

# The Dragon

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The Dragons  
Birthday Party



Gregor



# MILITARY FORMATIONS OF THE NATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE

By M.A.R. Barker

The following material is translated and adapted from the works of two of the great ancient strategists of Tekumel, Ssamiren of Kheiris, and Sa'alur of Jakalla. Both of these men lived during the First Imperium, the Dynasty of the Bednalljan Kings, and their strategic and tactical manuals have become standard among all of the nations of Tekumel. Time, unfortunately, does not permit the inclusion of material from the other two major battle manuals, those of Liyurain of Tsamra, and Hirkkulmeshmru the Dwarf.

Both Ssamiren and Sa'alur divide their works into discussions of (a) the army as a whole, and (b) units within an army. Under the former heading they include the functions and limitations of each section of a military "task force" (e.g. the establishment of chains of command, the roles played by various officers, signalling and trumpet calls, messengers, the use of magic as a weapon of attack and defense, the various troop types, the nature and optimal employment of the nonhuman races, etc.). In this section also, both authors provide a longish list (Ssamiren gives 112, Sa'alur 123) of "basic battle formations." These are battle plans tested by one or more commanders throughout the long centuries of Tekumel's history. Ssamiren describes each formation in detail and discusses its general qualities; Sa'alur, however, goes further and suggests counter formations for each, together with descriptions of battles in which each was used and the factors accounting (in his view) for each win or loss.

Under "unit formations," both authors discuss various types of organisation, the nature of sub-units, the use of officers, procedures for marching and countermarching, etc. They also provide descriptions of "basic tactical formations" in which units can be deployed upon the battlefield. Both manuals then go on to analyse matters of supply, the provision and maintenance of arms, the merits of various types of weapons and armour, entrenchments, fortifications, use of terrain, scouting and many other military factors. It must suffice here, however, to describe some of these authors' "army formations" and give the more useful of their "unit formations."

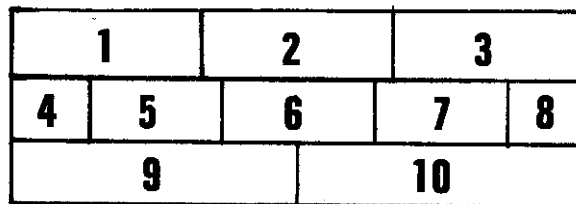
Ssamiren divided every battlefield army into "sword units" and "shield units": the former are those meant to attack, to break through enemy ranks, and to be the centre of strength; the latter are those units ordered to hold the enemy, to keep him from breaking through, to harass him and prevent him from committing valuable troops elsewhere. Every battlefield army must have one major "sword unit," and all others then function as "shield units." Very large armies, Ssamiren continues, may have more than one "sword," major and minor "swords." (He is here speaking of open field battles, rather than of defensive positions, sieges, special units charged with particular missions, etc.)

The positioning of one's "sword unit(s)" occupies much of Ssamiren's chapter on field tactics. Should this striking force be placed upon one's flank, upon both flanks, or in one's centre? Should it consist of one heavy unit (e.g. a phalanx), or should it be divided into smaller units? What are the optimal attack formations for these units? Where should secondary "sword" units be employed, and what are their logical objectives? What formations are useful for "shield units?" Ssamiren proceeds to answer these questions by describing the multiplicity of formations used by his predecessors and contemporaries. Borrowing terms from the fencing masters of his time, he discusses these in terms of "attack flank, shield centre" or "attack centre, shield flank." The former denotes a powerful striking force placed on one or both flanks and a weak centre ordered to hold. The latter signifies a strong centre planned to carry the main attack, with weaker holding forces on the flanks.

Sa'alur, who wrote some five hundred years after Ssamiren, accepts his predecessor's basic definitions and arguments but goes on to elaborate upon these, discussing special hidden "sword" units, complex formations which changed to some other formation after their arrival on the field, the use of extremely fast bands of missile troops as skirmishers, the deployment of the flying Hlaka scouts as additional harassment, and many other such features. Sa'alur also wrote exten-

sively of defensive field formations, entrenchments, abattis, and other holding tactics.

