

# Omnibus Compendium Vrayani

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## Geography

### Natural Geography

Vra is about 400 Tsa NS and 300 EW. The northern shore is high and precipitous, sloping down somewhat to the east, where it becomes a region of pretty, forested, fields and copses on the shores of the Strait of Hanar (whoever HE was) across which lies Thayuri Isle. The northern portion of the island is sparsely populated, rocky, and comparatively mountainous. There are vineyards, Hma and Hmelu pasturage, orchards, and berry fields there. The central "saddle" between Lnoris and the City of Vra is lower, more populous, planted in grain (mostly Dna), vegetables, and big Mash-fruit trees. Workshops and shipyards fill the coves on the eastern shore, and Vra itself sits in a charming harbour, with white houses with brown and red tiled roofs, occasional temple pyramids, palaces, and parks where the lithe, golden-skinned Vrayani children play. This region is called "Avanthe's Table" because of its richness and beauty.

The one major river is the Hlanel River (stress on the "nel"). It flows down from the northern mountains, takes a sharp eastern turn, and debouches into the Bay of Vra through the City of Vra. There are three bridges across this little river: the westernmost is the Span of the Judge, then the Bridge of Hejjeka IV "The Restorer of Dignities," and the easternmost (a longish pontoon bridge) is called the Bridge of Mighty Ships (for reasons nobody knows).

The north western coast is higher land with cliffs falling dramatically to the sea. This is why Lnoris is the last good port on the run across to Penom on the way to the West. The northern cliffs are not as high and steep as those of Dover, but they do make for glorious scenery. Lnoris has easy access across the "saddle" to the City of Vra, and timber for ships, tar, cordage, etc. are shipped to it from Thayuri Isle and other places, including Salarvyani goods brought in to Vra and less commonly, Mu'ugalavyani products sent the other way to Salarvya. There is no large, safe harbour on the long point that faces Tleku across the Strait of Hanar, but little fishing boats and a few passenger craft do ply those waters.

### Human Geography

The great clanhouses (those mentioned in a previous dispatch to the Blue Room and also some other, minor ones) are built like walled fortresses upon the hills behind the City of Vra. A single broad thoroughfare leads from Vra to Lnoris. This is not a Sakbe Road, of course, but it is a very good secondary road. Other, smaller roads lead northward and southward to other villages and towns. The southern part of Vra contains a central mountain peak, the "Old Woman Watcher." Small fishing villages, fruit orchards, and tiny grain-fields occupy the coves and inlets along these shores. [Note: "Thu'inin Senyatorakh would be the literal translation of "Old Woman Watcher": old (adj.) + watch-person-feminine-nonhonorific. Senyara is "to watch over something." In colloquial Vrayani, however, most people say *Thunsenya*, and add the -kh suffix for feminine or ignoble when trying to mind their grammar: *Thunsenyakh*.]

Lnoris is a typical Vrayani city. Most of the inhabitants are followers of Lady Avanthe (or Dilinala), with a few members of other faiths. The industries are mostly connected with the sea, fishing, and transport of goods. Lnoris is one of the last good all-weather ports before the long trip north to Penom, one of the regular stops on the Salarvyanu- Tsolyanu-Mu'ugalavya run. The stone seawall was built by the Engsvanyali, and it has been rebuilt and expanded by Emperor Hejjeka IV "Restorer of Dignities."

Vra is quite prosperous, rich and sunny, with lots of fine fruits, flowers, wines, and sweet, perfumed Dmi-sugar candies that are exported up to Jakalla and beyond. There is about as much agriculture on Vra as on Thayuri, but the latter's main products are sea-fish, shellfish, mother-of-pearl (a similar substance not identical with old Earth's), wines, etc.

### Climate:

The Deeps of Chanayaga produce a similar coastal climate for southern Tsolyanu and Salarvya. At Jakalla, the average mean temperature ranges from 26 degrees to 40 degrees C, with very hot summer days attaining 51 degrees C.

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Just north of the equator at 5-7 degrees north latitude (i.e. south of the terrain maps which extend from 12 degrees to 48 degrees N), a belt of trade winds blows at moderate speeds from the northeast. South of the equator another belt is encountered blowing in the opposite direction. The terrible equatorial heat (temperature over 60 degrees C in some months) makes these winds accessible only to the ships of the Shen, however, and it is this heat that has made contact between the northern and southern hemisphere so difficult over the centuries.

Seasonal shifts in pressure belts create monsoons throughout southern Tsolyanu and all along the coastlands of Salarvya. The annual rainfall at Penom is over 425 cm, while at Jakalla it is 380 cm. This contrasts with Bey Su and other central cities to the north that have an annual rainfall of about 70 cm.

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## History

The earliest records show that the Dragon Warriors established strongholds on the isles of Ganga, Thayari and Vra. These were seized by the 2nd Fishermen King, Ho Etehlto (he who wore the Ebon Helm and sat on the Ebon Throne), after he built his navy of small, fast galleys. They marked the western edge of the Fishermen Kings' empire.

The people of the southern islands were always renowned as great slingers. Epic poems from the time of the Fishermen Kings relate the adventures of Khu'es vuNaoma whose sling-stone struck out the 4th eye of the demon Kurritlakal and thus saved mankind.

The First (Bednalljan) Imperium seems to have established these slingers as regular light infantry. Engsvanyali records also state that once the troops of Vra were garlanded with wreaths of gold and given sacks of "sling-stones of diamond and rubies and all precious gems" as a reward for their slaying of the hluss and the hlutrgu.

After the fall of Ganga, Vra became independent and remained so for a thousand years [at least], ruled by the God-Kings of Vra. The God-Kings bore the Sapphire Seal of their dynasty and lived in the citadel entitled "The Tower of Perfect Power." There apparently was at least an advisory committee to the throne since we also hear of the Eyrie of the Seven Councilors, also located in the citadel. They held off hluss, hlutrgu, Tsolyani and pirates of the southern seas. Indeed, the High Pinnacle Clan of Vra was the enemy of the Tlakotani for many centuries. They killed all Tsolyani who landed there, including merchants and fisherfolk, earning Vra the name "The First of the Isles of the Excellent Dead" in "The Final Song of Cha-Nume" by Aresma hiAmiyala (976 A.S.).

Early on, though, they did choose to harbor some enemies of the Tlakotani: when the "People of the Peak" refused to join the first Tlakotani emperor and fled to Vra, the Vrayani gave them refuge. They apparently formed [were from?] the High Pinnacle Clan. "Not much is known [about the People of the Peak]. They were apparently dissidents against the Engsvanyali, and when the island of Ganga sank, they fled not to Thayari Isle but westward to Vra, where they quickly became cosy with the local anti-Tsolyani attitude. There were probably no more than two or three hundred of these folk, plus some retainers and serfs. Later, the Vrayani tried to seal off their island keep it "pure" from Tsolyani influence. The "People of the Peak" played a small role in the political infighting that went on sporadically until the Imperium conquered the island in 1115 A.S.

The date of the founding of the Legion of the Joyful Clan of the Noble Vrayani is unknown. But within a hundred years after the founding of the Tlakotani dynasty, the slingers were recorded as "serving beside the throne of the God-Kings of Vra." Many legends and epic poems were written about the slingers. The Song of Tneyu vuWasuma praises his daring raid on the homeland of the hlutrgu and the treasures he seized from there. These were kept in the Eyrie of the Seven Councilors in the citadel of Vra until 1115 A.S. when they were removed by the Tsolyani. Hejjeka IV returned the treasures to the Eyrie where they remain today.

The Tsolyani attempted the conquest of the island several times. The penultimate assault on Vra by the Tsolyani was ordered by Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla" sometime during his reign (1062- 1074 A.S.) Although he invaded with a huge army, it's unclear how much was accomplished since Vra did not fall until the invasion in 1115 A.S. by his successor Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "the Flattener of Peaks." During the Scourge's attack, the Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation, 18th Imperial Medium Infantry, saw service in Vra, the island of Thayari, and finally on ancient Ganga itself, where it gained battle honors. The records imply it stayed on Ganga, since its next movement was when Empress Janule in 1123 A.S. ordered it posted back to Tumissa. The Legion of the Clan of the Broken Bough, 19th Imperial Archers, also took part in the Scourge's attack on Vra.

It was conquered in 1115 by Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV 1074-1122 Worshipper of Vimuhla "Flattener of Peaks" who used the Omnipotent Azure Legion as his main force backed up by:

- The Legion of Mirkitani, Hero of Victories; 7th Imperial Heavy Infantry,
- The Legion of the Givers of Sorrow; 8th Imperial Heavy Infantry,

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- The Legion of the Echoing Stone; 11th Imperial Heavy Infantry,
- Golden Sunburst Legion; 11th Imperial Medium Infantry,
- The Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation; 18th Imperial Medium Infantry,
- The Regiment of the Clan of the Silver Lightning; 7th Imperial Archers,
- The Legion of the Clan of the Broken Bough; 19th Imperial Archers,
- The Legion of Girikteshmu; 23rd Imperial Archers,
- The Legion of Mengano the Jakallan; 12th Imperial Artillery,
- The Battalions of Vrishtara the Mole; 2nd Imperial Sappers,
- The Legion of Tik-nekw-ket; 1st Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry.

This is the defining event of recent Vrayani history: the successful Tsolyani invasion of 1115 A.S. by Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "the Flattener of Peaks." Amazing resources were poured into the effort to crush this independent island.

The Legion of Girikteshmu, 23rd Imperial Archers, swept the shores of Vra with arrows and prepared the way for the landing of the Tsolyani forces. The Legion of the Givers of Sorrow, 8th Imperial Heavy Infantry, won battle honors for the resounding defeat of the Vrayani on the northern end of the island (they had little chance against the better armed and trained Tsolyani). They then joined in on the final siege of the city of Vra where they received honorable mention in the battle reports. Two Cohorts of the Legion of Mengano the Jakallan, 12th Imperial Artillery battered unsuccessfully at the walls of the citadel, "The Tower of Perfect Power." The citadel finally fell at the hands of the Battalion of Vrishtara the Mole, 2nd Imperial Sappers, commanded by Vrishtara hiAuvesu. The clever engineering of this unit opened the sea beneath the Vrayani citadel, washing away its foundations and bringing down enough of it to allow the Tsolyani storming parties to fight their way into the place. The Regiment of the Clan of the Silver Lightning, 7th Imperial Archers was granted battle honors for their part of this final attack. The Legion of the Blood-Red Orb (now called the Legion of Lord Kharihaya, 14th Imperial Crossbowmen); the Legion of Hnalla, Master of Light, 4th Imperial Heavy Infantry; the Legion of Mirkitan, Hero of Victories, 7th Imperial Heavy Infantry; and some minor contingents of the Legion of Tik-nekw-ket, 1st Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry were also recorded as aiding in the annexation of Vra.

After their victory, the last defenders of the citadel were strangled with their own slings and their bodies were defiled. The Tsolyani exterminated the Vra nobility to a man and sold their women and children into slavery in the mines north of Avanthar. [Some had more obscure fates, such as the Princess Eddyana "the Singer of the Golden Cage"]. The streets of the city of Vra were paved with flayed skins of those who had dared to oppose the Imperium. The High Pinnacle Clan was presumed extinct. However, the last of the God-Kings of Vra, escaped in a boat as the Tsolyani troops landed. His descendants lived as potters in Jakalla.

