Nathu La Pass: the name of that pass, one of the legitimate entry points in the Sino-Indian border, so French and foreign, stayed with me. The “La” and it’s fashionable twang, added to the allure of border crossings.

When my father raised his children on his shoulders, the twin rounded peaks of our heads the mouth of periscopes eager to swallow all sights in view, the three of us and my short mother standing on her toes looking in the direction advised by the tourist guide, what did we really expect to see? Where? Where? The air was nervous with tourists’ queries – where really was the border? The mist gathered over our heads, our earlobes stung from the sharp scratching cold wind, but we stood there clinging to wet straws of hope.

“Where’s the border?” someone asked again.
Neil Armstrong saw it from the moon, and you can’t see it ten feet away, coaxed the guide.
Oh, it was visible from the moon, and not from India? my mother asked.
That evening, a group of Bengali tourists searched for the Great Wall of China with torch lights and search lights, even with match sticks and cigarette lighters. But they didn’t find it. That was where China began and India ended: the border story. But it’s one we could never begin reading.

ARUNI KASHYAP

SALT

In the spiteful seven-hand high soil-verandah of 102, all the men from the village had gathered. All the women in the village knew their plan. They knew that there was an early morning meeting at 102. They were called by Monoram Bora to discuss ‘important matters’ associated with the prestige of the village. If they weren’t discussed, there wouldn’t be relief camps during the next flood. Even if there might be, this village would be treated as Tejimola had been by her step-mother. It’s better to die than get yourself ground by your step-mother, like Tejimola. Even the dam, to stop the mighty river water from hugging the village, wouldn’t be re-re-built next summer. For some strange reason, the government officials came to construct the dam every summer, just before the monsoons, and would write to the “higher authorities” that the rains were the biggest hurdles, you know, how unpredictable the rains are in this part of the world, so much has been lost, we need more money. Old men in the village would discuss
with creased foreheads – why couldn’t they start work during the dry winters, when even the paddy fields
cracked like heels of farmers in harsh winters?

Nobody knew why. Nobody had bothered about who those ‘higher authorities’ were, as none of
these women had stopped their men from attending the meeting. But 102 was bitter.

Talking about the army, Horokanto’s mother had grumbled bitterly, ‘You don’t have to be tall,
slim, attractive, you only need a hole and they would come chasing you!’

Eighty-year-old Binapani-pehi revealed her betel-nut stained teeth, laughed, and added, “Those
green-clothed men with guns were laughing and pointing towards me while I squatted behind the shrub
near the road to release myself. I screamed, ‘Oi young men with guns, what you want to see? Come, I’ll
pull up my mekhela and show you my grey pubic hair.’

Many women exclaimed, gasped, “Binapani-pehi is so shameless, she will make people turn in
their graves!!”

Binapani-pehi’s fiery-foul tongue was well known. With a sneer of her nose, or with a slap on her
thigh, it seemed as if she could rock the whole village. People say she used to sing beautiful Bihu Songs
when she was young. She had marched in the processions of the Freedom Struggle, shouted slogans till
her green neck-veins were visible. One day, with the pretext of searching “Freedom Fighters”, some white
policemen had entered her house and raped her. Some people said there were ten of them. Some said
there were five. But what was certain was that she had almost bled to death. Nobody married her. She
gave birth to a very unusually fair baby with blond hair and green eyes. Her family members shoved
fistfuls of salt into the baby’s mouth and killed it as soon as it was born.

She had stopped singing after that. Legends twined around her like vines around a tree trunk. But
people didn’t forget her legendary talent for singing songs. Some old men and women in the village even
whispered that when she used to cook, sweep her floor, weave in the loom, she used to sing unknown,
rare, painful, forest-songs. They were so lovely that the dog listened with several folds forming on his
forehead-skin and skylarks swarmed the courtyard like ants on sugar cubes. After those alien white men
committed “those unspeakable atrocities” on her butter-coloured body, let alone songs, her voice wasn’t
heard for years. Her family refused to let her live among them. She was transferred to a house in the
backyard garden, away from public view. She cooked and lived there for the rest of her life. It was there
that she wove indecipherable dreams on clothes, sang harmonious, but unmelodious songs. She had a
dog, Ronga, but he came only to eat remnants, and slept with his nose planted into its asshole.

