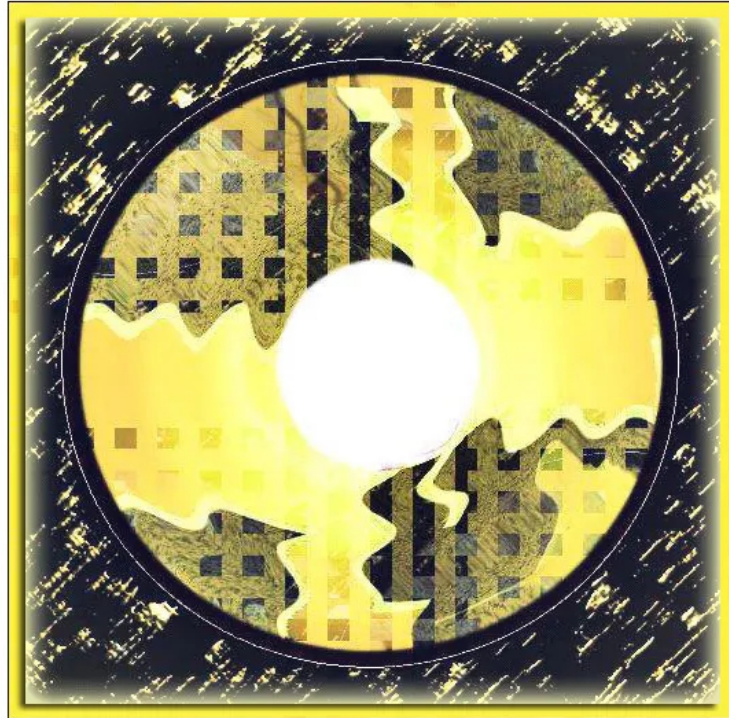


# MOON LEGEND:

## A bit of light-hearted balderdash



*Moon Legend*

*T. Newfields*

On the screen before them, a digital artwork radiated an eerie, otherworldly glow. At its heart sat a brilliant white torus, shining with the fierce clarity of a full moon. Intricate, golden Japanese-style patterns swirled within its circumference, bound by velvet dark matter that refused to behave like space at all.

An-Yi studied it with detached amusement. A slow smile curled across her face. "This would look perfect on a five-yen coin," she remarked lightly, flicking the idea into the room like a stone skipping across a pond. For a moment nobody replied.

Bhāraté leaned forward, eyes bright with theatrical authority. "Coins are passé," he declared. "Ceremonial at best. People keep metal for comfort, like nostalgia you can jingle. The real economy flows through invisible digital currents."

An-Yi smirked. "Yet ironically, many people still hoard shiny objects like crows." She sighed softly, staring at the glowing ring.

Chariya let out a soft, weary sigh, staring at the digital projection. "Yes," he murmured, his voice tinged with a melancholy. "The past still lives. Relics of the past are like flotsam within us. It seems as if we're not fully flesh anymore. Not fully ether, either. Just... mixed. Organic bodies, cyber thoughts." The white torus shimmered in his eyes, making them seem strangely lunar.

Daiki nodded once, then glanced back at the torus as if it had proved a point. "We exist in two states at once," he said. "Flesh and abstraction. Half-biological, half-symbolic. Memories uploaded into machines. Emotions reduced to signals. Identity scattered across networks." He paused, watching the glowing ring. "Maybe consciousness itself is becoming a sort of currency."

Bhāraté arched an eyebrow. "Doesn't that sound dangerously mystical?" He considered arguing further, then lost interest and yawned instead. The monitor hummed softly. No one answered.

- T Newfields

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