

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 dbyer 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 concreteness². 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 tathāgatagarbha³ 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

¹ See Chagmé, Karma.1998. *A Spacious Path to Freedom (commentary by Gyatrul Rinpoche, translated by B. Alan Wallace)*. Ithaca, Snow Lion, p. 180.

² In his *TCZ 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.

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 arising 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 result⁴. 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"⁵, because it is the one most frequently met with in Rdzogs chen texts:

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 arising of the three other lamps.
2. The Lamp of Utterly Pure Space (*dbyings 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 dbyings*) 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.

⁶ Overviews of the Three Series (*sde gsum*) are presented in Thondup (Rinpoche) Tulku, 1989. *Buddha Mind: An Anthology of Longchen Rabjam's Writings on Dzogpa Chenpo*. Ithaca, New York. Snow Lion, pp. 47-88; Karmay, Samten G., *The Great Perfection*, pp. 206-216; Reynolds, John Myrdhin. 1996. *The Golden Letters*, Ithaca, Snow Lion, pp. 31-35; Gyatso, Janet, *Apparitions of the Self*. For a detailed account of these series see Dudjom Rinpoche. 1991. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (2 vols.) London, Wisdom, pp. 319-345.

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.

⁸ This collection of *Snying thig* texts — see Abbreviations — consists of Four Branches to which the *zab mo yang thig* is added as the fifth branch. An index of the works contained in the New Delhi edition of the *Snying thig ya bzhi* is given in Goodman, Steven, D. 1983. *The kLong-chen snying-thig: An Eighteenth Century Tibetan Revelation*. Ph. D. dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, pp. 164-220. Overviews of the *Snying thig ya bzhi* are presented in Erhard, Franz-Karl. 1990. *Flügelschläge des Garuda. Literar-und Ideengeschichtliche Bemerkungen zu einer Liedersammlung des rDzogs-Chen*. Franz Steiner, pp. 17-31; Reynolds, John Myrdhin, *The Golden Letters*, pp. 215-217.

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*)⁹.

Similarly, 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 ignorance¹⁰.

One finds the same statement in many other texts of the TTT 54, as for instance in the *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po nam mkha'i mtha' dang myam pa'i rgyud chen po* which, too, belongs to the Mind Series¹¹. 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 hand¹².

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*) which is like a “water-crystal” (*chu shel*) 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 egg¹³.

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*)¹⁴.

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 gyil/ /nga ni ston pa'i sgron ma byang chub sems/ /dus gsum sangs rgyas kun gyi snying po yin/ /khams 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/ /gol sa sgrub pa ye nas med/ /de yang ji ltar med ce na/ /ye shes sgron ma rang la shar ba la/ ma rig mun pas bsgrubs pa ye nas gsal/.

¹¹ See TTT 54, p. 361, eleventh chapter of the *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po nam mkha'i mtha' dang myam pa'i rgyud chen po*: /gcong rong 'khor ba'i mun pa nyid/ /de nyid ye shes sgron mar 'bar/ /snyigs ma'i gnas ngan khams gsum nyid/ /rgyal ba'i zhing khams bde bar bsgyur/ /nga yi tshig 'di bdud rtsi'i bcud/ /ye shes sgron ma'i 'od 'bar can/ /rig pa'i steng du nan tan bya'ol/.

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 n/ /gdod nas lhun grub rang 'char bas/ /'byung ba lnga la rag ma pas/ /sku gsung thugs la rten mi 'cha'/ /gsal byed rig pa'i sgron ma yi s/ /gter khyim phung po gsal byed ltar/ /dman pa'i blo spangs gang dag la/ /tag gi ni nor bu bstan dang mtshungs/.

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 sun 'don phyir/ /da lta mngal gyi sgrub gyogs pas/ /longs sku dang ni sprul pa'i sku/ /chu shel sgron ma'i dpes mtshon kyang/ da lta rang la 'byung ma srid/ /khyung sgo ma chag 'phur mi nus/.

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 me shel ltar gsal bas/ /rin chen man ngag kun gyi bdag/ /kun gsal me long mthong thob pas/ /rna rgyud la rag ma lus/ /chos nyid nam mkha' lta bu la/ /rang byung gsal ba'i nyi ma shar/.

The *Seng ge sgra dgongs pa nyi 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 Buddha-Bodies. Thus, the purity of their appearances is represented by the nirmaakāya (*sprul sku*), their continuity by the sambhogakāya (*longs sku*), and their freedom from conceptuality by the dharmakāya (*chos sku*)¹⁵.

Another *man ngag sde* text of the TTT 54, the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa ma slad ji bzhin 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 sems 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*)¹⁶.

Moreover, in the *Seng ge sgra dgongs pa nyi 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 lnga*) dissolve into five-coloured light (*'od lnga*), that this light arises in the form of the Five Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*) 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 gru gu*). Understanding its arising in the sky of Reality Itself, one is liberated into the sambhogakāya¹⁷.

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

¹⁵ See TTT 54, p. 504, thirty-fifth chapter of the *Seng ge sgra dgongs pa nyi zla kha sbyor rgyud*: */me long dag pa'i ngos la gzugs brnyan sna tshogs 'char/ /bltas pas me long ngos la sna tshogs gdangs la gsal/ /rang bzhin 'gag med sna tshogs mtshan nyid stong/ /spros med me long nang du snang ba dag/ /de bzhin rgyang zhag chu yi sgon ma la/ /'dra 'bag sna tshogs phyi yi snang ba 'di/ /rang rig gdangs kyi 'od la bltas pa'i tshe/ /snang tsam nyid na ngo bos stong pa gdangs la gsal/ /gsal tsam nyid na rang bzhin dag pa sprul pa'i sku/ /rang bzhin 'gag med gsal stong longs sku'i ngang/spros med sgron mar snang ba dag la chos sku thugs kyi gter/ /snang ba sku gsum dbyer med bde chen ye shes sprad/.*

