

SHADOW SWORD & SPELL

under
paṣhuvanaṁś
puṣhe

brouillard



under
pashevvanal's
puhe



Chicago & Toronto



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introduction

This book is meant to be used in conjunction with the **Shadow, Sword & Spell**. It is an adventure taking place in the Kingdom of Beidha. Before proceeding, keep in mind that nothing here is “official,” everything here is a suggestion. The descriptions of the kingdoms of Beidha and Nipur don’t overrule what has been established in *your* game. As explained in the Chapter Nine of **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Expert**, there should be no obsession over “Official History”. You may also notice the adventure does not conclude with a dramatic, world-changing event. The characters are able to make a difference; but only locally, not beyond the borders of Beidha.

Because Beidha and Nipur are based on cultures which may not be familiar to the reader, taking the “encyclopedic approach” was very tempting but had to be avoided. This book contains no more, and no less, than the equivalent information about The League of Merchants in **SS&S: Basic**. You should find enough here to ensure that your Beidha and Nipur aren’t simply relabeled versions of other places, but hopefully not so much as to constrict your creative experience.



Part I: ~~kingdoms~~ of jade and bronze

Beidha and Nipur

Both kingdoms came into being after the fall of a previous civilization simply referred to as *The Old Kingdoms*. The cause of its collapse differs depending on who is asked. One thing is certain: Beidhanids and Nipuans have common ancestors and a common cultural heritage.

The two kingdoms are at a late Bronze Age stage of development. While they know how to smelt and work iron, copper is found in much greater quantities and is the metal of choice. Their artisans are skilled enough that they will employ iron if there is no choice, but objects of bronze and brass are much more common.

Jade is another material with which Beidhanid artisans are proficient. A variety of luxury items are made of it, and the left-over chips it are often ground to dust and sold as an alchemical ingredient.

Because the adventure takes place in Beidha, Nipur is referred to only when necessary. Assume that most of the things applying to Beidha also apply to Nipur... or not. What is mentioned in Chapter Nine of **Shadow Sword & Spell: Expert** remains valid and sufficient for this adventure.

The Land

The kingdom of Beidha is located between Nipur and Nogoton, north of the Southern Sea. Most of it is covered by a thick jungle called “Pashuvanam”, meaning “Jungle of Beasts.”

The jungle deserves its name. Fierce monsters and animals plague Beidhanids and Nipuans alike, sometimes destroying entire villages. Over the last few centuries, most of the dangerous creatures have been driven away from major settlements and main roads, giving the inhabitants a sense of security. Still, stories of unspeakable horrors lurking in the jungle’s depth persist—and are regularly proven true.

Beidha is divided in three distinctive regions: Coastal, Central and North-Eastern. Each region is further divided in several small provinces, called *Sabah*.



The Coastal region is dotted with fishing villages. It is usually warm and subject to frequent rain, including a Summer-end rainy season.

Inland is the Central region, dominated by the Pashuvanam jungle, which enjoys a climate similar to the Coastal region.

The North-Eastern region is a long strip of rolling hills bordering the Nergal's Fingers mountain range, kept cool and dry by the winds coming off the mountains. The hills experience some snowfall about one winter in three. Of the three regions it is the smallest and most sparsely populated, and the predominant industry is goat and sheep herding.

The three main rivers watering the kingdom all come from the snows of Nergal's Fingers. Beidha shares the *Anjali* (The Offering) and the *Girisha* (Lord of the Mountain) with Nipur, their western rival. The third river, the *Lavanya* (Sublime Grace) flows only through Beidha and most of its population depends on it.

The frequent rains and the mountain snows create dozens of lesser rivers that either connect to one of the three major rivers, or flow individually to the Southern Sea.

Major Settlements

Yash

Beidha's largest city is located at the mouth of the Lavanya, near the Southern Sea. Yash is built on an island in the middle of the Lavanya, with suburbs on both banks. The island shields a natural harbor and is Beidha's sole commercial port. Yash is often the first place a foreigner visits.

Kanta

Though Kanta is the capital of the kingdom, it is only the second largest city. The Maharajah has a vast, palatial estate there. Kanta is some 40 miles north of Yash, on the western bank of the Lavanya. Long ago, Kanta was favored as capital over Kunala because the latter was deemed too close to the border with Nipur.



Kunala

Kunala is often called “The Lotus City”, due to the lotus plants that grow profusely in its lakes and artificial basins. Kunala is located near a slope where many rivers meet the Girisha, several miles from the border with Nipur. Despite its poetic beauty, Kunala is reputed to hide assassins and Nipuan agitators. Kunala is one of the two major cities with a defensive wall (the other being Prasanna). Its wall runs at the base of the slope, to prevent siege machines from approaching. The Girisha, the Pashuvanam and other geographical obstacles are expected to slow invaders.

Manjumina

The fourth largest city it is famous not only for its production of silks, but dyes and spices as well. Despite its high production output, Manjumina is the poorest of all five major Beidhan cities. Crime, corruption, and bad local government are all to blame. Many of its people have sought consolation in Tiger Tooth Lotus, a narcotic flower also employed in Manjumina’s perfume and dye industries.

Prasanna

The northernmost settlement, Prasanna was originally built as a fort during the days of the Old Kingdoms.

It was restored by the current dynasty of the Jade Maharajahs and expanded into a fortified town.

In theory, the garrison of Prasanna is there to discourage Nipuan incursions through the Pashuvanam. In practice, however, it mostly deals with the creatures that emerge from the jungle.

Fortress of Padma

There are many other fortresses in Beidha, but Padma is the keystone against the anticipated Nipuan attack. Workers and slaves are continually working to improve its already-impressive walls and the land around them.

Naval Base of Jaya

The port is a vital part of Beidha’s survival, as it keeps Nipuan warships from landing with impunity. Jaya includes a small fort built on a tiny island some 500 hundred yards off the coast. The way between the two is closed by a low stone bridge, with the port’s wharves jutting from both sides.



The Azure Sea

Nergal's Fingers Mountain Range

Anjali River

Lavanya River

Prasanna

Griha River

Pashuvanam
Jungle

Mangulunda

Kunda

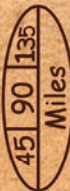
Pachid

Kanta

Yash

Jaya

Cutha



nipur & beidha

The Southern Sea

The Kestiam

Beidha is a society built on a caste system known as *Kestiam*. The Kestiam details the roles of each caste, their rules, and mobility between them. The Kestiam also contains the basic laws of society and how they apply to each caste.

Children are born to the same caste as their father. A woman marrying a man from a higher caste does not change caste, but enhances her parent's prestige within their own caste. Children born from an unknown father, or of one not recognizing his paternity, inherit the caste of their mother.

Foreigners are accepted as their equivalent within their own society – a foreign warrior, for instance, is accepted as a Kshatriya. It is considered quite offensive to provide false information about one's occupation to enhance one's caste; liars, if discovered, are publicly declared *Javit*.

Technically, the Kestiam is fairly rigid. It doesn't allow even the Maharajah to meddle directly in the affairs of a different caste.

Centuries of concessions from all sides have somewhat softened interpretation of the Kestiam. Economics blur the lines between those at the top or the bottom of their own caste.



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Kshatriya

This is the caste of warriors, rulers and their immediate family members. It is considered to be the most prestigious caste. While Kshatriyas are the theoretical top of the caste system, wealthy members of other castes may be able to control poorer Kshatriyas monetarily. The drawback of being warrior or noble is that all within this caste must answer the Maharajah's call to arms.

Athavan

The Athavan caste consists mostly of priests, mages, and scholars. They are the most educated people in the kingdom, and seek an understanding of nature, the world and its people. Depending on their field of specialization (religion, science, magic, etc), some Athavans may find themselves working closely with people of other castes. There is normally no such relationships between other castes.

Vastiya

The Vastiyans are Beidha's merchants. They do not produce much, but ensure goods are distributed. They expect to make a profit in the process. Vastiyans are the caste most encountered outside of Beidha, as they have the most to gain from foreign relationships.

Huiti

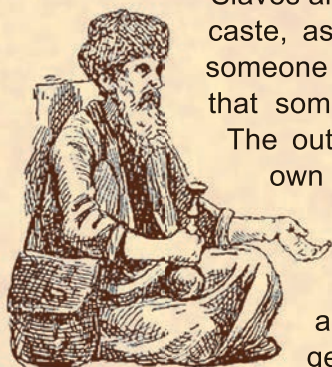
The Huitis are artists, artisans, and entertainers (including prostitutes). Because of the nature of their work, they often have dealings with Vastiyans. Vastiyans practice patronage, sponsoring Huitis to perfect their art, in exchange for exclusive access over what they produce.

Perhaps as a side effect of the kingdom's expertise with alchemy, Beidhanid artisans excel at making perfumes, dyes, adhesives and the like.

Javit

Finally there are those who don't quite fit in the ideal Beidhanid society, the Javit. The caste is comprised of outcasts, beggars, branded criminals, and slaves. Javits are allowed to interact with other castes, but they are not protected by the law, though they are still subject to it.





Slaves are perhaps the most privileged of this caste, as they have the protection of being someone else's property; unless, of course, that someone happens to be a Javit also.

The outcasts have to rely entirely on their own fortune or virtues to find their place in society. While they are officially not part of the Beidhanid society, they find a place for themselves according to what they have, or can get away with.

Government

By the Kestiam, the Kshatriya governs the other castes. The government is a monarchy (ruled by the Maharajah) supported by an array of lesser lords (Rajahs and Nawabs). Their mandate is to enforce the laws of the Kestiam, defend the people, and wage war.

Diplomats and administrators are drawn from the appropriate caste, depending on the situation or the nature of the work. If the kingdom wishes to negotiate a trade treaty with a foreign power, then an educated Vastiyen is sent. If a river needs a new dam, Huitis supervise and conduct the work. The judicial system is handled by Athavans.



16 When someone has to deal with issues normally handled by another caste, they petition their lord. The lord then commissions a specialist of the appropriate caste to work on the problem or join the team already on it.

Economy and Trade

The economy of Beidha is a *laissez-faire*. Trends are allowed to take their course, there are few regulations or taxes, and no market controls. This leaves Vastiyans free to prey on and exploit any and all in the pursuit of profit. The only encouraged intervention concerns the creation, distribution, and use of narcotics for non-medicinal purposes. The Kestiam outlaws such drugs, and the Kshatriya enforce it as much as they can.

Because the Kestiam doesn't apply outside of Beidha, ingredients for narcotics are usually exported to other countries, where Vastiyans-owned companies refine them for distribution. The system cannot prevent drugs making the trip back along with the profits from foreign markets.

This *laissez-faire* attitude has been somewhat countered by several guilds, who compile statistics to predict future scarcities. It is not uncommon for Vastiyans and Huitis to consult these guilds and adjust their production accordingly. This study of production, output and future prediction of market trends, has occasionally brought ruin due to unforeseen variables—like a freak storm wiping out crops and creating unpredicted demand.



The Coastal region is much richer and boasts a higher population than the other two regions. The Lavanya River and its lesser tributaries irrigate large areas dedicated to plantations of rice, sorghum and millet. The Southern Sea supports numerous villages of fishermen and pearl divers. These villages benefit from Beidha's main road linking Yash to Nipur's capital; Cutha. This road was built when the two kingdoms were on much better terms. Since the deterioration of diplomacy between the two countries, the Maharajah has not maintained it.



In the hills of the North-Eastern region, immense pastures support herds of goats and sheep. A few areas of this region are rich in minerals and sustain villages near profitable mines. It also supports a small but prosperous glassware industry.

The kingdom's exports are textiles (mainly silks and wools), spices (such as pepper and cinnamon), and lacquered porcelains. Most is sent to Cal'Athar, which is Beidha's main trading partner. Many Vastiyans are trying to open trade routes with Cathar, to depend less on Cal'Athar to buy their goods. Nogoton, although politically friendly, is a commercial rival for many of the wares Beidha produces.

A Glance at the Beidhanid-Nipuan War

Beidha is a nation born from the destruction of the Old Kingdoms. It is no mystery that its architecture, culture, art and traditions are descended from this earlier civilization.

The study of history is not one of Beidha's main concerns. The present conflict with the Nipuan is a much more pressing concern. While the fortunes of war have shifted back and forth regularly, the last few years have not been so kind to Beidha's regiments. Even the elite elephantries (war elephants), have failed to deliver any significant victory as of late.

With alarming reports of Nipuan troops massing, the Maharajah has followed the advice of many Nawabs and adopted a defensive strategy. Numerous wooden forts have been erected along the border, and the fortifications of Kunala, Manjumina and Padma are undergoing major improvements.

One front of this war that seems to be going well for Beidha is on the Southern Sea. The naval base of Jaya has managed to keep the merchant vessels of Yash and the fishermen of the Coastal Region safe.



A disease called the *Pale ShriII* has recently appeared in Beidha. It is believed to be the latest attempt by Nipuan plague-priests to weaken Beidha. The disease takes months to ravage the body and mind of its victims. Though some have

recovered, there is no recognized cure at the moment. The sickness causes an intense fever, which can lead to hallucination. The victim's hair turns white in the first month, and the victim goes progressively blind.



Culture

The Kestiam, the centerpiece of Beidhanid culture, is a powerful mechanism for preserving traditions. It maintains their purposes and explores their origins. Upholding tradition is not only encouraged, but is seen as a sign of prosperity within one's caste.

The Kestiam is not found in any book. It is carved directly into the stones of the Temple of Shashi and the incised text filled with brass. A class of Athavan priests learn the text, sometimes specializing in certain areas. They travel the country, serving as judges and arbitrators. If a conflict persists, or if priests differ in their understanding of the Kestiam, then all parties involved make a pilgrimage to the Temple of Shashi. There, the original text is consulted and the matter resolved. When a priest acknowledges the need for a pilgrimage, all parties are released from their normal duties and obligations in order to carry it out.

The door to changing traditions, and the integration of those from other cultures, is always open. Most of the time, the changes are made with the passing of generations. When new practices are introduced the old sutras are not obscured, but are left in place for future reference, with the new sutras are carved into the stone. It is possible for old traditions to come back simply because a situation similar to a past one develops. The old sutras gain new relevance, and the tradition is practiced again.



The consensus on what applies, and what has been replaced, is entirely regional and set by common recognition. The Athavan priests influence and publicize reforms but this usually requires many years to reach the most remote areas.

Magic is not seen as “belonging” to a specific caste, though those who study it are usually Athavans. If a non-Athavan is known to have achieved mastery without access to the academies, he may be invited to become an Athavan and receive a new status according to his talents. Athavans are urged to be selfless in their practice of magic.

A powerful symbol of the Beidhanid culture is the Kavidhi; a chariot wheel with eight spokes, representing life, death and change. It is also a mark of ownership found on important documents, house gates and worked into some personal crests. The Kavidhi symbol is directly derived from the Revadhi, an ancient rune of ill omen, representing a 12-spoke iron wheel in the sacred geometry of the Old Kingdoms. The two carry very different meanings and confusing them is one of the greatest insults. Making or drawing a Revadhi is a powerful curse; it serves no other function in Beidhanid culture.

Gods and Cults

Beidha is home to several beliefs, religions and cults. Dozens of gods are revered and some have several different cults. Furthermore, many gods do not ask for exclusivity of worship, meaning the majority of Beidhanids pray to several gods and may belong to many churches. According to Beidhanids, gods are not necessarily *good* or *evil*; they are simply *necessary*, even if unpleasant.

Nipuan, on the other hand, are not so free to worship whom or what they please. The overwhelming presence of the Church of Nergal has forced all other organized cults to remain small and very secretive. No Nipuan would dare speak against the Church or even its priests. Doing so is a combination of heresy and treason against the king himself, the latest reincarnation of Nergal.

Guesh

The single-tusked, feathered, white elephant god is said to live in the mountains at the headwaters of the Girisha River. Guesh is revered as a bringer of life and higher justice. Outsiders usually consider Guesh to be a false god, a myth created long ago to explain natural events such as earthquakes and the monsoon.

White elephants are believed to be the eyes of Guesh. For this reason, whenever one is found it is brought to the Maharajah to be kept on his estate.



Kavni

While not considered a god, Kavni is nonetheless revered by many. Kavni is a bringer of good luck as well as a symbol of bravery and cunning.

When Seth delivered the final blow to Qu'Tangles, the latter fell down and caused many tremors. Shaken by the fall, the great jade egg Qu'Tangles had saved for his next meal rolled down next to him. Knowing this was his last moment, Qu'Tangles breathed his remaining life onto the egg. The egg hatched and out of it flew a golden crane. Seth tried for years to catch the bird but each time he was outmaneuvered.

Kavni eventually sought Guesh for protection. The two became friends and Kavni serves him as his messenger to other gods (except for Seth). Unsurprisingly, Kavni is represented as a gold or bronze crane, sometimes next to a broken jade eggshell.

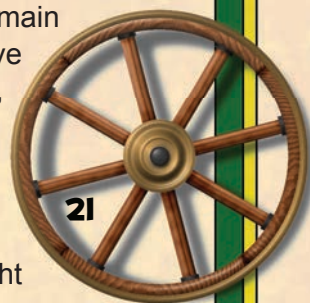
Nergal

The followers of Nergal are not the most popular people in Beidha. Most worship of Nergal comes from those imploring the god's mercy to cure an illness. Organized churches are closely watched by the authorities. Those wishing to remain publicly active must proclaim that they do not believe that the king of Nipur is a divine incarnation. Still, these measures have only limited success against those tending underground secret shrines.

