

UNMELTED SNOW CAP ON THE CROWN OF MOUNT KAILASH AND MANSAROVAR LAKE AS DIGNIFIED LAKE: BOTH ARE SACRED PLACES OF SHIVA AND PARVATI

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ABSTRACT

Mount Kailash is a deeply sacred mountain in Tibet revered as a holy pilgrimage site by four major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bön.

Religious Significance

- **Hinduism:** It is believed to be the ultimate abode of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati, where Shiva sits in deep meditation. It is also viewed as the cosmic axis (Axis Mundi) and the center of the spiritual universe.
- **Buddhism:** Known as Kang Rinpoche (Precious Snow Jewel), Buddhists view it as the home of the deity Demchok, representing supreme harmony and ultimate bliss.
- **Jainism:** It is called Mount Ashtapada, the sacred site where Rishabhadeva, the first Jain Tirthankara (creator of their faith), attained spiritual liberation (moksha).
- **Bön:** The indigenous pre-Buddhist spiritual tradition regards Kailash as a seat of immense spiritual power and the place where founder Tonpa Shenrab descended from heaven. Mount Kailash is a sacred 6,638-meter peak in Tibet shrouded in spiritual mysteries, climbing prohibitions, and geographical legends.

KEYWORDS: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Bön, Mount Kailash, Mansarovar lake, Shiva, Parvati, Tibet, Snow cap.

INTRODUCTION

Why It Cannot Be Climbed

- **Spiritual Prohibition:** Revering it as the center of the universe, four major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon—view climbing it as a desecration of divine energy.
- **Official Ban:** The Chinese government forbids climbing the mountain out of respect for these religious beliefs and local sensitivities.

- **Consensus on Failures:** Most users on Reddit agree that past attempts and local accounts associate the peak with extreme weather, disorientation, and an unclimbable terrain.

Popular Mysteries and Beliefs

Pyramid Shape: The symmetrical, four-sided peak resembles a giant, man-made pyramid or the mythical axis mundi (Mount Meru).



Figure 1: Mount Kailash.

Time Dilation

Claims: Unverified internet legends suggest that hair and nail growth accelerate or time passes differently near the mountain.

River Origins: Four major Asian rivers—the *Indus*, *Sutlej*, *Brahmaputra*, and *Karnali/Ghaghara*—originate within its immediate region.

Sacred Lakes: It stands next to **Lake Mansarovar** (symbolizing light/purity) and **Lake Rakshastal** (symbolizing darkness/energy).

1. **Mount Kailash has many names in different language in different religions:** Nestled in the Himalayas, Mount Kailash is a mountain of many names, echoing its spiritual significance across cultures. In Sanskrit, it's "Kailāsa," possibly derived from "kelāsa," meaning "crystal." In Tibetan, it's "Gang Rinpoche," translating to "Precious Jewel of Snows." This sacred peak holds diverse meanings: Tibetan Buddhists cherish it as "Kangri Rinpoche," Bon texts offer names like "Water's Flower" and "Mountain of Sea Water," and Hindus revere it as Lord Shiva's home. Locally, it's Tisé Mountain, the source of legendary rivers. These myriad names and

beliefs make Mount Kailash a captivating enigma.

2. **Mount Kailash holds a profound and unique significance within Tibetan Buddhism:** It is seen as a representation of the mythical Mount Meru, which is considered to be the cosmic mountain located at the exact center of the universe. This majestic mountain isn't just a geographical wonder but is believed to be the very heart of the universe, often referred to as the "navel of the universe." In the realm of Tibetan Buddhism, it stands as the holiest of holies, a sanctuary where the world was born.
3. **Mount Kailash is the home of Lord Shiva in Hinduism:** Mount Kailash graces the spiritual tapestry of Hinduism as the revered dwelling place of Lord Shiva. According to ancient Hindu beliefs, the mighty lord sits in eternal meditation here, his sacred presence wrapping the holy peaks with his yogic energy. He resides here with his divine family – his consort, Devi Parvati, and their two cherished sons, Ganesha and Kartikeya. The blessed bull, Nandi, Lord Shiva's ardent worshipper, also finds its place here. This mountain, veiled in mysticism, beckons devotees to embark on a spiritual journey to feel and pay homage to Lord Shiva's divine aura, gracing the very essence of the Himalayas.