¹⁶ See TTT 54, p. 559, ninth chapter of the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa ma slad ji bzhin ma'i don ye shes kyi mar me chen po'i rgyud*: */'gyur med rig pa'i sgron ma de/ /gnas lugs 'gyur ba med pa la/ /snang ba 'gag pa med pa ni/ /nyi ma dang ni zer bzhin du/ /'gyur med rig pa'i sgron ma shar/ /de la shar lugs rnam pa gsum/ rig pa sems gyi sgron ma dang/ /brgyud pa gsum pa shes rab sgron ma dang/ /nam mkha' gser gyi sgron ma'o/.*

¹⁷ See TTT 54, p. 568, seventh chapter of the *Seng ge sgra dgongs pa nyi zla kha sbyor rgyud*: */rnam shes lnga nyid 'od lnga ngang du grol/ /'od lnga rigs lnga yum lnga chos sku ngang du 'dus/ /ye shes sku de mtshon gyi gru gu bzhin/ /tsitta sgron mar zhugs nas chos nyid mkha' la shar/ /rtogs pas skal ldan longs sku ngo bor grol/.*

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 sems 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 (*dnagos med*), the nature of the core of meaning (*snying po'i rang bzhin*) nevertheless 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 dbyings*) where perfect Buddhahood (*mngon sangs rgyas*) finally is attained¹⁹.

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 shel*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 del /dper na mun par gser stor ba/ /btsal bas mi 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 sems 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 del/ /snying po'i rang bzhin dnagos med la/ /de nyid sna tshogs rtog par shar/ /shar tsam nyid na rang sar grol/ /ming med gting mtha' yongs grol ba/ /chos kyi dbyings su mngon sangs rgyas/ /snying po klong gyur gzhi la thim/ /dbyer med gdeng zin 'khrul pa sangs/ /ka dag snying po'i klong nas shar/.*

²⁰ That is, the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (*rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma*), the Lamp of Self-Arisen Discriminative Awareness (*shes rab 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*).

²¹ See TTT 55, p. 286, twenty-fourth chapter of the *Chos thams cad kyi don bstan pa*: */sgron ma bzhi yang 'di la 'char/ /mig gnyis rgyang zhag chu sgron yin/ gzugs sogs ngo bo nyid du sdud/ /don rnam rig cing go bar byed/ /shes rab rang byung sgron ma'o/ /theg pa rnam kyi the tshom gcod/ /dbyings ni nam mkha' stong pa yin/ /chos rnam mnyam pa nyid du nil/ /bsdus te rang snang 'dzin par byed/ /'di ni bag chags 'brel rgyun gcod/ /dbyings kyi dangs ma sdud pa dang/ /chos nyid mngon sum snang ba 'char/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma yil/ /'khor 'das bsre ba'i 'tshams sbyor byed/ /'dis ni las kun byed pas te/ /mig la brten nas 'ja' 'od 'char/ /rlung gis bkrang dang gzi mdangs bskyed/ /bsgyur cing ye shes snang ba ston/ /dag pa dbyings kyi sgron ma yil/ /rnal 'byor nyams kyi sa bon 'debs/ /'od snang zhing khams nyid du 'char/ /sgron ma'i mtshan nyid mang bshad kyang/ /mngon sum mthong ba nyid yin no/ /snang ba yis ni 'char byed lam/ /rkyen gyis ma bsgribs sems can mig /rgyal mo'i dkyil 'khor sgo nas nil/ /nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor bzhin du yangs/ /rang gi 'od kyi zer bzhin du/ /rang chas bzhin du rnam par snang/ /chos nyid mtshan nyid ye shes lnga/ /kha dog*

The other text containing rather extensive information about the standard set of the Four Lamps is the *Theg pa kun gyi spyi phud klong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud*, a *gter ma* text which also seems to belong to the Instruction Series²². 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*

ma 'dres mtshan nyid ldan/ /sku dang ye shes snang ba ni/ /rang bzhin snang ba ma 'gags shar/ /rig pa'i sku ni lha khang 'dra/ /rang rig ye shes mar me 'dra/ /sgron ma bzhin yang dbyings su 'dus/ /gnyis kyi dbyings la 'dus pa'o/ /rgyang zhag gis ni gzugs rnams 'dzin/ /shes rab kyi ni don rnams shes/ /thig le dbyings dang gnyis su med/ /'od snang thams cad rim bzhin 'char/ /de dag ye shes 'char sgo'o/.

²² See TTT 55, p. 310, fifth chapter of the *Theg pa kun gyi spyi phud klong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud*: *le ma sgron ma 'di ltar ro/ /shes rab rang byung sgron ma zhes/ /ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang/ /rang bzhin tshig nyid gnas pa'i sa/ /'char ba'i sgo dang shar ba'i yul/ /goms dang dgongs tshad 'thun dpe rnams/ /phyir yang sgo ni dbang po lnga/ /khyad par kha dang sna la 'char/ /skye byed rtsa nas tsittar 'khor/ /ro ma rkyang ma kun dharma/ /shel sbug khog pa stong pa'i nang/ /gsal ba rang shes chen por bzhugs/ /thams cad 'byed pa'i ngo bor ni/ /ming gzhi 'dus pa'i ye dangs su/ /ye nas lus kyi cha la gnas/ /thos dang bsam dang sgom pa dang/ /chos kun 'byed rig shes rab rnams/ /'di nyid ngo bor ye nas bzhugs/ /sdom ldan bla ma'i bdud rtsi 'thung/ /zhes gsungs nas/ /kun snang chos nyid kyi rol par than ne bzhugs so/ (...) le ma ho rgyang zhags chu yi sgron ma nyid/ /skye byed sa bon tshul du gnas/ /ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang/ /mtshan nyid bzhugs tshul gnas pa dang/ /skye byed 'char sgo 'thun pa'i tshad/ /'di rnams legs par yid la zung/ /ngo bo snang ba gnyis ka sdud/ /rgyang ni rig pa sku mthong stel/ /gzugs sogs 'dod yon lnga sogs rnams/ /'di yis 'ching bas zhags pas yin/ /snang ba rang sar bzhag nas ni/ /bdag 'dzin bral bas chu zhes bya/ /sgron ni rang gi snang ba gsal/ /gong nas gong du 'phel ba'o/ /dbying rig 'dres pas ma zhes bya/ /dbye ba rgyang zhags chu sgron dang/ /ye shes 'dus pa'i rgyang zhags dang/ /dbang po 'dus pa'i rgyang zhags so/ /mtshan nyid 'char byed 'gags med pas/ /dbang po'i dangs ma mig ces bya/ /'byed pa pad ma'i spyan du'o/ /'di yi gnas ni mig yin tel/ /mthong byed 'gag pa med pa yis/ /yul rnams 'dzin par byed pa'o/ /klad pa dung khang dkar po nas/ /gyas su 'khyil rtsa gsum po yi/ /ba men rwa 'dra rtsa yi dbyibs/ /rtsa yi nang na 'di nyid gnas/ /'char ba'i sgo ni tsakSHu rang/ /skye byed mngal du rang zhugs tshel/ /dus kun gyi ni thog ma ru/ /le ba'i rtsa mdud gru gsum du/ /phama'i rgyu rkyen dangs ma yis/ /mig gi dangs ma nyid du chags/ /pha ma'i rgyu rkyen gnyis las/ /dkar nag 'dres pa de bzhin no/ /'thun dpe 'dzin byed lcags kyu yul/ /gang snang snang nas 'dzin pa bzhin/ /'khor 'das sna gnyis 'di yis 'dzin/ /sgron mas yul gzugs rig par snang/ /lu gu rgyud mthong tshad yin no/ /zhes gsungs nas/ /dmigs med ka dag gi ngang na lhang nge bzhugs so/ (...) le ma ho sems dpa' rdo rje nyon/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma zhes/ /chos rnams kun gyi yid ches pa/ /'di nyid don rnams yid la zung/ /ngo bo nges tshig dbye ba dang/ /mtshan nyid dgongs pa gnas pa dang/ /'char sgo rang bzhin yul snang ba/ /tshad dang yon tan thabs 'thun dpe/ /'di rnams rtsa ba blo la zhog /ngo bo nyag gcig cha 'phra stel/ /stong pa'i mu sangs rang gsal ba/ /mi rtog spros bral zlum pa'o/ /thig ni mi 'gyur drang po la/ /le ni bral ba chen po yin/ /stong pa dngos yul zhen blo bkag /sgron mas 'od lnga rang snang stel/ /rang rig rang ngo gsal mdangs ldan/ /nges pa'i tshig yin the tshom sol/ /dbye ba lnga yin 'di ltar ro/ /gzhi gnas rang gi thig ledang/ /kun rdzobs rgyu yi thig le dang/ /don dam spros med thig le dang/ /rang byung 'bru yi thig le dang/ /mi 'gyur thig le stong pa'o/ /rang gnas dgongs pa gcig yin tel/ /tha snyad grangs zad 'dzin zhenbral/ /mtshan nyid dngos po rang stong stel/ /ma sgoms par yang mtshams med pa'i/ /thig le zla bral nyid du'o/ /ka ti gser gyi rtsa chen de/ /dar dkar rnal ltar 'phra la 'dril/ /shel sbug can bzhi'i nang na ni/ /rang gnas sus kyang byas med par/ /ye nas mnyam pa chen por gnas/ /res na rlung gi rta la zhon/ /lus dang rtsa yi nang dag na/ /sems can kun gyi lus rten du/ /thog ma nyid nas gnas pa'o/ /'char byed ma sgribs sems can mig /tsakSHu zhes pa'i sgo nas don/ /nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor bzhin du snang/ /kun gyi mig nas 'char ba yin/ /rang bzhin babs kyi gnas pa la/ /ye dangs rang bcas rang gsal tel/ /sus kyang ma byas rang bzhin no/ /'char yul bar snang stong pa la/ /byung gnas 'gro gsum bral ba yi/ /bde stong mi rtog zag med dang/ /rang byung thig le brjod med stong/ /nam mkha'i kham su spro bsdu med/ /bar snang mi 'gyur de nyid na/ /nges par tshad du de 'gyur ro/ /rtsol med nyid du rang grol tel/ /kham gsum 'khor bar zlog re skan/dngos ni lha la rang mtho gang/ /lha min phyag gang mi mthab gang/ /'od lnga 'dus pa'i zlum po ru/ /zag pa med par snang ba yin/ /thabs kyi man ngag mthab 'dzug gis/ /tsakSHu phugs dang 'gram btsir bas/ /sngon du snang ste yid ches so/ /'thun dpe rma bya'i mdongs 'dra stel/ /khra mig nya mig bzhin du gnas/ /'di la rang nyid dbang thob nas/ /rtsol med nyid du rang grol lo/ /zhes gsungs nas/ /kun bzang yangs pa lhun 'byam chen por lhan ne bzhugs so/.*

rnām par dag pa'i sgron ma) is neither in this chapter nor in other chapters available²³.

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*²⁴.

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: */rnām dag dbyings kyi sgron ma nil /'od zer kha dog mthing kha nil /yi ge na ro lta bu'am/ /'ja' tshon sna lnga'i mdud pa 'dra/*.

²⁴ The following index illustrates this fact quite clearly:

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

shes rab rang byung sgron ma

Klong chen:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye ba, 4. rang bzhin tshig nyid, 5. gnas pa'i sa, 6. 'char ba'i sgo, 7. shar ba'i yul, 8. goms dang dgongs tshad, 9. 'thun dpe.

Sgron ma:

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

TCZ:

1. ngo bo, 2. nge tshig, 3. dbye ba, 4. mtshan 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.

.....
rgyang zhags chu yi sgron ma

Klong chen:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig 3. dbye ba 4. mtshan nyid 5. bzhugs tshul 6. gnas pa 7. skye byed 8. 'char sgo 'thun pa'i tshad.

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. mtshan 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 rnam gang gis bzung.

TCZ:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye ba, 4. mtshan 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*.

