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Unheard Voices in the Trans-Himalayan Politics - Tibetan Reincarnation and the Larger Political Goal of CCP

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Abstract

This research paper through empirical research aims to analyze the unique tradition of the reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhism since the 11th century and the role of China. The first part of the paper will deal with the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the various traditional methods used to recognize the reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism starting from 11th century to present, as rituals are playing a vital role in the process of finding Trulku or reincarnation of enlightened individuals at the time of death of an individual. The second part will examine the role of CCP in Tibetan reincarnation through its state-approved religious laws, how CCP is planning to recognize the 14th Dalai Lama's reincarnation to fulfill the larger political goal of Chinese Communist Party. The third part aims to understand China's cultural assimilation policy in Tibet, similar to that of the 'Go West Han population' employed in Xinjiang.

Keywords: Sino-Tibet, Sovereignty, Reincarnations, Tulku, State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARS), Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

1. Introduction

In recent years the People's Republic of China (PRC) has shown itself increasingly willing to directly engage with reincarnation

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matters through the legislation of Chinese law. The Chinese position as encapsulated in remarks by scholars from important Chinese think tanks is that the Dalai Lama's reincarnation has to be approved by the Chinese government and selection has to be based on a combination of not just "*historical rules*" but also by current "*Chinese laws*". China tried keeping checks on the Lamas earlier through the Golden Urn method¹ during the Qing dynasty to select the reincarnations of Lama and enlightened individuals such as Dalai Lama and Panchen in the early century.

In the early 13th century, there was a cordial relationship between the Chinese emperor and high Lama of the Tibetans as they shared spiritual bonds. It was more like a Guru and disciple relationship as was evident when the fifth Dalai Lama visited Beijing in 1653 and established relations with the Qing Empire (Tuttle, 2005). In 1637, the Fifth Dalai Lama sought the help of his patron - the Mongol Prince - to intervene in Tibet in his favour, as the death of the fourth Lama had created tension between the Gelug and rival factions. Gushi Khan supported the Fifth Dalai Lama in this cause. Khan first visited Tibet as a pilgrim and then three years later, in 1640, he entered the country again with his troops and defeated all the powerful and rival Tibetan Armies and religious sects.

After taking control of all of Tibet, Gushi Khan presented the whole of Tibet to the Fifth Dalai Lama and made him both the spiritual and secular ruler of Tibet. In return, the Dalai Lama gave Gushi Khan the title of *Chokyi-Gyalpo* (king-according to-the-faith). The *Cho-yon* (*Priest-Patron*) relationship was once again applied to the governance of Tibet, this time with much more political authority for the Dalai Lama. Military assistance to the Gelug School enabled the Fifth Dalai Lama to establish political and spiritual control over Tibet which led to the birth of Ganden Phodrang². However the Fifth Dalai Lama's acknowledgment of the emperor as a source of authority never implied a concession to

¹ The Golden Urn method was through drawing a lot from a Golden vase and it was one tool to recognize the reincarnation of 10th Dalai Lama and 8th Panchen Lama and the highest Lama in Ghelupa School of Tibetan Buddhism.

² the Tibetan government that was established by the 5th Dalai Lama with the help of the Gushi Khan

a right of the emperor to interfere in Tibetan affairs, which is contradictory with present Chinese interpretation of the history (Schwieger, 2015). Moreover, it has nothing to do with the sovereign status of Tibet as a country. According to the author, the dominance of the Qing court over Tibet was based entirely on the Tibetan institution of reincarnation because at that time the Regulations of the Ministry through the *Tributary Territories* were quite popular in China.

As a part of their official policy of assimilation, China has even tried to increase Han migration in Tibetan region similar to what it did in Xinjiang through the “Go West Han Policy.” It was a core strategy of the PRC as part of its cultural assimilation policy and to absorb the ethnic minority into the mainstream of Han population. Special incentives are given to those Tibetans who marry descendants of Han origin like funding the education of their children, healthcare and other economic benefits by the State. And in the context of the religious faith, China is much more capable in building a favorable narrative in the international stage through manipulation and persuasion over Tibetan Buddhism. China claimed religious institutions should respect and protect the larger state interest of China and it cannot undermine the unification of the state and social harmony at large. To maintain its hegemony status, China subordinates the legitimacy of reincarnation through Chinese approved reincarnation of spiritual heads.

