
Khetterle Caravan

Khetterle Caravan (laborers, traders)

Creator Name: Kat Whitworth (additional material from Holly Hutchison)

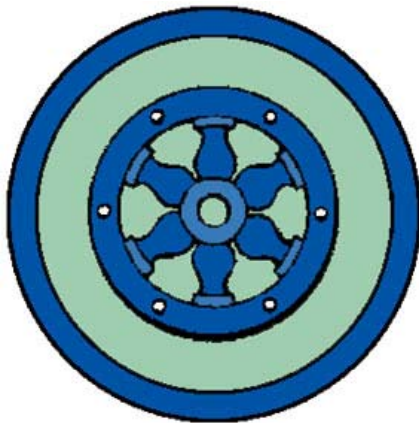
Current Holder: Caravan Master Jejinen Khetterle

Badge and Colors: On a light green roundel with a blue border, a six-spoked blue wheel.

Hold Beholden to: None

General Region Served: Sunstone, Windsong, Waterfall and Delta

Last Updated: January, 2006



Khetterle Badge by Holly Hutchison

GENERAL INFORMATION

Khetterle caravan is smaller than the average train, numbering (at the beginning of 2859) seven wagons total, and between 40 and 50 members (allowing for deaths and births). Due to bad leadership decisions, the family was hit hard by the return of Thread and has not yet built its numbers back up. It hasn't helped that they are also not the most welcoming caravan. Of all the family caravans, Khetterle are the least likely to take in the turned out or otherwise recently holdless.

The Khetterles have claimed for generations to be the oldest continuously traveling caravan on the Southern continent. The claim is frequently, and sometimes hotly, debated by other family caravans, but as there is no proof either way they continue to make the claim and the rest are powerless to stop them. They are connected ancestrally to the Khetterle train of the Northern Continent, and in the old caravan tradition they use the train's name as a surname (saying "Jejinen Khetterle" rather than "Jejinen of Khetterle"). They and the Yuttan caravan are the only two in Kadanzer territory that follow this ancient tradition, which supports both trains' claims to a venerable history.

The average Khetterle is confident of his or her moral rectitude and maintains a safe and strangely formal distance from any "cotter" or holder who doesn't respect that. The

train values its own rules and laws above those of the Lords, although it recognizes that it must obey the laws of the holdings it passes through scrupulously, in order to maintain the reputation that is so necessary to continuing successful trade. In fact, most members of the train realize that they must appear even ***more*** law-abiding than the average holder -- because they realize that as outsiders, holders view them with as much suspicion as they view the holdless. The train must be above reproach, and any member who does something to damage the train's reputation is dealt with harshly -- if it is determined it was the trainmember who was at fault. The train is also generally suspicious of the fairness of holder law and justice, particularly when it is applied to caravan folk like them.

In the Khetterle mind there are basically two kinds of people in the world: themselves and everyone else. The people of the train tend towards a dark-skinned, dark-haired look, which they consider "typical" of the Khetterle blood; but Turns of necessary intermarriage with others has produced the expected diversity of appearances. Due to this randomness of breeding, children born with what is considered to be the Khetterle look are slightly favored by the train's elders.

The family name is passed down the female side, and family wagons are considered to be a woman's property. Women do not own livestock though, and the team that pulls a wagon invariably belongs to her husband, her brother or her oldest son. As with most of the travelling people, Khetterle women are uncommon by holder standards and are able to ride and manage a weapon, often able to undertake any practical job a man can do. Otherwise, they wear skirts, and generally defer to the menfolk on matters outside of the domestic purview of the wagons.

Men who marry into Khetterle never lose their outsider status; they will never bear the family name, although their children will, through their mother. Women who marry into Khetterle must wait until they have borne a child, and that child reaches at least five Turns of age, before they are considered to be fully a part of the caravan. Until that time, these outsider wives will never own a wagon. After the traditional fifth birthday celebration for her first child, an outsider wife will almost always be formally adopted by one of the matriarchs of the caravan, after which the woman is considered to be a Khetterle, as are all of her children, and she may own property. Outsider women who leave the marriage and the train (or who are forced to leave it, for any number of reasons) before this formal adoption are, obviously, not Khetterle, and their children are not recognized as Khetterle even if they have a Khetterle father. It is also possible, if rare, for a woman to become eligible for the adoption, but for that honor to be withheld from her; this consigns her and her children to a second-class status within the train (while still entitled to food and shelter for their continued contribution of help and work, they will never be able to own property).

Most marriages in the train are arranged by the womenfolk of the wagons, though the train leader's

ratification is sought (and if the womenfolk are agreed, his ratification without question is usually expected), and he is always present for marriage negotiations with outsiders. But while a girl is expected not to dally with outsiders unless there is a marriage offer, she is permitted to take a dragonrider as a lover. Men of the train may be obliged, for blood considerations, to look outside the train for dalliance, but their bastards are not automatically welcomed into the train, and therefore they are encouraged to be cautious. The bastards of the train's men may occasionally be taken in, but the male bastards will never bear the Khetterle name, while the female bastards would have to be formally adopted (a process that, for children, happens only after the child has reached the age of majority at 15).

Khetterle men are taught that there's nothing in the world more valuable than Khetterle women, and Khetterle livestock. As soon as they are old enough to hold a weapon they're expected to use it in defense of any female or livestock that might come under threat. Men oversee the train's livestock, they hunt, and they engage in all primary trade negotiations with outsiders. Although women own the wagons and therefore each wagon is presided over by that wagon's matriarch, the train long ago realized that holders would not understand or honor the authority of those women. That is why, despite the arrangement with the wagons, and the rules and laws within the train, the train's leader is a man.

Khetterle caravan provides labor to holdings they pass through, usually in the form of fieldhands, and does some trading, but they are not entertainers. A few people here and there in the train have some skill at playing or singing or dancing, but this is for their own enrichment and entertainment, not to amuse holders or earn marks. That's not to say that a Khetterle musician playing at a gather would refuse marks if they were offered.

The train prizes learning, and devotes valuable resources to providing for a harper to travel with them for part of each Turn, to instruct everyone in the Teaching Ballads (review of which take place throughout the rest of the Turn). Both boys and girls are instructed in basic reading and writing, as it is felt that any of them might be in a trading situation, and they must know at least how to make a record of it, and to keep from being cheated.

The family preserves its reputation with holders by maintaining a great degree of reserve and aloofness. They realize that to some holders, caravan-folk are put in nearly the same category as the holdless -- even though the train is fiercely proud and would consider being equated aloud with the holdless a grave insult. All the same there are always those who will interpret their reserve as arrogance and their aloofness as secrecy. The Khetterles maintain that folks that see them as such are simply judging them from their own low standards. It takes a lot to provoke any kind of aggression out of them and in every instance where there has been a negative encounter between settled folk and the caravan it's been because of a real or perceived threat to one

of their women. Otherwise, they are careful not to involve themselves in outsider quarrels.

The only group of people on Pern aside from themselves that the Khetterles respect at all are the dragonriders, though their relationship with Kadanzer Weyr has varied over the Turns. Relations were allowed to sour while the caravan was under the leadership of Maelver Khetterle, who suspected the Weyr was intentionally searching his prettiest girls. Now that Jejinen is in charge things have improved, but the caravan-folk don't cater to any authority, and certainly don't expect the Weyr to cater to them. Search is not desirable, but it's understood to be necessary, and Jejinen Khetterle will not refuse any request made by the Weyr for youths to stand candidate. Likewise, while the family are all shrewd bargainers with most other traders and settled folk, they generally bargain more generously with weyrfolk. They'll never take a loss on a deal with the Weyr, but they have sometimes traded as low as cost, depending on the goods and the situation. Just don't ever tell the Weyr they did so. They'll deny it, every time.