

MAIN CHARACTERS

- Pelma is a 15-year-old novice nun who demonstrates her spiritual power and wisdom during a fantastic journey in Tibet during the Tang Dynasty.

- Tian Xia, the son of a Tang Dynasty ambassador, is a young man who accidentally becomes involved in the journey.

- Brother Antelope, who appears as an 18-year-old man, is an antelope-spirit reincarnated after 4,000 years.

- Lady Pasang, who appears as a seductive woman, is a wolf-spirit reincarnated after 5,000 years.

- Tsashi is a giant of a man with boundless energy. He was born into captivity and wants nothing more than to be a good slave.

THE TRIBES

- The Wangchuk are a powerful tribe who dominate other tribes economically by selling their potent and expensive shamanistic services. The tribal Chieftain wears a wolf's-head crown. In order to maintain their superiority, the Wangchuk force all other tribal people to learn their language.

- The Waguti are a matriarchal tribe. The women can have as many as four husbands at the same time, but they can keep neither the men they marry nor the male children they raise, as adult men leave the tribe and never return. Once a month, at the full moon, the women seek out men in order to produce offspring.

● The Gyatso are a tribe who control the water trade, selling water to other tribes. The Wangchuk have weakened the once-powerful Gyatso with their magic. Omu is the Gyatso Chieftain's assistant. He envies the Wangchuk's prosperity and plans to take power from his chieftain.

● The Chiangchup are a tribe engaged in slave trading. The men bring back captives from remote areas and the women train them to become good slaves. Doden is the Chiangchup Chieftain's assistant. He is a brutal man who waits for the opportunity to take his chieftain's place.

LAMAS AND NUNS

● The Abbess manages the remote Tsonying Convent. She is Pelma's mentor.

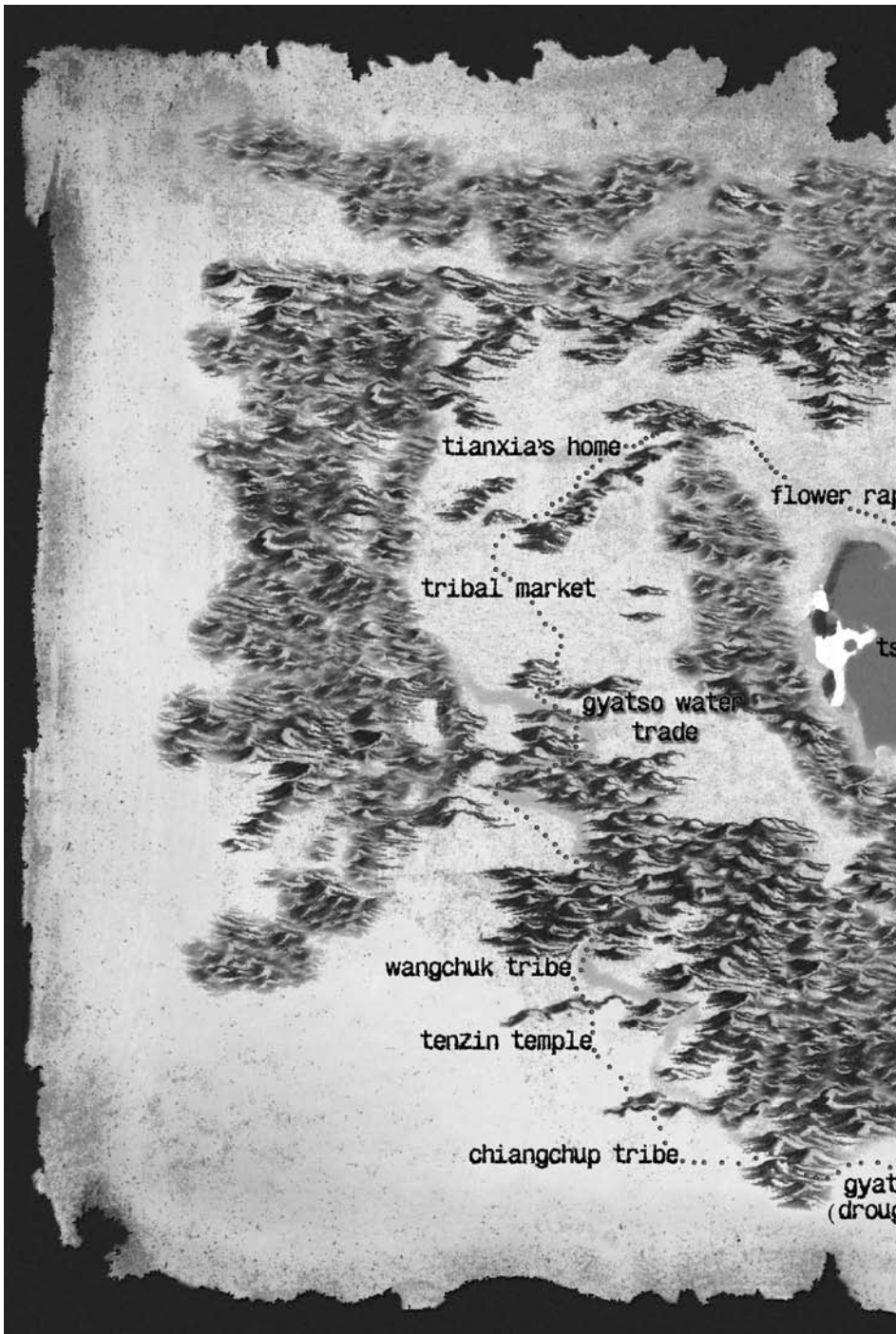
● Sherap is a high lama practicing meditation in Tsonying. He initiates Pelma's journey to repair the *thangka*.

