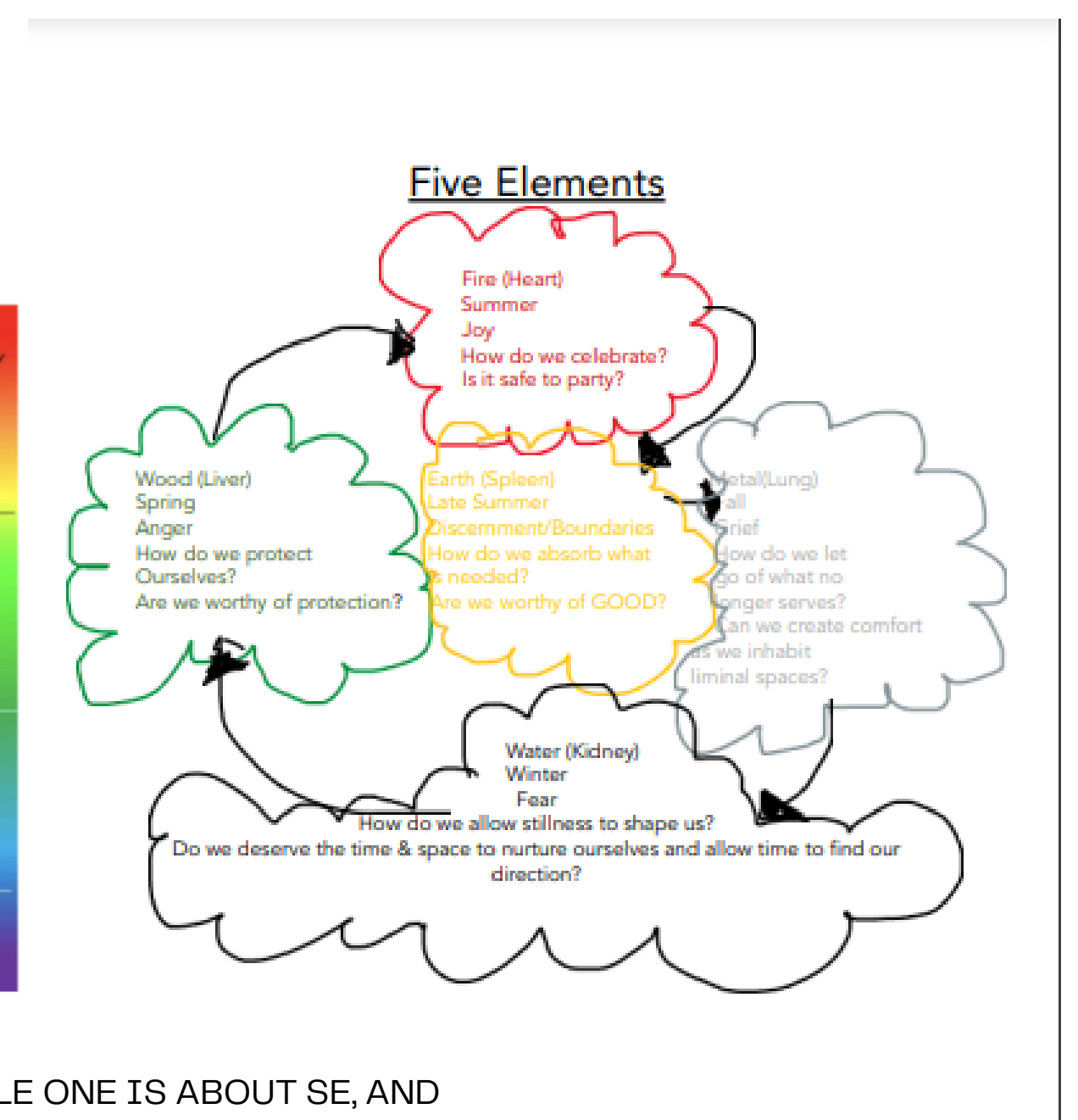
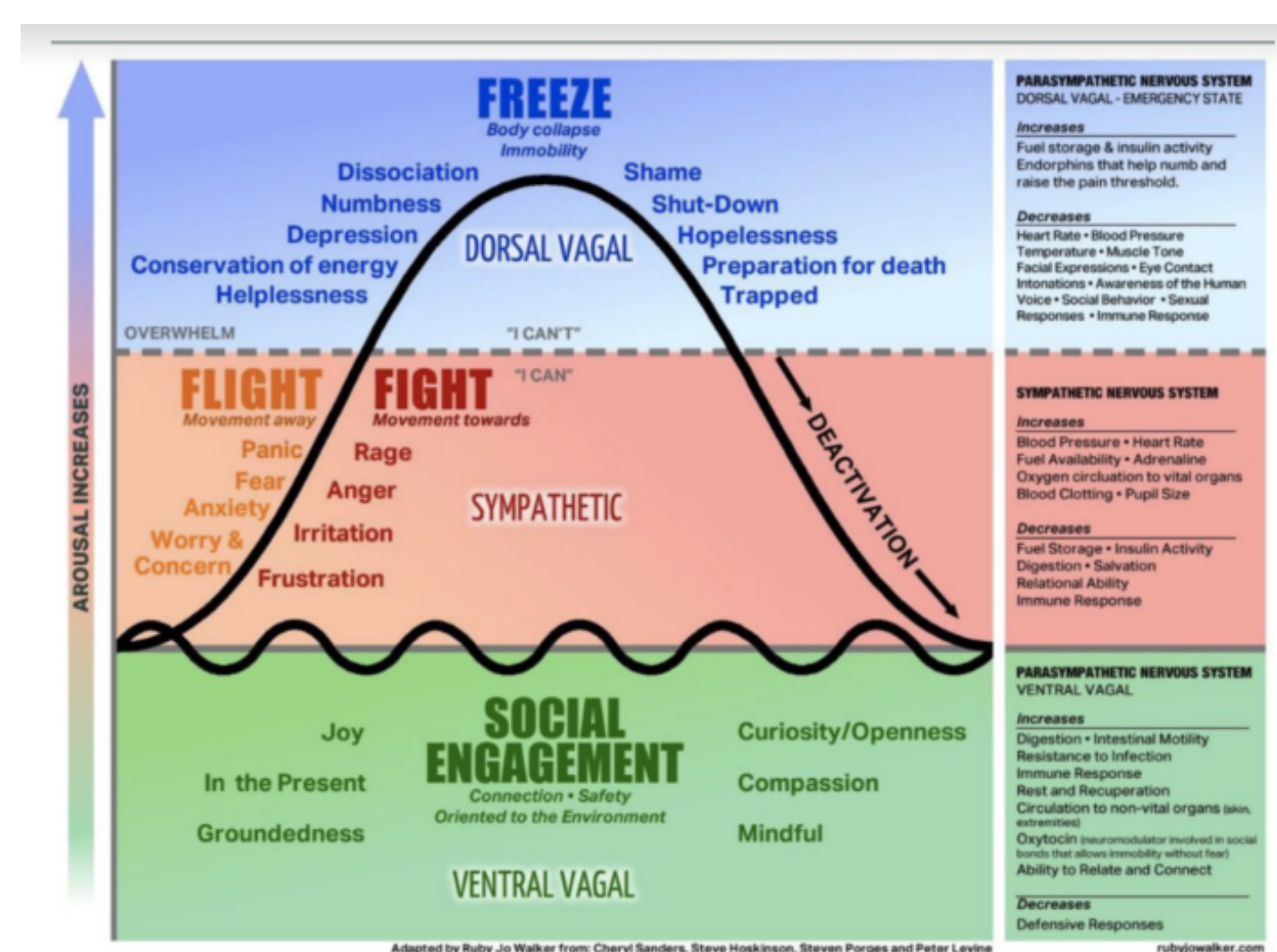