Both authors divide each army's side of a battlefield into ten subsections and go on to indicate the sorts of units which should be placed in each, depending upon available troops and the terrain. These subareas are:



1. Left Arrow; 2. Centre Arrow; 3. Right Arrow; 4. Left Gauntlet; 5. Left Arm; 6. Central Helm; 7. Right Arm; 8. Right Gauntlet; 9. Left Greave; 10. Right Greave.

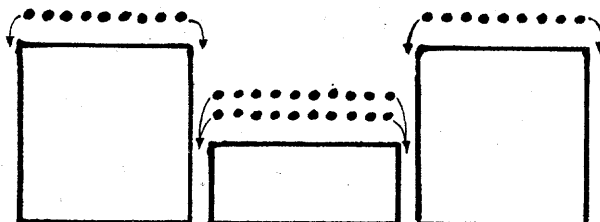
Numbers 1-3 are far forward areas, to be filled with light skirmishers, missile troops, and other harassing units; nos. 4 and 8 are the far flanks, to be occupied (depending upon the availability of troops and the basic battle plan) with further light units, heavier missile troops, artillery set up on high terrain, or special "sword" units; nos. 5 and 7 are the inner flanks, to be occupied by heavier units, "sword" units, or good holding units, depending upon the formation used; no. 6 is the main centre, filled with troops appropriate to the formation chosen; nos. 9 and 10 are the rear flanks and reserve areas, held by one's remaining forces and troops planned to enter the battle later.

Sa'alur added two more rear areas to this scheme: the baggage camp, with its protecting troops, and the general's command post. Most tacticians emphasize that the proper place for the Kerdu (the senior general) and his staff is upon some eminence behind his troops, from which he can see and direct the engagement. His army's magic-using forces are usually deployed with him, partly to provide cover for him from enemy sorcery or long-range artillery, and partly to give them a vantage point from which they can direct their spells against the enemy or to protect their own men. Since the exact positioning of the baggage camp and the command post depends largely upon terrain and other factors, most later tacticians have ignored Sa'alur's precise instructions for the placing of these units.

It is now useful to take Ssamiren's basic formations and deal with the more important ones, adding details from Sa'alur wherever feasible, and also commenting upon the modern employment of these by the various nations of Tekumel. The following are just a few of his "attack flank, shield centre" battle plans.

- N.B.*
- = light skirmishers/missile troops
  - = regular medium or heavy troops not further distinguished and dependent upon availability and other factors)
  - = special units (to be described below). Since these formations have been much simplified heavy missile troops, artillery, etc. have not been separately indicated.

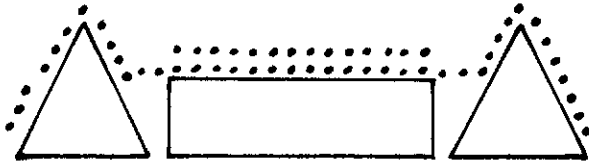
1. The Invincible Glory of Hnau Tektis:



This ancient formation is named after a semi-legendary general of the Three States of the Triangle. It consists of two heavy units (phalanxes, squares, etc.) and a weak centre designed only to hold. Light

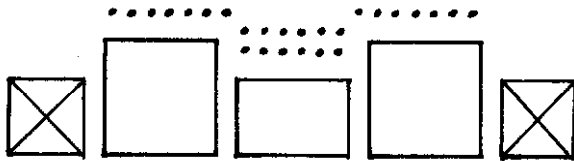
missile troops occupy the Centre Arrow position, and these have orders to fall back through the flank-centre gaps before the enemy can come within charge range. It is still a popular formation among the Salarvyani, the Yan Koryani, and the Pechani. The Mu'ugalavyani rarely use a weak centre formation, and the Livyani also do not employ it. The Tsolyani tend to disdain it because of its simplicity, although it has indeed been used in recent times by them. Either or both of the two heavy flanks may be composed of such powerful units as Shen, Ahoggya, or Pe Choi, if these are available.