.....
thig le stong pa'i sgron ma

Klong chen:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye ba dang, 4. mtshan nyid dgongs pa, 5. gnas pa, 6. 'char sgo, 7. rang bzhin, 8. yul snang ba, 9. tshad dang, 10. yon tan, 11. thabs, 12. 'thun dpe.

Sgron ma:

1. 'di yi ngo bo ji lta bu, 2. nges pa'i tshig ni gang rnam lags, 3. de bzhin dbye ba du tsam mchis, 4. mtshan 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 mdzes 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 sbyor gsang ba'i rgyud chen po*²⁶. 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.

TCZ:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye 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 TCZ whereas it is in the third section as far as the *Klong chen* and the *Sgron ma* are concerned.

.....
dag pa dbyings 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 dbye 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 bgyi, 7. de yi tshad ni gang gis gzung, 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 bgyid pa lags.

TCZ:

1. ngo bo, 2. nges tshig, 3. dbye 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 TCZ and in the *Sgron ma* are identical. However, this lamp is treated in the third section of the relevant text of the TCZ whereas it is in 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 dbyings kyi sgron ma dang/ /shes rab rang byung nyis dang ni/ /rgyang zhags chu yi sgron ma ni/ /mthong byed mig nas yul la snang ba'o/.*

²⁶ See TTT 56, p. 193, second chapter of the *Nyi zla kha sbyor gsang ba'i rgyud chen po*: */dbyings kyi sgron ma sus mthong ba/ /chos kyi dbyings la mngon du spyod/ /thig le'i sgron ma sus ye shes gcig 'dus mthong ba/ /rtsol bcas rnams 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 rnams la mngon shes 'char la dbang sgyur thob/.*

ma)²⁷. 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 (*mthsan nyid*), places (*ylul*), and supports (*rten*)²⁸.

A further exception is the *man ngag sde* text *Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*²⁹ 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* 56 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*³⁰ one finds besides the usual general descriptions of this set a short but very important elucidation of their essences.

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/ /gzugs sogs ngo bo nyid du sdud/ /shes rang rgyud la 'char rab rang byung sgron ma yis/ /theg pa rnam kyi the tshom gcod/ /thig le rtags byang chub sems kyi sgron ma stong pa'i sgron ma yis/ /'khor 'das bsre ba'i mtshams sbyor byed/ /dag pa dbyings kyi sgron ma rig pa ma yin yis/ /rnal 'byor nyams nyams myong gong nas gong du/ kyi sa bon 'debs/ /'di kun khyad par snang ba'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 sdud pa'ol/ /rgyang zhags las ni gzugs bsdus te/ /rlung gis gcod cing 'phen par byed/ /'ong dang 'gro ba'i 'phel 'grib kyi/ye shes dag ni sdud par byed/ /thig le stong pas las kun byed/ /'das pas lam gyi sna gzung nas/ /rlung gi bkrag dang gzi mdangs bskyed/ /bsgyur cing ye shes snang ston pa'ol/ /shes rab rang byung sgron ma yis/ /chos kun mnyam par ro gcig tu/ /bsdus te rang snang 'dzin par byed/ /'dis ni bag chags 'brel rgyun gcod/ /dbyings kyi dangs ma sdud pa dang/ /rig pa'i sku rnam 'dzin pa dang/ /gnad gsum chud du smin pa ste/ /'khor ba nyid ni spong bar byed/ /de ltar mig la sgron shar bas/ /sangs rgyas dgongs pa'i gnad 'dus par/ /rang snang yul rnam 'dzin pa'ol/ /sgron ma'i gnad ni ngas bshad kyi/ /lha bu skal ldan khyod nyon cig lyul dang rig pa rlung dag gis/ /chos nyis lam du gzung ba'i phyir/ /ye shes rdzogs pas chos nyid dag/ /'di yang sgron ma'i gnad yin no/ /rgyang zhags 'gul ba med pa gnad/ /'di dus lta stangs gsum dang sbyar/ /shes rab sgron ma sbyangs pa gnad/ /cho ga gsum gyi spel ba dang/ /sgrub pa'i gnad kyi rgya nyid bskyed/ /thig le'i sgron ma gtems pa gnad/ /rtsa dang mtheb mdzub ma bral bas/ /ye shes gong du 'phel ba'ol/ /dbyings kyi gnad ni 'khrid pa ste/ /nyi ma'i bsab pa rnal 'byor pas/ /legs par sbyar te 'khrid par byal/ /zla ba dag la'ang bsab par byal/.

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'i tshul gyis gnas/ /nam mkha' stong pa'i dkyil 'khor du/ /bcos med sgron ma rnam pa bzhi/ma 'gags pa yi don gyis gsal/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma ni/ /nam mkha' stong pa'i giong dkyil du/ /dbyings kyi rang bzhin 'od kyi sku/ /ma 'gags 'gags med rnam par gsal/ /ye shes lnga ldan thugs kyi sku/ /lu gu rgyud kyi tshul du 'char/ /de yang 'gro dang 'ong ba dang/ /'gul ba dang ni 'khrig pa'ol/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma ru/ /bcug ste rig pa ma 'gul na/ /'gyur med rtogs pa'i bar du bshad/ /shes rab rang byung sgron ma ni/ /sgron 'dogs thams cad cho'd pa dang/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma ni/ /rtsol ba med par shar gyur na/ /rgyang zhag chu yi sgron ma yi/ /de la lta ba ma yengs na/ /mthar phyin sgom pa'i tshad du gsungs/ /de las 'gag med snang ba shar gyur na/ /yang dag rtogs pa'i mchog tu gsungs/ /de ltar chos nyid don la yang/ /rtogs dang ma rtogs gnyis med do/.

