

# The Inestimable Fortunes of the Golden Bough

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## 1 About the Game

*Revelations for visitors from other worlds*

### 1.1 The Campaign

**The Inestimable Fortunes of the Golden Bough** is a play-by-forum game set in the Empire of the Petal Throne, on M.A.R. Barker’s Tékumel. It will be fairly rules-light, running on Chaosium’s *Basic Roleplaying* system (BRP), which is more or less *Call of Cthulu*, with some parts left over from *RuneQuest*. It will take place at rpol.net, for a large starting selection of players: I anticipate needing 10-15 starting players in order to still have a critical mass after the attrition to which forum games are prone.

#### 1.1.1 Why Tékumel?

If you’re asking and you don’t know the setting, a [very] brief description of some key points will follow. If you are asking despite knowing the setting then read the key points anyway: hopefully you can see which bits catch my enthusiasm.

### 1.1.2 Why rpol.net?

The main answer is that I want to run the game for various people I don't see enough in person, having moved away. That community has a web presence, yes, and there are two main reasons I'm not running it there. Firstly, rpol.net is designed for this purpose and has various capabilities that I'd have to do without or spend ages building in order to use them on a phpBB board. The second (and bigger) reason is that I want the game to be accessible to people outside that community, not least inviting some of my colleagues but also should the need arise recruiting players from the massive community who frequent rpol.

### 1.1.3 Why BRP?

The short answer is that I needed a light system that doesn't get in the way, and I love the advancement mechanic. The long answer is like that, but with more examples.

### 1.1.4 Sex and the game

As you may know (or can read below) sex is important to the Tsolyáni, for reproduction, religion or for fun. As much as I'm happy to have characters in-keeping with that we're not going to make any players uncomfortable. The game carries rpol's 'mature' tag because I want space for implications of off-camera sex (and plenty of space for explicit violence and so on); without the 'adult' tag it can't have explicit sex and I have no intention of upgrading it.

### 1.1.5 Political Correctness

Tsolyáni society is not like ours: it has very different values with which some players might not agree. I don't want to be drawn into debates about whether it's fair, so I just ask that players remember that to their characters, it's everything. [There's some racism, sure, but I feel that the apparent sexism — which I expect might be a sticking point — *is* fair. After all, as much as men and women are treated differently by default, women have the option to take the legal rights of men. There is a double standard, yes, and individual clans and families obviously vary in their stand, but the women who are 'owned' by their clans or

their husbands are well treated for it, and if they want to be their own person they can be.] They keep slaves, too. *That* I don't agree with, but it's a fictional setting.

## 1.2 Tékumel

For the moment, I'm reproducing the text of a background mail I sent to one of my friends to sell him the setting:

Tékumel is another world, in the far future after they've lost most of the technology and evolved magic. The exact how and why is interesting but you don't need to know it at the moment.

The centre of the setting is Tsolyánu, the Empire of the Petal Throne. Tsolyáni society is strange to Western readers, hence this introduction.

Most names are in Tsolyáni; pronunciation of most characters is as it looks, with stress on the accented syllable.

Tsolyáni society revolves around clans; clan is more important than family, religion, job or perhaps even the Empire itself. Within a clan different 'lineages' are recognised, but mainly for the status (and the surname); relatives are variously called brothers/sisters/fathers/mothers/cousins without much concern about who begat whom.

Women have two possible statuses. A 'good clan girl' is more or less a possession of her clan (if unmarried, she belongs to her husband if married); she cannot have a job, cannot take legal action or have it taken against her (although the clan/husband is liable for her and obliged to look after her) and has little in the way of rights. Any woman can declare herself aridáni, at which point she has all the same rights and obligations as a man; she can have any job (literally), marry, sue and be sued (more about that later) and so on.

Marriage is a contract more than anything else. Its main purpose is to generate children for the betterment of the clan(s) involved. It is generally for a limited time (although often can be extended by agreement of both parties) but ultimately is ruled by the terms of the marriage contract, which can vary considerably. A man (or aridáni woman) can have as many wives (husbands) as (s)he has the means to support, provided he can meet the conditions of all the contracts.

The Tsolyáni have two main punishments for crime: *shántla* ('blood money', effectively a law

suit) and impalement. There's also the possibility of a duel in the arena if circumstances allow. The magnitude of *shámtla* depends on the transgression and the relative status of those involved; a slight from a low clan against a high one will incur a punitive fine, while similar damage the other way might not even cover genuine costs.

