

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,000

It's not a cave, it's a city.

2

00:00:05,000 --> 00:00:07,000

Nobody's been up inside them before.

3

00:00:07,000 --> 00:00:09,000

Now this is uncharted territory for us.

4

00:00:16,000 --> 00:00:18,000

Come on, we down.

5

00:00:18,000 --> 00:00:20,000

Oh my God, look at this!

6

00:00:20,000 --> 00:00:22,000

That is discovery.

7

00:00:24,000 --> 00:00:25,000

Holy f***.

8

00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:26,000

There it is.

9

00:00:26,000 --> 00:00:27,000

You can see it.

10

00:00:27,000 --> 00:00:29,000

It's a big hole.

11

00:00:29,000 --> 00:00:31,000

You can see it. You see it?

12

00:00:38,000 --> 00:00:40,000

My name is Josh Gates.

13

00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:45,000

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration.

14

00:00:46,000 --> 00:00:49,000

I have a tendency to end up in some very strange situations.

15

00:00:50,000 --> 00:00:52,000

God, Lord have...

16

00:00:53,000 --> 00:00:56,000

My travels have taken me to the ends of the earth

17

00:00:56,000 --> 00:00:59,000

as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

18

00:01:00,000 --> 00:01:03,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

19

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:10,000

The legend of Shangri-La is the story of a hidden valley

20

00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:12,000

somewhere high in the Himalayas.

21

00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:17,000

A place of mystical energy, immortality, and eternal peace.

22

00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:20,000

But could it be based on someplace real?

23

00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:25,000

My search brought me to the holy city of Kathmandu

24

00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:28,000

where I learned about the spiritual tradition of Shambhala,

25

00:01:28,000 --> 00:01:31,000

an ancient Buddhist realm which inspired the Shangri-La story.

26

00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:35,000

I've also learned that archaeologists have recently been granted access

27

00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:38,000

to explore Nepal's remote northern frontier,

28

00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:40,000

known as the Mustang region,

29

00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:42,000

that may hold the truth behind the myth.

30

00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:48,000

My team and I hopped a helicopter to navigate high into the Himalayas

31

00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:51,000

where we touched down, switched to 4x4s,

32

00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:54,000

and undertook an epic drive into the Mustang.

33

00:01:56,000 --> 00:01:59,000

Once there, we linked up with archaeologist Mark Aldenderfer

34

00:01:59,000 --> 00:02:01,000

and his associate Mohan Singh Lama.

35

00:02:01,000 --> 00:02:06,000

They revealed that these valleys are filled with nearly 10,000 mysterious sky caves,

36

00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:11,000

perilous-looking chambers hand-dug out of the cliffs more than 500 years ago

37

00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:14,000

by Buddhists who came here from Tibet.

38

00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:15,000

But why?

39

00:02:15,000 --> 00:02:19,000

Some claim this area could be the real-life Shangri-La.

40

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:23,000

In one remote cave, I discovered that some of these structures

41

00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:25,000

were used as places of healing.

42

00:02:25,000 --> 00:02:28,000

You should not enter this if you're not pure of heart.

43

00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:29,000

Oh, now you tell me.

44

00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:33,000

Another cavern revealed incredible paintings by different ancient artists,

45

00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:38,000

proof that some of these caves were used as places of culture and craftsmanship.

46

00:02:38,000 --> 00:02:40,000

That is incredible.

47

00:02:42,000 --> 00:02:46,000

Now, at nearly 14,000 feet, we've discovered a rock tower

48

00:02:46,000 --> 00:02:51,000

that could help unravel the mystery of why people came to this valley so many centuries ago.

49

00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:54,000

Wall is crumbling here, guys.

50

00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:55,000

Be careful.

51

00:02:55,000 --> 00:02:57,000

Back up, back up, back up.

52

00:02:57,000 --> 00:02:58,000

You okay?

53

00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:00,000

Let's really sketch you up here.

54

00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:02,000

So, what do we got?

55

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:05,000

When you have small chambers like this, there are only one of two things usually put inside,

56

00:03:05,000 --> 00:03:08,000

something stored or human burials.

57

00:03:08,000 --> 00:03:11,000

So, let's see what the hell's in there.

58

00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:15,000

We got human burials.

59

00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:17,000

Oh, my God.

60

00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:18,000

Wow.

61

00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:19,000

Very good score.

62

00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:21,000

We got a human jaw.

63

00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:22,000

We've got long bones.

64

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:25,000

We've got a femur, fibula, or tibia.

65

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:27,000

Congratulations to the team here.

66

00:03:27,000 --> 00:03:28,000

This is great.

67

00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:29,000

Nice work, guys.

68

00:03:29,000 --> 00:03:30,000

Any sense of how old this might be?

69

00:03:30,000 --> 00:03:31,000

It's early in the 800 AD.

70

00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:35,000

This is actually an amazingly important find.

71

00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:37,000

This is astounding.

72

00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:41,000

We've discovered human remains that indicate that even in ancient times,

73

00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:43,000

people considered these mountains sacred.

74

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:48,000

By extension, the dizzyingly high sky caves may have been put up here for the same reason.

75

00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:50,000

To be closer to the gods.

76

00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:53,000

No doubt that many of the caves were considered holy ground

77

00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:56,000

for cremations and burials of the dead.

78

00:03:56,000 --> 00:04:00,000

Now, I'm going to, with your permission, extract this mandible.

79

00:04:00,000 --> 00:04:01,000

Yeah.

80

00:04:03,000 --> 00:04:04,000

Look at that.

81

00:04:04,000 --> 00:04:09,000

The jawbone has been bleached white by the sun and is incredibly well preserved.

82

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:12,000

This is a group of people that still are largely a mystery, right?

83

00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:15,000

If it's as early as I think it could be, it might help us recalibrate

84

00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:17,000

what our thinking is about this region.

85

00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:21,000

This is a really tangible link to the past.

86

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:22,000

Wow.

87

00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:23,000

Not bad for a day's work, huh?

88

00:04:23,000 --> 00:04:24,000

Not bad.

89

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:25,000

Good score, guys.

90

00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:26,000

Well done.

91

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:31,000

After photographing the site, we hike back down the mountain.

92

00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:36,000

As we walk, though, we see scraps of prayer flags and clothing on the ground.

93

00:04:36,000 --> 00:04:37,000

Lots of debris here.

94

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:38,000

Yeah.

95

00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:39,000

Parts of scarves.

96

00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:40,000

So it's a sky barrel site, yes.

97

00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:44,000

This is how they take their dead into the next dimension, if you will.

98

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:48,000

It turns out not all rituals on this mountain are ancient.

99

00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:52,000

We've come across what's known as a sky burial, an active site where Buddhists

100

00:04:52,000 --> 00:04:55,000

ceremonially part ways with the dead.

101

00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:58,000

Very few people that are not lobos or Tibetans see this.

102

00:04:58,000 --> 00:05:00,000

It's not something that they'd like you to watch.

103

00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:02,000

The person dies and they bring them here.

104

00:05:02,000 --> 00:05:04,000

They put them on the slab.

105

00:05:05,000 --> 00:05:08,000

That rope is used to tie around the deceased neck.

106

00:05:08,000 --> 00:05:10,000

They pull that neck so that the body is tight.

107

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:14,000

Then they'll slash the back of the body with a sharp knife.

108

00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:19,000

And then the Lamargar vultures get wind of this scent.

109

00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:21,000

They'll come in to feed on the body.

110

00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:27,000

And then what remains, the person will then crush those bones and push it all,

111

00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:28,000

make it into a pulp.

112

00:05:29,000 --> 00:05:32,000

And then leave it here for the vultures to come back.

113

00:05:33,000 --> 00:05:34,000

So there's nothing left.

114

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:35,000

That's the idea, right?

115

00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:36,000

Yep.

116

00:05:36,000 --> 00:05:40,000

The practice might seem gruesome, but it is also profound.

