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THE BIRTH OF REPUBLIC CITY**



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Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Ad-Hoc Crisis Committee! I know you have been patiently waiting for the topic to drop...hopefully you all were able to put together the clues I left behind on the website. We will be debating within the world of Avatar: The Last Airbender! The excitement regarding the new Netflix Live-Action series reignited my love and passion for the world of Avatar that I grew up with. Since a new generation will get to experience this amazing intricate world, I thought it would be the perfect jumping off point for an exciting weekend of debate.

Taking place after the Hundred Year, the reality in which you find yourselves will be that of rebuilding the Four Nations. You will be part of the United Republic Council, tasked with ushering in this new era of peace and advancement. Although fictitious, the Avatar World raises important questions that nations recovering from war must answer. How do we rebuild? How do we restore? Do we start anew? How do we hold aggressors accountable? I am beyond excited to see how you tackle this massive challenge!

To give a little background on me, my name is Laura Somoza, and I will be your Crisis Director. I am a Senior on the CMCMUN Team who unfortunately is graduating in a few short weeks (and whose Thesis is due on Monday). I am originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico where I had the pleasure of growing up surrounded by beautiful beaches but before I arrived at Claremont,

I lived in São Paulo, Brazil. I am a dual major in History and International Relations with an interest in Latin American and Human Rights. I hope you have as much fun this weekend as I did when writing this background guide for all of you!

Laura Somoza

Crisis Director, Ad-Hoc Crisis Committee for McKennaMUN XI

lsomoza24@cmc.edu

Committee Introduction

Welcome to the world of Avatar: The Last Airbender! Although it may seem silly, view this fictional world as a vehicle to discuss real issues that plague post-war societies on their road to recovery. The creators of this world pull heavily from different Asian cultures, with the main plot drawing from historical tensions of conquest in east Asia.¹ The Fire Nation, the antagonist, holds similar characteristics to that of Imperial Japan. Whereas the Earth Kingdom mainly resembles Chinese culture, also drawing from Korea and Thailand. The Water Tribes were imagined with various aboriginal tribes in mind. Lastly, the Air nomads, were created in the image of Tibetan

¹ Andrew R. Chow, "Avatar: The Last Airbender Is a Love Letter to Asian Cultures," Time, February 2024, <https://time.com/6696684/avatar-last-airbender-asian-influences/>.

monks, drawing inspiration from the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. ² Apart from the plot, the characters themselves encounter and interact with themes associated with war contexts such as genocide, duty, trauma, spirituality, and responsibility.

The World of Avatar is one heavily connected to the four traditional elements. Water. Air. Earth. Fire. The origins of the modern world lie in the deep connection with nature and spirituality, with the birth of what are known as bending abilities, deriving from this convergence. Benders are humans who can wield one of the four elements; someone can be an Airbender, a Waterbender, a Firebender, or an Earthbender. Or simply just a human. In this world, benders and non-benders live integrated in nations divided by the elements.

Within these nations, come to expect everything that you would find in our world. The original 2005 series mimics our world during the 1600s-1800s, pre-industrialization. At the end of the series, the Avatar World is propelled into global industrialization, with the nations ending their long tradition of isolationism. The 2012 spin-off series, *The Legend of Korra*, takes place 70 years after the end of the previous series. The Avatar World now resembles what our world looked like in the 1920s, with new representative political structures replacing old monarchies, and industrialization propelling technological innovation and private enterprise.

² Ziyad Bulbulia, "The Cultural Influences of Avatar: The Last Airbender," The Art Nerd, July 2019, <https://ziyadtheartnerd.wordpress.com/2018/05/23/the-cultural-influences-of-avatar-the-last-airbender/>.



167 AG: Republic City (*Avatar: Legend of Korra*)

Therefore, when thinking about what to do for your background arcs, feel free to draw inspiration from the real world but also don't be afraid to dive headfirst into fantastical elements! There are plenty of fantastical elements that you can pull from and expand on from the show, but also feel free to look elsewhere for inspiration; if you can integrate it within the Avatar World, it is okay with us!

Background:



The Earth Kingdom is known for its diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and formidable earthbending abilities. Governed by an extensive system of monarchies and local leaders, the Earth Kingdom values stability, tradition, and unity. Its culture places a strong emphasis on agriculture, craftsmanship, and communal values, with cities like Ba Sing Se serving as bustling centers of trade and culture. Earthbending is deeply ingrained in their society, symbolizing strength, resilience, and the power of the earth itself.



The Air Nomads were historically roamers, pacifists and highly spiritual beings. With all nomads being born with the ability to airbend, their culture was rooted in achieving harmony with nature, detaching themselves from worldly affairs and possessions, keeping balance with the spirit world, and reaching enlightenment. Their people were split between four major sacred sites: the Northern Air Temple, the Western Air Temple, the Eastern Air Temple, and the Southern Air Temple. Due to what is now known as the “Air Nomad Genocide,” their entire culture and race was thought to be extinct for a Hundred Years...that was until Aang was discovered frozen in a block of ice.



The Fire Nation is best illustrated by the characteristics of the elements they wield: fire. Determined and strong willed, the Fire Nation have historically been at the forefront of industrial and technological advancements. Led by the Fire Lord, it has a strong past of militarism and expansionism, seeking to dominate other nations. Fire Nation culture is deeply rooted in honor, discipline, and loyalty to the nation. Firebending is seen as a symbol of strength and is taught to citizens from a young age, contributing to the nation's formidable military prowess.



