

SKYREALMS of *Jorune*

Humans and shanthas on Jorune

By the original Skyrealms team

Humans on Jorune

In the Earth year 2116, interstellar travel became a reality. Technology developed by Earth scientists would allow travel through space at faster than light speed, opening communication with distant stars.

Scientists had long believed that habitable planets might exist outside the solar system. Using the new technology, several nations cooperated in a program to find such planets. Unmanned probes were sent to many distant star systems, and in 2123, one of the probes detected a life-supporting planet.

Lush and hospitable, the planet possessed a gravity, atmosphere and climate similar to that of earth. The transmissions from the probe indicated that the planet had a fully developed ecology which! Supported many forms of life.

The planet was named 'Jorune,' after its discoverer, Kadija Rhen Jorune. Excited by the prospect of a manned mission to the planet, the Earth nations made plans for a permanent research station, possibly to be followed by a larger colony.

Many years were spent in the development of long-range spacecraft. In 2138, two years after leaving Earth, a manned expedition of several hundred scientists reached Jorune. Small expeditions landed on the surface of the planet. The explorers soon discovered a race of intelligent beings that referred to themselves as "shanthas," thinly

Shanthas on Jorune

True natives of Jorune, the shanthas existed in relative peace for passive, their technology was centered more around life than death. The dysha mastery frantically pursued by muadra is mystery to shanthas. They see Isho more as a life force than as a force of destruction.

The body of shanthas is taller than that of a man's. They stand almost 7' tall, yet appear graceful, not awkward. They have no eyes, yet are able to see in all directions. Their native language flows elegantly.

Humans Through Shanthic Eyes

The shanthic race had lead a peaceful existence in underground caverns for thousands of years when the aliens came. These newcomers spoke a lumpy, awkward tongue lacking dimension and clarity. In spite of their crudity, the alien skills of energy manipulation were impressive. Their tools relied upon energy pellets, not Isho. Their belongings were Grafted of a resistant tlesk (metal). The Hoomans, as they wished to be called,

framed humanoids that communicated in a very complex language combining pictograms, phonics and colors. It was several months before computers could be programmed to translate shanthic communications.

Another intelligent race was found on Jorune, the "thriddle." Although not humanoid, the thriddle quickly mastered English (in all its simplicity), and were able to bridge some of the gaps in the colonist's communications with the shanthas. And, unlike the shanthas, they demonstrated much interest in Earth technology and peoples. Though the shanthas were far more numerous than the thriddle, neither seemed to be in a position of dominance. Other forms of intelligent life were later discovered. Some of these creatures lived in harsh, inclement terrain, for which they seemed poorly adapted. Attempts to communicate with these races were futile.

The presence of so many intelligent races on the planet presented contradictions to Earth scientists. Interactions between the various races on Jorune were highly segregated. Shanthas, in particular, demonstrated apparently little interest in other races. Paradoxically, most of the intelligent races lived simply, and seemed uneager to progress technologically. Although highly intelligent, the shanthas were a peaceful race with little machinery. Their life-styles were simple by human standards, despite their elaborate underground architecture. Thriddle had a primitive agricultural society. They lived in the ruins of a great past civilization. The exaggerated scale and architectural prowess the structures belied were ample evidence that they were not thriddle-built.

Certain features of the planet's geology defied explanation: minerals containing a very high energy density led to unusual geologic formations on Jorune. The energy from these minerals created a field which permeated the planet. Measurements showed this field to be quite stable with respect to geography, and to vary slightly with meteorological changes. Although extensive tests indicated that the field presented no danger to humans, its energy was unlike any radiation or force encountered on Earth.

In the face of these mysteries, the landing parties determined that a permanent presence would not represent a significant threat to humans or the indigenous life. The research teams settled on the planet. Earth scientists performed a variety of biological and geographical studies. It was finally deemed safe to establish a formal colony.

would not pronounce the name of the shanthic planet 'Sho-caudal' (vast fluid body). They would only say 'Jorune.'

These "H-oomans" were unable to see or feel the natural fluid of Sho-caudal. They hulked about gracelessly, blind and insensitive to the environment for which they had travelled a great distance. The shanthas had difficulty respecting these creatures who covered their Isho (literally: vitality) with fur. The shanthic "Sholari" (priests) encouraged cooperation with the outlanders to ensure peacefulness. H-oomans would be guided to areas where they would not be a disturbance.

