

Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus: Rethinking Power Dynamics in Early Eighteenth Century Tibet

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Introduction

This article focuses on the dGa' ldan pho brang's¹ relations with Mongols² and the Qing³ in the early 18th century, or more

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- ¹ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* briefly introduced the history of the dGa' ldan pho brang, "The residence, originally called the Rdo khang sngon mo, was given to him [the Second Dalai Lama] by the Sne'u dong princes in 1518, when he was the unquestioned leader of the major emerging Dge lugs monasteries. From this point, the Dga' ldan pho brang became the seat of the Dalai Lamas. Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, the fifth Dalai Lama, enlisted the help of the Qoshot Mongols and their leader, Gushri Khan, to decisively crush the Karma pa and his patron, the King of Gtsang. From this point, the Dga' ldan pho brang came to designate not the residence of the Dalai Lama but the seat of the Dalai Lama's rulership of substantial regions of Tibet, from which he collected taxes. By extension, the term Dga' ldan pho brang has come to mean the government of Tibet during the reign of the Dalai Lamas. To consolidate Dge lugs power and prevent the large Dge lugs monasteries [*gdan sa gsum*] from usurping his power, the fifth Dalai Lama moved the Dga' ldan pho brang into the Po ta la palace, which then became the seat of the government he established" (Buswell and Lopez 2014). Additionally, throughout its history, the dGa' ldan pho brang kept changing its territory, political power structure, and foreign relations with neighbouring powers, including Mongols and Manchus. Therefore, the term "dGa' ldan pho brang" in this article is not a fixed entity but a malleable political organisation with shifting geographical boundaries and political power structure and leadership.
- ² The term "Mongol" or "Mongol tribe" used in this article refers to two significant Mongol groups of the 17th and 18th centuries, including Khalkha Mongols and Oirat Mongols. These two groups broadly shared their culture, history, language, and customs, although they have many minor differences. The Khalkha Mongols are mainly Eastern Mongols. Under the umbrella rule of the 40 Khalkha tribes, there are sub-Mongolian groups, including, among others, Chahars, Ordos and Tumed. Their leaders were traditionally regarded as direct descendants of Genghis Khan. The Oirats are Western Mongols, with four main tribes: Dzungar, Torghut, Dorbet and Khoshut. The Torghut and Dorbet Mongols gradually became subjects of the Dzungar Mongols. The Khoshuts migrated to the Amdo Kokonor region and Central Tibet. Their tribe leaders are not regarded as descendants of Genghis Khan, but they received their political titles, such as Khan, Noyon, and Jinong, from the Fifth Dalai Lama and his successors in the dGa' ldan pho brang. Etymologically, the term "Mongol" derives from Mugulü and Māmkuya, referring to nomadic tribal peoples living in Central Asia who share language and tradition. (Vaissière 2021, pp.262–270) Even during the medieval period, sometimes, sub-Mongol tribes addressed themselves with their clan names rather than the term "Mongol".
- ³ In this article, I use the term "Manchus" and "Qing" interchangeably to refer to the Manchu political organisation or the Qing Empire, which was in the hands of Manchu leaders. The Manchus were initially from the northeast of China, and they

precisely, from 1696 to 1700. This significant period began with the controversial enthronement of the Sixth Dalai Lama in 1697, commencing a new political chapter in Central Tibet. In due course, the political atmosphere turned in a new direction in 1700 with the internal political clash between the sDe srid, the Sixth Dalai Lama, the purist ⁴ dGe lugs pas and the Khoshut Mongols in central Tibet.

ruled China proper from 1644 to 1912. *The Berkshire Encyclopaedia of China* explains, “The Manchus are descended from peoples of north-eastern Asia collectively called the ‘Tungus.’ The Manchus also claim descent from rulers of the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1125–1234). The Manchu tribes in the late sixteenth century were organised into a collective nation under the rule of their greatest chief, Nurhaci (1559–1626). Nurhaci’s successor, Abahai (1592–1643), changed the name of his people to Manchu to remove the historical memory that, as Jurchens, they had been under Chinese rule. The Manchus continued to increase military power in the border region northeast of the Great Wall and eventually overthrew the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) to establish China’s last imperial era, the Qing, or Manchu dynasty.” (Perrins and Cheng 2016) Rather than simply speaking of “China” to refer the Qing Empire in this context, it is essential to acknowledge the agency of the Manchus/Manchu people in shaping the unique features and history of the Qing Empire. See Rawski’s Presidential address on Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History. (Rawski 1996)

⁴ The term “purist” is my provisional English term referring to this specific faction of dGe lugs pa followers. Possible alternative terms would be “exclusivist,” “fundamentalist,” or “extremist.” This specific group of the dGe lugs pas promotes their claim of religious purity and exclusivity, expressed in their name, literally: the “odourless/stainless good tradition/system/school” (*lugs bzang dri ma med pa*) of rJe Tsong kha pa. The term “purist” is the closest equivalent to “odourless/stainless/without impurities.” An early example of this notion can be found in the *Biography of Tsong kha pa* by his main student dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438):

ལྷན་པའི་དམ་ཚཱ་མ་ལུས་པ་རྒྱལ་བའི་དགོངས་པ་འགྲེལ་བར་རྒྱལ་བ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ལུང་བསྟན་བརྟེན་པའི་ཤིང་
 ཉེད་ལྷོ་འབྲེད་ཆེན་མོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཇི་ལྟར་བཀའ་བའི་དགོངས་དོན་འབྲེད་པ་ལ་འགྲེལ་བའི་དྲི་མ་ཙམ་ཡང་མི་
 མང་བས་བསྟན་པ་འཇོག་པའི་ཆེ་མོ་རྣམས་ལྷན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་འཛིན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ནང་ན་སྟོན་པ་གཉིས་པ་ལྟ་
 ལུང་གྲུང་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

Because [Tsong kha pa] was completely free of any stain/odour (*dri ma*) of making mistakes in disentangling the intended meaning (*dgongs don*) of the complete noble doctrine of the Victorious [Buddha], [as contained in] the explanations by the great founders (*srol 'byed*) of the [Buddhist] vehicles, who had been prophesied by the Victorious [Buddha] himself as those who would explain the intentions of the Victorious One, [he] became like a second Buddha among those who uphold the unfailing victory banner of the precious doctrine. (mkhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang 2021, pp.99-100)

Since then, many dGe lugs pa scholars have described their tradition as “odourless/stainless/pure”. For example, in the 18th century, Thu’u bkwan Chos kyi nyi ma used the term “odourless/stainless” (*dri ma med pa*) five times to describe the dGe lugs tradition in his Doxography. (Thu’u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1994, p. 237, 260, 303, 304, and 305.) The term “purist” has also been used to characterise the dGe lugs pa in modern academic works. In 1997, David

Between these two events, the dGa' ldan pho brang went through a series of significant social and political transformations that set the framework of relations between the dGa' ldan pho brang, the Mongol tribes, and the Qing for the following centuries.

By reading primary historical materials, I have developed the hypothesis that the Tibetan internal factions controlled and shaped the politics of the dGa' ldan pho brang until 1708. Neither Mongols nor the Qing outside of central Tibet were in a position to interfere directly in the internal political mechanisms of the dGa' ldan pho brang. The Tibetan and Manchu sources presented in this article highlight two aspects: First, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus communicated and negotiated with each other in terms of a Tibetan Buddhist "preceptor-patron"⁵ diplomacy, which served the interests of all three neighbours.

Kay used the term "purist" in his article, "The New Kadampa Tradition and the Continuity of Tibetan Buddhism in Transition." He writes, "The original dGe lugs formulation was clerical and purist in that Tsong Kha pa, the 'reformer' of the monastic order, organised and 'essential teachings' into a single, structured and linear path which emphasised the gradual and philosophical understanding of the enlightened state within an academic and monastic context." (Kay 1997, p. 279) Similarly, Maher uses the term "pure Geluk" for those who opposed the idea of the Fifth Dalai Lama to accommodate non-dGe lugs schools under dGa' ldan pho brang. (Maher 2003, p. 20) The sDe srid, in his works, did not use the term "purist" referring to those who oppose him and his ideas but the purist themselves claimed that their notion of dGe lugs tradition is "pure" (stainless).

⁵ The notion of preceptor-patron (*mchod yon*) relations is a centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist approach to international relations in the Tibetan Buddhist world order. The term initially designated the relationship between religious leaders and their financial patrons in Tibet. However, in the 13th century, Sa skya lamas introduced the concept to explain their relationship with the Mongol Khans of the Yuan dynasty, which broadened the scope of this terminology to describe the relationship between a Tibetan Buddhist master (*mchod gnas* or preceptor) and a foreign political leader (*yon bdag* or patron). This became the standard approach of the Tibetan Buddhist government to their foreign relations policy. Throughout Tibet's medieval history, the government managed its ties with other states through preceptor-patron relations, in which the patron (i.e., the foreign political leader) was not only a financial supporter but also a protector. See also Ruegg's work (2000, pp.9–13). According to the *Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, preceptor-patron refers to the relationship between two influential leaders, Gushri Khan and bSod nam chos 'phel, serving under the fifth Dalai lama. The Fifth Dalai Lama regarded himself above this system of preceptor-patron. In the introduction of *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, Karmay writes:

Lobzang Gyatsho addressed these two men [Gushri Khan and bSod nam chos 'phel] as the Prelate and Patron, in the sense of the Tibetan political concept *choyon*, which in turn put Lobzang Gyatsho himself in the position of supreme head of the country, not bound by the conflation of the *choyon* system. (2014.p.5)

Other scholars, such as Ishihama, regard *mchod yon* concept as a relationship between Tibetan Lamas and foreign ruler patrons. Ishihama explained *mchod yon* within the notion of "Buddhist Government" among Mongols, Manchus, and

Second, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus during the early eighteenth century were formed and functioning through a complex yet dynamic social, political, and cultural structure. They did not consider themselves a “nation-state hood” within Eurocentric or Westphalia⁶ International relations. This rigid “nation-state hood” idea came to Inner Asia through European colonialism.

In the late 1690s, the force of Manchu military banners under the leadership of the Kangxi Emperor shook the great pastures of the Mongols while they were defeating and pursuing the Dzungar soldiers of dGa' ldan Khan. The dGa' ldan pho brang was unwillingly involved in this battle between the Qing and the Dzungars, which created many conflicts for the sDe sridd and his government.⁷ The Qing

Tibetans. (2000, pp.15–31). Both ideas are equally correct. One is the internal concept, and the other is the external approach. Sperling correctly pointed out that many modern Chinese writers ignored this “preceptor-patron” relationship and explained that Tibet was part of China. Sperling said, “One of China’s more well-known spokesmen of previous decades formulated the matter. ‘Is Tibet, after all, a part of China?’ History says it is.” (2004, pp.3–4) However, as we will read in this article, historically, the Qing’s relations with the dGa' ldan pho brang in the early 18th century was not that simple.

⁶ The “Peace of Westphalia” was named collectively after the treaties signed in 1648 to settle the war of eighty years between Spain, the Dutch, and the Germans. Under this treaty, the countries concerned confirmed their sovereignty over their territories, and their borders were delineated. The notion of political nation-statehood and sovereignty has been internationalised through these treaties, based on the European social, cultural, and political model. This notion was later applied to other parts of the world along with expanding colonial powers, often ignoring existing local models and interpretations of local government, statehood, and international relations. In his article “Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory”, Kayaoglu argued that this concept “was first developed by nineteenth century imperial international jurists and that the Westphalian narrative perpetuates a Eurocentric bias in international relations theory. This bias maintains that Westphalia created an international society, consolidating a normative divergence between European international relations and the rest of the international system.” (Kayaoglu 2010, p. 193) The issue is also discussed in Cutler’s work published in 2001.

⁷ Although this is discussed Perdue’s work, it is vital to comprehend the situation of the dGa' ldan pho brang in the Dzungar-Qing war in the 1690s. According to *Qing shilü zàngzú shilüo* record dated in 1696, dGa' ldan Khan, the leader of the Dzungars, accused the Dalai Lama of inciting him to come to the eastern part of Mongolia and fight against the Qing:

据降人言：噶尔丹遁时，部众多出怨言，噶尔丹云：我初不欲来克鲁伦地方，为达赖喇嘛煽惑而来。是达赖喇嘛陷我，我又陷尔众人矣。

According to the surrendered [Dzungar] people: ‘when dGa' ldan was escaping, many soldiers complained. [Therefore, dGa' ldan] explained, ‘At first, I did not want to come to Kè lǔ lún (the upper part of the Heilongjiang River, Eastern Mongolia), but the Dalai Lama incited me to do. The Dalai Lama tricked me, and I

won the war, and the Amdo Kokonor Mongols appear to have been impressed by the Manchu military campaign. They began to consider an official relationship with the Qing under the guidance of Tibetan Buddhist lamas. Seizing the opportunity, the Manchus deployed various diplomatic strategies among Mongols to establish their dominance on the one hand and to undermine the authority of the dGa' ldan pho brang in Mongolian societies on the other. Moreover, the Qing also used many Tibetan Buddhist lamas, such as lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan (1642–1714),⁸ at the Qing court to enhance the authority of the Kangxi Emperor among Mongols and Tibetans.⁹

brought everyone else [with me]. (*Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p. 128)

In return, the Kangxi Emperor had issued a decree to block all correspondence from the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and the Regent to dGa' ldan Khan (*Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p. 128). Inevitably, this made it harder for the sDe srid to reveal the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama and convince the Mongols and Manchus. This situation opened an opportunity for internal power factions such as purist dGe lugs pa to criticise the sDe srid.

⁸ lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan (1642–1714) was one of the most prominent lamas of dGon lung byams pa gling monastery in Amdo. This monastery has been the cultural and political centre to build relations between Mongols and Manchus and Tibetans. Read for more on dGon lung byams pa gling in Sullivan's work. (Sullivan 2021, pp. 52–55) lCang skya Nag dbang chos ldan became a significant Manchu-court lama in Peking and contributed to the Qing's political stability and foreign diplomacy. His autobiography is an essential historical source for the Qing's relations with the dGe lugs pa lamas at the Qing court. See Sagaster's work *Subud Erike, Ein Rosenkranz Aus Perlen: Die Biographie des 1st Pekingier lCang Skya Khutukhtu Nag Dbañ Blo Bzañ č'os Ldan*. (Sagaster 1967). Furthermore, read the second chapter of Marina Illich's thesis, *Selections from the Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Polymath: Chankya Rolpai Dorje (Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje), 1717–1786* published in 2006.

