battlefield, and add gilded breastplates if they can afford them, but the ordinary soldiers under their command are unarmored.

TERRAN EQUIPMENT

Some of Adam Reith's equipment appeared almost as good as Wanek gear, but Reith was surprised to discover personal force fields. We'll call the humans of Earth TL10, with TL12 contragravity and reactionless thrusters. Terran technology in *Planet of Adventure* almost exactly matches the tech in *GURPS Traveller*.

The equipment used by the Federal Space Agency includes spacecraft with contragravity drives, energy weapons, and computerized binoculars. GMs can use any standard TL9 and TL10 gear with little alteration. A few noteworthy items include:

Energy Cell

The Federal Space Agency energy cell is a versatile piece of equipment. Its primary use is to provide power for weapons and devices, just like a standard *GURPS* D cell. However, the Space Agency energy cell can also release its energy directly in the form of a destructive beam. Each energy cell has a recharge socket at one end and a crystal lens at the other. A switch on the side operates the lens. At low power it functions as a flashlight, giving light continuously for 3,000 hours before depleting the cell. At high power, the lens emits a gush of raw energy similar to a laser beam, rapidly using up the cell's stored power (it can only be fired on full automatic, using the laser autofire rules). Stats for the energy cell beam are given on the weapons table.

Pistol

The standard sidearm for Space Agency scouts is a small-caliber (2mm) electromagnetic pistol or Gauss gun firing explosive needles. It is not intended as a battlefield weapon; its range is short and the needles don't have much armor-penetration power. It is a survival weapon, good for battling dangerous animals or hunting food. A scout pistol shot does 1d-4

damage (with an armor divisor of 2); if the round penetrates the target's DR, any remaining damage is multiplied by 5 as the needle explodes internally.

Osmotic Film

Osmotic film is a square yard of thin plastic, permeable to water in one direction only. Placed on the ground, the film gradually sucks out droplets of pure water. Packed into a canteen, it becomes a purifier. One square yard of osmotic film can draw about 1 gallon of liquid from ordinary fertile soil in 8 hours. In desert terrain, it can draw only half a gallon in that time, while in a wet climate it can produce a gallon in 2 to 4 hours. Osmotic film is best used at night, when the heat of the sun won't evaporate the water as fast as it appears. Osmotic film requires no power, but sheets gradually lose their permeability as the catalysts and micropumps in the film break down. They work at full capacity for a month, and the amount of water extracted drops by half for each additional month. A square yard of film costs \$30 and weighs a negligible amount.

Scanscope

The Federal Space Agency Mark XI Photomultiplying Binocular Telescope is a standard piece of equipment. It has a magnification range of up to 1,000 times and incorporates light-amplification but not infrared vision. It is otherwise identical to the Televue's described on p. UT20. A scanscope costs \$1,500 (but obviously is not available for sale on Tschai).

Skin-Spray

A useful substitute for bandages, skin-spray is equivalent to plastiskin (see p. S95), save that it is applied with a spray bottle rather than patches. A bottle of skin-spray capable of covering one square yard of skin weighs 1 pound and costs \$300.

Survival Pack

The standard Federal Space Agency survival pack is a backpack occupying half a cubic foot and weighing 20 lbs. It contains the following: 1 standard medkit (see p. S96), 1 transcom, 1 energy cell, 1 sheet of osmotic film, a filter canteen, a heat-reflective blanket, food pills equivalent to 32 man-days, a signal mirror, 1,000 feet of synthetic rope, a needle pistol, and a scanscope.

Transcom

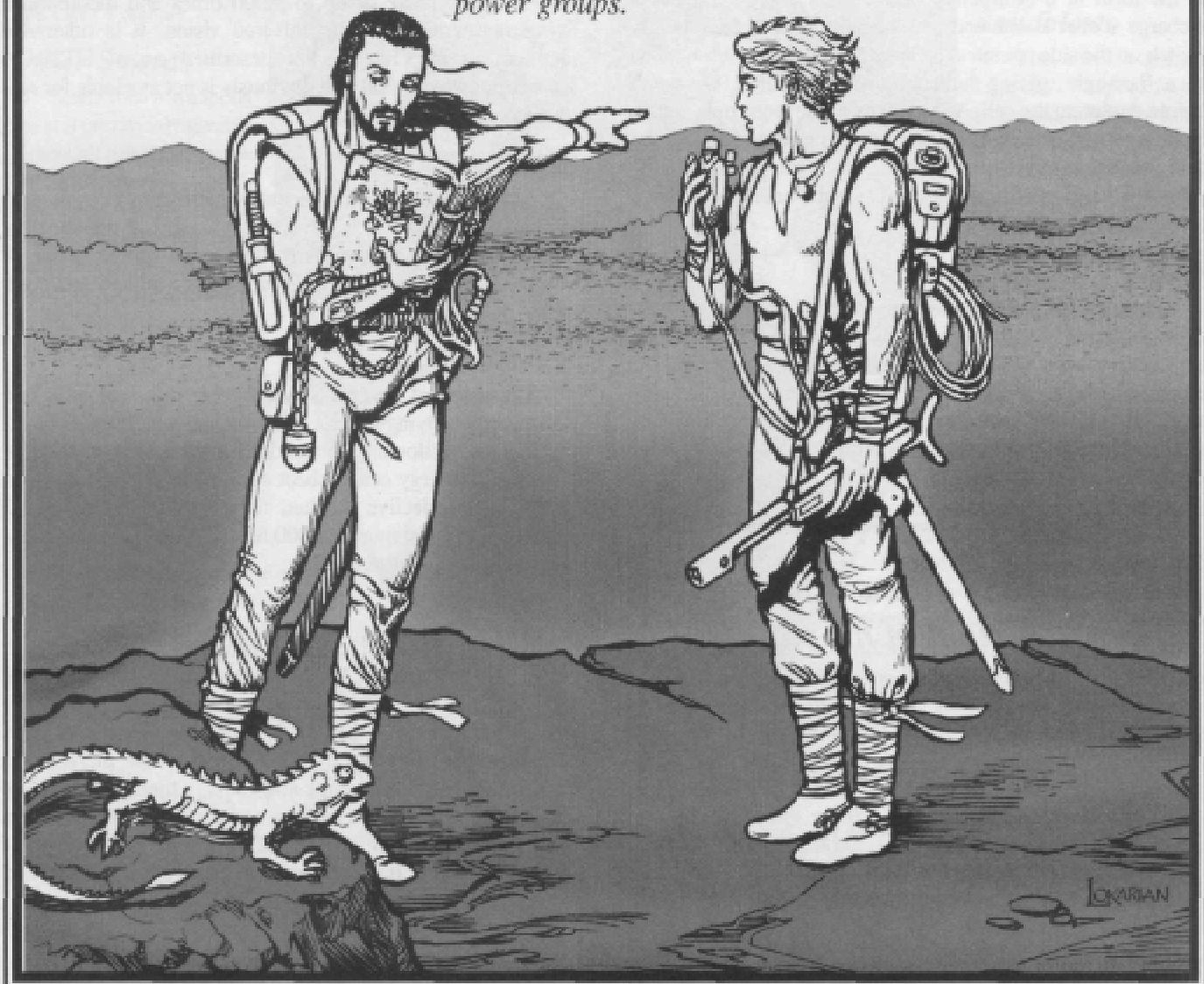
A transcom is a TL10 long-range communicator with some useful features. An automated distress beacon can keep ping-pong out a signal or a prerecorded message until the power cell runs out. Space Agency transcoms can page each other, sending out a coded signal which alerts other FSA transcoms within range and causing them to send back a locator signal giving a bearing and distance. This function is automatic, but can be shut off by the user if he doesn't want to be found. It is extremely helpful in locating downed or injured personnel.

... Reith, with a sinking heart, thought of his survival kit dangling from the tree, with its drugs, transcom, scanscope, energy pack, and, most especially, weapons.

— City of the Chasch

CAMPAIGNS & ADVENTURES

On Tschai, adventure is not hard to come by. In fact, it may be difficult to avoid. And adventure follows adventure . . . anyone who comes to prominence, especially if they display new technology or flout local conventions, will become interesting to both the alien rulers and the local human power groups.



CREATING TSCHAI CULTURES

While the various human and alien cultures of Tschai described in Chapters 2 and 3 hold the potential for a multitude of campaigns and adventures, GMs may wish to build on the existing structure of the world and create their own societies. (This is especially likely if the players have read *Planet of Adventure* themselves.)

However, anyone creating a new tribe or city for Tschai does have to face the fact that his home-brewed creations are going to be cheek by jowl with the work of one of science fiction's greatest world-builders. Just reaching into the stereotypes file and picking out a standard-issue "warrior culture" or "fishing village" won't cut it.

By way of illustration, consider two of the groups encountered by Adam Reith in the course of his adventures. The Kruthe fit most people's definition of a "warrior culture" – they raid caravans, duel among themselves, and are generally a pugnacious lot. But how many other bands of nomadic warriors take the personalities of the emblems they wear on their hats, or dispose of the dead by catapulting them into the air? In the same vein, the coastal folk of Gozed seem to be an ordinary fishing community – except for their religion of human sacrifice to the sea-scorpions.

Cultures on Tschai have *color*. They have weird customs and strange rituals and bizarre superstitions. They are not societies from past or modern-day Earth transposed to another planet.

WEIRD RELIGIONS

Tschai boasts a great variety of religious belief systems. Most religions in Jack Vance's stories are at least a little ridiculous, at least when viewed by outsiders. When creating new religions for Tschai, the GM should probably strive for the same slightly ironic view. There is no One True Faith, and the most fervent believers tend to be bigoted fanatics.

One interesting possibility is a cult of atheists, who deny the existence of gods, holding elaborate ritual ceremonies of denial. They might have doctrinal schisms over whether gods are actually impossible or merely nonexistent. Atheists might even wage "holy wars" against religions that worship gods.

A truly pantheistic cult might acknowledge all possible gods – for surely the gods must be perfect beings, and one aspect of perfection is existence; therefore, all possible gods must exist. It would be a good religion for unscrupulous sorts; since everything must be forbidden by at least one deity, and required by another, everything is equally virtuous and equally sinful. Anything goes!

For the sake of interesting adventures, religions on Tschai are likely to have either fanatical cultist assassins, greedy priests with boards of treasure, good-looking sacrificial victims, or all three. Religious beliefs can make for interesting complications in roleplaying, if the goals of the party are in conflict with the edicts of the gods. One thing which is *not*

likely to cause problems with the priests is advanced technology. The people of Tschai know that the alien masters have all kinds of high-tech weapons and equipment, and know that it isn't magical.

WEIRD GOVERNMENTS

There are lots of different ways to make decisions or pick the people to make them. On Earth the most common means are heredity (the child or other heir of the ruler becomes the ruler) or election (some subset of the population votes for the ruler). But these are by no means the only methods. One simple method would be to pick rulers randomly. Selection by reading omens or astrological signs is effectively random, although if the process involves any kind of specialized knowledge the soothsayers and astrologers can fudge their results.

*We pay sizable tithes
to the priests; they take
all responsibility for
appeasing Bisme; we have
no further inconvenience.*

*– Traveler,
Servants of the
Wanek*

Perhaps a society chooses rulers by their prowess at some activity. The imperial Chinese chose many of their officials by written examinations. One might argue that modern Americans pick people based on their ability to raise money and make speeches. Often, warlike cultures pick leaders who are good soldiers or generals. A mercantile society might simply sell offices to the highest bidder. Weirder possibilities include selecting rulers by playing some complex game, by artistic ability, or giving the highest office to whichever man can stay awake the longest.

Or a society might not have any rulers at all. The citizens might have voluntary committees to handle various situations; this seems to be the Dirdir system. In many American Indian tribes, going to war was an individual choice, not a tribal decision. A culture might leave all decision-making to omens or lots (as the Kruthe do by tossing moon-disks). Making decisions randomly may not be the most effective way to run a society, but even Earth history has examples of worse systems.

VANCIAN NOMENCLATURE

Jack Vance is acknowledged as a master of invented names and words for his alien societies. In *Planet of Adventure* one can spot some fairly simple rules for creating Tschai terms.

Place names, personal names and tribal names are not translated in the book. We meet Lokhars and people of Cath, rather than "Hill People" or residents of "The Peninsula." Presumably these names are all adapted from some ancient or alien language, much as place names in western Europe are often garbled forms of Celtic or Latin words. Humans of the servitor races – Dirdirmen, Chaschmen, and the others – have names given or inspired by their masters.

Otherwise, most terminology is translated. Weapons are called sand-blasts, animals are called nighthounds or leap-horses. The religious cults encountered by Reith have names like the Cult of the Female Mystery, or the Yearning Refluxives. As the latter term indicates, Vance does often use archaic or slightly obscure English words, and Game Masters can do the same with the help of a good dictionary or thesaurus. (It's worth noting, too, that when Vance does use an obscure term he uses it *correctly*: "reflux" means to flow back to the source, and the Yearning Refluxives long to return to a mythical home planet.)

To streamline roleplaying adventures, GMs may want to try to have one NPC who embodies the government. Real governments are usually large and complex, but players have trouble remembering too many names and people. It's much easier for them to keep track if there is one "boss" in a given society. The government doesn't have to be a one-man state; even in a democracy there's a President or a Prime Minister. If the GM wants to emphasize internal political struggles, then maybe each faction in the society should be personified by a leader or spokesman who interacts with the player characters. (Of course, if you want a *Paranoia*-style society of impenetrable bureaucracy, then the more faceless minor officials the players have to deal with, the better.)

WEIRD ECONOMICS

A culture may have an unusual way of allocating property and resources. In modern Western culture we tend to think of a market economy based on voluntary exchange of goods and services as the ultimate economic system, but other arrangements are possible. Wealth may be tied to status, so that members of the elite are entitled to a bigger share of everything by virtue of who they are. Perhaps the upper class can simply take what they want, and only the peasants have to pay.

Or maybe a society doesn't believe anything can be sold at all, only rented. If you want a tool, you rent it from the blacksmith, and keep paying him for it until the tool breaks or wears out. Consumable goods would serve as "currency." Trading would be a matter of sub-leasing items.

While sequins are the most common form of money on Tschai, it's not impossible for an isolated group to use some other medium of exchange – precious metals, livestock, huge carved stones, or even elaborately decorated pieces of paper. Endless complications can arise from the fact that what is valuable in one place might be nearly worthless in another.

INVENTING SOCIETIES

When inventing a new society for player characters to encounter on Tschai, the GM has to start with the dry factual details of how people live and what they do, then build from that to the exotic features.

Nuts and Bolts

The first thing to decide is how large the new culture is going to be. Is it a village, a city, or a kingdom? The masters of Tschai don't seem to allow any human states much bigger than a kingdom or a confederation of city-states. Nomads might control a large, sparsely populated region and call it an empire, but any state which might be able to threaten the alien overlords will probably be destroyed in a rain of atomic torpedoes.

Having picked the size, the next thing to decide is how the people in the society make their living. Are they farmers, herders, or fishermen? Do they trade? Do they manufacture goods or mine some valuable resource? Obviously the available technology affects

what kind of an economy is possible – farming or fishing demand at least TL1, and manufacturing isn't going to be a major part of the economy until about TL5. On Tschai most human cultures are restricted to TL4, which means that most societies are likely to be based on agriculture. If a state is more advanced than about TL6, there must be some reason why it hasn't been destroyed. Is it governed by human agents of the alien masters? Or is it small and isolated enough to escape their notice?

How do the people in this society govern themselves? Two things to consider are who has the decision-making power, and what limits to that power exist. Who holds the power can vary tremendously, from an absolute monarch ruling alone to the participatory democracy of a town meeting. Of course, often the titles and legal powers of the rulers don't reflect who really calls the shots: Louis XIII was the absolute monarch of France in theory, but everyone knew Cardinal Richelieu was really in charge.

Often the means of selecting rulers also limits what they can do. Elected officials must protect the interests of a majority of the voters. Monarchs whose power depends on the support of feudal lords have to consider what those lords are likely to favor. Theocratic rulers must follow the tenets of the state religion . . . or appear to.

One type of government which seems to be very rare on Tschai is democracy. Most states are ruled by a monarch or an oligarchic council. Perhaps the widespread suspicion on Tschai makes it hard to keep a democracy functioning.

Once the "machinery" of the society is in place, the GM can start making things fantastic and exotic. Give the people weird habits, a bizarre religion, or some peculiar institutions. Examples include the strange divided society of the Purples and Blacks in Ao Hidis, or the assassination business in Cath. Every society should have some vivid and distinctive element, something which the players will recall years later – "that place where they all wear masks."

But strange customs don't simply develop out of thin air. They usually have (or once had) a practical reason behind them. The GM should think about why people might do something, and what purpose it fills in their society. In general, humans do things for one of three reasons: desire, fear, or conviction.



When inventing a social custom or habit, think about what motivation it stems from. Is it based on desire? People do some amazing things for money or status. Is it the result of a fear? Fear of what? Many religious practices stem from a fear of death or punishment after death. Or is it based on a conviction that it is simply the morally correct thing to do?

As an example of a conviction, consider a society in which eating is considered a disgraceful act like elimination, and is only performed in secret. Certainly there is no desire or fear involved in that. What kind of culture is likely to have such a practice? Perhaps the people have a very strong notion of the distinction between the physical body and the mind or soul. Anything which reminds them that they are physical beings is repellent, so they will probably also be squeamish about other bodily functions, too. This, in turn, suggests that here must be "safety valves" or customs which allow the group to survive at all. Perhaps they have festivals at which the norms are reversed and people can indulge in all the pleasures of the flesh.

