

*(Excerpts From the Journal of Morten Nyhuus, 1892)*

Mount Makalu is every bit as impressive as the guide said it would be. Gazing up at its peaks from this village at its foot fills me with an awe I have not known since my time in Africa. I feel the mountain calling me, speaking to my soul in some primal, inhuman language I cannot deny. Tomorrow we set out to conquer the eastern slope...

The natives are helpful and show us the proper paths to take. The footing can be treacherous, but the exotic locals have an instinct for the mountain that is simply uncanny. Our guide takes us on goat and animal paths I expect to find impassable but discover to be quite solid. Now, at the end of the first day, I find myself anxious and expectant, as though some great secret was about to be revealed. Sleep eludes me, for my heart races with this strange urgency. Nevertheless, if we are to arrive at "the three fingers" (a natural rock formation of three columns) before nightfall tomorrow, I must have my rest...

Damn this weather! We had almost reached the three fingers when a terrible wind began to blow, scraping our faces with snow and ice. The wind soon turned to blizzard and the world turned white. I could not see my hand before my face, much less the others in my party, and the gale turned my shouts to whispers. Despair was about to take my heart when my numb, scrambling fingers found purchase on the lip of a small cave. It was tight, but I was just able to burrow through—and found a larger cave inside. This cave shall be my shelter tonight, for it is out of the wind, allowing me my meager fire...

It is no cave, but a tunnel I have found. I followed the tunnel several hours, and it has led me to a magnificent city beneath the mountain itself! Oh, wonder of wonders! Words cannot describe this fabulous place, nor could human hands have fashioned these marvelous towers and palaces from the stone itself. My lantern cannot provide enough light for me to see the ceiling of this cavern, nor the roofs of the heavenly structures. Yes, heavenly, for surely this is the work of the Hand of God...