⁹ Oidtmann writes that for gaining the trust and loyalty of Tibetans and Mongols, the Qing "actively sought to remold its subjects' faith." (2018, p. 21) On the one hand, with the help of the Tibetan Buddhist lamas, the Kangxi Emperor portrayed himself as the protector or patron of Tibetan Buddhism to convince Mongols and Tibetans of his religious and political integrity. On the other hand, the Kangxi used Tibetan Lamas to present himself as the emanation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī to enhance the authority of the Emperor. For example, upon the request, lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan composed a long-life prayer for the Kangxi Emperor entitled, *'Jam dbyangs gong ma chen po'i brtan bzhugs dge legs char 'bebs zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. In this prayer, lCang skya Nag dbang chos ldan described the emperor as the emanation of Mañjuśrī:

རྒྱལ་གུན་མཁུན་རབ་གཅིག་བསྐྱེས་འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས། འཛིན་མའི་ཁྱེན་ལ་གནས་པའི་སྐྱེ་འགོ་གུན། བན་བདེའི་དབལ་ལ་འགོད་ལྱུང་མའི་དབང་པོར། རབ་སྐྱལ་སྐྱེས་བུ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞབས་བརྟན་གསོལ།

Mañjughōṣa, the embodiment of the wisdom of all buddhas, manifested as the Mi'i dbang po (Emperor) to establish happiness and benefit for all sentient beings all over the earth (*'dzin ma'i khyon*). May this great man live a long life. (lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan n.d.b, f. 1a)

Despite the unfavourable social and political scenario in Inner Asia, the sDe srid was determined to run the dGa' ldan pho brang according to the vision and legacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The sDe srid is the main force popularising the Fifth Dalai Lama and his ideas among the public. Schaeffer writes, "Sanggye Gyatso spent much of the 1690s melding a public vision of the 5th Dalai Lama."¹⁰ MacCormack analysed the state-building visions and strategies of the sDe srid based on the latter's intellectual works.¹¹ It is evident that the sDe srid made an outstanding contribution to the theological state-building of the dGa' ldan pho brang. However, it is imperative to recognise that most of his rhetoric and activities aimed to maintain the vision of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

The Enthronement and Surrounding Conflicts

To ensure the continuity of the Fifth Dalai Lama's vision and legacy, the sDe srid was now keen to install the Sixth Dalai Lama on his throne in the Potala Palace. The death of the Fifth Dalai Lama had been kept secret for more than a decade; it was now time to reveal the identity of the reincarnated Sixth Dalai Lama to the public. Therefore, amidst rumours and speculations, sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho secretly planned the official enthronement ceremony of the Sixth Dalai Lama, fourteen years after his birth in 1683. He dispatched official representatives near and far to disclose the news of the new Dalai

However, scholars have debated to what degree the Kangxi Emperor himself identified with this Buddhist interpretation of his role. Spence, for example, said that the Kangxi had to spend much of his life for "offering prayers at the Temple of Heaven, attending lectures by court scholars on the Confucian *Classics*, performing sacrifices to his Manchu ancestors in the Shamanic shrines. (Spence 1974, p. xii) Scholars like Wáng yáo, on the other hand, think that Kangxi was a follower of Buddhism. In addition to his extraordinary support for Tibetan Buddhism, the Kangxi Emperor also had his own tomb carved with the 35 confessional Buddhas and other Buddhist deities. (Wáng yáo 1980.p.17)

¹⁰ Schaeffer 2005, p. 70. This is a vital topic is discussed along with MacCormack's thorough research on sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho elsewhere.

¹¹ Based on the works of the sDe srid, MacCormack explained the ideas of the "ideal Buddhist State" in the "Buddhist World" during a "Perfect Age". (MacCormack 2018, pp. 23–31). MacCormack's observations focus on the sDe srid's significant contributions to the dGa' ldan pho brang, including modelling public speaking, creating a holiday to commemorate the Fifth Dalai Lama, and building the red Palace at the Potala. Since MacCormack's work is not primarily a historical study, he does not discuss at length the politics of the different Mongol tribes and the battle between the Qing Empire and Dzungars. However, MacCormack traced the history of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet to legitimise the dGa' ldan pho brang's religio-political trope regarding the building of the Potala Palace and establishing the government in Lhasa, which made a good connection between the Fifth Dalai Lama and Srong btsan sgam po.

Lama to Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus.¹² The Qing official documents recorded how the dGa' ldan pho brang's representative Nyi thang zhabs drung (1640–1717)¹³ disclosed the secret of the death and reincarnation of the Dalai Lama to the emperor, and the latter's reaction.

Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào, the Qing Dynasty's Tibetan Historical Records, stated:

康熙三十六年 [一六九七·四·一一]
 谕领侍卫内大臣 索额图、内大臣 明珠、大学士伊桑阿：「前者，朕以达赖喇嘛身故已久，第巴隐之，附和噶尔丹行事，故差保住严诘第巴。预料第巴必自陈达赖喇嘛已故，乞为彼隐讳，向亦曾与尔等言之。今彼差尼麻唐胡土克图至，果密奏：[达赖喇嘛身故已十六年，再生之小达赖喇嘛已十五岁，乞皇上暂隐之，勿闻于众。]与朕昔语尔等之言略无少异。」（卷一八一·页一五上一一六上）

The Thirty-Sixth Year of Kangxi. (11th April 1697)
 [Kangxi told] interior minister Guānzhí Wéi and Suǒ Qé, and Míng Zhū and scholar Sāng ā: 'I knew already that the Dalai Lama had passed away a long time ago, but the Diba concealed this matter and acted according to the [benefit] of dGa' ldan. Therefore, I dispatched the guarantor to condemn the Diba severely. I expected that the Diba would take the initiative to tell the truth about the Dalai Lama's death and ask me to keep this secret. Now [the sDe srid's emissary], Nimatang Hutuktu, has

¹² Maher 2003, p. 130 and Rockhill 1910, pp. 29–30. The sDe srid reports how he sent representatives to Mongol areas and the Manchu court to disclose the news of the Sixth Dalai Lama. He also explains how his government explained the news to Tibetans in Lhasa and how they reacted to the news. This will be discussed later in this article.

¹³ Chos 'phel narrated the story of Nyi thang zhabs drung in his work *Gangs can bod kyi gnas bshad lam yig gsar ma*. The lengthy story can be summarised as follow: Nyi thang zhabs drung Ngag dbang gzhon nu, also known as Nimatang Hutuktu in Mongol and Manchu documents, is the first reincarnation of the Nyi thang zhabs drung. He was one of the main official diplomats of the dGa' ldan pho brang in Peking and Mongolian areas during the reign of the sDe srid. He was also the throne holder of the Nyi thang monastery, followed by his reincarnations. (Chos 'phel 2002, pp. 2–5)

arrived in the capital and disclosed that the Dalai Lama has been dead for sixteen years, and the reincarnated new Dalai Lama is fifteen years old. [He] also requested me to keep this secret from the public. This is not different from what I told you before.' (Volume 181, pp. 15–16)¹⁴

According to this passage, the Kangxi Emperor had already heard about the Fifth Dalai Lama's demise and dispatched his envoy to condemn the sDe srid. Upon hearing the same news from the official representative of the sDe srid, the emperor again sent his officer Bǎo zhǔ, working at the Lǐ fān yuán, an office to govern "Foreign Barbarians" in Xining,¹⁵ to Tibet to condemn the sDe srid. The dGa' ldan pho brang disclosed the news of the new Dalai Lama to the Qing and Mongols before its public announcement to keep peaceful relations with their patrons.

Using this opportunity, the Kangxi Emperor made four demands to the sDe srid to act in his favour: First, since the Panchen Lama repeatedly rejected the invitations of the emperor, Kangxi asked the sDe srid to send him to Peking. Second, the Fifth Dalai Lama sent Jilong Hutuktu (rje lung sprul sku) to resolve dGa' ldan Khan's conflict with Khalkhas. But, instead of solving the problem, Jilong Hutuktu helped dGa' ldan Khan to fight against the Khalkhas and the Qing. The emperor, therefore, wanted the sDe srid to kill Jilong Hutuktu or send him to Peking. Third, as dGa' ldan Khan's daughter had married a Khoshut prince in Amdo Kokonor and settled there, which might cause a problem in future, the Kangxi Emperor wanted the sDe srid to send the girl to Peking. Fourth, according to Perdue, on top of these

¹⁴ *Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào*, 1982, p. 151.

¹⁵ The *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China* comments on the Lǐ fān yuán during the Qing Empire:

Among the agencies supervising the tribute system and trade and the countries involved was the Lifan Yuan (Office to Administer Foreign Barbarians), established in 1638 and staffed by Manchu, that is, members of the multinational banners that constituted the core military and social groups of early Qing society. [...] Later the authority of the Lifan Yuan, along with Qing power itself, was extended more generally westward to take charge of virtually all relationships with the peoples of Inner Asia. (Buell 2009)

Modern Chinese historian, Liú hànchéng's work on Sino-Tibet relations *Xizàng zīgú yīlái jūn bùshì zhōngguó de yī bù fèn* critically discussed the power, influence, and mission of this office during the Qing and the dGa' ldan pho brang's relations with this office. Liú hànchéng argued that the sDe srid never regarded himself as a subordinate to the imperial representatives in the Lǐ fān yuán office. (Liú hànchéng 2019, pp. 430–431)

demands, Kangxi also asked the sDe srid to “let the Panchen Lama rule the Tibetan faith.”¹⁶ The sDe srid gave various excuses, and none of these demands were fulfilled.¹⁷ However, the Kangxi continued to build his relationship with the dGa’ ldan pho brang because he believed “that the influence of Lhasa was the most powerful he could command to re-establish peace among the Mongols and prevent the founding of a great and united Mongols empire.”¹⁸ Thus, he dispatched another team of emissaries to Tibet to reconcile with the sDe srid.

康熙三十六年[一六九七·四·二〇]

嗣后尔宜益加恭顺，勿违朕旨，朕尽弃尔前罪，嘉惠如初。如此，则尔土人民大蒙利赖，尔之荣贵可获长享矣。为此特遣正使理藩院主事保住、副使署主事萨哈连以降敕例，赐币六端。(卷一八一·页二七上一三〇上)

Kangxi 36th Year (20th April 1697)

[The Kangxi said,] ‘after this, you (the sDe srid) should be more respectful and obedient. Do not disobey my command. Instead of holding yourself accountable for your previous mistakes, I will honour you like before. In this way, the people of your land will significantly benefit. Your honour will be enjoyed for a long time. Therefore, I specially dispatched the chief of the imperial court, Bǎozhù, and the deputy chief of lǐ fān

¹⁶ Perdue 2005, p. 194 and *Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, pp. 157–158. *Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* mentioned that there are four demands made by the Kangxi Emperor, but it did not explicitly explain the fourth demand. However, Perdue found the fourth demand in other Manchu materials.

¹⁷ *Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, pp. 158–160. The primary Mongolian document “Ein mongolisches Textfragment über den Ölötenfürsten Galdan” translated by Heissig described this correspondence between the Kangxi and the sDe srid where the sDe srid politely and yet firmly rejected each demand of the Kangxi with various reasons. (Heissig 1941, pp. 123–124)

¹⁸ Rockhill 1910.p.28. Using Tibetan materials, Marina Illich thinks that the Manchu’s support of the dGa’ ldan pho brang and Tibetan Buddhism was not just for controlling Mongols:

Scholarship on the subject continues to reductively claim that the Manchus patronized Tibetan Buddhism solely to gain the submission of Buddhist Mongols and thus eliminate the perennial threat that a potentially united Mongol military front posed to Manchu hegemony. Though largely unexamined, Tibetan sources offer a different perspective. (Illich 2006, Abstract)

yuàn, Sà hā lián, to issue an edict and simultaneously give you six coins.' (Volume 181, pp. 27 — 30)¹⁹

These two Qing records regarding the sDe srid and the dGa' ldan pho brang explain two aspects: On the one hand, the sDe srid concealed the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama from the Qing for more than a decade and strategically supported the Dzungars in the name of the Dalai Lama. However, the emperor could not legally punish the sDe srid other than sending his representatives to condemn him verbally. On the other hand, the emperor knew that sending messengers to condemn the sDe srid would not change any practical power structure in the dGa' ldan pho brang. Therefore, nine days after his first dispatch, the emperor sent a second group of envoys with an edict and gift to reconcile with the sDe srid. Besides, the emperor also sent the Second lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan to represent him in the Sixth Dalai Lama's enthronement ceremony on 25th October 1697 to show his respect to the Dalai Lama and Buddhism.

According to the sDe srid himself, the news about the death of the Fifth and the identification of the Sixth Dalai Lama appears to have been met with general support among Central Tibet's population. They believed in the sDe srid's good intention and expressed deep gratitude toward the sDe srid for accomplishing this significant task. However, beneath this seemingly auspicious atmosphere, purist dGe lugs pas

¹⁹ *Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào*, 1982, p. 154. Surprisingly, a same official document issued on the same day stated:

但谓第巴曰：皇上统领大兵已临宁夏，因前事四款尔皆遵旨，皇上大悦，故不进兵。

[The Kangxi ordered Bǎozhù, the former's messenger:] 'Explain to the Diba that the emperor's army has almost reached Ningxia, but you [the Diba] have fulfilled the first four things (see the four demands above) according to the emperor's will. Therefore, he [the Kangxi] is delighted, he will not continue to march. (*Qīng shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p.154)

According to modern scholarship, the Kangxi Emperor did not come to Ningxia to launch his military expedition to Tibet but to fight against dGa' ldan Khan because Ningxia was a strategic place for its location and cheap food supplies. (Perdue 2005, p. 201, Rockhill 1910, p.29) If his military expedition to Tibet was a plan, why did the emperor send lCang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan to represent him in the enthronement ceremony of the Sixth Dalai Lama in Lhasa at the same time? Moreover, the sDe srid did not fulfil any of the Kangxi's demands, but this document recorded that the sDe srid had fulfilled the four orders. These cited passages demonstrate that the primary Qing official documents have two flaws: Their contents are inconsistent and sometimes contradict each other. Second, they often exaggerate the power of the Qing emperors. Thus, the documents need to be read cautiously.

and some aristocrats did not welcome the news. In his *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, the sDe srid recorded the Tibetans' reaction when the officers declared the news concerning the Dalai Lama's death and enthronement.

