

An introductory adventure by Sean Nittner

इतोनह वरवगुठ लठपनबान



There are many tales to be told, too many for even one bard to recount: a supplement for the Torchbearer RPG.


TORCHBEARER
Sagas

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Sagas

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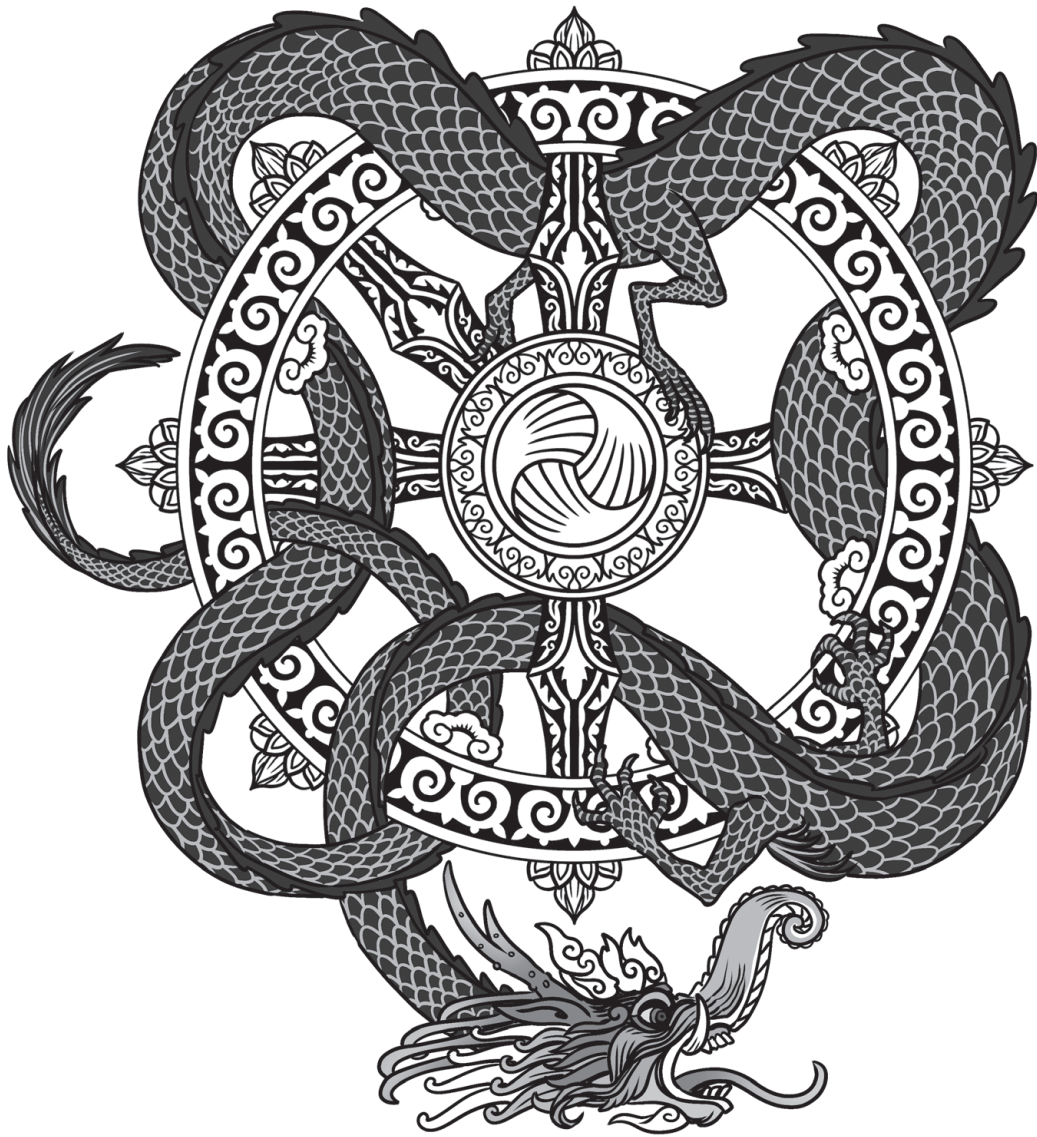


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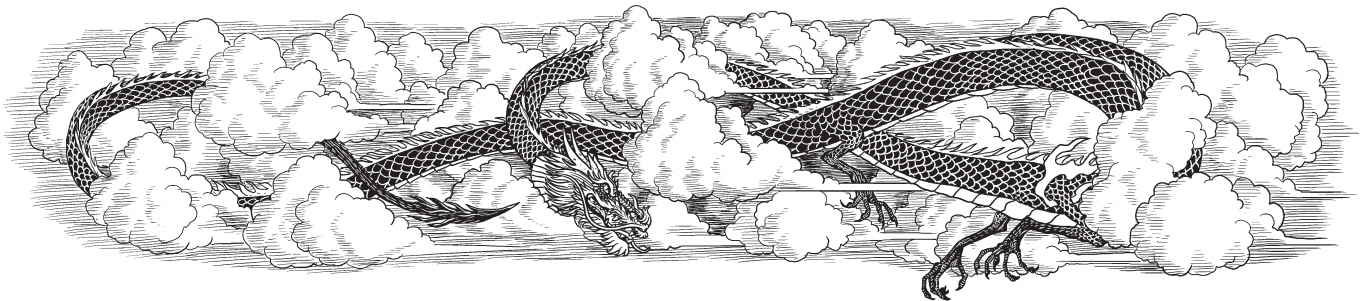
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Stone Dragon Lopkhavah



Deep inside the frozen Stone Dragon Mountain, an unearthly fire burns. It is stoked by generations of hatred for the local mountain dwellers, who try to forget their shameful history appeasing wrathful gods. Before the mountain erupts into violence and fire, a few ambitious explorers will have the opportunity to climb its frozen peaks, learn its secrets, and plunder its hoards.

Will that be you, brave adventurer? Or will the mountain consume you as it has so many others before?

the story

Three weeks ago, Stone Dragon Mountain shook with such violence that the Sharwa, the people of the mountain, shielded their eyes, for fear that the heavens themselves were cracking open and that the sun would consume them.

Avalanches raged across the top of the mountain, taking trees, rocks, and huge blocks of ice in their wake. Many structures collapsed or were damaged, but no lives were lost.

After the shaking stopped, the mountain's peak was bare of snow and the open maw of the dragon was visible for the first time in ages.

Two weeks ago, several goats and a yak went missing from their pens. The Sharwa know this and speak in hushed tones about ill omens.

A week ago, three herders ascended to look for the missing animals and never returned. Their families anxiously pray for their safe return.

Yesterday, a lowland woman who dared to seek treasure on the mountain with her sons returned to the base camp to bury them and curse the mountain's name. They were attacked by the Mikra, angry spirits that plague the mountain.

Today, the Sharwa are scared, afraid of an evil on the top of the mountain. Some fear punishment from their god Rava for breaking with tradition. Others fear the evils of the past have come back to haunt them. The salt nomads say it is unsafe to visit the salt lakes when the mountain is angry. Few will climb the mountain as they did before, and many are looking to lowlanders for help.

Lowland adventurers have come to test their strength and courage in reaching the mountain peak and exploring its mysteries. Will they find the riches they seek or will they become another verse in the song of Stone Dragon Mountain?



The Mountain at a Glance

- 3‡ The Sharwa people live on the mountain and trade pink salt with lowlanders.
- 3‡ At the command of their god, Rava, and shepherded by the Monks of the Burning Heart, they used to sacrifice their young to the mountain.
- 3‡ Twenty years ago, a woman refused to sacrifice her daughter and convinced others to abandon the god-fearing practice as well.
- 3‡ Three weeks ago, the Monks of the Burning Heart, whose monastery lies further up the mountain, broke open the frozen maw of Stone Dragon Mountain and found the sacrificed children still alive.
- 3‡ The children who have been trapped inside for generations now raid the mountain in retribution against the Sharwa. The Sharwa believe they are monsters from lore and call them the Mikra.
- 3‡ Inside the mountain, the monks are preparing a ritual that will revive the dragon and bathe the mountain in fire.

Setup

The adventurers have heard word of opportunity on the mountain. Lowlanders complain that salt trade has halted and offer rewards to see it revived. Fantastic rumors also abound—stories about the Dragon’s Heart, buried long ago by the ancients, or its teeth, natural gemstones broken free when the mountain’s maw opened. An example of one such enticement:

Following a massive earthquake, the frozen maw at the peak of Stone Dragon Mountain cracked open. Stories boast that a world of splendors awaits those brave enough to climb its forbidding peaks. A drunk in the House of Seven Wonders held aloft a jagged spike of gemstone, a Dragon’s Tooth, which he said rolled right down the mountain and stabbed him in the foot. He still has the limp to prove it! Wise women gossip about gods buried inside the mountain, and their crypts laden in gold. Boasting hunters say there is a demon adorned with a golden crown worth enough to buy a village. Some speak of evils that haunt the mountain, old superstitions to be sure.

Remind the players when they are selecting equipment that their characters will be doing a significant amount of mountain climbing. Once the players have introduced their characters and shared their beliefs and a detail about themselves, proceed with the description of the mighty climb.



Journey Rules

If you choose to use the journey rules for this adventure, here are the relative distances.

- ☞ Bottom of the mountain to Base Camp: 3 days.
- ☞ Base Camp to Dragon's Maw (Diamond Tooth's Pass): 3 days.
- ☞ Base Camp to Dragon's Maw (Kumbha's Pass): 4 days.

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The mountain ascent is a slow and arduous one. After several days of hiking you still haven't reached the snow line, but have passed several Sharwa, the people of the mountain, who have told you stories of woe on their way down. Goats and yaks have gone missing and herders have ascended the mountain and not returned. Salt nomads, who once brought bounty to the Sharwa, are now afraid to ascend the mountain. They speak of beasts of legend, the Mikra, never seen before, now raiding and killing in the moonlight. They say the rumbling ground is a bad omen.

Usually the character who dug up the lead for the next adventure assumes the leader role for that adventure. But if this is the group's first game of *Torchbearer*, the players need to choose a leader for this adventure now. Everyone in the group should offer suggestions and participate, but if there's ever a disagreement about how to proceed during the adventure, the leader has the final say.

Goals

Instruct the players to write their goals now or choose from these examples:

- ☞ I will find the missing herders.
- ☞ I will plumb the depths of Stone Dragon Mountain.
- ☞ I will kill the beasts that plague the mountains.
- ☞ I will return with a sack full of Dragon's Teeth.
- ☞ I will secure a path to a salt lake.
- ☞ I will claim the demon's golden crown.
- ☞ I will discover what opened the Dragon's Maw.
- ☞ I will loot this place for all it's worth.
- ☞ I will impress my companions with my bravery.

Adventure Background

This adventure was inspired by the awesome expanse of the Himalayan mountains. The cultures and vocabulary borrow from the Nepalese, Bhutanese, Sherpa, and Tibetan people, and the mythos from Buddhism and Hinduism. Though it is a fantasy setting and not beholden to any real-world strictures, please be respectful in your depictions of other cultures and beliefs.

The story of the mountain pits child against parent, and intends to give everyone cause to question tradition. If the players put their heads down and plow through the adventure, they should see a deadly and beautiful landscape and encounter fantastical creatures and mighty spells. If they take heed of people that inhabit the mountain, they will learn of its troubled history, and can guide its future.

Running Stone Dragon

The mountain is a hard place for hard people. There are treasures here, but they have to be pried free from the mountain's icy grip. There are wonders here, but they are ferocious and deadly. Think of uncontrollable shivering and teeth chattering, fingers so numb they are wracked with stabbing pains, and extremities being lost to frostbite. Consider people who live beside their gods, comfortable with their presence, but always fearful of their power.

Suggested Twists

Throughout the adventure there are example tests and suggested failure results (twists and conditions). Use these if they are helpful but do not feel constrained by them. If the adventurers try another tack, determine what kind of test—if any—is required and use the twists or complications that best follow the fiction. If you are ever at a loss for what test to use, or what failure results to use, remember the Describe to Live advice on page 116 of *Torchbearer*.

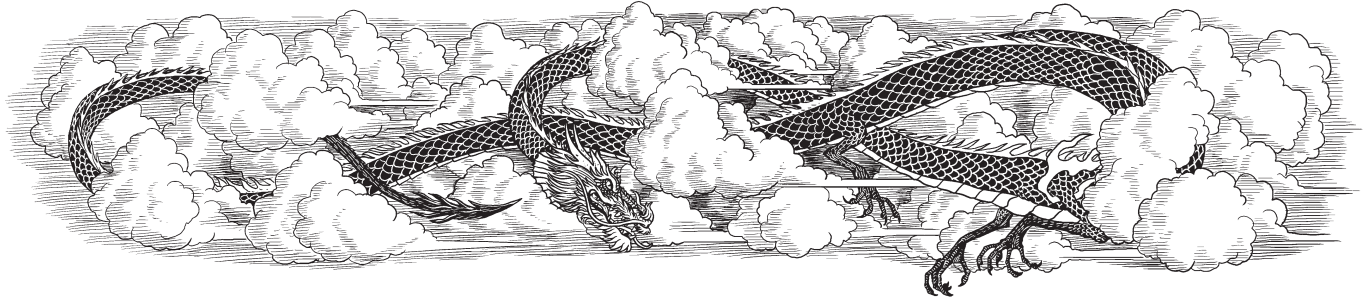
Nearby Towns

Further down the mountain, there are towns where treasure can be sold and supplies restocked. For a list of towns nearby, see **Appendix 1: Playing a Sharwa Character** page 56.





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The first ascent of Stone Dragon Mountain leads into a base camp perched on the mountain, filled with Sharwa and lowlanders, many of them uncertain of what to do next, and all of them looking to the adventurers to solve their problems. Though there are people here, this is not a town, rather a well equipped camp.

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- 3‡ *Anala*: Heart of the mountain, god of fire and rage. Son of Namakambhari and Rava.
- 3‡ *Demon*: Part of the Sharwa celestial cosmology. Spirits which often represent ignoble passions, but are not inherently evil.
- 3‡ *Kisha*: Dragon goddess of the mountain.
- 3‡ *Lowlander*: Anyone not native to the mountain.
- 3‡ *Mikra*: Angry spirits of Anala's rage. Literally translated to "Ice Men." In truth, the surviving sacrifices to the mountain.
- 3‡ *Monks of the Burning Heart*: Sharwa clergy in service of Rava, the Morning Sun.
- 3‡ *Namakambhari*: Goddess of the salt lakes.
- 3‡ *Rava*: God of the morning sun. Husband of Namakambhari. Son of Kisha.
- 3‡ *Salt Tongue*: The language gifted to the Sharwa by Namakambhari, which the gods of the mountain can hear. Forbidden to be taught to lowlanders.
- 3‡ *Sharwa*: People of the mountain.

Duress

The Sharwa are in a state of uncertainty and fear, which is causing tension between them. That fear and uncertainty is measured by a Duress rating from (0) At Ease to (4) At War.

At the start of the adventure, the Duress level is (1) Wary. Unless they are placated by the adventurers, they will progress to the next stage of Duress every time the adventurers return to base camp. Additionally there are multiple twists (see **Complications in Base Camp** page 10) that affect Duress, increasing it and/or offering the adventurers new opportunities to reduce it.

States of Duress

(0) At Ease: *"Lowlander, come into my hut and I'll tell you stories of the gods. It's cold outside."* Sharwa are welcoming of lowlanders, assured of their own safety, and thankful to the gods for bringing them the bounty of the mountain. The adventurers can make camp in the base camp and will be fed and offered a comfortable place to sleep. [Removes hungry and thirsty and grants +1D to recover from exhausted.]

(1) Wary: *You're greeted with a mixture of hard looks and averted eyes. Men by the fire huddle close to each other, speaking in a foreign tongue.* The Sharwa are concerned about having enough supplies to make it through the winter, they look to the salt nomads for guidance on appeasing the gods, and they are reluctant to give aid to strangers. Wary is a factor in any test to convince the Sharwa to climb the mountain. Reducing a group from Wary to At Ease requires an Ob 2 Orator test, assuring the Sharwa they will restore the salt trade or protect them from the Mikra raids.

(2) Disgruntled: *Sharwa villagers, many who look like they have traveled long distances, quarrel with the woman*



Jhala. They point up to the summit of the mountain, then turn their gazes and point at you. The Sharwa doubt Jhala's leadership and begin to ask hard questions: "When will the salt nomads climb the mountain?" "Where are the missing herders Chembal, Sani, and Ki-bi?" Disgruntled is a factor in all tests to convince Sharwa to act outside their nature (Climbing, Laboring, Persevering). As an additional cost of failing a social test, the adventurers can make an enemy of the person they are interacting with. Reducing a group from Disgruntled to Wary requires an Ob 3 Orator test.

(3) Hostile: *A Sharwa stands in your path, "The gods are angered by your presence. Lowlanders are not welcome here." Behind the Sharwa, you can see a sizable group of soldiers assembling.* Lowlanders are banned from the camp and the Khalish arrive. A test is required to enter a camp, or you need a friend to be invited. Reducing a group from Hostile to Disgruntled requires an Ob 4 Orator test.

(4) At War: *A Khalish army marches north, and those left behind guard the camp with spears.* Any who are not already pledged to fight the Mikra are considered enemies. The Khalish ascend to fight the Mikra. Reducing a group from At War to Hostile requires an Ob 4 Commander test.

Success

If the Orator test succeeds, the state of Duress is reduced. Margin of success can be spent to gain additional benefits. Each effect requires a certain margin of success. You can't use the same effect twice on the same test:

- 3☞ Margin of Success 1: Positive reception. Gain +1D advantage on your next social action in camp.
- 3☞ Margin of Success 2: Duress is reduced an additional level. If that would reduce Duress below At Ease, the adventurer who led the action is invited to become a Sharwa and is eligible to learn Sharwa-wise at their next opportunity.
- 3☞ Margin of Success 3: The adventurer gains a friend.

If the Commander test succeeds, the adventurers may choose to either lower the state of Duress to Hostile or join the Khalish army. Being a member of the Khalish grants +1s on Attacks in a Convince conflict with Bal Bahadur.

Suggested Orator failure result (choose one):

3☞ **Twist:** One of the Sharwa is offended that strangers are telling them how to live and act. One of the adventurers must make an Ob 2 Ritualist test to show they know the proper observances to the gods or be asked to leave the base camp.

3☞ **Twist:** Enemies are polarized. Two of the named NPCs (Hoa Veit, Jhala, Sampat, Ankit and family, or any of the salt nomads) turn against one another and focus their efforts on the other. Both of those characters are unavailable to the adventurers unless they can make a Ob 3 Persuader test to regain their attention and good favor.

3☞ **Twist:** Your face pisses me off. Gain a new enemy.

3☞ **Condition:** Angry. The Sharwa are calmed but it is an infuriating process to placate them.

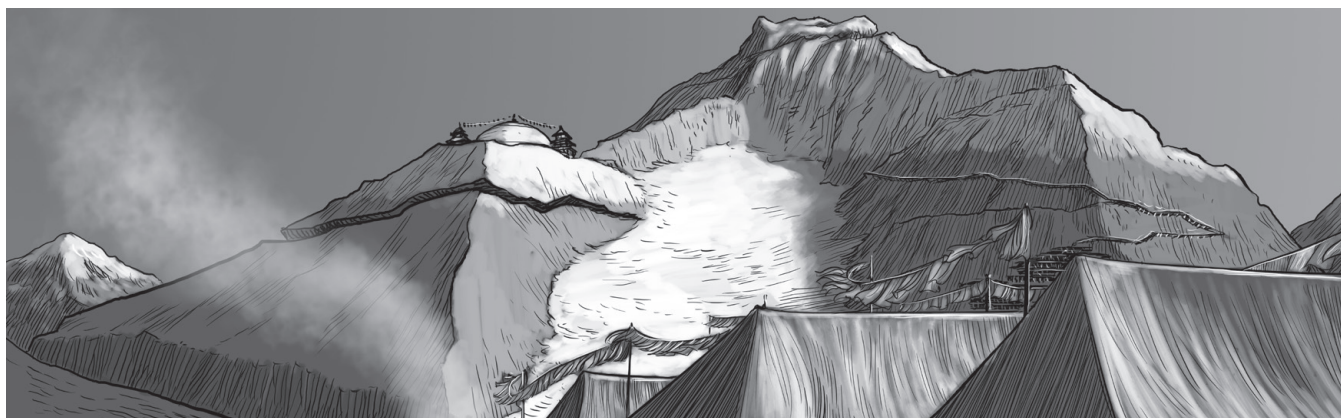
Suggested Commander failure result (choose one):

3☞ **Twist:** The adventurers are chased off by twenty soldiers. Flee or be captured.

3☞ **Condition:** Physical violence ensues and the adventurers are injured before they can calm the Sharwa.

Quell the Panic

Feel free to allow clever players other means of reducing (or increasing!) Duress by talking to individuals (which may require a Persuader or Manipulator test), helping out in the camp (which could be a Carpenter, Peasant, or Laborer test), or making substantial offerings. If they have a particularly clever solution to a problem in camp or solve a major problem like returning the stolen goats or missing herders, consider it a Good Idea and reduce the Duress level without requiring a test.



Complications in base camp

Use this list as an inspiration if you need a twist for a failed test inside or near base camp. Some of these twists are social in nature, others are physical calamities. Apply them as they are appropriate to the task the heroes are attempting, or use a twist of your own if you have a better idea. Also, make sure to throw in a few conditions here and there. Conditions hurt, but they keep the action moving by allowing the characters to continue making progress.

Duress among the Sharwa

The twists labeled Duress indicate tension building in the base camp and they modify the Duress track, which is detailed above. They are best to introduce after the adventurers have become acclimated to base camp.

- 3‡ *Pasang, stoned by children.* An erstwhile monk, chased by throng of Sharwa children.
- 3‡ *Damaged gear.* Some important bit of gear—rope, a grappling hook, a lantern, a backpack—is broken, ripped, or otherwise damaged as a result of a failed test.
- 3‡ *Goats break loose from their pen.* The boy Ankit chases them.
- 3‡ *“Your presence here offends the gods. Please, leave our home.”* One of the Sharwa is offended by the adventurers and asks them to leave.
- 3‡ *Mikra raid.* The sun has set behind the mountain. A scream is heard. Four Mikra raid the camp for goats, food, and anything else they can carry off (Duress).
- 3‡ *Missing guide.* Two adventurers, the Thewsdays, have returned to camp claiming their guide Deepti abandoned them (Duress).
- 3‡ *Khalish ascent.* A fearsome contingent of 30 soldiers arrive in base camp, ready to end the Mikra threat (only arrive when Duress is Hostile or above, set out when Duress is At War).
- 3‡ *Rocks fall.* An aftershock from the earthquake rumbles through the town, knocking over the shrine and causing a fright (Duress).

Pasang, Stoned by Children

Pasang is exiled from the Sharwa community, so he may appear before or after the base camp (in location 1 or 3) but unless circumstances change, will not appear in Base Camp (location 2).

You hear the heckling laughter of children and the weary moans of an old man. From around a bend you catch sight of a beggar in rags stumbling fitfully to escape a small throng of young Sharwa who yell, “You can’t have our food. Die, Mikra!” and throw stones at him. He pauses momentarily as he locks eyes on you, then begins stumbling downhill, the children in pursuit!

Pasang the exiled monk is being chased by young children whom he made the mistake of asking for food. They have heard tales of this old beggar haunting the camp, and now think he is one of the Mikra. They are young, boys and girls of 9 or 10, but there are enough that without aid, they could kill this old man who will not fight them.

Scaring off the children can be done with an Manipulator versus their Will 3 (3 + 3D from helpers, halved for Beginner’s Luck).

Suggested Manipulator failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** The impetuous youth have something to prove. They start with bravado but soon turn to throwing stones at the adventurers if they don’t back down.
- 3‡ **Twist:** Margen the salt nomad intervenes and scolds the children, sending them running. He shakes his head disdainfully at the adventurers, unimpressed.
- 3‡ **Condition:** Angry, and the children are scared off.

If the adventurers aid Pasang without harming the children, they have gained an ally, if an unstable one; see Pasang’s motivations below. If they tend to him and report as much to Margen, the salt nomad will help them as well (see page 17 for more on Margen).

Looking for Deepti

A bone-thin man in ragged clothes cranes his neck to look up at you. Deep creases in his brow form a wince. His shaking hand holds out a beggar’s cup. “The gods bless those who give. Have you any warm soup to spare?”

Pasang believes the end times are near and that the Mikra are angry spirits sent to punish the Sharwa for their impiety. He wants the adventurers to break bread with him because he subsists on alms, but also so he can tell them his tale and convince them to bring Deepti to him. What he needs, though, is a home. The years have been very hard on him and he will not survive another winter on the mountain.



If they share a meal together or engage in discussion, Pasang will try to convince the adventurers to find Deepti and bring her to him so he can make his plea to her: allows me to cast you into the mountain, as I should have done years ago, and all will be right. If the heroes engage in this discussion with him, treat it as a Convince conflict.

Regardless of the outcome, sharing food and kind words with Pasang is a Good Idea, and he is happy to tell the adventurers his story.

Pasang

- ॐ Quotes passages from Sharwa scripture about burning, suffering, and death at the hands of the gods.
- ॐ Scratches a scab on his neck and looks at you sideways.
- ॐ Chews on rhododendron flowers and spits into his beggar's cup; mouth stained purple by the flower.

Raw Abilities	Nature 3	Will 6	Health 2
Town Abilities	Resources 0	Circles 1	Might 2
Skills	Theologian 5, Ritualist 4, Scavenger 3, Cook 2, Survivalist 2		
Wises	Monks of the Burning Heart-wise, Hypocrisy-wise		
Traits	Wide-eyed zeal (2), Broken by poverty (1)		
Belief	The gods shout their will from the mountaintop, the selfish Sharwa cover their ears.		
Goal	Find Deepti and convince her to sacrifice herself to Rava in the God's Wound.		
Instinct	Always speak of the gods' great wrath and compassion.		
Prayer	<i>Breath of the Burning Lord</i>		

Goats Break Loose from Their Pen

There is a shout from above the camp. The goats have broken free of their simple pen, and are now running through the camp. The young boy Ankit chases after them, but he's unable to stop their mountain descent.

Capturing the goats requires a Ob 2 Peasant test (herding plus an evil GM factor for the panic).

Suggested Peasant failure result (choose one):

- ॐ **Twist:** The goats crash into Sampat's tents and destroy his beautiful silk. Sampat becomes an enemy to the adventurer who led the efforts to herd the goats.
- ॐ **Twist:** Goats escape down the mountain. Duress +1.

Collector of Sacrifices

Many years ago, Pasang was a Monk of the Burning Heart who held the unenviable position as the collector of sacrifices. He brought the children up the mountain and cast them down into the God's Wound.

Twenty years ago, Jhala rebuked him and refused to offer her daughter. When he returned to Damek Monastery without the ritual tithe, Mingmar and the other monks fretted and prayed, but sworn to peace, they took no action themselves. Lakpa prayed to Namakambhari for guidance, but found none.

After a time, alms stopped being delivered to the monastery, and the monks blamed Pasang for his failure to bring the sacrifice and shunned him. He prayed to Rava for justice, but found none.

Since then he has wandered the mountain, exiled by both the Sharwa and monks, begging for alms and believing the gods have abandoned him, their only pious follower. When the mountain shook, however, his faith was revived; he believes Anala has finally answered his prayers and asks him for one more sacrifice.

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ॐ **Condition:** Hungry and thirsty, but the goats have been rounded up and returned to the pen.

If the adventurers succeed. Ankit thanks them and offers a meal. If they accept he will tell them his story (see **location 2E** on page 18).

"Your Presence Here Offends the Gods"

One of the Sharwa present (Jhala, Margen, Ankit, or an unnamed NPC) takes offense at the adventurers' actions and asks them to leave the base camp. Quelling their objections requires either an Ob 2 Persuader test to mollify them by making amends or an Ob 3 Manipulator test to intimidate them with threats of violence.

Suggested Persuader or Manipulator failure result (choose one):

- ॐ **Twist:** Instead of backing down, a crowd begins to form and they all ask the adventurers to leave. They do not make threats, but they will not help them either. Duress +1.
- ॐ **Twist:** Amelioration requires an offering to the gods. Choose one suitable item or gear that the adventurer must burn at the altar to make amends.



✠ **Twist:** The aggrieved party stalks off. The adventurer who led the action adds the Sharwa's name to their character sheet as an enemy.

