

Principia Dharmata: The Buddhist View of the Nature of Mind

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Without past, present, future; empty awake mind.
-Mipham Rinpoche

The crux of the matter. In the Buddhist view of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection, and its foundation in *Madhyamaka Prasangika*, even the Ultimate Truth that is fundamental great emptiness (*mahashunyata*) is not a frozen absolute, that is, it is not a metaphysical logocentric idol or “false absolute” existing unconditioned and *independently* as a creator God, or some vast substrate, entity, being or thing. Rather, emptiness is a *relativized* absolute, abiding *interdependently*, as “dependent arising” or “Interbeing,” a timeless infinitely vast causal nexus of arising interconnected causes and conditions (*vasana*/quantum qubits). H.H. The Dalai Lama terms this ultimate paradox the “emptiness of emptiness.”

It is important for us to avoid the misapprehension that emptiness is an absolute reality from which the illusory world emerges... it's not some kind of [entity] out there somewhere. . .emptiness must be understood as 'empty of intrinsic or independent existence'. . .form's ultimate nature . . .(It) does not imply non-existence of phenomena but the emptiness of phenomena . . .its ultimate mode of being . . .the basis that allows form [to] arise as emptiness.

H.H. The Dalai Lama, *Buddhadharma Quarterly*, Fall, 2002

How then does emptiness exist? Emptiness is established by relative conventional minds. Therefore emptiness does not exist ultimately. It exists merely conventionally, as the dependent arising of form.

His Holiness explains the seminal relationship of the Buddha's Dependent Arising (*pratitya samutpada*) and Emptiness:

First, all conditional things and events in the world come into being only as a result of the interaction of causes and conditions. They don't just arise from nowhere, fully formed. Second, there is mutual dependence between parts and the whole: without parts there can be no whole, without a whole it makes no sense to speak of parts... Third, anything that exists and has an identity does so only within the total network of everything that has a possible or potential relation to it. No phenomenon exists with an independent or intrinsic identity... Thus, there are no subjects without the objects by which they are defined, there are no objects without subjects to apprehend them. . . (H.H. The Dalai Lama, 2005)

The forms of emptiness. Thus, all phenomena arise in dependence upon prior causes and conditions; phenomena arise in mutual interdependence of parts and the unbroken whole; phenomena are absent any separate, intrinsic existence because they exist only in dependence

on related factors: this absence is emptiness. Thus all phenomena are dependently and conceptually designated, that is, they exist only by way of reified perceptual and conceptual attribution, imputation and designation.

Cause and effect—the Principle of Causality—and its subset, karma is possible only in a *Kosmos* whose phenomena is interdependently arisen and therefore empty of intrinsic existence. Thus, as the Buddha's *Heart Sutra* expresses, "Emptiness is form, form is emptiness." Emptiness and the dependent arising of form are a prior unity. No emptiness, no form. No form, no emptiness. Relative phenomena arise interdependently only from the vast expanse of their prior causal nexus, their emptiness base (*gzhi*) or primordial sourceground (*cittata, cittadhatu*). This supreme source is Ultimate Truth (*paramartha satya*) that is Reality Itself (*dharmata/chos nyid*). This is the ultimate mode of being for all the interdependent things and beings of the dimension of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*). Independently existing phenomena, arising *ex nihilo*, from nothing, independent of prior causes and conditions is not logically or empirically possible.

If the objective and subjective phenomena of reality do not *ultimately* exist and are *ultimately* "unfindable" after twenty-five hundred years of philosophical, scientific and noetic (mind/spirit) analysis, we must ask how it is that phenomena *appear* to exist.

The question is not *whether* they exist but *how* they exist. They exist, but not in the manner in which we perceive them. They lack any discrete, intrinsic reality. This absence, or emptiness, of inherent existence is their ultimate nature. . . It is critical to understand that *Madhyamaka* does not say that things are absent of inherent existence mainly because they cannot be found when sought through critical analysis. This is not the full argument. Things and events are said to be absent of inherent or intrinsic existence because *they exist only in dependence on other factors*. . . In other words, anything that depends on other factors is devoid of its own independent nature, and this absence of an independent nature is emptiness. . . Nagarjuna says that things and events, which are dependently originated, are empty, and thus are also dependently designated. . . [He] concludes there is nothing that is not empty, for there is nothing that is not dependently originated. Here we see the equation between dependent origination and emptiness. . . the path of the Middle Way, which transcends the extremes of absolutism and nihilism.

