



Spinning the Wheel: Policy Implications of the Dalai Lama's Reincarnation

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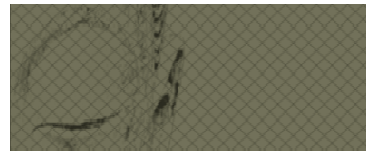
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Above-image source: Washington Post.

This policy monograph is dedicated to Dr. Andrew Nathan, who first encouraged the author's interest in this topic when she was a graduate student at Columbia University. The author would like to express her deepest gratitude to Kelley Currie, Project 2049 Institute Senior Fellow, for her invaluable insights and recommendations. She would also like to thank Dr. Robert Barnett, Director of the Modern Tibet Studies Program at Columbia University, for his continued guidance and friendship. Finally, she expresses her appreciation to Russell Hsiao, Project 2049 Institute Senior Research Fellow, for his support and patience during the preparation of this paper.

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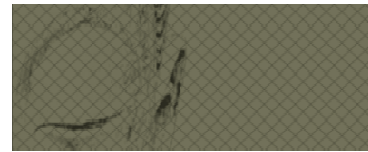
Introduction

On 24 September 2011, after several days sequestered with key Tibetan Buddhist leaders in the foothills of the Himalayas, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet issued a declaration regarding the future of his lineage. This remarkable document stated that the 76-year-old Dalai Lama would make the decision about whether and how to reincarnate through a consultative process to take place after he turns 90. It also included a strongly-worded rebuke of official Chinese claims of authority over the process of his reincarnation. *Time* magazine's cover art for a story on the issue featured an empty monk's robe with the caption "Tibet's Next Reincarnation" – showing how deeply intertwined the future of Tibet and the future of the Dalai Lama are in the popular imagination.

This latest development in the long-running dispute between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the current Dalai Lama over his reincarnation illustrates the extent to which this issue remains both highly incendiary and poorly understood. Disputes over the reincarnation of important Tibetan lamas are all too common, and the selection of the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama in the mid-1990s continues to provoke rancor and recrimination on all sides. It is notable that the Dalai Lama's announcement regarding his reincarnation included an extensive and detailed historical and theological background section on the institution of the Dalai Lama, as well as a number of comments on the institution's historic political and strategic importance.

Beijing has repeatedly blamed Tibetan unrest on the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India since 1959. Zhang Qingli, the former Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Secretary in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), stated in *Tibet Daily* on 19 March 2008: "The Dalai Lama is a wolf wrapped in a monk's habit, a monster with a human face and animal's heart. We are now engaged in a fierce blood-and-fire battle with the Dalai clique, a life-and-death battle between us and the enemy." Zhang recently added that he is "extremely angry with the Dalai clique for kidnapping peace" from Tibetans during the 2008 riots.¹ The Chinese government has also accused the Dalai Lama of being the "major obstacle" to the "normalization" of Tibetan Buddhism, and predictably responded to his proclamation by insisting that the Dalai Lama had no right to determine the path of his reincarnation outside of officially approved channels. This harsh rhetoric has exacerbated tensions in the region and deepened the mistrust between the Tibetan people and both the Chinese leadership and populace.

The Tibet issue has remained in the international spotlight for decades in part due to the charismatic appeal and widely acknowledged political leadership of the Dalai Lama. For decades, the Dalai Lama has repeatedly expressed a willingness to engage in dialogue with PRC officials, and has publicly renounced independence in favor of calling for the true autonomy that the Chinese constitution promises Tibetans.² The Dharamsala-based exile Tibetan political authority has also recently dropped the "government in exile" moniker, and now refers exclusively to itself as the "Central Tibetan Administration."



As a result of his seminal role and close association with the Tibetan cause, what happens after the Dalai Lama dies is a matter of concern to not only the Tibet people and Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, but also the CCP. Chinese leaders have already attempted to enshrine their preferred selection process for the designation of high-level reincarnate Tibetan Buddhist religious figures, including the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama lineages. Beijing has also moved to place greater pressure on India to withdraw its support for the Tibetan exile administration, which it has hosted in Dharamsala since 1960. By examining the selection process and analyzing how this aspect of Chinese policy in Tibet affects its relationship with the United States and India, one can gain a greater understanding of Beijing's potential strategy towards the future of Tibet and how this issue looms as a potential source of instability in the region.

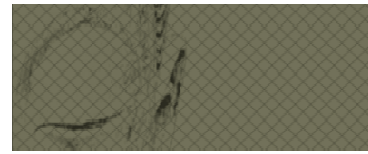
Historical Background and Analysis of the Selection Process

The PRC and its predecessors in China have long struggled to maintain stability along its western periphery, where concentrated communities of ethnic and religious minorities reside. During the past four years, Beijing has been forced to contend with violent clashes between ethnically Turkic Uyghurs and Han migrants in Xinjiang; widespread protests by Tibetans throughout ethnographic Tibet (i.e. the present-day Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces) that have at times flared into violence; and recently, unprecedented protests by ethnic Mongols across the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.

Efforts to influence the selection of important Tibetan lamas have been a key element of the exercise and consolidation of political authority in Tibetan areas since the establishment of the theocratic state in Tibet, for both distant imperial authorities as well as Tibetans themselves. The history of theocratic rule in Tibet is intimately intertwined with Chinese imperial politics, with influence waxing and waning as empires rose and fell. At the time Tibet was incorporated into the Mongol Empire (and subsequently the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty), imperial authorities cultivated lamas from the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism, which was pre-eminent in Tibet.

However, Tibet was rife with political and sectarian conflicts, into which both Mongol and Chinese imperial authorities often inserted themselves or were drawn by Tibetan parties. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Gelukpa school rose to challenge the Sakya and Kagyu schools for political and religious leadership. After unseating the Sakya through alliance with a powerful secular Tibetan prince, the Geluk achieved an alliance with the Mongols and came to dominate political authority in Tibet.³ In 1578, the Mongol khan gave a senior Gelukpa monk named Sonam Gyatso the title Dalai Lama.⁴ By this time, however, Mongol rulers had long ceased to govern China and there is substantial dispute among scholars regarding the exact nature of Tibetan relations with then-ruling Ming court, with most Western scholars contending that the Ming did not exercise sovereignty or actual control over Tibet.

As Manchu warriors conquered the crumbling Ming Empire (1368-1644) and consolidated their rule in China, the Gelukpa sect was likewise further consolidating power in Tibet. Scholars differ on the significance of early relations between the emerging Tibetan and Qing imperial powers (Qing Dynasty: 1644-1911), but during this period, Tibet was generally under direct lamaist rule



with some element of Mongol protection. In 1642, the Mongol khanate ceremoniously bestowed the conquered Tibetan lands upon the Fifth Dalai Lama, but reserved the title of king of Tibet for himself and his successors until the last such ruler died in the early eighteenth century, at which point the Qing emperor assumed the role of designating or at least recognizing Tibetan spiritual leaders.⁵ In 1652, the Qing Emperor Shunzhi invited the Fifth Dalai Lama to Beijing for an official visit. Some scholars believe that a priest-patron relationship subsequently emerged, whereby the Qing Emperor sought the spiritual patronage of the Fifth Dalai Lama much as its Yuan predecessors had done.⁶ Following the Dalai Lama's visit, reports from the Imperial Colonial Office note that it liaised with the Dalai Lama in his capacity as "spiritual leader and temporal adjudicator of selected affairs among the populations of eastern Mongolia and Qinghai."⁷ The Qing court began to monitor and even attempted to direct the Dalai Lamas, with limited success. By 1661, the Imperial Colonial Office considered itself to be supervising the selection process of key lamas.⁸ Nonetheless, the Qing court felt threatened by the Dzungar tribes of the northwest, whose influence had permeated Tibet by the early eighteenth century, and launched multiple attacks on Lhasa between 1718 and 1720, in the name of defeating the Dzungars. Some scholars argue that when Qing leaders subsequently established a military garrison as well as installed imperial commissioners (ambans) in Lhasa, they dissolved the monarchy and effectively stripped Tibet of its sovereignty.⁹

However, other scholars maintain that "under the influence of the Qing dynasty, the Dalai Lama's nominal leadership of Tibet continued in name with various restrictions, including the creation of a short-lived Tibetan monarchical institution."¹⁰ Although acknowledging the presence of ambans in Lhasa, Gray Tuttle's extensive study of this period asserts that "Gelukpa prelates largely served as the actual rulers of Tibet, in the capacity of regents for a series of young Dalai Lamas who died before, or shortly after, they reached maturity."¹¹ Qing historian Evelyn S. Rawski and others also assert that the imperial presence in Lhasa was initially more indirect. Only after the murder of two ambans, stemming from their involvement in a local political dispute, did the Qing emperor take greater notice of the situation in Lhasa in 1750. The Qing emperor responded with a dual strategy of enlarging the garrison in Lhasa while again recognizing the secular and religious authority of the Dalai Lama. Qianlong also established a council of ministers and instructed the ambans to monitor Tibetan affairs more closely.¹² Nonetheless, Tibet scholar Melvyn Goldstein argues that from the time the protectorate was created in 1727, actual Qing authority over Tibet remained limited despite a lack of Tibetan cohesive internal unity. The Qianlong Emperor himself remarked in 1792 that the quality of ambans sent to Lhasa was quite poor, and it was thus relatively easy for the Dalai Lama and his ministers to ignore them.¹³

The Manchu military intervention and subsequent attempt to gain greater influence may have represented the apex of Qing power in Tibet. Weary of Tibetan intrigues, in 1792, the Qianlong Emperor called for a complete restructuring of the Tibetan government in a document called "Twenty-Nine Regulations for Better Government in Tibet."¹⁴ It included a lottery system to assist in the selection of key incarnations, whereby Manchu officials would place the names of the candidate(s) – provided by ecclesiastical authorities, and divined through traditional methods – into a golden urn. An amban drew lots from the urn and chose the name of the successful candidate. The Qing reportedly developed this practice to avert manipulation of the selection process by politically prominent Tibetan families, as the discovery of an incarnate lama in such a family could certainly enhance its standing and political fortunes.¹⁵ Likewise, the regulations forbade relatives of high-ranking incarnate lamas from aspiring to public office.¹⁶ The emperor continued efforts to raise the status of the ambans in Tibet in order to assert

greater influence over administrative decisions and key appointments.¹⁷ However, internal unrest in China during the second half of the nineteenth century largely undermined the ability of his successors to influence Tibetan affairs.¹⁸

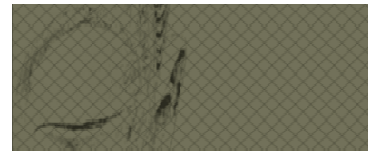
¹⁹From 1792 until the end of the Republican period in 1949, in practice the Tibetans infrequently used the golden urn to select important reincarnate lamas, especially during times when authorities in Beijing were unable to assert effective influence over Tibetan affairs. Even modern PRC historians admit that the use of the urn process was inconsistent to the point of being nearly discretionary. Chinese scholar Ya Hanzhang notes that Tibetan authorities sought and apparently received permission from Qing authorities to forgo the normal procedures when there was only a single undisputed candidate, as was the case with the Ninth (Lungtok Gyatso, recognized in 1807) and Thirteenth (Thupten Gyatso, recognized in 1877) Dalai Lamas.²⁰ The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, for his part, asserts that the urn method was used for the selection of only one of his predecessors, the Eleventh, and that in other cases it was either not used at all or only after-the-fact to placate Manchu authorities.²¹ In short, there is considerable debate about the degree to which Tibetan authorities utilized the golden urn process out of a sense of imperial obligation, as a convenient means of settling difficult internal disputes, or some combination of the two.



