

DZOGCHEN

The Tibetan Buddhism

Dzogchen the most esoteric teaching of the Buddha



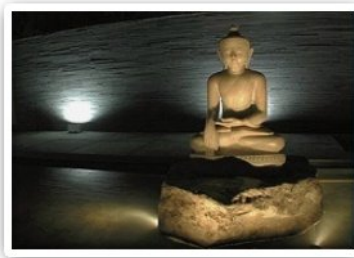
Taoshobuddha

DZOGCHEN



Taashobuddha

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism



MEDITATION LEADS TO ULTIMATE FLOWERING

Dzogchen - the Tibetan Buddhism

© 2011 Taoshobuddha

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the original publisher TAOSHOBUDDHA MEDITATIONS and TAOSHOBUDDHA.

Printed and Published by: **TAOSHOBUDDHA MEDITATIONS**
Cover design and graphics: **Anand Neelamber,**

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism



TAOSHOBUDDHA

The word Taoshobuddha comes from three words, 'tao,' 'sho,' and 'Buddha'. The word Tao was coined by the Chinese master, Lau Tzu. It means "that" which is and cannot be put into words. It is unknown and unknowable. It can only be experienced and not expressed in words. Its magnanimity cannot be condensed into finiteness. The word Sho implies, that which is vast like the sky and deep like an ocean and carries within its womb a treasure. It also means one on whom the existence showers its blessings. And lastly the word Buddha implies the Enlightened One; one who has arrived home.

Thus, Taoshobuddha implies one who is existential, on whom the existence showers its blessings and one who has arrived home. The Enlightened One!

Contents

1. Preface	6
2. Padmasambhava and Dzogchen	8
3. Introduction to Dzogchen	19
4. The Rigpa	21
5. Nomenclature and Etymology	25
6. Maha Ati	27
7. Background	29
8. Logic and the syllogism in Dzogchen	36
9. Causality and interdependent origination	40
10. Guardians and Practices	42
11. Apperception	48
12. Texts of Dzogchen	51
13. Dzogchen monastery	52
14. The Aro approach to Dzogchen	70
15. Introduction to Tantra	74
16. Hermetic Esoteric Mystical Philosophies	81
17. Hermetic Esoteric Mystical Philosophies	87
18. Purifying Our Emotions Silently	91

Preface

Twenty five centuries ago with the enlightenment of Gautam Siddhartha a new way of religiosity came into existence. Before Buddha there were religions but not religiosity.

Before Buddha there were religions but never a pure religiousness. Man was not yet mature. With Buddha, humanity enters into a mature age. Buddha has opened the gateless gate. It takes time for human beings to understand such a deep message. Buddha's message is the deepest ever. Nobody has done the work that Buddha has done, the way he has done. Nobody else represents pure fragrance.

Other founders of religions, other enlightened people, have compromised with their audience. Buddha remains uncompromised, hence his purity. He does not care what you can understand he cares only what the truth is. And he says it without being worried whether you understand it or not. In a way this looks hard; in another way this is great compassion.

Recently I began talks of the **Diamond Sutra** then Lars Jensen from Sweden asked a question:

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

'According to Dzogchen (a special practice performed in the some Tibetan Buddhism and also in the original religion of Tibet named BON) one should be aware of awareness itself, called aware of the naked awareness. They call this for the ultimate practice. So Dzogchen recommend that it is better way to practice awareness of awareness, than to be aware of (as for example) the physical breathing process going on in the body. So my question is: 'Is it a better way to practice awareness of awareness, than to practice awareness of body functions?' Or is it different level of practice and you should therefore start where you are?'

When a student like Subhati enquires something Buddha has to respond. So was the case when Lars asked this is the response.

I had to go into one of the past lives nearly 1000 year ago and this document was the outcome that was done many years ago and now it is being presented.

Once again it is the ingenuity of Lars that is behind this presentation.

Love

Taoshobuddha

**Padmasambhava and
Dzogchen**



Padmsambhava

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Dzogchen started with a Buddhist Tantric master from the country of Uddiyana in the North-West part of ancient India. Padmasambhava is the originator of Tibetan Buddhism or Dzogchen. He is also known as Rinpoche or Pema Jungne etc. who came to Tibet in the eight century. He was invited by the Tibetan King Tisong Detsan (742-797 CE).

Padmasambhava (Sanskrit - पद्मसम्भव; The Lotus Born, was a sage guru from Oḍḍiyāna who is said to have transmitted Vajrayana Buddhism to Bhutan and Tibet and neighboring countries in the 8th century. In those lands he is better known as Guru Rinpoche ('Precious Guru') or Lopon Rinpoche, or, simply, Padum in Tibet, where followers of the Nyingma School regard him as the second Buddha.

He said: 'My father is the intrinsic awareness, Samantabhadra. My mother is the ultimate sphere of reality, Samantabhadri. I belong to the caste of non-duality of the sphere of awareness. My name is the Glorious Lotus Born. I am from the unborn sphere of all phenomena. I consume concepts of duality as my diet. I act in the way of the Buddhas of the three times.'

According to tradition, Padmasambhava was incarnated as an eight-year-old child appearing

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

in a lotus blossom floating in Lake Dhanakosha, in the kingdom of Oḍḍiyāna. Traditionally it is identified with the Swat Valley of South Asia in present-day Pakistan.

His special nature was recognized by the local king who married him to one of his daughters, **Mandarava**. She and Padmasambhava's other main consort, **Yeshe Tsogyal**, developed into realized practitioners. Many thangkas and paintings show Padmasambhava in between them.

His fame became known to **Trisong Detsen**, the 38th King of the **Yarlung Dynasty**, and the first Emperor of Tibet (742–797), whose kingdom was beset by evil mountain deities.

The king invited Padmasambhava to Tibet where he used his tantric powers to subdue the evil deities he encountered along the way, eventually receiving the Emperor's wife, identified with the **Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal**, as a consort.

This was in accordance with the tantric principle of not eliminating negative forces but redirecting them to fuel the journey toward spiritual awakening.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

In Tibet he founded the first monastery in the country, **Samye Gompa**. He initiated the first monks, and introduced the people to the practice of **Tantric Buddhism**.

Padmasambhava had five major female tantric companions. These are the so-called '**Five Wisdom Dakinis**' (Wylie: Ye-shes mKha-'gro Inga) or '**Five Consorts**.'

In Padmasambhava's biography - they are described as the five women 'who had access to the master's heart'. He practiced tantric rites which are considered to have exorcised the previous demons of Tibet and converted them into protectors of the country.' They were:

- 1. Mandarava** of Zahor - the emanation of **Vajravarahi's Body**;
- 2. Belwong Kalasiddhi** of (North-West) India - the emanation of **Vajravarahi's Quality**,
- 3. Belmo Sakya Devi** of Nepal; the emanation of **Vajravarahi's Mind**,
- 4. Yeshe Tsogyal** of Tibet; the emanation of **Vajravarahi's Speech** and

5. Mangala or Tashi Kyedren of 'the Himalayas' - the emanation of Vajravarahi's Activity.

In Bhutan he is associated with the famous **Paro Taktsang** or '**Tiger's Nest**' monastery built on a sheer cliff wall about 500m above the floor of Paro valley. It was built around the **Taktsang Senge Samdup** (stag tshang seng ge bsam grub) cave where he is said to have meditated in the 8th Century. He flew there from Tibet on the back of **Yeshe Tsogyal**, whom he transformed into a flying tigress for the purpose of the trip. Later he travelled to Bumthang district to subdue a powerful deity offended by a local king. Padmasambhava's body imprint can be found in the wall of a cave at nearby Kurje Lhakhang temple.

Padmasambhava also hid a number of religious treasures (termas) in lakes, caves, fields and forests of the Himalayan region to be found and interpreted by future tertöns or spiritual treasure-finders. According to Tibetan tradition, the **Bardo Thodol** (commonly referred to as the Tibetan Book of the Dead) was among these hidden treasures, subsequently discovered by a Tibetan **terton, Karma Lingpa**.

A **tertön** is a discoverer of ancient texts or, one who finds terma. Many **tertöns** are considered

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

incarnations of the 25 main disciples of Padmasambhava. A vast system of transmission lineages developed. **Nyingma** scriptures were updated by terma discoveries, and terma teachings have guided many Buddhist and Bön practitioners.

Consorts, with whom they practice sexual yoga to accelerate and enhance their capacity for realization, are thought to be very important to **tertöns**. Fremantle (2001: p.19) states that:

One of the special requirements for the discovery of **termas** is the inspiration of the feminine principle, just as it was necessary for their concealment. The great majority of tertöns have been men, and generally they are accompanied by their wives or female companions (who need not necessarily have a sexual relationship with them). Alternatively, something representing the tertön's complementary energy, whether male or female, must be present.

