


Reincarnation at Work: A Case Study of the Incarnation Lineage of Sum pa mkhan po

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There were some shameless, deceitful, and cunning women who became pregnant and insisted to all directions like the wind that it was none other than a rebirth of the deceased lama in a false way, as I mentioned above. To this, even their husbands became confident. However, they gave birth to daughters eventually.¹

After the death of the previous Jebtsundamba *kātuktu*, the queen of the Tüsiyetü Khan became pregnant. It was proclaimed to all that this would be the reincarnation of the Jebtsundamba. However, when the time arrived, a daughter was born. This affair was laughable. As a result the Mongols came to be disdained.²

 In the Fire-Snake Year of the twelfth *rab byung* (1737 CE), the Amdo monk-scholar Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704–1788) was invited to the capital city of the Qing dynasty for an audience with the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735–1796). As it had been only two years since Qianlong ascended to the throne, Sum pa mkhan po was also a relatively young religious figure, only having finished his studies in Central Tibet a few years previously. It seems that both were not impressed with each other at their first meeting, since the court did not host this religious figure for long. They had little contact after that occasion,³ but we can find a striking similarity when both took up the matter of the incarnation institution in the last years of their lives, as witnessed in the two accounts cited above.

While the first account is taken from the concluding remarks of Sum pa mkhan po's critique of the incarnation institution in his autobio-

¹ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 4b.

² From Qianlong emperor's *Lama shuo*. I followed the English translation of Oidtmann 2018: 241.

³ Sum pa mkhan po had another meeting with the Qianlong emperor during his second trip to the capital city in the Water-Dog Year (1742), but this was much shorter than the previous occasion due to the former's sudden illness. For this trip, see Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 101a–101b.

graphy completed in 1788,⁴ the second is from the Qianlong emperor's famous *Lama shuo* 喇嘛說 ("Discourse on Lamas"), penned in 1792.⁵ From their common misogynist stance at the end of the account, Sum pa mkhan po and the Qianlong emperor both revealed the same concerns regarding the abuse of the incarnation institution by the Mongols by retelling exactly the same anecdote. This coincidence indicates that the two must have shared the similar sense of crisis about the same issue, although they adopted different social and religious stances.

This essay will address a lesser-known aspect of this historical issue in 18th-century Inner Asia. While the background and implications of Qianlong's writing of *Lama shuo* have attracted much scholarly attention and are well known,⁶ Sum pa mkhan po's opinion and role in the incarnation institution has received almost no attention. I will first provide an analytic comparison of perspectives on the incarnation institution from opposite poles of the empire, and then offer a case study of further details of Sum pa mkhan po's involvement in the development of the incarnation institution in order to shed light on the lesser-known, but more emic, side of the topic.

1. Diverging Discourses on Incarnation

It is commonly known that Qianlong's *Lama shuo* was motivated by the Sino-Nepalese War (1788–1792), the origin of which, as the emperor concluded, was a property dispute among incarnate lamas of sibling relationship from the family of the recently deceased 6th Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780). Bearing a grudge for the deprivation of his inheritance right of the late Panchen Lama's property, the 10th Zhwa dmar Chos grub rgya mtsho (1742–1792) entered Nepal and incited the Gurkha's invasion of Tibet, which was driven back by the Qing military. Among the many measures taken in the aftermath, the Qianlong emperor decided to mend what he thought was a corrupt system of the incarnation institution. *Lama shuo* was the emperor's proclamation for this amendment. Additionally, when we read the whole text of *Lama shuo* carefully, it reveals deeper layers of the emperor's opinion regarding Tibetan Buddhism.

⁴ For the completion year for Sum pa mkhan po's autobiography, see Kim 2018: 11–12.

⁵ For examining *Lama shuo*, I used Zhang 1988: 339–343, Beijing tushuguan jinshizu 1997: 37–40, and Oidtmann 2018: 239–243.

⁶ For a few exemplary studies of the subject, see Lessing 1942, Hevia 1993, and Oidtmann 2018.

The Qianlong emperor's opinion centered on two main topics when he authored *Lama shuo*. The first one is his refutation of criticism that he was too much inclined to worshipping and favoring Tibetan Buddhism and its hierarchs. The emperor invoked several comparisons with the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) to emphasize how differently and practically he used Tibetan Buddhism in his regime. Since the Yuan rulers revered Tibetan lamas, a variety of abuses had been perpetrated by these religious figures. By enumerating cases of abuse one by one, the emperor showed that he understood the bad effects of excessive worshipping and demonstrated that he knew what he was doing when it came to Tibetan Buddhism.

The second topic was why and how he attempted to systematize the process of selecting new incarnate lamas in Tibet and Mongolia. Although the self-interest of an individual lama or clan dominating the institution was the primary problem, the emperor also pointed out that any prospective conflict between Tibetans and Mongols over the selection results was to be pre-empted by taking appropriate measures. The result was an introduction of "the golden urn selection."⁷ In addition, an equally important position assumed by the emperor was that he did not intend to replace the original tradition of the selection process of incarnate lamas in its entirety. Instead, the emperor proposed that he would improve the problematic system by adding the method of "the golden urn selection" to the final stage, while the beginning stage of consulting oracles for finding new incarnates remained intact.⁸ In doing so, the ultimate goal of the emperor was a peaceful *status quo* in the outer regions, namely, Tibet and Mongolia.

On the other hand, Sum pa mkhan po's critique of the incarnation institution originated in his humble refusal to accept being an incarnate lama.⁹ In the opening part of his autobiography, Sum pa mkhan po discusses the topic of incarnation, including his own eligibility. He gives a succinct but interesting overview of incarnation as follows:

1. There is no doubt that great sages from Śākyamuni to Tsong kha pa's two disciples¹⁰ have reincarnated in a continuous

⁷ For recent discussions of the origin, implementation, and use of "the golden urn," see Sperling 2012 and Oidtmann 2018.

⁸ The emperor quoted a relevant maxim from a Chinese classic of *The Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) for the principle he adopted. See Oidtmann 2018: 243.