117

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:42,000

And this site, Mohan, is still being used?

118

00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:43,000

Yeah, it still leaves, dude.

119

00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:48,000

The experience of seeing the sky burial leaves us all feeling moved

120

00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:50,000

and frankly, a little shaken.

121

00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:54,000

We solemnly hike down to the 4x4s and drive on in silence.

122

00:05:55,000 --> 00:05:59,000

Just after dark, we arrive at the outskirts of the city of Lomantang.

123

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:01,000

Tomorrow we'll continue our investigation,

124

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:04,000

but with temperatures outside now below freezing,

125

00:06:04,000 --> 00:06:09,000

for tonight we seek shelter in a tea house, the local version of a Motel 6.

126

00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:12,000

Welcome to Lomantang.

127

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Bags are stacked and generators are plugged into our batteries.

128

00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:20,000

Do not splice wires with your mouth at home, kids.

129

00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:25,000

Our crew powers on the phones, but up here, even the satellites seem to be out of commission.

130

00:06:25,000 --> 00:06:26,000

What's going on?

131

00:06:26,000 --> 00:06:27,000

Just trying to call home.

132

00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:28,000

How's that going?

133

00:06:28,000 --> 00:06:29,000

Not so well.

134

00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:31,000

Doesn't work?

135

00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:35,000

The locals fire up the stoves, and we finally get to chow down.

136

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:39,000

Have you been to a coconut cookie in the middle of Lomantang?

137

00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:40,000

It's a beautiful day.

138

00:06:40,000 --> 00:06:42,000

What else you need in life?

139

00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:43,000

Nothing, nothing.

140

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:50,000

Morning in the Mustang region.

141

00:06:50,000 --> 00:06:53,000

We're only about 20 miles from the border of Tibet,

142

00:06:53,000 --> 00:06:56,000

and we're on the doorstep of a place that I've traveled a long way to see.

143

00:06:56,000 --> 00:06:58,000

This is Lomantang.

144

00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:01,000

A population of about 1,400 people, but believe it or not,

145

00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:04,000

that still makes this the biggest city for hundreds of miles.

146

00:07:04,000 --> 00:07:07,000

This was once the capital of the Kingdom of Loh,

147

00:07:07,000 --> 00:07:13,000

a walled fortress with 14 guard posts and two gates to keep out potential invaders.

148

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:15,000

Today, this is not just an entrance to a city.

149

00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:18,000

It is a portal to another time and place.

150

00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:24,000

Welcome to the past.

151

00:07:25,000 --> 00:07:29,000

A city made of mud, sweat, and prayers.

152

00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:31,000

This isn't a tourist attraction.

153

00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:33,000

This isn't a reenactment.

154

00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:37,000

This is, for all intents and purposes, life in the Middle Ages.

155

00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:45,000

It is also the best preserved example of ancient Tibetan culture left on Earth.

156

00:07:45,000 --> 00:07:49,000

Residents even collect and dry out yak dung to burn in their stoves.

157

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:52,000

Excuse me, just if I could just...

158

00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:54,000

It's fine.

159

00:07:55,000 --> 00:07:56,000

Hi.

160

00:07:56,000 --> 00:08:00,000

No internet, no phones, and don't even ask about the plumbing.

161

00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:04,000

In fact, the only modern amenity that seems to have made its way into town is this.

162

00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:06,000

An espresso machine.

163

00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:15,000

That's very good.

164

00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:16,000

Watch out, Starbucks.

165

00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:18,000

This guy's coming for you.

166

00:08:19,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Next door, I find a gift shop filled with authentic treasures from the region.

167

00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:24,000

This is beautiful.

168

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:25,000

What is this?

169

00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:29,000

We use it in Semuntang, like Tantik Semuntang for blow.

170

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:33,000

That's amazing.

171

00:08:34,000 --> 00:08:36,000

This is made from human fiber.

172

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:37,000

Oh, it's a human fiber?

173

00:08:37,000 --> 00:08:38,000

Yeah.

174

00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:40,000

I probably shouldn't have put that to my mouth.

175

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:45,000

As I continue my stroll through the 1400s,

176

00:08:45,000 --> 00:08:49,000

I notice that the women of Lomantang seem to be doing a lot of the heavy lifting.

177

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:53,000

Meanwhile, I find the guys in town hanging out at the local bar.

178

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:54,000

I must stay.

179

00:08:54,000 --> 00:08:55,000

Just without the bar part.

180

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:56,000

What are we talking about?

181

00:08:56,000 --> 00:08:59,000

Women? Money? The usual.

182

00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:04,000

Sure enough, it isn't long before someone brings a tray,

183

00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:06,000

and it isn't just tea, they're pouring.

184

00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:08,000

For me?

185

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:09,000

Yeah.

186

00:09:09,000 --> 00:09:10,000

What is this?

187

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:11,000

It smells good.

188

00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:13,000

Woo!

189

00:09:13,000 --> 00:09:14,000

Woo-hoo-hoo!

190

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:15,000

Woo-hoo!

191

00:09:15,000 --> 00:09:17,000

I think I just found enlightenment.

192

00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:20,000

This is Roxy, Nepalese moonshine.

193

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:21,000

Cheers.

194

00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:22,000

Cheers.

195

00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:26,000

I tell you what it tastes like, but I can no longer taste anything else for comparison.

196

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:33,000

You guys are the best.

197

00:09:33,000 --> 00:09:35,000

I love you guys.

198

00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:37,000

Let's always stay in touch.

199

00:09:37,000 --> 00:09:38,000

Yeah.

200

00:09:42,000 --> 00:09:44,000

After a few more rounds with the boys,

201

00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:47,000

I find myself in front of a Buddhist temple.

202

00:09:47,000 --> 00:09:51,000

Like all repentant drinkers, it seems I've turned to religion.

203

00:09:56,000 --> 00:09:59,000

Beyond the doors, time stops.

204

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:05,000

The bright and dusty streets of Lomantang replaced by twilight and silence.

205

00:10:05,000 --> 00:10:08,000

A monument to contemplation.

206

00:10:09,000 --> 00:10:11,000

Four Lamas chant mantras.

207

00:10:11,000 --> 00:10:16,000

Phrases repeated in order to allow the mind to drift away from distracting thoughts

208

00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:18,000

and into a trance-like state.

209

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:21,000

If I'm going to reach the realm of Shambhala, or Shangri-La,

210

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:24,000

I can't just explore the mysterious sky caves.

211

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:26,000

I need to explore my own mind.

212

00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:38,000

I spend an hour listening to the chanting,

213

00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:42,000

and then, for just a moment, everything vanishes.

214

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:45,000

And I fall into an incredible nothingness.

215

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:52,000

But it's fleeting, a taste of something I may never be disciplined enough to find again.

216

00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:56,000

The monks are gracious and grant me the next best thing to enlightenment.

217

00:10:56,000 --> 00:10:58,000

I carry their blessing from the temple.

218

00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:01,000

Where I'm going next, I'll certainly need it.

219

00:11:02,000 --> 00:11:04,000

Got a kind of foothold.

220

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:06,000

I thought Shangri-La was supposed to be peaceful.

221

00:11:06,000 --> 00:11:08,000

This is terrifying.

222

00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:18,000

I'm on an epic journey through Nepal investigating the legend of Shangri-La,

223

00:11:18,000 --> 00:11:20,000

or what Buddhists call Shambhala.

224

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:23,000

A heaven on earth rumored to be hidden high in the Himalayas.

225

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:28,000

Okay, convoy, we're moving out. Here we go.

226

00:11:29,000 --> 00:11:32,000

After two nights in the medieval city of Lomantang,

227

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:35,000

our convoy, led by archaeologist Mark Aldendurfer,

228

00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:39,000

sets off to explore remote sky caves that may be linked to the legend.

229

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:41,000

Where are we headed?

230

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:44,000

Today we're headed toward the Maruzang area,

231

00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:47,000

and apparently there's a cave system called Pumamba.