There is a pantheon of 10 gods, each of whom has an 'assistant' called a cohort tending for a subset of the god's portfolio. There are 5 gods of Stability and 5 gods of Change; I won't go into them all at the moment. Everyone believes in them all, and worships one or more of them in some combination (like Greek mythology; most people go to the temple appropriate for the praying they need to do right now).

Tsolyáni society doesn't much mind what you do, provided it's 'noble action', which mostly consists of fulfilling your proper role and meeting public expectations of you. A priest of a Change god might be a lot of trouble - probably evil by the standards of any other setting - but everyone understands that he's supposed to do that and his action is noble. And some of them are evil: human sacrifices and everything.

Slaves are common.

There are plenty of non-humans, but I can never remember them.

There are no taboos about sex or nudity; clothing is more for showing rank and status than anything else (especially in the hot south, where the game will be set), promiscuity isn't a problem (although adultery is a crime), several of the temples have sex as part of rituals, etc.

Metal is rare. One of the big lizards (the *chlén*) has hide that can be cured hard enough to make weapons and armour out of.

There are no riding animals. Heavy goods move on carts pulled by *chlén*, but they're too slow and rickety to ride.

The Empire is crossed by *sakbé* roads; big multi-level affairs with different tiers for people of different statuses and so on.

## 2 Character Generation

*In which splendid and illustrious scions of the Golden Bough are born and come of age.*

Table 1: Characteristics

Characteristic		Cost
Strength	STR	1
Constitution	CON	1
Size	SIZ	1
Intelligence	INT	3
Power	POW	4
Dexterity	DEX	3
Appearance	APP	2
Education	EDU	3

Character generation follows the ten steps listed in the Basic Roleplaying rulebook. Also noted are the corresponding steps from the 5<sup>th</sup> edition Call of Cthulu rules.

### 2.1 Name and Characteristics

- Write down your character's name, your name and your character's gender. Female characters are assumed to be *aridáni* and have the same rights (and obligations) as men.
- The characteristics are those familiar to RuneQuest and Call of Cthulu players, as per Table 1, nearby.
- Each begins at 10 and you have 36 points with which to raise them, at various costs per point — from one to four — as shown in the table. Characteristics may not rise above 21. Although the rules would normally let you gain points by reducing some characteristics below 10, scions of the Golden Bough will rarely be cursed with sub-standard characteristics: you may take your Size down to 9 or 8, point for point, but not any other (without giving me good reason).

### 2.2 Magic

A character with POW 14 or more may have an affinity for Psychic Magic or Ritual Magic. With 16 or more POW a character may have both affinities. Choose which if any your character knows; excepting a supernatural rise in POW it will be difficult to change your mind later.

## 2.3 Age and Experience

Without very good reason, character should be between 15 and 18 years old.

## 2.4 Characteristic Rolls

Note the following:

Effort	=	STR x5
Stamina	=	CON x5
Idea	=	INT x5
Luck	=	POW x5
Agility	=	DEX x5
Charisma	=	APP x5

## 2.5 Derived Characteristics

Round up after each division.

- Damage Bonus:

STR + SIZ	db
20-24	None
25-32	+d4
33-40	+d6
41+	+2d6

- Hit points = CON + SIZ divided by 2.
- Major Wound = Hit points divided by 2
- Starting Power Points = POW
- Experience bonus = INT divided by 2
- Movement rate (MOV) = 10
- Skill category bonuses:

The modifiers on the Table 2 are the bonus per point above (or bonus per two full points, round fractions down) or penalty per point below **10**. Add all applicable bonuses and penalties.

- Fatigue Points = STR + CON
- Current Sanity = POW x 5

## 2.6 Personality Type

As far as game mechanics go, this section is an option and we're not using it.

Table 2: Skill Category Modifiers

Category	Bonus	Half bonus	Penalty
Combat	DEX	STR, INT	-
Communication	INT	POW, APP	-
Manipulation	DEX	INT, STR	-
Mental	INT	POW, EDU	-
Perception	INT	POW, CON	-
Physical	DEX	STR, CON	SIZ

## 2.7 Skill Point Allocation

Skills and professions are listed in subsequent chapters. Divide EDU x 20 points between the skills of your profession, and add INT x 10 points to whatever skills you like (including adding more to your professional skills if you wish). Beginning skills are capped at 75

## 2.8 Distinctive Features

Another option we're not using.

