

# Blade and Hammer

A Lecture on the The Jotun Art of Vengeance

*Compiled from excerpts of a lecture given by the Intelligence Directorate of the Kalborean Army to the Military Academy in Castaal in the Year of Settlement 631.*

"For some four centuries the Rangers of the Watch have maintained a constant vigil upon our northern borders, guarding the narrow passes of the Great Rift against incursion by any Hordim attempting to find a way into the lands of Men. In the course of this vigil the Watch has had the opportunity to observe our Enemy, and over the long years of their duty have come to understand much of the culture and motivations of the Horde. It is from the knowledge gained from their struggle that this lecture has been compiled, and it is from their sacrifices that we can know better the capabilities and imperatives of our Enemy. Do not forget what is to be presented today, for it is knowledge bought with the blood of your countrymen. You owe it to them to take heed.

What then is our purpose here today? Our long history of conflict with the Hordim has proven the violent nature of our Enemy and we know to some measure the complexities of their battle strategy, but to understand how our Enemy thinks is the purpose of this presentation, one that should leave you in no doubt as to the danger that confronts us. In the course of these lectures we will explore all that is known on the culture of the Hordim but today we shall focus on the most powerful of their number and the Honour Code that rules their existence. Listen carefully Cadets, for in this lecture we shall be exploring the The Jotun Art of Vengeance and all that it means to the Jotun themselves and to us as combatants."

"Consider first if you will, the nature of the Horde itself. Unlike the Nations of Men that can look to an ancestry solely human, the Hordim are an aggregation of different creatures, both slaves and servants to ancient masters, each designed and created to fulfil the needs of those Beings yet all turned by history and necessity to warfare. The Jotun in particular are a case of a Being designed originally to perform the function of Miner and Engineer who has subsequently found a place in the Hordim Army as heavy infantry, and in many cases served as Generals and unit commanders. The hammer wielded by these giants that once would have been used as a mining tool has evolved over the years into a vicious weapon of war, and on the battlefield there can be no doubt that the Jotun is the most feared of the Hordim. Large and intelligent it is a formidable opponent, one that requires cunning and the proper equipment to bring down effectively.

Like all the Hordim however, the Jotun spend the greater part of their lives as more than just warriors. In the long years that have passed between the great Horde Wars that we have fought, the Jotun, like the other creatures of the Hordim, have survived a harsh existence in the far northern wastes of the world. It is whilst observing the great Kraals, or homelands, of the Jotun that our Rangers have been able to gather intelligence on the structure of their societies and the inherent strengths and weaknesses of their organisation. It is with their organisation that we must begin."



"It is certain that the Jotun of the Horde number no more than 30,000. Apart from the Mutan they are the least numerous of the Hordim but for both historical and practical reasons have spread themselves over more than two-thirds of the northern wastes beyond the Great Rift Mountains. In the central wastes of the north can be found the Jotunheim. This is the home of the more numerous of the Jotun tribes who refer to themselves as the Jotun of the March. In the far west can be found a further

collection of tribes who are known as the Jotun of the West. Although it is not yet known why there is this division between the Jotun it does not seem to hinder their conduct in battle and unfortunately provides no advantage to ourselves in either battle planning or strategy.

It is within the individual tribes of the Jotun however, that the organisation becomes far more sophisticated. Each tribe, or Kraal, commands an area of ground that can spread over vast tracts of the northern wastes and each is commanded by a single Chieftain. That Chieftain maintains control of his lands through a personal household that can include up to ten sons, each of these sons being titled as Brother-Chiefs and having administrative responsibility for a part of the Kraal and the command of units of warriors in time of war. Only two of these sons hold any real power however. One son is always designated as a Favoured Son, or *tuan*, the Jotun to whom succession will be given upon death of the Chief; and the other son titled as First Hammer, second in command to the Chieftain on all matters of war and discipline. It is to the Favoured Son that the Jotun look to for continuity and loyalty, it is to the First Hammer that they find discipline and justice.

Each Brother-Chief maintains a Household of their own but do not be deceived by the name as being something on a domestic scale. A Brother-Chief's Household can maintain dominion over hundreds of square leagues of territory and the day to day administration of thousands of subjects. It is known from the surveillance of the Rangers that each Household also focuses on the production of goods and foodstuffs as determined by their circumstances and the resources available within their territories. Trade between the Kraals is widespread and is controlled in each territory by a Household Arbiter who manages all transactions and disputes between parties.

