

# Adapting Tékumel to TORG

*By Fred Parham*

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I have been working on adapting the TORG rules to the world of Tékumel, either for adventuring in Tékumel or for having Tékumel be part of TORG's Possibility Wars. Here are my ideas for axiom levels, world laws, and how to integrate Tékumel into a TORG campaign. Any comments?

Some of this material deals not with Tékumel in itself but with how it interacts with the other worlds in the TORG campaign. If the TORG system is used just for adventuring in Tékumel, the axiom levels are not really necessary, since someone familiar with Tékumel can just disallow anything inappropriate. The world laws contain rules mechanics that deal with play in Tékumel.

## ***Axioms***

### **Social Axiom: 14**

Much of the known part of Tékumel is controlled by five large empires: Tsolyánu, Salarvyá, Mu'ugalavyá, Yán Kór and Livyánu. Society in these empires and in many of the smaller states is rigidly stratified. The clan into which he or she is born determines a large part of a person's place in life. In Tsolyánu, women normally have no independent legal existence; they are completely controlled by the leaders of their clans, though they can declare themselves "Aridáni" (independent) and get the same rights and duties as a man. The Law of Stagnation has a huge influence on Tekumeláni society.

### **Spiritual Axiom: 20**

The Gods are real on Tékumel, and they have been known to intervene when called on. See the Law of Divine Intervention below for more details.

### **Magical Axiom: 18**

Magic is important in Tékumel. Each legion of the armies of the five empires has its own wizards to aid it in battle. The temples and noble clans also have wizards. The Laws of Planar Power and Stagnation affect magic.

### **Technological Axiom: 25**

Although the technology commonly in use on Tékumel is at a fairly low level, there are still functional devices of the ancients that have amazing powers; however, much of the knowledge of how to use these devices has been lost. The Laws of Decadence, Stagnation, and Planar Power affect technology.

## **World Laws**

### **1. Law of Divine Intervention**

The gods are real on Tékumel, and they have been known to intervene in human affairs when called on; however, the belief of their followers does not produce any standardized miracles. The supernatural powers possessed by some of the clergy are the same as those used by independent magicians (of whom there are very few, and most of whom were originally trained by the temples), the sorcerers of the nonhuman races, and some of the devices of the Ancients. In TORG campaigns, any miracle other than Ritual of Hope or Ritual of Purification used in the cosm or realm of Tékumel creates a contradiction. Invocation of the gods according to the standard rules is allowed, however. Characters in the Tékumel realm or cosm can invoke the gods using either Faith or Focus; characters native to Tékumel will normally have only Faith.

### **2. Law of Decadence**

There are many powerful technological devices in Tékumel, with technological levels up to 25. There are also techno-magical devices, allowed by the Law of Planar Power, with levels up to 31. These devices have no trouble functioning (unless they have exhausted their power supplies); however, the knowledge of how to operate, repair, and build them has been lost. Any use of the Science skill or any Vehicles skill to repair, build, or learn about any device above tech level 15 takes the "device is from cosm with a higher tech axiom" penalty given under the description of the Science skill; tech 15 devices take half that penalty; devices of tech 14 or less are unaffected. The penalty for learning how to operate a device does not apply to devices which can be operated very simply; for example, the "Eyes", techno-magical devices of the Ancients which are the size and shape of a human eyeball, are operated simply by pressing a button.

In TORG campaigns, characters entering the Tekumeláni realm on Earth with high-tech devices will still know how to operate the devices if they are fairly simple (for instance, if all it takes is pulling a trigger), and they will remember what the devices are supposed to do; however, they will forget how to operate, build, and repair complex devices until they have made the appropriate Science or Vehicles skill rolls. I suggest that the characters be required to take a certain amount of time after a failed roll before they can try again; perhaps this could be governed by the dramatic skill use rules, with each card flip taking a day.

### **3. Law of Stagnation**

Societies on Tékumel have remained basically unchanged for millennia. Use of the Persuasion skill to try to get anyone to do anything that would lead to a fundamental change in society gets a -3 penalty, as does use of the Science skill to invent things. A character designing spells gets a penalty of -3 to all rolls, and the character is stymied for those rolls. Creating spells to be cast on the fly creates a contradiction in Tékumel.

### **4. Law of Planar Power**

Magic in Tékumel derives its power from Tékumel's connections to other dimensions. In TORG terms, these dimensions are part of Tékumel's cosm but can only be reached by Extra-dimensional Gate or similar spells. In some parts of Tékumel, the barriers between dimensions are especially thick, and there is a penalty to the bonus generated for magical skill rolls and rolls to apply the magical power of ancient devices; this penalty can be as high as -12 in some areas. In other areas,

there is a concentration of magical power and there are bonuses to magical rolls. Such areas are much more rare than the areas that give penalties, and the bonuses only go up to +3.

The extra-dimensional powers of Tekumeláni magic are dissipated by metal. Any character with at least 1.5 kg of non-magical metal on his person has a penalty to all magical skill bonuses of 2 times the TORG value of the mass of the metal. Thus a character wearing 30 lbs. of metal armor (TORG value 6) would have penalty of -12 to all magical skill rolls.

The power of magic in Tékumel is such that it allows spells that can be cast by the power of the mind alone. There are two ways of handling this. The first is just to use spells with the gestures, incantations, etc. taken away and the difficulty increased to compensate; the second is to use the psionics rules, with the psionics depending on the magic axiom instead of the social axiom. More details may follow after the Space Gods book is published later this month.

The Ancients had devices that drew on extra-dimensional power. Some of those devices still exist. They are generally more powerful and predictable than spells; however, they are subject to the Laws of Decadence and Stagnation. The Law of Planar Power allows devices of tech level 26-31 to exist, but these devices also require a magic axiom of at least 12; devices of tech level 26-31 from other cosms will not function in Tékumel unless they are powered by magic. The Occultech rules from the Tharkold sourcebook may be helpful here.

## ***TORG Link Difficulties***

### **For Tékumel characters in other cosms:**

Core Earth	13
Living Land	20
Aysle	11
Cyberpapacy	10
Nile Empire	8
Nippon Tech	18
Orrorsh	7
Land Below	17
Space Gods	13

### **For characters from other cosms in Tékumel:**

Core Earth	10
Living Land	8
Aysle	7
Cyberpapacy	7
Nile Empire	9
Nippon Tech	11
Orrorsh	9
Land Below	3
Space Gods	16

## ***Tékumel in TORG campaigns***

It would be possible to have an invading force from Tékumel as part of the Possibility Wars. The Earth from which Tékumel was originally settled would be assumed to be an alternate-cosm copy of Core Earth. I think it would be appropriate to have the High Lord leading the invasion be a worshipper of one of Tékumel's Pariah Gods. Those gods desire to draw all of the universe into

themselves (thereby destroying it); that is also the goal of the Nameless One, the source of the Darkness Devices which give TORG's High Lords their power. Perhaps the High Lord could be one of the five empires' leaders who has fallen into the worship of the Nameless-One-as-Pariah-God.

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