2. The Two Peaks of Tso'o Kinel:



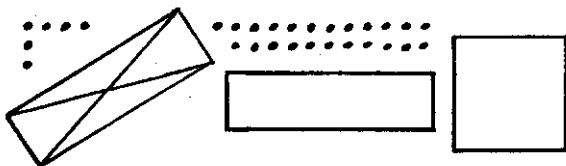
This formation is favoured by the Livyani. It consists of a weak centre but has two powerful wedges (or diamonds) cf. below) in the two inner flank positions. Again, the forward missile troops are programmed to retreat through the gaps and to the sides of the formation as the enemy advances. In a larger battle, the Left and Right Gauntlet positions may be occupied by two more wedge or diamond-shaped units, usually made up of Shen mercenaries. The Tsolyani used this formation at the Battle of Chene Ho in 2,019 against the Mu'ugalavyani. They lost, due to powerful enemy flank defences and an unexpectedly strong centre which split their army in half. The Salarvyani have also experimented with this battle plan against the Pechani with reasonably good results. The Yan Koryani and Mu'ugalavyani have never used it.

3. The Two Mighty Gauntlets of Hrugga:



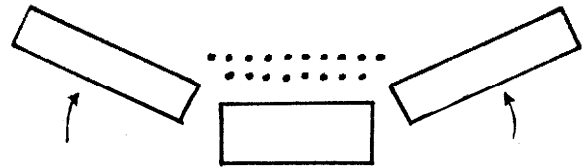
This formation is commonly employed by both the Tsolyani and the Salarvyani, and occasionally by the Yan Koryani. Its main feature is the presence of two powerful (or very fast moving) units in the Left and Right Gauntlet positions; these often have semi-independent commanders (Dritlan) and are ordered to hit enemy flanks, take advantage of gaps in the enemy line, and use considerable personal initiative. It has been used with great success in many battles, and it is the one weak centre formation which is occasionally adopted by the Mu'ugalavyani.

4. The Mace of Karakan:



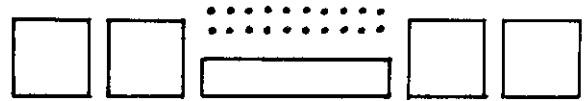
This formation has its most powerful and heaviest unit in the inner right flank position; the centre is ordered simply to hold, and the left flank consists of some specially strong unit, or a unit which is also commanded to hold, although it may have further orders to exploit enemy weaknesses. If this formation is reversed (i.e. if the heavy unit is placed on the left flank instead), it is called the Mace of Vimuhla. It has been used with success by the Yan Koryani against the Tsolyani in 2,347 A.S., and it is a favoured formation also amongst the Tsolyani tacticians. The Salarvyani have occasionally employed it, but the Mu'ugalavyani and the Livyani seem to prefer more balanced lines.

5. The Claw of the Krua:



This formation may begin with an advanced centre and one or both flanks refused, and only after the two flanks have advanced does it become obvious to the foe that this is the Claw of the Krua formation. The flanks are, of course, intended to push back the enemy's flank troops and crush his centre in upon itself. This battle plan is frequently used by all of the nations of Tekumel.

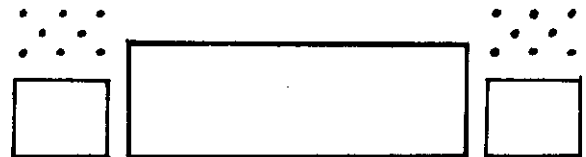
6. The Five Fingers of Death:



This is simply a variant of the Two Mighty Gauntlets of Hrugga; its flanks are composed of more equally balanced units, however. Some of these flank units may begin behind the centre (i.e. in the Left and/or Right Greave positions), and the commander may also opt to change to the Claw of the Krua formation either as a pre-battle decision or by trumpet call during the engagement. This formation is used by all of the major nations except the Mu'ugalavyani, who, as said above, do not prefer centre formations.

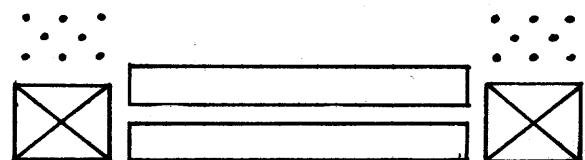
Space does not permit a discussion of Ssamiren's or Sa'alur's preferences for the reserve areas, their choices for the placement of artillery, or such "frills" as especially fast "sword" units ordered to conceal themselves behind one of the front line units and then appear through pre-planned gaps in the latter's ranks, or around one flank. These last are called "warhammer" units, and their use is favoured by the Tsolyani, the Yan Koryani, and the Salarvyani. These special units are almost always made up of Shen, Ahoggya, Pachi Lei, or some other powerful and speedy race. The following are some common "attack centre, shield flank" formations:

7. The Inexorable Sea:



In its simplest form, this formation consists of a central heavy unit (phalanx, deep rectangle, closely arrayed columns, etc.), with weaker holding units on its flanks. The latter may, of course, be special heavy troops, usually accompanied by lighter missile units to provide flanking fire. This formation is frequently used by all of the major nations of Tekumel, and it (or some more complex variant) is almost the only formation employed by the Shen.