⁹ Such a sense of self-humiliation is common in Tibetan autobiographical literature. For a discussion on the subject, see Roesler 2020. I owe this reference to the anonymous reviewer of this article.

¹⁰ Between Śākyamuni to Tsong kha pa's disciples, Sum pa mkhan po enumerates such sages: in India, "Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Ones (i.e., Nāgārjuna,

sequence;

2. Originally, there was no custom of incarnation in Tibet, but sages were intentionally born in Tibet to disseminate Buddha's teachings;

3. In later times, incarnation became popular in Central Tibet, Kham, Amdo, and Mongolia, and incarnate lamas became "as many as the number of ears in a good harvest";

4. However, authentic incarnations that are attended by unmistakably miraculous signs and have memories of their former lives are so rare that only a few exist in Tibet;¹¹

5. Therefore, those who were selected as incarnations should make every effort to generate faith in both Buddhists and non-Buddhists and not to lose face before their disciples.¹²

Problems arose in the system from this stage. In Sum pa mkhan po's opinion, the main problem with the incarnation institution was twofold. The first issue was that the incarnation institution was regionally limited. He emphasized that he had never heard of so-called incarnations being reborn in the same area where they had been born in their previous life. Originally, no such concept of incarnation existed in Tibet, and incarnations intentionally appeared in non-native areas in order to disseminate the Buddha's teachings more broadly. But many influential people began to appropriate the system, and the number of incarnate lamas grew to be too many in number and became fixed as a local custom.¹³

This corrupted state of affairs is connected to the institution's second problem. The incarnation institution was increasingly being monopolized by the rich families during Sum pa mkhan po's lifetime, and there appeared false incarnations. There were even cases where parents lied about the dates of their children's births to present them closer to the time of death of deceased lamas, or concocted omens or other evidence of their children being incarnations. In the end, these impostors made ordinary people doubt the Buddha's teachings *per se*.¹⁴

The two discourses by the Qianlong emperor and Sum pa mkhan po appear similar in their criticism, but there are some key differences

Āryadeva, Aśaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Dharmakīrti; Guṇaprabha and Śākyaprabha)" and 84 mahāsiddhas; in Kashmir and Nepal, many siddhas and paṇḍitas; in Tibet, Mar pa, Mi la ras pa, and Bu ston Rin chen grub, as those who were incarnated.

¹¹ An interlinear note here says: "[only] such as Dalai and Panchen Lamas and Lcang skya [are authentic incarnations] in Tibet."

¹² Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 3a–3b.

¹³ As indicated above, the regional limitedness and monopoly by powerful clans of the incarnation institution was mentioned by the Qianlong emperor too.

¹⁴ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 4a–4b.

between the critiques. Most significantly, their main concerns were totally different: while Qianlong was worried about any harmful effect on the administration of the Qing, especially in its outer regions, what mattered most to Sum pa mkhan po was any possible degeneration of the public opinion on Buddhist teachings. Another important difference was that Sum pa mkhan po was an insider in the institution and was in a traditional position to participate in the actual course of development of the incarnation institution, but the Qianlong emperor was a meddling outsider, at best, whose attempted efforts to add his authority to the system could have been easily seen as interference in the eyes of many Tibetan Buddhists.

2. *Sum pa mkhan po's Involvement in the Incarnation Institution*

Given the capacity of being an insider of the system, it would be significant to elucidate Sum pa mkhan po's experience of and involvement in the incarnation institution. Fortunately, his autobiography provides the details of such information and what follows is a reconstruction based mainly on the accounts about his lineage and himself from the autobiography.

2.1. *Beginning of the Sum pa*

The Sum pa has been known as one of major incarnation lineages at Dgon lung Monastery (Chin. Youningsi 佑寧寺, established in 1704), a large-scale Tibetan monastic complex located in present-day Huzhu 互助 county in eastern Qinghai province of China.¹⁵ Among the major incarnations, Lcang skya, Thu'u bkwan, and Sum pa were regarded as the three preeminent lineages.¹⁶ In fact, the significance of the Sum pa incarnation lineage should be recognized especially in its relation to Dgon lung's early history, in which the Sum pa were a local clan community that had a strong connection with Dgon lung's establishment, rather than an incarnation institution *per se*.

"Sum pa" is regarded to be the name of a clan mentioned in accounts of the Tibetan Empire (7th–9th centuries). Sum pa mkhan po himself also indicated that "it is probable that [our] clan is the Sum pa [listed] among the 18 great clans of [imperial] Tibet."¹⁷ Sum pa mkhan po's "Sum pa" is sometimes rendered "Sum bha," which suggests

¹⁵ For a recent full-scale study of Dgon lung Monastery, see Sullivan 2013.

¹⁶ Han 1982: 390–415.

¹⁷ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7a. For "the great eighteen clans" (Tib. *rus chen bco brgyad*), see Haarh 1969: 259, 282.

another possible etymology for the name.¹⁸ In any case, it seems that there is no clear evidence that ties the current Sum pa clan to the Sum pa clan mentioned in ancient accounts.

In his autobiography, Sum pa mkhan po identifies the current Sum pa clan with great specificity. According to him, the Sum pas were called “Be’i kya,” most likely in Chinese.¹⁹ In a modern list of Tibetan clan names in Huzhu county and adjacent Tianzhu 天祝 county in Gansu, we can find a “Baizha’er 白扎尔 (or Beizha’er 北札尔)” clan that may be closely associated with the “Be’i kya.”²⁰ The Sum pa also had a connection to a Chinese polity. An anecdote from Sum pa mkhan po’s autobiography indicates that a Sum pa ancestor took care of one of 13 temples built along the Sino-Tibetan border under the auspices of the mother of Ming emperor Wanli 萬曆 (r. 1573–1620).²¹ Regardless of how long these Sum pas lived before Sum pa mkhan po, the significance of Sum pa mkhan po’s work with respect to the subsequent history of the Sum pas has to do with Dgon lung Monastery.