³⁰ See *ZMYT* I, p. 462: /gnyis pa snying ga nas ye shes sum brtsegs kyi rang gdangs mig nas nam mkhar shar ba nyid/ /mngon sum snying po'i rang gdangs su ngo sprad nas/ /sgron ma bzhis nyams su len pa yin no/ /de la rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma ni/ mig gi a 'bras kyi dbang rten dbang

The Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (*rgyang zhag chu'i sgron ma*) is said to have a threefold essence consisting of the Three Ways of Looking (*gzigs stangs gsum*)³¹ 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 arising and continual augmentation of the Four Visions (*snang ba bzhi*)³².

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*³³, 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 arising of Pristine

po gnyis tel 'di'i gnad du chos sku'i gzigs stangs dangs ma 'dren byed gyen du blta ba/ longs sku'i zur dang thad sor blta ba/ sprul sku'i gzigs stangs thur la dbab pa gsum gang byed kyang/ ched du rtsol bas ma bsgrubs par bag chags kyi rang bab cha nas lhod yod par byas pas/ mig bde zhing 'phel snang brtan par byed pa'i gnad dam pa'ol /dbyings rnam par dag pa'i sgron ma ni/ de las phyi yul nam mkha' stong par dang po la mthing ga khyab pa chen po'i 'od las kha dog lngar mched pa 'od kyi mu khyud zlum 'khrigs dang bcas pa rma bya'i mdongs lta bu'ol /'di'i gnad du nam mkhar rig pa blta ba nyid ma yengs par dal bas 'grub po/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma mig phugs kyi 'od tshon gang ba stel ji zhis na de nyid kyang dngos su nam mkhar snang bas dbang po'i yul du 'gyur ro/ /'di'i gnad dal bus sor mos gtems la rig pas de la ma yengs par blta'ol /shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma ni/ rig pa rang gdangs/ shes rab rang gsal rtog med rgya chad bral bar rtogs pa'i cha de yin la/ de'i dngos ni rdo rje lu gu rgyud gser gyi skud pa lta bu'ol /tshigs kyi bar na/ thig le dang bcas pa pra ba 'gyu ba'i ldings bar snang ba'ol /'di'i gnad lu gu rgyud dbyings kyi ra bar gtad pa la/ mig mi 'gul shes pa ma yengs par byas pa'ol /de yang thal 'gyur las/ dbyings rig dal bas ye shes 'grub/ /ces so/.

³¹ See Padmasambhava (*Karma Lingpa*). 1998. *Natural Liberation*. Padmasambhava's Teaching on the Six Bardos (commentary by Gyatrul Rinpoche, translated by B. Alan Wallace.) Sommerville, MA, Wisdom, pp. 239-240.

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

³³ See *KDYT* II, p. 215: /de ltar 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 gis 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 rnam sduid cing sku 'dzin pa dang/ gnad gsum bcud du smin pas 'khrul snang stong par byed do/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron mas ye shes kyi 'phel rgyas pa dang rlung gi gnas byed do/ /rlung gis ye shes kyi bkrang dang gzi mdangs bskyed cing snang ba mi 'dra ba du ma gong nas gong du bsgyur zhing snang bar byed do/ /rlung ni sngar bshad pa'i ye shes srog rlung rig pa'i char gnas pa yin no/ /shes rab rang byung gi sgron mas chos thams cad du ma ro gcig tu sduid pa ste lhun grub kyi ye shes mngon du byed do/ /de'i gnas cha rtog med kyi skus chos nyid ka 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 arising 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 *KDYT*³⁶ 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 chos nyid 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 phebs pa/ mdor na rig pa ka dag gi ye shes nyid yin te/ sku dang ye shes la sogs pa'i 'byung gnas chen po yin no/*.

³⁶ See *KDYT I*, p. 362: */dang po la chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba/ nyams gong 'phel gyi snang ba/rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba/ chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba bzhi las/ dang po ni de ltar ngo sprad pa'i 'od gsal gyi snang ba sgron ma bzhir snang ba ste/ 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 su/ thig le stong pa'i sgron ma snang ba'i nang du rig pa lu gu rgyud gsal la ma yengs par bltas pas gsal stong rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes lhag gis skyes pa'i ngang las mi gyo bar myam par 'jog pa'i shes pa gsal ba dwangs pa ka dag dang lhun grub gnyis su med pa de nyid shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma zhes bya ste/ gdod ma'i gzhi la da ltar gyi snang sems grol bar byed pa ste/ gzhi yi gnas lugs nyid 'bras bu ye grol du smin par byed pa'i shes rab ces bya ba ste/ gzhi 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'i rgyud*³⁷, 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 rtsal rdzogs chen po*³⁸. 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. In

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

³⁷ See TTT 56, p. 58, twenty-fourth chapter of the *Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*: */de yang khyad par 'di lta ste/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma ni/ /sgron ma rtsol ba'i sems dang bcas/ /rtsol byed yod pas sgron ma'i don ma rtogs/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma ni/ /rtsol ba'i sems dang bral zhing ye shes dbyings la spyod/ /de yang nam kha' gsal la dangs pa la/ /rig pa mig la bcug nas ni/ /ltas na snang ba mthong bar 'gyur/ /de la yang na 'di lta ste/ /dbyings la sku dang ye shes brgyan pa ni/ /sku la dbyings kyi brgyan pa'o/ /de yang bshad lugs 'di lta ste/ /dbyings la sku yis brgyan pa ni/ /'di ltar kun la shes par bya/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma'i dkyil/ /stong pa ye shes 'od gsal sku/ /'gul bzhin pa dang khrig bzhin pa/ /de bzhin sna tshogs 'phro ba'o/ /de la bstan pa thob gyur nas/ /'gro med 'ong med ngang du thim/ /'gul dang 'khrig pa ga la yod/ /de ni bstan pa thob pa'o/ /de ltar rtog pa skyes gyur na/ /dbyings la sku yis brgyan pa ni/ /'di ltar kun la shes parbya/ /rig pa 'gyur ba med pa la/ /dbyings ni 'od kyi snang bar shar/ /nam mkha' gang bar mthong ba ni/ /sku la dbyings kyi brgyan pa'o/.*

