

Talpok

History:

The Talpok is a race of arboreal felines/fox that developed on the planet **Tacrafa**. Their ancestors were forcefully relocated, while still in their undeveloped stone age, during the first Aedifex war by the Principium Dominion, as a means to save their civilization before the firing of the Laxo devices, the ultimate weapon that was supposed to end the war. It should be noted that when the Talpok ships traveled to a new world, some got separated from the main fleet and ended up in another part of the galaxy, little else is known of the Talpok pre-history beyond this. Since their relocation to a new home world the Talpok evolved rapidly, as the new world had fewer large predators to challenge their eventual dominion over the planet. Their infighting and war-like period ended very quickly with one family, and its kin, taking control and creating a harsh but fair ruling government. The first rulers established the laws of equality, created a council that later became the seat and laid the foundation for the guild system, which is the way of life of the Talpok to this day. Unlike other civilizations, no one guild has more power than another not religion or the Tua politicians and autocrats. The empire into space eons ago and through, either conquest or by treaty, took control of dozens of systems spanning nearly half a spiral arm at its height, then came outsiders, the Spartus, the Voxx, and rebellion on many worlds. The empire was reduced in less than five millennia to a handful of systems. With the ingenuity of the Teka, and ancient Principium knowledge, they reconstructed the barrier of old that surrounds the remnant of the Talpok Empire. Run by the power of relocated suns, the barrier is slowly wearing down, and it is estimated it will run out of energy in less than a century or less. The Talpok need a new home and fresh resources or they will go extinct.

Government:

The Talpok run their Empire through the elected council with a dynastic line of emperors that has been unbroken since its inception during the great unification of the race. These leaders are chosen and sworn in by those who represent the various guilds that make up the Talpok society. These guilds are based around the seven Talpok gods (see Talpok religion). From the guild leadership come the nine representatives, except for the emperor himself. All major deliberation goes through the council to be voted on, and the motion passes/fails with the majority. The Talpok have few laws as they are bound by honor and social rules of conduct based on family lineage. The emperor, although the leader of their race, has only the same voting power as any other member of the council but he is treated with the pomp and ceremony befitting his station. Traditionally, and by law, only a male may rule as emperor.

Religion:

The Talpok are devoted in the belief of their gods, and what they represent to the Talpok race, as every aspect of their society is based around them. These gods come from Tassus the eternal black void that created all, and from its heart came Tal and Tu. Tal the father and Tu the mother. Upon being created, they fell madly in love and from their union came the sun where their five children Tox, Tua, Teka, Teesa, and Tual sprang forth. Grateful to their parents for giving them life, the children forged the five worlds of the Talpok main solar system and gave them life. The Talpok were given gifts from the gods to allow them to prosper and live. Indebted to their creators, they swore their devotion to their teachings. Talpok do not speak of their religion to other species often, nor do they care about others' beliefs so they do not expect others to follow their teachings, but they also do not like others attempting to alter theirs.

Gods:

Tal: The father, the speaker of truth and seeker of justice is represented by the Emperor in the council. All Talpok follow the word of Tal and in turn follow the Emperor's lineage that is chosen to lead the people, with the consent of the people, and it is supposed to insure their safety.

Tu: The mother, the protector of faith and healer is represented by the religious guild in the senate that inspires belief, maintains and teaches the scriptures of Tu to the Talpok people. All followers of Tu are physicians who devote their mind, body, and soul to the physical and mental preservation of others.

Tox: The warrior, the defender of all is represented by the martial guild in the council. All Talpok are given the wisdom of Tox and trained to fight, when called upon or who volunteer, and vow in his name, they will defend their race. Those, however, that take up his banner devote their lives to the protection and preservation of the Talpok against any who would harm them.

Tua: The messenger and explorer, the seeker of friends and goods is represented by the traders and diplomats guild in the council. Anyone that takes up her banner, are trained in the arts of trade, negotiations and diplomacy, venture into the unknown to find anyone or anything that will help the Talpok Empire by brokering commerce agreements, establishing trade and negotiating treaties in the name of the emperor and their people.

Tessa: The knowledge seeker, the one who strive to understand and learn is represented by the science and engineering guild on the council. Those who take up his banner devote themselves to creating new machines; solving problems and are the creative thinking to improve the standard of living, increase technology for all the guilds and for the Talpok as a whole.

Teka: The keeper of knowledge is represented by the teachers and archiving guild in the council. All Talpok seek her guidance to mentor the younger generations to impart wisdom, history and knowledge for growth. Those who take up her banner devote themselves to help others mentally and physically grow until they find where they belong. They also are charged with keeping the records and texts of all Talpok throughout their history. Knowledge is power as is learning from your mistakes, those that follow Teka help impart both the growth of history and knowledge to others.

Tual: The crafter of land and stone is represented by the arts and agricultural guild in the council. Anyone who carries her banner imparts beauty and compassion to all. Those that follow Tual tend to farms, mine and refine ore, and promote craft and the arts. They are able to express themselves and expand upon Talpok culture through their efforts, capturing its essence with the arts, and ensure that all are given amenities needed to survive.

Rituals:

Purification:

After a Talpok dies their body is said to trap the spirit and hold it to this world, because it is no longer pure, it no longer shares the energy of life in harmony with the soul, keeping the soul from ascending to join the power of all, in the realm of the gods. For the dead's soul to move on, the family and friends of the deceased will cremate the body to absolve it of all their sins attained in life. However, should the body rot unpurified, the soul will be consumed by its depravities and spend eternity locked to this plane, never able to be one with the gods. It is rare that this is allowed to happen, but there are occasions when a Talpok has committed acts against their code of life and blasphemed against the gods making them unworthy to move on. These few are buried or left to rot after death in far desolate places or in unmarked graves.

Marriage and Mating:

Talpok are devoted to family, kin and the guild way of life. They are raised with simple but very rigid traditions handed down from the days when they first came from the trees. Males and females are encouraged to be friends, open to each other in thought, play, training and in guild life but they are forbidden to have relations of intimate nature until they are mated and bound by the laws and traditions handed down in the text of Tu, the mother. When a male or female has chosen, and is trained in guild life, usually but not always of the family or kin, they may choose a mate. This can be either male to female or visa-versa as Talpok are all equal with no distinction as to males or females being dominant in their society. Talpok, despite some outsiders' notions of

them, are monogamous, taking only one mate for life. Talpok mates, if they live their full measure of life, can have up to three to five sets of offspring raised to guild age before they pass to the next existence. If one mate dies before another, often the survivor will not take another unless they are very young. In these cases, they are given a morning time before the family, or the kin suggests new mates to continue the family line. Talpok marriage ceremonies are not complex. The asking Talpok, male or female, brings gifts to the parentage of the family or kin, makes the request, if granted, and they are not always granted, the couple goes before a Tu guild council elder, the blessing is given by Tu, and they go to the ancient forest for a sort of honeymoon. There they live in the trees, for a time, or a designated place of their choosing, it varies according to the couples own desires. When they return they are given a place of their own by the Tual guild. During war time some Talpok couples settle on new worlds and build lives there, but always have a place on home world if needed.