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Rebirth Control in Tibetan Buddhism: Anything New?

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Motto:

As the Yellow Church inside and outside of China proper is under the supreme rule of these two men, all the Mongol tribes bear allegiance to them. By patronizing the Yellow Church we maintain peace among the Mongols. This being an important task we cannot but protect this religion.

Lama Shuo Pronouncement of Emperor Qianlong, 1792 AD

Chinese religious policy towards Buddhism in general

From the historical and cultural background (see below) it is obvious that the attempts to gain control over reincarnation and reincarnated religious authorities are a part of a broader context of both religious and secular politics which is not typical only to China and/or to the Chinese communism. In fact, there are only two possibilities for secular authorities when they try to control a society with a strong connection between worldly and religious affairs.

The first of them is to control numerous monks, which was more or less successful during the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Nowadays, in those parts of ethnic Tibet which are controlled by China, there are 46 000 monks in 1700 monasteries (Ma Rong, pp. 149 and 158). This is a relatively small number in comparison with 750 000 monks estimated by Das in the 19th century or 250 000 of monks estimated by Dalai Lama in 1959 (for details, see Ma Rong, pp. 149 and 158).

The second method used to control religion is to control religious authorities. The Chinese approach to Tibetan religious authorities is also a good example of different cultural patterns. In China, save some exceptions,¹ there was typical to perceive religion as a source of power competing with power of the ruling dynasty. In Tibet, religion was understood to be, if not as the source, then as the essential complement of the secular power and the connection between religion and politics was for Tibetan society typical. For Tibetans, no reduction of monastic community and repressions or verbal assaults against its religious authorities are acceptable and this may be the reason why the attempt to replace the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (who was recognized by the 14th Dalai Lama) with the candidate recognized by the government of PRC (i.e. Gyaltzen Norbu) in 1995 failed.²

¹ This happened mostly when the ruler overtook power in unusual manner (Slobodník 2007, pp. 32).

² See e. g. : BBC. "Tibet's missing spiritual guide." BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4551425.stm> (accessed July 27, 2014).



There may be said that the attempts to choose tulku according to a current political situation are quite typical even in the Tibetan policy which was recognized by the Chinese long time ago. In this context, current Chinese attempts to gain control over the choice, education and next rebirth of tulku is a logical continuance of the older Tibetan policy, adopted by the Qing and Guomintang, and adjusted by the PRC according to the traditional Chinese understanding of religion as a rival (or at least a parallel source of power) for the central government. When the influence of China in Tibet shifted from a formal suzerainty to the total control, it led firstly to the restriction of monastic communities and when the monastic communities became weaker (e.g. through forced laicization, murders, imprisonment, introduction of stricter rules for entering the monkhood, and strengthening the control in monasteries),³ it was to be expected that the next step would be intensifying the control over religious authorities including tulku.

My intention in this paper is to demonstrate that influencing the choice of tulku was and still is a commonly used political instrument in both Tibet and China. This fact can be seen from how both sides act and operate even today. The best method how to support this statement is – in my opinion – firstly, to examine the role of tulku in the traditional Tibetan society and, secondly, to study the precedents showing what influenced the choice and rebirth of particular tulku.

Some notes to the term tulku and the role of tulkus in traditional Tibetan society

Before dealing with political aspects of controlling the tulku, it is necessary to explain briefly at least some etymological aspects of the word tulku (Tib.: *sprul sku*)⁴ and the role of tulku in the Tibetan society, religion and politics.

The word tulku is compounded from two words tul and ku. Probably the closest English translation of the word tul (Tib.: *sprul* or *'phrul*) can be “miracle”, but this miracle is in the Tibetan context connected with transformation, appearing or manifestation of something.

³ At the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976 only 800 monks and eight monasteries left in Tibet (Ma Rong 2011, pp. 158).

⁴ Tibetan term tulku was used to translate Sanskrit term *nirmANakAya*, which means one of three bodies of the Buddha, but searching of the tulku as a successor to a monastic post is typical Tibetan feature (van Schaik 2011, 89-90). Other problem is that the words tul (Tib.: *phrul* or *'phrul*) and ku (Tib.: *sku*) are old polyvalent terms used also in other contexts. The fact, that somebody is a tulku, is mostly possible to recognize from title The Precious (Tib.: *rin po che*) added to his name (e.g. Butcher 2013, pp. 16). About tulkus in detail see e.g. Tucci (1988, pp 134-135), Kolmaš (2009, pp. 199) or Werner (2008, pp. 309-310).



Therefore scholars use the collocation “miraculous manifestation” (Berounský 2010, pp. 16). Tibetan emperors were addressed *phrul gyI lha btsan po* which means “Emperor, miraculously manifested deity.”

The term *tul* (Tib.: *sprul*, in Old Tibetan often *‘phrul*) itself is rather old⁵ and it always had a political subtext. Walter (2009, e.g. pp. 112) argues that in the Imperial Period of the Tibet’s history the Tibetan emperors, who also used title The Mighty One (Tib.: *btsan po*), were considered as a manifestation of ancestral deities or spirits called *lha* (Tib.: *lha*), which is nowadays a word used for both Buddhist deities and *tulkus*.⁶ These spirits were probably local deities connected often to mountains or lakes and also to clans residing in the area.⁷ During the Early Spread of the Teachings (i.e. Buddhism; Tib.: *bstan pa snga dar*)⁸ was this concept of the divine emperor reshaped and the divinity of emperor was connected to Buddhist deities - mostly bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (skrt.: Avalokiteśvara; Tib.: *Spyan ras gzi*s).⁹

The connection of the Buddhist concept of *tulku* with the old concept of the Tibetan emperor as a ruler of the strong and expansive military state may be in current perceptions sometimes underestimated. But it is probably not possible to deny the fact that almost all native rulers or influential politicians in the Tibetan history acted like continuators of the old Tibetan empire (i.e. period approx. 600-850 AD).¹⁰ For example, when in the 14th century the governor of Phagmodru Jangchub Galtzen (Tib.: *Byang chub rgyal mtshan*) in fact overthrew the Sakya administrators supported by Mongols (Tuttle, Schaeffer, pp. 256), one of his first steps was

⁵ Its first known appearance was in inscriptions on stelae in Chyongye (Tib.: *’Phyong rgyas*) and Karchung (Tib.: *Skar chung*) from the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. For details and translation see Richardson (1985) or Old Tibetan Documents Online. <http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/archives.cgi> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁶ For *tulkus* is this word used in common language. In literary Tibetan has this word meaning “god” an is connected to one of the Six classes of beings (Tib.: *rigs drug*; i.e.: gods, semi-gods or “those who are not gods”, humans, animals, so called hungry ghosts or pretas and beings dwelling in various hells).

