Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa

ELLIO'T SPERLING

It is not unusual to find that general literature dealing with Tibet frequently portrays the country, prior to 1950, as a "theocracy." More often than not, this reflects an imperfect understanding of only the last stage in the development of Tibetan government, what popular writers like to refer to as rule by a "God-king." While the term "theocracy" is not very satisfactory as a description of Tibet's traditional polity, it is nevertheless true that during the course of many centuries civil authority in Tibet was exercised by several religious sects. The different forms of this sectarian rule are as yet not well studied, a state of affairs that can be attributed largely to the dearth of primary information which has so far been uncovered on the subject.¹ It is with a view toward contributing something to what is currently known about sectarian rule in Tibet that the following brief remarks on the subject of the chief civil officials of the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect, the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa, are presented.

The scanty amount of available source material concerning the sgom-pa illustrates one of the basic problems inherent in any attempt at studying the various forms of sectarian authority in Tibet. In the case of the sgom-pa we have no materials, Tibetan or non-Tibetan, which deal with them at any length. A simple list of the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa is given by the 5th Dalai Lama.² This was brought to light by Giuseppe Tucci and quoted in Tibetan Painted Scrolls,³ as was a similar list given by Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor in the Dpaq-bsam ljon-bzang.⁴ Another list of sgom-pa is contained in a short anonymous work entitled Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang, which is found in the library of Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa of Gangtok.⁵ Unfortunately these lists provide us with no factual details beyond the names of the sgom-pa. For further information we must rely largely on two 'Bri-gung-pa gser-'phreng; one by 'Bri-gung Kun-dga' rin-chen⁶ and another by the Che-tshang sprul-sku Bstan-'dzin padma'i rgyal-mtshan.⁷ These works, however, deal almost exclusively with the lives of the 'Bri-gung-pa spiritual leaders (for the most part the abbots of 'Bri-gung) and the meager information on the sgom-pa which they provide is given in the form of scattered facts that are incidental to the larger mosaic of the life stories of the 'Bri-gung-pa hierarchs. It is from these short references, as well as from some further incidental material on the sgom-pa in another source, the Si-tu bka'-chems,⁸ that we must work.
The 'Bri-gung-pa date their beginnings to 1179/1180, when 'Jig-rten mgon-po (1143/1144-1217) began expanding the scale of the cloister built by Mi-nyag sgom-rings at 'Bri-gung.9 'Jig-rten mgon-po’s family, the 'Brugryal Skyu-ra family, played a central role in the history of the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect, one which may be compared to the role played by the 'Khon family within the Sa-skya-pa sect.10 It is therefore not surprising to see that the Skyu-ra dominated the position of sgom-pa at its very inception. The origins of both the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect and its chief civil and military office are described briefly by the Che-tshang sprul-sku, who states that

In the Earth-Pig year (1179/1180), when ('Jig-rten mgon-po) was thirty-seven years old, he founded the great see, the glorious monastery of 'Bri-gung Byang-chub-ling itself . . . . The official, sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge, was appointed to handle the [civil] affairs [of the subsect].11

In this short passage we learn the essential function of the sgom-pa. However, the Che-tshang sprul-sku has here condensed the events of an extended process in the development of the 'Bri-gung-pa into two short comments, for the office of sgom-pa does not go back as far as the subsect’s actual beginnings, as has been assumed. This point should be emphasized, for it then allows us a somewhat clearer image of the early 'Bri-gung-pa. In all probability the subsect did not appear on the stage of history with fully developed secular and material resources. Not surprisingly, it took time for the subsect’s fortunes to reach the point where a full-fledged civil and military administration would be required.12

The creation of the post of sgom-pa could only have occurred some decades after 'Jig-rten mgon-po established the 'Bri-gung-pa. We can conclude this on the basis of information about the first sgom-pa drawn from the biographies of the early 'Bri-gung-pa abbots. Therein we find that Rdo-rje seng-ge (whom all of our lists designate as the first sgom-pa)13 was a well-connected member of the Skyu-ra family. He was a first cousin to 'Jig-rten mgon-po, as his father, Dkon-mchog rin-chen, and 'Jig-rten mgon-po’s father, Rnal-‘byor-pa Rdo-rje, were brothers.14 Dkon-mchog rin-chen had three sons. The eldest was Dbon rin-po-che Bsod-nams grags-pa (1199/1200-1247), the second abbot of 'Bri-gung;15 the middle son was Rdo-rje seng-ge; and the youngest one was Gcung rin-po-che, Rdo-rje grags-pa (1210/1211-1278), the fourth abbot of 'Bri-gung.16 Taking the birth dates of Rdo-rje seng-ge’s brothers into consideration, we can reliably state the Rdo-rje seng-ge was born between 1199 and 1210. It would have been impossible for him to have assumed the position of sgom-pa in 1179, or at any time during the twelfth century.

Although we cannot be sure as to the exact date of which Rdo-rje seng-ge became sgom-pa, it is clear that he was an important figure for both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Skyu-ra family. Among his children were Thog-kha-ba Rin-
chen seng-ge (1226/1227-1284/1285), the fifth abbot of 'Bri-gung,17 and Mtshams-bcad-pa Grags-pa bsod-nams (1238/1239-1286) the sixth abbot.18 Another son, A-nu-rgyal,19 became the grandfather of the seventh and eighth abbots, Bcu-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chen (1278-1314)20 and Nyer-brgyad-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po (1284-1350),21 and the great grandfather of the ninth, Nyer-gnyis-pa Chos-kyi rgyal-po (1335-1407).22 Rdo-rje seng-ge was, at the very least, an important factor in the physical continuity of the Skyu-ra abbotship of 'Bri-gung. Unfortunately we have no information on the manner in which political and military power was exercised by him. This simply underlines the fact that the meager information we have is culled from sources concerned essentially with the lives of the abbots of 'Bri-gung, who for the most part (to judge from the contents of their biographies) appear to have been quite removed from the military and political activities of the early sgom-pa, up through at least the fourteenth century.

Nevertheless, the military scope of the office of sgom-pa is well known from the source materials which we have concerning the later sgom-pa. We may surmise that Rdo-rje seng-ge presided over a military force; certainly his successor, Shākya rin-chen, the second sgom-pa, did.

