

What does “recognition” of the enlightened mind in Dzogchen mean?

Of course in the process of one just getting "familiar" with Dzogchen teachings, the mind is engaged in looking for and "recognizing" what this "changeless, pure presence as rigpa" is. This isn't an intellectual pursuit, nor a gradual process of refinement through working through the levels of shamata and vispasana. That is the gradual path of Mahamudra. In Dzogchen Garab Dorje taught one begins by becoming directly oriented to this "rigpa" aware presence immediately without any supports of any kind. This "orientation" is actually a "familiarization" with what is already fully present in one's cognitive awareness or consciousness. One could call it a "recognition", but it is more like recognizing your face in a mirror amongst many other reflections, rather than receiving some "knowledge". So lets see how exactly this "recognizing" is brought about. And at the "recognizing", nothing new has been added to one's condition nor has anything been removed, just a re-focusing of attention from being focused on "mental constructions" as thoughts, feelings and perceptions to the highlighting of one's current naked and pure state of changeless aware Knowingness as "immediate and intrinsic presence".

Here below is how “recognition” is accomplished as described by the Dzogchen masters, and if you save and contemplate these quotes below, In my opinion, you will never find a more complete, more powerful Dzogchen "Direct Introduction" to our primordial state of utter perfection and pure aware Knowingness, the heart essence of the Buddha's Enlightenment:

Mingyur Rinpoche:

"It is easy to recognize it. You just have to drop thinking and it is right there. There is not a lot to be done. You do not have to do this and that and the other. It is like the example of trying to touch space with your finger. To touch space, you do not have to move your finger at all, do you—it is al- ready touching space, isn't it?"

There is an oral instruction about the way to look. It is said,
“It is as though your eyes were looking through the back of your head instead of looking forwards.”

"It is as though your eyes are looking backwards instead of forwards as they usually do. You are looking out with your eyes but are looking back at the same time. Do not try too hard with this though, otherwise you will really make a big mistake. You just sort of look back at your mind and say, “Who am I? Where am I? What is this? ” When you do that, do you see the thing that is thinking? That is enough!"

Tsoknyi Rinpoche wrote regarding Dzogchen recognition of Rigpa:

"Without any in or any out - utter openness. How is it that ‘openness’? It’s empty, awake, luminous and simple..."

"The way to do this is just to turn your attention slightly inward, not to look deeply inside, just to turn your focus from outward to inward in a very light way. The moment of recognizing this state is the blessings of the lineage."

Again from Tsoknyi Rinpoche:

"The style of meditation in Mahamudra and Dzogchen is meditation which is non-meditation. What is this non-meditation? How do we meditate without meditating? Whatever situation mind is in, whether there are discursive thoughts of good, bad, clean, unclean, and so on, if you drop all of these so that you are without even a whisker of the conceptual activity of mind, the nature of mind will shine forth as non-stopped clarity and that is called self-arising rigpa. This does not need to be created or produced or purchased; when you let mind itself, just as it is, shine forth and stay in that, that is called self-arising rigpa. Someone who meditates using logical processes could never meditate on this, could never realize it.

To do this, you need to reverse your outwardly-directed attention inward and look hither towards the mind. This way of looking hither towards the mind means to rest self-settled in unhindered clarity. Having released all the bindings of passion, aggression, pride, and so on, abide in the state of this self-arising rigpa of non-stopped clarity, crystal clarity, like the sun shining in the sky. Not being caught by this and that but resting in the non-stopped clarity of whatever there is occurring in mind is called self-arising rigpa."

To quote Norbu Rinpoche:

"Self-liberation means you find yourself right in that pure 'noticing', that pure presence of Rigpa."

19th century Dzogchen Master, Shakyasri Jnana's The Vital Essence:

"In every instance there is an aware quality that is both empty and cognizant and neither altered nor corrupted by any thoughts. Simply keep this natural state and remain without straying from it."

Dzogchen master, Chokyi Nyima says in his book: Present Fresh Wakefulness:

"Basically and fundamentally, our mind is utterly empty, sheer bliss, totally naked. We do not need to make it like this; we do not need to cultivate it by meditating, to create this state by meditating."

"Give up thinking of anything at all, about the past, the future or the present. Remain thought-free, like an infant."

"Innate suchness is unobscured the moment you are not caught up in present thinking."

"This is not some state that is far away from us: thought-free wakefulness actually exists together with every thought, inseparable from it... but the thinking obscures or hides this innate actuality. Thought free wakefulness (the natural state) is immediately present the very moment the thinking dissolves, the moment it vanishes, fades away, falls apart."