There are likely to be some practical reasons behind customs, too. Eating in secret does mean that contaminated food is unlikely to harm a whole roomful of diners, and would tend to cut down on wasteful displays of elaborate dinners. Maybe the custom originated in a time of scarcity, when food was in short supply and much of it was unhealthy.

It's important to think through all the implications of things. In a society that considers eating shameful, there will be no fancy restaurants. In fact, visitors may find it difficult to find anyone willing to sell food at all! Cooks may be considered unclean (or sacred). Food markets are going to be somber, dignified affairs, with customers buying what they need and hurrying away, perhaps even keeping their faces hidden as they shop. Instead of dinners as a social ritual, the people may do something different – meditate together, or perhaps inhale vapors that induce visions. In such a culture, being fat would be a sign of weakness or even corruption.

A culture which denies the body and develops the mind is unlikely to have much interest in athletics. People will strive to show their excellence at intellectual pursuits. It's possible that asceticism and even self-mutilation will be seen as proper conduct. The people might be obsessive about keeping clean (like the Brahmins of India), but could just as well neglect their appearance and stay dirty most of the time (like medieval Christian monks).

Finally, the GM should note what the consequences are for someone who fails to observe a culture's taboos. Will the people mob a stranger and tear him apart if he eats in public? Or will he simply not get any invitations to social events? Sometimes reactions will be mixed: in our own society, someone who gets into a fight may be prosecuted for assault, but may also get a reputation as a macho tough guy. In our hypothetical example culture, eating in public might be grounds for having a tooth pulled out as punishment, but might also make the eater seem sexually irresistible.

BLANK SPOTS ON THE MAP

The question of where to put a newly-invented culture is important. Obviously it can't be located in any of the places already described. Game Masters can borrow from Vance's existing societies and create a neighboring culture with some similarities. The stories mention a few places which Adam Reith never managed to visit in his wanderings.

The northeastern part of Charchan is apparently an advanced and densely populated region. The Dirdir have a major presence there, including their academies at Eliasir and Anismna where Dirdirmen technical specialists are trained. That region may also be the home of the Binth, Walalukians, or Shemolai – cultures as advanced as the Yao.

When placing a society, the GM should consider what sort of culture it is, and pick an appropriate place. If it's a violent, anarchic group, it probably shouldn't be plopped down next to the hypersophisticated Yao, but might fit in perfectly near the quarrelsome Khors of northern Kislovan. A rigidly bureaucratic society would go well in eastern Charchan, but would seem out of place on the steppes of Kotan.

good place to put newly-invented cultures. Adam Reith spent a little time sailing in coastal waters off Kislovan, but saw little of the rest of the Schanizade. It covers nearly half of Tschai's surface, and could easily hold hundreds of islands as big as Hawaii or even New Zealand. There could be Wanek fortresses, ruins of pre-Chasch conquerors of Tschai, or even secret enclaves of some previously unknown race of aliens.

Tschai's polar regions are another region Reith never visited. The climate there may be warm enough during the summer to support a modest civilization. Some people on Earth once speculated that the poles were openings into a hollow interior – a creative Game Master could ring changes on that idea by placing major entrances to the realm of the Pnume at Tschai's poles.

FREE TSCHAI!

One ambitious campaign goal is for the PCs to arrive on Tschai with the intention of organizing a revolt of the humans against their alien masters. The Chaschmen would be the obvious targets of such an effort, as the fall of Dadiche and Adam Reith's exposure of the Chasch rebirth hoax has laid the groundwork. The Chasch themselves are weak enough that a revolt might succeed, and the Dirdir or Wanek are unlikely to come to their aid.

A space war between Earth and the Dirdir would shift Terran operations toward the Dirdir. The Dirdirmen are probably too loyal, but hybrids and "sub-men" laboring in Dirdir factories could perhaps be encouraged to rise up and overthrow their masters. Certainly the Dirdir haven't won any friends with their taste for human meat and their love of hunting humans. They are good at terrorizing the people of Tschai, and any Terran agents would have to overcome ages of conditioning.

The early stages of organizing a revolt would involve lots of sneaking into alien-ruled cities, meetings with crackpot revolutionaries, narrow escapes from the police, and stirring speeches to skeptical masses. Once things are in full swing, the focus shifts to winning battles, rescuing captives, evading or counterpunching punitive raids, and keeping spirits up after reverses.

THE TSCHAI CAMPAIGN

The obvious starting point for a campaign set on Tschai is just after Adam Reith's adventures there. Since Tschai is such a weird and alien world, it's difficult to play native characters without a careful study of Vance's novels. The obvious solution is to have a group of Terran characters visiting Tschai and experiencing all its marvels and mysteries.

Terran exploration of Tschai is likely to proceed in three stages: scouting, research, and open contact. Initially, explorers and secret agents will try to learn more about the alien masters. In the second stage, scientists investigate

Tschai and its people, experiment with the alien masters, and to begin the delicate process of winning acceptance for humans as the equals of Dirdir and Chasch. Later on, there may also be a place for special operations troops, merchants, or even tourists!

Phase One

Adam Reith's report on Tschai contains a great deal of valuable information, but it raises a great many questions as well. Just how powerful are Tschai's alien masters? What are their intentions? Is it possible to establish peaceful relations with them? And how can the government of Earth help the humans of Tschai win their independence? The answers to all those questions are on Tschai itself.

After Adam Reith's return to Earth, the Federal Space Agency will send more scouts to Tschai.

Even without the Wanekmen lobbying torpedoes at ships in orbit, the other advanced races on Tschai are still warlike and trigger-happy. To avoid the fate of the *Explorer IV*, the Terrans will be inserted in stealthy scout-boats, dropped by cruisers hanging back out of detection range.

Once on the surface, the scouts will operate in small groups, doing their best to remain inconspicuous. Their main objectives are to explore the parts of the planet Reith didn't visit, and to learn about all the human cultures in order to prepare to establish formal contact with them.

Scouts who don't get shot down on landing will have the advantages of better equipment than Reith and a basic knowledge of the planet. Of course, their information won't help them in the places Reith didn't visit, and they can't use their advanced gear too openly without attracting attention.

Adventures in this phase of the program will resemble Adam Reith's exploits in the novels, except that the

heroes will be better-prepared and will have specific missions to complete. (Of course, the early missions are going to be along the lines of "Go see what's in eastern Kotan.") In the course of their exploration, the scouts will face all the usual perils of Tschai – bandits, dangerous animals, Phung, greedy innkeepers, and fanatic cultists. Besides completing their mission objectives, they will probably wind up rescuing some ladies or gentlemen in distress. All in a day's work for the Federal Space Agency.

Phase Two

Once the scouts have determined the lay of the land, the Terrans can begin creating a permanent presence on Tschai. Since overt contact is still too risky, this will have to be done in secret, using various cover stories and false identities.

extra spies on Tschai so have the technological advantage: they can blend in with the existing human population and move about relatively easily (no Dirdir or Chasch could do the same on Earth). This stage can last for years, as scientists secretly research the planet and its inhabitants, spies gather information and recruit informants, and the Terrans gradually build up their influence and power on Tschai.

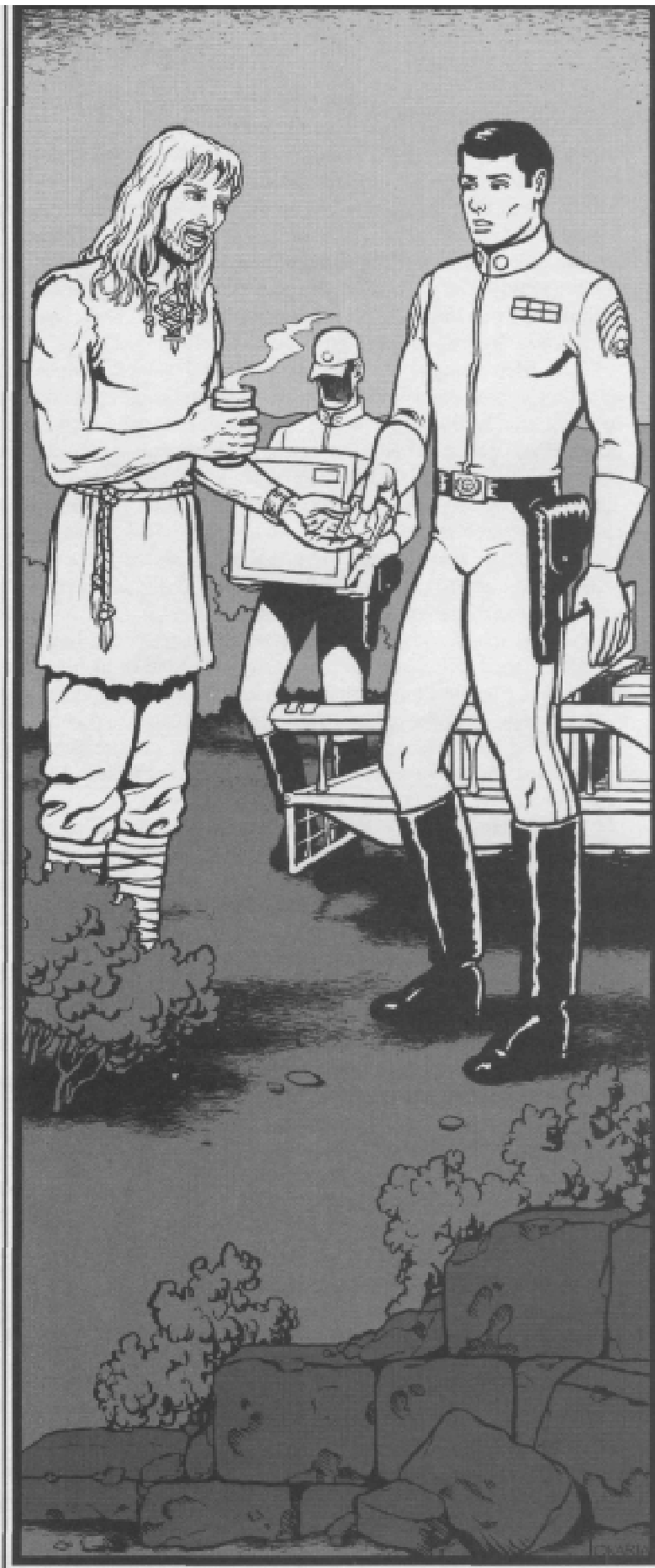
Useful character types for this phase of exploration include supercompetent scouts, xenologists and planetologists to uncover Tschai's secrets, intelligence agents and diplomats to secretly build up Terran influence, engineers and doctors to help the people of Tschai, merchants to make the sequins to pay for it all, and Federal rangers for protection.

Player characters operating on Tschai during the second phase can use the Kotan Merchant Adventurers (see sidebar) or their "mercenaries" as a cover story for almost anything. The company's covert operations include intelligence gathering, hiring loyal agents (purchasing and then freeing slaves is an excellent way to recruit people), and occasionally a little "wet work" if people take too close an interest in the company's doings. Scientific work includes gathering samples of interesting life forms, excavating ruins to discover more about Tschai's history, and making copies and translations of every book the company's agents come across. Under the heading of general do-gooding, the Merchant Adventurers do their best to improve conditions on Tschai, teach the local humans about advanced technology, help put down banditry and slavery, and encourage the human communities to work together. Finally, the mundane operations of the company include running caravans and merchant ships, which can be exciting enough!

Phase Three

Once the Federal Space Agency has gathered as much information as possible about Tschai and its masters, it will be time for Earth to establish contact. The agents in place will approach carefully chosen local leaders (probably human rulers, but possibly the Wanek or even the Pnume) and inform them that a spaceship from a world of humans is due to arrive in a few days. And then the fun *really* begins.

Naturally, diplomacy on Tschai won't be cocktail parties and speeches. Even if the Dirdir don't try to shoot down the diplomats' ship, there's no guarantee that the aliens will receive the Terrans as equals. Humans in a spaceship might be treated as renegades or pirates. Diplomats from Earth might endure humiliating treatment at the hands of supercilious Dirdirmen or prankish Chasch. And Adam Reith made some enemies who might decide to make things very difficult for the Terrans.



THE KOTAN MERCHANT ADVENTURERS

A possible cover for Phase Two's program of exploration and infiltration is a company of merchants called the Kotan Merchant Adventurers. The Merchant Adventurers are headquartered in Coad, which is sufficiently cosmopolitan that a new group of strangers attracts little attention. From Coad, parties of Merchant Adventurers venture nearly everywhere on company business – they ride along with caravans on the steppes of Kotan, sail across the Draschade and Schanizade Oceans, and even go as far as Sivishe.

The Merchant Adventurers' initial capital comes from selling untraceable trade goods from Earth, but once in business, the company does quite well with the benefit of radio, advanced weapons, and personal computers. They have established warehouses and branch offices in other cities, in Kotan and overseas, and have begun hiring Tschai-born humans. Since wealth equals influence, the Kotan Merchant Adventurers have been able to gain the ear of the rulers of Coad and other cities. The company is very accommodating about making low-interest loans to cash-strapped governments, and is often willing to provide the rulers with useful information.

The Merchant Adventurers have also been terribly helpful in improving local technology. The company has a staff of highly skilled technicians who are eager to share their knowledge. In Coad and elsewhere they have improved manufacturing, sanitation, and communications, and have even proposed plans to build electric generating plants to free the humans from their dependence on Dirdir and Chasch power cells.

The Kotan Merchant Adventurers have recruited a previously unknown tribe (the Federal Rangers) to provide security at their warehouses, guard their caravan drays, and protect their ships from pirates. These "mercenaries" occasionally hire themselves out to help communities fight off bandit gangs and nomad raiders.

Ambassadors establishing relations with one of the larger human states (like Cath or the Lokhars) will have their own problems. They will have to operate in secrecy to avoid interference by the aliens. Before they can open negotiations, they will have to convince the human governments of Tschai that Earth exists at all!

The life of a diplomat on Tschai is likely to be interesting. All of Tschai's cultures, human and alien, have bewildering forms of etiquette and protocol. In Cath a Terran ambassador would have to master all the subtleties of costume, manners, and the changing fashions of the "Round." Among Dirdir or Chasch, the envoys would have to demonstrate that they are not inferior beings, then learn all the alien customs and proprieties. The slightest mistake could mean discord – or even war! – between Earth and the rulers of Tschai. That would leave the Terrans on Tschai struggling to escape capture, smuggling key experts off the planet while gathering weapons for guerrilla warfare against the Dirdir and Chasch.

A diplomatic campaign would be excellent for players who like to have a big influence on the game world. Because of the tremendous distance from Earth to Tschai, diplomats can't call home and get instructions. They will have the authority to negotiate and make treaties, and can effectively set policy on the spot.

Useful character types include diplomats (of course), spies (possibly including Tschai-born agents working for the Terrans), xenologists who have studied the planet and its people, and security troopers to save everyone's bacon if negotiations break down.

Phase Four and Beyond

Of course there's no guarantee that Earth will wind up at war with any of the masters of Tschai. Maybe the Terrans can establish peaceful relations with the Dirdir, Chasch, Wanek, and some of Tschai's human nations. In that event, Terrans can visit Tschai for more peaceful and profitable reasons. Traders would flock to Tschai, swapping Earth goods for rarities and alien technology. There would still be plenty of opportunities for adventure, especially since "trade" and "cheating" appear to be synonyms on Tschai.

And there's no place so dismal or dangerous that someone won't want to go there on vacation. Tschai's ancient, exotic cultures might draw tourists from Earth. This could be played for laughs – overweight folks in shorts and humorous T-shirts gawking at the Wanek fortresses, posing for photos with Dirdir, and buying souvenirs from the Pnume. Or it could turn deadly serious, as a party of ill-informed and ill-equipped tourists have to cope with Tschai's perils.

CAMPAIGN TONE

When designing your campaign, consider the tone and the type. Tone determines what kind of adventures the player characters have, and type covers the things they will actually be doing.

The slightest mistake could mean discord – or even war! – between Earth and the rulers of Tschai.

The Tschai novels are science fiction adventure stories, and naturally the setting works best for that kind of campaign, but there are different “lenses” the GM can use to set the tone. Planetary Romance is the lens used by Vance himself, but one can also use Tschai as the venue for hard science fiction, horror, or even comedy.

Planetary Romance

The *Planet of Adventure* stories are prime examples of the science fiction sub-genre known as “planetary romances.” They are action-packed tales of exploration and adventure on a single planet with lots of colorful and diverse races and cultures. Planetary romances have a long and distinguished history, going back to John Carter’s exploits on Mars (or even the voyages of Odysseus). Key features of the genre are nonstop action, interesting world-building, and often a central mystery which must be solved.

The quest is the basic form of the planetary romance. The hero or heroes have a destination, and have adventures along the way. It worked for Dorothy in Oz, it worked for H. Rider Haggard’s Allan Quatermain, and it will work in a roleplaying campaign. The object of the quest can be a missing person, a treasure, a way home, or anything else. Given that the whole point of the quest is the adventure along the way, the object really isn’t that important.

