

Lhasa (9/1/2007-9/12/2007)

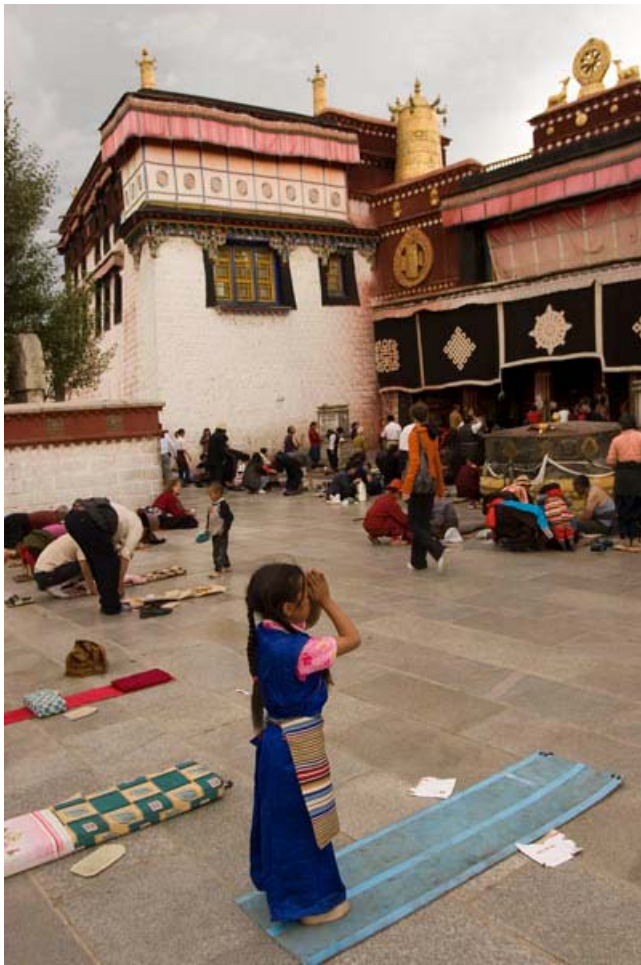
I'm always a little worried when I return to places I really enjoyed, not wanting to spoil those memories. So it was with a bit of trepidation that I road train on the newly completed rail line from Golmud to Lhasa, and the trepidation was not solely because I was traveling without a permit which all foreign visitors to Tibet are suppose to have but also I was a bit nervous that the city wouldn't live up to my memories. Both of my concerns were unfounded as I was never check for a permit, and despite a lot more tourists, both Chinese and Western, as well as an increasing urban sprawl Lhasa remains an amazing a vibrantly religious city. The Barkhor area around the Jokhang temple, the holiest temple in Tibet, is still bustling with pilgrims, who still thankfully vastly out number the many tourists. It's a fascinating place to wander, as a sea of pilgrims, old ladies prayer wheels in hand, monks, families, and nomads from the grasslands, all flow in a clockwise circumambulation of the Jokang. Some even prostrating around the whole circuit, or in an even greater show of devotion prostrating there way all the way to Lhasa measuring out the distance to the holy city one body length at a time. In the mornings and evenings the sounds of wooden pads clapping followed by the scraping of the pads across stone pavement from prostrating pilgrims emanates from in front of the large wooden doors at the main entrance to the Jokhang. Of course the city is dominated by the iconic Potala Palace, home to the Dali Lamas from the 17th century until the present 14th incarnation was forced to flee to India in 1959.



**Snow capped peak
over 20,000 ft high
along the rail route
into Tibet.**



Pilgrims circling the Jokhang, Lhasa.



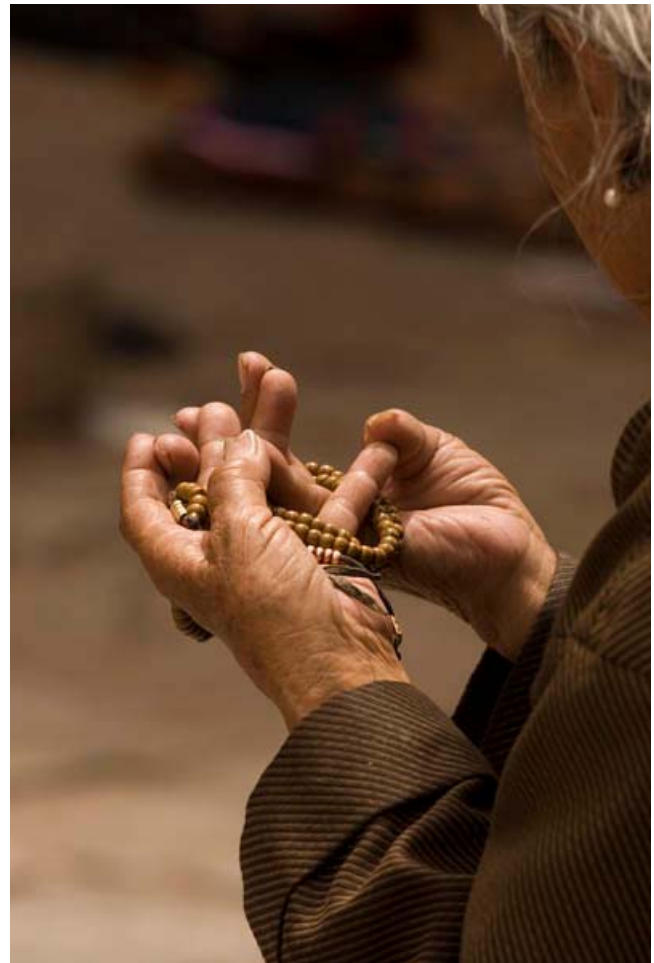
Young girl prostrating in front of the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



**Pilgrims turning
prayer wheel near
the Jokhang temple,
Lhasa.**



**Pilgrim with a prayer wheel near the
Jokhang temple, Lhasa.**



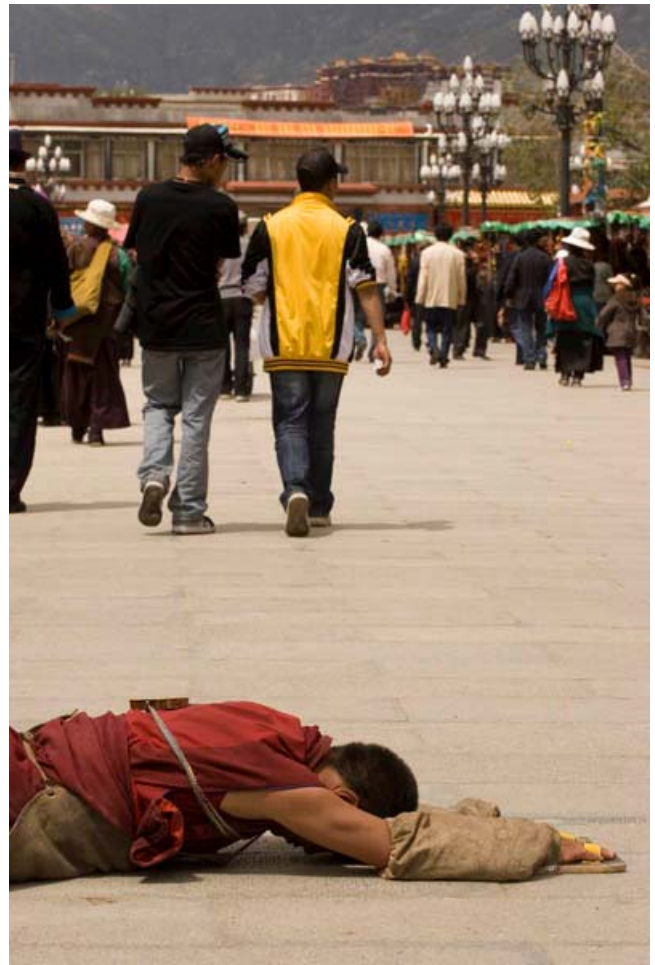
**Pilgrim with a prayer beads near the
Jokhang temple, Lhasa.**



Pilgrim turning prayer wheels while circumambulating the Potala Palace, Lhasa.



Pilgrim with a prayer wheel beads the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



Prostrating monk circumambulating the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



**Monk prostrating
around the Jokhang
temple, Lhasa.**



**Paintings and prayer flags on Chagpo
Ri, Lhasa.**



Painting on Chagpo Ri, Lhasa.



Prostrating monk near the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



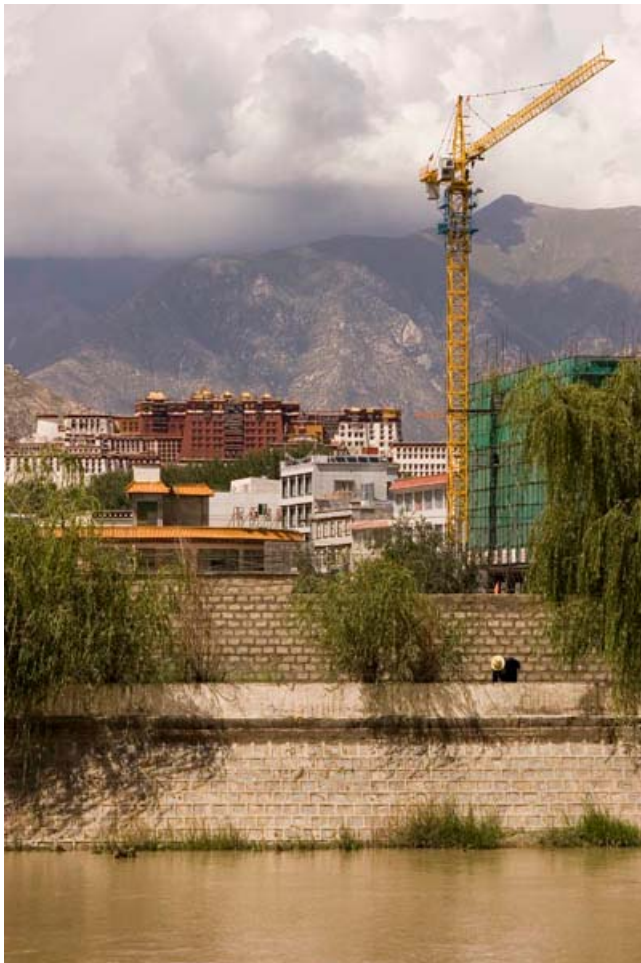
Manti stones (prayer engraved tablets) and yak horns near Chagpo Ri, Lhasa.



Man holds prayer beads near the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



Pilgrim prostrating in front of the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.



Crane adding to the urban sprawl around the Potala Palace, Lhasa.



Pilgrim prostrating in front of the Potala palace, Lhasa.



**Tibetan woman near the
Jokhang temple, Lhasa.**



**Pilgrim with a prayer wheel
near the Jokhang temple,
Lhasa.**



Pilgrim with a prayer wheel near the Jokhang temple, Lhasa.