

# Introduction

This work is based on the text *Rang gi yab rje rigs ldan chos kyi rgyal po Ngag dbang rnam par rgyal ba la zhu 'phrin du bya ba rig pa 'dzin pa'i pho nya zhes pa Śambhala'i lam gyi yig ge dang bcas pa* (henceforth *Rig pa 'dzin pa'i pho nya*), composed in the middle of the sixteenth century by the last Rin spungs ruler, Ngag dbang 'jig rten dbang phyug grags pa rdo rje. The book consists of a translation of the text, text analysis with a glossary and a revised version of my three articles related to the text, all published in 2015–2018. The monograph also contains studies related to the text, which have not been published earlier in any form. The present work may also be called a continuation of the first and the second projects on the Pander Tibetan Collection kept at the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, which began in 2007 and 2011, and of which I was part. During two years of the first project (2007–2009)<sup>1</sup>, while listing Tibetan texts in the collection, I was lucky to come across the present text under serial number Pander A 199, acc. 535. man. 36 l. Seeing the manuscript was intriguing and aroused enormous curiosity in me. Yet, because our project plan was to record the whole Pander Tibetan Collection, not to study just one text in its entirety, my excitement had to be kept at bay. However, I promised myself that I would work on it and study this text at some time in the future.

Although I was overwhelmingly interested in this text mainly because of its author and its poetic language, which has been transmitted in a beautifully written *Dbu med* script, and I was intrigued to know its contents in detail, I felt that cataloguing the Pander Tibetan Collection was my first duty and priority since it was of interest to all orientalists in Poland and the outside world, and that was more important than my personal interest. Therefore, in 2011, with the aim of cataloguing the collection, Filip Majkowski and I started a project funded by the Polish National Centre of Science (NCN). As a result of the project, in 2015 we

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<sup>1</sup> Project was carried out by Mejer, Marek, Helman-Ważny, Agnieszka and Chashab, Thupten Kunga. As a result of the project, the book, *A Preliminary Report on the Wanli Kanjur kept in the Jagiellonian Library, Krakow*, was published in 2010.

prepared, reviewed and published the catalogue, titled *Catalogue of the Tibetan Texts in the Pander Collection, Part A (Complete) and Part B (Partial) Held by the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow*. While working on our project I asked the Director of the Manuscript Section of the Jagiellonian Library, Professor Zdzisław Pietrzyk, for official permission to be able to use and work on this particular text. My request was kindly accepted, and I was granted permission to work on the manuscript and received scans of the original text, which will be included in this book.

It took me quite a few years to complete the work. In fact, I started working on the text in my spare time in between other duties while cataloguing the Pander Tibetan Collection. I began with the transliteration of the manuscript into the Wylie Tibetan Transliteration System and conversion of the *Dbu med* writing into the *Dbu chen* script, which I have included here as well. For those people who are more familiar with reading Tibetan transliteration than Tibetan script I have also included here the whole text in Wylie Tibetan transliteration. Having familiarised myself with the contents and keeping in mind the task of compiling a book in the future, subsequently I began to work on the translation of the text during my summer vacation, here in Warsaw, as well as outside the country whenever I was away. The translation of this text is one of the hardest works I have ever done. Despite the beauty of its language, it is a very difficult piece of Tibetan historical literature, and the task of precisely deciphering its poetic language—rich in synonyms, analogies, metaphors, Sanskrit words and archaic terms—has been more than gruelling. Often, words are ambiguous; therefore, my own understanding and interpretation of the text is not necessarily the right one. Perhaps other translators would understand and explain the text differently.

In the above paragraph I have touched on the importance and uniqueness of this manuscript. Precisely there are three reasons, for me, why it is important and unique. First of all, it was written by the Tibetan ruler of the Rin spungs clan in the middle of the sixteenth century, who lost all Rin spungs pa power and ended the history of the Rin spungs' reign in Tibet. Secondly, the whole text was written in a poetical style, with numerous metaphors rather than with the use of the usual prose. Thirdly, the text not only explains a detailed itinerary to Śambhala, but it also tells about the rise and fall of the Rin spungs kingdom after the death of the author's father, Ngag dbang nam rgyal, although it is difficult to find precise and detailed information about this.