Shākya rin-chen was the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa at the time of the early Mongol incursions into Tibet. The 'Bri-gung-pa sources state that it was Shākya rin-chen who was captured by the Mongol commander Dor-rti in 1240, and who was released, so it is said, when he caused a shower of stones to fall from the sky.23 However one may interpret these accounts, this incident is significant in allowing us to see that it was the sgom-pa of the 'Bri-gung-pa, i.e., the military and civil leader of the sect, with whom the Mongols were dealing, not the abbot of 'Bri-gung (at that time Spyan-snga Grags-pa 'byung-gnas [1175/1176-1256]).24 This clearly highlights the military role of the sgom-pa during this period (one readily understands why the Mongol military forces would deal with the sgom-pa) and adds weight to the impression that the authority and influence of the sgom-pa were already considerable. We may reasonably conclude that the secular fortunes of the 'Bri-gung-pa had risen quickly following the subsect's initial period of development, a period that had culminated in the establishment of a full-fledged civil and military bureaucracy in response to new exigencies. Shākya rin-chen was evidently a personage of influence in the highest circles of the 'Bri-gung-pa organization. Among all the people who took part in the decisions that brought Grags-pa 'byung-gnas to the throne of 'Bri-gung as the third abbot, Kun-dga' rin-chen mentions only Shākya rin-chen by name.25 In addition, the Rgya-Bod yig-tshang states that while serving as 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa Shākya rin-chen afforded general counsel to both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa,26 while the Che-tshang spur-sku implies that Shākya rin-chen was strong enough to pose a threat to the Sa-skya-pa. According to him, the well-known
'Bri-gung-pa revolt of 1290, the gling-log, had its origins in the animosity which developed between Shākya rin-chen and the Sa-skya-pa over fears that Shākya rin-chen had territorial ambitions within Tibet. This, he asserts, ultimately produced a deterioration in relations between several of the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa and Sa-skya-pa dpon-chen.27

The 'Bri-gung-pa revolt, as is well known, was actually a major set-back for the subsect. Nevertheless 'Bri-gung-pa sources don’t shed much light on the events leading up to it; in fact we lose track in our sources of the various sgom-pa and their activities in the period prior to it. Other Tibetan sources have various accounts of the revolt,28 none of them wholly satisfactory. For their part, 'Bri-gung-pa sources uniformly make protestations of innocence about the role of the 'Bri-gung-pa and put the blame for the climactic developments of the whole affair on unnamed “evil people” who spoke slanderously about the 'Bri-gung-pa to Qubilai.29 As we have just noted, however, tension between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Sa-skya-pa was evident well before the gling-log. Concomitantly, relations between the 'Bri-gung-pa and Qubilai do not appear to have ever been particularly good. 'Bri-gung-pa sources do not present the Mongol emperor in a very favorable light, particularly when describing the visit of Karma Pakshi to his court.30

In any event, our sources are silent regarding the sgom-pa on our lists after Shākya rin-chen, until we reach the sgom-pa designated as Sgom-pa Dbon-po.31 The Che-tshang sprul-skhu tells us that it was he who brought Stod-Hor troops into Tibet in the wake of the destruction of 'Bri-gung in 1290, and adds that this caused the Sa-skya-pa to urge Qubilai to take a softer line toward the 'Bri-gung-pa, ultimately allowing for the reconstruction of 'Bri-gung.32 Kundga’ rin-chen gives essentially the same account.33 These may or may not be attempts to put the best face possible on what was undeniably a major disaster for the 'Bri-gung-pa. Other sources which have been cited by Petech, Tucci, and Wylie maintain that the Stod-Hor troops came to assist the 'Bri-gung-pa prior to the gling-log, led by the sgom-pa and the Stod-Hor prince Rin-chen, both of whom were captured in battle, Sgom-pa Dbon-po subsequently being executed.34 The modern historian Dung-dkar rin-po-che gives the name of the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa who led Stod-Hor troops to Tibet to fight for the 'Bri-gung-pa as Kun-rdro rin-chen, but he makes no citations or references to any other works as sources for this information.35 While this name doesn’t appear on any of our lists of sgom-pa, it is entirely possible that this was Sgom-pa Dbon-po’s actual name; we can be certain that it wasn’t “Dbon-po.”

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the 'Bri-gung-pa religious hierarchs do not appear to have played a significant part in the political and military activities of the sgom-pa and the 'Bri-gung-pa forces. During the period of the gling-log, in fact, the abbot, Bcu-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chen, was only eleven years old and the religious affairs of the see were in the hands of a
regent, Jo-snubs Rdo-rje ye-shes (1223/1224-1293/1294), who fled with Rdo-rje rin-chen to Kong-po at the time of the destruction of 'Bri-gung.36

The 'Bri-gung-pa defeat was undoubtedly disastrous for the subsect, yet the remarks found in 'Bri-gung-pa writings to the effect that their forces were still able to regroup in the west and that their strength remained sufficient to force Qubilai to show them leniency and allow them to rebuild,37 may not be entirely wrong. By the mid-fourteenth century the 'Bri-gung-pa had recovered enough of their strength to throw their forces into a conflict with the dynamic civil leader of the Phag-mo gru-pa, Ta’i-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302/1303-1364/1365), a confrontation that admittedly resulted in a further military failure for the subsect.

In the period after the gling-log Sgom-pa Dbon-po was succeeded by Slobdpon Ye-shes dpal, who is mentioned by Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan in his testament, the Si-tu bka’-chems. This non-‘Bri-gung-pa source contains evidence to suggest that relations between the civil officials of the ‘Bri-gung-pa and Phag-mo gru-pa had already become somewhat strained by the time of Ye-shes dpal’s tenure as sgom-pa.38 Thus, although the abbot of Gdan-samthil entertained good feelings toward Ye-shes dpal, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan was not similarly inclined.39 We may also note, however, that under Ye-shes dpal relations between the sgom-pa and the Yuan court seem to have assumed an air of normalcy once more; Ye-shes dpal was granted a seal and an edict of appointment by Qubilai.40

Following the death of Ye-shes dpal, the ‘Bri-gung-pa decided upon the appointment of Rin-chen rdo-rje as senior sgom-pa (sgom-chen) and Kun-dga’ rin-chen as junior sgom-pa (sgom-chung), according to the account of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (who claims to have been influential in the decision).41 This information concerning the end result of the selection process is significant, for it is the first reference in our sources to any kind of bureaucratic structure associated with the office of sgom-pa.42 It is also very meager, informing us only that a junior sgom-pa served under a senior sgom-pa. Even so, it does clarify one point for us. The use of the term sgom-chen for the ‘Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa has been noticed by several scholars.43 Based upon the remarks in the Si-tu bka’-chems, we may now conclude that the term ‘sgom-chen’ simply represented the position of the highest ranking figure (the personage who is otherwise generally referred to as the ‘sgom-pa’) within the administrative structure of the ‘Bri-gung-pa civil bureaucracy; that is, as ‘senior sgom-pa’ in relation to a ‘junior sgom-pa’ and also (we may be certain) in relation to a number of other positions in the civil bureaucracy of lesser rank.

Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan has little to say about Rin-chen rdo-rje, allowing us to assume that relations between the two of them were not overtly hostile. This was not the case, however, with Rin-chen rdo-rje’s successor as sgom-pa
(i.e., sgom-chen), Kun-dga’ rin-chen, whom we have just seen mentioned as junior sgom-pa. It is made clear in the accounts of both Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan and the Che-tshang sprul-sku that Kun-dga’ rin-chen, after becoming sgom-pa, sought to reassert the military might and independence of the ’Bri-gung-pa in the face of the ascending power of the Phag-mo gru-pa. He gathered together troops (at Mtho-lding, we are told45) and presented Byan-chub rgyal-mtshan with a military ultimatum that left no room for any course other than that of armed conflict.46 This turn of events was disastrous for ’Bri-gung-pa power. The subsect’s forces were decisively defeated at Bra-gor, in the region of Gnyal, and as a result, their military aspirations to be the major power in Central Tibet were largely checked. Kun-dga’ rin-chen appears to have died shortly thereafter, having clearly miscalculated.46 As a further result of this defeat Kun-dga’ rin-chen does not seem to have fared well in the historical memory of the ’Bri-gung-pa. The Che-tshang sprul-sku, one of our ’Bri-gung-pa sources, speaks of him with extreme disfavor, blaming the strife between the ’Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa on him, for having acted toward Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan, his sovereign, in “the manner of a rebellious subject” (bangs gyen-ldog-gi rnam-pa).47

During this conflict a significant role was played by the junior sgom-pa of the ’Bri-gung-pa, Shâkya bzang-po, who tried without success to continue resistance against the Phag-mo gru-pa after the defeat at Bra-gor.48 Following a settlement that allowed for the release of ’Bri-gung-pa prisoners held by the Phag-mo gru-pa, and after the death of Kun-dga’ rin-chen, Shâkya bzang-po was named as the latter’s successor in the post of senior sgom-pa.49 As the chief civil official of the ’Bri-gung-pa, Shâkya bzang-po also received a measure of recognition from the Yuan court, which granted him the title of ta’i-si-tu some time shortly before the dynasty’s collapse.50 We should note that this recognition, as well as the recognition which ’Bri-gung-pa authority was to receive from the Ming court in the fifteenth century,51 indicate that the defeat inflicted upon the subsect by Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (like that suffered in the course of the gling-log) was by no means completely debilitating.

It is at this point, with Shâkya bzang-po’s tenure as sgom-pa, that two of our lists end, and it is with Shâkya bzang-po too that the 5th Dalai Lama ends his specific use of the term sgom-pa for the chief civil official of the ’Bri-gung-pa, remarking that

Afterwards, Shâkya bzang-po took up the office of sgom-pa. Then, although there arose the custom [by which] the tsung-ch’i (rdzong-ji) Bsdod-[nams] rin[-chen] and the uncle (sku-zhang) Tshul-[khrims] rgyal-mtshan?] held secular power, upon the dharmarâja (chos-rgyal) Rin-cen [sic, = chen] dpal-bzang[-po] was laid [the position of] bla-dpon; that is, he was in full possession of fine orders [giving both] reli-
gious and civil [authority]. The youngest of the two sons born [to Rin-
chen dpal-bzang-po], Bco-Inga rin-po-che, reached an exalted position
by means of [his] religious and civil [authority]. The eldest of the three
sons that [Bco-Inga rin-po-che] had went to the Phag-mo [gru-pa]. The
middle one, the dharmaśāmin (chos-ri) Kun-dga’ rin-cen [sic], sat
upon the [abbatial] throne [of the 'Bri-gung-pa].

This statement by the 5th Dalai Lama essentially implies that the office of
sgom-pa, as the seat of civil power among the 'Bri-gung-pa, faded away after
Shākya bzang-po’s tenure. The impression thus generated would lead us to
conclude that the civil and military duties previously associated with the
sgom-pa were now delegated to various members of the 'Bri-gung-pa estab-
ishment (including some of the subsect's high-ranking religious figures),
with no need for the particular office itself, nor even, perhaps, for the burea-
ocratic framework it provided. However, information provided by the Che-
tshang sprul-sku (and by Sum-pa mkhan-po) alters this impression somewhat.

According to the Che-tshang sprul-sku, the title of sgom-pa was borne by
Bsdod-nams rin-chen and Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, whose names are men-
tioned by the 5th Dalai Lama; and by another figure who is also referred to in
the passage just cited: Rin-chen rnam-rgyal, the son of Rin-chen chos-kyi
rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (the 5th Dalai Lama’s Bco-Inga rin-po-che) who
is said to have married a Phag-mo gru-pa woman. Another significant 'Bri-
gung-pa personage, Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, is also mentioned as a
sgom-pa by 'Bri-gung-pa sources. For his part, Sum-pa mkhan-po includes
Bsdod-nams rin-chen and “Tshul-[khrims] rgyal[-mtshan?]” on his list of
sgom-pa.

Bsdod-nams rin-chen was already holding the post of sgom-pa when he re-
ceived the title of tsung-ch'i from the Ming court in the year 1400/1401. Rin-
chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan (1395-?) must have followed Bsdod-nams rin-
chen almost immediately in the office, for it was certainly in recognition of
his military activities as sgom-pa that he received the title of ch'an-chiao
wang (“the prince who spreads the doctrine”) in 1413 from the Ming court.
Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan was the son of Don-grub rgyal-po (1369/1370-
1427/1428), the tenth abbot of 'Bri-gung, and like his father he too was even-
tually named to the abbatial seat of 'Bri-gung. Prior to that time, however,
Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan spent several years charged with the military
and civil administration of the subsect. To a certain extent the role of sgom-
pa fell to him because of the need to assure the continuity of the Skyu-ra line-
age as the leadership line of the 'Bri-gung-pa; this is essentially what 'Bri-
gung-pa sources relate. Thus, Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan took a wife
who bore him a son, Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po (1421/1422-1467[?]), who, as
we have seen, functioned as both the civil and religious head of the subsect.
The importance attached to Skyu-ra domination of the position of sgom-pa, as well as of the abbotship of 'Bri-gung, may be hinted at in the Che-tshang sprul-sku’s comment that

At that time, in that [Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po,] the one who had taken up the responsibilities of sgom-pa had no other brothers, [he] simultaneously attended to [both] the religious and civil [administration of the 'Bri-gung-pa].\textsuperscript{58}

While our information on the family backgrounds of most of the sgom-pa is non-existent, the very few for whom we do have information all belong to the Skyu-ra lineage.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, it can be assumed that (as the passage by the Che-tshang sprul-sku just quoted clearly implies) the office of sgom-pa was generally in the hands of the Skyu-ra in much the same way as was the abbacy of 'Bri-gung.

Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po in his turn married and had children. His two sons, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1446/1447[?]-1484) and Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po (1448/1449-1504), both rendered service to the see of 'Bri-gung.\textsuperscript{60} Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po followed his father as abbot, while Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po took up the responsibility of serving as sgom-pa. It is most probably Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po who is the subject of the entry in the Ming shih-lu for March 1,1469, telling of the dispatch of a mission from Ming Hsien-tsung that was entrusted with the task of delivering a letter patent to the 'Bri-gung-pa figure ‘Ling-chen chien-ts’an pa-erh tsang-pu.’\textsuperscript{61} It is of interest to note that some sources relate that Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po had a strong desire to pursue spiritual and scholarly endeavors, and thus was able to hand over his duties as sgom-pa for a time to his brother, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po, while he undertook these pursuits.\textsuperscript{62} After his brother’s death in 1484, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po was nominated to serve as abbot of 'Bri-gung, but he never accepted the post.\textsuperscript{63} A further point of interest is that while we have no information on the financial affairs of the other sgom-pa, in the case of Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po we know that he held an estate as his primary source of income.\textsuperscript{64} It is certainly not unreasonable to conceive of similar arrangements existing for the support of other sgom-pa.

Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po married (perhaps as a duty connected to his service as sgom-pa) and, as noted, became the father of another 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa, Rin-chen mam-rgyal (1472/1473-?), who took as his bride a woman born into the Phag-mo gru-pa line.\textsuperscript{65} This marriage, involving the civil leader of the 'Bri-gung-pa and the lineage of the titular lords of Central Tibet, essentially constituted an alliance and not surprisingly produced a close secular relationship between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa who, as we have seen, had been hostile rivals during at least one period
in the fourteenth century. This recalls the close relationship between the two subsects during the tenure of Shākya rin-chen as sgom-pa, to which reference has already been made. The Che-tshang sprul sku states that Rin-chen mãm-rgyal grew up, went to the Phag-mo gru-pa to marry, and “accepted the responsibilities of sgom-pa pertaining to the [office of] Khang-gsar nang-so.”

Further along he remarks that

Ever since the sgom-pa Rin-chen mãm-rgyal had taken a wife from among the Phag-mo [gru-pa], the so-called [post of] Thog-kha nang-so among the sgom-pa of ‘Bri-gung and the so-called [post of] Kha-gsang nang-so among the Phag-mo [gru-pa] went to brothers of one lineage, and thus ‘Bri-gung was famed as Khang-thog . . . .”

Although Rin-chen mãm-rgyal appears to have resided among the Phag-mo gru-pa, his position within the ‘Bri-gung-pa lineage does not seem to have been diminished. His Phag-mo gru-pa wife bore him a son, Byams-pa chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan legs-ltan rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, who in turn became the father of Rin-chen mãm-rgyal chos-kyi grags-po rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1520-1576), the abbot who followed Rin-chen mãm-rgyal’s brother, Kun-dga’ rin-chen (1475/1476-1527), and his nephew, Rin-chen phun-tshogs chos-kyi rgyal-po (1509/1510-1557), on the abbatial throne of ‘Bri-gung.

With the few references to Rin-chen mãm-rgyal’s position as a civil official of the ‘Bri-gung-pa, however, our view of the office of sgom-pa within the subsect once more fades. While Rin-chen mãm-rgyal was certainly not the last person to exercise civil authority among the ‘Bri-gung-pa (as a bla-dpon or a nang-so), our sources seem to cast no light on any later figures specifically designated sgom-pa. For the present, therefore, it is with Rin-chen mãm-rgyal that these brief remarks must conclude. Nevertheless, it is still possible to venture a few final observations about the ‘Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa based upon the information that we have already noted.

The position of sgom-pa developed among the ‘Bri-gung-pa some decades after the subsect’s start in 1179. The fact that it took so long for the post to develop would clearly indicate a gradual evolution of the political circumstances of the ‘Bri-gung-pa during the subsect’s early decades, implying that at first they did not have the kind of worldly concerns (or resources) that would necessitate the creation of a specialized civil and military bureaucracy. These concerns must have developed at the end of the twelfth century and/or the beginning of the thirteenth, and indicate that the ‘Bri-gung-pa had by then attained a degree of material wealth that demanded changes in their original organization. The resulting bureaucracy was one that utilized military force as an important element of secular power. Thus, the ‘Bri-gung-pa were ultimately capable of raising troops and entering into armed conflicts. Within this bureaucracy the sgom-pa were the highest officials, but certainly not the only
ones. Although we know almost nothing about these others, we can at least point out the position underneath the office of sgom-pa, that of sgom-chung, or “junior sgom-pa” (in relation to which the chief civil official of the ‘Bri-gung-pa, i.e., the figure whom we have generally referred to as sgom-pa, was often termed sgom-chen, or “senior sgom-pa”). In those instances where we know the name of a particular sgom-chung the person in question inevitably rises to the position of sgom-chen. We can deduce from this that there may have existed some limited sense of bureaucratic mobility through the ranks of the civil and military bureaucracy of the ‘Bri-gung-pa.

The available information on a small number of sgom-pa suggests that the office was probably the domain of members of the Skyu-ra family, and served as the medium for the clan’s exercise of civil and military authority. In the religious sphere this was paralleled by the Skyu-ra domination of the abbacy of ‘Bri-gung during most of the period with which we have dealt. If the example of Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po is at all typical, we may also surmise that the sgom-pa were allowed financial support from the income generated by specific estates held by the ‘Bri-gung-pa.

Until the lifetime of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-ntshen there seems to have been a very sharp boundary drawn between the religious and secular bureaucracies of the ‘Bri-gung-pa. Thus, we find no evidence of the religious hierarchs playing major roles in events such as the ‘Bri-gung-pa gling-log. During and after the lifetime of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-ntshen, however, it is not unusual to find ‘Bri-gung-pa figures charged with the highest posts in both realms. This development is no doubt related to the marked decline in secular power experienced by the ‘Bri-gung-pa at the time, much as the original appearance of the sgom-pa as a separate civil and military post signified the growth of such power. This question, and many of the others relating to the history of the ‘Bri-gung-pa that have been raised here, await further detailed study.

Nevertheless, we may hope that the remarks presented in this paper have shed some light on one of the manifestations of political power and authority in Tibet. We may hope too that they might stimulate further investigations of the rise and development of the various forms of sectarian rule in that country, a subject that is certainly far more complex than is intimated by this short paper.

