

[Sources: *Alien Module 1 (AM01)*; *MegaTraveller Referee's Companion (MTRC)*; *Traveller5 core rulebook (T5)*. *Galaxiad data is in square braces and grey italicized text, as if it were a box text.*]

Aslan Background Data

KUSYU-THE ASLAN HOMEWORLD

The Aslan homeworld is Kusyu/Kilrai' (I'aheako 0309 A8769H6-E) in what the Imperials call the Dark Nebula sector. Humans often spell Kusyu as Kuzu in Anglic; Kilrai' is often spelled Kilane

Stellar Data: Kusyu orbits a close binary consisting of Tyeyo and its companion Saietaie. Saietaie orbits Tyeyo at 42 million kilometers with a period of about one eakhau.

Tyeyo is a G4 V star somewhat dimmer than, and fractionally smaller than, Sol Luminosity is 0.77. Effective temperature is 5600 degrees K Radius is 0.93 of Sol Mass IS 0.96 of Sol.

Saietaie is a DA dwarf star barely visible against the face of Tyeyo, but becomes noticeable when its orbit swings it up to two stellar diameters to either side of its companion. Luminosity is 0.0003. Effective temperature is 14,000 degrees K. Radius is 0.01 of Sol. Mass is 0.36 of Sol.

World Orbital Data: Kusyu orbits Tyeyo at 1 au with a period of 320 standard days. It rotates on its axis once every 36 standard hours (one eakhau).

Aslan Calendar: The Aslan calendar is based on the revolution of Kusyu around Tyeyo, its star. The Aslan year (ftahea) is 320.2 standard days, or about 212.2 eakhau long. The same calendar is used on most Hierate worlds.

The Aslan calendar takes as its starting point the first selection of the Tlaukhu as supreme council on Kusyu about 3,200 years ago (-2083 Imperial). The Aslan year 3644 corresponds to Imperial year 1111.

World Physical Data: Kusyu is 12,980 kilometers in diameter, and has a standard atmosphere tainted with industrial pollutants. Sixty percent of the world is covered with water oceans. Kusyu has two major continents, both in the same hemisphere, and both straddling the equator. Several large archipelagoes lie off the continents' shores. North and south polar icecaps, anchored by island groups, cover about 15 percent of the total world surface

Kusyu has minimal axial tilt and orbital eccentricity. Average temperature for the world is about 9 degrees C.

Kusyu has two natural satellites, each about 400

kilometers in diameter, orbiting at 51,000 kilometers and 96,000 kilometers respectively. Several artificial satellites, including two LaGrange stations, are also present

World Social Data: Kusyu has a population of 4.6 billion, which includes the population of the artificial satellites and of several undersea colonies There are less than 600,000 non- Aslan on Kusyu

Humans classify the government of Kusyu as civil service bureaucracy, but Aslan classify the nature of the government as split control, similar in nature to a "balkanized" government for humans. All of the 29 Tlaukhu clans (and about 300 others) have *landholds* on Kusyu. Weapons restrictions are about equivalent to human law level 4 (military weapons prohibited). Technological level is E, and is about the maximum to be encountered in the Hierate.

The Hierate: *The Hierate is that region of space controlled by the Aslan race. Due to the nature of Aslan government, it is a rather loose confederation of worlds with little central direction. The binding force of the Hierate is less that of government or nationalism, and more that of common heritage, culture, and tradition. The Hierate includes more than 4,000 clans spread across about 7,000 worlds in 17 sectors. The Solomani Confederation borders on the Hierate, and has a long history of rivalry and enmity with Aslan worlds on the Hierate frontiers. The Third Imperium is also a neighbor of the Aslan Hierate, and also contains a significant (more than 3%) Aslan population.*

Although the Hierate has no central authority, it is a single interstellar community. Outside the Hierate exist several other Aslan communities, including several large clusters of colonies in the Trojan Reach and Beyond sectors, and some to rimward of the Hierate. These colonies are separate from the Hierate, isolated primarily by distance. The Aslan of these communities are far closer, however, to the Aslan social norm than most Aslan living under the Imperium or in the Solomani Confederacy.

In human terms, all Aslan worlds have a feudal form of government. Thus, one of several normal governmental codes might be assigned by humans to various Aslan planets (0, 3, 5, 6, 7,8, 9, A, B, and C are all applicable), and these codes might be found in a human catalog of world types (Kusyu, the

Aslan homeworld, is often assigned a government type 8 in this fashion).

ASLAN PHYSIOLOGY

Aslan are descended from four-limbed, carnivorous pouncers originally near the top of the food chain in the forests of Kusyu. About 1.8 million years ago, Kusyu's climate shifted, with the result that the extensive forests of Afohti (Kusyu's largest continent) almost completely disappeared. As the forests dwindled, so did the small fauna upon which the Aslan had preyed, forcing them to venture out into the expanding grassland plains. The large grazing animals in these regions were too much for a lone Aslan to kill, and they began hunting in ahriy (prides) of several families. The strongest male became the leader, and his family received the best parts of kills, choice sleeping places, and first drink at any waterhole.

