



WARSA Trading Card Game
An Introduction to the Story



WARS: An Introduction

"This is a matter of life and death."

—Wu-men kuan

Premise

WARS is about energy, power, conflict and the mysterious quantum effects of The Mumon Rift. In the 24th century, escalating warfare among three human factions in Earth's Solar System increases dramatically when a new planet and two warring alien races suddenly enter through an enormous rift in the fabric of the universe.

Backstory

Human beings dreamed of extending their reach into space for centuries. The Space Age began in the 1960s and for the next seventy years, satellites, rovers, probes and spaceships blasted from Earth into the vast unknown. In the infancy of space exploration, we knew little about the universe and our place in it. However, with the introduction of the GRAV Drive (GRAvity Attuned Vehicle) in the 2030s, humans could explore the Solar System with renewed interest and increasing freedom. Soon large, populated space stations signified humanity's foray into the dark void. A permanent colony on the Earth's moon became the platform for further exploration into deep space. Manned missions to Mars and other planets soon followed. Humans had emerged from Earth's womb and would never see the universe in the same way again.

In 2071, a large portion of Asia and the Pacific Rim experienced several catastrophic explosions that resulted in nuclear radiation poisoning. The death toll was staggering. Huge areas of land and many large population centers were rendered uninhabitable for generations. This incident was the catalyst for an Asian contingent to begin the arduous process of colonizing Mars. In late 2072, Mars welcomed the first humans who had no intention of ever returning to Earth.

At the same time, discoveries of valuable mineral and chemical deposits in the Asteroid Belt and on Jupiter's moons drew more and more people deeper into space. By the early 2100s, many mining and research operations were established in this region of the Solar System. Corporate investments in these operations gave birth to profitable trade routes between the inhabitants of the Outer Rim, Earth and Mars. Independent, rebellious types who favored anarchy over order chose the rugged way of life in the wild frontier of our system's Outer Rim; they were known throughout the system as "Mavericks." Life in the Outer Rim was lawless, dangerous and exciting. As Mars became a viable launching point for additional space expansion, it too began to develop commercial operations in "the rim." By the mid-2100s, Mars and the Outer Rim were thriving enclaves of humans who had never – and would never – stand on Mother Earth.

In 2161, with corporate influence at an all-time high, the economic powers on Earth came together to form the Central Governance Corporation (CGC). The CGC was the first world government to assume jurisdiction over the entire planet and its satellite operations scattered throughout the system. The CGC was created to exert control, but was limited in its ability to maintain authority over the colonies and stations of Mars and the Outer Rim. Disgruntled and rebellious, non-Earth humans grew more and more defiant. For 200 years, Earth struggled to retain control. In 2364, the inhabitants of Mars formally declared sovereignty and renamed their planet Gongen.

Defiance turned to hostility, and hostility turned to battle. Gongen forces defeated an Earther task force sent to occupy the Red Planet in the Earth-Gongen War. Losses suffered by both sides opened the door for Maverick power-seekers to commandeer much of the deep space resources of Earth and Gongen. This plunged the entire system into full-scale war.



Introduction (continued)

In another universe, a highly advanced and arrogant species known as the Shi developed the technology to travel through space at the quantum level. They had spent millennia traveling among the stars and plundering other cultures for technology and slaves. One such slave race, the Quay, managed to rise against the Shi. Despite being regarded as inferior by their oppressors, the Quay caused a cataclysmic disaster in the Shi system that forced the Shi to stretch their "rift" technology to unimaginable limits. In a desperate move, the Shi moved their planet through a gigantic rift in space, sending it into orbit around a new star – an orbit that puts the planet between Gongen and the asteroid belt. The move also creates an enormous tear in the fabric of space/time that does not close. The Mumon Rift is born.

The already volatile situation in the system explodes as the Shi, intent upon exerting their usual influence over inferior beings, try to subdue the stunned humans struggling to deal with the intergalactic interlopers. The Quay, savage warriors who pursue the Shi through the "gateless gate" of the rift, will do anything to survive. The three human factions must now deal with their own escalating conflict, and the increasing danger posed by two powerful new threats.

The WARS have begun.

Timeline

Unknown – Seyal System – Seyal

The Shi, an ancient race from another star system, develop "rift" technology, which allows them to travel seamlessly from one universe to another universe. Their goal is to explore, conquer and exploit whatever they can. On a rift trip thousands of years ago, the Shi discover the Quay homeworld and that race's ability to withstand harsh conditions and adapt to difficult situations. The Shi enslave a sufficient number of Quay to establish a mining colony on Talgon (a planet in their system replete with radiation and toxins) in order to gain access to mineral deposits needed for rift technology.

Unknown – Seyal System – Talgon

The Quay, left to die after Talgon was mined out and abandoned by the Shi, survive and multiply on that hostile planet.

2030s – Earth System – Earth

The invention of the GRAV drive (GRAvity Attuned Vehicle) makes space travel faster and cheaper. GRAV drives allow single-staged vehicles to attain escape velocity, travel through space, and return to Earth using the same power source.

2040s – Earth System – Earth

The GRAV drive makes it possible to construct several large space stations and research colonies throughout the Solar System; this sows the seeds for space colonization by Earth.

