

Global Classroom Book Club

EAT THE BUDDHA

Life and Death in a Tibetan Town

Monday - March 28th, 2022 | 4:30 - 6:45PM PT

Tuesday - March 29th, 2022 | 4:30 - 6:45PM PT



*Compiled By: Ryan Hauck, Tese Wintz Neighbor,
Julianna Patterson, and Isabel Wilson*

How to Use This Guide



Visual Media



Audio / Podcast



Charts and Graphs



Lesson Plans

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Outlining Standards

A Note on Learning Standards Presented in this Guide

Three sets of standards have been linked to each of the learning objectives in this packet. The **Washington State K-12 Social Studies Learning Standards** and the accompanying Grade Level Requirements are the social studies standards for WA State.

The **College, Career, & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards** are the standards published by the National Council for the Social Studies. Guiding the packet as a whole is the Framework for Global Learning created by the Asia Society and the Council of Chief State School Officers titled *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (2011).

Cross-objective standards are listed at the beginning of the packet, and content-specific standards can be found after each learning objective.

The standards provided have been selected for relevance, but are not exclusive: many other standards, such as Common Core, may be applicable to the resources and learning objectives identified in this packet. The intention for this packet's organization is to provide educators with an idea of resources available and possible uses for resources. Users should feel free to create their own learning objectives and to select resources according to the specific needs of their classrooms.

The student understands and applies reasoning skills to conduct research, deliberate, and form and evaluate positions through the processes of reading, writing, and communicating.

WASHINGTON STATE K-12 SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING STANDARDS

There are five EALRs in Social Studies, one for each of the discipline areas: civics, economics, geography, and history, and a fifth for social studies skills.

(1) Social Studies EALR 1: CIVICS

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

(2) Social Studies EALR 2: ECONOMICS

The student applies understanding of economic concepts and systems to analyze decision-making and the interactions between individuals, households, businesses, governments, and societies.

(3) Social Studies EALR 3: GEOGRAPHY

The student uses a spatial perspective to make reasoned decisions by applying the concepts of location, region, and movement and demonstrating knowledge of how geographic features and human cultures impact environments.

(4) Social Studies EALR 4: HISTORY

The student understands and applies knowledge of historical thinking, chronology, eras, turning points, major ideas, individuals, and themes on local, Washington State, tribal, United States, and world history in order to evaluate how history shapes the present and future.

(5) Social Studies EALR 5: SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The student understands and applies reasoning skills to conduct research, deliberate, and form and evaluate positions through the processes of reading, writing, and communicating.

Outlining Standards

COLLEGE, CAREER, & CIVIC LIFE C₃ FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

The C₃ Framework is organized into the four Dimensions, which support a robust social studies program rooted in inquiry.

The four Dimensions are as follows:

- (1) Developing questions and planning inquiries;
- (2) Applying disciplinary concepts and tools;
- (3) Evaluating sources and using evidence;
- (4) Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRES	DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY TOOLS AND CONCEPTS	DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE	DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLU- SIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics • Economics • Geography • History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and Evaluating Sources • Developing Claims and Using Evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions • Taking Informed Action

Dimension 2 has four disciplinary subsections: **(1) Civics; (2) Economics; (3) Geography; (4) History**. Each disciplinary subsection has three to four additional categories, which provide an organizing mechanism for the foundational content and skills within each discipline.

C₃ Framework Organization

CIVICS	ECONOMICS	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY
Civic and Political Institutions	Economic Decision Making	Geographic Representations: Special Views of the World	Change, Continuity, and Context
Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles	Exchange and Markets	Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Religions, and Culture	Perspective
Processes, Rules, and Laws	The National Economy	Human Populations: Spatial Patterns and Movements	Historical Sources and Evidence
	The Global Economy	Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns	Causation and Argumentation

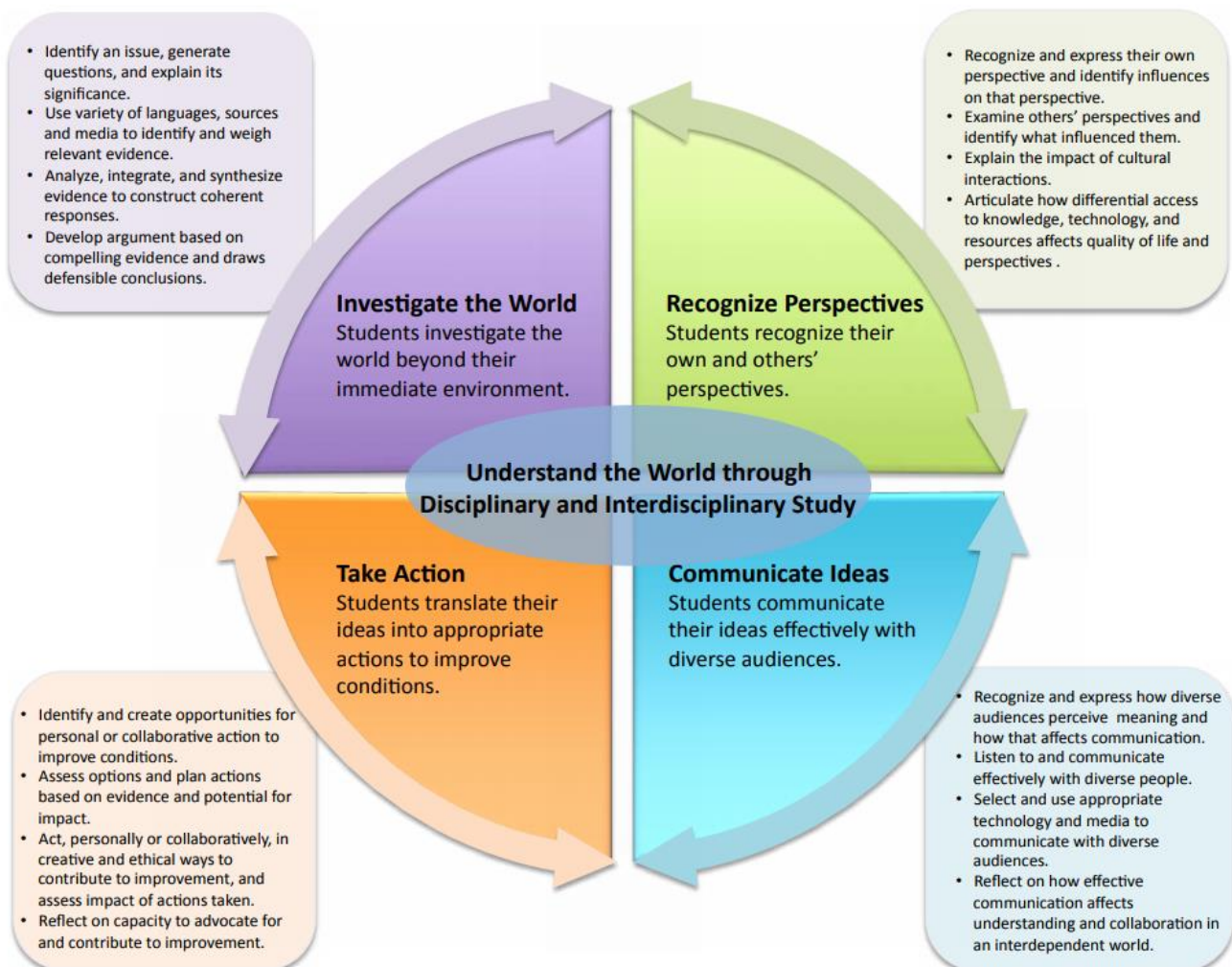
Educating for Global Competence

Frameworks taken from *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (Asia Society and the Council of Chief State School Officers 2011).

“Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (Chapter 2).

Globally competent students are able to perform the following four competences:

1. **Investigate the world** beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research.
2. **Recognize perspectives** others’ and their own, articulating and explaining such perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.
3. **Communicate ideas** effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.
4. **Take action** to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively.



About the Author



Barbara Demick is author of *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* and *Logavina Street: Life and Death in a Sarajevo Neighborhood* and the recently released *Eat the Buddha: Life and Death in a Tibetan Town*, published by Random House in July 2020. She was bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* in Beijing and Seoul, and previously reported from the Middle East and Balkans for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Demick grew up in New Jersey and graduated from Yale College. Her work has won many awards including the Samuel Johnson prize (now the Baillie Gifford prize) for non-fiction in the U.K., the Overseas Press Club's human rights reporting award, the Polk

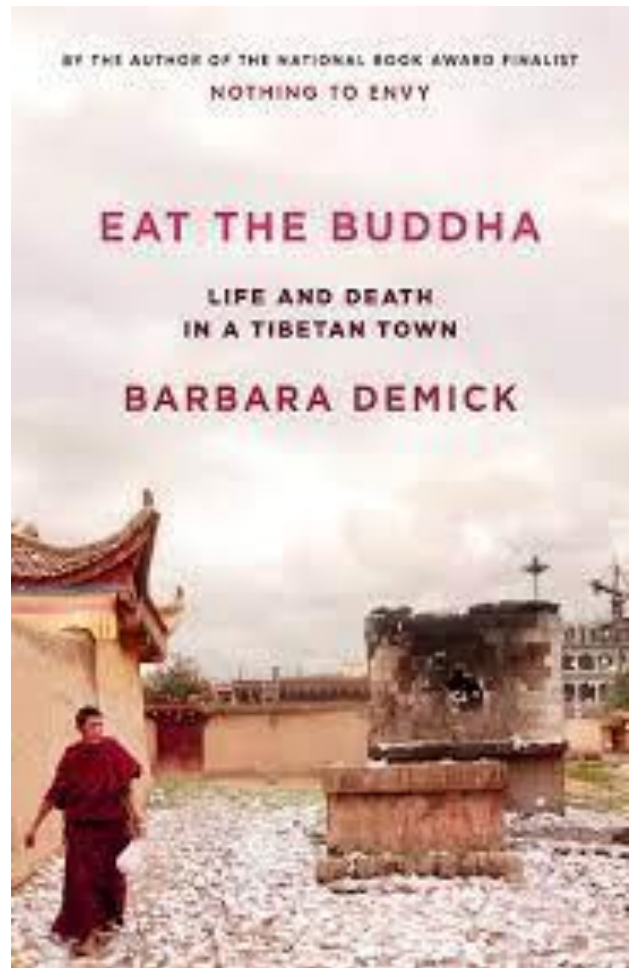
Award and the Robert F. Kennedy award and Stanford University's Shorenstein Award for Asia coverage. Her North Korea book was a finalist for the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. She was a press fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a Bagehot fellow in business journalism at Columbia University and a visiting professor of journalism at Princeton University. She lives in New York City.

Books By Barbara Demick:

<https://www.barbarademick.com/books/>

Additional Writings:

<https://www.barbarademick.com/other-writings>



Eat the Buddha | Background



[The Guardian Book Review: *Eat the Buddha* by Barbara Demick Review – Voices From A Forbidden Culture \(2020\)](#)

As in *Nothing to Envy* – and her first book *Logavina Street*, on the siege of Sarajevo – she captures crushing historical events through the stories of individuals: the novice who thrives on the monastery’s intellectual debates but is also thrilled to find it “an oversized playground” where he can slide down a heap of dirt; the teenage girl with a soft spot for handsome soldiers who begins to feel “like a double agent”; the young man who relishes his job entertaining Chinese tourists with songs and dances but becomes disenchanted and turns to activism.



[NYT Book Review: *Eat the Buddha* Reports From the ‘World Capital of Self-Immolations \(2020\)](#)

Demick covers an awe-inspiring breadth of history — from the heyday of the Tibetan empire, which could compete with those of the Turks and Arabs, to the present day, as the movement for Tibetan independence has faltered and transformed into an effort at cultural and spiritual survival. She charts the creative rebellions of recent years, the efforts at revitalizing the language and traditions, Tibetans’ attachment to the Dalai Lama (and their criticisms). Above all, Demick wants to give room for contemporary Tibetans to testify to their desires. If the spectacular horror of the self-immolations first attracted her interest, she finds, at least among her sources, demands that sound surprisingly modest.

Eat the Buddha | Background



[Author Interview: NPR Barbara Demick's *Eat The Buddha* Profiles A Little-Known Tibetan Town \(2020\)](#)

Reporter Barbara Demick is drawn to places where outsiders are largely forbidden. Her 2010 book *Nothing To Envy* was about six North Korean citizens. Her latest is about Tibet, which has been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party since the 1950s. In *Eat The Buddha: Life And Death In A Tibetan Town*, Demick profiles Ngaba (ph), a town in China's sprawling Sichuan Province. It's a part of Tibet you don't hear about, one with a reputation for resisting Beijing's rule and for self-immolation.



[Book Talk \(1 hour\) NY Society Library \(2020\)](#)

Illuminating a culture that has long been romanticized by Westerners as deeply spiritual and peaceful, Demick reveals what it is really like to be a Tibetan in the twenty-first century, trying to preserve one's culture, faith, and language against the depredations of a seemingly unstoppable, technologically all-seeing superpower. This event took place December 8, 2020.



[Eat the Buddha: Reportage on the Tibetan Plateau \(2021\)](#)

In this discussion with Columbia Professor Gray Tuttle, award-winning journalist Barbara Demick talks about her recent book, *Eat the Buddha*, and discusses the challenges of reporting on the Tibetan Plateau.



[P&P Live! Barbara Demick | EAT THE BUDDHA with Ed Wong \(2020\)](#)

Award-winning journalist Barbara Demick explores one of the most hidden corners of the world in *Eat The Buddha*. She tells the story of a Tibetan town perched eleven thousand feet above sea level that is one of the most difficult places in all of China for foreigners to visit. Illuminating a culture that has long been romanticized by Westerners as deeply spiritual and peaceful, Demick reveals what it is really like to be a Tibetan in the twenty-first century, trying to preserve one's culture, faith, and language against the depredations of a seemingly unstoppable, technologically all-seeing superpower. Her depiction is nuanced, unvarnished, and at times shocking.

Fast Fact:

Buddhism became a major presence in Tibet towards the end of the 8th century CE after being brought from India.

- British Broadcasting Company

Regional Profile

Tibet lies at the center of Asia, with an area of 2.5 million square kilometers. The earth's highest mountains, a vast arid plateau, and great river valleys make up the physical homeland of six million Tibetans. It has an average altitude of 13,000 feet above sea level. From 1949 to present, Tibet is comprised of the three provinces of Amdo (now split by China into the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu & Sichuan), Kham (largely incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai), and U-Tsang (which, together with western Kham, is today referred to by China as the Tibet Autonomous Region). This description comes from the East Asia Resource Center at the Elliott School of International Affairs. (<https://nrc.elliott.gwu.edu/tibet-2/>).



Tibet Autonomous Region: Yellow Red/Orange/Yellow Areas claims by Tibetan exiles as historical Tibet

Regional Profile

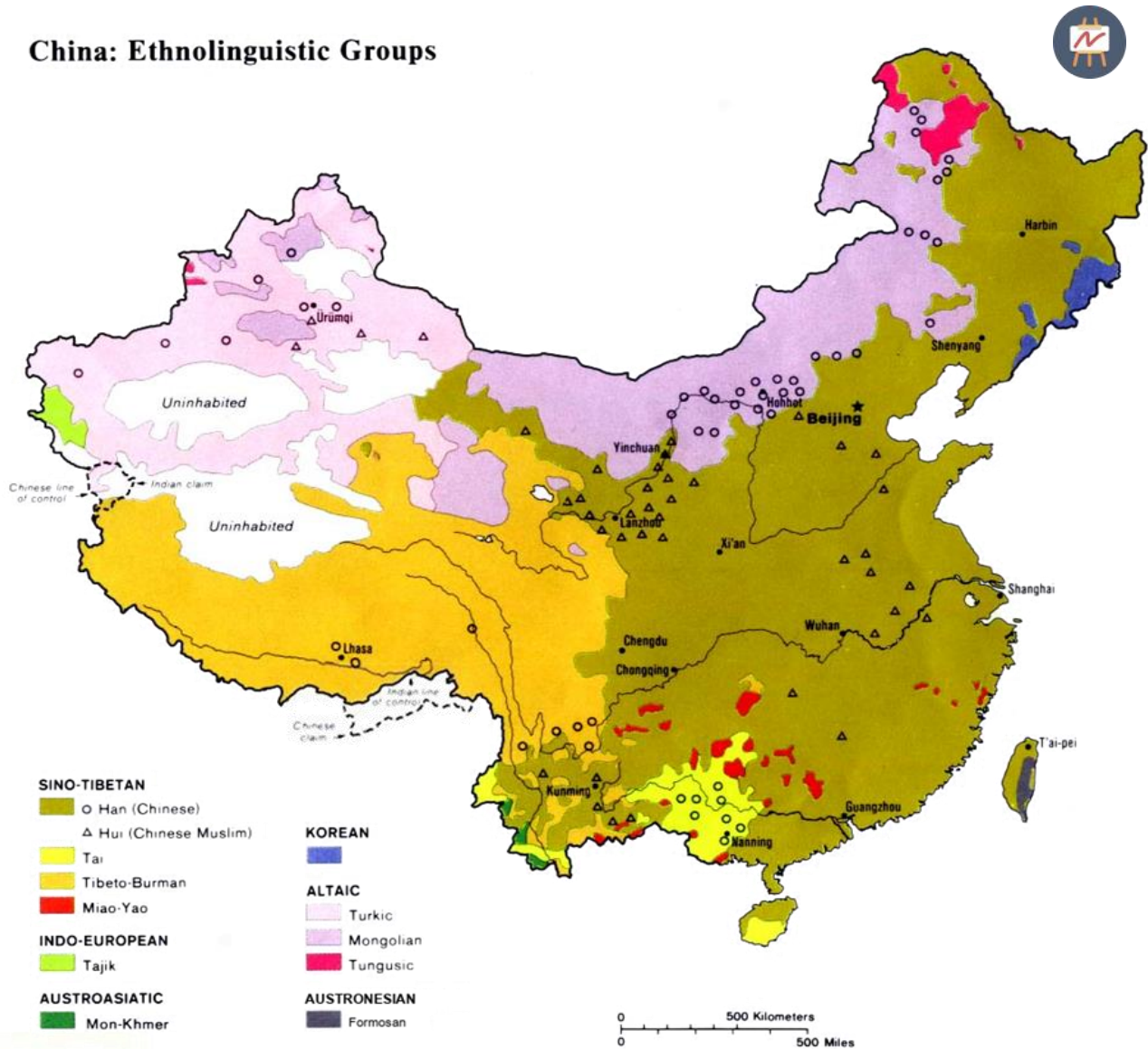
Note: Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) is an area defined and administered by the People's Republic of China. Its area is less than half of the "ethno-cultural" Tibet (or Greater Tibet). The majority of Tibetans live outside of the TAR. They live in the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Sichuan, as well as parts of northern Nepal and India. This map is available for educational use at www.johomaps.com (2005).



Regional Profile

Ethnolinguistic maps are a great resource for teaching about language and culture. This map identifies ethnolinguistic groups in China and can be found at the website below the map.

