LAMPS IN THE LEAPING OVER

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Lamps (sgron ma), is a key term used in the Leaping Over (thod rgal). It is by means of lamps that the ground (gzhi) arises in and as outer appearances. Certainly, the main characteristic of what is named “lamp” can be circumscribed as “inseparability of clarity and emptiness” (gsal stong dbya’er med)\(^1\). Thus, it is that which makes itself clear (gsal ba) — i.e., that which actualizes itself in and as visionary experience of form, colour, sound, etc., — without losing its quality of being empty of any concreteness\(^2\). In other words, it is the inseparability of the empty essence (ngo bo stong pa) and the clear nature (rang bzhin gsal ba) of the ground in and as all-pervading compassion (thugs rje kun khyab) as it manifests outwardly in visionary experience.

Of course, the term “manifest outwardly” (phyi snang) should not be taken too literally, rather, it should be understood as a projection of the “inner” luminosity (nang gsal) of the ground into the seemingly Outer Space (phyi’i dbyings). Useful in this context is the picture of the Youthful-Vase-Body (gzhon nu bum pa’i sku). When the outer wall of this body which symbolizes the ground in its “inner” potentiality, is broken through, its “inner” light is seen in the “Outer Space”. Obviously, the term “Outer Space” (phyi’i dbyings) does not refer to some kind of “science-fiction like outer space”, but means that the ground is making room for itself in and as experienceable plenum. Moreover, the term “lamp” (sgron ma) also implies a bodily presence. It is the ground present in the concrete givenness of an individual being and thus, it is similar to the tathāgatagarbha\(^3\) of the general Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In the Rdzogs chen literature exists a wide variety of different sets of lamps, because of the multivalence of this term. Nevertheless, a quite

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2 In his TzC II., p. 223 Klong chen rab ’byams emphasizes the point that the ground arising as outward appearances is not something material-physical despite its making itself felt as form, colour, sound, etc. For a translation of the relevant passage see Guenther 1992. Meditation Differently. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, p. 73.

3 As Gyatso (see Gyatso, Janet. 1998. Apparitions of the Self. Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp. 203-204) rightly remarks, the inner potentiality of the ground as symbolized by the Youthful-Vase-Body (gzhon nu bum pa’i sku) is a more sophisticated form of the idea of the presence of Buddhahood in the physical body. Unlike the tathāgatagarbha the Youthful-Vase-Body is not merely understood as seed of Buddhahood which has to be developed somewhat, but rather as a well which readily grants eternal youth, i.e., Buddhahood, with its promise to leave behind definitely everything which is impermanent. A succinct elucidation of the terms tathāgatagarbha and sugatagarbha in the context of the general Mahāyāna Buddhism can be found in Guenther, H.V. 1989. From Reductionism To Creativity. rDzogs-Chen and the New Sciences of Mind. Boston, Shambala, pp. 132-136, and an excellent summary of how the idea of the sugatagarbha was developed in the Rdzogs chen thinking is given in Karmay, Samten G. 1988. The Great Perfection (rDzogs Chen). A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism. Leiden, E. J. Brill, pp. 184-189. There one finds also an explanation of the criticism made against this idea as understood in Rdzogs chen. Basically, it is the seemingly physical presentation of the sugatagarbha — it is supposed to dwell in the middle of the heart — which is rejected in such criticism.
Lamps in the Leap Over

common set consisting of Six Lamps (sgron ma drug) seems to be the most suitable one to elucidate both, the ground as it is present in the body as the inner light of man and the ground’s projection as it is experienced in and as Outer Space:

1. The Lamp of the Abiding Ground (gnas pa gzhi’i sgron ma) corresponds to the essence, nature, and compassion of the ground and is very often equated with the tathāgatagarbha.

2. The Tsitta Lamp of Flesh (tsitta sha’i sgron ma) indicates not so much the mere fact of the presence of the ground in the body as does the first lamp, but rather its specific place in the body, i.e., the heart (tsitta).

3. The Lamp of the Channel Which is White and Smooth (dkar ’jam rtsa’i sgron ma) is a light-channel or rather a network of light-channels (’od rtsa) which functions as a path leading the inner light of man to the eyes. These channels are unique to Rdzogs chen and should not be confused with the channels (rtsa) as presented in many tantric texts.

4. The Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhags chu’i sgron ma) refers to the eyes, i.e., to their subtle facility to serve as a door for the arisal of the inner light of man into Outer Space (phyi’i dbyings).

5. The Lamp of the Time of the Intermediate State (bar do dus kyi sgron ma) denotes the Intermediate State of Reality Itself (chos nyid kyi bar do) where the ground manifest itself as peaceful and wrathful Buddha-Fields. It highlights the close relationship existing between the visions arising through the application of the Leaping Over (thod rgal) and the visions supposed to appear in the Intermediate State of Reality Itself. In other words, it is assumed that the Leaping Over opens up the way to experience right away what usually is only experienced after death, thus creating the possibility to attain Buddhahood in this very lifetime.

6. The Lamp of the Ultimate Result (mthar thug ’bras bu’i sgron ma) refers to the Awareness (rig pa) dwelling again in the ground after the dissolution of its self-appearance (rang snang). “Ultimate” (mthar thug) means that the result, i.e., Buddhahood which is attained after the recognition of its appearance as self-appearance is beyond change.

Relating the Six Lamps (sgron ma drug) to the three phases of ground, way and result, one has to count the first four lamps as ground, the fifth as way, and the sixth as result. As for the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance: It is also contained in a fourfold set that one could call the “standard or overall Rdzogs chen version of lamps”, because it is the one most frequently met with in Rdzogs chen texts:

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4 See Guenther, H.V., Meditation Differently, p. 86.
5 A diagram presenting the “overall version of the lamps” and some of its other versions can be found in Guenther H.V., Meditation Differently, p. 90. This diagram, however, merely lists the most common sets or versions of lamps.
1. The Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhag chu’i sgron ma) which provides the door for the arisal of the three other lamps.

2. The Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyaings rnam par dag pa’i sgron ma) presents itself as Outer Space, i.e., as space of projection for the two following lamps, and as such it is perceptible as dark blue appearance in the sky.

3. The Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa’i sgron ma) comes forth inside the second lamp in the shape of coloured light-drops (thig le) which join together to form groups and which steadily become bigger in size.

4. The Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma) is not actually lighting up as appearance but is an awareness that retains the non-duality of what arises in the phase of the self-appearance of the ground (rang snang) and itself.

One might wonder in which kind of Rdzogs chen texts the term “lamp” (sgron ma) is used. I went through the whole Rdzogs chen section of The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School (Rnying ma rgyud ‘bum) of the TTT which includes many Tantras of all of the Three Series (sde gsum)6 of Rdzogs chen and a few treasure texts (gter ma)7 belonging to the third series, i.e., the Instruction Series (man ngag sde), and I also had a close look at the Four Branches of the Heart Essence (Snying thig ya bzhi)8 which incorporates exclusively treasure texts belonging to the Instruction Series, but as a term denoting the actual projection of the inner light of man into Outer Space (phyi’i dbyaings) it can - as far as I know - only be found in texts of the Instruction Series.

Of course, it is met with in the two other series, i.e., in the Mind Series (sems sde) and the Space Series (klong sde), but there it seems to be understood in a rather symbolic way. Thus, in some of the texts of these two series the term “lamp” (sgron ma) denotes the enlightened mind (byang chub sems) or Pristine Cognition (ye shes) which - similar to a lamp - banishes the darkness of ignorance.

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7 A very detailed account of the treasure (gter ma) tradition is given in Thondup (Rinpoche) Tulku. 1986. Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism. London, Wisdom.

As for the standard set of the Four Lamps (sgron ma bzhi): This set is not at all referred to in the texts of the TTT 54. However, the term sgron ma -“lamp”- is often used in the TTT 54 to denote the teacher, i.e., the enlightened mind (byang chub sems). In this sense it is used for instance in certain passages of the Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po, one of the principal Tantras of the Mind Series (sems sde). Similary, the Rdzogs pa chen po ye shes gsang ba'i rgyud, again a text of the Space Series (klong sde), contains the statement that Pristine Cognition is like a lamp which banishes the darkness of ignorance.

One finds the same statement in many other texts of the TTT 54, for instance in the Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po nam mkha'i ntha’ dang myam pa’i rgyud chen po which, too, belongs to the Mind Series. In the sems sde text Byang chub kyi sems rdzogs pa chen po kun ’dus gser gyi nya mo ’khor lo bskor ba’i rgyud chen po the Lamp of Awareness (rig pa’i sgron ma) is understood as a means which lights up itself as self-arisen result and as such is compared to a jewel one is holding in the hand.

