

ECHOES OF THE SANKOFA

Comprehensive Mechanics & Systems Specification (v1)

A West■African/Ghanaian■inspired, legacy■driven, procedural strategy roguelite.

Prepared for: Ase Keeper (Design Owner)

Document Type: Game Design Document (GDD) — Mechanics Module

Scope: Mechanics, Systems, Data Model & MVP Requirements

High■Level Pitch

Command the Obosom Sanctum as the Ase Keeper. Summon Echoes (ancestral spirits) with unique personalities, lead 1–6 person squads through procedurally seeded Realms of Ase with varied objectives, and grow a living base. Permadeath is impactful but fuels legacy: fallen heroes pass fragments forward. Ase (time■generated) ensures players always progress; Ekwan (trial essence) gates rank■ups. The loop is infinitely replayable via deterministic procedural generation.

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1. World & Player Role

Setting: Nyamedua — a liminal spiritual realm between the mortal world and the ancestral beyond. You are the Ase Keeper, steward of the Ase Flame. From the Obosom Sanctum, you summon Echoes, rebuild lost knowledge, and confront Realms of Ase governed by forgotten spirits (Abosom).

Design Pillars: Legacy over grind; consequence with compassion; personality-driven systems; procedural variety; steady, time-based progress.

2. Core Pillars

- Deterministic procedural Realms allow infinite progression.
- Permadeath is permanent but fuels Legacy (inheritance fragments).
- Ase trickles in over time; progress never stalls.
- Six-trait personalities drive behavior, dialogue, synergy and leadership.
- Rank tiers (Uncalled, Awakened, Divine Echoes) shape growth and class identity.
- Base (Sanctum) upgrades & support characters create long-term strategy.

3. Resources & Economy

Resource	Lore	Earned By	Used For
Ase (base currency)	Vital life force; the Flame's flow	Passive time generation; realm clearing	Building, buildings, trading
Ekwan (rank essence)	Crystallized path fragments	Realm objectives; bosses; rare drops	Rank ups; awakenings
Relics of Abosom	Blessings tied to deities/spirits	Rare Realm drops; boss chests	Equip or fuse for unique powers

Principles: Ase grants steady progress and reduces frustration. Ekwan gates significant power spikes via rank-up. Relics provide rare, flavorful asymmetry. A Marketplace allows limited Ase↔Ekwan exchange to smooth bad luck.

4. Heroes: Ranks, Traits & Interaction

4.1 Ranks & Identities

- **Ranks 1–2: The Uncalled** — Common folk reborn (farmer, potter, hunter, guard). No class at start. Classes can be learned through deeds; slower growth.
- **Ranks 3–4: The Awakened** — Spiritual soldiers with assigned class & 1–2 abilities. Faster growth; clear roles (Okofor tank, Obayifo dark mage, Onyamesu healer, etc.).
- **Ranks 5–6: Divine Echoes** — Legendary spirits; rare summons; start with multiple traits and a unique Blessing (aura). Highest growth and leadership potential.

4.2 The Six-Trait System

- **Courage:** Bravery vs fear; affects panic, intimidation checks, performance under harsh realms.
- **Virtue:** Good–Evil spectrum; influences harmony, corruption risk, leadership & followership.

- **Wisdom:** Insight; improves auto■decisions and quality of tactical suggestions to the player.
- **Temperament:** Calm↔Rage; governs aggression, disobedience under stress, initiative risk■taking.
- **Faith:** Spiritual resilience; resists curses/fear; boosts in holy or blessed realms.
- **Ambition:** Drive for power/control; impacts loyalty, leadership bids, and event choices.

4.3 Interaction & Advice

Heroes speak in the Shrine of Voices and during missions. Advice quality scales with Wisdom and Faith; tone and intent are colored by Virtue and Ambition. High■rank heroes may request leadership or mentorship roles. Dialogue events can grant small buffs/debuffs, reveal Realm hints, or unlock passive bonds.

