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## About GURPS

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*GURPSnet*. Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to [www.io.com/~ftp/GURPSnet/www/](http://www.io.com/~ftp/GURPSnet/www/).

## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book refer to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means page 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*. A reference that begins with VE refers to *GURPS Vehicles*, Second Edition, and CI to *GURPS Compendium I*.

Only *Basic Set* and this book are required to play. *GURPS Space* and *Compendium I* may be handy. Players may also find *GURPS Swashbucklers* useful for its rules on swordplay and sea battles.

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Krishna! For decades readers of science fiction have enjoyed fantastic adventures on the second planet of Tau Ceti, courtesy of the fertile imagination of L. Sprague de Camp. Now gamers can join in the fun.

As a setting for roleplaying games, the planet Krishna is a trove of wonders. Brave Earthmen engage in swordplay beneath the triple moons and win the hand of a beautiful green-haired princess! A pirate queen and her stalwart band way-lay ships on the Sadabao Sea! Tailed cannibals menace castaways on the island of Fossanderan!



The Krishna stories combine classic space opera with hard-science realism and a dash of humor. If they are space opera, they are space opera as written by Gilbert and Sullivan. The brave Earthman is likely to be a novice tour guide or a scheming con artist. The pirate queen is fat and middle-aged. On Krishna, a hero who wins the hand of a princess must then live with the consequences of being married to a woman who lays eggs, on a world where dinner is eaten still wiggling and executions are a popular form of entertainment.

Since the entire planet is under an embargo that forbids the import of advanced technology, adventurers cannot clank about in powered battlesuits, menacing the natives with plasma cannon. On Krishna, the Earthmen and the green-skinned natives are on an equal footing. Characters must rely on their wits as much as on their swords. Game Masters who are tired of players who shoot their way out of every difficulty can see how well they do without their technological toys.

## ABOUT THE DE CAMPS

L. Sprague de Camp is recognized as one of the grand masters of science fiction and fantasy. His first science fiction story was "The Isolinguals," published in 1937. As a writer for *Astounding* during the editorship of John W. Campbell, he was one of the makers of science fiction's Golden Age. In addition to the Viagens Interplanetarias stories, he is the author of *Lest Darkness Fall*, *The Compleat Enchanter* (with Fletcher Pratt), and *The Glory That Was*. After the death of Robert E. Howard, he continued and expanded the Conan stories. His nonfiction includes works on ancient science and engineering, a study of the Atlantis myth, and biographies of Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft. He lives with his wife and co-author Catherine Crook de Camp in Texas.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James L. Cambias started playing roleplaying games back in 1979, dabbled at real work briefly, and now earns his living as a freelance writer of nonfiction and roleplaying supplements. He is the author of *Arabian Nights: A Genre Book for Rolemaster*, and dozens of magazine articles. Originally from New Orleans, he lives in Ithaca, New York. This book could never have been written without the help and encouragement of Sean Barrett, Diane Kelly, Joel Furr and Rob Furr. The patience and assistance of L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine Crook de Camp were indispensable.



## Ghulindé

The Qiribo capital of Ghulindé sits on Mount Sabushi, which is carved into a colossal statue of the war-god Qunjar. The city is in the lap of the statue, and looks out to the northeast towards the port of Damovang on the coast. Its site makes Ghulindé nearly impregnable, as it is impossible for an army to scale the cliffs of Qunjar's seat to reach the city. During the annual Kashyó festival, it is the site of religious rituals and great feasts in honor of Varzai.

Ghulindé is the center of Qirib's government, and holds the enormous royal palace, which, during the republic, was used as the president's home. After the death of Dour Vizman, the legislature took over the palace, and now the presidents of Qirib must find their own housing.



## QIRIB

Qirib occupies a mountainous peninsula on the western shore of the Sadabao Sea. The mainland portion of Qirib is mostly rolling hills, but the peninsula itself is made up of the towering peaks of the Zogha mountains. The mountains are rich in minerals, and the Zogha mines make Qirib a rich and powerful state.

Qirib is best known for its extremely unusual system of government. The kingdom is entirely controlled by women. The army is all-female, and the country is ruled by a dynasty of queens. Alvandi, the last Douri of Qirib, was a salty-tongued, hot-tempered old woman. The system was founded by the semi-legendary Queen Dejanai in the 14th century, and is tied to the official worship of the mother-goddess Varzai. Each year the ruling Douri marries a new consort, who serves as king until the Kashyó festival, celebrating the rebirth of the Sun in early spring. At the climax of the festival the king is killed and ceremoniously eaten by the Douri and her court. A new consort is then chosen by lottery from among the male inhabitants. The matriarchy uses the janrú drug to keep the men docile.

The matriarchy was overthrown in 2143 by the Terran Dirk Barnevelt, aided by the pirates of the Sunqar. Barnevelt set up a republic modeled on the United States, with a bicameral legislature and an elected president. The first president was Gizil bad-Bashti, whose term of office ran out in 2147. His successor, Vizman er-Qorf, declared a state of emergency and suspended elections to avoid leaving office in 2151, and finally proclaimed himself dour. After his death in 2176, the country held elections and a woman named Mushái became president.

