

= Golden Sun =

Golden Sun (?????? ?????? , ?gon no Taiy? : Hirakareshi F?in , " Golden Sun : The Opened Seal ") is the first installment in a series of fantasy role @-@ playing video games developed by Camelot Software Planning and published by Nintendo . It was released in November 2001 for Nintendo 's Game Boy Advance and was followed by a sequel , Golden Sun : The Lost Age , in 2002 . The game is notable for certain distinctive game elements , such as the use of special " Djinn " that empower the player and can be used against enemies .

Golden Sun 's story follows a band of magic @-@ attuned " Adepts " whose purpose , as it is revealed early on , is to protect the world of Weyard from alchemy , a potentially destructive power that was sealed away long ago . During their quest , the Adepts gain new abilities (called Psynergy) , assist others , and learn more about why alchemy was sealed away . The story continues in The Lost Age , this time from the perspective of the antagonists .

The game was highly praised by critics ; IGN 's Craig Harris said that Golden Sun could " arguably be one of the best 2D @-@ based Japanese RPGs created for any system . " The game has sold more than one million copies in Japan and the United States . A third game in the series , Golden Sun : Dark Dawn , was released in 2010 . Golden Sun was re @-@ released for the Virtual Console via the Wii U eShop in April 2014 .

= = Gameplay = =

Golden Sun is a contemporary presentation of the traditional role @-@ playing video game formula , in which the player controls a cast of four characters as they journey through a fantasy @-@ themed world , interact with other characters , battle monsters , acquire increasingly powerful abilities and equipment , and take part in an ongoing narrative . Although many of the player 's actions are compulsory , Golden Sun often allows the player to visit previous locations and complete certain objectives out of order .

Much of the time spent outside of battle takes place in dungeons , caves , and other locales , which often feature puzzles integrated into their layout . These puzzles require the player to perform a variety of actions , such as creating makeshift bridges by pushing logs into rivers , or shifting the track of a mine cart to gain access to new areas . Many of these puzzles require use of the game 's form of magic spells , " Psynergy " (" Energy " in the Japanese version) ; this is in contrast to many RPGs , which often restrict magic to within battles and post @-@ combat healing . Psynergy , however , is used for both purposes ; for example , the " Whirlwind " spell that damages enemies in battle is also used out of battle to remove overgrown foliage blocking the player 's path . Psynergy comes in four elements : Venus (manipulation of rocks and plants) , Mars (revolving around fire and heat) , Jupiter (based on wind and electricity) , and Mercury (concerning water and ice) . Players can return to previous locations in the game to finish puzzles which they could not solve earlier because of the lack of a specific Psynergy spell .

= = = Battle and Djinn = = =

Golden Sun contains both random monster encounters , featuring randomly selected enemies , and compulsory boss battles that advance the story . When a battle begins , a separate screen is brought up in which the player 's party faces off against the enemy . During a battle , the characters and the background rotate to offer a pseudo @-@ 3D effect . In each battle , players must defeat the enemies while keeping their own party alive through items and Psynergy that restore life and supplement defense . The player receives a " Game Over " if each character 's hit points are reduced to zero ; if this happens , the player will incur a monetary penalty and the party will be returned to the sanctum in the last visited town . After winning a battle , players receive experience points , coins , and occasionally items .

Golden Sun also features an optional battling mode accessible from the menu screen . In this mode , players can enter a team from their saved game files into an arena environment where they battle

increasingly difficult CPU @-@ controlled enemies . Additionally , players can select three of their four characters to fight another player 's three @-@ character team . The player does not receive any reward or punishment for participating in these battles .

One of the most distinctive features of Golden Sun is the collection and manipulation of creatures called Djinn . The Djinn are scattered in hiding throughout the game ; once found , they can be allocated to each character . They form the basis of the game 's statistic enhancement , as well as the system that dictates the character 's Psynergy capabilities . Attaching different Djinn to different characters modifies that character 's character class , subsequently modifying hit points , Psynergy points , and other statistics , as well as determining what Psynergy the character is able to perform .

Djinn can either be " Set " to a player or put on " Standby " . When a Djinni is Set , it gives bonuses to the stats of the character it is on , and may change the character 's class or usable Psynergy . Set Djinn also have abilities that can be used in battle to attack , heal , or otherwise affect the battle , however using these abilities causes the Djinn to move from being Set to being in Standby mode . There are seven Djinn of each element , and these Djinn can be mixed and matched to the four characters , allowing a large array of possible class setups and a variety of combat options .