⁷ Even nowadays have the “ordinary“ *tulkus* strong connection with local monastery and lay community. The most important *tulkus*, who belong often to leaders of Tibetan Buddhist schools or sects (like Karmapas or Dalai Lamas), have and ever had more international and interregional character connected with expansion of their schools.

⁸ In this article is used terminology and periodization created by Buton Rinchendrub (Tib.: *Bu ston rin chen grub*), famous Tibetan scholar from 14th century who is considered as a one of most important authorities in traditional Tibetan historiography. According to his opinion was this period approximately between 600 and 842 AD. For further information about periodization of Tibetan history see Cuevas (2006).

⁹ In detail see Walter (2009).

¹⁰ In this historical period were Tibetans one of the mightiest powers in Central Asia. Their state was a military empire which controlled area from Hindukush in the west to Ordos in the east and from Himalaya range in the south to Tien Shan in the north. Tibetans even in 763AD conquered Chang-an (nowadays Xi-an) which was the capital of the Tang dynasty in China. In literature is this period often called Imperial Period (Tib.: *btsan po ’i dus skabs*).



to create a new legal code which strongly resembled that of the old Tibetan empire,¹¹ accepting its dress code and expelling those who took over the Mongol language and customs (van Schaik 2011, pp 88-89).

Even lineages of local rulers in the Tibetan cultural area tried to connect themselves to heroes of the Tibetan empire. As an example may serve the case of the kings from Derge (Tib.: Sde dge) in the eastern Tibet who presented themselves being related to the famous Gar (Tib.: Mgar) clan (van Schaik 2011, pp 161).¹²

When Dalai Lamas¹³ became influential religious leaders (i. e. in 15th century), they continued in supporting the strong connection between religion and politics which is typical for the Tibetan society. This connection may be clearly seen in the term *chos srid lugs gnyis* which means “a system of religion and government” or “the religious and the secular”. Originally there were two representatives of the state. The first one should be a secular king and the second one was a highly religious person.¹⁴ In the 17th century, the role of the former became more or less formal and restricted to a military intervention - if need be. Thus the *chos srid lugs gnyis* became *chos srid gnyis ldan* which means “[the one] having the [both] religious and secular”. Richardson (1984, pp. 11) claims: “Church and state was almost interchangeable terms and all political matters were looked on as subordinate to the needs and interests of religion.” One of the Dalai Lama’s titles is thus *bod ljongs chos srid gnyis kyi mnga’ dbang* which means The possessor of Tibet’s religious and political [power]. For this political terminology in detail, see Slobodník (2007, pp. 21-22).¹⁵

¹¹ Exactly said it resembles the traditional image of this legal code, because in text provably written in the Imperial Period are only a few laws concerning less important legal situations (like hunting, theft or indemnities for dog-bite). In detail see: “Old Tibetan Documents Online.” Old Tibetan Documents Online. <http://otdo.aa.tufts.ac.jp/archives.cgi> (accessed July 27, 2014).

¹² This clan was very influential in the 2nd half of 7th century. Founder of its glory was famous Gar Tongtsen Yulzung (Tib.: Mgar stong rtsan yul zung) who served as a great minister of king Songtsen Gampo (see note 11). His sons were regents and ministers as well and in fact ruled Tibet till 696AD.

¹³ The title Dalai Lama came from Mongolian and it was conferred to the 3rd Dalai Lama by Altan khan in 16th century. Tibetans mostly prefer using other titles like Gyalwa Rimpoche (Tib.: *rgyal ba rin po che*) or Kundun (Tib.: *sku mdun*), but in this work will be used this title, which is the most widespread and known in the West.

¹⁴ This relationship between patron and lama was typical for relationship between Mongol princes (later Yuan emperors) and Tibetan religious masters since 13th century (in detail see Petech 1990, pp. 10).

¹⁵ It is necessary to point out, that the Dalai Lama even though he or his administration held the real power is not a formal head of the Gelug school. From the monastic point of view is more important the abbot of Ganden (Tib.: Dga’ ldan) monastery. This man is mostly older distinguished scholar who is chosen by election and has a title The holder of the Throne of Ganden (Tib.: *dga’ ldan khri pa*). But his role as a head of whole Gelug order and the direct successor of its founder Tsongkhapa (1357-1419; Tib.: Tsong kha pa) is since 17th century more or less formal. E.g. he used the same insignia (in detail see Cybikov 2001, pp. 227) as Dalai Lama only once a year on Monlam festival (Tib.: *smon lam chen mo*). From other point of view Panchen Lama is considered as more important than Dalai Lama because he is an incarnation of Buddha Amitabha (Tib.: 'Od dpag med) while Dalailama is “just”



It is also no coincidence that the Potala palace (Tib.: Rtse pho brang) built by the famous fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (Tib.: Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho; 1617-1682), who became the ruler of Tibet in 1642, was built on the same place where, as a legend has it, the ruins of the palace of the Emperor Songtsen Gampo¹⁶ stood (Tib.: Srong btsan sgam po). The political message of this conduct is more than obvious: “The same being ruled Tibet at the times of its enormous glory and now will rule it again as the Dalai Lama lineage.”

This connection of religious and state affairs, which is typical for the Tibetan society (Slobodník 2004, pp. 112-113), was also recognized by the British intelligence in the 19th century. In one confidential report for information of the director of military intelligence (Bower 1893, p. 1) there is written that the head of the Tibetan government in both temporal and spiritual matters is the Dalai Lama but in fact the most powerful person may be the governor.¹⁷

When the position of important tulkus was successfully established, searching for local tulkus became modern and since the 19th century it was a matter of prestige for each monastery to have its own tulku. In 1959, there were estimated more than 500 tulkus in Tibet (Maraini 2005, pp. 135). Except for prestige and religious duties, tulkus also play an important political and economic role in the Tibetan society. These roles will be described below.