Here are some "pointers" from two accomplished masters, Thrangu Rinpoche and Khenpo Gangshar:

"But you will see the mind-essence and it will be clear and expansive, vivid and naked. When we say "clear," this is like the clear aspect of the mind. When we talk about it being clear or luminous, sometimes we understand that as meaning some sort of a light—a blazingly bright light. But that is not what this means. It means that it can know and understand. It does not stop. We do not turn into some sort of rock. That is not what happens: there is the clear, knowing aspect of the mind. It is also expansive, which means here that the clarity is vast: we can see and know many things. Then the text says "vivid and naked." "Vivid" means that it is as if we are actually seeing—it is right there and we are really seeing it. There is no doubt whether or not this is it—it is just right there. It is naked: we are not thinking about it with logic or seeing it from far away; it is right here. There is no veil or anything covering it at all. This is what we rest in; this is the nature of the mind."

"We do not try to change anything; we rest directly in equipoise—... in an uncomplicated way. The reason for resting loosely like this is that our meditation is not something that is mentally constructed and newly made. Instead, it is just the way the mind is, unaltered. Normally we are deluded by many confused appearances, but the meditation should be understood as knowing the nature of the mind as it is, clearly and without mistake."

"This is not just something that only Khenpo Gangshar says. It is also said in The Supreme Continuum and The Ornament of Clear Realization by Maitreya, as well as in The Two Books, the tantra of the glorious Hevajra. These works all say:

In this there's nothing to remove
Nor anything at all to add.
By viewing rightness rightly and
By seeing rightly—liberation!"

"There is nothing to remove. We do not need to stop or get rid of anything, thinking, "This is emptiness. This cannot be established as a thing." The nature of the mind is fine just as it is. Nor is there anything to add to the mind-essence, thinking, "That is missing.

This is clarity. This is something I need to gain.” If we just look at the mind-essence rightly and rest in equipoise within this nature of the mind just as it is, not following our thoughts, we will see that it is rightness. We do not need to think, “It is emptiness”—its essence is naturally empty. We do not need to think, “It is clear”—its essence is naturally clear. Resting with this mind, as it is, is “viewing rightness rightly.” When we see that essence as it is, at that moment we will be liberated from our faults and from samsara.”

"This is why we just rest right in the nature of mind as it is. The dharma nature is unchanging. When the great meditators of the past meditated on it, they saw that we do not need to alter it in any way. We just need to come to thoroughly know the dharma nature as it is. When we see that, this is the mind that we call clear and expansive, vivid and awake."

“In fact, rigpa is coming all the time. It is always there so there is nothing to do. There is no meditation to do because it is there all the time. There is no need of mantra, no need to do anything in particular, no need to visualize something; it is just there.”

Tsoknyi Rinpoche

From the Yeshe Lama by Jigmed Lingpa,
translated by Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro
Snow Lion Publications

This is an actual secret Dzogchen Direct Introduction to Rigpa:

"Kye!

Do not contrive or elaborate the awareness of this very moment. Allow it to be just as it is. This is not established as existing, not existing, or having a direction. It does not discern between emptiness and appearances and does not have the characteristics of nihilism and eternalism. Within this state where nothing exists, it is unnecessary to exert effort through view or mediation. The great primordial liberation is not like being released from bondage. It is natural radiance uncontrived by the intellect, wisdom unsullied by concepts. The nature of phenomena, not tainted by the view and meditation, is evenness without placement ...without premeditation. It is clarity without characteristics and vastness not lost to uniformity. Although all sentient beings have never been separate from their own indwelling wisdom even for an instant, by failing to recognize this, it becomes like a natural flow of water solidifying into ice. With the inner grasping mind as the root cause and outer objective clinging as the contributing circumstance, beings wander in samsara indefinitely. Now,

with the guru's oral instructions, at the moment of encountering awareness--without any mental constructions-- rest in the way things truly are, without wavering from or meditating on anything. This fully reveals the core wisdom intent of the primordial Buddha Kuntuzangpo."

Chapter 6: THE VIEW OF DZOGCHEN

Taught by Lopon Tenzin Namdak,
Devon and Amsterdam, Spring 1991:

"If we depend on intellectual speculation alone, however, we shall be very far away from the Dzogchen view. It is not a matter of thinking "Maybe Dzogchen is like this or like that." That is something artificial; it is not direct experience. What is required at first is a direct introduction to the Natural State (rig-pa ngo-sprod). This Natural State is the view of Thegchod. The introduction is very simple: we just look back at ourselves."

The Jeweled Lamp Tantra states:

“From the nature of the three forms of freely resting
The very nature of original purity will be actualized.
To rest freely like a mountain, let your body remain motionless in the
seven-point posture of Vairocana. (normal meditation posture)

To rest freely like the ocean, keep your
eyes still; look straight ahead about one arrow-length into space with a
sense of vivid presence.

To let your awareness rest freely, remain untainted
by thoughts of the past, present, and future.