China: Ethnolinguistic Groups



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_groups_in_China#/media/



Additional Resource with Maps and Charts

The following article, "China File: How Much Does Beijing Control the Ethnic Makeup of Tibet," discusses the ethnic demography of Tibet (and outside the region). The author "highlights the importance of nuance, and how population and employment dynamics need to be differentiated, both inside Tibet, even inside TAR, but also from other regions in China such as Xinjiang." The article also includes a few maps and charts that will be useful for students to analyze and discuss. You can find the article at:

<https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/how-much-does-beijing-control-ethnic-makeup-of-tibet>

Regional Profile



TIBET	STATISTICS
Territory	Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)/Greater Tibet
Status	Region of China. Government In Exile seeks greater autonomy
Population	2.62 million in Tibet Autonomous Region (Chinese Census 2000) 6 million in Greater Tibet
Population in Exile Capital	150,000 (Dalai Lama estimate in 2009), most in India, Nepal, Bhutan, 9,000 in the United States
Ethnic Composition	92.8% Tibetan, 6.1% Han, 0.3% Hui, 0.3% Monpa (Greater Tibet) (Chinese Census data)
Capital	Lhasa
Area	1.2 million sq km (471,700 sq miles) in TAR, 2.5 million sq km in Greater Tibet
Major Languages	Tibetan, Chinese
Major Religion	Tibetan Buddhism, Bon
Staple Food:	Tsampa (roasted barley flour)
National Drink	Salted butter tea
Typical Animals	Wild Yak, Bharal (Blue) Sheep, Musk Deer, Tibetan Antelope, Tibetan Gazelle, Kyang, Pica
Typical Birds	Black-Necked Crane, Lammergeier, Great Crested Grebe, Bar Headed Goose, Ruddy Shel Duck
Environmental Problems	Deforestation in Eastern Tibet, Desertification, Poaching, Global Warming/Glacial Melting, Water concerns (damming, etc.)
Average Altitude	14,000 Feet
Highest Mountain	Chomo Langma (Mt. Everest) 29,028 feet
Average Temperature	July 58 degrees, January 24 degrees
Mineral Deposits	Borax, Uranium, Iron, Chromite, Gold
Major Rivers	Mekong, Yangtse, Salween, Tsangpo, Yellow, Indus, Karnali, Iriwaddy, Brahmaputra
Main Exports	Crafts, Livestock
Economic Activity	Tibetans: Predominately agriculture and animal husbandry; Chinese predominately government, commerce, and service sector
Bordering Countries 22	India, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma

Historical Timeline

7th-9th century - Namri Songzen and descendants begin to unify Tibetan-inhabited areas and conquer neighboring territories, in competition with China.

822 - Peace treaty with China delineates borders.

1244 - Mongols conquer Tibet. Tibet enjoys considerable autonomy under Yuan Dynasty.

1598 - Mongol Altan Khan makes high lama Sonam Gyatso first Dalai Lama.

1630s-1717 - Tibet involved in power struggles between Manchu and Mongol factions in China.

1624 - First European contact as Tibetans allow Portuguese missionaries to open church. Expelled at lama's insistence in 1745.

1717 - Dzungar Mongols conquer Tibet and sack Lhasa. Chinese Emperor Kangxi eventually ousts them in 1720 and re-establishes rule of Dalai Lama.

1724 - Chinese Manchu (Qing) dynasty appoints resident commissioner to run Tibet, annexes parts of historic Kham and Amdo provinces.

1750 - Rebellion against Chinese commissioners quelled by Chinese army, which keeps 2,000-strong garrison in Lhasa. Dalai Lama government appointed to run daily administration under supervision of commissioner.

1774 - British East India Company agent George Bogle visits to assess trade possibilities.

1788 and 1791 - China sends troops to expel Nepalese invaders.

1793 - China decrees its commissioners in Lhasa to supervise selection of Dalai and other senior lamas.

FOREIGNERS BANNED

1850s - Russian and British rivalry for control of Central Asia prompts Tibetan government to ban all foreigners.

1865 - Britain starts discreetly mapping Tibet.

1904 - Dalai Lama flees British military expedition under Colonel Francis Younghusband. Britain forces Tibet to sign trading agreement in order to forestall any Russian overtures.

1906 - British-Chinese Convention of 1906 confirms 1904 agreement, pledges Britain not to annex or interfere in Tibet in return for indemnity from Chinese government.

1907 - Britain and Russia acknowledge Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.

Historical Timeline

1908-09 - China restores Dalai Lama, who flees to India as China sends in army to control his government.

1912 April - Chinese garrison surrenders to Tibetan authorities after Chinese Republic declared.

INDEPENDENCE DECLARED

1912 - 13th Dalai Lama returns from India, Chinese troops leave.

1913 - Tibet reasserts independence after decades of rebuffing attempts by Britain and China.

1935 - The infant who will later become the 14th Dalai Lama is born to a peasant family in a small village in north-eastern Tibet. Buddhist officials declare him to be the reincarnation of the 13 previous Dalai Lamas.

1949 - Mao Zedong proclaims the founding of the People's Republic of China and threatens Tibet with "liberation."

1950 - China enforces a long-held claim to Tibet. The Dalai Lama, now aged 15, officially becomes head of state.

1951 - Tibetan leaders are forced to sign a treaty dictated by China. The treaty, known as the "Seventeen Point Agreement," professes to guarantee Tibetan autonomy and to respect the Buddhist religion, but also allows the establishment of Chinese civil and military headquarters at Lhasa.

Mid-1950s - Mounting resentment against Chinese rule leads to outbreaks of armed resistance.

1954 - The Dalai Lama visits Beijing for talks with Mao, but China still fails to honor the Seventeen Point Agreement.

REVOLT

1959 March - Full-scale uprising breaks out in Lhasa. Thousands are said to have died during the suppression of the revolt. The Dalai Lama flees to northern India, to be followed by some 80,000 other Tibetans.

1963 - Foreign visitors are banned from Tibet.

1965 - Chinese government establishes Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

1966 - The Cultural Revolution reaches Tibet and results in the destruction of a large number of monasteries and cultural artifacts.

1971 - Foreign visitors are again allowed to enter the country.

Late 1970s - End of Cultural Revolution leads to some easing of repression, though large-scale relocation of Han Chinese into Tibet continues.

Historical Timeline

1980s - China introduces "Open Door" reforms and boosts investment while resisting any move towards greater autonomy for Tibet.

1987 - The Dalai Lama calls for the establishment of Tibet as a zone of peace and continues to seek dialogue with China, with the aim of achieving genuine self-rule for Tibet within China.

1988 - China imposes martial law after riots break out.

1993 - Talks between China and the Dalai Lama break down.

1995 - The Dalai Lama names a six-year-old boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as the true reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the second most important figure in Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese authorities place the boy under house arrest and designate another six-year-old boy, Gyancaïn Norbu, as their officially sanctioned Panchen Lama.

2002 - Contacts between the Dalai Lama and Beijing are resumed.

RAIL LINK

2006 July - A new railway linking Lhasa and the Chinese city of Golmud is opened. The Chinese authorities hail it as a feat of engineering, but critics say it will significantly increase Han Chinese traffic to Tibet and accelerate the undermining of traditional Tibetan culture.

2007 November - The Dalai Lama hints at a break with the centuries-old tradition of selecting his successor, saying the Tibetan people should have a role.

2007 December - The number of tourists travelling to Tibet hits a record high, up 64% year on year at just over four million, Chinese state media say.

2008 March - Anti-China protests escalate into the worst violence Tibet has seen in 20 years, five months before Beijing hosts the Olympic Games.

Pro-Tibet activists in several countries focus world attention on the region by disrupting progress of the Olympic torch relay.

2008 October - The Dalai Lama says he has lost hope of reaching agreement with China about the future of Tibet. He suggests that his government-in-exile could now harden its position towards Beijing.

Historical Timeline

2008 November - The British government recognizes China's direct rule over Tibet for the first time. Critics say the move undermines the Dalai Lama in his talks with China.

China says there has been no progress in the latest round of talks with aides of the Dalai Lama, and blames the Tibetan exiles for the failure of the discussions.

A meeting of Tibetan exiles in northern India reaffirms support for the Dalai Lama's long-standing policy of seeking autonomy, rather than independence, from China.

2008 December - Row breaks out between European Union and China after Dalai Lama addresses European MPs. China suspends high-level ties with France after President Nicolas Sarkozy meets the Dalai Lama.

ANNIVERSARY

2009 January - Chinese authorities detain 81 people and question nearly 6,000 alleged criminals in what the Tibetan government-in-exile called a security crackdown ahead of the March anniversary of the 1959 flight of the Dalai Lama.

2009 March - China marks flight of Dalai Lama with new "Serfs' Liberation Day" public holiday. China promotes its appointee as Panchen Lama, the second highest-ranking Lama, as spokesman for Chinese rule in Tibet. Government reopens Tibet to tourists after a two-month closure ahead of the anniversary.

2009 April - China and France restore high-level contacts after December rift over President Sarkozy's meeting with the Dalai Lama, and ahead of a meeting between President Sarkozy and China's President Hu Jintao at the London G20 summit.

2009 August - Following serious ethnic unrest in China's Xinjiang region, the Dalai Lama describes Beijing's policy on ethnic minorities as "a failure." But he also says that the Tibetan issue is a Chinese domestic problem.

2009 October - China confirms that at least two Tibetans have been executed for their involvement in anti-China riots in Lhasa in March 2008.

2009 January - Head of pro-Beijing Tibet government, Qiangba Puncog, resigns. A former army soldier and, like Puncog, ethnic Tibetan, Padma Choling, is chosen to succeed him.

2010 April - Envoys of Dalai Lama visit Beijing to resume talks with Chinese officials after a break of more than one year.

Historical Timeline

2010 July 6 - The Dalai Lama celebrates his 75th birthday.

2011 February - "The Tibet problem will be solved in my lifetime." Dalai Lama, Mumbai University. China's State Administration for Religious Affairs disclosed plans to enact a new law forbidding the 75-year-old Buddhist deity to be reborn anywhere but on Chinese-controlled soil.

2011 March - A Tibetan Buddhist monk burns himself to death in a Tibetan-populated part of Sichuan Province in China, becoming the first of 12 monks and nuns in 2011 to make this protest against Chinese rule over Tibet.

2011 April - Dalai Lama announces his retirement from politics. Exiled Tibetans elect Lobsang Sangay to lead the government-in-exile.

2011 July - The man expected to be China's next president, Xi Jinping, promises to "smash" Tibetan separatism in a speech to mark the 60th anniversary of the Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet. This comes shortly after US President Barack Obama receives the Dalai Lama in Washington and expresses "strong support" for human rights in Tibet.

2011 November - The Dalai Lama formally hands over his political responsibilities to Lobsang Sangay, a former Harvard academic. Before stepping down, the Dalai Lama questions the wisdom and effectiveness of self-immolation as a means of protesting against Chinese rule in Tibet.

2011 December - An exiled Tibetan rights group says a former monk died several days after setting himself on fire. Tenzin Phuntsog is the first monk to die thus in Tibet proper.

2012 May - Two men set themselves on fire in Lhasa, one of whom died, the official Chinese media said. They are the first self-immolations reported in the Tibetan capital.

2012 August - Two Tibetan teenagers are reported to have burned themselves to death in Sichuan province.

2012 October - Several Tibetan men burn themselves to death in north-western Chinese province of Gansu, Tibetan rights campaigners say.

2012 November - UN human rights chief Navi Pillay calls on China to address abuses that have prompted the rise in self-immolations.

Historical Timeline

On the eve of the 18th Communist Party of China National Congress, three teenage Tibetan monks set themselves on fire.

2013 February - The London-based Free Tibet group says further self-immolations bring to over 100 the number of those who have resorted to this method of protest since March 2011.

2013 June - China denies allegations by rights activists that it has resettled two million Tibetans in "socialist villages".

2014 February - US President Obama holds talks with the Dalai Lama in Washington. China summons a US embassy official in Beijing to protest.

2014 April - Human Rights Watch says Nepal has imposed increasing restrictions on Tibetans living in the country following pressure from China.

2014 June - The Tibetan government-in-exile launches a fresh drive to persuade people across the world to support its campaign for more autonomy for people living inside the region.

2016 March - China announces five-year development plan, including plan to link Lhasa with Chengdu in China's south-west.

2017 August - Dr. Lobsang Sangay, president of the Central Tibetan Administration, says China's unchecked mining and dam building has to be reigned in. Rising temperatures on the roof of the world make Tibet both a driver and amplifier of global warming.

2020 - Some of the most serious clashes in decades between China and India on their disputed border in the Himalayas, with deaths on both sides.

The Dalai Lama calls for urgent climate action: "The Buddha would be green."

2020 September - Report says 500,000 rural workers trained for factories this year in program likened to Xinjiang operations.

Historical Timeline

2020 November - Dr. Lobsang Sangay, head of the Tibetan government in exile, visited the White House for the first time in six decades.

2021 July - Xi Jinping visit TAR, the first visit by a Chinese leader in 30 years.

2021 August - Chinese official Wang Yang announces that “all-round” efforts” are needed to ensure Tibetans speak standard spoken and written Chinese.

2022 March – International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reported that the popular Tibetan singer Tsewang Norbu died in Lhasa from wounds from his reported 2/25 self-immolation.



[Timeline from BBC](#)



Understanding China & Tibet

CHINA-TIBET RELATIONS

THOUGHTS/EXCERPTS ON THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL STATUS OF TIBET

There is general acceptance that Tibet was in some sense part of the Chinese Empire in the thirteenth century and again in the eighteenth century, when Chinese armies were sent to protect Tibet from internal conflict and to repel invasion by the Gurkhas of Nepal and when Chinese “Ambans” or imperial commissioners were stationed in Lhasa. But it is argued by many supporters of the Tibetan case that the Chinese Empire at that time was either a Mongol (in Chinese, Yuan) empire or a Manchu (Qing) one, and that the Chinese republicans who took over Beijing in 1911 did not inherit all the rights and respect that were due to their Manchu predecessors. It is a powerful argument in terms of Asian political traditions, but generally the international system accepts the transfer of rights between dynasties.

However, one resolves this debate, it is clear that, if it is once admitted that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (for example) the Chinese emperors had a significant right to participate in Tibetan affairs, the claim to a full and total independence by Tibetans is not at all as definite as it is sometimes presented. Those facts that can be asserted with some confidence give, accordingly, a more complex impression. Firstly, the Chinese (or their Mongol and Manchu rulers) believed themselves, rightly or wrongly, to be for considerable lengths of time in some way overlords of Tibet. Secondly, however, it is certain that these rulers and their citizens did not view their Tibetan Territory as identical in status to their Chinese provinces, which were handled by a different government office from that which dealt with Tibet and Mongolia. Thirdly, it is clear that until this century, at which time the British began actively to encourage a sense of separation in Lhasa, the Tibetans, as was natural in the traditional political culture of the time, did little to disabuse the emperors of their belief in their sovereignty over Tibet. Fourthly, it is not disputed even by the Chinese that after 1912, when all Chinese officials and residents in Lhasa were expelled by the Tibetan government following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Lhasa thenceforth exercise full control of all its own affairs, internal and external, until the Chinese army invaded its eastern borders thirty-eight years later.

This last argument is persuasive to many people, especially because the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, in a 1912 treaty with Mongolia of which the original is lost, reportedly declared Tibet to be independent. Still, it is not as conclusive as it might appear, since large parts of China were also in effect autonomous during the first half of this century – Qinghai, for example, more or less governed itself under Ma Pufang during the same period. But this could be seen as a consequence of the weakness of the then Chinese government, beset by Japanese invasion and wracked by civil war; it was not necessarily a proof in itself of separate political status. Ma Pufang apparently did not see himself or his realm as historically or culturally distinct from other political entities within China.

Understanding China & Tibet

In the final analysis lawyers and historians may not be able to come to a conclusive answer on this question. They may concede that the nature of Tibet's status before 1912 was not of a kind that can be exactly expressed by twentieth-century notions of statehood: it was not the same as a province of China, but, except when China was too weak to exercise central control, it did not define itself in modern terms as an independent state. The Tibetans like to express this by saying that there was a *cho-yon* or protector-patron relationship between the two governments before 1912, meaning that Tibetans offered spiritual guidance to emperors in return for political protection. This, however, seems more a description of a personal relationship between leaders than a resolution of the question of statehood.

There is, however, one negative argument that powerfully supports the Tibetan view: no one seems so far to have found any document in which the Tibetan people or their government explicitly recognized Chinese sovereignty before the invasion of 1950. The importance of this argument lies not in its role in the legal debate, but in what it indicates in terms of the political realities on the ground. Chief among these is the question as to how Tibetans perceived and perceive themselves. The fact is that most Tibetans seem to have experienced themselves and their land as distinct from China. Few in central Tibet had seen any Chinese before the invasion and almost none of the Chinese there now have lived in Tibet for more than fifty years. Although Chinese armies traveled to Tibet four times in the eighteenth century, they were probably regarded by Tibetans as allies assisting the Tibetan government to repel threats of invasion or insurrection, not as overlords. If Tibet was at any recent time part of China, this affiliation seems to have been for the most part a traditional construct that has no exact equivalent in our time, or an abstruse diplomatic technicality arranged among the elite that seemingly was never communicated to the Tibetan people.

Certainly, there were few signs of Chinese influence, let alone one rule, in Tibet. All the major indicators of culture and society were entirely different from those of their Chinese neighbors – the coinage, postage, language, dress, food, and taxation of Tibet were all distinctively Tibetan, and before the Chinese invasion Tibet had developed all the political and social institutions, from an army to a civil service, that a country needs to function as a separate entity. It is these simple, experienced realities rather than any legal considerations that are of political significance because it is largely to them, and to religious, that we must attribute the decision of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans in the 1950s and 1960s to face death in defense of their perception of Tibet as a separate country. It is in this context that we should view China's current campaign within Tibet to oblige all Tibetans to undergo "patriotic education," a program that requires everyone to attend lectures or to sign a statement saying that Tibet has been part of China since the thirteenth century. The campaign suggests that what matters to Beijing is not expert adjudication so much as popular consent: the Chinese authorities also see the Tibet issue as shaped not by the decisions of lawyers and leaders but by the views and beliefs of ordinary Tibetans.

Understanding China & Tibet

Strangely, few people, and fewer Tibetans, have chosen to argue that, given the distinct status that the Chinese emperors accorded to Tibet compared to their provinces, Tibet must at best have been something like a colony. If this argument was pursued – and it is hard to contest – the present situation could be described as one of colonial occupation. It is one of the mysteries (some people might say tragedies) of the Tibetan case that its leaders in exile and their advisers have sought to show that Tibet has a right to absolute statehood, perhaps gambling to attract Western support, rather than to seek its people's right to decolonization, an option that might have gained them wider support in the developing world.

But these are in essence questions of strategy and definition, matters that are decided by political elites. At the fundamental, everyday level at which most of us operate, the reality is that, as far as we can tell, the majority of Tibetans do not accept their current masters as legitimate rulers. It is difficult otherwise to explain the thousands of Tibetans who since 1950 have taken part in the revolt, in the guerrilla war, or in civil protests, who have been to prison or have been executed for holding such views, or who have fled as refugees. The numbers involved in these actions are too great to be discounted as all members or beneficiaries of the political elite whose power and wealth was jeopardized by the Chinese advance to Lhasa.

(Excerpt from The Tibetans: A Struggle to Survive, pp. 180-182)

For the Chinese, pre-1950 Tibet was a hell on earth ravaged by feudal exploitation. There are no redeemable features in Tibetan culture and tradition. This view is fostered by traditional Chinese prejudice against non-Chinese people. The Communists not only believe that they have succeeded in unifying China but that their rule in Tibet has constituted the liberation of the serfs and a continuous history of development and progress towards modernity.

For the Tibetans the image could not be more different. Before the Chinese invasion their country was a land of 'happy' and 'contented' people. Chinese rule has not only meant the destruction of Tibetans' independent political identity but (they maintain) four decades of near genocide of the Tibetan people and their culture. The gulf between the two positions is as wide as heaven and earth, and it is impossible to reconcile them.

Both are part of political mythmaking, in which these powerful symbols are invoked to justify and legitimize the claims of the proponents. For the Chinese it has been a political necessity to paint a dark and hellish picture of the past in order to justify their claim to have 'liberated' Tibet, a claim which is based only partly on a legal insistence that Tibet constituted an integral part of the PRC. The logic of the argument is the same as the belief held by Western colonial powers that their rule has been a civilizing influence on the natives in their dominions. For the Tibetans, particularly for those who experienced firsthand the oppression of the past four decades, regaining the past has become a necessary act of political invocation, which allows them to escape from a reality which has deprived them of their future. .

Understanding China & Tibet

They find meaning and identity in glorification of the past when the land of snows was the exclusive terrain of the Tibetan people.

Neither the Tibetans nor the Chinese want to allow any complexities to intrude on their firmly held beliefs. This has resulted in what I have called 'denial of history', a process which necessarily entails negation of responsibility. The Tibetan elite claims its actions are entirely blameless, seeking to give an image of total innocence and to portray the Chinese actions as the rape of an innocent people. It is difficult for the Tibetans to admit that they were not merely a passive agent in their recent history of that there was a much more complex issue surrounding the relationship between Tibet and China. In the early 1950's there was a consensus among Tibet's secular and religious ruling classes that Buddhist Tibet and Communist China could co-exist and, accordingly, they co-operated fully with the Chinese. Moreover, there were many people in Tibet who welcomed the Chinese as a modernizing influence.

Similarly, the Chinese leaders refuse to see the question of Tibet in terms of the desires and wishes of the Tibetan people. For the Chinese to acknowledge that Tibet had a recent history, and a personality would amount to an acceptance of Tibet's separateness from China. Chinese policy towards Tibet stems from two ideas which have shaped modern China: first, Chinese nationalism, which attaches great importance to the humiliation of China under Western imperialism and leads the Chinese to interpret Tibet's demand for independence as an externally generated conspiracy to dismember China, a view consistently held by successive Chinese regimes from the Qing to the Guomindang and the Communists. Therefore, all Chinese leaders since the later Qing have adopted a policy of incorporating Tibet within the greater policy of China. In this scheme of things, it does not matter what the Tibetans think or want: Tibet is part of China. The second formative view adopted by the Chinese is a narrow Marxist economic determinist view of national identity, which sees it as product of economic disparity, and argues that once economic inequality is removed, there would occur a natural withering of ethnic differences.

(Excerpt from The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947 by Tsering Shakya)



Understanding China & Tibet



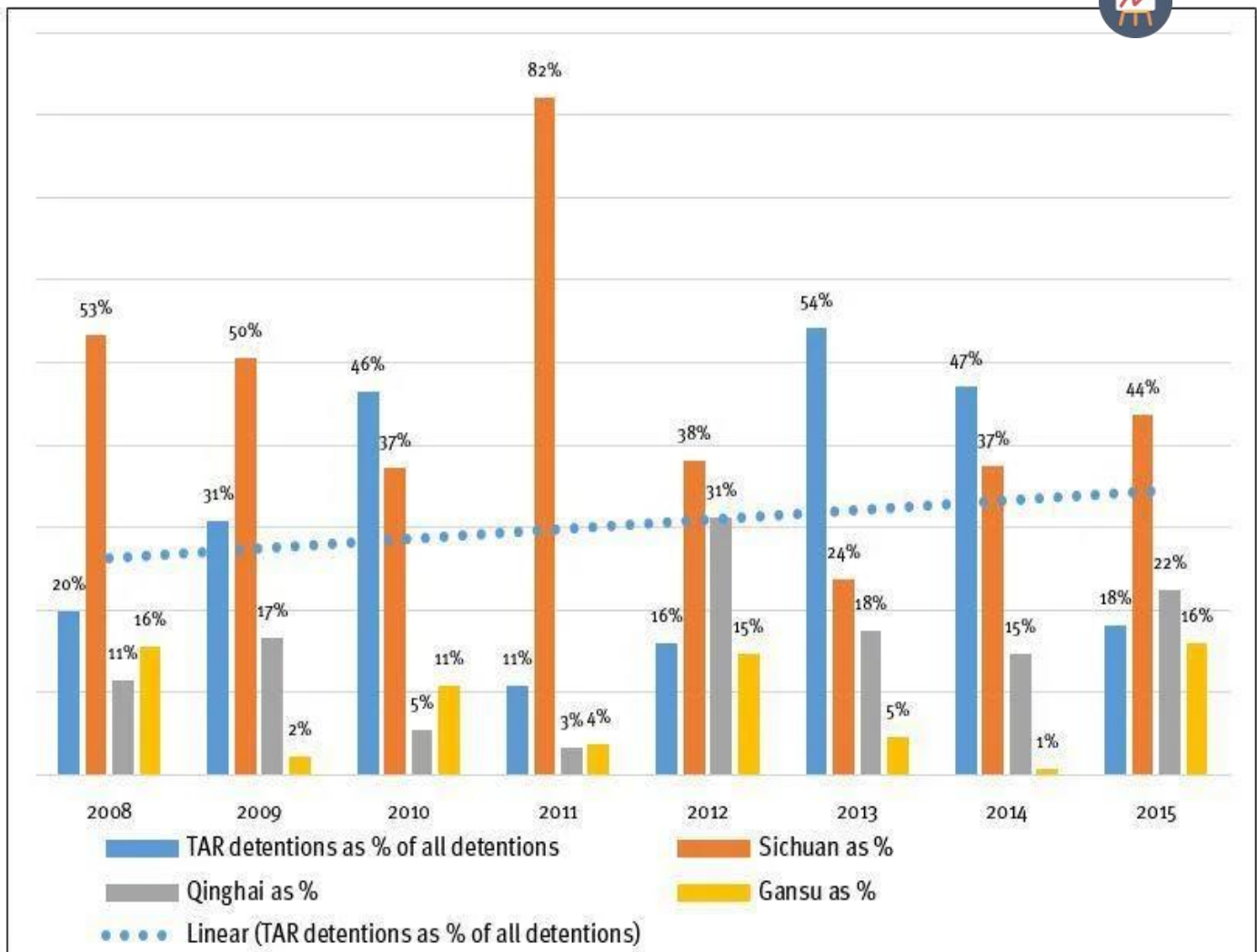
Tibet and Inner Asia Images

Visual representations can serve as a powerful tool to help students utilize their prior knowledge and apply newly acquired information. It is important for students to understand cultural and historical information in a geographic context. This lesson uses images from Tibet and Inner Asia to introduce geographic and historic information about the region. The activities in lesson one help engage students in the topic "Tibet and Inner Asia" and introduce important information about this unit.



BBC World Service - Witness History Podcast - The Tibetan Uprising

In 1959 the people of Tibet turned against Chinese occupying forces. Their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, escaped across the border to India. A short lived battle for independence followed.



Proportion of documented politicized detentions in each province-level Tibetan area, 2008-2015. Note that absolute numbers of political detentions declined from about 250 per year in 2008-2012 to 160 per year in 2013-2015.

Environment & Natural Resources



[Tibet's Natural Resources: Tension over Treasure \(2020\)](#)

Exactly sixty years ago, on October 7 1950, the 'volunteer' army of the newly founded People's Republic of China swept into Tibet and effectively ended 39-years of relative autonomy. Over the coming decades the relationship between Beijing and Lhasa will be defined to an important degree by the region's superb natural resources. But as the Chinese authorities prepare to unveil an important new rail-link and announce ambitious plans to make Tibet into 'an important strategic resources reserve base', it seems likely that the 'development' of the region will either strengthen or dissolve these political ties.



[Tibetan Nomads Struggle as Grasslands Disappear from the Roof of the World \(2010\)](#)

Tibet boasts some of the world's most majestic mountains and natural wonders. But in recent years the vegetation around the Tibetan plateau has been destroyed by rising temperatures, excess livestock and plagues of insects and rodents. Scientists say desertification of the mountain grasslands of the Tibetan plateau is accelerating climate change.



[The Himalayas](#)

The highest mountain range in the world, the Himalayan range is far-reaching, spanning thousands of miles, and holds within it an exceptionally diverse ecology. Coniferous and subtropical forests, wetlands, and montane grasslands are as much a part of this world as the inhospitable, frozen mountain-tops that tower above. Includes various short videos, fact page, and other resources.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 80% of Tibetan forests have been destroyed since 1959, when China seized control of the region.

- University of Massachusetts



Environment & Natural Resources



[Tibet's Natural Resources](#)

The diversity of geographic features makes Tibet not only a natural park rich with various kinds of fauna and flora, but amazingly blessed by vast mineral, hydro, solar and geothermal energy resources.



[Nature Documentary: Southeastern Tibet Ep. 1—Lonely Glaciers](#)

Lhegu Glaciers, the headwater of Parlung Zangbo River, comprises accumulations of ice, snow, rock and sediment. This moving ice body plays a vital role in the environment of Tibet. In the first episode, we look at the creation of glaciers, and how climate change influences the highest land on the planet.



[Inquiry on the Tibetan Plateau](#)

This lesson plan is meant to function in conjunction with the documentary film “Upward and Outward.” The lesson focuses on students understanding of the film through discussion and understanding of the scientific processes the film depicts.

[Tibet Justice Center Reports: Environmental Governance](#)

The Tibet Justice Center is referred to in Barbara Demick’s reference notes. The organization advocates for human rights and self-determination for the Tibetan people. In addition to projects focused on human rights, self-governance, and refugee populations, it also focuses on environmental governance. They work to “protect Tibet’s environment and promote its sustainable development by advocating for the Tibetans’ right to environmental governance – i.e. genuine access to and control over decision-making in the management, restoration, and conservation of Tibet’s natural resources. We believe that these freedoms constitute a powerful – and increasingly vital – form of self-determination to which all Tibetans have a fundamental right.” This would be a good resource to explore with regard to sustainability and environmental issues in Tibet, including its intersection with their other project-focused areas.

[In the Footsteps of Joseph Rock](#)

Dr. Joseph Rock was an Austrian-born American botanist, anthropologist and explorer. He lived in South West China from the 1920s to 1949. During that time he went on many expeditions to remote parts of the Tibetan borderlands, collecting plants, taking photographs and collating maps. He described his trips in several articles in the National Geographic journal. Many people have been inspired to revisit places he described in Sichuan and Yunnan such as Muli, Yading, Deqin and Gongga Shan. This blog describes his travels and compares Rock's pictures with ones others have taken in the same places.

Rivers & Water Resources

[International Rivers Organization: People, Water, Life. "Salween River" \(2019\)](#)

This site provides a brief overview of the work of the International Rivers Organization. According to their vision, the organization seeks to create a "world where healthy rivers and the rights of local river communities are valued and protected." The group also states that "where water and energy needs are met without degrading na-



ture or increasing poverty, and where people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives." This particular link explores the Salween River, which has been the longest undammed river in SE Asia with its headwaters in Tibet to its estuary in Myanmar. The river also flows through China's Three Parallel Rivers UNESCO World Heritage Site. This site would be a starting point for understanding how the river supports over 10 million people, including ethnic minorities in the region.

[A New Era for Tibet's Rivers \(2011\)](#)

The rushing waters of the Yarlung Zangbo, the last of China's great rivers to remain undammed, will soon be history. On November 12th, 2010, the builders of the Zangmu Hydropower Station announced the successful damming of the river – the first public announcement on a matter that, until now, has been kept under wraps. The Zangmu hydroelectric power station is being built on the middle reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo (known as the Brahmaputra when it reaches India) between the counties of Sangri and Gyaca. Around 7.9 billion yuan (US\$1.2 billion) is being invested in the project, located in a V-shaped valley 3,200 metres above sea level. At 510 megawatts, the plant is much smaller than China's 18,000- megawatt Three Gorges Dam, but still equivalent to the entire existing hydropower-generating capacity of Tibet.



[MEGOE TSO: The Damming of Tibet's Sacred Lake \(2005\)](#)

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the key issues surrounding the controversial dam project on eastern Tibet's most sacred lake, Megoe Tso. The project is currently "suspended" but nonetheless has been approved by China's central government. *Damming was again suspended in 2010.* The report is 22 pages, including graphs and charts. While 17 years old, the report provides an overview of some of the economic, political, environmental, and cultural significance of the lake.

Rivers & Water Resources

Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Region's Water Future (2009)

This report from Asia Society recommends a comprehensive strategy to avert a regional water crisis. The analysis argues that access to a safe, stable water supply in Asia "will have a profound impact on security throughout the region," warns a new Asia Society Leadership Group report. In response to the cascading set of consequences reduced access to fresh water will trigger—including impaired food production, the loss of livelihood security, largescale migration within and across borders, and increased economic and geopolitical tensions and instabilities. <https://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/WaterSecurityReport.pdf>

Environmental Cooperation: USAID-ASIA: Water and Sanitation/Environment Governance (2008)

This report from 2008 provides an overview of USAID-Asia's work in increases access to reliable and sustainable water and sanitation services to support regional health security and prosperity in Asia. Under the ECO-Asia Water and Sanitation Program, innovative strategies for expanding and sustaining access to services, especially to the urban poor, through partnership with cities, water utilities and financing institutions are identified. The report also describes progress in key programming areas such as (1) enabling safe water access; (2) promoting sustainable sanitation; (3) strengthening water services utility performance; and (4) innovative financing.

Fast Fact

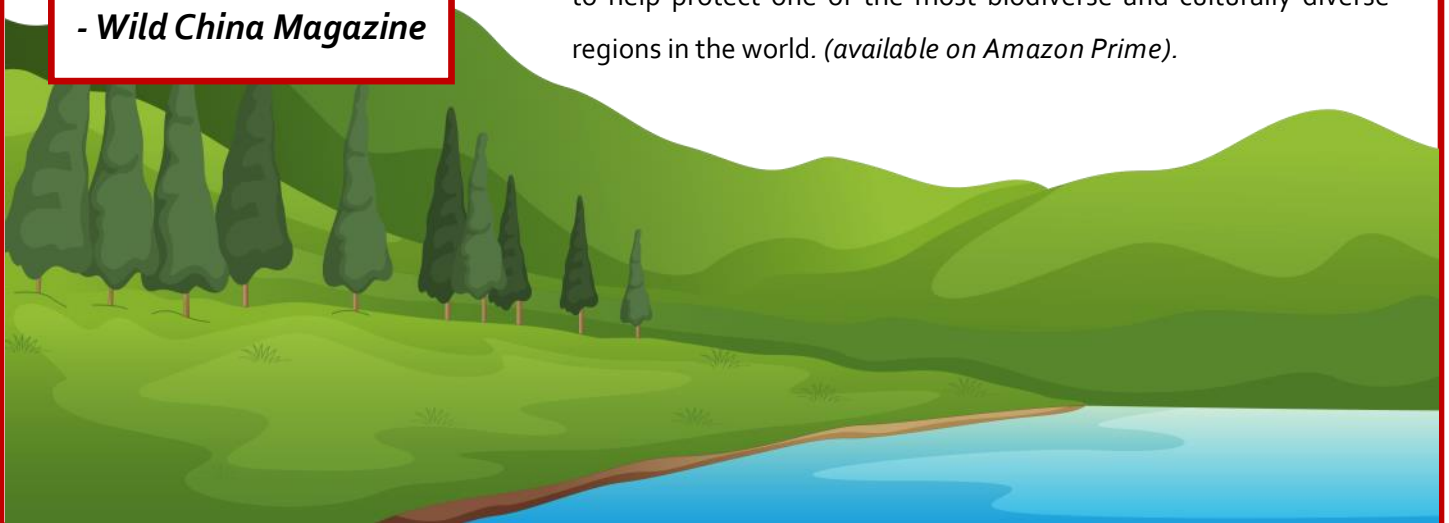
47% of the world's population depends on the flow of fresh water from Tibet. For that reason Tibet is often called the "Third Pole."

- Wild China Magazine



The Yunnan Great Rivers Expedition (2003)

In a remote corner of Southwest China, three of Asia's greatest rivers plunge off the Tibetan Plateau through steep canyons in the Himalayas thousands of feet deep. This stunningly beautiful film captures the incredible journey of a whitewater expedition, as it explores the upper Mekong, Salween and Yangtze rivers. More than a wild adventure, the two-month expedition was an ambitious partnership with the Nature Conservancy and the Chinese government to help protect one of the most biodiverse and culturally diverse regions in the world. *(available on Amazon Prime).*



Wildlife & Conservation

[The Story of Tsoe \(Tibetan Antelopes\) \(2010\)](#)

Today we are witnessing rapid changes inside Tibet as China races ahead into the 21st century. While growth and globalization have brought benefits to untold millions, for some, it has spelled disaster. The Tibetan antelope, called Tsoe or chiru, lives above the tree line on the Tibetan Plateau at an altitude of 14,000 ft and above. They are protected against the sub-zero temperatures and icy winds of the Himalayan plateau by the softest, finest hair on earth. An undercoat of this extremely fine fur, covered by a coarse outer fleece, enables it to survive winter temperatures of negative 45 degrees Fahrenheit. In a cruel twist of fate, nature's ingenuity is leading to ruin for this species. Shawls made from this fur, or shahtoosh, meaning "king of wool" in Persian, have long been prized amongst wealthy, fashionable Indian households.

[Chang Tang Reserve \(Established by Wildlife Conservation Society\)](#)

The Chang Tang region is one of the last great expanses of wilderness left on Earth. Covering a good part of the Tibetan Plateau, this area of more than 400,000 square miles consists of broad, rolling alpine steppes broken by hills, glacier-capped mountains, and large basins studded with wetlands and saline lakes. The land is too cold to support forests and agriculture. Vegetation consists primarily of a sparse cover of grasses, sedges, forbs, and low shrubs. A significant portion of the northern Chang Tang is uninhabited by people, but the southern- and westernmost parts support Tibetan pastoralists and their livestock.

[Snow Leopard Trust](#)

Founded in 1981, (in Seattle) the Snow Leopard Trust is the world's leading authority on the study and protection of the endangered snow leopard. The snow leopard's range encompasses 12 mountainous Central Asian Countries. The Snow Leopard Trust currently has programs in five of them: China, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, and Pakistan. These are the priority areas for snow leopard conservation: together, these five nations contain 75% of the world's population of wild snow leopards and a similar proportion of snow leopard habitat.

Country Brief:

China, the world's most populous country, also contains the largest number of snow leopards of any country in the world. A large country bordering on nearly all other snow leopard range states, and containing over half the world's potential snow leopard habitat, China is a key crossroads for snow leopard conservation. For the second half of the 20th Century, China's strict Communist dictatorship constrained the collection and, especially, the international interchange of scientific information. China is the Snow Leopard Trust's newest program country, and the Trust is initially focusing its work in Xinjiang province, which may harbor one-third of China's snow leopards.

Wildlife & Conservation

[A Turning Point for Tigers](#) [\(World Wildlife Fund, 2022\)](#)

Tigers in Asia, including Tibet, have been subjected to reduced habitat and therefore decreasing numbers. This article discusses efforts by World Wildlife Fund and others to turnaround this trend. As stated, "shrinking habitats, increasing contact—and conflict—with people, and a booming illicit trade in tiger parts have driven these powerful



predators to endangered status. By 2010, an estimated 3,200 tigers survived in the wild—a faint shadow of the roughly 100,000 that roamed Asia a century earlier. Today, the big cats are found in less than 5% of their historical range. There is reason for hope says Stuart Chapman. "Since tiger met man, the population has been in decline. Until a moment about five years ago, when the population stabilized and began increasing."

[World Wildlife Fund: Eastern Himalayas \(Including Tibet\)](#)

This site provides information about the Eastern Himalayas and efforts to protect it. According to WWF, "there are 163 globally threatened species found in the Himalayas, including Asia's three largest herbivores – Asian elephant, greater one-horned rhinoceros and wild water buffalo – and its largest carnivore, the tiger. The Himalayas is the highest mountain range in the world, and has 9 out of 10 of the world's highest peaks, including Mount Everest. These mountains are the source of some of Asia's major rivers and also help to regulate our planet's climate. For centuries people here have developed a unique culture that weaves nature and people together into the same fabric of life. The region is the birthplace of the Buddha, and is full of sacred natural sites such as secret valleys and high mountain lakes that predate ancient Hinduism. The Himalayas face many challenges, and governments are under pressure to provide for their people and secure their natural heritage. Forests are strained as demand continues to grow for timber and food crops. Protected areas are becoming isolated pockets, and international criminal networks are emptying forests of rare wildlife to feed the voracious illegal market. The impact of global climate change is melting the once mighty Himalayas at a rate faster than ever recorded in human history, jeopardizing a vital source of freshwater for billions of people in Asia."

