

## *Xio (I. Shield) Cadre*

*def. A monastic warrior cult formed in the First Era by the Ka'Ta'Viir ruling families to use as loyal, household guards. The Xio combat techniques became the foundation for most other martial forms that followed.*

*(P. Xiosians a.k.a. Xo, Xso, Xsosians)*

### *History:*

Few organizations in the Shadow World's early history have had a greater impact on the development of Kulthean martial culture. The Xio Cadre were the personal bodyguards of the Ka'Ta'Viir during the First Era. Originally Althans, the Xiosans pursued aggressive eugenics programs and genetic and physical modifications to create the most adept warriors in the Althan Empire. Too few in number to be an effective military force, the Xiosans became an extension of ruling Ka'Ta'Viir political power. While serving primarily as bodyguards, Xiosan Cadres later became a symbol of personal wealth, extravagance and power among the ruling families.

Initially one central organization, the Xio Cadre grew into several dozen Cadre "Temples" each under the patronage of a particular Ka'Ta'Viir family. Over time the temples reinforced patron loyalties and developed distinctive styles of dress and appearance. While Xio warriors were adept in modern combat systems, the Ka'Ta'Viir would have their Xiosan guards attend public ceremonies in distinctive garb: shining armor, swords and flying mounts that played upon Althan classical mythology and heroic memes. Xiosans warriors performed in elaborate athletic and martial performances during Ka'Ta'Viir social events and were used to mediate family or business disputes in proxy combats. A few individual Xios became celebrities in their own right, either through martial or athletic prowess.

An ascetic warrior society, the Xio developed the foundations of an unparalleled and potent combat system. Training began at childhood and was combined with bio-genetic enhancements to increase growth, strength, endurance and speed. Combat training was separated into three tiers: Wind (unarmed combat), Thunder (melee weapons) and Lightning (energy weapons and bio-ware systems). Remnants of these combat forms have survived and became the foundation for many martial disciplines throughout Kulthea.

### *The Legacy of the Xiosans:*

Some of the Xio Cadre survived the First Era: either with their Ka'Ta'Viir patrons in cryogenic hibernation, or were off planet during the worst of the conflicts. During the Interregnum, refugee Xiosans merged with indigenous cultures or established new settlements, slowly diluting their singular genetic traits. Still, interbreeding passed along many beneficial aspects of the Xio physical traits: the Zedrahin, Zor, Udahir and Shay all possess some of the size, physical characteristics and strength of the Xio warriors. It is believed that pure Xiosans still survive in the Eastern hemisphere with their Ka'Ta'Viir Lords, but out of a dozen Cadre Temples in the West only a handful of facilities and warriors survived:

1. Vale of the Merisia. The abandoned Sunlords Temple in Tanara still held armor, weapons and the offspring of their Steardan mounts when it was discovered and occupied by a Rhakaan expeditionary force during the Second Era. Using the equipment they found, the Zorians assumed the role of the mythical “Cloudlords”, emulating their Xiosan predecessors.
2. Changramai Monastery. The Changramai monastic order was a rebirth of the Xio discipline. The monastery was built upon the bones of a ruined Cadre temple. The Halls are intact, but the knowledge to access the security door has been lost. (The key is interred with Master Changramai).
3. Votania. Sun Cadre. The Masters of Emer built their palaces alongside an abandoned Xiosan Cadre Temple. The Masters repopulated the temple with their own servants. Adopting the flying chariots and weapons of the Sun Cadre.
4. Western Thuul. The Temple was reoccupied in early second era by a splinter group of Xiosans. They attempted to build a new settlement on Barzu-chaa (South Eastern Thuul) but the City-State was destroyed after conflict with surrounding cultures. The surviving Xiosans fled: some moved permanently to the Cadre Temple located in the Sullen Mountains while others fled east to the Gufu Rainforest where they are believed to be an offspring of a lost giant race. While still large of stature, most of the surviving Xiosans are a product of mixed heritage and have lost many of their defining physical attributes.
5. Mur Fostisur. The Mountain Enclave of the Udahir was originally a Xio Temple. Now the Udahir and their flying mounts occupy the vast hold.

Scholars whisper of a darker chapter in the Xiosan history. It is rumored that some Xiosans were ultimately bent to the will of the Unlife and became its most feared warriors: Heralds of Night. More chilling stories are spoken among the Loremasters: Kadeana performed experiments on her own Imperial Cadre. Six and sixty Xio warriors she used for her most terrifying creation....

### *Physical Attributes:*

While each Cadre developed their own specific physical aesthetic and genetic type, the Xiosan are intimidating and impressive physical specimens, even among the mighty Lords of Essence. Warriors average 7’6” to 8’6” tall, densely muscled and lean of build. Ethnic appearances varied: skin tone, hair and eye color were often controlled or influenced by the capricious tastes of their patron family. Xiosans received genetic, physical and bioware augmentation that lent them considerable combat abilities:

1. Physical trait bonuses: Str: +20, Co: +25, Ag: +15, Qu: +20
2. Save vs Stun (SD) +20. Failure still reduces any stun effect by 1rnd.
3. Accelerated Healing. X4 natural healing rate
4. Save vs organ failure/destruction
5. Triple lung capacity. +50 to fatigue. Increased stamina.
6. Poison/disease resistant: +35
7. Essence Sensitivity: -25 to RR and unable to use/manipulate essence/mentalism
8. Fear immunity:+75

9. Adrenal Moves: Strength & Speed +50. Effects for 10 rnds. Can be used once per hour.
10. Advanced MA skills & weapon kata (Rank 4 attacks only)
11. No penalty to Adrenal Defense using armor or weapons.
12. Behavior inhibitors. -100 on all attacks against a Ka'Ta'Viir.
13. -50 on saves against Ka'Ta'Viir mental/psionic attacks/probes
14. Behavior instincts. Will protect and defend Ka'Ta'Viir from any attack.

