

SKYREALMS of Jorune

Isho – The Invisible World

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Isho and the sho-sen

Isho is not magic and spells, but a form of multi-polaric energy that is bound to the planet Jorune and its moons through various crystal layers. There are seven types, or polarities, of isho energy. All of them act differently and when visible look to humans like differently coloured strands of electricity – hence their name “isho colours”.

The isho energy is very stable and unlike electricity is not easily conducted or “spread thin” through surfaces that it comes into contact with. It can be described as a “sticky” kind of stable energy, which can be stored for very long periods of time in crystals and some types of stone, which seem to attract or “soak” in the isho.

The different polarities can even be separated and then manipulated to intertwine with each other to create strange effects. Natural, but unknown circumstances force the isho to combine in strange ways, creating truly alien and unexplainable phenomena. Warps and skyrealms are the best known of these phenomena.

The colours of the isho reacts with each other and causes a kind of friction. It is this movement and reaction of the isho that creates the sho-sen (isho wind) that flows between the moons and the planet, affecting everything in its way. It is strongest at the planet’s surface, where it reacts with the oxygen, heat and common electric discharges such as lightning (creating isho storms). Although strong at the planets

surface, the sho-sen is normally invisible to creatures with normal optical organs. Only when the sho-sen reacts strongly with its surroundings or is distilled into one polarity/colour will it glow and become visible to normal eyes. This is the case of the famous isho storms of Jorune. These visibly display all the grandeur of the normally invisible isho world, but their unpredictability can make them dangerous. While most storms are harmless and colourful displays, others can rapidly grow into truly terrifying and devastating proportions. The famous description of the 3467 Roof Burner storm of Sydra by Sajjin Horloss, mentions the following:

“It appeared out of nowhere. As if it had stepped in from an invisible door far out at sea. Over the dark evening sea it grew from nothingness to enormous size, covering the entire horizon. A great multi-coloured curtain that slowly billowed back and forth, driven by the unseen isho tide. Ripples would now and then be seen travelling across the curtain, temporarily giving it other colours. As it came closer it started to drive the winds and attract the rainy clouds of thunder and lightning. Soon the wind and rain pelted the city and thunder crackled over our heads. The great isho storm loomed over the city, like a duradon falling on its prey. As if alive, the great curtain of isho fire sent out slow tendrils of various colours that seemed to pull it along like ghastly fingers or tentacles. The tendrils would strike at the city and surrounding hills with loud buzzing or crackling sounds. Unlike lightning, the fiery strands were not attracted to hilltops or tall towers, instead it struck all places, homes and people blessed with much isho. As the storm centred over the city, great crimson and yellow ripples or waves swooped over the rooftops, ripping them right off the houses like leaves in the autumn wind. It was as if an invisible gale blew beside the normal gale. The air became charged and thick with isho. Muadra children cried with discomfort while their parents let loose the isho damming up inside them. Some burned in the kerning bays and their screams could be heard over the city between the great thunder claps and driving rain.”

The sho-sen flows through the atmosphere following the planet's surface and penetrates deep down into the ground. The multi-polaric isho flows in three very different ways and concentrations. These are referred to as Alpha, Beta and Gamma isho, and behave very differently.

Alpha isho follows the movement of the moons and creates great waves and surges in the sho-sen, much like a great invisible and complex tide. It is sometimes referred to as background isho and is rarely perceived by life forms with primitive tra-sense (such as animals and muadra). Although reasonably weak it is very stable and constant, often acting as a catalyst or charger for major reactions in the Beta and Gamma isho. Being constant and stable, Alpha isho is more easily separated. Shantic devices constructed to function for a long time, will “soak” in weak, but stable Alpha isho indefinitely.

The stronger Beta isho follows the flow of the underground streams of molten crystal. The friction caused by the molten crystal streams reacts with the isho of the atmosphere and creates powerful lines of isho energy that run parallel to the underground crystal streams. Crystal schooners and skyrealms use mainly these

powerful lines to keep them afloat, but also Alpha isho may be used. Crystal streams will change their courses slightly over the years and some flows that lie very close to the surface will create dangerous super charged crystals and isho blowouts.