Prabhu

The traveling god Prabhu is said to have taught medicine, music, dancing, and wine to mortals. No one knows for sure where Prabhu is from, or where he fits in with the other gods, but many are thankful for what he did. Whenever there is a marriage or a festival an extra place is symbolically set for Prabhu, in case he decides to attend.

According to his priests, Prabhu travels the world, the sky and seas in the company of monkeys. The golden bird Kavni is the only one able to find him. Prabhu is pictured as a blue-skinned man with a third arm on his left side, carrying a shepherd's crook, a magic flute at his belt. Prabhu's monkeys are the objects of many stories in Beidhanid folklore.



Randra

The deity known as Randra is actually Nyarlathotep. In Beidha, Nyarlathotep/Randra is seen as a goddess and worshiped for her powers of luck and seduction, discarding the malicious parts elsewhere attributed to Nyarlathotep.

Riya

Riya is the name by which many Beidhanids know Mulciber. Later introductions of Mulciber worship have resulted in more churches and slightly different doctrines. These multiple presences are accepted by some and adamantly condemned by others.

Riya is a goddess who plucked one of Guesh's tusks, thus taking some of his power. With it, Riya dishes out her own form of cruel justice on mortals. She is often depicted as a woman lying on her side on a storm cloud, a flame in one hand and the precious tusk next to her.

Seth

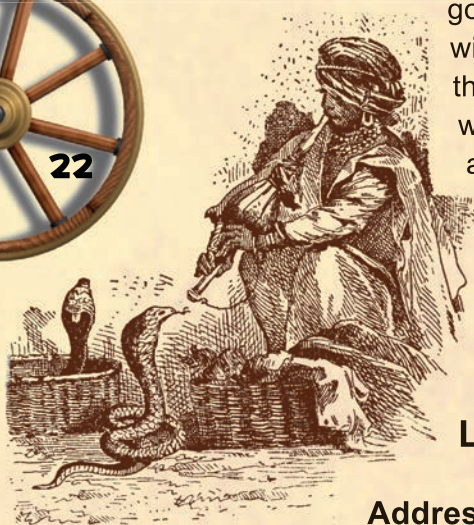
The followers of Seth are numerous in Beidha, but they do not tend to meddle in the affairs of others. Many seek the secret to immortality that Seth discovered before becoming a

god, hoping the snake deity will reveal something to them. Unsurprisingly, many worshippers are skilled alchemists who once studied at the University of Kanta. Unable to advance further in their science, they turned to Seth for guidance.

Local Customs

Addressing Others

When speaking to a superior, it is custom to call him *Sahib* (Sir). If the social difference is considered great, then the title *Rai* (Lord) is used instead. Interpretation over what is a "great" difference can lead to insult.



If the party wishes to make a good impression on an NPC of higher status, using the appropriate title (*Sahib* or *Rai*) improves their standing in the NPC's eyes, increasing the Situational Modifier by two levels should they wish to change this NPC's attitude. Characters must regularly use the title in conversation, though. Merely mentioning it once during the initial contact is not enough.

Tiger Tooth Lotus

Tiger Tooth Lotus is shaped like any other lotus, but its white petals are much thicker and tipped with red.

Tiger Tooth Lotus is an ingredient used in many perfumes and dyes. It is also enjoyed for its other chemical properties: the petals, when placed on the tongue, slowly release a soothing substance causing euphoria, hallucinations and induces sleep.

Chronic use doesn't create physical addiction, but it keeps people away from their work, their family, and their life in general. Manjumina, because of its perfume and dye industries, has a serious problem with the drug. Effects of prolonged use include drowsiness, muscular weakness and a lack of coordination. Heavy users also tend to lose sensitivity to pain.

Alchemists use the petals as a thickening agent to make gels, and healers employ them as an anesthetic. Interrogators administer it to their captives to make them easier to break.

When a petal is consumed it reduces the subject's Brawn, Quickness and Will by one point. It also inflicts 2d12 points of damage to Resolve, but increases Toughness by one. The effects of a petal last for roughly two hours. Multiple doses do not stack in effect, but do in duration.

Type: Control

Addiction: 5

The Perdition of Soma

Soma is a legendary substance said to increase awareness when drunk mixed with milk. Unfortunately, knowledge of its ingredients has been lost for ages. The Kestiam has laws treating specifically with soma, suggesting that its use was at commonplace at some point in the distant past.



The Kestiam is clear about the dangers of taking soma in great quantities. Just as a little seems to sharpen the mind and enhance one's wisdom, too much destroys the ability to make decisions.

Alternate Addiction Rules

To determine whether or not using a drug has led to an addiction, you can use this alternative rule. Call for a Will Ability Test. Apply a -1 Situation Modifier for every 2 points of the drug's Addiction rating. If multiple doses are taken, have the character make separate Ability Tests for each dose.

The Chalahata

An ancient tradition not often mentioned, many would like it removed from the sutras on the temple of Shashi. Chalahata is a publicly declared feud; a vow to destroy someone. The Chalahatite may also declare his intention to kill the target's family, friends, associates, and neighbors. Pledging Chalahata is not done lightly. Only death (or suicide) stops a Chalahatite.

When a person declares Chalahata, he has a week to give up everything except a set of clothes, a red turban (the symbol of his the pledge), a pair of sandals, and a weapon. At the end of the week the Chalahatite is not hindered by authorities, but neither can he count on anyone's protection. The target usually uses that week to flee, or to have the Chalahatite killed.

The Chalahata may reveal new enemies to the target. Family, friends or associates may deliver the target to the Chalahatite, hoping that the latter will commit suicide after the kill. A Chalahatite known for his martial or magical prowess has more chance of being presented such proposals during his week of preparation.



This powerful pledge of vengeance is open to members of all castes save for the Javit. Because Javits are not protected by laws, their wish for vengeance is not respected.

Dealing Death

The evolution of Beidha's martial culture is heavily influenced by the climate and mineral resources of the Kingdom. High population, the damp climate, and the thickness of the Pashuvanam are key factors against the use of armor. With armies several times the size of other nations', armoring everyone would be a logistical nightmare. Only war elephants and top officers receive leather and brass armor for protection. Common soldiers usually fight bare-chested.



Beidhanid weaponry focuses on individual agility and striking first as the principal means of defense. Weapons and tactics have followed this philosophy. Speed, deception, and acrobatic maneuvers are trademarks of the Beidhanid fighting style. Poisoned weapons are a widespread and practical means of ensuring one's survival.

Weapons

Beidhanids have many weapons similar to those found in the League of Merchants. Slight variations in shapes or names mean little—a short sword remains a short sword. There is a clear preference for clubs, daggers, maces, short swords, short bows, javelins, slings and spears.



A few of their weapons are rather unique and aren't included within the charts on pages 42 and 43 of **SS&S: Basic**. The **SS&S: Expert** book introduce some of these exotic weapons, namely the *Ahir*, *Kris* and *Tulwar*, featured on pages 23, 24 and 25. Here are three more weapons originating from Beidha and Nipur:

Kattari

Better known under its anglicized name *katar*, this punching dagger is one of the trademark weapons of Beidhanid culture. A kattari penetrates deeply and penetrates any type of conventional armor. While more powerful than regular daggers, it cannot be thrown.

A rare variant of this weapon is the *kattari kachi* or “scissor kattari”. A narrow blade is concealed inside a split larger one. When the wielder squeezes the grip, the larger blade opens like a scissors, revealing the small blade in the middle. It is used to parry incoming attacks or to deal trident-like wounds to unarmored opponents. Because the mechanism requires steel, it is quite expensive.

Chakram

A notorious weapon used in both Beidha and Nipur, chakrams are thin metal rings sharpened on the outer edge. Chakrams come in all sizes, from a few inches in diameter to as much as three feet. They are used in close combat, thrown at enemies, or worn as armguards. It is not uncommon to see warriors wearing stacks of chakram around their neck and arms, and resting on their turban.

There are several ways of throwing a chakram but the most interesting techniques is to spin it overhead with the index finger or a short pole, then release it with a flick to send it flying.

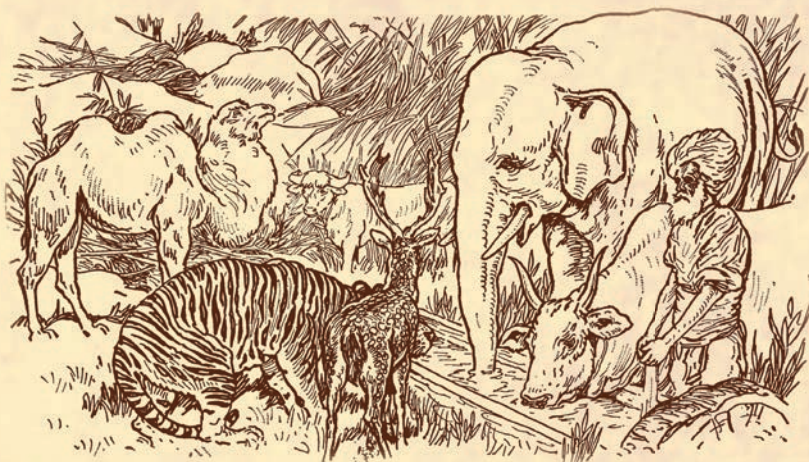
Shuckra

The shuckra is an unusual weapon; it can be used as a flail or a pick. It is essentially a metal tube with a leather string running through it. When the string is pulled, it brings all parts of the tube together, stacking them together to form a pick.

Overall the Shuckra is not a powerful weapon, but it is versatile and easily concealed. The most common way of fighting with one is to coil the flail around an opponent’s ankle, bring him down with a sharp pull, then pull the string and close in for the kill with the pick. The flail can also remove the Shield bonus normally given to Defend tests.



Weapons						
Type	DV	Min	Range	RoF	Size	Cost
Kattari	4(40)	-	-	-	1H	15 SC
Kattari kachi	4(35)	-	-	-	1H	40 SC
Chakram	3(30)	-	10/30/70	2/1	1H	5 SC
Shuckra (whip)	2(20)	-	-	-	1H	25 SC
Shuckra (pick)	2(35)	-	-	-	2H	25 SC



Toxins

Alchemy is a popular science in Beidha. That, coupled with the hundreds of natural toxins produced by the plants and animals found in the jungle, has greatly popularized the use of poisons in the region. Hunters and outdoorsmen know the use of each tree sap, frog, or slug secretion. What is good for hunting is generally also good for warfare, so collecting toxins and coating a weapon with them is as common and accepted as “picking berries in the woods”.

The characters may not expect it at first, but should they get into a fight during the course of the adventure, they will realize just how widespread the practice of poisoning a blade is. Most warriors treat their weapons with a Rank 1 or Rank 2 Alchemical poison (see **SS&S Basic**, chapter 6 for details). The poisons are administered on the first strike which causes damage. Scripted encounters always specify if poison is used and of what Rank.



Use of Toxins in the Adventure

Gamemasters can provide hints to the popularity of poisoning weapons when the characters enter the city of Yash, join Bashar's caravan or go on a tiger hunt with Firanjee. In Yash, the party notices snake-handlers selling venom; on joining the caravan they may notice all the scouts rubbing their blades against the same tree; and again before going on the hunt.

Part II: ~~adventure~~

How to Run This Adventure

This adventure is designed to accommodate characters created via the rules found in **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Basic**. Gamemasters who have allowed more experienced characters from **Shadow, Sword & Spell: Expert**, could have the characters influence the balance of power between Beidha and Nipur. A few locations and events have been designed for them, but they would not otherwise receive much challenge from the main adventure. Refer to **Part III: Experienced Characters** for adventure seeds for more experienced characters.

It will be difficult for the characters to be at every event, but as the flow chart on the next page illustrates, there is more than one way to complete this adventure.

Time and Events

In-game time is not important for this adventure; it may take as little as a few days to a month to arrive at a conclusion.

Characters interested in a side path should be allowed to take it. When they're done, resume the main adventure where they left off. The *sequence* of the events, rather than how much time separates them, is important. If the characters go through 2 days of events in one location, go elsewhere for 5 days, then return, they will still be on "day 3" of the first location.



Experienced characters might be tempted to resolve issues they encounter the same way lesser-experienced characters would. If this happens, explain to them that their victories are hollow and only short-term solutions. Players, being players, might still do what they want to, only to find themselves failing to resolve the higher issues.

Because there is no set ending for the more experienced adventure seeds, gamemasters are free to devise the consequences of their "failure".

City of
प्राज्ञे

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Bashar's

Caravan

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

City of

लान्जुल्लोना

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

City of

रुनाला

Day 1

Village of

रक्षेत्रा

Day 1

Ruins of

टोरा

Day 1

Lurking Threats

Beidha is a dangerous place; cities and the Pashuvanam jungle have their own ways to complicate an adventurer's life. The adventure presented here contains a few set encounters, but for the most part it is up to the Gamemaster to decide if the given situation warrants an encounter or not. Spring them on the players whenever it is convenient to the pace of your game.

Rumors are provided in each section, giving the players options as well as hints on what to do. Rumors are useful for introducing notorious creatures haunting certain parts of the jungle. Players might forget the rumor, but later when encountering the creature, they may struggle to remember exactly what the rumor said.

Introductions

Less-experienced characters enter Beidha through its port in the city of Yash, arriving on a ship early in the day. The reasons for going to Beidha vary; here are a few suggestions:

1. The party was traveling at sea when the ship was damaged by a storm. The nearest friendly port was the harbor of Yash.

The repairs will take some time, during which the party has little else to do but explore the surrounding area.

2. The characters were tricked into buying passage aboard what turned out to be a slave galley. Captured while the ship was at sea, they were slated to be sold in Beidha as slaves. Fortunately, the slaves managed to overthrow their captors and take control of the ship just a few hours before sailing into Yash's harbor.

3. Returning from some other adventure, the party learns that they must collect their reward in Beidha. Their contact is waiting for them in the city of Yash and suggests they explore the country.

4. As mercenaries, the characters learn about Beidha's increasingly desperate attempts to assemble a fighting force capable of resisting Nipur's pending invasion. The shortage of skilled warriors has driven up the prices mercenaries charge for their services. The party has joined other opportunistic sellswords to split the travel costs to get there.



The city of Yash is the first day of the adventure. If the characters enter Beidha by land instead of by sea, just wait until they reach Yash to start the events of Day One.

If this is the character's first time in Beidha, it may be a good idea for them to learn about the Kestiam and determine to which caste they belong while in the country. This affects how people react to them, as well as giving the players an understanding of those reactions.

Location A: The City of Yash

Beidha's largest city is always buzzing with activity, regardless of the time of day. Many citizens follow cults that require of them to pray at specific hours of the night; commerce and industry do not slow for night, and business is conducted at all hours. Teashops and restaurants are open all day and most of the night.

Yash's streets do not follow any logic in their direction or width; intersections are many and sometimes difficult to traverse. Animals are present everywhere, adding to the overall smell of the city. It is not rare to see a Yashim herding animals such as camels, goats, elephants or donkeys to or from the public market. Many raise chickens or rabbits in their communal backyards, adding even more to the sounds and scents of the city.



Yash is saved from becoming a putrid cesspool by the paved streets, cistern-fed water fountains, and a well-designed sewer system. Over the past centuries the sewers have collected so much filth that a patch of mud called "the sludge" has formed east of the harbor where they empty into the sea. Yash's system of public lighting is fueled by the gases emanating from the sewers, through thick brass pipes capped with covered lamps.

Because the local clay quarries produce white clay, buildings are built of white bricks, which are then plastered over. Dirt and moisture quickly turn everything to an ash-brown color.

रिहाना तक्षशीतक्षी व तक्षशीतक्षी



- A. Palace of Jade
- B. University of Kanta
- C. House of the Tiger Guards
- D. Grand Temple of Guesh
- E. Royal Mausolum
- F. Lair of the Boar of Vapul

तक्षशी व तक्षशी



- A. Harbor
- B. Temple of Shashi
- C. The Sludge
- D. Governor's Palace
- E. Bashar's Camp
- F. Thousand Stride Bridge

Points of Interest

Harbor

Yash's harbor is a busy place. Ships from as far as Cathar sail to the docks. Dockhands using counterweighted cranes busily load and unload ships day and night. Numerous crates and barrels crowd the docks, travelers from distant lands push their ways through the crowd, and rows of shackled slaves are herded to the public markets.

Looking east, a bank of mud and waste pours out of the sewers. A few brave Yashims circle "the Sludge" in canoes, poking at it with long poles, hoping to find something of value.

The Temple of Shashi

The temple stands in the middle of a grand plaza some distance from the harbor. It is made from stones carried over a great distance and their color contrasts with the dominant ash-brown plaster of every other building. Every available surface of the temple is covered with brass-filled carvings of the faith's sutras, the *Kestiam*.

The temple is a multi-level, three-sided pyramid with a covered walkway extending from each side. Torch holders and incense burners are fixed at regular intervals along the walkways.

Unsurprisingly, there are many Athavan in the area. Some consult the sutras, while others resolve disputes. An area has even been reserved to administer justice and execute death penalties—on the spot, if need be.



Bashar's Camp

The camp consists of several large circular tents. Each tent has an opening in the center of the roof to allow fire smoke to escape. Amongst the tents are an equal number of six-wheeled carts which are pulled by the water buffalos, zebu, and other cattle grazing some distance away.

There are two types of carts; some are simply big closed boxes on wheels for hauling cargo, the others are small habitations on wheels, with a door, a few windows and a copper chimney. There is enough room inside for four hammocks, a small table, and personal items. There are about 30 caravaneers in the camp, and three times that number of "passenger-clients".