2043 – Earth System – Earth's moon

The first permanent human off-world colony is established on the Earth's moon. The facility is manned by a multinational consortium of scientists and military officers from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Israel, Japan, and China.

2071 – Earth System – Earth

A chain of massive nuclear power plant failures in south central China kills hundreds of millions throughout Asia. Millions are saved from death by an AI system developed to control the power grid, which prevents catastrophic meltdowns. Much of the Asian continent is covered in radioactivity and rendered uninhabitable for centuries. Survivors

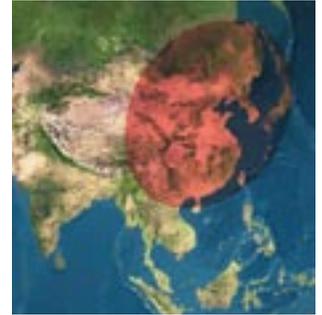


WARS Timeline

are pushed into other areas of the world, which adds to the extreme overpopulation problem that already exists.

2072 – Earth System – Earth

On the heels of the nuclear devastation, a consortium to colonize Mars is formed by governments who formerly occupied Japan, China, India and other Southeast Asian countries.



2076 – Earth System – Mars

The first permanent non-scientific colonies are established on Mars. The consortium begins the intense process of terraforming the Martian environment and building an urban infrastructure.

2100s – Earth System – Outer Rim

Many mining and research colonies are established throughout the asteroid belt and moons of the Solar System; the 2100s become known as the Age of Expansion.

2161 – Earth System – Earth

With the backing of the strongest economic nations, the Central Governance Corporation (CGC) forms as Earth's governing body to regulate worldwide issues like economic development and growth, resource allocation, pollution, hazardous waste disposal, and space exploration for the planet.

2250s – Seyal System – Seyal

The Quay develop interplanetary travel and begin raiding Shi colonies and outposts throughout their system.

2280s – Earth System – Mars

After more than one hundred years of being regulated, taxed and governed by Earth, the citizens of Mars grow increasingly frustrated with their political situation. The Independent Mars movement begins to grow into an organized, effective rebellion.

2364—Earth System – Gongen

After repeated attempts to reach agreement with the CGC, Mars declares independence and renames itself Gongen. The name means "Mountain Deity" in Shinto, and it is inspired by Olympus Mons, the largest mountain in the Solar System, located on Mars.

2370s – Earth System – Earther/Gongen

Military conflicts along trade routes and between outposts mark a decade of violence between Earth and Gongen over claims of independence for Gongen. The seeds of wars are sown.

2380s – Earth System – Earther/Gongen

Violence continues to escalate between the Earth and Gongen. Earth moves toward a military "takeover" of the Red Planet; wars begin in earnest.

2388 – Earth System – Earther/Gongen

The Earth-Gongen War, the first war between planets, is fought on and near the space around Gongen. The Battle of Phobos becomes a historical benchmark as the largest battle in human history. Other battles, some on Gongen soil, mark this bitter conflict. NōBots first appear on Gongen during an incursion of Earth's ground troops in 2388.



Timeline (continued)

The Battle of Phobos was a tactical loss for Earth. Gongen inflicts enough damage to prevent Earth from advancing with an occupying force; Gongen forces retain control of the military installation and their planet.

2389 – Earth System – Outer Rim

In the wake of war, a group of Outer Rim Mavericks form a loose union that seizes control of many outlying mining and research assets of both Earth and Gongen. Earther and Gongen leaders suspect the renegades of sabotage at the Battle of Phobos; the three factions wage battles throughout the system.

2390 – Seyal System – Seyal

The Shi develop a quantum explosion device with the intention of destroying the Quay and their adopted planet.

2391 – Seyal System – Seyal

The Quay foil the Shi plan to destroy the planet Talgon, and in the process cause the destruction of the Shi star. The Shi use rift technology to move their planet into the Solar System and settle into orbit near the Asteroid Belt. The rift they create in the fabric of the universe does not close.

2391 – Earth System – The Mumon Rift

The three human factions are preparing for all-out war throughout the system when The Mumon Rift appears. When the Shi planet and Quay colony ships burst into the system, the balance of power and history of mankind change forever. The entire Solar System is thrown into chaos.

2391 – Earth System – The Mumon Rift

The Quay strike almost immediately and seize a large space station between the asteroid belt and Jupiter to serve as their temporary headquarters in the system.

2391 – Earth System – Earth

The Shi make known their intent to “commandeer” Earth and Gongen for their use; Earth and Gongen forces react accordingly. Maverick and Quay insurgencies into Earth and Gongen space erupt in violence. The WARS have begun.

The active story timeline begins here.

What is truginium?

A whitish material, truginium is a byproduct of iron and copper ore refining. It is generated in significant quantities in the Solar System only on the Jovian moon of Ganymede. Earther, Gongen, and Maverick mining facilities operate on Ganymede.

Storing truginium in large quantities can produce something akin to radiation sickness without a containment vessel. Most mines have simply vented it into space, producing the characteristic bright columns above facilities on Ganymede.

Humans viewed this byproduct as a nuisance, with no practical applications. The Shi, however, use truginium as a key to their rift technology. The Quay know what it is, since they have mined it before for the Shi in the original Seyal star system.