Although shanthas understood the magnitude of a population of twenty thousand, they were taken aback by the sheer bulk of the colonists, when they arrived. Their awkward attempts at simple "cashiln" (walking) were shameful. Their intellects seemed just as disorganized. It was rumoured that H-oomans were incapable of controlling their own bodily functions. Their "inner fluid" was pumped involuntarily and their frontal lobes fluttered spasmodically. They spoke of nothing, ignoring everything around them. At first amusing, their flat speech soon came to be considered a waste of time. Human curiosity was deferred, while the thriddle were delighted to speak unceasingly with the visitors.

The H-oomans inability to project even the most simple "lih" (naull orb) was taken as an indication of dwarfed intelligence by many shanthas. But the H-oomans

When told of the colonization plans, the thriddle seemed very enthusiastic. The shanhas reacted more coolly. They did not stop the colonists from meeting their needs for water, land, and mineral resources, but they relegated the lands that the humans could occupy.

The Jorune colony was to transport over twenty thousand colonists and crew to the awaiting planet. A fleet of 80 ships would carry passengers in suspended animation for the long voyage through space. Months before the expeditionary party left for Jorune, questions of lunar-mining rights skyrocketed into the political spectrum. Excitement over the launch quelled tempers world-wide, but the fact remained that materials needed for the colony would be taken from the moon. Lunar mining rights were shared with nations not involved in the mission.

In 2147 the colony ships departed Earth. Each of the 80 vessels were designed to be reasonably self sufficient after landing; supplies from Earth would be needed only every 5 years. Biologists and botanists were given great leeway in their transport requests. Plant and animal species from Earth were brought for comparative studies with indigenous Jorune life. Most of the participating earth governments insisted that a strong military presence accompany the colony for security in an unknown environment.

In the Earth year 2155, all of the colony ships had landed at their various assignment locations. Security was relaxed to make life easier for the new colonists. In that same year the colonists learned of catastrophic war on Earth.

The raw materials for the colonization project had been taken almost exclusively from the moon. The already strained lunar treaties between the super-powers broke soon after the colony was established. Negotiations were attempted, but by 2155, no more talk was possible; Earth was engaged in full scale war.

Transmissions received by the colony indicated that Earth had lost the capability to support manned missions. Days later, communications with Earth were permanently lost. The colonists on Jorune were quick to comprehend the desperation of their situation. The supply ships they had expected would never arrive.

The attitude of the colonists changed. What had started as a research colony now appeared to be the last remnants of human civilization. The frantic colonists ignored the

commanded great tlesk manipulation, so the shanhas were content to help them meet their needs for minerals, water, and land, if that meant peace.

As the moons constellated, Hoomans relaxed and enjoyed their new environment. Treaties were obeyed. The new-comers seemed to have proven their harmlessness.

Suddenly the tranquillity of life was shattered; the Hoomans began acting frantically. They claimed the loss of their homeland. Yet they had abandoned their homeland to come to Sho-caudal. Erratic Hoomans behaviour became a concern. The shanhas were resigned to revive aggressive technology left to them by their ancestors. They watched and waited. Uneasiness and fear had been unknown to them; this sensation was, to the shanhas, a subtle poison released by the Hoomans.

Without warning, the Hoomans transgressed "Cali-Shafra," Battle Lands of the Ancients. The bountiful vegetation was stripped away and the land was pierced by huge tlesk. The Hoomans claimed that they needed the area to make their food. The shanhas were unsympathetic. The humans had survived for some time on Sho-caudal without taking such extreme measures. The transgressions of the Hoomans became intolerable. With the disruption of the Galsh-aca (Ancient Burial Grounds), shanhas finally felt that their energies could be justly unleashed.

The humans in their colony strongholds were not prepared for the massive energy blasts which

shanthic restrictions. They needed raw materials now that Earth supplies would be unavailable. They began to clear native Jorune vegetation for largescale seeding of a food crop biologically engineered to be competitive on Jorune. Though humans could safely consume many Jorune plants, this crop was specifically designed to meet their nutritional needs. They began mining operations on lands forbidden to them. The shanthas reacted with hostility to these transgressions. But the humans ignored their threats, as the shanthas had yet to demonstrate a technology equal to the defenses of the Earth colonists. When shanthas tried to interfere with human expansion, they were dealt with abusively.

