

cults of terror

NINE DANGEROUS DEITIES FOR RUNEQUEST ROLE-PLAYING



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May Arachne Solara bless and protect this book.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION, CULT OUTLINE, COSMOLOGY, HISTORY, PAULIS

Cults of Terror is a book about the bad guys of Glorantha, the enemies of creation, the foes against whom every fight must be fought. These forces are worthy of fanatical opposition, for once they are loosed in a campaign they will be difficult to dislodge.

This book also investigates the Gloranthan concept of Chaos. This difficult subject only has been touched upon previously.

Preceding the actual cult descriptions is an explanation of the several Gloranthan Chaoses. They are presented in the mythical chronology to establish their place in the cosmos.

Although the cults detailed here are generally despicable in aim, it should be realized that not all creatures of Chaos are totally and automatically corrupt. The cult of Nysalor will give new insight into the behavior of certain Chaotic creatures, and also into the motives of the Lunar Empire.

The Blank Cult Outline is presented to explain the material which is included in standard cult write-ups. Two cults, Primal Chaos and Nysalor, are unique and do not follow the standard form.

IMPORTANT: the contributors, editors, and publisher categorically intend that these cults be used for Non-Player Enemy religions. Player Characters should not join these cults. We recommend that Player Characters who join these religions quickly be put to sacrifice by Non-Player-Character priests, to get them out of play.

This is the second book of RuneQuest-related cults. With its larger companion, Cults of Prax, referees and players have a fair glimpse of religious practices and practical effects in the RuneQuest world, Glorantha. Readers will also get plenty of useful ideas and plot devices for religions in any fantasy world, from ancient Greece to Arthur's Britain, from Selucid Persia to Lankmar.

Cults of Prax was devoted to cults in which players would conceivably want player characters to belong. Cults of Terror contains complete information about the cults described, but it is furnished more in the hope that referees will find it useful in creating believable NPCs than with the expectation that players want to role-play unbelievably brutal characters.

Important assumptions underlie the facts compiled for this book. Primary among them are the immanence of deity, the reality of workable magic, and relation of these to the way people live. The effects of these assumptions can be explained.

A cult is a vehicle which provides communication between those people living and the cosmic entities known as deities. A cult is a religion, and it provides for the many deep needs of any mortal being.

One deep need is assistance lent by the cult to the individual to protect his or her life during difficult times. Another need

is some assurance or guarantee of immortality: death casts the weak and the strong alike into the powerful maws of the cosmic entities. Still another need is to provide worldly guidelines to the individual which will aid in the search for safety and preservation of identity.

In short, a cult supports the individual's way of life. It gives him focus to find balance within himself and with others, and with the world, and defines his relation with the universe.

A deity will be worshipped because of his attributes. His or her attributes were gained in the performance of significant actions during the mythical God Time. Such acts are related in the first sub-section of each cult, and in great respect the rest of the cult write-up describes how the mortal beings who came later accept and deal with archetypal acts and their equally archetypal consequences. Worshippers will imitate significant deeds and thereby magically partake of them. These mythic acts and the worshippers' lives will be similar.

The cults in this book illustrate in greater or lesser detail the effects of the Gods War and the Great Darkness, portraying some of the forces of Chaos which tried to seize the world-universe of Glorantha, and of the Great Compromise which froze the relations of the gods except on the mortal plane. These Chaos cults are published as part of the ongoing effort to fully depict a world in which magic constantly occurs, of both the everyday variety and of the astonishing.

Most players will not want to identify with the cults within, but the inclusion of such detail is integral to a rich and full campaign. What are vampires? What does that stack of heads indicate? Who is the Mother of the Broos? Players will want to understand the motivations of villainous non-player characters.

These cults are restricted for the most part to Genertela.

THE CAUSE OF TIME

The world of Glorantha is about 1600 years old. That many years ago, after a great and timeless Darkness, the Sun God rose in the east for the first of many days, instituting the new power of Time. Since then, dates in Time often have been written S.T., Solara Tempora. The year 575 S.T., then, would be the 575th year after the first sunrise.

Time is the most powerful of the gods of the New Age. We recognize Time in three natural forms (lineal, cyclical, and illusory), but Time did not exist in the God Time or the Great Darkness. The lineal relations imposed upon the myths and stories of those ages originate from our own temporal state of mind, since we mortals are a natural part of the Time flow of the New Age. Mythical events did not necessarily occur in the order we perceive them, and it can be difficult to reconcile conflicting versions of certain occurrences in Dreamtime. The difficulties with which we understand that age are illustrated by the words

