

The Excellent Travelling Volume

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ISSUE NO. 7

A fanzine of M.A.R. Barker's World of Tékumel

INTRODUCTION

This issue is full of firsts, all of which fill me with great pleasure and pride. One of these firsts should be immediately obvious: the colour cover by Stefan Poag, depicting a hapless Tsolyáni explorer's encounter with two Shunned Ones in the Tsuru'úm. I've wanted to do a colour cover for some time, as I thought it would make a terrific impression on first pulling the issue out of its mailing envelope. I also thought it would serve to mark the "maturity" of *The Excellent Travelling Volume*, now in its seventh issue in a little over two years.

I can only speak for myself, but I feel as if each issue of the 'zine has gotten better than the previous one; I hope readers feel the same. That said, I'm still learning my way around this and continue to make mistakes. I owe a lot to my collaborators and assistants, most especially Matt Hildebrand, who does the hard work of laying out each issue so that I can jam as much material into 32 pages as possible. Back the cover: I don't know that I'll be able to have a colour cover every issue, but I will try to have them from time to time. Perhaps I'll have another when we reach issue #10 and double digits...

Another noteworthy first in this issue is that three of the articles are by people other than myself. Prior to this, I've only ever included material from others once, way back in issue #2. This time around, I was fortunate enough to have received several submissions from outsiders that I'm happy to include. The first of these is Ian Young's martial artist character class, which is an intriguing option for certain types of campaigns. The second is Mikael Tuominen's "The Pyramid of Chanmarbáyik," a deadly tomb of a woman reputed to have had a close association with the goddess Dlamélish. The third is "The Revenant's Tomb" by Jeff Grubb. This last submission was a particular thrill to receive, as I've long admired the work of Mr Grubb, perhaps best known for the *Marvel Super Heroes* roleplaying game first published by TSR in 1984.

Having the work of others appear in these pages is, I think, important. Now, I have lots of material to include. Running two *Empire of the Petal Throne* campaigns simultaneously has led me to create plenty of locales, monsters, NPCs, magic items, and more. I like sharing them through the 'zine and will continue to do so. However, Professor Barker intended that Tékumel could be interpreted in as many ways as there are gamers who enjoy it. Most of what appears in *The Excellent Travelling Volume* is my interpretation of Tékumel, which no doubt differs from your interpretation (never mind Professor Barker's).

This is as it should be and one of the things I'd like this fanzine to do is to dispel the notion that there is only One True Way to enjoy Tékumel. This is a persistent myth that I continue to encounter among my fellow gamers. It's nonsense, of course, but one of the surest ways to banish it is to share the different ways that we're using Tékumel with our own gaming groups. Variety is the spice of life! To that end, I welcome more submissions to the 'zine. If you've got something from your *EPT* campaign that you think would make a good article, send it to me at jdmaliszewski@gmail.com and I'll be happy to take a look.

Speaking of firsts, next issue is also going to be something different. I won't spoil what it is here, but if you take a look at the back cover, you'll see what's in store in a few months...

James Maliszewski,
March 2017

The EXcellent Traveling Volume



ISSUE SEVEN

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Hrřh: Master of Time, Space, and Being

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tetvzine.com

Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi

Characters (Additions and Changes)

In my two current *Empire of the Petal Throne* campaigns, intelligent nonhumans other than the Inimical Races have played very small roles to date (with the exception of some Pygmy Folk encountered in Yán Kór). Nevertheless, I consider Tékumel's nonhuman species to be integral parts of the setting and hope that, at some point, one of my players might choose to play one. To that end, this issue looks at rules modifications to *Empire of the Petal Throne* to facilitate the playing of either Pé Chóí or Páchi Léi characters.

Though much of what follows is derived from information in *Swords & Glory, Volume 1: Tékumel Sourcebook* and other writings by Professor Barker, some of it is my own invention and should not be considered an "official" addition to or expansion of the Tékumel setting. It is nevertheless hoped that it will not only prove useful to *EPT* players and referees with an interest in generating Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi characters, but also as a reminder that creating new material for one's personal Tékumel campaign is not "wrong," but, rather, to be encouraged.

310. ALIGNMENT

Although the alignments of Stability and Change are human concepts, both the Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi fully understand and accept them. See Sec. 2100 below for more information.

320. CHOICE OF SEX

Pé Chóí have three sexes: male, female, and neuter. Males are gleaming black in colour, while females are white. Neuters are males or females who either

temporarily or permanently cease all sexual activity, undergoing certain physical changes in the process. Males play more important roles in Pé Chóí society, but the customs of the human society in which these nonhumans may live have a strong influence as well.

The Páchi Léi, on the other hand have no distinct sexes, reproducing instead by budding. At certain times during a four-year cycle, each individual exudes spore-like spermatozoa that fertilize the egg-buds on the bodies of others. These buds soon become pod-like extrusions and each of these bursts open to release a viable infant after about 250 days.

710. HIT DICE

Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi characters are treated just like humans with regards to hit dice. That is, they use the hit dice of whatever profession they have chosen without modification. Thus, if a Pé Chóí opts to be a priest, at Level I, he has 1 hit die, at Level II 1+3 hit dice, and so on. The same is true of a Páchi Léi.

900. STARTING THE GAME

Despite not being human, Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi generally do not start the game any differently than human characters.

1127. DESCRIPTIONS OF NONHUMAN RACES ENCOUNTERED

Both Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi characters possess unique racial abilities that separate them from human beings.

Pé Chóí: A member of this race has a broader range of hearing and vision,

rendering them able to detect invisible and/or inaudible creature up to 200 feet away with a 60% chance of success. Likewise, they can perceive secret doors and traps automatically if they stop to search for a turn (10 minutes); there is a chance of spotting a secret door even as they pass by it (1–2 on a 6-sided die). On a roll of 6 on a 6-sided die, they can use ESP on a neighbouring room, just like the priestly professional skill of the same name. Finally, they possess racial telepathy that alerts them to the death of another member of their species within 3 miles.

Páchi Léi: A member of this race has a good chance of detecting secret doors or passages as they pass by them: 1–4 on a 6-sided die.

2100. THE GODS, COHORTS, AND DIVINE INTERVENTION

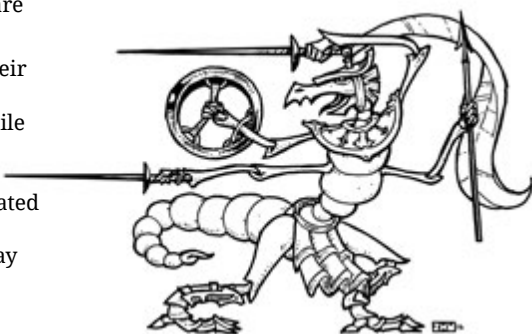
The Pé Chóí and Páchi Léi both adopt one of Pavár's deities if they reside in human lands. The Pé Chóí do this very easily, since they have only two native gods — “Father of Nests” (sometimes also called “One of Nests”), who encompasses the whole range of the Lords of Stability, and “Black Old One,” who similarly encompasses the Lords of Change. A Pé Chóí among humans may therefore choose to worship any of the traditional gods and cohorts. Some are even welcome as priests.

The Páchi Léi are also dualistic in their beliefs. Their god N'rg exhibits the attributes of Hnálla and Thúmis, while their other god Á'ish is an amalgam of Hrü'ú and Ksáruł. Consequently, Páchi Léi who live in human-dominated regions will usually join the temples of one of these four deities. Some may even become priests.

PÉ CHÓÍ NAMES

Pé Chóí names are difficult for humans to pronounce and, in some cases, impossible. Consequently, many Pé Chóí either adopt human names or nicknames when travelling among humans or else settle on approximations of their actual names that are more readily pronounceable by human beings.

PÉ CHÓÍ NAMES	
Male Names	Female Names
Chk P'tk Kk	Ch'p Kká
Ch'Kér	Ch's'q
Chtík p'Qwé	Ch'k
Dsík-Tè-Chí	Dzú'tù
Hétkw tè Ktêng	Hír-t-t-k
In-nkr-ích	H-k'ké
K-k-Tk	K'ch'k
Ktò-típ-ssiù	Ké-t-ík
Kt-t-r-Kí	N-ch'ék
Mt-t-ík	Tké'et'kl
Nchék-Pw'ekt-Ssá	Tk-n-mtk
Nchikp'q'	T'Mík-Ché-Kík
Pkétk Tqú	Tr-tfká-chr
Ptcht-tik-né	V'wát
Ptékw Tlún Tkík	Vk'p-sú



PÁCHI LÉI NAMES

As nonhuman names go, Páchi Léi names are, in general, not difficult for humans to pronounce. In some cases, they require a bit of practice to say correctly, but there are comparatively few sounds that are not pronounceable by humans.