The method is more similar to Stalin’s sovietization principle to promote Russian nationalism. The process of Sinicization is so intense in the so called Tibet Autonomous Region and other areas the ethnic Tibetans inhabit. The Communist Party of China set up the committee called Democratic Management Committee in every Monastery institution across Tibet. The committee members employed are the officials of the Chinese Communist party and they monitor the daily activities of Monasteries and has even the power to decide who should be recruited in the Monastery. Those who go against their directive are forced to go for reeducation camp where indoctrination of the individual happens. They need to prove that they have fathomless loyalty and allegiance toward the communist party to come out of these camps.

2. Objectives

- To get familiar with the Schools of Tibetan Buddhism
- To understand the various traditional methods used to recognize the reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism starting from 11th century to present
- To understand the role of CCP (Chinese Communist Party) in the Tibetan reincarnation practice through its state approved religious laws
- To know China's cultural assimilation Policy in Tibet

3. Methodology

An analytical and empirical methodology is used for the purpose of this study. All available primary and secondary sources were consulted and analyzed in order to explain the objectives. Being largely analytical in nature, the thesis involves a lot of description on the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the traditional method each school uses to recognize reincarnation and the state approved religious laws of China by consulting primary and secondary sources. Field study was conducted to interview Tibetans, to understand their culture and perceptions.

3.1 The Tibetan Reincarnation system

The institution of reincarnation of Tulku³ is rooted in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism from the 11th century onwards; it is believed that all sentient beings have to go through the concept of birth, death, and rebirth (Sanskrit *Samsāra*) until the Nirvana. According to the religious belief of Buddhism, this cycle is endless and every sentient being passes from one to the other based on the moral behavior of the individual practitioner. In the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, the concept of attaining three bodies (Sanskrit

³ The term tulku is composed of two words *sprul* meaning (*emanation*) and *SKU* (*body*) meaning the emanation body of an enlightened being, derived from the Mahayana doctrine of Buddhism. The Mahayana Buddhism reached in Tibet around the 7th century from India and later on the 10th and early 11th century.

trikaya) of Buddha Sakyamuni was formulated, which defined the Buddha into three major elements (Goldstein, 1973)

- a) The true body of Buddha (Sanskrit dharmakaya) the eternal and cosmic body Buddha which embodies the supreme truth, the transcendent form of physical and spiritual body
- b) The body of enjoyment (Sanskrit Sambhogaya) the form of Buddha and bodhisattva in celestial realm and it can be perceived only by those who have reached a specific level of attainment
- c) Transformation body (Sanskrit nirmanakaya which used trulku in Tibetan language) the material body in which Buddha and bodhisattva appear to ordinary human beings and in which they could help reach the path of nirvana

The Tibetanization of Buddhism was started by the establishment of four Schools of Tibetan Buddhism in the form of institutionalization of Buddhism in Tibetan society and later the concept of reincarnation or trulku emerged as a unique feature of Tibetan Buddhist tradition which was slightly different from the rebirth of another sentient being within the saṃsāra⁴ cycle of existence. The concept of trulku is vested in the belief that those individual spiritually highly accomplished being and who has overcome from the cycle of existence could attain nirvana⁵, these spiritual figures or enlightened master could reincarnate in order to reach the path of complete nirvana usually venerated by believers as an emanation of Buddha and bodhisattva⁶. The extraordinary religious figures could be reincarnated by their compassion, realization of the Buddha's virtues and quality associated with these spiritual beings.

3.2 Schools of Tibetan Buddhism

The *Karma Kagyu* was the first school of Tibetan Buddhism that introduced the system of reincarnation lineage of their spiritual leader. After the death of *Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa* (1100-1193) the

⁴Sanskrit word *samsara* means "flowing on" or "passing through"

⁵It means to extinguish ignorance, hatred and earthly suffering. By achieving nirvana, you can escape **saṃsāra**, the cycle of reincarnation

⁶One who seeks awakening, an individual on the path to become Buddha.

founder of first school of Tibetan Buddhism known as Karma Kagyu School, his disciple recognized the reincarnation of their master in *Karma Pakshi* (1206-1283) who later became second Karmapa, a supreme leader of the Karma Kagyu School and this lineage has continued up to now with the 17th Karmapa (Miracle of HH the XVI Gyalwa Karmapa, 1989). The forefathers in the Kagyu lineage known also as the “*Golden Rosary*”, emphasized the continuity of oral instruction passed on from master to students. Before the establishment of the Karmapa lineage in Tibet, history has suggested that the Karmapa manifested in countless different emanations through centuries.

