

STORIES OF TIBET

Welcome to World Building Library: Stories of Tibet. The following article is a collection of Tibetan folklore. Folklore is a socially created story with no single author, embodying the social structure, mores, and practices of a culture. They are orally transmitted, passed from generation to generation, used to teach and reinforce the values and practices of a given culture.

In Tibetan folklore, there are reflections of many influences. There are the virtues upheld in Buddhism: kindness, faithfulness, appreciation, contentment, humbleness, and a giving heart. There are the virtues inherited through interaction with their neighbors and the harsh environment of Tibet: ingenuity, resourcefulness, and cleverness. And finally, there is a fatalism underlying it all, yet Tibetan folklore seems to say, "Be a happy, hopeful fatalist."

We hope you enjoy these stories and find use for them in the complex environment that is your game table.

Suzi Yee

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SIRUK KHABUK

There was a remote wooded valley in the middle of no where, just far away from civilization to avoid landlords and noblemen with private armies, yet just on the edge of a caravan route. The settlement started small, but soon others came to seek a life free of the trappings of civilization.

Life in the remote wooded valley was ideal, except for the man-eating tiger who demanded a sacrifice once a year at the first full moon of spring. The great tiger was older, not as spry or excitable as he once was. He allowed the villagers to choose who the sacrifice would be amongst themselves.

Three days before the first full moon of spring, all the families gathered in the square, all dressed in their best clothing. Each family wrote its name on a piece of wood, and a village elder picked the family from which the sacrifice must come. The choice of the actual individual was made within the family.

With all the wood chips in the barrel, the village elder chose Zomba, a family consisting of a widow and her two young daughters Pedon and Yeshe. There was a sigh of relief from all the other families in the square.

Young Bagdo was most sad to hear this news, for he was in love with Pedon and Yeshe and wanted to make one of them his wife as soon as he saved enough for a cottage and land. However, there were those in the village

that were happy at the news. Thaken was a short man who lived next door to the family Zomba. He wanted to extend his holdings and asked marry the youngest daughter, only widow Zomba merely laughed when he proposed such a marriage. The simple weaver dreamed of being rich and powerful and saw the choice of sacrifice a punishment for scorning him.

The village streets were deserted and quiet, leaving each family to their thoughts. Bagdo was distraught, wanting to save the widow and both daughters, while Thaken plotted on stealing their fine ox to carry more wares to market.

The night of the first full moon of spring came, and all the houses were dark save the house of Zomba. Bagdo walked to the house carrying a big stick, determined to kill the tiger to save the family. When he knocked, the three women were arguing over who the sacrifice should be: the widow argued it should be her since she was the oldest and had lived her life while her daughters made pleas that it should be one of them. Bagdo entered with his big stick, telling the women that he was going to kill the tiger and save them all. Making it sound like a small matter, the daughters were awed of such courage and confidence. Encouraged, Bagdo began to make up stories of all the things he had killed, waving the stick in the air as he recounted his fights with the fierce Sok and Siruk Khabuk.