The Northern and Southern sister tribes together make up what is historically known as the Water Tribe. They are known for their resilience, spirituality, and connection to the natural elements of water and ice. They inhabit the polar regions and live in harmony with the surrounding icy landscapes. Waterbending is intertwined within their culture, serving both as a practical skill for survival and a spiritual practice that honors their ancestors and the spirits of the ocean. Water Tribe's culture surrounds the values of community, tradition, and cooperation, with a strong emphasis on family ties and respect for elders.



The Avatar, being the only person who can master all four elements, embodies the spirit of balance and harmony between the four nations. Reincarnated over generations, the Avatar serves as a bridge between the physical human and spirit worlds. Their duty is to maintain peace and order in the world, guided by the principles of compassion, justice, and understanding across all nations. Currently an Air Nomad, Aang, originally from the Southern Air Temple, holds this heavy responsibility. After the world thought he disappeared, Aang resurfaced in 99AD, in what is now known as the beginning of the end of the Hundred-Year War.

The Hundred Year War

"Water. Earth. Fire. Air. My grandmother used to tell me stories about the old days, a time of peace when the Avatar kept balance between the Water Tribes, Earth Kingdom, Fire Nation, and Air Nomads. But that all changed when the Fire Nation attacked. Only the Avatar mastered all four elements. Only he could stop the ruthless firebenders. But when the world needed him most, he vanished..." ~ Katara (Avatar: The Last Airbender)

First Stage 0 – 20 AG

Fire Lord Sozin commenced what would be known as the Hundred Year war, with a major offensive against the Air Temples. Seen as a powerful adversary to Fire Nation expansion and conquest, Sozin made use of the rare celestial event to annihilate the air nomad race. With the Comet enhancing all firebender's abilities with the power of 100 suns, they were able to swiftly decimate the four air temples in a coordinated attack, while also levying smaller attacks on the other nations as distractions.



99AG: Avatar Aang finds the dead body of his old Master Gyatso in the destroyed Western Air Temple.

(Avatar: The Last Airbender)

Known as the Air Nomad Genocide, it was successful in destroying the entire air nomad culture, way of life, and the airbending skill from existence. However, it was unsuccessful in killing the one individual who had the power to end Sozin's fire empire ambition: the Avatar. Without

knowledge of the immanent attacks, Avatar Aang ran away from the Western Air Temple with his Air Bison Appa. Caught in a storm, Aang plummeted from the sky, never to be seen again...at least not until 100 years later. Nobody knew what happened to the Avatar, but they knew he was still alive since they had yet to reincarnate. The longer the war continued, and more time the world spent without an Avatar, the more the world lost hope.

During his disappearance, the Fire Nation was busy. After the Air Nomads, they directed their attention to the Earth Kingdom, the largest and most expansive nation. Building off their initial economic and technological superiority, the Fire Nation was able to build a massive, sophisticated military force which was far more advanced than its adversaries’.

Second Stage (20-99 AG)

During Fire Lord Azulon’s reign, major raids on the Southern Water tribe became the norm. With strong resistance coming from waterbenders, eradicating all waterbenders from the tribe became the official policy of the fire nation. Now settled into the swing of things, the initial strong resistance of the Earth Kingdom began to dwindle. Its massive territory made it difficult for the Kingdom to fend off the Fire Nation from all sides, concentrating their forces in protecting the strong holds of Omashu and Ba Sing Se. Newly acquired Earth Kingdom territories were quickly

turned into fire nation colonies, adding to the prosperity of the Fire Nation and subsequently supporting the war effort by supplying food and resources.



57 AG: A newly conquered Fire Nation Colony (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

A notable defeat of the Fire Nation was the Siege of Ba Sing Se, led by General Iroh “The Dragon of the West.” He led a six-hundred-day siege of the infamous tiered wall city, managing to penetrate the outer ring. However, after hearing of the death of his son, he retreated, abandoning major territorial gain. Ozai saw the downfall of his older brother as his opportunity to become Fire Lord. In a plan to convince his father Azulon, Ozai used the death of Iroh’s son as justification as to why he should become Fire Lord instead; pointing at his two children, Zuko and Azula, as proof that the Fire Lord lineage would live on through them. Ozai was crowned Fire Lord in 95 AG, when it came to light that Azulon’s dying wish was that Ozai be his heir.

After surviving an initial attack from the Fire Nation in 0AG, the Northern Water Tribe closed its once infamous port city, adopting a policy of isolation and non-interference. It became an impenetrable fortress of ice, defeating all subsequent Fire Nation offenses, most notably in 15AG and 99AG. Its sister tribe, the Southern Water Tribe, wasn't so lucky. The Fire Nation was easily able to dwindle its numbers through a series of raids, taking prisoner or killing the majority of its waterbenders.

Final Stage 99AG - 100 AG

Everything changed when Team Avatar joined the war effort. Winter 99 AG. Southern Water Tribe. Sokka and Katara, siblings from the Wolf Cove, were out fishing for their village, when they came across a strange ice structure. Poking around the large spherical ice block, suddenly, the ground starts to tremble, and the ice starts to shatter. As the cold air clears, they find a kid covered in blue arrow tattoos and orange robes standing in the rubble next to a giant furry creature. As they later find out, the kid was the long-lost Avatar Aang who was frozen in ice since the first Fire Nation attack in 0 AG.