Maverick scientists discovered that truginium can be used to make magnetic monopoles, previously known only as theory. These single pole magnets allow tremendous increases in power generation and efficiency.

Earther Faction

"Controlled or not controlled?"
—Wu-men kuan



General Information:

In the past 400 years, Earthers have seen the merging of government and corporate initiatives. Earther culture is presently corporate-driven; efficiency, profit, structure and growth are the fundamental goals of most Earthers. You are either in a strong business position, or trying to get there. Even the worldwide government, the CGC, is a profit-seeking business organization. This single government handles oversight of taxes, defense, civil services and health care. There are three major employment categories on Earth – corporate (including government), military, and general citizens. Males and females in corporate and military jobs are generally fit, healthy, and mentally astute. The military is very selective... only the best are chosen from many applications.

Earth is still viewed by some humans around the Solar System as their home. There are some people on Gongen and in the Outer Rim who support Earth's efforts to unite humanity in the face of the new threats, but their numbers are few and they have little power.



Earther Government:

In 2161, as Earth became more corporate, a central Earth government was formed. The Central Governance Corporation (CGC) was headquartered in New York City. The CGC was patterned after the most successful corporations of the day. Its influence was not just global, but extended throughout the Solar System. According to Earthers, all colonies, space stations, mining facilities and trading operations fell under CGC jurisdiction. To say the least, this was not received well by off-world populations in the Outer Rim and Mars.

CGC – The CGC is heavily influenced by financial and manufacturing interests, and operates as a corporation itself. The CEO, or head of the CGC, is appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Board is elected by stockholders in the government and by voting members who have a representative voice. Many of the government's Board of Trustees serve on other corporate boards, and there are often conflict of interest issues being resolved in and out of Earth's courts.

The CGC contracts much of its day-to-day operations to smaller corporations. Things such as civil service, police, and military contracts are awarded through a bid system. For the most part, the CGC has done a good job of running the world. Like any organization with a political and business focus, it has some detractors.

iCom – Interstellar Commerce Corporation is another Earther company that provides capital ship fleets for the CGC. Air support contracts are supplied by iCom to CDC and FedGrav. iCom also sells fighter ships to other corporations, such as XeLabs. Commerce Authority is a division of iCom, tasked with regulating trade in the Solar System.

ClSyn – Coordination and Intelligence Syndicate is in charge of Earther information gathering operations. This includes infiltrators of other organizations as well as "gurus" provided as technical support staff for troops of other corporations.

FedGrav – Federated Grav Corporation produces vehicles and weapons for all Earther troops. They supply infantry with F.L.I.C. heavy weapons, "chest cannons" and GR-Blades, low altitude support vehicles such as the famous "Howler's Blades." FedGrav has



Earther Faction (continued)

developed a new battle tank called a juggernaut, in response to Earther ground force losses in the Earth-Gongen War.

XeLabs – Extraorbital Laboratories contracts medical support for combat operations. They operate a station orbiting Venus used for advanced research.

Earther History:

In 2071, a large nuclear explosion in south central China devastated the Asian continent. Billions died and most of the surrounding areas are still contaminated with radioactivity. This disaster forced nearly all of the surviving inhabitants living in those area to relocate and this spurred a movement among the Asian governments to colonize Mars. Space exploration had exploded in the 2030s and 2040s, due to the advent of the GRAV Drive (GRAvity Attuned Vehicle) engines that made space travel much easier and faster.

Within 100 years of humans beginning to live on another planet, Earther governments came together to form the CGC. For the next 200 years, the peoples of Earth and Mars argued over rights, taxes, power and authority. Mars became less dependent upon supplies and support from Earth, and gradually assumed more self-control. In 2364, Mars declared its independence from Earther rule and renamed the planet Gongen.

When it became clear to the CGC that diplomatic and corporate pressures were not going to work, Earth systematically blockaded the supply lines to Gongen and gradually moved an occupying force into Gongen space. The Earthers planned to choke off Gongen and force them to capitulate. In 2388, Earther and Gongen forces fought a monumental space battle. The Gongen moon, Phobos, had an Earther base located there. In reaction to the blockade, Gongen forces placed the Earther base under siege. The two powers faced off on Phobos and Gongen, and their fleets met in the space between Gongen and its moon. The Earther fleet outnumbered and outgunned the Gongen, but the smaller Gongen ships were faster and more maneuverable. The resulting battle inflicted huge losses on both sides. Earth was unable to regain control of the base on Phobos, and the resulting casualties left them without enough troops or support to sustain an occupying force on Gongen. Earth was forced to withdraw. Their defeat was enormous and unexpected.

Shortly after the Battle at Phobos, Earth suffered another mortifying loss when the Mavericks attacked and took control of multiple Outer Rim production and research facilities that were still in use. Earth made several attempts to regain their lost territories over the next three years but they were not successful. Just as Earth was preparing to mount a huge offensive to reclaim their Outer Rim facilities and subdue the Gongen, the Rift opened and changed the balance of power forever.

How fast is a grav drive?

