



Wednesday, March 10, 2004

OUAA to visit mystical Tibet

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

In keeping with the university's commitment to providing diverse and enriching cultural experiences and increasing its global perspective, the **Oakland University Alumni Association** (OUAA) has teamed with Associate Professor of Sociology Richard Stamps to offer a trip to China's Tibetan highlands to explore its unique culture from Aug. 11-28.

"People have a fascination with Tibet, there's something mystical about it," said Stamps, who has made several trips to China over the last 40 years. "There is some stunning natural beauty to see – mountains, lakes and glaciers. It's fascinating to see people living at the foot of a glacier. There are pastoral nomads living a lifestyle that parallels the experience of the Old Testament. Their people created Tibetan Buddhism, which has influenced people all over the world. There are some exceptional temples, monasteries and great architecture to see. The people have prevailed and created a unique cultural response to a harsh environmental setting."

The first two days of the trip will be spent in Beijing, where travelers can see Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven, Forbidden City or go on other optional excursions. Thereafter, the group will visit the Tse Tang, Gyantse and Xigaze regions to experience Tibetan culture, visit ancient monasteries and temples, see mud-walled farmhouses, and explore valleys and rocky mountains.

The climax of the Tibetan adventure is the tour of the Lhasa region. Travelers can tour the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery and shop in a Tibetan marketplace. Travelers will have time on the second day in Lhasa to contemplate the wonders of this spiritual oasis.

The trip concludes with an exciting tour of Hong Kong, where travelers can shop and sightsee in one of the world's most beautiful cities.

"I'll serve as a scholar escort for the group," said Stamps, who speaks Mandarin, the one language that unifies Tibet. "As an academic, I'm always trying to learn more about this part of the world and bring back books, photos and other items to use in my classes and my research. But I'll also enjoy sharing this experience with alumni and other friends of the university. It's a great example of continuing education and fits my concept of lifelong learning."

This trip is offered at the special OUAA price of \$3,695 per person, which includes round-trip airfare on Northwest Airlines; all transfers and transportations via air and coach; four- and three-star double-occupancy hotel accommodations; a daily Chinese breakfast, lunch and dinner; daily guided sightseeing tours with Stamps and native local tour guides; taxes and tips; and processing of the group visa to China and the Tibet Entry Permit.

In response to the many inquiries about the trip, the OUAA has planned an information meeting for Tuesday, March 16, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the home of Richard Stamps, 2900 Heidelberg Drive, in the faculty subdivision located across from the Adams Road campus entrance. In addition to answering questions and providing a trip preview, reservation information also will be given. To attend, RSVP by Monday, March 15, to OUAA Director Adrienne Bass at (248) 370-3700 or bass@oakland.edu. Those who are unable to attend may obtain an information packet by contacting Bass.

SUMMARY

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