NOTES

1. Political organization in traditional Tibet has been the subject of heightened interest lately, particularly in the People’s Republic of China. Among the recent works to appear that typify this trend are Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ‘phrin-las, Bod-kyi chos-srid zung-’brel skor bshad-pa, Peking 1981; and Yang Hsi-hao, “Chien-che Hsi-tsang ‘ching-chiao ho-i’ chih-tu,” Hsi-tsang yen-chiu (1983.II), 85-90. The first work has received much attention in intellectual circles in the Tibetan
diapora, and was reprinted in Dharamsala in 1982 by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. In spite of this recent activity, a comprehensive study of the diverse manifestations of interrelated religious and political rule in Tibet, exploring the origins and growth of the different sectarian systems developed in the country is yet to appear. However, for a study of government and politics at Sa-sky, and among the Sa-sky-pa (concentrating on the twentieth century), see C.W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Evall, A Tibetan Principality, Ithaca 1969.

2. Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chen-mo [= Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho], Gang-chen-yul-gyi sa-la spyan-pa'i mtho-ris-kyi rgyal-blon gso-bor brjod-pa'i deb-ther rdzogs-idan gzhon-nu'i dga'-ston dpysal-khi rgyal-mo'i glu-dbyangs, Peking 1981, p. 111. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper.


4. Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-byor, 'Phags-yul Rgya-nag chen-po Bod dang Sog-yul-du dam-pa'i chos byang-tsal dpag-bsam ljon-bzang, in Collected Works of Sum-pa-mkhan-po, New Delhi 1975, I f. 103v. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper.

This list has also been provided by Tucci, op. cit., pp. 652-653, but Tucci’s copy of the text seems to omit one of the names, Byang-shes. Tucci does note (p. 699) the appearance of Byang-shes on the 5th Dalai Lama’s list, but he assumes that Byang-shes and Byang-chub (the sgom-pa who follows Byang-shes on all of the lists) are one person.

5. Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang, f. 22v. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper. I must express my gratitude to my learned colleague, Tashi Tsering of Dharamsala, for calling this work to my attention and for kindly placing it at my disposal during my stay in India in January, 1984. I am informed that the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives is planning to publish it in the near future.


Regarding the life of ‘Jig-rten mgon-po, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 33v-41v; Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 48r-78r; Dpa’-bo Gtsug-lag ‘phreng-ba, Chos-byang mkhas-pa’i dga’-ston, New Delhi 1961, pp. 744-748; and Roerich, op. cit., pp. 596-601. Note the variant dates for his death mentioned on p. 4 of the English table of contents in the first source (i.e., ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit.).


11. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 59r-59v:

dgung-lo so-bdan-pa sa-phag-lor gdon-sa chen-po (59v) dpal ‘Bri-gung Byang-chub-gling-gi chos-sde’i nyid tshub . . . dpon Rdo-rje seng-ge’ phrin-las-kyi byed-bor bkos/See also ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 39v. We should note too that in his chapter on the ‘Bri-gung-pa, Dpa’-bo op. cit., p. 747, states that ‘Jig-rten mgon-po came to ‘Bri-gung in the Iron-Male-Mouse year (1110/1111), when he was thirty-eight.

13. See Appendix I at the end of this paper.


15. Concerning the life of Dkon rin-po-che, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 42r-45? (folio 45 is missing from the edition currently available); and Che-tsang sprul-skü op. cit., ff. 79r-81r.

16. Regarding the life of Gung rin-po-che, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 46v-51r; and Che-tsang sprul-skü op. cit., ff. 82r-85v. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p.4 of the English table of contents in the first source.

17. Concerning the life of Rin-cham seng-ge, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 51r-53v; and Che-tsang sprul-skü, op. cit., ff. 85v-87r. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p. 4 of the English table of contents in the first source.

18. Concerning the life of Grags-pa bsod-nams, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 53v-56v; and Che-tsang sprul-skü, op. cit., ff. 87r-88v. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p. 5 of the English table of contents in the first source.

19. Regarding A-nu-rgyal’s place in the Skyu-ra lineage, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 51v and 57r; Che-tsang sprul-skü, op. cit., ff. 86r and 90r; Dkon-mchog rin-chen, Rgyal-ba’i dbang-po ‘Bri-gung-pa chen-po’i gdang dang gdan-rabs 27 byon-tshul gces-bsud rin-po-che’i phreng-ba, in ‘Bri-gung-pa Texts, Leh 1972, I f. 13r; and Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, op. cit., IX p. 194. According to ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 51r-51v, Rdo-rje seng-ge had four sons: Thog-kha-ba rin-cham seng-ge, A-nu-rgyal, Stag-ma Rdo-rje seng-ge, and Mshar-ma bcd-pa Grags-pa bsod-nams. However, Che-tsang sprul-skü, op. cit., f. 86r, gives five sons to Rdo-rje seng-ge: the four just mentioned, plus a younger one named Dkon-mchog tshe. The last named son is also mentioned in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 57r, but as one of A-nu-rgyal’s three sons, the other two being Rdo-rje rgyal-mdzhan and Bsod-nams rdo-rje. Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., f. 15r, also gives A-nu rgyal three sons, naming them as Rdo-rje rgyal-mdzhan, Bsod-nams rin-chen, and Dkon-mchog brtsegs. Note that Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, loc. cit., follows the pattern in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, listing two sons for A-nu-rgyal and five for Rdo-rje seng-ge, the name of the youngest of the latter’s sons being given as Dkon-mchog mdzhe. All of our sources designate A-nu-rgyal’s son Rdo-rje rgyal-mdzhan as the father of the abbots Rdo-rje rin-chen and Rdo-rje rgyal-po of ‘Bri-gung.

20. Concerning the life of Rdo-rje rin-chen, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 56v-60v; and Che-tsang sprul-skü, op. cit., ff. 90v-92v. Note the variant dates for his death mentioned on p.5 of the English table of contents in the first source. The assignment of numbers to the ‘Bri-gung-pa abbots differs with various sources. I have generally followed the numbering given by the Che-tshang sprul-skü, but I have not counted Jo-snubs Rdo-rje ye-shes (concerning whom, see note 36, below) as the seventh abbot, as he does. The Che-tshang sprul-skü op. cit., f. 89r, acknowledges that Rdo-rje ye-shes was not actually an abbot of ‘Bri-gung (nor was he a member of the Skyu-ra lineage) and had only been appointed as a regent (rgyal-tshub-du mnga’-gsol-ba) due to Rdo-rje rin-chen’s youth at the time of Grags-pa bsod-nams’ death. Thus, Rdo-rje ye-shes is not listed among the abbots of ‘Bri-gung by ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., (but cf. the remarks on p. 5 of the English table of contents regarding ’Chos-sgo-ba Rdo-rje ye-shes,’ as he is referred to by Roerich, op. cit., p. 609; and by Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, op. cit., IX p. 275), nor by La-dawgs rtogs-sprul [=Rtogs-ldan rin-po-che] Thub-bstan-bstan-pa’i rgyal-mdzhan, Chos-rje ‘Bri-gung-pa’i gdan-rabs mdo-rdus, n.p., n.d. [written at Msho Padma in 1965]. He is listed, however, as an abbot by Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., ff. 14v-15r (=“Jed-gnub Ye-shes rdo-rje” [sic]).
21. Regarding the life of Rdo-rje rgyal-po, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 60v-64r; and Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 92v-94v. Note the variant date for his death mentioned on p. 5 of the English table of contents in the first source.