Source: www.flickr.com²²

At the turn of the twentieth century, British attempts to expand their influence beyond India and into Tibet led to an “activist, annexationist Chinese policy toward Tibet” whereby the Qing court again attempted to directly intervene in Tibetan affairs.²³ While the Younghusband Expedition initially resulted in negotiations between Tibetan and British authorities, the British Foreign Office quickly pulled them back and acknowledged Chinese preeminence in Tibet via the 1906 Anglo-Chinese Convention. After the British withdrawal, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama travelled to Beijing to negotiate directly with the Qing emperor over his and Tibet’s status.²⁴ The Manchu court treated him as a subordinate, and instructed him to “obey the laws of the Sovereign State China.... [and] exhort the Tibetans to be obedient.”²⁵ The Chinese even arranged all of the Dalai Lama’s meetings with foreign officials in Beijing. As Goldstein succinctly states, the Chinese made it clear that “he was subordinate to the emperor and that his position in Tibet was dependent on their goodwill.”²⁶

The situation worsened when the Dalai Lama subsequently attempted to return to Lhasa. The Qing authorized General Zhao Erfeng, who was named an amban in 1908, to dispatch two thousand soldiers to Lhasa to control the Dalai Lama. Realizing that he faced grave danger, the Dalai Lama fled to Darjeeling, India in early 1910. The Chinese acted to strip him of not only his authority, but also his incarnate status.²⁷ The Dalai Lama appealed to the Chinese to allow the British to act as intermediaries to negotiate a solution to the political crisis in Tibet. Yet, before such an arrangement could be undertaken, the Qing Dynasty collapsed, leaving China in chaos. Chinese troops stationed in Tibet withdrew and departed overland through India. The Dalai



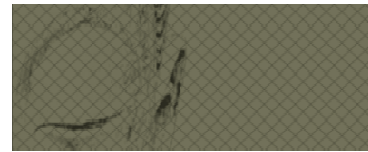
Lama arrived back in Lhasa in January 1913. This was the first time since the early eighteenth century there were no Chinese soldiers on Tibetan soil.²⁸

During the Republican Period (1911-1949), turmoil in China allowed Tibet to assert de-facto independence.²⁹ During his time in India, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had become friends with Sir Charles Bell, the political officer in Sikkim for British India. Bell shaped his thoughts on the importance of creating modern political institutions, a modern bureaucracy, and a modern army in Tibet. Upon his return to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama began to implement these new ideas on how to develop a modern Tibetan state.³⁰ These modernization efforts were frequently frustrated by the conservative Tibetan political and ecclesiastical elements, however, and failed to materialize as hoped.

Yuan Shikai, the Republic of China's Provisional President, sent the Dalai Lama a letter in fall 1912 that invited him to take up his post as spiritual leader of Tibet and serve the fledgling Chinese state. In response, the Dalai Lama stated that he did not require Yuan's permission to return to power, and fully intended to assert his rule in Tibet. Coupled with a proclamation issued twenty-two days later, these statements arguably constitute a declaration of Tibetan independence. However, subsequent negotiations between the British, Chinese, and Tibetans resulted in the 1914 Simla Convention, which proclaimed Chinese 'suzerainty' – but not sovereignty – over Tibet. Following the close of negotiations, it became clear this arrangement satisfied neither the Republic of China (ROC), which claimed Tibet as an integral part of its territory, nor Tibet, which saw itself as an independent state. The ROC disagreed with Lhasa authorities on where to draw the borders of Tibet and finally refused to sign the accord. Britain and Tibet decided to sign a bilateral note based on the convention, leaving the actual convention unsigned by any party.³¹

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek saw the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933 as an opportunity to reassert Chinese authority at the time of the selection of the next reincarnation. An official ROC policy document promulgated on 10 February 1936, entitled "Methods for the Reincarnation of Lamas," contained thirteen articles describing the means by which the candidate selection process should occur for all high-ranking incarnate lamas. It stipulated that Republican leaders would play a role in the selection process, and also required the use of the golden urn.³² Yet, it appears that the Republican regulations had little impact in Tibet. Republican scholar Hsiao-ting Lin argues that even after the Kuomintang established a new mission in Lhasa in 1934, Nanjing remained largely unfocused on Tibet policy and failed to implement any concrete initiatives there.³³ Following the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933, Tibetan religious leaders compiled a list of fourteen potential candidates using traditional methods of divination. They eventually selected a bright young boy named Lhamo Dondrup from a small village in the Tibetan area known as Amdo (present-day Qinghai province) as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.³⁴ The search team initially attempted to keep its selection secret. It feared that Ma Bufang, the local warlord in Qinghai, might either demand an exorbitant bribe before allowing the chosen candidate to leave or send a military escort with the boy to remain in Lhasa. When the team finally asked Ma permission to have the boy sent to Kumbum Monastery en route to Lhasa, the warlord repeatedly asked for large sums of money totaling 400,000 silver coins, as well as other favors.³⁵

Lhasa eventually asked the Kuomintang government whether it could convince Ma to free the young reincarnate from virtual house arrest. Nanjing subsequently responded by making its own demands, including the right to escort the Dalai Lama to Lhasa and also send a Chinese official



representative to the ceremony, so that he could bestow a Chinese title upon the monk. Lhasa refused to agree to all of the initial terms set forth by Nanjing, but an agreement was eventually reached. On 29 March 1939, the Kuomintang announced that it would dispatch Wu Zhongxin, Chairman of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, to Tibet as its official representative during the selection and enthronement ceremonies.³⁶ Interestingly, the British Mission in Lhasa reported at the time that the ROC had previously requested Chinese representation at the enthronement of the Dalai Lama, but implied that Lhasa had rebuffed its request.³⁷

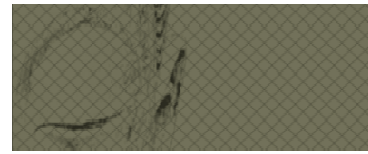
There is a strong continuity between Imperial and Republican approaches to the institution of the Dalai Lama. Even after the Qing Dynasty fell, it was a Chinese government priority to assert authority over all lands held during the height of the Qing Empire. Although the Republic of China was far too weak to establish effective control over Tibet during this time period, it never relinquished its claims there.³⁸ In the end, the Chinese Republican leadership had no input into the selection process of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and possessed no function during the ceremony. The lack of Chinese official participation subsequently prompted the incoming Communist regime to strengthen existing policies and attempt to gain real control over the selection process in the future.

Tibet & the Dalai Lama Under Chinese Communist Party Rule

From 1913 until Chinese annexation in 1950, Tibet was a de facto independent polity that controlled its own affairs.³⁹ However, Tibetan elites failed to enact meaningful reforms that might have protected Tibet from external aggression. The Dalai Lama was only fourteen years old when the Chinese Communists came to power in 1949; Tibetan governmental authority was thus in the hands of his regent and the cabinet of ministers. Historically, Tibet as a political entity was weaker when a regent ruled the country. Not all of the ruling elites agreed with the need to reform the political and economic landscape of Tibet, and the monastic elites were against any changes that would inhibit their leverage over the populace. Moreover, the Tibetan army was small, weak, and had few modern weapons.⁴⁰

Like the Qing and the Kuomintang rulers before them, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders saw Tibet as an unalienable part of Chinese territory. The annexation of Tibet was therefore less about liberating oppressed serfs and more about reclaiming “lost” territory that previous regimes had failed to control.⁴¹ CCP Chairman Mao Zedong realized that the “best strategy was to ‘liberate’ Tibet peacefully, i.e., with the agreement of the government of Tibet... [yet] military action would be needed to force Tibet to the negotiating table.”⁴² Therefore, the PLA’s 18th army attacked Chamdo, a location in Eastern Tibet, on 7 October 1950. The 10,000 weak troops stationed there could not withstand a Chinese attack.⁴³ The Tibetan leadership thus decided to negotiate directly with the Chinese to avoid a full-scale invasion of the capital.⁴⁴

On 23 May 1951, Tibetan representatives signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement, which cited foreign imperialism as the root cause of Tibet’s claims for independence.⁴⁵ The agreement forced Tibetan leaders to formally acknowledge that Tibet was an integral part of China and must therefore accept Chinese rule. However, the agreement also stipulated that Tibet would



maintain its “local” government until the people were willing to initiate socialist reforms.⁴⁶ During the first decade of Chinese involvement in Lhasa, the Chinese Government moved deliberately to introduce institutions and mechanisms that would allow it to eventually consolidate its rule and strengthen its legitimacy. However, Tibetans continued to view the Dalai Lama and the traditional Tibetan elites as the legitimate rulers of Tibet, and the Communists faced a great deal of resistance from both the traditional power structure and also many sectors of society in implementing basic reforms.⁴⁷

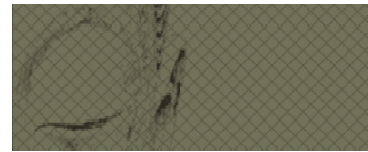


Source: www.flickr.com⁴⁸

On 9 March 1955, the Communist authorities formed the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART). Beijing defined PCART as “an authoritative body for consultation and planning during the transitional period before the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Tibet.”⁴⁹ It was meant to lay the groundwork for future “democratic reforms” in a manner that would gain the support of the Tibetan people.⁵⁰ The Tibetan elites continued to ostensibly rule Tibet, but the Chinese began to gain more and more power behind the scenes. A sizeable PLA garrison was also established in Lhasa, serving as the home for both the political and military CCP leadership.⁵¹

Meanwhile, the Chinese Government had already commenced agricultural reforms in eastern Tibetan areas that had been incorporated into other provinces of China. The Party Secretary of Sichuan initiated Chinese “democratic” reforms in Tibetan areas of the province in late 1955. These reforms disrupted the Tibetan way of life to such an extent that a large-scale revolt erupted across eastern Tibet. Thousands of refugees from eastern Tibet poured into Lhasa and set up camp near the Dalai Lama’s Potala Palace, bringing with them grim stories about the impact of the Chinese reforms.⁵²

The conditions throughout central Tibet also declined dramatically during this time. Chinese hard-liners argued that it was the responsibility of the CCP to implement reforms more quickly to destroy what they saw as the feudalistic and backwards practices of Tibetans. Mao Zedong was reportedly alarmed by the growing unrest in Tibetan areas and personally guaranteed the Dalai Lama that the Chinese would not implement any policy of land reform in Tibet for at least six years. However, the Dalai Lama could not control growing anti-Chinese sentiment in Tibet.



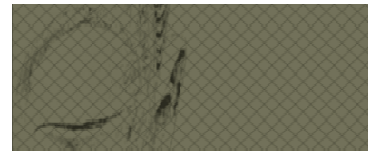
On 10 March 1959, amid rumors that the PLA intended to kidnap or assassinate the Dalai Lama if he attended a theatrical performance at the military garrison, Tibetans attempted to block PLA movements in the streets of Lhasa and clashed with Chinese soldiers. The situation on the streets of Lhasa grew increasingly tense and negotiations between the Tibetan and CCP leaders in Lhasa broke down in acrimony. On 17 March 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa to seek asylum in India, where he renounced the Seventeen-Point Agreement and attempted to garner support for Tibetan independence.⁵³

The leadership vacuum created by the revolt and exodus of many officials to India subsequently meant that the CCP no longer saw it necessary to focus on gaining the support of Tibetan elites.⁵⁴ The period of quasi-self-rule in Tibet was over; PCART was formally designated as the regional government of Tibet, and the Chinese bestowed new posts upon Tibetan elites who had not participated in the uprising or fled. The Panchen Lama had remained in China, and the CCP appointed him Chairman of PCART. However, it was actually the PLA Military Control Committee that held power in Tibet.⁵⁵ In September 1965, the PCART was officially transformed into the Tibet Autonomous Region.⁵⁶

During the disastrous Great Leap Forward from 1959-1962, Tibetans suffered from widespread famine and starvation. Radical political reforms were also set in motion.⁵⁷ Likewise, the 1966-1976 Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was a devastating and traumatic experience for Tibetans. In China proper, one could view the Cultural Revolution largely as an attack on authority, whereby the proletariat and Mao's Red Guards struggled against any "reactionaries" within the CCP who betrayed the cause of socialism by embarking upon a "capitalist road." In Tibet, the Cultural Revolution was perceived as nothing less than a full-scale attack upon the core of Tibetan culture and religion. Red Guards destroyed religious artifacts and buildings; forcibly disrobed monks and nuns from monasteries across Tibet; and prohibited the people from engaging in many traditional religious practices.⁵⁸ At the end of the Cultural Revolution, there were reportedly fewer than 1,000 monks in the eight functioning monasteries (out of an estimated 6,000 monasteries before 1949) that had not been destroyed.⁵⁹ The physical, intellectual and spiritual foundations of Tibetan Buddhism were decimated.