The language of Qirib is a dialect of Gozashtandou, with notable differences in pronunciation. Speakers of Gozashtandou suffer a skill penalty of -3 when attempting to speak or understand Qiribou.

The matriarchal government constantly feared an uprising by the male half of the population, so men were forbidden to carry weapons in Qirib. However, because in many Krishnan cultures a man would rather be naked than unarmed, the Qiribuma did not require that foreigners go without weapons. Instead, at the border all weapons were bound in their scabbards with wire, sealed with the official seal. Anyone whose seal was broken needed to provide a good explanation for the authorities. After the matriarchy was overthrown, men were allowed to own weapons, but the system of seals continued as a method of keeping order.

During the matriarchy, the Qiribuma followed a matronymic system of naming, using the prefix "bab-" to denote descent in the female line, so the princess Zei was Zei bab-Alvandi. After the revolution, many of the men of Qirib switched to patronymic names, while others adopted the Balhibo system of using the name of a maternal uncle.

Women in Qirib traditionally dressed plainly and severely, leaving the men to adorn themselves with jewelry and cosmetics. The revolution led to an explosion of sexy fashions and elaborate decoration among the women. Make-up remains habitual for both sexes. Qirib's hot climate makes most clothing uncomfortable, and the people content themselves with simple drapes of fabric or loincloths. They are casual about nudity. The period after the revolution was one of great licentiousness, and for a time the Kashyó celebration was as bawdy as the festival of Dashmok in Majbur.



## Horror

Although the tone of the Krishna stories is generally light and satirical, it would not be impossible to create a horror adventure set on Krishna, perhaps as a change of pace in an ongoing campaign. The incredibly long history of the planet means there are lots of ruins dotting the landscape. A particularly ancient site may conceal some long-imprisoned horror from the stars. The appalling practices of some of Krishna's cults are fertile material for a horror adventure. The prospect of being tortured to death by the followers of Yesht is horrible enough, but what if their rituals actually *work*?

A completely non-supernatural horror adventure could pit a group of isolated travelers against a mad nobleman with a palace full of deathtraps. Any isolated patch of woods might house a crazed cannibal killer, though sadly chainsaws are not allowed under Regulation 368.

## Green-Skinned Illuminati?

Following the principle that everything on Krishna is more exotic and colorful than on Earth, it stands to reason that much of the planet's history must be caused by a vast hidden conspiracy. Visiting Terrans may gradually become aware of the Conspiracy and its plans to gain advanced technology for Krishna. Or perhaps the Conspiracy's leaders are afraid of what industrialization would do to their grip on society, and are secretly helping the Viagens security forces maintain the embargo!

Corruption within the Viagens Interplanetarias is a part of several of the Krishna stories. A cabal within the organization might be plotting to smuggle advanced weapons onto Krishna and rule the entire planet as a new aristocracy. Or a network of female supremacists could be working to take over the Earth by means of Janrú extract. Osirian pseudohypnosis and the Saint-Rémy treatment could be powerful tools in the hands of an Earthbound conspiracy – as in the story “The Continent Makers.”

And who really controls the Interplanetary Council, anyway?

## BIG GAME HUNTING

One area where science and tourism overlap on Krishna is big-game hunting. Biologists want specimens of Krishnan life. Hunters want to be able to hunt on a world without pesky World Federation rules protecting everything bigger than a cockroach. Guides do good business leading groups of Terrans into the wilderness to hunt Krishnan animals.

Of course, many hunters are deterred by the technology restrictions. It's one thing to shoot a big creature like a yeki or a bishtar with a .500 Nitro Express rifle, and another thing entirely to face them with only a spear and a crossbow. Guides on hunting expeditions must be ready to rescue the Great White (or Black) Hunter from the jaws of an angry shan. They must also cope with the local Krishnans, who might take offense at aliens poaching on their territory.

A few sport fishermen have tried their luck on Krishna's seas, going after gvám or harpooner from the decks of a fast catamaran. This is not as popular as one might expect – probably because both gváms and harpooners are horrible-looking animals, and few fishermen want a tentacled Lovecraftian monster stuffed and mounted on their living-room wall. More mercenary sorts don't care what a gvám looks like, so long as they can get the valuable gvám-stones from its corpse to sell on shore.



## BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE!

Terran zoos and scientists love to get live Krishnan animals, and pay well enough to make the job profitable even with the horrendous costs of shipping the beasts back to Earth. The job isn't an easy one. Anybody who seeks to make a living catching wild animals on Krishna must be brave and resourceful. Some Terran environmentalists have taken it upon themselves to protect Krishna's wilderness, whether or not the Krishnans want it protected. Such self-appointed Guardians of the Planet might try to interfere with animal collectors.

The actual hunt itself is fraught with danger. Remember, no dart guns allowed under Regulation 368! Catching a wild shan alive means it must be trapped or snared with ropes and then subdued. The hunter will need a large crew of men to help with the capture.