Each Brother-Chief's Household is further divided into a large number of *nimirim*, groups of individuals bound by blood ties and held under the leadership of an *aald'en*, or Old Jotun. Each *aald'en* can have as many as fifty Jotun under their command and it is from the *nimirim* that are drawn the forces needed for war. Strong allegiances with the *aald'en* ensure a strong Kraal and within the politics of the Hordim they are the individuals given the most leeway in matters of discipline and trade. It serves the purposes of a Chief to have these Jotun looked after well.

It is important to understand that money has no value within the daily routine of the Hordim. As a concept it is foreign to them, only barter and trade existing to provide a flow of goods between Kraals. There is no concept of profit or wealth, only a tightly defined set of rules that allow for the fair trade of goods of equal value. In the lands of the northern wastes there are no rich Hordim.

With this in mind we can ask what then are the things valued most by our Enemy? Money and riches mean nothing, the true measure of their existence lying instead in position, honour and the cultivation of those alliances that make up the convoluted tangle that is Hordim politics. No Chief can rule without a supporting structure of these alliances, and no ordinary Hordim can survive without the protective numbers of their Kraal at their side. It is a truth of the northern wastes that there is no longevity in being alone.

What then is the Jotun Art of Vengeance? Hordim society exists in a calm state only whilst the rules of Honour and The Code remain unchallenged and for the Jotun this is especially so. Household Arbiters may have authority to deal with trade and barter disputes but all else must be dealt with under the brutal system of challenge and reprisal known as the *nahj*. Any confrontation that requires a challenge between Jotun always ends in combat and the drawing of blood.

It is in regards to the settling of disputes that the Art of Vengeance adds a further level of regulation to the strict rules of the Code. Nothing given order by the Code can be altered by any Hordim, no matter their status, but the Jotun have taken the personal discipline inherent in the Code and applied a broader scope to the proper settling of all disputes, with special focus on the settlement of blood feuds and the proper conduct of reprisal.

Such is the complexity of these rules that it has been difficult to quantify everything through observation alone, however the Art of Vengeance has been partially unearthed, the broad application of its rules evident to those who have seen it in action. It can be said before we continue that only the Hresh maintain a more rigid adherence to the Honour Code. The nature of their lives will be the subject of a further presentation but it can be said that for the foot soldiers of the Horde everything is a matter of life or death, there is no grey.

In the time that is available to us we cannot cover all that has been discovered of the Art of Vengeance. The following points however, do provide insight into the aspects of the Art that give cohesion and predictability to the lives of the Jotun Kraals.

In most cases the rules of *netherim'hir* apply, or as we might say, First Blood. For all minor disputes regarding petty disagreement or property issues a Jotun may challenge those that have wronged him and find satisfaction in combat with knives. The first to draw blood from their opponent wins the disagreement and whatever might have been the cause of it.

The use of knives in these circumstances is symbolic. Knives are considered as hunting and domestic tools by the Jotun and never as legitimate weapons of combat. To fight with a knife is to signify the minor nature of the dispute, and the letting of blood as an admission of guilt. It must be noted however, that the Jotun also believe there is no honour in a death by knife. To be killed in such a fashion is considered an insult and a sure path to torment in the Underworld. For more major disputes it has been observed that the Code is far more brutal.

When one Jotun challenges the authority of a better it is up to the challenged party to show his superiority. Combat is quick and engaged with warhammers, the only outcome the death of one of the combatants. Although it has not yet been confirmed we believe that this is the nature of advancement within the Hordim Kraals, although as we shall see later in this lecture that the rules of the Code are far more complex for Chiefs, and that no Jotun of lower rank can ever challenge a ruling Chief.

This settling of major disputes by mortal combat encompasses any challenge to rank or authority, any unresolved blood feud between households, as a method to obtain the rights to disputed lands and as an answer to any accusation of cowardice or dishonour. It is interesting to note that although these disputes may be dealt with quickly, and in bloody fashion, not all disagreements can be settled at once. The practicalities of some circumstances has led to the recording of many grudges so that they might be dealt with at a later time, and to that end all Kraals hold a *scrian'netherim*, a Record of Blood that outlines all such disputes and their ongoing status. This record is compiled by the Household Arbiter and it is said that there is no time limit to their resolution, indeed it has been discovered that some disputes have remained unresolved for centuries.

One factor that is well known is that the rules of engagement in Jotun society for such disputes are highly ritualised and require participation by a number of third parties. All combats must be witnessed by an unrelated third party, and each combatant must have a second who is there not to support their brother-in-arms but to kill them if they try and flee the field. Even in a combat for minor issues fought under the rules of *netherim'hir* it is regarded as a dishonour to flee, and as that Hordim is considered to have no value once dishonoured it is immediately hunted down and executed."



"For Chiefs the Code is a far more pressing and complex rule of law. Within the customs of the Jotun it is Chiefs who are most bound by the rules and it is with the process of succession that the *nahj* is most important. A Chief must live by the same code as his subordinates, but at the time of the passing of authority from a dying Chief to his Favoured Son it is the rules set down by the code that also ensure the smooth transfer of power.

It is known that for a Favoured Son to become Chief he must kill his father in combat. It is not important how frail or injured the father might be, it is the son that must strike the killing blow and do so in the presence of witnesses. To not do so leaves a Kraal without a leader and no capacity for another Jotun to take legitimate power. It is with the spilling of the old Chief's blood, and the writing of the winner's name upon his forehead with that blood that binds the Kraal to its new Chief. It is the

ultimate statement to all that power has been taken, and that there can be no further challenge to the new Chief's authority.

Although this must appear barbarous to our eyes this process of succession by combat serves a spiritual purpose as well. It is their belief that no Hordim can find peace in the Underworld unless they die in combat. To try and find rest without the honour of a warrior's death means an eternity of torment in a place Hordim call the Pillars of Dissolution. We have never been able to ascertain what such a place might be, but it is a powerful enough motivation for all sons to kill their fathers if they have not already found an honourable death in battle.

This concept of succession by combat pervades the Honour Code of the Hordim and does present practical difficulties for any Favoured Son waiting for their turn of leadership as Chieftain. It is an immutable law of Hordim society that a Chieftain cannot be challenged by any other or for any reason. Once in power a Chief's word is law, his decisions unquestionable, his judgement to be followed to the last breath of his subjects. As a strict tenet of the Code it has come to pass that a Favoured Son cannot be elevated to Chieftain if there are any outstanding disputes recorded against him. To allow a Favoured Son to become Chief whilst in dispute would automatically deny any claimant the natural justice that Hordim society requires and therefore leave the new Chief with a mark against his authority.

What this means for any Favoured Son is that all disputes must be settled immediately. For many reasons a Chief may die, whether it be through accident, misadventure or warfare, and therefore a Favoured Son must be constantly mindful of anything that might leave him in dispute with any other party. This is particularly true of any blood feud brought against a Kraal by the actions of another and such affronts cannot be suffered to continue. To do so would lay dishonour upon the entire Kraal with no remedy for its removal.

Surveillance of the Hordim in the wastelands has shown us that their strength lies in their absolute obedience and loyalty to their Chiefs. It has led to all the Horde Wars that we have fought against them, and has been the driving force that has made those wars so intractable and bloody. The strength that the Hordim find in this obedience has proven a two-edged sword however. Their incapacity to question the authority of their leadership has left more than one Horde army floundering upon orders that have led them to destruction.

For the Jotun their adherence to the strict tenets of the Art of Vengeance in times of peace is continued in their commitment to the Honour Code in war. A Kraal will follow its Chief to absolute destruction if necessary and no individual will think anything other than to obey. We have been fortunate that in all our previous confrontations with the Hordim we have proven victorious, but as we all know those victories have come at great cost and have resulted in no resolution of our differences.

It can be asked as to what their adherence to the Code means to us. The Hordim commitment to discipline, obedience and loyalty are all aspects of character that we can appreciate in ourselves. It can be said however, that to follow blindly is to leave yourself at the mercy of incompetence or hubris. To defeat the Hordim requires that we understand them, and in doing so exercise the one thing that they cannot. An Officer in the Kalborean Army must follow orders, but is encouraged to use his own judgement and free will in the completion of those orders. It is the one advantage that we hold over the Hordim. It is my hope that it is something our Enemy never determines for themselves."