Following Mao's death in 1976, Chinese policy in Tibet pulled back from these excesses. The Chinese Government appointed Ulanfu, a Mongol and the only ethnic minority in China to hold a senior position in the Party, as head of the United Front in July 1977. His selection as director indicated that the CCP was reverting to policies that displayed greater leniency towards minority peoples. In May 1977, high-ranking ethnic Tibetan CCP official Ngawang Jigme announced that the Dalai Lama was welcome to return to Tibet as long as he eschewed separatism and did not otherwise act to destabilize the socialist regime in Tibet.⁶⁰ By 1978, Deng Xiaoping had consolidated his power and launched the beginning of the Reform Era. The regime also started to rehabilitate religious leaders, such as the Panchen Lama.

Beijing invited a delegation representing the Dalai Lama to observe conditions in Tibet towards the end of 1979. At this point, many of the more liberal policies implemented at the center had not yet trickled down into Tibet, and the population was still feeling the effects of Maoist policies. As the delegation toured through ethnographic Tibet, it received a sincere and fervent response from the people. The Communist Party apparently was shocked that twenty years after the Dalai Lama had fled to India, he was still revered as a symbol of Tibetan pride and nationalism despite all attempts to subvert and destroy socio-political system of traditional Tibet.⁶¹



The CCP held a special work forum on the future of Tibet in April 1980 to assess its policy toward the TAR. The conference report noted: “We have been established for thirty years. Now the international situation is very complicated. If we do not seize the moment and immediately improve the relationship between the nationalities, we will make a serious mistake.”⁶² In order to emphasize that the Party was serious about implementing reforms in Tibet, CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang arrived in Lhasa on 22 May 1980, intentionally chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the historic signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Hu bluntly admitted that the Communist Party had failed the Tibetan people, and promised to promote liberal reforms in the TAR as the renewed basis for Chinese legitimacy in Tibet.⁶³ Following Hu Yaobang’s trip, the CCP loosened strictures on religious practice in the TAR, perhaps hoping to allow Tibetans to express ethnic identity in a non-political fashion. While political dissent of any kind still was not tolerated, the early and mid-80s were a period of relative liberalization.⁶⁴

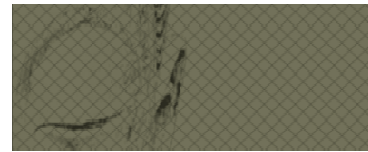


Source: Danwei

Overall, the relationship between the Chinese Government and Tibetans gradually improved during the Reform era, until a series of violent events shattered this relative calm. The Tibetan exile authorities in India had long been engaged in an effort to interest the international community in the plight of the Tibetan people, and by the mid-to-late 1980’s this effort was finally beginning to bear fruit. Sensing an opening as economic reforms gathered steam and the Chinese leadership appeared increasingly open to the world, the Tibetans inaugurated an international campaign to leverage Western support for Tibet and pry additional concessions from Beijing.⁶⁵ The new approach rapidly gained support in the United States. On 21 September 1987, the Dalai Lama spoke on Capitol Hill for the first time, at the invitation of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and articulated a five-point proposal for rectifying the Tibet issue.⁶⁶

These developments had an almost immediate effect on people inside Tibet. After a small monk-led protest in Lhasa on 27 September, thousands of Tibetans marched through the streets of Lhasa on Chinese National Day and clashed with police. On March 1988, monks gathered in Lhasa for the Monlam religious festival and again launched protests that ended in violence. Protests continued throughout the year. By March 1989, as the thirtieth anniversary of the 1959 uprising approached, Lhasa was extremely tense and Chinese authorities retreated from their liberalized policies on cultural and religious expression. In a foreshadowing of events to come in Beijing, large scale protests in Lhasa on 10 March 1989 were violently put down by security forces using live fire on demonstrators; estimates of dead ranged from dozens to hundreds. Then-TAR Party Secretary Hu Jintao imposed martial law and imprisoned large numbers of monks and nuns.⁶⁷

The international response was swift and negative, spurred on by the subsequent events in Tian’anmen Square. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 “for his efforts



to promote dialogue and draw international attention to the plight of the Tibetan people,” and the international community became a major player in his long-running engagement with Chinese authorities.⁶⁸ For its part, the Chinese Government reevaluated policies of relative political and religious liberalization, replacing them with those emphasizing rapid economic integration.

The Search for the Eleventh Panchen Lama

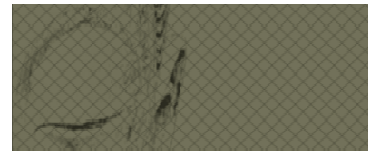
On 28 January 1989, the Tenth Panchen Lama passed away as tensions simmered in Lhasa. He was the only high-ranking Tibetan lama to remain in the PRC following the 1959 uprising. The CCP attempted, with mixed results, to use him as a regional proxy leader who could command local support but would also endorse Beijing's policies. While the Tenth Panchen had cooperated with the CCP, he had also at times criticized policies that he saw as harmful to Tibetans and was even jailed by the Chinese for his advocacy on behalf of Tibetans.

His death came during a period of major unrest in Lhasa. More unrest followed in subsequent months, and Beijing responded by declaring martial law for a thirteen-month period. The continued influence and respect exercised by key lamas among the Tibetan population, despite thirty years of CCP “democratic reforms,” reinforced the regime's belief that it needed to cultivate Tibetan religious leaders who were loyal to the state. Finding a reliable successor to the Tenth Panchen Lama thus emerged as a political priority for the Chinese, who saw it as part of their long-term governing strategy in Tibet. Given the legacy of Chinese attempts to exert influence over the confirmation of important lamas, the CCP decided that it must retain the right to control the final portion of this process, even as it did not seek to take total control of the proceedings away from the Tibetans. Indeed, the inclusion of traditional selection methods in the official procedure indicates that monastic authorities may have had input into the decision-making process.⁶⁹ Chinese leaders announced in August 1989 that Chadrel Rinpoche, then-abbot of Tashilumpo Monastery in Shigatse, had approved the procedure and would lead a team of Tibetan lamas to search for the next Panchen Lama. Tibet specialist Robert Barnett describes the five stages of the process officially endorsed by the CCP at that time:

- 1 - using mystical signs to identify the child candidates
- 2 - using tests with objects to identify the most likely candidate(s)
- 3 - using oracles and divination to "reconfirm" the final candidate(s)
- 4 - using the lottery system, drawn by a government official
- 5 - approval of the final decision by the central government⁷⁰

However, the PRC government may not have recognized that according to the phrasing of the document, the Dalai Lama or other Tibetan official could potentially decide upon a candidate by the end of the third step, thus eliminating the need to use the golden urn, as had happened in the case of the selection of the Eighth and Ninth Panchen Lamas, as well as the Ninth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas.⁷¹

Chadrel Rinpoche and his official team began its search in 1992. In 1993, the Chinese authorities made the conciliatory decision to procure the support of the Dalai Lama during the selection



process, the first substantial contact between the two sides since 1984. Chadrel Rinpoche; a PRC United Front official; a senior Tibetan exile leader; and Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of the Dalai Lama, met in Beijing in July 1993 to discuss the issue. The two exile leaders returned to Dharamsala with an official letter from PRC leaders asking the Dalai Lama to join talks on the selection process, in the hopes that both sides could agree on one candidate. The Dalai Lama replied on 5 August, and invited Chadrel Rinpoche to visit India.⁷²

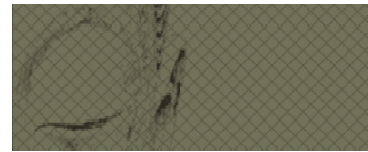
While details of what happened next remain unclear, authorities in Beijing apparently changed their mind at some point and decided not to cooperate with the Dalai Lama for the duration of the search. The Dalai Lama released a statement on 4 September expressing his frustration and disappointment, and neither side released further information regarding the search for nearly two years. As the Chinese position hardened, Beijing placed more and more restrictions upon Chadrel Rinpoche's team.⁷³ Nevertheless, the search team identified Gendun Choekyi Nyima, a child from the nomadic region of Lhari, approximately 250 km northeast of Lhasa, as their principal candidate among a list of 28 young boys.

On 14 May 1995, based on information received from sources inside the search process and divinations conducted in Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama made a decision to declare Gendun Choekyi Nyima as the next reincarnation. The Chinese reaction was swift and fierce. They placed the six-year-old and his family under "the protection of the government;" to this day his whereabouts remain unknown.⁷⁴ Authorities arrested Chadrel Rinpoche, his secretary Champa Chung-la, and thirty other individuals involved in the search. They received terms of up to six years in prison, but the whereabouts of Chadrel Rinpoche and his secretary remain unknown. Chinese leaders launched a broader crackdown in Tibet, acting to ban photos of the Dalai Lama; place limits upon the numbers of monks and nuns allowed to reside in each monastery; and require all public officials in Tibet to denounce the Dalai Lama's decision.⁷⁵

On 8 November 1995, the CCP produced a new document detailing a fourteen-step procedure for selecting a new Panchen or Dalai Lama. The updated procedure required approval from Beijing throughout the process, thus eliminating the possibility that Tibetan leaders could bypass the use of the golden urn and confirm an important lama without the consent of the Chinese leadership.⁷⁶ After completing the initial stages of the selection process, local religious officials would be required to seek approval from the central government before placing the names of the final candidates into the golden urn and drawing lots. They must report the results of the lottery to Beijing and await government approval before enthroning the chosen candidate. It is the central government that presides over the ceremony and confers the title. Finally, the new Dalai or Panchen Lama must send a representative to Beijing to express his gratitude.⁷⁷

Chinese leaders publicly announced on 11 November that they would use the Golden Urn ceremony to determine the next Panchen Lama. The ceremony subsequently took place on 29 November. The CCP selected Gyaltzen Norbu, a boy who had been a candidate in the initial selection process, and he was enthroned in a tightly controlled ceremony one week later.⁷⁸ To this day, visitors to ethnographic Tibet note that Tibetans appear to reject the Chinese appointment, although Tibetans cannot state their views publicly.

Despite the lack of Tibetan acceptance of Gyaltzen Norbu, the Chinese government has increasingly held him aloft as a key Tibetan Buddhist religious figure. They have given him senior (albeit largely honorary) positions in government bodies, and have arranged for him to



take high-profile official trips to Asian countries, where he is received by and photographed with senior government officials. Not coincidentally, many of the countries which have welcomed Gyaltzen Norbu have not permitted the Dalai Lama to visit, in deference to Chinese objections.

Reincarnation

From the time of the introduction of the golden urn in 1792 until the time of the Fourteen Stage Procedure of November 1995, Tibetans have generally maintained effective control over the selection of Dalai and Panchen Lamas without undue Chinese intervention. They have done so through the exercise of local knowledge and authority, although at times Tibetans also took advantage of chaos in China. Despite occasionally recognizing and accommodating Chinese wishes to confirm the major Tibetan reincarnations, Tibetan authorities historically were capable of maneuvering around Chinese efforts to control the selection process and its outcome. Faced with what it perceives as an ongoing challenge to its authority in this area, the CCP has increasingly taken steps to assert control and ensure that it will determine who shall take the Dalai Lama's place as the next

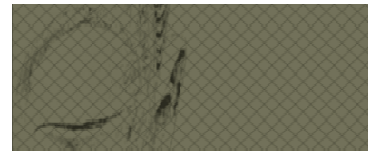


Source: Feng Li/Getty Images AsiaPacs

reincarnation, rather than Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders, including the Dalai Lama himself. This policy development clearly underlines the importance of control over religious leaders within the CCP framework of a nationalist agenda that promotes stability and manages the threat of “splittism” within its borders.

In an effort to cement its authority to manage this process, the PRC's State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) issued State Religious Affairs Bureau Order Number 5, which took effect on 1 September 2007.⁷⁹ These regulations state that all Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations must receive official approval in order to be recognized as such. The 2007 regulations attempted to address what Beijing saw as defects in the earlier procedures on the selection of important reincarnations. These defects were seen as contributing to the 1996 Panchen Lama debacle.

