

THE SCIENCE FICTION

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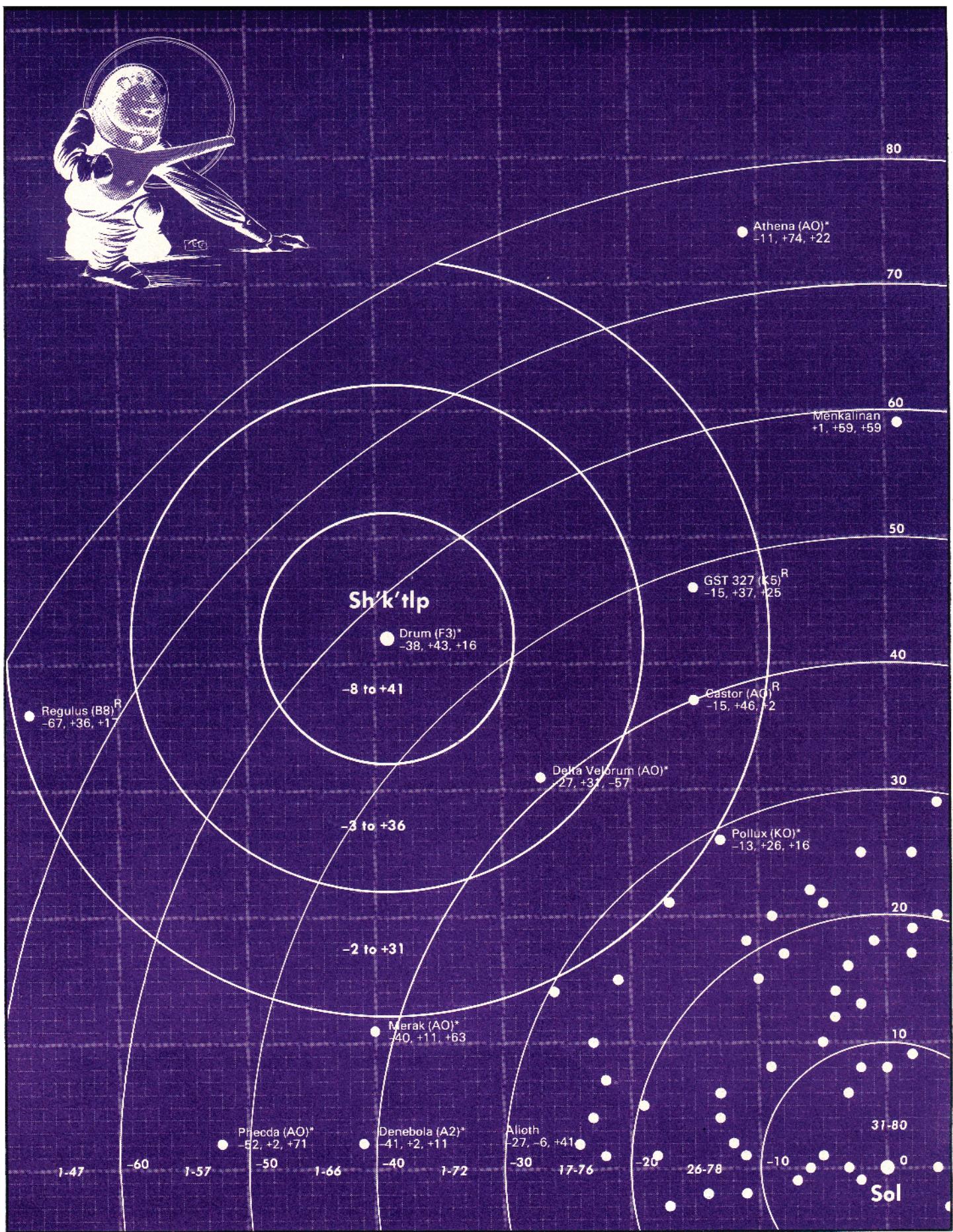
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FIRST CONTACTS

MEET THE Sh'k'tlp:
an astounding alien race

I. Introduction

The Sh'k'tlp are one of the three alien races that will appear in the *First Contacts* supplement for the *Universe™* game. The Sh'k'tlp, a race of shape-changing mammals, are described in this Role-Playing Gamer feature for use by a Gamesmaster in campaigns. This is *not* an independent game or adventure. It is intended for use only by the Gamesmaster, and it is assumed that he is fully familiar with all the game systems discussed in the Gamesmaster's Guide of the *Universe* game. Players must not be allowed access to any information in this feature that their players would not already know. The new professions and skills included in this feature and parts of the Chronology may be explained to players.

To ease calculations in play, all units of time, measurement, and money are expressed in Human terms. If the GM wishes, he may substitute alien currency or measurements where appropriate. Most of the alien equipment is also described in Human terms. Again, the GM may alter these in accordance with the technology guidelines of the alien race.

This feature examines the Sh'k'tlp's physical, mental and social behavior; their history and technological development; samples of their artifacts; and their method of space travel. A complete system for generating Sh'k'tlp player characters and incorporating them in play is also included. Various charts and tables are presented for creating Sh'k'tlp characters, and the illustrations present samples of Sh'k'tlp technology and the relation of their space as compared to Human space.

Since the Sh'k'tlp domain only partially overlaps Human space, The GM may find it necessary to generate new star systems. As new stars are discovered, the GM should mark them down on a piece of paper, using the X, Y, and Z coordinates as found on the *Universe* Interstellar Display. The stars generated by the GM should be known to the players, since it is assumed that by the 24th century all possible stars within a 80 light-year radius of Earth will be known. However the domain of the Sh'k'tlp should be explained to the players only after contact has been made.

Expanding The Interstellar Display

The GM should locate Sol in the center of a piece of graph paper (with coordinates of 0, 0, 0). The X and Y coordinates extend 80 light years in all directions; likewise, the Z coordinate extends 80 light years above and below the plane of the X-Y coordinates.

The First Contacts Interstellar Display, at left, shows the newly-discovered Sh'k'tlp area of space. Note that this display should be used in conjunction with the X, Y, and Z coordinates on the Universe Interstellar Display.

However, the absolute value of the *maximum Z coordinate* diminishes as the X or Y coordinate moves towards the 80 light-year limit; at the 80 light-year limit, the maximum Z coordinate can never be greater than 28 or less than -28. Thus, if the GM rolled a star with a Z coordinate of 35 or -42, it would not appear on his graph because the star would be outside the sphere encompassed by the 80 light-year radius. For each 10 light years along the X coordinate, the maximum Z coordinate diminishes as follows: at 0-10 light years, the Z coordinate is 80; at 20-30 light years, it is 76; at 30-40 light years, it is 72; at 40-50 light years, it is 66, at 50-60 light years, it is 57; at 60-70 light years, it is 47; and at 70-80 light years, it is 28.

The GM may generate stars to fill up the expanded interstellar display with a procedure that assigns each X-Y location a chance of having a star. The GM marks the display grid with these new stars (or lack thereof) as he checks each area. To check for the existence of a star, choose any X-Y coordinate that *does not already contain a star* and that has not already been checked. Conduct the following steps:

1. Roll percentile dice.

If the result is higher than 25, no star exists at that coordinate; mark a small slash through the coordinate. If the result is a 25 or less, the coordinate *may* contain a star; proceed to the next step.

2. Roll percentile dice again.

If the result is outside the upper and lower Z coordinate limits (as indicated above) for the band of the display the X-Y coordinate occupies, no star exists; mark the coordinate. If the result is within the indicated Z coordinate limits, a star exists there. If the dice result is even, treat the result as the Z coordinate. If the dice result is odd, treat it as the negative of the Z coordinate. Thus a roll of 28 indicates a Z coordinate of 28, while a roll of 27 indicates a Z coordinate of -27. Note the new star's complete coordinates on the display or on a separate sheet of paper.

3. Roll percentile dice again.

Locate the result of this roll on the Spectral Class Table to determine the spectral class and planet potential of the generated star on the map.

II. Chronology of the Years of Contact with the Sh'k'tlp

Note to the GM: The integration of an alien race into an ongoing campaign requires much care and attention. Players will be inundated with large amounts of information in a very short time, and easy assimilation of that information will be aided if the GM

has outlined his future history during the years of contact well in advance. Things to consider include: what each race knows about the other; which contact occurs first; why the contact occurs; when the second contact occurs. These problems must be addressed and dealt with in a coherent manner. This chronology is presented as an aid and inspiration to the GM.

This outlined future is only one possible sequence of events chosen out of those available; the decisions are based on logical interpretations of some very basic premises. The GM should feel free to use this outline in its entirety or parts of it in any manner he wishes. Its linear nature allows him to pick up the storyline at any point and to summarize the preceding events for the players prior to the start of play. For example, a GM chooses to use the outline as presented except he wishes the Sh'k'tlp contact to have occurred prior to the start of the campaign. Thus, he might begin his calendar in the year 2336, at the election of Chairman Vlad Pinsky. He verbally relates the entire history of the Sh'k'tlp encounters to his players (embellishing them, of course), and then proceeds to normal play. It is entirely expected any GM will alter the names or places to fit more coherently with the universe as he imagines it. The specific references to certain individuals in the events may be changed by the GM to allow players to run their characters in place of these individuals.

If the GM wishes to use the names, places and situations as described, he should notice certain references in the outline to individuals referred to as "skilled individuals." These particular events were included with the participation of the players' characters in mind. As in any situation where the players gain control, their own acumen (or lack thereof) will alter the best laid plans of any GM. Thus, any conclusion reached at the end of a situation as presented in the outline should not influence the ultimate resolution of that situation if played out by the players, and the GM should be mindful of this when using the outline as is.

The outline also indicates when players may attempt to generate alien characters. The percentage given at that point in the chronology indicates what chance a player has of his new character being an alien. The player must roll equal to or less than the listed percentage to be allowed to create an alien (otherwise, he must create a Human character). The percentage chance remains the same until the timeline advances and a new chance is listed for the race. As with the events in the chronology, the GM should use these percentages in context if he deviates from the history as written.

The Years A.D. 2310-2331

2310. Astronomers begin reporting momentary brightening and dimming in stars which have not, until this time, been suspected of being variable stars. The reported phenomena never lasts more than 2 seconds in any case, and manifests itself as a momentary variation with no apparent aftereffects or repercussions. Scientists are enthusiastic over what they suspect to be additional confirmation of the Big Bang theory regarding the creation of the universe. They report that these stars, all approximately 45 to 100 light years away from Sol with a right ascension between 6 and 10, roughly along the plane of the Earth's equator, are all older stars beginning to show evidence of the fluctuations which confirm their theories. As to why this variability was not noticed before, the scientists claim the recent advances in telescope technology involving the use of monopoles to polarize the plates of film has allowed them to detect the variances. The Group for Advanced Scientific Studies (GASS), located in New Palo Alto, remains skeptical about the findings.

2312. The theory regarding the variable stars reported in 2310 falls into disfavor as many new stars are discovered to have the same anomaly. GASS concludes that these anomalies are something brand new and should be further investigated by

proper authorities. This was the result of an intensive two-year study.

2314. More variable stars are found. This leads the Beta Foundation to begin organizing an exploratory mission into unknown space. They ignore the lack of proper insurance and fund the project themselves.

2316. In a unanimous vote, GASS delays the Beta exploratory mission in order to allow another intensive two-year investigation by the newly formed sub-committee of GASS, the Committee for the Observation of Unexplained Properties. This group constitutes the very cream of the crop, scientifically speaking, of the minds within the Federation.

2318. GASS gives the go-ahead for the exploratory mission, with a warning to the commander of the mission to "proceed with great caution, for we aren't sure what's out there."

2321. After much delay, the Beta Foundation probe *Amorica* hyperjumps from Racine (formerly LFT 661; -21, +15, -10) to Pollux (-13, +26, +16), a class K0 star which has varied more than most within the last five years. After much publicity concerning this new venture, the ship's CommLink message confirming successful hyperjumping never arrives. It is presumed to have simply misjumped and is never heard from again. GASS disavows any responsibility for the mission and reminds the Federation of its initial hesitancy as to the wisdom of such a venture. The Beta Foundation takes a total loss on the mission, and declares financial bankruptcy.

2322. American Express issues a general statement to the effect that any mission which terminates at a star without a spaceport will not be insured for any amount. Thus, the onus for the funding of such projects must fall to the Federation, the only corporate entity solvent enough to absorb the possible loss.

2328. A Heinz Corp exploration mission, headed by a young psion, Vlad Pinsky, discovers a large cache of monopoles in the unexplored regions of the Ross 41 system (+4, +29, +5), which opens up that system for colonization and thus rapidly expands the Heinz Corp's bankroll. Some of that wealth trickles down to Pinsky as a finder's fee. His name soon becomes a household word for guts, determination and luck. "You're a real pinsky!" catches on throughout the Federation as a phrase meaning "You're luckier than you deserve."

2330. The Heinz Corp begins to underwrite missions designed to expand the scope of mankind's knowledge. They accept the risks involved and forge ahead without any insurance coverage. GASS claims the Heinz Corp mentality will lead to the downfall of the local economy. They advise caution and proceed to set up a committee to study the problem

2331. The Heinz Corp has by this time established many diversified interests in the sector of space surrounding the Ross system, including large mining and ore refining outposts. They also develop a reputation for shady dealings, and Vlad Pinsky publicly disassociates himself from them for that reason. His public statement causes panic in the Heinz camp, and they begin to take greater and greater risks in the attempt to maintain their momentum. One of their routine mining excursions results in the ship *Christopher Martin* misjumping; the CommLink message that reaches the Federation indicates it lies outside the boundary of explored space and that it has been wrecked somehow. Heinz Corp hires a group of skilled individuals to recover the ship. The *Charon's Ferry* hyperjumps to GST 327 (-15, +46, +2) to recover the lost ship. There the crew encounters and explores an abandoned alien spaceship, and the first contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life occurs.

2331.4. The crew return and discuss their find with local

Federation officials, who call in representatives of GASS to evaluate the Federation's options. In their first intelligent move in years, GASS keeps the contact secret and investigates the evidence objectively and thoroughly.

2331.9. GASS finalizes their examination of the alien vessel, and advises the federation officials to "come clean" with the public and reveal the contact. The federation agrees, dubbing the ship *Teardrop I*, and publicly announces the accidental contact and the story of the brave exploratory team. The grisly details of the first crew's fate are fortunately left out of the story. GASS announces the extent of their involvement in the project and begins a campaign to lift the insurance ban for exploratory craft. They begin to search for the alien home star, setting up a sub-committee to examine the *Teardrop I* for any clues.

The Years A.D. 2332-2333

2332.1. In an amazingly short (for them) amount of time, GASS announces the theoretical location of the alien home system, and commissions a contest to see which corporation will be first to prepare and ready an exploration mission. American Express (having hired Vlad Pinsky as advisor) finishes first in the race, and the *Drumbeater* is allowed to depart to greet the aliens as official emissary of the Human race. Vlad Pinsky commands the vessel, which includes a crew of star sailors and skilled individuals.

2332.3. Arriving at the Sh'k'tlp home system, official contact is established with a Sh'k'tlp diplomatic ship. However, a snag develops. The "rats" (as the Sh'k'tlp are called by the *Drumbeater* crew members) refuse to allow the crew to land on any Sh'k'tlp worlds. Three star sailors are killed by Sh'k'tlp security robots when the Humans make moves they did not announce in advance. This incident leads to the immediate withdrawal of the diplomatic mission and the mistaken impression that the Sh'k'tlp are a vicious, aggressive race which must be dealt with. A general "call to alert" within the Federation takes place. In actuality, the Sh'k'tlp assumed the star sailors were predators that had impersonated the Humans, and shot them accordingly. They were only doing their best to protect the Humans and assumed their actions would be readily understood.

2332.4. Through the intercession of Vlad Pinsky, contact is reestablished, and the *Drumbeater* returns to the Sh'k'tlp system. Permission is still not granted to land on any worlds, however. This attitude creates suspicion among Human intelligence circles, and contingency plans are made for armed assault on Sh'k'tlp space. GASS creates a sub-committee to investigate all aspects of Sh'k'tlp behavior, the Committee for the Observation of Sh'k'tlp Thought. They promise to have their recommendations ASAP.

2332.6. A Sh'k'tlp bubble/rod ship arrives at Leonis (-13, +6, +5). The Sh'k'tlp send a cordial greeting to all Humankind, expressing sorrow for the recent misunderstandings and hoping for mutual understanding and the establishment of beneficial trading agreements. They propose a unitary currency, and an exchange of scientific information and specialists, particularly in the fields of predator control and space travel. The administrator of the local spaceport, acting without authorization from the Federation, intercepts the diplomatic mission with a squadron of Daggers. The squadron is unable to penetrate the Sh'k'tlp null-field and are further thwarted by the ship's maneuverability. The Sh'k'tlp ship dives for the star as if it intends to crash into it, but then assumes an orbit around the star at a distance which would be impossible for any Federal ship to approach to do damage. When the Federation learns of the unprovoked attack, they put the local administrator on trial and, when he is found guilty, they execute him in a public manner — more for the benefit of the Sh'k'tlp than for the Human viewers. The Sh'k'tlp are unimpressed. Vlad Pinsky con-



tinues with his arguments to have the Sh'k'tlp let him visit their world. Not quite knowing who Pinsky is, the Sh'k'tlp continue their indifference towards his ship.

2332.8. Federation committee chairman Fritz Riswold arrives at Leonis via a Federal cruiser to negotiate with the Sh'k'tlp. The desire for friendly relations is made clear, with the Sh'k'tlp emphasizing the benefits from mutual trade. After many hours of painstaking negotiation, involving many problems of translation, an agreement is reached which both sides are pleased with. Riswold, while announcing the final agreement, makes an allusion to a "pound of flesh" in reference to the negotiating skills of the Sh'k'tlp. This statement is misinterpreted by many who are unaware of Riswold's true meaning, which remains hidden. In the Sh'k'tlp home system, Vlad Pinsky beats the local Sh'k'tlp administrator in a game of dd'kl'jy, a Sh'k'tlp gambling game similar to the Human game of Hearts. This feat wins the everlasting respect of the Sh'k'tlp for Vlad, and he alone is allowed to travel down to the surface of the home world (Sh'k'tlp).

GENERATE SH'K'TLP CHARACTER: 5%.

2333.1. GASS announces they have discerned the best way to win the respect of the Sh'k'tlp is to beat them at a competitive game. They advise all Humans to brush up on their games of chance, and advise all Human corporations to "keep their wallets well hidden" as they fear manipulation by these highly intelligent aliens. Vlad Pinsky is by default nominated as the first official ambassador to Sh'k'tlp. The Sh'k'tlp themselves announce Vlad has been named Jfh'jg't (or "honorary predator hunter") and is forever welcome in their Commonwealth.

2333.3. Each race sends a friendship fleet to the other's capital world. The Human ships join Pinsky's ship in orbit around Sh'k'tlp, and his entire crew is welcomed on that world as heroes. Pinsky acts as mediator for the newly arrived Humans and the Sh'k'tlp dignitaries. Various arrangements occur to facilitate easy transfer of information. In Human space, the Sh'k'tlp fleet arrives with three ships in tow (one being the *Amorica* and the other an Omega lifeboat); the third, however, is of unknown origin. GASS represents the Human scientific community and announces a two-year study on the third ship to discover its origins. The

officials of the Federation do not allow GASS to appropriate the ship for this purpose and instead conduct a search for skilled individuals to examine the ship. GASS responds by branding the result of any such investigation to be without substance.

