

Reincarnation and Politics in Tibet

The concept of reincarnation, based upon the Buddhist belief in the transmigration of soul has a special significance among the Tibetan Buddhists. According to this theory of reincarnation, the great mind or the soul, which is reappearing in a new embodiment has already attained Buddhahood or Nirvana and has voluntarily decided to come back for the benefit of the other human beings. The departed soul not only decides the place of its rebirth and parentage according to the need of the moment, it can also reincarnate itself into as many different forms as it likes and at as many different places at the same time. The mind, speech and the body of the souls can also be reincarnated separately into three bodies- as used to be the practice among the Mahayana Buddhists of Bhutan. This practice, however, was not so common in Tibet.

There is ecclesiastical hierarchy among the reincarnations i.e. the tulkus of the mystic Buddhas, Bodhisattvas (the Dalai and Panchen Lamas), Dorje Phagmo etc. Lower in rank but belonging to the same category are the tulkus of some autochthonous gods like Pekar. There are also the tulkus of gods, demons and fairies which appear mostly in mythological stories and are not reckoned amongst the Lamaist aristocracy. The largest number of tulkus, however, are the reincarnations of saintly departed souls like those of Indian or Tibetan saints who fill up the higher posts of abbots in the monasteries. This institution of reincarnations, essentially religious in character, has political significance as well. This was reflected in the peculiar characteristic of the traditional Tibetan Government which used to be headed by the Dalai Lama, a tulku himself of the highest ecclesiastical hierarchy. Reincarnate monks also headed various other departments of the Gov-

ernment. This unique characteristic of the Tibetan Government is described as Rule by Incarnation. The Tibetans themselves have made practical use of the concept for solving the problem of succession in certain sects of Tibetan Buddhism that practised celibacy and tried to institutionalise the charisma of some individual lamas with extraordinary achievement through the concept of reincarnation. The peculiar form of Government headed by these lamas have also complicated Tibet's relation with China and China in its turn has tried to manipulate the identification of the reincarnations in order to retain control over the state and the Government of Tibet. The political use of the concept reached its height with the present political uncertainty over the future of Tibet. The objective of this paper is to probe into this mundane and secular aspect of reincarnation-to see how considerations other religion often influenced the identification of the reincarnation as well as to see how this concept has been used by both Tibet and China to derive political mileage out of it. In this paper we have tried to trace the history of the origin and spread of the theory of reincarnation and its gradual politicisation which has culminated into the recent conflict between China and Tibet.

ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF THE CONCEPT

It is not easy to get real facts regarding the origin and development of this theory. Waddell thinks that the whole question has been purposely obscured in order to give it the appearance of antiquity Alexander David Neel mentions that as early as the 11th century the Tibetans believed in tulkus. She refers to a biography of Milarepa in which it is mentioned that one of his disciples, called Bhiraja, convinced that a divine being was incarnated in his master, asked him to disclose his name. Milarepa himself believed that his own master, lama Marpa was the tulku of Dorje Chang. He called him repeatedly by that name-not only in his poems but when addressing him directly. The first historical reference to a reincarnated being comes from the Karmapa sect in the 13th century. On the eve of his death, Karma Pakshi, the head of the sect, prophesied his reincarnation and indicated a specific place and a specific family where he would reappear as a newly born child. This example of the Karmapa reincarnation was soon followed by the Gelugpas and the others in order to glorify their monks and within a short period of time the identification and installation of reincarnations became a common practice among all the Buddhist sects of Tibet. Even though they did not assume political or administrative power, the Karmapa lamas became involved in politics during the period of political uncertainty and infighting in Tibet during the 16th-17th centuries when they backed the Tsang kings of Tibet.⁷ It was in the mid 17th century that open political power passed on to these reincarnations but it was the Gelugpas and not the Karmapas who finally managed to rise to the position of