སྐང་སྤོང་ཅན་ལ་ཅིག་མ་གཏོགས་བྱིངས་ཆེ་དགའ་སྐྱོའི་ཀུན་རྟོག་པན་ཚུན་
འགྲན་པས་མཆི་མ་དབང་མིད་དུ་བྱུལ་བར་སྤང་།

Except for a few with the heart of an ox, most were moved by competing emotions of joy and sorrow and appeared to shed tears without control.²⁰

Looking at the context, we can deduce that the opponents with the "heart of an ox" came from two groups: One group consisted of members of the aristocracy who did not like the sDe srid's authoritarian leadership style and thought this was a strategy of the sDe srid to maintain his power. The other group were the dGe lugs purists, who viewed this plan of the sDe srid as a way to dilute the dGe lugs tradition's virtuous qualities. For instance, sGo mang mKhan po 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's first encounter with the Sixth Dalai Lama was completely negative, as will be demonstrated later in this article. For these dGe lugs pas, the purity of the religious school should be at the top of the dGa' ldan pho brang's priorities. It seems for the dGe lugs purists, the dGa' ldan pho brang was a religious institute rather than a political entity.

During this time, the Manchus were still preoccupied with their Mongolian rivals and strengthening the empire's unification. The Khalkhas and the Dzungars became weak and divided through the Dzungar's war against the Khalkhas and the Qing. According to many

²⁰ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 323. The same text also described the people's reaction in Lhasa:

མི་དཔོན་ཞང་གོང་པ་དོ་རྗེ་དང་ཤར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་མེ་རྟོག་ལྷན་པའི་ཐང་དུ་ལྷ་ས་བ་རྣམས་ལ་རྣ་བཅུད་
བཞགས་པར། ལྷུས་དམན་ཚན་པ་ལ་ཅིག་གིས། སྐྱེ་བྱེད་ཆེ། དེ་ཅོམ་གྱི་བར་རྒྱལ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཉེན་པ་མ་
བཞགས་པའི་ས་སྤོང་མེའི་ལྷུག་བཟུལ་དང་ཚོས་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ལུགས་ཁུར་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྗེ་སྤྲིད་སྐྱེ་ཞབས་གཅིག་
བྱས་བཞིས། དེད་ཚོས་ས་བྱབ་པ་མ་ཞེས་པར་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བ་མཐོང་བྱུང་སོགས་ལ་བ་སྤང་བཏང་འདུག།

Leader Zhang grong pa rDo rje and Shar bKra shis read the *rNa bcud* [the story of the transition from the Fifth to the Sixth Dalai Lama] to the people of Lhasa at the Flower Garden Ground. It has been told that some elderly ladies exclaimed, "Thank you, [sDe srid], for single-handedly carrying people's pain concerning the passing of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the political and religious duties for such a [long] time. We saw the sunrise without ever knowing nightfall. (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 324)

primary documents cited in this article, the Khoshut Mongols in Kokonor and Central Tibetan submitted to the charismatic leadership of sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. The dGa' ldan pho brang entitled the Khoshut Mongols as "Government Mongols"²¹ to recognise their significance and closeness with the dGa' ldan pho brang.²² Therefore, at this point, neither the Manchus nor the Mongols dominated the events about to unfold in Central Tibet. It was primarily the factions within the dGa' ldan pho brang that would shape these political developments.

The Sixth Dalai Lama and the Purist dGe lugs pas

The turbulent and sometimes bizarre odyssey of early 18th-century politics of the dGa' ldan pho brang began with the appearance of the Sixth Dalai Lama Tshang dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683–1706) in the late 1690s. Regarding the Sixth Dalai Lama, many still find it puzzling and challenging to comprehend his seemingly wild and tragic life. Growing up amidst family and political conflicts in mTsho sna, the child faced several attempts of assassination by his spiteful relatives.

²¹ The term "Government Mongol" is the equivalent to the Tibetan term "gZhung sog". One can also translate this Tibetan term as "Mongols of the dGa' ldan pho brang." I have chosen the term "Government Mongols" to characterise them as Mongols (*sog po*) who had a special relationship with the dGa' ldan pho brang (*gzhung*). The term can be traced in the Fifth Dalai Lama's works (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2014, p. 100), referring to the Khoshut Mongols in Central Tibet and the Kokonor region. These Khoshut Mongols were supporters of the dGe lugs pa school and played a key role in establishing the dGa' ldan pho brang. The Mongols in Central Tibet continuously served the dGa' ldan pho brang as a military force. They fought in many wars for the dGa' ldan pho brang. The Tibetan official document, *Tham deb long pa'i dmigs bu* compiled by Nor nang pa recorded:

དེ་དུས་ཀྱི་གཞུང་མོག་ཞེས་པ་འདི་རྣམས་ལྟར་གྲིབ་ཁང་གི་ཁོངས་གཏོགས་དང་། ལྷོ་མ་ལམ་ཏ་པའི་སྐབས་
རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡབ་སྐུ་འབོད་པའང་གནའ་བོའི་མིང་འཇགས་པ་བཅས་ཡིན་ནམ་སྟུམ།

The "Government Mongols" at the time belonged to Gushri Khan, and [the author wonders] whether the title of the "king and prince" for the horsemen [*rta pa*] during the sMon lam festival is perhaps also a remnant of the old name. (Nor nang pa 1981. f.36a)

This passage seems to imply that the Mongol kings and princes had been taking part in the Lhasa sMon lam festival as horsemen, which later became a tradition even after the Mongol kingship was discontinued in the dGa' ldan pho brang. See rNam rgyal dbang 'dus's work, *Bod rgyal khab kyi chab srid dang 'brel ba'i dmag don lo rgyus*, one of the most extensive works on Tibetan military history available, published in 2003.

²² FitzHerbert and Travers said, "As is well-known, the military power which brought the Ganden Phodrang to power as the government of Tibet in 1642 was an alliance of Tibetans and Mongols." (FitzHerbert and Travers 2020, p. 11)

Due to miscommunication with the sDe srid, the Dalai Lama and his family were kept under house arrest and treated very strictly for many years.²³ Later his situation improved, but the young Sixth Dalai Lama still did not receive the same scholarly and religious training, guidance, and environment that previous Dalai Lamas had enjoyed. In this situation, the fourteen-year-old Dalai Lama was likely to have already been exposed to adult behaviour, including romantic experiences, before entering into the celibacy of monkhood, according to the adult lifestyle typical in Tibet at the time.²⁴ However, his childhood was filled with misery, trauma, and worldly desires, which “would later affect the boy’s [the Sixth Dalai Lama] perception of himself and his acceptance by the political public in Inner Asia.”²⁵

Within a month of his official recognition as the Sixth Dalai Lama

²³ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, pp. 200–203. The content of this lengthy passage can be summarised as follows: The sDe srid regrettably explains the problems that the Sixth Dalai Lama had to endure in his childhood. According to this account, the local officials strictly held the child and his parents in a house, blocked the windows with stones, and locked the door from the outside. Every night, an official servant watched the house with a guard dog. They were not even allowed to light a fire in the middle of freezing winter days and were not allowed to contact outside people without official permission. Their nutrition was so poor that they were ravished by hunger and thirst and lived in constant fear, but gradually their situation improved. The sDe srid admitted that he heard later that the officials tried to destroy the family of the Dalai Lama due to, among many reasons, the political rivalry between the dGa’ ldan pho brang, Bhutan, and the Sixth Dalai Lama’s family. In his article about the Sixth Dalai Lama, Kalsang Dhondup wrote, “Misunderstanding the purpose of Desi’s order for strict secrecy, the Tsona officials kept the boy [the Sixth Dalai Lama] and the parents under virtual house arrest for a long time.” (Dhondup 2003, p.34)

²⁴ Tshe ring dbang rgyal 2002, pp.48–51 and pp. 61–65. The content of this lengthy passage can be summarised as follows: During the time of Pho lha nas in central Tibet, lay people in Tibet would generally begin to engage in adult entertainments such as sexual encounters, alcohol and hunting as early as 13 to 14 years old. Narrating the Pho lha nas’ multiple encounters with young girls, Tshe ring dbang rgyal gave various examples which show how lay people engaged in sexual activities at the time. For example, on many occasions, as a teenager, Pho lha nas joined his male friends to engage in sexual activities with other local girls of similar ages or sometimes even younger ones. In his famous lecture at the University of Lhasa, Nor bu bsam ’phel, who specialised in the dGa’ ldan pho brang, said:

ངག་རྒྱན་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ལྟར་ན། མཚོ་ལྷོར་གོང་ས་མཚོག་ས་གནས་ཀྱི་བྱུང་མེད་མང་པོ་དང་ལུས་འབྲིས་བྱུང་བར་
བཤད།

According to the oral history, it is said that Gong sa mchog (the Dalai Lama) had sexual intercourse (*lus ’brel*) with many local girls in mTso sna. (Nor bu bsam ’phel 2022, Online)

²⁵ Schwieger 2015, p.105. In his critical edition of the Sixth Dalai Lama’s poems, Sørensen explained the childhood of the Sixth Dalai Lama. He wrote: “From the very outset, he [the Sixth Dalai Lama] was detained, shrouded in secrecy, together with his parents, in mTsho-sna rdzon, before being transferred to sNa-dkar-rtse.” (Sørensen 1988, p.258)

in 1697, his yogi father Rig 'dzin bkra shis bstan 'dzin, a forty-year-old rNying ma master, suddenly fell ill and passed away on their way to Lhasa. The sDe srid records that his sick and bedridden father whispered his last advice to his son, the Dalai Lama:

ཡབ་བསྐྱུན་པའི་དུས་གོང་ཞབས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཡང་ཡང་ཚོས་རྣམ་གྲིས་བཀག་
 ཆ་ཞུས་འདུག་ཀྱང་ཕེབས་ཤིང་དེ་སྐབས་ཡབ་གྲིས་སྐྱུན་འབྲུལ་གྱི་རིགས་ཞུས་
 དོགས་པའི་ཁོ་རང་སྣོད་ཚིས་ཁོ་ན་བྱས་འདུག་ཀྱང་སྐབས་སྐབས་སེང་དབར་
 དུ་ཕེབས་པར། ཁོང་རྣམ་པས་ལེགས་པོ་མ་ཞུས་པ་དང་། ཁོང་རྣམ་པར་
 གསན་ན་མི་ཡོང་འཕྲུལ་ཕྱགས་སུ་བྱེད་རང་ཡབ་སྐུ་གྱི་དབར་དུ་སེལ་
 འཇུག་ཡོང་།

While [his] father was sick, Gong zhabs rin po che (the Sixth Dalai Lama) visited, even though Chos rdor (an attendant of the Dalai Lama) repeatedly attempted to stop [him]. Suspecting that the father would inform [the Dalai Lama] of different issues at the time, Chos rdor always tried to be there. However, in the breaks [between the periods in which he was present], [the Dalai Lama] visited from time to time. [The father told the Dalai Lama] 'They [the attendants like Chos rdor] did not speak well. If you listen to them, now and in the future, it will bring a dispute between you two [the Sde srid and Dalai Lama], master and student (*yab sras*).²⁶

This significant advice suggests two things: To begin with, starting with his official recognition, it appears that there were already people in the Dalai Lama's inner circle planning to destroy his relationship with the sDe srid. In addition, father Rig 'dzin was not even allowed to meet his son freely. It seems the attendants tried to create distrust between the sDe srid, the Dalai Lama, and his father. Chos rdor, the main official attendant of the Dalai Lama, even attempted to stop him from visiting his dying father and suspected them of having a conversation behind his back. The sDe srid later stated that the deceased father's advice was a visionary premonition of the occurrences between the Dalai Lama and the sDe srid.²⁷ When he

²⁶ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 321.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 321. The text reads:

སྐྱུན་སྣོད་མང་བ་འབྲུལ་གནང་བྱུང་འདུག་པ་ཕྱིས་སུ་བརྟགས་ན་མངོན་མཁྱེན་གྱིས་བཅད་པར་གོ།

arrived in Lhasa, the fourteen-year-old Dalai Lama had to face the aggressive purist dGe lugs pas and others who despised the sDe srid. The purists also disliked the fact that the Dalai Lama, the most important reincarnation of the dGe lugs pa school, was found in a rNying ma family. Besides, the sDe srid continued and extended the state-building visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama to include the other Tibetan religious schools, such as rNying ma and Bon po under the dGa' ldan pho brang.²⁸ The dGe lugs purists viewed this as a threat. In his thesis about the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa,²⁹ Maher writes:

Upon a later investigation of [his father's] ability to brief [the Dalai Lama] on many issues, it came to be understood [that he possessed] clairvoyance.