2333.6. Beginning with the Exxo Corp, many Human corporate conglomerations begin unofficial expeditions into Sh'k'tlp space to entice them to conclude separate, individual agreements for trade. At the same time, Sh'k'tlp groups begin similar missions into Human space, wheeling and dealing with all the influential Human businesses. The slow moving channels of the diplomatic process are ignored by greedy entrepreneurs on both sides, resulting in a flurry of trade which quickly breaks down due to a number of small but unfortunately violent confrontations between rival Human and Sh'k'tlp corporations. The violence is not confined to Human-Sh'k'tlp confrontations, but also to Human-Human and Sh'k'tlp-Sh'k'tlp confrontations as well, as many vie for the millions of Trans to be made. As the many hazards inherent in such long voyages for trade become apparent, the initial enthusiasm soon leads to skepticism. The long distances and possible violence along the way or at either end of a journey create growing tension between the races.

2333.9. The Federation and the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth agree to make GST-327 a gateway system (in fact, the Federation renames the star Gateway). Any spaceship traveling from a Sh'k'tlp star to a Human star or vice versa must stop there to be inspected and registered. Construction of a bi-racial spaceport begins in orbit around R'th (1 AU from Gateway). The Sh'k'tlp request a ban on Human travel to their space until the station is complete and operational. Vlad Pinsky, now a resident of Sh'k'tlp, is asked by the Federation to oversee the development of the spaceport and all support facilities. He agrees to the idea, promising an answer after "an extensive study."

GENERATE SH'K'TLP CHARACTER: 10%.

The Years A.D. 2334-2338.8

2334. The incidents of illegal trade begin to drop off as the climate for agreement becomes more favorable. Many business types search for a quick Tran, but opportunity does not knock during this period. Most are willing to wait and see if the agreements hold up and if mutually acceptable arrangements will be concluded. Some, like GASS, are impatient with this slow, painstaking process and take some matters into their own hands.

2334.3. The investigation of the ship of unknown origin (dubbed the *Ruby Slipper*) yields no hard information. Humans are still unaware of the creator's nature or abilities. Some very general tendencies are concluded: the creators are obviously intelligent, painstaking, and aggressive. They appear humanoid in form, but the number of limbs is unknown. They "see" and "hear" as we do. GASS declares these assumptions to be incorrect and denounces the entire investigation.

2334.6. The Federation revokes GASS's scientific grant.

2334.9. Illegal military ships of Eon Flashcorp arrive in secret on a remote Sh'k'tlp colony world (Kr'd'm). Their heavy weapons easily cow the residents. Flashcorp boss, Garn Tweeze, seizes the local Sh'k'tlp fleet and drives the residents from their capital city. His intentions are to uncover the secrets of Sh'k'tlp technology by force and sell the information to the highest bidder. Elsewhere, Vlad Pinsky accepts the post of Chairman of Gateway Corp, even though this relocation causes him great heartache; he has come to love Sh'k'tlp and its people. GASS, after a frantic struggle to find new funding, is forced to officially "fold" for lack of money.

2335.1. Word of the Flashcorp attack on Kr'd'm reaches the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth. Assuming this action is sponsored by the Federation, the Sh'k'tlp immediately pull out of the Gateway

project and cease all communications with Humans, whom they brand as predators. An emergency meeting of all Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth members is called to devise a method of ridding Kr'd'm of the Human aggressors. Vlad Pinsky hears the news just before leaving Sh'k'tlp and decides to stay there, refusing the post of chairman of Gateway. Sh'k'tlp declares him an honorary Commonwealth member, with all commensurate rights and privileges. Federation Chairman Riswold hears of the attack through the Federation intelligence network and issues an ultimatum to Flashcorp: *Leave Kr'd'm or face the seizure of all Flashcorp capital being kept in any Federal banks.* Garn Tweeze issues a retaliatory statement: *If that happens, the Sh'k'tlp on Kr'd'm begin to die.* The Federation as a whole is aghast at the obvious and horrid terrorism.

2335.6. After the Federation ordered a complete investigation of Flashcorp's motives and methods, it was revealed that GASS was the actual guiding force behind the invasion of Kr'd'm. They wanted the secret of the Sh'k'tlp null-field (Hg'jd'kn), which allows the hulls of the Sh'k'tlp spaceships to withstand the great heat of stars as they "skim" them to achieve FTL travel. GASS intended to steal this information and then reveal it to the Federation, claiming they had deduced it from already known Sh'k'tlp information and thus greatly raising their public image. This conspiracy was uncovered by Krym Starvy, special secret agent of the Federation, and a few select skilled individuals. Starvy posed as a member of GASS, infiltrated the organization, and brought the entire operation down. He had been known as a steady operator in the past, but this was the crowning achievement of his career. GASS disbands, never to be heard from in that form again in Federation history. The stalemate on Kr'd'm continues as the Sh'k'tlp grow increasingly impatient with the Humans' inability to make a decision in this matter.

2335.7. A group of skilled individuals, apparently acting entirely on their own, infiltrate Kr'd'm and overthrow the Flashcorp coup without much loss of Sh'k'tlp life. The Federation breathes a sigh of relief, as these brave individuals have freed them from making a difficult political decision. Shortly thereafter, it is revealed that Vlad Pinsky sponsored the infiltration of Kr'd'm, and the group included both Human and Sh'k'tlp members. These individuals are hailed as heroes by all sides, thus bridging the communications gap between the two races.

2336.3. Federation chairman Riswold dies of natural causes; Vlad Pinsky is by acclamation elected chairman of the Federation, the youngest Human ever to hold the post. He immediately begins a motion within the Federation Council to admit Sh'k'tlp as a full member. On Sh'k'tlp, they are all in favor of this development, even as they mourn the passing of Riswold, a man who had gained respect through his tough but fair negotiations. The Sh'k'tlp feel that by being admitted to the Federation, their trade agreements will increase both in number and in profit margin, thus offsetting any losses due to possible Federal tariffs.

2337.2. Sh'k'tlp is admitted into the Federation while retaining its own Commonwealth autonomy. This joining is purely business in nature, and no political agreements of any kind are reached. Vlad Pinsky does not exert control over any Sh'k'tlp holdings. The Gateway project is resumed as a bi-racial effort, with plans begun for the construction of four more such outposts, thus easing the movement of goods and information between the two races. All movement will flow through these gateways. A motion begins in the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth to admit Humanity.

GENERATE SH'K'TLP CHARACTER: 20%.

2338.8. Gateways One and Two are completed and operating. Debate continues within the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth concerning the Human question. Trade begins to flourish between the two

***"The Sh'k'tlp on Kr'd'm will begin to die."
The Federation is aghast at this obvious and horrid terrorism.***

races, and many bonds are forged between these two unlikely cohabitants. Although the examination of the *Ruby Slipper* continues, no knowledge of its origin has been uncovered.

Note to the GM: The references to the unknown craft, the so-called *Ruby Slipper*, indicate that there is another alien spacefaring race to be discovered. The GM may wish to use an alien race he has created as the owners of this craft.

III. New Professions and Skills

Four new professions and eight new skills are available to human characters. As noted, some of these are also available to Sh'k'tlp characters, in addition to those professions and skills unique to that race (listed in the following race description). Certain professions and skills are available only after a given date in the history of the Federation; to conform to the developments in the chronology and the time period in which the GM has set his campaign.

Some of these new professions and skills may not be the type a *Universe™* character would be too interested in (such as artist or missionary). They are, however, ideal livelihoods for non-player characters and may be used as a guide by the GM when creating such individuals for his campaign.

All such professions and skills are presented from a human point of view and, if taken by a Sh'k'tlp character, must be altered in accordance with their profession, skill, and technology rules. The race description also lists additional restrictions on professions and skills available to alien characters.

1. Modifications to Fields of Study and Professions

The Field of Study skill list in 6.3 of the Gamemaster's Guide is modified to include the following new skills:

Theoretical Science: Xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology (after the year 2335).

Humanities: Culture, art.

The Mind: Body control, psychometry.

Remember that all skills made available to a character by his fields of study may be acquired with initial Skill Points and professions Skill Points.

The *Skills Available* list for certain human professions in 7.9 of the Gamemaster's Guide is modified to include the following new skills:

Civil Inspector: Xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

Enforcer: Security.

Explorer: Culture, xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

Handyman: Security.

Interstellar Trader: Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

Lawman: Security.

Scout: Culture, xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

Space Pirate: Culture, security.

Space Technician: Security.

Spacetrooper: Security.

Spy: Security.

Star Sailor: Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

If the GM wishes to add new professions and skills to his campaign, any already-existing characters should be considered familiar with those new skills included in his fields of study or profession. That is, the character receives an X for each skill as described in 7.6 of the Gamemaster's Guide.

Skills that become available to a character on a given date may be acquired with initial Skill Points if he reaches the age of 20 after the listed date (that is, after his fields of study are chosen and before a profession is chosen). Dated skills may be acquired with professional Skill Points if the character is fully generated after the listed date. When a group of characters is generated, the GM should decide at what date the process will be completed beforehand. If a character cannot take a dated skill because it is not yet available (but he is in the proper field of study or profession), it will become available to him when the listed date is reached in the GM's campaign. The character will then be considered familiar with the skill.

2. Professions

ARTIST

Available to Humans

A creator of visuals, dance, song, or word; the artist is important throughout the far-flung colonies of the Federation, where he/she sparks creative thought necessary to the growth and maintenance of civilization. An artist is often an important member of exploratory expeditions, trained to see the patterns and connections that a more linear-minded soldier or scientist might miss. The artist is a specialist in non-verbal communication with entities who do not share a common language. Often assigned or invited to isolated colonies or military outposts, an artist can travel where other professions would not be permitted and is often given extraordinary access to leaders and other key personnel.

Prerequisites: Study of the humanities with art chosen as an initial skill; Characteristic Rating of at least Dexterity 5, Intelligence 5, Mental Power 2, and Empathy 5.

Skill Point Modifier: 6.

Skills Available: Art (2 additional levels required), psychokinesis (only if mind studied and MP 4 or greater), comput/robot tech, disguise, forgery/counterfeiting, xenology.

Benefits:

- A. 1 Tran cash.
- B. 3 Trans cash.
- C. 1 Tran x Empathy rating in cash.
- D. 3 Trans x Empathy rating in cash.
- E. 7 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; holographer.
- F. 15 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; Manner 36sd robot with construction and holographer systems.

CONTACTOR

Available to Humans and Sh'k'tlp after 2330

A specialist in contact, communication, investigation and negotiation with intelligent alien races. A contactor finds employment with federally-sponsored missions to alien space and official greeting parties for alien missions to Federal space. In the early stages of contact with a race, a contactor may be sent out alone or with a small party to commence interaction. A contactor is also valued by enterprises seeking to do business with aliens.

Prerequisites: Study of 2 of the following: theoretical science, applied science, or the humanities; Characteristic Ratings of at least Intelligence 7, Mental Power 3, and Empathy 6.

Skill Point Modifier: 8.

Skills Available: Physics, biology, astronomy, suit tech, electro tech, recruiting, law, linguistics, diplomacy (Human only), teaching, EVA, survival, air vehicles, marine vehicles, planetology, culture, xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology.

Benefits:

- A. 2 Trans cash.
- B. 500 mils x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 6 expedition suit.
- C. 1 Tran x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 6 expedition suit; Civ Level 7 translator.
- D. 3 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 7 expedition suit; Civ Level 7 translator; holographer.
- E. 10 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 7 expedition suit; Manner 38sdf. robot with recorder, information and language systems.
- F. 20 trans x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 7 expedition suit; Soidistant V-201 robot with electro tech, bio, holographer, information, language, and self-activation systems.

MISSIONARY

Available to Humans

A learned individual who promotes the role of religion in building culture and in enhancing the well-being of individuals. A missionary studies the underlying elements of life, creativity, and spiritual power within the universe. As a representative of a particular religion, a missionary will be sponsored by that organization and will seek to further its aims. A missionary may be a student of mind-body relationships and may have limited healing abilities. Journeys to colonies, outposts, and exploration missions are often underwritten by the Home Church.

Prerequisites: Study of the humanities; Characteristic Ratings of at least Intelligence 6, Mental Power 3, and Empathy 7.

Skill Point Modifier: 6.

Skills Available: Unarmed combat, diagnosis (2 levels only), treatment (2 levels only), recruiting, survival, urban, any environs.

Benefits:

- A. Nothing.
- B. 1 Tran cash, first aid kit.
- C. 2 Trans cash; first aid kit; Civ Level 7 translator.
- D. 4 Trans cash; first aid kit; Civ Level 8 translator.
- E. 10 Trans cash; first aid kit; Civ Level 8 translator; Interstellar CommLink (all transmission costs paid by church).
- F. 24 Trans cash; Civ level 8 mediscanner; Civ Level 8 translator; Interstellar CommLink (all transmission costs paid by church).

PATTERNIST

Available to Humans

A member of a unique, dynamic profession that combines elements of psionics with cultural studies; in an earlier time the patternist might have been known as a sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher, and mystic. Through training and sensitivity, the patternist is deeply aware of life and patterning going on within the cosmos; the underlying unities and connections among all things is the main field of study. A patternist has limited precognitive powers, which makes him a valuable consultant to all levels of government. A patternist is not as developed psionically as a thinker but, through empathetic sense, can perceive information in psychic ways and has an ability to heal others.

Prerequisites: Study of the humanities and the mind with culture chosen as an initial skill; Characteristic Ratings of at least Intelligence 8, mental Power 4, and Empathy 8.

Skill Point Modifier: 10.

Skills Available: Mind control, all scientific skills, xenology, Sh'k'tlp technology (after 2335).

Benefits:

All patternists may enter a psionic institute (see 10.5, Gamemaster's Guide)

- A. 1 Tran cash.
- B. 3 Trans cash; first aid kit.
- C. 1 Tran x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 6 mediscanner.
- D. 2 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; Civ Level 8 mediscanner.
- E. 5 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; any two scanners.
- F. 12 Trans x Empathy rating in cash; psionic rig, any two scanners.

3. Skills

New skills taken by a character may be recorded on the blank lines beneath the vehicle skills on the character record.

Some skill descriptions use the term *Equivalent Skill* when a Human skill is applied to use of an alien object. For example, a Sh'k'tlp *forcer* (a weapon, see Section IV, 16) is fired by using the laser/stun pistol skill, even though the weapon is not strictly a stun pistol and is certainly not a laser pistol. This modification has been done to reduce the need for new skills for alien characters. Thus, the laser/stun pistol skill is the equivalent skill for a forcer. When any alien object is being used (by an alien or human character) and an Equivalent Skill is not assigned by these rules, the GM should declare an appropriate Human skill as the Equivalent Skill. In addition, if a Human character is using an alien object, his xenology or Sh'k'tlp technology skill must also be considered.

One new skill presented here, *perception*, is different from all other skills in that all characters (of all races) are considered to possess it. It is strongly recommended that the GM add this skill to all the characters in his campaign.

ARTS (Interpersonal Skill)

8 Levels/Limit: Empathy

The character is skilled in the creation and interpretation of music, dance, performing, writing, or pictorialization (such as painting, sculpture, etc.). He may be able to entertain an audience or stimulate a reader or viewer. His accomplishments may aid communications with Humans, or affect their mood (in a manner similar to propaganda). His talents may enhance communication with non-Human intelligent beings as well, creating a common bond when purely analytical responses might fail. Add the character's *Intelligence* Rating and the square of his Skill Level to the Base Chance for the following tasks. Required times are not given for these tasks as they vary widely, depending on the situation.

► Write a document, create a picture, give a performance, etc., to impress an individual (that is, put a person in awe of your talents): **35%**. If this task is performed successfully, the impressed person will become more friendly with the character or even offer to purchase the product the character creates (if tangible) or to hire the character for additional performances.

► Write a document, create a picture, give a performance, etc., that affects an individual's mood and compels action: **25%**. Successful performance of this task may be equated with a successful propaganda program. The affected individual will be inclined to take action inspired by the character's creation.

► Affect the mood of a crowd: **15%**. Successful performance of this task may be equated with controlling the "mob spirit" of a crowd. If the attempt fails by **30 or more**, the crowd may turn somewhat hostile.

FIRST CONTACTS

T► Communicate with an alien intelligence: 5%. This task may be performed instead of, or in addition, to the xenology task of similar name. Its chance of success may vary widely, depending on the type of alien encountered.

A character who takes this skill should declare what artistic endeavor he will generally practice (dance, painting, holomaking, etc.). A character who rolls a **0, 1, or 2** on either die when attempting an art task receives 1 Experience Point.

BODY CONTROL (*Psionic Skill*)

8 Levels/Limit: Empathy

The character can alter his internal metabolism through the powers of his mind. He can enhance his immune and regenerative systems to heal himself without the aid of medical technology. He can increase his survival chances by decreasing his body's need for oxygen, water and food. Add the character's *Mental Power* Rating and the square of his Skill Level to the Base Chance for the following tasks.

T► Alter own biological system for survival: 30%. If this task is successfully performed, for every 10 points or fraction thereof below the modified chance the dice result indicates, the character's use of oxygen is reduced by **15%** (up to a maximum of **90%**), and the character need not perform the survival task (see 15.0, Gamemaster's Guide) for one day. Other characters in the party do not receive the benefits of success; they must perform the survival task. Once a character has successfully altered his biological state, he remains in a trance-like state and takes no action until he brings himself out of it (at any time he wishes, but then the positive aspects of success cease to exist).

T► Diagnose self when wounded or ill: 90%. The Base Chance for this task is reduced by hits received per the Diagnosis skill (12.0, Gamemaster's Guide). It is conducted as a diagnosis task, except that no equipment is used and the chance is modified by the character's *Mental Power* Rating and the square of his body control Skill Level (instead of Intelligence and diagnosis).

T► Treat self when wounded or ill: 1%. This task is like the Treatment skill task (12.0, Gamemaster's Guide) and may be performed only if the character's ailments have been successfully diagnosed (either by the body control skill or another character's diagnosis skill). Successful diagnosis may increase the Skill Level. Again no equipment is used, and the character's *Mental Power* Rating and the square of his body control Skill Level modify the Base Chance (instead of Intelligence and treatment).

A character who rolls a **0, 1 or 2** on either die when attempting a body control task receives 1 Experience point.

CULTURE (*Scientific Skill*)

8 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

The character is knowledgeable in various cultural arts and sciences, including sociology, anthropology, archaeology, political science, and cultural psychology. He understand the dynamics of human culture, how it grows, how it maintains itself, the many forms it can take, and how it may stagnate and die. He is skilled in synthesizing knowledge and can often enhance the effectiveness of tasks in other branches of endeavor. For success in a culture task, to the Base Chance add the character's *Intelligence* Rating and the square of his Skill Level.

T► Enhance diplomatic endeavor between Humans, enhance economic task, or enhance law task: 40%. Immediately before the character, or any other character in his party, performs any of the preceding tasks, the character may perform this task to improve the chances of the succeeding task. If the dice result is less than the

modified chance, increase the modified chance of success with the related skill by an amount equal to that by which the attempt succeeded. Conversely, if the attempt fails, decrease the Base Chance of the task to be attempted by an amount equal to that by which the attempt failed.

T► Deduce societal or cultural information about the nature of a Human or Human community through examination of its artifacts: 30%. This task is especially useful when examining ruins or abandoned Human settlements.

T► Understand alien artifact: 10%. This task is identical to the task of the same name in the xenology skill description. However, no piece of equipment will increase the character's Skill Level.