Mikra Raid

A man cries out in fear so loudly it sounds as if he has seen a ghost. He cowers on the ground, averting his eyes and making prayers to the gods for protection as four white-furred creatures tear apart his tent. Some stand on four legs and others on two, some rending with powerful arms, others cutting with tools. The leader's head is a dark tangle of horns and fangs.

This far down the mountain and against the number of Sharwa present, the Mikra are not here to kill, but rather to raid any stores they can for weapons, food, or tools.

If the adventurers attempt to fend them off, they can make a Fighter test versus the Mikra's Nature 4 plus 3D for three helpers (7D total). Adventurers gain +1s on the test in the case of a tie or success due to their higher Might. Success indicates they flee and Duress is reduced by 1.

Suggested Fighter failure result (choose one):

✠ **Twist:** The Mikra make off with the man's possessions—weaving needles and wool, clothes, and several sharp shearing blades—leaving him destitute. Duress +1.

✠ **Twist:** One of the Mikra, with skin as pale as moonlight, pounces on the lead adventurer and howls a curse before snatching one of their weapons or items in hand and fleeing.

✠ **Condition:** The Mikra are fought off, but one of them stabs the short blade of a shearing knife into the palm of an adventurer, leaving them injured. Others who assisted are afraid, as the spirits the Sharwa spoke of a real!

Going for the Blood

If the adventurers instead aim to slay the Mikra or capture them, use the Mikra stat block on page 22 and initiate an appropriate conflict. There are four Mikra present.

Missing Guide

A lowland couple is interrogating Jhala about the whereabouts of her daughter Deepti, who was acting as their guide. They insist that she was paid already and grow increasingly angry that Jhala does not know her whereabouts. The couple are adorned not unlike you, their packs stuffed with traveling gear, a mace dangling from

the woman's belt, a bow slung over the back of the man. Standing in the distance is the lowland merchant Sampat, with a dour expression growing darker by the moment.

The brother and sister are adventurers, Darby and Elske Thewsday, if anyone is asking. They were hired by Sampat to explore the mountain and find the salt lakes but fled back to base camp when they were ambushed by Mikra, leaving their guide Deepti and fellow adventurers to perish.

Darby and Elske

✠ **Blame others:** Deepti, Jhala, their companions.

✠ **Lie** about their actions and their affiliation with Sampat.

✠ **Flee** the moment they are not being watched. *"We're heading back down the mountain now; we'll take our chances with the Lords of Chaos!"*

Getting the truth out of the siblings requires an Ob 3 Manipulator test. Success indicates they admit their own cowardice, that they left Deepti to die, and that they were offered a small fortune to find the salt lakes for Sampat.

Suggested Manipulator failure result:

✠ **Twist:** The truth is revealed but Sampat is embarrassed and curses the adventurers for his misfortune. He becomes their enemy.

✠ **Twist:** The truth is revealed and Jhala wails in grief when she learns her daughter has died. Duress +1.

Upon hearing of Deepti's disappearance, Sampat gathers his hunters and heads up the mountain. He proclaims it is to find his betrothed, but the truth is he has lost patience and now seeks the salt lakes on his own.

Khalish Ascent

A small procession of armed men and women wearing ceremonial red robes over their hiking attire is preparing for a trek up the mountain. They are armed with long curved daggers and carry unstrung bows. One amongst them, a middle-aged bone-thin man, is barking orders to the rest. His dialect is too quick for your ears, but from his gestures it's clear they plan to ascend the mountain soon.

The Khalish soldiers, both Sharwa and lowlander, are prized for their endurance, dedication, and deadly military prowess. This group, led by Bal Bahadur, is one of many on their way up the mountain to do battle with the Mikra. Though disdainful of adventurers in general, Bal Bahadur does not have extensive mountain climbing experience. He is eager to conscript auxiliary troops that are expendable, but could be convinced to put his soldiers under the discretion of the adventurers if they can prove that they have superior military



and tactical acumen. Certainly by their third visit to the base camp, the adventurers have more experience on the mountain than Bal Bahadur does.

Bal Bahadur

- ॐ Refers disdainfully to anyone not joining the march as “pacifists.”
- ॐ Blinks twice in thought and then announces a plan, humoring no detractors.
- ॐ Absently touches the iron charm hanging from his belt.

Raw Abilities	Nature 3	Will 5	Health 4
Town Abilities	Resources 4	Circles 6	Might 3
Skills	Commander 5, Steward 4, Fighter 3, Orator 3, Mentor 3, Scout 3		
Wises	Khalish Army-wise, Watch-wise, Impossible Missions-wise		
Traits	Defender (2), Heart of Battle (1)		
Belief	Violence doesn't solve a problem, but it does stop one.		
Goal	Restore the salt trade on Stone Dragon Mountain.		
Instinct	Never end a battle before blood is shed.		

Commanding the Khalish

Should the adventurers gain control of the Khalish soldiers, the skill used to manage their resources is Steward, to lead them in battle is Commander, and to win over their loyalty is Orator. Failure should follow from the action taken.

Rocks Fall

A rumbling beneath your feet announces an aftershock from the great earthquake. High above on the mountain, ice and rocks come tumbling down. In the base camp itself, the rock shrine tumbles over and one of the salt nomads' tents collapses into a fire; thick smoke begins to smoulder from under it.

The mountain stirs once more, and the Sharwa are all affected by the rumbling. If the adventurers want to help, rebuilding the rock shrine requires an Ob 2 Laborer test (hauling chests and boxes). Saving the tent from burning up requires a Ob 2 Steward test to coordinate the effort.

Success at both of these tasks reduces Duress by 1.

Suggested Laborer failure result (choose one):

- ॐ **Twist:** The rock cairn will not hold. The adventurers are covered in soot. One of their raiments is ruined or lost.

Conflict Descriptions: Battle Conflict

If the Khalish are led against another opposing force, Battle conflict disposition is set by rolling Commander and adding successes to rank in Will. The skills used by action are:

- ॐ Attack/Feint: Commander
- ॐ Defend/Maneuver: Steward

The Khalish are versatile warriors and act as a Sword (+1D to any action, chosen at the start of the conflict) in a Battle conflict.

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- ॐ **Condition:** Moving a particularly heavy rock wrenches someone's back. The leader of the action is exhausted, others are hungry and thirsty, but the shrine is rebuilt.

Suggested Steward failure result (choose one):

- ॐ **Twist:** A strong wind picks up and the tent goes up in flames and is lost. Duress increases by +1.
- ॐ **Condition:** Stamping out the flames badly burns one of the adventurers. They are injured, but none who were assisting gain a condition.

बड टालप लोटालोड

1. First Ascent

After what seemed like endless switchbacks, the mountain path before you widens and slowly becomes indistinct, until all you see is a steep incline populated with scattered rocks, trusses of purple and white rhododendron, and occasional valleys where water collects. Above you is the mighty Wing Glacier and the paths that straddle either side of it, eclipsing the rest of the mountain.

- ॐ Below the snow line, the air is refreshingly cold.
- ॐ Filled with beautiful flora: rhododendron, bamboo orchids, junipers, and blue pines.
- ॐ Dragon Wing Glacier looms above.

This location is still flat enough that most of the sure-footed Sharwa can take any route up with little difficulty. For a lowlander, finding their way through this expanse requires an Ob 3 Pathfinder test.



Suggested Pathfinder failure result (choose one):

- ⌘ **Twist:** The trip is long and the sun begins setting. Lighting changes to dim light. In two turns it changes to darkness.
- ⌘ **Twist:** Snow begins falling, further obscuring any would-be path. The snow is now a factor in any test made outdoors. Anyone attempting to act outdoors must make an Ob 2 Health test. Suggested failure result: Condition (sick or exhausted) or Twist (gear used is broken or lost in the snow). The snow continues until the end of the Adventure phase or until an Ob 3 Survivalist test (weather-watching) is made.
- ⌘ **Condition:** Hungry and thirsty. It is thirsty work, but the party succeeds and makes it onto the path above.

2. Base Camp

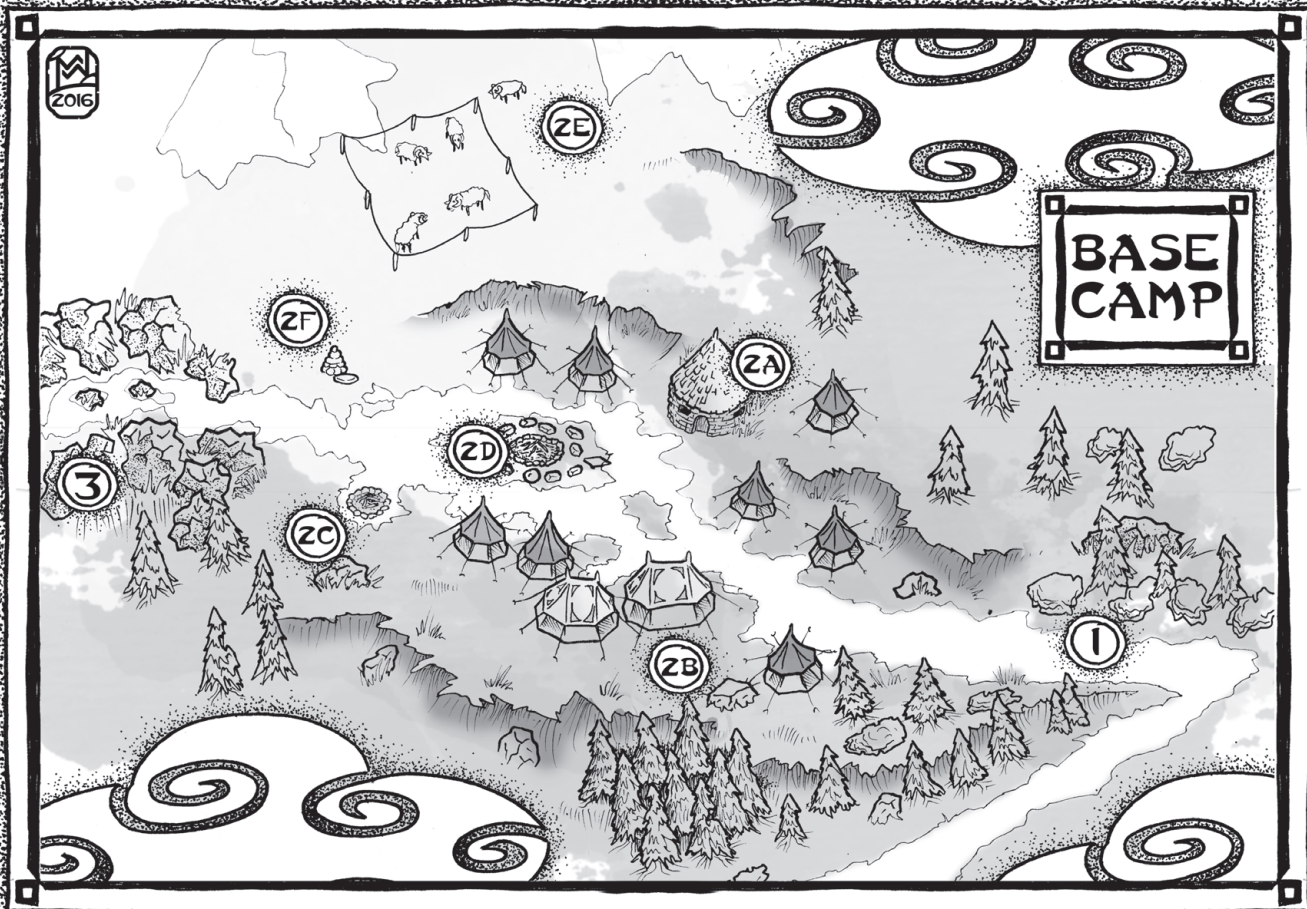
A small collection of Sharwa have carved a home in the side of the mountain pass. Colorful bunting connects several tents in the camp. Though beneath the snow line, it is clear by their spiked boots, snow goggles, and ice picks that they are familiar with the treacherous climb above.

Tendrils of smoke curl from a single earthen hut where a woman offers shelter to Sharwa refugees. In the center of camp some Sharwa idle by a dwindling fire. Above the camp a young herder frantically tends his disobedient flock. On the far edge of camp, a lowland woman sits alone, shunned by the Sharwa. A single sign of prosperity comes from a set of palatial tents, though sounds of an angry man shouting cuts through their thin walls. There is a small rock shrine here where burnt offerings are made.

More than a camp, not quite a town

This base camp is a temporary stopping point for travelers heading up the mountain. Normally climbers pass through, but the population is sedentary now due to the recent dangers on the mountain. Salt nomads who would have set out days ago to collect pink salt have been hunkering here, using up their supplies, waiting and praying for a sign that the mountain is safe again.

If accepted by the inhabitants (either by lowering Dures to At Ease or gaining a friend in the camp), the adventurers can use this location as a camp. It counts as a typical wilderness camp that includes shelter (no Survivalist test required).





Anachronistic charms and tools

Both lowlanders and Sharwa make a number of charms, tokens, and bangles intended to ward off malicious spirits and offer homage to good ones. Some charms that Jhala, Sampat, or others might possess:

- ॐ Namaskar pendant: Silver shaped into the symbol which means “to bow before your divinity.” This pendant, if presented upon first encountering a spirit, provides +1D on Persuader tests made to appease them (neck 1, worth 1D cash).
- ॐ Chakra health charm: Seven different colored beads tied together on yarn promise good health. If worn continuously (head 1, hands 1, or feet 1) the charm offers +1D recovering from sick conditions caused by the cold or starvation.
- ॐ Iron pins with amethyst studs: The iron in these piercings wards off incorporeal spirits that would possess the wearer, offering +1D to resist possession and +1s to Disposition in any Banish/Abjure conflicts with the undead (worth 1D cash, requires a Ob 2 Healer test to perform the piercing).

If one of the adventurers impresses Jhala, or offers to aid her beyond calming the Sharwa, she will offer them one of these charms in thanks.

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Additionally, though this is not a town, a player may spend one check during a camp phase to hire the boy Ankit (in location 2E) as a porter. This requires an Ob 2 Resources test and functions as indicated on page 89 of *Torchbearer*. There are no guards or guides available now.

- ॐ Below the snow line. Shivering sets in moments after movement stops.
- ॐ Colorful bunting clearly visible from far off flaps in the strong winds.
- ॐ Locations: Jhala’s hut, Sampat’s palatial tents, edge of camp, campfire congregation, anxious sheepherder, and rock cairn.

2A. Jhala’s Hut

A woman with deep creases in her face and kind eyes stands in the doorway of the lone earthen hut, consoling a group of Sharwa refugees who look weary and despondent after a long journey.

Jhala is the local leader of the Sharwa. She speaks an accented version of the common tongue and warmly greets lowlanders. She is intrigued by any stories from the lowlands and is affectionate, even motherly, to adventurers.

The Sharwa defer to Jhala because of her bravery years ago and the wealth she provides by brokering deals with lowland salt merchants. At the moment though, she needs housing and food for many Sharwa who were displaced by the earthquake. There are eight men and women who have fled to base camp, several that say they saw strange horrors in the night.

Jhala

- ॐ Addresses lowlanders as “friend.”
- ॐ Rubs a colorful rose quartz pendant for good luck.
- ॐ Offers butter tea to the disgruntled to calm them.

Belief:	Salt trade, not tradition, is the source of our prosperity.
Goal:	Provide shelter and safety for the Sharwa in base camp.
Instinct:	Walk the camp every morning.

Jhala’s Unstable Status

For many years she has been respected by the people and kept the peace. After recent events, many of the Sharwa are scared. Some are jealous of her. Some resent her dealings with Sampat.

Jhala’s Knowledge

If the adventurers can aid Jhala either by calming the camp (see **Duress** page 8) or providing basic needs like shelter or food for the Sharwa, Jhala will call them friend and gladly offer up the knowledge she has.

Mountain Guides: Despite Jhala’s fear, her daughter Deepti is a mountain guide. Though Jhala urges her to give up that life and move down the mountain where it’s safer, Deepti is right now up on the mountain, leading another group of adventurers.

“The mountain has taken too many from me already, she will not have my daughter as well.”

Paths Up the Mountain: If they seek the Dragon’s Maw there are two paths up either side of the Wing Glacier. To the west is Kumbha’s Pass. Jhala admits that it carries no toll, but there is a dangerous spirit that they should avoid. To the east is Diamond Tooth’s Pass. It is safer and has a spot for shelter, but they will have to contend with a cantankerous old man and his capricious demands.



demons spirits and gods

The name “demon” may conjure up very specific images that Hoa Veit and possibly the adventurers will share, but that is not the common interpretation on Stone Dragon Mountain.

To the Sharwa, demons are a society of supernatural spirits, not necessarily good or evil. While they are often depicted as monstrous in appearance, they are not inherently beguiling or seductive to humans. Often they are manifestations of the ignoble passions in the human mind.

Spirits and gods in a larger sense exist in both metaphorical and corporeal form. For example, Namakambhari is both the celestial god who cried for her son, and the physical salt lakes themselves. The Sharwa see themselves as constantly in the presence of the supernatural, so a word like demon is not intended to invoke insult or fear, but reverence and appreciation.

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Missing Herders: Chembal, Sani, and Ki-bi foolishly went looking for missing goats days ago. They are all experienced herders, and will be back soon enough, she hopes. If pressed she will reveal that they are Ankit’s uncles and aunt.

Salt Trade: The lifeline of the Sharwa. Without it, they would be back to living as nomads with nothing valuable to offer the lowlanders.

Jhala is fond of foreign tokens and charms. She has a lacquered cherry wood humidor that preserves pipe leaf tobacco. She also wears a colorful rose quartz pendant which she frequently rubs for good luck.

2B. Sampat’s Palatial Tents

A well-dressed lowlander paces impatiently between two palatial tents, always looking up as if waiting for something to appear on the mountain any moment. At intervals he barks a complaint to a fierce woman who stands by one of the tent entrances. Her response, if any, is inaudible.

Sampat is a lowland salt merchant seeking access to the salt lakes, unfettered by the overly pious salt nomad traditions. He has arranged with Jhala to marry her daughter Deepti. Deepti will be provided with wealth and taken away from the mountain (which Jhala wants), and Sampat will become a Sharwa and can be indoctrinated as a salt nomad. Once he

knows their secrets, he can set up his own mining operation, regardless of their objections. Or at least that was the plan made a year ago.

Always making contingencies, Sampat also secretly hired a pair of lowland adventurers, Darby and Elske Thewsday, and their companions to explore the mountain and find the salt lakes for him under the guise of making offerings to the gods at all the shrines on the mountain. By unfortunate happenstance, or perhaps because she was trying to avoid him, Deepti offered to guide them on their trek. Now all of his golden opportunities rest in one metaphorical basket.

The Thewsdays should have returned already with a report and Sampat grows increasingly anxious. Yuddha, his bodyguard and advisor, urges him to be patient, but Sampat knows the more time he wastes, the more coin he’s losing. For more on Sampat, see page 24.

Sampat the Wealthy

ॐ Brings money into the conversation.

ॐ Paces back and forth.

ॐ Speaks sweetly to strangers; barks orders at servants.

Belief: I’m worth what I can hold; my grip is wide and firm.

Goal: Convince the adventurers to find Deepti and return her to me.

Instinct: Calculate the cost before pursuing any new enterprise.

2C. Edge of Camp

A lowland woman sits on the edge of camp, shunned by the Sharwa. Her dour face is pocked by age and the elements.

Hoa Veit is a lowlander who speaks the common tongue and will gladly tell the adventurers what knowledge she has of the mountain. She and her sons sought the golden crown of the demon Kumbha, who lives high up the mountain.

Hoa knows the Sharwa have some superstitions about purification that must be performed before approaching the demon, but she believes none of it. They planned to liberate the crown from him by stealth or force, but were ambushed by Mikra before they had a chance. The foul beasts moved on four legs and were covered in fur, but used weapons of man. They howled as they leapt, wounding her and killing her sons Linh and Dhwa.

Now the Sharwa shun her for angering Kumbha; Jhala has instructed them to not allow her into the camp or offer her aid.



Hoā suffered an ugly wound that fractured her leg. Setting it requires an Ob 3 Healer test. Left alone, the infected wound will eventually take her.

Hoā Veit

- 3☯ Curses the foul beasts that took her sons.
- 3☯ Dismisses Sharwa beliefs as “superstitious nonsense.”
- 3☯ Winces in pain from her leg when she moves.

Belief: Life is only what you take from it, with sword and spell.

Goal: Convince these adventurers to slay my sons’ murderers and return their bones.

Instinct: Kill any Mikra on sight.

2D. Campfire Congregation

Three men idle around a fire weaving bags and other useful items from yak wool and deliberating among themselves. Their climbing gear has a thick rime coating and gathers more frost still.

These men are salt nomads, the rare few who know the location of the Salt Lakes and the invocations to appease the goddess Namakambhari. Several times a year they travel up the mountain to harvest pink salt, which brings wealth and sustenance to the Sharwa. Because of their favor with the gods, they are looked to by other Sharwa for spiritual guidance.

Their oaths restrict them from killing another living creature or from speaking in the Salt Tongue—a language the gods can hear—about subjects which might offend them (see below).

The salt nomads believe the Mikra are signs of Rava’s anger and are deliberating about when they can ascend the mountain again. They are upset that lowlanders are climbing all over their mountain and disturbing the spirits. One of them, Zopon, the lord of animals, is out on the mountain watching over the grazing yak (see **Zopon, Lord of Animals** page 26). The names of the nomads are also their titles, which are traded from time to time.

Salt Nomads

Margen, the old mother. He is the camp cook and the only one who speaks the common tongue.

- 3☯ Serves butter tea and *shakpa* stew filled with dough balls and vegetables.
- 3☯ Laughs when the other salt nomads frown. Thanks Namakambhari.

Prayer of Namakambhari’s Peace

Chanting thanks to all the greater and lesser gods on the mountain, the salt nomad asks Namakambhari to protect the supplicant from their wrath. (Anyone who knows the prayer may use the Ritualist skill to perform it; they do not have to be a cleric.)

3☯ Alignment: Unaligned.

3☯ Supplies for the Prayer of Namakambhari’s Peace: Incense made with masala spices.

Prayer of Namakambhari’s Peace Obstacle

Ritualist Ob to cast: The Might of the supernatural creature on Stone Dragon Mountain, +1 Ob per additional target (use the highest Might in the group to determine base Ob). Prayer must be invoked before a conflict, not during.

Prayer of Namakambhari’s Peace Effect

Meeting the obstacle means that all creatures affected are temporarily mollified as they show respect for Namakambhari. Any hostile actions will end the prayer’s effect, but the creatures can be interacted with in other manners, or the caster and their companions may pass unharmed.

Mikra and the Prayer

As the Mikra are an extension of Anala’s rage, this prayer will supplicate them as well.

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3☯ Speaks on subjects of sickness and death, which the others will not.

Motivation: Someone needs to feed the old man Pasang who begs for alms on the mountain; since the salt nomads have not traveled recently, he is probably very hungry. Pasang is outside of camp but usually close by. Finding him requires an Ob 4 Scout test, but Margen’s directions count as supplies and offer +1D on the test.

Pargen and Bopsa don’t speak the common tongue, so the adventurers must either win over Margen’s favor so he will translate for them, have an appropriate wise (Sharwa-wise or Salt Nomad-wise), or cast Wisdom of the Sages Ob 2 to speak with them.

Pargen, the old father. He is the leader of prayers and only speaks the Salt Tongue.

- 3☯ Makes burnt offerings before every meal and journey.
- 3☯ Distributes the meat and prepares the dumpling soup.



Eating with the Sharwa

Meals are communal and often prepared by a few individuals (the Margen and Pargen) that serve their respective dishes. Every meal features tea with butter and pink salt. Special occasions include *chang*, a beer made from maize, barley, or rice. Meals are typically based on starches (flour, potatoes, and barley).

- ☞ Breakfast is typically gruel made by adding *tsampa*, a roasted flour, to water, tea, or milk.
- ☞ Lunch is eaten in the late morning and may include boiled potatoes dipped in ground spices. Sometimes a stiff dough made from a mixture of grains (*sen*) is eaten with a thin sauce made from spices and vegetables, or meat if it is available.
- ☞ A typical dinner is a stew (*shakpa*) consisting of balls of dough, potatoes, and vegetables.

Dairy products, especially butter and curds, are important in the Sharwa diet. Sharwa eat meat, but many who cleave to the old gods will not kill animals themselves.

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- ☞ Takes others to a private tent to resolve disputes. Will not argue in public.

Motivation: Pargen wants someone to perform the prayers to Namakambhari and make the needed offerings. If someone offers to say the prayers he will take them at their word that they will do so, but requires that they show him their understanding of the gods so they will not offend them. Displaying this knowledge requires an Ob 3 Theologian test.

Suggested Theologian failure result (choose one):

- ☞ **Condition:** Pargen conveys the knowledge needed but he also tells them of the gods' terrible anger. Gain the afraid condition.
- ☞ **Twist:** Something was lost in translation and Pargen is offended. He believes you're just like all the other lowlanders who want their salt but spit on their gods.

If Pargen is convinced, he will take the adventurer aside in his tent and teach them the first words of Salt Tongue, the Prayer of Namakambhari's Peace.

Bopsa, the novice. Here to learn of the mountain. He is forbidden from speaking anything but the Salt Tongue.

- ☞ Performs menial tasks—cleaning, carrying wood, tending the fire.

- ☞ Spins wool with a needle when his hands are idle.

- ☞ May only speak in praise to the gods.

Motivation: Bopsa wants someone to send Sampat and the other lowlanders away!

Relationships

The salt nomads are an integral part of the Sharwa society, and though reclusive about their own secret knowledge, they are connected to everyone on the mountain.

- ☞ Pasang the old monk is a beggar and harmless. They often feed him or let him sleep in their tents as they pass.
- ☞ Jhala is the leader of the Sharwa, but she's brought Sampat onto the mountain, which she shouldn't have.
- ☞ Sampat is too wealthy to anger, but he does not belong here. The lowlanders he has hired have no respect for the gods on the mountain.

- ☞ Hoa Veit does not exist. Her actions were disrespectful to the spirits and they do not look at her.

They may trade their food and mountain climbing gear with the adventurers (see **Finding Provisions** below).

2E. Anxious Shepherd

Just above the camp, on no visible path, a small flock of bleating goats is being herded by a young boy. Like most of the Sharwa here, he wears a wide, easy smile, and has an olive complexion. He periodically slaps a billy on the rump with a stick when it wanders too far from the camp.

The boy, Ankit, though he smiles, is concerned and anxious about his goats. Two of them have gone missing, a runty billy and his mother. His two uncles and his aunt went up the mountain a week ago and haven't returned. He has nothing to offer the adventurers, except perhaps a warm meal, but would be ever so thankful, and become a friend, if they could return his goats.

2F. Rock Cairn

Thin wisps of sweet-smelling smoke drift from a rock cairn built on the side of the road. Beside it are several bright rhododendrons. The small basin at the top has been blackened by countless fires burned within.

Finding Provisions

The Sharwa here are equipped to make the trek up the mountain, but only barely so. Their equipment often breaks or is lost and when that happens they need to go all the way back down the mountain to replace it. Convincing the Sharwa to part with their gear can be done either by offering



them a fair trade of goods or aid, or by haggling with them using trinkets and promises. Here is the list of commonly available items:

- 3‡ Spiked Boots (feet/worn 1 or pack 2). Gives +1D to tests involving climbing ice or soft stone, traversing difficult terrain, or to avoid slipping. May be used as weapon (Dagger) in one combat, but are destroyed after use. Cost: Ob 2
- 3‡ Ice Axe (hand/carried 1 or pack 2). A sturdy metal pick with a wooden shaft. Grants +1D on tests involving climbing, anchoring the head, prying things apart, or breaking up ice. Each time it is used roll d6, on a 1 it is broken, lost, or stuck during use. Cost: Ob 2
- 3‡ Snow Goggles (head 1). Made of yak bone lashed together with a thin slit between them to look through. Prevents the effects of snow blindness or other bright light. Cost: Ob 1
- 3‡ Tent (pack 3). Keeps your gear from getting wet in camp and offers +1D to Survivalist tests to wait out the weather and to tests to recover from Exhaustion. Cost: Ob 3

Fair Trade

Though they can't be purchased with resources tests, trading items of equal or greater value (see the Master Gear List in *Torchbearer* page 37 for item values) is a Good Idea. It is also a Good Idea if the adventurers provide the Sharwa with something they need (see each NPC's goals above).