Sometimes the original quest object turns out to be a red herring, and the characters discover a more important goal

GOOD AND EVIL

Tschai is a place where definitions of good and evil are likely to get a workout. Dirdirmen of the highest caste hunt and sometimes eat other humans, in imitation of their alien masters. Are they evil? The fisher-folk of Gozed leave women staked out on the beach to become living incubators for sea-scorpion larvae. Are they evil? During his visit to Tschai, Adam Reith destroyed the Seminary of the Female Mystery, sacked a Chasch city, murdered Dirdir in cold blood for sequins, and kidnapped the helpless young Pnumekin Zap 210. Is he evil? His companions in adventure were Anacho, a Dirdirman who has eaten human flesh, and Traz, a steppe tribesman who has led raids on caravans. Are they evil?

Tschai is abundantly supplied with evils to battle: from petty swindling and robbery, through vicious religious rites and the habits of monsters like Aila Woudiver, on up to the ongoing exploitation of entire human nations by the Dirdir and Chasch. Game Masters and players can have fun exploring their own reactions to such things. One person may ignore the oppression of the alien masters as simply “the way things are” but balk at individual cruelty and crime. Another may want to tackle the big problems rather than right an infinite number of petty wrongs. And a third may enjoy the chance to be utterly amoral.

If the players enjoy character development, the GM can use Tschai to let them find out just what their standards are. At some point, even the most cheerfully wicked rogue is going to come up against something which is just plain wrong, and will have to take a stand.

along the way. If the heroes are seeking a treasure and stumble across clues to a secret which could change the world, they may switch to pursue the bigger objective instead. On Tschai, such bigger goals are likely to be connected to the aliens’ control and the oppressed status of the humans.

Settings for planetary romances tend to be low-technology worlds where swordplay is common and there’s no quick and easy way to get around. The heroes must live by their wits and their muscles, rather than relying on high-tech toys. On Tschai, there is quite a lot of advanced tech, but most of it is not in human hands. Getting high-technology gear can be a good short-term objective within a campaign. The plot of *City of the Chasch* is a good model: Reith starts out with little more than the contents of his survival pack and travels on foot. Later, he and his companions join a caravan and ride motor-drays; by the end of the story he has acquired a Chasch sky-raft. He’s no closer to getting off Tschai, but he has earned some tangible rewards for his efforts.

OTHER ALIEN MASTERS?

Given the vast size and long history of Tschai, it is entirely possible that the Dirdir, Chasch, and Wanek are not the only invaders still living there. In the Museum of Foreverness, Adam Reith saw models of several alien species which he did not encounter in his travels. They may have been extinct, or may simply be hidden in a region Reith didn’t visit. GMs should be cautious about adding new aliens, as any Vance purists among the players will probably object stridently to the idea.

Some of the races described in *GURPS Aliens*, *GURPS Atomic Horror*, or *GURPS Space* might make interesting rivals to the Dirdir and the Chasch (see the section on “Other *GURPS* Worlds” below). Ambitious GMs may wish to invent aliens of their own.

One especially suggestive reference in *City of the Chasch* mentions a type of tall and long-limbed human known as a Gray. Modern-day UFO lore is full of stories of gray-skinned aliens with long spindly limbs abducting humans for various purposes. Maybe some of those humans wind up on Tschai? The alien Grays could either be the small and feeble aliens from *GURPS Atomic Horror* or the terrifying and powerful ones from *GURPS Black Ops*.



As the name “planetary romance” implies, another common feature of these stories is a healthy dose of romance. John Carter met the lovely Dejah Thoris, Odysseus loved Calypso and Circe, and Adam Reith’s paramours included Flin-Ylan and Zap 210. How much romance you want in your campaign depends on the players and their tastes, but here should be a few damsels or swains to rescue.

Hard Science Fiction

An exotic, colorful planet like Tschai may seem like an odd setting for a hard science fiction campaign. But Jack Vance is one of the top writers in the field; Tschai is carefully worked out and plausible. Below the chrome and fins there’s a solid chassis and a well-tuned engine.

In a hard SF campaign, the characters won’t spend as much time battling bandits and rescuing maidens. Their goal is to learn the facts about Tschai: its history, secrets of the alien races, and other mysteries. Scientists may need to do some serious Indiana Jones-style research to penetrate Pnume archives or study Dirdir reproduction. They may face deathtraps and monsters in buried ruins. The people of Tschai are going to assume inquisitive strangers are looking for treasure or are easy pickings for bandits.

Horror

Tschai holds more than its share of horrors. There are the Dirdir hunts, the sadistic games of the Chasch, the slasher-novie antics of the Phung, and the black depths of the Pnume tunnels. The humans can be pretty horrifying, as well, as with Aila Woudiver’s use of children for his monstrous amusement. Often, the difference between action-adventure and horror is one of emphasis. Consider the Dirdir hunts in the Tarabas. In *The Dirdir*, Adam Reith’s expedition into the Tarabas is an action set-piece, as he and his comrades decide to hunt the hunters and lure the Dirdir into ambush. But what if the plan hadn’t worked? Instead of escaping with a vast fortune in sequins, Reith and his companions might have been pursued through the hostile landscape by bands of relentless Dirdir, hearing their hissing cries on all sides, knowing that

darkness is no protection from their infrared detectors. Exhausted and surrounded, the humans know that the price of capture is the agony of nerve-fire and then death. Horror on Tschai is simply a matter of making the villains tougher and more implacable.

Comedy

A subtle vein of ironic humor runs through all the Tschai novels. At times it breaks out into open farce, as in the description of the Urmank brat-house or the courteous and businesslike attitude of the assassins in Cath. A humorous *GURPS Planet of Adventure* campaign is mostly a matter of playing up the funny aspects and downplaying the serious ones.

The richest source of humor on Tschai is the bizarre customs of the various cultures. Even a race as sinister as the Dirdir has its comical aspect (the bewildering variety of Dirdir sexual types, for example). However, watch out; too much emphasis on the silly side of Tschai makes it hard for the players to take anything seriously. If the campaign is a comic romp, in the vein of *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, that’s fine, but if the GM later decides to run some serious adventures on Tschai, he may find the well is poisoned. A good solution is to look for the comic elements common to Tschai and our own society. The Yao obsession with social position is funny, in part because one can see people today being just as ridiculous about wearing the “right” clothes or listening to the “right” music.

HEROES OF TSCHAI

Not all humans come from Earth. In the *Planet of Adventure* universe, the people of Tschai are a substantial percentage of the human species. Players may want to run native Tschai characters instead of interlopers from Earth. An all-Tschai human campaign could take place before Reith’s exploits – or at any point in the 50,000-year history of humanity on Tschai.

Merchants

Money makes the world go around, even if that world is Tschai. A group of merchants makes a good adventuring party – they travel widely, interact with many cultures, and have to protect their goods from bandits and pirates. The caravans of Kotan provide an excellent framework for an episodic campaign. The caravan pulls into a depot, the traders have an adventure there, and then the caravan moves on. Between stops there are raiders and Green Chasch to fight off, ruined Chasch cities to explore, and whatever plots and plans the other caravan travelers are cooking up.

For more variety, there's the lure of the sea. A merchant ship voyaging from port to port on the Draschade Ocean is a natural "home base" for a campaign. The PCs can speculate in cargoes, battle pirates off the coast of Kachan, cope with troublesome passengers, and have adventures ashore in port. Seagoing merchants can do almost everything a tramp space freighter crew can (including transporting shady passengers who want to avoid any "Dirdir entanglements").

Pirates!

For serious swashbuckling, there's nothing that can beat the pirate life. Put on your black turban, run out the sandblasts, and cruise the seas in search of loot! *GURPS Swashbucklers* has plenty of information about Terran piracy in the 17th century, and GMs can adapt all the tropes of a pirate adventure to Tschai's unique conditions.

The distinction between pirates and merchants is a fairly vague one on Tschai, and a hybrid campaign is possible. The PCs sail about conducting honest trade – and robbing any ship they can catch. Pirates also have a long fictional tradition as romantic rogues, pledging their ships and skills to a Good Cause at the drop of a cutlass. A pirate band could act as seagoing Robin Hoods, battling for the oppressed humans by preying on shipping into Sivishe or Ao Hidis.

Renegades

One difficulty that most humans on Tschai face is their inferior technology. It's hard to battle the alien overlords if they have plasma blasters and you're only packing a catapult. Players who want a higher-tech campaign should consider running renegade Dirdirmen or Chaschmen. Renegades do not live an easy life. Their former masters may be hunting them, and the other humans of Tschai have no love for them either. Their advantages include technical training, the ability to masquerade as one of the elite servants of the alien masters, and whatever advanced goodies they were able to steal.

Sequin-Hunters

It's practically inevitable. As soon as the players learn about the Carabas, they'll want to go there. ("There's money just sitting in holes in the ground waiting for us? Let's go!") The threat of Dirdir hunters will not deter them. A sufficiently harrowing experience may make them reluctant to come back for more, but a few may want to make a career of it.

A campaign centered on sequin-hunting should involve more than just visit after visit to the Carabas and repeated brushes with the Dirdir. The town of Maust is full of shady

characters and sleazy operators; even successful hunters may have trouble hanging on to their sequins. Or a hunter in the Black Zone may stumble across something other than sequins – something the alien masters want back.

REITH, TRAZ, AND ANACHO

In a campaign set after Terran humanity has returned to Tschai, the three heroes of the novels will be very different people, and the details will be up to the GM. Some outlines:

Adam Reith, as described on p. 12, will probably not return to the field as a scout, but might wind up in command of the whole Terran presence. Now that he is familiar with Tschai, he'll be able to use his Xenology skill there. He might best be treated as the GM's ace in the hole, to get PCs out of trouble.

Ankhe at ofram Anacho (p. 15) would now be at least a 100-point character, with high skills and probably some added advantages, but foes among the Dirdir and Dirdirmen. Increasing his IQ to 12 would be justified, and all his combat skills are higher; he has also learned Diplomacy! If he has developed a taste for adventure, he might become a field agent and organizer, remaining Reith's right-hand man.

Traz Onmale would now be at least a 120-point character, or more if he has returned to his tribe and taken up Onmale (see p. 14). Combined with the experience he gained with Reith, the decisiveness and charisma conferred by Onmale will make him a very impressive chief. Traz could be an important contact for the PCs as he tries to civilize his people. If his tribe rebels against him or is destroyed, he would no doubt try to rejoin Reith.

Strangers From the Sky

Finally, any group of adventurers on Tschai can get involved with visitors from Earth. A first-contact scenario can get very interesting when you're the one being contacted. The natives may not realize who these mysterious strangers with funny coloring and nifty gadgets are at first. (The *players* may figure it out, but the GM should be strict about keeping player knowledge separate from character information.) To confuse matters, Adam Reith's visit may have inspired some slightly unhinged Yearning Reflexives to go about claiming to be Human Magi from the home world.

Sufficiently amoral PCs may simply take what they can get from the offworlders, and a party of loyalist Dirdirmen or Chaschmen may feel it is their duty to capture and execute any dangerous interlopers from Earth. With a clever GM and flexible players, one could have an entertaining campaign of heroic Dirdirmen struggling to uncover and stamp out the menace of the Earthmen.

ADVENTURES BEYOND TSCHAI

Tschai is a big place, with hundreds of different cultures and subraces. But a group of adventurers may get hold of their own space-boat and go exploring among the stars, or Terran spacemen may want to know what lies beyond Tschai. What's out there to discover?

The three spacefaring races – the Dirdir, Chasch, and Wanek – control interstellar empires of their own, and may well rule dozens or even hundreds of planets. There may be all manner of exotic races on other worlds, and the Dirdir may have transplanted humans to other planets besides Tschai. It's a big universe.



The Dirdir and the Wanek appear to be major powers, and are engaged in a low-intensity struggle for interstellar dominance. The Wanek have bases on Tschai to counter the Dirdir, which suggests that Tschai lies on the boundary between their spheres of influence. On other worlds the conflict may be more active, with armies and space fleets hammering at fortified positions. Or perhaps Tschai is one of the few border worlds which hasn't been reduced to a lifeless cinder.

The Chasch have apparently passed their glory days as a great power. The three races of Chasch on Tschai seem to spend more time fighting among themselves than battling the Dirdir or the Wanek, and this is likely to be true in space as well. The Old Chasch in particular are far gone in decadence, and may no longer be able to build spacecraft of their own. The worlds of the Chasch are disunited and fragmented into multiple petty states. Since the Chasch were on Tschai first and have since been displaced, there are probably other Chasch worlds under Dirdir or Wanek rule.

Space explorers from Earth are likely to discover that space near Tschai is dangerous. The Dirdir view humans as inferior beings, suitable only as slaves or food. A human expedition is likely to be taken for renegades and dealt with harshly. On the other hand, a well-armed Terran spaceship could give the Dirdir a very nasty surprise indeed! The Wanek seem to be less aggressive and arrogant; it might be possible to establish diplomatic relations with them, if the communication problem can be solved.

Diplomatic missions and first contacts with the Chasch worlds, the Dirdir, and the Wanek could easily provide enough material for an entire campaign. The Wanek are aloof and mysterious, the Dirdir hostile and contemptuous, and the Chasch at times seem almost insane. Terran representatives dealing with any of them must be patient, clever, and well-armed! To further complicate matters, there may be internal rivalries within each species; perhaps factions among the Wanek struggle for influence, while rival Chasch worlds would risk war to prevent each other from allying with Earth.

Men from Earth with the right combination of courage and greed may try to get rich trading among the aliens. Tschai appears to have a good central location between Dirdir, Wanek, and Chasch space, and would make a useful home base for merchants. Of course, traders would have to be part diplomat, part smuggler, part explorer, and part pirate to succeed. The Dirdir might refuse to trade with humans at all, unless the merchants can somehow convince them that they are the equals of the Dirdir. Communication with the Wanek is very difficult, so merchants must find some way to name a price. The customs of the Chasch are capricious and yet rigidly defined, and traders would have to learn them from scratch in order to do business. Oddly, of all the races found on and around Tschai, the Pnume seem to be the ones most likely to trade with humans. Of course, finding the Pnume is hard enough.

With such aggressive species ruling the stars, it may be impossible to avoid open warfare. The Dirdir in particular seem to be ready for another wave of expansion, and Earth would be a rich prize for them. In a wartime campaign, Terran spaceship crews would battle the sleek Dirdir cruisers – a tough fight, especially since the Dirdir have more advanced technology. Terran soldiers might make drops onto lightly defended worlds, hoping to seize Dirdir outposts. Spies might disguise themselves as Dirdirmen, moving among the servitor races to sow dissent and steal Dirdir technology. Diplomats would slip past the deadly Dirdir fleets to form alliances with the Wanek and the Chasch. Settlers on human colony worlds might have to battle invaders, and then find themselves living in a Dirdir-ruled society much like those on Tschai (if the Dirdir took humans to their other worlds, that is). Tschai itself would be a key objective in a Terran-Dirdir war: a whole planet of humans, with spaceyards and factories already in place, right on the doorstep of the Dirdir.

OTHER GURPS WORLDS

Many other *GURPS* books blend well with the *Planet of Adventure* setting. Here are some examples:

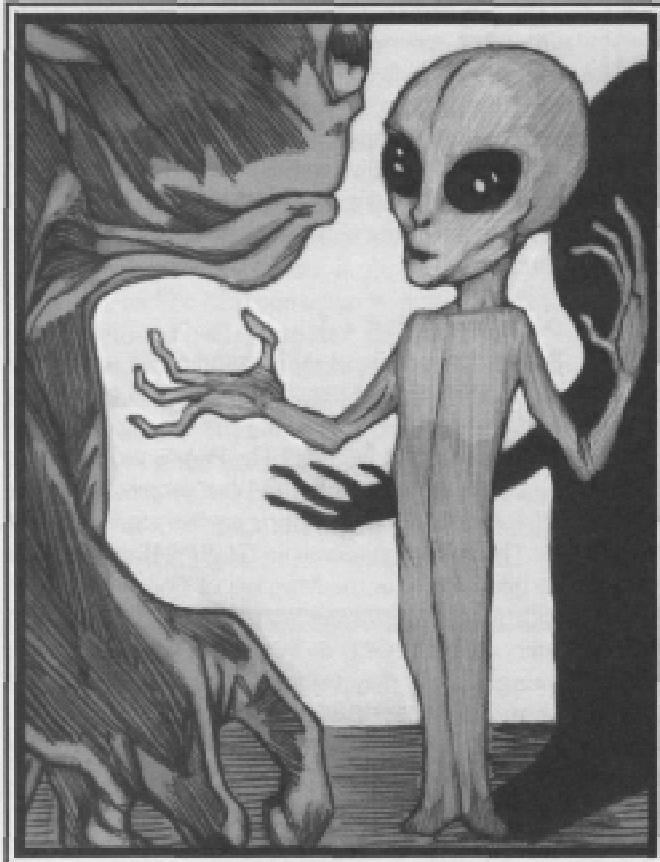
GURPS Atlantis

What if the first humans abducted by the Dirdir were not primitive cavemen, but representatives of a thriving, advanced culture? The present state of humans on Tschai may be the result of devolution from the Atlantean pinnacle – but there may be remnants of their lost heritage scattered throughout the steppe tribes, waiting to be rediscovered.

If the Minoan Conspiracy knows about its kidnapped cousins, they are probably very interested in learning what has happened to them. Or, for a metacrossover, perhaps the Loi mutants from *GURPS Atomic Horror* are ready to seek out their lost brethren . . .

