

VIII. Crystals, Stones, and Minerals of Dárdūnah



The foundation of the world of Dárdūnah, the very ground upon which the jánah walk, and the heart and soul of much of the mysticism, ritual, and value of the many cultures of the world are the wondrous and multitudinous crystals. The distant mountains are hewn from them, ships fly through the air with their aid, and even the very monies that line the purses of lord and beggar alike are made from them. Not a single day passes that crystals are not used, from the most utilitarian purposes to the crafting of some of the finest pieces of art and architecture. So numerous are the varieties of these crystals that it would surely be impossible to list them all here, not to mention the numerous types of stones and minerals that grace the vast expanses of the world.

Aside from the sheer volume of these different kinds of crystals, stones, and minerals that exist and the beauty that can be found in their colors and forms, many of them possess amazing and mystical properties. Most of the societies of Dárdūnah have learned to harness and make unique use of them. Indeed, many aspects of Dárdūni culture depend upon the use of such crystals and have thriving economies, social pastimes, and religious customs based upon their significance and the ever-present demand for them.

Foundation of the World

All the mountains of the world are formed of several types of crystal formations common to Dárdūnah, with some ranges being composed of gigantic crystals whose enormous facets can actually be seen from miles away, while others appear less crystal-dense, having sparkling foothills with peaks that seem to glow from within as the suns pass beyond them. Dárdūnah, unlike our Earth, does not have magma-induced geological growth. Instead all geological changes come about through crystal growth on a slow but gargantuan scale deep within the earth, pushing the peaks slowly skyward. Thus do mountain ranges form in various places throughout the world. There are areas within the mountains where volcanoes can be found, but these are a result of the enormous crystals rubbing against one another under immense pressure beneath the ground, forming glass volcanoes of the brightest blue-white color (as opposed to magma red), like hot lead crystal.

A traveler through the world may also notice various glowing crystals used for light and ornamentation atop some of the temple towers and within palaces. These are called “Stones of Rabishu” and are of both common and rare varieties. Crystals of that kind glow from within, and are considered to be endowed with holy power. The blue varieties shine with a brilliant light like miniature versions of the sapphire sun Edū that can be seen rising over the crystal mountains bringing about the event known as the False Dawn. This signals the beginning of the morning hour of prayer, after which the second orange-amber sun Lokáynū, sails into the sky.

Because crystal growth on Dárdūnah is incredibly bountiful and important to the geological life of the world and because the many crystals have a variety of special attributes (including some whose matrixes are strong and resilient enough to be used as thin swords without fear of breaking easily), crystals are seen as blessings from the Devah. They are used and crafted as a part of almost every aspect of the lives of the world’s inhabitants, as can be seen from one of their most common phrases, “May your crystal never shatter.”

A Selection of Dárdūni Crystals

Below we have chosen to list merely a few of the multitudes of crystals, minerals, and stones to be found throughout the world of Dárdūnah, in the hopes that these examples may inspire a broad range of other ideas for unique formations and gems of interesting quality. Though this is by no means comprehensive, there should be enough information contained within these few

descriptions to allow a creative GM and group of players to expand upon what is provided and to further enrich their gaming experience with new and unusual crystals.

Astra Crystals (AW-struh)



- A common variety of crystal found in most mountains, foothills, and valleys in a wide variety of colors and degrees of clarity. These crystals can grow into nearly eight-foot, angular, flat, tapering spire shapes at numerous angles from almost any stone surface, usually in small clusters. Though they may look delicate, they are, in fact, one of the more resilient of the Dárdūni crystals, hold an edge exceedingly well, and are regularly used to craft weapons of all kinds. Though the most preferred are those crystals that need to be shaped the least, Astra can be carved into various shapes and even melted down and recast into tools and other implements with ease, and to great effect.

Construction Stone



- Simply put, the basic non-crystalline stone used for most masonry projects throughout the world. This common stone comes in

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many varieties, colors, and degrees of hardness, with limestone, granite, marble, sandstone, and slate being some of the common types. On Dárdūnah, any of these types of stones can be the core base-stone from which crystal is born, and the foothills of even the most glittering crystal peaks are often composed of the basic opaque varieties of stone such as this.