● Little Bodhisattva is a seven-year-old boy who is worshipped as a reincarnated lama by the adult lamas in Tenzin Monastery.

● Kula is an older lama who manages Tenzin Monastery.

● Xuan Zang is a master monk from the Empire of the Tang, a historical character fictionalized in the famous Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. He is traveling to India with his followers Piggy and Monkey, in order to obtain Buddhist sutras and bring them back to China.

● Namkha is a high lama who paints the walls inside caves near Zhug Temple.



tianxia's home

flower rap

tribal market

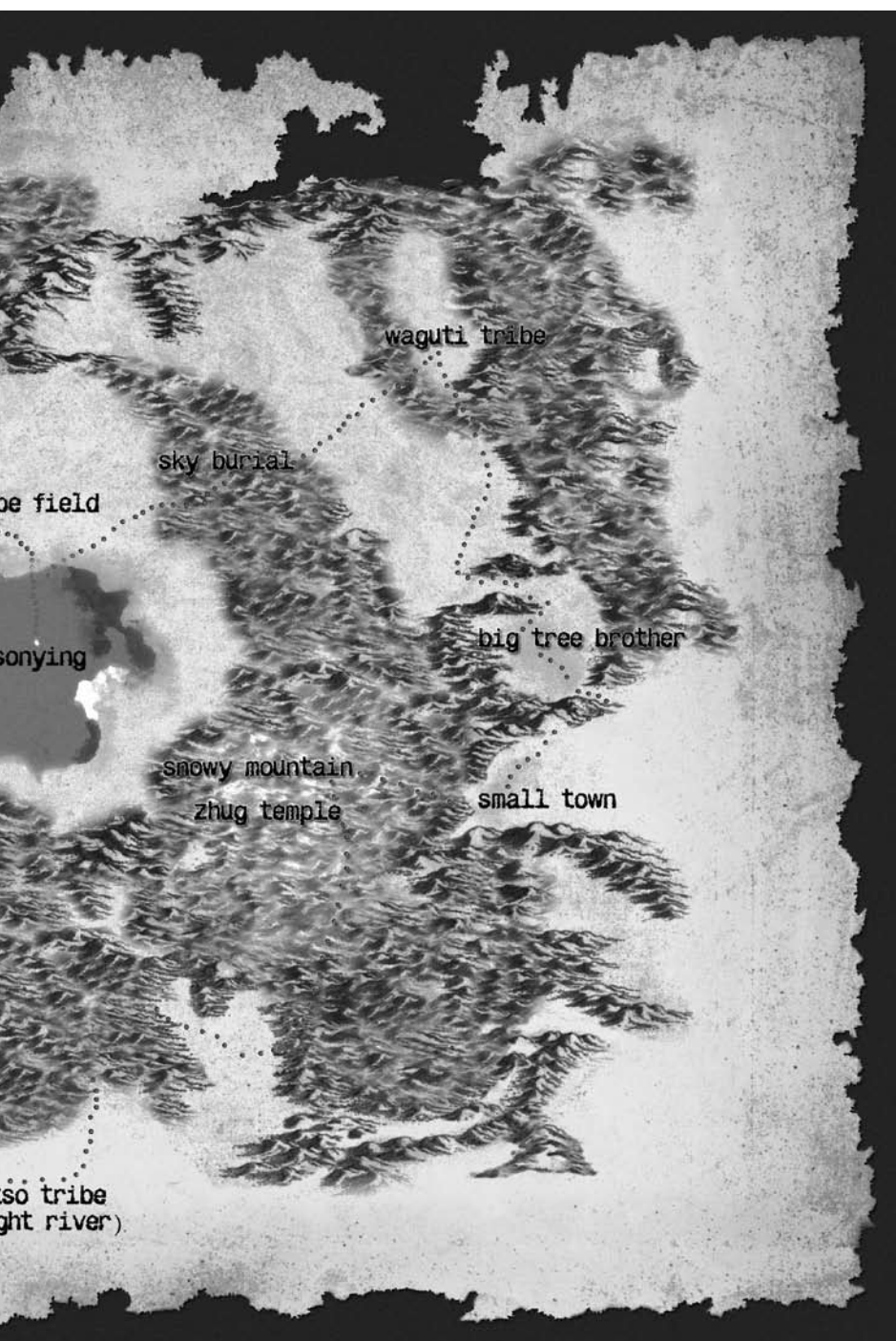
gyatso water
trade

wangchuk tribe

tenzin temple

chiangchup tribe.....

gyat
(droug)



waguti tribe

sky burial

be field

sonying

big tree brother

snowy mountain

zhug temple

small town

so tribe
(right river)

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PROLOGUE

Blue Lake, located on the high plateau of Tibet's Amdo region, is said by some to be the birthplace of Tibetan culture.

On an island at the heart of the lake, Tsonying Convent lies secluded from the world. It is inhabited by a hundred nuns and a few lamas who practice meditation and other religious austerities. Once a year, several elderly nuns come ashore for supplies. The rest of the island's inhabitants live their lives entirely in contemplation.

It is winter and the vast saline lake is frozen solid. The shiny surface surrounding the island is an empty expanse, save for two figures. A tired white horse moves slowly towards the island, and 15-year-old Pelma follows behind. The little nun's face is tired and her clothes are worn out from a long journey. On the back of the horse lie two large, grievously injured men.