The application for official recognition of a proposed reincarnate lama must come from an officially recognized religious institution. It subsequently must be submitted to the religious affairs and governmental offices at the provincial level, as well as SARA and the State Council – the highest executive organ in the PRC government. Involvement of “any group or individual from outside the country” is expressly forbidden.⁸⁰ In promulgating the regulations, SARA explicitly underlined the political motivation⁸¹ for its actions, stating “The selection of reincarnates must preserve national unity and solidarity of all ethnic groups.”⁸² In response, the Dalai Lama stated recently that communist interference in such religious matters was “outrageous and disgraceful. The enforcement of various inappropriate methods for recognizing



reincarnations to eradicate our unique Tibetan cultural traditions is doing damage that will be difficult to repair.”⁸³

The international community responded to the release of these regulations with expressions of official concern, while the western media coverage was marked by ironic ridicule of the spectacle of officially atheist Chinese Communist political authorities asserting an absolute right to discern the outcome of what is ostensibly a mysterious phenomenological religious matter. A *Newsweek* story on the regulations was typical in referring to their promulgation as “one of history's more absurd acts of totalitarianism.”⁸⁴

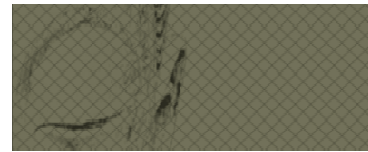
Scholars, experts, and Tibetan exile officials, however, focused on the deeper significance of this interference in the reincarnation of lineage holders. Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, the Special Envoy of the Dalai Lama and himself a reincarnate, argued: “These stringent new measures strike at the heart of Tibetan religious identity. They will only create further resentment among the Tibetan people and cannot override the Party's lack of legitimacy in the religious sphere.”⁸⁵ In most Tibetan areas, the lineage holder of the local monastery continues to have tremendous influence within the community, a fact that Chinese authorities recognize. Tsering Shakya noted that almost all areas where protests occurred in spring 2008 had seen senior lamas depart for exile because of restrictive religious practice, including the attempted imposition of the Chinese Panchen Lama in 1995. Scholars note that even those senior lamas who remain in Tibet have seen their influence systematically undermined by Chinese policies, and the effort to reduce this influence has gained steam since the 2008 protests.⁸⁶

For his part, the Dalai Lama's initial response to Beijing's regulation was to reiterate that his reincarnation would not be found in a Tibet that was not free. Later he made occasional references to possible alternative means of selecting his reincarnation—including saying that his reincarnation may be a woman, or several people, or that he may put it to a vote of the Tibetan people.⁸⁷ Despite his frequently jocular tone in addressing the issue, it was clear to close observers that he was carefully considering how to respond to Beijing's assertion of control over his next manifestation.

The Dalai Lama Speaks Out on Political Authority and the Reincarnation Issue

According to Tibetan Buddhist precepts, the Dalai Lama is a highly evolved being called a trulku, and as such he has the capability to control the process of his reincarnation. Because he has already achieved enlightenment, the only reason he continues to return to the corporeal realm is to alleviate suffering on earth. If he feels he can no longer do so effectively, he is fully within his powers to choose to move on and not return.

His 14 March 2011 announcement that he would fully retire from politics, after years of what he called “semi-retirement,” marked the culmination of a decades-long process of devolution of political authority. The Dalai Lama asked the Kashag, the Tibetan parliament, to alter the constitution so that his position as head of state was abolished or rendered symbolic, and that his authority be fully replaced by “a democratic system in which the political leadership is



elected by the people for a specific term.”⁸⁸ According to Robert Barnett, “the Dalai Lama’s demand is analogous to the Pope insisting for 50 years that the Vatican State turn itself into a secular, democratic institution in which he has only a symbolic role at most.”⁸⁹

The shrewd decision to shed his formal political offices reflects the Dalai Lama’s desire to deepen the democratic reforms that he began to implement in exile in the 1960s. It also contrasts sharply with the lack of such reform in China, a place where democratic political reform has hitherto failed to gain momentum. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly for the purposes of his succession, it serves to undercut China’s rationale for involvement in the reincarnation process. As previously noted, because of its historic political importance in Tibet, the institution of the Dalai Lama has traditionally been managed in a particular fashion and has at times been responsive – even if only superficially – to imperial prerogatives. This Tibetan practice was understandable in the complicated geo-political context of Sino-Tibetan relations of the imperial era. However, if the institution’s political responsibilities are cleaved off and assigned elsewhere as the current Dalai Lama has now done, the rationale for the present-day Chinese state’s involvement in what is now a purely religious and cultural position arguably has been weakened significantly.

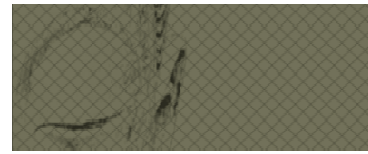
Furthermore, the Dalai Lama announced on 24 September 2011 that he plans to formulate clear guidelines on the issue of his reincarnation “so that there is no room for doubt or deception.”⁹⁰ In other words, he is seeking to counter direct CCP interference in Tibetan Buddhist affairs. The statement addresses various options available to the Dalai Lama and hinges upon an understanding of differences between reincarnation and emanation.



Source: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

The Dalai Lama begins by stating that although ordinary sentient beings “take rebirth involuntarily in higher or lower realms,” it is possible for “superior Bodhisattvas.... to choose their place and time of birth as well as their future parents. Such a rebirth, which is solely for the benefit of others, is rebirth through the force of compassion and prayer.”⁹¹ However, he adds that it is possible that rather than reincarnate, he might choose to emanate. To explain, the Dalai Lama quotes nineteenth century Buddhist scholar and incarnate lama Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo: “Reincarnation is what happens when someone takes rebirth after the predecessor’s passing away; emanation is when manifestations take place without the source’s passing away.”⁹² Robert Barnett conversely describes an emanation as a “person who embodies or reflects the qualities of that Buddha-form or lama, but not the same person. One could say that an emanation is like a mirror-image or reflection of a particular lama, while a reincarnation is the next link in their chain of lives.”⁹³ Moreover, just as superior Bodhisattvas can control how they reincarnate, they also have the ability to both “manifest themselves in hundreds or thousands of bodies simultaneously” and “manifest an emanation before death.”⁹⁴ Such choices provide a prominent incarnate lama with a greater flexibility to control how and when he reincarnates or emanates.

There are three different types of emanations that the Dalai Lama could recognize. First, he could recognize someone who possesses the same “mind-stream.” According to Barnett, the individual’s “spiritual realization is of such an advanced level that they in effect have unity of



consciousness” with the Dalai Lama.⁹⁵ “This procedure.... is equivalent to the rare but well-known Tibetan practice of recognizing someone as a “ma-ndey trulku” (ma-’das sprul sku), meaning a person recognized as a reincarnation before the death of the predecessor.”⁹⁶

Second, the Dalai Lama could choose an individual as an emanation based on close-knit personal ties or through a common devotion to his lifelong work and goals, or a “connection through the power of karma and prayers.”⁹⁷ This manner of emanation would give the Dalai Lama a great deal of flexibility in selecting someone who he trusts deeply and would likely continue his legacy.

Third, the Dalai Lama could recognize an individual with whom he may share no personal connection, someone who has “come as a result of blessings and appointment.”⁹⁸ Disciples and youth fall into this final category. The second and third types of emanations appear novel.⁹⁹

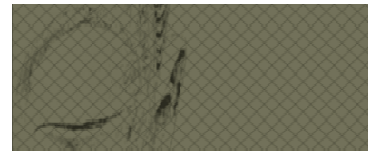
The Dalai Lama notes that he could choose to recognize someone as his emanation prior to his death, so that his successor could carry out his unfinished work. This phenomenon is not without precedent in Buddhism, and in fact many incarnate lamas have recognized their own emanations over the past centuries.¹⁰⁰ The Dalai Lama might also choose to recognize an emanation, and then leave open the door for the possibility of reincarnation following his death.

No Dalai Lama has ever recognized his own emanation in the past. Yet, as Barnett points out, this is unsurprising because until March, the Dalai Lama concurrently served as Tibet’s spiritual and political leader. It is difficult to imagine a political leader recognizing another claimant to the same office, but now this is no longer an issue.¹⁰¹ If the Dalai Lama chose a disciple or young individual prior to his death as an emanation, then he would have the opportunity to personally train his own successor how to manage the challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead for the Tibetan people.

Tibetans and others concerned with their fate have long feared that a power vacuum would emerge following the death of the Dalai Lama. Historically, the Tibetan state was at its weakest during interregnum periods, when a regent held power until the young Dalai Lama came of age. “Regents were seen as weak, prone to corruption, and as lacking in authority, even though almost all of them” were *hutuktu*, representing the highest rank of incarnate lamas.¹⁰² At the same time, designating and training a successor during his lifetime would bestow the Dalai Lama’s successor with far greater legitimacy amongst the Tibetan people, especially when the Chinese attempt to appoint their own candidate following the current Dalai Lama’s death.¹⁰³ By responding to these concerns and potentially eliminating the interregnum period, the Dalai Lama would ensure a more stable transition from one spiritual leader to the next.

After describing the potential methods of emanation and rebirth that he could employ, the Dalai Lama states his ultimate intent in the final paragraphs of the proclamation:

As I mentioned earlier, reincarnation is a phenomenon which should take place either through the voluntary choice of the concerned person or at least on the strength of his or her karma, merit and prayers. Therefore, the person who reincarnates has sole legitimate authority over where and how he or she takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognized. It is a reality that no one else can force the person concerned, or manipulate him or her. It is particularly inappropriate for Chinese communists, who explicitly reject even the idea of past and future lives, let alone the

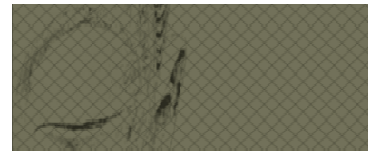


concept of reincarnate Tulkus, to meddle in the system of reincarnation and especially the reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas. Such brazen meddling contradicts their own political ideology and reveals their double standards. Should this situation continue in the future, it will be impossible for Tibetans and those who follow the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to acknowledge or accept it.

When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. On that basis we will take a decision. If it is decided that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust. They should consult the various heads of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked inseparably to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. They should seek advice and direction from these concerned beings and carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with past tradition. I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China.

These statements reveal a number of possible insights into how the Dalai Lama is seeking to manage the succession issue. First, by firmly denying the CCP the moral or religious authority to make any decisions regarding his successor, he is also laying down an important political marker. In 1993, the Dalai Lama made the decision to work with Chinese authorities to conduct a search for the Eleventh Panchen Lama. The hope of jointly agreeing upon a candidate was quickly dashed and instead resulted in acrimony and the disappearance of the Dalai Lama's chosen candidate.¹⁰⁴ The Dalai Lama is determined to avoid such a crisis from occurring again. He is thus making it clear that he will search for his successor in exile, and Tibetans themselves will guide and manage the process. The Dalai Lama is effectively denying legitimacy to any potential Chinese selection. Such a decision will likely garner support from the Tibetan people and international community.

Second, it appears that the Dalai Lama wishes to build a non-sectarian consensus within the Tibetan community prior to making any final decisions. He will listen to input from the leadership of various schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan people, as well as international scholars and experts. It also appears that because the Dalai Lama is no longer the Tibetans' political leader, the Central Tibetan Administration will bear no responsibility for overseeing or implementing this process. Instead, the Dalai Lama has designated "the Gaden Phodrang Trust" in Dharamsala as responsible for the future of the lineage, if it shall continue in the future.¹⁰⁵ For many Tibetans, who found it emotionally difficult to accept the Dalai Lama's decision to relinquish political power, the possibility that the Dalai Lama might choose to discontinue his own lineage would undoubtedly prove more challenging for them to accept. However, he has raised this possibility for years.¹⁰⁶ Giving Tibetans time to ponder, debate, and eventually come to terms with divergent visions for the future is an important part of the Dalai Lama's pragmatic long-term plan.

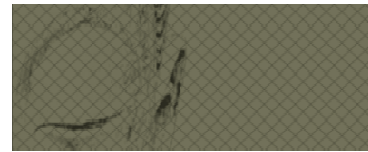


Challenges for China

The Dalai Lama's integrated efforts to relieve his office of political duties, while simultaneously establishing clearly defined parameters for his emanation or rebirth, create at least two awkward dilemmas for Chinese authorities. First, it places them in the position of defending the inherent political authority of what they themselves refer to as a feudal and irrational system of selecting Tibetan religious leaders, even after Tibetans in exile have moved toward a more democratic process. Second, it forces the atheist Chinese state to continually insist it has greater authority over an exclusively religious process than the lineage holder himself.