- ²⁸ The Fifth Dalai Lama embraced all Tibetan religious traditions and treated them equally along with the dGe lugs tradition. The Fifth Dalai Lama repeatedly emphasised the significance of having all Tibetan religious traditions under dGa' ldan pho brang in his autobiography. For example:

འདི་རིགས་དམ་ཚཱ་སྐྱབ་པའི་བྲོགས་སུ་ནི་ག་ལ་འགྲོ་འོན་ཏེ་བོད་འདིར་མགོ་ཚེས་ཤིག་ཡོད་ན་དུས་བདེ་
ཞིང་། ས་ཀར་རྗེ་དག་སྐྱུ་སྐྱེས་སྐྱབ་མཐའ་གཞན་རྣམས་དམིགས་པ་མེད་པའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་རྒྱས་མི་འདེབས་
པར་ཡན་ནམ་ལྷ་མ་པ་བྱུང་།

[I thought] although, of course, these [political engagements] will not be beneficial for practising the Buddha dharma, Tibet will be peaceful if it has a leader. This might also help the Sa [skya], Kar (bKa' brgyud), and rNying [ma] schools from not being destroyed without a trace. (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2014, p. 184)

To further comprehend the Dalai Lama's state-building visions, FitzHerbert concluded: "The Fifth Dalai Lama was an astute strategist in the domains of political and cultural symbolism." (FitzHerbert 2018, p.55)

- ²⁹ Maher's thesis comprehensively analyses the religious scholarship of the sGo mang mKhan po and its influence on the dGe lugs pa scholastic tradition. In his thesis, Maher argued, "the authority religious figures are able to wield is a reflection of the legitimacy they have been granted by their followers" (Maher 2003, Abstract). This is a significant feature of Tibetan Buddhist leaders at the time in Inner Asia to accumulate power and influence. Inevitably, dGe lugs pa Buddhist leaders during this time were often involved in politics, depending on their agenda and social context. There is no exception when it comes to 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa. Maher therefore had to analyse "the larger historical context in which he ['Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] lived in order to demonstrate some of the ways that he deployed his authority" (Maher 2003, Abstract) in religion. Since Maher's work is primarily focused on Buddhist philosophy, he did not write in detail about the political activities of the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, although his role in politics dismantled the stability of the social and political system in Central Tibet. Thus, Tsyrempilov has argued that our understanding of the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's political activities "still remains poor and incomplete" (Tsyrempilov 2003, p. 441). Interestingly, Maher highlights that one of the reasons for the internal disunity among the dGe lugs pas were "tensions [that] emerged between those in U and those in Amdo" (Maher 2003, p. 20) but I did not find any primary material evidence to support this argument. Comparing two biographies of the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa by 'Jigs med dbang po, the Second 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, and

“Additionally, there was a sense among some Gelukbas in the seventeenth century, including the Jamyang Shayba, that the integrity of their school was threatened from within by the syncretic inclination of some important figures, including the Fifth Dalai Lama.”³⁰

Because the Sixth Dalai Lama was born not only into a rNying ma family but to a famous rNying ma master and the sDe srid announced the birth of this new Dalai Lama after 15 years of secrecy, the purist dGe lugs pas thought that these were the plans plotted by the sDe srid to destroy the purity of the dGe lugs tradition. Their rejection of the new Dalai Lama is one of the many signs of disapproval that the purists expressed against the dGa' ldan pho brang under the leadership of the sDe srid in the name of protecting the “pure” dGe lugs tradition. Maher correctly recognises this conflict “between factions supporting the (Fifth) Dalai Lama’s syncretism and those preferring ‘pure’ Geluk.”³¹ This dispute sounds very much like religious conflict, however, because of the political position of the sDe srid and the dGa' ldan pho brang’s religio-political relationship with Se ra, 'Bras spungs, dGa' ldan, and bKra shis lhun po monasteries, it inevitably became a political game.

In this conflict, the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa became a voluntary leader who fearlessly raised his voice against the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama for accommodating non-dGe lugs traditions. The purists believed in the superiority of the dGe lugs tradition over the others and they would not tolerate the policy of the dGa' ldan pho brang, which treated all Tibetan religious schools equally.

In 1697, the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa attended the welcome ceremony of the Sixth Dalai Lama to check whether the boy was the real incarnation. During their first encounter, in his *Biography of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa*, bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis reported the following exchange:

ཆེབས་བསྐྱེད་སྐབས་གཟིགས་སྣང་མི་ལེགས་པ་གཅིག་བྱུང་གསུངས། དེ་དུས་
གཟིགས་སྣང་གང་བྱུང་ལྟས་པས། སྐྱེས་དེ་ལ་དབུ་མི་འདུག་པ་སྟམ་པ་ཡུན་

bSe ngag dbang bkra shis, Maher thought that both biographies “might have wanted to portray Jamyang Shayba as apolitical and uninvolved in the daily course of events” (Maher 2003, p. 169). One notable aspect is that Maher regards the biography of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa written by the Second 'Jam dbyangs bzhad as an autobiography (Maher 2003, Abstract). This biography of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa is the soft version of the biography written by bSe Nyag dbang bkra shis because the former biography excluded the provocative vocabularies and radical approaches of the latter biography. See further in the third chapter of Maher’s thesis (Maher 2003, pp. 112–168).

³⁰ Maher 2003, p. 35.

³¹ Maher 2003, p. 20.

རིང་གཞིགས་པས། མ་མཐོང་ཞིབ་ཏུ་ཡང་ཡང་གཞིགས་པས་རེ་ཞིག་ལ་མ་
ཤར་གསུངས། རོན་ལ་རླུན་མ་གཅིག་ཡིན་པའི་བརྗོད་པ་དང་།

[’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] said, ‘There occurred a bad apparition during the welcoming event.’ [He was] asked about the apparition, and [he responded,] ‘[I] saw the reincarnation (*sku skyes*) without his head for a long time. Even though [I] watched him closely again and again, [the head] did not appear for some time.’ This was, indeed, a sign that [the incarnation] is a fake one!³²

The purpose of this statement is to disprove the authenticity of the Sixth Dalai Lama. At the same time, this is also to display the supernormal knowledge of the First ’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa to make a prophecy. Many similar records are found throughout this biographical work.

Despite the condemnation by the Qing and suspicion of the purist dGe lugs pas, the Dalai Lama’s enthronement ceremony was successful, and Mongols and Manchus diplomats attended the ceremony along with Tibetan dignitaries. Ngag dbang chos ldan

³² bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.70a. The last sentence is a comment on the part of the author of the biography. Similar passages can be found elsewhere in the same biography:

དེ་ནས་ངག་དབང་དོན་རྒྱལ་ཚོས་བཟུང་ནས་ཡོངས་སྐབས་ཤིག་སྐྱོན་བོར་ནས་མི་འདྲག་ཀྱང་ལམ་སྐབས་
དེར་ལྷ་མ་རྩུས། དེ་རྩུབ་འབྲས་སྤངས་ལ་ལེབས། ལྷ་བྲང་རྙིང་བར་བཞུགས་པའི་མཚན་མོར་སྐྱོན་བོར་སོང་
ཞུས་པས། ཅི་ཡང་མི་བཀོད། ད་ལོ་ན་ཚོས་གོས་གཅིག་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་གསུངས། དེ་ནས་ཚོས་གོས་གཅིག་བཙལ་ནས་
ལུལ་བས་བྱིན་ལྲབས་གནང་ནས། རྟོན་འབྲེལ་མ་ལེགས་སྐྱེས་འདིས་བསྐབ་པ་མགོ་མི་ཐོན་པའི་ལྷས་ཡིན་
འདུག་གསུངས།

Then, Ngag dbang rdor rje was carrying the monastic robe (*sku chos*). On one occasion he lost it but [he] was not able to tell [’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] during the journey. That evening, they arrived at ‘Bras spungs and when they stayed in the old residence (*Bla rang*) for the night, Ngag dbang rdor rje said, “The monastic robe got lost.” [’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] did not scold him at all but said, “Find a way [to get a new] monastic robe!” Then, [Ngag dbang rdor rje] searched for a new robe and offered it. [’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] blessed it and said, “this is an inauspicious sign, an indication that this reincarnation [the Sixth Dalai Lama] will not be able to keep the precepts.” (bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., ff.69–70)

These excerpts show that the disapproval of the Sixth Dalai Lama among the purist dGe lugs pas like ’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa was not a later development; it was there from the beginning of the young Dalai Lama’s arrival in Lhasa.

(1642–1714), the Second ICang skya incarnation, who played a vital diplomatic role in the interactions between Mongols, Manchus, and Tibetans, was at the ceremony to present the Kangxi Emperor.³³ ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan became very close with the sDe srid, and hence the officer at *lǐ fān yuàn* suggested the Kangxi Emperor punish ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan severely.³⁴ However, the Kangxi could not kill him because ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan was an important lama with a significant number of Mongol and Tibetan followers. Moreover, Nag dbang chos ldan was instrumental in building trust among the Amdo Kokonor Mongols toward the Qing Emperor and convinced the Amdo Mongols to meet the Kangxi Emperor in 1697.³⁵ This was the first diplomatic meeting between the

³³ ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan, n.d.a, f.19a. The text reads:

རྒྱལ་དབང་བླ་མ་པ་གནས་མཚེག་པོ་ཏུ་ལར། གསར་དུ་ཕེབས་ཉིན་གོང་མའི་གསེར་ཡིག་དང་། ཉེན་ཚས་ལུས་
རྩིས་ཞལ་དཀར་རྩིས་རྩིས་སོགས། ཀ་ཅ་འགའ་ཞིག་མ་གཏོགས་ཕལ་ཆེ་བ། གསེར་དབུལ་གོས་དར་ལ་བཀགས་
བཟང་པོ་ལ། གཞི་བྱས་ཐོག་མར་ལེགས་འབུལ་ངོས་གཙང་ལུས།

On the same day when the Sixth Dalai Lama arrived at the Potala Palace, [I] offered the golden edict of Gong ma [the emperor] and religious items (*rten chas*). After that, [I] made a pure offering, which consisted—except for a white porcelain cup, vajra, bell, and a few other things—primarily of gold, silver, silk, and good *kha btags*.

Rockhill highlighted an opposite narrative: the Qing sent envoys to Tibet to investigate the sDe srid and his misdeeds. However, he acknowledged that Tibetan histories have a different narrative. (Rockhill 1910, pp.26–27) According to the Manchu documents, the Kangxi Emperor dispatched three groups of emissaries to investigate the case, reconcile with the sDe srid, and represent the emperor in the enthronement ceremony, respectively. Each envoy had a different mission, and they are not the same group and same people.

³⁴ The officer at *lǐ fān yuàn* in Xining complained about ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan's relationship with the sDe srid to the Qing court and suggested that the court should kill ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan as a punishment. (*Qing shǐlù zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p.160) However, the Kangxi spared his life and restored his dignity after a short suspension of his title because of his diplomatic contribution to the Qing court, which we will discuss later. In his autobiography, ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan wrote:

ཟླ་བ་ལ་ཤས་སོང་ནས་ད་ནི་ཉེད། ཟླ་མ་ཆེ་འདི་གལ་ལ་ཟུར་བཞིན་དུ།
འགོ་འདུག་ལྗོད་ལམ་སློ་སེམས་བདེ་མོ་གྱིས། ང་ཡི་སེམས་ལ་ཅེ་ཡང་འཛིན་མི་བྱེད།

After a few months, [the Kangxi said,] 'now you (ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan) can go and stay with higher lamas like it before. Be happy/relieved. I will not keep any[grudge]in my mind.' (n.d.a, ff.23a–23b)

For further reading, see Klaus Sagaster's biographic work of ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan published in 1967.

³⁵ In 1693, ICang skya Nag dbang chos ldan was officially invited to Peking and became a first-ranking official royal lama. *The Autobiography of ICang skya Ngag dbang chos ldan* describes how the emperor treated him with respect (ICang skya Nag dbang chos ldan n.d.a, f.16a). In 1697, the emperor dispatched the ICang skya lama to Lhasa to represent the emperor in the enthronement ceremony of the Sixth

Amdo Mongols and the Kangxi Emperor, which opened the door to building strong Qing influence among the Amdo Mongols. As argued before, Tibetan Buddhist lamas influenced not only internal Tibetan politics but also the external affairs of Mongols and the Qing court. This has already been pointed out by Marina Illich, who at the same time expressed her “critique of how western academic constructions of Qing history have radically marginalised and often mischaracterised the influence of Tibetan Buddhism on Qing court culture and imperial policy.”³⁶

Theoretically, from that day he was enthroned, the new Dalai Lama became Tibet’s political and spiritual leader. However, the dGa’ ldan pho brang’s practical power was exercised by the sDe srid for years because the Dalai Lama was young and needed to focus on his studies. Gradually, the Dalai Lama began to control his power and ruled the dGa’ ldan pho brang in collaboration with the sDe srid. The sDe srid became the political mentor and religious teacher of the Sixth Dalai Lama as he had paved the way for the Sixth Dalai Lama for many years.³⁷ Unaware of this internal relationship and its complexity, some

Dalai Lama. In his autobiography, the Second lCang skya Nag dbang chos ldan recorded that while he was in Xining, the allies of the Kangxi Emperor asked lCang skya lama to advise Amdo Mongol leaders to pay a visit to the Kangxi Emperor, who was in Ningxia at the time. The Second lCang skya lama strategically convinced the Amdo Mongols to meet the Kangxi Emperor in 1697, a historic diplomatic victory for the Qing. (lCang skya Nag dbang chos ldan n.d.a, ff. 18–19a) This is a significant example of how Tibetan Lamas influenced the Qing’s relations with the Mongols. Illich acknowledged that the Second lCang skya Nag dbang chos ldan “convinced the Mongols of Kokonor to submit to Qing rule while en route through their territory.” (Illich 2006, p.364) In the early diplomatic history of the Qing with the Amdo Mongols, this is one of the most critical events which built long-lasting relations between the two groups, the Kokonor Mongols and the Qing. Considering the urgency of the political situation in Dzungar, central Tibet and Qing Empire, this is one of the most significant diplomatic contributions of the Tibetan lamas in bridging the gap between the Amdo Mongols and the Kangxi Emperor in the 1690s.

³⁶ Illich 2006, Abstract. Acknowledging the role of Tibetan Lamas in Peking to influence the religious and political affairs in the Qing court, Illich highlights the importance of including primary Tibetan materials in Qing studies. (Illich 2006, Abstract)

³⁷ Comparative analysis of the *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama* (1989) and the *Autobiography of the Fifth Panchen Lama* (2014) gives a clear sense that the sDe srid did his best throughout the Sixth Dalai Lama’s life. For example, since the young Tshang dbyangs rgya mtsho was officially enthroned in Lhasa as the Sixth Dalai Lama, the sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho carefully looked after the young Dalai Lama’s growth, education, and political career. The sDe srid diplomatically established the recognition of the new Dalai Lama among Manchus, Mongols, and other neighbouring societies. He also wrote treatises including *lNga pa drug par ’phos pa’i gtan* (2007) and *Rab gsal gser gyi snye ma* (1989) to prove the authenticity of the Sixth Dalai Lama and encouraged other lamas and scholars in

scholars such as Perdue have assumed that the sDe srid was “forced to conciliate the furious Chinese Emperor by officially subordinating himself to the sixth Dalai Lama, Tshangs-dbyangs-rgya-mtsho.”³⁸ However, it is far more likely that the sDe srid willingly became the faithful follower of the Dalai Lama from the first day he was recognised. The fervent supporter of the Fifth Dalai Lama would naturally have been devoted to his incarnation, the Sixth Dalai Lama. However, as per tradition, the young Dalai Lama had to undergo a series of Buddhist educational training and ritual practices before taking on his full responsibilities within the dGa' ldan pho brang.