Ahá-Léiya

Diyéno

Ffsá Brügshmü

G-Gúm-Shóggü

Honmák

Nneggáya

Payáa

Peshkúnu

Rshstesánga

Srún-Tíku

Teváa

Urugbáya

Vántlu

Vroggá

Wléllu

PÉ CHÓI AND PÁCHI LÉI CLANS

Neither the Pé Chói nor Páchi Léi have clans among their own people, instead employing very different – and, to humans, incomprehensible – social arrangements among their own people. When living among humans, though, both races often seek out clan membership. Both races work well with humans and clans with Pé Chói and Páchi Léi members often experience a certain degree of prestige, being viewed by others as “cosmopolitan” and “sophisticated.”

HOMELANDS

The Pé Chói and the Páchi Léi both have homelands located along the border between Tsolyánu and Mu’ugalavyá. In the case of the Pé Chói, this homeland is in the forests of Dó Cháka, while the Páchi Léi make their homes in the forests of Pán Cháka. Both races are generally more friendly toward the Tsolyáni than the Mu’ugalavyáni, owing to events that happened long in the past. This is especially the case with the Páchi Léi, who despise the Red Hats and are never found in their service. There are also the so-called “wild” Pé Chói of the deep forests, who avoid all contact with human beings, regardless of their allegiance; they consider humans interlopers within their domain and often respond with violence.



The Martial Artist (Addition)

by Ian Young

The *Empire of the Petal Throne* rulebook introduces and discusses in brief the Assassin-Spy-Tracker skill in Sec. 420. Meanwhile, in *Swords & Glory, Volume 1: Tékumel Source Book* (Sec. 1.960), there is a discussion of the disciplines of unarmed combat practised by the temples of Thúmis, Keténgku, Ksárul, and Grugánu. These martial arts are the domain of a specialised type of lay clergy, who are taught in cloistered academies in and around Tsolyánu (and, it is reputed, in similar academies in other lands). What follows is an optional character class for use with *EPT* that presents one possible interpretation of these martial artists.

Martial artists practise forms of ritualised self-discipline that first render their formidable combatants in close, hand-to-hand confrontations; then skilled spies; and eventually masters of physical and mental control. Adherents of these temple philosophies are often employed as special agents, internal security, or intelligence attachés for their masters in the temples of the Tlokiriqáluyal or Tlomitlányal, but may sometimes be found pursuing goals of personal knowledge and accomplishment at all levels of experience.

The martial artists of Thúmis and Keténgku teach the unarmed combat discipline of Dedarátl, which focuses on the use of hands as weapons in a system of punches and holds. The monasteries of Ksárul and Grugánu teach the form of Hu'ón, which places greater stress on footwork and kicking. These disciplines are also known and taught to agents of the Omnipotent Azure Legion and their counterparts among the other nations,

though the methods are held in disdain among the Salarvyáni and Pecháni. The Livyáni temples of Kirrinéb, Guodái, Ru'ungkáno, and Kikumársha also teach variants on these methods.

310. ALIGNMENT

Martial Artists may serve either Stability or Change, though specific choice of temple may affect the order in which Specific Professional Skills are learned as noted in Section 430 below.

320. CHOICE OF SEX

Martial Artists may be of either sex; the choice lies with the player and referee.

420. ORIGINAL SKILLS

The skill Assassin-Spy-Tracker is a prerequisite for the martial artist profession. Consequently, any newly generated martial artist must choose this Group III skill ahead of any others he or she may receive as a result of the initial percentile roll. Any percentile roll below 61 is treated as 61, so that the new martial artist begins play with at least one Group III skill. Assassin-Spy-Tracker provides a +5% chance of success when using this skill to follow, move quietly and unnoticed, hide in shadows, and climb walls (see below).

430. SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Use the following list for martial artist characters:

Knows 2 Modern Languages

Spearman

Open-handed Strike

Kicking Strike

Control of Self

Detect Traps

Knows 2 Ancient Languages

Astrologer

Disbelieve and Dispel (per Group I Spell)

Calm (per Group I Spell)

Stealth (per Group II Spell, *Invisibility*)

Invulnerability (per Group III Spell)

Knows 2 Modern Languages: A list of available languages is given in Sec. 420 of the *EPT* rulebook.

Spearman: Martial artists are trained in the use of the spear as both a stabbing and slashing weapon, and as a quarterstaff.

Open-handed Strike: The primary form of Dedarátl, this skill allows the monitor to utilise his hands and arms as weapons in hand-to-hand combat. Disciples of Hu'ón are taught Kicking Strike prior to the use of Open-handed Strike, reversing the order in which these two skills are learned.

Kicking Strike: This skill allows the martial artist to utilise his feet and legs as weapons in hand-to-hand combat.

Control of Self: This skill is identical to the magic-user spell described in Sec. 433 of the *EPT* rulebook.

Detect Traps: The martial artist is able to detect traps of any kind within a radius of 30 feet. Duration: 2 turns. Usable 3 times a day.

Knows 2 Ancient Languages: A list of available languages is given in Sec. 420 of the *EPT* rulebook. With the referee's permission, the martial artist may take one or more of the variant secret temple dialects in lieu of those from the list of ancient languages.

Astrologer: This skill is identical to the magic-user skill described in Sec. 433 of the *EPT* rulebook.

Disbelieve and Dispel: This skill is identical to the Group I bonus spell described in Sec. 510 of the *EPT* rulebook.

Calm: This skill is identical to the Group I bonus spell described in Sec. 510 of the *EPT* rulebook. Duration 2 turns. Usable 2 times a day.

Stealth: This skill is essentially identical to the Group II bonus spell, *invisibility*, described in Sec. 510 of the *EPT* rulebook, with the addition that the martial artist may also move totally silently for the duration of the spell and may only affect the martial artist himself. Duration 2 turns. Usable 2 times a day.

Invulnerability: This skill is virtually identical to the Group III bonus spell from Sec. 510 of the *EPT* rulebook, except that it applies only to the martial artist himself. Duration: 2 turns, Usable 1 time per day.

"FRESH OFF THE BOAT" MARTIAL ARTISTS

Section 900 of the *Empire of the Petal Throne* rulebook assumes that starting player characters are foreigners arriving aboard a small boat from the unknown lands of the Southern Continent. As non-natives, these characters know little of Tsolyánu and Tsolyáni ways. For that reason, it is recommended that the martial artist class not be an option for such characters, as it represents someone who has grown up in a Tsolyáni (or Livyáni) monastery, where he has been taught an esoteric fighting technique.

Levels of Experience and Abilities	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Armour Class	+1		+2		+3		+4		+5
Attack Bonus	+1		+2		+3		+4		+5

520. MARTIAL ARTIST SPECIAL ABILITIES

A martial artist gains several special combat abilities unique to the martial styles of the knowledge temples with rise in experience level. The following table gives these abilities and the levels at which they are attained.

Armour Class: As the martial artist improves in skill, he is better able to protect himself in combat without the need for bulky, heavy armour or shield. When unarmoured or wearing armour no heavier than leather, he gains the listed bonus to his Armour Class; wearing chainmail or plate armour of any type, or using a shield, negates the listed bonus.

Attack Bonus: Beginning at Level IV, the martial artist gains the focus and finesse to impart extra force upon an unarmed strike or hold, inflicting the indicated added damage bonus to the damage dice score in combat, as described in Sec. 730 of the *EPT* rulebook. Disciples of Dedarát apply this bonus only to the use of hands and arms; students of Hu'ón apply the bonus to the use of feet and legs as weapons. Normally, unarmed attacks of any kind are treated as light weapons, dealing 1–4 points of damage on a successful attack roll.

Extra Attacks: Starting at Level III, a martial artist gains the ability to strike more than once per round in combat, provided he is using his fighting style. This additional attack functions identically to the broadsword and dagger style, described in Sec. 721 of the *Empire of the Petal Throne* rulebook.

610. EXPERIENCE POINT BONUSES

Any martial artist with either an Intelligence or Dexterity of 81-95 adds 5% to acquired experience points. A martial artist with both an Intelligence and Dexterity of 96-100 adds 10%.

630. LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE

Martial artists use the same experience table as priests.



700. HIT DICE

Martial artists use the following table to determine hit dice per level.

I	1+1
II	2
III	3
IV	3+3
V	4+1
VI	5
VII	6+1
VIII	7+1
IX	8+2
X	9+3

721. USE OF WEAPONS AND WEAPON TYPES

Martial artists may wear armour no heavier than leather and are prohibited from using shields. They may use spears, staffs, and any short, one-handed weapon with an emphasis on close-quarters combat. All missile weapons are permissible, with a similar emphasis on those that can be carried and employed discreetly.