Things don’t change— things like time; and things like a dog’s habit of smelling its asshole all
night; certain things only happen again and again.

Nobody knew if that was the reason why Binapani-pehi remained so unmoved about the spiteful
meeting at Bora’s house. Was it because she knew the lives of people remained unchanged, irrespective of
the colour of flags of different regimes (the British and the Indian) or symbols of different political
parties? Nothing has changed since Independence. The river continued to swell, people continued to
inhabit wrecked dams every summer. Every year, villagers spent sleepless nights thinking about the
impending floods, and dreaming about a full granary, a full stomach. The floods didn’t stop. The struggle
for freedom didn’t stop: unarmed, armed, procession-ed. Couldn’t Binapani-pehi at least spend some of
her strong words for those men who had threatened them to not walk out on the streets tomorrow?

But the women were not afraid. If eighty-year old Binapani-pehi wasn’t afraid to say “go back” to
the white-foreigners, why would they lag behind in their own country?

Perhaps, that’s how they could bring some justice for Bhumika who was raped and killed by the
army. Rupalim pledged to lead the procession along with Mastoroni-baideo and Binapani-pehi. She had
assured them that she would always remain by their side.

Mastoroni-baideo was the schoolteacher’s wife. He taught Assamese in the village primary school
and he wanted to sleep with Rupalim. He tried to seduce her by promising to fund her higher education
in the city. That was a few months ago. She had refused, after which he aligned with the ‘102-men’ out of
spite, to chalk out plans on how to stop the procession. He told them everything that he had learnt from his wife.

But one day, Rupalim discovered that their plan was leaked by Mastoroni-baideo. Alarmed, she told Bornali, Bornali told Monica’s mother, Monica’s mother told Kontilou’s mother, and finally it reached fiery-tongued Binapani-pehi. Mastoroni-baideo cried a lot when she was scolded.

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In that village, in that stream, at ‘102’, the sun gradually grew older. The toxic dialogues of Monoram Bora, the member of the ruling party who couldn’t win in the last elections had come to a halt. The fifty or more men who had assembled there nodded their heads. They said, if the foolish women go out tomorrow, a mountain of problems would fall on the village (they didn’t specify from where).

Monoram Bora said, “It’s true that the army did something wrong. But we should have been careful too. This is not the first time that such things are happening in the country? I know, our sons have taken up arms and have gone astray, but do you think the government would keep sitting with their hands folded? In their silly fight, we all cannot die. We have to survive, isn’t it?”

“Yes yes, we all have to survive.”

“We have to survive; what if they don’t build our bridge, out of spite? What if we are not given food in flood-relief camps next year? All of you will die of these foolish beings’ actions! It’s all organized and coordinated by the government and if our village does something that they don’t like, we would have to die hungry in flood-relief camps next year. All of it is because of these nonsensical creatures!!”

Monoram Bora’s house was built on the highest part of the village. It was never affected during floods. During floods, he would give shelter to some people at this backyard-garden, but women never felt assured in his compound. Every year during the floods, he took some utensils as mortgage from the villagers to give food in return. During winters, he organised large feasts for every random occasion and didn’t invite the people whom he disliked.

Who could go against Monoram Bora? He helped them issue ration cards, without which it was impossible to get free food from the government shops—subsidized kerosene and rice. He took a bribe of five-hundred rupees (only) to issue them. Before losing the last elections he used to charge one thousand rupees. But after he was defeated by Sodanondo Borthakur from the opposition party, he understood that it was difficult for the poor villagers to pay such a hefty amount. So he charged them five-hundred rupees (only). People assured him that they would vote for no one other than him, in the next elections.

