

Punla (Family)

The smallest social group within the [Poku Saeruo Degonjo](#) is a Punla (Pūn-lă), or *family*. The plural form of the word is Punlai (Pūn-lăē), meaning families.

Creation

A new family is made through the [Sumanâpa Punla \(Making Family\)](#) ritual.

Membership

A Punla consists of retired elders, married spouses, unmarried adult individuals, children, and [retainers](#). Bear in mind that a person does not have to be a blood relation to join a family. Families can adopt new members freely, even without the bonds of marriage, though unmarried adult individuals are encouraged by the culture to marry and form a family of their own.

Family Leadership Roles

A family is led by the Punla-Ta'a, or the Speaker for the Family. By tradition, this role is filled by the eldest member of the family regardless of their gender. The family democratically elects a Punla-To'â, or Assistant for the Family, who assists the Speaker and fills in for them in the event of their absence. These leadership roles are considered [Fabota](#), or positions, and they are respected and culturally important.

Voting

Every family in the Clan, whether they are part of a Greater or Lesser [Ruoka \(House\)](#), has a single vote as part of the [Vonai Jodau'tajo \(Thoughts of the People\)](#) system. How each family votes depends on their own traditions and preferences.

Retired Elders

Unless one marries into another family, an individual Poku'vonai remains a part of the same family until they pass. Clan members who are old enough to retire from active service to the Clan still perform work for their family. They guide the group, sharing their wisdom and learned lessons with their younger kin, and they perform tasks around the home. Very old Clan members are cared for if they become infirm or if they can no longer move without help.

Spouses

A family may include multiple spouses in a polygamous arrangement with each other. By tradition, all current spouses must agree to the addition of a new spouse. The Clan believes that the addition of more spouses strengthens a family, as long as they can support the new member as is proper. Some families even include a second or even third group of spouses. This is not typical; these are usually young newlyweds who are not yet able to form a family of their own, or who are suffering some other kind of hardship.

Leaving the Family/Divorce

Divorce is an acceptable, though regrettable, act in Clan culture. It is performed through the [Ânamuspa Punla \(Breaking Family\)](#). The ritual can also be performed by any family member who wishes to formally separate from the family for whatever reason; note that a single adult individual marrying into another family does not require this ritual to be performed first. An individual who separates from the family, or who divorces their spouse, forfeits all but their personal property. Any children they birthed or fathered traditionally remain with the family, though one may petition the Speaker of the House for an exception, and receive custody of children or property after the divorce.

Children

The children (baqli) of a family belong to the entire family. All adult members participate in the rearing and disciplining of the young.

Retainers

A retainer is a member of the family, and they are Poku'vonai. Retainers may or may not have passed the [Baqnor \(move from youth\)](#). They perform the role of house servant, often cooking and cleaning and maintaining the home. Some, but not all retainers are formerly [Bound People](#). A Clan member can volunteer to become a retainer for a family; typically, one chooses to become a retainer for an accomplished and successful family. Families which are struggling financially, or who are part of weak [Lesser Houses](#), are unlikely to have retainers.

Orphans

The [Poku'vonai](#) see all children as vital to their survival. In the event that all immediate parents of a child are killed; the orphan would be taken in by one of their extended family members (aunts, uncles, grandparents). If there are no direct extended family members, then another family in their House will take them in.

Those Without Families

An individual who loses their family due to disease, war or other factors is welcomed into any new family they choose to join. Widows and Widowers often rejoin the families they were born into. Some who have lost their families, in an expression of grief or in solidarity with those they lost, keep their family name alive in their House, even though they are a family of one. Such individuals are called Punla Tabak'a (Family Preserver). A Punla Tabak'a is viewed by some with quiet respect, and others with pity; one who does not eventually remarry and birth or foster new children is not working toward the next generation of members of the Clan.

Living Arrangements

In the Clan, family living arrangements differ based on the wealth of the Family and House. Middle class, low income families may live in small houses or apartments; single adults in the family may maintain a small house of their own on the family property. Wealthier families maintain estates which include multiple homes; grandparents and parents have each their own private spaces. Children that are married often live in the same house and have their spaces in the estate.

OOC Notes

- Article created by [Nashoba](#). Updated by [Hollander](#).

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