Global Warming & Anthropological Impacts on the Environment

[NASA: Black Carbon Deposits on Himalayas \(2009\)](#)

(Note: This provides a historical context as the site is no longer being updated)

Black soot deposited on Tibetan glaciers has contributed significantly to the retreat of the world's largest non-polar ice masses, according to new research by scientists from NASA and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Soot absorbs incoming solar radiation and can speed glacial melting when deposited on snow in sufficient quantities. Temperatures on the Tibetan Plateau—sometimes called Earth's "third pole"—have warmed by 0.3°C (0.5°F) per decade over the past 30 years, about twice the rate of observed global temperature increases. "Black soot is probably responsible for as much as half of the glacial melt, and greenhouse gases are responsible for the rest." "During the last 20 years, the black soot concentration has increased two- to three-fold relative to its concentration in 1975," said Junji Cao, a researcher from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing and a coauthor of the paper. The study was published December 7th in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "Fifty percent of the glaciers were retreating from 1950 to 1980 in the Tibetan region; that rose to 95 percent in the early 21st century," said Tandong Yao, director of the Chinese Academy's Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research. Since melt water from Tibetan glaciers replenishes many of Asia's major rivers—including the Indus, Ganges, Yellow, and Brahmaputra—such losses could have a profound impact on the billion people who rely on the rivers for fresh water.

[The Mushrooming Fungi Market in Tibet \(2008\)](#)

The collection of wild edible fungi has a long-standing history in Tibet. Today, a wide variety of mushrooms is collected to supplement rural income. Because of the lucrative economic return, rural Tibetans have increased their gathering activities substantially. In late 2007, the value of the best-quality *Yartsa Günbu* in Lhasa (Lasa)



traded for around CN ¥80,000 (nearly US \$12,000) per pound. The value of the fifty-ton annual harvest of Cordyceps surpassed the value of the industry and mining sector in 2004. Most county agencies have established a permit system and require collectors to obtain licenses. The ever-growing economic importance of these fungi raises concerns regarding sustainability of current harvest levels. There are scientific studies regarding Matsutake that conclude that when using appropriate harvesting techniques sustainability should be guaranteed.

Global Warming & Anthropological Impacts on the Environment

[National Geographic: Searching for Shangri-La \(2009\)](#)

Welcome to Shangri-La. A decade ago this was an obscure, one-horse village on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. Today, after an extreme makeover, it's one of the hottest tourist towns in China, gateway city to the Three Parallel Rivers World Heritage site in northwestern Yunnan Province. Ten years ago the original village was becoming a ghost town of derelict buildings and deserted dirt roads. Most residents had moved out of their traditional homes—commodious chalet-like farmhouses with stone walls and magnificent wooden beams—into more modern structures with running water and septic systems. The historic quarter they left behind seemed doomed. Tourism saved the place. The Tibetan farmhouses were suddenly rediscovered as unique, endemic architecture that could turn a profit. Redevelopment began immediately. Water and sewer lines were buried beneath the crooked lanes. Electricity and the Internet were snaked in. The old homes were rebuilt and turned into fancy shops. New shops were constructed in the same style but with baroque facades—ornately carved dragons and swans and tigers—to attract Chinese tourists. Which they did: More than three million tourists, almost 90 percent of them Chinese, visited Shangri-La last year.

[The Mountain Institute \(TMI\)](#)

TMI's programs in Asia started in the mid-1980s with the "Heart of the Himalaya" initiative for the establishment of two newly protected mountain areas: the Makalu-Barun National Park in Nepal and the Qomolangma (Mt. Everest). Nature Preserve in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Both were founded on the principles of participatory, design management and collaboration between park managers and local communities. These pioneering projects were some of the earliest demonstrations of community-based project design that has since become the cornerstone for TMI's programs. ***Scroll down to the end of the document for projects focused on Tibet.***



Religion | Buddhism in Tibet



[Understanding Tibetan Buddhism](#)

Tibetans commonly draw a distinction between three religious traditions: (1) the divine dharma (lha chos), or Buddhism; (2) Bon dharma (bon chos); and (3) the dharma of human beings (mi chos), or folk religion. (PBS).



[Tibetan Monk Sand Paintings](#)

Learners complete an art project. In this sand paintings instructional activity, students learn about the history of mandalas and then create a sand painting of their own. Extensions include writing a story or poem about their sand painting and study of the Tibetan culture.



[Religious Freedom - International Campaign for Tibet \(2018\)](#)

This video interviews Ngawang Sangdrol, who was arrested at age 13 for saying "Independent Tibet and Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama."



[Dalai Lama: Free Expression and Religion](#)

How is religious freedom connected to the conflict between China and Tibet? After reading an online passage of background information, your learners will divide into groups and both read and view an interview with the Dalai Lama. They will then explore the idea of non-violence as a response to the Tibetan conflict and offer their ideas through presentation.

Fast Fact

Tibetan Buddhism is practiced by 99 percent of the Tibetan population; Bon, the traditional religion, along with Islam and Christianity, are practiced by some Tibetans

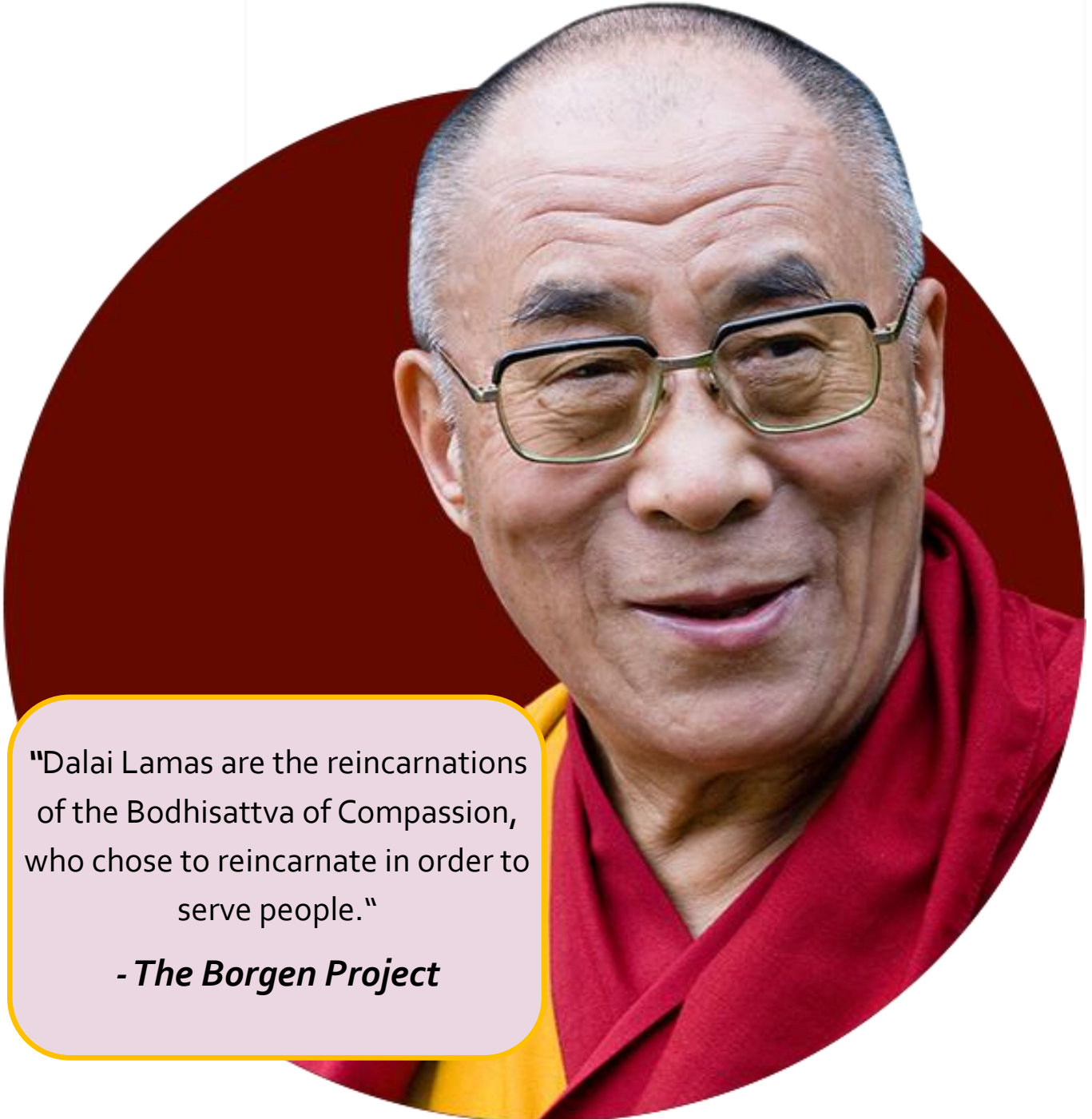
- International Campaign for Tibet

Religion | Buddhism in Tibet



Tibetan Buddhism Lesson Plan

With this lesson plan, your students are going to learn about Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism. Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to: Define the basic goals and beliefs of Vajrayana Buddhism, explain the roles of meditation and ritual in the Vajrayana Buddhist search for Enlightenment, connect Buddhism in Tibet to the greater history of Buddhism .



"Dalai Lamas are the reincarnations of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, who chose to reincarnate in order to serve people."

- The Borgen Project

Religion | Buddhism in Tibet

Regional Distribution of Buddhists

Population by region as of 2010



Percentage of world Buddhist population in each region as of 2010



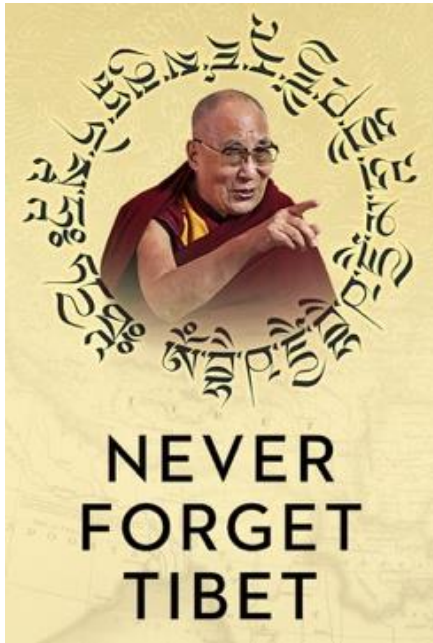
Population estimates are rounded to the ten thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Global Religious Landscape, December 2012



[Tibetan Mandala—Craft Activity Lesson Plan](#)

This lesson plan, best suited for students in elementary school, allows for a creative activity to encourage lessons about Tibet. Students will create a mandala while learning about Buddhism and Tibetan history and culture.

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries



NEVER FORGET TIBET - THE DALAI LAMA'S UNTOLD STORY — 2022 (95 MINUTES)

Over sixty years after China's Most Wanted Man escaped from occupied Tibet, the powerful documentary follows The Dalai Lama as he recounts his escape through the Tibetan borderlands into India to tell his remarkable escape story as he fled in 1959. One of the most significant moments of 20th-century history, *Never Forget Tibet* tells the secret story of the Dalai Lama's journey into exile told in his own words through exclusive access to the Dalai Lama and the previously unknown private diary of the Indian political officer who led him to safety, Har Mander Singh. Incorporating interviews with the Dalai Lama's family, the Tibetan Community living in Exile and those with historic ties to Tibet, this

culturally significant story offers insights into the importance of our shared worldwide humanity and reveals the incredible details of the Dalai Lama's escape and his wider message of compassion firsthand. It also documents the rich art, culture, and traditions of the region.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crgRJNkmdBo>

DARK RED FOREST — 2021 (85 MINUTES)

The mysterious daily life of women devoted to their faith is stunningly framed in this majestic verité documentary, shot over six years. On the hundred coldest days of the year, thousands of Buddhist nuns go on a meditation retreat at the Yarchen Gar Monastery on a snowy plateau in Tibet, living in tiny, temporary wooden houses, running through their rituals and practices, and learning from their lamas. Surrounded by harsh nature, secluded from the outside world, and far away from their families, these women offer us a glimpse into their religious exploration of life's biggest questions. "There is no suffering in the world," one nun intones. "People only suffer because of their obsessions." The film doesn't follow any one person or plot, choosing instead to dip in and out of moments and alternating between broad vistas and intimate, close-up profiles, ranging from their youthful studies to the ceremonial offering of their bodies at burial in the hope of celestial return—all in a contemplative manner befitting the subject matter. With breathtaking cinematography, where every second could be framed in an art gallery, *Dark Red Forest* is a transcendent work of perseverance and matter-of-fact spiritual inquiry.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T24kE8U6s8E&t=5s>

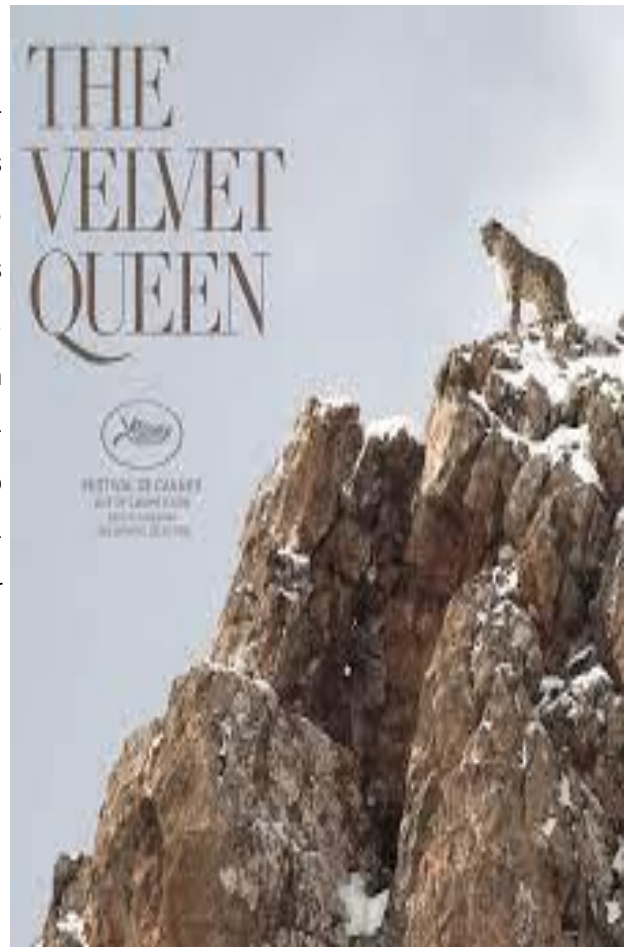
Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

THE VELVET QUEEN — 2021 (92 MINUTES)

In the heart of the Tibetan highlands, multi-award-winning nature photographer Vincent Munier guides writer Sylvain Tesson on his quest to document the infamously elusive snow leopard. Munier introduces Tesson to the subtle art of waiting from a blind spot, tracking animals, and finding the patience to catch sight of the beasts. Through their journey in the Tibetan peaks, inhabited by invisible presences, the two men ponder humankind's place amongst the magnificent creatures and glorious landscapes they encounter along the way.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXP-Nd58d4o>

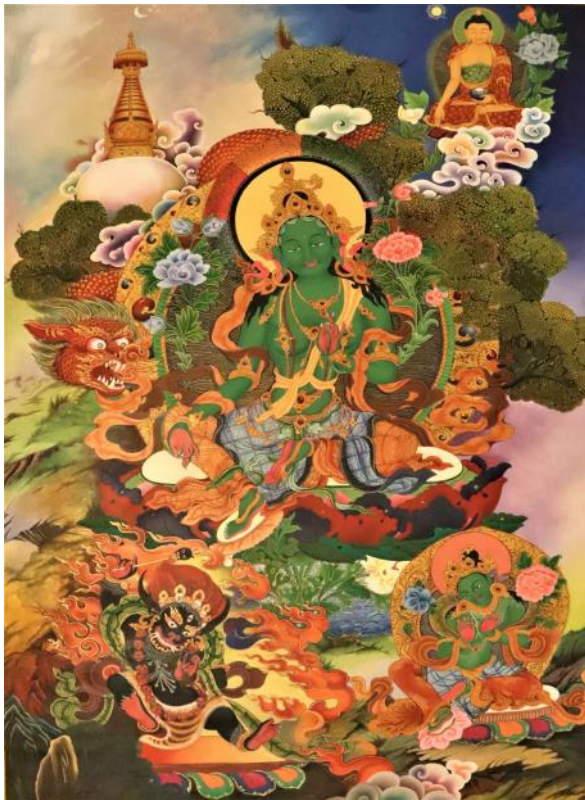
Stream: <https://ondemand.spectrum.net/movies/21023570/the-velvet-queen/>



A WOMAN WHO PAINTS THANGKAS — 2019

Rebgong (Qinghai, China) is well-known for its Tibetan Buddhist thangka art for centuries. However, Tibetan women were not allowed to learn or to paint thangkas, until recent years. Lutso is one of the few Tibetan female thangka painters in Rebgong. She is also a mother, a wife, and the oldest daughter in the family. The film captures Lutso's unique life as a thangka painter, who has a career to develop and a family to support. The film is made by Dr. Ming Xue, an anthropologist who has been doing field research about Tibetan thangka painters in Rebgong since 2009.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/334373370>



Tibet Through Film | Documentaries



[RITOMA — 2018 \(57 MINUTES\)](#)

On any given day on the vast Tibetan Plateau, you will find nomads herding their yaks and sheep, and monks reciting their mantras. You will also find them playing one of their favorite sports — basketball. Makeshift courts are found in nearly every village. Next to traditional horseback riding, basketball has become a way for young men to work off their aggression and channel their energy. With the introduction of televised NBA games, the nomads of Ritoma have a new strategy for their court game. And when a proper coach arrives from the United States, slam-dunk becomes their new mantra. A new tournament has been announced, the first in their region. Can they put together a team that's good enough to take the part? Might they even be able to win?

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABCSJ_qNyqk

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

THE LAST DALAI LAMA? — 2016 (82 MINUTES)

Every film begins with a question, Lemle has said—something he’s keen to know. *The Last Dalai Lama?* is no exception, though more than one question seems to have inspired him here. An obvious one: does His Holiness hate the Chinese? The answer, in a clip lifted from *Compassion in Exile*, is no. His Holiness describes his lifelong daily practice of *tonglen*, or taking and giving: he takes the anger, ignorance, and suffering of the Chinese into himself and gives them “positive thoughts” in return. Since the situation in Tibet has worsened, not improved, in the past quarter century, the follow up question is a natural: “Has it worked? Who’s benefitted from your 40 years of that practice?”

“Benefit to myself,” His Holiness shoots back, laughing. “It won’t help the actual problem, but immense help to maintain peace of mind”—key to making better decisions that benefit all.

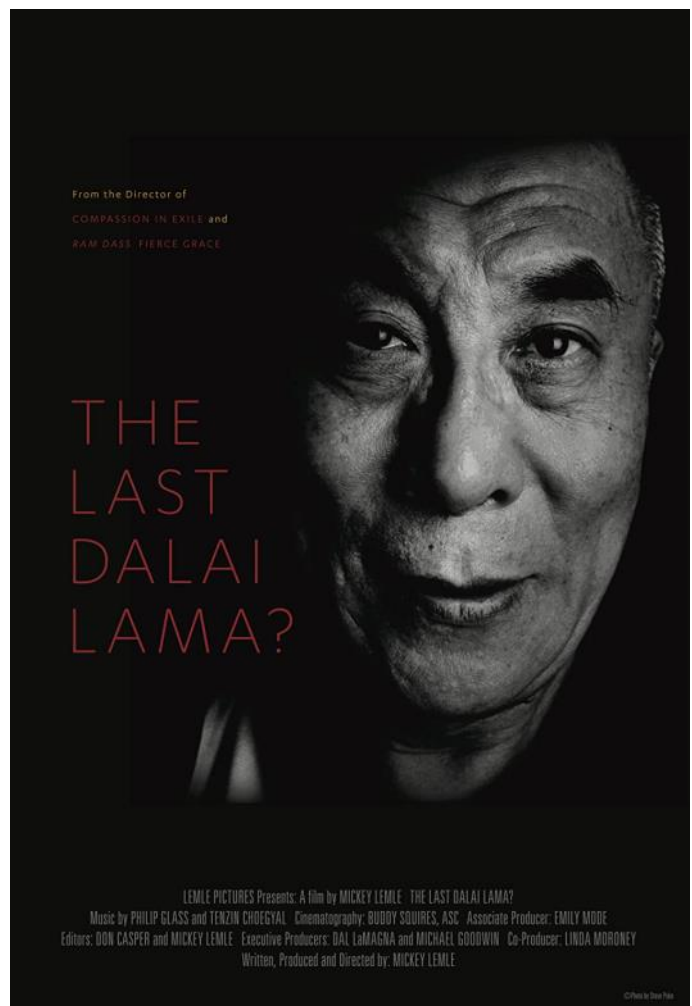
As for the question posed in the film’s title, Lemle follows His Holiness’s shifting thoughts on the subject, even as the Chinese are tightening efforts to control recognition and installation of all future lamas, not just the Dalai Lama. The film reiterates His Holiness’s position: any future Dalai Lama, if there is one, will be born outside Tibet. He hasn’t ruled out reincarnating, but only “where there are some difficulties or problems, where I can make a contribution.”