Gamma isho is the most locally tied variety of isho. It reacts with both Alpha and Beta isho and radiates out from strong sources of isho. It creates local flows, torrents, surges and vortexes, depending on various reactions and different isho materials. Most of the time it can be likened to rings that spread on water, although it pulsates outwards fairly constantly (or until the isho source has been depleted). This pulsating, ring-like motion will be “bent” by the Alpha isho, as if by a wind and cut or divided by the stronger Beta isho. Gamma isho differs greatly in strength or charge in an area or during a certain time (as during isho storms). Skyrealms can stay afloat in strong areas of Gamma isho and crystal schooners can sail. But if this isho drops rapidly to low levels, the skyrealm and crystal schooner will descend at the rate of the drop (which is why crystal schooner crews hurry across areas with Gamma isho to the next stream of Beta isho). It is the Gamma isho that is most easily perceived with tra-sense. It is also the finer strands of Gamma isho that penetrate and charge, or soak, living organisms. Although shantas have attempted it, it is suicidal to extract and charge ones body with any other kind of isho than the finer Gamma isho.

Inanimate isho conductive materials, such as crystals, are “charged” or “soaked” with isho through long-term natural processes, while living, cellular organisms seem to attract isho (Gamma isho) and accumulate it temporarily within the cells. Terran colonial scientists were on the brink of discovery when they concluded that the strange energy phenomena of the planet (not known as isho at that time) seemed to be drawn to electrical discharges, even as minute as those within a creature’s nervous system.

Isho is in fact attracted to all kinds of electrical activity, much like a sponge absorbs water. The greater the isho conduit, the greater the amount of isho stored there. Thus, Shantic- and other indigenous isho harmonic bodies attract and store more isho than human, or to be extreme, ramian bodies (which store none at all).

The size also matters. A large creature absorbs and holds exponentially more isho. Many creatures and plants of Jorune have taken advantage of the fact that their bodies attract isho and have found use of the isho around them to enhance their survival skills. This might be in order to navigate, determine mating seasons, power certain organs or glands, isho float, see in darkness, stun prey, protect themselves, hide etc. Iscins are daily surprised by nature’s multitude of ways to use isho.

Creatures that specialise in the use of isho for natural defence have further proven to have an enhanced ability to absorb isho. These creatures have either learnt how to store more isho or their bodies have adapted to achieve the same effect. It is for this reason a Dhar Corondon will be brimming with isho and rightfully feared.

Tra-sense

A more advanced form of adaptation to the isho is the tra-sense that can be found among many shantic organisms. These organisms have adapted to Jorune’s isho in such a way that they can perceive the isho and the sho-sen with this special tra-sense.

Most organisms leave a distinct energy pattern or trace around them while moving through the sho-sen. It can be likened to the rings that form in a pool when disturbed

by an object. Unlike the rings of a pool, these energy ripples are constant, as long as there is material that affects the sho-sen. Some famous hishtin have said that the sho-sen “plays” a creature’s copra’s/soul’s/body’s energy resistance while passing through them, in the same way that air creates a distinct sound when passing through a flute. These energy patterns or “signatures” can be noticed/felt/perceived by creatures with isho sensitive sensory organs at varying distances depending on the density/charge/strength of the sho-sen in the area. The direction of the sho-sen’s “flow” also determines in what direction the signature will be easier to perceive, much like a dog is dependant upon the wind when following a scent trail.

The tra-sense of a highly developed creature can not only perceive all objects around it as, trees, rocks, animals etc, but also “scent” traces of signatures from a long distance away that have been brought in fragments by the sho-sen. It is common for shantas to pick up faint signature traces or fragments like these that have been carried “downwind” with a particularly strong flow of sho-sen. Shanta can therefore “feel” the presence of human copras (signatures are referred to as copras when they emanate from intelligent creatures) close to their villages, but might not be able to pinpoint their exact location.

However, higher life forms, such as shantas, can also focus their tra-sense during shorter periods and in smaller areas to more accurately scan the sho-sen for signatures or investigate the exact setup of a signature. A signature fragment can therefore be sought out, although it requires some time and effort.

The more objects in the way of the object sought, the more signatures will distort and disrupt the signature sought. Much in the same way as trees of a forest would block the view of someone trying to locate a cottage or river in the distance. While eyesight can be easily blocked, tra-sense can perceive signatures through other objects, such as walls, trees, blindfolds etc. However, living objects have stronger signatures than inanimate objects and therefore “obstruct” tra-sense more than normal sight. A shanta trying to locate an animal among pillars of rocks would find this very simple, compared to finding the same animal in crowd of humans.

Devices such as cle-eshtas can among other things magnify the energy ripples of an area, thus detailing a search for certain signatures or isho disturbances.

The indigenous species of Jorune have poorly working optical sensory organs or none at all. If these organs have developed as a complement to the isho sensory organs, or have lost their use while developing isho sensory organs, is unknown. By using this tra-sense many creatures indigenous to Jorune “perceive” their surroundings rather than relying on normal optic organs to “see”. There is no way of interpreting the way they perceive this isho into the world of optical senses – it is a unique sense.