GURPS Atomic Horror

This book can be useful in several ways. First, the Metarans and Alphans might have outposts of their own on Tschai (though the Metarans should probably be deprived of their shape-shifting ability). They probably are not as dominant as the Dirdir or the Chasch, but may have operations on the same scale as the Wanek.



Second, Tschai would be a good destination for a space-going *Atomic Horror* campaign. Traveling aboard a mad scientist's experimental starship, a group of 1950s Americans wind up crashing on Tschai. Can good old American know-how manage to get them home?

GURPS Dinosaurs

The Dirdir first brought humans to Tschai 50,000 years ago. At that time, Europe was still going through the Ice Age and many now-extinct species were thriving. Given the Dirdir love of hunting, they may have brought some especially interesting Terran animals along with the humans. Travelers on Tschai might run across some late Pleistocene-era mammals like cave bears, the big cats *Smilodon* and *Megantereon*, giant baboons, mammoths, or woolly rhinos.

Or GMs might want to run a campaign set at the time of the Dirdir raids, with Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal men coming face to face with the strange ivory-skinned gods who transport them to a new land. There's no way a bunch of cavemen is going to hijack a starship and get home again, but they might be able to escape captivity on Tschai and live in freedom.

GURPS Illuminati

Conspiracy theorists love to speculate that Earth is secretly controlled by alien beings. On Tschai, it's true, and it isn't even a secret! The Pnume, the Wanekmen, and the Dirdir all use agents and secret conspiracies to watch and plot against each other, and there may well be human conspiracies dedicated to opposing the aliens.

There is another, more sinister possibility. The Dirdir know where Earth is, and visited here in the distant past. They carried humans off to Tschai, but did they leave anything behind? Perhaps all of human history has been controlled and manipulated by a secret society of Dirdirmen, and under the final mask of the Secret Masters of your favorite Illuminati is a bone-white face with glowing antennae.

GURPS Religion

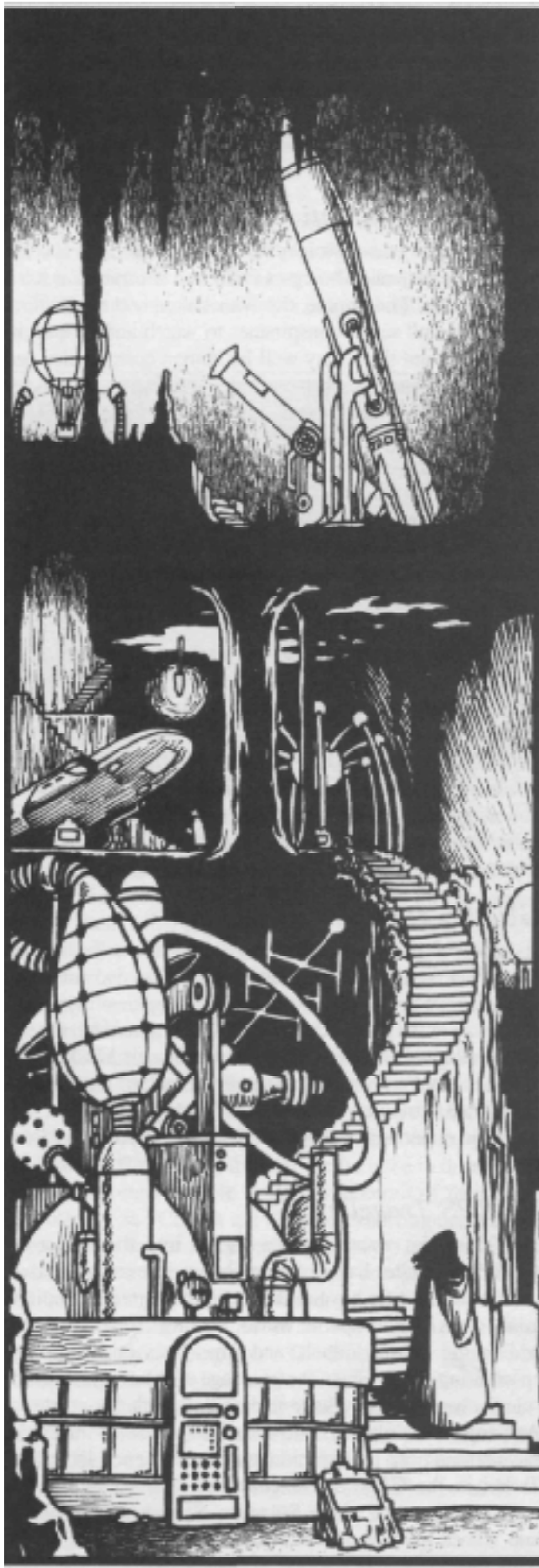
This book has a great deal of useful information on creating new religions for use in roleplaying games. GMs who want to create bizarre cults or theocratic societies will find it a very helpful reference. In the Vance novels, no religion seems to be any more true than another, but GMs who want to add some supernatural elements may want to consider the notion that the gods are created by the *belief* of their worshippers. What kind of gods would the people of Tschai bring into existence?

GURPS Swashbucklers

Swashbucklers is extremely useful for a Tschai campaign. The seas of Tschai swarm with pirates and smugglers; they may not fly the Jolly Roger, but they operate in much the same way as the pirates described in *Swashbucklers*. On land, the cavaliers of Cath live much like the King's Musketeers in 17th-century Paris – duels, love affairs, palace intrigues, and occasional struggles for cash. GMs planning to run campaigns in either venue should probably use *Swashbucklers* as a guide.

GURPS Traveller

GMs who want to place Tschai into the universe of *GURPS Traveller* have a few problems to overcome. Tschai itself must exist far beyond the limits of charted space; it certainly can't be an Imperial world! Adding Tschai also means adding the Dirdir, Wanek, and Chasch as fairly important spacefaring races. Given the great age of the civilizations that rule Tschai, they may have had contact with the mysterious Ancients. Certainly the Pnume are likely to have Ancient artifacts buried deep in their hidden tunnels. A good location for Tschai in the *GURPS Traveller* universe would be in the region to rimward of the Solomani Sphere. Dirdir, Chasch, and Wanek space would be further out still.



Note that the very large scale of the *Traveller* universe affects how the Imperium or Solomani Confederation will react to the situation on Tschai. Humans under the thumb of alien overlords won't arouse much indignation. There are *dozens* of planets like that on the fringes of the Imperium (and Solomani patriots would say the Imperium itself is an even better example). Explorers who stumble across Tschai and head home expecting to raise a crusade to liberate the oppressed will be greeted with a yawn from the government. Perhaps a small, privately funded expedition could do the job?

GURPS Uplift

There are a great many similarities between David Brin's *Uplift* universe and the back story for Jack Vance's Tschai. There are powerful and ancient alien races (who seem fond of manipulating other species through selective breeding), and humans are the "new kids on the block." *GURPS Uplift* also features a number of interesting alien races which might turn up on Tschai or in nearby space. The Soro or Tandu would be good candidates for extra alien masters on Tschai. Finally, the excellent material on creating and uplifting alien beings is of great use to GMs designing new alien masters or new human races for Tschai.

GURPS Warehouse 23

The Prume have a planet-wide complex of secret tunnels, they collect people and items and hide them away, they have existed for a long time, and they are among the secret rulers of the world. Sound familiar? The Prume are running a "Warehouse 23" on a planetary scale! What secrets lie in their tunnels? What secrets *don't* lie in their ancient storehouses of knowledge? The items and secrets in *GURPS Warehouse 23* can provide good ideas for the Museum of Foreverness, and the methods and activities of the Warehouse's caretakers and Secret Masters may give GMs an insight into how the Prume behave. Daring humans may venture into the Prume tunnels to recover some ancient artifact of great power. It is also possible that the Prume don't content themselves with collecting things from the surface of Tschai, and hire carefully selected agents to venture forth to gather items from other worlds. Adventurers could serve the Prume as collectors, or get shanghaied to Tschai as unwilling museum pieces!



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are intended to show off the possibilities for campaigns on Tschai.

RESCUE FROM THE DIRDIR

This adventure is intended for Terrans on Tschai, though the party can include any number of Tschai humans. None of the characters should be loyal Dirdirmen, although a renegade would be very appropriate.

One goal of the Terrans on Tschai is to learn as much about the various spacefaring alien powers as they can before the aliens learn that Earth has acquired space travel and some colony worlds. Tschai is the perfect place for this, since the humans can theoretically hide themselves among the native human population.

Unfortunately, a Terran xenologist being smuggled onto Tschai by space-boat was detected and shot down over eastern Kislovan. A Dirdir airship captured him, and he has been taken back to Sivishe for interrogation. Cyril Nkruma, the xenologist, is trained to resist questioning, but there is only so much even the strongest will can do against truth drugs and torture. Right now the Dirdir think Nkruma is part of some hidden human faction on Tschai who have stolen some space-boats and are fomenting revolution. If they discover that he is from a planet of free humans with spaceships, Earth may face a vicious war.

*Must I always be
cursed with suspicious
associates?*

*— Issam the Thang,
The Dirdir*

Friends and Enemies

There are a handful of humans in the city of Hei who are favorably disposed toward Terrans after Adam Reith's visit. One of them is Othal, a Dirdirman hybrid who performs menial tasks in the spaceyards of Sivishe. He knows how to smuggle the humans into the Dirdir city, but knows nothing of Nkruma's fate. Othal is willing to help the Terrans, but is utterly terrified of the Dirdir and will not be able to face them or oppose them directly.

CYRIL NKRUMA

Cyril Nkruma is a xenologist trained by the Federal Space Agency for duty on Tschai. He is used to living in rough conditions on alien worlds, and has experience dealing with aliens. Unfortunately, he has been captured by the Dirdir and savagely tortured. Nkruma's current HT is only 2 and he suffers all the penalties for being wounded, exhausted, dehydrated, and hungry.

Cyril Nkruma **139 1/2 points**

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge 6.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Fit [5]; Panimmunity (TL10) [5]; Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Duty (to FSA, 12 or less) [-10]; Curious [-5].

Skills: Astrogation/TL10-14 [4]; Diplomacy-12 [1]; First Aid/TL10-13 [1]; Guns/TL10 (Pistol)-13* [1]; Linguistics-13 [2]; Piloting/TL10 (Space-boat)-13 [8]; Planology-15 [6]; Stealth-12 [4]; Survival (Desert)-15 [6]; Xenobiology-14 [4]; Xenology-16 [10].

* Includes +2 bonus for IQ 12+.

Languages: English-16 (native) [0]; Chinese-15 [1]; Dirdir-13 [1/2]; Tschaiian-15 [1].

Adam Reith made enemies in Hei as well as friends. The dwarfish Hisziu, a confederate of the late Aila Woudiver, has taken over many of Woudiver's criminal operations, and holds a grudge against Reith and any of his friends. If he learns of the Terrans seeking Nkruma (and any attempt to recruit help among Hei's underworld will come to his attention), Hisziu will try to learn their plans and intercept them after they have rescued Nkruma. That way he can hand them over to the Dirdir and likely gain a substantial reward as well as the satisfaction of revenge.

Infiltrating Hei

The only humans in Hei are laborers and Dirdirmen. It is fairly easy to disguise humans as laborers – they all wear gray cloaks but are otherwise a very diverse lot. But besides dressing the part, the PCs must show permits and passes frequently. The permits must be written in Dirdir script, which means that any attempt to make forged permits is limited by the forger's knowledge of the Dirdir language (use whichever skill is lower to make the skill roll).

Attempting to disguise the party as Dirdirmen frees them of the need for permits, but is much more difficult. Ironically, it is easier for Terrans masquerading as Dirdirmen to fool the Dirdir than it is to fool the Dirdirmen themselves. The Disguise skill roll is reduced by 2 when humans in disguise are attempting to deceive real Dirdirmen, but there is no penalty with Dirdir.

Finally, a group of stealthy and fearless heroes may try simply to sneak through the streets of Hei without being noticed. At night, a Stealth skill roll is needed every five minutes to move about unseen. During the day a Stealth roll at -4 must be made *each minute* to slip past the crowds of Dirdirmen and Dirdir in the streets. If detected, the intruders must convince their captors they are merely beggars or pilferers, since that will get them nothing worse than a beating and expulsion from the city. Strangers with some purpose in Hei will be questioned by a high-caste Dirdir and then sent to the Glass Box.

Finding Nkruma

There are several ways to locate Nkruma. Unsubtle heroes can interrogate a Dirdir or Dirdirman, or search the entire city. Clever investigators can try a bit of "social engineering" to trick the information out of someone. Most Dirdir know the name of the clan which shot down the space-boat, but Dirdirmen must roll against IQ to be up on the latest gossip. Nkruma is being held at the tower of the clan which captured him, the Raf'hrz. The Raf'hrz clan leaders are trying to learn more about the "sub-men rebellion" before announcing a grand Initiative to stamp it out. He has so far resisted the effects of nerve-fire, but the Raf'hrz have brought in a human medical specialist to administer truth drugs.



The Big Breakout

The heart of the problem is getting Nkruma out of a Dirdir clan home, then – somehow – escaping a city full of Dirdir hunters. If the rescuers try to shoot their way in, they are likely to fail. Most of the Dirdir have plasma blasters, and can quickly call air-cars armed with heavy blasters or sandblasts. If the humans try to outfox the Dirdir through technology, they may get an uncomfortable reminder that the Dirdir have higher tech than Terrans do.

Slipping into the Raf'hrz tower by stealth or trickery to rescue Nkruma is one possibility. The tower is 12 stories high, with only four rooms on each floor and an antigravity lift chute in the center. The lower floors are public spaces. Above that are the quarters of the clan's members, with the chambers of the highest-status clan members at the top. The Raf'hrz number 20 in all, with about 10 Dirdirmen servants.

Nkruma is being kept in an empty bedroom on the ninth floor of the tower. He has been terribly beaten and tortured with nerve-fire, and is currently at HT 2 instead of his normal 11. There is still a nerve-fire implant in Nkruma's neck, which means that the Dirdir can kill him from a distance unless it is removed.

Once the rescuers have gotten Nkruma out of Hei, their troubles are far from over. Such an act of effrontery by sub-men will certainly inspire dozens of initiatives on the part of ambitious Dirdir. Unless the party's spacecraft is near Hei, they will be dodging Dirdir all the way to the pickup point.

SECRETS OF THE PNUME

This somewhat free-form adventure can be adapted to just about any locale on Tschai or group of adventurers. The premise is simple: the heroes have come into possession of something belonging to the Pnume and don't know it. The Pnume want it back, and once the secret gets out, everybody else on Tschai will be trying to get it as well.

Several million years ago a race called the Gjee settled on Tschai. One Gjee savant took an interest in the chrysoptine nodes of central Kislovan, and studied the unique chemistry which produces sequins. When the Gjee were destroyed by the Fesa, the Pnume gathered up many of their artifacts, including the metal tape-rolls holding the savant's findings on the formation of sequins. For millions of years, they rested in the dark caverns of Foreverness.

Recently, the Gjee artifacts were relocated to a new gallery. During the move, the crate containing the tape-rolls was mislabeled and included in a shipment of scrap metal on its way to a trading-post in the far north of Charchan. By the time the Pnume realized and traced the error, the tape-rolls were in the possession of a collector in Cath.

An Encounter in the Mercade

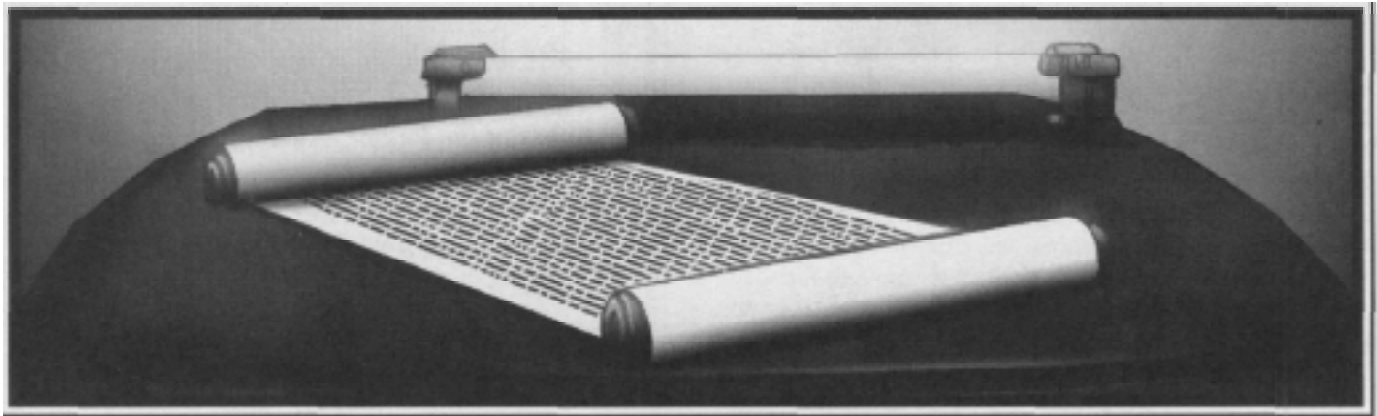
While shopping for supplies (or just browsing) in the Mercade district of Setra, one of the party is accosted by a haggard, frightened-looking old man. Anyone making a successful Savoir-Faire roll can recognize that he wears clothing suitable for an elderly philosopher attending an intimate dinner in town, except that his garments are muddy and torn. He clutches the arm of one PC and croaks "Please – take this from me!"