The original grav drives operated at 1G acceleration, with constant accel and decel due to cheap fusion power. With improved grav dampeners installed on interplanetary ships, crews can now withstand greater acceleration. So, 2.5G is standard for commercial and transport vessels. Military and racing craft can reach 5G.

The distance between two planets varies widely because of their orbital paths. This distance can be as little as the difference between their distances from the star, or as great as that sum (if the two planets are on exact opposite sides).

On average, a regular commercial transport makes a 1.4 AU Earth to Mars run in 35 hours (24 hours at 5G). Earth to Ganymede, about 5 AU, is 66 hours (44 hours at 5G).

Gongen Faction

“You must climb a mountain of swords
with bare feet.”
—Wu-men kuan



General Information:

Survival on Mars demanded a communal approach where harmony and loyalty came before commercial and economic interests. The Gongen have abandoned the corporate culture of the CGC; the result is a melding of the communism of China with the “company man” approach of Japan. Unlike Earth with its corporations, the Gongen people have taken the place of the driving force of their planet.

Gongen History:

Space exploration exploded in the 2030s and 2040s. The advent of GRAV drive (GRAvity Attuned Vehicle) engines made space travel much easier and faster, and precipitated a tremendous expansion into space.

The colonization of Gongen (formerly Mars) began in the 2070s, largely initiated by the governments of Asia after a series of disastrous nuclear explosions occurred there in 2071. A large part of Asia and the surrounding Pacific Rim area were contaminated and will be uninhabitable for thousands of years. Asians were the predominant racial group among the early settlers of Mars. While billions of people died in the disaster, the surviving populations had the means and motivation to leave. In addition to GRAV drives, their technology was highly advanced. Asia had been on the leading edge of space exploration during the previous three decades.



The initial colonies were fragile and relied upon a philosophy of sharing for the common good that found favor with the colonists. The early settlers also relied heavily on mechanization. In the early days of colonization, much of the work was performed by robots programmed to handle manual labor in the thin atmosphere. These bots evolved into a servant class used for domestic labor, civil defense and heavy construction. An artificial intelligence was installed to oversee the bots’ construction and deployment. It was the same AI system that shutdown many of the malfunctioning reactors on Earth, preventing catastrophic meltdowns in some areas. Otherwise, the loss of life would have been worldwide. Remembering how that system saved millions of lives, the Gongen people put their trust in the AI, now named “Shocho” (a word meaning “advisor”) in its new incarnation. Over the years, the population increased and cities thrived by tapping into subterranean watersheds and melting large parts of the polar icecaps. The more self-sufficient the Mars settlers became, the less they relied upon shipments from Earth, and the more independent they became.

After struggling for years with the Earth’s Central Governance Corporation (CGC), Mars’ authorities claimed their independence in 2364. Inspired by the fact that Mars has the largest volcano in the Solar System (Olympus Mons), they renamed the planet Gongen (“mountain deity”). Any Earthier official who did not sign the Gongen Declaration of Sovereignty was immediately and unceremoniously sent back to Earth. The most passionate among the Gongen claimed sovereignty based upon the theory that life arose on Gongen, and was transferred to Earth as a result of meteor impacts; they claimed, therefore, that all humans are Gongen and that Gongen is the true cradle of humanity.



Gongen Faction (continued)

In 2388 Earther and Gongen forces fought a monumental space battle. Earth's defeat was unexpected. During the battle of Phobos, NōBots appeared at each of the major Gongen cities to defend them from attacking forces. The people of Gongen did not know the NōBots existed. The mystery surrounding the NōBots—where they came from and why they came—initially baffled and later delighted the Gongen.

Years ago as the conflict between Earth and Gongen was escalating, Shocho took these instructions to a logical conclusion unforeseen by the Gongen. NōBots are large, 15-meter (50-foot) robots designed by Shocho and constructed at remote bot facilities in secret. Each NōBot is decorated with a mask from the traditional Nō theater. As a result, the NōBots have become synonymous with Gongen warfare and legendary throughout the Solar System. In the tradition of the ancient warrior beliefs, a NōBot is programmed to destroy itself if the city it is guarding is defeated. During the Gongen War of Independence, a NōBot known as Ko-omote destroyed itself and killed hundreds of invading Earther troops and making the ultimate sacrifice known as Junshi.

After the Battle of Phobos was over, shrine-like temples were built to honor the NōBots. Since the appearance of the NōBots, Gongen army units have been organized into Kokata units (named after actors in the Nō theater who never wear masks). The uniforms of Kokata units now incorporate symbolic references to honor NōBots. A Kokata units' color scheme is the same as the NōBot assigned to defend their city, and Kokata warriors have an icon of the NōBot's mask on their chest. When the Kokata troops mobilize for war, the NōBots they follow join them in support.

Shikami was the first NōBot to appear. The Shikami Nō mask represents rage, and especially masculine rage. He fought with great fierceness and resolve in defense of his appointed city. His Kokata followers are strong fighters, capable of holding ground for a long long time.

Deigan was the second NōBot to appear. The Deigan Nō mask represents change and enlightenment, a female character. Her Kokata followers are interested in gathering information and finding out about other cultures and planets. After the Earth-Gongen War was concluded, another NōBot named Hannya joined the Deigan Kokata units.