Rumors

1. Marauding Nipuans have eluded the scouts patrolling the border (true). There is a Zealot of Nergal among them, feeding on the flesh of his victims (false).
2. There is an outbreak of Pale ShriII somewhere north of Kunala (false). The disease was introduced in Beidha two or three years ago by Nipuans (true). Nipuans themselves have been infected (true).
3. The Temple of Shashi is not the first to bear the name. An earlier and much smaller temple is located in the *Sabah* (province) of Cira (true).

Day 1

The players are required to go to the Temple of Shashi to be assigned a caste. While this caste assignment may seem frivolous to outsiders, Beidhanids insist on it. Those not assigned a caste are assumed to be Javit, and find that their time in Beidha difficult: travel is restricted, their dealings with merchants and innkeepers are next to impossible, and the majority of services are out of reach. The Temple of Shashi is conveniently located less than a mile away from the harbor.



Once at the temple, a young Athavan priestess waiting in the plaza welcomes the party. The priestess recently had her head shaved and she wears the purple toga of an initiate. Her job is to direct visitors to a priest who can help them. When she sees the party approaching, she accurately assumes they're here to receive a caste. She points to an older priest who is copying a section of an exterior wall, indicating that they should see him for their caste assignment.

The old priest, noticing the characters' approach, puts his pen down on a nearby lectern. He welcomes them to Beidha and inquires about each party member's origin. He invites everyone to sit on circular woven straw mats.

He introduces himself as "Athavan Mokhu Onand, keeper of the sacred text." He then asks each character about their birth, parents, and occupation, and tells them to which caste they belong in Beidhanid society. The entire meeting shouldn't take more than ten minutes.

Special Note

It is important to note which character uses the title “Sahib” when speaking with Onand (see Local Customs, page 22). Onand is no ordinary man; he has close ties to the fortunes and divinities of Beidha. The exchange with him will influence if the Kavidhi, the Wheel of Fate, turns in their favor later, when they need to resist a takeover of their mind.

If the players have not had this custom explained before the adventure begins, you can use Onand to inform them of this custom, and see who employs the title for the remainder of the encounter with him.

In addition, ask the players to make an Investigation Skill Test with a +2 modifier. Success allows their characters to notice that Onand wears a small copper medallion in the shape of a bird. With a critical success, they will have noticed that other priests in these parts are frugal about jewelry. If asked about it, Onand says that he received it from a friend.



Mokhu Onand



Onand is able to answer any questions related to Beidhanid society. Right after Onand finishes the caste assignment and answered questions, but before the party has a chance to get up, a man bearing a curved knife, wearing a white tunic and a red turban approaches Onand. The man addresses Onand, ignoring any non-violent reactions from the party. Visibly angry, the man, asks Onand if: "Jirhan is still hiding around here somewhere". Onand motions to the party to refrain from intervening as he reluctantly answers the man that: "Jirhan left for Manjumina". Once he has his answer, the man leaves.

If the party is curious as to what just happened and asks Onand about the red turban man, Onand tells them the man is Amar Kaviprakash. The red turban indicates that he is now a *Chahalatite*. Onand rises and bids the party to follow him. He brings them to another section of the temple in order to show them sutras explaining what the *Chahalata* is. He explains this tradition if they are willing to listen (see the Local Customs, page 24 about the Chahalata).

Though no one is allowed to interfere with Amar's plan of vengeance, warning his good friend Jirhan that a Chahalatite is after him *is* allowed. Onand will ask the party for their help. He wants to know why someone would give up everything to make Jirhan suffer. Onand believes the characters, being in better health than he, and faster than regular messengers, could seek Jirhan in Manjumina. More importantly, being strangers they give Amar no motive to extend his vengeance to them. Onand mentions that he is bound by tradition to reward the party with one boon of equal importance. Tradition states that the importance of the favor has to reflect the amount of hardship the party goes through to fulfill the request.



The characters are now part of the Kestiam (most likely as Kshatriyas or Athavans), While this includes protections provided by the Kestiam, it also includes the inheritance of duties. It falls on Kshatriyas and Athavans to resolve issues such as the one he brings before them. Therefore, when Onand explains that he would be obliged to give a reward, he also states that these same traditions bind the party to listen, respond, and aid with his request. They can refuse based on a lack of competence or unavailability, both of which seem

unlikely in Onand's opinion. More experienced characters, with their own retinue or hirelings, could delegate such task, allowing them to pursue greater issues in Kanta.

Accepting Onand's plea for help opens up the "Day 1" event in Manjumina when the party gets there. (Experienced characters are extended an invitation from the Maharajah to travel to Kanta instead, which opens up the Location G: Palace of the Maharajah in Kanta.) According to Onand, Jirhan works with drug addicts, mostly those from the streets of Manjumina. Onand recommends traveling with Bashar's caravan. Bashar is a well-respected man who regularly takes the Yash-Kunala route. Going with him will be easier and safer than traveling alone though the Pashuvanam. Bashar camps on the other side of the Thousand Strides Bridge and leaves for Manjumina the next day. Following this advice makes the "Day 2" event in Yash available.

If the party chases the man with the red turban...

After the party finishes its conversation with Onand, the man with the red turban will still be visible. His red turban is enough to cause people to scurry out of his way, pushing others at the same time. The party may be tempted to chase after the man to question him. (Otherwise, skip to the next events: "Day 2" in Yash or "Day 1" in Kanta.)

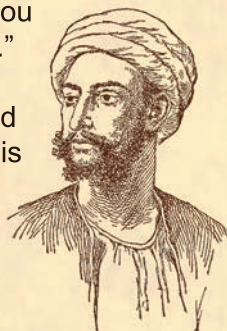
The man stops when he realizes the party is after him. He is not in a hurry and doesn't want to risk a confrontation. He introduces himself as Amar Kaviprakash, a Vastiyan from the village of Barum. If asked about the confrontation with Onand, Amar explains that he is in a state of Chalahata against the Athavan Jirhan Churesh (see the Local Customs, page 24 about the Chalahata).

Amar does not hide the motive behind his pledge and is happy to provide details. Several months ago, Amar's wife, Nata, caught a disease called the *Pale Shrii* (see A Glance at the Beidhanid-Nipuan War, page 18 about the Pale Shrii); she was feverish, delusional and her hair and eyes turned white. He brought her to Jirhan, whom he had heard could make a cure for the *Pale Shrii*. Amar swears that Jirhan claimed he could not *officially* help, but slipped invitations to offer him a suitable bribe. Because he got angry at Jirhan, the latter left, saying: "In



the future, refrain from making requests if you don't make the proper donation to the church."

Amar ends his tale saying that Nata died recently, and that he publicly announced his Chalahata in front of the Temple of Shashi a week ago. He is the first in four years to do so. He now seeks Jirhan to fulfill his oath.



Amar Kaviprakash

Day 2

If the party decides to follow Onand's advice and seek Bashar, they find him in his camp located in the field beyond the Thousand Strides Bridge of Yash. The party may pay him a visit immediately after the events of Day 1, but Bashar will be not be leaving until the afternoon of Day 2. At the end of Day 1 the caravaneers clean the area and burn their trash. On day 2 they dismantle their tents and pack up. Regardless of the day, Bashar is always ready to welcome in new clients.

Bashar is clearly not from Beidha, but has adopted local ways. A successful Study (history, geography or culture-related focus)

Skill Test reveals he is from Cal'Athar. The normal charge for joining the caravan is 40 copper coins; if they pledge to help defend the caravan in case of attack, he will charge them only 30 copper coins. The price includes two meals a day and one hot bath, which they can take any evening during the trip. Bashar also adds, as a side note, that he has "company" (women, men or children) available for additional fees.



Should the party accept these terms, Bashar tells them the rules while traveling with his caravan:

- Any crime against another customer or caravaneer, including slaves, is subject to his justice.
- He is not responsible for anything that happens beyond the perimeter of his guards.
- If the caravan is attacked and the discounted fee was paid, you are expected to fight under his command.
- The small ovens inside the carts must be put out by the last occupant before going to sleep.

The caravaneers dine early and embark in the evening of Day 2. The characters are assigned a cart in which they can sleep while the caravan slowly makes its way toward Manjumina. This leads to the events of Location B: Bashar's Caravan. The characters are free to leave the caravan and travel on their own but they do not receive a refund from Bashar. Ignoring Bashar and remaining in Yash opens the events of "Day 3".



Abdulah Bashar

Day 3

Though it may seem that there is no incentive to remain in Yash, the city still has much to offer. If the party ignores/ delays answering Onand's plea, decide that Bashar cannot be trusted, or believe Yash is simply more interesting, then you can play out the following events.

A column of pilgrims pass through the city on the third day. These pilgrims mostly come from Kanta and the villages and small towns northeast of Yash. All castes are represented within this group consisting of about 1500 men, women and children. With them are beasts of burden carrying their food, water and personal belongings. News of their passage incites many Yashim to rush to the scene of their passage to curse them and throw stones (and other objects) at them. A few even assault the pilgrims, and the city guards try their best to escort the pilgrims safely across the city.



Witnessing the scene will provide the party with some information. The pilgrims answer the call of a prophetess named Vera, who urges everyone to abandon the gods and seek personal enlightenment and moral purity. Listening to the curses from the Yashims or the preaching of the pilgrims reveals that they are heading for the "Spring of Kunala" to receive their purification. This is apparently not the first such procession through Yash. An Observe Test for all witnessing the scene provides information on what is happening. Depending upon the degrees of success this information is as follows:

0 degrees: The children among the pilgrims do not seem intimidated by the crowd; in fact they don't give it much attention and proceed in silence.

2 degrees: The pilgrims are all relatively young, and none seem to be older than 30. Moreover, all the children seem to be between 5 and 10 of age.

4 degrees: The dilated pupils of the pilgrims reveal that they are under the influence of some drug.

5+ degrees: From the way the adults are "pressing" the children ahead and their subtle gestures and expressions, it appears that these are not their children.

This scene opens the "Day 1" event in Location D: Kunala.

If there is an attempt by a party member to use Astrology or Divination to uncover something about Vera, they may uncover one or more (your choice) of the following:

- She is not a priestess of any God.
- She is protected by an unnatural force.
- She doesn't fear for Beidha's uncertain future.
- At night, she is surrounded by water.
- Though she is veiled in darkness, she can still see better than any other.
- She is the daughter of a Javit but also happens to be of noble blood.



Mokhu Onand, Athavan

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
4	4	5	12	10
Vitality	Skills: Bargain 12, Defend 7, Diplomacy 11, Empathy 11, Magic (Healing 11, Protection 11, Refresh 10, Sanctify 10), Study (religion)			
22				
Resolve	Gear: Purple and white robes, Sandals, A stack of sheepskins, Calligraphy kit, Bird-shaped copper medal			
62				
Sanity				
50				

Amar Kaviprakash, Vastiyān

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
7	7	6	7	8
Vitality	Skills: Acrobatics 8, Athletics, 8, Brawl 8, Defend 8, Melee 9, Stealth, 8,			
32				
Resolve				
37				
Sanity	Gear: Dagger (with rank 2 poison), Red turban, Sandals, White tunic, Trousers			
40				

Abdulah Bashar, Vastiyān

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
6	7	6	9	6
Vitality	Skills: Bargain 9, Diplomacy 8, Gaming 10, Melee 7			
30				
Resolve				
37				
Sanity	Gear: Short sword, white and blue fine clothes, 80 Silver coins, boots, carving knife			
30				

Location B: Bashar's Caravan

The caravan travels the main road toward Manjumina. Bashar plans on pitching camp outside the city, trade with the local businesses and then be off to Kunala. He has set scouts riding ahead and into the Pashuvanam on either side of the road. The caravan itself is a long file of beast-drawn wagons with armed lookouts on their roofs.



The caravan travels between 10 and 15 miles per day depending on the condition of the road. Bashar expects to reach Manjumina in about three weeks.

Rumors

1. Bashar hosts a card game at the evening camp. To get invited you must give Bashar 5 silver coins before sunset and bring at least 20 more to the game (true).

2. The Giant Boar of Vapul has been sighted again north of Kanta, and bounty hunters have gone to track it. The boar is frightening away all game on the royal hunting grounds (true).
3. Mutilated bodies are floating down the Girisha at Kunala (true). Locals claim they are the latest victim of the *Pale Shrii* disease (false). Five or six bodies are seen each day (true).

Day 1

The first day is uneventful. The characters pick up rumors and gossip from fellow travelers and join the evening celebrations (music, eating, dancing and smoking). During the day, Bashar is seen around directing the progress of his convoy. He carries a fine piece of wood which he carves into a statuette with his knife. Bashar uses every free moment to shave off a bit more off it.

During the evening celebrations, Bashar invites a dozen people to play a game of cards in his large tent. If a player follows the rumor and gets invited, he may enter Bashar's tent and join the game. Excluding the character(s), there are seven other players including Bashar.



The game is called "Swapping," and the object is to build the best possible hand. Players are dealt a hand of four cards, with a fifth they cannot look at. This card is held facing outward at the back of the hand so the others can see it. To stay in the round the player must ante a nominal fee. In turn, players may make an offer to another player to acquire their fifth card. The would-be seller must decide whether the offer is a good one or not. The rest of the players are allowed to react as they wish, but they cannot say what the card is. If the offer is accepted, the two players swap their fifth cards. At the end of the round all players put their five cards down and the hands are compared. Bashar and the others are playing a variant where each player who *doesn't* win the round must drink a mug of wine.

Cheating is allowed, but being caught doubles (cumulatively) the ante for a player to stay in for subsequent rounds. Common ways of cheating involve stealing and hiding cards from the deck when it is one's turn to deal, not paying the ante, stealing from another player's stack, exchanging cards with another player, or slipping something suspicious into someone's mug...

Much of the game's interest lies in the negotiations to acquire a suitable fifth card while not knowing your own. If a player receives numerous good offers for his fifth card he may suspect it is a strong one. Furthermore, the price offered could make it tempting to risk not having it while still making money off a losing hand. Players are out of the game when they cannot pay the ante or if they decide to leave by paying their current ante to each remaining player. Winners are those who walk out with more than they came in with.

Because of the strategic (building a solid hand), physical (drinking wine on a loss), and bartering aspects of the game, each participating players must first make a Gaming Skill Test. Success or failure becomes a Situation Modifier of +2 or -2 for the next test (+4 and -4 for a critical success or failure). Next is a Toughness Ability Test; as with the previous Test, success or failure grants a +2/-2 (+4/-4) Situation Modifier for the last test: an Opposed Test of Bargain involving all participants. Rank all players according to the final margin of success and determine the winnings of each. Those that fail this test walk out having lost everything, as they couldn't ante in additional rounds.

Count the number of players failing the test, multiply by 20 and add the percentage below. Possible 6th or subsequent players are counted as failing their test. It is unlikely that this method will account for all the money put into the game; consider the rest stolen by another player at some point: 1st +50%, 2nd +25%, 3rd +15%, 4th +10% and 5th +5%.

Note the names of the character who has made any profit from this evening of Swapping. It will have repercussions later when an attempt is made to take over the character's mind.



Average Swapping Card Player

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
6	7	7	8	6
Vitality	Skills: Gaming 8			
32				
Resolve				
35	Gear: None			
Sanity				
30				

Day 2

The caravan stops at a place called the Springs of Ksitani. Bashar has the caravan stay there for longer than usual to allow himself and his customers to trade with the locals. The Ksitani, who gave their name to the springs found nearby, are not part of Beidhanid society and have their own customs. Bashar says they are primitive, friendly, and (most importantly) incredibly gullible and susceptible to a good sale pitch.

Bashar unpacks “special wares” he has set aside to sell to the Ksitani. Any character watching him barter realizes, with a successful Observe Test, that Bashar’s wares are not what he says they are. For example, he tries to pass an old wicker bread basket for a stylish hat of Kanda’s latest fashion. He even insists that it is a faithful reproduction of a model reserved for the Maharajah’s family. He also passes off the statuette he carved the previous day as a magical charm to enhance a man’s sexual potency.

During the trading, a Ksitana girl, about fourteen or fifteen years old, approaches the party. Her name is Nadi and she is counting on foreigners to be sickened by her situation: her parents want to marry her to a goat. According to the elders of the tribe, this marriage will lift a curse placed on her mother by the angered spirit of a goat that wasn’t properly sacrificed years ago at her baptism. The curse prevents her mother from giving birth to a boy and Nadi is the only one of five daughters to be of marrying age.



Nadi is counting on the stranger’s relative ignorance of the Kestiam to act in her favor. This can be “sensed” (but never openly admitted by Nadi) with a successful Investigation Test at -2. According to Nadi, the marriage prevents her not only from having a family of her own, but sustaining herself without depending on the charity of others.

There are several options available should at least one party member decide to involve himself. Several can be applied at once if the players come up with more than one. These options include:

Nadi Setram, Huiti				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
5	12	5	7	6
Vitality	Skills: Animal handling 8, Bargain 7, Diplomacy 7, Empathy 8, Performance 8 (flute)			
25				
Resolve				
32				
Sanity	Gear: Orange robes, Wooden flute, Sandals, Dagger, Staff			
30				
Average Ksitani Elder, (all castes)				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
4	5	5	7	7
Vitality	Skills: Diplomacy 8			
22.5				
Resolve				
35				
Sanity	Gear: Cotton clothes			
35				

1. They kill the selected goat discreetly. This does not solve Nadi's problem, but it significantly delays the marriage until another auspicious goat is found.
2. They present an alternate way of lifting the curse to the Ksitani council of elders.
3. They modify the elders' attitude. The council of elders has a collective Resolve of 45 and an initial "Unfriendly" disposition. Regardless of the number of characters or Ksitani elders involved, it is still treated as a one-on-one confrontation. The best speaker of each group is chosen and makes the appropriate Skill Check.
4. They talk to Nadi's parents and change their attitude. Her parents have a collective Resolve of 35. Their initial disposition is "Unfriendly".
5. One last possibility is for Nadi to marry a man. No Ksitana priest will go against the elders and perform the ceremony. Moreover, no other Ksitana man will marry her and risk



angering the rest of the tribe. The solution lies in finding a man from the caravan, or the party itself, who agrees to marry her, and a substitute priest (or someone who can fake it) to perform the ceremony.