730. DAMAGE DICE

A martial artist's attack is shifted *up* one horizontal line on the Damage Dice table as for priests.

SAMPLE MARTIAL ARTIST

Regardless of whether the referee wishes to include martial artists as an option for player characters, this new class might prove useful as for non-player characters and as a way to introduce the disciplines of Dedarátl and Hu'ón into the campaign. Below is a sample martial artist that can serve as a model for other practitioners of these esoteric combat arts.

Jarága hiTurshína

Level III Martial Artist; STR 42, INT 85, CON 67, PSY 62, DEX 65, COM 91; To Hit +3 (+4 hand-to-hand); Damage +1; AC 6; HP 9; Original Skills: Dancer, Dyer, Hunter, Paper-Ink Maker, Scribe-Accountant; Professional Skills: Control of Self, Kicking, Open-Handed Strike, Spear-Man; Languages: Livyáni, Mu'ugalavyáni, Tsolyáni

Jarága is a member of the medium-ranked Black Hood clan. Early in life, she demonstrated a quick mind and sure-footedness. In addition, she excelled as a dancer. One of her mothers was a priestess of Grugánu and recommended Jarága to her temple superiors as a child with the skills necessary to become a practitioner of Hu'ón. With that, she was sent off into the countryside to the Monastery of the Hidden Countenance, where she would live and be instructed over the next decade.

Initially, Jarága resented being sent away, feeling abandoned by her clan and not at all suited to life as a priestess. Her attitude changed after she came under the tutelage of an aged woman in the monastery named Biyún hiChakén, who saw in Jarága the potential for greatness. Biyún awakened in Jarága a strong desire to overcome any obstacles before her, a desire she channelled into a mastery of Hu'ón.

Eventually, Jarága left the monastery, sent off by Biyún into the service of the temple of Grugánu. Jarága has since travelled throughout Tsolyánu, in the process improving her skills and her knowledge of the wider world. Though still young, she is not naive and understands well that changes are afoot within the Imperium, changes that she hopes to use to her advantage and the advantage of her temple.

The Revenant's Tomb

by Jeff Grubb

BACKGROUND

Some eight hundred years ago, (during the reign of Metlunél V, 1517–1574 A.S.), a procession of priests of Belkhánu made their way through the hills, bearing the coffin of one of their elders, Jinátlin hiBaríssa. The procession went to an ancient shrine, placed the coffin within a stone crypt, sealed and buried the entrance, and departed. None of this was out of the ordinary – except that Jinátlin was not quite dead. Given a paralytic poison by rivals within the temple, he awoke to darkness and confinement. He prayed to Belkhánu for deliverance but received no answer and, in despair, he turned instead to Sárku, desperately wishing to not die. Sárku (or something that claimed to answer to Sárku) responded and granted his wish, after a fashion.

DISCOVERING THE TOMB

The characters discover an entrance to the buried tomb by accident. They hear the bleating of a hmélu that had fallen into a sinkhole that had formed above the tomb (alternately, the characters may be entreated by a local farmer to locate the hmélu). The hmélu's bleats come from a small sinkhole at the base of a tree. The turf is folded into the hole and the soil is loose around the edges. Looking in with a torch, a character can see the hmélu in a small ledge beneath. The walls are rough soil and easily climbed down.

Young Hmelu (AC 8 MV 9" HD 1 HP 2)

1. The Ledge

This is a small 5'×5' landing where the hmélu is stranded; it is relatively

easy to get down to the landing. An individual with the Animal-Trainer skill can keep the hmélu calm to rescue it. Otherwise the hmélu will attack and, on a successful hit, knock a human-sized or smaller opponent off the ledge. Tumbling from the ledge to the base of the sinkhole will inflict 1–6 points of damage.

2. The Ceremonial Hall

This wide room has entrances to the north and south. The northern entrance was the original entrance and is a ramp leading up to a stone plug sealing the entrance. The plug is 5 feet thick, with another twenty feet of soil and earth heaped in front of it. The passage walls are painted with frescoes of Belkhánu most of which are stained and damaged by water and mould. One panel has collapsed where the sinkhole ends, allowing entrance to the tomb. It is easy to get back up to the surface, with failure being simply sliding back to the hall.

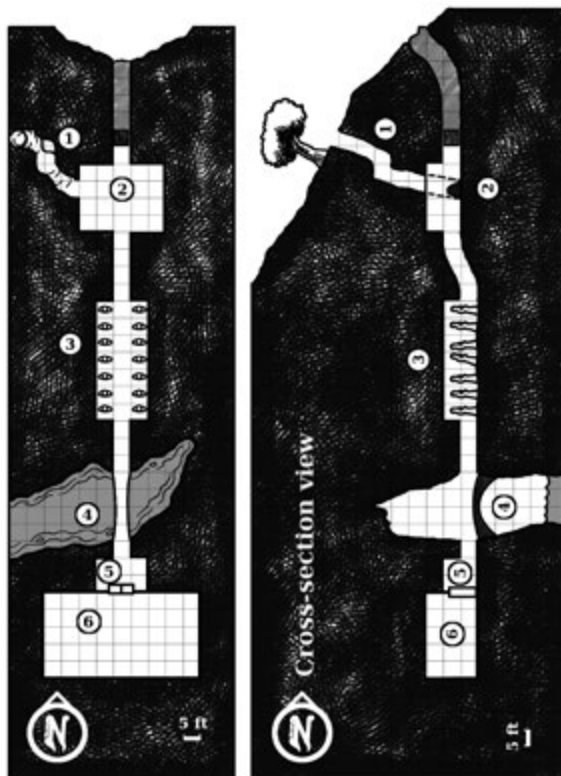
3. The Hall of Statues

This narrow hallway is floored with uneven stone blocks that have settled over time and is lined on both sides with statues of priests of Belkhánu, some of which are canted at strange angles from the ground settling. Halfway down, one statue is perched precariously, so that anyone passing in front of it stands a 1 in 6 chance of it toppling over and inflicting 1–6 damage.

4. Stone Bridge

A stone bridge spans the chasm here. It is wide but slick from the surrounding water below. There should be no problem with a careful traveller walking

MAPS OF THE TOMB



across the bridge, but anyone running — say, fleeing an undead monstrosity — or fighting have a 1 in 6 chance of falling 20 feet into the stagnant water below. The water is twenty feet deep and home to a ravenous Haqél.

Haqél (AC 3 MV9” HD 5 HP 20)

5. The Doors

A set of stone doors hung with square chlén plates is unsecured and may be pushed open easily. The plates note (in archaic but clearly readable Tsolyáni)

that this is the final resting place of Jinátlín and is under the protection of Belkhánu by order of a local temple (which is still in existence if anyone should look into the matter later).

6. The Crypt

The burial chamber is in much better shape than the rest of the tomb, with more frescoes depicting Belkhánu. There are a number of empty sepulchres lining the walls, flanked by empty jars that would, in a proper burial, be filled with treasure and grave goods. In fact, for a tomb, there seems to be a definite lack of retainers, treasure, and protective devices.

The stone crypt is in the centre of the chamber. Within it is Jinátlín's sarcophagus, weakened by centuries of clawing from the inside. Should the characters spend

a few rounds in the room, they will hear the renewed scratching of Jinátlín trying to get out. The stone lid of the crypt takes a combined strength of 80 to move aside, revealing a weathered wooden coffin carved with Jinátlín's disapproving visage on the front.

What happens next is the up to the referee, depending on if he or she wishes to make this a jumping off point for additional adventures. Here are three possible ways for the referee to proceed.

1. Jinátlin has been driven mad by his confinement and is little more than a monster now.

When the stone lid is removed, he punches through the thin wood, rises out of the coffin, and attacks any living creature nearby.

2. Jinátlin has been driven mad by his confinement, and seeks vengeance against the temples of Sárku.

When the stone lid is removed, he punches through the thin wood, and rises out of the coffin. He does not attack immediately, but if attacked will defend himself fully (see first option above). If not attacked, he will command all to kneel before the power of Belkhánu and leave this place. If engaged in conversation, Jinátlin will declare his anger at Sárku and that he seeks vengeance (this may not go down well with any devotees of Sáku among the characters). If the characters let him go, there will be reports of deaths of Sárku priests and burning of their temples and shrines, starting with the closest village and working up to larger cities. The characters may well be employed to track down the madman they have unleashed.

