

Free Tibet presentation: Tibet and China

Teacher's notes

Slide 1

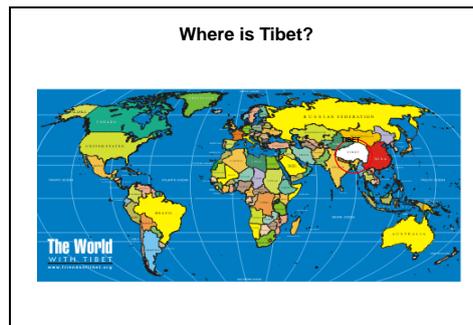


Introduction

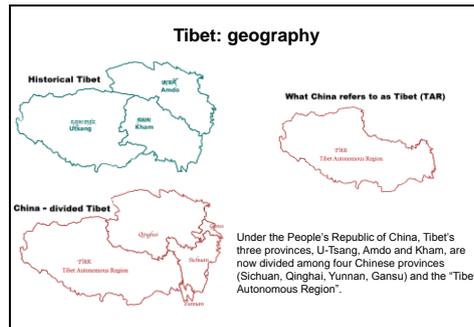
Information about the subjects of all slides is available at www.freetibet.org Additional references are provided in the notes below.

NOTE: International media, diplomats and human rights organisations are denied access to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and have highly restricted access to other parts of Tibet. See Free Tibet resource-China teaching resources – independent and dissident perspectives for a comprehensive list of independent sources of information about the current situation in Tibet.

Slide 2



Slide 3



Tibet covers a land area of over 2.5 million square kilometres. It is more than ¼ of China's land mass.

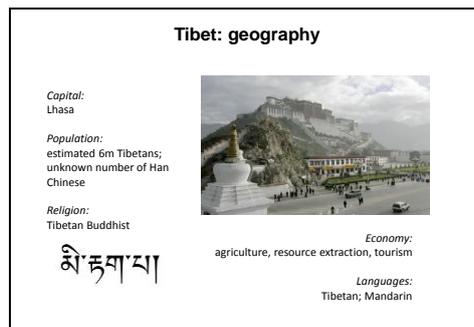
<http://tibet.net/about-tibet/tibet-at-a-glance/>

When China's government refers to "Tibet", it means only the region now called the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Many international media and governments have adopted this practice. For Tibetans, the entire area of the three provinces is Tibet.

Map source:

<http://www.thlib.org/places/tibet/>

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Population: Chinese figures show the population of the TAR to be more than 90% ethnic Tibetan but excludes "temporary" migrants (see slide 10) and military forces.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet#Demographics>

Economy: Natural resources include extensive reserves of gold, copper, silver, lithium (used in batteries) and uranium.

<https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/4696-Tibet-s-resource-curse> ;
<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2013/08/mining-tibet-poisoning-china/>

Most tourism is internal, with more than 90% of visitors to the Tibet Autonomous Region being Chinese.
<http://tibet.net/2012/10/13/tibet-a-rare-foreign-visitor-finds-a-chinese-tourism-boom/>

Tibetan is an entirely separate language from Chinese, using a different written script. Mandarin was

rarely spoken in Tibet before 1950 but is now the main language used in business and education. Some younger Tibetans are no longer fluent or literate in Tibetan.

Image: Potala Palace, Lhasa; Tibetan script

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Tibet: geography

The Tibetan Plateau - 4,500m average height.
Tibet has the Himalayan mountains in the south-west, primarily grassland in the north and forested valleys in the east and south-east



The Tibetan plateau is known as the "Third Pole" because of the amount of fresh water stored in its glaciers.

MAJOR RIVERS SOURCED IN TIBET

An estimated 2bn people in Asia depend on the flow of fresh water from Tibet.

Tibet faces substantial environmental challenges. Climate change is leading to melting of its glaciers. Deforestation and the damming of rivers for hydropower are changing its physical geography.