After finding out the world had been entrenched in War while he was frozen in ice, Aang knew he had to finally step up as the Avatar and find a way to stop the Fire Nation and restore

balance to the world. With Sokka, Katara, and Appa by his side, Aang set off to master all four elements to be ready to face the powerful Fire Lord Ozai.

In his journey, he met various friends along the way such as Toph Beifong, the Kyoshi Warriors, Master Pakku, and more, who would become essential in helping Aang reach his full bending potential. He also encountered various adversaries along the way, coming to blows with Fire Nation forces multiple times. Most notably, Prince Zuko was in constant pursuit of Team Avatar. Three years before Aang was discovered, Zuko had been banished from the Fire Nation by his father after he had spoken out of turn against one of his Generals during a war council meeting. Fire Lord Ozai told Zuko he wasn't allowed to set foot back into Fire Nation territory until he successfully captured the Avatar. Therefore, to restore his honor, he chased the Avatar with his Uncle Iroh, managing to capture him various times. However, after a confrontation with his father, he soon realized his true destiny was to help the Avatar defeat Fire Lord Ozai. After much convincing, Zuko joined Team Avatar and became Aang's firebending teacher.



100 AG: Team Avatar gets ready to leave for the final battle against Fire Lord Ozai. (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

Fire Lord Ozai planned to use the same Comet that his grandfather used to start the war, to end it; planning a decisive attack against the Earth Kingdom. Knowing that he would have to potentially kill Fire Lord Ozai to end the war, Aang faced a moral dilemma. His personal values as an air nomad taught him to be compassionate and protect all life. But his duty as the Avatar was to maintain balance and peace, propelling him to consider taking Fire Lord Ozai's life as the necessary price to pay for ending the prolonged suffering of the war.

In his journey to find alternatives to taking the Fire Lord's life, Aang consulted his various past lives. During his spiritual journey to make an ethical decision, he discovered the ancient art

of energybending, which allowed him to take away someone's bending ability by manipulating their spiritual energy to sever their connection to their bending element.



100AG: Aang energybending (*Avatar: The last Airbender Series*)

In an epic final showdown, Aang and Fire Lord Ozai finally come face to face. After various blows, Aang activates the Avatar State, tapping into his newly learned ability. He is able to successfully overtake Ozai's energy and remove his ability to firebend, defeating the Fire Lord while still holding true to his values. This effectively marked the end of the Hundred Year War.

Post-War Realities:

The end of the Hundred Year War was not all rainbows and sunshine. Yes, Fire Lord Ozai was stripped of his bending abilities and thrown in prison but removing him from power did not resolve all the destruction he left behind. All four nations needed to make severe adjustments for their societies to flourish in the newfound era of peace.³



100 AG: Aang and Zuko stand together after his coronation as Fire Lord. (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

One of the most pressing challenges would be tackling the integration of soldiers back into the fold of society.⁴ These are individuals who have known nothing but war, being born and raised

³ David Wessel and Dave Skidmore, “What Lessons Do Past International Efforts at Rebuilding War-Torn Countries Hold for Organizing the Reconstruction of Ukraine?,” Brookings, December 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-lessons-do-past-international-efforts-at-rebuilding-war-torn-countries-hold-for-organizing-the-reconstruction-of-ukraine/>.

⁴ Kathleen Frydl, “Readjustment & Postwar Life,” American Soldier in WWII, 2021, <https://americansoldierww2.org/topics/readjustment-and-postwar-life>.

under the impression that they were going to grow up to be soldiers. All governments need to take the initiative to provide proper avenues for employment and avenues for individuals who want to acquire new skills and pursue education. Additionally, governments need to provide pathways for veterans and citizens alike to receive general counseling to treat any PTSD or trauma they may be experiencing due to the prolonged war.⁵

Especially, a reframing of the post war narrative needs to occur in the Fire Nation. They had been the aggressors in a century long war, were indoctrinated under extreme Fire Nation nationalism from birth, and were used to committing acts of violence under superior's orders. Also, a large influx of soldiers returning into society comes with its own economic challenges on an already strained job market and consequences for gender roles.⁶ Therefore, creating concrete avenues and policies that target these individuals should be at the top of the list. In tandem, similar avenues need to be extended to members of rebel groups and prisoners of war, providing legal avenues for them to reintegrate into society without shame. If any of these populations are ignored, the risk for a fragmented society and for peace to fall apart is massive.

⁵ Mass General Brigham McLean, ed., "The Effects of Trauma on Military Members and Their Families," Effects of Trauma on Military & Families | McLean Hospital, September 2023, <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/military-trauma>.

⁶ Fabrice Virgili, "When War Disrupts Gender," Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe, 2020, <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/gender-and-europe/when-war-disrupts-gender/when-war-disrupts-gender>.



102 AG: A meeting of the New Ozai Society, a rebel society comprised of disgruntled Fire Nation soldiers, who believe Zuko wrongfully usurped the Throne; calling for the reinstatement of Fire Lord Ozai.

(Team Avatar Tales: The Rebound Comic)

Secondly, a major initiative for assisting refugees of war needs to be undertaken.⁷ Villages that were destroyed by the Fire Nation, and families who fled their occupied towns, created large refugee populations constantly seeking a permanent place to resettle. Ba Sing Se became the city with the largest population of refugees due to its strong-hold status. The priority here lies in providing support and resources for these families to get back on their feet; helping them to either return to their old villages or start a new life elsewhere.⁸

⁷ Reva Dhingra and Sophie Roehse, “A Roadmap for European Asylum and Refugee Integration Policy,” Brookings, August 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-roadmap-for-european-asylum-and-refugee-integration-policy/>.

