

Guardians of the Desert Glossary and Pronunciation Guide

A number of the words in the southern language include the glottal-stop, which is rendered here as ^. A glottal stop involves closing, to some degree, the back of the throat, resulting in a near-coughing sound when released. Sometimes this sounds as though a hard "H" has been inserted.

Aenstone (ayn-stone): An Aerthraim Family-created stone composite; they hold the process secret. In sufficient quantity, aenstone blocks psychic communications, inhibits the use of psychic abilities, and weakens ha'ra'hain.

Aerthraim lanterns: Any lamp filled with the peculiar green oil produced only by Aerthraim Family; gives off an unusually white light and little to no smoke when burned.

Aesa (ay-sah): A common plant whose leaves, when dried and used in a pipe, produce a mild euphoria. Illegal in the north; legal south of Bright Bay.

Aqeyva (ack-ee-vah, alt. ahh-keh-vah): A combination of martial-arts training and meditation disciplines. The combat training is often referred to as a 'dance' as it involves smooth, flowing motions that have no apparent resemblance to any fighting mode.

Asp-jacau (asp-jack-how): A slender canine with long, thin snout and legs. Its short-haired coat tends toward fawn or brindle coloring. Its excellent sense of

smell is primarily used to detect dangerous snakes and (in some cases) drugs. In Bright Bay, only royalty or King's Guard patrols may own an asp-jacau, but below the Horn the asp-jacau is a common companion animal.

Athain (ath-ain): Lit. translation: *spirit-walker*. Teyanain specially trained to manipulate energy and psychic forces; extremely dangerous people, and very rare. Athain are considered holy by the teyanain. While they have elaborate outfits for ceremonial purposes, in "ordinary" clothes athain are distinguished by a unique manner of braiding their hair: beginning as one braid, then dividing further into three smaller braids, usually laced with tiny beads.

Ayn (ain): Chabi piece representing water. Cylindrical in shape, the ayn moves like a crooked stream: two spaces in one direction, three in another. It is one of the most versatile pieces on the board.

Cactus-flute: A long, thin flute made from minor branches of the same hard-skinned cactus used for making shabacas. Produces a thin, piping sound; sometimes tied together in sets of three to produce a wider range of tones.

Callen (call-en): One sworn to the service of a southern god.

Ceiling tube: A skylight in the form of a wide tube lined with mirrors; developed by Aerthraim Family. The secret of their manufacture is tightly controlled; they must be installed and repaired by Aerthraim craftsmen.

Chabi (chah-bee): A desert game whose underlying principles, moves and strategies reflect the principles of survival in a dry, hostile environment. In chabi, different types of pieces represent wind, water, goods, and money; different areas of the board represent compass directions, fortresses, fire, air, and water.

Clee: Three athain working together; extremely rare and extremely dangerous.

Coming or going: Street-slang inquiry about a relationship; "is she coming or going" means, more or less, "is she your girlfriend or a temporary amusement?"

Comos (Cohm-ohs): One of three gods honored in the southlands. Represents the neutrality/balance/questioning energies; also linked to the season of winter, the colors white and brown, and curiosity. Callen of Comos, if male, must be castrated; women must be past menopause to be allowed out in the world at large.

Dahass (dah-hahs; alt., dah-hass): Nomadic tribes that roam the uncharted and unclaimed southlands and follow no ruler but their own leader. They are likely the source of many of the wilder tales of southern barbarism that circulate in the northlands, as they find spreading such rumors amusing.

Dasta (dah-stah): A drug originally developed by the ketarches, whose use has altered significantly over the years.

Dashaic (dash-ache): So-called dasta tea is dasta powder turned into a thick, potent syrup. Dashaic travels better than the powder, as it runs less risk of be-

ing ruined by damp conditions, but is more difficult to produce and thus far more expensive.

Datda (Dat-dah): One of three gods honored in the southlands, Datda represents the negative/death/change energies; also linked to the season of high summer, the colors red and black, and the emotion of anger. Commonly called “the Sun Lord”; saying the name aloud is held to be bad luck. Only Datda’s Callen may safely pronounce the holy name, but they tend to be reluctant to advertise their affiliation; everyone knows that most Callen of Datda have trained extensively as assassins and spies.

Dathedain (dath-heh-dane): Followers of the god Datda.

Desert sage: A tree-sized plant resembling ordinary garden sage, which has adapted for desert life; the leaves curl up during the day’s heat into thick, needle-shaped rolls, and spread out in damp weather or at night. After a long drought, even a slight breeze will stir the dead leaves into a shivery, rattling sound. The dry wood gives off a pleasant aroma when burned, but the leaves are not edible. Often holds large nests of blood-spiders and micru.

Desert truce: An agreement to work together for mutual survival in a hostile environment; ends immediately upon reaching safety.