Transition of power and searching for tulkus

When religious persons were obtaining more and more worldly power and became the de facto rulers of Tibet (or at least influential politicians), the matter of their succession

reincarnation of bodhisattva (see Bell 2000, pp. 190). First Panchen Lama Khedrup Gelek Pelzangpo (Tib.: Mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang po) was also direct disciple of Tsongkhapa and after his death he took part at education of the first Dalai Lama. And the subordination of the student to the teacher is in Tibetan Buddhism taken for granted.

¹⁶ Songtsen Gampo is a nickname meaning Songtsen the Wise. Real name of this ruler was Tri Songtsen (Tib.: Khri srong brtsan). He died in 650AD and his birth date is not known exactly. He was probably born between 609 and 613 (Richardson 1965, pp 8). Both Songtsen Gampo and Dalai Lama are considered being manifestation of bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. To the connecting rulers to deities in detail see Brauen (2005, pp. 24).

¹⁷ In Tibetan was this official called desi (Tib.: *sde srid*), which is nowadays translated as a regent. Some of these men were the real rulers of Tibet in the meantime between the rebirth and growing up of the Dalai Lamas.



became vital. Sometimes it was solved through kinship. Older tantric masters were in fact landlords and they did not have to live as celibate monks, so they transferred their wealth¹⁸ and social position to their heirs. When mass monasticism prevailed and basic schools of Tibetan Buddhism were distinguished (in 11th century; for more details see Werner 2008, pp. 305-306), there were basically three possibilities how to transmit the political power and prestige.

The first possibility can be found in the Sakya tradition where the leadership is being transferred in the Khon (Tib.: Khon) family from 11th century up to the present, usually from uncle to nephew.¹⁹ The leader is called Sakya Trizin (Tib.: *sa skya khri 'dzin*) i.e. the Holder of the Sakya Throne. The current Sakya Trizin is the 41st in the lineage and among the followers of Sakya tradition he is sometimes considered to be the second most important spiritual authority of Tibet.²⁰

The second possibility is acquiring power through education. Traditional Tibetan monastic education is very demanding and to graduate from a monastic university takes often between fifteen to seventeen years. The choice based on scholarly reputation was used mostly when choosing abbots (Tib.: *mkhan po*) for great monasteries with thousands of monks (Tib.: *dgon sa*) in the Gelug tradition like Ganden (mentioned above), Sera (Tib.: *Se ra*), Drepung (Tib.: 'Bras spung), Labrang (Tib.: *Bla brang*) and Kumbum (Tib.: *Sku 'bum*) or rectors for particular colleges (Tib.: *grwa tshang*) at monastic universities.²¹ It was no wonder that these men were often more than sixty years of age when they took charge of their position.

Finally, the third possibility how to gain power was to be a reincarnated master i.e. tulku. The tradition of tulkus began in the 13th century in the lineage of Karmapas when Karma Pagshi (Tib.: *Karma pak+Shi*) was recognised as a successor of Dusum Khyenpa.²² This custom has been practised in all main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism since the 14th century where authorities are usually fully ordained monks (Tib.: *dge slong*) living in celibate. It is typical for the Karma Kagyu and Gelug schools, i.e. schools which put emphasis on monastic life and discipline.

¹⁸ At the beginning of the Later Spread of the Teachings (Tib.: *bstan pa phyi dar*) were the tantric teachings very popular and for their transmission were paid enormous sums of money.

¹⁹ According to circumstances is possible for Sakya Trizin to marry and have son when is necessary to preserve the lineage. This was also case of the father of current Sakya Trizin.

²⁰ See e.g.: "SAKYA History." Prominent Teachers. <http://www.sakyaling.de/sakya-history/> (accessed July 27, 2014).

²¹ It seems that even in this case tulku might be preferred (Duncan 1998, pp. 172).

²² The case of Karma Pagshi is not so clear because he was born more than ten years after Dusum Khyenpa. In ordinary people is expected the rebirth after forty nine days, in the case of bodhisattvas is this period longer (usually up to two years), but ten years is unusually long period. Apart from that in Tibetan sources is more often that tulku used term *las can* which means [someone] who has karmic [link] (in detail see Berounský 2010, pp. 22).



When an important tulku feels that his decease is soon possible, he sets up instructions for searching his next rebirth.²³ After his decease and funeral,²⁴ it is necessary to wait for some time because tulkus may spend more time in the intermediate state (i.e. state between death and rebirth; Tib.: *bar do*) than ordinary people. After approx. one year, the tulku is reborn (the cases of two years for Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are rather exceptional). Then it is necessary to wait until the child grows up to be able to pass the tests. In the meantime, astrologers (Tib.: *rtsis pa*) and oracles (Tib.: *sku khog* or *lha pa*) are consulted.²⁵ Their calculations or advice may later help the searching party. When at least some indications seem to be obvious, the searching party (in case of important tulkus, there may be more than one party²⁶) begins to search for the child who meets the said signs.²⁷ Someone from the searching party may also have a dream or vision which can be a hint where to search.²⁸ When the searching party feels that some child may be a proper candidate, they examine his body looking for particular physical signs (e.g. prolonged years; for all signs, see Bell 2000, pp. 161). Then the child has to pass tests based on recognising objects from the property of the deceased tulku (e.g. rosaries, prayer wheels, articles of daily use).²⁹ If the child passes the tests, the recognition must be approved.

²³ These instructions can be various. For example in the case of 7th Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso was one of songs of 6th Dalai Lama regarded as prediction of his birthplace (see e.g.: "The Dalai Lamas." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. <http://www.dalailama.com/biography/the-dalai-lamas#7> (accessed July 27, 2014; full text and commentary see Sørensen 1990, pp. 251). Translation can be e.g.: Oh you white crane, borrow me your wings, I won't fly too long, just circle Lithang [i.e. my next birthplace] and return [back to Lhasa]. Problem is that the number of songs ascribed to 6th Dalai Lama may be more than four hundred (Brauen 2005, 101) and significance of this song was recognized retrospectively.

²⁴ This may be different. Some tulkus are embalmed and preserved in a special stupas (this is also case of Dalai Lamas), some are cremated (e.g. Karmapas). Other types of burial (feeding the vultures, burial in earth or in water) are not usual for reincarnated masters, but it will be probably possible to find exceptions, because in Tibet is a matter of burial solved individually by astrologer after the death.

²⁵ In the case of Dalai Lamas is used so called Nechung oracle (Tib.: Gnas chung chos rje) who is possessed by deity named Pehar (Tib.: Pe har; in detail see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996, pp. 444-455). Sometimes was used also the oracle in Samye monastery (Tib.: Bsam yas; Bell 2000, pp. 160).

²⁶ This sometimes led to finding more candidates. E. g. in case of 10th Dalai Lama was the reincarnation chosen from five boys (Žagabpa 2000, pp. 155).

²⁷ I.e. who was born after the tulku's decease (but this is not necessary), whose birth was accompanied by special signs (e.g. rainbow is popular in this context) and who fits the instruction of deceased tulku (e.g. tulku gives first names of mother and father) and the calculations of astrologers and prophecies of oracles. Other signs are also possible. E.g. the embalmed body of 13th Dalai Lama allegedly turned its head in direction where the 14th Dalai Lama was later found (Gjamccho 2011, pp. 19).

²⁸ Well described are the visions connected with searching of 14th Dalai Lama. In the case of Dalai Lamas the searchers was used to look in the lake Lhamo Latso (Tib.: Lha mo bla mtsho) and in this case were seen the Tibetan letters *a ka* and *ma* and then three-storey monastery and finally a small house which was later recognized as the birthplace of current Dalai Lama (Gjamccho 2011, pp. 19; Brauen 2005, pp. 163; Maraini 2005, pp. 137-138).

²⁹ Passing the test is a bit tricky moment too. For example the 5th Dalai Lama confesses in his autobiography that he probably didn't pass this test (van Schaik 2011, pp. 119).



One special case is a document of the Chinese Emperor Qianlong from 1793 which states that important tulkus (i.e. mostly Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama³⁰) should be chosen from appropriate candidates by a lot pulled out a golden urn especially made for this purpose. The drawing took place in Jokhang (Tib.: Jo khang better Gtsug lag khang; the main temple in Lhasa) and it should have been carried out by an Amban (i.e. a Chinese official in Lhasa). This is often presented as a proof of the Chinese sovereignty over Tibet but it was more or less a formal procedure (Slobodník 2007, pp. 42) and it was not used when the 9th, 13th and 14th Dalai Lamas were chosen. So this rule was applied in a half of cases. A similar golden urn was in Beijing and it was used to choose Mongolian tulkus. The aim of such an arrangement was obvious. The Qing emperors wanted to prevent the concentration of power in hands of anybody (e.g. from aristocracy) who was able to influence the choice of important tulkus and thus to strengthen the ties between some noble families and religious institutions in both Tibet and Mongolia.

As all these methods may differ for each tulku, they give a lot of leeway in the decision making who the next tulku will be. Divination and/or statements of the oracles have many interpretations and visions or dreams of the searchers cannot be shared. The signs which accompanied the birth of the child are mostly realised ex-post when the child is about three years old and when it is clear that he will be possibly chosen as a tulku. Also the choice of particular objects from the property of the previous tulku depends on a relatively small number of eyewitnesses. Bodily signs are sometimes not so significant when the tulku grows up. All these facts can be easily affected by wishes or interests of the searchers and by the ambitions of the child's family or disputed by another searching party or a politically influential group. This is probably the reason why the tulku, after having been searched out, should be somehow approved. As to my best knowledge, there is no general rule to define who will be the authority entitled to approve the tulku.³¹ Tibetan Buddhism has no highest authority, therefore the best practice would be to approve an important tulku by other famous tulkus of his tradition (sometimes also by tulkus of other traditions), by government and by the great monasteries. Needless to say, only if all influential groups including the public agree on the candidate. This may be seen in the case of Ngawang Yeshey Gyatso (Tib. Ngag dbang ye shes rgya mtsho) declared in 1707 by Labrang Khan as the 6th Dalai Lama. He should have replaced Tsangyang Gyatso (Tib.: Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho) who died under strange circumstances and who was very popular despite his liking for women, drinking, poetry and archery.³² It is said that ordinary Tibetans never accepted this enforced replacing

³⁰ In less important tulkus was this system used irregularly (Slobodník 2007, pp. 42)

³¹ E.g. tulkus in Labrang monastery were according to tradition approved by Jamyang Zhepa (Tib.: 'Jam dbyang bzhad pa) who was considered most important tulku in the monastery (Kozlov 1929, pp. 370).

³² Very popular was e.g. his poetry which is very well known among the Tibetan people even today (see e.g. Sørensen 1990).



and everybody addressed him Kusho Yeshey Gyatso (Tib.: *sku shogs Ye shes rgya mtsho*), i.e. Mr. Yeshey Gyatso.³³ This will be unimaginable when speaking about Dalai Lama.

Political and economic roles of the tulkus and some risks connected with them

Apart from the religious role in the Tibetan society like religious education, performing rituals, giving blessings (Tib.: *byin rlabs gnang*) etc., tulkus have two other spheres of activities. These are economic and political. Every tulku had his labrang (Tib.: *bla brang*) which means a residence or an estate. This was an institution whose goal was to administer and manage the tulku's property while all the new wealth acquired by the current reincarnation was added to this labrang (Goldstein 1992, pp. 35). Labrangs of important tulkus were enormously rich especially when the tulku served as a regent³⁴ of Tibet (Tib.: *sde srid*) when Dalai Lama was still too young. It was considered to be absolutely inappropriate for tulku to take care of economic matters himself, therefore labrangs were administrated and managed by laymen or monks of a lower rank within the religious hierarchy. Another important economic activity of tulkus was collecting alms (Tib.: *ldum bu*) from faithful people. Tibetan Buddhism considers giving religious gifts as one of ways to accumulate merits and that is why tulkus travelled and collected money, animals, food and other things. In religious biographies (Tib. *rnam thar*) and autobiographies (Tib. *rang rnam*) such activities of particular masters are often mentioned. Tulkus were also given many gifts from people visiting their monasteries.