232

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:48,000

Pumamba.

233

00:11:48,000 --> 00:11:49,000

Pumamba, yeah.

234

00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:50,000

Sounds tropical.

235

00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:51,000

It does. It's an odd name.

236

00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:53,000

And what's in the Pumamba caves?

237

00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:55,000

Well, we don't know what's in the Pumamba caves.

238

00:11:55,000 --> 00:11:56,000

I haven't been explored by anybody's team.

239

00:11:56,000 --> 00:11:57,000

Nobody's been in there?

240

00:11:57,000 --> 00:11:58,000

No.

241

00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:00,000

So I think that they're worth taking a look at.

242

00:12:00,000 --> 00:12:01,000

For sure.

243

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:02,000

Oh, my God.

244

00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:04,000

Just a little bumpy in here.

245

00:12:05,000 --> 00:12:07,000

The road to paradise is far from paved.

246

00:12:07,000 --> 00:12:10,000

We're driving near the restricted border of Tibet,

247

00:12:10,000 --> 00:12:13,000

to a valley that contains the mysterious sky caves.

248

00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:17,000

This is the craziest road I've ever been on for sure.

249

00:12:17,000 --> 00:12:19,000

This is like some next level f***ing really.

250

00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:28,000

Just trying to not hit the big rocks.

251

00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:29,000

Right.

252

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:31,000

Come on, girl.

253

00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:37,000

Wow, look at this.

254

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:41,000

The one smooth section of road.

255

00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:42,000

Is this a mirage, Mark?

256

00:12:42,000 --> 00:12:43,000

No, no.

257

00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:44,000

Keep going.

258

00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:45,000

My kidneys, thank you.

259

00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:47,000

Don't get used to it.

260

00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:52,000

This looks like a tough crossing.

261

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:54,000

What do you think?

262

00:12:54,000 --> 00:12:55,000

We've gone through this or walking?

263

00:12:55,000 --> 00:12:56,000

We have to walk.

264

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:57,000

We have to walk?

265

00:12:57,000 --> 00:12:58,000

Yeah.

266

00:12:58,000 --> 00:12:59,000

Too much weight in the vehicle?

267

00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:00,000

Yeah.

268

00:13:00,000 --> 00:13:02,000

So let's get out and we'll have one of the drivers take it across.

269

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:04,000

Okay, let's jump out.

270

00:13:04,000 --> 00:13:07,000

Everyone climbs out to cross the stream on foot,

271

00:13:07,000 --> 00:13:09,000

while one of our local guides drives solo.

272

00:13:09,000 --> 00:13:11,000

On his way to Robba Bank, apparently.

273

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:19,000

Our local team protects our most valuable commodity, breakfast.

274

00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:22,000

Several dozen eggs are hand-carried across the river.

275

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:24,000

Something tells me we're all taking them scrambled tomorrow.

276

00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:25,000

Hey, Lachman.

277

00:13:25,000 --> 00:13:26,000

Yes, sir.

278

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:27,000

How did the eggs do?

279

00:13:27,000 --> 00:13:28,000

Did you crack any eggs coming across?

280

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:29,000

No, no, no.

281

00:13:29,000 --> 00:13:30,000

You sure?

282

00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:31,000

Yeah.

283

00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:32,000

You saved them all?

284

00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:33,000

Yeah.

285

00:13:33,000 --> 00:13:34,000

Nice work, buddy.

286

00:13:35,000 --> 00:13:36,000

We ready?

287

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:37,000

Yeah.

288

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:38,000

Back in the cars.

289

00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:43,000

We drive through the seemingly barren valley,

290

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:45,000

inventing the road as we go.

291

00:13:48,000 --> 00:13:50,000

But soon, we hit the end of the line.

292

00:13:50,000 --> 00:13:52,000

Okay, so here we are.

293

00:13:53,000 --> 00:13:55,000

Pomonga is just a little bit further down valley.

294

00:13:55,000 --> 00:13:56,000

Okay.

295

00:13:56,000 --> 00:13:57,000

There we go.

296

00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:00,000

We're less than an hour's hike to the caves,

297

00:14:00,000 --> 00:14:03,000

but once the sun goes down, it gets really cold around here.

298

00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:06,000

So we'll need to make camp before we set off on foot.

299

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:12,000

Once again, we have to take all of the gear from one place to someplace else.

300

00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:14,000

Don't worry, breakfast made it.

301

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:17,000

Josh, you want me to carry one of those?

302

00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:18,000

No, no, I got this, Brian.

303

00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:19,000

You sure?

304

00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:20,000

No, no, don't worry about it.

305

00:14:20,000 --> 00:14:21,000

You look pretty solid.

306

00:14:21,000 --> 00:14:23,000

You know, you just stand there with that one small camera.

307

00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:24,000

Okay.

308

00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:25,000

I got all this.

309

00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:27,000

Everyone pitches in to move the equipment,

310

00:14:27,000 --> 00:14:30,000

though I'm not sure my contributions are being fully appreciated.

311

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:31,000

Brian, I got this.

312

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:32,000

You got it?

313

00:14:32,000 --> 00:14:33,000

Yeah, I got it.

314

00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:34,000

You got this?

315

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:35,000

Yeah, I got it.

316

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:36,000

I got it.

317

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:37,000

It's fine, I got it.

318

00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:38,000

Yeah.

319

00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:40,000

Josh Gates, finally doing some work around here.

320

00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:41,000

Finally.

321

00:14:41,000 --> 00:14:42,000

I'm gonna kill all of you.

322

00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:44,000

I'm gonna leave you all out here for dead.

323

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:51,000

While we set up the tents,

324

00:14:51,000 --> 00:14:53,000

our local guides start preparing dinner.

325

00:14:53,000 --> 00:14:55,000

They cook as easily on the side of the Himalayas

326

00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:58,000

as I do in a fully stocked kitchen.

327

00:14:58,000 --> 00:15:00,000

Andrew, I'm sorry we ran out of tents, man.

328

00:15:00,000 --> 00:15:01,000

It's all right, it's all right.

329

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:02,000

Don't worry about it.

330

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:03,000

Somebody's got to watch the gear.

331

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:04,000

Yeah, you'll be fine.

332

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:06,000

Temperature should be about 20 degrees tonight.

333

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:07,000

Yeah, yeah, I got this.

334

00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:08,000

Don't worry.

335

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:10,000

With camp set,

336

00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:13,000

it's time for another high altitude hike.

337

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:16,000

We're setting out to survey a group of sky caves

338

00:15:16,000 --> 00:15:18,000

that have never been explored.

339

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:20,000

The enigmatic caverns of this region

340

00:15:20,000 --> 00:15:22,000

have been linked to the Shangri-La legend,

341

00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:25,000

so we're eager to see what might be hiding inside.

342

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:26,000

Is that it?

343

00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:28,000

That's Pumamba right dead ahead.

344

00:15:28,000 --> 00:15:29,000

Wow.

345

00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:31,000

They're really extensive.

346

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:34,000

They are, but I hope you've noticed one thing.

347

00:15:35,000 --> 00:15:39,000

The closer we get to the place, the higher up they are.

348

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:40,000

Yeah, I do notice that.

349

00:15:40,000 --> 00:15:42,000

From where I first saw them, they didn't look too bad.

350

00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:44,000

Now it looks like they're, I don't know,

351

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:45,000

a couple hundred feet up at least.

352

00:15:45,000 --> 00:15:46,000

Yep.

353

00:15:47,000 --> 00:15:49,000

How many openings do you think there are?

354

00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:51,000

50 or 60 easily, maybe more.

355

00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:53,000

So nobody's been up inside them before?

356

00:15:53,000 --> 00:15:55,000

No, this is uncharted territory for us.

357

00:16:04,000 --> 00:16:08,000

Caves are absolutely stunning and really mysterious looking,

358

00:16:08,000 --> 00:16:11,000

but as you get close to them, they're also something else.

