



BRUSHSTROKE
1E



PRELUDE

WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS?

THE GAME OF IMAGINATION

Brushstroke is a fantasy narrative tabletop role-playing game. In other words, this is a game of imagination. It is inspired by myths and legends of ancient imperial china, and tries to evoke the wonderful mix of mystery, drama, and martial arts of those times. Simulating stories seen in Wuxia and Xianxia genres. This is an improvisation game where friends gather together to construct a fantasy story together.

A typical session length varies from table to table, but it is recommended for a session to last between 4 to 6 hours. But games can last anywhere from 30 minutes to 12 hours. It really depends on how the session is going. Brushstroke is all about imagination, just like our childhood games, it is about picturing the scenes and characters, imagining the crowded streets at night lit by red paper lanterns, the smell of food from the restaurants opening in the late summer night, the corrupted master challenging you to a duel. How would you react? What would you do?

In Brushstroke, each player creates a character and interacts with other characters and the world around them, which are played by the other friends at the table.

It is comparable to a movie, in which each player is a protagonist or main character, and the rest of the movie and characters are controlled by the Narrator. The Narrator describes the situations, plans out plots, enemies, NPCs, and such. Everything else that happens is the decision of the players. The Narrator has to write down the multiple possibilities the players may do throughout the session before the session, but after all, it is impossible to predict all decisions, so a good Narrator is also a great improviser.

SO IS THIS A BOARDGAME?

Brushstroke is not a boardgame, it is not the Narrator vs the players, or the players against themselves. It is a collaborative role-playing experience, with the purpose of providing entertainment and strengthening friendship while expanding our imagination. It is an opportunity to create a unique story with unique characters that you and your friend group came up with.

This book and its rules will provide guidelines and are designed to aid in creating stories under this specific aesthetic of mythical china, but you are encouraged to expand your horizons and play in any setting you want.

HOW TO PLAY?

Like most narrative ttrpgs, it usually follows a simple conversational pattern.

1. The Narrator narrates the environment the players find themselves in.

2. The Players narrate how their characters react to the situation.

3. The Narrator narrates the resolution of those actions.

Although it is all verbal and in the mind, some tables prefer some visual aid, like miniatures on a map, pictures, physical objects, etc.

Narrator: So you decided to take the steepy stone stairs to reach the mountain temple. After 5 hours of intense climbing, you finally reach the top. The sun's setting, birds are chirping, and a pleasant breeze brushes over you, cool in the summer's heat, and refreshing your sweat. In the middle of the fabled stone temple, stands a short old man looking at you. Narrator (as the old man): well, that took you a while hehe.

Narrator: he laughs as he strokes his magnificent white beard.

Player 1 (playing as their character): guys! Is that Master Shin?

Player 2: (out of character) out of character- who was Master Shin?

Player 3: (out of character) the guy who taught us how to use a sword!

Player 2: (out of character) oh, I remember now, thanks!. Then I immediately shout (in character) Hey Old Man! What are you doing here!

Narrator: By his face, it is indeed Master Shin, but he is unresponsive, and just repeats what he just said seconds ago (as Master Shin) [well, that took you a while, hehe] and strokes his beard again...

Player 1: I want to sense his Shen, is this an illusion?

Player 2: I run up to him to give him a hand shake!

Player 3: I become extremely conscious of our surroundings. Is this a trap set up by the Shadow Assassin?

USING THIS BOOK

This book is organized into 5 main sections, with an introductory and a finalizing section.

Introduction: important information to read before your first game of brushstroke, it is recommended to not skip the first part.

Chapter 1: Tome of Creation, Tome of Wood: This chapter is for players to lookup the world their character will be in to make themselves more fitting to the setting. Alternatively, if the Narrator wants to change up the world, players will skip this chapter and look at the Narrator for world setting details.

As a Narrator, this chapter is for knowing what things to include to tell your players when creating your own setting.

Chapter 2: Tome of Gameplay, Tome of Fire. This chapter is mainly for the players, here they'll explore the character sheet and learn to make an interesting character.

Chapter 3: Tome of Moderation, Tome of Earth. This chapter contains all the rules to run a smooth game.

Chapter 4: Tome of Structure, Tome of Metal. This chapter is more for Narrators, to give a more defined structure to their games, as well as some Narrator Tips.

Chapter 5: Tome of Forbidden Wisdom, Tome of Water. This chapter is exclusively designed for Narrators to look at. Players are recommended to ignore this chapter.



CORE PHILOSOPHIES

metagaming is a term used in role-playing games, which describes a player's use of real-life knowledge concerning the state of the game to determine their character's actions, when said character has no relevant knowledge or awareness under the circumstances.