⁸ Ibid.

To summarize, stability is needed, and quickly. The war essentially turned the once prosperous nations into societies geared towards sustaining a cycle of violence.⁹ Their economies and labor had been created to support that of war; with technological advancements being focused on the weapons and machinery sector, industry being geared towards the production of materials needed for war. Now without a war to finance, every nation's economy needs to go through major changes to stoke economic growth and diversification if they want to see any sort of prosperity in the coming years.

The Fire Nation left behind severe social and environmental consequences. Not only did it eliminate an entire race, but it also brought others to the brink of extinction and destroyed hundreds of villages. They were single-handedly responsible for the disappearance of centuries-long traditions and cultural practices. Moreover, the Fire Nation's blatant environmental destruction led to the unbalancing of both worlds: the physical and the spirit. Without the Air Nomads to keep the balance, both worlds meshed together, with spirits instigating chaos throughout the physical world.

⁹ Anke Hoeffler, "Growth, Aid, and Policies in Countries Recovering from War," OECD, 2012, https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/WP1_Growth_Aid_and_Policies.pdf.



99AG: Aang discovers the Fire Nation army had burned down the forest to make a path for their tanks to easily traverse the area. (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

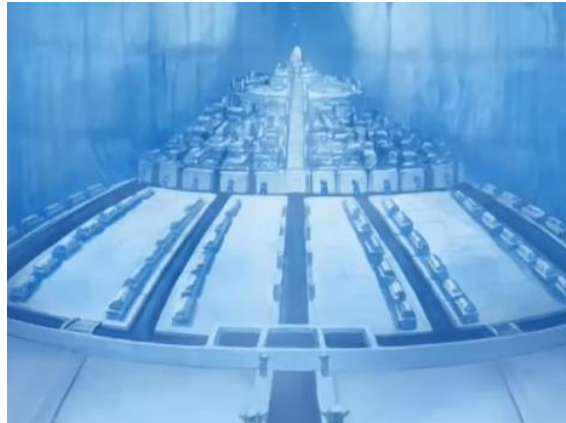
Lastly, how are nations supposed to easily transition into an era of peace that includes the Fire Nation? Fire Lord Zuko and Avatar Aang have promised to work together to restore peace and make things right. However, is that enough for everything the Fire Nation did to be forgiven?

Southern Reconstruction Project

The Southern Water Tribe endured many attacks from the Fire Nation during the war period. In a series of various naval battles, the Fire Nation was able to chip away at the Southern Water Tribe's forces, killing or taking prisoner any waterbender they encountered. The Fire

Nation's actions left mass environmental devastation behind in the South Pole, causing multiple shipwrecks, oil spills, propelling the melting of ice caps and leaving behind dangerous metal shrapnel. The frequency of Fire Nation raids would eventually diminish, but every time they came to a village, mass loss of life was inevitable.

At the end of the war, the Tribe was on the brink of extinction. Their Tribe was held together by a string of small, isolated villages, with long-standing cultural traditions and practices being forgotten as their numbers dwindled. The strong tribal political structure that once provided stability was left fractured and abandoned when Chiefs and Warriors left the villages in mass to help the Earth Kingdom fight against Fire Nation forces. On top of that, the Fire Nation managed to rip out the core of the Southern Water tribe, waterbending culture; with Katara known to be the last waterbender from the South Pole. Moreover, due to its geography, the Southern water tribe fell further into obscurity, especially so when its sister tribe decided to close itself off completely from the rest of the nations in the first stage of the war. The South Pole was in no condition to start rebuilding; at least not alone.



99AG: Agna Qel'a, the capital of Northern Water Tribe during the War.

The reality of the Southern Water Tribe was grim compared to its Northern Sister Tribe. During the war, the Northern water tribe thrived in isolation, with members from all over the nation moving to the capital city, Agna Qel'a, for safety. At the end of the war, the powerful nation once again opened its gates, seeking to rejoin the rest of the world and finally reunify with the Southern Water Tribe.

Master Pakku, a White Lotus Member and waterbender from the Northern Water Tribe, spearheaded what is known as the “Southern Reconstruction Project,” an initiative to help the Southern Water Tribe back on its feet. What started off as a small expedition of some Northern waterbenders, healers and warriors, quickly turned into one of cultural preservation, economic revitalization, environmental conservation, and rebuilding pre-existing infrastructure.

Conflict quickly arose between the Southern Water tribe and their Northern counterparts, when their visions for the sole pole's future didn't align. Whereas Northerners Malina and Maliq envisioned various projects which would propel the rapid urbanization of the tribe, Southern Head Chieftan Hakoda was apprehensive, arguing that the little traditions the tribe had left would be lost in the midst of all the modernization.



100 AG: Chieftan Hakoda introduces Malina and Maliq (*ATLA: North and South Comic*)

Although they were able to reach a middle ground, this wasn't the end of the North versus South tensions. When various Southerners found out about the Northerners' plan to exploit the newly discovered oil reserves in the South Pole, chaos broke loose. Protests quickly erupted

against the refinery's construction. A group of self-proclaimed patriots soon formed under the leadership of Gilak, a warrior of the Southern Water Tribe and veteran of the war, which aimed to expose the malicious ambition of the Northerners and expel all other foreign presence. They were able to uncover Maliq's secret plans to sell the extracted Southern oil to the North, much to Malina and Hakoda's surprise. Maliq justified his intentions by claiming it would help both nations economically prosper from this new opportunity, believing that the South would need supervision from an 'actual civilization' for such a complicated undertaking.