Monoram Bora wanted to defeat Sodanondo Borthakur from the regional party in the next elections. No one dared to go against Bora. He was the richest, the most powerful person in that village. His influence extended like yellow wild parasitic creepers to nine or twelve villages. Even if some people resented his sway they had to obey him due to their children’s demands; after all, there weren’t many days in one’s life that one gets to eat mutton and mati mah’s dal with sticky, reddish, sleep-inducing bora-rice, until one is full to the neck—a feast awaited most eagerly by the children of the village along with the teenagers, and the Bangladeshi immigrants who were hired to work in the fields. The people believed that he knew everything about the government. That he knew what they might do if the people organised the procession. He didn’t tell them about the strict orders which had been sent to him from top-rung leaders of the party. He was to ‘take care’ of the people in his constituency. If that protest march reached the District Commissioner’s Office, the party would definitely not give him the ticket in the next elections and Sodananda would win again, or Bhringeshwar would get the ticket instead of him, since he maintained good relations with the ‘inside people’ in Dispur.

To the people who were sitting in the courtyard of 102 (some socially conscious women who didn’t like Binapani-pehi and company had also joined the gathering by now), he told what might happen if the women marched out in a procession the next day. They got illuminating knowledge from him. Finally, they knew why Rupalim was raped by four soldiers. So they went home, told their women that it
was Rupalim’s fault that she had been raped—a good girl from a good family should be staying miles away from the army; but she went to argue with them when they dragged out her adolescent brother.

Some of them didn’t want to argue about Rupalim because they had a soft corner for her. So they chatted about Bhumika. ‘It was Bhumika’s family’s fault; no one leaves a young attractive girl alone at home during such bad times.’

“That low-caste Rupalim—just because she is able to read two letters and has passed two exams, she thinks she is a leader?” Monorom Bora had questioned and made a face as if someone had slashed his face with a razor just then. “I had warned her father Dhoroni not to send her to college, but he didn’t listen to me. Now look - no one will marry her!”

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Far away in another corner of the village, in an unmarked place, a regular gathering took place every morning—fiery tongues ruled there; so fiery that if some men reached there by mistake while searching for wild limes and jackfruits; they would scream in unison, “What has happened to you? Have your balls tholorke-tholorke dropped down like ripe mangoes?”

In one of those gatherings, amidst the clings and tings of aluminum tumblers where they washed rice, washed clothes with Janata soap and smeared the foam of Lux soap on their faces, they decided: we have to do something.

But this we have to do something had a history—of blood and fireflies; of lost innocence. Nobody knew what exactly propelled them that made them think we have to do something. May be it was Bhumika’s blood which they saw or maybe it was the meeting that Rupalim had unofficially called. But before they had decided to do something, something had happened.

No one knew what exactly it was, but all of them had felt it, sensed it. What had they felt? What?

May be they had felt the wind. Heavy. When it passed through the earlobes of women who left their earrings at home in lemon-water bowls before coming to bathe at the stream, it was as if it played a mournful song near their ears.

One may speak about the red soil. It had rained the previous night, when they had decided to do something. Some people said it was apt; when someone dies, it drizzles irrespective of the season.

So there was red soil in several parts of the stone where they sat and bathed, washed dishes and rinsed rice; and they noticed the red colour that clung to their feet like alta.

One of them must have thought, “this is Bhumika’s blood.”

That day, the air was heavy. The red soil also reminded them of the blood on Bhumika’s bed; the nail marks over her body, her bitten off underdeveloped breasts, skin on her nape.

Her mother had blamed herself for running out of the house with her daughter-in-law to save her son from the jawans who had taken him away for interrogation, and for fainting when she saw her daughter’s body.

When people saw a red stain proudly annexing its territory — the white sheets of the bed every minute like red ink on a cotton-bed sheet, they asked each other, “How many more young women and men will be killed in this manner?”