Prominent tertöns

Bhutanese painted thangka of Tertön Guru Nyima Özer, late 19th century, Do Khachu Gonpa, Chukka, and Bhutan. According to generally accepted history, the rediscovering of terma began with the first tertön, Sangye Lama

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

(1000–1080). Tertöns of outstanding importance were Nyangral Nyima Özer (1124–1192), Guru Chowang (1212–1270), Rigdzin Gödem (1307–1408), Pema Lingpa (1450–1521), Migyur Dorje (1645–1667), and Jigme Lingpa (1729–1798), Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892) and Orgyen Chokyr Lingpa (1829–1870).

The 'seal' of all tertöns is said to have been Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892). In one of his visions, he could clearly see all the terma that were hidden throughout Tibet and other countries. He was the only master in Tibetan history to have not only received, but also transmitted the '**seven transmissions**' that are the canonical teachings, treasures taken from the earth, reconciled treasures, mind treasures, recollections, pure visions, and aural transmissions received in visions.

In the 8th century, Guru Padmasambhava predicted that in the future hundreds of tertöns would spread his teachings. Throughout the centuries many more people were known as tertön. Five of them were widely recognized as very important ones and called the 'five tertön kings:'

1. Nyangral Nyima Özer (1124–1192)
2. Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (1212–1270)

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

3. Dorje Lingpa (1346-1405)
4. Pema Lingpa (1445/50-1521)
5. Padma Ösel Do-ngak Lingpa (Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo) (1820-1892)

Another noteworthy tertön is Tsangpa Gyare, founder of the Drukpa Kagyu order (12th century).

Tantric cycles related to Padmasambhava are not just practiced by the **Nyingma**. They even gave rise to a new offshoot of **Bön** which emerged in the 14th century called the **New Bön**.

Prominent figures of the Sarma (new translation) schools such as the Karmapas and Sakya lineage heads have practiced these cycles and taught them. Some of the greatest tertons revealing teachings related to Padmasambhava have been from the Kagyu or Sakya lineages. The hidden lake temple of the Dalai Lamas behind the Potala called Lukhang is dedicated to Dzogchen teachings and has murals depicting the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava. Padmasambhava established **Vajrayana Buddhism** and the highest forms of **Dzogchen (Mengagde)** in Tibet and transformed the entire nation.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

On Padmasambhava's consort practice with Princess **Sakya Devi** from Nepal it is said: 'In a state of intense bliss, Padmasambhava and **Sakya Devi** realized the infinite reality of the **Primordial Buddha Mind**, the All-Beneficent Lord (Samantabhadra), whose absolute love is the unimpeded dynamo of existence.

Experiencing the succession of the four stages of ecstasy, their mutual state of consciousness increased from height to height. And thus, meditating on **Supreme Vajrasattva Heruka** as the translucent image of compassionate wrathful (energized) activity, they together acquired the **Mahamudra of Divinity** and attained complete Great Enlightenment.

Also, The Bramze'i skor (The Cycle of the Brahmin) is a group of Nyingma tantras of the Atiyoga class which were introduced into Tibet by Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. The 'brahmin' referred to is apparently Bram za Bde mchong snying po, who received the lineage from **Dga' rab rdo rje** and passed it to Srisimha. He by their tradition taught the Tibetan Buddhists how to do telepathy - the Varyadara - a skill of Tantric Yoga. To acquire it, young lamas spend three years sitting in a wooden box, unable to lie down.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

His Pureland Paradise is Zangdok Palri (the Copper-coloured Mountain).

He is further considered an emanation of Buddha Amitabha and traditionally even venerated as 'a second Buddha'.

Padmasambhava is supposed to be the author of what is wrongly known as the '**Tibetan book of Death**' in the west. Padmasambhava also wrote some other secret texts that was hidden and concealed in temples and caves by the king, to be discovered by the coming generation when the understanding was higher so they could be able to understand these secret knowledge.

Urgyan Lingpa (1323-1360) rediscovered these writing, some centuries later as prophecies by Padmasambhava. These writing were about **Dzogchen Teaching**. From that time the Dzogchen tradition and teaching has been given in Tibet. **Dzogchen is regarded in Tibet as the most esoteric teaching of the Buddha**. Dzogchen is known by different names in different schools. Among Tibetan Buddhists of the old school, the Nyingmapas and also among BON, it is generally known as Dzogchen. Mostly Dzogchen is taught by the non-sectarian Tibetan monks, but is also a part of the teaching of many other Tibetan schools.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

One of these secret texts by Padmasambhava is 'Rig-pa ngo-sprod gcer-mthong rang-grol', which may be translated to English as '**Self-Liberation through seeing with naked awareness, being an direct introduction to the state of intrinsic awareness.**' This is one of a large number of texts belonging to the cycle of the hidden treasure texts, entitled the **Zabchs zhi-khro dgongs-pa rang-grol**, 'The profound teaching of Self-liberation in the primordial state of the peaceful and wrathful Deities.'

Introduction to Dzogchen

Dzogchen is regarded in Tibet as the most esoteric teaching of the Buddha. Dzogchen is a Tibetan term used to denote a meditation practice and also a body of teachings that helps the seekers to recognize and discover the **dzogchen state. It is the Tibetan adaptation of Buddhist teachings that has the influence of Tantra.**

The Tibetan term **dzogchen** is said to be an adaptation of the Sanskrit term **mahāsandhi**, and is also used to render the Sanskrit term **ati yoga – prim-ordial yoga.**

In general terms dzogchen refers to a **meditation practice** and body of teachings aimed at helping an individual to recognize the Dzogchen state, to become sure about it, and to

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

develop the capacity to maintain the state continually.

According to Tibetan Buddhism and Bön, Dzogchen is the natural, primordial state or natural condition of the mind, and a body of teachings and meditation practices aimed at realizing that condition. Dzogchen, or 'Great Perfection', is a central teaching of the **Nyingma School** also practiced by adherents of other Tibetan Buddhist sects. **According to Dzogchen literature, Dzogchen is the highest and most definitive path to enlightenment.**

The Rigpa

According to Dzogchen, the ultimate nature of all sentient beings is said to be pure, all-encompassing, primordial awareness or naturally occurring timeless awareness. This **'intrinsic awareness'** has no form of its own and yet is capable of perceiving, experiencing, reflecting, or expressing all form. It does so without being affected by those forms in any ultimate, permanent way.

Dzogchenpas refer to this pristine awareness as **RIGPA**. The Dzogchen masters say that one's nature is like a mirror which reflects with complete openness but is not affected by the reflections, or like a crystal ball that takes on the color of the material on which it is placed without itself being changed.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Rigpa is a Tibetan word, which in general English means '**intelligence**' or '**awareness**'.

In Sanskrit it means **vidya** विद्या.

In the dzogchen teachings, rigpa means direct awareness of the truth, direct recognition of the non-dual awareness that is the true nature of the individual.

In Dzogchen, there is direct perception of non-duality. According to the Dzogchen view, continuing rigpa is enlightenment.

In Dzogchen the highest teachings in the Buddhist tradition of Tibet, **rigpa** have a deeper connotation. It refers to '**the innermost nature of the mind**'. The whole teaching of Buddha is directed towards realizing this, our ultimate nature, the state of omniscience or enlightenment – a truth so universal, so primordial that it goes beyond all limits, and beyond even religion itself.

—Sogyal Rinpoche

Having distinguished from mind, one is not distracted by the mind, i.e. one does not let thoughts lead oneself. This allows thoughts to naturally self-liberate without avoidance. Rigpa has three wisdoms:

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

1. **ka dag** (the essence or **ngo bo wisdom**)
2. **lhun grub** (the **rang bzhin wisdom**)
3. The third wisdom, **thugs rje** (compassion), is the inseparability of the previous two wisdoms.

Ka dag (primordial purity) is the Dzogchen term for **emptiness**. **Lhun grub** (natural formation) is the Dzogchen term for **dependent origination**, for the lhun grub aspect of the Base is its manifestation, which is ruled by the aforementioned principle.

Throughout Mahayana, **emptiness** and **dependent origination** are two sides of the same coin. The **lhun grub** aspect has to do with **special yogas**, such as (but not limited to) thod rgal, that spontaneously liberate the dependently originated human body into the **Sambhogakaya** (rainbow body phenomenon). In this context, lhun grub refers to the spontaneous systemic activities that manifests as the irate mechanisms that in this practice force delusion to spontaneously liberate it each and every time it manifests, and which thus rapidly neutralize the propensities for delusion, putting an end to samsara and its potentialities. The symbol of Dzogchen is a Tibetan letter '**A**' wrapped in a **thigle**. The **A**

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

represents **kadag** while the **thigle** represents **lhun grub**.

In Dzogchen, the fundamental point of the natural state is to distinguish rigpa from sems (mind). The distinguishing of rigpa and sems from each other is emphasized by **Jigme Lingpa** and goes back to the seventeen tantras.

There is a fairly wide consensus among lamas of both the **Nyingma** and **Sarma schools** that the end state of **dzogchen and mahamudra** are the same. The Madhyamaka teachings on emptiness are fundamental to and thoroughly compatible with Dzogchen practices. Essence Mahamudra is viewed as being the same as Dzogchen, except the former does not include thö dgal.

Nomenclature and Etymology

The word Dzogchen has been translated as Great Perfection, Great Completeness, Total Completeness, and Super-completeness. These terms also convey the idea that our nature as intrinsic awareness has many qualities that make it perfect. These include indestructibility, incorruptible purity, non-discriminating openness, flawless clarity, profound simplicity, all-pervading presence and equality within all beings (i.e., the quality, quantity and functionality of this awareness is exactly the same in every being in the universe).

It is said that the impressive personal qualities of the fully enlightened Buddha derived from the fact that he was fully aligned with this already-

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

existing primordial nature. Descriptions of a buddha as omniscient and omnipresent refer to their ultimate nature as this awareness. The Tibetan term dzogchen is sometimes said to be a rendering of the Sanskrit term mahāsandhi, and is also used to render the Sanskrit term **ati yoga (primordial yoga)**.

A homonymous term dzogchen designates a meditation practice and body of teachings aimed at helping an individual to recognize the Dzogchen state, to become sure about it, and to develop the capacity to maintain the state continually.

Maha Ati

Maha Ati is a term coined by Trungpa Rinpoche a master of the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism.

He generally preferred to introduce Sanskrit rather than Tibetan terms to his students, and felt '**Maha Ati**' was the closest equivalent for 'Dzogpa Chenpo,' although he acknowledged it was an unorthodox choice. In an indication of its pedigree as a back-formation, the coinage does not follow the sandhi rules; if it did, it would properly be mahāti.

Esoteric transmission

The Dzogchen teachings are the highest of the nine yana, (Tibetan theg pa, vehicle) of the Nyingma (Wylie: rnying ma) school of Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan Bön (Wylie: bon) tradition. Many lamas, particularly of the

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Nyingma and Kagyu schools, regard them as the most profound teachings altogether.

The instructions that point to the Dzogchen state are sometimes described as a set of 'inner' or 'heart' (Wylie: snying thig) teachings. Tibetan Buddhist ascetics consider that the state pointed to by these teachings is very difficult to describe, and can only be discovered through the esoteric transmission and pointing-out instruction by an authentic **Vajra Master**.

Although Dzogchen cannot be separated by the Buddhist or Bön tradition, very often teachers emphasize the non-religious character of Dzogchen. However, the Buddhist or Bön traditional framework is never negated.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche says that, as our primordial nature, Dzogchen has existed since the beginning of time and is pointed to by various masters throughout the Universe.

Background

According to one tradition, the first master of the Buddhist Dzogchen lineage in our world was **Garab Dorje** - Sanskrit **Prahevajra** from Uddiyana.

Indian originators

From **Garab Dorje, Dzogchen** is said to have been passed down as listed following. Often, practitioners are said to have lived for hundreds of years, and there are inconsistencies in the lifespan dates given, making it impossible to construct a sensible timeline.

1. Prahevajra (Tib. Garab Dorje, Wylie: dga' rab rdo rje) 184 BCE to 57 CE

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

2. Mañjuśrīmitra (Tib. Jampal Shenyen, Wylie: 'jam dpal bshes gnyen) 2nd century BCE (elder contemporary of Prahevajra)
3. Śrī Siṃha (Tib. Palgyi Senge, Wylie: dpal gyi senge) 3rd century CE (500 years before Vimalamitra)
4. Padmasambhava (Tib. Pema Jungne or Guru Rinpoche) fl. mid-8th CE
5. Vimalamitra (Tib. Drime Shenyen, Wylie: dri med bshes gnyen) fl. late 8th CE
6. Vairotsana (Tib. Nampar Nangdze Lotsawa, Wylie: rnam par snang mdzad lo tsa ba) fl. late 8th CE.

In Tibet

Padmasambhava - Tib. Pema Jugne or Guru Rinpoche, Wylie: padma 'byung gnas. Guru Rinpoche is considered the source of the Buddhist Dzogchen teachings in Tibet which are the heart of the **Nyingma tradition**, with which they are primarily associated. Dzogchen has also been practiced in the **Kagyu lineage**,

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

beginning with **Milarepa** and most notably by the Third **Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje. The Fifth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth (present) Dalai Lamas** are also noted Dzogchen masters, although their adoption of the practice of Dzogchen has been a source of controversy among more conservative members of the Gelug tradition.

In the **Bön religion**, three separate Dzogchen traditions are attested and continue to be practiced:

1. A-tri,
2. Dzogchen, here referring narrowly to the specific lineage within the Bön tradition), and
3. Shang Shung Nyen Gyu. All are traced back.

This open awareness of Dzogchen, or rigpa (also comparable to the Buddha nature), is said to lie at the heart of all things and indeed of all Dzogchen practice and is nothing less than '... primordial wisdom's recognition of itself as unbounded wholeness ... the incorruptible mind-nature.'

This reflexive awareness of Enlightenment is said to be inherent within all beings, but not to be attainable by thought. Namkhai Norbu points

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

out that Dzogchen 'refers to the true primordial state of every individual and not to any transcendent reality.'

In discussing the Nyingma text, the Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra Namkhai Norbu explains that Kunjed Gyalpo is in fact 'beyond' the dualism inherent in the notion of an 'individual'. He writes:

The transmission of knowledge comes from the state of rigpa that has never been stained and has never been hindered. This is Adibuddha, or 'primordial Buddha', Kunjed Gyalpo ... The state of Kunjed Gyalpo is knowledge, and in knowledge there is not even the concept of 'one and two', otherwise we have already entered into dualism. Also, the concept of 'individual' presupposes dualistic vision. But Samantabhadra is beyond all this ...

Klein and Wangyal comment on the ultimate 'one taste' and dynamic stillness of the Dzogchen state:

'... cause and effect, sentient beings and Buddhas, subjects and objects, path and goal are ultimately revealed to be of one taste: movement from one to the other is no movement at all, really, but a dynamic stillness.'

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

There can be found within Dzogchen a sense of Reality as limitless wholeness, a multiplicity which is yet all of one 'taste'. Also it is borderless wholeness. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, it is unconditioned and permanent, changeless, not originated from causes and conditions. It is blissful, and the base or support of numerous exalted qualities.

It is at once base, path, and fruit. 'That reality, unbounded wholeness, is naturally complete.' Also: '... the essence and base of self-arisen wisdom is the all base that primordial open awareness is the base, and that recognition of this base is not separate from the primordial wisdom itself. ... That open awareness is itself authentic and its authenticity is a function of it being aware of, or recognizing itself as, the base. ... The reflexively self-aware primordial wisdom is itself open awareness (rigpa), inalienably one with unbounded wholeness.'

In dzogchen teachings, the buddha-nature is viewed as the basis of all worlds and phenomena, in the sense that the idea of 'beings' and 'worlds' only arises when one, out of ignorance, ignores the mind's essential condition, manufactures reference points, and clings to them as if they are real.

Opposing views

The views of the Dzogchen School are not endorsed by all Tibetan Buddhists. In fact, Bonpo Lopon Tenzin Namdak contrasts his own view that primordial wisdom does not arise from causes with that of Tsongkhapa, who states that without consciousness, there is no understanding.

Some critics claim that the views of the Dzogchen school of philosophy conflict with those of Madhyamaka and to the views of other prominent Buddhist thinkers such as the logician Dharmakirti. However, Longchenpa and Mipham argue that the views of the Dzogchen School are in fact in accord with the view of Madhyamaka. Dzogchen meditative techniques are, however, consistent with Madhyamaka.

Germano conveys how Longchenpa codified the now normalized, institutionalized and orthodox view of the Nyingma Dzogchenpa from its foundations of Madhyamaka, Cittamatra (Yogachara), Buddha nature, Tathagatagarbha, Tantra (specifically Mantrayana) traditions, holds that:

'...one can profitably interpret the overall system of [Nyingma Dzogchen] thought [as formulated by Longchenpa] as a very innovative

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

reinterpretation of the mainstream exoteric Indian Buddhist schools of 'the Middle Way' (Madhyamika) and 'Mind Only' (Cittamatra) that not only revives the themes of the so-called 'Buddha-nature' or 'enlightened nucleus of realized-energy' (Tathaga[ta]garbha) literature in a much more sophisticated form, but also takes the tantric discourse and transforms it into a model for a new understanding of philosophical thought and literary expression totally eliminating the boundaries between exoteric philosophy (emphasizing analytical logic) and esoteric tantras (emphasizing contemplation and 'aesthetic' issues).'

Logic and the syllogism in Dzogchen

Dzogchen, though a learned and literate tradition de-emphasizes and deconstructs the importance of conceptuality, scholasticism and rhetoric even though it has its own sophisticated technical language, treasury of poetic song and literary masterpieces, educational skillful means and modalities to convey its philosophical constructions and philosophical liberations. This tension is evident and to be seen in how the traditions of Buddhist Logic, Bon Logic and the syllogism are engaged in markedly different ways in the lineages of Dzogchen.

Germano (1992: p. 4) in his doctoral thesis supervised by the Geshe and Professor Emeritus, Lhundub Sopa (b. 1923) discusses the

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

typical view of the Dzogchen tradition towards the 'syllogism' and by implication Buddhist Logic:

'The tradition is especially striking in its implicit development of a model of rigorous philosophical thought that refuses to be reduced to syllogistic reasoning (though utilizing it as a secondary hermeneutical tool) or dismissed as mere 'aesthetics' as it treats Buddhist Tantra as a serious philosophical innovation that must be utilized to reinterpret previous traditional scholasticism, in stark contrast to extend traditional scholastic methodologies into Tantra, and deny the revolution of 'poetic thought' they may embody.'

Three aspects of energy:-

Ananda Chakra

Sentient beings have their energy manifested in 3 aspects:

1. 'dang' (Wylie: gDangs)
2. 'rolpa' (Wylie: Rol-pa)
3. 'tsal' (Wylie: rTsal)

Energy of an individual on the **dang level** is essentially **infinite and formless**.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

In the form of **rolpa**, energy forms appear as though seen with '**the eye of the mind**'. Many practices of thödgäl and yangthig work on the basis of functioning of the rolpa aspect of individual's energy. It is also the original source of the sambhogakaya deities visualized in Buddhist tantric transformational practices and of manifestations of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities in bardo and Zhitro practices.

Tsal is the manifestation of the energy of the individual him or herself, as apparently an '**external**' world. The mind of a sentient being is also **tsal energy** when it is 'contaminated' by the karmic 'winds'. Certain practices stop the karmic winds of the body and therefore allow the energy of tsal to be experienced by itself.

The interplay of these energies explain the **thought-form** or **tulpa** (Tibetan: sprul pa) phenomenon, the logistics of the **Trikaya doctrine**, the yidam sadhana, bardo visions, Clear Light (Tibetan: 'od gsal), emergence and the logistics of the doctrine of Pratityasamutpāda, they also explain the 'play' (Sanskrit: lila; Tibetan: kun tu rtse) of the Five Pure Lights (Tibetan: 'od Inga) and the arising of a 'Creation' without a Creator deity or a Prime Cause that is the particular 'view' (Tibetan: Ita ba) and hallmark of Buddhism.

External world versus continuum

According to Dzogchen teachings, energy of an individual is essentially totally formless and free from any duality. However, karmic traces, contained in the storehouse consciousness of the individual's mind stream (Sanskrit: citta santana; Tibetan: sems rgyud) give rise to two kinds of forms:

1. forms that the individual experiences as his or her body, voice and mind and,
2. Forms that the individual experiences as an external environment.

It is maintained that there is nothing external or separate from the individual. What appears as a world of apparently external phenomena is the energy of the individual himself or herself. Everything that manifests in the individual's field of experience is a continuum (Sanskrit: santana; Tibetan: rgyud). This is the Great Perfection that is discovered in the Dzogchen practice.

Causality and interdependent origination

In Dzogchen teachings the interdependent origination and any kind of causality is considered illusory: '(One says), All these (configurations of events and meanings) come about and disappear according to dependent origination.' But, like a burnt seed, since a nonexistent (result) does not come about from a nonexistent (cause), cause and effect do not exist.

'Being obsessed with entities, one's experiencing itself [Wylie: sems, Sanskrit: citta], which discriminates each cause and effect, appears as if it were cause and condition.' (from byang chub sems bsgom pa by Mañjusrîmitra. Primordial experience! An Introduction to Dzogs-chen Meditation, pp. 60, 61

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

This corresponds to the assertion in the Heart Sutra (Sanskrit: Prajñāpāramitā Hridaya Sūtra), that there is no karma, no law of cause and effect. The assertion was made by bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in a teaching for the great arhat Sariputra, given before multitude of beings, on request of Buddha Shakyamuni. After the teaching Buddha Shakyamuni greatly praised the wisdom of Avalokiteshvara's words and the beings present rejoiced.

Guardians and Practices

All teachings have energies that have special relationships with them. These energies are guardians of the teachings. The energies are iconographically depicted as they were perceived by yogis who had contact with them. The dharmapalas most associated with Dzogchen are Ekajati in the Nyingma and Sidpa Gyalmo in the Bön tradition. The iconographic forms were shaped by perceptions and also by the culture of those who saw the original manifestation and by the development of the tradition. However the guardians are not merely symbols. The pictures show actual beings.

Well-being and health

Dzogchen teachings maintain that the quality of lives of people is best when the internal elements are balanced. The body is healthy when the elements are balanced. They see the

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

best way to balance the elements as abiding in the natural state.

Practice

Up to and including tregchöd, Dzogchen meditative practices are parallel to and often identical with those of essence Mahamudra.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and other teachers provide different practical sets of instructions for the practice of Dzogchen. The central practice of Dzogchen teaching is Dzogchen 'contemplation' (Tib. ting nge 'dzin) which is rendered in English as 'The View'. 'The View' when stabilized or unbroken, is the non-dual perception of the Dzogchenpa, or Dzogchen practitioner. That is, a continuous 'contemplation' through all activity, waking and sleeping as a lived experience. According to some Dzogchenpa (in particular, Namkhai Norbu), Dzogchen is a 'practice', rather than a 'doctrine' or 'religion', and does not require the practitioner (Sanskrit: sadhaka) to be anywhere special; in fact, to be normally active while in a state of primordial or natural awareness is the ultimate practice of Dzogchen.

Having distinguished **rigpa from sems, - silent and prolonged meditation** (Tib. sgom pa) is also used to allow the obscurations (Sanskrit:

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

kleśa) of the mind to dissipate like clouds dissolving to reveal the empty, luminous sky. Through meditation, it is possible to remove the conditioning of our body-mind (Sanskrit: namarupa) and to glimpse and work to stabilize rigpa.

Tregchöd and thödgal

Once the state of non-dual contemplation has been arrived at, one has to continue in it. This continuation has two levels of practice: tregchöd and thödgal (also sometimes spelled thogal). These are main practices presented in the Menngagde series (Oral Instruction Series) of the dzogchen teachings.

In both the Bön and Buddhist Dzogchen traditions, sky gazing is considered to be an important part of tregchöd.

Thödgal represents more a fruition than a practice itself. There are methods prepared in the event of a psychotic break to bring the practitioner back to sanity.

In contrast to other kinds of tantric practices, there is no intentional visualization; rather, imagery appears spontaneously using secondary conditions such as darkness or light. Eventually a practitioner has experiences which are viewed

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

as knowing the subtle energies of one's being. These have the qualities of earth, water, fire, air and space (see Classical element). Throughout the retreat, a practitioner is believed to be approaching an experience which is entirely unconditioned.

Thödgal relies on esoteric anatomy including the avadhuti (also known as the center channel or sushumna according to Hindus and heart chakra. Along with the fact that Dzogchen is based on a class of literature called the tantras, this indicates why Dzogchen is considered a tantric system as opposed to sutra systems such as Zen. This is not to say that Dzogchen is a part of general Vajrayana. **Vajrayana is a path of transformation. Dzogchen, an independent vehicle in its own right, is a path of self-liberation.**

The ultimate fruition of the thodgal practices is a body of pure light, called a rainbow body. If the four visions of thodgal are not completed before death, then at death, from the point of view of an external observer, the following happens: the corpse does not start to decompose, but starts to shrink until it disappears. Usually fingernails, toenails and hair are left behind. The attainment of the rainbow

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

body is typically accompanied by the appearance of lights and rainbows.

Some exceptional practitioners such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra are held to have realized the Great Transference. The practitioner self-liberates the human body into the Sambhogakāya while alive. Having completed the four visions before death, the individual does not die at all, instead his or her physical body gradually disappears for an external observer, while being able to exist and abide wherever and whenever as pointed by one's compassion.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu relates that once someone asked the famous Dzogchen Master, Yungtön Dorje Pel, what his practice consisted of, and he replied with the negative 'mepa' or 'there isn't.' Then his startled questioner asked again, 'Then you don't meditate?' to which the **Master replied, 'And when am I ever distracted?' This is 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.