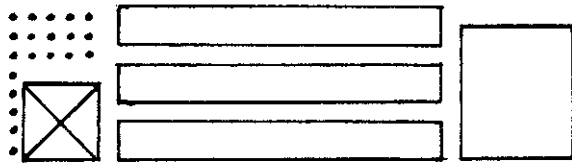
8. The Two Gates of Wuru, the Many-Legged Serpent of Gloom:



This battle plan consists of two strong central units, one behind the

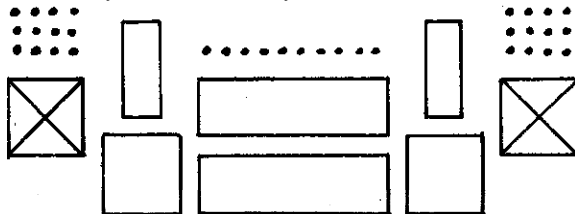
other, with two comparatively strong flanking units and accompanying missile troops. A larger variant, the "Five Feshenga of Wuru," has two further units in the Left and Right Gauntlet positions on the extreme flanks. Missile troops may also be concealed behind the first heavy phalanx, with the ranks of the latter ordered to open up to permit the former to advance, fire, and retreat again; Sa'alur calls this the "Teeth of the Feshenga" variant. All of these formations are frequently used by the Mu'ugalavyani, who occasionally also conceal special "warhammer" units behind either or both flanks — although this is considered rather innovative and daring by them. The Tsolyani, Yan Koryani, and Salarvyani also utilise this deployment occasionally.

9. The Triple Palace of Skulls:



This formation is a favourite with the Mu'ugalavyani for larger battles. For some reason not clear to the author, both of the great tacticians suggest using unbalanced flanks: a stronger unit in either the Left or Right Arm position, with a concentration of light missile troops and/or skirmishers on the weaker flank. Sa'alur also proposes to break up the three great phalanxes into squares, rectangles, or columns in a staggered pattern, with units of light missile troops functioning almost independently between these groups. The Yan Koryani and Tsolyani have used this formation from time to time, and the Salarvyani also employed it successfully against the Tsolyani in 1,218 A.S.

10. The Many Doors of Destiny:



This formation consists of one, two, or three heavy phalanxes in the centre (two being the number favoured by the Mu'ugalavyani); there are then two units in each of the Arm positions, one deployed far forward, and the other held back behind; the Left and Right Gauntlet positions are then occupied by one or more special "warhammer" units. Missile troops are concentrated in the gaps between these and also in the Left and Right Arrow positions. In very large battles the Arm and Gauntlet positions may be filled with several separate units, and as the great central phalanx rolls inexorably forward, the army commander can push forward first one and then another of these flanking units in an attempt to draw his opposite number off balance and thus gain the advantage. This was the formation used by the Mu'ugalavyani at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2,020 A.S., but the Tsolyani outflanked the Mu'ugalavyani left and destroyed the best units on the right before the two great phalanxes could complete the annihilation of the weaker Tsolyani phalanx in the latter's centre. The Mu'ugalavyani commander also failed to deploy sufficient missile troops on his flanks but instead concentrated them in front of his centre, where they were disorganised by Tsolyani light skirmishers and a small unit of archers.