The Politics of Accusation and Sectarianism

In 1698, the Third Khoshut Khan Tenzin Dalai, who did not have much political power, officially invited the purist leader 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa to his residence, dGa' ldan khang gsar, in Lhasa. The Khan asked 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa to give him and his queen religious initiations and empowerment. At the end of this meeting, the Khoshut king and queen declared and requested:

ད་ནས་བཟུང་ཁྱེད་ལྷ་མ་ཁྱེད། ཡང་ཡང་མེད་སྐད་དགོས་ལྷན།

From now onward, [we will] regard you ['Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] as [our] lama. Please visit [us] often.³⁹

Tibet to do the same. In his article about the Sixth Dalai Lama, Kalsang Dhondup vividly explained how the sDe srid protected the Sixth Dalai Lama until the former's sudden death in 1705. (Dhondup 2003, pp.32–41) Although it is true that the success of the Sixth Dalai Lama is essential for the sDe srid's political career and legacy, I am aware of any primary Tibetan materials claim that whatever the sDe srid did for the Sixth Dalai Lama was for his own benefit.

³⁸ Perdue 2005, p. 228. As we will see later, Perdue's work recorded many such cases where the Manchu court secretaries purposely exaggerated political occurrences to portray the authority of their emperor beyond its reality. If the Dalai Lama could not get legitimacy and religious recognition within Tibetan society, external powers, such as the Manchu emperors, could not force Tibetans to subordinate them. An example of this is the case of Ngag dbang ye shes rgya mtsho, the alternative claimant to the title of the Dalai Lama with recognition from lHa bzang Khan and Kangxi Emperor 1707, never gained public legitimacy among Tibetans and Mongols as the authentic Dalai Lama. (Petech 1972, pp.17–18) Thus, Tibetans discovered another Dalai Lama while Ngag dbang ye shes rgya mtsho was still in Potala Palace as the Sixth Dalai Lama.

³⁹ bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.71b. This meeting between the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa and Khoshut Tenzin Dalai Khan paved way for the Purists in building their relationship with lHa bzang Khan. According to the *Biography of 'Jam dbyangs*

This meeting was a significant event in Central Tibet because it brought a new beginning to the purist dGe lugs pas' relationship with the Mongol leaders in Lhasa. The collaboration between the purist dGe lugs pas and the Khoshut Mongols became the central force to challenge the dGa' ldan pho brang under the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama. Subsequently, the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's relationship with the Amdo Mongols, such as the Ju nang tribe, also became strong and intimate.⁴⁰ This may partly have been because of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's birthplace and its historical connection with the Amdo Mongols. These newly forged diplomatic and religious relationships increased the influence of the purist dGe lugs pas and the Khoshut Mongols in the dGa' ldan pho brang political power struggle. The political dGa' ldan pho brang was still not established enough to be firmly connected with Tibetans, and the government's internal power structure was not strong and stable. The political factions and interest groups under this government were relatively new and fragile because they did not have historically inherited power bases in Lhasa. In this situation, the dGe lugs pa monastic leaders in Lhasa became leading figures of the new dGa' ldan pho brang government.⁴¹

bzhad, his social and political influence among Tibetans and Mongols visibly increased after this meeting.

⁴⁰ The Ju nang Mongol leader later invited the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa to Amdo and supported him in establishing Bla brang monastery in 1710. In his history of Amdo, Hor gtsang 'Jigs med explained how the Bla brang monastery became a big dGe lugs pa centre in the Amdo region. (Hor gtsang 'Jigs med 2009, pp.23–26) Since 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa became the prominent lama of the Khoshut Khan, he became popular among Mongol Ju nang tribes. Gradually he got close with many other Amdo Mongols. After the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa became the mKhan po, the frequency of his meeting with the Khoshut and the Dzungar Mongols suddenly increased. As we will see later, this indirectly strengthened his position in Lhasa.

⁴¹ The Lhasa region, previously known as sKyid shod lung pa, had been the political domain of the sKyid shod family for generations. They supported the dGe lugs pa schools and fought against the gTsang pa kings but the gTsang army defeated the sKyid shod sde pa in 1618. In this situation, sKyid shod sde pa leader Chos rje blo bzang bstan' dzin rgya mtsho (1593–1638) escaped to Amdo Kokonor. Since then, sKyid shod lung pa or Lhasa did not have any powerful ruler until the dGa' ldan pho brang government was established in 1642. Around this time, there was no powerful political authority anywhere in the Lhasa area to challenge the dGa' ldan pho brang. See the work of Yon tan rgya mtsho published in 2001. The dGa' ldan pho brang was a private religious institution that later became a political organisation in 1642. The leaders of the dGa' ldan pho brang decided to move their government from 'Bras spungs monastery to Lhasa and rebuilt the Potala Palace for strategic purpose. (Karmay 2016, Online and Schaeffer 2005, p.76) Therefore, the dGa' ldan pho brang was established during this power vacuum in Lhasa. In this situation, the leaders of the dGe lugs pa monasteries automatically became the leaders in this new government.

These monastic leaders were not professional politicians and they had other responsibilities to fulfil. For instance, the mKhan pos of the monasteries had to look after their monasteries financially and spiritually. Under these circumstances, it was not feasible for mKhan pos to attend all government assemblies. Therefore, the government created two assemblies known as the “large/greater assembly” (*rgyas 'dzoms*) and the “select/smaller/exclusive gathering” (*hrag bsdus*). The political power of the dGa' ldan pho brang at the time circulated among three internal parties: the Khoshut Mongols in Central Tibet, the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama, and prominent dGe lugs pa monasteries. Among these three, the Khoshut Mongols controlled most military power as per tradition. The dGe lugs pa monasteries dominated the two assemblies of the dGa' ldan pho brang because they were the majority.⁴² Considering the increasing tensions between the leaders of the powerful dGe lugs pa institutions and the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama, the increasingly growing intimate relationship between the Khoshut Mongols and the purist dGe lugs pas was not good news for the Dalai Lama and the sDe srid. These new developments made the dGe lugs purists their potential competitors.

Therefore, it seems that Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, as the sDe srid of the dGa' ldan pho brang, attempted to establish a better power balance between the political and religious parties within the dGa' ldan pho brang by accommodating all factions in a way that was meaningful to them. According to primary sources, De mo and Sems dpa' rin po che were neither scholars nor aristocrats, and they were also from 'Bras spungs sgo mang college and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's close students.⁴³ However, they became the inner attendants of the Sixth Dalai Lama. This puzzle shows that the sDe srid purposely recruited

⁴² Monasteries under the leadership of the mKhan pos held the key positions in the decision-making process in both assemblies (*rgyas 'dzoms* and *hrag bsdus*) in the dGa' ldan pho brang political power structure. This unique feature emerged due to the specific social and political context in which the dGe lugs pas founded the dGa' ldan pho brang with the help of the Mongolian military force.

⁴³ For example, since the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa had student-master relationships with De mo and Sems dpa' rin po che, he scolded them for renouncing the monastic vows along with the Sixth Dalai Lama:

རྗེ་འདིས་དེ་མོ་སྐུལ་སྐུ་དང་སེམས་དབའ་གཉིས་ལ། སྐུ་ཕྱོགས་དེ་འདྲ་གནང་ནའང་ཉེད་གཉིས་འདི་འདྲ་ཉེད་
ལྷགས་ཡོད་དམ་ཞེས་བཀའ་བརྒྱུན།

rJe 'dis ['Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] scolded De mo lama and Sems dpa', "Even the sKu phyogs [the Dalai Lama] did that. How could you two do the same thing?" (bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.86b)

Although this event occurred in 1702, this shows the power of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa over the close attendants of the Sixth Dalai Lama. Historically, De mo rin po che and Sems dpa' rin po che belonged to the 'Bras spungs sgo mang college, which brought them into the purist circle dGe lugs pa group.

these two young lamas to please the purist dGe lugs pas and build his relationship with the sGo mang monastery through the Dalai Lama. Additionally, the sDe srid also began to invite the purist leader 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa on special occasions to observe and witness the debate of Buddhist scholars (*dge bshes*) with the Dalai Lama.⁴⁴ However, at the same time, the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama requested all religious masters, including the Bon pos, to perform nationwide rituals for the dGa' ldan pho brang and instructed all regional offices to do the same annually.⁴⁵ The performance of these state-sponsored rituals was considered very significant in accumulating common merit (*spyi mthun bsod nams*) and demonstrating the state's power, recognition, and legitimacy.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.73a. The text reads:

ལྷོན་དུས་ཚངས་དབྱངས་པ་འབྲས་སྤངས་གྲུ་ཚང་བཞིའི་ཚོས་གྲུ་ལ་ལེབས་དུས་ལྷེ་བས་ཇི་འདི་ལ་ཡང་ལེབས་
ནས་དག་བཤེས་གཞན་ཚོས་ཚོད་པའི་དཔང་པོ་བྱེད་དགོས་ལུས་ནས།

In the autumn, while Tshang dbyangs pa [the Sixth Dalai Lama] visited the four colleges of 'Bras spungs monastery, the sDe ba requested this Master ['Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] to oversee debates of other Buddhist scholars (*dge bshes*) [with the Dalai Lama], then.

During this time, the Dalai Lama was still in the process of his intensive Buddhist scholastic training. As per the tradition, each Dalai Lama had to visit Se ra, 'Bras spungs, and dGa' ldan to debate with top Buddhist scholars to develop himself and demonstrate his progress. The Tibetan government would invite senior Buddhist scholars to judge the debates. The judges are called the *mTshan zhabs* of the Dalai Lama. *mTshan zhabs* literally translates as "the servant of the logical studies" of the Dalai Lama. Becoming a *mTshan zhabs* of the Dalai Lama is one of the highest honours in the dGe lugs pa community. In this context, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa was invited to judge the debate as the *mTshan zhabs* of the Dalai Lama. This honorary invitation demonstrated that the sDe srid tried to be friends with the purists or showed the principle of his government to accommodate different factions equally.

⁴⁵ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, pp.423–428. The content of this lengthy passage can be summarised as follow: The dGa' ldan pho brang built religious statues and stūpas in many places under the initiative of the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama. The sDe srid recorded the details of where the government built which statues and stūpas according to which religious tradition in Tibet. The sDe srid explained that the government ordered many monasteries, including the Bon pos, to perform rituals for the dGa' ldan pho brang from time to time. He also recorded the gifts the government offered to various lamas and monasteries to perform rituals for the government. The sDe sri also described the geomancy of the locations where the government erected statues and stūpas.

⁴⁶ During this period, ritual played a vital role in the public recognition and legitimacy of the dGa' ldan pho brang. Karmay observed, "Regarded in this way, we have a corpus of ritual that not only evoked the earlier imperial power and gave political legitimacy to Dalai Lama's rule, but also mirrored the culmination of the political and military struggle that preceded Dalai Lama's accession to power as the sovereign of Tibet in 1642." (Karmay 2002, p. 24) Additionally, in the early years of the dGa' ldan pho brang, military magic was essential because of their political rivals, backed up by religious schools famous for such practices. In

Besides, the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama continued to lead the great non-sectarian prayer festival (*ris med ser tshogs*) in Lhasa every year after the sMon lam chen mo, which was initially started by the Fifth Dalai Lama. It seems the gathering was not that large during the Fifth Dalai Lama's time.⁴⁷ Gradually, the great non-sectarian prayer

his article *Ritual as War Propaganda in the Establishment of the Tibetan Ganden Phodrang State in the Mid-17th century*, FitzHerbert discusses the institutionalisation of rituals, including military magic, formulated by the Fifth Dalai Lama based on the Northern Treasures tradition (*byang gter*) and his pure visionary experiences (*dag snang*). (FitzHerbert 2018, pp.99–116). Interestingly, Dalton noted, "From the thirteenth century, the violent rites, which had so far been largely the preserve of individuals or small groups of Buddhist practitioners, grew into large-scale rites that were performed on behalf of the state. Violent ritual, in this sense, went from the local to the global" (Dalton 2011, pp.279). Therefore, Dalton argued that the rise of such magic related to the arrival of Mongols in Tibet (Dalton 2011, pp.279–280). He wrote, "after the fourteenth century, war magic continued to grow in influence, and by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it dominated much of the language of Tibetan military conflict." (Dalton 2011, p.316) Therefore, FitzHerbert concludes that the Fifth Dalai Lama took charge of ritual war magics and "ensured their success and institutionalisation as part of the state-building process." (FitzHerbert 2018, p.55) Richardson recorded that most public ceremonies, which come with different rituals, were reorganised and elaborated "during the rule of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and his equally great regent Sangye Gyatso when they were put into what was very much their latest form with the clear intention of enhancing the grandeur of the new regime." (Richardson and Aris 1993, p. 7.) These ceremonies were not purely celebratory in nature, but included rituals designed to bolster the prestige and stability of the government.

⁴⁷ The sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama scheduled this prayer festival just after the sMon lam chen mo, which turned it into a massive gathering of tens of thousands of monks from 441 different monasteries, including all religious traditions in Tibet. During these annual gatherings, the dGa' ldan pho brang often organised nationwide rituals by all Tibetan religious masters including Bon po masters. For example, *the Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama* recorded one such event:

ས་ཀྱི་དོ་སློབ་ཡོད་པ་རྣམས་སུ་ཐུགས་བོན་ལག་ལེན་ཡོད་པས་ཡུལ་ལྗང་གཞི་བདག་ལ་གསོལ་མཚོན། དགོ་གསུམ་ལ་ཇ་ཚུལ་བཅོ་མར་གདུགས་དཀར་རྣམས་དང་། ལྷ་བ་གཉིས་པའི་གནམ་གང་ཞོགས་ཉི་མ་དམར་མཚོན་པའི་ལྷ་ས་རྣམས་གོང་ས་སྐུ་ཐབས་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་དབུས་དགའ་ཕྱན་པོ་བྲང་བསྟན་སྲིད་དེ་འཛིན་དང་བཅས་སུ་དན་བཞོག་ཐབས་སུ། ས་དགོ་རྗེའི་གསུམ་གྱི་དགོན་ཨང་རྣམས་ལ་ཇ་སུམ་སུ། རིས་མང་ཨང་དང་ལ་ཇ་ཉི་གུ། ཨང་གཉིས་ལ་ཇ་བཅོ་ལྔ། ཨང་གསུམ་ལ་ཇ་བཅུ།

There was a tantric Bon ritual practice where [people] dug up the earth and turned over rocks. Hence, [Bonpos were asked] to pray and make offerings to regional deities and local guardians (*yu lha gzhi bdag*). [The government] offered tea bricks to the *dge gsum* (monks from three abodes) and practitioners of Sitāpatra on the 15th day. On the morning of the 30th of the second month, a day on which the sun was red, the people in Lhasa offered bricks of tea to repel the obstacles of those holding the religion and politics of the dGa' ldan pho brang, especially the Dalai Lama. Thirty bricks of tea were given to Sa [skya], dGe [lugs], and rNying [ma] monasteries, twenty bricks to first ranking non-sectarian [monasteries], fifteen bricks to those ranking second,

festival became famous and successful, attracting Buddhists from all Tibetan Buddhist schools. Therefore, it appears that the purists began to see this as a strategy to damage the reputation of the dGe lugs tradition and gain more fame for the sDe srid himself.

