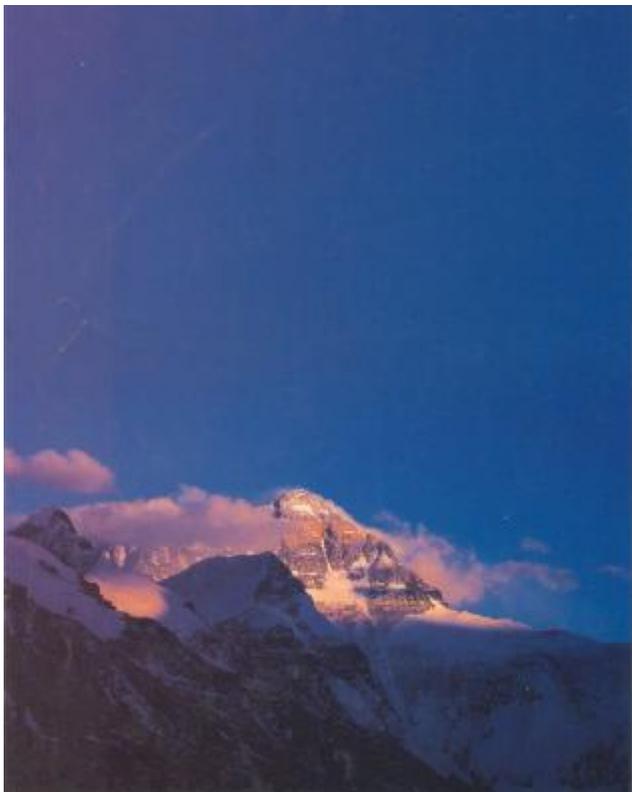


The Tibetan Ethnic Group

The symbolic design of the Tibetans is the Potala Palace. It was said that the palace was first built in the 7th century when King Songzan Gambo Married Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty. The Potala Palace is divided into the red palace and white palace, built up against the mountain, all in stone and wood structure. The main building consists of 13 floors, 119 meter high and 360 meters long, with approximately 10000 rooms in it. The Potala palace is built in the Potala Mountain in the northwest of Lhasa, with a cluster of buildings of great momentum looking majestic and lofty afar.



The population and the environment



The Tibetans with a population of 5,416,021 scatter in the broad Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and mostly live in the Tibet Autonomous Region; and Haibei, Huangnan, Hainan, Guoluo, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Haixi Tibetan and Mongolia Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province; the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the Gannan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture and the Tianzhu Tibetan autonomous County in Gansu Province; the Garze and Aba Tibetan Autonomous prefectures and the Muli Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan Province; and the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is known as “the ridge of the world”, the average height of which is over 4,000 meters above sea level. Mt. Qomolangma is on the Sino-Nepalese border. There are rich water resources in the plateau, from which the Yellow River and the Yangtze River originate. Due to the height of the plateau, most areas have cold weather and thin air. Yet the latitude is low, so the radiant intensity of the sun is high and the time of sunlight is long. There are rich resources of animals and plants with a variety of precious animals.

The origin and history of the Tibetan

The Tibetans first settled along the middle reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River in Tibet. After a long time the earliest tribes scattered on The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau gradually united as the local tribal alliance and became the Tibet today. At the beginning of the 7th century, King Songzan Bambo began to rule the whole of Tibet and set up “Tubo” regime, putting an end to the continuous wars among the tribes.

In the Tang Dynasty, the “Tubo” regime established their political, economic and cultural contacts with the Tang Dynasty (618-907) through the marriages and alliance of the kingdoms. In 641, King Songzan Gambo married Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty. In 710, King Chide Zuzain married another Tang princess Jin Cheng. The two princesses brought with them the books and advanced production techniques of Central China to Tibet,

which stimulated economical development in Tibet.

In the middle of 13th century, Tibet was brought into the domain of the Yuan Dynasty and was under the unified rule of the central government.

The appellation of the ethnic group and its language

The appellations of the Tibet differ according to the different areas.

The Tibetan language belongs to the Tibetan sub-branch of the Tibetan-Mayanmese language branch of the Chinese-Tibetan language family. According to geographical divisions, it has three major local dialects: Weizang, kang and Amdo. The Tibetan script, an alphabetic system of writing, was created in the early 7th century.

The dwelling characteristics—the flat-roofed house and tent

There are mostly flat-roofed houses in the rural areas of Tibet, which are square-shaped and the rafter and pillar are made of square-edged timbers. The house is floored with planks with windows around. There are generally three stories in the house, on the second and third floors of which the people live, while on the first domestic animals are raised or some sundries placed. There is a family hall for worshipping Buddha and the top of it is used as terrace.

There are mostly tents in the pasturing areas, which are made of thick woolen cloth, quadrate or elliptic, with the center supported by a wooden pillar and the four sides tightened and nailed up on the ground. On the tent roof, there is a long hole as a channel for daylight and smoke. The door faces the south and there is hearthstone somewhere between the center and the door. Around some tents there are low walls built by hay and cattle dung.

The dressing characteristics—Tibetan ornaments and Bangdian and Bazhu

All Tibetans, men and women, like to wear ornaments with long sleeves, loose waist and front. The ornaments in the farming areas are made of woolen textile. They wear long-sleeved silk or cloth jackets inside the ornaments. Women in farming areas wear aprons, called “Bangdian”, with beautiful patterns, and triangle or arched headwear, called “Bazhu”, on top of head, decorated with coral, agate and some precious stones, looking pretty and artistic. The ornaments in pastoral areas are made of sheepskin. They have belt on the waist, decorated with a nice-looking Tibetan knife. Women used to plait their hair into two queues or many tiny queues adorned with ornaments such as corals or shells.



