

Phods

Phods are short, stocky humanoids with features blending those of both pigs and owls. These good-natured and reasonable creatures hail from the fertile planet of [Ohara](#) (pronounced OH-ARA). Though Phodian individuals tend to be kind and even a little hedonistic, their homeworld's politics are subsumed by a decades-long competition between two rival states and their differing political systems. Though the world became a part of the Yamatai Star Empire in the late YE 20's, Ohara's technology levels advanced slowly and, in many cases, against their own wishes. Despite this, individual Phods can become effective and successful members of the greater [Yamatai Star Empire](#) society, even serving in its [Star Army of Yamatai](#) with distinction.

The Phod population on their homeworld of Ohara is around 7.2 billion.



Art by Daniel Olsén (Weremole)
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Above: Image of a Phod, art by Daniel Olsén, aka Weremole.

History

Little is known about the ancient ancestors of the modern Phod species. Researchers are confident that the heat-trapping feathers of Phods are a hold-over evolutionary feature stemming from their planet's last Ice Age. Modern archaeologists suspect that their kind once was capable of flight, but that the practice of agriculture brought more and more of them to the ground. The farming of crops came about during their world's Stone Age, when ancient Phods wielded fire and early metal-smithing techniques in order to turn the tide against violent predator species who once lived on Ohara. Those ancient predators nearly drove the Phods to extinction, it is believed, but Phod technology turned that tide. It is believed that as Phods used their wings for the manipulation of weapons, tools, and for the harvesting of plants, Phods were flying less and less. Their civilizations were developing in single locations, without a need to migrate or flee predators. Over the centuries, archaeologists theorize that the original wing appendages gradually shifted into the arm-structures of today.

Feudal Era, And Freya's Landing

In time, these civilizations of antiquity developed into disparate city-states, and for much of its known history, the planet [Ohara](#) had no countries or nations to speak of. The world's climate was temperate and ideal for agricultural production. Food and wealth were plenty. Technology and industrialization were advancing at a pace that was slow enough to be safe to the environment. Conflicts were few, and were relegated to the saber-rattling variety. The citizens were content. A major Phodian religion known as the Order of Freya contests that, around 130 years before [YE 01](#), a humanoid woman named Freya and a team of other humanoids arrived on Ohara. Their exploits and deeds during their lifetime on Ohara remains unknown, but a religion whose foundational virtues are attributed to Freya's philosophy have had an impact on the develop of much of the species from her arrival onward. Members of the Order of Freya worship the visitor as a Goddess. Further, members of the Order believe that Freya made a prediction before her death, or Ascension. This prediction is called "Freya's Prophecy". Her words prophesied that humans would one day return to Ohara. Some modern researchers argue that Freya was a Nepleslian captain, and she and her crew crash landed on the world, influencing it for decades to come.

The Plague

20 years before [YE 01](#), a worldwide plague struck the vegetation of the still-feudal Ohara, wiping out the most of the planet's crops for several years in a row. The more corrupt among the feudal lords and their subordinates began hoarding food for themselves. In desperation, their citizens revolted against their former liege lords. Under the red banner of revolution, the Lage Republic was founded on the principles of equality and governmental accountability. The republic brought several of the more powerful city-states under the same flag. Other city-states soon found themselves at the mercy of the red republic.

Lage and Haton Formed

Major schisms developed among the revolutionaries as soon as the Lage Republic was founded. While

they all agreed upon the principle of a government for the people, major disputes started over who should have the power to rule, and how the economy should be run. Some believed that only those with education and dedication to the founding principles of the revolution should rule, while others asserted that the people should decide such matters. Others believed that the government should maintain strict control over the economy, with accountability laws to make sure that atrocities such as food hoarding never happened again. Others still others declared that only a free market economy could ensure that civilization would survive another plague.

