

# Way of the Claw

## An Introduction to the Tlaxu

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**I** am Tchiv, Patriarch of our clan, husband to many wives and father to countless children. My word is law

**W**e are the people of Tchiv's Clan, we are tlaxu of the plains. I have made this clan the greatest of all the tlaxu clans since Tshem's time. We are more cultured and decent than the wild mountain tlaxu, and more honourable and brave than the decadent tlaxu of Mopendor.

**W**e deal with others with strength and honour even when they have none. We trade pelts for weapons and we raid the other clans for wives so that I can add to our numbers. War and hunting must be conducted according to the rituals else we shall lose our honour. All members of this clan must heed my word or face exile.

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The tlaxu are a feline-like race of humanoids from the Inner Continent of the World of Conclave. They come in a range of ethnic variations with different appearances and cultures, but all belong to the same tlaxu race.

**Personality:** Other races view the tlaxu as being very serious and humourless although this isn't always the case. Tlaxu of all types seem to dislike displaying emotion in public, but in private they can run the gamut from garrulous and friendly to laconic and hostile. They are often pragmatic, but also have a strong degree of solipsism.

**Physical Description:** Tlaxu are slightly taller and more powerfully built than humans on average, but overall they show a similar variation in size and shape as humans. All tlaxu have short fur on their bodies and longer, coarser hair on their heads. Their facial features and ears are reminiscent of cats, although they are not feline creatures. Tlaxu hands have three fingers and a thumb, tlaxu feet have four toes. Fingers and toes are broad-ended with retractable claws. Tlaxu fur colours are tawny brown to deep blue-black, and different patterns show different ethnic groups. Mountain tlaxu are striped and orange-black. Plains tlaxu are tawny and Mopendine tlaxu are either brown/black dappled (low caste) or completely black (high caste).

**Relations:** Tlaxu generally treat other races with disdain, preferring those races and cultures with a sense of honour and dignity to those with a frivolous and light-hearted outlook. In the World of Conclave, the humans of the eastern borders of the old Empire of Splendour, particularly Llaza and the southern Anhoi States, view tlaxu with mistrust due

to a long-standing grudge over a tlaxu invasion. Low caste Mopendor tlaxu are commonly encountered in port cities as they are able sea traders. Mountain tlaxu are the most reclusive of all tlaxu, preferring a solitary life.

**Alignment:** Tlaxu have no particular predilection towards a given alignment. Their pragmatic and self-regarding nature means that they are quite often true neutral.

**Tlaxu Lands:** Tlaxu seem to originate from the eastern quadrant of the Inner Continent, Perfection of Concordance, on the World of Conclave. This is where the highest concentration of tlaxu can be found, from the Queendom of Mopendor, through the Tlaxu Plains to the Three Sisters Mountains, there is a range of tlaxu nations. Tlaxu have no overt preference to the climate or geography of where they settle - anywhere a living can be made is good enough for them - although most tlaxu lands seem to be those unwanted or unreachable by other races.

**Religion:** The tlaxu are able to see partly into the spirit realm and so have a closer relationship with spirits than other races do. Mountain tlaxu often revere specific spirits of natural places. Plains tlaxu believe in an all-powerful spirit called the Whispering One, and his many sister-wives who together populate the spirit world. In Mopendor the major religion is the cult of Daxa, a god of immortality after death.

**Classes:** Tlaxu of all character classes can be found. The mountain tlaxu tend to be barbarians, shamans or druids, plains tlaxu prefer fighting classes and only the Mopendine tlaxu have much of a tradition with arcane magic.

## *Tlaxu: The Cat Folk*

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**Language:** All tlaxu languages stem from the root language Tlaxan. The different tlaxu cultures have dialectical variations on basic Tlaxan but there are enough similarities to be mutually intelligible.

**Names:** Mountain tlaxu usually have a component of their name that relates to a local spirit that they revere. Most plains tlaxu identify themselves by their patriarch's name. Mopendine names are dependent on caste, with low caste tlaxu having names of one or two syllables and high caste tlaxu having names of three or more syllables.

*Tlaxu male names:* Chrin, Tlerixil, Tshem, Tshev, Tshivexu, Tzin,

*Tlaxu female names:* Aril, Hrestaniliv, Sev, Tla, Tlix, Varshram, Vil,

**Adventurers:** Wandering tlaxu may be mountain tlaxu displaced from their home territory, plains tlaxu *tshoymar* cast out by (or escaping from) the clan patriarch or low caste Mopendine wanderers. Many tlaxu leave their culture to escape what they see as rigid strictures.

## Tlaxu Racial Traits

- Tlaxu have no modifiers to their ability scores.
- Tlaxu base speed is 30 feet.
- **Medium:** As medium-sized creatures, tlaxu have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Tlaxu have low-light vision.
- Tlaxu have keen senses and gain a +2 racial bonus to Listen, Spot, Search and Sense Motive checks, and to Survival checks for the purposes of tracking.
- Tlaxu have fast reactions when it comes to danger, and gain a +1 racial bonus to Initiative.
- **Claws:** Tlaxu have retractable claws on their hands and feet. They can use these for combat and are considered proficient with their use. Tlaxu claws cause 1d4 damage and have a critical modifier of x2. A tlaxu is considered

armed when using these claws. The claws can also provide a +2 racial bonus to Climb checks.

- **Automatic Languages:** Tlaxan and Common. The various tlaxu sub-races have many dialects of tlaxan but all stem from the same language and tlaxu from different cultures can usually make themselves understood. In the World of Conclave, replace Common with Low Imperial.
- **Bonus Languages:** Any.

## Typical weapons

The following are culturally typical weaponry. Tlaxu characters are not restricted to this list.