The dietetic habits—Zanba, buttered tea and Qingke barley wine

The staple food and drinks for the Tibetans are Zanba, buttered tea and Qingke wine. There are meat and milk products in pastoral areas. Zanba is prepared by mixing roasted barley flour with buttered tea and barley wine into small balls with some condiments. Buttered tea is everyday drink for themselves or for the guests, which is prepared by mixing butter and strong tea. The Qingke barley wine brewed with barley is an indispensable drink for the festivals and the entertainment of guests. When the drinking of barley wine deserves a formality of “three mouthfuls for a cup”, that is, the guests have to take three mouthfuls first and then drink it all.

The religious beliefs—the Tibetan Buddhism

The Tibetans generally believe in the Tibetan Buddhism. The Mahayana school of Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the seventh century and developed into Lamaism by assimilating of the local religion called Bon. Lamaism was divided into many different sects. The Yellow sect rose comparatively later and had wide influence in Tibet. The Yellow sect practices the institution of reincarnation of living Buddhas. Religious beliefs of the national constitution are under the protection and laws. Nowadays there are all together 1700 temples and various kinds of sites for religions monks and nuns, where a variety of grand religious festivals or activities are scheduled to be held every year, and more than one million of disciples come to Lhasa for burning joss sticks and worshipping the Buddha.



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The customs of festivals—the Tibetan lunar calendar and dedication of Hada

The Tibetans have a lot of traditional festivals, the most ceremonious of which is the festival of the Tibetan lunar calendar, the first of January of the Tibetan lunar calendar. Before the festival, people get ready everything necessary for the festival and create some designs for good fortune with flour on the central all of the kitchen and gate. During the festival, some Tibetan dramas are performed and yak races are held, etc. Besides, there are “Xuedun festival”, “Wanguo festival”, “The ghee lamp festival”, “Zhuanshan fair”, etc.



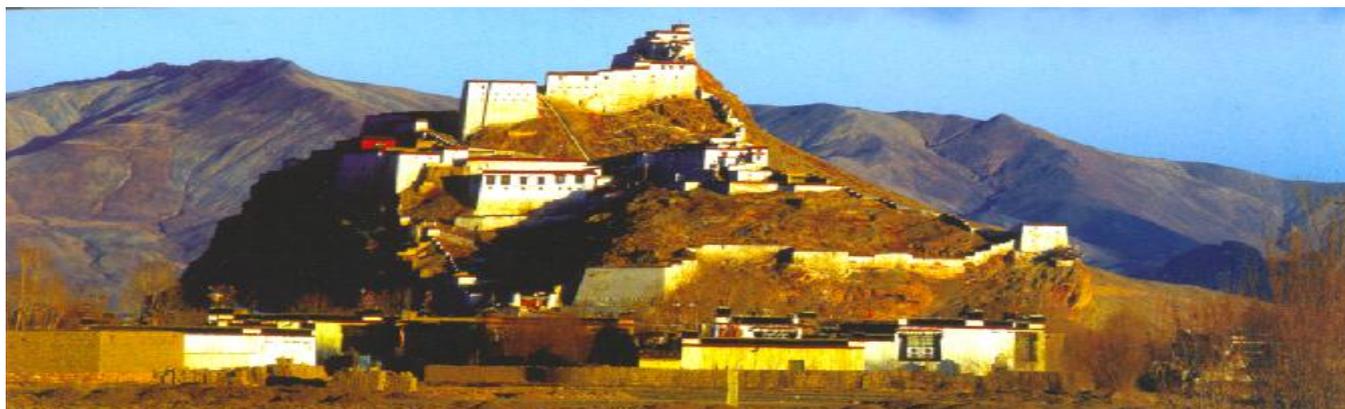
The dedication of Hada is the Tibetan traditional ceremony. Hada is a long towel made of white silk, which is dedicated on the occasions of weddings funerals, festivals, moving to a new residence, requesting to be somebody’s pupil, receiving or sending-off some friends or relatives, and making one’s pilgrimage to the Buddha.

The literature and the dancing art—King Gesser and the Tibetan dramas

The Tibetan literature is rich and colorful. King Gesser is world's longest epic poem, best known as a folk art form of mainly talking and singing among the people. The epic poem describes the heroic deeds of Gesser, who defies brute force, fears no dangers and difficulties, and wipe out the wicked and protect the people. The Love Songs of Cangyang Jiacao is another literary works well known in the world, the author of which is the Sixth Dalai Lama, a famous poet.

The Tibetan song and dance has a long history and a variety of forms. The Tibetan drama is a comprehensive art that presents literary stories in the forms of song and dance, mostly performed in a square and generally divided into three parts, the prelude, the main body and the end with well-wishing. The eight Tibetan dramas including Princess Wen Cheng are well favored by the Tibetans.

The painting and architectural arts—Tangka, fresco and the Potala Palace



The Tibetan painting art is well advanced. The subject matters of the paintings are taken from the religion, the history and the life, which have handsome layout and bright color. The frescos in the temples and Tangka Buddha's paintings are the rarities in the Tibetan painting. Tangka is the scroll painting mounted by colored damask with a size of about one meter, which is generally hung in the temples. In the creation of Tangka, the combination of history and art is pursued, in which the important events are depicted.

The constructional styles of the Tibetan palace and temples are unique. The Potala Palace well known in the world is 13-story high with a floor space of 130,000 square meters, which, in an enormous scale, resplendent and magnificent as an integrated whole with the mountains, is representative of the Tibetan art treasures and palace construction.