

SKYREALMS OF Jorune

The Sky People

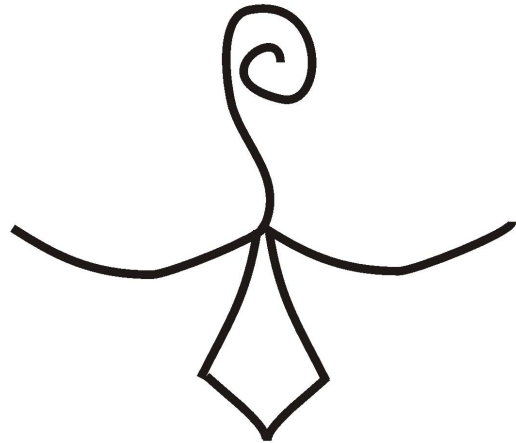
By sholari James

Among the highest mountains of the Per’Kulai valley of western Thantier and high amidst the Thodic mountains bordering this valley, can be found lofty temples and villages high above the tree line. Many of these are only mysterious crumbling ruins, while others are inhabited but strange monks and shy villagers. These dwellings are known to few but thodicean hillmen and belong to the mysterious and fairly unknown Sky People.

The Sky Culture once stretched among all the mountains of the Per’Kulai valley. Three large towns and numerous villages and monasteries could be found in high inaccessible places. However, the Sky people did not always live among the high mountains. Originally they lived in the great Per’Kulai Valley and among the lower vales of the Thodic Mountains. In 95 PC they were forced to retreat into the valley from the great onslaught of the cleash coming out of the Sharras jungle lands in 95 PC. The threat of the cleash drove them to safe havens among the mountains and in 220 PC they had become the Sky People, a culture adapted to mountain survival. Their villages and towns were always built in hidden and easily defended places, high up in the mountains.

The Sky people often expanded abandoned shantic dwellings or went through great endeavours to conceal their villages and towns on inaccessible plateaus and hidden valleys. Two of the larger Sky towns were cut into the sides of the mountains and had meadows for livestock on small, high, inaccessible mountain plateaus. The three major towns, whose names are lost to history, were built upon the mountains: Hallivo, Torinuu and Hus’ika.

As the merciless cleash established towns and forts in the valley in 450 PC, the Sky people soon found themselves constantly under siege and cut off from the rest of the shattered Empire. However, one of the legendary Thanterian Advisors slept within the walls of a Sky monastery and she awoke in 483 PC to help the Sky people when they were under the worst siege of the cleash. Among the devices invented by the Advisor to buy respite from the cleash, were hot-air balloons and airships filled with tepinna gas, tepinna bombs, Cloud Elixir (adapts the body to living in high altitudes), mountain durlig, watch posts and sentinel telescopes. Of greatest importance were the tepinna balloons, which served as lookout platforms and means of transportation and communication among the towns. They also



Sign of Immoran

allowed the Sky people to bombard advancing cleash armies. In this way the Sky people developed a culture among the clouds and often moved their villages by airships to inaccessible parts of the mountains whenever cleash were advancing.

However, the Advisor fell terminally ill in 492 PC and placed herself in cryogenic sleep again. Her location became a secret carefully guarded by the Sky monks.

The cleash and their scarmis hordes finally managed to destroy the three towns of the Sky people in a great cataclysmic war known as the Sky Weeping War in 790-810 PC.

One by one, the villages also succumbed until only a few remotely hidden monasteries remained. Slowly the Sky people declined until there were only the monks of the monasteries and small villages left. When humans returned to the Per’Kulai valley after the cleash had disappeared in 1100 PC, they did not notice the few remaining hidden monasteries among the mountains. The mysterious ruins of the Sky towns and their old unreadable scriptures remain a mystery for most Thodiceans. However, a rare few people have discovered or been allowed to enter the secret monasteries of the dying Sky people that remain. These monasteries and their small villages still wield their ancient airships, unseen in the clouds among the misty mountains of Per’Kulai. Their religion reveres the stars and sun as holy places or realms, which can be astrally visited by their monks in order to gain guidance and insight. Their language, Sky Tongue, is related to Than. Among the Thodicean people there also exists a legend of a secret valley, beyond the highest mountain, filled with riches and prosperity. Some hillmen know that this legend is actually true.