Then, in 1458 A.S., Hejjeka IV "Restorer of Dignities" proclaimed a general amnesty to all "who had been foes of the glory of the Tsolyani." A commoner stepped out of the crowd at the coronation festival at Bey Su – a direct, lineal descendant of the last of the God-Kings of Vra, proving this by his possession of the lost Sapphire Seal of the Vrayani dynasty. The Emperor granted him a pardon and restored him as fiefholder under Imperial law. The Vrayani greeted him with the wildest jubilation and proclaimed loyalty to him and his successors forever. However, he had lived all his life in Tsolyanu (as had his ancestors by then for some three hundred years) and he continued to serve the Tlakotani Dynasty loyally and almost fanatically until he died in 1501 A.S. His descendants have been faithful ever since.

Hejjeka IV also combed the Empire for any other descendants of the original nobility of Vra. Most were still in the north living as mountaineers and peasants. The coming of the gorgeously dressed Imperial officials to the villages is recounted in the "Hymn to the Light Above" by Ndiu vuChrayu (composed in 1550 A.S.). To their great surprise, the villagers were not massacred or enslaved but were instead robed in the strange costumes of the people of Vra, given great sums of money, and were returned in magnificent splendour to the island of their long-forgotten ancestors. There they had to learn all over again the skills of a sea people, and there were those who quietly left and returned to their new homeland in the north. The majority, however, adapted and survived.

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Hejjeka V “the Open-Handed” completed the process by granting nobility in the Empire to all descended from the ancient Vrayani nobility, and he supplied money and equipment to found a new Legion of slingers: the Legion of the Joyful Clan of Noble Vrayani, 3rd Imperial Slingers.

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## Social and Cultural

Enjoy Vra! It's a lovely place. A little tense with ancient clan rivalries and now political differences, but still one of the nicer locales of the Empire. I've always had a soft spot for old Vra; there's nothing like sailing in to Vra Harbour just after sunset, with the coloured paper lanterns of the wealthy twinkling in the colonnades of the white clan-palaces rising up like cliffs behind the docks. The smells of spices, incense, cooking, and fresh fruit heaped on the quays give Vra its own sweet, exotic atmosphere. The tinkling bells and heady rhythms of the drums of the Temple of Dlamelish, which stands right beside the Bridge of Mighty Ships call the visitor to stay and drowse awhile.

One must distinguish between Vra and the other southern islands. Ganga, Thayuri, Burru Isle, and even little Lilsu Isle are all part of the Engsvanyali heritage, while Vra was always separate, with a different dialect, a somewhat different culture (hardly more than a sub-culture, really), and very distinct political objectives that did not include being subservient to the lords of Bey Su, Jakalla, and the north. The temples of Engsvanyalu had better luck with the Vrayani than the Priestkings' political arm. The temple of Lady Avanthé was particularly popular -- and was perhaps identified with one or another of the goddesses of the southern seas (cf. the Sourcebook, p. 54) in this area.

To fit in on Vra and gain influence, let him be generous and full of mirth, as Yetil says (in Engsvanyali verse). *"Thus is the gateway to the heart of Vra opened. Let him hear all who come to him, reflect wisely, judge carefully -- and then pass it all off with a joke..."*

The Vrayani are traditionally more fun-loving, more given to jokes and humour -- or at least an occasional smile -- than the serious and status-conscious Tsolyani, much less the dour residents of Khirgar and Yan Kor. There is always a party, usually informal, without all of the structured and stratified entertainments and feasting found in the Empire itself. The Arena in the City of Vra is often filled with clowns and pretty girls, and athletic events, rather than with grim and bloody gladiators. The Vrayani value singing, playing the Sra'ur (rather like a lute), folkdancing (which the mighty of Tsolyanu would not be caught dead doing), art, and erotic poetry. The Engsvanyali poet Yetil is much admired, and his sensuous verses have been translated into Tsolyani and also into the Vrayani dialect of Tsolyani, as well as other tongues. There is a thriving book-copying and selling business in Lnoris, as well as in the City of Vra.

Along with more jollity, the Vrayani are also given to hotter tempers and more violence, especially over women (and their women fight just as often over men!), gambling, and the custom of daring each other to perform feats of athletic prowess -- and quarreling over it. Be a little careful when addressing a Vrayani, male or female, especially one who wears the slim Vrayani dagger in a sheath at his or her hip.

Many of the old lineages have been represented on the island of Vra for millennia, and a number of these have members in the Joyous of Vra. Inter-marriage is fairly common and not frowned upon, provided that the link is with an equal or higher clan. Hence, lineage names often overlap, and the Vrayani are an amiable, outgoing bunch, who don't mind such unions. (Contrast this to the attitude of the locals in City of Sarku, Hmakuyal or even Khirgar) Some lineage names specifically associated with Vra are vuWasuma, vuChrayu, hi Makkochaqu [Princes of Vra], hiHoqqulen [of the Clan of the High Pinnacle if not others too], vuHaggoshe and vuNaoma.

The Temple of Qon on Vra contains several very old copies of the writings of Pavar. One, written on leaves of gold and ornamented with yellow gems, is said to have been rescued by divers from the sunken palace of the Priestkings itself. Although it possesses no magical powers, the worshippers of Qon believe it to be sacred, having been personally presented by Qon to Pavar. On a more mysterious note, fisherfolk around the isle of Vra claim to see vessels propelled by other-planar magic (at least, without oars and sails) silently cruising the deeper waters around the island.

During the reign of Hirkane, the love songs of Vra were fashionable.

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## People and Politics

Vra covers 400 by 300 tsan and returns 134,000 kaitars to the Emperor each year from the fief holders. That makes it marginally “undertaxed” compared to other islands or regions.

### Noted People

The list of notables on Vra over the period from the end of the reign of Emperor Hirkané the Stone Upon Whom the Universe Rests and the ascension of Mirusiya Tlakotani is given below. There are, of course, many others who have simply not been mentioned in the public versions of Imperial Depatches.

Take care in Vra to use the correct forms of “hi” or “vu”. For instance, even within Red Flower there is considerable dispute (often vigorous and sometimes violent) between young men of the Chaquvar lineage. Those who dwell on Vra and have 3 or more generations of Vrayani parents always use “vuChaquvar”, those in the Jakallan Clan house tend to use “hiChaquvar” and everyone else just watches the arguments with wry smiles.

**Governor of Vra: Lord Hu’un hiChle** Hu'un hiChli of High Singing Bird: a Governor of Vra, he lives in Vra worships Avanthé. 60years old, small, wispy, skinny; kind, gentle, fuddy-duddy, devoted to his temple and his island; interested in fine glassware and delicate statuary and art; studies aesthetics, literature, religious tracts; said to be bisexual, but has a fat, doughy wife, 2 plump daughters and 1 totally unbearable piggy son; he avoids these family members as much as possible, staying in his scholarly library and dealing with his tasks at rigid, stiffly formal audiences; makes few friends; sister married to General Sryma of Vra.

Mirkitani vuMakkochaqu, Prince of Vra, General of the Legion of Mirkitani, Hero of Victories, 7th Imperial Heavy Infantry. He is a powerful soldier and warrior, a personal friend of General Kettukal and Prince Eselne, one of the greatest strengths of the Military Party. (Others would say “Mirkitani vuMakkochaqu of Joyous of Vra: a General, lives in Vra worships Chegarrá. 48years old, Funny, jovial, sly, clever with words, rather lackadaisical leader; 7 Cohorts in Khirgar (loyal to Prince Eselni), 3 at Paya Gupa (ditto), 2 in training on the island of Vra; 7 lost in Yan Ksr at the siege of Kai; sister (Sisnu) is the wife of General Kittukal hiMraktini; personal friend of Kittukal & Prince Eselne, strong man of the Military Party.”)

Sryma hiHoqqulen, Lord of Vra, General of the Battalions of Sryma of Vra, 39th Imperial Medium Infantry, of the Clan of the High Pinnacle. Sryma is a good soldier, having served under General Kettukal, and is a friend of the Governor of Vra, Lord Hu’un hiChle. In fact, there are plans for him to marry the governor’s sister, once again bringing a member of the High Pinnacle Clan into the Palace of the God-Kings of Vra. (Others would say “Sryma hiHoqqulin of High Pinnacle: a General, lives in Vra worships Karakan. 26years old, Young scion of an old, noble Vrayani family; impetuous and fiery; 4 Cohorts on Vra; 4 at Thraya, 2 at Jaikalsr; used to “keep the peace” in the south; likely to remain out of the political intrigue for the throne; friend of Governor Hu’zn hiChli and married Governor’s sister in 2355”).

Lord Miruene vuChrayu, General of the Legion of the Joyful Clan of the Noble Vrayani, 3rd Imperial Slingers. He is a seasoned soldier, a good strategist who often advises General Kettukal, and a staunch supporter of the Imperium. He worships Hnalla but cooperates with the Military Party. Others would say “Miruene vuChrayu of Joyous of Vra: a General, lives in Vra worships Hnalla. 39years old, Ancient clan lineage, dislikes General Mirkitani; rather sly and devious, enjoys a practical joke; money-hungry; 12 Cohorts at Khirgar (loyal to Prince Eselni), 2 at Paya Gupa (ditto); may go over to Prince Taksuru if he seems to be winning -- and offers enough.” So beware!

Hagarr hiChunmiyal, General of the Flotilla of Hagarr of Paranta, 1st Imperial Marines (may live in Jakalla or Thayari Isle, it’s not clear). He’s a rather old man, an excellent sailor who also owns a fleet of merchant ships, and he hopes to pass the Legion on to his son Miridame hiChunmiyel.



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Sisnu vuMakkochaqu of Sea Blue: a Noble wife, she lives in Vra worships Chegarra. 38years old, Wife of General Kettukal hiMraktini, First General of the Empire; sister of Mirkitani vuMakkochaqu, Prince of the old Vrayani nobility and General of 7th Heavy Infantry; very devoted to her husband, otherwise a-political; loves outdoors, swimming, long walks, sitting by the fire, good dinners with friends; very social and lively;

Naru hiTitin of Red Flower: a Warrior, lives in Vra worships Karakan. 21years old, Bodyguard in Jakalla; Longsword (13), Bow (9); pleasant young man

Muysn vuCharsha of High Singing Bird of Vra: a Lay Priest, Scholar, he lives in Vra worships Thumis. 35years old, Knows: Mu'ugalavyani, Salarvyani, Llyani; spells: Healing, Ascertainment, Clairvoyance, Alleviation, Hands of Kra, etc.; some astrology, swimmer; Lay Priest.

Myrdmn hiKhanmu of Red Blade of Death: a Lay Priest, Ritual, lives in Vra worships Vimzhla. 26years old, Knows: Ghatsni, Mu'ugalavyani, Milumanayani, Tsaqw, Mihalli; spells: Light, Detect Evil/Good, minor Healing, Telepathy, Protection, Calm, Shadows, Invisibility, Hands of Kra, Shield of Defense, Energy Bolt; some minor warrior skills; enchanted flail, steel armour.

Kugssha hiChriqa of Noble Vrayani: a Ship Captain, she lives in Vra worships Hru'u. 69 years old, Small, white-haired, round-faced; called "Granny" by everybody; owns a fast bireme (the "Shining Sun of Morn"), with 24 Vrayani slinger-girls; pleasant and friendly but as murderous and piratical as they come: the Lizzie Borden of the Southern Seas! Usually operates out of Jakalla.

