



Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference X

Saturday, January 29th to Sunday, January 30th, 2022

Boston University Academy

Boston, MA

Avatar: The Last Airbender

JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE

Water Subcommittee

Background Guide

Chair: Cris Lattorre ('23), clattorre@bu.edu

Vice-Chair Isaac Rajagopal ('23), isaacraj@bu.edu

Introduction from the Chair and Vice-Chair:

Hello, Delegates:

My name is Cristian *Cris* Latorre ('23). I am a junior at Boston University Academy, and I will be your chair for BUAMUN X. Isaac Rajagopal ('23) will be my vice-chair. This committee will discuss the discovery of Avatar Aang. It is not modeled on a meeting that is canon to the show, but rather what might have happened had the Northern and Southern water tribes had been united at the time of Aang's discovery.

If you haven't watched *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, I highly recommend watching at least the first season as research for this committee (not to mention it is a great show and really everyone should watch at least the first season). Don't stress too much about sticking to canons as this committee will certainly diverge from it pretty quickly. Do however be ready to get into character. And, of course, don't forget to have fun. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I am here to make this experience enjoyable for everyone.

Sincerely,

Cristian Latorre ***Chair***

Boston University Academy '23

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Isaac Rajagopal ***Vice-chair***

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Committee Information:

This is a Crisis committee. Therefore, new information will be given to the delegates as the committee progresses, and delegates should be ready to pivot quickly from one crisis to another. It is important to stay on your toes and always be ready to have your situation flipped on its head.

We will be discussing three main topics which are outlined below: the reappearance of the Avatar, the advance of the Fire Nation on the Southern Water Tribe, and the reunification of the two Water Tribes. These are three of the main plot points in season one of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, which is why we have chosen them to be the main focus of our subcommittee.

Position Paper Guidelines:

This committee requires a position paper if you wish to be eligible for an award. They are on the topics of the reappearance of the Avatar, the advance of the Fire Nation on the Southern Water Tribe, and the reunification of the two Water Tribes. The absence of a position paper will disqualify you (the delegate) from receiving an award. The quality, depth, and clarity of your position paper(s) will influence award decisions. Each position paper should be 1-3 pages and double spaced. This includes citations which are preferably in the format of footnotes. To insert a footnote, simply click *Insert > Footnote*. Note: A footnote goes after the period. Position papers should follow a general outline with three paragraphs. This is only a suggestion, as long as the paper fits the aforementioned specifications, the number of paragraphs will not be taken into consideration.

Possible position paper outline:

- 1) Introduction to your delegation and the topic as a whole
- 2) The position of your delegation
- 3) Your delegations proposed solutions

Furthermore, the position paper must be titled in the following format:

Delegation: Cristian Latorre

School: Boston University Academy

Committee: Avatar: The Last Airbender; Water Subcommittee

Position: Katara

Topic: The Reappearance of the Avatar

Background On The Committee Topic:

"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. A hundred years have passed and the Fire Nation is nearing victory in the War. Two years ago, my father and the men of my tribe journeyed to the Earth Kingdom to help fight against the Fire Nation, leaving me and my brother to look after our tribe. Some people believe that the Avatar was never reborn into the Air Nomads and that the cycle is broken. But I haven't lost hope. I still believe that somehow, the Avatar will return to save the world." – Katara

What is bending?

Bending is the act of controlling one of the four elements (fire, earth, water, air) with martial-arts-like movements. Bending is genetic and recessive, meaning that the majority of people are not able to bend. A person who is not the Avatar can only bend one element. Though some forms of bending may appear to bend elements other than the core four (blood bending, swamp bending, sand bending) these are merely derivatives of the core forms of bending. For example, only a waterbender can blood bend because blood bending is, at its core, water bending.

What is an Avatar?

As described in the Pilot episode of *Avatar* by Katara acting as the narrator, the Avatar is the one person in the world who can bend all four elements. When an Avatar dies they are reincarnated into a person of the next bending ability in the cycle. The Avatar before Aang was Avatar Roku who was Fire Nation, and before him came Avatar Kyoshi of the Earth Kingdom. Avatars can connect with their past lives through meditation, and can receive advice from them.