359

00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:12,000

They're terrifying.

360

00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:16,000

The enormity of the caves is finally clear to me,

361

00:16:16,000 --> 00:16:18,000

and one thing is for certain,

362

00:16:18,000 --> 00:16:20,000

we're going to need a bigger ladder.

363

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:23,000

That is a real challenge.

364

00:16:25,000 --> 00:16:26,000

Me.

365

00:16:27,000 --> 00:16:29,000

I'm in the Himalayan mountains of Nepal,

366

00:16:29,000 --> 00:16:32,000

searching for the origins of the Shangri-La legend,

367

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:35,000

and my investigation just got a whole lot harder.

368

00:16:36,000 --> 00:16:37,000

Me.

369

00:16:38,000 --> 00:16:39,000

So there she is.

370

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:40,000

Yep.

371

00:16:40,000 --> 00:16:41,000

Good Lord.

372

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:43,000

That is a real challenge.

373

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:47,000

It's going to be an interesting climb to get in there,

374

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:49,000

but you know, it looks doable.

375

00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:51,000

With the right kind of ropes and the right kind of rope,

376

00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:52,000

and the right kind of rope,

377

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:53,000

and the right kind of rope,

378

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:54,000

and the right kind of rope,

379

00:16:54,000 --> 00:16:55,000

it looks doable.

380

00:16:55,000 --> 00:16:57,000

With the right kind of ropes and good guide,

381

00:16:57,000 --> 00:16:59,000

you should be able to get in there no problem.

382

00:17:00,000 --> 00:17:01,000

You're going in there.

383

00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:02,000

No, I'm not going in there.

384

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:03,000

Really?

385

00:17:03,000 --> 00:17:04,000

Really.

386

00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:05,000

Bad back.

387

00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:06,000

I got bad everything, Mark.

388

00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:09,000

High altitude caves like this are Mark's passion,

389

00:17:09,000 --> 00:17:11,000

but since he's recovering from a recent injury,

390

00:17:11,000 --> 00:17:13,000

he won't be able to attempt an ascent.

391

00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:15,000

Who is the man in charge then?

392

00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:18,000

I think that the most important thing to do is to put this all in Nima's hands,

393

00:17:18,000 --> 00:17:19,000

because he's the pro.

394

00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:21,000

He knows how to get into these places.

395

00:17:21,000 --> 00:17:25,000

Our local team member Nima has been climbing in this region all his life,

396

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:29,000

and knows firsthand how dangerous these crumbling cliffs really are.

397

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:31,000

Okay, Nima, walk me through this.

398

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:33,000

How in the hell did we get inside of that?

399

00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:35,000

First, we need to put some anchor up there,

400

00:17:35,000 --> 00:17:41,000

and then trevoss, scary, sexy, and then climb up to the rocky point.

401

00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:44,000

And then we try to gain access there in that hole?

402

00:17:44,000 --> 00:17:47,000

When do you think the last time was somebody was up in these caves?

403

00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:49,000

I think the last time is when the people left,

404

00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:52,000

which would have been four and five hundred years ago.

405

00:17:52,000 --> 00:17:54,000

We have no idea what's in here.

406

00:17:54,000 --> 00:17:56,000

Okay, great. Let's get to work.

407

00:17:56,000 --> 00:17:58,000

We gear up for the climb,

408

00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:01,000

eager to understand why people carve these openings

409

00:18:01,000 --> 00:18:05,000

and whether the secrets of Shangri-La are hiding inside.

410

00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:09,000

But the cliffs here are made up of the softest rock this side of Barry Manila,

411

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:12,000

which is why they're collapsing to dust before our eyes.

412

00:18:12,000 --> 00:18:16,000

My cameraman JJ sums up the climb very succinctly.

413

00:18:16,000 --> 00:18:18,000

This snaps I die.

414

00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:20,000

Okay, we ready?

415

00:18:20,000 --> 00:18:22,000

So, order events. You're going to go up first?

416

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:23,000

Yep.

417

00:18:23,000 --> 00:18:25,000

You guys are going to set the anchor points?

418

00:18:25,000 --> 00:18:27,000

We're following up, and we'll be talking to you when Wauke talks.

419

00:18:27,000 --> 00:18:28,000

Sounds good. Climb safe.

420

00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:29,000

Hey, thanks, man.

421

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:30,000

Good luck.

422

00:18:30,000 --> 00:18:33,000

We carefully hike up the lower embankment,

423

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:36,000

while Nima sets pitons into the rock.

424

00:18:36,000 --> 00:18:38,000

We'll then clip into a fixed rope

425

00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:41,000

and move together across the cliff face.

426

00:18:41,000 --> 00:18:44,000

The problem is that these canyons are made of loose conglomerate,

427

00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:46,000

step in the wrong place,

428

00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:49,000

and the hillside can come down like the world's biggest game of Jenga.

429

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:51,000

There they go.

430

00:18:57,000 --> 00:19:00,000

I thought Shangri-La was supposed to be peaceful.

431

00:19:00,000 --> 00:19:01,000

This is terrifying.

432

00:19:01,000 --> 00:19:03,000

We make it up to the first plateau,

433

00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:05,000

and then clip into the next section of rope

434

00:19:05,000 --> 00:19:08,000

and ease our way across the face of the cliff.

435

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:10,000

Very slippery and very loose.

436

00:19:10,000 --> 00:19:12,000

You know where we are now, my friend.

437

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:13,000

Death zone?

438

00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:14,000

Death zone.

439

00:19:14,000 --> 00:19:17,000

I'm going to that Great Wednesday time slot in the sky.

440

00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:19,000

These are the Widowmakers right here.

441

00:19:19,000 --> 00:19:22,000

There's just huge boulders and all this loose conglomerate.

442

00:19:22,000 --> 00:19:26,000

Waiting to let go makes this incredibly dangerous.

443

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:31,000

Got a kind of foothold.

444

00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:33,000

Okay, now what?

445

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:35,000

I got it.

446

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:41,000

Finally, we make it to the edge of the caves.

447

00:19:44,000 --> 00:19:46,000

Hey.

448

00:19:46,000 --> 00:19:48,000

That was stupid.

449

00:19:48,000 --> 00:19:49,000

Oh, God.

450

00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:51,000

Look at how sketchy this thing is now that we're inside of it.

451

00:19:51,000 --> 00:19:53,000

Looks twice as bad.

452

00:19:53,000 --> 00:19:56,000

How the hell am I going to get down from here?

453

00:19:56,000 --> 00:19:58,000

Look at this place.

454

00:19:58,000 --> 00:19:59,000

This is incredible.

455

00:19:59,000 --> 00:20:01,000

Mark, we are in the caves.

456

00:20:01,000 --> 00:20:02,000

Copy, we are in the caves.

457

00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:03,000

Copy that.

458

00:20:03,000 --> 00:20:04,000

What do you say?

459

00:20:04,000 --> 00:20:06,000

There's a passage that goes up,

460

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:09,000

and then one, two, three other passages coming off this.

461

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:11,000

So we're going to try to explore around a little bit in here,

462

00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:13,000

and we'll report and let you know what we see.

463

00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:15,000

Copy that, thanks.

464

00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:18,000

The cave openings that we saw from the ground are deceptive.

465

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:21,000

Now that we're up here, there's more than meets the eye.

466

00:20:21,000 --> 00:20:26,000

The caves are merely windows to a huge network of interconnected tunnels.

467

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:29,000

This place is like a massive ant farm for people.

468

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:32,000

On the right, room after room.

469

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:35,000

On the left, not much.

470

00:20:38,000 --> 00:20:40,000

Long way down.

471

00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:42,000

Check this out.

472

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:45,000

Wow.

473

00:20:45,000 --> 00:20:46,000

This is so cool.

474

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:47,000

Look at this.

475

00:20:47,000 --> 00:20:50,000

Inside the caverns, there's construction.

476

00:20:50,000 --> 00:20:54,000

Mysterious mud brick enclosures of every shape and size.

