

Population

The Tibetan people totals about 5.37M. 5.25 million Tibetans live in greater Tibet, comprised of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures that China has annexed to its provinces. About 87% of Tibetans are rural and some 126,000 Tibetan refugees live in exile. China's settler influx has reduced indigenous Tibetans to only about half of all inhabitants.

Tibetan language, of the Tibeto-Burman group, has spread with through Tibetan Buddhism, to which most Tibetans adhere. Tibetans commemorate every 10 March as the day in 1959 when they rose up against Chinese occupation, when Chinese forces massacred Tibetans in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, and exiled the XIV Dalai Lama.

Origins

Historians and anthropologists believe that Tibetans' ancestors are of mongoloid origin who converged in present-day Tibet from the northeast (China) and the southeast (Assam and Burma).

For centuries, until the late 1800s, Sino-Tibet relations were based on reciprocal "priest/patron" ties; whereby, Tibet depended on China for security and defense, but Tibetans maintained independence in running their internal and external affairs despite Chinese emperors attempts to impose their will

Historical Background

Tibetan history forms four main passages:

- **The rise and the fall of early kings from the 3rd Century BC–13th Century AD;**
- **The rise and the fall of the Sakya rule (1247–1368);**
- **The rise and the fall of hegemony (1368–1644); and**
- **The rise of the Dalai Lama's influence and rule (1644–present).**

In the 19th Century, while advancing its influence and interests in the Indian subcontinent and the Far East, the British Empire considered Tibet to be a strategic zone. During that period, Sino-Tibetan relations deteriorated as China suffered under the "unequal treaties" that culminated in the 1839–42 and 1856–60 Opium Wars and heavy Western hegemony. The British often treated the Tibetans as autonomous, but that recognition was contingent on the interests of the other powers in the region. By the early 20th Century, China and Great Britain had concluded several treaties over Tibet that Tibetans, militarily weaker, could not contest.

In 1912, China's revolution and fall of the Qing Dynasty led to a shift in the balance of power between China and Tibet. The XIIIth Dalai Lama asserted a political role for the first time, declaring independence and increasing Tibet's power during WWI. This sovereignty declaration was not internationally recognized and post-WWI China's position of relative power enabled it to integrate Tibet into its internal affairs.

In 1950, Communist China "liberated" Tibet from what it described as a "feudal system," and forced a Tibetan delegation to sign the Seventeen Point Agreement. China assumed

control over defense and foreign affairs. Tibet then lost its independence and Tibetans remain stateless to date.

Discriminatory Practices

China has never set up a special legal system of discrimination. The practices of all its local representatives and agencies, however, are deeply discriminatory, resulting in a *de facto* system of Tibetan rights violations and superior privileges for Han Chinese settlers that parallels the *de jure* discrimination of other cases.

Chinese government tactics are manifold. Besides numerous arrests of political prisoners, deportation to work camps and demographic manipulation through abortion campaigns, continuous policy involves replacing Tibetans with Chinese officials at all administrative levels. This systematically discriminates against Tibetans to the benefit of Han Chinese settlers, especially in housing matters, where Han settlers receive better services and bigger living areas.

Very strict ideological control of all information media deprives young Tibetans of adequate educational facilities. Occupation policies of deforestation and toxic waste dumping, among others, have caused grave environmental damage. The Chinese authorities now forcibly displace Tibetan nomads under various pretexts of environmental protection and reforestation. Additionally, despite the Chinese Constitution's espousal of religious freedom, authorities and settlers have continuously harassed Tibetan monks and nuns, important purveyors of Tibetan identity and culture.

TIBET
UNDER PR CHINA 1949-1999
The Year & Types of Territorial Sub-Divisions



SOURCE: IO, CTA 1979

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