To the final question—how is he preparing for death?—the answer, predictably, is practice: “If my mind is clear, I’m quite sure I will remember while I’m dying about altruism for sentient beings.”

The Last Dalai Lama? offers no great revelations. But His Holiness’s presence is always uplifting. And on the deep questions, as usual, he gives us food for thought.

Trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vRpg36ig)

[v=5vRpg36ig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vRpg36ig)



Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

NOWHERE TO CALL HOME: A TIBETAN IN BEIJING — 2014 (83 MINUTES)

When the Tibetan farmer Zanta's husband died, she was forced by local custom to move in with her in-laws, who forbade her son to attend school. Instead, she packed up and moved to Beijing, where she was helped by a relative from another lifetime. That is the beginning of *Nowhere to Call Home*, a documentary by a foreign correspondent in Beijing, Jocelyn Ford, [showing at the Museum of Modern Art this month](#). The film follows Zanta (who, like many Tibetans, goes by one name) here and in her hometown, where she confronts her father-in-law. Along the way, it becomes clear that the relative from another lifetime is Ms. Ford, who breaks the traditional wall between journalist and subject by becoming a friend.

The film breaks down the sometimes romantic Shangri-La view that Westerners have of Tibet, showing it to be a place with many hidebound traditions, especially discrimination against women. It also offers a shocking portrait of the outright racism that Zanta and other Tibetans face in Chinese parts of the country. And it shows how many members of minorities lack even basic education: Zanta's sisters are illiterate, unable to count their change in the market or recognize the numbers on a cellphone. But maybe most surprising is that Ms. Ford has been quietly showing the film in China itself, eliciting admiration and unease that such a penetrating film was made by a foreigner.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/46664189>

Discussion with Filmmaker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy3-fW5MGOU>



Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

YAK DUNG — 2010 (50 MINUTES)

For nomadic families on the Tibetan Plateau, yak dung is a renewable and readily available energy source for staying warm, making sacrifices and providing light. Yak dung is also used to build homes and fences, fertilize grass, and as a medicinal ingredient, detergent, and material for sculptures.



It is an indispensable part of the Tibetan culture and livelihood. Living with yak dung is part of a life-style that has coexisted with nature for centuries. But more and more people on the plateau are drifting away from this way of life. Having never before made a film, director Lanzhe attended film training workshops organized by the Shanshui Conservation Center, a Beijing-based environmental NGO that works in Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Shaanxi provinces in western China. Its program “Eyes of the Village Nature and Culture” trains and empowers amateurs to make films to document lives in their own habitats. Many of these trainees, such as Lanzhe, were picking up a camera for the first time in their life.

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfpTHOhExGI>

THE BUDDHA – 2010 (120 MINUTES)

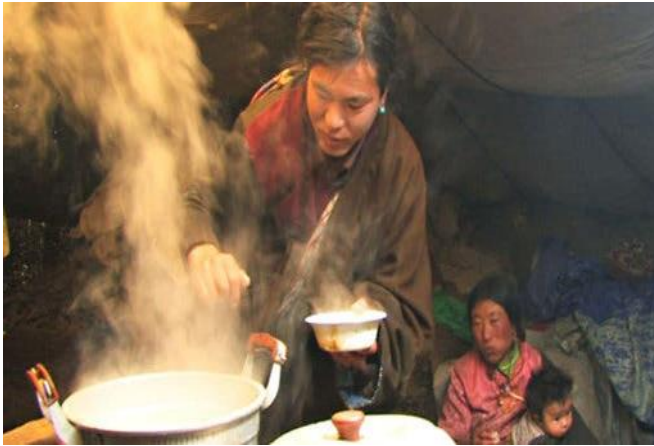
Tells the story of the Buddha’s life, a journey especially relevant to our own bewildering times of violent change and spiritual confusion. It features the work of some of the world’s greatest artists and sculptors, who across two millennia, have depicted the Buddha’s life in art rich in beauty and complexity. Hear insights into the ancient narrative by contemporary Buddhists, including Pulitzer Prize winning poet W.S. Merwin and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Join the conversation and learn more about meditation, the history of Buddhism, and how to incorporate the Buddha’s teachings on compassion and mindfulness into daily life.

Teacher Guide: <http://www.pbs.org/thebuddha/lesson-plans/>

Stream entire film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6fwoaVnxDU>

Stream on apple/Amazon

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries



SUMMER PASTURE – 2010 (85 MINUTES)

In recent years, growing pressures from the outside world have posed unprecedented challenges for Tibetan nomads. Rigid government policies, rangeland degradation, and the allure of modern life have prompted many nomadic families to leave the pastures for permanent settlement in towns and cities. According to nomads, the world has entered duegnan—dark times.

Summer Pasture a.k.a. *A Nomad's Life* is a feature-

length documentary that chronicles one summer with a young family amidst this period of great uncertainty. Locho, his wife Yama, and their infant daughter, nicknamed Jiatomah ("pale chubby girl"), spend the summer months in eastern Tibet's Zachukha grasslands, an area known as Wu-Zui or "5-Most," the highest, coldest, poorest, largest, and most remote county in Sichuan Province, China. The story of a family at a crossroads, *Summer Pasture* takes place at a critical time in Locho and Yama's lives, as they question their future as nomads. With their pastoral traditions confronting rapid modernization, Locho and Yama must reconcile the challenges that threaten to drastically reshape their existence.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79-8uatcry4>

Clips without film available here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/independent-lens-summer-pasture/>

Available on Amazon/Stream free on Kanapy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/summer-pasture-1>

JOURNEY FROM ZANSKAR – 2010 (90 MINUTES)

How far would you go to save your dying culture? Two Buddhist monks fulfill their pledge to the Dalai Lama to help save their dying culture by leading a group of 17 poor children aged 4-12 on a journey from Zanskar in remote northwest India through the Himalayas. To seek an education- on foot, on horseback, by jeep and bus, whatever it takes. Thirty years ago, when they were children, these monks walked the same path. The 17 children with them now may not return home for 10-15 years or more. This is the story of their incredible journey. This film is produced by Frederick Marx of *Hoop Dreams*, narrated by Richard Gere, and features His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Trailer: https://vimeo.com/144774358?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=6073220

Stream on Apple/Amazon

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

KINDNESS: A LETTER FROM TIBET – 2009 (102 MINUTES)

Kindness is about the wisdom of a nation. When Tsering Jampa is 4 years of age Chinese soldiers occupy her house. Her peaceful life is brutally disturbed. After this, her family flees from Tibet to India. What about the pain? Her mother's singing, old stories and her father's prayers surround her and nourish her consciousness. What about the injustice? When Tsering is 12 years of age she finds the key to the answer, hidden in an ancient verse. Forty years later China is getting ready for the Olympics. Tsering is living in the Netherlands for 23 years and is director of International Campaign for Tibet-Europe. In 2008, unexpectedly, her people revolt! Which part plays the ancient verse in these dramatic developments?

Trailer: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1476270/>

Stream here: <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/50430/KINDNESS--a-letter-from-Tibet>

UNMISTAKEN CHILD – 2009 (102 MINUTES)

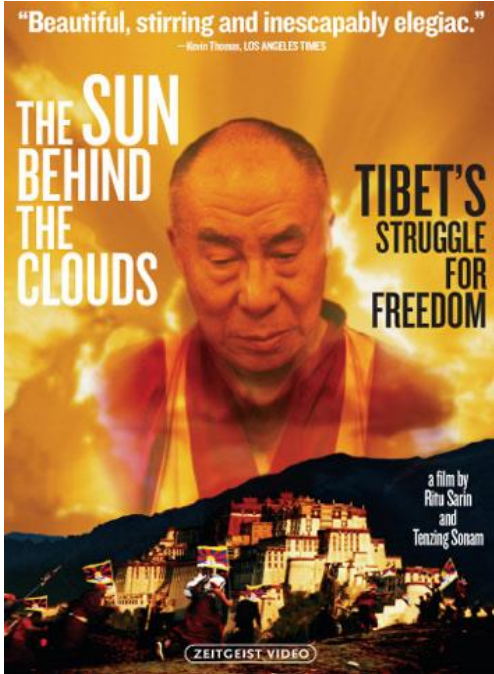
This documentary by the Israeli filmmaker Nati Baratz observes the anointing of a spiritual heir without the usual devices designed to make Western audiences comfortable. There's no voice-over narration, a minimum of scene-setting- no ethnographic framing, in other words. Nor is there a political subtext: China and its treatment of Tibet are never raised. We simply are present from 2001, when the 84-year-old Geshe Lama Konchog died, to 2005, when the toddler recognized as his reincarnation was presented to the Buddhist community of Nepal and beyond. You could argue that the film would be stronger if it explained more fully and asked more questions, yet *Unmistaken Child* stands as a window on a beautiful and mysterious world. The questions it leaves hanging are for us to untangle.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy9AFwvzmok>

Available on Amazon/Stream free on Kanopy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/unmistaken-child>



Tibet Through Film | Documentaries



THE SUN BEHIND THE CLOUDS — 2009 (79 MINUTES)

A provocative and potent look at the Dalai Lama's ceaseless struggle for justice and recognition for the Tibetan people, *The Sun Behind the Clouds* focuses on the pivotal and particularly tumultuous events of 2008. From the four-month march of exiled Tibetans to the Indo-Tibet border and Buddhist monks' protests in Lhasa, to the Beijing Olympics and the contentious talks between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama's emissaries, the film uncovers the growing rifts between younger Tibetans and their most respected spiritual leader. While His Holiness advocates for political autonomy within China rather than secession from it, a younger generation within Tibet has grown impatient and begun to chart a more confrontational course. Following the Dalai Lama's political life with

unprecedented personal access, Tibetan filmmaker Tenzing Sonam and co-director Ritu Sarin bring an impassioned focus to the myriad complexities in finding a peaceful solution based on compromise and dialogue.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34cLHNfFiZg>

Stream free on Kanopy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/sun-behind-clouds>

LEAVING FEAR BEHIND — 2008 (24 MINUTES)



Leaving Fear Behind (in Tibetan, Jigdre) is a heroic film shot by Tibetans from inside Tibet, who longed to bring Tibetan voices to the Beijing Olympic Games. With the global spotlight on China as it rises to host the XXIX Olympics, Tibetans wish to tell the world of their plight and their heartfelt grievances against Chinese rule. The footage was smuggled out of Tibet under extraordinary circumstances. The filmmakers were detained soon after sending their tapes out, and remain in detention today.

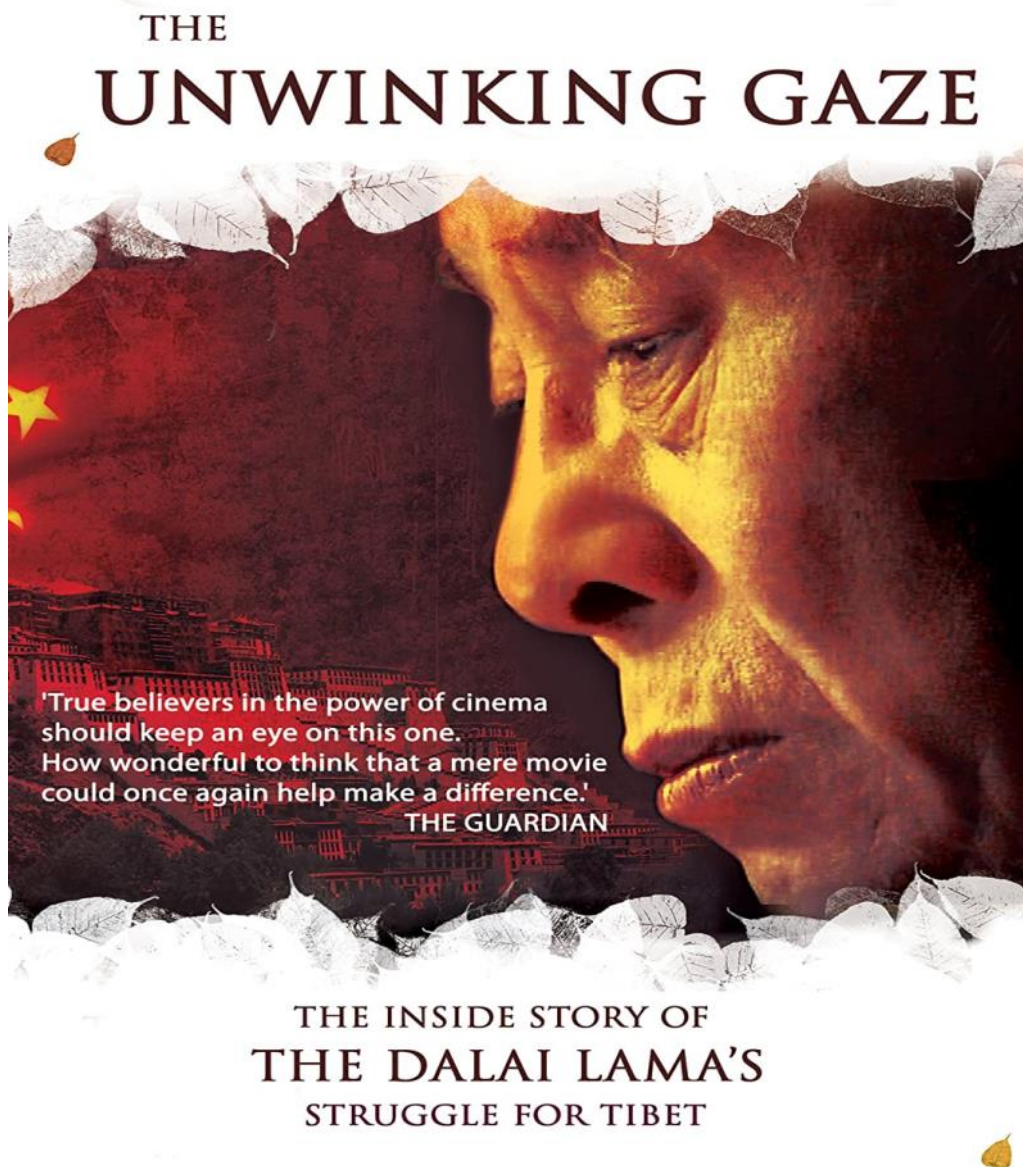
Stream free here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wi8U-asY1QI>

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

THE UNWINKING GAZE — 2008 (69 MINUTES)

The Unwinking Gaze offers a unique, behind-the-scenes insight into the recent working life of Tibet's would-be savior and revered world icon the Dalai Lama. This documentary was filmed over a period of three years with exceptional access showing the daily agonies of the Tibetan leader as he tries to strike a balance between his Buddhist vows and the realpolitik needed to placate China. David and Goliath is played out in front of us as the world's emerging superpower and the Dalai Lama walks a tightrope over an issue of global importance. *The Unwinking Gaze* is not 3 years in the life of the Dalai Lama. It is his life's work in 3 years. This film takes you inside the Titanic struggle of one of the great spiritual and political figures of our time, as he tries to lead his people to a peaceful resolution with China.

Stream here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2l-iEu-RTAE>



Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

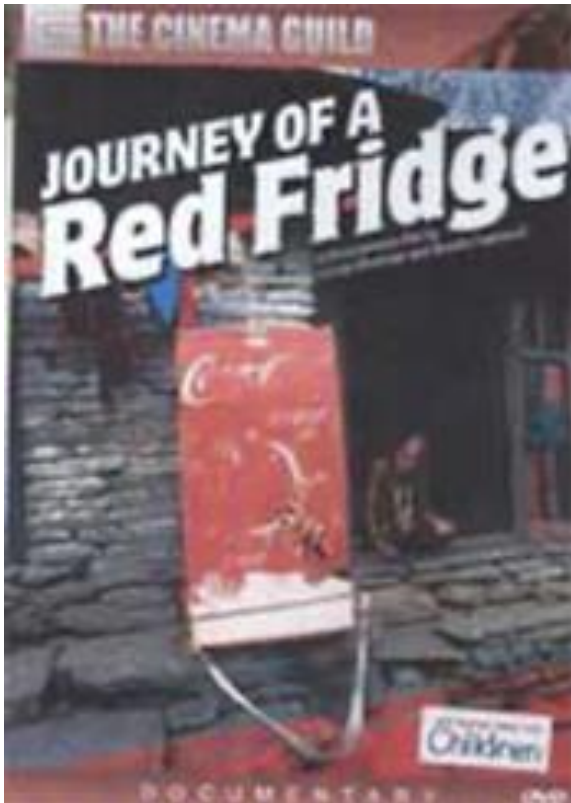
TIBET IN SONG — 2008 (82 MINUTES)

Tibet in Song tells the story of Ngawang Choephel, a Tibetan exile and former Fulbright scholar at Middlebury College, who returns to Tibet in 1995 to videotape traditional music and dance. The film follows his travels throughout the country recording music and understanding the impact of Chinese communist rule on Tibetan culture and everyday life. The movie contends that the Chinese authorities re-purposed traditional Tibetan music to forward their own agenda and propaganda. Two months into the trip, after he'd sent a batch of material back to friends in India, Chinese intelligence agents arrested Choephel and confiscated his camera, notes, and videotape. He was convicted of spying, without a trial, and sentenced to 18 years in prison. While in prison he continued his research, transcribing songs from prisoners and eventually memorizing songs after his notes were confiscated. His mother launched a tireless campaign for his freedom, and in January 2002, he was released.

Review: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/20192>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdAqU2PdVU4>

THE JOURNEY OF THE RED FRIDGE — 2007 (52 MINUTES)



This is a story of a 17-year-old boy named Hari Rai, who lives in a small village in the Himalayan Mountains of Nepal, and his extraordinary journey. Hari is a student. However, he also works as a porter so that he could pay for his tuition and cover his living expenses. Although very young, he already has three years of experience carrying loads up and down the mountain, mostly tourists' backpacks. This time, he gets a job to carry a huge red refrigerator from the top of the mountain to the nearest town. We follow Hari Rai on his journey through the fascinating Himalayan landscapes, we discover Hari's inner life, his thoughts, hopes and dreams and we also get to know the culture and the local people's way of life in this region. We learn about their relation with the most important aspects of their lives: family, nature and religion.

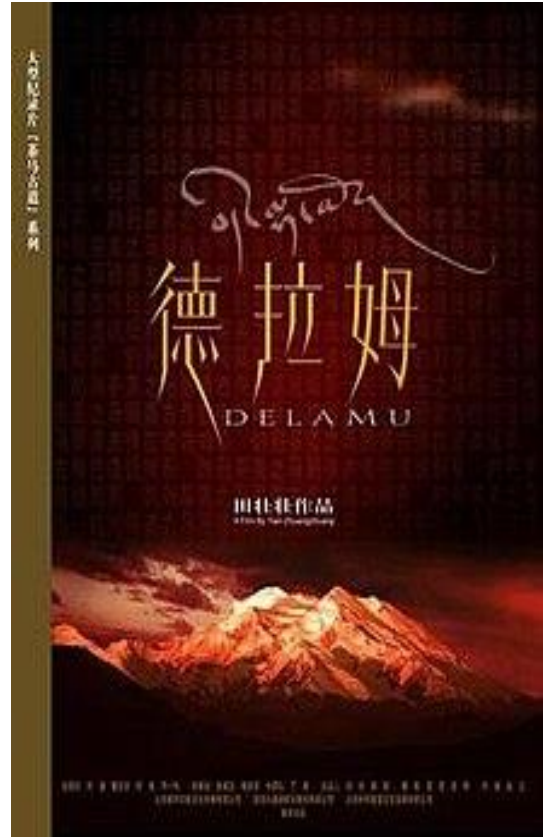
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNrK1JpXeTo>

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

[NOVA: LOST TREASURES OF TIBET – 2007 \(55 MINUTES\)](#)

A caring scientist and four mountain-climbing explorers risked their lives to keep the Chang Tang chiru, a small, endangered, antelope-like animal, safe from poachers. NOVA travels to the Mustang region in Nepal where a small group of Westerners are working with local townspeople to preserve murals on monastery walls. The program: explores the village of Lo Monthang where the way of life has remained the same for the past 500 years; discusses Mustang's importance as a last stronghold of Tibetan culture, which was mostly destroyed when China invaded Tibet in the 1950s. Focuses on the preservation of paintings on the walls of a monastery in Lo Monthang; explores the dynamics between Western preservationists and the citizens of Lo Monthang. Examines the importance of Buddhism in Tibetan culture and the key role the monasteries play in town politics and education; documents techniques used by visiting specialists to preserve the monasteries and their paintings; shows the technology used by locals to repair the monasteries; compares the Renaissance periods that took place simultaneously, yet independently of one another, in Europe and Tibet.

