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Liberation in Dzogchen, Immediate Realization

by [Jackson Peterson](#) on Wednesday, September 5, 2012

I recommend saving this text as I have also included many powerful pointing out instructions from several Dzogchen Masters and texts. This text is meant itself to be a "direct introduction to Rigpa".

What is liberation in Dzogchen?

The basic and key definition of "liberation" in Dzogchen teachings is a condition where the mind recognizes its true condition. Its not one mind recognizing another mind, a higher mind, but rather recognizing the essential nature of our current aware consciousness, our sentient mind that perceives and knows.

If we just take a moment to reflect on our aware presence of mind, we can get a sense of this by looking out our eyes. Then sort of "look back" mentally at that which is "looking" out the eyes. Perhaps you can notice what seems like a center of awareness behind the eyes or in the eyes or occupying the space of the head. The main point is that you have some sense of localization from where you appear to be looking from. Look back within this aware consciousness. Does it have any shape or color? Does it have an actual center? Does it have any substance to it at all? Does this awareness have any sense of a self or identity other than the thoughts defining a self, passing through it? Does it seem like aware empty space? Does it have any borders? Just notice the nature of your mind for a few minutes.

You may notice that thoughts arise and dissolve within this empty aware space. You may notice the various perceptions that arise and change in the space of this aware emptiness. Now notice the bare or naked quality of the awareness itself. Its transparent, invisible and formless, right? Yet is fully alert and present, agreed?

From Padmasamhava via Karma Lingpa:

"And in the present moment, when (your mind) remains in its own condition without constructing anything, awareness, at that moment,

in itself is quite ordinary. And when you look into yourself in this way nakedly (without any discursive thoughts),

*****Since there is only this pure observing, there will be found a lucid clarity without anyone being there who is the observer; only a naked manifest awareness is present. (This awareness) is empty and immaculately pure, not being created by anything whatsoever.*****

It is authentic and unadulterated, without any duality of clarity and emptiness."

Here's a quote from the famous 14th century Tibetan Dzogchen Master, Longchenpa:

"Awareness abides as the aspect which is aware under any and all circumstances, and so occurs naturally, without transition or change. For this reason, this should be understood to be ultimately abiding Suchness."

Again notice from the perspective of being a "changeless empty aware presence" how thoughts and experiences arise, change and disappear, but this empty aware presence from which and through which all these thoughts come and go, remains motionless. This is your "changeless presence". Its as though you are a mirror, the changeless glass of the mirror. Reflections arise and dissolve within you as the glass of the mirror, you are not modified or conditioned by any of those reflections. This is your "changeless nature". This is like the stars in the night sky being reflected clearly in a pond of clear water.

Nothing can condition this empty aware space that you always are. Now with your eyes open and looking outward, "look" back at your observingness that is always present but with no entity or self-notion present as a personal observer. Its just open and empty observingness or awareness. This empty and naked "observingness" that is the place from where you are looking, has no name, no history, no karma, no conditioning, no ignorance, no concepts, no center, no border and is changeless. Recognize this alert, empty presence to be the mind's essential nature. If you suddenly "recognize" this in a moment of authentic insight, that is Rigpa, the wisdom knowing of your true nature. This is like the sun lighting up the dawn sky.

That being realized, you just continue in that recognition. Doubts may arise or various thoughts, but again just notice how they arise and dissolve within the empty space your unchanging awareness. They can't condition the nature of this pure observing. Indeed, they are just the spontaneous play of your own awareness itself, like waves of empty awareness. By noticing thoughts, feelings and perceptions to be just empty waves of awareness itself, that have no substance, they just self-release upon the arising. In this way the Clarity of awareness itself appears to itself as these same thoughts, feelings and perceptions. This is like pouring clear water into clear water.

And we just continue in this recognition that arises spontaneously in every moment. This is like setting a prisoner free who was never in bondage.

"So, ugly or beautiful, positive or negative conditions, heavens or hells or transmigration do not in any way affect the underlying nature of the consciousness that is the state of the mirror itself." **Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche**

Here is a quote from a fundamental Dzogchen Tantra or scriptural text, called the "The Heaped Jewels". It completely summarizes the unique method of Dzogchen practice:

"When anyone rests in the natural state without concentration, understanding manifests in that individual's mind, without someone having to teach all the words by which the mind understands these meanings. As this understanding dawns in the mind, all that is non-manifest and all sensory appearances, which in themselves entail no concepts, are seen to be naturally pure. Thus, in an unobstructed way, everything becomes an expression of the supreme unity of emptiness and lucidity."

"Mind is poised in the state of bare awareness, there is no directing the mind. One is not looking within for anything; one is not looking without for anything. One is simply letting the mind rest in its own natural state. The empty, clear and unimpeded nature of mind can be experienced if we can rest in an uncontrived state of bare awareness without distraction and without the spark of awareness being lost.

The pure nature of mind calls to mind an image such as the sun or the moon, a luminous body."

Kalu Rinpoche

"Meanwhile there is always a perceiving, a presence, and "awareness of" the moments without thought, of the moments with thought. And this perceiving, this awareness of the presence of both those moments of the naypa (calm), of the gyuwa (movement of thought), that presence that's aware of both we call rigpa"

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

"Now there always exists in that moment, even though there's no thought, a kind of presence or awareness. And that presence, that noticing or perceiving is called Rigpa" Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

"But in the absolute sense, the underlying condition of the individual, his primordial consciousness has never been and never can be impeded or obstructed."

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

"In any event, what is most important, both at the beginning and later on, is to relax. The natural State is already full present from the very beginning, and so there no need to cajole or coerce it. Just relax and let all be. It is all there. That is the way of Dzogchen." Dzogchen Master Lopon Tenzin Namdak

Norbu Rinpoche said: "Whatever arises in the mind, the awareness of that, the presence of that state of whatever arises is itself Rigpa. This is not a concept, but it's a direct experience, that kind of presence or awareness. It's beyond any concept. One continues to remain beyond concept and one continuously finds oneself in this knowingness or presence. This is the essence of all that we speak of in the Upadesha teachings."

From Dzogchen Master, Lopon Tenzin Namdak:

"Just remaining continuously in a bright sense of presence without grasping at anything will bring us a sense of inexpressible bliss. We still continue to see all of the mountains, lakes, trees, houses, people, and so on , that exist in the world, but we will not be distracted by

anything that we see or hear. We remain in a sense of presence (Rigpa) that is bright and clear, just like a mirror that reflects all of these same things in the world, but is not affected or changed by what it reflects. We become like that mirror. All of them are merely reflections and they make no changes or modifications to our Natural State.

No matter what circumstances or what worlds we find ourselves in, we are without any expectations or changes. We are just what we are, the Natural State which is like a mirror. It is clear and empty, and yet it reflects everything, all possible existences and all possible lifetimes. But it never changes and it does not depend on anything else. It is just itself, and nothing special. Even if the mind finds itself dull or drowsy or agitated, the Natural State is no way disturbed or modified by this. So there is nothing to be removed and nothing to be purified in any particular way."