Ikazuchi was the third NōBot to appear, in defense of the city of Takumi. He represents thunder and lightning, and his Kokata followers move quickly and strike with great strength, using jet packs and fast vehicles called TSVs.

Chijo is the nature represented as the "planet defenders." They are troops trained in defense, originally ordered to support other Kokata units in defending Gongen against the Earther attacks. Now, Chijo troops are found wherever the Gongen are fighting.

Tenno is the nature represented as the "heaven defenders." They build and maintain the ships of the Gongen fleet. Four carriers are the heart of the fleet, each named for one of the four winds. More are in construction. Gongen ships have advanced expert control systems that help their pilots battle more efficiently.

How do you pronounce...

CISyn—Sigh•sin

Gongen—Gahn•jen

Kizen—Kee•zen

Quay—Kway

Seyalshi—See-all-shee

Seyal—See•all

Shi—Shee

Shocho—Show•cho

Traginium—Trah•jin•ee•um

XeLabs—Zee•labs

Maverick Faction

“They travel in all directions,
above and below.”

—Wu-men kuan



General Information:

During the Earth/Gongen War, Maverick opportunists and ringleaders seized property and facilities belonging to Earth and Gongen to stake their claim on the limited resources beyond the Asteroid Belt. They style themselves as players in the grand scheme, and fight as mercenaries or for their own security to gain the upper hand. They will go up against any of the other factions, and if they see a way to gain power or influence in the system, they take it.

Heavy mining is prevalent throughout Outer Rim; heavy mining equipment is also readily available. Another interesting aspect of the area is that some small asteroids have been converted into portable space stations. They have been fitted with their own propulsion systems and can be moved through space, although not as fast or far as a capital ship.

Maverick Government:

The more powerful overlords rule a series of outposts. There is no formal government, but the Maverick gangs often work with each other to further the power of the Outer Rim as a whole when it works to their individual and collective advantage. Earth and Gongen (and now the Shi and Quay) will have a hard time gaining a foothold in this region.



The Accord – Pirate-like overlords, they rule many of the captured outposts. The Accord has its headquarters on Titan, a moon of Saturn. Their charismatic leader is a woman known only as Raving Red-Jane.

The Hellcats – A group of female Maverick pilots, perhaps the best in the Solar System. They contract out their ships and pilots to other Maverick gangs. Their headquarters is on Themis, largest of the Maverick mobile asteroids. Their cobbled-together hotrod fighter ships are some of the fastest known.

The Nest – Named for the Rats’ Nest, a well-known bar on Ceres in the Outer Rim where its members meet. They have more than a few card players among their members. Perhaps the best known is Ace McCallister.

The Cartel – A group of Mavericks run by a man known as The Gambler from his headquarter complex on Europa. They deal mostly in information, and they’re the gang to contact if you want to find out what’s going on.

Cogs – A group of Maverick hotrodders. They’re famous for wheeling and dealing, and they’ve created some modified vehicles that are much sought-after.

The Knaves – Another group of pirates, although they seem less cutthroat than the merciless Accord. Jack Wilgress seems to be their leader, and they have some fast hotrod fighters too.

Regulators – A group of mean and surly thugs who some say are working as a force for good, almost like an independent Maverick police force. Most observers don’t think that’s going to work out very well.



Maverick Faction (continued)

Maverick History:

Space exploration exploded in the 2030s and 2040s with the advent of the GRAV Drive (GRAvity Attuned Vehicle) engines that made space travel easier and faster. This precipitated a tremendous growth in space colonization. Starting with an international colony on the moon, humans spread throughout the Solar System, building space stations, mining colonies and creating trade routes. For a long time, life in the Outer Rim has been lawless, dangerous, and exciting. Early in the history of the Outer Rim, an emergent group of "pirate lords" divided up territories and ruled in a somewhat mob-like fashion. These overlords ranged from charismatic rogues to cut-throat deviants.

After the formation of Earth's Central Governance Corporation (CGC), the Mavericks largely ignored the CGC's authority, and continued to do pursue their own interests. For many years, there were only token efforts from Earth to maintain jurisdiction in the Outer Rim. When they realized valuable assets could be lost, the CGC sent security forces into deep space in an effort to re-establish authority and bring order. Unfortunately for Earth, such efforts have been largely ineffective.

In the wake of the Earth-Gongen War, the Mavericks formed a loose union and seized control of much of the outlying mining and research assets of both Earth and Gongen. Defections from the Gongen and Earther fleets right after the Battle of Phobos led to massive speculation that the forces behind the Outer Rim contingent had agents involved in both sides that made the battle much more costly than it would otherwise have been. In truth, Mavericks did just that in pirate-like tactics to weaken Gongen and Earth and capture the spoils of war.

This threw the Solar System into a three-way conflict, with skirmishes between the factions becoming increasingly frequent and violent. As Earth was preparing a major offensive to clean up the Outer Rim, the Mumon Rift opened and ushered the Shi and the Quay into our star system. Immediately, the Outer Rim was cast into a system-wide conflict and forced to defend their newly acquired territory and power from everyone. In cunning pursuit of power, they now seek ways to increase their reach and riches in the growing wars everywhere.

What is a kizen?