- H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Buddhadharma*, Winter 2004, p.20

How then do phenomena exist? The world is real, not from its own side, but merely by relative intersubjective conventional designation. According to Buddhist practitioner and philosopher of science Alan Wallace, this "intersubjectivity lies at the very heart of the Buddhist worldview and its path to spiritual awakening." The Buddhist view sees the individual not as an *independent* ego, but as a self—our bodymind—arising as an *interdependent process*, a causal nexus of prior causes and conditions. In this holistic Middle Way view the

ego-I exists, as with all phenomena, not permanently nor absolutely, but only nominally and relatively, through its own conceptual imputation and designation. Ultimately however, all the phenomena of reality are “empty of self-nature,” utterly devoid of any essential or intrinsic existence. Therefore, there is inherent existence neither in being, nor in non-being. Nagarjuna’s “tetralemma refutation” refutes 1) reified existence, 2) nihilistic non-existence, 3) both existence and non-existence, and 4) neither existence nor non-existence. How then do the *Prasangika Madhyamikas*—Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Tsongkhapa—refute the *Svatantrika Madhyamika* and *Cittamatra* charges of nihilism and skepticism? Once again, nihilism is avoided by accomplishing the delicate balance between negating too much (nihilism) and negating too little (absolutism). Dependently arising phenomena really do exist conventionally, yet are devoid of any intrinsic absolute existence. And this is the “emptiness of emptiness.”

Emptiness objective and subjective. His Holiness further distinguishes between objective emptiness and subjective emptiness.³ Objective emptiness or the “objective luminosity” is a “non-affirming negative phenomenon,” the absence or negation of any independent or intrinsic existence, or self. But the Buddha’s Great Emptiness (*mahashunyata*) is not *ultimately* a non-affirming negative. In the highest view of the nondual tantras—the view of *Dzogchen* and Highest Yoga Tantra—negated phenomena appearing to a self as relative-conventional reality are replaced by subjective emptiness (*nay lug*), the *affirming* luminosity of the clear light (*‘od gsal/prabhasvara*), the nondual cognitive-emotive direct experience presence (*vidya/rigpa*) of the pure bright clarity of the emptiness of form. This “wisdom realizing emptiness,” whose complementary is the *Madhyamaka* Great Compassion (*mahakuruna*), is liberation from suffering—Ultimate Happiness Itself (*mahasuka/paramananda, eudaemonia*). So there remains, after the negation of objective and subjective gross and subtle forms encountered through the form and formless mindfulness, quiescence, introspection and insight practices, a subtler outshining luminosity as the vast expanse of the *Madhyamaka* Great Emptiness manifests itself from the “primordial purity” (*kadag*) of the primordial ground or base (*gzhi*). For Tibetan Buddhists, this fundament of clearlight ground luminosity is the ultimate nature of Reality Itself (*chonyid/dharmata*), the nature of primordial consciousness, the very essence or Nature of Mind (*sems nyid*). Regarding the *Dzogchen* view of this ultimate base, the three Buddha Bodies or the “*Trikaya* of the Base” that is our supreme source (*cittata, kunjed gyalpo*): its *Essence* is emptiness (*shunyata*), its *Nature* is luminosity (luminous clarity *gsal ba*), its *Energy* emanates continuously as light/motion/form (*tsal/rolba*), and in human conduct as wisdom/compassion (*thugs re*). (See Appendix A, *Dzogchen, The Great Perfection*). “Within the essence original wakefulness which is primordially pure (*kadag*) manifests the nature, a radiance which is spontaneously present” (*lhundrub*). (Mipham Rinpoche).