Last month, all three daughters of Mr Patgiri were gang-raped by a group from the combing army. Anima, Ronjona and Bobita. In three different rooms. The parents were thrown out of the house. They ran here. The wind slapping them. They ran there. The wind pulling their mother’s hair. Patgiri went to the police station but they refused to come—the soldiers have special Powers, the police said.

Anima hung herself. She was found dead with a long neck like the necks of dead ducks killed for meat. People pressed handkerchiefs and cloth on their noses when they broke open the door. A strong
stench of shit and urine floated in the room. Ronjona tied a steel pot around her neck and jumped into
the river after about week later. Bobita is still in a state of shock.

Someone standing beside Bhumika’s mother asked, “How old were they?”
Nobody knew. But everyone knew Bhumika was in the fourth standard.

Slowly, the news engulfed the people who had gathered at Bhumika’s house that night. They had
started to scream. Bhumika gasped for breath for about half-an-hour before dying. “The government
wants to kill all the rebels. Already several top leaders have been killed.”—Men who read newspapers
spoke softly with creased foreheads.

A wail gradually engulfed the house like the calls of angry nest-broken crows. The wail became
shriller every minute.

It awakened the crows, brown skylarks and white and ash-coloured doves that were sleeping in
their nests. They encircled the house like vultures just the way journalists came to write about dead people
and blast sites.

Soon, all wails merged into one. No one knew which were the crows’ caws and which were the
women’s wails.

The crows were wailing.
The people were cawing.

Everyone remained hungry that night. Weeping, hungry children with streams of phlegm and
crusts of snot were silenced with rice left over from lunch. They surrounded the house that was full with
people with white crusts of dried tears around their eyes. Every family poured water on their hearths that
night. The hearths hissed like snakes. Moth-white snaky coils aimed towards the dark night sky.

It must have awakened Monoram Bora. People still say, he had called up the party office and
bargained that they must let him contest the next elections if he was able to stop a protest march and the
filing of an FIR. It would malign the ruling government. If it reached the Assamese papers, the English
papers would know, too. And if it reached the Assamese and the English papers, someone would write to
Amnesty International.

It awakened Rupalim too. When the fair and tall Rupalim walked out into that star-studded
night to Mastoroni-baideo’s house, dogs barked at her, the wind ruffled her hair, twigs of parrot-green
caminikanchan shrubs pulled her cotton clothes.

A few months ago, the schoolteacher had met her one evening after Operation Bajrang had been
halted. Cicadas’ songs wove a dense loneliness in an invisible loom. She was coming back from the village
stream. He said, he was very concerned about her, was worried what would happen to her bright academic
future as her father would never be able to afford it. He assured her, she could study further, do her MA
in the city if she wanted to. He and Monoram Bora would fund her education. Both of them make
frequent visits to Lakhimpur for work, so they could keep meeting her whenever it would be convenient
for her. But Rupalim knew amidst this ‘If You Want’, what mattered was the ‘What We Want’. Rupalim
slapped him. She trembled; poured the whole pot of water brought from the stream on his body.

And even on this night, when the winds ruffled her hair, and the twigs pulled her clothes, she
wasn’t scared. There were soldiers patrolling the village main-road. She took routes which they would
never know. It was her village, purfected by olive-green hounds suddenly.

After a long knock, when Mastoroni-baideo opened the door, Rupalim said, “Baideo, I haven’t
been able to sleep after little Bhumika died. We have to do something. Let’s go to Binapani-pehi’s
house.”

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Beside the weaving looms with which rural women draw dreams on clothes, a meeting was held.
‘Something has to be done. We will go and meet the District Commissioner.’
They complained. They had never been to the city even to shit. How could they go, stand and shout slogans? Who would write the banners? Even if they were written by someone else how would they read them aloud?

Moina’s mother said, “I know the roads in the city well. Last year, I walked around the whole city when we didn’t get the right kind of thread at our regular shop.”