A mere two months after the founding of the Lage Republic, several city-states broke away to form the Haton Federation, the first democratic government in Phodian history. The Lage Republic developed into a socialist authoritarian government. Most of the city-states that had managed to remain independent until that point then aligned themselves with either the Lageans or Hatonians. 60 years later the revolution, and the plague that started it, are nothing more than a memory and a rather interesting chapter in history textbooks. Diplomatic tensions between the republic and the federation have steadily increased over the years. Some say that the hundreds of nuclear missiles the two nations have pointed at each other are all that's keeping the planet from all-out war. The split peoples of Ohara felt further pressure from another source; climate change. Phod technology and industry, as well as certain environmental practices, were altering the climate of the planet, causing it to become warmer. The negative effects of climate change began to alter planetary weather cycles, crop production, and even the health of individual citizens. Both the Lageans and Hatonians seemed unable to take concrete action toward curbing this gradual cycle of harm.

'First' Contact

Some time around [YE 28](#), an event occurred which appeared to fulfill Freya's Prophecy. The [Third Expeditionary Fleet](#), led by former Taisho [Henry Chen](#), made "First Contact" with the Phods. In that same year, Ohara joined the Yamatai Star Empire under the terms of the [Treaty With Ohara](#). This treaty between the Yamatai Star Empire and the Lage Republic and the Haton Federation as well as all the other principalities established, among other things, the nature of the world's membership in the Empire. Though not included in the document, the Phods nonetheless enforced a near-total ban on any off-world technology, demanding that no technology be brought to Phod that could not be produced by the Phods themselves with their own existing knowledge and abilities. The ban was only *near*-total, as advanced agricultural technology was brought to Ohara quite soon after their joining.

Further cracks formed in this early 'wall' of technological isolationism. Only a year after Ohara joined the Empire, in [YE 28](#) the Phod Senator of Ohara at the time, Vax Jameson, sponsored a successful amendment to allow some medical technology and techniques to be imported, and that allowed Phod citizens on Ohara to receive medical treatment off-world. The 13th article of this amendment, called the [Amendment To Treaty With Ohara](#), also specifically banned the import of weapons technology of any kind onto Ohara. The allowance for advanced medical treatment and technology was positively received by the people of Ohara, and this led to another shift; the Oharans accepted help from the Yamatai Star Empire with their growing climate change problem. This new project required years of work, but led to more sustainable environmental practices and to the transformation of many native Phodian technologies and practices that were harmful to their own world's ecosystem and livelihood. The undeniable success of this project eased even the most hardline of technologically-isolationist factions, leading to even more growth and advancement on Ohara. By the YE 30's, Ohara was exporting a tremendous amount of food to the rest of the Empire.

Military And Recent Events

Militarily, the Yamatai Star Empire goes to great lengths to protect and insulate Ohara from the outside, such as, by the [Treaty With Ohara](#), having an entire fleet permanently stationed above, and solely dedicated to, Ohara's defense. That fleet is staffed primarily by Phods who are trained extensively by the [Star Army of Yamatai](#). [Fort Ohara](#) Remains a permanent garrison over the world as well, supporting its defense and acting as an extension of the Empire's influence over the planet below. Ohara continues to supply the Empire with food as well as soldiers, playing a role in major engagements such as the [Kuvexian War](#) and the various wars with the [Mishhuvurthyar](#). The Phods are currently, and eagerly, seeking colonization opportunities within range of their current spacefaring capabilities, though some in their society are arguing that they should allow the Yamatai Star Empire to facilitate their colonization efforts with their FTL technology.

Physiology

The humanoid Phods are shorter than most species known by the Yamatai Star Empire. Their entire body, aside from their three-taloned feet, is covered in downy and fur-like feathers. Their feathers are usually shades of brown, black, gray, white, pink, or a mixture thereof, cover almost the entire body of the Phod with the exception of their talon-like feet. Though now flightless, their winglike arms have two fingers and one thumb at the ends of each. The pig-like head sports two beady eyes, a large flat snout, and large floppy ears. Their torso and their legs resemble those of an owl. Phods usually have very strong chest muscles, a feature that hints at a flight-capable evolutionary past. Not all Phods are slim or slight, either; many Phods can grow large, muscular, or even rotund bodies.