22. Concerning the life of Chos-kyi rgyal-po, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 64r-73r; and Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 95r-100r.

23. These events are recounted in Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., f. 82r; and Lha-rigs Riangs-khyi rnam-thar, ff. 230-231. Other Tibetan accounts of this incident have long been available in translation; see Turrell V. Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies XXXVII (1977), p. 107.

24. Cf., however, Luciano Petech, "Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols," in Morris Rossabi, ed., China Among Equals, Berkeley 1983, pp. 181 and 197. Nevertheless, the 'Bri-gung-pa and Phag-mo gru-pa sources cited in the previous note make it clear that Shākya rin-chen, and not Grags-pa 'byung-gnas (who, though abbot of 'Bri-gung, was a member of the Rngag clan, the dominant family of the Phag-mo gru-pa), was the 'Bri-gung-pa figure taken prisoner by the Mongols. Regarding the life of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 457-46v (folio 45 is missing from the edition currently available); Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 81r-82r; and Roerich, op. cit., pp. 571-579.

25. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 46r. As may be inferred from the preceding note, relations between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa were fairly close at this time. During his lifetime, Grags-pa 'byung-gnas served as the abbot of both Gdan-sa-mthil and 'Bri-gung. As is well known, the origins of the 'Bri-gung-pa are closely bound up with the Phag-mo gru-pa subsect. 'Jig-rten mgon-po too, during his lifetime, held sway over the sees of both 'Bri-gung and Gdan-sa-mthil; see Roerich, op. cit., pp. 569-570. Cf. also, 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 39v.


27. Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 89r-89v.


29. See the 'Bri-gung-pa accounts of the gling-log provided by 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 58r-58v; and Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 89r-91r.

30. See 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 47v-48? (folio 48 is missing from the edition currently available); and Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 83r-83v.

31. He is referred to in some sources as Sgom-pa Dpon-po. Compare the two references to him given by Tucci, op. cit. (1949), pp.631 ("Dpon-pa") and 652 ("Dpon-po"); and see also Appendix 1 at the end of this paper. Note too that the recent edition of the 5th Dalai Lama's history which I have utilized in preparing this paper refers to him as Sgom-pa Dpon-po, while the copy used by Tucci (op. cit., p. 631) refers to him as Sgom-pa Dpon-po.

32. Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 90v-91r.

33. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 58v.


36. Concerning the life of Rdo-rje ye-shes, see Che-tshang sprul-skru, op. cit., ff. 88v-90r; and Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., ff. 14v-15r. As already mentioned in note 20, above, Rdo-rje ye-shes was not a member of the Skyu-ra lineage. He was descended from a line that included the important Rnying-ma-pa figures Snubs nam-mkha' i snying-po (one of Padmasambhava's chief
disciples; see Roerich, *op. cit.*, p. 705), and Snubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (concerning whom, see Mkhas-bsun bzang-po, *op. cit.*, III pp. 136-155 [=Gnubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes]).

37. Bri-gung chos-ri, *op. cit.*, f. 58v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, ff. 90v-91r, both intimate that the 'Bri-gung-pa success in gaining Mongol support in the west (i.e., stod-phyeogs, the "upper regions") resulted in a severance of some of the Yuan court’s lines of communications.


40. Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 91r. We can see that Ye-shes dpal was active in the position of sgom-pa for quite some time, since his tenure overlapped the careers of both Qbilai (1215-1294) and Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302/1303-1364/1365; see, however, the variant dates for his death mentioned by Zhwa-sgab-pa, *op. cit.*, I p. 335). We may note that when Ye-shes dpal died it was Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan who was chosen to represent the Phag-mo gru-pa in paying respects at 'Bri-gung; see Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 453-454.

41. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 455-456.

42. This information was later incorporated into the 5th Dalai Lama’s history; see Rgyal dbang lnga-ba chen-mo, *op. cit.* p. 111.


44. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, f. 491. Mtho-liding is located in Western Tibet, where (as Petech, *op. cit.* [1978], pp. 313-325, has amply illustrated) the 'Bri-gung-pa were well established. Regarding Mtho-liding, see Wylie, *op. cit.* (1962), p.125.


46. Ibid., ff. 493-495. Regarding Bra-gor, see Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p.126.

47. Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 94v.

48. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 493-494, mentions the capture by Phag-mo gru-pa forces of 363 soldiers raised in Tshe-kha by Shäkyà bzang-po. The soldiers were captured in Tshekha and were from that area and 'Phan-yul. Tshe-kha is probably in or near 'Phan-yul, which itself lies to the north of Lhasa; see Ferrari, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83; and Wylie, *op. cit.* (1962), p. 162.

49. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 494-495.

