

Dzogchen Terms

A

The white Tibetan letter A is the symbol of Shunyata and of primordial wisdom.



Attitude

Awareness, Non-judging, Patience, Relaxed Mind, Integration, Presence, Non-striving, Acceptance, Nonduality, Letting Go, Beyond Mind.

Awareness

The awareness (pozornost') of natural perfection is everywhere, its parameters beyond indication, its actuality incommunicable; the sovereign view of natural perfection is the here-and-now, naturally present without speech or books, irrespective of conceptual clarity or dullness, but as spontaneous joyful creativity its reality is nothing at all.

— *Natural Perfection, Longchenpa's Radical Dzogchen*

Bodhichitta

Relative Bodhichitta is a state of being awake, tender, and genuine. The Sanskrit term bodhi means “wakefulness” (bdelost'). The ground of nonthought is Absolute Bodhichitta.

Buddha Nature

The nature of mind, synonym for ‘buddha nature’ or Dzogchen, or the potentiality of vajra in vajrayana. It should be distinguished from ‘mind’ (sems), which refers to ordinary discursive thinking based on ignorance. ‘Mind Essence’ is the basic space from and within which these thoughts take place.

Dharmakaya

Naked and aware emptiness.

Dzogchen

Dzogchen – Great Perfection; the state of contemplation beyond the mind; mental processes not conditioning awareness.

Dzogchen is about resting in the “primordial state of pure awareness”. The term also derives from the “highest perfection” of the Vajrayana practice after the visualization of the deity and the mantra recitation is dissolved and one rests in the natural state of luminous and pure awareness. Dzogchen – Tibetan Great Perfection – is also considered as “The Zen of Tantra”. Dzogchen is a sudden path with gradual cultivation.

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There exist three series of Dzogchen teachings: the Mind Series (semde), the Space Series (longde), and the Secret Instruction Series (mangagde).

The Mind Series (semde) focuses on contemplation, or the Nature of Mind. The principal method employed is Zhine, or fixating the mind on a single object of meditation, at first on a visual object, and later on an empty location in space. The emphasis is on Kadag, or the primordial purity – also called Tregcho, the total relaxation of body, speech, and mind.

The Space Series (longde) focuses on sky meditation.

The Secret Instruction Series (mangagde) assumes one knows how to get into contemplation through different means. The emphasis is on Lhundrub, the spontaneous visible manifestations of energies potential within the Nature of Mind.

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The three tregcho guidelines for meditation are: resting one's mind in dharmadhatu (semde), resting effortlessly (longde), and resting without accepting or rejecting (mangagde).

The Dzogchen talks about the eyes as the gates of wisdom. If there is a direct simplicity of mind, or tregcho, the light chains begin to stay and wait for your perception. In order to observe the vajra chains, you first have to develop a sense of carelessness at the Dzogchen level; otherwise, they will not stop. When you have developed carelessness, noncaring, and spaciousness, they begin to slow down. If you have not cut through, you cannot see these visions. The more you cut through, the more these chains wait for you or actually come back to you. It is connected with the physical setup and speed of the brain. With this practice, you can actually see your own brain.

■ **Emptiness, Empty**

Without thoughts

Who's aware of emptiness?

Teravadian: Not me

Mahayanain: Compassion

Tantric: Bliss

Madhyamakain: Emptiness

Dzogchenpa: Awareness

■ **Essence of mind**

Nature of mind is the base of everything, empty and pure with clarity. Shunyata, the state of emptiness, is the very essence of the mind.

Ground

In Dzogchen ground is the primordial state. It is an essential component of the Dzogchen tradition. Knowledge of this Ground is called rigpa. Beings are trapped in samsara by not recognizing the ground.

Guruyoga

“Guru” means teacher, “yoga” means having knowledge or understanding of one’s own authentic state, the essential condition in which there is nothing to change or modify. We are not judging and thinking. This is the state of the guru. Guruyoga is, then, the main element in the practice of Dzogchen.



Kadag

Primordial purity

Lhundrub

Spontaneous presence

Main Point

In the mahayana, everything depends on attitude, and everything is done with diplomacy.

But in vajrayana, you cut thoughts abruptly, on the spot. You do not even take an attitude. You just do it. It is very direct and precise. Right away - bang, bang, bang, on the spot. There is no particular way to do it. Cutting thoughts is the first way of blowing up the samsaric world.

The main point that runs through every level of vajrayana practice, is that you are able to cut your mental contents directly and abruptly.

Main Practice

The tantric nyingthik tradition contains Zen-like practices of formless meditation and exercises that cultivate spontaneous visions of buddhas.

Main practice consists of

- Trekchö “break through”, recognizing rigpa
- Tögal “leap ahead”, spontaneous presence which is the stabilization of rigpa and compassionate action.

Natural State

Natural State – we are totally aware and relaxed. The Natural State is not just but also the dissolving of thoughts. Just leave everything as it is and thoughts will dissolve by themselves. This state of presence or immediate awareness is the Natural State (not only in semde).