DESIGN GOALS

In any game, it is important for the players to be on the same page with the designers. All the rules and design choices were made with these specific goals in mind.

Creativity. Brushstroke is intended to be customized a lot. From new weapons to attributes to arts, the idea is for the Narrator to have fun creating their unique world, and improving the theme's immersion with unique homebrewed rules. Just like the players get to create their characters, each Narrator should get to have the fun of creating their own world and rules with the set of tools that Brushstroke provides. If something doesn't fit in your table, or doesn't make sense to you and your group, feel completely free to change it to your liking.

Immersion and Fiction First, also known as [it makes sense this way] In Brushstroke, never let rules get into the way of the narrative. Remember that IT HAS TO MAKE SENSE. Rules are abstractions to cut to the good part, in which case is roleplaying. Abstraction naturally comes with misunderstanding, therefore if a rule doesn't make sense to your table, be sure to re-read its intended design and meaning, afterwhich, if it still doesn't make sense to you and your table, feel free to change or ignore those rules. Take advantage of the fact that this is not a videogame, and rules should always be molded around the fiction and never the other way around.

Collaborative experience, not competitive game. Related to the previous goal, it is intended to be a collaborative roleplaying experience, not a competition. It is not the players vs the narrator or the players against themselves. Out of character, everyone should be on the same page, of crafting the story together in collaboration, passing on the spotlight between your friends. The aim should be having fun while also striving for the fun of others. This adds onto the idea that the Narrator is over the rules, they have the responsibility to create, change, control, and remove rules as they see what would be better for the story.

As a consequence of those three main goals, below are important and helpful tips that will help your table play Brushstroke the way it was designed.

Sink your boat, lift others'. This means to let yourself be defeated to create a more interesting narrative. When we were kids and we played make-believe fighting with our friends, when we got hit, we would always fall to the ground on our own, we wouldn't wait until our bodies really collapsed. This same spirit should be reignited in Brushstroke. If your character would make a bad decision, do it despite knowing the self-sabotaging consequences, if you think that monster should have dealt more damage to your character, narrate how you are more wounded than the rules dictate. Always sink yourself down to create a greater narrative, or so others have the opportunity to lift

Fun first. Fun comes even before fiction. The narrator is also called the moderator because they have the responsibility of moderating the rules, the fiction, and making sure everyone is having a good time. However, this doesn't exclude them from having fun. So they should voice their concerns and talk to players when something upsets them, just like how players should also talk to everyone else at the table about what makes them feel uncomfortable. Communication is key.

Accept the imbalances. Just like in any story, not all the characters are equally powerful, some are clearly weaker than others, this should will also happen in Brushstroke games, accept the narrative fact that maybe another player's character is more powerful than yours, there's nothing wrong with that as long as it is creating a better story and everyone's having fun.

Find your ideal match. According to brushstroke, [fun] means the collaborative story telling process, and the after-session talk between everyone as friends, remembering the epic tales and funny stories that were made thanks to everyone. However, not everyone sees the same thing as fun, therefore, always be sure to be on the same page with everyone on the table before starting a game. It is extremely important to find a table where everyone is looking for the same type of fun.

Find the balance between metagaming and staying in character. For example, metagaming should be used to avoid making others' uncomfortable. Find what works best at your table.

Brushstroke. Just like the enso and calligraphy, each brushstroke is made without thought with the emotion of the moment, with no way to erase it, finding peace with however the result was. This philosophy carries into roleplaying. Don't worry about making bad choices, saying the wrong things or not being a good enough roleplayer, be happy with how things turn out, and see the bigger picture, a bonding moment with

It is easy to metagame, anyone can foresee an unfavorable outcome and not make a choice. A good player will see through their character's eyes, and make an unbiased decision based solely on their character's perspective. Whether good or bad. Now that is truly respectable.

Neither players or the narrator should ever be biased or competitive. (unless that's the type of game you are all looking for.



Separate player with character, think objectively, good exercise is to give likes, dislikes, hobbies and quirks that differ from you as a person, dissociation is key, starting from simple likes, it will extend to ideals and give better story telling experience.

Don't incarnate into your character, you must know their motivations, strengths and limitations, remain impartial to craft the great story together with everyone else at the table. (don't be playing an rpg)

Important concept: what YOU want is over what the character wants, play like a storyteller, find the perfect balance between immersion and storytelling.

It is about creating the story, an experienced player, will allow their character to fail at a task despite the will of the character, because they know that's how the story moves forward in the best way possible (for him)

player motivation is the most important, character motivations are just another tool to create a better narrative.
Role of the Narrator:
Set the boundaries of imagination.
Coordinate table relationship and logistics

THE FIVE WAYS

Every action is fueled by one or more of the Five Ways.

It is the motivation behind an action, that truly determines its success.

Therefore, the five ways will also represent a character's personality.

The change of ways happens frequently, just as a character's ways strengthen, they may also weaken with time.

(This, is determined solely by the player, when deemed [makes narrative sense])

(Add more text explaining purpose, behavior, RP design goals)

- Not physical/material elements distinction



Thoughtful, Selfless, Responsible, Dutiful, Caring



Independent, Impartial, Organized, Ambitious, Unswerving



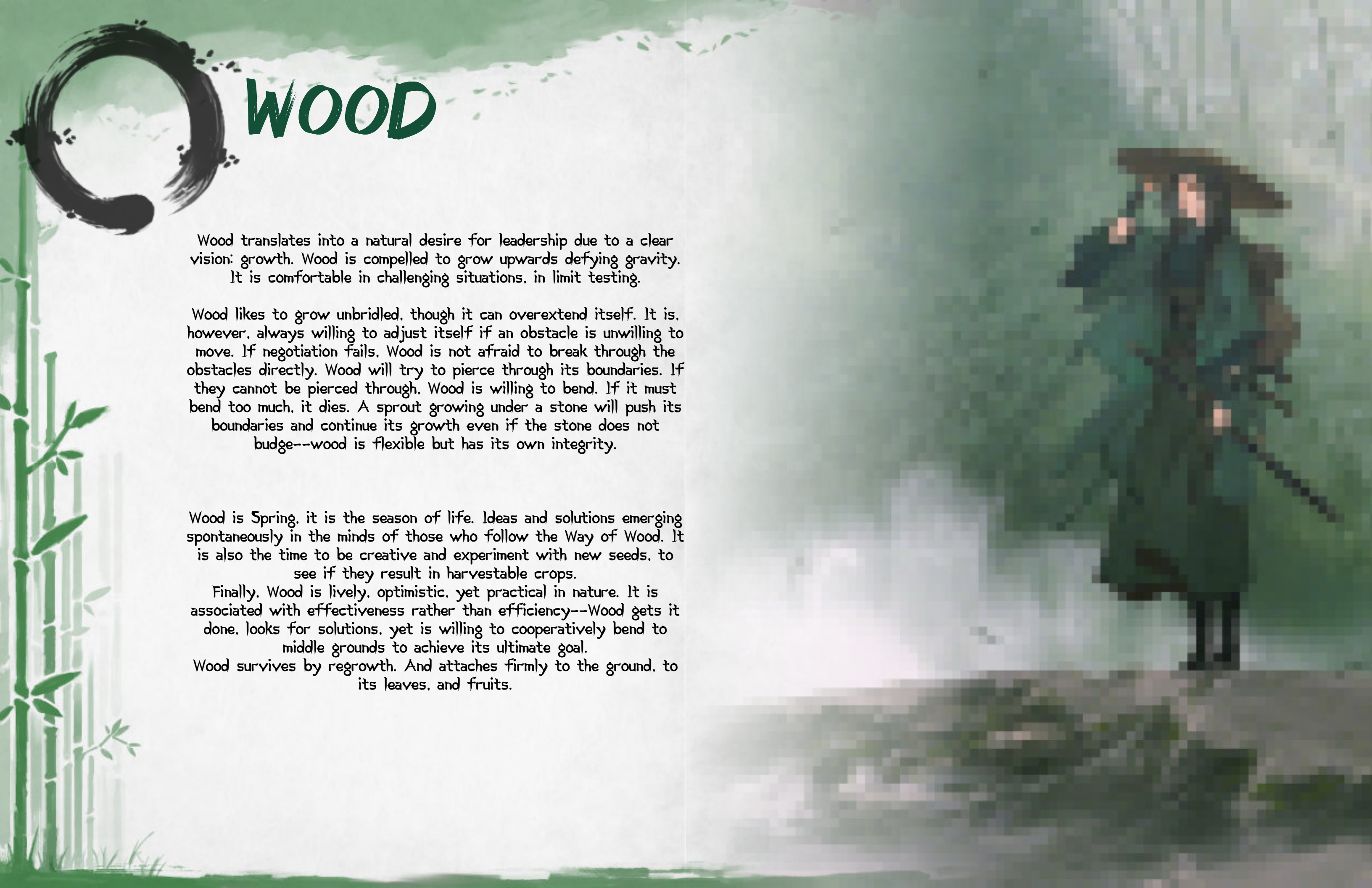
Passionate, Transient, Invasive, Dynamic, Expansive.



Audacious, Purposive, Effective, Flexible, Creative.



Shapeless, Deceptive, Adaptive, Elusive, Efficient



WOOD

Wood translates into a natural desire for leadership due to a clear vision: growth. Wood is compelled to grow upwards defying gravity. It is comfortable in challenging situations, in limit testing.

Wood likes to grow unbridled, though it can overextend itself. It is, however, always willing to adjust itself if an obstacle is unwilling to move. If negotiation fails, Wood is not afraid to break through the obstacles directly. Wood will try to pierce through its boundaries. If they cannot be pierced through, Wood is willing to bend. If it must bend too much, it dies. A sprout growing under a stone will push its boundaries and continue its growth even if the stone does not budge--wood is flexible but has its own integrity.

Wood is Spring, it is the season of life. Ideas and solutions emerging spontaneously in the minds of those who follow the Way of Wood. It is also the time to be creative and experiment with new seeds, to see if they result in harvestable crops.

Finally, Wood is lively, optimistic, yet practical in nature. It is associated with effectiveness rather than efficiency--Wood gets it done, looks for solutions, yet is willing to cooperatively bend to middle grounds to achieve its ultimate goal.

Wood survives by regrowth. And attaches firmly to the ground, to its leaves, and fruits.

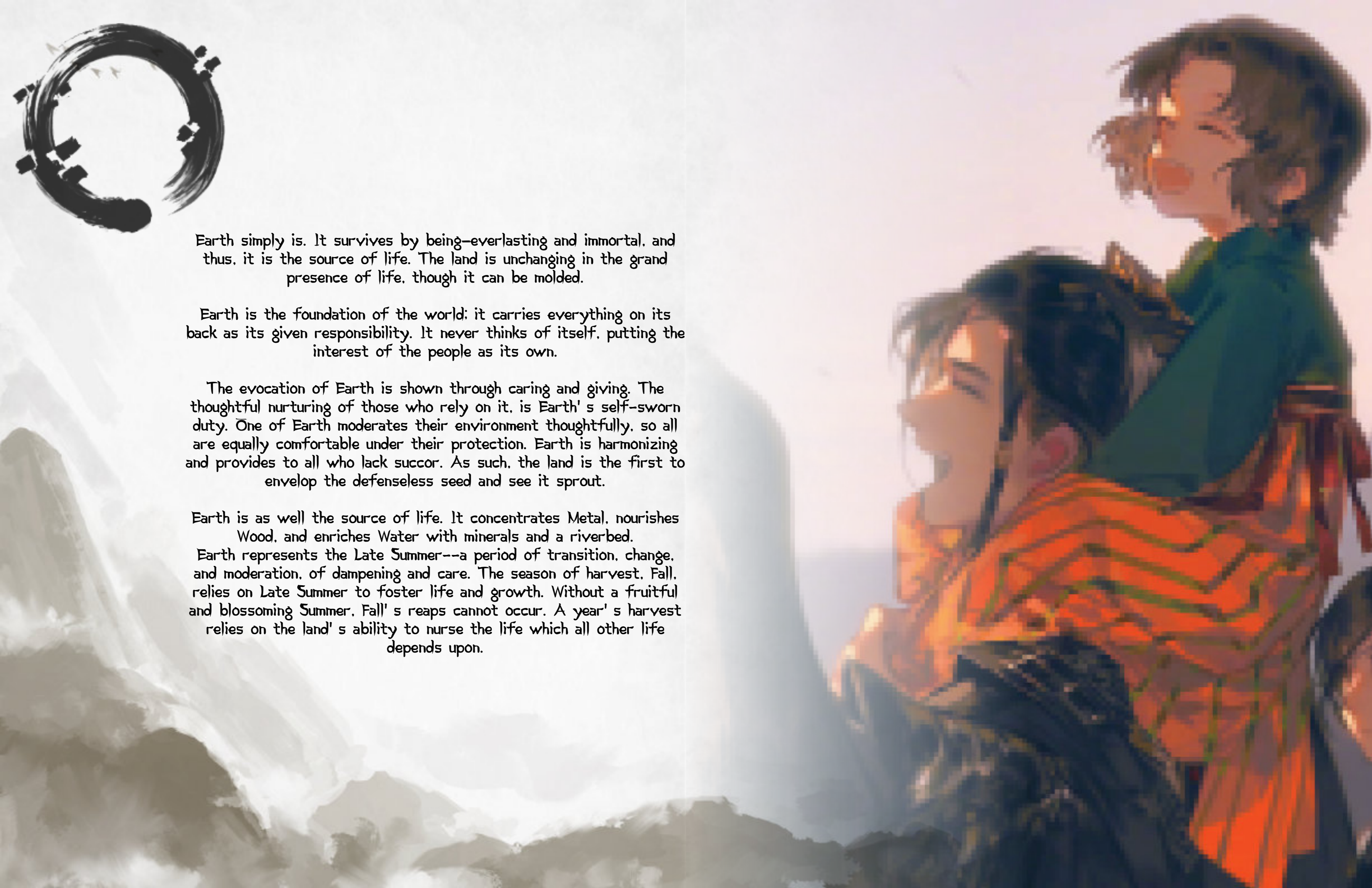


Folks gather by the bonfire, seeking its warmth. Those who follow the Way of Fire are naturally charismatic and the center of attention--they thrive in appraisal and applause. There is a charm to Fire, but it burns those who get too close. In nature, Fire is destructive and aggressive, razing the world in its wake to fuel its expansion. Fire can only survive by consuming. It moves in disregard of others, though with no evil intent. It simply is its way. One who evokes Fire may exhaust and deplete others unintentionally, as it always gives its one hundred and ten. Unsurprisingly, Fire will also eventually burn out one's own self.

Fire's overactive flame is ever-expansive, impossible to contain. Even though it spreads rapidly, it is destined to go out in a short-lived blaze. No candle wick lasts forever. For instance, one of Fire finds new passions in differing places, but loses interest just as quickly.

Fire gives little regard to stability, and its spread is uncontrollable. When contested, it erupts aggressively, lashing out. If Fire can continue to consume, it continues to blaze, until there's nothing left to fuel it. Only when suffocated, does Fire cease its expansion. Fire lacks proper structure, and thus it holds no grudges itself. Fire is Summer, the time of life and activity. It is a period of rampant growth for the seeds sowed during Spring, now blooming with colorful fruits and aromatic flowers.

Fire excels at self-expression.