T► Deduce information about the societal or cultural nature of an alien through examination of its artifacts: 10%. This task may be performed if the nature of the involved artifacts are understood by the character. See task of similar title in the xenology skill description for further information.

A major function of the culture skill is a prerequisite for the xenology skill. As described in that skill listing, a character's xenology Skill Level may never exceed culture Skill Level. A character who rolls a **0 or 1** on either die when attempting a cultural task receives 1 Experience Point.

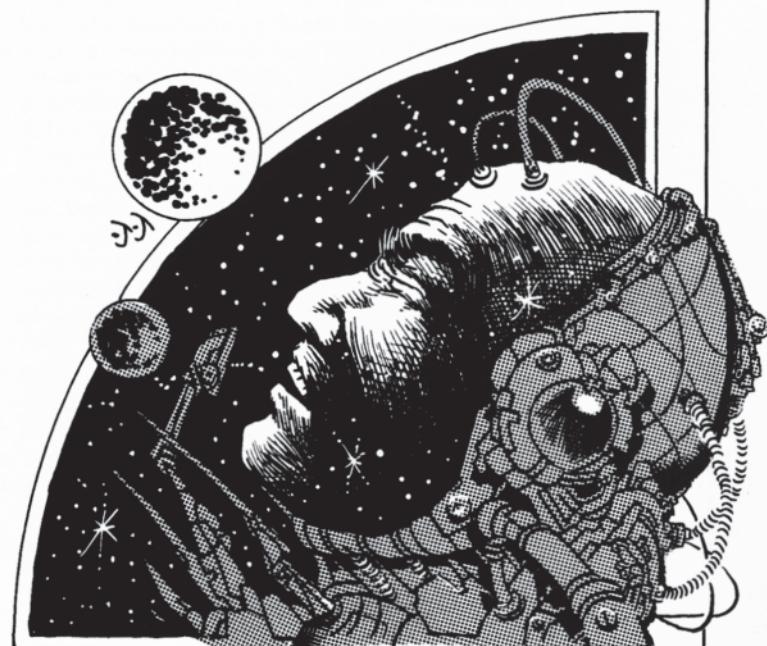
PERCEPTION

9 Levels/No Characteristic Limit

Perception is a measure of the character's intuition developed as a result of his adventuring experience. It is used during play to determine if a character notices a detail about a situation, notices something in the distance, hears a footfall, etc.

Every character automatically possesses the perception skill when generated. Human and Sh'k'tlp characters initially possess this skill at Level 2. No initial Skill Points or professional Skill Points need be spent to acquire the skill, nor may the skill be improved by the expenditure of such points. Perception may be improved during play by amassing Perception Experience Points. Perception is used in play in either of two ways:

1. If the GM wishes to allow a character a chance to notice



something not readily apparent that is related purely to the senses (sight, hearing, smell, etc.), he instructs the character to conduct a *Perception Check* by rolling *one* die. If the die result is equal to or less than the character's Perception Level, the GM informs of the occurrence or time. If the die result is greater than the character's Perception Level, the GM provides no information.

2. If the GM wishes to allow a character a chance to notice something related to a particular area of expertise, he instructs the character to conduct a Perception Check by rolling *percentile dice*. The chance of success equals the character's Perception Level *plus* the level he has with the skill associated with the item or event. The *higher* of these two levels is *squared before adding*. **Example:** A skimmer is flying by the character at the edge of view. He has Perception 3 and Air Vehicles 5, so he has a 28% chance (5² + 3), of noticing the vehicle and correctly identifying it as a skimmer. Any one of many different skills may be associated with a Perception Check; the most common would be scientific, technical, environ, or vehicle skill. However, any skill might apply, depending on the situation.

A character who rolls a **1** on either die when conducting a Perception Check receives 1 Perception Experience Point.

PSYCHOMETRY (Psionic Skill)

8 Levels/Limit: Empathy

The character has the psionic ability to receive information about an object by touching or holding it. This information can include the history of the object, its nature or function, and who has held it or possessed it previously. A psionic rig does not aid this skill, nor is there any danger of psionic backlash. When the character uses this skill, the GM rolls percentile dice secretly and adds the character's *Mental Power* Rating and the square of his Skill Level to the Base Chance for the following task.

► Receive information about an object by holding it or laying hands on it: **30%**. This task may be performed only if the character's bare hands come in contact with the object. Time required: **10 minutes**. If the task is performed unsuccessfully, no information is forthcoming. If the dice result is over the modified chance by **40 or more**, the GM gives the character false information about the object. If the attempt is successful, the GM gives information about the object according to the following guidelines: if the dice roll is equal to the chance or up to **10 points below** it, give sketchy information about the history of the object over the past week, but reveal nothing about what the object is or does; if from **11 to 20** points below the chance, reveal what has happened to the object, including who has held it, over the past two months; if from **21 to 30** points below, reveal the history of the object over the past five years and more correct and detailed information about the nature of the object; if from **41-50** points below, give the history of the object over the past 25 years and more information about its nature, and if **51 or more** points below the chance, the GM discloses as much information about the object as the character wishes or needs to further his interests.

The information that a psychometrist receives is usually in the form of visions and impressions; it is usually not hard scientific data. If the psychometrist is familiar with a particular brand of science, engineering, art, or culture, he will be better able to correctly interpret and understand what he is "picking up" from the object. Thus, a psychometrist with no technical skills trying to tune into an artifact that performs a technical function will pick up impressions, but will not have the background to precisely interpret those impressions. A character who rolls a **0 or 1** on either die when attempting the skill psychometry receives 1 Experience Point.

The character has the psionic ability to receive information about an object by touching or holding it.

SECURITY (Technical Skill)

7 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

The character is familiar with all kinds of alarms and security systems. He may leave traps that will warn him of an intrusion while he is away (such as the hair-across-the-door-opening trick) and is skilled in avoiding such traps. He may disconnect alarm systems and detect intrusions into areas that he has prepared for detection and, to a lesser extent, into unprepared areas. The character's *Dexterity* Rating and the square of his Skill Level are added to the Base Chance of the following tasks.

► Prepare area for secret detection: **25%**. Time required: **1 hour**. If the character is using a *locator* (a Sh'k'tlp device, see Section IV, 15), his Skill Level is increased by **2** for this task, and the time required is reduced to **1 Action Round** (15 seconds). If the dice result is **less than or equal to** the modified chance, the character will be informed upon his return to the area, whether or not there were any intrusions and, if so, the nature of that intrusion. If the result is **more than 30 greater** than the modified chance, the character is given erroneous information. **Exception:** If the intruder has security skill and performs the next task successfully, the character is not informed at all.

► Enter area undetected: **45%**. If the area has been prepared for detection, subtract the square of the preparer's security Skill Level from the chance. The GM rolls dice secretly; if the attempt fails, this fact is not revealed until the detection of the intrusion.

► Detect intrusion in unprepared area: **10%**. Time required: **30 minutes**. If the character is using a locator, his Skill Level is increased by **2** and the time required is reduced to **4 Action Rounds** (1 minute). If the percentile dice result is **equal to or less than** the modified chance, the character is informed of any intrusions.

► Disconnect alarm: **60%**. Time required: **30 minutes**. The character's Skill Level is increased by **1 (or 2)** if he is using a Civ Level 7 (or 8) electrokit. The square of the alarm system's Civ Level is subtracted from the Base Chance. Only one attempt may be made. If the attempt fails by **30 or more**, the character has set off the alarm.

A character who rolls a **0, 1 or 2** on either die when attempting a security task receives 1 Experience Point.

XENOLOGY (Scientific Skill)

7 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

The character is familiar with varied forms of alien life encountered by the Federation and Human theories of alien intelligence, technology, and culture. His background in anthropology, archaeology, and extraterrestrial phenomena allows him to examine alien artifacts to discern their function and perhaps even use them. He may attempt to communicate with possibly intelligent alien life. Once communication is established, he will best know how to express concepts to aliens and to understand their various expressions.

A character may not choose the xenology skill unless he also

has the culture skill. Furthermore, his xenology Skill Level may never be higher than his culture Skill Level. If the receipt of an Experience Point would increase a character's xenology level beyond his cultural level, the Experience Point is assigned to culture instead. To the Base Chance of each of the following tasks, add the character's *Intelligence* Rating and the square of his Skill Level. The GM should roll secretly for each xenology task.

T► Understand alien artifact: 10%. Time required depends on sophistication of the artifact. If the character is using a visual scanner, energy scanner, or other piece of equipment that the GM feels will aid identification, he may increase the character's Skill Level by 2 for the attempt. If the character is successful, the GM informs him about the nature of the artifact. If the character fails by **more than 30**, the device is damaged, or harms the character, or both (depending on the nature of the device).

T► Use alien artifact: 30%. If the purpose of an alien artifact is understood (either through successful completion of the above task or an outside source), the character may attempt to use it (e.g., fire a weapon or control a vehicle). In addition to his intelligence or the square of his xenology Skill Level, the GM adds the level the character has with the Equivalent Skill for the item's use to the Base Chance. If successful, the character may use the device as if he had a Skill Level of 1 with it. If he fails by **more than 30**, the device is damaged, or harms the character, or both (depending on the nature of the device).

T► Deduce information about the physical or mental nature of an alien through examination of its artifacts: 10%. This task may be performed only if the natures of the involved artifacts are understood by the character. The time required depends on the number and sophistication of the artifacts examined. The chance of success for this task and the information the GM reveals if successful are highly variable, depending on the types of artifacts examined and previous knowledge of the race possessed by the character. If the character fails the attempt by **more than 30**, the GM should reveal erroneous information about the aliens.

T► Communicate with intelligent alien encountered for the first time: 10%. Time required: **2 to 5 hours.** The alien's Intelligence Rating is also added to the Base Chance. If successful, the involved parties may exchange a simple vocabulary of words. If unsuccessful by **more than 30**, the aliens will react negatively (either with great fear or aggression) towards the character. The xenology skill may also be used instead of the linguistics skill when attempting to communicate with creatures.

When a character is interacting with a known alien with whom communication has already been established, the appropriate Interpersonal Skill is used (see *Universe*, 14.0). However, the lower of the character's appropriate interpersonal Skill Level and xenology Skill Level is used to modify the Base Chance. For example, if a character with a trading Skill Level of 4 and a xenology Skill Level of 2 were attempting to trade with an alien, his Skill Level would be considered 2. If he had no xenology skill, he would be considered without trading skill as well. A character who rolls a **0** or **1** on either die when attempting a xenology task receives 1 Experience Point.

Depending on the situation, other skills may aid a xenology task attempt. For example, psionic or linguistic skills may aid communication. If examining an artifact, the GM should take into account how that artifact relates to the character's skills. For example, a doctor investigating an artifact with a medical function might have more success than an astronomer, even if both have the xenology skill. Likewise, alien art forms would be better recognized by a Human artist than by an engineer.

SH'TK'LIP TECHNOLOGY (Scientific Skill)

9 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

Available to Humans only

The character is familiar with the concepts behind the technology of the Sh'tk'lip. He understands the basic mechanical, electronic, and aesthetic ideas behind the weapons, vehicles, spaceships, and other products of the Sh'tk'lip. A character possessing this skill need not perform the "use alien artifact" task (see xenology) to use any Sh'tk'lip race's technological item. Whenever the character wishes to use a Sh'tk'lip item, he compares his Equivalent Skill Level to his Sh'tk'lip Technology Level. If the Equivalent Skill Level is equal to or less than the Technology Skill Level, he uses the square of his Equivalent Skill Level and the appropriate characteristic to modify the Base Chance. If the Technology Skill Level is less than the Equivalent Skill Level, he uses the square of the Technology Skill Level plus his intelligence Rating to modify the Base Chance.

Example: A character wishes to fire a Sh'tk'lip *forcer*. His Laser/-Stun Pistol (the Equivalent Skill) is a **4** and his Sh'tk'lip Technology Level is **2**. Thus, he uses the square of his Technology Skill Level plus his Intelligence Rating to modify the Base Chance. If his Technology Skill Level were **5**, he would instead use the square of his Laser/Stun Pistol Level and Dexterity Rating to modify the Base Chance.

When a character uses a Sh'tk'lip item, he may gain an EP in accordance with the appropriate Equivalent Skill description. If an EP is gained, it is applied only to the skill used to modify the Base Chance — either the Equivalent Skill or the Sh'tk'lip Technology Skill Level, a character must amass a number of EPs equal to twice the level to be attained. For example, to increase from Level **2** to Level **3** would require **6** EPs.

HUMAN TECHNOLOGY (Scientific Skill)

9 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

Available to Sh'tk'lip

This skill is identical in all respects to the Sh'tk'lip technology skill, except that it represents an alien character's familiarity with Human devices.

IV. The Sh'tk'lip

4. Physical Characteristics

Sh'tk'lip are a carbon-based life form, they breathe oxygen, and they are sapient. They are not warm-blooded as we understand the term (no drawback on their home planet, which has an average temperature of 37 degrees Celsius — around 100 degrees Farenheit — and mild seasons), but they do have a highly complex and efficient circulatory system. They are like terrestrial marsupials in that they are oviparous (laying eggs outside the body) and have a pouch. Unlike marsupials, the eggs are not incubated in any way in a nest; rather, the eggs are laid directly into the pouch for warmth and safe-keeping during the incubation period. The Sh'tk'lip have distinct male and female sexes; both sexes contain pouches and the incubation period is shared, though females usually have a closer attachment to their eggs.

Sh'tk'lip mass between 1 and 50 kg, adults between 40 and 50 kg in their natural form. Females are generally slightly larger than males. They have four limbs and a retractable spine. Bones are of an aluminous silicate and play no part in maintaining the being's circulatory system.

Sh'tk'lip have limited shape-changing abilities. Essentially, they can rearrange their flesh in nearly any shape, but their bones can be rearranged only marginally. Consequently, any shape a Sh'tk'lip takes must have four limbs (though limbs can, of course, be hidden by fitting them into grooves along the side, and false limbs of flesh containing no bones can be created). The retractable spine allows Sh'tk'lip the option of having a tail or not; it can also be used to create a fifth limb, though that limb will not have

functional fingers or toes since the end of the tail lacks the necessary minor bones. The tail bone is incapable of supporting the weight of a Sh'k'tlp, and thus cannot be used as a monkey's; neither is it able to grasp and firmly hold an object.

In addition, Sh'k'tlp have a color-changing ability similar to that of chameleons. They are capable only of monochromatic color-schemes (i.e., they may not color themselves with patterns).

Note: The ability to use color-schemes can be achieved by Sh'k'tlp through intensive training; it is considered an art form and a badge of status among the Sh'k'tlp. A Sh'k'tlp character may learn color-scheming.

Conservation of mass, of course, does apply to Sh'k'tlp shape-changing. Thus, a 50 kg Sh'k'tlp can take on a wide variety of forms, but all of them will mass 50 kgs.

Sh'k'tlp are completely hairless and featherless, and cannot create hair or feathers as a result of shape-changing. Thus, it would be difficult for a Sh'k'tlp to pass as Human. However, those with color-changing ability may be able to create small dark markings that mimic the appearance of hair. Close inspection of such markings would reveal the fraud.

A Sh'k'tlp can change shape in 2 to 20 minutes, depending on the shape chosen. When a Sh'k'tlp character decides to change shape, the GM should determine how long it will take him to do so; essentially, the more radical the change in shape, the longer it should take. For the sake of simplicity, the GM may, if he so wishes, roll two dice, add the numbers, and use the result as the number of minutes required.

Instead of Strength, Dexterity and Agility characteristics, Sh'k'tlp characters have a single *Body* characteristic (see Character Generation, following). Essentially, this *Body* characteristic can be broken down into Strength, Dexterity, and Agility characteristics; the sum of these three characteristics may not exceed the *Body* characteristic. **Note:** No characteristic may be less than one.

A Sh'k'tlp character must declare what shape he is at any given time (and this is how his *Body* Rating is allocated). Until he announces a shape change, he must use that particular *Body* Rating breakdown.

Sh'k'tlp flesh can be formed into hard, horny plates or protuberances at the termination of the limbs and tail. Thus, effectively, Sh'k'tlp can form claws for use in combat. When a Sh'k'tlp changes shape, its character may stipulate that it is forming claws; if so, its Dexterity may not be greater than 2. Sh'k'tlp with claws add 2 to their Unarmed Combat Skill when engaged in combat at close quarters.

Because they are cold-blooded, Sh'k'tlp become sluggish and irritable at temperatures below 27 degrees C. (80 degrees F.) and can die if exposed to temperatures below 10 degrees C. (50 degrees F.) for extended periods of time (for instance, the sum of two die-rolls in hours at 10 degrees C. before death and proportionately shorter times for lower temperatures).

Because the sun of the Sh'k'tlp home planet is hotter and bluer than Sol, the Sh'k'tlp visible spectrum is centered on about 4500 Angstroms, which means they cannot see red but can see another color in the ultraviolet (which they call k'hr'du).

5. Sh'k'tlp Home Environment

The home planet of the Sh'k'tlp is called Sh'k'tlp, the second planet of Sh'ddd (Drum in the *Universe* game; -38, 43, 16), an F-class star. Sh'k'tlp has an average global temperature of 37 degrees C. (100 degrees F.). Although its hydrographic percentage is low by comparison with Earth (45%) and there are few large bodies of water, the higher temperature and lack of icecaps means the air of Sh'k'tlp is, by and large, extremely humid. (The exceptions are mostly in the great temperate desert zone.) As a result, most of the planet is covered by lush, dense, rapidly-growing vegetation. The high incidence of radiation on the planet-

ary surface (relative to Earth) means more plantlife can be supported per square meter since there is more energy to tap. Consequently, a higher density of animal life can also be supported. The result is an environment similar to Western misconceptions of jungle life: tremendous, lush vegetation teeming with life, constant predation, and constant danger.

Life on Sh'k'tlp is extremely dangerous. A fantastic variety of predators has evolved since life began on the planet. There were three early life forms that competed for dominance on the land, once the dry surface had been colonized: one form was quite similar to the dinosaurian predecessors, another was a primitive mammal, and the third the forebearer of all shape-changers. A harsh change of climate just at the time these three ancestors were competing for dominance gave the edge to the shape-changers. Though mammalian and reptilian creatures still survive, the shape-changers are the predominant species on Sh'k'tlp. (In Earth terms, it would be as though the dinosaur line conquered and had never become extinct.) Since that early climatic catastrophe on Sh'k'tlp, there have been no others, allowing the shape-changers to remain dominant. Though the marsupial-like reproduction of the shape-changers is somewhat more primitive than that of mammals, the dominance of shape-changers has never been seriously challenged by competing life forms. The main predators on Sh'k'tlp are, of course, shape-changers.

The predators have a much greater shape-changing ability than the Sh'k'tlp; the more dangerous predators can literally take on any shape and coloration (though they are still limited by mass considerations). In response to this continuing evolutionary pressure, the Sh'k'tlp have evolved three defenses:

1. Shape-changing abilities to fool predators.
2. Intelligence.
3. Compulsive neatness.

Their compulsive neatness allows a Sh'k'tlp to detect the presence of a predator. Every object in his living quarters has a precise location. Sh'k'tlp have nearly photographic memories and remember precisely where they put things. If a Sh'k'tlp finds an object is not exactly in its proper place, he has good reason to believe a predator has taken the object's place and is mimicking its appearance in the room.