[See *Thantier* essay for more details on the Sky people.]



*Sky monastery of Reaching Moon
and a tepinna ship.*

TIMELINE

It becomes clear to many surviving colonists that shantha avoid killing humans who do not carry Earth-tec, but hunt down individuals with subtronic equipment, tec-tons or those located near Earth-tec installations. Recommendation is broadcasted from a colony near Jasp to bury all earth-tec in cryo-bins to survive; retrieval of equipment in small amounts can come later. Details of how to do this and where to later search is broadcast by the Jorune Science Board survivors. This broadcast is later to be known as “Jason’s Will” after the presenter of the message. Survivors in Burdoth, Temauntro, Jasp and Drail heed the message, while the survivors in Thantier struggle to hold onto civilisation and continue warring with the shanta.

5 PC Twenty terran scientists and colony administrators heeding the warning of the Jaspian colony place themselves in cryosleep together with earth-tec equipment among the remains of the Ithaca Research Stations in the Doben-al and the Binhauer Research Stations in Thantier. They hope to elude the shantic warriors and awaken one day to help future generations. They later become known as the Sleepers (Ithaca scientists) and the Advisors (Binhauer scientists). The other human survivors of The Ithaca Research Stations either travel north, trying to reach Northfield Research Station or stay behind to guard the sleeping scientists.

12 PC colony survivors in Thantier calculate that their chances of survival would be better on the island of Tan-iricid. They try to invade the island but the thriddle use unknown energy or weapons to drive off the invaders. Most of the southern survivors advanced earth-tec is destroyed.

23 PC The last survivors guarding the sleeping Ithaca scientists succumb to diseases or are killed by shantic warriors. The sleepers are never awakened.

42 PC Last eleven original survivors of Newfield Research Station establish a network of trails and stations to keep as much contact as possible between the various camps of survivors in Thantier.

70 PC A people living in the Per’Kulai Valley and the lower vales of the Thodic Mountains rally under their Black Elite (actually African descendants). They form the Ajawi tribes and coordinate their farming and defences against the shanta.

90 PC Cleash begin to come into Thantier. They come through the warps that the shanta open between the Ice Fields of Gilthaw and the Sharras and Trinnu Jungle lands. The heavily decimated shantic race is too weak to fight the strong survivor civilisation in Thantier and decide to use cleash as pawns. It is a dangerous game. First contact between Thanterians and cleash results in major battle leaving over one hundred colonists and twenty cleash dead. Ensuing skirmishes show that at first cleash kill with little provocation; after human retaliation, they begin to attack on sight. Using the growing population, humans in Thantier begin to build and live in fortresses.

95 PC Cleash insurgence into Thantier becomes much stronger. Rumour of the monstrous cleash reach the Per’Kulai Valley and the Ajawi people. Through the wisdom of their elders, they start preparing havens hidden among the valleys.

98 PC The cleash masses and their minions reach the Per’Kulai Valley. The Ajawi of the region are prepared and flee to their mountain havens. Those that stay do defend their homes are slaughtered. All human life in the valley is exterminated.

101 PC Ajawi refugees of the mountains learn much about the mountain hideouts and start referring to themselves as the Sky People. They also study the cleash and then start raiding their lowland neighbours. As the great cleash insurgence pushes eastward, the cleash do not have time to retaliate and find the Sky People.

137 PC The Sky People found the town of Ashamta among old shantic ruins cut into the side of mount Hallivo. Livestock and crops survive on sheltered mountain plateaus.

165 PC The town Hamansa is founded high on the hidden northern slope of Mount Torinuu. It soon grows to become the largest and most well defended of the Sky towns. Its lofty mountain top temples survey the entire valley.