In a passage of the Rdzogs pa chen po ye shes ’khor lo gsang ba thugs kyi rgyud which forms part of the Instruction Series (man ngag sde) one reads that even though the Form-Body (gzugs sku) or like a lamp, is dwelling in one’s body, it is temporarily lacking the capability of manifesting on account of the formation of the physical body. This situation then is compared to the one of the bird called Khyung which is capable of flying immediately after having left its egg, but which possesses this power only potentially as long it stays in its egg.

According to the sems sde text Byang chub kyi sems rin chen ’khor lo, it is due to the Lamp of Awareness Which Is Mind Itself (sems nyid rig pa’i sgron ma) that the essence of all precious quintessential instructions is revealed. Thus, without needing any oral transmission, the sun of self-arisen clarity lights up in the sky-like nature of all that is (chos nyid nam mkha’ lta bu)\(^9\).

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9 See TTT 54, p. 20, forty-first chapter of the Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po: /kye /sems dpa’ dam pa rdo rje khyod/ /nga yi rang bzhin ’di ltar shes par gyi/ /nga ni ston pa’i sgron ma byang chub sems/ /dus gsum snying rgyas kun gyi snying po yin/ /kham gsum sems can kun gyi pha dang ma/ /snang srid snod bcud kun gyi rgyu yang yin/.

10 See TTT 54, p. 250, first chapter of the Rdzogs pa chen po ye shes gsang ba’i rgyud: /de lta bu yi ye shes la/ /go sa sgrig pa ye nas me/ /de yang ji ltar med ce na/ /ye shes sgron ma rang la shar ba la/ /ma rig mun pas bsgribs pa ye nas gsal/.

11 See TTT 54, p. 361, eleventh chapter of the Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po nam mkha’i ntha’ dang myam pa’i rgyud chen po: /gson rong ’khor ba’i mun pa nyid/ /de nyid ye shes sgron ma’i bar/ /snyigs ma’i gnas nyan khams gsum nyid/ /rgyal ba’i zhi ngams bde bar sgyur/ /nga yi tshig ’di bdud rtsi’i bcud/ /ye shes sgron ma’i od ’bar can/ /rig pa’i steng du nam tan bya’o/.

12 See TTT 54, p. 361, seventeenth chapter of the Byang chub kyi sems rdzogs pa chen po kun ’dus gser gyi nya mo ’khor lo bskor ba’i rgyud chen po: /rang byung lhun grub ’bras bu ni/ /gdon nas lhun grub rang ’char bas/ /byung ba lha la rag ma pas/ /sku gsum thugs la rien mi ’cha’/ /gsal byed rig pa’i sgron ma yi s/ /gser khyim phung po gsal byed ltar/ /dman pa’i blo spungs gang dag la/ /lag gi ni nor bu bstan dang mthunlings/.

13 See TTT 54, p. 403, tenth chapter of the Rdzogs pa chen po ye shes ’khor lo gsang ba thugs kyi rgyud: /ma rig rdzun de ’don phyur/ /lta lta ming gdi sgrig gyes gyes pas/ /longs sku dang ni sprul pa’i skul/ /chu shel sgron ma’i dpe mthun byangs/ lta rang la ’byung ma srid/ /khyung sgo ma chag ’phur ni nas/.

14 See TTT 54, p. 504, eighth chapter of the Byang chub kyi sems rin chen ’khor lo: /sems nyid rig pa’i sgron ma yis/ /rin chen ne shel ltar gsal bas/ /rin chen nam ngag kun gyi bdag kun gsal me long mthong thob pas/ /lta rgyud la rag ma lus/ /chos nyid nam mkha’ lta bu la/ /rang byung gsal ba’i rgyud la rag ma lus/ /chos nyid nam mkha’ lta bu la/ /rang byung gsal ba’i rgyud la rag ma lus/.
The Seng ge sgra dgongs pa ngyi zla kha sbyor rgyud probably belongs to the Instruction Series (man ngag sde) and seems to be the only text of the TTT 54 which mentions the expression “Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance” (rgyang zhag chu yi sgon ma). Here, this lamp is likened to a mirror which stands for the ground on which everything is appearing. In particular, this lamp is connected with the Three Budda-Bodies. Thus, the purity of their appearances is represented by the nirmaṇya (sprul sku), their continuity by the sambhogakāya (longs sku), and their freedom from conceptuality by the dharmakāya (chos sku)\(^\text{15}\).

Another man ngag sde text of the TTT 54, the Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa ma slad ji bzhi ma'i don ye shes kyi mar me chen po'i rgyud, contains a passage which presents an uncommon fourfold set of lamps consisting of one principal lamp and three subsidiary lamps. Unfortunately, one finds there only a rather concise explanation of it. What seems to be clear, however, is the statement that the sun-like Lamp of Unchanging Awareness ('gyur med rig pa'i sgron ma) arises, together with three lamps as its light-rays, out of the ground (gzhi). These three lamps are named “Lamp of Mind Which Is Awareness” (rig pa sens gyi sgron ma), “Lamp of Discriminative Awareness of the Three Lineages” (brgyud pa gsum pa shes rab sgron ma), and “Lamp of Space and Light-Rays” (nam mkha' gser gyi sgron ma)\(^\text{16}\).

Moreover, in the Seng ge sgra dgongs pa ngyi zla kha sbyor rgyud one finds a passage which quite clearly explains the appearance of the ground (gzhi snang) in Outer Space which, of course, is the basic concept of the practice of Leaping Over (thod rgal). It is stated here that the five aspects of consciousness (rnam shes lding) dissolve into five-coloured light ('od lding), that this light arises in the form of the Five Buddha-Families (rigs lding) and that it finally rejoins the dharmakāya. It is known as the Body of Pristine Cognition (ye shes sku) and dwells forever in the Lamp of the Heart (tsitta sgron ma) as a five-coloured thread-ball (mtshon gyi gtu gu). Understanding its arisal in the sky of Reality Itself, one is liberated into the sambhogakāya\(^\text{17}\).

Now, as we have seen how the term sgron ma is used in the texts of the TTT 54, we shall examine how the situation presents itself in the texts of the TTT 55. On the whole, the texts of the TTT 55 treat the term sgron ma in a

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15\ See TTT 54, p. 504, thirty-fifth chapter of the Seng ge sgra dgongs pa ngyi zla kha sbyor rgyud:

16\ See TTT 54, p. 559, ninth chapter of the Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa ma slad ji bzhi ma'i don ye shes kyi mar po'i rgyud:

17\ See TTT 54, p. 568, seventh chapter of the Seng ge sgra dgongs pa ngyi zla kha sbyor rgyud:
similar way, but unlike the texts of the TTT 54, they do contain several passages dealing with the standard set of the Four Lamps (sgron ma bzhi).18

A particular case is the gter ma text Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla’i snying po’od ‘bar ba bdud rtsi rgya mtsho ‘khyil ba’i rgyud which belongs to the Instruction Series (man ngag sde) and which presents an uncommon set of Four Lamps. Their names are mentioned, but a detailed explanation of them is not given. The central statement of the relevant passage, however, is that the so called “gold of the core of meaning” (snying po don gyi gser) which is covered by ignorance can only be found with the help of the Four Lamps which are termed here “Lamp of Self-Clear Mind” (rang gsal sens kyi sgron ma), “Lamp of Realization Which Is Pristine Cognition” (rtog pa ye shes sgron ma), “Lamp of Self-Arisen Innate Radiation” (rang byung ngang dangs sgron ma), and “Lamp of the Core Which Is Reality Itself” (snying po chos nyid sgron ma). Despite its insubstantiality (dngos med), the nature of the core of meaning (snying po'i rang bzhin dngos med la) can manifest itself as anything by using the medium of the Four Lamps. Of decisive importance is here that the various appearances of the lamps dissolve in the very moment of their arisal into the nameless dark-blue of sky, called “Space of Reality” (chos dBryings) where perfect Buddhahood (mngon sangs rgyas) finally is attained.19

The standard set of Four Lamps20 is explained in some detail in the gter ma text Chos thams cad kyi don bstan pa which is also named Rgyud chen dri med zla shes.21 However, what is explained here is not different from what can be found in other similar texts of the Instruction Series (man ngag sde).

18 Five Lamps (sgron ma lnga) are mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Bskal pa dum bu’i rgyud, a Tantra which seems to belong to the Instruction Series (man ngag sde) — see TTT 55, p. 268 — but I could not find their names and functions in this Tantra. Moreover, there is a passage in the gter ma text Chos thams chad kyi don bstan pa (see TTT 55, p. 291) which alludes to a set of Two Lamps (sgron ma gnyis) without specifying it. Hopefully, both texts will be examined in the near future in order to know to which of the Three Series (sde gsum) they belong.

