

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

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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 subject, 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 *Dpag-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 'Brug-rgyal 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-gling 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-rta 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 Spyān-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 subject'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 sprul-sku implies that Shākya rin-chen was strong enough to pose a threat to the Sa-skyā-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-skyapa 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-skyapa *dpon-chen*.²⁷

The 'Bri-gung-pa revolt, as is well known, was actually a major set-back for the subject. 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-skyapa 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-sku 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-skyapa 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-rdor 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-tje 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 subject, 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 subject.

In the period after the *gling-log* Sgom-pa Dbon-po was succeeded by Slob-dpon 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 Yüan 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 told⁴⁴) and presented Byan-chub rgyal-mtshan with a military ultimatum that left no room for any course other than that of armed conflict.⁴⁵ This turn of events was disastrous for 'Bri-gung-pa power. The subject'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, Shākya 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, Shākya 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, Shākya bzang-po also received a measure of recognition from the Yüan 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 subject 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 Shākya bzang-po's tenure as *sgom-pa*, that two of our lists end, and it is with Shākya 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, Shākya bzang-po took up the office of *sgom-pa*. Then, although there arose the custom [by which] the *tsung-ch'i* (*rdzong-ji*) Bsod-[nams] rin[-chen] and the uncle (*sku-zhang*) Tshul-[khrims] rgyal[-mtshan?] held secular power, upon the *dharmarāja* (*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-lnga rin-po-che, reached an exalted position by means of [his] religious and civil [authority]. The eldest of the three sons that [Bco-lnga rin-po-che] had went to the Phag-mo [gru-pa]. The middle one, the *dharmasvāmin* (*chos-rje*) Kun-dga' rin-cen [*sic*], sat upon the [abbatial] throne [of the 'Bri-gung-pa].⁵²

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 establishment (including some of the subject's high-ranking religious figures), with no need for the particular office itself, nor even, perhaps, for the bureaucratic 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 Bsod-nams rin-chen and Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, whose names are mentioned 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-lnga rin-po-che) who is said to have married a Phag-mo gru-pa woman.⁵³ 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 Bsod-nams rin-chen and "Tshul-[khrims] rgyal[-mtshan?]" on his list of *sgom-pa*.⁵⁴

Bsod-nams rin-chen was already holding the post of *sgom-pa* when he received the title of *tsung-ch'i* from the Ming court in the year 1400/1401.⁵⁵ Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan (1395-?) must have followed Bsod-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 eventually 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 subject.⁵⁶ To a certain extent the role of *sgom-pa* fell to him because of the need to assure the continuity of the Skyu-ra lineage 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 subject.⁵⁷

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].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.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 sec of 'Bri-gung.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-chan chien-ts'an pa-erh tsang-pu."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.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.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.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 nam-rgyal (1472/1473-?), who took as his bride a woman born into the Phag-mo gru-pa line.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 subjects 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 nam-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*.”⁶⁶ Further along he remarks that

Ever since the *sgom-pa* Rin-chen nam-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-thog⁶⁷

Although Rin-chen nam-rgyal appears to have resided among the Phag-mo gru-pa,⁶⁸ 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-ldan rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, who in turn became the father of Rin-chen nam-rgyal chos-kyi grags-pa rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1520-1576),⁶⁹ the abbot who followed Rin-chen nam-rgyal's brother, Kundga' rin-chen (1475/1476-1527),⁷⁰ and his nephew, Rin-chen phun-tshogs chos-kyi rgyal-po (1509/1510-1557),⁷¹ on the abbatial throne of 'Bri-gung.

With the few references to Rin-chen nam-rgyal's position as a civil official of the 'Bri-gung-pa, however, our view of the office of *sgom-pa* within the subject once more fades. While Rin-chen nam-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 nam-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 subject'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 subject'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 adduce 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-mtshan 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-mtshan, 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,⁷² 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 Hsü-hao, “Chien-che Hsi-tsang ‘cheng-chiao ho-i’ chih-tu,” *Hsi-tsang yen-chiu* (1983.11), 85-90. The first work has received much attention in intellectual circles in the Tibetan

diaspora, 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-skya, and among the Sa-skya-pa (concentrating on the twentieth century), see C.W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality*, Ithaca 1969.

