

The Caste System of Castithan

This is what I've come up with for the language of the Castithan caste system. At present the system hasn't been described, so I took some liberties; feel free to send me notes and I'll update the linguistic part of it as necessary.

The terminology (or cosmology) of the Castithan caste system is based on cloud terminology. Specifically, the Castithan sky is broken down into different regions, and the names of the castes derive from the names of those regions. Here's a schematic representation of the system:



Above are the modern terms used to describe the basic levels at which clouds form (the term *ajivano* just means "layer" or "stratum"). Within those levels, there are different words for the different types of clouds (likely equivalent to cumulus, cirrus, etc.); these are just the names for the layers.

The terms for the Castithan caste system come from the words for these layers because the Castithan word for "caste", *liro*, is an older word for "cloud". The structure of Castithan society is conceptualized rather like the sky, where certain types of clouds are restricted to particular strata in the sky, and within each stratum there's a certain

amount of diversity amongst cloud types. The *fovásho* (Castithan caste system [means "great sky"]) works in a similar way, where one's *liro* is determined by birth, and under ordinary circumstances, one's *liro* doesn't change (it's possible to be cast out of a higher *liro* and relegated to lower *liro*, but it's not common; it's *much* less common to move from a lower *liro* to a higher one). Below are the details of the *fovásho* (the short form for the caste name is given in parentheses):

- * *Shanje Liro (Shando)*: The *Shanjifyo* are the highest rung of Castithan society. The heads of all areas of government (save local branches, in most cases), the top level commanders in the military, the highest ranking religious officials, and the landed aristocracy all belong to the *Shanje Liro*. *Shanje* families can trace their genealogies back over a thousand years, and all family members will likewise be *Shanje*. Aside from governing and serving in titular capacities, *Shanjifyo* do not labor.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Shanje Liro*
- ❖ Short Name: *Shando*
- ❖ Demonym: *Shanjifyo*
- ❖ Adjective: *Shanje*
- ❖ Derivation: *shando* (n.) highest stratum of the Castithan sky

- * *Valáne Liro (Valáno)*: The *Valáfyo* are just below the *Shanjifyo* on the social scale. This *liro* generally comprises former members of the *Shando* who married someone below their *liro*, and were reduced in status (rather than having their spouse raised in status, which happened only rarely). Such marriages usually happened hundreds of years ago, but descendants remain in the *Valáne Liro*. Like the *Shanjifyo*, the *Valáfyo* serve as officials in the government, the military and the church, but they can never rise as high as the *Shanjifyo*. Those whose families have fallen on hard times may occasionally have to labor for a living (which is considered shameful), many often serving as researchers, professors or medical doctors.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Valáne Liro*
- ❖ Short Name: *Valáno*
- ❖ Demonym: *Valáfyo*
- ❖ Adjective: *Valáne*
- ❖ Derivation: *valáno* (n.) medial stratum of the Castithan sky

- * *Emine Liro (Emino)*: The *Eminifyo* are the lowest of the so-called *Ovásho Liro* (Sky Castes), and comprise the business owners, bankers and money-lenders of Castithan society. Descended from merchants, the *Eminifyo* modeled their businesses and families on *Shanje* and *Valáne* families, keeping the highest positions in their businesses for family members, and producing families that, in modern times, can rival even *Shanje* families in terms of wealth and prestige. Though barred from the highest ranks of the government, the military and the church, an established *Emine* family can command respect from any Castithan.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Emine Liro*
- ❖ Short Name: *Emino*
- ❖ Demonym: *Eminifyo*
- ❖ Adjective: *Emine*
- ❖ Derivation: *emino* (n.) lowest stratum of the Castithan sky

- * *Yuke Liro (Yuko)*: The *Yukifyo* are the laborers of the Castithan world. They serve in a wide range of professions, from hard laborers (farmers, delivery people, cleaning crew workers), to service workers (salespeople, massage therapists, office assistants), to technicians, to educators, to physicians, to servants. This is the largest *liro*, but their power and influence is limited.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Yuke Liro*
- ❖ Short Name: *Yuko*
- ❖ Demonym: *Yukifyo*
- ❖ Adjective: *Yuke*
- ❖ Derivation: *yuko* (n.) fog (ground-level cloud cover)