The Sum pas were certainly already an important clan in the area when Dgon lung was founded. The first abbot (Tib. *khri pa*) of Dgon lung came from this clan, and it seems that his appointment was not simply a fortuitous one. The first abbot, Sum pa *slob dpon che ba* (“greater master”) Dam chos rgya mtsho (d.u.), had earned his reputation as a scholar even before Dgon lung was established. Born in Amdo, young Dam chos rgya mtsho traveled to Central Tibet for his studies. He was given the epithet *slob dpon pa* (“master”) by the 3rd Phags pa lha Mthong ba don ldan (1567–1604) when he was invited to Chab mdo in Kham before returning to Amdo.²² He was likely chosen as an abbot not only because of his scholarly achievements but because of his father’s important role in the building of Dgon lung. According to Sum pa mkhan po’s account, Dam chos rgya mtsho’s

¹⁸ This different rendering is especially seen in accounts of later generations. In the woodblock printings of Sum pa mkhan po’s works (produced no later than the end of the 18th century) “Sum bha” was not in use. However, the mid-19th-century accounts such as *Deb ther rgya mtsho* have both Sum pa and Sum bha. A very recent account by Per Nyi ma ’dzin uses “Sum bha” for all the lineage (2007: 81–98).

¹⁹ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7a.

²⁰ Chen Qingying *et al.* 1990: 335–340.

²¹ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7a. The emperor’s mother allegedly had people build the temples after she completed the project of producing and disseminating 100 copies of the golden *Bka’ ’gyur*. This account is repeated in *Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas* 1982: 63. I have been unable to find any evidence from Chinese historical sources on this enterprise sponsored by Wanli’s mother, Empress Dowager Xiaoding 孝定 (1544–1614), who is known as a devout Buddhist.

²² *Thu’u bkwan* 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1988: 27–28. Phags pa lha is an incarnation lineage of Dga’ ldan byams pa gling in Chab mdo, Kham.

father, Sum pa Don grub (d.u.), received a written permission from the Lanzhou *zongdu* 蘭州總督 to use the land to build Dgon lung.²³ This story suggests that the Sum pas played a key role in the establishment of Dgon lung.

Sum pa mkhan po mentions another aspect in which the Sum pa were important in establishing the monastic community. When Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho returned to his hometown from Chab mdo, he helped Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho (d. ca. 1637), the founder of Dgon lung, to establish a “stream of monks” (Tib. *grwa rgyun*) for the new monastery. He provided young monks by “buying many boys” (Tib. *bu chung mang po nyos nas*) from their families with horses and other types of wealth.²⁴ The property that Dam chos rgya mtsho used to accomplish this purpose does not seem to have been his personal property; it is very likely that he used the wealth of his father Sum pa Don grub or that of the clan as a whole. When Dam chos rgya mtsho stayed for many years in Central Tibet and Kham, Sum pa Don grub, or at least the Sum pa clan, played a key role in establishing Dgon lung by procuring its estate. Later, when he had returned, they continued their relationship with the monastery by helping to provide its initial population of monks.

After they had provided the monastery with land and personnel, the Sum pas were entrusted with the creation of its systems of discipline and curriculum. The founder of Dgon lung Monastery, Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho, bestowed the authority over the monastery on Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho and then left for Central Tibet for good. Dam chos rgya mtsho twice assumed the *khri pa* position; he held office as the 1st *khri pa* (1609–1612) and again as the 4th *khri pa* (1621–1627). During his tenures, Dam chos rgya mtsho taught topics on Buddhist studies and as a result nurtured many prominent disciples such as the 1st Lcang skya Grags pa 'od zer (d. 1641). He also established a salary system to promote the monks' studies.²⁵ As his epithet “*slob dpon che ba*” indicates, he earned enough of a reputation that when he passed away, his disciples sought his rebirth. However, this lineage was not maintained under the name of Sum pa for several reasons that will be discussed below.

²³ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7b. In the early 17th century, the Ming government installed *sanbian zongdu* 三邊總督 (i.e., a governor-general of three border areas) whose jurisdiction covered the Gansu area. However, Sum pa mkhan po might have used the term *zongdu* not as an exact position but just as referring to a highest authority in Lanzhou, i.e., *lan gru mkhar gyi dpon* (a ruler of the Lanzhou governor's office).

²⁴ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7b.

²⁵ Thu'u bkwan 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1988: 29–30.

The comparative epithet *slob dpon che ba* (“greater master”) implies that there was “*slob dpon chung ba*,” a lesser master of Sum pa, too. Dam chos rgya mtsho’s younger brother, Dam chos rgyal mtshan (d.u.), was the Sum pa *slob dpon chung ba*. He helped his brother solidify the foundations of the newly established monastery. Dam chos rgyal mtshan served as Dgon lung’s 7th *khri pa* from 1633 to 1637. He was also known as an instrumental figure in protecting Xining 西寧 and Dgon lung against Chinese rebel forces led by Li Zicheng 李自成 when they approached the area in 1644.²⁶ Dam chos rgyal mtshan established connections with Te’i thung Monastery and Se ra lung Monastery in Tianzhu County, which were maintained up to Sum pa mkhan po’s time.²⁷ Thus, Sum pa *slob dpon chung ba* Dam chos rgyal mtshan, like his elder brother, was a significant figure in the early history of Dgon lung Monastery.

Since these two bothers played a significant role in the founding and early development of Dgon lung, titles of “greater” Sum pa and “lesser” Sum pa have remained as vestiges of their contributions. There have been attempts to connect these two titles to the Sum pa incarnation lineage of later generations. Han Rulin has suggested that there existed two incarnation lineages for Sum pa,²⁸ but only the incarnation lineage of the “lesser” Sum pa brother has survived.

2.2. The Sum pa Bifurcation

Although there is no indication that the system of incarnate lamas was in full swing in early 17th-century Amdo, there is some evidence that the system did already exist in the region by that time.²⁹ If the Sum pas

²⁶ In Tibetan, the name of the rebel leader is given as “lu’u zi” or “lu’u ci.” Some sources explain it as a Tibetan transliteration of Chinese *Li zei* 李賊 (“Li [zicheng]’s bandits”) but this is highly doubtful. In the last years of the Ming dynasty, there was a rebel leader Lu Wenbin 魯文彬, who was subordinate to Li zicheng and active around the Xining area. His family name seems to be closer to “lu’u.” However, more research is needed to know how Li Zicheng’s rebellion was understood by the Amdo—especially Tibetan speaking—people at that time.