Some of the most prominent manifestations of the Karmapa are the *Great Brahmin Sahara* and *Padmasambhava* in India and many other emanations in Tibet; he has manifested from the 11th century until the present day. Each school of Tibetan Buddhism follow its own practice of reincarnations system and the Golden Rosary of the Kagyu Lineage was prominent in the Karma Kagyu School and the process of selecting next reincarnations was by providing instructions to a disciple to find the next lineage and communication between senior disciple and master about his /her next life. The first Karmapa *Dusum Khyenpa* left behind the letter of prediction with *Drogon Rechen*, his senior disciple providing details on the circumstances of his reincarnation. In addition to that, the teaching of the Karmapa has over the centuries been passed along from “ear to mouth” through the lineage of transmission from person to person. The prediction letter is the key to the identification of the next Karmapa as per the belief of Khagyu school lineage.

In the *Gelugpa School* the Dalai lama’s explanation of Trulku or reincarnated lama, the fourteen Dalai lama, follows three forms as the emanations of the body (Skt Nirmanakaya)

- 1) the supreme Emanation body like that of the historical Buddha,
- 2) the Artistic Emanation body for example in the form of Craftsman and
- 3) the incarnate Emanation body which could be non-human like a medicinal plants.

According to the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism, there is a major transmission of spirits of one enlightened being to another body. First, emanation belongs to the same stream of consciousness of the predecessors, second emanation who connect to the other person through the power of karma and prayer and third emanation who connected to others as a result of blessing and appointment. The institution of Dalai Lama has existed as a formalized politico-religious body since the 16th century, when the third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyaltsso who entered into a Priest- patron relationship with Mongol ruler Altan Khan (Klieger, 1991). According to Tibetan belief Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, a bodhisattva of compassion (Rehman, 2019). The purpose behind the adoption of the Tulku system in Tibetan Buddhism is believed to continue and complete the unfinished work of previous birth and carry forward a good legacy for the welfare of all the sentient beings and his devotees in particular.

The *Sakya School* of Tibetan Buddhism follows a different system of reincarnation where it is based on the blood-line method to inherit leadership in the monastery. It is led by an unbroken hereditary line of the spiritual master. They are three families who ruled the Sakya tradition and they act as the supreme leader of the School. The first family is Lha Rig literally meaning *celestial race* as they are believed to have descended from clear light heavens to the high mountain of Tibet. Others are Khon and Sakya. In accordance with *Atisha's prophecy*, the Sakya family lama believed the emanation of *Avalokiteshvara*, which meant the embodiment of Buddha's compassion, and the process of lineage is hereditary in nature with the transmission of teachings from father to son one after the other (Mullin & Shepherd, 2008).

3.3 The various traditional methods to recognize the reincarnation system in Tibetan Buddhism from 11th century to the present day

In the system of reincarnation of Lamas in Tibetan Buddhism, a collection of rituals play a vital role in the process of finding Trulku or reincarnation of enlightened individuals at the time of death of an individual. Many cases are noted from the hidden treasures through their past memories and unique qualities during childhood, for instance, calling the name of the monastery where

his/ her predecessors belong to, and there are several indications while recognizing the reincarnations.

a. The acceptances of Past and Futures lives

The Buddhist philosophers believed that there is no end-stage of the mind-stream of the human body even after the death of an individual. One's deeds of present life will be reflected in the future based on the law of Karma and cycle of existence theory. Therefore it is very essential to accept the past and future in order to reincarnate the individual, to refuse the past and future rebirth would be the contradiction to the basic Buddhist principle of the *ground, path and result*. This is a result of the disciplined and undisciplined mind of the individual. Nothing comes out without cause and condition, the Buddhist accepted that there is a connection between past, present and future. Reincarnation is the continuous process of the enlightened human mind from one individual to another being at the time of death of his/her predecessor and is based on the law of Karma theory (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, 2011). Some of the High Lama have given predictions before his death and it could be written or oral and clear or in the form of enigmatic language and as well as other symbols,, for an example in the case of the 1st Karmapa, he gave a prediction letter to his senior disciple just before he passed away and that prediction was used to recognize the Second karmapa Thondup⁷