19 See TTT 55, p. 600, fifty-seventh chapter of the Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla’i snying po’od ‘bar ba bdud rtsi rgya mtsho ‘khyil ba’i rgyud: /sgron ma bzhi yis ngo sprad de/ /dper na mnu par gser stor ba/ /bsal bas ni rnyed sgron mes rnyed/ /de bzhin ma rig mun pa’i nang/ /snying po don gyi gser stor ba/ /gzhan min sgron ma bzhi yis rnyed/ /de la sgron ma rnam pa bzhi/ /rang gsal sens kyi sgron ma dang/ /rtog pa ye shes sgron ma dang/ /rang byung ngang dangs sgron ma dang/ /snying po chos nyid sgron ma’o/ /sgron ma bzhi yis ngo sprad de/ /snying po’i rang bzhin dngos med la/ /de nyid sna tshogs rtog par shar/ /shar tsam nyid na rang sar gro/ /mng med gting mtha’ yongs grol ba/ /ches kyi dbyungs su mngon sangs rgyas/ /snying po klong gyar ge zhi la thim/ /dbyer med gdeng zin ‘khrul pa’angs/ /ka dag snying po’i klong nas shar/.

20 That is, the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhag chu’i sgron ma), the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes bab rang byung gi sgron ma), the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa’i sgron ma), and the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings rnam par dag pa’i sgron ma).

The other text containing rather extensive information about the standard set of the Four Lamps is the Theg pa kun gyi sphyi phud klong chen rab `byams kyi rgyud, a gter ma text which also seems to belong to the Instruction Series. In the fifth chapter of this Tantra, three of these four lamps are explained in detail, but a detailed presentation of the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings...)

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22. See TTT 55, p. 310, fifth chapter of the Theg pa kun gyi sphyi phud klong chen rab `byams kyi rgyud: /e ma sgron ma /'di ltar rol /'shes rab rang byung sgron ma zhes /ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang /rang `bzhin thig dbyings gsar pa'i sal /'char ba'i sgo dang shar ba'i yul /'gongs dang dngongs tshad /'thun dpe nams /'phur yang sgo ni dbang po lha /khud par kha dang na 'char /'skyed byed rtsa ni tsittar 'khor /'ro ma rgyang ma kun dharma /'shel sbag kho pg'i stong pa'i rang /'goal ba rang shes chen por bzhugs /'thams cad /'byed pa'i ngo bo nil /'mng zhes /'di dang po /'rangs dang bsam dang sgron pa dang /'chos kun /'byed rig snges fa rang /'di nyid ngo bo ye na bzhugs /sdom ldan hla ma'i bdud rtsi 'thung /'zhes gsungs nas /'kun snang chos nyid kyi rol par than ne bzhugs so /... /e ma ho rgyang zhis chu yi sgron ma rang /'skyed byed sa bon tsodal du gnas /'ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang /'mthshan nangs bzhugs tshul gnas pa dang /'skyed byed 'char sgo /'di nangs legs par yid la zung /'ngo bo snges ka sal /'rgyang ni rig pa sku nthang ste /'zugs sogs don yon lha sogs nams /'di yis 'ching bus zhang pas yin /'snang ba rang sar bzhag nas nil /'bdag 'dzin bral bas chu zhes byal /'sgron ni rang gi sngang ba go /'gongs nas gong du /'phel ba bo /'byang rig pas ma zhes byal /'dbye ba rgyang zhangs chu sgron dang /'ye shes /'di dang po /'rungs zhangs snges so /'mthshan nangs 'char byed 'gags med pas /'dbang po /'di dangs ma mig ces byal /'byed pa pad ma'i sbyan d'o /'di yi ngyis ni mig yin te /'mthshan byed /'gags pa med pa yis /'yul nangs /'dzin par byed pa'o /'kldru ba rang dang khar po nas /'gsas su /'khyi rtsa gsum po /'ba men rna /'dra rtsa yi dbibs /'rta yi nang na /'di ngyis gsar /'char ba'i sgo ni tshakSPhu rang /'skyed byed mnagal du rang zhis bshes /'lus kun gyi ni thog ma rul /'lte bu' rtsa mdu rdo gsum d'i /'phlama'i rgyu rgyen dngogs ma yis /'miig gi dangs ma niyid ma dkar ches /'phu ma'i rgyu rgyen gngis lasi /'dkar nang 'dres pa de byed nang /'drun dpe /'zins byed longs kyu yis /'rang sngang sngang nas /'dzin pa bzhugs /'khor 'das sna gnyis /'di ngyis /'sgron nas yul gngis rig par sngang /'lu gyi rgyud mthong tshad yin rol /'zhes gsungs nas /'di nangs mdangs lag yin te /'le ma ho snges dpas /'rdo rje nyid /'thig le stong pa'i sgron ma zhes /'chos nangs kun gyi yid ches pa /'di ngyid don nangs yid la zung /'ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang /'mthshan nangs dngog pa gnas pa dang /'char sgo rang zhang zhis bzhag bshes /'bsad dang yon than tshads /'thun sde /'di nangs rtsa ba blo la zhog /'ngo bo mnyig geig cha /'phra stel /'stong pa'i mu snyad rgyun go ba /'ukl rtsog spros bral zuum pa'o /'thig ni mi /'gguur dkar dang po la /'lte ni brdal ba chen po yin /'sgrong pa dang go sa rang blo blag /'sgron nas /'dngog nas dang bsam dang go sa rang /'chos kun /'mthshan byed 'gags ma bzhugs bshes /'lus dang rtsa yi rang dang na /'snges don yin te /'thig le than tshads /'mthshan yin /'thung byed 'gags par yis /'miig gi dangs ma /'di rang go sa rang /'rang sngang sparg ma rang /'di rangs dang go sa rang /'chos kun /'mthshan byed snges don yin te /'thig le mthong tshad yin rol /'zhes gsungs nas /'di mthong tshad yin rol /'}
Lamps in the Leap Over

Sigrunpar dag pa’i sgron ma) is neither in this chapter nor in other chapters available.

Similar to the exposition of the standard set of the Four Lamps as given in the Sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud (= Gser gyi me tog mdzes pa rin po che'i sgron ma ‘bar ba'i rgyud) or in the TCZ, here too, each of them is analysed into its aspects. Concerning the number of the various aspects, it is noteworthy that one discovers only slight differences when one is comparing the relevant passages with those of the Sgron ma ‘bar ba'i rgyud or the TCZ.

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23 In the thirty-seventh chapter of the Theg pa kun gyi spyi phud klong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud, this lamp is mentioned and succinctly defined, but is not analysed extensively as is the case with the three other lamps. See TTT 55, p. 334: /rnam dag dbyings kyi sgron ma ni/ 'od zer kha dog mtshing kha ni/ l'yi ge na ro lta bu'am/ /'ja' tshon sna lnga'i mdud pa 'drai/.

24 The following index illustrates this fact quite clearly:

Klong chen = Theg pa kun gyi spyi phud klong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud
Sgron ma = Gser gyi me tog mdzes pa rin po che'i sgron ma ‘bar ba'i rgyud
TCZ = Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzad

shes rab rang byung sgron ma

Klong chen:

Sgron ma:
1. de yi ngo bo ji lta bu, 2. de bzhin nges tshig mam pa gang, 3. dbye ba du yis bstan pa lags, 4. ‘di yi mtsan nyid ji lta bu, 5. sgo ni ‘char byed gang la snang 6. de bzhin mam pa gang dbye ba, 7. de bzhin gnas sa gang zhig lags, 8. dgongs pa’i tshad rnamms ji lta bu, 9. ‘di la mthun dpe gang gis mdzad.

TCZ:
1. ngo bo, 2. nge tshig, 3. dbye ba, 4. mtsan nyid, 5. sgo 6. gnas, 7. tshad, 8. mthun dpe.

At the beginning of the exposition of the shes rab rang byung kyi sgron ma in the Klong chen, ten aspects are listed, but in the following, they are not discussed. The eight aspects of this lamp as presented in the TCZ and in the Sgron ma are identical. Moreover, in the exposition of the Four Lamps according to the Klong chen, it is the first lamp which is explained. The Sgron ma treats it as second and the TCZ as fourth lamp.