The Aslan which has evolved from those beginnings is, like humankind, an upright biped averaging two meters in height and 100 kilograms in weight. There are two sexes: male and female, of which the most notable external difference is the male's increased size and more impressive mane. Females outnumber males by a ratio of 3:1.

The Aslan hand has three fingers opposing one medially placed thumb, and all have retractable claws. In addition, Aslan have a single, highly specialized claw under each thumb; this dewclaw folds back jackknife fashion into a horny covering in the base of the thumb and palm. The presence of these claws and the general nature of their body structure make the Aslan somewhat clumsy by comparison with humans, but what they lack in dexterity they make up for in strength and endurance.

True to their pouncer ancestry, Aslan are capable of short bursts of speed somewhat greater than that manageable by humans and slightly superior hearing and night vision.

ASLAN HISTORY

From their earliest days as hunters on Kusyu's grassland plains, the Aslan have had a curious dichotomy in their social organization. Females were traditionally responsible for provisions and improvement of life, while males existed largely for defense and war. The early hunts were conducted by females, and females are generally credited as the innovators in the areas of tool-making, animal husbandry, and eventually agriculture (developed to support herds of livestock, not for direct consumption). Males adopted female innovations reluctantly, but it was the female of the species who

strived always to improve the Aslan way of life.

The Aslan eventually hunted to virtual extinction most of the large carnivores which threatened them on Tafahti. At this point, fire, metalworking, agriculture, and many other developments had brought the Aslan to the verge of civilization, and the security they now enjoy permitted development of a number of civilized communities on Tafahti.

The territorial instincts of the Aslan male made the general trend of Aslan social development a feudal one. Families formed into prides, and prides formed into clans under the leadership of a dominant pride. Clans practiced a variety of semi-feudal procedures of fiefdom and vassalage which led to the development of a few very powerful clans, but this was generally the limit of social organization in most Aslan civilizations. Although tradition and ritual gradually evolved to curb the aggressive male character, wars were common as clans sought greater power or greater territory, and as population pressure increased on Kusyu, wars grew both more common and more intense. Kusyu barely escaped a global conflict of devastating proportions, saved by two developments which took place at about the same time. First, the Aslan instituted their Hierate, an agreement on the part of the 29 preeminent clans to meet and discuss their differences on a regular basis, replacing the previous procedures which dealt with each problem on a case-by-case emergency basis. This eased most rivalries and pressures, and under the new Hierate system there grew up an increasing formality in warfare (the concept of highly limited wars with outside referees was introduced at this time).

The quasi-government was clumsy at best, and probably would not have withstood the test of time if not for the second great innovation – the invention of jump drive. About 96 Aslan (-1999 Imperial), barely a century after the Tlaukhu came into being (the exact date and circumstances of the discovery remain shrouded in mystery), the two most powerful clans (the Yerlyaruiwo and the Khaukheairl) cooperated to an unprecedented degree to produce a star drive. It opened the stars to the Aslan race.

Star travel was the ideal way to satisfy the territorial drives of the race. At first expansion was slow, limited by the gradual development of jump technology. But every new planet discovered opened new territories for colonization. The era of 96 to 2100 Aslan (approximately -1999 to -242 Imperial) was an era of expansion and cultural flowering not unlike Earth's Ages of Discovery (A.D. 1450 to 1600, and A.D. 2100 to 2300).

Luckily, the Aslan had come on the scene during the

Long Night (342 to 2323 Aslan, -1776 to -30 Imperial) in human space: the era between the Second and Third Imperiums in which humaniti was splintered into many rival states. As a result, the Aslan never confronted any human state at a time when it was significantly stronger than an Aslan clan. This was important, for the clans of the Hierate were never (and are not now) capable of acting in concert as a human empire could; clans each conduct wars on their own, sometimes with assistance of others, sometimes without, but never with a sense of central purpose or unity. Some human worlds accepted Aslan domination as a superior alternative to the chaos of the Long Night, and now remain within the Hierate with human or mixed human and Aslan population embracing Aslan culture and society. Other worlds resisted, and sporadic warfare characterized the Aslan Border Wars (1100 to 2810 Aslan; -1120 to -380 Imperial), which lasted until the Third Imperium appeared on the scene. The Peace of Ftahair (2810 Aslan) established much of Aeitle Sakh (Reaver's Deep) sector as a buffer zone between Aslan and Imperial spheres of influence; the population in the buffer zone was left independent of both interstellar communities.

ASLAN PSYCHOLOGY

Aslan are shaped by their physical and social surroundings. Aslan psychology is dominated by two concerns: gender and land.

Gender

The sexes have very different roles in Aslan society. Males (in all but the lowest classes) are concerned mostly with military operations, acquisition of territory, and political affairs. Females, on the other hand, are concerned more with industry, trade and commerce, and with the accumulation of wealth and knowledge. Females always own and control corporations.

