

## CHAPTER 8

# THE DIRECT INDICATION OF BUDDHAHOOD BEYOND CLASSIFICATION

*BY NUDEN DORJE*

*BEING,*

*THE SECTION ON THE INSTRUCTION ON THE PRIMORDIALLY PURE  
GREAT PERFECTION,*

*BELONGING TO*

*THE COLLECTED VERY SECRET DAKINI TEACHINGS,*

*FROM*

*THE COMPOSITION OF THE ESSENTIAL PROFOUND TRUTH*

This dzogchen teaching is part of the treasures (gTer-Chos) discovered by Nuden Dorje Dropen Lingpa Drolo Tsal in the middle of the nineteenth century. He spent most of his life in eastern Tibet and later lived at Khordong Gomba in Kham Trehor, which was founded by Sherab Mebar, a disciple of Padma Trinlae who was a student of the fifth Dalai Lama. Nuden Dorje was recognised as an incarnation of Ke'u Chung Lotsawa, a direct disciple of Padma Sambhava, from whom he received this teaching.

The text begins in typical nyingma fashion with an admonition to flee samara and then an instruction to use meditation on the deity as a way into intrinsic openness. Dzogchen is seen here as an invitation to our intrinsic openness. It is not presented as an exclusive system—whatever helps the student awaken to their innate freedom is valid, for dzogchen begins only when that freedom becomes available in the midst of confusion. Thus the hope of liberation and the desire to avoid the suffering of samsara are useful both as preliminary orienting attitudes and as part of an integrating path which is no path. Exclusion, hierarchy, totalisation and all the other methods of imposing order are both unnecessary and unproblematic in this pluralistic openness.

On the second page of the translation Nuden Dorje presents dzogchen as an approach involving individual choice and responsibility. There are many different ways of practising. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the students are familiar with these. But it is the students' responsibility to be aware of their own current state and to apply whichever of the styles and techniques is most appropriate to an integration with unchanging openness. This is the guru as facilitator rather than director. It is not a question of applying specific antidotes to specific situations but rather of using the energy of whatever arises to self-liberate the arisings while remaining relaxed in one's own intrinsic openness.

The focus of this text is not on the complexity of dzogchen exercises for relaxing and being in harmony with time and place and body, as described in the Klong-sDe literature. Here, attention is directed much more simply to the twin tasks of finding oneself in intrinsic openness, and learning how to cope in a non-reactive fashion with all that might obscure this unchanging openness.

The form of the text is that of a spontaneous discourse in which there is less sense of a sequential flow of ideas than one finds in Chetsangpa. Each paragraph is a statement or an instruction or a piece of evidence. The text is pervaded with a sense of the absolute importance of what is being stated; it is truly a teaching from the heart, a revelation of the author's most intimate experience of value. This style is shared with many of the texts collected here for they are not presentations of the dharma as a system of knowledge but are rather sharings of the truth of experience and affirmations of the genuine benefit of such practices.

## THE TEXT

Salutation to my own awareness, the supreme ruler.

Concerning the practice of these instructions on the original knowing of the primordially pure intrinsic great perfection, the profound peace free of all interpretation, all you meditating yogis should thoroughly receive the nectar of instructions from the holy gurus you follow.

Having been born in this impure samsara you should flee society and live alone in isolated places. Keep your body in the posture of Vairocana which has seven aspects<sup>i</sup>. Keep your voice free of all conversation and recitation. Expel the air from your body and remain relaxed in your own place. Do not entertain past confusions nor encourage future ones. Stay in the present without doubt or uncertainty. Not thinking of anything, not developing anything—just abiding spontaneously in the simplicity of non-distraction.

Meditate on the form of your deity without taking the appearance to be strongly real. Pray very strongly and then allow the deity to dissolve into light and melt into yourself so that he or she is inseparable from your own mind. The meditator and the experience are clear so remain relaxed in non-distraction beyond expression.

You can also focus your attention on a statue, a letter, a symbolic implement, or pebble—whatever feels appropriate to you. Then not thinking anything with your mind, do not meditate, don't pursue the objects of the six senses but remain as you are without being mixed with even the most subtle thoughts of being or non-being and so on. At that time do not block the flow of experience with thoughts of hoping to remain in that state for a moment or of wondering how long it will continue. For whatever sudden thoughts appear, recognise them immediately and continue without distraction in the openness that does not grasp after the site where the thoughts arose.