Look at the gap between thoughts while you are resting. At that time you are not dull, there is no agitation, there is just a clear presence. That is Nature, and you must trust and realize this. That is real Nature.

The spiritual world is an intangible world (nehmatateľný svet).

The natural state is like the experience of a person who just finished some long exhausting work, once it is finally over, they experience blissful satisfaction. The natural state is fresh, vividly open and empty, brilliantly clear and deeply relaxed.

Nirvana

Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please explain to us the meaning of ‘nirvana’.

The Teacher replied: Best Beloved, listen to this! We shall explain to you the meaning of nirvana. Nirvana is essentially unlocatable all-inclusive awareness.

— *Everything is Light, p.219*

Nirvana is the extinction of all concepts. It is total freedom.

Nondualistic

Nondualistic – vajrayana insight: it is insight that is free from thinking about something else, free from perceiving the other. In other words, it is nondualistic; it is just direct perception.

Open Awareness

Open awareness – rigpa – is the heart of all Dzogchen practices.

Principle

Devotion and Pure Perception that lead beyond confusion to thought-free wakefulness. Devotion towards the natural state.

Rigpa

Rigpa is the knowledge of the ground. Pure Awareness. Open/panoramic/direct awareness; naked/empty vision. A Tibetan word meaning the “essential nature of mind”, or unchanging, transparent awareness.

Question: Can there be thinking during Rigpa (Buddha Mind)?

Answer: It is essential to resolve the fact that there is no namtog (thought) whatsoever in the state of rigpa; it is impossible. A hair cannot remain in a flame. I cannot emphasize this enough – there is no thought during the state of rigpa!

— *As It Is, volume 2, p.168*

Like transmission after Phat being in guru’s state not judging or thinking. For tantric rigpa is the knowledge of the essence of energy, the secret sound.

Most esoteric traditions agree that thoughts themselves are not the enemy. On the other hand, when we are thinking, awareness is dulled and confused.

Thoughts and emotions are different. In Buddhism the word namtog encompasses both.

Shine

The practice of fixation, with or without a visible object, is equated with shamatha meditation (zhi-gnas), attaining a state of calm, according to the Dzogchen viewpoint.

The practice of vision, whether with the empty sky or with sunlight as the support, is equated with vipashyana meditation, or higher insight (lhag-mthong).

Transcending samsara

In the mahayana, transcending samsara means to do good, whereas in vajrayana, transcending samsara means play.

Vajrayana

This vehicle teaches the practices of taking the result as the path, also known as Secret Mantra.

Vajrayana Insight

Vajrayana Insight: it is insight that is free from thinking about something else, free from perceiving the other. In other words, it is nondualistic; it is just direct perception.

Vajrayana Magic

We are not talking about magic in the style of a conjuring magician on the stage, but we are talking about fundamental magic. Out of that comes vajrayana magic, which is that we are able to cut our thoughts abruptly and directly. On the spot! Cutting thoughts is the first way of blowing up the samsaric world.

— *The Tantric Path of Indestructible Wakefulness, p.197*

Vajrayana sayings

Vajrayana sayings:

- Rigpa Free from Sem
- Buddha without Breath (insight without mind)
- Meditation without Thought, but Luminous (beyond just emptiness).

Additional Terms

Clear Light

The fundamental innate mind of clear light is considered to be the nature of mind, or the root of consciousness.

Contemplation

- The action of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time.
- A kind of inner vision or seeing, transcendent of the intellect, facilitated by means of practices such as prayer or meditation.
- A content-free mind directed towards the awareness of Divinity as a living reality.

Difference

Mahamudra and Dzogchen

Differ in words but not in meaning.

The only difference is that mahamudra stresses mindfulness,

While Dzogchen relaxes within awareness.

Guruyoga

At times visualize at the hearth, at the center of a five-colored thigle a clear and luminous white A, energy of nonduality of the state of the guru and your rigpa. Otherwise, visualize a white A at the forehead in the middle of a gankhyil at the center of a triangle.

Four Visions

The Four Visions (snang ba bzhi) of the Leaping Over (thod rgal)

- 1) The Vision of the Immediate Perception of Reality Itself
(chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba)
 - Vajra Chains Awareness Vision
- 2) The Vision of Increasing Experiences (nyams gong 'phel gyi snang ba)
 - Rainbow Lights, Buddha-Bodies Vision
- 3) The Vision of the Awareness Reaching Its Peak
(rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba)
 - Perfected Buddha Families Vision
- 4) The Vision of Exhaustion of Reality Itself (chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba)
 - Dissolution of Visions, Buddhahood.

It is related to light visions, light lamps, light channels of awareness.

Concerning Trekchö it is sufficient to just recognize the moment free from thoughts of the three times, free of concepts. While in the state of Trekchö, you apply the key points of the instructions of Tögal; do the three postures and the three gazes, apply the key points, and leave the mind in rigpa. Then you see the deities, they are visible, but they are intangible (nehmatatel'né).

