

CHINA AND TIBET

Tibet has become the focus of world attention after heavy protests against Chinese rule. It is isolated not only geographically, but also diplomatically. By Chinese rulers, Tibet had long been regarded as a part of China and in 1950 it finally became part of the Chinese territory. The two sides have different opinions about the legal status of Tibet. China says Tibet has
5 officially been part of the Chinese nation since the mid-13th century, so should remain under Chinese rule. Many Tibetans say that the Himalayan region was an independent¹ kingdom for many centuries, and the Chinese rule over Tibet has not been constant. For example, after a military conflict between China and Tibet, Tibet had declared itself an independent republic in 1912. Although its status was not accepted by many countries, Tibet functioned as an
10 independent nation until 1951. China sent troops to Tibet in 1950. Since then Tibetans have had problems with Beijing's rule. Although China has invested in the economy, human rights groups point to widespread mistreatment of the Tibetan population and that their religious life and political freedom is limited.

Buddhist monks² recently marched from monasteries³ in and around Lhasa (capital of Tibet)
15 to show their protest against Chinese rule. As the protest escalated more members of the general Tibetan population became involved in the monks' protests. Many Tibetans are angry at the increasing numbers of Chinese migrants arriving in the region and accuse them of taking the best jobs. Tibetans feel they have been left behind by the economic boom. China has reacted to these protests with a show of force. There is now a heavy military presence in
20 Lhasa and in other areas where unrest was reported.

Every monastery in Tibet is visited at least once every week by a Communist Party official, who checks that everybody follows the government regulations. The government is also very careful whom it allows to become a monk. The private life and background of all novices⁴ is checked in detail. This procedure takes years to complete. Even their families are checked for
25 any subversive background. The Chinese government also restricts the number of monks and nuns. In fact, monasteries can no longer practise many of their rituals correctly because of a shortage of monks.

¹ independent: having their own government

² monk: member of a religious group who do not marry or have personal possessions.

³ monastery: monks live far away from other people in monasteries.

⁴ novice: a person who has joined a religious group and is preparing to become a monk

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Comprehension Test

1. Find a synonym for each of the following words or expressions

- 1. focus (l. 1)→ _____
- 2. regarded (l. 3)→ _____
- 3. widespread (l. 12)→ _____
- 4. to show (l. 15) → _____
- 5. increasing (l. 17)→ _____

2. Answer the following questions in full sentences. Do not copy from the text. Use your own words as far as possible.

2.1. Shortly explain why the diplomatic/political relationship between Tibet and China is a problematic one.

2.2. What are the reasons for the protests in the streets of Lhasa?

2.3. In what way does China influence the Tibetan monks' life?

3. Comment – Write a comment of about 80 words on the following topic:

Should there be a boycott of the Olympic Games in China? Discuss.