If, and how, a marriage is performed is up to the Gamemaster and players. The laws of the Kestiam validate the ceremony in the eyes of the Ksitani and the Beidhanids. This would resolve Nadi's problem, but a younger sister will inherit the problem of marrying a goat when she comes of age.

Convincing a caravaneer or one of Bashar's customers to wed the girl is easy because Nadi is quite beautiful. However, it is complicated by the fact that she is a dancer and flutist, thus a Huiti. She refuses to marry a Javit, and will bring no prestige to a prospective husband. She will marry one of the party if she can accompany him on his travels or receive long-term support.

Day 3

Early in the day Bashar orders the caravan back on the road to resume the journey to Manjumina. He disappears into his wagon to sleep for several hours, to recuperate from another night of drinking and playing. The caravan continues on the road under the guidance of his son, who drives the lead wagon.



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Meanwhile five of Bashar's off-duty scouts organize a tiger hunt. They plan to follow a course running parallel to the road looking for tigers. The party is invited to join and offered the use of spare mounts and spears if they need. Firanjee, one of the scouts, explains the technique: one group combs the jungle while the second advances well ahead, ready to close the encirclement. The party members are to be "bushbeaters" while Firanjee and the others wait with their spears and bows.

Any party member listening to Firanjee's instructions has a chance to see flaws in his technique. Have the character make a Survival Test and make note of the degrees of success. Depending on the degrees of success, the character learns one of the following:

Sibo Firanjee, Kshatriya

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
8	8	7	7	5
Vitality	Skills: Animal handling 9 (horse), Archery 9, Defend 9, Dodge 9, Survival 8 (jungle)			
37				
Resolve				
30				
Sanity	Gear: black trousers, white turban, leather armguards, boots, spear (with rank 2 poison), short bow, arrows x10, quiver, pouch (10 CP)			
25				

Firanjee's Scouts, Kshatriya

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
7	8	7	7	5
Vitality	Skills: Animal handling 8 (horse), Melee 8, Stealth 9			
35				
Resolve				
30				
Sanity	Gear: sandals, trousers, spear or shortsword (with rank 2 poison), white turban			
25				

0 degrees: While probably guaranteeing the death of a surrounded tiger, it will fight with redoubled effort, risking injuries to the horses as well as the hunters. It is usually recommended to tire a fierce predator and wound it repeatedly, rather than to seek one decisive strike.

2 degrees: The plan doesn't take into account the fact that tigers hunt early in the day and rarely roam in the jungle after that. Some important factors seem to have been left out of Firanjee's plan. Failing to mention them is rather negligent for an experienced hunter.

4 degrees: The vagueness of the plan seems to indicate that Firanjee has never had any success using this method. Furthermore, it isolates the party in an unfamiliar area.

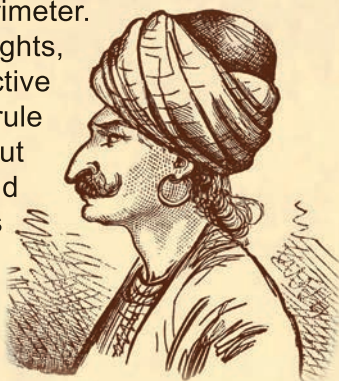
5+ degrees: The plan is clearly designed not to hunt a tiger, but to ambush gullible and unsuspecting foreigners.



Firanjee seems amenable to any revisions of his plan, but insists that they must manage to follow the caravan and return before sunset. What is important to him is that he is able to ambush the characters away from Bashar's jurisdiction.

Should Firanjee's intentions be revealed to the party before the hunt begins, remember that Bashar does not tolerate violence inside the caravan's perimeter.

His men are instructed to stop all fights, even if this requires hurting all active combatants. Firanjee follows the rule and does not instigate violence, but will keep an eye on the party should he be exposed. What happens outside the perimeter (theft, murder or other) is of no concern to Bashar. The party, if they learn of Firanjee's intention, could play along and devise a counter-plan to thwart him.



Sibo Firanjee

If captured and interrogated vigorously, the scouts reveal that they are part of a fraternity of Thagī (assassins who kill in the name of the Goddess Riya). The Thagī believe that Riya demands a regular tribute of blood, which they pay in exchange for her blessing. They view themselves simply as tools—not as judges or executioners—and trust in Riya to deliver suitable victims to them by chance. Surviving scouts ask for death to pay Riya's tribute and avoid damnation.



Day 4

Near the end of the voyage, the caravan is close to the Nipur border. By noon, the road forks; one branch leads west into Nipur while the other veers north toward Manjumina. Bashar asks everyone to be ready in case of attack. In mid-afternoon, as the caravan passes near the shore of the Lake Siba, Bashar receives a report from one of his scouts that Nipuan marauders are in the area. Bashar orders the wagons to stop and form a defensive circle; all non-combatants are ordered inside their wagons. Guards and other combatants (including the characters, if they paid the 30 copper coin rate) are to either join him in the middle of the circle, or get on the roof of a wagon to use ranged weapons.

The caravan has no more than ten minutes to prepare before Nipuan war cries are heard from the east, in the direction of the lake. The marauders show up in one wave, ready for an all-out attack. Their strategy is to pelt the defenders posted on the wagons with stones and javelins. When they see a weak point they climb the wagon in an attempt to get inside the perimeter.

Bashar's strategy is to let the marauders exhaust their supply of missiles while the bulk of his force waits, protected inside the circle. When there is an assault by the enemy, he dispatches a few men to intercept it. His wagons have hand- and foot-holds inside the circle, but not outside.

The problem with Bashar's strategy is that the Nipuans will not run out of missiles. As soon as a group of defenders stops an assault, they receive a renewed barrage before they can get back inside the circle. The Nipuans attack from all sides, and Bashar sends the party to defend wagons several times. Eventually the perimeter is breached and the fighting takes place inside the circle.

Confront the party a number of opponents you feel appropriate for their skill level. It should be obvious that the Nipuans will overcome the caravaneers and that the only refuge is the Pashuvanam. As the battle progresses, many of the non-combatants leave their wagons and head for the jungle in order to reach Manjumina on foot. The Nipuan marauders focus on the caravan's food and water supplies before turning their attention to the travelers. To stay mobile, this band of marauders travels with few supplies and have to eat off what they seize from the Beidhanids.



Add opponents to slowly increase the pressure on the party. Once the fighting reaches the inside of the defensive ring, give them a chance to fight the Nipuan captain. Eliminating him will delay pursuit and allow additional refugees to make it to Manjumina. Bashar escapes to Manjumina with a few of his swordsmen. He guides nearby survivors to the city. The heroes should have no difficulty in reaching Manjumina.

Having lost everything, Bashar meets with the governor of Manjumina and explains what happened. He has no further role to play in this adventure.

Average Nipuan Marauder				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
8	6	8	5	6
Vitality	Skills: Melee 8, Stealth 6			
40				
Resolve				
27				
Sanity	Gear: Morningstar (with rank 1 poison), Shield (AV 5), turban, clothes, sandals			
30				

Nipuan Captain				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
9	7	8	5	6
Vitality	Skills: Athletics 9, Intimidation 7, Melee 11, Stealth 7, Tactics 6			
42				
Resolve				
32				
Sanity	Gear: Leather armor (AV 20), Short sword (with rank 1 poison), Dagger x3, Clothes, Boots (plain)			
30				



Location C: City of Manjumina

One of the largest cities of Beidha, Manjumina is the poorest. It's not that the city has no wealth, but what it has is spent very badly. This is apparent as soon the characters enter the city. The once-magnificent city is now run down and neglected. Walls, roads and buildings show numerous, often hasty and shoddy, repairs. To an outsider, the architecture is an awkward marriage of old, nicely-chiseled stonework, patched or extended with plank walls. Statues and monuments are the only parts of the city retaining some past dignity.

Worse than the general lack of skilled maintenance, Manjumina suffers from corruption, disease, crime and Tiger Tooth Lotus addiction. Back alleys and dark corners serve are filled with lotus-eaters wishing to lie down and seek solace in the pleasant, dreamy haze of its petals.

Those not addicted to the drug have learned to accept Manjumina as-is, and simply try to endure it the best they can. None are old enough to remember when things were better.

Points of interest

Back Alleys

Manjumina's less-reputable areas are known for their violence and depravity. It is commonly assumed that if you have anything of value, you will attract beggars, thieves or ruffians. Some areas are considered so dangerous that even city guards won't enter them.

The litter found on all the streets is notable for the ubiquity of discarded Tiger Tooth Lotus petals, from freshly picked petals still showing their white and red beauty, to old brown petals that stain the cobblestone pavement. Everywhere, the homeless try to secure some spot to rest and get protection from Beidha's daily rain shower. Adventurers entering the back alleys attract the attention of a local armed gang requesting a "tax" for trespassing.



The Beach Foundry

One of Manjumina's major industrial centers operates on the sandy shore of Sahi Lake. Located less than half a mile south of the city, hundreds of workers sort scrap metal, carve casting molds in the sand, tend smelting ovens, or polish finished pieces. They are overseen by taskmasters while dozens of clients inspect custom-made pieces.

The foundry is an unsafe place to work, and many workers sport burn scars or missing fingers. There is always the hazard of stepping into a puddle of hot copper, brass, or bronze. Those manning the ovens are exposed to arsenic fumes produced by the melting ore. Those who have worked there for years have skin damage, as well as difficulty breathing and blurred vision. The arsenical fumes fill the area with a mild scent of garlic.



Rumors

1. Some of the copper melted at the foundry is from the unearthed tombs of previous Maharajahs (true). Someone managed to smuggle vast quantities of this copper to Manjumina against the Maharajah's condemnation. (false).

2. Some of the copper melted at the foundry is from the unearthed tombs of previous Maharajahs (true). Many people claim the royal family is outraged, but in reality the Maharajah has authorized it to compensate for a lack of slaves in the copper mines (true). The Maharajah is fearful that a drop in metal production will hamper the war effort (true).

3. The Athavan Jirhan has, twice earlier this month, sent children from Manjumina to join the Pilgrim's March (true). These pilgrims travel north to escort children who are destined to become monks (false). The next march is due to arrive from Yash soon (true). **Note:** this rumor is one of two ways to open the events of "Day 3" in Manjumina.

4. Jirhan was once a priest of Guesh but renounced the god to join Vera's movement (true). He now wears the "yellow and grey" typical of those who have lost faith (true).

5. A Chahalatite was seen in town (true. This rumor is available only during the events of the third day). He looks quite intimidating (not particularly).



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Day 1

The party enters Manjumina, and characters immediately notice the poor condition of the city and its people. Except in a few upper class areas, there is no way to miss it. The only benefit is that poverty keeps the prices for food, lodging and clothing low. Characters are harassed by beggars unless they aggressively object.

Following Onand's hint, the party should start their inquiry about Jirhan among the lotus addicts. It is not too difficult to locate several of them in the back alleys, and they are happy to help, for the appropriate fee. Paltry "donations" get any addict to talk freely about the priest.

Manjumina's Back Alley Ruffians				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
5	7	5	5	4
Vitality	Skills: Melee 6, Brawl 6, Intimidation 6, Subterfuge 6			
25				
Resolve				
22	Gear: Dagger, Club, Cotton tunic, Sandals, 2-8 Copper Coins			
Sanity				
20				

Any drug addict will tell the characters that Jirhan works closely with Manjumina's destitute. He regularly tours the worst neighborhoods to distribute donations collected in the name of a prophetess named Vera. Though the current whereabouts of the Athavan are unknown, they mention that he will visit the beach foundry the next morning. This opens the "Day 2" events.

When the word spreads that the party has an interest in Jirhan, and that they pay for information, would-be informers try to get on the party's good side. A few attempt to sell fabricated information; however, this is a perfect opportunity for the party to learn rumors.

If the characters decide to search for Jirhan at the beach foundry the next morning, then trigger the "Day 2" events, otherwise go through at least a day and skip to the "Day 3" events.



Day 2

Workers arrive early at the beach foundry to clean it up from the previous day's smelting. They retrace their molds in the sand, sometime starting fresh in order to have better-shaped ones. Because half the work force is still under the lingering effects of the previous evening's "activities," work is slow and the first mold is cast only in mid-morning. If asked, the workers confirm that a priest called Jirhan is likely to show up a bit later to bless them.

After waiting an hour or so, the characters see a man arriving at the site. He wears the yellow and grey robes of a priest who has rejected all Gods. It is obvious that he is not one of the workers.

As is his daily ritual, he arrives in the late morning to offer a prayer to the workers and help them get off the lotus. His short service consists of walking into the lake until the water is up to his ankles (to avoid any puddles of melted metal), and waving a smoking thurible while reciting sutras.

As he passes near the workers, they touch their forehead with their left index finger. When he's finished, Jirhan goes to the worker's rest area to wait for any who require help with their addiction. It is a good time to approach him, as no addict has done so yet.



Jirhan Churesh

Jirhan has two reasons for being in Manjumina: to perform his priestly duties, and to "mark" specific people. His priestly duties are actually a front to alleviate suspicions. "Marking" people, is his contribution to his mistress's scheme. Jirhan identifies children to be taken by the pilgrims marching across Beidha.



The children are bought from their parents who are promised that they will receive Athavan education in a distant temple in the mountains. The birth date of these children must match certain criteria devised by his secret cult. Jirhan double-checks birthdays using astrology. He uses his offer of help as a pretext to approach parents bankrupt from lotus-related debts.

If told about Amar's oath of Chalahata, Jirhan is shaken and looks worried. He honestly does not remember Amar or his wife Nata, but flatly lies about requesting bribes in the past. He reasons aloud that if the characters were able to find him this easily, then the Chalahatite can as well, which will disrupt his plans to welcome the pilgrims' arrival tomorrow.

Telling Jirhan of Amar and his oath effectively completes Onand's request, but it should appear to the party that there is more behind what they have seen and heard, especially about Jirhan and the Pilgrim March. If the players do not reach this conclusion on their own, a successful Empathy test at +1 gives the heroes the feeling that something is suspicious, and that Jirhan seems to be hiding something important from them.

Jirhan doesn't specifically remember any priest called Onand. He does not deny the possibility that he once knew him, but he currently does not have any friend with such name. Assuming the heroes still believe him at this point, this should create a small mystery around Onand, who claimed Jirhan was a "good friend." Again, if the players do not reach this conclusion, you can help them if their heroes make a successful Wits test.

A suspicious party may wish to press Jirhan for answers but he is less than willing to disclose his secrets. The characters may try to change his attitude, but as the conversation progresses he becomes increasingly more guarded with his reactions. The Attitude levels have been renamed for this case, and the Skills players can use are increasingly limited.

Cornering the priest some distance away from the foundry prevents workers from interfering. Jirhan reveals increasingly more as his attitude levels are chipped down.

If workers are present, they listen with great interest but cannot interfere with the interrogation, as this would be meddling in the affairs of other castes (Jirhan is Athavan, the players are probably Athavans or Kshatriyas). If the heroes turn violent or force Jirhan to remain at the site, then the workers will send for the guards. Four city guards will show up five rounds after the workers send for them.

When his attitude is down to antagonistic or broken, Jirhan tries to leave the foundry and walk toward the city. If the heroes follow, they are ignored and Jirhan seeks refuge in the first crowd he sees.

Jirhan starts this conversation at "Friendly":



Jirhan Churesh, Athavan				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
8	6	8	8	5
Validity	Skills: Alchemy 8, Astrology 8, Bargain 6, Diplomacy 7, Heal 10, Magic (Ball/Bolt 7, Protection 8, Eldritch Tendril 8), Sense 8,			
40				
Resolve				
32				
Sanity	Gear: Grey and yellow robes, Sandals, Leather belt, 16 Brass Coins			
25				

Friendly: 5 levels:

Usable Skills: Bargain, Diplomacy, Empathy, Intimidation, Investigation & Socialize

The children he selects are sent away to become monks. These children travel with the others who come from the east. Other Athavans, like himself, guide the children to Kunala to be purified on their way north. The processions are commonly called “Pilgrim Marches”. These pilgrims have rejected the Gods and follow the teachings of Vera the prophetess. This opens the “Day 1” events of Kunala.

Neutral: 5 levels:

Usable Skills: Diplomacy, Empathy, Intimidation, Investigation & Socialize

Jirhan invites the characters to join him in welcoming the Pilgrim March, due to arrive the next day, and get answers from them. This opens the “Day 3” events of Manjumina.

Cautious: 5 levels:

Usable Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidation & Investigation

Jirhan’s new church is taking steps to ensure its survival following the likely Nipuan victory over the Maharajah’s forces. He admits that some of these steps are of questionable morality (without being specific) but nonetheless essential.



Antagonistic, 5 levels:

Usable Skills: Intimidation & Investigation

Jirhan works for a new cult, and they have a plan for the impending invasion by Nipuan forces. The Pilgrim Marches take selected individuals to a secret location near Kunala. The pilgrims have been misled into believing they are to be purified through the ordeals of their journey.

Broken, 5 levels:

Usable Skills: Intimidation

The children handed over to the pilgrims do not return once they reach Kunala. Jirhan believes his cult experiments on them to find various cures against the diseases created by the plague priests of Nipur. He also believes the cure he knows for the *Pale Shrii* comes from these alchemical experiments. His contact among the pilgrims is a young woman named Muri.