Figure 2: Tibet Map.

4. **Mount Kailash is believed to be the link between Earth and Heaven:** Amidst the towering Himalayas, Mount Kailash stands tall, its four faces pointing in the four cardinal directions. In the beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, this mountain is seen as a celestial link between Earth and Heaven, a gateway to the divine. According to legends, the Pandavas and Draupadi embarked on a spiritual journey here, seeking moksha, the ultimate liberation. As they trekked these sacred slopes, one of them is said to have achieved liberation before reaching the summit. Mount Kailash, a tangible bridge between the earthly and the heavenly, continues to call out to seekers, inviting them to explore the mystical connection between our world and the divine realm above. Mount Kailash Pilgrims Prostrate. Local pilgrims prostrate along the kora around Mount Kailash, which is the most sincere way to worship Buddha.
5. **There is the face of Lord Shiva on the Mt. Kailash:** Deep in Tibet's remote southwest, Mount Kailash in the Himalayas holds a remarkable secret – a face resembling Lord Shiva, as noted by NASA scientists. The sacred pilgrimage, Mount Kailash parikrama, begins at Yamdwar, revealing Kailash's South face, then progresses to Dirapuk for the North face. With every step, the mountain reveals new facets, transitioning from the South to the West, then finally to the North face. As trekkers advance, the mountain transforms, presenting its West face, where a massive, human-like face emerges. Lord Shiva devotees, known as *Bhole Bhakts*, regard it as Lord Shiva's face.
6. **Mount Kailash is a solitary peak located in the remote area of western Tibet:** Situated in the remote wilderness of western Tibet, Mount Kailash stands tall, reaching 6,638 meters above sea level. It's a lone giant in the area, with no other mountains nearby to rival its magnificence. This makes it an exceptional and breathtaking sight, as its beauty remains untouched and unobstructed by any neighboring peaks. This unique geographical isolation only deepens its spiritual allure, drawing pilgrims from diverse faiths to pay homage to its sacred heights. As the world's attention turns toward this solitary sentinel, it remains a testament to nature's artistry and a beacon of reverence in a rugged and uninhabited landscape.
7. **The Shape of Mount Kailash peak is like a man-made Pyramid:** Mount Kailash, a mountain shrouded in mystery, has revealed an astonishing secret. Scientists believe that its peak is not a natural formation but a man-made vacuum pyramid. It's surrounded by more than 100 smaller pyramids. These pyramids are estimated to be between 100 and 1,800 meters tall, surpassing even the famous Egyptian pyramids, which are 146 meters high. This discovery challenges the idea that Mount Kailash is a purely natural creation. Russian scientists argue that its perfect symmetry and resemblance to a cathedral, along with its unnaturally steep sides, suggest intentional design, similar to a pyramid. If confirmed, this revelation could change our understanding of ancient engineering and the mysteries surrounding this sacred mountain.
8. **The snow cap of Mount Kailash never melts:** One of the most enigmatic features of Mount Kailash is its perpetually unmelted snow cap. Despite its location in a region where temperatures can be extreme, the crown of this sacred peak remains eternally covered in pristine white snow. This phenomenon has captured the imagination of pilgrims and seekers for centuries, further adding to the mountain's aura of mysticism and divine significance. Whether attributed to natural factors or revered as a manifestation of the sacred, the perpetual snow cap of Mount Kailash stands as a symbol of enduring purity and spiritual resonance in the heart of the Himalayas.
9. **The peak of Mount Kailash is unclimbable:** At 6,638 meters above sea level, Mount Kailash is a mountain of unique intrigue. Surprisingly, it's not the tallest in Tibet Plateau, yet it remains unconquered by climbers. Climbing Mount Kailash is deemed taboo, as it is believed to anger the gods. Its Sanskrit name, meaning 'heaven of Shiva,' underscores its sacred stature across four religions. Despite attracting adventurers for centuries, this mystic mountain has never yielded to human conquest, preserving its enigmatic aura.