Before the startled hero can react, the old man thrusts a wooden case about the size of a cigar box into his hands, then staggers away, looking about wildly. He glances out an archway, shrieks in terror, and flees into the crowd. Standing in the archway are a pair of Gzhindra.

If anyone tries to follow or catch the old man, he will flee from them, cackling gleefully, "I don't have it any more! It's not mine, it's yours now!" Unfortunately, too distracted to watch where he is going, he steps into the path of a speeding motor-dray and is run down. The PCs are left holding the box.

The MacGuffin

The box is a handsomely carved wooden case, which any native of Cath can identify as the handiwork of the Hoch Har.



It is made of dark red wood and decorated with silver filigree. Though it has no lock, opening the box is a bit tricky, requiring a successful Lockpicking or Traps roll with a bonus of +4. The box is not very solid, and anyone who can't figure out the catch can always just break it open.

Inside is a pair of metal cylinders, about eight inches long and three inches thick. They are labeled with disks of glass bearing Pnumic writing. (If any of the party has learned some Pnumic, the labels read "Item 74636-49a: Gjee Monograph on the Making of Sequins, Volumes 1 and 2.") The cylinders are cases for two scrolls of very thin metal foil, marked with

a pattern of lines and dots in brilliant blue dye. When fully unrolled, each one is 45 feet long, so the two rolls are the equivalent of a good-sized book.

It is likely that the characters won't be able to read the labels, and they certainly can't read the Gjee writing on the metal scrolls. Settra is home to a fair number of scholarly gentlemen who might be able to help, but investigation will quickly discover that most of the intellectual dilettantes in Settra are sick, out of town, or just plain unavailable. (They have all been visited by Gzhindra recently and so are terrified of strangers.)

JENNAVO

Jennavo is something of an oddity among the cavaliers of the Yao because of his intellectual bent and love of books. His lack of funds is more normal. He spent a couple of lackluster decades commanding a regiment, and now lives in retirement at his country villa. Jennavo has found a way to combine his love of ancient lore with his need for funds . . . by vouching for the authenticity of bogus archaeological relics in exchange for a cut of the profits from the forger. This has brought him into contact with Settra's criminal class, and means he can call upon some surprising allies.

Jennavo **97 1/2 points**

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 9.

Advantages: Intuition [15]; Military Rank 4 [20]; Status 2 [5].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Yao) [-10]; Extravagance [-10]; Struggling [-10].

Skills: Archaeology-11 [4]; Beam Weapons/TL11 (Blaster)-13* [1]; Carousing-12 [8]; Dancing-12 [2]; Fencing-14 [8]; Gambling-11 [2]; Heraldry-12 [0]; History-12 [6]; Politics-12 [4]; Riding (Leap-horse)-14 [8]; Savoir-Faire-15 [8]; Streetwise-11 [2].

* Beam Weapons includes +1 bonus from IQ 10+.

Languages: Tschaiian (native)-13 [2]; Blue Chasch-8 [1]; Dirdir-9 [1]; Pnumic-8 [1/2].

A Helpful Man

There is one man, however, who is willing to see them and claims to know all the languages of Tschai. He is a retired cavalier who goes by his pen-name of Jennavo and lives in a seedy villa on the outskirts of Settra. Observant visitors may notice that there don't appear to be any servants at the villa, and that only a couple of rooms are furnished, but Jennavo is hospitable and charming, eager to learn what the newcomers have brought.

Jennavo can read a bit of Pnumic, but can't make out the Gjee letters at all. He is a wily, greedy fellow, though, and will say that the labels read "Decorative foil." Jennavo claims to be interested in Prume curios, and offers to buy the rolls for a hundred sequins or so. He can't offer more because he is pretty much flat broke. If the PCs won't sell, Jennavo will try a bit of sleight-of-hand, asking to look at the rolls once more and then trying to pocket them instead of putting them back in the box.

If he can't buy the rolls or steal them, Jennavo will resort to more and more extreme measures. He may challenge the owner of the rolls to a duel (if he looks like a bad enough fencer for Jennavo to beat); he may sell off his last settee to pay for an assassin. In desperation, he may even take some of Settra's criminal underworld into his confidence. Once that happens, word will spread quickly that the party has the secret of making sequins, and pretty soon *everybody* is trying to get the two cylinders.

Stalked by Gzhindra

Meanwhile, the agents of the Pnume are still hot on the trail of the cylinders. The two Gzhindra who saw the old man pass them to the PCs will try to keep track of the party's movements. If the heroes try to lose the Gzhindra, they can call in up to eight helpers (all the Gzhindra in that part of Cath). They are good at shadowing people, making use of secret Pnume tunnel entrances and exits to disappear and reappear mysteriously. The Gzhindra can also hire mundane help, including Cath's professional assassination bureaux. When the PCs are asleep, the Gzhindra will try to snatch the cylinders, or ambush them if they can muster greater numbers. If that doesn't work, they will try to isolate the person with the MacGuffin.

Losing the White Elephant

As more and more people start pursuing the characters and trying to rob or kill them, they may suspect that there is more to the cylinders than Jennavo revealed. Any of his criminal hirelings has heard the rumor that the metal rolls are the secret to making sequins. The Gzhindra, if questioned, will only say that the objects belong to Foreverness and must be returned.

MEIROM WERL

Meirom Werl is the commander of the Chasch army, and is in charge of recapturing Dadiche. Werl is a skilled and fairly clever tactician. He has learned from the fall of Dadiche and won't underestimate the fighting abilities of humans again. His plan is simple: to besiege Dadiche and starve out the humans while harassing and bombarding them from the air. If the humans come out and engage his army in the open, so much the better. Werl's main weakness is that he is physically lazy, and prefers to let the enemy come to him rather than conducting long and tiresome operations to seek out the foe.

Meirom Werl **127 points**

ST 12 [0]; **DX** 8/10 [0]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 4.5; Move 4.

Dodge 4.

Advantages: Blue Chasch [80]; Military Rank 5 [25]; Status 2 [0].

Disadvantages: Bully [-10]; Incurious [-5]; Laziness [-10].

Skills: Administration-12 [2]; Area Knowledge (Dadiche and environs)-12 [1]; Beam Weapons/TL11 (Blaster)-12* [4]; Gardening-12 [1]; Interrogation-12 [2]; Piloting/TL11 (Sky-raft)-10 [8]; Tactics-14 [8].

* Beam Weapons skill includes a +2 bonus for IQ.

Languages: Blue Chasch (native)-12 [0]; Tschaiian-10 [1].

Getting rid of the cylinders is only a partial solution. The underworld of Settra will still be convinced the PCs have the secret to unlimited wealth, and correcting this mistake one

"Pnumekin: they are men, are they not?"

"Men in a sense. They are the spies, the couriers of the Pnume. Some say that tunnels run beneath the steppe, with secret entrance traps – perhaps under that very bush!"

Reith examined the bush toward which Traz had directed his attention, but it seemed ordinary enough.

*– Adam Reith and Traz,
City of the Chasch*

thug at a time will get tiresome after a while. The Gzhindra will be satisfied only if they can find out who does have the objects. The adventurers may wind up having to chase after the blasted things again, just to get everyone else off their backs!

Leaving Settra will eliminate the threat from Jennavo and the criminals, but not the Gzhindra. The Pnume have agents and tunnel entrances everywhere, and at night they themselves may emerge in pursuit of their stolen treasures.

The crowning irony of the whole affair is that the scrolls by themselves are completely useless. Nobody on Tschai has been able to read Gjee for millions of years. It is impossible to learn the secret of making sequins simply by looking at the alien writing. However, there is a Pnumic-Gjee translation dictionary, somewhere in the endless galleries of Foreverness. Are the PCs brave and greedy enough to venture into the realm of the Pnume in search of the book?

WAR WITH THE CHASCH

One of Adam Reith's first exploits on Tschai was the conquest of the Blue Chasch city of Dadiche. Such a bold stroke could not go unanswered, however, and the Blue Chasch have gathered their forces to retake the city and punish the humans severely for their temerity. This is primarily a military adventure, and would be suitable for a group of native Tschai mercenaries or a party of Terran operatives.

The Enemy

The Chasch army consists of 3,000 Chaschmen led by 400 Blue Chasch. The Chaschmen troops are armed with flame-projectors, needle-rifles, and sling-grenades, while the Blue Chasch have blasters. The force is accompanied by 20 flying platforms equipped with heavy mortars and bombs. The Chasch army is a powerful force, but it represents the greater part of Blue Chasch military strength. If the humans can hold off or defeat them, it may mark the end of Blue Chasch dominance in the region for good.

The Human Forces

The humans of Dadiche and their allies in Pera have an army of 1,000 men. Their equipment varies – about 100 have Chasch blasters, 600 have hand-catatapults, nearly all have rapiers, and 200 have only spears. The two cities have a total of 12 flying platforms armed with sand-blasts.

The chief problem for the humans is divided command. A quarter of the force belongs to the city of Pera. They are allied with the humans of Dadiche and (correctly) figure that once the Chasch take care of Dadiche, Pera is next. But just because they recognize a common enemy doesn't mean they work well as allies. Many Perans are arrogant, since they were the ones who liberated Dadiche under Adam Reith's leadership. Their commander, Potus Nota, has insisted on equal command even though his army is considerably smaller and less well-equipped than the forces of Dadiche. The former Chaschmen of Dadiche, on the other hand, are suffering from a terrible crisis of morale. Their troops were brought up to view Chasch as superior beings, and the thought of trying to defeat them in battle is disheartening.

Roles for Characters

The humans need all types of help in their fight. Any human warriors are welcome to join the army. Terrans trying to help free Tschai should take this golden opportunity to help create a region entirely under human rule.

The humans are weakest in leadership and technical support. A few officers with Tactics and some Leadership skill could be a great boon to them. Technicians capable of maintaining and repairing the abandoned Chasch equipment are urgently needed, as are skilled pilots for the flying platforms.

Anyone who can come up with and construct some kind of "secret weapon" would get an enthusiastic hearing. The governing council in Dadiche are desperate for any way to even the odds and offset the superior technology of the Chasch. Of course, some genuine crackpots and lunatics have appeared making grandiose claims, and someone who can help tell the workable ideas from the fantasies would be useful.

Perhaps the single thing the humans need most is confidence. Adam Reith helped them win the city, and that has made them willing to defend it, but many former Chaschmen believe they cannot stand against the full strength of the Chasch. A few victories, even minor ones, could do a lot to improve morale.

The PCs can lead raids on the Chasch column as it approaches Dadiche, or go on desperate diplomatic missions to other human communities asking for aid. Even if the heroes are all foot soldiers, the GM should put the players themselves in charge of planning the defense of the city. If they come up with a good strategy, maybe Dadiche can be saved!

LEADERSHIP

Dadiche is governed by a council consisting of four men and one woman, all former servants of the Chasch. They were picked because they volunteered, and nobody else wanted the job.

Rojam Hojan

Rojam Hojan is head of the council, and is generally thought of as the closest thing to a leader the city has. He has developed into a fairly good diplomat as he tries to balance the various factions in the city and keep them unified. His chief flaw is that he doesn't really believe the Chasch can be overcome, and is planning to flee with a small band of followers and as much loot as he can carry as soon as they approach.

Rojam Hojan

72 points

ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Administrative Rank 4 [20]; Alertness +2 [10]; Status 4 [20].

Disadvantages: Delusion ("The Chasch are superior beings") [-5]; Greed [-15]; No Sense of Humor [-10].

Skills: Administration-12 [2]; Agronomy/TL11-12 [2]; Distilling-12 [2]; Driving/TL6 (Heavy wheeled)-11 [2]; Freight Handling-12 [2]; Politics-12 [2]; Streetwise-12 [2].

Languages: Blue Chasch-12 [8]; Tschaiian (native)-12 [0].

Palacal En

Palacal En is in command of the defense of the city, and is doing the best job he can. Unfortunately, his best may not be good enough. He is a great warrior himself, and has been able to attract recruits to his army, but his notions of tactics and strategy are limited mostly to charging pell-mell at the enemy and slugging it out hand to hand. In caravan raids and minor skirmishes against bandits he has been successful, but against a powerful and well-organized foe En's tactics would be suicide.

Palacal En

80 points

ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 8.

Advantages: High Pain Threshold [10]; Military Rank 4 [20]; Status 1 [0].

Disadvantages: No Sense of Humor [-10]; Overconfidence [-10].

Skills: Administration-10 [2]; Beam Weapons/TL11 (Blaster)-13* [1]; Brawling-12 [1]; Carousing-11 [2]; Driving/TL6 (Heavy wheeled)-12 [2]; Leadership-12 [6]; Riding (Leap-horse)-12 [2].

* Includes +1 from IQ.

Languages: Tschaiian-10 (native) [0]; Blue Chasch-9 [4].

AGENTS OF THE WANEK

This adventure takes place after the events chronicled in the *Planet of Adventure* novels. The Wanekmen live in exile after their masters learned about their systematic treachery. The Wanek withdrew into their fortresses, and have not been seen since.

Until now.

The Message

When the party arrives in Ao Hidis, the whole town is abuzz with the latest news. The day before, a solitary Wanek emerged from the Wanek citadel and put up a crudely lettered sign, then marched back inside. Purples, Blacks, and former Wanekmen all crowded around to read the message, and since then copies have been printed and distributed to all the neighboring communities. The sign reads:

DESIRE WANEK
WORK HUMAN
DESIRE HUMAN WANEK GIVE
EVENT 2 DAYS CONSTANT PLACE

The message is the closest the Wanek can get to "Help wanted, apply here in two days."



Testing Time

If the PCs decide to stick around until the next day, they can see a large crowd gather where the Wanek posted the message. There are about 1,000 humans, of whom almost half are former Wanekmen. They loudly insist that the line "DESIRE HUMAN WANEK GIVE" obviously means the Wanek want them back.

At precisely the same time he emerged last time, the same Wanek comes down out of the fortress, accompanied by a dozen others. The Wanek are all armed with Gauss pistols ("hand-sandblasts") and are protected by personal forcefields.

The first thing the Wanek leader does is to grab two humans from the crowd, one a Wanekman and one a trembling Purple. The Wanek leads them to a place where they can be clearly seen by the crowd, then casually shoots the Wanekman in the head. There is quite a bit of commotion, but the message seems clear and the Wanekmen leave the scene (although a group of about a dozen hangs back to watch the proceedings).

Once things settle down a bit, the Wanek leader raises another sign. This one reads:

"DESIRE WANEK
"DO TASK HUMAN SEVERAL"

What follows is a strange series of tests. The Wanek want the humans to perform tasks of endurance, coordination, and intellect. Of course, they can't tell them that. All they can do is hand them things and sometimes gesture with their sandblasts.

The tests include:

Strength: Two burly Wanek hand a heavy weight to the subject. If he drops it, they send him away. (The character must make a Strength roll to pass the test.) This test eliminates about 50 of the 500 potential recruits.

Coordination: The Wanek suddenly begins tossing small ceramic-foam cubes at the applicant. If he can't catch most of them, he's out. (Make a Dexterity roll.) This test knocks out about 100 recruits, leaving some 350.

Endurance: The Wanek suddenly plunges the human's head into a tub of water and holds it down for exactly 113 seconds. Anyone who passes out or breaks loose is disqualified. (See the rules on "breath holding" on p. B91 to see how long a character can stay under. To break free the subject simply has to win a quick test of ST or Brawling skill against the ST 12 Wanek holding his head under.) This test is a real killer, in part because many of the humans don't understand what's going on. It removes 250 from the pool of recruits.

Intellect: The Wanek hands each of the remaining 100 humans a slab of black glass and a stylus which leaves glowing gold lines on the glass. It then holds up a sign bearing the cryptic message

"++
"+++
"+++++
"++++++"

The numbers on the sign are all prime numbers, and if the players themselves don't realize this, their characters can figure it out by making a Mathematics skill roll. The proper answer is to write the next prime number in the series – which is 11, or "+++++++" – on the glass slab.

The Mission

The final test eliminates all but a small number of potential recruits, including (we hope!) the PCs and three or four others. These happy few are led into the fortress for a briefing. They are given some of the Wanekmen body-suits, belts holding sandblast pistols, pouches holding 100 sequins each, and a few other pieces of high-tech gear (flashlights, rope, etc.).

At the briefing, the new Agents of the Wanek are shown a globe of Tschai. The Wanek leader holds up a model which Terrans may recognize as some kind of satellite. The Wanek then indicates a spot on the globe, in western Kislovan. Then the doors of the fortress are opened again and the humans are free to go. The doors will not open again until someone returns with the lost satellite. (The Wanek can't go get it themselves because it's too close to Chasch and Dirdir territory, and this will be a useful test to see if they can hire new human operatives.)

Most of the others are puzzled by the whole business and can't understand what it is the Wanek want. If the PCs figure it out and decide to go, they still face the daunting task of crossing the Draschade Ocean, finding the satellite, and returning with it. The sequins given them by the Wanek are not enough for passage across the sea, so they will have to earn some money or work their way.

Especially fiendish GMs may decide to have the investigators accused of witchcraft for trying to locate fallen sky-demons.

Other Problems

Besides all the obvious difficulties, there is an additional threat. The former Wanekmen don't like the idea of being replaced. If the new recruits fail miserably at their assigned task, perhaps the Wanek will have to take back their old servants despite their faithlessness. When the party leaves for Kislovan, an equal number of Wanekmen will set out after them.

