

***The Magic Key for Entering Knowledge* Commentary by Khenpo Gangshar (part III):
The Middle Way Schools: The Consequentialist (Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika) Middle Way
Teaching by 9th Thrangu Rinpoche (Day 6)**

Video: <https://youtu.be/mwFXByWHVbo>

Overview: <https://dakinitranslations.com/2023/07/03/the-middle-way-schools-the-consequentialist-prasangika-middle-way-school-and-the-dangers-of-negating-everything-into-empty-of-self-rang-tong-part-iii/>

TRANSCRIPT

The Consequentialist Middle Way (Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika) School – not differentiating between the two truths and going directly for ‘unapproximated’ emptiness of ultimate reality

When we come to understand emptiness, first normally we think that things are there, we think there is something present, that it exists. Then we prove “oh it's not really there” and we think of that as being emptiness. So that is one type of emptiness the ‘approximated’ (nam-drang), the ‘almost in the ballpark’ sort of emptiness. Then there is the emptiness that transcends that, and this is the emptiness where we realize that if there is non-existence you first must have existence, so if you do not have existence then you cannot have non-existence either. So, this is emptiness that is free of all ideas of there being something or being nothing, existence and non-existence. This is what Mipham Rinpoche and then Khenpo Gangshar are following and calling their specific term the ‘unapproximated’ (or nam-drang ma-yin pa ‘unspecified’) emptiness.

The unapproximated emptiness is not a specific emptiness and this is a really important point to understand and establish. Who really establishes and comes to this point? As it is said here in the text in the section on the Consequentialists (Thal-Gyurwa):

“The Consequentialist/Prasangika masters such as Chandrakirti and Shantideva do not differentiate the two truths.”

Which means that they do not say that everything exists relatively and it is empty ultimately.

“From the very beginning they established that everything is emptiness and that all phenomena are unapproximated emptiness free of elaborations such as existence non-existence, being or non-being.”

So, it is free of all sorts of elaborations. It is an emptiness that is free of all these extremes and elaborations, and that is the unapproximated emptiness. When they establish and come to the certainty of the 'unapproximated' emptiness then these masters do not accept any propositions and therefore the consequentialists are known as having no propositions. They do not propose that things are something or that they are nothing, that they are both or neither. They are free of all the extremes, free of all the conceptual elaborations. This is the final view of the empty-of-self (rang-tong) view. The main thing, the root that we must come to understand is this and we must establish this and if we do not really come to establish this, then it is not very comfortable for us. So, we need to really establish and comprehend emptiness and we must do this through our experience.

The reasons why having both the correct view and meditative experience are essential for developing and realising the nature of mind and Buddha Nature

In terms of the Sutra schools, we talk about the views of the Svatantrika/ Autonomous, and the Prasangika/Consequentialist school. So, we need to meditate upon these and understand them. However, in terms of meditating and establishing this is primarily looking at external things, looking at our body and at the external world, at our mind and establishing that everything is emptiness, but establishing this through logic.

Now when we do the meditations of Mahamudra and Dzogchen do we do it this way through logic? We do not. In mahamudra meditation it does not really matter to us whether the external objects are empty or not, it is not so important. It is not so easy to meditate upon this. If you can develop the view going through the logic you can develop real certainty in this but it is not very easy to meditate upon. So, the main thing that we do is we look at the mind itself and we learn how to look at the nature of the mind and nurture that experience of the nature of the mind.

Nowadays, there are many great lamas who come and they point out the great nature of the mind and there are many students who recognize the nature of that mind and have an experience of the nature of the mind and that is wonderful that is really very good. But there are some people who have a feeling that they recognize it but they are not able to really develop it. They have this feeling that, as we say in English, they get a glimpse of the nature of mind but they are not able to nurture that or able to develop and expand that understanding. They are not able to transform that into the Buddhist path you have not been able to find the method to do that. So, what is the reason that we are unable to do this? The reason is that first we need to really establish this view properly. First, we must establish the view, we have to have real certainty in it and then once we have the experience of the nature of the mind, we will be able to maintain it and develop it.

So, you all are extremely fortunate now, you are able to do many dhatuns and many retreats and through this you develop shamatha tranquillity meditation and this is wonderful. Through that then you often are pointed out the nature of the mind and you often recognize the nature of the mind. Then, in order to really develop that you need to have a solid basis. What is that basis? That basis is to really understand and be certain in the view of the Middle Way/Madhyamika and the view of the empty-of-self and the empty-of-

other Middle Way schools. So really understanding these and establishing them with certainty is extremely beneficial.

Trying to climb a cliff with no hands – Having meditation without the right view

When we establish emptiness through logic and come to gain certainty through that, this is what we call the view. Then, when we practice this and we meditate upon it that is what we call meditation. We need to be diligent about our meditation. Our view will help our meditation, and our meditation will help the view; we need these two together. It is important that the two of these go together because if they are separated and become removed from one another, then it will not work well.

This is something said in one of the songs of the great Kagyu masters, that having the meditation without the view is like someone without arms trying to climb a cliff. If there's someone who has no arms who is unable to climb a cliff, like these days a lot of people go out to the rocky mountains in Colorado and go rock climbing. You've got two arms and you've got your equipment, you can go up there you can sink your picks and your crampons and all the stuff, you can tie the ropes and you can climb up the rock and you can eventually get to the summit. So, you get to the summit because you have arms and you can climb up. Then there might be someone who has no arms who thinks "hey I want to try that". So this climber with no arms goes up to the cliff and there is no way they can actually climb. No matter how much confidence they have the person without arms just cannot climb that cliff. So, in the same way, if we want to do meditation, we have to have the view, if we do not have the right view, there is no way that we are actually going to be able to meditate.

Being a rich miser – having the view without meditation

But is it enough to just have a good view? It is not. We also have to meditate. As the song continues, having the view but not meditating is like a rich miser. So, you have to actually meditate upon what you establish as the view. Having the view alone does not help you. It is like a rich person who has a lot of wealth and that is great. Yet they have got all these possessions but they are really miserly and stingy. They have all these possessions and wealth but too stingy to use that "I cannot spend that penny and you know I cannot give that money to anyone else I cannot do it. I have got to keep that money for myself. This is really important I have to pass it on to my children." So, you have all the wealth but you aren't able to spend it, so what good does that wealth do you? So, if you have that good view but you do not actually meditate on it, that does not help you in any way. One has to have the view and the meditation and these have to be joined and brought together. If you do that then your meditation will be really stable.

Building a house without good plans will become a mess – the importance of the view for meditation

For instance, it is like if you are building a house, first you to have the right architecture and have to design it well. If you have a good design and plans, then you know where to put the doors and the staircases. So, you have the plans and then you can actually build the house. So having the view is like having the plans and the architecture of the house. Then actually building the house is like the meditation and if you have the good plans then it will turn out well. Otherwise, if you do not have good plans then it will not work out well. It is like the retreat centre we had built at Milarepa's Cave in Bhaktapur. When we built this retreat centre, we did not have such good architecture and did not do the plans so well. So, the way it worked out was strange. First, the staircase went up into the middle of the shrine room. Then when you are trying to have pujas there is a staircase in the middle of the shrine but it is not that easy to have the staircase. Then you look at the shrine from outside and it looks like this really big roomy temple and then you get inside it is small because there is a staircase right in the middle of it. Then you go outside and you look at all the retreat rooms there and some are higher, some are lower it is like going all over the place and it is strange and not convenient. So, they decided well we need to take the staircase and build a new staircase on the outside of it but then you have to close everything up and redo all the framing and all this stuff, it is just a real mess. This is because we did not have a good plan to begin with, we did not have good architecture and so it did not work out right.