3. Jinátlin has been not driven mad, though he has suffered mightily.

He will not attack unless attacked and, even if he is attacked, he will seek to parley (usually making an offer after he downs/kills an opponent). Jinatlin understands he is a horrid monstrosity, but knows of an Eye of Restoring the Chusétl (which reunites the component parts of one's identity and, on a single charge, turns an undead creature back into its living form) in the Belkhánu temple that will restore him. He asks the characters to break into the temple and retrieve it. (If turned down, he will try it himself, with the resulting deaths and arson being on their heads).

Should the eye be retrieved and the high priest restored to human form, Jinátlin might become a patron for the characters. However, he was a stiff-necked, reactionary the first time around (which is why he was buried alive by his comrades) and time has moved on, even if at a slow pace. Jinátlin is intent of gaining vengeance on the descendants of those who immured him. Once restored, Jinátlin hiBaríssa is highly regarded by the clergy of Belkhánu, but will attempt to set the clock back 800 years, and is willing to risk a major schism within the faith about even the most mundane matters, such as the proper way to wear ceremonial robes.

Jinátlin hiBaríssa (as undead monstrosity) (AC 3 MV9" HD 8 HP 32)

Jinátlin hiBaríssa (as restored priest of Belkhánu)

Level VII Priest of Stability; STR 40, INT 85, CON 60, PSY 95, DEX 45, COM 82; To Hit+1; Damage +1; AC 3; HP 28; Original Skills: Animal-Trainer, Author, Cook, Grocer, Jeweller-Goldsmith, Merchant, Orator, Paper-Ink Maker, Scribe-Accountant, Scholar, Ship-Captain, Slaver; Professional Skills: Detect Good/Evil, Control Person, Cure Light Wounds, ESP, Produce Light, Protection from Evil/Good, Telepathy; Bonus Spells: Calm, Dispel Magic, Extra-Vision, Locate Objects, Petrefaction, Research, The Vapour of Death, Walls (prefers Fire); Languages: Bednallján, Classical Tsolyáni, Engsvanyáli, Livyáni*, Llyáni, Pecháni*, Salarvyáni*, Tsolyáni*, (*All modern languages spoken with an archaic accent)

Demon Weapons

Section 1810 of the *Empire of the Petal Throne* rulebook notes that “certain swords, scimitars, and axes may have further magical powers.” These powers include alignment (to Stability or Change), intelligence, ego, specific enemies, and spells — in addition to whatever bonuses they possess according to Sec. 1820. In my own campaigns, I have expanded the use of the information in Sec. 1810 to include warhammers, daggers, maces, and battle-axes.

Taking inspiration from information in one of Professor Barker’s other Tékumel roleplaying games (*Gardásiyal: Deeds of Glory*), I consider these magical weapons relicts of earlier ages or, colloquially, demon weapons. These weapons are so called because the common folk believe that any weapon capable of purpose or speech must accomplish these feats by means of having a demon bound into it a powerful sorcerer. Whether this is true or not in every case is immaterial (and indeed up to the referee to decide), but it makes for a good story nonetheless.

What follows are the descriptions of four demon weapons I have created for use in my own campaigns. These descriptions provide details not only of a weapon’s appearance and game statistics, but also its history, so far as it can be known. These demon weapons can be used as is in one’s own campaign or can serve as inspiration to referees looking to make their own magical weapons a bit more distinctive.

HMÁKH (“TOOTH”)

Hmákh is a *short sword* +1 made from enchanted steel. Its hilt is jewelled with six blood stones (each worth 100



Káitars). The sword’s blade is fiercely jagged, which gives the weapon its common Tsolyáni name. In the light, the blade displays engraved tracery that sometimes flashes orange-red or black, seemingly without any obvious pattern.

Hmákh is aligned to Change and, more specifically to the cohort Chiténg. Despite this, the sword possesses only a low intelligence and is incapable of speech. Instead, it can only achieve empathy with its wielder, making its likes and dislikes known. Its primary like is slaughter and plunder, making it an ideal weapon for soldiers. Hmákh has a weak ego and is thus only capable of controlling a wielder of Level I.

The sword possesses two spells, each of which its wielder may use once per day. The first spell is *fear* (like the Group I bonus spell of the same name). The second spell is *withering* (like the Group II bonus spell of the same name).

Using a spell requires a successful hit roll on a target; a miss expends the spell and it may not be cast again until the next day. Both spells permit saving throws, of course.

Hmákh was first recorded in Tsolyáni history during the Time of the Usurpers (1699–1700 A.S.), in the hands of Vajésh hiTukólu, a Kási in the service of one of the self-proclaimed “Priestking of Fasiltum,” Onusú hiBarúdlá. Vajésh supposedly obtained the sword while on a mission for his liege that took him into the underworld beneath Béy Sú itself. He wielded the sword to good effect throughout his life and passed it on to one of his sons, who in turn passed it down through the centuries, remaining an heirloom of the Red Star clan, until the War of 2020. During that conflict, the wielder of the sword, Jashána hiTukólu, was slain near Butrús and the weapon lost. It is presumed that it fell into Mu’ugalavyáni hands, but, if so, it has not been sighted since then.



TRÉCH TKÁT (“DRAGON SWORD”)

Tréch Tkát is a *scimitar* +2 made of enchanted steel. The sword’s hilt features a draconic motif, depicting a scaled monster of some sort, perhaps a Sró or Serúdlá or even one of the

legendary beasts after whom the Dragon Warriors derived their name. Set in the hilt are two black opals worth 500 Káitars each.

Tréch Tkát is not aligned and can thus be wielded by an individual of any alignment. The sword is very intelligent and can speak both Ancient N’lússa and modern Mu’uglavýáni. Contrariwise, the sword has no discernible ego, but it does hate magic-users, providing its wielder with a +1 bonus to hit and +2 to damage against them.

The sword possesses one spell, the Group II bonus spell, *dispel magic*, which its wielder may cast three times per day. These spells can be cast by the wielder at any time and do not require that the intended target be struck by the swords.

Tréch Tkát is an ancient weapon — several thousand years old at least! A weapon very similar to it, both in appearance and in abilities is described in *Jnéshqlaq Kéq Yóssu*, “The Tome of Black Mould,” where it is said to have been owned by a vassal (named Wénrat) of the Sárq of the city of Schüák. In contemporary N’lúss, there is a lineage of warriors who take their name from this vassal, claiming descent from him. A member of the lineage, called Mgég Wénrat, became a mercenary and travelled throughout the Five Empires, in the process fighting in multiple campaigns for many masters. He never returned to N’lúss. Whether Mgég died and Tréch Tkát fell into other hands, is still wielded by his own descendants, or was simply lost somewhere along the way is unknown.

RÜ’ÜTLÁKH (“SKULL SPLITTER”)

Rü’ütlákh is a massive, two-handed *mace* +3 made of enchanted steel in the frightful style associated with the



era of the Flower Wars of ancient Éngsvan hla Gánga. The mace is artfully decorated with numerous small yellow sapphires that, in total, are worth in excess of 2000 Káitars.

This weapon is powerfully aligned with Stability, owing to the fact it claims to have bound within it one of Lord Qón's demonic Mace Wielders (see issue #5 of *The Excellent Travelling Volume*), who

calls itself Skull Splitter (or Rû'ütlákh in Engsvanyáli). Because of this, the mace has a strong ego and can control a wielder up to Level V. Rû'ütlákh's intelligence is such that it can speak aloud but only in the Engsvanyáli language. Its specific enemies are underworld creatures, against which it gains a +1 damage bonus.

Rû'ütlákh enables its wielder to cast three spells, two of Group II and one of Group III. They are: *invisibility*, *petrefaction*, and *shield of defense*. Each of these spells is usable only once per day. In the case of the spell *petrefaction*, it can be used against even an opponent the wielder has not struck in combat.

According to the demon dwelling within the mace, it was enchanted by an Engsvanyáli sorcerer named Sumené Cheshúruk in the city of Kharigár (modern day Khirgár), who served the Archon of Yellow. The weapon was made for use by the

Archon's youngest son, Kadránu'u, who was a military priest in the service of Lord Khúan (Qón). At the conclusion of the Flower Wars, when his father was banished to the southern continent, Kadránu'u, followed him. He lived a long and exciting life, during which he battled against men, monsters, and demons of Change. When at last he died, Rû'ütlákh was sent by ship back to Kharigár, but it never reached its destination. Over the millennia, it has fallen into numerous hands and been lost again just as often (as Rû'ütlákh itself will tell at great length if its wielder allows it to do so).



ÍKH TÈN ("LITTLE SISTER")

The two-handed *hammer* +2/+2 known as Íkh Tèn is made from a heavy shaft of Tíu wood with enchanted steel reinforcements. The weapon's head includes a flourish that depicts a reptilian tail of some sort, but unlike that of any creature seen within the Five Empires. There is evidence of writing, perhaps in the blocky script of

Yán Kór, on part of the hammer's head, but, after centuries of use, it is nearly impossible to decipher.