477

00:20:54,000 --> 00:20:56,000

Lots of little chambers in here.

478

00:20:56,000 --> 00:20:58,000

You can see this has been divided off,

479

00:20:58,000 --> 00:21:00,000

and they've made these channels from the side.

480

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:03,000

You can just see that there's actually so much architecture

481

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:05,000

once you get inside of these caves.

482

00:21:05,000 --> 00:21:06,000

They're not just raw spaces.

483

00:21:06,000 --> 00:21:08,000

They actually have design to them.

484

00:21:08,000 --> 00:21:13,000

I make sure to take dozens of photos for Mark and Mohan to analyze later.

485

00:21:13,000 --> 00:21:16,000

Okay, good. Let's keep moving.

486

00:21:17,000 --> 00:21:19,000

The number of passages is disorienting.

487

00:21:19,000 --> 00:21:21,000

Left, right, up, down.

488

00:21:21,000 --> 00:21:24,000

It's a total labyrinth.

489

00:21:24,000 --> 00:21:27,000

Each tunnel I take branches off in every direction.

490

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:31,000

More chambers here, here, and it looks like it connects through.

491

00:21:31,000 --> 00:21:34,000

This is like MC Escher's summer house.

492

00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:37,000

And as tough as it is for me, it's twice as hard for JJ,

493

00:21:37,000 --> 00:21:40,000

who has to sling a camera while he climbs.

494

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:47,000

Good job on Jeopardy.

495

00:21:49,000 --> 00:21:51,000

But with effort comes reward.

496

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:53,000

Oh, look at this!

497

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:55,000

Look at that.

498

00:21:55,000 --> 00:21:57,000

Beautiful piece of ceramic.

499

00:21:57,000 --> 00:21:59,000

How cool is that?

500

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:00,000

Mark, can you read me?

501

00:22:00,000 --> 00:22:02,000

Yes, Josh.

502

00:22:02,000 --> 00:22:03,000

Come in.

503

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:05,000

Found some beautiful pottery up here, Mark.

504

00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:07,000

Looks like a bowl of some kind.

505

00:22:07,000 --> 00:22:09,000

Black on the outside.

506

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:13,000

Can you smudge on the outside and see if there's any charcoal on the exterior?

507

00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:15,000

Yeah, there is.

508

00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:17,000

We think it's a cooking pot.

509

00:22:17,000 --> 00:22:19,000

Please take a good picture.

510

00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:22,000

That is unreal.

511

00:22:22,000 --> 00:22:25,000

See how burned up the walls of the ceiling are.

512

00:22:25,000 --> 00:22:29,000

And lots of carbon that's just caked on from hundreds of years of fires in here.

513

00:22:29,000 --> 00:22:32,000

This is decades and decades of grease.

514

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:34,000

And it's not just in this chamber.

515

00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:37,000

At every turn, I find materials from the past.

516

00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:38,000

Oh, look at this.

517

00:22:38,000 --> 00:22:40,000

Get a horn here.

518

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:42,000

Probably ceremonial.

519

00:22:42,000 --> 00:22:48,000

And then down here, this looks like animal hide.

520

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:50,000

Some kind of leather.

521

00:22:50,000 --> 00:22:53,000

Okay, let's keep moving.

522

00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:55,000

We're burning daylight here.

523

00:22:55,000 --> 00:23:00,000

We explore for hours, carefully traversing passage after passage.

524

00:23:00,000 --> 00:23:04,000

In each chamber, we find the remains of a vanished culture.

525

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:06,000

These are the fingerprints of the people that were here.

526

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:08,000

This is what they left behind.

527

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:11,000

Though it's just a broken piece of pottery.

528

00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:14,000

It's really all that's left of a person,

529

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:17,000

all that's left of a whole culture that was up here,

530

00:23:17,000 --> 00:23:19,000

are little fragments like this.

531

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:22,000

So they may be broken, but they're huge clues.

532

00:23:23,000 --> 00:23:26,000

Room after room after room.

533

00:23:26,000 --> 00:23:28,000

It's not a cave.

534

00:23:28,000 --> 00:23:30,000

It's a city.

535

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:33,000

I mean, thousands of people could have lived up here.

536

00:23:33,000 --> 00:23:35,000

It's incredible.

537

00:23:36,000 --> 00:23:37,000

Say what?

538

00:23:37,000 --> 00:23:40,000

I am really looking forward to standing up straight again.

539

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:44,000

Okay, let's keep moving.

540

00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:48,000

We continue to investigate until there's nowhere to go, but down.

541

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:50,000

Looks like that's a dead end.

542

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:54,000

And there's the team down there.

543

00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:55,000

Josh from Mark, come in.

544

00:23:55,000 --> 00:23:56,000

Mark here, Josh.

545

00:23:56,000 --> 00:23:59,000

I think it's seen me. I'm in a very narrow chamber.

546

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:01,000

I'm going to flash my light down.

547

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:05,000

I do in fact see you. Hello.

548

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:08,000

Mark, what can you see above me?

549

00:24:08,000 --> 00:24:10,000

Here, anything? How high up am I in the complex?

550

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:14,000

Here in the upper window, there's no place higher for you to go.

551

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:17,000

I do have a question for you though.

552

00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:18,000

Yeah, hit me.

553

00:24:18,000 --> 00:24:20,000

Have you found Shambhala yet?

554

00:24:22,000 --> 00:24:24,000

You know, I'd say what? Looking out of the view.

555

00:24:24,000 --> 00:24:27,000

Maybe I have. Copy that.

556

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:34,000

You think why would anybody want to live in a cave, the side of a cliff,

557

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:36,000

and then you see the view?

558

00:24:38,000 --> 00:24:43,000

For a life of quiet reflection, there's no better place in the world to be.

559

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:44,000

Oh, man.

560

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:49,000

Imagine living here, pull up the ladders, and no army could take this place.

561

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:52,000

You're in the ultimate fortress of solitude.

562

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:57,000

Okay, let's head down, yeah?

563

00:24:57,000 --> 00:24:58,000

Yeah.

564

00:24:59,000 --> 00:25:03,000

Having made it to the highest chamber, we carefully descend down to the entrance.

565

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:08,000

But then, oh my God, look at this!

566

00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:10,000

Holy...

567

00:25:16,000 --> 00:25:20,000

200 feet off the ground in a remarkable man-made sky cave,

568

00:25:20,000 --> 00:25:25,000

and I spot something that may shed light on the ancient origins of the Shangri-La legend.

569

00:25:25,000 --> 00:25:28,000

Oh my God, look at this! Look at this!

570

00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:30,000

Come here, look!

571

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:32,000

Holy...

572

00:25:33,000 --> 00:25:36,000

Oh my God, Josh from Mark, come in.

573

00:25:36,000 --> 00:25:37,000

Mark here, Josh.

574

00:25:37,000 --> 00:25:39,000

Mark, we got artwork up here.

575

00:25:39,000 --> 00:25:41,000

There's a painting on the wall here.

576

00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:48,000

It's done in, uh, it looks like a white and red, uh, plaster that looks Tibetan.

577

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:50,000

That is totally fantastic.

578

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:52,000

Make sure you get a good documentation of this.

579

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:54,000

I'll take a lot of photos for you.

580

00:25:54,000 --> 00:25:55,000

Fantastic.

581

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:56,000

Copy that, thanks so much.

582

00:25:56,000 --> 00:26:02,000

That is something. I mean, we are the first people to see this.

583

00:26:02,000 --> 00:26:07,000

You are the first people to see this in probably 500 years.

584

00:26:07,000 --> 00:26:10,000

That is discovery.

585

00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:13,000

Worth a climb up, I'll tell you that.

586

00:26:13,000 --> 00:26:15,000

This is awesome.

587

00:26:15,000 --> 00:26:19,000

The painting is vivid, spelling out a message from across time.

588

00:26:19,000 --> 00:26:25,000

I try to get photos for the guys on the ground, though a real wide shot may send me over the edge.