In the same way, you have got to have the good basis and plan for your meditation that is the view and the basis. You have to have that view and good understanding then your meditation will go well. That is why it is important to understand these views of the empty-of-self/rang-tong Middle Way schools. The autonomous and the consequentialist schools are often called the empty-of-self schools. It is important to understand this and through this we can really understand what emptiness.

***Ultimate reality is not mere nothingness or blankness but a union of clarity and emptiness
- The Empty-of-Other view***

Then when we have really comprehended and internalized that emptiness, we can see via the view of the Empty-of-Other/ Shentong that the nature of that emptiness is not inanimate, blank, dead emptiness. If we have that understanding, then when we actually meditate and come to look at the nature of the mind, we will see the nature of the mind but we will realize that we cannot actually find its nature in any way. That is just the dharma nature of the mind, that is the way it is, that is the emptiness of the mind. This is the end. When we look at the nature of the mind and we see this emptiness that the self-empty school teaches it is not something, it is not anything, it is not neither, it is not both, you cannot put a finger on it in any way, it is just this emptiness you cannot find it. But is that emptiness that we see when we meditate is that just blank, is it like some sort of a rock, is it nothingness, blackness? It is not like that, it has the clear awareness, it can know everything and it can understand and think everything. When we see the nature of the mind in our meditation that is the feeling that we have and what is that feeling of? That is the feeling of the clear aspect, of the wisdom aspect. So that is what we really come to understand and internalize through developing the view of the empty-of-other. That is the clear aspect. We have the clarity and we also have the emptiness and so how are these like? It is

the union of the clarity and emptiness. It is not as if emptiness is one thing and clarity is another thing and then they are sort of mushed together somehow, that is not how it is. It is like one and the same essence. So we have to understand that the clarity and the emptiness are the same in essence. Then when we experience it, when we look at the nature of the mind we see these two things together, it is together that we see the emptiness and the clarity. If we understand it and have that view and then when we see them, we recognize it then our meditation will be stable, it will be clear, we will have real confidence and belief in our meditation. And because we have that confidence and belief in our meditation it will be able to really develop. So that is why it is so important to really establish and internalize the views of the middle way.

The dangers of the Consequentialist view of having ‘no propositions’ and not understanding Empty-of-Other

Then we are really establishing and internalizing this view of emptiness then we absolutely must also have the view of the Empty-of-Other if we do not have that view of the Empty-of-Other there are problems that can happen, as it says here in Khenpo Gangshar’s commentary:

“These days in this scriptural tradition people take mere words that appear such as no propositions as a refuge. They do not accept the presentation of the path and result and do not even assert the Buddha Nature (Dezheg Nyingpo). Then they focus their mind single-pointedly on the blank, mere emptiness of the lack of elaborations.”

So, some Consequentialists just say that it is just emptiness, there is nothing but a blank emptiness and do not accept the presentation of path, result or buddha nature. They say that everything is just plain emptiness and there is no need to worry about paths and levels bodhisattva levels or about any result or about buddha nature it is all it is all emptiness and so this is what some people say.

“Whenever such people speak, they repeat “lack of elaborations, lack of elaborations’ over and over and consider the Empty-of-Other Middleway the Shentong school to be barren.”

So, they say that Empty-of-Other view is like clinging to things as being true, it is clinging to the buddha nature as being true and so it is not good in any way. So, they refute it. But actually, their view of everything being just total emptiness is not good.

The text then says:

“If you do not realise this well, then it is equivalent to the nihilistic view (cherbupa). As the masters of the Empty-of-Other say unanimously.”

So Khenpo Gangshar says that if you say there's just mere emptiness nothing at all then that is not quite okay. There is a danger that your view will become a nihilistic view. So, there are other masters the Shentong school who say this.

The dangers of the Consequentialist view of having 'no propositions' and not understanding Empty-of-Other (Zhentong)

Not only that, it is as the great master Saraha said in the song 'Clinging to Objects': "Clinging to things is as stupid as an ox." So, if you cling to things as actually existing then that is as stupid as an ox. Now an ox here is used as a metaphor, or an analogy for something being stupid. Oxes are stupid because if you say to an ox everything is empty, then the ox is not going to understand you. So, in the same way if you do not accept that things are empty then it is like being as stupid as that ox.

