Races D6 / Sonep

Sonep

The Sonep are an enigmatic species who have been active in the known galaxy for over 15,000 years. Nothing is known of their homeworld for certain, and very little is known of their culture. The Sonep have only ever been encountered in space, leading many to believe that their homeworld was destroyed untold millenia ago. In some areas of space the Sonep are completely unknown, while in others they are fairly active traders. There seems to be no pattern to this. Sometimes one sector will be a hotbed of Sonep activity, while in neighboring sectors they will be little more than rumours. The Sonep are quite definitely an ancient race. Xenoarcheologists have found carvings on the planet of Resol IV dating back over 280,000 years which depict the long-vanished natives of that planet coming into contact with beings which could only be the distinctive Sonep. There is some evidence that the Sonep have advanced only a little in the 15,000 since their first contact with the Old Republic. Many scholars insist that the Sonep have entered into a stage of cultural stagnation, and even decline. It is important to note however, that no Sonep has ever deigned to speak about the Sonep culture, or technology level, so all theories are based upon indirect observations. Most of this observation is based upon the apparant performance capabilities of their walnut-like ovoid vessels. Once, during the time of the Old Republic, a curious scout managed to affix a subspace homing device on the outer hull of a Sonep ship just before it jumped to hyperspace. A few minutes later, the scout picked up the signal from a nearby system. Using the hyperdrives of the day it should have taken a day and a half to reach that system. Even by todays standards this performance is impressive, and about as fast as the fastest hyperdrives the military has ever had access to. The true capabilities of these ships are unknown, since the only times when they have been observed in combat they simply ignored the attacking ships, and leisurely moved into a position to jump to hyperspace. The Sonep have never attacked another vessel in recorded history.

One interesting encounter occured in recent years. The planet Garrala was being blocaded by the Imperial Navy. A Sonep vessel which had been docked at one of the 3 space stations orbiting Garrala slowly passed through the blocade, ignoring fire from a Dreadnaught and 2 Strike Cruisers. An Interdictor moved to prevent the ship from entering hyperspace, and set up an interdiction field centered on the Sonep ship. The Sonep jumped to hyperspace without bothering to leave the interdiction field. This incident has been hushed up, but it has left certain members of the Admiralty extremely apprehensive. A commission was set up to analyse all of the sensor data from the encounter, as well as disassemble the Interdictor's gravwell projectors and inspect them piece by piece. The commission came to the conclusion that the incident was impossible and couldn't have happened. The findings of this commission were covered up, and Lord Vader personally oversaw the liquidation of all sources of info on the Garrala incident. It has been suggested that this incident was possible not because of a system specially designed to circumvent an interdiction, but rather because of an extremely advanced hyperdrive which is capable of jumping to hyperspace within weaker gravity wells. This would be a great boon to military vessels, and some members of the Imperial admiralty advocated capturing a Sonep ship for the purposes of studying it, but this idea was vetoed by Emperor Palpatine himself. The reason for this decision is unknown. What really scares the admiralty, or rather what did scare the admiralty when there was an admiralty to speak of, is not the potential threat of hostilities from the Sonep, but rather their complete disregard for the Empire. It is as if the Sonep do not consider the petty affairs of the rest of the galaxy as worthy of

even the slightest notice. If they can't even be bothered to acknowledge when somebody is attempting to cause them harm, how secure must they be in their own power? The only consolation is that the Sonep have never shown any signs of becoming involved in the lives of any other species, at least not in the time since the Republic first contacted them.