Day 3

The pilgrims arrive in Manjumina late in the morning. They tell the city guards about some burned wagons and bodies they found a few miles out of town. If the characters traveled with Bashar's caravan, they know that the pilgrims refer to aftermath of the attack by Nipuan marauders.

A priest wearing yellow and grey robes stands close to the main gate to welcome the pilgrims with blessings. If the characters met Jirhan the day before, they recognize him instantly. He gives his blessings much like his ritual at the beach foundry the day before (see "Day 2"). If the characters have warned him about Amar Kaviprakash the Chalahatite, he tries to stay close to the guards stationed at the gate. All 1500+ pilgrims pass before him and make their way across the city, toward the eastern shore of the Girisha River. Unlike the Yashims during the "Day 3" events in Yash, the people of Manjumina do not scorn the pilgrims—most barely notice them.

If the party did not meet Jirhan at the foundry, the pilgrims will inadvertently reveal his presence by chanting his name as they pass him, attracting the party's attention.



At this point, the party has several avenues to explore: they can approach Jirhan and further question him further, or simply keep an eye on him while remaining some distance away. Doing either offers them some additional pieces to the puzzle. First, a woman emerges from the ranks of the pilgrims and has a curious exchange with him, during which Jirhan seems overly reverential. If the party was successful in breaking Jirhan the previous day, they may correctly suspect that she is Muri, as she is also wearing yellow and grey robes. Next, they notice Amar Kaviprakash stalking Jirhan.

The Chahalatite

Amar, having pledged to destroy Jirhan slowly, does not wish to kill his target outright. Instead, he wishes to publicly expose the Athavan for what he really is. Amar knows that Jirhan is corrupt and greedy, but is unaware of his involvement in something much more sinister. For now, Amar is content to gather up any information on Jirhan and search for ways to expose him. His secondary objective is to make sure that Jirhan sees him occasionally, in order to destabilize him.

The party can be a great help to Amar should they engage him in conversation and reveal what they have learned so far.

Should this happen, Amar asks the characters to let him take care of dealing with Jirhan and appeals to them to uproot the evil behind the Pilgrim's March. He admits not having anything but his gratitude to offer for fulfilling this request. He also offers a quotation from the *Kestiam* that says:

"We put eight spokes together and call it a Kavidhi; But it is the empty spaces in between them that offer the most. By relying on quality rather than wealth, you will achieve greatness."

Note to whom Amar recites this sutra. It will be important at the end of the adventure, when dealing with an attempt to take over the character's mind.

Jirhan and Muri

This is the first time the characters have a chance to see Muri. She guides the pilgrims to Kunala, to a place she simply calls "The Spring", and seems pleased with Jirhan's work in Manjumina. The latter informs her that the children he has



Muri Nayana, Huiti				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
5	9	5	8	8
Vitality	Skills: Bargain 8, Diplomacy 9, Empathy 8, Heal 8, Profession 8 (gardening), Socialize 10			
25				
Resolve				
40				
Sanity	Gear: Staff, Yellow and grey robes, Sandals, Water skin, Small sack, 35 Brass Coins			
40				

recruited are waiting on the eastern shore of the Girisha River. If any of the characters approach, she readily engages them in conversation. She learned long ago how to recognize hardy adventurers, and how they can turn out to be either nuisances or powerful allies. Muri attempts to determine which of the two types the party represents.

If the party is neutral or antagonistic, Muri attempts to redirect it toward a second Nipuan incursion, describing the damage the first raid dealt to Bashar's caravan (she doesn't know the party was involved in that attack, if they were). She points out that any successful action against this (fictional) second incursion will be richly rewarded by the authorities of Manjumina. After all, it is the duty of Kshatriyas to deal with such matters. Muri engages all party members in an Opposed Test of her Diplomacy versus their Empathy. Muri says she has reports of Nipuan pitching camp a few miles to the north-east where they sort through the riches they plundered from the caravan. Compare her result from the Diplomacy test against each party member's Empathy individually to determine who she did, or did not, convince of this lie.

If the party takes the bait and actually attempts to find this non-existent band of Nipuan marauders, you might want to give them a second chance to doubt Muri's claim. Call for an Ability Test of Wits; those who succeed find the notion of Nipuan Marauders capturing riches doubtful. Logic dictates that these marauders don't expect to make it back alive from their raid and therefore wouldn't be interested in riches.



If, on the other hand, the party adopts a friendly attitude with Muri, she tries get the characters to embrace her cause. She invites them to express any concerns they may have directly with Vera, her spiritual leader, at “The Spring” near Kunala.

Jirhan’s behavior depends on the exchange of the previous day, if there was one. The more thorough the party was at revealing his secrets, the less he wishes to talk to, or even look at, the characters.

Location D: City of Kunala

Kunala is famous for its beauty. Water is abundant, and numerous stone basins hold water diverted from the Girisha River. This, in turn, is distributed gently into the lower basins, fountains, and ponds scattered throughout the city. Kunala sits on a moderate slope, and because all construction follows the course of these basins, the city has a “stairway” appearance. Each building is unique, due to the variously-colored stones used in their construction. The colors are many, and the whole city looks as if a rainbow has settled on the ground.

The beauty of Kunala hides a more ominous reputation. The city has numerous Nipuan assassins, spies, agitators, and saboteurs who mingle with Kunala’s underworld. Together, they steal inventory manifests, intercept official couriers, and try to determine who can be corrupted, persuaded, or bullied to Nipur’s cause.

Kunalans are calm and, on the surface, quite friendly. Behind their smiles, however, they struggle to maintain appearances and false pretenses. They consider it more important to remain polite and avoid attracting attention than to be honest.

Points of interest

The Pilgrim’s Spring

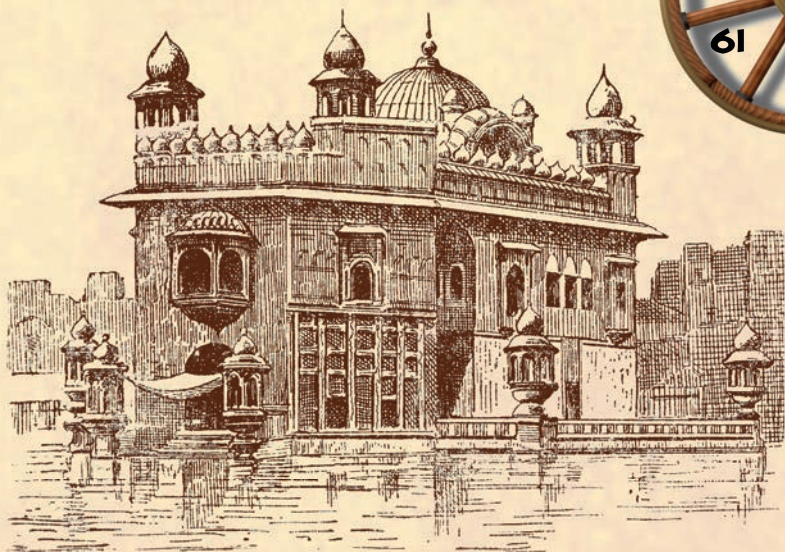
While the city has many interesting sites for sightseeing, only the spring is relevant to this adventure. The source is located two miles east, outside of Kunala, in the Pashuvanam. The characters have no difficulty locating it, as it attracts significant attention. The pilgrims who flock to it in droves have created a wide dirt track leading to the spring branching off the main road.



Over the centuries, the spring has carved a pool in the limestone. The area has been known by locals for a long time, but apparently only the followers of Vera give it importance. The pilgrims have set up a camp under the canopy of the Pashuvanam next to the pool. From this camp a long line of pilgrims stretches even deeper in the Pashuvanam, leading to Vera's abode some 200 yards uphill from the spring. After an audience, the prophetess gives each visitor a specific task and commands them to bathe in the pool before leaving. These tasks range from traveling to a specific location, waiting in the camp for her call, or delivering important messages.

Rumors

1. Bathing in the waters of the spring removes the influence of the Gods over a child, and grants them enlightenment (true or false, depending on personal belief).
2. Vera veils her face to hide her beauty, because she does not want it to distract her followers in their quest for enlightenment and purification (false).
3. A group of five children was sent northeast into the Pashuvanam by Vera as part of their assignment. They were escorted by a priestess sent to watch over them (true). Searching for the children in the Pashuvanam opens the "Day 1" events of Kshetra.



Day 1

Arriving on the site, it becomes obvious that the only thing of interest is the presence of Vera. If they investigate the spring itself, it is (to an objective observer) nothing more than that: a natural spring in a limestone pool. The pilgrims, obviously, have a different opinion, and the characters' presence does not go unnoticed. Their weapons, armor, exotic mannerisms and foreign accents ensure that their arrival is swiftly reported to Vera.

Much like Muri, whom the party may or may not have encountered, Vera knows how to recognize adventurers and the potential trouble or aid they represent. She sends a pair of aides, 12 year old children wearing yellow and green tunics, to carry an invitation to the characters. Following the children allows the party to cut to the front of the line and gain an audience with Vera immediately.

Vera's hut is very simple in design and cannot have been built more than a year or two ago. Constructed from wicker, the hut is supported by reinforced corner posts and roofed with large dried leaves. Its door is nothing more than a heavy burlap curtain. Devoid of windows or a smoke hole, the only light in the hut filters through the wicker walls. The pilgrims are in line some distance away, patiently awaiting their own summonses. The aides invite the party to enter after leaving their footwear outside. A bucket of water (presumably from the spring) is provided, and the characters are directed to wash their feet.



Save for a thick straw mat covering the entire floor and an incense burner hanging from the ceiling, there is no furniture in the hut. A wicker screen divides the hut in two and prevents anyone outside from seeing Vera or her guests. As the characters enter the hut, Vera refills the incense burner and salutes them by putting her left index finger to her forehead, in the same fashion used by the foundry workers in Manjuma.

How this meeting proceeds depends on the party's attitude and their suspicions of the pilgrims. You are free to conduct Vera's part of the conversation as you see fit, but make sure to give the players enough to open Location E: Village of Kshetra.

The village of Kshetra should be mentioned by Vera when she raises concerns about missing children. Vera, wishing to recruit the characters to her cause, feigns ignorance and appears worried about the children's safety. She suggests tracking down the last ones she sent away, to ensure that they were not taken away by a rogue faction operating from within the pilgrims.

Vera has several means to ensure the party sides with her rather than act against her. If a simple request fails to move the characters to act, she resorts to her supernatural seductive powers and the drug the party has been inhaling since entering the hut. The incense was laced with a drug which reduces their Wits and Will by 2 points, unless a successful Toughness Ability Check at -2 is made. The effects only last for the length of the exposure.

Vera's hypnotic powers and her natural beauty come from her unnatural parentage; she hatched from an egg laid by her Nāgī mother. Her eyes, golden with triangular pupils, reveal her heritage, but also serve to apply her enthralling charm on the characters.

One look from Vera is enough for her to use her power on the characters. Each character needs to make a Will Test; failure prevents hostility and makes them amenable to her suggestions. The effect lasts one day. She uses her power to make the characters more receptive to her pleas of ignorance, and to make them more susceptible to her request to go after the children.



Vera, Athavan (Javit)

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
6	8	8	9	8
Vitality	Skills: Bargain 8, Defend 8, Diplomacy 9, Empathy 8, Heal 9, Magic (Ball/Bolt 9, Quicken 8, Sleep 10), Melee 6, Sense 9			
35				
Resolve	Gear: Silk veil, White priest robes, Incense cubes x9			
42				
Sanity				
40				

Location E: Village of Kshetra

If the party ventures northeast of Kunala, either because they are following up on the rumor of the children, or according to Vera's instructions, they come to the village of Kshetra. The tracks left by the children are easy to follow when near wetlands, but impossible to see on dryer soil. The nearby villagers seem to be the only ones able to offer a new lead.

Points of interest

The Village

Located in the middle of one of Pashuvanam's numerous swamps, the small village of Kshetra has no more than a hundred inhabitants. The village is of recent construction, and is built primarily with wood and woven reeds. Each structure is built on poles, raising it four to six feet above the swamp's water. A few causeways and floating bridges made of reeds connect islands and houses. Canoes and rafts are moored everywhere, for anyone to use, and are the easiest way to travel through the village.

Anyone walking along the muddy banks of the swamp notices that several trees have been cut to collect their sap.

Each bears numerous scars from previous years' extractions. The Kshetrites use the sap to make a lacquer that they apply to the pottery which they sell to the merchants of Kunala. Kshetrite pottery has an excellent reputation, renowned for their durable, shiny finish. Only this deep in the Pashuvanam are there lacquer trees old enough and big enough to produce the unique resin Kshetrites use.



There is one more thing any visitor notices: the relentless drone of flies and mosquitoes filling the air. On a successful Observe Test -2, visitors notice that the Kshetrites are not bothered by the insects.

Life in Kshetra revolves around a place referred as *The Heart*. The Heart is a large roofed platform located in the center of the village. The Kshetrites spend most of their time there preparing communal meals, gutting and drying the day's catch, and weaving reeds into various useful objects. The Heart is where religious ceremonies are performed, village politics carried out, and disputes resolved. The locals revere Guesh, as the many pillars adorned with ivory sculptures of the one-tusked elephant attest.

Rumors

1. Washing your clothes with Blivesh leaves repels insects (true).
2. Chewing the Blivesh leaves achieves the same result (true, but the leaves a long-lasting foul taste. It is a common childish prank to convince strangers to eat them).
3. Blivesh plants are small bushes easily found in the surrounding swamp (true).

Day 1

Kshetrites are curious about the adventurers. Most adults simply throw an occasional glance their way, a few stare, but it is the giggles of the children that emphasize how the party simply cannot blend in with the locals. A group of Kshetrites in "The Heart" gesture for the characters to take a raft and join them. Once there, the party is offered marigold flower tea and a chance to talk with the chieftain.

Vishal, the chieftain of Kshetra, is a middle-aged man. He was made chief because he is the best hunter in the village. A crowd surrounds the party and Vishal to listen to the meeting. The locals are not hostile toward the characters but they are pushy in their observation of them (the characters get -1 to all Diplomacy, Streetwise, Empathy and Intimidation Tests).



The villagers, who find all visitors to be exotic and interesting, want to touch the fabric of their foreign clothes and feel the texture of their hair, especially if blond, auburn, or red. The party should not just feel like outsiders but, more importantly, *peculiar* outsiders.

A direct man, the first thing Vishal asks is whether they work with Vera’s pilgrims. Saying “No” puts him at ease, while “Yes” makes him careful and hesitant in his choice of words. No matter how the characters answer, Vishal tells the story of his people, to dissuade the characters from listening to Vera and to give them the information they seek.

“Two years ago, Kshetra was located further north from Kunala, on the Eastern bank of the Girisha River. One day, Kshetrite hunters rescued a beautiful, golden-eyed woman from the jungle. She claimed to be lost and remembered nothing of her past up to the day before. Taking pity on her, the hunters invited her to stay in the village until she could heal and regain her memory. To their amazement, and her own, she was a skilled alchemist. The days turned to months and the woman, calling herself Vera, gradually introduced soma to the villagers. Extracting a substance from the stalks of some unknown yellowish plant and lacing it with horse milk, soma was supposed to elevate consciousness and create a deep bond with nature, resulting in more fruitful hunts and spiritual clarity. Many villagers used it, making them more receptive to Vera’s suggestions. Soma, along with Vera’s “magical eyes”, divided the Kshetrites. One group left for the Ruins of Cira at her request; the others relocated here following a fire that destroyed the old village.”



Vishal Sinamk, Kshatriya

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
9	8	7	6	5
Vitality	Skills: Acrobatics 8, Archery 8, Athletics 9, Investigation 7, Melee 10, Stealth 9, Survival 8, Track 9			
40				
Resolve	Gear: Dagger x2, Short bow, Arrows x18, Quiver, Cotton trousers, Sandals			
27				
Sanity				
25				

Hearing this story unlocks the events of “Day 1” at the Ruins of Cira for the characters.

Vishal knows that Vera has relocated somewhere near Kunala. Because many Kshetrites have taken soma at one time or another, they are powerless to act against her. Vishal suspects that Vera believes her hold on them is stronger than it is. He theorizes that this explains why she sent the party to his village. Vishal assures the characters that the pilgrims are in no danger, other than that offered by the Pashuvanam. He knows that the children passed through recently, and they were escorted by priests.

What happens next depends on what happened during the meeting with Vera.

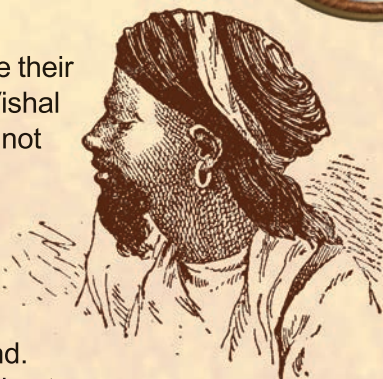
If the party fought and killed her, Vishal offers to guide the characters to the Ruins of Cira himself, should they still wish to go there. He supplies them with food, black beer, and fresh clothes. In addition, he draws intricate symbols on the back of their necks in thick green paint. This “war paint” is a charm the Kshetrites draw before they go to war or expect to face a dangerous evil. The tradition dates back to when the Pashuvanam was a much more dangerous jungle. Having Vishal guiding the party removes all possible “unscripted encounters” on the way between Kshetra and the ruins. Keep note of who accepts the war paint and keeps it on, as it will have a role to play later, when there will be an attempt to take over the character’s mind.



If the party sided with Vera:

Hearing Vishal’s story might change their opinion of her. If this is the case, Vishal provides the above aid, but does not personally guide them to the ruins.

