



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama should reincarnate following traditional Tibetan practices, Tibetan religious leaders say

<https://savetibet.org/dalai-lama-should-reincarnate-following-traditional-tibetan-practices-tibetan-religious-leaders-say/>

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Senior Tibetan religious leaders today adopted a resolution urging the Dalai Lama to reincarnate according to Tibetan traditions and declaring that Tibetans will never accept a Dalai Lama appointed by China.

The resolution that emerged at the 14th Tibetan Religious Conference also says the Dalai Lama alone has the authority to decide how his reincarnation will occur and that no government has the right to interfere in that sacred process.

The three-day conference, which brings together the heads of major Tibetan Buddhist and Bon traditions, began today in Dharamsala, India, the exile home of the Dalai Lama. The conference is organized by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which provides democratic governance to the Tibetan diaspora. In attendance were the heads and senior masters of all the Tibetan Buddhist lineages as well as of the Bon religion.

The Dalai Lama, who is now 84, is scheduled to address the conference on Friday, Nov. 29, 2019.

Dalai Lama has sole authority

The current Dalai Lama is the 14th in his line. Each Dalai Lama is recognized as the reincarnation of their predecessors, and, according to Tibetan Buddhist beliefs, has the sole authority to decide whether to return after death in order to benefit humankind.

Using this authority, the Dalai Lama issued a statement in 2011 saying that Tibetans and the followers of Tibetan Buddhism should decide whether or not to continue the institution of the Dalai Lama after he eventually dies.

Despite this, China—which has brutally occupied Tibet, a historically independent country in the Himalayan region, for the past 60 years—has made it clear it plans to appoint its own successor to the Dalai Lama, who will no doubt serve as a mouthpiece for the regime in Beijing, just as the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama does.

China's plans not only represent a major violation of international religious freedom but, given the Dalai Lama's massive popularity around the globe, would also help the Communist Party's efforts to use soft power to influence and undermine foreign countries.

Already Chinese officials have warned India that bilateral relations between the two Asian powers will suffer if India does not recognize the Chinese-appointed Dalai Lama.

International pushback on China

Thankfully however, many world leaders support Tibetans' right to select their own religious leaders.

In the US, a new bill was introduced in Congress this fall that makes it official US policy that the succession of the Dalai Lama is something only he and the Tibetan Buddhist community can decide on.

The bill, known as the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, will also sanction Chinese officials who attempt to appoint a future Dalai Lama.

During a trip last month to Dharamsala, US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback said, "We believe that Tibetans, like all faith communities, must be able to practice their faith freely and select their leaders without interference."

Brownback added: "The international community must work together now to make clear we stand unequivocally with the people of Tibet."

Voice of Tibetans

Tibetans themselves have also made their views on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation clear.

At a general meeting in October, Tibetan representatives unanimously passed a resolution stating that China has no right to interfere in the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist leaders.

The resolution adopted at today's religious leaders' conference strengthens the position of the Tibetan Buddhist community and its allies in the US and across the world.

Below is the text of the resolution from the website of the CTA.

- The Karmic bond between the Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan people have been inseparable and the present status of the Tibetan people being extremely critical, all Tibetans genuinely wish for the continuation of the Institution and Reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in the future. We therefore strongly supplicate to His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama for the same.
- The authority of decision concerning the way and the manner in which the next reincarnation of the XIV Dalai Lama should appear solely rests with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama himself. No government or otherwise will have such authority. If the Government of the People's Republic of China for political ends chooses a candidate for the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan people will not recognize and respect that candidate.
- Regarding the method of recognizing the future reincarnations of the Dalai Lama, the same unique Tibetan traditional method, which has been continuously used until now, will be followed. This method conforms to be basic philosophy and tenets of the Buddhadharma and originated in Tibet over 800 years ago.