Junmoni’s mother added, “Yes, yes, my elder brother stays there too.” Her eyes glistened like sunlight reflected back by black marbles. More than a suggestion, it was a sense of pride that came across when she spoke, “We will inform him of our arrival; he can make some arrangement for tea. After submitting the letter to the officer, we shall go and sit in his house. He has a big house. There are tube-lights in his drawing room. The doorbell sings—\textit{pi-pi-pi-piya}—that Hindi song?“

If Dhonti’s mother had not shaken her thin frail body and replied, Junmoni’s mother would have continued to speak, roping in the cost of the sofa set, the colour TV and large dining table made from teak-wood into her conversation.—“\textit{Isk}, why would he bother himself so much? So many of us! The whole village will be going! Junmoni’s ma, it will be very unfair on them.”

Nauman commented, “What’s the problem? After such a long walk, won’t we need a place to freshen up? Otherwise we will collapse! Don’t we have to cook, clean and weave after reaching home?”

Rupalim moist eyes became red. Binapani-pehi pulled her petticoat up to her knees and started to make the best use of her sharp tongue. “Losers! Will something good ever happen in your accursed lives? . . . The whole country is burning and you are behaving as if we are going for a picnic!”

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After the meeting, after the decision to do something was taken, it rained. There was dampness around the village. Old men felt like picking the hail stones that had fallen with the rain and became thoughtful and nostalgic. Children dug further into their mother’s chests for warmth. Young sisters and brothers who shared beds hugged each other. Some old people spoke about the autumn rain that came without warning, the cawing of crows at night; they reminded each other about the big-earthquake which made the chests of rivers shallow forever and caused floods. They discussed how animals and birds behaved strangely before the earth rocked in 1950, when the ‘Big Earthquake’ happened. Land moved like waves, waves in the river-flooded villages that stretch on the river banks. Forests sank down, gave birth to lakes instantly during the big earthquake. Hills cracked like nuts, and rivers descended from there.

“Something unusual will happen.”

“Something unusual will happen.”

The next day, near the stream, all the women agreed one by one that something must be done. They looked at the sticky red-soil under their soles and realised that that could have been their own blood or their daughters’, sons’, sisters’.

They told each other as Rupalim told them about Lobhita from Sibasagar, “That girl, she was alone in the house that afternoon.”

Moina’s Mother screamed, “What is happening in this country?”

Junmoni’s Mother remembered exactly what Rupalim narrated after reading the papers, “Those dogs barged into the house and dragged that girl to the thickets behind the house. Later, when her parents came home and didn’t find her inside the house, they searched everywhere in and around the house for about two hours and found her lying in their backyard fishery, breathing heavily. Before dying she said, there were six of them. She had one of the badges in her palms with a name inscribed on it. That was the only proof; the Officer in Charge threw it into the dustbin and said it was inadequate evidence and refused to file a case.”

Why wouldn’t Rupalim cry?”—Rupohi extended the statement, “Even Rupalim went through a similar experience.”
They became quiet. Though Rupalim’s father, her brother, Mastoroni-baideo and Gandhian Freedom Fighter Binapani-pehi had gone along, the local police station refused to file her complaint. They had said that they didn’t have adequate proof. They would have to furnish a doctor’s certificate. They went to the doctor, he said, bring the first information report. They went to bring the first information report. The Officer in Charge was not there. When he came back after many hours, he laughed, “This girl who can walk for four miles and move round and round is a rape-victim? Tomorrow you all will say that a cow has climbed a tree; and you’d expect me to believe it. Get out!”

Rupalim wrote to all the major newspapers and women’s organisations in Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Sibasagar. Her news was published and Binapani-pehi spoke to all the reporters. Cried. They published Binapani-pehi’s weeping photo but not the one when she was angry and had screamed slogans such as *Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Jai Hind* and *Gandhi Mahatma Zindabaad* to ensure that Rupalim, who she had seen growing up, achieved justice.