Iszra hiTargzma of Sea Blue: a Lay Priestess, Scholar, lives in Vra worships Ketingku. 30years old, Knows: Tsolyani, Salarvyani, Livyani; Pearl Grey Citadel, Bridge of Nebulous Passage, Omniscient Eye, Control Self, Light, Translocation, Healing, Missiles of Metallja; Eye of Healing (9); skills: Physician (4), Warrior (3)

Helilma hiSaksdla of Red Flower: a Soldier: Tirrikamu, lives in Vra worships Karakan. 31years old, Warrior (18), Soldier (10); Warrior skills: Spear (21), Scimitar (15), Crossbow (10); studied Artillery (9) and Field Tactics (6); owns steel armour.

Harisu hiMrayalu of Green Lintel: a Priest, High Ritual, he lives in Vra worships Thzmis. 61years old, Stout, pompous, sloppy eater.

Fiyudana hiKashmma of White Stone: a Noble Wife, she lives in Vra worships Avanthé. 23 years old, Slender, aristocratic, arrogant; accomplished musician and poetess; wife of Chyrisan hiValzro (cf. Officials list).

Dus hiHa'al of Golden Bough: a Noblewoman, she lives in Vra worships Hnalla. 17years old, Pretty, mischievous, laughs a lot; athletic; knows: Swimming (4), Sailing (3), Fishing (2); Singing (5); given a parcel of land near Aukisha (2 square Tsan)

Chitla hiKainar of Might of Ganga: a Official OAL, she lives in Vra worships Thumis. 37years old, Small, fiery-tempered, agile woman; watches over Imperial interests on Vra; loyal to the Imperium but dislikes Dhichune; excellent tracking skill, lock-picking, and other intelligence-related talents; hardworking and never gives up; knows Mu'ugalavyani (3), Livyani (2); dagger (4), short sword (4); and crossbow (3); good friend -- bad enemy!

Chitl vuKhmrsha of Red Flower: a Warrior, lives in Vra worships Vimuhla. 27years old, Warrior skills: Shortsword, Sling (expert).

Asain hiMashkudai of Golden Bough: a Noble, she lives in Vra worships Hnalla. 17years old, Artless young girl of high clan; no skills and not very bright; fell in love with Osumitlu hiVu'zrtesh, High Priest of Hnalla, when he was on the island of Vra; now interested in becoming a priestess of Hnalla, but some of her relatives are thinking of rebelling against the Tsolyani Empire and setting Vra up as a separate island state; this appeals to her sense of adventure.

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## Noted Clans:

- Tlakotani. [The Imperial clan has maintained a very small clanhouse in Vra since the accession of Vra in 1115. This symbolises the conquest of Vra and the authority of the Tlakotani. It is unusual to have a Tlakotani clan house this far south.]
- Golden Sunburst [small clan house]
- Might of Ganga [V large. Full of overbearing Gangans who think they own Vra] Golden Bough [V small clan house]
- Sword of Fire [Large clan house with strong mercantile links to Mu'ugalavya]
- Blade Raised High [Strong links with the Legions associated with Vra. Claims to have been founded on Vra by a captain of the palace guard of the Priestkings who fled when Ganga sank]
- Purple Gem [v. small]
- High Pinnacle [The current manifestation on Vra of the "People of the Peak" who came to Vra to avoid Tlakotani oppression. Wherever the original "Peak" was, the clan have adopted for their own the tall central peak of the range of hills/mountains south of the city of Vra {This is the high ground in the middle of the southern "blob" of the Isle of Vra}. A representation of this peak is now frequently used in clan symbols. The peak is also an important navigational aid for ships sailing to Vra. ]
- Great Stone [small presence of a northern clan for trading purposes]
- Amber Cloak
- Joyous of Vra [Enormous clan house - Think they should be running Vra and treated with a lot more respect than those Might of Gangans!]
- Blue Kirtle
- Golden Dawn
- Moon of Evening
- Red Flame [Enormous - dominate all trading activity in and out of the port of Vra. Many official posts administering the port are passed down through the clan]
- Weeping Stone
- Blazoned Sail
- Flowering Life
- Flat Peak
- Collar of Bronze [I am told that the big clan house for Collar of Bronze is in Lnoris as this has trading routes to Livyanu, Mu'ugalavya, Tsolyanu mainland and Salavya ]
- Red Flower a trading clan that attempts to make up in sheer numbers for its lack of Noble status. Well represented on Vra and Jakalla, with branches or associates on most islands and most Southern Tsolyani cities. [For further details refer to the "Red Flower Journals"]. Main Lineages: Zanirin, Chaquvar, Isassa.

## Military Forces:

Vra is by far the most bellicose of the islands, hosting 3 Legions and sending men to serve in two others.

The Legion of Mirkitani, Hero of Victories, 7th Imperial Heavy Infantry, has been garrisoned on Vra since 1115. It has done much to consolidate Imperial power in the islands and currently boasts a very prominent General. (Some troops are also garrisoned in Jakalla)

The most recent incarnation of the Legion of the Joyful Clans of the Noble Vrayani, 3rd Imperial Slingers, was established in 1582 under Hejjeka V "the Open Handed." It has seen much action across the empire and is currently deeply involved in the Yan Koryani war, most of the 20 Cohorts are at Chene Ho preparing an offensive. Most of the troops worship Hnalla but are willing to cooperate with the Military Party.

The Battalions of Sryma of Vra is the newest legion, established under Hirkane at the urging of Sryma. The Legion was created in the spirit of developing a truly Vrayani local autonomy and culture. It's currently 11 Cohorts strong and growing. The Legion is devoted to the Clan of the High Pinnacle and the worship of Lord Chegarra.

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The Flotilla of Hagarr of Paranta, 1st Imperial Marines, keeps 500 ships based at Penom and Jakalla. Another 200-300 ships are kept at Vra, Tleku on Thayari Isle and Petris Layoda on the island of Ganga. The navy is small because of the threat of a southern invasion is perceived to be small due to the difficulties of this approach. Each ship has a crew of sailors who fight at best as light infantry. The main defense is the complement of marines, the equivalent of medium land troops. The marines' duties include fighting from ship to ship, landing and destroying pirate nests, and defending the southern shores against smugglers. Due to a past scandal, no one from the Clan of the Red Sky can serve as an officer on a ship.

Lastly, half the men recruited into the Squadrons of Tlaneno the Steersman, 3rd Imperial Marines, come from Vra, Thayari and Ganga. (The other half come from the coasts around Jakalla.) This Legion was founded by Emperor Arshu'u "the Ever-Splendid" in 2251 A.S. and is closely connected to Golden Sunburst and the Temples of Karakan and Chegarra in Jakalla. In 2349, they defeated the Hlyss incursion off Ngeshtu Head, but otherwise have seen only the usual number of raids, pirates and smugglers. Currently used only to control the river traffic from Jakalla to Avanthar and along the Rananga River to the east. The present commander is General Tlaneno hiVorodlaya of Golden Sunburst, a Karakan worshipper, a close friend of Eselne and a supporter of the Military Party. He wants more action and is bidding his time, waiting for the right opportunity.

### Political/Administrative Divisions:

The isle of Vra is split into two provinces. The boundary line starts below Lornis on the west coast, rises to run SSW-NNE so as to pass in between Lnoris and the town of Vra, and then goes east to end on the east coast about a hex above Vra town. The northern province (containing Lnoris) is called Sine (accent on the e) and the southern province is called, again, Vra.

The etymologies of Sine and Vra are not known – lost in history. Probably even pre-Engsvanyali and even First Imperium. The division into two provinces was certainly Engsvanyali and was done for ease of administration. Vra and Lnoris are clearly two separate ancient power centers. (I once heard a legend that there had been warfare between them at some unguessably early time in mythological history. I could never find any sources, however.) Now there is really little rivalry between these provinces; the rulers of Vra itself seem to have triumphed, economically, over the inhabitants of Lnoris. It's pretty much one country nowadays: rather like Kent and Surrey. Vra seems to be the richer of the two provinces, and its agricultural products are more widely famed than those of its sister-province. Nobody seems to mind very much. The real provincial governor resides in Vra, while the governor of Lnoris is much less important.

There are two or three fiefs on Vra that are vacant. One belonged to a strong worshipper of Lord Durrilamish, a loyal fan of Dhich'une. It will almost certainly be vacated soon. One is vacant now, its previous owner having died at age 82. The third I'm not certain about -- have to check.

After Dhich'une became Emperor, his soldiers on Vra were polite, circumspect, and remained almost invisible, so as not to annoy the turbulent Vrayani.

After 2366, when a plague virtually wiped out the Livyanu population, and the Mu'ugalavyani invaded, Vra is in turmoil, having received no goods from Livyanu (because of the plague) and very little from Tsolyanu (because of the war). There is a growing movement towards autonomy.

[From a player on The Blue Room: This shows that there is normally an important trade route to Livyanu from Vra. For this to vie in importance with the routes to the Tsolyani mainland I believe that this suggests that there is one trade route across open sea to Livyanu that avoids hugging the coast via Mu'ugalavya. This is an extraordinarily adventurous route that has only been mastered by Livyani vessels (possibly in Convoys) using a superior navigational technology to that displayed by the Tsolyani. My researches have not yet uncovered whether this advantage is due to magic or skill].

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## Details

### Relevant historical clippings:

In 357 AP, Emperor Girándu's armies first engaged the "traitors" of the splinter-dynasties. "The Book of the Priestkings" records that the forerunner of the Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation [*most of whose troops were devotees of Vimúhla*] was sent against the powerful citadel of Harkóntio Thá'mis [*a place near modern Tumíssa*], whose major clans also served the Flame. The Priestking risked much by this step, but he eventually won out. Another Legion devoted to Vimúhla and Chiténg, that of the Searing Flame, won the Battle of the Seven-Pointed Star near Jekáral [*Jaikalór, in south-eastern Tsolyánu*] and drove the nonhuman Hlutrgú back into the jungles of Layódu and the Shikél Swamps. Another, later victory was won by the slingers of the Legion of the Joyful Clans of the Noble Vrayani; the Emperor rewarded each soldier with slingstones of rubies and diamonds.

### The Flower Wars

The conflicts called "**The Flower Wars**" were a series of struggles for power between the Viceroys of the Empire. Empress Tratikánte I had ordered the construction of "The Many-Hued Garden" at the palace on Gánga. Each area of this garden contained flowers of only one colour: there were thus seven separate sectors, devoted to red, yellow, blue, white, green, lavender, and orange blooms, respectively. When the Empress walked in one of these walled bowers, she and all those with her wore garments of only that colour. She appointed each of her chief ministers a *Kelém* ["Archon" or "Ruler"] of one segment of this Garden. After her death these titles were continued, and political parties grew up around them.