Known as the "Third Pole" because the amount of fresh water stored in its glaciers and flowing from its rivers is exceeded only by North and South poles. <http://www.thethirdpole.net/>
<http://tibet-edd.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/resource-extraction-and-deforestation.html>

Picture credits:

<http://www.tpe.ac.cn/>;

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan Plateau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Plateau)

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Brief history of Tibet

- Tibet and China had close relations for centuries, amid shifting empires in east Asia
- Ruled by Dalai Lamas since 17th century
- In 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama formally asserted Tibet's independence.
- Tibet issued currency and passports, and signed international treaties in 20th century



China claims that Tibet has been part of China “since antiquity” but this is rejected Tibetans and many independent scholars. As neither country was a modern nation state before 1900, the independence or otherwise of Tibet before the 1950 invasion remains a matter of dispute.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89552004>

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and, in Tibetan Buddhist belief, is the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama. The religious role dates back to the 1400s, but Dalai Lamas also ruled Tibet politically until the Chinese invasion of 1950.

<http://www.dalailama.com/biography/the-dalai-lamas>

Images: 13th Dalai Lama and Tibetan currency

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Brief history of Tibet

- Tibet was invaded and occupied by the People's Republic of China in 1949-50
- Tibetan leaders signed "Seventeen Point Agreement" with China, ceding sovereignty but preserving some autonomy
- In March 1959, uprising took place against Chinese rule
- The uprising was suppressed and the Dalai Lama fled to India with tens-of-thousands of followers



Tibet’s small army briefly opposed China’s invasion but was rapidly overwhelmed and the “17 point Agreement” was signed with Chinese military forces occupying Tibet. Tibetans became increasingly concerned that the autonomy supposedly enshrined in the agreement was being undermined by China, leading to the 1959.

<http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16689779>

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Brief history of Tibet

- More than one million Tibetans are thought to have died as a result of the Chinese invasion of Tibet
- There have been significant Tibetan uprisings against Chinese rule in the 1980s, 1990s and in 2008



Hundreds of thousands of Tibetan peasants and nomads died between 1960 and 1962



More than 6,000 monasteries have been closed or destroyed

Numbers of Tibetans killed in the period following the 1950 invasion and the 1959 uprising are not known but are agreed by scholars to be in the tens-of-thousands.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1959_Tibetan_uprising

Numbers killed since by security forces during the suppression of protests and in custody as a result of neglect or torture are also unknown.

Chairman Mao's "Great Leap Forward" (1958-60) caused famine leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Tibetan peasants and nomads (and millions of people across China).

http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/great_leap_forward.htm

Thousands of monasteries were also destroyed following the invasion and in particular during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).

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Tibet in exile

- Tibetan government-in-exile established in Dharamsala, India in 1959. Dalai Lama passed political control to fully-elected government in 2011.
- Now called the Central Tibetan Administration, the Dharamsala government is not recognised by any government or the United Nations

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet

- spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism
- winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989
- called by China "a wolf in monk's clothing"



The government-in-exile began democratisation in 1960, with an elected Parliament. Since 2001, the leader of the government has been directly elected. www.tibet.net

The current Dalai Lama was a teenager when Tibet was invaded [www.dalailama.com] and has not returned to Tibet since 1959. The Chinese government has said it will consider his return if he accepts that Tibet has always been part of China. <http://www.ecns.cn/2015/04-15/161801.shtml>

The Dalai Lama has proposed a

“Middle Way” solution to the status of Tibet, in which it remains part of the People’s Republic of China but has far greater autonomy to protect its environment, traditions, language and culture. China has rejected the Middle Way, claiming that it is “cover” for his ultimate aim of independence. The Dalai Lama denies this, although many Tibetans do seek independence.

<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/middle-way-approach>

Slide 10

Tibet today: migration and marginalisation



- China plans to increase the urban population of the Tibet Autonomous Region by 30% by 2020 - an increase of 280,000 people
- Chinese people are offered incentives to move to Tibet
- Tibetans are disadvantaged through language, ethnicity, education

Since the invasion, China has actively encouraged migration of Han Chinese people to the whole of Tibet. Incentives include relaxation of the one-child policy

<http://english.cntv.cn/2014/11/07/AR/11415317752096286.shtml>

Mandarin is now the language of education, government and business in Tibet. This favours Chinese immigrants and Tibetans face difficulties in competing for jobs.

<http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3671>

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Tibet today: relocation and “Disneyfication”

Relocation
Two million Tibetan nomads have been moved from their land to urban settlements, where they lack the skills to compete for jobs

“Disneyfication”
Picturesque representations of Tibetan culture are used to attract tourists while Tibetans face increasing restrictions on their freedom to practice it

Nomadic families who are relocated can be forced to pay three-quarters or more of the cost of their new housing, forcing them into debt making them unable to feed their livestock or families.