Apart from economic influence, the tulku has also a political role. Not only he may have the same estate as many noblemen³⁵ but he was also involved in the state affairs.³⁶ The political

³³ This may be understood as well as Father Yeshey Gyatso, because the Tibetan term *sku shogs* is used also to address a monk (but not a reincarnated master or ecclesiastical dignitary).

³⁴ Regent was very often monk (Richardson 1984, pp. 20). Later the monastic segment (i.e. mostly conservative huge monasteries) insisted that regent should be only tulku (Goldstein 1992, pp. 365). Other cases of rich and influential tulkus from Kumbum monastery see Cybikov (2001, pp. 33) and Labrang monastery see Kozlov (1929, pp. 41-42).

³⁵ In Central Tibet traditionally more than 40% of arable land belonged to clergy (Slobodník 2007, pp. 26).

³⁶ A typical case of an economically and politically active tulku is Retting Rimpoche (Tib. *Rwa sgreng rin po che*) who was a regent between 1933 and 1941. During this period his labrang not only became one of the largest wool traders in Tibet but it also acquired additional estates as a reward for searching the 14th Dalai Lama (Goldstein 1992, pp. 819-820). Retting was in 1947 imprisoned for his intrigues against Taktra Rimpoche (Tib.: *Stag brag rin po che*) who replaced him in the position of the regent. Retting died in prison under strange circumstances. As a punishment for his intrigues, one part of his labrang property was confiscated, however, only that part which was acquired during the Retting's life (Goldstein 1992, pp. 820). This also shows the advantage of religious property which



role of tulku may be noticeable even in modern democratic states like the Republic of India where the well-known Bakula Rinpoche (Tib.: Ba ku la rin po che), whose 19th rebirth happened in 1953, was elected in the National Parliament in Delhi as a representative of Ladakh. Later on (1990-2000), he served as an Indian ambassador to Mongolia (for details, see Shaksपो 2012, pp. 83-97). Other tulku involved in Ladakhi politics was Togdan Rinpoche (for details, see Butcher 2013, pp. 19).

Moreover, the role of tulku as a middleman is also worth mentioning. As an example the case of the first Panchen Lama may serve because this tulku mediated the temporary peace between Dalai Lama and Karmapa (van Schaik 2011, pp. 118), or that of Changkya Khutukhtu who supported Panchen Lama in a dispute about choosing the 8th Dalai Lama (van Schaik 2011, pp 152). In nomad areas of the ethnical Tibet, religious authorities and especially tulkus are sought-after middlemen in cases of clan wars and blood revenge (Tib.: *khra len* or *sha len*).

There are two main risks connected with the tulku institution. The first risk is the necessity of “interregnum” caused by the need of rebirth, searching and education of the tulku. This may take some considerably long time which gives administrators a chance to gain power and to endanger the tulku before he grows up. This might have been the cases of the 9th, 10th and 11th Dalai Lamas who were allegedly poisoned by their regents who wanted to stay at power (Kapstein 2006, pp. 160).³⁷

The second disadvantage consists of the unpredictability of the system of reincarnated masters. No one can guarantee that the chosen child is a real tulku. Moreover, it is not clear what the authorities who had chosen him were expecting and nobody knows if he will fulfil their expectations. Another problem is who will be the regent in the meantime and whether he will be able to manage his tasks. It is possible to find some statements (one of them is quoted by Maraini 1998, pp. 135) that the system of tulkus can be understood as a combination of traditional authority and democratic principles because the rebirth of a tulku is possible in any family in the country.³⁸ This may be true but there is also a somewhat tricky fact that there is no fixed procedure how to choose the tulku. Though there are some

was considered as put in trust to its current administrators but belonging to whole monastic community. By the way of contrast the confiscation of the property of noble families was (along with a mutilation, banishment and the ban on holding public functions) one of the common punishments for conflict with the government.

³⁷ Interesting case when regent tried to kill 13th Dalai Lama using a violent spell describes Bell (2000, pp. 162-163).

³⁸ Nowadays when the Tibetan Buddhism has a global character is another question to answer: Will be possible to find the reincarnation even outside Tibetan communities?



customs and precedents (see above), there exist many exceptions and irregularities, too. This leads to some uncertainty which even the current Dalai Lama is afraid of.³⁹

The unpredictability of this old system in modern times can be seen in the case of the Precious Scholar from Domo (Tib.: Do mo dge bshes rin po che), an important and respected tulku from the Gelug tradition, whose seat was Yatung. The previous Domo Geshe disappeared in 1959 and nowadays there are several people who claim to be his rebirth. One of them is a middle-aged American woman named Marjorie Quinn.⁴⁰

Another good example of this problem can be the Karmapa controversy. The Karmapas are well known for their formulating detailed instructions⁴¹ for searching further rebirths (even the family name of parents) and they have precise rules for searching and approving the next rebirth. However, when the 16th Karmapa died in the USA in 1981, his letter was not found. Four of his pupils (all of them are also tulkus) were established both as regents and the searching party and they were not successful in their searching for more than ten years. In 1992, the letter of the 16th Karmapa was finally found by one of the regents (Tai Situ Rinpoche; Tib.: Ta'i si tu rin po che) and despite of the protests from another regent (Shamar Rinpoche; Tib.: Zhwa dmar rin po che) the searching began. In the same year, Ogyen Trinley Dorje (Tib.: O rgyan 'phrin las rdo rje)⁴² was found and recognized. This resulted in an agreement but later on (in 1994), Shamar Rinpoche found "the true" Karmapa named Trinley Thaye Dorje (Tib.: Phrin las mtha' yas rdo rje). Nowadays the Karma Kagyu tradition is

³⁹ In his statement from September 24, 2011 Dalai Lama repeatedly claims that the reincarnation is a matter of tulku's personal decision and that he will leave the clear written instructions about this topic. His reincarnation (if realised) must be done "in accordance with past tradition" and conferred with "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" (i.e. oracles). For a full text of the statement see:

"Reincarnation." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/statement-of-his-holiness-the-fourteenth-dalai-lama-tenzin-gyatso-on-the-issue-of-his-reincarnation> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁴⁰ This is extremely curious case. Although in Tibetan society are men and women more or less equal (Bell 1968, pp. 147 and further), in Tibetan Buddhism women play a less important role and the social status of ordinary nuns is not high (see Kapstein 2006, pp. 199-200 or Duncan 1998, pp. 175). It is probably no coincidence that female were often called "the lower birth" (Tib.: *skyes dman*) in literary Tibetan. To the case of Domo Geshe see: "Domo Geshe Rinpoche - Biography." White Conch Dharma Center. <http://www.white-conch.org/Domo-Geshe-Rinpoche.html> (accessed July 27, 2014) and "The Enthronement Ceremony of Domo Geshe Rinpoche." Dorje Shugden and Dalai Lama. <http://www.dorjeshugden.com/all-articles/news/the-enthronement-ceremony-of-his-eminence-the-domo-geshe-rinpoche/> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁴¹ These instructions are in fact often written in poetic language and may be ambiguous. It is customary that current Karmapa leaves written instructions to regent an also to his successor (in detail Manson 2009, pp. 32).

⁴² Very interesting is the fact, that recognition was confirmed also by 14th Dalai Lama who is de facto head of another tradition of Tibetan Buddhism (i.e. Gelug) and in 17th century was Dalai Lama irreconcilable enemy of Karmapa. This was also the only case when the tulku was approved both by the Dalai Lama and Chinese government (Slobodník 2007, pp. 131).



divided and both parties were even involved in a lawsuit concerning the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim (i.e. the exile seat of Karmapas). For detailed information, see Brožková (2007).

Influencing the tulkus as a part of policy

Due to the fact that reincarnated masters play such important social and political roles, attempts to control them seem to be logical. An adult and mature politician can hardly be recognized as a tulku, therefore it is necessary to find a way how to get the tulku under the said politician's influence. There are four possibilities how to control a tulku or his followers: to ban the reincarnation, to influence the searching process, to become a person close to tulku, or to pretend some influence.

The first possibility is to ban his reincarnation or rather to ban searching for the suitable candidate. This happens sometimes as a part of a struggle among religious authorities or when a secular authority is interested in reducing the power of clergy. An interesting case of such a policy happened in 1588 when the king of Tsang (Tib.: Gtsang), who was a supporter of the Karma Kagyu school, i.e. the enemy of Gelug, forbade the searching for the fifth Dalai Lama (van Schaik 118).

Another well known and sensitive case was the death of Dragpa Gyaltzen (1619-1656; Tib.: Grags pa rgyal mtshan) who, as a child, was a competitor of the 5th Dalai Lama. Later on, he became an important and popular tulku in the Drepung monastery.⁴³ When he died under strange circumstances, the rumour had it that he was murdered by order of the 5th Dalai Lama. This rumour grew stronger when some strange sounds were heard from a stupa with his remains. His remains were then thrown in the Kyichu river and searching for his reincarnation was banned. Tibetans believe that he became an angry and dangerous deity called Dorje Shugden (Tib.: Rdo rje shugs ldan) which remains a significant source of controversy until today.⁴⁴

When Sarat Chandra Das, who was practically a British spy (Hopkirk 2006, pp. 55), was travelling through Tibet, he met a reincarnated master called Sangchen Lama from the Dongtse monastery in the Central Tibet who helped him. For his kindness to a foreign spy,

⁴³ This is a remarkable fact because when the child who was not chosen as a particular tulku is later recognised as another one it looks like a compromise between the parties supporting the candidates or as some kind of compensation.

⁴⁴ On the official websites of 14th Dalai Lama in the section containing most important speeches and statements (see: "Messages." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. <http://dalailama.com/messages> (accessed July 27, 2014).) are almost eighty links. Twelve of them are focused on explaining the situation around Shugden, which is more than e.g. statements concerning the world peace.



this Lama was later punished with the death penalty and forbidden to reincarnate (Bell 2000, pp. 156).

The reincarnation of a tulku could also be delayed or intentionally not searched for as a result of some bad experience with the predecessor. This is described by Duncan (1998, pp. 98). It happened in the Atuntze Monastery in Kham and the particular tulku was well known for his fondness for women and drinking.

Another case when the tulku lineage was not banned but just left to disappear was the 8th Mongolian Jebtsundamba Khutagt (known also as Bogdo Gegen), the tulku from Urga (nowadays Ulanbaatar). Since 1921 until his death in 1924, this tulku was tolerated and even worshiped by the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and the state was a form of a constitutional monarchy. After his death in 1924, the MPP was renamed to the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) and the rebirth was not officially searched for. At the seventh congress of the MPRP in 1928, the institution of the "living gods" (i.e. tulkus) was cancelled (Morozova 2009, pp. 70). Nevertheless, later on (in 1936), the Jebtsundamba Khutagt's reincarnation was found in Tibet and kept in secret. The 9th Jebtsundamba Khutagt later renounced his monastic vows and lived as a householder. His reincarnation was kept in secret till 1990.⁴⁵

The second possibility how to affect the tulku's position may be an intentional searching for the rebirth in a particular region or social strata (mostly the nobility) to gain its support. Here may be mentioned some rebirths of the Dalai Lama chosen probably after consideration of political affairs.

The first of them is the 3rd Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso (Tib.: Bsod rnam s rgya mtsho). He became popular among the Tumed Mongols and he established a close lama-patron relationship with their ruler Altan Khan at the end of 1570s (Tucci 1988, pp. 252). This should remind the famous relationship between Phagpa Lama (Tib.: 'Phags pa bla ma) and Kublai Khan in the 13th century. When his successor was chosen from two candidates, it is logical that the Gelug school preferred the Altan Khan's grandson who became known as Yonten Gyatso (Tib.: Yon tan rgya mtsho; van Schaik 2011, pp. 116). Later on, when still more children of Mongol leaders were recognised as tulkus (van Schaik 2011, pp. 117), the ties between Tibet and Mongolia became stronger and finally the Gelug school was powerful enough to oppose the Karmapas supported by the king of Tsang.