Haggling over Every Copper Coin

Trying to convince them to give over their climbing gear with the promise of deeds (building shelter for the Sharwa refugees, finding Deepti, recovering the goats, etc.) or for goods of little value requires a Hagglor test with Ob equal to the highest Cost Ob of an item they desire +1 for each additional item.

Suggested Hagglor failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** Assurances must be made. The adventurer's raiment is required as proof of their intentions.
- 3‡ **Twist:** "Why would I help lowlanders cause more problems?" Whoever the adventurer was haggling with becomes their enemy.
- 3‡ **Condition:** The Sharwa gladly give over the gear and wish the adventurers well. It's clear, however, that they are terrified of the evil spirits who haunt the mountain, as it's believed they can kill you in your sleep. The adventurers gain the afraid condition.

Burnt Offerings

Small shrines are scattered on the mountain pass. If sacrifices are burned in them, usually incense, powders, medicine, or good-quality wood, the smoke signifies veneration of the gods and spirits on the mountain. Also, garlands of many colored rhododendrons are hand woven and placed at the base of the shrines.

Casual offerings are seen as good practice by the Sharwa but do not require a test. Performing the prayers, blessings, and thanks correctly to appease the spirits requires an Ob 2 Ritualist test, and success acts as supplies on a single test when interacting with any of the spirits or gods on the mountain (Kumbha, Anala, Pemba, Namakambhari's Serpent, etc.).

Suggested Ritualist failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Condition:** The flames burn much higher than expected and the face of a fiery demon appears within it. Only those who perform the offering hear it declare, "I will burn your fields and melt your bones!" The ritual is complete but the supplicant is afraid.
- 3‡ **Twist:** During the prayers the earth shakes and the rock altar collapses. All the of ashes contained within scatter to the wind and dirty the petitioner's clothes. It's a mess.

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Information Available

Jhala and Hoa are the only two in camp who speak the common tongue fluently and have knowledge of the mountain. Sampat is also easy to converse with but knows nothing of the mountain and seeks more information than he offers. The salt nomads are forbidden from speaking about such prosaic matters.

Others speak a smattering of familiar words such as sheep, yak, salt, and cold. If the adventurers inquire, treat it either as a Good Idea if they speak with someone inclined to help them or be talkative, otherwise it will require a versus test using either Manipulator (to trick them) or Persuader (to offer aid). Information they can glean:

- 3‡ An order of monks lives up on the mountain, but they worship the "old" ways and are best forgotten.
- 3‡ It's colder up on the mountain than it used to be. Only a few decades ago, it was warmer and the snow was above the salt lakes. Now they must dig through the snow to get to the salt.





- 3‡ After the earthquake three weeks ago, there have been several attacks in the night. Livestock was stolen (Ankit will bemoan this), and the three uncles who went up after them have not returned.
- 3‡ Everyone looks to the salt nomads for answers as they know how to appease the spirits, but they are deliberating and have not acted since the earthquake.
- 3‡ Sampat is a lowlander whose interest in the salt lakes is obvious. He thinks that the Sharwa are fools and that they don't see his greed.
- 3‡ Hoa Veit angered the spirits and now must endure their punishment. She casts a dark shadow on us all.
- 3‡ Kisha's teeth are fabled treasures. Crystal shards of unparalleled beauty.
- 3‡ A fragment of Rava's own sword is still buried within the mountain god Kisha.
- 3‡ There is a old monk named Pasang on the mountain. Jhala says we must not talk to him.
- 3‡ Deepti, a guide, took a group of adventurers up a few days ago. They have not returned yet and are due back soon.
- 3‡ Rumor has it Jhala is trying to marry her daughter Deepti to Sampat the Wealthy, but young Deepti wants nothing of it.
- 3‡ Mikra are angry spirits of the god's wrath. Legend holds that anyone who sees one will die in their sleep. Avert your eyes!
- 3‡ The Sharwa are a peaceful people who do not take lives. If violence must be done, the great Khalish army will come to do it.
- 3‡ The Salt Tongue is a holy language, taught only the Sharwa. Speaking in the Salt Tongue to lowlanders offends the gods.

3. Broken Earth

As though the flat rock surface of the mountain had been shattered by a giant's hammer, the vast moraine in front of you is full of large granite boulders broken apart and jutting from the earth at uneven angles. Some are sturdy but after the recent earthquake many look precariously balanced, ready to tumble down at any moment. The rocks are blackened by a thin sheet of ice coating their surface.

- 3‡ Below the snow line. Biting wind that stings exposed skin.
- 3‡ Jagged slabs of rough granite, silver-banded gneiss, and crystal-suffused pegmatite.
- 3‡ Black ice patches easily missed by those unfamiliar with them.

The moraine is naturally formed, but was indeed disturbed by the earthquake. Climbing over it, the most direct route, requires a Ob 3 Dungeoneer test (vertical pitch plus evil GM factor of ice on the surface and the shifting rocks) for one person to pass, Ob 4 for two, or Ob 5 for the entire party. Alternately the party can look for a path around the broken rocks, taking their time to look for safer passage. This requires an Ob 4 Pathfinder test (nearby destination, path overgrown or washed out). If using the journey rules this takes at least a day and counts as Toll +1.

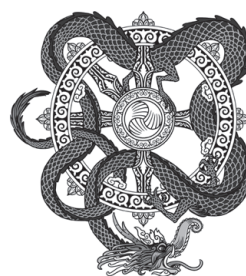
Suggested Dungeoneer failure result:

- 3‡ **Twist:** As they climb, the rocks shift and pinch one of the adventurers' feet, painfully trapping their leg. Freeing them requires an Ob 2 Laborer test to remove and the person trapped cannot help except with a wise. Suggested Laborer failure result: Condition (injured) or Twist (Mikra attack).

Suggested Pathfinder failure result:

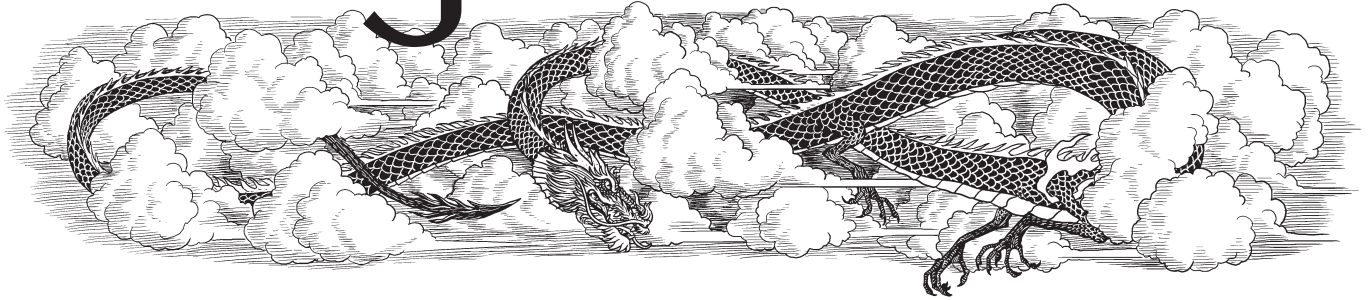
- 3‡ **Twist:** The party is lost. By the time they make it up to Wing Glacier Canyon (location 4), using Cartographer to map their progress is impossible.

Once past Base Camp, the true mountain trek begins and the challenges the adventurers face will be much more daunting without the support of the Sharwa.





वेदवगुण प्वांगु गुबिटांर



इतारंगु प्प थे लोपुतार

If you are running this adventure as a one shot or just want to skip right to the mountain climbing, here is the suggested method for doing so.

Tell the players their characters have passed through base camp and give them each one piece of information they gleaned from the list of **Information Available** page 19.

- ॐ Start them at location 4: Wing Glacier Canyon.
- ॐ If they return to Base Camp later, before entering the mountain set Duress at (2) Disgruntled. If they return after entering the mountain, set it to (3) Hostile.

पुतारंगु इ फ्रोस्ट वरु रेवर

When things go wrong on the mountain, and they will, remember the awesome expanse of merciless ice, the recently creeping cold, and the hateful inhabitants. Also recall the majestic beauty, the exaltation of exploration, and the palpable presence of the gods. Use this list as inspiration if you need a twist for a failed test, but don't hesitate to use a twist of your own if you have a better idea. Also, make sure

to throw in a few conditions here and there. Conditions hurt, but they keep the action moving by allowing the adventurers to continue making progress.

Mountain Inhabitants

Deepti, Zopon, and Sampat's lowland hunters offer human interactions on an otherwise bleak and unforgiving mountain. They also reveal much of the mountain's history and inner turmoil.

- ॐ *Mikra ambush.* 1d3+2 Mikra ambush the party, looking for easy prey to carry off or useful tools to steal.
- ॐ *Powerful winds.* A torrent of wind whips by, blowing out torches and knocking people off balance.
- ॐ *Extreme cold.* The biting cold of the mountain chills travelers to the bone.
- ॐ *Damaged gear.* Some important bit of gear—rope, a grappling hook, a lantern, a backpack—is broken, ripped, or otherwise damaged.
- ॐ *Deepti.* A Sharwa guide left for dead by the adventurers she was guiding.
- ॐ *Sampat and his lowland hunters.* Patience exhausted, Sampat sets out with Yuddha and mercenary lowland hunters to find the salt lakes and eliminate any threats on the mountain.
- ॐ *Hidden crevasse.* Ice or rock gives way and a climber falls into a crevasse.



High Altitude Twists

Of special note, above the snow line (locations 6K-9K, 7D-9D, and 10) the mountain is even deadlier than it is below. In any of those locations, these become additional options for any failed roll:

- 3✚ **Twist:** Thin air. This counts as a factor for recovering from exhausted, and torches only give off half the light they usually would (light for one, dim light for one).
- 3✚ **Condition:** Exhausted from shortness of breath and lightheadedness.
- 3✚ **Condition:** Sick. Altitude sickness causes headaches, fatigue, indigestion, dizziness, nosebleeds, drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting.
- 3✚ **Condition:** Dead (if already sick or injured). Suffocation caused by fluid accumulating in the lungs.

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- 3✚ **Trail lost.** A recent snow or heavy winds have covered the path.
- 3✚ **Snow blindness.** The sun beats down and reflects off the ice, blinding all those unprotected.
- 3✚ **Sun setting.** Outside changes to dim light. In two turns it changes to darkness.
- 3✚ **Avalanche.** Heat, precipitation, or pressure causes a fracture in the snowpack, sending a large mass of ice and snow tumbling down.
- 3✚ **Snowfall.** A fresh layer of snow begins to accumulate. This is a factor in all tests while not under protection and prevents camp unless a shelter is found.
- 3✚ **Zopon. Lord of Animals.** Tending to his yaks and trying to keep them safe.
- 3✚ **Snow leopard.** A ranging leopard, hungry enough to attack larger prey.

Mind Your Factors

There are two twists that cause factors in future tests: snowfall and extreme cold. They are great for reminding the players of how deadly the cold is, but using both at the same time is not recommended as more than one factor can make even easy challenges impossibly difficult.

Mikra Ambush

The Mikra are hateful of everyone outside the mountain and will attack in the darkness or dim light whenever they can. Though vicious, they are content to make off with stolen tools and weapons if they are overmatched.

Creatures bound from the darkness and are suddenly upon you. Covered in fur, some walk on two legs some on all fours. They carry a mixture of crudely improvised and well manufactured weapons. The Mikra howl in revelry as they attack!

This is an important twist to use early on so the adventurers experience the violence the Mikra are capable of. Make sure to use it in the dark, either when the sun has set (another twist) or when they are making camp. It is an especially good twist for a failed test during camp. Delay the twist until all the actions are taken and then describe them being woken in the middle of the night by the sounds of creatures roaring!

मिक्रा

Abilities	Might: 2	Nature: 4
Descriptors:	Ambushing, Escaping, Demanding	
CONFLICT		
Dispositions	Weapons	
Kill: 6	Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus	
	Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons	
Drive Off: 3	Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus	
	Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons	
Flee: 6	Attack: +1D, Know the terrain	
	Defend: +1D, Know the terrain	
Armor:	None	
Instinct:	Attack in the darkness.	
SPECIAL		
Mikra have no penalty operating in dim light. Full light or darkness counts as a factor in all tests except riddling.		

Powerful Winds

Powerful winds tear down the mountainside, causing a horrible whistling and blowing out torches. If any adventurer has precarious footing or is holding on to something, they need to make an Ob 2 Health test or they will fall or lose what they were holding. Powerful winds are a factor for all social tests due to difficulty hearing.

Note

This is a great twist to give characters who are climbing over the ice wall (location 5K), traversing the God's Wound (location 7K), or trying to shimmy across Diamond Tooth's





bridge (location 7D). Another good time to use this is after a snowfall or dip in the river (location 9D) has made their gear wet.

Extreme Cold

Some days are so cold that your bones ache and your lungs burn with each breath. Any exposed flesh that hasn't been smeared with animal grease is at risk.

Rules

- 3✘ Extreme cold is a factor in any tests that involve fine motor control.
- 3✘ The injured condition (frostbite) is an appropriate consequence for any failed test in extreme cold.
- 3✘ Adventurers who become wet in extreme cold and cannot immediately get to shelter and warmth must make an Ob 4 Health test. Suggested failure result: **Condition:** Sick (hypothermia).
- 3✘ If using the journey rules, traveling in extreme cold: Toll +1.

The cold can be waited out with an Ob 3 Survivalist test.

Suggested Survivalist failure result:

- 3✘ **Condition:** Sick from hypothermia, but the cold is waited out.

Damaged Gear

The snow and ice are just as hard on the adventurers' gear as they are on the adventurers. Metal tools shattering in the cold, ropes snapping, water freezing in bottles and expanding to the point of breaking the glass are all brutal examples of how inhospitable the mountainside is.

Deepti

A young Sharwa woman stands at the edge of a crevasse pulling on a rope with all her might. She shouts a desperate command to someone below, "Climb, lowlander! Climb if you want to live!"

Deepti is a young Sharwa guide that takes lowlanders up the mountain. Right now, she's looking for help.

An adventuring party Deepti guided were attacked by Mikra and only one of her clients survived, the dwarven adventurer Halfard. As they fled, Halfard fell into a crevasse, and Deepti is desperate to save his life.

Halfard is jammed in an icy crevasse, and one wrong move will send him falling to his death. Rescuing him will take more than just a rope and strong arms; someone has to climb down and help him out of the fissure. Getting Halfard up to safety requires an Ob 4 Dungeoneer test.

Deepti and the mountain

Deepti is Jhala's daughter, and the two of them are constantly at odds. Jhala wants Deepti to leave the mountain and marry Sampat. Deepti is not interested in that plan. Though it is not spoken of often, Deepti has figured out that she was the first child refused to the mountain. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, she is drawn to the mysterious peak. Although she often takes travelers to the Burning Heart Monastery, the one concession she made to her mother was that she would never enter it.

Deepti speaks the common tongue and cautiously enjoys the company of lowlanders. She is often suspicious at first but quick to warm to fellow mountaineers.

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Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

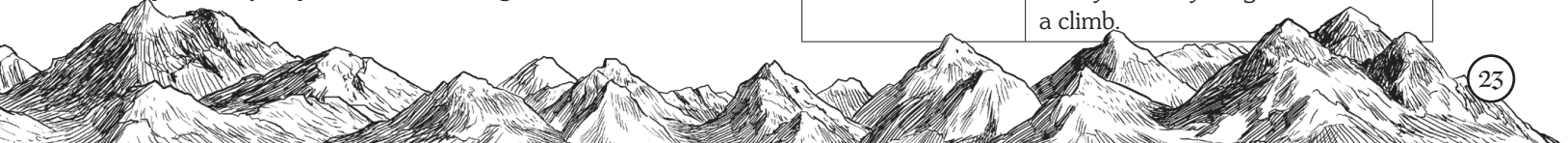
- 3✘ **Twist:** Halfard is bleeding badly. An Ob 3 Healer test must be made in the next four turns or he will die.
- 3✘ **Twist:** Mikra attack as the sun sets. See the Mikra Ambush twist.
- 3✘ **Twist:** Halfard falls to his death in the crevasse.
- 3✘ **Condition:** Halfard is freed but everyone who helped him out is exhausted.

If Halfard is saved and brought back to base camp, Deepti is very thankful and will act as a **guide** (see *Torchbearer* page 89). She provides help (+1D) in Pathfinder and outdoor Dungeoneer tests so long as the adventurers ascend no higher than the Burning Heart Monastery. She will not go past that without being convinced to break her promise to her mother.

Deepti

- 3✘ Smiles as she looks to the top of the mountain.
- 3✘ Sprinkles a pinch of pink salt on the ground and murmurs, "Thanks to Namakambhari."
- 3✘ Pulls a brightly colored and well worn wool cap down lower on her head.

Raw Abilities	Nature 3	Will 4	Health 6
Town Abilities	Resources 1	Circles 2	Might 2
Skills	Pathfinder 5, Survivalist 5, Dungeoneer 4, Scout 3		
Wises	Stone Dragon Mountain-wise		
Traits	Stubborn (1), Weather Sense (1)		
Instinct	Always check your gear before a climb.		



Sampat and his lowland hunters

Sampat the Wealthy (see his full description on page 16) has lost his patience and has gone up the mountain to look for the salt lakes himself. Of course, without a guide he's now hopelessly lost. Sampat is furious and ready to lash out at anyone unless they can give him exactly what he wants: a direct path to the salt lakes.

Allies or Enemies?

The hunters twist could either be a bit of comfort for the adventurers to find others like them, or a dire threat if Sampat perceives that the adventurers have allied with the Mikra or threaten his interests in the salt lakes

Yuddha

Yuddha is Sampat's bodyguard. She was a soldier in the Khalish army who once while wounded was given refuge on Sampat's estate. Retired from service, she now protects Sampat and offers him council. She urges him to be patient in most things, but once his mind is set, she follows his orders without question.

- ☞ Translates Sharwa for Sampat.
- ☞ Secures the area with a guard and light.
- ☞ Prays to the Immortal Lords of Valor and Shields.

Raw Abilities	Nature 4	Will 3	Health 5
Town Abilities	Resources 3	Circles 2	Might 3
Skills	Fighter 5, Scout 3, Laborer 3		
Wises	Khalish Army-wise, Calming Sampat-wise, Sharwa-wise		
Traits	Defender (1), Heart of Battle (2)		
Instinct	Always follow Sampat's direct orders.		

Sampat the Wealthy

- ☞ Brings money into the conversation.
- ☞ Paces back and forth.
- ☞ Speaks sweetly to strangers; barks orders at servants.

Raw Abilities	Nature 4	Will 6	Health 4
Town Abilities	Resources 8	Circles 6	Might 2
Skills	Haggler 5, Steward 3, Persuader 3, Manipulator 4		
Wises	Salt-wise, Trade Route-wise		
Traits	Cunning (2)		
Instinct	Calculate the cost before pursuing any new enterprise.		

The two are accompanied by lowland hunters who claim there is nothing on this mountain they can't kill or capture.

lowland hunters

- ☞ Spend any money they make on luxuries.
- ☞ Enamored of the value of pink salt.
- ☞ Make jokes about the salt nomads in common tongue.

Raw Abilities	Nature 3	Will 3	Health 5
Town Abilities	Resources 1	Circles 2	Might 2
Skills	Hunter 4, Fighter 3, Scout 3, Haggler 2		
Wises	Killing Something for a Coin-wise, Saving My Own Skin-wise		
Traits	Natural Bearing (1)		
Instinct	Respond to threats with steel.		

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Tangled Relationships

Deepti's appearance will have the most impact if the adventurers have already met Darby and Elske Thewsday (see the Missing Guide event in **Base Camp** on page 12). If she appears before them and returns to camp with the adventurers, Darby and Elske should be there swearing she abandoned them.

Hidden Crevasse

Snow gives way underneath a climber, or a slip on loose ground sends one or more of the adventurers down into a narrow crevasse.

Bound Together by Rope

If the adventurers are tied together, climbing out requires an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test for one person, Ob 4 for two, or Ob 5 if more than two characters fell in. The rope provides +1D and any who are on the surface may help using Dungeoneer or Health.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

- ☞ **Condition:** Exhausted for the adventurer(s) climbing out, afraid for those who helped (this could happen any time, to any of them).
- ☞ **Twist:** Ice gives way on the surface, and another adventurer falls in.



3✘ Twist: The rope breaks and the adventurer falls (see below).

Falling

Without being tied off, or if the rope breaks, the crevasse is deadly. The falling adventurer(s) can make an Ob 3 Health test on their way down to slow themselves or catch onto an edge.

Suggested Health failure result (choose one):

3✘ Twist: The adventurer falls until they are caught either by a protruding ledge or because the crevasse narrows. One of their appendages is trapped, and it is extremely difficult to dislodge them due to the narrow confines. Make an Ob 5 Health test to pull them out. (Suggested failure result: **Condition:** Injured, sick, or exhausted.)

3✘ Condition: Injured but their fall is stopped.

3✘ Condition: Dead (this option is only available if the character was already injured or sick). The adventurer plummets into darkness. Their screams will haunt your dreams.

Trail Lost

A path that seemed perfectly visible moments ago is now just one more patch of snow. The adventurers are lost and need to find their bearings if they want to move on. Getting back on the path requires an Ob 4 Pathfinder test (nearby, overgrown, or washed out).

Suggested Pathfinder failure result:

3✘ Condition: The party finds its way but the snow and cold are draining. The leader is exhausted. Helpers are hungry and thirsty.

Snow Blindness

A long trek in blinding light on the mountain is brutally painful. The light is so bright it burns the insides of eyes, similar to a sunburn. After the damage is done, bright light becomes intolerable, and eyes tear in pain.

The Sharwa crafts snow goggles made of yak bones, which only allow a tiny slit for the wearer to see through. Wearing these or similar devices will protect the user from these flash burns, otherwise the damage is already done before it is noticed.

Any adventurers wearing goggles are protected from this twist. After the blinding light is mentioned, if they seek to craft a similar device on the journey it requires an Ob 3 Survivalist test (emergency tool-making) or they can make

camp immediately and construct protection accordingly with an Ob 2 Carpenter or Weaver test (depending on the materials used).

If the adventurers proceed unprotected, they must each make an Ob 4 Health test at the end of the day or as they are setting camp.

Suggested Health failure result:

3✘ Condition: Sick. Light sensitivity, intense tearing, and pain like sand is in your eyes.

Avalanche

An uncanny stillness followed by a rumbling as the ice pack breaks apart and quickly escalates into a torrential wave of ice and snow! Decide if the avalanche starts above the party and is crashing down on them, or starts under their feet.

If the avalanche comes from above, it will bury the party in snow and ice if they don't move fast to find cover. Finding nearby cover requires an Ob 3 Scout test.

As a suggested failure for the Scout roll, or if the avalanche happens under them, the adventurers are swept away in the ice and snow unless they can make an Ob 4 Health test.

Suggested Health failure result (choose one):

3✘ Twist: Buried! The adventurers are buried and must dig their way out of the snow before they run out of air.

3✘ Twist: Lost on the mountain. The adventurers are carried down the mountain and must find their way back up to proceed. Make an Ob 5 Pathfinder (nearby, blazing a new trail) to find their way back. Suggested failure: Arriving at a new location, still lost.

3✘ Condition: Injured by the ice hammering into the adventurer or knocking them against a rock or tree.

3✘ Condition: Exhausted, and the adventurer climbs back up the torrent of snow.

Snowfall

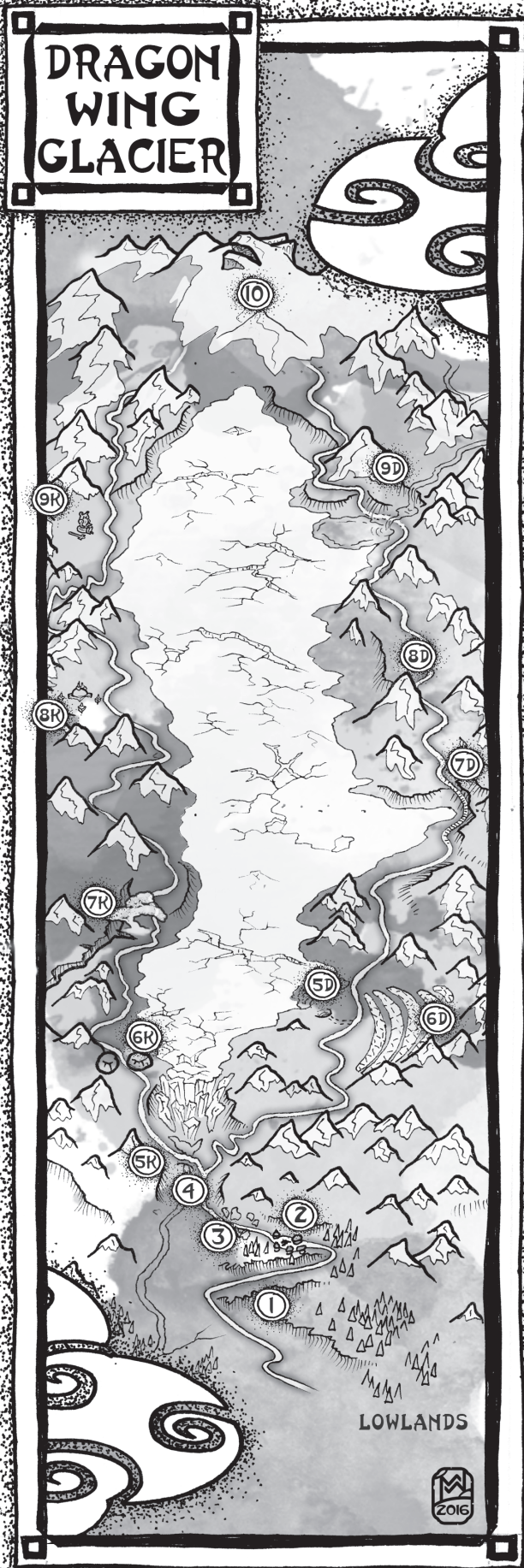
Heavy, thick snow obscures vision and brings with it a bitter cold. It can make being outdoors for any extended period of time a misery. The rules are as follows:

3✘ Snow can factor into any outdoor skill or ability tests, as appropriate.

3✘ A few tests, like using Scout to track someone, may benefit from the snow to the tune of +1D.

3✘ The exhausted or sick conditions are an appropriate consequence for any failed test in the snow.





Yak Parturition

When the female yak is close to birthing, she leaves the herd and travels uphill, often just below the snow line, to give birth alone where there are fewer predators. The process involves alternating between standing and lying on her side near a shelter place. The umbilical cord breaks on its own, either when the cow stands up or if the calf falls down.

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ॐ If using the journey rules, traveling in snow without the benefit of the Breath of the Burning Lord prayer:
Toll +2

The snow can be waited out with an Ob 3 Survivalist test.

Suggested Survivalist failure result:

ॐ **Condition:** Hungry and thirsty but the snows have passed.

Zopon, Lord of Animals

Zopon is a salt nomad who tends to yaks and follows them wherever they graze. This is the first year Zopon has held this title. Before this year he was Margen, the mother, who stayed with the other salt nomads and cooked. As Margen he also interacted more closely with Sharwa and lowlanders. Zopon yearns for company, but on the mountain he is only allowed to speak the Salt Tongue, and must be extremely careful as the gods are listening. He will emote eagerly, though, as he'd give his left arm for a warm cup of butter tea or even better, some warm barley chang.

Zopon

When the adventurers arrive he is distracted. One of his yaks is in labor and she is having difficulty. He's never birthed a yak before and watches in horror as she bleats and struggles.

ॐ Clutches his bakhu robe tight around his body for warmth.

ॐ Stares wide eyed at the yak, sweat dripping down his brow.

ॐ Thanks Namakambhari apropos of nothing.

Helping the cow along may involve either coaxing her to give birth among the others, or walking her high up to a place she feels safer and waiting. It is an Ob 3 Peasant test (calving and foaling).



Suggested Peasant failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** The foal is stillborn and Zopon is convinced it is an ill omen from the gods. He is afraid and despondent.
- 3‡ **Condition:** Stupid yak doesn't know what's good for it. The beast kicked and knocked the adventurer into the ice more than once in the process. The calf is birthed but gain the angry condition.

Snow Leopard

Beneath the snow, in the shadows, or perched in a pine tree, a leopard waits for its prey. A leopard can smell from miles away, detect vibrations caused by movement deep under snow, and has unparalleled night vision. Avoiding the leopard's ambush requires a Scout test versus its Nature.

Suggested Scout failure result:

- 3‡ The leopard ambushes the adventurers.