# Redefine the sense of self in Somatic and TCM educational cohort with BIPOC activists in the Midwest

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## Introduction

This study emerged from an eight week educational cohort on body healing that centered around social justice themes and was influenced by Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Somatic Experiencing (SE). Somatic abolitionism (Menakem, 2022.), which entails a personal and collective effort to build a culture and way of living which liberates our bodies and the places we inhabit from white body supremacy and the racialized trauma it causes, served as the theoretical framework for this cohort; Each weekly session spanned approximately 2 hours to 2.5 hours, creating a sustained and immersive experience.



NOTE: HANDOUT ORGANIZED BY TWO FACILITATORS: AZIZ AND JOI. THE LEFT ONE AND MIDDLE ONE IS ABOUT SE, AND THE RIGHT ONE IS RELATED TO TCM, FOCUSED ON THE SPLEEN QI (SENSE OF SELF) AND DIGESTIVE SYSTEM.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What does it mean to live on this land, as a first generation Chinese American?

### METHODOLOGY

Autoethnography and Art Based Research

## Field Text

The wind starts in the yard. The scent of the lit incense drifts away, and the candlelight next to it flickers. I close my eyes and continue to breathe, feeling my grandmother come to my side. I thought I had forgotten her thin and sparse gray hair; forgotten her flat big feet, she was a farmer's daughter and needed to work so she hadn't had her feet bound; forgotten the taste of her dentures soaking in a teacup; forgotten her long and thick breasts that had deeply nourished eight children; and also forgotten...her flowers. She started giving birth at 16 and only knew the three characters in her own name. In her lifetime, my grandmother experienced both war and violence, but she never stopped creating. She would embroider, cut, and paint flowers on gray-blue cotton jackets with patches piled on patches, on the windows, and on mixed flour corn pancakes. She was a short person with sloped shoulders, who did not argue, and was often silent, but she would block the whip Grandpa used to hit my dad with. My grandmother leans against me, gently touching my hair, and then leaves. My eyes are full of tears. I thought I was here to do research, but I saw my grandmother. My grandma brings abundant love. I am not a lone person scattered here.