b. The Lamas who tell about their previous lives

It is the common phenomena in Tibetan Buddhism that when extraordinary children are born, at a very young age, they could narrate their previous life and are able to recall his predecessor's name and recognize his predecessor's teachers and servants. Based on these indications reincarnation of enlightened individuals may be selected. Exhibiting unique quality during Childhood is also an indication of being a reincarnation of some high lama of that particular tradition.

⁷ For more see (www.kagyuoffice.org)

c. Tulku recognized by High lamas

High Lamas have a responsibility to recognize the reincarnations of a Lama. For example 14th Dalai Lama has recognized the 17th Karmapa based on the report of the search party and as well the special quality of child. It is a tradition in Tibetan Buddhism that high Lama has a role in recognizing the reincarnation of other spiritual leaders in their respective schools after their death (Terhune, 2004).

The prophecies in light of Tibetan Buddhism, there are many cases where the appearance of a Tulku is foretold by the great master many centuries ago. Within each school there are various methods to recognize the reincarnation of their respective religious or spiritual master from the 13th century till the 21st century. In Tibet, a tradition of recognizing such an incarnation or Tulku began in the 13th century and it continues to the present day. When a master dies he/ she may leave a precise indication of where he will be reborn. The close disciple or (Rinpoche, 2002) spiritual friends are responsible for his or her rebirth.

d. Golden Urn method

This method was used to recognize the reincarnation of Dalai Lama. It is a traditional procedural for selecting reincarnation by drawing lots from a Golden Vase. At the time of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933, the body of Tibet's spiritual leader was placed on a throne at Norbulingka, his summer palace in Lhasa. His body was placed facing south but overnight it turned to the east and pointing towards the east, a star-shaped fungus mysteriously formed on a pillar of the room. There were many symbolic indications that happen at the time of death as well as birth of a spiritual figure (The Economist, 2015).

The origin of the Golden Urn method can be traced from the conflict between the Tibetans and the Gurkhas (1791-93). The conflict led the Tibetan Government to call on Manchu military support. After expulsion of Gurkha force from Tibet with the assistance from Manchu military, Manchu proposed 29 points for effective administration of Tibet. (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, 2011), the Golden Urn one among them. To decide the reincarnation of Dalai Lama through picking a lot from the Golden

Urn., It was merely a procedure and was not a main element in recognizing the reincarnation. To recognize the 11th Dalai Lama it was not used as the authentic reincarnation source but it was announced as part of the procedure. Golden Urn was used only two times, during the 11th and 12th Dalai Lama's spiritual reincarnation procedure and it was dispense from 10th, 13th and 14th Dalai Lama. There was no evidence that the Golden Urn was being used in the 8th and 9th Dalai Lama reincarnation. Manchu empire involvement in the reincarnation process of Tibetan Buddhism early in the century shared more like a Priest-Patron relationship between Tibet and the Manchu and the relation was nothing which questioned the sovereign status of Tibet.

4. China's stance

a. On next Dalai Lama through its state approved religious laws

In recent years the PRC has shown itself increasingly willing to directly engage with reincarnation matters through the Chinese legislation. The Chinese position as encapsulated in remarks by scholars from important Chinese think tanks is that the Dalai Lama's reincarnation has to be approved by the Chinese government and selection has to be based on a combination of not just "*historical rules*" but also by current "*Chinese laws.*" (Bhutia, 2017) In 1951 the Chinese came up with a new legislature known as the *State Administration for Religious Affairs*, (SARA), a functional department under the State Council in charge of religious affairs to keep religion under state control. In 2007, the State Administration for Religious Affairs issued Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation (MMR) of Living Buddha's (International Campaign for Tibet, 2016). Now the State Administration for Religious Affairs has been placed directly under the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department. Order No. 5 of the MMR of Living Buddha's states that a Reincarnation Application must be filed by all Buddhist temples in that country before they are allowed to recognize individuals as tulkus.