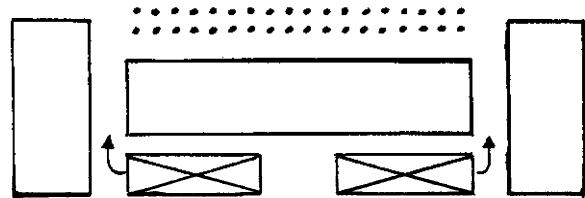
11. The Toothed Jaw of Mighty Qame'el:



As the name indicates, this is primarily a Livyani variant. Both Ssamiren and Sa'alur describe this formation as being common to most of the armies of their time, and their name for it was the "Jaws of the Sro." (N.B. Several of the formation names given herein are those in

current use, rather than the names originally provided by the ancient strategists: e.g. only a scholar of Bednalljan Salarvyani would be able to identify the "Two Gates of Wuru" deployment as Ssamiren's "Two Walls of Brass" and Sa'alur's "Ranks of Illimitable Might" formations.) This battle plan consists of a strong centre divided into the wedges and squares of the "Teeth of Kra" formation (cf. below), with weaker flanking units in wedges or diamonds. Missile troops are usually concentrated on the flanks but may also be deployed through gaps in the centre to fire and retreat. The Tsolyani and the Yan Koryani have employed variants of this plan from time to time.

12. The Oncoming Wings of the Hereafter:



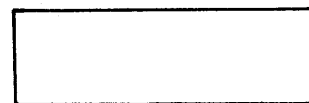
This battle plan consists of a strong centre (variously divided into phalanxes, squares, wedges, etc.) and two long, fast-moving columns of lighter troops on the flanks, sometimes with "warhammer" units in concealment in one or both of the Greave positions behind. As the centre meets the foe, one or both of these columns may attempt to cut off enemy flanking units for annihilation by the concealed "warhammer" units coming along behind, or they may swing out like great wings to try to outflank the enemy and attack him from the rear. This is particularly favoured by the Yan Koryani, the Pechani, and the Salarvyani, although the Tsolyani have also used it in a few instances. Missile troops may be concentrated in the Centre Arrow position, or they may be posted on either flank in the Left or Right Arrow positions.

Both Ssamiren and Sa'alur go on to list a great many more formations and to discuss the advantages of advancing or refusing the centre or the flanks, the practice of advancing units, halting them, and then advancing others in order to gain ground and beneficial field position, the various means of catching an opponent off balance by utilising units as feints, decoys, and even sacrifices, and many other features. The above must suffice, however, for a brief introductory article such as this.

Sa'alur also discusses defensive field positions: e.g. the "Clawed Hands of Mnakhis" (named after another ancient strategist, Mnakhis of Purdimal, most of whose works are now lost). This consists of protecting both flanks (usually missile troops) with rows of protecting sharpened stakes so that they can enfilade an advancing enemy line and cannot themselves easily be charged or outflanked. All of the armies of Tekumel use field entrenchments and fortifications, if time and terrain permit, and Sa'alur categorises some forty-five types of entrenchments, traps, etc. for use by commanders forced into defensive positions.

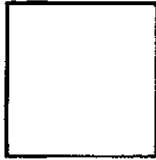
It only remains to give a brief list of the unit formations employed on Tekumel. Ssamiren provides descriptions of twenty-two separate deployments for individual units, while Sa'alur names seventy-three (many of which are redundant or highly fanciful: e.g. he even gives a name to a disorganised band of troops in no discernible formation: the "Joyous Heroes" pattern!). The more useful unit deployments are:

1. The Stone Mountain:



This consists of a phalanx (or body of other types of troops) in a horizontal rectangle. This is especially favoured for pikemen, spearmen, halberdiers, or even swordsmen. It is employed by all of the nations of Tekumel. The Tsolyani favour phalanxes of ten or twenty men deep; the Mu'ugalavyani organise theirs into units fifteen men deep, and the other nations vary theirs according to the availability of troops and the preference of the commander.

2. The Mighty Block.



This is a body of heavy or medium troops organised in a solid square or a long rectangle. There are no particular limitations on the numbers of men in the ranks or in the files. All of the nations of Tekume1 make use of this deployment. This name is also given to a march column.

3. The Blade of the Sword:



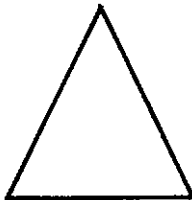
This is a formation consisting of one, two, or three ranks of men in lines. It is frequently used for skirmishers and missile troops, as well as for the deployment of medium or heavy troops through woods or other difficult terrain.

4. The Serpent:



This is simply a column of men in single file.

5. The Divider of Foes:



This is the wedge, favoured by the Livyani and also a component of many other formations.

