



Teacher's Guide

Tibet **Beyond Our Borders Series**

Grade Levels:

6-10

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

World History

World Geography & Cultures

Foreign Languages

Synopsis:

Provides a unique view of Tibet and the Tibetan people focusing on ancient agricultural and social traditions, which provide unity and self-sufficiency in remote mountain communities. Follows a group of Tibetans on an arduous journey down narrow mountain pathways and across the raging Yarlung Tsangpo River to worship the Buddha. Also depicts emancipated Tibetan women carrying heavy loads and acting as the final arbiter in family decisions. A brief section films Tibetan nomads and their dependency on the Yak. Travels to the holy city of Lhasa to film key tourist sites such as the market, the Jokhang Temple, and the Potala Palace. Evidence of the Communist takeover is everywhere including shopping malls, restaurants where Chinese is spoken, and in the countryside where Tibetan forests have been ravaged to support the Chinese economy. Closes with a brief introduction to the Dalai Lama and his message of world peace and advice to Tibetans to promote a spirit of non-violence in spite of Chinese abuses.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Describe the landscape of Tibet.
- Describe ancient cultural traditions that sustain the Tibetan people.
- Explain how Tibet has changed as a result of the Chinese occupation.
- Appreciate the gentle spirit of the Tibetan people.

Vocabulary:

self-sufficiency, inter-dependence, jack-in-the-pulpit, rhododendrons, diverted, regenerates, pilgrimage, lamas, emancipated, compassion, beast-of-burden, sure-footed, prostrate, harmonious

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Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Why do most people know something about Tibet and its people? Why is this relatively small country so important to the global community?

Who is the Dalai Lama? What does he represent to his people?

Where is Tibet located? How would you describe its geography?

Is Tibet an independent country or is it part of China? What makes you think so?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

What aspect of Tibetan society impressed you the most? What was particularly fascinating about life in Tibetan villages located at high elevations?

What river sustains life in Tibet? How do Tibetans use this river for agriculture, drinking water, and as a power source?

What animal sustains life for many Tibetans? What products do Tibetans make from the hides of this animal? What other uses does this animal fill for Tibetans?

In recent years, how has the capital city been changed by the Chinese takeover? How has the countryside changed as a result of the takeover? What is the Dalai Lama's attitude to these changes? How do the Tibetan people feel about the takeover?

Further Activities:

Further investigate the environmental damage that has occurred in Tibet as a result of the Chinese occupation.

Compare and contrast the lives of Tibetan women who live in mountain villages and those who live in Lhasa.

Find out where Tibetan art treasures can be found today and what they represent.

Read firsthand accounts of adventurers who have journeyed into the Tibetan Plateau.

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