Upper-class males have little concept of money, and are incapable of functioning in a technological society without aid. They are seldom encountered away from the supervision of a sister, wife, mother, or some other female relative or employer. For instance, a typical Aslan mercenary unit will be organized by a wealthy *married* female, who will then assign its operation, for a share of the profits, to an unmarried female relative. The battle commander and most of the troops will be unmarried males (many of them also relatives, hired with promises of land grants and the opportunity to gain honor, glory, and reputation in combat). These males are capable of operating most forms of high-tech equipment by rote as black boxes, but their expertise is limited to bravery, tactical skill, and button-pushing. Tasks

which require more than this must be entrusted to males of very low social level or to females. Females of high social level fill all staff, operations, supply, and intelligence positions, and handle the administration of the unit. This example holds true for most aspects of Aslan society.

Aslan tend to place great emphasis (generally unconsciously) on the gender of those they deal with, whether Aslan or alien. They also tend to make their evaluation of gender based on a cultural rather than a biological basis. As a result, an Aslan can see a human as having a perceived gender of male because she is a gunner, even though she is biologically female. An Aslan might also classify a human male navigator as female (because he considers navigation to be a female occupation). Such judgments have strange ramifications, because an Aslan will accept discourteous behavior from the opposite sex, while challenging to a duel a human believed to be of the same sex. Aslan will also refuse to hire individuals of a gender inappropriate to the job (qualified females will not be hired as pilots; qualified males will not be hired as brokers), yet if the human's gender is not directly pointed out, an Aslan will often assume correct gender based on skill qualifications.

Because the ratio of females to males in Aslan society is roughly 3:1, Aslan society tends towards polygamy (which tendency can be traced to Aslan prehistory, when populations were small and a male stood a greater chance of survival with more hunting females in his family). However, a high proportion of females remains unmarried, preferring to devote themselves to business, science, or other matters to the exclusion of marriage. Unmarried females remain part of their father's or brother's families, and in most corporations it is the females who pledge to remain unmarried who get the top positions (since marriage would transfer the wife — and the wife's holdings — to a new family, often outside the clan, to the detriment of the clan's interest in that company).

Land

A deep-seated territorial instinct causes male Aslan to have an inordinate (from the human point of view) concern for the acquisition and control of land. The ownership of land is a major goal in the lives of most Aslan males. An Aslan's stature is determined by the amount of land she (or her husband) controls, and the amount of land controlled by his family, pride, or clan. The lowest classes in Aslan society are landless, providing the farmers, laborers, craftsmen, and workers essential to the society.

The largest landholds are in the hands of the Tlaukhu, and consist of many worlds and parts of

worlds Since holding such an extensive territory is beyond the ability of one Aslan, an extensive network of vassals (usually sons, brothers, or male relatives by marriage) administer it in the clan head's name.

Landholds are passed on from father to son. Originally, sons fought for the right to inherit their father's landholdings, the losers became subordinate to the winner, or left to seek new landholds for themselves. On large landholds, the losers became vassals to the winner and administered part of the landhold as their own. Primogeniture (the automatic passing of landholds to the eldest son) is a recent cultural innovation, having come into favor about 2300 to 2400 Aslan. Sons who do not inherit are *ihatei* (literally, second sons). With the development of starflight, *ihatei* became the vanguard of Aslan exploration and conquest of space.

Landholds have always been difficult to come by. Early explorations on Kusyu opened up new territory and made more land available. Periodic warfare has redistributed landholds to the stronger males, and conquering clans redistributed land to particularly brave, resourceful, or deserving males. With the advent of starflight, vast new territories became available.

Landholds are frequently granted as rewards for military excellence or other superlative service to the clan. An individual clan will include prides and families of all social levels, the most important of these will be of high Social Standing (9+), with extensive landholds (usually all held in fief as vassals of the clan's leader); middle-class prides and families will have smaller landholds, while the lowest classes own no land at all, but live and work on land belonging to their lords.

ASLAN SOCIETY

The Aslan have long been a race of "noble warriors": devoted to those in authority above them and responsible for those who owe fealty from below. Aslan society is based on the family and its relationships.

Family Structures

An individual Aslan is usually a member of a family (*ekho*) of from two to 12 persons under a patriarchal leader. This family will generally include the male family head, one or more wives, plus children and various blood relatives of the leader (unmarried brothers and sisters, aged surviving parents no longer maintaining separate families, adopted orphans of blood relatives). Several families combine into a pride (*ahriy*), with one family dominant. The leader of that family is also the leader of the pride

Other families owe him and his family their fealty. A number of prides form a clan (*huiha*), with one pride dominant. Again, prides in the clan owe fealty to the clan's leader. The clan's leader is expected, in turn, to protect and provide for members of the clan, and administer his holdings wisely and well.

Clans may, in turn, owe fealty to more powerful clans, particularly where blood relationships exist. The *Tlaukhu* consists of the 29 preeminent Aslan clans, the strongest within the *Hierate*; many other clans owe them fealty, either directly or through a chain of other clans. Overall, however, clans owing fealty to one of the *Tlaukhu* are in the minority, most clans are independent and function accordingly.