The Ka'Ta'Viir were not naive to the physical threat of the Xiosans. Their proximity to the inner sanctums of the Ka'Ta'Viir and the Lords own paranoia made them cautious. Part of their genetic modifications included behavioral conditioning: Xiosans cannot attack a Ka'Ta'Viir and indeed had to submit to their will. Additionally the Xiosans were made more susceptible to the Essence (which only the Ka'Ta'Viir controlled at that time) and they themselves were not able to tap the powers of Essence.

### ***Xio Cadre Summary***

#### **CADRE: Imperial**

PATRON: House Kaedean

LOCATION: ????

FOCUS: Modern Minimalist/Technology.

PHYSICAL TYPE: Tall, muscular, black hair, dark eyes.

MOUNTS: Lesser Black Dragons

ARMOR: Dark red polysteel armor and seamless visorless black helms.

WEAPONS: Laser Pistols, Energy Swords

NOTES: Less ostentatious than the Cadres of the lesser ruling caste, the Imperial Cadre were the personal guard of the Empress Kadeana. Their training center was a closely guarded secret and the Cadre rarely participated in ceremonial displays. Despite Kaedenas defeat by Doenku and the Soulsword, the Imperial Cadre had already made a pact with their mistress. In a lengthy process, the Imperial Cadre volunteers became immortal servants of the Unlife in a new incarnation: that of the Shards. The Cadre Commander, Shar-Bu is now lord of the I-Lat.

#### **CADRE: SunLords**

PATRON: House Tessiananta

LOCATION: Vale of Merisia, Tanara Jaiman

FOCUS: Althan Classical/Mythological

PHYSICAL TYPE: Tall, muscular, blond, blue-eyed.

MOUNTS: Steardan.

ARMOR: Golden Plate & Greaves

WEAPONS: Hand Axes, Sunwords

NOTES: This abandoned facility still held armor, weapons and wild Steardan when it was discovered and occupied by a Rhakaan expeditionary force during the Second Era. Using the equipment they found, the Zorians assumed the role of the mystical "Cloudlords", emulating their Xiosan predecessors

**CADRE: Lightning**

PATRON: House Terra

LOCATION: Changramai Monastarey, Choak Mnts, Emer

FOCUS: Martial Arts, Athleticism, Adrenal Focus

PHYSICAL TYPE: Varied.

MOUNTS: Anti Grav Bracers

ARMOR: Black cloaks, Black Masks w/yellow bolts.

WEAPONS: Changa,

NOTES: The Lightning Cadre were perhaps the most dedicated to the physical arts.

Athletic ability, acrobatics and unarmed combat were the focus. The cadre put on elaborate displays of martial prowess combined with amazing ariel feats using their anti-grav arm and leg bracers. They could seemingly “fly” through the air.

**CADRE: Claw**

PATRON: House

LOCATION: Mur Fostisyr

FOCUS: Beserker Troops.

PHYSICAL TYPE: Large, dark-haired, and heavily muscled. Claw Cadre was feared for their combat prowess and mercurial nature.

MOUNTS: Fire and Ice Dragons.

ARMOR: Spiked Plate and Force Armor.

WEAPONS: Over-sized battleswords. In modern combat they wielded heavy laser cannons and disintegrators.

NOTES: The Temple was discovered and settled by the Udahir but had been looted long before.

**CADRE: Steel**

PATRON: House Letrati

LOCATION: Votania, Emer

FOCUS: Deception, misdirection, subterfuge

PHYSICAL TYPE: Tall, dark hair, grey eyes, light skin

MOUNTS: Anti-Grav Chariots

ARMOR: Grey Armor, Chameleon Cloaks

WEAPONS: Wide leaf bladed short swords

NOTES: The Masters of Emer built their palaces alongside a Xiosan Cadre Temple. It's not known whether any original Xio pledged service to the Masters or the Temple was repopulated by others.

**CADRE: Onyx**

PATRON: House Thorenian

LOCATION: Sullen Mountains, SW Argyla

FOCUS: Tribal, Physical Form, Animalistic

PHYSICAL TYPE: Dark skin, silver eyes, silver/white hair

MOUNTS: Kith

ARMOR: Silver metallic armor, Jewelry

WEAPONS: Black Laen Longsword & Shortsword

NOTES: The Temple was reoccupied in early second era by a splinter group of Xiosans. They attempted to build a new settlement on Barzu-chaa (South Eastern Thuul) but the City-State was destroyed. The surviving Xiosans fled: some moved permanently to the Cadre Temple to the Northeast in the Sullen Mountains while others fled East to the Gufu Rainforest where they are now believed to be an offspring of a lost giant race. While still large of stature, most of the surviving Xiosans are a product of mixed heritage and have lost most of their defining physical attributes.