The typical Phod is about 1.4 meters (4 feet 7 inches) in height and perhaps 54 kilograms (120 pounds) in weight.



Above: Image of a Phod. Art by [Yangfan](#), the species' original creator.¹⁾

Diet

Phods are omnivorous, but are primarily vegetarian. Meat and dairy are not a regular part of a Phod's diet primarily because they have never domesticated another species on their homeworld, and they make for poor hunters. Phods only tend to hunt if their agricultural crops are ruined by some unforeseen disaster.



Above: Image of a Phod. Art generated by [Wes](#) using Midjourney.

Not all Phods have are slim! Some can grow muscular, and even rotund.

Environment

Ohara has exceedingly high agricultural production capabilities, and it is a lush and temperate world. The planet has numerous vast oceans dotted with islands. Though the recent century saw a period of bad weather and soaring temperatures due to climate change, a cooperative project with the Yamatai Star Empire largely ended these negative effects and stabilized the planet's climate.

Phod urban environments reflect the culture of the nation. Lagean cities are organized by the state, and are planned for form and function. Cities are arranged into districts, and many Phods live in huge government-run apartment complexes. Architecture tends toward the brutalist and the un-decorated, though there are some publicly-funded art projects and statues and posters to catch the eye.

Hatonian cities tend to be more sporadically arranged, with private buyers snatching up bits of land and zoning them haphazardly. Hatonian families tend to own their own physically distinct homes in the Federation, though tiny apartments and slums exist for the poor. Every property owner has a high degree of free reign when it comes to the design and color of their buildings, so no two Hatonian structure looks alike.

A list of the major city-states of [Ohara](#) can be found on the planet's page.

Life Cycle

Phods live a shorter natural lifespan than [humans](#), their average around eighty percent of the average human one.

Life Phase	Years in YE
Infancy	0-2
Childhood	2-7
Adolescence	7-12
Young Adult	12-22
Adulthood	22-40
Middle Age	40-65
Old Age	65+

Culture

The family is the basic unit in Phodian society. Most Phodians are monogamous, and they raise between four and eight children on average. A typical Phod is friendly, optimistic, gentle, and forgiving when encountered alone. To some observers of national politics however, the intelligence and kindness of a group of Phods seem to decrease exponentially as their number increases. Overall, the Phods could be considered a reasonably civilized species in terms of morality and decorum. That sense of decorum may falter, however, when it comes to food. Culturally, the Phods are very epicurean, if not downright hedonistic. Food is considered a major part of Phodian culture. Contests of culinary skills are accorded with the same passion and obsession that other societies might feel about sports or scientific achievement. Learning how to cook is a major part of a young Phod's upbringing and education; the main rite of passage for a Phod into adulthood is cooking his or her parent's favorite dish for them. It is interesting to note that, in all Phodian military units, all the cooks are of ranks Lieutenant and above. On smaller naval vessels, the Head Chef is the third-highest ranking officer.

The Order of Freya exhibits several unique cultural practices due to their religion. Due to Freya's human description and to her Goddess-like status, Order members and even many Phods of other faiths have strong reactions upon meeting human-like beings for the first time. Some Phods are awestruck with religious fervor, or worshipful, or even unruly upon meeting a humanoid for the first time because of the influence of this faith. The decades of membership in the Empire has made these moments of rapture or shock less common, but they can still happen. Separately from this cultural anomaly, Order practitioners raise their children, and orphans that they adopt, differently from most other Phods. Order children are raised in communal creches, and those who grow up in these creches usually become Priests of Freya and Paladins of Freya, although they're free to choose other paths in life. Paladins of Freya aid the weak, punish criminals if their host nation allows for it, and they serve in their nation's military under whatever circumstances their religious oaths allow. Many members of the Order are citizens of the Free City State of Everspring, where the base of their faith is located.