## 2.9 Armour and Equipment

There'll be a standard 'load-out' of stuff based on what you need and can use. I won't be worrying too much about money unless the plot starts to need it or characters start trying to buy and maintain lavish things.

## 2.10 Background and Final 'Grooming'

Whatever background you can come up with would be great. You could be from Jakálla (where the campaign will begin and mostly be set) or somewhere else. If you like, talk to other players about the possibility of being siblings or other specific relations.

## 3 Skills

*Being the methods of the attainment of glory.*

I'm not going to describe all the skills. Pay attention to the base chances in brackets: any points you spend on the skills are added to the base chances. Skills marked 'various' require a speciality to be chosen: multiple specialities are paid for separately and you only get the base chance in the first one,

except for weapon skills where you get the appropriate base chance in each weapon category.

- Administration (Mental, 10%)
- Appraise (Mental, 15%)
- Art (various, Manipulation, 05%)
- Artillery (various, Combat, varies)
- Bargain (Communication, 05%)
- Brawl (Combat, 25%)
- Climb (Physical, 40%)
- Command (Communication, 05%)
- Craft (various, Manipulation, 05%)
- Demolition (Manipulation, 00%)
- Disguise (Communication, 01%)
- Dodge (Physical, DEX x2)
- Drive (various, 01%)
- Etiquette (Tsolyáni, Communication, 25%)
- Etiquette (one other, Communication, 05%)
- Etiquette (various, Communication, 00%)
- Fine Manipulation (Manipulation, 05%)
- First Aid (Mental, INT)
- Fly (Physical, DEX / 2)
- Gaming (Mental, INT + POW)
- Grapple (Combat, 25%)
- Hide (Physical, 10%)
- Insight (Perception, 05%)
- Jump (Physical, 25%)
- Knowledge (various, Mental, 01%)
- Language, Tsolyáni (Mental, EDU x5)
- Language, Other (various, Mental, 00%)
- Listen (Perception, 25%)
- Literacy, Tsolyáni (Mental, EDU x5)
- Literacy, Other (various, Mental, 00%)
- Martial Arts (Combat, 00%)
- Medicine (Mental, 00%)
- Melee Weapons (various, Combat, varies)
- Missile Weapons (various, Combat, varies)
- Navigate (Perception, 01%)
- Parry (various, Combat, varies)
- Perform (various, Communication, 05%)
- Persuade (Communication, 15%)
- Pilot (various, Physical, 01%)

Table 3: Tsolyáni Status by Clan

Status	Clan
01-09	Clanless
10-24	Very Low
25-39	Low
40-54	Medium
55-69	High
70-84	Very High
85-99	Imperial

Table 4: Clan Status by Lineage

Status	Lineage
01-19	Very Low
20-39	Low
40-59	Medium
60-79	High
80-99	Very High

- Projection (Physical, DEX x2)
- Psychotherapy (Mental, 00%)
- Repair (various, Manipulation, 15%)
- Research (Perception, 25%)
- Sense (Perception, 10%)
- Sexuality (Physical, 15%)
- Shield (Combat, varies)
- Sleight of Hand (Manipulation, 05%)
- Spot (Perception, 25%)
- Status (Tsolyáni, Communication, 70%)
- Status (Clan, Communication, by lineage)
- Status (temple, legion or palace; Communication, by rank)
- Status (various, Communication, 00%)
- Stealth (Physical, 10%)
- Strategy (Mental, 01%)
- Swim (Physical, 25%)
- Teach (Communication, 10%)

*Like Call of Cthulu's Credit Rating, the Status family aren't so much skills as 'backgrounds'. In general each is useful only for comparisons with other characters who have the same speciality. Status does not earn checks during play; it rises (or falls) only with the character's fortunes.*

- Teamwork (Communication, 25%)
- Throw (Physical, 25%)
- Track (Perception, 10%)

## 4 Professions

*The most excellent occupations open to our resplendent paragons.*

This is a sample of professions rather than an exhaustive list, but it should cover the things most people have in mind. Note that lots of professions are missing because they're not noble occupations for a member of the Golden Bough.

### 4.1 Administrator

Whether working for the clan, one of the palaces of government or a legion, the skills of an administrator are of a similar theme.

**Skills:** Administration, Etiquette (any), Knowledge (clan, palace, legion or similar), Language (Tsolyáni), Literacy (Tsolyáni)

*...and three of* Appraise, Bargain, Command, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (other), Literacy (other), Persuade, Research.