219 PC The town Kavanta is founded on the slopes of Mount Hus’ika among the Thodic Mountains. Only the hardest of the Sky People survive in this cold city, situated at the extreme altitude of 6000 m above sea level. It is built upon subterranean shantic ruins that lead into a hidden, tropical, thermally heated valley.

220 PC The Sky Culture is now fully established and perfectly adapted to mountain living and survival. They place their towns and villages in inaccessible places among the Per’Kulai Mountains, often expanding abandoned shantic ruins. Towns are found on high plateaux hidden by clouds or cut into high mountain sides. The three main towns of the culture are the ones placed upon the mountains Hallivo, Torinuu and Hus’ika.

Approx. 350 PC As the cleash insurgence into Thantier stabilises, the cleash build permanent forts, towns and breeding pits in the Per’Kulai Valley. Cleash retaliation against Sky raids become more frequent.

450 PC The cleash start fortifying the Per’iKulai Valley and the Sky people soon find themselves under constant siege. They are cut off from the rest of the humans in Thantier and disappear from the known annals of Thantier.

483 PC The terran scientist Emanuella Sanchez, sleeping in a sacred Sky Monastery, is awakened by Sky monks. In legend she will be remembered as one of the Advisors. The sky people plead for her help in saving them from the cleash. Emanuella immediately presents her people with numerous devices to defend them against the cleash, such as tepinna gas balloons, lookout platforms and airships. The Sky people can now roam the high mountains more freely and move their villages around when cleash appear. They can also assail the cleash from above with tepinna bombs. Emanuella also helps the Sky People adapt better to high altitude living by creating the fabulous Cloud Elixir and mountain durlig. Under her rule, the Sky people withdraw into the mountains and avoid the cleash.

492 PC Emanuella Sanchez, the Advisor of the Sky people, falls terminally ill. She writes a number of scriptures to aid her people and then places herself in cryosleep again. Invigorated by her, the Sky Culture continues to develop. Her sacred tomb is hidden well under the foundation of a grand Sky monastery.

598 PC Kavanta becomes the capitol of the Sky people and their Monks of Divine Wisdom. The tropical Mas'ka Valley is settled and decorated with the beautiful Sky Towers, which serve as watchtowers. Many large Sky villages spread into the interior of the high Thodic Mountains as Tepinna gas is found in abundance there.

699 PC The Sky people complete their High Fleet of tepinna ships. Filled with confidence they start raiding the cleash again and become more daring. Many of the Sky monks have forgotten the true teachings of Emanuella (knowing her now as The Immoran) and resort to finding mystical answers in drug induced dream states.

736 PC Varricks'sa the new Sro'licr (army leader and colony lord of central western Thantier) is enraged by the elusive Sky People's attacks. She becomes determined to destroy them and starts a campaign of pursuit. The number of minor cleash forts also increase among the foothills. King Kibetto of the Sky People releases the High Fleet upon the new cleash and destroy one of their towns in the inner reaches of the Per'Kulai Valley. Filled with pride and confidence he acts contrary to the holy teachings of the Immoran to keep his people hidden.

737 PC Infuriated by the retaliation of the Sky People, Varrick'sa starts breeding scarmis and cleash clones along with kelenn beasts that will plague the air. She also drives her hordes of cleash, scarmis and beast-machines high up into the mountains to destroy the Sky People.

780 PC Moss'la, the crairrick (Overlord) of Thantier understands the threat of the Sky people's tepinna fleet. He demands Varrick'sa to be punished and orders the Sky people destroyed. Varrick'sa is reprimanded physically and deformed by ceremony. Trek'srarr, Trocarr (warlord) of Varrick'sa is beheaded for his incompetence and his head presented to the crairrick. Varrick'sa personally takes over the war effort against the Sky people.

790-810 PC The Sky Weeping War.