In their leisure time, Phods tend to enjoy calm and sedate activities indoors. They have a rich tradition of card games and board games. The religious Order of Freya contends that some of these games were passed on to the people of Ohara by Freya and her fellow visitors. Phods also enjoy spending time near the beaches, since the weather is usually cooler near the seas.

Crime is dealt with somewhat reluctantly on Ohara, and Phods hesitate to discuss the concept of crime

with off-worlders. There is an ancient tradition of piracy on the seas of Ohara, with the modern Phod city-states each employing their own security forces to combat criminals and pirates. Punishment for crimes often involves forced labor for a set period of years, with entire farms dedicated to housing and employing criminals.

Clothing

As the vast majority of the planet's surface enjoys a temperate climate, and as Phods are endowed with heat-trapping feathers, clothing is usually worn sparingly and loosely about the body. The goal of many outfits is to cover up certain parts of the anatomy as modesty demands, and to display one's gender, status, and station in life. Shorts and armbands are common, and Phods use jewelry to display their social status. The two major city-states of Ohara, the Lage Republic and the Haton Federation, each have their own distinct tendencies when it comes to fashion. Lagean clothing is usually utilitarian and designed for function. Hatonian fashion is more adventurous and esoteric, exhibiting a broader range of color within the same outfit. Phods often like to wear the national colors of their home polity. All Phodian military attire is as sparse and loose as civilian clothing. Rural Phodians prefer durable, lightweight clothes, and typically wear far less clothing than urban Phodians whose lifestyles may not require as much exertion or time outside in the sun.

Food

Traditional foodstuffs that make up a Phod's diet are native to Ohara, and consist primarily of fruits, vegetables, and grains. Phods preserve produce so that it may be eaten when it is out of its natural growing season; nearly every Phod eats a diet of fresh recently grown produce, supplemented with dried fruits and vegetables, or produce that has been preserved in salt and spices. Some imported Neplesian crop varieties have taken root on Ohara, including corn, barley and cotton. Phods are adventurous eaters, and are eager to incorporate new items into their diet whenever the opportunity arises.

While Phods are very fond of food, the role alcohol plays in their diet is a more utilitarian one. Alcohol is primarily used as a source of safe drinking water during long journeys. Phods know how to ferment fruit juices and grains into mead, ale, rum, or wine. The Phodian physiology reacts to alcohol soporifically, with Phods feeling a desire to sleep instead of any other intoxicating effect. Culturally, this sleepy effect is desirable during long and boring voyages, but not when there is work to be done.

The vast majority of Phodian fruits and vegetables can be safely consumed by humans, but a few varieties do produce toxic compounds in the human digestive system. For this reason, Neplesians are advised avoid consuming Phodian food for the time being. Due to their anti-toxin immune systems, Yamataians and Nekovalkyrja can consume Phodian food with little to no side effects.

Language

The Phodian spoken language is at once guttural and nasal, with many sounds generated at the back of the mouth, and within the Phodian nose. It might be best described as both 'grunty' and 'snorty' to an ear that cannot understand it. Phodian writing is read right-to-left, top-to-bottom, and it consists of long,

interconnected strokes and scratches of lines and dots. These symbols, joined together like continuous cursive, convey meaning through commonly-understood symbols representing ideas. Students of ancient Phodian history suspect that early Phods wrote with their feet, scrabbling messages to each other in the soil or on the stone.

Naming

Phod parents play fast and loose with their naming conventions for their children. Names can be virtually any combination of sounds, though there are some tendencies for chosen names that have become a constant in Phodian society. More traditional Phod naming styles *tend* to lead to names with no more than two syllables. More orthodox names often include include an 'L' sound, as well as the sound of 'X' or 'CKS'. Many Phod names encountered when Ohara made first contact with the Yamatai Star Empire already bore striking resemblances to old Nepleslian names, possibly lending credence to the theory of Freya's crash-landing on the world over a century ago. Members of the Order of Freya have a strong preference for what appear to be Nepleslian-style names. Phod names became even *more* diverse after formal first contact, as some adventurous Phod parents began copying the newly-learned names of offworlders who they met, or simply heard of.