In this denotation, dzogchen is a verb, and denotes the perfect process in the grammatical

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

sense or alternately an infinitive verb, wherein the great continuum of 'one taste' or as Capriles renders it 'single state' is the effortless 'contemplating' or abiding in the view of non-distraction from rigpa.

Apperception

'Apperception' is also known as svasaṃvedana or svasaṃvitti in Sanskrit. It is understood variously in different yana, buddhist schools, and practice lineages. These cosmetic differences are resolved in the practice of 'meditative trance'. For it is in the direct experience and associated literatures of the deep contemplative traditions of Himalayan Buddhism - Tibetan Buddhism, Nepalese Buddhism, Bhutanese Buddhism, etc. and Bon, particularly Dzogchen and Mahamudra, that apperception is key, e.g. Dark retreat.

Pettit (1999: p. 129) holds that 'apperception' is key to Mipham's (1846–1912) system of epistemology and hermeneutics discussed in the DRG and in Mipham's Commentary to the Ninth Chapter of the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Padmasambhava, Karma Lingpa, Gyurme Dorje, Graham Coleman and Thupten Jinpa (2005: p. 480) define 'intrinsic awareness' which is a rendering of the Tibetan Wylie 'rang-rig' and the Sanskrit 'svasaṃvitti' or 'svasaṃvedana' according to the precedent established in Indian Buddhist epistemology and in the writings of the lauded logicians Dignāga and Dharmakīrti that this technical:

The term *svasaṃvedana* refers to the apperceptive or reflexive faculty of consciousness, for which reason it is sometimes rendered as '**reflexive awareness**' or '**apperceptive awareness**'. However, in the view of the Great Perfection and in the context of the present work [The Tibetan Book of the Dead], the same term refers to the fundamental innate mind in its natural state of spontaneity and purity, beyond the alternating states of motion and rest and the subject-object dichotomy. It is therefore rendered here as 'intrinsic awareness'.

As such, intrinsic awareness gives the meditator access to pristine cognition or the buddha-mind itself, and it stands in direct contrast to fundamental ignorance - *avidyā*, which is the primary cause of rebirth in cyclic existence *samsara*. The direct introduction to intrinsic

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

awareness is a distinctive teaching within the Nyingma School. This practice is a central component of the Esoteric Instruction Class – *upadeśa varga* of Atiyoga, where it is known as Cutting through Resistance.

Dharmakīrti and Śāntarakṣita hold that all is sentient consciousness.

There is also an epistemological argument found in thinkers like Dharmakīrti and Santaraksita. How does consciousness know 'external' physical objects, when consciousness itself is of a completely different order from matter? **Consciousness has a reflexive quality of knowing (svasamvedana), while matter has no such reflexivity.** Clearly only things of the same basic order of reality can contact each other. Thus either all must be matter, or all must be consciousness. But if all were matter then there would be no experience at all. Since there patently is experience, all must be consciousness.

Texts of Dzogchen

Dzogchen instructions are found in some Mahayoga texts, as it may simply have been the associated completion stage practice. However, the majority of the Dzogchen corpus comprises the '18' Semde tantra texts, the Longde tantras, and the Menngagde termas.

Samten Migdrön is a Tibetan text of historical importance for the historical relationship of Dzogchen and Zen as well identifying the view of its author, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe.

There are Seventeen Tantras of Dzogchen Upadesha-varga. These Seventeen Tantras amongst other Dzogchen texts are included in the various divergences and holdings of the numerous extant Nyingma Gyubum editions.

Reality vs dreams

'The real sky knows that samsara and nirvana are merely an illusory display.'

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

—Mipham Rinpoche, Quintessential Instructions of Mind, p. 117

According to contemporary teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, in Dzogchen **the perceived reality is considered to be unreal. All appearances perceived during the whole life of an individual through all senses, including sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations in their totality are like a big dream.**

It is therefore claimed that on careful examination the dream of life and regular nightly dreams are not very different, and that in their essential nature there is no difference between them.

The non-essential difference between our dreaming state and our ordinary waking experience is that the latter is more concrete and linked with our attachment; the dreaming is slightly detached.

Also according to this teaching, there is a correspondence between the states of sleep and dream and our experiences when we die. After experiences in an intermediate state (bardo) an individual comes out of it, a new karmic illusion is created and another existence begins. This is how transmigration happens.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

One aim of dream practice is to realize during a dream that one is dreaming. One can then dream with lucidity and do all sorts of things, such as go to different places, talk to people, fly and so forth. It is also possible to do different yogic practices while dreaming (usually such yogic practices one does in waking state).

In this way the yogi can have a very strong experience and with this comes understanding of the dream-like nature of daily life. This is very relevant to diminishing attachments, because they are based on strong beliefs that life's perceptions and objects are real and, as a consequence, important. If one really understands what Buddha Shakyamuni meant when he said that everything is unreal or of the nature of shunyata, then one can diminish attachments and tensions.

The realization that the life is only a big dream can help us finally liberate ourselves from the chains of emotions, attachments, and ego and then we have the possibility of ultimately becoming enlightened.

Dzogchen monastery

One of the traditional centers for the practice of Dzogchen is Dzogchen Monastery, headed by Dzogchen Rinpoche, brother of Sogyal Rinpoche, the author of the best-selling book **The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying**.

Dzogchen

Dzogchen is a spiritual approach, whose scope is to allow us to know ourselves as we really are. The basic premise of Dzogchen is that a person can spend the whole day living within the framework of a natural state of consciousness.

Awareness

The book '**Dzogchen**', by **Duro Despot M.D**; describes the ancient Tibetan way of meditating. Padmasambhava, one of the greatest teachers

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

of spirituality of them all, brought these awareness exercises from Tibet.

The book teaches the reader, by way of practical guidance, how to enter the natural state of consciousness which is innate to every human being. Every human being can experience the ecstasy of self-existence if he or she were to attain the optimum state of relaxation in body and mind. An ordinary person will spend the entire day identifying with his or her thoughts and emotions, and so very far from understands what it likes to exist without such thoughts and emotions. For that reason, the people of western civilizations have a very powerful need for expedients to help them relax, expedients such as alcohol, cigarettes and non-prescription drugs.

At first, these unhealthy chemicals may have a relaxing effect on body and mind. However, soon they come to have a negative effect on both the consciousness of a person and on his/her character. However, one can enter the natural state of consciousness, a true state of peace and ecstasy, very easily using Dzogchen exercises, provided that the person has a strong desire to do so, that he or she is correctly acquainted with the technique, and that he or she is guided by an experienced Dzogchen

master. **The exercises described in the book are therefore also called awareness exercises**, because by practicing them we can experience a complete awareness of the present moment. When any being experiences the complete present, he or she no longer has thoughts or oscillating emotions, and becomes happy and joyful because he or she exists in the natural state of consciousness.

Consciousness

For a person to come to the natural state of consciousness, it is necessary that he or she becomes acquainted with how his or her consciousness functions, how thoughts and emotions appear, how to liberate himself or herself from them, and ultimately how to exist continuously and without much effort in the natural state of consciousness.

The first part of the book describes these phenomena exactly. The book is primarily intended to treat the subject in a practical way, and consequently one entire intensive exercise is presented in detail, the way **Duro Despot** conducted it with his pupils.

The key notion in the evolution of man's spirituality is wakefulness; in other words, awareness. After a review of the intensive

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

exercise, the author makes the effort to explain how the individual can experience awareness, and how awareness can be developed in the consciousness of every person. If someone succeeds in becoming aware of his or her wakefulness during the day, he or she will succeed much more easily in remaining 'awake' (i.e. aware) even when sleeping. And, of course, if the practitioner succeeds in being awake while sleeping, he or she will be awake much more easily even when he or she leaves the physical body.

Dzogchen teacher

People who practice Dzogchen regularly can perform their normal daily activities but still exist in the state of self-ecstasy. **Duro Despot** is a Dzogchen teacher who was initiated in Dzogchen with the help of destiny, or, more correctly, of divine energies. Most of the knowledge which he shares in this book is the consequence of his own personal research, and does not come from hearsay or from second-hand sources.

It is not his intention to proclaim his way of Dzogchen 'the best', but he wants it to form one of the branches of Padmasambhava's teaching. The spirit of the scientific way of observation,

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

which he acquired in his medical training, together with a powerful attachment to Dzogchen, were both useful to him when he came to research the processes at work in the consciousness of every being.

