

# Tekumel Summary

## History

60,000 years in our future, the vast Human star empire discovered the planet Tékumel. It would have been ignored, since two hostile races lived there, the subterranean Ssú and the aquatic Hlüss, possessing energy weapons and system-level space travel, but Tékumel was in a strategically important location. The humans defeated these races, placed them on reservations defended by force fields, destroyed vast tracts of poisonous native plant life and extensively terraformed the world, including cleansing the atmosphere, changing its orbit, and installing gravity generators at the core of the planet. Tékumel became a hub of trade and a resort for the rich and powerful. Humankind's nonhuman allies came, as secretly did their enemies.

After a millennium as a pleasure planet for the wealthy, a great cataclysm occurred, ripping Tékumel's star system out of normal space and plunging it into the darkness of another dimension. Was this caused by some alien weapon, was it a side effect of the faster-than-light drive, or was this the scheme of some immensely powerful interdimensional being? No one knows. From the global stresses of this event, earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves and other disasters befell Tékumel, and without supplies from the Human empire (especially iron for this metal-poor planet), civilization fell hard. The Ssú and the Hlüss rejoiced as the force fields keeping them in their enclaves failed.

In the intervening 25 to 100 millennia (the exact timeframe is unknown) before the game's current time period, civilization has returned, and has approximately a medieval level of technology.

## Magic Exists

The veil between universes is thinner, allowing the power of the mind to unleash the energies of interplanar power. The training in the magical arts is controlled by the temples.

## The Gods Exist

Over the millennia, contact has been made with powerful interdimensional beings, who have been worshipped as Gods. The pantheon of Tsolyanu consists of the Five Stability Gods and their Cohorts and the Five Change Gods and their Cohorts. The Cohorts are slightly less powerful than their God counterpart, acting as assistant gods.

### *Stability Gods*

**Hnalla** - Supreme Lord of Stability, maintenance of the order of things, light. *Dra* is his Cohort.

**Karakan** - War for the sake of society, courage. *Chegarra* is his Cohort.

**Thumis** - Knowledge for the good of society, healing. *Ketengku* is his Cohort.

**Belkhanu** - Passage into the afterlife. *Qon* is his Cohort.

**Avanthe** - Nature, family, motherhood, crop fertility. *Dilinala* is her Cohort.

### *Change Gods*

**Hru'u** - Ultimate chaos, secretiveness, darkness. *Wuru* is his Cohort.

**Vimuhla** - flame, war for the sake of overturning society. *Chiteng* is his Cohort.

**Ksarul** - Knowledge for selfish use, the 'Demon' planes. *Gruganu* is his Cohort.

**Sarku** - Survival of the Intellect after death, tombs. *Durritlamish* is his Cohort.

**Dlamelish** - Hedonism, pleasure of the Now, sensuality. *Hrihayal* is her Cohort.

## **The Climate is Hot**

Tékumel is a hot planet. Temperatures are similar to Earth's equatorial zone. Daytime temperatures in the summer can reach 125° F; nighttime temperatures in the winter go as low as 70° F.

## **Not Much Iron**

The density of the planet is relatively low, making metals, especially iron, in short supply. Humans have adapted to this with the use of chlén hide, an animal hide chemically treated by the armorer's clan to form a lightweight substance with the hardness of bronze.

## **No Cavalry**

No riding beasts are known on Tékumel and the only draft animal is the ponderously slow chlén. Most merchant caravans use slave bearers, trained to carry large loads on their backs. Armies have no cavalry, relying on foot soldiers.

## **Clan**

The clans are the major unit of social organization in Tsolyanu and other empires of Tekumel of which nearly all citizens are a part. Clans are large extended family groups. To be without a clan is to be lower than a member of the lowest latrine-cleaning clan. Clans are organized by status.

## **Politics**

The Five Empires are on the order of Rome or China in size and bureaucratic complexity. The PCs live in Tsolyanu, a 2500-year old empire, with an emperor who rules from his palace, never leaving it.

A war with Yan Kor to the north ended when Prince Dhich'une killed his father the Emperor and took the throne while the other princes and princesses were away from Avanthar. A civil war broke out between Dhich'une and the other princes. Mirusiya overthrew Dhich'une and now sits on the Petal Throne. Peace has lasted a few years.

Permission is granted to print or photocopy for personal use only.

Tekumel is a trademark of M.A.R. Barker

Empire of the Petal Throne is copyright 1975 by M.A.R. Barker