Yet, Saraha continues, if you cling to nothing, then it is even more idiotic than that ox. So, if you cling to there being nothing, just non-existence, then that is even stupider than that ox. That is because it is not at all in accord with the nature of how things are, the actual nature of how things are transcends all ideas of something, or of nothing, or existence or non-existence. This is the emptiness; it is the union of clarity-emptiness. This is the emptiness indivisible from the clarity that is taught by the masters of the Shentong school in order to see this we have to turn our minds and attention inwards and meditate and when we do that, then we will see "Ah, that's what the clarity is, that is what the emptiness is." and we can see this in in our mind and really get to the bottom of what it really means to have this union of clarity and emptiness. This is really important.

When I was young and I was studying texts and working on developing the understanding, I had a Khenpo Lodro Rabsel, and I was always saying to him: "This does not work, this cannot be what it is. What is this? I do not understand emptiness, what is that approximated emptiness and unapproximated emptiness? This does not make sense, this does not work." Khenpo would always say "You cannot look like this; you have to turn inside and turn your intention inside. You are looking at outside things. If you look at outside things you will not understand. You need to look inside."

I thought to myself: "I cannot do that; how can you look inside like that? It does not make any sense, there is no way you can do that. This does not make any sense looking inside, come on you got to be kidding me, you cannot look inside like that." But then later Khenpo Gangshar came and he gave some instructions and I thought: "Oh that is what my Khenpo meant to say. When he said looking inside that is what it means to look inside, this is what looking inside is! "So, when I got these instructions like "Ah, that's what he said!" I had this feeling that occurred. So, we have to really understand the view and then we have to join it with the meditation. We have to have the two together.

Then the text says:

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“All these exponents [of Empty-of-Self] should really re-examine their accepted view reached at with scriptures and logic with unbiased intelligence.”

Then it says:

“Generally grasping at either things or non-things does not transcend fixation on extremes. The nature of some mere empty aspect that is merely free of extremes, because all extremes have been refuted by mentally fabricated suppositions, is not similar to the ultimate nature (thar-thug). “

So, here generally grasping at either things or non-things does not transcend fixation on extremes. Grasping at things is an extreme, grasping at non-things or nothing is an extreme. So, it is good to come to understand and internalize the view of the empty-of-self we need to do that. When we come to understand that emptiness then there is the approximated emptiness and the unapproximated emptiness. Approximated emptiness is the emptiness that distinguishes between something and nothing, existence, and non-existence. Then there is the unapproximated emptiness that transcends any extreme of something or nothing, existing or non-existing. So, coming to understand this is very good and it is really wonderful to understand it. But at the same time, you also have to understand and comprehend that there is Buddha-nature, there is the clear wisdom aspect you have to really look at this very carefully. They need to examine their view extremely carefully. So “generally grasping at either things or non-things does not transcend fixation on the extremes.” So, if you grasp it at something it is an extreme, if you grasp at nothing it is an extreme, it does not transcend the fixation on extremes. However, the text says, “the nature of some mere empty aspect that is merely free of extremes because all extremes have been refuted by mentally fabricated supposition is not similar to the ultimate.” So, this is something that we need to experience in our mind. When we experience our mind and we see that it is not something, it is not anything, it is free of all the extremes but also, it is not just mere emptiness, an inanimate emptiness, it is not that. The mere emptiness is not the ultimate emptiness.