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rgyang zhogs chu yi sgron ma

Klong chen:

Sgron ma:
1. ‘di yi ngo bo ji lta bu, 2. ‘di la nges tshig ji skad gsung, 3. dbye ba rnam pa du zhig yod, 4. mtsan nyid bzhugs tshul ji lta bu, 5. gnas ni gang na gnas pa lags, 6. thog ma gang gis bskyed pa lags, 7. ‘char sgo’i snang ba ji lta bu, 8. ‘di yi mthun dpe gang zhig lags, 9. ‘di kun tshad rnamms gang gis bzung.

TCZ:
1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye ba, 4. mtsan nyid, 5. de’i gnas, 6. gang gis skyed tshul, 7. ‘char sgo’i snang ba, 8. mthun dpe, 9. tshad nges pa.

There are nine aspects of this lamp which are identical in the three texts in question. However, this lamp is treated in the first section of the relevant text of the Klong chen and not as fourth section as it is the case with the TCZ and the Sgron ma.

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thig le stong pa’i sgron ma

Klong chen:

Sgron ma:
1. ‘di yi ngo bo ji lta bu, 2. nges pa’i tshig ni gang rnamms lags, 3. de bzhin dbye ba du tsam mchis, 4. mtsan nyid dgongs pa ci zhig lags, 5. ‘di yi gnas ni gang na gnas, 6. ‘char bar...
As far as I know, the Theg pa kun gyi spyi phud klong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud and the Chos thams cad kyi don bstan pa are the only two texts - both of them are gter ma texts - to be found in the TTT 55 which treat the standard set of the Four Lamps. This is not surprising, because it is well known that this subject is mainly presented in the texts of the Instruction Series (man ngag sde) to which these two texts belong, and this series is primarily contained in the TTT 56.

Consequently, one should be able to locate relevant texts in the TTT 56 which incorporates many man ngag sde texts. However, this is not the case. The only detailed exposition of the standard set of the Four Lamps is the one to be found in the Gser gyi me tog mdzi es pa rin po che'i sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud. Thus, in the man ngag sde text Mu tig phreng ba rin po che gsang ba'i rgyud, their names are mentioned without giving any further information about them25. Another passage elucidating the standard set of the Four Lamps with a few words can be found in the man ngag sde text Nyi zla kha shyor gsang ba'i rgyud chen po26. Surprisingly, in the Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud gsang ba chen po one has no presentation of them, there being only a small commentary on the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa'i sgron

byed pa'i sgo de gang, 7. de la rang bzhin ji lta bu, 8. yul la ji ltar snang ba lags, 9. de kun tshad ni gang gis bzung, 10. 'di nyid dngos ni gang zhig lags, 11. de yi thabs kyi man ngag ci, 12. de la mthun dpe ji ltar lags.

TCP:
1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbyae ba, 4. mtshan nyid, 5. gnas, 6. sgo, 7. rang bzhin, 8. yul snang, 9. tshad, 10. sgron ma dngos, 11. de nyams su len thabs, 12. mthun dpe.

There are twelve aspects of this lamp which are identical in the three texts in question. However, this lamp is treated in the second section of the relevant text of the TCP whereas it is in the third section as far as the Klong chen and the Sgron ma are concerned.

dag pa dbyangs kyi sgron ma

Klong chen:
There is no analysis of the aspects of this lamp.

Sgron ma:
1. ngo bo ji lta bu zhig lags, 2. 'di yi nges tshig rnam pa ci, 3. 'di la dbyae ba du tsam mchis, 4. de yi rang bzhin nyid de gang, 5. mtshan nyid dgongs pa ji lta bu, 6. 'di la goms pa ji ltar byi, 7. de yi tshad ni gang gis grung, 8. 'di yi gnas ni gang du bzhugs, 9. de bzhin sgo ni gang na 'char, 10. de nyid dngos de ji lta bu, 11. mthun dpe gang gis bygyid pa lags.

TCP:
1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbyae ba, 4. rang bzhin, 5. mtshan nyid, 6. goms tshul, 7. tshad, 8. gnas, 9. sgo, 10. dngos, 11. mthun dpe dang bcu gcig.

The eleven aspects of this lamp as presented in the TCP and in the Sgron ma are identical. However, this lamp is treated in the third section of the relevant text of the TCP whereas it is the fourth section as far as the Sgron ma are concerned.

25 See TTT 56, p. 169, sixth chapter of the Mu tig phreng ba rin po che gsang ba'i rgyud: /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma dang/ /dag pa dbyangs kyi sgron ma dang/ /shes rab rang byung nyis dang nil/ /rgyang zhugs chu yi sgron ma nil/ /mthong byed mig nas yul la sngan bu'o/.

26 See TTT 56, p. 193, second chapter of the Nyi zla kha shyor gsang ba'i rgyud chen po: /dbyings kyi sgron ma sus mthong ba/ /chos kyi dbyangs la mngon du rgyud/ /thig le'i sgron ma sus ye shes gcig 'dus mthong ba/ /rtsol bcas rnam tshad yin pas kyi re gnas thob/ /shes rab sgron ma yul rnam par dag sus mthong ba /phyi chos dang rang gi mtshan nyid rtogs /chu yi sgron ma sus mthong ba /dbang po rnam la mngon shes 'char la dhang sgyur thob/.
Lamps in the Leap Over

The man ngag sde text Sgra thal 'gyur is a particular case as far as the standard set of the Four Lamps are concerned, because here one finds at least a quite extensive analysis of their actions (las), piths (gnad), characteristics (mthabs nyid), places (yul), and supports (rten). A further exception is the man ngag sde text Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud which, too, presents at least a short exposition of the standard set of the Four Lamps. However, it should be noted that the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma) is replaced here by the Lamp of Space and Awareness (rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma) a term which, of course, emphasizes the Inseparable Union of Space and Awareness (dbyings rig byer med). Except for that, there are no significant differences as far as the Four Lamps are concerned.

Last but not least, it's worth mentioning that there are no texts in the TTT which treat sets of three, five, six or nine lamps. However, sets consisting of two lamps - see below - are frequently met with.

As for the collection Four Branches of the Heart Essence (Snying thig ya bzhi): In the ZMYT one finds besides the usual general descriptions of this set a short but very important elucidation of their essences.

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27 See TTT 56, p. 183, sixth chapter of the man ngag sde text Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud gsang ba chen po: /di kun sgron ma rnam bzhi yis/ /sems can kun gyi snang ba 'dzin lus la/ /rgyang zhags mig la zer chu yi sgron ma yis/ /gzaugs sogs ngo bo nyid du sdu/ /shes rang rgyud la 'char rab rang byung sgron ma yis/ /theg pa ruams kyi the bshom good/ /thig le rtags byang chub sems kyi sgron ma/ /stong pa'i sgron ma yis/ /'khor 'das bse bu'i mthams shbyor byed/ /dag pa dbyings kyi sgron ma rig pa ma yin yis/ /rnal 'byor nyams nyams myong gong nas gong du/ /kyis sa bon 'debs/ /ri kun klud par snang bu'ol/.

28 See TTT 56, p. 131, second chapter of the Sgra thal 'gyur: /sgron ma rnam pa bzhi zhes te/ /smin cing 'jug pa khyab stong pas/ /chos nyid yul snang sdu pa'ol/ /rgyug zhags las ni gzaugs bsdu/ /rlung gis gcod 'phen par byed/ /'ong dang 'gro ba'i 'phel 'grub kyis/ /je shes dag ni sdu par byed/ /thig le stong pas las kun byed/ /'das pas lam gni sna gzung nas/ /rlung gi bhrag dang gzi miangs bsnyid/ /bsnyug cing ye shes snang ston pa'ol/ /shes rang byang sgron ma yis/ /chos kun mngun par ro gci gud/ /bdus te rang snang 'dzin par byed/ /'dis ni bog chags 'brel rgyun good/ /dbyings kyi dangs ma sdu pa dang/ /rign pa'i sru rnuams 'dzin pa dang/ /gnaug gsum chuz du snang pa ste/ /'khor ba nyid ni spon bar byed/ /de ltar mig la sgron shar bas/ /sangs rgyas dgyongs pa'i gnad 'dus par/ /rang snang yul rnuams 'dzin pa'ol/ /sgron ma'i gnad ni ngas bshad kyis/ /lha bu skal dan khyod nyon cig/ /yul dang rig pa rlung dag gis/ /chos myis lam du gzung ba'i phyir/ /ye shes rdzogs pas chos nyid dag/ /'di yang sgron ma' gnad yin nas/ /rgyug zhags 'gul ba med pa gnad/ /'di dus ltda stangs gsum dang sbyar/ /shes rab sgron ma sbyangs pa gnad/ /cho ga gsum gnyi gspal ba dang/ /sgrub pa'i gnad kyis rgya nyid bsnyid/ /thig le'i sgron ma gtiems pa gnad/ /rtsa dang mthet mzaub ma bral bas/ /ye shes gong du 'phel ba'ol/ /dbyings kyi gnad ni 'khrig pa ste/ /gni ma'i sblub pa ruad/ /byor pas/ /legs par sbyar te 'khrig par byul/ /zla ba dag la'ang sblub par byul/.