**The Archons** eventually came to open warfare. Almost immediately, the Archon of the White lost the city of Sokátis to the Archon of the Green; the former committed suicide, but his impaled corpse was displayed anyway. The Archon of the Yellow, who ruled Khirgár and the north-west, married the Lady Tirisánte Melél, the lovely Archon of the Blue and Viceroy of Vrá. The couple retired from the fray and gave all of their forces over to the Archon of the Orange, Lord Vikkumékýar of Chame'él in Salarvyá. The Archon of the Lavender fled to his own region in Yán Kór and was not seen again. It is said that he sought refuge in Nuru'ún in the far north-east. The Archons of the Green and the White (the son of the original Archon) fought a vast, confused, bloody battle near Fasíltum against the Archon of the Red, where the latter had his major strongholds; Red won, White perished on the field, and Green was imprisoned and exhibited in a cage for years thereafter. The last act of this mad civil war was the battle and siege of Mmélökh [*Mmilláka, in western Salarvyá*] between the Archons of the Red and the Orange. The Vimúhla-worshipping soldiers of the Vríddi won out after months of fighting; Koylúga and other cities were sacked, and the Archon of the Red, Lord Amukánatl Vríddi, assumed the throne. The last act of the war was the unnecessary exile of the Archons of Yellow and Blue to the Southern Continent, where nothing more was heard of them.

The Flower Wars were destructive not only to life and property but also to the concept of Imperial unity. Several regions declared local autonomy: Yán Kór and the Lorún lands of the north were lost first, followed by N'lüss [*which had never been happy under Engsvanyáli rule in any case*]. Mu'ugalavyá never wavered from its fealty to Éngsvan hla Gánga, however. Salarvyá was divided into a conquered zone adjacent to Tsolyánu, and a jumble of independent eastern states beginning at the city of Chgáth [*modern Jéggeth*] and running all the way to the eastern ocean. The western region soon fell away and became independent as well. Outlying areas, such as the Tsoléi Archipelago, Ghatón, Chayákku, and Saá Allaqí, were also lost, but Mihállu remained loyal -- and, it is said, still regularly sends tribute to vanished Gánga and expects a new Viceroy to arrive daily!

Secret societies sprang up soon after the Flower Wars: e.g. the **Scarlet Brotherhood**, which served Vimúhla and Chiténg, the **Brethren of the Scarlet Nail** (which, oddly enough, was devoted to Sárku), the **Incandescent Blaze Society** (again, Vimúhla and Chiténg), the **Ndálu Clan** (Ksáru), etc. Keshkúru Gama'án founded the **Scroll of the Blaze Revealed**, another sect of zealots who served the Flame Lord. Some of these societies are extinct, while others survive into modern society.

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## History

It was freed in 1458-1517 by Hejjeka IV "Restorer of Dignities, who gave local independence back to the Vrayani and to other protectorates, restored ancient patents of nobility.

[Moderator's Note: David Chaterjee asks questions about Vra, Thayuri and Ganga.]

I'm developing a campaign on the Isle of Thayuri, and before I start making it all up I'd like to ask if anyone else has spent much time there. Mark Daniels tells me that the Professor has not, but what information I have (mainly from Deeds of the Ever-Glorious) leads to a string of questions I and my players will have to answer for ourselves (with pleasure) if neither the Great One nor anyone else can:

>1. *The Vrayani legion descriptions (Sryma of Vra 39 IMI, Joyful of Vra 3 Slingers) discuss the horrific massacres of the Vrayani in the Tsolyani invasion of Vra, Ganga and Thayuri in 1115 AS. Meanwhile the only Thayuri-based legion (Echoing Stone 11 IHI) shows that Thayuri offered apparently no resistance to the Tsolyani, without explanation. Is an explanation known?*

The Legion of the Echoing Stone was not very large, nor very political, during the period of the invasion of Vra in 1115. It is not well known, but the records seem to imply that the officers of the Legion in this period were actually pro-Tsolyani. Thayuri Isle has always been a bastion of loyalty to the Imperium; just why is not known. A boring possibility is that they saw what happened to the Vrayani and kept their heads down. But this assumes the Vrayani atrocities were clear before the Thayuri invasion, and that Thayuri lacks the "noble" attitude prevalent throughout the legion histories of "ok boys we're completely outnumbered and if we don't surrender we're sure to die horribly, but hey we're not wimps are we lads? Charge!"

This explanation does not ring true. The Thayuri are very proud of their "nobility" and would probably take violent exception to someone who suggested otherwise. The legion was small, its leaders were probably loyalists, and the people of Thayuri are NOT Vrayani and feel little ethnic identity with Vra. The Thayuri consider themselves to be descended from the mighty Priestkings of Ganga, and some clans still have legends of arriving by boat on the island after the catastrophe that sank mighty Ganga to the south. First alternative that occurs to me is that Vra was already treating Thayuri pretty badly and the Tsolyani were welcomed as liberators (ok, not so bright maybe). Perhaps Thayuri was betrayed by its leaders (compare Butrus in 2019 or Fasiltum every couple of hundred years). Or is it something a bit juicier? (I haven't started thinking up sexy possibilities yet. If nobody knows the facts, speculation would be welcome.)

I don't have the name or clan of the general who was in charge of this legion in 1115, but I would bet he is descended from somebody in the Might of Ganga clan, even possibly of the hiZayuvu lineage, like the present general. These people are aristocratic bluebloods, who consider anything not traceable back to the court of the Priestkings somewhat déclassé.

>2. *"Deeds otEG" generally implies that the 1115 invasion was the first time Tsolyani and the islands were brought together. But then how come the Legion of the Twelve Paths of Avanthé (9 Slingers) from Ganga was a favourite of Avanthar well before this time? Is the modern history (ie After the Seal) of Ganga completely distinct from those of Thayuri and Vra, or was the link between the churches of Avanthé on the island and the mainland purely an internal affair?*

Yes, one must distinguish between Vra and the other southern islands. Ganga, Thayuri, Burru Isle, and even little Lilsu Isle are all part of the Engsvanyali heritage, while Vra was always separate, with a different dialect, a somewhat different culture (hardly more than a sub-culture, really), and very distinct political objectives that did not include being subservient to the lords of Bey Su, Jakalla, and the north. The temples of Engsvanyalu had better luck with the Vrayani than the Priestkings' political arm. The temple of Lady Avanthé was particularly popular -- and was perhaps identified with one or another of the goddesses of the southern seas (cf. the Sourcebook, p. 54) in this area.

>3. *Is anything known about the People of the Peak who opposed the First Tlakotani and fled to Vra? (See Deeds, 3 Slingers and maybe 39 MI. ) Is the Vrayani Clan of the High Pinnacle derived completely from them, or were the two merged?*

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Not much is known. The "People of the Peak" were apparently dissidents against the Engsvanyali, and when the island of Ganga sank, they fled not to Thayuri Isle but westward to Vra, where they quickly became cosy with the local anti-Tsolyani attitude. There were probably no more than two or three hundred of these folk, plus some retainers and serfs. Later, the Vrayani tried to seal off their island and keep it "pure" from Tsolyani influences. The "People of the Peak" played a small role in the political infighting that went on sporadically until the Imperium conquered the island in 1115 A. S. More boring ones:

>4. *Does anyone know anything at all about the Isle of Lilsu just north of Thayuri?*

Lilsu Isle is low, rolling, covered with rather pretty farms and estates owned by magnates from Jakalla, the Kaija Protectorate, and also from Thayuri Isle. Most of these estates grow garden vegetables, fruits, and crops for the markets of the other islands and Jakalla. Nuts, berries, Dlel-fruit, and other commodities bring in a lot of wealth. There are only small port towns on Lilsu, too small to be marked on the map. There is also a central ridge of scrub forest, where a few wild animals can still be found. The island is about 90 Tsan east-west, by 30 north-south. There are no good all-weather ports, however, and when storms come, the inhabitants haul their fishing boats and cargo vessels out of water and put them into protected dry docks. This precludes larger vessels, of course. There are also dangerous shallow waters and shoals off the northwest corner of the island, which only a skilled pilot can avoid. The island is technically under the governorship of Thayuri Isle, but in fact, it tends to be semi-autonomous, run by wealthy landholders and business folk from Jakalla, Kaija, and Thayuri Isle.

>5. *The Bestiary section on the Hlutrgu (and probably elsewhere) seems to imply that the name of Msumtel Bay on the world-maps covers at least the whole Kerunan/Salarvyani coastline as far as maybe Songyal. Obviously particular stretches of sea will have more specific names, but is this broadly true? And are the names of the channels between the islands known to anyone?*

The name Msumtel Bay does not quite reach as far south as Songgyal Isle -- only to the northern edge of Tamkade Bay -- a rather vague delineation. All of this area is named, although some parts are not often traversed by human shipping: e.g. the little islands closest in to the Layoda Swamps. This area is the "Drowned Land": a region of great underwater tree trunks, vines, roots, and vegetation that contain some of the ugliest creatures on the planet, many not in the Bestiary at all! The western reaches of the Gilraya Forest become progressively wetter and denser jungle, and by the time one reaches the boundaries of the Layoda Swamps, there is no ground underfoot at all -- only squelching vegetation and dismal water. At the south edge of the Gilraya Forests, along Tamkade Bay, the land rises somewhat, and there are stretches of miasmal coastal swamps all along here. Ships generally stay well to the south of this, and hug the Salarvyani coast all the way up to Heru.

>6. *Ganudla province covers Thayuri and Lilsu (map in volume one of the split-up edition of the Sourcebook). The kerdu of the Legion of the Echoing Stone (in 2358 at least) is Ri'isma hiZayavu of the Clan of the Might of Ganga (see Deeds), and he is described as the "Lord of Tleku" (the capital of Thayuri). Does this mean he is the Governor of Ganudla, or is this just a noble title without formal administrative power (though inevitably with a good deal of influence)? If he is not Governor, does anyone know who is? (Or even whether it is a local or a mainlander?)*

He is not the Governor but rather holds an historic but rather empty title. His clan and family is indeed very wealthy, but the Governor is someone appointed by the Imperium. He is currently Lord Changartla hiMriyatlatku, of the Golden Bough clan. He is 43 years old, has 2 wives (one of whom he mistreats, while pampering the other one). He has 3 sons and 1 daughter, all adults with jobs of their own. Lord Changartla is suave, sophisticated, loves dogs (racing, hunting, breeding), and high-culture entertainments like epic poetry, drama, mime, etc. He is also as crooked as the day is long: cheats on taxes and contracts, takes bribes, hires hit men, ruthlessly grabs property, and is generally not a nice person. He is no favourite of Avanthar, but rather almost an exile from the court at Bey Su. The current Emperor, Dhich'une, hardly knows he exists. As long as reports and taxes come in, Dhich'une ignores him. One day he may get what he so richly deserves: a one-way trip in a small boat into the Msumtel Swamps. . .

>7. *(PS Present tense here refers to 2363, since most of my players are fairly new to Tekumel and I'd like them to see the start of the civil war. I'm aware of what's appeared on this list about the Tsolyani losing control over this part of the world to the Salarvyani over the coming few years. )*

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The Salarvyani have not been able to extend their control to the islands, at least not completely nor for any length of time. They do raid, loot, and take slaves. The Tsolyani, Vrayani, etc. have been able to fend off the one or two largish attempts at conquest mounted by the Lords of Chame'el.

[Moderator's Note: Paul Snow contributes another item on Vra, a seemingly popular topic these days. ]

Greetings Oh Noble Scholars,

I am Nikun hi Sayodla of the Blue Hood Clan. I have been asked by a humble doorkeeper to the Great Tower of the Roaring Gong here in my temple to prepare a report on the history and current events of the Isle of Vra. As a humble, but keen, priest in the Temple of Our Great Blue Prince here in Jaikalar I realise it is wise to answer the requests of any apparent menial. So I turn to you my colleagues for any help you may be able to offer.