Following the death of one Avatar, the masters of the next nation in the cycle will be on the search for the new Avatar to begin training them early. Avatar Aang was an Air Acolyte ¹ at the Southern Air Temple when his masters discovered that he was the Avatar.

Why is Aang in an Iceberg?

When Avatar Aang was told by his mentors that he was the Avatar he felt greatly burdened by the responsibility it put on him. He knew how much he would have to sacrifice, and he struggled to deal with so much at the tender age of 12. When he found that he was going to be sent away to another air temple apart from his father figure, Master Gyatso, that was the last straw. He decided to run away from his home.

Aang fled on his flying bison Appa, but it wasn't long until the pair were caught in a nasty storm. When Appa sank into the ocean, too tired to go on, Aang went into the avatar state, enclosing the two in an air bubble which later froze into an iceberg.

What is the hundred years war and why did it start?

At the time of the aforementioned Avatar Roku, there was peace among the nations. When Fire Lord Sozin came to power he sought to increase the influence of the Fire Nation and began moving to colonize parts of the other nations. Avatar Roku, who was a friend to Fire Lord

¹ An airbender in training

Sozin, was appalled by these actions and came to speak with him. Roku forbade any more colonization and stated that he would kill Sozin if he deemed it necessary to keep peace in the world. Sozin backed down, but the two had many the switch from best friends to sworn enemies.

When Roku died, Sozin knew that the next Avatar would be a member of the Air Nation. Hoping to end the Avatar cycle, Sozin used the power he gained from the passing of Sozin's Comet² to wipe out the entire Air Nation. He was aware that the Avatar survived his extermination efforts, however, and he spent the rest of his life searching for him.

Following this horrific act of violence by the Fire Nation, both the Earth Kingdom and the Water Tribes declared war on the Fire Nation. The Southern Water tribe had all but one of its waterbenders captured and was diminished to a minuscule size. The Northern Water Tribe, having a geographic advantage and a stronger army to start, was able to hold off the repeated attacks by the Fire Nation and remained mostly intact.

The Earth Kingdom was chipped away at piece by piece by the Fire Nation until little of it remained in the hands of the Earth Monarch. All that remains are the cities of Ba Sing Se and Omashu which are each surrounded by sturdy stone walls.

What is the current situation?

Now the Fire Nation essentially rules the world, but the new Fire Lord, Ozai, still fears that the Avatar may return to take his power. He has sent his disgraced son, Prince Zuko, on the hunt for the Avatar, promising him his honor back should he capture the Avatar. Prince Zuko will stop at nothing to retrieve the Avatar for his father. If only he knew where to find them.

² A comet which appears every 100 years which increases the power of firebenders exponentially for a short amount of time.

Topic 1: The Reappearance of the Avatar

General Overview:

The avatar has reappeared on Earth. He was discovered by Sokka and Katara of the Southern Water Tribe, frozen in an iceberg along with his flying bison, Appa. The Fire Nation has been informed of his reappearance and is on the hunt for him. They aim to capture him and keep him imprisoned until his death when they will need to find the next avatar. The hunt for Aang is commanded by Prince Zuko, eldest son of Fire Lord Ozai.

Questions to Consider:

- Should the Water Tribe use its resources to protect the Avatar?
- Is it in the Tribes' best interest to hand the Avatar over to the Fire Nation?
- Is the Avatar still relevant after one hundred years of absence?

Topic 2: The Advance of the Fire Nation on the Water Tribe

General Overview:

The war between the Fire Nation and the other nations (Water, Earth, Air³) has been raging for a hundred years. In the past twenty or so years, the Water Nation has not seeded any more land to the Fire Nation, but now they are back with a vengeance. The Water Tribes must choose how best to proceed given this heightened danger.

Questions to consider:

- Can the Water Tribes continue to fight the water tribe without going extinct?
- Is it in the best interest of the Tribes to create a peace deal between them and the Fire Nation?