In addition to support from outside, some support from inside may be helpful, too. In this context, it is not coincidence that the famous 5th Dalai Lama was born in a family of a

⁴⁵ In detail see: "Obituary: His Eminence the Ninth Khalkha Jetsun Dhampa." Central Tibetan Administration. <http://tibet.net/2012/03/01/obituary-his-eminence-the-ninth-khalkha-jetsun-dhampa/> (accessed July 27, 2014).



nobleman called Zahor. This family belonged to opponents of the king of Tsang (who was a supporter of Karma school i.e. an enemy of Gelug) and they lived in a castle called Tagtse (Tib.: Stag rtse) which was considered to be the seat of the Tibetan Emperors mentioned above. From the example above it is also evident that the 5th Dalai Lama later acted as a successor of the famous Tibetan Emperor Songtsen Gampo.

The last example of having chosen Dalai Lama on the grounds of political reasons was choosing the 7th Dalai Lama in 1707. At that time, the Central Tibet was under the influence of the Qoshot Mongol chief Lajang Khan (Tib.: Lha bzang). This ruler insisted that the 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso was not a real reincarnation and after his death a monk of the same age was established as the true Dalai Lama. It was believed that this monk was Lajang's own son (van Schaik, 2011, pp. 136).

The third possibility how to influence the tulku is to become a person close to him like his secretary, treasurer or just a personal favourite. Two cases of such protégés can be found close to the 13th Dalai Lama. The first of them was Langdün Kunga Wangchug (Tib.: Glang mdun kun dga' dbang phyug) who was a nephew of the 13th Dalai Lama, since 1924 an assistant of the prime minister and since 1926 serving as the prime minister (Tib.: *blon chen*; Goldstein 1998, pp. 147). The second case is a protégé per se. His name was Kumbela (Tib.: Kun 'phel lags) and he was neither a nobleman, nor a relative of Dalai Lama. When young, he met by chance the 13th Dalai Lama and became his personal servant (Tib.: *sku bcar*). Later on, Kumbela was involved in various projects of modernisation (e.g. power plants or army) and became one of the most powerful men in Tibet. But he also had enemies among the military, nobility and state officials. He was indicted for sudden death of the 13th Dalai Lama and later arrested, exiled and his property was confiscated (for details, see Goldstein 1998, pp. 146-177).

The last way how to control the tulku is to pretend some influence. This was a case of the Qing policy since the 17th century. They were not able to gain a direct control over the government of the Central Tibet (Tib.: *dga' ldan pho brang*) led by the Dalai Lama and thus they had to be satisfied with a formal suzerainty, i.e. to pretend some control over number of monks in the Central Tibet and Outer Mongolia and to choose Dalai Lama using the golden urn.⁴⁶ Moreover, a list of important tulkus containing 160 lineages was created. But the real influence of Ambans (i.e. Chinese officials in Lhasa) was not crucial. Cpt. Bower (Bower 1883, pp. 2) writes: "The position of the Amban at Lhasa I take to be exactly the same as that of his fellow-countryman in Chiamdo; treated outwardly with much respect, before strangers at least, the bearing of the Tibetan authorities towards him is almost servile, but in reality he has no authority whatever and lives in continual dread of the powerful priesthood."

⁴⁶ This resembles older Tibetan method of dough-ball divination, but should be performed with Chinese looking equipment and in front of picture of Chinese emperor. For description of dough-ball divination see Gruber (2010, pp. 12).



This policy was later practiced by the Guomintang. When the 14th Dalai Lama was enthroned in 1940, the Chinese representative Wu Chung-tsin did not play any role in the ceremony even though he was slightly preferred in comparison with representatives of the British Mission in Lhasa (Goldstein 1989, pp. 325-327). Wu later insisted that he, as a representative of China, allowed the recognition of the Dalai Lama without lot-drawing from the golden urn. But this seems to be just pretending some influence ex-post (Goldstein 1989, pp. 328). The Guomintang also acted as a protector of the 9th Panchen Lama Thubten Choekyi Nyima (Tib.: Thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma) who had a dispute with the Tibetan government concerning taxes. But the position of both the protector and protégé was weak.

When China gained more power in the 50s, it was able to reach real control over the Tibetan affairs. This began in Amdo and Kham, i.e. in the regions with no strong ties to the government in Lhasa. The Chinese government persuaded some religious authorities to cooperate – in exchange for having promised them to respect their religion. Nevertheless, after 1959, searching for tulkus in Tibet was interrupted till 1990 (Slobodník, pp. 130). A similar interruption can be seen in the Buryat ASSR (Bělka 2001, pp. 81-90) and in the Mongolian People's Republic (Morozova 2009, pp. 77) but in comparison to these countries, China had a disadvantage because of the Tibetan exile led by Dalai Lama and other religious authorities. China tried to create a counterweight by supporting the 10th Panchen Lama but he later refused to cooperate, showed his disillusion and was imprisoned in early 60s (Kapstein 2006, pp. 288-289). Even the suppression of the Tibetan Buddhism during the Cultural Revolution was more of an excess than a systematic approach and the pragmatic generation of Chinese politicians decided to tolerate at least somewhat limited religious life.

However, this brought the essential question: Who will be the authority choosing and confirming the tulkus? In 1992, the choosing of Karmapa ended by an agreement between Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. Yet in 1995, a dispute over choice of the 11th Panchen Lama turned up. When Karmapa fled to exile in 2000, the situation escalated. And when Dalai Lama declared that he would not be born in the PRC,⁴⁷ the State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5⁴⁸ from 2007 was a reaction from the PRC authorities. The key points of this order are a ban for searching and recognising the tulku by unauthorised groups or individuals (article 7), insisting on the golden urn ritual adverting to its historicity (article 8) and defining the authorities to approve the tulku (article 9).

⁴⁷ See e.g.: "The Dalai Lama." BBC News.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/people/dalailama_1.shtml (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁴⁸ Full text and translation see: "Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism (ICT Translation)." Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

<http://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/measures-on-the-management-of-the-reincarnation-of-living-buddhas-in-0> (accessed July 27, 2014).



