

8th century AD -- Padma Sambhlava spreads Buddhism in Tibet

9th century -- Langdanna tries to wipe out Buddhism in favor of the Bon religion

11th century -- Rincen Zangp founds Lamayuru and other centers of learning and worship

early 20th century -- The Wangchuk Dynasty begins to rule Bhutan

1911 -- Tibet declares independence from China

1951 -- China reasserts control over Tibet

1959 -- China suppresses the practice of Buddhism in Tibet; the Dalai Lama goes into exile

1975 -- Sikkim becomes part of India

Things to Think About _____

- How has the mountainous, rugged terrain of the Tibetan region affected the lives of the people who live there?
- Research the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, and how he came to create Buddhism and spread his beliefs.
- Describe some of the ritual practices of Tibetan Buddhism.
- What are some of the ways in which circles appear in the Tibetan Buddhist world?
- In the past, children as young as five were sent to live in Tibetan monasteries to become monks. Is this still practiced today? What must one do to become a monk?
- What is the current status of Tibet within China? What rights do Tibetans have to practice their religion?
- The Dalai Lama, living in exile, travels and speaks widely. Research his recent activities. What are some of the things he speaks about?

Internet Resources _____

www.buddhanet.net/tibet.htm -- A site on the practices, arts, and images of Tibetan Buddhism.

<http://www.snowlionpub.com/> -- Links to many sites on Buddhist studies and organizations, Tibetan news, travel, and more.

www.tibet.com/Buddhism/index.html -- The official site maintained by the office of the Dalai Lama, with information on all facets of Tibetan Buddhism.

Other Resources _____

FOR STUDENTS:

Heinrichs, Ann. *Tibet*. Children's Press, 1997.

Levy, Patricia. *Tibet*. Marshall Cavendish, 1996.

Miller, Luree. *The Black Hat Dances: Two Buddhist Boys in the Himalayas*. Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1987.

FOR ADULTS:

Bernstein, Jeremy. *In the Himalayas: Journeys Through Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan*. Lyons Press, 1996.

Feigon, Lee. *Demystifying Tibet: Unlocking the Secrets of the Land of the Snows*. Ivan R. Dee, 1998.

Harding, Mike. *Footloose in the Himalayas*. Michael Joseph, 1989.

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Come explore the ancient kingdom of Tibet, seat of wisdom and mysticism high up in the Himalayas.

The independent nation of Tibet no longer exists, but the legacy of ancient Tibetan culture--with its evocative art, shrines, rituals, prayers, and dances--can still be found in the nations of India, Nepal, and Bhutan.





After studying the map and reading about Tibet and its place in the world, read the sections on vocabulary and important people, places, and dates to provide a focus while viewing the program. After viewing the program, review the sections listed above and consider the Things to Think About. Research topics further using the Inter-net and other resources provided.

Context in the World

Tibet, a sparsely populated region of rugged mountains and plateaus, was for the most part ruled by rival local groups during its early history. China took control in the 18th century, but in 1911, Tibetans drove the Chinese out and declared independence. It was short-lived, as China reasserted its rule in 1951. The Tibetan government negotiated an agreement under which Tibet would be regionally autonomous within China and the practice of Buddhism under the Dalai Lama--the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism--would be allowed. But in 1959, China cracked down, closing many monasteries and suppressing Buddhism. The Dalai Lama and many Tibetans fled to India, and he remains in exile today. In recent years, there has been some easing of restrictions on the practice of Buddhism in Tibet, and Tibetan Buddhism is also active in the neighboring kingdoms of Bhutan and Nepal and in sections of India.

Vocabulary

Bon -- A shamanistic religion, characterized by the belief in unseen spirits, practiced in Tibet before Buddhism.

Buddhism -- The religion founded by Siddhartha Gautama--called the Buddha--c. 500 BC.

Chant -- A festival of ritual dances performed by Buddhist monks.

chorten -- A Buddhist shrine holding holy objects or the remains of a sacred person.

Dashmochā -- A Buddhist feast in which a city is exorcised.

doss -- A religious object made of interwoven ribbons that is used in Buddhist ceremonies.