³ This was only applicable before the destruction of the Air Nation by the Fire Nation.

Topic 3: Reunification of the Two Water Tribes

General Overview:

At the start of the Hundred Years War, the Southern and Northern Water Tribes became completely disconnected. Now they have the option to reunify and form a large tribe to stand together against the Fire Nation.

Questions to consider:

- How would the reunification of the two tribes benefit each of them?
- Who would lead a unified tribe?
- How would unification impact the fight against the Fire Nation?

Bloc Positions:

Bato - Southern

Bato is the good friend of Chief Hakoda and his right-hand man in battle. He is a truehearted warrior who seeks to protect his tribe from the threat of the Fire Nation.

Chief Arnook - Northern

Arnook is the Chief of the Northern Water Tribe. Despite not being a bender, he is revered and respected by his people. He is also the father of Yue. He is greatly in favor of reunification with the south and wishes to aid them in their rehabilitation with supplies and warriors.

Chief Hakoda - Southern

Fulfilling his role as the chief of the Southern Water Tribe, Hakoda left his village and family, including Katara and Sokka, to fight against the Fire Nation. He led the Southern Army into battle. He is a staunch supporter of the war and believes that through defeating the fire nation in tandem with the Northern tribe, peace can be achieved once more.

Gilak - Southern

Gilak was a warrior in the Southern army until he had a falling out with Chief Hakoda. Now the two are enemies. He is in favor of the reunification of the two branches of the Water Tribe. He wants primarily to reunite the Water Tribes.

Hahn - Northern

Hahn is a high-ranking soldier in the Northern Water Tribe army. He was betrothed to Yue until she fell in love with Sokka. Because of this he will disagree with anything that Sokka says. He is in favor of as aggressive an approach against the Fire Nation as possible.

Hama - Southern

One of the most skilled of the Southern waterbenders was captured in some of the first Fire Nation raids of the Water Tribe. She was tortured by the Fire Nation, and while she was in their custody she discovered that she could blood bend.⁴ She is completely anti firebender and wishes to use violence to destroy them. She is enemies with Sokka and Katara as they do not support her use of blood bending.

Kanna (aka. Gran Gran) - Northern

The mother of Chief Hakoda and grandmother of Katara and Sokka, Kanna was put in charge of the Southern Water Tribe when the warriors went away to fight the Fire Nation. She is hesitant to support Aang as it might anger the Fire Nation more and put her grandchildren in danger. She believes that the most important course of action when it comes to the Fire Nation is the safest one.

Katara - Southern

The daughter of Chief Hakoda and the late Kya, Katara is the last waterbender in the southern water tribe. Her mother died to protect her from being captured by the Fire Nation, and she will do anything to take them down. She is in favor of protecting the Avatar. Her older brother is Sokka.

Master Pakku - Northern

Master Pakku is the former lover of Kanna and the father of Chief Hakoda. He is also Katara's water bending mentor as well as her paternal grandfather. He is in favor of reunification, and he believes that more subtle measures than combat may be necessary for ending the war.

Princess Yue - Northern

⁴ Blood bending is the act of controlling the body of a human or animal through water bending their blood.

Formerly betrothed to Hahn, Yue is the lover of Sokka. Additionally she is the daughter of Chief Arnook and heir to the Northern Water Tribe. She wants more than anything to protect her people and is in favor of reunification if it means her tribesmen will be safer and happier.

Sokka - Southern

Son of Hakoda and elder brother of Katara, Sokka sees himself as a protector above all else. Though he would never admit it, he loves his sister above all else and wishes to do what is best for the two of them. He is initially opposed to aiding the Avatar. Additionally, he is the last warrior still living at home with the Southern Water Tribe, and he pines to go and fight the Fire Nation with the other men.

Further Research:

For further research, we suggest watching the TV show *Avatar the Last Airbender*. It can be found on Netflix.

Additional resources include:

<https://avatar.fandom.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatar:_The_Last_Airbender