This present moment of
consciousness manifests, yet is unidentifiable. Without trying to add or
remove anything, just let be in the state of reality itself.

As the student rests in this manner, say the following:

‘Now listen, fortunate one. Look without distraction at the
naked self-clarity of this present moment of awareness. Do not
indulge your thoughts or try to rein them in. Awareness cannot
be spoiled by moral judgments or tainted by hope and fear.

It is clear, yet ungraspable; lucid, yet without inside or out; wide
open, but without slipping into a state of diffusion. It is inherently
radiant, yet cannot be identified.

It is transparent, expansive,
and even. This naked state, just as it is, is the Dharmakaya

itself-naturally luminous and unchanging.

Simply maintain recognition of this ungraspable self-radiance.
This is Buddhahood, pure and pristine,
The Dharmakaya of unchanging self-awareness. Vivid,
vibrant, and clear, like a cloudless autumn sky.
Rest like a mountain, steady and immutable.
Rest like the ocean, still and clear.
Rest like space, infinite in breadth.

However still your mind may be,
Rest in that as the state of awareness.
However your mind may manifest,
Rest in that as the radiance of awareness.
Motion and stillness are self-awareness,
Isolate their pure lucidity and rest.
Rest in the self-clarity of phenomena,
Which never waver from the state of awareness,
Just as birds can never escape space, wherever they may fly."

The Third Dzogchen Rinpoche

Dzogchen master, Mingyur Rinpoche wrote:

"In the practice of "The three—abiding, moving, and knowing"
, if you do the practice as described and look again and
again at the mind to see if it is abiding (calm or still) or if it is moving, then it is possible
that the "knower", which in this case is a coarse, separate observer,
might dissolve and the "knower" which is innate to the essence of
mind might come forth. If that happens, the essence of whatever
abiding happens is the "knower" and the essence of whatever moving
happens is the knower. Thus, the abiding and the movement
come to have the same essence, which is mind's innate knower (rigpa).
The abiding and movement are said to be not different at that
point in the sense that they are both manifestations of the innate
knower of mind."

Lama Shakbar:

"Despite the innumerable names that are tagged onto it,
Know that the real meaning is as follows:

Let your mind spontaneously relax and rest.
When left to itself, ordinary mind is fresh and naked.
If observed, it is a vivid clarity without anything to see,

A direct awareness, sharp and awake.
Possessing no existence, it is empty and pure,
A clear openness of non-dual luminosity and emptiness.

It is not permanent, since it does not exist at all.
It is not nothingness, since it is vividly clear and awake.
It is not oneness, since many things are cognized and known.
It is not plurality, since the many things known are inseparable in one taste.
It is not somewhere else; it is your own awareness itself.
The face of this Primordial Protector, dwelling in your heart,
Can be directly perceived in this very instant.
Never be separated from it, children of my heart!

If you want to find something greater than this in another place,
It's like going off searching for footprints although the elephant is right there.
You may scan the entire three-thousand-fold universe,
But it is impossible that you will find more than the mere name of Buddha.

This is the song which indicates the natural state of the main practice."

Lama Shabkar

From Tsoknyi Rinpoche:

"The style of meditation in Mahamudra and Dzogchen is meditation which is non-meditation. What is this non-meditation? How do we meditate without meditating? Whatever situation mind is in, whether there are discursive thoughts of good, bad, clean, unclean, and so on, if you drop all of these so that you are without even a whisker of the conceptual activity of mind, the nature of mind will shine forth as non-stopped clarity and that is called self-arising rigpa. This does not need to be created or produced or purchased; when you let mind itself, just as it is, shine forth and stay in that, that is called self-arising rigpa. Someone who meditates using logical processes could never meditate on this, could never realize it.

To do this, you need to reverse your outwardly-directed attention inward and look hither towards the mind. This way of looking hither towards the mind means to rest self-settled in unhindered clarity. Having released all the bindings of passion, aggression, pride, and so on, abide in the state of this self-arising rigpa of non-stopped clarity, crystal clarity, like the sun shining in the sky. Not being caught by this and that but resting in the non-stopped clarity of whatever there is occurring in mind is

called self-arising rigpa.

Regarding this, Jetsun Milarepa said,

"In the gap between former and later thoughts
Non-conceptual wisdom shines continuously. "

"This is what he meant: Our former moments of discursive thought give rise to later moments of thought and we follow along after the thoughts so that we have first, second, third, and so on thoughts. If you strike gently but decisively at discursive thoughts, you will see in the gap between discursive thoughts the self-arising rigpa, no-thought wisdom. You need to rest in equipoise on that. Self-arising rigpa is really like that; it occurs in between discursive thoughts. How do we go about looking at this? Having dropped all discursive thoughts, the "ordinary mind" (rigpa) of now-ness is there."

