Sumeru: One Thought, A Thousand Worlds

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Project Overview

Sumeru: One Thought, A Thousand Worlds is an experimental narrative game project initiated by Boston Bilingual Pioneer Media. Inspired by Buddhist cosmology and contemporary understandings of perception and meaning-making, the project explores how humans construct stability, identity, and purpose through repeated choices and expectations. Rather than presenting religious doctrine or didactic explanation, the game uses interactive experience to invite players into a world that appears ordered and meaningful, and gradually reveals how that order is sustained through attachment and habit.

Conceptual Foundation: "Sumeru"

In Buddhist cosmology, Sumeru does not merely refer to a mythical mountain, but to the axis of order and perception around which worlds are structured. In this project, Sumeru functions as a metaphor rather than a literal location. It represents the assumed center that gives coherence, hierarchy, and meaning to one's world. The game translates this cosmological insight into an experiential form, allowing players to encounter how such a center is maintained through their own actions and expectations.

Core Experience Goals

The core experience of the game emphasizes observation over domination and awareness over accumulation. Players are invited to feel how order and reward emerge through repetition, and how systems designed to provide stability can quietly limit freedom. Progress is marked not by power gained, but by shifts in perception, moments of pause, and the recognition of patterns that were previously taken for granted.

Relationship to Contemporary Thought

While inspired by Buddhist cosmology, the project does not seek to synthesize or explain religious or scientific theories. Instead, it engages in implicit dialogue with contemporary psychology and cognitive science through design. Ideas such as habit formation, attention, and meaning-making inform the structure of the experience without appearing explicitly in the game. This approach allows players to encounter these patterns firsthand, rather than being instructed about them.