political supremacy in Tibet to wield total political authority over the country through the institution of the Dalai Lamas. The Gelugpas, which was basically a reformist sect was founded by the great scholarly monk Tsong Khapa in the 14th century. In order to check corruption and moral degeneration in the sect, he insisted on the practice of celibacy for the monks. He himself was succeeded by Gedun Truppa, his senior disciple and it was after the latter's death that the problem of succession was solved by the ingenious use of the concept of reincarnation. It was from Gedun Truppa that the line of reincarnated monks started. Even though the general impression is that the system came into force immediately upon Gedun Truppa's death, Charles Bell points out that it was not so. In fact, he refers to a biography of Gedun Truppa where the latter says nothing about his spirit passing then or afterwards into a baby successor but describes the measures taken in the ordinary way to choose the next occupant of the chair. He, according to Charles Bell does not appear to have envisaged a return to Drepung or Tashilhunpo monasteries. Rather, he said that he and the great saint would be reborn in China to work there as teacher and pupil respectively. Charles Bell further points out that the system became firmly established seventy years later with the notion that it was originated by Gedun Truppa. This is brought out in a biography of Sonam Gyatso (c. 1542) who was the third head of the sect of the Gelugpas. What Charles Bell says gives one the impression that there was something else other than mere philosophy that lay behind the application of the theory of reincarnation for the purpose of succession to the highest post in the Gelugpa sect. This religious concept was ultimately picked up for the practical purpose it served in a religious order that insisted on celibacy and thus ruled out the possibility of biological inheritors. At the same time, the insistence on the identification of the reincarnation ensured that there were no rival claimants for the particular post. Once, rationalised, the system of succession by reincarnation became the tradition. Gedun Truppa, the first reincarnated head of the Gelugpa sect was succeeded by Gedun Gyatso, who, in his turn, was followed by Sonam Gyatso. Even though he was the first to receive the title of Dalai Lama from the Mongols, he came to be known as the third Dalai Lama by the logic that it was the same soul of Gedun Truppa that was continuing in the person of Sonam Gyatso, the third in line of the Gelugpa sect, hence it was the latter who deserved to be the first in the line of the Dalai Lamas. Birth of the fourth Dalai Lama in a Mongol family as a great grandson of Chengis Khan guaranteed renewed patronage of the Mongols and ensured further Mongol assistance at the time of the fifth Dalai Lama. Ultimately, it was the Mongols who, in 1542 defeated the Tsang kings backed by the Karmapas and handed over the charge of administration of Tibet to the Fifth Dalai Lama making the religious head of the Gelugpas also the temporal head of the country. This was the beginning of the tradition of the 'Rule by Incarnation' - commonly

known as the rule by monk kings over Tibet. The identification of the Dalai Lama with Chenrezig i.e. Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara who is also the founder deity of Lhasa further attached unquestionable authority to his person. A Dalai Lama therefore is a monk, a deity and a king in one.¹⁰

IDENTIFICATION OF REINCARNATION

As a rule, it is about two years after the death of an incarnation that the search for the reincarnation begins. The process of identification-long and complicated-pass through several stages. Sometimes the lamas themselves leave directions regarding rebirth in order to help the fellow monks to pursue their search. In the absence of such directions they resort either to astrologers or an oracles, who points out in vague and obscure terms, the direction and the place where investigations must be made as well as the various signs by which the child must be identified. Signs are also found in the waters of some sacred lakes which are interpreted as guidelines. When a child, who nearly answers the prescribed conditions is discovered, a lama clairvoyant is again consulted and if he pronounces in favour of the child, the final test is applied. At this stage, the child is expected to prove his identity by recognising his rosary, bell and other religious implements as well as servants, ponies etc., that were with him in his previous existence. He is expected to do it though just a child, two or three years old and the belief is universal that he does so. The system of identification, however, did not always prove to be full proof and often there used to be several candidates for the same post. Equally convincing signs were noticed concerning each of them and they all correctly picked up the objects of the deceased lama. Rival candidates were often put up by interested parents because becoming a tulku not only assured a revered position in the society but property as well. The tulkus of high ranks not only held high post in his monastery but owned mansions and estates in other parts of Tibet as well as in Mongolia. Even the near relatives of these lamas were provided with comfortable lodging and were plentifully supplied with all their needs. The close relatives of the Dalai Lama were raised to positions of high nobility. All this naturally led to a lot of politics and intrigues over the question of succession of a high incarnate lama. Amidst the warlike folks of Kham or of the Northern borderland, even bloody, feuds sprang from such passionate competition.¹¹ That the trend continues till now is indicated by the recent disturbances in the Rumtek monastery of Sikkim over the question of the identification of the 17th Karmapa. It is an example of intra-sect rivalry that often broke out among the sects over the question of installing the heads of the sects and the monasteries. Since the death of the 16th Gyawla Karmapa in 1981, the Rumtek Monastery, the headquarters of the Karmapas and considered to be the richest in the world, remained without a