Despite the fact that he has had to live the life of a western man and to perform everything that the modern family and society require of him, when he finished with such obligations, **Duro Despot** belonged to Dzogchen with all of his being. He regularly retreated for weeks and even months from the beginning of his spiritual work and research.

He later included Dzogchen in his everyday life, and he has been practicing it in all circumstances. He has taught the practical knowledge he has acquired to his pupils for years, and he has written this book for today's man and woman.

Meditations

Consciousness is what we will observe most during our teachings. The first feature of our consciousness is the possession of a primary and a secondary attention.

In the case of the average person, the primary attention keeps wandering from one object to

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

another and from one emotion to another from the moment that person wakes to the point when he or she falls asleep. The primary attention is conditioned by the constant impulse to move.

The primary attention is usually attracted to any stronger, more painful, more interesting or more irritating stimulant.

The second feature of an average person's consciousness is that its focus can be kept on a single static object for no longer than 12 seconds.

Since a person can't normally keep his or her primary attention focused on a static object for a longer period of time, the primary attention has a tendency to wander. Most people in modern society are unable to keep their primary attention from wandering, because their power to concentrate isn't strong enough.

People usually disagree when I tell them that their ability to concentrate isn't good enough, and they usually reply: 'what do you mean my ability to concentrate isn't good enough? When I sit down to learn, I can learn for hours!'

Learning is a type of concentration where the attention keeps moving from one word

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

to another and from one subject to another. Thus we can say that, while learning, our attention constantly wanders. It is a far more strenuous activity when we are forced to keep our attention on a static object.

Watching movies and listening to the radio is similar to learning. In each case, our attention is captivated by an ever-changing series of stimuli.

To show them how weak their powers of concentration were I used to ask participants in my Intensive Meditation groups to participate in an experiment. I would ask them first to sit down, perform some breathing exercises and start meditating. After ten minutes, I would interrupt the meditation and tell them to keep their eyes closed, because we were going to perform an experiment.

I would play some music with words that could be easily distinguished. I would tell them to keep meditating, and a few minutes later I would tell them: 'OK, if your ability to concentrate is really that good, try to continue meditating, but without actually hearing the lyrics of the song! Go ahead and try!'

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Not one member of the group managed to meditate successfully, because their attention was constantly diverted by the lyrics.

If I had played the same music with the same lyrics, but without talking about it, and if we had all continued meditating without interruption, most people would have been capable of going on with the meditation without being bothered by the music.

However, by strictly urging them to try meditating instead of listening to the lyrics, and to do it right away, I strongly stimulated their primary attention. The music that I played belonged to the category of 'irritating stimulants' at that particular moment - irritating, in that it prevented them from concentrating. In this case, no one managed to re-focus their primary attention inwards, and towards meditation, until the end of the experiment.

The consciousness of those attempting to meditate wasn't well enough trained to allow them to focus their primary attention wherever and whenever they wanted. To take this further, we can say that consciousnesses like these are slaves of the fluctuations and vagrancies of their respective primary attentions.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

With a trained consciousness, the primary attention can stay focused on a static object for minutes, hours or even days in a row.

The spiritual life of the average person is usually reduced to observations rooted in the physical body: what they experience, how they look, where they move and so on. This is followed by observations of the emotional and mental life.

The average person thinks of his or her emotions and thoughts as the backbone of their lives. They identify with their thoughts and emotions, and never go any further in questioning their own identities.

Those who have ventured into spiritual science in sufficient detail, however, already know that every thought and every emotion is energy.

During the course of a day, and because of the permanent vagrancy of his primary attention, a person wastes enormous amounts of energy, and this is all the more pronounced under high emotional pressure.

Despite the fact that people in the modern world enjoy many material improvements on the lives of their forebears, from greater comfort to the easier acquisition of material wealth, mankind

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

hasn't evolved into a happier being. This is a consequence of permanently focusing the primary attention outwards, because whenever the primary attention is directed towards the outside, the individual becomes malcontent and forlorn.

It is very important to recognize that our primary attention is on the outside whenever it is focused on external objects, such as, for example, a chair, food, a flower etc. In the same manner, the primary attention is on the outside with every thought we have, and whenever we experience oscillating emotions.

The primary attention is at its source when it isn't wandering, and when it is blended with our wakefulness within our consciousness.

Once you have learned to discern the primary attention within your consciousness, you will notice similar effects, and also realize that your attention doesn't wander quite as relentlessly as it does in everyday life.

The everyday practice of dzogchen is simply to develop a complete carefree acceptance, openness to all situations without limit.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

We should realize openness as the playground of our emotions and relate to people without artificiality, manipulation or strategy.

We should experience everything totally, never withdrawing into ourselves as a marmot hides in its hole. This practice releases tremendous energy which is usually constricted by the process of maintaining fixed reference points. Preferentiality is the process by which we retreat from the direct experience of everyday life.

Being present in the moment may initially trigger fear. But by welcoming the sensation of fear with complete openness, we cut through the barriers created by habitual emotional patterns.

When we engage in the practice of discovering space, we should develop the feeling of opening ourselves out completely to the entire universe. We should open ourselves with absolute simplicity and nakedness of mind. This is the powerful and ordinary practice of dropping the mask of self-protection.

We shouldn't make a division in our meditation between perception and field of perception. We shouldn't become like a cat watching a mouse. We should realize that the purpose of

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

meditation is not to go 'deeply into ourselves' or withdraw from the world. Practice should be free and non-conceptual, unconstrained by introspection and concentration.

Vast un-originated self-luminous wisdom space is the ground of being - the beginning and the end of confusion. The presence of awareness in the primordial state has no bias toward enlightenment or non-enlightenment.

This ground of being which is known as pure or original mind is the source from which all phenomena arise. It is known as the great mother, as the womb of potentiality in which all things arise and dissolve in natural self-perfectness and absolute spontaneity.

All aspects of phenomena are completely clear and lucid. The whole universe is open and unobstructed - everything is mutually interpenetrating.

Seeing all things as naked, clear and free from obscurations, there is nothing to attain or realize. The nature of phenomena appears naturally and is naturally present in time-transcending awareness. Everything is naturally perfect just as it is.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

All phenomena appear in their uniqueness as part of the continually changing pattern. These patterns are vibrant with meaning and significance at every moment; yet there is no significance to attach to such meanings beyond the moment in which they present themselves.

This is the dance of the five elements in which matter is a symbol of energy and energy a symbol of emptiness. We are a symbol of our own enlightenment. With no effort or practice whatsoever, liberation or enlightenment is already here.

The everyday practice of dzogchen is just everyday life itself. Since the undeveloped state does not exist, there is no need to behave in any special way or attempt to attain anything above and beyond what you actually are. There should be no feeling of striving to reach some 'amazing goal' or 'advanced state.'

To strive for such a state is a neurosis which only conditions us and serves to obstruct the free flow of Mind. We should also avoid thinking of ourselves as worthless persons - we are naturally free and unconditioned. We are intrinsically enlightened and lack nothing.

When engaging in meditation practice, we should feel it to be as natural as eating,

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

breathing and defecating. It should not become a specialized or formal event, bloated with seriousness and solemnity. We should realize that meditation transcends effort, practice, aims, goals and the duality of liberation and non-liberation.

Meditation is always ideal; there is no need to correct anything. Since everything that arises is simply the play of mind as such, there is no unsatisfactory meditation and no need to judge thoughts as good or bad.

Therefore we should simply sit. Simply stay in your own place, in your own condition just as it is. Forgetting self-conscious feelings, we do not have to think 'I am meditating.' Our practice should be without effort, without strain, without attempts to control or force and without trying to become 'peaceful.'

If we find that we are disturbing ourselves in any of these ways, we stop meditating and simply rest or relax for a while. Then we resume our meditation.

When we have 'interesting experiences' either during or after meditation, we should avoid making anything special of them. To spend time thinking about experiences is simply a distraction and an attempt to become unnatural.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

These experiences are simply signs of practice and should be regarded as transient events. We should not attempt to re-experience them because to do so only serves to distort the natural spontaneity of mind.

All phenomena are completely new and fresh, absolutely unique and entirely free from all concepts of past, present and future. They are experienced in timelessness.

The continual stream of new discovery, revelation and inspiration which arises at every moment is the manifestation of our clarity. We should learn to see everyday life as mandala - the luminous fringes of experience which radiate spontaneously from the empty nature of our being.

The aspects of our mandala are the day-to-day objects of our life experience moving in the dance or play of the universe. By this symbolism the inner teacher reveals the profound and ultimate significance of being. Therefore we should be natural and spontaneous, accepting and learning from everything. This enables us to see the ironic and amusing side of events that usually irritate us.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

In meditation we can see through the illusion of past, present and future - our experience becomes the continuity of now-ness. The past is only an unreliable memory held in the present. The future is only a projection of our present conceptions. The present itself vanishes as soon as we try to grasp it. So why bother with attempting to establish an illusion of solid ground?