- * *Rizi Liro (Rizyo)*: The *Rizifyo* are the warriors and soldiers of the Castithan army. Many families have served as soldiers for years and years. *Rizifyo* who don't do actual combat perform any number of roles within the military structure, including serving as officers, translators, technicians, researchers, physicians and surgeons. Some who have trained in these roles serve outside the military, when there's a need (often as physicians, surgeons, technicians or police officers). Aside from the highest ranking *Shanjifyo*, *Rizifyo* find themselves often serving under and commanding Castithans of every *liro*, placing them outside the general structure of the *Fovásho*.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Rizi Liro*
 - ❖ Short Name: *Rizyo*
 - ❖ Demonym: *Rizifyo*
 - ❖ Adjective: *Rizi*
 - ❖ Derivation: *rizyo* (n.) wind (travels between strata)
- * *Thawandaye Liro* (*Thawandayo*): The *Thawandayafyo* (more commonly *Yafyo*) actually lie outside the *Fovásho*, and the term *Thawandaye Liro* itself is considered silly. The *Yafyo* are the lowest rung of Castithan society, and comprise the poor, criminals, rebels, and those who have been cast out of society. Castithans of other *liro* (usually those with means) sometimes voluntarily join the *Yafyo* to protest the *Fovásho*. *Yafyo* are often barred from working regular jobs, or even entering many sections of a Castithan city.

Key Terms

- ❖ Full Name: *Thawandaye Liro* (nonstandard)
- ❖ Short Name: *Thawandayo*
- ❖ Demonym: *Thawandayafyo* (technical); *Yafyo* (colloquial)
- ❖ Adjective: *Thawandaye*
- ❖ Derivation: *thawando* (n.) reflection (i.e. not an actual caste)

In addition to the above, here are some miscellaneous related vocabulary items:

liro (n.) caste

fovásho (n.) word for the Castithan caste system as a whole

liwando (n.) word for a group that doesn't fall under *fovásho*

farubolo (adj.) not native to the Castithan home world

ovásho liro (n.) a word for the top three Castithan *liro* (*Shando*, *Valáno*, and *Emino*)

chaho liro (n.) a word for the other Castithan *liro* (*Rizyo* and *Yuko*)

Caste Emblems

Each caste discussed above will have an associated caste emblem. Those are shown and discussed below:

Shanje Liro

The emblem for the highest caste is actually based on the first character of the word *shanje* (i.e. 𑌑𑌎). The left and right symbols of the syllable *sha* were shaped into a cloud-like shape to produce the interlocking clouds of the emblem.

Valáne Liro

As the most recent caste, the emblem of the *valáne liro* is actually based on the emblem of the *shanje liro*. It was originally drawn with a line beneath it, indicating that the caste lay below the *shanje liro*. The line has since become stylized.

Emine Liro

The emblem for the *emine liro* is a simple pattern of two overlapping clouds. The clouds are larger and simpler because they're closer to the ground (and, therefore, not as complex or interesting).

Yuke Liro

The emblem *yuke liro*, or the fog caste, is an iconic representation of fog: ubiquitous, thick, and oppressive.

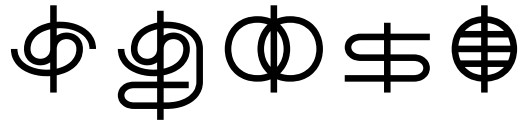
Rizi Liro

The military caste is somewhat outside the caste system. Represented by the wind, the caste emblem shows the wind (represented by the horizontal lines) blowing through the entire sphere of the sky (represented by the circle).

Outcast Emblems

The last "cast" is the *thawandaye liro*. Initially, *everyone* is born into one of the castes above (even orphans and foundlings are put into the *yuke liro* [or the *rizi liro*, if recruits

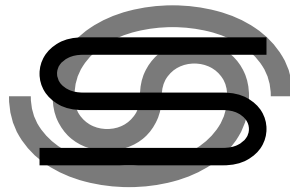
are needed]). If a Castithan has done something to be completely cast *out* of society, though, their caste emblem is struck through, like so:



The only Castithans born without any cast would be those born to outcasts, but it seems likely that "charitable" organizations would exist that would try to "rescue" the children of *yafyo* and insert them back into Castithan society (giving them a caste emblem, to boot).

Regarding the look of these struck emblems, the reason they look exact is because they were created with a font. If they're used on a person, there's no reason for them to look exact: the strike through can happen at an angle, or be thicker on one side than the other, etc. It's up to the artist to decide.

Finally, Datak will have been born into the *yuke liro*—the laborer caste. One *could* conceivably alter that mark to make it *look* like the *shanje liro* emblem. An approximation of an attempt is given below:



Ignoring the middle, one could see how a tattoo (or perhaps burn) artist could try to *thicken* the top line of the *yuke* emblem and have it curl down on the right side—and then do the opposite with the lower left—to approximate the *shanje* emblem. You could also take the midline of the *yuke* emblem and thicken the lower left side and the upper right side to approximate the swoosh in the middle of the *shanje* emblem. It would look a little sloppy, but at a distance, it might fool some people. (And, of course, if Datak has enough power, who's going to point it out to his face?)