When Seyal burst through the Mumon Rift into Earth's Solar System, a showering of quantum particles began because the Rift failed to close. Our story begins shortly thereafter, and the effects of these particles, the basic building blocks of the universe, are only beginning to show themselves.

Due to many different factors such as proximity to the Rift, local gravitational conditions, atmospheric anomalies, and genetic predispositions, an unknown number of individuals become endowed with special abilities from the shower of particles.

Those affected by the Rift in dramatic ways are called "kizen" (pronounced "kee-zen"), derived from the Shi term for these beings, as heard through telepathy. It is believed that the particles interact on a quantum level to release and enhance the capabilities of the affected organism and somehow connect it to the universe.

Kizen are found in every faction, some are in positions of leadership while others are relatively unknown and undistinguished until their Kizen properties begin to emerge. A few realize that they have abilities above and beyond those of ordinary beings, while many suppose they are merely "lucky" or "talented."

Shi Faction

“And devil’s eyes sprout from their bodies.”
—Wu-men kuan

General Information:

The citizens of Seyal are known as the Seyalshi, or Shi, for short. The Shi are a slender, pallid alien race with graceful features that bespeak power and sophistication. They are roughly 2 meters tall, extraordinarily lightweight at only 20 to 30 kilograms, and have a wispy, vampiric presence. Upon encountering the Shi, many humans have a feeling of unease. They are ghost-like and stealthy, with three cold, emotionless black eyes, no hair and bony plates in their facial structures. The Shi move in a fluid, gliding motion as they hover 15-20 centimeters above the ground. They have gills instead of mouths, and no longer need to speak vocally as humans do. Instead, they communicate telepathically over short distances, perceived by other races as a “voice” in one’s head. Shi are asexual and reproduce by a form of cellular phasing.

The Shi have three castes: the Crown class (royal, elite oligarchs), the Warrior class and the Civil class (citizens and civil workers). An individual is born into a caste, but can advance to the Crown class with major achievement. Only the Crown class is eligible for body part cloning, leadership roles (ruling body, military commands) and leading rift excursions. Most Shi from any class exhibit the apex of arrogance, although other views are sometimes tolerated.

After millennia of space travel, the Crown class became bored and sought new challenges. Competition for excellence became the focal point around which society revolved. This manifested in every aspect of their culture from construction of buildings to science to martial prowess. Sophisticated dueling became an exciting event in their society, with the winners greatly celebrated. Shi in the Crown class are often well trained in physical fighting. They prefer melee weapons in battle, and see this as the noble way to fight. There is limited threat to the duelers, since if they suffer a catastrophic wound overwhelming the healing powers of the nanobots, they use cloning technology to replace organs and limbs.

Shi Government:

The Shi society is governed by an Oligarchy among members of the Crown class. The membership of this body is comprised of five royal families. Once a part of the Oligarchy, a family usually remains there.

Sudeva – represented by a sapphire jewel. They are explorers and scouts, curious and restless. They display an endless wanderlust and a drive to push the boundaries of exploration. It is said, “The eyes of the Sudeva see the whole galaxy.”

Vishal – represented by a ruby jewel. They are responsible for external security, which means for the Shi removing other societies in the way of their relentless conquest. The Vishal are ruthless, even genocidal in their tactics. They eradicate or enslave any resistance. It is said, “Vishal expands the peace of Seyalshi.”

Anant – represented by an emerald jewel. They maintain the Shi internal policies, improving the quality of life for all Shi citizens. They are most skilled in organizing and managing resources. It is said, “Immortality is worth living because of the Anant.”





Shi Faction (continued)

Damir – represented by an amethyst jewel. They are most skilled at information gathering, and extracting information from all kinds of sources. They are scholarly and knowledgeable, and they maintain the vast data stores of the ancient Shi civilization. It is said, “Wisdom is a fact recorded by the Damir.”

Tilak – represented by an amber jewel. The Tilak are foremost in the fields of science, and they are responsible for the fantastic healing capabilities of the Shi. They are questioning and inventive, and in charge of scientific research and development. It is said, “When a Shi dies, the Tilak fail.”

Shi History:

The Shi invented a technology for travel through rifts in space/time and used them to explore and conquer. On Seyal are many dangerous and exotic artifacts acquired in these expeditions, some of which could be of untold value to other civilizations.

On a rift expedition long ago, the Shi found the Quay homeworld and decided they could make use of the Quay's ability to withstand harsh conditions and adapt to difficult situations. They captured enough Quay to establish a mining colony on Talgon, a planet in the Seyal system. Talgon was a lethal mixture of radiation and toxins, but it had valuable deposits of a mineral used in rift technology.

Over the years, the Quay multiplied, and provided a hardy, disposable work force for the Shi. Some of the Quay spent time in the lower decks of Shi ships that traveled through rifts. On such journeys, the Shi used Quay laborers and scouting teams in areas that could pose dangers for the Shi. As such, some Quay received repeated, small-dose exposure to quantum particles, although neither the Shi nor the Quay knew the potential of quantum effects at the time.

When the mineral resources on Talgon were mined out, the Shi abandoned the mine and the Quay, and simply left them there to die. But the Quay did not die. With their unique adaptability, and tribal-style leadership, they survived. They squeezed an existence out of the planet's limited resources, as well as old ships and equipment left behind by the Shi.