Give the Adventurers a Chance

The leopard is best introduced after one of the other people on the mountain like Zopon or Pasang has warned the adventurers about creatures on the mountain so they have a chance to prepare for it.

SNOW LEOPARD

Abilities	Might: 3 Nature: 5
Descriptors:	Climbing, Hunting, Stalking
CONFLICT	
Dispositions	Weapons
Kill: 5 +	Attack: +1s, <i>Incredible Agility</i>
Nature Roll	Maneuver: +1s, <i>Powerful Pounce</i>
Drive Off: 5	Attack: +1s, <i>Incredible Agility</i>
	Maneuver: +1s, <i>Powerful Pounce</i>
Flee: 11	Attack: +1s, <i>Amazing Speed</i>
	Defend: +2D, <i>Keen Smell</i>
Armor:	None
Instinct:	Always ambush your prey.
SPECIAL	

Snow leopards hunt their targets with incredible patience and skill. They may reroll all 6s on Nature rolls when stalking.

you blots out the rest of the mountain completely. Where the path splits, a worn wooden sign hangs from chains hammered into the stone face. The text is written in Sharwa, but there are images depicting an axe to the left and a tooth to the right. There is a small rock shrine here where burnt offerings are made.

- 3‡ Below the snow line. Breath is heavy and visible. Extremities becoming numb.
- 3‡ An ancient signpost for travelers.
- 3‡ Well used rock cairn with flowers only a few days old beside it and charred fragments of burnt offerings in the basin.

Anyone with Sharwa-wise can read the sign, otherwise it requires an Ob 2 Scholar test to decipher the path markers. The carved symbols translate to:

Kumbha's Pass to the Left. Beware the Demon: Do Not Wake!

Diamond Tooth Pass to the Right. Coin and Platitudes Will Aid You.

Heeding this warning offers a +1D on a Peasant test to keep the sheep calm or on a Scout test to sneak past Kumbha. Offering at least 2D of coin and being very polite counts as a Good Idea for gaining passage across Diamond Tooth's bridge or dissuading him from killing the adventurers in their sleep.

Suggested Scholar failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** The sun is setting: the area is now has dim lighting and in two turns will be darkness.
- 3‡ **Condition:** Afraid, and the adventurer realizes there is a demon on this mountain.

5K. Pertemba's Rest

Just below the snow line only hearty brush, stout firs, and large rock outcroppings stand out from the ubiquitous white that blankets the ground. A light layer of frost covers everything, sticking to your armor, your hair, and your exposed skin.

As you trudge forward, the trail opens and pair of boulders form a natural barrier to the wind and snow, an area that would make a serviceable camp. Small mounds dot the clearing, offering you an opportunity to sit and rest after a long trek.

- 3‡ Just below the snow line. The ice crust still breaks under foot. Numbness is pervasive.

mountain locations

4. Wing Glacier Canyon

As the mountain becomes steeper, and the ground is covered in a thin sheet of ice, the Wing Glacier above



⌘ Rock formation offers protection from the snow and howling wind.

⌘ Bits of detritus still left over from the Thewsday camp.

This is the camp site of Darby and Elske Thewsday's; those they abandoned are dead and now buried under the snow. Any activity in the camp will reveal signs of their presence. A kicked mound turns out to be a boot, or a cut mark on the side of a boulder indicates a fight.

If used as a camp site, Pertemba's Rest provides an unsafe wilderness camp with shelter without requiring a Survivalist test.

Finding a few signs of struggle are easy but anyone who searches the camp can make an Ob 3 Scout test to find the rest of their remains.

Suggested Scout failure result (choose one):

⌘ **Twist:** The dead adventurers are discovered, but their belongings have all been ransacked. All that is found are the broken bodies of an elf and a halfling.

⌘ **Twist:** (dim light or darkness only): Mikra wait in ambush and attack from the shadows of the boulders (see **Mikra Ambush** on page 22).

⌘ **Condition:** Searching through the ice numbs fingers to the bone. Gain the sick condition but succeed in finding their remaining possessions.

The bodies of two adventurers are under the snow, though it is clear from the camp that there were more here at one point. They have on them the following possessions:

⌘ Three preserved rations hidden in the folds of the halfling's clothes.

⌘ Four torches scattered about like kindling.

⌘ An axe wedged between the two boulders.

⌘ A heavy bronze ring with a bear's head featuring two blue opals for eyes worth 2D of cash, which requires cutting off the halfling's swollen finger to recover.

⌘ A map that contains the locations from Base Camp up to this point.

⌘ A spellbook owned by the elf Taleil, containing the spell Lightness of Being (treat it as a scroll that takes up two slots).

Everything else of value has been ransacked.

Examining the Bodies

Should anyone take interest in the bodies themselves, they should make an Ob 2 Healer test to determine that their wounds were contusions caused by blunt trauma.

Suggested Healer failure result:

⌘ **Condition:** Afraid and realize that someone killed these adventurers in their sleep while they thought they were safe in camp.

Note

The Mikra who killed these people used rocks and cudgels, but they took the weapons off the fallen adventurers (except the axe, which they couldn't pry out of the boulders). They now have a spear and two daggers. The two fallen are Taleil the Elf Ranger and Jarred the Halfling Burglar.

6K. Wall of Ice

Ahead, the Wing Glacier has stretched a claw of ice over the path, blocking your way. Beside the path the snow drops in a steep decline, revealing the white tops of pine and fir trees below.

⌘ Above the snow line. Fingertips filled with pins and needles. Teeth chattering painfully.

⌘ A giant wall of ice, cut out from the mountain and thrown down to block passage.

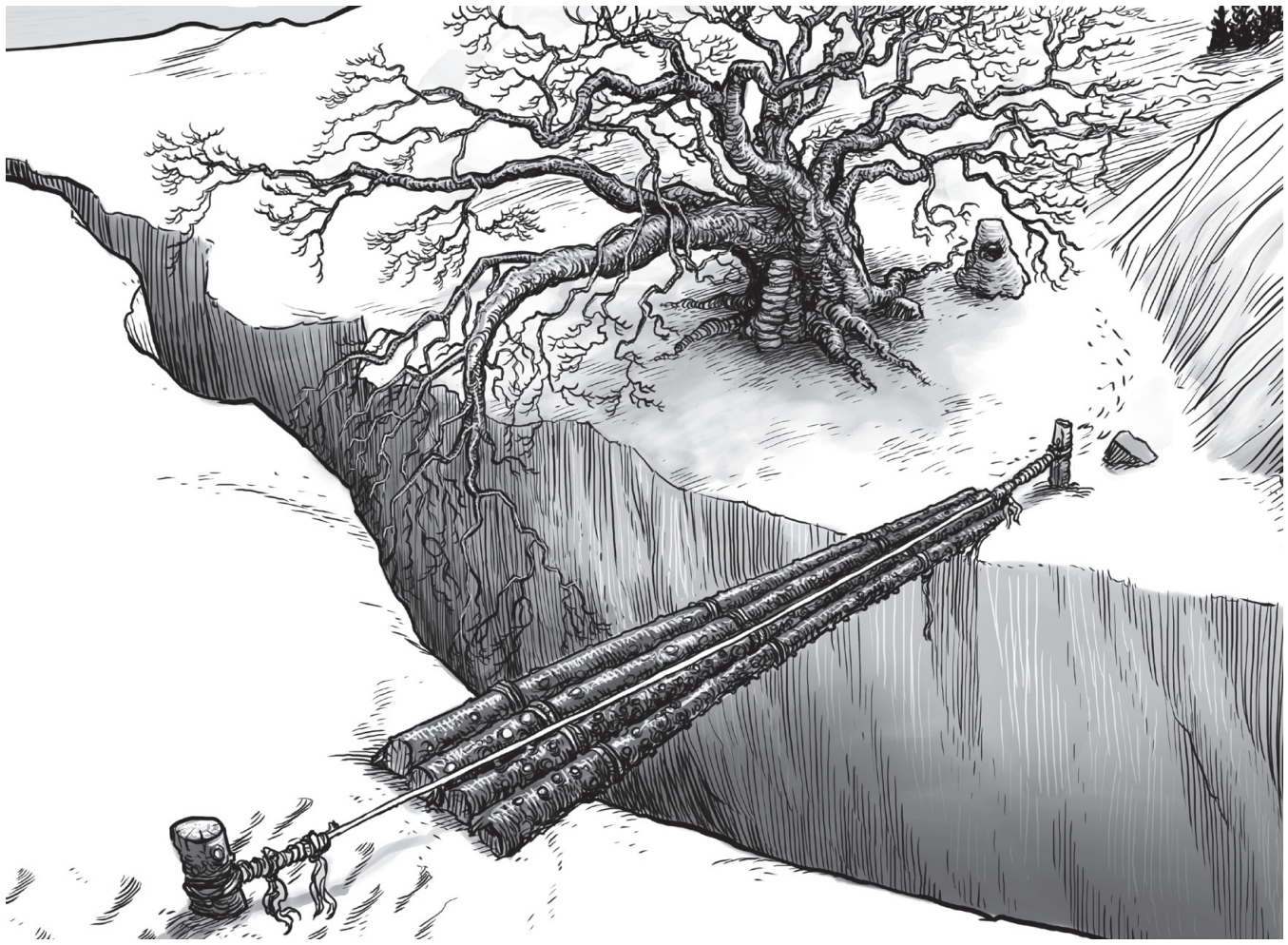
⌘ A harrowing drop to one side. A treacherous climb on the other.

Above on the mountain, Kumbha the Demon (see location 9K), was annoyed at interlopers tromping through his lands. He cleaved a wedge of ice from the glacier and tossed it down the path. Now it stands in the way of anyone heading up the pass. Close examination reveals ice uncovered by snow; this obstruction is recent! Traversing the block of ice is an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test for one person, Ob 4 for two, and Ob 5 for a party of adventurers.

On the top it is obvious that this giant slab of ice is not naturally occurring, but that some great blade cut it out of the mountain and sent it tumbling down.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

⌘ **Twist:** One of the party members loses their footing and slips. The next thing they know, they are hanging on the edge of the barrier with a hundred-foot drop beneath them. Scrambling back up to safety requires an Ob 4 Health test. Anyone involved in the first Dungeoneer test can help. Suggested failure result: Condition (exhausted).



3⚡ **Twist:** Equipment used is broken or lost in the climb. If no gear was used, something slipped off or was snagged during the climb.

Creative Players

Some other things intrepid adventurers might try:

- 3⚡ Once one person makes it over the ice barrier, they could throw a rope to the others and pull them up and over, treated as a Good Idea (no test required).
- 3⚡ They might also look for another way around by tromping through the snow off the side of the path. This would be an Ob 5 Pathfinder test (nearby, blazing a new trail). Suggested failure result: Condition (exhausted). If using the journey rules, this takes at least a day. Toll +1.
- 3⚡ Cutting through the ice is nearly impossible; it's just so big. Should they try, require an Ob 6 Laborer test. Suggested failure result: Twist (weapons and tools break against the ice's hard surface).

7K. God's Wound

You come to an impossibly long crevasse, as if a giant blade split the ground asunder. The drop descends into darkness below. A harrowing wind whistles through the deep crack; the terrible cold cuts right to your bones.

A narrow and feeble bridge has been laid across the expanse. The bridge is made of fir trees lashed together and has no railing; instead a rope with slack in it is tied to either end, presumably to act as a guide. Off the path to the west is a massive oak. From its trunk a low thick branch extends over the crevasse.

- 3⚡ Above the snow line. Joints become stiff. Chest pains begin. Snow weighs heavy on trees and shrubs.
- 3⚡ A narrow bridge spans a massive crevasse.
- 3⚡ A gnarled oak covered in the trappings of rituals performed long ago.

Rickety Bridge

The bridge isn't meant to be a trap, but one misstep can spell doom...or opportunity.



Danger

While terrifying, crossing this bridge doesn't require a test so long as the adventurers have time to take it slowly. Should they be rushing, passing safely across requires an Ob 4 Health test, but the rope guide offers a +1D bonus to the roll.

Suggested Health failure result:

⌘ **Twist:** Falling deep into the crevasse until the gap narrows, and catching painfully on a shelf of ice.

Climbing back up requires an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

⌘ **Twist:** Falling further and landing on the Frozen Steps (location 17).

⌘ **Twist:** Gear lost in the crevasse.

⌘ **Condition:** Injured trying to climb out.

Inside the Crevasse

Should the climber take a moment to listen, they can hear echoes bouncing back and forth. Make an Ob 2 Scout test. Success reveals that the crevasse opens up below into a larger structure (Frozen Steps, location 17).

Suggested Scout failure result:

⌘ **Condition:** The adventurer is exhausted from hanging for so long, but succeeds and makes it to the Frozen Steps safely.

Descending down the crevasse is a significant climbing endeavor. It is a long, long way, but the bridge or oak tree can anchor any rope the adventurers have to ease their descent. Climbing down is an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test for an individual, Ob 4 for two people, an Ob 5 for an entire party.

Great Oak

This great oak defies the harsh wind and snow and stubbornly perches on the edge of the crevasse. Leafless, covered in ice, it will not yield. A low massive limb stretches out over the crevasse. Beside the tree is a rock shrine where burnt offerings can be made. Unlike the crude gathering of stones found elsewhere in the mountain, this shrine was carved from a single piece of limestone that juts forth from the earth.

Identifying the shrine requires an Ob 3 Lore Master test (enchanted places). The shrine was carved by Monks of the Burning Heart in reverence of Anala, Rava, and Kisha. This is where the child sacrifices were made: they walked across the limb and then were tossed down into the God's Wound.

Suggested Lore Master failure result (choose one):

⌘ **Twist:** Powerful winds whip up from the crevasse.

Torches are blown out and anyone standing on the limb needs to make an Ob 2 Health test or fall.

⌘ **Condition:** The adventurers understand what was done here, and the cruel ritual causes them to be angry.

8K. Damek Monastery

Snow covers everything now, making the path harder and harder to follow. Ahead, flapping in the wind, are the weathered and tattered remains of the same colorful bunting you saw in the base camp below. One end is untethered and whips about wildly in the furious winds. Following it with your eye to its base, you realize there is a large domed building up ahead, half buried in the snow. The traces of a stairway lead up to the structure and surrounding it you can just make out four shorter pagodas, their angular square roofs heavily laden with ice.

⌘ Above the snow line. The air is thin and difficult to breath. Overwhelming fatigue. Nearly barren landscapes.

⌘ A magnificent monastery slowly being worn away by wind and time.

⌘ A grand stupa in the center depicting the history of the mountain in a scrolling mural.

Damek Monastery is the home of the Monks of the Burning Heart. Each of the four square buildings faces one of the cardinal directions and serves a mundane function. To the north is a dormitory and workshop, to the west a kitchen and larder and to the south a refectory. The east has no walls—only a roof and rock altar—and is used for morning prayer.

Damek Stupa, the hemispherical building in the center, is a monument built in honor of Rava, the Morning Sun. It has no entrance, as it contains the relics of the first disciple of Rava. At the apex of the dome is a sun carved from brilliant yellow mica. The outside is carved and embossed with a beautiful mural that covers the entire building. The walls depict generations of gods rising up and overthrowing their parents, and in turn being overthrown. The mural was painted on the circular walls as one continuous story, such that the end of one cycle is the beginning of the next.

If the adventurers are welcomed by Lakpa, Damek Monastery provides a typical camp with water and shelter without requiring a Survivalist test.



Lakpa, the Last Monk

Lakpa, an old, nearly blind woman, is the only monk that remains at the monastery. Her back is stooped, her face wide, and her hands rough from years of hard labor. When the monastery was in use, she was the chief stonemason in charge of maintaining it. As no alms are sent to them, and no monks remain in the monastery, Lakpa is now destitute and devotes herself only to prayer.

The lone monk will invite any adventurers who wish to take refuge in the monastery, but insists that while there they bring harm to no living creature, and that they keep a respectful distance from the stupa.

Lakpa

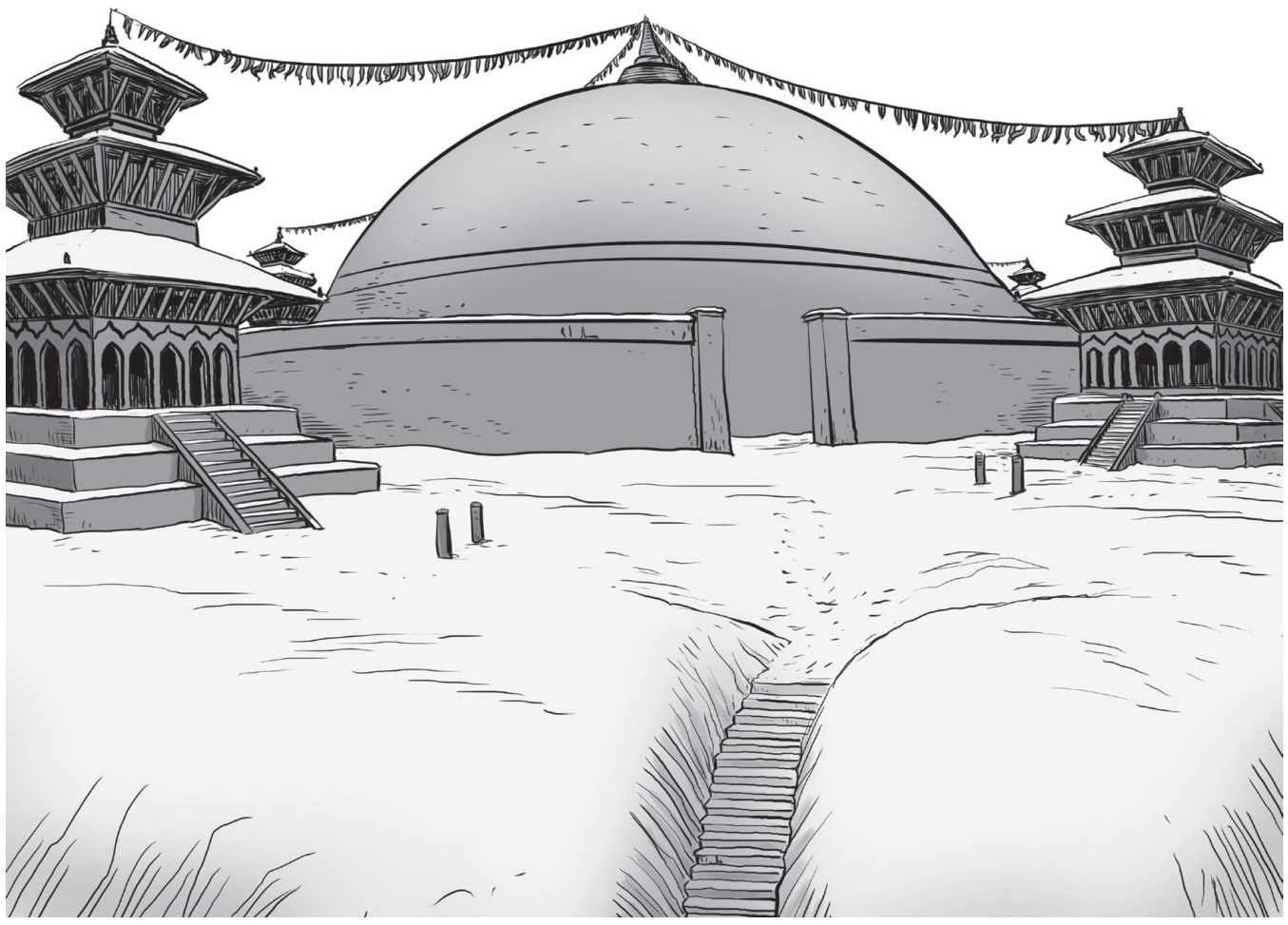
- 3i Gingerly ducks beneath the caterpillar nest that blocks a passage in the monastery.
- 3i Stretches out her stiff hands, popping her knuckles.
- 3i Starts a sentence with, "Thanks to <god's name>,..."

Lakpa will talk in generalities about appeasing the gods Kisha the earth, Rava the sun, Namakambhari the mother,

Anala the Burning Heart, and so forth. To glean specific information from her about the monks, the Mikra, the gods, or what has happened on the mountain, the adventurers will need to show her that they will heed her wisdom. Convincing her requires an Ob 3 Scholar test which can be helped with Ritualist or Persuader.

Suggested Scholar failure result (choose one):

- 3i **Twist:** Cursed! Lakpa is offended by the adventurers and curses them: "May the gods be blind to your visage and deaf to your prayers. Leave our mountain, lest you offend them further." This curse counts as a factor in Ritualist tests until the adventurers leave the mountain or perform the proper absolution (Ob 3 Ritualist test, suggested failure is the afraid condition as they witness the gods' displeasure firsthand in a great shaking of the earth).
- 3i **Condition:** Angry. The adventurers are engrossed by Lakpa's story and hearing it incites them to admonish the Sharwa for abandoning the monks, or the gods for demanding such a sacrifice.



If convinced to speak, Lakpa will tell them what a shame it is that the Sharwa have forsaken their sacred duty to offer children to the mountain, as Rava commanded, and that to prevent another Age of Frost, the abbot Mingmar has gone into the mountain to stoke the flames of the Burning Heart. Listening to her also acts as supplies (+1D) for understanding the stupa.

Note

Lakpa joined the monastery later in life, after she had already married, had children, and lost her husband. She is Jhala's mother, Deepti's grandmother. It is because Lakpa would know her own granddaughter that Jhala has forbidden Deepti from ever entering the monastery. Jhala fears even now that the monks—Lakpa in particular—would try to make Deepti a sacrifice if they could.

Divining the History of Stone Dragon Mountain

Walking around the stupa in a clockwise direction allows the pious attendant to understand the history of Stone Dragon Mountain and the cosmology of the gods. Understanding this requires an Ob 3 Theologian test (far reaches). Success reveals the history of the mountain through the Age of Dusk (see **Appendix 2: History of the Mountain** on page 57), provides +1D to the Defend action in any convince conflict with the Monks of the Burning Heart, and informs the adventurers of the treasures beneath the Frozen Lake (location 13).

Suggested Theologian failure result:

- 3‡ **Condition:** The adventurer is hungry and thirsty from the time spent walking the monastery grounds and discerns the meaning of the mural.
- 3‡ **Twist:** The mural is read backwards and depicts generations of parents conquering their rebellious children. This faulty understanding gives -1 to disposition in any social conflict with Tenzing, Anala, or Monks of the Burning Heart that is related to the gods.

Desecrating the Stupa

The stupa is a holy site with no reward for the greedy. Adventurers who want to know for sure will have to start at it with hammers or shovels to find that out. It is an Ob 3 Laborer test to break through the wall or to dig through the hard ground beneath. Either action irreparably damages the stupa.

Inside are the remains of Kalden, the first Monk of the Burning Heart. Though most of his body and possessions

have decayed to dust, his left femur is still intact and may be used as a club that will break as the result of a twist or mild compromise.

If this is done in the sight of Lakpa, she will throw herself in front of their path to prevent them. If she cannot, she will curse them (see above).

9K. Kumbha's Sheep

The temperature is painfully cold at this altitude. The moisture in your breath freezes instantly on your teeth; they feel as though they are about to shatter.

In the distance you spot a flock of mountain goats, burrowing through the ice and snow to graze on the hearty shrub below. There is a clearing in the center of them where a man rests, impossibly large with dark red skin and thick black hair, crowned with a gem-studded golden helm. Even at this distance you can feel the rumbling in the ground emanating from him—the thunder of his powerful snores. Beside him lies a mighty axe.

- 3‡ Above the snow line. Teeth and bones feel as though they may shatter. Danger of frostbite looms.
- 3‡ Kumbha, the red-skinned demon who towers over mortals, sleeps soundly.
- 3‡ Giant mountain goats graze on shrub buried beneath the snow.

Kumbha the demon tends his goats here and lives in relative peace when left alone. When woken he is furious and hungry, killing those who have disturbed him and devouring them. He also has riches upon his body, should any be so bold as to steal them.

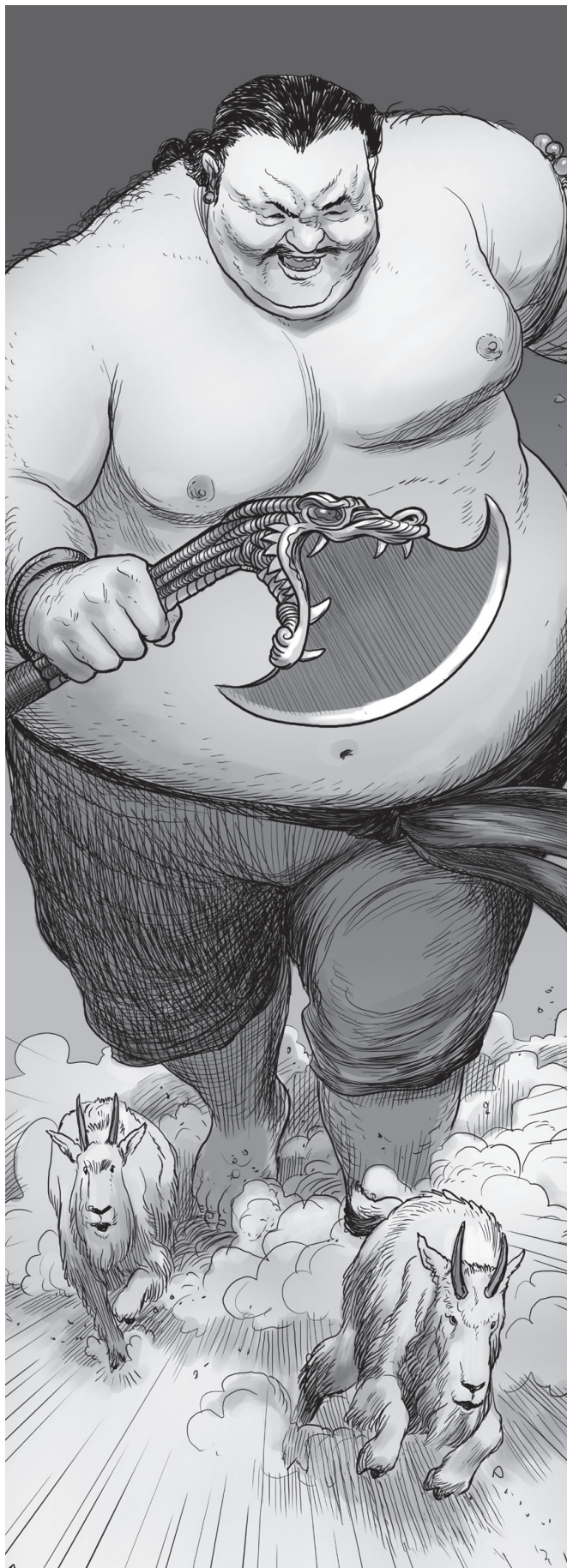
Avoiding Kumbha

Though he sleeps, the smell of food and the sound of his goats upset can rouse him. Should the adventurers make camp in this location, he will wake and come to thrash them for trespassing on his mountain. Otherwise they can try to sneak by.

The goats are naturally distrustful of anyone but Kumbha and will bleat loudly if anyone approaches. Calming them requires an Ob 2 Peasant test (herding and tending with a factor for their natural distrust). Success means they will allow the party past.

Suggested Peasant failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** A mother goat protecting her young bleats loudly and bashes into one of the adventurers, knocking them over. The commotion rouses Kumbha!



☩ **Condition:** Herding goats is infuriating work; they always move left when you want them to go right. The party passes safely but gain the angry condition doing so.

Stealing from Kumbha

Should a bold adventurer seek to pluck the gems from Kumbha's helm, they must succeed in a Criminal versus test against Kumbha's Nature 7. Success indicates they have prised free a great ruby worth 4D of cash (pack 1).

Suggested Criminal failure result:

☩ **Twist:** Kumbha wakes in a rage! Fight him or flee.

Kumbha

Abilities Might: 5 Nature: 7 (Demon)

Descriptors: Sleeping, Devouring, Herding

CONFLICT

Dispositions Weapons

Kill: 14 Attack: +1s, *Insatiable Hunger*

Maneuver: +1D, *Giant Stride*

Drive Off: 10 Attack: +1s, *Insatiable Hunger*

Maneuver: +1D, *Giant Stride*

Flee: 7 Attack: +1s, *Mighty Thews*

Armor: Demon Skin (equivalent to leather)

Instinct: Devour any who have disturbed me.

SPECIAL

A warrior that has ritually fasted without food, drink, or sleep gains +3 to their Order of Might when facing Kumbha.