Dueling

Aslan pride makes them a touchy race, and it is quite easy for Aslan to give or take offense. This behavior originated in the past struggles for dominance within families and prides, and remains a basic part of the Aslan personality. Over the centuries, Aslan touchiness has grown formal and ritualized; this rigid pattern of behavior has been necessary to reduce conflict and injury in the settlement of personal disputes. Non-Aslan who do not understand these ritual forms of conduct often find it difficult to get along with individual Aslan.

Aslan society categorizes abrasive, uncultured, or offensive behavior into three classes: familiarity, impoliteness, and discourtesy. Familiarity is the treatment of social superiors as equals; it involves social interaction, extreme friendliness, or condescending treatment by a lower-class Aslan toward an upper-class Aslan. Impoliteness stems from a lack of proper education or upbringing; it might include failure to address a social superior by the correct honorifics, failure to respond promptly when one is addressed, or losing one's temper in public. Discourtesy is a deliberate insult, and springs from contempt, a lack of respect, or malice; outward actions may often be perceived by Aslan as discourtesy although they are not meant to be so by someone alien to Aslan culture. Any of these three behaviors can give offense, and an offended Aslan becomes an enemy. Discourtesy, however, is also grounds for dueling.

Dueling is a common way by which insults and slights are resolved, especially if rituals and other tension-relieving forms fail to defuse the problem. Duels follow well-established rituals and are fought to the death only rarely. The rules of conduct and protocols which govern them clearly state what is allowed and not allowed.

A challenge to duel is never made lightly. At the

same time, reluctance to challenge is seen in Aslan culture as weakness, a trait few Aslan wish to exhibit. Properly, anyone may challenge at any time. Most challenges are issued in response to discourtesy; elaborate but informal rituals have evolved wherein one party is discourteous and actually gains stature if the other does not reply with a challenge. Much of this behavior seems incomprehensible to individuals not steeped in Aslan culture.

The rituals for dueling, however, are strictly segregated by gender. Males and females never duel; insults and slights by the opposite sex are dismissed with the excuse that males (or females) don't understand female (or male) honor. When a transgression becomes too blatant, too extreme, or too unacceptable, then a member of the insulted Aslan's immediate family (and of the correct sex) will respond to the discourtesy with a challenge.

The barriers against certain duels within a family are almost as strong as those for cross-gender dueling. Children never duel with their parents (which socially includes any adults in their family of the previous generation, not just their biological parents).

Duels between Aslan take place as personal combat. Combatants use only their hands (and dewclaws); combat continues until one side receives a wound. In the case of grave insult, the fight may continue to unconsciousness for one participant. The winner has his or her honor satisfied; the loser is required by social and ritual standards to apologize (even if he or she was the one originally insulted).

For non-Aslan, one way to gain an Aslan's respect is to be willing to challenge to duel when required, and to duel if challenged. Aslan consider those who do not embrace their culture to be tahiwihtakhtau (barbarians). Willingness to behave in the honorable fashion is one indication that one is not a completely ignorant barbarian. Since Aslan especially respect prowess in battle, upholding one's honor in a duel is especially respected.

Feuds

Disputes between families, or between prides, usually take place because of slights, insults, mistreatments, or problems which have not been resolved to both parties' satisfaction. The families may back different scientific theories; one family member may have won a competition which the other family had traditionally won; a family may have rejected a proposed marriage between it and the other family.

Feuds are an intermediate step between duels and wars. Strangely for Aslan society, they are

unstructured and lack rituals to control them. If kept at a low level, a feud is a pretext for discourteous behavior and sparks many duels. If allowed to get out of hand, it involves the vassal prides and families of each side and can erupt into war.

Wars and Disputes

[[NOTE: I've merged two very similar paragraphs together into this section. -rje]]

Disputes between clans are usually over ownership, control, or access to land. They are settled through formal clan wars. Like duels, they are highly ritualized, with specific rules, restrictions in locale, tech level of equipment, combatants, and other limitations. These rules are agreed upon by all parties in advance.

An earleatrais (referee) from a neutral clan is chosen to oversee the war. Such an appointment is an enormous honor for the receiving clan, and the referee acts with scrupulous objectivity; moreover, especially good referees produce not only fair decisions, but also salvage honor and pride for both sides of the conflict.

There are many types of clan wars, including ordinary military conflict, wars of assassins, and capture-the-flag games in which some token must be removed from an enemy stronghold in order for victory to be won.

Unlike duels, most clan wars do involve the death of enemy personnel. In some cases though (particularly wars of assassins), the war may be bloodless, akin to counting coup practices of certain peoples from early Earth history.

Aslan Government

Government in the human sense does not exist in Aslan space. There is no central authority for the Aslan as a race, and Aslan have little concept of racial unity, purpose, or pride. They do have a fierce pride in their culture; a human who adheres to the culture and traditions which Aslan consider proper is considered closer in spirit than an Aslan who has, for some reason, abandoned those traditions and that culture. Aslan have no racial prejudice, but do have cultural prejudice, with non-Aslan looked upon as tahiwihtakhtau (barbarians) unless they embrace Aslan culture and behave as the Aslan do.