Íkh Tèn is aligned with Change. It is intelligent enough to communicate telepathically with its wielder, but with no one else; it has an average ego, enabling it to control a wielder of up to Level III. Íkh Tèn does not have any specific enemies. The weapon's name is Yán Koryáni in origin, but it is also what the demon bound within the hammer calls itself when speaking to its wielder. The mace grants no spells to its wielder.

The history of Íkh Tén is muddled and tied up with an esoteric feminine aspect of Lord Hrű'ű known as Khirídash Dné. According to certain texts, Khirídash Dné is the 12th Inner Aspect (though some sources claim she is the 11th) and is an instigator of misfortune, particularly violent death, in enemies of Change. One text suggests that Khirídash Dné was originally a pre-Pavár Yán Koryáni goddess or demon whose worship was incorporated into that of Hrű'ű during late Engsvanyáli times. Íkh Tén shows an affinity for Hrű'ű and implies — but does not outright state — that she is Khirídash Dné and thus enjoys a special relationship with the Master of Negation. Whatever the truth, the hammer spent most of its existence in the north, where it passed to many wielders over the millennia, most recently to Jangáiva hiTlélsu, an Aridáni warrior from Sokátis. It is presumed she still possesses the weapon, though it has been many months since she was last seen.

THE ZIGZAG SCIMITAR OF SAVADÉNO THE SLAYER

Here is an additional demon weapon, first presented in *Gardásiyal: Deeds of Glory* and now presented for use with *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Like the other weapons I have created for use in my own campaigns, referees are encouraged to use or modify this weapon to suit their own tastes.

This strangely shaped *long sword* +2/+2 is made of a dingy-looking metal, with a hilt that appears to be silver-chained iron. The sword has a low intelligence, which enables it to achieve a sort of empathy with its wielder, provided that he is devoted to any of the deities of Change. If a follower of Stability so much as picks it up, he immediately suffers 2-12 points of damage, for which there is no saving throw. Despite its low intelligence, it possesses a strong ego, enabling it to control a wielder of up to Level V. The sword hates priests of Stability, dealing an additional +1 damage against them.

The Zigzag Scimitar does not grant its wielder the ability to cast any spells. However, the sword does have an additional special ability. On the wielder's command, the scimitar can shoot its blade like an arrow at a single target within 3". A normal attack roll is made to determine if the blade successfully hits its target. If a hit is scored, the blade then returns to its hilt, allowing it to be used again the next round either as a sword or as a missile weapon. If the attack misses, however, the blade must be retrieved manually before it can be used again in any fashion.

The Pyramid of Chanmarbáyik

by Mikael Tuominen

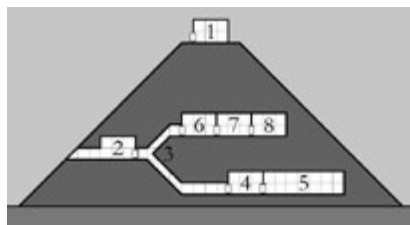
The legends tell stories about Chanmarbáyik, a forgotten aspect of Dlamélish and the patron of debauchery. In the semi-mythical Latter Times, when the gods and goddesses sometimes walked among humans, Chanmarbáyik amused herself by seducing them, humans and gods alike.

Eventually, she grew tired to this and sought new pleasures. But so many gods and goddesses had fallen in love with her that Chanmarbáyik attempted to hide herself away by transforming into a Sphinx-like figure: only those who were clever enough to solve her riddles got to see her. Those who failed were doomed to die.

About 1,000 years ago, a beautiful and intelligent Livyáni priestess named Zhunánab came to Tsolyánu, gaining many followers and devotees. Some even claimed that she had an aspect of Dlamélish upon her, namely lost Chanmarbáyik. When Zhunánab prematurely died, her followers were stunned. In their grief, they erected an awesome pyramid-tomb to her but this was not enough—some believers wanted to be buried alive with their mistress. Those who so vowed were old and fragile when the building was finally completed, but were nevertheless willing to follow their mistress unto death.

THE PYRAMID

The monument is a step pyramid of medium size. Built from thick greenish stone, its walls and doors are nigh-impossible to destroy. The doors



are immune to the *Eye of Advancing Through Portals* and similar magical means of opening doors.

The walls are decorated with beautiful frescoes depicting Chanmarbáyik and the gods seduced by her. She is always depicted as a woman with a curvaceous body, delicate hands, and an enigmatic, self-contented expression. Emerald green, the sacred color of Dlamélish, is ever-present. There are also some text inscriptions, described later. These texts are written in dated but intelligible Tsolyáni.

While Chanmarbáyik might be deemed careless, cruel, or even grotesque, she is nevertheless also beautiful and courteous, and these aspects are well represented in the frescoes. Sometimes Chanmarbáyik is depicted in more down-to-earth activities. These frescoes actually tell the story of Zhunánab and her followers.

One square on the map corresponds to 5 feet. This makes the pyramid approximately 80 feet tall. The corridors are very tight for humans, though Tinaliya and Pygmy Folk can move more easily. The actual rooms are quite spacious, however. They are all square-shaped.

1. Shrine. A small shrine with an altar and a statue of Chanmarbáyik. The altar is made of bronze and sounds like it is hollow. A golden disc depicting the face of Chanmarbáyik is attached to the centre of the altar. The disc can be removed relatively easy and is worth 500 Káitars. However, this lets a poison gas stored inside the altar leak out (save vs. Poison or die).

Three ellipsoid glass containers, about 1 foot in diameter, lie in one corner. They are empty but have an opening so they can be filled. The glass is painted with weird geometric patterns. At least one container is needed to advance further from room #2 safely. Otherwise the containers are not particularly valuable.

2. Place of Purification. A shallow pool of faintly glowing, clear water is present. The water has a magical power to purify filth. Drinking the water neutralizes any digested poison, including the one in room #4.

A 2-feet-high pedestal is placed in the center of the room. Its top is shaped like a bowl, and the glass containers from room #1 fit perfectly. The container must be filled with water from the magic pool. Characters must then wait for the sunset—sunbeams will come through the corridor, straight to the bowl.

Green light then glows through the patterns in the glass, creating an otherworldly atmosphere and dispelling the magical darkness from the corridor (#3). The darkness returns when the sun no longer shines through the corridor, so characters must be fast if they don't want to spend 24 hours inside the pyramid.

3. Corridor. This corridor is enveloped in magical darkness. It is pitch-black and torches and light-producing magic are of no use. The darkness is full of ominous whispers and clutching hands. Each round spent in the darkness inflicts 1–6 points of damage.

4. Masked Statue. A large statue of the goddess stands in the northern end of this room. A hideous mask with an enraged expression hides its face. The hands of the statue are joined together, palms open and upwards, as if the goddess wants something to be given to her.

Four items are placed on four pedestals: a mirror, a short sword, a golden chalice, and an *eye of madness*. If someone tries to steal the items, the statue animates and attacks.

Animated Statue (AC 1, MV 9", HD 7 HP 25)

The item to be given to the goddess is the mirror. When it is placed into the hands of the statue, the statue removes the mask on its face, revealing a smile, and opens the door to the room #5. It is otherwise impossible to open the door.

If the sword is given to the statue, the statue animates and attacks with the sword.

Anyone familiar with Tsolyáni culture immediately recognizes the chalice. It is of the same type as used by performers of epics and dramas, in which this particular design is used to inform the audience that the wine is poisoned. If given to the goddess, the statue "drinks" from the chalice. The person who gave the chalice must then save vs. poison or die. The goddess then throws the chalice to the ground and turns inanimate again.

The eye of madness is not a real eye, but rather an ornamental replica, which should be clear to people already familiar with eyes. The name of the eye is inscribed to it in Tsolyáni. Nevertheless, if the eye is given to the Goddess, she proceeds to use it, which causes deep madness in the person who gave it unless a saving throw vs. eyes is made.

5. Tomb of the Faithful. Thirteen surprisingly well-preserved corpses lie in stone sarcophagi. It seems they were buried alive. All had reached venerable age. They have been buried in expensive silk clothing, but it crumbles when touched. There is some silver jewelry to be found, however, worth 375 Káitars.

A blood-stained altar is placed opposite the door. If anyone offer a human sacrifice to Chanmarbáyik, he acquires the life-force of the victim, gaining 1 point of Constitution. With a sufficient number of sacrifices, one can acquire the maximum Constitution of 100! This only works for followers of Change, however.

Tsolyáni words are inscribed to the altar:
One dies so that another can prosper;
Those who love the Goddess shall live;
Those who do not shall love;
Those who die shall serve.