Earth simply is. It survives by being—everlasting and immortal, and thus, it is the source of life. The land is unchanging in the grand presence of life, though it can be molded.

Earth is the foundation of the world; it carries everything on its back as its given responsibility. It never thinks of itself, putting the interest of the people as its own.

The evocation of Earth is shown through caring and giving. The thoughtful nurturing of those who rely on it, is Earth's self-sworn duty. One of Earth moderates their environment thoughtfully, so all are equally comfortable under their protection. Earth is harmonizing and provides to all who lack succor. As such, the land is the first to envelop the defenseless seed and see it sprout.

Earth is as well the source of life. It concentrates Metal, nourishes Wood, and enriches Water with minerals and a riverbed.

Earth represents the Late Summer—a period of transition, change, and moderation, of dampening and care. The season of harvest, Fall, relies on Late Summer to foster life and growth. Without a fruitful and blossoming Summer, Fall's reaps cannot occur. A year's harvest relies on the land's ability to nurse the life which all other life depends upon.



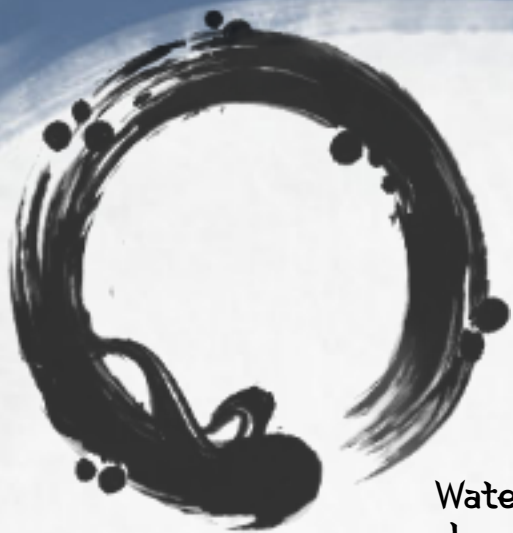
Metal is cold and rigid. On the surface, one may think that it does not possess emotions.

Metal is ambitious, it has a purpose and will strike down any obstacles in its path. One who evokes Metal accomplishes their goals however necessary--from relentlessly chopping down a forest, to patiently mining through a mountain. It is unswerving, unbending, and possesses a thirst for control. The evocation of Metal asks for not only victory, but victory in its own terms. One of Metal is self-reliant and possesses little regard for others--unless they are useful for a cause. A position of power allows one to allocate manpower and distribute resources. Thus, Metal naturally seeks the role of leadership to ensure everything is carried out to perfection.

However, while Metal is uncompromising and unyielding, it is not devoid of heart. Once tempered, steel is malleable, and any dent and scratch becomes permanent on its body. Hence why Metal never forgets.

Metal is Fall, the season of harvest. Fall is the season when all life begins to plan for the future. Plants wither and drop their next generation deep into the land, hoping for the first rays of Spring to awaken the dormant life. Crops bear harvest, allowing the folk to prepare for a remorseless Winter. Trees let go of their leaves, in order to brace against the biting cold, and preserve any nutrients left within their bodies. Metal represents life's ability to grasp all necessary preparations to face upcoming challenges.