If you find yourself not stopping your engagement with the flow of thoughts but instead following after them, then keep your body in the seven-fold position, keep your attention sharp and look with mind well focused.

You can also practise by remaining relaxed without forcing a focus. And you can practise by merging attention with the objects of the six senses. You should also know how to practise this together with inhalation, holding, and exhalation of the breath. For the beginning yogi meditators who practise in these ways, there are many ways that thoughts can arise. Do not see this as error, for if you maintain your practice you will be able to remain simply in awareness free of thought. Then you will not like distraction, you will speak little, and you will abide in one-pointed recollection. This is the method by which one practises lucid calm abiding (Zhi-gNas).

The outer objects we believe in, all the experienceable phenomena of samsara and nirvana, have from the very beginning been like the sky. All mentation's dualistic ideas are merely names devoid of even an atom's worth of true reality. Towards the bewildering whirl of illusory appearances which are empty and devoid of inherent self-nature we look in terms of particular entities and apply names to them. So we must become clear that their actuality is beyond being the object of limiting interpretation. Whatever objects arise are self-liberating and towards the ceaseless flow of whatever appearances we see we should remain free of the stain of holding them to be really existing. Clear, empty and free of grasping like the sky, that is the presence that will then arise. To remain spontaneously in that lucidity is the development of insight (Lhag-mThong).

When practising, however you do it, many different kinds of thoughts and experiences will occur. Then you must unwaveringly examine how they are in terms of where they come from, where they stay, where they go, and what shape and colour they have.

Also look at awareness itself. If you do not see anything at all then examine carefully what is looked at and who is the looker. If you don't see anything which is without self-substance then truly examine the many different thoughts very carefully. Remain spontaneously without grasping in the sky-like openness without limits, free of objects and thus be totally clear that mind is without any root.

If you understand and examine in this way and clearly see all the varieties of the faults of stillness and movement then by staying in this practice for a long time you will see how the mind is. Thus towards whatever thoughts arise be without encouragement or expectation, without accepting or rejecting— look at their self-arising and self-liberation.

Moreover when there are many swirling thoughts do not see this as a fault. Do not get mixed with ideas that do not perceive the qualities of naked clarity and emptiness but rather practise the display of uncontrived actuality.

If when sitting in the seven-fold posture with eyes correctly focused, there occurs the familiar presence of known objects due to the power of subtle thoughts, then it is very important not to go under the power of these very minuscule movements. From the very beginning emptiness has been without inherent self-identity, free of all interpretation. It is very important to know that your present consciousness, beyond intellectualisation, is just awareness itself.

What is looked at, the looking and the looker, as well as stillness and movement, are all the clarity of intrinsic self-expression. To be without grasping regarding this is to recognise one's own presence or to be clear about the one ground of knowing, and is a most important point.

If you do not have that understanding then what is looked at, the looking and the looker will be differentiated. Stillness and movement will be examined and labelled and you will be bound by the concepts of being and non-being, inhibiting and encouraging. So not only with the conceptual labelling of emptiness in terms of outer and inner but also regarding attachment to the object of meditation and notions of good and bad, hopes and doubts, do take care not to get bound up in these. Do not let your mind get distracted by the hidden movement of thought. It is vital to gain the understanding that is free of objects and beyond limits.

When one is not undistractedly in a posture and way of viewing like that, then one automatically wanders in the confusion of not understanding one's thoughts, and this process is not recognised. In other words, one does not know anything, one is stupid and revolves in unclarity. This is also described as not maintaining the spontaneity of thought and this leads to being bound by the necessity of distraction so that one cannot enter free expression. Thus movement and recollection must be under the control of clarity.

Moreover one can follow after the thoughts which are consequent on the arising of the various objects of the six senses. Then one examines and judges, pursuing each one after the other so that recollection is strengthened. Also when the mind does not rest in itself, thoughts go wandering all over the place without reaching a limit and this you must recognise as due to obstacles in your view and meditation. If one's practice develops in these ways then, as explained above, do not obscure things with erroneous understanding. Avoid conceptual artifice and maintain automatic spontaneity.