Swallow Whole: The first person Kumbha reduces to 0 disposition in a Kill, Drive Off or Capture conflict is devoured by him. Disposition cannot be restored to that adventurer during the conflict, unless Kumbha's Insatiable Hunger is disarmed with a maneuver action.

Fasting Ritual

Kumbha's father Kumbhakarna was a mighty rakshasa who could only be slain by a mortal who did not sleep, eat, or drink for fourteen years. An Ob 5 Theologian test will reveal the ritual fasting a mortal would have to perform in order to slay Kumbha. Knowledge passed on by Hoa Veit in base camp counts as supplies (+1D) for the ritual.

Once it is known, performing the ritual is an Ob 5 Health test that must take place during a camp phase. Help cannot be provided by others, but an Ob 3 Ritualist test can be used to generate supplies and grant +1D to the roll.



Suggested Health failure result:

⌘ **Condition:** Exhausted. The ritual is complete but the supplicant is exhausted from the ordeal.

After the ritual is complete, the supplicant cannot eat, drink, or sleep (relieve the hungry and thirsty or exhausted conditions), or the benefit is lost. So long as they are purified, the supplicant's Order of Might is +3 in conflicts with Kumbha.

How Long Does It Take?

The fast can take as much time as is appropriate, typically a week, but it can be shortened or lengthened at your discretion, or glossed over as a montage of others eating while one character goes without. If using the journey rules, track rations accordingly. Toll +2.

5D. Salt Terrace

Ahead you see row upon row of Sharwa-made salt flats. The ground is unusually even here and hundreds of small rocks gathered from a moraine below the terrace have been placed in a grid to form squares where the fabled pink salt is dried and collected. The thin layer of snow that has collected on the flats indicates the terrace has not been worked in several weeks.

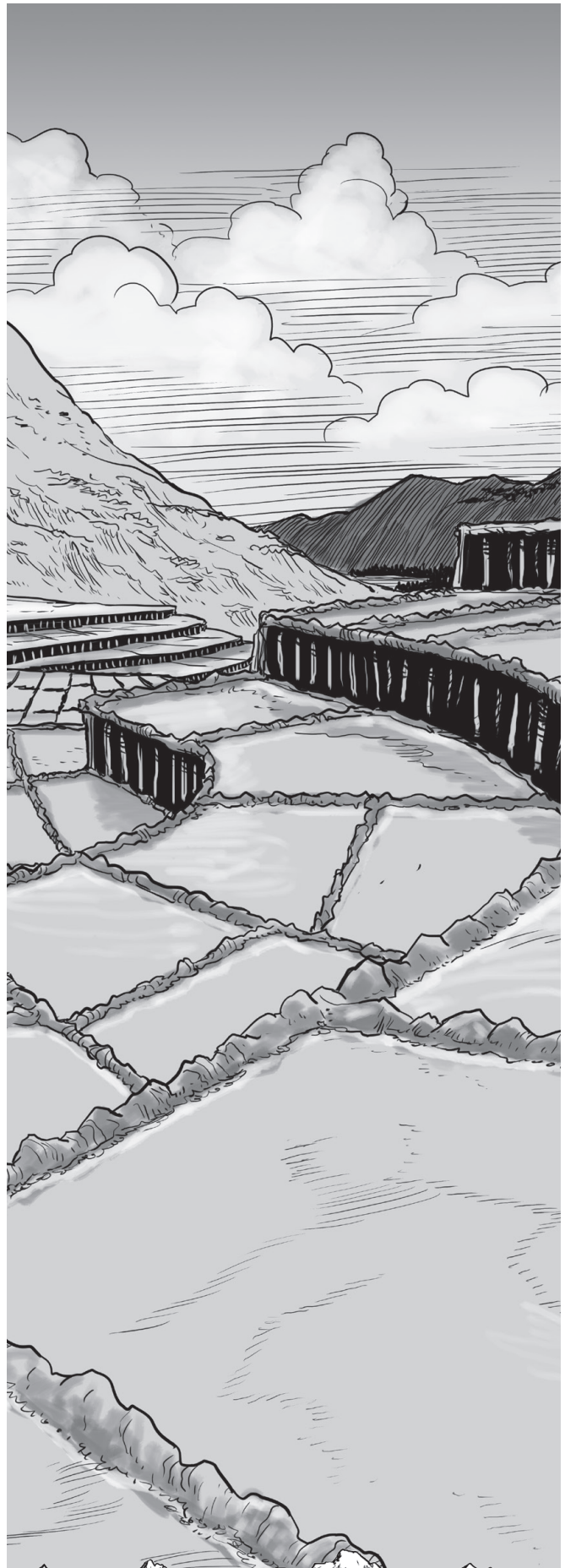
- ⌘ Below the snow line. Cold air burns in the lungs until acclimated. Ice crystals form on the tops of trees.
- ⌘ Extensive grid of salt beds formed by rock and mortar dividers.
- ⌘ Tools for harvesting stored nearby: buckets attached to yokes, dull blades for scraping salt crystals, flat shovels to collect them.

The terrace is where salt nomads bring buckets of pink salt brine to dry, then scrape the salt and collect it in yak wool sacks. There is still salt here which can be harvested with an Ob 3 Peasant test (planting and harvesting). Salt collected must be put in a sack, satchel, or backpack and must be the only item in the container, otherwise it will be made worthless by the contamination of other items. Pink salt is 2D cash (pack 2).

Suggested Peasant failure result (choose one):

- ⌘ **Twist:** Sampat the Wealthy and his lowland hunters arrive as the adventurers are harvesting the salt. He is not pleased that they are stealing his salt! (see **Sampat and His Lowland Hunters** in page 24.)
- ⌘ **Condition:** Exhausted, but the work is done. Hungry and thirsty for helpers.

From here, there is a hidden path that leads down into the salt lake (location 6D). The passage is hidden under





the rocks in the moraine beneath the terrace. While most of the rocks are massive and impossible to move, one boulder is precariously balanced such that it can be rolled away from the entrance and rolled back. Detecting the secret passage requires an Ob 3 Scout test.

Suggested Scout failure result (choose one):

3✘ **Twist:** The boulder is pushed too far and with a huge crash it rolls down the mountainside, leaving the salt lake exposed for any to see.

3✘ **Condition:** Hungry and thirsty and the hidden path is found.

6D. Hidden Salt Lake

Beneath the ground, worn steps carved into the walls spiral down to a well below. As you descend, the smell of ocean sea water overpowers your senses. You can hear the faint sound of water trickling down the walls around you.

3✘ Humidity and warm salt air ease pained joints.

3✘ Rime of salt crusting the walls.

3✘ Salt lake below. Home to the Serpent of Namakambhari and the prosperity of the Sharwa.

Only the first few steps down are lit by the outside. Otherwise, it is dark and the adventurers will need to provide light to see. Once a torch is lit, they can see the reflection of the light on the black waters below as well as pink salt crystal deposits lining the walls of the descending cavern.

The stairs lead down directly into the Salt Lake Namakambhari. Above the water level, there are yokes with large buckets on them hanging from the walls. These are designed to rest on the shoulders and allow salt nomads to carry two buckets filled with salt water up at a time. Below the tools is a sacred altar.

Altar of Namakambhari

There is a large altar carved into the side of the cave at the base of the steps, with a blackened pit for burnt offerings. Surrounding the pit are four soot-stained figurines in the shape of a dragon, a rising sun, a serpent, and a flame.

These are the symbols of the four major gods of the mountain: Kisha the dragon, Rava the morning sun, Namakambhari the serpent, and Anala the flame. Making a burnt offering at the altar and performing the Prayer of Namakambhari's Peace (see Pargen in **Base Camp** page 17) will both appease the Serpent of Namakambhari (see below) and provide dim light in the cavern as the salt lake glows from beneath the water.

If the Prayer of Namakambhari's Peace is known, it requires an Ob 4 Ritualist test to perform, but the supplicant is granted +1D if they have been taught the prayer by Pargen.

If the prayer is not known, determining it first requires an Ob 4 Theologian test (secret doctrine).

If the adventurers do not attempt to perform supplication once they have broken the surface of the water or tampered with the figurines, the Serpent of Namakambhari will rise from the waters and attack them.

Suggested Theologian or Ritualist failure result (choose one):

3✘ **Twist:** The Serpent of Namakambhari rises up from the water and attacks.

3✘ **Twist:** The ritual is interrupted by a Mikra ambush.

3✘ **Twist:** The ritual is interrupted by Sampat the Wealthy and his hunters entering the cavern above.

Successfully completing the ritual will cause the flames to burn brighter (making the area fully lit instead of providing dim light) and the adventurers can harvest from the salt lake without repercussion. A faint bubbling on the surface indicates that something that something has now sunk deep.

Serpent of Namakambhari

Abilities **Might:** 4 **Nature:** 6
Descriptors: Protecting the Salt Lake,
 Aiding the Salt Nomads, Revering

CONFLICT
Dispositions **Weapons**
Kill: 6 **Attack:** +1D, *Serpentine Speed*
 Maneuver: +2D, *Depths of the Salt Lake*
Drive Off: 12 **Attack:** +1D, *Serpentine Speed*
 Maneuver: +2D, *Depths of the Salt Lake*
Flee: 4 **Attack:** -1s, *Bound to the Lake*
Convince: 9 **Attack:** +1D, *Namakambhari's Will*
 Defend: +1D, *Sacred Ground*

Armor: Serpent Scales (as chain mail)

Instinct: Never let any but the Sharwa enter the lake.

SPECIAL
The Serpent of Namakambhari cannot be convinced to leave the salt lakes.

Wrath of Namakambhari: Twice per conflict, as an attack action the Serpent can exhale a spray of salt water which stiffens the joints and fogs the mind. Every character that takes damage from the attack also gains the hungry and



thirsty condition (which may lower overall disposition). If they are already hungry and thirsty they gain the exhausted condition.

Guarded Treasure!

- 3‡ The most obvious but least portable treasure here is access to the salt lakes. This information can be sold to Sambat the Wealthy or any other prospecting lowlander for 6D of cash.
- 3‡ The salt itself is valuable but only if carried to the flats, dried, and harvested. Doing so requires an Ob 2 Laborer test to carry the salt up and an Ob 3 Peasant test to prepare it. Doing so yields pink salt worth 2D cash (pack 2). Managing a team of salt workers instead of doing it yourself can be done with an Ob 5 Steward test, but instead of treasure it yields a reliable income the adventurers could retire on! Acquiring salt is a time-consuming process that normally takes weeks to harvest, dry, and collect.
- 3‡ The four soot-stained statues are made of gold. If the soot is rubbed off, a golden gleam will show through. Each statue is worth 3D cash (pack 1).

7D. Fallen Bridge

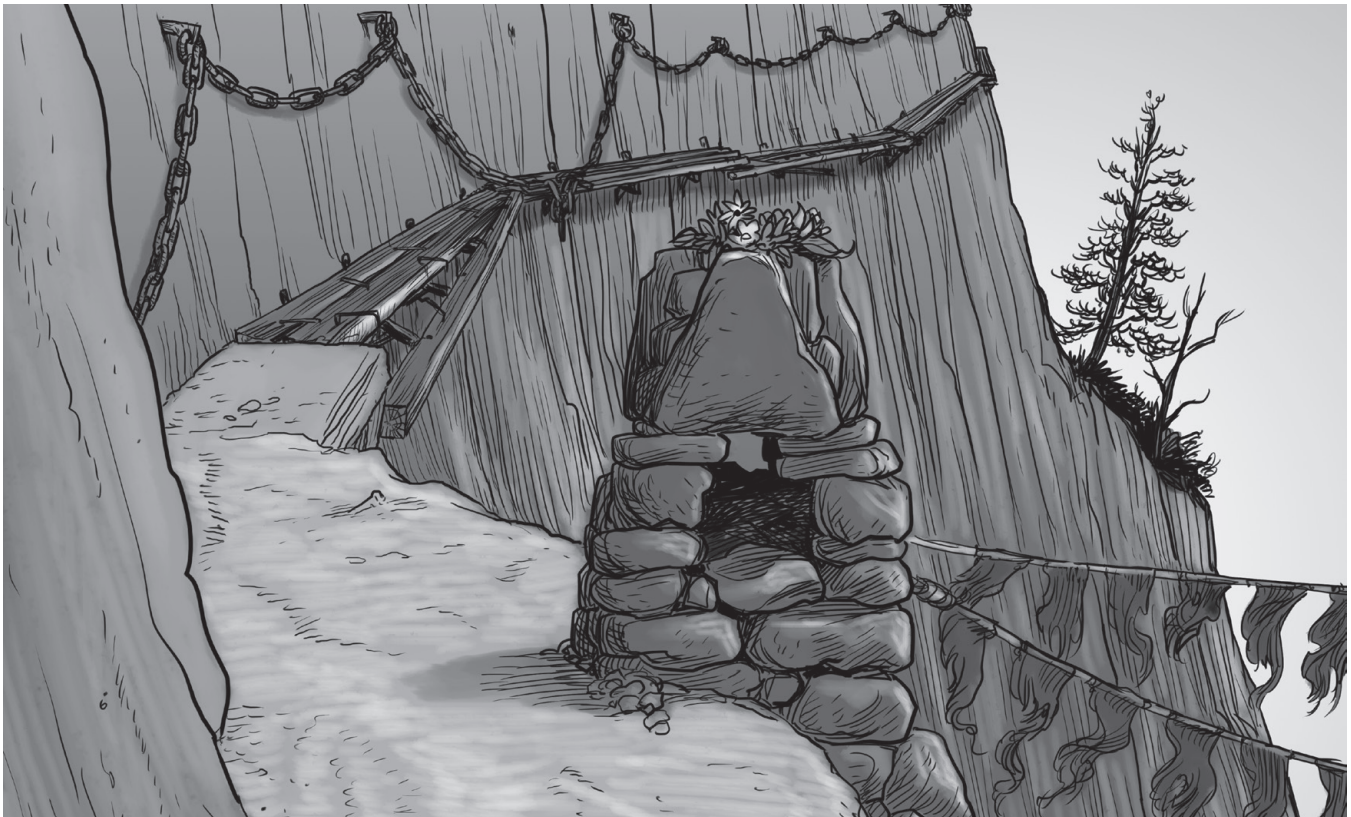
On the mountain face shielded from the snow, the path tapers off and eventually disappears, replaced by a man-made walkway. The rickety structure is made of irregular

wood beams hammered together with a patchwork assembly of bent nails, wire, and the occasional wooden spike, all of which is supported by worn metal rods pounded into the mountain face. Beneath you a sheer cliff drops away into the fog below. Hammered into the mountain itself are metal rungs that a chain passes through, offering a fragile lifeline to prevent one misstep from being your last. Before the bridge there is a small rock shrine where burnt offerings are made.

- 3‡ At the snow line. Powerful gusts of wind. Hands and fingers won't stop shivering. Metal chains stick painfully to any exposed skin.
- 3‡ Impossibly narrow walkway, held together with rickety chains and uneven wood.
- 3‡ A bridge hangs down on the other side, rattled by the wind, but still too far to reach!

Though there is no immediate challenge here, ask how the adventurers are proceeding, as it will affect the upcoming challenge.

[Coming from location 5D in the south] *As though the gods sought to punish you, after a time the rickety bridge itself has given way to a vast nothingness below. Just around the bend, you can see the missing ledge, hanging limp against the rock face. A rope-and-pulley contraption*





is attached to the hanging portion, but that is at least four strides away, over a looming chasm. Just before the drop-off, there is an old rusted bell with its clapper missing.

Diamond Tooth has rigged up a drawbridge here, though the bridge raises instead of lowers. It's simple enough to operate from the other side by freeing the counterweight from a ledge and letting it pull up the bridge, but from the south entrance there is no mechanism built for raising the bridge (and Diamond Tooth likes it that way).

Crossing the Gap

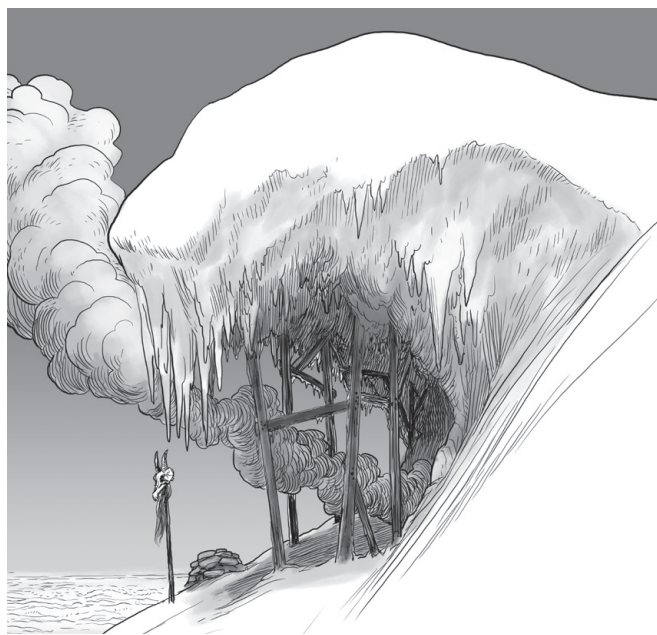
- 3✚ Scaling the cliff without the bridge up is an Ob 4 Dungeoneer test for one person, Ob 5 for two people, and Ob 6 for the entire party.
- 3✚ Ripping up bits of the path behind them to assemble a makeshift bridge requires an Ob 3 Carpenter test.
- 3✚ Getting Diamond Tooth's attention (either by yelling or ringing the bell) requires an Ob 4 Will test. If successful, he'll descend after a time, but they'll still have to convince him to raise the bridge (see location 12).
- 3✚ Trying to manipulate the rope and counterweight mechanism from a distance can be done several ways. Knocking the counterweight free with arrows or thrown items requires an Ob 3 Fighter test (can be helped with Dungeoneer and Criminal). Catching the ropes with a grappling hook or other implement and hauling the bridge up requires an Ob 4 Health test.

Note

All of these obstacles have a factor (already included) for the very narrow space that the adventurers are working in. The players will need to be particularly creative to describe how they help here as well, since there is not enough room for more than one person to stand by the ledge.

Suggested failure result for any method of crossing (choose one):

- 3✚ **Twist:** Caught in the middle. Halfway through any attempt to cross, Diamond Tooth arrives carrying a long wooden shaft, ready to knock anyone off the edge unless they turn back or pay a toll. Some items Diamond Tooth would accept: cash (2D in any form), food (one ration per adventurer), or outdoor supplies (any piece of gear useful for outdoor survival that is worth Ob 3 or higher on the Master Gear List on page 37 of *Torchbearer*).
- 3✚ **Twist:** A weapon, piece of gear, or container gets knocked loose and plummets to the depths below, possibly halting progress.



- 3✚ **Condition:** Exhausted. Making its way across is arduous and painful, but the party has scrambled over to the other side.
- 3✚ **Condition:** Sick. The freezing altitude chills the adventurers to the bone. If someone is already sick, they could die of hypothermia.

8D. Diamond Tooth's Cornice

Around the bend, a huge ledge of snow juts out over a ridge in the mountain. From underneath, smoke rises; it seems as if any moment the entire lip could collapse and bury the small dwelling beneath it.

- 3✚ Above the snow line. Glistening white landscapes looking down on the tree line below.
- 3✚ Precariously supported cornice turned into shelter. Looks ready to collapse. Caged Mikra hidden in the shadows.
- 3✚ Diamond Tooth, hateful due to his lot in life.

This is the home of Diamond Tooth, named for his single tooth made from a solid diamond. He is a Sharwa hermit who left his people after being forced to sacrifice his child. He hates his fellow Sharwa for forcing him to give up his son Tenzing and is angry at lowlanders for convincing the Sharwa to change their ways too late. Bitterness and living alone has aged Diamond Tooth poorly, and though he is only middle-aged, he appears an old man.

If he is slain or bound, Diamond Tooth's tooth may be extracted. It is worth 3D cash and is very sharp.



Diamond Tooth

Raw Abilities	Nature 4	Will 5	Health 3
Town Abilities	Resources 1	Circles 0	Might 2
Skills	Survivalist 5, Pathfinder 4, Scout 3, Scavenger 3, Hunter 3		
Wises	Murder in Your Sleep-wise.		
Traits	Keen Ear (1), Suspicious (1)		
Belief	People? Gods? To hell with them all.		
Goal	Find my son Tenzing.		
Instinct	Protect what's mine.		

Rigged to Collapse

Diamond Tooth has reinforced this cornice with rare timbers brought down from the river above. He has supports rigged to collapse at the pull of a rope and will openly threaten anyone. Should they try to take anything from him, he'll collapse the whole thing on all of them...he'd rather die than be stolen from!

Trigger

If a character threatens Diamond Tooth, he will grab a coiled rope and run out from under the cornice, pulling it behind him to trigger the collapse. Spotting the rope and detecting

the trap requires an Ob 2 Scout test. Disabling it requires an Ob 1 Dungeoneer test and getting past Diamond Tooth to do it. That could either be a versus Health test to get there first or a versus Manipulator test to trick him into letting them get close. Suggested failure result for any of those actions is the trap going off.

Trap

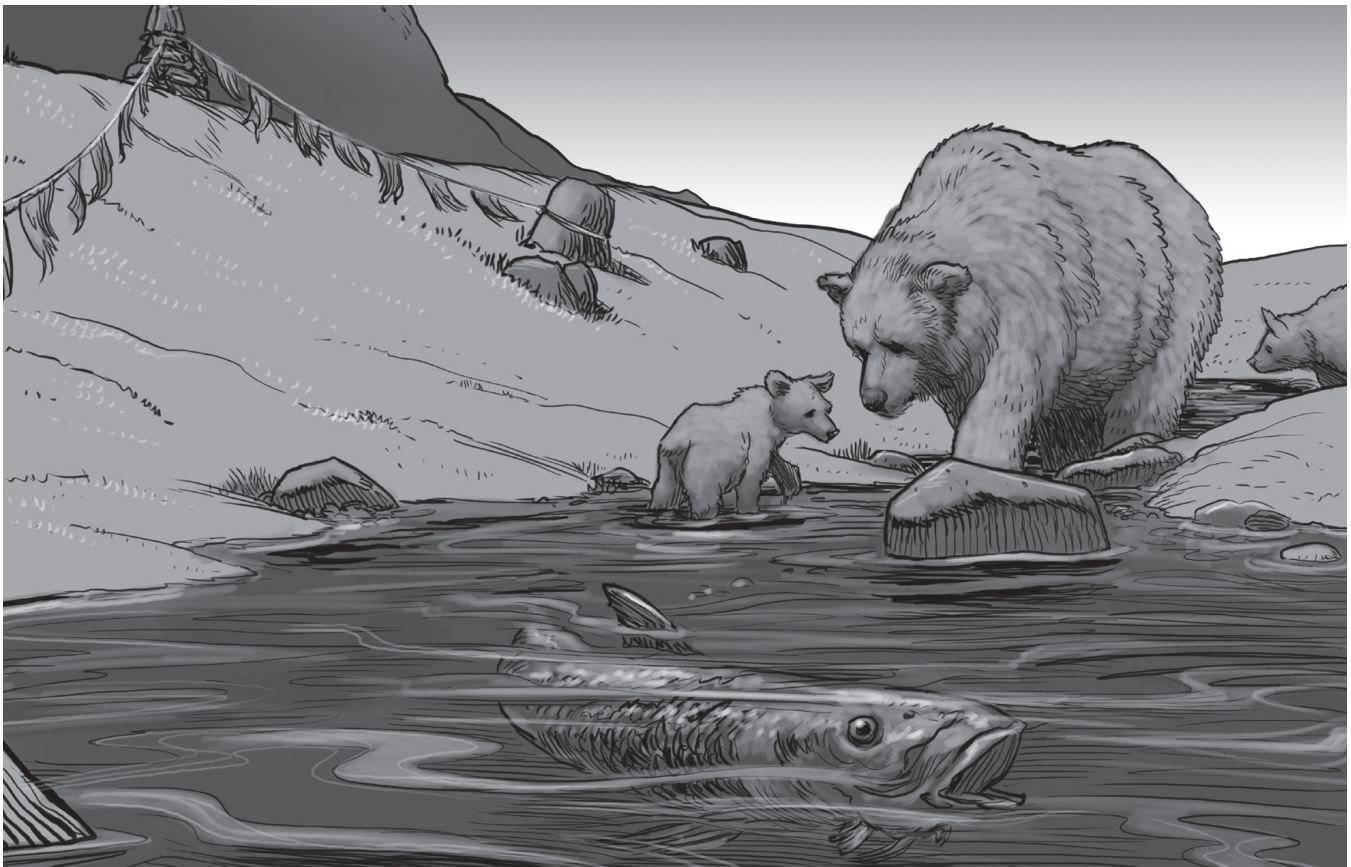
The trap collapses the cornice. Anyone beneath must make an Ob 4 Health test to avoid the falling ice and snow.

Suggested Health failure result (choose one):

- 3⚡ **Twist:** The party is separated from each other by the avalanche. They must either regroup by using a different pass, or find a way round the collapsed snow.
- 3⚡ **Twist:** Buried in ice and snow. The adventurers must dig their way out before running out of air! Make and Ob 4 Health test to climb out. Suggested failure result: Sick or Injured.
- 3⚡ **Condition:** Injured by the collapse but not trapped by the snow.

Mikra Captive

After the battle at Pertemba's Rest, Diamond Tooth found a wounded Mikra, whom he brought back to his camp so that





he could ask her of his son. When she woke however, she attacked him and now he keeps her locked in a cage at the back of his cave. Cursed Mikra, he hates them too!

The Mikra is wrapped head to toe in rags and can only be identified as human if close inspections are made, not that Diamond Tooth wants anyone coming in his cave or anywhere near his captive.

Should the adventurers discuss the Mikra with him and offer him a reasonable assurance that they can find Tenzing, his demeanor will improve greatly. He will not try to kill them in their sleep; camping outside his cornice is merely unsafe instead of dangerous (see below).

Speaking with the Mikra is challenging. Their dialect is Sharwa but it has changed under the mountain. They were all children when they were sacrificed and developed their own speech patterns. They can be understood by someone who has Mikra-wise, or by casting Wisdom of the Sages at Ob 2.

The Mikra's name is Choden. She wants freedom, food, and revenge.

Dangerous Wilderness Camp

Diamond Tooth can offer food and shelter, but is hateful and demands a steep levy. He'll accept either coin (1D of cash in any form) or sweets, requiring an Ob 3 Cook test to bake up.

Diamond Tooth is even more unsavory than he seems on the surface. If they don't post a guard, Diamond Tooth is inclined to slit the throats of interlopers while they sleep, loot their bodies, and roll them down the mountain.

Trigger

When the adventurers rest for camp, Diamond Tooth will stealthily attack. If the adventurers post a guard to watch, the sentry can make a versus Scout check. Suggested failure is that they are the first target of the ambush. Make the Scout check (if any) before camp is made, but the trap should go off after all the checks are spent (when the adventure phase resumes).

Stopping Diamond Tooth from his murderous mission just requires scaring him off. Waking up your companions is considered a Good Idea and will succeed automatically. Otherwise it will require a versus Manipulator test to intimidate him, or a Fighter test to beat him back.

Trap

Anyone caught unawares by Diamond Tooth needs to make a Will test versus Diamond Tooth's Nature to see if they wake before he's done his dastardly deeds. The GM

should select one person at a time and help cannot be given on this test. Diamond Tooth's first targets are those who appear physically weak and those with any obvious wealth or jewelry.

Suggested Will failure result (choose one):

- 3⚡ **Twist:** Captured! The adventurer wakes up to find that they and their companions are tied up. Diamond Tooth is rummaging through their belongings and after looting them plans to roll them all down the hill.
- 3⚡ **Condition:** Injured! The adventurer wakes just as Diamond Tooth's blade is about to slit their throat. If they are already injured or sick, he succeeds (they gain the dead condition) but they are still able to yell out in time to wake their companions. If not, they gain the injured condition but manage to repel Diamond Tooth after he gashes them with his blade.

9D. Koki River

Under the shadow of the Dragon's Maw, the endless snow and ice ares interrupted; a cool crisp mountain stream runs beside the path. Upstream a sandy brown bear and her cubs are splashing in the river, perhaps bathing or hunting for the long fish...which appear to be made of living gold! There is a small rock shrine here where burnt offerings are made.

- 3⚡ Above the snow line. Cold permeates through protective clothing and into the bones.
- 3⚡ Beautiful river full of fresh water and golden fish.
- 3⚡ A shrine dedicated to Rava. No signs of recent offerings.
- 3⚡ A protective mother bear who just lost her mate.