Dzogchen Ponlop wrote:

"From the perspective of the Mahamudra and Dzogchen teachings, we can wake up right now. When we wake up from our confused state of mind, that is enlightenment. There is no difference between this moment and enlightenment. The nature of our mind is fully awakened right from the beginning, and this awakened state is nothing other than our ordinary experience of emotions, thoughts, and perceptions. If we can genuinely see our emotions, senses, and thoughts just as they are, without trying to change them or improve our way of seeing them, then we can see the basic state of wakefulness. The state of fruition is simply the recognition of this nature of mind. That is what we call "nirvana," or "freedom from samsara." There is nothing more."

Tenzin Wangyal:

"In the Dzogchen view, the goal is already present. Nothing has to be developed, only recognized. The fundamental practices of Dzogchen are not aimed at developing anything, not even positive qualities. The practice is simply abiding in the nature of mind in which all qualities are already present and can spontaneously arise. Even the methods and supportive practices are not essential. Methods can become an obstacle to abiding in nondual awareness if the practitioner believes that one must use the practice to renounce something or transform something. Practices are only used to connect to the natural state and stabilize in it."

Sogyal Rinpoche:

"The essence of meditation practice in Dzogchen is encapsulated by these four points:

1. When one past thought has ceased and a future thought has not yet arisen, in that gap, in between, isn't there a consciousness of the present moment, fresh, virgin, unaltered by even a hair's breadth of concept, a luminous, naked awareness? Well, that is what Rigpa is!
2. Yet it doesn't stay in that state forever, because another thought suddenly arises, doesn't it? This is the self-radiance of that rigpa.
3. However, if you do not recognize this thought for what it really is, the very instant it arises, then it will turn into just another ordinary thought, as before. This is called the chain of delusion and is the root of samsara.
4. If you are able to recognize the true nature of the thought as soon as it arises, and leave it alone without any follow up, then whatever thoughts arise all automatically dissolve back into the vast expanse of Rigpa and are liberated." - Sogyal Rinpoche

"When we understand that key point, then our perspective changes, and we realize that our ordinary perceptions, which are based upon our present state of confusion, do not truly exist as they seem. They are purely adventitious and superficial, and the fundamental innate mind of clear light, the nature of mind, is completely unaffected and unsullied by these adventitious factors. They have nothing to do with the actual nature of our mind as it is, because that nature is not sullied by such superficial manifestations. It is with the confidence that comes with such a view that we can arouse a state of perception that is not ordinary, but divine, and which pertains to the deity rather than to ordinary ways of seeing things. In a way, it is quite automatic. Once we understand things from the point of view of the nature of mind, then the confidence that gives us means that our ordinary way of perceiving things simply ceases, as a matter of course. And in its stead there arises this divine state of perception, this way of seeing things from the point of view of their innate purity."

"There are many ways to interpret this term primordial wisdom. You could, for example, understand it to mean "the untainted wisdom of the aryas." However, what we are referring to here when we say "taking primordial wisdom as the path" is the unchanging rigpa awareness, which is "just the same later as it was before." This unchanging rigpa is Samantabhadra, the primordial buddha. Even while we remain in samsara, this ground, our fundamental nature, is never tainted by the transient stains of discursive thought. Neither the phenomena of samsara nor their causes, the karmic winds and ordinary thought patterns, have ever stained or defiled the purity of rigpa."

The Dalai Lama (2012-06-25T03:00:00+00:00). Mind in Comfort and Ease: The Vision of Enlightenment in the Great Perfection

From 19th century Dzogchen Master, Shakya Shri Jnana's The Vital Essence

"In every instance there is an aware quality that is both empty and cognizant and neither altered nor corrupted by any thoughts. Simply keep this natural state and remain without straying from it."

"The Great Perfection does not require analysis nor cultivation. Rather, it is merely a matter of recognizing, as your own nature, this very wakefulness of natural knowing that is self-existing and spontaneously present throughout samsara and nirvana."

"According to this kind of views, our Dzogchen tradition, whether expressions of thought movement occur, remain, or dissolve, the essence does not change but remains a fresh, basic state of naturalness. No matter the variety samsaric or nirvanic displays that may arise, there is nothing else to be attained apart from or superior to this unchanging essence suffused with awareness, which transcends being liberated, even though the labels "Buddha" or "fruition" may be given to it. Since this essence has never been tainted by confusion, it is free from the seeds for taking rebirth... Primordial purity (kadag) means that the basic nature of awareness belongs to neither samsara nor nirvana, and therefore its identity is primordially pure. No type of virtuous karmic cause and effect improves this primordial purity, nor does any type of unvirtuous karmic cause and effect worsen it. This primordially pure identity of awareness can be neither improved nor harmed by anything whatsoever. It is an unchanging openness of awareness that continues throughout the day and night."