In his biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama, the sDe srid recorded the following accusations made by the purist dGe lugs pas:

ནག་ཕྱོགས་ཁ་རྒྱལ་བའི་རིས་མེད་ཀྱི་དགོ་འདུན་འཚོག་པ་དགོ་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་
དམའ་འབེབས་དང་། ལ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱབ་ནས་འབོད་པ་སྐྱོན་གྲགས་ཀྱི་ཆེད་ལས་དགོ་
མེད་ཚུལ་དང་།

The gathering of monks without sectarianism, in which the dark side has won predominance, is a blasphemy/dishonour to the dGe lugs pa. And proclaiming [such a message] far and wide (lit.: crossing passes and rivers, *la chu rgyab*) is without virtue but for the sake of fame.⁴⁸

This excerpt shows that the purists made the connection between this gathering and the sDe srid's personal reputation. This accusation targeted the public to give them a negative view of this non-sectarian gathering. On the other hand, this passage also shows that the sDe srid or the government continuously popularised and promoted this gathering far and wide. Thus, it is possible to discern an increasing polarisation as the two factions pursued their own polemical agendas with their own strategies. According to this passage, the dGe lugs purists applied the term "the dark side" (*nag phyogs*) to represent a non-dGe lugs tradition. In this context, this term can refer to rNying ma or any other non-dGe lugs pa schools or anti-purist dGe lugs pa groups. Therefore, according to the dGe lugs purists, this ceremony served two aims: It allowed the non-dGe lugs pas a victory and disgraced the dGe lugs pa. Besides, this gathering helped the sDe srid

and ten bricks to those ranking third. (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p.802)

This is just one example during the reign of the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama. Like during the Fifth Dalai Lama's time, on many occasions, the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama invited all Tibetan religious masters including Bon pos to perform nationwide rituals like this one mentioned above. This ritual performance is another government policy to accommodate all religious traditions under the dGa' ldan pho brang government, similar to the non-sectarian prayer gathering.

⁴⁸ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p.697. One might think this is the interpretation of just one biography; however, looking at the influence of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa and the events related to these accusations in central Tibet, one can safely assume that this idea had been shared by many purist dGe lugs pas.

grow in fame because he was the prominent figure behind this festival. Similar accusations are found in other primary sources. For instance, in his *Biography of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa*, bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis stated:

དེ་སྐབས་གཞུང་ནས་དྲག་ཞན་ཀུན་རྫིང་མ་ལ་བསྐྱར་འདོད་ནས།

During that time, the government [the dGa' ldan pho brang] intended to convert all high and low [people] into rNying ma [pa], then.⁴⁹

This passage implies a fear among a few dGe lugs pas, especially the purists, who thought the rNying ma pa would take over the government. Looking at the context of this quotation, the purists misinterpreted or misrepresented the engagement of the dGa' ldan pho brang with the rNying ma tradition. This was presumably the same for other religious schools, such as the Bon tradition.

In the name of protecting the dGe lugs tradition, the purists deployed two strategies: Initially, they attempted to destroy the reputation of the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama among Tibetans and Mongols through the accusations cited above. Additionally, they appealed to the dGa' ldan pho brang to appoint the fifty-three-year-old First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa as the thirty-second mKhan po of the sGo mang college. The purists thought they could consolidate their power under this leadership, which would be a landmark for their struggle to protect the purist dGe lugs tradition. Either the Sixth Dalai Lama and the sDe srid did not see the intention of the purists behind this appeal, or they underestimated the power of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa. Regardless, as a gesture of goodwill, the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama agreed to their appeal and officially appointed the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa as the sGo mang mKhan po. He was formally enthroned in sGo mang college in 'Bras spungs on 15th October 1700.⁵⁰ As we will see later, this is a monumental

⁴⁹ bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.75a.

⁵⁰ bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis n.d., f.80a. The text reads:

ལྷགས་པོ་འབྲུག་གི་ལོ་རྟོག་རྒྱ་བཅུ་བའི་ཡར་དོའི་ཚེས་ལྔའི་ཉི་ཤར་ལ་ཚེས་ལྗེ་ཚན་པོ་ཕྱགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་པ་དང་པལ་ལྡན་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྣོ་མང་གི་མི་འཇིགས་སེང་གའི་བྱི་ལ་ཞབས་ཀྱི་པད་མོ་ཉེ་བར་བཞོད་དེ་བསྐབ་གསུམ་དང་ལྡན་ཞིང་། རྗེ་སྣོད་གསུམ་གྱི་ལུང་གིས་ཕྱག་པ་རྒྱན་བྱས་ལྷ་བུའི་མཁས་མང་འདུས་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་མགོན་དུ་གྱུར་དོ།

At sunrise, on the 5th of the tenth waxing month of the Hor calendar of Male Iron Dragon year, the lotus feet of [the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa] gracefully landed on the fearless lion throne of the great religious monastery dPal ldan bkra shis sgo mang, victorious in all directions, and became the leader of the ocean of

achievement for the purist dGe lugs pa.

The Role of the Purists among the dGe lugs pa Patrons

The appointment of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa became a turning point for the purist dGe lugs pa's direct influence on the government. mKhan pos of the major dGe lugs monasteries automatically became members of two government assemblies of the dGa' ldan pho brang. The voices of the purists began to be heard in high-level government decision-making bodies that rapidly strengthened and enlarged their influence among Mongols and Tibetans. Under the leadership of the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, the purists consistently accused the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama of destroying the dGe lugs tradition.⁵¹ Rumours of such accusations reached the Dzungar Mongols, who were strong supporters of the purist dGe lugs pa, and their new leader Tshe dbang rab brtan did not like the sDe srid.⁵² The Dzungars became

the assembly of scholars as learned as the Six Ornaments (*rgyan drug*), who are enriched with the teachings of the Tripiṭaka and three religious trainings.

⁵¹ The sDe srid repeatedly records the accusations that he received. For example, in the *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, he recorded an accusation created by the purists among the Kokonor Mongols, which the latter however rejected:

སློབ་གསལ་སློང་དཔོན་སློབ་མཚོ་ལར་འབྱོར་བའི་ཚོགས་འདུ་ལ་བོད་མའི་ཚོས་བཙོ་ཐུབ་པའི་དཔོན་ལག་
 རྩམས་ཀྱིས་གོང་འབས་ཤིན་པོ་ཚེར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་འགྱུར་བ་མེད་པ་འདྲ་དུ་འང་གྲ་རིགས་དང་པོད་དུ་འགྲོ་མིས་སློང་
 ལྷ་ཚོགས་ལ་བས་པ་ལས་འདྲེས་ཅི་ཤེས། ད་སློབ་གོང་གི་བཀའ་དང་བཅས་ལོག་ལྷ་མི་གནང་ཞིང་།
 [After] the gathering where Blo gsal gling dPon slob (a well-known reincarnated Lama) had arrived at the Kokonor (*mtsho kha*) was concluded on the 15th of the previous month, the [Mongol] leaders [declared that they] 'have faith in Gong zhab rin po che [the Sixth Dalai Lama] without doubt and wavering (*the tshom 'gyur ba med pa*).' To me [the sDe srid], [they said,] 'We do not know anything other than the various rumours (*gleng sna tshogs*) spread by monks and the people who visited Tibet. Now, along with the special command/advice of Gong (probably, Blo gsal gling dPon slob) we will not hold wrong views toward [the sDe srid].' (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 723)

This quotation indicates that around this time, there were many negative rumours about the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama, "spread by monks and the people who visited Tibet". The monks and the people in this passage were likely to have been both Tibetans and Mongols because many Mongols and Tibetans kept going back-and-forth between Amdo Kokonor and Central Tibet around this time.

⁵² Dzungar was the name of one of the four major tribes of the Oirat confederation; however, it later became the collective name for other Oirat tribes when the Dzungars took over other Oirat tribes. Historically, Dzungar was the left-wing army of the Oirat confederation during the time of the Mongol Empire. See further *Oirat People: Cultural Uniformity and Diversification* edited by I Lkhagvasürén, and Yuki Konagaya in 2014. Beginning in the 16th century, many of the Dzungar elites, including for example dGa' ldan, became dGe lugs pa lamas and scholars in Tibet,

furious at what the sDe srid was doing in Central Tibet, which they regarded as a disgrace to the dGe lugs tradition, and they also perceived this as an opportunity to expand their influence in Central Tibet.⁵³ In this situation, Tshe dbang rab brtan, the leader of the Dzungars, immediately dispatched a warning to the sDe srid, claiming that it served to protect the pure dGe lugs tradition.

The Biography of Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal or Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1651–1726),⁵⁴ who had a close relationship with the sDe srid throughout the latter's life, recalls the message:

ལྷོང་གར་ནས་ཉོང་མའི་ཇིས་ལྡེ་སྲིད་ལ་ལྷོང་མི་ནག་དཔོན་པོ་ཞིག་གིས་སྐྱ་མ་

making the dGe lugs tradition a dominant school among the Dzungars. This is perhaps why the Dzungars had a close relationship with the purist dGe lugs pas such as Lama Grags pa rgyal mtshan, believed to have turned into the deity Shugs ldan after his mysterious death 1656. However, the visible turning point was after the death of the Dzungar leader, dGa' ldan Khan in 1697. The new the Dzungar leader, Tshe dbang rab brtan, did not like the sDe srid because of the latter's lifetime alliance with dGa' ldan Khan. Since then, the Dzungars became apparent supporters of the purist dGe lugs school in Tibet. See Perdue's work *China March West*.

⁵³ There is historical background for this political conflict between the Dzungar leader Tshe dbang rab brtan and the sDe srid. The sDe srid supported the Dzungar leader dGa' ldan Khan throughout the latter's fight against the Qing. (*Qing shilü zàngzú shiliào* 1982, p.161 and *Qing shèng zǔ shilü* 2008, Vol-12, p. 27) The Dzungar Tshe dbang rab brtan did not like the sDe srid for the latter's alliance with dGa' ldan Khan. Tshe dbang rab brtan and dGa' ldan Khan had a blood feud. Tshe brtan bkra shis and bZod pa Batur, two brothers of Tshe dbang rab brtan, assassinated Sangs rgyas, the half-brother of dGa' ldan Khan and leader of the Dzungars at the time. Upon hearing the news from Tibet, dGa' ldan Khan returned to the Dzungar and murdered Tshe brtan bkra shis and bZod pa Batur in revenge. (Heissig 1944, p.113 and Sagaster 1967, p. 20) At the time, Tshe dbang rab brtan fled from the Dzungar helped the Qing to defeat dGa' ldan Khan. (Perdue 2005, p.183 and p.199) That is why Tshe dbang rab brtan supported the purist dGe lugs pas against the sDe srid. The other important thing is that the new Dzungars no longer had the power to extend their influence among the Khalkha Mongols and the Qing Empire. Their territory of influence had been shrinking because of the expansion of the growing Qing Empire. Therefore, they found Tibet to be a new destination where they could expand their influence. Regarding this, Perdue writes that "Tsewang Rabdan had begun to take an interest in Tibetan affairs." (Perdue 2005, p.229).

⁵⁴ According to the biography of Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal or Blo gsal rgya mtsho by Sle lung Bzhad pa'i rdo rje published in 1735, Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal was a rNying ma master and the teacher of the author, Sle lung Bzhad pa'i rdo rje. According to the *Biography of Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal* by Sle lung Lama, Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal was in his 75th year when he passed away in 1726, which means he would have been born in was born in 1652. Therefore, Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal witnessed the administration of the dGa' ldan pho brang under the sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho from beginning to end. He regularly communicated with the sDe srid and often openly shared his opinion about the administration of the dGa' ldan pho brang and the sDe srid's behaviour. He was said to have cried when he heard that Mongols assassinated the sDe srid.

ཚོ་ལ་ཕྱག་དབང་སྟེར་བ་ཡག་པོ་མ་རེད། དེ་འདྲ་མ་བྱེད། ལྷ་མའི་གལ་མགོར་
 མ་སྟོན། བོ་དྭ་ལར་རྟིང་མའི་གྲ་ཚང་མ་འཛོག་ངའི་ཁ་ལ་ཉན་བ་བྱུང་ན་འདྲ་
 རང་གཉིས་འཆམ་པོ་ཡོང་། ཉན་མ་བྱུང་ན་དམག་རྒྱལ་རྒྱ་ཡིན་ཞེས་དགོ་
 སྟོང་ནམ་མཁན་རྒྱལ་མཚན་གྲིས་མི་སྣར་ཕྱིན་དུས་འཕྲིན་བསྐྱར་འདུག

ཕྱེ་སྲིད་ནས་མ་གསན་པར་བརྟེན་དམག་རྒྱལ་རྒྱས་གྲ་སྦྱིག་དང་། གོས་
 བསྐྱར་ཡང་ཡང་གནང་འདུག་སྟེ། གཞུང་རང་གི་སྐུ་རིམ་བཟང་དྲགས་པས་
 རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཐོག་ལ་མ་གཏོགས་དམག་འགྲུགས་སྲུབ་པ་བྱུང་མ་སོང་ཞེས་ཚོས་
 འཕེལ་ཇ་སང་ནས་ངོས་གྲིས་ཟེར་བ་ཐོས།

Hong Taiji⁵⁵ from the Dzungar sent a letter with the monk Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, who went there as an envoy: "For a lay-leader (*mi nag dpon po*) like you (the sDe srid), it is not appropriate to offer hand-blessings to other lamas. Do not do this. Do not sit above lamas. Do not set up a rNying ma college in the Potala. If you listen to me, we will be on good terms. But if you do not, I will launch a military campaign [against you]."

