Qinghai Information

Overview

Qinghai is located in northwestern China. The capital and largest city, Xining, lies roughly 50 miles (80 km) from the western border and approximately 30 miles (48 km) north of the Yellow River (Huang He). It is the nation’s 4th largest province with almost 279,000 square miles (more accurately 721,000 sq km). However, the total population places 30th in the country with only 5,390,000 people. The province earns its name from the salt lake Qinghai, located in the province’s northeast less than 100 miles (161 km) west of Xining. Qinghai Lake is the largest lake in China, the word literally meaning “blue sea”.

Qinghai Geography

Qinghai province is located on the northeastern part of the Tibetan Plateau of western China. The Altun Mountains run along the northwestern horizontal border with Xinjiang while the Hoh Xil Mountains run horizontally over the vertical portion of that border. The Qilian Mountains run along the northeastern border with Gansu. The Kunlun Mountains follow the horizontal border between Tibet (Xizang) and Xinjiang. The Kunlun Mountains gently slope southward as the move to central Qinghai where they are extended eastward by the Bayan Har Mountains. The Dangla Mountains start in Tibet south of the Kunlun Mountains to which they run parallel. The Ningjing Mountains start in the south of Qinghai and move southward into Tibet then Yunnan.

The famous Yellow River commences in this Qinghai China. A small river flows from the west into Gyaring Lake where a small outlet carries water eastward to Ngoring Lake. The Yellow River then starts on the east side of Ngoring Lake. The Yangtze River comes from the Jinsha and Yalong Rivers, which meet on the southern border of Qinghai province at Panzhihua, forming the Yangtze. The Mekong (Lancang) River also commences in the southern part of the province.

Qinghai Demographics

Qinghai province is large enough for many of the indigenous ethnicities to have maintained prominence in their historical areas. Han comprise only 54% of the population and Tibetan follow with 23%. Hui constitute 16%. Tu make up 4% and Salar and Mongol compose 1.8% each. Kazak are also present.

Qinghai History

Qinghai province is for the most part tied to Tibetan history. In the 14th century Qinghai became part of Gansu when it was separated form Tibet and put under the control of Mongols from the north. The Qing Dynasty (1644 AD – 1911 AD) in 1724 gained control over the territory and it was governed from its present capital Xining. In 1928, the region became an official Chinese province and the Communist government delineated autonomous districts for the Tibetan, Chinese Muslim, Kazakh, and Mongol Minorities. Han migration increased significantly after 1950 as they sought work in the mineral extraction industries with the next four years seeing 1,116,200 immigrants total.

Qinghai covers part of the traditional Kham (Kang) and Amdo (Anduo) Tibetan provinces. Kham, which extended into Sichuan, Yunan, Qinghai, and Tibet, was a special administrative district of the Republic of China.
until 1939 and was known as Xikang. It nominally gained provincial status in 1939. Amdo was mostly within the modern bounds of Qinghai province and is where the current Dalai Lama originated.

**Qinghai China Industry**

Qinghai province plays a small role in China’s economy contributing just over 0.3% to the nation’s GDP. However, in terms of its past, the provincial economy has been developing at a rapid rate. The province has started to take advantage of its potential for hydropower and has boosted its economy with oil, natural gas, coal, and iron production. The vast farmlands and grasslands help the province’s agricultural and animal products.

The pasturelands full of the famous Qinghai horses, yaks, and white sheep, with herdsman’s tents dotting the landscape in addition to the many natural wonders have become an important draw for tourists. As tourism plays an increasingly important role the Qinghai Tourism Administration has taken this into account helping the province advertise and build the necessary infrastructure.