After apologizing profusely to the Southerners, Malina resigned from the project on behalf of her and her brother. Although Maliq's intentions were wrongly executed, he truly believed in that the South Pole's untapped resources could aid in the world's technological progress and uplift non-benders alike. However, Maliq's misguided actions show how deeply colonist and hierarchical ideology continues to run through various northerners. With the livelihood of the Southern Water Tribe at stake, questions on the degree of foreign influence are strong. The South Pole presents the economic opportunity of a lifetime; however, caution is needed when accepting foreign and private funding blindly.¹⁰

¹⁰ Wessel and Skidmore, "What Lessons Do Past International Efforts at Rebuilding War-Torn Countries Hold for Organizing the Reconstruction of Ukraine?"

Some questions to consider: What does the future of the Southern Water Tribe look like? What type of relationship should there be between the Northern and Southern Water Tribes? What is the best way to preserve cultural practices while still taking the necessary steps to urbanize?

Restoration of Air Temples and Resurgence of Air-Nomad Culture

The Air Nomad Genocide left a massive hole in the balance of the World of Avatar. After the end of the war, reviving the Air Nomad culture was a top priority for Aang. Receiving reparations on behalf of the nomads from the Fire Nation, Aang set out to firstly restore the old Air Temples. He soon realized that groups of refugees from the Earth Kingdom had resettled in some of the air temple ruins and other sacred lands. This posed a large moral question: What do we do with these new established communities? Is it fair to relocate them in the name of cultural restoration? Additionally, Aang set out to recover relics and artifacts looted and stolen during the war; asking any nations and institutions to donate old scrolls or books they had on the Air Nomads. However, the task of restoring the entire Air Nomad culture and traditions proved difficult for just one person.

To help him in his journey to preserve the culture and teachings of the Air Nomads, Aang founded the Air Acolytes in 101AG, a group of non-benders dedicated to studying Air Nomad philosophy and traditions. Originally known as the Official Avatar Aang Fan Club, Aang stumbled

across a Chapter of this group in Yu Dao, one of the Fire Nation Colonies. Initially happy to teach them about Air Nomad culture and show them a few airbending moves, Aang was deeply offended when he realized the blue arrow tattoos the fan club members donned were actually permanent tattoos they had gotten. Being rightly frustrated, he engaged in a debate about the differences between cultural appropriation and culture appreciation with the Club members. He shared how the blue arrow tattoos were to be earned once airbending mastery had been reached, being a sacred tradition and ceremony of the nomads.



Aang and the Air Acolytes (*ATLA: The Promise Comics*)

Realizing the error of their way, Fan Club members apologized to Aang and re-stated their passion to learn about the Air Nomad culture and help in the restoration of the temples. Renaming them the 'Air Acolytes', Aang trained them in the ways of the Air Nomads and taught them everything he knew about festivals, traditions, and ceremonies. The Air Acolytes soon became the

driving force behind the resurgence of Air Nomad culture, helping Aang revive traditions such as the Yangchen and Spirits Festival.

The Acolytes themselves adopted the practices of the Air Nomads, including meditation, vegetarianism, and a deep reverence for spirituality. As the years progress more and more people joined this way of life, committing themselves to the preservation of culture and spreading the ideals of peace, harmony, and spiritual enlightenment throughout the world. They all reside in the newly established Republic City Air Temple, together with Aang and his growing family, while they continue to restore the other temples.



119 AG: Aang and Katara with their Children, Bumi, Kya, and Tenzin (from left to right) (*Avatar: The Legend of Korra*)

Tenzin, born in 119 AG, is Aang and Katara's only child who has airbending abilities. He quickly became Aang's shining hope of there once again being a large airbending race; however, they knew that it would be generations before a large group of airbenders would once again roam the world. Possible future? There is a myth that a major shift in the world's energy might lead to non-benders receiving bending abilities at random. Is the future of repopulating the air temples and of the air nomad nation much closer than we thought?

Some questions to consider: How can we best aid in the restoring of a disappeared culture?

Where do we draw the line between appropriation and appreciation?

Spirit World

The Spirit World is a realm that exists alongside the physical world, however hidden. It is a place that runs by no rules we recognize from the physical world, being home to spiritual entities that represent various aspects of nature and emotions. Spiritual beings, however, are not all peaceful. Koh the Face Stealer, and the Fog of Lost Souls are all known spiritual entities that prey on human's darkest memories, emotions and insecurities to imprison or devour them.

During the Hundred-year war, without the Avatar and the Air Nomads, the physical world lost touch with its parallel spiritual dimension. In one of the many adventures the Avatar Gang

went on, they encountered the consequences of the lack of attention held for the connection of world. They found angry, unruly spirits tormenting small villages and people. Soon after, Aang made it a priority to reconnect with the Spirit World to ensure peace between dimensions.