So, when we talk about emptiness then in the path of the sutras this is what is established through inference as being the dharma expanse, the dharmadhatu. The dharma expanse is that all things the external appearances, the internal mind all of these things are emptiness. There is the expanse of emptiness out of which all internal external things in our mind can arise, that is free of all the extremes and free of all conceptual elaborations, that is the dharma expanse. It is the basis which allows all appearances to happen or the expanse where all appearances can happen that is the dharma expanse. But is that dharma expanse just mere emptiness? Is it just blank nothingness? No, it is not that. There is the clear awareness aspect and has to be that clear aspect because if it were just mere emptiness, it would be like empty space. With empty space no matter how long, you can wait months and years, and it will never develop any qualities, or any wisdom. But with the nature of the mind, the dharma expanse when you really understand it you see that, then there is the possibility that all the qualities can develop. So, the emptiness of the dharma nature has the potential for the qualities of the buddha path of the vajrayana. Is it something that we can

actually realize? It is something that we can realize. Can we develop these qualities? We can develop these qualities. Why is it that we can do this? It is because of this clear wisdom aspect that it is not an inanimate emptiness, there is a clear wisdom emptiness and because it has that clear wisdom aspect, then all the qualities can occur. So, it is not similar to the ultimate nature/emptiness.

[Although this is not mentioned in Thrangu Rinpoche's teaching, at this section of Khenpo Gangshar's text, there is a list the lineage of the Zhentong with several Jonang masters, such as Dolpopa and Taranatha, and he also says:

"In particular, their (Zhentong) view is like it is taught in the Kālacakra tantra, which says that 'since beginningless time, all sentient beings have the nature of Buddha. Since the basis of Dharmatā (Chokyi) is stainless and uncorrupted, that which is called samsara is unestablished other than merely a name. All the phenomena of nirvana are devoid of changing and everlasting and from beginninglessness is the nature of mind abiding intrinsically/naturally. However, past or present it is the unchanging Dharmatā that is innately present."

Which is interesting as the current 14th Dalai Lama and Gelug lineage (who espouse the Rangtong/Empty-of-Self) view has bestowed and participated in many Kālacakra empowerments, as bestowed to them by the Dro Kalacakra lineage holders, which include Jonang. So, the Empty-of-Other view is crucial to the Kalacakra practice, which is often referred to as tantric Zhentong.]

As the omniscient dharma lord Longchenpa said:

"Generally grasping at either things or non-things does not transcend fixation on the extremes." So, if you grasp it at something it is an extreme, if you grasp at nothing it is an extreme, it does not transcend the fixation on extremes. However:

"The nature of some mere empty aspect that is merely free of extremes because all extremes have been refuted by mentally fabricated supposition is not equivalent to the ultimate."

So, it is good to come to understand and internalize the view of the empty-of-self and we need to do that. When we come to understand that emptiness, then there is the approximated emptiness and the unapproximated emptiness. Approximated emptiness is the emptiness that distinguishes between something and nothing, existence and non-existence. Then there is the unapproximated emptiness that transcends any extreme of something or nothing, existing or non-existing. So, coming to understand this is very good and it is really wonderful to understand it. But at the same time, you also have to understand and comprehend that there is Buddha-nature, there is the clarity wisdom aspect you have to really look at this very carefully. They need to examine their view extremely carefully.

So, the view of Empty-of-Self is not similar to the ultimate nature/emptiness. This is what Omniscient Longchenpa taught. The text reads:

“As the omniscient dharma lord Longchenpa said: "If you just say free of the extremes of existence and non-existence without knowing the basis of removal/separation [bral gshi].."

So, if you just say that it is free of existence and free of being non-existent, it is free of all extremes, you can say this it sounds wonderful, you might know it well, but if you do not understand the basis for removal, if you say just free of the extremes of existence without knowing the basis for removal. So, if just say that there is nothing and do not understand what the basis for saying that is. If you say that everything is emptiness without understanding that the basis of that emptiness is the Buddha Nature, then you do not understand the view well. If you understand the basis of removal, the Buddha Nature well, you realize that it is the union of the clear primordial awareness, and emptiness. There is the clear awareness aspect and the empty aspect and they are joined. These two are indivisible this is the nature of how it is, and we need to understand it well.