The Wanekmen are limited in their equipment and funds. They have raised about 1,000 sequins from the other Wanekmen exiles, and they have three sandblast-pistols, plus hand-catapults for any extra members of their group. Their plan is simple: follow the PCs to Kislovan, let them find the satellite, then steal it and bring it back to Ao Hidis themselves.

Finding the Satellite

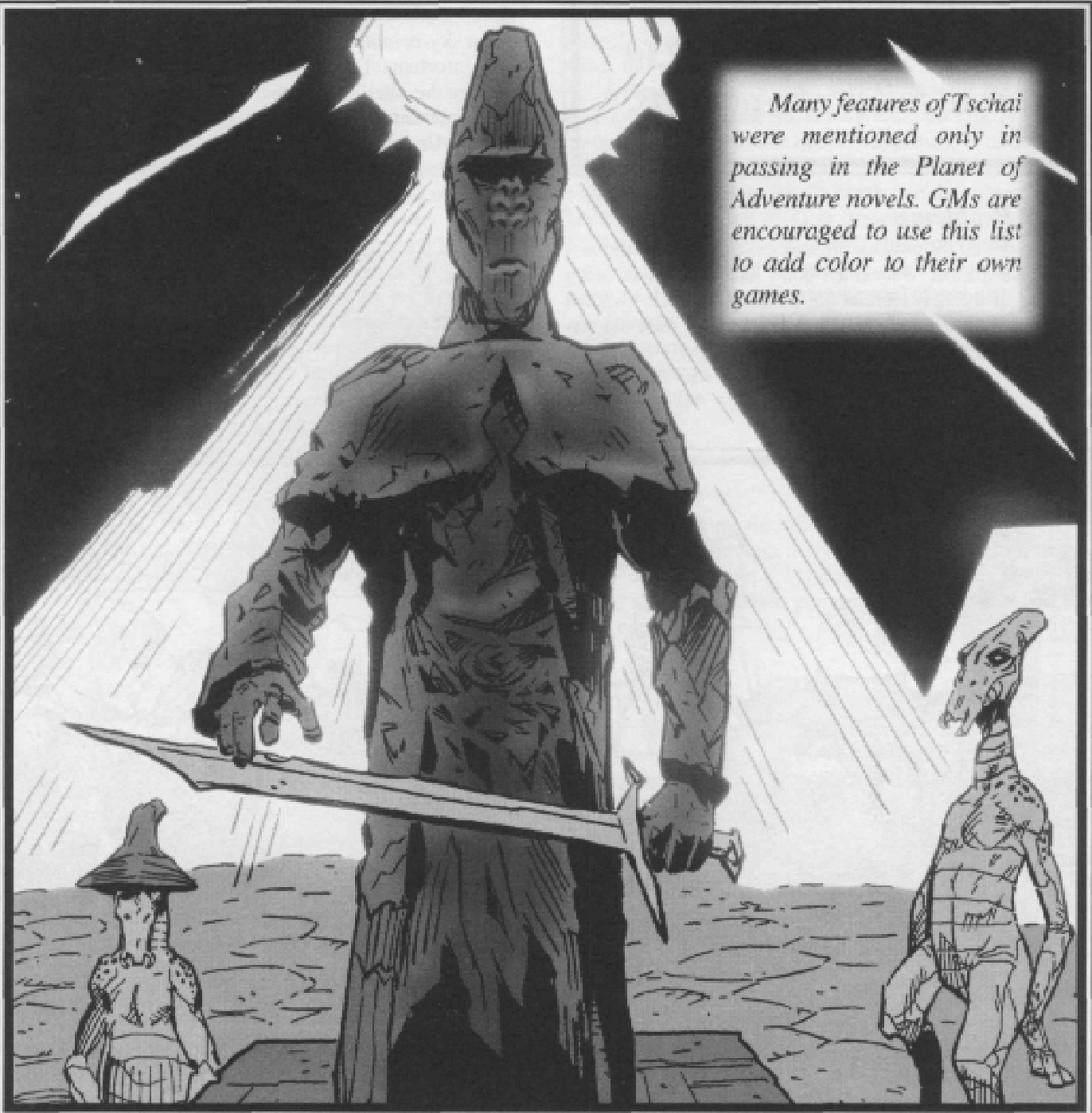
The satellite went down in northwestern Kislovan, in the mountains leading to Cape Braize. The group can track it down by interviewing natives of the region and asking if they saw a shooting star fall to the ground recently. Of course, the natives may wonder why the strangers want to know, and especially fiendish GMs may decide to have the player characters accused of witchcraft for trying to locate fallen sky-demons.

Unfortunately, finding the impact site doesn't help, because the satellite isn't there. It was found by some traveling entertainers who are now exhibiting it at the marketplace in Urmark. They claim it is an actual star fallen from the heavens, and are offering it for sale at no less than 10,000 sequins.

The entertainers number 10 in all, and consist of a troupe of four dancing girls (two pairs of identical twins); an aged Dirdirman renegade magician who is the owner and manager; two burly Khors who take on the local champions in bare-knuckles bouts and double as bouncers at the dancing shows; and three young Thang men who drive the wagons, tend the pull-beasts, work as barkers, and moonlight as thieves.



TSCHAI GLOSSARY



Many features of Tschai were mentioned only in passing in the Planet of Adventure novels. GMs are encouraged to use this list to add color to their own games.

Achenkin Strait: Waterway separating the continents of Kotan and Charchan.

adarak: Tall yellow-green trees like poplars which exude a peculiar freshness into the air; a favorite of the Chasch.

Aegis: One of the highest castes of Yao society; Lord Cizante and Ylin-Ylan were of the Aegis caste.

"Ah-oo-cha": Ritual cry of the Serafs at sunset; only they know what it means.

Aesedra Bight: A large gulf on the west coast of Kotan.

Aig: City in northern Kotan; one end of the caravan route to Hedajha.

aine: Word for the number one.

Ajzan, Gulf of: A large bay on the south coast of Kislovan, separated from the Schanizade Ocean by the Haulk Peninsula. At the head of the gulf is the island of Sivishe.

Alutrin Stargold: Dordolio's field-name.

Aman Steppe: Vast expanse of open country covering the southern portion of Kotan; home to many nomad tribes and Green Chasch.

amphire wood: A type of aromatic wood grown in northern Kotan; often traded to the Chasch.

Anacho, Ankhe at afram: A Dirdirman Superior of the Sixth Estate, he murdered Enze Edo Ezdowirram and fled into the wilderness of Kotan, where he encountered Adam Reith and became his ally.

angbut: Food eaten by Green Chasch during the mating season, said to make them thick-blooded and irritable.

Anguish: Process of endowing Dirdirmen with variant sexual organs in imitation of the Dirdir; entitles them to wear blue and pink.

Anismna: Dirdir city in eastern Charchan, home of one of the academies for Dirdirmen.

annel-leaves: Strongly aromatic leaves used for pull-beast fodder in western Kotan; Chasch can recognize draymen by their smell of annel-leaves.

Ao Hidis: Port on the coast of Kachan, inhabited by Purples and Blacks; also the site of the main Wanek spaceport.

Ao Khaha: The largest Wanek citadel on Tschai, located on Lake Falas in Kachan.

Ao Zalil: A smaller Wanek citadel east of Lake Falas in Kachan.

Artilo: Aila Woudiver's bodyguard and henchman. Adam Reith killed him, to no one's regret.

Arts, Palace of: A Yao cultural institution destroyed in the nuclear attack on Setra.

asofa: A plant which grows in Kachan; the Serafs use asofa root in their perfumes.

asponistra: A type of tree common in the Lokhar Highlands.

Assassins, Guild of: A professional organization of licensed assassins in Cath; only Guild members may carry out assassination contracts.

Athan: Part of the Pagaz Zone in the Prume tunnel complex beneath Kislovan. Zap 210 was from Athan Area.

attander: A dangerous animal native to Kotan; they keep to the shadows of the swales at night, making travel there dangerous.

Audlan Moor: An uninhabited region between Setra and Vervodei in Cath; a haunted, desolate place inhabited by Phung and night-hounds.

awalle: A state of murderous rage which afflicts individuals of the Yao when they have suffered some great humiliation.

Az: The outer moon of Tschai; it appears pink from the ground. Az is believed by some to be the abode of the blessed.

Azaimas: One month of the Tschai calendar.

Azarvin issit Dardo: A Dirdir Excellent who disappeared at the time of Anacho's flight into exile, and was never seen again. It is unclear whether Anacho was actually responsible for Dardo's death.

Azday: One of the days of the Tschai week.

*I represent the Slave-taker's Guild,
and this is my fair appraisal of your
group. The girl is valuable, the boy
less so. Dirdirmen are generally
considered worthless except in clerical or
administrative servitude, for which we
have no demand. You would be rated a
winkle-gatherer or a nut-huller, of no
great value. This man, whatever he is,
appears capable of toil, and would sell at
the standard rate.*

— Coad native,

Servants of the Wanek

Ballisidre: A large city of Cath, one of the chief Yao communities; it suffered a nuclear attack 150 Tschai years ago after the Yearning Refluxives attempted to communicate with Earth.

Balul Zac Ag: When the sun passes into the constellation of Tartusz, the Lokhars observe Balul Zac Ag, the "unnatural dream time," when slaughter, slave-taking, pillage and arson come to a halt across the highlands, and the Great Fair is held at Smargash.

Banquet of the Season: One of the main events of the Yao round, when the princess invites the girls to state their names and thereby make their social debuts.

Bazhan-Gahai: The Prume surface trade center for goods from the Stang Islands and Hedajha, located on the northern coast of Kislovan.

Belbal Gap: A ravine along the route from Pera to Dadiche; the Gnashters erected a gate there in order to levy a toll on trade with the Chasch.

berl: An animal, described as a lithe brown monster with a wicked boar's-head split by a vast mouth. From its neck extend a pair of long arms with great horny hands which it holds above its head.

Berl Totems: A nomad tribe of the Kotan steppes, rivals and occasional enemies of the Emblems.

Bevol: A supernatural being, used to swear by ("Bevol take 'em!").

bice: The smallest unit of currency on Tschai. There are 100 bice in a sequin.

Bifold Genesis, Doctrine of: The Dirdirman belief that humans and Dirdir are derived from the same Great Egg, and that all non-Dirdirmen are the result of hybridizing and degeneration.

Birth: A civilized human culture, as advanced as the Yao.

Bisme: A god worshipped in Murgan; the people pay tithes to the priests, who take all responsibility for appeasing Bisme.

Black Mountain Lake: A large body of water in Charchan, east of Cath. It is the source of the river Jinga.

Blacks: One of the two human groups inhabiting Ao Hidis; they are mortal enemies of the Purples.



Blag: The capital city of the Lokhars, three days west of Smargash by motor-dray.

blast-cannon: A common heavy weapon on Tschai; essentially a heavy plasma blaster.

Blue and Pink: Colors signifying that a Dirdirman has undergone the Anguish and therefore has secret modified reproductive organs.

Blue Band: A gang of robbers who prey on sequin-hunters near Maust.

Blue Jade Palace: An important manse in Settra; its lord is Lord Cizante, whose daughter was Ylin-Ylan, the Flower of Cath.

bode-bird: Predatory bird native to the chasms west of the Lokhar Highlands.

Bonte Bazaar: One of the main marketplaces in the city of Dadiche.

brachial plates: Horny growths on the forearms of a Phung; they grow constantly and must be filed down from time to time.

Braize, Cape: A peninsula on the north coast of Kislován; marks the boundary between the Second Sea and the Schanizade Ocean.

brat-house: A Thang entertainment in which customers are allowed to pelt an obnoxious child with prickly-burrs and dung for a small fee.

Braz: The inner moon of Tschai; it appears pale blue. Braz is thought to be the abode of evil and a place of torment for the wicked after death.

Brazday: One of the days of the week, considered to be inauspicious.

Buszli the Bandit: A notorious highwayman who preys on sequin-hunters making their way from Maust to Khorai.

candlenut: A tree found in the Saschan Islands and northwest Kislován; its fruit is rich in wax.

Carabas: The Dirdir hunting preserve in central Kislován; sequins come from nodes of radioactive salts in the Carabas.

Carcegus: A ruined city on the Aman Steppe in Kotan, possibly built by Old Chasch or an even earlier civilization.

Carina 4269: The star which Tschai orbits; an aged Type K star, cooler and smaller than Earth's Sun. It is 212 light years from Earth, in the constellation Carina.

Castigators: Officials in charge of punishing Dirdirmen who violate the laws or customs.

catapult: Common hand weapon among the low-tech societies of Tschai, using two elastic cords to propel a feathered dart.

Cath: A rich and fertile region of southwestern Charchan, home to the Yao.

Cath, Flower of: A name or title used by Ylin-Ylan, the daughter of Lord Cizante. It appears that the title is awarded to the most beautiful maiden of the Yao upper classes.

Channel of Death: A narrow passage south of the Saschan Islands, between the Charnel Teeth islets and the coast of Kislován.

Charchan: One of the major continents of Tschai. Cath is in Charchan.

charnel bird: Bizarre flying creature with a multitude of pink tentacles and a single eye. They inhabit the Charnel Teeth, and seafarers believe they are the guts of sailors shipwrecked on the rocks.

Charnel Teeth: A group of rocky pinnacles jutting from the waters off the west coast of Kislován. They are very dangerous to ships.

Chasch, Blue: The most numerous and advanced of the Chasch races on Tschai, the Blue Chasch came from the planet Godag about 90,000 years ago. They are renowned for their cruelty.

Chasch, Green: The most primitive of the Chasch, Green Chasch were brought to Tschai as mercenaries in the wars between the Old Chasch and the Blue Chasch. They now live in nomadic hordes on the steppes of Kotan. Green Chasch are very big and powerful, and are telepathic among themselves.

Chasch, Old: The original Chasch race, the Old Chasch are native to the planet Zoör. They came to Tschai over 100,000 years ago, but are now far gone in degeneracy.

Chaschmen: Human servants of the Chasch; a dour, saturnine folk bred to resemble their masters as much as possible.



chrysopine: A crystal formed by radioactive salts in the soil of the Carabas. Chrysopine discs are known as sequins.

Cizante, Lord: Lord of the Blue Jade Palace, and a wealthy and important figure among the Yao. His daughter was the Flower of Cath.

Clark: One of the constellations of Tschai's night sky. Earth lies in the constellation Clari, 212 light years from Tschai.

Clarification, Rite of: A horrible ritual conducted every three years at the Seminary of the Female Mystery in Fasm. It is an orgy of torture and bloodshed.

Cloud, Islands of: A chain of islands off the west coast of Charchan. The people there appear to be friendly and relatively advanced.

Clut: The lowest grade of Dirdirmen, showing the greatest admixture of "sub-men" blood.

Coad: City on the southern coast of Kotan, on the strait called the Dwan Zher. An important port and a famous marketplace.

cog: A small sailing vessel, usually with a round hull and two or three masts.

Concax Screamer: The newest and most advanced model of Dirdir space-boat.

Convocation of Souls: A religion with followers in the Islands of Cloud and perhaps in Cath as well. Priests of the Convocation of Souls are thought to be unnecessarily familiar with their congregations.

cor, red: Small, dangerous animal native to the chasms of western Kachan; it lurks under rocks.

cripthorn: A spiky and venomous plant native to the badlands of Kachan.

cyclodon: Large round-mouthed carnivore which hunts by sight. Chasch find it amusing to put a blindfolded cyclodon and a blindfolded human together in an arena.

Dadiche: A Blue Chasch city in western Kotan, near Pera. Adam Reith's scout-boat was taken there by the Chasch, making it necessary for him to conquer the city and exile the Chasch.

Dark Gatherings: Meetings of Dirdir for anonymous sex, at which all the participants are masked to prevent anyone from learning their true identities.

Dead Steppe: A flat, gray waste in Kotan, northwest of the Aman Steppe. It is semi-desert country, lifeless except for tufts of gorse and pilgrim plant, inhabited mostly by Green Chasch.

Deep Places: The lowest levels of the Pnume tunnel system, where most Pnume spend their lives and few Pnumekin ever venture. The most precious things of the Pnume are kept in the Deep Places.

depilatorium: A barber-shop or waxing salon.

Derduk: A Lokhar town in the Infnets mountains of Kachan, at the southern end of the Lokhar Highlands; south of Derduk there are no roads.

Derogators: Officials in charge of capturing Dirdirmen who have committed crimes or violated propriety. They hand prisoners over to the Castigators for punishment.

Desidea River: A river which rises in the Infnets Mountains in the Lokhar Highlands of Kachan, and flows through a chasm into Lake Falas.

detector wand: Device used by Chasch to augment their sense of smell; they are attached to a facemask worn by the user.

Devil, First: A presumably mythical being, possibly originating in Pnume beliefs or else associated with them in popular superstition. The Pnume's First Devil is said to be watted.

Diko: Addictive sweet-salt wafers which form part of every Pnumekin meal. They contain hormone-suppressants and give the Pnumekin an unusual body odor reminiscent of camphor and sour milk.

Dirdir: The most powerful of the alien masters of Tschai, Dirdir are lean and elegant beings with bone-white skin and glowing antennae. They have numerous sexes and a complex social hierarchy. They are avid hunters and occasionally regress to a primitive state of ferocity.