589

00:26:27,000 --> 00:26:30,000

With the sun beginning to set, it's time to head back to camp.

590

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:35,000

The return trip down the cliff is every bit as dangerous as the one going up.

591

00:26:35,000 --> 00:26:37,000

Rock!

592

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:41,000

But we managed to make it down in one piece.

593

00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:43,000

Hey, great job.

594

00:26:43,000 --> 00:26:45,000

Woo! JJ.

595

00:26:45,000 --> 00:26:47,000

That was a big one.

596

00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:48,000

That was a big one.

597

00:26:48,000 --> 00:26:49,000

It looked like you were all pros up there.

598

00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:51,000

I don't know about that. I was quaking.

599

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:54,000

I'll tell you what though, to go into each chamber and to think,

600

00:26:54,000 --> 00:26:58,000

I'm the first guy to go in here in hundreds of years is just a thrill.

601

00:26:58,000 --> 00:27:00,000

That's what the romance of archaeology is really all about.

602

00:27:00,000 --> 00:27:02,000

Well, I got about a million photos to show you.

603

00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:03,000

Great.

604

00:27:03,000 --> 00:27:06,000

So let's get derigged and we'll hike back and take a look at them.

605

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:08,000

Sounds fantastic.

606

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:14,000

After a day like today, we get back to camp with a huge appetite and lots to discuss.

607

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:18,000

The local guides have dinner waiting for us beside a crackling fire.

608

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:20,000

This is how people go camping in Nepal.

609

00:27:20,000 --> 00:27:24,000

We've got beef stew, vegetables, salad and macaroni cheese on a silver platter.

610

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:26,000

It's made with yak cheese though.

611

00:27:26,000 --> 00:27:28,000

Yak and cheese, I believe it's known as.

612

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:30,000

Got garlic and salads and vegetables.

613

00:27:30,000 --> 00:27:32,000

It's like a full service restaurant out here.

614

00:27:32,000 --> 00:27:34,000

It's so super.

615

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:37,000

Wait a second, wasn't this bottle of whiskey full like 10 minutes ago?

616

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:39,000

There were actually two bottles full of 10 minutes ago.

617

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:40,000

And they're both empty?

618

00:27:40,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Is there more of this?

619

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:49,000

Once we're full and warm again, I sit down with Mark and Mohan to review our pictures of the caves.

620

00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:51,000

Let's see what you got.

621

00:27:52,000 --> 00:27:53,000

Check it out.

622

00:27:53,000 --> 00:27:55,000

Here's generally what a lot of the rooms look like.

623

00:27:55,000 --> 00:27:57,000

They have this segmented architecture.

624

00:27:57,000 --> 00:27:58,000

That's right.

625

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:00,000

And so this is for storage, yeah?

626

00:28:00,000 --> 00:28:01,000

Yeah.

627

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:05,000

You put blankets back there, you put food back there, you put gear for your horses.

628

00:28:05,000 --> 00:28:06,000

Right.

629

00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:09,000

And then one of the rooms had a chamber that went down and in here.

630

00:28:09,000 --> 00:28:11,000

There were a few small pieces of ceramic down there.

631

00:28:11,000 --> 00:28:13,000

And then really large piece.

632

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:14,000

That's beautiful.

633

00:28:14,000 --> 00:28:16,000

This is one that had charcoal on the outside.

634

00:28:16,000 --> 00:28:17,000

Yes, yeah.

635

00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:19,000

And we think that's likely to be some kind of a part of a cooking pot.

636

00:28:19,000 --> 00:28:21,000

And here is the painting.

637

00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:24,000

Wow, that is just amazingly beautiful.

638

00:28:24,000 --> 00:28:26,000

Look how well preserved that is.

639

00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:27,000

It's really clear and crisp.

640

00:28:27,000 --> 00:28:28,000

Yeah.

641

00:28:28,000 --> 00:28:29,000

That's absolutely stunning.

642

00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:30,000

Intact.

643

00:28:30,000 --> 00:28:32,000

Intact, it's for a change.

644

00:28:32,000 --> 00:28:36,000

Not often do we find whole wall segments that have painting on it like this.

645

00:28:36,000 --> 00:28:37,000

Cool.

646

00:28:37,000 --> 00:28:38,000

Really impressive.

647

00:28:38,000 --> 00:28:39,000

What are we looking at here?

648

00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:40,000

The Pudismantra.

649

00:28:40,000 --> 00:28:41,000

Okay.

650

00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:43,000

Every single line on here says, oh, Mami Padra.

651

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:45,000

Oh, Mami Padra, hungry.

652

00:28:45,000 --> 00:28:48,000

And they just do that over and over and over again.

653

00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:51,000

And so looking at the structure of the rooms, looking at the paintings,

654

00:28:51,000 --> 00:28:52,000

what can we say about this place?

655

00:28:52,000 --> 00:28:53,000

This is home.

656

00:28:54,000 --> 00:28:59,000

This is home to families that came down from the Tibetan Plateau at some point after 1000 AD.

657

00:28:59,000 --> 00:29:01,000

If you're living up there, you still need food from down here.

658

00:29:01,000 --> 00:29:05,000

Why go through all the trouble of going up to these really dangerous cliffside areas

659

00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:07,000

and hollowing out these caves?

660

00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:09,000

You know, arable land is so scarce here.

661

00:29:09,000 --> 00:29:12,000

What people are doing is not living on that arable land.

662

00:29:12,000 --> 00:29:17,000

They're saying, I've got to live someplace where we're not actually destroying farmland

663

00:29:17,000 --> 00:29:18,000

by putting up our houses.

664

00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:22,000

Keep in mind, there's a great deal of political instability of the entire region.

665

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:26,000

So people are likely also putting themselves into these high places

666

00:29:26,000 --> 00:29:30,000

to protect themselves from other folks coming through that might want to take that away from them.

667

00:29:30,000 --> 00:29:32,000

Right. It's a safe place.

668

00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:33,000

It's a safe place.

669

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:38,000

That security is one of the most crucial aspects of the Shambhala myth,

670

00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:41,000

a safe place free from the threat of war.

671

00:29:41,000 --> 00:29:45,000

But the biggest clue about whether these caves were a real Shangri-La

672

00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:48,000

is the meditation painting we discovered.

673

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:52,000

The locals have told Mark and Mohan that they've seen similar paintings

674

00:29:52,000 --> 00:29:55,000

at a remote and hidden monastery.

675

00:29:56,000 --> 00:30:00,000

A place that might have been built by the same people who constructed the sky caves.

676

00:30:00,000 --> 00:30:06,000

Could this location reveal the truth behind whether this place was really a heaven on Earth?

677

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:11,000

With temperatures now well below freezing, the answer will have to wait until tomorrow.

678

00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:21,000

It's a little bit chilly out this morning.

679

00:30:21,000 --> 00:30:25,000

My team and I face the day and get ready for one last adventure.

680

00:30:25,000 --> 00:30:30,000

We notice some new arrivals at camp, a group of horses to carry us to our final destination.

681

00:30:30,000 --> 00:30:31,000

Good morning.

682

00:30:31,000 --> 00:30:32,000

Good morning.

683

00:30:32,000 --> 00:30:35,000

Josh, this is my good friend Dasha, who's got the horses.

684

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:38,000

Headed out to a place called Chudzam.

685

00:30:38,000 --> 00:30:39,000

And what is this place?

686

00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:41,000

Well, it's got a cave monastery.

687

00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:44,000

It's a branch of Tibetan Buddhism, which is relatively rare around here.

688

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:46,000

And has anybody looked inside this place?

689

00:30:46,000 --> 00:30:47,000

Never.

690

00:30:48,000 --> 00:30:51,000

This is a place totally unseen by the outside world.

691

00:30:51,000 --> 00:30:56,000

Only the locals who continue to maintain the monastery for rituals know its location.