head. The responsibility of looking after the monastery and searching for the chosen one was entrusted to four senior monks. However, in 1992, the group split into two, over the identification of actual reincarnation. One group identified nine year old Tibet born Ogyen Thinley Dorjee as the reincarnation while the other faction insisted that the eleven year old India born Thinley Thai Dorjee was the rightful heir to the coveted post. According to Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Gyalwa Karmapa leaves behind a letter of prediction about his own reincarnation. After his death the letter is traced and deciphered and the new Karmapa tracked down and identified. Then a report is sent to the Dalai Lama for approval. This approval was obtained in April 1992 for Tibet born Ogyen Thinley Dorjee and eventually the Chinese authorities also proclaimed him as the 17th Karmapa. However, the rival group rejected the candidature of Ogyen Thinley. There was a vertical split among the followers of the sect over the issue. The supporters of the two rival camps clashed and a case was registered with the police. The clashes reached such an extent that the State Government deployed security forces. Petitions were sent by both the factions to the Central and State Governments for appropriate actions to restore peace and normalcy in the monastery. The issue subsequently gave rise to questions of far reaching significance of international ramifications relating to the credential of the Dalai Lama under the changed political condition when he is no longer the king of Tibet and also regarding Beijing's intentions. Chinese recognition of the Dalai Lama selected candidate as the Karmapa was interpreted as a Chinese plan to prop him up against the Dalai Lama himself as a parallel head of Tibetan Buddhists.¹² To the general public however, it appeared to be a feud between the two groups of monks for the rights over the wealth and religious sway of the monastery and the sect through their proteges.¹³ Politics around the identification of the reincarnate lamas took place at another level where China wanted to control the final selection of the lamas in order to exercise political control over Tibet through them. In fact, the Chinese interference in the identification of the high lamas which has become a major issue of her confrontation with Tibet had become evident from as early as the 17th century, i.e. from the time of the 9th Dalai Lama whose death was followed by five candidates out of which two were finally short-listed as probable reincarnations. At this stage, the Manchu Ambans insisted on a solution by drawing lots from the Golden Urn. Drawing of lots from an urn is an ancient Tibetan system long predating the Manchu empire. The method involves encasing the names of candidates in dough balls of equal size and weight. The balls are put into a container which is then rotated until one of them falls out. The name of the candidate inscribed on the ejected ball is declared the successful candidate. Certain other Buddhist elements such as saying prayers of Buddha and other deities and shaking the urn in a clockwise direction were added in course of time. Emperor Chienlung presented a golden

urn to replace the old one.¹⁴ Despite initial hesitations and objections, the Tibetans finally gave in to the Chinese demands and the lottery method was employed.¹⁵ This happened again at the time of the selection of the 11th Dalai Lama when there were two candidates. Even though no details are available in this regard, the Chinese claim that he was chosen by drawing of lots.¹⁶ Similar claims are made regarding the selection of the 12th Dalai Lama while controversy shrouds the selection of the 13th Dalai Lama.¹⁷ Even though the Chinese insistence on the drawing of lots implies an indirect Chinese control on the method of selection, the Tibetans claim that this had never been the decisive test but was applied in addition to the traditional tests. Moreover, the results, they claim, were always identical. Yet, in retrospect it seems to have been a wrong and short-sighted step taken by the Tibetans because the Chinese now claim that the Amban supervised drawing of lots is indeed a proof of their sovereignty over Tibet.¹⁸