Article 3 of the *Regulation of Religious Affairs* places importance upon the duty to 'safeguard the unification of the country'. The Constitution protects the right to believe or not to believe in religion (Article 36), and the rationale for state management for

reincarnation is that careful regulation protects wider social harmony, within which the freedom of religion operates. Under this new legislature on the reincarnation system it denied individual or any organizational use of religious activity in the public which disrupts the public order and interest of the state. Technically it meant that the Chinese policy is aimed to alter the long tradition or the originality of the Tibetan reincarnation system and place it in the legal framework of atheist communist government. This is ideologically incompatible with the founding principles of the atheist socialist state (Kellam, 2014) .

“China wants a tamed lama” (Bhutia, 2017) as pointed out by Professor Robert Barnett who is director of the Modern Tibet Studies programme at Columbia University. From the historical archive’s recorded China’s ambitions was very clear, China abducted six year old 11th Panchen Lama in 1995 after the Dalai Lama’s approval for exile and immediately China picked up another child as 11th Panchen Lama and forced Tibetans to worship him as true reincarnation of 10th Panchen Lama because the current Communist party assumed that they could rule Tibetans by controlling the spiritual leaders and modify the age old traditions in favor of communist party’s interest to further cement its sovereign or legitimacy over Tibet plateau (Central Tibetan Administration, 2019)

China’s target on Tibetan Buddhism was complete. From its occupation of Tibet in 1959, the communist organizers has dismantled all the religious institutions across the Tibet and forced the Monks and nuns to give up their Monkhood in the name of secularization of the religion based on the principle of state communism purported by chairman Mao and his red guards. During the Cultural Revolution the red guards completely destroyed the Monastery with a clear aim of wiping out the identity of its people as part of ‘One China Policy’ and occupied Tibet both physically and emotionally (Hillman, 2005).

China’s Foreign minister Geng Shuang has stated that “the reincarnation of the living Buddha is an institution of succession unique to Tibetan Buddhism and is governed by fixed religious rituals and historical conventions” (Shuang, 2019) but he also mentioned that the reincarnation system is respected and will be

protected by regulations, it literally meant that all the reincarnation will be approved by the Central Government directed by Communist party of People's Republic of China.

b. The Cultural assimilation policy of China in Tibet

Cultural hegemony functions by framing the worldview of the ruling class, and the social and economic structures that embody it, as just, legitimate, and designed for the benefit of all, even though these structures may only benefit the ruling class. Analyzing China's policy toward Tibet in realms like reincarnation and the practice of religious faith from the eyes of hegemony theory, one can argue that the cultural hegemony can be accepted only when 'spontaneous' consent is given by the great masses of the population. As a part of their official policy of assimilation China has even tried to increase Han migration in Tibetan region as it did in Xinjiang through the "Go West Han Policy". It was a core strategy of PRC's as part of their cultural assimilation policy and to absorb the ethnic minority into the mainstream Han population. Special incentives are given to those Tibetans who marry descendants of Han origin, they will get more benefit to their family like funding of the education of their Children, health care and other economic benefits by the state (Topgyal, 2018). And in the context of the religious faith, China is much more capable in building a favorable narrative in the international stage through manipulation and persuasion over Tibetan Buddhism. China has proclaimed that religious institutions should respect and protect the larger state interest of China and it cannot undermine the unification of the state and social harmony at large (Norbu, 2001). The Han Centrism policy's ultimate goal is to establish a monolithic society based on one particular ethnic value and undermine the existing social structure of the subordinated groups and redefine the tradition of them under its control. To maintain its hegemonic status, China subordinates the legitimacy of reincarnation by approving Chinese approved reincarnation of spiritual heads.