³⁸ See TTT 56, p. 206, fifth chapter of the *Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po*: */e ma ho/ rig pa'i ye shes sgron ma ni/ /sems can kun la rang chas te/ /rnam pa gnyis kyi tshul du 'char/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma dang/ /rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma'o/ /'du 'bral med pa'i tshul du 'char/ /sems can kun gyi snang ba bshad/ /de yang bshad pa 'di lta ste/ /gnas dang dus dang rtog pa'o/ /gnas ni bhri ku ta na gnas/ /dus ni bar ma do la 'char/ /rtogs pa nam mkha'i ngang du rtogs/ /de yang mthong ba'i dus su bstan/ /de yang dbyings dang rig pa bshad/ /de yang bshad lugs 'di lta ste/ /gzhi la gnas 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 text³⁹, one finds a still different set of Two Lamps (*sgron ma gnyis*). 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 dbyings kyi sgron ma*) mentioned above. By the way, this set of Two Lamps can also be found in the *man ngag sde* text *Nor bu 'phra bkod chen po'i rgyud*⁴⁰.

As far as I know, except for the *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 *man ngag sde* texts *Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud* and *Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*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 yi sgon ma or chu'i sgron ma*) is spoken of, the three other lamps, however, are not even mentioned⁴².

³⁹ See TTT 56, p. 211, eighth chapter of the *Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po*: /sku yi snang ba de dag kun/ /yul gyi snang ba ma yin te/ /dper na na chung gzhon pa yis/ /me long mtshan nyid gsal ba la/ /rang gi bzhin snang mthong ba ltar/ /chos nyid yul gyi nam mkha' la/ /rig pa'i snang ba sku ru gsal/ /rang gi gnas lugs mthong ba ni/ /yul la yod pa ma yin te/ /dmigs pa dag pas mngon du gsal/ /rang gi dkyil 'khor dang bcas/ /ye shes don la yul med kyang/ /sems can dus na yul du byung/ /mthong ba'i dus na rtogs pa che/ /go ba'i dus na bde ba che/ /snang ba mthong na nyams myong che/ /rang rig gcig bu grogs kyi mchog/ /snang ba'i yul du med pas nal/ /rdo rje lu gu rgyud nyid 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/ /zer ldan thig le bsam mi khyab/.

⁴⁰ See TTT 56, p. 224, fourth chapter of the *Nor bu 'phra bkod chen po'i rgyud*: /rdzogs chen sgron ma 'od gsal bas/ /stong pa nyid kyi lam du 'gyur/ /sgron ma'i de nyid mngon rdzogs pas/ /gsang sngags lam la nye ring med/ /rang gi tsitta'i dkyil 'khor gyi/ /thig le nyag gcig rang rdzogs nas/ /ye nas gnas pa'i rdzogs chen don/ /gsang chen rdzogs pa'i klong du gnas/ /thig le stong pa'i sgron ma dang/ /rang byung dbyings kyi sgron ma gnyis/ /stong dang mi stong mtha' las 'das/.

⁴¹ See for instance TTT 56, p. 153, first chapter of the *Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud*: /bstan pa'i sgron ma chos sku 'od po che/ /don dang mthun pa'i skyes bu rnam la gsal/ /bar ma do la 'od kyi snang ba so sor 'char/ /de phyir blo yi rim pa bdun bdun dag tu phyel/ /de las gdams ngag nyi shu rtsa gcig dag tu shes par bya/ /ye shes sgron ma rnam dag mkha' la de bzhin gshegs/ /rnam dag don ldan snying po ye shes sku/ /skye med don ldan rig pa byang chub sems/ /rang byung dbyings nas bde chen 'od 'bar sku/ /sku lnga mthar phyin sku gcig don la zhog/.

In the *Rdo rje sems 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 gyi 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 *Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*: /rang rig bstan pa'i sgron ma 'di/ /gzung bas mi zin chu zla 'dra/ /byang chub lam gyi sgron ma rang byung rang la thim/ /dper na nya yi mig bzhin 'gro ba yongs la khyab/ /tsitta'i dkyil du gnas bcas mig nas lam 'byung zhing/ /ye shes sgron ma stong nyid nam mkha' la/ /ye shes 'od phung nam mkha'i mtha' dang myam/ /bag chags sbubs la rten nas ye shes dbyings la spyod/ /ye shes sgron ma rang snang 'od po che/ /ye shes sgron ma bstan pa kun gyi rtse/.

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

As already mentioned above, I could not even find a single text in the TTT 56 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 54 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 54.

In the TTT 55 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 there⁴³. The only source at my disposal which contains information about Five Lamps is the *BMYT*⁴⁴.

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*⁴⁵.

⁴³ See TTT 55, p. 268, twelfth chapter of the *Bskal pa dum bu'i rgyud*.

⁴⁴ See *BMY* II, p. 390: */de yang sgron ma lngar dbye na/ 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/ /mig gi a 'bras ni 'od gsal gyi gzugs brnyan 'dzin pas rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma'o/ /'od gsal mi gyo ba las skyes pa'i ting nge 'dzi ni 'od gsal ye shes kyi sgron ma'o/ /thig le gsang skor gzhan las sgron ma bzahir gsungs kyang/ /'dir nyams su len pa bla na med pa dang dang mthun pas lngar byung ba'o/ /ye shes rang sar gnas pa ngos zin nas bsgoms pas gdod ma'i sar grol bar byed pa'o/ /mdor dril bas ye shes kyi ngo bo ni/ sems nyid 'od gsal ba sku dag ye shes kyi rang bzhih/ gnas ni snying/ lam ni rtsa/ sgo ni mig yul ni nam mkha'/ byed las ni gdod mar grol ba'o/*