²⁷ For these two monasteries, see *Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Tianzhu zangzu zizhixian weiyuanhui* 2000: 25–56; 165–70. For Sum pa mkhan po’s relationship with these monasteries, see Kim 2018: 235–254. Rong bo Skal ldan rgya mtsho (1607–1677) also mentioned activities of these monasteries in a relation to Dgon lung Monastery (Sullivan 2013: 47).

²⁸ Han 1982: 409.

²⁹ For the first incarnation in Amdo, see Tuttle 2011, and Sullivan 2013: 32n102. Also see Sullivan’s description of the incarnation system in Sde pa *chos rje* Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho’s time (1593–1638): “This suggests that the phenomenon of recognizing the rebirths of lamas was still unfamiliar in Amdo at this time” (Sullivan 2013: 112).

may have attempted to use the incarnation system to keep their influence intact, it seems that they developed their system in a very clumsy way, probably because the institution was very new to them. It may be that maintaining the power of the bloodline was not the only motive for attempting to find an incarnation of Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho. Religious and spiritual elements must have played a role as well, given his attainment of the status of master in Chab mdo and his contribution to the scholarly foundations of Dgon lung's early history. Such secular and religious motives must have mingled in a complex fashion as his retinue searched for his incarnation.

The attempt to create an incarnation lineage for Dam chos rgya mtsho seems to have developed along an unintended path and only survived as a vestige in later generations of the Sum pas. Sum pa mkhan po emphasized the meaning of Dam chos rgya mtsho's being an incarnate lama:

Specifically, everyone knows that *khri chen* La mo ba Blo gros rgya mtsho himself, who was the next incarnation of the one known as Sum pa *slob dpon che ba* [Dam chos rgya mtsho], was prophesized to be the one who would appear as a *dga' ldan khri pa*, an emanation of Tsong kha pa himself, [as recorded] in *the Book of Tsong kha pa's Emanations*. The former Lcang skya also said so. This *khri chen* La mo ba, a.k.a. Galdan Siregetü qutuytu) also admitted it, and when the Mañjuśrī Great Emperor (i.e., Kangxi 康熙) asked him [regarding] his life lineage he answered like that. [Thus] the lineage of Sum pa lamas is known to be blessed.³⁰

It is noteworthy that *khri chen* La mo ba Blo gros rgya mtsho (1635–1688) was identified as the next incarnation of Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho. *Khri chen* La mo ba Blo gros rgya mtsho was the 44th holder of the position of *Dga' ldan khri pa*, the most prestigious position in the whole Dge lug pa hierarchy. Born in Amdo, he spent some time in Mongolia during his childhood. After traveling to Central Tibet for studies, he became an accomplished scholar, ultimately ascending to the *Dga' ldan khri pa* position in 1682. When conflict broke out between Oirat and Khalkha in 1686, he was dispatched by the *Dga' ldan pho brang* government to reconcile them. After that, he visited Beijing at the invitation of the Kangxi emperor. On his way back to Tibet, Blo gros rgya mtsho passed away somewhere in Amdo. He was also known by the title Galdan Siregetü qutuytu.³¹ The suggestion that Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho had been the preceding incarnation of this prominent figure was only partially successful, as indicated in this

³⁰ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 7a.

³¹ For more about Galdan Siregetü qutuytu and his lineage, see Kim 2019: 89–94.

passage from an 18th-century record of the Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu authored by the 7th Dalai Lama (1708–1757):

It has been said that he was then born in the area of Dgon lung in Mdo smad as Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho, a realized master who would nourish the Teachings and beings in that area. But since I have neither seen nor heard the story of his full biography, I am unable to write such [things] here.³²

This statement indicates that Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho was once placed in the line of incarnations that 18th-century figures like Sum pa mkhan po or the 7th Dalai Lama Bskal bzang rgya mtsho knew as Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu, but his place in that lineage did not go unquestioned. The 3rd Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802) also wrote:

It is widely known that his (i.e., Sum pa's) subsequent incarnation was none other than La mo *khri chen* Blo gros rgya mtsho. Yet despite that being widely known, [he] is not included in *Khri sprul sku blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma'i 'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs* composed by Panchen Rinpoche.³³

The belief in Sum pa's subsequent incarnation as *khri chen* was still in circulation in the mid–19th century. It is mentioned briefly in this passage from Brag dgon pa's *Deb ther rgya mtsho*: "It is known that the subsequent incarnation in the line was *khri chen* [Ngag dbang] blo gros rgya mtsho."³⁴

However, in more recent sources, there is an increased certainty of his place in the Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu lineage, rather than in Sum pa's own lineage. Gser tog Blo bzang tshul khri rgya mtsho (1845–1915) gives a description of the "Dga' ldan gser khri" lineage when providing an account of the 67th abbot of Sku 'bum Monastery, Blo bzang thub bstan rgya mtsho (1847–1902), who was considered an incarnation of Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu.³⁵ In this account, the Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu lineage is reformed and Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho is described as a member of that line. More recently, the 5th Shing bza Skal bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1925–1998) provided the most detailed account of the Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu lineage. As Shing bza's account indicates, Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho has now

³² Tā la'i bla ma 07 Bskal bzang rgya mtsho 1983: 3b–4a.

³³ Thu'u bkwan 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1988: 30. I have been unable to locate this work by Panchen. Did Thu'u bkwan confuse it with a work by the 7th Dalai Lama?

³⁴ Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982: 57.