For whatever movements and recollections arise, remain present with insight and clarity: do not enter into evaluation, neither taking nor rejecting, adopting nor discarding. And do not go following after anything that occurs. Do not block movement and do not inhibit cessation. The essential point of the view is to remain exactly on the awareness of the unchanging openness of the one who gives rise to thoughts.

You need to recognise what is known as the practice or implementation of the play of actuality, which means understanding the view just stated. At that time, if the root of movement has not been cut—so that thoughts are experienced as abiding, and one protects one's own familiar story—then many thoughts arise as the objects of consciousness that is without understanding. One's immediate knowledge sinks and one experiences the obstacle of stupid calmness. So keep your mind sharp and clear. Practise in short sessions and allow the mind to move. It is very important to recognise movement and stability.

Moreover if one follows after movements, be they subtle or gross, then there is the obstacle of the mind becoming excited, so control attention. As before, develop the clarity of abiding without inhibiting lucidity regarding stillness and movement. The essential point of the view is the direct experience of the truth of this clarity. If the faults of sinking or excitation occur, they can be cleared by praying while meditating respectively on the red or the white form of Padma Sambhava.

If thoughts arise very strongly, such as feeling sick or much pain, and if one is not able to sit and does not know how to meditate, then this is the obstacle of the arising of dispersal and excitation. So relax body, speech and mind and with the mind look at the infinity of the sky. In a half  (i.e. V) at one's navel visualise a blazing fire and in it burn up the aggregates and potentialities<sup>ii</sup> and all the outer and inner entities of the world and its inhabitants so that there is just emptiness. Meditate on this repeatedly.

If the obstacles of sinking, fogginess and dullness arise so that the mind is repeatedly obscured, then control body, speech and mind. Be diligent in purification practices and in the accumulation of wisdom and merit. It is important to complete these two accumulations and offer bliss to the gods who reside in the channels by raising and lowering one's energy.

When practising the naked experience of awareness, the objects of the six senses may manifest. Do not let the mind stray after them. And with the mind not focused within, remain free of encouraging and inhibiting and all self-identification. Although the six sense objects may appear, do not be bound by hopes or needs. For example, however many waves arise in the ocean, they are all self-arising and self-dissolving. For whatever thoughts arise, if you can truly avoid storing them up then at that time you will be abiding in the state of the higher calm abiding.

If thoughts manifest, then they will manifest as the great play of original knowing. With the gradual experience of mind itself there is clarity free of the waves of movement and recollection. And with the intrinsic clarity of this, self-expression is unceasing as shining

radiance. This is the essential point of entering the meditative balance (mNyan-bZhag) of the union of emptiness and clear energy.

Although beginners will experience a ceaseless flow of many thoughts, their many faults will gradually, spontaneously, be self-pacified and remain for only an instant. Thus, as with the faults of the outer objects like sounds, thoughts come and this is known as movement. The understanding that discriminates between movement and stillness is known as recollection. That is the introduction to stillness (gNas), movement ('Gyu) and awareness (Rig).

Sometimes there is great stillness and then some movement occurs. Do not pursue the movement but maintain the recollection. Do this again and again. Moreover, do not look at the 'good' qualities of stillness and the 'problems' of movement. To simply stay (gNas) on (or to abide in) awareness is the intrinsic mode. Movement is the manifest mode and clarity is the radiant mode. Thus there is not even a hair's worth of good or bad thoughts.

If this is not actualised and one has attachment to good thoughts and bad thoughts, then, if one likes to be involved in the experience of emptiness, one will be born in the formless realm. If one likes to be involved in the experience of happiness, one will be born in the realms of desire. And if one pursues or is involved in the experience of clarity, one will be born in the form realm.

If one is free of the deluding movements that arise like that and practises clarity for a long time, then there is emptiness (sTong-Pa). One should peacefully stay for a long time in the presence of the intrinsic with the experience of bliss that cannot be changed or removed. The ceaseless arising of thoughts as the power of awareness is clarity. The point is to recognise the basis of the things which are to be purified, such as hopes for these experiences, and sadness at ending in dispersal, and not seeing the primordial purity, the essence of meditation.

Thus if there is the bewilderment ('Khrul-Pa)<sup>iii</sup> of many thoughts, in the knowledge of the pacifying (Zhi-Ba) of outer and inner dispersal in its own place, abide (gNas) clearly without contrivance. This is the truth of calm abiding (Zhi-gNas).