⁴⁵ See *ZMY* II, p. 138: *don gnyis pa sgron ma drug gi gnad bcings pa la drug las/ gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma ni/ gzhi rang bzhih lhuun grub kyi sangs rgyas des 'khor 'das thams cad la khyab pa ni 'o ma la mar gyis khyab pa bzhih gnas te/ dpal phreng gi mdo las/ bde gshegs snying pos 'gro kun yongs la khyab/ /ces pa dang/mtshan brjod las/ mi 'gyur kun 'phro khyab pa po/ zhes pa dang/ mkha' 'gro ma gur las/ rin chen sems las phyir gyur pa'i/ /sang rgyas med cing sems can med/ /ces pa dang/ 'khor lo bzhi sbags las/ ma byung ma skyes od lnga'i snying po can/ /'gro ba yongs kyi gzhi rtsa mchog /ces so/ /tsitta sha'i sgron ma ni/ snying nang na sku dang ye shes rang 'od dang bcas pa bum pa nang gi mar me ltar gnas te/ de bzhih gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa'i mdo las/ sems can thams cad kyi nang na thog ma ji lta ba las ma gyos par gnas so/ /zhes pa dang/ mtshan brjod las/ so so rang rig mi gyo ba/ /mchog gi dang po sku gsum 'chang/ /zhes pa dang/ kye rdo rje las/ lus la ye shes chen po gnas/ /rtog pa thams cad yang dag spang/ dngos po kun la khyab pa'o/ /lus gnas lus las ma skyes pa'o/ /zhes pa dang/ thig le 'dus pa las/ sems can dran byed tsitta'i dkyil/ /chos gsum nyid kyi ngo bor gnas/ /zhes so/ /dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma ni/ /snying nas mig ru rtsa dar dkar gyi skud pa 'dra ba'i nang na/ ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'char ba rgya skar gyi nyi zhur lta bu ste/ mdo tshigs su bcad pa rgyas pa las/ /ye shes sgron mar 'brel bas ni/ /phyogs 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 *BMV*. 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*

kham *gsal bar mthong zhes pa dang/ mtshan brjod las/ sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i tshul bstan pa/ 'di ni nram dag legs pa'i lam/ |zhes dang/ phal chen las/ |gzhi nas rgya mtshor 'od gsal ba/ |la la nam mkha'i dbyings na gsal/ |'od kyi dkyil 'khor nram par bkra/ |zhes pa dang/ thig le 'dus pa las/ rtsa yi rgyal po shel gyi sbu gu can/ |nyi ma zla ba'i nang du zug par gnas/ |zhes so/ |rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma ni/mig gi dangs ma ye shes lhug par 'char ba'i sgo gnyis tel/ shar gyi mkhar nyi ma'i mdangs nub ri la gsal ba lta bu'o/ |yum las/ |sems kyi rang bzhin 'od gsal ba'o/ |zhes pa dang/ mtshan brjod las/ |ye shes mig gcig dri ma med/ |ye shes lus can de bzhin gshegs/ |zhes pa dang/ kun tu bzang po che ba rang la gnas pa'i rgyud las/ |shes pa rang snang mngon sum gnad/ |legs pa'i ye shes rang snang ba/ |zhes pa dang/ kun gsal las/ |chos nyid gsal ba'i ye gdangs ni/ |nam lang zhogs pa lta bu'o/ |zhes so/ |bar do dus kyi sgron ma ni/ |gzhi snang sku dang ye shes su shar ba rang ngo shes pas/ |sngar 'dris kyi mi dang 'phrad pa lta bu ste/ |'da' kha ye shes las/ |rang bzhin mi dmigs 'od gsal bas/ |dngos po ci la'ang mi chags bsgoms/ |zhes dang/ mtshan brjod las/ |'od chen nram par snang bar byed/ |ye shes skar ma lam me ba/ |'gro ba'i mar me ye shes sgron/ |gzi brjod phung po blta na sdug |ces pa dang/ |gsang 'dus las/ |nam mkha'i dbyings kyi dbus gnas par/ |'od zer sprin gyi tshogs chen po/ |sangs rgyas 'bar ba'i 'od dang ldan/ |ye shes 'bar bas kun la khyab/ |ces pa dang/ thig le 'dus pa las/ |rang byung ye shes chen po las/ |rang gdangs sna tshogs rigs lngar gsal/ |zhes so/ |mthar thug 'bras bu'i sgron ma ni/ |gzhi snang dbyings su thim pa rig pa rang sa zin pa rin po che gsang ba'i sbubs las 'phor 'gyur med pa ste/ |de las mthar thug pa'am bogs dbyung du med pa ston ka'i lo thog smin legs pa lta bu'o/ |yum las/ |phyin ci log las shin tu 'das nas/ |mya nang las 'das pa'i mthar phyin tel/ |zhes dang/ mtshan brjod las/ |mya ngan 'das pa mya ngan 'das/ |legs par mya ngan 'das dang nye/ |zhes pa dang/ rgyud kyi snying po las/ |snang srid 'khor 'das chos rnam la/ |ye shes spyi blugs rgyas thebs na/ |sku dang ye shes rang bzhin las/ |kham gsum 'khor bar mi 'gyur tel/ |thams cad zab mo chos nyid klong/ |zhes pa dang/ thig le kun gsal las/ |gnyis med chos sku mi 'gyur ba/ |stong nyid rdo rje'i sku thob po/ |gnyis med chos sku'i ngang las ni/ |rig pa'i ye shes mi 'gag gsal/ |zhes gsungs so/ |sgron ma drug gi mdo bcings pa bstan zin to/*

gsang ba'i sbubs)⁴⁶ 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 *BYT*⁴⁷. It is stated here that they are associated with the Six Intermediate States (*bar do drug*)⁴⁸, 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 zhags 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*),

⁴⁶ 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'i sbubs*). 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 gsang ba'i sbubs*) in order to distinguish it from the so called "Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness As Ground" (*gzhi lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs*). The sphere named "Secret Sphere of Spontaneously Perfect Preciousness As Way" (*lam lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs*) in general is associated with the Eight Modes of Arising (*'char tshul brgyad*) 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 (*sgo gnyis*). [*phyir shar ba'i 'char tshul brgyad kyi snang ba'i gnas la gzhi snang gi lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs zer la/ thog ma'i gzhi la mthar phyin pa dang/ gzhi rang mal gnyis la gzhi lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs dang/ mthar phyin pa 'bras bu lhun grub rin po che gsang ba'i sbubs zhes/ lhun grub kyi sbubs gsum du bshad la/ gzhi snang la lam lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs zhes gsungs tel/ nyams su blangs dus snang ba bzhi'i ye shes dang lam snang thams cad 'di las 'char ba yin no/*].