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

3. Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949, p. 631.

4. Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor, 'Phags-yul Rgya-nag chen-po Bod dang Sog-yul-du dam-pa'i chos byung-tshul 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.

6. 'Bri-gung chos-rje Kun-dga' rin-chen, *Dpal-ldan bla-ma Kun-dga' rin-chen-gyi rnam-par thar-pa dang Bka'-'bum 'thor-bu'i dbu-phyogs* [= *Miscellaneous Writings (Bka'-'bum thor bu)* of 'Bri-gung chos-rje Kun-dga' rin-chen], Leh 1972.

7. Che-tshang sprul-sku Bstan-'dzin padma'i rgyal-mtshan, *Nges-don bstan-pa'i snying-po 'Bri-gung-pa chen-po'i gdan-rabs chos-kyi byung-tshul gser-gyi phreng-ba*, Bir 1977.

8. *Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar*, New Delhi 1974, ff. 217-866.

9. See Alfonsa Ferrari, *Mk'yen Brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, Rome 1958, pp. 111-112; George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, Delhi 1976, pp. 597-598; Giuseppe Tucci, *Deb T'er Dmar Po Gsar Ma*, Rome 1971, p. 195; and Turrell V. Wylie, *The Geography of Tibet According to the 'Dzam-gling-rgyas-bshad*, Rome 1962, p. 165. Cf. also note 11, below. 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-byung 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.*).

10. Regarding the Skyu-ra lineage, see Mkhas-btsun bzang-po [= Khetsun Sangpo], *Bod-du sgrub-brgyud shing-rta mched-brgyad* [= *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*], Dharamsala 1981, IX pp. 189-203. Cf. also Luciano Petech, "The 'Bri-guñ-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh," in Louis Ligeti, ed., *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium*, Budapest 1978, p. 313; and Satō Hisashi, "Mindai Chibetto no Rigompa-ha no keitō ni tsuite," *Tōyō Gakuhō* XLV (1963), p. 435.

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

dgung-lo so-bdun-pa sa-phag-lor gdan-sa chen-po (59v) *dpal 'Bri-gung Byang-chub-gling-gi chos-sde 'di-nyid btab . . . dpon Rdo-rje seng-ge 'phrin-las-kyi byed-bor bskos!*

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 (1180/1181), when he was thirty-eight.

12. Cf., in this regard, the remarks concerning the establishment of Mar-pa's secular authority in the article by Turrell Wylie, "Mar-pa's Tower: Notes on Local Hegemons in Tibet," *History of Religions* III (1964), pp. 278-291.

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

14. According to Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op.cit.*, f. 51r, 'Jig-rten mgon-po's grandfather, Sngags-chang Dpe-ka dbang-rgyal, had four sons: Mkhan-po Dar-ma, Dkon-Mchog rin-chen, Btsun-pa 'Bar-ba, and Rnal-'byor-pa Rdo-rje. Cf. Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, *op.cit.*, IX p. 193 (in which 'Jig-rten mgon-po's grandfather is named as Snags-'chang Spe-ka dbang-rgyal).