5. Summoning, Growth & Rank■Up

5.1 Summoning (Ase■Powered)

Summoning binds an Echo from the Echoes of Ages. Costs Ase; tiered gates affect odds for high■rank arrivals. Pools are lightly re■seeded weekly per player to ensure unique fates. Lower ranks arrive as Uncalled (jobs, no class), mid ranks as Awakened (classed), and upper ranks as Divine Echoes (blessed).

5.2 Growth Paths

- Level & Stats: battle XP; class■weighted gains.
- Class Learning (Uncalled only): repeated actions trigger class discovery events.
- Abilities & Blessings: unlocked by rank and research (Diviner's Library).
- Synthesis: Forge of Souls merges fallen traits into survivors (chance■based, improving with upgrades).

5.3 Rank■Up (Ekwan■Gated)

Rank increases require Ekwan (earned in Realms) or traded from Ase at the Marketplace. Higher ranks cost more Ekwan. Rank■up grants stat multipliers, ability slots, trait fusion opportunities, and leadership potential.

6. Realms of Ase: Procedural Stages & Objectives (6■Hero Squads)

Players deploy up to 6 heroes per Realm. Each Realm is a seeded stage with terrain, element, ambient fear and one or more objectives. Objective catalog (expandable): Purify the Shrine (survive waves), Protect the Totem (defense rounds), Slay the Spirit Lord (boss), Recover the Relic (timed), Escort the Soul (keep NPC alive).

6.1 Outcomes & Consequences

- **Clear:** XP, Ase, chance of Relic, Ekwan, and a temporary Realm Blessing.
- **Fail:** Either full permadeath for deployed heroes (high■tier Realms) or a Severe Wound debuff (e.g., -50% all stats for 5 missions).

6.2 Procedural Seeding

Seed = hash(player_seed + realm_index). Enemy packs, modifiers, and rewards derive from the seed with guardrails (min/max, composition rules). Every 10th Realm is a boss checkpoint with scripted twists.

7. Combat System: AutoBattle, Morale & Fear

Step-based auto battle. Initiative by Speed; action selection by class behavior and Temperament. Morale (0–100) shifts with events; low Courage or Faith increases fear effects. Leadership auras from high-rank heroes mitigate collapse.

- Actions: strike, guard, taunt, heal/buff, special (class-specific).
- Fear Auras: certain Realms impose fear tests; failures may cause skip/retreat/errant actions.
- Damage: simple readable formula with crits; class modifiers layer in later.
- Victory/Defeat hooks apply Realm outcomes and meta-progression.

8. Permadeath & Legacy

Hero death removes the unit permanently but spawns an Ase Echo fragment. The Forge of Souls may imbue new or existing heroes with inherited fragments (trait bumps, unique quirks). The Hall of Lineage increases the odds and potency of meaningful inheritance over time.

Design Intent: Loss stings, but history empowers the next generation.

9. Obosom Sanctum (Base): Buildings & Support Characters

9.1 Buildings

- **Ase Flame:** Generates Ase per minute; upgrades increase flow and unlock rituals.
- **Forge of Souls:** Synthesis & inheritance; upgrade to improve rare trait transfer rates.
- **Shrine of Voices:** Dialogue hub; morale restoration; unlocks relationship events.
- **Hall of Lineage:** Ancestry records; increases legacy fragment quality & chance.
- **Diviner's Library:** Researches abilities, elements, counters; unlocks class passives.
- **Marketplace of Spirits:** Trade Ase↔Ekwan; occasional traveling traders with offers.

9.2 Support Characters (Later Stage, Planned from Start)

- **Diviner/Researcher:** Analyzes relics, unlocks abilities, reveals Realm forecasts.
- **Smith/Craft Spirit:** Forges spirit weapons; upgrades gear using Relics/Ekwan.
- **Lorekeeper:** Captures hero stories; grants narrative-based buffs; unlocks memorials.
- **Trader/Djinn:** Improves exchange rates; spawns timed bargains.
- **Caretaker:** Heals Severe Wounds over time or via offerings; manages recovery queues.

10. Procedural Generation & Determinism

Use a single PRNG keyed by player_seed. Derive subseeds per system: summons, Realms, relics. Keep outcomes reproducible for a given player. Clamp stat rolls; validate with offline autosims. Example seeds: summon_seed = H(player_seed|timestamp), realm_seed = H(player_seed|index).