So, we must negate objective and subjective arising phenomena. But, as Tsongkhapa reminds us, if we negate too much we depart the Middle Way and fall into dark nihilism where our compassionate ethical precepts and conduct are compromised. If we negate too little we fall into the opposite extreme of absolutism reifying endlessly real phenomena and failing to accomplish the nondual wisdom of emptiness. Our awareness of the separate self-

³ For the finer points of this teaching see *The Nature of Mind, The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen*, ©David Paul Boaz, 2006, www.davidpaulboaz.org.

sense, the independently existing ego-I, is necessary to develop our view and ethical sense, Kant's "moral law within us." This sense of a permanent self is a vehicle for managing our relative conventional existence. But this self cannot be an independent, permanently existing entity. It is rather, a dependently arising, impermanent and relative existence. Thus do the *Madhyamaka* schools of the *Mahayana* seek a Middle Way between the two extremes of absolutism and nihilism.

Why is the ontological negation of the self-sense of the ego-I—the "no-self of the individual"—so important? Because it is the defence of the attachments and aversions of this self that causes the negative afflictive emotions—anger/aggression, pride/envy, desire/attachment/greed that is ignorance (*avidya/marigpa*), the root cause of human suffering and unhappiness. "All the evil, fear and suffering of this world is the result of attachment to the self" (Shantideva).

The non-conceptual realization of the state of this transcendent perfection of wisdom (*prajnaparamita*)—the wisdom of emptiness—is decidedly not mere conceptual speculation. The weight of our entire contemplative Wisdom Tradition grounds this view in the practice of meditative quiescence (*shamatha*) and penetrating insight (*vipashyana*) which, with compassionate conduct, bears the fruit of liberation or Buddhahood. "The fruit is no different at the pinnacle of enlightenment than it is at the primordial base" (Adzom Rinpoche). According to H. H. The Dalai Lama, all states of consciousness—negative or positive—indeed all phenomena are pervaded by this clear light luminosity that is the "wish fulfilling jewel" of Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*gnosis/jnana/ yeshe*) (H.H. The Dalai Lama, 2000). From this ground it all arises, dwells, and into this it all returns, with no essential separation at all.

All limbs of the Buddha's teaching have this one purpose—to lead us to the nondual transcendent wisdom. It participates in and pervades all views and paths for one who is capable of accessing it. . . All things flow from emptiness, and return again to emptiness. This is dependent arising . . . the dynamic display of the mind. This is the true nature of arising phenomena, the nature of reality itself.

-Adzom Paylo Rinpoche (*Upaya* Retreat,
Santa Fe, NM 2002, trans. Anne C. Klien)

Let us then remember, moment to moment, wherever we go, whatever we do, it's always here.

Knowing and feeling: the unity of wisdom and compassion. The Buddhist *Muhamudra*, *Madhyamaka* and *Dzogchen* traditions agree: nondual realization and perfection of the ultimate truth of the Nature of Mind (*sems nyid*), Ultimate Reality Itself (*chos nyid*), luminous emptiness (*shunyata*), Absolute *Bodhicitta* can be accomplished neither by the ambulations of common conceptual mind, nor by the "attentional stability, brilliant clarity and joy" of contemplative quiescence practices. According to the highest or subtlest *Madhyamaka* and tantric teachings, even realized contemplative quiescence (realized *shamatha*) is not altogether free of conceptual grasping and contrivance (ignorance/*advidya*)—though it is often mistaken to be so. Mind training in conceptual understanding, and also in quiescence must be unified with the compassionate heartmind of relative *bodhicitta*—the "mind of

enlightenment” —and with the parallel wisdom of penetrating insight (*vapashyana*), attained through the noetic contemplative analysis of insight practice under the guidance of, and with great devotion to a qualified master. As these “two legs of enlightenment”—wisdom and compassion—are unified, habitual material and conceptual grasping is transcended and realization of the utterly unmediated awareness continuum that is the primordial base or ground may be accomplished. The ultimate perfection of this process is Buddhahood. (For extensive documentation see B. Alan Wallace, *Balancing the Mind*, 2005, p.230ff., and his *The Attention Revolution*, 2006. For esoteric wholeness fundamentals see Anne C. Klein’s *Unbounded Wholeness*, 2006.)