## Relevant Literature

- Ahmed, S. (2014). *The cultural politics of emotion* (NED-New edition, 2). Edinburgh University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09x4q>
- Duncan, A. D., Kain, K. L., & Hollifield, M. D. M. (2019). *The Tao of trauma: A practitioner's guide for integrating five element theory and trauma treatment* (Illustrated edition). North Atlantic Books.
- Halberstam, J. M., & Livingston, I. (1995). *Posthuman bodies*. Indiana University Press.
- Menakem, R. L. (2022). *The quaking of America: An embodied guide to navigating our nation's upheaval and racial reckoning*. Central Recovery Press.
- UCD - University College Dublin (Director). (2015, March 6). What do we take to be "the self"? Judith Butler. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goNW-YGbnfA>

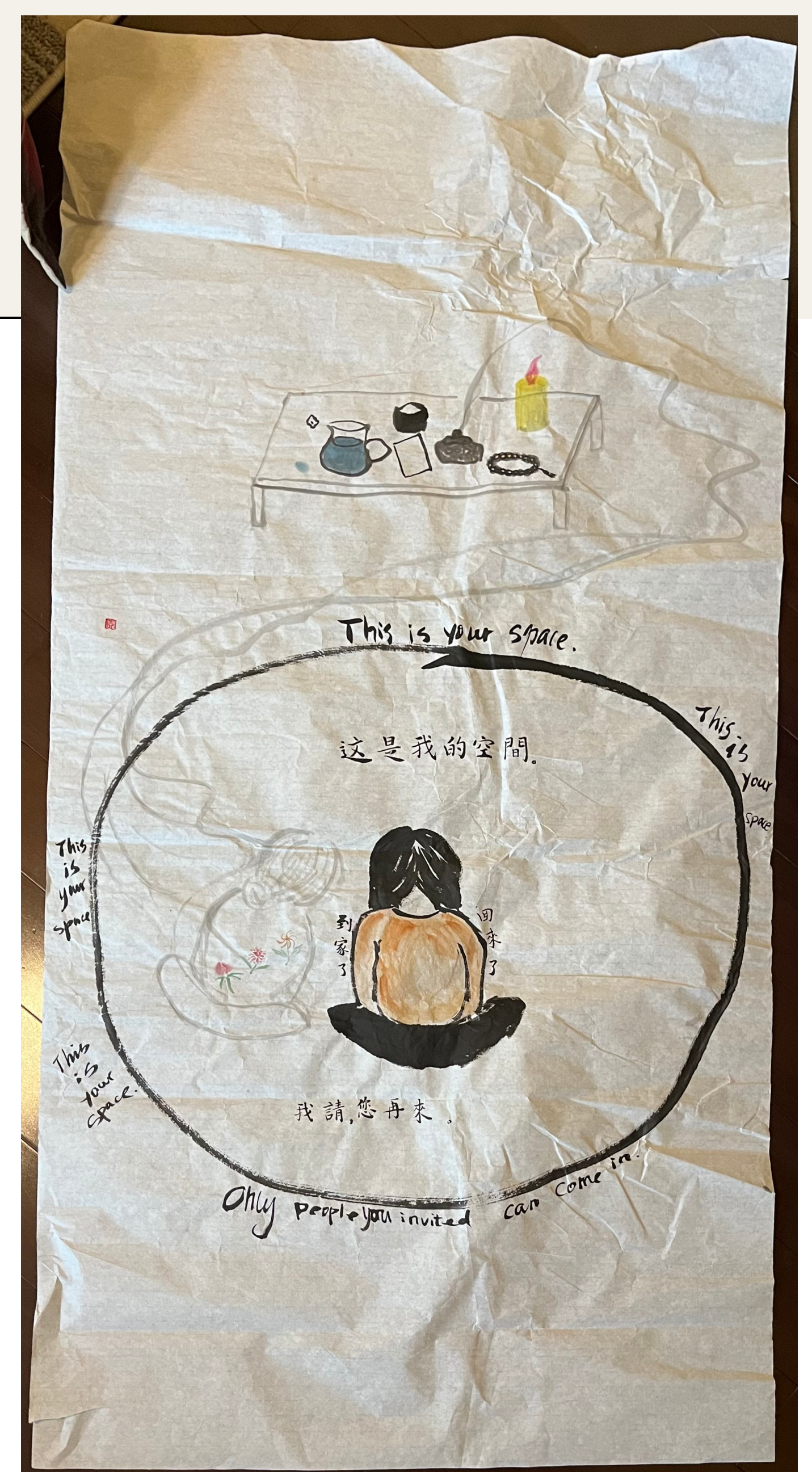


FIG. 2. 刘澎. (1.2.2024). SEEING MY GRANDMA WHILE EXPLORING MY SENSE OF SELF. [RICE PAPER, 4 X 3 FEET]. PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA, USA.