If these words are read aloud, all corpses inside the pyramid (including Zhunánab's corpse in room #8) turn into magical automatons called Chagupathá. They are humanoid emerald shapes of half-materialized light. Their touch induces marvelous pleasure, so strong that it actually damages mortal bodies, reducing hit points as if they were attacks. The Chagupathá act in the best interests of Dlamélish, so killing or banishing grave-robbers is the probable course of action.

The spell that creates these creatures only works inside the pyramid. If it is read from the last line to the first (beginning with "Those who die shall serve"), the Chagupathá turn into corpses again.

Chagupathá (AC 6, MV 12", HD 3)

6. The Riddle. The door to the room #6 is a large stone door with no handle or keyhole. A variant of a once-popular riddle is used as a means to test the wits of those who want to enter the tomb of Zhunánab. There are three caskets attached to pedestals — gold, silver, and copper — and an inscription on the wall:

The Goddess had three caskets with engravings.

The golden one read: "The key to my heart is here."

The silver one read: "The key to my heart is not in the golden casket."

The copper one read: "The key to my heart is not here."

The Goddess said: "Only one of the engravings is true; that, or everything is lies."

The Goddess smiled and said: "To choose wrongly is to die."

The correct answer is that the silver casket tells the truth and the two others lie. This is the only combination that causes no logical contradictions. Thus, one should open the copper casket. It is empty, but when the lid is opened, the door to room #6 will open, too (and when the lid is closed, the door will close). Other caskets are empty, too, but opening one will immediately kill the person who opened it. No saving throws are permitted.

7. Preparation Room. In this room the priestesses of Chanmarbáyik prepared themselves to face the holy relics of

Zhunánab. The room is full of emerald green robes and candles, as well as ritual items of various sorts (total value 250 Káitars). There is an inscription on the wall:

*Beauteous Chanmarbáyik;
Gods and Goddesses kneel before your feet.
I wish to be like you;
People shall kneel before my feet.*

Reading these words aloud turns one into a woman with emerald eyes and increases the Comeliness score by 1 – 6 percentiles. Only very powerful magic will reverse the transformation. Women will experience similar effects but retain their sex.

The entrance to the room #8 is a magical mirror. If a man looks into the mirror, he sees himself as a woman with green eyes. If a woman looks into the mirror, her eyes will be green but she remains otherwise unchanged. Only women can pass through the mirror into the tomb of Zhunánab. If a man tries to pass, the mirror burns the body parts touching it, inflicting 2–12 points of damage. If this is enough to kill someone attempting to pass through the mirror, his body is reduced to ashes. A pile of ashes lies in front of the mirror as a warning.

8. The Tomb of Zhunánab. A stone sarcophagus with a gilded lid shaped to the appearance of Zhunánab (worth 1,000 Káitars) lies here. She is a beautiful woman with a long and a narrow face. It is safe to open the sarcophagus.

Zhunánab's magically preserved corpse lies inside — worshipers of Chanmarbáyik (should the characters find them somehow) will pay 1,000–6,000 Káitars if the corpse is sold to them intact and fresh. Player characters should remember, however,

that tomb robbery is illegal in Tsołyanu and the punishments are severe.

Zhunánab wears a golden mask that resembles Chanmarbáyik's face. If the mask is removed, Zhunánab begins to rot. Wearing the mask stops aging, improves Armour Class by one point and gives a +5 bonus to reaction rolls. Its wearer also becomes a fanatic worshiper of Chanmarbáyik and a follower of Change. The mask attaches itself to the wearer's face, and if removed, the injuries permanently lower Comeliness by 1–20 points and deal 1–6 points of damage. The mask only detaches peacefully after its bearer's death. It is worth 5,000 Káitars or more to collectors of ancient artifacts.

THE IDENTITY OF CHANMARBÁYIK

Lady Dlamélish is known to have 101 distinct aspects, in addition to many more that are known only to the inner circles of her temple. Thus, it is possible to say that the Mistress of Demons has more aspects than any other god in Pavár's pantheon – even terrifying Lord Sárku! For that reason, it would be very easy for a referee to decide that Chanmarbáyik is simply one of the inner aspects of Dlamélish known only to the most knowledgeable, influential, and deeply initiated priests within her temple. The temples of the gods of Change are prone to secrecy, after all, and the temple of the Green-Eyed Lady of Fleshly Joys is no different in this regard.

Of course, there are other options, depending on the referee's own tastes and the direction in which he wishes to take his campaign.

The Shunned Ones – The Vlëshgayal

Number Appearing: 2–200

Hit Dice: 2

Armour Class: 2

Treasure: D: 30

Movement: 12"

Lair: 40: 4–400

Treasure in Lair: E: 50

The Shunned Ones (called Vlëshgayal by the Tsolyáni and Bláshagh by the Yán Koryáni) are hideous, inimical humanoids rarely seen outside their sealed, domed cities. They are generally taller than humans – five and a half to almost seven feet in height – and have extremely long, bony limbs. Their faces are withered and wrinkly, looking rather like a rotted fruit; their only discernible facial features being two black, pupil-less eyes.

The Shunned Ones cover themselves in voluminous, flapping cloaks of dust-brown or night-black. It is thought that these cloaks are meant more as protection from the atmosphere and sunlight of Téकुमल than as articles of dress. The tall leaders of this race may also have a pectoral of mirror-bright gold or electrum and/or a belt similarly made of precious materials. When viewed in silhouette, their attire gives them a frightening, ghost-like appearance, which is no doubt the source of the many superstitions and folk tales surrounding them. Contributing to the fear they elicit is the repellent stench that always accompanies them, which humans and other beings can smell from as far away as 200 feet!

The Shunned Ones range the rocky wastelands of eastern Yán Kór and the Jánnu mountain range of Sa'a Allaqi in small parties. They prefer



ambushes and brief forays, and no large battle with this species has ever been recorded. Nevertheless, the Gurék (Legion) of Ngakú, a city in hex 5631, has long fought the Shunned Ones and

its soldiers probably have as much practical experience with these alien beings as anyone on Tékumel.

The Shunned Ones are deadly foes. They are especially renowned as sorcerers (a few examples of their unique spells can be found in issue #6 of *The Excellent Travelling Volume*). Indeed, there is a 60% chance that any party of these alien beings will include a magic-user of level V–X. Furthermore, these magic-users (and sometimes others) usually carry one or more ancient technological devices, such as eyes. For reasons unknown, the Shunned Ones seem to have ready access to devices of this sort. While it is unlikely that they can manufacture them, there is evidence that they can repair them. Shunned Ones are a common enough sight in ruins and underworlds, where they no doubt find many ancient items to use for their own inscrutable purposes. Despite their gangly, almost skeletal appearance, Shunned One warriors can be surprisingly effective in combat, particularly when operating large groups. Their preferred weapons are long, metal-tipped spears, two-handed swords and maces, polearms, and various shorter swords and daggers. They also make use of a spear-thrower reminiscent of the atlatl.

The stench that accompanies the Shunned Ones is the lingering effect of the yellow gas that these beings breathe within the domed cities they inhabit. The gas is mildly corrosive to the lungs of human beings, who cannot function at full strength for more than 30 minutes in such an environment. Longer than that and a human begins to cough and gasp, dying within another 30–45 minutes. Certain spells and magical devices are reputed to be able to extend the survival of humans, as is dressing in the protective clothing of a Shunned One, but the truth of the

matter remains a matter of debate. For their part, Shunned Ones also seem to be limited in their ability to breathe normal air — most stories claim they can do so for no more than a week — which limits their ability to travel far from their cities except by means of fast transportation like tubeway cars.

There are conflicting stories about the origins of the Shunned Ones. Most human scholars believe that these beings have always been enemies of mankind and that they came to Tékumel to fight against their rivals. However, some, like the Pecháni priest of Tsómeq, Hruhyúsh Farádz, claim that the Shunned Ones are a truly ancient race, dwelling on Tékumel before the gods placed human beings on its surface. Farádz even goes so far as to claim that the Shunned Ones predate the Ssú and the Hlúss! Such speculations are, of course, nigh-impossible to prove, given both the paucity of evidence and the long history of Tékumel. Nevertheless, that anyone, even a Pecháni scholar priest could seriously propose such a theory is evidence of the perceived antiquity of the Shunned Ones.

Very little is known about the society of the Shunned Ones, as they are irrevocably hostile to humanity and its allied species. As noted above, they dwell in domed cities whose internal arrangements are largely unknown. Typically, there are four, eight, or sixteen round gates, plus a number of subterranean sally ports and tunnels. The dome itself is made from a cloudy, translucent material whose substance is unknown and cannot be duplicated. Most of these cities are located in Yán Kór (including a ruined one, at hex 5425), but there are tales of them being found even farther north and in the remote west, beyond the Plain of Towers.

