

# Kajiman Humans of Kyrell (The Shogunate)

*Lore Article · Culture*

## Summary

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A full cultural and historical reference for the Kajiman -- the island people of the Shogunate, defined by the Vareth code, strict hierarchy, and the monk tradition that the continent knows better than the civilization that produced it. Covers Kajima and the Shogunate, the Vareth, the Mureven, society abroad, religion, naming conventions, and racial traits.

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The Kajiman come from Kajima, an island nation that most of the Settled Lands knows primarily as the place that produces monks. This is reductive in the way that most summary descriptions of complex cultures are reductive, and the Kajiman are aware of it. They are not simply a source of warrior-scholars for the continent's fighting traditions. They are a civilization with a complete system of governance, ethics, art, and philosophy that has been functioning continuously since before the Weohstannuk Empire was founded -- they simply do not spend much time explaining themselves to people who are not prepared to understand the explanation.

The Kajiman abroad -- and there are always Kajiman abroad, for reasons the society both generates and regrets -- carry their civilization with them not as a set of customs to be observed when convenient but as a complete framework for living that does not reduce to its surface features. The Vareth code is not a list of rules. It is a way of understanding what one is and what one owes. A Kajiman who has left Kajima has not left the Vareth. They have simply entered a world that does not share it, and the adjustment is permanent in ways that visitors from Kajima never quite understand until they have experienced it themselves.

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## Kajima and the Shogunate

The island of Kajima sits off the eastern coast of Dracomere, close enough to the continent to maintain trade relationships and far enough to have developed in near-complete cultural independence until the Vennite period opened maritime routes that made sustained contact possible. Kajima was not part of the Empire of Venn and was not invited to be. The Kajiman assessed the invitation and declined, which the Empire recorded as a diplomatic failure and the Kajiman recorded as the obvious correct decision.

The **Shogunate** is the governing structure of Kajima -- a military government in form, operating through a strict hierarchy: the **Shogun** at the apex, the **Zanru** (great lords who control territorial domains), the **Tenshari** (warriors in service to a Zanru), and **commoners** who provide the agricultural, craft, and merchant base that sustains the entire structure. Each tier is governed by the Vareth, the code of conduct that defines what honorable behavior looks like at every level of the hierarchy. The Shogun's obligations to the realm are as precisely defined by the Vareth as the commoner's obligations to their lord. The code does not exempt anyone from its requirements. It simply defines different requirements for different positions.

The Shogunate has been the continuous governing structure of Kajima for as long as Kajiman records extend. There have been different Shogun dynasties, periods of instability between dynasties, and at least one complete restructuring of the Zanru territories following a period of civil war that the Kajiman refer to as the Dispute of Succession and consider a cautionary example of what happens when the Vareth's succession provisions are interpreted too broadly. The Shogunate in the current age is stable. It has been stable for several generations. The Kajiman are aware that stability of this duration tends to precede a Dispute, and certain factions at court are quietly

preparing for it.

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## The Vareth

The Vareth is the Kajiman code of conduct -- a complete ethical framework that governs every aspect of life in the Shogunate. It is not a legal code in the sense that the Settled Lands would recognize. It is not enforced by courts and punishments in the primary instance. It is enforced by the accumulated weight of a society in which everyone's behavior is visible to everyone else, and in which deviation from the Vareth's requirements is legible to any Kajiman observer as clearly as a physical mark.

The Vareth defines obligations at every level of the hierarchy. A commoner owes honest labor, fair dealing, and loyalty to their immediate lord. A tenshari owes their life and capability to their Zanru, owes correct conduct toward those below them in the hierarchy, and owes respect to the Vareth itself as the framework within which all other obligations exist. A Zanru owes just governance to their domain, correct deference to the Shogun, and the maintenance of the specific traditions of their house. The Shogun owes the welfare of Kajima itself -- not just the hierarchy, not just the Zanru, but the island and its people as a whole.

What the Vareth does not permit at any level is the violation of stated obligations. A Zanru who harms their tenshari without cause. A tenshari who betrays their Zanru for personal advantage. A Shogun who sacrifices the island's welfare for their dynasty's benefit. These are not just social failures in Kajiman understanding -- they are existential failures, a break with what makes a person a member of the Kajiman civilization rather than someone who merely lives on the island.

The Vareth's provisions for honor and its loss are the aspect most familiar to outsiders, partly because they are the most dramatic and partly because the stories export well. A Kajiman who violates the Vareth in a significant way has options: acknowledge the violation and accept whatever consequence the hierarchy determines is appropriate, or accept the alternative that the Vareth offers -- a formal process of self-accountability that closes the account on one's own terms. Outsiders who have heard about this practice without context tend to find it disturbing. Kajiman who have explained it to outsiders many times tend to find the reaction predictable.

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## The Mureven

The **Mureven** are tenshari without a lord -- Kajiman warriors whose Zanru has died, dissolved their service, or been dishonored in a way that broke the obligation. The word translates approximately as *those between*, which captures the social position accurately: a Mureven is a complete Kajiman person, trained and capable and fully under the Vareth's requirements, existing in a structural position that the Shogunate's hierarchy does not have a clean category for.