On the basis of unchanging openness, free of modification or adulteration, the powerful unobscured expression of awareness is seen directly and this is the introduction to insight or true seeing (Lhag-mThong).

Thus for whichever of the afflictions arise, be it aversion, attraction or assumption, and for whatever thoughts arise, good or bad, do not inhibit them. Do not see them as enemies. Do not evaluate them. Their true nature has been empty from the very beginning and they do not go beyond that. So it is very important to develop your ability to abide in spontaneity free of grasping.

In the THAL-'GYUR it is said,

All the thoughts that can possibly arise

Are self-liberating like a knotted snake tossed in the air.  
Yet those yogis who  
Know what is to be abandoned  
Seek the antidote elsewhere.  
Hoping to gain benefits and avoid difficulties,  
They are bound by duality.  
Experience primordial liberation from that false effort!

Thus as regards the objects of the five senses in which are sought antidotes for the afflictions which are to be abandoned, if you maintain spontaneity no matter what grasping thoughts arise, then there is self-liberation of the objects of the six senses. Whatever good thoughts and bad thoughts arise, do not pursue them in search of benefit or harm. Practise the state of the one who is open to happy or sad thoughts.

Meditation abides in its own place; thoughts manifest and recollection is held. For example, it is easy for one man to perform the three activities of going, sleeping and sitting. Similarly you must realise that the actuality of these three (abiding, manifesting and recollection) is their inseparability in one non-duality.

Calm abiding, which is the pacification of all thoughts in their own place, and insight, which is the direct seeing of awareness, are not two. All the possible appearances of the energy of the ground are self-liberating.

To express this in its briefest form: stillness and movement, recollection and awareness, good or bad thoughts, however they arise, do not make them separate! Don't enter into inhibiting or encouraging, rejecting or accepting. In the state free of appearance and interpretation directly maintain awareness and emptiness. When thoughts arise it is very important not to err in terms of the instructions.

In this way for whatever appears or arises maintain the recollection of distinction and stay with it however it is, and thus keep meditative balance. Then practise with the knowledge that has the intrinsic confidence of the unwavering, unchanging truth, the ground, so that there is the consequent gain of the changing mutability of movement and recollection.

Thoughts are inherently unstable. Thoughts vanish after which empty space is revealed within which thought manifests. So truly understand the actuality of whatever thoughts appear. Maintain instant, direct experience without residue. Maintain self-liberation. Do not mix this up with effortful activity. Stay present in this direct knowing.

Whoever meets with this instruction will be one with good karma and opportunities. If it is realised in the morning one will be a buddha in the morning. If it is realised at night one will be a buddha at night. Whoever practises it will gain buddhahood in this life if they are of the highest capacity. If of middle capacity they will get it in the bardo at death. And those of ordinary

capacity will be freed from bad births. Of this there is no doubt. This teaching is under the protection of the dharma guardians, the Tanma Chunyi and Nyanchen Thanglha.

Regarding this essence of all the essential profound truths, although there are many practices of all the special and most secret teachings, this is the final essence extracted from the ultimate essence. It can be discovered only by a fortunate person with good karma, for it is sealed in secrecy. It is sealed against those without vows and who have wrong views. It is to be given to my vow-keeping devoted follower. The treasure protectors are under orders to protect it. It is sealed beyond classification by Ugyen Padma. It is the dakinis' heart blood and heart treasure. Secret seal. Body, Speech, Mind will not err. Vajra vows. Seal. Seal. Seal. Treasure seal. Hidden seal. Profound seal. Secret seal. Mandala. This is the special teaching of Nuden Dorje Drophan Lingpa Drola Tsal.

### *NOTES*

---

<sup>i</sup> These are: legs in lotus position, back straight, chest raised, chin lowered, hands in lap, gaze gently fixed one meter in front, and tongue slightly turned up.

<sup>ii</sup> The aggregates of form, feeling, perception, association and consciousness. The potentialities are the six sense organs, their six objects, and their six consciousnesses.

<sup>iii</sup> 'Khrul-Pa is translated as both delusion and bewilderment. It refers to the delusion of taking impermanent arisings to be self-existing phenomena which are then identified with. On the basis of this one makes plans and acts to achieve them. But when they do not work out one is bewildered for somehow, despite all our efforts, life doesn't make sense.