I shall present below the knowledge I have so far gathered and place in parentheses [thus] any speculations of my own. I would be honoured to hear any comments that you can make upon my facts and speculations. A (?) mark shows a point that seems worthy of elaboration for the enlightenment of all.

<<\*\*\* I Nikun hi Sayodla of the Blue Hood Clan dedicate this work to my father Jerus that I might follow his steps to wisdom.  
\*\*\*>>

-----Some History of Vra -----

Gamulu the Fisherman King built a navy of small, fast galleys that he used to capture the Dragon Warrior strongholds on the Isles of Ganga, Thayuri and Vra. There are epic poems dating to this age that tell of the adventures of one Khu'es vuNaoma whose sling-stone struck out the fourth eye of the Demon Kurritlakal and thus saved mankind.

[ I conclude from this that Vra was part of the Dragon Warriors empire which brought worship of Vimuhla across the face of the lands but then learned of our mighty Lord Ksarul from the Black Robes of the Fisherman Kings whilst Jakalla and the mainland still lived in sorry ignorance of the power of His knowledge. ]

[Did this period have any lasting effect on the development of the Vrayani people? They still seem a bellicose people who play host to three Imperial legions. From the earliest days they have had to fight off the threat of the Hluss from the west. Perhaps some of the spirit of the Dragon Warriors remains in them as they struggle against the enemies of mankind. For how many generations has Lnoris been the last bastion of civilisation facing out to Hlussuyal? The folk from there do seem to be very tall]

[ During the ascendancy of Engsvan hla Ganga, Vra was clearly near the heart of the mighty empire yet I know nothing about Vra at this time. I speculate that this golden age for mankind still has more obvious influence on the present state of Vra than it has for much of the rest of Tsolyanu. I will return to this later. ]

This fact has been found. Engsvanyali records state that once the troops of the island of Vra were garlanded with wreaths of gold and given sacks of "sling-stones of diamond and rubies and all precious gems" as a reward for their slaying of the Hluss and the evil Hlutgru.

[ Next, after the fall of Ganga, comes the time of no Kings that lasts according to our standard histories until the founding of our current glorious Imperium which stands as the culmination of all past knowledge, wisdom and history. Yet, I find that the Vrayani do not see it like this. The lights are said not to have dimmed so darkly on the Isle. A state was established there that stood for 2000 years before our Seal Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV conquered Vra in 1115. ]

Vra is conquered in 1115 AS by the Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "Flattener of Peaks". The Legion of Mirkítani, Hero of Victories helped take the island and has been stationed there for most of the time since. Vra was at the time of the conquest the home of

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the "People of the Peak"(?) who had taken refuge on Vra after being driven back by the first Tlakotani. The island was described as "The First of the Isles of the Excellent Dead" as it was death for a Tsolyani to land there. Such was the enmity involved. For at least 1000 years Vra held off the Hluss, the Hlutgru, the Tsolyani and all the pirates of the southern sea. Mighty warriors are they indeed on Vra.

After the conquest the nobility of the island were apparently exterminated to a man and the women and children sold into slavery. Many Vrayani women and children served out miserable lives in the mines to the north of Avanthar. Princess Eddyana "the Singer of the Golden Cage" suffered a less pleasant fate (?- what?)

In 1458 AS, Hejjeka IV "Restorer of Dignities" restored fiefs to some disaffected noble families. At this time a commoner was identified to be a direct descendant of the last of the God-Kings of Vra. He was found to possess the lost Sapphire Seal of the Vrayani dynasty. The nobility of Vra was restored to the island as fief holders under the Imperium. The Emperor encouraged the founding of a new Vrayani legion (The Battalion of Sryma of Vra as it is now) and encouraged the development of a truly Vrayani local autonomy and culture ruled from the Palace of the God-Kings of Vra.

At this time the treasure of Tneyu vuWasuma, which he seized from the Hluss, was returned to the rebuilt citadel of Vra. The coming of the Imperial officials to the simple mountaineers and peasants ( the remainder of the slaves ) to whom they restored their ancestral rights is recorded in the "Hymn to the Light Above" by Ndiu vuChrayu. At this time the peasants were robed again in the strange costumes (?) of the people of Vra.

[I believe that when the ancient rights were restored to the God-Kings of Vra, the reformed Vrayani culture accentuated its differences from the Tsolyani norm. This highlighted the theocratic nature of the rule of the god-kings that is seen on Vra as linking back to the glorious time of Engsvan hlaGanga. Reinvented traditions are more extreme and more dearly held than simple habit. Religious structures permeate the nature of life and rule on Vra. Education is at temple schools for all those who are educated. All officials in the palaces of government on Vra who are Vrayani are also lay-priests. The Tsolyanu mainland tolerates this as it doesn't contribute greatly to politics off of Vra. The big contribution Vra makes to mainstream political life is that it is a centre of power for the military party because Vra is the home of many generals loyal to Kettukal and hence Eselne. ]

*Finally, I note that Vra is in turmoil, having received no goods from Livyanu because of the plague. There is a growing movement towards autonomy. { MARB - Eye of All-Seeing Wonder 5 }*

[This shows that there is normally an important trade route to Livyanu from Vra. For this to vie in importance with the routes to the Tsolyani mainland I believe that this suggests that there is one trade route across open sea to Livyanu that avoids hugging the coast via Mu'ugalavya. This is an extraordinarily adventurous route that has only been mastered by Livyani vessels (possibly in Convoys) using a superior navigational technology to that displayed by the Tsolyani. My researches have not yet uncovered whether this advantage is due to magic or skill]

These are lineage names associated with Vra

vuWasuma, vuChrayu, hi Makkochaqu [Princes of Vra], hi Hoqqulen [of the Clan of the High Pinnacle if not others too], vuNaoma

[What do we know about these lineages? Who are they named for? What does the vu prefix tell us about Vrayani language or society. Do the vus stand apart from the his? What are the dominant clans on Vra?]

Who are the current personages of note on Vra? What famous sites are worth visiting on Vra? How much of Vra was destroyed when Ganga fell? What is exported from Vra?

All details will be very thankfully appreciated and I might yet make it to Vth circle. ]

Nikun hi Sayodla



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## [Questions re: fall of Ganga and effects on the region]

>Greetings Noble and Mighty Kin,

*>As a follow up to the discussion of the effects the fall of Ganga on the islands of the Gangan Archipelago (?- is that their collective description - I never really listened to the geography scholar as it was right after magic class ).*

*>How quickly did all the disasters happen?*

In response to Nikun hiSayodla of the Blue Hood clan, it is written:

The sinking of Ganga is fraught with legend and story. There are few contemporary records, and some of those are too wound up with mythological meanderings to be reliable as "history" (compare Plato on the subject of Atlantis, or various Middle Eastern sources on the Flood). The story of the Hero of the Age, the Warrior-Hero Kokun, and his attempts to defeat the Demons from Beyond, who brought about the sinking, take up a good part of the epic poetry dealing with this period. Kokun failed, betrayed by a woman, and then by comrades who were not strong enough to succeed him. Hence, it is said, mighty Ganga sank, all in one long day during a beautiful summer day (exact Tsolyani date unknown). There had been rumblings and subsidence for some years, and the more timid folk had already left the island, some fleeing to Thayuri, some to Vra, some as far as Jakalla. The story has it that the island shivered once, twice, thrice, and then tilted gracefully to the east, bowing to the Lord Sun when he rose, and then disappeared beneath the waves. The accompanying roar and tumult was, literally, the end of the world for many. They say that the death of Ganga could be heard as far away as Thraya, though this may be hearsay. The tidal waves that roared in did take out most of the coastal cities as far away as Penom! All was dark, clouds of vapour and dust filled the sky, and the gods ground their mighty teeth together in horror. . .

This was the first of what seems to have been a long readjustment of the tectonic plates: northern Yan Kor rose, and the shallow inner sea was replaced with lowlands where Rulla and Eer and Go'on stand today. The Desert of Sighs itself seems to be the lowest point of an ancient sea bottom. The catastrophe had ramifications in Mu'ugalavya and Salarvyva, and high tides plagued Livyanu for years thereafter.

Many of the folk of Ganga had had warning and managed to get away. Much of their moveable property was saved along with them. Others refused to move, feeling that the Gods would take care of them --which they did, as one poet put it, "by throwing open the gates to the Paradises of the Isles of Teretane. "

*>Was there a big bang and a crash, tidal waves, flying rock and a new cartography needed? This onslaught of destruction burns libraries and loses treasures for ever and seems to be implied.*

There was probably both a gradual subsidence and also a short, sharp catastrophe. The Priestkings apparently opted to stay with their palaces and gardens, although this is probably an exaggeration: many must have quietly fled to higher ground.

The story has it that the waters roared down into the ancient underworld below the City of Ganga, drowning the tombs and catacombs, hurling the revered dead from their coffins, and bringing the roofs down with a thunder the like of which "no God had ever heard." There is no record of what happened to the creatures, guardians, and inhabitants of the tomb cities, but it is probable that most perished -- some may have got away across the Straits to what was then the pleasant woodland of Gilraya -- and is now a waterlogged morass.

*>or did the lands slip gently into (and out of) the waters? I imagine the Priestkings rising to find their ground floor rooms rather wet one day as the water lapped in. So, they decide to only use upper rooms until they find that this is untenable too. This version would give much more time to allow for migrations of families and less overall loss of life but you would expect valuables to be saved and carried off rather than lost. Some of the social effects mentioned in recent postings seem more likely from this version rather than the mass destruction vision above.*

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*>I have just had an interesting idea for the seepage version above. Imagine what would happen if one tremor occurred, starting fires across Ganga and a few buildings tumble. This starts a \_slow\_ sinking of the terrain but also releases waters to flood all through the underworld before they rise up to basement levels. Imagine then a stream of underworld critters fleeing the dark depths of the unknown to appear in the streets of the greatest and most beautiful capital the world has ever known. That really would keep the temple guards busy and encourage mass migration.*

>Nikun hi Sayodla of the Blue Hood Clan.

>- All Praise to Lord Ksarul - Study the Darkness and Make it Your Own -

All too true -- and possibly exactly as it happened. Even with a near- instantaneous catastrophe, there must have been time for many denizens of the dark to win free and vanish to parts unknown.

The sinking of mighty Ganga still stands as one of the most moving and terrifying calamities that ever occurred. Far greater than one volcanic island of Thera (modern Santorini: where Atlantis is supposed have been), the fall of Ganga shook both the physical and the political world to its foundations. The forces of disruption soon triumphed over the shaken remnants of the Priestkings' administration, and whole provinces broke away within a few decades. The "lost armies" that had gone as far as old Mihallu and lost Tane, could not get home again and either perished or sent down roots and became local folk. Even the language slowly perished, giving way to the modern tongues of the Five Empires.

The wings of the dark covered the eyes of light, as the poets say.

There are some sources, but not many that give realistic pictures of this period. Most, as said above, are wound about with myths and story to the point that they are of little use as histories. If you are interested, check out the books listed on p 11 of the Zocchi Sourcebook. "Pogurdikh hiKolumebabardali" by Kerulya Kettumridal of Jakalla is perhaps the most readable, although a knowledge of Engsvanyali is assumed.

**[Moderator's Note: There seems to be much interest in the area of Ganga, Vra and Thayuri, so I am going to post this directly to the list. However, Professor, would you give a shot at answering his questions and helping him flesh out his Duke?]**

Continuing on the interesting theme of the Gangan archipelago I'd like to put some questions regarding one of my players characters. I hope that it will add a bit of personality to a (so far) unpopulated Isle. Could you pass my queries onto the professor for some flavour please? If Phil has any time to answer these queries, we'd appreciate it.) No worries if he can't answer them all.

Thanks **Dermot** ----- Greetings noble lords and ladies,

I am **Dridakku vuGachu**, senior archivist and scholar to the **Clan of the Joyous of Vra** here in Lnoris, Vra. Even though my lineage is not as glorious as others I gain great honour from this position.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you all that we have a newly appointed nobleman here in Lnoris, a great hero so they say and a proud member of our clan, Joyous of Vra! His name is Tetkoru vuChrayu and due to the great deeds he performed for the empire the clan was awarded the title of Duke of Lnoris, which was given to Lord Tetkoru in recognition of service.

He is a tall handsome and proud man, a strong worshipper of Avanthé he has four wives and at least six children at the last count, with another two on the way. It is rumoured that the goddess herself has blessed him as all his offspring are strong of mind and body. At the age of 25 he has accomplished a great deal, struggling against demons and technology of the ancients, saving the empire from great perils.

Essentially, he is a family man and kind of heart, but woe to any man that come against the steel of his hlepurdal blades! The honour bestowed as Duke of Lnoris meant that he has moved his household to Vra and is fast gaining a reputation as an honest

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and noble lord. He also holds the the fief of Karankor in the Bey Su area and is its *arsemekoi* (baron), but this is contested by reason of local troubles.

So now you know something of the man I would ask you to help me compile some information on the personalities and politics of Lnoris and Vra. Some information on the clan and vuChrayu lineage has also been requested. His lordship requires a report of me and I would be most grateful if you could assist me in this.

- Who are the notables of Lnoris? (Govenor, senior clergy, military figures, clan elders, etc. )
- What does the title Duke of Lnoris actually mean?(lands, political influence, social standing, etc. )
- What of the local ecomomy, is it similar to Thayuri or more prosperous?
- What cultural differences can one expect in Vra?
- What is the feeling in the air about possible sucession from Tsolyanu? Any rebellion in sight?
- Could you give some words of advice for the good Duke as to how he should fit in and gain influence in his new home?
- Records show that lord Tetkoru is descended from the poet and scholar Ndiu vuChrayu, what other history does this lineage have?
- What are the origins of 'Joyous of Vra'?Were they once the nobility of the island, any bits of history?
- Have other (disposed) lineages/clans held this position before, will this cause problems?

--- Apologies for my rantings but I have so much to do for my new lord I can ramble on a little. Any response from so great a body of scholars is humbly appreciated.

with gracious thanks

Dridakku vuGachu, Joyous of Vra, Lnoris

[Moderator's Note: Paul Snow writes about Clans on the Island of Vra. How close is this to 'Real' Tekumel, Professor?]

Temple of Ksarul - Jaikalor

To the Master of all Knowledge. The Temple Library

My Sagacious Master, Keeper of all Wisdom, I have gathered some information regarding the clans to be found in the city of Vra. Please can this be checked against the current temple records as a test of the veracity of my source.

Report from Nikun hi Sayodla =====

I have compiled the following list of the clans to be found in the city of Vra after interviewing a boatmen on the Equnoyel River who claims that he visited Vra in his youth. They are listed in order of their status as recognised in Avanthar. I believe that the effective ordering on Vra varies slightly from this due to local history and mores. [Is this true?]

## The List of Clans known to be on Vra:

- Tlakotani. [The Imperial clan has maintained a very small clanhouse in Vra since the accession of Vra in 1115. This symbolises the conquest of Vra and the authority of the Tlakotani. It is unusual to have a Tlakotani clan house this far south.]
- Golden Sunburst [small clan house] Might of Ganga [V large. Full of overbearing Gangans who think they own Vra] Golden Bough [V small clan house] Sword of Fire [Large clan house with strong mercantile links to Mu'uglavaya] Blade Raised High [Strong links with the Legions associated with Vra. Claims to have been founded on Vra by a captain of the palace guard of the Priestkings who fled when Ganga sank]
- Purple Gem [v. small] High Pinnacle [The current manifestation on Vra of the "People of the Peak" who came to Vra to avoid Tlakotani oppression. Wherever the original "Peak" was, the clan have adopted for their own the tall central peak of the

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range of hills/mountains south of the city of Vra {This is the high ground in the middle of the southern "blob" of the Isle of Vra}. A representation of this peak is now frequently used in clan symbols. The peak is also an important navigational aid for ships sailing to Vra. ]

- Great Stone [small presence of a northern clan for trading purposes] Amber Cloak Joyous of Vra [Enormous clan house - Think they should be running Vra and treated with a lot more respect than those Might of Gangans!]
- Blue Kirtle Golden Dawn Moon of Evening Red Flame [Enormous - dominate all trading activity in and out of the port of Vra. Many official posts administering the port are passed down through the clan] Weeping Stone Blazoned Sail
- Flowering Life
- Flat Peak
- Collar of Bronze [I am told that the big clan house for Collar of Bronze is in Lnoris as this has trading routes to Livyanu, Mu'ugalavya, Tsolyanu mainland and Salavya ]

Thank you Mighty One for your time.

Nikun hi Sayodla.

[Moderator's Note: The Professor responds to Dermot's message about Vra. ]

Hail, Dridakku, Ngangmuru bruhaya lel brumazik!

*>I am Dridakku vuGachu, senior archivist and scholar to the Clan of the Joyous of Vra here in Lnoris, Vra. Even though my lineage is not as>glorious as others I gain great honour from this position. It gives me great pleasure to tell you all that we have a newly appointed>nobleman here in Lnoris, a great hero so they say and a proud member of our clan, Joyous of Vra! His name is Tetkoru vuChrayu and due to the great deeds he performed for the empire the clan was awarded the title of Duke of Lnoris, which was given to Lord Tetkoru in recognition of service.*

I am dubious about the \_clan\_ awarding anybody a noble title. These ancient patents of Bednalljan and Engsvanyali nobility are not much employed in the modern Empire and are largely hereditary. They are almost always a gift from the Emperor to a loyal and outstanding follower who has served the Petal Throne well. The title "Duke" is also not easily translated into Tsolyani since it has connotations of the Western European feudal system. The Tsolyani titles are given on p. 61 of the Zocchi "Sourcebook": Arsekmekoi (lower rank, akin to "Baron"), Hehellukoi ("Count" ???), Pachukoi ("Lord"), and Mringukoi ("High Lord"). (The -koi is a suffix of nobility; cf. the Tsolyani Grammar.) These are rather empty forms these days, although they do look well in one's dossier!

*>He is a tall handsome and proud man, a strong worshipper of Avanthé he has four wives and at least six children at the last count, with another two on the way. It is rumoured that the goddess herself has blessed him as all his offspring are strong of mind and body. At the age of 25 he has accomplished a great deal, struggling against demons and technology of the ancients, saving the empire from great perils.*

Sounds like a good candidate for Imperial recognition. But from the Sarku-worshipping Emperor Dwich'üne? Wait for the next Emperor and then present your man's case to him. Prince Rereshqala worships Hnalla and is likely to be favourable. Prince Eselne worships Karakan and values only military service and bravery in battle -- not so likely. He rather despises those who stay home and fight demons. If Prince Mirusiya becomes Emperor there may be a chance for a noble title for your man; he values bravery and battle hardness. Prince Taksuru is an enigma: as a follower of Lord Ksarul, he does have some feeling for the exploits you describe, but he's likely to put all titles and other things on the back burner until he has brought the Empire back under control, ended the battles between the candidates for the Petal Throne, and settled a lot of issues. With him, it would be wait and see. . . Essentially he is a family man and kind of heart, but woe to any man that come against the steel of his hlepurdal blades! The honour bestowed as Duke of Lnoris meant that he has moved his household to Vra and is fast gaining a reputation as an honest and noble lord. He also holds the the fief of Karankor in the Bey Su area and is its arsemekoi (baron), but this is contested by reason of local troubles.

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Last I heard, Prince Taksuru's troops were occupying that fief and guzzling the goodies of its wine cellar! Your man will almost certainly be transferred OUT of that fief by any Emperor worth his salt. Absentee landlords collect few taxes, and as Arsekme, your candidate should be there to see to the Imperium's business. If he is seen as a loyal and useful person by the next Emperor, he will be given some other fief closer to home. There are two or three on Vra itself that are vacant. One belonged to a strong worshipper of Lord Durritlemish, a loyal fan of Dhich'une. It will almost certainly be vacated soon. One is vacant now, its previous owner having died at age 82. The third I'm not certain about -- have to check.

*>So now you know something of the man I would ask you to help me compile some information on the personalities and politics of Lnoris and Vra. >Some information on the clan and vuChrayu lineage has also been requested. His lordship requires a report of me and I would be most grateful if you could assist me in this.*

Lnoris is a typical Vrayani city. Most of the inhabitants are followers of Lady Avanthé (or Dilinala), with a few members of other faiths. The industries are mostly connected with the sea, fishing, and transport of goods. Lnoris is one of the last good all-weather ports before the long trip north to Penom, one of the regular stops on the Salarvyanu-Tsolyanu- Mu'ugalavya run. The Engsvanyali built the stone seawall, and it has been rebuilt and expanded by Emperor Hejjeka IV "Restorer of Dignities." The politics of Lnoris are relatively simple: worship Lady Avanthé, belong to one of the high Vrayani clans (Joyous of Vra is the best!), serve the local shipping interests, grow nice fruits and vegetables in your estate's gardens, hold lots of delicate parties and fetes to entertain your peers, and enjoy! The warm southern sunlight will lull you into sleepy lethargy, and you'll die a rich man with lots of kiddies by pretty Vrayani clan girls whom you can hardly remember. . . Thus, the Tsolyani author says, is the fate of those who dwell on Vra, the "Island of Softnesses."

*>Who are the notables of Lnoris? (Governor, senior clergy, military figures, clan elders, etc. )*

Sorry -- no time to fill out the roster. Chris, you have the character files; if you're in a jolly mood, you may be able to sort out some Vrayani and e-mail these on. ???

[Moderator's Note: I'll see what I can do. ]

*>What does the title Duke of Lnoris actually mean? (lands, political influence, social standing, etc. )*

As said, the title of "Duke" is a poor translation of an ancient Engsvanyali title that really means something like "Loyal Friend of the Throne." Your man is obviously an important clansman, and he will have the say over clan lands, agriculture, fishing, etc. , together with the council of his peers in the clan. He'll be a player in local politics and will carry some weight in the councils of the City of Vra itself.

*>What of the local economy? Is it similar to Thayuri or more prosperous?*

Mentioned briefly above. Vra is quite prosperous, rich and sunny, with lots of fine fruits, flowers, wines, and sweet, perfumed Dmi-sugar candies that are exported up to Jakalla and beyond. There is about as much agriculture on Vra as on Thayuri, but the latter's main products are sea-fish, shellfish, mother-of-pearl (a similar substance not identical with old Earth's), wines, etc.