As Quay technology and numbers grew, they became more aggressive towards Seyal. Though the Shi possessed superior technology, the Quay were resilient to the nobler warfare preferred by the Shi, and their adaptability and underground colonies on Talgon proved a big nuisance to the Shi. Repeated raids by the Quay on Shi colonies and even a few on Seyal itself (some for supplies, some for vengeance) caused the Shi to decide to eliminate the Quay altogether.

When the Shi developed a quantum disruption device to destroy the Quay, the Quay staged a brazen raid on the Shi space station where the device had been constructed. In their escape attempt, the Quay's damaged ship was pulled into the Seyal star and the stolen device detonated. The star was disrupted to the point that it was on the verge of exploding. Desperate, the Shi devised a plan to harness the exploding star's energy and combine it with their rift technology to open a rift to move the entire Seyal planet to the safety of another universe. In retribution for the Shi's ill-fated plan, the Quay launched a fanatical attack against Seyal with every ship they had. When the star exploded and Seyal moved through space/time, a large contingent of Quay life ships chased the Shi through the rift before the nova destroyed the Seyal system and every living being left behind.

Quay Faction

“Had he known what fire was.”
—Wu-men kuan

General Information:

The Quay are a primal and bestial alien race, and they possess great physical strength. They are from 2 to 2.5 meters tall, quadrupedal and walk upright. They have a carapace that gives the appearance of body armor. Their appearance is a sharp contrast to humans, and the more elegant, lithe Shi. Humans find them creepy, even nightmarish. The Quay use their physical presence to intimidate opponents in battle. Quay have an extremely high body temperature, which they can use to expand their physical form and increase their strength and stature for short periods of time. When they do, their carapace becomes almost magma-like and they glow like molten metal. They can maintain this form for 10-15 minutes in battle, or longer when not in heavy exertion.

The Quay are resilient and highly adaptive. They survived in the harshest of conditions for hundreds of generations and they are equipped to endure. They can extract the minimum amount of gases needed for respiration from the thinnest of atmospheres and highly toxic environments. They also have a low respiration rate, which allows them to survive for hours in the vacuum of space (or under water).

Some of the Quay who have been touched by the quantum particles of the Rift have become able to create visceral fear-inducing visions in their foes. It is primarily a mind-control technique. With a culture so steeped in physical dominance and loathing of their captors, most manifestations of this ability seem to target the fear centers of the brain and memory. In many ways, these nightmares are like the Tulpas of Earth legend, creatures manifested wholly of thought.

The Quay have a raw, primal nature and generally rely upon instinct and predatory tendencies. They have a colony-like mentality and a utilitarian approach to all things. It's common for Quay to sacrifice themselves for the good of their tribe. The Quay aggression has manifested in an “attack first, ask questions later” mentality among most of the tribes. Having experienced oppression under the Shi, the Quay's main goal is to become strong enough to never be subservient again. Their “strike first” attitude gained them a foothold in the Solar System, as they took control of one of the largest human space stations located near where Seyal and the Quay ships emerged from the Rift. They are working towards building a series of colonies and bases to serve as a defensive front.

Quay Government:

The Quay are organized into tribal family groups. They have male and female sexes, and brood groups often number four, an important number for Quay society. Tribe members, especially warriors, are tattooed with identifying markings. They are fierce fighters, and show little mercy towards their foes. When engaged in battle, they fight with unrestrained passion. Their tribal leaders are the strongest, bravest fighters, and many of these leaders have had their aggression enhanced by the effect of the quantum particles.





Quay Faction (continued)

The strongest among the Quay lead the individual tribes. There are hundreds of tribes, but no one is quite sure how many came through the rift. Tribes generally band together for the common good of the Quay, but they have also been known to fight amongst themselves.

A tribal chieftain rules each tribe with input from all his advisors and lobbyists. Decisions that affect all Quay though are handled in the democratic Ruling Council of Chiefs. This council existed as a secret committee formed during the early years of enslavement to develop plans to resist their Shi captors. Fables state that this council was the first to bring the Quay tribes peacefully together in generations. A common enemy unites even the contentious Quay chieftains.

The Council contains a representative from each of the five recognized tribes, either the chieftain or a chosen advisor. Like any democracy, the process is fraught with allegiances, back-room deals, skullduggery and other such arrangements.

The challenges to the Council are many, as maintaining some sense of organization over millions of bloodthirsty revenge-minded Quay is difficult enough, but to do so with no home planet or base is nearly impossible. As such, the council sees this new star system as their best chance to establish a permanent defensible foothold to rebuild their race, and subsequently wipe the Shi from existence.

Katal – This tribe has a reputation for breeding great leaders, strategic planners, and tacticians. They are investigating ways to accelerate the Quay breeding cycle.

Makal – This tribe is steeped in lore and legends, and they are leaders of spiritual and religious belief. Their shamans are proponents of ancient rituals and magics. Many Makal are storytellers, historians, and shamans. They maintain the quest for the Quay homeworld.

Luhus – This tribe is most proud of their ability in combat. They provide the best special forces of the Quay. Often, the Luhus believe their battle prowess entitles them to run the government, in conflict with the tribal council.