The work *Rig pa 'dzin pa'i pho nya* consists of thirty-seven folios, and its subject matter can be divided into five parts: 1) paying homage to the Kālacakra deity, Mañjuśrī, Sarasvatī, and the author's father, and the promise to compose (*rtsom par dam bca'*) the text; 2) the death of the author's father and his grief; 3) a guide to Śambhala; 4) conflict and the decline of Rin spungs power; and 5) the nature of learned people, monks and tantric practitioners, as well as the four stages of life comprising birth, aging, sickness and death (*skyes rga na 'chi*). However, in this book I have presented subject matters of the text differently than the above classification. In particular, the text concentrates on two main points:

a) a description of Śambhala, including a road map leading to it from Rin spungs; and b) conflict within and the decline of the Rin spungs kingdom after the death of the author's father.

The three published articles based on the text mentioned above are as follows: “Guide to Śambhala in a unique manuscript by the sixteenth century Tibetan ruler of Rin spungs (Extract from his letter to his father Ngag dbang rnam rgyal)” in 2015; “The Life of Ngag dbang ’jig grags, the last ruler of Rin spungs, based on the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*, or *A Messenger of A Yogi*”<sup>2</sup> in 2017; and “Survey of the Pander Tibetan Collection at the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow, and an overview of the literary aspect of *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*” in 2018. The first two articles were published in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 2015, Vol. LXVIII-2, pp. 47–64, and 2017, Vol. LXX-2, pp. 97–127, Poland. The last article has been published in “Geschichte–Erinnerung–Politik, Studies in History, Memory and Politics”, Bd/Vol. 23, Peter Lang, Berlin, Germany. The three articles mentioned have been revised and enlarged by giving more clarification on certain topics, owing to new information that I was not able to comment on in the previous versions of the articles. I added additional commentaries, especially in the first and last articles. As one may learn from the contents of this work and from studying other historical books, I have added short commentaries on Rin spungs pa rulers and marriage relations between the Phag gru ba and Rin spungs pa clans. In the “Guide to Śambhala” (Chashab 2015), under a separate subtitle, I added a detailed discussion on the location of Śambhala explained by the author Ngag dbang ’jig grags along with other commentaries or opinions. I also added an analysis of two references quoted by the author regarding high mountains on the way to Śambhala and a semi-human (*mi’am ci*) explained in all three versions of the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*.

The present work on the text of Ngag dbang ’jig grags is presented here in four main parts with the appendixes. The first part consists of the text description and related topics on the Rin spungs kingdom and its rulers. The second part consists of the life of author Ngag dbang ’jig grags in detail, based on the second part of the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*. The third part is an introduction to Śambhala in general and a presentation of the “Guide to Śambhala” in detail based on the first part of the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya* with additional detailed analysis of the location of Śambhala explained in the text itself and the location explained in other sources. In the fourth part, I have included an English translation of the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*, the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya* in Dbu chen transcription with comparative text analysis and transliteration of the text in the Wylie transliteration system, and at the end I have added a scanned copy of the original text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*, found at the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow.

In Appendix 1, at the end of this book, I have included a brief introduction on the nature and literary aspect of the text *Rig pa ’dzin pa’i pho nya*, extracted

<sup>2</sup> The translation of the title “A Messenger of A Yogi” into “Vidyādhara-the Messenger” in this book.

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some poetic ornaments and found out to which poetic ornament they belong in Daṇḍin's Kāvyaḍarśa tradition with the table of old Tibetan terms. In Appendix 2 I have included Sanskrit words and synonyms with Tibetan and English equivalents, if they exist, for the names of plants, precious stones and a few examples of analogy found in the text. In Appendix 3 I have attached an index of personal names, places and monasteries and a glossary of Tibetan words found in MS199.