Mureven most commonly appear on the continent as the Kajiman most likely to be encountered by non-Kajiman. A tenshari with a lord has obligations that tie them to their lord's domain. A Mureven has those same obligations in principle but no specific person to fulfill them toward -- which creates a freedom of movement that the tenshari's life does not permit. Many Mureven come to the continent because the continent is where Mureven go, a self-reinforcing pattern that has created small Kajiman communities in several of the larger Settled Lands cities.

The Mureven abroad carry the Vareth with them. This is not metaphorical. A Mureven in Caernguard or Saltmere is not operating by local norms where the Vareth's requirements conflict with them -- they are operating by the Vareth, in a context that does not share it, which requires constant translation between frameworks that do not map cleanly onto each other. The Mureven who manage this well become extraordinarily effective at navigating complex social situations. The

Mureven who do not manage it well become extraordinarily legible as people operating by a rulebook nobody else has read.

The question of whether a Mureven can take a new lord from outside the Shogunate's hierarchy is answered differently by different Kajiman scholars. Most Mureven who have been on the continent long enough have formed their own opinion and are living by it.

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## Physical Description

Kajiman are shorter on average than Weohstan humans -- closer to the middle of the human height range -- with dark hair (black is nearly universal), dark eyes, and a golden skin tone that ranges from pale gold to a rich warm brown depending on ancestry and time spent outdoors. The physical build varies by role: tenshari and their descendants tend toward lean, conditioned musculature developed through training regimens that begin in childhood. Commoner ancestry produces more varied builds. Both are Kajiman.

Kajiman dress marks hierarchy clearly to those who know the conventions -- fabric quality, color, the specific way a garment is cut and worn -- and most Kajiman abroad are dressed in a way that tells any other Kajiman who they are and what they are doing here. Non-Kajiman observers see clothing. Kajiman observers see a statement.

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## Society

Kajiman society abroad replicates as much of the Shogunate's structure as the available population allows. A Kajiman community large enough to have a Zanru descendant in it will organize around that person's authority even if the authority is nominal and the domain is a neighborhood in a human city. A community too small for a formal hierarchy will develop an informal one organized around the Vareth's principles, with the most senior and most capable individuals holding the weight without the titles.

The **monk tradition** that the Settled Lands most associates with Kajima emerged from the tenshari training system -- the rigorous physical, mental, and ethical development that the Vareth requires of warriors who serve the hierarchy. The unarmed combat techniques, the discipline practices, and the philosophical framework that the Settled Lands calls *monk training* are the tenshari curriculum, exported to the continent through Mureven who taught it for income or purpose and through Kajiman scholars who established training houses in the larger cities. Most monk practitioners on the continent are not Kajiman. Most of them also do not know that what they are practicing is a subset of a complete ethical system, and the Kajiman instructors who know this vary in how much they consider it their responsibility to explain it.

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## Religion

The Kajiman religious tradition is distinct from the Kyrell pantheon in ways that create genuine friction when Kajiman come to the continent. Kajima has its own gods -- or, more precisely, a relationship with divine forces that does not map cleanly onto the Court of Light and Court of Shadows structure that most of Dracomere operates within. The Kajiman understand the Kyrell pantheon as real but view the relationship between mortal and divine differently: less a matter of worship and petition and more a matter of correct conduct in the world as the primary expression of religious life. The gods are honored through the Vareth's practice, not primarily through temple observance.

Kajiman on the continent who engage with the local religious institutions typically do so on

pragmatic grounds -- access to healing, community connection, the social cost of refusing to participate. The engagement is rarely conversion in the sense that local clergy would recognize it. **Solgarde** has the most Kajiman following of the Kyrell pantheon's gods, partly because his emphasis on righteous order and the obligations of power maps reasonably well onto Vareth principles and partly because the sun god's aesthetic -- light, discipline, the sword used in service of something larger than personal advantage -- resonates with tenshari values in ways that other options do not.

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## **Names**

Kajiman names follow strict conventions that mark gender, family, and social position for any Kajiman reader. Family names come first: the Zanru house name for noble lines, a clan name for tenshari families, a craft or place name for commoners. Personal names follow, shorter and simpler. *Yamashin Koretomo, Ishida Yuriko, Taneka Ryu*. Outsiders consistently reverse the order, putting the personal name first. Most Kajiman on the continent have stopped correcting this, which they consider a reasonable concession to a world that cannot be expected to understand the priority of the family over the individual.

Mureven sometimes adopt a single name for continental use -- either their personal name alone or a simplified version of both -- as a practical accommodation that the Vareth's scholars debate the acceptability of and the Mureven themselves have generally decided is fine.

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## **Racial Traits**

Variant Human Traits as per PHB p.31.

Kajiman speak Common and Kajimani. Kajimani is a complete language with a writing system of roughly three thousand characters -- a significant investment to learn, which is why Kajiman scholars who have mastered it are valued across the continent's scholarly institutions regardless of what other knowledge they bring.