The mother bear is in a particularly bad mood. Mikra have slain her mate and now she's ready to rampage against anything on two legs, especially if it gets anywhere near her cubs. Accessing the stream (to bathe, collect water, or fish) without drawing the ire of the mother bear requires a versus Scout test.

Suggested Scout failure result:

- 3⚡ Mother bear perceives the adventurers as a threat and charges at them, claws and teeth first.

River of Bounty

The cool river water is clean and crisp. The rare golden masheer that swim here can be fished with an Ob 4 Hunter test. One of these giant fish provides three portions of fresh game or, if preserved as a trophy with an Ob 2 Alchemist test, can be sold for 2D of cash (pack 1).



Mother Bear

Abilities	Might: 4 Nature: 5
Descriptors:	Hunting, Climbing, Savaging
CONFLICT	_____
Dispositions	Weapons
Kill: 10	Attack: +1D <i>Mighty Claws</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Fearsome Roar</i>
Drive Off: 6	Attack: +1D <i>Mighty Claws</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Fearsome Roar</i>
Calm: 8	Defend: +2D, <i>Stubborn Beast</i> Feint: +1D, <i>Mother's Anger</i>
Armor:	Thick Hide (equivalent to leather)
Instinct:	Always fight to protect my cubs.

SPECIAL

Bears cannot be convinced, tricked, or riddled.

Calm: Though enraged, the mother bear can be calmed and will wander off on her own with her cubs. Treat this as a Convince conflict. Disposition is set by rolling Hunter and adding to Will. Attack and Maneuvers are performed with Hunter. Defend and Feint are performed with Peasant.

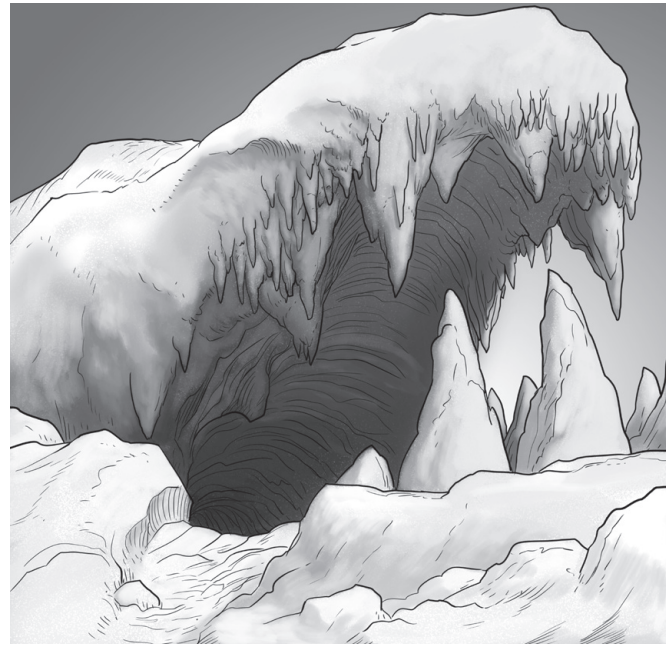
10. Dragon's Maw

Before you lies the mountain's namesake, a giant outcropping of spiked stone that opens into a cavern below. Mounds of ice, recently cracked apart, circle the giant maw of Stone Dragon Mountain.

The maw is open and offers a tiny reprieve from the biting wind outside. Camp is possible here if there are no Mikra in the area. The ground inside is strewn with hundreds of broken implements, attempts from generation after generation of Mikra to break out of the maw.

- 3☞ Above the snow line. Powerful winds whip violently over the summit. Anything that stops moving freezes in place. Torches are impossible to use.
- 3☞ The head is covered in ice and weathered by time.
- 3☞ The inside is all stone and the dragon's teeth are 15' long, not the small crystal gems they might have hoped for. However, in the light of day or torchlight something glinting and reflecting the light can be seen below.
- 3☞ Centuries of broken implements (crude and primitive) lie scattered on the floor.

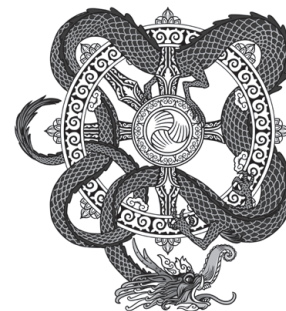
At the edge is a steep descent that leads into the throat below (location 11).



A Mighty Feat

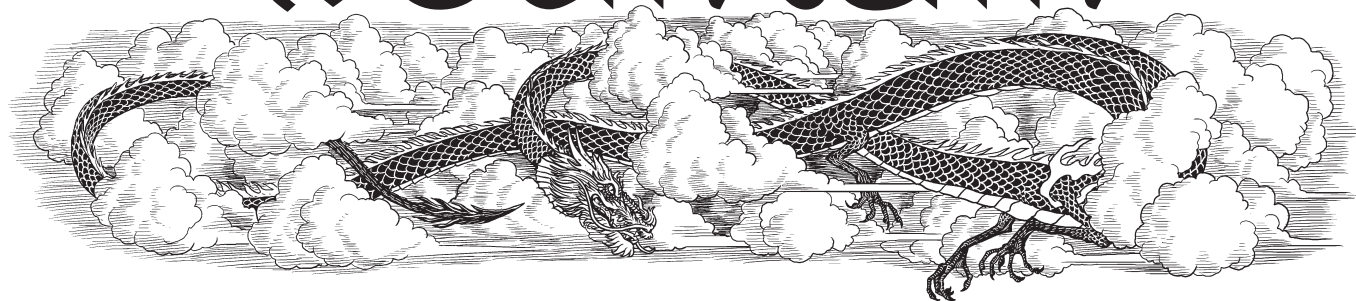
The heroes have made it! Either by descending the God's Wound or climbing to the peak, the heroes are halfway through the adventure. A few suggestions at this point:

- 3☞ Take a brief break in the game. Congratulate your players; not many groups have made it this far! Give everyone a few minutes to stretch, relax, and refuel while you review the notes in this section.
- 3☞ If you are getting to the end of the allotted time, this may be a good place to break and do end-of-session rewards.
- 3☞ Remember that now they are inside, they will need to supply their own light. Torches fueled by burning pitch smell awful and create noxious smoke. Candles flicker and flutter as powerful winds whistle through the caves. Lanterns have delicate glass, easily shattered by a bad fall.
- 3☞ This is the home of the Mikra. They have every advantage here. They are used to the darkness, to the cold, and the tight quarters. They know their way around and all the choke points that make the best ambush sites. They hate all who live outside...show the players that hatred.





Inside the Lophlah



Trouble under the mountain

As with outside the mountain, treat these potential twists as a guide rather than as a prescriptive list. Twists like damaged gear may follow as a natural result of the fiction. Others, like a Mikra ambush, are great for interrupting whatever the adventurers were trying to do. Be mindful of the cave-ins; they are deadly!

- 3ꞑ *Mikra ambush.* 1d3+2 Mikra ambush the party, intent on murdering outsiders or capturing them for Mingmar's ritual.
- 3ꞑ *Damaged gear.* Some important bit of gear—rope, a grappling hook, a lantern, a backpack—is broken, ripped, or otherwise damaged.
- 3ꞑ *Sampat and his lowland hunters.* Sampat and Yuddha are lost inside the mountain.
- 3ꞑ *Khalish army.* Here to drive back the Mikra and seal them in the mountain once more.
- 3ꞑ *Cave-in.* Icicles rain frozen death upon the adventurers.
- 3ꞑ *Disturbed spirit of Pemba.* The spirit of a Mikra who died inside the mountain, vexed that they were not prayed for and remembered.
- 3ꞑ *Lost footing.* Slippery ice or uneven ground causes the character to slip or fall.

3ꞑ *Tenzing.* The Mikra high priest. Commanding, inflammatory, and righteous. Looking for sacrifices for his god. Curious about lowlanders.

3ꞑ *Niri.* A Monk of the Burning Heart trying to help the Mikra.

Mikra

Abilities	Might: 2	Nature: 4
Descriptors:	Ambushing, Escaping, Demanding	
CONFLICT	<hr/>	
Dispositions	Weapons	
Kill: 6	<i>Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus</i>	
	<i>Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons</i>	
Drive Off: 3	<i>Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus</i>	
	<i>Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons</i>	
Flee: 6	<i>Attack: +1D, Know the Terrain</i>	
	<i>Defend: +1D, Know the Terrain</i>	
Armor:	None	
Instinct:	Attack in the darkness.	
SPECIAL	<hr/>	
Mikra have no penalty operating in dim light. Full light or darkness counts as a factor in all tests except riddling.		





Sampat and His Lowland Hunters

Inside the mountain, Sampat is completely out of his element. He expected to find salt and instead he's encountered a warrior race which he is sure guards ancient treasures. By this time he's lost all sense and assumes everyone that isn't in his party is his enemy.

Note

This is a great twist to have show up a second time if the adventurers already met up with the hunters outside the mountain. Note how his goal has changed to *loot the mountain for all it's worth!* Their abilities can be found on page 24.

Khalish Army

Bal Bahadur and his forces have orders to end the Mikra threat by main force. The journey up the mountain was a challenging one for him and his soldiers, however, and by the time they reached the summit, their desire for battle was greatly diminished. A practical man wary of sending his followers into unfamiliar terrain, he plans to collapse the Maw once more, trapping the Mikra inside and avoiding unnecessary bloodshed.

Sealing the Maw

Given time, his soldiers will rig a cave-in that will cut off access through the Maw again. Aiding him—and thus gaining his favor—can be accomplished either by aiding him in rallying his forces with an Ob 3 Orator test or by lending a hand and doing the work with an Ob 3 Laborer test.

If Bal Bahadur is unable to command his soldiers, directing them to collapse the Maw in his stead can be completed with an Ob 5 Steward test, which can be helped with Orator, Laborer, or Stonemason.

Once the Maw is sealed, the only passage in and out of the mountain is through the God's Wound and that requires ropes lowered from the surface.

Suggested Orator, Laborer, or Steward failure result (choose one):

3☞ **Condition:** The work is backbreaking but it is complete. Everyone gains the exhausted condition.

3☞ **Twist:** The cave collapses too soon and buries some of the workers, possibly adventurers included!

3☞ **Twist:** Mikra hear the sounds of demolition and bring all their warriors to attack in number. If the adventurers fight alongside the army, this may be either a Drive Off, Kill, or Battle conflict. If they run, it may be a Flee conflict and the leader of the conflict can certainly add Bahadur as an enemy, should he survive.

Setting Bal Bahadur to New Purpose

Convincing Bahadur and his soldiers to stop or delay their work will require a Convince conflict to dissuade Bahadur in private or a Convince Crowd conflict to win over his subordinates. None of them are inclined to delay, knowing the Mikra could surface at any moment.

Bal Bahadur

Raw Abilities	Nature 3	Will 5	Health 4
Town Abilities	Resources 4	Circles 6	Might 3
Skills	Commander 5, Steward 4, Fighter 3, Orator 3, Mentor 3, Scout 3		
Wises	Khalish Army-wise, Watch-wise, Impossible Missions-wise		
Traits	Defender (2), Heart of Battle (1)		
Instinct	Never end a battle before blood is shed.		

Forestalling the Inevitable

None of the Khalish know that Mingmar is below, performing a ritual that will ignite the mountain in flames and burst through any obstacle they could erect. If the adventurers know of Mingmar's plans, they can use that knowledge as evidence (Weapon: +1s on Attack actions) in the conflict to convince the Khalish army to delay or stop the collapsing of the Maw.

Cave-In

A deadly shower of ice falls. This could either be huge blocks of ice or hundreds of piercing icicles. An Ob 4 Health test is required to dodge the falling ice.

Suggested Health failure result (choose one):

3☞ **Condition:** Injured by the ice, dodging the worst of it.

3☞ **Condition:** Afraid. Avoided the falling ice but is convinced that it will collapse again.

3☞ **Twist:** Adventurers are separated from each other by the falling ice, and must dig through it (Ob 2 Laborer test, suggested failure is another cave-in or the exhausted condition).

3☞ **Twist:** A character is trapped under the ice.

Whatever the outcome, mark the cave-in on your map. This location is now impassable without digging.

Disturbed Spirit of Pemba

The monks once remembered the names of every child sacrificed to the mountain and prayed daily that upon their death, their souls would be reincarnated. Pemba died a year ago, but she was forgotten and no one has prayed





for her soul. She is trapped in the mountain now and her spirit haunts it. Pemba can be reasoned with, and even put to rest, but if she catches the adventurers defiling a grave, she'll attack!

Disturbed Spirit of Pemba

Abilities Might: 4 Nature: 5 (Undead)

Descriptors: Eating the Dead, Hiding, Punishing the Living

CONFLICT

Dispositions Weapons

Kill: 8

Attack: +2D, *Ancient Fury*

Maneuver: +1D, *Atavistic Savagery*

Convince: 10

Attack: +1D, +1s *Forgotten by Her People*

Defend: +1D, *Secrets of Death*

Banish: 7

Attack: +1D, +1s, *Immortal Fury*

Flee: 4

Attack: +1s, *Inhuman Stamina*

Armor:

None

Instinct:

Always take revenge on those who disturb my rest.

SPECIAL

The restless spirit is immune to mind-affecting spells and though she can be defeated in a kill conflict, doing so only destroys her body. She will return in the next phase as a Disturbed Spirit (see *Petersen Bestiary Vol 1*).

Lost Footing

Either due to the incline of the passage, slippery ice, or carelessness, a character slips and falls, potentially into another location on the map, or being exposed to an enemy unprepared.

Tenzing

Tenzing is Diamond Tooth's son and the last sacrifice the Sharwa made. While most of the sacrifices were only a vessel of Anala's anger for a year before passing it on, Tenzing has been channeling it for two decades. Over the years the anger required to commune with Anala has burned away everything else. On the surface Tenzing is commanding, inflammatory, and resolute. Inside, he's broken and yearns for a release from his bond with Anala.

☞ Bites his nails down until they are nothing but nubs.

☞ Turns his head slowly, neck stiff, and stares at intruders.

☞ Barks orders, then quickly changes his mind and orders something else.

As high priest, Tenzing has a duty to sustain anger and rage in his people that fuel Anala's flame. He does so every day in **The Remembering** (see location I7).

Tenzing wants freedom for his people, who have been imprisoned nearly all of their lives, and vengeance on the Sharwa for casting them down into the mountain. He intends to raise his people into an army and take them to fertile lands below. Tenzing hopes leading the Mikra to a new home will free him of his communion with the god Anala and maintain his leadership.

To accomplish his goals Tenzing is willing to side with Mingmar and bathe the mountain in fire. He has no intent, however, of staying in the mountain, or being one of Mingmar's chosen people.

Regarding lowlanders, adventurers included, he is curious. He may side with them if they can find a means to communicate, and if they can show him that they will help the Mikra fight the Sharwa. Otherwise they are his enemy.

Surrounded by Warriors

If Tenzing is encountered, he is likely on a raid and accompanied by Mikra. He won't shy away from a violent encounter but if the adventurers attempt to communicate with him, he may be more interested in learning from them than killing them.

Tenzing

Abilities Might: 4 Nature: 5

Descriptors: Ambushing, Communing, Demanding

CONFLICT

Dispositions Weapons

Kill: 10

Attack: *Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus*

Convince: 7

Defend: +2D, *Anala Must Be Appeased*

Feint: +1s, *Curious of the Lowlanders*

Flee: 4

Attack: +1D, *Know the Terrain*

Maneuver: +1D, *Know the Terrain*

Armor:

None

Belief:

All burns beneath the embers of Anala's rage.

Goal:

Free my people from this mountain.

Instinct:

Always perform The Remembering at noon.

Traits:

Touched by the Gods (3), Quick to Anger (2).

SPECIAL

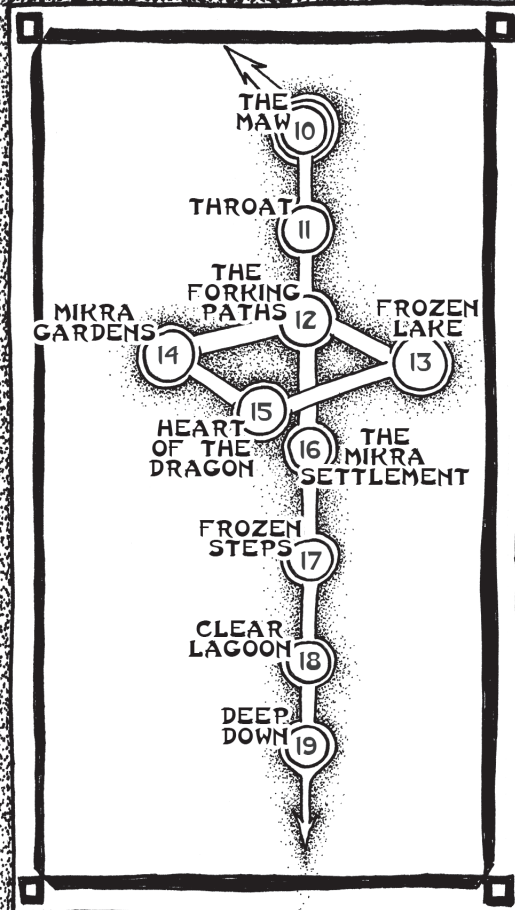
Tenzing has no penalty operating in dim light. Full light or darkness counts as a factor in all tests except riddling.

Niri

Niri is Abbot Mingmar's sister. When the sacrifices stopped, and the cold returned, Niri gave herself to the mountain in



STONE DRAGON MOUNTAIN





Vessel of a God

Tenzing is cognizant that inside the mountain he is only the leader of the Mikra as long as he communes with Anala. He is suspicious of Mingmar and fears the monk will try to usurp him. Thus, even though it wracks him with pain to continue communing with Anala, he jealously guards access to the god (Heart of the Dragon, location I5).

While Mingmar purifies himself to perform the Ritual of Awakening, Tenzing has instructed him to stay in the Mikra Gardens until the ritual is ready.

को ड्रागन पहाड तरि यात्रा

devotion to Rava. Because she was resigned to the task, and was not angry, her sacrifice did not fuel Anala's flame. She survived the fall and since then has been teaching the Mikra to accept their terrible plight.

Niri has convinced a small group of Mikra that they could find peace with their parents the Sharwa. Perhaps it is the adoption of stoic understanding that starved Anala enough to reach out for Mingmar.

Unlike Mingmar, Niri does not despise the lowlanders. She believes they may be able to assist and will ask the adventurers to help the Sharwa and the Mikra make peace with one another, starting with bringing Tenzing and his father together.

Niri

Abilities Nature: 4 Will: 4 Health: 3
Resources: 0 Circles: 3 Might: 2

Belief: We are one people.
Goal: Reunite Tenzing with Diamond Tooth.
Instinct: Always offer her own life in place of other's.
Traits: Touched by the Gods (1), Patient (1)
Wises: Monks of the Burning Heart-wise, Captivity-wise
Skills: Theologian 4, Ritualist 3, Orator 4, Healer 3
Prayers: *Balm of the Lords of Serenity and Grace of the Lords of Plenty.*



इन्डिवे लोटवार्थ

11. The Throat

The descent down is steep and treacherous. The ice inside is packed and slick. Now that the Maw has opened, a few Mikra have made their way to the surface but have yet to carve out a safe passage. The Throat connects to the Maw (location 10) on the outside and the Forking Paths (location 12) below.

- 3) Inside, the wind is biting but infrequent.
- 3) Littered with broken tools and weapons. Futile attempts over the ages to escape. Shadows of the dragon's teeth dance upon the ice.
- 3) A dangerous climb down.

Descending down the slope requires an Ob 2 Dungeoneer test, Ob 3 for two people, and Ob 4 for an entire party.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

- 3) **Condition:** One misstep is all it takes to lose footing and come crashing down to the plateau below with a fractured tibia. The adventurers makes it down but the leader is injured.
- 3) **Twist:** The noise draws attention from the Mikra and they ambush the adventurers (see **Mikra Ambush** on page 41).

12. Forking Paths

Thousands of icicles hang from the ceiling above, tinkling as the wind from outside passes over them, their tips like poised needles hanging over you. Ahead the icicles extend and thicken into stalactite columns that split the tunnel in two directions.

The left passage is narrow; a giant boulder once blocked it, but the rock has been cleaved down the center, and now a man could just squeeze through it. The right passage is broad and descends with a gentle slope.

- 3) Treasure for the taking—but also a dangerous place to be caught unprepared!
- 3) The path splits, leading either down a gentle slope to the Mikra Settlement (location 16) or through the narrow passage to another split that goes to the Frozen Lake (location 13) and the Mikra Gardens (location 14).



Because of the icicles, the ceiling is very low here, forcing everyone to stoop low or crawl. The Mikra are used to this and if they attack here they have the advantage. Mikra gain +1s on conflict dispositions and +1D to any maneuver actions in a conflict here.

The icicles above are sturdier than they look, but could certainly break free if disturbed by vibrations or a sudden heat. Hidden among them are a pair of clear quartz crystals, the “Dragon’s Teeth” that were raved about (each worth 2D cash, pack 1 for both). They are easy to spot if the icicles are inspected but breaking them free requires an Ob 2 Laborer test.

Suggested Laborer failure result (choose one):

- 3⚡ **Twist:** The icicles collapse on the characters, triggering a cave-in. (see **Cave-In** on page 42).
- 3⚡ **Twist:** The noise draws attention from the Mikra and they ambush the adventurers (see **Mikra Ambush** on page 41).
- 3⚡ **Condition:** Injured. The quartz breaks free, but in doing so an icicle falls and impales the character.

Provided the adventurers are not in a rush, there is no challenge to taking either path. Passing through the cracked boulder must be done single file, but otherwise is not treacherous. That path inclines slightly and splits again leading to the Mikra Gardens (I4) and the Frozen Lake (I3).

Going down the slight descent requires some caution to not slip, but that is all. The wide passage leads down into the Mikra Settlement.

Moving Quickly

If the players need to move through either of these spaces in a rush, or they don’t describe taking some care on the slope, it will require an Ob 2 Health test.

Suggested Health failure result (choose one):

- 3⚡ **Twist:** Gear is broken or lost.
- 3⚡ **Twist:** A howling wind whips through the narrow passage and blows out torches.
- 3⚡ **Twist:** Someone is stuck in the narrow passageway.

13. Frozen Lake

The cavern descent flattens to a plateau filled with a wide frozen lake. The surface is laced with seams, breaches, and fractures. Visible beneath are large frozen bubbles the size of a man’s head, like winter jewels protected by a window

of ice. On the far wall a ramp of packed ice leads to an elevated passage. Your open flames flare slightly and turn a bluish color.

The frozen lake is filled with highly flammable methane bubbles and methane ice. The small amount of methane gas that escapes naturally has no odor but does cause torches and other light sources to give off a bluish flame.

In the center, visible once the adventurers have entered the cavern, is a full-size golden statue carrying a heavy sword and dressed in armor, buried several feet beneath the surface of the ice!

- 3⚡ Frozen lake. Ob 4 Pathfinder test to cross safely.
- 3⚡ Filled with methane gas bubbles...and a golden statue!
- 3⚡ Treasure and methane ice can be dug out of the lake.
- 3⚡ Ramp that leads to Heart of the Dragon (location I5).

Detecting the Gas

Identifying the gas requires an Ob 2 Dungeoneer test (detecting bad/good air plus an evil GM factor for the lack of smell).

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result:

- 3⚡ **Condition:** Afraid that the entire lake might explode if exposed to flame or collapse if the gases have caused the ice to rot and the gas is identified.

With this knowledge the adventurers may take actions to mitigate the danger of the gas. This may require an Alchemist or Dungeoneer test, or a Good Idea. If they have taken an appropriate action to mitigate the danger of the gas, they gain +1D on tests to either excavate the golden statue or obtain methane clathrates.

Excavating the Golden Statue

Digging through the ice is difficult and dangerous. The ice below the surface is hard, and packed within it are bubbles of methane gas that can ignite either from the spark of striking a pick or from any open flames. Excavating the treasure requires an Ob 4 Laborer test.

Suggested Laborer failure result (choose one):

- 3⚡ **Twist:** Attacked by Pemba who lives here (see **Disturbed Spirit of Pemba** on page 43).
- 3⚡ **Twist:** Explosion! Either a spark or an open flame ignites the gas. Everyone must make an Ob 3 Health test to put out the flames safely. Suggested failure result: Injured or afraid condition.



The statute carries a fine sword inscribed with a prayer to Rava (as sword, worth 3D cash and acts as a scroll of Breath of the Burning Lord; see *Torchbearer* page 52). It is also dressed in chain mail. The statue itself requires an Ob 5 Laborer test to carry and is worth 10D cash.

Mining the Lake for Methane Ice

Resourceful adventurers who want to take advantage of the natural resources before them could intentionally harvest some of the methane clathrates in the lake. Digging for the methane ice requires an Ob 2 Laborer test (digging plus an a factor for the dangerous gas). The clathrates can then be used as supplies for a future Alchemist test or can be ignited to provide light like a lantern for one turn (pack 1). The ice will melt in temperatures above freezing.

Suggested Laborer failure result:

⚔ **Condition:** Hungry and thirsty from the work.

Crossing the Lake

Further down the passage, the heat coming from the Heart of the Dragon (location I5) has rotted the ice in the lake. Finding safe passage across it requires a Ob 4 Pathfinder test.

Suggested Pathfinder failure result (choose one):

⚔ **Twist:** Though the ice appears strong, the rotted honeycomb structure is weak. The surface collapses under an adventurer and the lake envelops them, burying them inside instantly. Getting out means finding the hole you fell through in the dark and climbing back out without breaking more ice! This is an Ob 5 Health test. Suggested failure result: sick condition (hypothermia).

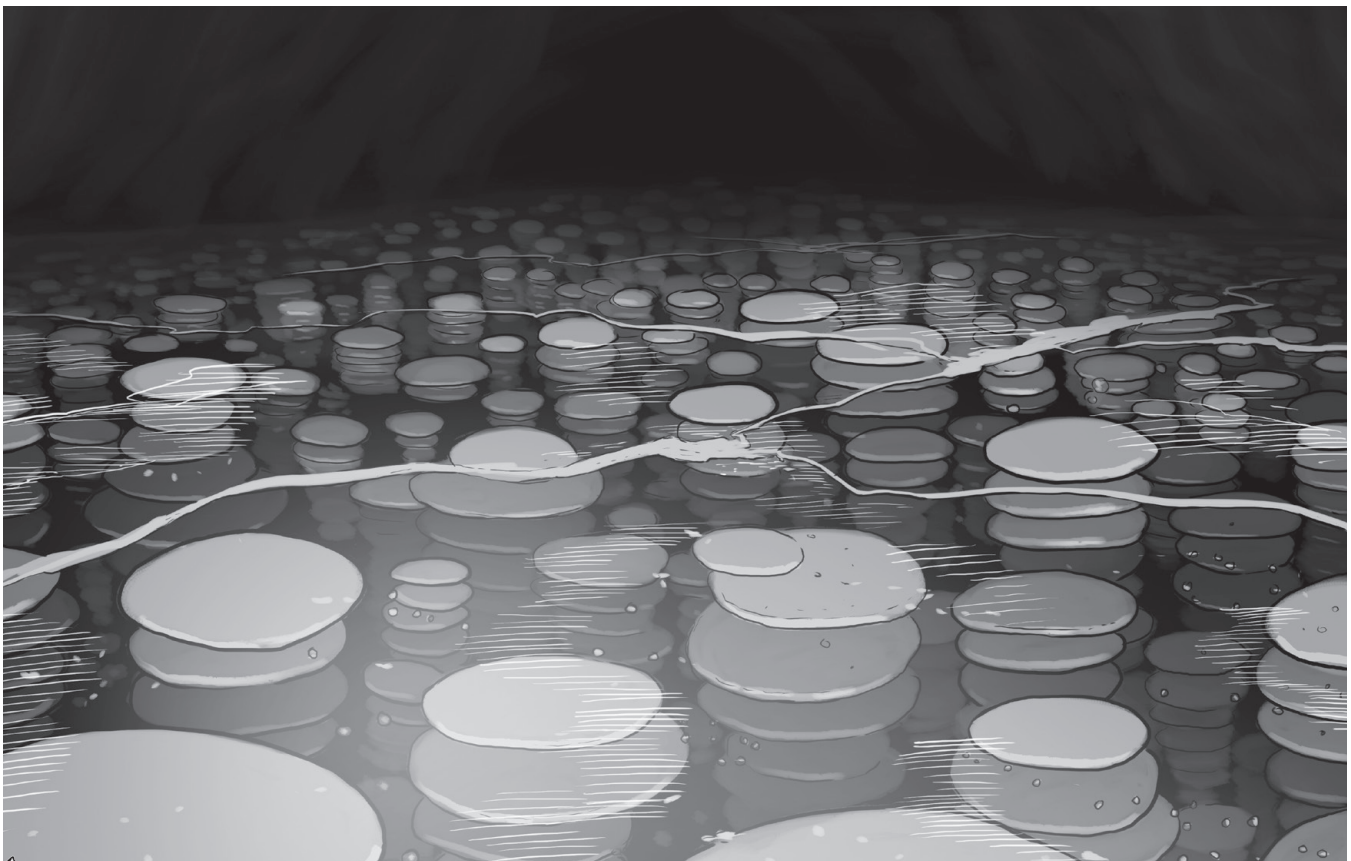
⚔ **Twist:** Attacked by Pemba who lives above (see **Disturbed Spirit of Pemba** on page 43).