100 AG: Avatar faces Hei Bai, an angry forest spirit. (*Avatar: The Last Airbender*)

One can access the Spirit World in many ways. There are various touch points and portals scattered throughout the physical realm, where the division between worlds is softened and humans can traverse between dimensions. Highly spiritual beings can use meditation as a form of passing between dimensions, with a temporary separation of spirit and physical body occurring while in the Spirit World; the Avatar's high spiritual enlightenment causes him to have an easier time crossing between worlds. Two major portals are known to be located in the North and South pole; however, they were closed by Avatar Wan, the first Avatar, in 9829 BG.

Some questions to consider: How can we maintain balance between the spirit and physical world? Should we strive for a convergence of some sort? Can spirits and humans live together?

Avatar Jurisdiction

Historically the Avatar is seen as the one who brings balance to the world. However, without a visible avatar for the last 100 years, society has advanced past the avatar and has found ways to find peace and solve problems without them. In this new modern world, with new technological advancements, a sensitive populous to sovereignty and borders, what is the place of the Avatar?

Some questions to consider: Does their ability to control all four elements, forgive them from following any laws? Are they liable for any destruction they cause while in the pursuit of ‘peace and restoring balance’?

Reparations and Fire Nation Colonies

The end of the war came with a lot of questions regarding how to properly hold the Fire Nation accountable for the myriad of crimes they committed. Some felt that imprisoning Fire Lord Ozai was not enough to stifle the long sentiments of nationalism and expansionism that dominated

the Fire Nation for decades or being justice to the thousands of victims of his reign. Therefore, discussions regarding holding other large political figures and generals involved started to surface, but Zuko has yet to take any decisive actions regarding holding trails.

Additionally, Zuko has already promised extensive war reparations to the Earth Kingdom and plans to fund all restoration projects relating to Air Nomad culture. However, some are weary of the Fire Nation making amends by ‘paying their way out of it’, arguing against the effectivity of sending large sums of money to large, centralized governments.¹¹

On top of this, the new Fire Lord came up with a plan together with Earth King Kuei to return Fire Nations colonies and help in their integration back into the Earth Kingdom. However not everyone was happy about the Harmony Restoration Project, especially the city of Yu Dao. Yu Dao is a city located on the intersection of the Earth Kingdom and Fire Nation territories. It was initially a Fire Nation colony established during the Hundred Year War. Overtime, Yu Dao evolved into a thriving multicultural city due to the blending of Earth Kingdom and Fire Nation cultures, becoming one of the most prosperous cities in the world, producing extremely fine metal works. Unlike other Fire Nation colonies in the Earth Kingdom, Yu Dao exhibited significant

¹¹ Claudia Moisel, “War Reparations,” Encyclopédie d’histoire numérique de l’Europe, 2020, <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/wars-and-memories/judging-atoning-reconciling/%E2%80%9Cwar-reparations%E2%80%9D>.

intermingling between the two cultures with intermarriage and feelings of mutual kinship becoming quite common.



Kori Morishita fighting for Yu Dao (*ALTA: The Promise Comic*)

Kori Morishita, the daughter of the Mayor of Yu Dao, emerged as the Movement's strongest opponent. She advocated for the peaceful coexistence and understanding between the two nations, rather than the forced choice of loyalty. Feeling as the colonials' opinions on the matter weren't being considered, she took matters into her own hands and attempted to assassinate Zuko. Failing, she instead focused her energy in convincing Zuko and Aang to preserve the integrity of Yu Dao

at all costs. Kori herself was a testament to a possible harmonized future, being the daughter of a fire nation national and earth bending citizen. Even though she proudly presents herself as a loyal citizen of the Fire Nation, she is also a highly skilled earthbender.

Ultimately, after almost coming to blows, Fire Lord Zuko and King Kuei agree to end the Harmony Restoration Movement, acknowledging Yu Dao as a unique, multicultural city where citizens of both nations can live together in peace, rather than a colony to be annexed. Although this city became the framework for what would become the United Republic of Nations, this was the sentiment of one colony out of hundreds. How should Fire Lord Zuko therefore approach the colony question?

Some questions to consider: How should we reform the internal fire nation political structure? Should we hold trials for certain Fire Lord Commanders in a court of law? How should the Fire Nation approach providing reparations and making amends? How do we approach the divide of Fire Nation Colonies?

United Republic of Nations

Although the Harmony Restoration Movement failed, it led to the creation of the United Republic of Nations. Seeing Yu Dao's success, Fire Lord Zuko proposed the idea of a unified

nation where people from all four bending tribes could live together in harmony. This vision led Zuko and Aang to establish the new nation in the former Fire Nation colonies. Republic City, located at the center of the new nation, became a symbol of cultural diversity and cooperation. The United Republic of Nations aimed to promote peace, equality, and unity among all its citizens, regardless of their bending abilities or cultural backgrounds. However, with any new nation, reality quickly sets in.

Republic City:

With the creation of Republic City, a multitude of challenges, tough decisions and questions soon arose. One of the most significant was that of cultural integration. Bringing together people from all bending nations on such a scale had never been attempted before, raising questions about the formation of a unified cultural identity. The city's founders envisioned a harmonious blend of traditions, customs, and bending arts, striving to create a new culture that celebrated diversity and inclusivity.

As the city expanded, it attracted large populations of both benders and non-benders. The city quickly developed into one characterized by close proximity and bustling streets. However, this proximity soon uncovered tensions between the two groups. Beyond the power dynamics inherent in bending abilities, benders often had greater economic opportunities, leading to

disparities in employment and wealth distribution. Additionally, some benders exploited their abilities for personal gain, giving rise to criminal organizations like the Triple Threat Triad.