Under the circumstances, one could fairly interpret the Dalai Lama's efforts to divest political authority from his office as an integral element of his strategy to counter the CCP's claims that it will ultimately determine who will serve as the Fifteenth Dalai Lama. Beijing has responded with predictable hostility. When asked about the Dalai Lama's impending retirement, Qianba Puncog, former Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region's People's Congress Standing Committee and former TAR Chairman, stated that "there is a great difference between the Dalai Lama retiring as a political head and his retiring as a religious leader. Since no country recognizes his self-declared 'exile Tibetan government', whatever he does in his illegal political organization is nonsense and Tibet will not be affected at all."¹⁰⁷ Likewise, Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Jiang Yu declared that as the Dalai Lama "has talked often about retirement in the past few years," his latest decisions are simply "tricks to deceive the international community."¹⁰⁸ In regards to the Dalai Lama's comments that he might choose not to reincarnate, Padma Choling, the Chinese-appointed governor of Tibet, stated in March that everyone "must respect the historical institutions and religious rituals of Tibetan Buddhism" and that the Dalai Lama cannot unilaterally make such a radical decision.¹⁰⁹ Wang Weipei, a deputy standing director of the United Front Work Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region's CPC Committee, was the latest to condemn the Dalai Lama's statements on reincarnation. "The so-called Tibetan government-in-exile has never ceased its attempt to seek Tibetan independence or to internationalize the Tibet question." He added that "the 14th Dalai Lama was not born a living Buddha, as he was also approved by the central authorities. The Dalai Lama now serves as a mere pawn of the U.S., who has been seeking to hamper China's development."¹¹⁰ One can expect Chinese rhetoric to remain harsh as tensions rise in the region.

The Dalai Lama responded in an official statement by emphasizing that the CCP, which is officially atheist and thus does not lend credence to reincarnation, has no right to interfere in this matter. "One thing I want to make clear, as far as my own rebirth is concerned, the final authority is myself and no one else, and obviously not China's Communists." He added that "it's a disgrace to see that they want to control" the selection process; "they've become mad by political power."¹¹¹ As previously mentioned, the Dalai Lama has undoubtedly learned from the search for the Eleventh Panchen Lama. By appointing a new Dalai Lama prior to his own death and preemptively stripping that office of political authority, the spiritual leader will place China on the defensive. Moreover, if Beijing insists upon adhering to "tradition," then the communist government may find itself in the awkward position of not only appointing a candidate years after the Dalai Lama has already personally chosen a successor in exile, but also asserting that its chosen religious figurehead has political legitimacy that Tibetans themselves no longer accept as valid. Thus, the new direction of the Tibetan exile government may well strengthen its long-term position vis-à-vis China, while rendering Beijing's efforts to manipulate the selection of the

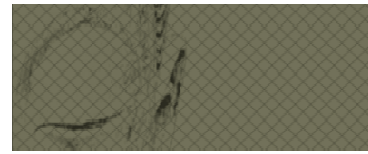


next Dalai Lama as largely irrelevant in a geopolitical sense and offensive in a purely religious one.

Regardless, conspicuous Chinese interference in the selection of the next Dalai Lama would have profound implications for political and social stability in ethnographic Tibet. For many years, one was likely to find photographs of the Chinese-selected Eleventh Panchen Lama only in the largest and most closely watched monasteries. Monks poignantly remarked to foreign visitors in hushed tones that they refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the “fake Panchen,” preferring to hang portraits of his predecessor. They are loath to accept the indignity of another Chinese appointee, especially as a replacement to one of the most beloved figures in Tibetan religious and political history. Jigme, a Tibetan monk from Rebkong, Qinghai Province, stated angrily that if this comes to pass, “we will protest. The people will be very unhappy. This is a religious decision. There should be no politics.”¹¹² Given the widespread March 2008 protests in Tibet, it seems unlikely that the Tibetans would submit quietly. Chen Qingying and Chen Lijian, scholars at Beijing’s Chinese Center for Tibetan Studies, warned in a recent book that overt manipulation of the selection process by Tibetan exile leadership could have dramatic consequences. “Only if the system used historically is employed during the reincarnation process for a living Buddha can it be completed, otherwise there will be disturbances and chaos.”¹¹³ Nevertheless, the Tibetans must believe that they themselves have a stake in the outcome of the selection process. Feelings of disenfranchisement would undoubtedly exacerbate tensions and potentially lead to violence.

Repression & Resistance across the Tibetan Plateau

Observers have witnessed a sharp rise in political protests in the past year, as Tibetans have expressed their frustration over increasing state repression and a range of restrictive religious and cultural policies. Tibetans have staged demonstrations and more than a dozen individuals – almost entirely members of the monastic community – have committed self-immolation. At the time of publication, protests have marked the region's worst violence since the 2008 riots. Thousands of Tibetan demonstrators have taken to the streets in Draggo, Ngaba, and Serthar, towns located in present-day Sichuan province. Security forces used tear gas and fired upon protestors. As of 25 January, the total number of dead and injured remain unclear. However, preliminary reports currently suggest that up to 11 people are dead and dozens more are injured. Local sources are reporting that telephone communication has been cut off to Draggo and Serthar, and a curfew is in effect in Serthar.¹¹⁴



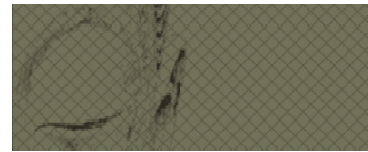
Source: *International Campaign for Tibet*¹¹⁵

Moreover, a bomb exploded in a government building in southeastern Tibet on 26 October 2011. Witnesses saw that slogans demanding Tibetan independence were painted upon the walls. Flyers calling for freedom were also found strewn around the area.¹¹⁶ It was the first reported bombing since March 2009, when Tibetans in Sichuan targeted a newly constructed police station to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1959 uprising and the first anniversary of the 2008 riots.¹¹⁷ Both bombings took place well outside normal working hours, which strongly suggests that those involved wanted to make a strong political statement without injuring anyone.

Self-immolations are extremely rare among Tibetan Buddhists, who place great value on the sanctity of human life. There are a small number of precedents for “self-immolation as a religious practice in the mythical past, where people did it to show devotion to Buddha.”¹¹⁸ However, it appears that average Tibetans and exile officials alike feel great empathy for those who have died, and thus have a difficult time condemning the recent spate of self-immolations. “I think that Tibetans take it very seriously when they see people prepared to give up their lives,” remarked Barnett, “because of what is understood to be political pressure on them.”¹¹⁹ At the same time, he argues that self-immolation “is still a choice of last resort ... Tibetans do not see this as strategic, as a way of getting attention. They see it as a way [of] indicating that the pressure on these monks is so great that they do not feel they have any other choice.”¹²⁰

In response to recent events, the Dalai Lama held a public prayer ceremony on 19 October in Dharamsala. The exile community stood “in solidarity with those Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet and particularly those who self-immolated, their families and those suffering repression in Tibet,” stated Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay. “We pay homage to their courage and stand in solidarity with their indomitable spirit.”¹²¹ At the same time, Thubten Samphel, a spokesperson for the religious leader, denied the Chinese accusation that the Dalai Lama incited the protesters to commit suicide, emphasizing that the Dalai Lama views self-immolation as an act of violence.¹²²

Various reports from New Delhi indicate that many exiles are supportive of the monks, nuns, and laymen who have sacrificed themselves in protest of repressive Chinese policies, although some also expressed the view that self-immolation is ultimately a sin. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Dharamsala, said that “In Tibet, there is no freedom of speech, of movement, nothing. But the world is too consumed to notice, there’s too much going on. Our job



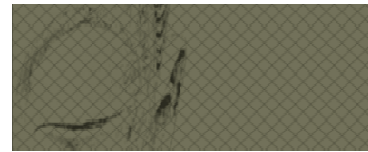
outside Tibet is to make sure the sacrifices do not go meaningless.” He added that if one day, his own daughter decided to commit self-immolation, “I’ll be very supportive; it’s her choice. As long as she doesn’t do it in front of me.”¹²³ Such sentiments were shared by Tenzin Chonden Burkar, a Tibetan student at Delhi University who has recently considered self-immolation. Despite his love for his coursework and his life in India, he worries that there may be no other way to draw the world’s attention to the plight of the Tibetan people. “It will be a slow death and I will feel the pain, but I will be giving my life for my nation.”¹²⁴

Regardless of the empathy exiles feel for Tibetans who still lack freedom, there is debate as to whether self-immolation constitutes a sin. Tashi Choezom, a nursing student in New Delhi, remarked that while she stands in “solidarity with those who have committed self-immolation,” she believes it is “terribly wrong to take one’s own life.” She added that “We are getting support from various countries through this, but these acts of self-immolation must stop. Buddhism does not allow this.”¹²⁵ Tsewang Dolma agreed. The exile living in Kathmandu stated that she’s “personally against this way of protest. In Buddhism, it’s a big sin. But they don’t have a choice because they are not allowed to practise their faith.”¹²⁶ Yet, Geshey Lobsang, a monk in Dharamsala, argues that religious teachings are ambiguous on the subject. “It is sin to destroy one’s body, but Buddhist philosophy also states that every action should be driven by good motivation and reason.” Thus, he asserts that those who self-immolated have not committed a sin because they act in the pursuit of a noble purpose.¹²⁷

Yet, the Chinese authorities appear to consider such acts of self-immolations terrorism. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu stated that the so-called ‘Dalai Clique’ had “played up such issues to incite more people to follow suit” and “beautified” the demonstrators rather than condemning the violence. “As we know, such splittist activities at the cost of human lives is violence and terrorism in disguise.”¹²⁸ Moreover, the *Global Times* accused the Dalai Lama of attempting to “deny the position of secular life in the Tibetan region, and encourage monks to chase the supremacy of religion. According to such a mentality, these monks’ religious identity surpasses everything else, including their identity as Chinese citizens.”¹²⁹ The Chinese government portrays those monks committing acts of self-immolation as holding a minority view: “A few Tibetan monks may feel nostalgic about the Dalai Lama and the old social life under his governance. The Dalai Lama regards this as the Tibetan culture that should be protected. However, most Tibetan monks are patriotic, and they know the Tibetan region will not return to the past.”

Beijing has responded to the recent protests with more than rhetoric. There is an increased security presence in some parts of ethnographic Tibet, and many fear that a large-scale official crackdown is imminent.¹³⁰ Tensions are running especially high in places like Ngaba (Aba), where Chinese authorities have deployed military and paramilitary forces. Reports also indicate that access to telephone communication and the Internet is currently restricted.¹³¹ Another report indicates that officials are taking precautionary measures in Lhasa, where thousands of extra troops have poured into the city.¹³² If the demonstrations continue to intensify, the Chinese government may decide to launch yet another ‘Strike Hard’ campaign aimed at cracking down on dissent and detaining those suspected of fermenting unrest.¹³³

Why are Tibetans employing increasingly drastic tactics such as self-immolation as a political tool? Tibetans both inside the PRC and also in exile are citing a number of reasons. First, there is growing frustration in Tibet that the Chinese government has not demonstrated sincerity by engaging in serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama. Many fear that the Dalai Lama will be



unable to return to ethnographic Tibet prior to his death, thus denying entire generations of Tibetan Buddhists meaningful contact with their spiritual leader. In fact, as they committed suicide, many of those who self-immolated called for the Dalai Lama's return to underscore the significance of this issue. Experts suspect that Beijing spurns negotiations because the CCP believes that international support for the Tibetan cause will dramatically decline following the charismatic leader's death. Even now, a recent article in China's *Global Times* noted that "Recent years have seen the marginalization of the Tibet issue in the world. International society attaches more importance to their relations with China. Under such a climate, the 'Free-Tibet' movement becomes inopportune."¹³⁴ The Chinese appear to believe that time is on their side as their nation grows in power and stature.