³⁵ Gser tog Blo bzang tshul khri rgya mtsho 1982: 170–182.

been firmly absorbed into the Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu lineage.³⁶ Another biographical account of successive Galdan Siregetü qutuγtus by Sangs rgyas rin chen also places Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho as a fixed figure in the earlier line of Galdan Siregetü qutuγtus.³⁷

Despite these developments, the idea of forming a “greater” Sum pa lineage has not lost its vitality on the Sum pa’s side. Per Nyi ma ‘dzin, in his account of the Sum pa lineage, suggests that La mo ba Blo gros rgya mtsho was a lineage holder. According to him, the Sum pa lineage is unilinear, with Sum pa Dam chos rgya mtsho being the first incarnation, La mo ba Blo gros rgya mtsho the second, and Sum pa mkhan po the third.³⁸ It is patently obvious that the author fabricated the lineage and has ignored the complexity that existed in the early history of the Sum pa lineage. He also disregards the existence of “greater” and “lesser” Sum pas, substituting a unilinear incarnation lineage in their place.³⁹

The reality of the lineage is complex because in the beginning the Sum pas held local power based on their property and kinship relations. Their local power also had some connection with Chinese authority. At some point, a son of this clan was sent to Central Tibet to increase his prestige through education. When he returned to his hometown, the stage for his future activities had been already prepared. His achievements led to the development of an incarnation lineage with respect to him, but the line was unstable and absorbed by a more powerful monastic institution. Thus, the “greater” Sum pa is now lost to us. However, another Sum pa incarnation lineage managed to overcome these obstacles by looking outside. This new version of the Sum pa incarnation lineage identified Sum pa mkhan po as its new Sum pa. What follows is an examination of the details of this new chapter in the Sum pa lineage.

³⁶ Skal bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan 1990. The author also gives Dam chos rgya mtsho’s death year as 1634, a piece of information that is not found in any other source. This information seems to have been added in an attempt to integrate him into the line of Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu incarnations more smoothly.

³⁷ Sangs rgyas rin chen 1991: 108–118.

³⁸ Per Nyi ma ‘dzin 2007: 81–88.

³⁹ Here one may recall Vostrikov’s remark on Tibetans’ perfunctoriness in formulating histories of incarnations: “The Tibetans do not pay much attention to the lack of chronological sequence in the listing of incarnations. The fact that these texts ascribe, to the same person, two or more simultaneous re-births in the past is also taken by the Tibetan very lightly” (Vostrikov 1970: 97n307). Nevertheless, I believe that one should detect a meaning behind this “perfunctoriness” with careful analyses of relevant literature, rather than simply ignore them as “unscientific.” I owe this reference to the anonymous reviewer of this article.

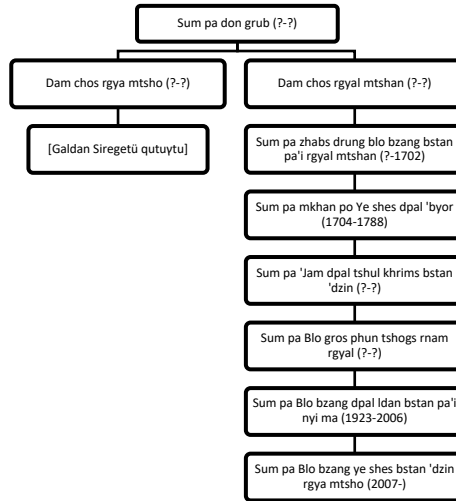


Fig. 1 — Genealogy of Sum pa incarnation lineages

2.3. Identification of *Ye shes dpal 'byor* as a Sum pa Incarnation

While the greater Sum pa, *slob dpon che ba*, was absorbed into the more powerful Galdan Siregetü qutuytu's lineage, the lesser Sum pa lineage has survived. The path that this line of incarnations has taken shows its own distinctive development that illuminates the functions and mechanism of the incarnation institution in 18th-century Amdo. We begin our examination of the details of how this lineage developed and has survived with the second lesser Sum pa, Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (d. 1702).

Little is known about how Sum pa *zhabs drung* Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was chosen as the incarnation of Sum pa *slob dpon chung ba*. According to Sum pa mkhan po, he was born in Shing ru, a part of the Dgon lung monastic estate. He went to Central Tibet for studies and his activities in Central Tibet are attested by La mo *dge bshes* Ngag dbang 'phrin las (1661–1726),⁴⁰ who spent some time with Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan in Central Tibet. Ngag dbang 'phrin las was later called in to test the young Sum pa mkhan po because of that experience.⁴¹ After his return, Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan only wanted to live as a hermit but could not, because he had to take a leading role in the retinue of the 2nd Lcang skya Ngag dbang blo bzang

⁴⁰ This La mo *dge bshes* later became more commonly known as the first Amdo zhwa dmar, an important incarnation lineage in the Amdo area especially for La mo bde chen and its sub-monasteries.

⁴¹ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 13a.

chos ldan (1642–1714) when the latter traveled to Beijing in 1693.⁴² His title *zhabs drung* (which Sum pa mkhan po inherited for a time) was probably awarded to him for his service to Lcang skya.⁴³ He was likely a close servant to Lcang skya because he traveled to Doloon Nuur⁴⁴ and Beijing with him again in 1701. On that trip, when Lcang skya's company arrived in Beijing from Doloon Nuur, Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan fell ill and passed away there in 1702. We can be sure that Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was quite important to Lcang skya, because the account of his death is preserved in verse in a long section of Lcang skya's biography:

On behalf of Sum bha [sic] *zhabs drung*, who had fallen ill with a serious sickness, I made donations to more than a 1,000 sangha who received their salaries in Beijing, performed a healing rite, and provided whatever medical care was available. Nevertheless, I was struck with immense grief because, as if it were inevitable, he passed into nirvāṇa.⁴⁵

It took some time to begin the process of finding a new Sum pa. In 1710, when a consecration ceremony was held for a newly built assembly hall at Dgon lung, the 2nd Lcang skya publicly raised the issue. Interestingly enough, instead of initiating the search himself, Lcang skya entrusted the task to 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa Ngag dbang brtson 'grus (1648–1722). When 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa visited Dgon lung Monastery, Lcang skya told him, “[My] friend Sum pa *zhabs drung* Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, who escorted me to China and was a virtuous friend in the spirit of the Bka' gdams, passed away. May you find an incarnation of him.” 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa delightedly accepted the task.⁴⁶

Some accounts about Sum pa mkhan po explain that this 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa was the person who led the identification of Sum pa mkhan po as the Sum pa incarnate. In a very broad sense, this is correct. However, a detailed analysis of the situation reveals that frictions and rivalry existed during the identification process. This becomes clearer when we realize that 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa was not the only figure who was involved in identifying Sum pa mkhan po, nor was he the only person trying to find Sum pa's incarnation. An

⁴² Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 8a.