Devil-tree: A tree largely found in southern wastelands, with deeply fissured bark, wildly twisted branches, and semi-soft needle-style leaves; cones are bright red and poisonous to humans, but attract a variety of wildlife. The wood does not burn easily and gives off a nasty smoke.

Eki (eh-key): One of the Four Gods of the Northern Church pantheon; represents Wind. She is considered to be the most evil of the Northern gods, and her good nature is rarely appealed to, for her favors carry a heavy price. Her strength is that of the air and clouds. She is deceitful and often malicious. Thieves often call on her for protection.
Esthit (ess-thitt): A drug originally developed by the ketarches, whose use has altered significantly over the years.

Estiqi (est-EEK-ee): A liqueur made from esthit; lowers boundaries and dulls the senses. Used to help “stuck” desert lords (i.e., desert lords resisting the transition to their altered natures) open fully to their new abilities, by allowing them to briefly relax back to “normal”.

Four Gods: The pantheon of the Northern Church; Eki (Wind), Payti (Fire), Syrta (Earth), and Wae (Water). Each has a dual nature (good/evil), and the Church teaches that mankind must ever be careful not to provoke the “evil” side.

Fours: street slang term for devout followers of the Northern Church.

Furun (fuhr-roon): Chabi game piece representing money. Shaped like a coin, the furun may move one square in any direction once unlocked; it may only be unlocked by a grey shassen jumping over it.

Gods’-glory Flower: A common vine in the humid areas of the southlands;

sports large, funnel-shaped flowers in an infinite variety of colors and blooming patterns (morning, evening, middle of the night).

Ha'inn (properly: hah-[^]inn; more commonly: **high**-inn): Lit. translation: *Honored One*. Reserved for ha'ra'hain. The glottal stop between *a* and *i*, always difficult for humans to manage, has fallen out of favor over the centuries.

Ha'ra'ha (hah-[^]rah-[^]hah); plural **ha'ra'hain** (hah-[^]rah-[^]hayn): Person of mixed blood (human and ha'rethe).

Ha'ra'hain (hah-[^]rah-[^]hayn): Plural of **ha'ra'ha**.

Ha'rai'nain (hah-[^]ray-[^]nayn): Plural of **ha'rai'nin**.

Ha'rai'nin (hah-[^]ray-[^]nin); plural **ha'rai'nain** (hah-[^]ray-[^]nayn): One who has dedicated his or her life to serving the ha'reye.

Ha'rethe (hah-[^]reth-ay); plural **ha'reye** (hah-[^]ray): Lit. translation: *golden eyes*. An ancient race, predating humanity.

Ha'reye (hah-[^]ray): Plural of **ha'rethe**.

Ha'reye-kin (hah-[^]ray-kin); alt. **true-ha'rai'nin** (hah-[^]hray-nin): 1. A human who has spent so much time around the ha'reye that he or she has changed physically; no longer human, a ha'rai'nin more closely resembles a lesser ha'ra'ha. 2. A lesser ha'ra'ha who has spent so much time among the ha'reye that it is growing into greater powers. Both are extremely exceptional; at this time, only one human qualifies as the first and only one ha'ra'ha qualifies as the second.

Hai-katihe (high-kat-tea): Rough translation: *those who serve (intimately) a ha'ra'ha*. No longer in common use.

Iii-naa tarren, iii-nas lalien, iii-be salalae (eee-nah tar-ren, eee-nahs lah-lee-en, eee-beh sah-lah-lay): Rough translation: *We serve the gods, the gods smile on us, we survive under the glory of the gods*. Implications of submission, sacrifice, loss of selfhood in service of the divine.

Ish (isshh): Prefix indicating feminine/female aspects.

Ishrai (**Ish**-wry): One of the three gods honored in the southlands; represents the positive/feminine/birth energies. She is also connected to the season of spring, the color green, and the emotion of love.

Ishraidain (ishh-wry-dane): Women serving penance for various crimes, under the protection of Ishrai.

Ishrait (ishh-rate): High priestess of Ishrai.

Itna tarnen, itnas talien, itnabe shalla (it-nah tahr-neh, it-nahs tah-lee-en, it-nah-bay shah-lah): Rough translation: *We empty ourselves into the gods, the gods pour themselves into us, glory be to the gods*. Implications of partnership, gods and man giving to one another in service of building a better world.

Jacau-drum (jack-how drum): A large drum, generally stationary, with a wide head; produces a deep, booming tone. Originally covered with the skin of un-

usually large asp-jacaus, thus the name. Today these drums are usually made with cow, deer, horse, or goat skins, depending on how rich the owner is.

Jungles: Also called *Forbidden Jungles*. An area of tropical rainforest far to the south where the majority of the surviving ha'reye and their human devotees live; outsiders are not permitted to enter.

Justice-right: The right of a desert lord to intervene in a situation and see it resolved according to his own opinion of justice.

