

It is a settled fact that merchants love to haggle. It is also a truth universally to be seen that when merchants found a city and make up so much of its history, politics, and culture, that the spirit of haggling will endure and shape the governance of that city. Thul Ka is no exception.

The Civic Assembly, the governing body of the city, is famously argumentative and divided into factions. So too is the city with merchants vying against each other and against powerful labor groups, the ancient patrician families, imperial interests, and dozens of other factions. Political life in Thul Ka is neither simple nor quiet and the city's reputation of quarrels is well deserved.

At the present time, the government of the city is formed by a coalition of two of the political parties: the Brotherhood of the Crocus, representing the traditional merchant interests of increased trade and civic functionality, and the Worshipful Company of Pipefitters, representing the interest of labor and industry. This coalition is itself tenuous for there are great points of division between the two parties and though each needs the other to stay in power, it is unclear if that necessity will be fruitful.

The rivalry between the Crocus-party Mayor Bulu Erlu Bandu and Boss Jakali of the Pipefitters is well known and the subject of considerable comment and speculation. It is widely believed that Jakali is preparing herself to run for the office of mayor though she officially denies this. Nevertheless, Pipefitter organizers have been unusually assiduous in drumming of support and lining up voters ahead of the elections.

Other parties in the Assembly have capitalized on the fragile government and are even now growing support. The Fat-Purse Party, advocates for cutting the city's services, lowering taxes, and doing away with the traditional power and influence of the merchant guilds, have been making inroads among the smaller merchants and business people of the city, siphoning off some of the traditional supporters of the Crocus. At the same time, the bellicose and radically anti-foreigner Bull Elephant party has been making inroads as well, making allies among those who demand greater public security in the face of an influx of refugees and the looming threat of an expanded revolution.

The political winds are shifting and no one is quite sure whether they blow fair or foul.