⁴³ The literal meaning of “*zhabs drung*” is “at the feet of.” Generally, it refers to a servant of a great lama. When Sum pa mkhan po arrived in Central Tibet, he was still called “Sum pa *zhabs drung*” (Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 38a).

⁴⁴ Situated 250 km north of Beijing, Doloon Nuur was a religious center for Mongolian Buddhists during the Qing dynasty, with several monastic complexes at the location.

⁴⁵ Lcang skya 02 Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan (19th century): 27b–28a.

⁴⁶ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 12a.

attendant of the former Sum pa, whose name was Sum pa *chos rje* Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (d. 1740), began a parallel search for the incarnation. Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was a “kitchen servant” (Tib. *thab g.yog*) for Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. He even traveled to Central Tibet to perform a funeral ritual for the deceased Sum pa and made a supplication to the 5th Panchen Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737) to facilitate Sum pa's quick return.⁴⁷

Sum pa *chos rje* Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was born in Sum pa village and went to Ngam ring in Tsang to attain his *rab 'byams pa* title when he was 17. He was also a participant in other important moments in Dgon lung's history. Before Dgon lung's destruction during Blo bzang bstan 'dzin's Rebellion in 1723–1724, he was among three *chos rjes* (“religious lord”) who tried to dissuade Dgon lung monks from joining Blo bzang bstan 'dzin's troops. Perhaps thanks to his role in the event, he became the first *khri pa* of Dgon lung after it was re-established in 1729. It seems obvious that Sum pa *chos rje* Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was one of the Sum pas who had localized power and had a very similar background to the two Sum pa brothers. This Sum pa *chos rje* also became an incarnation lineage. It seems likely that he lived at a time when people formed as many incarnation lineages as possible, so long as candidates had academic training and were politically active.

According to Sum pa mkhan po, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was not happy with others' attempts to identify Sum pa mkhan po as the incarnation of Sum pa *zhabs drung*. He believed that another child, born in Shing ru, the same town where the former Sum pa *zhabs drung* was born, was the right incarnation. He even made a prophecy inquiry (Tib. *lung zhu ba*) regarding this boy in Central Tibet and seems to have received a positive answer. He may have been looking to identify an incarnation from the prior incarnation's village to preserve local authority. When he informed 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa of his work, however, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa blocked his inquiry, declaring:

Given that, other than that the prophecy simply conforms to the petitioner, there is not much certainty [in this method], we will only be certain when he unerringly recognizes the prayer beads, water bottle, three supports, and such, of his own prior incarnation.⁴⁸

We do not know why 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa blocked Sum pa *chos rje*'s attempt. In any case, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa instead entrusted this task to a descendant of Gushri khan, Erdeni Taiji Tshang ba

⁴⁷ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 8b.

⁴⁸ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 12a.

skyabs.⁴⁹ Then Tshang ba skyabs dispatched messengers to many places and finally Sum pa mkhan po's parents informed one of them that their seven-year-old son was showing monk's habits.⁵⁰ 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa might have wanted to thwart the continuation of Sum pa's local authority in this matter, instead relying on his own patrons of the Khoshut Mongols.

But the story does not end there. The identification process unfolded in a way that it was not much in the hands of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa either. People from La mo bde chen Monastery got involved in the search for the incarnation, in which the most important person was aforementioned La mo *dge bshes* Ngag dbang 'phrin las. At that time, La mo bde chen Monastery was an emerging monastic power in the middle of the Amdo region and its founders were competing with people who were subordinate to 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa who later formed a more powerful religious center called Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil Monastery. The atmosphere of this confrontation had a lingering effect on Sum pa mkhan po's later life.⁵¹

Thus, the boy sent by Erdeni Taiji Tshang ba skyabs was confirmed at La mo bde chen. However, rather than finalizing the incarnation discovery process, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa sent Sum pa mkhan po to Thar shul Chos skyong rgya mtsho under the pretext of continuing his education, but probably also to verify his identity as the incarnation of the lama through an examination of his character. It is interesting that the new Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu Blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma (1689–1762) made the final notification to the Sum pa residence in Dgon lung Monastery after Thar shul confirmed the final decision.

However, the monastery did not accept that Thar shul and Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu had the authority. After receiving Galdan Siregetü qutuγtu's notification, Sum pa *chos rje* dispatched *dge slong* Blo bzang rab brtan to the family of Sum pa mkhan po. They made a final confirmation of the child's identity by having him identify the former Sum pa's old books. The identification was successful and the *dge slong* brought the news to Dgon lung. Dgon lung arranged an escort company for Sum pa mkhan po's family, but a female chieftain of the tribe refused to cooperate, saying, "'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa told us that [this child] should be brought to [Dgon lung] next year." Instead of Dgon lung's company, the escort was led by the female chieftain, and Sum pa mkhan po finally arrived at the Sum pa residence in the third

⁴⁹ Erdeni Taiji Tshang ba skyabs was a grandson of Gu shri khan's sixth son, Rdo rje dalai hungtaiji.

⁵⁰ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 12b.