Dakshīni (dok-SHEE-nee)



- A common variety of crystalline stone, which can be anything from totally transparent to entirely opaque, and is found in a variety of pastel to earth-tone colors, dakshīni is used anywhere that especially strong, hard, and durable masonry and crystal-works are required. Mighty palaces and glorious temples have been carved from this stone, with the more translucent varieties of it used for glittering domes, walls, and ceilings meant to let in the holy light of the suns. Even the large gears within the bellies of skyships, used to control the rudders and skycrystal sheaths, are made from the toughest types of this crystal. Dakshīni is mined from within the heart of crystal mountains or from formations deep below the earth, where the crystalline stone is of the hardest consistency.

Dalán (dah-LAHN)



- The common unit of currency. It is a small, hexagonal sapphire-like crystal whose Earth equivalent would be about \$5. They are often carved with various symbols and representations of royalty from their nation of origin but are usually accepted in any nation. The color of a crystal coin also indicates where it came from, as sapphires

are formed in a variety of hues and most nations create their coins from a specific quality and color of crystal.

Kiráh, Crystals of (kee-RAH)



- As one aspect of the devah Kiráh is fortune so it is fitting that his song is heard in these crystals, often used at the beginning of many rituals and prayers to promote success in supplication to the divine. When delicately struck, these meditation crystals resonate with a vibratory sound that sets the tone for many auspicious ceremonies. This constant, melodious sound only ceases when the crystal is touched again. Crystals of Kiráh are fairly common, come in many colorful varieties, and have been carved into many shapes. The most renowned of this type of crystal are the singing Jíbha River crystals of Visedhárah, which grow quite tall and thin, and can sometimes be heard humming in their natural environment along the shimmering banks of the river, reacting perhaps to the movement of the water or the wind.

Lohürd (lo-HYOORD)



- Rare crystals that sometimes grow on the walls and ceilings of southern caves and valleys. They have the unique property of drawing moisture from the environment around them, collecting certain suspended minerals from it that allows each crystal to slowly grow. Anything organic that remains too long (mere days) within the immediate area of a cave

full of such crystals will slowly begin to desiccate and, if alive, will eventually die from dehydration, mummifying completely.

Nadár Crystal (nah-DAR)



- Light greenish-yellow in color and looking much like a chunk of milky glass, these crystals, also called cold-stones, are useful but somewhat dangerous. Normally found only in deep subterranean grottoes, they are seen as opaque white, spiky crystalline formations growing beneath the surface of underground water sources. In truth, these formations are merely ice that has grown around the stone itself, which has the unique property of emitting an aura of powerful cold. Anything touching it and within a foot or so, such as the water it is immersed in, will eventually freeze solid, remaining so cold that it almost seems to burn to the touch. Past that range, within a few yards, the surrounding temperatures will be quite cold, but this frigidity diminishes swiftly beyond that till it is no longer felt at all. Nothing living can grow within this radius of cold, and anything kept near the stone for too long will eventually die of exposure. These stones are deposited by swift underground rivers into watery caverns and will have formed by that time a thick crust of crystalline ice that will not melt due to its proximity to the stone. If this ice is chipped away, exposing the stone to sunlight, the Nadár Crystal will shatter violently within but a few hours, becoming totally inert. Despite the dangers when handling them, these very rare stones are quite valuable to those who seek to use them for keeping perishable items cold or near-frozen.

Rabíshu, Blue Stones of (rah-BEE-shoo)



- These usually small, brilliant blue crystals glow

perpetually (and apparently for countless centuries) with an otherworldly blue-white radiance that comes from within their translucent depths. They are incredibly rare and very expensive, though ancient lore seems to indicate that they were once mined in greater abundance. Most that had adorned the ruins of once-great monuments and temples have long since been looted but they are still uncovered on rare occasions here and there, in mines and other remote digs. Unlike the Fiery Stones of Rabíshu (see below), their blue cousins glow individually without needing to touch one another, have never been seen to extinguish unless shattered, and give off no heat of any kind. Only the most prestigious, rich, and influential members of society can afford to decorate the outsides of their palaces and holy places with stones such as these.