While suffering an overdose of mirame, caji Barroz Calvin described the isho world he perceived in the following way:

“When I ordered my eyes to be blindfolded my Witching Eye dominated me. Colours swirled, rippled and flowed around me. Dazzling, glowing balls hung around me, pulsating slightly. I could not see these things. They appeared inside me. I was suddenly aware of them, rather than observed them. As I gently floated with the sho-sen and relaxed, the coloured swirls started to make sense. I could see or hear or feel a steady and rhythmic

tide of weaker, but always present isho, far in the distance. I could sense a great road or river of isho flowing close by. I could see swirls and ripples of various colours around me. I could see the sho-sen. It flowed through the walls of the kerning bay, outlining them and bearing with it traces of the very wall. It reacted with the hands of my fellow caji by lighting the isho remains stuck to them. It vibrated crystals that it flowed through and made them gleam and shine. It bounced or slid through copras, sending out ripples in all directions and outlining the very body the copra's owner. The great, dazzling lights of isho were the active crystals and woven dyshas. These shone like fiery fire or stars, brightly and strongly. The isho swirled fast around these and great ripples were sent in all directions from them. The isho seemed to boil around them and was attracted to it, like flies to a fire."

Since the world of a shanta and the world of a human are so different, many metaphors and phenomena cannot be clearly described or understood by both races. Colours of a tree, building etc, would mean little to a shanta as an art form. They would still perceive the difference between a red coloured cloak and a blue coloured cloak by the way the isho signature feels, but would not find a red cloak to match badly with pink boots. Also, shantas have great problems linking two-dimensional pictures to real objects, i.e. a portrait to a person. Therefore shantic art will be three-dimensional, created out of stone, isho, wood etc. Neither, have shanta grasped high clouds and do not seem to be able to perceive stars in the night sky. Similarly humans cannot understand how shantas can sense people, animals, art in an isho form or certain objects to be nearby, when they themselves cannot see them. That a persons emotions and health can be examined or even manipulated with isho is equally hard to understand. Humans are blind to the great influence of the seven moons above the planet and their tidal waves of isho. One of the hardest cultural barriers between shantas and humans is the complex shantic language that is enhanced by variations in the copra of the speaker and through manipulation of the surrounding isho (often small and subtle) or a naull orb (on formal occasions). Shantas and humans may be found on the same planet, but still live in two completely different worlds.

Human tra-sense (signature skills)

Muadra and boccord have adapted to the sho-sen in a strange way. Both can be trained hard to perceive changes or signatures in the sho-sen.

Muadra are closest to having a tra-sense and often refer to this ability as such. They can train themselves to see the greatest energy ripples around isho technology devices or isho phenomena such as crystals and dyshas along with their make-up of the different colours of isho. With the help of this tra-sense they can see the isho they wish to manipulate. They can however never see the smaller, subtler details such as signatures of the surroundings and copras. One could compare the tra-sense of a muadra to someone extremely short sighted. The tra-sense used by muadra works very well within very short distances (1-2 metres) or on very strong isho sources. [See *Weaving the isho* essay for more details on muadra tra-sense.]

Boccord can on the other hand be trained to “sense” signatures in the sho-sen. Since the boccord cannot see the different isho polarities/colours, it is not really tra-sense. Some iscin have theories that since boccord bodies seem to have a natural defence that matches the isho of a great source of disturbing isho (natural interference against dyshas, that also can be trained into active interference) this enables them also to sense isho disturbances such as signatures. They seem to “feel” the strongest signatures, the copras of intelligent creatures, and if trained well, the signatures of other living creatures. By concentrating and expelling isho stored in their bodies they receive a brief glimpse or “echo” of the surrounding sho-sen and can “feel” a signature’s proximity and may be able to recognise it again. The stronger the sho-sen and the stronger the copra, the easier it is to sense. However, a boccord can never use this signature spotting to navigate through the isho world since only copras and stronger signatures can be noticed. Inanimate objects and things like fire, holes and water would not be detected. Blind boccord have on the other hand proven to manage very well when combining the remaining normal senses with signature spotting.

Like many other indigenous life forms, some boccord have learnt to match the sho-sen passing through their bodies so that no copra is created. Once again, this seems to be a skill associated with the active interference skill. In this way they become “invisible” to life forms that rely on less refined tra-sense. A shanta or a predator that has specialised its tra-sense for small details would not be fooled.