11. Data Model (Draft Schemas)

11.1 Hero (Echo)

```
{ "id": "ECHO_xxx", "name": "Ama of the Red Dune", "rank": 2, "job": "Hunter",  
// Uncalled only "class": null, // becomes e.g. "Okofor" after discovery  
"traits": { // 1..10 "courage": 6, "virtue": 7, "wisdom": 5, "temperament": 4,  
"faith": 6, "ambition": 5 }, "stats": { "hp": 120, "atk": 18, "def": 10,  
"spd": 11, "faith": 6 }, "abilities": ["basic_strike"], "blessing": null, //  
for Divine Echoes "legacy_fragments": ["courage_minor"], "personality_lines":  
["Keeper, the drums are restless tonight."], "alive": true,  
"wounded_runs_left": 0 }
```

11.2 Realm

```
{ "index": 37, "name": "Vale of Tears", "element": "Water", "modifier":  
"Despair (-morale each round)", "objective": "ProtectTotem", // or  
PurifyShrine, SlaySpiritLord, RecoverRelic, EscortSoul "waves": 3,  
"enemy_pack": [{ "type": "Wailer", "power": 580 }, { "type": "Drowned", "power": 560 } ],  
"rewards": { "ase": 200, "ekwan": 1, "relic_chance": 0.05 }, "on_fail":  
"PermadeathOrSevereWound" }
```

11.3 Sanctum Save

```
{ "player_seed": "ABC123", "resources": { "ase": 860, "ekwan": 3 },  
"buildings": { "ase_flame": 2, "forge_of_souls": 1, "shrine_of_voices": 1 },  
"roster": ["ECHO_001", "ECHO_002", "..."], "lineage_log": ["ECHO_000 died on  
Realm 12; fragment:courage_minor"] }
```

12. MVP Definition (Balanced, Good v1)

- Ase passive generation (+collection UI); basic Marketplace swap Ase↔Ekwan.
- Summoning (procedural heroes with name + 6 traits + rank tier); minimal dialogue line per hero.
- Autobattle (6hero cap); morale/fear checks; readable combat log.
- Realm generator with 3 objectives (Purify Shrine, Protect Totem, Slay Spirit Lord); boss every 10 Realms.
- Outcome logic: Clear → rewards + temp blessing; Fail → permadeath or Severe Wound (–50% stats for next 5 missions).
- Sanctum with 3 buildings (Ase Flame, Forge of Souls, Shrine of Voices), 2 upgrade tiers each.
- Permadeath + Legacy fragments; simple inheritance via Forge of Souls.
- Deterministic PRNG; persistent save/load.

13. UX, Accessibility & Telemetry Notes

- Clarity first: surface squad power, realm danger, and risk of permadeath before deployment.

- Color■agnostic cues (icons, patterns) for elements and states; readable fonts; scalable UI for mobile.
- Combat log with filters (actions, damage, morale events).
- Telemetry hooks (offline): realm index, squad comp, deaths, time■to■defeat, economy delta; export to JSON for balancing.

14. Appendices

A. Example Realm Blessings (temporary buffs)

- Blessing of Calm: +10 Morale on deploy; −10% fear impact for next mission.
- Blessing of Steel: +5% DEF and Guard effectiveness for 1 mission.
- Blessing of Echoes: +1 legacy fragment roll on next hero death (if any).

B. Example Support Character Events

- Diviner vision reveals next Realm element → +10% counter damage if class matches.
- Smith forges a Spirit Blade → +3% ATK aura for squad's melee heroes (1 mission).
- Lorekeeper memorial: fallen hero's story grants +5 Morale on deployment (stacking, capped).

C. Pseudocode Snippets

```
// Deterministic seeds realm_seed = H(player_seed + "|" + realm_index)
summon_seed = H(player_seed + "|" + summon_count) // Morale shift (per round)
morale += (+2 on kill) + (-5 on ally death) + (leadership_aura) +
(realm_modifier) // Fail consequence if realm_failed: if high_tier: permadeath
= true else: wounded_runs_left = 5; apply -50% stats
```