Conclusion

From the background mentioned above it is obvious that the choice of tulku is not only a religious but also a political act and the office of the most important tulku in Tibet (i.e. Dalai Lama) seems to be aware of this fact, too, and therefore it gave up the control over the worldly affairs of the Central Tibetan Administration in exile.⁴⁹ This step should perhaps imply that the democratic reforms are still being introduced among the Tibetan exile but the second goal may be to prevent a potential takeover by the next reincarnation affected by the Chinese law and education and by the advisors from the Tibet's motherland (as China calls itself in this context). This concern is also apparent in the Dalai Lama's statements about his next reincarnation. On his official webpage,⁵⁰ he explains how the reincarnation works and he mentions all possible scenarios how the question of his successor will be solved. The intention may be to show first that there are many possibilities of rebirth, not only the one preferred and codified by the PRC authorities. Apart from that, there may be an intention to keep plans of the current Dalai Lama in secret in order to reduce the opponent's time to react.

But the time does not seem to be on the Dalai Lama's side. Should his successor be searched for in the traditional way, it will take at least three years till the baby is able to pass the tests and it will take at least fifteen more years before he can take over the duty of his predecessor. This is a very long time for opponents (for the risk of the interregnum, see Snellgrove and Richardson 2003, pp. 204) to prepare and apart from that no one (including the current Dalai Lama) can be sure that the next rebirth will be such a strong and skilful politician as the previous two.⁵¹ In the meantime, he certainly will not be so successful in fundraising as the current Dalai Lama who, in fact, is a global celebrity.⁵² Another question is who will approve him because there are two Karmapas as two Panchen Lamas and the Central Tibetan Administration in exile has no real power.

⁴⁹ Why he refuses the term exile government is also explained here: "His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Remarks on Retirement - March 19th, 2011." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. <http://dalailama.com/messages/retirement/retirement-remarks> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁵⁰ For more details see: "Reincarnation." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. <http://dalailama.com/biography/reincarnation> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁵¹ In analytical and historical works are mostly only 3rd, 5th, 13th and 14th Dalai Lamas considered as really strong political leaders, so it is no reason to presume that the next rebirth will automatically have these qualities. Classical case was the 5th Dalai Lama, whose death was kept in secret more than thirteen years and his successor was overpowered by Qoshod Mongols and later probably murdered.

⁵² It is probable that most of Dalai Lama's property remained in Tibet in 1959 when he was escaping from Lhasa. According to his autobiography only a few boxes of gold and jewels were transferred to Sikkim via Yatung in 1950. Its price was supposedly eight millions of USD (Tändzin Gjamccho 2011, pp.187) so most investments to establish Tibetan exile must have been done by government of India and from gifts collected by NGOs and religious gifts. When current Dalai Lama as the main face of Tibetan exile disappears and for a many years will be no comparable charismatic person representing Tibetans, it may also cause decrease of funds.



In this context, it is even possible that the current Dalai Lama is afraid of the traditional way of choosing his rebirth. In his statement concerning this topic (see above), Dalai Lama emphasizes the fact that in past the choice and activities of the tulkus were influenced both by wealthy lama-estates (i.e. labrang) and, in the Manchu era, by Chinese political authorities whereas today it is by authoritarian rulers of the PRC. In other words, the attempts to influence choosing the tulkus are not a new problem but a part of the problem called by Goldstein (1998) the Dalai Lama's dilemma. This seems to be such a serious issue that it is practically impossible to draw any conclusion as for whether the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. Unfortunately, both solutions may lead to tightening the control over the Tibetan Buddhism in China and to the loss of hope as well as to further radicalization among the exile Tibetans. The current Dalai Lama seems to see the solution in secularization of politics and in introducing democratic principles both in politics and religion. The time will show whether he is correct but it seems to be highly probable when the PRC authorities gain control over the choice of tulkus and if they manage to hold it for some time (and this scenario is in the context of the political pragmatism in today's China possible), it may lead to the by far highest degree of control over the Tibetan Buddhism anyone had ever seen before.⁵³

⁵³ Both the Qing regime in China and the regime of Russian Tsars were not able even control the number of Buddhist monks among the Tibetans or Buryats and were satisfied by a formal domination over the religious (what means in Tibetan context also political) affairs. The communist regimes in Soviet Union and China were in the 1st half of 20th century able to violently reduce the number of monks and monasteries. All regimes were from time to time able to secure loyalty of individuals or groups of religious authorities mostly in exchange for the military intervention to their benefit. But no one was yet able to gain control over the principle of choosing the highest religious authorities.



Abstract

The two men mentioned in the Emperor Qianlong's pronouncement are important and well known tulkus (Tib.: *sprul sku*) of the Gelug (Tib.: Dge lugs) school known to the westerners as Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. Since the 13th century when reincarnation of Dusum Khyenpa (Tib.: Dus gsum mkhyen pa; better known as Karma Pagshi) was recognized, reincarnated Lamas were not only important religious authorities but also powerful politicians and wealthy noblemen. Chinese emperors were aware of the fact, if they managed to "protect", i.e. to control, Tibetan Buddhism, it would strengthen their influence in Mongolia and Tibet. One of the possible approaches to gain control over the Tibetan Buddhism was restricting or reducing the monastic communities. Another approach was supporting some of the religious authorities in exchange for their loyalty. This was the case of Changkya Khutukhtu (Tib.: Lcang skya ho thog thu) based in Beijing. The Qing policy was followed by the Guomintang and Mao Zedong was aware of it, too. Therefore, it is no wonder that Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama were members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in 1954.

On September 1, 2007, the State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5 was declared. This regulation says that reincarnation (Chinese usually use the term living Buddha) shall be searched for and approved only by specified authorities of the PRC. My paper seeks an answer to the question whether the attempt to control reincarnation legally is just a logical continuance of the old Qing policy or if it is a new concept and, moreover, what can be expected as a result of such an attempt. Nowadays, when Tenzin Gyatso (Tib.: Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho), the 14th Dalai Lama, is 79 years old and it is more than obvious that Chinese authorities are expecting his decease, this topic seems to be very actual, indeed.



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Notes to Transcription and Transliteration

In this paper, the English transcriptions are used with added transliterations (Wylie, 1959) wherein Tibetan words are written in *italics* with blank spaces between the syllables. Personal names and names of places are written in Roman with a capital letter at the



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Rebirth Control in Tibetan Buddhism: Anything New?

—

July 2014

beginning of the word and with blank spaces between syllables. The reversed sign for the vowel i (Tib.: *gi log*) is transcribed as I.

For Sanskrit the Harvard-Kyoto Convention is used.

Acknowledgement

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