The Aslan equivalent of government is best equated with social structure. The head of the family settles disputes between family members. The head of the pride or a delegated male member of his clan or a delegated vassal settles disputes between prides.

The Tlaukhu

At the top of the chain of family, pride, and clan heads stands the Tlaukhu. The term is used synonymously for the 29 clan heads who meet on Kusyu, and for the 29 clans which are the most powerful in the Hierate. When the Tlaukhu was originally established on Kusyu, it was an alliance of the largest and strongest of the Aslan clans. Since then, the criteria for the composition of the 29 have been strength and land; population, military strength, industrial power, and landholdings are together considered when evaluating relative rankings of clans. Of the original 29, 19 of the original clans remain in it today; the remaining 10 positions have been occupied (some by a succession of clans) by new clans which have risen in strength, power and population to replace the others. Replacement of clans on the Tlaukhu occurs as the result of clan war, or when a clan falls in power and prestige to the point that it must become vassal to another clan.

Representatives of the Tlaukhu meet continuously on Kusyu to arbitrate disputes, settle matters of common interest, and otherwise interact with one another in the interests of their individual clans. It naturally follows that their decisions affect the other clans of the Hierate as well. A decision to cooperate in the development of a new technology affects other clans when the technology becomes available; a decision to settle a clan war affects other clans by creating or removing trade barriers. Regardless of the effects of the decisions of the Tlaukhu, it is in no way to be considered a ruling council. The Tlaukhu makes no laws, decides no issues affecting the Hierate as a whole, owns no collective bases, military forces, or other centralized institutions, and has no power over any clan (except for the power each individual clan in the 29 has over vassal clans). The closest analogy that might be found in human history is the League of Nations, a body with no real authority in which important issues and disputes can be debated, but not necessarily resolved, save by the agreement of all concerned.

Each clan is an independent entity (but may also be vassal to another clan). It controls space within each system in which a world is owned; when control of a world is split among several clans, there is a balance of power in the system as well. Each clan in such a case might maintain its own base, its own colonies, its own space station, its own outposts. Each would enforce such regulations regarding Interplanetary flight as it saw fit, with local law level serving as a good guide to its stringency of enforcement.

Representatives of other clans (powerful allies, vassals, or overlords) exert some influence on any

given world, as do large corporations. These agents or envoys are most often found at the local starport, watching out for the interests of the clan or corporation.

Starports and Trade

Starports are for the most part extraterritorial enclaves which are not owned by any clan. The facilities are built, operated, and maintained by corporations which lease the land from a local clan. If a clan base is present, this will be located at the starport, but is under the control of the owning clan. Representatives of clans and companies can be found at the starport and other major transport and trade terminals, from whom such permission must be sought.

Piracy and Privateers

In space, Aslan systems have a far lower risk of piracy and similar hazards than many systems in human space. Piracy as a profession is typically tainted with dishonor, and most Aslan would never pursue such a career. However, when a clan war escalates to open hostilities, then there is the potential for privateers: corporate-owned raiding ships licensed by a clan to raid the ships and commerce of the enemy clan. Such corporate activity is profit-oriented, and considered a legitimate enterprise.

Justice

Criminal acts are rare, but not completely unheard of in Aslan society. Crimes are different from the insults or slurs that provoke duels, and are classified into three categories: crimes of passion, crimes with victims, and crimes of honor. Crimes of passion involve misbehavior prompted by temper, anger, or provocation (assault other than dueling, intoxication, or rioting). Crimes with victims involve taking money or items of value (theft, stealing, burglary, fraud, forgery, extortion), violating the person of another for profit (kidnapping, terrorism, piracy). Crimes of honor involve failure to observe rituals established for behavior (ambush, failure to obey the earleatrais in a duel, abandoning responsibilities, lying in a clan council, perfidy).

Originally, all accusations of crime were judged by the head of the family, pride, or clan involved. Through time, other methods have evolved.

For crimes of passion, the accused is judged by the head of the family, pride, or clan involved. Who judges the accused is determined by elaborate protocols which consider the ramifications of the crime and the notoriety which it has received. Appeals may be made to the next higher head.

Punishments are minimal for first offenses, with escalating penalties for continued violations. Generally, a contrite apology is sufficient atonement for a first offense. A fine, or perhaps donated labor for the family involved, is called for in later offenses.

For crimes with victims, current practice is to find an impartial earleatrais to consider the case and present findings; appeals can be made to a panel composed of the heads of the families of the accused, the victim, and the earleatrais. Penalties call for restitution at the very least, and often doubled or tripled penalties as punishments. Clans vary in their treatment of cases where the victim is physically injured or killed, some inflict a similar fate on the guilty party, while others require restitution and punitive damages, or terms of forced labor. Judgments in cases involving money and males are often very lenient, taking into account the lack of understanding most males have of money.