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

16. Regarding the life of Gcung rin-po-che, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op.cit.*, ff. 46v-51r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku *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-chen seng-ge, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op.cit.*, ff.51r-53v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, *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-tshang sprul-sku, *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-tshang sprul-sku, *op.cit.*, ff. 86r and 90r; Dkon-mchog rin-chen, *Rgyal-ba'i dbang-po 'Bri-gung-pa chen-po'i gdung dang gdan-rabs 27 byon-tshul gces-bsdud rin-po-che'i phreng-ba*, in 'Bri-guñ-pa Texts, Leh 1972, I f. 15r; and Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, *op.cit.*, IX p. 194. According to 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op.cit.*, ff. 51r-51v, Rdo-rje seng-ge had four sons: Thog-kha-ba rin-chen seng-ge, A-nu-rgyal, Stag-ma Rdo-rje seng-ge, and Mtshams-bcad-pa Grags-pa bsod-nams. However, Che-tshang sprul-sku, *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-mtshan 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-mtshan, 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 mdzes. All of our sources designate A-nu-rgyal's son Rdo-rje rgyal-mtshan 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-tshang sprul-sku, *op.cit.*, ff. 90r-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-sku, 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-sku *op.cit.*, f. 89r, acknowledges that Rdo-rje ye-shes was not really an abbot of 'Bri-gung (nor was he a member of the Skyu-ra lineage) and had only been appointed as a regent (*rgyal-tshab-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-dwags rtogs-sprul [= Rtogs-ldan rin-po-che] Thub-bstan bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, *Chos-rje 'Bri-gung-pa'i gdan-rabs mdor-bsdus*, n.p., n.d. [written at Mtsho Padma in 1965]. He is listed, however, as an abbot by Dkon-mchog rin-chen, *op.cit.*, ff. 14v-15r (= "Jod-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-sku, *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-sku, *op. cit.*, ff. 95r-100r.
23. These events are recounted in Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 82r; and *Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi 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 Rlangs 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 Grag-pa 'byung-gnas, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op. cit.*, ff. 45?-46v (folio 45 is missing from the edition currently available); Che-tshang sprul-sku, *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-ten 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.
26. G.yas-ru Stag-tshang-pa Dpal-'byor bzang-po [= Śrībhūtibhadra], *Rgya-Bod-kyi yig-tshang mkhas-pa'i dga'-byed chen-mo 'dzam-gling gsal-ba'i me-long*, Thimphu 1979, II f. 169v. Cf. Ariane Macdonald, "Préambule à la lecture d'un Rgya-Bod yig-chañ," *Journal Asiatique* CCLI (1963), pp. 149-150.
27. Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, ff. 89r-89v.
28. Cf. the remarks of Zhwa-sgab-pa Dbang-phyug bde-ldan [= Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa], *Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-rabs* [= *An Advanced Political History of Tibet*], Kalimpong 1979, I pp. 304-306 on the origins of the revolt.
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-sku, *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-sku, *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 ("Dbon-po") and 652 ("Dpon-po"); and see also Appendix I 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 Dbon-po.
32. Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, ff. 90v-91r.
33. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op. cit.*, f. 58v.
34. Petech, *op. cit.* (1983), pp. 189-190 and 202; Tucci, *op. cit.* (1949), pp. 16 and 253; and Wylie, *op. cit.* (1962), p. 134.
35. Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las, *op. cit.*, p. 72. See also Dung-dkar rin-po-che's annotations in Tshal-pa Kun-dga' rdo-rje, *Deb-ther dmar-po*, Peking 1981, p. 436.
36. Concerning the life of Rdo-rje ye-shes, see Che-tshang sprul-sku, *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
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disciples; see Roerich, *op. cit.*, p. 705), and Snubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (concerning whom, see Mkhas-btsun bzang-po, *op. cit.*, III pp. 136-155 [= Gnubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes]).

37. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *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-phyogs*, the "upper regions") resulted in a severance of some of the Yüan court's lines of communications.

38. *Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar*, ff. 453-454.

39. *Ibid.*, ff. 453-454 and 456-457.

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 Qubilai (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-rig 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 Inga-ba chen-mo, *op. cit.* p. 111.

43. See Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Petech, *op. cit.* (1978), p. 313; and Tucci, *op. cit.* (1949), p. 253.

44. *Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar*, f. 491. Mtho-lding 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-lding, see Wylie, *op. cit.* (1962), p. 125.

45. *Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar*, ff. 492-493.