29 See TTT 56, p. 63, thirty-second chapter of the Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud: /de yang sgron ma rnam pa bzhi/ /'gag pa med pa'tsul ghyis gnas/ /nam mkha' stong pa'i dkyil 'khor du/ /bcos med sgron ma rnam pa bzhi/ma 'gags pa yi don gyis gnal/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma ni/ /nam mkha' stong pa'i gnyis dkyul 'du/ /dbyings kyi rang bzhin 'od kyi skul/ /ma 'gags 'gags med rnam par gnal/ /ye shes lnga ldam thugs kyi skul/ /lung rgyud kyi tsul du 'char/ /'di yang 'gro dang 'ong ba dang/ /'gul dag ba dang/ /'khrig pa'ol/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma ru/ /bcug ste rig pa ma 'gul nas/ /'gyur med rtogs pa'i bar du bshad/ /shes rang byung sgron ma ni/ /sgru 'dogs thams cad chod pa dang/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma ni/ /rtsal ba med pa shar kyur nas/ /rgyug zhags chu yi sgron ma yis/ /de la lha ba ma yengs nas/ /mthar phuyin sgron pa'i tshul du gungs/ /de las 'gag med snang ba shar kyur nas/ /yang dag rtogs pa'i mchog tu gungs/ /de ltar chus nyid don la rang/ /rtogs dang ma rtogs gnus med do/.

30 See ZMYT I, p. 462: /gnys pa snying ga nas ye shes sum brtsegs kyi rang gdangs mi nas nam mkhar shar ba nyid/ /mngon sum snang po'i rang gdangs su ngo sprad nas/ /sgron ma bzhis nyams su len pa yin nas/ /de la rgyug zhags chu'i sgron ma ni/ /mi gis a 'bras kyi dbang rten dbang
The Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang chags chu’i sgron ma) is said to have a threefold essence consisting of the Three Ways of Looking (gzigs stangs gsum) as applied in the practice of Leaping Over. It is emphasized here that these ways of looking should not be forced, because only an involuntary relaxation which implies the Self-Liberation (rang grol) of karmic propensities (bag chags) manifesting in and as samsaric appearances, brings about the arisal and continual augmentation of the Four Visions (snang ba bzhi).

As far as the essence of the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings rnam par dag pa’i sgron ma) is concerned, the point is stressed that a calmness free from distraction enhances the vision of Awareness in Outer Space (phyi’i dbyings).

To gently press the eyes with thumb and finger and to focus Awareness on the light-drops represents the essence of the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa’i sgron ma). Similar to the preceding lamps, an involuntary composure is considered as essence of the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma), but the object of this lamp is rather the Vajra-Chains whereas the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light is intimately related to the light-drops, and the sphere of activity of the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space is said to be the Outer Space. As is stated below in the same text, the different essences can be condensed into a single one, namely the completely relaxed absorption in Space and Awareness (dbyings rig), by means of which Pristine Cognition is accomplished without effort.

In the KDYT, one finds an interesting passage describing the activity (byed las) of the Four Lamps. Thus, the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance serves as support for the arisal of Pristine

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32 About the Four Visions (snang ba bzhi) see Padmasambhava (Karma Lingpa), Natural Liberation, pp. 243-255.

33 See KDYT II, p. 215. /de litar sgron ma bzhi’i byed las ni/rgyang zhags chu’i sgron mas ye shes ‘char ba’i rten byed de/ de las ye shes kyi rlung gi lam byed do/ dbyings rnam dag gi sgron mas phyi’i dbyings nam mkha’i sgron ma ‘char ba’i yul byed/ nang dbyings rnam dag gi sgron mas dwangs ma rnamns sna’ad cing sku ‘dzin pa dag/ gnod gsum bcdu du smin pas ‘khrul snang stong par byed do/ ltiig le stong pa’i sgron mas ye shes kyi ‘phel rygas pa dang rlung gi gnas byed do/ rlung gi ye shes kyi bkra’ig dang gzi mdangs bskyed cing snang ba mi ‘dra ba du ma gong nas gong du byegur zhinphan byed bar byed do/ rlung ni sangar bshad pa ye shes srog rlung rig pa’i char gnas pa yin no/ shes rab rang byung gi sgron mas cho shams cad du ma ro gcig tu saud pa ste lhun grub kyi ye shes mngon du byed do/ de’i gnas cha riog med kyi skus chos snyid ba dag gi ye shes mngon du byed do/"
Cognition. Moreover, the wind of Pristine Cognition (ye shes kyi rlung) proceeds from this lamp into Outer Space.

The Lamp of Utterly Pure Space presents itself as Outer Space (phyi'i dbyings), i.e., as Space of projection for the arisal of the other lamps. In the outwardly projected Inner Space

(nang dbyings) of this lamp arises a five coloured lustre (dwangs ma) and Buddha-Bodies without interruption. Moreover, it brings about the complete maturation of the Three Piths

(gnad gsum)34 and empties delusory appearances ('khrul snang).

The Lamp of Empty Drops of Light effects the augmentation of Pristine Cognition by providing the location for the activity of the wind (rlung) which expresses itself inside this lamp in the form of numerous appearances of light. Klong chen rab 'byams emphasizes here the point that he is not referring to the karmic wind (las rlung), because non-karmic appearances like light-drops exclusively are brought about by the wind of Pristine Cognition (ye shes kyi rlung).

The Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness is conscious of whatever arises in such a way that it retains its natural non-duality. Thereby, the spontaneously perfect Pristine Cognition (lhun grub kyi ye shes) is revealed in its very immediacy. Furthermore, what dwells forever in this lamp is the Non-Conceptual Buddha-Body (rtog med kyi sku) which discloses the Pristine Cognition of the primordially pure Reality Itself (chos nyid ka dag gi ye shes).

Obviously, Pristine Cognition as such understands that whatever is, ultimately is unconditioned (chos thams cad 'dus ma byas pa) and therefore without any self (bdag med)35.

As usual, however, the assumption is denied that an understanding of exclusive emptiness is implied, because it is also termed “naturally clear” (rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba).

Therefore, it comes not as a surprise that Pristine Cognition is accounted for as the great source of whatever is manifesting as Pristine Cognition or Buddha-Bodies (sku). Thus, this source is primordially pure (ka dag), because it is empty of any conceptuality and at the same time spontaneously perfect (lhun grub), because it is endowed with clarity.

In the KDYT36 there is also a passage stating that the non-duality of primordial purity and spontaneous perfection is the principal characteristic of the Lamp of Self-Arisen

34 About the Three Piths (gnad gsum) see Padmasambhava (Karma Lingpa), Natural Liberation, pp. 236-240.
35 See BMNYT IV, p. 300: /gsang ba cho snyid ka dag gi yul ni/ chos thams cad 'dus ma byas pa/ bdag med pa/ stong pa/ rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba/ brjod bya'i yul las 'das pa/ bdag med pa/ stong pa/ rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba/ brjod bya'i yul las 'das pa/ sgra dang tshad ma gtan tshigs gang gis kyang gtan la ma phibs pa/ mdor na rig pa/ ka dag gi ye shes nyid yin tel/ sku dang ye shes la sogs pa'i 'byung gnas chen po yin no/.
36 See KDYT I, p. 362: /dag po la cho snyid mngon sum snyang ba/ dbyangs gang 'phel gyi snyang ba/ rig pa tshad phibs kyi snang ba/ cho snyid zad pa'i snyang ba bzhi las/ dang po ni de ltar ngo sprad pa'i 'od gsal gyi snyang ba sgron ma bzhi snang ba stel/ de'ang rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma las/ dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma sprin med pa'i nam kha' ston pa la shar ba'i dbus sul/ thig le stong pa'i sgron ma snyang ba'i nang du rig pa/ la gu rgyad gsal la ma yengs par blas pas gsal stong rnam par mi tseg pa'i ye shes lhong gis snyes pa'i ngang las mi gye bar nyam par 'phog pa'i snyang pa/ sgron ma bzhin pa/ dag dang lhun grub guysis su med pa de snyid sras rab rang byung gi sgron ma/ zhes bya stel/ gdod ma'i gzhis la da ltar gyi snyang sems grol bar byed pa stel/ gzhis gnyas lugs nyid 'bras bu ye grol du smin par byed pa'i snyang sras ces bya ba stel/ gzhis nyid 'bras bu smin.
Discriminative Awareness, and the central role of ripening the ground into the result is also assigned to this lamp. Here, “ripening” is defined as “ripening of Discriminative Awareness into Buddha-Bodies” (shes rab sku ru smin pa) which arise during the Four Visions (snang ba bzhi) of the Leaping Over, and the result is qualified as “liberated forever” (ye grol) which points at its intimate relation to the ground.