⚔ **Condition:** Exhausted. The trek across the lake is arduous and slow. The leader is exhausted, helpers are hungry and thirsty.

Even More Challenging...

Getting trapped under a frozen lake is terrifying. You're disoriented, have terrible visibility, and are being drowned all at once.

If you wish to make the broken ice twist more challenging, instead of a single Health test, you can require the adventurers to first find a hole (either by the trapped hero making a Scout test, or by the adventurers who are still on the lake making a Health test to break open a new hole for them). Then, require a Dungeoneer test to climb a vertical



pitch (make sure to add an evil GM factor for the breaking ice and cold) to get out, and any who help take the chance of falling in themselves as a twist if the Dungeoneer test fails. Finally, require a Health test from the nearly drowned adventurer.

Failure either results in the sick condition (hypothermia) or a twist that they cannot move or take actions until the next camp phase.

14. Mikra Gardens

The cavern you enter is narrow but tall. On one side the wall of blue ice is smooth, as though worked by hand. Beneath the transparent blue surface are dark shapes arranged in a grid pattern that ascends beyond the light of your torches. A pillar of flat stone slabs is stacked against the wall, forming a precarious-looking landing at least three elves tall.

The other side is a natural cavern populated with hundreds of icicles hanging from the ceiling. Beneath them is a shelf of ice surrounded by a circle of stones.

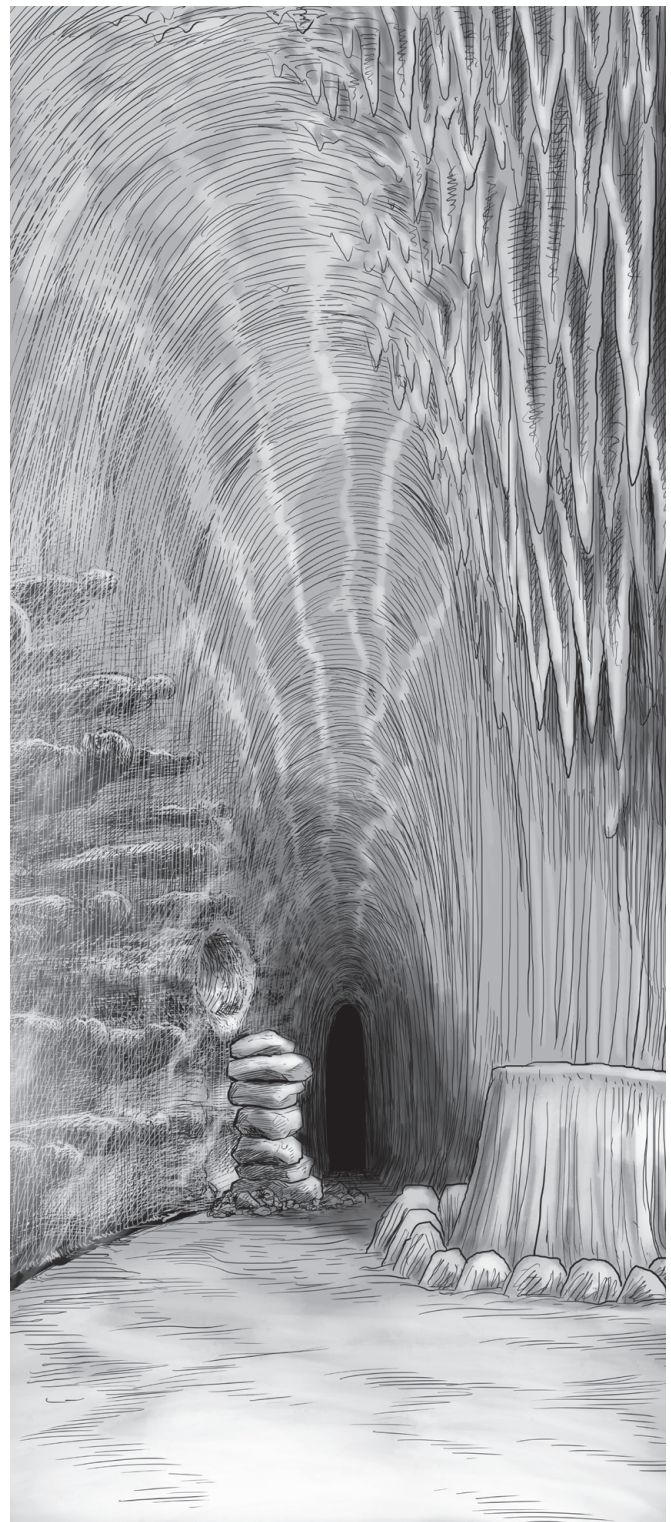
The Gardens are the Mikra's crypt. Cut into the walls of ice are tombs made for the fallen, hundreds of them. On the opposite side is the funeral bed where prayers are given, so that their spirits may escape this prison.

High up, a small passage leads off to the north (location 15). Warm air comes out of it and the ice around its periphery is slowly melting. Climbing up to the passage requires an Ob 2 Dungeoneer test, Ob 3 for two people, and Ob 4 for the entire party. Moving the tower of stones being used to dig a Mikra grave requires an Ob 2 Laborer test and makes the ascent possible without a test.

- 3☞ Ceremonial funeral bed. Upon it lies the dead Mikra Dawa, who was killed by Hoa Veit and her sons.
- 3☞ Possible activities: Ritual purification being performed by Mingmar and a funeral for Dawa.
- 3☞ Icicles hanging from above on the ceremonial side; any disturbance can bring them clattering down.
- 3☞ Elevated passage with warm air coming out leads to the Heart of the Dragon (location 15).

Activity in the Garden

Activity in the Garden changes over time. Any of these activities might be taking place when the adventurers arrive, depending on their prior interactions. If they have not already met Mingmar, this is good place to introduce him.



Activity: Ritual Preparation

An old man, naked from the waist up, shivers violently as two robed figures splash buckets of cold water across his chest. Between each interval of what looks like torture, the man incants prayers of supplication.



Mingmar's Story

Abbot of the Monks of the Burning Heart, Mingmar spent the last 20 years watching his order deteriorate. After the sacrifices stopped, so did the sending of children to become new initiates, as well as the food and supplies the monks needed. The reverence once given to the monks was replaced by the greedy callousness of the lowlanders.

Mingmar watched as the sacred salt lakes were mined and the salt sold to lowlanders. He watched as the Sharwa began worshiping new gods. He watched as the mountain grew colder and colder every year.

Three weeks ago, he finally stopped watching and took action. After finding out that his own sister, Niri, had given her life to appease the gods, Mingmar was enraged. In that anger, with a waft of smoke that came up through the God's Wound, he communed for the first time with the god Anala, which he only knew as the Burning Heart.

The Burning Heart bade him to feed that anger, enter the mountain, stoke his flames and wake the slumbering god Kisha, who would punish the Sharwa for their sins, and would rid the mountain of lowlanders forever.

Mingmar believes he is saving his people, even if they have to kill many Sharwa to do it. Ultimately, he believes the Sharwa themselves are too corrupted and that the devout Mikra, unaffected by lowlander influence, will be the next generation of holy people on the mountain.

Mingmar has not traveled further down into the mountain yet, so he does not yet know that his sister Niri still lives, nor that they are now working at cross-purposes.

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Mingmar and two of his attendant Monks of the Burning Heart are purifying themselves in preparation for the ritual. Although he is hateful of lowlanders (see below), if he encounters them here, Mingmar will try to turn their presence to his advantage by feigning fear of them and offering to tell them the location of a powerful artifact, the Burning Heart, in exchange for his life.

Keep Your Friends Close, Your Enemies Closer

Mingmar has an uneasy alliance with Tenzing. They both want revenge but on two different people. Mingmar hopes to turn Tenzing against lowlanders and make the Mikra his tool to purify the mountain of the lowlander presence. Once

the adventurers make off to retrieve the Burning Heart, he will rush to find Tenzing and bring him to the Heart of the Dragon (location I5) so he can witness the lowlanders' sacrilegious and perfidious nature.

Mingmar in the Gardens

Abilities Might: 3 Nature: 4
Descriptors: Inciting, Demanding, Running

CONFLICT

Dispositions Weapons
Trick: 6 Attack: +2D, Knowledge of Treasure
Feint: +1D, Enfeebled Appearance
Convince: 12 Maneuver: +1D, Interrupting
Defend: +1D, Stalwart Faith

Armor: None

Belief: The Mikra are chosen by the gods to rule.

Goal: Bathe the mountain in fire.

Instinct: Always reveal lowlander greed.

Traits: Quick to Anger (2), Stubborn (1).

Wises: Tradition-wise, Sacrifice-wise.

Skills: Ritualist 5, Theologian 5, Lore Master 4, Scholar 4, Mentor 3, Orator 4

SPECIAL

Incantation of Rava the Morning Sun (Blessing of the Lords of Light and Darkness) and Lamentation of Namakambhari (Benediction of the Lords of Creation).

Activity: Funeral for Dawa

Two Mikra stand on the pile of stone slabs, chipping away at a section of the ice wall. Across the room from them, two more hunch down under the icicles and tend to a fifth who lies lifeless on the shelf below. All four murmur something indecipherable as they work.

The Mikra work with primitive tools to carve out a grave in the flat wall for Dawa, who died in the fight with Hoa. They use ancient ice axes with bone shafts and stone blades. Dawa lies on the funeral bed, while the Mikra pray for his soul to ascend to the heavens.

If disturbed, the two working on the stone slabs will attempt to flee to the settlement for reinforcements while the two attending Dawa will keep murmuring their prayers without faltering so that Dawa's spirit does not share the same fate as Pempa's (see **Frozen Lake**, location 13).



Mikra

Abilities	Might: 2 Nature: 4
Descriptors:	Ambushing, Escaping, Demanding
CONFLICT	
Dispositions	Weapons
Kill: 6	<i>Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus</i> <i>Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons</i>
Drive Off: 3	<i>Attack: Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus</i> <i>Maneuver: Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons</i>
Flee: 6	<i>Attack: +1D, Know the Terrain</i> <i>Defend: +1D, Know the Terrain</i>
Armor:	None
Instinct:	Attack in the darkness.

SPECIAL

Mikra have no penalty operating in dim light. Full light or darkness counts as a factor in all tests except riddling.

15. Heart of the Dragon

As you approach, the temperature rises quickly. Sweat drips from your brow and the gear that once protected you from the cold now threatens to smother you. A bright glow comes from deeper in the passage.

- ☞ Unbearable heat.
- ☞ In the presence of a god.
- ☞ Possible activities: Mikra attendants, Tenzing communing with Anala, or Mingmar waking the dragon from her slumber.

The god Anala resides here in the form of a metal brazier, the Burning Heart. The more his supplicants rage against their own mothers and fathers, the higher and hotter his flames rise.

- ☞ When the brazier smokes, communion with Anala is possible. Doing so requires physical proximity, being angry (angry condition), or using the Ritualist skill. Anyone who has two of these three may commune with Anala and understand his speech perfectly. Anyone who has all three is subject to his divine commands.

Anala

God of Fire, called the Burning Heart by the Sharwa, and worshiped by the Mikra. Cast down by his father Rava to warm the mountain in the Age of Frost.

Anala craves release from this mountain and from his physical vessel so that he may return to the heavens and smite his father, taking his place. He manifests as a metal brazier whose fire is fueled by anger. When roused he can speak through the smoke that wafts from him. The more anger near him, the more powerful his fires grow.

Anala

Abilities	Might: 7 Nature: 6
Descriptors:	Burning, Communing, Hating
CONFLICT	
Dispositions	Weapons
Trick/	<i>Maneuver: +1D Clever Sayings of Old</i>
Riddle: 5	<i>Defend: +1s, Insight Into the Heart of Man</i>
Convince: 6	<i>Attack: +2D, Immortal Hatred</i> <i>Defend: +1s, An Age of Punishment</i>
Bind/	<i>Feint: +1D, Feigned Obedience</i>
Release: 12	
Armor:	None
Instinct:	Always reward the hateful.

SPECIAL

Anala is a god cast down to earth by his father Rava. He is not subject to Kill, Drive Off, or Capture conflicts, nor will he engage in a Flee conflict.

Bind/Release: A special Kill conflict that uses the Banish/Abjure Skills and Abilities. Order of Might applies as it does in Kill conflicts. Defeating Anala in this conflict allows the winner to either bind him to another physical object or free him to the heavens. Losing usually means a fiery death, as per Killing Is My Business on page 74 in *Torchbearer*.

Note

Communing with Anala requires the angry condition, which gives +1 Ob on all social rolls (needed for both Convince and Trick conflicts).

Activity in the Heart of the Dragon

This is where the final ritual to wake Kisha must be performed, but when the adventurers first arrive, Mingmar may not yet be prepared. Here are three possible encounters in the Heart of the Dragon, presented in proximity to the ritual being performed.

Activity: Mikra Attendants

Inside the domed cavern three Mikra tend to a large fire burning brightly in a large metal brazier. They seem to be arguing, yelling at one another and pointing at each other from across the fire. As they do the flames lick the air between them.



Though shouting at each other, the Mikra are not in an argument. They are performing a routine ritual of cursing their parents before the fire. While this has no immediate effect on the Burning Heart (the true stoking of the flames is caused by the Remembering), it is part of their daily rituals. If given time, they will complete the ritual and walk out, exhausted by the bellowing and the incredible heat.

Sneaking up to or past the Mikra requires a Scout test versus their Nature, but the Mikra have a factor (+1 Ob) as they are distracted by the ritual.

Activity: Tenzing Communing

A lone figure kneels before a fire in the center of the room. The unearthly flames form the shape of a young man's face, who speaks in the tongue of the immortal lords.

Tenzing is communing with Anala. The Burning Heart chastises Tenzing for his reticence and fear of Mingmar. Tenzing has served him well, but the mortal man does not provide the fuel Anala needs to be free of this mountain: "Join with the old man, be free of this mountain, overthrow the yoke of our fathers, and then when you are done, burn him in my flames."

More information on Tenzing is on page 43.

Tenzing

Abilities	Might: 4 Nature: 5
Descriptors:	Ambushing, Communing, Demanding
CONFLICT	
Dispositions	Weapons
Kill: 10	Attack: <i>Ice Axe, may be thrown once per fight to change Attack to versus</i>
	Maneuver: <i>Dagger, successful Maneuver counts as disarm against spear-type and missile weapons</i>
Convince: 7	Defend: +2D, <i>Anala Must Be Appeased</i>
	Feint: +1s, <i>Curious of the Lowlanders</i>
Flee: 7	Attack: +1D, <i>Know the Terrain</i>
	Maneuver: +1D, <i>Know the Terrain</i>
Armor:	None
Instinct:	Always perform the Remembering at noon.
Traits:	Touched by the Gods (3), Quick to Anger (2).

SPECIAL

Tenzing has no penalty operating in dim light. Full light or darkness counts as a factor in all tests except riddling.

Activity: Wake the Dragon From Her Slumber

When you come to the room, you're blinded momentarily by the inferno within. In the center of the room a pyre has been erected and the flames burn hotter and brighter than any you have seen. You can see signs of the stone walls cracking, and places where thin sheets of stone have flaked off the walls, like a snake sloughing off scales.

Mingmar and his acolytes, Monks of the Burning Heart, are performing a ritual here with the three captive Sharwa herders Chembal, Sani, and Ki-bi. Chembal is already dead, his body burning on the pyre. The heat and volume of the flames have been accelerated by the quicklime, pine resin, and alchemically refined bitumen added by the monks.

The second, Sani, is in the process of being tattooed by one of Mingmar's acolytes. Her forehead, throat, and chest have been inked so far; she is bound by ropes as they begin on her abdomen. Ki-bi is unconscious in the corner. Mingmar is repeating this chant as he operates a large bellows that stokes the flame further: "Wake, Burning Heart, be free of stones and earth. Wake, Burning Heart, grant us your warmth as we give you ours. Wake, Burning Heart, grant us destruction upon those who do not revere you..."



Mingmar has several Mikra chanting with him. With each hate-filled repetition the flames of the pyre grow hotter. See **Mikra Gardens** (location 14) for more information on Mingmar.

- 3‡ Burning pyre in the center with a climber turning to embers on it.
- 3‡ Mingmar chanting and stoking the fire with his anger.
- 3‡ Acolytes tattooing one of the climbers on her stomach.
- 3‡ The third climber unconscious in the corner.
- 3‡ Six Mikra chanting with Mingmar.

Mingmar in the heart of the dragon

Abilities	Might: 4 Nature: 4
Descriptors:	Inciting, Demanding, Running
CONFLICT	
Dispositions	Weapons
Kill: 6	Attack: Ritualist +1D, <i>Stoke the Flames</i> Maneuver: Ritualist +1D, <i>Stoke the Flames</i>
Drive Off: 8	Attack: Ritualist +1D, <i>Stoke the Flames</i> Maneuver: Ritualist +1D, <i>Stoke the Flames</i>
Convince: 12	Maneuver: +1D, <i>Interrupting</i> Defend: +2D, <i>Stalwart Faith</i>
Armor:	None
Belief:	The Mikra are chosen by the gods to rule.
Goal:	Bathe the mountain in fire.
Instinct:	Always reveal lowlander greed.
Traits:	Quick to Anger (2), Stubborn (1).
Wises:	Tradition-wise, Sacrifice-wise.
Skills:	Ritualist 5, Theologian 5, Lore Master 4, Scholar 4, Mentor 3, Orator 4

Monks of the burning heart

Raw Abilities	Nature 3 Will 5 Health 3
Town Abilities	Resources 2 Circles 3 Might 2
Skills	Theologian 4, Ritualist 3, Choose one: Mentor, Laborer, Peasant 3.
Wises	Rava-wise, Sacrifice-wise
Traits	Touched by the Gods (1)
Instinct	Always follow the word of Rava.

Dousing the Flames

Even without the monks to stoke it, the pyre burns with an unearthly flame. The sacrifices already made to the Burning Heart are a catalyst for reviving the dead god Kisha. Putting out the fire requires an Ob 4 Survivalist test that can be helped with Laborer, Lore Master, or Ritualist.

Suggested Survivalist failure result (choose one):

- 3‡ **Twist:** The ritual fails to revive the old god Kisha, but it has gone on long enough that the mountain begins to collapse. A **Cave-in** (see page 42) happens in this location immediately and the rest of the mountain begins to collapse (triggering another cave-in every two turns).
- 3‡ **Condition:** The flames are put out but the adventurers are burned in the process and are injured.

Note

If the flames are not doused and Mingmar's ritual is completed, the dragon Kisha will wake and bathe the mountain in fire. At this point you can decide if the legends are true and the mountain truly is a dragon that will break from the stone around her and fly off, or if all this was the story of a dormant volcano that is now erupting. Either way, the adventurers have one hell of a Chase conflict to get out before being engulfed in flames.

The Burning Heart

This heavy metal brazier is blackened from use. Engravings of a serpent consuming itself are etched in the sides and come alive when a fire burns within. The god of fire, Anala, resides within the brazier. When it smokes, he can commune with those nearby (see Anala on page 50).

Effect: +1D, +1s to Cook, Alchemist, and Ritualist tests involving fire.

Inventory: Hands/carried 2 (Ob 2 Laborer test) or pack 6.

Type: Magical equipment.

16. Mikra Settlement

Carved from the ice walls themselves, this giant cavern is filled with structures built by the Mikra. Dim lights glow from the buildings, billows of black smoke tumbling out from some of them.

- 3‡ Hundreds of Mikra live here.
- 3‡ Crude technology: coal mines, furs from beasts, food and clothing made from treated lichen.

Inside the Mikra settlement are several hundred Mikra, along with the other necessities for civilization: food and clothing



made of lichen and fungi; furs taken from the creatures slain; coal burning in fire pits for warmth and cooking; a few artifacts from the outside; and goats, furs, and equipment they have stolen.

The Mikra's response to the adventurers is by nature one of fear and hatred, seeing them as literal *outsiders*. But if the adventurers fall through the God's Wound, the Mikra may see them as fellow prisoners and accept them in.

Activity in the Settlement

Any of these activities might be taking place when the adventurers arrive.

- 3 Three young Mikra are performing a rite of passage ceremony that ends with them swimming under the ice lagoon and capturing a beast in the Deep Down.

- 3 Niri is a monk of the Burning Heart who survived the fall into the God's Wound. She is trying to dissuade those who have never seen the stars from attacking the Sharwa.

- 3 Lichen from below is being cooked outside over a coal fire.

- 3 A shout of "The Remembering!" is made and all of the Mikra move down to the Frozen Steps below (location I7).

- 3 Tenzing is rallying together a band of Mikra in the night to go raid the Sharwa settlements above.

Sneaking through the settlement requires an Ob 3 Scout test. Making allies of the Mikra requires a Convince, Trick, or Convince Crowd conflict.



17. Frozen Steps

A latticework of ice-covered steps and ramps fills this tunnel, which descends further into the depths of the mountain. Fluorescent fungal blooms grow along the walls and edges of the ground in thick patches, providing soft illumination.

The deep down is where the God's Wound drops into. The fall down is broken by the thick fungus. During the day, a thin shaft of light can be seen from the crack above.

- ☞ Sunlight comes through the God's Wound above (location 7K).
- ☞ Fungus grows on the walls here. Edible, though poisonous if not prepared properly.
- ☞ The site where the Mikra gather to remember how their parents abandoned them.

The Remembering

At noon, when the sun is at its peak, a shaft of light comes down through the God's Wound and lights up a small platform. There, Tenzing the high priest, performs the ritual of hating. He stands in the light wearing a mask and plays the part of the Sharwa, the parents of the Mikra.

"You are my child. You are of my blood. And I despise you! You are so offensive to my eyes that I give you to the mountain. You are unwanted. You are unloved. You are unworthy!"

The response is a hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness. A primal fury boils up in your chest and rages so powerfully it threatens to burst out if not directed to the hatred of another. That is the hate that fuels Anala and the hate that warms the mountain. Now exacerbated by the vehemence of the monk's ritual, it threatens to make the mountain explode in a fiery cataclysm.

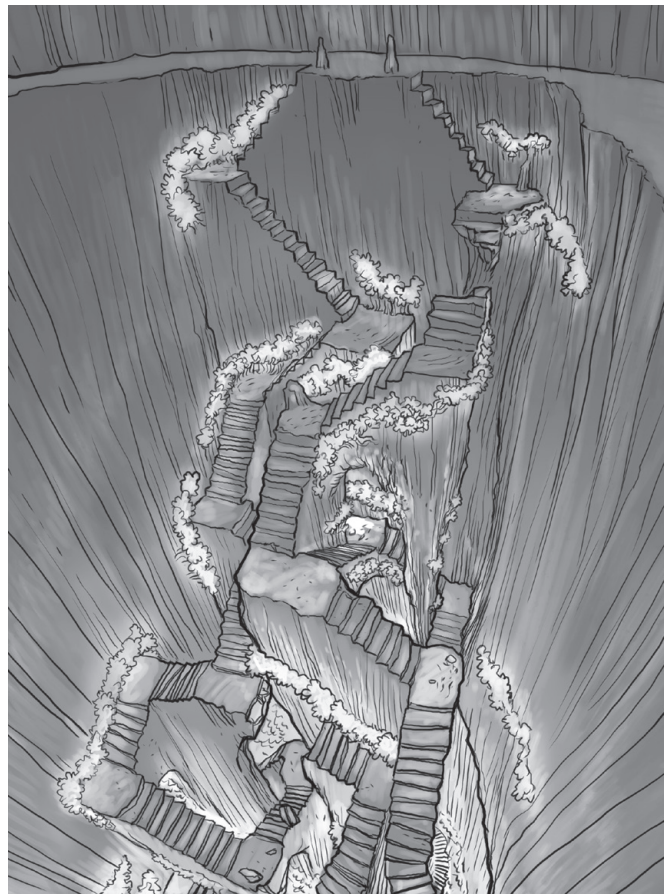
Observing the ritual causes all to become incensed to anger and wanton violence. Resisting the lull of the sermon requires an Ob 3 Will test.

Suggested Will failure result:

- ☞ **Condition:** The rage is suppressed and you gain the angry condition.

Harvesting Fungus

The fungus itself is nutritious if properly prepared, otherwise it is poisonous to consume. Preparing it requires an Ob 3 Cook test.



Suggested Cook failure result:

- ☞ **Twist:** Poisoned (see below).

Poisoned

If the lichen is eaten without first being prepared, or as a twist from a failed Cook test, then eating the fungus requires an Ob 3 Health test.

Suggested Health failure result:

- ☞ **Condition:** The lichen is filling (removes hungry and thirsty) but shortly after consuming it the adventurers experience dizziness, muscle cramping, blurry vision, and severe nausea. They are sick.

18. Clear Lagoon

This deep in the mountain, the temperature is warmer. Water drips in a slow, steady rhythm from the thawing icicles above. Around a bend, the floor gives way to a clear lagoon that fills the cavern.

The lagoon fills up the entirety of this cavern and appears to be an end to the descent. It continues under the far wall. Traversing through it to the Deep Down requires an Ob 4 Dungeoneer test for one person to traverse, Ob 5 for two, and Ob 6 for an entire party.



- 3☯ Cool and refreshing water.
- 3☯ An underwater passage to further beyond.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure result (choose one):

- 3☯ **Twist:** Stuck underwater and without air.
- 3☯ **Condition:** Sick. Exhausted for helpers. They make it across, but the water is just barely warmer than freezing and they start suffering from hypothermia.

19. Deep Down

Depicting this location is largely up to the GM. At this point they have left the dragon and are beneath the mountain proper. If you wish the dungeon to be a “closed” environment, make this a small region that can be explored with a Pathfinder test and reveal the presence of underground floral and fauna.

If you want to expand this world, however, it is an entire hollow earth filled with its own peoples and civilizations.

- 3☯ The bottom of the mountain or a passage into another world?

the end

The end of the adventure comes at the players' discretion. If they want to hike down the mountain to the city of Lahan and sell their goods, they might make several treks into the

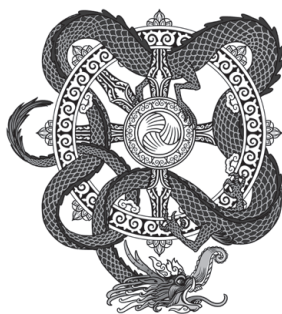
mountain. Remember that with the Cartographer skill and mapping they can quickly travel from point to point after they've explored it.

What happens in and on the mountain will greatly affect them. If they don't stop Mingmar, he will wake the Burning Heart and then set the mountain ablaze. You can decide if the mountain itself truly is a dragon that wakes, or if the god Kisha is a metaphor for a volcanic eruption. Either way, should this happen, the mountain itself may become incredibly dangerous, impassible, or completely inaccessible (in the event that the dragon flies away).

As for the people of the mountain, without the adventurers' intervention they will go to war with each other, brother against sister, children killing their parents and worse. If the adventurers take action to aid either side or to prevent the conflict, they can shape the future of the mountain.

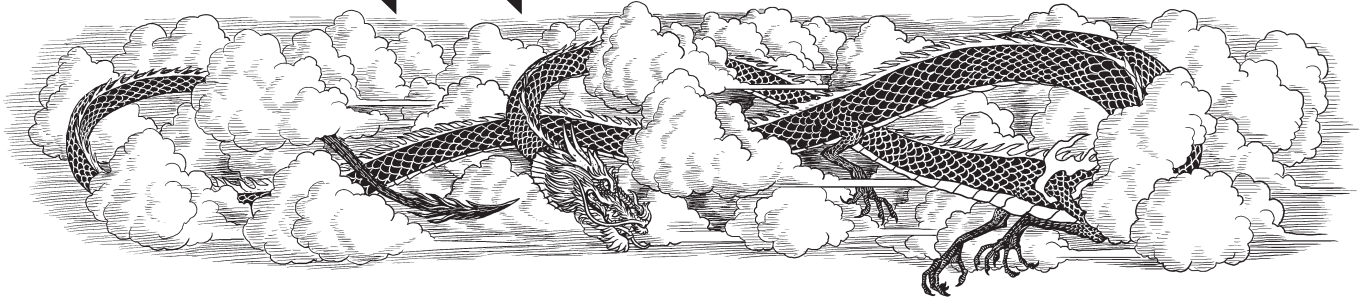
Where to Go Now

Are the adventurers on a perilous journey to get down the mountain before it erupts in fire? Are they leading a Mikra army to claim the lowlands below? Are they sent on a religious quest to find a new way to appease the old gods? Have they become the ambassadors between the three factions on the mountain and now struggle to maintain a fragile peace? Or do other adventures in distant lands call to them?





वपपेहदंख



वपपेहदंख 1

Playing a Sharwa Character

Players are encouraged to use the iconic Torchbearer characters in most cases, but if someone wants to play a Sharwa, or a nearby lowlander, here are some of their starting options.

Also, GMs can use the homes in this section as nearby towns the adventurers can visit during the town phase. All of them are below base camp.

Where Is Your Home?

There are three places that can be used to replace the Religious Bastion, Remote Village and Busy Crossroads locations on page 15 of *Torchbearer*.

Ladak Monastery (Religious Bastion)

Ladak Monastery is a community based around a temple in the mountains. The monks who live here practice daily offerings and prayers the gods. They also teach those who come to learn of history, writing, and theology. Mostly, however, they work: washing clothes, cleaning the monastery, and repairing damage done by the harsh winds.

Ladak Monastery

Skills: Mentor, Laborer, Theologian **Haggling:** Ob 4
Traits: Celibate, Insightful **Alignment:** Law

AVAILABLE LOCATIONS

Guild hall, temple, flophouse (lifestyle cost: 0 plus 1 if additional recovery test is made), inn, and streets.

CURRENT LAWS

- ⌘ Drunkenness is a criminal act. Punishable by public humiliation.
- ⌘ Belonging to a Chaos cult is a criminal act. Punishable by exile.
- ⌘ All peoples are forbidden to bear arms greater than a knife or dagger in town. Punishable by confiscation of arms and fine (Ob 2 Resources test).

Dampur (Remote Village)

Filled with tents and huts made of earth and dung, the residents of Dampur are a transient lot. They must travel far every year to trade for the supplies they will need in the winter. They make an amazing array of clothes, tents, and containers from the sheep wool they weave. Some act as guides to take others on spiritual journeys up Stone Dragon Mountain, other are salt nomads who climb the mountain for its bounty.





Dampur	
Skills: Pathfinder, Peasant, Weaver	Haggling: Ob 2
Traits: Early Riser, Reverent	Alignment: Law
AVAILABLE LOCATIONS	Tea house (as tavern), market, temple, flophouse, inn, and streets.
CURRENT LAWS	<p>☞ Theft is a criminal act. Punishable by public humiliation and extra chores (Ob 3 Laborer test).</p> <p>☞ Revealing the location of the salt lakes to a lowlander is a criminal act punishable by a beating and exile.</p> <p>☞ Mentioning the old Sharwa sacrifices is taboo and punishable by public shunning for one day.</p>

Lahan (Busy Crossroads)

Lahan is in the lowlands and filled with more lowlanders than Sharwa. The buildings are many-tiered pagodas, furnished with demon arrestors to catch lightning from the sky. The people of Lahan trade in salt and wool products that come from the mountain for both simple necessities and luxuries.

Lahan	
Skills: Cook, Hagglor, Steward	Haggling: Ob 2
Traits: Devout, Quick-Witted	Alignment: Unaligned
AVAILABLE LOCATIONS	Tea house (as tavern), guild hall, market, stables, flophouse, inn, hotel, and streets.
CURRENT LAWS	<p>☞ Theft is a criminal act punishable by loss of limb or facial branding.</p> <p>☞ Failing to report for watch duty is a criminal act punishable by whipping.</p> <p>☞ Contracts with the salters guild are enforced and payable immediately.</p>
FUTURE LAW (IF THE MOUNTAIN ERUPTS)	☞ Proclamation of war against the Mikra.

How Are You Wise?

Wises that Sharwa characters can take: Salt Trade-wise, Monks of the Burning Heart-wise, Sharwa-wise, any home above (for instance Lahan-wise), Old Gods of the Mountain-wise.

After completing this adventure, any character can take Salt Nomad-wise, which includes knowledge of the Salt Tongue to speak with the spirits.

Nature

Descriptors: Climbing, Laboring, Persevering

Sharwa Nature Questions

When trouble comes, do you climb up the mountain, seeking the protection of your gods or do you use the tools of the lowlanders to fend it off?

- ☞ If you seek the safety of the gods on the mountain, increase your Nature by 1.
- ☞ If you use the tools of the lowlanders, you may increase or replace your home travels with Well-Traveled or Extravagant.

When it's cold out and the goats need gathering, do you wrap yourself in heavy wool and reach for a stout stick to herd them, or do you huddle by the fire enjoying a warm cup of butter tea?

- ☞ If you tend the herd, increase your Nature by 1 and decrease your Fighter skill by one.
- ☞ If you warm yourself by the fire, no ratings change.

When the salt wealth wanes and your hunger grows, do you revere the gods and follow your traditions or do you seek out opportunities of your own?

- ☞ If you follow tradition, increase your Nature by 1.
- ☞ If you seek out new opportunities for yourself, you may increase or replace your home trait with Jaded or Loner.

Name

Page 20 of *Torchbearer* instructs you to give your character an appropriate name. If your character is a lowlander, then names analogous to those found in China, Nepal, and Bhutan could be used for inspiration. If your character is a Sharwa from the mountain, names found in Tibet and those of the Sherpa could be used.

appendix 2

History of the Mountain

Age of Legends

When the immortal lords were young and walked the earth, the dragon Kisha flew in the skies. When tired, she perched upon the sun and cast the world in darkness. When she woke she was warmed by the sun's fire and flew the skies, bringing light.

Kisha's son, young Rava, god of morning, was jealous that he could not call out the sun from under his mother's slumber. Rava stole his father's sword and slew Kisha with a mighty blow. She fell to the ground and became a mountain.



Age of Frost

Kisha's body cooled and turned to stone. The earth cooled with her and the land grew too cold for man. Rava, an old god now, cast his son Anala, god of fire, into the mountain to warm it for the Sharwa, the people of the mountain. Anala's mother Namakambhari wept over the grave of her son. Her tears poured down the mountain and became the salt lakes.

Age of Warmth

Rava instructed his Sharwa monks to do the same to their children as he did to Anala. Thankful to Rava for his sacrifice, and fearful of his wrath, the Sharwa obeyed his command. Once a year, first sons and daughters were sacrificed from seven families in reverence to Rava and in thanks to Namakambhari. They took the children up the mountain, to the God's Wound, where Rava slew his mother. The unwilling children were blessed by the monks, forced into ritual garments, and thrown into the crevasse.

Below, the childrens' anger fueled Anala's flames and warmth was renewed on the mountain.

Changing Ways

Many years later a wealthy merchant named Xin Ghou was guided up the mountain by the Sharwa on a spiritual journey and chanced upon one of the salt lakes. He remarked upon the incredible value of the salt and offered riches to the Sharwa that they had never known. This sparked the salt trade between the Sharwa and lowlanders.

Twenty years ago, changed by influence from the lowlanders, Jhala refused to give her daughter Deepti to the mountain. She decried the old ways as being superstition and barbaric; the gods could not ask such a sacrifice and it must have been an invention of the monks. She turned her back on the old ways, and the Sharwa followed.

Age of Dust

Now it is cold once more. The rare pink salt is carried down the mountain and traded with the lowlanders. The Sharwa do not give up their children to the mountain, and refuse to speak of the old ways.

The dragon Kisha is now a story grandmothers tell lazy children who won't climb out of bed to do chores. Only her great maw extending from the mountain's peak indicates otherwise.

What's Happening Now

Three weeks ago, after years of watching the Sharwa ("People of the Mountain") abandon their faith, the abbot Mingmar received a message from the god Anala, the

Sharwa lifestyle

Though the salt nomads are ever transient, trade has afforded many of the Sharwa more permanent dwellings and way stations. There, many raise goats, sheep, and yaks and weave beautiful clothes and tents from their wool.

Sharwa enjoy simple comforts like a yak dung fire to warm their tents or earthen homes, yak milk butter tea, and foodstuffs portered up the mountain. They live in peace despite the increasing cold.

In every settlement and significant landmark on the mountain, the Sharwa erect small rock shrines where burnt offerings are made to the gods to ward off their anger and give thanks for beneficence.

को ड्रागन पहाड तरि यात्रा

Burning Heart. The god hungered for the sacrifices he had been deprived of for the past 20 years. Mingmar saw images of the mountain bathed in fire—a fire that would rid his home of the lowlanders and their heretical influence.

"A sign of the old god's strength will bring back their faith," he called to his monks. The Monks of the Burning Heart climbed the mountaintop and performed a ritual to stir the slumbering god Kisha. The ground thundered, and a colossal torrent of snow and ice avalanched down the face of Stone Dragon Mountain. The aftermath revealed a lost entrance into the mountain at the maw on its peak.

The Mikra are free of their mountain prison, but it is also their home. They raid the mountainside during the night but the harsh sun forces them to retreat back inside and shield their sensitive eyes.

The Sharwa want the Mikra to stop attacking them or leave the mountain, but are unwilling to confront them directly.

अपहरण ३

People of the Mountain

Sharwa

The Sharwa are a hearty and nomadic people who live on the mountainside in places most would find uninhabitable. Their skin is dark from years of exposure to the mountain sun, which not only beats down on them from above, but also reflects off the snow below.



depicting the Mikra

When the Sharwa speak of them, they say the Mikra are evil or unlucky spirits. In the Sharwa tongue, Mikra means “ice man” literally but connotatively it means a bogeyman. Legend holds that anyone who sees one will die in their sleep, so they instruct lowlanders to avert their eyes when confronting them.

Mikra wear arctic furs or crude rags. They stand stooped over, and have adapted to the darkness inside the mountain. Their dialect has drifted from the tongue of the Sharwa. Many changes have taken place, but they are still men and women.

को इरागन पहाड तरि यात्रा

Accustomed to traveling long distances, the Sharwa are well acquainted with lowlanders, who for years have come up the mountain for spiritual retreats, exploration, and trade rice, barley, metal, and crafts for rare pink salt.

Interactions with the lowlanders have also influenced their beliefs. Though pious, the mountain people practice a syncretic religion that blends the portents of their animistic gods as well as the immortal lords of the lowlanders. They are thankful to Rava the Morning Sun for bringing the light, and to Namakambhari the Salt Lakes for bringing them prosperity. They are also thankful to the Lords of Valor for granting them courage, and to the Lords of Terror for not visiting their homes.

Only 20 years ago, they still practiced the tradition of offering child sacrifices to the mountain, as they had been directed to by the monks in order to appease the god Rava. Though devout, they now consider that old practice barbaric and hope to forget the shameful time when they believed only a child’s heart would warm the mountain.

Mikra

Thought dead by their families, the Mikra are Sharwa children offered up as sacrifices and thrown into a great crevasse in Rava’s honor. For generations the Mikra have lived trapped inside the mountain, fueling the god Anala with their anger.

The rage and fury experienced by a sacrificed child allowed them to commune with Anala, the Burning Heart. Communing with their god, they became a priest of the Mikra, until another sacrifice was made to take their place.

One people, Three desires

Sharwa, the People of the Mountain

Devout to their gods but changed by exposure to lowland cultures, the Sharwa wish to maintain their improved lifestyle and appease the angered spirits.

At the start they are reluctant to act, as they fear upsetting the spirits further. They look to lowlanders to appease them, or drive the spirits from the mountain.

Leader: Jhala, first woman to deny the sacrifice.

Monks of the Burning Heart

The Sharwa monks wish to restore the old ways and be rid of lowlander influence. They may ask the adventurers to aid them in showing the Sharwa their folly, but may also sacrifice the adventurers to Kisha to enact a ritual of rebirth for Anala. If left unchecked by the adventurers, they will convince the Mikra to set the mountain ablaze.

Leader: Mingmar, abbot of the monks.

Mikra, Sacrifices to the Mountain

Generations of imprisonment have made the Mikra hateful of everyone outside the mountain. Their god Anala spurs on their anger and commands them to violence, though there are a few among them who wish for peace and want to be rejoined with their families.

Their first interactions with the players are likely to be hostile. However, the Mikra may ally with the players if they agree to wreak havoc on the Sharwa. If they are not stopped, the Mikra will go to war with everyone from the “outside” and claim both the mountain and the lowlands beneath it as theirs.

Leader: Tenzing, last sacrifice made to the mountain.

को इरागन पहाड तरि यात्रा

The Mikra encountered the Monks of the Burning Heart at the Maw, and though their first reaction was hostile, the sagacious Mingmar reminded them that it was not the monks, but their own parents that offered them to the mountain. He offered them vengeance upon their captors if the Mikra aided him in igniting the Burning Heart.

The last sacrifice was made 20 years ago, so most Mikra currently below were born inside the mountain, and have never before seen the world above. They have never seen daylight before. After generations of captivity they have a deep hatred for their jailors. Now free, they raid Sharwa settlements in the darkness of night.



Monks of the Burning Heart

The Monks of the Burning Heart shepherded the Sharwa, taking one child from them a year, and giving it to the mountain, emulating Rava's sacrifice of his son Anala. They observed the fall into the God's Wound and prayed for the spirits of those who died inside the mountain so their angry spirits would not rise to the surface.

What the monks knew but the layfolk did not was that the Mikra cast down into the mountain lived. It was not the child's life but the anger and hatred of the Mikra trapped below that stoked the heart of the dragon, and their anger that kept the mountain warm.

In ages past the monks were revered. Alms were sent and a great stupa was built for them. Child sacrifices were considered a sacred duty of Sharwa, and the monks were an esteemed order.

The monks have grown old and weary. They sense the time of frost is returning, and their time is ending. Some have given up the faith. Others were reduced to begging for alms.

Weeks ago, in anger and desperation, the monks cast a spell to break open the frozen maw at the top of the mountain, and now rally the Mikra to their side. With the proper rituals they will revive the dragon Kisha and burn all of the mountain people with the heat of a thousand suns, ridding it of the lowlanders below—an extreme measure to mature their dire circumstances and dauntless faith. Should this happen, the Age of Dusk would end in a fiery cataclysm.

Making Peace between the Mikra and the Sharwa

The Mikra are the children of the Sharwa, but both sides see the other as monsters. Even after the truth is revealed, perhaps even more so afterwards, the Mikra have generations of hate backing their beliefs, and the Sharwa are ashamed of their past.

Individual reconciliation is difficult but possible. Large-scale peace between the two peoples will not happen without intervention from the adventurers.

Lowlanders

Anyone not "of the mountain" is considered a lowlander by the Sharwa. This includes lowland residents such as Hoa Veit and Sampat, as well as any character that is not specifically from the mountain.

To the Sharwa this is not a disparaging term. They are fascinated by lowlander culture and technology. Many of the Sharwa travel down to the base of the mountain and further to trade their prized pink salt.

There is also a long-standing tradition of lowlanders coming up the mountain for spiritual journeys. It is common for a Sharwa guide to take groups up the mountain to pray at the monks' stupa, or to seek out magical hidden valleys. Due to the recent Mikra attacks, it has become less common.

The Sharwa are accustomed to lowlanders. Some of them speak a common tongue and many are equipped with trinkets and tools from other cultures.

Stock

Sharwa and lowlanders can be of any stock.

appendix 4

Quotes about Stone Dragon

"When the gods live among you, it is wise to guard your words and actions."

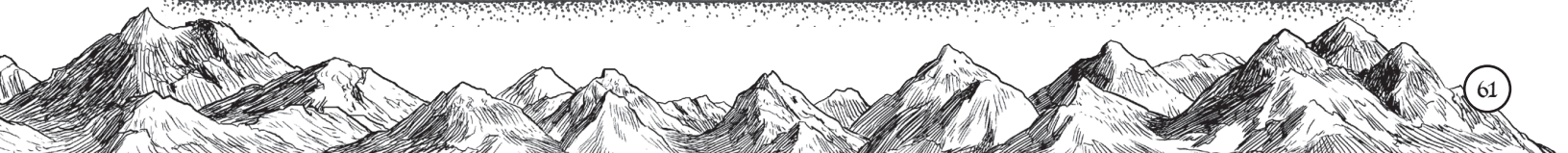
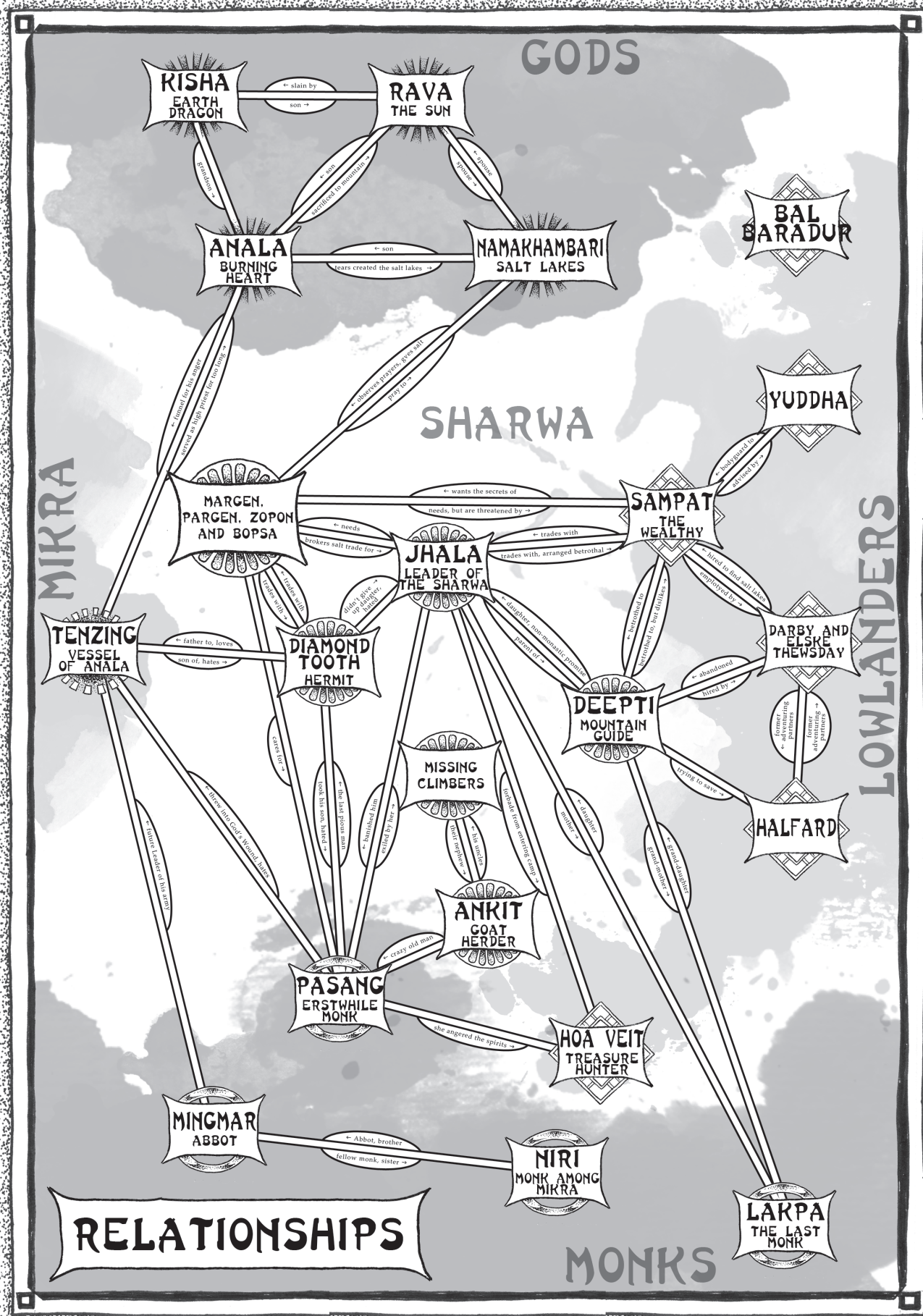
—Kalden, first Monk of the Burning Heart.

"From all around we heard the deafening crack and then felt the mountain shake, roaring with a furious thunder. When snow and ice finally stopped tumbling down, I saw for the first time in my life the peak of the mountain, the great maw of Kisha. She stirs once more."

—Paramesh, sandalwood merchant of Lahan.

"Just look at that mountain! Open for the first time in centuries. Just imagine what gold and jewels are hiding within it. I'll be damned by the Lords of Chaos if I'll let stories of angry spirits scare me off. I'm claiming those treasures before someone else beats me to it."

—Elske Thewsday, adventurer from Skogenby.



appendix 5

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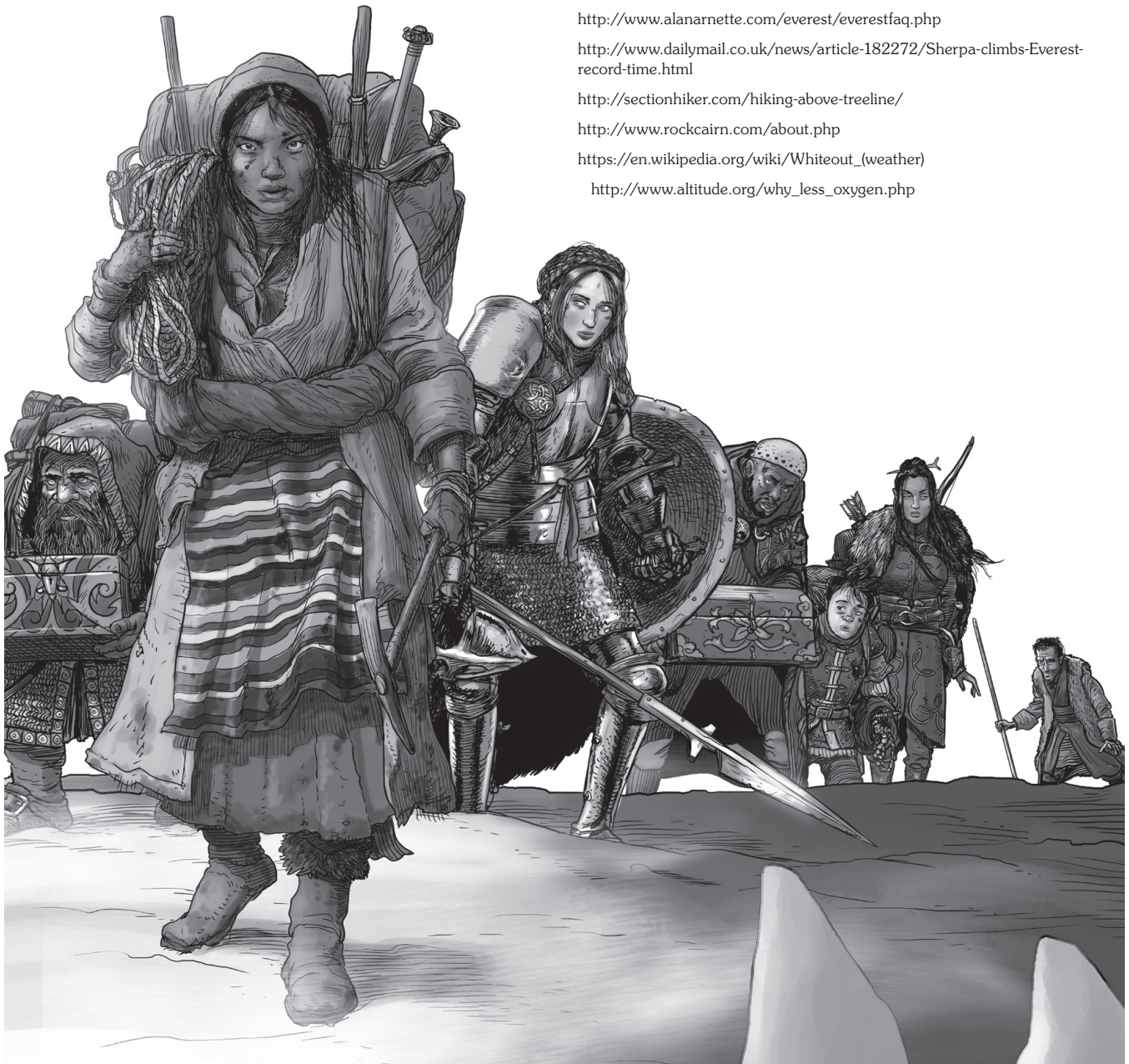
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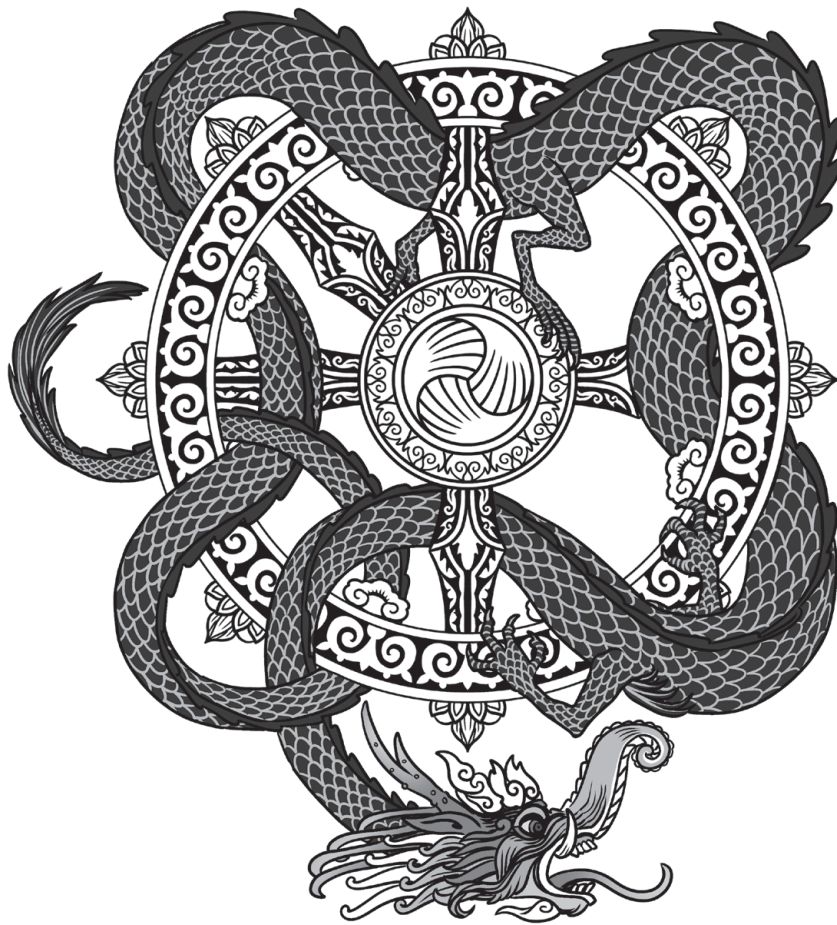
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Frozen Splendor

Deep inside the frozen Stone Dragon Mountain, an unearthly fire burns. It is stoked by generations of hatred for the local mountain dwellers, who try to forget their shameful history appeasing wrathful gods. Before the mountain erupts into violence and fire, a few ambitious explorers will have the opportunity to climb its frozen peaks, learn its secrets, and plunder its hoards.

Will that be you, brave adventurer? Or will the mountain consume you as it has so many others before?

Stone Dragon Mountain is an introductory Torchbearer campaign that explores the fantastic beauty and terrible danger of climbing expeditions, as well as the divide between generations who have turned on each other.

Stone Dragon Mountain includes:

- Three scenario chapters, each with its own locations, challenges, rewards, and complications.
- Three town locations on the mountain.
- Over 20 interconnected NPCs, with relationship map.
- Wilderness and dungeon exploration.
- Rules for creating local characters.
- New Duress mechanic for measuring fear and tension!

को ड्रगन पहाड तरि यात्राको ड्रगन पहाड तरि यात्रा



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There are many tales to be told, too many for even one bard to recount. Sagas are third-party supplementary products and adventures for the Torchbearer RPG that have been reviewed and approved by Burning Wheel Headquarters.

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