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 Shākya bzang-po. The soldiers were captured in Tshe-kha 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 T'ang 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 Yüan court to a number of Tibetan figures (including, as we have seen, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan), but was discarded for bestowal 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 Shākya 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 Yüan in 1367. As such, he was also recognized as the myriarch (*khri-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 (*khri-bskor*) was "subjugated as one of the myriarchies of Dbus and Gtsang" (*Dbus-Gtsang-gi khri-bskor l mnga'-bangs-su bcug-ste*) only when the *gling-log* had been put down and Qubilai 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 *wam*. 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 shiryō*, *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 Satō, *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 Satō, *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 abbacy, 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 hierarchs. 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 shiryō*, p. 107. Satō, *op. cit.*, p. 443, suggests that these characters might transcribe something like "Chos-rgyal Byams-pa rin-chen." 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. Satō, *op. cit.*, pp. 442-448.

62. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op. cit.*, f. 93v; and Dpa'-bo, *op. cit.*, p. 753.

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 abbatial 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-rtse, a man named Bsam-grub who was of the lineage of Mgar-lung, said to be subject to the Skyu-ra. Stag-rtse 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 oldest 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.*, f. 89r; 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.

66. Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 111r (*Khang-gsar nang-so'i sgom-pa'i khur-bzhes*). '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 subsects together. Khang-gsar in all probability refers to a structure housing the *nang-so* at Sne'u-gdong, the administrative seat of the Phag-mo gru-pa; cf. the remarks about Kha-gsang and Thog-kha in the next note. Regarding Sne'u-gdong, 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 *Nan so* The *Nan so* presided over the administration of justice . . . and was a sort of Prime Minister."

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

sgom-pa Rin-chen nam-rgyal Phag-mor khab-tu bzhes-pa-nas bzung/ 'Bri-gung-gi sgom-par Thog-kha nang-so zhes-dang/ Phag-mor Kha-gsang nang-so zhes-pa/ phan-tshun dung l-pa'i sku-mched-la song-bas 'Bri-gung Khang-Thog zhes grags

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 pavillion 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 Satō, *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 nam-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.*, ff. 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

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], pp. 631 and 653); and Tucci, *op. cit.* (1971), pp. 199-200.

71. Concerning the life of Rin-chen phun-tshogs 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 mam-rgyal and Kun-dga' rin-chen; see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, *op. cit.*, f. 89r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, *op. cit.*, f. 111r.

72. See Petech, *op. cit.*, (1978), pp. 313-314.

GLOSSARY

- ch'an-chiao wang 闡教王
 Chang T'ing-yü 張廷玉
 Chien-che Hsi-tsang "cheng-chiao ho-i"
 chih-tu 簡析西藏“正教合一”制度
 Ch'o-erh chia chien-pa ling-chan 綽兒加堅巴領占
 fa-wang 法王
 Hsi-tsang yen-chiu 西藏研究
 Ling-chan chien-ts'an pa-erh tsang-pu 領占堅參叭兒藏ト
 Ling-chan pa-erh-chieh chien-ts'an 領占叭兒結堅參
 Mindai Chibetto no Rigompa-ha no
 Keitō ni tsuite 明代チベットのリゴンパ派の系統について
 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 總旗
 wang 王
 Wu-t'ai-shan 五臺山
 Yang Hsü-hao 楊許浩
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APPENDIX I

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

5th Dalai Lama

1. Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge
2. Shākya rin-chen
3. Byang-she
4. Byang-chub
5. Spangs-ras
6. Chos-seng
7. Rin-cen seng-ge
8. Sgom-pa Dpon-po
9. Sgom-pa Shākya dar
10. Rin-cen grags
11. Ye-shes dpal
12. Rin-cen rdo-rje
13. Slob-dpon Kun-rin
14. Shākya bzang-po
- 15.
- 16.

Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor

Rdo-rje seng-ge
 Shākya rin-chen
 Byang-shes
 Byang-chub
 Spang-ras
 Chos-seng
 Rin-seng
 Sgom-pa Dpon-po
 Shāk-dar
 Rin-grags
 Ye-dpal
 Rin-rdor
 Kun-rin
 Shāk-bzang
 Rdzong-ji-pa Bsod-rin
 Sku-zhang Tshul-rgyal

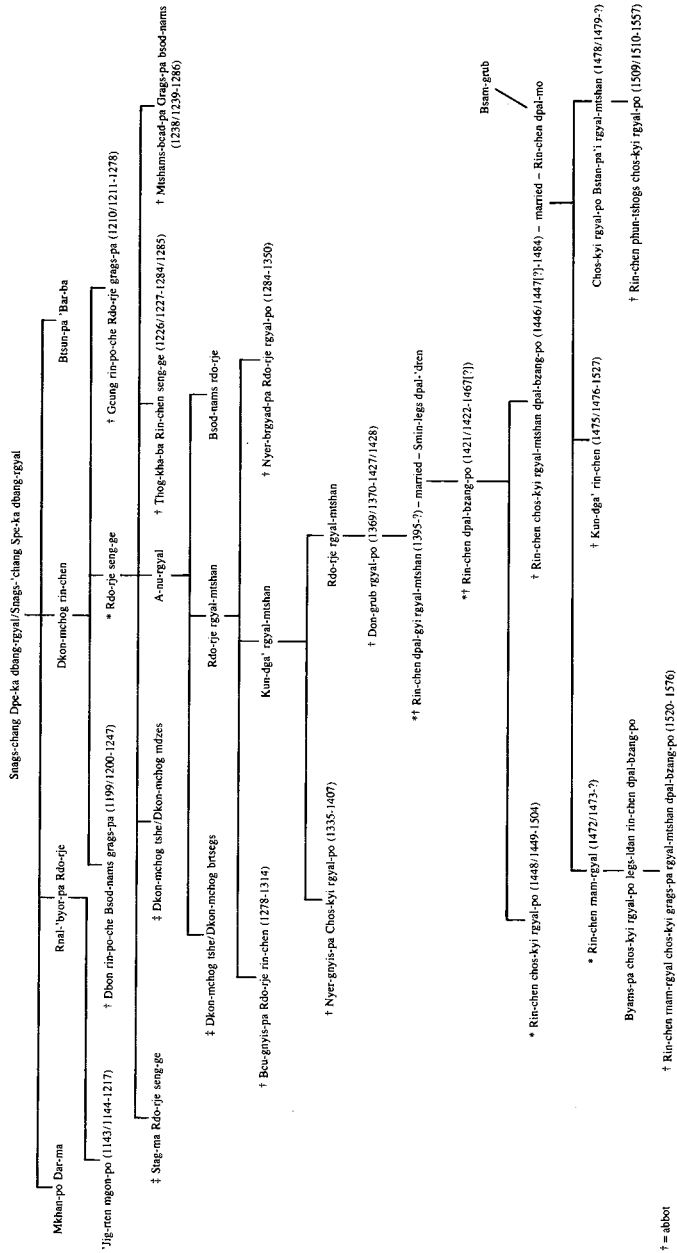
Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang

Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge
 Sgom-pa Shākya rin-chen
 Sgom-pa Byang-she
 Sgom-pa Byang-chub
 Sgom-pa Spang-ras
 Sgom-pa Chos-seng
 Sgom-pa Rin-chen seng-ge
 Sgom-pa Dbon-po
 Sgom-pa Shākya dar
 Sgom-pa Rin-chen grags
 Sgom-pa Slob-dpon Ye-shes dpal
 Rin-rdor
 Slob-dpon Kun-dga' rin-chen
 Slob-dpon Shākya bzang-po

* See notes 2, 4, and 5.

APPENDIX II

Members of the Skyu-ra Lineage Mentioned in E. Sperling,
 "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa'..."



† = concerning the positions of Sna-ma Rdo-rje Seng-ge and Dkon-mchog tshar/Dkon-mchog mtzes/Dkon-mchog brtsegs within the Skyu-ra lineage, see note 19

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