To “spiritually” recognize, then realize and perfect this vast emptiness Nature of Mind—the clear light of the mind beyond the “web of belief” that is the mind’s mere cognitive contents—is to realize the temporal impermanence (*anitya*) of ego-self in time, and the utter absence (*shunya*) of it in space. The on-going failure of realization in the former instance I have termed *objective dualism*, in the latter instance, *subjective dualism*. The result is the two aspects of ignorance (*avidya*), or “missing the mark” (*hamartia/sin*). These two are primary ignorance or clinging to the sense of self (the ego-I) in space and time, and secondary ignorance, grasping at phenomena as substantial, permanent, eternal, absolute or ultimate (Boaz, 2004).

Therefore, according to the greater esoteric or nondual “innermost secret” Buddhist View—*Dzogchen*, *Essence Mahamudra*—this emptiness residue of self cannot be nihilistic nothingness or utter non-being. Rather, this reality is the prior unity of emptiness and awareness that is the very ground luminosity, the potential of everything that arises. This is “The Bright” of the Upanishads (“Upanishadic Monism”), *gnosis*, radiant essential clearlight basic mind nature itself. This then is the *knowing* aspect of liberation. As this Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*jnana*, *vidya*, *yeshe*, *gnosis*) becomes truly manifest in the lifeworld as the wisdom of kindness, and then permanent and profound loving compassion (*karuna*) for the welfare of living beings, it becomes, in direct proportion to that, our own ultimate happiness (beatitude/*mahasukha/paramananda*), Happiness Itself.⁴ This is the feeling or emotional aspect (*ishta*, *bhakti*, bliss, devotion) of liberation.

The indwelling innate, intrinsic presence (*vidya/rigpa*, *lhundrub*) of this wisdom happiness is who we are now. It cannot be found outside, or in the future. All thought, even our negative emotions are apertures opening into the depth of its primordial purity (*kadag*)—if that is, we can surrender these concepts at the instant of their arising. Indeed, everything that arises from the purity of the Base is already self-liberated and utterly free of conceptual elaboration and corruption—empty in essence, luminous clarity by nature, and spontaneously compassionate in its expression.

These two—knowing and feeling—pervade the unity of outer, inner, secret and innermost secret (nondual) understanding of the emptiness (*shunyata*), selflessness (*anatman*), impermanence (*anitya*) and interdependence (*pratitya samutpada*) of our Great Tradition’s gradual yet always immediate path to liberation from ignorance (*avidya*) that is suffering

⁴ In the Middle Way (*Madhyamaka*) *Mahayana* there are three kinds of compassion, exoteric/outer, esoteric/inner, and greater esoteric or nondual “innermost secret.” The first is relative, directed toward sentient beings. The second, toward the ignorance (*avidya/marigpa*) that causes the suffering of beings. The third is absolute, the equanimity of resting in the nondual state of presence of the source. This compassion without an object is the unity of compassion and the wisdom of emptiness. From emptiness compassion spontaneously arises. Through compassion, emptiness is realized.

(*dukkha*). Such a post-metaphysical, post-mystical, non-conceptual understanding was perfectly expressed 800 years ago by Soto Zen patriarch Dogen:

Midnight. No waves
No Wind. The empty boat
Flooded with moonlight.

Somewhere in Tibet, a *Dzogchen* master softly speaks to his heart son: “Do you see it? That is what you seek. That’s it.”

A Glimpse of the Great Perfection⁵

The nature of mind is the unity of awareness and emptiness. . .
The nature of mind is clear light.

-Shakyamini Buddha

Now is the time to enter into it.
- Garab Dorje

On the account of the subtlest view of the Buddhist teaching that is *Ati Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection (*Essence Mahamundra* and the *Madhyamaka of the Definitive Meaning* are essentially the same as to the View), this realm of Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*)—form (objective reality) and formless form (mental and subjective experience)—arises from its primordial energy (*jnana prana*) within the perfectly subjective pristine cognition of the vast expanse of Reality Itself (*dharmadhatujnana/chos-bying yeshe*). According to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche (1991) this unity of the absolute space of arising phenomena (*dharmadhatu/bying*) with primordial consciousness itself, is the luminosity of clearlight primordial awareness wisdom (*gnosis/jnana/yeshe*), utterly free of conceptual elaboration. This is the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*. This Ultimate Reality (*dharmata/cho nyid*) is the *Madhyamaka* luminous emptiness (*shunyata*) that is the inherent nature of relative spacetime phenomena (*dharmachos*) whose apparitional or illusory face (*dharmin/cho can*) emerges from its primordial purity (*kadag*) of the emptiness base (*gzhi*) as the limited consciousness of sentient beings who perceive, then reify, then conceptually designate (*maya/ignorance/ajnana/marigpa*) these appearances as the seemingly substantial phenomena of a reified, imputed, permanent, and substantial everyday reality. Yet all such instantiation of phenomenal consciousness is “always already” illumined by the radiant original face of the primordial awareness wisdom (*jnana/yeshe*) that is their (our) intrinsic actual nature, the very nature of mind (*cittata/sems nyid*). And that is the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection.