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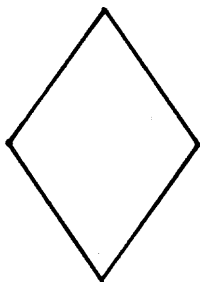
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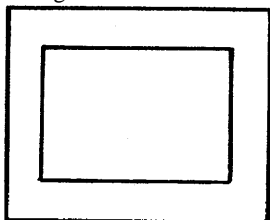
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6. The Crystal Square:



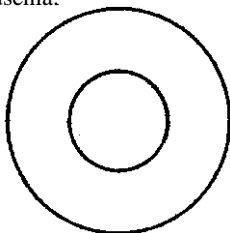
This is a diamond-shaped wedge. The men in the rear are often trained to fight facing away from the front, so that this formation has no real flanks. This is also popular with the Livyani, but it is used by many other nations as well.

7. The Fortress of Milengano of Vra:



This is a hollow square. As with the wedge, men in the sides and rear of this formation are trained to fight facing directly outward, and this deployment thus has no flanks or rear. It moves at a slower pace than purely forward-facing formations, of course, but it is sometimes used to escort a commander or a group of priests away from a pursuing foe. Only the Yan Koryani are really skilled in manoeuvring in this pattern, although other nations use it as well.

8. The Bracelet of Kurusenla:



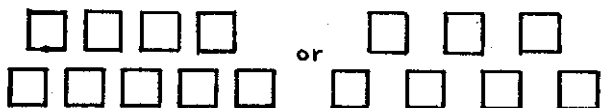
This is a hollow circle, named after an ancient queen of the time of the Dragon Lords. It is used primarily by troops who are surrounded and who would rather die in place than be taken for sacrifice. It is employed by all of the peoples of Tekumel and is a favourite defensive posture of the Pe Choi.

9. The Embrace of Nayari:



This formation may be used by a phalanx or by other troop types. It consists of a solid rectangle with two forward-projecting "arms" which are used to outflank or to penetrate into an enemy unit. The Tsolyani have developed this deployment to a fine art and can shorten or elongate the "arms" as needed. The Mu'ugalavyani, Salarvyani, and Yan Koryani also use this pattern occasionally with some success.

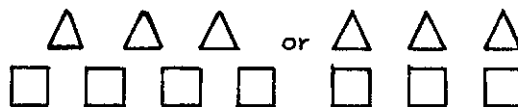
10. The Garment of Idessa:



This is a checkerboard pattern, used by heavy and medium troops of all of Tekumel's nations. The size of each of the squares may be var-

ied by the commander as he sees fit. This requires prior training, of course, but many good units are taught to change from the Stone Mountain into this formation, then back again or into some other pattern. It may be noted that on those rare occasions when the Ssu have fought pitched battles, they have adopted checkerboard patterns. The Shen, on the other hand, can hardly be got to drill in this formation, much less fight in it. The Ahoggya also prefer solid blocks or phalanxes and hate what they call "human folkdancing," while the Pe Choi, Pachi Lei, and Tinaliya all favour complex patterns.

11. The Teeth of Kra:



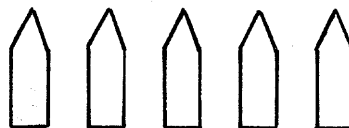
This formation consists of small wedges followed by squares in staggered rows or in columns. It is used by all of the armies of Tekumel, although the Mu'ugalavyani do not favour it.

12. The Towers of Purdanim:



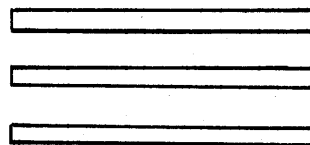
This is a series of columns. A solid line or phalanx is often opened out into this pattern in order that missile troops can run forward, fire, and retreat. The Tsolyani have also trained heavy Shen mercenary units to race forward through these gaps and then reform into a solid phalanx just in front of a surprised enemy. Mu'ugalavyani generals also favour this pattern, and other nations of Tekumel also use it but less frequently. It should be noted that this is a pre-contact formation, and a unit is rarely ordered to hit the enemy line in this pattern.

13. The Palisades of Murudani:



This is similar to the preceding deployment. Each column has a wedge-shaped end, however, and each such sub-unit is ordered to advance and strike the enemy line semi-independently. These columns then function as long wedges initially; after contact has been made, the troops from the rear of each column are trained to wheel to the left or right upon a signal and engage the enemy between the "teeth" of the palisade. This is a common Yan Koryani formation, but it is not much used elsewhere.