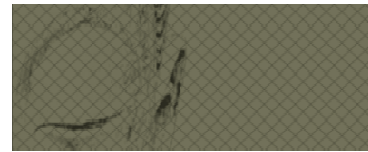
Such a strategy could easily backfire, however, threatening the "harmonious society" that the Chinese leadership strives to create. As Tibetans are left with fewer and fewer options to express their widespread disenchantment with the authoritarian regime, committing increasingly aggressive acts of political dissent – including additional demonstrations, self-immolations, rioting, and even acts of sabotage – may yet appear more rational than refusing to act at all. If the Tibetan people come to regard the status quo as intolerable and within the domain of losses, then they may lash out against the regime despite the certainty of harsh government retaliation and repression.¹³⁵

Second, the self-immolations and protests reflect widespread anger over the lack of fundamental freedoms and human rights in Tibet, as well as official policies that appear to threaten the traditional religious, cultural, and linguistic practices that underpin the Tibetan identity. The Dalai Lama has blamed recent unrest on hard-line Chinese policies, and accuses the government of carrying out "cultural genocide."¹³⁶ Similarly, a wide range of prominent figures – running the gamut from global political leaders to international non-governmental organizations, to academics and experts on Tibet – have also stated that the Chinese government needs to address counterproductive policies causing tensions in the region. Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, stated in a joint press release with Amnesty International that "Years of restrictions on Tibetans' rights have led to further unrest and acts of desperation. It is clearly time for the Chinese government to fundamentally rethink its approach by listening to and addressing Tibetans' grievances."¹³⁷

Maria Otero, the U.S. State Department Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and Commissioner, Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) recently addressed the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs at a hearing on the CECC 2011 Annual Report. She noted in her remarks that:

Tibetans who peacefully expressed disagreement with government policy faced increased risk of punishment, as the Chinese government continued to criminalize such expression under the guise of 'safeguarding social stability.' The Chinese government also substantially increased state infringement of freedom of religion in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries. Government security and judicial officials detained and imprisoned Tibetan writers, artists, intellectuals, and cultural advocates who lamented or criticized government policies.

In July, when I participated on the Commission's panel, "The Dalai Lama: What He Means for Tibetans Today," I noted my deep concern with the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibetan areas of China, and specifically with the abuse and forcible removal of



monks from Kirti Monastery and the heavy security presence there. The recent self-immolations of young Tibetans, many of whom have been affiliated with Kirti Monastery, are desperate acts that reflect intense frustration with human rights conditions, including religious freedom, inside China. The Commission has thoroughly documented the policies that many believe have created escalating tensions and a growing sense of isolation and despair among Tibetans. These policies include dramatically expanded government controls on religious life and practice, ongoing “patriotic education” campaigns within monasteries that require monks to denounce the Dalai Lama, increasingly intensive surveillance, arbitrary detentions and disappearances of hundreds of monks, and restrictions on and imprisonment of some families and friends of self-immolators.

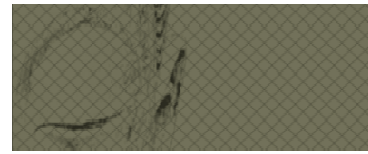
The U.S. government repeatedly has urged the Chinese government to address its counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and that threaten the unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people. Senior State Department officials have consistently and directly raised with the Chinese government the issue of Tibetan self-immolations. We have urged the Chinese government to allow access to Tibetan areas for journalists, diplomats and other observers. We also have asked the Chinese government to resume substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. When President Obama met with the Dalai Lama at the White House in July, the President stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans.¹³⁸

Despite these international calls for the PRC to reevaluate its policies in ethnographic Tibet, authorities in Beijing insist that those who committed acts of self-immolation are separatists whose views do not represent mainstream Tibetan opinion. The *Global Times* argues that the Dalai Lama himself is actively instigating unrest in the region, in order to disrupt economic development, gain publicity for the exile cause, and force Beijing to enter into negotiations with the “separatist government.” His actions are not reflective of “power and influence,” but rather “desperation and fragility.”¹³⁹ To this date, Beijing has given no indication that it will alter its policies. On the contrary, it appears that the government is retrenching by cracking down on all forms of dissent and increasing its security presence in the region.

The India Factor

On 10 November 2009 the Dalai Lama visited Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian controlled border region inhabited by indigenous people of Tibetan extraction. China claims the area as “South Tibet.” The PRC vociferously protested the visit, despite the insistence of the Indian government and the Dalai Lama that he made the trip purely for religious purposes. These arguments are nothing new: China and India have been at odds over the Tibet issue since before the Dalai Lama first escaped from Tibet, crossing the border into Arunachal Pradesh in 1959.

Some Indian strategic thinkers see the Tibet issue as a powerful means by which India can pressure China on various matters. There are more than 100,000 Tibetan exiles in India, and India can choose to monitor and control their activities in acquiescence with or against Chinese wishes. India officially recognizes that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of



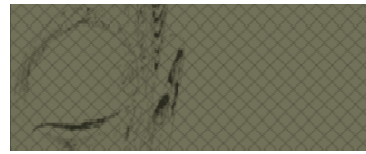
the PRC, but has generally done so in a fashion intended to fall well short of Beijing's preferred formula on recognition of its sovereignty.

Since a 1954 agreement between the People's Republic of China and Republic of India, the latter party has maintained that Tibet is an autonomous region of China. This was well before China officially designated Tibet as an "autonomous region" in 1965. Sino-Indian relations expert John W. Garver argues that "India's leaders ask why they should help Beijing consolidate its control over Tibet when Beijing has ignored its own 1954 implicit promises to uphold Tibetan autonomy. Indians also ask what they will get from China in return for helping Beijing break Tibetan resistance."¹⁴⁰ There is widespread public sympathy in India for the Tibetan cause, stemming from both humanitarian concerns and the belief that Tibet is historically part of the Indian cultural sphere. Tibet has thus emerged as a domestic political issue.¹⁴¹ At the same time, although the Indian government has repeatedly pledged to guard against "splittist" actions by Tibetan refugees, it has taken a liberal interpretation of what constitutes "anti-Chinese activities" within its territory. India not only tends to uphold its democratic values but also gains international approval by not restricting exile activities severely, asserts Garver.¹⁴²

One way in which the Indian government does restrict "anti-China" activities is by arresting exiles who stage public demonstrations in India. Some observers may view such arrests as an example of failure to uphold "democratic values," assuming that the protests are peaceful. For example, when Premier Wen Jiabao visited India in 2005, Indian police briefly placed under house arrest or arrested approximately one hundred Tibetan protesters from the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). The non-governmental organization supports the independence movement and claims to have over 30,000 registered members worldwide. Conversely, when Premier Wen came in December 2010, only six protesters were detained out of the hundreds that marched past his hotel. These and other events show that there are limits to Indian support for Tibetan aspirations.¹⁴³

For years, increasing numbers of Tibetan exile youth have grown exasperated with the government-in-exile for what they view as capitulation to the PRC government. The Middle Way Approach developed by the Dalai Lama in 1989 and promoted by Dharamsala advocates patience and compromise, and relinquishes the dream of Tibetan independence to press for "genuine regional autonomy" through direct negotiations with Beijing.¹⁴⁴ However, these youth argue that time – as well as their patience – is rapidly running out. Lobsang Dorjee, a TYC activist in Dharamsala, bitterly complained that "Fifty years have passed, and China has not changed its position on Tibet one inch. They [Chinese authorities] are more irrational than ever." He added, "The language they use to describe the Dalai Lama has become more and more extreme. The 'Middle Way' approach makes maximum concessions to China. In return, we get nothing."¹⁴⁵ The frustration expressed by many youth activists exacerbates fears among scholars and experts that upon the Dalai Lama's death and the loss of his restraining influence, youth both inside and outside Tibet may resort to violence out of a deep sense of desperation. Even the increasingly aggressive non-violent tactics of these activists have tested India's forbearance, and further escalation is likely to be met with a tougher response from the current Indian government.

Nonetheless, India's generally liberal policies remain critical to the sustainability of the international Tibet movement. These policies include allowing the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan exiles to travel around the world in support of Tibetan human rights and even independence from China. New Delhi issues the documentation necessary for these refugees to



leave and reenter India, meaning that their actions require “the active cooperation and tacit approval of the Indian government. Stated differently, Dharamsala’s fairly successful efforts to internationalize the Tibetan issue from the mid-1980’s onward were predicated on quiet but vital tacit support from New Delhi.”¹⁴⁶ Moreover, India continues to provide entry permits to newly arriving Tibetan refugees and allows them to be resettled among existing Tibetan communities, whose affairs—including governance, economic development, health care, education and religious matters – the Central Tibetan Administration manages in a largely autonomous fashion.

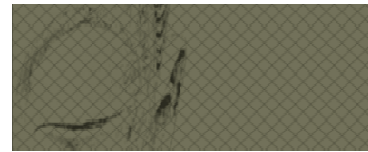
Despite his considerable and broadly supported efforts to establish a separate democratic political authority, Tibetans in Tibet and in the diaspora will continue to look to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as their leader. Likewise, his global stature is such that the 76-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner cannot escape his obligation as international spokesman for his people and their plight. He is one of the most famous and widely respected people in the world, and continues to keep a busy schedule of public appearances that attract huge numbers of people each year. The Republic of India has stated that it accepted the Dalai Lama as a refugee “in deference to his spiritual position” and given the historic cultural and religious affinity between India and Tibet.¹⁴⁷ Whether these statements are accurate is not as important as the fact that forcing the Dalai Lama and his government to leave India would cause infinitely more political problems for India than would allowing him to stay.

Beijing is well aware of the implications of India’s policy towards Tibetan refugees, and strongly criticizes what it perceives as continued Indian dismissal of its promises to China. The question remains how long-term engagement between India and China may actually affect what happens to the Tibetan exile government in the future. In Beijing’s view, the fact that New Delhi continues to host the Dalai Lama is in itself a glaring example of political, anti-Chinese activities on Indian soil. Tsering Shakya likewise argues that

The Chinese recognized that improvement in their relations with India was crucial for stability in Tibet. Despite India’s repeated claims that it does not support any demand for Tibetan independence, and that it would not allow the Tibetans to wage anti-Chinese campaigns on Indian territory, Beijing is well aware that this is merely diplomatic coyness.... In fact, hard-nosed Chinese analysts view the Dalai Lama’s campaigns abroad as an extension of Indian foreign policy and argue that India used Tibet as a wedge between Beijing and Washington.¹⁴⁸

China thus continues to place diplomatic pressure upon India to take a tougher line with the Tibetan refugees. It often uses bilateral statements to insist that India publicly state its support for the “one China” policy.¹⁴⁹ In January 2008, the two sides released a joint statement entitled “A Shared Vision for the 21st Century of the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China,” which contained the following language:

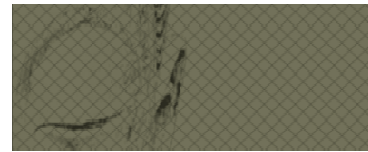
The Indian side recalls that India was among the first countries to recognize that there is one China and that its one China policy has remained unaltered. The Indian side states that it would continue to abide by its one China policy, and oppose any activity that is against the One China principle. The Chinese side expresses its appreciation for the Indian position.¹⁵⁰



Although the one China policy, one China principle, and so-called “Anti-Secession Law” are often assumed to refer specifically to Taiwan, these tropes can also possess broader implications. In this case, the Chinese may have wished to remind India that the Chinese Government will not tolerate “splittist” activities anywhere, including India, that promote the independence of any territories under Chinese control. India, however, has been careful to hew to a specific formula in discussing Tibet with China. While it has explicitly stated that it recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region as part of the People’s Republic of China, it avoids any discussion of pre-1949 historic Chinese claims over Tibet. Interestingly, the December 2010 joint Indo-Chinese communiqué failed to include any mention of the “one China” policy.¹⁵¹ It is possible that Beijing ceased to press New Delhi on the issue when the Indians drew direct comparisons between the “one China” policy and Indian claims in Jammu and Kashmir, claims that China is not ready to acknowledge due to its relationship with Pakistan.¹⁵² Although the most recent bilateral statement, like those preceding it, appears to essentially preserve the status quo, the reality is more complicated.