Needless to say, it certainly is beyond the scope of this work to give an exhaustive explanation of all that has been written about the standard set of the Four Lamps in the collection Four Branches of the Heart Essence (Snying thig ya bzhi). However, when one is looking for sets of Two, Five or Six lamps, one soon realizes that there is not much information about them in this collection and sets of Three or Nine Lamps cannot be found there. As far as the TTT 54-56 is concerned: Different sets of lamps can only be located in texts belonging to the Instruction Series (man ngag sde). Undoubtedly, it will be the slowly growing research on the huge corpus of the treasure texts (gter ma) that will shed some further light on the different sets of lamps.

A set of Two Lamps (sgron ma gnyis) is presented in the Rig pa rang shar chen po rgyud, but very little is said about it. Thus, one is merely told that the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light cannot be realized by efforts made by mind (sems) and the Lamp of Space and Awareness (rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma), too, is considered to be beyond mind, because its sphere of action is the Space of Pristine Cognition. It represents Awareness which penetrates the eyes by means of which it then perceives the appearances of Pristine Cognition in its completely pure Outer Space.

This set of Two Lamps (sgron ma gnyis) can also be found in the man ngag sde text Seng ge rtseg rdzogs chen po. Interestingly, these two lamps are considered here to be the two inseparable aspects of the Lamp of Pristine Cognition of Awareness (rig pa'i ye shes sgron ma). Thus, their place is the eye, their time is the Intermediate State of Reality Itself (chos nyid kyi bar do), and their realization is Awareness which is fully arisen in Outer Space.

byed shes rab ste/ shes rab sku ru smin pa yis/ shes pa'i don nyams su blangs pas dbyings kyi ra bar rig pa tshud de/ thig le gsum 'brel gyi snang ba dbang pos mgon sun du mthong ba tshun chad chos nyid mgon sun gzi snang ba'o/.

See TTT 56, p. 58, twenty-fourth chapter of the Rig pa rang shar chen po rgyud: /de yang khyad par 'di lta ste/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma nil/ /sgron ma rtseg ba'i sens dang bcas/ /rtseg byed yod pas sgron ma'i don ma rtseg/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma nil/ /rtseg ba'i sens dang bral zhiung ye shes dbyings la sprot/ /de yang nam kha'i gsal la dangs pa la/ /rig pa mig la bcug nas nil/ /lta na snang ba mthong bar 'guur/ /de la yang na 'di lta ste/ /dbyings la sgu dang ye shes bsgyang pa nil/ /sku la dbyings kyi bsgyang pa'o/ /de yang bshad lugs 'di lta ste/ /dbyings la sku yis bsgyang pa nil/ /'di lta kun la shes par byul/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma'i dkyil/ /stong pa ye shes 'od gsal skul'/ /gul bzhin pa dang khrig bzhin pa/ /de bzhin sna tshogs 'pho ba'o/ /de la bstan pa thob gyer nas/ /gro med 'ong med ngang du thim/ /'gul dang 'khrig pa ga la yod/ /de ni bstan pa thob pa'o/ /de lta rtog pa skyes guur nas/ /dbyings la sku yis bsgyang pa nil/ /'di lta kun la shes par byul/ /rig pa 'gyur ba med pa la/ /dbyings ni 'od kyi snang bar shar/ /'gul dang 'khrig pa ga la yod/ /de ni bstan pa thob pa'o/ /de lta rtog pa skyes guur nas/ /dbyings la sgron ma/ /sems can kun la rang chas la/ /rtseg pa mthong ba'i char/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma dang/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma'o/ /du 'bral med pa'tsul du 'char/ /sems can kun gyi snang ba bshad/ /de yang bshad pa 'di lta ste/ /sgron ma dang dus dang rtog pa'o/ /gna mi bshad ba/ /de yang bshad lugs 'di lta ste/ /gna mi bshad pa'i dbyings rig dang/ /lam la snang ba'i dbyings rig dang/ /mtha' la skyol ba'i dbyings rig go'/.

See TTT 56, p. 206, fifth chapter of the Seng ge rtseg rdzogs chen po: /de ma ho/rig pa'i ye shes sgron ma nil/ /sems can kun la rang chas tla/ /mtha' la skyol ba'i char/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma dang/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma'o/ /du 'bral med pa'tsul du 'char/ /sems can kun gyi snang ba bshad/ /de yang bshad pa 'di lta ste/ /gna mi bshad pa'i dbyings rig dang/ /lam la snang ba'i dbyings rig dang/ /mtha' la skyol ba'i dbyings rig go'/.
another passage of the same text\textsuperscript{39}, one finds a still different set of Two Lamps (sgron ma gnayis). It consists of:

1. The Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa’i sgron ma), and
2. the Lamp of Self-Arisen Space (rang byung dbyings kyi sgron ma).

Obviously, the latter replaces here the Lamp of Space and Awareness (rig pa’i ye shes sgron ma) mentioned above. By the way, this set of Two Lamps can also be found in the\textit{man ngag sde} text\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Nor bu ‘phra bkod chen po’i rgyud}\textsuperscript{40}.

As far as I know, except for the\textit{Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po}, there are no other texts of the TTT 56 treating the Lamp of Pristine Cognition of Awareness (rig pa’i ye shes sgron ma). Further research will have to show how far the latter is identical with the Lamp of Pristine Cognition (ye shes sgron ma) as witnessed in the\textit{man ngag sde} texts\textit{Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud} and\textit{Rdo rje sens dpa’ snying gi me long}\textsuperscript{41}.

Examining the texts of the TTT 56, it is noticeable that very often the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhag chu’i sgron ma) is spoken of, the three other lamps, however, are not even mentioned\textsuperscript{42}.

\textsuperscript{39}See TTT 56, p. 211, eighth chapter of the\textit{Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po}: [sku yi snang ba de dag kun] [yiul gyi snang ba ma yin te] / &per na na chung gzhon pa yis/ [jme long mtschan njid gsal ba la] / rang gi bzhin snang mthong ba ltar/ [chos njid yul gyi nam mkha’ la] / rig pa’i snang ba ku ra gsal/ [rang gi gnas lugs mthong ba nil] [yiul la yed pa ma yin te] / [dmigs pa dag pas mcon g du gsal] [rang gi dkyil] [khor dang bca’i ye shes don la yul med kyang] / [sams can dus na yul du byung] [mthong ba’i dus na rdo g pa che] / [go ba’i dus na bde ba che] / snang ba mthong na nams ngay chel] / rang rig geig bu grogs kyi mchog] / [snang ba’i yul du med pas na] / [rdo rje lu gu rgyud njid las] / [cha shas sku ni bsam mi khyab] / [rang byung dbyings kyi sgron ma la] / [rang snang ’od ni bsam mi khyab] / [thig le stong pa’i sgron ma la] / [zor ldan thig le bsam mi khyab].


In the\textit{Rdo rje sens dpa’ snying gi me long} one finds passage describing a lamp called “Lamp of the Teaching of Self-Awareness” (rang rig bstan pa’i sgron ma) which has two aspects. Thus, the Lamp of the Teaching of Self-Awareness refers to the dharmakāya Great Light (chos sku’ od po che), the Lamp of the Way of Enlightened Mind (byang chub lam gya’i sgron ma) denotes the process of self-appearance and dissolution into itself (rang byung rang la thim), and the Lamp of Pristine Cognition (ye shes sgron ma) is indicative of the boundless aggregation of light occasioned by the lamps as a whole. See TTT 56, p. 145, first chapter of the\textit{Rdo rje sens dpa’ snying gi me long}: [rang rig bstan pa’i sgron ma’i] / [gsang bas mi zin chu zla’ dra] / [byang chub la mgyi sgron ma rang byung rang la thim] / [&per na nya yi mig bzhin] [gro ba yongs la khyab] / [isrita’i dkyil] du gnas bca’i mig nas lam’ byung zhing/ [ye shes sgron ma sngong njid nam mkha’ la] / [ye shes ’od phung nam mkha’i mtha’ dang mnyam] / [bag chogs shabs la rten nas ye shes dbyings la spgyal] / [ye shes sgron ma rang snang ’od po che] / [ye shes sgron ma bstan pa kun gyi rite].