Well-trained hishtin have even been able to change their copra as the sho-sen passes through them and so creating a false copra. It may be as subtle as a change of personality or a change into a different species altogether. Hishtin Kurrac Hagell of Parash kerning bay in Kirlan was notorious for his short creations of corondon signatures, with which he enjoyed startling guard tarros. Once again, a shanta would not be as easily fooled.

Living with isho

Most intelligent races are aware of the isho around them but cannot perceive it. They might have heard about its potential, but have no ways of tapping into this bountiful resource of energy. Therefore they do not spend much time worrying about it or investigating it. Instead, isho is something most people agree should not be meddled with and in many places it has been forbidden to do so. (Why worry about something you cannot see or influence? Better to leave it alone.)

Many do, however, fear the power of stored isho that might be found in crystals and other isho conducting materials (shantic devices in old ruins etc). Only a few humans have ever learned how to release the isho stored in crystals or how to measure the sho-sen with crystal dust, making it a sort of arcane or occult knowledge. To normal people this would mean meddling with things better left alone.

The more powerful isho manifestations, such as isho storms, skyrealms, warps and other natural isho phenomena are revered or feared, as they are mostly unexplained. They are proof of the power and dangers of isho and given the appropriate respect and awe.

Thivin and thriddle dabble in isho lore. The thivin have learnt the art of crystal cutting and constantly strive to improve the quality of their trade. Thivin bodies are also capable of releasing isho from a stored device slowly (crystal singing) and therefore use crystals more frequently than humans. Thriddle study the sho-sen and the natural

isho phenomena closely to learn more about the invisible world of isho. To them it is a true science that they have decided to one day master.

The ramian fear the isho and call it the Invisible Fire. Great superstition surrounds isho and links it to the destruction of their gods and the fury of the shanta. Occasionally a ramian of a higher caste might use a caji for his purposes, but it will be like striking a deal with the devil. Therefore, caji often find that their presence will upset or even agitate ramian. Just to be safe, ramian rarely take muadra prisoners, preferring to kill them immediately.

Cleash know more than people suspect about the isho, and warps especially. They are a clever race that have bent their will upon mastering the invisible energy. Although incapable of using the isho themselves, the cleash have servants or slaves that weave the isho for them. The isho lore of the cleash overlords, combined with their knowledge of lamorri and cleash tech, is a thing to be feared.

Crugar, woffen, bronth, tologra, salu and acubon are aware of the isho in the same way as humans and some have even found their own ways to use it. In most respects, however, these races are as ignorant as humans when it comes to isho.

Croid, corastin, scarmis and blount seem unaware of the isho or simply do not care about it. They do not seem to feel any discomfort during isho storms and cannot release the isho from crystals.

Isho technology (shantic technology)

Shantas, like to some extent – muadras and boccord - have not only learnt how to manipulate their signatures, they have also learnt how to weave the isho with and within their bodies and how to draw more isho into themselves from the surrounding sho-sen. In some cases they can even manipulate the sho-sen around them and the copras of other creatures. However, shantas also found more powerful ways to manipulate the isho. The various ways to cut crystals that had absorbed isho were probably the first. These were later followed by the combining of crystals and various materials such as rare stones, bone and certain metals that also affected or stored isho in strange ways. Isho phenomena of great power or duration could be created in this way. Complex manipulating and even transmuting of isho became possible - a great technological leap was taken. Some of the sophisticated isho technology devices that followed were capable of creating warps, stabilising the sho-sen of an area, communicating over great distances, hollowing of dwellings and even the creation of evids.

Describing the various elements of isho technological devices and their function is nearly impossible. For a human, many of the technological theories would even be impossible to understand, as isho itself cannot be perceived or understood fully. However, a short description on how to use isho technology (only applies to muadra – as only they among the human sub-species can manipulate isho) follows below:

In order to use isho technology, three things are required.

1. The device must be understood and its function “perceived” by the user, in order to manipulate it/press the right “buttons”. (Tra-sense skill required, a penalty applies depending on device complexity)

Having earlier experience, knowledge or theories about Shantic technology helps the user to understand the device and its function. (Successful Lore: Shantic Tech skill roll gives bonus to tra-sense roll.)

2. Isho must be harnessed in order to perform the manipulation and to transmit energy to the device. The knowledge and ability how to weave isho is required. The right amount of isho of the right colour must be transmitted to the device. (Racial weaving ability and 1-7 Moon skill rolls)
3. Permanent changes might have to be made to the isho through transmuting isho combinations (spending colour points).

[See the *Isho Technology* essay for more details of how isho technology works and a list of artefacts.]