50. See Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 98r ("ta-si-tu"). Ta-'i-si-tu renders into Tibetan the Chinese ta-ssu-t'u, a title that is quite old. During various periods in dynastic China the ssu-t'u was an official charged with responsibility for education. Thus, Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the Tang Dynastic Histories*, Columbia S.C. 1972, p. 195, renders ssu-t'u as "director of instructions." So too, we may render ta-ssu-t'u as "grand director of instructions." This title was given by the Yuan court to a number of Tibetan figures (including, as we have seen, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan), but was discarded for bestowed upon Tibetans by the Ming, except in those instances during the dynasty's first years when the Chinese court actively sought to renew such titles for Tibetans who had received them from the previous Mongol rulers. Since the strife between the Phag-mo gru-pa and the 'Bri-gung-pa which preceded Shäkhyà bzang-po's accession to the post of sgom-pa can be dated to the 1350's (see Zhwa-sgab-pa, *op. cit.*, I p. 332), we can assume that he was granted the title of ta-'i-si-tu/ta-ssu-t'u not too long before the collapse of the Yuan in 1367. As such, he was also recognized as the myriarch (khrri-dpon) of 'Bri-gung; see Dpa'-bo, *op. cit.*, p. 750. According to Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 91r, the 'Bri-gung-pa myriarchy (khrri-bskor) was "subjugated as one of the myriarchies of Dbus and Gtsang." (Dbus-Gtsang-gi khrri-bskor l mdga'-bangs-su bcug-ste) only when the gling-leg had been put down and Qbilai was taking steps to ameliorate the situation by allowing reconstruction to take place at 'Bri-gung.
quoted. It is more common to find the Chinese term wang rendered into Tibetan as dbang, rather than as wang. Cf. the references to Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po as Dbang rin-po-che, in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 90r, and in Tucci, op. cit. (1971), p. 198; as Dbang Rin-chen chos-rgyal, in Dpa‘bo, op. cit., p. 753; and as Dbang Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 112r. According to an earlier Ming shih-lu entry, for February 7, 1469 (see Mindai Seizō shirō, loc. cit.), the emperor had ordered that “Ling-chan chien-tsan pa-erh tsang-pu” was to inherit the title of ch’an-chiao wang, previously held by his father, “Ling-chan pa-erh-chieh chien-ts’an.” The former holder of the title referred to in this entry is probably Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, even though the transcription given for his name can only render something akin to “Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan;” see Satô, op. cit., p. 447; and Tucci, op. cit. (1949), p. 689. The date for this shih-lu entry indicates that the date of 1467/1468 for Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po’s death given by ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 87v, ought to be accepted in preference to that given by Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 109v (see note 56, above). This is not the only instance of confusion surrounding Ming transcriptions of the names of ‘Bri-gung-pa figures. The name of Don-grub rgyal-po, the father of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, is usually transcribed in Ming sources as if it were “Don-grub rgyal-mtshan;” see Satô, op. cit., pp. 439-440. We should point out that our sources seem to indicate that the title of ch’an-chiao wang was passed down along the line of ‘Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa rather than along the line of abbots at ‘Bri-gung. Thus, the title was bestowed on Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, and Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, all of whom have their tenures as sgom pa (rather than as abbot) in common. (It should be noted that Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan received the title of ch’an-chiao wang well before he was named abbot; in fact he fled from ‘Bri-gung very shortly thereafter and thus never really functioned in the post. Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, as noted, never accepted the abбыcy, even though he was named to it.) This accords with the fact that the title of wang, as bestowed on various Tibetan figures during the early Ming, was essentially a secular title, in contrast to that of fa-wang (“king of the dharma;” i.e., “dharmarāja”), which was reserved for certain prominent religious hierarchies. The transcription of names is not the only area in which Ming sources are problematic regarding ‘Bri-gung-pa figures. Prior to “Ling-chan pa-erh-chieh chien-tsan” (whom we can suppose to be Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po) being designated ch’an-chiao wang by the court, the title is given to someone described as Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan’s son, and whose name is transcribed as “Ch’o-erh-chia-chien-pa ling-chan”; see Mindai Seizō shirō, p. 107. Satô, op. cit., p. 443, suggests that these characters might transcribe something like “Chos-rgyal Byams-pa rin-chan.” In any event, it is not possible at present to hazard a guess as to who might have held this title among the ‘Bri-gung-pa between the eras of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan and Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po. So far, we know of no other children, aside from Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, fathered by Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, nor are we aware of the names of any other sgom-pa during this period. In addition, ‘Bri-gung-pa sources show that no one else was named to the abbacy of ‘Bri-gung during this period. The identifications made on the basis of the Chinese transcriptions mentioned throughout this note must of course remain tentative; we can only assume, on the basis of the serious discrepancies between the ‘Bri-gung-pa sources and the Ming sources (including the remarks on the ‘Bri-gung-pa in Chang T’ing-yü, et al., Ming-shih, Peking 1974, ch. 331, p. 8584) that the Ming materials are far from reliable in this area. On these transcriptions and the personages involved, cf. Satô, op. cit., pp. 442-448.


63. Thus, even though his appointment as abbot brings him biographical entries in the various ‘Bri-gung-pa gser-phreng, ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 93v; Dpa‘bo, op. cit., p. 753; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 112r and 113r-113v, make it clear that he refused to accept the abbacy. The Che-tshang sprul-sku does not even assign him a number within the abbotial succession.

64. See note 61, above.

65. According to Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan
dpal-bzang-po married one Rin-chen dpal-mo, the beautiful daughter of the rdzong-dpon of Stag-rse, a man named Bsam-brug who was of the lineage of Mgur-lung, said to be subject to the Skyu-ra. Stag-rse is located in Dbus, in the region of 'Ol-kha; see Ferrari, op. cit., p. 121; and Wylie, op. cit. (1962), pp. 171-172. Aside from Rin-chen mam-rgyal, the eldest son born from this marriage, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po fathered at least two other sons, Kun-dga’ rin-chen, who held the position of abbot at ‘Bri-gung after Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po declined it, and Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa’i rgyal-mtshan; see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., p. 89; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r. Regarding Kun-dga’ rin-chen and Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa’i rgyal-mtshan, see notes 70 and 71, below.

'Bri-gung-pa sources refer to Rin-chen mam-rgyal as sgom-pa without further qualification often enough to allow us to conclude that he served the civil administrations of both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa. This impression is also supported by the later remarks in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 155v (cited in the following note), which indicate that Rin-chen mam-rgyal, through this marriage alliance, brought the civil administrations of both subjects together. Khang-gsar in all probability refers to a structure housing the nang-so at Snee’u-gdond, the administrative seat of the Phag-mo gru-pa; cf. the remarks about Kha-gsang and Thog-kha in the next note. Regarding Snee’u-gdond, see Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 123-124; and Wylie, op. cit. (1962), p. 170. The title of nang-so denoted civil officials (who were quite similar to the sgom-pa of the 'Bri-gung-pa) found in various realms in Tibet; see Tucci, op. cit. (1949), p. 35: “The highest official of the state . . . was the Nah so . . . . The Nah so presided over the administration of justice . . . and was a sort of Prime Minister.”

67. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 155v:


These comments indicate a use of the term nang-so in reference to later civil officials of the 'Bri-gung-pa. (Cf. Tucci, op. cit. [1971], p. 200, but note that the dates he gives for the events recounted are far too early.) These figures, however, fall outside the limited scope of this paper. “Kha-gsang nang-so” may be a variant reference to the “Khang-gsar nang-so” mentioned in the preceding note, and thus Kha-gsang may simply denote a structure. However, this cannot be established with certainty at present. Thog-kha, on the other hand, can be identified as a structure at ‘Bri-gung. The fifth abbot of ‘Bri-gung, Rin-chen seng-ge, spent seven years engaged in austerities in the Thog-kha gser-khang there, and subsequently bore the appellation “Thog-kha-ba.” Cf. the diverse references to this pavilion given by ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 52v, 55r, 60r, 67r, and 70v; Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 86r, 91r-91v, and 92r; Dpa’bo, op. cit., p. 751; and Satö, op. cit., p. 443. Undoubtedly, this building also housed the later nang-so. “Khang-thog,” as a reference to ‘Bri-gung, in all probability takes the syllable “thog” from the building’s name.