POLITICISATION OF THE REINCARNATIONS **A Trend Since the 17th century**

The unusual mode of Governance in Tibet- through the reincarnations did provide an opportunity to the outsiders to manipulate the identification and the installation of these high profile reincarnations. High lamas, sometimes knowingly, sometimes under manipulation by their ambitious entourage got entangled in the mundane world of power struggle. In this, they were often encouraged by their dominant neighbours. Because the high lamas wielded enormous influence, they often acted as instruments of the great powers and tended to toe the line so long as their political patrons did not interfere in their religious sphere. The Chinese interference in the identification of the high incarnations and their attempted control over Tibetan Government through these lamas has been the major cause of the strain in Sino Tibetan relations and the consequent confusion over the political status of Tibet. The first Sino-Tibetan entanglement over the Dalai Lama took place as early as 16th/17th century. The pretext was provided by the unmonklike behaviour of the 6th Dalai Lama who led a frivolous life, wrote romantic and lyrical verses and eventually renounced his Getsul vows. This Dalai Lama was initially supported by Lhazang Khan, the leader of the Qosot Mongols. In course of time, Lhazang became critical of the Lama and decided to take him to the Mongol military camp near Lhalu in 1706. The Dalai Lama died on the way. After his death, Lhazang Khan declared him to be an impostor and enthroned a young monk (said to be his own son) as the 'real' Dalai Lama. A few years later, reports came in of an extraordinary child believed to be the reincarnation of the 6th Dalai Lama. Since the child was accepted by the Tibetans as the authentic incarnation it was found advisable to remove the boy to a safer place in Kumbum. At this point,

recognition and protection was offered to him by the Dzungar tribe of the Mongols. They escorted the boy to the Kokonor region, out of sight of Lhazang Khan. In this, they were helped by the Manchu Emperors of China. Later, the Dzungars attacked Lhasa and killed Lhazang Khan, deposed the latter's prot_g_, the so called 6th Dalai Lama and sent him to China where he reportedly died in 1725. The Dzungars themselves became unpopular in Tibet in a short period of time. This gave the Manchus an opportunity to extend their influence to Tibet. The Emperor sent an army to escort the 7th Dalai Lama from Kumbum as well as to drive away the Dzungars. In the war that followed, the Chinese, assisted by the Tibetans, finally drove away the Dzungars and installed the 7th Dalai Lama.¹⁹ What is more significant, this also provided the Manchus with the opportunity to 'conquer' Tibet over which they considerably increased their influence in the following decades. The Chinese attempts to control Tibet through the high incarnate lamas intensified in the 20th century. This was the period when the Chinese were trying to introduce socialist reforms in Tibet in order to prepare ground for the unification of Tibet with the motherland i.e. China. There was widespread resentment and discontent against the Chinese measures. The Chinese on one hand tried to reduce the administrative powers of the Dalai Lama by projecting him as a Chinese official and on the other hand wanted him to exercise his influence on the people to make them accept the Chinese reforms. Since the Dalai Lama was not very pliable to the Chinese demands, Beijing picked up the Panchen Lama and projected him as an alternative to the Dalai Lama. He was endowed with a political status that he had never enjoyed before. The history of the previous Panchen Lama's disagreements with the 13th Dalai Lama provided the Chinese with the opportunity to create a rift between the two high lamas. The process started with the question of the installation of the 10th Panchen Lama.²⁰ After the death of the 9th Panchen Lama, two candidates, one from Amdo and the other from Kham were short-listed for final identification of which the former was preferred and declared as the 10th Panchen Lama by the pro-Chinese section of the previous Panchen Lama's court. However, considerable complications preceded his formal recognition. The Dalai Lama was still a minor and a reincarnation of Panchen Lama's stature could not be universally accepted unless the authenticity was publicly confirmed by the Dalai Lama. At the time of the signing of the 17 Point Agreement in 1951 the Chinese delegates insisted that the Tibetan Government accept and recognise the 'Chinese candidate' as the true incarnation. Given the fact that his predecessor had revolted against the 13th Dalai Lama's Government and sought China's support and the Communists supported his candidature, the young 10th Panchen Lama was popularly perceived as pro-Chinese throughout the 1950s. As a result, he was, from the time of his identification caught up in the politics of China's political ambition towards Tibet. The Communist regime tried to use him