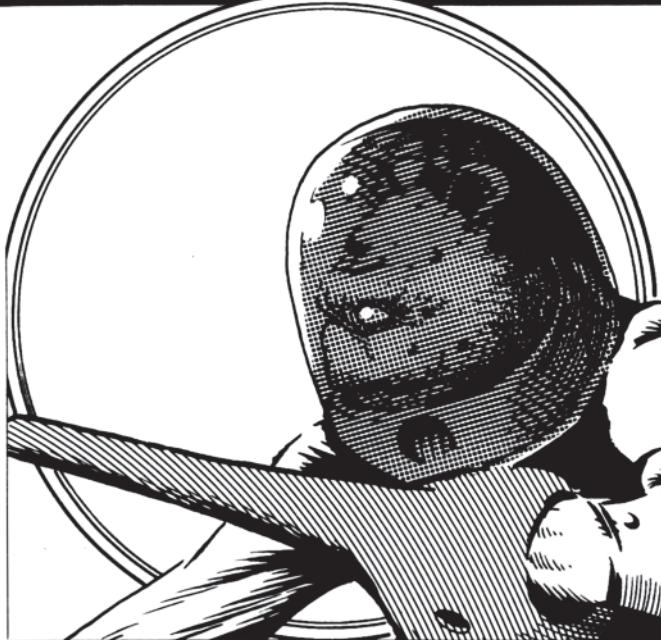
6. Sh'k'tlp Mentality

To a Human, the most striking aspect of the Sh'k'tlp mind set is compulsive neatness. A Sh'k'tlp home is extremely well-organized; color-coding and the use of specifically shaped cubby-holes is common. A common remark is that a Sh'k'tlp dwelling is like a spaceship: economy of space is at a maximum and absolutely everything, down to writing implements, has a specific place.

This compulsive neatness extends beyond the simply physical. Sh'k'tlp commonly take a systems-design approach to every problem; that is, they seek to identify the independent aspects of the problem, develop an algorithm to solve it, and design a system incorporating that algorithm. Thus, they are consistent, logical, careful, and do everything on a step-by-step basis. To Humans, the Sh'k'tlp are plodders, not innovators; managers rather than entrepreneurs; computer programmers rather than theoretical scientists. (This is not to say that innovation is entirely lacking in their culture nor that they lack entrepreneurs and theoretical scientists; the above statement is simply a description of the Sh'k'tlp mentality.) The Sh'k'tlp tend to do things by the book rather than to improvise.

The reaction of a Sh'k'tlp to lack of organization and neatness will range, depending on severity and the implications, from irritation to fear or anger. A good way to give a Sh'k'tlp a bad case of nerves is to ransack his living quarters.

Sh'k'tlp have nearly photographic memories. That is, they



have almost perfect recall, both for visual images and for spoken material. This trait is necessary since a Sh'k'tlp must be able to memorize precise locations of innumerable objects. As a result, the Sh'k'tlp never developed a system of writing as Humans understand; they instead use a short series of color and graphic symbols for use in industry. Perfect recall meant information could be passed on with remarkable exactness from generation to generation. Messages could be transported by runner. A numbering system was developed quite early. With the rise of the industrial revolution, the total amount of information available to a society began to multiply tremendously and a means of storing information outside the body became necessary; the result was the development of a numerical-phonetic alphabet, with each phoneme in a Sh'k'tlp tongue being assigned a sequential number. The same system was easily adapted to computer storage once computers were developed.

From a human perspective, Sh'k'tlp are not only compulsively neat but more than a little paranoid — another survival trait. They have to be suspicious of everything out of the ordinary, as any other attitude may result in being eaten. Sh'k'tlp tend to be suspicious of strangers — or, sometimes, even of friends. If two friends are apart even for a short time, they will be somewhat wary toward one another after meeting again until they can positively identify one another. The problem is that the shape-changing abilities of Sh'k'tlp make it difficult to make positive identification; recognition of physical form is essentially impossible, and the form-changing abilities of the Sh'k'tlp enable them to change the timbre of the voice by altering their vocal apparatus. Identification is a matter of mannerisms and knowledge. Sh'k'tlp often go out of their way to be idiosyncratic in certain ways to ease the problem of identification. In modern Sh'k'tlp society, the problem is not a major one, since practically everyone wears government-issued identification bracelets, which are difficult (though not impossible) to duplicate.

In modern Sh'k'tlp politics, this paranoia contends with the camaraderie engendered by the feeling that all sapient species are locked in a struggle against a voracious nature. The Racialists urge the construction of a large space fleet in order to protect the Sh'k'tlp race against possible attack from other sapient species, while the Loonies believe that Sh'k'tlp history shows contact with other civilizations will ultimately result in the immeasurable benefit of all sapient species.

Summary: Sh'k'tlp are compulsively neat; think linearly rather

than intuitively; fear disorder and the unknown; attack what they fear; are willing to sacrifice the weak; tend to mate for life; are extremely cautious; and often are friendly towards other intelligent beings.

7. Sh'k'tlp Language

Rather than a voice box and vocal cords, Sh'k'tlp have a series of timpani-like vibratory membranes in the throat. Their language sounds to the untrained listener like a series of snare and kettle-drums being played. In essence, the language contains consonants but no vowels, something possible as a result of the unique vocal arrangements of the Sh'k'tlp (a number of consonants unknown in Universal are transliterated as **d**, **h**, **l** and **m**, sounds not present in the Sh'k'tlp language). The apostrophes in Universal transliteration represent stops in words.

Since Sh'k'tlp have trouble with vowels and Humans have trouble with words without vowels, Humans usually speak Sh'k'tlp by inserting the vowel **i** (chosen arbitrarily) between consonants when necessary. (Thus, "Sh'k'tlp" is pronounced *sh-ki-tlp*.) Sh'k'tlp who deal with Humans will have no difficulty understanding this mangling of their language. Conversely, Sh'k'tlp usually speak Human language omitting vowels and replacing the consonants **d**, **h**, **l** and **m** by their non-Human equivalents. Thus, "unacquainted" is pronounced *nkwntd* by a Sh'k'tlp. The result may sound peculiar to the Human ear, but familiarity with Sh'k'tlp pronunciation eventually results in understanding between both species.

A Human may learn Sh'k'tlp tongues and vice versa, though learning an alien tongue is more difficult than learning a tongue of one's own species; a character may not learn the Sh'k'tlp tongue until he has a Linguistics Skill Level of 5 or greater (see 14.0, Gamemaster's Guide). There are three Sh'k'tlp languages still in common usage: Zh'drn, Kwrtp, and Blbdd'l. Zh'drn is the most common and can be assumed to be the Sh'k'tlp Universal. All three languages share a large body of identical roots for words, at least for verbs, though nouns and modifiers vary widely among the three languages.

Sh'k'tlp names commonly begin with the consonants **sh**, **zh**, **p** or **f**. Names of beings generally consist of three sound groupings (like syllables). Character names should follow these rules.

8. Sh'k'tlp History

Human history tends to follow one of two distinct trends, which can be termed Western and Eastern. In Western history, civilization initiates in a group of competing cultures (a city-state or nation-state phase) followed by solidification into an imperial stage. Through internal decay and bureaucratic ossification, the imperial stage begins to decline; eventually, it is swept away by barbarian incursions, the result being a dark age which gradually develops into a group of competing cultures. In Eastern history, dark ages are rare because invaders are generally fewer in number than the civilized population and are instead rapidly integrated into the civilization. The ossification of the Eastern imperial stage generally leads to a breakdown in imperial control, followed by a stage of competing cultures (a warlord phase), followed by re-establishment of an imperium.

The radically different Sh'k'tlp psychology creates a different trend in their history. Civilization begins in a region. Small regional areas establish their own civilizations, engaging in trade with surrounding areas. Because of the lack of a warring instinct and the extremely logical nature of Sh'k'tlp thought, these regional civilizations gradually coalesce into a single over-arching civilization. Bureaucratic ossification sets in. At this stage in Human society, either barbarian incursion or revolt of local leaders would lead to a dark age or warlord age. However, the lack of a Sh'k'tlp warring instinct means that ossification con-

tinues. The result is that Sh'k'tlp imperiums tend to last until complete collapse of the economic framework through excessive bureaucratic intervention. The collapse is followed by an excessively long dark age (by Human standards).

In Human society, the greatest technological and artistic advances tend to occur during periods of competing cultures (witness Greek city-states, the Renaissance Italian city-states, and the nation-states of the 19th and 20th centuries). Since Sh'k'tlp societies do not ordinarily go through such phases, technological advance tends to be a slow, upward process in Sh'k'tlp history, rather than occurring in brief spurts as in Human history. In Sh'k'tlp as in Human society, the pace of change alters dramatically once the industrial revolution begins, since the industrial revolution inevitably breeds a class of scientists and technologists and a new understanding of the nature of knowledge and the scientific method. Once the industrial revolution is underway, the technological advances of a sapient society skyrocket.

Recorded Human history began around 3000 B.C., meaning there has been about 5500 years of recorded history. Since the development of a Sh'k'tlp written language occurred only about 1200 years before contact with Humans, it is difficult to compare the length of "recorded" histories. Indeed, there are Sh'k'tlp verbal epics dealing with the exploits of neolithic hunters which have been handed down from generation to generation; some may be hundreds of thousands of years old. However, agriculture began on Sh'k'tlp about 30,000 years ago (compared with 8000, on the continents of Earth).

The poles of Sh'k'tlp are uncomfortably cold as far as the Sh'k'tlp are concerned, and the interiors of the continents in the tropical and low temperate regions are generally quite dry. The most hospitable areas are the upper latitudes (30-60 degrees North and South) in both hemispheres, and the island chains and archipelagoes at lower latitudes. There were three cradles of civilization on Sh'k'tlp: the periphery of the Zh'drnk Sea (environs s02 and s03, and s08); Kwrtpk and the archipelago to the south of it (environs n02 and n07); and the Blddd'l archipelago (environs n11 and n04).

Although now united, the Sh'k'tlp civilizations grew out of these three distinct cultures. They are the same ones that gave the Sh'k'tlp their three languages: Blddd'l, Kwrptk, and Zh'drn.

Each group nurtured its culture independently, with a different approach to communal living and government. The Blddd'l started out as a theocracy about 20,000 BC (by Human reckoning), but it collapsed and they remained in a dark age for over 8000 years until they discovered iron. This spawned a rapid growth of exploration and settlement of new lands. The great Blddd'l expansion gave rise to an autocracy which strictly regulated the peoples' lives and their ways of doing business.

The Kwrptk civilization started out in a military fashion. Their location in a river valley which, while fertile, was also filled with predators could explain this militarism. The necessity of protecting the people and the carry-over of inborn fears from their primitive ancestors made these Sh'k'tlp perfect soldiers. In this manner they found the way to survive.

On the other hand, the Zh'drn grew in a relatively predator-free environment, which allowed them to discover, experience, or create their own myths and religions. The civilization believed that Sun-gods brought to them the sword, the plow, and their monetary unit, which were displayed on their royal coat of arms. While some Sh'k'tlp anthropologists maintain the Zh'drn were visited by space travellers, the more popular and scientifically substantiated theory is that a group of renegade Blddd'l landed there and set themselves up as gods. The relatively placid lifestyle led the Zh'drn to favor the good in the Sh'k'tlp over the evil. They came to appreciate beauty and the individual freedoms rather than develop the near paranoia of their Sh'k'tlp brothers.

Left by themselves, these civilizations would have all sunk into lethargy and decay, which perhaps would have spelled destruction for the Sh'k'tlp in the face of so many predators. The driving curiosity of sentient beings decreed that their paths should cross. The first to meet were the Kwrtp and Zh'drn (about 10,000 BC). While there were the inevitable skirmishes and fights to retain the old orders, the Sh'k'tlps soon learned to mix the logic and beneficial government ideals of the Zh'drn with the economical and cultural efficiency of the Kwrtp.

Sometime about 6000 BC, the Kwrtp/Zh'drn encountered the Blddd'l. At first the Blddd'l leaders banned all trade with the new civilization, but the new technological advances each side could offer the other soon led to a rich black market trade. The Blddd'l autocracy, unable to keep out new ideas and philosophies, perished after a thousand years of erosion.

From that time on, the Blddd'l civilization grew to become the most advanced, taking more from the other societies than they returned. Gradually, the Kwrtp and Zh'drn were absorbed by the Blddd'l and the united Sh'k'tlp have flourished as a race.

9. Sh'k'tlp Culture: The Commonwealth

In many ways, Sh'k'tlp society is politically organized in the same was as the Federation. Most (but not all) Sh'k'tlp worlds are members of the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth, the capital of which is K'mnt on the peninsula in environ s02. The Commonwealth is more centralized than the Federation; each member-planet has a Planetary Governor appointed by the Commonwealth Legislature. Planetary Governors have absolute power, subject only to injunction by the planetary courts and unanimous veto of gubernatorial edicts by all legislators from the planet. Governors are expected to report weekly to Sector Administrators, who report back to the Commonwealth President. The President is appointed by the Commonwealth Legislature, and commonly rules for a term of 20 years. Planetary Governors generally rule for a term of 5 years, though appointment for other terms (including life) is not unknown.

Each member-planet of the Commonwealth has one legislator per hundred million people (but a minimum of three legislators per planet). Only planets with a population of a hundred million or more are full members of the Commonwealth; others are colonies. Colonies have Colonial Governors but no legislatures, and their courts are subject to the courts of the nearest full-member planet. There are only seven full-member planets, including Sh'k'tlp itself. Sh'k'tlp has a population of roughly 3.75 billion, and thus has 38 legislators; the other 6 member-planets together have a total of 29 legislators, so Sh'k'tlp can necessarily out-vote the rest of the Commonwealth combined. (However, the legislators from a single planet can veto edicts of the local governor, which means the power Sh'k'tlp can exert over member-planets is limited.) Deep space colonies are under the supervision of the closest member-planets or colonies, and their population is counted when calculating the number of legislators.

Legislators are not elected. Anyone may apply to the Commonwealth bureaucracy to become a legislator from his home planet. When an opening occurs, candidates undergo a rigorous testing and questioning procedure at the hands of the bureaucracy; in theory, the bureaucracy then picks the most eligible candidate from among the ranks of the volunteers. Naturally, the system generally results in the choice of uncontroversial candidates of high social standing. In play, any character of influence 21 or higher should be permitted to apply to the legislature and, if an opening occurs, should have some chance of succeeding to the office left vacant.

Legislators serve for life, or until resignation due to physical

or mental disability. Once every Sh'k'tlp year, each legislator must by law pass a health exam administered by the health bureaucracy. The result is often a flurry of legislation shortly before the time of the exam as legislators attempt to get laws passed before the composition of the legislature changes.

Because of the non-elective nature of the Sh'k'tlp political system, political parties as they are known to Humans generally do not exist. There are groups of individuals in the legislature who see eye-to-eye on many issues and thus vote together on legislation, but these are the closest equivalents to parties (the most similar instances in Human history were the Whig and Tory parties in the late 19th century).

The largest political coalition has been given a name that can best be translated as the derogatory term which Terrans use for dwellers on Earth's Moon — Loonies. The Loony "party" has its roots in the period several centuries in the past when the Sh'k'tlp first began their colonization into space. The Loonies support scientific research, interstellar expansion, and generally friendly relations with other interstellar groups. They tend to support the status quo and are supported by much of the bureaucracy — a convenient alliance for the Loonies when the time comes to choose a new legislator. Most of the legislators from planets other than Sh'k'tlp belong to this group, but so do many from Sh'k'tlp as well. Except for brief periods, the Loonies have enjoyed dominance of the Commonwealth for the last two centuries.

The second largest coalition is known as the Racialists. They fear that all non-Sh'k'tlp sapient species pose a threat to the future survival of the Sh'k'tlp race. They wish to establish a sizeable fleet capable of interstellar war. Some of the more extreme Racialists promise to fight a war of genocide against Humanity and other sapient species if elected, but the majority of the party stops short at maintenance of a significant fleet. The Racialists also promise reform of the bureaucracy, more liberal methods for choice of legislators, and stricter control of business enterprises. Many citizens support the Racialists not so much in that they believe in the maintenance of a stronger fleet but more because the Racialists promise a change from Loony rule.

The third largest coalition (having about 10 legislators) is called the Radicals. They propose to turn interstellar exploration over to the private companies, grant the colonial worlds more autonomy, loosen restrictions on business and day-to-day activities, and abolish the small Sh'k'tlp fleet. Their greatest support is in the colonies and among the lower classes on Sh'k'tlp.

The Extremists currently have three legislators, and tend to vote with the Radicals. They believe in direct election of legislators, abolition or truncation of the bureaucracy, and drastic liberalization of regulations on business. There is little support for the Extremists except in certain circles in the academic and business communities.

Finally, the Romantics are less of a political bloc than an institution. Approximately two hundred years ago, they were one of the major coalitions of the Commonwealth, but these days their sole remaining legislator is Zz'ln, an extremely old but mentally sharp female from Sh'k'tlp. The traditional policy of the Romantics is to slow growth to preserve the time-honored traditions of ancient Sh'k'tlp society and to preserve the environment. Zz'ln has rarely been bested in debate and will filibuster endlessly; most of the rest of the Legislature will be happy to see her leave permanently.

10. Sh'k'tlp Law

The Law Levels of Sh'k'tlp planets tend to be quite high — any member planet will have a Law Level of 5, and Law Levels of 1 are extremely unusual, even on frontier planets. On any planet of Civ Level 6 or higher, each citizen is issued an ID bracelet which is extremely difficult to counterfeit. These ID bracelets are com-

monly used not only as identification, but for banking and charge uses, and also allow access to central computing systems. An organized system of identification is necessary because of the shape-changing abilities of the Sh'k'tlp. The system makes it relatively easy to track down all but the most sophisticated of criminals, since counterfeiting is so difficult. A Sh'k'tlp without an ID bracelet, or one unable to use his because it has been voided by the government as a result of criminal activity, will find himself in extremely straitened circumstances, since he will be unable to purchase any goods.

On Law Level 5 planets, alien visitors are expected to register with the Visitors Bureau, where they are issued temporary ID bracelets. These ID bracelets are then used for all purchases while in Sh'k'tlp space, which purchases are charged against the value of cargo, or against money deposited at the Bureau by the visitors. This visitors' ID system, among other things, makes it possible for the authorities to trace every movement of a visitor, rendering illegal or espionage activity quite difficult.

Visitors to high-Law Level Sh'k'tlp worlds are advised to hire a local lawyer to help them wind their way through the byzantine labyrinth of Sh'k'tlp over-regulation. Business, and trade in general, is heavily regulated by the bureaucracy, and the typical free-trader may have a good deal of trouble complying with the law without expert advice. Merchants should expect to allocate about 5% of the value of their cargo to legal expenses.

Criminal law among the Sh'k'tlp is much the same as among sane Human cultures. Actions that harm other individuals (such as murder, theft, rape) are illegal and stringently punished. There are few "victimless crime" laws, since, by and large, Sh'k'tlp are perfectly willing to let individuals harm themselves.

Ships landing on or in orbit around Sh'k'tlp planets are commonly charged port and docking fees. The docking fee is a one-time payment, generally around one percent of the purchase price of the docking slip. Port fees are a monthly payment, generally on the order of 100 Trans/month, and more for large spacefaring ships.

Sh'k'tlp may apply to become subsidized merchants. The procedure to become a subsidized merchant is complicated, usually requiring six to eight months for the necessary review to be completed. The Base Chance of successful approval should equal the character's Influence Rating (i.e., an Influence Rating of 10 should equal a 10% chance). If subsidization is approved, the Sh'k'tlp government will lend the character 50% of the cost of a ship at low interest rates, as well as 50% of the cost of the character's first cargo. Additionally, low-cost insurance will be available from the government. However, subsidized merchants are subject to commandeering by the local Governor in times of extreme emergency.