In combat , a Djinni has several uses . Each Set Djinni has a special ability which can be invoked during combat by the character it is attached to , which can include enhanced elemental attacks , buffing / debuffing spells , healing / restoration spells , and other effects . After a successful invoke , the Djinni shifts to " Standby " mode until it is " Set " on the character again . While in standby , the Djinn do not contribute to statistics or change character classes , but can be used for summon spells , which are attacks where the player summons a powerful elemental monster to inflict damage on every enemy and increases the respective characters affinity for that element for a duration . This is the game 's most powerful method of attack , but the required switch to Standby mode is a risky trade @-@ off : Djinn used for summoning must rest for several turns before reverting to the Set position , during which time they cannot bolster statistics or classes . There are sixteen Summon Sequences in Golden Sun ? four for each element ? and each summon sequence requires between one and four Djinn of the same element on Standby .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Golden Sun takes place in the fantasy world of " Weyard " ? a massive , earth @-@ like environment with several major continents and oceans . It is revealed in the game 's sequel , Golden Sun : The Lost Age , that the setting is based on the flat Earth concept ; it is a flat , roughly elliptical plane whose oceans perpetually spill off the edge of the world 's perimeter into an endless abyss . The plot progression of Golden Sun spans the two largest continents in the world 's central region : Angara to the north and Gondowan to the south .

Weyard is governed by the mythological concept of the classical elements . All matter on Weyard consists of any combination of the four base elements : Venus , Mars , Mercury and Jupiter , or earth , fire , water , and wind , respectively . These four building blocks of reality can be manipulated by the omnipotent force of Alchemy , which reigned supreme in the world 's ancient past . Alchemy was sealed away in the past , however , and the world in the present age has become seemingly devoid of this power . However , in various places throughout the world , people demonstrate an aptitude to manipulate one of the elements through a form of magic called Psynergy . These wielders of Psynergy , called Adepts , usually refrain from displaying their talents to outsiders .

= = = Characters = = =

The player controls four characters in Golden Sun . Isaac , the game 's silent protagonist , is a seventeen @-@ year @-@ old Venus Adept from the village of Vale . Garet , a seventeen @-@ year @-@ old Mars Adept also from Vale , is Isaac 's closest companion . Ivan is a fifteen @-@

year @-@ old Jupiter Adept who has lived with a famous merchant in the town of Kalay his entire life . Mia , a sixteen @-@ year @-@ old Mercury Adept from the wintry town of Imil , is a gentle healer from a heritage of Mercury Adept clansmen . A fifth character seen and playable in the game 's exposition sequence is the 17 @-@ year @-@ old Mars Adept Jenna , another childhood friend to Isaac .

The primary antagonists of the game are Saturos and Menardi , a pair of immensely powerful and talented Mars Adepts of a foreign race hailing from Prox , a town in Weyard 's frigid north . Their goal is to restore Alchemy to the world , and they are assisted by the powerful and mysterious Mercury Adept Alex , who is of the same heritage as Mia ; and Jenna 's older brother , the 18 @-@ year @-@ old Venus Adept Felix , who is indebted to Saturos for saving Felix from death .

= = = Plot = = =

The prevalent force of Alchemy in Weyard 's ancient past enabled the development of great civilizations . However , this thriving period eventually gave way to worldwide conflict that subsided only with the sealing away of Alchemy . The keys to unlocking Alchemy , the four Elemental Stars which hold the pure power of the four elements , are hidden within the mountain shrine , Mt . Aleph , which in turn is guarded by the town of Vale at the mountain 's base . In the game 's prologue , Saturos and Menardi , with help from a raiding party , storm Mt . Aleph with the intention to seize the Elemental Stars for themselves . They fail to solve the riddles guarding the stars and are driven away by the mountain 's trap , a magically generated thunderstorm and rock slide .

Three years later , Isaac , Garet , and Jenna join their teacher , Kraden , in his research of Mt . Aleph . Their research coincides with a second raid of the sanctum by Saturos and Menardi , now assisted by Felix and Alex , who coerce Isaac into giving them three of the four stars . The volcano erupts before they can retrieve the final star , but before escaping they capture Jenna and Kraden as eventual bargaining chips . The guardian of Mt . Aleph , the Wise One , appears before Isaac and Garet and instructs them to prevent Saturos ' group from casting the Elemental Stars into their respective Elemental Lighthouses across Weyard ; if this happens , Alchemy will be restored and the period of instability will begin anew .