Maddened by hatred and old age, Varrick'sa unleashes her horde of cleash and scarmis bred for the purpose of destroying the Sky People. Many dangerous machine-beasts, noxious gases and plague stricken prisoners are released into the mountains. Her most successful weapon is the terrible winged kelenn beasts that attack the tepinna ships. The greatest cities of the Sky people fall one by one. Kavanta falls in the final year of the war. Having driven her minions to utter exhaustion, Varrick'sa is attacked by her own offspring as she enters the city. The old and severely wounded Sro'licrr drags herself upon the Emerald Throne of Kavanta to die. Nobody dares to remove her and her dried plates and bones remain there to this day – in the haunted halls of the demon-king. A few of the fleeing Sky people of Kavanta manage to seal the passage to the Mas'ka Valley. The cleash hordes, tired of the high altitude siege, return home without finding it. After the terrible losses of the war, the Sky culture diminishes rapidly into a few hidden villages around remote mountain monasteries.

950 PC Cleash wars escalate in all of Thantier, as cleash unleash terrible beasts in Thantier and in the Ceridis Sea. Their forts are numerous and their numbers steadily increasing. K'crikss ships starts harassing the Tan-Iricid coasts and only the massing of Corastin there prevents them from invading the island. The true intentions and cleverly hidden plans of the cleash rulers to take Tan-Iricid becoms clear to the shanta. Shanta start controlling the cleash and even attacking those that do not obey. Thanterians suffer terribly and many towns fall to the merciless cleash.

1105 PC After the pleading of Gjassum, the last Advisor, in Meshka-Tra the shanta act swiftly upon the cleash menace. Even when summoning all their new-won strength the shanta have problems controlling the cleash pawns they once unleashed. Acting just in time and before the cleash manage to solve the mystery of warp travel, the shanta manage to force the ancient cleash rulers in the Ice Field of Gilthaw to recall their minions. Cleash abandon their forts and strongholds and vanish mysteriously from Thantier in less than a year.

1498 PC Erucians scout the Per'kulai Valley. They find no remaining traces of human settlements in the valley but numerous abandoned, crumbling cleash forts. The Erucians assume that the valley has never before been visited by humans and claim it as their own. However, apart from some minor outposts and some ore mines, the valley is largely left unsettled.

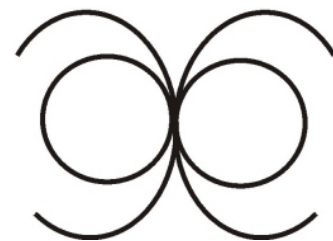
*Traditional spread of the Sky People
at the beginning of the Sky Weeping War*

*Red = The major cities and villages
Striped = Spread before the arrival
of the cleash*



THE SKY PEOPLE TODAY

The last of members of the Sky people live in a stagnant and secluded culture amidst the high peaks of the southern Thodic Mountains overlooking the Per'Kulai Valley. Their monks keep the traditions alive and do not tolerate any contact with the Lower World. The villages serve the monasteries and receive spiritual guidance and protection from evil in return. Many of the Sky People have also lived on Cloud Elixir for so many generations that they would have serious problems surviving on low altitudes.

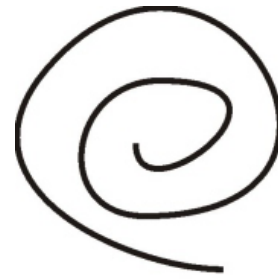


Cloud Elixir

The simple villagers tend to their crops of mountain durlig and watch over their flocks of flightless ozrill birds. The only colourful remnant of their culture resides in the hidden Mas'ka Village in the form of a high monk known as the Sky Childe and King Hataka who rules his people among the downfallen, overgrown ruins of his forefathers. Tepinna ships are used only as lookouts and for safe travel during clouded days or dark nights. All Sky monasteries are filled with images of the dreaded cleash and all monks believe that their existence depends upon their secrecy and devotion to the spiritual worlds of the stars and the sun.

RELIGION

The religion of the mysterious Sky people is known as “Immorans”. Holy monks revere the stars and the sun as holy places or realms, which can be astrally visited in order to gain guidance and insight. Small monasteries and villages seeing to the needs of these is all that remains of the elusive culture that once spread between the inaccessible mountain plateaus of the Per’Kulai Mountains of western Thantier.