Otherwise, if you do not understand this and you say it is just merely emptiness then your view is that of the *Peak of Existence*. The view of the *Peak of Existence* is the view of the highest formless realm so the four formless realms, the highest of these is the is the realm of neither conception or non-conception. It is also called the peak of existence. So, your meditation is just like the meditation that will lead you to be reborn there in that highest of the formless realms. So that is not realization of the dharma nature as it is. In terms of the Mahamudra and the Dzogchen teachings, we say you have not realized the nature of the mind, because this goes outside of the teaching and is not what the Bhagavan buddha taught. It is not in the teachings of the sutras; it is not in the two teachings of the tantras. In terms of the sutras, it is not the teaching of the self-empty, it is not the teaching of the other empty. In terms of the secret mantra of Vajrayana it is not the teachings of the Empty-of-Other, Mahamudra or Dzogchen.

So having just a view of it just being mere blank emptiness is not anything. It is an outsider view. It is like spreading dust on the sky of the mind. We have a saying that it is all like the sky just blank emptiness with no qualities like that. So just spreading dust on it here is a reference to the non-Buddhist, the naked Ascetic or Jain school. So, if your view is just like the view of the Jains and so if you are going to have the view of the Jains then you might as well act like the Jains. If you are going to act like the Jains then you have to be extremely meticulous about your conduct and must go around naked. Then you must smear yourself with dust. So, if you are going to have this view then that is how you should that is how you should treat yourself and it will be good.

So, we need to really understand and internalize what the nature is like, but how do we do this? it is as the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje said in his aspiration for mahamudra:

"Not something even buddhas cannot see it. Not anything, it is the basis of samsara and nirvana, not a contradiction, it is the middle way of unity. May we realize the nature of mind free of all extremes."

So, when we realize the nature of the mind the way the mind is or whether we talk about it as the dharma nature, the dharma expanse, in the middle way view when we come to understand is this something? does it exist? is it something no it does not we cannot find anything that exists if we look with if we look with logic, we cannot find anything that exists. If we look through our meditation, when we look at the nature of the mind, we cannot find anything that something there is no solid thing no something that we can find there. whether we look at it through meditation or logic and so with logic first we come to really know the views of the great exposition and the sutra schools, and then we come to understand the view of the mind-only school, and then we meditate upon the emptiness of all phenomena and in meditating on the emptiness of all phenomena we follow the sequence of first following the autonomous school and then following the meditations of the consequentialist schools. So, we come to realize that all phenomena are emptiness, they are free of all extremes and all elaborations. So, is their emptiness something we can find that is empty? We cannot. Even the buddha cannot see it.

Then it says: "It is not nothing, it's the basis of samsara and nirvana". So, if it is not something, well does that mean it is nothing? it is not just merely nothing it is not merely non-existent. As Khenpo Gangshar just said, if it were just blank nothingness then that is not understanding the basis for the removal, the basis for the emptiness. Just a mere emptiness is like the view of the Jain schools or the naked ascetics. So it is not nothing, because it is the basis of samsara and nirvana.

So how is it the basis of samsara? Well because this emptiness also has the clear aspect then because of that all of the various appearances and perceptions we have are able to occur. All of the qualities of nirvana are also able to occur and when these qualities of nirvana appear, then there are the Buddha's qualities of wisdom, love, and power. How is it that they appear? If it were just mere blank emptiness then these qualities of wisdom, love and power would not be able to occur. But the essence of that mere emptiness is clear awareness and because it is clear awareness, then the wisdom can arise. As there is that wisdom, there is the love, that is the compassionate love. Then because of the love there is the power, the activity, and the resplendent and excellent activity of the Buddhas. For that reason, it is not nothing, it is the basis of samsara and nirvana.

Normally the way we think about it is: "If it isn't something, then it's nothing, if it isn't nothing then it's something." right? So, they're contradictory it is either one or the other, it cannot be both or neither, if it is not nothing it is something if it is not something, it is nothing. So, are they contradictory? Actually, they are not contradictory. The something and nothing are together it is this union the clarity-emptiness are together. The essence of the emptiness is clear but that clarity is not something that we can establish as a thing it is not something that is true that we can establish as truly existent.