If the characters still remain loyal to Vera even after hearing the story, Vishal simply bids them farewell, offering no aid of any kind. He will point them in the right direction to the ruins, if they choose to go there.



Vishal Sinamk

Location F: Ruins of Cira

Cira was an ancient city, located on the opposite bank of the Girisha River from Kshetra. The ruins conceal an underground complex which serves as a base of operation for Vera's mother, a Nāgī named Azakah. Serving her are the Kshetrites that Vera turned to their cause, along with some men and women selected from the Pilgrims. All fell prey to Azakah's hypnotic powers and the substantial doses of soma they were given. They are Azakah's thralls.

To get to the complex, the party has to find a way across the Girisha River, locate the entrance within the ruins, and avoid or deal with the sentries.

Points of interest

The Ruined City

On first seeing the ruins, it is obvious that they predate the current dynasty. The ruins are the remains of a long-forgotten city that the jungle is slowly reclaiming. The architecture resembles nothing found in Beidhanid or Nipuan cities.

Scattered in the ruins are several giant heads of intricate design, some of which were part of larger structures that crumbled with the passage of time. Numerous gateways and rows of broken columns that have withstood time and the elements are covered with moss and mildew. The largest surviving structure is a ziggurat shaped like a three-sided step pyramid. Though the ruins still stand tall in some places, the jungle is taller and casts gloomy shadows over everything but the ziggurat.

The major streets of the former city are still discernable. They formed an octagon pattern with the ziggurat at its center. Now these cobblestone streets are broken in several places, covered with rubble from fallen structures, or simply reclaimed by the Pashuvanam. Other streets were laid in a cross pattern, centered on the ziggurat, dividing the city into four districts.

There is some activity in the ruins; smoke rises from in the south. Searching the city for riches turns up nothing, as it was picked clean a long time ago.



Day 1

The Crossing of the Girisha

It is necessary to cross the Girisha River to reach the ruins of Cira. Unfortunately, all bridges that once spanned the great river have been dismantled in order to prevent Nipur from using them.

If Vishal is with the characters, he has a catamaran concealed among bushes on the Kshetra side of the river. If he is not, there is a small chance for them to find it. If the characters are actively looking for a concealed boat, or fallen trees in order to make a raft, then a successful Investigate test at -3 allows them to discover the catamaran.

If Vishal is not with them, then the party needs to improvise; perhaps building a raft or dugout canoes to get to the west side. Regardless of the season, the waters of the Girisha are not calm. Whatever vessel the party uses, it has to be reasonably sturdy and stable to make it.

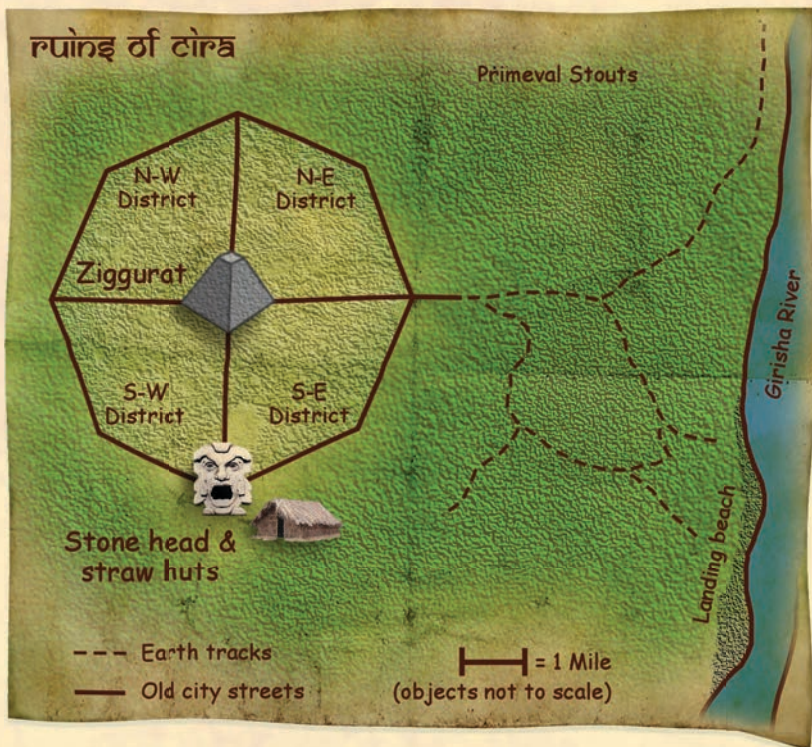
Paddling to the other side of the river doesn't require much proficiency, but requires a vigorous effort. To remain firmly on board despite the rough current requires passing a test of Athletics at + 3. Vishal's catamaran is stable enough to give a modifier of +5 instead of +3.

A character who falls overboard needs to pass an Athletics (swimming) test at -2. Success allows him to climb back aboard; failure puts distance between him and the boat. Subsequent Athletics (swimming) tests can be made every other round, but each test has a cumulative difficulty of -2 per round. When the difficulty reaches -8, the character begins to drown and must depend on friends still aboard the boat to rescue him.

The City

The western bank of the Girisha is the most ancient region of the Pashuvanam. Its giant trees are called *Primeval Stouts* by the people of Beidha and Nipur. Dirt tracks link a small pebble stone beach to the ruins of Cira six miles away. A few boats and rafts of various types are scattered across the beach.





Four of Azakah's thralls patrol these tracks from the beach. If the characters have not taken steps to hide their boat, then the patrol will backtrack toward the city actively searching for trespassers. The characters have to deal with this patrol one way or another, though they may be able to sneak pass them.



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If Vishal is with the party, he paces the trip to arrive at night. He knows that it is likely sentries are posted and he wants the cover of darkness. He makes sure they conceal the catamaran and avoid the dirt track leading to the ruins, bypassing the patrol.

Making their way through the dense, wet foliage brings the party to the ancient ruins of Cira. There, in the looming trees casting their shadow over the rough terrain is what the characters seek. There, hidden *Under Pashuvanam's Lush*, the characters sense a pulsating evil. The feeling, like the beating of a drum, throbs in their marrow.

There are two areas of interest in the ruins: the ziggurat and the plumes of smoke rising in the south. The party can explore the ziggurat but, ultimately, it is the smoke that is of real interest.

The Ziggurat

This three-sided pyramid reminds the characters of the Temple of Shashi in Yash. Though it doesn't match the latter in complexity, it served a similar purpose to the people of the earlier dynasty. The half-faded runes covering it could be a long-forgotten version of the Kestiam. No entrance exists anywhere on the pyramid, but the top of the structure is flat. On each side of the ziggurat is a stairway ascending to the summit.

Characters climbing to the top gain a view of the ruins and the surrounding jungle. An Observe test notices circular patterns carved into the stone of the pyramid's summit. A successful Astrology or Lore Skill Check reveals that it is a lunar calendar devised by people with advanced knowledge of mathematics and geometry.

From the summit, it is possible to see what produces the smoke in the south. It rises from four square stone chimneys coming right out of the ground. Near their base are four straw huts.

Straw Huts and Chimneys

At the crossing of the great octagon street and the southern boulevard are four straw huts in the middle of the intersection. Their main purpose is to house Kshetrite sentries posted outside the complex. Nearby is a small cattle pen with three cows, and a horse tethered to a pole.

From the nearby rubble of what used to be a guardhouse rise four 25-foot tall, rectangular stone chimneys. Smoke, visible from across the city, wafts gently from their tops. These smokestacks cannot have been built more than a year ago. Across the street, on the opposite side of the straw huts, facing the old guardhouse, rests a giant stone head. Its open mouth is the entrance to an underground complex.

There are 6 sentries stationed at the huts, and the party needs to find a way past them. Each sentry carries a tin whistle strung around his neck. Should a sentry manage to blow his whistle, the remaining sentries arrive in two rounds. The whistle is not loud enough to warn the occupants of the underground complex.



Azakah's Thralls, Javit				
Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
6	8	6	6	2
Vitality	Skills: Athletics 6, Observe 5, Melee 6			
30				
Resolve				
20	Gear: Club or mace, Shield (AV 5), Boots, Cotton tunic			
Sanity				
10				

If the party arrives at night, only three sentries will be outside the huts, tending to a campfire and drinking from clay jars. If, on the other hand, they arrive during the day all the sentries will be awake, performing routine tasks such as preparing a meal, fixing the pen's fence, collecting firewood, or gutting fish. A search of the huts produces yields little; food, twenty jars of black beer, various utensils, tools, and fishing nets.

The Complex



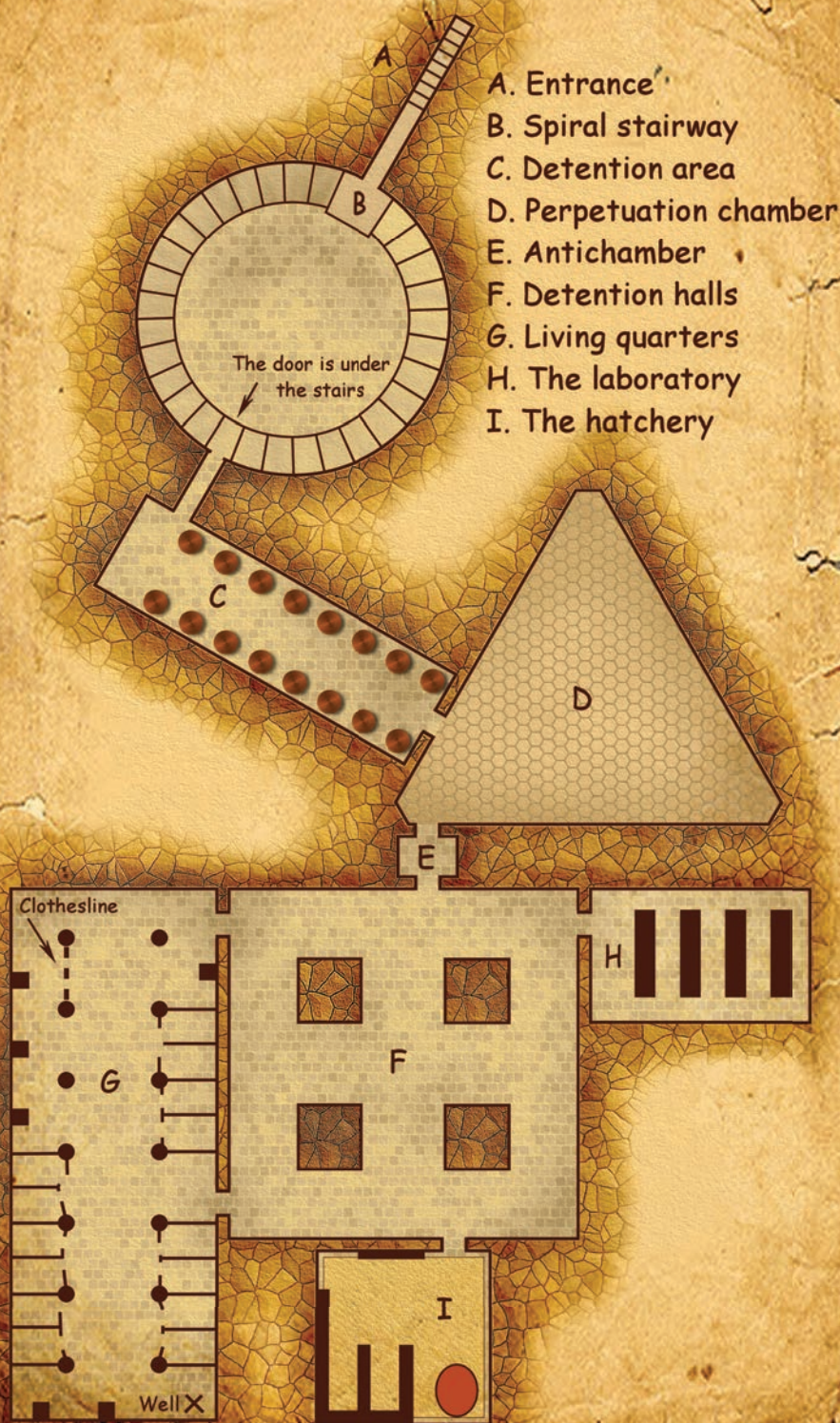
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Once the sentries are dealt with, the characters can enter the underground complex. If Vishal is with the party he stops and waits outside; what remains of Vera's influence prevents him from directly acting against her mother. He hides in the vicinity of the site and prays for the souls of his former villagers, whose lives the party will likely take in their venture into the complex.

The complex is the lair of a powerful *Nāgī* matron named Azakah. *Nāgī* is the term for a female *Nāga*, a race of ancient human-snake hybrids that once lived in the Pashuvanam and the Jungles of Moran. This same race is known as "Lamia" in myths from the City States of Dōārñ, the League of Merchants and Cathar. The temple of Shashi tells how they begat the Snake People currently found in the Jungles of Moran, and were nearly destroyed by them.



Underground Complex of Cira



Area A: Entrance to the Underground Complex

The open mouth of a huge stone head serves as the entry to the underground complex. The head did not belong to a larger statue, but is simply the carving of a head, hewn from a single boulder. A successful Study (religion or theology) test at -3 reveals that it depicts the Goddess Randra, the name by which Nyarlathotep is known in Beidha and Nipur. The carving has been thoroughly cleaned and re-cut, and shows her as she was depicted 800 to 1,200 years ago. Instead of a tongue, a stairway leads deep into the ground. The steps have been recently refurbished with new stones.

Area B: The Circular Stairway

The stairway from the surface brings the characters to the entrance of a large circular room, 10 yards below the surface. The stones of this room are also recently cleaned and repaired. It is obvious that the current occupants of the site have completed an extensive restoration of it.

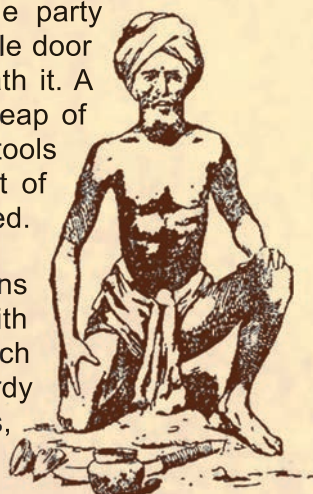
Spiraling downward along the wall is a second set of stairs which drops an additional 20 yards downward, while leaving the center of the room empty. Though light from the surface is enough to illuminate the top of the first stairway, the bottom of the stairs and the circular room are dark. Faint light comes from a door at the bottom of the second set of stairs. There are eight bronze hooks fixed in the wall at the top of the spiral stairway. Six hold crude oil lamps, the other two are empty.



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Going down the stairs, the party finds a sturdy wooden double door with light escaping underneath it. A few feet to the right, a small heap of stone chips and some discarded tools indicate that, while not complete, most of the stone renovation has been completed.

The double door is not locked and opens both ways. Beyond it is a room with sixteen holding cages, eight on each side, suspended from the ceiling by sturdy bronze chains. Six contain bodies, five of which are dead. As the party approaches, the only living prisoner tries to get their attention...



Mamud

Area C: The Detention Area

In the weak light of the oil lamps, the characters see a former pilgrim and sculptor (a Huiti) named Mamud. His heavy bronze cage can be opened from the bottom. Its lock, though hard-mounted in the circular bottom, is crude and can easily be picked or forced open. A successful Subterfuge Test at +1 is needed to pick the lock, while a Brawn Ability Test at +1 will force it open.

Mamud knows all about this place from his own sad experience, and asks if the party is here to uproot the evil. If they confirm this, he tells what he knows, in case it may be useful to the task.

This is the lair of Azakah, a Nāgī. Azakah is different from the few remaining Nāga in that she wishes to meddle in the affairs of men and dominate them. Because no man would accept a monster as his ruler, Azakah plans to achieve her goal through Nipur's conquest of Beidha. She wants control of both kingdoms after Nipur conquers Beidha. To this end, she plans to introduce her second daughter to the God-Emperor of Nipur (and soon-to-be conqueror of Beidha).

Unable to resist her daughter's charms, the God-Emperor will impregnate her with a being of great power. Azakah will then pour her mind into the newborn child, abandoning her own body and effectively becoming the heir to the empire.

Drawing on her knowledge of alchemy and ancient sorcery, Azakah gave birth to her first "human" daughter, Vera. When Vera was old enough, Azakah ordered her to mingle with humans, enthrall some as a work force, and find a way to supply her mother with selected individuals. These select individuals are the children brought the complex by the Pilgrims. Their organs are essential ingredients in concoctions that will allow Azakah to give birth to a human-nāgī hybrid, tailored to become a vessel for her mind.



Mamud learned all of this from Azakah herself, when she tried to invade his mind. He resisted and was left with memories that aren't his own. He gladly welcomes freedom, but does not ask the party to free him, as he doesn't have the strength to make it far outside. He simply wishes not to be forgotten if the party successfully makes its way out. If they *do* free him, he waits by the double door for their return.

As for the five dead prisoners in the other cages, they were able to resist Azakah, but they all died of hunger. Mamud doesn't know why they were not simply killed.

Area D: The Perpetuation Chamber

Beyond the room with cages is a triangular room. The ceiling is higher here, reaching about 16 feet. The walls are hidden by neatly-stacked clear crystals with people and creatures trapped inside. Like mosquitoes in amber they are prisoners in a solid cell, caught and frozen forever in their last moment of agony. Nothing in the room gives any indication as to the identity of the people or creatures, or the purpose of their preservation.