Impartial and unbiased, persistence



Water is subtle, mysterious, and elusive. While Water is formless, shapeless in nature, it is not powerless. Water is among the most powerful forces, as with time, even drips off a roof can slowly dent through solid stone. Water, in large enough quantity, can be dark and fathomless, as the jade river. Yet while water can be raging, it can be tranquil as a mirror.

Water thrives within the flow, finding conformity in whatever place it arrives to. Water does not have goals or ambitions, it is passive and follows the movement of the world around it. It sees no purpose in defying gravity, thus it finds the lowest point to roost. Water remains stagnant until it is moved, or a way further lower opens up for it.

Water is wise and adaptive. It can take the form of vapor or ice, depending on the circumstances it happens upon. It transforms depending on the circumstances, valuing efficiency over specificity or methods. The wisdom of Water is demonstrated in its ability to take advantage of all and every situation. To one who evokes Water, a setback is merely a newfound opportunity. Its shapelessness, unpredictability, and apparent serenity, grant Water an edge far more dangerous than attributed. The river that feeds the village is the same which floods and destroys after a night of thundering storm.

Water represents the season of Winter, a period of retreat, reservation, and stillness. It is dangerous, and at times unforgiving. The cold of Winter is blind, in the same way Water is no friend nor foe. Water can flow, or it can crash.





TOME OF CREATION

WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS?

From investigation, to drama, to adrenaline-packed action, any genre is possible in Brushstroke. Depending on the specific genre you are aiming for, you will create different worlds and maybe alter some of the rules.

As a system, brushstroke is a canvas, a starting point to develop a more customized system for each table.

This book will be written to support the 'main' way to play it, which is a balanced mix of melodrama and action.

The same thing goes with the world setting, this book will provide an entire world, with its culture, traditions, supernatural phenomena, and fighting styles, however, every table is encouraged to either alter or create their own world to fit their needs.

Be sure to try out my version of Brushstroke first!

WELCOME TO THE CHOSEN LAND

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, then it means that my attempt at sending this journal to my homeworld proved successful. You might be wondering who I am or what this book is about, well, this is my journal, here lies everything I collected from my journeys to the Chosen Land. Through my stay, I was taught that wisdom is best preserved with ink, and that no .

Let me guide you through my journey to the Chosen Land, or [Tensha] as pronounced in [Wen], their standard language.

A land of discipline and passion, a land of wisdom and mystery, a land of art and mastery.

LEGENDARY ORIGIN

The Chosen Land was designed, created, and is regulated by nature itself. By something they call [Shen], the omnipresent energy of the world. (Shen would be the equivalent of our word for [God] or [supreme arbiter], but it has many more meanings that I shall expand on briefly, but it also includes the idea of natural selection, evolution, and our abilities of free will and determinism alike)

[It is no coincidence that some of us have the ability to question existence, while most animals simply live in bliss, it is no coincidence that we have wars, crafts, and arts, while we lack what other animals take for granted, everything in this land is not opposing but complementary, just like life and death itself.]

PHILOSOPHY & CULTURE

In the Chosen Land, everything is related, intertwining, harmonizing, and conflicting with everything else.

Of course, each city or establishment had their own rules, but there were some [universal] values that were deemed to be good, and bad.

MORALITY IN THE CHOSEN LAND

Does Shen define good and bad? Having explored theology and accepting no ethereal god or supreme being was present in the world (at least not in the sense we would classify it), scholars of Tensha studied the cosmos, nature, and all things we can theorize of, constantly aspiring for knowledge. Scholars agreed on that no virtue is objective, and if there is one, it is the virtue to understand relativity. They reached the conclusion that society should establish rules that felt [natural] or [instinctive] as a parameter. Since everything is equally subjective, then let our nature (Shen) be our guide.

[That is what I call, the beautiful irony. Thousands of years of thinking and theorizing, made us reach the conclusion that in order to reach a conclusion, we must stop thinking.] - Master Wanshu

I remember asking old Master Wanshu, a renowned scholar of the Rain Dragon House, if this meant that [Shen guiding instincts] was the supreme objectivity. He laughed as if I misunderstood everything he has said so far, and stated: Shen offers us the pathways, it is up to each individual to choose which path to walk on... Moral conflicts are a necessary part of our existence and it is not something to be avoided. However, without an established point of reference, we cannot meaningful discussion. We just happened to pick an arbitrary path and call it [the main path], (he did a play on words: [main path] uses the same words as [objective morality]). but we could have easily picked any other path, actually, we already did in the past, and there is nothing wrong with that, morality should flow and change with dynasties.