The reports were published. People who didn’t know how to read or write gathered around people who knew how to read and write and urged them to read aloud what they had written about Binapani-pehi and Rupalim. Binapani-pehi called the reporters ‘dogs’. She asked how dare they publish her weeping photograph but not her clenched-fisted one. She vowed to slap them if they ever came again. Some people said, ‘It’s good, after all people will get to know even our Teteliguri Village has a Gandhian freedom fighter. Have you seen how proud those Maloybarians are after one of their farmers won the government’s award for good farming?’

Monoram Bora called groups of people to his house. Served them lime-juice with rock salt, and served them aromatic *paan* too.

“Look how they have maligned our village? Who will marry our girls now? Rupalim will get compensation from the government and become very rich. Binapani-pehi will receive Freedom Fighters’ Pension. Both of them want publicity and money.”

Everyone said “Such a shameless dirty way to get ‘Publicity’.”

But none of them knew what ‘Publicity’ was, since it had been said in English, not Assamese.

Some women discussed what ‘Publicity’ could be, in the stream while bathing and concluded with firm conviction, “It’s a very expensive nose-ring Guwahatians wear, like our golden *citipoti*-necklace. Guwahati is a very rich city. All women in Guwahati wear Publicity…”

Horokanto’s Mother placed her face in her hands and wondered aloud in a sad tone, “I wonder why old Binapani-pehi wants to wear such expensive ornaments at this age?”

Rupohi shed some tears, twisted her face in a sorrowful expression and spoke, “Why are you all jealous? She hasn’t married and has lived a widow’s life, if she wants to wear it, let her wear it before she dies. She has a golden heart!”

They all agreed. They had realised that certain events just happen again and again. Salt. Green eyes. Blonde baby. Rupalim. Bhumika.

After butter-coloured Binapani-pehi, it was Rupalim’s turn.

*We should make sure that even Rupalim gets to wear a ‘Publicity’ ring or necklace – whatever it is…*

Water was boiling from long ago.

For that riverine-village, trampled by mighty floods each year, the saga had started on the day when a butter-coloured girl in the village gave birth to a child with blond hair and green eyes. Things didn’t change at all, much like the dog’s unchanging habit of thrusting its nose into its asshole before sleeping.

But to change things we have to do something. For that, even without a tea-break, they were ready to go to the city and demand justice. Mastoroni-baideo was given the responsibility of writing a very strongly worded letter. While writing, she had stopped, had bitten her lips and cried, “How can I forget that little Bhumika? She used to play Brides and Grooms and Kitchen-Kitchen with her cloth-dolls in my courtyard.”
All the women and several men and young teenagers in the village signed it, gave thumb imprints. All the men who didn’t go to the malicious 102 signed it, pressed ink-drenched thumbs. It became longer and longer. As it grew, more and more pages were added, it became a history book of oppression and it if it would have been a little longer, the story of a blond child with green eyes killed instantly by having fistfuls of salt shoved into its mouth would also have been part of the story of the letter.

The ‘We-Have-to-Do-Something-Procession’ was also a green eyed baby. Even if it was so, they knew they wouldn’t allow fistfuls of salt to be shoved into its mouth that day. Power-hungry Monoram Bora wanted to shove in some salt, too.

Even this lunatic river, forever confused about its path, changing it every four-five years, would shimmer with the confessions on its fish-scale-waves that all of them came out of their tiny, unimportant matchbox houses like bees, crows and ants.

Junmoni’s mother emerged late. With bruises on her face. “Can you come along?” others asked. “Yes of course, what’s the point of living like this? Let the soldiers kill me too.”—She wept.

Before leaving, Junmoni’s mother shouted out at her husband who had not come with her, had beaten her up for taking part in the procession against his wishes, “You will really repent for the rest of your life in case we die.”

Junmoni’s mother noticed it only after reaching the District Commissioner’s office that even Junmoni’s father was among the people. When she said her head was spinning, he patted her head with water poured on his hands from a plastic bottle.