14. The Waves of Chanayaga:

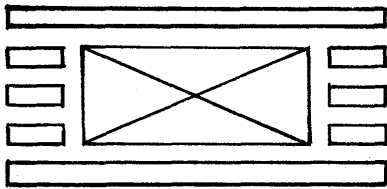


This is a series of lines with spaces between them. This is a common formation everywhere for light troops, missile troops, and other troop types in open order. Orders can be given to this pattern to close up into the Stone Mountain formation or to regroup into the Garment of Idessa.

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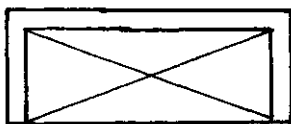
*Details to follow. See you there in winter?*

## 15. The Krua Beneath the Sea:



This is a series of lines similar to the preceding, but with a solid, heavy unit (often of Ahoggya or Shen) concealed within the formation. As the human troops reach the enemy, those in front of the concealed unit are trained to run back between their lines and reveal the "warhammer" unit — the deadly Krua. This is a common Salarvanyi deployment, and it is occasionally used by the Yan Koryani and Tsolyani as well. The Mu'ugalavyani and the Livyani tend to disdain it.

## 16. The Gift of Nayari:

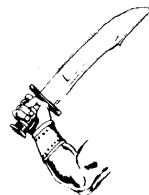


Named after the ancient, evil queen of the Bednalljan Dynasty, this formation consists of medium or even heavy human troops deployed to conceal a powerful Shen or Ahoggya unit within their "phalanx." As contact nears, the human screening troops are trained to run to the sides and then back, while the nonhuman unit strikes the astonished enemy as hard as it can. This is also a Salarvanyi strategem rarely practiced by other armies. The success of this and the preceding formation depends upon the inability of the enemy to discern the concealed "warhammer" unit. This is often achieved by raising clouds of dust (cf. no. 21 below) or by magical spells of non-seeing. Concealment is especially difficult if the enemy have flying Hlaka scouts or a command post situated high above the battlefield. Even so, the Salarvanyi succeeded with this deployment in 1,219 A.S. by providing the concealed unit, a small phalanx of Ahoggya, with large shields similar to those used by the concealing unit (a body of heavy infantry). Holding these over their carapaces in the "Ghar of the Deeps" formation (cf. no. 20 below), the Ahoggya deceived the Hlaka scouts of the Tsolyani into believing that the entire group was composed of human troops.

## 17. The Bow of Hrugga:



This formation consists of two phalanxes with a narrow gap between them. A special unit of crack troops is poised at the rear of one (or both) of the phalanxes, and at the moment contact is made, these picked troops race down the lane between their two phalanxes and hit the foe in a powerful wedge formation. The objective is to split the enemy in two and force a gap which can be exploited by further troops from the rear ranks. This is much favoured by Sa'alur, and the Salarvanyi (who prefer his manual to all others) often use it. The Bow of Hrugga is known to other nations, of course, and it was even used once — rather improbably — by the N'lyss against a punitive Mu'ugalavyani expedition sent against them. The scarlet-clad battalions of the Four Palaces of the Square were so surprised that they would have lost the battle, had it not been for their superior magic.



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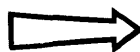
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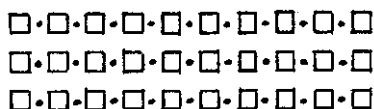
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18. The Two Moons:



This is essentially a positional defensive stance. It consists of a large semi-circle of troops with a smaller and more compact semi-circle in the centre. If the two flanks can be anchored against suitable terrain features (e.g. the walls of a mountain pass), this formation is a difficult one to overcome. Sa'alur also lists this as a defensive army formation, calling it the "Pupil of the Eye," and suggests that the outer semi-circle be composed of lighter troops (preferably with missiles) and the inner one of a dense body of heavy infantry. This deployment is used by many nations, including the smaller ones (e.g. the Ghatoni, Pijjenani, N'lyss, etc.). It was also adopted by the ill-fated Gurek of the White Sun, a Yan Koryani legion, when it was trapped by a greatly superior force of Shunned Ones at the base of Pachalim Cliff in 1,783 A.S. Although the Yan Koryani were eventually slain to the last warrior, they managed to slay nearly triple their numbers of Shunned Ones.