⁵¹ For this La mo bde chen Monastery and its competition with 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's group of monastics, see Kim 2019.

month in the Water-Dragon Year (approx. 1712), a date that had been specified by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa himself.⁵²

Even though Dgon lung and the Sum pas took the initiative to find a new Sum pa, the process was seized by non-Dgon lung powers once the process began. The non-Dgon lung powers that interfered with the identification were the newly built monasteries and Oirat Mongolian communities. Dgon lung by then was already an old powerhouse whose authority was based on their local power and groups of clan communities. Although they had tried to adjust their method of transmission of power by adopting the incarnation lineage, the lineage itself was soon absorbed by the more well-organized groups whose connections were more far-reaching. Sum pa mkhan po's identification process shows this complex nexus of monastic and secular powers in early 18th-century Amdo. As the Sum pa lineage was removed from the auspices of local authorities, monastic powers who were strongly connected to Oirat Mongols vied with one another to control it. Upon close examination, the changes in authority over the lineage can be seen in Sum pa mkhan po's later life too.

2.4. *Old and New Sum pa Coexistence and Dénouement*

Although the selection process of a new Sum pa was largely controlled by forces outside of Dgon lung, Sum pa mkhan po could not escape the Sum pas' meddling in the course of his life once he arrived at the Sum pa residence in Dgon lung Monastery. The term "*khu dbon*" appears frequently in Sum pa mkhan po's accounts. It means "uncle and nephew," and generally refers to a familial bond. But Sum pa mkhan po uses the term to refer to a group of people who were part of the Sum pas both in bloodline and incarnation lineage. Sum pa mkhan po's relationship with this Sum pa *khu dbon* helps us to understand the complex dynamics inside the Sum pa *bla brang*.

In 1722, when Dgon lung was about to send an envoy to Rgyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa (1696–1750) in Central Tibet, Sum pa mkhan po asked Sum pa *chos rje* "*khu dbon*" for permission to go along. They did not grant him permission.⁵³ Sum pa mkhan po persistently tried to get the permission, even presenting positive evidence gained by requesting a dharma protector through a medium for a divination, until he was finally allowed to go. In 1723, when Sum pa mkhan po

⁵² Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 16b, 18a–18b.

⁵³ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 29b.

was about to leave for Central Tibet, he overheard some Sum pa *dbon pos* (“nephews”) and other bad company talking behind his back.⁵⁴

Two things are noteworthy about this anecdote. First, there existed in Dgon lung Monastery a group of people who shared the name “Sum pa” and who were described as “uncle(s) and nephews.” We do not know if the term for uncle is singular or plural, but we do know that Sum pa *chos rje* was called “uncle” (*khu*) and was the person in charge of everything related to the Sum pa group. An equally important fact is that there were a number of Sum pa “nephews” (*dbon*) in Dgon lung Monastery. Second, Sum pa mkhan po was not sent to Central Tibet on his own, but as part of a “Sum pa” group. Sum pa Blo bzang phun tshogs went along as a guide for Sum pa mkhan po, and Sum pa *rab 'byams pa* Phun tshogs don grub was supposed to be one of his kitchen servants. However, the latter became an obstruction for Sum pa mkhan po’s career.⁵⁵ When Sum pa mkhan po returned to Dgon lung Monastery, Phun tshogs don grub again became a mischief-maker, causing later hostility between Sum pa mkhan po and the Sum pa “uncles and nephews.”⁵⁶ These are all signs that there was discord between Sum pa mkhan po and the preexisting Sum pa faction.

Sum pa mkhan po’s relationship with Sum pa *chos rje* can be gleaned from Sum pa mkhan po’s reaction to the passing of Sum pa *chos rje* after his illness in 1740. Although Sum pa mkhan po took care of the *chos rje* for more than 20 days, he attributed *chos rje*’s misfortune to the harm the *chos rje* had done to him earlier in his life. Sum pa mkhan po even quoted a stanza from *Bodhicaryāvatāra* to indicate his mixed feelings about losing the *chos rje*:

Those who will falsely accuse me,
And others who will do me harm,
And others still who will degrade me,
May they all share in Awakening.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 30a. They said: “When these two, our *zhabs drung* and Sum pa Blo bzang phun tshogs, arrive in Dbus, this *dbon po* will correct this untamed *zhabs drung* who does not practice good qualities.”

⁵⁵ Phun tshogs don grub caused Sum pa mkhan po to lose the opportunity to attend Rgyud smad grwa tshang. This was not simply a one-time setback, but had a lingering effect on Sum pa mkhan po’s later career. The 2nd Thu’u bkwan once recommended Sum pa mkhan po as an abbot of the Tantric College at Dgon lung, but elders of the monastery opposed the idea for the reason that Sum pa mkhan po had never attended a Tantric college. For this Sum pa mkhan po blames the “kitchen servant” (*thab g.yog pa*) Phun tshogs don grub (Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 102a).

⁵⁶ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 43a.

⁵⁷ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 95b. This is the 16th stanza of the chapter III from *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva.

In any case, Sum pa mkhan po led the funeral ceremony with abundant offerings and erected a stūpa to house *chos rje's* relics.⁵⁸

It seems that the Sum pa faction had a strained relationship with Sum pa mkhan po even after Sum pa *chos rje's* death. In 1741, there were many Buddhist services for Sum pa mkhan po including the reinstallation of the Maitreya statue and its temple. Sum pa mkhan po composed a *dkar chag* for the celebration.⁵⁹ However, he also lamented that there were some people who “do harm, like repaying great religious or material benefits given to them with poisonous food during a feast,” and that the “*khu dbon*” were the main group of this kind of wicked people.⁶⁰ These themes were mentioned again in 1749 when Lcang skya praised Sum pa mkhan po's tenure as Dgon lung's *khri pa*.⁶¹

It is interesting that Sum pa *chos rje* began to be succeeded through his own incarnation lineage and Sum pa mkhan po took charge of the selection. By depending on his own dreams, he chose Blo bzang dbang rgyal, the son of a Li kya chieftain from one of Dgon lung's monastic estates. The boy was invited to Dgon lung with a ceremony in 1746.⁶² For this occasion, it seems that the Sum pas still kept their influence within the bounds of Dgon lung's territory. However, Sum pa mkhan po's next step jeopardized their influence.