I [Che mchog 'dus pa rtsal] heard that Chos 'phel ja sang said, '(the Dzungars) prepared for a military expedition [to Tibet] and discussed the matter many times because the sDe srid did not listen [to them]. [However,] due to the excellence of the government's rituals, except on the King [lHa bzang Khan in 1717], they could not wage war [against the sDe srid].⁵⁶

In this passage, the most significant line is "do not set up a rNying ma college in the Potala" which refers to a group of rNying ma and Bon po masters who, from time to time, gathered in the Potala Palace to

⁵⁵ In this context, Hong Taiji refers to Tshe dbang rab brtan. Hong Taiji is a Mongolian title, probably derived from the Chinese word Huáng Tàiji or vice versa, which means "crown prince". Historically, the title belonged only to the descendants of Genghis Khan among Mongols. However, in 1678, the Fifth Dalai Lama conferred the title to the Dzungar leader dGa' ldan Khan, which made the latter a legitimate Hong Taiji. (Ishihama 1992, p. 503) In 1694, in the name of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the dGa' ldan pho brang offered the same title to Tshe dbang rab brtan. (Ishihama 1992, p.504) Since then, the following Dzungar leaders were automatically recognised as Hong Taiji in Central Asia.

⁵⁶ Sle lung Bzhad pa'i rdo rje 1735, f.38b.

perform official rituals. This tradition of the dGa' ldan pho brang was initiated by the Fifth Dalai Lama, not the sDe srid. As discussed above, the Manchus claimed their military force was in Ningxia to launch a war against the dGa' ldan pho brang, and the Dzungars, similarly, sent several military warnings to the sDe srid, but it looked like they were ultimately hesitant to attack. There are several possible reasons for this: First of all, the Mongols and the Manchus portrayed themselves as Tibetan Buddhist patrons. Therefore, it was difficult for them to start a war against the dGa' ldan pho brang, the emblematic institution of the dGe lugs tradition. Additionally, along with its Buddhist authority, the dGa' ldan pho brang also had the Khoshut Mongol and Tibetan local armies. In this scenario, it was not easy to win against the dGa' ldan pho brang militarily and diplomatically. Therefore, even though there is currently no solid evidence available to verify this, there may have been an unwritten mutual understanding between the Mongols and the Qing court that they should not invade the territory of the dGa' ldan pho brang.⁵⁷

As discussed above, the internal power balance in central Tibet was very significant for the dGa' ldan pho brang to exercise its full legal authority. In this regard, the unity between dBus and gTsang was vital for the stability and strength of the dGa' ldan pho brang as a government. Historically, the relationship between the two regions was always sensitive. Many leaders and ordinary people from these regions often viewed each other suspiciously. Two important groups in the region of gTsang did not like the sDe srid and the dGa' ldan pho brang: the first group was the gTsang regionalists, who viewed the people from dBus negatively because of the many civil wars between the two regions for centuries.⁵⁸ The second group was the gTsang purist dGe lugs pas, mainly from bKra shis lhun po monastery, who

⁵⁷ After Khoshut Mongol lHa bzang Khan assassinated the former sDe srid and took control of the dGa' ldan pho brang in 1705, the unwritten mutual understanding among Mongols and the Qing related to Tibet had gradually vanished. The Mongols and Manchus increasingly began to intrude in the dGa' ldan pho brang's politics which culminated in the Dzungar's invasion of Tibet in 1717 and Manchu's permanent military station in Lhasa in 1720. See Petech's work, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIth Century* (Petech 1972).

⁵⁸ Schwiieger explained the rivalry and suspicion between the two regions as early as the late 16th century. For example, the people from dBus thought the Fourth Dalai Lama was murdered "by the ruler of Tsang Province at that time." (Schwiieger 2015.p. 36) So, Schwiieger named the gTsang pa rulers, "the mighty rival of Gelukpa power in Central Tibet." (Schwiieger 2015.p. 36) Divalerio further analysed the ground history of civil wars between the two regions—dBus and gTsang—in central Tibet. (Divalerio 2015) Schwiieger summarised the early 17th century: "During the following years, an enormous power play was fought out between the Gelukpa and the ruler of Tsang in Central Tibet. And into that struggle the Mongols were now dragged." (Schwiieger 2015.p. 37)

opposed the sDe srid for his religious policies. Knowing this situation, the purists seem to have created a rumour that the Kangxi Emperor intended to invite the Panchen Lama because the dGa' ldan pho brang prevented the latter from visiting Peking. This rumour was designed to create suspicion between the sDe srid and bKra shis lhun po and also discredit the sDe srid's leadership integrity in the eyes of the Manchus.

Two significant Tibetan and Manchu documents explain how this misinformation was created purposefully.

In his *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, the sDe srid recorded the conflict:

.....གོང་མའི་མི་སྣ་ལ་ཤས་ལ་སླ་བར་གི་སྣེ་མོ་བ་འགས་གཏིང་མ་རྟོགས་
པའི་སློང་བརྗོད་སོགས་ལ་བརྟེན་གོང་མས་གདན་འདྲེན་གྱི་དགོངས་གཞི་
གཏང་བེར་བ་ཀུན་རྟོག་འོག་འགྲུའི་ལབ་གཞི་ལས་དོན་དུ་གནས་པ་ག་ལ་
ཡིན།

འོན་ཀྱང་ལུག་པ་ཚངས་བྱིན་གྱི་བྱེད་སློ་དེས་པའ་ཆེན་བསྟན་པའི་བདག་པོ་
ཆེན་པོ་རང་སྐུ་འབྱུང་མ་བཞེས་པ་སོགས་དགོངས་གཞི་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡང་རྒྱ་ནག་
དུ་ཆེབས་བསྐྱར་དགོངས་པར་གཏན་ནས་མི་བསག་པའི་བྱ་ཐབས་དཀའ་
བར་གོང་མའི་དགོངས་པ་པའ་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལེབས་བཞེད་ལ་གཞུང་ནས་
བཀག་པ་ལྟ་བུའི་དགོངས་ཚམས་ཆེ་ཞིང་།

.... The assertion that the Gong ma (the emperor) intended (*dgongs gzhi gtad*) to invite [the Panchen Lama to Peking] because of some senior officials at the residence (*bla brang*) of [the Panchen Lama's] conversation with some messengers (*mi sna*) of the Gong ma without comprehending the depth (*gting*) [of this situation] is not true. It is nothing other than a rumour [*lab gzhi*] of deceptive imagination.

However, because of Phug pa Tshang phyin's⁵⁹

⁵⁹ An officer of the dGa' ldan pho brang government in gZhis ka rtse, who, according to the sDe srid, abused his power over the gTsang pa people and did not treat the Panchen Lama respectfully, and angered and disgusted the public. Worst of all, he pretended that what he had done was the instruction of the sDe srid's government. The sDe srid clarified this incident in his biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama:

ག་ལུག་པ་ཚངས་བྱིན་གྱི་སློང་བརྗོད་སོགས་ལ་བརྟེན་གོང་མས་གདན་འདྲེན་གྱི་དགོངས་གཞི་
ཇི་ལྟར་ཡང་རྒྱ་ནག་དུ་ཆེབས་བསྐྱར་དགོངས་པར་གཏན་ནས་མི་བསག་པའི་བྱ་ཐབས་
དཀའ་བར་གོང་མའི་དགོངས་པ་པའ་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལེབས་བཞེད་ལ་གཞུང་ནས་

actions, the Panchen Lama, the great lord of Buddhism, had never intended to visit China [due to] not having been infected with smallpox. Nothing can be done, whatever the intention [of the Panchen Lama] might be. [Therefore] the Gong ma suspected strongly that the government [the dGa' ldan pho brang] stopped the Panchen Lama, although he wanted to visit.⁶⁰

According to the first part of this excerpt, the sDe srid was trying to clarify the rumour, most probably spreading among the gTsang pa people. The Kangxi invited the Panchen Lama, but it was not because of a conversation between the Panchen Lama's attendants and Imperial messengers. In fact, the Kangxi began to invite the Panchen Lama as early as May 25, 1693, but the Emperor's messengers met the Panchen Lama's attendant only in September 1693.⁶¹ This historical

སྒོ་ཐུག་པ་ལྷ་ཕུག་པའི་འདི་ནས་བསྐྱབ་སྟོན་ཡོད་པའི་རྒྱུ་རྗེ་བཀའ་གིས་སྐྱ་མེད་ཚང་མར་བསྟན་ཅོམ་བཀྲིས་པའི་ཁོངས་ལས་བཀའ་བརྒྱུ་ཆེ་བ་མ་ལུས་འདུག་པར་།

Gra phug pa Tshangs byin.... even after [he] arrived to gZhis rtser, [he] was very strict/inflexible (*jur dam*) over all monks and householders (*lha sde mi sde*). Although the Panchen Lama of bKra shis lhun po, the Master of the [Buddhist] doctrine, needs to be respected unlike [i.e. more than] others, [Gra phug pa Tshangs byin] did not offer a big expression of respect by deceptively pretending as if [he] had an instructional edict [document] size like a space behind the door [*sgo rgyanb*] from *'di nas* [the dGa' ldan pho brang or sDe srid], which disgusted all laymen and monks. (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p.513.)

The complexity of the relationship between the sDe srid, dGa' ldan pho brang's officers, bKra shis lhun po, and gTsang pa people made it hard for the sDe srid to be friends with all factions. We do not know whether Gra phug pa Tshangs byin belonged to the purist dGe lugs pa group or the regionalist section or none. However, this shows that many actors contributed to the disunity between dBus and gTsang regions.

⁶⁰ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p.514. The invitation of the Panchen Lama to Peking became a matter of conflict between the Qing and the dGa' ldan pho brang over many years. The Kangxi Emperor began to mention the plan to invite the Panchen Lama in the early 1690s, and this continued until 1704. The emperor repeatedly accused the sDe srid of preventing the Panchen Lama. (*Qīng shèng zǔ shǐliù*, Běijīng 2008. p. 116, 165, and 176) On the other hand, Tibetan materials, like the quotation above, explained how the sDe srid clarified the misunderstanding to the Kangxi. Again, the main point here is that the sDe srid was dragged into these regional conflicts without having a choice.

⁶¹ Schwiieger 2015, pp.84–85. The Kangxi to invite the Panchen Lama for several reasons such as, among others, “to weaken the strong ties between the Dsungars and the Geluk hierarchs in Tibet” (Schwiieger 2015, p.84) and to improve his image among Tibetans and Mongols.

fact proves that Kangxi decided to invite the Panchen Lama long before his messengers met the attendants of the Panchen Lama. Considering all these issues, it became clear that all these rumours were nothing but purposely created to discredit the sDe srid and bring more disunity between the two regions.

The second part of this passage shows that the Kangxi suspected the sDe srid or the dGa' ldan pho brang of preventing the Panchen Lama from travelling to the Qing court. The sDe srid had to persuade the Panchen Lama to travel on the one hand and clarify the case to the Kangxi on the other. Additionally, around that time, the Qing also accused the sDe srid of collaborating with dGa' ldan Khan to prevent the Panchen Lama from travelling to Peking.⁶² Therefore, the sDe srid had to explain to the Kangxi that the messengers of dGa' ldan Khan "had already explained to the Panchen lama that a journey to Beijing would not be appropriate."⁶³ According to this, the real force to prevent the Panchen Lama was the Dzungars, but no one in Tibet raised this issue except the sDe srid.

The Kangxi Emperor may personally not have cared about the real reason why the Panchen Lama rejected his invitations. Still, he was offended by the speculation/rumour that the sDe srid and the dGa' ldan pho brang prevented the Panchen Lama from travelling to Peking to meet him.

The Qing imperial official document recorded the misdeeds of the sDe srid on 17th July 1670:

第巴原系达赖喇嘛下管事人，朕优擢之，封为土伯特

⁶² The Qing official statement recorded on 6th September 1696 said:

但第巴与噶尔丹朋比，恐吓班禅，言噶尔丹兵将要而杀之，不遣之行。

[The Kangxi said] 'However, the sDe srid colluded with dGa' ldan and threatened the Panchen Lama that dGa' ldan's would kill him and would not allow him to travel to [Peking]'. (*Qing shèng zǔ shìlù*, Běijīng 2008. p.134)

Schwieger also notes that the sDe srid asked the Panchen Lama to accept the invitation of the Kangxi and, at the same time, "He adds, however, that he does not know whether this will cause the Boshugtu Qan [dGa' ldan Khan]." (Schwieger 2015, p.86) Schwieger analysed correspondence between the sDe srid, the Kangxi emperor and the Panchen Lama to analyse this conflict and confusion about the Panchen Lama's invitation. (Schwieger 2015, pp. 84–88) Schwieger also dismissed the claim of Chinese historian Yá hán zhāng that the Panchen Lama hoped to go to Peking as the Fifth Dalai Lama had done. (Schwieger 2015, p. 85) Perdue, on the other hand, wrote that the sDe srid "did try to prevent the Panchen Lama and Galdan's daughter, now in Tibet, from being summoned to the capital, but the emperor refused his request." (Perdue 2004, p. 199)

⁶³ Schwieger 2015, p. 86. Schwieger translated an official letter of the sDe srid to prove this statement.