as a rival to the Dalai Lama—a counterforce of Tibetan nationalism and indeed as the Tibetan spokesman of Chinese politics in Tibet. These roles were well publicised by the Chinese Communists in the 1950s and the Tibetans of that generation still remember him as pro Chinese.²¹ It is altogether a different story that contrary to the popular impression he turned out to be a great patriot and was subjected to severe punishments by the Communist Government of China for his criticism of Chinese policy towards Tibet and the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.²² After the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 the right to identify the reincarnations of the high lamas became a major issue of confrontation between the Communist Government of Beijing and the Tibetan government in exile. While Dalai Lama, as the head of this Government claims to retain the traditional right of identifying and legitimising the reincarnations, Beijing claims that the right has passed on to the Communist Government by virtue of its sovereignty over Tibet. The struggle between the two reached its climax over the issue of identification of the 10th Panchen Lama's reincarnation after his death in 1989. China appointed Chadrak Gyurme Rinpoche, acting Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo monastery as the Chairman of the Search Committee to whom they gave considerable freedom and power. However, Chadrak Gyurme Rinpoche is said to have maintained considerable connection with Dalai Lama as he could not totally brush aside the traditional belief and sentiment that no Panchen Lama would be accepted by the Tibetans if not formally approved by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama's repeated offers to initiate the identification process either remained unanswered or were turned down by the Chinese. This prompted him to act on his own and he announced Gedun Choekyi Nyima as the true incarnation on May 14, 1995. This was perceived by China as an indirect challenge to its sovereignty. They acted swiftly by taking direct political action and by completely ignoring the Search Committee. Chadrak Gyurme Rinpoche was detained on 17th May on charges of colluding with Dalai Lama. The boy identified as Panchen Lama was taken to China along with his family and his whereabouts has since then remained unknown. Forty eight Tibetans were arrested between May and August 1995 on suspicion of helping Chadrak Gyurme Rinpoche who sent messages about the child to the Dalai Lama in India. Then China embarked upon a policy of enthroning a candidate of their own choice as the Panchen Lama. Instructions were issued to 300 senior lamas in Central Tibet to condemn Chadrak Gyurme Rinpoche and to support the Chinese decision to use the Golden Urn method to select their own Panchen Lama. The Chinese imposition was opposed by all the monks and lamas of Tashi Lhunpo, who, in a special meeting in June 1995, expressed their conviction in the authenticity of the reincarnation identified by the Dalai Lama because they had experienced many supernatural events. Specific demand by some lamas that the boy recognised by the Dalai Lama also be included in the list of candidates was categorically rejected by the Chinese authorities. They finally got Gaincain Norbu