She had blushed, “What you are doing in front of so many people!” She had complained.

In Chariali, at the end of the village, twenty young men who worked for Monoram Bora stood blocking the road with lathis in their hands.

Binapani-pehi screamed, “Come, you want to fight me! Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai!” (the young girls smiled sheepishly saying “yooo” when they saw her being so melodramatic)

They bowed their heads and said, even we want to come, please take us along!

Some miles later, they were joined by Patgiri’s youngest daughter Bobita who didn’t commit suicide.

She held her placard high: Indian Army, Rape Us.

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That day, near the District Commissioner’s office, there were thousands of people.

But still, there were people. People with a letter. When the police tried to stop them, they screamed. Women picked up stones and threw them at the government servants.

Binapani-pehi’s chest took the first bullet.

Before dying, she cried, “Jai Hind!”

After all, she was a freedom fighter.

Some people say, the District Commissioner was writing a letter to the Chief Minister’s office when she was killed and the people were demanding justice. Their screams shook the walls; some glass in the windows broke—maybe due to stones thrown indiscriminately. Or maybe due to bullets fired randomly. But glass broke, his tables shook, and a cup of strong brown Assam-tea suddenly stained his expensive white suit bought from Fancy Bazar in Guwahati. It had cost him ten thousand rupees and a twelve hour long travel in an air-conditioned car. The sky around his office was covered with a thousand cawing crows. People wondered for years from where they came. People say, when something unusual happens, animals and birds behave strangely.
Salt definition: Salt is a strong-tasting substance, in the form of white powder or crystals, which is used to improve the flavour of food or to preserve it. Salt occurs naturally in sea water. Season lightly with salt and pepper. ...a pinch of salt. In chemistry, a salt is a chemical compound consisting of an ionic assembly of cations and anions. Salts are composed of related numbers of cations (positively charged ions) and anions (negatively charged ions) so that the product is electrically neutral (without a net charge). These component ions can be inorganic, such as chloride (Cl\(^{-}\)), or organic, such as acetate (CH\(_3\)CO\(^{-}\)); and can be monatomic, such as fluoride (F\(^{-}\)) or polyatomic, such as sulfate (SO\(_2\)\(^{-}\)). Salt, also called sodium chloride, mineral substance of great importance to human and animal health, as well as to industry. The mineral form halite, or rock salt, is sometimes called common salt to distinguish it from a class of chemical compounds called salts. Learn more about salt in this article. Learn about the health effects of salt on the human body. Learn about salt, including its health effects. Contunico © ZDF Enterprises GmbH, Mainz See all videos for this article.

Properties of common salt are shown in the table. 431, 515, and svarta-salt, black salt, from sea-water, N. G. L. i. 39:äEof salt used for cattle, salt skal hann eigi meira gÃ¶ra en hann þarf at gefa búfé sÃ­nu, id.:—the phrase, leggja sÃ¶k salt, to shelve a case, Bs. i. 690: the saying, Á salti liggr sÃ¶k ef sÃ¶kendr duga; nÃ° stendr skuld tuttugu vetr. eA°a tuttugu vetrum lengr, Á¾A° fyrir vÃ¦ttum, enn hann mÃ¡ koma honum til eiA°a at hvÃ¡ru, Á¾vÃ¡at Á salti liggr sÃ¶k ef sÃ¶kendr duga, N. G. L. i. 24 (Gþl. 484, Jb. 351); vega salt, to balance against one another. Salt is a mineral, composed primarily of sodium chloride, which is commonly eaten by humans. There are different forms of salt: unrefined salt (such as sea salt), refined salt (table salt), and iodized salt. It is a crystalline solid, white, pale pink or light grey in color, normally obtained from sea water or rock deposits. Natural sea salt includes vital trace minerals in addition to the sodium chloride. Edible rock salts may be slightly greyish in color due to this mineral content.