Dirdirmen: Human servitors of the Dirdir, bred to resemble their masters as much as possible. High-ranking Dirdirmen are unnaturally tall and slender, with tiny ears and noses and almost no hair.

distillation: An alcoholic beverage similar to brandy.

Dordolio: A Yao cavalier of the Gold and Carmelian nanse, who traveled as far as Coad in search of the kidnapped Flower of Cath. His field-name is Alutrin Stargold.

Dragan: The southernmost of the Isles of Cloud, just north of the territory controlled by the Wanek in Kachan.

Draschade: The smaller of Tschai's two oceans, the Draschade is bounded on the west by Kotan and Kislovian, and on the east by Charchan and Kachan.

draymen: Drivers of wagons or motor-drays, especially those holding permits to enter Chasch cities. In western Kotan, draymen have a strong scent of annel-leaves.

drays: Large wagons with six or eight wheels, either motorized or drawn by teams of pull-beasts. The biggest drays can be 80 feet long and luxuriously appointed.

Dread (Cape): The southernmost promontory of the island of Vord, commonly recognized as the boundary between the Draschade and Schanizade Oceans.

dros: The word for the number three in the language of Tschai.

Dr'ysa dr'ysa, dr'ysa: The cry of a Dirdir who has been wronged and demands arbitration. If the arbitration fails he can challenge the arbitrator; if he fails again, his effulgences are pulled out and he becomes a pariah.

Dugbo: A landless and impoverished tribe with a reputation for being thieves and musicians. Their practitioners are said to work miracles.

Dwan Zher: The strait separating eastern Kotan and Kislovian and connecting the First Sea with the Draschade Ocean. Coad is on the north shore of the Dwan Zher, and the islands of Grenie and Horasin are at the eastern end.

dyan tree: Tree native to the north coast of Kislovian. In the country of the Khors, Dyan trees are grown in sacred groves, where the Khors conduct their nightly conjugal rituals.

effulgences: The glowing antennae on the sides of a Dirdir's crest; Dirdirmen of the highest rank wear artificial ones.

Effulgents: One name by which the Dirdirmen know the Dirdir.

Eliasis: A city in northeastern Charchan, home to one of the academies for Dirdirmen. A group of students expelled from the Eliasis academy founded the Society of Yearning Refluxives in Cath.

Erluis, Clodo: The administrator of the city of Sivishe, eager to curry favor with the Dirdir.

emblems: Circular decorations worn by the men of the Kruthe tribe on the steppes of Kotan. They are made of silver, copper, stone, and wood, and are believed by the wearers to be semi-divine entities.



enser: The word for the number four in the language of Tschai.

Estrane: The third of the four castes of Dirdirmen, with visible traces of "sub-men" ancestry.

Expansionists: One faction or philosophy among the Dirdir; they favor a policy of interstellar conquest and colonization. The Expansionists were dominant during the period when Tschai was conquered, but more recently have fallen from favor.

explator: The victim in the ceremony of Pathetic Communion, a Yao who has given way to *awaile* and will die by torture at the hands of the Ministrants.

Explorer IV: A starship of Earth's Federal Space Agency, which detected curious signals from Carina 4269 and voyaged to investigate. It was destroyed in orbit over Tschai just after launching a scout-boat to explore the surface.

Ezdowirram, Enze Edo: A Dirdirman and rival of Ankhe at Afram Anacho; their feud was resolved when Anacho pushed him out of an air-car.

Falas, Lake: A large freshwater body in southern Kachan, fed by rivers including the Desidea. Its shores are marshy and are inhabited by the Xars; at the western end is the Wanek citadel of Ao Khaha, and at the eastern end is Ao Zalil.

Fasm Junction: A depot along the Dead Steppe caravan routes in Kotan, near the Seminary of the Female Mystery.

fat-hump: Large animal raised for food by steppe nomads and others; relative of pull-beasts and leap-horses.

feather-palm: A tree with green leaves resembling ostrich plumes.

Federal Space Agency: The Earth organization in charge of space exploration.

Female Mystery, Cult of the: An all-woman cult headquartered near Fasm Junction on the Dead Steppe. Every three years they conduct a dreadful sacrificial rite.

Female Mystery, Seminary of the: The headquarters of the Cult of the Female Mystery, located in a hidden valley among the badlands near Fasm Junction on the Dead Steppe.

ferre: A predatory animal native to the badlands of western Kachan.

fern-pod: A common food item, eaten either pickled, boiled, or served raw in salads.

Fesa: An ancient alien civilization, who drove the Gjee from Tschai and ruled the planet until they fled the approach of the red star Hsi.

First Folk, First Race: Names used by the Dirdirmen to refer to the Dirdir.

First Sea: The body of water between Kotan and Kislován. On the east it empties into the Draschade Ocean through the Dwan Zher; on the west it connects to the Second Sea and thence to the Schanzade Ocean.

First Tans: An ancient human stock of Tschai, ancestors of the Yao. The modern Tans of Coad are probably derived from the First Tans.

First Whites: Another of the ancient human strains of Tschai, possibly the proto-Caucasians brought back from Earth by the Dirdir. They are ancestors of the Yao, and presumably many other peoples of Tschai as well.

fluke-fish: A freshwater fish of northern Kotan with a flat horizontal tail like those of Terran dolphins. Fluke-fish are abundant at the time of the Green Chasch mating season, and the Chasch gorge on them before returning south to the Dead Steppe.

Foreland: The northern part of the Carabas, a stretch of plain between the Hills of Recall and the entrance to the zone at Maust. The Foreland is the least dangerous part of the Carabas, but also the least rich in chrysopine nodes.

Foreverness: The Pnume caverns on the lowest levels of their tunnels, where artifacts, relics, and preserved individuals of bygone civilizations are preserved.

Gaiz (Cape): The westernmost promontory of Kachan, where the port of Tusa Tula is located.

garde-nez: A nose guard; originally a piece of armor but now generally a gilded ornament clipped to the bridge of the nose. Often worn by Yao cavaliers.

gauze-moth: Large insectile creature with flexible transparent wings, found in the jungles along the lower Jinga river.

ghaun: Pnume word meaning "a wild region exposed to wind and weather," used by Pnumekin to refer to the surface world.

ghian: Inhabitants of the *ghaun*; surface-dwellers, in the Pnume language.

ghoul: Scavenging carnivore of vaguely humanoid outline, found all over Tschai.

Gjee: An ancient alien civilization which founded eight empires on Tschai before being wiped out by the Fesa, long before any of Tschai's current masters arrived.

Glass Box: An immense enclosed hunting ground in Hei, five miles long, three miles wide, and 1,000 feet high. Inside is a simulation of the Dirdir native environment on Sibol. Dirdir hunt human criminals in the Glass Box, and sometimes high-ranking Dirdirmen are also allowed to join the hunt.

Gnashters: A group of bandits led by Naga Goho who took over the city of Pera in western Kotan. The Gnashters drove out the Phung and other dangers, but cruelly oppressed the people of Pera until Adam Reith led a revolt against them.

Godag: The home planet of the Blue Chasch, presumably once a colony planet settled by the Old Chasch.

Goho, Naga: The leader of the Gnashters and ruler of Pera until Reith's revolt. "Goho" appears to be a title.

Gold and Carnelian Manse: One of the great noble manors of Cath, a rival of the Blue Jade Palace. The cavalier Dordolio was a scion of the Gold and Carnelian.

Gol'eszitra: See "Listening Monitor."

*You hairy black villain,
what are you doing to that
poor assassin? He is only
a workman at his trade!*

*— Angry woman,
Servants of
the Wanek*

Golsse: An Old Chasch city near the Jang Pinnacles, on the main caravan route across Kotan. It is a city of low white domes half-hidden under foliage, with gardens everywhere. Visitors are advised not to leave the oval plaza in the center of town.

Gozed: A mountainous, thickly forested island in the Draschade Ocean; the shore is infested by sea-scorpions, and the islanders worship them in the cult of the Sea Mother.

Gruys: A human race of Tschai found in Kotan and Kislován.

Great Daduz Forest: A large forest in the south of Kotan, between the Aman Steppe and the coast. The Kruthe gather herbs and dyes in the forest.

Great Fair: An annual event in Smargash, during the "unnatural dream time" when the Lokhars observe a truce period.

Great Fish: A figure in Dirdir mythology, the progenitor of all life on Sibol. According to the Doctrine of Bifold Genesis, the Great Fish laid a single egg from which hatched both Dirdir and Dirdirmen.

Grenie: An island at the head of the Dwan Zher, next to Horasin. It is populated by short gnarled-looking people with stringy black hair. Men from Grenie have a monopoly on the palanquin-bearing business in Coad.

gzhindra: Term for Pnumekin who have been exiled from the underground world of the Pnume, and serve their masters as spies and agents on the surface. Surface-dwellers don't recognize the distinction and call them Pnumekin.

Hamil Zut: A squalid town in Kachan, with 100 mud huts and 12 taverns, where the Sarsazm Road from the north enters the Lokhar Uplands.

Harasthy: A mythical demon of Tschai, used chiefly as a swear word.

Haulk: A long peninsula extending south from Kislovan, separating the Schanizade Ocean from the Gulf of Ajzan.

haze-water: A type of perfume used by Dugbo dancing-girls and others to make themselves more alluring.

Hedajha Gulf: A gulf on the south coast of Kotan, off the First Sea. The port of Malagash is on the Hedajha Gulf, as is the island of Hedajha.

*In Pera no one may rob or
rape but Naga Goho and the
Gnashters; and this is a boon.
What if everyone enjoyed this
license?*

— Pera native,

City of the Chasch

Hedajhans: Inhabitants of Hedajha, who wear turbans and shawls, walk with a swaggering bent-kneed gait, and are often pirates.

Hei: The Dirdir city on the mainland of Kislovan, connected to Sivishe by a causeway. Hei is one of the main Dirdir centers on Tschai, and is the home of the dreaded Glass Box.

Hesse: A Wanekman who was working undercover as secretary to Lord Cizante of the Blue Jade Palace in Cath. He was abducted and released by the Pnume, and forced to translate for Reith in Ao Khaha.

Hills of Recall: A range of rocky hills in the center of the Carabas.

hisz: The word for the number six in the language of Tschai.

Hisziu: Aila Woudiver's dwarfish assistant, who shared most of his master's vices but lacked his virtues.

Hoch Har: The inhabitants of the region around Black Mountain Lake east of Cath. They are ancient enemies of the Yao.

Home: The name given to Earth by the Yearning Refluxives of Cath; it is said to be a world of bounty, with golden mountains crowned with opals, and "forests of dreams."

Horasin: An island lying just on the equator at the mouth of the Dwan Zher, covered by a jungle of giant gray-green trees.

Hrostilfe, Dobagq: A Sealord of Kabasas; a short mahogany-colored man with a beaky nose, the owner and captain of the merchant ship *Pibar*. He tried to rob his passengers and lost his ship as a result.

Hs'ai hs'ai, hs'ai: The cry of a Dirdir in distress. All Dirdir are honor-bound to aid anyone who gives the call.

Hsi: A red star which passed near the Carina 4269 system millions of years ago. The Fesa fled Tschai at that time and never returned.

h'so: "Marvellous dominance," the quality exhibited by a Dirdir who organizes an initiative or hunt.

Human Magi: The mighty human masters of the human home planet, according to the Yearning Refluxives. Having failed to contact them by radio, the cult now tries to send them telepathic messages.

Human Things: A curious tribe of Kachan, who hide their faces behind pottery masks.

Ilanths: A fierce tribe of northern Kotan, who are often employed as mercenaries to guard caravans on the steppes.

Isday: One of the days of the Tschai week.

Immaculate: The highest caste of Dirdirmen, considered to be almost the equal of Dirdir. They are permitted to undergo surgical modification in order to have secret sexes.

imp: Juvenile Chasch.

Infnets: A range of mountains in Kachan, along the western and southern edge of the Lokhar Highlands.

Intensive: The second-highest caste of Dirdirmen, showing no trace of "sub-men" ancestry but resembling Dirdir much less than the Immaculates.

Ioba: A river flowing through the Aman Steppe.

Ish: A river of Kachan, flowing northward from the Lokhar Highlands to enter the Parapan at Zara. It is navigable as far upstream as the country of the Niss.

Ispra: An older model of Dirdir spaceboat, now superseded by the Concax Screamer.

issir: The word for "sword" in the language of Tschai.

Ivensday: One day of the Tschai week.

Jang Pinnacles: A range of extinct volcanoes in the Dead Steppe, now eroded to their granite cores. The Old Chasch city of Golsse is near the Pinnacles.

Jinga: A major river of Charchan, rising in Black Mountain Lake east of Cath and flowing south through jungles and swamps to the city of Kabasas on the Parapan.

junction-stones: Polished semi-precious stones sold by Dugbo necromancers and said to facilitate telepathy.

Kabasas: Port city at the mouth of the Jinga River, on the Parapan strait between Charchan and Kachan. The inhabitants have unusual courtship practices.

Kachan: One of the four major continents of Tschai, south of Charchan and east of Kislovan.

Kadant: A type of large Wanek-built spaceboat.

Kar Yan: Slinking gray beasts native to the Kachan badlands.

Kazabir Depot: The only human settlement in the Dead Steppe, a heavily fortified village amid rock pinnacles.

Kazain: A port on the Schanizade coast of Kislovan, near the base of the Haulk peninsula.

keel tree: A handsome tree native to many parts of Tschai. The name suggests the wood is useful for building ships.

Khermans: A human tribe of Kislovan; many Khermans move to Sivishe to work in the spaceyards.

Khors: A quarrelsome people living on the north coast of Kislovan; they take offense easily and gather nightly in their sacred groves.

Khusz: The Dirdir hunting camp at the edge of the Carabas, about 10 miles south of the South Stage.

kianthus: A tree native to the Saschan Islands and the western coast of Kislovan.

Kislovan: One of Tschai's four large continents, south of Kotan and west of Kachan.

Kite-Fighters: A nomad tribe of the Aman Steppe, known for their elaborate and maneuverable kites.

knife-foil: The favored weapon of the Emblem men and other steppe nomads, a triangular buckler which can be used both as shield and knife.

Kotan: One of Tschai's four continents, north of Kislovan and adjacent to Charchan. Much of Kotan is sparsely-settled steppe.

Kruthe: Nomads of the Aman steppe, also known as the Emblems for their sacred devices.

Ktan: A star-god in Yao mythology, the lover of the nymph L'lae; the Flower of Cath's lover-name for Adam Reith.

Kud: A small type of Wanek spaceboat.

leap-horse: A common riding animal on Tschai, an ill-smelling and foul-tempered beast controlled by a steering bar driven through the brain.

lethipod: A kind of tree native to western Kislovan and the islands of the Schanizade Ocean.

Leume: An island in the Draschade Ocean off the east coast of Kislovan; also the gulf separating it from the mainland.

Liquid One: A drug used in the process of preparing specimens for permanent display in Foreverness; it invigorates and tones, opening the passages of the body for Liquid Two.

Liquid Two: A preservative which turns living beings into imperishable exhibits in the Pnume galleries of Foreverness.

Listening Monitor: A Pnume official in charge of maintaining order; the name is a translation of the term *gol'eszitra*, or "supervisory intellect with ears alert for raucous disturbance."

L'lae: A nymph in Yao folklore who lives in the clouds above Mount Daramthissa and loves the star-god Ktan; the Flower of Cath used L'lae as her lover-name with Adam Reith.

Lokhar: A human tribe native to the uplands of Kachan. The men dye their skin black and bleach their hair white, while women adopt the reverse coloring. Lokhars are sometimes hired as technicians in the Wanek spaceyards.



Lok Lu Steppe: An expanse in eastern Kotan, east of the Djzanalai Mountains.

Lost Counties: A region south of Smargash in the Lokhar uplands of Kachan, now controlled by other tribes.

Mad Axes: A nomad tribe of the Aman Steppe, enemies and cousins of the Kruthe.

Malagash: A port on the Hedajha Gulf in southern Kotan, one end of the north-south caravan route.

managa: The word for the number eight in the language of Tschai.

Marshmen: A widespread human race on Tschai, found in Kotan, Kislovan and possibly elsewhere as well. They are small slender yellow people with white or black eyes. Aila Noudiver was part Marshman.

Maust: The town at the north end of the Carabas in Kislovan, 50 miles south of the coast. It is the favored point of departure for sequin-hunters, and is full of suppliers, guides, thieves, and swindlers.

Meraghan: A ruined city on the Aman Steppe.

Mercade: A marketplace or business district in Yao cities.

Meumas: One of the months in the Tschai calendar.

Mother of the Gods: The victim and honoree of the Cult of the Sea Mother, who is left out for the sea-scorpions to sting, implanting their larvae in her flesh.

mother-women: The few Pnumekin women who do not receive hormone suppressants and serve as breeding stock for future generations; each mother-woman bears about a dozen children.

motor-dray: Large motorized vehicle with six or eight wheels, used by steppe caravans and for travel in rough country.

Mount Daramthissa: In Yao legend, the nymph L'lae lives in clouds over Mount Daramthissa.

Nabiga: A great river of Kotan, which separates the Dead Steppe from the Aman Steppe, and empties into the Dwan Zher at Coad.