\textsuperscript{42}See for instance TTT 56, p. 251, fifty-ninth chapter of the\textit{man ngag sde} text\textit{Spros bral don gsal chen po’i rgyud}, or TTT 56, p. 282, or the forty-second chapter of the\textit{man ngag sde} text\textit{Thig le kun gsal chen po}. 

As already mentioned above, I could not even find a single text in the TTT dealing with sets of Three, Five, Six or Nine Lamps. The mang ngag sde text Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa ma slad ji bzhin ma'i don ye shes kyi mar me chen po'i rgyud of the TTT presents besides an uncommon fourfold set of lamps - see above - a set of Three Lamps, i.e., the Lamp of the Drop of Pristine Cognition (thig le ye shes sgron ma), the Lamp of the Water (chu'i sgron ma), and the Lamp of the Radiation of the Ocean (rgya mtsho gdangs kyi sgron ma). Sets of Two, Four, Five, Six or Nine Lamps, however, cannot be found in the TTT.

In the TTT I could not locate sets of Two, Three, Six or Nine Lamps, but this volume contains the standard set of Four Lamps as well as an uncommon fourfold set of lamps. Moreover, one finds in the Bskal pa dum bu'i rgyud a passage mentioning the term “Five Lamps”, but no further information about it is given there. The only source at my disposal which contains information about Five Lamps is the BMYT.

1. The Tsitta Lamp of Flesh (tsitta sha'i sgron ma) is the heart.
2. The Lamp of the Ground In Its Natural State (gnas lugs gzhi'i sgron ma) is the Awareness dwelling in the heart.
3. The Lamp of the Channel Which is White and Smooth (dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma) is the channel connecting the heart with the eyes.
4. The Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma) is the eye which sees the visions of the Clear Light.
5. The Lamp of Pristine Cognition of the Clear Light (od gsal ye shes kyi sgron ma) refers to a continual absorption (ting nge 'dzin) in the Clear Light.

In order to know more about the first four lamps — I could not locate an explanation of the fifth one — one has to consult the set of Six Lamps (sgron ma drug) to be found in the ZMY.

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43 See TTT 55, p. 268, twelfth chapter of the Bskal pa dum bu'i rgyud.
44 See BMY II, p. 390: /de ye shes sgron ma lngar dbu ma/ snying ni tsitta sha'i sgron ma'o /de na gnas pa'i rig pa ni gnas lugs gzhi'i sgron ma'o /snying nas mig tu 'brel ba'i rtsa ni dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma'o /miig gi a 'bras ni 'od gsal gnyis sgron brnyan 'dzin pas gnyis gya mtsho sgron ma/o /'od gsal mi gyo ba las skyes pa ti'ing nge 'dzin ni 'od gsal ye shes kyi sgron ma'o /'theug le gyang skor ghan las sgron ma bzhir gya mtsho kyung /dir ngyams su len pa bla ma med pa dang dang nithun pa dang lngar byung ba'o /ske shes rang sar gnas pa ngos zin nas bsgoms pas gnod ma'si sar grol bar byed pa'o /indor dril bas ye shes kyi ngo bo ni/sens nyid /'od gsal ba sku dag ye shes kyi rang bzhin/ gnas ni snying /lam ni rtsal /sro ni mig /yul ni nam mkha'/ byed las ni gnod grol ba'o.
45 See ZMY II, p. 138: don gnys pa sgron ma drug gi gnad bcings pa la drug las/ gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma ni/ gzhi rang bzhin lhun grub kyi sngags rgyas des 'khor 'das thams cad la khyab pa ni'o ma la mar gyan khyab pa bzhin gnas te dpal phreng gi mdo las bde sghegs snying pos /'gro kun yongs la khyab lces pa dang mtshan brjod las / mi'gyur kun 'phro khyab pa po/ zhes pa dang /mka'/ 'gro ma gur las rin chen sens las phyir gyur pa'i/ sangs rgyas med cing sens can med/ lces pa dang /'khor lo bzhin sngags las ma byung ma skyes od lnga'i snying po can] /'gro ba yongs kyi gzhi rtsa mchog lces sol /tsitta sha'i sgron ma ni/ snying nang na sku dang dang ye shes rang /'od dang bcas pabum ma pang ni mar me ltar gnas te /de bzhin sngags pa'i snying po bstun pa'i mdo las/ sens can thams cad kyi rang na thog ma ji lta ba las ma gyos par gnas sol /zhes pa dang/ mtshan brjod las so so rang rig ni gyo ba /mchog gi dang po sku gsum 'chang /zhes pa dang/ kye rdo rje las /lus la ye shes chen po gnas /'trog pa thams cad yang dag dang/ dongs po kun la khyab pa'o /lus gnyis las ma skyes pa'o/ zhes pa dang thig le 'dus pa las/ sens can dran byed tsitta'i dkyil/ chos gsum nyid kyi ngo bor gnas /zhes sol /'jgam 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma ni /snying nas mig ru rtsa dar dkar gyi skud pa /'dra ba'i nang ma ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'char ba rgya skar gyi nyi zhur lta bu ste/ mdo tshigs su bcad pa gnyas pa las /ye shes sgron mar 'brel bas ni /pho gyes bcu'i
1. First, there is an explanation of the Lamp of the Abiding Ground (gnas pa gzhi’i sgron ma) which corresponds to the Lamp of the Ground In Its Natural State (gnas lugs gzhi’i sgron ma) as presented in the BMY. It is defined as the spontaneously perfect Buddhahood of the ground which pervades samsara and nirvana in the same way as milk pervades butter. Different sutric and tantric texts are quoted in order to confirm the identity of this lamp with the tathāgatagarbha (de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po).

2. When the Lamp of the Abiding Ground denotes the potential of the ground to manifest itself as anything, the Tsitta Lamp of Flesh (tsitta sha’i sgron ma) rather points at the place where it is centred. Similar to a butterlamp inside a vase, it dwells in the innermost middle of the heart as self-light (rang ’od) of Pristine Cognition and Buddha-Bodies.

3. The Lamp of the Channel Which is White and Smooth (dkar ‘jam rtsa’i sgron ma) refers to the channel which is like white silken thread. It connects the heart with the eyes and shelters the self-radiation of Pristine Cognition.

4. The eyes are the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhags chu’i sgron ma). Because this lamp has the capacity to illuminate anything, it is compared to sun and moon.

5. The Lamp of the Time of the Intermediate State (bar do dus kyi sgron ma) is the Intermediate State of Reality Itself (chos nyid kyi bar do). To be precise, it denotes the time of the recognition that it is the ground itself which appears as Pristine Cognition and Buddha-Bodies (sku). This recognition is like meeting an old friend again, because it is said to be immediate and involuntary.

6. The Lamp of the Ultimate Result (mthar thug ‘bras bu’i sgron ma), at last, refers to Awareness taking again its seat in the ground after the dissolution of the appearances of the ground (gzhi snang). This seat is named “Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness” (lhun grub rin po che...
gsang ba'i sbubs and is, on account of its ultimate and unchanging being, compared to the crop one has harvested in autumn.

Another passage dealing with the same set of Six Lamps (sgron ma drug) is contained in the BM YT. It is stated here that they are associated with the Six Intermediate States (bar do drug), but unfortunately one is not told how these two sets are related to each other. Probably, this statement is here just intended to stress the point that whatever is arises in the Six Intermediate States is directly related to the Six Lamps.

Now, as to the set of Nine Lamps (sgron ma dgu):

1. The Tsitta Lamp of Flesh (tsitta sha'i sgron ma),
2. the Lamp of the Channel Which Is White and Smooth (dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma),
3. the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zha's chu'i sgron ma),
4. the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa'i sgron ma),
5. the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma),
6. the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma),
7. the Lamp of the Abiding Ground (gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma).

As mentioned in the ZMY II, the Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness (lhun grub rin po che'gsang ba'i sbubs) represents the result and is identical with the Spontaneously Perfect Precious Sphere (lhun grub rin po che'gsangs). In the passage of the TCZ I, p. 299, which is quoted below, it is explicitly referred to as “Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness As Result” (bras bu lhun grub rin po che'gsangs) in order to distinguish it from the so called “Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness As Ground” (gzhi lhun grub rin po che'gsangs). The sphere named “Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness As Way” (lam lhun grub rin po che'gsangs) in general is associated with the Eight Modes of Arising (char tshul bregyad) and in particular with the so called “appearances of the way” subsumed under the Four Visions (snang ba bzhi). About the Eight Modes of Arising see the Second Theme where they are presented as Six Modes of Arising (char tshul drug) and Two Doors (ego gru's).  phyug shar ba'i 'char tshul bregyad kyi snang ba' gnas la gzhi snang gi lhun grub rin po che'gsangs zer la thog ma' gzhi la mithar phyin pa dang gzhi rgyang mal gru's la gzhi lhun grub rin po che'gsangs dang mthar phyin pa 'bras bu lhun grub rin po che'gsangs zhes lhun grub kyi sbubs gsun du bshad la/ gzhir snang la lam lhun grub rin po che'gsangs zhes gsungs te/ nyams su blangs dus snang ba bzh'i ye shes dang lam snang thams ca'di la 'char ba yin no/.