Ka (kah): Honored (generic term).

Ka-s'a (kah-ss-^ah): Honored lady (generic term).

Ka-s'eias (kah-ss-^ey-as): Honored (mixed gender) group (generic term).

Kaen (kay-en): Honored leader/supreme authority.

Kaenic (kay-nick): Southern term for the most common Northern Kingdom dialect.

Kaenz (kay-nohz): Rough translation: kingdom.

Kahar (kay-har) Pyramid-shaped chabi game piece representing wind. These pieces move in straight lines.

Kath (kath): Rough translation: *servant*. Used with a variety of modifiers to indicate occupation and status; *s'a-dinne kath* indicates a kitchen or dining hall servant; *s'a kathalle* indicates a cleaning servant. When used in conjunction with *kath*, the female gender indicator (*s'a*) does not imply a female servant, but rather the concept of serving. The term *katha village*, while in common usage, is grammatically incorrect: it should properly be *va-kathe*, "village of intimate services".

Kathain (kath-ayn): Personal servants to a desert lord; generally offered to visiting desert lords as a courtesy, and considered an essential part of a new desert lord's staff for at least the first two years. Duties range from amusing their lord with playful games to more intimate services. This peculiar word is the same in both singular and plural forms, (i.e.: *Tanavin was a kathain*; *The four kathain left the room*; *The kathain's room was small*.)

Katihe (kat-tea): Rough translation: *honorable intimacy*; obscure term rarely used in modern times.

Ke (keh): Prefix or suffix indicating masculine/male aspects.

Ketarch (kee-tarsch): Organized groups of healers in the south who focus on preserving old healing lore and researching new ways of healing.

Loresource: Combination historian, genealogist, and researcher; as a group, one of the major political forces behind the scenes in the southlands. Every Family has (or is supposed to have) a group of loresources resident.

Mahadrae (mah-hahd-ray): Rough translation: *chosen mother of the free people*. Proper title for the female Head of Aerthraim Family. A male leader would be

mahadran; but that version has not been used for quite some time.

Micru (mick-rue): Rough translation: *small death*; a small, black and tan striped viper found in rocky desert areas, whose poison is instantly fatal to large animals. Also the call-name of a member of the Hidden Cadre.

Nu-s'e (noo-ss-^{eh}): Honored man of the south (female is *nu-s'a*); generic honorific in the absence of specific indicators.

Numaina (noo-main-ah); plural **numainiae** (noo-main-ay): Proper title for a Scratha Family ruler.

Payti (pay-tee): One of the Four Gods of the Northern Church pantheon; represents Fire. Payti's "kind" incarnation is usually pictured as a short, plump man, with ruddy cheeks and a contagious cheeriness. In Payti's "dark" incarnation, the form is that of a tall, beautiful woman with a seductive gaze that bewitches all men who gaze upon her to their destruction. Payti's strength is that of the sun and the flame.

Protector: Not all fortresses are protected by full ha'reye any longer; some are occupied by first or second generation ha'ra'hain. Those aware of the distinction tend to use the term 'protector' to refer to those lesser ha'ra'hain bound to serve a particular Fortress.

Qisani (key-sahn-nee): A rocky cavern complex in the southern desert, which was given, under a Conclave decision, to the Callen of Ishrai many years ago as a haven of their own. All the desert Families contribute to supporting the Qisani. The followers of Datda and Comos also have central havens, but they are more secretive about the locations. Blood trials conducted at any of the havens are considered the hardest of all possible.

Ravann (rah-van; alt., rah-vahn): Similar to lavender in appearance and scent, but tends towards a darker leaf color, white flowers, and a slightly more acrid odor; only found south of Water's End, largely around the Aerthraim Fortress lands. Adapted for desert living, very hardy, but does not transplant well.

Reeven (ree-vehn): A ghost that seeks to possess living humans whenever possible; most dangerous during the dark of the moon, and generally driven away by (regional variances in the tale) the scent of lavender, rosemary, or pine. Usually strong-willed people, especially women, are seen as potential reeven after their death; the theory being that such people are be more likely to fight off the final journey into the afterlife, so as not to lose their earthly power.

S'a / S'e / S'ieas / S'ii: Respectful address designators, analogous to sir and madam; specific to gender, and frequently parts of complex and highly specific expressions of relationship between the speaker and the person being

addressed.

S'a (ss-[^]ah): feminine

S'e (ss-[^]eh): masculine

S'ieas (ss-[^]eh-ahs): a group of mixed gender

S'ii (ss-[^]ee): neuter; generally used to address a eunuch.

S'e-kath (ss[^]eh kahth): Personal servant to the lord of a fortress; the best are highly trained in scholarship, politics, and combat. Extremely well respected and dangerous.