Records from the now extinct Krukel species record a terrible war with the Sonep roughly 85,000 years ago, or at least with a species very closely matching the description of the Sonep. The Krukel, according to all available archeological evidence, had a vast empire spanning dozens, possibly even hundreds of systems. By todays standards the Krukel weren't extremely advanced technologically, comparing roughly with pre-Republic technology levels. The Krukel had numbers on their side, and fought with great ferocity, but according to their records were slaughtered effortlessly by the Sonep. The cause of this war is unknown since the Krukel records are fragmentary at best, and the Sonep themselves are reluctant to speak about any aspect of their history or culture. Much effort has gone into researching this war, as it is the only recorded conflict with the Sonep. From the available evidence this war lasted for almost 30 years. It is apparant that the only reason that the Krukel lasted so long is because they were constantly evacuating their civilians from colonies that the Sonep were about to attack, and relocating them to other worlds, where they would then concentrate on rebuilding the forces that were lost while covering the escape. In this way the war spread over a vast area. The Krukel were destroyed in the end however, and most of the remnants of their colonies were raised by the Sonep, although by the damage it would seem that the Sonep weren't intent on wiping out all traces of the Krukel, but rather that some ruins were left partially intact on purpose. What possible reason the Sonep could have for this is a matter of some debate in academic circles. Many scholars believe that this was meant to send a message to other civilisations, but the agressiveness implied by this theory has not been shown at any time since the Sonep were first encountered by the Republic.

The Sonep trade semi-regularly throughout the galaxy. The items that they tend to trade for are mundane, foodstuffs, raw materials, and the like. The Sonep have never used currency in their dealings as far as is recorded, rather they trade strange blood-red jewels known as heartgems. These heartgems are unfaceted, and seem to glow with a dull inner light. Most of the heartgems traded are about the size of a human's fist, and somewhat egg-shaped. The Sonep are the only known source of these stones, and they have been characteristically silent about their origins. On the open market a single average-sized heartgem can fetch anywhere up to about 40,000 cr. Many of the richer citizens of the galaxy prize heartgems, and keep them on display, often in fantastic settings of every imaginable precious metal. Some artisans have attempted to carve heartgems into different shapes over the years, but they are virtually impossible to cut with anything less than a massive plasma beam torch, like the ones used for cutting through starship hulls. It is difficult to get any degree of accuracy with such an instrument, and so heartgem carving is a rare occupation to say the least.

It should be noted that never in the recorded history of the Republic did anyone ever come face-to-face with a Sonep. Instead they always deal through the Geoon, a species that serves the Sonep, and was apparantly bred for this express purpose. Ship-to-ship communications usually are performed by the Sonep themselves, but all actual contact is done by the amorphous Geoon. The Sonep speak in a piping whistling song-like language, which the Geoon imitate in a sort of howling manner. Most protocol droids understand the Sonep tongue (if it can be called that, xenobiologists believe that the Sonep don't actually have tongues, and the Geoon certainly don't). Nobody is ever allowed on board a Sonep vessel, save the Sonep and the Geoon. When the ships are loaded with supplies the tough gray amoeba-like Geoon do all of the physical transportation of goods onto the ships. The intelligence of the Geoon seems to be limited, but their strength is prodigious, and they are able to carry extremely heavy and bulky cargos with little difficulty. On the occasions when the Sonep have communicated directly with individuals of other species they have spoken their own strange language, forcing translators to be used, although they seem to understand basic perfectly well, and theoretically they should be capable of speaking it. The same is true of the Geoon, but

there is a major difference between communicating with the Geoon as opposed to the Sonep. The Geoon are always very businesslike and to the point when dealing with others. Descriptions of the Geoon usually include the word singleminded. The Sonep, on the other hand, are always very evasive and cryptic in their communications. Popular belief holds that they are possibly the most ancient sentient species in the galaxy, and due to their great antiquity are privy to profound secrets which they do not believe the younger races are ready to know, hence the secrecy and evasiveness.