Burdened by its load, the horse falters and falls to its knees on the ice. Pelma pulls the men from the horse and wraps their bodies in thin blankets. Carefully she binds them with ropes and begins to drag the two men across the ice, step by step, towards Tsonying. The exhausted horse follows.

The girl struggles forward in the hope of coming across someone who can help her, but she sees nothing in the waning light.

Stars begin to glisten in the sky. Suddenly Pelma hears something behind her. She turns to see three wolves approaching from the East. They are lean, their coats are silver, and they seem intent on Pelma's horse. Their teeth flash in the night. The horse whinnies nervously. Pelma walks towards the pack and offers what little food

she has left.

“I still have some dried yak meat. You can have it all.”

The wolves approach warily and sniff her offerings. They show no interest, but they back off. Then, not wishing to upset the girl further, they run off in a group.

Pelma turns back towards Tsonying. The furrows in her brow begin to fade, and each step towards the convent seems to give her a little more strength. There is a serenity and wisdom in her weather-stained face. She will live her life in a completely different manner from now on, no longer troubled by the fear and ignorance that clouded her mind when she first departed from this paradise. She looks down at her reflection in the ice and realizes that she is no longer a naive young nun.

There is movement along the shore of Tsonying as, from behind the rising moon, a group of women approaches. Though they are still far away, Pelma is overcome with emotion – she has so much to tell the nuns.

As they draw close, Pelma realizes again that she has failed to bring back what the Abbess wanted. The two dying men will certainly not be a welcome sight.