692

00:30:56,000 --> 00:30:58,000

No foreigner has ever filmed there.

693

00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:03,000

So we bid farewell to the camp and head out on foot, or hoof, I guess.

694

00:31:06,000 --> 00:31:08,000

We saddle up and ride out into the valley.

695

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:14,000

We're accompanied by a local monk who carries a key and his blessing for us to see the holy site.

696

00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:19,000

The landscape is frigid and vast, and roads are non-existent.

697

00:31:24,000 --> 00:31:29,000

It's incredible coming through here, just these thousand foot walls on either side covered in mud and ice.

698

00:31:29,000 --> 00:31:30,000

It's truly remarkable.

699

00:31:31,000 --> 00:31:33,000

Mark looks like some caves up there.

700

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:36,000

Maybe we're close.

701

00:31:36,000 --> 00:31:37,000

I think so.

702

00:31:39,000 --> 00:31:43,000

There are sky caves looking down from the tall canyon walls all around us,

703

00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:45,000

like the ones we entered yesterday.

704

00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:47,000

These two have likely never been explored.

705

00:31:51,000 --> 00:31:56,000

As we get further up valley, the riverbed gets blocked and the terrain turns treacherous.

706

00:31:57,000 --> 00:31:58,000

Okay.

707

00:31:58,000 --> 00:32:00,000

Even the horses are getting antsy.

708

00:32:00,000 --> 00:32:01,000

We walk.

709

00:32:01,000 --> 00:32:02,000

We walk.

710

00:32:02,000 --> 00:32:03,000

Okay.

711

00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:05,000

So we have kind of a tough section here.

712

00:32:05,000 --> 00:32:09,000

Tashi wants us to go on foot, walk the horses.

713

00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:12,000

The path ahead is far too steep to ride.

714

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:17,000

We dismount to hike up the canyon, but even hiking seems like a dangerous proposition.

715

00:32:29,000 --> 00:32:32,000

I'm on horseback in the Himalaya Mountains of Nepal,

716

00:32:32,000 --> 00:32:35,000

but the conditions are making this a wilder ride than we expected.

717

00:32:36,000 --> 00:32:37,000

Tough section here.

718

00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:41,000

When the trail suddenly turns steep, we're forced to get off the horses.

719

00:32:43,000 --> 00:32:44,000

We walk.

720

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:45,000

We walk.

721

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:46,000

Okay.

722

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:47,000

So this is it?

723

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:48,000

Yeah.

724

00:32:48,000 --> 00:32:49,000

This is crazy.

725

00:32:50,000 --> 00:32:53,000

Well, if the horses can do it, we can do it.

726

00:32:53,000 --> 00:32:54,000

Here we go.

727

00:32:56,000 --> 00:33:02,000

This is the toughest climb we've faced so far, a steep incline in seriously thin air.

728

00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:05,000

One foot in front of the other.

729

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:08,000

The horses lead and we follow.

730

00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:11,000

And just when I think we've reached the end,

731

00:33:11,000 --> 00:33:14,000

holy s***, you do not want to come around this corner.

732

00:33:16,000 --> 00:33:17,000

I went in sight.

733

00:33:20,000 --> 00:33:22,000

This trek up the mountain feels brutal.

734

00:33:22,000 --> 00:33:26,000

For all the oxygen we're taking in, we might as well be goldfish up here.

735

00:33:26,000 --> 00:33:31,000

Yet we keep trudging uphill until we catch sight of something distinctly man-made.

736

00:33:36,000 --> 00:33:37,000

What's this?

737

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:44,000

Oh, yeah, we've got a chorten here, which should be the entrance to the monastery and village.

738

00:33:45,000 --> 00:33:48,000

And it's a good sign that we're really close to the monastery right now.

739

00:33:48,000 --> 00:33:49,000

We're on the right track.

740

00:33:49,000 --> 00:33:54,000

These mound-like stone buildings, also called stupas, are sacred structures in the Buddhist world.

741

00:33:54,000 --> 00:33:56,000

Make sure you go on the left-hand side.

742

00:33:56,000 --> 00:33:57,000

Got it.

743

00:34:00,000 --> 00:34:06,000

We pass on the left to earn what Buddhists call merit, and to purify us for the path to enlightenment.

744

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:11,000

At one time, there probably would have been a village here, but all that's gone now.

745

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:15,000

The locals just report that there's the remains of this monastery.

746

00:34:17,000 --> 00:34:20,000

We hike through the remains of dozens of structures.

747

00:34:20,000 --> 00:34:23,000

Looks like there was a ton of construction down here at one point.

748

00:34:23,000 --> 00:34:25,000

There's an old village of some kind down here.

749

00:34:25,000 --> 00:34:26,000

Look at that.

750

00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:30,000

Though these valleys seem like the surface of the moon, there is life here,

751

00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:34,000

grass growing, and signs of agricultural terraces.

752

00:34:34,000 --> 00:34:38,000

With the ground leveling out, we remount the horses and ride for the last leg.

753

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:47,000

There it is.

754

00:34:48,000 --> 00:34:49,000

I can see it. You see it?

755

00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:51,000

Look at that.

756

00:34:51,000 --> 00:34:54,000

The monastery is insanely remote.

757

00:34:54,000 --> 00:34:57,000

Few people in the modern age have ever seen this place.

758

00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:00,000

Okay, let's type the horses here and we'll try to find a way up on foot.

759

00:35:01,000 --> 00:35:03,000

We hike toward the cliff.

760

00:35:03,000 --> 00:35:08,000

It seems impassable, but the monk leads us to a narrow and hidden slot in the rocks.

761

00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:16,000

Then, round the bend, we encounter stunning religious murals,

762

00:35:16,000 --> 00:35:20,000

Painted with the same pigments we saw at the sky caves.

763

00:35:20,000 --> 00:35:21,000

That's just beautiful.

764

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:28,000

They are disintegrating, just the remains of what were once vast paintings on the rock face.

765

00:35:28,000 --> 00:35:30,000

Soon, they'll be gone entirely.

766

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:32,000

Wow.

767

00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:38,000

And then, like characters from Lost Horizon, the weary western travelers arrive hungry and tired

768

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:40,000

at the door of a remote monastery.

769

00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:48,000

Wow.

770

00:35:50,000 --> 00:35:51,000

This is unbelievable.

771

00:35:51,000 --> 00:35:54,000

The entryway alone could fill an art history book.

772

00:35:54,000 --> 00:35:56,000

Wood beams half a millennium,

773

00:35:56,000 --> 00:36:00,000

old and representations of Kalashakra, the deity who guards Shambhala.

774

00:36:00,000 --> 00:36:02,000

It's absolutely stunning.

775

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:05,000

We're fortunate folks to be able to have this opportunity.

776

00:36:05,000 --> 00:36:07,000

Well, shall we see what's inside?

777

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:08,000

Let's do.

778

00:36:08,000 --> 00:36:14,000

The llama produces a key and unlocks the door to a place that has been hidden away for centuries.

779

00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:22,000

This is a holy meditation shrine.

780

00:36:22,000 --> 00:36:27,000

Festooned with centuries of offerings and surrounded by representations of Shambhala.

781

00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:30,000

Oh, wow.

782

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:31,000

Beautiful.

783

00:36:33,000 --> 00:36:35,000

Look at this, and more painting up here.

784

00:36:37,000 --> 00:36:38,000

Look at this.

785

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:41,000

Oh, for the chan festival.

786

00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:43,000

I mean, it's like a time capsule.

787

00:36:43,000 --> 00:36:44,000

Very much so.

788

00:36:44,000 --> 00:36:45,000

I'm literally speechless.

789

00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:47,000

But this altar is really classic.

790

00:36:49,000 --> 00:36:50,000

This is unreal.

791

00:36:50,000 --> 00:36:52,000

It's absolutely stunning, isn't it?

792

00:36:53,000 --> 00:36:55,000

Absolutely gorgeous statuary.