For crimes of honor, judgment is made by the pride or clan head, depending on the severity of the crime. Crimes of honor are the most serious of crimes in Aslan society, and penalties range from banishment (at a minimum) through mutilation or branding to forfeiture of all property and death. In practice, most crimes of honor are never tried: A duel to the death disposes of the accused before a trial can take place.

LAW LEVEL

Law Level represents the touchiness of the local clan government. It continues to show the frequency with which authorities may be encountered, and should also be used as the basis for determining the initial reaction of any official encountered. Subtract the law level from 15; this number is the reaction result for most officials who might be encountered in the line of duty. Other reactions and the interaction of characters and NPCs proceed according to the encounter rules as modified later in this booklet.

BASES

There are two types of bases, those belonging to clans of the Tlaukhu, and those belonging to lesser clans. All are considered **naval bases**, but those of the Tlaukhu are larger and more well-equipped. All bases are maintained by individual clans.

THE MILITARY

Each clan maintains its own armed forces to defend and protect it, and many companies own mercenary forces which are hired out to clans — or to groups outside the Hierate — for profit. The necessity for such forces is demonstrated by the fact that clan warfare is constant in the Hierate; somewhere there

is always a clan war in progress. Although such wars are formal, and governed by elaborate rituals, they are no less deadly for the combatants.

External threats to the Aslan are infrequent (the last of the great Aslan Border Wars ended in 380 Imperial), and also are handled on the clan level.

One problem Aslan sometimes have is recognizing that non-Aslan are less likely to fight by the strict set of rules which govern Aslan-Aslan conflicts. Until realized, the Aslan often fight at a disadvantage. When they do recognize that the enemy is not abiding by the supposed rules, Aslan tend to over-react and begin all-out warfare.

Organization: Military organization for the Aslan military places males in leadership and fighting positions, and females provide administrative or technical support.

Unit commanders are male, assisted by a female executive. The commander leads the troops and determines tactics, while the executive oversees logistics and has a strong influence over operations through her creation of battle plans. Maintenance and supply units are staffed by lower-class males and females. Fighting units are staffed mostly by males, support units mostly by females, although there is some crossover. Males of low social level in combat units have some chance of social (and hence military) advancement, while those in non-combatant arms have virtually none.

Mercenaries: Mercenary units are typically organized as business ventures by a female (often as part of a corporation). The owner, or a female relation appointed to act as representative of the owner, negotiates tickets and generally sees to business. This individual accompanies the unit headquarters and is the ultimate source of decisions regarding the employment of the unit. In practice, however, she lets the (male) commander make the combat decisions, intervening only when the male's lack of a balanced viewpoint threatens the best business interests of the unit.

The profession of mercenary is an honorable one, since there are usually more landless males (lower-class and ihatei alike) than there are positions in a clan's military force. Mercenaries win land, honor, and glory through their actions, and females have run mercenary units as a source of wealth since long before the Aslan went into space.

Some mercenary units are composed of highly trained **assassins**; skilled less in mass warfare than in individual or small unit combat techniques. These units need fewer females, since logistics and similar operations are less a part of a **war** of **assassins**.

There is nothing dishonorable about such assassinations, as long as they are part of a prescribed clan war. Assassins and wars of assassins are far less frequent than more orthodox warfare and military forces.

ASLAN CORPORATIONS

Commerce and industry play a large part in Aslan society, as it does in any technological society. Corporations are the domain of female Aslan. Males might be employed by a corporation as crews of starships, mercenaries, or (for the lower classes only) workers, but the direction and management of corporate affairs rests entirely in female hands.

For this reason, corporations are not clan-owned, since the clan is a masculine quasi-political structure. Instead, customs have grown up to maintain corporate independence, but also allow clan ties to corporations, furnishing a continuity to the conduct of business. Small businesses pass from clan to clan through the marriage of the female business owner. Larger companies have safeguards built in to avoid direct ties to a clan.

Some companies may be owned by a female who has decided not to marry. Ultimately, control passes to another female who has made a similar pledge. An owner may always opt out of management if (or when) she decided to marry; a successor is always being groomed as a hedge against the possible marriage, death, or disability of the current owner.

In other cases, the ownership may indeed be clan-controlled, with the upper levels staffed by the unmarried females and wives of the clan. In such cases, marriage of an executive outside of the clan will result in an exchange of assets; in essence, she will sell her stock in her native clan's company to other executives of that company and buy stock in her new clan's company as a condition of her marriage. If a large potential monetary loss is involved, simultaneous cross-marriages or other methods of equalizing the value of the exchange may be arranged or required. Marriages of this type are frequently more complex than complicated corporate mergers within the Imperium.

A third type of corporation is the jointly-owned company, in which executives may be drawn from many different clans, and clan interest in and control over such corporations is proportional to the power of its females within the corporate hierarchy. The aim is to strike a balance, and this type of company strives to be beyond the possible control of any one clan.

Finally, a single female might amass enough wealth during her lifetime to elevate her to the circles of the

large corporations. She may adopt a conventional business organization, establish a unique organization, or simply allow the corporation to be broken up on her death.