We should free ourselves from our past memories and preconceptions of meditation. Each moment of meditation is completely unique and full of potentiality. In such moments, we will be incapable of judging our meditation in terms of past experience, dry theory or hollow rhetoric.

Simply plunging directly into meditation in the moment now, with our whole being, free from hesitation, boredom or excitement, is enlightenment.

**The Aro approach to
Dzogchen**

Dzogchen is the approach within Buddhism based on recognizing our enlightened nature, through meditation. 'Dzogchen' in Tibetan means 'utterly complete'. It is the most complete or inclusive teaching of Buddhism. From the point of view of Dzogchen, we are also each already complete.

There is nothing we need to obtain or jettison in order to realize enlightenment. We need only recognize and allow ourselves to be as we actually are. This is the path of immediate self-liberation.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

To learn more about Dzogchen and self-liberation, start with our essay 'An Uncommon Perspective'. There is much information about Dzogchen to explore elsewhere on this web site as well, particularly in the 'Teachings' section.

The Aro approach to Dzogchen

Dzogchen is 'complete' in that all other Buddhist teachings are contained within it. All Aro teachings—whether on Dzogchen, Tantra, or Sutra—are rooted in the Dzogchen perspective. Aro is quite unusual in teaching even basic concepts of Sutra, such as the Four Noble Truths and Five Precepts, from point of view of Dzogchen.

The base or starting point, of Dzogchen is rigpa: instantaneous enlightenment. If one has not experienced rigpa, it is not possible to truly practice Dzogchen. For this reason, Dzogchen was not taught widely in Tibet. Most commonly, students were required to master Tantra before approaching Dzogchen.

The result of Tantra is rigpa, so the practice of Tantra can bring one to the base of Dzogchen. Tantra however, as it has typically been taught, requires many years of full-time practice to master. Mastery of Sutra has often also been taken as a prerequisite to begin Tantra.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Altogether this approach makes Dzogchen accessible only to those who can devote all their time to formal spiritual training. In practice, that means only monks and nuns.

Fortunately, the Dzogchen teachings contain an ngöndro—or ‘preparation’—which brings you to the base. This ngöndro is a series of four meditation practices whose result is rigpa. These practices have the style or texture of Dzogchen – although they are not strictly speaking Dzogchen itself.

In this way it is possible to approach Dzogchen on its own terms, rather than via Sutra and then Tantra. This direct approach was traditional in Tibet not only for hermits – but for people with families and jobs. Aro was founded and practiced by such people in Tibet, and it is taught and practiced by such people in the West today.

The practices of this Dzogchen ngöndro are not easy – but they are not difficult or complex, either. They require no preparation or technical knowledge. Anyone may begin at any time.

Aro Dzogchen programs

The Dzogchen ngöndro is the foundation for all other Aro teaching and practice. Our meditation

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

site contains extensive resources and information on this ngöndro. We offer a free internet course, books, classes, audio guided meditations, retreats, and individual instruction.

Dzogchen itself is divided into three series: **sem-dé** (sometimes spelled semde), **long-dé**, and **men-ngag-dé**. Aro teaches all three series. However, each series contains less conceptual content than the previous, and requires greater experience of non-conceptual practice.

Accordingly, most of our public programs are concerned with sem-dé. Some aspects of long-dé are taught publicly. Generally men-ngag-dé is taught only to Aro apprentices.

Because the Dzogchen approach permeates the Aro teachings, all our programs are effectively Dzogchen programs. You can find talks, classes, and retreats on our events site.

Introduction to Tantra

Tantric Buddhism employs the urgent energies of agony and ecstasy, lust and hatred, paranoia and greed to transform our confusion into enlightenment.

Tantra is radically positive insanity. Tantra is the hot blood of kindness. Tantra conjures with the electricity of being: the shimmering voltage that crackles ecstatically between emptiness and form. Tantra is the alchemy of transformation by which we re-create ourselves limitlessly according to the kaleidoscopic pattern of moments that comprises our experience.

Tantra is the short path of Buddhism – the direct line to the summit. Mountaineers on longer paths circle around the peak weighted down with the safety equipment of codified philosophy and ethics. Tantra scales the vertical

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

face without oxygen. The climbers ascend naked. At the peak they find liberation: freedom from domination by conflictive emotions, customary rôles, and constricted expectations. They climb quickly; but sometimes, they fall.

The Aro approach to Tantra

Aro is a non-monastic tradition. In Tibet, Tantra was mainly taught to monks who were able to devote all their time to religious practice. A style evolved that required years of theoretical study as a preliminary. Elaborate, hours-long rituals were the main practice. These rituals consisted primarily of chanting texts. This form of Tantra is effective in monasteries, but not always so accessible to people with families and jobs.

Fortunately, Tantra as it originated in India was practiced by people from all spheres: farmers, prostitutes, kings, beggars, merchants, musicians, housewives, and industrialists. Their methods of practice were diverse and suited to their individual circumstances. This tradition was preserved by a minority of Tantrikas in Tibet. Aro is a lineage in this tradition.

Tantra in Aro is highly 'essentialized' – meaning that it lacks unnecessary complexity. The original core of each method is practiced without the elaborations found in the monastic tradition.

Aro Tantric programs

Our recommended reading list has many books on Tantra – several by Aro Lamas.

Spectrum of Being is our course of evening classes concerned with the transformation of the five elemental neurotic emotions into the corresponding five elemental enlightened wisdoms. This is a central practice of Tantric Buddhism.

Wearing the Body of Visions is another course that teaches two additional key practices. These are self-arising and Lama'i naljor. Self-arising is the practice of visualizing oneself as a Buddha. Lama'i Naljor is the method of uniting our minds with the enlightened minds of the Buddhas. The course includes an empowerment ceremony that is the prerequisite for these practices.

You can find these courses on our events calendar. There you can also find weekend retreats on Tantra. Some of these are:

Passion and the Geography of the Elements and Embracing Emotions as the Path – using the energy of emotion as the fuel for spiritual practice

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Wearing the Body of Visions – the practice of self-arising as a Buddha

Heart of the Sun & Moon – romantic love as a profound Buddhist practice

The Terrifyingly Compassionate Gamester – the relationship with the vajra master – the heart of Tantra

Sky Weaving – the craft that magnetizes neuroses, fears and obsessions and releases them in their pure, enlightened forms

Dream Yoga – practices of clear light, lucid dreaming, and illusory wakefulness for finding luminous awareness in every moment of the day and night – whatever our state of consciousness

The heart essence of unconventional wisdom

The Heart Sutra is a condensed statement of the whole of the Buddhist view of the nature of reality. Its subject, the non-duality of form and emptiness, is central to all Buddhism, particularly Dzogchen. It is called sNying mDo in Tibetan and Prajñāparamitahridaya Sutra in Sanskrit. This translation of its essential

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

meaning (i.e. not word-for-word) is by Ngak'chang Rinpoche.

Chenrézigs—absorbed in the contemplation of unconventional wisdom—perceived duality as empty. Seeing this directly, he turned to Sariputra saying:

'Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form.'

Then—in order to clarify his statement—he continued: Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness not different from form.

That which appears as emptiness is form, and that which appears as form is emptiness.

You will not find emptiness apart from form; nor form apart from emptiness.

The psychology of duality – sensation, sense connections, thought, and consciousness – these are also both emptiness and form.

So Sariputra – you can only characterize form in terms of emptiness. You can only characterize emptiness in terms of form.

The phenomena of reality are neither existent, nor non-existent. They are neither pure, nor impure. They neither increase, nor decrease.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

Psychological attributes are neither existent, nor non-existent. The perceptions of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind – are both reality and illusion. Likewise form, sound, color, taste, touch, and objects are both reality and illusion, and likewise the dimension of vision and awareness too.

There is neither understanding, nor absence of understanding. There is no suffering, old age, or death – nor do they end. There is neither merit, nor accumulation of merit. There is no annihilation, no path, and no wisdom. There is neither realization nor non-realization. There is neither attainment nor absence of attainment.

Because the Mind-warrior's awareness is characterized by this unconventional wisdom, even the four philosophical extremes are not perceived as dualism. Likewise all those who realize non-duality—in the past, present, and future—dwell in the knowledge of unconventional wisdom which is the none other than rigpa.

So—Sariputra—relax. Relax in the knowledge that unconventional wisdom is the great mantra, the mantra of completion, the mantra of totality, the mantra which expresses everything. Unconventional wisdom dissolves all struggles. It is true, simply because it lacks the

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

complication of falsity. This is the essence of unconventional wisdom.”