In this profound and subtle “practice of Ati Yoga, which is also secret such that only the fortunate can understand it,” Buddhahood (Buddha-nature/*buddhadhatu*) is accomplished when the fundamental, primal intrinsic awareness (*vidya/rigpa*) of the Buddha Body of Reality Itself (*dharmakaya/chos-ku*) is liberated, exactly as it is, directly here and now through the

⁵ See Appendix A, *Dzogchen, the Self-Perfected State*, and *The Buddhist View: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen* ©David Paul Boaz, 2006.

recognition—“brief moments many times”—realization and perfection of the primordially pure body of *Samantabhadra* (*Kuntazangpo*), the *Dharmakaya* Buddha, who is none other than the pristine cognition of the supreme reality that is *dharmadhatu*, the vast Absolute Space of all arising phenomena, beyond belief, always already present in whatever arises in this very moment now.

This clearlight (*'od gsal*) absolute space (*bying*) of phenomena that is Ultimate Truth must not be conflated with the material, contingent relative dimension of spacetime that arises within and through it. The prior unity of these conceptual “Two Truths” that is the nonconceptual one truth, the perfect nondual sphere of *Dzogchen*, is ontologically prior, subsuming, transcending yet embracing and pervading the physical spacetime dimension, including the “space particles” of the ground state of the quasi-physical Unified Quantum Vacuum. *The great paradoxical conclusion then is this: ultimately there is no difference! In the pristine cognition of equality—Buddha cognition (samatajnana /nyam-nyid yeshe—the Two Truths are equal. One and the same. A unity. The primal duality of the conceptual binary that is the Two Truths resolved in this one great nondual truth. “There is not the slightest difference between samsara and nirvana” (Nagarjuna).*

The Quantum Vacuum and the Great Perfection. Thus, from this ultimate view, the Zero Point Energy of the Quantum Vacuum arises from the *alayavijnana*, the substrate consciousness that arises from the primordial wisdom consciousness (*jnana/yeshe*) that is not other than the emptiness base (*gzhi*). And from the Quantum Vacuum arises *chitta/sems*, the human bodymind along with the entire spacetime mansion of Relative Truth. These are the three consciousness dimensions—*chitta, alaya and jnana*—of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist view. O wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha, *samsara* and *nirvana* are One! And all this, always here, now outshines perfectly just as it is, the natural state, “natural mind” the very nature of your mind. *Mahasuka*, great joy. Nothing special (*wu shin*). As we begin to see this post-metaphysical, post-mystical “ordinary mind” as the very Nature of Mind, we wake up. “Now we spontaneously generate the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings.” (Vimalakirti).

The great 14th Century *Nyingma Dzogchen* Master Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa) transmits this primordial wisdom (*gnosis, jnana, yeshe*) that is the very nature of *Kosmos, Reality* Itself:

Self arising wisdom is rigpa that is empty, clear and free from all elaboration, like an immaculate sphere of crystal . . . It does not analyze objects. . . By simply identifying that non-conceptual, pristine, naked rigpa, you realize there is nothing other than this nature. . . This is non-dual self-arising wisdom. . . Like a reflection in a mirror, when objects and perceptions manifest to rigpa, that pristine and naked awareness which does not proliferate into thought is called the inner power (*tsal*), the responsiveness that is the ground (*gzhi*) for all the arising of things . . . For a yogin who realizes the naked meaning of *Dzogpachenpo*, rigpa is fresh, pure and naked, and objects may manifest and appear within rigpa, but it does not lose itself externally to those objects.

