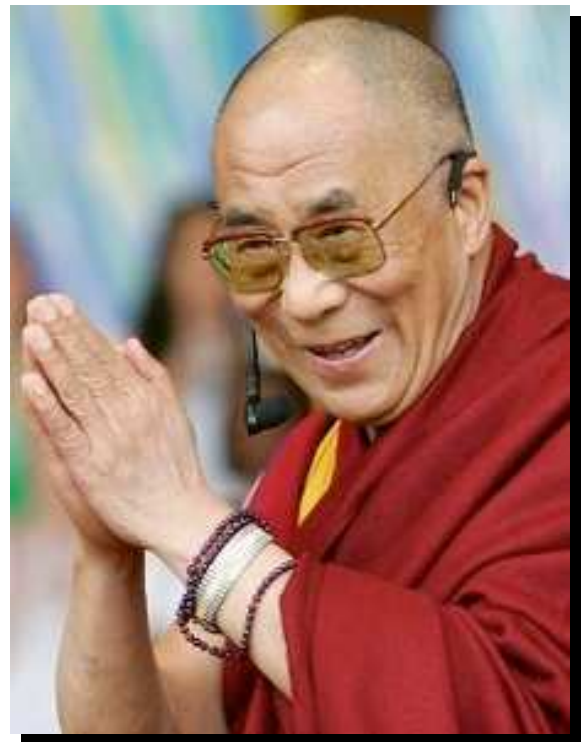


# ཐོད་ TIBET



Tibet in Brief - Tibet is a plateau region in Asia, north of the Himalayas between India and China. Tibet is the highest region on earth, with an average elevation of 16,000 ft. For centuries Tibet, a vast high altitude plateau between China and India, remained remote from the rest of the world with a widely dispersed population of nomads, farmers, monks, and traders. Tibet had its own national flag, its own currency, language, a distinct culture and religion, and controlled its own affairs until the Chinese Communist occupation in 1949. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who remains in exile in India is the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama - The Dalai Lama is believed to be an emanation of the Buddha of Compassion who assumes human form and reincarnates time and time again for the benefit of all sentient beings. A government headed by the Dalai Lamas, ruled Tibet from the 1640s until 1950s. The present Dalai Lama, the fourteenth, is internationally renowned for his eclectic study and reverence for all Buddhist traditions as well as promoting inter-faith understanding and cooperation for world peace through his message of universal responsibility and compassion. For his tireless work for human rights and peace, he has been awarded countless awards such as the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and Congressional Gold Medal in 2006.



Tibetan Buddhism – Buddhism was introduced from India to Tibet from the 6th century. Tibetan Buddhism belongs to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and is deeply influenced by Tantric (Vajrayana) Buddhism. The aim of spiritual development in Tibetan Buddhism is to achieve enlightenment (buddhahood/nirvana) in order to help all other sentient beings attain this state to avoid ‘samsaric’ or worldly sufferings through endless rebirths. On the path to enlightenment one must cultivate compassion and wisdom through meditation and analytical thinking on the nature of reality.



Modern History - In 1949, following the foundation of the Chinese Communist state, the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet and soon overpowered its poorly equipped army and guerilla resistance. In March 1959, Tibetans rose up against the Chinese occupiers. The uprising was brutally crushed and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama escaped to India, followed by more than 80,000 Tibetans. Tens of thousands of Tibetans who remained were killed or imprisoned. Untold numbers, but at least hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have died as a direct result of China's policies since 1949 - through starvation, torture and execution. Nearly all of Tibet's 6,000 monasteries were destroyed and religious artifacts ransacked during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Tibet Today - Tibet is important to China for strategic and economic reasons and because of the Communist Party's imperialist ambitions. In Tibet today where even possessing a picture of the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan flag can lead to imprisonment, torture, or even death, Tibetans remain resilient and continue to risk their lives by showing affection to the Dalai Lama and for a free Tibet. Every year thousands of Tibetans risk their lives by crossing the



treacherous Himalayas on foot into India to escape Chinese brutality and to seek greater opportunities to learn Tibetan culture and religion in exile.

Tibetans are forced to live under an atmosphere of fear and intimidation brought on by the Chinese. There is an ongoing crackdown led by the brutal Chinese military in Tibet to crush all forms of dissent. Arrests, tortures, closed door trials leading to long sentences or deaths are the norm these days. These are precisely why we are calling for an end to human rights abuses and for the promotion of freedom of religion, speech, and press in Tibet.

To take action, please visit [www.FreeTibetanHeroes.org](http://www.FreeTibetanHeroes.org)