**Gaté, Gaté, Para Gaté,
Parasam Gaté, Bodhi Svaha**

**Hermetic - Esoteric -
Mystical Philosophies**

**Awakening the infinite inner energies of
healing - A dzogchen practice**

Taking one or two deep breaths, release all your stress and worries and enjoy the relaxed feelings in your body and mind. Then slowly and calmly go through the following exercises, taking a minute or two for each step.

1. When you wake up in the morning, or at any time of the day, feel devotion to the source of power. (It could be the Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, the Cosmic Christ, your Perfect Model, or any other source of power.) Devotion wakes up your body and mind and

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

makes them blossom. Devotion brings warmth, bliss, strength, and openness.

- 2.** Visualize and feel that your heart, the center of your body, is in the form of an amazing flower of light, blossoming in the warmth of devotion. As a result, from that devotional flower-heart arises your wisdom, compassion, and power, the enlightened qualities in the form of the source of power.

The source of power, in the form of a light body with heat and bliss, rises up through the central channel a spacious channel made of clear and pure light of your body. Then the source of power adorns the stainless and limitless sky, as if thousands of suns have arisen as one body.

- 3.** Believe that the source of power is the embodiment of wisdom, compassion, and power of all the divinities and of the universal truth. Feel that your whole body and mind are filled with heat, bliss, and boundless energy by being in the presence of the source of power.

- 4.** Then see that the whole earth is filled with various beings. Their hearts are filled

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

with devotion and their faces are blossoming with Joyful smiles. Their wide-open eyes are one-pointedly watching the source of power with wonder. Joining you, they are all expressing the power of their devotion in prayers, singing harmoniously with various resonances, like a great symphony. Sing the prayer with great celebration in which there are no limits or restrictions.

5. Singing the prayers, imagine that the prayers have invoked the compassionate mind of the source of power. From the source of power, its wisdom, compassion, and power come toward you in the form of multiple beams of blessing lights of various colors (or streams of nectar). These beams of light touch every pore of your body. Feel the heat of their mere touch. Feel the blissful nature of the heat. And feel the power of the blissful heat.

6. Then the beams of light enter your body. Visualize and feel that all your negative habits, mental ills, emotional conflicts, lack of fulfillment, fear, physical sicknesses, and circulation or energy blockages are in the form of darkness in your body. By the mere touch of the blessing light, all the darkness is completely dispelled, without any trace, from your body and mind. Your body is filled with

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

amazing bright light, with the sensation of heat, bliss, and strength. Then see and feel that your whole body is transformed into a blessing light body. Feel that every cell of your body is transformed into the cells of blessing light with heat, bliss, and strength.

7. Then think of a cell on your forehead (or any other place in your body). The cell is made of bright blessing light. It is vast and beautiful. Slowly, enter into the cell. It is limitless and boundless as the sky. Feel the vastness of the cell for a while.

8. Then see and feel that your body is made of billions of the same kind of vast, beautiful, blissful cells. Each cell is adorned with the presence of the source of power. Be aware of the amazing display and energy of your miraculous body. All the cells are *Meditations* in love and harmony with each other. Feel the power of these billions of blissful cells in your body adorned by the sources of power.

9. All the cells of the channels, organs, and muscles of your blessing light body are breathing. They are breathing heat and bliss openly and spontaneously like the waves of the ocean. Feel the waves of blissful movement. The waves caress, relax, and melt

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

any place where we have hardness or rigidity, any fixations of unresolved emotions and unhealed wounds with their traces. Feel the energy aura. Feel the feeling. Be one with the feeling.

10. Then you could sing OM, AH, and HUNG, (or any other sacred mantra which is sacred to you) as the healing movement generates strength and openness in your cells, unite with them. You can sing your mantra loudly, softly, or silently in your mind.

As you repeatedly sing **OM** (or your sacred mantra) slowly and continuously, be aware of how the waves of sound powerfully resonate in every cell, from your vocal cords through your whole body like the waves of the ocean. Delight in the feeling of power and strength, the qualities of the Buddha-body - Cosmic Christ or your Perfect Model.

In the same way, singing AH, be aware of the opening, releasing, and blossoming energies, the qualities of the Buddha-speech.

Singing **HUNG** be aware of merging yourself with the union of power and openness, which is the boundless power, the qualities of the Buddha-mind.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

In the same way, make a gesture of a blossoming flower at your heart. Holding the fists upward, unfold the fingers of your fist (one after another, starting with the little fingers) and open your hands and arms and be aware of the delightful feeling of opening, releasing, and blossoming, the qualities of the Buddha-speech.

Make a contemplative gesture, placing your hands palms up in your lap, the right hand over the left hand, with the thumbs slightly touching, and be aware of merging yourself with the union of power and openness, which is the boundless power, the qualities of the Buddha-mind.

11. You could see an amazingly vast aura of bright blessing light filled with energy power around your body. It is a protective aura that prevents any negative effects from coming in. It is also an aura of transmutation that transforms everything in the energy aura into blessing light, like snowflakes falling into warm water.

**Hermetic - Esoteric -
Mystical Philosophies**

Healing through blessed sounds

The sounds OM, AH, and HUNG (pronounced hoong, with a soft H) are viewed as the 'seed syllables' of the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, the fully enlightened nature. Because of the universality of these sounds, anyone can benefit from them.

These three syllables comprise one of the most powerful chants in Buddhism. They are pure and archetypal in nature, free from elaboration, concepts, grasping, and rigidity. So just giving voice to these sounds allows us to be more open.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

For Buddhists, these sounds also embody special meaning in their expression of all the qualities of the Buddha: OM is the changeless strength and beauty of the true nature we all possess, the Buddha body; AH is the ceaseless expression and prevailing energy of reality, the Buddha speech; HUNG is the unmoving perfection of reality's primordial openness, the Buddha mind. Long used in healing practices, these sounds have been blessed by many Buddhas and enlightened beings throughout the ages.

Each syllable represents particular healing qualities. Singing OM brings peace, bliss, clarity, firmness, courage, stability, and strength; AH brings energy, openness, expansion, and empowerment; HUNG is associated with enlightenment, infinity, essence, and oneness.

You can sing each syllable with equal emphasis. Or else emphasize and repeat one syllable according to the particular healing qualities you need. For example:

**OOOOOOOOOMMMM
AHHHHHHHHHHH
HUUUUUUUNNNNGGG**

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

**OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM
AHHHHH HUUUNNNGGG**

**OOOOMM
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
HUUUNNNGGG**

**OOOOMM AHHHHHHHHH
HUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUNNNNNGGG**

Sing the syllables however you feel is soothing in a tune that rises and falls or on one note, quietly or loudly, with high pitch or low, with feelings, and images.

Feel as if sadness or painful emotion is contained within the sound of OM in the form of clouds, smoke, or mist. As you sing AH, let go of the problems forever. With HUNG, feel the healing of peace and openness of the sound.

You can work with these sounds to transform difficult thoughts, you can also call forth your source of power with these syllables (or with the sound of AH alone).

Feel that the sound is invoking and generating all the healing forces of the universe, and that the source of power emerges from and is itself an embodiment of the sound.

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

See and feel warm, bright light radiating from the sound and the image. The light gradually fills your head and entire body.

As you continue chanting, take your time celebrating the sound and the light, which brings healing to every part of mind and body.

Purifying Our Emotions **Silently**

Chanting can be silent too. An exercise called 'threefold-breathing' involves saying the three seed syllables to ourselves in unison with our breathing. This develops concentration and strength of mind, purifies negative emotions, and can be a good preliminary to any other healing meditation.

In threefold breathing mentally say OM as you inhale. Say AH as you pause, in the moment when the breath is about to begin moving the other way. Say HUNG on the out-breath. Feel that you are breathing in unison with the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, all the Buddhas of all time, or the Cosmic Christ or your Perfect Model. If you are more comfortable with a secular approach, appreciate these

DZOGCHEN - the Tibetan Buddhism

syllables as the universal embodiment of strength, openness, and oneness.

Let your breath and the syllables flow naturally. Give yourself fully to this, so that your breathing, the syllables, and your mind become one. Finally, allow your silent chanting to dissolve into relaxed breathing, let go of the syllables, and merge within the silence of your breathing.

Amid the noise of modern life, it is tempting to fall back on noisy distractions that take us away from our true selves. Perhaps we are afraid of silence, like children afraid of the dark. By giving ourselves wholly to chanting or singing, produced by the body in union with the mind, we learn to appreciate sound. Then it becomes easier to fully appreciate silence.

Why not try in your home or in your city, to chant or sing, even near a busy, noisy street where no one will notice or care. Warm up slowly and with your relaxed out-breath build to a loud AH or any sound that feels natural. Really let go, it's your right to make a joyful noise.