Even less is known about the Shunned Ones' biology. The bodies of dead Shunned Ones exhibit at least five types of organs that may be reproductive. Scholars differ as to whether this means there are five sexes or if the organs indicate developmental stages of the same sex. A common belief is that they live approximately 150 years, barring some accident, but, like so much else about the Shunned Ones, evidence of the truth of such beliefs is minimal. One thing that is known is that these beings are immune to the effects of the Group II bonus spell, *sleep*.

SHUNNED ONES AND EYES

As noted elsewhere, the Shunned Ones are quite adept at the use and repair of eyes and other artifacts of the Ancients, which they seek out in the explorations beneath the surface of Tékumel. Consequently, these strange beings provide the referee with an easy way to introduce new examples of such devices into the campaign. Described below are three new eyes that might be found in the possession of the Shunned Ones:

The Eye of the Glorious Lord of Worms: The bodies of 1-6 beings within a 1" circle of effect become infested with tiny, voracious worms. If a healing spell of eye of healing is not applied within 2 rounds, the targets die. The eye can also cast a 1" circle of crawling worms onto the floor and a saving throw must be made by anyone in the circle or who enters it to avoid infestation, as described above.

The Slaver Llérgeo's Little Eye of Irresistible Tranquility:

This eye causes 1-6 beings within a 1" circle of effect to lose courage and/or physical strength for 1-20 turns. Percentiles are rolled for each target:

01-20 = The target no longer wants to fight or perform strenuous activities but loses nothing else;

21-40 = The target's armour and weapons become limp and soft as cheese for 1-6 rounds;

41-60 = The target suffers a penalty of -3 to all attack rolls for the duration of the effect;

61-80 = The target suffers the effects of both 21-40 and 41-60;

81-90 = The target yearns only for peace, will not fight or run away, and will become subservient to the eye's user until a dispel magic is cast;

91-100 = The target becomes permanently comatose and can only be restored by an eye of healing.
Range: 6"

The Splendid Eye of Seeking Far Adventure:

The user and 1-6 companions (or other beings within the 1" circle of effect) are unceremoniously hurled into another plane, as selected by the referee. These planes are never dangerous (i.e. they do not open into outer space, the heart of a sun, solid rock, etc.), but they are likely to be very distant from the world of Tékumel. The eye must be fired again to find the interplanar road back. Targets are transported with only those possessions worn or kept in pouches or backpacks; all else is left behind.
Range: 1".

Hrsh: Master of Time, Space, and Being

Throughout the Five Empires, it is said that the heritage of the Engsvanyáli is well attested – architecturally, linguistically, militarily, socially – but the one area where the Empire of the Priestkings left its most enduring mark is in matters of religion. The pantheon of Pavár is revered widely across the continent; travellers from Tsolyánu may journey to the far north in Yán Kór, the far east in Salarvyá, and the far west in Mu’ugalavyá and still find temples and shrines erected to the very same gods that they worship in their own lands.

Or can they? The Livyáni, for example, do not pay homage to Pavár’s ten gods and ten cohorts, preferring their own enigmatic Shadow Gods, whom they have worshipped for untold millennia. Likewise, the Yán Koryáni have altered Pavár’s pantheon to suit themselves, while the Salarvyáni revere the goddess Shiringgáyi above all. The truth – if that is the word – is that Pavár’s pantheon has, almost from the very start, been augmented, modified, and reinterpreted to suit local perspectives, perspectives that sometimes go back thousands upon thousands of years. The supposed universality of the pantheon is Engsvanyáli propaganda, a politically convenient myth to serve the ambitions of the Priestkings and those who, like the Seal Emperors of Tsolyánu, share them.

Mu’ugalvyá has a long and proud history of devotion to Lord Vimúhla (or Vemélísh, as he is known there) and his cohort Chiténg (Kténgish). This devotion predates the revelation of Pavár and reflects when the Dragon Warriors and their red-robed priests swept down upon the land of Mu’aghátł, as Mu’ugalavyá was called

at the time. While the Mu’ugalvyáni readily accepted this new god with fervour, they already worshipped another deity called in those days Hrzhö – nowadays called Lord Hrsh.

EVER-LIVING, NEVER-DYING

In Mu’ugalavyá, Hrsh bears many titles and epithets: “Master of Time, Space, and Being,” “Lord of Eternal Splendour,” “the Beauteous,” “the Ever-Illuminated,” “Divine Master,” “the Omnipotent and Omniscient,” “the Highest Lord,” and more. He is revered above all other gods, at least among the aristocracy, who regard him as the special patron of their land and the guarantor of both victory in battle against their enemies and the continued stability of their manner of government. Unsurprisingly, Hrsh is regularly invoked at civic events and on battlefields and his protection is ritually sought on behalf of the Princes of the Four Palaces of the Square.

The origins of Lord Hrsh are unclear. As noted above, the deity has been known and worshipped in Mu’ugalavyá since before the Engsvanyáli came. His name in those days, Hrzhö, is not a Khíshan word at all (or so say linguistic pedants), which lends credence to the notion that his worship came from elsewhere and was imported into Mu’ugalavyá. Exactly where is a matter of much debate, with some scholars suggesting M’mórcha as the most likely candidate (based on vague and possibly tendentious similarities between the name Hrzhö and those of demonic spirits feared by the Fungus-Eaters), while other scholars place his origins farther away, such as the semi-mythical city of Ureshyésa that supposedly lies beyond the Plain of Towers.

The tome known as *Mi'iththúrish Hřshénga Mmeghusané* (“The Treatise of Hřsh, the Highest Lord”) is sometimes considered an authority on the matter of Lord Hřsh, especially among scholars outside of Mu'ugalavyá. The book was reputedly written by a sorcerer of ancient Ch'óchi whose name is unrecorded. Indeed, the writer, in a prefatory section, states that “[his] name is of no matter, for the only name that truly matters is that of the Lord and Master of All.” In addition to recounting numerous myths and legends regarding Hřsh — including stories of the god's battles upon Dórmoron Plain against various foes — the book spends considerable time discussing the most ancient shrines and temples dedicated to him. Most of these locales are within Mu'ugalavyá, as one might expect, but two others are noteworthy. The first is a place known as Hragyé'el. This name is unknown among modern scholars and the author of the treatise provides no further details. The second is called Khúna Khu'ún is said to have “been laid waste long ago, due to disobedience to the Master's commands. The forest now protects it, awaiting the return of Lord Hřsh's faithful servants.”

Whatever the truth, Hřsh is the god of the ruling classes of Mu'ugalavyá have long adored. The centre of his worship is the island of Mu'ugállá (hex 5024), entrance to which is forbidden to all but a small number of specially initiated priests and, of course, the fanatics of the dread Company of the Mourners in Sable (see p. 25).

The rites associated with Hřsh are of two kinds: the public and the esoteric. Public rites are commonplace in Mu'ugalvyá, offered up by priests both in temples and in civic locations (e.g. market squares, Hirilákte arenas) for the good of the country, its success

in war, good harvests, etc. These rites undergird Mu'ugalavyáni loyalty to the Four Palaces of the Square, especially among the high clans.

The esoteric rites are offered up at special temples or shrines where only the initiated can participate. The exact nature of these rites is largely unknown to outsiders, even within Mu'ugalavyá. This has led to much speculation regarding the true nature of Lord Hřsh and his demands on his worshippers. For this reason, Hřsh has a sinister reputation in foreign lands, particularly Tsolyánu, where priests of Pavár's pantheon often suggest that Hřsh is, in fact, no god at all but some demonic being from the Planes Beyond masquerading as a god and that the Mu'ugalavyáni are fools to show such devotion to a being whose true nature is so mysterious. For their part, the Mu'ugalavyáni care little for such criticisms, citing both the antiquity of the worship of Hřsh and the (not unreasonable) fact that the Tsolyáni know no more about the true nature of the gods they hold so dear. In any case, the esoteric rites of Hřsh are carefully guarded and anyone attempting to intrude upon them will quickly pay the penalty for doing so with his life.

As a final note on this matter, it is worth mentioning that, while the common folk of Mu'ugalavyá pay homage to Hřsh as part of their duties to the state, very few of them show him any great affection. They prefer instead to worship the gods of Pavár when it comes to their day-to-day concerns, hopes, and dreams. It is primarily (though not exclusively) the nobility, the great generals, and other high officials of the empire of the Four Palaces of the Square who devote themselves to Hřsh.