LANGUAGE AND NAMING

All Aslan (with the exception of a few lost colonies) share the common language and culture. However, this culture is highly complex and custom-bound, and individual names and words can become rather unwieldy.

The clan head of an independent clan (vassal to no other clan) is known simply by the clan's name; where differentiation is necessary, the particle *ko* (himself) is added. For example, the head of clan Hlyueawi would be known as Hlyueawi or Hlyueawiko. At the opposite extreme, an Aslan lower in the social order (but still a noble) might be named HlyueawifiyAhroay'ifiyWahtoilAyeau-iwahfeaktelihalikhtyeiteyahahtateisiyu, roughly meaning, "unmarried first son of the third son of the grandfather of the head of the pride which holds the valley in the fork of the Iwahfeal River, part of clan Wahtoi, which is a vassal of clan Aroaye'i, itself a vassal of clan Hlyueawi."

Females are named for their husbands, fathers, or brothers, depending on circumstances. Non-nobles are named for the nobles of whom they are vassals or clients.

Needless to say, while formal or ritual speech (which is frequent) calls for Aslan to use their full names, nicknames are commonly used among intimates, and are absolutely essential if gamers are to play a **Traveller** game and get past the stage of introducing their character in a single session. Nicknames usually commemorate some supposed virtue or achievement, and can be chosen and discarded whenever the holder desires.

In coming up with names or words for Aslan characters, places, or things, a simple system for generating random, Aslan-sounding words is provided. This neatly avoids all considerations of syntax and vocabulary. Simply generate a word as desired and assign a suitable meaning to it, such as "Killer of Ten Thousand," or, less bloodthirstily, "He Honors His Ancestors," or "Place of the North Wind." Since Aslan does not translate well into English (most Aslan words are an entire phrase of meaning, much like written Chinese ideograms), meanings can vary considerably. Tehleikhoi is the name of an Aslan mercenary regiment; it can be translated as "Soldiers of the Falling Night," "Knights of the Setting Sun," or "Warriors of the Evening Star." There is a great deal of latitude in the

development of Aslan words and names.

ASLAN IN THE IMPERIUM

Entire planets of Aslan (as well as worlds with a mixed-but usually geographically separate-population of humans and Aslan) lie within the Imperium. These Imperial Aslan remain culturally apart from the mainstream of human Imperial society, clinging to most of the traditional values of the Aslan culture. For them, the Emperor is an overlord, to whom the Aslan clans swear fealty, and from whom land is awarded; while such Aslan are full Imperial citizens, serving in the Imperial armed forces, paying taxes, and participating as citizens, they do so as Aslan.

HUMANS IN THE HIERATE

Just as Aslan are found in the Imperium, so, too, humans may be encountered within Hierate space. This can occur in two ways: the humans may be outsiders, or they may actually be part of the Hierate social structure.

The reception of human travellers in a Hierate system depends largely on their business there. If they are seen as being useful to the clan, they will be welcomed. Otherwise, they will be requested to refuel and depart as quickly as possible. Most probably, they will be doing business with some local corporation, buying or selling, and humans spending large amounts of money are likely to be quite welcome (at least as far as that corporation is concerned).

Most dealings within Aslan space require that characters seek out influential Aslan patrons, either nobles or corporate executives, who can smooth the way for them to travel in Hierate space. A lord might give a party a letter of introduction to his vassals elsewhere, or a vassal a letter of recommendation to his lord. Corporate dealings would be essentially contractual.

Tourism is not beyond the bounds of possibility, with corporations providing guided tours of Aslan worlds (and paying part of the profits to the controlling clan). Tourists would, however, be shepherded closely by assigned guides who can tolerate non-Aslan. In general, most Aslan space would be considered an Amber Zone for most humans, due to the dangers associated in dealing with touchy Aslan individuals. A human's best recourse is to attempt to understand and make use of Aslan customs, to obey the judgements of Aslan lords, and above all, to fight for honor are the most important virtues a visiting human can display. By and large, such humans have nothing to fear while in Aslan space, as long as their

own actions and intentions are honorable and they behave with propriety and respect.

Humans may also exist as vassals of some Aslan clan. In such a case, the humans thus encountered will be almost indistinguishable from racial Aslan in terms of behavior and culture, having thoroughly embraced all aspects of Aslan culture. Others will be barbarians who have been actively kept from interstellar travel by a locally dominant clan.

Human characters who have adopted Aslan culture follow the basic Aslan mindset. Drives, motivations, and ways of looking at things will be thoroughly Aslan.