-Longchen Rabjam, *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*
(Commentary), Adzom Chögar edition

According to recent Tibetan *Dzogchen rime* master Tulku Urgen Rinpoche, the two innermost principles of *Dzogchen* are Basic Space (*bying/dhatu*) and Awareness (*rigpa/vidya*). This Basic Space is pregnant luminous emptiness, the unity of emptiness (*shunyata*) and the clearlight luminosity (*'od gsal*). In *Dzogchen*, the innermost secret realization of Basic Space is *klong*, the infinite “vast expanse” of Reality Itself, transcending all conceptual elaboration, judgement and bias, beyond even the subtlest subject-object duality, beyond objective and subjective emptiness, beyond ground and path luminosity (Boaz, 2004).

As space pervades, so awareness pervades. . .like space, rigpa is all-encompassing. . . Just as beings are all pervaded by space, rigpa pervades the minds of beings. . . . Basic space is the absence of mental constructs, while awareness is the knowing of this absence of constructs, recognizing the complete emptiness of mind essence. . . The ultimate dharma is the realization of the indivisibility of basic space and awareness [that is] Samantabhadra.

-Tulku Urgyen (As It is, Vol. I, 1999 and Rainbow Printing, 1995)

The Supreme Source. The primary *Dzogchen* tantra, *The Kunjed Gyalpo (The Supreme Source)*, must surely be considered one of humankind’s great spiritual treasures. According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, this supreme nondual teaching has been transmitted from master to disciple directly, heartmind to heartmind, for thousands of years. Historical *Dzogchen* wisdom dates from the teaching of Garab Dorje in the Second Century CE. The *Kunjed Gyalpo* tantra arises in the Eighth Century and is a fundamental tantra of the *Dzogchen semde* (mind)teaching series. This version of the great nondual primordial teaching is derived from Buddhist sutra and tantra understanding of the Nature of Mind, yet its truth essence runs, like a golden thread through the grand tapestry of humankind’s primordial great Wisdom Tradition. *Kunjed Gyalpo, The Wise and Glorious King* is Sambantabhadra (clarity) and Samantabhadri (emptiness) in inseparable *yabyum* embrace—androgynous skylike primordial Adi Buddha—the union of clarity and emptiness that is none other than our original Buddha nature, Supreme Source, Basis, primordial womb of everything. Sambantabhadra, this *Dharmakaya* Buddha speaks to Vajrasattva, *Sambhogakaya* Buddha:

The essence of all the Buddhas exists prior to samsara and nirvana. . . it transcends the four conceptual limits and is intrinsically pure; this original condition is the uncreated nature of existence that always existed, the ultimate nature of all phenomena. . . It is utterly free of the defects of dualistic thought which is only capable of referring to an object other than itself. . .it is the base of primordial purity. . . Similar to space it pervades all beings. . . The inseparability of the two truths, absolute and relative is called the ‘primordial Buddha’. . . If at the moment the energy of the base manifests, one does not consider it something other than oneself. . . it self-liberates. . . Understanding the essence . . . one finds oneself

always in this state . . . dwelling in the fourth time, beyond past, present and future. . . the infinite space of self-perfection. . . pure dharmakaya, the essence of the vajra of clear light.

- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Supreme Source*
(*Kunjed Gyalpo*), 1999

Thus do the sutras and the tantras of Buddha's teaching, the binary dualities of the path—objective and subjective, self and other, observer and data, true and false, relative and ultimate—abide in the prior unity of the dependently arisen perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection, ultimate mind nature, luminous innate clearlight mind that is always already the unity of awareness and emptiness. Who is it, that I am? All the masters of the three times have told it. This infinite vast expanse of the primordial awareness wisdom continuum is who we actually are. *Tat toam ami. That, I Am!* That is our supreme identity, great perfection of our always present Buddha Nature, deep heartseed presence of ultimate happiness that is both origin and aim of all our seeking.

H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's Comments on Garab Dorje's Three Vajra Verses or The Three Essential Statements of the Dzogchen View, Meditation and Conduct (translated by John Reynolds):

Verse I: Recognize your own true nature (The Base and View) "This fresh immediate awareness of the present moment, transcending all thoughts related to the three times (past, present, future), is itself that primordial awareness or knowledge (*yeshe*) that is self-originated intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*).” From this View arises the *Semde* teaching series.