In 1762, Sum pa *chos rje's* incarnation, Blo bzang dbang rgyal, suffered from an illness and passed away at the age of 20.⁶³ Afterwards, the progression of the incarnation lineage took a turn when Sum pa mkhan po decided to confirm a new incarnation of the deceased Blo bzang dbang rgyal. Sum pa mkhan po's account has it that he had consulted relevant authorities in Central Tibet with several candidates' names, but a definitive answer could not be obtained for some time. As a result, it took more than ten years to determine the next incarnation after the former's death in 1762. Among several candidates, there were two final ones. For the first one, a medium possessed by a deity local to Dgon lung prophesied that a boy born to

⁵⁸ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 95b–96a.

⁵⁹ This *dkar chag* is in Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 97a–97b.

⁶⁰ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 98b.

⁶¹ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 112b.

⁶² Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 105a–105b.

⁶³ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 134b–135a. Sum pa mkhan po had an interesting interpretation of this incarnation's young death. He recounted that the former *chos rje* had helped him up until the time when he moved to Central Tibet at the age of 20. After that, the *chos rje* did not have the same kindness toward him because they were estranged from each other. Sum pa mkhan po argued that, like the *chos rje*, he could only take care of his incarnation until the boy was 20 years old. In that way, he framed the incarnation's death as a karmic repayment for the former *chos rje's* mistreatment.

a family in Zhwa dmar, a place five or six days' journey to the northeast of Dgon lung Monastery, was the incarnation.⁶⁴ The second candidate was a son of *gong* (duke) Mgon skyabs rdo rje in Ordos,⁶⁵ whom Sum pa mkhan po had met in Ordos on his way to Doloon Nuur in 1772. Sum pa mkhan po must have agonized over making the final decision for the selection. He requested the 3rd Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786) to advise him on the matter when the two met during their time on Mount Wutai in 1775, but Lcang skya maintained an ambiguous attitude with respect to the situation.⁶⁶ Eventually, when Sum pa mkhan po passed through Ordos again in the same year, he requested that the chieftains of the area let him bring the child to Dgon lung. The child's parents agreed to let him follow Sum pa mkhan po.⁶⁷

Some points need to be highlighted regarding this procedure of selecting a new incarnation. First, by selecting this Ordos child, Sum pa mkhan po was on the side of undercutting local interests vested in the Sum pa *chos rje* lineage, instead connecting the lineage to a Mongolian community beyond the bounds of the Dgon lung estates. In doing so, Sum pa mkhan po may have been acting upon his own belief that an incarnation should not be born in the same place as the former's birthplace. Secondly, this was not simply an isolated event in which a boy from among Chinggis Khan's descendants in Ordos was brought into Dgon lung Monastery, but it had a lingering effect on the monastery. In Sum pa mkhan po's later years, especially during his third term as the abbot of Dgon lung Monastery (1781–1785), the major sponsors for religious ceremonies held in the monastery—New Year's Smon lam Festival in particular—were Mongolian chieftains, including those from Ordos.⁶⁸ Thirdly, the selection was not an arbitrary and instant action, but a careful and time-consuming process, which shows the seriousness that the process of selecting an incarnation entailed. The final consultation with Lcang skya, in particular, clearly shows that Sum pa mkhan po maintained his prudence with respect to making the choice, even though the right to select the incarnation was in his hands and he was well aware that the incarnation institution was one of the main pillars that buttressed the

⁶⁴ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 170a. Zhwa dmar is an old name for a tribal union in present-day Dpa' ris (Huarui 華銳; a.k.a. Tianzhu) county in Gansu.

⁶⁵ According to Sum pa mkhan po (1975: 172a), Mgon skyabs rdo rje was the second son among three (other two were *wang* Tshe ring rdo rje and *taiji* Mgon po rdo rje) of *wang* 'Jam dbyangs of Ordos, who was a descendant of Chinggis Khan.

⁶⁶ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 170b.

⁶⁷ Sum pa mkhan po 1975: 172a–72b.

⁶⁸ Sum pa mkhan po surely did not mention that sponsorship was a direct result of this selection. However, the selection can be seen as one of many activities Sum pa mkhan po exerted himself with in order to establish connections with Mongols in his later life.

Tibetan form of Buddhism. Last but not the least, it should be pointed out that what Sum pa mkhan po had done with respect to the *chos rje* incarnation lineage was in line with a trend that had previously made Sum pa mkhan po himself an incarnate lama, namely, the transition of power in the matter of the incarnation institution from locally-based authority to the Dge lugs-Mongolian partnership.

4. Conclusion

While reviewing the history of the Sum pa lineage, it becomes clear that the incarnation institution in the 18th century was not a static, antique system, but, on the contrary, was rather lively and continually evolving. During that period, control of the lineage shifted from the localized power towards Tibetan-Mongolian groups. This is what Sum pa mkhan po experienced in his former and early lives, and also what Sum pa mkhan po himself fostered within the incarnation lineage system. Of course, we cannot say that this single case based only on one individual's experience unveils the whole picture of the system. Besides, although Sum pa mkhan po tried to solve problems that existed in the system, it finally caused the same issue among the Mongols, as one can see in the quotations at the outset of this article. Despite the ongoing problems, the attempts to fix the incarnation lineage system should be given credits since the resilience of the system has been due to efforts of authorities such as Sum pa mkhan po and the Qianlong emperor, whatever their ultimate objectives were.

Last but not the least, a note should be made about the final rendezvous between the Sum pa lineage and the Qianlong emperor. When Qianlong's new incarnation selection system of "the golden urn" was first tested at Lhasa's Jo khang Temple in 1793, the Sum pa incarnation was among the five selectee-lineages for the first trial of the system.⁶⁹ It seems that the Sum pa appointee for this golden urn selection was Sum pa 'Jam dpal tshul khribs bstan 'dzin, who succeeded Sum pa mkhan po (d. 1788). In this way, the Sum pa's succession finally became under the imperial control of the system.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ For details of this process, see Oidtmann 2018: 113–115.

⁷⁰ Per Nyi ma 'dzin gives 'Jam dpal tshul khribs bstan 'dzin's birth year as 1802 (2007: 93), but it is doubtful given his fabrication of the Sum pa genealogy as explained above.

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