In Atiyoga, the deity is primordially present as our nature without any need to be created. They are we. That is the short path.

When we experience the ultimate Tögal, the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities will appear. One realizes that spontaneous presence is self-display.

Four Ways of Cutting Through Thoughts

From the Instruction Manual for the Ground of Tregcho

To rest in the state of empty and luminous awareness is known as the ground of cutting through. Now do thoughts occur during this state of stillness? Is there stillness while the thoughts occur? There are thoughts during the state of stillness, and there are four ways of cutting thoughts relaxed way:

- 1) Like a cat waiting for a mouse,
Look directly into the essence of the thoughts.
- 2) Like a brahman threading a needle,
Keep awareness balanced and look into the essence of the thoughts.
- 3) Like a watchman in a watchtower,
Look into the thoughts within the state of undistracted awareness.
- 4) Like an arrow flying from an archer,
Look into the thoughts within the state of one-pointed awareness.

Now, as for mingling stillness and thinking:

Stillness is to rest quietly in the state of empty and
luminous mind-nature.

From within that state a thought suddenly occurs.

By looking directly into it, it completely disappears in
the continuity of this mind-nature.

This is called mingling stillness and thinking in the
continuity of mind-nature.

Wakefulness that is primordially pure in essence

Is free from all unawareness and thinking.

By relying on the primordial purity, the emptiness, to bring forth the intrinsic awareness nakedly, free from elaboration, and to dissolve (the phenomenal existents into the) ultimate nature, the emptiness (is Thregcho).

— *Jigme Lingpa, The Practice of Dzogchen, p.69*

Luminosity

Emptiness and Luminosity Shamatha-vipashyana is sometimes referred to in vajrayana terms as the indivisibility of emptiness and luminosity. Emptiness is connected with shamatha, we try to avoid discursive thoughts. Luminosity is connected with vipashyana. It means seeing brightly and clearly. By means of luminosity, awareness begins to pick up what needs to be done.

Maha-Ati

Maha-Ati refers to Atiyoga or to higher tantric yantras (Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga). Maha-Ati teachings may be complex, but they are in fact simple, pure, and immediate.

Meditation

In Dzogchen it is simply resting undistracted in natural state.

It is free from all mental constructions, while remaining fully relaxed, without any distraction or grasping.

How do we know when it is rigpa and when it is not? If you are in an unaltered state, it is rigpa. If not contriving or manipulating the mind in any way, but simply resting in an unaltered state of pure and pristine awareness.

When one past thought has ceased and a future thought has not yet risen, in that gap, in between, there is a consciousness of the present moment; fresh, virgin, unaltered naked awareness. Another thought suddenly arises. This is if recognized, the self-radiance of that rigpa awareness.

In cutting through, the practitioner rests in attention and lets that attention cut through the confusion of thought and projection to the natural purity of timeless awareness itself.

As soon as a thought arises, rest and relax the posture. Then look again. Work with this alternation, the looking and the resting.

Samaya

The essence of Samaya in Dzogchen teaching: “not to meditate or to practice something with the mind” and yet never to be distracted, for one remains uninterruptedly in the self-perfection of the single state of rigpa or truth.

Present / Mindful / Awareness

Present: The present time is associated with the events perceived directly and for the first time, not as a recollection or speculation. It is a period between the past and the future.

Mindful: Focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment.

Awareness: Being conscious of itself.

Stillness, Occurrence, Awareness

According to the oral instructions of the realized ones, leave out various logical investigations.

Stillness is when you look into your mind, direct yourself inward, and remain devoid of any kind of thinking.

Occurrence is when various kinds of thoughts arise.

Awareness is your mind being conscious of either of these.

There is nothing easier than this recognizing awareness, but it is essential to practice.

The moment you realize you are not present, you are present. It is not about eliminating thoughts but illuminating them.

Vacant state

Most esoteric traditions agree that thoughts themselves are not the enemy. On the other hand, when we are thinking, awareness is dulled and confused.

The vacant state of not thinking of anything

Is itself the cause of ignorance and confusion.

But there is a thought-free knowing (rigpa) that is totally open like a clear sky that is your own nature. Indescribable, awareness, or knowing (rigpa). Then the wakefulness of knowing your nature will dawn. The difference is like having eyesight and being blind.

Merely recognizing this nature of knowing however is not enough; you must stabilize familiarity with this state. So it is important to sustain a constant remembrance of settling into the natural state.

Shamatha here is being an ongoing steadiness in remembering to settle in the natural state, and vipashyana the recognizing of your essence as natural cognizance.

Mark the degree of progress in this practice by the strength of the luminosity at night.

— From *The Lamp that Dispels Darkness* by Mipham

Yangti

The Yangti Nakpo "The Single Golden Letter of the Black Quintessence" is a cycle of Dzogchen teachings that includes practices focusing on dark retreat.