### 4.2 Clan Guard

Among the many who work tirelessly for the good of the clan, these men and women guard important people and places. Being present around the clan-houses they might have other responsibilities such as training young clan members in combat skills.

**Skills:** Brawl, Dodge, Listen, Melee Weapon (sword, spear), Spot, Teamwork

*...and four of* Climb, Command, Drive, First Aid, Grapple, Hide, Insight, Jump, Missile Weapon (any), Persuade, Stealth, Teach, Throw.

### 4.3 Administrative Priest

Each temple is run and supported by the administrative priests. Where a skill lists 'temple' as a speciality, specify the particular temple to which the character belongs.

**Skills:** Administration, Etiquette (temple), Insight, Knowledge (Religion), Knowledge (temple secrets), Language (Tsolyáni)

*...and four of* Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (temple), Melee Weapon (any of ritual significance), Perform (Oratory), Sexuality.

### 4.4 Ritual Priest

Ritual priests are those that run the services of the temple, both for temple worshippers and the priests themselves. Most of those who practice magic do so as ritual priests. For skills listing 'temple' in the speciality, specify the temple.

**Skills:** Etiquette (temple), Insight, Knowledge (Religion), Knowledge (temple secrets), Language (Tsolyáni), Perform (Ritual)

*...and four of* Fast Talk, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (temple), Melee Weapon (any of ritual significance), Perform (any), Persuade, Sexuality.

### 4.5 Scholar Priest

Scholarly priests are those who keep the knowledge of their temple, specialising in any discipline of interest to their faith. Magically inclined characters often choose a scholarly speciality and learn their magic in the temple. For skills listing 'temple' as a speciality, choose the temple.

**Skills:** Etiquette (temple), Language (Tsolyáni), Research, Teach

*...and six of* Art (any), Craft (any), Knowledge (any), Language (any), Literacy (any).

### 4.6 Lay Priest

Lay priests are those who work only part-time in the temple while keeping employment elsewhere. Lay priests hold less status in their temple and advance in rank more slowly, if at all. To create a lay priest character choose another profession and modify its skill list. Add the following skills to the selection list for the character's main profession. If there are no skills to be chosen from a list in the main profession, replace up to two of the profession's skills with skills from this list; if the character wants more priestly skills he'll have to learn them in his own time, with his personal skills allowance.

**Skills:** *Add the following to your '...and X of' list:* Art (any), Craft (any), Etiquette (temple),

Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Literacy (any), Melee Weapon (any of ritual significance), Perform (Ritual or other), Research, Sexuality, Teach.

Since lay priests allow a wide variety of skills, you should check with me to make sure that your final skill list makes sense.

## 4.7 Temple Guard

Temples and their dignitaries are protected by professional guards much like those employed by the clans. The more military-oriented temples train temple guards more like soldiers; players may wish to use the Legionary profession to represent this.

**Skills:** Brawl, Dodge, Listen, Melee Weapon (spear, sword), Spot, Teamwork

*...and four of* Climb, Command, Drive, Etiquette (temple), First Aid, Grapple, Hide, Insight, Jump, Knowledge (Religion), Melee Weapon (any of ritual significance), Missile Weapon (any), Stealth, Throw

*...including optionally one of* Art (any), Craft (any), Knowledge (any), Language (any), Literacy (any), Perform (Ritual or other), Research, Sexuality, Teach.

## 4.8 Legionary

The following skill list should cover professional soldiers of all kinds, regardless of which legion. Etiquette (Legion) is a single speciality and does not need further specification.

**Skills:** Brawl, Climb, Dodge, Melee Weapon (any), Teamwork

*...and five of* Artillery, Drive, Command, Etiquette (Legion), First Aid, Grapple, Hide, Language (Other), Listen, Jump, Missile Weapon (any), Navigate, Spot, Stealth, Throw.

## 4.9 Legion Officer

Officers have a slightly modified skill list, with emphasis on their leadership and strategy.

**Skills:** Brawl, Command, Dodge, Etiquette (Legion), Melee Weapon (any), Teamwork, Strategy

*...and three of* Climb, Drive, Etiquette (any), Grapple, Hide, Insight, Jump, Language (Tsolyáni), Language (Other), Listen, Missile

Weapon (any), Navigate, Persuade, Spot, Stealth, Teach, Throw.