It is more similar to Stalin's sovietization principle to promote Russian nationalism, the party leadership called in for political indoctrination to focus on the Bolsheviks' ideology as forefront to construct a nation based on Russian identity where he set up the

Central Committee department of culture and propaganda and promoted Russian nationalistic approach over minority under its control (Brandenberger, 2010) which is same thing that has been reflected in Sino-Tibet conflict. The process of Sinicization is intense in the so called Tibet Autonomous Region and other areas ethnic Tibetans inhabit. The Communist Party of China set up the committee called Democratic Management Committee in every Monastery institutions across Tibet. The committee members employed are the officials of the Chinese Communist party and they monitor the daily activities of Monasteries and has even the power to decide who should be recruited in the Monasteries and those who go against their directive are forced to go for reeducation camps where indoctrination of the individual happens. They need to prove that they have fathomless loyalty and allegiance toward the communist party to be released from these camps.

c. 14th Dalai Lama and the Tibetans in exile stance on the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and the China fear factor

Dalai lama has said “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”. He has made it very clear that the issue of reincarnation is a personal business and a person who reincarnate has sole legitimate authority over where and how he/she takes rebirth and the process of the reincarnation is personal choice and no one else can force the concern person or manipulates the religious tradition of the Tibetan Buddhism since its inception in early 13th century. Dalai lama further stated on reincarnation that “When I am about ninety years of age 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” (Lama, 1997)

On the 6th July, 2019, there was an exclusive interview with the Dalai lama by “The Week” on various issues of his 60 years in India as refugee. When Namarata Biji asked about his next reincarnation, he stated that teaching of the Buddha is more important than reincarnation. Buddha himself has never reincarnated after his enlightenment but his teachings are still relevant even now. He also

mentioned that the system of Lama Institution has some connection with the feudal system. On the question of how lama institutions are connected to the feudal system, the answer was given by Goldstein, his reason was very simple that reincarnation has been used as a mechanism for political succession in the Tibetan political system for over many decades (Chonzom, 2015).

The features inherent in reincarnation as a mode of political succession in turn produced the political competition and conflict that were characteristic of the traditional Tibetan political system in the past history of Tibet. For Goldstein the major drawback in the lama institution started when it institutionalized the reincarnation process. Dalai Lama claimed that the lama institution is associated with the feudal system, when normally spiritual life is detached from the materialistic world and merely focused on the training of the mind and follows path of Nirvana. However in many cases some lama became so rich and the system of reincarnation is used as a method to get their way which does not serve the interest of the people and protection of Dharma and its values. Dalai Lama pointed out that "Institutions need to be owned by the people and not by an individual". There could also be a possibility that his statement was made in fears over the Chinese influence over the future Dalai Lama.

Tibetans in exile are now so much cautious about Chinese designed claim over their right to recognize the 15th Dalai lama through the legal framework known as *the Measures for the management of Living Buddha* by direction of United Front Department which monitored the Minority community under the people's Republic of China also connected to SARA (*State Administration for Religious Affairs*). This deceptive strategy of People's Republic of China, reminds the Tibetans the past history with what happened to the 11th Panchen lama, second highest lama from Ghelupa sect of Tibetan Buddhism who has been abducted at the age of six along with his parents by Chinese authority in his hometown in eastern Tibet. The Chinese authority instead picked one Tibetan boy and approved him as the real reincarnation of 10th Panchen Lama without any consent of spiritual practice and traditional procedures of reincarnations methods. Later on, it's become more evident that Chinese used their appointed Panchen Lama as a political tool to gain more

leverage over Tibet and their legitimacy over Tibet by putting into legal framework over the system of reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism.

Since 2007 meddling in the reincarnation of Buddhist Lamas has been the official policy of China. Tibetans under the direction of Central Tibetan Administration had called for two consecutive meetings in the month of October 2019 particularly on the *reincarnation and relationship between the Tibetan and the Dalai Lama institute*. On the first Special General Meeting, the representatives of Tibetan diasporas organizations from 24 countries around the world and 240 community leaders unanimously passed the specific resolution on the issue of the reincarnation of Dalai Lama and rejected Chinese allegations and meddling in the reincarnation of Dalai Lama and spiritual affairs of Tibetan Buddhism. It is the absolute right of Dalai Lama himself and his office *Garden Phordang Trust* to decide the reincarnation as per the practice of Tibetan Buddhism and its value. China's meddling in the issues of reincarnation and spiritual matters of Tibetan Buddhism has also been reflected in the 14th Religious Conference Organized by Department Cultural and Religious of Central Tibetan Administration based on the Indian state of Himachal, when the Spiritual Heads of four Schools of Tibetans Buddhism including Spiritual Head of native Bon religion of Tibet gathered for two days of intensive discussion on the reincarnation of Dalai Lama and carved out a future road map for survival of Buddhist tradition due to growing threat from the Chinese intervention and their cultural assimilation policy (Central Tibetan Administration, 2019).