Recent decisions by the Dalai Lama seem likely to have both a tremendous and complicating impact on the future trajectory of the Central Tibetan Administration. Although Dharamsala has held direct elections for the post of prime minister, or Kalon Tripa, since 2001, the Dalai Lama had retained substantial political influence and authority. However, in light of the Dalai Lama’s long-anticipated announcement of complete retirement from political duties, the 20 March 2011 legislative and prime ministerial elections suddenly took on fresh significance among the 83,399 registered exile voters in the Tibetan diaspora. The Kalon Tripa, like never before, would emerge as the new face of the exile polity. For the first time since exile Tibetans began voting for the Kalon Tripa, they faced a genuinely competitive election between three non-monastic candidates: Harvard Law School graduate and research fellow Lobsang Sangay; former Tibetan official and Stanford University fellow Tenzin Namgyal Tethong; and long-time exile government official Tashi Wangdi.

Lobsang Sangay was declared the election winner on 27 April 2011. The new prime minister faces many challenges as leader of the Tibetan people. He has never served in the exile government, and lacks managerial expertise. He has not spent time in Tibet, and cannot speak Chinese. Lobsang Sangay will undoubtedly face great difficulties as he attempts to unify monks and laypeople, exiles and Tibetans inside China. As it does not recognize the government in Dharamsala, Beijing refuses to speak with any exile leader other than the Dalai Lama – although ironically, it hasn’t seemed particularly fond of speaking with him either.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, Dr. Sangay has repeatedly insisted he is ready to speak to Beijing. At the same time, he is moving ahead with certain policies affecting Tibetans in exile where he feels he can have an immediate impact. Unlike his predecessor, whose close ties to Indian establishment figures gave him a quiet entrée into key policy-making circles, Sangay is also new to Indian politics and is having to chart his own course there. Given the other pressures on this already delicate situation, his political inexperience – absent full support from those with better connections to Indian power brokers – could become a serious stumbling block.



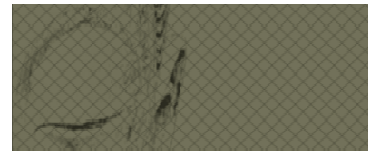
A Role for the United States?

Over the past twenty years, the United States has demonstrated relatively high levels of support for human rights and religious freedom in Tibet, as well as extensive political and financial support for the liberal policies of the Indian government. The President and congressional leaders should continue to meet with the Dalai Lama in order to address ongoing concerns and promote the general welfare of the Tibetan people, including through dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. It was beneficial for President Barack Obama to finally meet with the Dalai Lama in February 2010 and again in July 2011.¹⁵⁴ Yet, declining to meet with the spiritual leader in October 2009 – and doing so in such a clumsy manner – sent the wrong message to the Beijing. China has clearly demonstrated that it is willing to use occasional threats and intimidation to pursue a hard-line foreign policy agenda on the issues of Tibet, Xinjiang (East Turkestan), and Taiwan. The White House admitted that it deliberately avoided meeting the Dalai Lama to gain Chinese cooperation on issues such as economic policy and climate change prior to President Obama's trip to Beijing in November 2009. However, by canceling meetings with or avoiding exile leaders such as the Dalai Lama or prominent Uyghur activist Rebiya Kadeer, the United States consequently sets a poor precedent for the future¹⁵⁵. Such inconsistency gives the Chinese leadership the impression US support for Tibet is unprincipled, something the Chinese foreign ministry alluded to in labeling President Obama's most recent meeting with the Dalai Lama as an “unscrupulous trick of pragmatism.”¹⁵⁶

An official White House statement released following President Obama's 2010 meeting with the Dalai Lama was nevertheless laudable. The United States declared its “strong support for the preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity and the protection of human rights for Tibetans in the People's Republic of China” and commended the spiritual leader's nonviolent approach to finding a resolution to the problems plaguing the Tibetan people¹⁵⁷. The message was a rebuke to Beijing, an acknowledgment of U.S. displeasure with Chinese progress on promoting freedom and protecting human rights. It was also a reminder that all parties benefit from clear and open channels of dialogue, as well as a willingness to show sincerity and flexibility during official talks.

In July 2011, the Dalai Lama made an 11-day visit to Washington, D.C. to conduct a major religious teaching, the Kalachakra for World Peace.¹⁵⁸ A separate public event held on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol on 9 July attracted twenty thousand people.¹⁵⁹ His visit also provided an opportunity to meet with members of Congress, the State Department, and President Obama.¹⁶⁰ Robert Barnett notes that

Politically, this visit is interesting because it is probably the longest [the Dalai Lama] has spent in the U.S. capital, and because the other potential major player in the exiles' future have come too: the Gyalwang Karmapa, head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. This is only the second time the Indians have allowed the Karmapa to go abroad since he fled into exile in India in early 2000, an important figure since he is the only major lama recognized officially by both the Dalai Lama and Beijing. It's the first time he's been seen in the West alongside the Dalai Lama, so his role in DC is being keenly watched.¹⁶¹

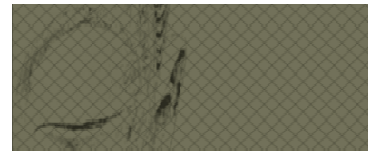


There was intense domestic pressure for the President to invite the Dalai Lama to the White House. At the same time, Beijing had repeatedly warned President Obama not to meet with the spiritual leader. Although a meeting ultimately took place at the end of the Dalai Lama's visit, it appears that the White House attempted to downplay the meeting to avoid unduly offending Chinese sensitivities. The two leaders met for approximately 45 minutes in the White House Map Room, rather than the Oval Office, where the President meets with heads of state.¹⁶² Journalists were neither granted access to the meeting nor given the opportunity to speak with the Dalai Lama directly afterwards. The official White House statement emphasized "the U.S. policy that Tibet is a part of the People's Republic of China and the United States does not support independence for Tibet," and that the "Dalai Lama stated that he is not seeking independence for Tibet."¹⁶³ While both statements accurately reflect the policies of Washington and Dharamsala, they were not present in the 2010 White House press statement. Despite these efforts to downplay the meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu reacted to the meeting with typically florid rhetoric¹⁶⁴, asserting that President Obama "grossly interfered in China's internal affairs, hurt the feelings of Chinese people and damaged the Sino-American relations."¹⁶⁵

Since President George H.W. Bush first met with the Dalai Lama in 1991, an American president's willingness to meet with the Tibetan spiritual leader has become a kind of code for determining the role of values in formulating policy toward China. The Tibetans understand the symbolic value of these meetings, but for them, these issues are deeply substantive and existential as well. As the Dalai Lama noted on the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "There cannot be peace and stability as long as there is oppression and suppression. It is unfair to seek one's own interests at the cost of other people's rights."¹⁶⁶

Given its continued position of global leadership, the United States will set the tone for others with its commitment to democratic freedoms and human rights. As such, Washington remains in the best position to raise with Beijing its responsibility to provide Tibetans with the meaningful autonomy and religious freedoms guaranteed under the PRC constitution and international human rights conventions to which China is a party or signatory. There is significant space between the cautious approach that the present administration has taken on Tibet and actions that would truly fall within a reasonable definition of interference in Chinese sovereignty. The administration should push back vigorously when Beijing's rhetoric takes on the tone of dictating U.S. policy for dealing with the Dalai Lama, or challenges the principled nature of U.S. interests in the Tibet issue.

Likewise, when the Fourteenth Dalai Lama passes away, the United States can play a positive role by lending political succor to the Central Tibetan Administration and Republic of India in the face of what is sure to be extreme Chinese pressure. Now that the Dalai Lama has announced his intentions, the United States should make clear its support for his right to determine the path of his own emanation or reincarnation. It is important for Tibetans themselves, including those in exile, to have the exclusive right to determine the mechanisms by which their religious leaders are selected, including high-level incarnate lamas. A principled stand on this issue will best serve U.S. interests. Moreover, non-Tibetans, including officials serving in the United States, Chinese, and Indian governments, should respect the Tibetans' efforts to separate sangha and state, and move forward on that basis. A policy of neutrality in the face of a Chinese government's assertion of the right to make these decisions is tantamount to acquiescence.



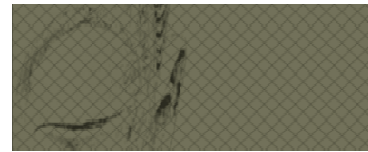
At the same time, U.S. policy makers should find meaningful ways to support the political representatives of the Tibetan people as well as their efforts to engage in meaningful dialogue with China, no less than they support these same efforts while the Dalai Lama officially leads them. Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, the previous Kalon Tripa; Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Kalon Tripa; and Mr. Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile all had the opportunity to visit with members of Congress and hold informal meetings with State Department officials during their July 2011 visit. Dr. Sangay subsequently held another successful visit to Washington in November 2011. Such opportunities allow both sides to share their thoughts and concerns as the exile government moves to fully consolidate its democracy, and should be continued in a more formal and regular fashion. “Establishing democratic institutions was not very difficult,” said Samdhong Rinpoche, “but establishing a democratic culture is harder.”¹⁶⁷ The United States should provide strong encouragement and reasonable, appropriate programmatic support – such as assistance through the National Endowment for Democracy – as the Central Tibetan Administration continues to transform itself into a liberal democracy.

U.S. State Department officials should continue to include Tibet-related issues in dialogues with their counterparts in India, in order to discuss how the two sides should work together to reduce regional tensions and the likelihood of future instability. Sustaining Track II dialogue also serves to further quiet diplomacy and benefit key players on all four sides. The United States should also prepare to accept a greater number of Tibetan refugees, as it is likely that more Tibetans will attempt to flee China or even potentially leave India and Nepal.

Principled Planning for an Uncertain Future

Tibetan Buddhists will undoubtedly feel tremendous grief at the passing of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; this traumatic event will cause great societal anxiety among the Tibetan community at large. Chinese attempts at manipulation of the selection process will only further inflame already high tensions between the PRC government and Tibetan people, which may subsequently lead to radicalism and outbreaks of violence. If recent history is any guide, Beijing will meet Tibetan resistance with overwhelming force and further repression. The resulting turmoil on the Tibetan plateau would likely lead to a surge in refugees fleeing to relative safety in India, and strong international condemnation of China's behavior. Such an outcome benefits no one, and it behooves Beijing to show due sensitivity and rethink its strategy. Restraint on the part of Beijing would also encourage calmer heads to prevail in Dharamsala and inside Tibet. Unfortunately, such restraint seems unlikely given the current trajectory and mindset of the leadership in Beijing.

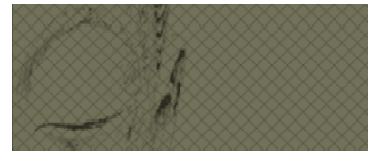
Following the Dalai Lama's death, China will undoubtedly place far greater pressure upon India to withdraw support for the Central Tibetan Administration. No one can speak for the Tibetan community better than the Tibetan people themselves, and the collapse of the democratic exile government would have dramatic repercussions, particularly if that community is already reeling from the loss of its respected leader. India would face the prospect of more than 100,000 disenfranchised Tibetan refugees within its borders, and the United States would undoubtedly



be called upon as part of the solution to their problems. It would also mark a tragic conclusion to the peaceful, democratic legacy the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has spent much of his life building.

The United States should preempt pressure from Beijing by standing firmly with India, including by continuing to acknowledge New Delhi's generosity; endorsing and supporting – including financially – Dharamsala's critical role in providing for and protecting its people; and forcefully addressing Tibetan human rights concerns with China. Moreover, the United States and India should have a frank discussion, both among themselves and with the exile Tibetan leadership, about the future of the CTA.

Now is the time for speaking frankly with Beijing about the consequences of its present policies, not least the destabilizing prospect of competing Dalai Lamas. As two states with significant historical and current interests in Tibet, India and the United States should lead this effort. At the same time, there are practical steps both the U.S. and India can take now to mitigate chaos at the time of the Dalai Lama's death, which will reduce the likelihood of missteps arising from Chinese pressure or ad hoc, crisis-driven policy-making. This is the best way for two of his long-standing friends to honor the legacy he has built with their support.