RELATIONSHIP WITH VIMÚHLA AND THE OTHER GODS

The worship of Lord Vimúhla is deeply ingrained in Mu'ugalavyá, especially within the military, where rank-and-file legionnaires typically do homage to the Flame Lord. However, among the officer class, Hřsh holds greater sway. The philosophical School of Ssa'átis identifies the two deities as two names for one divine reality. Precisely what this means depends upon which thinker of the school one asks, for there are many theories. The most popular one postulates that Vimúhla is a title or aspect of Hřsh. In this way, Hřsh is the ultimate reality, while Vimúhla is merely a part of his divine being.

This question also bedevils discussions of the other gods as well. There are two broad interpretations of the matter within Mu'ugalavyá. The most popular one, for it is favoured among the common folk, is that Lord Hřsh is simply the Ruler of the Gods — and not just the gods of Pavár but *all* the gods, whoever (or whatever) they might be. In practical terms, this means that the average Mu'ugalavyáni believes there are ten gods and ten cohorts, with Hřsh ruling over them, as a wise prince beyond both Stability and Change (see below). If they are educated or simply well travelled, they might concede the existence of other gods and, if so, they claim that Hřsh rules over them as well. The other interpretation, favoured by scholars and intellectuals, is a variation of the teaching of the School of Ssa'átis. It holds that all the “gods,” whether they be the coruscating light of Lord Hnálla (Hnéluish), the gloomy darkness of Lord Sárku (Gyu'úmish), or the recondite knowledge of Lord Ksárul (Ksoruélish), are simply facets or reflections of the Ultimate Glory of the Highest Lord. The other gods,

these scholars claim, are but names, albeit good ones, that enable mortals to speak of the many different perfections contained within the infinite being of Hřsh. In this fashion, there is but one god and his name — his fullest name, at any rate — is Hřsh.

It is worth mentioning that, within Mu'ugalavyá, the concepts of Stability and Change are of comparatively little importance. That is not to say they are unknown, but they do not occupy the same degree of influence that they do in, say, Tsolyánu, where cleaving to ancient Engsvanyáli philosophical notions is a vital part of the national character. The main reason for this is that Lord Hřsh, however one chooses to understand him, is not bound by such concepts. No one within Mu'ugalavyá, claims that Hřsh is a god of Stability, despite the fact that he commands all to be obedient to the state and its representatives. Likewise, no one claims that he is a god of Change, even though he teaches that worthiness in his eyes is gained through self-betterment, even at the expense of others. Hřsh transcends such mortals notions, however useful they may be in discussing the ephemeral world human beings inhabit.

THE MOURNERS IN SABLE

For outsiders, perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the Temple of Hřsh is the dreaded Company of the Mourners in Sable, the special guard of the forbidden city of Mu'ugálla. These fanatics are entrusted with the gathering of information, the administration of Mu'ugalavyá's prisons, as well as secret rites to their god. Members are specially chosen from among the highest clans as children. They spend most of their lives on the island that is home to Mu'ugálla,



where they are trained as assassins and spies, as well as being initiated into the most esoteric doctrines of Lord Hřsh. The Mourners only leave Mu'ugállá when dispatched for a mission of utmost importance to the temple (and, by extension, the Four Palaces of the Square).

The name of the Company of the Mourners in Sable comes, in part, from the fact that its members dress in black armour, complete with helmets whose visors mimic their beast-headed deity. As to why they are called Mourners, there is no definitive answer, only theories. One popular theory in Mu'ugalavyá is that they are so called because they are willing to perform any action on behalf of Lord Hřsh, even things that ignoble or impure and would thus condemn them to torment in their god's hells after death. They thus mourn the loss of their own nobility and purity, which they nevertheless offer up willingly to Hřsh. Another theory suggests that they pre-emptively lament those who will be swept aside before the glory of Hřsh, for no one can stand in the way of the Master of Time, Space, and Being. As with so much about the

Temple of Hřsh, the truth is hidden from outsiders.

THE ICON OF LORD HŘSH AT SSA'ÁTIS

One the greatest temples of Lord Hřsh is to be found in the capital of Mu'ugalavyá, Ssa'átis. Within that temple is a huge and ancient icon that depicts the god. To those not well versed in the intricacies of Hřsh's theology and myth, it appears little more than a jumble of strange images without rhyme or reason. What follows, therefore, is a brief guide of the most prominent details for the uninitiated.

Hřsh is frequently described as “beast-headed,” owing to the fact that he does not look like a man. However, what his face actually looks like is unknown, for he hides it away behind a military helmet. This is done both to stress Hřsh's martial prowess but also to keep his divine majesty a secret known only to those who have proven themselves worthy of its revelation. The helmet is adorned with both a Khéshchal feather (denoting his authority) and the feathers of the Kúni (denoting his role as a hunter – but of what?).

Seated upon his helmet is a smaller figure, an impish genius known variously as Tlákrsh, Táksh, or Thúkhsh. The genius, it is said, speaks constantly to Lord Hřsh, bringing him the prayers of mortals, as well as singing praises to his divine master. Tlákh is a popular figure in many Mu'ugalavyáni folk tales, for he is said to visit Tékmel from time to time and enjoys playing pranks and other jests on the impious. In other tales, Lord Hřsh sometimes “lends” Tlákh to other gods (or even mortals) who are in dire need of his assistance.

Hřsh has four arms and four hands, which is why his sacred number is also



four. In one hand, he holds a censer, from which incense smoke wafts, representing the right worship of the gods. In another, he holds a mystical figure the Mu'ugalavyáni call a *Tsa'át*, which represents the totality of the cosmos and, by extension, Lord Hrísh's rulership over it. In yet another hand, he holds the roots of the legendary Flower of Life and Death, which sprouts from his belly. This represents his mastery of all things, from the beginning to the end of time. Finally, his fourth arm is armoured and holds a fierce bladed weapon, a representation of his martial nature and his ability to bestow victory upon those who do him homage.

The icon at Ssa'átis contains many more details, such as the plaques on Hrísh's kilt, whose faces represent various demons and spirits whom he has defeated; his flame baton, suggesting his connection to Vimúhla (or vice versa); the musical instruments he plays and by which he establishes the rhythm of All That Was, Is, or is Yet to Be; as well as symbols whose meanings are more obscure. Devotees of Lord Hrísh meditate upon this icon and others like it in order to gain deeper insights into his religion.

TEMPLE SPELLS

Like the deities of Pavár's pantheon, the priests of the temple of Lord Hrísh have their own unique spells, developed and practiced over thousands of years and shared with no one outside their own temple. What follows are descriptions of a couple of these spells, in order to give priests and magic-users dedicated to the Master of Time, Space, and Being a collection of unusual abilities that differentiate them from devotees of other gods. For game purposes, consider all of these temple spells Group III spells.

Castigation: A beam of orange-black energy descends upon a single target selected by the caster, enveloping him and dealing 6–36 points of damage. This energy continues to surround the target, dealing one six-sided die of damage less on each subsequent round (5–30 on the second round, 4–24 on the third round, 3–18 on the fourth round, etc.) until either the spell expires or the target dies, whichever comes first. The target gets a saving throw every round to avoid the effects of the damage dealt on that particular round. Success (or failure) on any given round does not influence subsequent rolls. Range: 3".

Enervation: The caster may steal life energy from a single target within 3". A saving throw is permitted, but, if the target fails, he loses 1–6 percentiles from Strength or Constitution, at the choice of the caster. For each percentile steal, the caster may choose to "convert" it into one of the following: a +1 bonus to hit, a +1 bonus to damage, a +1 bonus to saving throws, a +5% bonus to the chance of spell casting success. These bonuses last for 3 turns, after which they dissipate. The target, however, does not regain the lost percentiles, though he may, of course, increase them later, as a result of achieving a new level of experience (as outlined in Sec. 417 of the *EPT* rulebook).

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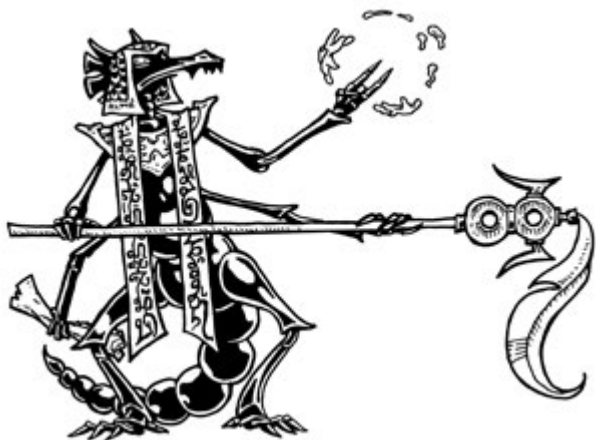
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