Sh'k'tlp taxes generally average 40-50% of the typical Sh'k'tlp income. Taxes are not graduated. Sh'k'tlp working abroad are not expected to pay taxes, but conversely receive no protection from their government; a Sh'k'tlp ship seized by pirates outside Sh'k'tlp space can expect no help from the Sh'k'tlp space navy.

There are no internal tariffs in Sh'k'tlp space, but traders bringing goods in from outside may be charged up to 20% of the value of their goods in tariffs, depending on the nature of the goods and the inclinations of the local Governor.

Goods purchased on Sh'k'tlp worlds may be subject to sales taxes as high as 10%, again depending on the need of the local Governor for funds.

11. Sh'k'tlp Class Structure

The hierarchical political organization of Sh'k'tlp society tends to produce a hierarchical social organization as well. Those less important in the estimation of society tend to defer to those who

are more important. The Influence rules may be used to help simulate this fact.

Those who have risen high in government are accorded the most honor. The extremely wealthy, and those successful in the arts and sciences, are also accorded respect. Valor in the defense of the Sh'k'tlp race, the development of new standard forms, and heroism in general can also elevate the status of a Sh'k'tlp.

Because of the shape-changing abilities of the Sh'k'tlp, nothing so crude as clothes or accent can be used to distinguish the class of a Sh'k'tlp. Instead class recognition is through standard forms of society.

For each job, there is a standard form (shape). This form is the best suited to performance of the job. Obviously, an automobile mechanic will take a different form from a computer programmer, as each performs different tasks, and can most efficiently perform those tasks by taking a specific shape. Over the years, a job tends to evolve a standard form — a form best suited to that job. Even outside the job, a Sh'k'tlp takes pride in maintaining the standard form of his occupation.

Maintaining one's shape is not required, and indeed many beings prefer to take a more generalized form better suited to walking or whatnot. However, there are class connotations to most of the generalized forms, and a being will generally assume a form corresponding to his general class. Assuming the form of a lower class is considered eccentric but acceptable; assuming the form of a higher class is considered the epitome of bad taste. Needless to say, there are Sh'k'tlp who counterfeit membership in a class to which they have no right, but under most circumstances conversation with such a being, or an ID check with the planetary ID computer will unmask the masquerade.

In Sh'k'tlp society, class is less a matter of birth and more a matter of occupation and accomplishment. Although a Sh'k'tlp child is assumed initially to belong to the same class as his parents, there are few barriers to upward mobility. Education beyond his parents' means is available to the intelligent Sh'k'tlp; the educational bureaucracy will provide funds to promising children. (The corollary, naturally, is that the educational bureaucracy is one of the most stifling, costly, and inefficient in the Commonwealth.) Hiring for most jobs is on the basis of merit. It is not at all unusual for members of the lowest class to rise to considerably higher status. The three most common routes to advancement are slow rise through the ranks of one of the bureaucracies or larger companies (slow but relatively certain); taking entrepreneurial risks, setting up a new company (risky but potentially very profitable); or success in the arts, sciences, or valor (risky, but again, potentially very rewarding). Few characters will, presumably, take the first route, though both of the latter are quite possible for interested adventurers.

12. Sh'k'tlp Character Generation

Sh'k'tlp characters are generated much the same way as Human characters. The GM should allow a player to generate a Sh'k'tlp character only if the Federation and the Commonwealth are in full contact in his campaign, or if his campaign takes place in the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth (with all player characters being Sh'k'tlp). The chronology (see II) lists the percentage chance of a character being a Sh'k'tlp at a number of "historical" points; the GM should use the chance corresponding to the time period of his campaign. The following character generation procedure corresponds to that for Humans in the GM Guide. Unless stated otherwise in this sequence, the rules for Human character generation apply.

1. *Determine 4 Potential Multipliers.*

2. *Calculate the number of Study Points the character receives.*

He receives the number of Study Points equal to his Social Background Multiplier, or one and a half times his Intellect Multiplier (rounded up), whichever is higher.

3. *Determine the character's natural habitat.* Use the Home Environ Table (rolling percentile dice twice) to determine the contour and the cover of the character's home environ. Use the Environ Skill Level Table to determine his Home Environ Skill Level. Use the Urban Skill Level Table (as modified by the Environ Skill Level) to determine his Urban Skill (if any). Use the Temperature Table to determine the Temperature Range in the character's home environ. All Sh'k'tlp characters begin play with the following Gravity Skill Levels:

NW: (-2), **LT:** (2), **HY:** (-1), **EX:** (-4).

4. *Determine the character's social standing.* Use the Sh'k'tlp Social Standing Table in the same manner as the Human Social Standing Table. Then determine the character's initial Skill Points in accordance with GM 5.8.

5. *Choose fields of study for the character.* A character may study the mind even if he studies military or business.

6. *Choose initial skills for the character.* The following skills are available to Sh'k'tlp characters, depending on their fields of study. Those skills marked with an asterisk (*) are available at the GM's discretion.

Theoretical Science. Chemistry, physics, biology, programming, geology, astronomy, xenology (after 2340).

Applied Science. Suit tech, electro tech, construction, vehicle tech, programming, security tech.

Business. Programming, recruiting, law, economics, trading.

Sh'k'tlpities. Linguistics, law, teaching, culture.

The Mind. Psionic boost, psionic communication, life sense, body control.

The Body. Unarmed combat, ambush, EVA, gravity (home gravity type only), jet pack, survival, body control.

Military. Ambush, longarms, handguns, grenades.

General.* Laser/stun pistol, gambling, blades, air vehicles, (direct lift sub-skill only), urban (if level is one or higher), environ (home environ only), multicolor, shape-change, Human technology (after 2360).

7. *Determine the character's 7 characteristic ratings.* Strength, Dexterity, and Agility are not generated; instead, the Body characteristic is generated as follows: use the Body Modifier Chart in the same way that the Characteristic Modifier Chart is used to determine the modifier that will be applied to the dice roll on the Characteristic Generation Table (*Universe*, 6.6). Double the result achieved on the Generation Table; this product is the character's Body Rating, which may range from 3 to 24 (if a 2 is generated, increase it to 3).

8. *Choose a profession for the character.* Professions available to Sh'k'tlp characters are listed in 13.

9. *Declare how many years the character will practice his profession.*

10. *Determine the effects of age on the character.* If the character is beyond the age of 24, use the Sh'k'tlp Effects of Age Table to find if his body and/or Endurance ratings are reduced.

11. *Calculate the number of Skill Points the character receives.*

12. *Choose skills for the character.* Skills from the appropriate Sh'k'tlp fields of study and the profession may be chosen.

13. *Determine benefits the character receives from his profession.*

14. *Determine the character's Influence Rating.* Multiply the Influence Multiplier listed with the character's profession by his Benefit Level (A=1, B=2... F=6) and halve the product (rounding down). The result of this calculation is the character's Influence Rating. The initial rating may range from 1 to 21.

13. Sh'k'tlp Professions

The following professions are not available to Sh'k'tlp characters: Astrogard; civil inspector; freefaller; ranger; space pirate; spy; and spacetrooper. All other Human professions listed in *Universe 7.9* are available. However, the GM should keep in mind the following general guidelines when applying Human professions to Sh'k'tlp characters.

The GM must alter the description of the profession to fit Sh'k'tlp culture. Specifically, all mentions of the Federation should be replaced with the Commonwealth. Military professions should be considered government service with a military-like selection and ranking system. Military ranks may be taken from the examples given in the Sh'k'tlp militia and Psiguard professions below. All mention of heavy weapons in Sh'k'tlp military professions should be ignored.

The prerequisites listed for each profession remain the same. If the profession lists Strength, Dexterity, and/or Agility as prerequisites, a Sh'k'tlp character may enter such a profession if he can fulfill all prerequisites in a single shape. **Example:** A Sh'k'tlp character would have to have a Body Rating of at least 9 to become a space technician, because the profession requires Dexterity 7. A Sh'k'tlp with Body 9 could assume a Dexterity 7 shape, allocating one point each to Strength and Agility; one with lower body could not, because any shape must always have Strength, Agility, and Dexterity of at least 1 each. **Example:** A Sh'k'tlp character would have to have a Body Rating of at least 12 to become an enforcer. Enforcers must have physical characteristics of at least 4 each; a Sh'k'tlp with Body 12 could assume a shape having Strength 4, Dexterity 4, and Agility 4.

The Skill Point Modifier remains the same. All Human skills which are not available to Sh'k'tlp characters are ignored when listed in a profession. The following professions make additional skills available to Sh'k'tlp characters:

Diplomat. Xenology (1 Level only, after 2335), Human technology (After 2340.)

Enforcer. Security.

Explorer. Xenology, culture, psychometry, Human technology (after 2340).

Interstellar Trader. Culture, xenology (after 2335), Human technology (after 2340).

Doctor. Psychometry, culture.

Lawman. Security.

Merchant. Human technology (after 2340).

Reporter. Xenology (after 2335), Human technology (after 2340).

Scientist. Culture, xenology (after 2335), Human technology (after 2340).

Scout. Psychometry, culture, xenology, Human technology (after 2340).

Space Technician. Human technology (after 2340).

Star Sailor. Human technology (after 2340).

Thinker. Psychometry, psionic flash.

Culturalist.

Contractor. Human technology (after 2335).

In addition, any profession that makes the air vehicles skill available, also makes ground vehicles available.

The GM must make extensive changes in the Benefit Level of a Human profession taken by a Sh'k'tlp character. Whenever an item of personal use (except a weapon) is mentioned as a benefit, the GM should assume that a Sh'k'tlp version of the same item is available. The item's Civ Level will always be the highest available for that type of item (as listed in Chapter 5 of *Universe™* or the

Assuming the form of a higher class is considered the epitome of bad taste.

equipment charts). The following new professions show a few ways that benefits may be assigned. Weapons listed in Human professions must be replaced with Sh'k'tlp weapons. Many Human weapons have no Sh'k'tlp counterpart.

The Human professions descriptions and benefits may be used as they are if the Sh'k'tlp character already possesses the Human technology skill when choosing a profession. This assumes that the character grew up with Human contact (after 2360). Such a character must apply at least as many Skill Points from practicing his profession to the Human technology skill as to any other single skill.

Human professions have the following Sh'k'tlp Influence Multiples (when taken by Sh'k'tlp characters): colonist (2); diplomat (7); doctor (5); enforcer (3); explorer (4); handyman (3); interstellar trader (4); lawman (4); merchant (3); reporter (4); scientist (5); scout (4); space technician (4); star sailor (4); thinker (5); zero-g miner (3); culturalist (6); contractor (5).

The following four professions are available to Sh'k'tlp player characters only.

BUREAUCRAT

A member of the omnipresent Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth state service. The nature of his duties may vary widely; he can be charged with such tasks as operating a space port, regulating one industry or another, overseeing the police or another state agency, or administering colonial development (as a Human civil inspector). Bureaucrats enjoy a great deal of prestige in Sh'k'tlp society and the possibility for acquisition of honors is great. The pay, however, is not too great.

Prerequisites: Study of the Sh'k'tlp (humanities). Characteristics of at least Intelligence 7, Leadership 4, and Empathy 4.

Skill Point Modifier: 10.

Skills Available: Air vehicles, ground vehicles, planetology, programming, economics, recruitment, Human technology (after 2340).

Benefits:

- A. 300 Mils cash.
- B. 1 Tran cash; CompuSphere I.
- C. 2 Trans cash; translator.
- D. 3 Trans cash; translator; CompuSphere II.
- E. 5 Trans cash; translator; CompuSphere II; car with chauffeur (salary paid by state).
- F. 10 Trans cash; translator; CompuSphere II; deluxe air disc with chauffeur (salary paid); 5 trans per year pension.

Influence Multiplier: 7.

MILITIA (Military)

Neither precisely a lawman nor a member of a warfaring military, the Sh'k'tlp militia is designed to sweep areas which have been invaded by predators and eliminate them. Militia members often accompany travelling state employees. The work is no less dangerous than the work of Human soldiers; the weapons used are confined to personal ones, as weapons of mass destruction destroy property as well as predators, something to be avoided in residential areas. (The purpose, after all, is to protect citizens from predators, not to destroy citizens in the process.)

FIRST CONTACTS

Prerequisites: Study of the military and of the body; Body Characteristic of at least 10.

Skill Point Modifier: 3.

Skills Available: Weapon tech, security tech, bows, any environs, vehicle tech.

Benefits: The first term in each listing is the character's rank, denoted by a shape decoration he must form on his head..

A. Point; 250 Mils cash.

B. Line; 1 Trans cash; marker.

C. Triangle; 2 Trans cash; congealor.

D. Square; 7 Trans cash; shocker.

E. Pentagon; 20 Trans cash; force gun; 750 Mils per year pension.

F. Hexagon; 40 Trans cash; force gun; air disc; 25 Trans cash per year pension.

Influence Multiplier: 4.

PSIGUARD (Military)

In the Federation, all psions receive their training through the Psionic Institute, and learn a philosophy which discourages violent use of psionic powers. In the Sh'k'tlp Commonwealth, instruction in psionics is usually given at private institutions, the closest Human equivalent being the karate dojo. Consequently, there is no such cultural conditioning against violence among the Sh'k'tlp psions. Psigards are those who have chosen to learn both psionic and military skills; they generally operate either as adjuncts to the militia, or as private body guards registered with the Commonwealth. A Sh'k'tlp character with psionic abilities is better off becoming a Psigard than a thinker. Since Sh'k'tlp psions do not control interstellar travel (but do run the equivalent of the Human CommLink service), there is not nearly as much money controlled by the psionic population.

Prerequisites: Study of the military and the mind. Characteristics of at least Body 8, Mental Power 5, and Intelligence 4.

Skill Point Modifiers: 5.

Skills Available: Mind control, psionic lash, psychokinesis, psion tech, psychometry.

Benefits (first term is rank):

A. Point; 300 Mils cash.

B. Line; 750 Mils cash; marker.

C. Triangle; 2 Trans cash; marker; interstellar commlink.

D. Square; 4 Trans cash; congealor; CommLink; psionic rig.

E. Pentagon; 9 Trans cash; shocker; CommLink; field rig.

F. Hexagon; 20 Trans cash; force gun; CommLink; field rig; psionic rig; 2 Trans per year pension.

Influence Multiplier: 5.

SECURITY SPECIALIST

Because of the dangerous nature of Sh'k'tlp predators, the profession of security specialist is common among Sh'k'tlp. Security specialists are trained in techniques designed to prevent, detect, and deal with intrusions of predators. The same techniques, naturally, can be adapted to use against criminals and for use during espionage operations.

Prerequisites: Study of the military and applied science. Intelligence of at least 6; Body of at least 6.

Skill Point Modifier: 6.

Skills Available: Any environs, unarmed combat, biology, treatment, weapon tech, survival, energy tech.

Benefits:

A. 1 Tran cash.

B. 2 Trans cash; infrared goggles.

C. 4 Trans cash; infrared goggles; marker.

D. 10 Trans cash; infrared goggles; congealor.

E. 20 Trans cash; goggles; congealor; locator.

F. 40 Trans cash; neuro scanner; goggles; congealor; locator.

170)

Influence Multiplier: 5.

14. Sh'k'tlp Skills

The following Human skills are not available to Sh'k'tlp characters: artillery, battlefield, body armor, demolitions, arc gun, machine guns, paint gun, missile guidance, space tactics, navigation, military vehicles, disguise, diplomacy and streetwise. If a Sh'k'tlp character attempts to use a weapon whose use is governed by one of the above skills, the GM should have the character use his Human technology skill and his ambush, longarms, or grenade skill (as appropriate). If the GM's campaign has Sh'k'tlp that grew up in contact with Humans, he may allow them to take any of the above military skills; however, the character still must use the skill in conjunction with his Human technology skill.

If use of a skill calls for a Sh'k'tlp character's Dexterity, Agility, or Strength Rating, the rating possessed by his current shape is used. If a skill uses one of these ratings as a Level Limit, the character may acquire the skill up to a Level equal to his Body Rating minus 2. However, the Skill Level used at any given time may not exceed the current rating for the specific characteristic. **Example:** A Sh'k'tlp with Body 10 could acquire unarmed combat up to Level 8, because he could assume a shape with Agility 8. However, if he were in a shape with an Agility of 5, he could only use the skill at Level 5 (maximum) even if he possessed it at a higher Level.

All other Human skills are available to Sh'k'tlp characters, including security, body control, psychometry, xenology, culture, and Human technology. The following skills have special modifications when used by a Sh'k'tlp:

Ambush. Increase all Base Chances by 10. May be used as the battlefield skill during encounter awareness checks and during Action Round initiative rolls.

Unarmed Combat. Increase Skill Level by 2 if the character is in a shape with claws.

Handguns. Used when firing a shocker or force gun.

Grenades. Used when throwing a congeal grenade.

Laser/Stun Pistol. Used when firing a force gun.

Longarms. Used when firing a marker or congealor.

Gunnery. Allows use of spaceship plasma thrust as weapon.

Pilot. Level 5 or higher in this skill reduces the chances of an enemy missile intercepting the spaceship by 1 (Level 8 by 2, and Level 9 by 3).

Law, Recruiting, and Trading. Use the character's Influence Rating (plus the square of the Skill Level) to modify the Base Chance instead of the characteristic listed for Humans. The listed characteristic still determines the highest Skill Level that may be achieved.

The following three skills are available to Sh'k'tlp player characters only:

MULTICOLOR

8 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

Normally, a Sh'k'tlp character can only assume one coloration. Sh'k'tlp are capable of changing colors like chameleons, but can normally assume only one color at a time. With the multicolor skill, a character gains the ability to assume more than one color in any pattern he chooses. The number of independent colors that can be assumed is equal to the character's Multicolor Skill Level. Sh'k'tlp are capable of disguising themselves as other Sh'k'tlp or as any other being having four limbs (with or without a tail), and

Any Sh'k'tlp is capable of changing shapes as long as the shape he assumes has four limbs and mass is conserved.

massing around 50 kg (this could include a small Human). The character's Body characteristic and the *square of his Skill Level* are added to the Base Chance for the following tasks:

► Disguise self to resemble being that has been extensively observed: **50%**.

► Disguise self to resemble being that has been seen briefly or in pictures only: **25%**.

The Base Chance is reduced by 25% when the character is attempting to fool any non-Sh'k'tlp being. This is because Sh'k'tlp do not see in the Human visible range and are consequently unable to color themselves red, something an attentive human observer might notice. The result of a multicolor disguise attempt is implemented as described in the Disguise skill description (see *Universe™ 14.0*). A character who rolls a **0, 1, or 2** on either die when using the Multicolor skill receives an Experience Point.

PSIONIC LASH

7 Levels/Limit: Intelligence

Psionic lash is a skill which allows a character to make a mental attack on a Human being. Because of the structure of the Human Psionic Institute, the skill is not normally available to Humans, though a Sh'k'tlp with teaching skill might be willing to teach a psionic Human the skill. The Base Chance of success in psionic lash attack is **40%**. To this is added the character's Mental Power Rating and the *square of his Psionic Lash Skill*. The target's *Intelligence* and *Mental Power* are subtracted from the chance. Percentile dice are then rolled; if the number rolled is less than or equal to the number calculated, the attempt has been successful. If a psionic lash attempt fails, the character using the skill is subjected to Psionic Backlash.