from Nagchu in Northern Tibet recognised as the 11th Panchen Lama. The method used for this was not the traditional Tibetan rituals but drawing of lots which had never before been used for the selection of the Panchen Lama. Interestingly, the boy is said to have come from a family of a cadre of the Communist Party. Earlier, on August 4, 1994, the CPC's TAR's Discipline Inspection Committee had issued a Nine Point Document (Doc. No. 58 of 1994) signed into a law by TAR leader Buchung instructing the Party members and cadres to refrain from accepting any recognition of their children as reincarnation by the "Dalai clique". Since the Chinese Central authorities realised that their political action would be opposed by the Tibetans inside Tibet, a de facto martial law was imposed on Shigatse and Tashi Lhunpo which remained closed to the tourists. The Chinese acclamation rituals at Jokhang temple at Lhasa and the enthronement ceremony at Tashi Lhunpo were conducted amidst heavy armed police forces around the two places.²³ In spite of all the Chinese efforts, Gyaltzen Norbu, the 11th Panchen Lama remains a suspect in Tibetan and Buddhist eyes without the Dalai Lama's sanctification and legitimisation. After the controversy over the identification of the Panchen Lama, both the Tibetans and the Chinese are already reported to be preparing for the eventuality of the Dalai Lama's death and the selection of his reincarnation. The issue started taking shape from 1995 when he turned 60 and Beijing started a press campaign highlight his advanced age.²⁴ On the occasion of his 64th birthday in July, 1999, the Dalai Lama reacted to this by making the following statement: "...should people prefer the old system of choosing a reincarnation, the Dalai Lama's reincarnation will appear in a free country and not in Chinese hand as the purpose of reincarnation is to carry the work started by the previous life and yet not fulfilled."²⁵ Earlier in May 1997 also, he is reported to have said that "If I die in exile and if the Tibetan people wish to continue the institution of Dalai Lama, my reincarnation will not be born under Chinese control, it will be outside, in the free world....."²⁶ Thus, he has already prepared the ground for the search of his reincarnation outside China. No candidate, it is expected, will henceforth be accepted as an authentic one by the Tibetans, if picked up by the Chinese from China itself. That the Chinese too are making some game plan for the eventuality is indicated by the unconfirmed reports that the Chinese Government has already established a committee to oversee the selection of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. The committee will lay the groundwork for an eventuality when Beijing might have to dispute the Exile Tibetan Government's choice of the present Dalai Lama's reincarnation within its own candidate.²⁷ If unable to do so, China may even try to unilaterally terminate the institution of Dalai Lamas. This is indicated by a pronouncement of Ma Chongying -Deputy Director of the Minority and Religious Affairs Bureau in Tibet that 'when Dalai Lama dies, he dies. There will be no replacement.' Earlier, in 1994, a slogan, "Crush the serpent's head" - was raised in a

meeting on Tibet in Beijing. The serpent was a reference to the Tibetan freedom struggle and its head-His Holiness the Dalai Lama.²⁸ Thus, by refusing to recognise the Dalai Lama's reincarnation (if he is put up by the exiled Tibetans) China may try to bring an end to the institution altogether, which they hope, will crush the Tibetan freedom movement for good.

CONCLUSION

The concept of reincarnation, basically a religious one, had assumed political significance in Tibet. Not only was the concept used by certain sects of Tibetan Buddhists to solve the problem of succession in the sects but in the Government as well. Eventually, Tibet became the only country of the world which came to be headed by a monk who happens to be the reincarnation of the previous ruler. This particular practice has created problems for Tibet as a country and even undermined its sovereignty. Even though the Tibetans claim that the method of identification is a full proof one there have sometimes been more than one candidate for certain particular posts. This has often created feuds and factionalisms in the sects and monasteries. This, in its turn has given scope to certain neighbouring countries-China being the most important of them- to interfere into the mode of selection. By manipulating the selections and putting up its own candidates for the high Government posts China has tried to indirectly subordinate Tibet and make claims to sovereignty over her. This trend, that had set in the 18th century intensified in the 20th century after the Communists came to power in China. The recent controversy over the identification of the Panchen Lama and the reported gameplan about the selection of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in case of his death in exile indicate the culmination of this power struggle between China and Tibet. The Tibetan experience is a case in example of how a religious concept degenerates into an issue of political contention of international ramifications when it is used for extra religious purposes.

REINCARNATION AND POLITICS IN TIBET

(Summary)

The concept of reincarnation, based on the Buddhist belief in the transmigration of soul has assumed a political significance in Tibet. The concept was used by certain sects of Tibetan Buddhists like the Karmapas and the Gelugpas to solve the problem of succession in the sects. In course of time, the reincarnated monks, occupying high posts in the monasteries became involved in politics as well. Eventually, Tibet became the only country of the world that was headed by a

monk who happened to be the reincarnation of the previous ruler. The Dalai Lama, the head of the Gelugpa sect was also the head of the Government of Tibet.

This particular practice has created certain problems for Tibet and undermined her sovereignty. Even though the Tibetans claimed that the method of identification of these incarnations is full proof, there have been more than one candidate for certain particular posts. This has created feuds and factionalism in the sects and the monasteries and invited interference from certain neighbouring countries, China being the most important of them.