Qurim – This tribe has the pilots, navigators, space scientists, and ship builders of the Quay. They are advanced scientifically due to their enslavement by the Shi. They are the newest tribe in the ruling council.

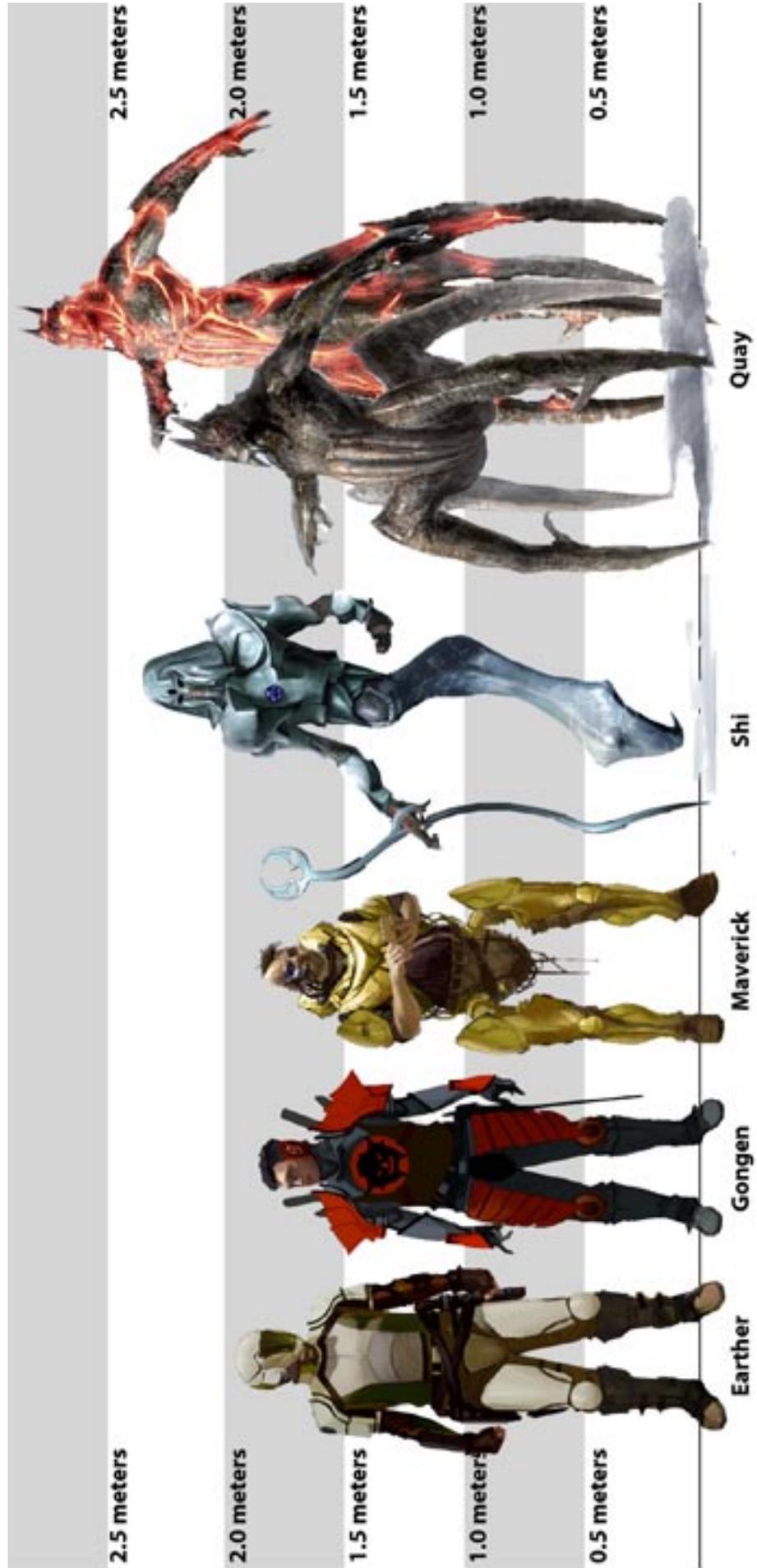
Tahka – This tribe includes the negotiators and wheeler dealers of the Quay. They believe in solving problems with back door deals and shady politics. Even assassins and spies are not beyond their tactics. Their chieftain, Sitka, is the first female chieftain in recent Quay history.

Quay History:

The Quay exist in constant survival mode. They have had no homeworld and minimal self-sustaining infrastructure since they were enslaved by the Shi. On a rift expedition a long time ago, the Shi found the Quay homeworld and decided they could make use of them. The Quay have no memory of that homeworld, which has attained nearly mythical status in their culture.

The Quay have been forced to deal with Earthers, Gongen, and Mavericks in one way or another. In many instances, that has resulted in conflict. From time to time, however, the Quay have allied themselves with one of the human groups to meet a specific need. Some of the tribes on the Council realize the need for alliances to obtain information about their new star system. However, when the Quay join forces with a human race it is usually to fight against the common enemy of the Shi.

In this new universe, for the Quay, revenge is a dish best served hot.



Character Size Comparison