Most of the creatures preserved here are monsters and deformities that once populated the Pashuvanam. They share the room with Snake Men from the Jungles of Moarn, Humans from various regions and even a few Nāgas, as if part of a collection. In all, there are over fifty crystals, with room for a few more. Each crystal weighs approximately half a ton. If the party manages to move one somehow, the real wall, constructed of the same stone as the rest of the complex, is visible behind it. There are no tools or obvious means of moving the crystal blocks.



Area F: Detention Halls

The next section is occupied by Azakah's thralls. This area is huge, with four pillars, 50 feet on a side, supporting the roof. Several oil lamps hang from bronze rings fixed at intervals to the walls. There is a stench of sweat, urine and blood. From the entrance, openings to other rooms are visible to the left, right, and far side of the room.

The thralls have shackled pilgrims, half of whom are children, to rings the middle walls separating the corridors. Three thralls go from one prisoner to the next. Some prisoners are given a drink of a milky-white liquid. Others have organs harvested

with a sharp knife. The prisoners don't react to the thralls' knife cuts; they are clearly not aware of their surroundings and seem caught in a hallucinogenic high. More than a few captives have bled to death.

The organs are carried to a room to the left side (the Lab). Everything is conducted under the supervision of another daughter of Azakah. Bloodstains on the floor suggest that perhaps hundreds have been harvested. While the floor and walls are awash in old blood, excrement and urine, the prisoners are kept very clean. From the number of dried petals on the floor, it seems that thralls also give their prisoners Tiger-Tooth Lotus on a regular basis.

If the characters listened to Vishal's story, they may deduce that the milky fluid is soma. Otherwise, an Herbalist Skill Test with a situation modifier of -2 reveals that the effects on the prisoners are reminiscent of legends of a rare shamanic plant from this region.

With an Observe Skill Test, the characters can hear noises coming from the right side of the halls. They come from the Living Quarters, where many more thralls are engaged in everyday activities such as cooking, chopping wood, braiding rope, etc...

If a character succeeds at a Sense Skill Test (no situation modifier), he feels a faint magical aura emanating from the section to the left (the Lab). If he happens to see the daughter of Azakah at the same time, he will sense a similar, but much more elaborate, aura surrounding her.



Azakah's Daughter, Javit

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
6	8	8	8	8
Vitality	Skills: Alchemy 10, Defend 10, Investigation 8, Melee 6, Resist 9, Stealth 10			
35				
Resolve	Gear: White cotton robes, Sandals, Ceremonial knife DV 2(35)			
40				
Sanity				
40				

Stepping into the room far across the hall (the Hatchery) without having caused a major distraction in at least one of the other areas guarantees a difficult time. Azakah, who resides in the hatchery, will raise an alarm to attract her thralls. If they are already distracted by an incident in the lab or the living quarters, then her call will go unanswered.

Special Note: At this point, you must decide how to challenge the characters with the elements at hand. Use the map provided and the party's plans to determine type of opposition they will face. Certain actions on the character's part are more likely to help them than others. Wreaking havoc in the lab or setting a fire in the living quarters will attract the most attention and occupy the most thralls. Freeing prisoners is not the most productive approach, as they are caught in a delusional haze and are not aware of their surroundings; many don't even have the strength to remain on their feet.

Area G: The Living Quarters

The Living Quarters used to be a prayer hall. Plank walls, anchored on the existing columns, divide the hall into a dormitory, a kitchen, and a common area. Brick ovens and furnaces were built for cooking, providing heat and reducing humidity. The chimneys over these fires are the ones the characters saw outside. Ventilation is provided by air-wells, a well was dug in a corner of the hall. There is room enough to comfortably house approximately 40 people.



Starting a fire is a good way to create a distraction in this area. However, the number of thralls in the living quarters makes discovery of the party very likely. A successful Observe Test reveals some clothes drying on a rope strung between two columns. These clothes are unattended, and could disguise two of the party as Kshetrite thralls. To sneak into the hall requires a Stealth Skill with a -3 penalty; using a disguise removes this penalty but, as none of the Kshetrite workers carry weapons, characters in disguise cannot carry non-concealable weapons.



A thrall of Azakah

Special Note: If the party decides to enter the living quarters, make sure they are aware that they are clearly outnumbered. If they are seen they will have to face far more thralls that they can handle, and escape could be their only viable choice.

Area H: The Laboratory

As the party approaches the laboratory, they are assailed by an overpowering aroma of burnt flesh, alcohol, and spice.

The laboratory is where the organs collected from the prisoners are taken. Here they are crushed, boiled, vaporized and distilled in a glass and metal alchemical equipment. Four 18-foot long, rectangular tables run the same hellish process in parallel, fed at different stages with fresh ingredients. Each table is closely watched by a thrall who ensures nothing goes wrong. Their attention is so focused on the processes, and the noise from all the burning and bubbling liquids is so loud, that characters can easily enter the lab undetected; they get a +2 situation modifier to Stealth Tests.

Wooden shelves filled with books, spare alchemical equipment, and labeled jars cover the walls. Piled close to the entrance are 8 kegs containing soma.

Azakah's daughter makes frequent visits from the detention hall to extract certain fluids produced here. She sometimes dispatches thralls to carry vials to her mother and have empty ones retrieved.

Special Note: If the party plans to create the distraction here, disturbing the process even slightly will ruin the experiment and be sufficient to create a distraction. With an Alchemy Skill Test, a character can cause a powerful delayed explosion which will destroy everything in this room. Furthermore, the noise from such an explosion will attract every Kshetrite available to this area, clearing the way for the characters to enter the hatchery.

Area I: The Hatchery

The hatchery is where Azakah rests and lays her eggs. It is also where she nurtures and pours her magical concoctions on them. The hatchery is warm, dank, and dark.



A pair of candles placed in a brass holder immediately to the right of the entrance barely illuminate the room. A dull yellow carpet covers the floor. There are three major pieces of furniture: a circular bed, a great bookshelf, and a low shelf supporting eight baskets.

The bed is a plain wooden base on which a red cotton mattress has been placed. A thin silk curtain hanging from the ceiling surrounds it and ripples at the slightest movement in the room. When the characters enter they see, even in the near-darkness, a Nāgī coiled on the bed.

Azakah has the well-defined upper body of a woman, but instead of legs she has a 20-foot snake-like tail. Her porcelain-white skin contrasts sharply with her shiny black hair and the olive-green scales of her lower “half”. Azakah is naked, wearing only a gold and pearl tiara and matching bracelet.

The bookshelves at the right of the bed contain thousands of triptychs made of some rigid paper. These triptychs have lines of small ideograms of a language known only by the Nāgas. Deciphering even just a few symbols would take the lifetime of a dedicated linguist. It is safe to assume they tell stories of Azakah’s people and record the foul alchemical formula she uses on her eggs.



The shelf with the baskets is only a foot above the floor, three feet from the candleholder to the right of the entrance. Four baskets contain a single white-splotched dark grey egg. Each egg is roughly the size of a watermelon. A few empty glass vials have been left under the shelf.

Facing Azakah

If the party didn’t create a distraction before entering the hatchery, Azakah will pull a knotted leather string behind her bed. This summons 2 or 3 thralls to her rescue (you decide the number). She joins the ensuing fight with her sorcery. Every 4th round of combat, additional thralls will arrive to attack the party. This makes the confrontation with Azakah much more difficult. Azakah has no qualms using her Acid Cloud spell on an area occupied by her thralls, so long as it engulfs as many characters as possible.



A sample of Naga scriptures

Special Note: Azakah is instinctively aware that the characters aren't her thralls, and simply needs to buy about 5 seconds to use her hypnotic powers on them. A brief gaze from her golden snake eyes is all that is required. Her hypnotic charm is much more potent than that of Vera or her second daughter, seen in the detention halls.

If the party *did* cause a distraction before entering the hatchery, Azakah knows that she has to face the party on her own. Her dominance over her thralls makes her telepathically aware of their panic. She slides off her bed and says: "I see a band of brave souls entering the chamber of Azakah, a Matron among the Nāga. For what purpose I wonder. Is it to destroy her?"



Ask your players to make a Will Ability Test to resist. By default, the Situation Modifier for this test -4. However, a character's actions during the course of the adventure can make the Kavidhi, the Great Wheel of Fate, roll in their favor.

1. Any Characters wearing Vishal's war paint: +2 (**Kshetra, Day 1**)
2. Persuading Nadi's parents or finding her a husband: +1 to everyone (**Bashar's Caravan, Day 2**)
3. Making a profit from Bashar's game of Swapping: +1 (**Bashar's Caravan, Day 1**)

- 4. Characters who received Amar’s thanks with a passage from the Kestiam: +3 (**The Chahalatite**)
- 5. Characters who employed the title “Sahib” during their meeting with Onand: +2 (**The City of Yash, Day 1**)
- 6. If Vera and Azakah’s second daughter were killed: +1 for each daughter

Azakah, Nāgī Matron, Javit

Brawn	Quickness	Toughness	Wits	Will
10	14	14	13	16
Vitality	Skills: Alchemy 14, Athletics 11 (swim), Brawl 11, Defend 14, Intimidation 16, Magic (Fright 16, Ball/Bolt 16, Acid Cloud 17), Resist 15, Sense 14			
60				
Resolve	Claws: Claws do d12 + Quickness damage Spellcaster: Azakah is able to work magic Squeeze: Azakah can make a Brawl Test to grab an enemy. Escape is possible with a Brawn Test. For every Round trapped, the opponent suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. Squeeze damage is equal to Azakah’s Brawn + Toughness.			
72				
Sanity	Gear: Pearled gold bracelet, Pearled gold tiara			
80				



If the entire party fails this Ability Test, then it’s over. They have become thralls of Azakah. They are no longer masters of their own minds and will work tirelessly to help Azakah. Their adventure ends here.

Characters that pass their test experience flashes of alien memories. These support what Mamud said earlier about Azakah’s plan. It will be obvious to them that the Nāgī has failed to make them her thralls. As a side effect, they are immune to her gaze in the future.

Acid Cloud

Time	1 action	Performed On	Others
Range	10 feet	Vitality Cost	5
Duration	3 rounds	Sanity Cost	0

This common spell creates a yellowish cloud of acid that fills a 10' x 10' x 10' area in front of the magic user. The cloud will burn flesh and cause irritations of the eyes and lungs resulting in damage to all caught inside equal to the caster's Will (twice in the advent of a critical success). The acid will bypass all armor except Plate and Full Plate coupled with a Full Helmet. The cloud will drift ahead 10' on the second round and again 10' on the third. Moderate to strong winds will dissipates the cloud completely after the first round.

Most likely, some characters will fail while others succeed. Those who failed are not yet thralls of Azakah. They will be able to “snap out” of the hypnotic trance if the not-enthralled fight against Azakah within three rounds. It takes a further three rounds (four, if it was a Critical Failure) for the hypnotized characters to shake off the effects of Azakah’s spell. While they are still merely hypnotized, characters will not, directly or indirectly, act against Azakah.

If no-one attacks Azakah in the first three rounds, the hypnotized characters find clarity again: Azakah is their mistress, they must obey her every command. They are Thralls. Only Azahka’s death, despite their best efforts to defend her, will return them to their senses.

Onand’s Reward

Rewards for the characters mysteriously find their way into their bags, pouches or pockets the next night. You may assign the following to characters in any manner you see fit:

- A vial filled with a dark-green liquid. The vial has no label and is slightly warm to the touch. Drinking it will restore one permanent point of Sanity and remove one random Common Disorder. If the character doesn’t have any disorders, then he gets two Sanity points restored instead. Note that this vial restores lost Sanity; it confers no benefits to characters already at maximum Sanity.
- A sheepskin scroll detailing the Acid Cloud Spell employed by Azakah. The scroll is contained in a watertight ivory tube with a copper cap at one end. The tube itself is worth 15 Silver Coins.
- A beautiful signal horn made from the tusk of an elephant, with rings of bronze. The ivory is incredibly hard, allowing the horn to be used as a warhammer. Aside from sounding a deep and powerful note, blowing it for one action removes active Fear effects in all allied characters within 50 feet, once per day.



- A hard disk of dark green paste, used to make war paint. The disk is wrapped in a square cloth, and will turn into paste when mixed with hot water. The cloth has a simple pattern printed on one side and instructions on the other. The instructions describe how to make a war-paint pattern that grants +2 on the next Will Ability Test. There is enough paste for 3 applications.

- A pouch containing from 50 to 100 Silver Coins.

- A vial with a concentrate of Blivesh leaves. When sprinkled on a person, a place, or an object, it repels all insects and other small critters such as rats, snakes and scorpions. It may also be used to give food a memorably foul taste (if need be). There is enough for three uses.

Returning to Onand

If the characters return to Yash to look for Onand, he is nowhere to be found. People at the temple of Shashi don't remember ever seeing anyone of his description. Mokhu Onand is an uncommon name, though encountered on occasions. Athavans can explain that it is a name from the story of Kavni and the Humble Fisherman. If the character asks for the details of this story, any Athavan near the Temple of Shashi will recite it:



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One evening, the young prince Darjee was on his high balcony composing songs and poems. He was, at the time, filled with a great sadness because his father, the Maharajah, was too occupied dealing with the evils that plagued the realm to govern his people fairly. This sadness pervaded his work and moved his personal servants to tears. Flying overhead,

Kavni, the sacred bird, heard the prince's laments. Kavni was touched by the prince's plea for a happier existence for the Maharajah's subjects. Kavni decided to gift a mortal with the gift of Inspiration, so he could motivate his fellow men to do good deeds that would lift people from their sufferings. After years of searching for the most honest man, Kavni met a humble fisherman named Onand and gifted him. Thus, it is said, Onand appears where an evil needs to be confronted and inspires brave folks to deal with it for the common good.

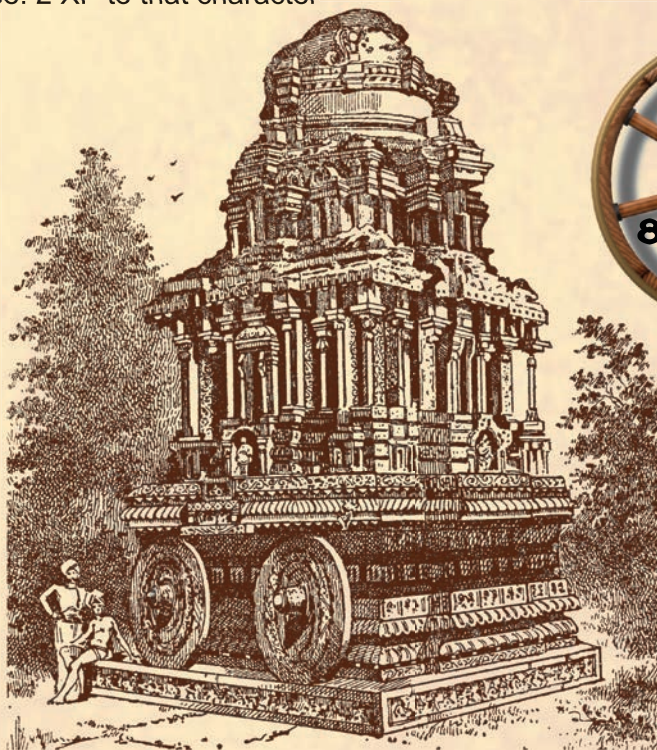
Whether the Onand the characters have met before has something to do with the one from the story is up to them.

Experience Point Rewards

- Defeating Azakah and her daughters and freeing their enthralled captives: 3 XP.
- Meeting Vera, and resisting her charms or refusing to be swayed to help her or discovering her true nature: 1 XP
- Pressing Jirhan to “Antagonistic” or “Broken” level: 1 XP
- Warning Jirhan about Amar Kaviprakash: 1 XP
- Defending Bashar’s caravan and defeating the Nipuan Captain during the attack: 1 XP
- Participating in Firanjee’s hunt and foiling his attempt to kill the characters (killing him or not): 1 XP
- Finding Nadi a suitable husband or convincing her parents to accept the curse: 1 XP

or

If a character volunteers (with noble intent) to become Nadi’s spouse: 2 XP to that character



Part III: ~~EXPERIENCED~~ CHARACTERS

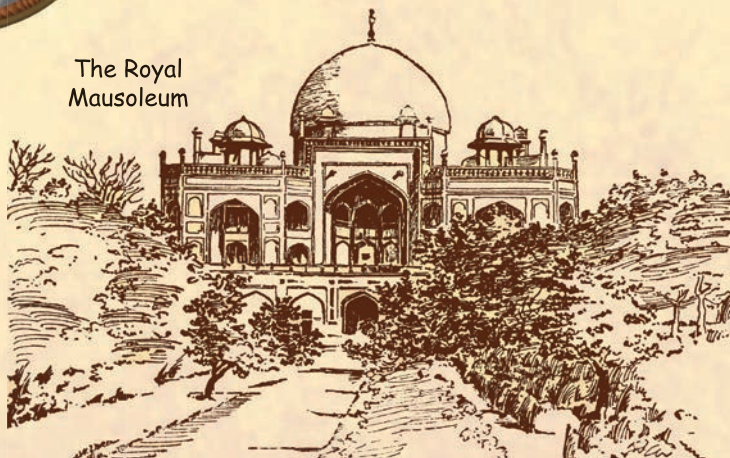
Location G: Palace of the Maharajah, Kanta

Kanta is the second largest city of Beidha and its capital. The Maharajah's Palace of Jade is located in Kanta. The city displays the power of the current dynasty in its architectural feats and monuments. Kanta is built in the circular shape of a Kavidhi, the sacred wheel symbol. Eight major boulevards form the spokes and meet at the center of the city, at the palace. The city has many domed buildings, which are overlooked by hundreds of minarets topped by domes of patined copper.