Rabíshu, Fiery Stones of (rah-BEE-shoo)



- These small, dark reddish-orange crystals are inert when separate, but when two are allowed to remain in contact, they begin to emit a bright orange glow from within, becoming slightly warm. As more are added to create a small cluster of touching stones, the heat will grow more intense until a cluster of four or five will emit enough heat to set afire small combustibles such as paper and kindling all the while continuing to glow. They should be removed from any real fire once started, however, for being subjected to flames for more than a few minutes will crack or shatter the crystals, destroying their properties. Large collected numbers (thirty or more) could actually generate enough heat on their own to warm a sleeping chamber comfortably on a chill night. Great temples and palaces will sometimes collect them in mighty braziers to provide light and warmth to warm their impressive halls. The stones are slightly rare, however, and

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are usually about five dalán each, when available in the markets. These stones are favored by herbalists and healers or indeed by anyone who wishes to heat something at a constant, reliable temperature. They have been used with darker intent as well, for harsh lords have been known to torture and execute particularly vile criminals by forcing them to swallow such Stones of Rabíshu one at a time. The properties of these crystals can last for many years before they finally go forever dark.

Sarva Crystal (SAR-vah)



- A common variety of crystal, coming in many different colors and degrees of translucency, sarva crystal is used for some of the most utilitarian purposes by the jánah of the world. Everything from tools, dishware, and simple ornamentations are crafted from this easy-to-carve formation, which is usually to be found at the base of most mountains and crystal outcroppings, having flaked away and fallen from the greater whole like glimmering chunks of colorful shale. The matrix of sarva crystal is softer than the deeper formations of common mountain crystal, which must be mined from within the mountains themselves, and has been conjectured to be more brittle because it has been exposed to the elements for untold ages, representing the outer shell of the firmer inner crystal mountain core that eventually tends to fall away, to be harvested by opportunistic jánah or ground away over time to become the earth and loam beneath our feet.

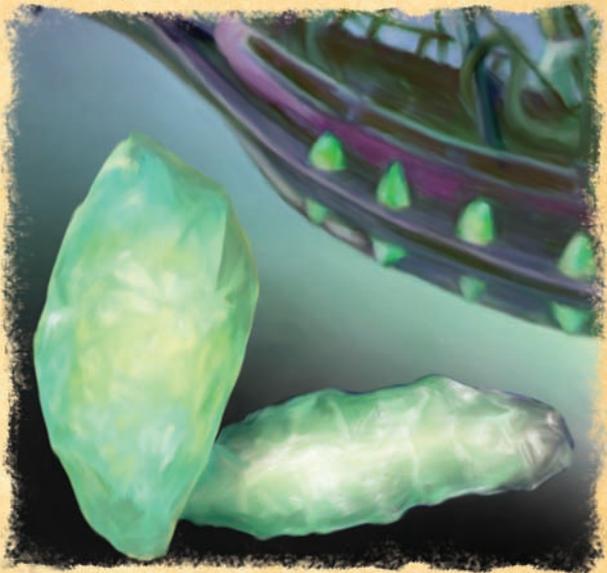
Sittám Stones (sih-TOM)



- An exceedingly rare type of crystal found in isolated veins within the heart of often-inaccessible mountain ranges. Regarded by some as blessed by the Devah, these stones, when used properly by sir'hibas, seem to dramatically heighten their power, though fearful tales relate in whispers the possible

dangers this may invoke. Some sir'hibas speak of being burned by them, or worse, when channeling their energies but there can be little doubt as to their potency. They are usually no larger than 6 inches across (more often smaller) but there have been reports of greater ones discovered. They are dark scarlet or inky-purple in color and nearly opaque when dormant but are said to become brilliant and shining with a powerful inner light when invoked, as if burning from within.

Sky Crystals



- The magic crystals that provide the lift to skyships. They are somewhat rare and grow in remote mountain peaks, sometimes breaking off to float high in the sky, carried along by the powerful winds of the upper atmosphere.

The "mother-stone" from which it grows is actually laced with bahnif, a mineral that dampens the crystal's effects to a large extent. If separated from bahnif through erosion or other forces, the sky crystal's floating properties will be at their fullest. This mineral is ground into powder called bahnif dust that is mixed with the resins used to make the retractable plating employed on skyships. The plates surround the banks of crystal attached to skyships' sides, to control lift as needed.

With the exception of the enormous ones occasionally discovered (such as those that are sometimes used to lift vast architectural structures meant to float above the ground), most sky crystals are oblong in shape, tapering toward each end, and can be in size anywhere between 6 inches to 8 feet in length while usually only half that in width, and usually appear light bluish, light blue-greenish, or light blue-violet in color.



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