The colonists sadly underestimated their hosts. Soon after humans started refining ore from Shanthic lands, a wave of attacks employing energies of almost nuclear proportions were launched against each of the 80 colony settlements. Thousands of the colony members were killed. Humans were stunned by the effectiveness of the attacks. Their great shields had offered them no protection.

The humans, however, were still the masters of a sophisticated biological technology. In a desperate attempt, one of the colony sites released biological warfare agents into the upper atmosphere. These genetically modified bacterium were created to exclusively kill shanthic life. As sound as the biological creations were, the scientists who developed them had no time to account for subtle variations in the shanthic race. Still, over 99% of the shanthas died, leaving only thousands of a once populous race.

This was no victory for man however; all of the starships were destroyed, and with them man's only means of leaving Jorune. In the violent aftermath, settlements were abandoned and items of technology left behind. It was a common belief that shanthas could seek out power sources, even those used in small hand-weapons.

Communication between colony sites was destroyed; survivors had no knowledge of the fate of the their fellow humans. In isolation after the attack, Iscin, a bio-tec engineer, feared that no earth animals would survive. An expert in biological engineering, he attempted to modify earth animals to make them more competitive on Jorune. In his experiments, he altered several earth species into intelligent, bipedal creatures. These derivative species eventually developed stable populations.

exploded from within their ships. To the shanthas, it was a simple matter: The warp mappings to the ships were regional and the Isho was readily available. Warps were forced open, and through them, tremendous dyshas of Desti and Du were sent.

It was expected that the problem was over. Instead, nearly all of their race lapsed into "shyee," the Isholess state. The shanthas remember this as "Leesh Ebeeca" (The Dying Time). The few who remained were unable to maintain the ancient underground comglowing lowpr wrld and take to the more desolate parts of their glowing lower world and take to the more desolate parts of their planet. The shanthas knew that the Hoomans were destined to enter their cities in the coming millennium. They sorrowfully laid to rest their the best means they could muster. They looked to the time when their descendants could reclaim their heritage, and restore the race to greatness.

Over the ages, shanthas have learned a bit about humans. Although their original impressions have yet to be dispelled, they have come to grips with living as a minority on their own planet. Their interactions with other life forms are usually brief and specific. 3400 years after Leesh Ebeeca, hostility between shanthas and humans is rare. Again the shanthas are watching and waiting; this time for a chance to restore their race to ancestral splendour.

Of all the human descendants shanthas find the muadra the most intriguing. Their Isho abilities closely

The destruction of the colony sights left many earth species refugees in the strange environment of Jorune. Most earth animals perished in an ecosystem in which they had no niche. Cows were the first to go. Although the geography and weather of the planet were well suited to earth life, the native competitors held the upper hand in most struggles for survival. Some earth species survived, humans among them.

The chaos of war destroyed any hope of creating a self sustaining colony. The surviving humans quickly became part of the forest fabric. Man became a hunter again.

In the 250 years that followed, humans and shanthas played out the hostilities kindled earlier. For fear of shanthic detection and reprisal, tools and technology were abandoned; life became simple in philosophy as existence became a struggle.

Jorune is surrounded by an exotic form of energy unlike any on Earth. The native life was adapted to this energy, and after many generations, Earth species also began to adapt. In particular, two sub-species of humans began to develop.

A few decades after colonization, humans began to experience occasional mutant births, many occurring regularly and along predictable lines. Some humans attained great size and physical strength—they came to be known as “boccord.” Others were born exceptionally small and weak. These “muadra” sometimes displayed the disturbing trait of spasmotic, static-energy release. A muadra named “Caji Gends,” under shanthic guidance, was the first of his kind to master and direct the planet's ambient energy.

Thirty-five Hundred Years Later

Over the millennia, the humans have grown to be the most populous race on Jorune. Muadra and boccord remain minorities in (pure) human settlements and cities.

After centuries of backsliding, human society on Jorune has now begun to progress. Having forgotten their origins on Earth, the humans of Jorune have developed their own cultures. Conditions on Jorune have impeded their technological development, but humans have recently recovered caches of the old Earth technology hidden by members of the original colonies. They have learned to use many devices without full understanding of the principles involved. Life on Jorune is a paradoxical mix of old and new as the humans begin to comprehend their origins.

resemble their own. It was this shanthic interest that led Sho Copra-Tra to train Caji Gends. This first relationship between shantha and muadra catalyzed a new existence for the muadra race.