S'iope (s-[^]igh-o-pay): Lit. translation: *beloved of the gods*; implications of being neuter, all energy devoted to the gods. Term used to refer to the priests of the Northern Church. Disrespectful nickname: soapy.

Saishe-pais (say-shh-paws; alt. say-she-pays): An expression of heartfelt gratitude, indicating that the one so addressed has shown great honor in his/her actions.

Sanahair (sahn-ah-hair): Lit. translation: *shit boy*. The word ties into an obscure southern joke about kicking the person ranked just below you until there's only the chamberpot contents left to kick.

Shabaca (shah-bah-kah): A large dried gourd or cactus filled with pebbles or dried beans to make a rattle; common musical instrument in the southlands.

Shall (shawl): A temporary, portable desert shelter.

Shassen (shass-sen): Chabi game piece representing goods. Cubic in shape, the shassen moves one to three spaces in a straight line; it may never move diagonally or jump another piece, with the singular exception of unlocking the furun.

Sheth-hinn (shethh-hnn): Assassin.

Split, The: A time of great chaos and dissension, during which humanity and the ha'reye renegotiated the Agreement and much knowledge was lost.

Stibik (stih-bic): A substance developed by the ketarches that temporarily weakens ha'ra'hain and ha'reye. Usually found in the form of a white powder, but sometimes as a concentrated, corrosive oil. It is illegal to bring stibik onto the land of an active ha'rethe; an even greater offense to use against a ha'ra'ha. Stibik was banned and ordered completely destroyed years ago; the ketarches, ever independent-minded, disobeyed the order.

Su-s'a (sue-ss-[^]ah): Northern lady.

Syrta (seer-tah): One of the Four Gods of the Northern Church pantheon; represents Earth. In his "good" incarnation, he is described as a leafy tree in spring or summer; when provoked to evil, he takes the form of a twisted, winter-stripped tree. He is credited with creating mankind and placing them in dominion over all beasts and growing things.

Ta (tah): Prefix implying masculine aspects; usually involved in insults (see

ta'karne).

Ta-karne (tah-carn-ay): Insult. Rough translation: *asshole*.

Ta-neka (tah-neek-ah): Insult; female version of *ta-karne*.

Tas-shadata (tahz-shah-dah-ta): Rough translation: *fool, coward, idiot*.

Taska (task-ah; alt. **tah-skah**): Courier and guide.

Tath-shinn: Rough translation: *ghost of a female madwoman/assassin/murderer*; implies that a woman who would kill is insane, overly male, and impossible to handle even after death. Probably originated in the lower southwestern coast-line region, among the Shakain. In the upper northlands, a similar creature is called a *shia-banse*: the ghost of a woman who died while under the influence of evil.

Te (teh): Prefix indicating formality and honor; no gender.

Teth-kavit (tehth-kah-vitt): Lit. translation: *Gods hold you, and blessings to your strength*.

Teuthin (too-thin): Rough translation: *meeting place*. Any agreed-upon neutral ground where all are seen as equal and violence is forbidden. Generally implies the presence of nobles of some rank.

Teyanin (tay-ah-nin); plural: **teyanain** (tay-ah-nayn): A very old, small tribe which retreated to the mountains of the Horn after the Split. Originally the judges and law determiners of the desert, they're now considered the guardians of the Horn.

Tharr (thahrr): Rough translation: *the invisible ones*. A derogatory term used by the ha'reye and ha'ra'hain to indicate those humans who do not directly "serve" them (in essence, everyone but desert lords).

Thass (tass; alt. **thass**): A person with great status, beyond even noble rank.

That in it: Street-slang for *involved*; politically, not personally.

Thio (thee-oh): Status.

Thopuh (thoh-poo): Lit. translation: *blood of victory*. Also the name of a style of tea production currently monopolized by F'Heing. Thopuh tea grows stronger, more complexly flavored, and more valuable with proper aging.

Tibi (tee-bee): a shallow oval bowl usually carried by travelers in the south; food is scooped from a communal bowl into one's own tibi.

Toi, te hoethra (toy, teh hoe-thrah): Lit. translation: *I swear to you I am speaking truth*.

Ugren (oo-ghren): a very rare universal bonding mixture; also used in the southlands to imply unbreakable permanence in an arrangement or situation.

Wae (way): One of the Four Gods of the Northern Church pantheon; represents Water. Wae can take any form; in his kindly incarnation he is often drawn as a great, wavering blue horse made from the coldest water of the deeps. His dark side is depicted in forms with a dark, shiny surface, like treacherous black

ice—often a snake is drawn for this. Wae's strength is that of the waters, both still and quick, and the mountain glaciers.

Wailer: Street-slang for the tath-shinn.

Ways, the: A series of passages linking areas with an active ha'reye or ha'ra'hain presence. Travel through these passages generally requires the active cooperation of a ha'rethe or ha'ra'ha, and is essentially instantaneous regardless of intervening distance.