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WORLD OF WONDER

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

The red rhododendron is the national flower of Tibet.

Mt. Everest is called Chomolungma, "goddess mother of the world," by Tibetans. At 29,029 feet (8,848 m) it is the highest place on Earth. It is part of the Himalayas.



TIBET



The **Yak** is a type of wild ox. Tibetan herders and farmers use its meat, hides and milk.

Today, Tibet is under Chinese occupation and has been divided into Chinese provinces. When China refers to Tibet, it is referring to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China. The people of Tibet associate Tibet with the historical area it covered prior to the invasion of the 1950s.

In a word

The name **Tibet** is derived from the Mongolian **Thubet**, the Chinese **Tufan**, the Thai **Thibet**, and the Arabic **Tubbat**.

Tibet is sometimes called the "roof of the world" because of its many high mountains, including the Himalayas and Mt. Everest.

A land in dispute

Many Tibetans say their country is an independent nation, but the Chinese government says it is part of China.

Tibet has kept its own culture, written and spoken language, religion and political system for centuries.

Tibetan protesters want protection for their cultural identity, for freedom, for human rights and the return of the Dalai Lama.



Historic Tibet

Wildlife

In addition to wild yaks, Tibetan antelopes, Tibetan gazelle, blue sheep, wild horses, tigers, bears, monkeys, black-necked cranes and giant pandas also live in Tibet.



The Chinese government forbids the flying or display of the Tibetan flag. This flag is also known as the **snow lion flag**. The snow lion represents the mountain ranges and glaciers of Tibet. The flag is still used by the Tibetan government-in-exile.

The **giant panda** has become an iconic representative for endangered species and the World Wildlife Fund. Once endangered, it is now listed as vulnerable because population numbers have increased.

The Dalai Lama

Since the 17th century, the Dalai Lama has been Tibet's political and spiritual leader. He is symbol of unification and wisdom, representing Buddhist values and traditions.

In 1959, believing his life was in danger, the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet. He has been living as a refugee in India, where he has established a democratic government (known as the Central Tibetan Administration). He advocates for a "Middle Way Approach," proposing that Tibet remain a part of the People's Republic of China but with far greater control over its own affairs.

When the current Dalai Lama dies, a search for the lama's **yangsi**, or reincarnation, will be made.

Just the facts

Population (2020)	In TAR: 3.18 million (About 4 million Tibetans live in other areas in China. Approximately 120,000 Tibetans live in exile.)
Capital city	Lhasa
Highest elevation	Mt. Everest 29,029 ft. (8,848 m)
Average elevation	Tibetan Plateau 14,750 ft. (4,500 m)
Economy	Primarily agricultural



SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <https://www.travelchinaguide.com>; <https://tibetnetwork.org>; Central Tibetan Administration; <http://tibetoffice.org>; <https://tibetmuseum.org>

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