The Palace of Jade is surrounded by extensive gardens guarded by high walls, where exotic birds fly free and small monkeys play in the trees. The palace itself is made of the finest stone and is, at the same time, the residence of the Maharajah and his family, the royal court, and a temple for Prabhu. Anyone in the palatial grounds must carry a written authorization at all times. Prestigious guests are escorted by the Maharajah's elite "Tiger Guards".

A few miles north of Kanta is the royal mausoleum, where the corpses of the imperial family are preserved. It is rumored that their bodies are kept in a magical fluid that allows their spirit to whisper into the Maharaja's dreams. The mausoleum is also under the watch of the Tiger Guards and is frequently visited by the current Maharajah, Deviprasad Sukhjinder XXVIII.

The Royal
Mausoleum



Adventure Seeds

--- While the party is received in the palace as honored guests, a regional governor is attempting to seize power and dethrone the Maharajah. The governor seizes the city of Kanta with his troops and surrounds the palace to force the Maharajah to capitulate. The palace can hold out for months. Spokesmen from the governor are sent to try to sway men of influence to support their lord. Meanwhile, the Maharajah attempts to rally supporters. For days, or even weeks, the palace is a place of plots and assassination attempts. The characters have several options: side with the Maharajah, side with the governor, remain neutral, or take the throne for themselves. On the other hand, this could have all been orchestrated by the Maharajah himself to weed out traitors. Yet an ambitious governor, accepting such a plan by his master, could see the possibility to make it a real coup...



Deviprasad Sukhjinder
XXVIII

--- The characters are ambassadors sent by a foreign power. Their mission is to negotiate the establishment of an embassy with the Maharajah. It turns out that the Maharajah is very eager and gives land and workers for the construction of the embassy. Looking at the map, the character realizes that the land, situated near Kunala, is right on the path of the expected Nipuan attack. It becomes obvious that the Maharajah would like to involve the party's kingdom in the war. Will the characters refuse the deal, or will they accept the land, putting their kingdom in a delicate position? Will they offer something of their own to "buy" a relocation of the ambassadorial estate?



--- The Maharajah is dead! His successor, too young to rule, is controlled by an abusive regent. The characters are envoys with gifts given from their kingdom. The young prince, fearing for his life, sends a secret message to the characters seeking their help to organize a coup against the regent. What will they do?

Location H: Battle of Virugna-Husaam

This is the first assault of a larger push by Nipuan troops. This attack is meant to destabilize the Beidhanid forces and slow down their work on the various forts they are building or improving. It forces them to abandon the unfinished works and rush each fort to a state of readiness.

The Nipuan sent for this attack are few, but all are die-hard fanatics who expect only to kill as many Beidhanids as possible for the glory of their master. If these Nipuan can be stopped at the first battle, word of the defeat may cause the Nipuan commanders to put a temporary hold on the larger invasion.

Adventure Seed

--- The characters are on a diplomatic visit to the Fortress of Padma when the general and his officers are poisoned at a banquet. The next in line to command is a captain who fears that he too young and inexperienced for overall command. The captain asks the characters to lead the army out to intercept the Nipuan before they slip inside the defense

perimeter. Should they accept, the characters will have a sizable army and a battle plan, designed by the former general, calling for an interception at the Plains of Virugna-Hussam.



The General

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Location I: Fortress of Padma

This fortress is the cornerstone of Beidha's defense against Nipur. It consists of two concentric octagonal walls around a pyramidal keep. Each wall has eight circular towers. Everything is made from reddish-brown rock. The inner wall is significantly higher than the outer one, so archers on the inner wall can shoot over it.

The massive doors of the two walls are covered with brass spikes to counter battering attempts. Access to these doors are provided by long ramps running parallel to the walls, to expose attackers as much as possible to the defenders placed in the battlements.

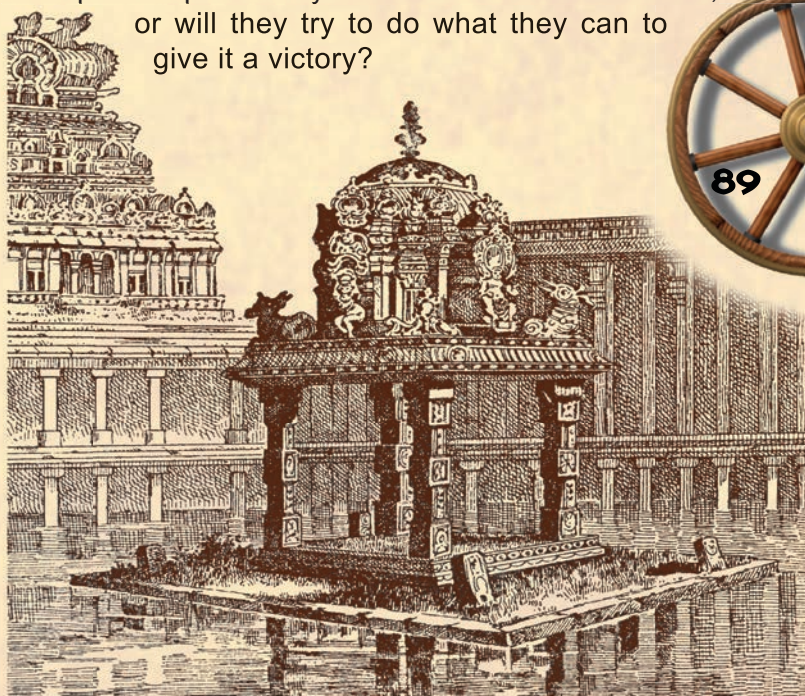
When the players arrive on the site, they see thousands of slaves working on scaffolding around the outer wall, laying the foundations for advanced bastions in the field. They are carefully watched over by guards and taskmasters alike.

Adventure Seeds

--- The general stationed at Padma seeks an audience with the characters. He recognizes the influence the foreigners can have in the upcoming battle. The general is ready to put a sizable portion of his forces under their supervision. He will ask that they train the soldiers and command them in battle. Should the characters accept, the general will petition the Maharajah make the characters Nawabs, and gives them their own province near the Nipuan border.

--- A local witch has declared the presence of the characters to be a powerful omen of victory for the Beidhanid troops. The word spreads rapidly and, spurred by the sudden boost of confidence, the common soldiers deploy for an immediate battle with the Nipuans. The officers, not wanting to lose face, go along with the sudden passion of their soldiers. The characters realize this as the first battalions begin their uncoordinated march toward the border. Will the characters attempt to stop the army doomed to failure on its own,

or will they try to do what they can to give it a victory?



Location J: Naval Base of Jaya

Jaya is both the military port, and its fort which serves as lighthouse. In practice however, Jaya is much more than that; there are two villages close by that subsist on trade with mariners, supply depots, a shipyard and a lumber yard.

The fort is a pair of large martello towers, linked by a small, rectangular keep. A large brazier is kept burning atop the Eastern tower. The whole fort sits on a tiny island some 500 yards offshore. The island can be reached by a low stone bridge, which also serves as access way for the wooden wharves on either side. Breakwaters of piled rocks extend from the sides of the island to protect the port.

Adventure Seed

--- The characters have to deal with some evil located in R'lyeh, and the base of Jaya is the closest friendly port. With considerable resources at their disposal, the party has negotiated with the admiral and the commander of the fort to use the harbor and the shipyard facilities. Before leaving for R'lyeh, the party realizes that some resource/important item/piece of intelligence has gone missing. They are forced to remain in port until it is recovered, but they overstay their welcome and disputes erupt between the men under the characters' command and those of Jaya.



The busy streets of the City of Yash

Part IV: **परीचय**

NPC Name List

As the characters adventure through Beidha, they will encounter many NPCs whose names are not provided. Should you need to come up with a name, the following list can help generate suitable names. Don't be afraid to use the same more than once, Beidhanids are often named after famous people and the same name can be encountered often. Compounding them also works fine.

Last Names and Masculine Given Names

Abhay	Kailash	Prabhakara
Agni	Kalda	Punit
Ajit	Kamala	Purushottam
Ankur	Kapila	Rama
Arya	Kiran	Ratna
Baldev	Kishore	Ravi
Basant	Lakshmana	Rishi
Basu	Lalita	Roshan
Devadas	Lochan	Sachin
Dhaval	Madhava	Sandeep
Dipaka	Madhuri	Sanjit
Durai	Manish	Shresth
Gautai	Mohana	Singh
Gopala	Mukhul	Subhash
Gotam	Murali	Suresh
Harinder	Nala	Swapnil
Harisha	Naranaya	Swarna
Harshad	Narinder	Turvander
Isha	Naveen	Vasanta
Jagannatha	Nilam	Vijaya
Jaya	Nithya	Vimal
Jayanta	Pankaja	Vinay
Jaywan	Pitambara	Yama

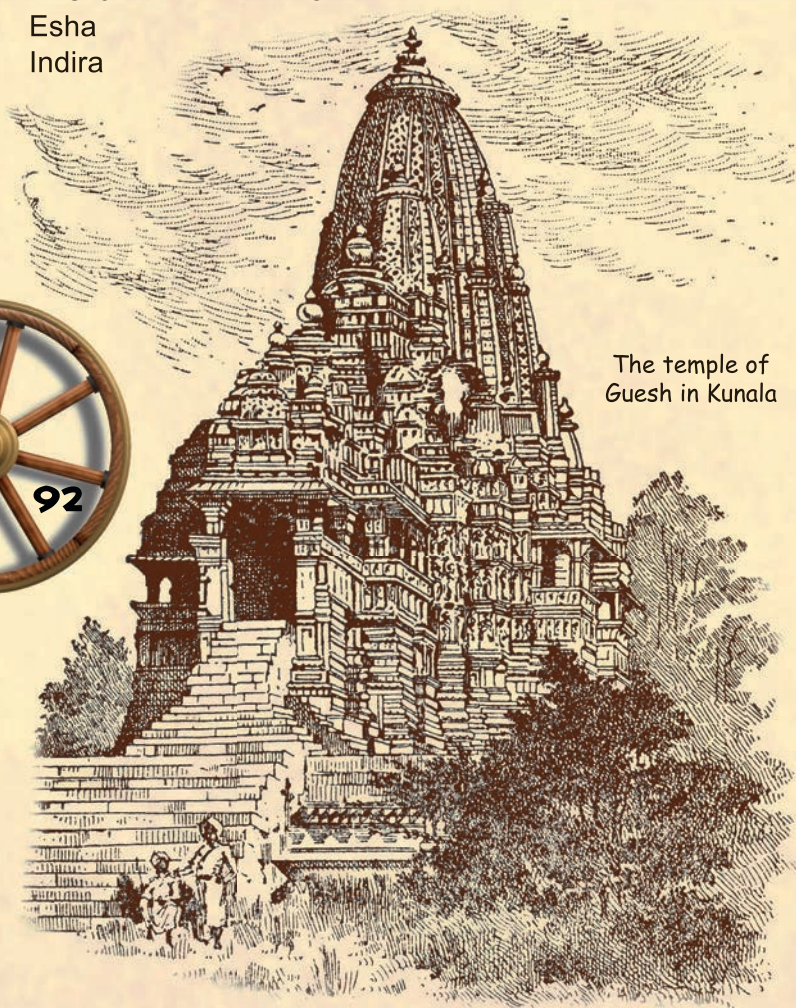


Feminine Given Names

Abhilasha	Jayanti	Mukta
Aditi	Jyotsna	Nila
Amrita	Kala	Nisha
Ankita	Kamini	Parvati
Asha	Karishma	Priti
Avani	Kaur	Reva
Bala	Kavita	Sanjana
Chanda	Kirana	Sima
Chetana	Lalita	Shiri
Devi	Lila	Usha
Devika	Lina	Veda
Divya	Manili	Yami
Drishti	Mira	
Esha		
Indira		



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The temple of
Guesh in Kunala

**Main Road:
Distances in
Miles**

	City of Kanta	City of Yash	Naval Base of Jaya	City of Manjumina	Fortress of Padma	City of Kunala	Village of Kshetra	Ruins of Cira	Prasanna	Cutha (Nipur)
City of Kanta	X	55	155	325	455	510	545	585	700	885
City of Yash	55	X	100	270	400	455	490	530	645	830
Naval Base of Jaya	155	100	X	170	300	355	390	430	545	730
City of Manjumina	325	270	170	X	130	185	220	260	375	630
Fortress of Padma	455	400	300	130	X	55	90	130	245	760
City of Kunala	510	455	355	185	55	X	35	75	190	815
Village of Kshetra	545	490	390	220	90	35	X	40	210	850
Ruins of Cira	585	530	430	260	130	75	40	X	250	890
Prasanna	700	645	545	375	245	190	210	250	X	1005
Cutha (Nipur)	885	830	730	630	760	815	850	890	1005	X



Lake Sahi near Manjumina



Lexicon

Anjali - One of the three great rivers of Beidha, shared with Nipur. Its name signifies “The Offering”.

Athavan - The caste of scholars, priests, academicians, magicians and scientists.

Beidhanid - Demonym for the people of Beidha.

Chalahata - An ancient oath; a death-wish to ensure the destruction of an enemy.

Chalahatite - Someone who has made the oath of Chahalata.

Cutha - Capital city of the Kingdom of Nipur.

Elephantries - Units of elephant-mounted soldiers employed by the Maharajah and the king of Nipur.

Girisha - Like the Anjali, the Girisha is a great river running through Beidha and Nipur. Its name signifies “The Lord of the Mountain” and is a reference to the deity Guesh.

Huiti - The caste of artists, artisans and entertainers of Beidha.

Javit - A caste of people deemed “undesirable” by society, most of whom are criminals. People are not born Javit, but they can become it.

Kavidhi - One of the most powerful symbols of Beidhanid philosophy. It is a wooden wheel with eight spokes and represents several aspects and interpretations on how fate, fortune, life and death function in the universe.

Kestiam - The Kestiam is the collection of texts, or sutras, holding all the traditions and laws of Beidhanid society.

Kunalans - Demonym for the people of the city of Kunala

Kshatriya - The caste of warriors and rulers, and their immediate families. The entire ruling class of Beidha is from this caste.

Ksitana - Ksitani (Ksitana is its singular form) is the name commonly given to a people from the territory of Beidha who are not of the Beidhanid society. They live in semi-primitive tribes on the fringe of large cities.



Lavanya - One of the great rivers of Beidha. Its name means "Sublime Grace".

Nāga - Mysterious snake and humanoid creatures from the mountains of Nergal's Fingers. The Nāga (Nāgī for the feminine form) now nearly extinct, once lived in the Pashuvanam. Related creatures also exist elsewhere and are known as Lamias.

Maharajah - Title given to the king of Beidha.

Nawab - Title given to the governor of one of the 32 provinces, or Sabah, of Beidha.

Nipuan - Demyonym for the people of Nipur

Pashuvanam - Extensive jungle covering most of Beidha and Nipur. It is roughly translates to "Jungle of Beasts"

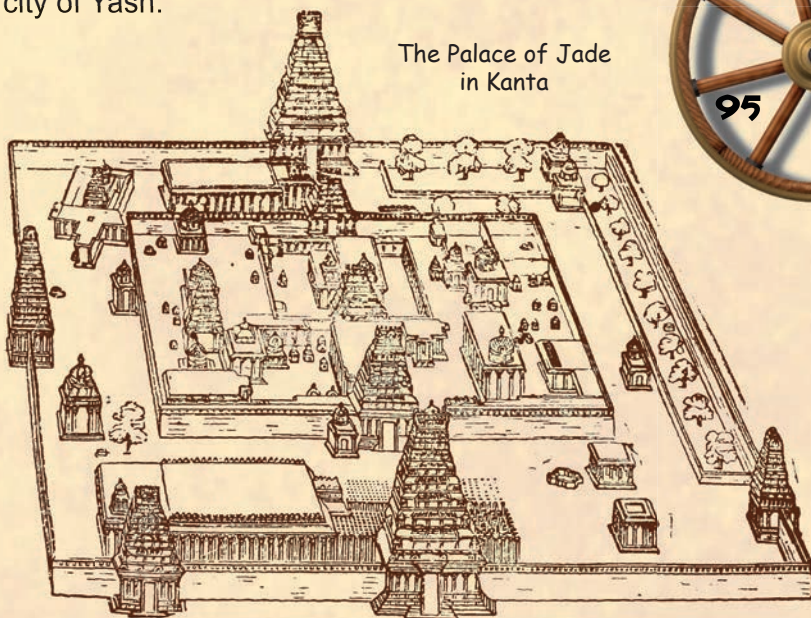
Revadhi - A twelve-spoke wheel of great symbolic significance to the people of Beidha. It is considered unlucky, and a powerful symbol of misfortune.

Sabah - A local word for "province".

Vastiya - The caste of bankers, merchants and lower administrators that don't require an advanced education.

Yashim - Demyonym for the people who live in the city of Yash.

The Palace of Jade
in Kanta



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SHADOW SWORD & SPELL

Beidha.

The name invokes wonderment. It fuels the imagination of storytellers. It fills merchants with a lust for riches.

Covering most of this land is a thick jungle called the Pashuvanam, or Jungle of Beasts. The jungle deserves its name. Fierce monsters and animals plague Beidhanids and Nipuanes alike, sometimes destroying entire villages. Over the last few centuries, most of the dangerous creatures have been driven away from major settlements and main roads, giving the inhabitants a sense of security. Still, stories of unspeakable horrors lurking in the jungle's depth persist—and are regularly proven true.

Under Pashuvanam's Lush is your introduction to this land. Here you will find adventure, rumor and mysteries. More than a sourcebook, this is an adventure which takes the heroes from the civilization of this land and through the dark foreboding jungles to ruins long forgotten.

What evil lurks under the lush?