*>What cultural differences can one expect in Vra?*

Hard to say but definitely there. The Vrayani are traditionally more fun-loving, more given to jokes and humour -- or at least an occasional smile -- than the serious and status-conscious Tsolyani, much less the dour residents of Khirgar and Yan Kor. There is always a party, usually informal, without all of the structured and stratified entertainments and feasting found in the Empire itself. The Arena in the City of Vra is often filled with clowns and pretty girls, and athletic events, rather than with grim and bloody gladiators. The Vrayani value singing, playing the Sra'ur (rather like a lute), folk dancing (which the mighty of Tsolyanu would not be caught dead doing), art, and erotic poetry. The Engsvanyali poet Yetil is much admired, and his sensuous verses have been

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translated into Tsolyani and also into the Vrayani dialect of Tsolyani, as well as other tongues. There is a thriving book-copying and selling business in Lnoris, as well as in the City of Vra.

Along with more jollity, the Vrayani are also given to hotter tempers and more violence, especially over women (and their women fight just as often over men!), gambling, and the custom of daring each other to perform feats of athletic prowess -- and quarrelling over it. Be a little careful when addressing a Vrayani, male or female, especially one who wears the slim Vrayani dagger in a sheath at his or her hip. What is the feeling in the air about possible succession from Tsolyanu? Any rebellion in sight?

There is a battle going on right now for Avanthar. Prince Taksuru and Prince Mirusiya have combined forces. This news will not reach Vra for another month or two. Dchich'une's soldiers are polite, circumspect, and remain almost invisible, so as not to annoy the turbulent Vrayani.

*>Could you give some words of advice for the good Duke as to how he should fit in and gain influence in his new home?*

Let him be generous and full of mirth, as Yetil says (in Engsvanyali verse). Thus is the gateway to the heart of Vra opened. Let him hear all who come to him, reflect wisely, judge carefully -- and then pass it all off with a joke. . .

*>Records show that lord Tetkoru is descended from the poet and scholar Ndiu vuChrayu, what other history does this lineage have?*

I have no current information. Have to look it up.

*>What are the origins of 'Joyous of Vra'? Were they once the nobility of the island, any bits of history?*

I'm running short of and must seal this letter. Perhaps I can return to it later. Happy to chat again later when you have a shorter list of queries!

*>Have other (disposed) lineages/clans held this position before, will this cause problems?*

Of course. There are several lineages and other clans who will be jealous.

**[Moderator's Note: Paul Snow has a few more questions about Vra. The Professor sends these answers.]**

The Professor also sent his Database of information on Vra. I will put it on the ftp site by the weekend.]

Here's a brief reply to the Vra questions:

*>What roughly is the geography of Vra? By a rough calculation I estimate it to about the size of Ireland. Given this I would guess that it must have rivers or streams flowing from the inland to the coast. The Vrayani heartland must really be very removed from the cosmopolitan life in the>ports on the coast.*

Since "Ireland" is a mythical place, and only Tekumel is real, I have no idea of their comparative sizes. . . Vra is about 400 Tsa NS and 300 EW. The northern shore is high and precipitous, sloping down somewhat to the east, where it becomes a region of pretty, forested, fields and copses on the shores of the Strait of Hanar (whoever HE was) across which lies Thayuri Isle. The northern portion of the island is sparsely populated, rocky, and comparatively mountainous. There are vineyards, Hma and Hmelu pasturage, orchards, and berry fields there. The central "saddle" between Lnoris and the City of Vra is lower, more populous, planted in grain (mostly Dna), vegetables, and big Mash-fruit trees. Workshops and shipyards fill the coves on the eastern shore, and Vra itself sits in a charming harbour, with white houses with brown and red tiled roofs, occasional temple pyramids, palaces, and parks where the lithe, golden-skinned Vrayani children play. This region is called "Avanth's Table" because of its richness and beauty. The great clan houses (those mentioned in a previous dispatch to the Blue Room and also some other, minor ones) are built like walled fortresses upon the hills behind the City of Vra. A single broad thoroughfare leads from Vra to Lnoris. This is not a

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Sakbe Road, of course, but it is a very good secondary road. Other, smaller roads lead northward and southward to other villages and towns. The southern part of Vra contains a central mountain peak, the "Old Woman Watcher. " Small fishing villages, fruit orchards, and tiny grain-fields occupy the coves and inlets along these shores.

*>Looking at the map does this put the City of Vra in a sheltered bay where a river meets the sea? Where is the high land in the middle of Vra that the water flows down from?*

The one major river is the Hlanel (stress on the "nel"). It flows down from the northern mountains, takes a sharp eastern turn, and debouches into the Bay of Vra through the City of Vra. There are three bridges across this little river: the westernmost is the Span of the Judge, then the Bridge of Hejjeka IV "The Restorer of Dignities, " and the easternmost (a longish pontoon bridge) is called the Bridge of Mighty Ships (for reasons nobody knows).

*>I suspect that the northwestern coast is higher land with cliffs falling dramatically to the sea. Is this right? This is why Lnoris is the last good port on the run across to Penom on the way to the West?*

You have it exactly right. The northern cliffs are not as high and steep as those of Dover, but they do make for glorious scenery. Lnoris has easy access across the "saddle" to the City of Vra, and timber for ships, tar, cordage, etc. are shipped to it from Thayuri Isle and other places, including Salarvyani goods brought in to Vra and less commonly, Mu'ugalavyani products sent the other way to Salarvya. There is no large, safe harbour on the long point that faces Tleku across the Strait of Hanar, but little fishing boats and a few passenger craft do ply those waters.

Enjoy Vra! It's a lovely place. A little tense with ancient clan rivalries and now political differences, but still one of the nicer locales of the Empire. I've always had a soft spot for old Vra; there's nothing like sailing in to Vra Harbour just after sunset, with the coloured paper lanterns of the wealthy twinkling in the colonnades of the white clan-palaces rising up like cliffs behind the docks. The smells of spices, incense, cooking, and fresh fruit heaped on the quays give Vra its own sweet, exotic atmosphere. The tinkling bells and heady rhythms of the drums of the Temple of Dlamelish, which stands right beside the Bridge of Mighty Ships call the visitor to stay and drowse awhile.

**[Moderator's Note: Paul Snow provides some interesting data on horizon distances and viewing. ]**

As you will probably have realised I am preparing to run a campaign set on Vra. In preparation for this I have been thinking about ships, trading routes and navigation. This lead me on to considering how far you can see on Tekumel.

A quickish calculation shows me that the distance to the horizon for aviewer at height, h, on a world of diameter D is given by,

Horizon,  $H = \sqrt{h D} = \sqrt{h} * \sqrt{D}$  and  $\sqrt{D}$  you can just calculate once for the world.

This gives the distance to the furthest point on the surface of a sphere you can see from height h above it assuming that visibility is perfect. Clearly as D increases and the surface of the world tends towards being a flat plane the distance to the horizon increases.

Now the Earth's diameter is roughly 12, 752km, Tekumel's is 20, 838km. This means that the distance to the horizon is ~28% greater on Tekumel than on Earth.

Plugging some numbers into the equation, For a human [eyes ~ 2m from ground]  $H = 6455m$  [~4. 8 Tsan]

For someone on a cliff top [ say 66m above sea level]  $H = 37085m$  [~27. 75Tsan]

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This can be quickly used to give the useful field of view of a watchtower or lighthouse. Remember for two ships spotting each other at sea, lookouts in crow's nests see each other as just as they both become visible over the horizon that is a point half way between them limiting their sight.

For spotting land from the sea, the horizon calculated for the top of a mountain tells you how far to sea that mountain can be seen. This will happen before the coast comes into view assuming that visibility is good. Explorers on Earth could see mountains in Africa like this before anyone {European} had actually reached them. Hope you find this interesting folks,

Notebook of Nikun hi Sayodla ==

### Section 5. 3. 4b Geography of Vra : Old Women Watcher

In compiling my report on Vra I have come across the following questions and answers. They were in a document acquired from the Temple of Ketengku many years ago that I found secreted in a cubbyhole in our library. So best keep quiet about it!

How Tall is Old Women Watcher? Wise Bashan, Scholar of the Temple of Thumis in the City of Vra, tells us that the Old Women Watcher rises 2790 dhaiba above the level of the sea. That is 30 dhaiba for every aspect of Lady Avanthé that separates the peak of Old Women Watcher from the body of our Lady Avanthé, Mistress of the Sea. [Seems an oddly convenient number to me! NhS]

How tall is this? Old Women Watcher is tall enough so that ships setting out on the trip from the western trip of Burru Isle towards the Isle of Vra know that they are halfway to the Isle when on a clear day they see the mountain in the distance. Old women watcher is tall enough that she can just be seen in the distance from the high ground on the north of the island. Thus it is true that Old Women Watcher keeps a good eye on all of Vra and much of the surrounding sea.

Nikun hiSayodla

[ PS. 2790 dhaiba is 3720m. In comparison - Mt Etna is 3323m and Mauna Kea is 4205m. Two mountains on islands that I thought to look up.

What is the Tsolyani or Vrayani for Old Women Watcher?

> *What is the Tsolyani or Vrayani for Old Women Watcher?*

*Thu'inin Senyatorakh* would be the literal translation: old (adj. ) +watch-person-feminine-nonhonorific. Senyara is "to watch over something. The stress (accent) is on the first "i" in Thu'inin, and on the first "a" in Senyatorakh. In colloquial Vrayani, however, most people say *Thunsenya*, and add the -kh suffix for feminine or ignoble when trying to mind their grammar: *Thunsenyakh*. The stress is on the "e. "



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## Local Legions

*Copied from Deeds of the Ever Glorious – All rights acknowledged*

### The Battalions of Sryma of Vra; 39th Imperial Medium Infantry

This is a new unit formed by a lord of the island of Vra: Sryma hiHoqqulen, of the ancient and noble Clan of the High Pinnacle. This Legion is devoted to the clan and to the worship of Lord Chegarra, the Hero-King, Cohort of mighty Karakan.

The High Pinnacle Clan was the enemy of the Tlakotani Dynasty for many centuries. The First Emperor is recorded as having “driven back the “People of the Peak,” and these took refuge in the sea, on the island of Vra. It was death for Tsolyani merchants and fisher folk to land upon the island, and in the poem “The Final Song of Cha-Nume” by Aresmu hiAmiyala (976 A. S. ), the island is described as “the First of the Isles of the Excellent Dead.”

The Tsolyani attempted the conquest of the island several times, but it was not until 1115 A.S that they were successful. The nobility of the island was exterminated to a man, their women and children were sold into slavery, and the streets of the little city of Vra were paved with the flayed skins of those who had dared to oppose the might of the Imperium.

The High Pinnacle Clan was assumed to be extinct, and the Tsolyani imposed their own laws and customs upon the islanders. When Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities” came to the throne in 1458 A. S. , however, his first act was to proclaim an end to certain ancient hostilities, the restoration of fiefs to some of the disaffected noble families in the Empire, and a general amnesty to all “who had been foes of the glory of Tsolyanu. ” At this time a commoner stepped out of the crowd at the coronation festivities at Bey Su and requested audience with the governor. It was then learned that this man was the direct, lineal descendant of the last of the God-Kings of Vra - he possessed the lost Sapphire Seal of the Vrayani dynasty, and he told a story of escaping the island by small boat just as the Tsolyani troops stormed into the palace many years before. The Emperor was constrained to grant a pardon to this man and his descendants, then living as potters in Jakalla, and they were restored to their island as fief holders under Imperial law. This was perhaps the wisest thing the Imperium could have done; the Vrayani received their ancient rulers’ descendants with the wildest jubilation and proclaimed their loyalty to him and his successors forever. He, however, had lived all his life in Tsolyanu (as had his ancestors by then for some three hundred years), and he continued to serve the Tlakotani Dynasty loyally and almost fanatically until he died in 1501 A. S. His descendants have been faithful ever since.