Eye of Wisdom

The name Immoran comes from the very first wise woman among them, Emanuella Sanchez who was (is) an immortal. She had descended from the stars but spent most of her existence in a Dream State. She awoke from time to time to help her people and presented great inventions that helped them avoid the invading cleash and enabled them to fly between their havens of the mountain plateaus. According to legend, Emanuella became weary and sick of the world filled with the evil cleash and chose to never awaken again. According to ancient scripts, she sleeps until this day in a hidden monastery among the clouds of the mountains.

Like Emanuella, the Immoran monks tried to find answers to their worldly problems by sleeping and visiting the Holy Realms where all wisdom can be found. The Immoran monks therefore spent much of their lives in a natural or drug induced dream state, where they could pass over the boundaries of time, matter and distance. They visited the distant past, travelled to the star and sun realms and found some of the lesser answers. The first monks acted as advisors to their people and lived in the high towns cut into the mountainsides. With the demise of their culture and the destruction of their greater towns, the monks turned to the deeper mysteries and away from their people. They were originally supposed to find answers to more mundane everyday problems but now turned to life’s greater mysteries. As the culture dwindled the monks became drug addicts that would spend most of their life in Dream Chambers pondering upon the mysteries of life. Strange rituals not understood by the villagers are conducted from time to time to keep the veil of time intact around the unaging culture. Villagers know no other way of life and tend to the monks and their old monasteries and do not meddle with their Dreaming except when they are in dire need of their advice.

Today, small villages support the last crumbling monasteries hidden from the sight of other humans among the high Per’Kulai Mountains. Only a select few monks know about the great treasure of knowledge from the terran colony that is hidden among one of their abandoned monasteries.

LANGUAGE

Sky tongue is related to Colonial English, but has more in common with the Than dialect than Entren. However, the dialect has been isolated for such a long time that pronunciation differs greatly from Than and has to the ear become a language of its own.

Sky Script is written with the original Latin alphabet intact although spelling has changed slightly from Colonial English. Readers of Sky Script would therefore understand written Sky Tongue better than spoken.

SKY ARTEFACTS AND SECRETS

Cloud Elixir

A special brew that allows the body to function with less oxygen and store more oxygen in its cells, thus avoiding Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and haemorrhages of the lungs, eyes and brain.

Tepinna Balloons

Great balloons filled with the volatile tepinna gas that can be found in thermal areas among the Thodic Mountains. Lookout platforms, boats and entire ships can be fastened to these.

Tepinna Bombs

Pots filled with samara mud, which has attracted great quantities of tepinna locked within the mud as bubbles. Upon impact or other great kinetic movement or friction, the mud will sparkle. With the tepinna inside – it explodes. Ideal for bombing from tepinna ships.

Mountain Durlig

Small durlig adapted to mountain cultivation. Can endure frosts better and high altitudes, as well as the strong sunlight of the mountain peaks.

Sentinel Telescopes

Big telescopes with great lenses. Placed and hidden on mountain tops to watch for approaching enemy or signals between Sky settlements. Very few are used today. Some can be found in the abandoned watch towers, which originally were created to watch out for approaching cleash armies.

Immoran's Tomb

Three interlinked chambers within the Great Temple of Mas'Ka. Sealed since centuries against intruders it can only be opened by the two Eye of Immoran amulets, placed in the safekeeping of the Sky King and the Sky Childe. Inside lies the sleeping Goddess Immoran herself. In reality, after the deluge of the Sky culture when the cleash invaded their capitol city of Hamansa, the cryo tube of Immoran and its power pile was removed to the remote and now abandoned mountain top monastery of Gobey's Moon. Not even the present Sky King or the Sky Childe are aware of this. After the monastery was abandoned, the last resting place of Immoran became unknown.

Breath Helmets

In order to easier breath the very cold and thin air of the mountains and the strong sun, the Sky Ice Warriors that patrol the skies around Mas'Ka Valley wear breath helmets with filters and fore-chambers to warm their breath. The helmets also have tinted glass to protect their eyes from the sun. Their voices sound monstrous and growling through this helm and its appearance, along with the feathered armour, has been created to intimidate trespassers.