Below is a list of sample Phod names, but bear in mind such a short list fails to convey the breadth of the names parents choose.

Allobroxus	Bim Walik	Julix	Azova Kajaal
Rum Taman	Valdosta Odum	Geo Minimax	Zoid Tennet

Politics

There are two dominant states on Ohara, each with competing political and economic ideologies. The various other satellite states are all aligned politically with either Lage or Haton, and are usually ruled by mere puppet governments, with the Free City State of Everspring remaining a notable exception to this rule. Decades of struggle and rivalry between the two major powers has left Ohara in a continual state of high diplomatic tension. Both sides continued to escalate their military build-ups, with each expanding their ground militaries, navies, and their complements of nuclear missile weaponry. To understand Ohara's politics, one must first understand these two distinct polities of the Lage Republic and the Haton Federation.

Lage Republic

The Lage Republic is a socialist authoritarian republic, with one dominant political party and a strong central government. It was the first true nation to be formed on Ohara in the aftermath of the revolution against the feudal states, and Lage's formation was followed by the creation of the Haton Federation two months later. The majority of Lagean power is concentrated in a 12-person bureaucratic committee known as the "Boop". A Grand Assembly, consisted of representatives of local governments, also meets weekly to debate upon and to ratify (or veto) legislation proposed by the Boop. Instances where the Grand Assembly refused to ratify certain legislation are rare, however. Lagean citizens are not given the

right to vote for their leaders, though they are allowed to anonymously register complaints against government officials or government policy.

Haton Federation

The Haton Federation is a capitalist representative-democracy with a decentralized federal government and several political parties. Most Phods have trouble telling the parties apart, however, as most of the parties share similar platforms. Corporations hold major sway in the political arena, as few elections to the Grand Congress (the main legislative body of the federation) are won without donations and other forms of support from corporate sponsors. In fact, many Hatonian politicians proudly wear jackets with the logos of their corporate sponsors emblazoned upon them. The people still have the final word over the federation's political policies, through the election system, and through a recall system. Unpopular politicians do not stay in office for long.

Politics Under the Empire

The tension between the two powers, spurred by their mutual development of atomic weapons, was greatly reduced by the world's inclusion in the Yamatai Star Empire and the subsequent social and technological advancements. Both nations initially struggled to adapt to the unexpected changes, and their citizens had to try to balance their national identity with a now-greater Imperial identity. New technology lead to new economic opportunities, and the construction of [Fort Ohara](#) meant there was a huge, superpowered watchdog observing their planet from above. The cold war froze entirely, and though both states still competed economically and politically, the threat of military action or nuclear destruction faded entirely. Ohara's Senator is elected by a majority vote of all eligible voters of all nations and city-states, even the more authoritarian Lagean-inspired polities.

The Free City State of Everspring

Separate from the feuding of Lage and Haton lies the Free City State of Everspring on an isolated ocean island. Everspring, as the base of the Order of Freya, maintains no official army, but its paladins serve both as a police force and a self-defense force. Everspring also maintains a small naval force and an air force, which it directs against the pirates that operate in its trade routes and fishing waters. Everspring has always remained neutral in the current state of cold war between Lage and Haton, but it is involved with the work of the Senator of Ohara.

Technology

The pace of Phod technological development comes in fits and bursts, spread out between long and gradual developments spanning generations. The Iron Age era was one such burst of development, followed by many years of slow change until the Oharan Industrial Revolution. In the decades leading up to First Contact with the Yamatai Star Empire, the Phods had a general tech level comparable with that of 1960s Earth. However, their ground and naval military technology was much closer to what was common

during Earth's first World War, while their aerial military technology was comparable to 1950's Earth. Both major nations on Ohara developed the atomic bomb around the same time, not long prior to First Contact.