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- ¹ Cui Jia, “Dalai’s plan to retire nonsense: Tibet top official,” *China Daily*, 11 March 2011, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011npc/2011-03/11/content_12152735.htm>.
- ² See, for example, Dalai Lama’s speech to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 15 June 1988. Text available at <<http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/european-international-actions/his-holiness-dalai-lama-addresses-european-parliament-strasbourg-15-june-19>>.
- ³ Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 19.
- ⁴ Sonam Gyatso is generally considered to be the Third Dalai Lama, as his two predecessors in his reincarnation line were given the title retrospectively. The title is often misattributed as “ocean of wisdom” but “dalai” is generally understood to be the Mongolian translation of the word “ocean” (“gyatso” is the Tibetan word for ocean), and “lama” is Sanskrit for teacher.
- ⁵ Tuttle, 19.
- ⁶ Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 10.
- ⁷ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 329.
- ⁸ Crossley, 329.
- ⁹ Crossley, 330.
- ¹⁰ Tuttle, 19.
- ¹¹ Tuttle, 19.
- ¹² Evelyn S. Rawski, “The Qing Empire During the Qianlong Reign,” in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of the Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, ed. James A. Millward (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 18.
- ¹³ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 18.
- ¹⁴ Contemporary Chinese accounts generally assert that Qianlong issued the regulations in 1793.
- ¹⁵ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 19.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹⁹ “Golden Urn (AD 1793)”, Tibetan National Museum, Lhasa, <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/niallcorbet/6168586567/>>.
- ²⁰ Hanzhang Ya, *The Biographies of the Dalai Lamas* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1991), 87; 105-106.
- ²¹ “Statement of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, on the Issue of His Reincarnation,” (hereinafter, “Reincarnation Proclamation”) The Office of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, 24 September 2011, <<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/reincarnation-statement>>.
- ²² <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/niallcorbet/6168586567/>>
- ²³ Goldstein and Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 46.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 47-49.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 50. See Imperial Edict of 3 November 1908, translated from the Chinese Government Gazette.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-52.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 53-59.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 53-54.
- ³¹ Even after the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1951 and declaration of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1959, Britain acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet only in 2008 after declaring the concept of suzerainty to be an “anachronism.” See Warren Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); and Robert

Barnett, "Did Britain Just Sell Tibet?," *New York Times*, 25 November 2008, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/25/opinion/25iht-edbarnet.1.18137616.html>>.

³² See, for example, National Center for Tibetan Studies (China), *Regulations of the Republic of China Concerning Rule Over Tibet (1912-1949)* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1999).

³³ Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-49* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 84.

³⁴ The Tibetan search committee verified his authenticity as the true reincarnation using a number of traditional methods: he correctly identified a number of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's personal affects, including a set of prayer beads, walking sticks, and a drum. He also innately knew that Keutsang Rimpoche was a lama from Sera Monastery. Goldstein and Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 317-319.

³⁵ Goldstein and Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 319-322.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 322-323.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 322-323.

³⁸ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 30-34. Even today, the Republic of China constitution in use on Taiwan claims Mongolia and Tibet as ROC territories.

³⁹ Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 1-5; Melvyn C Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question," *The Atlantic Council of the United States' Occasional Paper*, 1995.

⁴⁰ Shakya, 4-5; Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 619-620.

⁴¹ An editorial that appeared in *Xinhua Bao* [New China Newspaper] on 2 September 1949 stated: "The Chinese People's Liberation Army must liberate the whole territory of China, including Tibet, Sinkiang [Xinjiang] and so forth. Even an inch of Chinese land will not be permitted to be left outside the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China. We tolerate no longer the aggression of the foreign countries. This is the unchangeable policy of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese People's Liberation Army." See Shakya, 8-9. The reference to "aggression" on the part of foreign countries concerns the Chinese belief that the Chinese Mission in Lhasa was expelled earlier that summer at the instigation of foreign nations such as Britain and India.

⁴² Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States."

⁴³ Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States."

⁴⁴ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 757.

⁴⁵ See the Tibet Justice Center website to view a variety of legal materials regarding Tibet: <<http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/>>. The Tibetans have claimed they signed the agreement under duress and that the representatives in Beijing were barred from contact with Lhasa during negotiations. See Tenzin Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), 63-65. Shakya and Goldstein specifically make the point that the agreement was signed without authorization from Lhasa. See Shakya, 70-7; and Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 770-772. Goldstein includes a detailed chapter on the Seventeen-Point Agreement in his book.

⁴⁶ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 763-765.

⁴⁷ For a more detailed account of Tibet during the 1950s, please see *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947* and Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet: Volume 2, The Calm Before the Storm, 1951-1955* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ In September 1954, state leaders received the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Erdeni and their entourage, who came to Beijing to take part in the first National People's Congress. In the front row, starting with the second from left are: Huang Yanpei, Ahang lan, Soong Ching Ling, Panchen Erdeni, Mao Zedong, the Dalai Lama, Liu Shaoqi, Li Jishen and Guo Muruo. Former Residence of Soong Ching Ling, No. 46, Houhai Beiyuan (Beijing, China), <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nozomiiqel/2071497222/#/>> .

⁴⁹ Shakya, 124-125.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵² See Shakya, 139-144 and Tenzin Gyatso, 104-105.

⁵³ Goldstein, "Tibet, China and the United States." See also Shakya, 186-208. For a primary source account, see Tenzin Gyatso, 131-143.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 238-251.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 241-242.

⁵⁶ Martinsen, Joel, "Some Photos from Woesser," *Danwei*, 3 August 2006, <http://www.danwei.org/internet/some_photos_from_woeser.php>.

⁵⁷ For information on the Great Leap Forward and other economic policies implemented in Tibet during this period, see Shakya, 237-262.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 319-322.

⁵⁹ Ch'ing Jung, "Socioeconomic Changes and Riots in Lhasa", cited in Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, 561.

⁶⁰ Shakya, 370.

⁶¹ See Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 61-63.

⁶² Report of the National United Front Work Conference, January 23, 1982, Minzu zhengce wenxuan [Selected Documents of Nationality Policy] (Urumqi: Xinjiang Renmin Chubanshe [Xinjiang People's Press], 1985), 10. Cited in Sharlho, "China's Reforms in Tibet: Issues and Dilemmas."

⁶³ Wang Yao, "Hu Yaobang's Visit to Tibet, May 22-31, 1980," in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, ed. Robert Barnett (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1994), 287-288. The reforms emphasized the need for real regional autonomy, the rehabilitation of purged cadres, economic reforms that would recognize the unique conditions of Tibet, plans to develop agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as science, culture, and education, and a renewed attempt to improve relations between Chinese and Tibetans.

⁶⁴ Sharlho, "China's Reforms in Tibet: Issues and Dilemmas."

⁶⁵ Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 75.

⁶⁶ Kerry Dumbaugh, "Tibet: Problems, Prospects, and U.S. Policy," (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2008), 16 <fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/103673.pdf>. Dumbaugh cites the five points which comprise the proposal: "transformation of all Tibet into a zone of peace; halting the transfer of large numbers of Han Chinese into Tibet; respect for Tibet's human rights and democratic freedoms; restoration of Tibet's environment and the halting of nuclear waste dumping in Tibet; and commencement of Sino-Tibetan negotiations on the future status of Tibet."

⁶⁷ Smith and Shakya.

⁶⁸ "The 14th Dalai Lama - Acceptance Speech," 10 December 1989, Nobelprize.org, <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1989/lama-acceptance.html>.

⁶⁹ Robert Barnett, "Authenticity, Secrecy, and Public Space: Chen Kuyuan and Representations of the Panchen Lama Reincarnation Dispute of 1995," in *Tibetan Modernities: Notes from the Field on Cultural and Social Change*, ed. Robert Barnett and Ronald D. Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 356-358.

⁷⁰ Robert Barnett, "Chinese Regulations and Procedures on the Panchen Lama Reincarnation: The Five Stage Procedure of 1989," Documents and Statements from Tibet, Tibet Information Network (TIN) *Background Briefing Paper 26* (London: TIN, 29 December 1995), 1.

⁷¹ Barnett, "Chinese Regulations and Procedures on the Panchen Lama Reincarnation," 1.

⁷² Barnett, "Authenticity, Secrecy, and Public Space," 357-359.

⁷³ Barnett, "Authenticity, Secrecy, and Public Space," 359-360.

⁷⁴ Barnett, "Authenticity, Secrecy, and Public Space," 361. In addition, see Tibet Information Network, "China admits holding Panchen Lama child 'for protection,'" TIN News Update, 1 June 1996.

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⁷⁶ Barnett, "Chinese Regulations and Procedures on the Panchen Lama Reincarnation," 1.

⁷⁷ Barnett, "Chinese Regulations and Procedures on the Panchen Lama Reincarnation," 1.

⁷⁸ Barnett, "Authenticity, Secrecy, and Public Space," 362.

⁷⁹ For contemporaneous official statement, see "Reincarnation of living Buddha needs gov't approval," *Xinhua*, 4 August 2007, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-08/04/content_5448242.htm>.

⁸⁰ See Kerry Dumbaugh, "Tibet: Problems, Prospects, and U.S. Policy" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2008) 7 <<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/103673.pdf>>.

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¹⁴⁷ Garver, 74-75.

¹⁴⁸ Shakya, 435.

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¹⁶⁰ See, e.g., “Speaker John Boehner and congressional leaders welcome His Holiness to United States Congress,” The Office of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, 8 July 2011, <<http://www.dalailama.com/news/post/703-speaker-john-boehner-and-congressional-leaders-welcome-his-holiness-to-united-states-congress>>; “US lawmakers to rally behind Dalai Lama,” The Office of Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, 8 July 2011, <<http://ros-lehtinen.house.gov/us-lawmakers-rally-behind-dalai-lama>>; “His Holiness meets Senate Foreign Relations Committee members and completes Kalachakra Preliminary Initiation,” The Office of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, 14 July 2011, <<http://dalailama.com/news/post/710-his-holiness-meets-senate-foreign-relations-committee-members-and-completes-kalachakra-preliminary-initiation>>; and “The President’s Meeting with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama,” The White House Blog, 17 July 2011, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/07/17/president-s-meeting-his-holiness-xiv-dalai-lama>>.

¹⁶¹ For further analysis, please see Amy Levin, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama Goes to Washington,” *The Revealer*, 15 July 2011, <<http://therevealer.org/archives/9045>>.

¹⁶² Please see Jackie Calmes, “Dalai Lama and Obama Meet to Talk About Tibet,” *New York Times*, 16 July 2011,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/us/politics/17prexy.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Dalai%20Lama&st=cs>; M.J. Lee, “Dalai Lama, Obama meet at W.H.,” *Politico*, 15 July 2011, <http://www.politico.com/politico44/perm/0711/a_holy_visit_3342f4a5-d1d2-41f7-b9a3-68d3e6393f19.html>; and “China Formally Protests Obama Meeting with Dalai Lama,” *Voice of America News*, 17 July 2011, <<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/China-Formally-Protests-Obama-Meeting-With-Dalai-Lama-125710273.html>>.

¹⁶³ Kori Schulman, “The President’s Meeting with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama,” *The White House Blog*, 17 July 2011, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/07/17/president-s-meeting-his-holiness-xiv-dalai-lama>>.

¹⁶⁴ “China voice strong indignation, objection to Obama-Dalai meeting,” *Xinhua*, 17 July 2011, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-07/17/c_13989714.htm>.

¹⁶⁵ North Korea rose to defend its ally by similarly protesting the visit. See “N. Korea slams Obama’s meeting with Dalai Lama,” *Yonhap News Agency* [Seoul], 18 July 2011, <<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2011/07/18/24/0401000000AEN20110718004800315F.HTML>>.

¹⁶⁶ Tenzin Gyatso, “Human Rights, Democracy and Freedom,” The Office of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, <<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/world-peace/human-rights-democracy-and-freedom>>.

¹⁶⁷ Samdhong Rinpoche, Roundtable on Tibet’s Democratic Transition, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, D.C., 14 July 2011. To learn more about the perspective of Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay, please see two of his articles on the Tibetan democratic experience in exile: Lobsang Sangay, “What China could learn from the Dalai Lama,” *Washington Post*, 4 July 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/what-china-could-learn-from-the-dalai-lama/2011/07/04/gHQAYBnByH_story.html>; Lobsang Sangay, “Tibet: Exiles’ Journey,” *Journal of Democracy*, 14.3 (2003): 119-130, <<http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/gratis/Sangay-14-3.pdf>>.