Throughout the years many incredible stories have popped up regarding the Sonep. Intelligent people regard most of these as poor fiction at best, but some of them seem at least possible, if not likely. One of the more compelling stories surfaced a few decades before the clone wars. A scout ship was surveying the Countac system, which is well within the borders of "civilised" space, but is isolated by a large nebula which makes travel to and from the system difficult (note: the Countac system is within the Conheav sector, but has not been included on the map of the sector, and will not be detailed on my webpage because it is uninhabited, commercially useless, and there are no standard hyperdrive routes to it; indeed this story is the only thing that makes the system even remotely stand out from any of a million similar systems). This, coupled with an unpromising report from the automated probe which initially charted the system had kept it from being properly surveyed for nearly 1,000 years. The scout vessel encountered a powerless ship drifting near the orbit of the system's 2nd planet. The ship was Sonep in design. The scouts latched their ship onto the hull of the Sonep vessel, with the intention of cutting through the hull to gain access. Their surprise was complete when the hull opened beneath their universal airlock. The scouts hadn't even positioned their airlock over a hatch on the Sonep ship. Four of the scouts entered the Sonep ship to find out what the situation was, leaving 2 onboard their own vessel to moniter the situation. About 45 minutes later one of the scouts returned, frantically cycling the airlock. He insisted that they detach from the Sonep ship immediately, and wouldn't calm down untill they had done so. The scout refused to give any details about exactly what happened, and when one of his fellows wanted to go back to pick up the other scouts from the derelict he would only say "There's no point in that now. They were good friends, but there's no point," refusing to elaborate. All that anyone ever managed to drag out of the scout was that the ship wasn't abandoned after all. Aparantly the Geoon had attacked them, although the scout would never say so directly, but would only hint at it. After the initial shock wore off the scout, who was obviously deeply scarred from the experience was often heard muttering "If they're supposed to be so damned advanced, why didn't they see that coming? Murderous beasts. Why did they trust them?" The scouts jumped to the nearest inhabited system and returned with an Old Republic Dreadnaught to further investigate. When they arrived back in the Countac system there was only a radioactive cloud of quickly decaying dust. Within an hour the dust had completely disintigrated. The science team on board believed that the ship had been destroyed by an unknown weapon.

For years this story captured the imaginations of millions, and differing theories abounded about it. Some claim that it was all a hoax, since there was no physical evidence of the incident, only sensor logs and eyewitness reports. Criticts of the hoax theory maintain that there was no evidence that any of the sensor logs had been tampered with, and that it would be impossible to coordinate the nearly 20,000 people who were on board the Dreadnaught to participate in a hoax. One of the more popular theories holds that the Sonep ship was a victim of a mutiny on the part of the Geoon, but that the Geoon were then unable to operate the vessel without their masters. This theory also assumes that the Sonep somehow learned of the drifting ship after the scouts returned to civilisation, and that they then took steps to destroy it so that there would be no evidence of weakness. As is typical the Sonep declined to comment on the incident.

The Sonep are slightly active in the Conheav sector, but they have never been seen in the Alegna system, and there has only ever been one recorded Sonep sighting in the Kurk system, and very few sightings in the Sponia system. There are rumours that the Sonep shun the planet Mogtnom in the Alegna system because of the mysterious towers that dot the surface of the planet.

There have been suggestions that the Sonep have some knowledge of the builders of these towers, and there are even those who suggest that the Sonep may even be the Great Race, or the Old Ones who are spoken of in concert with the towers in Mutcer legend. It should be noted, however, that these theories are vrtually unknown outside the Conheav sector, and it seems that almost every sector of space that the Sonep do business in has at least one theory about the origins of these mysterious beings.

In appearance the Sonep are stocky, barrel-shaped beings with trilateral symmetry. The Sonep have no heads and their sensory organs are placed all around their bodies. The Sonep have 3 arms placed equilaterally around their bodies, each of which has 3 long fingers arranged around the "hand" so that they are all fully opposable to each other. The Sonep do not have differentiated legs, but rather have a single flexible thick trunk-like lower appendage with 3 "feet" sprouting from the bottom of it. The Sonep move by pivoting from one foot to another, whirling and spinning at incredible speeds to get from one place to another. Sonep are grey-green in colouration, and tend to have bony ridges protecting their many eyes, and other less identifiable features. The Sonep wear simple harnesses that allow them to carry tools without interfering with their unusual forms. The mouth of a Sonep is located on top of their bodies, where a head would be in most species. This mouth is a gaping hole through which the Sonep feed and speak their haunting language. Astute readers will realize that the Sonep were largely inspired by H. P. Lovecraft, and Babylon 5. No stats have been included for the Sonep, as they are best used if the PCs never find themselves in direct contact with the mysterious race, except perhaps very rarely over ship-to-ship communications.

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