Verse II: Choose the state of presence (The Path and Meditation) "Whatever phenomena of *samsara* or *nirvana* may manifest, all of them represent the play of the creative energy or potentiality of one's own immediate intrinsic awareness (*rig pa'i rtsal*). One must decide upon this unique state for oneself and know that there exists nothing other than this.” From The Meditation arises the *Longde* teaching series.

Verse III: Continue in the state with confidence in liberation (The Fruit and Conduct) "Whatever gross or subtle thoughts may arise, by merely recognizing their nature, they arise and self-liberate simultaneously in the vast expanse of *Dharmakaya*, where Emptiness and Awareness are inseparable (*gsal stong gnyis med*).” From the Fruit arises the Secret *Upadesha* (*Mengagde*), or heart essence (*nyingthig*) teaching series.

And from Jigme Lingpa, author of the Longchen Nyingthig *Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse*, on the nondual Dzogchen view at play in the world:

No Buddhas, no beings,
beyond existence and non-existence
Intrinsic Awareness Itself
is absolute Guru, Ultimate Truth.

By resting naturally, beyond fixation
in that inherently free
perfect innate Bodhi-mind,
I take refuge and actualize Bodhicitta.
- Jigme Lingpa, *Longchen Nyingthig*

“The perfect explanation of *Dzogchen*,” according to contemporary *Dzogchen* master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is voiced in these profound words of Gautama Shakyamuni, the historical *Nirmanakaya* Buddha:

All that arises
is essentially no more real
than a reflection,
transparently pure and clear,
beyond all definition
or logical explanation.
Yet the seeds of past action,
karma, continue to cause further arising.
Even so, know that all that exists
is ultimately void of self-nature,
utterly non dual!

The End of the Great Search

You will not find Happiness until you stop seeking it.
-Chuang Tzu

What you seek is already present.
-Jesus of Nazareth

The nature of mind is Buddha from the beginning... Realizing the purity essence of all things, to remain there without seeking is the meditation.

- Garab Dorje (*The Three Vajra Verses*)

View, Path and Result. The wisdom teachings that have arisen within the primordial Great Wisdom Tradition of human history have a View (*darshana*, theory) which explains the Ground, the great Source of all appearing reality, and a Path (*marga*) which establishes the Meditation (*bhavana*) that seeks the continuity of recognition of the Ground leading to the Result or Fruition of the practice. This endpoint is “the Fruit” that is ultimate realization of our inherently nondual primordial wisdom sourceground that is, paradoxically “already accomplished” and “always already” present at the spiritual heart (*hridayam*) of each human being. This final realization is seen as the essence, if not the cause of human happiness, and in the highest nondual teaching of each tradition as ultimate Happiness Itself (*paramananda*,

mahasuka). In Buddhism this blissful Result of wisdom is Buddhahood. The Path is the confusion of the gradual seeking strategies to this “goal” of liberation enlightenment. Regarding the View, the teaching is generally presented exoterically. Thus, as knowledge deepens to wisdom in the “advanced” practitioner the teaching becomes more and more esoteric (inward, secret, nondual). Regarding the View of the Fruition (result/realization) of the path, it may be either gradual (*zengo, rim-gys-pa*), or non-gradual (sudden, direct *tongo, cig-car-ba*). In actual practice these two are interdependent, and the “gradual/non-gradual” dualism is a false dichotomy. We make the goal the path (Boaz, 2006).