Figure 3: Unmelted snow cap on the crown of Mount Kailash.

10. **The Mount Kailash Kora purifies the soul and leads to spiritual liberation:** Kora, a Tibetan term for "circumambulation," transcends pilgrimage; it is a spiritual journey encompassing meditation and enlightenment. At Mount Kailash, a three-day, 53-kilometer clockwise Kora purifies souls, absolves sins, and guides seekers toward salvation or Nirvana. This sacred practice involves clockwise circumnavigation of Mount Kailash, epitomizing deep reverence. Pilgrims chant mantras, rotate prayer wheels, and sometimes prostrate before the sacred sites, embracing a life deeply connected to divinity.
11. **There is very little wildlife in Mount Kailash Region:** The Mount Kailash region, shrouded in spiritual mystique, is notably devoid of abundant wildlife. It is said that the profound energy of this sacred place exerts a unique influence on the behavior of animals. This energy, deeply intertwined with the beliefs of pilgrims and seekers, seems to create an environment where the usual presence of wildlife remains scarce.
12. **Mount Kailash is the origin of the four great rivers in Asia:** Mount Kailash holds a unique distinction as the wellspring of four major Asian rivers: the Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, and Karnali. These rivers, integral to the region's life and culture, trace their origins close to this sacred mountain and the nearby Lake Manasarovar and Lake Rakshastal. The Yarlung Tsangpo, also known as the Brahmaputra, flows through Tibet, India, and Bangladesh, carving the formidable Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon. The Sutlej originates near Mount Kailash, traversing Tibet and India. The Indus, known as Singgye Khabub in Tibetan, starts its journey in Tibet before meandering through Pakistan. The Karnali, named Macha Khabub in Tibetan, flows from Tibet into Nepal and eventually joins the Ganges. This confluence of sacred rivers weaves a rich tapestry of cultural and ecological significance in the Mount Kailash region.
13. **Mount Kailash is associated with the mythical city of Shambhala:** Mount Kailash carries a mystical association with the legendary city of Shambhala. Shambhala, often spelled "Shambala," is a mythical realm in Buddhism, said to exist between the Himalayas and the Gobi Desert. This kingdom represents the pinnacle of Tibetan Buddhist ideals, where all inhabitants have attained enlightenment, earning it the moniker "The Pure Land." Mount Kailash, referred as the "Axis Mundi," bridges the physical and spiritual realms in Tibetan culture. Scientific studies from Russia and America endorse it as the world's central point, aligned with monuments like Stonehenge (6,666 km), the North Pole (6,666 km), and the South Pole (13,332 km). This sacred mountain is also recognized as the cosmic axis and world tree in the Vedas and the Ramayana. It symbolizes humanity's pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, unifying diverse cultures in

awe of its divine significance as the pivotal point where heaven and earth converge.

14. **Swastika and Om Parvat symbols can be observed on Mount Kailash during sunset:** As the sun sets behind Mount Kailash, a captivating spectacle unfolds. The mountain's shadow, cast against the backdrop of the twilight sky, forms distinct symbols of spiritual significance. One is the Swastika, a revered Hindu symbol symbolizing auspiciousness and well-being. The other is the Om Parvat, a mystery in itself, where the falling snow on the peak miraculously takes the form of the sacred Om symbol. These phenomena add to the mystique surrounding Mount Kailash, drawing seekers and believers to witness the divine symbolism that graces this sacred mountain during the enchanting moments of sunset. Mount Kailash Mani Stones Even if you can't see the mysterious symbols, you can still find Mani stones at the foot of Mount Kailash.