By putting up its own candidates for high government posts or manipulating their selection, China has indirectly subordinated Tibet and made claims of sovereignty over her. The trend that had started in the 18th century intensified in the 20th after the communists came to power in China and ultimately occupied Tibet in 1956.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Leo E. Rose: *The Politics of Bhutan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1977, pp. 26-27.
2. Alexandra David-Neel: *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (originally in French, Paris 1929) Dover Publications, New York, 1971, pp. 116-117. She thinks that the concept of this category of tulkus originated not in Lamaism but in the old religion of Tibet.
3. This expression is coined by Franz Michael. The title of his book is *Rule by Incarnation-Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State*. Westview Press, Boulder, 1982.
4. L.A. Waddell: *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, (1893), Reprint Manjusri Publications, New Delhi, 1978, p. 229.
5. Alexandra David-Neel, op cit. p. 115
6. Franz Michael, op cit. pp. 37-39.
7. For details, W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, Vol. 1, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1967, pp. 73-99.
8. Charles Bell: *The Religion of Tibet* (1931) Reprint, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968, pp. 108-109.
9. L.A. Waddell expresses more or less the same opinion. "It seems to me that it arose no earlier than the 15th century, and that at first it was simply a scheme to secure stability for the succession to the headship of the state against electioneering intrigues of a crafty lama." *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, op cit. p. 229.
10. Charles Bell: *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great*

- Thirteenth* (1946) Reprint, Wisdom Publications, London, 1987, p. 38.
11. Alexandra David-Neel, op cit, p. 125.
 12. The issue has come into focus again after the flight of the Karmapa Ogyen Thinley Dorjee from Tsurphu monastery in Tibet and his taking up of asylum in Dharamsala, the headquarters of the Tibetan Government in Exile in January 2000.
 13. For details of the Karmapa controversy see Amrita Bazar Patrika 4.6.94, *The Statesman* (Calcutta) 17.11.94,
 14. Dawa Norbu, *Tibet : The Road Ahead*; Harper Collins Publishers India, 1997,p. 309-310.
 15. W.D.Shakabpa, however, denies that the Golden Urn system was used for selection of the IXth Dalai Lama. op cit. p.172
 16. Ibid. p.176
 17. Ibid. p.176
 18. The Communists claim that a presentation of a golden urn by the Manchu Emperor in 1792 marked the height of Manchu influence over Tibet. This was so mainly for two reasons Tibet during this period was invaded four times by the Gorkhas of Nepal and each time the Lhasa Government requested the Chinese Emperor Chien Lung to send Manchu troops to repulse the Gorkha forces. Secondly, Emperor Chein-ling was perhaps the most expansionist of Manchu emperors and this affected Tibet too. This is the reason why the Communists takes the golden urn presentation in 1792 as the historic basis of its claim to 'confirm' the reincarnations of the Dalai and the Panchen Lamas. Dawa Norbu, op cit.p.309.
 19. For detailed account of the course of events of this period, ibid .pp. 129-139
 20. For details of Chinese policy and Tibetan reaction see Michael Harris Goodman : *The Last Dalai Lama : A Biography*, (1986) Rupa Paperback, Calcutta 1996, pp..115-277.
 21. Ibid.
 22. Dawa Norbu, op cit. pp. 300-308.
 23. The Panchen Lama Lineage : How Reincarnation is being used as a Political Tool, Department of Information and International Relations, Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamsala, 1996. For further details of selection procedure and analysis of the Dalai Lama's actions, Dawa Norbu, op cit, pp.310-319.
 24. As early as February 1995, China's Tibet, an official magazine carried an article under the headline " the Dalai Lama is getting old on in years and worries". The article signalled the onset of Beijing's interference in the reincarnation issue of the Dalai Lama. It predicted that the exile movement would disintegrate once the leader died. The same magazine

had accused the Dalai Lama of nursing a yearning for longevity in an article a year before. *Tibetan Bulletin*, Dharmasala, January-February, p. 21. 25. This was quoted in the *Tibetan Review*, New Delhi, August 1999, p.7 from *The Indian Express*, 6.7.1999.

26. *Tibetan Bulletin*, op cit, p.21.
27. Seth Faison, *New York Times*, New York, 25.11.1998.
28. Ibid.