See BM YT II, p. 378: ide dag bsdu na sgron ma drug tu 'das te' gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma nil sens nyid 'od gsal ba'ol /tsitta sha'i sgron ma nil snying rin po che michad gur phub pa 'dra ba stel de'i nang na 'od gsal bum nam gi mar me lhar gnas pa'ol /dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma nil rgya skar gyi nu'i zhu'lar snying nas mi gtu 'bral ba'ol 'od gsal gya lam mol /rgyang zha's chu'i sgron ma nil mig gu's kyis kyi a 'bras te 'od gsal 'char ba'i sgo'ol /bar do dus kyi sgron ma nil rang snang 'od gsal gya dkyil 'khor shar ba nge shes pas ggod ma'i sar skyes ba'ol /mthar thug 'bras bu' gsal gya lam mol ni ye shes dbyings su 'khyul bas gzhan nu bum pa sku'i zhih na btsan sa zin pa'ol/.

According to the BM YT II, p. 361, the Six Intermediate States (bar do drug) are:

5. The Intermediate State of Spontaneously Perfect Reality Itself (lhun grub chos nyid gya bar do).
6. The Intermediate State of the Karmic Bardo of Becoming (srid pa las gya bar do).
8. the Lamp of the Time of the Intermediate State (bar do dus kyi sgron ma), and
9. the Lamp of the Ultimate Result (mthar thug 'bras bu'i sgron ma).

As mentioned above, this set is not available in the collection Four Branches of the Heart Essence (Snying thig ya bzhi) and the same is the case as far the TTT 54-56 are concerned. The only source at my disposal dealing with them is the NYSNY, a relatively late text:

Here, these Nine Lamps are classified into an inner, an outer, and an unnamed threefold set. However, there are some problems involved with this kind of classification. Certainly, it is comprehensible that the Tsitta Lamp of Flesh (tsitta sha'i sgron ma), the Lamp of the Channel Which Is White and Smooth (dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma), and the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma) are conceived of as “Three Inner Lamps” (nang gi sgron ma gsum), because they have in common that they dwell inside the body.

The reason why the Lamp of Empty Drops of Light (thig le stong pa'i sgron ma), the Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma), and the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma) are called “Three Outer Lamps” (phyi'i sgron ma gsum) is, however, less obvious, but maybe it reflects the fact that all of them arise in Outer Space. As is well known, even entities conceived of as inner entities such as mental processes are perceived in the context of the Leaping Over (thod rgal) as something which appears outside. Thus, this kind of externalization does not even stop at the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma) which makes itself felt outwardly in the form of Vajra-Chains.

Very little is said here concerning the last unnamed threefold set which consists of the Lamp of the Abiding Ground (gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma), the

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49 There is an English translation of this text: H. V. Guenther, Meditating Differently, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1992.
50 See NYSNY, p. 31: /skabs 'dir ni don dam ye shes kyi thig le lam du byed pa'i gdirs pa yin gytades nas tsitta sh'is sgron ma zhes pa snying gi rtse mo nas/ ka ti shel shag can kharag dang chu ser la sogs med pa'i rtsa dar dkar gyi skud pa la bu rtse mo gnyis su gyes pa zhih dibu ma'i nang nas nagin pa rtsa'i draw ba bregyud cing klap pa dang khang nas mar gug pa mig gi a 'bras gnyis la zog nas yod pa de ni dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma zhes bya ba ye shes mngon sum 'char ba'i lam yin pas/ rio rje semis dpa'i gsang lam zhes kyang bya zhih/ mngon sum snying tig gi rnal 'byor gang dag 'chikhar rig pa 'pha ba'i lam yang mig tu gswangs pa'i gnad kyang 'di nying dol/de yang klong gsal las/ khyad par snying nas 'brel bu'i rtsa/ [dar skud ba men ra 'dra'i khal/ [dhang po mig la zug pa stel/ [zhes gungs pa bzhin/ rig pa ye shes kyi nji 'od rtsa'i lam de las bregyud nas/ rgyang zhag chu'i sgron zhes bya ba mig gi sgo las sku dang zhing khams kyi rang mngon sum du 'char ba stel' 'di la rgyang zhags kyi nang ishan dbye na gsum yod de/ 'byung ba 'dus pa'i rgyang zhags zhes mig gi dhang rten nying dang/ [dhang po 'dus pa'i snying tigs ni gzed snang 'dzin nus pa'i mig gi shes pa dang/ ye shes 'dus pa'i rgyang zhags ni 'od rtsa dangs pa'i sgo dngos ye shes kyi nthong byed dang gsum po tshogs pa'i nthus chos nying mngon sum gyi snang ba nthong bar 'gyur ba stel/ sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud las/ 'char byed 'gags pa med pa yi/ [dhang po'i dangs ma gi sgor/ bskyed pas padma'is snyan du gnas/ /zhes dang_gsra thal/ 'gyur las/ ye shes 'char ba'i sgo nying ni/ [dang bcud dangs ma kun 'dus pa' /tsakSHu zhes pa'i sgo nus 'thoni/ [di las ye shes dngos/ 'byung stel/ [zhes sogs rgya cher gswangs shing/ [de las bu'i nang gi sgron ma gsum la briin nas nas nang gi gnad du bsum pa phyi'i sgron ma gsum 'char bar/ 'gyur la/ de la goms pas ni bar de dus kyi sgron ma dang mthar thug 'bras bu'i sgron ma gnyis kyang shugs las 'byung zhing/gnas pa gzhi'i sgron mas ni kun la khyab tshelde iar sgron ma rnam pa dgyo po/ 'di dag ni rdzogs chen gyi nyams len rtsa ba ste bsdu na drug la 'di zhing/de dag kyang bzhis ru 'du bar gswangs sol.}
Lamp of the Time of the Intermediate State (bar do dus kyi sgron ma), and the Lamp of the Ultimate Result (mthar thug ‘bras bu’i sgron ma). However, it seems to be quite clear that they are associated with the ground, the way, and the result (gzhi lam ‘bras gsum). In other words, they refer to the three phases of the unfolding of the tree inner and three outer lamps described above.

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>NYSNY</td>
<td>Theg pa thams cad kyi mchog rab gsang ba bla na med pa ‘od gsal rdo rje snying po’i don rnam par bshad pa nyi ma’i snying po zhes bya ba. By Rtse le rgod tshang pa, b. 1608. In Collected Works. 5 vols. New Delhi. 1974</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS IN WESTERN LANGUAGES


**B. WORKS IN TIBETAN**

**Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long**  

**Klong chen snying thig**  

**Klong chen mdzod bdun**  

**Klong drug pa**  

**Bkra shis mdzes ldan**  

**Sku gdung 'bar ba**  

**Mkha’ ‘gro snying thig**  

**Mkha’ ‘gro yang thig**  

**Grub pa'i mtha' rin po che'i mdzod**  

**Sgra thal 'gyur**  

**Sgron ma 'bar ba**  
Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod

Nyi zla kha sbyor

Rnying ma bka’ ma rgyas pa

Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum

Snying thig ya bzhi

Theg pa’i mchog rin po che’i mdzod

Gdams ngag mdzod

Rdo rje sems dpa’ snying gi me long

Nor bu ’phra bkod

Gnas lugs rin po che’i mdzod

Bi ma’i snying thig

Bla ma’ yang thig
**Man ngag rin po che’i mdzod**

**Mu tig phreng ba**

**Tshig don rin po che’i mdzod**

**Rdzogs pa rang byung**

**Zab mo yang thig**

**Yang tig nag po**

**Yi ge med pa**

**Yid bzhin rin po che’i mdzod**

**Yon tan rin po che’i mdzod kyi ‘grel pa nyi zla’i sgron me**

**Rig pa rang groi**

**Rig pa rang shar**

**Rin chen spungs pa**
Seng ge rtsal rdzogs
In: *The Tibetan Tripitaka*. Vol. 56. Editor-in-Chief: A W. Barber. SMC

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