CODE OF SOCIETY: HONOR

These teachings were passed from generation to generation, forming a code of Honor deeply ingrained into the culture, a sense of pride in [doing what' s right and preventing what' s wrong] These are often different from what the government imposes onto the society. Scholars of the Chosen Land had chosen 5 values as their societal virtues. When I asked why 5, Master Wanshu told me it was because we had five fingers on our hands, but I think he was just playing a silly joke on a foreigner. Each virtue is represented by a word in their language [Wen], There' s no direct translation but I tried my best to capture their essence.

KINDNESS One must be aware of the feelings of others. Do not do unto others what you do not want to be done unto you. At the end of the day, trying to make those you care about happy is all that matters. The concept of altruism or disinterest of material value is also considered as part of this virtue.

COURAGE One must not leave others behind. A virtuous man will stand up against the tyrant to help the weak.

INTEGRITY One must stay truthful and fair. Integrity is all about having sportsmanship, whether in board games, martial arts tournaments, sports, or struggles of life. Integrity also means keeping every promise made, loyalty, and devotion, and perhaps most importantly it is also self-worth, in the sense of confidence and [know your place] alike, being honest with other and yourself.

RETRIBUTION One must be thankful of what they have, just like one can be angered for what was taken from them. From repaying good deeds, to seeking vengeance to bring a villain to justice, bringing retribution is considered a virtue. Everything is in constant change and motion, nothing lasts forever, not even nothingness. They are all actions that keep the world in motion. (Integrity comes into play here, it is not the same to kill someone to avenge your master, rather than killing them using your dead master as an excuse.) *

*Retribution Chains: a common concept, when two families are constantly avenging each other' s losses, resulting in never ending hatred toward each other.

WISDOM: One must be wise in their decisions and possess their own judgment for every situation.

One must be courageous but that does not exempt them from knowing which fights to choose. One must be kind and altruistic, but that does not exempt them from taking care or standing up for themselves.

One must have integrity, but that does not exempt them from being loyal to corrupt powers or keeping forced promises.

One must seek retribution, but that does not exempt them from being prudent and looking at the bigger picture, and analyzing the possible repercussions of their actions down the line. One must strive for acquiring and passing on knowledge, like how a bucket carries water, we carry knowledge, if knowledge is lost, tradition will be lost.

As you can see, all concepts are directly related to each other, forming a solid set of Honor code. However, it is also explicitly stated that these virtues will obviously collide, even though we follow the same Honor code, it is not guaranteed we will see the other as a paragon of the tenets. Combinations of these tenets result in important ideals of the culture, such as [respect the elder] comes from a combination of Kindness, Retribution, Integrity, and Wisdom.

OTHER IMPORTANT VALUES

This core foundation of five virtues created some important values in their society over the years. These are things that are seen as qualities that make [a good person] by the general population.

Note: these are not official, but is what I got from surveying and studying people from all over the continent.

Similar to the virtues, I could not find the perfect translations for each word, but I tried my best with the meaning. Use the 5 virtues as a foundation to better understand these societal values.

OPEN MINDEDNESS

Understanding other people' s perspectives, learning to appreciate the opinion of others, and being willing to give new experiences a chance before denying them.

DISCIPLINE

Being in control of your actions, therefore taking responsibility in everything you do. This includes being productive, constant, hard working, and independent.

RESPECT

Respect others' boundaries, preferences, and experience, especially the elders. Being down to earth and humble, acknowledging the greatness of the universe: there' s always a higher ceiling to reach, there' s always a lesson to be learned. This is also the quality of knowing how to be respected by having a proper judgment of when to stand up for yourself.

BALANCE

It is important to not jump to extremes and maintain proper moderation of everything in life. Don' t overwork, but also don' t be lazy, don' t overeat, but also don' t starve. This applies to mental, physical, and spiritual growth too.

INNOVATION

The world is ever changing, ideas come and go. One should strive to innovate and create, whether in art, technology, or spirituality, contributing to society' s lake of knowledge is considered as a good quality. Sharing newfound discoveries is equally as valuable as discovering it in the first place. Tangentially, the mentality of constant improvement - of striving for perfect while acknowledging that perfect is impossible - is also associated with this quality.

MINDFULNESS

Since there is no truth, and only experience in this world, live. Being able to enjoy even the little things in life, accepting fate, destiny, and most importantly being conscious of the present moment and appreciate the gift that is the present.

HONOR AND HEART

Being honorable may seem simple, but when your heart comes into play, things are quite different. Everyone has desires, personal ambitions, dark secrets, and thoughts. As much as we try, we will never be able to suppress those feelings forever, they are bound to burst out.

[You know I love you too, but what will happen to the reputation of your family when people find out their eldest son decided to marry a mere servant?] -excerpt from a novel.