## 4.10 OAL Agent

The main intelligence agency of the Empire of the Petal Throne is the civil arm of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. Their covert agents are experts at working undercover to gather information.

**Skills:** Dodge, Fast Talk, Hide, Listen, Spot, Stealth

*...and three of* Brawl, Disguise, Etiquette (any), Grapple, Knowledge (any non-secret), Language (any), Literacy (any), Navigate, Persuade, Pilot (any), Research, Swim, Throw, Track.

## 4.11 OAL Operative

The intelligence arm of the Omnipotent Azure Legion trains operatives to carry out missions for the good of the Empire. Specialists exist in many fields, with some or more variation in skill lists.

**Skills:** Brawl, Dodge, Hide, Listen, Melee Weapon (any), Stealth

*...and three of* Brawl, Disguise, Etiquette (any), Fast Talk, Grapple, Fine Manipulation, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Literacy (any), Missile Weapon (any), Persuade, Throw, Track.

## 4.12 Imperial Messenger

For messages that aren't suited or don't justify telepathic communication, the Empire employs skilled couriers to take messages swiftly and safely to their destinations.

**Skills:**

## 4.13 Clan Liaison

# 5 The Golden Bough

*In which we expound manifold truths of the Clan itself.*

## 5.1 Lineages

The lineages of the Golden Bough are numerous. In descending order of importance within the clan, here are those considered most influential in Jakálla. The comments I make are a combination of

tradition and outside perception; members of each lineage are encouraged to follow their own paths. Since this version of this document uses a point buy I've replaced the characteristic modifiers with a guide that players are free to follow or not.

Renowned for the compassion and wisdom of their leadership, the **hiTishkólun** are the rulers of the clan. They are not as numerous as they once were, and whispers in dark corners suggest that the line may not be as fertile as the clan elders would like. The **hiToshkólun** favour APP and EDU and typically have Status (Golden Bough) of 80% or more.

The **hiMrékka** have a great tradition of warriors and war leaders, known for strength of body and will. **hiMrékka** children are often trained in arms from an early age regardless of what other aptitudes they show, and many spend at least one tour of duty in the Legion of Visháya (or one further afield). They tend to develop good STR and SIZ, as well as well-advanced POW; they generally favour combat and military skill over others and have Status (Golden Bough) between 60% and 79%.

The Golden Bough is blessed with a number of magicians, most of them belonging to the **hiZhnáya** lineage. Even those without the spark of magic are noted as clever and insightful. The **hiZhnáya** are immensely proud of their talents, a feature that does not often endear them to people. What they gain in INT and POW they lose in APP, for while they are as beautiful as their kin in other lineages they are generally less charismatic; Status (Golden Bough) is in the range 60% and 79%.

A younger 'up and coming' lineage, the **hiKirisáya** are known for a certain perfectionism that influences all their activities. Many of them are accomplished ritual priests, or have found other callings that suit their precision. **hiKirisáya** favour DEX and CHA but tend to be of smaller SIZ (starter PCs may gain characteristic points one for one by reducing their SIZ as low as 6). Status (Golden Bough) tends to be around 50%, between 40% and 59%.

Although the clan has many more lineages and several more are represented at Jakálla, the others are lower and not suitable for this campaign.

## 5.2 Temples

Followers of all of the Lords and Ladies of Stability and Change, and any of the cohorts, can be found in the Golden Bough, and Jakálla has large temples to them all. Player characters may follow any of them and can find nearby employ in any of the temples.

## 5.3 Legions

The Golden Bough is proud to send its young men (and sometimes Aridáni) to serve the glorious Empire in its legions.

The Legion of Visháya, Vigilance of the South, 19th Imperial Heavy Infantry, is based here in Jakálla. It is named for its Kérdu, Lady Visháya **hiMrékka** of the Golden Bough. Although not a clan legion, Visháya works with her elders to make sure the most promising of the clan's warriors can gain a commission should they want it.

The following legions are based in Jakálla:

- The Legion of Sérqu, Sword of the Empire, 14th Heavy Infantry
- The Legion of Héket of Púrdimal, 17th Heavy Infantry
- The Legion of Giriktéshmu, 23rd Archers
- The Legion of Mengáno the Jakállan, 12th Artillery
- The Battalions of Vrishtára the Mole, 2nd Sappers
- The Squadrons of Tlanéno the Steersman, 3rd Marines

Worthy of special mention is the Legion of Mighty Jakálla, 27th Imperial Heavy Infantry. Led by Chiringgá **hiTishklun**, former Govenor of Jakálla, the 27th is a formerly extinct legion being reconstructed in Kírgar. Although Chiringgá clearly isn't the most popular subject of the Petal Throne, the clan would gladly support anyone with an aptitude for training or military administration that is prepared to go and serve under him.