Trokh Glossary

[[NOTE: I removed the clan names. -rje]]

ahryi: pride; several families.
aisai: dewclaw.
Akhuaeuhrekhyeh: rite of passage.
alr: one.
aokhaoc honor.
areiaao: sprint; Aslan period of time between the uealaa and the khtauaao; approximately 159 standard seconds.
Arlaeaha: Vargr.
ayloi. artificial dewclaw used by humans and other sophonts which participate in Aslan culture
-eakh: suffix for world. Hlyueawikoeakh means Hlyueawiko's World.
eakhau: Aslan day of 16 tekhaao; 36 standard hours.
eal: gun.
earleatrais: referee; judge.
eikhoi: dusk.
ekho: family.
-fiy: vassal of.
Fiyfyalc the Imperium.
fryrukhte: Insults and provocation intended to demean another party. Similar to the human game of "Chicken."
ftahea: Aslan year of 212 2 eakhau, 320 standard days.
Fterrl: Aslan, people.
Hrsol'i: Solomani.
hlai: two.
Hrirohrytukhyelreah: the Ancients.
hryeh: four.
hryo: six.

htater: first son.
htoi: green.
ihatei: second son.
Istoruaei: Zhodani.
iyrl: twenty (base 8); equals 16 in base 10
khaulear: one hundred (base 8), equals 64 in base 10.
kheh: three.
khoiaya: armor.
khtauaao: Aslan time period of eight areiaao; 18 standard minutes.
khte: zero.
khtyer: holding; landhold.
khu: five.
-ko: himself.
koih: seven.
Kusyu: Aslan homeworld
layeau: valley.
-siya: unmarried.
Siyreackhaotoior: Classic Aslan literature; myths and legends of old.
soistsea: unknown lands.
starl: forty (base 8), equals 32 in base 10.
tahrwihteakhtau: barbarians.
tea: ten (base 8), equals eight in base 10.
tekhaao: Aslan hour of eight khtauaao, 135.7 standard minutes.
Tlasayerlahel: large Aslan trading corporation.
tlau: thirty (base 8); equals 24 in base 10.
Tlaukhu (<Tlau + Khu): the 29.
Tyeyo. Kusyu's star, the Aslan sun.
uealaa: One Aslan second; about 2 standard seconds.
ukhte: hero.
ya'uiya: dishonor.

Travel Guidelines

Factors relating to Aslan travellers are noted here.

Clan Hospitality: Members of a character's clan will offer free food and lodging to the character, and will provide a middle passage ticket on a roll of 8+. The basic roll is 3 or less on 2D for representative's of the Aslan's clan to be present on any given world. DM+ World Importance. DM+2 if the Aslan is a member of one of the 29.

Noble Passage and Stewards. Aslan "noble passage" is the same price as middle passage, and the baggage allowance is 500 kg. Most properly staffed ships will include a steward, because noble males will require the services of one steward per four of them, and if no proper steward is provided, they will co-opt another crew member for the position. A well-prepared ship thus provides a steward in order to avoid losing an engineer or navigator at the wrong moment.

Purser: Each merchant starship engaged in commercial activity, trade, commerce, cargo transport, passenger transport, or charter activity must have a purser (salary: Cr5,000 per month). Invariably, the purser will be female, and she must have a minimum of either Admin-1, Broker-1, or Trader-1 skill.

Swapping Stories: A main common area on an Aslan ship is designated for sharing stories. Aslan with time on their dewclaws enjoy telling stories of their exploits and adventures. During the long days of a space journey, the passengers (and crew with no immediate jobs to perform) meet in the galley or central lounge and take turns telling stories of what they have seen, what they have done, and what they plan to do. Participants in these story-swapping sessions gain acceptance into the group as well as diversion from the boredom of a long journey. In addition, the stories told are often the source of further adventures or expeditions.

Shrine of Heroes: A typical compartment aboard

Aslan craft is the Shrine of Heroes. The shrine has data commemorating a selection of past battles, heroes, or other inspirational events. It may be low-tech, with plaques and books, or it may have a holographic interface, or anything in between. The room is used for meditation and contemplation of the heroic traditions of the Aslan.

Societal Standards: Because of the expectations of Aslan society, all but pirate ships will restrict crew positions to the proper gender. Only males may be gunners and pilots. Only females will be astrogators, pursers, engineers, medics, and stewards. Otherwise undefined crew positions (security personnel, mechanics, technicians, small craft pilots, and clerks) are open to any properly skilled individuals, although noble males will refuse most positions other than gunner or pilot.

Working Passage: Working passage is common within clan members only.

Updated Aslan Timeline

<i>Aslan</i>	<i>Imp.</i>	<i>Event</i>
-123	-2190	First World War
-88	-2160	Second World War (nuclear)
-60	-2136	TL 7
-22	-2102	Orbital bases
-18	-2098	Third World War
0	-2083	Tlaukhu formed
94	-1999	TL 9; Jump drive invented
117	-1980	First contact with Humaniti
1100	-1118	Border Wars begin
1185	-1044	Great Rift crossed
2810	380	Peace of Ftahalr; Border wars end
2902	461	First contact with Zhodani
3077	614	Yerlyaruiwo-Tralyeaeawi War
3120	652	Hlyueawi clan joins Tlaukhu
3167	693	Yerlyaruiwo-T. War ends
3644	1111	Golden era of Third Imperium
3744	1201	The New Era
3880	1320	The Wave hits the Hierate
4543	1902	The Galaxiad Era