The 14th Religious Conference passed unanimously the declaration known as Dharamsala Declaration which stated the inseparable karmic bond between the lineage of Dalai Lama and Tibetan people right from 1st Dalai Lama, Gedun Drupa in 1391 to present Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyaltso, who was born 1935. The Lama has shared a unique relationship and wish to the continuation of reincarnation institution of Dalai Lama for future, however the authority regarding the next reincarnation rest solely on the Dalai Lama himself. No government entity and individual has the right to interfere in this purely spiritual matter with over 800 years of Tibetan tradition. If the Government of People's Republic of China

for political ends choose a candidate for the Dalai Lama, 'Tibetan people will not recognize this and will never respect Chinese choice'. The method of identifying the next reincarnation should be the same as the unique traditional Tibetan method which has for over 800 years. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile made a statement on Chinese intervention in the reincarnation principle of Tibet stating "it is like Fidel Castro saying, 'I will select the next Pope, and all the Catholics should follow'".

China is becoming more and more assertive on their role to recognize the next Dalai Lama. When Sam Brownback, the US ambassador- for international religious freedom made statement about USA's support for Tibetans choice over next Dalai Lama, exactly two weeks later, the Chinese government through the Foreign Ministry spokesman 'Geng Shuang' condemned the US interference in 'China's internal affairs'.

5. Conclusion

All the above mentioned research findings points out that the future 15th Dalai Lama will be the major concern in the Politics of Trans-Himalaya area and in particular for Tibetan people's Struggle for freedom from People's Republic of China. The Central Tibetan Administration based in the Indian state of Himachal has expressed its concern over the post Dalai Lama period. The administration represents the legitimate political aspiration of six million Tibetan people who have been under China's occupation for the last 70 years. For Tibetans the Institution of Dalai Lama has a special significance in their national cause and his lineage has immense contribution in the history of Tibet from 1642. , Dalai Lama is a symbol of Tibet as a Nation and the identity of the Tibetan civilization. Thus Chinese Communist party believes that by controlling Dalai Lama they could establish checks over the Tibetan people and Tibet both emotionally and physically.

China's agenda for the reincarnation process of the next Dalai Lama and other spiritual masters of Tibetan Buddhism is not yet clear. However analysis can be drawn from the examples of 1995 abduction of 11th Panchen Lama at age of six and from the 2007

Chinese Legislation over reincarnation of living Buddha, under the order number five known as *Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism* (MMR). It is clear China is trying to have a direct intervention in the 800 years old tradition that Tibetans have been practicing; trying to undermine the credibility of the Spiritual faith of Tibetan people, through its state approved religious law.

Since 2010, China's talks with the Dalai Lama and his representative on the Tibet issue have come to a halt after the fruitless nine rounds of negotiation. His Holiness 'Middle way approach' is the only realistic solution for resolving the issue of Tibet. Without seeking independence for Tibet, the Central Tibetan Administration strives for the creation of a political entity comprising of the three traditional provinces of Tibet. Such an entity should enjoy a status of genuine national regional autonomy. This autonomy should be governed by the popularly-elected legislature and executive through a democratic process and should have an independent judicial system. As soon as the above status is agreed upon by the Chinese government, Tibet would not seek separation from, and remain within, the People's Republic of China. Until the time Tibet is transformed into a zone of peace and non-violence, the Chinese government can keep a limited number of armed forces in Tibet for its protection. The Central Government of the People's Republic of China has the responsibility for the political aspects of Tibet, international relations and defense, whereas the Tibetan people should manage all other affairs pertaining to Tibet, such as religion and culture, education, economy, health, ecological and environmental protection. The Chinese government should stop its policy of human rights violations in Tibet and the transfer of Chinese population into Tibetan areas; To resolve the issue of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall take the main responsibility of sincerely pursuing negotiations and reconciliation with the Chinese government.

Thus a workable solution can be achieved by having a positive approach towards the commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese people and in helping unite the vast spread of Tibetan diaspora. Finally by transforming the whole of Tibet into a zone of

peace and abandoning the population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans and respecting the Tibetan people's fundamental religious freedom, human rights and democratic freedom, a peaceful coexistence can be achieved.

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