

Broad Strokes History between Sapience and First Contact

The hundred millennia between the dawn of sapience and First Contact can be divided into three ages of roughly equal length. The first age, sometimes called the golden age of the Bright Way, is characterized by the expansion of both the Bright Way within yinrih society, and the expansion of the yinrih themselves, first throughout Yih, and then into the rest of Focus.

It's important to remember that, unlike humanity, which sundered into a myriad of different ethnolinguistic groups with sometimes drastically different cultures, the yinrih's culture remained far more monolithic and cohesive thanks to their innate ability to write. Different cultures do exist, but their differences are comparable to those between, say, French, Italian, and Spanish cultures. Distinct identities emerge and grow, but there's always a common baseline. The yinrih thus have nothing comparable to indigenous peoples on Earth. It is this cultural cohesion that allowed the Bright Way to settle in as a ubiquitous, powerful force in society.

It is also during this age that the yinrih take their first steps into the starry firmament, with the first permanent orbital colony being founded shortly after, marking the birth of the Spacers. Between this time and the discovery of tailstone and the Underlay, you see groups like the Mechanists pioneering ahead to found settlements on Newhome, with other ideological missfits following in their footsteps. The yinrih's true age of discovery begins after the invention of the ansible. The Mechanists and others on Newhome went there specifically because it was isolated from Yih, but the ansible made the system much smaller, allowing Newhome to simply grow into an extension of wider yinrih society. The same pattern of growth, establishment, and pioneering repeated itself many times for the other terraformable bodies throughout Focus.

In reality, there is no clear delineation between the Golden Age and the Age of Decadence, but most Wayfarers set the pivot point at the first attempt by the High Hearthkeeper to halt interstellar mission work. She was "persuaded" to reconsider by the missionaries, backed up by the considerable firepower of the Knights of the Sun, who at this time were among the most pious groups within the Bright Way (more on the Knights in a subsequent post.) Anyway, this is considered to be the moment the Bright Way lost its focus and transitioned from being a very popular religion that happened to control power infrastructure and interplanetary transport and communications, to a multi-industry for-profit monopoly that happened to have a religion that shared its name. Many people during this time may not have even been aware that the "Bright Way" delivering their power and handling their interplanetary messages was the same "Bright Way" that ran the local lighthouse.

The Age of decadence is when the yinrih finish their conquest of the system, ascending to Kardashev II status. It's also during this time that Yinrihcron gets built (still looking for an in-universe name). The City of Eternal Noon is also founded around the beginning of this time, and the city's corrupt foundress is in retrospect considered a harbinger of things to come.

Unlike the gradual transition between the first two ages, the third age begins decisively with the War of Dissolution. That's a big enough topic to get its own post some time, but the war and its aftermath sets up the current players in monkey fox geopolitics: Hearthside, now the center of the Bright Way, which is lead by the successors to the Pious Dissolutionists during the war; The Allied Worlds: consisting of planetary metagovernments of Sweetwater, Yih, Newhome, and Welkinstead; The Spacer Confederacy: a VERY loose collection of independent Spacer city-states in the inner belt; Moonlitter: a somewhat more cohesive group of semi-autonomous lunar colonies around the titular ice giant, with nominal authority over the part of the outer belt not claimed by the Partisans. Last but not least, we have the Partisans themselves, who were the original instigators of the war. They were technically the allies of both the Pious Dissolutionists and the Allied Worlds, but the relationship broke down after the war, as the Allied Worlds were willing to allow the Pious Dissolutionists to maintain their strictly religious institutions while breaking up and privatizing the Bright Way's worldly holdings.

The Partisans, however, wanted to see the Bright Way completely eradicated. If you wanted to be generous, you could say they wanted to make absolutely sure that nobody held the same level of power over the entire system again. If you were more cynical, you could say they had designs on being the next system-wide superpower themselves. Like most big movements, it was probably a little of column A, a little of column B.

The alliances boil down to this: The Allied Worlds (AW) and Hearthside are cordial but somewhat aloof allies. The AW have disestablishmentarianism as a core tenant, while Hearthside is of course an ecclesiocracy. The AW and the Partisans are politically opposed to one another, even as the Partisans put down deep economic roots in just about every supply chain in every industry in the AW. The Spacer Confederacy kind of fills the same niche as Newhome did before the Underlay was discovered. It's a home for everything from cult colonies, libertarian (u/dys)topias, anarchosyndicalist communes, and groups of people who just want to get by in peace--all of whom somehow hate each other just little enough to form a debateably functional government.

And then there's poor Moonlitter. Its government swings between favoring the Partisans and the AW, depending on who gets elected (or whichever of the two sides has better spies at the time.)

The refugees that formed Wayfarers' Haven, including four of the six crew of the Dewfall, were at least nominally citizens of Moonlitter before being evacuated to the Inner Belt and forming their own city-state. They could have just moved to Moonlitter itself, but they wanted to get as far away from the Partisans as possible while still staying together as a community, not to mention Moonlitter's notoriously unstable government.

“ [Visions1](#) wrote: 2024-02-16T20:34:24+00:00 Why not doggie doors?

I mention vertically hinged doors, which are more or less doggie doors.

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