The Emperor has thus been agreeable to the founding of a new Vrayani Legion and has encouraged the development of a truly Vrayani local autonomy and culture. Lord Sryma is a good soldier, another of those who had served under General Kettukal and learned his lessons well. He has gathered some eleven Cohorts thus far and promises more. He is a good friend of the Governor of Vra, Lord Hu’un hiChle, and there are plans for him to marry the governor’s sister, thus once again bringing a member of the High Pinnacle Clan into the Palace of the God-Kings of Vra.

### The Legion of the Joyful Clan of the Noble Vrayani; 3rd Imperial Slingers

The people of the southern islands have always been renowned as great slingers. There are epic poems dating to the age of the Fishermen Kings that relate the adventures of one Khu’es vuNaoma, whose sling-stone struck out the fourth eye of the Demon Kurritlakal and thus saved mankind. The First Imperium seems to have established these troops as regular light infantry, and the Engsvanyali records state that once the troops of the island of Vra were garlanded with wreaths of gold and given sacks of “sling-stones of diamond and rubies and all precious gems” as a reward for their slaying of the Hlyss and the evil Hlutrgu.

The fall of the Engsvanyali Imperium gave the island its opportunity for independence. When the “People of the Peak” refused to join the first Tlakotani emperor and fled to the island, the Vrayani gave them refuge and joined with them against the mainlanders. Thereafter, for over a thousand years the Vrayani held off the Hlyss, the Hlutrgu, the Tsolyani, and all of the pirates of the southern seas.

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The date of the founding of the Legion is not known, but within a hundred years of the founding of the Tsolyani Imperium these slingers are recorded as “serving beside the throne of the God-King of Vra.” There are many legends and epic poems about the men of this ancient and noble unit; e. g. the Song of Tneyu vuWasuma, praising his daring raid upon the homeland of the Hlyss and the treasures which he seized there. These objects were kept in the Eyrie of the Seven Councillors in the citadel of Vra until captured by the Tsolyani in 1115 A. S.

When at last Vra fell to the Tsolyani, the Legion was destroyed. Most of the Vrayani nobility was slain, a few were able to flee in small boats, and only a few captives were taken alive to be sacrificed later to the war-gods by Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks”. The last defenders of the citadel were “strangled with their own slings, their bodies were defiled, and their families were carried over the sea to slavery for the greater Glory of the Imperium.” Many Vrayani women and children dragged out miserable lives in the mines to the north of Avanthar, although one or two met still less pleasant fates: the story of Princess Eddyana “the Singer of the Golden Cage” is famous, though irrelevant here.

Thus things remained until the reign of Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities,” who restored the Legion of the Clan of the High Pinnacle (as described above) and who also commanded the return of the treasures of Tneyu vuWasuma to the rebuilt citadel of Vra, where they may still be seen today. The Imperium was combed for descendants of the original nobility of Vra, and some were found still living in the mountains north of the Empire, no longer slaves but mostly simple mountaineers and peasants. The coming of the gorgeously dressed Imperial officials to these mean villages is recounted in the “Hymn to the Light Above” by Ndiu vuChrayu (composed in 1550 A. S. ). To their great surprise, the villagers were not massacred or enslaved but were instead robed in the strange costumes of the people of Vra, given great sums of money, and were returned in magnificent splendour to the island of their long-forgotten ancestors. There they had to learn all over again the skills of a sea people, and there were those who quietly left and returned to their new homeland in the north. The majority, however, adapted and survived.

In 1582 A S Hejjeka V “the Open-Handed” freely granted nobility in the Empire to all of those who were descended from the ancient Vrayani aristocracy, and he supplied money and equipment also for the founding of a new Legion of slingers. This Legion quickly saw action in the Time of the Usurpers, and their support of Vriggetsu Dnash, “the Usurper of the South” put them under a temporary cloud with the succeeding Emperor, Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender.” Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” similarly disliked the followers of the Lords of Stability and ordered the Legion to disband, but before his command had been acted upon, his death occurred, and the accession of Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” saw the cancellation of the order and the restoration of the Legion to Imperial favour.

The Legion took part in the retaking of Pan Chaka and some other minor engagements of this period, and when the Great War of 2020 occurred, it was posted first to Jakalla and later to relieve Katalal. Units of this Legion were present at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020 A. S. , and at the second battle of Tumissa it was awarded battle honours and a special standard for its rout of the Mu’ugalavyani left flank. In modern times it was with General Kettukal at the Battle of Butrus and also with the Tsolyani Legions during the first great incursion into Yan Kor. Most of the present twenty Cohorts of the Legion are now at Chene Ho, preparing an offensive there against the Yan Koryani invaders. The present general, Lord Miruene vuChrayu, is a seasoned soldier, a good strategist who is often called upon to give council at the military staff meetings of General Kettukal, and a staunch supporter of the Imperium. He himself worships lord Hnalla, Master of Light, as do most of his troops, but he is not averse to cooperation with Prince Eselne and the Military Party. His tough, wiry little slingers are his pride, and he would like nothing better than to see his sling-stones clattering from the walls of Ke’er once again.

### The Flotilla of Hagarr of Paranta; 1st Imperial Marines

The Imperium maintains a rather small navy. An invasion along the southern coast would be fraught with difficulties for any daring enough to attempt it, and no great threat is perceived from this quarter. About five hundred ships of various sizes are based at Penom and Jakalla, and perhaps another two or three hundred are kept at Vra, Tleku on Thayuri Isle, and at Petris Layoda on the island of Ganga. Each of these vessels is allotted a crew of sailors who fight at best as light infantry, plus a complement of marines, who are armoured approximately in the fashion of medium land troops. The duties of these latter include fighting from ship to

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ship, occasionally landing to destroy pirate nests, and defending the southern shores against smugglers and others who would evade Imperial scrutiny.

In the Time of Chaos after the downfall of the Engsvanyali Imperium there are legends of a mighty warrior, one Hagarr of Paranta (the exact place is now not known but is supposed to be Pry Teketl Head to the southeast of the city of Penom). Hagarr is said to have fought against the Hlyss, the Hlutrgu, various pirates, innumerable sea monsters and other such-like, and finally “sailed his great ship into the Islands of the Sky, where the Lords of Many Lights there did him homage.” Still another legend has him perishing in the wastes of the now-dry Bay of Ssu’um, where travelers report seeing his metal-hulled vessel protruding from the sand-dunes from time to time.

There is no record of any unit of Imperial marines separate from land-based Legions until modern times, however. Earlier Emperors seem to have used Cohorts of other Legions occasionally to fight at sea, placing these troops under the command of one or another admiral of the fleet. The Red Sky Clan, of the city of Penom continued to claim direct descent from the original Hagarr, and various members of this clan are recorded as serving the Imperium in important capacities, but the clan had no particular military connections until the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night.” During this period the Red Sky Clan, which largely consists of worshippers of Karakan and his Cohort, Chegarra, joined in the defense of Penom against the incursions of pirates and the nonhuman Hlyss. A leader of this clan is described as collecting a force of sailors and other troops and setting sail for Ssam-ris Isle in the western reaches of the Great Gulf. There he defeated the Mu’ugalavyani settlers and claimed the island in the name of Tsolyanu. His descendants continued to dwell there until the Great War of 2020, when the Mu’ugalavyani landed on the island in force and took it back. Some members of the Red Sky Clan still live on the island and still speak of their “cousins” in Tsolyanu, although they are now completely adapted to Mu’ugalavyani customs and language.

In 2251 A. S. Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid” commanded that certain Legions be raised to serve largely aboard ships as a counter to the southern pirates and the deadly Hlyss. One of these was to be based at Penom, and it was the Red Sky Clan which offered to recruit troops and pay for the arms and armour of the unit. The ships, of course, were to be supplied by the Imperium. This led to a major scandal in 2305 A. S. , when it was discovered that the clan was using its men and the ships to trade along the coast as far as Livyanu and Tsatsayagga in Salarvya. Not only were the coasts being guarded, said the clan-leaders in reply, but we are also enriching the Empire through our commerce. The practice was ordered stopped forthwith, however, and seven or eight renegade captains were seized and impaled, along with all their crews. Since then the ships of the Imperial navy are always officered by men who have no connection with the Clan of the Red Sky.

Aside from raids and local duty, the Legion has seen no major military action. It is now commanded by a namesake of the ancient Hagarr, a man of the lineage of hiChunmiyel, who is himself an excellent sailor and who owns a fleet of merchant ships apart from his military commission. He is rather old for active command, however, and hopes to hand the Legion on to his son, Miridame hiChunmiyel.

### The Squadrons of Tlaneno the Steersman; 3rd Imperial Marines

This is another of the special Legions of marines raised by the Emperor Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid” in 2251 A. S. Throughout its existence it has been closely connected with the wealthy Golden Sunburst Clan (which traces its ancestry back to the aristocracy of the Bednalljan Dynasty), and also with the Temples of Karakan and Chegarra in Jakalla. Approximately half of the men of this Legion are native to the coasts around Jakalla, while the other half are recruited from the island of Vra, Thayuri, and Ganga.

The Legion has seen the usual number of raids, pirates, and smugglers, and it has also defeated a Hlyss incursion off Ngeshtu Head in 2349 A. S. Other than this, however, it has had no real military experience. It was drawn up for battle during the brief war scare which followed the Battle of Ru in 2347 A. S. and was set for a sea invasion of the city of Heru in Salarvya, but this was never attempted. This Legion is now entrusted with the control of river traffic all the way from Jakalla up to Avanthar in the far north and along the Rananga River to the east, and it is thus considered more of a police force than a real military entity.

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This is, however, not to the taste of the Legion's present commander. General Tlaneno hiVorodlaya is a prominent member of the Golden Sunburst Clan, a worshipper of Karakan, and a close personal friend of Prince Eselne. General Tlaneno is thus a supporter of the Military Party and one of the most powerful officers in the Empire. His talents exceed those needed for a mere officer of river police, and Prince Eselne consults him about matters of larger strategy, tactics, and other affairs. He has been offered a major post in the Prince's entourage, but this he has refused, preferring instead to remain in command of his ancient and traditional Legion - at least until an opening which suits his political and military abilities appears. It is said that if there is to be a war with Yan Kor, that General Tlaneno may well be given command of an entire army group over the heads of many lesser generals. He may thus find himself playing a much larger role in such a conflict than his clan had originally hoped, although he does not really like serving on land and hates the hot, dry climate of the deserts around Khirgar. He has one driving desire: ever since the discovery of an ancient manuscript in the Tsaqw tongue of Old Yan Kor which describes the "sailings of Dumielu the Wave-Cleaver, " General Tlaneno has dreamed of traveling around Salarvya to the southeast, up along the unknown coasts of Rannalu, and around into the Pentrurtra Deeps to take Yan Kor by surprise from the north! According to this ancient book, there is a passage there large enough for "many navies, " and if enough ships could be found to make the perilous voyage, Yan Kor could be invaded and devastated before its forces could be brought to bear upon the invaders. Such a plan must remain a dream, of course, since no Emperor would be willing to risk enough ships and men to attempt it, and the perils of the sea itself are not to be ignored, much less the dangers of unknown peoples and coasts in the unknown regions north of the eastern- most coasts of Salarvya!

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