68. See the references to this in Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chen-mo, op. cit., p. 111, previously cited; and Tucci, op. cit. (1971), p. 199: “[Rin-chen mam-rgyal] went to P’ag mo gru, took up the office of sgom pa and had a son . . . . . .”

69. Concerning the life of Rin-chen mam-rgyal chos-kyi grags-pa rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po, see Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 141r-147v.

70. Regarding the life of Kun-dga’ rin-chen, See Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., pp. 115r-128r. It is of interest that Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ‘phrin-las, op. cit., p. 84, mentions a ‘Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa named Kun-dga’ rin-chen, engaged in the military actions that were undertaken against Dge-lugs-pa holdings around ‘Bri-gung in 1526. However, there is nothing in the Che-tshang sprul-sku’s biographical entry on the abbot Kun-dga’ rin-chen that connects him with the office of
ELLiot Sperling 51

sgom-pa, or with any direct military role in this strife; see the references to these troubles in Che-
tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff 127r-127v. Cf. also, Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chen-mo, op. cit., p. 111-
112; Sum-pa mkhan-po, op. cit., I f. 103v (both of which are translated in Tucci, op. cit. [1949]),

71. Concerning the life of Rin-chen phun-tsogs chos-kyi rgyal-po, see Che-tshang sprul-sku,
op. cit., ff. 130r-139v. His father, Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa’i rgyal-mtshan (1478/1479-?),
was a brother of Rin-chen nam-rgyal and Kun-dga’ rin-chu; see ’Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f.
89r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r.


GLOSSARY

ch’an-chiao wang 闍教王
Ch‘en T‘ing-shu 張廷玉
Chien-che Hsi-tsang “ch‘eng-chiao ho-i”
chih-tu 甘新西藏“正教合一”制度
Ch‘o-erh-chia chien-pa ling-chan 翁兒加堅巴領占
fa-wang 法王
Hsi-tsang yen-chiu 西藏研究
Ling-chan chien-ts’an pa-erh tsang-pu 領占堅參八藏卜
Ling-chan pa-erh-chieh chien-ts’an 領占八兒堅堅參
Mindai Chibetto no Rigompa-ha no
Keitō ni tsuite 明代チベットのリコンペ派の系統について
Mindai Man-mō shiryō 明代滿蒙史料
Mindai Seizō shiryō 明代西藏史料
Ming Hsien-tsung 明憲宗
Ming-shih 明史
Ming shih-lu 明實錄
Satō Hisashi 佐藤長
ta-ssu-t‘u 大司徒
Tamura Jitsuzō 田村實造
tsung-ch‘i 總輯
wang 王
Wu-t‘ai-shan 武臺山
Yang Hsü-hao 楊詠浩
APPENDIX I

Three Lists of 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th Dalai Lama</th>
<th>Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor</th>
<th>Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge</td>
<td>Rdo-rje seng-ge</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shākya rin-chen</td>
<td>Shākya rin-chen</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Shakya rin-chen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Byang-she</td>
<td>Byang-shes</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Byang-she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Byang-chub</td>
<td>Byang-chub</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Byang-chub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spangs-ras</td>
<td>Spang-ras</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Spang-ras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chos-seng</td>
<td>Chos-seng</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Chos-seng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rin-cen seng-ge</td>
<td>Rin-seng</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Rin-cen seng-ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sgom-pa Dpon-po</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Dpon-po</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Dpon-po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sgom-pa Shākya dar</td>
<td>Shāk-dar</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Shakya dar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Rin-cen grags</td>
<td>Rin-grags</td>
<td>Sgom-pa Rin-cen grags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Rin-cen Rdo-rje</td>
<td>Rin-rdor</td>
<td>Rin-rdor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Shākya bzang-po</td>
<td>Shāk-bzang</td>
<td>Slob-dpon Shakya bzang-po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Rdzong-jil-pa Bsod-rin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Sku-zhang Tshul-rgyal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See notes 2, 4, and 5.
APPENDIX II

Members of the Skyesa Lineage Mentioned in E. Spuligol,
"Some Notes on the Early ‘Rgo-gros-pa Skyesa-pa’"

Seng-deng 'Dpe-sa-dzang-rgyal Stangs 'dzang 'Dpe-sa-dzang rgyal

Mikyong-pa Dam-la

Rab-gser-pa 'Rdo-rje

Dkon-mchog rin-chos

Bstan-pa 'Rin-bzan

'Tig-on mi-pa (1145-1146-1277)

† Dkon-mchog chag-cho Bod-ma-rgyal-lugs-pa (1996-1050-1247)

† Rdo-rje sgong-gr

† Gsing rin-po-che 'Rdo-rje-grags-pa (1210-1214-1278)

† Stag na Rdo-rje sgong-gr

† Dkon-mchog lha-lha Dkon-mchog rgyal-chen

A-sa rgyal

† Stong-bla-ba Rin-chos sgong-gr (1226-1227-1234-1235)

† Mchogbon-pa 'Ding-po Bod-ma-rin-po (1228-1230-1236)

† Dkon-mchog lha-lha Dkon-mchog lha-lha

Rdo-rje rgyal-mdo-ba

Bstan-ma rgyal-chen

† Rsa-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chos (1278-1314)

Kung-dga’ rgyal-mdo-ba

† Nyer-breg-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po (1284-1330)

† Nyer-grus-pa Chos-khyi rgyal-po (1335-1347)

Rdo-rje rgyal-mdo-ba

† Dzog-grub rgyal-po (1409-1412-1427-1428)

† Rin-chos dpal-ri rgyal-mdo-ba (1305-7) - married - Sevis leg-pa dpal-sdm.

† Rin-chos dpal-bzang-po (1421-1422-1427-1428)

Bstan-grub

† Rin-chos chos-khyi rgyal-po (1446-1449-1534)

† Rin-chos chos-khyi rgyal-mdo-ba dpal-bzang-po (1446-1447-1448) - married - Rin-chos dpal-mo-ba

† Rin-chos mnyen rgyal-po (1472-1473-1474)

† Kung-dga’ rin-chos (1475-1476-1477)

Chos-khyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa rin-rgyal-mdo-ba (1478-1479-7)

† Rin-chos dbang-’dul-chos-khyi rgyal-po (1509-1510-1517)

† Rin-chen mnyen rgyal-khyi grags-pa rgyal-mdo-ba dpal-bzang-po (1520-1538)

† Rin-chen phag-mtsho-chos-khyi rgyal-po (1559-1560-1561)

† = abbot

* = sgom-po

I = concerning the positions of Stag na Rdo-rje Seng-gr and Dkon-mchog lha-lha Dkon-mchog lha-lha within the Skyesa lineage, see note 19.