793

00:36:55,000 --> 00:36:57,000

Look at these statues.

794

00:36:57,000 --> 00:36:59,000

Really insanely beautiful.

795

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:01,000

But as staggering as this is,

796

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:05,000

it's nothing compared to what's waiting in the inner sanctuary.

797

00:37:05,000 --> 00:37:06,000

Wow, look at that.

798

00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:10,000

Wow.

799

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:12,000

It's a great place to be.

800

00:37:12,000 --> 00:37:13,000

Look at that.

801

00:37:43,000 --> 00:37:46,000

This is like something from another age.

802

00:37:47,000 --> 00:37:49,000

I mean, it's like a time capsule.

803

00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:50,000

Very much so.

804

00:37:50,000 --> 00:37:52,000

I'm literally speechless.

805

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:00,000

Let's see where we are here.

806

00:38:00,000 --> 00:38:01,000

Oh, wow.

807

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:06,000

Oh, my word.

808

00:38:06,000 --> 00:38:08,000

These are absolutely stunning.

809

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:09,000

Look at this.

810

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:10,000

They are stunning.

811

00:38:10,000 --> 00:38:11,000

Look at this.

812

00:38:11,000 --> 00:38:12,000

They are just amazing.

813

00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:14,000

Look at these gorgeous statues.

814

00:38:15,000 --> 00:38:18,000

Here we are at last, the home of the gods.

815

00:38:18,000 --> 00:38:21,000

Deities created an intricate detail

816

00:38:21,000 --> 00:38:23,000

in the darkness of this holy site.

817

00:38:23,000 --> 00:38:24,000

Truly remarkable.

818

00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:26,000

Aren't these beautiful?

819

00:38:26,000 --> 00:38:29,000

Old and, you know, kind of local construction.

820

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:30,000

And kind of fearsome, too.

821

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:32,000

Well, these are very fearsome creatures.

822

00:38:32,000 --> 00:38:33,000

Yes, these are protectors.

823

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:37,000

They all are demanding their sacrifice.

824

00:38:37,000 --> 00:38:39,000

They have skull cups, yeah?

825

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:40,000

Yes.

826

00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:43,000

Each of them has a skull cup in the left hand.

827

00:38:43,000 --> 00:38:44,000

It's OK to touch?

828

00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:45,000

Yeah.

829

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:46,000

This is the top of a human skull?

830

00:38:46,000 --> 00:38:47,000

Correct.

831

00:38:47,000 --> 00:38:49,000

And this is used as an offering cup?

832

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:52,000

It, you know, tantric offerings are put inside those.

833

00:38:52,000 --> 00:38:54,000

Sometimes blood, sometimes grain, sometimes water.

834

00:38:54,000 --> 00:38:56,000

That is something else.

835

00:38:56,000 --> 00:38:59,000

The statues are adorned with armor and weapons

836

00:38:59,000 --> 00:39:01,000

brought here over the course of centuries.

837

00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:03,000

These are not recreations,

838

00:39:03,000 --> 00:39:06,000

but masterworks of art from the Middle Ages.

839

00:39:06,000 --> 00:39:08,000

Fear some weapons in their hands.

840

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:10,000

And look at these real swords.

841

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:12,000

Look at the shields.

842

00:39:12,000 --> 00:39:13,000

That is beautiful.

843

00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:14,000

Real, real.

844

00:39:14,000 --> 00:39:15,000

That is real.

845

00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:16,000

No question about it.

846

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:20,000

You could fill a museum gallery with what's in these few rooms.

847

00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:22,000

Yeah, this is absolutely stunning material.

848

00:39:23,000 --> 00:39:27,000

There are crossbows from the 1400s, helmets from Tibet,

849

00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:30,000

and even armor from the era of Chinggis Khan.

850

00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:32,000

The shields, and this is actually male.

851

00:39:32,000 --> 00:39:33,000

This is a chain mail, yeah?

852

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:34,000

Exactly.

853

00:39:34,000 --> 00:39:35,000

It's not amazing.

854

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:36,000

Wait a minute.

855

00:39:36,000 --> 00:39:37,000

Is this what I think it is, Mark?

856

00:39:37,000 --> 00:39:39,000

If only.

857

00:39:39,000 --> 00:39:41,000

I know where you're going with it, but it's not.

858

00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:44,000

For a second I thought we really hit the jackpot here.

859

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:47,000

Returning to the monastery's outer chamber,

860

00:39:47,000 --> 00:39:50,000

we try to take stock of what we've seen.

861

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:52,000

What's your impression of it now that you've seen the collection in here?

862

00:39:52,000 --> 00:39:54,000

It's a time capsule in one sense.

863

00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:57,000

You're stepping back, you know, five, six, seven hundred years of time

864

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:02,000

to look at a very local monastery and temple institution.

865

00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:04,000

And this idea of Shangri-La

866

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:07,000

does seem like there is something up here

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00:40:07,000 --> 00:40:09,000

that plays into that notion.

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00:40:09,000 --> 00:40:10,000

There's no question that it does,

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00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:12,000

so it looks like a very uninhabitable place,

870

00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:14,000

but yet, look what they do to it.

871

00:40:14,000 --> 00:40:17,000

They create all of this beauty and all of this, you know, ritual

872

00:40:17,000 --> 00:40:19,000

and all of this circumstance.

873

00:40:19,000 --> 00:40:21,000

They reflect that idea of the Shangri-La.

874

00:40:21,000 --> 00:40:24,000

They've turned this place into something that is magical.

875

00:40:24,000 --> 00:40:25,000

It is.

876

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:26,000

Very much so.

877

00:40:26,000 --> 00:40:30,000

This is the final puzzle piece in our exploration of Nepal's Sky Caves.

878

00:40:31,000 --> 00:40:34,000

At lower altitudes, we saw caves used by Buddhists

879

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:38,000

as places of healing and as workshops for skilled artists.

880

00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:42,000

The high caves we climbed into revealed a city inside a mountain,

881

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:43,000

a place for meditation,

882

00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:46,000

and a home with impenetrable security,

883

00:40:46,000 --> 00:40:48,000

which no army could breach.

884

00:40:48,000 --> 00:40:51,000

And now here, evidence of sustained agriculture,

885

00:40:51,000 --> 00:40:54,000

terraces that transformed valleys into farms,

886

00:40:54,000 --> 00:40:59,000

and within this shrine, a portal to commune directly with the gods.

887

00:41:00,000 --> 00:41:02,000

Before leaving to return to our world,

888

00:41:02,000 --> 00:41:06,000

we light candles and incense to pay our respects to the gods

889

00:41:06,000 --> 00:41:10,000

and our local friends for sustaining us during these past few weeks.

890

00:41:12,000 --> 00:41:14,000

Shangri-La is not a myth.

891

00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:18,000

The Mustang region of Nepal is, in a very real sense,

892

00:41:18,000 --> 00:41:20,000

an earthly Shambhala.

893

00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:22,000

It is a land hidden among clouds,

894

00:41:22,000 --> 00:41:26,000

a place of tranquility cradled by the eternal Himalayas.

895

00:41:27,000 --> 00:41:29,000

But it is also fragile,

896

00:41:29,000 --> 00:41:31,000

like the bodies placed on sky burials.

897

00:41:31,000 --> 00:41:34,000

The art, the caves, even the land itself

898

00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:37,000

is constantly being returned to the earth,

899

00:41:37,000 --> 00:41:39,000

where it is renewed again.

900

00:41:39,000 --> 00:41:42,000

Many wonder what the modern world will do to this place

901

00:41:42,000 --> 00:41:44,000

and to its indomitable people,

902

00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:46,000

probably more harm than good.

903

00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:50,000

But I now realize that time here is measured in eons.

904

00:41:50,000 --> 00:41:53,000

The Himalayas will give and take,

905

00:41:53,000 --> 00:41:56,000

and we will continue to rest in their shadows

906

00:41:57,000 --> 00:41:59,000

and search for enlightenment.