Stream here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oflGBaSRrs>



[DELAMU — 2004 \(114 MINUTES\)](#)

With this ravishing new film, Tian Zhuangzhuang returns to the pastoral cinematic territory of the documentary-based ethnographic explorations of his earlier masterpieces, *On the Hunting Ground* and *The Horse Thief*. Shot along an ancient trading route that is etched on the mountainside from the high plateau in Western Yunnan to the trading outposts of Tibet, above the roar of the Nujiang River, *Delamu* is animated by a series of portraits of people along the way. An old Protestant pastor has returned to his church and his fellow Lisu tribesmen in his parish after years of exile and imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution; a young Tibetan describes his life with his older brother and the wife they share; an old woman from the Nu minority recalls the days when soldiers of the Kuomintang sought out her hand in marriage; and a young wrangler speaks tenderly of the sure-footed mules and ponies who help him make his living. The range and utterly compelling humanity of these and other intimate sketches are as awe-inspiring as the plunging gorges and the soaring mountains that form the backdrop of this work of measured beauty.

Tibet Through Film | Documentaries

THE YUNNAN GREAT RIVERS EXPEDITION – 2003 (46 MINUTES)

In a remote corner of Southwest China, three of Asia's greatest rivers plunge off the Tibetan Plateau through steep canyons in the Himalayas thousands of feet deep. This stunningly beautiful film captures the incredible journey of a whitewater expedition, as it explores the upper Mekong, Salween and Yangtze rivers. More than a wild adventure, the two-month expedition was an ambitious partnership with the Nature Conservancy and the Chinese government to help protect one of the most biodiverse and culturally diverse regions in the world. **Available on Amazon.**

HIMALAYA – 1999 (108 MINUTES)

An aging chief's last stand, lessons for the new, and the education of a young chief-to-be played against harsh Nature in Nepal's Dolpo. When his son dies returning from Tibet's salt lakes, Tintle blames Karma, his son's friend, refuses to give Karma his blessing as the new chief, and organizes a rival caravan to take the salt to lower Nepal to trade for grain. He, a few old men, his son's widow, his grandson, and his second son, a monk, set out on the arduous journey. Fearing storms, Karma has led his caravan out of the village before the auspicious day ordained by the lamas. Tintle's group catches Karma's before the final pass; the two stubborn men lock wills with Tintle's grandson watching.

Teacher Guide: http://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan_cultures/2004_plans/lfaden/geography.htm

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi249436597?playlistId=tt0210727&ref=tt_ov_vi

COMPASSION IN EXILE: THE STORY OF THE 14TH DALAI LAMA – 1993 (60 MINUTES)

This is the story of the Dalai Lama, and it is filled with wonderful photos (much never before seen), film clips and candid interviews with His Holiness, his family and other prominent people and Tibetans who have left Tibet. With candor and humor, the Dalai Lama describes his upbringing and the key moments in his life leading to his becoming head of state at age sixteen, meeting with Mao Zedong, and of his life in exile and non-violent struggle on behalf of his people.



Stream free on Kanopy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/compassion-exile>

Tibet Through Film | Feature Films

BALLOON — 2019

Shepherd Dargye's two boys have found their parents' stash, delighting in what for them are simply oblong balloons. With its cool colour palette, attentive handheld camerawork, and painterly passages that seem to transpire somewhere between this world and the next, Balloon approaches weighty themes with beguiling brio. Its closing sequence, in which each character gazes upward to glimpse some fleeting spectacle, will leave you with a sense of wonder you won't soon shake off.

Review: <https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/balloon-review-1203319030/>

Interview: <http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006551/The%20Tibetan%20Filmmaker%20Fighting%20to%20>



Tibet Through Film | Feature Films

ALA CHANGSO — 2018 (109 MINUTES)

Ala Changso is the transliteration of a Tibetan folk song's title meaning please drink up this cup of good wine. Directed by Sonthar Gyal it tells the story of a woman who conceals her illness and the secret between her and her ex-husband and decides to go on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. The long pilgrimage reveals her inner secrets one by one. These secrets include entanglements and perplexities of love, morality, responsibility and belief between her and her ex-husband and between her and her second husband.

When young Tibetan farmer Drolma receives news she's seriously ill, she decides to go on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. For her, this means a grueling, year-long walk over Tibetan mountain roads, during which she must prostrate herself every three steps. Drolma's gruff, loving husband Dorje hesitates but can't say no to her. Before she leaves, she visits the home of her parents, who have been raising her severely uncommunicative, now 10-year-old son Norbu. Drolma sets off with two female friends who, faced with miserable weather (it's cold and raining) and the rigors of carrying her equipment and sleeping outdoors, end up abandoning her part way. But Dorje brings Norbu to join her on the road, and the family has an opportunity to relearn and build anew their emotional relationships. Secret intimate sadness and unexpected connections emerge, gently infusing this profoundly beautiful, deceptively simple family road movie and transforming it into a delicate psychological and spiritual journey.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/ala-changso-1124123/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfv5yo6Nn2w>

WANGDRAK'S RAIN BOOTS — 2018 (90 MINUTES)

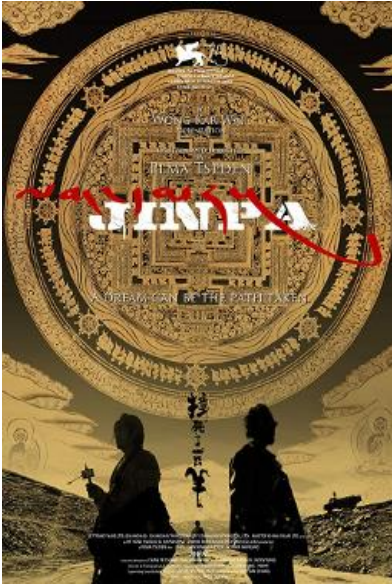
After heavy rains, puddles and mud cover the streets of the Tibetan mountain village. It's good for the crops, but bad for young Wangdrak, the only boy in the village without rubber boots. While his father is busy with other worries, Wangdrak's mother fulfills her son's wish. But new shoes bring new problems. For Wangdrak, a battle against the blue sky and for the rain begins, fought alongside his loyal friend Lhamo. Nestled in the inimitable mountain landscape, director Lhapal Gyal uses vivid imagery to show us a culture steeped in ancient traditions, paying special attention to the young protagonist's dreams.

Stream: <https://404movies.com/m/3547-wangdrak-s-rain-boots>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzL6gKH3jQ>



Tibet Through Film | Feature Films



JINPA — 2018 (87 MINUTES)

Jinpa is a 2018 Chinese Tibetan-language film written and directed by Pema Tseden. The screenplay is based on the novels *The Slayer* by Tsering Norbu and *I Ran Over a Sheep* by Pema. On an isolated road passing through the vast barren plains of Tibet, a truck driver, who has accidentally run over a sheep, chances upon a young man, who is hitching a ride. As they drive and chat, the truck driver notices that his new friend has a silver dagger strapped to his leg. He comes to understand that his man is out to kill someone, who wronged him earlier in life. As he drops the hitchhiker off at a fork in the road, little does the truck driver realize that their short time together has changed everything, and that their destinies are inexorably intertwined.

On the path of life, sometimes we meet someone whose dreams overtake our own to the point that they converge.

Trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi2101526297?playlistId=tt8836292&ref=vp_rv_0

Available on Apple/Amazon/Ovid

BARLEY FIELDS ON THE OTHER SIDES OF THE MOUNTAIN — 2017 (88 MINUTES)

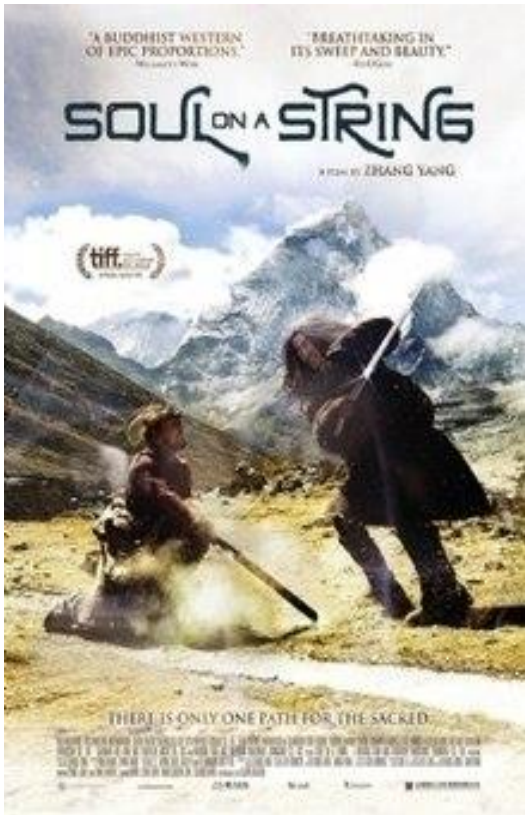
Breathtaking visuals and a remarkable score instantly jump out as the most alluring qualities in the feature debut from director Tian Tsering. However, it's the thought-provoking plotline of *Barley Fields on the Other Side of the Mountain* that pulls the audience deep into the world of 16-year-old Tibetan girl Pema (Tsering Choekyi). Despite her inability to fully understand the political disputes between Tibet and China, Pema strives for freedom as she helplessly searches for her father (Samten Dhondup), who has been arrested by the authorities. The characters in *Barley Fields* convey the difficult realities of China's rule over Tibet, and ongoing unrest in the region. As she decides whether to abandon her life and follow her friend Choeden (Jamyang Choezom) over the Himalayas into the safety of India, Pema attempts to overcome her struggles in a fearless manner that fosters boundless empathy. Shot with a non-professional cast, Tsering's film highlights the complicated histories of Tibet and the experiences of its people in a way that inspires the forging of new paths.

Review: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/barley-fields-side-mountain-review-1051055/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A0ms2wzxr0>

Stream free on Kanopy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/barley-fields-other-side-mountain>

Tibet Through Film | Feature Films



[SOUL ON A STRING — 2016 \(144 MINUTES\)](#)

Soul on a String (Tibetan: ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་གི་རྩ་མེས་ཀྱི་ལོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) is a 2016 Chinese Tibetan-language adventure film directed by Zhang Yang and co-written by Zhang Yang and Tashi Dawa, based on Tashi Dawa's short stories *Souls Tied to the Knots on a Leather Cord* and *On the Road to Lhasa*. Tabei is a hunter who had killed countless animals. While hunting a deer, he is killed by lightning. But it isn't long before that he is saved by the Gautama Buddha, who orders him to escort a treasure to a holy land of Tibetan place named "Zhangwendi."

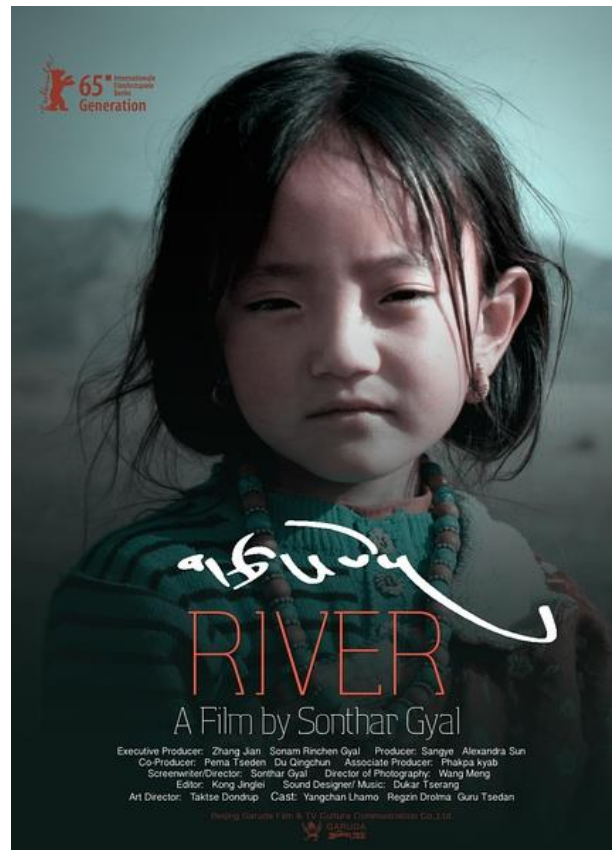
Review: <https://variety.com/2016/film/reviews/soul-on-a-string-review-1201803695/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzKIZZtERIE>

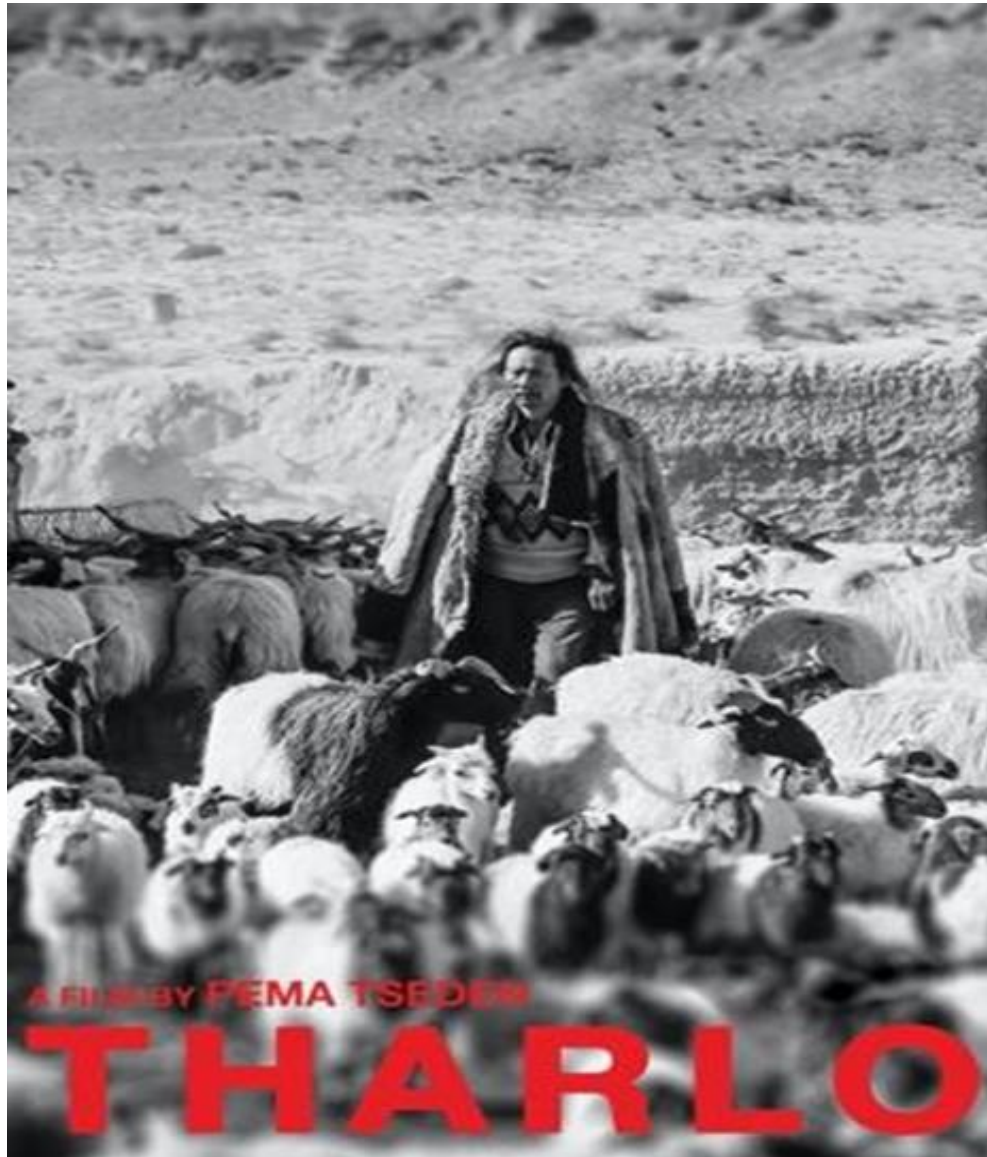
[RIVER — 2015 \(98 MINUTES\)](#)

The complexity of human relations is the subject of Tibetan writer director Sonthar Gyal's marvelously understated second film, *River* (Gtsnngbo). A small girl of 3 or 4 struggles with her fear of losing her parents' love when her mother gets pregnant and weans her. At the same time, her stubborn klutz of a dad wages a silent war against his own father for what he considers an unforgivable lapse. Tibet's high, lonely mountains lend the story an aching authenticity, while the comically expressive face of little Yangchen Lhamo (played by Yangchan Lhamu) keeps the mood light and tender.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epq6PsbKFss>



Tibet Through Film | Feature Films



THARLO — 2015

Tharlo is an orphan. Now grown up, he makes a living as a sheep herder in the village. He has grown a ponytail, so people simply call him "Ponytail", since nobody remembers his real name anyway. He embarks on the journey to find his true self. He sells all his sheep and those entrusted by other villagers to him for care, and decides to use the money to go out into the world. Ironically, in his journey of self-discovery, Tharlo begins to lose his sense of self.

Review: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/movies/review-tharlo.html>

Trailer: <https://letterboxd.com/film/tharlo/trailer/>

Available on Apple/Amazon/Ovid

Tibet Through Film | Feature Films

PRINCE OF THE HIMALAYAS — 2006 (108 MINUTES)

Prince Lhamoklodan learns of his father's mysterious death and returns home to find his uncle has taken the throne—and the widowed queen. The dead emperor's son wants revenge, but how can he exact it without devastating his mother? In the struggle to face his destiny and fight his demons, a new king is born. *Prince of the Himalayas* is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*. Set in ancient Tibet under the shadow of the Himalayas, the film is a visually ravishing historical epic with stunning scenery, richly saturated color, and lush costuming. Setting Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark in a completely new context is richly suggestive of the play's enduring relevance for the modern world. As the proto-typical tale of oedipal anxiety, or of the terrifying possibilities of taking action in the social world, this film re-invents and refreshes a story we thought we knew.

Trailer/commentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxgaAoSLjBQ>

Stream free on Kanopy: <https://spl.kanopy.com/video/prince-himalayas>

THE SILENT HOLY STONES — 2005 (102 MINUTES)

A 10-year-old Buddhist novice nicknamed "Little Lama" returns home from the remote Guwa monastery for the New Year celebration. After a long journey on horseback over icy steppes, he finds himself glued to his family's new TV, watching the popular Chinese television series *Journey to the West*. Meanwhile, the villagers are rehearsing their annual staging of a traditional Tibetan opera for the New Year. The juxtaposition shows a young monk who finds himself magnetically drawn to the secular world, which calls to him through the TV. *The Silent Holy Stones* has the immediacy of a documentary, delivering a compelling and intimate insider's look of everyday life in Tseden's hometown, where traditional life rubs up against modernity and globalization. The character Little Lama in *The Silent Holy Stones* was played by a real monk, Luosang Danpai, who later de-robbed, got married, and is now living a lay-person's life. Written and directed by Pema Tseden, the film is entirely in the Tibetan language and with non-professional Tibetan actors. The film won the Best Directorial Debut at the 25th Golden Rooster Awards in China and is an official selection of the Pusan International Film Festival, the International Buddhist Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the San Francisco International Film Festival.



Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ot_rVTEAXrE

Tibet Through Film | Feature Films

MOUNTAIN PATROL: KEKEXILI — 2004 (89 MINUTES)

Kekexili, the largest wildlife reserve in China, is home to many rare species. When photojournalist Ga Yu (Zhang Lei) arrives at the Kekexili Mountain Patrol camp, they are mourning the death of one of their members. Determined to uncover the real story behind the disappearance of patrol volunteers, the slaughtering of Tibetan antelopes and the rumor that the patrol cooperates with the poachers, Ga Yu joins the squad into the wilderness. Led by Ri Tai (Duo Bujie), the patrol risk their lives in the fight against the brutal hunters. At first distanced by the lens of his camera, Ga Yu slowly becomes personally involved in the deadly struggle. Ga Yu returns to Beijing a different man and writes the story that shocks the nation.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rosOtYVJM4I>

Stream entire film here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-36suoN_f78

Available on Apple/Amazon/Etc.



KUNDUN — 1997 (134 MINUTES)

The Tibetans refer to the Dalai Lama as 'Kundun', which means 'The Presence'. He was forced to escape from his native home, Tibet, when communist China invaded and enforced an oppressive regime upon the peaceful nation of Tibet. The Dalai Lama escaped to India in 1959 and has been living in exile in Dharamsala ever since. In 1937, in a remote area of Tibet close to the Chinese border, a two-year-old child is identified as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the compassionate Buddha. Two years later, the child is brought to Lhasa where he is schooled as a monk and as head of state amidst the color and pageantry of Tibetan culture. The film follows him into adulthood: when he is 14, the Chinese invade Tibet and he is forced into a shaky coalition government; he travels to China to meet with a cynical Mao; and, finally, in 1959, ill and under siege, he flees to India.

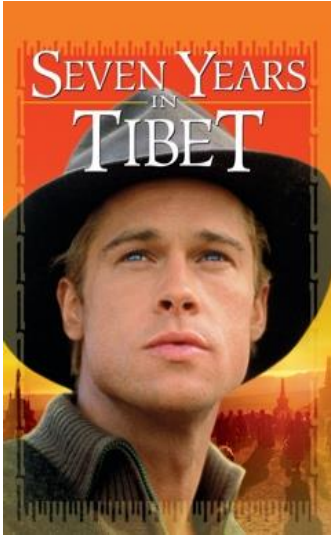
Teacher Guide: <https://teachwithmovies.org/kundun/>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UePpBgQatnw>

Available on Kino

Tibet Through Film | Feature Films

SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET — 1997 (136 MINUTES)



In the film, Harrer (Pitt) and fellow-Austrian Peter Aufschnaiter (Thewlis) are mountaineering in 1930s British India. When World War II begins in 1939, their German citizenship results in their imprisonment in a prisoner-of-war camp in Dehradun in the Himalayas. In 1944, Harrer and Aufschnaiter escape the prison and cross the border into Tibet, traversing the treacherous high plateau. There, after initially being ordered to return to India, they are welcomed at the holy city of Lhasa and become absorbed into an unfamiliar way of life. Harrer is introduced to the 14th Dalai Lama, who is still a boy, and becomes one of his tutors. During their time together, Heinrich becomes a close friend to the young spiritual leader. Harrer and Aufschnaiter stay in the country until the Battle of Chamdo in 1950.

Review: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/seven-years-in-tibet-1997>

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uh5rZr4iTIY> (*Available on numerous platforms*)

LITTLE BUDDHA – 1993 (123 MINUTES)

Lama Norbu comes to Seattle in search of the reincarnation of his dead teacher, Lama Dorje. His search leads him to young Jesse Conrad, Raju, a waif from Kathmandu, and an upper-class Indian girl. Together, they journey to Bhutan where the three children must undergo a test to prove which is the true reincarnation. Interspersed with this, is the story of Siddhartha, later known as the Buddha. It traces his spiritual journey from ignorance to true enlightenment.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siO6Vk_CtuM

LOST HORIZON – 1937 (126 MINUTES)

This Frank Capra retelling of the classic tale of James Hilton's Utopian lost world plays out uneasily amid musical production numbers and Bacharach pop music. While escaping war-torn China, a group of Europeans crash in the Himalayas, where they are rescued and taken to the mysterious Valley of the Blue Moon, Shangri-La. Hidden from the rest of the world, Shangri-La is a haven of peace and tranquility for world-weary diplomat Richard Conway. His ambitious brother, George, sees it as a prison from which he must escape, even if it means risking his life and bringing destruction to the ancient culture of Shangri-La.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ7g3HOGENS>

Stream free here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/lost-horizon-1937-oxoabm/>

A musical version of Lost Horizon was remade in 1973 and listed in several guides (The 50 Worst Films of All Time and The 100 Most Enjoyable Bad Movies Ever Made).

Books on Tibet

SELECT BOOKS FOR EDUCATORS

The Guardian Book Recommendation: *Tibet on Fire* by Tsering Woeser

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/oct/21/top-10-books-about-the-himalayas>

Barbara Demick's book about self-immolation in Tibet, *Eat the Buddha*, has won lots of plaudits but I'd like to recommend this earlier work, from the Tibetan poet and blogger Tsering Woeser. Born in Lhasa, Woeser is a quarter Han, her grandfather serving in the army of the Kuomintang. Her father was an officer in the PLA. Yet she has become one of the bravest and most insightful critics of China in Tibet, and among the few Tibetans writing in Chinese, with a prominence that has brought house arrest and close surveillance. *Tibet on Fire* is an outline of the reasons why so many Tibetans set fire to themselves and also a cry from the heart.

Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History Under Mao Retold; Essays and Primary

Documents, edited by Robert Barnett, Benno Weiner, and Francoise Robin,

2020.

Forbidden Memory: Tibet During the Cultural Revolution, Tsering Woeser, 2020.

The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier, Benno Weiner, 2020.

Tragedy in Crimson: How the Dalai Lama Conquered the World but Lost the Battle with China, Tim Johnson, 2011.

Escape from the Land of Snows: The Young Dalai Lama's Harrowing Flight to Freedom and the Making of a Spiritual Hero, Stephen Talty, 2011.

Why the Dalai Lama Matters: His Act of Truth as the Solution for China, Tibet, and the World, Robert A. E. Thurman, 2008.

The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Dalai Lama, Pico Iyer, 2008. Enjoy the twosome!

The 14th Dalai Lama: A Manga Biography, Tetsu Saiwai, 2008. A manga biography.

Why the Dalai Lama Matters: His Act of Truth as the Solution for China, Tibet, and the World, Robert A. E. Thurman, 2008. "The Dalai Lama matters on the world plane...he brings ethics and spirituality into politics."

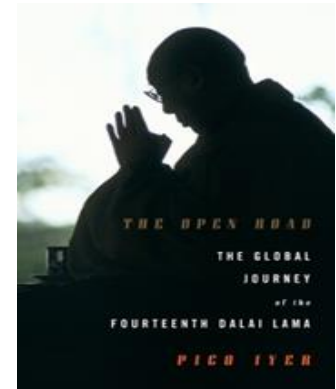
The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Pico Iyer, 2008. Perceptive exploration of the Dalai Lama's ideas as a politician, scientist, and philosopher.

Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions, ed. Anne-Marie Blondeau & Katia Buffetrille, 2008.

The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering, Tashi Tsering, Melvyn Goldstein, William Siebenschuh, 2000. Remarkable, unbiting story filled with twists and turns.

The Snow Lion and the Dragon, Melvyn Goldstein, 1999. Unsentimental historical summary of the Tibet Question.

Prisoners of Shangri-La Tibetan Buddhism and the West, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 1998. Discusses both positive and negative misconceptions of Tibetan Buddhism.



Books on Tibet

Ama Adhe: The Voice That Remembers: The Heroic Story of a Woman's Fight to Free Tibet, Adhe Tapuntsang, 1997. A terrifying and inspiring story.

The Book of Tibetan Elders: The Life Stories and Wisdom of the Great Spiritual Masters of Tibet, Sandy Johnson, 1996. "An insight into the traditions and teachings of great Tibetan spiritual masters, against the oppressive background of the Chinese Communist regime."

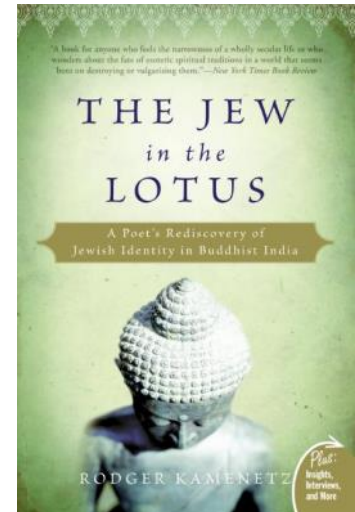
Tibetan Portrait: The Power of Compassion, Phil Borges, 1996. This Seattle-based photographer's work is truly moving.

The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet's Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India, Rodger Kamenetz, 1994. Thought provoking personal journey.

The Dalai Lama, Christopher Gibb, 1990 (For grades 7 and up)

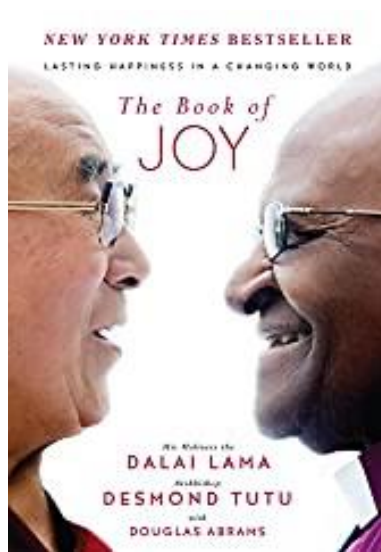
My Tibet, Photographs by Galen Rowell, Text by the Dalai Lama, 1990

Trespassers on the Roof of the World, Peter Hopkirk, 1982. Exciting armchair travel as you follow "colonial interlopers" in their quest for the legendary Lhasa.



Seven Years in Tibet, Heinrich Harrer, New York, 1954. Curl up now and start this adventure across the Himalayas.

My Journey to Lhasa, Alexandra David-Neel, 1986 (1927!). Astounding journey by an extraordinary woman.



BOOKS BY/ABOUT THE 14th DALAI LAMA

This Fragile Planet: His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Environment, the Dalai Lama, 2021.

The Little Book of Encouragement, the Dalai Lama, 2021.

Our Only Home - A Climate Appeal to the World, the Dalai Lama and Franz Alt, 2021.

The Book of Joy, the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, 2016.

Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World, the Dalai Lama, 2011.

My Spiritual Journey, the Dalai Lama, and Sofia Stril-Rever, 2010.

Toward a True Kinship of Faiths, the Dalai Lama, 2010.

Books on Tibet

The Middle Way - Faith Grounded in Reason, the Dalai Lama translated by Thubten Jinpa, 2009.

Leaders' Way - Business, Buddhism and Happiness in an Interconnected World, the Dalai Lama and Laurens van den Muyzenberg, 2009.

All You Ever Wanted to Know About Happiness, Life and Living, the Dalai Lama compiled by Rajiv Mehrotra, 2009.
Art of Happiness in a Troubled World, the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, 2009.

Emotional Awareness, the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman, 2009.

Becoming Enlightened, the Dalai Lama, translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins, 2009.

In My Own Words - An Introduction to My Teachings and Philosophy, the Dalai Lama, edited by Rajiv Mehrotra, 2008.

Freedom in Exile, the Dalai Lama, 2008.

Dalai Lama at MIT, the Dalai Lama, edited by Anne Harrington and Arthur Zajonc, 2008.

Mind in Comfort and Ease - The Vision of Enlightenment in the Great Perfection, the Dalai Lama, 2007.

Activating Bodhichitta and a Meditation on Compassion, the Dalai Lama, 2006.

The Universe in a Single Atom - The Convergence of Science and Spirituality, the Dalai Lama, 2005.

Widening the Circle of Love, the Dalai Lama, translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins, 2005.

Lighting the Path, Teachings on Wisdom and Compassion, the Dalai Lama, translated by Geshe Thubten Jinpa, 2005.

Path of Wisdom, Path of Peace - A Personal Conversation, the Dalai Lama and Felizitas Von Schoenborn, 2005.

The Wisdom of Forgiveness, the Dalai Lama, and Victor Chan, 2005.

Many Ways to Nirvana, the Dalai Lama, 2004.

The Wisdom of Forgiveness, the Dalai Lama and Victor Chan, 2004.



Books on Tibet

The Compassionate Life, the Dalai Lama, 2003.

The Essence of Happiness: A Guidebook for Living, the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, 2002.

Ethics for the New Millennium, the Dalai Lama, 1999.

The Wisdom Teachings of The Dalai Lama, edited by Mathew Bunson, 1997.

The Dalai Lama: Policy of Kindness, edited by Sidney Piburn, 1990.

Kindness, Clarity and Insight, the Dalai Lama, 1987.

My Land, My People, the Dalai Lama, 1962.

PICTURE BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

The Seed of Compassion: Lessons from the Life and Teaching, Dalai Lama and Bao Luu, 2020.

The Yeti and the Jolly Lama: A Tale of Friendship, Surya Das, 2019.

Dorje the Yak, Caryn Hartman, 2018

Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure, Naomi Rose, 2016.

The Chiru of High Tibet: A True Story, Jacqueline Briggs Martin illustrations by Linda S. Wingerter, 2011.

Tibetan Tales from the Top of the World, Naomi C. Rose, 2009.

Tenzin's Deer, Barbara Soros, 2005.

Tibetan Tales for Little Buddhas, Naomi Rose, 2004.

Clear Sky, Red Earth: A Himalayan Story, Sienna Craig and Tenzin Norbu, 2004.

Greater Tibet: Where Earth Touches the Heavens, Jimmy Lam, 2004.

All the Way to Lhasa: A Tale from Tibet, Barbara Helen Berger, 2002

I Once Was a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told, Jeanne M. Lee, 1999.

Spirit of Tibet: Portrait of a Culture in Exile, Alison Wright, 1998.

Tibet Through the Red Box, by Peter Sís, 1998.

Our Journey from Tibet, Laurie Dolphin, 1997.

The Little Lama of Tibet, Lois Raimondo, 1994.

Hero of the Land of Snow, Sylvia Gretchen, 1990.

The Mountains of Tibet, Mordicai Gerstein, 1989.

Where is Tibet? Gina Halpern, 1992.

Books on Tibet

BOOKS ON TIBETAN MEDICINE

Tibetan Medicine and You, Miriam E Cameron and Tenzin Namdul, 2020.

Tibetan Medicine and Other Holistic Health-Care Systems, Tom Dummer, 2014.

Essentials of Tibetan Traditional Medicine, Thinley Gyatso and Chris Hakim, 2010.

A Mirror of Beryl: A Historical Introduction to Tibetan Medicine (Library of Tibetan Classics), Desi Sang-ye Gyatso and Gavin Kilty, 2010.

The Book of Tibetan Medicine: How to Use Tibetan Healing for Personal Wellbeing, Ralph Quinlan Forde, 2008.

Tibetan Medicine: A Practical and Inspirational Guide to Diagnosing, Treating and Healing The Buddhist Way, Gerti Samel, 2001.

Healing from the Source: The Science and Lore of Tibetan Medicine, Yeshe Dhonden, 2000.



Tibet Advocacy & Cultural Organizations

Note: There are numerous Tibet advocacy and cultural organizations based around the world.

[The Official Website of Central Tibetan Administration](#)

The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile is the supreme law governing the functions of the CTA. It was drafted by the Constitution Redrafting Committee and referred to the Tibetan Parliament- in-Exile for approval. The parliament, in turn, adopted the Charter on 14 June 1991. Based on the spirit of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter guarantees to all Tibetans equality before the law and enjoyment of rights and freedom without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, language and social origin. It provides for a clear separation of power among the three organs of the administration: judiciary, legislature and executive. Before the Charter came into being, the Central Tibetan Administration functioned roughly along the lines of the draft democratic constitution for future Tibet, promulgated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 10 March 1963.

[The Office of Tibet](#)

The Office of Tibet in Washington, D.C. represents His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration in North America. The main responsibility of this Office is to work for the promotion of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's three principal commitments- Promotion of Human values, Promotion of religious harmony and Preservation of Tibetan culture and religion. Its activities include: Coordinating and preparing the visits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in North America; Mobilizing support from the executive and legislative branches of the United States & Canadian governments for the resolution of Tibet issue; Maintaining relations with & providing services to the North American Tibetan Diaspora through Tibetan Associations; Reaching out to Chinese brothers and sisters and create awareness about Tibet issue; Strengthening and enhancing relationships with Tibetan Buddhist Dharma Centers in North America.; The current head of the Office of Tibet is Representative Ngodup Tsering, who in this capacity is the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to North America.

[International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet proudly celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2018. For more than two decades, we have called the world's attention to the injustices and brutality being suffered by the people of Tibet. We've shone a spotlight on China's repressive authority and intervened on behalf of political prisoners. We've worked with and been guided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and have provided support to Tibetans in exile. As the largest Tibet support group in the world, we help Tibetans in their peaceful struggle for democracy and human rights and seek to preserve Tibet's ancient culture of wisdom

Tibet Advocacy & Cultural Organizations

[Tibetan Youth Congress](#)

The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) is a worldwide Organization of Tibetans united in our common struggle for the restoration of complete independence for the whole of Tibet, which includes the traditional three provinces of U-Tsang, Do-tse, and Do-med. An independent Organization, with a written constitution and its own plans and programs, TYC has emerged as the largest and most active non-governmental Organization of Tibetans in exile. It has more than 30,000 members worldwide. ATYC does not subscribe to any particular political ideology nor to any particular religion or religious" sect.

[Tibet Justice Center](#)

Tibet Justice Center has provided key support to the advocacy of the Government-in-Exile before the United Nations and individual project page image1governments, and the work of Tibet support groups around the world. We helped establish the Tibet Bureau in Geneva, the main base for the Tibetans' U.N. work, and today we help prepare the Government-in-Exile's major position papers on human rights issues for submission to U.N. bodies. These have recently included briefs on Women's Rights, Torture, and Racism.

[The Tibet Fund](#)

The Tibet Fund's primary mission is to preserve the distinct cultural and national identity of the Tibetan people. Their aim is to promote self-reliance and help sustain the cohesiveness of the exile Tibetan community. As the primary funding organization, they have worked closely with the Central Tibetan Administration in advancing education, refugee rehabilitation, religious and cultural preservation, and community development for more than 140,000 Tibetan refugees living in India, Nepal and Bhutan. In Tibet, their support is directed to orphanages, eye care and other health programs and educational projects that aid impoverished and marginalized Tibetans.



Tibet Advocacy & Cultural Organizations

[Tibet House: U.S.](#)

Mission: Tibet House US is dedicated to preserving Tibet's unique culture at a time when it is confronted with extinction on its own soil. By presenting Tibetan civilization and its profound wisdom, beauty, and special art of freedom to the people of the world, we hope to inspire others to join the effort to protect and save it. Tibet House US is part of a worldwide network of Tibetan institutions committed to ensuring that the light of the Tibetan spirit never disappears from the face of this earth. Tibet House US was founded at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who at the inauguration in 1987 stated his wish for a long-term cultural institution to ensure the survival of Tibetan civilization and culture, whatever the political destiny of the six million people of Tibet itself.

[U.S. Tibet Committee](#)

Since 1977, the U.S. Tibet Committee (USTC) has worked to further the Tibetan people's nonviolent struggle to restore independence to Tibet. At the grass roots level, our commitment is to educate Americans on the occupation of Tibet, and to mobilize them into action against this injustice.

[Committee of 100 for Tibet](#)

Founded in 1992, the Committee of 100 for Tibet (C100) is a unique organization in its composition, strategy and uncompromising support of the Tibetan people in their peaceful struggle. In addition to pursuing its own projects, the C100 actively endorses and contributes to the work of other key organizations supporting Tibet and the Tibetan people.