Republic City (*Avatar: Legend of Korra*)

As mentioned, the transition away from a war economy fueled a rapid industrialization boom around the world, with Republic City quickly emerging as a center of industry and innovation. Technological advancements from the war such as warships, war balloons, and aerial warships laid the foundation for industrial growth. Companies like Cabbage Corp and Future Industries spearheaded this technological development, introducing groundbreaking inventions such as personal-use vehicles. However, the rapid growth also prompted calls for government regulations to balance much needed entrepreneurship with societal well-being.

With the rise of industry came an increase in crime, exacerbated by a lack of oversight while the nation still figured out its governing laws; with law enforcement taking a more ad-hoc approach. Rumors circulated about an underground figure with the ability to bloodbend, a rare and dangerous bending technique. In the face of these harsh realities, Toph Beifong proposed the establishment of a Republic City Police Force, equipped with a specialized metalbending unit, to address the growing threat of criminal activity.

Republic City's governing structures include the United Republic Council, comprised of representatives from each nation, which governs both the nation and the city. Additionally, cultural centers throughout the city, such as Air Temple Island, serve as focal points for preserving and promoting various cultural traditions. As Air Temple Island nears completion, it stands as a testament to Republic City's commitment to honoring the diverse heritage of its inhabitants and restore what was lost in the war.

What is Happening now?

It is 125 AG, 25 years after the end of the Hundred Year War. The United Republic Council is tasked with leading the development of the new project that is trying to bridge together all four nations and be a beacon of peace. 10 years since Avatar Aang and Fire Lord Zuko declared the

United Republic a new nation have passed, however making it a successful initiative has proved difficult.

The heart of the territory, Republic City is a testament to the current state of affairs. Although we have seen some industry boom, crime has run rampant in the absence of no formal policing force. Additionally, citizens from all nations living together for the first time is not at all what Zuko and Aang had imagined, with deep prejudices within their population running deep; especially towards Fire Nation members. On top of that, there have been rumblings coming from non-bender citizens, claiming they have less job opportunities as opposed to their bender counterparts and no political representation.

As the United Republic Council, you are the governing body of this young nation. You have the power to institute policies, create and dissolve institutions and bodies, and commence any new project/initiative within the realm of the nation. It is your job to make sure that the United Republic of Nations sees prosperity and long-term peace. However, eyes are watching. Every choice you make and every crisis you solve will be under constant scrutiny by leaders of other nations. It is up to you to make sure this new nation sets an example for how to successfully navigate this new post-war reality.

Council Members:

Fire Lord Zuko, Fire Nation

After being crowned Fire Lord at the end of the war, Zuko set his sights on ushering in a new era of peace and reconciliation, together with Aang. Wanting to restore the honor of the Fire Nation, he sought to undo the damage caused by his father's tyrannical reign by rebuilding relationships and providing a series of reparations to all nations. The United Republic of Nations was the epitome of his vision for the new world. During the final year of the war, Zuko went through a profound transformation, driven by a desire to redeem himself in his father's eyes, Zuko ultimately became a wise and compassionate leader committed to upholding the values of integrity, and humility. As Fire Lord, he focuses on addressing the social and economic inequalities within the Fire Nation, working to create a more just and equitable society for all its citizens, striving to be a worthy and respected leader for his people and the world at large.

Kori Morishita, Fire Nation

The daughter of a Fire Nation father and an Earthbender mother, Kori became a passionate advocate for multiculturalism. Born in Yu Dao, the oldest Fire Nation colony established in the Earth Kingdom, Kori is extremely protective of her hometown. A formidable fighter, Kori was raised with earthbending and weapons training, known to use an earthen meteor hammer in

combat. During the Harmony Restoration Movement, Kori was prepared to assassinate Fire Lord Zuko or engage in an all-out battle to defend Yu Dao's right to exist as a place where Fire Nation and Earth Kingdom culture blended. Ultimately, Kori's involvement in talks on the future of Yu Dao supported the election of a new coalition government that represented both the Fire Nation and the Earth Kingdom. Now she is the face of the multicultural mission that Republic City is attempting to achieve.

Sokka, Southern Water Tribe

A warrior of the Southern Water Tribe, Sokka and his sister, Katara, were raised by their grandmother, Kanna, following their mother's death and their father, Hakoda's departure for war. As the son of the tribe's chief and the oldest male remaining in the village after most adult men had left to fight the Fire Nation, Sokka assumed responsibility for the children of the tribe and led their training. Sokka and Katara discovered Aang frozen in an iceberg and discovered that he was the Avatar. Over time, as he helped Aang's quest, he began to believe Aang had the potential to achieve world peace. While Sokka lacks the ability to water bend, he is a skilled strategist. Through the course of the Hundred Year War, he became a master swordsman and skilled warrior. On the United Republic Council, Sokka represents the Southern Water Tribe, being incredible resourceful and a master at cracking jokes.

Bato, Southern Water Tribe

Bato was a close friend of Katara and Sokka's father, Chief Hakoda. Because of this, he served as another father figure to Sokka and Katara. Like Chief Hakoda, Bato left his village in the Southern Water Tribe to fight the Fire Nation. Bato was heavily involved in Team Avatar's efforts against the Fire Nation. He was one of many warriors who landed on Fire Nation Capital beach on the Day of Black Sun, and he served as a leader during the attack. When Chief Hakoda became incapacitated during the battle, Bato led the invasion force. However, the invasion was unsuccessful, and Bato was sent to a Capital City Prison. He was freed after the Hundred Year War and attended Fire Lord Zuko's coronation in the capital.