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2013/06/27/they-say-we-should-be-grateful-0>

Disneyfication:

[http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january february 2014/ten miles square/the disneyfication of tibet048349.php?page=all](http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january_february_2014/ten_miles_square/the_disneyfication_of_tibet048349.php?page=all)

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Tibet today: human rights

Human Rights

- “Splittism”
- Surveillance
- Criminalisation of religious and cultural life
- Collective punishment
- Communication restrictions

It doesn't take much for a Tibetan to get jailed under China's regime

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“Splittism/separatism” is a crime in Chinese law, referring to acts which threaten to divide Chinese territory. It can be applied to any “nationalistic” act, such as signing patriotic songs or advocating for the return of the Dalai Lama. Images of the Dalai Lama are banned, as is the Tibet flag.

Communities where protests take place can face cancellation of state-funded projects. Families of protesters may lose land rights. Collective punishment is illegal under international human rights law.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/11/29/china-tibetan-immolations-security-measures-escalate>

Tibetans pictured include:

Dhondup Wangchen (top row, centre), filmmaker, served six years for making “Leaving Fear behind” in 2008, which featured interviews with Tibetans speaking frankly about political situation

Khenpo Kartse (second row, second from right), monk, environment

activist and teacher, imprisoned for two-and-a-half years in 2014.

Jigme Dolma (third row, right), 17-year-old student, arrested and beaten for a solo protest in 2012. Serving three year sentence.

Lolo (bottom left), popular singer imprisoned in 2013.

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Tibet today: human rights

"Tibet today is one of the most repressed and closed societies in the world"
Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 2012

- Suppression of protest
- Intimidation
- Torture
- Severe sentences

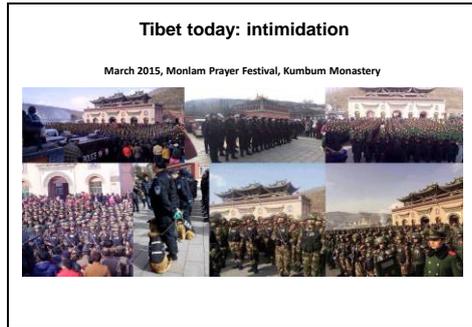


Suppression of protests: Protest is prohibited. In 2008, demonstrations swept across the entire Tibetan plateau. Authorities arrested an estimated 6,000 protestors, of which the fate of about 1,000 still remains unknown. On 12 August 2014, four Tibetans died after security forces opened fire on a demonstration in Kardze.

Torture: Torture in China and Tibet is "routine" and "widespread", according to the United Nations.
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/reatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fCHN%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en Monk and activist Golog Jigme reports being handcuffed to a burning stove after being arrested in 2008.

In 2014, Thardhod Gyaltzen was given an 18 year prison sentence after Chinese police found banned pictures and teachings of the Dalai Lama in his room.

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Security forces deployed at a traditional religious festival at Kumbum Monastery, eastern Tibet. <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/china-wants-choose-dalai-lama>

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Free Tibet maintains a constantly updated record of protest in Tibet at <http://freetibet.org/about/tibets-resistance>

Protests against cultural destruction include high school students in 2012 opposing the replacement of Tibetan language school books with books in Mandarin.

Self-immolation protests: Since March 2009, more than 135 people are known to have set themselves on fire inside Tibet in protest against China's occupation and policies. They include teachers, students and herdsmen, as well as mothers and fathers.

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Tibetans also resist the effects of occupation by pro-actively defending and asserting their culture. This includes the setting up of Tibetan language classes in their communities, writing poems, essays, songs and creating paintings devoted to Tibetan language, identity and culture.

Lhakar ("White Wednesdays") is a people's movement that has emerged in Tibet. Every Wednesday, a growing number of Tibetans are making special efforts to wear traditional

clothes, speak Tibetan and patronise Tibetan-owned businesses.

<http://lhakar.org/about/>

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Self-determination

"All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Article 1(1) – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966



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The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is the principle international document establishing the political rights of people and the obligations of governments. China has signed the Convention but has not ratified it.

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx> ;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Covenant_on_Civil_and_Political_Rights

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More information

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16689779>

The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/tibet>

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet>

Chinese government: <http://tibet.news.cn/english/>

High Peaks Pure Earth: www.highpeakspureearth.com

Free Tibet: www.freetibet.org

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