Nerv: A city on the westernmost promontory of Charchan, just across the Achenkin Strait from Kotan.

nerve-fire: A Dirdir device which causes intense pain in victims, used for torture and to drive prey along with a hunting party until dinnertime.

nif: The word for the number five in the language of Tschai.

night-hound: Nocturnal predator and scavenger found all over Tschai. Night-hounds travel in packs, hatch from larvae, and have some mysterious connection with the Pnume.

Niss: Tribesmen of Kachan who live along the lower Ish river; they are extremely tall, wear black cloaks, and live in roles like night-hounds.

nuwai: The word for the number nine in the language of Tschai.

Ogres: Inhabitants of the forests of southern Kotan; the steppe dwellers believe them to be cannibals.

Ojzanalai Mountains: A range of mountains in central Kotan, separating the western steppes from the Wild Waste of the east.

Old State: A primitive condition which Dirdir enter while hunting or in battle.

olfactory amplifiers: Devices used by Chasch to improve their sense of smell, particularly when pursuing fugitives or seeking out hidden things. They resemble moth antennae, and are worn on a headband.

Onmale: The most prominent of the Kruthe Emblems; the wearer of Onmale is the tribal leader. Adam Reith's companion Traz wore Onmale, then buried it when he fled the tribe. He resumed Onmale before departing for Earth.

Original Masters: High-ranking Wanek who have demonstrated great expertise and creativity in some field.

osmotic film: A device used for gathering and purifying water, it is a thin membrane permeable only by water molecules. Part of the standard Federal Space Agency survival kit.

Otwile: The arena brawling champion of Urmank, a huge bald man with a surly disposition. In the arena he is undefeated.

I don't mind satisfying your curiosity if you are willing to pay my not-unreasonable fee. In fact I can offer you various grades of enlightenment. For a hundred sequins I guarantee amazement and awe.

– Adam Reith, The Pnume

ouinga: Gauzy purple tree native to northern Kislovan. The Zsafathrans plant them around their homes and create pleasant bowers.

Pansogmatic Gnosis: A religion currently popular in the Isles of Cloud, a straightforward faith in which one simply recites the litany daily.

Pagaz: One of the zones of the Pnume tunnel system under Kislovan; Zap 210's home.

Parapan: The narrow sea separating Charchan and Kachan.

Pathetic Communion: The ritual in which Yao who have killed others while in a state of *awaile* are tortured to death.

pepper-tea: A mildly intoxicating beverage.

Pera: The "City of Lost Souls" at the western edge of the Dead Steppe in Kotan; until Reith's visit it was ruled by Naga Goho and the Gnashters.

Phung: Strange, mad-seeming creatures related to Pnume, who live solitary lives in ruins and wastelands. They are prodigiously strong and quick, and attack all they encounter.

pilgrim plant: A very useful food plant which grows almost everywhere on Tschai. It is a low weed on which grow small white globules. The globules have a bland flavor, but are very nutritious.

pn'hanh: "Comosive or metal-bursting sagacity," a virtue much esteemed by the higher grades of Dirdir.

Pnume: The native sentients of Tschai, gaunt ivory-colored beings who live in a vast network of caverns and are never seen aboveground during the day.

Pnumekin: Human servitors of the Pnume, they are slight and pale, with coal-black hair and regular features. Only a few are allowed to breed; the rest are given hormone suppressants which keep them sexless and docile.

Portal of Gleams: The gateway to the Carabas at Maust.

power-gun: A general term for energy weapons.

prickle-burr: Thorny seed-pod native to Cape Braize and northern Kislovan; a favorite ammunition for brat-house patrons.

Przelius: A tyrant who ruled Urmank 1,000 years ago and built a great rotunda there.

psilla tree: A tree common in Kotan, Kislovan, and nearby islands.

pull-beast: Large and powerful animal with eight soft feet, used as a beast of burden; a smaller and slighter variety is used in Kachan as riding animals.

Purples: One of the two human subraces of Ao Hidis; they are mortal enemies of the Blacks despite their common ancestry.

pysantilla: Dangerous animal native to the badlands of Kachan.

rack-belly: A poisonous plant native to the Kachan badlands.

Rakh: A large island or small continent east of Kachan.

reed-walker: A small, long-legged animal found in swamps. When pickled, they are a delicacy.

Rhadamth: A mythical sea-demon, believed by the Zsafathrans to be the ancestor of humanity, along with the sacred Xyxl bird.

the "Round": The constantly changing cycle of entertainments and fashions, the focus of Yao social maneuvering.

Saaba: A Blue Chasch city in western Kotan, south of Pera.

Sad Islanders: Inhabitants of the Sad Islands, off the coast of Kislovan; Sad Islanders often work in the spaceyards at Sivishe.

Sagorio: A demon or deity, invoked in the blessing "May nine-headed Sagorio maim your enemies."

Sandblast: Heavy weapon originally devised by the Wanek but now common on Tschai; it uses electrostatics to propel tiny grains of sand at a fraction of the speed of light.

sard: A type of sequin, colored pale blue and worth 5 clears.

Sarsazm Road: A major caravan route in Kotan, leading from the upper limit of navigation on the Ish, through the ancient seabeds to Hamil Zut at the base of the Lokhar Uplands.

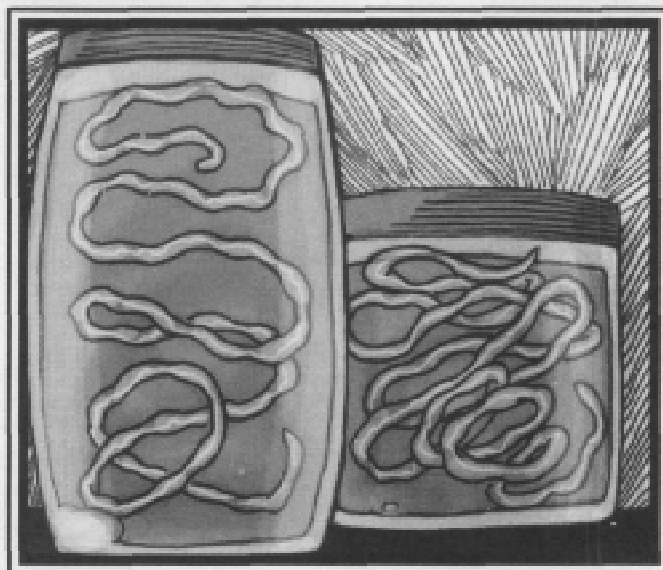
Saschan Islands: A trio of islands off the west coast of Kislovan, ancient volcanic cores now thickly forested.

scanscope: An optical instrument issued to Federal Space Agency scouts; it can magnify up to 1,000 times and has light-amplification built in.

Schanizade Ocean: The largest of Tschai's oceans, covering nearly half the planet. On the west it washes Charchan and Rakh, and on the east it touches Kotan and Kislovan.

sea-fruit: A type of edible plant which grows in shallow coastal waters.

sea-scorpion: Large amphibious arthropod which infests the waters around Gozed. They implant their larvae in warm-blooded hosts to incubate on land.



sea-worm: Iridescent marine creature, sometimes kept as decorative pets in glass jars.

Second Sea: A small body of water between Kotan and Kislovan, connected to the First Sea and the Schanizade Ocean.

Section Warden: High Pnume official, permitted access to the most secret maps and passages. The name is a translation of an unpronounceable Pnume term which connotes superlative erudition in combination with high authority and status.

Security Assassination Company: A well-respected assassination firm in Settra.

sei: The word for the number two in the language of Tschai.

sequin: Disc-shaped crystal of chrysopine which comes in various colors; the universal currency of Tschai.

Serafs: A tribe of Kachan who make perfumes and scented wax, and claim to know the secret of immortality. They wear white robes and spined helmets, and cry "Ah-oo-cha" at sunset.

Settra: The chief city of the Yao and the capital of Cath.

Shelters: The Pnumekin term for the underground labyrinth of the Pnume.

Shemolel: An advanced and cultured human society of Tschai.

Shivvan: One of the first alien invaders of Tschai, who occupied the planet some seven million years ago.

Siadz: A Lokhar town west of Smargash, at the rim of the highlands above the chasms.

Sibol: The home planet of the Dirdir; a hot, dry world with a bright sun.

Sieps: Dwarfish humans from the eastern slopes of the Gjzanalai Mountains in Kotan, who sometimes work as street musicians in Coad and other cities.

Silent Critic: A Prume official, functioning as a sort of inspector general.

Sivishe: A large city on an island in the Ajzan Gulf south of Kislovan, it is the home of the chief Dirdir spaceport and spaceship yards. Sivishe is a city of men, governed by an appointed Administrator.

Slant, Great: A long and dangerous canyon full of rapids and rocks, through which the Jinga River leaves Black Mountain Lake.

Smargash: The chief city of the Lokhars.

smur: Dangerous reptilian creatures native to Kislovan; they infest the Carabas and prey on the sequin-hunters there.

Songh: The most southerly of the Blue Chasch cities, 20 miles south of Cape Braize in Kislovan.

South Ebron Mercade: The main commercial district in the city of Settra.

South Stage: The most dangerous section of the Carabas, between the Hills of Recall and the Dirdir hunting camp; also the section richest in sequins.

spider-bat: Winged creature which rides the wind kite-fashion, anchored to a long thread.

spumet: A toxic plant native to the chasms of western Kachan.

Stheine: An ancient stone city, possibly prehuman, built at the tip of Cape Braize.

sting: A hand weapon carried by Dirdirmen and others; it is a rapier which can retract into a small rod for ease in carrying.

Stone Desert: A desolate region of northeastern Kislovan.

Tans: A human race of Tschai, native to Coad and other parts of Kotan. They are affable fox-faced people, with wide polished cheekbones, pointed chins, and red or dark brown hair.

Tartusz: One of the zodiacal constellations of Tschai. When the sun is in Tartusz, the Lokhars observe a period of truce.

tatap: The word for "father" in the language of Tschai.

tayberry: A type of tree bearing edible fruit, often planted as a shade tree.

Temas: One of the months of the year in the calendar of Tschai.

Thangs: A human culture on Tschai, native to Cape Braize and northern Kislovan. Thangs are traders and enjoy sharp dealing as well as outright fraud. They are not musical, but their food is good.

Third Sea: One of the chain of small seas separating Kotan and Kislovan.

ti: The word for the number ten in the common human language of Tschai.

Transcom: A communication device issued by the Federal Space Agency to field scouts.

Traz: A boy of the Kruthe tribe; the wearer of the emblem Onmale, and thus the chief.

tsau'gsh: A Dirdir term meaning a band of determined hunters who have claimed the right to carry out a task in order to gain status; often translated as "initiative."

Tusa Tala: A port on Cape Gaiz, the westernmost promontory of Kachan.

Essentially, I disregarded the perquisites of a certain Enze Edo Ezdowirram, who brought me to the attention of the First Race. I trusted to ingenuity and refused to be chastened. I compounded my original offense; I exacerbated the situation a dozen times over. At last, in a spasm of irritation, I dislodged Enze Edo from his seat a mile above the steppe.

– Anacho, City of the Chasch

Tutelanics: A religion practiced in the Isles of Cloud and elsewhere; it calls for a great deal of memorizing and therefore is unpopular.

Twelve Touches: A method of assassination practiced by the Assassins' Guild in Cath – each day for 12 days the victim is touched with a splinter of wood, and on the last day he dies.

Urmank: The chief city of the Thangs, located on Cape Braize in Kislovan. Urmank is a port and a center of trade.

vam: The word for "mother" in the common human language of Tschai.

Vervodel: The chief port of Cath, a small city connected to Settra by wheelway.

Vord: An island southwest of Kachan, where Cape Dread marks the division between the Schanizade and Draschade oceans.

Walalukians: One of the more advanced human cultures on Tschai, the equals of the Yao or Shemolei.

Wanek: One of the alien races which dominate Tschai, the Wanek are amphibious creatures at war with the Dirdir. Their presence on Tschai is limited to a few fortress complexes in Kachan. The Wanek language is very difficult for humans to learn and understand.

Wanekmen: Human servants of the Wanek. They have saturnine features, with pale skin and dark hair; Adam Reith found them somehow repulsive.

watak: A weedy-looking black plant which flourishes in steppes and wastelands. Watak plants store up to a gallon of sap in their roots; the liquid is acrid-tasting and can cause deafness with prolonged consumption, but is a lifesaver for travelers in dry regions.

wheelway: A transport system connecting the major cities of Cath. Wheelway cars ride a wedge-shaped concrete slot on two great wheels; the system is not as efficient as it could be.

Wild Waste: An expanse of steppe and tundra in north-eastern Kotan, also called the Zhaarken.

Wind Mountain Depot: A caravanserai on the Dead Steppe, where the caravans coming north from Malagash meet those bound westward for Pera.

Woudiver, Aila: A humble dealer in sand and gravel who also has a finger in all of Sivilshe's criminal rackets. He is a bloated, mustard-colored man, called "Big Yellow" by his subordinates.

Wyness: The chief city in the Isles of Cloud.

Xars: A tribe of humans who live in the swamps by Lake Falas in Kachan. They are short and stocky, with congested complexions, and wear their hair varnished into tall columns.

Xyxl bird: A type of bird held to be sacred by Zsafathrans; they believe humans sprang from the union of the Xyxl bird and the sea-demon Rhadamth.

yaga: The word for the number seven in the common human language of Tschai.

Yao: One of the more advanced and cultured human nations on Tschai. The Yao live in Cath, in the continent of Charchan. They are lithe and attractive, but are obsessed with social position and proper behavior.

Yatl: A large river which cuts through the Dead Steppe in Kotan.

Yearning Reflexives: A cult in Cath who believe humans come from another world and must return there. They once actually built transmitters to signal Earth, but now are far gone in superstition and crackpotdom.

*Days drifted past: cool
mornings with a pearly smoke
clinging to the sea; noons with
Carina 4269 burning at the
zenith; ale-colored afternoons;
quiet nights.*

– Servants of the Wanek

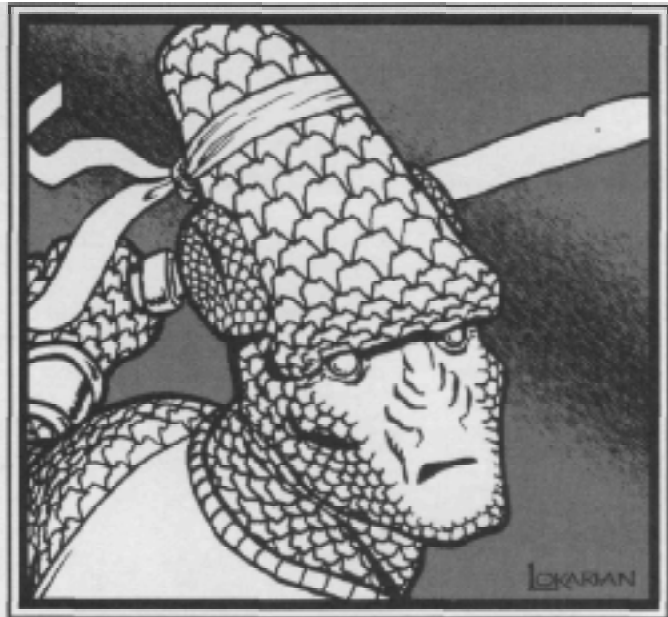
Yellow-Blacks: A tribe of nomads on the Aman Steppe.

Ylin-Yian: The "flower-name" of the Flower of Cath.

Zadno's Depot: A small caravanserai on the Dead Steppe, dug into a cliff for protection. The place produces rock crystals and slabs of malachite.

Zam: A human tribe of Kachan or Charchan, makers of good sausage (at least, Zarfo Detwiler the Lokhar liked it).

Zants, Greater: One of the Green Chasch hordes of the Dead Steppe, not to be confused with the Lesser Zants.



Zants, Lesser: A Green Chasch horde inhabiting the Dead Steppe, cousins and enemies of the Greater Zants. They are distinguished by the protuberances on either side of their heads.

Zap 210: A Pnumekin girl who accompanied Adam Reith on his later adventures. The name is his invention; she is number 210 in Zith Group, Athan area, Pagaz zone.

Zara: A port in northern Kachan, at the mouth of the Ish River on the Parapan.

Zeno: A type of small Wanek-built spaceboat.

Zhaarken: An expanse of steppe and tundra in north-eastern Kotan, between the Lok Lu steppe and the Achenkin Strait.

zhna-dih: The Dirdir term for individual initiative; literally, "a great dashing leap trailing lightning-like sparks."

Zhurvegs: A tribe of the Kachan interior who sell elaborately woven rugs, said to be made by legless children kidnapped by the Zhurvegs.

Zith: One of the Pnumekin groups in Athan area beneath Kislovan.

Zoga'ar zum Fulkash am: The "way of death's-heads with purple-gleaming eye sockets" – the road to the Carabas in Kislovan.

Zoör: The original homeworld of the Chasch.

Zopal Range: A range of red and black peaks in north-eastern Kislovan, running roughly northwest to southeast, near the Stone Desert.

Zozi: The "child name" of Ylin-Ylan, used only by her close family.


Zuzuma Kastchai: Pnumekin term for the Pnume, which translates roughly as "Ancient and secret world-folk derived from dark rock and mother-soil."

Zsafathra: A region on the north coast of Kislovan between Khorai and Cape Braize; the inhabitants are peaceful, friendly, and only somewhat mercenary in outlook.

zs'hanh: Dirdir term for "Contemptuous indifference to the activity of others," which is considered an attribute of the fourth through 13th grades of Dirdir.

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