The Ohara of today has spent nearly two decades as a member world of the Yamatai Star Empire. Despite an initial policy barring off-world technology from Ohara, elements of new science made it through and influenced the development of the world tremendously. New food crops, imported meat and dairy, medical technology, military technology, agricultural methods and equipment and more were all brought down from the skies above. Further, native Ohara science advanced significantly on its own for a variety of reasons. The protection and patronage of a galaxy-spanning Empire inspired Phods to be more active members of their own world's development. Further, native Phods who left and earned an advanced education often returned to Ohara, bringing new ideas and new skills to their terrestrial kin. Notably, the tradition of piracy and smuggling on Ohara's oceans led to similar activities in space. Phod smugglers left Ohara, and found ways to return with technologies that their world's governments sought to keep away. Smugglers played their own role in forcing Ohara to loosen its policies on off-world technology, as new tools and sciences from beyond their solar system were appearing in their midst whether they liked it or not.

Though far more advanced than they were by [YE 28](#), Phods are only minimally space-faring. They have launched several of their own early satellites into their planet's orbit, and they have made several manned excursions to other astral bodies in their solar system. They also coordinate their own supply and transport launches to [Fort Ohara](#) from time to time, though transports arranged by the Empire remain the most common. No Phod-designed ships are yet FTL-capable.

Economy

Beyond the specific intricacies of the economics of the Lage Republic and the Haton Federation, Phods are a people who enjoy trading. Most like experiencing new things, particularly food, and haggling and bartering are enjoyable and relaxing pasttimes. On-planet, Phods transport goods between nations and city-states, even those who squabbling with each other. Phods very frequently conduct commerce by sea. This situation attracts morally-challenged opportunists; piracy has ever been, and still remains, a problem on Ohara. Phods also engage in the practice of smuggling; the criminal act of moving goods through borders while ignoring embargoes or blockades. The planetary economy of Ohara has been deeply affected by items and techniques from off-world. In just one example, cotton, one of the plants brought to Ohara by visiting Nepleslians, became a major crop on the planet soon after being introduced. Cotton grew so popular among Phods that it supplanted other fibers used to make clothing, becoming the primary source of cloth on the world. Cotton completely supplanted all native sources of fiber, shuttering industries and erasing family traditions that were based around the old methods of making clothes.

More broadly speaking, in the Empire, Phod is most notable for its significant agricultural exports, and for the talent of its chefs. After the [Battle of Yamatai](#) in [YE 33](#), the Phodians began exporting food to [Yamatai \(Planet\)](#) and other Yamataian worlds for the first time, and they expanded their farming capacity accordingly. The Phodians have been able to integrate advanced farming techniques from the [Yamatai Star Empire](#) to great advantage to their efficiency and output, and to mitigate the environmental side-effects. The largest export is corn. Phodian corn is considered to be very desirable for its flavor and Phodian cornbread is famous and loved throughout the Empire.



Above: Image of [Julix](#), the Phodian Cook.

Art is by Raph/ichan, aka Raph Villaremo (commissioned by [Wes](#)).

Phod Characters

Here's a list of all characters whose species is set to Phod.

#	Page	Occupation	Faction	Current Location
1	Julix	Ship's Cook	Yamatai Star Empire	YSS Resurgence
2	Odom Stockwell	Paladin of Freya	Yamatai Star Empire	

OOO Notes

Original species writeup by [Yangfan](#) in October 2004, added to the Wiki by [Wes](#) on January 14, 2007. ²⁾
Article updated on February 8, 2024.

species	
Species Category	alien
Nanomachines	Low
Symbiotics	Low
Pharmaceuticals	Low

¹⁾
<https://stararmy.com/roleplay-forum/threads/phod-art-attribution-question.71497/post-443993>

²⁾
<https://stararmy.com/roleplay-forum/threads/species-design-phods.11134/>

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