



BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

# Li Li's Travel Journal

Part 8 of 11



## **Entry Eight: Kun-Lai Summit**

I'd thought the Jade Forest was a big honking slice of land, but it didn't compare to Kun-Lai Summit. The mountains there were so tall that even from up in the hot-air balloon, I had to crane my neck just to see where the snowy slopes vanished above the clouds.

Our destination—the Temple of the White Tiger—was nestled in northeastern Kun-Lai. Like the temples in the Jade Forest and the Krasarang Wilds, it was dedicated to one of Pandaria's legendary celestials. In this case it was Xuen, the White Tiger. The balloon's pilot, Shin, also referred to the being as the spirit of strength, which seemed like the perfect trait to have up in those harsh mountains.

The temple grounds were freezing cold when we arrived. My paws were numb by the time we'd unloaded all of the fish barrels. Even my bandicoon, Shisai, couldn't escape the cold. Frost covered his fur from head to tail, and his whiskers had turned to ice. I would've felt bad for the little guy if he hadn't been acting like such a grouch recently. Just the night before, he'd tried to bite me when I'd caught him stealing fish from the barrels!

Something was wrong with him, but I didn't know what... Not yet.

After making our delivery, we returned to the skies and headed to the rocky highland steppes in southern Kun-Lai. That was where most folks in the region lived. Apart from hozen huts and pandaren villages, I saw a jinyu settlement at the edge of a lake called Inkgill Mere. I'd been hoping to learn a lot about that amphibious race's ancient culture and rich history. More importantly, I wanted to know how they put tiny fish into bubbles and then made them float around in the air.

But I never got a chance to explore Inkgill. In fact, I couldn't enjoy *any* of Kun-Lai's amazing sights. Every second that passed, Shisai became more dangerous and unpredictable.

"He is angry," Shin explained, noticing the bandicoon's behavior. "But it is not his fault..." The pandaren went on to tell me that one of the sha—a being of pure anger—had escaped from its prison high in the mountains. It was terrorizing the steppes, causing violence to break out among the different peoples who lived there.

To make things worse, a race of shaggy yak-faced nomads called the yaungol had marched into the region from the west. The big jerks acted like they owned the place, burning any settlements that stood in their path to the ground. Shin didn't know if the yaungol's sudden appearance was connected to the sha, but the brutes sure weren't making Kun-Lai safer.

Although we couldn't do much about the sha or the yaungol, we could still help my bandicoon. Shin said he knew just the person to cure Shisai's anger issues: Courageous Yon.

Yon lived in a small cave up in Kota Peak, a remote mountain in southwestern Kun-Lai. He was an eccentric pandaren, famous for his ability to tame wild animals and train them how to fight. Luckily, Shin was old pals with Yon, so the tamer welcomed us into his home and agreed to help Shisai. Carefully, he inspected the grumpy bandicoon. Every so often, Yon would turn to the pets he kept in his cave and ask them a question or mutter something under his breath. But what really freaked me out were the weird sweaters, booties, and scarves hanging on the walls. It was clear they'd been knitted to fit different kinds of animals. Each piece of clothing even had the name of one of Yon's pets embroidered on it!

"Laugh if you want," the tamer said defensively when he caught me staring at the clothes. "But up here in the cold it's important to keep a pet warm. They could pull a muscle, you know."

Yeah... Yon was kind of crazy, but I liked him. He reminded me of the master monks back on the Wandering Isle, who spent their entire lives training in their chosen arts. Only instead of achieving inner balance, Yon was making bunnies fight baby crocolisks. Which was cool, too.



Over the next day, Yon showed me ways to deal with Shisai and "focus his anger." By that, I realized he meant teaching the bandicoot how to battle other animals. I never expected my scrappy little furball would be able to use tactics in a fight, but he turned out to be pretty good at it!

Shisai was actually holding his own against Yon's battle-hardened pets (thanks to *my* strategic coaching, of course). More than that, the fighting *did* calm Shisai. In between smacking around his opponents, he was back to his old self, although with a few more scars.

The following morning, I set off from Kota Peak with Shin and Shisai. Before we left, Yon gave me a bag of his old pet supplies: chew toys to settle Shisai down if he got crabby, treats, and all sorts of other stuff. The tamer never asked me for payment. I respected him a lot for that. He'd helped Shisai because of his love for taming wild beasts. And, well, the fact that he knew I didn't have any money might've been a factor too.

Shin piloted the balloon east as we talked about where he would drop me off. About halfway into our conversation, something on the ground caught my eye. Dozens and dozens of pandaren were entering a giant gate at the southern border of Kun-Lai.

Shin called it the Gate of the August Celestials. He was stunned that it was open. Apparently, the barrier had been closed for thousands of years. Beyond the wall lay a place long shrouded in myth and legend: the Vale of Eternal Blossoms. It was a land very few people had *ever* set foot in.

In other words, the vale was an explorer's dream come true, and I knew I *had* to go there next.

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