

# UWS Open Forum Series 2008

## Tibet and its People

# Tibet



**Tibet is situated between the two ancient civilizations of China and India.**

**Within the People's Republic of China, Tibet is identified with the Autonomous Region, which includes about half of historical Tibet.**

- **Its borders coincide roughly with the actual zone of control of the government of Tibet before 1959.**
- **Tibet is the second-largest province of China by area (spanning over 1,200,000 km<sup>2</sup>).**

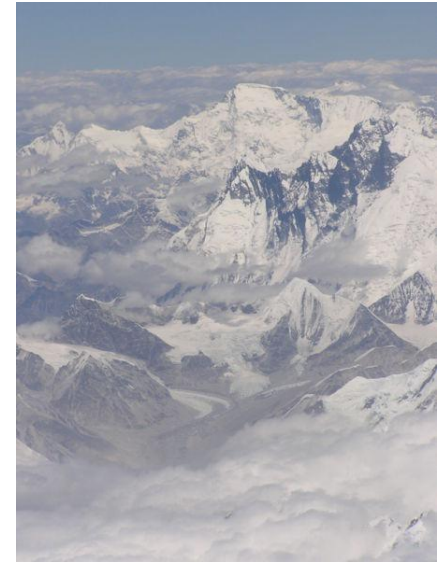
**The Government of Tibet in Exile includes the Tibetan areas it has controlled since 1959 and the provinces of Amdo, Kham, and Ü-Tsang removed from Tibet in the 18 century.**

**Bhutan and Ladakh also form part of the Tibetan cultural sphere.**

# Geography

**Commonly referred to as the "Roof of the World".  
Tibet has an average elevation of 4,900 meters.**

**It is the highest region on Earth and includes  
most of the Himalaya mountain range.**





# Population

**The Tibetan people are indigenous to Tibet and surrounding areas.**

**5.4 million people live in the greater Tibet, including about 2.8 million in the Tibet Autonomous Region. An additional 125,000 Tibetan exiles live in India, 60,000 in Nepal, and 4,000 in Bhutan.**

**As of 2000, 92.8% of the population are ethnic Tibetans, Han Chinese comprise 6.1% of the population.**

**The Tibet Autonomous Region has the lowest population density among China's administrative regions.**

**The Tibetan traditional agricultural work and animal husbandry continue to lead the Tibet's economy.**

**Since the 1980s economy diversified, in Particular, service sectors associated with tourism grew and in 2005 overtook agriculture and contributed more than half its GDP growth.**

**In the past five years, Tibet's annual GDP growth has averaged 12%.**

**In 2006, Tibet's nominal GDP topped 29 billion yuan (US\$3.8 billion).**

**In 2005, the per capita disposable incomes of urban and rural residents in Tibet averaged 8,411 yuan (US\$1,051) and 2,075 yuan (US\$259) respectively.**

# Economy



# Culture and Language



**Tibet has its own unique culture and language.**

**The Tibetan language is spoken in various dialects which are usually mutually comprehensible.**

**Tibetan history is characterized by a special dedication to the Buddhist religion.**



# Religion

## Dalai Lama

**Dalai Lama is known as spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhist faith.**

**By the end of XIII century the Living Buddha reincarnation system was introduced.**

**In 1578 the title "Dalai Lama" was bestowed by the Mongolian ruler Altan Khan upon Sonam Gyatso, the third Dalai Lama.**

**Between the 17th century and 1959, the Dalai Lamas were both religious and administrative authorities over large parts of Tibet, ruling from the traditional capital Lhasa.**

# History – The Key Milestones

**Early humans inhabited the Tibetan Plateau from at least 20,000 years ago.**

**In the early VII century Tibet unified under Songtsän Gampo as an independent kingdom and sent an ambassador to China.**



Tibet's Empire in 700 AD.

**1247 – 1728 Tibet under Mongol control.**

**1913 - 1959 Tibetan self-rule in the areas of present Tibet Autonomous Region; other parts of historic Tibet were not under the administration of the Tibetan government during the XX century.**





The flag of Tibet was used intermittently between 1912 and 1950. This version was introduced by the 13th Dalai Lama in 1912.

The flag is outlawed in PRC.

**1950 - the Chinese Army “liberated” the Tibetan area of Chamdo.**

**1951 - the Tibetan representatives signed a seventeen-point agreement with the Chinese Central People's Government affirming China's sovereignty over Tibet.**

**1956 - 1959 insurrection against Chinese rule.**

**1959 - Chinese crushed the insurrection and the 14th Dalai Lama and government principals fled into political exile in India.**

**1971 - PRC were admitted to UN and UN General Assembly; and the Republic of China expelled from the UN.**

**1972 - Nixon visits PRC and establishes diplomatic relations based on the “one China” policy.**



# Status of Tibet Today

Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (with a small part controlled by India).

Tibet is also officially claimed by the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Tibet in Exile still disagree over:

- when Tibet became a part of China, and
- whether the incorporation into China is legitimate according to international law.

The Dalai Lama seeks increased autonomy for Tibet.

# Human Rights



**There are significant human rights issues in Tibet.**

**At present there is unrest in Tibet and foreign journalists cannot visit Tibet.**

**PM Rudd condemned China's violation of human rights in Tibet. He said in early April 2008 prior to his Beijing visit:**

***"It is absolutely clear that there are human rights abuses in Tibet. That's clear-cut; we need to be upfront and absolutely straight about what's going on."***