If the psionic lash attempt succeeds, the being subject to the attack is subject to a roll on the Psionic Backlash Table (10.4). Determine the first digit of the two-digit number rolled when determining whether or not the psionic lash succeeds; square this number, and add it to the roll on the Psionic Backlash Table. **Example:** Zzl'brtz has Mental Power of 6 and Psionic Lash Skill of 3. 3 squared is 9; $40+9+6=55$. His target has Intelligence 4 and Mental Power 2; $55-4-2=49$. The chance of success is **49%**. Zzl'brtz rolls a 36; his attempt therefore succeeds. The first digit of 36 is 3; 3 squared is 9; therefore 9 is added to the die roll on the Psionic Backlash Table. Zzl'brtz rolls again, and rolls a 46. $46+9=55$. 55 on the Psionic Backlash Table means the target of the psionic lash passes out, and his Endurance Rating is reduced to 0.

Psionic rigs and Psionic Boost may be used to increase the chance of success. A character who rolls a **0 or 1** on either die when attempting Psionic Lash receives an Experience Point.

SHAPE-CHANGE

7 Levels/Limit: Half of Body

The limit is one half of the character's Body characteristic, rounded down.

Any Sh'k'tlp is capable of changing shapes as long as the shape he assumes has four and only four limbs, and mass is conserved (see Physical Characteristics for a more complete discussion). However, it takes a Sh'k'tlp character between 2 and 20 minutes (as

determined by two dice roll) to change from one shape to another. A Sh'k'tlp with the shape-change skill can change shapes much more rapidly.

On the Sh'k'tlp Character Record are printed several boxes, each labeled **Shape #**, followed by a list of three characteristics: Strength, Dexterity, and Agility. A character with the shape-change skill has one or more standard shapes into which he can change rapidly. Changing into any other shape takes the normal 2 to 20 minutes. The number of standard shapes known by a Sh'k'tlp is equal to his Shape-change Skill Level.

When a Sh'k'tlp character first takes the shape-change skill, he would fill in the **Shape #** box on the Character Record. He should divide his Body among Strength, Dexterity, and Agility; i.e., the numbers written in these three boxes should add up to his Body characteristic. Under **description** he should write a brief description of the shape, noting whether it has claws or not. (Remember that a clawed shape cannot have Dexterity 2, but adds 2 to the Unarmed Combat Skill when in close combat.) At First Level, the character will be unable to shift to his single standard shape from any other shape relatively rapidly. Each time the character goes up a Skill Level, it acquires one additional standard shape; the player should fill in the next **Shape #** box with characteristics and description.

When a Sh'k'tlp attempts to assume one of its standard shapes, it rolls to determine whether it successfully assumes the shape each Combat Round (i.e., once every 15 seconds). The Base Chance of successfully changing is **45%**; add to this the *square of the Shape-change Skill Level* (only). Roll percentile dice; if the roll is less than or equal to the calculated number, the character successfully changes shape (taking the full Round to do so). If the roll is higher, the character has failed, but may try again next Combat Round. A character who rolls a **0 or 1** on either die when using the shape-change skill gains one Experience Point.

INFLUENCE

Sh'k'tlp society is a good deal more hierarchical than Human society. There are many distinct classes, and members of the lower classes tend to defer to and follow the lead of members of the upper classes. (There is, of course, a certain amount of class hostility.) Upward mobility is quite possible, since the class distinctions are not rigid; one's social standing and hence one's influence is more a matter of what one has done than to whom one was born.

A Sh'k'tlp (or a Human) may try to influence another Sh'k'tlp. "Influencing" may be anything from persuading a bank manager to give one a loan, to persuading the planetary legislature to take action against an immediate threat. Thus Sh'k'tlp Influence replaces the Human diplomacy and streetwise skills.

To determine whether an influence attempt is successful, compare the Influence Ratings of the influencing character and the NPC he is attempting to influence. If the influencing character's Rating is **more than 8 higher** than the NPC's, the attempt is successful; otherwise, subtract the NPC's Influence Rating from the character's. Multiply the resulting positive or negative number by 4. Roll percentile dice and add the number calculated to the dice roll. If the sum is . . .

67 or higher: The attempt is successful; the NPC has reacted positively to the influence attempt and will probably do what the influencing character asks.

34 to 66: The attempt has no effect; the NPC is uninfluenced and will decide what to do without regard for the character.

33 or less: The attempt is unsuccessful; the NPC has reacted negatively to the attempt and may try to hinder the character.

Any character may attempt to influence a Sh'k'tlp NPC in this manner. Conversely, a Sh'k'tlp character may himself be the

subject of an influence attempt (by another character or an NPC) and must abide by the results of the attempt.

These rules should be considered as a guideline for the Gamesmaster, not a straightjacket. The Gamesmaster should feel free to apply positive or negative modifiers to the influence die roll as the situation requires. For example, a prisoner will have little chance of influencing his jailor to set him free even if the prisoner is the equivalent of the Commonwealth President. Sh'k'tlp tend to follow the rules without regard to influence; a bureaucrat will go by the book most of the time, although an extremely influential person might persuade him to do otherwise.

One problem the Gamesmaster may have is with characters who say "Well, I attempt to influence him," without bothering to tell the Gamesmaster how they are trying to do so. The Gamesmaster should insist that the character converse with the person he is trying to influence, and take the part of that person (NPC) in conversation with the player. What the player says should provide a modifier on the influence table; if he is especially obnoxious or stupid, there should certainly be a negative modifier on the table. Offered bribes will either increase the chance of successful influence (if the bribe is taken) or decrease the chance (if the NPC is honest). The Gamesmaster should use his judgement in deciding to what degree he will allow influence to affect the NPCs' actions.

The Human-Sh'k'tlp Influence Rating Table gives Influence Ratings for Human characters. These ratings are used when a Human tries to influence a Sh'k'tlp. The table is rather limited, and the Gamesmaster should feel free to give Human characters other Influence Ratings depending on how the Sh'k'tlp are likely to perceive the characters.

The Sh'k'tlp Influence Modifier Table lists a number of ways that a Sh'k'tlp character can increase his Influence Rating. The Gamesmaster should, of course, feel free to increase or decrease a character's Influence Rating if he performs a notable action not listed on the table. However, influence should not fluctuate too widely and should not change over short periods of time; changing one's Influence Rating is a matter of gaining or losing enough prestige so that other Sh'k'tlp tend to treat the character as if he were a member of a higher or lower class.

On the table, an increase "above base" means that the character's Influence Rating is increased above its original value as long as the reason for the increase continues to apply. For example, a Sh'k'tlp Influence Rating is increased by 1 point for every 100 Trans he owns. If the Sh'k'tlp were to lose money, his Influence Rating would decrease. A permanent gain or loss means that the Influence Rating is permanently changed. For example, a Sh'k'tlp character who is appointed to the Commonwealth legislature has his Influence Rating permanently increased by 1 point (as a result of the prestige of political life), and temporarily increased by 3 points (because of the prestige accorded a member of the legislature).

15. Sh'k'tlp Technology

The Sh'k'tlp desire for order and neatness has resulted in a structural simplicity in all their inventions. Any object, from a calculator to a spaceship, is a simple shape with as few protuberances and attachments as possible. The ability of predators to mimic many shapes has forced the Sh'k'tlp to develop a catalog of three-dimensional forms that have proven impossible to mimic. The association with safety that these shapes now hold for the Sh'k'tlp cause them to design even items much too large to be mimicked in the "safe" forms, even on worlds with no shape-changing predators. Furthermore, a particular type of invention will almost always be found in the same shape it was originally conceived, even if other shapes would serve as well in later uses for the invention. Thus, every Sh'k'tlp spaceship has one of two

shapes: the classic teardrop and disc shape, or the sphere and rod shape, *regardless of size and use*.

The basic safe shape is a large mass placed off-center atop a single leg. If an entity were able to successfully assume this shape, it would find it very difficult to stand on its one leg. Most Sh'k'tlp furniture is a play on this form. The leg is bolted to the floor or wall, or, if the furniture is portable, the leg fits into any number of peg holes in the wall or floor. (These holes are plugged when not in constant use.)

The flat box, disc, or oval is another popular safe shape (dimensions of 10 by 10 by 1 or flatter). Sh'k'tlp research has shown that few predators can assume such an extreme shape, and those that can, require a long time to change into a mobile form. A perfect sphere is pleasing to the Sh'k'tlp. Although a sphere can be mimicked, it takes an incredible amount of endurance to hold the shape (one point supports all weight) and, unless the surface is level, the sphere will roll, disrupting concentration. To take advantage of this fact, many Sh'k'tlp surfaces are at a slight angle. Spheroid objects are held in place by magnetic points in the surface and the sphere.

The pyramid and cube are unpopular shapes for Sh'k'tlp objects (unless as a mass on the end of a leg, as in the basic safe shape). A predator can assume such a shape with its appendages as the edge corners, providing the attacker with stability and power as it leaps from its shape onto its prey.

The GM should keep these aesthetic guidelines in mind when he introduces Sh'k'tlp technology (a weapon, a calculator, a scanner, a car, or any other manufactured item) into play.

One of the major considerations in the development of Sh'k'tlp technology since the advent of space travel is gravity. The Sh'k'tlp shape-changing ability is greatly impaired by gravity lighter or heavier than 1G. Because of this factor, extensive research in artificial gravity using monopoles and artificial force generators put the Sh'k'tlp far ahead of Humans in this area. The Sh'k'tlp have used their knowledge of artificial gravity to create sophisticated personal and mass air transport systems. The Human levitator, floater, and skimmer are primitive versions of the type of vehicles that are common in Sh'k'tlp life. Thus, most Sh'k'tlp air vehicles will call for use of the Direct Lift air vehicle sub-skill. Ground and marine vehicles are rare among affluent Sh'k'tlp persons.

Along the same lines of research, the Sh'k'tlp have developed two types of force fields. The first is like its Human counterpart—it repels kinetic energy. The second type (called a null-field) repels light and heat; it is mainly used on interstellar spacecraft to protect against the hostile stellar environment the ship must skirt to travel faster than light (see Sh'k'tlp space travel). A null-field will repel laser and particle blasts, but not projectiles like bullets and missiles.

Because of the lack of high-tech warfare, the Sh'k'tlp are far behind Humans in the development of heavy weapons and have never used a laser as a weapon. The spaceships do not possess any type of weapon systems other than the thruster, although mining craft may carry a crude laser for cutting rock. The Sh'k'tlp have not developed defensive combat technology; the maximum beam or projectile protection that Sh'k'tlp armor will provide is 3.

Sh'k'tlp robot technology has developed along different lines than artificial Human intelligences. Robots are not designed as companions, but as adjuncts to stationary technology. That is, a robot may be a mobile component of a security system, or, as a wandering maintenance/caretaker system for a structure. Sh'k'tlp robots will not possess such systems as creative thought, language, or learning.

Sh'k'tlp personal equipment is comparable to Human devices found in *Universe™ 22.0* and will usually be equivalent to Civ Level 8 in sophistication. Additional equipment can be found

among the following items listed below.

Identifier. The shape-changing ability of the Sh'k'tlp and their predators has led to the development of the universal Sh'k'tlp identification bracelet, worn by every Sh'k'tlp from birth. Made from a flexible metal mesh, the band will fit any diameter from 3 cm to 30 cm comfortably. Sensors in the bracelet interact with the owner's genetic code; if another individual wears the identifier, the band turns a bright green. A button on the identifier is encoded with a number of combinations and "keys" to allow the wearer access to any security areas he might be entitled to enter or examine (because of his occupation or influence). The button is pressed against a panel that "unlocks" a door, a computer link, a file, etc. The identifier also serves as a credit card, passport, library card, driver's license, etc.

CompuSphere. A portable computer in the form of a sphere with a 15 cm diameter. Similar in power to a Human business computer (see *Universe 22.3*). Used to keep many personal records as it may only be accessible through the owner's identifier. *Price:* 5 Trans. *Weight:* 5 kg.

CompuSphere II. A more powerful version of the regular CompuSphere, this sphere with a 20 cm diameter also contains comprehensive demographic and economic data on the three Sh'k'tlp worlds. *Price:* 10 Trans. *Weight:* 8 kg.

Air Disc. A personal air vehicle capable of carrying two Sh'k'tlp. The disc uses the advanced Sh'k'tlp anti-gravity technology to dart around Sh'k'tlp cities and countrysides. It is not capable of orbital or space flight. The deluxe model has an extra seat for the driver (chauffeur), separate from the two passenger seats. *Price:* 400 Trans (deluxe 600). *Range:* Unlimited. *Speed:* 100 km per hour. *Operable World Sizes:* 4-6. *Cargo Capacity:* 500 kg. *Performance Modifier:* +25. *Repair Time:* 5 days. *Armor:* 2/2. *Length:* 4 meters. *Weight:* 1000 kg.

Field Rig. Protective attire similar to human personal force field. When activated, the wearer is surrounded by a force field or null-field (wearer's choice). Activation or deactivation requires one Action Round; two Rounds are required to switch fields. A force field protects from projectiles, while a null-field protects from light and heat. The wearer may not move at all when either field is activated. The null-field appears as a dark globe around the wearer that cannot be seen into or out of. When the wearer of an active null-field is fired upon by any type of weapon, reduce the

Hit Chance by 10. Both fields may not be activated at the same time. *Weight:* 2 kg. *Price:* 80 Trans. *Projectile Defense:* force field (6), null-field (0). *Beam Defense:* force field (0), null-field (6).

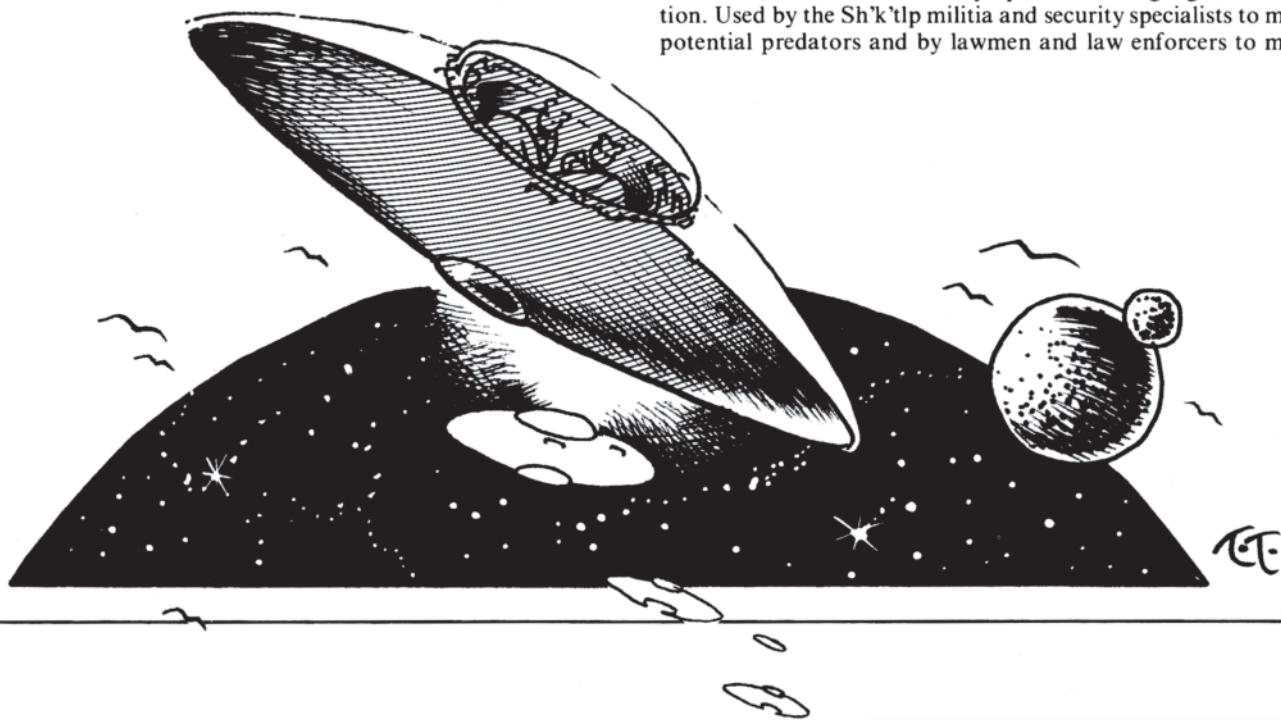
Infrared Goggles. Similar to Human night glasses. Allows vision at night and allows a Sh'k'tlp to see the color red. The goggles are worn over the eyes (whereas night glasses are held) and are kept in place by changing the shape of the head slightly (any Sh'k'tlp is capable of this change). A Human will not be able to wear the goggles, will find them uncomfortable to look through, and will not be able to see through both lenses at once. *Weight:* 5 kg. *Price:* 3 Trans.

Locator. A hand-held scanner in the shape of a disc, 20 cm in diameter. Used to scan an interior or exterior area to detect movement or to detect any changes in the area since it was last scanned. The locator has a memory capable of keeping records of 20 different areas at a time. Most commonly used to scan a room upon leaving and then again upon return; the device will report any changes in the area down to a fraction of a millimeter. The first time it scans an area it will point out any type of movement detected (such as breathing or a mechanical device). Used widely by Sh'k'tlp security specialists to check for predators. *Range:* 25 meters (5 hexes). *Weight:* 4 kg. *Price:* 15 Trans. *Skill Plus:* 2 (for security). *Time Needed for Use:* one Action Round. *Base Repair Time:* 1 hour.

16. Sh'k'tlp Weapons

Sh'k'tlp personal weapon technology is based on the desire to eliminate predators as cleanly as possible. All Sh'k'tlp personal weapons are legal but require a permit, thus involving a lot of red tape to acquire. When a character purchases a Sh'k'tlp weapon, he must wait a number of weeks equal to the roll of two dice minus his Influence Rating (rounded up). As a rule, Sh'k'tlp weapons all have the same basic shape, but differ in size and length. A Sh'k'tlp holds the weapon with one appendage formed around the bulb of the weapon and fires it by depressing the inset button with a temporary protuberance of his "hand." A Human must hold a Sh'k'tlp weapon with two hands to use it. Common Sh'k'tlp weapons include the following (summarized on the Sh'k'tlp Weapon Chart):

Marker. A harmless weapon similar to a squirt gun. It emits a non-toxic chemical solution that, upon contact with any organic substance, turns the entire entity a permanent bright green coloration. Used by the Sh'k'tlp militia and security specialists to mark potential predators and by lawmen and law enforcers to mark



Sh'k'tlp criminals. The liquid works on Humans also. The solution must strike skin (or soak through clothes) to have any effect. Once dry (30 seconds under normal conditions), the liquid loses its coloration ability. This shade of green cannot be neutralized by any known predators or by any Sh'k'tlp (even those possessing the multi-color skill). Ammunition for the marker comes in capsule form; each allowing 1 minute (4 Action Rounds) of continuous squirting. A character firing a marker in an Action Round may "paint" any number of in-range hexes with the ejected liquid. For every target in excess of the one he wishes to hit in the hex span, the hit chance is reduced by 10 (as noted in the Fire Modifier Summary, *Universe™* 29.6) A character may not move in the same Action Round that he fires a marker.

Congealer. A weapon that shoots darts tipped with an artificial coagulant. When the solution gets into the circulatory system of any shape-changing entity, it neutralizes the proteins in the system that allow shape change, and destroys those glands that produce shape-change cells. The shape an entity is in when hit with a dart is permanently formed; the entity may never change shape again (but may still move). If the dart penetrates the skin of a protein non-shape-changer (such as a Human), the solution will work directly on blood cells and platelets, coagulating the target's entire circulatory system. Such a target will die in a number of seconds equal to the sum of his Strength and Endurance Ratings (Combat Rating plus Agility Rating if a creature). Ammunition for a congealer consists of a large ampule containing two darts suspended in solution. The congealer is designed to shoot congealing darts only; a character with weapon tech skill may be able to modify the weapon to accept other types of needles (making the weapon a Sh'k'tlp equivalent of a needle pistol).

Shocker. A projectile weapon that shoots a charged bullet. The bullet has two Hit Strengths (6 and 5); the first is applied normally. The second Strength represents a powerful electric shock that the bullet releases after impact and is only applied if the bullet actually strikes its target (is not stopped by armor). The two Hit Strengths of the bullet are applied to the target separately; roll on the Hit Table for the impact Strength and then, if penetration occurs, for the shock Strength. Hits incurred by a target as a result of the shock Strength are applied to Endurance only (Strength if Endurance is 0), and shock hits are not reduced by armor. A character wearing a force field rig is protected from the impact Strength of the bullet but not the shock Strength; his entire force field shocks him with the listed shock Strength. Ammunition for a shocker consists of a two-bullet cartridge.

Forcer. A weapon that emits a force field (not a null-field). The field is projected as a column of energy that strikes the target like a battering ram. The gun has two settings, adjusted by a switch. When at *low*, the force gun is considered a stun pistol and affects the target as in *Universe* 30.4. When at *high*, the Hit Strength of the gun is applied to the target normally. The Hit Strength of a forcer is reduced by 1 for every 5 meters (1 hex) distant the target lies. A forcer used at high strength is considered to have a stun strength of 10 at 75 meters (15 hexes); its damage Hit Strength is exhausted at that point. Ammunition for a forcer comes in the form of a charge pack. Three fires at low strength depletes the pack. A forcer will not fire at high strength unless the charge pack is fresh.

Congeal Grenade. Similar in effect to a congealer (see above). The grenade explodes upon impact, emitting a congealing gas that affects any entity that breathes it. Used like a Human gas grenade. Congealing gas is effective in the hex the grenade strikes and all adjacent hexes for four Action Rounds.

Charger. Similar to a cattle prod, consisting of a rod 60 cm in length with a 2 cm diameter sphere at one end and a 6 cm diameter

sphere at the other end. The large sphere is the hilt and holds the battery pack. Any target struck by the small sphere end of the weapon receives an intense electrical charge (Hit Strength of 10). Damage incurred as a result of the strike affects Endurance only (Strength if Endurance is 0). Any type of protective attire insulates the wearer from the shock. **Exception:** A character in an active force field rig receives the shock (as in the shocker description above). The battery pack is rechargeable and when at full strength holds sufficient power for 10 strikes. *Weight:* 3 kg. *Price:* 2 Trans. *Equivalent Skill:* Blades.

17. Sh'k'tlp Spaceships

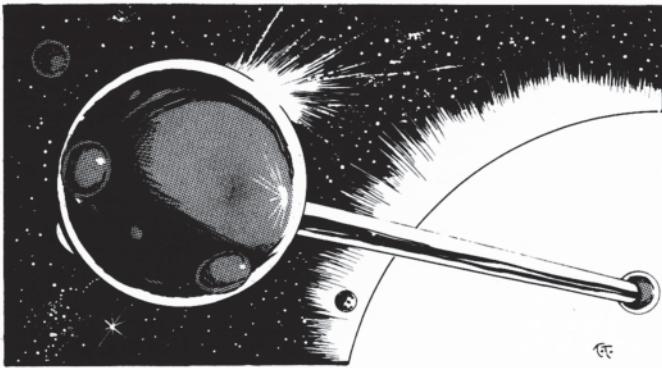
As of the time of their first contact with Humans, the Sh'k'tlp have been a star-faring race for 300 years (about 100 years longer than Humans). The Sh'k'tlp do not use psionic navigation for faster-than-light travel. The discovery of star-wells and quick-space deterred psionic development in this area. Most Sh'k'tlp employ fusion drive. Their spaceships come in variations of two basic shapes. Specific examples can be found in the Sh'k'tlp Spaceship Chart and are described in general below.

The **teardrop/disc** design is used for small craft (50 meters long or less) and ships that may enter a world's atmosphere. The large bulb can be egrated to the hull; it contains the payload, life support systems, and fusion energy generators. The disc section contains a monopole ring used to create a null-field to protect the ship when near a star, and also generates gravity for the hull. The small bulb houses the propulsion system. The two bulbs are joined together by a tapered rod of varying length that channels the fusion matter and keeps dangerous reactions away from the payload. In atmosphere-capable models, the disc is not present and a delta wing is built on top of the craft (the rod is its spine, a fin atop the propulsion bulb is its tail). Such models do not generate artificial gravity or a null-field and are rarely used for long flights; the Sh'k'tlp abhor the absence of the logic of gravity.

The **bubble/rod** design is used for all large craft. A clear globe surrounds one to six disc-shaped decks. This globe is studded with thousands of monopole points used to generate artificial gravity and create a null-field. The disc in the smaller teardrop craft cannot distribute gravity evenly when the area to be controlled gets beyond a certain size, and thus it is not used on larger craft. The sphere is held in place around the decks by the force of its own gravity and is open at the back and at one side point for access to the decks. The decks are joined together by a central shaft that extends out of the sphere as a long rod, connecting the propulsion system to the rest of the ship. A Sh'k'tlp bubble/rod ship is never streamlined.

Because of artificial gravity generators in most Sh'k'tlp spaceships, those aboard a ship are not affected by the force of its velocity changes. The Sh'k'tlp have no need for gravity webs, and their spaceships are routinely designed to accelerate and decelerate at much greater rates than Human ships. Sh'k'tlp spaceships are never built in a modular fashion. They would find the concept of pods very disturbing.

All Sh'k'tlp ships capable of faster-than-light travel have a null-field generator. When activated, the ship is surrounded by a dark globe that cannot be seen into or out of. In fact, the ship will seem to disappear from view of anyone outside, but the view of anything beyond the ship will still be blocked. Communication into or out of a ship with an active null-field is impossible, except psionically. Whenever a ship is within 30 million km (1/5 of an AU) of a star's surface, its engine is shut down and the field is activated. Because Sh'k'tlp interstellar voyages often take a number of years, coldsleep compartments are included in many spaceships. Using kryogenics, Sh'k'tlp crew are put in suspended



animation for long periods and are revived automatically.

18. Faster-Than-Light Travel

Sh'k'tlp faster-than-light travel may be achieved by any spaceship with a null-field. The ship dives toward the star in the system of origin and then whips around it, as done (on a much smaller scale) in the 1980s by the *Voyager* spaceprobes around Jupiter and Saturn. As the ship skims around the star, its own velocity plus the tremendous gravitational forces exerted on it, propel the ship beyond the speed of light. Although Humans continue to prove that this type of acceleration is a physical impossibility, the Sh'k'tlp refuse to acknowledge their claims. When a Sh'k'tlp spaceship is travelling FTL it is said to be in ts'tk, or quickspace.

The speed that can be attained by a spaceship in quickspace depends on the type of star that is skimmed.

| STAR TYPE SKIMMED | SPEED ATTAINED | MULTIPLE OF LIGHT SPEED |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| B | 1 LY per day | 365 |
| A | 1 LY per 3 days | 120 |
| F | 1 LY per 10 days | 35 |
| G | 1 LY per Month | 12 |
| K | 1 LY per 3 Months | 4 |
| M | 1 LY per year | 1 |

Once light speed, or greater, is attained, the direction and speed of the spaceship may not be altered at all except by encountering another star (the destination). Thus, accurate navigation and plotting are essential for safe FTL travel. When the destination star is reached, the ship uses the gravitational forces of the star to go into orbit around the star in an ever-increasing spiral so that the ship slows down to maneuver speed. The amount of time this deceleration takes depends on the speed the ship is going, and the spectral class of the destination star. This time can be calculated as follows: Divide the ship's speed (expressed as a multiple of the speed of light in the preceding table) by the light speed multiple listed for the destination star. The result of this division is the number of days required for the ship to decelerate to maneuver speed. For example, if a ship entered quickspace by skimming an F star (light speed multiple 35) and its destination is a K star (multiple of 4), it would take 8 days and 18 hours ($35/4=8.75$) for the ship to slow down once the destination is reached. If the ship were travelling from the K star to the F star, deceleration time would take 3 hours, but the interstellar travel time would be almost nine times as long.

After a spaceship reaches its destination star and has slowed to maneuver speed, it will be orbiting the star at one of the following distances, in AU's: B(25), A(18), F(13), G(9), K(6), M(4).

Sh'k'tlp faster-than-light travel causes a strange pheno-

menon to occur, which it uses to enter, or come out of quickspace. When a ship crosses the "light barrier," it momentarily affects the star as if the ship possessed great mass; the star dims for a few moments as its surface gases are sucked away by the departing ship. This "mass anomaly" is retained by the ship until it reaches its destination, where the star there receives this mass, and burns brighter for a few moments.

Any Sh'k'tlp character that has pilot, physics, and astronomy skills may navigate a Sh'k'tlp ship for faster-than-light travel. Through careful course plotting, star surveying, and trajectory corrections, the navigator guides the ship to the exit star, whips the ship into quickspace, and then brings the ship to sub-light speed in the gravity well of the destination star. When a character with all three skills (at Level 1 or greater) is navigating a ship, roll percentile dice. Unless the roll is 100 (0,0), the voyage is safely navigated. If the result is 100, roll percentile dice again. If the second roll is greater than the following sum, the ship is on a quickspace course that will not meet the target star, and will travel on and on and on. . . .

[20+Intelligence+(Pilot+Astronomy+Physics)]

The lowest of these three skill levels is squared before adding.

If the second dice roll is equal to or less than the sum, the voyage is safe. A Human character may safely navigate a Sh'k'tlp ship into quickspace if he fulfills the above requirements *and* has the Sh'k'tlp technology skill. If any character does not fulfill the above requirements and attempts to navigate into quickspace, only the *first* percentile dice roll is compared to the equation shown above.

Throughout the history of the Sh'k'tlp quickspace travel, a number of Sh'k'tlp ships have gone astray (about 1 out of every 400 journeys). The Sh'k'tlp maintain records of these ships, and for each one, have calculated the likely date when the ship will intercept a random star, enabling it to come out of quickspace.

19. Sh'k'tlp Space Combat

The Sh'k'tlp Spaceships Chart gives information pertinent to typical Sh'k'tlp craft. Their spaceships do not possess laser or particle weapons and do not carry missiles. The only type of weapon that may be fired from a Sh'k'tlp ship is the plasma exhaust from its fusion drive. Thus, in *Delta Vee*™ terms, conducting plasma fire from a Sh'k'tlp spaceship necessitates that the ship accelerate, decelerate, or turn when the fire is emitted. By the same token, whenever a spaceship performs one of these maneuvers, it emits fire automatically. Because of this, when a Sh'k'tlp ship is involved in space combat (using the *Delta Vee* system), its fire is conducted during the Command Phase, not during the Fire Phase.

When a Sh'k'tlp spaceship is involved in a Command Phase, the phase is broken into the following segments:

1. Flip over every unrevealed enemy unit within five hexes of the spaceship.
2. Issue any number of decelerate commands to the ship. If any enemy units are in the decelerate exhaust zone, the Sh'k'tlp ship may attack that unit with a number of thrusts up to the number of decelerate commands issued. Thrust attacks declared now are noted but not yet resolved.
3. Issue any number of turn commands to the ship. If any enemy units are in the ship's turn exhaust zone, the Sh'k'tlp ship may declare a number of thrust attacks against the unit up to the number of turn commands issued.
4. Issue any number of accelerate commands to the ship. If any enemy units are in the accelerate exhaust zone, the Sh'k'tlp ship may declare a number of thrusts up to the number of accelerate commands issued.

FIRST CONTACTS

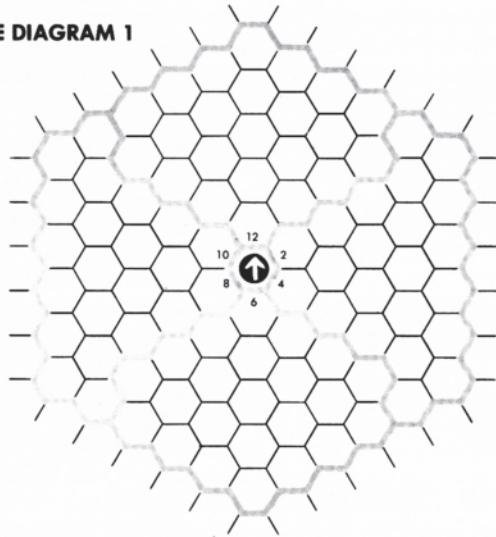
Note: At any one time during the preceding three segments, one of the following battle commands may be issued to the Sh'k'tlp ship: active search, rendezvous, activate/deactivate null-field. No maneuver commands may be issued to a ship with an active null-field. At any time during the preceding three steps, one weave command may be issued to the ship. The conduct of a weave does not result in a thrust attack.

5. Count up the total number of thrust attacks declared against each enemy unit and resolve each unit separately.

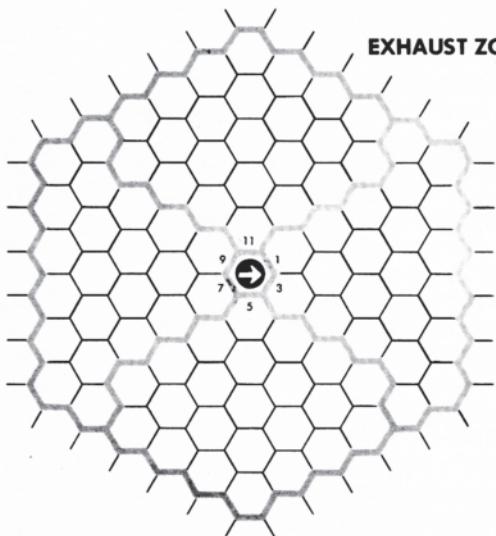
EXHAUST ZONES

The direction that plasma thrust is emitted from a Sh'k'tlp ship depends on whether the ship is accelerating, decelerating, or turning. These directions have been simplified into four exhaust zones. Refer to the diagram that corresponds to the Sh'k'tlp ship's orientation (pointing toward a hex side or hex corner).

EXHAUST ZONE DIAGRAM 1



EXHAUST ZONE DIAGRAM 2



When a ship decelerates, any enemy units in the forward exhaust zone may be attacked by the plasma thrusts emitted.

When a ship turns so that its final orientation is toward points 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, any enemy units in the left exhaust zone may be attacked. When a ship turns so that its final orientation is toward points 10, 11, 9, 8, or 7, any enemy units in the right exhaust zone may be attacked. A ship may not receive more than five turn commands in a single Command Phase.

When a ship accelerates, any enemy units in the rear exhaust zone may be attacked. Note that if the ship turns, its rear exhaust zone will be different when it accelerates.

Each plasma thrust into a given zone may be applied to any target in that zone. Thus, if three thrusts were directed into an exhaust zone containing two enemy units, one of the units could be attacked with two thrusts and the other attacked with one. Attacks against different units are resolved separately. All thrusts against a single target are added together and resolved as a single attack, after all maneuver commands have been issued to the firing ship in the Command Phase.

A spaceship may not conduct a thrust attack against a spaceship that is beyond a thrust zone (more than five hexes away).

When a ship at zero velocity receives turn commands, no energy is expended and thus, no thrust attacks may be conducted. A ship at zero velocity may receive six turn commands in a single Command Phase (thus reversing its direction).

RESOLVING A PLASMA THRUST ATTACK

The Sh'k'tlp Spaceship Thrust Attack Table is used to resolve thrust attacks against enemy units. Determine the target value as in *Delta Vee 8.0*. Use the position and velocity of the firing ship after all commands have been issued in the phase for this calculation. Note that every Sh'k'tlp ship has a targeting program modifier of -2. Roll one die and follow the instructions on the table to find out if any plasma thrusts strike the target, and if so, how many hits are achieved. If the target is hit, use the appropriate Hit Table to find the extent of the damage.

A thrust attack is not required when plasma exhaust is directed into an exhaust zone occupied by a unit. The player controlling the Sh'k'tlp ship may declare whether or not the thrust is an attack.

DAMAGE TO SH'K'TLP SPACESHIPS

When a Sh'k'tlp ship is the target of any type of attack, the Sh'k'tlp Spaceship Hit Table is used to determine what part of the ship is hit. This table is used in a similar way to the Hit Table for Human ships (*Delta Vee 8.7*), but is divided into two parts, one for each basic type of Sh'k'tlp spaceship. Since Sh'k'tlp ships do not have armor, there are no effects listed for a part becoming vulnerable or damaged, just destroyed.

ENERGY EXPENDITURE

Sh'k'tlp spaceships expend energy blocks at a different rate than Human ships. For every two maneuver commands issued to a ship during a Command Phase, one energy block is expended. Fractions are rounded down, so that if only one maneuver command is issued in a phase, no energy is expended.

A weave command requires the expenditure of one energy block. No energy is expended to activate or deactivate a null-field. Energy for a long intrasystem voyage is expended as described in *Universe™ 32.2*. No energy is expended while in quickspace.

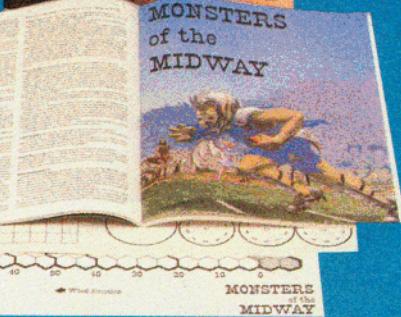
THE NULL-FIELD IN COMBAT

A Sh'k'tlp ship with an active null-field is shielded from laser and particle fire. The field does not stop missiles or projectiles. As long as a ship with an active null-field is outside the automatic detection radius of enemy ships (three hexes for Human ships, five hexes for Sh'k'tlp ships), it will always be undetected. The chance of an enemy missile intercepting a ship with a null-field is reduced by two on the Missile Interception Table, *Delta Vee 9.7*, to represent the absence of detectable emissions from the ship.

Credits:

Sh'k'tlp Design by Greg Costikyan
Other Design and Development by John H. Butterfield
Graphics by Timothy Truman
Editing by David J. Ritchie and Michael Moore

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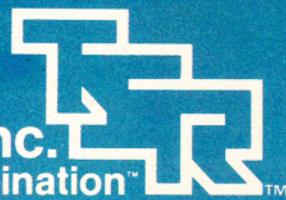
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[5.2] SH'K'TLP CHARACTER HERITAGE TABLES

Home Environ Table

| COVER (SECOND DICE ROLL) | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| FIRST DICE ROLL | CONTOUR | VO | CR | BN | LV | WD | FT | JU | MA |
| 01-10 | PK | 01-18 | 19-35 | 36-48 | 49-65 | 66-83 | 84-00 | - | - |
| 11-30 | MN | 01-15 | 16-30 | 31-40 | 41-55 | 56-70 | 71-85 | 86-00 | - |
| 31-50 | HL | 01-10 | 11-19 | 20-27 | 28-35 | 36-44 | 45-62 | 63-87 | 88-00 |
| 51-84 | FL | - | 01-10 | 11-20 | 21-29 | 30-39 | 40-58 | 59-87 | 88-00 |
| 85-94 | IN | | | | | | | | |
| 95-99 | SF | | | | | | | | |
| 00 | SB | | | | | | | | |

Procedure: Roll percentile dice to determine the *contour* of the character's home environ. Then roll the percentile dice again and locate the result in the row corresponding to the determined contour to find the *cover* of the home environ. **Exception:** If an **IN**, **SF** or **SB** is achieved, the second dice roll is not conducted. The contour and cover received from this table are the character's home environ and correspond to the abbreviations on the Character Record's Environ Skill Display.

Environ Skill Level Table

| DIE ROLL | SKILL LEVEL |
|----------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2-3 | 2 |
| 4-6 | 3 |
| 7-8 | 4 |
| 9 | 5 |
| 10 | 6 |

Temperature Table

| DIE ROLL | TEMPERATURE RANGE |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Cold |
| 2-5 | Normal |
| 6-10 | Hot |

Results correspond to the temperature ranges on the Character Record.

Urban Skill Level Table

| DIE ROLL = ENVIRON SKILL LEVEL | URBAN SKILL LEVEL |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 | 6 |
| 3-4 | 5 |
| 5-6 | 4 |
| 7-9 | 3 |
| 10-11 | 2 |
| 12 | 1 |
| 13-16 | 0 |

[5.1] SPECTRAL CLASS TABLE

| PERCENTILE DICE RESULT | SPECTRAL TYPE |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | A ¹ |
| 2 | F (0-4)* |
| 3,4 | F (5-9)* |
| 5-8 | G (0-4)* |
| 9-13 | G (5-9)* |
| 14-19 | K (0-4)* |
| 20-26 | K (5-9)* |
| 27-37 | M (0-4)* |
| 38-53 | M (5-9)* |
| 54 or more | Dwarf ² |

Spectral Type: Choose any number in the range listed as the sub-class of the star.

An asterisk (*) by the spectral type indicates that the star has planet potential.

NOTES:

1. If a star of an *A* spectral type is rolled, roll a percentile die a second time. On a roll of *1-4*, the star is *A* (0-4) and has planet potential; on a roll of *5-10*, the star is *A* (5-9) and has planet potential.
2. A dwarf star has no planet potential. Roll the percentile dice again to find the type of dwarf star; if the second result is also *dwarf*, consider the star an *M*-class dwarf.

[5.3] SH'K'TLP SOCIAL STANDING TABLE

| MODIFIED DIE RESULT | SOCIAL STANDING | WEALTH: ONE DIE | INITIAL SKILL POINT MODIFIER |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| -1 or less | Congenital unemployed | 1 Mil | +1 |
| 0 | Common laborer | 10 Mils | +3 |
| 1 | Lower class | 10 Mils | +2 |
| 2-3 | Poor colonist | 10 Mils | +1 |
| 4-5 | Private sector employee | 1 Tran | 0 |
| 6-7 | Public sector employee | 100 Mils | +1 |
| 8-9 | Military family | 100 Mils | +1 |
| 10-11 | Tech family | 1 Tran | +1 |
| 12-14 | Bureaucrat | 1 Tran | 0 |
| 15-16 | Independent trader | 10 Trans | -1 |
| 17-18 | High level bureaucrat | 1 Tran | +1 |
| 19 | Gold star bureaucrat | 10 Trans | 0 |
| 20 | Prince of industry | 100 Trans | -2 |
| 21 | Wealthy dilettante | 200 Trans | -4 |

See 5.6 for explanation of use.

FIRST CONTACTS

[5.4] SH'K'TLP BODY MODIFIER CHART

| FIELD OF STUDY | BODY |
|---------------------|------|
| Theoretical Science | 0 |
| Applied Science | 2 |
| Business | 0 |
| Humanities | 0 |
| The Mind | 0 |
| The Body | 6 |
| The Military | 4 |
| General | 1 |

Multiplied by Potentials: Physique, Coordination.

[5.5] SH'K'TLP INFLUENCE MODIFIER TABLE

| REASON FOR INCREASE | INCREASE |
|---|---|
| For each 100 Trans owned by the character | +1 above base (maximum increase of 10 points) |
| For each form which becomes standard | +5 permanently |
| If character owns ship | +2 above base |
| For major service rendered the Sh'k'tlp race | +1 to 5 (GM's discretion) |
| Arrested for minor crime | -1 permanently |
| Arrested for major crime | -3 permanently |
| Imprisoned for major crime | -5 permanently |
| For major disservice to the Sh'k'tlp race | -1 to 5 (GM's discretion) |
| For business failure | -1 permanently |
| For appointment to the Commonwealth legislature | +3 above base, +1 permanently |

SH'K'TLP Effects of Age Table

| DIE ROLL PLUS AGE | CHARACTERISTIC POINTS LOST |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 37 or less | 0 |
| 38, 39 | 1 Body |
| 40, 41 | 1 Endurance |
| 42, 43 | 1 Body and 1 Endurance |
| 44, 45 | 2 Body |
| 46, 47 | 2 Body and 1 Endurance |
| 48 or more | 2 Body and 2 Endurance |

The Body characteristic may not be reduced below 3 as a result of aging. If such a reduction is called for, it is applied to the Endurance instead.

[5.6] HUMAN-SH'K'TLP INFLUENCE RATING TABLE

| HUMAN IS: | INFLUENCE RATING |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Planetary president or higher | 20 |
| Shipping magnate (5+ ships) | 18 |
| Minor trader (4 or less ships) | 10 |
| Diplomat | 16 |
| Other government official | 12 |
| Psi | 12 |
| Has 500+ Trans in cash | See note |
| Anyone else | 5 |

Note: Multiply the number of Trans in hundreds by 10 to find influence rating (minimum rating 5).

[5.7] SH'K'TLP WEAPON CHART

| RATE OF FIRE | HIT STRENGTH | WEAPON | TERRAIN MULTIPLIER% | | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | WEIGHT IN KGs | PRICE IN TRANS | EQUIVALENT SKILL |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----|------|------------------|-------|----|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | | | RANGE IN HEXES% | 0 | 1-4 | 5-13 | 14-25 | 26-40 | | | | |
| Spray | None | Marker ¹ | | 50 | 40 | 15 | P | P | 4 | 2 | | Longarms |
| 2 | 2 | Congealer ¹ | | 35 | 45 | 30 | 10 | -10 | 2 | 2 | | Longarms |
| 2 | 6/5 ² | Shocker ¹ | | 60 | 55 | 40 | 20 | -5 | 2 | 2 | | Handguns |
| 2 | 10 ³⁴ | Forcer (low) | | 55 | 45 | 30 | P | P | 4 | 10 | | Laser/Stun |
| 1 | 15 ⁴⁵ | Forcer (high) | | 55 | 45 | 30 | 10 | P | | | | |
| 1 | 4 | Congeal Grenade ⁶ | | P | 50 | -10 | -60 ⁷ | P | .5 | .2 | | Grenades |

See 16 in Section 4 for explanation of *Charger* and for further details on the weapons listed above. This chart is organized like the Human Weapons Chart (see 19.0, Gamemasters' Guide). The skill that a Sh'k'tlp would employ to use each weapon is listed as the Equivalent Skill. The *Marker* weapon, when it sprays, squirts continuously for 4 Action Rounds into any number of hexes within range.

NOTES:

1. Weapon produces recoil with each fire (see 29.6, Gamemasters' Guide).
2. The first strength to the left of the slash is the Impact Strength; the second to the right of the slash is the Shock Strength. 3. The Hit Strength is used to check for stun only (see 30.4 of the Gamemasters' Guide); the Terrain Value is considered 0. 4. The Hit Strength is reduced by 1 for every hex in distance to where the target is located. 5. The weapon has a stun strength of 10 at 15 hexes. 6. Effective in target hex and all adjacent hexes for 4 Action Rounds. 7. Strength Rating of throwing character is added to the Hit Chance.

BASE HIT CHANCE

[5.10] SH'K'TLP SPACESHIP HIT TABLE

| | | Part of Target Ship | Hit |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------------|-----|
| Die | Teardrop/Disc Ship | Sphere/Rod Ship | |
| 1 | Critical Hit! | Critical Hit! | |
| 2 | Bridge, Life Support | Bridge, Life Support | |
| 3 | Engine, Energy | Thruster, Rod | |
| 4 | Gravity, Null-Field | Energy | |
| 5 | Hold | Gravity | |
| 6 | Thruster, Rod | Null-field | |
| 7 | Wing ² | Engine, Deck 4 | |
| 8 | No Hit | Deck 1, Deck 5 | |
| 9 | No Hit | Deck 2, Deck 6 | |
| 10 | No Hit | Deck 3, Rod 3 ³ | |

NOTES:

1. If the ship is unrevealed, treat as a No Hit. 2. If the ship is not designed for atmospheric travel, treat as a No Hit. 3. If the ship is not capable of FTL travel, the "Deck 3" result must be used.

PROCEDURE:

When a Sh'k'tlp ship is hit, the firing player rolls a percentile die and locates the result under the proper ship type to find which part of the ship is *destroyed*. If two parts are listed in the result and the ship possesses both parts (whether destroyed or not), roll the percentile die again. On a 1-5, the first part is destroyed; on a 6-10, the second part listed is destroyed. A Sh'k'tlp ship with an active null-field is immune to laser and particle fire.

EXPLANATION OF RESULTS:

Critical Hit: See 8.7, *Delta Vee* booklet.

Bridge or Engine: See 8.9, *Delta Vee* booklet.

Life Support: All crew aboard not wearing an expedition suit (or equivalent) are dead in a number of turns (5 minute units) equal to one D6 die roll.

Energy: Twenty additional energy units must be expended each Command Phase until all energy is depleted.

Gravity: The ship no longer has artificial gravity. Any velocity change greater than 2 in a single Command Phase will kill all Sh'k'tlp aboard; Humans aboard may survive a velocity change of 3.

Null-field: The ship's null-field may not be activated.

Hold: The cargo, passenger, crew and laboratory areas are destroyed. Its Maneuver Rating is halved (round up).

Rod: The expenditure of an Energy Block is required for each and every Maneuver Command issued to the ship. If the rod is hit twice, the ship may receive no Maneuver Commands at all.

Wing: The ship may no longer land on a world with an atmosphere.

Deck: The specific function of the deck (cargo, passengers, crew quarters, laboratory, etc.) may no longer be performed.

[5.8] SH'K'TLP SPACESHIP ATTRIBUTE CHART

| Die | Teardrop/Disc I | Teardrop/Disc II | Teardrop/Disc III | Bubble/rod (5 decks) | Bubble/rod (3 decks) |
|-----|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 4 | 11 | 100 | 1 | Yes | No |
| 5 | 13 | 150 | 3 | Yes | No |
| 6 | 15 | 240 | 4 | No | Yes |
| 7 | 9 | 400 | 8 | No | Yes |
| 8 | 12 | 300 | 6 | No | Yes |
| 9 | 10 | 20 | 5 | 20 | 10 |
| 10 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 4 |

All Sh'k'tlp spaceships have an Armor Class of 0 and a Targeting Program of -2. Consider a Sh'k'tlp ship to have a Civ Level of 8, if required for resolution of a game function. Although Sh'k'tlp spaceships do not use the pod system (see 31.4, *Gamemaster's Guide*), the GM may customize a Sh'k'tlp ship by giving it the capabilities of a number of pods equal to the Pod Equivalents number on the chart. The following Human pods are *not* available for Sh'k'tlp ships: arsenal, augmented jump, battlecraft, battle communications, energy (already calculated into the ship), explorer, heavy weapon, hunter, light weapon, standard jump, tractor beam. The listed cost of a Sh'k'tlp ship on the above chart assumes that any modifications made to the ship by the GM include pod attributes of average cost. This cost may vary by as much as 20% if the pod attributes are either especially cheap (such as cargo space) or expensive (such as scientific equipment).

[5.9] SPACESHIP THRUST ATTACK TABLE

| Number of Thrusts | 0 | 1 | 2,3 | 4,5 | 6,7 | 8-10 | 11-14 | 15-20 |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 2,3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | - | - |
| 4,5 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | - | - |
| 6,7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 8,9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 10,11 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |

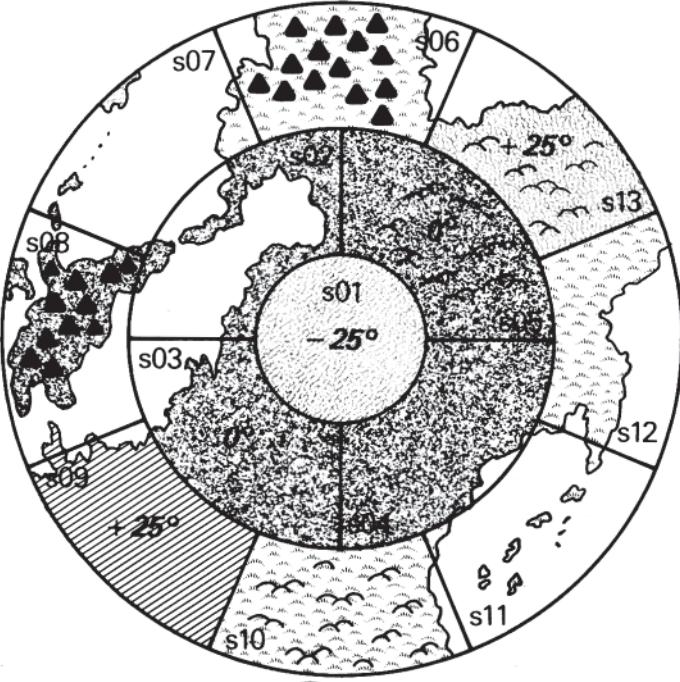
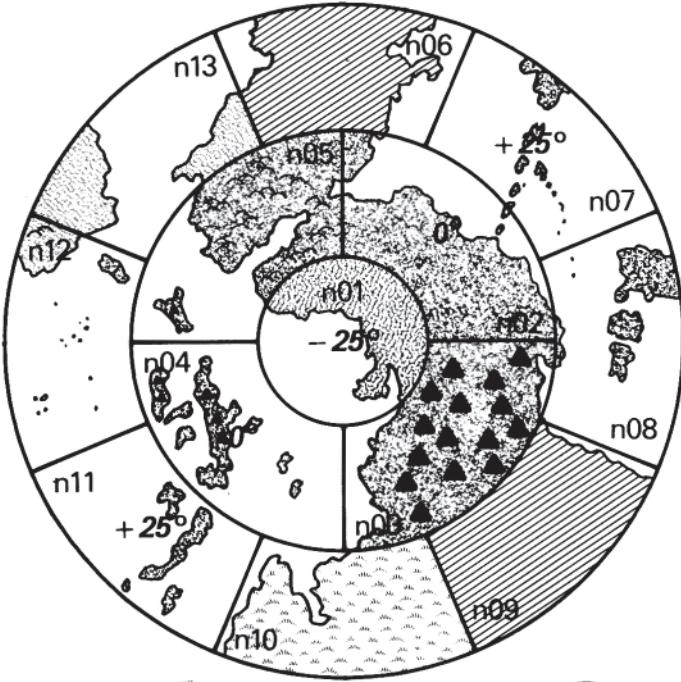
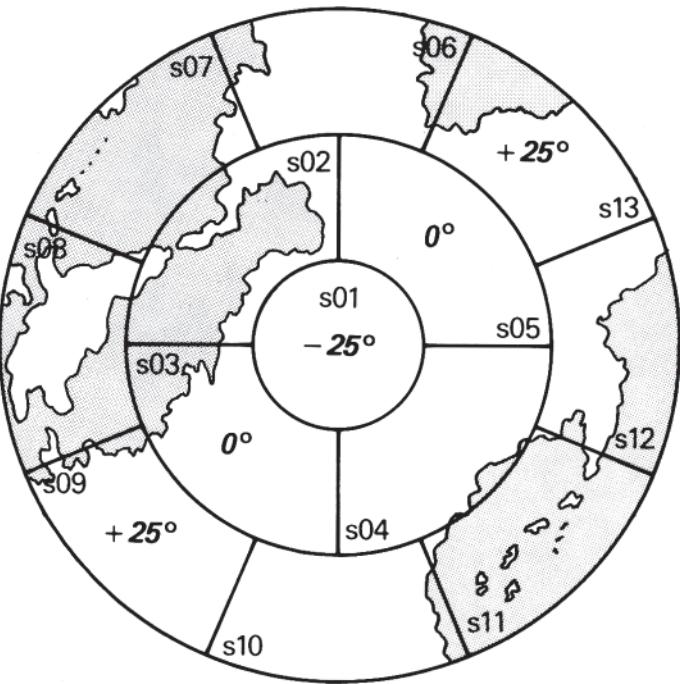
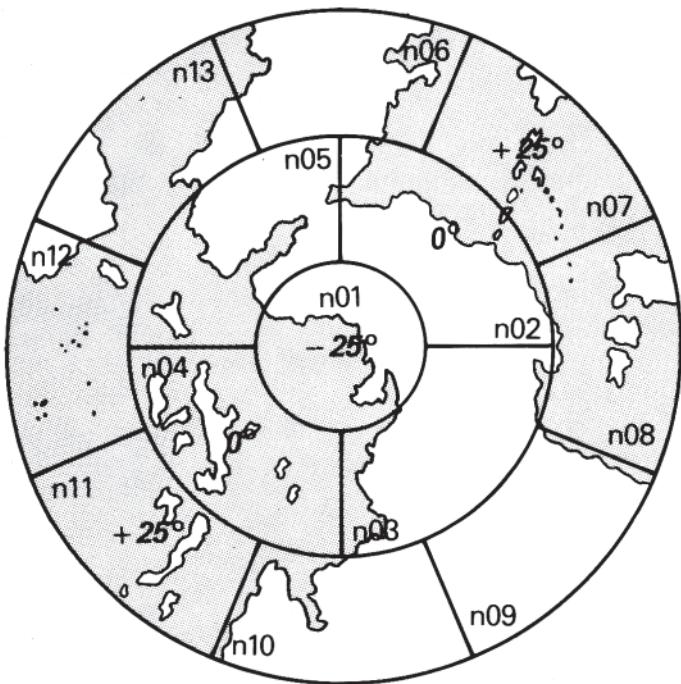
PROCEDURE:

Cross-reference the Target Value [Range + (Relative Velocity - Target Program)] with the total number of Plasma Thrusts directed at the target to find the Hit Chance. Roll one die. If the die result is equal to or greater than the Hit Chance, all the thrusts miss the target. If the die result is less than the Hit Chance, the thrusts have hit the target; subtract the die result from the Hit Chance to determine the total number of Plasma Hits the target incurred. Plasma Hits the target incurred. Plasma hexes away from the firing Sh'k'tlp ship.

FIRST CONTACTS

WORLD LOG: Size 5

Gravity: 1.0 (LT) Action Round Movement: None



BARREN



LT. VEGETATION



FOREST



JUNGLE



HILLS



MOUNTAINS

NAME Sh'k'tlp TYPE E MOONS (nr.) 3
 DISTANCE FROM STAR 1AU ATMOSPHERE NORM MEAN TEMP 100°F
 HYDROGRAPH 45 DAY LENGTH 18hrs.
 SETTLEMENT STATUS N/A LAW LEVEL 3 CIV LEVEL 8
 SPACEPORT CLASS 5 RESOURCES _____

REMARKS Sh'k'tlp Home World
Sh'k'tlp population 3 3/4 Billion