Characters of a particular religious or political bent may travel to join a different legion, but all military characters (especially those gone to Kírgar) should have retired or secured a lengthy period of leave in order to return in time for the game.

## 5.4 Clan-houses

The Golden Bough maintains three clan-houses of varying size and opulence in Jakálla.

### 5.4.1 The Golden Halls of Splendid Gathering under the Bough

The Golden Halls is the largest, and may be one of the largest clan-houses in the city. The complex is built around a vast array of communal chambers ranging from rooms for small performances or debates up to huge halls that could comfortably seat most of the city's clan members. Each room is decorated with a range of scenes from epic tales and poems rendered in mosaics of tiny tiles and semi-precious stones, with the occasional detail picked out in vibrant gems. The larger halls sport gilt columns styled as trees with branches that spread across the ceiling.

Although one wing has private rooms for clan members and guests outfitted in the same kind of grandeur, most of the clan-house is taken up with more modest accommodation for members of the lower lineages, including some representing the clan's agricultural concerns near the city and the many more who staff the clan houses.

The atmosphere in the Golden Halls varies week to week, sometimes day by day, as different clan dignitaries and friends of the clan come and go. Parties and other gatherings are frequent, from small and informal meetings of clan brothers celebrating their latest achievements to fine banquets in honour of those the clan wish to honour with their hospitality.

### 5.4.2 The Venerable House of Noble Service

Auspiciously situated near the Governor's Palace and the Palace of the Realm, the Venerable House is the base of the clan's leadership and administration. Although not the most prestigious clan-house, it is home to the Clan Patriarch and other elders as well as many of the clan's most accomplished and most promising bureaucrats.

The house is a typical selection of atria surrounded by complexes of private rooms. The men of the clan-house and an unusual proportion of aridáni tend to be away at one of the Palaces for most of each day, leaving the place in a gentle quiet

that belies its size. Even at most meals the dining hall is far from full.

When there are enough of the clan men at home the atmosphere is quite intense, and on the occasion that there is time for it the entertainments can be quite extravagant. Considering that many of the bureaucrats are worshippers of Stability to some or other degree, visits from priests of Dlamélish are unusually common.

### 5.4.3 The Resplendent Shrine of the Effervescent Waters

Nestled between the temples of Karakán, Thúmis, Vimúhla and Chegárra, the Resplendent Shrine is considered the most prestigious house of the clan, albeit by far the smallest.

The house is centred on a small courtyard in which stands a dais set with a large bowl of bubbling water. The water emanates from somewhere far below and is claimed to have various properties of healing and subtly prolonging life; even the bubbles that rise through it and burst on its surface release a gas that has a mild euphoric effect on humans.

Resident clan members are welcome to take small draughts from the pool, but while the clan is satisfied with the rumours that describe it to the city it is quite careful when choosing outsiders to see it, drink from it or especially take any of the water away.

The Shrine hosts only the highest lineages of the clan and has little space for guests. Most of the clan's visitors to the city stay at the Golden Halls, as does almost all of the Shrine's clan staff.

Except for the smallest of personal gatherings and of course inviting people to see the waters, the Resplendent Shrine does not have sufficient space or staff for hosting entertainments fit for such a high clan. Instead the residents of the Shrine host their parties at the Golden Halls. Many even find that they must send their children to be raised by clan cousins in the Golden Halls or the Venerable House, since there is room for only a few children in each generation at the Shrine.

### 5.4.4 A House for the Players

The player characters will be part of (probably most or all of) the latest generation to come of age

in the Resplendent Shrine of the Effervescent Waters. As noted in the house descriptions, this puts them among the clan's elite, most likely the first (or otherwise most promising) children of particularly respected clan members.

Since space in the Resplendent Shrine is at a premium, characters that need lots of space (because they take on multiple wives or have many children, or who simply ask for extra room and make appropriate donations) may have to move to one of the other clan-houses. Although a step down in some ways, there is no stigma in this since everyone recognises the success of someone who deserves more room than the Shrine can provide. Such a person might send a child or two back to live there when they come of age, or move back once his marriages expire.

## **5.5 August Personages**