19. The Meadow of Death:



This formation consists of two interpenetrating units trained to work together: a unit of medium troops (usually halberdiers, axemen, or two-handed swordsmen) is interspersed with a unit of missile troops. As the two units advance in open order, the missile troops fire, while their comrades cover them and themselves with their shields. When contact is made with an enemy unit, the missile troops run back through the ranks and form up again elsewhere, preferably at a spot from which they can still pour fire into the rear ranks of the foe. If need be, these missile troops can also be ordered to run around to the rear of the engaging enemy unit and hack at its rear ranks with short swords, axes, etc. This is a typical Yan Koryani formation, since the missile unit is often composed of the younger sons, wives, and daughters of the halberdiers, swordsmen, etc. Other nations use this type of formation sparingly, although interpenetration of units in open order is not uncommon, and some special units are indeed used by various nations which consist of more than one troop type.

20. The Ghar of the Deeps:

This is not so much a separate formation as it is a defensive stance. Units in several of the preceding formations (especially the Stone Mountain, the Mighty Block, the Divider of Foes, the Crystal Square, the Towers of Purdanim, etc.) can be ordered to form a shield wall to their front and left; those in the centre hold their shields over their heads, and those on the right are either lefthanded men or else are ordered to sling their shields on their right sides. The formation then moves forward at a diagonal, as a Ghar does, almost totally shielded from enemy missile fire. This is a common deployment for troops attacking higher fortifications, or who are badly outmatched in missile capabilities. All of the five major nations use this formation, and many of the smaller ones are familiar with it as well.

21. The Curtain of Unseeing:

Again, this is not strictly a "formation" but rather a trick devised by Ssamiren. In order to create confusion and to prevent the enemy commander or his Hlaka scouts from discerning one's deployment, light troops in the forward Arrow positions are trained to stamp their feet and create a cloud of dust, if the weather and the chosen battle-

ground permit. This has the disadvantage of concealing and discomfiting one's own troops, of course; yet in many battlefield situations it is the only means of maintaining secrecy for one's manoeuvres. It is indeed possible to maintain concealment with spells of non-seeing, although these are of little use on the ground where men are likely to move out of their area of protection, and where the foe are in such close proximity that they can perceive something amiss in the area covered. Spells of non-seeing are more useful, thus, against scouts flying at a distance overhead, but they require time and concentration to cast, and they must be maintained at the cost of efforts which can usually be better directed elsewhere. The "Curtain of Unseeing" is therefore a common defense against the Hlaka, and, as the Tsolyani adage has it, "The best answer to a Hlaka is a mouthful of dust — or an arrow in the belly."

The foregoing are only a few of the many formations and variants proposed by the great ancient strategists, but they should provide an idea of the complexities of warfare on Tekumel. Full translations of the works of Ssamiren and Sa'alur would require several volumes, and much of their content consists of "frills" — variations used perhaps once and then discarded — or of elaborate detailing of these basic patterns. Perhaps the main feature of warfare on Tekumel is the elaborate manoeuvrability of troops; all of the major nations maintain large standing armies, utilise efficient means of training, and have long traditions of military prowess. It is thus possible to achieve formations and shifts in deployment which would not be possible on this planet.

*Continued from page 29*

was eagerly pointing towards a moving group of tiny figures just going out of sight within the shadows.

"What caused your excitement?" Dunstan inquired with irritation. It surely couldn't have been those far off men . . .

Mellerd was clambering up on his mare as his master spoke, and he replied with amazement: "Didn't you see those things chasing that little lad yonder?"

"Your eyes must be sharp as a hawk's. I could make them out only as specks at that distance."

The boy nodded agreement: "I couldn't make them out too very well at first either, but when they crossed the top of the last hill there," and he indicated the elevation in the distance, "some trick of the light seemed to magnify them so that I could see as clearly as if they were only a few furlongs away!"

At this moment the group topped a nearer hill. Dunstan strained his gaze in the failing light, and suddenly the figures seemed to grow larger, just as Mellerd had explained: "Great Gods!" expostulated the startled errant. "It is a dwarf being pursued by a pack of giant toads and weirdly hopping men!"