[Students for a Free Tibet \(National Office\)](#)

Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) works in solidarity with the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and independence. We are a chapter-based network of young people and activists around the world. Through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action, we campaign for Tibetans' fundamental right to political freedom. Our role is to empower and train youth as leaders in the worldwide movement for social justice.

[The Free Tibet Campaign](#)

Free Tibet stands for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future. We campaign for an end to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet generates active support through public education about the situation in Tibet. We are independent of all governments and are funded by our members and supporters.

Tibet Advocacy & Cultural Organizations

[The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy](#)

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is a non-governmental human rights organization that was created in 1996 in Dharamsala, India. The organization aims to protect the human rights of Tibetan people and promote democracy in the Tibetan exile community. The organization is composed



of exiled Tibetans and works to monitor, research, and expose human rights violations in the international community.

[Tibetan Association of Washington](#)

The Tibetan Association of Washington is a non-profit organization of Tibetans in the state of Washington. It strives to preserve and promote the unique Tibetan cultural traditions within the Tibetan Community and share our ancient cultural traditions with Washingtonians and the rest of North America. Aims & Objectives: Tibetan Association of Washington started with just only about 25 Tibetan families in late 1980s. With the help of resettlement project of 1000 Tibetans by the US congress, 50 Tibetans settled in Washington State in 1991-'92. Family members of 50 Tibetans were reunited and many have since started new family here. Currently, there are approximately 400 Tibetans/Tibetan Americans in Washington and many more are relocating from other states.

[Seattle Center Tibet Fest](#)

Seattle Center Festál presents Tibet Fest (pronounced T-bet Fest) in partnership with the Tibetan Association of Washington (TAW). The festival showcases traditional and contemporary Tibetan art, music, dance, art and more. The public rarely has the opportunity to experience Tibet's unique and endangered culture. The Tibetan diaspora outside Tibet is very small in number and it is challenging to preserve and propagate the culture among the younger generation. Tibet Fest provides a unique opportunity for the community to embrace their Tibetan identity with pride, and introduce themselves to the public as being a part of the greater diverse population in this city and nation. The focus of Tibet Fest is to preserve the culture in their community and also provide an opportunity for the broader public to experience this very rich and unique, but often inaccessible culture.

In Calm Abiding

The Legacy of TIBET IN CALM ABIDING



AS THE TIBETAN PEOPLE FACE THE LOSS OF
COUNTRY AND CULTURE, THE DALAI LAMA CHARTS
A PATH OF COMPOSURE AND COMPASSION

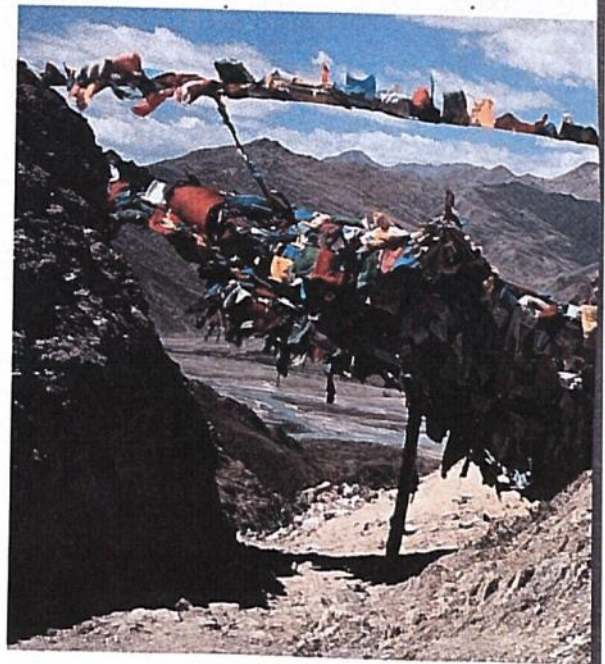
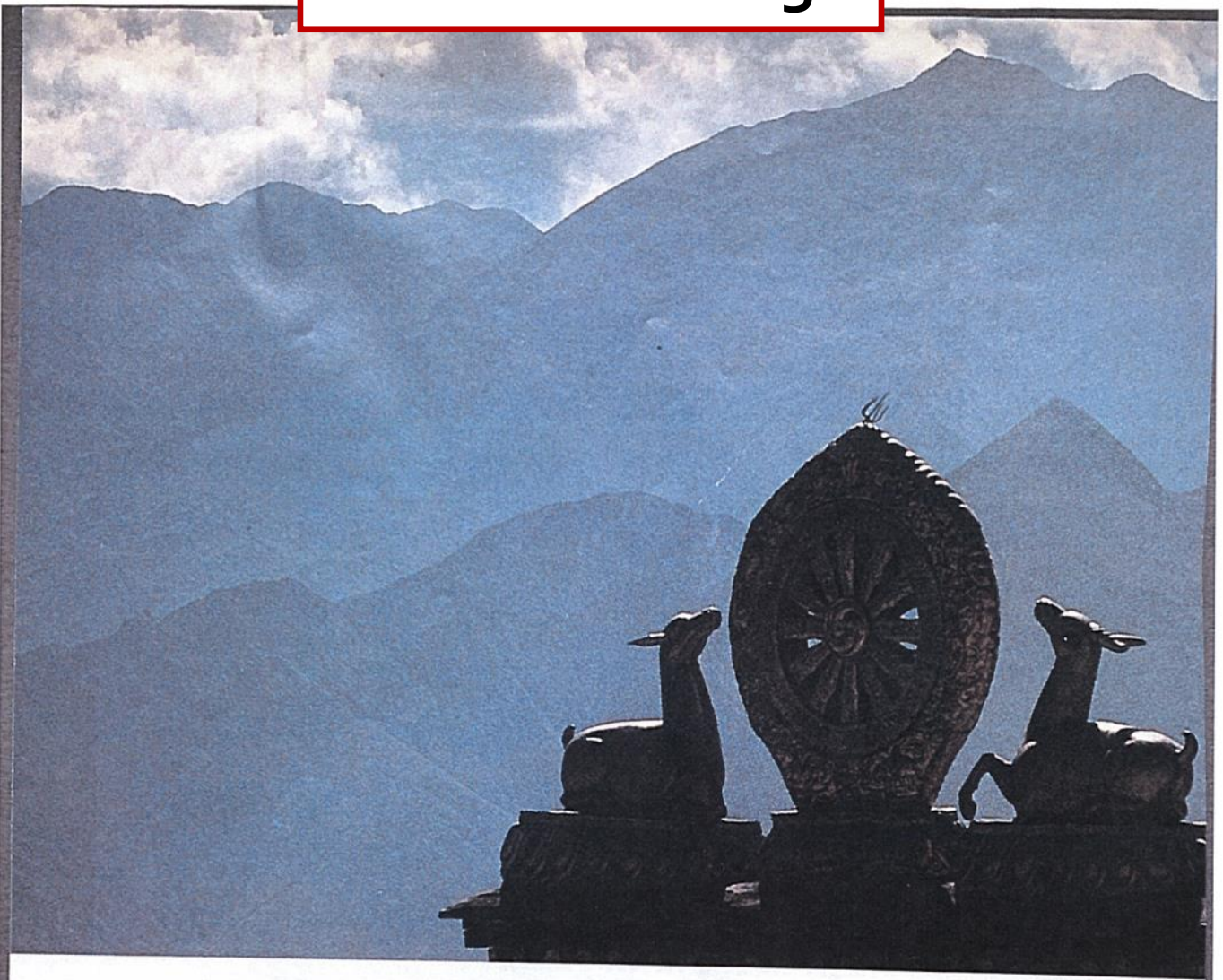


The heat of northern India permeates the packed meeting room as I slip into a seat next to my brother. The Dalai Lama, dressed in his simple sleeveless maroon robe, walks out onto the bare stage, his head closely shaven as befits this spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. Facing the 400 people who have traveled halfway around the world to hear him—their pens poised to record every word—he looks out at the audience and lets out a hearty laugh. I am awed by his unmonklike glee and unassuming manner.

I am not a Buddhist. After spending the first two decades of my life overwhelmed by everything Catholic, I have spent my last two decades rebelling against all religions and spiritual leaders. My attraction to the Dalai Lama stems from the quiet place within me that finds comfort in his simple manner and nonviolent message. As he chants opening

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY T.C. BRINNON

In Calm Abiding



Top: With an average altitude of 14,000 feet, Tibet reaches across the highest plateau in the world. Above: A Tibetan Buddhist monk in early morning prayer. Right: Prayer flags blowing in the wind at a high mountain pass. The four primary colors represent wind, water, earth and sky. Opposite page: The thousand-room Potala Palace, built in Lhasa in the 17th century, was the home of the Dalai Lama as well as the seat of Tibetan government.

In Calm Abiding



Above: The spirit of the Tibetans transcends the harsh reality of life under Chinese control. With clear eyes and warm smiles, they will peer shyly at visitors, face-to-face from a three-inch distance.

Left: Many visitors are caught off guard by the similarities between Tibetans and Native American Navajos.

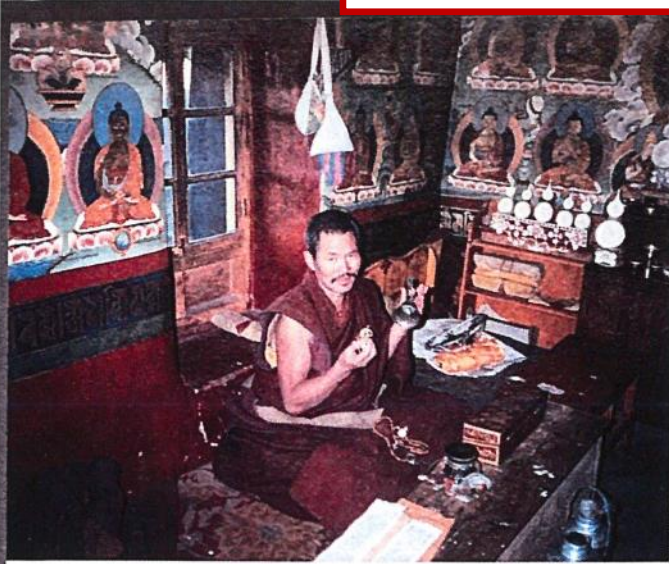
prayers in the deep, resonant and hypnotizing tones of the Tibetan language, I close my eyes and remember the long and circuitous route that has led me to this front row seat.

It started in 1981. I was working as a translator in Beijing, where I came across not only awkward sentences but also government propaganda. Articles such as "Happy Tibetans Welcome the People's Liberation Army" troubled me, as they contradicted what I had read as a student of modern Asian history. While my days were spent reading Chinese propaganda, at night I explored Beijing by bike and planned journeys to see this diverse country for myself. Tibet was at the top of my list. The next summer, joined by my brother and his wife, I was flying west over jagged, massive peaks to Tibet, the roof of the world.

Bouncing off the plane, I was instantly exhilarated by the expansive moonscape-like beauty of the land and a physical lightness of being. As I caught sight of the Potala, the highest palace in the world, I knew that this was only the beginning of my Tibet travels. Four hours later, I was flat on my back. "Altitude sickness," the Tibetan doctor diagnosed without touching my forehead. "Could last an hour, could last much longer." Although my debilitating headache and nausea lasted three days, my pulse, which jumped an additional 30 beats a minute, didn't settle down until I returned to sea level two weeks later.

After acclimatizing to the altitude, I was filled with unlimited energy to explore Lhasa's monasteries, temples, old labyrinthine streets, and the hole-in-the-wall teahouses where my brother would find me late at night. When my body finally collapsed, my mind stayed awake. How could I fall asleep when flashes of lightning kept illuminating a new view of the 1,000-room Potala Palace from my hotel window? How could I sleep past sunrise know-

In Calm Abiding



Top left: A Tibetan Buddhist monk in a small temple in Lhasa. Above right: Photographs of the Dalai Lama—which are now illegal in Tibet—surround the holiest Buddha in the ancient Jokhang Temple. Above: Gold- and jewel-encrusted Buddha in the Jokhang Temple. Left: Medical tree thanka (sacred painting) at the School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine in Lhasa.

mountains. As I followed rock cairns up a steep switch-back path, I met an old woman wearing a long black robe, standing by the rubble of what used to be a series of stone buildings cut into the side of the mountain. She beckoned me into her humble hut. We passed through a doorless doorway into a small, dark and smoky room. She motioned for me to sit down on a large, dusty cushion next to the fire in the middle of the mud-packed floor. She served yak butter tea in a brown, chipped cup, then sank her head into my lap and began to weep. "Dalai Lama, Dalai Lama," were the only words I recognized.

Overwhelmed by her grief and frustrated by my inability to comfort her in Tibetan words, I gently stroked the gray stubble of hair on her head. Was she a Buddhist nun? Was she living in the remnants of a mountain hermitage? As the questions grew in my mind, so did my anger over the Chinese destruction of her people and culture. Holding back my tears, I lifted her head and looked straight into her eyes and said: "The Dalai Lama is alive in India." I repeated it slowly, over and over again, like a mantra. I prayed that, at some level, she understood.

Now, here in India, 14 years since that first visit to Tibet, I watch the Tibetan god-king—recipient of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize—tilt his head back, close his eyes, and let out a wonderful roar. I marvel at his ability to laugh after all he and his people have endured.

It has been almost four decades since the Dalai Lama escaped from the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. More than a million Tibetans have died and more than 6,000 monasteries and shrines have been destroyed. On my most recent trip to Tibet, I discovered that much of Old Lhasa has been torn down and replaced by Chinese-style cement block buildings. Young Chinese entrepreneurs hawk Buddhist prayer flags, prayer scarves

In Calm Abiding



Above: A potential young student at the training school for Tibetan artists. Above right: An old pilgrim on the sacred circuit around the Jokhang Temple.



drawn—like a child seeking her parent—to pass by his hotel room. My brother and I step from the elevator onto the fifth floor and into a flurry of activity. Armed guards pace outside the room closest to the elevator, while monks in saffron robes transport a few pieces of luggage onto the elevator. We stand to one side, hoping that the rumor we have heard about His Holiness catching a post-midnight flight is true.

Suddenly, he steps out from the guarded room. As he approaches, I smile, hoping the compassion I feel might massage his weary bones. He stops, turns toward me, palms together, and whispers, "Good night." I feel calm and refreshed like seeing a Himalayan glacier for the first time.

The elevator doors close. My brother and I quickly glance at each other. Without a word, we head to the Dalai Lama's door. I turn the knob. It is unlocked.

Silently we explore the threadbare two-room suite. Poking and probing, we tiptoe across the faded red carpet. I expected the room to smell like yak butter tea and fragrant incense. Instead there is the predictable smell of musty, humid air mixed with dust off the north Indian plain.

"Does the spirit linger a few minutes before it follows the

body?" I wonder, kneeling to rest my forehead against His Holiness' queen-size bed.

The silent night is broken by the sound of elevator doors opening. My brother and I become like statues with antennae, listening to the floors creak as the footsteps grow louder and louder. I freeze in place, noticing my brother poised motionless over a bouquet of roses sitting on the windowsill. My heart is beating loudly. What if the footsteps belong to one of the policemen who has been guarding this room for the past 48 hours? What if one of them is returning to lock up the room? They have guns!

The footsteps pause outside the door. I hear a key in the door. The door opens. My eyes take in flowing maroon robes. My ears hear a shriek of child-like joy: "You're just like the Tibetans!" cries the monk, a broad grin moving toward his large ears. I recognize him immediately. It is Jampal Chosang, the Dalai Lama's interpreter. I laugh with Jampal—relieved that our spontaneous trespass is not only lawful but praiseworthy. The twinkle in Jampal's eyes tells me that my brother and I are not the only ones there to glean any lingering energy. He holds up the room key, blushing. "I kept the key so that I, too, could sneak in and press my forehead against his bed and chair."

Jampal grins at me, and then he walks over to my brother, who is just lifting his nose out of a dozen yellow roses. The monk picks up the bouquet and hands us the flowers, one by one, until they are all gone.

T. C. Brannon teaches Asian history and leads tours to Tibet, China, Vietnam, and India. She recently returned from escorting a group to the former Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim, which borders Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. The tour ended in New Delhi with a special audience with the 14th Dalai Lama

Tibet On Our Minds

Every Picture
Tells
A Thousand
Stories



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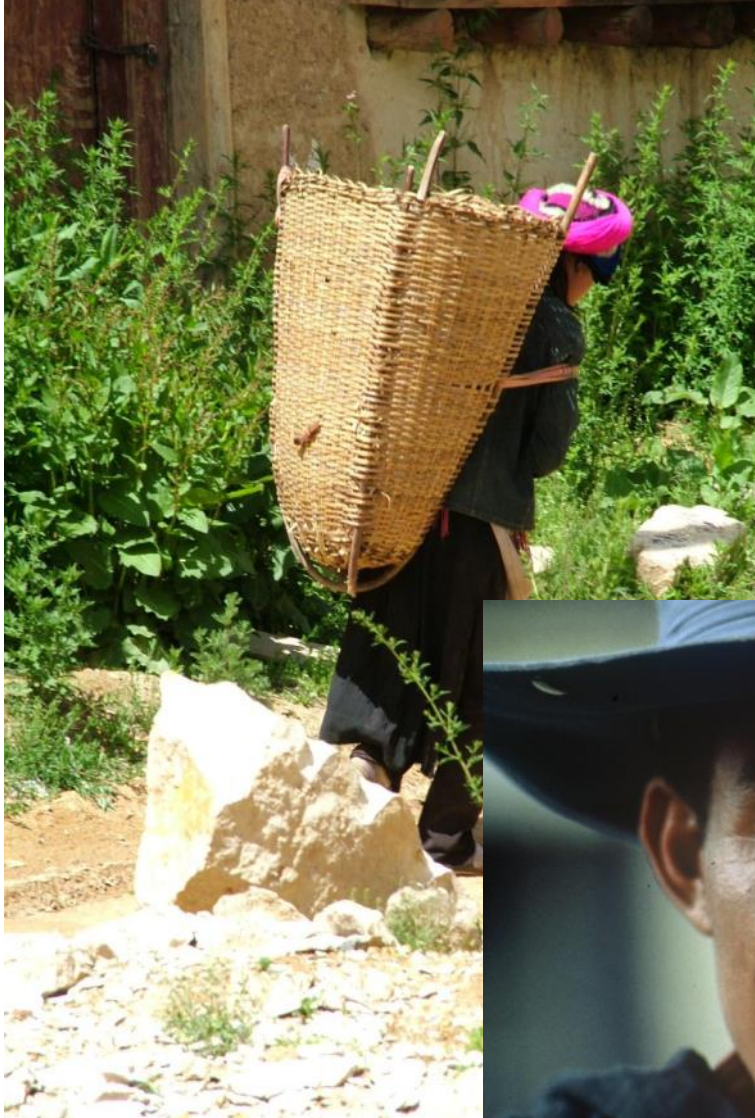
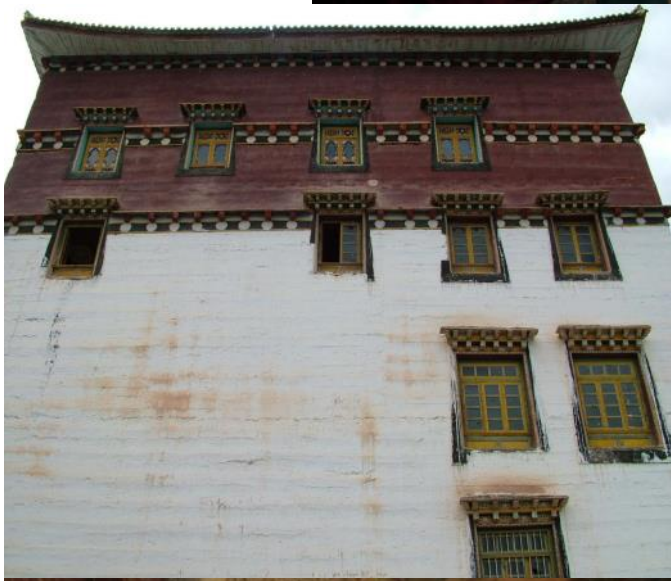


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