⁴⁷ See *BYT II*, p. 378: [*de dag bsdu na sgron ma drug tu 'dus tel/ gnas pa gzhi'i sgron ma ni/ sems nyid 'od gsal ba'o/ 'tsitta sha'i sgron ma ni/ snying rin po che mchod gur phub pa 'dra ba stel de'i nang na 'od gsal bum nang gi mar me ltar gnas pa'o/ 'dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma ni/ rgya skar gyi nyi zhur ltar snying nas mig tu 'brel ba'i rtsa 'od gsal gyi lam mol/ rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma ni/ mig gnyis kyi a 'bras te 'od gsal 'char ba'i sgo'o/ 'bar do dus kyi sgron ma ni/ rang snang 'od gsal gyi dkyl 'khor shar ba ngo shes pas gdod ma'i sar skyel ba'o/ 'mthar thug 'bras bu'i sgron ma ni/ ye shes dbyings su 'khyil bas gzhon nu bum pa sku'i zhing na btsan sa zin pa'o/*].

⁴⁸ According to the *BYT II*, p. 361, the Six Intermediate States (*bar do drug*) are:

1. The Intermediate State of the Ground In Its Natural State (*gnas lugs gzhi' bar do*).
2. The Intermediate State of the Absorption of the Clear Light (*'od gsal ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*).
3. The Intermediate State of the Delusory Appearances of Dreaming (*'khrul snang rmi lam gyi bar do*).
4. The Intermediate State of Death Caused by Disorder of the Elementary Forces (*'byung 'khrugs 'chi kha'i bar do*).
5. The Intermediate State of Spontaneously Perfect Reality Itself (*lhun grub chos nyid kyi bar do*).
6. The Intermediate State of the Karmic Bardo of Becoming (*srid pa las kyi 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 text⁴⁹:

Here, these Nine Lamps⁵⁰ 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

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 gdams pa yin gyir/des na tsitta sha'i sgron ma zhes pa snying gi rtse mo nas/ ka ti shel sbug can khrag dang chu ser la sogs med pa'i rtsa dar dkar gyi skud pa lta bu rtse mo gnyis su gyes pa zhig dbu ma'i nang nas mgrin pa rtsa'i drwa bar brgyud cing klad pa dung khang nas mar gug pa mig gi a 'bras gnyis la zug nas yod pa de ni dkar 'jam rtsa'i sgron ma zhes bya ba ye shes mngon sum 'char ba'i lam yin pas/ rdo rje sems dpa'i gsang lam zhes kyang bya zhing/ mngon sum snying tig gi rnal 'byor gang dag 'chikhar rig pa 'pho ba'i lam yang mig tu gsungs pa'i gnad kyang 'di nyid do/de yang klong gsal las/ khyad par snying nas 'brel ba'i rtsa/ dar skud ba men ra 'dra'i kha/ dbang po mig la zug pa stel /zhes gsungs pa bzhin/ rig pa'i ye shes kyi nyi 'od rtsa'i lam de las brgyud nas/ rgyang zhag chu'i sgron zhes bya ba mig gi sgo las sku dang zhing khams kyi rang snang mngon sum du 'char ba stel 'di la rgyang zhags kyi nang tshan dbye na gsum yod del 'byung ba 'dus pa'i rgyang zhags zhes mig gi dbang rten nyid dang/ dbang po 'dus pa'i rgyang zags ni gzugs 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 mthong byed dang gsum po tshogs pa'i mthus chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba mthong bar 'gyur ba stel/ sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud las/ 'char byed 'gags pa med pa yi/ dbang po'i dangs ma mig gi sgor/ bskyed pas padma'i spyen du gnas/ /zhes dang/ sgra thal 'gyur las/ ye shes 'char ba'i sgo nyid ni/ /lus bcud dangs ma kun 'dus pa/ tsakSHu zhes pa'i sgo nas 'thon/ 'di las ye shes dngos 'byung ste/ zhes sogs rgya cher gsungs shing/ /de lta bu'i nang gi sgron ma gsum la brten nas man ngag gis gnad du bsun pas phyi'i sgron ma gsum 'char bar 'gyur la/ de la goms pas ni bar do 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 tshede/ lta rtsa sgron ma rnam pa dgu po 'di dag ni rdzogs chen gyi nyams len rtsa ba ste bsdu na drug la 'du zhing/ de dag kyang bzhi ru 'du bar gsungs so/.

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

BMNYT I / II / III / IV	<i>Bi ma'i snying thig</i> . In <i>Snying thig ya bzhi</i> . 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi. 1970.
BMYT I / II	<i>Bla ma yang thig</i> . In <i>Snying thig ya bzhi</i> . 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.
KDNYT I / II	<i>Mkha' 'gro snying thig</i> . In <i>Snying thig ya bzhi</i> . 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi. 1970.
KDYT I / II / III	<i>Mkha' 'gro yang thig</i> . In <i>Snying thig ya bzhi</i> . 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi. 1970.
NYSNY	<i>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</i> . By <i>Rtse le rgod tshang pa</i> , b. 1608. In <i>Collected Works</i> . 5 vols. New Delhi . 1974
TCZ I / II	<i>Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod</i> . By <i>Klong chen rab 'byams</i> . In <i>Klong chen mdzod bdun</i> , <i>Sde-dge</i> edition. 6 vols. Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang. 1983.
TTT 54 / 55 / 56	<i>The Tibetan Tripitaka</i> , vols. 54, 55, 56. Editor-in-Chief: A W. Barber. SMC Publishing Inc., Taipei, 1991.
ZMYT I / II	<i>Zab mo yang thig</i> . In <i>Snying thig ya bzhi</i> . 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

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