SHEN

Even though Shen may seem an abstract concept, let me tell you how it relates to them on the physical level. Shen is the energy within people, it represents their instincts and vital energy. It is also the fabric that ties the cosmos together, it is their consciousness, and it is their spirit. One recharges Shen through breathing, by tapping into the life source that nature provides. Not everyone has the same amount of Shen in their bodies, stronger people have more Shen. Strong not in the physical sense, but in general. Legends rumor that people with similar Shen levels attract each other.

[Dangerous men meet in narrow streets]

SHEN AFFINITY

Shen affinity is different than the overall Shen a person possesses.

We describe Shen affinity as the power to control the flow of Shen, unlike a person' s Shen level which is a byproduct of their vitality. Shen affinity can be actively improved through training with meditation and breathing exercises. Masters of Shen can achieve supernatural feats such as running on water, breathing fire, or controlling the wind.

Shen, although one and the same, is classified into different sub-types, some people are born with Fire Shen, some with Water Shen, it is not genetics nor predictable. Shen chooses your Shen affinity at birth. However, you can always learn to control other types of Shen through training. New types of Shen are discovered continuously over the years.

ADORATION FOR JADE

Jade is the sacred stone of the Chosen Lands, this is not only due to its unique beauty, but also because Jade is the purest material form of Shen. It was discovered that Pure Jade is able to store Shen inside of it, in order to be extracted later on. Jade Shen Masters are also able to store messages and information inside Jade slips.

SHEN AFFINITIES

Water Shen

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

THE SKY AND THE LAKE

There's a common saying that there are 2 social circles, that are different worlds operating in different rhythms of each other. The sky and the lake

THE SKY

The sky refers to the official government, a world of courtesy, law, and regulations, but also of greed, bureaucracy, and power. It is composed of people that are on top controlling the life of others, telling others what to do, and consuming what others produce, living in an illusion of perfection unaware of what people are actually going through.

GEOPOLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Chosen Land has been under the Yue Dynasty, or [Blood Moon Dynasty] for the past 700 years, a corrupt government ruled by the young emperor Yue Qing, who is bringing demise to the land due to his ignorance, hunger for power, and childish ambitions.

The land is divided into 12 [Homelands], each with their own cities and capital city. A major is assigned by the emperor to rule each Homeland. These homelands were divided due to their geological differences as well as what they contribute to the entire Chosen Land. Even though Dynasties come and go, the Homeland division has remained the same for at least ten thousand years.

CONFLICTS

It is hard to manage a dynasty this big, naturally, conflicts arise all the time, rebellions against the government, civil war, fights between Homelands, even fights between cities of the same Homeland, war is unavoidable, just like times of peace. The huge disparity between economic statuses also doesn't help to bring harmony and union into the Land.

External conflicts are less frequent, since the Chosen Land has no neighboring civilization other than itself, however, there have been cases of foreign invaders from exotic far away lands, as well as expeditions to conquer beyond the borders of the Chosen Land, but they all resulted in nothing.

THE LAKE

The lake is the counterculture society of commonwealth who shape their destiny with their own hands: craftsmen, thieves, wandering herbalists, and martial artists. It is an underworld governed by the people, their values, and their fists.

MARTIAL COMMITTEES

The highest form of organization in the Lake are Martial Committees, which are alliances formed when two or more Houses come onto mutual agreement on particular issues. Such as protecting a sacred place, fighting off the government, or destroying another Martial Committee. The largest committee is the Chosen Enclave. Established by the most powerful Houses, it is often seen as the big brother that everyone must respect.

HOUSES

Other times referred as [School], a House is a martial arts organization composed of about 5-10 big families and up to hundreds of small families. Some Houses live literally in one same imperial house, others have their schools and families spread throughout their territory. The most prestigious families are the ones who govern the Houses.

Families do not necessary share the same biological origins, many people adopt or exchange disciples and children. Once you join a family and you change your last name, you are responsible of living up to its reputation and making sure of honoring and not bringing shame to your family.

HOUSE TERMS

Common House terms:

Ruling Families: The most prestigious or important families of the House.

Burden Families: The worst or most useless families that are bringing down the honor and glory of the House.

Master: Patriarch, matriarch or most important person of the family.

Inner Circle: Those of trust, nominated by the Master, usually will act as general teachers or mentors in classrooms, passing on the secrets of the House.

Guardian: Most disciples eventually become Guardians after they finish they are approved by the Inner Circle and their Guardian, their responsibility is to mentor a disciple on a personal level.

Favored: Those that come from favored families or earned the upper ranks' trust

Disciple: A disciple is someone who just joined the House, they are assigned to a Guardian for supervision and mentoring.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLE

Each House has their own distinct martial arts style that has been passed down over generations. However, each family within the House usually refines their own alterations, resulting in a rich mix of different varieties of styles.