国王。乃阳奉宗喀巴之道法，阴与噶尔丹比，欺达赖喇嘛、班禅而坏宗喀巴之法。前遣济隆胡土克图至噶尔丹所，为噶尔丹诵经，选择战日。朕为众生往召班禅，沮而不遣。（卷一八二·页一下—三上）

[The Kangxi] said, 'The sDe srid was initially a steward of the [Fifth] Dalai Lama. [But] I supported him and conferred on him the title of Tibetan king.⁶⁴ The Diba superficially pretended to believe in Tsong kha pa's teachings but secretly schemed with dGa' ldan.⁶⁵ [He also] deceived the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama and destroyed Tsong kha pa's teachings. Before sending Jilong Hutuktu to dGa' ldan's place, [the Diba] performed rituals for dGa' ldan and chose the war date. I invited the Panchen Lama for the sake of all sentient beings, but [the Diba] prevented him [the Fifth Panchen Lama].' (Vol. 182, pp. 1–3)⁶⁶

⁶⁴ In this Manchu document of *Qing shilü zàngzú shǐliào*, the term Guówáng (国王) is used several times to refer to the leaders of the dGa' ldan pho brang (*Qing shilü zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p.130, p.156, p.167 and more). This term has been commonly translated as "the king of a country", and the meaning remains the same in today's Chinese language. In the Chinese language, there is a difference between Wáng (王) and Guówáng (国王). Both terms mean "king", but the latter one precisely means the "king of a country". The term "country" represents an independent political entity although it is different from the Eurocentric notion of "nation state". Liú Hàchéng noticed that the Qing did not use this political term Guówáng to refer to those under their jurisdiction. The definition of this term remains the same in classical Chinese during the Qing Empire. We can therefore conclude that the territory under the rule of the dGa' ldan pho brang was considered to be a separate country by the Tibetan Buddhist patrons such as the Manchus. (Liú Hàchéng 2019, p.29)

⁶⁵ Regarding the Dzungar-Qing war, the sDe srid was obviously on the side of the dGa' ldan Khan. However, concerning the invitation of the Panchen Lama, as discussed above, the sDe srid explained to the Kangxi that dGa' ldan Khan was the main reason why the Panchen Lama did not visit Peking. (Schwieger 2015, p. 86)

⁶⁶ *Qing shilü zàngzú shǐliào* 1982, p.130. In this critical Manchu official document, several similar imperial decrees were issued to criticise the sDe srid and his works for many years. Most of the Emperor's accusations against the sDe srid were raised in his discussion with other court ministers. These verbal attacks just remained in the record of the court documents and never reached Tibet. In practice, the emperor had no choice but to continue his relationship with the sDe srid and the dGa' ldan pho brang to deal with Mongols. In this regard, "Relations with Tibet became the most critical contest." (Perdue 2005, p. 178) In a famous lecture by Tibetan scholar Nor bu bsam 'phel at the University of Lhasa, he argued:

In this passage, the Kangxi Emperor furiously scolded the sDe srid and blamed him for several problems, as he had done in his previous decrees. However, one accusation is new here. The emperor made the accusation that the sDe srid “destroyed Tsong kha pa’s teachings” and “superficially pretended to believe in Tsong kha pa’s teaching.” This statement echoes the rumours and claims raised by the purist dGe lugs pas. Perhaps, like Tshe dbang rab brtan, upon hearing the allegations of the purist dGe lugs pa, the emperor made these statements to portray himself as the protector of the dGe lugs tradition. At the same time, the modern Tibetan scholar Chab spel tshe brtan phun tshogs explains that the Kangxi Emperor dispatched his envoys in Xining to warn the sDe srid of a possible military attack against the dGa’ ldan pho brang if he still went against the interest of the Qing empire.⁶⁷ The emperor also decided to withdraw the official title that he had given to the sDe srid, “The Vajra Holder [Sanskrit Vajradhara] who upholds the Religion and Politics of the Dalai Lama, the King (*sa dbang*) promoting the Buddhist doctrine, Buddha Abaidi.”⁶⁸

ལང་ཤིས་ཀྱིས་དམག་བཏང་ནས་བོད་དབང་བསྐྱར་བྱེད་འདོད་ནའང་། ལོས་ལག་ལེན་ཚོག་ཏུ་བསྐྱར་བུབ་ཀྱིན་
མེད། གང་ཡིན་ཟེར་ན། དགའ་ཕུན་པོ་བྱང་སོག་པོ་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་ཁྲིད་དུ་རྒྱབ་སྐྱོར་ཆེན་པོ་ཡོད་པས་རེད།

Although Kangxi wanted to send his army to invade Tibet, he could not apply it in practice. Because the dGa’ ldan pho brang had a strong support among all Mongols. (Nor bu bsam ‘phel 2022, Online)

⁶⁷ Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs 1989, pp.667–668. The text reads:

གོང་མས་ཟེ་ཡིང་གི་སྐྱེ་ཚབ་བརྒྱད་ནས། ཟස་མིང་སྐུ་མཐུང་གོང་མའི་བཀའ་ཚོག་ཚུགས་སུ་བསྐྱོད་ན་དམག་མི་
གཏོང་རྒྱུ་ཡིན་པའི་ཉེན་བརྡ་བཏང་།

Gong ma [the Kangxi] warned through his representative in Xining that [he] will send [his] army if the sDe srid is continuously going against the commands of the Gong ma.

Regarding Chab spel’s historical works, it is vital to notice that his narratives are based on Yá hán zhāng’s work, *Dá lài lāma chuán* published in 1984. Chab spel acknowledged that the Chinese government instructed him to use Yá hán zhāng’s book as a guidebook for writing Tibetan history. Thus, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs quoted Yá hán zhāng more than 100 times in his work on Tibetan history. Yá hán zhāng was a communist expert on Tibet who had briefly lived at Bla brang and ‘Bras spungs monasteries and studied Tibetan language and Buddhism. Since the 1940s, Yá hán zhāng gradually emerged as a leading expert on ethnic affairs and became influential in the Chinese Communist Party (Han 2021, p.311). Even today, the Chinese Communist Party still regards Yá hán zhāng’s works as the exemplary official narrative of China’s relations with Tibet.

⁶⁸ *Qīng shèng zú shǐlù* 2008, Vol, 163, p. 98. *Qīng shèng zú shǐlù*, dated in May of the 33rd Year of Kangxi’s reign (1694), gave the official title offered to the sDe srid in three languages: Tibetan, Chinese, and Manchu. In Tibetan: རྫོང་འཆང་ཏུ་ལའི་རྒྱ་མའི་ཆོས་མིང་མཛོན་
ཅིང་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྐྱར་པ་དར་རྒྱས་སྐྱོང་བའི་ས་དབང་བཅུད་མཐོན་ལེས་། In Chinese: 掌瓦赤喇怛喇达赖喇嘛教弘宣佛法
王布忒达阿白迪之印。 The three languages, Tibetan, Manchu, and Chinese were used in all seals and titles offered to Tibetans and Mongols by the Qing Court.

In his *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, the sDe srid recorded the event:

ལྷོ་གཉེར་དུ་ཤང་བློ་ལིང་ནས་འཁོར། རྒྱ་ནག་གོང་མས་ངེད་དུ་ལྷོ་སོར་གནང་
བའི་ཐམ་ག་ཕྱིར་སློང་གསུང་བ་སོགས་བཀའ་ལྷི་བའི་བཀའ་ཤོག་སྐྱེ་ཞབས་
སུ་ངེད་ལ་སྤྲད།

Hwa shang,⁶⁹ the general manager, returned from Xining. [He] gave me [the sDe srid] an official letter of the emperor, loaded with heavy words, in front of the sKu zhabs [the Dalai Lama], saying that I had to return the seal that I was given before by the emperor, etc.⁷⁰

The passages quoted above show the pressure the sDe srid received from the Dzungars, the Qing, and even many leaders and ordinary people from the g'Tsang region. Even though the Dzungars and the Qing sent military warnings to Lhasa, the dGa' ldan pho brang government, under the leadership of the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama, continued their inclusive policy toward non-dGe lugs pa religious schools and continuously organised annual non-sectarian prayer festival and official rituals led by rNying ma and Bon po masters from the Potala Palace. As a matter of diplomacy and to keep a peaceful relationship with their patrons, the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama

Tham deb long pa'i dmigs bu, (1981) the official collection of seals and titles of the dGa' ldan pho brang leaders, did not contain the title of the sDe srid given by the Kangxi. Here, the term "Sa dbang" is translated as "king" because, as quoted above, the Qing documents refers to the sDe srid as the king (Guówáng (国王) of the dGa' ldan pho brang government.

⁶⁹ In this passage, the sDe srid used the Chinese term Héshàng (和尚), which means a monk, to refer to a monk diplomat in Xining. Although the sDe srid did not name the monk, according to this context, this monk must be the Mongolian monk Phyag na rdo rje, also known as Shangnandorji, a diplomat officer of li fān yuàn in Xining. (Schwieger 2015, p.116) Oyun Bilige, a Mongolian scholar whose Chinese name is Wūyún bì lì gé, is perhaps the first person to analyse the works of the Qing diplomat Phyag na rdo rje. Oyun Bilige described Phyag na rdo rje as the Grand Minister Ofi of the Deliberate Council of the Qing. (Wūyún bì lì gé 1994, pp.82–91) Based on Oyun Bilige's work, Schwieger described the monk Phyag na rdo rje as a well-known diplomat serving on behalf of the Qing in their relations with Tibet, the Dzungar and the Khoshuts (Schwieger 2015, p.116). I am unaware of the reason, but the monk diplomat Phyag na rdo rje's approach toward the sDe srid is very critical. As discussed above, this monk had also suggested that the Kangxi punished the Second lCang skya Ngag bang chos ldan for the latter's relationship with the sDe srid.

⁷⁰ sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p.738.

attempted to explain the situation of Panchen Lama's invitation to the Manchus.⁷¹

The differences between the Dzungar and Manchu messages cited above reveal two things: To begin with, the Dzungars and Manchus were waiting to get involved in the dGa' ldan pho brang politics. They immediately reacted in the name of dGe lugs pa protection as soon as they heard that the sDe srid was criticised by the purists because of his relationship with non-dGe lugs pa schools. Secondly, apart from sending warnings and withdrawing the title of King (*sa dbang*), the Dzungars and Manchus did not have any actual power to change the government policy of the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama.

Realising they could not directly influence the dGa' ldan pho brang leaders, the Dzungars turned toward the Amdo Kokonor Mongols. As discussed above, the purists already spread negative rumours about the sDe srid in Amdo Kokonor through monks and lay people. However, this time Tshe dbang rab brtan insisted that the Kokonor Mongols take a firm stand against the dGa' ldan pho brang in order to protect the dGe lugs pa tradition. Upon hearing this news from the Amdo Kokonor area, the sDe srid dispatched the dPon slob of Blo gsal gling college to investigate the details of this and the reaction of the Amdo Kokonor Mongol leaders in 1700. The Amdo Kokonor leaders explained to the dPon slob how they responded to the Dzungars' demand. They again expressed their support for the sDe srid and his government.

The sDe srid's *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama* recorded the following response of the Kokonor Mongols in 1700:

ཚེ་དབང་རབ་བརྟན་གྱིས་དམག་བྱེད་ཟེར་བའང་ཚུན་ལ་ངེད་རང་ཚོ་ཚད་
ཚོགས་ངེད་ཚོ་བོད་དང་མ་གཅིག་ན་ལྷ་མ་ཚོས་སྐྱོང་གི་བཀའ་ཚད་ཡོང་།

Even though Tshe dbang rab brtan asked [the Kokonor Mongols] to launch a war [against the dGa' ldan pho brang], [the Kokonor Mongols replied], 'fight us first. If we are not united with the Tibetans, the lama and protector deities will punish us.'⁷²

⁷¹ For example, as discussed above, the sDe srid tried to explain the situation of the Panchen Lama in Tibet to the Qing court repeatedly. (Schwieger 2015, pp. 84–88)

⁷² sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 723. Historically, Khoshut Mongols had a very close relationship with the dGa' ldan pho brang. To support the dGe lugs pa school, the Khoshut Mongols, under the leadership of Gūshi Khan, defeated Khalkha Choghtu Khong Tayij's army in 1638 in Amdo Kokonor. The Khoshuts continuously crushed the enemies of dGe lugs pa school and helped to establish the dGa' ldan pho brang government in 1642. Since then, a group of Khoshut Mongols

This quotation demonstrates that Tshe dbang rab brtan, the Dzungar leader, was not confident enough to fight against the dGa' ldan pho brang alone, or he needed more supporters to fight against the dGa' ldan pho brang diplomatically. Therefore, the Dzungar leader tried to persuade the Amdo Kokonor Mongols to fight against the dGa' ldan pho brang. As quoted above, this is the same time that the purist dGe lugs pas were spreading rumours about the sDe srid in Amdo Kokonor regions. On the other hand, this passage shows the Tibetan Buddhist power/influence among the Amdo Kokonor Mongols and their loyalty toward the dGa' ldan pho brang leadership.

Conclusion

The Manchus repeatedly accused the sDe srid of hiding the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama for fifteen years and of forging an alliance with dGa' ldan Khan in the Dzungar-Manchu war. Moreover, the purist dGe lugs pas disapproved of the sDe srid for his inclusive approach toward non-dGe lugs pa schools and for discovering the Dalai Lama in a rNying ma family. However, the sDe srid enthroned the Sixth Dalai Lama in the Potala palace with the full recognition of the Tibetans, and thus the patrons of Tibetan Buddhism, such as the Mongols and the Manchus, also did not have any choice but to join the official ceremony.

Analysing the disputes and accusations from the internal factions such as the gTsang region and the purist dGe lugs pas, it becomes clear that the internal factions in Central Tibet were the main forces that

settled in Amdo Kokonor and others in Central Tibet. Karmay briefly summarise the history of Amdo Khoshut Mongols:

Under the Fifth Dalai Lama's rule, as under the ancient Tibetan empire, Kokonor in Amdo became one of the most strategic regions. He was quick to realize this as he travelled the region in 1652 and 1653. Eight of Gushri Khan's ten sons and their respective tribes had settled there in 1638, after their arrival from western Mongolia, and constantly quarrelled over territory. In 1656 and 1659, the Fifth Dalai Lama sent several governors to Kokonor. Over time the region's Mongols were completely Tibetanized but continued to enjoy prestige among the Tibetans as Gushri Khan's descendants and played a significant role in the Gelug Order's expansion in Amdo. (Karmay 2005, p.13)

The Khoshut Mongols continuously supported the dGa' ldan pho brang until Khoshut lHa bzang Khan assassinated the sDe srid in 1705. After that the two Khoshut groups, one in Amdo Kokonor and others in Central Tibet, became rivals to each other. See Petech's early work, *The Dalai-Lamas and Regents of Tibet: A Chronological Study*, published in 1959.

shaped the politics of the dGa' ldan pho brang. To keep the strength of the government, the dGa' ldan pho brang attempted to pacify the internal clash among the factions from time to time. Sometimes, the sDe srid and the Dalai Lama had to adjust and accommodate the demands of internal factions to improve their internal relationship. For instance, they appointed the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa as the mKhan po of sGo mang college to pacify the purist dGe lugs pas and encouraged the Panchen Lama to visit Peking to satisfy the gTsang pa people.

During this turbulent time, the Dzungar Mongols and the Qing attempted to interfere in the politics of the dGa' ldan pho brang in the name of the dGe lugs tradition. To maintain peaceful and friendly relations, the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama tried to communicate with their outside patrons and explain the rumours and misunderstandings about the dGa' ldan pho brang. However, they did not change the principles of their policies because of the demands of the Qing and the Dzungars. The government continuously organised, among others, the annual non-sectarian prayer festival (*ris med ser tshogs*) in Lhasa and performed state-sponsored nationwide rituals by all Tibetan Buddhist schools, including the Bon pos. The dGe lugs pa religious purity may or may not have been the real concern for the various political parties such as the Manchus, the Dzungars and lHa bzang Khan. It became, however, a primary political weapon to destroy the future of the dGa' ldan pho brang under the sDe srid and the Sixth Dalai Lama.

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