Isaac and Garet pursue Saturos ' group to the Mercury Lighthouse , joined by Ivan and Mia . Despite their best efforts , they fail to prevent Saturos from activating Mercury Lighthouse with the Mercury Star . Saturos ' group leaves for the next Lighthouse with Isaac 's party remaining in pursuit . In the ensuing chase , Isaac learns that Saturos has taken another Adept hostage : the female Jupiter Adept , Sheba . Saturos and Menardi activate the Venus Lighthouse with the Venus Star , and are confronted by Isaac 's party immediately thereafter . Attempting to annihilate their opponents , Saturos and Menardi magically merge to form a massive two @-@ headed dragon , but Isaac 's party slay Saturos and Menardi for good . The remnants of Saturos ' group , headed by Felix and Alex , continue their quest to light the remaining two Lighthouses , with Jenna , Sheba , and Kraden still with them . The game ends as Isaac 's party boards a ship and sail out into Weyard 's open seas to continue their mission .

= = Development = =

Camelot Software Planning spent between twelve and eighteen months developing Golden Sun , which is considered a long time for a handheld video game ; the finished product was described as a testament to the positive results a long development cycle can bring to a game . In August 2000 , Camelot showed an early but playable version at the Nintendo Spaceworld Expo in Japan . North American previewers received the game a few weeks before the release , and IGN noted that the experience of developing Shining Force for Sega helped Camelot develop a gripping RPG for the handheld .

Camelot originally planned to create a single title instead of a series , and in the extremely early stages of their project they had created a game design document for the one Golden Sun game to be on the Nintendo 64 console . When it became apparent the N64 was to be superseded by the

Nintendo GameCube , Camelot shifted their focus to making a game on the handheld Game Boy Advance . Golden Sun was still intended to be a single game , but due to the hardware limitations of putting the game on a single Game Boy Advance cartridge and the developers ' own desire for what they wanted to do with the game , it was expanded to become two successive games , Golden Sun and Golden Sun : The Lost Age . Scenario writer Hiroyuki Takahashi and director Shugo Takahashi had previously designed Shining Force III , where the story involved playing through the perspectives of both the " good " and " bad " characters . Thinking that it was an effective way of conveying the full story of a fictional game world , they incorporated elements of this storytelling methodology into the two @-@ game setup of the Golden Sun series , having the player control the " good guys " in Golden Sun and some of the antagonists in The Lost Age .

= = Reception = =

Golden Sun sold 740 @, @ 000 copies in the United States and 338 @, @ 000 in Japan . It received critical acclaim ; the title is ranked 91 % and 90 % on the review score aggregator sites Metacritic and GameRankings , respectively . Many reviewers praised the game 's graphics , sound , and varied yet refined RPG gameplay , with particular emphasis on the Battle Mode and Djinn system . Certain critics felt that , despite the technical limitations of its 32 @-@ bit cartridge , the game 's graphical quality was still extremely high ; GameSpot wrote that " Golden Sun is a throwback to some of the SNES 's best . " Complaints generally focused on a perceived overuse of text dialogue in the game 's cutscenes ? particularly during the prologue section . Some faulted the game for relying on the " wander around , get into a random battle , win battle , wander around , random battle , etc . " mechanics present in many other role @-@ playing games .

G4 TV stated , " It 's the best original (nonport) GBA RPG to date " , while GamePro called it a " huge , fantastic , creative , and wickedly fun RPG that doesn 't seem to care that it 's ' just ' on a GBA " . Game Informer called Golden Sun " a visual treat " , and said that its graphics " would have amazed Super Nintendo owners back in the day " . Noting the game 's similarity to previous Japanese role @-@ playing games , the reviewers believed that it was " easily the best original RPG on the GBA " , and the " new ruler in the GBA RPG realm " . Advance compared the game to the Pokémon series , and considered its graphics " luscious " and sound " incredible [and] cinematic " . Despite describing its plot as " Cliche City " , the magazine hailed the game as " the best handheld role @-@ player ever " .

In 2001 , Golden Sun won the Nintendo Power Award for best Game Boy Advance game of the year . Golden Sun was ranked 94 on IGN 's Readers Choice Top 100 games ever . In 2007 , it was named 24th best Game Boy Advance game in IGN 's feature reflecting on the Game Boy Advance 's long lifespan ; the website also named it Game of the Month for April 2003 because it had " amazing graphics and sound presentation , as well as a quest that lasts for more than thirty hours . " It was rated the 31st best game made on a Nintendo system in Nintendo Power 's Top 200 Games list .