The Paradox of Seeking. Our Great Wisdom Tradition teaches that this paradox of the path—the paradox of seeking—is that the happiness we desire through all our seeking strategies is already here, indwelling, timeless, perfectly awake, prior to the cyclic suffering of the endless painful dualities that this flesh is heir to. “The path is emptiness. Emptiness is the path.” “What you seek is already present, but you do not know it.” “Wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha.” This recognition is after all, the very definition of religion—*religare/religio, yoga/zygon*, union with the whole—our inherent primordial urge and impulse toward spirit, the unbroken whole that is our “supreme source,” the ultimate “transcendental signified.” “We cannot *become* happy, we can only *be* happy.” We cannot *become* enlightened, we can only *be* enlightened. Why? Because seeking happiness to avoid suffering is a form of suffering, the ignorance (*avidya*) that causes suffering. Liberation from suffering—Happiness Itself—is not a separate reality, some state or thing to be sought, caught and grasped by a knowing subject. “The seeker and that sought are one and the same” (*Padmasambhava*). Actor and action are not separate. Meditator and meditation are not separate. We need not cling to the existence or non-existence of anything at all. Thus our seeking motive is destroyed and we enter in the immediate, naked pristine awareness of the nondual presence (*vidya/rigpa*) of the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection, our primordial buddhahood—by whatever name—that is fully awake, if unrecognized, from the very beginning. Thus our liberation from the endless strategies of seeking happiness is right here now our ultimate happiness, the non-idealized happiness that cannot be lost.

Seeing with naked awareness. In the “pure view” (*dag nang*) of the *Ati Yoga* of *Dzogchen* there is nothing to be transformed or transcended; nothing to be fabricated, contrived or deconstructed by the mind because all that arises from the primordial purity (*kadag*) of the base (*gzhi*)—negative, positive, neutral—is always already spontaneously present (*lhundrub*) and self-perfected (*rang grol*) and naturally self-liberated (*rang bzhin gyis mya ngan las ‘das pa*) from the very beginning. Simply relax into That (*Tat/Sat*). That is the continuity of completion (*Dzog*) and perfection of the natural state, natural ordinary mind that is “the Bright” of the light of the mind and everything appearing therein always arising from primordial purity that is the very ground of being. Practice that, moment to moment, and be supremely happy. Thus it is. Now there is nothing to do, so that everything we do is selfless, authentic and kind. Thus do we choose our reality. Thus do we create our individual and thereby collective destiny.

Thus nondual, non-separate Spirit, Ultimate Reality Itself, already transcends yet includes and embraces both subject and object, self and other, right here now. This reality is who we actually are, our supreme identity. So there is no need to try to *become* something else,

try to change anything. “Leave it as it is, and rest your weary mind, all things are perfect, exactly as they are” (Shakyamuni Buddha). This is the perennial truth of non-action *wu-wei*, surrender to the wisdom of emptiness, non-seeking, not seeking something outside, nor inside, not seeking anything at all. Let it be as it is, and all that arises spontaneously self-liberates at the very instant of its arising. This is liberation from unhappiness. This is the primordial wisdom teaching.

All the masters have told it. That happiness you seek is “always already” present. The heartseed of enlightenment, our Buddha Nature (tatagatagarbha), our Christ Nature (christos), by whatever name, is inherent right here within the continuum of our mental-emotional nature at the very heart (hridayam, kokoro, nyingpo) of the human bodymind. Can we really be that presence, this space of sky, in the chaos of our splendid earth? Yes, according to the nondual view of the wisdom traditions. We can be that because That is our actual original, primordial wisdom nature (gnosis, jnana, yeshe), the very nature of our mind. How do we do this? The masters of the three times—past, present, future—have told it: We train the mind in equanimity and compassion through the path (marga/lam), meditation practice (bhavana) under the guidance of a qualified master, all the way to the end of it.

You have always been one with the Buddha, so do not pretend you can attain this oneness by various practices. If, in this very instant, you could know that it can never be attained by effort. . .you would now be the Buddha Mind. . . Do not seek Buddhahood, your seeking is doomed to failure.

-Huang Po (Kraft, *Zen Tradition*, 1988)

In this very act of seeking, the truth is revealed, just for a moment... Buddha is within you, clear and bright and vast as space. This is the meditation. In this quiet, vast emptiness there is nothing to construct and nothing to do. In a carefree way, let it be as it is, and just relax into it... there is nothing other than this... Now then, rest in *That*.

-Lama Wangdor Rinpoche
(Santa Fe Retreat, 2003)

Who is it? Who is it that desires to know, and to be happy? Who is it that is afraid and angry? Who is it that is born, suffers and dies? Who is it that shines through the mind and abides at the heart of all beings, forever liberated and fully awake?