Mount Kailash remains unclimbed primarily because it is strictly forbidden by religious beliefs and government regulations out of deep respect for its sacred status. Most users on Quora agree that its unclimbed status is a mix of spiritual reverence, legal bans, and dangerous physical conditions.

Spiritual and Cultural Significance

- **Abode of Gods:** Hindus view Mount Kailash as the eternal home of Lord Shiva.
- **Cosmic Center:** Buddhists know it as Mount Meru, the center of the universe.
- **Sacred Grounds:** Jains and followers of the Bon religion also revere the peak as a place of supreme spiritual power.
- **Taboo:** Stepping on the summit is considered a severe sacrilege [Sacrilege means treating something holy, sacred, or deeply respected with great disrespect or violation] that brings misfortune. A strong social, cultural, or religious ban against a specific behavior or topic.
- **Lake Manasarovar and Mount Kailash** are restricted because they are located in the remote Tibet Autonomous Region of China, subject to strict geopolitical borders, sensitive security zones, and ecological preservation rules.

Key Reasons for Restrictions

Geopolitical & Border Tensions: The region sits near sensitive borders (such as Aksai Chin), and political friction between India and China has historically led to prolonged suspensions or tight controls on cross-border travel and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Strict Permit and Visa Controls: Entering Tibet requires specialized Chinese visas, travel permits, and government-approved itineraries. Travelers attempting to go without fully approved documentation are frequently stranded.

Environmental and Religious Bans: Chinese authorities prohibit direct holy dips/bathing in Lake Manasarovar due to pollution concerns, restricting visitors to collecting water in buckets or bathing at a distance. Furthermore, climbing Mount Kailash is permanently banned out of respect for its sacred status in multiple religions.

Extreme Geography: The high altitude (over 15,000 feet) poses severe health risks like altitude sickness, prompting strict age limits and fitness requirements for safety.

Lake Manasarovar is a high-altitude freshwater lake in Tibet, China, revered as a sacred pilgrimage site by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Bon followers.



Figure 4: Kailash & Mansarovar.

Quick Facts

Location: Burang County, Ngari Prefecture, Tibet, China.

Altitude: About 4,600 meters (15,100 feet) above sea level.

Significance: Believed to be created from the mind or heart of Lord Brahma in Hindu tradition, and associated with purity and sacred wisdom.

Nearby Landmark: Situated close to the sacred Mount Kailash.

Traveling to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar involves strict regulatory, age, health, and environmental restrictions enforced by Chinese and Tibetan authorities.

Travel Documents and Permits

Mandatory Visas: You must possess a valid passport, a Chinese visa, and a Tibet Travel Permit issued for the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

Bifurcated Rules: Indian citizens have strict processing guidelines depending on residency, requiring pre-booked authorized private groups or government-approved channels.

Age Restrictions

Standard Limits: Most sanctioned routes and operators set the general age limits between 18 and 70 years.

Special Approvals: Travelers outside this range (such as children under 12 or seniors up to 75) face heavy constraints, require medical clearances, mandatory family/blood relative escorts, or special security deposits.

Health and Fitness

Medical Screening: Because the altitude exceeds 4,500 meters, individuals with severe heart conditions, implanted pacemakers/stents, or respiratory issues like

acute asthma are restricted or barred from trekking due to risks like Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS).

Environmental and Item Bans

Prohibited Items: Carrying lake water across the international border from Lake Manasarovar is strictly forbidden.

Natural Objects: Collecting and taking stones, pebbles, or soil from the Mount Kailash region is completely banned for environmental preservation and territorial control.

CONCLUSION

The mysteries and secrets surrounding the sacred Mount Kailash highlight its spiritual significance, diverse pilgrimage traditions, and unique geographical location. It is not only a lifelong destination for pilgrims but also an attractive addition to any Tibet tour. If you seek to unravel its enigma firsthand, join a journey with us, as we unveil the authentic essence of this hallowed mountain and introduce you to the real Tibet.

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