Drukpa -- An order of Buddhism, meaning "of the dragon."

dzong -- A building that serves as a fortress, temple, and monastery.

Gelupa -- An order of Buddhism also called the Yellow Hats, after their headwear.

gompas -- Tibetan Buddhist monasteries built in the mountains.

Kagyatt -- A Buddhist festival.

Kanjur -- A 108-volume work of the words of the Buddha.

Ladakhi -- A group of Tibetan descent with some Indo-European characteristics, who live largely in India.

lamas -- Spiritual leaders of Tibetan Buddhism who have achieved a state of enlightenment.

Mahakala -- A goddess called the Great Black One.

malha -- The Buddhist rosary, with 108 beads.

mandalas -- Complex patterns that show the path to enlightenment.

mani korlo -- Prayer wheels, which people spin as they recite the prayer contained inside.

mantras -- Sacred syllables recited during meditation or prayer.

Nyingmapa -- An order of Buddhism also called the Red Hats, after their headwear.

Sakya -- An order of Buddhism.

Shanag -- A ritual dance of the Black Hats.

stupas -- Shrines for Buddhist saints.

tarcho -- Flags containing printed prayers.

Tee Jee -- A Buddhist festival of ritual dances celebrated in Nepal.

thanka -- Specially printed cloths showing religious subjects.

torma -- Offerings made of rice and butter that are used in Buddhist rituals.

tsampa -- A staple food made of barley flour, butter, and tea.

Tsechu -- A Buddhist festival.

Important People

Bodhisattva -- Buddhist monk who played a key role in spreading the religion in the 8th century.

Buddha -- "Enlightened One," the name given to Siddhartha Gautama, founder of Buddhism c. 500 BC.

Dalai Lama -- The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, in exile since 1959.

Langdarma -- Tibetan king who supported the Bon religion and tried to wipe out Buddhism in the 9th century.

Namgyal Family -- Rulers of Sikkim until it became part of India in 1975.

Padma Sambhava -- Indian guru who spread the Buddhist faith in Tibet in the 8th century.

Rincen Zangp -- Buddhist master who founded such centers of learning and worship as Lamayuru in the 11th century.

Trisong Detsen -- Tibetan king who expanded the empire and spread Buddhism in the 8th century.

Tzong Kapa -- Founder of the Gelupa order of Buddhism.

Wangchuk Dynasty -- Rulers of Bhutan since the early 20th century.

Important Places

Alchi -- A complex in Ladakh, India, with a gompa containing great artwork.

Annapurna -- A Himalayan peak.

Bodhnath -- Site of a stupa that is a place of pilgrimage, near Kathmandu, Nepal.

Chosang -- A town in Mustang, Nepal.

Dhaulagiri -- A Himalayan peak.

Dren Jong -- Local name by which Sikkim is known.

Druk-Yul -- Local name by which Bhutan is known, meaning Land of the Dragon.

Gangtok -- The capital of Sikkim.

Himalayas -- An enormous mountain chain in southeast Asia.

Kagbeni -- A town in Mustang, Nepal.

Kali Gandaki -- A river in the Himalayas.

Kanchenjunga -- A high mountain in the Himalayas.

Kathmandu -- The capital of Nepal.

Ladakh -- A region in northern India known as Little Tibet.

Lamayuru -- A village in Ladakh, India, the site of a Buddhist monastery.

Leh -- The capital of the region of Ladakh, India, and the site of the royal palace.

Lo-Manthang -- The capital of the region of Mustang, Nepal.

Machhaupuchhare -- A Himalayan peak,

Mount Everest -- The highest peak in the world, in the Himalayas.

Muktinath -- A spring in the region of Mustang, Nepal, that is a place of pilgrimage.

Mustang -- A mountainous region in western Nepal.

Paro -- Both a district and a valley in Bhutan.

Phodang -- A monastery in Sikkim.

Sikkim -- A region in India that was an independent Tibetan principality until 1975.

Tashillumpo -- The site of a monastery in Tibet.

Thimphu -- The capital of Bhutan.

Important Dates

c. 500 BC -- Buddhism is founded by Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha