

The name "Shangri-La" became popular after World War II and was used to christen many songs, hotels and restaurants because it represents a "heaven away from the turmoil of the mundane world." Actually, "Shangri-La" is a

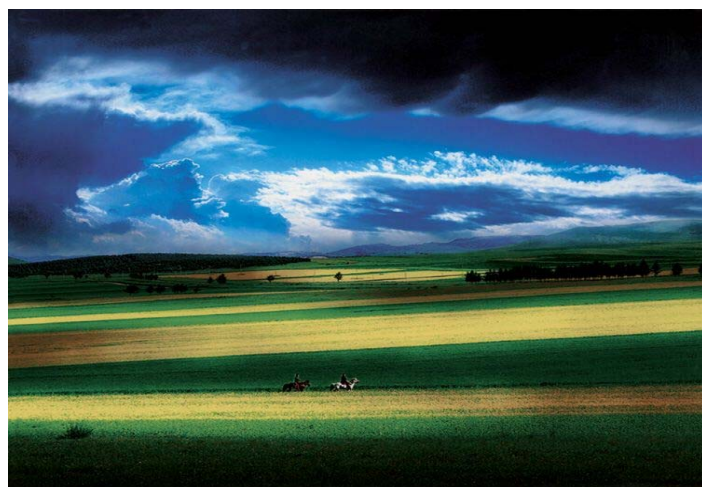


Tibetan word meaning "land of sacredness and peace."

The word first appeared in James Hilton's novel *The Lost Horizon*, which tells the story of three American pilots who crashed while flying the Sino-Indo air route during World War II. They landed on a land of eternity, tranquility and peace characterized by "snowy mountains, grassland, Tibetan people,

red soil plateaus, three rivers flowing along, colorless snow-tea and a lamasery." Rescued by the local Tibetan people, the three American pilots finally returned home. The publication of this novel quickly brought fame to an unknown and uncontaminated place -- Shangri-La -- and made it a household word. Since then, this fascinating spot has become a dreamland for many tourists and adventure lovers. ...

Dozens of years witnessed the failure of efforts to seek out and locate for certain this dreamland. However, with the passing of time, people's believe that it must be somewhere in the southeast tip of the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, the highest plateau in the world, became firmer with more and more evidences as a result of persistent search and research. At last, in year 1987, the government of Yunnan Province



declared the discovery of Shangri-La. It is in "Diqing", now a prefecture in Yunnan Province, China. It is a marvelous place, where, as the novel described, travelers could

simultaneously see a splendid canyon, towering snow-capped mountains, broad prairies, stunning scenery and a melting pot of various cultures and ethnic groups at work. Yaks and sheep are easily seen grazing and playing on the grassland, and the melodious pastoral songs by herdsmen in colorful costumes can be heard here and there, creating an atmosphere of irresistible charm and enjoyment that delights all the senses.

Shangri-La is also a paradise for mountaineers. Over one hundred snow-capped peaks present endless challenges for mountain climbers. Among these peaks, the Thirteen Princes are all over 6,000 meters high and are



among the most mysterious and precipitous. The Kagebo Peak, known as "Chief of the Eight Sacred Peaks," soars as high as 6,740 meters and towers over the surrounding mountains. In the 20th century, mankind has set foot on the summit of Everest many times but has failed to conquer the Kagebo Peak. Shangri-La features a simple but peaceful life; friendly

and honest interpersonal relationships; pious and persistent religious beliefs; and local people who are kind, uninhibited and unsophisticated. It provides visitors with a chance to enjoy unforgettable moments without any stress and confusion while enveloped in a natural environment, which is remarkably charming and incredibly welcoming, thanks to the hospitality of the local ethnic groups. A highway links Zhongdian to Kunming over a distance of 700 kilometers, and in 1999 an airline was commissioned between the two places. Now, Shangri-La becomes more and more accessible to visitors at home and abroad.