So, the essence of the clear awareness is empty and that is the teaching of the middle way. It is not a contradiction, it is the middle path of unity as Rangjung Dorje said. So, it's not something, and because it is not something it does not fall to the extreme of permanence. Because it is not nothing it avoids the extreme of nihilism. It is free of all of the extremes and so this is the unified middle path, the unified middle way. Where do we find this? We find this in the nature of our mind that is free of all extremes. So Rangjung Dorje concludes the stanza with the prayer: "May we realize the nature of our minds free of all extremes." So may all sentient beings realize this nature of the mind. Here this section is about how we can really come to understand and internalize the view of the consequentialist school. When we do that, we also need to have the view of the empty-of-other school. For that reason, we have now completed the section on the Consequentialist view and next is the view of the empty-of-other school.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: I know that basically, meditation instruction is very personal but for instance, in meditation on Shamatha, there is a general instruction of following or focusing on the breath in order to establish Shamatha. Is there some similar instruction for meditation looking in at the mind, rather than focusing outwardly? Just some kind of a general instruction that could be given?

A: A general instruction for this is that first you look at the mind you recognize the mind and the nature of the mind and when you do that, then you sort of maintain and nurture that is very important to do. But while we are just nurturing the experience of the nature of the mind, then we should not just merely do that. We have both the meditation and the post-meditation and these are important. The meditation sessions can be short, and then when you get up into the post-meditation you should keep your mind undistracted, maintain your mindfulness and awareness. Just not forget the feeling of the equipoise, the feeling of the meditation. Remember that again and again. If you do this this, it is combining your post-meditation and the equipoise.

It is combining and mixing the two. So, this is mixing the experience and the post-meditation. This is very important so when we do the post-meditation if we were to do rest in equipoise do our meditation and then get up and when whatever our mind goes, we just follow our mind off into thoughts of greed or aversion or delusion and that is not okay. We have to maintain our mindfulness and awareness we have to keep them strong, and use them over and over again. Remember that experience and if we do that then that will help. That is the first method.

The second method is devotion. So, we need to develop devotion we can do the practice of guru yoga and make supplications and aspirations and through that develop motivation this will help our meditation. Or we can supplicate the precious three jewels this will increase our belief and our faith and if our belief and our faith increase then because of the feeling of

the devotion it will be able to develop our realization. So, this is why it is said in the Vajradhara lineage prayer that "devotion is the head of meditation as it's taught" . So, these are the two different methods you can use.

Q: I wanted to re-ask a question, I remember you were teaching on the philosophical schools some years ago, and a student asked this question and your answer was really helpful to all of us in the group because it kind of brought to life that in some of the so-called lower schools there were great meditators there and which I think we can lose the fact of that the idea of that sometimes when we're studying the schools. The question went like this as I remember, the student said Rinpoche "I have read that the Mind-Only were great meditators would it be correct to think that their realization in their meditation was as profound as the later schools but that they did not express it as well?" and your answer was so helpful to that but maybe you could answer that again.

Here we have to distinguish between the periods when we are establishing the view and the period of meditation, these are different. In terms of the view, the mind-only does hold that the mind can be truly established. So, in that respect they have not in terms of the view realized the true nature of phenomena. But in terms of the experience of their meditation when they are meditating then they follow the good aspects of the mind-only view and they come to see the nature of external phenomena. Then they see well actually "Oh that mind can't actually be truly established as anything, it really isn't like that. So naturally they then gain the view of the middle way. If they are trying to try to sort of force themselves to follow the mind-only view and just meditate upon it like that, there would not really be any way for them to actually meditate, or to attain any result out of it. Naturally, because of the strength of their own wisdom they will just naturally enter the middle way view. So, this is in terms of the Mahayana they will naturally enter the Middle Way view.