Hou-Ting, Earth Kingdom

Hou-Ting was born shortly after the Hundred Year War to Earth King Kuei. Currently a feisty 16-year-old, the heir to the Earth Kingdom throne is not afraid to speak her mind. She has time and time again opposed her father's decisions regarding reconstruction efforts, being highly critical of his decision to cede Earth Kingdom territory to the United Republic of Nations. Now a part of the council, she remains skeptical of the new nation's possible success, always prioritizing Earth Kingdom interest.

Toph Beifong, Earth Kingdom

Toph Beifong, also known as the Blind Bandit, is fiercely independent and often referred to as the strongest earthbender in the world. Despite being blind, Toph harnesses her seismic sense to "see" through vibrations in the ground, making her an unparalleled fighter and tracker. After the war, Toph founded the Metalbending Academy, teaching other earthbenders how to bend metal (a skill she pioneered), marking a significant advancement in earthbending techniques. As one of the founding members of the United Republic, she leveraged her understanding of societal dynamics to aid in shaping the city's infrastructure and governance. Specifically, she led the creation of the Republic City Police Force, establishing a specialized law enforcement unit comprised of only metalbenders. Toph's unwavering loyalty to her friends, drives her to confront challenges head-on, always standing up for what she believes is right, doing the same in her position as a council member.

General Duanmu, Earth Kingdom

General Duanmu is a highly skilled earthbender and war strategist of the Earth Kingdom. Throughout his career, General Duanmu faced countless challenges and adversaries, earning him a reputation as a fearsome opponent and a formidable ally. His unwavering loyalty to the Earth Kingdom and dedication to its people make him a trusted advisor to King Kuei, earning him a spot

on the coveted Council of Five. He was a staunch opponent of Long Fen, a known traitor of the Earth Kingdom. Despite his formidable reputation on the battlefield, General Duanmu is not without compassion. In his position within the United Republic Council, he values the lives of all republic nation citizens equally, known to be a fair and wise decisionmaker.

Malina, Northern Water Tribe

Malina, a member of the Northern Water Tribe, is a compassionate individual known for her for her unwavering commitment to helping others and making a positive impact on the world. Designated the leader of the Southern Reconstruction Project, she leveraged her expertise to spearhead initiatives that uplifted and empowered the Southern Water Tribe. While in her post, she championed for inclusive and sustainable reconstruction efforts that prioritized the needs of the community, while still ushering in modernity. Despite facing adversity, Malina continues to remain steadfast in her beliefs and values. With a keen intellect and empathetic nature, as a council member she navigates every challenge with grace and resilience. Having a formal background as an Engineer and Architect, like her brother Maliq, Malina has spent significant time traveling across all four nations. Becoming close allies with Chief Hakoda, she is extremely empathetic to the Southerner cause.

Maliq, Northern Water Tribe

Maliq is a determined and resourceful individual, known for his unwavering dedication to his goals. A member of the Northern Water Tribe, Maliq studied to become an architect and engineer at Ba Sing Se university. With a sharp intellect and strategic mindset, he navigates challenges with calculated precision, often finding innovative solutions to complex problems. Together with his sister Malina, Maliq spearheaded the Southern Reconstruction Project. Despite his ambitious nature, Maliq maintains a strong sense of integrity and loyalty to those he cares about, earning him the respect and admiration of his peers. Representing the Northern Water Tribe's interest on the Council, Maliq's sharp intellect and strategic mindset makes him a valuable member, often finding innovative solutions to complex problems.

Xing Ying, Air Acolyte

Xing Ying was one of the founding members of the Official Avatar Fan Club. She served as the president of the Yu Dao chapter of the fan club. She had tremendous admiration for Air Nomad culture, which led her to tattoo herself in the traditional style of airbending masters. While she had tattooed herself out of admiration, Avatar Aang found her choice to be disrespectful and appropriative of Air Nomad culture. Xing Ying realized her mistake, and she covered up part of her tattoo in order to be more respectful of Air Nomads. Avatar Aang trained Xing Ying in the ways

of the Air Nomads, helping her to continue her study of Air Nomad culture in a respectful way, and Xing Ying became an Air Acolyte. As an Air Acolyte, she avoids unnecessary violence, and she is skilled in resolving conflicts through interpersonal communication. Being one of two representatives of the air nomads on the council, her main priority lies in restoring air nomad culture.

Yee-Li, Air Acolyte

Yee-Li was one of the founding members of the Official Avatar Aang Fan Club, an organization of young women who adored Avatar Aang and the Air Nomads. She first met Avatar Aang when he was brought to meet the fan club. Immediately, the two bonded because Yee-Li had purchased an airbender flute like the one his mentor Monk Gyatso had owned. Aang taught Yee-Li the ways of the Air Nomads, allowing her to develop skills that allowed her to become one of the first Air Acolytes. As an Air Acolyte, she is devoted to preserving and practicing the culture and traditions of the Air Nomad. She prioritizes the preservation of her inner peace, abstaining from unnecessary violence, and maintaining a vegetarian diet. Similar to Xing Ying, Yee-Li wants to see the continued growth of the new air nomad nation and culture.

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