

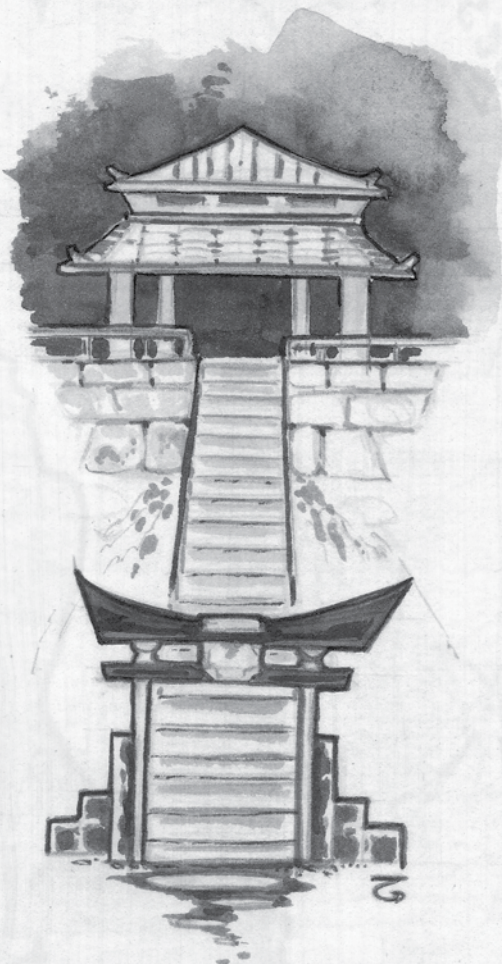
"To die, to be truly dead, ah that would be glorious!"

— Bram Stoker 'Dracula'

## INTRODUCTION

Remember the golden days of role-playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat and intriguing dungeons. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

*Shrine of the Fallen Lama* is designed for four to six characters of 10th to 12th level, with a total of 48–60 total character levels between party members. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a well-balanced party will have the best odds of besting the varied challenges of the scenario. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.



## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventurers set out to destroy the evil force contained within a mountain shrine and its surrounding complex. Once a bastion of good, law, and learning, the shrine and its residents were corrupted by a dark force that was released through the arrogance of the shrines' head Lama. Only magical wards and protections created by members of the sect before they fled or were corrupted or destroyed have prevented the evil spreading beyond the shrine complex. The PCs must face both the corrupted undead residents of the complex and the various evil creatures that have taken residence within. In doing so, they are able to recover the items and knowledge necessary to enter the shrine and defeat the Fallen Lama himself, severing the link that binds the evil force to the material plane.

## GAME MASTERS SECTION

### ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. The abbreviations used are: **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), hazard (H), or combat (C). **EL** – encounter level.

### SCALING INFORMATION

*Shrine of the Fallen Lama* is designed for 5 characters of 10th–12th level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting the module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

**Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters or lower than 10th level):** If your party is slightly weaker than the standard groups of PCs, consider the following changes. Do not roll for random encounters around the shrine complex. Reduce the number of ogre savages in area A to two. Remove the elite status from Daryll Vasco in area C–10. Remove two advanced wraiths from area E–1. Remove one revenant monk student from area F–3. Remove one level from the Grandmaster in area F–6, and two levels from Ji Sung in area G–5. Remove two levels from Ming Cha in area H–3, and only allow his *necrotic invigoration* ability to recharge on a roll of six.

**Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 12th level):** Tougher parties should be sufficiently challenged by *Shrine of the Fallen Lama*, but consider the following changes if your party is particularly strong. Add one more ogre savage in area A. Add one more revenant archer in area B. Add two levels to Iyam in area C–6. Add another gorgor or splintered one in area C–10. Add 2 more advanced wraiths in area E–1. Add two more revenant monk students in area F–3. Add two levels to the Grandmaster in area F–6. Add one level to Ji Sung in area G–5. Finally, add two or more advanced wraiths in area H–3 to support Ming Cha.



Location	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
Area A	8	C	Ogre clan leader 4 ogre savages	10
Area B	11	C	3 revenant guardsmen 2 revenant archers	10
C-1	12	C	<i>The Body Snatchers</i>	9
C-2	14	T	Falling masonry trap	5
C-4	14	C	<i>The Body Snatchers</i>	9
C-5	15	T	Security trap	10
C-6	16	C	<i>Iyam</i> , goblin jailer	8
C-7	16	C	5 dwarven prospectors 2 tiefling servants of Ahriman	10
C-10	18	C	<i>Daryll Vasco</i> , human necromancer Gorger Splintered one	11
D-1	20	C	Bulette alpha	9
E-1	22	C	<i>Mdus</i> , wraith servant cleric 4 advanced wraiths	11
F-3	24	C/T	4 revenant monk students Obstacles and hazards	11
F-6	26	C	<i>The Grandmaster</i> , wraith servant monk	10
G-1	27	T	Blade trap	5
G-2	27	H	Necrosis vines	8
G-4	28	T	Spectral tendrils trap	7
G-5	28	C	<i>Ji Sung</i> , wraith servant sorcerer	11
H-3	30	C/H	<i>Ming Cha</i> , <i>The Fallen Lama</i> , vampire lord monk	

### GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins with the party arriving at the gatehouse to the shrine complex (*Encounter Area A*). As the heroes are experienced and likely to have adventured previously, their individual reasons for being here should tie in to their existing backgrounds or the course of your campaign. Devise an appropriate plot hook or adapt one of the following to get them started:

- The remaining members of the sect hire the PCs to reclaim the shrine for them. The sect provides the PCs with information about the shrines' corruption.
- The PCs encounter a dying paladin, who persuades them to finish his last quest and remove the corruption from the monastery.
- The PCs are approached by members of the scribes' guild. They are willing to pay for scrolls of historical interest recovered from the shrine complex's library.
- One of the PCs is a descendent of someone whose soul is trapped within the shrine complex and has taken on the responsibility to free his or her ancestor.
- The PCs are tracking a group of non-human bandits or raiders who are using the shrine as a base of operations.
- Increasing use of the complex by evil beings has forced local authorities to offer a reward to anyone who can destroy this threat, and the PCs intend to collect.

### KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

PCs may draw upon their knowledge and training in order to glean information regarding the shrine. You may allow PCs to make the following skill checks.

*Arcana DC 25:* The Lama and the followers who maintained the shrine were mystics and incorporated both arcane and divine studies into their beliefs and practices.

*Arcana DC 25:* The nature of the corrupting influence over a geographical area suggests the probability of a planar link between the shrine and a realm of negative and evil energies.

*History DC 20:* The complex is situated near several important valleys and travel routes through an otherwise difficult to traverse mountainous area, making it an ideal location for bandit and raider groups.

*History DC 20:* The shrine and the surrounding complex were once famous for its advanced knowledge and practice in the mystical arts and attracted many students.

*History DC 20:* A number of years before the corruption of the shrine, a schism developed between the shrine and the sect of which it was part. Many in the sect apparently believed that the Lama – despite (or because of) his exceptional knowledge, understanding, and ability – had grown too arrogant for his position.

*History DC 25:* Evidence exists that the Lama and his corrupt followers are imprisoned within the confines of the complex, as those sect members who escaped were not



powerful enough to destroy them or the evil presence that dwelled within the shrine complex.

*Insight DC 20:* Age and lack of maintenance means much of the shrine complex now lies in ruin. Allow PCs to visually inspect the area from a distance to assess which areas of the complex seem best maintained and safest for exploration.

*Religion DC 20:* As aesthetic mystics, the Lama and his followers explored universal forces and principles rather than any god or divine being.

*Streetwise DC 20:* The shrine and its surroundings are an area of evil. Only evil creatures are safe within its grounds, meaning it attracts primarily undead creatures and non-human bandits from the surrounding mountains.

## BACKGROUND STORY

Many years ago the Shrine of Zongxian — Wisdom of the Ancestors — was a force for good throughout the surrounding lands, represented by many monasteries and temples throughout the world. The sect was led by the Lama, who was reincarnated after every death, his spirit passing to a newly conceived child. The Lama was often taken from his family as a small boy and brought to the shrine where he would be both instructed in the sect's beliefs and worshipped by its followers.

At the time of its fall, Zongxian was at its height, with followers throughout the world. Many considered Ming Cha, the Lama who presided over this period of prosperity and enlightenment, the architect of the sect's advancement. Others in the sect, however, considered the Lama arrogant and dangerous. The sect started to break apart, with many monasteries refusing to acknowledge the Lama's authority. The Lama, already quite old, became troubled by the state of the sect and grew ill. Fearing that their position would come under threat should the Lama die, his closest and most powerful followers sought a ritual that would enable the Lama's spirit to transcend and become an immortal force.

The conspirators sought far and wide for a source of immortality, but the only answers came from the dark arts of necromancy. However, one of the Lama's followers believed he had found a way to control the dark magical forces without being corrupted by them. Fortified by this belief, they began their dark rituals while the Lama lay in his deathbed.

Their plan might have worked. The ritual might have contained the corrupting influence. But necromancy is not an art to be trifled with, and it exacted a price. The ritual failed, and the dark energies fed off the magical forces designed to contain them. There was an explosion of blackness over the entire valley, and when the cloud settled, the followers realized what they had done, for now they were all cursed to the eternal torment of undeath.

The sect of Zongxian has slipped from the memory of all but a few loyal practitioners and their valley has become a place of mystery and evil from which no one has returned.

## PLAYER BEGINNING

Start the adventure by reading the following:

*As the morning sun rises above the mountain's peaks, you reach the goal of your journey! Silhouetted by the sun's rays are the towers that once held the gates that protected the shrine and its buildings. The gates are long since gone and the proud towers are now little more than piles of debris surrounding the remnants of their lowest levels.*

*The ruinous towers are not what concern you most, however. Even at a distance, the shrine complex emits a sense of dread. Yet something seems almost inviting about its presence. The sensation is unconnected to anything you can physically identify, which makes the conflicting feelings even more disturbing.*

*Such feelings soon pass, for you are experienced heroes, and the thrill of the unknown and the challenges that await gird you for adventure as they have done so often before!*

## THE SHRINE COMPLEX

The complex lies on a plateau overlooking a wide mountainous valley. Surrounded on three sides by natural defenses, the complex can only be entered through the gateway that once shielded it from the dangerous creatures and bandits that make the mountains their home. Once entered, the complex contains numerous ruined buildings, only parts of which are habitable and still in use, either by the undead servants of the Lama or the other creatures of evil and darkness that have been drawn to the site. In addition, the evil presence that corrupted the Lama and his followers is a constant presence throughout the complex, except where noted below, meaning adventurers setting up camp within the grounds of the complex face the probability of attack and must continually deal with the effects of dark, otherworldly energies upon them and the creatures they face (see **Evil Presence** below).

**Random Encounters:** Once per two hours or when camping in the shrine complex itself, except for the library, or within half a mile of it, the party has a 10% chance of a random encounter. Roll 1d6 on the following table:

Roll	Encounter
1	Five advanced specters
2	Six hobgoblin bandits
3	One elite sword wraith
4	Five phantom monks
5	Five minotaur raiders
6	Five advanced wraiths