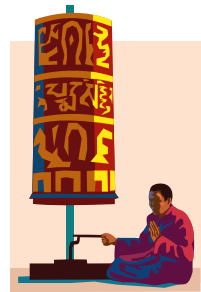


"Buddha" means "Enlightened One" and was the name given to Siddhartha Gautama who lived in India 2,500 years ago. He grew up in a luxurious home, married and had a son, but even though he had "everything," he felt life had no meaning. He left his family and wandered through India seeking the meaning of life. He'd been taught that after a person dies, he is reborn with a new life - if he had lived a bad life before, he might be reborn poor; if he had done good deeds, he might come back rich or wise next time. Buddha finally decided the only way to be free from this cycle of being reborn was to reach the state of nirvana, or "nothingness". He taught that to do so, people must be kind, not hurt any living creature, and do good deeds.



there's only one way to have eternal life. (Read Romans 3:23)

To try to be good Buddhists, many men become monks (wearing orange robes); others try hard to live good lives and give offerings of food or flowers to statues of Buddha and spin prayer wheels, believing that their prayers will be carried to the ends of the universe. This sounds very good but the Bible tells us that EVERYONE sins (no matter how hard we try not to!) and



Romans 7:15 (NLT) says: "I don't really understand myself for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead I do what I hate." Then v.24 continues: "Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God the answer is Jesus Christ our Lord."

Have YOU ever felt like this? Believe it or not, everyone feels this way sometimes - that is why God sent Jesus to set us free from that. You can see how important it is to tell Buddhists about Jesus, so they can have joy and fulfillment in THIS life instead of hoping to one day gain "nothingness"!!

'Til next time, Your friend, Shirley

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(Answer: Baby boy; U; Dharamsala; Dalai Lama; Himalayas; India; Sampa; Tenzin = BUDDHIST)

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Do you know which country is called "The Roof of the World"?



It is TIBET! It's been given that name because it is mostly a high plain or plateau over 15,000 ft above sea level, surrounded by some of the highest mountains in the world, including the Himalayas and Mt. Everest.



In fact Tibet has 38 mountains over 22,900 ft high!! Maybe you can find Tibet between the large countries of India to the South and China to the North - it covers over 714,000 square miles and is a little smaller than the size of Mexico. Because of all the mountains, Tibet remained a mysterious country until even just 100 years ago.

In 1950 China invaded Tibet, killing many Tibetans and destroying their monasteries, and a strict Communist government took over. Thousands of Tibetans fled to the surrounding countries and many Chinese people moved into Tibet. Now it is said that less than half the total number of about 5-6 million Tibetans actually live in their homeland.

It's against Chinese law to fly the Tibetan flag in Tibet and so it's rarely seen. It has a yellow border and a yellow sun in the middle, with 12 rays of color (alternately red and blue) and at the bottom are two artistic "snow lions" and a Yin Yang sign -



# True story!

Most Tibetans are Buddhists and their most important priest and leader is called the Dalai Lama. Tibetans believe that he is a god-king and when he dies, his soul is reborn as a new baby. When the Dalai Lama dies, a search begins to find the "right" baby boy who will be chosen to be the next Dalai Lama for the rest of his life! Baby boys born up to 18 months after the death of the Dalai Lama are given special tests to see which one is chosen. One of the tests involves placing a number of objects in front of the baby - if the baby correctly picks the objects that had belonged to the previous Dalai Lama, he passes the test and could be the next leader of Tibet!



The present Dalai Lama (the 14<sup>th</sup>) was born in 1935 as Tenzin Gyatso, in a farmhouse hundreds of miles from Tibet's capital. After being chosen before the age of 2, he began to be prepared to be the country's new leader. At the age of 5 he was taken from his family to live in the Potala (the most important monastery in Tibet) and to study all about Buddhism. He was taught by the monks there and was not allowed to leave, except to visit another monastery! He could only ever see "regular" people and children in the streets outside by looking through binoculars - imagine growing up away from your family and never playing with other children!



But THIS Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) has not spent his whole life in a monastery - after he had been there for 19 years, the Chinese invaded and he fled to India, where he still lives in Dharamsala with the exiled Tibetan government. He travels around the world visiting other countries to ask for help to free his country from Communist Chinese rule. The Chinese have greatly changed Tibetan life, but in some ways there have been improvements. Before, the Tibetan priests were totally in charge and most ordinary people were treated like slaves - they even had to stick out their tongues when they met an important person, to show that they didn't have demons in them!! The Chinese have built roads across the country; many children can now attend school; and planes now fly over the mountains bringing visitors from "outside".



In fact many tourists now visit Tibet and although much of the country is dry desert with only a few scrubby bushes and strong, bitterly cold winds, there are many fascinating places - even a region called simply, "U"!!



Tourists come to climb the magnificent mountains and visit the hundreds of beautiful Buddhist temples and monasteries. The capital, Lhasa, is an ancient, sprawling city over 1,300 years old with the famous Potala monastery overlooking it all, and this fascinating city covers more than 11,500 sq miles!!

Because of the extremely cold winters and thin air, there are many strange things to experience in Tibet. Few vegetables are grown, and the main grain is barley. There are some hardy sheep and the famous hairy cows called "yaks", which produce milk with a lot of fat, which helps keep the Tibetan people healthy in the bitter cold. In fact "sampa", the food that is eaten at every meal, is made by mixing barley flour and salted yak butter tea in a bowl. Small lumps of mixture are squeezed and eaten with the fingers! Yak yogurt is also eaten daily, and other common dishes include radish stew, potato buns and dried yak meat, which is freeze-dried by hanging strips of raw meat in the chilly winter air!



## Tibetan Puzzle

Look through this month's issue to find the answers to the clues; write down the first letter of each to form the name of something commonly found in Tibet:

- \_\_\_\_\_ possibly the next Dalai Lama
- \_\_\_\_\_ a region of Tibet
- \_\_\_\_\_ where the Tibetan government is now
- \_\_\_\_\_ traditional Tibetan leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ tallest mountain range
- \_\_\_\_\_ neighboring country to the South
- \_\_\_\_\_ food eaten daily in Tibet
- \_\_\_\_\_ real name of the present Dalai Lama

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_