**Weaponry:** Bolas, claws, claw-stick, javelin, klai dagger, long-claw, shortbow, shortspear, spear, throwing stick.

Table: Random Starting Ages

	Adulthood	Barbarian Rogue Sorcerer	Bard Fighter Paladin Ranger	Cleric Druid Monk Shaman Wizard
Tlaxu	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6

Table: Aging Effects

	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Tlaxu	30 years	55 years	80 years	+2d20 years

Table: Random Height and Weight

	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Tlaxu, male	5'	+2d8	150 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Tlaxu, female	4'8"	+2d6	130 lb.	× (2d4) lb.

## Flaxu: The Cat Folk

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fortitude Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	+1 Str, +1 Dex, Scent
2	+2	+1	+3	+1	+1 Dex, +10 ft. move
3	+3	+2	+3	+2	+1 Str, Spirit Sight

Flaxu are able to take levels of the 'flaxu' racial class to increase their racial abilities. Many flaxu have one level of flaxu instead of an NPC class.

**Hit Die:** 1d8

**Skill Points at 1<sup>st</sup> Character Level:** (2+Intelligence bonus) x 4

**Skill Points at Higher Levels:** 2+ Intelligence bonus

**'Class' Skills:** Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex),

Spot (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Survival (Wis)

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** Flaxu with levels only in flaxu (no class levels) are proficient with simple weapons and light armour.

**Scent:** The flaxu gains the scent special quality.

**Spirit Sight:** The flaxu can see into the spirit world and can automatically see any spirits within visual range.

	Cost	DMG (T)	Critical	Range	Increment	Weight	Type
<b>Martial Weapons</b>							
<i>-One-handed</i>							
Claw Stick	10 gp	1d6	18-20/x2	-		1 lb.	Slashing
<i>-Two-Handed</i>							
Long Claw	20 gp	1d8	x3	-		5 lb.	Slashing
<i>-Ranged</i>							
Throwing Stick	33 gp	1d4	x3	70 ft.		2/10 lb.	Piercing
<b>Exotic Weapons</b>							
<i>-Light</i>							
Klai dagger	50 gp	1d4	x3	-		3/10 lb.	Piercing

**Clawstick.** This is a wooden staff set with claws, teeth and other small sharp items (commonly taken from fallen foes). The clawstick causes painful tearing wounds, allowing the user to add +1 damage against unarmoured enemies. Any armour, including natural armour, denies the user this bonus.

**Klai dagger.** This resembles a two-bladed punching dagger with one forward facing, primary, blade that acts as a piercing weapon and a secondary blade that overlies the forearm and acts as a slashing or parrying weapon. The klai dagger is mainly found in the hands of Mopendor flaxu. A klai wielder can use the secondary blade to gain an extra attack each round, but this attack and all other attacks made with the klai in that round suffer a -4 penalty. Dextrous combatants can wield two klai daggers, in which case each dagger may make a second attack with the secondary blade. The -4 penalty stacks with any penalties incurred for fighting with two weapons, but do not stack across weapons. For example, Tshem the flaxu is fighting with two klai, and has the Two Weapon Fighting feat. If he attacks with both primary blades only, he incurs the usual penalty for two-weapon fighting (a -2 penalty to main and off-hand attacks since the klai is light). If he chooses to use the secondary blade of his main hand klai only, his main hand attacks suffer a -6 penalty (-2 from two-weapon fighting, -4 for using secondary blade) but his off-hand klai still only suffers a -2 penalty (two-weapon fighting only, no secondary attack). Only one attack with the secondary blade of each klai may be

made per round. When the second blade is not used for attack it can act as a parrying weapon and provides a +1 shield bonus to AC. The user only gains the benefit of this once. Parrying with two klai is subsumed under the total defence option or the Two Weapon Fighting, Defensive feat.

If a klai dagger is made masterwork, each blade must apply the masterwork cost separately. If a klai is enchanted, each blade must be enchanted separately. The secondary blade may be enchanted as a weapon or as a shield but not both.

**Longclaw.** This is a two-handed staff set with teeth, claws and other small sharp objects, usually taken from fallen foes. The longclaw causes painful tearing wounds, allowing the user to add +1 damage against unarmoured enemies. Any armour, including natural armour, denies the user this bonus. Flaxu who trade with humans use a metal-headed version of the longclaw but these use the statistics of a glaive. A longclaw has reach and cannot be used against an adjacent foe.

**Throwing Sticks.** Small fire-hardened or metal-tipped sticks, midway between a dart and a javelin. They pack more punch than a dart but have a shorter range. Variants in size and length use the statistics for dart and javelin. They are favoured by the 'sea' flaxu of Mopendor who commonly take the Manyshot feat to enable them to throw several sticks simultaneously.

Armour	Cost	Armour/Shield Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	Speed (30 ft.)	Speed (20 ft.)	Weight
<b>Light</b>								
Wicker Armour	15 gp	+2	+5	-1	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Bone Armour	20 gp	+3	+4	-3	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lb.
<b>Shield</b>								
Wicker Shield	3 gp	+1	-	-1	5%	-	-	2 lb.

**Bone Armour.** This is a form of splint or banded armour, but made from the bones of slain foes. It is light but not particularly flexible and is worn as much for status and intimidation as for protection. Daxan priests in Mopendor often wear it, and weave the souls of the dead into the bonework for extra magical protection.

**Wicker Armour.** Common amongst the plains tlaxu, this is a suit of armour made from woven grass fibres. It is light and surprisingly tough.

**Wicker Shield.** As wicker armour, this is a medium-sized shield made from woven grass fibres. It is light, but does not provide a great deal of protection.

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